

Flower Duet
an operatic play in eight scenes

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Stephanie, 30-40, a former model.

Max, 35-45, a photographer.

Maddie, 35-45. Maddie, a housewife.

Sandy, 45-55, an attorney.

Daisy, an offstage child. Dances at the end of the play- early twenties.

TIME

The present, Scenes 1-5

Two years in the future, Scene 6

Many years in the past, Scene 7

Many years in the future, Scene 8

SYNOPSIS

Some people fight to stay together, and others fight to tear each other apart. A careless act of infidelity has long reaching consequences in this play that explores the intimate lives of two couples.

Max and Stephanie have a marriage with fuzzy rules; Sandy and Maddie have a loveless one, and they fight dirty in an effort to get that they want from each other. At the center of this action is a lonely four-year old child, Maddie's daughter, whose behavior is becoming more and more difficult to understand. Daisy's offstage story mirrors her parents' confusion and heartbreak, and it provides a lens for the other couple to see their relationship more clearly. Flower Duet explores how love can hurt but it's always worth fighting for.

Act 1

SCENE 1

*Music plays - Carmen; Overture
(Prelude)*

Max cooks with great flourish. He hums
Toreador.

Stephanie enters.

STEPHANIE

You're off key.

MAX

How was church?

STEPHANIE

Oh it was... I ended up not going I ended up driving around.
I think the clutch is going-

MAX

Hand me that try this wait it's hot-

STEPHANIE

Good-

MAX

I know it's good how good-

STEPHANIE

Kind of peppery-

MAX

It's pepper steak. *Steak au poivre*. I'm sauteing some
mushrooms-

STEPHANIE

I hate mushrooms-

MAX

For your dad-

STEPHANIE

He hates pepper. The clutch is going.

MAX

You mean the Volvo?

STEPHANIE

Either that or the emergency is sticking again.

MAX

He hates pepper.

STEPHANIE

Have you ever seen him use pepper?

MAX

I don't know.

STEPHANIE

Well, he hates it.

MAX

You might have told me.

STEPHANIE

It wasn't doing it before.

MAX

I mean the pepper.

STEPHANIE

After twelve years I figured you knew.

MAX

I ground fresh pepper on his salad, he didn't say anything.

STEPHANIE

Too polite.

MAX

What about Sally?

STEPHANIE

What about her?

MAX

Does she like pepper?

STEPHANIE

I don't know, I couldn't care less.

MAX

I guess I could make omelettes and French fried potatoes, except we only have four eggs. Are you kidding about the pepper?

STEPHANIE

They're not coming. Dad and Sally. I called them from the car, they're not coming.

MAX

Someone sick?

STEPHANIE

I called them and it turns out they were about to call. Justin's wife went into labor. I'm going to be a step aunt. He couldn't come and see me when I had my appendix out but he's going right into the labor room with a video camera.

MAX

You okay?

STEPHANIE

It's been kind of a rough morning.

MAX

Sorry about your dad.

STEPHANIE

I just didn't sleep well last night.

MAX

Sorry.

STEPHANIE

You know they're tearing down that barn the eight sided barn on Pinter's Hill?

MAX

They're not tearing it down exactly.

STEPHANIE

There are men there and they're tearing it down.

MAX

They're deconstructing it. It's going to Massachusetts somewhere. It was in the paper, a historical society bought it, turns out the builder was a Minute Man or something of that nature.

STEPHANIE

All the same, it's coming down.

MAX

You were driving up Pinter's Hill this morning?

STEPHANIE

That was one of the places I went. I actually stopped by Sandy and Maddie's. Thought maybe I could get a cup of coffee.

MAX

How are they doing?

STEPHANIE

Maddie had gone to church so Sandy and I had some coffee. Things are a little rough at the moment.

MAX

Why is that?

STEPHANIE

You know Maddie never really recovered from her miscarriage. I think they might be drifting apart.

MAX

What about Daisy?

STEPHANIE

What about her?

MAX

She's only four?

STEPHANIE

I know, I know she's four. She's very independent for four.

MAX

Christ's sake, I hate to see anyone break up, is that what you're telling me that they are breaking up?

STEPHANIE

And I hate pepper, have you ever seen me pepper anything? Not even eggs.

MAX

That's because they're already peppered. I pepper them when I make them. Hey, come on. Come here.

STEPHANIE

I'd rather-

MAX

What?

STEPHANIE

I'd rather talk.

MAX

Sorry.

STEPHANIE

For what?

MAX

Everything, I don't know, whatever I did last night, the pepper, the barn. What do you want to do? I mean, today.

STEPHANIE

I don't know. I thought I'd work on a quilt.

MAX

Okay unless you want to do something.

STEPHANIE

Like what?

MAX

I don't know, a drive or a hike. We could go to Middlebury and look at antiques.

STEPHANIE

I'd rather work on a quilt.

MAX

Do you want to invite someone over? I've got all this food.

STEPHANIE

I don't know anyone who likes pepper steak.

MAX

Fine.

STEPHANIE

I'm just in a bad mood. Can you take the car in tomorrow?

MAX

I can't tomorrow. I'm working at home all day. I've got to organize the photos.

STEPHANIE

Why don't you do it today?

MAX

Because it's Sunday. I can't work every day.

STEPHANIE

I just thought since you had time on your hands. It's good, I was wrong about the pepper,

MAX

Do you want something to drink?

STEPHANIE

Stop taking care of me.

MAX

Pardon.

STEPHANIE

There's something I need to tell you.

MAX

Jesus.

STEPHANIE

Jesus what?

MAX

Jesus there's something I need to tell you.

STEPHANIE

Why do you always expect the worst?

MAX

So what do you need to tell me?

STEPHANIE

It's not the worst thing that could happen, although it's not great. Something happened with Sandy.

MAX

You what?

STEPHANIE

This morning.

MAX

Okay.

STEPHANIE

I wouldn't have if Maddie had been home but she was gone so it just happened. I didn't plan it you're going to-

Max burns his hand.

MAX

Jesus!

STEPHANIE

Let me see it, I'll get some balm, we don't have any balm, does it hurt?

MAX

So what happened?

STEPHANIE

Nothing. We were fooling around laughing and then the next thing I know we were kissing. I went up there to drop off the sheet music and-

MAX

And then you what?

STEPHANIE

I told you. We started kissing and then we stopped and then he wanted to show me the upstairs. You know how Maddie never lets anyone up there.

(MORE)

STEPHANIE (cont'd)

I've always wanted to see the upstairs, it's a very interesting house and I don't know what Maddie goes on about it's neat as a pin. Maddie came back to the house, Daisy ran inside to get her stuffed whatever and I think she, I don't know, I think she knew I was there. In the bedroom. Sandy told her it was you up there.

MAX

In the bedroom?

STEPHANIE

In the basement. He said you were down there looking at the furnace. I don't know why he even said anything, he could have just said, "Daisy look who's here" but for some reason he panicked and-

MAX

Great.

STEPHANIE

It's just what he said. It was the first thing that came to mind-

MAX

So Maddie didn't come in.

STEPHANIE

No.

MAX

Then what did you do?

STEPHANIE

I, we had some coffee.

MAX

We never agreed on Sandy.

STEPHANIE

Okay, so what should we do make a list?

MAX

You think you're the only one who has fooled around with him on a Sunday morning when his wife is at church?

STEPHANIE

It turns out he has a big crush on me. I had no idea.

MAX

Jesus, here we go.

STEPHANIE

I had no idea. He poured his heart out to me, I never realized how unhappy he is, he's having a very rough time, he hates Vermont and Maddie won't even consider moving anywhere else, she won't even talk about it. Don't be a smart ass and it was your idea-

MAX

My idea-

STEPHANIE

You said when it felt right, if it felt right-

MAX

It is something we talk about, something we plan-

STEPHANIE

What about Montreal?

MAX

We were together, that was different and anyway I don't remember making any agreement about Sandy.

STEPHANIE

So I didn't plan it and nothing happened and he's funny.

MAX

Funny.

STEPHANIE

He makes me laugh.

MAX

What does he tell you jokes?

STEPHANIE

Yes, he does he tells jokes.

MAX

I've never heard him tell a joke.

STEPHANIE

You just don't get the jokes.

MAX

Well guess I'm the joke.

STEPHANIE

Stop!

MAX

You don't want a dog, I don't want a dog. You want to live in Vermont, we live in Vermont!

STEPHANIE

My father lives here!

MAX

I know and I invited him for lunch!

STEPHANIE

I made a mistake. Look there's really no harm done but if anything should come up about the furnace in front of Maddie, sometime in the future, I need you to say something.

MAX

You want me to lie.

STEPHANIE

Yeah, is that so hard.

MAX

I don't lie.

STEPHANIE

Max-

MAX

All right, I'm a furnace fixer.

STEPHANIE

Thank you.

MAX

But it better never happen again.

STEPHANIE

Ooh, jealous?

MAX

I'm not jealous. I don't believe in jealousy. I do believe however in trust.

STEPHANIE

We'll eat steak. I love pepper. I don't know why I said that. Love it.

MAX

You know all you have to do is say the word.

STEPHANIE

That's what we can't agree on. The word How's your hand?

MAX

Hurts.

She kisses his hand.

STEPHANIE

She's four.

MADDIE

These flowers are gorgeous.

STEPHANIE

They'll only last a day or so. They can stand a storm or even survive freezing temperatures but take them out of their element and they die in a day.

MADDIE

Beautiful. I think I'll put in a wild flower garden in the fall. Oh no-

STEPHANIE

It'll dry. I can print some more off. I transposed your part it was a little high for you.

MADDIE

What?

STEPHANIE

You're more of an alto.

MADDIE

I'm an honest to god mezzo.

STEPHANIE

Sorry.

MADDIE

You're not the only one who sang professionally.

STEPHANIE

I never sang professionally. I'll change it back.

MADDIE

I can sustain an A sharp. Haaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa

STEPHANIE

Oh, okay. It was just something you said at rehearsal, that you were more comfortable a bit lower.

MADDIE

That's because I hadn't been practicing.

STEPHANIE

When do you want to practice?

MADDIE

Well, soon.

STEPHANIE

Can get together on Saturday? Do you want to have dinner? Max is cooking again.

MADDIE

What's he cooking?

STEPHANIE

French, I guess it's French. Lots of butter.

MADDIE

That's French. But practice first, then we can drink wine.

STEPHANIE

Mais oui. Do you think you should get a baby sitter?

MADDIE

Mais oui. Thanks for dropping this off. You really didn't need to come all the way up here.

STEPHANIE

Hey, it's a gorgeous day. You're so lucky to live in the country. I hope Daisy feels better. What is it?

MADDIE

I don't know.

STEPHANIE

Come on.

MADDIE

I'm just so worried. I mean she's so strange, she can be very sweet but mostly she's just very strange.

STEPHANIE

Often only children are precocious.

MADDIE

She stares at me sometimes and then I realize she's not staring at me at all, she's just staring in my direction.

STEPHANIE

What do you think it means?

MADDIE

That's just it, I don't think it means anything, anything that I can relate to. I don't even know what I'm saying. What do you do when you don't... when you're uncomfortable with your own daughter? It's not that I don't like her, it's just that I don't understand her, Sandy says I make her nervous but really it's the other way around. Do you know what I mean?

STEPHANIE

You are a little, um, like jumpy.

MADDIE

Jumpy?

STEPHANIE

Just an observation. It's not a bad thing. Quick movements, you move quickly-

MADDIE

Do I make you nervous?

STEPHANIE

I wouldn't say nervous. I would say off balance, it can be a good thing. You keep people alert.

MADDIE

Is that what people say?

