SAMUEL FRENCH SAMPLE PERUSAL

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SF PERUSALS

Pastorale

Deborah Eisenberg

A Samuel French Acting Edition

SAMUEL FRENCH
Founded 1830

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PASTORALE was first presented in New York City in April, 1982, at the Second Stage, whose Artistic Directors are Robyn Goodman and Carole Rothman. It was directed by Carole Rothman, the set design was by Heidi Landesman, the lighting by Frances Aronson, costumes by Nan Cibula, and the sound design by Gary Harris. The Production Stage Manager was James McConnell-Clark, Jr., the Stage Manager was Rebecca Pease, Kim Novick was the Production Supervisor for the Second Stage, and Drew Farber the Associate Director. Casting was by Meg Simon and Fran Kumin. The cast, in order of appearance, was as follows:

MELANIE ..... Judith Ivey

RACHEL ..... Christine Estabrook

STEVE ..... Thomas Waites

MAN ..... Howard Renensland

EDIE ..... Elizabeth Austin

JOHN ..... Jeffrey Fahey

CELIA ..... Taylor Miller

COLORADANS .... David B. Hunt, Bjorn Johnson, Paul Loughlin

WOMAN ..... Rebecca Pease

CAST

Men

Steve
Man
John
and, if possible, 3 guys from Colorado

Women

Melanie
Rachel
Edie
Celia

There should also be a Couple, who appear very briefly. If necessary, however, the Couple could be played as a Woman (by a woman) or as a Man (by a man.)

MELANIE

RACHEL

STEVE

EDIE *and*

JOHN *are in their mid-20's. It may seem to you that they are younger, but they are not.*

the MAN *is around 28 or 30*

CELIA *is 19 or 20*

the COUPLE *who arrive at the end of February should be in their late 20's or early 30's. They are self-possessed and relaxed. They are chic and dressed in jeans or corderoys, maybe, and Frye boots.*

The play until the end of the final scene takes place entirely in the central room of a farmhouse. A door leading to Melanie's room is visible. Also opening directly onto this room, either visibly or not, are doors leading to the outside and to the kitchen. Somewhere in this house is a room in which Rachel stays. Perhaps it is directly off this room, or perhaps it isn't.

MELANIE. So why don't you just drop it? I mean, what do you care?

RACHEL. It's true. I know. I don't even know the guy, but I've got this horrible crush on him anyhow.

STEVE. How did you guys get together?

RACHEL. Well, I met him one day a month or two ago. He was passing through the city on his way to Europe and he didn't know anybody, so I said he could come over and stay for a couple of nights. So anyhow, he just kind of eventually was still there. Sometimes I'd come home from work and he'd have made cookies or something, and sometimes he said these really terrific things. And I got to really like sleeping with him. I mean, I didn't ever get to know him that well, but—

STEVE. And then he left for Europe, huh?

RACHEL. Well, not exactly. What it is, is when I was laid off I went to Colorado for a couple of weeks until my unemployment started, and I left him in the apartment, and when I got back it turned out he had moved in with my sort-of friend Pammy on 6th Street.

STEVE. It's too bad you feel so bad about him.

RACHEL. Well, yes, but really I don't. At least I don't actually care about him, really. That's a whole other thing, thank God. I mean, I know I won't feel

like this too long, and besides, it's not a very important sort of feeling. And also, it's not, you know, very closely related to the person I feel it about.

STEVE. Well, but Rachel—I mean, that's always all that's going on. I mean, you just have some sort of feeling, you know, scanning your field, and somebody wanders into its trajectory, is all.

RACHEL. Could be. Well, but what if, say, you're actually in love with someone, though. Well, maybe not love . . . but, oh—friends. You only feel friendship about people who are actually your friends.

STEVE. Well, but friendship isn't exactly a feeling, though, in that sense.

RACHEL. Oh, yeah. True. You know, I'm really glad I came up this weekend. We all should keep in touch more.

MELANIE. Why don't you just stay up here for the summer?

