

Two on the Aisle, Three in a Van

Mary Lynn Dobson

A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION



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TWO ON THE AISLE, THREE IN A VAN was performed in the FringeNYC Festival, August 16th–29th, 2009, at the Connelly Theatre, New York. It was produced by Peter Riga Jr., Dan Whitten, and Tiger Theatricals. The production was directed by Mary Lynn Dobson with costumes by James Herrera and Sue Takacs, lighting by Tom Rowe. The production stage manager was Bob Dumpert. The cast was as follows:

VONDO	.....	Gordon Joseph Weiss
JEANNIE	.....	Letitia D. Townes
JEFF	.....	Paul De Pasquale
MIKE	.....	Jim Stanek
HARRIET	.....	Terri Sturtevant
ERIC	.....	Jonathan Wierzbicki (<i>certain performances</i>) John P. Dowgin (<i>certain performances</i>)
MEREDITH	.....	Nataschia Diaz
DANIEL	.....	Stephen Medvidick
ROBIN	.....	Madeline Blue
SCOTT	.....	Rick Delaney

TWO ON THE AISLE, THREE IN A VAN was a winner and was performed as part of the Northern Kentucky University's YES Festival. The production was directed by Michael King.

CHARACTERS

MIKE – Director/stage manager, soon to be artistic director, good looking, genuinely nice, mid thirties.

JEANNIE – Stage manager, wardrobe person, techie in general, has grown to hate the actors, mid thirties to fifties.

VONDO – Techie, sometime actor, one time pot head, dressed as he was in high school—probably even in the same shirt, owner of the van, late fifties to sixties.

JEFF – The artistic director, forever trying to avoid disaster, high blood pressure and forever trying to avoid a stroke, fifties to early sixties.

SCOTT – The new guy from the Midwest, costume designer, wardrobe person, nice guy, thirties to late forties.

ERIC – Director, writer, actor, threatens greatness but delivers nonsense, constantly morbid, mid-thirties.

MEREDITH – Actress, usually gets the leads, a diva-wanna-be, feigns confidence, basically plain, mid-thirties.

DANIEL – Actor, idiot, thinks he's the ultimate theater persona, obsessed with dancing, mid to late twenties.

ROBIN – Actress, plays all the ingénue roles, you just want to hug her because she's cute as cute can be, innocent, naive, fifteen.

HARRIET – Actress, sometime wardrobe person, quick-witted, real, early sixties to seventies.

Note: Additional character descriptions can be found at the back of the script.

TIME

TWO ON THE AISLE, THREE IN A VAN takes place over a three and a half month span on a one unit set.

ACT I

Scene 1 – HELLO DOLLY

Scene 2 – SOUND OF MUSIC

Scene 3 – MEDEA

ACT II

Scene 1 – OKLAHOMA

Scene 2 – THE GLASS MENAGERIE

Scene 3 – WEST SIDE STORY

MANDATORY PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

By acquiring the rights to perform this play you are agreeing to abide by the conditions of the playwright's notes at the back of the script. They state certain specifics about the play that cannot be changed. It is mandatory that the director and actors read these notes before rehearsing and performing this play.

ACT I

Scene I

(Time: the present. At curtain, Deep Purple's "Smoke on the Water" is played on an electric guitar. Only the introduction of the song is played. The scene is a parking lot in back of a theatre. A well-traveled van, which is at least 15 to 20 years old, is positioned so it is "parked" so the back is facing the audience. Its two back doors are open. The building has one commercial steel door, solid –no glass. There is a used-looking cooler next to the van. Sets from the show are being kept outside due to lack of wing space. There are racks with appropriate costumes hanging on them with a small tarp or cover on half the rack, which can be used to hide the costumes which will be seen in the upcoming scenes. There is a marquee stage left. It reads: "The Neighborhood Actors Summerfun Repertory Theatre – Now Playing – Hello Dolly". It's intermission of the first performance. [Note: throughout the play, the tech people should always be working on something for the next show opening.] VONDO is sitting on the back of the van playing his electric guitar, at a medium-low volume, through a small amp next to where he sits. He's dressed exactly as he was in high school, jeans, sneakers and a tee shirt. His hair is semi-long or in a ponytail. JEANNIE lies in the van next to him – we only see her knees, hanging over the back edge of the van. She is dressed in jeans/shorts and a show-tee shirt or in "tech black". JEFF, the artistic director, enters from the theatre. It is obvious he has high blood pressure.*

*See Music Use Note on pg. 3.

JEFF. (*pissed*) **VONDO!** Have you seen Eric?

VONDO. No.

JEFF. If you do, tell him I'm going to kill him. You got that Vondo? Tell the man he's going to die.

VONDO. Okay, Boss.

(JEFF begins to exit, MIKE enters. MIKE's a good-looking guy in jeans and a tee shirt. He carries an approximately 4x3 frame, no glass, for what will be a "stained glass window" for the next show.)

JEFF. (*crosses to MIKE*) **MIKE!** Have you seen Eric?

MIKE. No.

JEFF. If you do, tell him I'm going to kill him. You got that Mike? Tell the man he's going to die.

MIKE. Okay.

JEFF. (*turns to JEANNIE*) **JEANNIE!**

JEANNIE. (*not sitting up*) I'll tell him!

(JEFF exits into the theatre, storming past HARRIET as she enters. She's in the chorus and is dressed in turn of the century garb. She looks at MIKE and shakes her head. MIKE crosses to the van where he, JEANNIE and VONDO eventually begin to work on the "church window" by taping either colored construction paper or colored cellophane into the empty panes of the window. Whatever materials are used should not be noisy, so as to not distract from the scene.)

MIKE. (*to HARRIET*) Well, he told Eric to close Act I with a bang.

HARRIET. Yes he did. Oh, it's nice out here tonight. You know, I think I like being out here better than in the chorus room. I used to think you all were pretty silly not wanting to stay in the air-conditioning. But it's really quite pleasant out here.

MIKE. And more peaceful.

HARRIET. Well dear, anywhere away from Meredith is more peaceful. She's in there right now barking at Scott

because, of all things, her gloves don't fit right. (*crosses to cooler*)

JEANNIE. (*sits up*) It's not about the gloves. She's just pissed because Robin's stealing the show.

HARRIET. I don't know about her. (*Takes a beer out of the cooler. Looks at her beer.*) Rheingold?* Who bought this?

VONDO. I did. I got it for you. I thought you might like it. I mean, you know, it's from your era.

HARRIET. So is polio, dear. Have you ever tasted this stuff?

VONDO. No. And I never will. I've given it up for life.

HARRIET. (*sweetly*) Yes well, thank you for the thought, honey. Perhaps tomorrow night during intermission I'll come out and churn some butter for everyone. (*puts beer back in cooler*)

JEANNIE. Hey Harriet, I thought you were you supposed to play Dolly. What happened?

HARRIET. Well...let's just say I graciously backed out when they switched directors.

(*ERIC and MEREDITH enter. ERIC is a director/actor who would explore the dark side of Winnie the Pooh. He wears head to toe black. MEREDITH is the company's star who's on the neurotic side. She wears a Hello Dolly red sequined dress with red feathers in her hair.*)

ERIC. I didn't feel you at all! You're not coming across to the audience. Continue like this and you'll ruin my play! Now tell me! Who is Dolly Levy?

MEREDITH. (*she rattles this off because she's said it a thousand times*) She's a widow cheated by death at the height of her sexuality. She rages against the bondage forced by the fraternal tyranny of a misogynistic world.

ERIC. Good. What else?

MEREDITH. She's a survivor. But, she wants to control the lives of those around her.

ERIC. Right!

*If Rheingold is unavailable, Schaefer or Ballantine may be substituted.

MEREDITH. And that's why she's a matchmaker.

ERIC. NO! I told you never to use that word! You're an actor, Meredith! See beyond the words! Dolly Levy sells and buys women for a fee. FOR A FEE! Dolly Levy is a pimp.

JEANNIE. (to **HARRIET**) Dolly Levy's a pimp?

ERIC. (to **MEREDITH**) Just because a playwright says something – doesn't mean they really mean it. They just give you clues.

VONDO. (to **HARRIET**) Does this mean Carol Channing was a pimp?

ERIC. (to **MEREDITH**) It's your job to "see beyond the words"!

JEANNIE. No, I can't see Carol Channing as a pimp.

MIKE. Me either. A muppet, maybe, but not a pimp.

VONDO. A Carol Channing muppet would be cute. She could have big, ping-pong ball eyes that go blinky, blinky, blinky.

MEREDITH. (to **VONDO**) Stop! You're breaking my concentration. (to **ERIC**) I can't act with this.

MIKE. Hey lighten up, guys.

ERIC. Peasant! This is a painful process. Meredith delves into parts of herself that she didn't even know existed to create her character.

MEREDITH. (to **JEANNIE**) I suffer for my performance.

JEANNIE. So does everyone who sees it.

MEREDITH. (to **ERIC**) I can't act with this. (**MEREDITH** walks behind the van.)

(**DANIEL** enters. He's playing a waiter and wears a white shirt, black bow tie, red vest, black pants and spats.)

