

# If Looks Could Kill

A Play By  
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# If Looks Could Kill

## CHARACTERS:

ESTHER AMERINO (26) Worried about her weight, somewhat wild 80's hairstyle, born and raised in Queens.

ELOWYN FURST (31)- Shy, but attractive. *Very* colorful personality, yet fragile. The world overwhelms her because of her sensitivity. She never developed a thick skin.

LORI WALTERS (29)- The manager of the department. *Very* nice. probably too nice. A little scatterbrained.

BONNIE RATNER (27)- Died her hair too red, almost orange. Thinks the world of herself. And thinks she should be running the counter. *Very* cunning.

HEATHER: HOUSTON (26)- A product "Rep" from the company. Hired for her beauty. Could have been a model, she claims, but she was too short.

CORKY WYGAMY (28)- One of the security guards for the store. Large handsome. Likes sports and women. Actually, to him women sadly are a sport.

HELEN AVRILL (63)- One of the top nature photographers in the world. An avid animal rights activist. She doesn't really belong in a city, and her awkwardness shows.

SETTING: The Alexander Von Egon cosmetics counter in a large department store on the upper east side of Manhattan, when there were still capitals of retail, this was THE ONE.

TIME: Monday, three weeks before Christmas, 1988.

For Hilary Six, who had great compassion

## SCENE ONE

*The lights come up on the Alexander Von Egan cosmetics counter at a large department store on the upper east side of Manhattan. What is seen is actually one side of a four-sided island, the side which faces away from the main aisle of traffic, known as "Fifth Avenue", the cosmetics capitol of the world. The counter is an unfortunate cross between Hi-tech and Art Nouveau, too many mirrors and fluorescent lights trying to blend with Alexander Von Egon's signature colors of rose and black. peacock feathers, and silk flowers. ESTHER AMERINO is sitting in one of the four chairs (two on each side of the stage) placed in front of the counter for the customers to test the product. Esther, who is dark haired, plump and thirty five, is putting more eye shadow onto a face that already has enough makeup for a kabuki dancer. Von Egon's "look" this year has been very "twenties," so all the girls that work the counter must wear a very pale base (eggshell like,) with severe eye colors and lipstick. The look is very surreal. Striking on some girls, on Esther it looks gangrenous. ELOWYN FURST, 31, but looks much younger, enters tying her apron around her rose blouse and black skirt, the uniform worn by all the girls. She is flustered and out of breath.*

WYN: I'm sorry, I'm so late.

ESTHER: *(upset at her eyeliner)* Damn...

WYN: Is everyone else here? *(She disappears behind the counter)*

ESTHER: *(yelling)* Nope. It's just you and me so far.

WYN: *(reappears on the other side.)* I can't think of anything more disgusting than the New York subway system, can you? Oooh. It's inhuman. Absolutely inhuman. Let 'em off. Let 'em off. We're like cattle. Being herded. *(She sits, looking at her arm in the mirror)* It "is" going to be a bruise.

ESTHER: What happened?

WYN: Oh, this--"pinhead" was trying to cram his way onto the train using his briefcase like a battering ram--"excuse me, excuse me." I mean there must be a law- of physics or something. There must be some obscure--"axiom of nature" that says: There will always be space for at least one more sweaty bald-headed man in any given subway car, no matter how crowded. Or why else would they try. Anyway, he was crushing this poor old woman, who didn't even have time to scream. So when the doors coughed open trying to dislodge him, because his rather large rear end was still hanging out, I took a deep breath and pushed him off the train. back onto the platform. And this forty-five year old vice president of some large bank or something turns and yells at me very eloquently: "Fuck you, asshole."

ESTHER: Nice guy ...

WYN: Oh, he was a gem. He was even going to try it again. You could tell he was standing there watching the doors as they shut wondering: should I try it again, but the old woman stepped up next to me and said: "Go, ahead, I dare you. Try it again." And she tosses him his cap, and everyone starts to cheer and she says: "And don't worry, I'll be sure and bean your mother with a briefcase next time I see her. *(She looks at her arm again.)* Yes, we had quite a little showdown on the IRT this morning.

ESTHER: *(after a long beat)* You're the girl with the funny name, aren't you?

WYN: Excuse me?

ESTHER: The new girl, with the funny name. (*She tries to remember.*)

WYN: Elowyn.

ESTHER: Elowyn., yeah...

WYN: I prefer "Wyn".

ESTHER: I don't blame you. Okay, "Win."

WYN: Yes, well...

ESTHER: What's that, a family name or something?

WYN: Yes. My mother's favorite sister.

ESTHER: Oh.

WYN: She *died* when my mother was seventeen.

ESTHER: Really. Well. that's nice then. Mine's Biblical. Esther. In Hebrew it means a "star." The kind in the sky. But it could also mean like a performer. Which I was for years. A singer.

WYN: Were you?

ESTHER: Sure. What does yours mean? No. really. I'm very interested in names. My husband and I. we're already making lists. (*She takes out a paperback book of baby names.*) Because next year we start the fam. So, what does yours mean?

WYN: I'm not really sure. actually-

ESTHER: Well, then let's look it up.

WYN: I doubt it would be in there.

ESTHER: Sure. I bought the comprehensive one. Even has Spanish and Italian...Eloise...Here it is. Elowyn. It's a compound of Ella and Wynne. Ella means fairy princess, from the same root as elf, and Wynne, means fair or white.

WYN: Oh, well, that's actually kind of nice.

ESTHER: Like Snow White. We're thinking of Angelica if it's a girl. please, please, please, God. And if it's a boy, Salvatore. Salvatore Amerino the third. My husband's family insists. Sicilian blood lines. And I thought my family was bad. We're Jewish. I'm sorry, you were talking about something entirely different, weren't you? Go ahead, you were telling me about the subway...

WYN: Oh, no. I was Just explaining why I was so late--Did you have to go around all those people chanting outside?

ESTHER: The Hari Krishna's?

WYN: No. I don't think so-- Hari Krishna's? Are they still around?

ESTHER: Sure. Especially near Rockefeller Center.

WYN: I never see them anymore. No. these people had hair.

ESTHER: The Fur People. Ha. No wonder they were hairy. Were they holding up cages?

WYN: Cages?

ESTHER: Yes. It was probably the animal rights people. They protest every year. Especially when there is a big fur sale.

WYN: Oh, I thought it was people trying to get in. I was thinking, "Oh great, they're already fighting to get in, it's so crowded.

ESTHER: Don't worry, it will be. (*singing*) Ha-ppy Hol-i-days, da dum.

WYN: (*standing up*) Well. we aren't exactly solving the world's problems this morning, are we?

ESTHER: You go right ahead. I'm busy trying to unclump my mascara. This stuff is terrible. And it's expensive. Von Egon, you make a shitty mascara.

WYN: Isn't there something we should do?

ESTHER: Do?

WYN: Yes, you know, to get ready.

ESTHER: Probably. (*pause*) So, Lori says you write children's stories.

WYN: Oh. well actually they're not children's stories. I mean I don't intend them for children. I don't write "See the dog bark" or "Wee-Willie winkie." Things like that. I sort of write what I like to read-

ESTHER: Which is?

WYN: Fantasy. Lots of fairies and dwarfs. Magical things.

ESTHER: Like your name.

WYN: Yes.

ESTHER: See, now. Of course you do. It's like I keep telling Sal. Names are very important. Very. They can make or break your entire personality. You probably write stories like that because of your name.

WYN: Maybe...

ESTHER: Sure. Why else?

WYN: It certainly might have had something to do with it.

ESTHER: It had a lot to do with it. Don't kid yourself. I always wanted to be a performer. Why? Because of my name. And I always wanted to be in a Broadway show. And I was.

WYN: Really?

ESTHER: Sure. Fiddler on the Roof. Not the original. The revival. A few years ago. I was only a townsperson, you know, the chorus-

WYN: But still, that must have been very exciting...

ESTHER: It was a lot of fun. *(pause)* How about you? Any luck? You know- have you had anything---

WYN: Published?

ESTHER: Yeah.

WYN: No. Not really.

ESTHER: That's too bad... Hey, it's rough. believe me, I know. Why is it we can land a man on the moon, but we can't make a decent mascara?

WYN: Isn't there something I could be doing? I've Just never opened before-

ESTHER: You could wipe the counters if you want.

WYN: Oh, good. That'll be fun.

ESTHER: Fun?

WYN: Yes. I like to clean. Don't you?

ESTHER: What?

WYN: Like to clean?

ESTHER: Never.

WYN: No? Not even when you're depressed?

ESTHER: Especially when I'm depressed.

WYN: Oh, I do.

ESTHER: In fact. cleaning depresses me.

WYN: When I'm depressed I love to get out my duster buster and go crazy. Vrr, Vrr, you should see me. Or scrub the tub. Nothing is better than a clean tub. Get it all white and shiney. I feel great.

ESTHER: Well, I guess it takes all kinds.

WYN: I know. I'm compulsive. You haven't ever done that. though? When you're really upset?

ESTHER: I eat. Chocolate chip cookies. Or donuts. A hot glazed donut. You can keep your clean tub, just give me a box of glazed donuts. In the cabinet.

WYN: What?

ESTHER: More paper towels. In the cabinet behind you.

WYN: Thanks.

ESTHER: Listen. while we have the chance. may I say something?

WYN: Sure.

ESTHER: I know you're new here. but from what Lori says you're okay. I mean no bimbo, you know like, what's her name, Malibu Barbie...

WYN: HEATHER:?

ESTHER: Cannot stand her. Did not like the girl from the word go. I took one look at that girl and I said "bullshit." The hair is bullshit, the walk is bullshit. She talks bullshit with that "Hi, how are you?" All that sweetness and goo-goo talk. Her name is even bullshit. I'll bet you a week's commission her real name is Susan or Karen, but that's not fru-fru enough. So we've got to change that to HEATHER:.

WYN: I think I get the picture. You don't much care for her.

ESTHER: Or anyone like her. Never have and never will.

WYN: And you obviously aren't one for restraint...

ESTHER: Look. I'm from Queens. Where I come from restraint is a pair of handcuffs that hopefully is only being used for foreplay. We are famous for telling it like it is. We don't go for all that Southern charm or those girly games. You want something, you ask for it. Or you go out, and get it. You don't mamby pamby around. Anyway, all I'm saying is that we're getting down to the wire here, with the holidays, I mean. Things get very cutthroat around here this time of year.

WYN: I see that.

ESTHER: Holiday season is commission season. That's all I'm saying... And we are talking about a lot of money. Not to mention the little trip--to Club Med. But from what I hear, you seem to know about that already.

WYN: Oh, great-

ESTHER: Hey. relax. I personally do not care if you stole the sale or not-

WYN

Stole? Stole what?

ESTHER: Look that's between you and Bonnie.

WYN: Bonnie? What, she thinks I stole that sale? Is that what she said? What did she say? What did she say?

ESTHER: Well, she told me we to watch my regulars like a hawk. She said she wouldn't be surprised if the cash drawer even started being short.

WYN: This is ridiculous.

ESTHER: Look, you steal a girl's customers, and you are breaking the first commandment.

WYN: I didn't "steal" anybody. I don't believe this. A woman walked up to me. I didn't reach over the counter and take her. She walked up to me, and she says, "Young lady, the girl over there is doing her best to ignore me, do you think I could get you to help me a minute." And I said "certainly." I mean the lady was even angry because no one would help her.

ESTHER: Yes, well Bonnie says she told the lady she would be right with her, she was helping fix an overring.

WYN: Overring? She was talking to that guy, that guy from Security she's got the hots for. You know.

ESTHER: Yes.

WYN: Woody or Oakie...

ESTHER: Corky.

WYN: Corky. Yes. Corky.

ESTHER: Oakie?

WYN: Well I knew it was a wood of some kind. A light wood. But all I could think of was balsa. And I knew it also sounded like Dork. Anyway, she was sitting there talking to that Corky guy and ignoring this lady. I mean it's not like this poor woman had a sign painted on her "Grab me girls, I'm going to buy 100 bottles of Narcissus." I mean how did I know she was going to do that?