STEVE. Yeah, why go back to all that pavement. Summer in the city. God. The city's so overloaded anyway.

RACHEL. It's true there's a lot of jumping around for I don't know what. I'm always so wired, but I can't think what I've really been doing. Sometimes I wish I could just, you know, stop.

STEVE. God. I wish I could just start.

MELANIE. You know, there's plenty of room here, if you want to stay.

RACHEL. It would be great, but I've really got to go back and get a job.

MELANIE. You could get a job up here, though. Matter of fact, I'm going to talk to some lady at the

pottery place this afternoon about a job, and I'll ask for you, too. This house is really a good deal, besides. It's practically free. Remember Ruthie Fisher? She got it for me. The owners have moved to Connecticut, and they want someone in the house till it gets sold. All I have to do is see if any kids fall in the well and take out the dead mice my cats bring in and stuff.

MAN. (*From off*) Hey, Melanie!

MELANIE. Oh. GOODMORNING! Shit.

RACHEL. What's that?

MELANIE. Some guy I managed to pry loose from the bar at the Ironstone. Too bad you were asleep when I got in. You missed an enchanting little entertainment. Me absolutely desperate to haul him into bed, and him absolutely glued to the sofa, telling me that a young woman like me should watch out for the venal characters that hang around the bars in town. Actually he was so ripped he couldn't stand up. Furthermore, he was so boring I almost just had to toss him out on his ass. Basically, though, I'm a very patient person.

RACHEL. Gosh. Well, at least your patience was rewarded.

MELANIE. Not particularly well. Wish I could remember his name, though. Horrible breach of etiquette, huh?

MAN. Melanie! Got any aspirin?

MELANIE. Coming right away, there, uh . . . Lamb Chop. (MELANIE *goes to her room.*)

STEVE. Why not stick around, Rache? We could all have a lot of fun.

RACHEL. Wish I could.

(MELANIE *returns*)

MELANIE. Anybody need anything from the store?

RACHEL. Cookies!

MELANIE. O.K. (MELANIE *exits*)

RACHEL. It's nice to see Melanie again.

STEVE. She's changed a lot since school, you know. People around here are sort of concerned about her, in fact.

RACHEL. Really? Why?

STEVE. Well, those people in town disapprove of her, essentially, and everyone we know around here considers her, you know, extreme. And she is quite, well, observable, a lot of the time.

RACHEL. She never was a hypocrite.

STEVE. Well, she's a bit farther along the line than non-hypocrisy these days. I mean, she's fine, but it's not what people want, exactly. And she does lie, occasionally, too, which isn't ideal.

RACHEL. She does?

STEVE. Well, not about anything big. But things like, one day we were over at Edie's and someone asked Melanie where she got her ring, and she said she got it in Tashkent. But actually, I happen to know she got it in Townsend, cause I was with her at the time. Just stuff like that. Little things.

RACHEL. God. That's too bad. But in a way it doesn't matter, I don't think. Because, I mean, if someone says something, it's true, isn't it? I mean, it's true because either they intend it, or they want it to be that way, or they believe it is that way . . .

STEVE. That's what I used to think, but now I think—

MAN. (*Emerging*) Morning.

RACHEL. Oh. Gosh!

STEVE. Hey.

MAN. Where's Melanie?

RACHEL. I don't know, really. She left.

STEVE. She had to do something.

MAN. Oh. You her roommates?

RACHEL. Oh, we don't have roommates. Oh, actually, Steve does. Steve lives over in the valley with some friends of ours.

MAN. Well, that's nice, Steve. And what about you —do you live anywhere?

RACHEL. Oh, yes!

MAN. Now that's what I call a coincidence.

RACHEL. Oh. I see. No, I live in the city.

MAN. Must be fun. Like it there?

RACHEL. Well, I'm not sure. I mean, I'm not there right now, so I can't tell. I mean right now I'm here, and I like it, even though of course I can't tell exactly, because I don't have anything to compare it to. I mean, you can't really know how how you feel about a place, unless you can be in some other place at the same time.