DANIEL. Eric! Eric! Eric! I just got this idea. It's so entertaining! Instead of me just pointing up the stairs and saying, (blandly) "Rudy, she's here." How about I play the waiter who will not bow to the Gestapo tactics of the maitre d'? I can do a strength move. Watch – (runs to one end of the stage) Rudy, (runs to **ERIC**, does a spin, lands on one knee and points with a big gesture) SHE'S HERE!

ERIC. Do it the way we rehearsed it.

DANIEL. How about we use it in the kick line...

ERIC. Not now, Daniel!

(exits after MEREDITH behind van)

JEANNIE. Hey Daniel, they said at least six weeks to fix my coffee maker. I loved that coffee maker. It was the only good thing that came out of my marriage.

DANIEL. I'm sorry already. It was an accident, okay?

JEANNIE. Accident or not, you're buying me coffee every day till I get it back.

DANIEL. Okay! God! *(exasperated, exits)*

HARRIET. Well, I'm going to check my make-up.

VONDO. Remember Harriet, cast party at my place tonight.

HARRIET. Yes, I'll be there. *(to MIKE)* Oh boy, Rheingold for everyone.

(ROBIN ROSENBLATT enters. She's 15 and is playing Minnie Fay and wears a ruffley Victorian dress with a big bow in her hair.)

HARRIET. Oh your song sounded great, Robin. *(exits)*

ROBIN. *(upset)* I'm not Robin. Mike, do you think Jeff'll get mad if I ask him to change the program when he prints more for next week?

MIKE. Why, what's the matter?

ROBIN. He put the wrong name in. *(shows him the program)* I wanted a stage name, so me and my friends made up one. But Jeff forgot and printed Robin Rosenblatt.

MIKE. Who are you this show?

ROBIN. Tapestry Meadowlark.

(MIKE, JEANNIE and VONDO try to suppress their smiles.)

ROBIN. *(seeing their reactions)* You don't think it's good? I can change it. What should I change it to?

VONDO. Sydney Australia?

JEANNIE. Summers Eve?

ROBIN. (to **MIKE** with a big smile) Summers Eve? I like that!

MIKE. (looks at **JEANNIE**) Let's just leave it like it is, okay? I'll take care of it.

ROBIN. (big smile) Thanks, Mike! You're so nice! (hugs him and exits)

ERIC. (enters, calling back to **MEREDITH**) That's better, you almost have it. Just give me a little more *Super Fly*. God, I can't believe the crap I have to put up with on this show. Things will be different when I do *Medea*.

VONDO. Oh, it is *Medea*. I thought they just spelled media wrong. What's it about?

ERIC. You don't know what *Medea's* about? Blatant ignorance!

MIKE. It's your basic Greek tragedy. Woman scorned, kills lover's wife, kills her children, kills lover's children, kill's lover's wife's father, escapes by chariot that flies through sky. (to **ERIC**) So which version are you doing, Euripides or Anouilh?

ERIC. Oh, please! I'm doing *my* version. As Associate Artistic Director, it is my *job* to see that new works find their way to our stage. Michael, you're somewhat a music connoisseur, are you not?

MIKE. Yeah?

ERIC. Perhaps you can help me find the perfect music for the pinnacle of Act I. *Medea's* murder of her children. I was thinking of using the theme from *Psycho*, but I thought that was, you know, a little too typical.

JEANNIE. Besides, aren't you saving that for your wedding song?

ERIC. (to **JEANNIE**) Simple maid, your life is so sad. (to **MIKE**) I need something with a beat – to coincide with *Medea* stabbing them.

MIKE. I'll see what I can come up with.

ERIC. I've told Scott to line the costumes with blood packs. That way, when they're stabbed, my actors will bleed like stuck pigs.

MIKE. You do realize that in all Greek tragedies the violence happens off-stage.

ERIC. Well, guess what Toto, we're not in Greece anymore. And I'm not just planning murder, I'm planning dismemberment as well. Behind the murder scene I'm flashing slides of pigs led to slaughter, tanks closing in on Tiananmen Square, the ambush scene from Bonnie and Clyde! *Guts* oozing out of the actors and spilling into the polka-dotted laps of the blue hairs in the front row! Yes! *(smiles and exits)*

JEANNIE. Something tells me his mother breast-fed him just a little too long.

MIKE. Know where he gets these brilliant ideas for his adaptations of great novels? Cliff Notes. He won't read the novel, cause he says reading the book just gives you the author's side of the story. You know what he had the nerve to say to me today? That I'm intellectually inferior to him. *(shakes his head and smiles)* I love it.

I've got my Master's in literature and I'm getting dissed by the manager of a Dairy Queen. *(speaking as ERIC)* You people are all fools! I have such insight of the world that even I fear my own mind. I am astute! I am superior! I am intellectually above you all! *(holds arm out, handing someone an ice cream cone)* Do you want sprinkles with that?

(SCOTT enters completely panicked, with a clipboard with a pencil attached by a string and long, white evening gloves. He's the costume designer and is dressed conservatively. Shorts and a button down short-sleeve shirt.)

SCOTT. Get ready for fireworks.

JEFF. *(enters in a panic, holding red gels.)* VONDO!

(JEFF deliberately speaks into VONDO's face.)

I want you to hide these. Put them somewhere and under no circumstances give them to Eric. You got that, Vondo? Keep these away from Eric.

ERIC. (*offstage*) WHERE ARE MY GELS?

JEFF. (*hands VONDO the gels*) SIT ON THEM! EAT THEM! HIDE THEM NOW!

ERIC. (*enters*) WHO TOOK MY GELS?!

JEFF. YOU! YOU ARE GOING TO DIE! I AM GOING TO KILL YOU! YOU GOT THAT ERIC? I AM GOING TO KILL YOU DEAD! I can't believe you had the girls in the parade number strip down to their corsets! And as if that weren't bad enough, ya had the cotton candy vendor soliciting sex! WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU?

ERIC. (*calmly*) Each one of these women is desperate for a man and they use Dolly as their pimp. They're hookers. It's dark. It's perverse. It's real.

JEFF. (*stares at him*) IT'S *HELLO DOLLY*! How did you get like this? Did your parents like, lock you in a box until you were twelve? Was your only friend the vacuum cleaner? What is it? I'd really like to know.

ERIC. I am breathing new life into stale, musical sewage! Why can you not appreciate the important work I do at this theatre?

JEFF. The only reason you do *any* work at this theatre is because your goddamn aunt owns the goddamn building!

ERIC. And might I remind you if it weren't for me getting Aunt Phyllis involved here, this place would have shut down six years ago.

JEFF. You don't have to. She does every time she writes a check. And so do all her geriatric friends you talked into joining the board. So don't flatter yourself by confusing talent with stacking the deck. Associate Artistic Director, my ass. Gee, she bought you your title, did she have to buy you friends in school too?

ERIC. Give me back my gels. The Dolly number must be bathed in red!

JEFF. No! I've had it with you. Now listen, if your actors don't go out there happily singing and dancing their

little hearts out, I'm going to happily *rip* your little heart out. Is that real enough for you?

ERIC. I am persona non grata!

(ERIC exits, storming into the theatre.)

JEFF. (to SCOTT) Now, as far as you're concerned...

SCOTT. Jeff, I had those girls bustled down to their high button shoes. The corsets and garter belts, I swear, that wasn't me. I don't know where they got them.

JEFF. Did you give my keys to "the freak?"

SCOTT. (wincing) Yeah.

JEFF. RULE NUMBER ONE – never give my keys to "the freak!" My keys control this theatre. The keeper of the keys is king. Never make "the freak" king. Got that?

SCOTT. But he said the Associate Artistic Director gets to use the keys.

JEFF. WELL HE'S WRONG! That title means *nothing!* Look, I know this is your first show with us, but learn from this, okay? Now do me a favor, double check so there's no more surprises. I don't know, before they go on stick your head up their skirts or something.

SCOTT. Okay.

JEFF. Okay. (looks at SCOTT a second) I'm done with you. Stand over there.

(SCOTT stands where JEFF has pointed.)

(to MIKE) Please, tell me you're gonna direct *Glass Menagerie* without any, ya know, mondo-bizzaro social sermon.

MIKE. Don't worry. I'll keep it simple.

JEFF. (smiles) Simple. I like simple. Simple is good. Simple makes me happy.

MIKE. You gotta stop letting him get to you like this. I know you think that's a bogus title you gave him, but let me tell you, if you get sick – this place is his.

JEFF. Don't worry. Everything's fine. (gives a pep talk he's given a thousand times before) Oh yeah, by the way, you're

all doing great. I'm real proud of you. Teamwork. That's our motto. Now, let's put on a show.

(VONDO give him a "thumbs-up." JEFF exits.)

SCOTT. He's gonna have a stroke.

MIKE. No actually, it's ulcers. His doctor didn't even want him to finish the season. Doing this full time really did him in.

SCOTT. You guys full timers too?

JEANNIE. Oh God, no.

MIKE. Jeannie, Vondo and I work together at Middletown High. Jeff saw one of the shows I directed and got me over here. Then I lured them into this purgatory – and that's how we've been spending our summers for the past eight years.

SCOTT. What do you do?

MIKE. I teach English Lit. and Drama, Jeannie works in the principal's office and Vondo's the janitor.

VONDO. Also known as "The Crud Buster".