STEPHANIE

People don't say anything.

MADDIE

Of course they do. They say all kinds of things.

STEPHANIE

I've never heard anyone say a word about you being jumpy.

MADDIE

Then what?

STEPHANIE

Very nice and a lovely home and pretty-

MADDIE

Bullshit.

STEPHANIE

You are nice.

MADDIE

Yes, but they don't say that. I mean, what's to say if someone is nice, that's not very interesting. Interesting is she looks hung over or her husband is rude or she thinks she's better than everyone or they think she's had work done.

STEPHANIE

Who do they say that about?

MADDIE

No one. Just examples of what people say, petty things they say. Terry is a social climber.

STEPHANIE
Oh, that's the truth.

MADDIE
So what do they say about me?

STEPHANIE
I just told you, nothing.

MADDIE
Nothing.

STEPHANIE
Nothing.

MADDIE
So I'm what, nothing?

STEPHANIE
What do they say about me?

MADDIE
I don't know. No one talks to me.

STEPHANIE
They told you that Terry was a social climber.

MADDIE
They didn't exactly tell me, I was just there and they were talking. I would never have said a thing like that. I think she's nice.

STEPHANIE
That's because you're someone she is climbing on.

MADDIE
Me?

STEPHANIE
You and your money and your connections.

MADDIE
What connections?

STEPHANIE
The Kennedy thing.

MADDIE
Oh, god that's hardly a connection.

STEPHANIE
She's counting on an invitation.

What?

MADDIE

To your reunion.

STEPHANIE

She thinks I'm going to invite her?

MADDIE

She's got it worked out. She said she's going to ask you to drive down together, maybe stay in a hotel while she does some kind of business and that you'll invite her rather than leave her in the hotel room.

STEPHANIE

She actually said that?

MADDIE

More or less.

STEPHANIE

I can't bring her to the reunion.

MADDIE

Well, she's got it worked out.

STEPHANIE

How is it you know everything?

MADDIE

I don't know everything.

STEPHANIE

You've always got information of some kind.

MADDIE

People tell me things.

STEPHANIE

No one tells me anything.

MADDIE

Well. I'm telling you.

STEPHANIE

Now I'll have to invite her.

MADDIE

What?

STEPHANIE

I will. She'll be determined and so I might as well just ask her.

STEPHANIE

You're kidding.

MADDIE

It's awkward, I hate awkward. I think Daisy's... she's in the hall. Daisy, Daisy are you out of your room? Daisy answer me. Can you go and see her?

STEPHANIE

Me?

MADDIE

She'll argue with me and I've I've got a headache.

STEPHANIE

She threw her glass at me.

MADDIE

And she's sorry. I'm going to call Sandy, he's going to have to come home, I can't have her acting up like this. Daisy I can hear you! Now go on tell her.

STEPHANIE

Daisy, go back to your room. She's staring at me.

MADDIE

Stop staring and go back to your room! Can you just stay until Sandy comes? When she's peculiar like this I can't... really, it just happens once in a while. I think she's got... she's very bright, the doctor said she might be gifted but she refuses to really talk to him. Some children are just like this, they're difficult and we all have to be tolerant, not indulgent, just see it through. And now he's not answering, he does that he ignores my calls! Maybe if you called, he would consider it rude to ignore your calls but he just ignores mine. So would you and ask him to come home? Tell him you have to leave and I'm having a headache and Daisy is acting peculiar-

STEPHANIE

It's going straight to voice mail.

MADDIE

See what I mean?

STEPHANIE

He's got it turned off.

MADDIE

See what I mean? Max wouldn't do that.

STEPHANIE

No, Max wouldn't do that.

MADDIE

He's there, here. He's present.

STEPHANIE

He's not perfect.

MADDIE

Of course not, yes he is!

STEPHANIE

Hah!

MADDIE

Hah? You don't know hah when you see it. Max is a dream, he cooks he cleans, he listens. He listens to me

STEPHANIE

I listen.

MADDIE

But you don't cook.

STEPHANIE

Or clean.

MADDIE

I thought maybe if we had another baby there would be a distribution of some sort. The energy, the family energy wouldn't be so concentrated on... It's just the three of us and it feels very... concentrated. You never thought you would have kids?

STEPHANIE

I raised my stepbrothers, that was enough.

MADDIE

It's not what everyone thinks. At least it's not what I thought and we went through hell, literally hell and back to have her and then... But she, she really can't help it she's only four and a beauty. She looks like my sister. I know I'm pretty but I don't have the features that she does. It doesn't hurt to be beautiful, does it? It's an asset in this world and Sandy is having an affair.

STEPHANIE

How do you, with who?

MADDIE

Someone. He keeps disappearing and fixing his hair. He watches himself in the mirror, you know, sort of congratulating himself, I can't stand adulterers, it's really immature.

STEPHANIE

Where does he disappear to?

MADDIE

He goes into town and then comes back a couple hours later. He goes to the video store, he refuses to get Netflix, and he says he talks to people.

STEPHANIE

I think you're jumping to conclusions.

MADDIE

You do?

STEPHANIE

Yes, I mean Netflix?

MADDIE

It's the little things. It's always the little things.

STEPHANIE

No, I think it's the big things, you have this house-

MADDIE

What are the signs then?

STEPHANIE

I don't know, fighting?

MADDIE

We fight all the time.

STEPHANIE

Okay we fight all the time, too. How's your sex life?

MADDIE

How's your sex life?

STEPHANIE

Max isn't having an affair and he smokes too much pot.

MADDIE

Daisy asked him if he loved anyone else.

STEPHANIE

What did he say?

MADDIE

What do you think he said?

STEPHANIE

I have no idea.

MADDIE

He said, "there are many kinds of love and it's all right to love different people because there can't be too much love in the world."

STEPHANIE

That sounds-

MADDIE

Like bull shit, if there's so much love in the world, how come I don't get any?

STEPHANIE

Why don't you see a therapist?

MADDIE

We did see one. They flirted. And you know what else?

STEPHANIE

What?

MADDIE

You know what else I learned?

STEPHANIE

What the hell else did you learn?

MADDIE

Tell me how you met Max.

STEPHANIE

What?

MADDIE

Just tell me how you met him.

Stephanie thinks and laughs.

MADDIE (cont'd)

See?

STEPHANIE

See what?

MADDIE

You thought about how you met and it made you happy.

STEPHANIE

I'm not happy, it's just... it was funny, that's all. We woke up together. We were at a party and we both stayed over and in the morning... there he was. I barely spoke to him the night before. He made pancakes.

MADDIE

So when the therapist asked us how we met, Sandy just rolled his eyes. That's the litmus test. How you react when you describe your first meeting.

STEPHANIE

How did you react?

MADDIE

WHAT DOES IT MATTER HOW I REACTED, I JUST TOLD YOU-

STEPHANIE

I'm making some tea.

(Maddie gets a glimpse of Daisy offstage.)

MADDIE

YOU GO BACK IN THERE YOU GO BACK IN THERE RIGHT NOW! She didn't hear me, do you think she heard me?

STEPHANIE

What are you wearing to the wedding?

MADDIE

I'm a bridesmaid. The question is, what are you wearing to the wedding?

STEPHANIE

Oh I don't know.

MADDIE

You look good in everything.

STEPHANIE

Of course I look good in everything, I was paid to look good in everything. What are your dresses like?

MADDIE

Awful. Really awful, floral jasmine and roses.

STEPHANIE

You're kidding.

MADDIE

Well the song.

STEPHANIE

She designed her bridesmaid dresses around the song?

MADDIE

Jasmine and roses.

STEPHANIE

What is that white and pink?

MADDIE

And little green leaves.

STEPHANIE

I hate pink and I can't wear white.

MADDIE

You can wear white, Allison isn't wearing white.
What's the first note?

STEPHANIE

Hmmmmmmmm

STEPHANIE/MADDIE

(they sing)

*Sous le dôme épais
Où le blanc jasmin
À la rose s'assemble
Sur la rive en fleurs,
Riant au matin
Viens, descendons ensemble.
DouceMENT glissons de son flot charmant
Suivons le courant fuyant*

*Dans l'onde frémissante
D'une main nonchalante
Viens, gagnons le bord,
Où la source dort et
L'oiseau, l'oiseau chante.*

*Sous le dôme épais
Où le blanc jasmin,
Ah! descendons
Ensemble!*

MADDIE

I'll work on it before Saturday.

STEPHANIE

I do love jasmine tea.

MADDIE

Mm...

*Music plays - Il Barbere di Siviglia:
Largo al factotum*

SCENE 3

That weekend. Max, in an apron, cooks.
Sandy stands near him.

Offstage we hear Maddie and Stephanie practicing the song and laughing.

SANDY

Mostly it's been going down, lot of people are pretty unhappy about that, a lot of my friends are unhappy about that, but tell you the truth I'm making a killing. I went out on a limb, chose ten people told me were hot, and sold them all short so while everybody else is complaining, I'm getting rich.

MAX

Try this, no go on-

Max sticks a spoonful of hot broth in Sandy's mouth.

SANDY

Jesus, well at least on paper. Hopefully it will keep going. You know those fools that believe in buy and hold? They're just riding a roller coaster, up and down and up and down they just end up getting off exactly where they got on except most of them aren't even smart enough to do that and sell when they're behind, not even realizing that it's just going to go back to where they started.

MAX

Am I right?

SANDY

I'm basically a contrarian. My friends are always telling me about the hottest new thing and I just pretty much ignore them. You're right. What is that?

MAX

Do you taste it?

SANDY

Sometimes they get lucky but more often they just end up down the toilet like everybody else who heard the hot tip. What is it?

MAX

You'll probably never guess.

SANDY

I'll probably never guess, I don't cook. Last week my friend Joe, you don't know him, told me about this start up company hot, right, and I swear I read in the paper just yesterday that they declared Chapter 11. I don't know if it was the same company but knowing Joe and the way he chooses stocks, I wouldn't be surprised.

MAX
(produces a fennel seed)
Fennel.

SANDY
Fennel?

MAX
Fennel seed.

SANDY
Fennel seed.

MAX
This is what it looks like.

SANDY
That's the flavor.

MAX
Fennel.

SANDY
I don't think I've ever had it.

MAX
It's used in Mediterranean dishes a lot.

SANDY
Is that what we're having?

MAX
It's good for your eyesight, fennel is.

SANDY
Really?

MAX
It's used in Chinese medicine. Snakes will eat fennel after they shed their skins.

SANDY
Really?

MAX
It's been noted it helps restore their eyesight.

SANDY
How do they know that?

MAX
Who?

SANDY

Whoever. Scientists.

MAX

Pliny the Elder was the first one to document it.

SANDY

Pliny.

MAX

You ever heard of him?

SANDY

I think so.

MAX

Who was he?

SANDY

This guy who wrote about fennel,

MAX

He noted that snakes eat fennel seeds after they shed their skins. Try one.

Max pops it in Sandy's mouth.

SANDY

How did he know it helped their eyesight?

MAX

Experiments. There are no accidents in the wild. Animals have very refined instincts. Reptiles, especially. They're pure instinct,

SANDY

They eat their young in most cases.

MAX

I think that's a myth, otherwise many species would become extinct,

SANDY

Good point.

Maddie enters, in high spirits.

MADDIE

Hey-

SANDY

Hey you two about done?

Need a drink. MADDIE

You sound terrific. MAX

Oh, thanks. MADDIE

You want to taste this? MAX

What? Oh, mm mm. What is that, fennel? MADDIE

Yes! MAX

I love fennel. MADDIE

It's good for your eyesight. SANDY

Really? MADDIE

She rolls her eyes at Max, grabs a bottle of wine and exits.

