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SF PERUSALS

Ken Ludwig's

Be My Baby

A Samuel French Acting Edition



SAMUEL FRENCH

FOUNDED 1830

NEW YORK HOLLYWOOD LONDON TORONTO

SAMUELFRENCH.COM

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Ken Ludwig's
"BE MY BABY"

In addition the following credit *must* be given in all programs and publicity information distributed in association with this piece:

Originally produced by the Alley Theatre
Gregory Boyd, Artistic Director, Terrance Dwyer, Managing Director

BE MY BABY had it's world premiere at the Alley Theatre, Gregory Boyd, Artistic Director; Terrence Dwyer, Managing Director, on September 30, 2005. The Scenic Designer was Alexander Dodge, the Costume Designer was David C. Woolard, the Lighting Designer was Donald Holder and the Sound Designer was John Gromada. The Production Stage Manager was Terry Cranshaw and the Stage Manager was Richard Constabile. The production was under the direction of John Rando with the following cast:

GLORIA NANCE . . . . . Elizabeth Bunch
MAUD KINCH . . . . . Dixie Carter
CHRISTY McCALL. . . . . Ty Mayberry
JOHN CAMPBELL . . . . . Hal Holbrook
MALE ENSEMBLE . . . . . James Black
FEMALE ENSEMBLE . . . . . Robin Moseley

CHARACTERS

JOHN CAMPBELL

MAUD KINCH

CHRISTY MCCALL

GLORIA NANCE

All other parts played by two actors, a man and a woman.

For my brother Gene,
who has always been my guiding light.

ACT I

(In the darkness, we hear the Ronettes' hit song "Be My Baby" coming through the sound system.

The lights come up and two women are riding in the front seat of a car on a bumpy road. The younger woman, GLORIA NANCE, is 19 years old. She's English, rich, vivacious and very sure of herself. She's the one driving. The other woman, in the passenger seat, is her aunt, MAUD KINCH. She's English, in her 50's and rather behind the times. At the moment, she's extremely unhappy. They're driving along a back road outside Aberdeen, Scotland, and the road is full of holes. The time is 1963. The music transfers loudly to the car radio.)

GLORIA. *(Over the noise of the song.)* We're almost there. We must be…

MAUD. *What?!*

GLORIA. I said we're almost there!

MAUD. *Would you turn that thing down for heaven's sake! (GLORIA turns down the radio.)* Honestly…Now what did you say?

GLORIA. I said we're almost at the house and it should be any...*Wait!* There's the barn! Do you see it?! Through the trees! ... Aunt Maud?!

MAUD. Yes?

GLORIA. *(Ecstatically) Do you see the barn?!*

MAUD. *(Blankly)*... Stunning. A miraculous barn.

GLORIA. It's Christy's, you know. And he owns all the land between here and the main house. And they named a whole village after his family. Over three hundred years ago. Oh, I love Scotland, don't you?

MAUD. It's very quaint.

GLORIA. And Christy is a real honest-to-God lord up here. I mean, he's nobility!

MAUD. I'm aware of that.

GLORIA. Oh, Maud, why do you hate him so much?

MAUD. What a thing to say.

GLORIA. You know you do. And it's unfair!

MAUD. *(Boiling)* I'm unfair. I'm unfair?! You completely disregard my advice! You make a mockery of my position. I made a promise to your parents before they died that I would take good care of you, and yet you force me into a position that makes a joke of my responsibility! *My authority!*

GLORIA. But he's wonderful!

MAUD. You are nineteen years old. You haven't the faintest idea what is wonderful and what is not wonderful. You should have waited to get engaged. I blame both of you.

GLORIA. In most societies, the woman is married when she reaches the age of fertility.

MAUD. How educational.

GLORIA. Aborigine women have all had intercourse by the time they're thirteen. Have I shocked you by saying that?

MAUD. Tremendously.

GLORIA. In some tribes, they actually celebrate the breaking of the woman's hy —

MAUD. *(Cutting her off.)* Let's *not* discuss it.

GLORIA. Oh, Maud, don't be a prune! I want you to love Christy as much as I do. And don't you simply adore John? He practically raised Christy, single-handed. Christy was orphaned even before I was. Did you know that?

MAUD. Of course I did.

GLORIA. John was their sort of house manager or something.

MAUD. Yes, I kn —

GLORIA. John is such a stone-face. But it's all show. He just takes some getting used to, that's all.

MAUD. *(With intense dislike.)* That is the understatement of the century. John Campbell is the rudest man that ever walked this earth.

GLORIA. Well *I* like him. I think he's funny.

MAUD. I'm sure you do. And I'm sure you'll be very happy living here — in the wilderness.

GLORIA. I'm sick of London.

MAUD. In my opinion, that is so ty —

GLORIA. *(Suddenly) Oh, Maud, there's the house!* Isn't it gorgeous! Oh, I wish you were getting married, too! It's so exciting! You will live with us? You promised.

MAUD. I said I would think about it.

GLORIA. *(Distressed)* But you *have* to! We'll be so happy together!

MAUD. We shall see.

GLORIA. Oh, Maud, I can't live without you. It's impossible. Please say yes. *Please!*

MAUD. Well, I –
GLORIA. *Look! There he is! It's Christy!*
MAUD. Wait until the car stops.
GLORIA. *Christy!*
MAUD. *The car! Mind the car!*

(MAUD is thrown around like a rag doll, as GLORIA screeches to a halt.)