SCOTT. Hey, ah, Vondo...what time did you say the party's gonna to start tonight?

VONDO. Right after the show. You coming?

SCOTT. Yeah, I'll be there. Uh... (*looks at everyone and says very deliberately*) I'm, bringing...Ed.

MIKE. (*beat*) Okay, who's Ed?

SCOTT. Who's Ed? You mean, who is Ed? Well, Ed's...a man. Ya know, he's this guy. A *male* guy. Ya know? I'm not doing this very well, am I? Who am I kidding, you probably know already.

JEANNIE. Ya think? You're an unmarried man working in the theatre as a costume designer, who listens to non-stop Bette Midler and knows the difference between purple and aubergine. I don't know, that's some smoke screen ya got there, pal.

VONDO. (*menacing*) We got a gay costume designer?

SCOTT. (*wary*) Yeah.

VONDO. Huh. All we need now is a vending machine by the bathroom and we have arrived.

(Puts his arm around SCOTT, smiles and gives him a thumbs up.)

SCOTT. *(to JEANNIE)* Okay, not sure what that meant, but he's smiling, so I'll take it. God, you'd think by now at my age I'd be more comfortable...ya know...coming out, but, ...I'm from Iowa.

(JEANNIE, MIKE and VONDO give a quiet "Oh." of recognition.)

Well, I better get back in...the theatre. *(points to theatre)* I'm going back in the theatre. I didn't mean I was going back in the... *(getting slightly frustrated)* I just came out, why would I go back in?

(NOTE: To explain no live cell phone ring, since all the scenes of this play take place during a show, VONDO's phone would be set to vibrate. The "buzzin'" refers to the phone's vibration.)

VONDO. OH!

(Referring to his vibrating cell phone, he hits all of his pockets to locate which pocket has the cell phone. As he's checking his pockets...)

I'm buzzin' I'm buzzin'.

(Takes out cell phone for pocket.)

(to SCOTT) Wait – you gotta meet Reba. *(answers)* Hey baby! Ya called at a good time. Guess what? Ya know the new guy, Scott? Yeah, well, he just came out of the theatre from Iowa with Ed, who's this guy who's a mailman. So how'd the move go? Great. Did you get your new number? Yeah. *(points to SCOTT's clipboard)* Can you take this down? *(to REBA)* Shoot. *(SCOTT writes)* 977-316-4149... *(SCOTT stops writing, VONDO looks at SCOTT)* 1, 3... *(SCOTT quickly starts writing again.)* ...dash 1, 9. *(beat)* Cell Block C. Got it, Darlin'. Huh? No kidding! *(very proud to MIKE and JEANNIE)* She's got

a window – she can see the fence. I’m real proud of ya, babe. See what good behavior’ll get ya? Oh okay, I won’t keep ya then. *(holds phone out)* Say bye to Reba.

MIKE & JEANNIE. Bye Reba.

(VONDO stunned that SCOTT didn’t join in, deliberately holds the phone out to him.)

SCOTT. *(speaks into phone)* Bye Reba.

VONDO. *(to REBA)* Okay, baby, love ya too. A-reba-derci.

(Turns off phone, puts it in his pocket.)

(to SCOTT) God bless her. That woman puts the “cell” in cell phone.

SCOTT. *(tears paper off clipboard and hands it to VONDO)* How long has she been away?

VONDO. Sixteen years this November.

SCOTT. Wow. You’ve been together a long time, huh?

VONDO. *(nods)* Yeah, almost four years.

SCOTT. *(confused; offside to MIKE)* They met in prison?

MIKE. Oh no, she’s in Montana. She was making her weekly phone call, dialed the wrong number, got Vondo and they’ve been together ever since.

SCOTT. *(to VONDO)* You’ve never met her?

VONDO. *(looks at him like he’s crazy)* No. Why ruin a good thing?

SCOTT. *(confused)* Okay. I’m sure I’ll get up to speed on this stuff. Here you go.

(Hands paper to VONDO then crosses to JEANNIE.)

Can you do me a favor and give these to Meredith?

JEANNIE. Sure.

(SCOTT hands gloves to JEANNIE.)

SCOTT. Thanks.

(SCOTT exits passing DANIEL and HARRIET.)

HARRIET. Daniel, I don’t think you should be changing the choreography. Eric said to leave it be.

DANIEL. Ya know, the only reason I'm in chorus is because they need a strong dancer for the kick line. And I do strength moves no dancers would ever do.

JEANNIE. You do lots of moves no dancers would ever do.

DANIEL. Hey, thanks. (*begins his next stupid dance move*) Five, six, seven, eight... (*practices a strength move*)

MEREDITH. (*Enters, muttering.*) I'm a pimp, I'm a pimp, was Scott just here? I'm a pimp, I'm a pimp.

(**DANIEL** dances by **VONDO** and **MEREDITH** and continues to dance around the stage)

I need my gloves! I'm a pimp. I'm a pimp. I'm a pimp.

(**DANIEL** dances by her.)

No! Don't make me look at you. I'll fall out of character! I'm a pimp. I'm a pimp. Go away!

(**DANIEL** dances behind the van.)

Where are my gloves?!

JEANNIE. Here! (*holds up her gloves*)

MEREDITH. (*to JEANNIE*) If I don't have my gloves, I'm not fully in character.

HARRIET. Dear, you really shouldn't cause yourself such angst. You're getting very stressed out.

MEREDITH. That's because my character is very stressed out, Harriet.

HARRIET. You know there's nothing wrong with trying to have a little fun with the role.

MEREDITH. No offense, Harriet, but I'm showing my audience an intricate person, not just some smiling cartoon. Anyone can look bouncy and happy, singing and dancing. But my Dolly is a complex human being. She's a woman who's cramped. She feels constrained, blocked. I want the audience to think she's...oh what's the word I'm looking for?

HARRIET. Constipated?

VONDO. Hey, if that's the case I can play her too.

MEREDITH. Forget it. I don't expect you to understand. (*as she puts on the gloves*) I'm a pimp, I'm a pimp...

(*looks at MIKE and smiles*)

(*nicely*) Mike, are we going to stay at the party long? I should only make an appearance. Doing this role every night takes so much out of me. I really have to come down after the show.

MIKE. That's fine with me.

MEREDITH. (*coily*) Thanks. (*walks behind the van*) I'm a pimp, I'm a pimp, I'm a pimp...DANCE OVER THERE!

(*DANIEL does a grand jeté from behind the van.*)

JEANNIE. (*to MIKE*) You're taking She-Who-Causes-Pain to the party?

VONDO. Oh! I'd rather take Ed.

MIKE. Don't start.

JEANNIE. You've watched her in action for five years and now, at the height of her tirades, you think dating her is a good idea? You're scaring me, Mike.

MIKE. Ya know, Meredith is a pretty nice person when she's not here.

JEANNIE. Ha. What brought you to that conclusion?

MIKE. Last week I went out for Chinese. I saw her there, we ate together and ended up talking for about, God, four hours. Believe it or not, there's a whole other side to her. She can be... (*a little smile*) a really sweet person.

(*JEANNIE, VONDO and HARRIET look at MIKE.*)

MIKE. I've seen it.

VONDO. Mike, I've seen my foot melt away and swirl down the drain of my shower when I was dropping acid, it was fun to watch, but it wasn't real.

MIKE. We're just going to the party, that's all. I don't know what the next step will be after that.

HARRIET. Therapy, no doubt. Oh, did I say that? I'm sorry. But you know us cartoon-like little old ladies. We get ourselves all bouncy and happy singing and dancing

and then senility takes over. But please dear, don't take me seriously.

(exits)

DANIEL. Ya know, I think Meredith's problem is that she feels threatened by all the competition. She can act and sing okay, but she's not a commodity. I'm a commodity. That's what my voice teacher says. He says that I should be on Broadway, but not in the chorus cuz I'm no chorus boy. I should only have leads. And that's all I've ever had. Except for now. But now doesn't count because they need my strength moves in the kick line.

(VONDO plays Smoke on the Water quietly)*

Here, look. This is a step I made up called "soaring eagle toes".

(Starts doing the step. The step should look kinda dopey but not too ridiculous.)

See, it's a strength move. Once when I was auditioning, I was doing this step and everyone just stared at me!

(He repeats the step over and over. JEANNIE slowly turns up the volume on VONDO's amp. DANIEL yells over the music.)

I mean, they just sat there with their mouths open. Then they said, *(louder)* "What are you doing?" *(louder)* And I said, it's "soaring eagle toes!" It's a strength move! Only I can do it. **THEY COULDN'T BELIEVE WHAT THEY WERE SEEING! I COULD TELL! AND THEN I SAID...**

MEREDITH. STOP!

(Comes out from behind the van. VONDO stops playing. Neurotic, her voice quivers.)

I am preparing for a performance here! Can't you understand that! I can't act with this.

*See Music Use Note on pg 3

DANIEL. (*looks at MEREDITH, then to everyone as if she wasn't there*) Did I mention I'm writing a new musical?

(**MEREDITH**, exasperated, turns away.)

I told Eric about it and he loves it! We're gonna collaborate. He wants to produce it next season, cause there's never been anything like it! It's about three...

ERIC. (*enters snapping his fingers*) Places, places! The entr'acte is about to start.