ESTHER: Look, like I said, that is between you and Bonnie. And so is the all the attention you've been giving Corky-

WYN: Oh, God.

ESTHER: Well, since you brought it up.

WYN: What attention?



ESTHER: Okay, now you going to sit here and tell me you haven't- alright. That you haven't at least noticed him going out of his way to talk to you?

WYN: Yes-but-

ESTHER: And knowing that Bonnie and him have been seeing each other for- I don't know how many months now?

WYN: I thought he was being friendly because I was new. Look. I have no interest in this ---guy, I Just was being friendly.

ESTHER: I'll say. Look Just do me a favor, okay? What happens between you and Bonnie, like I said, that's your business. But between you and me: I need every penny I make at this time of year. Somebody has to pay the bills and my husband, doesn't even make the rent on his prestigious salary. And I don't sing anymore, and I don't write fairy-tales. I've grown up now, end this is the real world. And in the real world, I sell. This is my livelihood now. You understand?

WYN: Of course-

ESTHER: So. all I'm saying is watch yourself, okay? That's all I'm saying. You're new here. Don't step on any more toes. (*LORI WALTERS, a single woman in her late twenties, and the manager of the counter enters, very flustered.*)

LORI: Hi. Esther. Hi. Wyn. Sorry. I'm late.

WYN: Hi. You okay?

LORI: Yes. yes. Well. actually no. But it's a long story. So. you two met?

WYN: Oh, yes. We had a nice little chat.

LORI: Good. Did you get my list?

ESTHER: What list?

LORI: Oh. Esther. I left you a list. Of the things that had to be done before opening. For the Super Santa Days sale.

ESTHER: I didn't see it.

LORI: Right there.

ESTHER: Yes. now I see it.

LORI: I wasn't thinking. I should have taped it to the mirror.

ESTHER: Well. aren't we in a cheery mood this morning. What's the matter? Another Kamikaze date?

LORI: I mean there it is. Sitting right there in front of you. This is Just great. Nothing ever gets done around here. (*She disappears around the counter to see who else is there.*)

ESTHER: You can always tell. She's like this all day long. It's because she lets them stay over. I keep telling her: "Hey, we all make mistakes, but why wake up and have to make them breakfast. If you send them home it's like a bad dream, if you let them stay, it's a nightmare."

LORI: Where is Bonnie? What time is it anyway?

ESTHER: Is it ten yet?

WYN: I have quarter till.

LORI: You know who she is don't you?

WYN: Oh, yes.

LORI: Red hair, bright red-

ESTHER: Almost orange.

LORI: Blue eyeshadow?

ESTHER: Looks like one of those monkeys. those--what are they? Oh. come on now, Lori, you always say it. Ever since she died her hair. She looks like--What?

LORI: An orangutan.

ESTHER: Right. Anyway. it's not ten yet. so you know where Bonnie is. She having her coffee with HEATHER:. Any chance to smooch up to her. To prove, yet again, how valuable she is. She has decided she wants to rep. Not that I blame her. It must be better than this. All the travelling. And they treat you like you a princess. But fat chance, right? That's what I keep telling her. "Bonnie," I say, "look, give it up." They only take the tall and perfect ones, and let's face it, we aren't exactly Charlie's Angels material here, any of us.

LORI: Esther, would you do me a favor?

ESTHER: Yes, Mine Fuhrer?

LORI: Re-ticket these shadows. And start on the other side of the counter please.

ESTHER: Yah. vol. It would be nice. though. Not to be cooped up behind the same counter all day. *(She disappears behind the counter.)*

LORI: I'm sorry I'm a little spacey today. but I need to talk to you about a few things, okay?

WYN: Sure.

LORI: I just need to make a quick phone call-

WYN: Is it about Bonnie?

LORI: Bonnie?

WYN: Yes. from what I hear. she wants to have me tarred and feathered.

LORI: Listen. Bonnie hates anyone that makes her look bad. And you selling that much Narcissus your first day, does not exactly make her look good.

ESTHER: (*entering*) Actually. Sal-Sal. my husband-and I were talking about that just the other night. The shadows are finished.

LORI: Finished?

ESTHER: Somebody had already ticketed them.

LORI: Who?

ESTHER: I don't know. Call the F.B.I.

LORI: Are you sure?

ESTHER: Look, they were 14.95. You wanted them 12.95. They are now 12.95. From this I have come to the conclusion somebody has already ticketed them. (*Lori exits to check.*) Anyway, Sal says to me the other day "How can you stand being cooped up like that all day behind that little counter. Sal rakes leaves in a park near the house for a living. This makes him an expert in wide open spaces.

LORI: That's weird. They are done.

WYN: Maybe it was the "eye-shadow" elves.

ESTHER: Anyway. he says "I don't know how you can stand it. With all those bright lights, and mirrors, and the people." "I'd go nuts," he says. And I say: "Yeah-"

LORI: (*on the phone*) Eastside Animal Center, please.

ESTHER: I thought so too. But it's all relative. Sweetie. It's all relative.

LORI: (*on the phone*) Yes... (*They put her on hold*) Oh...

ESTHER: You know what I mean?

WYN: I couldn't have said it better myself.

ESTHER: No ,I'm not kidding. Because, yes, this place is relatively small, compared to a supermarket, say, or a park. But in the world of cosmetics, this is a veritable yacht. We have the biggest ship in the fleet. And when it's busy, and we're selling, we don't have time to think about how small it is in relation to the outside world. Hell, there is no outside world. This is our world, am I right?

LORI: Did somebody spike your grapefruit Juice this morning Esther? (*To phone*) Hi. Yes, this is Ms. Walters. Yes. Walters. Buster.

ESTHER: You'll see--Wyn. I have to get used to that name. You'll see. You've only been here what-?

WYN: Three days.

ESTHER: Right, well you'll see. When it gets busy this little counter here becomes enormous. Like I told Sal, it's all relative. I mean you hear of rich people in the largest houses in the world, huge estates. Twice as large as this whole store even, and they're lonely as hell. Feeling trapped, blowing their brains out-

LORI: Oh, thank God.

WYN: What?

LORI: Yes... He's alright. He was just in shock.

WYN: Who?

LORI: Buster- no, I'm sorry. Go ahead.

WYN: Buster.

ESTHER: Must be a new one. In shock?

WYN: I think it's her cat.

ESTHER: Oh, I thought maybe she got into the rough stuff.

LORI: Of course, it's my cat... No. that's fine. Thank you. so much.

ESTHER: The original spoiled child...

LORI: He is not spoiled. Bye.

ESTHER: He eats out of a dish from Tiffany's doesn't he?

LORI: It was a gift.

WYN: Was he hurt?

LORI: He fell out of the window.

WYN: Oh, no.

LORI: Yes, that's why I was late.

WYN: He fell out of the window?

ESTHER: He fell out a window?

LORI: Yes.

WYN: Oh, that's terrible.

ESTHER: It's also impossible.

WYN: Esther-

ESTHER: Cat's do not fallout of windows.

LORI: What, do you think I pushed him?

ESTHER: I don't know. How should I know? Look. all I know is cats do not fall out of windows. They have too good a sense of balance. They might jump or get knocked off, but they do not fall.

LORI: Alright, so he jumped.

ESTHER: Unless he was drunk. A drunk cat maybe...

WYN: How many stories? How high up is your apartment?

LORI: The ground floor.

ESTHER: Your cat fell one story?

LORI: Yes.

ESTHER: And he's in shock?

LORI: He is not in shock from the fall, Esther. He is in shock from being outside all night. In the cold and the snow.

ESTHER: Oh. Oh. Look. I'm sorry, I'm not trying to sound unconcerned. I know how much you love that cat-

WYN: But he's okay?

LORI: Yes. He was Just scared and cold... God. I am so stupid. I left the window open last night because the heat was on so high I was boiling...

ESTHER: Okay. let me get this straight-

WYN: Esther-

ESTHER: No. wait. Your cat Buster fell out of a one story window and then couldn't get back in. Does this cat have special needs? Should he be examined?

LORI: No. Esther. Actually, I'm the one who should be examined. I shut the window so he couldn't get back in even if he wanted to. I'm the idiot. See. my neighbor has this black Persian named Beatrice. who every time she goes into heat, Buster goes crazy. He cries all night until you let him out. And usually he Jumps across the alley way and into Beatrice's house and- you know-

WYN: Has his way with her.

LORI: Right. And then he comes home. Only this time. I didn't realize he was gone. and I must have shut the window.

WYN: Oh, the poor thing.

LORI: He was Just sitting out there in the cold shaking.

ESTHER: I would have been screaming-

LORI: He might have been. I sleep pretty soundly... Sometimes I take a few pills and then I sleep pretty soundly. I mean I don't hear the phone ring. nothing ...

WYN: Lori. that's not good.

LORI: I know. It's dangerous. I didn't even hear the smoke detector once. This guy had left a muffin in the oven in the apartment below me, and it had caught on fire, and the smoke detector went off, I mean this really loud noise, and I didn't even hear it. I had this strange feeling that someone was looking at me, and I woke up and this fireman was standing over me.

ESTHER: Was he cute?

LORI: Actually. yes. I was very embarrassed.

ESTHER: I'll have to try that.

LORI: Anyway, Buster might have been meowing his head off. I wouldn't have heard it.

WYN

Oh. that is terrible. What kind of cat is he?

LORI: A tabby.

WYN: Oh!

LORI: I rescued him from the A.S.P.C.A.

WYN: Good. I hate people who buy cats.

LORI: Oh. yes. So do I.

WYN: I bet that Beatrice is a store bought cat. That temptress.

LORI: It's my fault. I shouldn't let him prowl the neighborhood. like that. But I don't know ... He Just seems to enJoy it so. (*BONNIE enters.*)

WYN: Most men do.

BONNIE: Most men do what? Oh. come on, if it's about men. please, I want to hear it. Most men do what?

WYN: Enjoy sex.

ESTHER: Not my husband.

BONNIE: Can you blame him?

ESTHER: Fuck you. Bonnie. (*HEATHER: enters.*)

BONNIE: Most men enjoy sex. Wow. That is astonishing\_ And what other pearls of wisdom have we come up with here in Beautyland this morning? (*HEATHER: exits to the other side of the counter to let "the girls" have a little meeting.*)

LORI: Why are you late?

BONNIE: I wasn't late. HEATHER: and I have been here since nine fifteen. And since no one else was here. we figured we'd go up and look at the new fur display on five. (*to Esther*) You should see them, I've got to have one. We're thinking of standing in front of the store with a can and begging. "Please, Please, help a poor girl buy a fur..."

LORI: You could have started this list.

BONNIE: We did start it. And we finished it. Except for the mascara. We left those for Esther because only she knows which ones are used and which ones aren't.

LORI: Well... thank you.

BONNIE: Hey, somebody has to work around here. (*starting to go around the counter*) HEATHER: have you heard, most men enjoy sex?

ESTHER: Why, tell her. She's probably been fucked more times-

HEATHER: (*entering*) Lori. may I speak to you for a minute? (*Lori goes over to her.*) Go right ahead. Esther. I believe you were talking about my sex life. (*to Lori*) Now. I didn't want to move them without your permission, because I know how much time you spent the other day making that cute little display. But, frankly, I thought we should feature Narcissus on each end of the Fifth Avenue side of the counter. That is the high traffic area, after all, is it not?

LORI: Yes. usually.

HEATHER: And if they walk by and see it there. and then walk a little and see it again. Then we will have hit them with it not once. but twice. You see? And over here. well- let's face it, this is the dead side of the counter. I mean this is for overflow. Skin care products, the older colors. Not for the Christmassy items like Narcissus. Don't you think?

LORI: True ...

HEATHER: Of course it's true. So I moved them and stacked them a little differently. More elegantly. Come, take a look. Tell me what you think. Maybe you could help me. (*They exit together.*)

BONNIE: Hello. How are you today?

