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Play it Again, Sam

A ROMANTIC COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

by Woody Allen

A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION



New York Hollywood London Toronto

SAMUELFRENCH.COM

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PLAY IT AGAIN, SAM was first presented by David Merrick, in association with Jack Rollins and Charles Joffe, at the Broadhurst Theatre, N.Y.C., Feb. 12, 1969. The setting was by William Ritman, costumes by Ann Roth, and lighting by Martin Aronstein. Director of the play was Joseph Hardy.

CAST

(In Order of Appearance)

ALLAN FELIX	<i>Woody Allen</i>
NANCY	<i>Sheila Sullivan</i>
BOGEY	<i>Jerry Lacy</i>
DICK CHRISTIE	<i>Anthony Roberts</i>
LINDA CHRISTIE	<i>Diane Keaton</i>
SHARON	<i>Barbara Brownell</i>
SHARON LAKE	<i>Diana Walker</i>
GINA	<i>Jean Fowler</i>
VANESSA	<i>Cynthia Dalbey</i>
GO-GO GIRL	<i>Lee Anne Fahey</i>
INTELLECTUAL GIRL	<i>Barbara Press</i>
BARBARA	<i>Barbara Brownell</i>

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE

SCENE 1: *A late summer afternoon.*

SCENE 2: *Later that night.*

ACT TWO

Several weeks later.

ACT THREE

The following morning.

The entire action of the play takes place in the apartment of Allan Felix on West 10th Street in New York.

Play It Again, Sam

ACT ONE

SCENE 1

The house LIGHTS DIM and we hear the voices of Humphrey Bogart and Mary Astor in a scene from "The Maltese Falcon." It is the scene at the end where Bogart is going to turn her in despite the fact he loves her and she can't believe it. Presently the CURTAIN rises on ALLAN FELIX, watching the movie on his TV set in the living room of his apartment on 10th Street, between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, in New York City. The living room is one of three rooms, the other two being a small but adequate bedroom and small but adequate kitchen, both of which are offstage in opposite directions. U. C. there is a door which is the entrance to the apartment and which opens right in on the living room. The living room itself is a reasonably spacious room, typical of the type found in old village brownstones; cheery with good-sized windows that overlook a tree-lined block from the second floor. It has a wood-burning fireplace and is furnished with a youthful warmth that includes books and records, a large photo of Bogart, comfortable chairs and an inviting sofa. It is an apartment that rents for about a hundred and sixty-five dollars a month and has been furnished and lived in for the past two years by the Felixes, a young married couple. ALLAN FELIX is a slight, bespectacled young man of about twenty-eight or nine who looks as if he just stepped out of a Jules

Feiffer cartoon. He earns a decent living as a writer of articles and reviews, some literary but mostly cinematic, as he is a film buff, for a little intellectual film magazine. He daydreams of someday doing something important in either literature or film. ALLAN daydreams a lot—in fact, his mind is a hyperactive mass of preposterously neurotic contradictions that make the world a little too much for him. He is nervous, shy, insecure, and has been in and out of psychotherapy for years.

At rise ALLAN is alone in the swivel chair watching "The Maltese Falcon" on a tiny TV which sits on the D. R. hassock. The film is in the final sequence wherein Bogey tells Mary Astor that he is going to turn her in. The sound track precedes the Curtain for a line or two. . . . He watches a bit after the curtain is up, sighs, crosses to the set and turns it off.

ALLAN. How does he do it? What's the secret? It's the movies that's the secret. Maybe if I took two more aspirin I'd feel better. That's 2—4—6 aspirin. (*He picks up empty aspirin bottle on coffee table.*) I'm turning into an aspirin junkie. Next thing you know I'll be boiling the cotton at the top of the bottle to get the extra. What's the matter with me—why can't I relax? I never should have signed those papers. (*He sits on the swivel chair hassock.*) Let her take me to court. Two years of marriage down the drain . . . like that. . . . I couldn't believe it when she told me two weeks ago. She was like a stranger, not like my wife, like a total stranger.

(*DREAM LIGHT in the office area. NANCY appears from U. R. C. slot, in wrapper, drying her hair with a towel, and crosses to D. R. end of railing on platform.*)

NANCY. *I don't want any alimony. You can have everything. I just want out.*

ALLAN. Can't we discuss it?

NANCY. *We've discussed it fifty times. It's no use.*

ALLAN. Why?

NANCY. *I don't know. I can't stand the marriage. I don't find you fun. I feel you suffocate me. I don't feel any rapport with you, and I don't dig you physically. For God's sake don't take it personal! (Exits D. R. slot, LIGHT FADES.)*

ALLAN. *(Rises—paces L. and R.)* Oh, I won't take it personal. I'll just kill myself, that's all. If only I knew where my damn analyst was vacationing. Where do they go every August? They leave the city. Every summer New York is full of people who are crazy till Labor Day. And so what? What if I reach him? No matter what I say he tells me it's a sexual problem. Isn't that silly? How can there be a sexual problem? We weren't even having relations. Well, once in a while. But she used to watch television during it . . . and change channels with the remote control switch. *(Sits swivel hassock.)* What's the matter with me? Why can't I be cool? What's the secret?

(DREAM LIGHT in U. L. area. BOGART appears from U. L. slot in trench coat.)

