

SAINTLY MOTHER

An Original Drama

By

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TIME

The Present and 20 Years Earlier

PLACE

The Philadelphia suburban home of Dr. Carl Dewart, including a living room and a library, which has been turned into a sick room.

The Greenwich Village studio of Carl's artist father

CAST

JULIANA.....The Mother, a small woman in her 60s
CARL.....Her Son, in his late 30s
HELEN.....Carl's wife, in her late 30s
WINSTON.....Carl's father, in his 40s
MARGE.....Juliana's best friend, in her 40s
DR. YEAMAN.....A Psychiatrist in his 40s or 50

Saintly Mother

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SETTING: An urban, middle-class living room with a connecting study that has been turned into a sick room. The living room is dominated by what appears to be a very large, pop art canvas, showing a cowboy on a horse, about to be hung from a tree, and a buxom blonde cutting the noose with a long knife. The other walls are covered with oil paintings, mostly of seascapes, and a scattering of artful photographs. . In one corner is the painting of a fire hydrant, and nearby, in a less conspicuous location, is a large photograph in a very fine frame.

SCENE

HELEN, an attractive, stylishly dressed woman in her 30s, is finishing a telephone conversation.

HELEN

We wouldn't have enjoyed ourselves anyhow, knowing she was in the hospital. Maybe we can get away for that weekend after she leaves. I think I hear them now. I'll call you later.

She hangs up, resigned to what is about to happen. Off stage is heard the sound of two people entering the downstairs front door, followed by the sound of voices and steps climbing stairs with difficulty. Helen tenses.

JULIANA (O.S.)

You didn't say you had so many steps.

CARL (O.S.)

You have more steps in New York.

Helen gets up and goes to the door.

JULIANA (O.S.)

The steps aren't so step in New York.

HELEN

(Calling down the stairs)

Is that you, Juliana?

JULIANA (O.S.)

Saintly Mother has arrived.

CARL and JULIANA enter. Carl is in his 30s, dressed in the understated affluence of an academic physician. He is not happy. Juliana is in her 60s and wears a jumpsuit and a tattered raincoat. She used to be an attractive woman, but a life of too much drinking, cigarettes and sadness has taken its toll. She wears a lot of make-up, perhaps too much for her age, and carries a cane and a large camera bag, which hangs from her shoulder.

HELEN

How was your trip?

JULIANA

The trip was all right. Philadelphia I'm no so sure about.

HELEN

After all these years, you've finally made it to Philadelphia.

Helen goes to hug Juliana, but the old woman tenses. Helen smiles instead. Juliana surveys the living room with a critical eye.

JULIANA

So this is the fancy town house that Carl keeps talking about. I am impressed.

HELEN

It's hardly fancy, Juliana. We have only two floors.

JULIANA

In Manhattan, two floors is fancy. Even big-name doctors like my son can't afford two floors in Manhattan. Why is your living room on the second floor?

CARL

Better light.

JULIANA

Living rooms should be on the first floor so you can greet guests at the front door when they arrive.

(Leaning heavily on her cane, Juliana hobbles over to the western painting)
Paintings like these are worth a fortune now. A lot more than your father ever got paid for them.

(Closely inspecting the blonde in the picture)
I used to be pretty.

HELEN

A lot of people comment on how pretty you are.

JULIANA

(To Carl)

You tell people the blonde is your mother?

Carl nods but says nothing. He's preoccupied.

JULIANA

I suppose it does make for interesting conversation.

CARL

Drinks anyone?

JULIANA

Yes, my arrival should be celebrated.

(Coming upon the small photograph hanging on the wall)

I see you even found room for one of my little photographs. You've arranged the paintings very nicely, Carl. You always did have a fine eye for composition. Your father would have been very proud.

CARL

It was Helen. She arranged the paintings.

JULIANA

Oh.

HELEN

I want to hang more of your photographs. But we haven't had a chance to get the negatives blown up.

Carl pours a glass of wine for himself. And then he pours two glasses of club soda from another bottle, which Juliana notices. He hands one glass to his mother and the other to Helen.

CARL

To Sainly Mother.

They toast. Juliana moves on to one of the marine paintings.

JULIANA

Winston always took such pride in the rigging on his sailing ships. He would stand for hours, painting in each rope, making certain that every knot was turned in just the right way.

(Coming upon the fire hydrant painting)

What's your father's fire hydrant painting doing over here in the corner? It would look better over there, where my photograph is.

(Plopping down in a chair)

It takes a special genius to see beauty in a fire hydrant. Winston was very gifted that way. He could find beauty where others saw only ugliness. Why don't you try it over there now?

HELEN

It didn't look very good on that wall, Juliana.

JULIANA

Just hold it near the light. You'll see.

CARL

Helen said she tried it there.

JULIANA

Why do you have to be so disagreeable? All the way down in the car, you were so unpleasant.

CARL

(Muttering to himself)

I guess it was my upbringing.

JULIANA

What did you say, Carl?

He doesn't reply.

JULIANA

Is it such a big deal to move a little painting?

CARL

All right, I'll move it.

He switches them, angering Helen.

JULIANA

See. It's a lot better there.

She lights a cigarette. Helen starts to say they don't smoke in her house but thinks better of the idea. She forces a smile.

HELEN

It's so nice that you will be staying with us for a little while.

JULIANA

Who said anything about a little while? I might stay for good.

HELEN

(Her smile quivering)

That would be nice.

JULIANA

Do you have an ashtray?

HELEN

No, I'm afraid we don't...

JULIANA

How is that possible?

CARL

This is a non-smoking house.

JULIANA

Not anymore.

Juliana brings a small, silver ashtray from her huge handbag.

JULIANA

I plan to be here only long enough to transact my business. Have you ever been a patient in a hospital?

(Before Helen can respond)

Don't ever let them put you in one. All they want to do is experiment on you.

CARL

They weren't experimenting on you.

JULIANA

What are they doing then?

CARL

They were pumping out your stomach.

JULIANA

If I had wanted my stomach to be pumped out, I wouldn't have taken all those pills.

The phone rings. Helen answers it.

HELEN

Hello. Yes. Just a minute.

(Handing the phone to Carl)

Your resident at the hospital. Don't you dare leave me.

CARL

(On phone)

This is Dr. Stewart....That Doesn't sound good. How long has she been like that? I better come in.

HELEN

Carl, no.

CARL

(On phone)

Lancaster is the attending?

HELEN

He can take care of it.

CARL

But he won't be covering the whole evening. I better come in.

JULIANA

My son, the important doctor.

CARL

It's no problem for me to come in. Because I think I should come in, that's why.

(Hanging up)

An emergency.

HELEN

You son of a bitch.

CARL

I'll come back as soon as I can.

(To Juliana)

I'm sorry.

JULIANA

So go.

CARL

One of the kids in intensive care has taken a turn for the worse.

JULIANA

(Pointedly ignoring Carl)

And how is your work going, Helen?

HELEN

It's going well, thank you.

CARL

The little girl is really very sick.

JULIANA

I'm glad your work is going well.

CARL

I'd stay if I could.

JULIANA

So go already.

CARL

I'm glad you both understand.

He slams out of the house.

JULIANA

His father was like that. Always the work came first.

HELEN

Some things should be more important than work.

JULIANA

For an artist, nothing can be more important.

HELEN

Carl is not an artist.

JULIANA

Winston and I had hoped he would become an artist. But he chose medicine instead. Disappointment is part of parenthood.

HELEN

You should be proud of Carl. He's a wonderful doctor, and a loving son.

JULIANA

Carl is a dutiful son.

HELEN

That, too.

JULIANA

Every Sunday evening, Carl calls me just before 60 Minutes, Carl's favorite TV show. Lately I have been asking myself, does he call me because he wants to talk to me or does he call because he thinks this is what a dutiful son should do? During commercials.

HELEN

How could you ask such a question?

JULIANA

When you are alone, with no one coming to see you, you have time to ask these questions

HELEN

I know we should try to get up there more often.

JULIANA

I began to wonder about this when I noticed that our conversations always end just as 60 Minutes is beginning. No matter what we are talking about. I think if I was having a heart attack during one of our chats, he'd say he'd call me back in an hour. But enough talk about Carl. Tell me, how many bedrooms do you have in this fancy house of yours.

HELEN

Four.

JULIANA

Do any of the rooms have an eastern view?

HELEN

(Worried)

Why are you asking?

JULIANA

I like to watch the sunrise.

HELEN

It's going to be raining the entire weekend.

JULIANA

But sunshine is predicted by the end of the week.

HELEN

One of the rooms has an eastern view.

JULIANA

I'll check it out later. Why do you live in such a large house?

HELEN

Maybe one day we'll have children.

Helen waits tensely, expecting the inevitable question.
Juliana says nothing. Helen relaxes.

JULIANA
When?

HELEN
When what?

JULIANA
When will you one day have children?

HELEN
I don't know.
(Trying to change the subject)
Would you like some coffee?

Juliana smiles a yes.

HELEN
It's only instant, I'm afraid.

JULIANA
Then thank you no.

JULIANA
When did you discover that you were pregnant?

HELEN
I beg your pardon.

JULIANA
Why didn't you tell me?

HELEN
What makes you think I'm pregnant?

JULIANA
You've stopped drinking. And you've stopped smoking. The modern woman stops smoking and drinking for only one reason. She's pregnant.

HELEN
We'll get some regular coffee tonight.

JULIANA
Why have you waited so long to have children.

HELEN
(Losing her patience)
I don't know, Juliana.