How's Daisy? MAX

Daisy's great, four is a great age. SANDY

What time does she go to sleep? MAX

Seven thirty, eight. SANDY

Seven thirty, eight. MAX

Yeah. SANDY

You know, it makes a lot of sense. Most of the year we really should go to sleep when it gets dark. I think electricity is screwing up our brains. What time does she get up? MAX

Daisy? Six.

SANDY

See?

MAX

See what?

SANDY

That's around sunrise. She's in tune with mother nature. What about you, what time do you go to bed?

MAX

Um, midnight or so.

SANDY

And sleep till...

MAX

Uh, seven seven thirty.

SANDY

You should try turning in earlier, see what happens.

MAX

I know what will happen, I'll lie there awake.

SANDY

Ever have trouble with insomnia?

MAX

No.

SANDY

Hm. Lucky.

MAX

If I do I take Tylenol PM.

SANDY

Oh, you do have trouble sleeping at night.

MAX

No, but if I do I take Tylenol PM.

SANDY

What kinds of things keep you awake at night? What kind of things prey on your mind?

MAX

Uh, sometimes work.

SANDY

MAX

Ever do anything you regret? Sometimes I can't sleep because I regret something.

SANDY

I'm too young to have any regrets.

MAX

Uh huh.

SANDY

So what time are we going to eat- HEY STEPHANIE!

MAX

I heard a good joke the other day.

SANDY

Okay.

MAX

Actually I didn't hear it. I read it.

SANDY

Okay.

MAX

Woman is in a doctor's office asking for birth control and he's says we're all out, but I do have this pair of Birkenstocks...

SANDY

Yeah...

MAX

Birkenstocks aren't sexy.

SANDY

You mean the shoes?

MAX

They're not sexy.

SANDY

Stephanie, all the girls wear Birkenstocks, that company has made a fortune.

Stephanie and Maddie enter. Stephanie has her cell phone to her ear.

STEPHANIE

Hello?

SANDY

You guys about done?

MAX

Sandy and I were just telling jokes.

STEPHANIE

Max doesn't know any jokes.
We're going to give you a
concert.

(on the phone, speaks
while the others
continue)

*Hello yeah, we're practicing
right now... we're both...
yeah why... no I do but...*

SANDY

We're about to eat.

STEPHANIE

*Why what if you just had the
English in the program...
because we learned it in
French that's the way it...*

STEPHANIE

*What if we can't... no one
really cares about the words
anyway they don't make sense
in any language...*

MAX

More wine?

SANDY

So how's the job search?

STEPHANIE

*Why, what if you just had the
English in the program...
because we learned it in
French that's the way it...
what if we can't.*

MAX

Freelancing is hell, how's
your business?

STEPHANIE

(hangs up)
I'm going to kill her!

SANDY

Oh you know someone always
needs a lawyer.

MADDIE

He's putting the screws to someone right now, that's what you
said you said you were putting the screws to-

SANDY

I'm not putting the-

MADDIE

He's working for the mob-

SANDY

Jesus-

MADDIE

Tony someone from New York
he's a mobster-

SANDY

He's a contractor-

MADDIE

See?

SANDY

He's Puerto Rican from Ohio originally. Ohio. He's bidding on repaving a section of I-87 from Glens Falls to Albany, how is that putting the screws to anyone?

MADDIE

You said it, you said Tony was underbidding and then burying the language about add-ons-

STEPHANIE (O.S.)

Max, it's freezing in here-

MAX

So turn up the thermostat! But it's all legal-

SANDY

Legal of course it's legal. The problem with most people and they can't help it, is that they don't know the laws, They don't know what they're entitled to. It's the same with contracts, it's about protecting yourself. If everything always went well, if there were no conflicts we wouldn't need them.

MAX

What, lawyers?

SANDY

Contracts and yeah I guess...

MAX

Job security, that's what you've got, no worries.

SANDY

What do you mean, no worries?

MAX

I mean, you've got a job, stable, second oldest profession, am I right, Maddie? It could be worse.

STEPHANIE (O.S.)

IT'S NOT COMING ON!

MADDIE

GET MAX, HE'S THE FURNACE EXPERT!

Maddie goes to find Stephanie.

SANDY

I didn't say I had it bad, I said you said I don't have any worries.

STEPHANIE (O.S.)

MAX THE FURNACE ISN'T COMING ON!

MAX

Oh, why don't I fix the furnace? I took that course, just remembered, Sandy want to lend a hand?

SANDY

Afraid I wouldn't be much help.

STEPHANIE (O.S.)

SHOULD WE CALL SOMEONE?

MAX

Yeah, what do you worry about- GET SOME KINDLING!

SANDY

I worry about lots of things.

STEPHANIE (O.S.)

WHERE IS IT?

MAX

Yeah? Like what- IN THE GARAGE!

SANDY

I worry about my daughter.

MAX

In what way?

SANDY

In what way?

MAX

I mean, anything specific?

SANDY

Just the usual, pedophiles, nasty teachers, mean, kids, accidents.

MAX

She's a terrific kid.

SANDY

Thank you.

MAX

No I mean really terrific. We had a great conversation about arthropods. She wanted to know what happens to their skin when they grow and I explained-

SANDY

Uh huh.

MAX

You know what happens?

SANDY

I-

MAX

They molt. Just ask Daisy.

Maddie and Stephanie enter carrying kindling.

MADDIE

Where do you want this?

SANDY

I know they molt.

MADDIE

(to Stephanie)

I'm not learning it in English, this is just like her. She's changed everything at least five or six times.

Suddenly the furnace comes on.

MAX

Ah there it is! Feel it, Stephanie? The heat's back on. Saved!

MADDIE

Do you know the bridal party has lines we have to say from the opera? At first she wanted us to do the entire first act, like anyone wants to sit through that. She spends two weeks in India and it takes over her entire life.

MAX

So you're learning it in Indian?

STEPHANIE/MADDIE

French.

STEPHANIE

It's in French, it's an aria, French, now she wants English.

MADDIE

It is prettier in English.

STEPHANIE

I don't care and anyway you can translate French but for me it's a lot of work.

MADDIE

I'm just saying, and so what we can learn, "under the dense canopy where the white jasmine blends with the rose on the flowering bank"-

MAX

It's her wedding.

MADDIE

(to Sandy)

Have you called Ginger?

SANDY

We called when we got here.

MADDIE

I know but that was an hour ago.

SANDY

Okay, so call her.

MADDIE

I'd rather you did.

SANDY

Okay, I'll call her.

MADDIE

Daisy should be in bed by now, make sure she's in bed.

Sandy gets out his cell phone and calls Ginger. He speaks in a low voice and we hear him laugh occasionally.

MAX

Can you set the table?

MADDIE

Pour me one of those, wow that smells good.

MAX

If you would toss that-

MADDIE

Sandy and I never have people over, we just go out. If I could cook like this...

MAX

You can cook like this, there's nothing to it.

MADDIE

I can't follow directions, that's the problem. What is this wine?

MAX

Cab Shiraz blend but good.

MADDIE

Divine.

STEPHANIE

You can cook, you made cheesecake.

MADDIE

One thing. I think it's because I have attention
whatisitcalled.

STEPHANIE

Jumpy.

MADDIE

(pours a glass of wine)

Attention jumpy. It comes from alcoholism, my parents both of
them were, then they quit and it was worse than when they
drank. Talk about jumpy-

MAX

Careful.

MADDIE

Careful what?

MAX

Your glass is already full.

MADDIE

You think I drink too much?

MAX

I'm just saying. You're about to spill.

MADDIE

Okay, I won't drink.

STEPHANIE

Max, can you just shut up once in a while? Maddie, you don't
drink too much.

MADDIE

Maybe I do, I'll ask Sandy, maybe he knows. Sandy?

Sandy disconnects his cell phone.

SANDY

Everyone's asleep.

MADDIE

Who's everyone's asleep, is Ginger asleep?

SANDY

I mean Daisy by everyone.

MADDIE

What time did she go to sleep?

SANDY
I don't know, fifteen minutes ago.

MADDIE
Do I drink too much?

SANDY
I don't know. Sometimes.

He's pretty sure he's walking into a trap.

SANDY (cont'd)
Sometimes I drink too much.

MADDIE
After tonight, I'm quitting.

SANDY
What I mean is, that sometimes you drink more than at other times and the next day you say, I wish I hadn't drank so much. No big deal.

MADDIE
Why is everyone staring at me?

STEPHANIE
I'm staring at that bouillabaisse, I'm starving.

SANDY
Here, let me get that.

Sandy holds the chair for Stephanie, but not for Maddie.

STEPHANIE
A gentleman...

SANDY
I grew up with sisters. My mother trained me so they would know what to expect on a date.

Max vigorously sprinkles pepper on Sandy's salad.

SANDY (cont'd)
It's called manners. Thanks, I don't usually add pepper.

MAX
Pepper improves digestion.

SANDY
My digestion works just fine.

MAX

Just a grind or two.

SANDY

God damn it, I don't want any more pepper!

MAX

Whoa, sorry.

MADDIE

I'd love some.

SANDY

Can I eat?

STEPHANIE

(to Max)

I am so tired of your internet research bullshit.

MADDIE

Max, this salad is divine. How's your father, Stephanie, how's Fred?

STEPHANIE

My father? Oh...

MADDIE

Are they still breeding those dogs?

MAX

Pugs.

MADDIE

With the faces.

STEPHANIE

He hates them, it's his wife's thing.

MAX

They just got another bitch. He told me. What? That's what you say, a female dog is a bitch.

STEPHANIE

I don't like that word.

MAX

Justin's wife had a baby. Stephanie's stepbrother, Justin.

MADDIE

You didn't tell me that. Oh your father must be ecstatic, he made such a fuss over Daisy when he met her.

STEPHANIE

Now he's a fucking grandfather.

SANDY

Pass me the bread.

STEPHANIE

Max, can you get a knife?

MAX

(throws the bread at Sandy)

Just rip it apart, Sandy can do it with his great big strong hands, can't you, Sandy...

Everyone chews a bite.

MAX (cont'd)

(loudly)

So how's the song?

MADDIE

(about to crack up)

It's too high.

*Music plays - The Magic Flute; Der
Holle Rache Kocht In Meinem Herzen*

SCENE 4

Max and Stephanie clean up the kitchen.

MAX

Don't throw that away.

STEPHANIE

(lobster shells in her hand)

What?

MAX

I'm sending those home to Daisy.

STEPHANIE

You're sending these?

MAX

She'll be very interested in looking at them.

STEPHANIE

This is disgusting, you are not sending that, you're going to give her nightmares.

MAX

I think she's going to be a scientist.

STEPHANIE

Jesus.

Sandy enters.

SANDY
She thinks another fifteen minutes.

STEPHANIE
Did she keep the Advil down?

SANDY
The second time. I think it's just a reaction, she's on this new antidepressant.

MAX
What's it called?

SANDY
What?

MAX
The name.

SANDY
I don't know something with a pan at the end.

MAX
Lorazepan?

SANDY
Maybe.

MAX
Because that's a tranquilizer.

SANDY
Yeah, maybe that's it.

MAX
And you're not supposed to drink with it, where's the bottle?

Max exits.

STEPHANIE
FIND HER A CLEAN SHIRT!

SANDY
I DON'T KNOW, IN HER PURSE!

STEPHANIE
He can't stand it when he feeds people and they throw up all over themselves. Do you want to call Ginger?

SANDY
I'm sure she's asleep by now, she's always asleep when we get home.

STEPHANIE
Are you having an affair with someone?