BOGART. There's no secret, kid. Dames are simple. I never met one who didn't understand a slap in the mouth or a slug from a forty-five.

ALLAN. I could never hit Nancy. It's not that type of relationship.

BOGART. *(Crosses D. L.)* Relationship? Where'd you learn that word? From one of those Park Avenue head-shrinkers?

ALLAN. I'm not like you. At the end of "Casablanca," when you lost Ingrid Bergman, weren't you crushed?

BOGART. *(Crosses U. L. steps.)* Nothing that a little bourbon and soda wouldn't fix.

ALLAN. See, I don't drink. My body will not tolerate alcohol.

BOGART. Take my advice and forget this fancy relationship stuff. The world is full of dames. All you got to do is whistle. (BOGART exits U. R. slot, DREAM LIGHT FADES.)

ALLAN. (*Pacing.*) He's right. You give 'em an inch and they step all over you. Why can't I develop that attitude? Nothing a little bourbon and soda couldn't heal. I have one thimbleful of bourbon, I run out and get tattooed. On the other hand, why should a divorce bother me so? What the hell—maybe I'm better off without her. Why not? I'm young . . . I'm healthy . . . I got a good job . . . this could be an opportunity to step out a little . . . if she can swing, so can I. I'll get broads up here like you wouldn't believe. I'll turn this place into a night club. Swingers, freaks, nymphomaniacs . . . salesgirls from Paraphernalia. . . . She didn't want me—I'm not going to push myself on her. (*Sits swivel.*) I couldn't believe the things she said to me the day she left.

(*DREAM LIGHT in office area. NANCY enters from D. R. slot to R. end of railing on platform, with bag, gloves, and scarf.*)

NANCY. *I want a new life. I want to go discothequing and skiing and to the beach. I want to drive through Europe on a motorcycle. All we ever do is see movies.*

ALLAN. I write for a film magazine, they send me. Besides I happen to like movies.

NANCY. *You like movies because you're one of life's great watchers. I'm not like that. I'm a doer. I want to participate. I want to laugh. We never laugh together.*

ALLAN. How can you say that? I don't know about you, but I'm constantly laughing—I chuckle, I giggle, I guffaw occasionally. Besides, why didn't any of this come up while we were dating?

NANCY. *Things were different—you were more aggressive.*

ALLAN. Everybody is during courtship. It's only

natural. You try and impress the other person. You can't expect me to keep up that level of charm. I'd have a heart attack.

NANCY. *Goodbye, Allan. My lawyer will call your lawyer.*

ALLAN. I don't have a lawyer . . . have him call my doctor. (NANCY *exits* U. R. C. slot, DREAM LIGHT FADES. ALLAN *paces*.) She thinks she's some hot stuff. She's no swinger. She's a product of the City College cafeteria. Next thing you know she'll be smoking pot—she'll think it's hip. I smoked pot once. Had a bad reaction . . . tried to take my pants off over my head. It's 'cause I'm guilty. I'm always so guilty over everything. She leaves me and I'm worried how she'll make out. (DOOR BUZZER *sounds*.) There's Dick and Linda. Thank God for Dick. He's my best friend, but I must not use him as a crutch. (BUZZ.) I'll use him as a crutch. (*Opens door*.)

(DICK, *nice-looking young executive type, and his lovely wife* LINDA, *enter*.)

DICK. (*Along railing*.) Allan, are you all right?

LINDA. (*Closes door; crosses to end of railing*.) Oh, you poor thing.

DICK. Why didn't you call us as soon as she left?

ALLAN. (*Off platform, steps R.*) I didn't want to bother you.

DICK. Not bother us! For God's sake, what are friends for?

LINDA. What reason did she give for wanting a divorce?

ALLAN. (*To swivel, then sits corner bench*.) She wants to laugh. She doesn't laugh enough. Insufficient laughter, that's grounds for divorce. And skiing—she wants to go skiing. She wants to ski down a mountain laughing like an idiot.

DICK. Just let me call my office and let them know where I am. I rushed right out of a business meeting the minute you called. They must've thought I was crazy.

LINDA. (*Purse on bench.*) Have you heard from her?

ALLAN. I heard from the firm of Schulman and Weiss, they had me sign some papers, and Nancy went to Mexico. It's funny. We went to Mexico on our honeymoon. Spent the entire two weeks in bed. I had dysentery.

(*During above, and following speeches, LINDA puts books from floor by coffee table on shelf above bar; puts magazines from sofa corner on table behind sofa; gets mug from bar, sweater from L. end of sofa, TV trays and aspirin bottle from coffee table, and in general cleans up the place.*)

DICK. (*On phone.*) Hello, George? Did they agree to the terms? Oh hell. Well, if we blow it we blow it.

LINDA. Don't you cook anything but TV dinners?

ALLAN. Who cooks 'em? I suck 'em frozen.

DICK. Let me tell you where you can reach me. I'll be at Gramercy 7-9205 for a while, then I'll be at Murray Hill 5-4774 for fifteen minutes, then I'll be at Templeton 8-5548, then I'll be home, that's LE 5-8343. Right, George.

LINDA. There's a phone booth on the corner—you want me to run down and get the number, you'll be passing it. (*Exits kitchen.*)

DICK. I'm sorry, Allan.