GLORIA. *(Jumping out of the car before it completely stops.) Christy, we're here!*

(As GLORIA jumps out of the car, we see CHRISTY McCALL and JOHN CAMPBELL. CHRISTY is about 25, good-looking and likeable. He's Scots. JOHN is in his 60s, very matter-of-fact and unsmiling. Very Scots. Both men speak with a Scots accent, but JOHN'S is more marked. GLORIA runs to CHRISTY and throws her arms around him.)

CHRISTY. *Gloria!*
GLORIA. *Oh, Christy!*

(They kiss furiously. They're bursting with sexuality, and their lips and hands are all over each other. MAUD gets out of the car, swaying from the near-disaster. She nods to JOHN. They clearly don't like each other in the least.)

JOHN. Miss Kinch.
MAUD. Mr. Campbell.
JOHN. Welcome to Scotland.
MAUD. Thank you.

JOHN. …They're far too young to get married, you know.

MAUD. I'm very well aware of that.

JOHN. "Wisdom cries out in the streets and no man regards it."

MAUD. I agree entirely.

(This entire time, CHRISTY has been kissing GLORIA'S neck and ears, and GLORIA has been getting more and more excited. Now she jumps up and throws her legs around CHRISTY'S waist and their petting gets even more intense. They're virtually having sex in front of JOHN and MAUD.)

JOHN. However, I think we'd better set a date for the wedding before a child appears from spontaneous combustion.

(The lights fade and then come up on the kitchen in the main house, a few days later. It's the kind of kitchen that had a staff of five in the 19th century. Now it's run by MRS. ADAMS, who is bustling about preparing dinner. Maud ENTERS.)

MAUD. It smells absolutely divine in this kitchen. It reminds one of London.

(A GARDENER ENTERS, wheeling a barrow and unceremoniously plunks his morning's bounty on the cook's table.)

GARDENER. Turnips. *(Thud)* Onions. *(Thud)* Cabbage. *(Thud)* Beets. *(Thud)*…And two coneys. *(Thud. As he EXITS, he tips his hat to MAUD.)* Ma'am…

(He EXITS.)

MAUD. … Yes, it smells divine.

MRS. ADAMS. *(Pleased)* Thank you, mum. It's the apple dumplings.

MAUD. Dumplings! You're joking! My mother and I used to make apple dumplings together at our home in London, on the Edgeware Road. It was such a remarkable place to grow up.

MRS. ADAMS. I've never been to London, mum.

MAUD. *(Incredulous)* Never?

MRS. ADAMS. I always intended to.

MAUD. Then you must come and visit me. On your next holiday. I insist, that's final.

MRS. ADAMS. Oh, mum —

MAUD. I don't want to hear any arguments, it is completely settled. *(Beat)* If I go back at all. I'm not sure that I can bear to leave Gloria.

MRS. ADAMS. I know just how you feel, mum. I have two girls meself. But there comes a time when you have to let 'em fly on their own. Even if they take off arse backwards.

(John ENTERS in his shirtsleeves. He sees MAUD and stops short — then enters the room anyway.)

JOHN. 'Evening.

MAUD. *(Acidly)* Good evening. Now as I was saying, Mrs. Adams, in my opinion, if one is tired of London, one is tired of life.

JOHN. I believe that Samuel Johnson had the same opinion about two hundred years ago.

MAUD. Really? What an amazing coincidence. *(Looking into one of the pots.)* Ah! Now what is this? The smell is heaven!

MRS. ADAMS. That'll be the haggis, mum. We'll be havin' that at the weddin'.

MAUD. Do you know, I've heard about haggis since I was a child. I love that word. "Haggis." Now what is that white thing bobbing around there in the water? It looks fascinating.

MRS. ADAMS. That'd be the guts, mum. [She pronounces it "goots," to rhyme with "foot's."]

MAUD. I beg your pardon?

MRS. ADAMS. The guts. The stomach. O' the sheep. You can do it with calf guts, but most of us think that sheep is better.

JOHN. I'tis better. It's got more juice.

MAUD. *(Horrified)* You're serving a...a...sheep's stomach at my niece's wedding?

JOHN. *(With a laugh at her ignorance.)* Nay, o' course not. 'Tis only boiled in the stomach. The sweetness is in the chopped heart and lungs.

MAUD. Oh!

MRS. ADAMS. It's very popular.

MAUD. No. I'm sorry, but I'm afraid not. I won't have it.

JOHN. ... You "won't have it"?

MAUD. No. Sorry.

JOHN. *(Restraining himself.)* I'm obliged to tell you, madam, it is not a question of your havin' or not havin'.

MAUD. But we have guests coming from *London!*

JOHN. Let 'em come from Timbuktu — !

MAUD. They'll be *disgusted!*

JOHN. *(Roaring) Then let 'em go home with my compliments!*

MAUD. … I will speak to Christy about it.

JOHN. You can speak to Jesus Christ Almighty and his Apostles and it'll make no difference! And I'll thank you not to be stickin' your nose into everything else appertainin' to this household!

MAUD. *(Quivering with indignation.)* In my opinion, you are a very rude man, and I pity you. I have half a mind to leave here today and *never come back.*

JOHN. What would it take to convince the other half?!

(JOHN stomps out of the kitchen. He strides across the back lawn of the house, where he's joined by CHRISTY.)

CHRISTY. John! Please!

JOHN. No!

CHRISTY. Please! Just listen!

JOHN. *No!*

CHRISTY. But you know what it means to me!

JOHN. I would not hurt you for the world, boy, but I will not attend the wedding if that she-devil is there.