SANDY
What is this?

STEPHANIE
I've heard things.

SANDY
Really from who?

STEPHANIE
It doesn't matter.

SANDY
I think it does matter. I'd like to know who- did Maddie say something because that's the kind of thing Maddie would say, she's a drama queen.

STEPHANIE
Well, she's your wife.

SANDY
She is my wife.

STEPHANIE
You're married.

SANDY
Guilty, I'm guilty. I confess I am married. I am married. Stephanie-

STEPHANIE
Daisy threw her glass at me.

SANDY
She's four.

STEPHANIE
I just think that the other day-

SANDY
She's four, for Christ's sake kids throw things when they're four. You should see what she does to her mother.

STEPHANIE
She's mad.

SANDY
Of course she's mad. We've got one kid and Maddie can't handle her. I don't know what to do, hire a nanny, maybe. What were you like when you were four?

STEPHANIE
I don't know. Probably mad.

But cute.

SANDY

I was cute.

STEPHANIE

Offstage, Maddie and Max can be heard -
howling with laughter.

SANDY

How's work going?

STEPHANIE

Work is work.

SANDY

Come on. Smile.

She makes a face.

STEPHANIE

How's your work?

SANDY

I'd rather talk about you.

STEPHANIE

Nothing to talk about. We're launching two new flavors this
month.

SANDY

Anything good?

STEPHANIE

Good, of course it's good, it's ice cream. But I'm sworn to
secrecy. I can't even tell Max. I'll just tell you this one
thing.

SANDY

Okay.

STEPHANIE

Pumpkin.

SANDY

Pumpkin ice cream?

STEPHANIE

It was my idea.

SANDY

Oh, pumpkin!

STEPHANIE

And pecan pie chocolate turkeys and wild flower honey.

SANDY

How does it taste?

STEPHANIE

Well, you know it's pumpkin. Do you like pumpkin?

SANDY

Love pumpkin. How do you stay so skinny?

STEPHANIE

Self control.

SANDY

I don't have any.

STEPHANIE

I noticed.

SANDY

Pumpkin ice cream. Pumpkin, that took balls.

STEPHANIE

Nothing ventured.

SANDY

I'm going to New York.

STEPHANIE

Uh huh.

SANDY

Just for a couple days. On business. It would be nice to get away, wouldn't it?

STEPHANIE

I hope you have a wonderful time.

SANDY

No, I mean the two of us. A couple of days.

STEPHANIE

I can't just go to New York.

SANDY

Why not?

STEPHANIE

Because I'm working and it's just not that-

SANDY

What?

STEPHANIE

Stop it. You know.

SANDY

Who else can I go to New York with?

STEPHANIE

Well, your wife.

SANDY

She's got a doctor's appointment.

STEPHANIE

So go next week.

SANDY

I just thought a little
dinner, maybe a Broadway
show...

(sings)

If ever I would leave you...

STEPHANIE

I happen to know you hate
musicals-

SANDY

(sings)

It wouldn't be in summer-

STEPHANIE

Cut that out-

SANDY

(swings her around)

*Seeing you in summer I never
would go*

STEPHANIE

Hey-

SANDY

Da da da da da da-

STEPHANIE

We're going to knock
something over-

SANDY

Da da da da daaaaa-

STEPHANIE

You're crazy!

SANDY

No, never would I leave you...

Now Maddie and Max enter. She is
dressed as a harem girl, Max as a
slave.

MADDIE

Aren't we adorable? I'm supposed to be Salome.

MAX

And she wants my head.

MADDIE

You should see what they've got in their closet, Sandy. Oh my
god, there is one little number that I think...

(MORE)

MADDIE (cont'd)

I think it's got your name on it... kind of a- what do you call it, Max, kind of an Adam and Eve thing.

MAX

Clover leaf.

MADDIE

But it's pink, I love you in pink.

STEPHANIE

You two are hilarious.

SANDY

I think it's time we went home.

MADDIE

Can you keep a secret? I'm a little high. Max said it would take the edge off. I haven't gotten high... Sandy gets high with what's his name, Al, the trust fund hippie. But I'm not allowed. I must bear up.

SANDY

Are you happy?

STEPHANIE

Max likes everyone to be happy.

MAX

We all have fun in our own way.

MADDIE

(grabs a wine bottle)

I want to sing something.

SANDY

Do not open that bottle.

MADDIE

It's just for show. It's part of my act. Okay, give me a suggestion.

SANDY

Can someone take that away?

MAX

How about something from Cats?

STEPHANIE

You hate Cats.

MADDIE

Okay yes, that song, that signature song, how does it go?

MAX

The first word is moonlight.

MADDIE

Oh yeah Stephanie, give me a note.

STEPHANIE

Maybe you should just-

MADDIE

Give me the fucking note!

STEPHANIE

Mmmm

MADDIE

Moonlight...

SANDY

We told Ginger we'd be back by ten thirty.

MADDIE

I'm having fun... *da da da da da da da...*

SANDY

You're making an ass of yourself.

MADDIE

Okay, I'm making an ass of myself, so what. Once in a while I want to let loose let my hair down.

SANDY

You let your hair down, as you call it, every time you get a chance-

MADDIE

Sandy and I used to play, didn't we, Sandy? Once we went out and pretended we didn't know each other at one of those country bars. Sandy wore a cowboy hat.

SANDY

You are unbelievable, it was my cousin's bar.

MADDIE

Yeah but it was your hat. *Memory da da da da da* how's it go Max?

MAX

(sings)

SANDY

God damn it, Maddie, we're going home now-

MADDIE

I can't go home. I can't leave Max. We made a pact in there, in the closet, said we'd never be separated.

SANDY

Maddie-

MADDIE

I love him. I do.

SANDY

You love him.

MADDIE

Stephanie, I'm in love with your husband. I'm leaving you, Sandy. I'm going to marry Max, if he'll have me. Stephanie, you can live with us.

SANDY

I'm tired. It's late and Ginger is... MADDIE!

MADDIE

Why won't you play with me?

SANDY

Because it isn't fun!

MADDIE

FINE! I'LL JUST GO THROW MYSELF OFF A CLIFF!

Maddie exits. Max follows.

STEPHANIE

Maddie, come back here! Max, you couldn't resist.

SANDY

You see?

STEPHANIE

She's just a little-

SANDY

That's what I have to deal with.

STEPHANIE

Calm down-

SANDY

That's why we don't have people over.

STEPHANIE

Look it's only us-

(a crash offstage)

MAX DON'T LET HER GO OUTSIDE! AND PUT HER IN THE BATHTUB!

(to Sandy)

Whenever anyone gets hysterical Max puts them in the bath. I think she's under a lot of stress. Look, she can stay here. We'll bring her home in the morning. It's okay. Really.

(MORE)

STEPHANIE (cont'd)

Max will love it, they'll probably sit up all night and watch movies.

SANDY

Come to New York with me.

STEPHANIE

Go home. We'll put her to bed and bring her in the morn-

Sandy kisses her.

SANDY

Think about it.

STEPHANIE

Okay. I'll think about it.

Sandy exits; Max enters.

MAX

It's freezing outside.

STEPHANIE

Is she-

MAX

She's fine. I told you that this morning it was going to freeze, we had to bring in the mums.

STEPHANIE

I don't remember.

MAX

I was telling you, I was watching the Weather Channel.

STEPHANIE

That was yesterday.

MAX

Yesterday it didn't freeze.

STEPHANIE

You couldn't have been talking to me. I left at seven thirty-

MAX

I said bring in the mums, it was before you left-

STEPHANIE

I DIDN'T EVEN SEE YOU THIS MORNING, I ONLY HEARD YOU, YOU WERE TALKING TO THAT GODDAMNED LOBSTER APOLOGIZING, YOU DRIVE ME CRAZY WHEN YOU APOLOGIZE TO THE SEAFOOD- WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

MAX

TO BRING IN THE MUMS!

STEPHANIE

YOU CAN'T SAVE THE WORLD!

Maddie enters wrapped in a quilt.

MADDIE

Where's Sandy?

STEPHANIE

He just left.

MADDIE

Left? Like left, left?

STEPHANIE

Left left.

MADDIE

He left.

STEPHANIE

Gone?

MADDIE

I'll be damned.

STEPHANIE

I said you could stay over.

MADDIE

I can't stay over, Daisy-

STEPHANIE

Daisy will be fine.

MADDIE

She won't be fine, she's not fine, she's not fine at all.

STEPHANIE

She's sleeping and in the morning-

MADDIE

I'M TELLING YOU SHE'S NOT FINE AT ALL!

STEPHANIE

Okay, we'll drive you home. MAX!

MADDIE

We'd better make another date. The song. You know something? I never told you. I had a voice teacher and she said that I if I really worked... I could... I could have been an opera singer, an honest to god mezzo.

STEPHANIE

I think you have a beautiful-

MADDIE

Just shut up. I don't want to hear about it. I just wanted someone to know.

STEPHANIE

Right. Maybe early in the week I'm I might... go away on business... Overnight. Why don't you write the words in English out, we can practice on our own then get together again next weekend.

MADDIE

(looking at the quilt)

You made this didn't you? You know what I love about your quilts? They're all over the house. What is this one?

STEPHANIE

My stepmother made that one.

MADDIE

The evil queen?

STEPHANIE

It's our wedding quilt.

MADDIE

Oh my god, and I'm dragging it!

STEPHANIE

It's made out of Max's and my clothes, believe me everything in it has been dragged somewhere.

MADDIE

She made this out of your clothes?

STEPHANIE

Kind of, I don't know a collage of us.

MADDIE

You're sewn together. That's beautiful.

STEPHANIE

It's just a quilt.

MADDIE

No one ever sewed me a quilt.

Max enters carrying the mums.

STEPHANIE

You don't have my stepmother. Maddie wants to go home.

MADDIE

You don't have to no *I'm still here*

MAX

Bullshit I'll go with you-

STEPHANIE

Max is great with doctors he drives them crazy-

MAX

You just have to ask the right questions what are they doing a CAT scan-

MADDIE

(back and forth on the phone)

...you're kidding wait a minute... an MRI there's the possibility of a brain tumor *if that's what you want then*

STEPHANIE

He didn't say that-

MADDIE

...just a minute... why else would she stare it's like she disappears *...Allison what...*

STEPHANIE

I told you Max will take you-

MAX

I'll take you-

MADDIE

...I never said that Stephanie didn't...

STEPHANIE

What's she saying? Max go warm up the car it's freezing out-

Maddie disconnects the call.

MADDIE

That was Allison. We're fired.

STEPHANIE

We're what?

MADDIE

Fired. She hired two women from White River.

STEPHANIE

She-

MADDIE

Opera starlets. Interns at the Met. She stumbled over them, she said, and thought it would be easier. Can you believe it? We're fired after all that.

STEPHANIE

Hired, she hired-

MADDIE

You know these people don't sing for free!

STEPHANIE

How much?

MADDIE

She said for their resumes, but you know better, I know better, the nerve-

STEPHANIE

I didn't even want to do it. I didn't even want to go to her wedding, her *third* wedding-

MADDIE

Yeah, well I'm a bridesmaid so I have to go-

MAX

You ready?

MADDIE

Yes, thanks. I mean, thank you really for a lovely, lovely... that meal Max-

MAX

Oh that reminds me, for Daisy.

He hands her the lobster shells.

MADDIE

She'll love them. Was that... did I really... you won't talk about me tomorrow, will you?

STEPHANIE

You were very cute.

MADDIE

People may say some things, they may say nothing, but no one would ever, ever call me cute.

Max and Maddie start to exit. Stephanie grabs Max and kisses him hard and quick.