JULIANA

You're almost 35. Your eggs are getting musty.

HELEN

I guess there's just never been any time.

JULIANA

For what?

HELEN

(Exasperated)

To conceive a baby.

JULIANA

Conceiving a baby doesn't take long. It's raising them that's time consuming. Winston didn't want to have babies. Other than Carl, of course.

HELEN

I think I'll have some coffee. Are you sure that you wouldn't like some?

JULIANA

Thank you. No.

HELEN

Perhaps tea.

Juliana shakes her head.

HELEN

Maybe later.

Helen exits. Juliana starts hunting through her huge camera bag. She takes out a super size bottle of aspirins and puts it on the table next to her. She hunts further and takes out a heavy rope, knotted with a noose. Finally she finds what she is looking for -- a carton of cigarettes. She takes a pack from the box, replaces everything in her bag and opens the pack. Lighting the cigarette, she settles back for a moment, surveying the room. She spots a very expensive vase on the table, reaches over and turns it upside down to read the name on the boom. She is not impressed. Hearing Helen, she replaces and vase. Helen enters.

HELEN

Smoking isn't good for you, Juliana.

JULIANA

I'm not pregnant.

HELEN

It looks like it's going to be a beautiful evening. You brought the sunshine with you. So tell me, what would you like to do while you're with us. There's an old neighborhood that's been restored to its original Colonial American style. Or we could see the National Constitution Center. People come from all over the country to see....

JULIANA

I won't have time for any of that. I have business to attend to.

HELEN

You have business in Philadelphia?

JULIANA

You might say I brought it down with me from New York.

HELEN

Would you mind me asking what this business is?

JULIANA

Suicide.

HELEN

What?

JULIANA

I'm going to commit suicide.

HELEN

Philadelphia isn't that bad.

Helen laughs at her joke. Juliana doesn't.

HELEN

You're kidding, of course.

Juliana doesn't respond.

HELEN

You're not kidding.

JULIANA

I have lived long enough, and now I want to stop. That's all.

HELEN

Are you ill?

JULIANA

A little arthritis, maybe. And my eyes are not so good anymore. Aging ain't for sissies.

HELEN

That's no reason to give up.

JULIANA

Who's talking about giving up? When you've had your fill of food, you don't give up. You just stop eating. Why should I let my body decide when enough is enough? You don't keep cleaning the carpet until the vacuum wears out and stop running.

HELEN

I wish you'd stop these analogies.

JULIANA

What do I have to live for? Winston is dead. Carl doesn't need me anymore. He has you and his career and his life is down here. This is not a bad thing I am planning. It has many attractions. You and Carl won't have to worry about finding me a nursing home. I won't have to worry about going into one.

HELEN

You must be in terrible pain.

JULIANA

Must you have a toothache before you leave a boring movie?

HELEN

Juliana.

JULIANA

I hope you don't mind having a suicidal person living in your house. I'll try not to get under foot though I will end up being a disposal problem.

HELEN

You're not a suicidal person.

JULIANA

What does it take to qualify?

The sound of the boiling teapot is heard.

HELEN

You've been alone in New York for too long. Things are going to start looking better for you.

JULIANA

In Philadelphia? How can things look better in Philadelphia than in New York?

HELEN

You'll be with us.

JULIANA

I want Carl to help me...

HELEN

He'll want to help you.

JULIANA

...commit suicide.

HELEN

Don't joke about this.

JULIANA

He's a physician and knows about these things.

HELEN

You want your own son to help you do this?

Juliana nods.

HELEN

You have spoken to Carl about this?

JULIANA

In the car, coming down here.

HELEN

What did he say?

JULIANA

He said don't be silly.

HELEN

Is that all?

JULIANA

I don't think he believed me.

HELEN

He didn't do anything?

JULIANA

He put the car radio on. Your tea kettle is boiling.

Helen exits, muttering to herself. Juliana hobbles over to the couch and curls up, apparently in sleep. The sound of the kettle stops abruptly and Helen reappears with a drink in her hand instead of coffee. Her mood in combattant.

HELEN

Where?

She sees Juliana curled up on the couch and shakes her harshly.

HELEN

Where do you intend to do it?

JULIANA

I don't want to bore you with the details.

HELEN

I assure you, Juliana, the details won't bore me. What are you planning?

JULIANA

That depends on Carl.

HELEN

What should we do until you work out the details?

JULIANA

Just go about your business. I'm no different than any mother-in-law dropping by for a visit.

She yawns.

HELEN

I hope I'm not boring you with my silly questions.

JULIANA

The trip from New York has made me very tired.

HELEN

Our nice little chat is at an end?

JULIANA

For the time being.

HELEN

Just like that?

JULIANA

Suddenly I am very tired.

HELEN

You will let us know when you've finished making your plans?

Juliana acts as though she is asleep. Helen finishes her drink, looking with anger at Juliana, whose fragile frame is dwarfed by the large couch. Helen's anger slowly turns to pity and sadness.

HELEN

The pull-out couch in the library is all made up. Let me help you to it.

JULIANA

Don't go to any trouble for me. This couch is fine.

Helen pulls the blinds and snaps off the lights. Standing in the light of the doorway, she looks at Juliana one last time and exits. Juliana gives Helen a few seconds to go downstairs and marches, surprisingly briskly and without a cane, to the hangman picture. She looks at it intently and then begins to cry.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK

SCENE

An artist's studio, twenty years earlier. WINSTON a handsome, well-built man in his early 40s, is seated on a stool. He's dressed in a cowboy shirt, with a noose around his neck. Nearby, on Winston's easel, is the unfinished hangman's picture shown in the first scene. Carl, who is in his early teens, is seated on the floor, reading a book and oblivious to the bizarre scene. Opera music is heard on the radio.

WINSTON

(Calling out)

Come on, Julie, I have to finish this picture today.

JULIANA (O.S.)

Just a minute. I'm looking for something.

WINSTON

This cover has everything.

JULIANA (O.S.)

It's a good cover, Winston.

WINSTON

Sex. Impending, violent death. A brave, handsome cowboy.

JULIANA (O.S.)

Ah, here it is.

JULIANA enters. She's in her early 40s now and is dressed in a cowboy outfit, just like the woman in the cowboy picture seen in the previous scene. She carries a huge old Speed Graphic camera with a flash. Putting down the camera, she poses Winston in the noose. Winston holds up one end of the rope as though it's attached to the tree.

WINSTON

We've got to do a lot of faking here.

She aims the camera and takes a picture with the flash.

JULIANA

One more.

(Taking another picture)

That should do it.

WINSTON

Now I need you to pose. A few highlights.

Winston slips his head out of the noose and goes to the easel as Juliana poses with a knife, cutting the rope.

WINSTON

Bend in closer to the noose. More. Good. Good.

(Painting a few brush strokes)

Open another button on your blouse. I need more cleavage.

She opens a button and bends a little more forward so the cleavage is more obvious.

WINSTON

Beautiful. Beautiful.

He starts painting furiously, singing with the opera. MARGE enters. She's a woman in her 30s, who wears a cocktail dress and has a camera bag on her shoulder.

MARGE

(Out of breath)

Oh, those stairs. I must be getting old.

WINSTON

There's my favorite camera girl. Looking beautiful as ever.

(Singing)

La done-nae mo-bi-le. Qual piu-mail ven-to mu-ta d'ac-cen-to.

MARGE

(Studying the painting)

I've always liked impressionism.

WINSTON

(Singing)

E di epn-sie-ro. Sem-preun-a. Ma-bi-le.

MARGE

(Indicating the painting)

What's it called?

WINSTON

I don't know. What do you think, Julie?

JULIANA

The Hangman's Undoing.

WINSTON

There it is, Marge. The Hangman's Undoing.

MARGE

You artists have so much fun.

Winston gives Marge a seductive look. Not to be outdone by Marge, Juliana bends over more.

JULIANA

Do you want more cleavage?

WINSTON

Nope. I'm through with you.

WINSTON

I think that's going to work.

(Putting down his brushes, he claps his hands)

Time for a drink. Yes sir, Julie. I think this cover will do it. Finally our ship is coming in.

Juliana pours drinks and gives them to Marge and Winston.

WINSTON

A toast.

JULIANA

(Handing Carl a Coke)

You're in this also, Carl.

WINSTON

A toast to... What are we calling it?

MARGE

The Hangman's Undoing.

WINSTON

To The Hangman's Undoing.

WINSTON

We must celebrate at Victor's. But first, the rape cover. It's due next week. I need a picture of Marge screaming.

JULIANA

You need it now?

WINSTON

It's only take a few minutes.

Juliana gets her camera.

WINSTON

(To Marge)
Let me see you scream.

Marge screams and Winston is not impressed.

WINSTON

That's not much of a scream. And you don't look scared.

Marge screams again. Not good enough.

WINSTON

You've got to get in the right mood. Visualize the scene. You're in a dark alley. It's only you and this crazed man. You're about to be raped and brutally murdered.

She howls.

WINSTON

He grabs you about the neck.

She howls louder.

WINSTON

He rips off your blouse. Pulls down you skirt and your panties.

She howls even louder.

WINSTON

Now we're cooking.

The flash goes off.

WINSTON

He'd raping you.

A piercing scream. Another flash.

WINSTON

Beautiful. You get it Julie?

JULIANA

Got it. Let Carl take a picture. Come over here, Carl, and I'll show you how to use a camera.

CARL

I'm reading.

JULIANA

I want you to take a picture of Marge being raped.

CARL

I don't want to.