MAN. Is she . . .?

STEVE. Huh?

MAN. Any coffee around here?

STEVE. Yeah. Some in there.

MAN. Anybody else want some?

STEVE. Yeah, thanks.

RACHEL. Oh, me too!

MAN. How about half a cup, in case you're having

one somewhere else now, too?

STEVE. Rachel just likes to get things straight, is all.

RACHEL. That's true! That's right! Oh, Steve. That's what was so disconcerting about this business with Paul. See, I had thought our relationship grew out of his wanting a place to stay, but actually it grew out of his wanting someone to stay with. So everything I had thought was going on all during it was really just completely grounded in error!

STEVE. Well, you know, Rache, you can't decide all by yourself what's going on with you and other people, because it happens in the middle of you, you know? And besides, it keeps changing while it's going on.

RACHEL. True. Well, what do you mean, though?

STEVE. Well, I mean, you don't look out the window and see the woods and say, "Oh, that tree looks so nice and so does that one. And so does that one over there." I mean, you don't go out in the rain and think, "Well, the first 17 drops made me damp, and the next 42 will get me wet, and 31 more will keep me wet, and the 60th will get me really drenched." You know?

MAN. You're not going to believe this, but I was just about to make that very point myself.

STEVE. Huh? Oh, was there any cream left in there, by the way?

RACHEL. Oh, I see what you mean, I think. I mean, I think . . .

AUGUST

RACHEL. I think your new girlfriend is terrific, Steve.

STEVE. She really is, isn't she? I'm really in love. She's so smart, you know, and pretty. She's so, sort of, sweet and clean, like a little toy train, or something. I'm so crazy about her. I really just want to spirit her away into the forest and live in the branches and sing and eat fruit and drink wine out of silver goblets our relatives send us—

RACHEL. Are you going to get a place together?

STEVE. Well, no, actually. She'll have to go back to her dorm in the fall, and her parents would hit the roof anyhow. And besides, I feel like I'd really like to live alone for a while. It's been pretty rough over at Sue and Edie's recently.

RACHEL. How come?

STEVE. Well, too many people cruising through, for one thing. And Fred is really getting to me. I mean, at first I really enjoyed him, but the novelty is definitely wearing off.

MELANIE. I can see why. He is revolting, after all.

STEVE. Oh, I don't mind that. But he teaches some sort of, like, political philosophy to little kids at that experimental school in Leamingham, and he sort of forgets to stop when he comes home. Between him and Sue there's a system for everything at that house. There are grocery-shopping systems, and dinner-cooking systems, and floor-sweeping systems, and plant-watering systems. And Edie's pretty automated herself. They're even sort of regimented about their dope. And Sue and Keith are always enacting these tragic endings to their epic love. It's just so Teutonic over there. Besides, Sue says I'm a slob.

RACHEL. Oh, slobs. God. I'm such a slob. How can you stand it, Melanie? You're so neat. How can you live with a slob like me?

MELANIE. Well, I don't really mind. I've been thinking about it, in fact, and it's occured to me that it's probably harder to learn to be neat than to learn to be a slob, so I thought maybe I'd try to be a slob, too, so we don't get, you know, tense about the whole thing. I bet I could get into it. I mean, actually, I'm really tired of taking out those disgusting dead mice my cats bring in, for instance. I think I'm just going to put coffee cups over them. And I'm definitely too compulsive about the dishes. I'm going to try to leave them in the sink for a while from now on.

RACHEL. Oh, hey, speaking of dirty dishes, is there anything to eat around here?

MELANIE. Well, there's some left over meat loaf.

RACHEL. The loaded meat loaf? No thanks. Any chocolate?

MELANIE. All out. I could make some eggs.

RACHEL. Phooey.

MELANIE. How about a shot of bourbon?

RACHEL. . What I really want is some cookies or something.

MELANIE. Well, I guess I'll just have to drink that bourbon myself.

STEVE. Anybody want to go for a swim?