WYN: Fine, you?

BONNIE: As good as can be expected. On four hours of sleep. It was Tequila Night at HEATHER's boyfriend's bar.

HEATHER:: (*From the other side*) He is not my boyfriend. I wish you would quit saying that.

BONNIE: Well, he is a boy and you certainly did get friendly-

HEATHER:: (*Coming back*) That does not make him my boyfriend.

BONNIE: Not yet, at least.

HEATHER:: Not ever. And I've told him that. Many times.

BONNIE: Well, I think you're crazy. He's amazing looking.

HEATHER:: He's okay.

BONNIE; Okay? I'm telling you this guy is perfection.

HEATHER:: Yes. but looks are not everything.

BONNIE: No, but they certainly help.

HEATHER:: Don't be so trite. There are a lot of good-looking men in the world-

BONNIE: Yes. but how many of them are straight?

HEATHER:: He's a bartender.

ESTHER: What's wrong with that?

BONNIE: He makes a great margarita.

HEATHER:: If you think his margaritas are great ••.

BONNIE: Don't, that's not fair ...

HEATHER:: I can do better than Sid. that's all that I'm saying. Much better. I think he's sweet, and lord knows he can be fun, but he's Just for now, okay?

BONNIE: Okay ...

HEATHER:: Look. you invest a little money in the wrong stock. and all you lose is a little money. You invest in the wrong man, and you lose a part of your life. Sometimes a big part. My mother did that with my father, and I am not about to. I know what I want and it is not Sid. And I also know that it is only a matter of time before I do get it. So, I'll be patient. But when I do, you can kiss this Job goodbye, I assure you.

WYN: We've come a long way baby... (*Esther laughs.*)

HEATHER:: I beg your pardon?



WYN: Oh, nothing. I was just admiring your confidence. You make it seem so easy to meet men. To listen to you-it's a-"seller's market." Now, my poor friends, they are always moaning Just the opposite.

HEATHER:: Really. Well. I can only speak for myself ... Those are lovely earrings.

WYN: Thank you.

HEATHER:: But when it comes to men. Wyn- Ha! When-Men- Wyn I'm a poet and I didn't even know it. Hello Esther.

ESTHER: Hi.

HEATHER: (*Lori enters.*) What would rhyme with Esther?

BONNIE Esther, the cause of many sores to fester.

WYN: Oh, that's gross.

ESTHER: What rhymes with Dick-Brain?

LORI: Well. aren't we all being creative this morning\_ Esther, straighten out the charge receipts on the other side will you? They're a mess.

ESTHER: My pleasure. (*She leaves.*)

LORI: And Heather,I hope you don't mind, but I took the liberty of taking down your display and putting it back the way I had it originally. It was taking up entirely too much counter space, and I think you'll agree with me ,that it is much more eye-catching the way it is now. Why don't you go and take a look, if you want? (*HEATHER shoots a look at Bonnie and they both exit.*) I just love reliving Mutiny on the Bounty every morning...

WYN: It does feel a bit like being surrounded by sharks..

LORI: I warned you ...

WYN: I know... I'm glad Buster is okay.

LORI: So am I. Are you okay? You look a little tired.

WYN: I'm okay... I just been having a little trouble sleeping myself. I've been having the weirdest dreams lately.

LORI: Really, what about?

WYN: Well. normally I dream about fun things. like Ancient Egypt. or Persia, you know ,that sort of thing-

LORI: Okay...

WYN: What?

LORI: Nothing. I'm just lucky. if I dream about Harrison Ford and you're dreaming about-

WYN: Nefertiti. I know. It's great. I love to sleep. Normally. But lately. I've been having this dream--Did you ever play that game- it was a board with a maze on it. And you roll this metal ball through the maze, and if you tilt it the ball would go one way, and if you tilt it again, the ball would go another-

LORI: And you try to make the ball fall into the hole at the end.

WYN: That's right. Well, lately, I've been having this dream-

LORI: The same dream over and over?

WYN: Yes. Not always. But more than a few times.

LORI: A reoccurring dream. Oh, I hate those. My therapist says they definitely mean something. I have one about marrying Jerry Lewis. Go on.

WYN: Well, in this dream, I'm in a maze. This huge maze.

LORI: Like the garden in "The Shining?"

WYN: Yes, only not a garden. All the walls are this shiny metal. Like stainless steel. And every time I think I have it figured out, the walls change. Every turn is different and nothing is the same. Or the walls get hot. Unbearably hot.

LORI: Hot, how?

WYN: I don't know. The floor Just gets so hot you can't stand still.

LORI: Oohh ...

WYN: And once, every time I made a wrong turn. you know. I got to a dead end I'd feel this vibration. My whole body would start to shake. Like when they drill your teeth at the dentists, only through my whole body shaking. It was like a loud ringing, a siren, inside your head-

LORI: God, wake me up ...

WYN: It was incredibly painful.

BONNIE: (*entering*) Lori?

WYN: Speaking of painful...

BONNIE: May I talk to you a minute?

LORI: It's almost ten, Bonnie, can't it wait.

BONNIE: It will only take a minute.

WYN: I guess I should go and help Esther.

BONNIE: Didn't r ask you not to schedule me any more shifts with her after Saturday?

LORI: Bonnie-

BONNIE: Didn't I? Didn't I tell you that I did not want to work anywhere near Miss Out-for-blood?

LORI: Watch it, Bonnie.

BONNIE: Oh, that's right. We have to watch what we say because you're such good friends. Oh, oh, but don't let management hear about that-

LORI: Are you finished?

BONNIE: Because it's against the rules to hire friends, so we don't want them to know about that..

LORI: I said, are you finished? *(pause)* First of all, she's not a friend-

BONNIE: Oh-

LORI: We had a mutual friend.

BONNIE: Did you?

LORI: The man I lived with when I first came to New York. *(A look from Bonnie)* He was gay Bonnie. And he died a few months ago. And he and Wyn were very close. Very. I only know Wyn because of Sean, when she used to come over to the apartment. And he asked me to keep an eye on her, and to try to help her, so I did. And that is what I told personnel the other day when they asked me about it-and that is what I am telling you, now. And I do not feel that that is breaking any rules.

BONNIE: Karen asked me, you know, what I thought of her, so I told her. I don't go to her. She comes to me. *(She starts to leave.)*

LORI: I am not finished. *(Bonnie stops.)*

BONNIE: Sorry.

LORI: Okay, I'm going to try and forget that I've have already had a very upsetting morning-

BONNIE: Why did you have another bad date again?

LORI: And I'm am going to try and forget how many times you have tried to do my Job for me in the past two years, and what a little shit you can be when you want to be, and I am going to tell you this for the last time. I am the manager here. Whether you like it or not. And I make the schedules and I run this counter, and if you don't like it you can shake your --ruffled but-feathers right out of here and quit. Do you understand? I said do you understand? *(Bonnie Just smirks.)* What?

BONNIE: Nothing.

LORI: Do you understand?

BONNIE: More than you know.

LORI: Fine. (*pause*) Besides I couldn't split your shifts even if I wanted to, for my own peace of mind. We are understaffed as it is and no one has a day off except you and Esther. Until Christmas. So I suggest you just drop it.

BONNIE: I'd like to drop her.

LORI: Okay?

BONNIE: Then do me a favor, okay? Keep her on the other side of the counter just keep her away from me.

LORI: That I can do.

BONNIE: Or else she's going to end up stuffed into the main showcase with peacock feathers up her ass.

CORKY: (*A large man, thirty, the security guard. enters*) Five minutes ladies. Opening the doors in five minutes. Little too much to drink last night, Buns?

BONNIE: Not at all. I can still remember everything about him.

WYN: May I interrupt you for a minute-

CORKY: (*To Wyn*) Good morning. Five minutes. Five minutes. (*He leaves.*)

BONNIE: You're not interrupting. I've said everything I had to say.

WYN: Then may I say something? To both of you?

LORI: Wyn ...

WYN: If you don't mind.

BONNIE: Listen, sister-

WYN: From what I've heard you think I stole that sale from you and I just wanted to tell you if that is what you really think-

BONNIE: You bet it is.

WYN: Then I want you to have it. I want to give it to you. Right now. It's yours. I'm not really interested in winning any trip and I certainly wouldn't be able to enjoy it, even if I did. Under circumstances like these.

BONNIE: So, then you admit it?

WYN: Admit what?

BONNIE: That you stole it.

WYN: No. I am not admitting anything. I Just have no desire to cause any bad feelings.

BONNIE: Well, it's a little late for that.

LORI: I'm afraid it is. I've already sent in the sales report from Saturday. The company already has the tally sheets.

BONNIE: You could tell them there was a mistake.

LORI: Sure- It would make all our totals look very random then. The sale was clearly rung on -Mae's register key.

BONNIE: By mistake.

LORI: I think it's going to look like a pretty strange mistake. I mean wouldn't you have a hard time believing that somebody sold a hundred bottles of Narcissus during a sales contest ,a hundred bottles, and then rung it on somebody else's register key? By mistake?

BONNIE: Okay. fine. Then who cares. Let her have it then. It's obvious now that she stole them, or else she wouldn't feel so guilty, so who cares. I won't need them anyway. I'll sell five times that by Christmas. You watch. I wouldn't take them now, anyway. (She exits).

WYN: You know the frightening thing is I believe her.

LORI: About what?

WYN: She probably could sell five hundred bottles of that shit before Christmas. I feel sorry for anyone who walks by.

LORI: I cannot believe this day. and it hasn't even started yet.

WYN: Lori. do you want me to quit?

LORI: Quit?

WYN: So you won't have to fire me? Look at all the trouble I'm causing...

LORI: Don't be ridiculous.

WYN: Or so they won't fire you .. Why didn't you tell me?

LORI: Tell you what?

WYN: That you were up for review. That between now and Christmas that you are on trial.

LORI: That I'm being evaluated, not on trial.

WYN: Well. that's what it sounds like to me. One week to prove your worth... It's terrible. After two years.

LORI: It's what they do. To everyone. Who told you?

WYN: Esther. I had to drag it out of her.

LORI: I'll bet.

WYN: If I had known that, I wouldn't have let you hire me. It's hardly the time to be betting on the long shots.

LORI: Stop it. You needed a job. didn't you?

WYN: Very badly, yes. But I do not want to be the reason you lose yours.

LORI: Why. do you know something I don't?

WYN: No, of course not.

LORI: So then stop talking as though it's true. I'm not going anywhere. *(Pause)* Except maybe unemployment. So, what. I've been there before. It's been a long time, but I have been there. There was a time when they even knew me by name.

WYN: I am trying, you know that don't you. I am trying to do a good job.

*(Corky enters)*

LORI: I know that. I see that.

CORKY: Hey.

LORI: I know. Five minutes.

CORKY: Exactly. Listen, Lori if you don't mind, let me set the record straight, okay? Because from what I hear Big Bad Bonnie's all bent out of shape over what happened yesterday. And see, it's all because she thinks I'm spending too much time here with old Pooh-bear- You like that "Pooh-bear" you know like "Winnie the Pooh?" Cute, huh? Anyway, I was here Saturday when all the excitement broke out, so let me set the record straight. Once and for all. For the new gal in town.

LORI: Corky-

CORKY: See we were over right about here *(He illustrates.)* Bonnie and I, discussing our lack of a romantic future. For about the eight hundredth time. And Bonnie was giving me the "what about this ...." and the "what about that ...." The "what about all our plans?" You know, almost begging. Which- well, you know Bonnie. Bonnie begging is not a pretty sight. And this poor customer is standing right about where you are now, right." And she's going "Excuse me, excuse me?" She's an okay looking lady, corporate type. Probably a real ball buster. And Bonnie turns to her, very agitated and says "I'll be right with you--Miss! I'm busy." So I say: "maybe we should discuss this later and she says: "Oh, no. Oh, no you don't. *(Lori tries to interrupt)* So, we're arguing, right? And the woman's being ignored. And next

thing I know Winnie's saying: "I'm sorry what did you say?" And Bonnie and I turn around because we think she's talking to us. And the woman says: "I'll take 100 bottles." And Bonnie says: "100 bottles of what?" And the woman says 100 bottles of your perfume. Narcissus. And you should have seen Bonnie's face. It was great. She turned as pink as her blouse. 100 bottles of what? It was hysterical... Anyway, I just wanted to set the record straight for Pooh-bear here. She was Just an innocent victim of circumstance.