JULIANA

You should learn photography. When you grow up, it's good to have different ways to make money, just in case the art world doesn't discover you immediately.

CARL

I don't want to be a photographer.

JULIANA

Photographing Marge will take only a minute.

CARL

Hey, mom. I just want to read my book. All right?

JULIANA

Why do you have to give me a tough time? Don't you want to be an artist?

CARL

Photographers aren't artists. They are technicians.

JULIANA

(Hurt by the remark)

A good photographer can always make a buck.

(Holding out the camera)

Just one photograph.

CARL

Oh, Christ.

He throws his book down, walks over to Juliana, takes the camera, aims it vaguely in the direction of Marge and pulls the shutter. The flash goes off. He hands the camera back to Juliana and returns to his book.

JULIANA

It's a beginning. I suppose.

WINSTON

OK, now let's eat.

He heads for the door and Carl and Marge follow. Juliana stays behind.

WINSTON

Julie, come on.

JULIANA

I have to do the prints.

WINSTON

We can't celebrate without you.

JULIANA

Go ahead, I said.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK

SCENE

Back to the present, the living room that night. Helen is setting the dinner table, which consists of a card table with a table cloth and candles. Carl enters, carrying an attache case and looking weary. He gives Helen a kiss, which she resists. She is angry.

CARL

Hi.

Helen doesn't respond.

CARL

What's all this?

(No response)

Why are we eating up here instead of the dining room?

HELEN

It's your mother's idea.

CARL

It was good I went in. We had to put the kid back on the ventilator.

(A beat)

I think she's going to be OK now.

(A beat)

Her name is Sarah. A cute blonde-headed girl.

(A beat)

She has the most soulful eyes. She's only six.

(A beat)

I sure could use a drink.

She doesn't move. He gets it himself.

HELEN

You're not going to ask me about her, are you?

CARL

Who?

HELEN

Your mother, Carl. Your goddamn mother.

CARL

I'm sorry, Helen. I had to go to the hospital.

HELEN
She's your mother.

CARL
How did it go?

HELEN
It was awful.

CARL
Oh.

HELEN
Horrible.

CARL
It couldn't have been that bad.

HELEN
Why didn't you tell me what she said to you in the car?

CARL
Oh. That

HELEN
Yes, Carl. That.

CARL
I couldn't talk about it in front of her. I know it will be difficult having her live here, for a while.

HELEN
Yes, it will be difficult, sitting around, waiting for your mother to kill herself.

CARL
She's not going to kill herself.

HELEN
Not knowing when I wake up if I'm going to find your mother hanging from the ceiling or dead on the floor from an overdose.

CARL
She's not the easiest person to live with.

HELEN
We're not talking about living, Carl. We're talking about dying. We're going to end up like characters in one of your father's magazine covers. She should see a psychiatrist.

CARL

I can't ask her to do that.

HELEN

You'd rather find her in a tub of red water with her wrists slit?

CARL

Stop it, Helen. She's not about to kill herself. And she's certainly not about to see a psychiatrist.

HELEN

Just ask your friend Laurie to see her.

CARL

She'd end up analyzing Laurie. She probably was savoring the chaos this would create, all the way down in the car

HELEN

You're gambling with her life, Carl. What if you're wrong and she does do it?

He silently considers the possibility

HELEN

This must be dealt with. She's already tried to kill herself once.

CARL

It was a silly charade. She only took a handful of aspirins. And was OK. After they pumped out her stomach and took her off life support.

HELEN

This is what you call a silly charade?

CARL

When I got up there, she was sitting in the hospital room, mad as hell. She started yelling at me for taking so long to get to the hospital.

HELEN

At least you went up there.

CARL

Whenever we get together, it always ends up this way. Her yelling at me.

The sound of the television going on in the adjacent room is heard. Carl and Helen look at each other with concern that she might have heard what they had been saying. Carl goes to the door and speaks through it.

CARL

Are you awake? Has the Saintly Mother arisen?

Saintly Mother by Donald C. Drake

JULIANA (O.S.)

What time is it?

Lights come up on Carl's library, which has been turned into a sick room, with a fold-out bed and television set. Juliana is sitting in front of the television as Helen and Carl enter.

HELEN

You ready for dinner?

JULIANA

Not hungry. Pumping out your stomach kills your appetite. You two eat alone. I don't want to interfere.

(Looking at Carl without smiling)

So he's back?

Helen gets Juliana's slippers and tries fitting them onto her feet.

JULIANA

I need my vitamin shots.

CARL

I told you those shots are worthless.

JULIANA

So humor me. That's what doctors get paid for, isn't it? They can't cure anything.

(Becoming aware of Helen putting on her shoes)

What are you doing?

HELEN

Getting you ready for dinner. Now take my arm. Go ahead.

Juliana tries gamely to stand.

JULIANA

Ever since my stroke, I don't seem so steady. God knows how much worse I would be if it wasn't for my vitamins.

They help her into the living room.

HELEN

Sit down here.

JULIANA

Where are my cigarettes?

CARL

I'll go get them.

He exits.

HELEN

Maybe you should wait until after dinner to smoke.

JULIANA

Why?

HELEN

It'll spoil your appetite.

JULIANA

Don't be ridiculous.

HELEN

It doesn't spoil your appetite?

JULIANA

It never has yet.

HELEN

I'll go get the roast.

Helen exits, as Carl enters, with the cigarettes.

JULIANA

What took you so long? Have you locked up my cigarettes in a safe in the attic?

CARL

I didn't do that. If you want to smoke, smoke.

JULIANA

Got a match?

CARL

(Lighting her cigarette)

It's your business if you want to rot away your lungs with cancer. Wake up every morning with a hacking cough. Struggle to breathe when you...

JULIANA

Enough already. None of that is going to happen.

CARL

What makes you think so?

JULIANA

The cigarettes are filtered.

Helen enters with the roast.

HELEN

Your favorite, Juliana. Roast beef.

JULIANA

You're not worried about cholesterol?

CARL

You are?

JULIANA

No.

CARL

Then why did you ask her that?

JULIANA

Just making middle-class, dinner conversation.

Helen places the roast on the table and Carl starts angrily slashing at it while Helen lights the candles.

JULIANA

Do you always eat so elegantly?

HELEN

Only when we have someone special to welcome to our home.

JULIANA

Should I be honored?

CARL

Rare or well done?

JULIANA

If you don't remember after all these years, I'm not going to tell you.

HELEN

You know your mother prefers well done.

He dumps some well cooked meat onto her plate.

JULIANA

In the orphanage we had meat only twice a year. Christmas and Thanksgiving.

CARL

Yes, you must tell us about the orphanage again.

HELEN

We know all about the orphanage, Carl.

JULIANA

The rest of the year all we got was stew. Every day we had to wash the floor on our hands and knees.

CARL

Dickens should have been there.

JULIANA

It was not like today, where everywhere there are carpets and machines to clean them.

CARL

(Egging her on)

And even at night there was no rest for you.

HELEN

I wish you would stop egging her on, Carl.

JULIANA

We had to sleep with our hands folded on top of the sheets.

CARL

Tell us about the nuns.

JULIANA

The nuns would come around in the middle of the night with flashlights to make sure that our hands weren't in places they shouldn't be.

CARL

And you haven't touched yourself or anyone since.

HELEN

Carl!

JULIANA

You never wanted to be hugged. You said it was for sissies.

CARL

I was only a kid for Christ sake.

JULIANA

I don't know why I ever gave birth to you. I was in labor for 20 hours. That's how long it took for you to be born. You don't know pain until you've experienced childbirth. Men could never endure such pain. Twenty hours. If getting a woman pregnant hurt men as much as delivering a baby, you'd see a sharp drop in the population.

(To Helen)

It was because of his big head that he wouldn't come out. He almost ruined me.

CARL

My own personal original sin.

JULIANA

It wasn't funny.

CARL

If abortion had been legal, I probably wouldn't be here today.

HELEN

Would anyone like more roast beef.

CARL

Now that it's all gone and done with, are you sorry that you had me?

HELEN

Coffee?

CARL

I'm not sorry about it.

JULIANA

I should hope not. As a child you had a wonderful life.

(To Helen)

He lived in the most exciting city in the world and his father took him everywhere.

CARL

Yeah, he took me around.

JULIANA

Carl and his father were very close.

HELEN

Carl has told me a lot of wonderful stories about growing up in Greenwich Village. It must have been very exciting, Juliana. A lot more exciting than my life, growing up in Scarsdale.

CARL

I remember the art store dad always used to go to -- a dinky little place squeezed between a homosexual gym and a liquor store on Christopher Street. The place was cram packed with tubes of paint and rolls of canvas. It was so clean and new, not like the stink of photographic chemicals.

(Remark hurts Juliana)

Dad would buy these huge sheets of canvas, which we'd carry back to the studio, rolled up under our arms, like knights with long, white lances.

Helen sees that Carl's remarks are hurting Juliana.

HELEN

Are you all right, Juliana?

She doesn't respond.

CARL

He'd cut the canvas and stretch it tight across the wood frame. Hammer it taut like a drum. Whack. Whack. Whack. Whenever I heard that sound, I knew dad was starting a new painting. And when he finished a painting and was ready to take it down to the magazine editors, he'd wrap it up in brown paper, tie it with string and head down the street to the subway. In the afternoon, I'd sit in the window and watch the subway entrance. If he came out with nothing under his arm, I'd know he sold the painting and we'd have money for a couple of months. If it was still under his arm, it meant we had to tighten our belts again.

