

**SAUGERTIES**

**by Susan Eve Haar**

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### Cast of Characters

- SHE            30s. Smart, sensual, emotionally disheveled. She's certainly imaginative and a little bit unpredictable.
- HE             Looks older. Steady, but he knows how to play. Muscular and lean, he has the physical energy of a man very present in his body.

### Place

A bedroom on the second floor of a remote Bed & Breakfast outside Saugerties, New York

### Time

Sometime in the future

Setting: Darkness. In the dark, we hear a popping sound - the firing of a champagne cork. Lights come up to reveal a chintz-decorated Victorian-style room in a B&B. The room is furnished in eclectic style: Upstage center: vintage bed beside it a bedside table on which sits a lamp with a frilled shade and a vase of roses. Stage left: armchair and bureau, door to outside. Stage right: a small 'occasional' antique table, door to bathroom. A bottle of champagne rests, open, on the table, with two glasses. Bright green carpet, oddly colored flowered wallpaper.

At Rise: SHE is seated on the antique bed. SHE wears a slip, garter belt, stockings and pearls. HE, seated in an old plush armchair, watches her. HE stands, refills his glass with champagne and hands her a filled glass. HE toasts her.

HE

Ten years.

SHE

(Toasting back, empties glass)

Ten years -- and here we are in this strange little room with pink wainscoting and a small green rug -- where the walls are not quite plumb ...

HE

(wiggling bottle)

More champagne?

SHE

... where the walls lean in a-kilter and the rug is this artificial green like astro-turf. I'm going to lie on it.

HE

Be my guest.

(She rises nimbly from the bed, lies on the floor.)

SHE

A room to die in. Look at my skin on this green. Do you think I look like an albino whale? An albino whale beached in a B&B?

HE

Get off the floor, Jen.

SHE

I always thought I'd die in a white room, but now I think I'd like to die in a room just like this.

HE

Get off the floor.

SHE

Oh my God the wallpaper! Look at those morning glories! The stamens—don't they look like tentacles?

HE

Come over here and let me make you happy.

SHE

No!

HE

You know you want to be happy, Jen. And today's gonna be the day--

SHE

Did you read that story in the paper about those giant squid? They live deep in the ocean, eating prehistoric fish. Do you think they have eyes, Rog?

HE

Uh-huh.

SHE

Maybe they've evolved in some strange way--traded eyes for something else.

HE

I'm going to evolve you. Now get on up here.

SHE

Nobody's ever seen them but they're out there--submerged, but still there. Parts wash up sometimes...

(He gets up, reaching for her, pulling her. She resists.)

No! Not yet! This place is scaring me!

(pulling away)

Oh my God. Look! Lavender flowers and pink vines! Please, let's go home.

HE

We have to stay here.

SHE

Why?

HE

Relax and breathe.

(SHE breathes deeply.)

HE (Cont.)

This is the place it's going to happen.

SHE

Oh.

HE

A surprise to end all surprises.

SHE

It feels—it's supposed to be charming but there's something creepy, perverse...

HE

Just crappy décor.

SHE

Who would put those colors together? Only someone in total despair. Or a psychopath.

HE

OK. I'll turn out the lights now.

SHE

No! I'm not ready!

HE

Go brush your teeth and forget about the décor.

(She gets up and goes into the bathroom. She brushes her teeth. HE lies down on the bed.)

SHE (offstage)

I know you don't think it's important. But it is. Before you notice the décor creeps in like toxic mold -- and the things take over. The things multiply and get stronger and stronger and pretty soon the things are in charge and you're their slave. The things tell you to bring home other things, "Buy her. I want her, in pink." That big chaise, the one in your study? It said to me "I need a pillow, and it better not be needlepoint."

HE

Relax pussycat. Come here and lie down, let me stroke you.

(She comes to him. Lies on the bed. He kisses her neck.)

SHE

(sitting up)

Wait a minute. Do you hear something?

HE

Crickets. The fan. Nothing.

(SHE gets out of bed and looks out the window.)

SHE

Soon it'll be too late.

HE

For what?

(She goes to her bag and pulls out a tube.)

SHE

Superglue. That invisible adhesive that fills in all the cracks, and sticks together everything that has been torn asunder, all manner of shattered things...

HE

Jesus, Jen. Cut it out. Nothing's shattered here. No one's broken. Yes, it's been a rough patch but we're through it. I've been planning this night for a long time, the surprise to end all surprises...

SHE

Oh! It's leaking.

(throws the tube away)

I glued my fingers together!

(holds them up)

I know what to do—you pry your fingertips apart, and then there's this little coating of glue, like a second skin, you can either let time do its work or you can rip it off...And then when your fingertips are healed, you'd be untraceable.

HE

Uh huh. You could begin again.

SHE

You, not us.

HE

We're in this together and we're going to be happy, babe, happy like at the beginning. We're going to start clean.

SHE

Are you deaf to me?

HE

I listen, but what you *say* doesn't matter, because I hear what you don't say.

SHE

No you don't.

And I know what you did for me... HE

Eons ago. SHE

You stood by me like no one ever had. HE

Long, long ago SHE

You held me for days. HE

You were puking and sweating. SHE

You patted my back. HE

Your hair was standing on end. SHE

I was twitching and crawling, out of my mind. HE

Cool compresses, Klonopin under your tongue. SHE

You never left me. HE

You couldn't be alone. SHE

And now? Now I can be alone? HE

Yes! SHE

Oh Jen. Look, I know that you've got this craving—you got to fill it to be happy- HE

SHE  
It's a hunger in my body. It gnaws at me.

HE  
I get that.

SHE  
It's my fault.

HE  
You weren't ready.

SHE  
And now it's too late! My tubes are scarred and I can't be fixed, there's no life left in me! There's nothing left but the things and dinner parties and birthdays and car crashes and the calendar that means nothing to me! I can't go on like this!

HE  
I know how hard it's been—the surgery and the drugs – if we'd made a different decision way back then maybe it would've been different, but that's over now. So you can forgive me—and yourself—and come to me, let me hold you babe, let me make you happy now and forever.

SHE  
You think you know how to do that?

HE  
Yes.

SHE  
No one makes anyone else happy.

HE  
I can. I will. I know what you want.

SHE  
No you don't.

HE  
Oh, I do, trust me. You're in my power, you're in my fingertips.  
(HE reaches for her wiggling his fingertips.)

SHE  
Stop it!  
(HE grabs at her.)  
Not now! I mean it, Rog, I'm not playing!



HE

I don't care what you want.

(HE gets out of bed. SHE tries to escape. HE tickles her a little too roughly.)

SHE

Stop! Stop it! Don't!

(SHE pushes him back on bed. HE lets her. HE holds her. SHE gets up. Lies back down on floor.)

HE

You think you want to get away from me? Is that what you want?

SHE

Yes!

HE

You don't know what you want. You don't even know what's possible.

SHE

Yes, I do!

HE

You're gonna be amazed.

SHE

Nothing helps!

HE

Tomorrow you'll wake up and everything's gonna be different.