CHRISTY. Now wait. She didn't really do anything -

JOHN. Everything is wrong accordin' to her. First it was the seating arrangements. Then the time of the wedding. Now it's the haggis. I'm surprised she hasn't asked for a Mooslim ceremony!

CHRISTY. John —

JOHN. *(Mimicking MAUD'S voice.)* "In my opinion..." Everything is "in my opinion." If I hear that one more time I'll stuff her tongue up her nose.

CHRISTY. Look —

JOHN. *She objected to the kilts, for God's sake!*

CHRISTY. She'll only be here for another month! That's the plan, anyway.

JOHN. *(Aghast)* A month? The wedding is Saturday. She could be out o' here by Sunday noon.

CHRISTY. We can't just tell her to leave that quickly.

JOHN. Why not?

CHRISTY. She's Gloria's aunt! You can't do that to Gloria. She's had no one else in the world since she was a child. She'd be heartbroken.

JOHN. The next thing you know, she'll be wantin' to live here.

(Beat. CHRISTY avoids his eyes.)

CHRISTY. Well ...

JOHN. Oh dear God.

CHRISTY. John —

JOHN. Say it's not true.

CHRISTY. It's been discussed. That's all. It's very unlikely.

JOHN. "Unlikely?"

CHRISTY. Now listen —

JOHN. Ya must be mad!

CHRISTY. Just listen! *(A deep breath, then he plunges ahead.)* First of all…now hear me out…I-I've agreed about the kilts. There'll be no kilts at the wedding. *(Silence)* Maud asked for an English wedding, and I agreed to that, from the start. I gave my word. So nobody's wearing kilts. It's black tie. Sorry.

(JOHN, tight-lipped, walks out of the room.)

CHRISTY. John...*John! Hey! I'm not finished! (Running after him.) We got to pick the church, didn't we?!*

(As the lights fade, wedding bells start pealing. The lights come up on MAUD and GLORIA in GLORIA'S bedroom. MAUD is sitting with GLORIA'S wedding dress in her lap. She's trying to repair it with a needle and thread, getting more and more anxious by the second. GLORIA, in her slip, is pacing nervously.)

MAUD. *(Cross)* Just look at this dress. It's a wreck.

GLORIA. Maud, we only have ten minutes.

MAUD. Well it cannot be repaired properly in ten minutes! The entire lining is ripped. Despite what you think, I am not Hercules. How you could possibly tear the lining of a brand new wedding dress that has never been worn outside this room, I will never know.

GLORIA. I wore it downstairs this morning, to show Christy.

(MAUD stops cold and gapes at GLORIA.)

MAUD. ... You didn't.

GLORIA. I wanted him to see it. I guess I was excited.

MAUD. *(Distressed, working herself into a state.)* Gloria! How *could* you! It's bad luck for the groom to see the gown before the wedding! Even *you* know that!

GLORIA. Oh, Maud —

MAUD. It is the worst possible thing you can do!

GLORIA. That's an old wives' tale, and you know it —

MAUD. We *must* get you a new gown!

GLORIA. Maud!

MAUD. But there isn't *time!*

GLORIA. Maud!!

MAUD. Oh, what should we *do*?!

GLORIA. Maud, stop it —

MAUD. *(Distraught)* Oh, Gloria, how could you *do* this?! How could you possibly be so terribly, terribly *thoughtless*—!

GLORIA. *(Flaring with anger.) MAUD, STOP IT RIGHT NOW! JUST FIX THE DRESS!*

(Silence. MAUD turns away, hurt. GLORIA instantly repents.)

GLORIA. Oh, Maud, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. *(She kneels next to MAUD and hugs her.)* I don't know what's wrong with me.

(MAUD strokes her hair.)

MAUD. You're getting married. And you're a little frightened. It's perfectly natural. I'm sure I'd feel exactly the same way. *(Beat)* Now I've got to finish. *(She goes back to the dress.)* And I still don't understand how you did this. It's ripped right up the bodice. The only way that could happen is if you tore it off as fast as you could, without even thinking. Just ripped it off in a state of ...

(She suddenly realizes how it must have happened. She looks at GLORIA, and GLORIA giggles. MAUD buries herself back into her work.)

MAUD. ...I don't want to talk about it. I have just lost interest in the entire conversation.

(The lights cross-fade, so we now see JOHN and CHRISTY in CHRISTY'S bedroom.)

CHRISTY. Help me with the tie here.

JOHN. Aye …

(As he ties CHRISTY'S tie:)

GLORIA. Oh Aunt Maud, I'm sorry – but I couldn't help myself.

MAUD. Of course you could. To be civilized is to be restrained. Find limits to your behavior.

GLORIA. For you it is. Because you're so much older than everybody else.

MAUD. It is called experience.

JOHN. *(Finishing the tie.)* There.

MAUD. *(Finishing the dress.)* There.

JOHN. Quite respectable. And don't tell me *that's* too tight.

CHRISTY. John. You don't think I'm making a mistake, do you?

JOHN. Dreadful mistake. But that's marriage for you.

GLORIA. You don't want me to live alone all my life, do you?

MAUD. Of course not. But that doesn't mean handing out everything in advance.

CHRISTY. I mean Gloria. You do like her, don't you?

JOHN. Do you like her?

CHRISTY. I don't think I can live without her.

JOHN. Then you'd be a fool not to marry her, wouldn't you.