RACHEL. You know, it occurs to me I've really got to get a job just about instantly. I'm really almost totally out of money.

STEVE. Well, I'm doing all right with this construction job. I could carry you for a while.

RACHEL. . Oh, thanks, Steve, but I really can't do that. Besides, I've been coasting a bit on Melanie, and she's almost broke.

MELANIE. The thing is to not get hysterical about it. The pottery thing almost worked out, after all. Besides, we know a lot of people around here who could get us something.

STEVE. It's true. I know everybody at all the bars in Townsend and Whitfield. Tomorrow, I absolutely promise, I'll take you two around and we'll get you both jobs.

MELANIE. Oh, rapture.

STEVE. So listen, are we going swimming or not?

MELANIE. It's getting kind of late.

RACHEL. I don't think I can really handle getting all undressed and then having to get dressed again. I feel like I've done it so often recently.

MELANIE. Why don't you call Celia, Steve? She could come over or something.

STEVE. Well, I don't know. Her sister just had a baby, so she's really busy for a while.

RACHEL. Well.

MELANIE. We could go to the movies.

STEVE. If there was anything in town we wanted to see, which there isn't.

RACHEL. We could go visit Edie and Sue.

STEVE. I just left them. Want to go into Townsend for a drink?

RACHEL. Too early.

MELANIE. Arts and crafts? Fun and games? Show and tell?

STEVE. Live and learn?

MELANIE. Well, ok, but like, anything in particular? I mean, what do we want to do?

STEVE. This, I guess. I mean, this is what we're doing.

SEPTEMBER

(STEVE *and* RACHEL *are asleep on the floor or sofas*)

STEVE. Oh, that sun! Christ!

RACHEL. Umf.

STEVE. Glad I fell asleep here. I never would have made it home.

RACHEL. Specially since you left your car at The Distant Drum.

STEVE. Did I? Oh, right. Melanie drove back, didn't she. Jesus. That was awful. Aren't you afraid to drive around with her?

RACHEL. A little. Usually she isn't that bad, though.

STEVE. She couldn't be. Think these are aspirin?

RACHEL. They look a little small.

STEVE. I'd sure like them to be aspirin.

RACHEL. Well, ok.

EDIE. (*Appearing*) Hi. I was just on my way to the Grand Union and thought I'd drop by to see how you were. Hi, Steve. How's your new place?

STEVE. Oh, great. How's the house? How's Sue doing? I hear Fred moved out.

EDIE. Yeah. He and Sue had a big fight about the dinner-cooking system. On the weeks he was in charge all he ever bought was chicken. And Count Chocula. Every night during his weeks we ate broiled chicken. Which was better than it could have been. I mean, who doesn't like broiled chicken? Except us, now. We hate it. Besides, it was really unfair. He was the one who set up the system, and the rest of us would

really, you know, try to make these actual meals, which was at the very least a fantastic pain in the ass, and all he did was just make 45 pounds of broiled chicken every Monday. That's all we ever got to eat, plus Count Chocula.

RACHEL. I like Count Chocula.

EDIE. Yeah, it's good. But we never even had any milk to go with it!

STEVE. So is anybody else living there now?

EDIE. Well, there's this sort of religious couple, Mark and Louise. I don't know exactly what their religion is, but it's very quiet. Unfortunately, they're also real pigs. And Sanford's there until he finishes the place he's building.

RACHEL. Sounds good.

EDIE. So it's too bad about you and Melanie getting fired.

RACHEL. Wow. News travels fast.

EDIE. It didn't have far to go. I was standing right next to you.

RACHEL. You know, there may be some stuff I can't remember too clearly about last night.

EDIE. So are you pissed off at Melanie?

RACHEL. No. Why?

EDIE. Well, I mean, she got you fired, really, didn't she.

RACHEL. Oh, I don't know. They're so stuffy at that place. As if they were running a real restaurant, you know? I mean it's basically just a bar, when you get right down to it, and a pretty elemental one at that. And to take on about Melanie like that! It was so pointless.