SHE

No way.

HE

And you're gonna be astonished because you're gonna be happy. I'm going to give you what you've been aching for.

SHE

No!

(backing away)

HE

Fine. I can wait. You just spin yourself into butter. I'm going to relax until you soften up.  
(He stretches out on the bed and closes his eyes.)

SHE  
You're not relaxed. You're faking. (beat) Rog, Rog? Are you happy?

HE  
I couldn't be happier.

SHE  
Really?

HE  
Uh huh. (Opens his eyes) You look great lying on the floor. Frothing at the mouth that little bit.

SHE  
Like-- this?

HE  
Uh huh.

SHE  
I'm not frothing! I'm... lathered. *Neigh...*  
(SHE neighs like a horse.)

HE  
Come on up here and I'll ride you round the bend.

SHE  
My hooves will clatter and my teeth will chatter.

HE  
Whoa!

SHE  
Will you curry me? Will you brush me just so?

HE  
I'll brush you all over, with steady, gentle strokes. I'll start with your withers, and oh, you're going to whinny.

SHE  
I don't think so.

HE  
Why not?

SHE  
You forgot the whip.

Oh, I'm prepared. HE

You are? SHE

Uh huh. Something very special, to straighten out your crooked little heart. HE

I can't hear you! SHE  
(SHE covers her ears.)

It's what you want. It's what you've been pining for. I'm going to make you feel like a real woman! HE

NO! SHE

Don't pretend you don't hear me. HE

I don't! SHE

Jenny you drive me crazy, but I still love you. HE

Really? SHE  
(uncovering ears)

It's a tick like Tourette's. HE

I make you swear? SHE

You make me twitch. HE

I do? SHE

You do. HE  
 SHE  
 (covering her ears and humming)  
 I can't hear you. HmMMMM...!  
 HE  
 Stop it!  
 SHE  
 La!  
 HE  
 Cut it out!  
 (Throws pillow at her. She throws it back.)  
 SHE  
 La La La!  
 HE  
 You want me to give up on you, is that it?  
 SHE  
 (humming louder)  
 HmMMMM!  
 HE  
 Cut it out! This is real life, babe, this is all we've got. You're born, you open your eyes, you learn to walk...  
 SHE  
 La!  
 HE  
 Momentum—that's what carries you for a long time, but then you look around, and you're not a kid anymore, and you're alone—or maybe you find someone.  
 SHE  
 La La!  
 HE  
 Maybe if there's some angel floating around looking out for you, you find somebody. Somebody special. And you don't let go of her, you don't let her slip away no matter how much she wants to go...

La La! SHE

Alright! Fine. You win. HE

Really? SHE

Congratulations. HE

What do you want to do? SHE

Why don't you tell me a bedtime story? You tell me a story and then I'll tell *you* a story. HE

OK, I can do that. (pause) Once upon a time, in a faraway kingdom, there were these two people, not so different from you and me. Except that he had secrets. SHE

How'd she know? HE

She could tell from the way he turned his face away from her when he slept. She could tell from the acid that sloshed in the pit of her belly and from her blistered heart. SHE

He knew her grief. He knew her sadness. HE

Uh-huh. When he was born he had a full set of teeth. Little silvery ones, like a zipper. Very sharp. So sharp that when he wanted to nurse, he hurt her. SHE

Who? HE

His mother. He chewed off his mother's nipple, like one of those pink erasers. SHE

If he hurt her it was a mistake. HE

SHE

I'm not talking about you, Rog. I'm talking about them.

HE

Them?

SHE

Yes. And these people-- they collected things, things, things, things--to fill up the void and they tried to be happy. The way trees are happy. Or like bedroom slippers are happy. Happy in the way of inanimate things.

HE

Then, one day he decides it's got to change.

SHE

It can't go on this way.

HE

So he takes her on a little trip, far away from the fucked up reality they have wrought. Back to the way it used to be between them before they started to snarl at each other like dogs.

SHE

Like mangy curs ...

HE

To celebrate their life together, which is precious to him above all other things.

SHE

But something is not right. They leave their regular life, and go to this strange room in this strange little hotel. A place where anything can happen. Urges that were lying dormant, libidinal, start to grow, watered by the solitude.

HE

Far, far away from everything.

SHE

At first, she thinks it's just that annoying sound the fan makes every other rotation, but then she really starts to feel it. Things can happen, things that never could happen at home.

HE

You're a very bad girl. Come here so I can spank you, you nasty girl!

SHE

No! This isn't where I get spanked. This is the room where I die!

HE

I'm going to tickle you 'til you beg me to stop, 'til you can't breathe, 'til you think you're going to die and maybe just maybe then I'll stop.

SHE

Oh!

HE

Uh-huh.

SHE

Stand up on the bed Rog. Please. Come on. I want you to look at me from the bed. Do I look dead?

HE

What are you doing down there?

SHE

Do I look dead?

HE

Stop it right now. It's enough.

SHE

Or what?

HE

Don't make me come after you.

SHE

I'm going to stay very still. Lie here like an alligator and keep my eyes shut 'til it's over.

HE

Open your eyes!

SHE

No!

HE

What the hell time is it anyway?  
(Looks at his watch.)

SHE

Hey! Come here! I need you to take a look. Please, Rog. Please.

HE  
No. I'm not playing anymore.

SHE  
Just for a minute. Stand up on the bed and squint. Tell me if I look dead.

HE  
You want to look dead?

SHE  
Uh-huh. Murdered.

HE  
Who murdered you? Me?

SHE  
Uh-huh. Do you want to kill me awake or asleep?

HE  
Well, asleep would be good. At least you'd shut up. But awake, is better. I'd do it with my hands. Hold you down, belly-to-belly, pin you down, and groan with you 'til you stop thrashing.

SHE  
Oh! Will it be painful?

HE  
Yes.

SHE  
Will...I like it?

HE  
Yes. I'll take you in my arms and extinguish you. Wipe you out entirely. That's what you want.

SHE  
To feel nothing.

HE  
Stop fooling around and get up.

SHE  
As soon as you look.

HE  
And then you'll get up?



Uh-huh. SHE

HE  
(HE stands up on bed)  
You look like somebody broke your neck.

Who did it? SHE

There was a guy hiding ... HE

Waiting in the dark. SHE

...He grabbed you by the hair and he pulled you down. And then he locked you in his arms like a cage. HE

I was fighting! But he held me down! SHE

He licked you all over. HE

Like a viper. SHE

Like a viper, and then he carved his initials into your breast. HE

I was begging! I was screaming, but nobody heard! SHE

You saw that he'd marked you forever as his. HE

How does he carve them? SHE

He has tools. HE

Oh! SHE

HE  
Now tell me you love me.

SHE  
No.

HE  
Tell me before it's too late.

SHE  
I can't.

HE  
Lie, make it up.

SHE  
If you could really see me—the way I am—you wouldn't want me at all, you'd be disgusted. Because I'm poisonous Rog, empty. No life can take in me. The only thing left is this unendurable emptiness and I can't stand it!

HE  
I know.