MRS. ADAMS. *(Hurrying in.)* Mr. Campbell, sir?! You'd

better hurry! The congregation is gettin' restless. And Parson McNair excused himself to the gents and he came back smellin' o' whiskey!

JOHN. We'll be right there.

(MRS. ADAMS EXITS. CHRISTY takes a deep breath.)

CHRISTY. Wish me luck.

JOHN. You don't need luck, my lad. *(Christy exits.) I'm* the one who needs the luck.

(As he walks out the door and disappears, lights come up in the church. The wedding is about to begin, and we hear the noise of the congregation. PARSON McNAIR is waiting impatiently at the pulpit. He looks at his watch.)

PARSON MCNAIR. Come on, come on, I ain't got all day. You'd think it was the marriage o' David and Bathsheba. Or Liz Taylor. *(Calling off.) I got a baptism at two o'clock, and the little tyke ain't gonna be happy! (Back to the congregation.)* I hope they ain't back there havin' premarital sex or somethin'. While we're waitin', let me remind you that we've now sold 32 tickets to the Annual Loch Mull Dinner Dance and Fly Fishin' Competition. I've done me math, and that represents 75 percent o' the population so keep up the good work. Also, the Sunday School picnic has been postponed for lack of interest. …Ah. Here we go. It's about time.

(CHRISTY hurries in and stands to one side of the pulpit. Then he sees MAUD sitting in the first row. He hurries over and gives her a kiss on the cheek.)

MAUD. Good luck, dear boy. Please take care of her.

CHRISTY. I will, Aunt Maud. I promise.

(CHRISTY goes back to where he was. He nods to MCNAIR, who nods to the organist. The introductory chords ring out, followed by "Here Comes the Bride." GLORIA APPEARS at the back of the church in her wedding gown. She looks gorgeous. She holds out her arm, and John appears; he's giving her away.
But JOHN is now wearing a kilt.)

GLORIA. *(Whispering fiercely.)* John! What's that?! That's a kilt!

JOHN. That's because we're in Scotland, me lassie. And so is this: *(He calls out loudly.) Open the doors, gentlemen, and play your hearts out!*

(The doors of the church are thrown open, and we hear "Here Comes the Bride" being played by an army of bagpipers. The whine of the bagpipes drowns out the organ. MAUD turns around in her chair, in a state of shock. CHRISTY shakes his head. And JOHN walks proudly up the aisle with GLORIA on his arm.
When he and MAUD sit down in their pews, on opposite sides of the stage, he gives his kilt a shake – and flashes her. She recoils in horror – and the lights fade quickly.
They then come up on a room in the main house. It's night, and the room is empty. We hear heavy rain and possibly thunder outside. Then we hear MAUD'S voice calling in the distance.)

MAUD. *(Off)* Hello?!...Hello-o?! *(After a moment, MAUD*

hurries in, pulling her coat off, soaking wet. She looks highly distressed.) Christy?!

(No answer. Then MRS. ADAMS ENTERS.)

MAUD. *Mrs. Adams! How is she?! How's Gloria?!*

MRS. ADAMS. The doctor is in with her now, along with Christy and Mr. Campbell. I know they're doing all they can.

MAUD. I would have been here sooner, but the train was delayed. Unaccountably! It just *sat* there, in the station, for over an hour, *not moving at all,* and…I should have been here!

MRS. ADAMS. There's nothing anyone could have done. It just happened all of a sudden. Without any warning. She was perfectly fine all day, and no one suspected a thing. Not a single thing.

MAUD. *I* would have suspected. *I* would have known.

MRS. ADAMS. He's a very good doctor, Miss Kinch. Of that I promise you. He delivered all my children – every one of them – and I'm sure he's doing everything that he possibly can. And I've said a prayer, and so has all the staff …

(JOHN ENTERS, in trousers and shirt sleeves, looking weary and upset.)

MAUD. Mr. Campbell. How is she?! How's my Gloria?!

JOHN. The doctor is still somewhat concerned.

MAUD. Oh, no.

JOHN. They were at a party, but of course the baby isn't due for six weeks. She had a sort of...spasm, and we brought her back here, thinkin' it was no great shakes. Now they don't want to move her.

MAUD. Oh dear God. Where is she?

JOHN. Upstairs, but I think you should wait. Christy's in with her.

MAUD. I want to see her *right now!*

JOHN. I know you do.

MAUD. *(Losing control.)* I should have been here. It's my fault. I didn't *need* to visit London. It was vanity, that's all it was. Sheer vanity.

JOHN. It would have happened anyway.

MAUD. She's all I've got.

JOHN. I know.

MAUD. *(Starting to cry.)* I feel so helpless.

JOHN. I suppose God must have a higher purpose in mind with all this. But for the life o' me I can't figure out what it is.

MAUD. *(Fiercely, bitterly.)* I don't believe that for one... millionth of a second. Higher purpose. If anything happens to that girl, I will never have faith in anything. Ever.

JOHN. It's all a great mystery. I suppose if it wasn't, every preacher on earth would be hanged by now.

(CHRISTY ENTERS, looking pale. They stare at him without breathing.)

CHRISTY. Gloria's all right. She'll be fine.

MAUD. Oh, thank God! Can I see her now? *(CHRISTY nods, and MAUD rushes out of the room.) Gloria!*

(She's gone. JOHN sees from CHRISTY'S expression that something is wrong.)

JOHN. But?

CHRISTY. ... The baby was stillborn. …The doctor says, because of the...damage, she can't have any more children.