(**DANIEL** exits. As **MEREDITH** walks by, **ERIC** grabs her by the shoulders.)

ERIC. (*cont.*) (*points to MEREDITH*) You! Here. Now listen, you can go out there an actor, or you can go out there a singing ape. See beyond the words! (*points in her face*) Who are you?

MEREDITH. (*on the verge of tears*) I'm Dolly Levy!

ERIC. What are you?

MEREDITH. I am a survivor!

ERIC. And what is your profession?

MEREDITH. (*grabs him by the shirt, totally in his face, and from the bowels of hell...*) I'M A PIMP!

(*exits*)

ERIC. (*follows, calling after her in doorway.*) That's it! Now control them! Hate them! Make them pay! (*to those left on stage*) Hey, come on guys, it's magic time.

(**ERIC** exits, **JEANNIE**, **VONDO** and **MIKE** follow. *Lights dim.*)

Scene II

(Music to Hello Dolly fades. The marquee reads: The Sound of Music plus an addition that reads: "COMING SOON, CHILDREN'S THEATRE". A poster taped onto the wall by the entrance that reads, "Auditions for Glass Menagerie July 10 at 7:30". VONDO is talking to REBA.)

VONDO. Yeah, it's goin' okay. People just have opening night jitters, that's all. *(beat)* Oh, that's cause I was outta the house early this morning. Yeah. We had our first rehearsal for – *Medea.* *(big eyes)* WHOA! *(laughs, beat)* No, no, they didn't spell it wrong – it *is* *Medea.* Who knew?

(ERIC and JEANNIE enter. ERIC holds a box marked "MEDEA" in one arm and with his other hand holds up a stocking leg that is stuffed and twisted to resemble a large intestine.)

ERIC. Well, it's not bad. I guess when it's dipped in blood it'll look like an intestine. *(puts intestine in box)*

JEANNIE. *(reading a list)* I gotta make all of these?

ERIC. Yes! The disembowelment scene is *very* specific. Please be the same. *(puts box down)* Thank you.

VONDO. *(to JEANNIE)* Wanna say "hi" to Reba?

JEANNIE. *(takes phone)* Hi Reba. *(looks at list)* Do you know how to make a spleen?

(JEFF enters with MIKE who is wearing a Nazi youth outfit and is blatantly not happy. He wears a khaki cap, shirt, tie, shorts, knees socks and a military shoe or work boots. JEANNIE and VONDO break out laughing. NOTE: the outfit does not have a swastika. This is act one of The Sound of Music and Rolf would not be dressed in full Nazi garb until act two.)

VONDO. *(to MIKE)* What the hell are you wearing?

MIKE. I'm going on as Rolf.

VONDO. *(takes phone, to REBA)* Crisis baby, gotta run. *(hangs up)* What happened?

JEFF. Billy Thurman came down with mono.

ERIC. A thirty-something year old delivery boy? I see in this production Rolf will be portrayed as an underachiever.

MIKE. Bite me.

ERIC. Don't be rude, I'm Associate Artistic Director. I outrank you.

MIKE. You sure do love that title, don't you?

ERIC. Be nice or I won't audition for *Glass Menagerie*. You need me to play Tom – you know you do.

JEFF. Knock it off, will ya? I've eaten a case of Tums today already. *(to MIKE)* Look, I swear, I'll find someone to take the role tomorrow. You and Robin will be fine.

VONDO. You mean Tapestry.

JEANNIE. *(sits up)* No, not this show.

MIKE. Oh God, who is she this time? *(JEANNIE hands MIKE the program. Beat.)* Cheryl Streep.

(JEANNIE laughs, MIKE shakes his head.)

(to ERIC) Hey Kubrick, I've got something for you.
(pulls out a CD)

ERIC. Oh my God, is this my music?

MIKE. See if you like it. *(tosses ERIC the CD)*

ERIC. *(hands cd to VONDO)* Mr. Von der Leith, I implore you, may I hear it?

(VONDO takes the CD, goes to his van to play it. During the rest of the scene, JEANNIE sits on the ground and attempts to create various body organs with clay. NOTE: at no time do the organs become obscene.)

ERIC. What is it?

MIKE. It's classical. It might be right for what you're doing.
It's called, *Night On Bald Mountain*.

ERIC. *(repeats the title in a dramatic voice)* *Night On Bald Mountain...* I like it.

MIKE. It's by Mussorgsky.

ERIC. *(repeats the name in the same dramatic voice)*
Mussorgsky...I like it.

(Music plays. ERIC's eyes light up.)

Oh my God! How wonderful! *(He enacts stabbing to the music.)* Just imagine Medea mutilating her children as blood gushes from every orifice of their bodies! This music realizes my vision! This is it!

MIKE. *(to VONDO)* That's good Vondo. *(music stops)*

ERIC. Mike, I thank you. Truly I do. You have just made an important contribution to my play.

MIKE. Oh no, that's okay...keep all of the credit for yourself.

VONDO. *(comes out of the van; gives ERIC the CD)* I give it an eight. It's got a good beat and you can murder to it.

JEFF. I think it sucks.

ERIC. You'll take any chance you can to deprecate a fellow artist, won't you?

JEFF. No, just you.

ERIC. Jeffrey, we must learn to work together. You have talent! Use it! Why depict Maria as candy-coated bride of Christ, when you could portray her as a theologian anti-fascist? You wait. Between *Medea* and my collaboration with Daniel, you will see genius. I will set the stage on fire!

JEFF. Hopefully with you on it.

ERIC. I am *persona non grata*!

VONDO. What does that mean?

ERIC. It means, I am a person not wanted. *(to JEFF)* See beyond the words, Mr. Director. Sing and dance no more, sing and dance no more.

(ERIC exits as MEREDITH enters. She is wearing a nun's novice habit.)

MEREDITH. (*Shoots MIKE a nasty look. To JEFF.*) Jeff, you've got to do something. I know you told Harriet that Mother Abbess should have a Austrian accent, but every night, at the pinnacle of our scene, she looks me straight in the eye and says, (*imitates HARRIET's accent*) "Mareea, tell me, vaht is it you cunt face?"

JEFF. For God's sake, Meredith, I can't explain that to her!

MEREDITH. This is serious! I can't act with this.

JEFF. Okay, I'll talk to her.

(**MEREDITH** sits next to **VONDO**.)

JEANNIE. (*Holds up a wad of clay with a short hose sticking out of it. To MEREDITH.*) Does this look like a spleen?

(**ROBIN** and **SCOTT** enter from the theatre. **ROBIN's** playing *Liesel* but is not in costume yet. She wears an over-sized button down shirt.)

SCOTT. No, I'm sorry, honey, it's not going to happen. (*goes to rack, gets sailor suit*)

ROBIN. But it's not fair. Eric said this will develop my character. It'll deepen her. It'll make her real. I'm just trying to make my character deep and real, Scott.

(*exits back into the theatre*)

JEFF. What's wrong?

SCOTT. (*in a rush*) Eric got a hold of her and said since her character is sixteen going on seventeen, she's reeking with newly found sexuality. Now she wants a sexier image and asked me to make her sailor suit strapless.

JEFF. I'll talk to her.

SCOTT. Thank you. (*exits back into the theatre*)

(**JEFF** follows **SCOTT** as **DANIEL** enters. He's dressed as *Captain Von Trapp*. **JEFF** turns quickly, walks the other way trying to avoid him.)

DANIEL. Jeff! Jeff! Jeff! Jeff! (**DANIEL** continues barking his name until **JEFF** cuts him off.)

JEFF. NO, DANIEL! No! Do you see my mouth moving?
That means I'm saying something. This time try to
hear it – CAPTAIN-VON-TRAPP-DOES-NOT-TAP-
DANCE!

DANIEL. Aw, come on! The audience would really like it.

JEFF. No!

DANIEL. Then can we talk about my play?

JEFF. No.

DANIEL. Then watch this step.

JEFF. NO!

DANIEL. I can do it in "Edelweiss."

JEFF. (*as he bolts for the door*) "Edelweiss" is not a tap number!

DANIEL. (*runs after JEFF dancing all the way*) Then how about
a kick line?

(*JEFF exits into the theatre slamming the door in
DANIEL's face.*)

VONDO. Hey Mike, did you hear that? Robin's discovering
her sexuality. Know what that means? That kiss after
the song? She's gonna tongue ya.

MEREDITH. Oh! You insensitive cretin. (*looks at DANIEL
with contempt*) Makes me wonder if you've been taking
lessons from Daniel.

DANIEL. Oh stop making such a big stink over nothing.

MEREDITH. Go to hell! It's opening night and you have the
gall to give me...*your leading lady*, flowers you bought
at Seven-Eleven. Jesus, why didn't you just pick me up
a bouquet of Slim Jims?

JEANNIE. (*puts down whatever organ she's making*) You went to
Seven-Eleven and didn't get me coffee?

MEREDITH. I'm Maria Von Trapp.

JEANNIE. You're supposed to get me coffee.

DANIEL. (*to JEANNIE*) I was only there two minutes.

MEREDITH. The essence of piety and passion.

JEANNIE. You broke my coffee maker, you buy me coffee.

MEREDITH. Not to mention I'm at war with the Nazis!

JEFF. (*enters*) Has anyone seen Robin?