ALLAN. She wants to be a swinger. All of a sudden married life is no good.

DICK. Don't get all worked up.

(*LINDA enters from kitchen with paper toweling, which she puts on desk. Then she puts the papers from the floor around the wastebasket into the wastebasket, and the wastebasket under the desk. Then she takes the robe off the D. R. corner of the railing and the towel and T shirt off the back of the desk chair.*)

ALLAN. I gave her a home with affection and security.

This was a little girl I found waiting on tables at the Hip Bagel. I used to come in every night and overtip her. A dollar-fifty on a thirty-five-cent check! (*LINDA takes robe off railing, towel and T shirt off desk chair.*)

DICK. Nancy was impulsive. We all knew that about her.

ALLAN. She didn't leave impulsively. She talked about it for months. I just couldn't believe she'd go through with it. I'm such a naive jerk. I'm lying in bed with her and she's looking up lawyers in the yellow pages.

DICK. It's good you found out now. You're young. You can make new lives. (*LINDA takes things into bedroom.*)

ALLAN. Young? I'm 29. The height of my sexual potency was ten years ago.

DICK. Look at the bright side. You're free. You'll go out. You'll meet exciting new girls, you'll flirt, there'll be parties, you'll have affairs with married women, sexual relations with girls of every race, creed, and color. (*LINDA comes out of bedroom, down R. steps, picks up plastic pillow, puts on bench.*)

ALLAN. Ah, you get tired of that. Besides those things never happen to me. I managed to fool one girl into loving me and now she's gone.

DICK. See how he downgrades himself? Don't you think there are plenty of women in the world who would find him attractive?

LINDA. Huh? . . . Oh-er . . . of course.

DICK. (*Sits sofa.*) The world is full of eligible women.

ALLAN. Not like Nancy. She was a lovely thing. I used to lie in bed at night and watch her sleep. Once in a while she'd wake up and see me. She'd let out a scream.

LINDA. He really loved her. I feel like crying.

DICK. Why do you feel like crying? A man makes an investment—it doesn't pay off.

LINDA. Could I get an aspirin? I'm getting a little headache.

DICK. He's having a breakdown and you're getting sick.

LINDA. Don't get upset.

DICK. I'm not getting upset. I had a very rough day today.

ALLAN. *You* want an aspirin?

DICK. No.

ALLAN. I ate all the aspirins. What about Darvan?

LINDA. That's okay. My analyst once suggested Darvan when I had migraines.

ALLAN. I used to get migraines but my analyst cured me. Now I get tremendous cold sores.

LINDA. I still do. Big ugly ones—from tension.

ALLAN. I don't think analysis can help me. I may need a lobotomy.

LINDA. With mine on vacation I feel paralyzed.

DICK. The two of you should get married and move into a hospital.

ALLAN. You want a Fresca with your Darvan?

LINDA. Unless you have apple juice.

ALLAN. Oh, apple juice and Darvan are fantastic together.

LINDA. Have you ever had Librium and tomato juice?

ALLAN. I haven't personally but another neurotic tells me they're unbelievable.

DICK. Could I get a Coke with nothing in it?

(ALLAN *exits to bedroom*; LINDA *puts papers in hall*.)

LINDA. He's suffering for her so. It's kind of sweet in a way. Would you suffer for me like that?

DICK. Sure I'd suffer, but I wouldn't go crazy. You're like him. The two of you can get emotionally wrapped up in a weather report.

LINDA. He never should have married Nancy.

DICK. He never mentioned anything. I thought they were getting along.

LINDA. That's because you're so busy all the time. You never see what's going on around you. Didn't you think it was strange he was married and yet he still couldn't get a date for New Year's Eve?

DICK. Why are you getting so overwrought?

LINDA. These things upset me. I'm experiencing a wave of insecurity.

DICK. You're experiencing a wave of insecurity? May I tell you what happened to me today? I bought 100 acres of land in Florida this morning. It turns out ninety-eight of them have quicksand. My syndicate wanted to build a golf course. Now what? The only thing we can do is build a three-hole golf course with the biggest sand trap in the world. Why did this have to come up when I'm on the verge of a million things?

LINDA. You're always on the verge of a million things.

DICK. I can't help it. That's what I do, Linda. I look for openings, I keep on my toes, I play the market, I make brilliant deals like this quicksand thing.

LINDA. Dick, you're doing brilliantly. You're only twenty-nine years old and you've already filed for bankruptcy twice.

DICK. Oh, come on, darling, don't get upset. Could I be any more crazy about you? Jesus, I tell him to take it easy. . . . If I was in his shoes I'd go nuts. Now come on, we've got to get him over this.

LINDA. If I knew a nice girl for him.

DICK. You know models. There must be somebody in your agency.

LINDA. Not that many single ones.

DICK. What about Carol?

LINDA. Engaged.

DICK. And Doreen?

LINDA. She's living with a priest.

DICK. (*Brainstorm.*) What about Zorita? That model at Don's party?

LINDA. For Allan? My God, she'd eat him alive. There'd be nothing left but his glasses. No, this is going to be a little problem.

ALLAN. (*Enters with pills and drinks.*) Y'know I'm glad you two came over. I'm feeling a little better.

DICK. Listen, Allan, Linda and I are going out for

dinner tonight. We'll invite some nice girl, and the four of us will go together.