EDIE. Well, I mean, she does act like a maniac, after all. And she probably drinks half their profit.

RACHEL. Well, they could have thought of that a while ago. Alain was just irritated cause she was acting like that while his wife was around.

EDIE. I still don't understand why they fired you too.

RACHEL. Oh, I don't know. I suppose they had to. I mean, I haven't slept with any of them, and Melanie's slept with all of them. So they couldn't have just fired her without feeling pretty foolish. And besides, I really am a terrible waitress—anything I don't forget, I drop.

EDIE. You know, if you want to move in with us you can.

RACHEL. Thanks. Really.

EDIE. I mean, I think life's probably a lot simpler over at our place.

(MELANIE *enters*)

STEVE. How's Sue doing with Keith these days? Is that going any better?

EDIE. Well, I don't think so. He keeps telling her he cares about her, and then he'll show up somewhere with some girl, or he won't call her, or he'll just get all weird and remote all of a sudden. And she spends all of her time trying to, you know, get all the information into some digestible form. I mean, she sits around thinking, 'Oh, I made him feel this, so he's doing that,' or, 'Oh, I wonder what this means that he's acting like that,' when the truth is nothing he does means anything. He's just an asshole.

MELANIE. Whenever I see them together, it doesn't really look like he's very interested in her.

EDIE. Well, he is, in his nasty little way.

MELANIE. He's always coming on to other women.

EDIE. No he isn't. He just likes to have a big effect on everyone.

MELANIE. Well, he seems pretty serious. I mean about coming on to other women.

EDIE. It's just bullshit. It wouldn't fool a child.

STEVE. Melanie, are these aspirin?

MELANIE. Jesus. No.

STEVE. What would they do to me if I took them?

MELANIE. The question is what would I do to you if you took them. Does everybody want coffee? I'll go make some. (*She exits*)

EDIE. Boy. Melanie's sure gotten a lot worse.

RACHEL. Wow. (*Long silence*) Worse than what?

EDIE. Worse than she used to be.

RACHEL. Well, he really does come on to her. I've seen him.

EDIE. Well, but he can't stand her. He says so.

MELANIE. (*Entering*) Who wants breakfast?

STEVE. I want aspirin.

RACHEL. Breakfast? Oh, boy. Can we have french toast?

MELANIE. Sure. Going to stick around, Edie?

EDIE. No. I have to get to work. Thanks, though.

MELANIE. Are you still working for Jeremy whatsisname?

EDIE. Yeah. I'm doing my textiles for him now. He's selling them in lengths, and they're actually doing pretty well.

MELANIE. Yes? That's fabulous. You know what—you should have me and Rachel make some up into dresses for the store. We could probably make some money that way, and it would be really good for you.

RACHEL. I can't sew.

EDIE. Well, maybe. I don't know.

MELANIE. Why don't you talk to Jeremy about it?

EDIE. Well, can you do stuff in true sizes and stuff, and could you hand finish them?

MELANIE. Why not?

EDIE. Well, I don't know. I'll talk to Jeremy maybe. But we've just started this deal, and I don't want to screw it up.

MELANIE. Why would that screw it up?

EDIE. Oh, I don't know. Ok, I'll talk to him sometime.

STEVE. Does anybody have any aspirin?

MELANIE. Sure, help yourself. In my night table drawer.

EDIE. Well, ok. I've gotta go. Steve, why don't you bring your girlfriend over sometime. We really want to meet her.

STEVE. Sure. (*He wanders out to get aspirin*)

EDIE. Oh, and Rachel—Sue really wants to see you. You should stop by.

RACHEL. Great.

EDIE. See you guys soon.

STEVE. (*Crossing to kitchen*) Bye.

(EDIE *exits*)

MELANIE. Want bacon with your french toast?

RACHEL. Sure! Great!

(MELANIE *exits*)

STEVE. (*Returning with aspirin and water*) Ah. Relief.

RACHEL. Work fast, huh?