(CHRISTY cries and JOHN holds him. The lights fade. They then come up in the gardens behind the house. CHRISTY is alone, sitting on a stone fence, thinking, when GLORIA hurries in, waving a letter.)

GLORIA. Christy!...Christy, look!

CHRISTY. Gloria, would you stay in bed!

GLORIA. *Look!* It's a letter from Celia!

CHRISTY. Celia?

GLORIA. *(Sighs with disgust.)* My cousin from San Francisco. She was at the wedding. Don't you remember anything?

CHRISTY. I was nervous.

GLORIA. The pretty one. Blonde. She wore the teal dress with the spaghetti straps and the hideous blue pumps.

CHRISTY. With the glasses.

GLORIA. That was Annabel!

CHRISTY. Oh.

GLORIA. God. Men are so stupid. Now listen. Celia and Tim have been having problems.

CHRISTY. Tim?

GLORIA. Her husband! Dark. Tall. Long arms.

CHRISTY. Swings from trees.

GLORIA. You could see there was trouble brewing at the reception. He was eyeing everything in a skirt. It was disgusting. Well, Celia got pregnant right after that, God knows how, and she had the baby last week, a little girl, but now they're getting a divorce.

CHRISTY. Ooh, bad timing.

GLORIA. No, it's *perfect* timing. They're putting the baby up for adoption.

CHRISTY. Why?

GLORIA. Oh they both say they want their "freedom." Celia was always a pea-brain. If she didn't have that incredible figure she'd be totally useless.

CHRISTY. Oh, *Celia.*

GLORIA. Christy, I want the baby. I want to adopt her. Don't you see, it's perfect! She's a newborn. In perfect health. They're getting a divorce and they'll just hand her over to an agency or something. *It's perfect.*

CHRISTY. We'll have to think about this.

GLORIA. There isn't *time* to think about it! We'll lose our chance! If they give her to an agency, she'll be gone. Christy, I want to call them right now. And I want to go to San Francisco.

CHRISTY. Gloria! You're *not* even supposed to be out of bed!

GLORIA. I'm fine.

CHRISTY. No you're *not* fine. The doctor would have a fit.

GLORIA. I don't care! Christy, it's fate. It has to be. Please. *Please.*

CHRISTY. ... I guess I could go myself.

GLORIA. *No!* You'd be useless by yourself. Taking care of a baby?

CHRISTY. Hey, c'mon. How hard can it be? Every few hours you put a new diaper on her head. Right?

GLORIA. Christy, please. I don't want to be alone. Please, please, please. Let me go. I'll be fine.

(Beat.)

CHRISTY. We'll send John.

GLORIA. *John?!* Does he know *anything* about babies? Has he ever *seen* one?

CHRISTY. I don't know. But John can do anything.

GLORIA. What about Maud? We could send her.

CHRISTY. Oh, sure.

GLORIA. Why not?

CHRISTY. Maud? Dealing with all the...lawyers and the paperwork and the immigration? They'd end up in Tibet.

GLORIA. I'll bet she could do it.

CHRISTY. Never.

GLORIA. She could! Honestly!

CHRISTY. No! *(Pause.)* …I suppose we could send them together.

GLORIA. John and Maud? To San Francisco?

CHRISTY. Yeah.

(Beat. Christy laughs wickedly.)

Oh I'd love to see that. They'd kill each other. The problem is, they wouldn't do it.

GLORIA. Of course they would. For us?! They have to! We need them!

CHRISTY. John'll refuse.

GLORIA. No he won't!

CHRISTY. Gloria, I know him!

GLORIA. At least *talk* to him. All right, please? That can't hurt. And I'll talk to Maud. But it has to be *now,* Christy, before it's too late!

(JOHN and MAUD ENTER from opposite sides.)

JOHN. *No!*
MAUD. *No!*
JOHN. *Absolutely not!*
MAUD. *You must be out of your mind!*
CHRISTY. John!
GLORIA. Maud!
CHRISTY. Please.
GLORIA. Please, please!
CHRISTY. John.
JOHN & MAUD. *NO!!!*

(Blackout. In the darkness we hear:)

ANNOUNCER (PA SYSTEM.) Caledonia Airlines Flight 936 to New York City with connecting flights to Chicago, Denver and San Francisco is now boarding at Gate 14.

(The lights come up on the inside of the airport as JOHN and MAUD head for the gate. CHRISTY is with them just to help.)

MAUD. *(Fussing)* I've got my wallet…my passport…Do you have your passport?

JOHN. Yes –

MAUD. And the address?

JOHN. Yes, yes! We've been over this a thousand times! All right?! I've got everything! I'll be right back. I need to use the gents.

MAUD. It's called the "bathroom" in America. Don't

forget, the expressions are different over there. *(JOHN walks away with a frustrated sigh. MAUD continues her explanation to CHRISTY.)* In America, you don't "ring" someone up, you call them up. You don't "knock someone up." You knock on the door.

MAUD. To knock someone up means, well…you know…to have…relations.

CHRISTY. Sorry, what?

MAUD. I said to "knock someone up" means something different in America.

CHRISTY. I can't hear you!

(The announcer stops abruptly.)

ANNOUNCER (PA SYSTEM). This is your final call for Caledonia Airlines Flight 936 to New York City, with connecting flights to Chicago, Denver and San Francisco.

Please proceed to Gate 14.

Final call for Caledonia Airlines Flight 936.

MAUD. IT MEANS HAVING SEXUAL INTERCOURSE!!

(She looks around, mortified that she's just been heard by everyone in the terminal. JOHN RETURNS.)