LORI: Well, thank you Corky. But I think I already knew that.

CORKY: Ssh. Don't say that. I'm trying to make her feel guilty enough to have dinner with me... (*Bonnie enters with a ribbon and crosses to get a pair of scissors. Sees Corky and stops.*) Well, speak of the devil. (*Bonnie doesn't say anything.*) She's mad at me too, aren't you Buns? Aren't you? Well, you know what they say "If looks could kill... Lori, she's dangerous you shouldn't leave scissors like that lying around. They could be very dangerous in the wrong hands. (*Bonnie hold the ribbon in front of her as if it were "her penis" and cuts it in half.*)

CORKY: And don't think she hasn't tried it. (*He leaves. Bonnie looks at Wyn and exits.*)

WYN: God. this whole thing is just so silly... All of it. I mean I could care less about any of this. I don't want to go out with him. And the last thing I need is a trip, to club Mate or where-ever-the hell it is. I Just took a little trip. I Just had a nice little vacation from reality. I mean who needs Club Med when you've been to Club Bellevue...

LORI: Stop it...

WYN: God. all this competitiveness. I hate it. I always have. The whole world works that way. In high school I used to be terrible at all the games. You know like softball or basketball. I wasn't a bad player, I just never had that killer instinct. That need to be win. I mean who cares, I just wanted to have fun. (*She laughs*) No wonder they used to choose me near the end. I bet Bonnie was the captain of every team.

LORI: The worst part is how good she always manages to make herself look. Even as she is stabbing you in the back, she always manages to come off smelling like a rose.

WYN: Where do people like her come from?

LORI: Who knows.

WYN: They must breed them somewhere. In some swamp... Lori? I Just don't know what to do. I mean, maybe I'm Just way in over my head here.

LORI: This job, you mean?

WYN: Yes. I mean I'm not exactly the picture of stability, right now. You know that. You know what a big deal it's been for me to even go out of the house-

LORI: I know.

WYN: And it's not because of Sean. I don't mean to make it sound like that's the only reason, because it's not-

LORI: Yes. but it does have a lot to do with it.

WYN: Yes. and no. I mean yes. of course, it does have something to do with it, but this isn't something new. Believe me. This is hardly something new. I have always had a hard time trying to "fit in." Always. I used to spend hours in the backyard playing with imaginary fairies and elves, instead of real people. For years my best friend growing up was this lawn ornament we had, made out of cement. This cement dwarf, but to me he was "Grodin," king of the Outerworld. You know, Sean was the first real friend that I ever had, the first real human being that I spent time with. Besides my parents. And we can hardly count them. Even if they wanted to be. And I was almost thirteen when I met him. It wasn't that there weren't other kids in the neighborhood, there were. He was Just the first person- that I ever trusted. Who didn't make me feel like I was a freak or something. *(She laughs to herself.)* He used to try to scare me- You remember what a morbid sense of humor he had-

LORI: Oh, yes ...

WYN: Well , I used to go on about how lucky I was- and God, was it ever true how lucky I was that he was my first friend. My first "real" friend. And he used to tease me- "Well" Buddy-" that's what he used to call me in that southern twang he had- "well, Buddy, maybe I'm not "real" either... And he gives me that little devilish smile, remember? *(Lori nods.)* So, I guess what I'm trying to say is... About the last thing I need right now is someone telling me how wrong I am. Making me feel like what I'm doing is wrong. I mean I can't have that, I just can't. Do you understand?

LORI: Sure.

WYN: I am trying to make this work, Lori. This job. I mean. With all my heart. I want it to work.

LORI: I know that. I know you are. Look. I know you're upset, but I think we should Just try and forget about all this, okay? We have a lot of work to do.

WYN: I'm sorry. You're right.

LORI: I know you didn't do anything wrong. Bonnie is Just one of those people... that are very greedy. And my nanna used to say "Lord" knows the world has always been full of them." I mean let's face it, dangle a carrot in front of most of us, and look out...

WYN: Not a very highly evolved species, are we... *(The lights start to fade. They are ticketing some boxes.)*

LORI: Nope. Not very... But that's life-

WYN: That's life... In the real world.

LORI: In the "real" world" yes.

WYN: See. in my world, Grodin would hold a contest. for all the greedy people, like Bonnie. And the winner would be promised all the food and drink, she could eat for the rest of her life. Hers for the taking. And it would be a race of some kind, or a game, very competitive. And just as it was over, and of course the Bonnie's would win- Poof! They would be turned into a cockroach. And Grodin would say: "Now, go" all the world's yours for the taking... And he would watch them scurry off, and he would just laugh... *(The lights have faded to black.)*

**End of Scene One**



## Scene Two

The same day about eight thirty. The store is almost empty and will close in a half hour. It has been a very busy day. Esther and Wyn are sitting cutting ribbons to make bows for the next few days. They are singing "On The First Day Of Christmas."

ESTHER: On the fourth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me-

WYN: Four calling birds,

ESTHER: Three French hens,

WYN: Two turtle doves,

ESTHER and WYN: And a partridge in a pear tree.

WYN: On the fifth day of Christmas. my true love gave to me,

ESTHER and WYN: Five golden rings.

ESTHER: See, now you're talking. This is where this song starts to make sense

WYN: Four calling birds,

ESTHER: (You can have them) Three French hens, (French hens, no thank you)

WYN: Two turtle doves,

ESTHER: (Enough with the birds already)

ESTHER and WYN: And a partridge in a pear tree.

ESTHER: I mean who wrote this song, Noah? These are not presents... And look what comes next. six geese-a-laying? Forget it. Keep your geese-a-laying. Six Louis Vuitton handbags,

ESTHER and WYN: Five golden rings.

LORI: (*entering*) What's going on over here?

WYN: We're singing.

LORI: I hear.

ESTHER: Four what? Four Kamali dresses.

LORI: (*Joking*) Stop this. Stop this at once.

ESTHER: Three pairs of pumps, two diamond earrings,

LORI: This is work. Stop having a good time.

WYN: Bah Humbug!

ESTHER: And a trip to Acapulco. Now, we're talking true love...

LORI: I can't leave you two alone for a second.

ESTHER: We're Just trying to get Wyn into the Christmas spirit.

WYN: Me.

ESTHER: Yes. She said she hated Christmas.

WYN: No, I didn't.

ESTHER: Yes, she did. She said it was a bother.

WYN: Well, it is. All the pressure. What to buy everybody. Where to get the money. How much to spend.

LORI: And you're calling me Scrooge?

WYN: But I like the ornaments. And the carols.

ESTHER: So we were singing.

LORI: These look nice, Esther.

ESTHER: Thanks, I'm famous for my bows.

WYN: See, she taught me.

LORI: Yes, I see.

WYN: Why, are they terrible?

LORI: No ,no. Not at all.

ESTHER: Do you know you can count on one hand the list of things this girl likes.

WYN: That's not true...

ESTHER: Mexican food. Aretha Franklin...

LORI: Mexican food and Aretha Franklin?

ESTHER: Look, trust me it's not easy. She hates magazines-

WYN: Because they're stupid, most of them. How to firm your thighs, what to wear this fall, who's sleeping with Who. Who cares. I like the National Geographic-

ESTHER: She hates television-

WYN: No-

ESTHER: Except for the animal shows. The documentaries on flying bats, and sea turtles, that sort of thing. She hates Christmas.

LORI: I don't like Christmas either.

ESTHER: Oh, not you, too...

LORI: It was wonderful when I was little, but who in their right mind can work in retail and like Christmas. It's a nightmare.

ESTHER: I do. I like the commissions.

LORI: True. Speaking of commissions. Bonnie is on cloud nine. She sold 26 bottles of Narcissus today.

ESTHER: Twenty Six? Really?

WYN: Oh, thank God...

LORI: Which really impressed Heather. She's now taken it upon herself to teach Bonnie the finer points of demonstrating.

ESTHER: Do you think it was a record? I mean for the whole counter?

LORI: We'll know soon enough.

ESTHER: It certainly felt like it. At least for a Monday.

WYN: That would be wonderful. wouldn't it?

ESTHER: What time is it anyway?

LORI: Eight twenty five.

ESTHER: God, I hate this last hour. It takes forever. It's like somebody flips a switch and all the clocks stop. And everyone disappears. Look- We were packed all day and at eight o'clock, poof, nobody. There must be a curfew or something.

LORI: I like it. It gives me a chance to catch up. And you a chance to finish those bows.

ESTHER: Relax, I was Just shaking ou- my cutting hand.

LORI: You know what else I hate about Christmas. Going home and having my mother asking me if I am ever going to get married. There hasn't been a Christmas since I was twenty, or a New Years, or a birthday, that she hasn't find some way to bring it up. "So, have you met any nice fellas in that store of yours lately." Or "what ever happened to that one boy, that nice one that you were seeing... I'm telling you, it's a mission with her. To make sure I'm married before she dies. Is your mom like that? Every time you go home?"

WYN: Sure. Every time I go home, and every time she comes here, and every time she calls. Probably every time she writes too, but I stopped reading her letters...

LORI: God. I hate that. don't you?

WYN: Oh, don't get me started on the subject of marriage. Please.

ESTHER: Oh. and what's wrong with marriage? You don't like that either? Of course not. I suppose that's too what, what was the word you used earlier-

WYN: Commercial.

ESTHER: Too commercial for you, huh?

LORI: I had a friend who Just got married who spent over forty thousand dollars on her wedding.

ESTHER: And I bet it was beautiful.

LORI: Well. I guess it was. But it seemed a little extravagant to me.

WYN: It's obscene. *(Pause)* Well. it is. To spend that much money on something so unnecessary.

ESTHER: Unnecessary? Unnecessary to who? *(Wyn tries not to respond.)* To who? You know what your problem is? You forgotten how to have fun. You think too much. Unnecessary? Who cares? It's a celebration. A party. What's wrong with that? Is it wrong for people to want to celebrate, is having fun unnecessary?

WYN: Look, I'm sorry. I was Just being opinionated. You're right. I don't think it's wrong for people to want to celebrate, I don't-

ESTHER: Oh , as long as they do it on a budget.

WYN: You know what I really don't like about marriage?

ESTHER: Uh , oh...

WYN: It's not the ceremony, although. yes, I think it's pretty silly, but you know what I really hate? That in our society marriage equals success. Without it, you have failed as an adult. Somehow. Women- and men, if they get to be thirty and they are still single, look out. They are talked about like oddities.

LORI: Amen.

WYN: Everyone feels sorry for them. Their parents and friends wonder what's wrong with them.

LORI: It's true. My mother once asked me why I thought men didn't like me. Why men didn't like me, not why I haven't found a man I liked.

WYN: Let's face it. some things never change.

LORI: If you're over thirty-and single, you're on the way to being an old maid.

WYN: Watch it. I'm thirty-one.

LORI: You're thirty-one?

WYN: Yes. Why. am I suddenly more pathetic or something?

LORI: No, I Just always thought. you were my age, you know twenty-nine.

WYN: No, I'm well into spinsterhood. I should be worried about it, I know. I try... But it just seems so silly. If marriage is so important and so precious, why do over half of them last fewer than five years. Over half. Seems like a pretty risky way of investing forty thousand dollars to me... *(Lori goes to the other side of the counter to find some paperwork.)*

ESTHER: Sal and I have been married eight years, we were high school sweethearts. And we had a gorgeous wedding, at the Botanical Gardens, in May. It was very romantic. People still talk about it. And we are still very happy.