STEVE. Actually, they don't work at all, I don't think. But I take them anyhow. I mean, you have to take the plunge, right? It may look like a sequence of empty gestures, but it just might turn out to be real life.

RACHEL. Hey, Steve? How come Edie's so weird with Melanie? I mean she really seems to hate Melanie.

STEVE. Yeah, that's true. I don't really know why. I mean, Melanie is... well, I don't know... I mean I know Edie thinks it's really ridiculous that Melanie wears false eyelashes, and ... well, she thinks Melanie's a terrible driver, but so do I—I mean, I don't really know.

RACHEL. Oh! I forgot to tell you. Melanie and I ran into Celia yesterday.

STEVE. Where?

RACHEL. In town.

STEVE. Where in town? What was she doing? Was she with anyone? What did she say?

RACHEL. We saw her in Harold's. She was very sweet. We just talked for a minute. You should bring her by sometime.

STEVE. I'd really like to. I'd really like to. What was she doing in Harold's do you think?

RACHEL. She was buying a notebook or something.

I don't know. Steve?

STEVE. Huh? Where did I put that glass of water. Oh, man. Ah, there. What?

RACHEL. Nothin'.

MELANIE. (*Enters*) Coffee?

RACHEL AND STEVE. Wow, great. Fantastic.

RACHEL. Maybe this afternoon we should look for a new job or something.

MELANIE. Oh, God. This afternoon. Listen, the season will be starting soon. We aren't going to have any trouble.

RACHEL. Well, I haven't saved anything up. And I want to be able to go back to New York with something.

MELANIE. Well, besides. We can probably work something out with Edie and Jeremy. Listen. We had a very rough night last night, we really did. And I think it's important just not to worry about anything today. We should really try not to worry.

NOVEMBER

MELANIE. Oh, God. You know what? I'm supposed to have those samples for Edie Friday morning.

STEVE. Do you have a lot left to do?

MELANIE. Well, basically, yes. I mean, I haven't really started.

STEVE. Wow. Well, maybe John and I should leave so you could do them.

MELANIE. I don't think that would help really.

STEVE. Anything I could do?

MELANIE. Can you sew?

STEVE. Uh uh.

MELANIE. Neither can I, as it turns out. I thought I could when I told Edie I'd do the dresses. I don't really know why it didn't occur to me I couldn't. You know how that happens sometimes?

STEVE. Sort of. I'm not sure. What about Rachel?

MELANIE. Oh you know Rachel. She just says, "I can't sew, I can't sew."

STEVE. Can Rachel sew?

MELANIE. Rachel? Of course not.

STEVE. Where is Rachel anyway?

MELANIE. She's working tonight over at the Wellspring. She should be back any time now. Marty Patera's dropping her off on his way home.

JOHN. (*Who has been reading catalogues or comic books*) Who's Rachel?

MELANIE. She lives here.

JOHN. Yeah?

STEVE. So should we do something about those dresses?

MELANIE. Well. The first thing we should do is have a drink. Then, if nothing occurs to us by tomorrow, I'll just call Edie and explain.

STEVE. Well at least nobody's depending on them or anything.

MELANIE. Nope. I mean, a couple of people have ordered them, but, you know.

STEVE. Oops. Oh, well.

MELANIE. Yeah. Good thing Jeremy gave me an advance.

STEVE. Jesus. How did you ever get that miser to give you an advance?

MELANIE. Oh, I went for a drink with him, and I was very, uh, charming. And I told him I couldn't possibly do anything without an advance. Which was true. I bought that sewing machine with the advance.

STEVE. Useful investment, huh.

MELANIE. And some other stuff besides, of course. It only cost 20 bucks. So who wants something to drink?

JOHN. Me. What is there?

MELANIE. Gin. Tonic, anyone? Some lemon? (*She is peeling a lemon toward herself*) You know, whenever I do this, I always picture the blade in my heart.

(RACHEL *enters*)

STEVE. The one of those I do most is when someone bumps into me, sometimes, I'm so enraged I see myself just grabbing them and hurling them into the wall, or turning around and pushing them off the bus as hard as I can.