JOHN. All right, let's go. They said final call. Take care, my lad.

MAUD. Christy, please take care of Gloria, she means everything to me.

CHRISTY. I will, I promise.

MAUD. She's a delicate girl, like her mother.

CHRISTY. I know –

MAUD. But I know she'll make you a good wife always.

CHRISTY. Of course she will.

MAUD. Like her mother —

JOHN. *Would you come on, woman, and stop the palaver!*

MAUD. *All right, all right! (JOHN stalks off.)* Good-bye, Christy. Tell Gloria I love her!

(MAUD hurries off leaving CHRISTY alone. The lights fade quickly, then come up on the first class section of Caledonia Airlines, Flight 936.)

STEWARDESS. *(Over PA system.)* Please take your seats, ladies and gentlemen. We apologize for the short delay, but the doors are now closing and the plane will be pulling out from the gate momentarily.

(JOHN and MAUD ENTER at the top of the aisle. MAUD is looking around at everything on the plane, which is obviously unfamiliar to her. She's very spooked, but is trying to act calm. JOHN is grumpy and annoyed, but trying to be tolerant.)

MAUD. ...It's very small in here. I had no idea. Planes look so much bigger from the outside. I suppose it's an optical illusion of some kind...

(They reach their row.)

JOHN. Aisle or window?

MAUD. Sorry?

JOHN. Aisle or window. Which seat would you prefer?

MAUD. ... I have no idea.

JOHN. Take the window. You'll see more. And you could jump out of it.

MAUD. It's very stuffy in here. Is it always this stuffy?

(A VERY FAT PASSENGER squeezes by them.)

PASSENGER. Sorry, sorry.

JOHN. Sorry.

MAUD. Sorry.

PASSENGER. Sorry.

(He's gone.)

MAUD. All these people.

JOHN. You should see it back there.

MAUD. Where?

JOHN. Back there! Behind the curtain. In the regular class.

MAUD. There are *more* people? Are you sure? *(JOHN sighs in disbelief. MAUD walks up the aisle and peeks behind the curtain.)* Oh my God, it's like Calcutta!

(The STEWARDESS comes by.)

STEWARDESS. *(To MAUD.)* Could you find your seat, please. We'll be taking off in a moment.

MAUD. ... Sorry?

JOHN. Over here! She wants you to sit down!

MAUD. Oh. Sorry. *(She squeezes by the Passenger we saw*

before, who's now going back the other way.) Sorry.

PASSENGER. Sorry.

MAUD. So sorry.

(MAUD takes her seat, and JOHN sits beside her, on the aisle. She looks extremely anxious. We hear the crackle of the plane's PA system, and the CAPTAIN makes an announcement.)

CAPTAIN. This is your Captain speaking. Please fasten your seat belts, and keep them fastened until further notice. We should be airborne presently. Thank you.

(This being a plane, not a word of the announcement was intelligible to the human ear.)

MAUD. What did he say?

JOHN. I have no idea.

(MAUD can't find her seat belt, so JOHN tries to help her. He has trouble finding one of the ends, and reaches around her so that his hand is under MAUD'S rear end. At this moment, the PASSENGER passes.)

PASSENGER. (*Reacting to JOHN seemingly groping MAUD.)* Sorry.

JOHN. Sorry.

(JOHN finally gets her buckled in.)

MAUD. What if someone died during the flight. What would they do with him?

JOHN. I suppose they'd pop him out one of the windows.

(The plane lurches as it begins to move.)

MAUD. *AAAAAAHH!*
JOHN. *Shh!*
MAUD. *What happened?!*
JOHN. The plane is moving. It's supposed to move.
MAUD. Oh. I see...It moved. …It's supposed to…

(MAUD takes a deep breath and tries to calm herself. We now realize that MAUD is that hysterically nervous flyer who is buried deeply in all of us. The sounds and movements of the plane set off a phobic, hysterical reaction.)

MAUD. ... I think I should tell you something. I *AHHH!*... I've never flown before. In a plane. *(She laughs nervously.)* In a plane. I suppose that's the only way to fly, isn't it.
JOHN. *(Giving her a look.)* Not necessarily.

(The plane lurches again.)

MAUD. *AAAAAHH! AHH! AHH! AHH!*

(She grabs JOHN'S arm in real desperation.)

JOHN. What are you doing?!
MAUD. I'm sorry, I'm sorry. It's just. It's just. It's not supposed to do *that*, is it?! That-that-that *lurch.* I mean a *second* time …
JOHN. Of course it is. It's just startin' and stoppin' like a bloody car.

(The plane lurches forward again.)

MAUD. *AHHHHHH!!!*

(JOHN rolls his eyes, and the STEWARDESS APPEARS.)

STEWARDESS. Madam, are you all right?
MAUD. I'm fine, I'm fine, I'm fine...
STEWARDESS. Can I get you something? A pillow?
MAUD. *(To the STEWARDESS.)* The plane is moving. It's supposed to move.
JOHN. Bring her a Rob Roy.

(The STEWARDESS EXITS.)

MAUD. *(Agitated)* I never should have agreed to this. I said we should take a ship. A ship is *civilized.* It may take a few more days, but it's *safe. (Lurch) AHH!*
JOHN. There is nothin' to be frightened of.
MAUD. *(Babbling)* I took a ship once, to the Greek islands. It was delightful. They-they had entertainment. And-and-and deck chairs. Beautiful deck chairs. With canvas on them.
STEWARDESS. *(Reappearing with a glass and handing it to MAUD.)* Here we are. I'll come back when we're aloft.