ALLAN. Oh no, I don't think so.

DICK. Come on, you've got to get out of the house.

ALLAN. I haven't looked at another woman in two years. I'm out of practice. When I was in practice I was out of practice.

DICK. Come on, Allan. You've invested your emotions in a losing stock, it was wiped out, dropped off the board. What do you do? You reinvest . . . maybe in a more stable stock . . . something with long-term growth possibilities.

ALLAN. Who are you going to fix me up with—Merrill, Lynch, Pierce, Fenner, and Smith?

DICK. Come on, Allan, shape up.

ALLAN. A pretty girl? Because she'd have to be damn good to do anything for my morale at all.

DICK. Who can we get for him?

ALLAN. You mean you don't even have anybody in mind?

DICK. We've got several people in mind.

LINDA. What kind do you like?

DICK. He likes neurotics.

ALLAN. I like blondes. Little blondes with long hair and short skirts with big chests and boots and bright and witty, and perceptive.

DICK. Don't set yourself ridiculous standards.

LINDA. She must be beautiful? With long hair and a big bust?

ALLAN. Oh—and a good behind. Something I can sink my teeth into.

DICK. He was always very fussy.

ALLAN. That's right, but look at the result.

DICK. That's right, you never went out.

LINDA. Sally Keller is blond and has a good-sized chest.

ALLAN. What's good-sized?

LINDA. (*Makes gesture with hands.*) I don't know—like this.

DICK. She's not the brightest girl in the world.

ALLAN. What does she do?

LINDA. She dances in a cage at a discotheque.

ALLAN. Forget it.

DICK. Come on, you might even be able to get her into bed.

ALLAN. Into bed! With my luck, I wouldn't be able to get her into a chair.

LINDA. Well, the girls that look the way you want them to don't usually have great minds.

DICK. I don't know why we're making such a fuss over a little pleasant dinner companionship.

ALLAN. I don't even want that. I'm still too attached to Nancy.

DICK. Allan, forget Nancy. She's gone.

ALLAN. That's true. She wanted to be free to swing.

DICK. Come on, honey, think of someone.

ALLAN. I can just picture what she's been up to.

NANCY. *(Enters.) Oh, Jeffrey, take me in your arms, hold me. To think that we two could meet here in a little town like Juarez, you divorcing Celia, me getting rid of what's-his-name. It's such a pleasure to be made love to by a tall, strong, handsome, blond, blue-eyed man. (Exit.)*

ALLAN. We're divorced two weeks, she's dating a Nazi.

LINDA. Hey, what about Sharon?

DICK. *(It strikes him.)* What about Sharon?

ALLAN. I like the name.

LINDA. Sharon Lake. She works for Jack Edelman the photographer. She's his assistant.

DICK. She's a bright girl and very cute.

ALLAN. Okay. Let's go.

DICK. *(To LINDA.)* Call her.

LINDA. *(Goes to phone.)* Perfect.

ALLAN. *(Beginning to falter.)* What are you going to tell her?

LINDA. *(Dials.)* I'm going to see if she's free for dinner.

ALLAN. *(Getting panicky.)* Don't tell her anything

about the divorce. Maybe you better tell her my wife's dead.

DICK. Leave it to us.

ALLAN. I don't know if we should go through with this. (*Begins pacing.*) The old tension is setting in. My stomach is jumping.

LINDA. (*Into phone.*) Sharon Lake please. Linda Christie.

ALLAN. (*Puts hands up to ears, growls, nervously blocking out sound.*) I don't want to hear this. La-umm-mmmm-de-ummmmmmmmm . . .

LINDA. Sharon? Hi. Linda. How are you? Good. Listen—

ALLAN. Ummmm-ummmmm . . .

LINDA. Dick and I are having dinner with a friend tonight and we thought you might want to join us.

ALLAN. Ummmm-ummmmm . . .

LINDA. No, that's nothing. We have the radio on. (*Beckons to DICK to help. He silences ALLAN.*) Allan Felix. You don't know him. He's a friend of Dick's.

ALLAN. (*Prompting.*) Attractive. A writer. A widow—widower—my wife died in a mine shaft explosion—

LINDA. He's a lot of fun. I think you'll like him.

ALLAN. Listen, if she doesn't want to—forget it. I don't need this aggravation.

LINDA. Okay. We'll pick you up with the car. Eight o'clock. A simple dress, oh sure . . . flats are okay.

ALLAN. Let her wear heels, what am I—Toulouse-Lautrec?

LINDA. Okay. . . . We'll pick you up. Okay. 'Bye. (*Hangs up.*) You're set.

ALLAN. (*Can hardly suppress his excitement.*) I have very mixed feelings. What if I have this chick in bed and Nancy comes in? Hoo-hoo.

DICK. Let's not hope for too much this first night, Allan.

ALLAN. (*To LINDA.*) Did she say anything about me?

LINDA. She doesn't know you. How could she say anything?

ALLAN. You know, you never said I was a widower.

LINDA. (*Takes Coke and Fresca into kitchen.*) I got you the date. You tell her the part about your wife's death.

ALLAN. Ooh, I'm excited.

DICK. (*Dials phone.*) We'll pick Sharon up because she lives two blocks from us and then the three of us will pick you up. See you about ten after eight. I can't stay out late though, I have a business meeting tomorrow morning.