HELEN

What do you remember most about these times, Juliana?

Juliana shrugs.

CARL

(To Juliana, still attacking)

Don't you remember that one aria he kept playing. It was Bizet, wasn't it?

Juliana nods

HELEN

Carmen?

JULIANA

Pearl Fishers.

CARL

What was that Aria about?

JULIANA

I don't know.

CARL

You don't know? He must have played it a thousand times.

JULIANA

It was in French.

CARL

Still.

JULIANA

I made up my own stories.

CARL

It was very sad.

JULIANA

I made up sad stories.

They become silent.

HELEN

(Finally)

I think we could use some gravy.

She exits.

JULIANA

Are you going to help me?

CARL

You won't give up on that, will you? You want me to help you? I'll help you. Do you want to set a date for it or should I just spike your orange juice one morning without warning?

JULIANA

You don't have to be nasty about it.

CARL

It's better not to know ahead of time. You don't want to be counting down the hours like someone on death row. How should we do it? Do you have any preferences? I think it would be better if you were lying down when it happened. You'll lie here on the couch. I'll put on music. Do you know what you'd want to hear?

(She doesn't reply)

I'll pick something nice. We'll talk a bit. You've have a last smoke. And then I'll fill the syringe with the poison that will kill you.

JULIANA

It will be easier for you and Helen when I'm gone.

CARL

That's for sure.

JULIANA

You won't have to call me every Sunday.

CARL

Think of the money we'll save on presents. And trips to New York for Thanksgiving and Christmas. The savings in unwanted greeting cards will be incalculable. I never realized the full ramifications of this...

(Looking for the word)

...event.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK

SCENE

The sick room, a few days later. Juliana is hunting through the many compartments in her huge handbag. Finally she pulls out a large bottle of aspirins, which she tries to open, but has trouble with the safety cap.

JULIANA

Damn children.

She tries to open it by biting on the lid. She slams it against the table. Finally she brings out a nail file and pries off the cap. She turns the bottle upside down and dumps out all the aspirins into her bag. She places the now empty bottle and a glass on their sides, as though they had been knocked over by her fall. Dissatisfied with the scene, she picks up the glass and drops it onto the floor. It breaks.

HELEN (O.S.)

Juliana, are you ready for your lunch?

Juliana hurriedly stretches out on the floor, assuming the pose of someone who has collapsed from an overdose of pills. Helen appears in the doorway. She doesn't see Juliana, who is partially hidden by furniture.

HELEN

Juliana, are you awake? I'm making some soup and sandwiches.

The doorbell rings.

HELEN

Oh, damn.

Helen exits. Juliana holds her pose for a few seconds, but finally realizes that Helen isn't coming in. She sits up and lights a cigarette. After a few moments, Helen calls.

HELEN (O.S.)

How hungry are you, Juliana?

Juliana snuffs out her cigarette and resumes her pose. Helen enters.

HELEN

It's so dark in here and so beautiful outside. You should really try to get out.

Helen lifts the shades, letting in the light. The phone rings. Helen rushes out to answer it. Juliana waits and then gets up, sitting dejectedly on the couch. She finds her cigarette, lights it and thinks about what to do next. She hears Helen approaching and resumes her overdose position on the floor.

HELEN

Carl just called. He won't be home for dinner again.

She sees Juliana.

HELEN

Juliana! Are you OK? Juliana.

No response. Helen sees the empty bottle and broken glass on the floor.

HELEN

Oh, my God.

She puts her ear to Juliana's chest.

HELEN

Oh, my God.

She turns Juliana onto her back and bends down to listen to her chest.

HELEN

Oh, my God. Oh, my God.

Holding her clasped hands above her head, Helen smashes them down, hitting the center of Juliana's chest as she attempts cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

JULIANA

Ow.

HELEN

Juliana.

JULIANA

Stop it.

HELEN

Juliana. Juliana.

JULIANA

(Remembering her feigned unconsciousness)

Oh, where am I?

Helen dials the phone frantically.

JULIANA

Where are you?

HELEN

Hello, police.

JULIANA

(Wanting to distract Helen, she feigns throwing up)

Help me. I'm going to throw up.

Helen slams down the phone.

HELEN

Wait. Wait.

Helen gets a wastepaper basket and holds it up for Juliana to throw up into.

HELEN

Here, use this.

JULIANA

No, the bathroom. Help me to the bathroom.

Helen helps Juliana to the bathroom and starts to go in with her.

JULIANA

I'll do it myself.

Juliana goes into the bathroom and shuts the door. Helen waits outside. The sound of someone throwing up is heard, followed by flushing. The door opens.

JULIANA

I threw up all the pills.

HELEN

I better call an ambulance.

JULIANA

No.

HELEN

You've got to go to the hospital.

JULIANA

I've thrown everything up. It's OK.

HELEN

Juliana, I don't...

JULIANA

It's OK, I said. I've had experience with these things.

HELEN

We should do something.

JULIANA

Wait until Carl comes home.

HELEN

I want someone to look at you.

JULIANA

I want to wait for Carl.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK

SCENE

The living room a few days later. Juliana is smoking a cigarette, pointedly ignoring Dr. Yeaman, who is sitting nearby, looking at her. She takes a puff and blows out the smoke. She takes another puff. Dr. Yeaman remains silent. Finally she turns and looks at him staring at her.

JULIANA

You're not very directive, are you? Modern psychiatrists are supposed to be directive. I don't need therapy. But you know what you could do for me, doctor? You could give me a vitamin B-12 shot. My son doesn't believe in them.

(Pause)

What was your question?

He doesn't reply.

JULIANA

I recognize your technique, doctor. I saw it on Saturday Night Live. Your work must be very difficult, trying to get crazy people to talk about their crazy thoughts. Carl said you're not married. You're very old not to be married. And you're a doctor. I'm surprised some woman hasn't snatched you up already. Are you gay?

DR. YEAMAN

We're here to talk about you, not me.

JULIANA

Nothing wrong with being gay. Some of our best artists are gay. They're a very creative, sensitive people, homosexuals are. You strike me as a very creative and sensitive person.

DR. YEAMAN

I'm not homosexual.

Dr. Yeaman, winces from having reacted. Juliana smiles in victory.

JULIANA

Maybe you're just having trouble making commitments. Most men do.

DR. YEAMAN

Tell me something about Winston.

JULIANA

What's there to say. He was a wonderful man. Everyone will tell you that. Ask Carl. He'll tell you how his father was wonderful in every way.

DR. YEAMAN

In every way

JULIANA

In every way.

DR. YEAMAN

Was he a good provider?

Juliana looks through him and doesn't answer. Dr. Yeaman waits.

JULIANA

(Finally)

What was your question?

DR. YEAMAN

Was he a good provider?

JULIANA

He didn't have to be. I made enough from my business with Marge to support us.

DR. YEAMAN

Who is Marge?

JULIANA

Someone who used to be my best friend. You're not here to talk about that. That's not why Carl brought you in here.

DR. YEAMAN

Why do you think he wants us to talk?

JULIANA

So he doesn't have to.

DR. YEAMAN

What did you want to tell me about the suicide?

JULIANA

A-ha. That's why you're here.

DR. YEAMAN

Tell me about it.

JULIANA

There's nothing to tell.

DR. YEAMAN

You want Carl to help you, don't you?

JULIANA

He's told you everything.

DR. YEAMAN

How do you want Carl to help you?

JULIANA

Do all your sentences end with question marks, doctor? You're going to have to improve your technique. I want Carl to help me commit suicide. He's an expert on these things because doctors are killing people all the time. It's the least he can do for his saintly mother. Don't you agree, doctor?

DR. YEAMAN

Do you need help to commit suicide?

JULIANA

We old ladies need help with these kind of chores.

DR. YEAMAN

But why is it your son who you are asking for that kind of help?

JULIANA

I've never asked him for anything before.

DR. YEAMAN

Do you think helping you commit suicide would be an easy thing for him to do?

JULIANA

Carl's a doctor.

DR. YEAMAN

But he's also a son, isn't he?

JULIANA

Don't be so old fashioned, doctor. It's very modern for children to help parents kill themselves. I'm surprised they haven't formed an association. The Good Riddance Society.

DR. YEAMAN

Why do you think Carl would want to give parents that kind of support?

JULIANA

Isn't it obvious?

DR. YEAMAN

Tell me what you think.

JULIANA

It's cheaper than nursing homes.

DR. YEAMAN

What do you really think?

JULIANA

You know what I think, doctor? We've talked enough.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK

Online Sample Reading Only

SCENE

Studio, 20 years earlier. It's nighttime and the studio is dimly lit. Marge and Winston are hugging and kissing in the dark.

MARGE

That was nice.

WINSTON

I'm glad you decided not to go to work.

MARGE

So am I.

They kiss some more.

WINSTON

Don't stop.

The sound of a key in the lock. The front door opens and a shaft of light cuts across the darkened room. Marge and Winston sit up abruptly. Juliana enters. She sees the two sitting closely together, stares at them for a moment and then shuts the door. She crosses to the table, takes the heavy camera bag from her shoulder, puts on the light and sits down.

JULIANA

They said you called in sick.

MARGE

(Straightening her dress)
I had a bad headache.

WINSTON

She's feeling better now.

Juliana doesn't reply. She starts unzipping the many compartments in the camera bag.

WINSTON

How did it go at work?

Juliana doesn't reply.

MARGE

I think I better get going.

Juliana starts taking folded up dollar bills from the many compartments of her bag, unfolding them, and stacking up the money.