MELANIE. Yeah, that one. Another thing I always see is me on the windshield of some car, or flying through my own windshield. It's so slow and vivid. I can feel each of my bones impacting with the glass, and then the glass gives and shatters, and I see it glittering and I feel my blood bursting out—

RACHEL. You know what really scares me? I'm always afraid I'm going to grab food off the plate of the person sitting next to me in a restaurant. You know, when you come in and sit down, and you're hungry, and the people next to you are just sitting

there talking, and there's this food on their plates, and sometimes it just sort of starts singing to you?

JOHN. Singing to you. Oh shit.

MELANIE. Hi, Rache. Want some gin?

RACHEL. Yes. No. Maybe I better not. I just took some acid, I think

MELANIE. Well, do you think you did? Or do you think you know you did? Or what?

RACHEL. Oh, well, I guess I know I did.

STEVE. I didn't think you did that stuff.

RACHEL. I didn't. But I just did. So I guess now I do. I mean, I suppose I wouldn't have, but Marty and I stopped for gas in Leamingham and he took a tab, and he handed one to me and he said, "Here. Take this," so I did.

(*Horrible silence*)

RACHEL. Was that a bad thing to do?

MELANIE. Oh, no! It's fine!

STEVE. Fine!

RACHEL. What do you mean! Oh, no, oh God. I'm going to go insane, aren't I! I'm going to be insane the entire rest of my life!

STEVE. No, uh uh. You'll be fine! It'll be fun. We'll be right here, and you'll have a lot of fun!

RACHEL. Oh, God. Oh, God.

(*Long silence during which* JOHN *gets up and gets a piece of fruit, which he eats slowly and noisily.*)

RACHEL. You know, another thing that I'm always afraid of is that I'm going to touch people.

JOHN. Like, what do you mean?

RACHEL. Well, I mean, sometimes don't you ever think when someone's sitting right near you that you could just so easily? You know, reach over and stroke their leg or something? I mean, sometimes I'll be standing in line behind somebody, or something, and I really want to put my hand on their face or kiss their neck or something. I mean I'm just suddenly so aware of this person's body being right there. And I just sometimes really feel like touching this person's body.

MELANIE. More gin?

JOHN. Sure. (*As* MELANIE *pours gin in his glass, he runs his hand up her leg. They remain thus affiliated for the first part of his speech*) I remember once I was at this concert, and there was this chick sitting in the seat next to me. And she was, like, older, but she was pretty good looking, and she looked really, really sad. Well, I remember I had just washed my hair, which was pretty long then, and it was all sort of electric. And I realized it was sort of brushing against this woman when I'd turn around, and I wondered if it was annoying her. But then I noticed she was beginning to lean a bit towards me when I'd turn, and also I saw that she was sort of looking at my hands. I mean, I really wasn't sure, so I rolled up my sleeves, really slowly. Like this... And I sort of stretched my arms out on the arm rests. Well she was definitely looking at my arms. No question about it. So, I was staring at the stage like I was really absorbed in the concert, and I leaned my head just a little bit towards her. Well, first she put her arm sort of over the back

of my seat, like she was just sitting there, but pretty soon her hand started, just really, really gently playing with my hair, and I pretended not to notice, but I sort of moved my head around a bit. (*He reaches out and pulls the transfixed* MELANIE *onto his lap*) That's right, honey. Climb on aboard. So anyway, after a bit she was really getting into it, you know? And so I just, like I didn't notice what I was doing, put my hand down, right so the back of my hand was just touching her leg, and then I moved it. Just a bit, but noticably. Well, she practically just melted over into my seat with me, and she was crying like crazy, but completely silent. Oh, God, it was so weird—her tears were sort of pouring around my neck, and she was unbuttoning my shirt, and running her hand, like inside the top of my jeans, just sobbing away, but completely quiet. Christ, was that freaky.

(*Long silence.* JOHN *and* MELANIE *neck in the chair with great intensity.* STEVE *and* RACHEL *sit*)

STEVE. Think that means I'm going to shove someone off a bus?

