

HOWARD FINE ACTING STUDIO

AUDITION INSTRUCTIONS AND SELECTIONS

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY

- Prepare two (2) monologues: The first must be from the following selections provided by the Studio. The second one can be your choice or it can also be from the Studio selections. *(Your selection may be contemporary or classic, prose or verse, by any playwright from any country. Please, nothing from film or television or motivational presentations. However, a selection from a novel, short story or poetry would be acceptable.)* Choose material that you can identify with and that is age-appropriate. Keep in mind that we're learning about you through the material you've chosen and prepared for this audition.
- Do the appropriate research and preparation for both monologues, including reading the full play/script from which your monologue is taken. If you are unable to find a full copy of the script, use Google to research summaries, notes and character breakdowns to help understand the context of the pieces you've chosen.
- It is strongly suggested that you read Howard Fine's book FINE ON ACTING: A Vision of the Craft in preparation for your audition. You will find that his 8-Steps are an invaluable tool. *(The book is available at the Studio or on-line.)*
- Bring extra copies of your monologues with the following information on the top of each page: Your name, Title of play, playwright, and role.
- Please attach the monologues to your headshot & resume and bring this with you to the audition.

*Remember - Preparation gives you freedom.
We look forward to seeing your audition.*

*Thank you.
Howard Fine Acting Studio - Australia*

A DOLL'S HOUSE by Henrik Ibsen

Act 2

NORA

It is perfectly true, Torvald. When I was at home with papa, he told me his opinion about everything, and so I had the same opinions; and if I differed from him I concealed the fact, because he would not have liked it. He called me his doll-child, and he played with me just as I used to play with my dolls. And when I came to live with you...

I mean that I was simply transferred from papa's hand into yours. You arranged everything according to your own taste, and so I got the same tastes as you – or else I pretended to, I am really not quite sure which – I think sometimes the one and sometimes the other. When I look back on it, it seems to me as if I had been living here like a poor woman – just from hand to mouth. I have existed merely to perform tricks for you, Torvald. But you would have it so. You and papa have committed a great sin against me. It is your fault that I have made nothing of my life.

You neither think nor talk like the man I could bind myself to. As soon as your fear was over – and it was not fear for what threatened me, but for what might happen to you – when the whole things was past, as far as you were concerned it was exactly as if nothing at all had happened. Exactly as before, I was your little skylark, your doll, which you would in future treat with doubly gentle care, because it was so brittle and fragile.

Torvald – it was then it dawned upon me that for eight years I had been living here with a strange man, and had borne him three children. Oh! I can't bear to think of it! I could tear myself into little bits!

AN IDEAL HUSBAND by Oscar Wilde

“Mabel Chiltern” – Young adult

Mabel Chiltern, the well-bred, clever and capricious younger sister of Sir Robert Chiltern.

Act 2, Part 2

MABEL:

Well, Tommy has proposed to me again. Tommy really does nothing but propose to me. He proposed to me last night in the music-room, when I was quite unprotected, as there was an elaborate trio going on. I didn't dare to make the smallest repartee, I need hardly tell you. If I had, it would have stopped the music at once. Musical people are so absurdly unreasonable. They always want one to be perfectly dumb at the very moment when one is longing to be absolutely deaf. Then he proposed to me in broad daylight this morning, in front of that dreadful statue of Achilles. Really, the things that go on in front of that work of art are quite appalling. The police should interfere.

At luncheon I saw by the glare in his eye that he was going to propose again, and I just managed to check him in time by assuring him that I was a bimetallist. Fortunately I don't know what bimetallism means. And I don't believe anybody else does either. But the observation crushed Tommy for ten minutes. He looked quite shocked. And then Tommy is so annoying in the way he proposes. If he proposed at the top of his voice, I should not mind so much. That might produce some effect on the public. But he does it in a horrid confidential way. When Tommy wants to be romantic he talks to one just like a doctor. I am very fond of Tommy, but his methods of proposing are quite out of date.