WYN: Good. And I wish you nothing but happiness. Honestly. But that's your happiness. And mine is different. And what bothers me is that we don't seem to live in a world that takes that into account. That some people are different.

ESTHER: Why. you don't want a husband?

WYN: No.

ESTHER: Ever?

WYN: I don't see any reason for it, no.

ESTHER: What about babies. To have children.

WYN: You mean to propagate? Is that why you got married?

ESTHER: No, of course not. But I do want to have children. I do want to propagate.

WYN: And if I don't?

ESTHER: Then. I don't know. Then don't. And don't get married.

WYN: But then I'm a freak. right? In your eyes. I'm strange.

ESTHER: Well, you aren't exactly normal.

BONNIE: *(from around the corner)* I'm glad somebody else finally said it.

WYN: And what is so horrible about that. Not being normal? What? Would I be more acceptable, more likable, if I had a husband who watches football, and says "bring me another beer, would you Hon.?" And my two children Becky and Skipper, and my favorite soap opera, and a washer and dryer? Well, that isn't

my idea of happiness, it never has been. And I resent being labeled strange because of it. (*Exits around the counter, to the other side.*)

BONNIE: (*coming around, passing her*) Becky and Skipper?

ESTHER: Her kids.

BONNIE: She's got kids? (*Heather has followed.*)

ESTHER: No. she doesn't want to have any.

BONNIE: What did I tell you?

HEATHER: Bonnie, thinks she's gay.

ESTHER: Who knows. It certainly would make sense. Whatever she is she certainly isn't normal. She doesn't believe in marriage, either.

BONNIE: Careful, Esther, she's going to ask you out.

HEATHER: I just read an article. In this month's Vogue. I think. That said a lot of girls in the sixties and seventies were against marriage. But that weddings are making a big comeback. Most people are saying: "why not? It's fun"

ESTHER: Exactly. God. what's wrong with having a little fun.

BONNIE: Don't ask me. It's what I live for. I'm the original pleasure seeker. I would have been a great hippie.

HEATHER: Not me. I'm glad I was a toddler in the sixties. I wouldn't have lasted five minutes.

ESTHER: You had to have straight hair. Long straight hair.

HEATHER: And you had to pretend to care about so many hopeless things. I mean really. Let's get real. Grow up. The world just doesn't work that way. Try telling Yasir Arafat that all he needs is love. And to give peace a chance. The whole thing was just an excuse to avoid life and get high a lot.

BONNIE: Sounds okay to me.

HEATHER: Stop it. Now, where were we?

BONNIE: Oh, Esther was going to help us out. Esther?

ESTHER: What?

BONNIE: Heather is trying to teach me "the approach" So would you be a customer for me?

ESTHER: Be a customer. Okay. What do you want me to do?

BONNIE: Just walk by me. (*She does.*) Excuse me? (*Esther keeps walking.*) Esther.  
Esther.

ESTHER: What?

BONNIE: You can't Just walk by me. You can't Just ignore me.

ESTHER: Why not? That's what I always do...

BONNIE: Yes, but-

HEATHER: Actually. that was good because ninety five percent of the people are going to do that. Most of them are going to try and ignore you. So you have to learn to pick out the right marks. Or you'll go crazy. You'll be like all those other girls desperately lunging at anybody after five minutes. Wrong! The key is selection. Wait for the right marks. Learn to pick them out. The browsers. The sharp dressers, the elegant ladies, not the dowdy wives on their way to the men's department to return their husband's underwear. Okay, now Esther you be a woman browsing. A woman who is very interested in cosmetics-

ESTHER: Shouldn't be hard for me.

HEATHER: Who is looking for Just that special kind of new fragrance.

BONNIE: Excuse me?

ESTHER: Yes?

BONNIE: May I interest you in our newest fragrance? Narcissus?

ESTHER: Did you say new fragrance.

BONNIE: Yes.

ESTHER: Well. I really don't have very much time.

BONNIE: But you've probably never smelt anything quite like it before.

ESTHER: Smelt?

BONNIE: What perfume do you normally wear?

HEATHER: Fragrance.

BONNIE: Fragrance. What fragrance do you normally wear?

HEATHER: Good, engage her in a conversation.

BONNIE: I am.

HEATHER: I know, it's good.

BONNIE: I mean your everyday fragrance?

ESTHER: Everyday?

BONNIE: Yes.

ESTHER: I wear Chanel. Chanel number five.

BONNIE: Oh. Well, certainly a lot of women agree with you. It's a very popular fragrance. Almost every other girl you meet wears it. But wouldn't it be nice to excite a room when you walk in, rather than blend in with everyone else?

ESTHER: Excite a room?

BONNIE: Yes- Was that bad?

HEATHER: No, not at all. But you're forgetting something.

BONNIE: What?

HEATHER: You don't know, do you?

BONNIE: No, what?

HEATHER: It's only the first thing I told you to do. The one thing you're supposed to never forget. The key to any demonstration?

BONNIE: Oh, spray the stuff-

HEATHER: Right. Let the product do the talking for you.

BONNIE: Okay. Okay. I remember. Here, let me show you. *(She sprays the perfume.)*

ESTHER: Oh, you're right. That's marvelous. I'll take a hundred bottles please.

BONNIE: Funny, Esther. *(Spraying it on her)* Very funny.

ESTHER: Oh, stop. Stop.

HEATHER: So, do you think you're ready to try it on the real thing?

BONNIE: Sure. But where? There's no one in here.

HEATHER: Sure, there is. Look over by Lancôme. Come on. We'll hide and wait.

BONNIE: *(like the Wicked Witch)* I'll get you, my pretty!!!

CORKY: Where are they going?

ESTHER: Off to brand another unsuspecting browser with our new perfume. Excuse me, fragrance. You know- *(She stops herself.)*

CORKY: What?

ESTHER: Oh, nothing.



CORKY: You okay?

ESTHER: You know, sometimes- I don't know. Sometimes I Just wonder if this all isn't a big scam. I mean, what do we do here all day. I mean, what difference does it really make? In the great scheme of things who really cares about exfoliating creme? Or revitalizing lotion ...

CORKY: Sounds to me like you've had a long day.

ESTHER: Maybe.

CORKY: And I don't know about exfoliation or revitalizing creme, but it seems to me a lot of woman buy this stuff because it makes them feel good. And if it makes them feel good, then why not? Right? This is the feel good business here, and there is nothing wrong with that. Not to mention what it does for us guys. No, I'm serious. We are greatly indebted to you. You provide an important service, and we should thank you for it. Because there is not a single girl that I know of, not one, who does not look a little better with some makeup, right? And there is nothing, I mean nothing, like a girl all dolled up, her hair fixed, a nice slinky dress, some red lipstick. Her cheeks all smooth, and smelling nice... Mmmn! Forget it. It's fucking heaven on earth, I'm telling you. So, if for nothing else but us guys-

ESTHER: Okay-

CORKY: If only for us, it's a good thing you're here every day.

ESTHER: I'm sorry I asked.

CORKY: Because it's woman like you who make this imperfect world of ours, a nicer place to live.

ESTHER: Thank you, Corky. You've made me feel Just a whole lot better...

CORKY: Hey, don't mention it. Uh. you didn't by any chance get a second to give-

ESTHER: Oh, no. Damn! I forgot. I put it here, and I forgot all about it. I'm sorry.

CORKY: No problem, I figured you were busy.

ESTHER: No, it's my fault.

CORKY: You know, it's funny, Esther. r must be losing my charm. I don't think she likes me very much.

ESTHER: Here, I'll give it to her.

CORKY: Oh, well... The one good thing about this place, there's always some new blood...

ESTHER: Wyn! Wyn!

WYN: *(Coming around the counter with Lori. who waits by the side to keep an eye out for customers.)*  
Yes?

ESTHER: Corky. brought this by for you while you were out for lunch and I forgot to give it to you. I'm sorry, we just got kind of busy.

WYN: That's okay. Thank you.

ESTHER: Sorry about that.

WYN: It's okay. Esther? I'm sorry if I got a little bitchy a few minutes ago-

ESTHER: When?

WYN: You know-

ESTHER: Listen. we've all had a long day, and we're all pretty tired.

WYN: I know. I Just hope I didn't upset you.

ESTHER: You didn't. Uh ,I hope I didn't upset you any either.

WYN: You didn't.

CORKY: Good. So then we can all kiss and make up and get back to work. right?

LORI: For once I agree with you. Corky. *(She sees a customer)* There are still plenty of bows to be made. *(She is gone.)*

CORKY: So do you like it? It's a Pooh-bear?

WYN: Pooh-bear?

ESTHER: You know. like in Winnie the Pooh. Get it Winnie. the Pooh?

WYN: Oh. yes. Well. thank you. It's very cute. But I'm afraid I can't accept it.

CORKY: Why not?

WYN: Really-

CORKY: It's a gift.

WYN: I understand. But I-Just can't accept it.

CORKY: Why?

WYN: Look- I'm sorry I can never remember your name-

CORKY:  
Oh, great...

WYN: Corky. Anyway, Corky. look I'm sorry but I have never been good at accepting presents. It embarrasses me. When people spend money on me.

CORKY: Why, it's not enough?

WYN: No-

CORKY: I thought it was the thought that counts.

WYN: It is-

CORKY: Well, I've had lots of thoughts, believe me. Very nice ones...

WYN: Have you.

CORKY: Yes. I'm really not a horrible person, you know. I Just like to do nice things for people. (*He offers the bear to her.*) If it's the money, forget about it-

WYN: It's not Just the money-

CORKY: So, then take it. (*She doesn't.*) Look, I'm the kind of guy that enjoys doing things for other people. Isn't that right Esther? Esther?

ESTHER: What ?

CORKY: That I like to do nice things for people? Like the time you needed a birthday present for your husband, and I knew you were hurting for cash, so I picked her out the nicest wallet in the store. The leather felt like butter, didn't it Esther? See, Pooh-bear, my job here is to watch over things, so by the same token, if my friends need a favor, they know who to come to. Understand?

WYN: No. I'm sorry I don't.

CORKY: It's like Robin Hood, you remember Robin Hood?

WYN: Yes.

CORKY: You take a little from the rich and you give to the poor. You and me. And what the store doesn't know, can't hurt them. Besides they're insured, so everybody comes out even. Right? Everybody's happy.

WYN: And you do that?

CORKY: Sure.

WYN: You take things?

CORKY: Not take. Give. I give them. To my friends.

WYN: I don't believe this.

CORKY: Hey, ask Heather: where she got her earrings, or ask Bonnie where she got that nice snake pin-

ESTHER: Or, her stereo.

CORKY: Or, her stereo. She told you about that?

ESTHER: No I guessed.

CORKY: Yes, well she wanted it and I don't know sometimes you do stupid things. Love is blind, what can I say... So, see, I'm not such a bad guy. I Just like to see my friends happy. *(A woman in her early sixties enters, very flustered and a little out of breath. She is wearing a pant suit about ten years out of date, thick eyeglasses, and is wiping her arm as if to remove something unpleasant.)*

HELEN: Excuse me, May I trouble you for one of those tissues?

ESTHER: Sure. help yourself. Are you looking for anything in particular?

HELEN: Oh. no. NO! I'm sorry. I was just trying to catch my breath.

WYN: Hello.

HELEN: Hello..

WYN: You don't remember me, do you?

HELEN: Remember you?

WYN: Yes.

HELEN: Remember you. Well, now. Remember you. Yes.. Yes... We have met before, then?

WYN: Briefly, yes.

HELEN: Briefly. Briefly... I was afraid of that. It wasn't in Europe, was it?

WYN: *(Laughing)* No ...

HELEN: Kenya?

CORKY: Kenya?

WYN: No, this morning.

HELEN: This morning.

CORKY: Well that's rules out Kenya.

WYN: On the subway.

HELEN: Oh. yes. of course. The subway.