Music plays - Das Reingold: Entry of the Gods.

SCENE 5

Fade to: La Traviata E Strano!

MUSIC UNDERSCORES ENTIRE SCENE.

It is later that night. Split stage -
two kitchens - two fights.

Sandy and Maddie are furious at each
other.

Sandy

That was not necessary-

MaddIE

Don't tell me what's necessary-

Sandy

You're drunk-

MADDIE

I'm not drunk I'm furious-

Sandy

Keep your voice down-

MADDIE

Alright how's this. I'm going to divorce you. I'm going to
call a lawyer in the morning, someone you don't know-

Sandy

Tomorrow's Sunday-

MADDIE

SHUT UP!

Sandy

Stop it, just stop it. You're irrational, my god what do you
think Ginger is thinking, she'll never baby-sit again!

MADDIE

Baby-sit? You call that baby-sitting? I'm calling her
parents.

Sandy

No you're not-

MADDIE

Yes I am-

Sandy

No you're not. You're going to go upstairs to bed and in the
morning we'll talk about this.

(MORE)

Sandy (cont'd)

Maddie, I think you are losing your... I think you need to talk to someone, you have been acting strange ever since, I know, losing the baby-

MADDIE

Don't you talk to me about the baby!

Sandy

That's it, I can't talk to you about the baby, I can't talk to you about how I feel, I'm supposed to walk around on eggshells so I don't upset you, meanwhile your daughter stares at us like we're ghosts-

MADDIE

This is not about me! This is about you and Ginger!

Sandy

We had just found Daisy-

MADDIE

Your shirt is off!

Sandy

It had oil on it. I told you, I found her in the basement behind the furnace-

MADDIE

She doesn't have oil on her-

Sandy

We cleaned her up.

MADDIE

Show me. Show me how you cleaned her up.

Sandy

(grabs a nightgown)

Here. It's her nightgown. I rinsed it out, it was in the bathroom.

MADDIE

I never knew Daisy to go in the basement, she's scared of the basement.

Sandy

It's the second time I've found her down there. I think... I think... she gets confused... and when she is in that state she's been... I think she goes down the stairs she must think she's going from the upstairs... her bedroom or something to find you and she gets confused. Look, I'm not going to New York next week. This really... I guess I didn't really see it until now, I mean, I was concerned, of course I was concerned, but the way she looked at me... she was so scared... she was so lost...

(MORE)

Sandy (cont'd)

I don't, I wish I knew what happened. Ginger was watching television, she didn't hear her, and my little daughter, my little Daisy was down there behind the furnace, her big eyes staring. That's the only way I would have seen her is that she had her big eyes open, staring.

Stephanie enters. Musical transition to announce her - *Les Contes d'Hoffmann, Belle Nuit.*

She is dressed in a man's suit. She goes to Max and rips open his shirt and kisses him.

MADDIE

(comforts him)

Oh, it's okay... oh no it's all right. I'm sorry, what, I should never, it's my fault. Ginger, poor Ginger... I'll go there in the morning, what are we going to do?

Sandy

We're taking Daisy to the doctor.

MADDIE

Yes, we are, but what I mean-

Sandy

And the rest will sort itself out. I can't believe we waited this long, it's just that Daisy is so smart sometimes, really intelligent children are just, you know, kind of strange.

MADDIE

She's not strange.

Sandy

No, she's not strange, but different.

MADDIE

She needs us.

Sandy

I know.

MADDIE

And I need you. I need you so much. I'm so afraid most of the time, it's only when you're here, and you're really here, you know, that I feel safe and then I think Daisy picks that up from me-

Sandy

Sh sh, it's not anyone's fault, we're all just trying to make our way, Daisy included. You know the worst part is it doesn't get any easier, but we have each other. We love each other-

MADDIE

I love you-

Sandy

And the bright spots, being close, I'm sorry, I'm so so sorry-

MADDIE

If you were home more-

Sandy

I know and I will be I promise-

MADDIE

We don't need the money-

Sandy

I was thinking of building something, a barn. Maybe we could have some animals, we have all this land. I could take a leave in a couple of months, I'll wait until spring is really here-

MADDIE

Like in June maybe-

Sandy

I was thinking maybe a horse or a pony. I think Daisy would like that she loves animals-

MADDIE

Maybe chickens, we could have hens-

Sandy

Fresh eggs-

MADDIE

But we're not going to eat the chickens-

Sandy

No, of course not. I'll take the summer off and see how it goes, say April to September, then part time after that.

MADDIE

Won't you miss it?

Sandy

Really, I can do most of my work from home if we do a little remodelling-

MADDIE

You said we distract you.

Sandy

But if we remodel, close off the L and make a private entrance, I still need privacy-

MADDIE

So you mean you'd put a wall up where the living room connects to the hallway-

Max pulls away from Stephanie. Fade to *Wagner, Tristan and Isolde, Prelude to Act 1.*

(OVERLAPPING WHERE INDICATED)

STEPHANIE

What did I do?

SANDY

Or an addition we could build an addition-

MaddIE (cont'd)

The house is already so big-

MAX

Nothing it's me.

SANDY

But for my office-

MADDIE (cont'd)

I thought you were taking the summer off-

Sandy

I am but if I'm going to work part time-

MADDIE

For part time you need an addition-

STEPHANIE

I thought you liked it when I-

Max

Just stop okay-

STEPHANIE

-dressed like this.

Max opens a drawer and begins to roll a joint.

Sandy (cont'd)

Jesus, Maddie, I'm trying here I'm trying to figure out how it might work-

MADDIE

There are five bedrooms upstairs-

Sandy

But I don't want to hear you and besides occasionally I have a meeting-

MADDIE

The thought of workmen! Remember when we did the kitchen? They were in the kitchen for six weeks-

Sandy

But this won't be in your way. It will be, Jesus, Maddie all right, suppose we go to California and see my folks while they're working-

MADDIE

We don't know about Daisy. We don't know how she'll be. They kept coming back, they kept forgetting and the pantry still doesn't close right and I can't stay in a hotel for two weeks, I can't eat out that long-

Sandy

Okay-

MADDIE

Okay what-

Sandy

Okay, whatever you want, you tell me. Not tonight but tomorrow or in a day or a week you tell me what you want-

MADDIE

What is that supposed to mean?

MAX

I'm tired.

STEPHANIE

I thought you liked this-

MAX

I do I said I'm tired.

STEPHANIE

Maddie okay?

MAX

Fine.

SANDY

Nothing, just how it will work best for you for us, maybe we should wait until after we see the neurologist.

MADDIE

What are you saying?

SANDY

Nothing, I'm saying that we're tired but clearly we both are trying to find a solution to our problems.

STEPHANIE

What the fuck Max, talk to me?

Max

I don't really have anything to say,

STEPHANIE MADDIE
What's that supposed to mean? What problems?

Sandy
 No problems, just we need to spend more time together.

MADDIE
 I'll second that.

Sandy
 Come here, can you come here? Ah, let's go up.

MADDIE
 I'm going to get a few things ready for breakfast, grind the coffee, set the table.

Sandy kisses her, then exits.

Maddie watches him leave, then opens a cupboard and takes out a vodka bottle. She pours herself a glass.

MAX
 I moved here, I tried it. Because you wanted to be near your father. So we're near your father. We never see your father.

STEPHANIE
 It's that horrible wife of his.

MAX
 She's not horrible, she's nice. It's your goddamned father who's an asshole. He could care less, Stephanie. I don't know what he was like when your mother was alive but if he's the reason I'm in Vermont, then it's no reason at all. When was the last time we saw him, April?

Maddie drinks. She sits and stares out at nothing.

STEPHANIE
 We talk.

MAX
 Yeah, you could talk from New York or anywhere and speaking of New York, Maddie told me you were going to New York.

STEPHANIE
 No, she didn't, I just said-

MAX
 She said you were going out of town-

STEPHANIE
 So? so I go out of town-

MAX
Cut the bullshit Stephanie-

STEPHANIE
I'm going to Bennington all day-

MAX
You're a liar. You're lying, that's the one thing I thought we had between us honesty-

STEPHANIE
I don't think you really care about me or what I need. I'm alone, I'm all alone. You're in your own world and you're perfectly fine. Well I need to be needed. It's a goddamned circus all of this-

MAX
Maddie thinks Sandy is having an affair.

STEPHANIE
I know she thinks that because he won't get Netflix.

MAX
No, it's because he doesn't touch her but I noticed he doesn't have any trouble touching you.

STEPHANIE
Oh, come on.

MAX
Are you?

STEPHANIE
Are you kidding? You've got a lot of nerve after what I put up with-

MAX
Put up with?

STEPHANIE
Montreal-

MAX
That was the two of us-

STEPHANIE
Oh, really? I counted four-

MAX
What are you trying to say?

STEPHANIE
I'm tired of trying to figure out how to keep up with you. I just want someone to lust after me, you know, my smell the way I look when I don't care. It's humiliating.

Max turns away and lights the joint.

STEPHANIE (cont'd)

Okay, okay I thought about it, for one fleeting shining moment. I thought it would be fun. Sometimes a girl needs a little fun but I wasn't... I'm not... it was stupid to even consider when on the other hand I can sit around and watch you smoke pot all week and play with your pictures-

MAX

You don't have to sit around and watch me do anything. I have a job offer in North Carolina. I've thought about it and I'm going to take it. Institutional stuff not creative but the money's good and it will solve a lot of problems.

STEPHANIE

And what about me?

MAX

I don't know.

STEPHANIE

You don't know?

MAX

I'm leaving next Monday.

STEPHANIE

You already bought your ticket?

MAX

I'm driving.

STEPHANIE

You've taken the job?

MAX

More or less.

STEPHANIE

Oh, fuck you.

MAX

Yeah well, that doesn't look to be much of an option anymore.

Stephanie slaps him. Sandy enters. He watches Maddie.

STEPHANIE

(screaming)

You don't care whether I sleep with Sandy. You don't really care what I do you, just don't want to miss out on the fun. Well, guess what, it was . I had two orgasms.

(MORE)

STEPHANIE (cont'd)

Real ones, the kind that can happen between a man and a woman alone together, no props, no costumes, my skin. For some men that's enough.

Stephanie exits. Max puts out his joint and starts to clean the kitchen. He picks up the quilt.

SANDY

What are you doing?

Maddie grabs the lobster shells and throws them in the garbage.

MADDIE

Nothing, I was throwing these things away. Max sent them, they're disgusting, I'll be right up.

Sandy

No, I mean in that what's in that?

MADDIE

I was thirsty.

Sandy

Are you drinking?

MADDIE

Diet Coke.

Sandy grabs the glass.

MADDIE (cont'd)

Okay, it's called a night cap. I wanted a sip. It's been a long day and I'm not quite unwound. What are you doing, anyway?

Sandy

I was going to put the recycling out. What is this?

MADDIE

I don't need you checking on me, do I check on you? What you're doing every minute? I could have just taken a pill and I thought, no, I don't want to do that, I'll be groggy in the morning, so sue me, right, that's a laugh.

Sandy

You're... what are you... what is this?

He sees in the recycling that there are several empty bottles.

MADDIE

You have to go through everything? That has been there forever.

SANDY

I've had enough for one night, I'm going up.

Sandy starts to exit. Maddie screams at him.

MADDIE

I'M CALLING GINGER'S PARENTS IN THE MORNING!

Sandy

GOOD CALL THEM!

MADDIE

SHE'S SIXTEEN!

Sandy

SEVENTEEN!

Maddie sees Daisy hiding behind the door offstage.

MADDIE

Oh, no sweetheart, what are you doing out of bed, Mommy's coming...