I wish, Gertrude, you would speak to him, and tell him that once a week is quite often enough to propose to anyone, and that it should always be done in a manner that attracts some attention.

AND THE LITTLE DOG LAUGHED (Ellen) by Douglas Carter Beane

“Ellen” – Young adult

Act 1

Ellen tells the audience about returning to her mother’s home in Westchester, at 3am, breaking a window to get in.

ELLEN:

After the club Alex and I both deplored, I went home to Westchester to have a visit with Screecher. Screech is my new none-too-affectionate nickname for my none-too-affectionate mother. And Screecher’s all “Ellen”—no, wait—“ELLEN!!! GODDAMN IT, YOU NEVER GODDAMN COME GODDAMN HOME FOR A GODDAMN VISIT, GODDAMNIT.” So I went home for a visit. Goddamnit. And, you know, she’s not pleased. I just so cannot win here. Alright maybe I shouldn’t have shown up at three in the morning. Maybe I should have called first, maybe I should have had money for the cab, maybe I should have had a key and not broken a window to get in, you know, we all have some things we’d like to do over. So I’m there—just licking my wounds about Arthur dumping me. And it’s whatever o’clock in the morning. In my once room. But it’s not my room anymore. After all that fuss Screecher made about me coming home, there’s no home left for me now. Just. Wicker baskets and doll heads and—and dried flowers. Screech has gone and transformed my room into a craft room, which I guess is de rigueur among the post-hysterectomy set. And as the doll heads stare at me, I realize. My childhood is motherfucking over. When did that happen, right? And I am so good to lose it. And. And I find three long strands of thin vinyl string and I’m scared and I’m alone. And the next think I know, I am getting busy. Making a bracelet. Oh yeah. So I just. Made me a bracelet.

AND THE LITTLE DOG LAUGHED by Douglas Carter Beane

“Ellen” – Young adult

Talking to the audience

Act 1

ELLEN:

Later this afternoon I'll go back to Williamsburg with Alex. I'll be cold on the subway and he'll take off his leather jacket and put it over my shoulders. It will be the kindest gesture anyone will do for me for the rest of my life, and I have a sense of it, in that moment. Once we're back in his horrible apartment, we will begin to make love. And even though he's three inches from my face- And he's looking directly into my eyes. I can see that he is miles away and is thinking of someone else. And he feels so good. And I feel so good. And he holds me. And he holds me and he holds me and he holds me. And he holds me for a long time. And he holds me until I hear his long deep exhale that I've come to know means that he is asleep. And he is asleep and I am awake and- OK the thing with guys, when they make love to you it's like they're running into your arms. And if you look really close at their faces, you can see if they're running towards you or running away from something else- and you just got in the way. And I got a good look at Alex's face and- he was definitely fleeing someone or something and I was road kill. I mean beautiful road kill... I sneak out of bed and go to my laptop computer, get on line, and quickly type in the name, "Mitchell Green" and look at this photograph of this guy next door for a very long time. And then I find the sleek new gimp bracelet I made- which is just so orange- and I, with the merest suggestion of pageantry, slide it on his wrist. And I go to sleep just content as like a...'cause I know- wherever he is. Whoever. Whoever he's with. He's wearing that bracelet and. I'm with- I'm. So, you see, a lot can be said about the psychologically healing powers of jewelry.

BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS by Neil Simon

Act I

NORA

How would you feel if your entire life depended on what your Uncle Jack decided?...Oh, God, I wish Daddy were alive.

Oh, God, he was so handsome. Always dressed so dapper, his shoes always shined. I always thought he should have been a movie star...like Gary Cooper...only very short. Mostly I remember his pockets.

When I was six or seven he always brought me home a little surprise. Like a Hershey or a top. He'd tell me to go get it in his coat pocket. So I'd run to the closet and put my hand in and it felt as big as a tent. I wanted to crawl in there and go to sleep. And there were all these terrific things in there, like Juicy Fruit gum or Spearmint Life Savers and bits of cellophane and crumbled pieces of tobacco and movie stubs and nickels and pennies and rubber bands and paper clips and his grey suede gloves that he wore in the winter time.