JEANNIE. (*points to DANIEL*) He went to Seven-Eleven and didn't get me coffee.

MEREDITH. (*quickly takes off her wimple and holds it up*) I am Churchill in a habit!

JEFF. (*to DANIEL*) Hey pal, you know the deal.

DANIEL. I was only there two minutes!

MEREDITH. I make myself raw for you and all you give me is convenience store carnations!

JEANNIE. I bet you reached over the coffee to get those cruddy carnations too. Didn't ya?

DANIEL. Nuh-uh. They were nowhere near the coffee.

MEREDITH. Forget about the coffee! I am trying to make a point. And my point is...

(*they look at her as she tries to remember*)

Roses! I'm your leading lady, I should have roses. But I guess I'm not important enough to receive roses. I mean, (*beat*) it's not as though you and I have slept together or anything. Oh, that's right, that wouldn't qualify me to be important enough to receive roses either, would it...*Mike.*

(**JEFF, JEANNIE, DANIEL** and **VONDO** look and turn to **MIKE.**)

What I'm saying Daniel – is you are walking, talking proof that man evolved from swine.

(*Points to JEANNIE and VONDO. VONDO begins to play Smoke on the Water*.*)

These are the pig people (*points to DANIEL*) and you are their king! (*puts her hand over the strings of VONDO's guitar stopping the sound*) Will you please stop playing that song!

VONDO. It's the only one I know.

MEREDITH. Then, do yourself a favor – expand your horizons. Learn a goddamn D chord.

*See Music Use Note on pg. 3.

VONDO. Hey Jeff, (*takes the wimple from MEREDITH and taps it with his foot*) ask me what I'm doing.

JEFF. What are you doing?

VONDO. I'm kicking the habit.

(*MEREDITH grabs her wimple from VONDO and smacks him with it. JEFF still laughing, opens the door for MEREDITH, she and JEFF exit into the theatre.*)

DANIEL. She's just mad cause I upstage her with my strength moves in the folk-dance. (*exits into the theatre*)

VONDO. (*Big smile. To MIKE.*) My, oh my. Looks like someone's been delivering more than telegrams lately.

MIKE. Don't.

VONDO. I wanna thank you, Mike. You've just opened a whole world of delivery jokes for us.

JEANNIE. Yeah, I just thought of three new words U.P.S. can stand for.

MIKE. Will you stop! And for the record, I'm not the prick she's making me out to be. I didn't have time to get her roses because I got stuck playing Knee-Sock-Boy.

VONDO. No roses. That means one thing for my poor man Mike – no overnight delivery!

(*He and JEANNIE laugh.*)

Ya know, I'm surprised how good this show is ending up. Katie's even coming.

MIKE. Wait, I know this – Katie's wife two.

VONDO. Katie's wife three. Carol's wife two. Debbie, or as she's known now, Sequoia Little Rain, is Frau Vondo numero uno. But Katie, yeah she was fun. I had two five or seven good years with her depending who you talk to. It started when I was at a jellyroll joint party. A jellyroll is when you take a rolling paper, sprinkle a little opiated hash over some Maui-Wowie and then, you dip it in some hash oil. Then you dip it, sprinkle it, roll it, Then you dip it, sprinkle it, roll it. Well, I lit that sucker up and BOOM! There was Katie. She walks

over to me, says “hi ya, handsome” and hands me a triple shot of Quervo and a disco biscuit – for you novices, that’s a Quaalude. I took one look at her in her tube top and her cut-offs, popped the lude, chased it with the Quervo and BOOM! We got married that night at The Rocky Horror Picture Show. Man, were her parents pissed. And let me tell ya, that’s the only wedding I’ve ever been to you got to smoke the bride’s bouquet. Problem was, Katie kept getting mad at me cause I couldn’t remember if I divorced Debbie. Come to think of it, I’m not really sure if I divorced Katie. *(Smile fades. To MIKE.)* You know...I should find those papers.

MIKE. I’m telling ya, Jeannie, this guy’s amazing. Show him a pot seed, he’ll tell you what kind of pot it is, the part of the country it’s grown in, the alkaline level of the soil, and the name of the farmer who grew it.

VONDO. Well, we’re all good at something.

JEANNIE. So what made you give it up?

VONDO. One morning I woke up naked in the sink *(beat)* and my cat was shaved. But hell, I got it right now. Six times in rehab will really straighten your ass out. Nope. No more problems – except for, ever since I quit drinkin’, smokin’ and dopin’, Yoo-hoo is my crack. *(pats his cooler)* Love it, need it, gots to have it. Steal my van, kick my cat, burn down my house, but do *not* deny me my Yoo-hoo. *(getting angst)* You think you know me? Think again. If I don’t get it when I need it, I get ugly. We’re talkin’ pitbull with rabies ugly. *(angst)* I can handle anything you throw at me – *(deep breath)* just don’t screw with my Yoo-hoo. *(Smiles. Sits on the back of the van.)*

(JEFF and ROBIN enter. ROBIN wears a white sailor suit with navy blue trim [see the movie] and has a BIG bow in her hair. Her skirt is pleated and falls at her knee. Important note: ROBIN must be wearing ankle socks and not tights or stockings. There is an upcoming joke and if she wears tights the joke will not go over.)

JEFF. (*holding the script*) Vondo, will you stay on book during all of Mike's scenes, just in case.

VONDO. Sure.

JEFF. I want you two to run your lines one more time.

ROBIN. This is gonna be fun. (*sits next to MIKE on the bench*)
My whole family will be here tonight. And know what?
My temple has 112 people coming.

JEFF. Group sales. Good girl.

MIKE. Well, I hope I don't blow a line. I don't want to throw off your performance.

(Playwright's note: At no time should the actor playing ROBIN act sexy during this next exchange. She does not realize the impact of what she's saying. What makes it funny is that she is the only one oblivious to what it sounds like, when everyone else is stunned. If you play it differently, it makes ROBIN look a little slutty, it will shift the perception of her character in the wrong way for the rest of the show, and you will totally "kill the funny" of this moment.)

ROBIN. Oh, I'm not worried. (*very matter of fact*) I know your Rolf will be more sensual than Billy Thurman's.

(MIKE and JEFF look at ROBIN.)

(innocently) Eric says, Liesel is a sixteen year old coquette. And although she's singing that she's timid and shy, what she's really saying is, she wants be seduced.

JEFF. Ah, honey, how did Eric suggest you prepare for this role?

ROBIN. He gave me Cliff Notes to *Lolita*. (*innocently*) Eric says, I must see beyond the words. That Liesel's a survivor of puberty. She's an unbridled filly galloping through her first pasture of stallions. (*big smile to MIKE*) I love horses. (*to EVERYONE*) Eric says, Liesel is a woman-child awakening her body to...

MIKE. (*Starting to panic. Looks to JEFF for help.*) JEFF!

JEFF. Robin, honey, I, I think you're going a little off the deep end.

ROBIN. But, why? I've worked so hard to bring my character this far. I've deepened her.

JEFF. Yeah, I know you have, honey. And that's really quite commendable.

ROBIN. Thanks. (*Innocently smiles to MIKE. Beat.*) I'm not wearing underwear.*

MIKE. (*horrified, jumps up from bench and away from ROBIN*)
JESUS CHRIST!

JEFF. Ah, Robin...

MIKE. (*staring at ROBIN in horror*) SHE'S FIFTEEN!

JEFF. I know.

MIKE. I'M A TEACHER!!!!

JEFF. Calm down.

MIKE. THAT'S ILLEGAL!

VONDO. Only if you get caught.

MIKE. JESUS CHRIST!

JEFF. Now take it easy.

MIKE. TAKE IT EASY?! ARE YOU NUTS? Her father is the top criminal attorney in the state! I'm gonna be onstage while Stanley Rosenblatt, his family and the entire congregation of Temple Beth Shalom, watches his fifteen year old bare ass baby girl, thrust her newfound sexuality at me, a man twice her age, WHO'S DRESSED AS A NAZI!

JEFF. Robin...honey, I really wish you would check with me before you let someone else guide your character to such an extreme. Now, let's go back to making Liesel a sweet, innocent, young lady, okay?

ROBIN. Okay.

JEFF. Good girl. Now...go put on your panties.

ROBIN. Thanks, Jeff.

*Playwright's note: Say this line exactly as written. Do not add the word "any" and make it "I'm not wearing any underwear". This has been a common mistake and it trips up the laugh line.

(**ROBIN** hugs **JEFF** who is uncomfortable to hug her back in her “undressed” condition raises both arms over his head. **ROBIN** exits as **DANIEL** enters.)

MIKE. I am not doing this!

JEFF. (with a smile and a little chuckle) Don’t worry, you’ll be fine. You’ll be fine and she’ll be fine and I’ll be fine. The only one who won’t be fine – is Eric. And ya know why Eric won’t be fine, Mike? Cause after the show, you and I are going to take him in the woods – AND BEAT HIM WITH A STICK! Then after that, everything will be fine. Oh yeah, by the way, you’re all doing great. I’m real proud of you. Teamwork. That’s our motto. Now, let’s put on a show.

(**VONDO** gives him a “thumbs-up”. **JEFF** exits.)

JEANNIE. (to **MIKE**) It’s for one night. Don’t sweat it.