LINDA. (*Comes out of kitchen with four clean glasses—to bar.*) Listen, if there's anything at all you want—if the dishes pile up or if you need a bed made—

DICK. (*Into phone.*) Hello, this is Mr. Christie. I'm leaving the Gramercy number now and proceeding due north to the Murray Hill number.

ALLAN. Let's eat at Tavern on the Green. It's a perfect night to dine out in Central Park.

LINDA. Wonderful, it's so romantic there.

DICK. Besides I think it's going to rain. (*To ALLAN.*) You be all right? (*DICK and LINDA at door.*)

ALLAN. Sure—I'll be fine—I'll shower and douse my body with Canoe. . . . Now I'm kind of looking forward to it. I'm excited.

DICK. Goodbye.

ALLAN. I'm better. . . . (*Closes door, ALLAN's face changes to serious.*) I'm scared.

BLACKOUT

ACT ONE

SCENE 2

It is nearly eight that night. ALLAN emerges from the bedroom, tie around his neck, and goes to the mirror over the bar. He is a mixture of anticipatory excitement, guilt, and nerves as he tries to get his hair to fall satisfactorily.

ALLAN. I cannot get my damn hair to stay down . . . this hot weather is murder on it. I'm not a bad-looking guy . . . chin's a little weak . . . what the hell . . . she shouldn't be disappointed. What does she expect? Rock Hudson? I'm a normal decent-looking guy . . . maybe slightly below normal. I wish she'd seen me before. . . . I hate to be there on a blind date when the girl sets eyes on me. What if she looks at me and laughs or screams? Will you relax! Has a girl ever once reacted by laughing or screaming? Once. That little coed from Brooklyn College came to the door, saw me, and passed out . . . but she was weak from dieting. What the hell . . . Bogart was short . . . didn't bother anybody.

BOGART. (*Appearing at the archway up R. C.*) You're starting off on the wrong foot, kid.

ALLAN. Negative you mean?

BOGART. Sure. You're letting her get the best of you before the game starts. What's that stuff you were putting on your face?

ALLAN. Canoe. It's an after-shave lotion.

BOGART. And the other stuff?

ALLAN. That was Mennen Spray Deodorant, Lavis, and Johnson and Johnson Baby Powder.

BOGART. For Christ's sake, you're going to smell like a French cat house.

ALLAN. I need them.

BOGART. Why? You ashamed to sweat?

ALLAN. I want to make an impression.

BOGART. Y'know, kid, somewhere in life you got turned around. It's her job to smell nice for you. And whatever you do, don't tell her you don't drink. She'll think you're a Boy Scout. And don't get nervous—the only bad break you could get is if she turns out to be a virgin or a cop. (*Exits U. L. slot.*)

ALLAN. With my luck she'll turn out to be both. He's right. A lot of girls get turned on by a masculine earthy quality. I shouldn't have put so much Binaca under my arms. I want to create a good subliminal impression without being too pushy. Hey, I better memorize some photography terms, if she's a photographer's assistant. (*Crosses to the magazine rack D. R. and pulls out a magazine, crossing back to coffee table as he reads.*) "Not only is there a great qualitative difference between my Nikon and my other cameras," says ace photographer Greg Barnett, "but my Nikon is built sturdy enough to withstand the throwing around I give it when the outdoor shooting gets rough." (*Drops magazine to coffee table.*) I'm going to charm this girl. Wouldn't it be great if Sharon and I hit it off at first sight? Sure, why not? They say dames are simple. I never met one who didn't respond to a slap in the mouth or a slug from a forty-five. C'mere, Sharon.

(*DREAM SHARON appears from the U. R. C. slot, slightly disheveled . . . no shoes or stockings. "As Time Goes By" plays softly on the piano.*)

SHARON. Oh, Allan, you are fantastic . . . up until tonight, the doctors had said that I was frigid. I want to thank you for proving them wrong.

ALLAN. If you've got any friends with the same problem, bring them around.

SHARON. When Dick and Linda spoke of you, they used terms like genius and brilliant. They never said you were also an animal.

ALLAN. I'm sorry I had to slap you around, sweetheart, but you got hysterical when I said, "No more."

SHARON. Oh, Allan . . . Allan. (*Exits.*)

(*LIGHTS CHANGE, MUSIC FADES, BUZZER SOUNDS simultaneously. SHARON disappears U. L. slot.*)

ALLAN. Yes?

LINDA. (*Off.*) It's Linda.

ALLAN. Linda?

LINDA. I'm alone. (*ALLAN opens the door. LINDA enters with a jar of cocktail nuts in a bag.*) Sharon's with Dick. They're parking. He sent me ahead just to make sure everything's okay.

ALLAN. Everything's fine. . . . I didn't realize it was so late.

LINDA. (*Takes two bowls out of cabinet and puts nuts into each.*) Hey! What did you do? Break a bottle of shaving lotion?

ALLAN. You're kidding! I'm wearing too much?

LINDA. It's a touch strong . . . not terrible. Once we get into the air, you won't even notice it.

ALLAN. (*Crosses bedroom door.*) I just want to set up the place quickly.

LINDA. (*Nut bowl to coffee table.*) The place is fine. We're only going to have a quick drink and go.