Then I found his coat in Mom's closet and I put my hand in the pocket.

And everything was gone. It was emptied and dry-cleaned and it felt cold...And that's when I knew he was really dead.

Oh God, I wish we had our own place to live. I hate being a boarder. Listen, let's make a pact...The first one who makes enough money promises not to spend any on herself, but saves it all to get a house for you and me and Mom. That means every penny we get from now on, we save for the house...We can't buy anything. No lipstick or magazines or nail polish or bubble gum. *Nothing*...Is it a pact?

BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS by Neil Simon

Act 2

NORA

I can't believe it. You mean it's alright for you to leave us but it wasn't alright for me to leave you?

It was *my* future. Why couldn't I have something to say about it? I need to be independent.

So I have to give up the one chance I may never get again, is that it? I'm the one who has to pay for what you couldn't do with your own life. I'm not judging you. I can't even talk to you. I don't exist to you. I have tried so hard to get close to you, but there was never any room. Whatever you had to give went to Daddy, and when he died, whatever was left you gave to Laurie...

....I have been jealous my whole life of Laurie because she was lucky enough to be born sick. I could never turn a light on in my room at night or read in bed because Laurie always needed her precious sleep. I could never have a friend over on the weekends because Laurie was always resting. I used to pray I'd get some terrible disease or get hit by a car so I'd have a leg all twisted and crippled and then once, maybe just once, I'd get to crawl into bed next to you on a cold rainy night and talk to you and hold you until I fell asleep in your arms...just once...

BURIED CHILD by Sam Shepard

"Shelley" – Young adult

Shelly has agreed to go on a roadtrip to New Mexico with her boyfriend, Vince, to visit his father and mother and brother at an old farmhouse.

Act 3, Scene 1

SHELLEY:

Don't come near me! Don't anyone come near me. I don't need any words from you. I'm not threatening anybody. I don't even know what I'm doing here. You all say you don't remember Vince, okay, maybe you don't. Maybe it's Vince that's crazy. Maybe he's made this whole family thing up. I don't even care anymore. I was just coming along for the ride. I thought it'd be a nice gesture. Besides, I was curious. He made all of you sound familiar to me. Every one of you. For every name, I had an image. Every time he'd tell me a name, I'd see the person. In fact, each of you was so clear in my mind that I actually believed it was you. I really believed that when I walked through that door that the people who lived here would turn out to be the same people in my imagination. Real people. People with faces. But I don't recognize any of you. Not one. Not even the slightest resemblance.

THE EARLY GIRL by Caroline Kava

Act 2, Scene 8

LANA:

I understand your doubts. Number One was a windfall for you, Lily. That doesn't make it any less valid. But it's why this next month is so important. You'll prove to yourself, once and for all, that you are indeed Number One, with all your competition in force. I'm so excited for you. Because I know you're going to make it. And then! The Requests will start pouring in. Hundreds of requests. You won't be able to accept them all. But you know something? They'll wait. They'll wait for you. Because everyone wants the best, the very best, including Dolly. Well, don't let me keep you. I know you'll be spending some time at the bank. Don't forget to take your diamonds.

(Looking in the mirror.) Ah ...

THE SEAGULL by Anton Chekhov

“Masha” – Young adult

Act 3

Masha has been drinking all morning. She approaches Trigorin, a well-known writer staying at Sorin’s estate in rural Russia, 1890’s.

MASHA:

I’m telling you all this because you’re a writer and can use it. Quite honestly, if he’d wounded himself seriously I couldn’t have gone on living one minute. I’m quite brave, though, so I simply decided to wrench this love out of my heart and uproot it. By getting married. To Medvedenko. To be hopelessly in love, just waiting, waiting for years on end --. But when I’m married I shan’t bother about love, new worries will drive out old, and anyway it’ll make a change, won’t it?