CORKY: Well. you were close.

HELEN: Of course. My knight in shining armor. This pretty young thing saved me from a most certain fate. Being trampled alive on the I.R.T.

ESTHER: I heard.

HELEN: Briefcased to death by some banker. Oh, it's so nice to see you again.

WYN: It's nice to see you.

HELEN: That was this morning? It feels like days ago already-

WYN: It certainly does...

HELEN: I'm sorry. I've forgotten your name.

WYN: Elowyn.

HELEN: Elowyn. What a pretty name.

WYN: Thank you.

HELEN: I'm Helen. Helen Alviss.

CORKY: Well, I certainly don't want to interrupt this tearful reunion-

WYN: I'm sorry.

CORKY: That's okay. I'll come back later. I'm sure there is some twelve year old up in toys, trying to pocket a transformers. (*He leaves.*)

WYN: Isn't that funny, Esther. This is the woman I told you about.

ESTHER: From the subway. I see that. It's a small world... She isn't the one that bought all the perfume, though, is she? The hundred bottles?

HELEN: Perfume?

WYN: It's a long story. No, Esther. She's not.

ESTHER: Because for a minute there I was going to say: "Hang on, sister. I saw her first."

HELEN: That woman has covered me with the most horrible stench.

WYN: Who?

ESTHER: (*sniffing*) That's our stuff. That's Narcissus.

HELEN: She walked up to me and Just sprayed it all over me. Without even asking. It's awful...

WYN: I know. I don't care for it much, either.

HELEN: Do you work here?

WYN: Yes.

HELEN: Isn't that strange.

WYN: I know. Some coincidence, huh?

HELEN: No. that you would be working in a place like this. It doesn't seem like you. How long have you worked here?

WYN: Four days. Why?

HELEN: Four days. Well. That explains it...

WYN: Explains what"?

HELEN: Explains why you are working at a job that is wrong for you. You have to leave.

ESTHER: She must be a friend of Bonnie's

HELEN: Bonnie. Who's Bonnie?

WYN: One of the girls who works here.

HELEN: Not the one who sprayed me with that awful--what was it?

WYN: Narcissus.

HELEN: Hah. yes well at least we're finally being honest about it. Ooh. With her Cheshire smile, and her contrite voice- she just walked up to me and sprayed it all over me. Without even asking. Try this, sprish, sprish. I couldn't stand it.

WYN: Helen. here sit down.

HELEN: No, I can't. I shouldn't even be in here. My sister would kill me. I told her I was going for a yogurt.

ESTHER: Wyn... *(She makes the sign for a crazy person.)*

HELEN: See. my sister Louise and I. we both work for this cause "Beauty without Cruelty."

WYN: Beauty without Cruelty?

HELEN: Yes. And we believe-

ESTHER: That you don't have to kill yourself to look great?

HELEN: That you don't have to kill anything to look great. Especially not hundreds of innocent animals.

ESTHER: Oh, she's one of the animal rights people...

HELEN: Yes. Be careful. we're vicious...

ESTHER: I thought it was against your religion or something. to come in here. Like walking into the "Valley of Death ...

WYN: Esther-

ESTHER: It's true. Haven't you heard them outside. "Don't go in there." "Stop, don't buy from murderers." That's us. Sacco and Vanzetti.

HELEN: We do feel that this store sells products that are wrong, yes... But actually, that is why I came in here. To recruit some girls for our store.

WYN: Your store?

HELEN: Yes. My sister and I are opening a store of our own, downtown. Just a little place. But we are going to specialize in products that aren't made from, or tested on animals. We're opening it next month. Only we're not really able to run it. I'm a photographer-

WYN: Really?

HELEN: Yes. And I travel a great deal. I shoot animals mostly.

ESTHER: Of course...

HELEN: Yes, but you know the ironic thing was I made a living for years. shooting animals all over the world-Africa, Asia, and everywhere I went~ during the day I would be trying to capture their beauty with a camera, and at night, I would sit down at a table to eat them. or wash myself in a product that had tortured them. It hardly seemed to make any sense. Lou, taught me, really. She's always been the smart one. She's a writer, a damn good one. It's her idea to open the shop, so "by God, we'll finally have a place to buy the stuff." That's what she always says...

WYN: Well, it certainly sounds like a good idea, don't you think Esther?

HELEN: So what we need are some girls to help us set up and run the place, because, Lord knows we don't know a thing about it. I'd be lost.

WYN: I know that feeling.

HELEN: And like I told Lou. I said: "What better place to find out girls than from the enemy ranks. Wouldn't that make our victory that much sweeter"?"

ESTHER: Victory?

HELEN: Yes. See, we know that our one little shop is hardly going to change the world, but you almost have to hope that it could. And that each person that we help, and that we try to make aware, really is a step, isn't it?

WYN: Sure ...

HELEN: Of course it is. All change starts somewhere, with each person doing what they can. And each day can save at least one animals life, or stop at least one animal from being tortured.

ESTHER: Okay, I can understand getting upset over some things, like fur coats. That makes sense. They're stupid. I mean, if you ask me you have to be an asshole to buy a fur coat-

HELEN: Well. I didn't say it you did-

ESTHER: Yes. and it's true. Anyone who could spend ten thousand dollars on a coat is an asshole.

WYN: Oh. why? I thought if it's fun, why not?

ESTHER: Yes. but we were talking about weddings. I think there is a little difference between having a nice wedding and buying a fur coat.

WYN: They both seem pretty wasteful to me...

ESTHER: Yes. but no animals are killed to make a wedding dress. are they? And the issue here is animals. Right?

HELEN: Yes ...

ESTHER: So. so what was I saying? Oh. yeah. so. okay. go get upset with the fur department, fine with me. But can't you leave us poor girls in cosmetics alone. Ours is a humble vocation- to make the world a little more beautiful than it already is. In three different kinds of light.

HELEN: Have you ever heard of the Draize test?

ESTHER: The what?

HELEN: The Draize 50 test? It was named after the doctor who invented it. It's used on almost every product you sell p to test the possibility of eye irritation or blindness. Here, here is a pamphlet describing how it is used. They call it the Draize "fifty" test because what it actually measures is the amount of perfume or mascara that it takes to blind or maim fifty percent of the rabbits that are tested. At least fifty percent have to fail. These are rabbits that have been tied down and whose eyes are held open and injected with concentrations of up to 200 per cent of a given substance, for as long as it takes, until at least half of them have been blinded. Von Egon, like almost all cosmetics companies uses the test on hundreds of products.

WYN: That is Just awful...

HELEN: And so unnecessary.

ESTHER: But they do it to make sure the stuff is safe.

HELEN: Tell that to the rabbits.

WYN: This Just doesn't make sense. I mean, how many of us are going to pour perfume in our eyes?

ESTHER: No, but what about mascara. eyeshadow, stuff like that?

WYN: But they must know by now which ingredients are harmful. and which aren't?



HELEN: Of course they do. But you see g that really isn't the issue. Because each time they come up with a new improved mascara, to try and boost their sales, they have to test it all over again. This is a very big business we are talking about, toxic testing. And up till now, there has been little competition. Here, this is a report that shows that the Draize test is actually no longer even economically effective. A group of considerate scientists, who thank god weren't satisfied with the status quo, have developed a test that cost hundreds of dollars less, using cell tissue, that is 90 something percent effective. Without harming a single animal.

WYN: So why aren't they using that?

HELEN: Actually. some of the companies are. Starting to use it. Starting... We've been protesting for years, asking them to stop for moral reasons, and finally because they might save a buck, they are starting to listen. God bless, capitalism.

WYN: This is horrible.

HELEN: And there are hundreds of other tests. Skin tests, force feedings. Confinement testing. Here's one test that a psychology lab at Harvard once ran. Psychology labs are famous for running ridiculous tests in the name of research. This is verbatim from a report:" At Harvard University, R. Soloman, L. Kamin, and L. Wynne tested the effects of electric shock on the behavior of dogs. They placed forty dogs in a device called a "shuttlebox" which consists of a box divided into two compartments, separated by a barrier. Initially the barrier was set at the height of the dog's back. Hundreds of intense electric shocks were delivered to the dog's feet through a grid floor. At first the dogs could escape the shock if they learned to jump the barrier into the other compartment. In an attempt to "discourage" one dog from jumping, the experimenters forced the dog to Jump into shock one hundred times. They said that as the dog Jumped, he gave a "sharp anticipatory yip which turned into a yelp when he landed on the electrified grid." They then blocked the passage between the compartments with a piece of plate glass and tested the same dog again. The dog "Jumped forward and smashed his head against the glass." Initially dogs showed symptoms such as "defecation, urination, yelping and shrieking, trembling, attacking the apparatus" and so on. But after ten or twelve days of trial dogs that were prevented from escaping shock, they ceased to resist. The experimenters reported themselves "impressed" by this, and concluded that a combination of the plate glass barrier and foot shock was "very effective" in eliminating Jumping by dogs."

WYN: Unbelievable...

HELEN: Don't I wish it was.

ESTHER: Okay, what you Just described, I think that's wrong, definitely, one hundred percent wrong. Those men are sickos. Nobody is being helped by stopping a dog from jumping. But what about all the tests that do help, help all of us, like for cancer research, things like that?

HELEN: Which, I will not argue need to continue.

ESTHER: Okay-

HELEN: Just not with animals as the victims of the testing...

ESTHER: Oh-

HELEN: Why? Is it any different to test a dog for Jumping than it is to test it for cancer? Do you. think the dog knows the difference? Do you think it cares? Do you think it is any less painful for the dog to die

a slow death from cancer than from electric shock? I wouldn't think so... See, the issue isn't why we test them, but "if" we should test them, if it is ever right to inflict pain. The issue is compassion. Because if you can Justify torturing an animal for cancer, then you can certainly justify torturing it for mascara.

BONNIE: (*Entering, very playfully*) Oh. I hate you! I hate this girl ... (*HEATHER: follows.*) Have you seen the new guy in Polo? The one who looks like Patrick Swayze? He's new, he's beautiful-

HEATHER: And he's mine.

BONNIE: I hate you. He's been here what two days, two days and she's already gotten him to ask her out. I hate you.

HEATHER: We're just going to a movie.

BONNIE: Yeah, right. (*Sees Helen*) Oh. Hello...

HELEN: (*Standing*) Hello...

BONNIE: Have you tried our new fragrance ...

HELEN: (*alarmed*) Yes, thank you.

BONNIE: What's with her?

WYN: Bonnie.

HEATHER: Have you actually tried it?

WYN: Bonnie! stop it.

BONNIE: What?

HELEN: You've already covered me with it once. Thank you very much.

BONNIE: Oh. and you didn't care for it?

HELEN: No, I didn't.

ESTHER: She's one of the animal people.

HEATHER: Animal people?

BONNIE: Oh...

ESTHER: From out front.

BONNIE: The ones who scream and yell at us? Call us criminals? Just because we need to pay the rent? One of those animal people?

WYN: Bonnie. please. She's a friend of mine.

BONNIE: Is she. Well... Any friend of Elowyn's is certainly a friend of mine.  
Here- *(She sprays the perfume.)*

HELEN: Stop that.

BONNIE: What? It's Just a little perfume. Our latest fragrance. *(She sprays it again.)* Allow me to demonstrate its lethal capabilities.

WYN: Bonnie!

BONNIE: Look. look at her go. Pretty spunky for an old lady. *(Wyn is coming around to try and stop her.)* Persistence... righ, Heather? The key is persistence... *(She pushes Wyn out of the way. And sprays it again. Helen flees.)* Maybe we should market this differently, it's a wonderful repellent. *(She runs off chasing Helen. A loud crash is heard offstage. Onstage if the budget can allow for it.)*

WYN: Oh. my god.

HEATHER: Bonnie?

ESTHER: Oh, shit!

LORI: *(coming around the counter)* What was that?

ESTHER: She fell into the display of mirrors. In the center aisle.

LORI: Who?