MIKE. “Nazi Pervert Teacher Gropes Panty-less Von Trapp Child” – film at eleven. (puts head in his hands)

DANIEL. (big smile) Guess what? I talked to Jeff and he said I can give you my musical for you to look at for next season. Isn’t that great? Eric and I already talked to the board about it and they’re really interested. Finally, now people are starting to take me seriously as a playwright too. I mean, I’ve so many great ideas for plays and stuff. But this one’s a real winner. It’s called, Mime – the Musical. It’s about a troupe of mimes trying to make it to the big time. Ya know, just like the movie *Fame*, except without words. And the really unique thing is, it’s a musical, but nobody sings. Nobody sings with their voices, that is. They sing with their bodies. But it’s not dance, it’s mime. (mimes “I’m in a box”) Ya know, I’m gonna study mime this fall. You need a lot of strength to perform mime. I’m so excited, I’ve even started doing the make-up palettes for the show.

JEANNIE. Why don’t you just paint your face white and write “dork” on your forehead?

DANIEL. Oh, please! This is gonna be big! Everyone will know about this show cause Eric and I are gonna market it like crazy. We're gonna send flyers to clubs, schools, oh, and we're even going to have a special performance for the deaf. We're gonna have a sign interpreter sign the whole show for them.

MIKE. Daniel, why would you use an interpreter?

DANIEL. Duh. Because they're deaf.

MIKE. Yeah, I know. But you're performing the show in mime.

DANIEL. So?

MIKE. So, you don't need someone to sign it.

DANIEL. Yes I do. They can't hear.

MIKE. But no one speaks in mime.

DANIEL. I know that.

MIKE. They'll see the actors performing.

DANIEL. Well of course they will, stupid. They're not blind, they're deaf.

MIKE. My point exactly. So you don't need an interpreter.

DANIEL. Yeah, but mime is not sign language.

MIKE. I know.

DANIEL. It's mime.

MIKE. Right.

DANIEL. So they won't understand.

MIKE. They'll understand through the mime.

DANIEL. But they can't hear mime.

MIKE. No one can hear mime!

DANIEL. So they'll need an interpreter!

MIKE. NO, THEY'LL SEE IT!

DANIEL. BUT THEY WON'T *HEAR IT*, CAUSE THEY'RE *DEAF!* (*beat, looks at MIKE in amazement*) Boy, ya just don't get it, do ya, Mike? What's up with you? You got something against the deaf?

MIKE. NO!

DANIEL. Then why don't you want them to enjoy the theatre?

MIKE. No, I was just saying...

DANIEL. Yeah, we *know* what you were saying. Bigotry is ugly, Mike. The theatre has places for all kinds of people, but there's no room for people who hate the deaf! (*exits in a snit*)

MIKE. (*yells after him*) I DON'T HATE THE DEAF! (*desperate to JEANNIE*) Please tell me you knew what I was saying.

JEANNIE. Yeah, you hate the deaf.

MIKE. I DON'T HATE THE DEAF!

JEFF. (*Enters. Confused from the theatre. To MIKE.*) You hate the deaf?

MIKE. NO! Forget it!

JEFF. Okay, people, let's go.

(*VONDO enters into the theatre.*)

(*to MIKE*) Now relax, you and Robin will be fine. But just to be on the safe side, don't spin her around during the dance number.

MIKE. (*walks away from the stage door*) That's it! I am not doing this!

JEFF. Jeannie, do me a favor – go find Robin and make sure she's...ya know, fully dressed. Okay?

JEANNIE. Yeah. (*exits*)

MIKE. I mean it. I'm not going on that stage until I know she's legal.

JEFF. We'll make her legal, don't worry.

MIKE. And what the hell are you thinking? You told Daniel we might do his musical?

JEFF. Well, I had to do something. He cornered me in my office doing that (*imitates DANIEL's gestures*) "I'm in a box, I'm in a box," shit. I swear, I'm gonna kill that kid. He and Eric have been pitching the thing to the board and they're really starting to listen to them.

MIKE. So I've heard.

JEFF. Well, it won't be my problem much longer. I guess now's a good enough time as any to tell you. I'm leaving.

MIKE. What?

JEFF. I'm done, Mike. Well, I'm not done, but my wife says I'm done, my doctor says I'm done, the girl at the bagel place says I'm done. Actually, she has nothing to do with it, but she doesn't charge for cream cheese so I make her feel important. Anyway, I wanted you to be the first know. I'm outta here after this season. I called an emergency board meeting this morning and gave them my resignation.

MIKE. Oh man, that sucks. I'm sorry, Jeff.

JEFF. Yeah, well, whadda ya gonna do.

MIKE. I bet Phyllis was in her glory.

JEFF. She wasn't there. She's away this weekend. Listen, I just want to let you know, you've been really great. From the day you've stepped foot into this place you've done nothing but worked like crazy to make it better. You've always supported me when I had to fight Phyllis and the maniacs and you've been the one person I know I could trust. I can't tell you how much that's meant. That's why it really kills me that the board felt the next step was to make Eric Artistic Director.

MIKE. Are you serious? They're not really thinking that, are they? (**JEFF nods**) Jesus, you can't let that happen. If they give him this theatre, he'll kill it.

JEFF. I know.

MIKE. Well you gotta do something! I mean it. Now is no time to give in. You do anything you have to, to keep this theatre out of Eric's hands. Ya hear me, Jeff? No matter how drastic or desperate the action is, I want you to do whatever it takes and I'll stand and fight with you all the way.

JEFF. I knew I could count on you. Okay, this is where we stand. I knew I only had this once chance to strike. So I told the board I was putting my foot down. Contrary to what they think, Phyllis doesn't run this place, I do.

(MIKE gives JEFF a supportive slap on the arm.)

And I didn't give a damn if she wasn't there, we were voting on it now.

MIKE. Good.

JEFF. So I nominated you, we voted you in and you're the new Artistic Director.

MIKE. *(front, enthusiastically)* Yes. *(quick turn to JEFF)* What?

JEFF. *(shakes his hand)* You start October 16th, congratulations.

MIKE. What?

HARRIET. *(enters dressed as Mother Abbess)* Gentlemen, the temple's here and we're sold out. Mazel Tov.

JEFF. *(motions for MIKE to wait a minute)* Harriet, can I talk to you a moment?

HARRIET. What's the matter, dear?

JEFF. Well, um, I'm not exactly sure how to say this but, um, it's, your accent. You know in the scene with Meredith right before, "Climb Every Mountain?" Ahhh, how do I say this? Instead of saying, "What is it you *can't* face," it sounds more like – oh God...

HARRIET. Jeff, I think I know what you're trying to say. And let me tell you something honey, this is my fifth show with Meredith...and well...that's no accent. *(smiles, pats him on the cheek)*

(JEFF looks back at MIKE and smiles. HARRIET exits into the theatre, JEFF follows her quickly to avoid MIKE.)

MIKE. *(after JEFF)* Whoa Jeff, wait!

ROBIN. *(Enters. With a big smile.)* Mike! Whadda ya doing out here? Come on. The overture is gonna start.

JEANNIE. (*Enters. To ROBIN.*) There you are. (**JEANNIE** *grabs ROBIN by the hand.*) Get in here.

(They both go into the theatre. Offstage.)

OKAY...BEND OVER. (*Sticks her head out the door. To MIKE.*) This is mission control, we have coverage, Houston, it's a go. (*gives a thumbs-up*)

(Climb Every Mountain blares. Lights fade to spot on MIKE bewildered. Lights fade.)*

*See Music Use Note on Page 3.

Scene III

(Sound of Music* fades out, the marquee now reads: *Medea*. An added sign reads: “Children’s Theatre Presents: *Cinderella*”. There are now two racks of costumes. One with the togas has a sign that reads: “*Togas*”. The other reads: “*Cinderella*”. The audition notice from the previous scene is gone. Light coming inside the theatre indicates they’re in the middle of a performance. **SCOTT** sits in the van, **JEANNIE** is next to him, lying face down with her head resting on her folded arms. **VONDO** sits on his cooler.)

(Playwright’s note: Due to an upcoming situation, **VONDO**’s tee shirt must be white or a light color. Keep the logo small or on the back.)

SCOTT. (laughing) Oh my God, you’re kidding!

VONDO. No, no, wait. It gets better. (talks on phone to **REBA**) Ya there, babe? Okay. (holds phone up so **REBA** can hear the story too) So now we’re doing, *Streetcar Named Desire*. It’s dress rehearsal, at the end of some scene – Jeannie fades out the lights. Meredith goes berserk and screams, “The *only* blackout is at the end of the *rape* scene. What kind of idiot are you?”

(**MIKE** enters during the next few lines and immediately recognizes the story.)

SCOTT. Oh man!

VONDO. Yeah – not a good idea. Now it’s opening night. We’re at the end of the rape scene. Eric grabs Meredith and says the cue for the blackout, “You and I have had this date from the beginning.” (beat) *Nothing*. He says it again, (louder) “You and I have had this date from the beginning.” *Nothing*. Meredith’s eyes get real big, she turns, looks up to the light booth, and there sits Jeannie – just smilin’ and wavin’. (waves)

*See Music Use Note on Page 3.