WINSTON

(To Marge)

I'm glad you're feeling better.

MARGE

Yeah. Thanks.

She combs out her hair, gets her handbag and prepares to leave.

MARGE

Good night, Julie.

Juliana ignores her.

Marge exits.

WINSTON

That's no way to treat your best friend.

Juliana doesn't reply.

WINSTON

I started a new painting today.

He goes to his easel and snaps on the light, revealing a square-rigged sail ship sketched in.

WINSTON

To hell with the pulps. I'm going to do fine art. Don't you have anything to say?

JULIANA

I'm tired.

She finishes counting the money.

WINSTON

Good tips.

She doesn't reply.

JULIANA

How much did you make?

JULIANA

Forty-eight dollars.

WINSTON

That's pretty good.

JULIANA

I was very busy. Because Marge wasn't there.

WINSTON

You like the painting?

She doesn't reply. She pours a glass of gin.

WINSTON

I was working on it all night.

Winston puts on a record. It's La Traviata. Taking up his brushes, he starts working on the painting as he sings along with the opera. Juliana pours another glass of gin.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK

SCENE

The sickroom the next morning. Juliana is alone, staring at the TV. The program ends, she shuts it off and stands up. Getting a chair, she puts it under the rafter. Then she gets her handbag, hunts around inside and brings out the hangman's noose. After several failed attempts, she manages to throw the rope around the rafter and tie it off. She cuts off the noose with a knife and makes the end look ragged with her fingers. Putting the noose around her neck, she knocks the chair and box over with a clatter and lies down on the floor under the rafter, as though the rope broke when she attempted to hang herself. Helen and Carl rush into the sickroom.

HELEN

Oh my God. She's done it again.

Carl calmly checks the noose around her neck.

CARL

It's not even pulled tight, for God's sake.

HELEN

What do you mean it hasn't been pulled tight?

Carl shows Helen the noose draped only loosely around Juliana's neck. Juliana gasps, but no one pays attention.

CARL

She's wearing it like a necklace. See.

JULIANA

(Exaggerated gasping)

Pulled noose loose. Changed mind. For time being.

Juliana appears to pass out. No one is impressed. Helen takes the noose from around Juliana's neck and inspects it. She tries to pull the noose tight, but it won't close. Carl takes the noose from her and inspects it fondly.

CARL

Dad's old noose, the one he used on all his hangman covers.

HELEN

It won't tighten.

Juliana gasping gets a little worse.

CARL

My father tied it that way purposely. He was afraid I would play with it and end up hanging myself.

Juliana's gasping becomes more agitated.

HELEN

It just can't be tightened.

JULIANA

Water. I need water.

HELEN

(To Juliana)

Why?

Juliana tries to get up from the floor and Helen pointedly doesn't try to help her.

CARL

You should be ashamed of yourself.

HELEN

Why did you do that, Juliana?

JULIANA

Water. Please water. My throat. Help me, Helen.

HELEN

Why?

JULIANA

Please help.

CARL

You've got to stop doing this.

JULIANA

(Sitting up with surprising control)

No one cares about me.

CARL

It's not funny.

JULIANA

I could have been hanging there all day for all you cared. Suicide gestures should be taken seriously. You're a doctor. You should know that.

Juliana stands with surprising strength and heads for the door.

CARL

Where the hell do you think you're going?

JULIANA

It's a beautiful day. It was going to be my last. I don't want to miss it.

Juliana exits.

HELEN

I don't think I can take much more of this, Carl. It's not normal what your mother is doing.

CARL

You don't think it's normal for a mother-in-law to act out hangman's scenes?

HELEN

You're afraid of her.

CARL

Don't be ridiculous.

HELEN

You're afraid to work at your own desk because she's in there.

CARL

I can't work with the television on.

HELEN

You're afraid to be with your own mother.

CARL

Why would I bring her down here if I was afraid of her?

HELEN

You knew you could dump her on me. You're always at work.

CARL

I'm not always at work.

HELEN

You're always somewhere else. There's always a reason why you can't be here with her. You bring in a psychiatrist when you should be talking to her. You're afraid to even call her mother.

CARL

What are you talking about?

HELEN

You can't say mom. Or mother. You keep her at a distance, by calling her saintly mother.

CARL

She calls herself that.

HELEN

You're the one who started it.

CARL

I don't need this, Helen.

HELEN

This is very difficult for me to say, Carl, but I think that your mother should be in a hospital.

CARL

A hospital?

HELEN

A mental hospital.

CARL

That woman is not crazy.

HELEN

She has deep problems.

CARL

She's old That's what's wrong. A mental hospital isn't going to change that.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK

SCENE

Artist's studio, 20 years earlier. Winston is painting at his easel and is dressed slightly more formally than is normal for him, though still very arty. Juliana is playing solitaire at her table. Carl enters. He wears a jacket and tie. He comes in excitedly but loses it the moment he sees his mother obviously not about to go to a formal event.

CARL

You're not ready.

She doesn't reply.

CARL

Aren't you going to get dressed?

WINSTON

Your mother's not feeling well.

CARL

She seems well enough to play solitaire.

(Yelling at his mother)

What's wrong with you?

WINSTON

Don't yell at her.

CARL

Aren't you going to my graduation?

She doesn't respond.

CARL

I thought you'd want to take photographs, at least.

JULIANA

What's there to take photographs of?

CARL

Of your son graduating.

JULIANA

Why do you want photographs of that?

CARL

I don't want photographs. I don't care. I just thought you'd want to be there.

WINSTON

It's better that she rests, son. You and I can make a day of it.

CARL

Sure. You and me, dad.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK

Online Sample Reading Only

SCENE

The living room, one week after she attempted to hang herself. Dr. Yeaman is admiring the Washington Square photograph. Juliana enters.

JULIANA

What are you doing here so early?

DR. YEAMAN

I wanted to come a few minutes early so I could admire the photographs.

JULIANA

You mean the paintings.

DR. YEAMAN

No, the photographs. They're lovely. Especially this one.

He indicates the Washington Square photo.

JULIANA

It's a nice enough snapshot.

DR. YEAMAN

It's far more than a snapshot. It's a work of art.

JULIANA

The paintings are works of art. The photographs are snapshots.

DR. YEAMAN

I do some photography myself.

JULIANA

Anyone can take photographs with these new cameras.

DR. YEAMAN

I take pride in my images that I think are artful. But I've never done anything like this. There must be a thousand photographs of the Washington Square Arch, but I've never seen one that captures the mood of that park at dusk as well as this photograph does. There is so little light yet you capture everything. Of course, you must have used a tripod.

JULIANA

Balanced the camera on my knee.

DR. YEAMAN
Why?

JULIANA
I like shaky images.

DR. YEAMAN
What kind of a camera did you use?

JULIANA
A pocket camera.

DR. YEAMAN
That's not possible. Surely it was a Nikon or Leica.

JULIANA
Speed Graphic.

DR. YEAMAN
Those old cameras news photographers used to use? They're huge.

JULIANA
I have huge pockets.

DR. YEAMAN
I'm an expert of the arch. I went to NYU and spent a lot of time in Washington Square Park. But we're not here to talk about the Washington Square Park. I understand there was some excitement last week.

JULIANA
Excitement?

DR. YEAMAN
With a noose.

JULIANA
Oh, that.

DR. YEAMAN
Tell me what happened.

JULIANA
The damn rope broke. I'm not very good with my hands. I wanted Carl to help me, but I couldn't find him.

DR. YEAMAN
Help you how?

JULIANA

I don't know. Tie the rope. Make sure that the noose worked. Declare me dead when it was all over. Dispose of the body. All sorts of jobs he could do.

DR. YEAMAN

Do you think this is something he would want to do?

JULIANA

Carl is a dutiful son.

DR. YEAMAN

No son would kill his mother out of a sense of duty.

JULIANA

You don't think so?

DR. YEAMAN

Don't you think Carl is a loving son?

JULIANA

The jury's still out.

DR. YEAMAN

But you don't think so?

JULIANA

No.

DR. YEAMAN

Why?

JULIANA

You can tell.

DR. YEAMAN

How can you tell?

JULIANA

There's nothing to suggest that he is.

DR. YEAMAN

You say a loving son wouldn't help you commit suicide and Carl has refused to help you.

JULIANA

So far.

DR. YEAMAN

He brought you down here after you got out of the hospital.

JULIANA

Something a dutiful son would have to do.

DR. YEAMAN

Something a loving son would want to do.

JULIANA

The trouble with dutiful sons is that you don't know where the love ends and the duty begins. Carl and I are not close.

DR. YEAMAN

Why not?

JULIANA

Because he loves his father.

DR. YEAMAN

His father is dead.

JULIANA

Is he?

DR. YEAMAN

You are a very witty woman.

JULIANA

I try to be amusing.

DR. YEAMAN

Wit keeps people at a distance.

JULIANA

I don't keep people at a distance.

DR. YEAMAN

You kept me at a distance. Just now. When I was trying to talk to you about your photography.

JULIANA

Why were you talking to me about my photography?

DR. YEAMAN

The photography is impressive. And I wanted to get to know you better.

JULIANA

Good Lord, why?

DR. YEAMAN

Because I care about you.

JULIANA

I'm just one of your patients.

DR. YEAMAN

I care about all of my clients.

JULIANA

That makes me feel special.

DR. YEAMAN

You are special.

JULIANA

You're being nice to me because it's part of the job.

DR. YEAMAN

I'm a dutiful psychotherapist. Is that what you think?