Maddie runs past Stephanie who has changed into a nightgown and runs to Max. She gets down on her knees.

STEPHANIE

Max, Max I'm sorry would you please, please...

Music from Tristan and Isolde fades out and fades into-

SCENE 6

Le nozze de Figaro, overture.

In the dark. Lights slowly come up.

(OVERLAPPING WHERE INDICATED)

STEPHANIE

Wow, that's hot-

MAX

Hold that-

MADDIE

Grab it-

STEPHANIE

Yeow-

MADDIE
Get them all out-

STEPHANIE
I'm doing-

MAX
Here let me-

STEPHANIE
Fine don't you have any tongs-

MAX
There-

MADDIE
Ooh this is going to be so good-

STEPHANIE
I really hurt my finger-

MADDIE
Put some butter on it here stick that in on both ends some salt-

MAX
Oh yeah-

They are cooking corn on the cob.

STEPHANIE
Let me taste mm mm-

MAX
Get your own-

STEPHANIE
Mm mm-

MADDIE
Oh god I've waited so long for this-

MAX
Mm mm-

MADDIE
I'm going to finish this and go get some more, keep the water boiling, how's your finger-

STEPHANIE
Who cares-

MAX
We'll never eat all this.

MADDIE (cont'd)
You have to cook it as soon as you pick it so make room. Hand me that, you want another glass?

STEPHANIE
Half a glass.

MAX
No thanks.

MADDIE
I hardly did anything after Sandy planted this.

MAX
God provides.

MADDIE

But now I think I'm going to get serious about growing corn, I've got all this land.

STEPHANIE

You're going to become a farmer?

MADDIE

Daisy should have the opportunity to learn something about where food comes from.

STEPHANIE

That's what field trips are for.

MAX

I think it's a grand idea.

MADDIE

You do?

MAX

You'll get all sorts of tax credits.

MADDIE

I hadn't thought of that.

MAX

The government is encouraging people to grow food. How much land were you thinking?

MADDIE

I don't know, twenty acres?

STEPHANIE

Twenty acres?

MAX

All you have to do is call the Department of Agriculture, they'll send someone up here straight away,

MADDIE

Really?

MAX

Howie and Bridget did that.

STEPHANIE

They're actual farmers.

MADDIE

I want to be an actual farmer who grows actual corn.

Maddie exits.

STEPHANIE
What are you doing?

MAX
What are you doing?

STEPHANIE
She can't farm.

MAX
No, but she can dream she can talk she can wonder.

STEPHANIE
She's drunk.

MAX
So stop drinking.

STEPHANIE
I just had a half.

MAX
It only encourages her.

STEPHANIE
I am not the problem. Turn the stove back up.

MAX
All right, all right, let's not fight.

STEPHANIE
Wow, she looks like hell.

MAX
How's your dad?

STEPHANIE
Oh, you know.

MAX
We could go and see him if you like.

STEPHANIE
I haven't seen him since the last time you were here. He'll get the wrong idea. It doesn't matter, anyway.

MAX
Steph-

He tries to hold her.

STEPHANIE
I can't. Where do you suppose- I don't see her...

MADDIE

Oh, okay good... splash splash...

MAX

I could use a cup of coffee.

MADDIE

Oh, sorry, only tea.

MAX

Where do you?

MADDIE

In that one, jasmine, maybe Earl Grey. You two have to stop this nonsense going living in two places. There is only one place on god's earth for lovers and that is here in the, state of Vermont, the Green Mountain State is for lovers. Max, I know, you should go into business doing weddings. Remember Allison's wedding? Her nephew had to take the pictures, she couldn't find anyone.

STEPHANIE

Max hates weddings.

MAX

No, I don't. I hate wedding receptions. I love weddings.

MADDIE

So, how was it?

STEPHANIE

Oh, you know, about what you'd expect.

MADDIE

And Terry, how did she look?

MAX

Fat.

STEPHANIE

Definitely fat.

MAX

Dumpy and fat.

MADDIE

Oh, come on, she weighs a hundred and twelve.

MAX

All in her ass.

STEPHANIE

Daisy on the other hand-

MADDIE

Don't tell me. I don't want to know. Sandy picked her up around eight. The groom's not supposed to see the bride on his wedding day but the ex-wife, well-

STEPHANIE

Got to be bad luck.

MADDIE

And to think I took her to my reunion. I should have poisoned her. Stephanie, how about some more wine?

STEPHANIE

I'm good.

MADDIE

You're both very nice people to come over here like this and eat corn with me on my husband's wedding day.

MAX

Here's some tea.

Maddie holds up a quilt.

MADDIE

Look at this gorgeous thing you made. What is this one, this blue?

STEPHANIE

I think I picked that material up in a thrift store in Boston.

MADDIE

Oh, I hate Boston so stuffy.

(a thought occurs suddenly)

I don't hate Boston. I just said I hate Boston. Sandy hates Boston. Well guess what Sandy, you might have divorced me, but I JUST DIVORCED ALL YOUR STUPID IDEAS!

STEPHANIE

And that flowered piece, do you remember the dress I wore to Allison's wedding?

MADDIE

That's it?

STEPHANIE

That's a piece of it.

MADDIE

You cut up that dress just to make this quilt?

STEPHANIE

No, I cut up the dress and then thought, hey I can put it in the quilt.

MAX

She cuts up everything.

MADDIE

You just cut things up and put them back together just like that.

MAX

Tell her about the kittens.

STEPHANIE

Gerry had kittens.

MADDIE

That tomcat you found?

MAX

Geraldine, now.

STEPHANIE

He was pregnant, she was pregnant. I took him to the vet to get spayed and he was already pregnant.

MAX

Seven of them last night.

MADDIE

Seven kittens? Max hates cats.

MAX

Hate cats, love kittens.

STEPHANIE

Max delivered them.

MAX

Gerry was magnificent.

MADDIE

What are you going to do with seven kittens?

STEPHANIE

I figured you'd take one or two... or three.

MADDIE

Hah!

MAX

Daisy would love a kitten.

MADDIE

Yes, she would.

STEPHANIE

Then it's settled.

MADDIE

Tell me about the ceremony. Did they swear to love each other eternally and all that?

STEPHANIE

It was the usual.

MAX

I cried.

STEPHANIE

It doesn't count, he always cries. It was ordinary. They said the vows right out of the book-

Maddie runs out of the room.

STEPHANIE (cont'd)

-and what are you telling her you cried, you are an asshole!

MAX

You're right I'm sorry I've been crying ever since Gerry had his kittens, the miracle of life.

Maddie returns with a piece of paper.

MADDIE

(reads)

*What greater thing is there for two human souls
than to feel that they are joined together to strengthen
each other in all labor, to minister to each other in all
sorrow,
to share with each other in all gladness,
to be one with each other in the
silent unspoken memories?*

(sits down)

George Eliot. I found it in Daisy's backpack, she had copied it. Please tell me she didn't read it.

STEPHANIE

No one, didn't read it.

MADDIE

Promise?

STEPHANIE

Promise.

Maddie looks at Max who cannot lie.

MAX

Sandy read it.

MADDIE

Stephanie, you've really got to quit fibbing, you think you're sparing me but really you're a terrible liar.

STEPHANIE

Please don't drink any more.

MADDIE

Oh, phooey. Okay here's my big news. I'm going into rehab in three days, three days from now I'll be in nonalcoholic incarceration. I'm expected to drink myself into oblivion beforehand. I went to an AA meeting and I heard all about it. God, it was awful those people, so sincere. I hope I don't turn out like that.

MAX

Maddie that's-

MADDIE

Don't say it. Don't congratulate me. I'm doing it for Daisy and don't tell me to do it for myself because I can't. I tried that. I tried it every day for the last two years.

MAX

Daisy is a good reason.

MADDIE

How did she look in her flower girl dress?

MAX

Beautiful.

MADDIE

I didn't want to see her in it.

Maddie breaks down a little - Max, as usual, comforts her.

STEPHANIE

(a bit pissed)

It was yellow. Bright bright yellow. Sleeveless and silk daisies sewn all around the hem, the neckline. And she carried a bouquet, oh Max, it's in the bag.

(Stephanie produces the bouquet.)

It's for you, she said to give it to her mother, she said it right in front of Terry and Max took pictures. I'll email them to you so you can see so you don't have to suffer a monotonous obsession.

MADDIE

Okay, okay.

Maddie exits again.

MAX

Now you've done it.

STEPHANIE

I don't care I gave up a Klesmer band for this and I could be home with the kittens.

MAX

They are very, very cute.

STEPHANIE

They're not cute yet but they're going to be. I'll send you pictures when their eyes are open.

MAX

When will that be?

STEPHANIE

A few weeks someone told me. I never had kittens before.

MAX

It's a big responsibility.

STEPHANIE

Gerry's a natural. He ate every one of the placentas and licked those babies to life. I wouldn't have had the sense to do that if I was a cat.

MAX

I don't believe that.

STEPHANIE

Well, believe it. It came as an absolute shock.

MAX

But I would have been there to tell you. I would have coached you.

STEPHANIE

Tomcats are conveniently out tomcatting when the going gets rough.

He tries to touch her again.

STEPHANIE (cont'd)

Don't do that, and stop looking like that. You can't pull this two days before we're signing the papers and then you fly back to North Carolina.

MAX

Actually, I'm heading to New York.

STEPHANIE

Oh?

MAX

An ad agency. I've got an interview. Remember Gary?

STEPHANIE

I remember Gary.

MAX

He recommended me and it's tempting.

STEPHANIE

So is it definite?

MAX

No but...

STEPHANIE

But it probably is.

MAX

If I say yes. For some reason they want me.

STEPHANIE

Of course, they want you, because you're good. You're very, very good. I ought to know I practically made you famous.

MAX

I was thinking maybe you could come with me.

STEPHANIE

Why in the world would I do that?

MAX

Because it would be fun.

STEPHANIE

I've had enough fun. Anyway I've got the kittens to think of.

MAX

Right.

STEPHANIE

Say hi to Gary for me and anyway I'm seeing someone and we have plans for the middle of the week, probably spill over into the weekend-

MAX

Really.

STEPHANIE

His name's Bill. He's a dentist. Grew up in Jericho, now lives in Montpelier. Divorced, he's forty and he has twin boys who are sixteen years old. He's Catholic, of all things and actually very involved with his church but not conservative in the ways that count, quite liberal, in fact. He sings in a rock band.

MAX

Really.

STEPHANIE

With other forty year olds. It's quite a fun group in fact, they have a gig-

MAX

A gig?

STEPHANIE

A gig, they have a gig tomorrow night but I told him I wouldn't be able to make it.

MAX

Just in case I want to know.

.STEPHANIE

I don't ask you, it's your business.

MAX

I didn't ask you either.

STEPHANIE

No, I volunteered and frankly I don't want to know what you're doing.

MAX

I'm not doing anything-

STEPHANIE

I don't care and I don't want to know-

MAX

Nothing no one-

STEPHANIE

La la la la la la la

MAX

I went out a couple of times.
There was this girl on
Facebook but it turned out-

STEPHANIE

La la la la la la la

MAX

Cut it out and come with me-

STEPHANIE

I told you I've got plans-

Look fuck Frank-

MAX

Bill-

STEPHANIE

Fuck Bill and come to New York with me help me look for an apartment-

MAX

No-

STEPHANIE

Yes-

MAX

I've got kittens-

STEPHANIE

You're coming-

MAX

I said I've got goddamned kittens-

STEPHANIE

You can bring the goddamned kittens-

MAX

They're too young to fly!