SHE  
I can't stand it anymore! I'm old, my eggs are defective my tubes are scarred, —I can't have a baby—And I see them everywhere, babies in the supermarket, babies in my dreams it tortures me, the pain is unendurable. I'm barren, I'm dead inside and nothing's going to fix me.  
(HE takes a small package out of his suitcase and hands it to her.)

HE  
Here.

SHE  
A present?

HE  
Open it.  
(She opens it)

SHE  
What is it?

HE  
A Leatherman. It's got seventeen tools. Two blades, one for cutting and one for sawing.  
(Opening Leatherman)  
You can do just about anything with it. I want to show you how it works.

I like it. It's very nice.

SHE

Uh huh.

HE

We could do a lot of things with one of these Leathermen.

SHE

Leatherman. One man many blades. And sometimes, you got to really think about which one to use. For a particular situation. What really works. What's the right thing to get the job done? It's not always what you expect, you can't plan how things are supposed to be.

HE

How are you planning to use it?

SHE

Many different ways.

HE

When you're done with me--what're you going to do with my body? Bury me under the floorboards?

SHE

Burn you. Sliver you up and burn you like a witch.

HE

Yes!

SHE

You want to feel pain? Real pain?

HE

Yes! Just get it over with!

SHE

Blade or saw?

HE

Either. Just do it!

SHE

It's what you want?

HE

Yes. SHE

This is ridiculous. HE  
(HE tosses Leatherman.)

SHE  
All plans and promises but in the end, nothing. This void. This bleating misery. Small demands, tiny desires, you turn joy into ashes you extinguish me, my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth!

Then shut up! HE

You...you suffocate me! You diminish me! SHE

Cut it out! HE

You—make me small and you bore me! SHE

I bore you? HE

Yes! SHE

What are you talking about? HE

B-o-r-e! SHE

You bitch! HE

You bore me! SHE

Shut the hell up! HE

Or what? What? SHE

You better just- HE

Come on. I don't feel anything for you. Make me feel something!  
(HE drags her up, they struggle.) SHE  
Hey! Stop it! Stop it! You're hurting me!  
(SHE bites him.)

Jesus, sonofabitch, you bit me!  
(Pins her down.) HE

Stop it! I'm going to scream!  
(SHE screams.) SHE

Shut up. HE

Or what? What? SHE

Just shut up! HE

I hate you! SHE

No you don't! HE

I hate you! SHE

Shut the fuck up! HE

Go ahead. Hurt me. SHE

You want me to? HE

SHE

Why don't you just try it?

(HE whips off the string of pearls she wears, breaking it.)

You broke my pearls!

HE

You're like a child. You think that if you die, whatever the fuck is wrong with you is going to end? That you get to start over with babies and daffodils? Dead is you rot! Dead is the end!

SHE

It's not worth it to feel this way!

HE

What about me? Don't I matter at all?

SHE

It's not about you! I can't make a baby!

HE

Then make something else!

SHE

I can't stand it! I see babies in strollers on the street and I just want to die...please, I want to die!

HE

Die and leave me? What we've had, what we've made means nothing to you?

SHE

Nothing!

HE

Don't I matter at all?

SHE

No!

HE

You really want to die?

SHE

Do it!

HE

I'm so sick of this.

SHE  
If you really love me, you'd kill me.

HE  
You want me to put you out of your misery?

SHE  
Yes!

HE  
You really want to die? You want to die?

SHE  
Yes!

(SHE approaches slowly, a stocking in her hand. He grabs it away from her, dragging her to him. Pushes her down. Kissing her neck, he wraps the stocking around it, pulls. She fights. He pins her down. She struggles, frees up a hand and hits him, scratching. He pins her down again, strangling her. SHE fights desperately. Then she goes limp.)

HE  
Jen? Jen?

(SHE moves, groans.)

Ah Jesus. Jesus. I never wanted to hurt you sweetheart. I wanted to surprise you. Make it beautiful like at the beginning.

(HE weeps.)

SHE  
I do love you.

HE  
Jenny? Oh Jenny listen to me...

SHE  
I'm o.k.

HE  
Don't turn away like that.

SHE  
You can't fix me.

HE  
I got you a baby.

(SHE pushes him away.)

Don't even pretend. SHE

She's coming. HE

Don't twist the knife. SHE

We'll put the cradle together and take her home, and then we'll paint clouds on her ceiling or the Chinese alphabet—whatever you want. We'll throw out all the stuff that's freaking you out, get furniture with round edges... HE

Stop it! SHE

You, me, one perfect little girl. HE

You're laughing at me. You hyena you're laughing at me I could rip out your throat! SHE

She's a heartbeat away. HE

A baby? Where would you get a baby? SHE

I had you cloned. HE

This is a mean game you son of a bitch!  
(SHE slaps him, hard. HE blocks her, holds her arm away.) SHE

Cloned. Your cheek, this little swab. It's still kind of experimental. HE

What are you talking about? SHE

The lab where they outsource the wombs it's about three miles away, just outside of Saugerties. HE



SHE  
You're crazy.

HE  
It doesn't always work out, that's why I didn't want to tell you.

SHE  
A clone?

HE  
She's a clone -- but really, she's more like a latter-day identical twin, that's what they said at the lab. And that's just the DNA because it is this really complex interaction between the genes and what happens to her, what's around her in the world, the way we raise her — the interplay between the environment and the DNA.

SHE  
Another me?

HE  
No! No way is she going to be you. She's not going to get her dog run over by her first boyfriend or be humiliated by her terrible sense of direction—well maybe she won't have a sense of direction, I don't know, but the point is that she will have a whole life of different experiences and that's going to mold her brain and her body even. She'll be her own separate person and that person needs your love. Without it she doesn't have a chance.

SHE  
Rog I can't play this game.

HE  
I'm not kidding!

SHE  
What are you talking about?

HE  
The baby.

SHE  
Not funny.

HE  
More like amazing.

SHE  
You had me cloned?

HE

Why not? What's so good about the regular way? It's so random. One little gene, you got a Mongoloid, another you get a concert pianist. This way, we know what we're getting.

SHE

What are you talking about!?!

HE

The baby.

SHE

Oh Rog. Not funny.

HE

More like amazing.

SHE

Stop it you're making it up.

HE

No I'm not. Want to hear how they do it?

(SHE nods.)

Basically, you take some woman's egg, then you use this little pipette to suck out the nucleus and you toss the rest. So then it's ready, like a blank blackboard.

SHE

Tabula rasa...

HE

Yes. Then they put one of your cells inside the... zona pellicuda, next to the egg. A little electroshock, and ta -da!

SHE

You're saying--you got me a baby?

HE

Grew you one.

SHE

Just like that?

HE

No. It was really hard. They didn't make any promises that it'd work out.

SHE

A clone? You got me a baby like what— instead of diamond studs? An anniversary present?

HE

For both of us. That's why we're here—close to the lab.

SHE

Oh? The lab delivers?

HE

Within ten miles.

SHE

Am I really supposed to believe this? A clone? You ordered her? Another human being? Just charged it to MasterCard and waited?