JEANNIE. (*lifts head, takes VONDO's arm that's holding the phone, and speaks into the phone*) That was the happiest day of my life. (*puts her head back down*)

SCOTT. So what happened?

MIKE. Jeff got to the light board just as Eric dropped his pants.

(**SCOTT** and **VONDO** go into hysterics.)

I'm really glad you find this funny. Are you guys gonna do this to me when I take over?

JEANNIE, VONDO & SCOTT. (*Beat. Overly sincere they nod their heads "no", VONDO hold the phone out to MIKE and shakes it back and forth as if the phone is shaking it's head "no" too.*) No! No, no, no, no, no. No.

VONDO. (*to REBA*) Huh? Okay babe. Catch ya later. (*holds phone up*)

JEANNIE, MIKE & SCOTT. Bye, Reba.

(**VONDO** hangs up. Almost every time a character opens the stage door to enter or exit, we'll hear someone offstage performing Medea. **HARRIET** enters, we hear **MEREDITH** performing. She speaks all her lines with a Scottish accent.)

MEREDITH. (*offstage*) HUSBAND! WHAT PAIN YE HAVE CAUSED ME! I SCREAM NOW, AS I DID WHILE BIRTHING YOUR UNWANTED OFFSPRING!

HARRIET. (*closes the door*) My God, this show is awful.

SCOTT. I'm confused. Isn't she supposed to have a Greek accent?

JEANNIE. She thinks she does.

HARRIET. Are you two alright? You look exhausted.

SCOTT. We've been here since seven.

HARRIET. My goodness, why so early?

SCOTT. Nobody expected *Cinderella* to go over so well.

JEANNIE. (*lifts her head, her eyes half closed*) Jeff added shows at eleven, two, and five. Then we do whatever the hell

the evening show is. At least we have it easy now. Eric wants only one light cue at the death scene. So until then, we get to sit here. *(Her pathetic cheer trails off as she puts her head down.)* Yaaaaay.

HARRIET. *(to MIKE)* So how are you holding up?

MIKE. Eric's going ballistic screaming to the board he wants to have a say in next season. Phyllis thinks we should be co-artistic directors. And Jeff keeps on me every second not to give them an inch. Jesus, no wonder he's got ulcers. Now I know what I'll be like in twelve years.

JEANNIE. *(lifts head)* Ha. Try August.

HARRIET. *(to MIKE)* Should I ask?

MIKE. Yeah, I told him I'd do it. But now I'm directing two shows back to back.

JEANNIE. What?

MIKE. I'm gonna finish directing *Oklahoma* for Jeff. Before he jumps ship, he wants to take two weeks, rebudget, put together a proposal and see if he can get some other source of funding. That way I won't have to put up with Eric, Phyllis or things like –

(Instantaneously ROBIN enters opens the theatre door and immediately we hear offstage.)

MEREDITH. *(offstage)* SPEW YOUR VOMIT YOU WORTHLESS BAG O'PUKE!

(MIKE gestures to the door.)

ROBIN. *(wearing a pink toga and a laurel of flowers)* Hey Scott, I'm done with my scene. Can you help me with my murder costume?

SCOTT. Sure. This is such a pain in the ass. Ya know how Eric had me line all the kid's costumes with blood packets? Now, nobody can sit down before they get killed or they'll pop. *(goes to costume rack.)*

MIKE. *(aside to ROBIN)* Hey Robin, are you going out with us after the show?

ROBIN. Yeah, I was gonna.

MIKE. Can you do me a favor and not talk about *Glass Menagerie*? Only the people that got parts know who's in the cast. So, I don't want to talk about it until I've officially announced it. Okay?

ROBIN. Okay.

(as MIKE turns ROBIN innocently but loudly says)

Thanks again for letting me play Laura! I can't wait! It'll really increase my range as an actress. *(to EVERYONE)* I get to limp.

(SCOTT and ROBIN exit to the trailer.)

JEANNIE. *(sits up, to MIKE)* You didn't give the part to Meredith?

MIKE. No.

JEANNIE. Does she know this?

MIKE. No.

JEANNIE. Can we watch when you tell her?

MIKE. Stop! She is gonna be crushed. You have no idea how bad she wanted this part. It's all she's talked about for weeks. And you should've seen her at auditions. She thought she nailed it. And, she wasn't bad, but, she just wasn't right for the role. No matter how I looked at it, she was just too...

HARRIET. *(with a sarcastic little smile)* Tall?

(MIKE turns to HARRIET.)

You don't think she's too tall, dear?

MIKE. No.

HARRIET. Well, if she's not too tall whatever could it be?

MIKE. You're gonna make me say it, aren't you? Fine. She's too old. Is that what you want to hear?

HARRIET. *(with a sweet smile)* Every waking moment, dear.

MIKE. I mean, Laura's in her twenties – tops. So Meredith really didn't stand much of a chance.

VONDO. Robin just got the lead in *West Side Story* too. I'm telling ya, this kid is kickin' ingénue butt.

MIKE. I know. And the funny thing is, she has no idea how talented she is.

JEANNIE. Yeah well, Meredith does. Especially since the review of *Sound Of Music* said Robin was outstanding but Meredith played Maria more like Attila the Nun.

MIKE. That review was pretty unfair.

JEANNIE. No it wasn't. She didn't listen to Jeff's direction and she got exactly what she deserved. Despite it all, I feel bad for her. This place may be the starting gate for Robin, but it's the last lap for Meredith.

(DANIEL enters. He's playing Medea's husband and wears a toga and a head laurel.)

DANIEL. Guess what? I improvised a little dance with Meredith. I spun her around and put her into a dip. Boy, did it enhance her character! You could really see the tension in her face. Ya know, before the season ends, Eric and I are gonna do a workshop production of our show, Mime. This means I'm gonna have to prepare myself mentally for the characters. So Eric suggested from now on, unless I'm onstage, I shouldn't talk. I should only communicate through mime.

JEANNIE. Oh, Daniel, that's really not a good idea.

DANIEL. Duh. Sure it is. It's a great way to...

JEANNIE. *(cuts him off quick)* Daniel! I'm gonna try to help you. I'm gonna do something I avoid doing at all costs. I'm gonna talk to you. To be blunt, I hate you. I hate you, and I hate mime. And I'm not alone. *(beat)* We have a club. We meet on Mondays. We pay dues. We have bake sales. We go on bus trips – next week we see *Phantom*. And guess what? We all hate you. We're big. And we're getting bigger every strength move. So trust me on this, take the mime idea and flush it down the toilet. Cause there are people out there who wanna hurt you – they wanna hurt ya bad, Daniel. And right now, you are looking at the Grand Poo-bah of them all.

(**DANIEL** looks at **JEANNIE** and mimes a single tear falling from his eye. He puts his index finger beneath his eye, makes a boo-boo face, and traces the tear rolling down his cheek.)

JEANNIE. Stop it!

(**DANIEL** repeats the action quicker this time.)

STOP IT!

(**JEANNIE** crosses as **DANIEL** follows miming “You broke my heart.” He takes his two hands, cups them so they make a heart. He puts them on his chest, then separates his two hands as the broken heart.)

GET AWAY FROM ME!

ERIC. (enters from the theatre, holding a bloody leg) Quiet! There is a performance going on in here!

MEREDITH. (wailing offstage) OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO
OOOOOOOOOOHHHHHHH!!

ERIC. You almost made me miss my favorite line. Now shut up! (goes back in, door closes)

(**DANIEL** puts his finger up to his mouth and mimes “SHHHHHH!” then “zipper my lips” and continues various other mime actions – i.e. walking a dog, pulling a rope, going down stairs)

JEANNIE. (watches **DANIEL** miming) Vondo, start your van and run him over.

VONDO. Come on, Honey. Let’s go in the theatre so you can laugh at the actors. Won’t that be fun?

(**JEANNIE** grabs her staple gun and shoots staples at **DANIEL**, who mimes shooting in a gun duel. **VONDO** grabs **JEANNIE** and exits into the theatre as **DANIEL** follows passing **JEFF** and **ERIC** as they enter.)

MEREDITH. (offstage, sings in frantic operatic voice) LA! LA, LA, LA, LA! LA, LA, LA, LA, LA, LA! LA, LA, LA!

JEFF. (shakes his head in disbelief) Wow. (he closes the door)

ERIC. Pretty powerful, huh?

JEFF. Oh, it's making an impact, all right. *(to MIKE as he points to theatre door)* This is all because I listened to Phyllis and let Eric pick one show this season. Remember that, heed it, tattoo it on your ass.

ERIC. Laugh now but wait till tomorrow. The box office will be mobbed!

MIKE. I think the only mob you'll see is the one running you out of town.

ERIC. Don't talk down to me, peasant. You're not Artistic Director yet. Remember, Aunt Phyllis has made it quite clear that she wants her money to be used for the development of new works, especially mine.

JEFF. Yeah well, after she gets a gander of that – I won't be surprised if she turns this place into a Jiffy Lube.

MIKE. And can't you ever be accurate? Medea only has two sons. Why do you have her as the mother of six?

ERIC. Because this is *my* version! Besides, we had all those Von Trapp kids left over. Don't worry Mike, Meredith will be brilliant in the murder scene – I've instilled her with rage. I just informed her you screwed her out of her part in *Glass Menagerie*.