STEPHANIE

I mean when they're old enough. Bring them, bring the entire family of cats to New York. I'll find a cat friendly neighborhood, what do I have to do?

MAX

Nothing, it's too late-

STEPHANIE

Stephanie-

MAX

Cut that out-

STEPHANIE

Stephanie-

MAX

I said stop it!

STEPHANIE

Okay, I'll stop it.

MAX

STEPHANIE

Good.

MAX

Okay.

STEPHANIE

You can't just barge in here and ask me to go to New York.

MAX

Okay, I'm sorry. I was wrong. Forget it.

STEPHANIE

Six months.

MAX

You wouldn't let me come and see you.

STEPHANIE

Why the hell should I want to see you, it's over and if it wasn't for the kittens I'd make you stay in a motel. In fact, I think I'll just go home. I'll come back later and get you. Tell Maddie... don't let her drive.

MAX

I won't let her drive.

Stephanie exits. Max waits patiently.
She returns.

STEPHANIE

You're just going to let me leave?

MAX

Jesus-

STEPHANIE

That's all one feeble attempt. You really, really make me mad-

MAX

What do you want me to do-

STEPHANIE

Convince me, dammit, throw me down the stairs, stand on your head, do something-

He grabs her and this time does not let her go.

STEPHANIE (cont'd)

Oh oh oh I'm... I'm not... because you keep making things worse... you are the worst man I ever... don't look at me like that... that's the problem from the start the way you just look at me with those goddamned oh-

Another kiss.

MAX

These are my eyes.

STEPHANIE

This is my heart.

MAX

And we love each other. Isn't that the one thing-

STEPHANIE

No, yes, yes, we did but then you didn't, you left.

MAX

That we agreed that we would love each other-

STEPHANIE

And what is love anyway, it's just an emotion, it's what you do, it's what you do everyday that has to count-

Maddie creeps back in with a camera.
She has put on the dress she wore to
Allison's wedding.

MAX

And I've kept my end up and you've... look at me... so have you so I don't want to hear another word about it, that's final.

MADDIE

Smile! Look it has a built in flash and everything... What did I say?

MAX

Nothing we were just talking. Wow, that's quite a change,

MADDIE

Oh, it's this dress. I only wore it that once. Did you know Allison's marriage has already hit the skids? To think I paid two hundred dollars for this dress and she's in the skids. It's because we didn't sing, Steph. We should have sung, that was a mistake. Those opera starlets sent the wrong message. I thought... I actually thought I looked pretty in this dress.

MAX

You do.

MADDIE

I think New York is a great idea, Max. You'll be so much closer to Stephanie.

MAX

Stephanie's coming too.

STEPHANIE

We haven't agreed.

MAX

We don't agree on anything, that's why you're coming. You can come and see us.

MADDIE

Oh, yeah.

MAX

Bring Daisy.

MADDIE

Oh, oh yeah.

MAX

We'll take her to the ballet. All little girls should go to the ballet. They should learn very young that it's possible to fly.

MADDIE

She loves to dance. She dances all over the house. She's found a way to calm herself. I should be so lucky, all that's happened and Daisy has this zest. I never had it. My sister, she so reminds me of Joy, Joy, my sister Joy. Will she survive me? I think if I could just be taken apart and put back together, you know the barn Pinter's barn? It got a new life in Massachusetts. The Pinter's were just letting it fall apart and then, voila, it got a new life, probably last a thousand years. It's in some village now, one of those villages where people reenact the past. They tread with a light foot so things will last.

STEPHANIE

Hey, it's okay-

MADDIE

I took her off her medication. I don't care, the doctors argue and fight. No one can decide what's wrong with her. Well, god damn it, there's nothing wrong with her, she's just Daisy, the way God made her. The whole world is falling apart and she's the only one with enough sense to make any real noise about it. No pills, no drugs, no no no, not with my child.

MAX

Maddie, why don't you come home with us tonight?

STEPHANIE

Yes, please sleep over at our house.

MADDIE

A sleep over?

STEPHANIE

A sleep over.

MADDIE

I can't leave the corn and besides Daisy might come home. She's supposed to stay at the hotel with Sandy's mother but I have a feeling... I have an idea. Max go home and check on the kittens. I'll sleep in Daisy's room, you two can have my room at the top of the stairs, go right.

STEPHANIE

You mean left.

MADDIE

No, we switched, Daisy and I after Sandy left. How did you... when were you upstairs?

STEPHANIE

I don't know, once, the day I brought the music over, you asked me to check on Daisy.

MADDIE

I don't remember that.

STEPHANIE

The day she threw her glass at me.

MADDIE

You didn't go upstairs. Not that day.

STEPHANIE

Maddie, I-

MADDIE

She's smart, my Daisy. She sees everything. I walk around in a fog, I know I do. I think those spells when she blanks out, she's really, really seeing deeply. Seeing, is it a curse or a blessing to know the truth? You know the day we got married, Sandy wore a white tux. He looked a little like that singer, Pat, Pat Boone. He told me he was wearing a white suit and I thought, oh, how dashing, and then there he was, waiting for me, and it wasn't quite the effect. I think maybe only the bride should wear white. What was your dress like Stephanie?

MAX

It had beads.

STEPHANIE

There were no beads.

MAX

I remember beads.

STEPHANIE

You don't remember anything.

MAX

You wore a veil... it had all these little pearls... and I remember I lifted the veil... and there you were... and I thought... who is this amazing woman... where did she come from... I almost fainted... I was near death with happiness.

MADDIE

You made a good choice, Stephanie, you could have had anyone a girl like you.

MAX

Well, it's funny isn't the whole, isn't all of it just so damn funny sometimes...

MADDIE

(Flower Duet melody)

La la la la lovely la la la la

STEPHANIE

La la la

MADDIE

(She hands Stephanie the bouquet and sets them up as if at a wedding. She speaks.)

Under the dense canopy
Where the white jasmine
Blends with the rose
On the flowering bank
Laughing at the morning
Come, let us drift down together
Let us gently glide along
With the enchanting flow
Of the fleeing current
On the rippling surface
With a lazy hand
Let us reach the shore
Where the source sleeps
And the bird sings
Under the dense canopy
Under the white jasmine
Let us drift down together.

It really is much prettier in English

Music plays- Lakme, Flower Duet.

SCENE 7

MUSIC UNDERSCORES ENTIRE SCENE.

Selections from melodies we have heard,
but always soft and romantic.

A split stage. Years in the past, as
both couples might want to remember
things. Flowers and soft fabrics,
glittering light and young faces.

Sandy waits for Maddie in a bar. They
are meeting for the first time.

In a spotlight - Maddie sings
Bewitched, from Pal Joey. Stephanie
undresses in soft light and gets into a
tub.

And Max's studio apartment in New York.
Let's begin the scene in the dark,
except for the flash of Max's camera.

(OVERLAPPING WHERE INDICATED)

<p><i>That's it-</i></p> <p>I'm Madeline-</p>	<p>MAX</p> <p>MADDIE</p>	<p>Are you-</p> <p><i>One more time-</i></p>	<p>SANDY</p> <p>MAX</p>
<p>SANDY</p> <p>Sandy. Here let me get that-</p> <p>He takes her coat.</p>			
<p>MADDIE</p> <p>Thank you wow it's cold out nice to-</p>			
<p><i>Open your mouth-</i></p> <p><i>Not so much-</i></p>	<p>MAX</p> <p>MAX</p>	<p>Meet you, don't worry I'll just hold it-</p> <p>Is this all right?</p>	<p>MADDIE</p> <p>SANDY</p>
<p>MADDIE (cont'd)</p> <p>Oh perfect.</p>			
<p>SANDY</p> <p>Let me hang that up. I've only been here once-</p>			
<p><i>Like you're about to smile-</i></p> <p><i>Only you don't-</i></p>	<p>MAX</p> <p>MAX</p>	<p>No it's fine-</p> <p>Yes it is but noisy-</p>	<p>MADDIE</p> <p>SANDY</p>

MADDIE
But I like that actually-

SANDY
Really?

MAX
That's better, sly-

MADDIE
Well it's a thing, a thing of mine-

MAX
But don't laugh-

MADDIE
I'm, silence is sometimes-

MAX
Think bad thoughts-

MADDIE
Makes me nervous I talk a lot-

MAX
Dead kittens.

MADDIE
-afraid if I stop someone will leave-

SANDY (cont'd)
I'm not leaving, do you want a drink-

MADDIE
What, oh a wine something or other-

SANDY
I'm hungry, you hungry-

MADDIE
Yes-

MAX
Yes that face keep it-

SANDY
Madeline, do they call you Maddie?

MAX
Yeah baby-

MADDIE
If they have Pinot Grigio, I hate Maddie-

SANDY
Two Pinot Grigios-

Sandy gets two glasses of wine from the bar.

MAX
The light is just-

SANDY
What's Pinot Grigio?

MADDIE
Italian white wine, kind of sweet-

MAX
Now take a handful of rose petals-

SANDY (cont'd)
You look more like a Maddie, soft sweet.

MADDIE
We'll start with Madeline.

SANDY
Maybe it will grow on you.

MADDIE
Maybe.

SANDY
This is mm tasty. I'm spreading out, spreading my wings
trying something new.

STEPHANIE
Ah...

MAX SANDY
And let them kind of spill So Madeline, Madeline...
keep that face...

MADDIE
You're making fun of me.

SANDY
Never. I'm just trying to figure out what is really going on
in that head of yours.

MADDIE
Nothing's going on, I'm... nothing.

STEPHANIE
My back is killing me-

Max
Just one or two more-

SANDY
A blank.

MADDIE
Yes. No. I'm taking this in all of this.

Sandy points in the direction of Max
and Stephanie.

SANDY
Look at those, look at them,

MADDIE
What?

STEPHANIE
Like maybe... me-

SANDY
And my father and mother
remarried-

MAX (cont'd)
You are crude-

STEPHANIE
Oh, come on-

MAX
Natalie is more my taste-

STEPHANIE
Yeah ask Gary-
MAX (cont'd)
Gary, what-

MADDIE
So how does that make-
SANDY
My mother's gay-

STEPHANIE
He likes you-

MADDIE
Oh-

MAX (cont'd)
Gary is a genius-

STEPHANIE
Ooh genius, you're a genius.
I just mean Gary, hmm
competition-

SANDY
Yeah so, two stepmothers, how
is that?

MADDIE
It's good-

STEPHANIE
What about me-

MAX (cont'd)
What about you, you smell
incredible-

MADDIE
Do you like it-

SANDY
Kind of sweet-

STEPHANIE
You like this-

MADDIE
It is kind of sweet not
always-

MAX
Have a taste-

SANDY
That's all right, you have a sister?

MADDIE
Why, in case I don't work out?

SANDY
No-

Max fools around with his camera
equipment.

MADDIE

I'm an only child-

STEPHANIE SANDY

God this stuff is awful, come here- And your parents?

MADDIE (cont'd)

Virginia, in Richmond,

SANDY

I love Virginia,

MADDIE *STEPHANIE*

Yes, well... *I'm going to start charging more-*

SANDY (cont'd)

You smell good.

MADDIE

I smell good? How can you tell?

SANDY

It's wafting.

MADDIE

It's wafting, I don't think so.

SANDY

It's like roses.

MADDIE

It is, it's Joy. Joy, that's essence of roses.

STEPHANIE

Would you stop fussing and sit down?

MAX

All right, all right-

SANDY

I thought roses were for old ladies, but on you it's right. You're blushing again!

MADDIE

It's the wine.

SANDY

I don't think so. This is really sweet.

MADDIE

Do you want something else?