ALLAN. (*Taking book from desk shelf to downstage bench.*) A few carefully placed objects will create the proper impression.

LINDA. (*Bowl of nuts to hassock D. R.*) You're not going to leave half-open books around like you're reading them?

ALLAN. Why not? It creates a certain image.

LINDA. You don't need an image. . . .

ALLAN. (*Takes medal from bar drawer.*) I've got just the thing . . . my hundred-yard-dash medal.

LINDA. You're joking! You're not going to leave out a track medal?

ALLAN. (*Puts medal on swivel hassock.*) Why not? I paid twenty dollars for it!

LINDA. Just be yourself. She'll like you.

ALLAN. (*Takes Bartok record from shelf above desk.*) I've got a big decision to make. Do I go with Thelonious Monk or Bartok's String Quartet Number Five?

LINDA. Why don't you put on Thelonious Monk and leave Bartok carelessly strewn about?

ALLAN. (*Puts Bartok against rail on bench.*) Brilliant! That's exactly what I'll do.

LINDA. (*Gets bottles out of bar and puts them on top.*) I've never seen anyone go through so much trouble to impress a date. Particularly such a casual date. If you devoted this much interest and care with Nancy, I don't see why she left you.

ALLAN. (*Finding Monk record on shelf.*) Oh, I did. I used to write her poems. And take her to little candlelight restaurants and order in French and then the waiter would bring all the wrong things.

LINDA. (*At bench corner.*) Maybe if you had leaned across the candlelight and kissed her . . .

ALLAN. I tried, and she'd say—Christ, not here, people are staring. Then once at a great little bistro on Second Avenue, my sleeve caught fire. (*Puts Monk record on phono and plays. LINDA laughs.*) So you laugh at it, it's funny, right? She took it as a symbol of my clumsiness, which I guess it was. (*Door BUZZER sounds. ALLAN snaps to.*) Finesse . . . tremendous poise . . . I'm an absolute master.

LINDA. Right. I'll get the ice. (*Exits to kitchen as ALLAN answers the door. DICK enters with SHARON LAKE, a very nice girl, attractive, but not the sex machine of ALLAN'S vision. However, ALLAN is sufficiently impressed to be rendered speechless.*)

DICK. Allan, this is Sharon.

SHARON. Hello.

ALLAN. AH . . . ER . . . (*Stands dumbfounded, hand on door. DICK directs SHARON to living room, thumps door to release ALLAN'S hold and closes door.*)

SHARON. (*Sitting L. end of sofa.*) I was just telling

Dick, I have some friends on this block. In the house across the street. Do you know the Gibsons?

ALLAN. . . . The Gibsons? . . . no. . . . (DICK gives ALLAN a push into the room.)

SHARON. Hal and Eleanor Gibson. They're a great couple. He's an interior decorator.

ALLAN. (At sofa.) Oh, really? That's sort of a hobby of mine.

SHARON. (Looking around, not overly impressed.) Oh . . . uh-huh . . .

ALLAN. The key to decorating is to avoid looking like you used a decorator.

DICK. (At railing.) I've got to make one fast call.

LINDA. (Entering from kitchen with water pitcher and ice bucket to bar.) Hi!

SHARON. Hi! . . . Linda?

LINDA. Yes?

SHARON. Are you wearing Jasmine?

LINDA. Me? No. . . . (LINDA and ALLAN realize simultaneously that the pervading scent is from ALLAN.) What are we drinking?

DICK. J and B on the rocks.

SHARON. I'll just have a little Harvey's Bristol Cream, please.

ALLAN. The usual. (LINDA looks at him quizzically.) Bourbon and water. (LINDA to bar. Pours drinks.)

SHARON. Oh . . . a bourbon man.

ALLAN. Yeah, I gotta cut down on it. I'm putting away a quart a day. (Sits sofa r.)

DICK. (On phone.) Hello, this is Mr. Christie. I'm no longer at Lehigh 5-8343. I'll be at . . . What? Did he leave a message? (Sits at the desk to take a few notes.)

LINDA. (Delivering a glass of sherry to SHARON and back to bar.) Sharon did a movie.

ALLAN. Oh?

SHARON. Underground.

ALLAN. A stag film?

SHARON. Underground. You know—very arty sixteen-millimeter.

LINDA. (*Taking drink to DICK at desk and back to bar.*) Allan's interested in cinema.

SHARON. What do you do?

ALLAN. I'm a writer. Nothing major. For *Film Quarterly*. You know—essays, criticism . . . reviews. . . .

SHARON. This film I made got very good reviews. And I got singled out. Of course, I was the only girl in it with nine men.

ALLAN. Oh, really? What was the film called, maybe I saw it?

SHARON. "Gang Bang." They have the raunchiest titles, but it wasn't a bit sexy. . . .

DICK. (*Finished at the desk, he crosses to join SHARON and ALLAN.*) This is ridiculous. I have to get a phone for my car, Volkswagen or not.

ALLAN. Volkswagen! (*Music starts to build.*)

LINDA. (*Delivering glass to ALLAN.*) You were all out of bourbon, so I made it straight water. (*She joins group, sitting D. L. hassock with her own drink.*) It's so humid. I think it's going to rain.

SHARON. Maybe that's why I have this headache, I get sinus attacks.