(She EXITS.)

MAUD. *(Closing her eyes.)* Corfu. I'll think about Corfu.
JOHN. Have a drink while you're at it.

(The noise of the plane's engines suddenly increases, and the plane starts to shake as it takes off. MAUD opens her eyes.)

MAUD. ... What's rattling? Why is everything rattling?! All at once?! *The plane is coming apart! IT'S COMING APART!*

JOHN. Take a drink before it spills!

(MAUD takes a drink...and immediately starts coughing and sputtering and gasping for air.)

MAUD. Oh God! Oh my God! What *is* it?! Ohh! Ohh! *AHH! AHH!*

(She keeps coughing and screaming. She can't get her breath. JOHN slaps her on her back. After a great deal of commotion, she settles down, though she's still panting and holding her throat. As she pants, she realizes that the noise and rattling have stopped and have been replaced by a comforting hum. She looks around, then sighs deeply.)

MAUD. Oh, thank God. Listen. There's a gentle hum. Do you hear it? Let's get off before they try *that* again.

JOHN. We can't. We're in the air.

MAUD. Sorry?

JOHN. We're *flying.* We're in the *air.*

(MAUD looks at him as though he's lost his mind. Then she looks out the window...and without thinking, she picks up the glass and drinks the rest. Immediately, she starts

coughing and gasping again. JOHN shakes his head. The lights fade. We hear in the darkness:)

CAPTAIN. *(Over PA system.)* Ladies and gentlemen, this is your captain speaking. We have now reached our cruising altitude of 35,000 feet. Our flying time to New York City is approximately seven hours and fifteen minutes. Please keep your seatbelts fastened when you're in your seats, as we're likely to hit quite a bit of turbulence this trip.

(The lights come up. It's two hours later. MAUD is slumped in her seat, snoring loudly. There are three empty glasses in front of her. The plane is bumping quite a bit, but she's oblivious to it. JOHN glances at her, to make sure she's asleep. Then he goes back to reading his copy of "Doctor Spock on Baby Care.")

As the lights fade, we hear Elvis Presley singing "You Ain't Nothin' But A Hound Dog." The lights come up on the living room of a hotel suite in San Francisco. Elvis's song is coming out of a radio on one of the tables. After a moment, we hear a knock on the door to the hall. No answer. Then more knocking. MAUD ENTERS from one of the two bedrooms off the living room. She looks pretty much worse for wear, and her head is killing her. She's buttoning the sleeves of her blouse, just getting dressed for the day. As she passes the radio, she looks at it quizzically, turns it off and opens the door. DIMITRI, a waiter, ENTERS, a friendly fellow carrying a tray. He has an Eastern European accent.)

DIMITRI. You order breakfast?

MAUD. Yes, come in. Could you put it here?

DIMITRI. Sure. Why not. You should open curtain. Is beautiful day out. Okay?

MAUD. All right. *(The WAITER opens the curtains and sunlight floods into the room, adding to MAUD'S headache.)* I'm afraid I overslept. In fact, I seem to have lost an entire day somewhere.

DIMITRI. Is no big deal. I lose days all the time. After my brother's wedding, I lose whole week. *(He lifts the tray cover.)* Eggs ham bacon oatmeal you don't say what so I bring everything. Coffee toast danish is very fresh. You need more, you holler. Ask for Ivan.

MAUD. Is your name Ivan?

DIMITRI. No, I'm Dimitri.

MAUD. Thank you. Oh. Wait. *(She goes to her purse and gives him a tip.)* This is for you.

DIMITRI. *(Looks at the tip sadly.)* Okay.…Oh. I almost forget. Your husband say to tell you he will be back soon. Is doing errands.

MAUD. My "husband?"

DIMITRI. Yah.

MAUD. What do you mean my *"husband"?*

DIMITRI. Husband. Tickle tickle in bed.

MAUD. I know what a husband is!

DIMITRI. Mr. Camp Bell.

MAUD. "Campbell." And he is *not* my husband!

DIMITRI. Oh. You are kept woman.

MAUD. No. I am not a "kept woman." Did Mr. Campbell *say* he was my husband?

DIMITRI. Uh, no. But same room...

MAUD. There are *two bedrooms* in this suite, young man. Which is why we chose this particular hotel.

DIMITRI. Is nice hotel. Romantic. Good for tickle tickle...

MAUD. We are here on business!. Please tell the staff. And the management. And anyone else you can think of!

DIMITRI. Okay. Sorry. I go.

(As he goes for the door, JOHN ENTERS carrying an armful of purchases. He seems unusually chipper.)

JOHN. *(To the WAITER.)* Hello Dimitri! Nice to see you again!

DIMITRI. Breakfast over there. Next to your wife. Good luck.

(DMITRI EXITS and closes the door.)

MAUD. Did you hear that?! Hm?! That man? He thinks we're married! And so, apparently, does everyone else in this hotel!

(Beat. JOHN bursts into a hearty laugh. Then:)

JOHN. You're joking.

MAUD. No.

JOHN. I hope you set him straight.

MAUD. Of course I did.

JOHN. *(Putting down his packages.)* They're a strange lot, these Americans. But I like 'em. They've got real heart. And this city, it's wonderful! It's built on hills, you know. Quite invigoratin'. And wait'll you see the bridge! It's called the Golden Gate.

MAUD. You're in a good mood.