ESTHER: This woman. A customer. She was running away from Bonnie.

BONNIE: *(coming back)* Did you see that?

HEATHER: *(following)* Calm down

BONNIE: She's nuts. I'm telling you.

HEATHER: Bonnie-

BONNIE: She attacked me. You saw her.

HEATHER: Yes, now calm down. Let's see, if you're cut anywhere...

LORI: Esther, call security. Is she hurt?

HEATHER: I don't know there's a little blood on her blouse.

BONNIE: Oh, great. I'm probably bleeding to death.

HEATHER: Hold still. I don't think it's hers.

BONNIE: How did you die? I was attacked by a rabid old woman.

LORI: Okay, Heather, you stay with her. Where's Wyn.

BONNIE: Where's Wyn? She went chasing after her friend. Lizzie Borden. *(Lori leaves.)* Why didn't you warn me Esther? You saw her. Why didn't you warn me? That woman should be locked up.

HEATHER: Hold still! You have a scrape on your arm.

BONNIE: Great. *(Yelling)* Lock her up and throw away the key...

**BLACKOUT**

### SCENE THREE

*The store, a half hour later. It is now closed, and Bonnie and Heather are sitting waiting for something, Esther is sorting receipts. Bonnie has a small bandage on her forearm.*

BONNIE: I should sue. I should. I could have been killed. All that glass. I should say I can't work anymore. That it has caused me irreparable harm. Ever since the accident I've become afraid of mirrors. I can't go anywhere near them, I can't even look at them.

ESTHER: You shouldn't...

BONNIE: Oh, listen to the pot calling the kettle black. Take away your mirror and it would be like taking away your oxygen. There was a woman from Jersey, Just the other day, who worked in a Fotomat or somewhere. She was attacked by customer and she won a couple a hundred thousand. That's what I should do.

HEATHER: Did Karen say anything about the damages.

BONNIE: No, but they weren't cheap. Thirty-nine bucks for a stupid little mirror.

ESTHER: Maintenance said there were only two that didn't crack. Two out of seventy. Who says they don't make them like they used to.

BONNIE: I mean who in their right mind would pay forty dollars for a mirror that says "who's the fairest of them all" on it.

HEATHER: I liked them. I thought they were cute.

ESTHER: Don't look at me... Apparently, a lot of people agree with her, because they were selling like hot cakes. I heard they sold over a hundred today. You're lucky she wasn't here earlier this morning.

HEATHER: Why? You aren't going to have to pay for them, are you?

BONNIE: Hell, no. I'm not going to pay for them. It wasn't my fault. The woman pushed at me. Besides they'll Just right it off anyway. On their insurance.

ESTHER: That's true. I once broke a display case-

BONNIE: How, sitting on it?

ESTHER: *(on a calculator)* Seventy minus two. that's sixty-eight. Sixty-eight times seven, that's 476 years of bad luck. I guess, that would make me a bitch too.

LORI: *(Entering)* Okay, thanks for waiting-

ESTHER: We did it. I "Z"-d out. It's a record.

LORI: Really? What were the totals?

ESTHER: Fifty thousand and twelve dollars and thirty seven cents.

LORI: Fifty thousand and twelve? Good lord...

HEATHER: Awesome!

ESTHER: And it's only a Monday.

LORI: Well, that's great. Where's Wyn?

ESTHER: She's still looking for her friend.

BONNIE: The Mascara Murderer...

LORI: They haven't found her yet?

BONNIE: I'm telling you, she's long gone. She's probably in Macy's by now. Slaughtering innocent salesgirls left and right.

ESTHER: Someone in furniture said they saw a woman in a green paint-suit, Just a little while ago. At least that's what Corky said.

BONNIE: Really?

ESTHER: Yes, He was on his way up there to check it out.

HEATHER: That doesn't make sense. Why would she still be in here?

BONNIE: Because she's a looney, that's why. I mean we are not exactly dealing with someone who is rational...

LORI: Where are you going?

BONNIE: To see if it's true.

LORI: Karen needs you to fill out a damage report. She's got it upstairs.

BONNIE: Fine. I'll do that too...

LORI: It has to be done before you leave. is that clear?

BONNIE: I think so. See. Karen. Before. I. Leave. Yes, I think I've got it.

LORI: Esther, are all the slips sorted?

ESTHER: No, not yet.

LORI: Okay, I'll help you-

BONNIE: I bet they have found her. I bet she's up there denying the whole thing...

HEATHER: Come on. I'll go with you.

BONNIE: Okay. Oh, I get it.

HEATHER: What.?

BONNIE: Because we have to pass by Polo. right? And you just want to see if Patrick Swayze is...

HEATHER: Maybe...

BONNIE: Here. I thought you were worried about me...

HEATHER: I am. He said it was going to be awhile. anyway. They had a crazy day too.

BONNIE: Oh. did somebody attack him too?

HEATHER: I wouldn't be surprised. I'm going to.

BONNIE: Oh, sure. Be selfish... I could be on the way to jail for assault with a deadly perfume bottle. Locked up for life, and all you care about is your dinner date.

HEATHER: It's just a movie, I told you. We are only going to a movie. (*They are gone.*)

LORI: (*the receipts*) Which are these? The other side?

ESTHER: Yes. And these are from here. Some day, huh?

LORI: Unbelievable...

ESTHER: But. we did it! Ha! Ha! We broke the record.

LORI: We did, didn't we?

ESTHER: You bet your sweet patooties. we did! Fifty thousand in one day. Over fifty thousand!

LORI: I never thought. I'd see the day. (*Wyn comes in, carrying a broken pair of eyeglasses.*) Where have you been?

WYN: What do you mean, where have I been?

LORI: Hey!

WYN: I'm sorry. I'm upset. Really. I'm sorry.

LORI: What is that?:

WYN: It's her eyeglasses. Or what's left of them. One of the girls over in Clinique found them.

ESTHER: In Clinique?

WYN: They must have fallen off and got kicked around. and then stepped. on. They were going to throw them away.

ESTHER: Well, they aren't going to do much good anymore.

WYN: Look. how thick they are. The poor thing p she must be blind without them.

LORI: So you weren't with her?

WYN: No. Some woman fell in front of me. And I stopped to help her. She was distraught

LORI: And no one saw her? At least which way she went?

WYN: One of the Janitors said he saw her get on the elevator. but that was almost a half hour ago. Who knows where she is by now.

LORI: Well. they'll find her. Esther said Corky has security looking all over for her.

WYN: They don't know where she is, and they don't even care. I Just spoke to one of them. They all think she must have left by now. Strolled out the front door-

LORI: Well. it is possible. you ...

WYN: How? I can't even find my way around this place. and I work here and you're going to tell me a frightened old woman, who's now blind as a bat, is going to Just stroll out the front door?

ESTHER: Can I go home now? Please. These are finished.

LORI: Sure. Just staple them. And staple these, and then we'll all go home.

*(Esther goes around the counter.)*

WYN: Lori? I have to give you notice. I can't do this anymore.

LORI: Wyn, please...

WYN: No, I'm serious. I've thought about it. and I know it's a bad time. So I'll work as long as it takes for you to find someone, to replace me. But I just can't do this anymore. It isn't right. I mean let's face it, in four days I've managed to almost cause a world war here, and now this.

LORI: What?

WYN: This issue.

LORI: What issue?

WYN: About the animals.

LORI: Oh, God.

WYN: If it's true, I don't want to work here.

LORI: If what's true?



WYN: If they really test all of this stuff on animals, killing them.

LORI: I am exhausted...

WYN: Look, I'm sorry. I am. I know you've had a bad day, and I don't want to cause you any trouble, any more trouble than I already have. But Lori, you of all people, you should understand. You love animals. Do you know what they do, to make all of this?

LORI: I've heard, yes.

WYN: Have you?

LORI: Yes. They test the products to make sure they're safe. Or something like that. But they do that to everything. To toothpaste, to laundry detergent. Almost everything we use. So, what are you going to do, not brush your teeth? And where are you going to work? What store doesn't sell something that hasn't been tested?

WYN: Actually. that's why Helen was here. That's exactly what she's doing, opening a store. A store that specialized in products that aren't harmful. And she said they need a manager, a manager and a staff.

LORI: Really. Well. then, what are we waiting for? Let's leave right now. This job doesn't mean anything to me anyway-

WYN: I'm not saying it doesn't mean anything-

LORI: It's almost New Years, why not. Hell, why not throwaway three years of hard work and benefits. Who cares, right? Who cares if we just had the best day in the history of this department.

WYN: Okay...

LORI: Boy I sure hope this store of yours is already open. and ready for business, and I sure hope it pays as much as this place does, because I don't know about you but I barely make ends meet as it is. And I've grown rather fond of my new extravagant lifestyle. Of actually paying my Con Ed bill on time. But I guess that makes me selfish-

WYN: Look, okay. I'm sorry. I'm not trying to imply that you are selfish. In any way. You know I don't think that.

LORI: Look, Wyn. we are both tired and cranky, and we both need some sleep.

WYN: I know that.

LORI: So, then let's Just talk about this tomorrow, okay? *(pause)* Okay?

WYN: You know, Helen said something, something very true, and I know it may sound trite, but she said each person can only do what they can do, that it has to come from within. And I agree with that. We can only do what we are able to do.

LORI: Yes, so, I agree with that.

WYN: God, Sean used to say that. All the time. Whenever I used to ask him why he wasn't angry. Why he never seemed to get pissed off. You know, when people called him queer, or faggot. He used to say to me: "Oh, don't get me wrong. I get angry and believe me I don't like it, not for a second. If only I had worked on my Voodoo skills... But no, see, the way to fight it is to fight it in yourself. Because like the nice little animals that we all are, we can smell each other's hatred and we can smell each other's fear, and then before you know it, we're at each other's throats."

CORKY: (*who has walked up*) I have no idea what you are talking about. but it sure sounds involved.

WYN: Yes. It is actually.

CORKY: I won't interrupt then. (*Motions her to come a few steps over.*) I was just wondering if you had made up your mind.

WYN: Made up my mind about what?

CORKY: Where you wanted to have dinner tonight.

WYN: Oh. God...

LORI: Corky...

CORKY: What? It's after nine. She's a civilian again. I can bother her.

LORI: Bother her later, we are talking-

CORKY: About what? The crazy lady? I'm sorry\_ I looked allover for her. I looked everywhere. And if there's one thing I know p it's this store. Believe me if she was still in here. I would have found her. I even checked the fitting rooms.

LORI: You spend most of your time in the fitting rooms.

WYN: I'll bet.

CORKY: Hey. every job has its benefits. Anyway, I tried. I tried to find her for you, but now, it's late, and I'm tired and its dinner time. (*to Lori*) Right?

LORI: Right.

CORKY: So, how about it? A little dinner. A little wine. A little whatever...

WYN: Look-

CORKY: Corky.

WYN: Corky-

CORKY: In case you forgot, again.

WYN: Thank you. But I didn't forget. I couldn't forget now, even if I wanted to. I'm afraid you've succeeded in making an indelible impression on me.

CORKY: Good.

WYN: Look... *(She is crossing to get the teddy bear.)* I am flattered, really. Very flattered. That you would want to spend time with me. I realize there must be a lot of "new meat" around here for you to go after. But I am really not in the market for a little dinner and whatever. Right now, okay? Or for a "hot" teddy bear either. *(She hands him the teddy bear.)*

ESTHER: Wyn? Someone in Lancôme just said an old lady knocked over a jar of pencils and then ran off.

WYN: When?

ESTHER: Just now. Come on. I was on my way out, and she told me.

CORKY: Where?

ESTHER: Lancôme. Hurry. She sent Bonnie looking for her too.

WYN: Oh, great.

LORI: Wait. *(She gets her register key)* That's stupid. Who's going to bother it, it's empty.

*She exits. The stage is empty for a second. The teddy bear is on the counter. Helen enters cautiously. And makes her way to the counter. And sits. "Sees" the bear and touches it. Bonnie and Heather enter.*

BONNIE: Well, well look who's here.