ALLAN. Really? You should have them drained. (*BUILD MUSIC.*)

DICK. (*Sits swivel.*) That's why it's silly to go to Tavern on the Green.

SHARON. Do you think you could turn the music down a bit?

(*ALLAN crosses to office area.*)

DICK. What's the point of going to an outdoor restaurant if it's going to rain?

LINDA. You used to like to take me walking in the rain.

ALLAN. I love the rain . . . it washes memories off

the sidewalk of life. . . . (*As this purple prose hangs in the air, ALLAN turns to the phonograph where he accidentally knocks the tone arm, causing an ear-splitting SCRATCH. ALL cringe. DICK spins around in the swivel.*)

LINDA. Gee . . . you really have a delicate touch.

DICK. (*Rising and crossing to D. R. hassock, takes a nut.*) Allan's a little tense. He's had a little misfortune with his wife. . . .

SHARON. His WIFE? (*ALLAN takes Monk jacket and replaces record, keeping record jacket in his hands.*)

LINDA. Dick . . .

DICK. Ex-wife . . . she's gone . . .

ALLAN. She's dead.

SHARON. How awful!

LINDA. Well, no, she's not dead.

ALLAN. Technically not dead . . . but we're not dating.

DICK. She left him.

SHARON. I'm sorry.

DICK. (*Crossing to phone.*) Why don't I call and make a reservation at the Hong Fat Noodle Company in Chinatown?

LINDA. (*Joining DICK.*) Here, I have the phone number in my purse.

ALLAN. (*Joining SHARON on the sofa, record jacket in hand.*) I don't know if you like Thelonious Monk or not, but to me he has a wry, mirthful quality that's not at all accommodating to the casual listener, although his harmonic conceptions are often haunting.

SHARON. You sound like the back of a record jacket. (*ALLAN tosses the album back of sofa.*) Er . . . have you known Dick and Linda long?

ALLAN. I've known Dick for years. I don't know Linda nearly as well. Dick's a great guy. A little overambitious maybe, but he's always been that way. He's like a kid brother to me. I'm always helping him out of one jam or another. He kind of looks up to me. (*Crosses his legs, hooking his toe under the coffee table and tipping it,*

scattering nuts and debris. DICK and LINDA rush to set things right. ALLAN backs off in dismay.)

DICK. *(Turning to ALLAN.)* We're all set at the Hong Fat Noodle Company.

ALLAN. Just let me get my sport jacket. *(He limps off to bedroom.)*

SHARON. . . . Is he on anything?

LINDA. Um . . . oh . . . no.

DICK. I'm just going to call my service and tell them where I'll be.

LINDA. *(Clearing up the mess.)* I hope you like Chinese food.

SHARON. Oh, sure. . . . Linda, I've just got to make it an early evening. . . . I've got a terrible day tomorrow.

LINDA. Oh, I'm sorry.

DICK. *(On phone.)* Hello. This is Mr. Christie. If Mr. Milton from the Chase Manhattan Bank calls, I'll be at the Hong Fat Noodle Company in Chinatown. That's Canal 8-6321.

(LINDA hands SHARON photography magazine from the floor. LINDA puts her and SHARON's glass on bar.

DICK crosses to LINDA, gives her his glass.)

SHARON. Hey! Look at this! Greg Barnett. You remember Greg? . . . Jack's old partner. . . . *(Reads.)* "There is a great qualitative difference between my Nikon and my other cameras," says ace photographer Gregg Barnett, "but my Nikon is built sturdy enough to withstand the throwing around I give it when the outdoor shooting gets rough." I wonder how much they paid him to say that?

ALLAN. *(Enters from the bedroom, crosses down to SHARON.)* I'm ready! And you've gotta let me order because I'm an expert on Chinese food.

SHARON. Good! I'm starved . . . we had such a rough day today trying to photograph little children.

ALLAN. *(Giving his arm as they start out.)* Oh really?

Photography is a hobby of mine. In fact, I've been having a little trouble with my cameras lately. See, I feel there is a great qualitative difference between my Nikon and my other cameras, but my Nikon is built sturdy enough to withstand the throwing around I give it when . . .

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

CURTAIN rises on ALLAN. . . . Two weeks later and he has had a pretty discouraging time of it. He is at the sofa, phone on the coffee table, as he thumbs through an old address book.

ALLAN. Mildred Denberg . . . can't even remember her. Marion Drayson . . . she sat behind me in Civics. Toby Kovack . . . yeah . . . I remember her! She was a pushover, with those great legs and those freaky parties. (*Dials.*) Hello? Is this the Kovack residence? Ah . . . how can I get in touch with Toby? Oh, she is? I see. No, thanks, let it go, forget it. (*Hangs up.*) The wife of Rabbi Kaplan! I'm cursed. I cannot get a break. (*Thumbs book.*) Marilyn Perry. The queen of Dubrow's. (*Dials.*) Hello, is this the Perry residence? Ah, is Marilyn there? (*Rises and crosses R.*) You know where I can reach her? An old friend from Midwood High School—Allan Felix. I dated her once. Do you remember? I'm stunned! It was eleven years ago . . . that's right . . . short, with red hair and glasses—no, that's cleared up. How can I get in touch with her? Oh, really? She still feels that way? You know it's been eleven years now. When did you speak to her? Last week . . . and she specified she didn't want you to give me the number? Well, goodbye, Mrs. Perry. No, that's all right. (*Hangs up and puts phone on bench.*) I don't know how much longer I can take this. I miss being married. These past two weeks have been terrible. At least Linda's been fixing me up with some of her friends. But with every girl something goes wrong. First there was that photographer's assistant, Sharon. I made a mess of that. Then the next night there was Gina.