HE

Uh huh. She was really expensive.

SHE

Rog why did you get me that thing with seventeen blades?

HE

It's got a Phillips head. I brought it to put the cradle together.

SHE

What cradle?

HE

It's in the trunk.

SHE

Oh God. This is so crazy –

HE

She's amazing. Her skin—it's like yours but she's so new it's like she's translucent -- when the light is shining directly on her, you can see her little blue veins perfectly. The last time I went to the lab they let me touch her hand—and her fingers grabbed mine.

SHE

Wait a minute. You've been visiting her?

HE

Just to see how it was going.

SHE

So she's used to you. What about me? How's she going to know I'm her mother?

HE

Come on Jen— she's needs a mother, so you act like one and she's going to love you.

SHE

She will?

HE

They play some kind of chanting at the lab so they get used to the human voice but that's it, they don't believe in preprogramming.

SHE

Tell me more. Please.

HE

Well--first they do the nuclear transfer. And that's when it begins. Life kicks in. They take the embryo-tomorula -- that's what they're called -- and then they sort them out and take the best, the ones that are perfect. It doesn't always work but this time it did. We got lucky. It was meant to be.

(Caresses her.)

SHE

It was? Well then why couldn't we have a baby the normal way?

HE

And what's that? Mixing stuff up in a Petrie dish and shooting it up your cervix?

SHE

It seems so weird.

HE

It's not that weird. They have this whole floor with these artificial wombs. Clear, like plastic bubbles. But they're made of skin and you can see the placenta holding on at the top like this big bloody starfish. And then you see the babies, suspended, growing like ships in a bottle.

SHE

Wait a minute. Babies?

HE

They started with sixty-two fetuses from your cells.

SHE

*Sixty-two?!?*

HE

Yeah, freaky right? Like an army of you. But three months into it, there were four left.

Four?

SHE

Two had abnormal livers.

HE

Then there were two.

SHE

Two tiny little girls with perfect teeny hands, you could see them waving. I fell in love though the doctor told me not to get too attached...

HE

Ooooh---

SHE

Even with the same DNA they didn't seem exactly the same, maybe one got more sunlight, or got touched a little differently when they were putting her in the tank...

HE

What are you talking about?

SHE

Two babies in some kind of viscous liquid—all curled up but moving, you know? I kept thinking they both had your DNA, but they were different.

HE

Floating, me and not me.

SHE

We lost one. I wanted to tell you.

HE

Oh my God.

SHE

But we still have one, and that's all we need, one perfect little girl.

HE

Really?

SHE

Really. Here in minutes.

HE

SHE

In minutes? If she really comes—If I even look at her I'll be trapped forever!

HE

Oh my God.

SHE

Does she even have a name?

HE

Jill would be nice.

SHE

Jill? Are you serious? This is real and important and forever. Your name walks in front of you and people expect things when they hear a name—you have to be really careful. Nothing that's too strange but then if it's too common it'll sound like you picked it up in a toilet stall—Oh my God it has to be right at six and at sixty, the wrong name and she's cooked from the start. She'll end up a librarian or homeless in Los Vegas!

HE

Sarah then.

SHE

Sarah? My mother's name? Oh my God, this baby is my mother!

HE

What are you talking about?

SHE

So, now I get to raise my mom, bathe her, sooth her, feed her, give her foot massages with pink baby cream, give her everything she never gave me—

HE

She's not *your mother*. She's a whole different person.

SHE

Well I can't do it.

HE

What?

SHE

I...I'm not ready. I haven't had time to get used to her, morning sickness and all those little karate chops from the inside—and what about her? She's going to be terrified-- because I'm terrified -- and she'll catch it from me like bird flu and then she'll never feel safe ...

HE

Stop it.

SHE

She was never inside me Rog— don't you see we won't know each other's rhythms or... or temperaments... she won't know me she won't even recognize my voice, she'll think she's been kidnapped!

HE

Take it down a notch.

SHE

Down a notch? You don't even get another person a dog without asking!

HE

I couldn't ask you. What if it hadn't worked out?

SHE

Oh sweetheart. We have to give her back.

HE

Give her back? Are you insane?

SHE

Who's insane? You think I'd want to raise myself? I mean how terrifying is that? Even if I wanted to ---I'll end up doing her irreparable damage.

HE

Jesus Christ!

SHE

What if she's self-destructive? Oh my God. Who would be running the show?

HE

You!

SHE

Oh my God I'm so completely unprepared!

(Doorbell rings)

(HE jumps up.)

HE

Yes!

(Takes money out of wallet for tip. Opens door offstage. Carries in large picnic basket, places it on the floor. Starts to open it. SHE blocks him.)

Does this mean? SHE

Uh huh. HE

Really? SHE

Uh huh. HE

If you open it, and I see her that's it—I'm hers for life. SHE

HE  
You look at her and you're going to fall in love. That's how it is; it's in the programming. You're gonna look at the her, this little bit of humanity, another light shining, and you're gonna be amazed. (Going to the basket, hand on the lid) Ready?

SHE  
No! Oh my God, I feel her in my body-- I feel her breathing—she's here, she's really here.

HE  
Uh huh.  
(Kneels. Starts to open the basket)

SHE  
Don't!

HE  
(Getting up)  
Why not?

SHE  
Who is she Rog? What is she--

HE  
She's from you but not you, not you at all.

SHE  
Back. Return her.

HE  
You're kidding, right?



SHE

No.

HE

Let me get this straight. You beg, you moan, you pray and sacrifice to some seven-armed fertility goddess. What else? You put potatoes under the bed and stand on you head after we make love. Can you imagine how that makes me feel?

SHE

I never said it was your fault! I never even thought it!

HE

And now the world changes, it rotates on its axis and we have a baby! I made it happen and you don't want her?

SHE

I want a baby, just not *this* baby!

HE

This is the baby we got, now get with the program!

SHE

I don't want a clone!

HE

For Christ sake, she's a *baby*.

SHE

She comes from a lab.

HE

She comes from my love for you.

SHE

You purchased her.

HE

For love! Can't you understand?

SHE

You did it to trap me.

HE

Trap you? Look at me! Find some scrap of hope, some scrap of love--

SHE

How can I take care of her? Me? I don't trust myself and the world is just too dangerous. Evil is loose in the world, weapons of mass destruction and chemical warfare, fanatics pretending they're pregnant ready to blow themselves up to smithereens. And even if I keep her from blinding herself with the Clorox under the sink there are still accidents, she could swallow a balloon or choke on popcorn or turn into one of those adolescents who takes animal trances and drives off a bridge—

HE

You're gonna feel a joy that's like nothing else.

SHE

How would you know?

HE

Look at her.

(SHE shakes her head shutting her eyes)

Look at our baby!

(Baby cries. SHE cowers.)

SHE

(opens her eyes)

I already know what she looks like!

HE

The first moment I saw you --you had your back turned but I had this weird feeling like I knew you, like it was meant to be. And then you turned and looked at me and in that split second I committed to you, all I wanted to do was make you happy. I put my heart in your hands my beating heart--I never looked at another woman again-- but it was never enough for you. Nothing I do matters; this baby doesn't matter I don't fucking matter!