HEATHER: Is that her?

BONNIE: It's certainly not Estee Lauder.

HELEN: Elowyn?

BONNIE: Careful. Heather. Careful.

HEATHER: Maybe. we should get Corky.

BONNIE: That may not be a bad idea.

HEATHER: I'll go and try to find him.

HELEN: *(Alarmed)* Elowyn, is that you?

BONNIE: Hurry! *(HEATHER: leaves.)*

HELEN: Who is that?

BONNIE: Hello.

HELEN: Is that you. Elowyn? *(She stands. Bonnie notices she is having trouble seeing.)*

BONNIE: You lost your glasses, didn't you? I know Just how you feel. I can't see a thing without my contacts...

HELEN: You're that awful girl, the one with the perfume.

BONNIE: Yes, and I owe you an apology for that. Really. I'm sorry. *(Helen tries to move.)*

HEATHER: *(entering from the direction Helen was trying to leave from)* Where should I look? Ah!

BONNIE: Just stay there.

HEATHER: Oh. God.

BONNIE: Help me keep her here. I'll page him. *(She is trying to move to the phone. Heather is wielding her purse. Helen tries to move in Bonnie's direction.)* Ah, don't do that. We have to keep you here. Just for a few minutes. We need to talk to you a minute.

HELEN: You have no right. No right to do this to me.

BONNIE: Do what? All we want to do is ask you a few questions?

HELEN: I didn't do anything to you. I never meant to break anything.

BONNIE: We know that. Really. We do. That's why we just need you to --

HEATHER: We Just need for you to fill out a damage report.

HELEN: A what?

BONNIE: Heater!

HEATHER: What? I don't know what to say.

HELEN: Where is Elowyn?

HEATHER: Elowyn? Uh, Elowyn--

BONNIE: Went to the bathroom, didn't she?

HEATHER: Yes, I think that's right. Yes. She went to the bathroom. Just a few minutes ago. She'll be right back. Probably.

BONNIE: Is this your bear, on the counter?

HELEN: What are you doing?

BONNIE: I'm just going over here. To the phone to page Elowyn for you.

HELEN: No, you're not. You wouldn't try to help me. *(She senses she can get by now. And tries to flee, knocking over one of the chairs.)*

BONNIE: Heather!

HEATHER: Oh, great. Stay right there.

HELEN: Leave me alone!

HEATHER: Bonnie, help! (*Helen gets free and runs.*)

BONNIE: (*dropping the phone*) Shit! Great!

HEATHER: Well, you're the one who pissed her off. With the phone.

CORKY: (*offstage, having stopped her*) Alright, now let's just calm down. I said calm down! Ma'am, I'm with security-

HELEN: But I didn't do anything, I tell you.

CORKY: Then, let's Just stop all this kicking and (*They are onstage now and he is getting upset.*) and scratching! And just sit down here. I said sit down!

HELEN: I don't believe this.

CORKY: Well, neither do I. Is this the woman that attacked you, Buns?

BONNIE: Of course. it is. But we could compare claw marks if you want to make sure.

HELEN: This is a nightmare...

BONNIE: And for you, it's only going to get worse. (*Helen tries to move*)

CORKY: You Just stay put. I said stay put, understand?

BONNIE: Here. Give her her teddy bear. Maybe that will help.

CORKY: Bonnie-

BONNIE: What. I'm Just trying to help. (*offering the bear to her*)

CORKY: Would you back off. that's not her bear anyway.

BONNIE: Yes, it is.

HELEN: (*struggling*) You--can't--

BONNIE: It's certainly not mine.

HELEN: Keep--me--here--

CORKY: It's Wyn's. I gave it to her.

BONNIE: Oh, sorry.

CORKY: M'am if you do not stop struggling. I'm afraid I'm going to have to restrain you. Do you understand?

BONNIE: Did you hear that Heather? Corks gave it to Wyn. Well, isn't that sweet. Hey, lady, whatever your name is. You want to see some real animal torture? Watch this. *(She steps on the bear. Stomps on it. Then picks it up and yanks at it. And actually, pulls off its head.)* There. Now that's animal torture. *(She puts the bear on the counter in front of Helen. And the head.)* I hope you can see that-

WYN *(entering)* What the hell are you doing?

CORKY: We found her-

WYN: Helen?

HELEN: Oh, Lord. Is that Elowyn?

WYN: Yes. Yes, it is. Are you alright.

HELEN: They have me trapped in here. Trapped. All of the doors are locked.

WYN: It's okay.

HELEN: They're all locked. I had to hide in a wardrobe.

WYN: A wardrobe?

HELEN: Yes. upstairs. In the furniture. They were looking for me. In their red coats. It was horrible. *(She Just holds onto her p afraid to let go.)*

CORKY: She put up quite a struggle.

WYN: Of course she did. wouldn't you?

CORKY: Look-

BONNIE: But out, Wyn.

CORKY: We Just need to keep her here long enough to answer some questions.

*(Lori and Esther enter)*

ESTHER: *(to Lori)* After all. this is New York-

BONNIE: Corky is in charge here. Wyn, let him do his job.

HELEN: Oh, now I've gotten you in trouble-

WYN: Hush.

LORI: What is going on here?

CORKY: This is the woman who attacked Bonnie-

WYN: Who Bonnie attacked!

CORKY: And she doesn't want to stick around long enough to answer any questions. So, I had to restrain her.

WYN: She was frightened. They probably had her cornered. She can't even see.

CORKY: And now, little Miss Marple here p is being a real pain in the ass-

WYN: Lori, you're in charge here-

BONNIE: No. she's not.

WYN: Of course. she is.

LORI: Wyn-

CORKY: In matters of security members of the security department. Have jurisdiction over all other departments. Period.

BONNIE: He's right.

LORI: I'm afraid he is.

WYN: No, he's not

HELEN: I can't allow this, I'm sorry.

BONNIE: Watch her!

HELEN: This has got to stop. now! (*She is having real trouble breathing.*) I need some water. I need to take a pill.

WYN: Helen?

LORI: Esther. get her some water. (*Esther leaves.*)

HELEN: It's Just my nerves. I get short of breath. I'll be alright. I need to get my pills, they're in my pocket.

WYN: Which pocket?

HELEN: I'm not sure... I have so many pockets in this thing. I don't like to carry a purse, you see, because-

WYN: These?

HELEN: Yes. Thank you. Because I usually have my camera. Oh, Elowyn... I'm so sorry. I was just overcome, you see. Overcome.

WYN: It's alright.

HELEN: You forget, don't you? Even if you see them every day. You still forget. You become blind to them...

WYN: Blind to what?

HELEN: I climbed out of my wardrobe and I was trying to make my way down here and all of a sudden I was surrounded. Surrounded. "Winter Wonderland" you call it.

WYN: Wonderland?

HELEN: And there were hundreds and hundreds of them, Just hanging there. Slaughtered. On those racks.

WYN: Oh, no.

HELEN: There were so many, Elowyn. so many. And at first I heard what sounded like moans, long sorrowful moans, but then it was as if I wasn't listening to them as if I didn't realize they were still alive. That they were still beautiful creatures not pieces of clothing, they started crying out at me, all of them crying out at the injustice of it all... (*Esther enters.*)

ESTHER: (*handing Wyn the water*) Here.

WYN: Here, Helen.

HELEN: Thank you. (*She takes the pill.*) Yechh! Thank you. I'll be alright now.

WYN: You sure?

HELEN: Oh. yes. They always work.

BONNIE: (*To Heather*) Where are you going?

HEATHER: To my movie. Look. I'm sorry, I'll catch the re-run on Law and Order, but I'm late as it is... (*She leaves.*)

HELEN: Actually, I need to be going myself. I can't stay in here any longer. Please.

BONNIE: Wait a minute. Wait, just a minute.

WYN: Bonnie, I don't think you understand. I don't think you understand what is really going on here. This woman is being held against her will, against her will, after you abused and chased her into a display of glass mirrors, and almost sent her to the hospital. Now, I'm not a great legal mind, but it seems to me she has every right to sue both you and this store for assault and battery, for character deformation, and probably a whole lot of other things. I mean, We are talking about a major law suit here, a major law suit. Involving a hell of a lot of money, and a hell of a lot of jobs, and a lot of negative publicity. And if I have to, I will be a good witness. Very good.

BONNIE: Oh, I'm worried. Do you believe this?



WYN: You'd better believe it, sister. Because it's only going to get ugly from here on out. And it could get very ugly, very ugly. Isn't that right, Corky? Who knows what questions might be asked. Like about jewelry for instance...

LORI: Jewelry?

WYN: Yeah.

LORI: What Jewelry?

WYN: I think he understands. (*Corky and Bonnie exchange looks.*) I think they might both understand. But we won't have to worry about that at all, now will we? Because Corky, is going to unlock the door over there, and my friend Helen and I are going to walk out of here and forget this whole thing, isn't that right Helen?

HELEN: Absolutely.

WYN: This whole thing is going to be forgotten.

CORKY: I'd have to get the key. I don't have any keys to the doors-

WYN: Then get them. (*He starts to go*)

BONNIE: What?

CORKY: Bonnie, shut up!

WYN: Get them. if you don't mind.

BONNIE: (*She is following him*) Wait. how do you know-

CORKY: Just drop it, Bonnie. (*They are gone.*)

HELEN: There you go again. coming to my rescue.

WYN: I know. Such a nuisance aren't I?

HELEN: Now. You are going to have to work for me.

WYN: We're not out of this yet...

HELEN: I insist.

WYN: You may not have to. I don't think I'll have a job here...

HELEN: No, probably not...

LORI: (*Handing Helen her glasses*) Ma'am?

HELEN: What are these? Are these my glasses?

LORI: What's left of them. yes.

WYN: Lori. please don't hate me for this.

LORI:  
What did you mean about jewelry?

WYN: It's a long story. really, I'll explain it all later. I promise. I will.

HELEN: Do you know I have only lost my glasses one other time. It was in Africa...

LORI: I certainly hope somebody will.

ESTHER: Corky has been taking things every now and then for years- Stealing. Usually when he needed favors from people, or to bribe them. He stole a wallet once for me to give to Sal, last year, because he knew I had extra tickets to a Giants game. And he stole jewelry for Bonnie and Heather.

WYN: Apparently, he does it all the time.

LORI:  
God ... What next?

WYN: So, see. She doesn't always come out smelling like a rose.

LORI:  
No, I guess not.

HELEN: We were in Kenya. and we had this guide. I'll never forget him. He was much older than you, much older than me actually, if that's possible. He had eyes like yours. Very wise, very trusting... We never knew what his real name was, he told us to call him "Fisi"-

WYN: Fisi?

HELEN: Yes, it means Hyena. He said it was because he loved to laugh...

CORKY: (*entering with the keys*) Okay. let's go.

WYN: Came on, Helen.

HELEN: And I couldn't see a thing then, either.

WYN: Here. take my hand.

HELEN: We were in the middle of the Massai Mala Reserve. And I couldn't find my glasses anywhere. Wait let me get my papers. My pamphlets...

WYN: I'll get them.

HELEN: And he had to lead me for miles through the jungle- (The lights start to fade,now)

WYN:Here, here they are.

HELEN: Thank you.

CORKY: Hurry, please. I'd prefer it if no one knew about this ... (*Helen stumbles into a chair trying to hurry*)

WYN: Are you okay?

HELEN: Oh, heavens, yes. Ought to be easy compared to the jungle. Lead on! Lead on!

BONNIE: Nice working with you, Wyn.

HELEN: Of course, there were poisonous snakes... (Wyn laughs.) And there we were, walking for miles. The two of us. And I was stumbling into trees and falling all over the place, and poor, kind old Fisi, every time I stumbled he would just laugh, like you, and before you knew it, I'd be laughing too. And there were, the two of us, stumbling out of the jungle, just laughing...

**The lights fade to black as they exit**

**End Of Play**