(GINA enters—U. R. C. slot—as LIGHTS CHANGE and

ALLAN falls into step with her as they cross to the downstage railing.)

GINA. Good night, Allan. (*He moves to embrace her.*)
Don't!

ALLAN. Why not?

GINA. I'm Catholic.

ALLAN. I'll convert.

GINA. Besides, I didn't take my pill today. (*Exits bedroom door, slamming it behind her.*)

ALLAN. That's all right. . . . I took an extra one! (*LIGHTS RESTORE.*) What'd I do wrong? She treated me cold from the second I showed up at her door with a Whitman Sampler. And what about Vanessa? That was only a week ago . . . you'd think by then my luck would have begun to change.

(*LIGHTS DIM to a late-night romantic mood. VANESSA, exotically dressed, appears—from U. L. slot—and glides to the sofa where she reclines. Soft MUSIC in the background. ALLAN joins her.*)

VANESSA. I've had many men . . . my first at twelve. After that it was an endless stream. Poets, writers. I lived in a house with five actors. Some were gay, but what does it matter? I straightened them out. It was a challenge. My life was a continual round of orgies. I took on the entire Tau Epsilon Phi Fraternity at Yale in three hours. It's still a record in New Haven. I've always thought of sex as something wonderful and open . . . to be enjoyed as fully and frequently as possible. (*ALLAN, increasingly aroused, finally can restrain himself no longer and lunges for her. She screams and jumps up.*) Aaaaagh! What do you take me for?!? (*She exits U. L. slot as LIGHTS RESTORE.*)

ALLAN. How did I misread those signs? . . . What am I going to do? I've practically used up every friend Linda has. I may have to resort to desperate measures to meet

women . . . like going up to Eas hampton or hanging around Bloomingdale's stocking counter. Ah . . . I'm too shy to do those things alone. Linda would come with me even if Dick's busy. Dick and Linda sure have been great. I've dragged them everywhere to help me find girls. Linda seems to like it. I know she enjoyed that evening at the discotheque. (*Sits corner of bench.*)

(*LIGHTS DIM. DICK and LINDA join ALLAN from the D. R. slot and sit at the corner of the bench. On the platform behind them a fantastic little BLONDE in a glittering dress is bumping and jerking to drive you crazy. MUSIC blares.*)

LINDA. Gee, this is fun. We haven't been to a discotheque in such a long time.

ALLAN. I'm getting a heart attack. I can't believe that girl.

DICK. (*Into phone.*) I'm at Lehigh 4-3605.

ALLAN. She's a doll! I would sell my mother to the Arabs for that girl!

LINDA. Well, ask her to dance. You've been staring at her for an hour.

ALLAN. I can't . . . I don't know her.

DICK. (*Puts phone down, and turns to them.*) Come on. I can't stay any longer. I have to get up early tomorrow and sue some friends.

LINDA. You want to dance one dance, honey?

DICK. We can't do those dances. They're undignified. You've got to be under sixteen to look good. But you two can stay, just don't get home too late. Good luck. (*Exits thru kitchen.*)

ALLAN. I love you, Miss—whoever you are—I want to have your child.

(*MUSIC segues to a relatively slow number.*)

LINDA. Get up and do it.

ALLAN. I can't dance—have you ever seen my body move? It's like a printing press.

LINDA. (*Dragging him to the platform.*) Come on. . . .

ALLAN. I'm scared—please—no—no. . . .

LINDA. Start dancing . . . that's it . . . keep count . . . one . . . two . . . one . . . two. Now talk to her. Go ahead.

ALLAN. One . . . two . . . one . . . two . . .

LINDA. Try something more meaningful.

ALLAN. Three . . . four . . . three . . . four. . . .

LINDA. NO! . . . Go on. . . .

ALLAN. Er . . . good evening, miss. Would you be interested in dancing?

GIRL. Sure!

(*MUSIC SWITCHES abruptly to wild rock as the GIRL thrashes appropriately. In a desperate effort to look good ALLAN attempts a few vaguely Spanish fandangos. LINDA has slipped off D. R. at the start of this. The GIRL dances her way U. C., sees ALLAN and erupts into derisive laughter, backing off U. R. C. slot. LIGHTS RESTORE and MUSIC FADES.*)

ALLAN. What I need is a more intellectual girl . . . that's where my appeal is . . . that's why last Monday afternoon the Museum of Modern Art seemed such a good idea. . . .

(*LIGHTS FADE leaving an aisle of light across the fore-stage. LINDA enters D. R. slot wearing a raincoat. ALLAN joins her.*)

LINDA. Um . . . look at that Salvador Dali . . . if you could have any painting in the world, what would you pick? (*Thru these speeches they drift L.*)

ALLAN. A Van Gogh. Any Van Gogh.

LINDA. Me too. I feel some kind of mystical attraction for Van Gogh. Why is that?

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