SHE

Don't be like this!

(HE gets up for his shoes)

HE

I need some air.

SHE

Stay with me. Please. You can't leave me with—

HE

You'll be fine.

SHE

You're not really going are you?

HE

You're never going to change.

SHE

I'm changing all the time. The baby—she'll change me.

HE

The baby? You don't even want her. I used to think if I could just get it right, whatever it was—but I get it now, the light bulb finally went off. How stupid am I, what was I thinking, make you happy? It's never going to happen it's like trying to empty the ocean with my fingers. I'm done trying, Jen.

SHE

You don't really mean it--

HE

I need a walk.

SHE

Stay with me.

(SHE begins to kiss him. HE pulls away.)

HE

Not now...

(HE removes her hand moving toward the door)

SHE

No!

(HE takes her hands off)

Please don't go. I love you I do love you---at least take the baby!

HE

Let go! If I stay—someone's going to get hurt.

(SHE tries to hold him)

Let go of me!

(HE shakes her off, goes to the door and leaves. SHE cries. BABY starts to cry. SHE stops crying, BABY stops. SHE creeps toward the basket slowly, opens it, looks in mesmerized.)

SHE

There you are. Oh! Look at you, all curled up like a funny little snail. Where did you really come from baby? Were you really made just for me? But you look like a baby, you even smell like a baby (sniffing) like... a day at the beach or a crocus. Can we do it? Oh! You opened your eyes! Hello. Welcome to the world. You're so beautiful. Perfect. New.

(Reaches into basket, touches the baby)

SHE (Cont.)

Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you—Happy Birthday Dear...  
(SHE takes a deep breath in.)

(Blackout)

END OF ACT ONE

## ACT II

Setting: Twenty years later. The same room, the same B & B. A large ugly lamp has been added and one wall has been painted beige.

At Rise: A man and a woman enter. HE carries two small suitcases. SHE carries a fabric bag. HE puts down the suitcases, looking around uneasily.

It has this weird, sanitized smell... SHE

Too much room freshener. HE

Like it's covering something rotten. SHE

Musty. HE

The sound of the fan like a dying mouse. SHE

Let's go to a real hotel. HE

A real hotel? SHE

Room service and real food, breakfast in bed, with a spa, you can swim in the pool. You can have oatmeal. HE

With berries? SHE

You can eat it in bed. HE

Mmmm nice. But no. I can't. SHE

(SHE removes an urn from the fabric bag, placing it carefully on a bedside table.)

Thank you for coming.

HE

I'm happy to be anywhere with you. Could be Newark.

(HE takes off his coat, hangs it on chair then HE takes off her coat, turns off the light, takes her hand, leads her to the window, and puts his arms around her from behind.)

SHE

Hold me tight.

(Sounds of wind in trees)

HE

Listen to those trees.

SHE

Like an ocean of dark lapping all around us.

(SHE listens.)

HE

Every bit of you gets polluted in the City. You can't even tell if it's day or night, you're like an animal living in a cage of lights.

SHE

That's me.

HE

Kiss me.

(HE flicks on the light. They kiss. She starts to unpack.)

You bring something special to wear?

SHE

Want to see?

(SHE holds up glam dress.)

HE

Nice. Put it on.

SHE

Now?

HE

Uh huh. It'll look great at the reception.

SHE

Oh, so that's it, we're playing *reception*?

HE  
Yeah. So get that dress on.

SHE  
Well OK I guess-- wait a minute.  
(SHE exits to bathroom. He gets urn and moves it to the windowsill.  
Stretches out on the bed. She re-enters.)  
What do you think?

HE  
You look gorgeous.

SHE  
Thanks.

HE  
Your legs look really great. Give me a twirl.  
(SHE twirls.)  
Nice. There's definitely gonna be dancing at this reception.

SHE  
Dancing?

HE  
Dancing and cake with lots of that thick, sweet icing.

SHE  
Mmmm. Vanilla icing.

HE  
I'm gonna smear you with it and lick it off

SHE  
Later.

HE  
Come here, babe.

SHE  
No. I don't want to play *that*.

HE  
Let's dance. I'll teach you the foxtrot.

SHE  
The foxtrot?

HE  
 There's always the foxtrot at weddings.

SHE  
 I can't dance.

HE  
 It'll be fun. I'm the Best Man and the Best Man's definitely got to dance.

SHE  
 You're the Best Man?

HE  
 Of course.

SHE  
 And who'm I?

HE  
 Whoever you want to be.

SHE  
 Well, alright then.  
 (SHE goes to him. HE hums her a song. They dance. SHE quickly gets the steps. HE dips her, dips her again)

You're a natural, babe.

SHE  
 What is it about hotel rooms? They're such a turn on. The anonymity of someone else's choices, but still that hint of other bodies, like you're sleeping inside another caterpillar's cocoon.

HE  
 Hey. Let's get married.

SHE  
*Again?*

HE  
 Why not?

SHE  
 What? Are you crazy? I'd rather play Japanese businessman and hooker.



HE

No pressure, no presents, no people.  
(takes her in his arms.)

SHE

(pushing away)  
So, a man like you must be from, what do you think, baby? Okinawa? Oh, I can tell from the way you hold your spine so straight, and the thick muscles of your arms you are a man of Okinawa.

HE

Look, I know marriage upsets you.

SHE

Sugoku suki! You want I take off my shirt? You give me five dollars.

HE

I only have a twenty.

SHE

You give me wallet.  
(HE laughs. SHE gets urn from the windowsill, puts it on table beside bed.)

SHE

She was so tough on me. But she was still my mother. She took care of me. When I had my tonsils out, she fed me teaspoons of vanilla ice cream, and it was my mom who held me after my turtle died, and planted a pansy on its grave.

HE

Sorry I never met her.

SHE

She would have liked you.

HE

We'll scatter her-- where do you think? In the rose bushes by the door or maybe the woods?

SHE

The woods.

HE

Then one third in the Mississippi.

SHE

Close to Baton Rouge.

Then? HE

One third to some P.O. box. SHE

Fifty-fifty would be a whole lot easier. HE

She was never easy. SHE

Neither are you. But you're worth it. HE

Am I? SHE

You're perfect. HE  
(SHE sits down on the floor.)

Do you think they ever vacuum? SHE

You look really pretty. HE

Do I? SHE

Yeah. A perfect pretend bride. HE  
(HE gets down on one knee and mimes presenting her with a ring.)  
Will you be my wife? To care for in sickness and death, through jitters and cosmic insecurity?

Cut it out! SHE

Will you? HE

Get up! Right now! SHE

HE

What? You don't like the ring?

SHE

Stop it! This is not fun, not fun at all. And I'm very sad today.

HE

You want to contemplate your fate without chaining it to the ankle of a spouse?

SHE

That's it.

HE

Without jumping into a lake and sucking in water 'til your lungs bust and you're dead?

SHE

Uh huh.