MADDIE
Oh, I can't read a contract-

SANDY
That's why we get paid-

MADDIE
I see-

MAX
You'd make a great dude-

STEPHANIE
I'd what?

MAX
*I mean it as a compliment.
It's sexy, your body, the way
it curves, the hips-*

MADDIE
Do you handle divorces things
like that-

SANDY
That's family law. I work in
corporate, there's no money
in divorces-

MAX
*Kind of Marlene Dietrich, the
eyes very very-*

SANDY
Do you want another one?

MADDIE
Oh I never drink more than one-

Max and Stephanie make love.

SANDY
So, now the big question-

MADDIE
What?

SANDY
Do you want to see me again?

MADDIE
Are you leaving?

SANDY
No, I hope not, just... why fool around? We can talk another
half hour and go our separate ways, and I can tell you I'll
call or we can, shall we say, put our cards on the table.

MADDIE
I'm not following.

SANDY

I like you.

MADDIE

I like you.

SANDY

Damn, I hate it when Curtis is right.

MADDIE

He said-

SANDY

Madeline is gorgeous.

MADDIE

Oh, I'm not.

Sandy

Gorgeous and she blushes.

MADDIE

My sister, if you had known her... she died but she was really really beautiful... she had this way about her, confident, you know... she was very centered... she certainly didn't blush, you couldn't embarrass her.

SANDY

Am I embarrassing you?

MADDIE

No, I... it's a confidence thing.

Sandy

How did she die?

MADDIE

A terrible accident, four years ago now. My mother also. The two of them.

SANDY

We don't have to talk about this.

MADDIE

A drunk driver.

SANDY

We'll talk about it, oh, on our fifth date.

MADDIE

When will that be?

SANDY

Um let's see today is the fifth, no later than the tenth.

Okay.

MADDIE

How's your new job?

SANDY

Oh, I'm just answering the phone. Did Curtis tell you I left?

MADDIE

You told me on the phone.

SANDY

I did?

MADDIE

You said you had just come home from your new job.

SANDY

Well, it's still a temp thing, while I'm taking classes. Voice.

MADDIE

You sing like, what?

SANDY

Anything romantic.

MADDIE

Like musicals?

SANDY

Oh my god, do you like musicals?

MADDIE

Truth? I... okay how about a lie?

SANDY

You don't like musicals.

MADDIE

I just don't get them, actors standing around talking and then breaking into song, I mean who does that?

SANDY

It's not real life.

MADDIE

Thank god.

SANDY

Hm.

MADDIE

SANDY

But I could convert. I think I just need the right girl to experience them with.

MADDIE

I suppose opera is out, just kidding, I can always find a friend.

SANDY

Okay, so sing something.

MADDIE

I'm not going to sing.

SANDY

Come on what's your favorite musical?

MADDIE

I don't know... Camelot. You hate it?

SANDY

I, yes, but I have a good excuse, my parents used to sing those songs around the house. It's was a Kennedy thing, they were crazy about the Kennedys, so it's kind of off limits that one.

MADDIE

Okay, no Camelot.

SANDY

What else do you like?

MADDIE

I speak French.

SANDY

Tres bien.

MADDIE

I mean, I really speak French. I majored in French.

SANDY

Say something in French. You probably hate it when people say that.

MADDIE

No it's fine. What do you want me to say

SANDY

I don't know, I won't understand it anyway.

MADDIE

So...

SANDY
Tell me I'm the most fascinating guy you've ever met.

MADDIE
Fascinating?

SANDY
Is fascinating good?

MADDIE
Not too fascinating.

SANDY
Okay then how about...

MADDIE
Speaks in French

Max and Stephanie come up for air.

SANDY
What was that?

MADDIE
Ask me later.

STEPHANIE
Wow that's a record.

SANDY
So do you like to ski?

MADDIE (cont'd)
Ski?

STEPHANIE
I mean, exciting.

SANDY
I love Vermont. Stowe, my buddies and I rent a condo there every winter.

STEPHANIE
Hot, very hot but...

MAX
Do you want a drink?

MADDIE
I can ice skate, I've never skied.

STEPHANIE (cont'd)
You are kinky.

MADDIE
Does water skiing count?

MAX
I'm not kinky, what's kinky?

STEPHANIE (cont'd)
THIS IS KINKY!

SANDY
 Definitely. If I could make
 enough money I'd live up
 there. It's a great place to
 raise kids. Boston is, I
 don't know, there's a certain
 snobbery here, it wears me
 out.

STEPHANIE
You're the artiste.

MADDIE
 You don't like your wine?

SANDY
 Oh it's sweet.

MADDIE
 I might as well...

Maddie takes Sandy's glass. Sandy goes
 to the bar and stands next to Max, who
 is fixing two martinis. Max gives one
 to Stephanie.

STEPHANIE
Thank you.

SANDY
 Excuse me, I'll have a
 martini rocks.

MADDIE (cont'd)
 He wants a dirty martini.

STEPHANIE
I love it dirty.

SANDY
 Yes I do.

MAX
I know.

MADDIE (cont'd)
 I'll have one too.

SANDY
 What happened to the only one?

MADDIE
 Only one of each.

MADDIE (cont'd)
 I should use the ladies...

SANDY
 Sure.

Maddie exits to the bathroom, leaving
 Sandy alone.

STEPHANIE
 What?

Nothing I-

MAX

What?

STEPHANIE

I what do you think about maybe moving in.

MAX

What with you and Gary?

STEPHANIE

Gary's moving out?

MAX

Uh huh.

STEPHANIE

Swear to god, the first of the month.

MAX

And you want me to move in?

STEPHANIE

Til death do us part.

MAX

What you mean?

STEPHANIE

Yeah.

MAX

Is this a proposal?

STEPHANIE

It could be.

MAX

Could be?

STEPHANIE

Okay it is.

MAX

You've got to be joking.

STEPHANIE

Okay sorry.

MAX

You're actually, this is a proposal?

STEPHANIE

MAX

Forget it.

STEPHANIE

Forget it?

MAX

I've been thinking about it and I think that we-

STEPHANIE

Wait a minute wait a minute, this is not how it goes. Where's the ring?

MAX

I thought we could go look for one-

STEPHANIE

I don't want to look for one, I want you to look for one, jesus christ-

MAX

You never like anything I buy-

STEPHANIE

That's not the point. That's not the point at all. You are supposed to buy the most expensive ring you can't afford and then I go crazy and after a few days we go back and exchange it.

MAX

Sorry.

STEPHANIE

My first proposal and you mess it up.

MAX

How many are you planning on?

STEPHANIE

My stepmother was right. My stepmother was right about you. She said I might as well marry my brother as marry you, there is no passion, no mystery-

MAX

No passion, what was that?

STEPHANIE

That was kinky! Now I know, finally I know-

MAX

Know what?

STEPHAIE

Anyway we can't get married. We can't ever get married, we know each other too well. The seven year itch is just two years away.

MAX

Two years we were apart.

STEPHANIE

It doesn't count, we talked every day.

MAX

Yeah you called every day.

STEPHANIE

So I called. See what I mean? You didn't even take our separation seriously. You took my calls. We've been together five years, unmarried. Statistically we don't stand a chance.

MAX

What did you read that in Cosmo?

STEPHANIE

So how many lovers did you have?

MAX

What, when?

STEPHANIE

When we were apart.

MAX

We don't tell, remember?

STEPHANIE

Brad, Chelsea, Gary of course-

MAX

Caroline, Brad-

STEPHANIE

You slept with Caroline-

MAX

No you did-

STEPHANIE

Where did you hear that-

MAX

Some things are sacred-

STEPHANIE

I didn't sleep with Caroline but I could have-

MAX

I don't care-

STEPHANIE

You don't care. Really you don't care. Then forget it.

They both slam things around, start to get dressed.

STEPHANIE (cont'd)

What are you... stop it... I'm sorry, I'm sorry, my... shit, I just wanted some romance, you know, like these rose petals wafting down.

MAX

You don't let me even try.

STEPHANIE

I'm a bitch.

MAX

You are a bitch.

STEPHANIE

Just don't be mad.

MAX

I don't want to hear about Caroline or anybody.

STEPHANIE

Sorry.

Maddie returns from the bathroom.

MAX

Okay.

SANDY

(sings, from Camelot)

How to handle a woman... you okay?

MADDIE

I'm wow, it's warm in here-

SANDY

Here let me-

MADDIE

I, it's some days, even after all this time, I get worked up-

SANDY

My fault-

MAX

So it's supposed to go how?

STEPHANIE
Nothing, never mind.

MADDIE
You know I was also in the car.

SANDY
Oh.

MADDIE
So it's there was this settlement-

MAX
I want to try again-

MADDIE
I just put it away, my father put it away for me-

SANDY
Were you hurt?

Stephanie is mad now - she starts to get dressed. Max goes to her and tries to tickle her a little.

MADDIE
A broken pelvis. I was in the back, but the money...

MAX
Stephanie...

MADDIE
It... in some ways I'd like to give it away or just spend it... it just sits there and I think about it, my therapist said it should represent freedom but somehow it doesn't.

MAX
Will you let me-

Stephanie relents but tries to stay mad.

STEPHANIE
All right. I said all right-

MADDIE
These statements come every month and I just think of... I just think of them and I've stopped basically getting the mail.

MAX
Okay, I know about the down on one knee bit-

STEPHANIE (cont'd)
Somehow I always pictured this in a French restaurant.

SANDY
You could have them sent to someone else, a lawyer, a banker, accountant anybody

MADDIE
It's just too-

SANDY
I'm sorry-

MAX

I do not have to do this if you don't want me to-

MADDIE

No, it's good to talk about it.

STEPHANIE (cont'd)

I'm just letting go of it all. I'm letting go of my expectations.

MADDIE

Wow this is, you're the first person I've actually... there is something, you are very kind, you have a kindness, I can feel it. Thank you.

SANDY

I hope I can be your friend, maybe more, but you know, we could all use a friend, right?

STEPHANIE

But it's good in a way. I've been living in a fantasy world. This is how things actually happen, I guess.

MAX

I'M TRYING TO BE ROMANTIC, FOR GOD'S SAKE!

MADDIE

I've never talked to anybody about this. How can you put a price on someone's life?

STEPHANIE

I'M BEING PRACTICAL! FOR ONCE! WOULD YOU JUST GET HTIS OVER WITH?

SANDY

Hey, let me see those eyes let me see those blue green wonderful-

MAX

IF YOU'RE GOING TO YELL AT ME I'M REALLY NOT GOING TO PROPOSE!

SANDY

I really, really appreciate your honesty. It takes a lot of guts to open up to someone, especially someone you just met.

STEPHANIE

Jesus Christ, why are you always so emotional? Okay, okay, I'm sorry. I'm just kidding. You never know when I'm kidding.

SANDY

I hope I get the chance... I hope we get the chance to really get to-

MAX

You never even give me a chance.

STEPHANIE

You're right. Please. I'm sorry. I hope you know... I want you to know... how much...

MADDIE

That's what I said! That's what I said, I said I hope, in French, I said I hope, oh maybe it's a sign, do you think it could be a sign?

MAX (cont'd)

Stephanie, will you be my-

He pulls out a diamond ring.

STEPHANIE

(screaming)

Aah jesus christ, you, aah, it's beautiful... you're a horrible, horrible, wonderful, I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you...

Music plays - If Ever I Would Leave You, from Camelot. Both couples dance.

SCENE 8

And it fades to... Rusalka; O Silver Moon. Daisy in her underwear, dances a ballet; it is her wedding day. Stephanie and Maddie enter and put on her wedding gown. They fuss over her. The scents of jasmine and roses wafting. THE END