JULIANA

Touche.

DR. YEAMAN

I think you're testing your son, Mrs. Stewart. Will he or won't he help you commit suicide? If he helps you, he's only a dutiful son. If he refuses, he's a loving son. Isn't that what you're doing, Mrs. Stewart? Testing your son?

JULIANA

You must be very proud of yourself coming up with a theory like that.

DR. YEAMAN

Am I right?

JULIANA

Is everything we talk about in here just between you and me?

DR. YEAMAN

Everything is confidential.

JULIANA

Completely?

DR. YEAMAN

Completely.

JULIANA

You won't share any of it with Carl, even though he is a good friend?

DR. YEAMAN

It would be unethical.

JULIANA

You won't break this confidence because you think it would be in my best interest?

DR. YEAMAN

I would try to do whatever I could to help you. But I would never say anything about what we've been talking about.

JULIANA

Then the answer to your question, doctor, is yes. I am testing him. Is Carl only a dutiful son?

DR. YEAMAN

That is crazy,

JULIANA

Now, now, Dr. Yeaman. I thought psychotherapists never used that word.

DR. YEAMAN

Your trial will prove nothing. Many factors, other than love or duty, would be involved in the decision about helping you.

JULIANA

Nice try, doctor. But you know my plan is brilliant. If Carl loves me, I won't die and our love will grow. If he doesn't love me, I will die, which is just as well, because life wouldn't be worth living with only a dutiful son.

DR. YEAMAN

You have a lot to live for.

JULIANA

Since Winston died, Carl is all I have.

LIGHTS FADE BLACK

SCENE

The sickroom, a few days later. Juliana is watching TV, slightly amused by the show. Carl enters. At first she pays no attention to him standing in the doorway, but curiosity overtakes her and she turns to look at him.

JULIANA

It's a documentary about American hospitals. You like comedies?

CARL

I don't have time for TV.

JULIANA

Except for 60 Minutes.

CARL

I do like 60 Minutes.

JULIANA

Yes, I know. Sit down. Spend some time bonding with your saintly mother.

He sits down and they watch for a few seconds. Carl can't help but laugh at something.

JULIANA

That's terrible. The doctor is ignoring the old woman while she's having a heart attack.

CARL

Yes, I know.

JULIANA

And you're laughing?

CARL

I missed a heart attack once.

JULIANA

He's on the telephone making arrangements for golf.

CARL

It's hard on a doctor when he misses a heart attack in progress.

JULIANA

Not as hard as it is on your patient.

They turn back to the TV. Soon they are both laughing together. Juliana stops suddenly and grabs her chest. Carl laughs. He thinks she is playing with him.

CARL

Having a heart attack?

He laughs heartily. She screams out in pain.,

CARL

Now grab your left arm. Pain radiating down the left arm. That's the classic sign of a heart attack. You are having a classic heart attack, I assume?

She grabs her left arm, fighting to get her breath.

CARL

Now fall to the floor.

She falls to the floor. She is silent. Carl applauds.

CARL

Bravo. Bravo. The blood has stopped going to your heart and your heart is dying. In 10 minutes your heart will be dead and so will you. Now I'll make a phone call to make reservations for golf.

He dials on his cell phone. The house phone rings.

CARL

(On phone)

Hi, dear. I'm up here with saintly mother. She's having a heart attack. No need to call 911. Let nature take its course... Everything is really all right. We were watching this show about someone who's having a heart attack and her doctor lets her die. Saintly mother decided to recreate the scene... I'm fine. No need to come up. Bye.

He hangs up. Goes to the liquor cabinet, fills a glass with ice. Pours in gin. Pours in tonic. Takes a big slug. He sits down and starts reading the newspaper with a theatrical flourish. He looks at his mother who hasn't moved.

CARL

That's enough playing around. Saintly mother, come back to the living. It's almost time for 60 Minutes. Saintly mother.

He goes to her and looks closely. He checks for a pulse.

CARL

Oh, my God.

(Yelling)

Helen. Call 911. She's really having a heart attack.

He desperately starts CPR.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK

Online Sample Reading Only

SCENE

Artist's studio 10 years earlier. Juliana is passed out drunk, leaning on the small table she usually sits at. Glasses and a half full bottle of gin are near her head. Winston is at his easel, painting, working on a seascape. The noose seen in the cowboy picture hangs from the easel, a memento. The sound of keys in the front door. Carl enters.

WINSTON

Carl, you son of a gun. I wasn't expecting you until this afternoon.

CARL

I was able to get an earlier train.

Carl takes off his overcoat, exposing a sweat shirt that says "NYU Medicine."

WINSTON

I expected a white coat with a stethoscope.

CARL

In this neighborhood, I would get mugged.
(Discovering his mother)
She's been at it again?

WINSTON

She's been doing good. But last night at dinner... She got a little too excited over your coming.

CARL

How are you doing, dad?

WINSTON

Good. Fine. Pretty good.

CARL

(Looking at the painting on the easel)
I like this. A lot of power.

WINSTON

That's what I want. For you to feel the power of the ocean, waves smashing against the bow and the rigging groaning against all that force.

CARL

It's all there, dad. Pennsylvania Hospital accepted me.

WINSTON

That's the one you wanted, isn't it?

CARL

Top of my list.

WINSTON

Why didn't you call and tell us?

CARL

I wanted to tell both of you in person. To see your reaction.

(Looking sadly at his passed out mother)

It means I'll be coming back to Philadelphia, for a couple of years at least.

WINSTON

Now there's something to drink to.

Winston takes the bottle next to Juliana's head and starts filling two glasses.

CARL

How's your angina?

WINSTON

Ah, there's the doctor in you coming out. The angina is happening a little more often.

Especially on cold days or when I'm too dumb to walk slowly. But I take a nitro and it's OK again.

(Handing Carl a glass)

To Pennsylvania Hospital's newest doctor.

They drink. Juliana moans.

CARL

How can you stand living with her like that?

WINSTON

She's gotten better since I came back.

CARL

Why did you ever come back?

WINSTON

Your mother couldn't get along by herself.

CARL

I hate to think what would happen if you weren't here.

WINSTON

You don't have to worry about that, son.

CARL

What do you mean?

Winston doesn't reply.

CARL

Why wouldn't I have to worry about that?

WINSTON

When I die, it's all going to work out. That's all.

CARL

How is it going to work out?

WINSTON

Your mother and I...

(He doesn't want to say)

CARL

Yes?

WINSTON

We talked it over.

CARL

And?

WINSTON

She doesn't want to live after I'm gone.

CARL

You mean she'd...

(He can't say it)

WINSTON

It's what she wants, son.

Carl looks at his father in shock. Juliana stirs. Groggy and with poor control, she feels about the table for the bottle, but can't find it. She gets to an upright position and looks about the room. She sees Carl.

JULIANA

So finally, the distinguished doctor has arrived.

CARL

(Going angrily to his mother)
You're killing yourself with this shit.

JULIANA

It's taking long enough.

CARL

What are you trying to do? Commit suicide?

She shrugs her shoulders.

CARL

Why with alcohol?

JULIANA

Why not?

CARL

Because it won't work.

JULIANA

Is that what's wrong?

CARL

You think we'll come in here one day and find you spread out over this table dead. But it's not going to be that simple. Not for you. Not for us. You'll stroke out. Fall down the stairs. Break your neck. And we'll be stuck, taking care of a fucking quadriplegic.

WINSTON

Let her be.

CARL

Did you ever think of that?

WINSTON

You've said enough, Carl.

CARL

Don't you care about anyone except yourself?

Finally the words have reached her through her drunken haze. She is looking at him with surprise and concern.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK

SCENE

The living room. Carl and Helen enter, having just returned from the hospital.

CARL

We shouldn't have left the hospital.

HELEN

They said the anesthesia wouldn't wear off for hours.

CARL

You can never be sure about those things. I could have slept in my office. We might lose her, Helen. She's high risk and her heart stopped for God knows how long. While I'm standing there like a fool, watching. How could I have done such a stupid thing. I'm a doctor and...

HELEN

Carl, you're getting hysterical.

Carl nods in agreement. He closes his eyes and slowly takes in several deep breaths. He becomes calm.

CARL

This is so crazy. She kept pretending to commit suicide and now this happens.

HELEN

If she doesn't make it, maybe it's for the better. It's why she came down here.

CARL

I did not do right by that woman. I try to love her. And I do. When she's not near me. That's when I see all the good things. But when we're together and she's doing her thing I just want to be somewhere else.

HELEN

You've been good to her.

CARL

I shouldn't have left her alone in New York.

HELEN

You offered to find her a place down here.

CARL

She should have been living with us.

HELEN

She didn't want that.

CARL

All her life she's been alone. I remember how she used to sit by herself at night, in the corner of the studio, smoking cigarettes and playing solitaire. I'd hear the cards being slapped down on the table as I was trying to go to sleep. Plop. Plop. Plop. Plop. Plop. The whole studio was dark except for the light in the corner over her table. And her bent over the cards.

HELEN

She doesn't let you get close. My God, she's never hugged you and rarely smiles.

CARL

She's hugged me.

HELEN

You said she's never touched you.

CARL

But she showed me love in her own way. The few times I came up to visit, she always had a feast waiting for me. And that wasn't easy for her to do with the arthritis and walking around getting just the right ingredients. I'd eat the food and act like it was an imposition because I didn't want to stay that long. She knew I loved Italian salads so she bought a case of fine virgin olive oil from an importer she was working for. I didn't even thank her for it.