Shall we have another? Don’t look at me like that, women drink a lot more than you think. A few do it openly like me, but most keep quiet about it. Oh yes they do. And it’s always vodka or brandy. [Clinks glasses] All the best.

You’re a decent sort, I’m sorry we shan’t see each other again. My schoolmaster’s not all that bright, but he is kind. He’s poor and very much in love with me. I’m sorry for him, and for his old mother too. Ah well, let me wish you all the best. Remember me kindly. [Shakes him firmly by the hand] Thanks for being so nice. Send me your books, and mind you write something in them, not ‘with respects’. Just put: ‘To Masha, who doesn’t know where she comes from or what she’s doing on this earth’. Good-bye.

THE SHADOW BOX by Michael Christofer

Act 2

AGNES:

We were very close. Our whole family. Especially after my father died. We were just children then. Mama worked very hard to keep us together. We had a dairy farm. It was a beautiful place. Big, old house 1873. And so much land. It seemed even bigger then I was so little. We were very happy.

And then Claire ... there was a boy ... well, she left us ... just like that. She was a lot like Mama. They would fight and yell and throw things at each other ... they got along very well. Claire was so beautiful. I would hide in my room. I got so frightened when they fought, but . . . I don't know . . . suddenly the fight would be over and Mama would throw open her arms and curse the day she bore children and Claire would laugh and then Mama would laugh and hug her close . . . and then all of us, we would laugh . . . I can still hear us . . . But she left. And we never heard from her. Almost a year. The longest year I can remember. Mama waited and waited, but she never wrote or came back to visit . . . nothing.

And then one morning, we received a phone call from a man in Louisiana. There was an accident . . . something. And Claire was dead. They said at first they thought she was going to be all right, but she was hemorrhaging and . . . This is very hard to remember.

THE SHADOW BOX by Michael Christofer

Act 2

BEVERLEY:

Past time ... way past time. The sign goes up and I can see 'useless' printed all over it. Let me tell you something, as one whore to another-what you do with your ass is your business. You can drag it through every gutter from here to Morocco. You can trade it, sell it, or give it away. You can run it up a flagpole, paint it blue or cut it off if you feel like it. I don't care. I'll even show you the best way to do it. That's the kind of person I am.

But Brian is different. Because Brian is stupid. Because Brian is blind. Because Brian doesn't know where you come from or who you come from or why or how or even what you are coming to. Because Brian happens to need you. And if that is not enough for you, then you get yourself out of his life-fast. You take your delicate sensibilities and your fears and your disgust, if that's all you feel, and you pack it up and you get out. Yes. That simple. A postcard at Christmas, a telegram for his birthday, and maybe a phone call every few years . . . if he lives. But only when it gets really bad. When the money and the time and the people are all running out faster than you care to count, and the reasons don't sound as good as they used to and you don't remember anymore why ... why you walked out on the one person who said yes, you do what you have to because I love you. And you can't remember anymore what it was you thought you had to do or who the hell you thought you were that was so goddamn important that you couldn't hang around long enough to say

goodbye or to find out what it was you were saying goodbye to . . . Then you phone, because you need to know that somewhere, for no good reason, there is one poor stupid deluded human being who smells and rots and dies and still believes in you. One human being who cares. My God, why isn't that ever enough?

THIS IS OUR YOUTH by Kenneth Lonergan

Act 2

JESSICA

Don't you guys get into like, comparing notes and stuff?

Well...OK...It's just – This is getting a little weird now, because when I talked to Valerie, she asked me if anything happened with us last night, and for some reason, I guess I didn't really tell her that anything did. So now she's gonna talk to Dennis and I'm gonna look like a total liar to someone I'm just starting to be close friends with and who I really care about...!

I just should have figured that you would like rush off to tell your friends that you fucked me – whereas I might be more inclined to be a little more discreet about it till I found out where I stood with you.

Ok, but you know what? It really doesn't matter – So you just tell him anything he wants to know no matter what the consequences are for somebody else?!