HE

It's dark in the water.

SHE

So very dark.

HE

The water's so murky you can't find the surface, you try not to panic but the carbon dioxide's seeping in and the cells in your brain are pinging as they explode-- you can't resist! You breathe in water--and you die.

SHE

That's how it happens?

HE

I like the idea of 'til death do us part.

SHE

Well, that could happen anytime.

(SHE goes over to the bed, kicks off her shoes, plunks down with a book.)

HE

Hey. Talk to me.

SHE

Hmmm?

HE  
Tell me the story of the beginning.

SHE  
Again?

HE  
Yeah. You came to me...

SHE  
I need to be quiet. Well—Ok.  
(shutting book, her fingers keeping the place)

HE  
You came to me.

SHE  
The lecture was over. I noticed your raincoat, the color of persimmons. I crossed the floor, I felt like I was sleepwalking...

HE  
Hallucinating....

SHE  
Inexorable but real.

HE  
You were wearing that hat.

SHE  
You couldn't see my face.

HE  
Mysterious.

SHE  
My hair was crushed.

HE  
I asked you to lunch.

SHE  
To lunch!

HE  
And then I kissed you in the car.

I kissed you back. I was drinking you in. SHE

You wanted me. HE

I did. I do. SHE

Really? HE

Really. Now can I read? SHE

A little more. HE

Shivering. I thought I had the flu. SHE (sighing)

You did have the flu. HE  
(SHE picks up the book.)

Hey, what are you doing? HE

Reading. SHE

Well...what is it? HE  
(SHE shows him book, returns to reading.)  
*The Hungry Soul?* Sounds intense.

Uh huh. SHE

Put it down. HE

Hmmm? SHE

HE  
Put it down!  
(SHE puts it down.)  
You think you're too smart for me?

SHE  
What?

HE  
Think you're so smart that your genes would be degraded by co-mingling with mine? Well maybe you don't understand the need for a little injection of mutt energy into the gene pool.

SHE  
Co-mingling? What are you talking about?

HE  
You think I'm too old for kids?

SHE  
For Christ's sake, let it lie!

HE  
Let it lie? Like a sleeping dog? Or would that be me?

SHE  
Come on! You're not a dog; you're my dearest most beloved.

HE  
Pat my head.

SHE  
Uh uh.

HE  
Come on baby. Rub my belly.

SHE  
I can't believe you started that kid stuff again.

HE  
What could I have been thinking?

SHE  
I don't know.

HE

So you don't want me to knock you up, hey I'm Ok with that.

SHE

Good.

HE

I'll get you more jewelry. Maybe a whopper diamond....

SHE

I don't want jewelry.

HE

We can travel. We can get silverware—you choose, cloth napkins...

SHE

A croquet set...

HE

White picket fence, no mortgage. Settle down and have a good life.

SHE

You want sexy *kyaba kura*?

(SHE starts to slither over to him.)

HE

Cut it out.

(SHE caresses his toes.)

SHE

You want I get your slippers?

(HE laughs. They laugh.)

HE

We really fit, babe. We lock together like some kind of strange crystals, the male and the female, the yin and the yang...

SHE

Oh for Christ's sake. I don't want to be the yin to your yang. I want to be my own separate self.

HE

Don't I give you plenty of space?

SHE

(lying down on bed)

First it's marriage and pretty soon you're going to want me to take your name, to be that kind of woman, subservient and subsumed like butter.

HE

I'd never be that kind of husband.

SHE

Husband! Even the sound of it!

HE

Husbands are OK, husbands take care, like-- you know "to husband."

SHE

Like crops and soil rotation, something dirty and fecund.

HE

Get off that bed!

SHE

I need to relax!

HE

Get up! Get the fuck out of that bed!

SHE

What's going on with you?

HE

I don't know.

(HE flops down on the bed beside her. She strokes his hair)

SHE

Are you upset, sweetie?

HE

Yes.

SHE

(Kisses the top of his head.)

There's something weird about this place.

(SHE strokes him.)

I want to talk to you about something.



HE  
So, what is it?

SHE  
Mmmm. No. Maybe now's not the time.

HE  
Come on. What's on your mind?

SHE  
A lot of stuff.

HE  
Like?

SHE  
I don't know, the source of the Nile, the circumference of my big toe—everything, the way I see things, the colors behind my eyelids when I shut my eyes.

HE  
Tell me.

SHE  
You really don't want to know.

HE  
I want to know.

SHE  
What I'm not telling you is so egregiously enormous, can't we know what we know, on our little islands of knowing and be content?

HE  
Stop bullshitting!  
(SHE gets up slaps down book, pacing.)

SHE  
I'm on the cliff; don't you get it? I have to keep my balance and it's not easy. It's not easy to get up in the morning and look in the mirror and smile, greet the day like I know what the fuck I'm doing on earth and then what? Go to work and eat sandwiches and send e-mails and hope for the best? The way we live, mellifluous, sweet and thick with affection, maybe even love--but who knows? Who knows what you think when you're playing darts or driving or looking out a window into the dark? Or when we make love, what do you think about then?

HE  
You really want to know?

SHE

No! But when you look into the eyes of another person, even someone you think you love, how can you know that you're really understood?

HE

You're exhausting me and we haven't even gotten ready for dinner.

SHE

There's something you don't know about me.

HE

What? You've been cheating on me?

SHE

No! Does it always have to be about sex?  
(HE thinks about this.)

HE

Yes.

SHE

How could I possibly want anyone else? You satisfy me in every way, I come and come for you.

HE

I want to live with you, I want to die holding your hand, I want my ashes mingled with yours and thrown into the ocean.

SHE

Look, you can trust me, to take care of you when you're sick, to feed you healthy food and soothe you when things rough you up.

HE

Tell me what's going on.

SHE

Nothing!

HE

There's something you're not telling me.

SHE

There isn't anything to tell!

HE

Who is it? You fucking your boss?

SHE

Are you insane? I can't stand the man. He eats with his mouth open. And he's got this bulging walrus belly; I bet he couldn't screw anybody without stirrups and a ladder!

HE

Well, it's someone, all right. That conference when you didn't answer your cell?

SHE

I fell asleep early!

HE

Is his dick bigger than mine?

SHE

You're being ridiculous-

HE

Is he younger than me? I know he's richer, that's for damn sure--and he drives some fucking German car, it's a shift, right?

SHE

Don't be an asshole. I love *you*. Just calm down.

HE

Calm down? You want me to calm down? I can do that.

(HE sits in meditation pose, closes his eyes.)

SHE

Well, this is a really mature way to be dealing with this. You don't even meditate, meditation makes you twitch-- you told me that. You're acting like a maniac, and all this jealousy? There's nothing going on, so help me God!

(SHE pounds on his back. HE doesn't budge.)

You're making me feel so small, like I'm going to disappear. Do you want to make me disappear? Ooooh. That's what's going on-- you want to break up and you don't have the guts. This is all a bullshit sham, it's always been a sham, the way you held me at night like you'll take care of me forever that's the way you've held every woman you ever slept with!