Carl dials the phone.

CARL

(On phone)

Hello, this is Dr. Stewart. Could you give me the status of Juliana Stewart...A bypass patient, from last night...Good...Who's the attending?... Let me speak to him... Hello, Bill, this is Carl...Yes, they old me...Could you give me a call the moment it looks like she's beginning to wake up?...Thanks a lot...Yes, it is encouraging.

(Hangs up)

She's stable and her numbers are looking good.

HELEN

She's a tough lady.

CARL

I never saw her cry. Not even when my father died. He had a heart attack and she called me up in Philadelphia. Your father's dead. That's all she said. And she hangs up. I called back but the line was busy. When I got up to New York, I found her passed out drunk, slumped over her table. The phone was off the hook on the floor besides her.

We had the funeral a few days later. She was too drunk to attend. After that, people stopped coming to the studio. If she makes it out of the hospital, I'm going to...

Carl can't continue. Helen takes him in her arms. He's crying.

CARL

After dad died, she refused to leave the studio. She left everything in place, just like it was the day he died. Brushes in turpentine. Globbs of paint on his palette. A half finished painting on the easel.

HELEN

That studio gave me the creeps. It was like a mausoleum.

CARL

When dad was alive, the studio was always filled with people. They were always flocking around him. It was almost as though my mom wasn't there. In a way she wasn't. She was usually in the corner, half passed out

HELEN

I never saw your mother take a drink.

CARL

She stopped drinking. Cold turkey. Just before I started my residency at Pennsylvania Hospital. I don't know what made her stop. Even when she was drinking, she managed to keep working and bring in the only money we had. When it came to money and down-to-earth things, my father was just another kid in the family who had to be taken care of.

He goes to the window and looks out, comes back and sits down.

CARL

I don't want her to die, Helen. Too many things have been left unsaid. I've got to get back to the hospital. I want to be there. In case she takes a turn for the.... I just want to be there.

HELEN

I'll go with you.

CARL

No. You should get some sleep.

He starts to leave.

HELEN

I love you.

He exits. The phone rings. Helen answers it.

HELEN

Yes... He just left for the hospital.

Carl rushes back in.

CARL

Who is it?

HELEN

(Handing him the phone)

It's Bill.

CARL

(Grabbing the phone)

Hello... Yes, Bill... That's a surprise... She what?

(He laughs)

We'll be right there.

(Hanging up)

She's awake. Complaining about the service in the ICU.

They hurry out.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK

SCENE

The sickroom, several days later. Juliana is ensconced on her couch as Carl and Helen bustle about, taking care of her needs.

HELEN

(Bringing in a vase with flowers)

Here are some flowers to cheer up the room.

CARL

I bought you a bunch of crossword puzzles.

HELEN

I know it sounds corny but I made chicken soup.

JULIANA

Cigarettes.

HELEN

What?

JULIANA

Where are my cigarettes?

CARL

You're not going to start smoking again.

JULIANA

I want my cigarettes.

CARL

I don't know where they are.

She gives him a "who-are-you-trying-to-kid" look. He stares back. Finally Carl gives in.

CARL

Shit.

He brings out a single cigarette and hands it to her.

CARL

You're not supposed to be smoking.

JULIANA

Got a match?

He lights her cigarette.

JULIANA

Where's the pack?

CARL

Why don't you wait and see if you'll want another one.

JULIANA

I don't have to wait and see. I know I'll want another one. .

CARL

Helen and I have been talking.

JULIANA

Married couples should do that every now and then.

CARL

We think you should move down here.

JULIANA

Move to Philadelphia?

CARL

Yes.

JULIANA

Move from New York City to Philadelphia?

CARL

We have room.

JULIANA

You live in the suburbs.

CARL

West Philadelphia is hardly the suburbs.

JULIANA

I'd die in the suburbs.

CARL

You wanted to commit suicide.

JULIANA

But not so slowly.

HELEN

You've given up that silly idea, haven't you?

JULIANA

I don't think it's a silly idea.

HELEN

You almost died. Don't you see things differently now?

JULIANA

Near-death experiences do tend to change your perspective on things.

HELEN

So you don't want to do it anymore?

JULIANA

I see no reason to die.

HELEN

I'm really glad to hear that, Juliana.

JULIANA

But I see no reason to keep on living, either.

HELEN

You're impossible.

JULIANA

So I've been told.

HELEN

Do you plan to live long enough to have lunch today?

JULIANA

It's not good to die on an empty stomach. Do I smell biscuits in the oven?

HELEN

You do.

JULIANA

They're my favorite.

HELEN

I know. I better get them before they burn.

She exits.

CARL

I have something to show you.

JULIANA

What are you doing home so early?

CARL

(Unwrapping one of the packages)

I think you'll like it. I bought a camera.

He holds it up. She is not impressed.

JULIANA

You've worked late every night this week.

CARL

I also got a flash attachment.

JULIANA

It must be awfully lonely for Helen. You working late every night.

CARL

I thought maybe you could teach me how to use the camera.

She doesn't reply.

CARL

It's something we can do together.

JULIANA

You've got to be kidding.

CARL

Now that you're stronger, maybe we could go out and shoot some pictures.

JULIANA

After all these years, you want to learn photography?

CARL

Why not?

JULIANA

Because photographers aren't real artists. That's what you always said.

CARL
I did?

JULIANA
I remember if very clearly. You were 17 years old, the first time you said it.

CARL
You remember the date?

JULIANA
Very clearly. Photographers are just technicians. That's what you said.

CARL
Oh Jesus.

JULIANA
But you never did become an artists, did you?

CARL
Yes, I really screwed up by becoming a physician.

JULIANA
You were a rebellious kid.

CARL
We can't all be successful.

JULIANA
You did your best, I suppose.

CARL
(Facetiously)
I wanted my saintly mother to be proud.

JULIANA
So I'm proud.

She turns up the television.

CARL
Would you please shut that thing off?

She does but continues staring at the blank screen.

CARL
I didn't mean to yell at you.

JULIANA
Where are my aspirins?

CARL

Oh, no.

JULIANA

I've got a headache.

Carl goes to the desk, opens a drawer with a key and takes out a bottle. Pouring two pills into his hand, he locks the bottle back in the drawer.

JULIANA

What a production.

He gives the pills to her and goes to get water but she swallows them without water.

JULIANA

Why don't you just leave the bottle there?

He shakes his head gravely. He is disappointed that his attempt to reach out to his mother has failed. Sadly he starts to pack away the camera.

JULIANA

OK, you've proved that you can be a dutiful son. You can go now.

CARL

What?

JULIANA

You don't have to spend all your free time with me. You have better things to do.

Juliana struggles to get up.

CARL

What are you doing?

JULIANA

Will you help me?

CARL

(Helping her)
Where are you going?

JULIANA

(Indicating the bathroom)
Take me over there.

Carl helps her into the bathroom, leaving her alone. She calls to him.

JULIANA (O.S.)

Where did you go?

CARL

You want privacy, don't you?

JULIANA (O.S.)

I might fall. Help me sit down.

CARL

Sit down slowly.

JULIANA (O.S.)

If I could sit down slowly on my own, I wouldn't be yelling at you through this door.

CARL

Hold on to the seat.

JULIANA (O.S.)

Would you come in here and help me?

CARL (O.S.)

(Going into the bathroom)

Here, let me hold the cigarette for you.

The sound of him helping Juliana to sit down is heard. He reappears flustered.

JULIANA (O.S.)

Thank you very much.

For several seconds there is silence. Carl finally works up the courage to speak.

CARL

It scared the hell out of me, when they took you to the hospital. For a moment I thought....Well, You know.

He looks at the bathroom door, which is ajar, for a response. But there is none.

CARL

Mom?

JULIANA (O.S.)

I didn't have to go, after all.

CARL

Do you need help?

JULIANA (O.S.)

Yes, please.

Carl goes into the bathroom and brings her back.

CARL

Just like the astronauts. One long trip for you, one short step for mankind.

JULIANA

(With much sincerity)

Thank you, son.

CARL

Sure, mom.

They look at each other with feeling.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK

SCENE

The sickroom, late at night, a little while later. It's dark. Carl is dozing in a chair near the sleeping Juliana. Juliana coughs and struggles to breathe.

CARL

(Jolting awake)

I'm here.

She coughs more as she looks for her cigarettes.

JULIANA

What time is it?

CARL

Almost dawn.

JULIANA

Where are my cigarettes?

Carl gets a single cigarette for her.

JULIANA

Why were you sitting there in the dark?

CARL

I thought you might need something.

JULIANA

If I needed something, I would have called.

CARL

I just wanted to stay with you.

JULIANA

Staying up all night with me is beyond the call of duty.

CARL

Are you being facetious?

JULIANA

(Surprise discovery)

No, I don't think I was being facetious. Thank you.

CARL

I was thinking about the old times.

JULIANA

The good old times or the bad old times?

CARL

There were a lot of both, weren't there?

JULIANA

Mostly good times when your father was alive.

CARL

A party every day.

JULIANA

So much excitement with every new project.

CARL

He was caught up in it.

JULIANA

We all were.

CARL

I never realized how selfish he was.

JULIANA

What?

CARL

It's taken me all this time to realize that.

JULIANA

Your father was a good man.

CARL

He only thought about his work.

JULIANA

That's what artists do.

CARL

There's more to life than work.

JULIANA

He was good to me.

CARL

He shouldn't have left you like he did.

JULIANA

He came back.

CARL

It was wrong.