MELANIE. So what happened then?

JOHN. When?

MELANIE. Well, I mean, at the end of the concert.

JOHN. Well, it was the end of the concert. I left.

MELANIE. With the woman?

JOHN. Nah. She was with some other chick anyway.

RACHEL. I think that might be very . . .

STEVE. Don't focus on it.

(JOHN *and* MELANIE *are again absorbed in necking*)

RACHEL. You know what, Steve?

STEVE. What.

RACHEL. You're not going to shove anyone off a bus!

STEVE. Oh, probably not. Anyhow, it's nothing to worry about.

RACHEL. No, but it is! I'm really serious, because it's really important! I mean I never really knew this was true until right now, but it is—this thing is true—THERE ARE DIFFERENT SORTS OF PEOPLE!

JOHN. What a piece of work.

MELANIE. She's my friend.

RACHEL. I mean you always wonder, well, are people all the same, and they just get screwed up in various different ways, but basically everyone's the same, and everyone *could* shove someone off the bus or toss someone out the window or chop some guy's arm off at the shoulder, but only some people *do*, and that's just completely because of circumstances, like there's a war or someone in the same room makes them so angry they just have to, which could happen to anybody.

MELANIE. Let's go into my room.

JOHN. I sort of like it here.

RACHEL. But that's not right! See, the real reason that some people do and some people don't is that people differ from one another! I mean at least in this way, which has got to be, like, chemical, probably. Because when you think about it, it's like what kind of food you like. I mean, I really like, uh, let's see... banana

bread! You know? But some people just don't. And it's probably true that they really basically don't, because there isn't that much that can deeply influence you with food. I mean, there are some things, obviously, that can, like if your mother mashes olives into your hair when she gets mad at you when you're a kid, you probably won't like olives, but it's probably going to be restricted to pretty narrow particulars, like you might not like olives, but you probably won't not like all oval foods, even though on the same basis you might sort of learn to not like all people. What was I talking about? Wait—

JOHN. Ok. You want to go to your room?

MELANIE. Wait a sec.

JOHN. Are you going to have to do something about her?

MELANIE. No. What do you mean? (JOHN *exits to* MELANIE'*s room*) Hey, Rache.

RACHEL. Hi, Melanie.

MELANIE. Hi. Listen, Rachel. There are two things I have to say, and I want you to remember them. Ok?

RACHEL. Ok. Yes.

MELANIE. See these? These are my false eyelashes. A little later it may occur to you that they're wiggling. But they won't be. So don't squash them, please, ok?

RACHEL. Ok. How many things was that?

MELANIE. Huh? Oh. One thing.

RACHEL. How can you tell?

MELANIE. Well . . . cause, I mean, cause I know. I mean, I know it's one thing cause it's all in the same, uh . . . category.

RACHEL. It is? Well, how come everything isn't in that category.

MELANIE. No. What I mean is, it's one thing because I mean, I'm the person who's talking, so I get to decide how many things it is. No, wait, I mean... oh, shit. Trust me.

RACHEL. I do trust you, Melanie. I really, really trust you.

JOHN. Hey.

MELANIE. Coming. Good night, Rache.

RACHEL. Good night. You be ok?

MELANIE. Sure. Of course. Oh! The other thing is...

RACHEL. Don't make this one too hard...

MELANIE. ...is, if you want to, remember you can wake me up.

RACHEL. I can!? Really!?

MELANIE. Yeah, like if Steve goes home and you get...

RACHEL. Get..

MELANIE. No, it's ok. I mean, if you just happen to feel like company, just wake me up. I won't mind.

JOHN. Hey!

MELANIE. Coming.

RACHEL. Melanie?

MELANIE. Yeah, Rache?

RACHEL. Goodnight, Melanie.

MELANIE. Goodnight, Rachel.

STEVE. Goodnight, Melanie.

MELANIE. Goodnight, Steve.

JOHN. For Chrissake.

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