JOHN. I feel very...free in this country. Very much my own self. And I like the people. They all talk like John Wayne. *(Imitating John Wayne.)* "The hotel is two blocks thataway, pilgrim…" So. Here it is. What do you think?

(He has pulled out a grocery carrier with a handle and is displaying it proudly.)

MAUD. What is it?

JOHN. To carry the baby! I got it from a grocery store. So what do you think it cost us? Guess. ...Three dollars.

MAUD. That's not a bassinet.

JOHN. Well o' course not. A real bassinet is upwards o' twenty dollars. It's highway robbery! And this does exactly the same thing. Three dollars.

MAUD. I don't believe it.

JOHN. Nor did I. But it's the gospel. I also got everything else on the list. Look at this. Nightshirt. *(He pulls out a child's nightshirt big enough for a three-year-old.)* With *duckies* on it.

MAUD. Don't you think it's a bit big?

JOHN. I thought o' that. So I got her a belt, just in case. *(He pulls out the belt.)* Bottle. Nipple for bottle.

MAUD. You got *one* bottle?

JOHN. And one nipple. One is plenty. You wash 'em after every meal. *(He pulls out more surprises.)* Nappie. They call it a diaper.

MAUD. You didn't buy just *one?*

JOHN. *(Scornfully)* Of course not. Here's the other one. And here's the pin. It was over-priced, but I had no choice.

MAUD. *(Coldly)* Is that everything?

JOHN. No. I saved the best for last. The crowning glory. *(He pulls out a pair of Mickey Mouse Club ears.)* Mouse ears. Mickey Mouse. He's very popular over here. They've got a club or somethin'. She can wear 'em on her head. She'll love it.

MAUD. Give me the list.

JOHN. Why?

MAUD. Give me the list! I obviously have some shopping to do.

JOHN. I did the shopping!

MAUD. There is no child on earth who has only two nappies. You need at least a dozen.

JOHN. *A dozen*?!

MAUD. And where's the blanket?

JOHN. There's two on my bed. She can have one o' those. And she can have my pillow too.

MAUD. Give me the list! Now!

JOHN. *(Handing it over.)* Fine! Do what you want!

MAUD. *(Getting her purse.)* I'll be back by lunch time.

JOHN. Don't do me any favors. You can take your time! *(She heads for the door.)* And be it on your head if the child is spoiled! *(She EXITS, slamming the door. To himself:)* You are easily the most impossible woman that ever lived. *(He starts putting his purchases back in the bags.)* It's no wonder you never married. You'd drive a sane man to the bug house...*(The phone rings, and he answers it.)* Hello? ...Yes it is.... Ah, Miss Merchant. We've been expectin' your call.... We are indeed. And we're anxious to meet the little tyke....*(He goes white.)* What? ...You're jokin'. ...You're downstairs with the baby now?…Come up? Uh, sure. That-that-that's grand.... Yes, I'm right here. I'll be waitin'. *(He hangs up in a dazed panic ... then*

runs out of the room, and we hear him calling for MAUD off-stage:) Miss Kinch!...*Miss Kinch*!!...*(He hurries back into the room, to the telephone, and dials.)*

JOHN. *(Cont'd)* Hello, front desk? It's Mr. Campbell, room 806. Miss Kinch should be comin' out o' the lift any second and I want you to stop her....Maud Kinch.... About fifty. Hair like straw. A very dowdy person. No, she's not my wife! *(Horrified:) ...She did?! She left already?! Are ya sur… Well what the hell good are you?!! (He hangs up; and immediately there's a knock on the door.)* Holy Christ.

(He doesn't know what to do, but finally opens the door. BEVERLY MERCHANT ENTERS, a friendly woman holding an infant in her arms. The infant is wrapped in a blanket. JOHN looks stunned.)

JOHN. Come in, come in...

BEVERLY. Here she is.

(JOHN looks at the baby for the first time, and he's awestruck. Mesmerized. From this point on, JOHN is in another world.)

BEVERLY. Would you like to hold her?

JOHN. ... I would. Yes. *(She hands the baby to JOHN. He can't take his eyes off her.)* ...She's a little thing.

BEVERLY. She's two weeks old.

JOHN. Two weeks old...

BEVERLY. I'm sorry I'm early, but I have two more placements today. I hope it's all right. *(No response.)* Mr. Campbell ...?

JOHN. Hm?

BEVERLY. I said I'm sorry I'm early.

JOHN. It's fine…

BEVERLY. Is Miss Kinch here?

JOHN. *(To the baby.)* What a pretty little girl you are.... She's got my finger.

BEVERLY. She's a real heartbreaker. She hardly cries at all. She has a great disposition.

JOHN. Hello...

BEVERLY. I'll need to see some identification, and you'll have to sign a release. We'll do the real paperwork next Friday, before we go to court. It is on Friday, by the way. The judge had to postpone for a few days. He had some minor surgery.

(JOHN hasn't heard a word of this. He's completely wrapped up in the baby.)

JOHN. She's very sweet. Look at her...*(Then:)* Uh oh. I think she's wet. Or somethin' else maybe. *(Sniff)*

BEVERLY. Do you want to change her?

JOHN. Not in this lifetime.

BEVERLY. Sure you do. Put her down. We'll do it together. Have you ever changed a baby?

JOHN. Un-uhn..

BEVERLY. Unpin her. I'll get some water. *(She heads for the bathroom and EXITS, calling:)* Do you have a clean diaper?

JOHN. *(Calling back.)* Is one diaper enough?!

BEVERLY. Sure!

JOHN. I knew it, I knew it!

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