HE

So now it's on me? Wow. You start this whole thing, you get me going and then you blame me? I mean what the fuck, is it my fault that you don't trust me? Well I don't think so.

SHE

I just can't.

HE

Oh, I think you can.

I'm scared everything's going to change.

SHE

For Christ's sake tell me!

HE

Alright! I'm not a regular person.

SHE

What does that mean?

HE

I wasn't born.

SHE

What?

HE

I'm a clone.

SHE

That's a ridiculous game, I'm not playing that.

HE

A clone. A replicant. A freak of nature!

SHE

Really.

HE

It's true. My mother told me everything before she died.

SHE

And you believed her?

HE

Yes! I know it's true, I can feel it.

SHE

Feel what?

HE

SHE  
Shreds of memory, flashes of a life that isn't mine. It used to scare me witless. And I always knew at some primitive level that I couldn't tell anyone. That was really bad, I mean, if you're a little kid and you have to keep secrets it makes a dark cave in your heart and it's there—you

SHE (Cont.)

know it's there-- you can always go in there to hide. Just curl up in the dark by yourself and wait for it to be over. I try not to do that with you, I try so hard to be with you. (beat) They grew me in a lab in Saugerties. I'm a science experiment with breasts and breath and hope and dreams.

HE

This lab was-

SHE

Near here, before it was outlawed.

HE

Outlawed? I remember something.

SHE

Most of the kids died young. They couldn't figure out why. There was a lot of litigation...

HE

That's crazy.

SHE

A lot of us couldn't handle it. When you first find out—well it's insane. You don't want to believe it, but you feel it, you feel it in your body and you know it's true. Then you want to die, to get it over with, you want to obliterate yourself as one last act of independence, the clone suicide rate is 20%. One out of five. I'm strong but I know I'll die young that's for sure. Most of us don't make it past forty.

HE

Forty? You don't know that, we all die sure, but when—keeps the excitement in it I mean isn't this an interesting life? Isn't it full of surprises? Everything. You rub mint between your fingers and...and...the aroma, you got to be grateful you exist.

SHE

I didn't choose to exist.

HE

Who does? You think you fly around the window and make some decision to come in?

SHE

I know you don't choose your mother. But my mother bought me.

HE

She must have really wanted you.

SHE

I guess. Anyway, she found this place in Saugerties that did it, you know, cloning. Somehow

SHE (Cont.)

she got the money together and she did it. When I was little she'd say I was made of stardust and love. The guy—the husband—he didn't want a baby, so when I showed up that was it. I think my mom always thought he'd come back.

HE

She said that?

SHE

He left and she never saw him again.

HE

Wow that's some story.

SHE

He was a dick, he smelled his first diaper and *boom* he was out of there.

HE

But you're fine, it's not like you've got PTSD.

SHE

If I'm so fine why'm I with an old guy like you?

HE

Because you love me.

SHE

Oh. Right. But now you get why I can't have a baby.

HE

Not really.

SHE

I'm going to die young and I'm not going to abandon my baby the way he did...

HE

He couldn't stay.

SHE

How would you know?

HE

What happened before is over. Done. And you can look over your shoulder babe, all you want, but it's just getting further and further away. And maybe you think you remember but pretty soon you're just telling yourself a story of how it was, you can't smell it or touch it—but if you're lucky you get to start again--

SHE

Really? Start again? Well it's not that way for me. Not at all. It's with me always, this terrible secret eating away at me. Sometimes I forget but then it's back—it's in my brain and my blood in my gut. This horror like the me who wants vanilla ice cream and hates egg salad—none of this is really me because there is no me, it's all her and I can't cut her out or tear her out she's in my cells. It's a terrible thing to do, to make someone. Almost a person, not quite human. My mother, she was so screwed up—and then my dad walked out. She never got over it, he broke her heart. Then it was just the two of us. So screwed up. Maybe the lab people did it for the money or to fuck up evolution, I don't know. And the parents, or whatever, nobody thought about us, the clones. They didn't care what happened to us. God, it's so wrong and complicated, who gets cloned, the rich or people whose kids die? If you've got the money can you make more than one? And then what happens, you have clones for spare parts or to clean the house? Is it even fair to anybody? To humanity! The earth's collapsing under all the people. There's going to be protein wars and droughts.

HE

You almost had me going there.

SHE

I'm not playing.

HE

Stand up baby, come on.

(SHE stands reaches out her arms for him.)

Hold your arms straight by your side.

(SHE does.)

Now lean over, from the waist. Stay stiff.

(Comes up behind her. She begins to straighten.)

Don't move!

(HE begins a winding motion at her back.)

Now straighten up.

SHE

What are you ...?

HE

I'm turning the key. I'm winding you up.

(SHE straightens up.)

Now keep your legs straight—do not bend your knees--OK now march! March! Swing your arms! That's it!

(SHE marches.)

SHE

You're totally crazy!

HE

You're not a clone, you're a doll, a mechanical doll!

SHE

Fuck you! How can you be so cruel?

HE

OK, so you're a clone, like that sheep...

SHE

Don't fool around. This is real. This is my reality, my day- to-day reality and it's like a prison. My body is a prison and even my spirit, is it mine? I don't know and it's unbearable. I'm a real live sentient woman with her rationality and irrationalities. I'm not a robot-- I'm a clone! A clone of my mother!

HE

You don't even look like her.

SHE

How would you know? You never met her.

HE

That picture in your bedroom. You don't look anything like her.

SHE

I try so hard to be different.

HE

You don't even talk like her.

SHE

What? How would you...?

HE

Do you love me?

SHE

I do love you. I mean it feels like love, but I don't know if it's real. Am I real? The only thing that feels real is pain.

HE

Oh Christ.

SHE

It's so hard. I try, I really do, to invent myself every day, to wake up and be myself but I feel her leaking in. In the mirror, I see her walking toward me. I mean, look at me! I've got her body; I



SHE (Cont.)

got her spatulate fingers. I'm so scared I'm going to die young. So many of us did. I'll never have a chance to do anything, to figure out what my life's about, to really love, to go through the ups and downs, to become a real person.

HE

Hey. Shhh baby, you're fine, you're like everybody else.

SHE

No I'm not! I'm not like other people and I'm not like her! Though sometimes I feel her inhabiting me, like she's inside me. I have flashes of memory that are so vivid it's like I'm living it—like I've lived her life and now there's my life, but it's all jumbled up with hers and I can't tell anybody. You have to be very clever to hide what you are, even if you don't know what that is. (beat) I've always liked older men, what do you think of that?

HE

I think, lucky for me.

SHE

Always men a lot too old. I'd look at them and think, your woman is really lucky.

HE

Uh huh.

SHE

What about you?

HE

What about me what?

SHE

Younger women. Much younger women.

HE

Look, I wouldn't care if you were old—

SHE

Mature.