JULIANA

It was important for your father to be his own man.

CARL

You and dad never had fun together. You were always working.

JULIANA

Work was our fun.

CARL

Why didn't you come to my high school graduation?

JULIANA

Your father went.

CARL

Why didn't you go?

JULIANA

Your father was there.

CARL

That didn't make up for it.

JULIANA

Make up for what?

CARL

That you weren't there.

She is touched.

JULIANA

(Finally)

Death has been very patient with me.

CARL

You have many more years.

JULIANA

I think about my death often.

CARL

It must be frightening to be preoccupied with non-existence all the time, like that.

She is surprised by his concerned tone.

JULIANA

(Looking at the cigarette in her hand)

Non-existence is not having a cough in the morning.

CARL

I used to think they'd find a way to prevent death, by whipping out one disease after another until none were left to kill me when I grew up.

JULIANA

A thinking man's immortality.

CARL

Medical school took care of that fantasy.

JULIANA

Did you ever tell your father about your fantasy?

CARL

You're the first person I've ever told.

JULIANA

Not even Helen?

CARL

No.

JULIANA

When you get to my age, death becomes an ally.

CARL

For a physician, it's both the enemy and an ally.

JULIANA

Have you ever helped...have you ever allowed one of your patients to die.

At first he doesn't reply. She realizes he has.

CARL

Suicide is...usually there are other choices. You can never be sure that things won't be brighter next week or next month or next year.

JULIANA

But sometimes it's the only choice.

CARL

Sometimes.

JULIANA

As I get weaker, I'll be more of a burden for you and Helen.

CARL

We'll take care of you.

JULIANA

It would be a lot easier for you if I wasn't here. Wouldn't it?

CARL

We want you here, with us.

JULIANA

Why?

CARL

Why?

JULIANA

Yes. Why?

CARL

Because I... Because we... I love you.

Juliana is stunned. For a moment she can't speak.

JULIANA

I wanted to go to your graduation.

CARL

Then why didn't you?

JULIANA

Your father thought I would embarrass you. Because of the drinking.

Carl is shocked. Juliana sees the sunrise.

JULIANA

It's getting light.

CARL

I didn't realize it was so late. I have to get ready for the hospital.

He prepares to leave.

JULIANA

Is that why you became a doctor? Because of how you feel about death?

He shakes his head.

JULIANA

Then why didn't you become an artist? You were so talented.

CARL

Don't you think one artist in the family was enough?

Carl exits. Slowly Juliana's impassive expression is replaced by a smile.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK

SCENE

The living room, a little while later. Carl is standing on a ladder in the living room. He has just taken down the cowboy picture and is replacing it with a large photograph of the Washington Square arch in Greenwich Village. Juliana enters.

JULIANA

Carl.

CARL

My God, don't scare me like that.

JULIANA

What have you done with your father's painting?

CARL

Time for a change.

JULIANA

You shouldn't have taken it down.

(Inspecting the photograph)

They could have burned in the brushes a little more.

CARL

(Laughing at the characteristic remark)

Do you like it?

JULIANA

Yes.

CARL

Looking at that photograph, I can almost feel how it used to be. Washington Square on a hot, humid summer's night. Remember how we'd all go to the park to get out of the hot studio and catch the evening air? Air conditioning has robbed us of moments like that.

JULIANA

(Suspicious)

Why did you change pictures?

CARL

It felt right. I've got a surprise for you.

He goes to the stereo and puts on a record. The music from the Pearl Fishers comes up.

JULIANA

You got my record.

CARL

I've got another surprise for you.

He takes a box from his pocket and brings out a syringe and a small, brown bottle.

CARL

The music is hauntingly beautiful.

JULIANA

What are you doing?

CARL

(Filling the syringe)
What does it look like I'm doing?

JULIANA

What's that?

CARL

(Walking over to her with the syringe)
What's what?

JULIANA

In your hand, for Christ sake.

CARL

My way of saying that I was wrong about some things.

JULIANA

Damn.

CARL

It's your Vitamine B-12 shot.

He attempts to swab her arm with alcohol. She pulls back.

CARL

What's the matter?

JULIANA

I thought you didn't believe in them.

CARL
Believe in what?

JULIANA
Vitamin B-12 shots.

CARL
I don't. But you do.

He starts to deliver the injection.

JULIANA
I want a cigarette.

CARL
Let me finish this.

JULIANA
No. I want a smoke now.

CARL
All right. Whatever you say.

He lights a cigarette for her.

JULIANA
I like the way you've hung my picture. The darkroom did a good job with the print, except for the bushes.

CARL
You're shaking.

JULIANA
You have a nice house, Carl.

CARL
We like it.

JULIANA
In a nice neighborhood. Philadelphia isn't so bad.

He attempts to inject her again.

JULIANA
No, I don't want it.

CARL
Now you don't want it?

JULIANA

Not today.

CARL

I'll be damned.

JULIANA

Tomorrow. Maybe tomorrow.

CARL

You're scared. You're scared of getting an injection from me.

JULIANA

I am not.

CARL

You are, too.

JULIANA

You're a very bad actor, Carl. I know exactly what you're up to. You're trying to be kind by pretending so I won't be scared. But I know what you're about to do.

CARL

What?

JULIANA

Kill me.

CARL

Don't be ridiculous. Would I tell you it was a harmless vitamin shot if it wasn't?

JULIANA

That's exactly what you'd tell me. You don't want me counting off the minutes.

CARL

I thought you wanted to commit suicide.

JULIANA

Later.

CARL

(Preparing to administer the shot)
You're being silly.

JULIANA

Not now..

CARL

It's a Vitamin B-12 shot.

JULIANA
Prove it.

CARL
Look at the bottle.

He shows her the bottle he is filling the syringe from.

CARL
Plain as day. Vitamin B-12.

JULIANA
That's what the bottle says. But what's in it maybe isn't Vitamin B-12.

CARL
What are you saying?

JULIANA
You switched the contents. I wasn't born yesterday.

CARL
OK. You're right.

JULIANA
(With disappointment)
I am?

CARL
Whenever I give someone a lethal injection, I always pretend it's Vitamin B-12.

JULIANA
You do?

CARL
It's the kindest thing to do.

JULIANA
It is?

CARL
Of course it is.

JULIANA
Then you're about to...

CARL
This is not a lethal injection. Don't you trust your own son?

JULIANA

You're a doctor.

CARL

But a son first. And a son would never lie to his mother.

JULIANA

He wouldn't?

CARL

Give me your arm.

She reluctantly gives him her arm.

CARL

It'll be painless. I promise you.

He injects her.

BLACK-OUT

SCENE

The living room, a little while later. The set is almost identical to the set in the opening scene, except that the cowboy painting hangs in the corner and in its place is the Washington Square photograph. Helen is on the phone.

HELEN

(On phone)

I'll tell you all about it at lunch... Carl tried to talk her out of it, but she was adamant. Carl said she was very scared when she saw the needle... Yes, it is ironic. I hear Carl coming. I'll see you at one.

She hangs up. Carl enters. He seems depressed. He looks into the sick room.

CARL

You cleaned it up already?

HELEN

I thought it best to get things back to normal as quickly as possible.

CARL

You could have waited a while.

He plops down on the couch. She goes to him.

HELEN

You OK?

He nods.

HELEN

You sure?

He nods.

CARL

What a tough lady.

HELEN

The toughest.

CARL

It's good to get my office back, but I'm going to miss her.

HELEN

In her own strange way, she was lovable.

CARL

Saintly Mother lovable?

HELEN

In her own strange way.

The crash of a table and dishes being knocked over is heard.

JULIANA (O.S.)

God damnit. What the hell is that doing here?

CARL

Mom.

Juliana limps in.

JULIANA

Will you help me?

Carl helps Juliana into the room. She is dressed up and ready to leave.

JULIANA

Stupid place for a table.

She looks into the sick room and sees that it has been turned back into a study.

JULIANA

That didn't take you long.

HELEN

You look so grand.

CARL

I thought you'd drowned. You were up there for over an hour.

JULIANA

For New York you have to look your best.

CARL

You never cared how you looked in Philadelphia.

JULIANA

Philadelphia has no standards.

CARL

That's not true. You New Yorkers are all snobs.

JULIANA

I can't believe I raised a son like you.

CARL

I can't believe I survived a childhood with a mother like you.

JULIANA

So, are we ready to go?

CARL

You're in a hurry to go. Have we worn out our hospitality?

JULIANA

Did you ever have any? My bag is in my room.

She indicates the sickroom. Carl gets it.

CARL

Are you sure you don't want this?

(Offering her the bottle and needle)

I can show you how to inject yourself.

JULIANA

Thank you. No thank you.

(Admiring her big photograph)

Your father's picture looked better there.

CARL

You're really something, mother. Can't you for once just...

JULIANA

Why must you be so disagreeable?

HELEN

Both of you are impossible.

JULIANA

All right, already. I will give my loving son the last word.

CARL

Thank you, mother.

JULIANA

Finally some respect.

Carl and Helen look at a triumphant Juliana, realizing that Carl didn't get the last word. They all laugh. Carl and Juliana start to leave.

JULIANA

(Looking down the stairs)
Oh, these damn steep stairs.

HELEN

Carl and I are going to get up to New York more often now.

JULIANA

Don't go out of your way for me.

CARL

We won't.

JULIANA

But this is a good time of the year to see New York. There's the theater and the museums. And the restaurants. New York has much better restaurants than Philadelphia.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK

CURTAIN -- END OF PLAY