MIKE. You told her? You bastard.

(MIKE exits into the theatre. ROBIN enters from the trailer. She's wearing a white toga. This toga must be white. She wears a laurel of white flowers in her hair.)

MEREDITH. *(offstage)* HERE KITTY, KITTY, KITTY, KITTY, KITTY! *(door closes)*

ERIC. Ah, here's my little sacrificial lamb. My dear, are you mentally prepared to have your insides brutally eviscerated from your body and spattered upon the stage for all the world to see?

ROBIN. *(with a smile)* Okay.

VONDO. *(goes to the van, picks up a small bag)* Hey Robin, I have a little opening night present for you.

ROBIN. *(takes bag)* This is for me? You didn't have to do that! Vondo, you're so nice! *(takes the bag and pulls out a*

small white teddy bear with a Greek laurel wreath on its head)

Oh my gosh, he's so cute! Look! (*shows it to HARRIET*)

HARRIET. Oh, isn't he precious!

ROBIN. Vondo, I really, really love him! You are the sweetest person in the whole wide world!

VONDO. Well, break a leg.

ROBIN. Thanks!

(She runs, throws her arms around VONDO's neck and hugs him big. They separate and all of ROBIN's blood packets have popped. She and VONDO are covered in blood.)

OH MY GOD!

VONDO. (*Seeing he too is covered in blood, he just screams.*)
AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

ERIC. OH MY GOD! (*to JEFF*) GET SCOTT! HURRY, GET SCOTT!

(JEFF exits to the trailer. VONDO, eyes bulging, looking at his shirt, trembling in fear.)

ROBIN. THIS IS SO GROSS! (*She puts her bear down.*)

HARRIET. (*Sees VONDO in shock. Speaks deliberately.*) Vondo, honey, it's okay. It was her costume. It wasn't real.

(JEFF and SCOTT barrel in from the trailer)

SCOTT. (*sees ROBIN*) OH SHIT!

(SCOTT runs over to the rack of costumes and frantically searches through it.)

ROBIN. (*crying*) I popped!

ERIC. FOR GOD'S SAKE DO SOMETHING!

JEFF. Can you put another toga on her?

SCOTT. No. She won't bleed when she gets stabbed!

ERIC. SHE HAS TO BLEED WHEN SHE GETS STABBED!

JEFF. Well, put a sheet on her or something.

SCOTT. She'll seep right through it. Then she'll be bleeding before she gets stabbed.

ERIC. SHE CAN'T BLEED BEFORE SHE GETS STABBED!

SCOTT. I KNOW THAT!

ERIC. WELL, YOU'RE THE GODDAMN COSTUME DESIGNER! DO SOMETHING!

SCOTT. NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO PISS ME OFF, ERIC!

ERIC. Take this situation and create with it! Use it! Use It!

SCOTT. SHUT UP!

(SCOTT exits to the trailer, JEANNIE and MIKE enter from the theatre.)

MIKE. *(rushing out)* Hey, keep it down. We can hear you in... *(sees ROBIN)* Jesus!

JEANNIE. Oh my God! What happened?

VONDO. I popped her prematurely.

(JEANNIE helps clean up ROBIN. MIKE runs over to a laundry-type bag or basket by the rack and finds a towel or other things to wipe the blood off Robin. He hands them to JEANNIE and HARRIET but he does not wipe the blood off ROBIN as that would be inappropriate. Playwright's note: If there is blood splattered on the floor, at no time should any actor wipe the floor of the stage. Remember, they are in a parking lot and would not wipe the asphalt.)

HARRIET. Would you believe this is the result of a harmless little thank you hug?

ROBIN. *(crying)* I didn't mean it! I really didn't mean it!

ERIC. Remain calm, little one. *(screams)* WE MUST REMAIN CALM!

EVERYONE. SHHHHHHHHHH!

HARRIET. *(wiping the blood off ROBIN)* It's okay honey. I'm sure Scott can fix this.

JEANNIE. *(wiping the blood off ROBIN)* Yeah, he'll have you looking as good as new...in about a week.

VONDO. I'm so sorry, Robin. I really am. Please don't cry. God, I feel like I just shot the Easter Bunny.

(SCOTT enters running.)

SCOTT. Okay, I need help.

*(They huddle around **ROBIN** and begin to dress her.)*

ERIC. What the hell is that?

ROBIN. Oh, Scott...please say you're kidding.

SCOTT. Let's just see how it looks.

MIKE. Are you sure about this?

SCOTT. *(frantically dresses her)* Work with me, people. I have thirty seconds to make a costume, so just work with me, goddamnit! *(beat)* Well, I'll admit, it's not the correct time period. But it'll have to do.

*(They step back to reveal **ROBIN** wearing a trash bag with some kind of Greek toga belt.)*

ERIC. She can't wear that.

ROBIN. I look stupid.

SCOTT. Well, that's all I've got!

ROBIN. *(in tears)* Oh God, I used my real name for this show.

ERIC. THIS IS ABSURD! Nobody will see her bleed when she gets stabbed!

SCOTT. Well I don't hear you coming up with a solution! *(thinks)* Look, Robin, when you get stabbed, rip the bag – like you're in pain or something. That way people will see the blood.

ERIC. Yes! That's it! But don't think of it as ripping the bag, think of it as shedding your skin. It's a re-birth! Understand?

ROBIN. *(crying)* No.

ERIC. It'll deepen her. Understand?

ROBIN. *(crying)* No.

ERIC. Good enough, get in there. *(to **VONDO**)* You. Go with her and cue the music. *(proclaims)* We will have murder. *(to **ROBIN** as she walking)* Now take this and use it! See beyond the words, little one. See beyond the words.

*(**ROBIN** nodding "yes" gives a little snuffle/sob as she exits into the theatre. **VONDO** and **SCOTT** follow her.)*

ERIC. Congratulations, all! We've taken a negative and made it a positive! That garbage bag has become a part of who she is. Now, no one will ever even notice.

(MEREDITH enters holding a head. She wears a toga, her hair is done like a Greek goddess. She stays in character and continues to speak with a Scottish accent.)

MEREDITH. Why is me daughter wearing a trash bag?

JEFF. There was a little mishap.

ERIC. Don't tell her that!

JEFF. Fine! You explain it. Bye-bye.

(JEFF exits into the theatre.)

ERIC. *(to MEREDITH)* There was no mishap! As she dies, your daughter will shed her skin. It's a re-birth.

MEREDITH. That's ridiculous!

ERIC. Who are you? Tell me who you are!

MEREDITH. I'm Medea, a Greek heroine with serial killer tendencies.

ERIC. Right! And this is your new motivation for murdering your children.

MEREDITH. But ye can't change me motivation right a'fore me big scene!

ERIC. Oh for God sakes, TAKE IT AND USE IT!

MEREDITH. I can't act with this. *(as she opens door to theatre and exits...)*

DANIEL. *(offstage)* CHILDREN, YOUR MOTHER ARRIVES!
TIME TO SLAUGHTER THE YAK.

ERIC. *(sigh of relief)* Well, I guess every show has to have at least one little disaster to truly make it a success.

VONDO. *(enters)* Hey Eric, did you put the CD in the sound booth? It's not in the player.

ERIC. What? Oh my God, don't tell me that! Oh my God! I'm sure I put it in the booth. Oh my God!

MIKE. Okay, don't panic. Start looking for it!

ERIC. We've gotta find it or my play will be ruined!

(From this point on, the action and lines happen very fast. Everyone searches for the CD.)

VONDO. Harriet, can you hold the door? I gotta hear my cue.

HARRIET. Sure, honey. *(She opens the theatre door and will continue to hold it until the end of the scene.)*

MEREDITH. *(offstage)* COME TO ME HUSBAND. KISS ME! TELL ME YE LOVE ME!

MIKE. *(searching a prop box)* Is it in your backpack?

ERIC. I DON'T KNOW! *(gets his backpack and searches through it)* Oh my God! The entire fate of this show depends on that music!!!

VONDO. *(nervous)* Oh boy, I'll check the booth again.

(runs into the theatre as HARRIET holds the door)

MIKE. *(yells after him)* Tell Jeff to cover the lights.

MEREDITH. *(offstage)* NAY! NAY! NAY I SAY! YOUR LOVE SCORNS ME!

JEANNIE. *(to ERIC)* Did you listen to it today?

ERIC. *(stops)* THE VAN!

(They bolt over to the van and start searching it frantically. JEANNIE jumps into the front.)

MEREDITH. *(offstage)* VENGEANCE BE ME LOVER, ABSOLUTION BE ME FRIEND!

JEANNIE. *(from inside the van)* It's not in the player!

VONDO. *(enters)* It's not in the booth.

ERIC. SHIT! *(things fly out of the van)*

MEREDITH. *(offstage)* SWEET REVENGE THE DAY IS YOURS! HEAR ME SING YOUR SONG!

VONDO. *(nervously as he runs to the van)* HEY GUYS, SHE'S GONNA GIVE ME THE CUE!

ROBIN. *(offstage)* MOTHER! WHY DO YE LOOK SO COLD? MOTHER! WHY DO YE LOOK SO QUEER?

ERIC. FIND IT! THERE HAS GOT TO BE MUSIC!