HE

I'm in love with you clone no clone, old or young, it doesn't matter. Sure I love your ass but that's not it, it's more like I was put on earth to love you, I just hadn't met you yet. I kept looking, I tried to make it happen, but it just didn't work out, so I had to keep on looking. And it was tough to hang in there, I got lonely and I felt in my gut that it was never going to happen for me. Plenty of sex and a lot of laughs but never—when I kissed you I knew.

SHE  
Knew what?

HE  
I recognized you.

SHE  
I won't survive without you.

HE  
You're different. You're nothing like her.

SHE  
How would you know?

HE  
I know.

(SHE looks at him strangely.)

Ok. Ok. It's going to be ok, it's gonna be great, you'll see. You're you. When I touch you that's your skin I feel, velvety and warm.

(HE reaches, touches her.)

SHE  
I feel your fingers on me and I forget everything else.

HE  
When you moan in your sleep and I stroke your back you quiet down, you let me comfort you.  
(HE strokes her back.)

SHE  
You do.

HE  
She was wrong to make you come here.

SHE  
You don't know that.

HE  
Look, we're all witless tools trying to dick with the machine, the God machine that makes us and spits us out. There's no reason to believe that you're really very different. I'm OK with this. This clone thing. The two of us are something different, different time, different places. So what if your DNA's like hers? You aren't. We can make something great together, we can sleep under the quilt all tangled up and keep the lights on when we're doing lewd acts and eat every meal in bed; we can do whatever the fuck we want.

I need to ask you something. SHE

You can ask me anything. HE

Why do you always hide your passport and your driver's license? SHE

I like to keep my important documents together. HE

And why's that? SHE

I'm a careful guy. HE

Let me see your wallet. SHE

Think I forgot it. HE

Think again. SHE

(SHE goes over to his jacket and pulls out his wallet.)  
What will I find inside?

Give me that. HE

(SHE dances around holding his wallet up in the air.)

Uh uh. SHE

I'm not fooling around! HE

Hey! SHE

Come on. HE

How old are you really? SHE

Just give it back! HE

What am I going to find inside? A picture of your wife? SHE

What does it matter? I love you... HE

Shall I look? SHE

No! HE  
(SHE wiggles away, opens wallet and pulls out photo)

That woman—she's— SHE  
(HE rips it up)  
Oh my God, the P.O box... it was you.

And I love you... HE

No! SHE

I loved her, sure, but I couldn't ... one of us would have gotten killed; and then I met you and... HE

You wanted a newer better version. That's why you deserted us, you son of a bitch. SHE

No! HE

Where were you? Waiting for me to get ripe? SHE

For God's sake. She moved away. And then I met this beautiful young woman. HE

SHE

I'm your daughter.

HE

No! You're not my daughter. Not one cell. You're your own amazing self and when I met you -

SHE

You selfish son of a bitch, you left us, I never had a father at all, do you know what that's like?

HE

(grabbing her)

Listen to me. I swear I didn't plan it. You just walked into that room and I saw you and it was love at first sight. You can't plan that, it just smacks you in the face.

SHE

The perfect woman?

HE

Perfect for me.

(HE tries to kiss her. They struggle. She breaks away.)

SHE

You want the perfect woman? She's right here---

(SHE opens closet and takes out the urn, starts prying it open.)

HE

What are you doing? Are you crazy?

(HE tries to pull the urn away from her.)

SHE

*Yes! Just like her!*

(the urn opens. SHE grabs a handful of ash and throws it in his face. HE jerks the urn out of her hands, restraining her with one hand.)

Let go of me!

(the urn falls and smashes.)

Oh my God!

HE

I know.

SHE

It's some kind of cosmic rape.

HE

You wanted me.

But I didn't know!

SHE

You felt it. As soon as I saw you—

HE

Don't.

SHE

My finger brushed the back of your hand—

HE

No! (covering ears)

SHE

I didn't know who you were!

HE

You could have stayed with Mom and me but you didn't, you went off on your journey, the journey that is your life and you didn't give a fuck what happened to anybody else and now you circle back on me and Mom...

SHE

She's not any part of this, she's gone.

HE

But I feel her! She's right here!

SHE

Maybe so. Maybe there's some energy floating round the universe, but the person? She's not here, she's dead. We're gonna scatter her, we're going to watch the ashes float and settle and let go.

HE

You miss her too!

SHE

We had our time together, we weren't making each other happy, but with you it's different.

HE

Because she raised me with so much love— (beat) Oh my God, you planned it!

SHE

I planned it? I had no clue, so help me God. All I wanted to do was to make that woman happy.

HE (Cont.)

I took out the garbage, I gave her foot massages and played her weird games; she said she was dying for a baby, so I got her one. Look, we were broken; we were splashing around in the gutter climbing up on each other's backs to get out. Was I stupid to think a baby would make a difference? Well I had to try, so yea, I got that baby. You. I got you I wasn't stupid, I knew the odds, I just had hope you know? I wanted to give her a family, to be a family with her, I was crazy about her, but she was just plain crazy—push you off the cliff crazy. So I left. That's what happened. I said I'm going out for cigarettes and I never went back.

SHE

You didn't even say goodbye.

HE

Look it isn't easy walking away even if everything's gone to shit. You love her, you hang in there until somebody pries your fingers off the ledge. She wanted me to go, she never wanted to be a wife she wanted to be a mother. So, I gave her that and I gotta believe she was happier. She was, look at you. She reached inside and found some kind of love; that was never going to happen with me. And then years later there you were like a miracle. A complete surprise in my relatively miserable existence just shining there. And you wanted me too, I couldn't believe it. So you may think I'm making it up like it's insane but I swear I didn't know and if I felt anything—hey everybody's got a little history rattling round in there—I didn't know anything until I saw that picture. And even then—but by then it was too late. Call me a coward, but it's not what you think.

SHE

She gave me everything, everything she had, she loved me more than herself.

HE

Maybe so.

SHE

I would have never come near you!

HE

What we have, what you feel for me, it's nothing you can ever have with anyone else—

SHE

If you'd told me-

HE

Then we would never have gone to Iceland and seen the Aurora Borealis.

SHE

That trip.

That night. HE

The sky was shimmering. SHE

It was like the world was beginning again. HE

You curled around me. SHE

I held you close— HE

You kept me warm. SHE

HE  
The light came pouring through that tent flap and suddenly you were bathed in green, you'd transformed into someone I'd never seen before but I recognized you, though everything else was changing.

SHE  
The light was so strange and the sky was crackling.

HE  
I held on no matter how much you changed.

SHE  
I wasn't afraid.

HE  
Everything I'd thought mattered was completely inconsequential. I wanted to fall on my knees but I couldn't because I was holding you.

SHE  
Then we were quiet together.

HE  
Hushed.

SHE  
It was dark, so very dark.



HE

We lay there under that inky blanket of sky and we kept each other warm.  
(they lie together on the bed.)

HE

I saw that picture, the one in your bedroom. It didn't look like her at all, she'd gotten so old -- when I saw that picture I didn't feel anything. It was like a postcard from another life.

(SHE turns and meets his eyes. HE curls around her, spooning without touching. SHE reaches back and takes his hand. They bend around each other.)

“Blackout”

END OF PLAY