But honestly, Warren? I really don't care who you told, or what you told them, because people are gonna think whatever they think and you know what? There's nothing I can do about it.

I should just really listen to my instincts, you know? Because your instincts are never wrong. And it was totally against my instinct to come over here last night, and it was definitely against my instinct to sleep with you, but I did and it's too late. And now my Mom is totally furious at me, I probably ruined my friendship with Valerie, and now like Dennis Ziegler thinks I'm like, easy pickins, or something - ! And it's not like I even care what he thinks, OK? Because I don't actually know him. Or you. Or Valerie, for that matter! So it doesn't really matter! I've made new friends before, I can make more new friends now if I have to. So let's just forget the whole thing ever happened, you can chalk one up in your book or whatever – and I'll just know better next time! Hopefully. OK?

THREE SISTERS by Anton Chekhov

IRINA:

Tell me, why is it I'm so happy today? As if I were sailing, with the wide, blue sky above me, and great white birds soaring in the wind. Why is it? Why?

I woke up this morning, I got up, I washed - and suddenly I felt everything in this world was clear to me - I felt I knew how life had to be lived. Dear Ivan Romanich, I can see it all. A human being has to labour, whoever he happens to be, he has to toil in the sweat of his face; that's the only way he can find the sense and purpose of his life, his happiness, his delight.

How fine to be a working man who rises at first light and breaks stones on the road, or a shepherd, or a teacher, or an engine driver on the railway... Lord, never mind being human even - better to be an ox, better to be a simple horse, just so long as you work - anything rather than a young lady who rises at noon, then drinks her coffee in bed, then takes two hours to dress... that's terrible! In hot weather sometimes you long to drink the way I began longing to work. And if I don't start getting up early and working, then shut your heart against me, Ivan Romanich.

SPIKE HEELS by Theresa Rebeck

Act 2, Scene 1

GEORGIE:

All of you. What an amazing fucking snow job you all are doing on the world. And I bought it! We all buy it. My family – they're like, all of a sudden I'm Mary Tyler Moore or something. I mean, they live in hell, right, and they spend their whole lives just wishing they were somewhere else, wishing they were rich, or sober, or clean; living on a street with trees, being on some rucking TV show. And I did it. I moved to Boston, I work in a law office, I'm the big success story. And they have no idea what that means. It means I get to hang out with a bunch of lunatics. It means I get to read books that make no sense. It means that instead of getting harassed by jerks at the local bar, now I get harassed by guys in suits. Guys with glasses. Guys who talk nice. Guys in suits.

Well, you know what I have to say to all of you? Shame on you. Shame on your for thinking you're better than the rest of us. And shame on you for being mean to me.

Shame on you Lydia.

SPIKE HEELS by Theresa Rebeck

Act 2, Scene 1

LYDIA:

At first, I admired Andrew's interest in your welfare. He cares about people; he truly cares and I think that's wonderful. But these past few months, I must admit, I have become less interested in his interest. Not only do I listen to him talk about you incessantly, any time I come over to have dinner or spend the night here, I am bombarded by you. When you come home at night, we hear your little heels clicking on the ceiling. When you leave in the morning, we hear your little heels. When you go to bed we hear you brush your teeth, and talk on the phone, and listen to the radio and on certain evenings I could swear that we can even hear you undress. I am not enjoying this. For the past two months, I have been under the distinct impression that any time I spend the night here, I am actually sleeping with two people – Andrew and yourself. In fact, when you came home with Edward tonight my first thought was, my God, the bed is already crowded enough, now we have to fit Edward in too?

WILD HONEY by Anton Chekhov

ANNA PETROVNA:

How can you say that? How can you lie to me, on such a night as this, beneath such a sky? Tell your lies in autumn, if you must, in the gloom and the mud, but not now, not here. You're being watched! Look up, you absurd man! A thousand eyes, all shining with indignation! You must be good and true, just as all this is good and true. Don't break this silence with your little words! There's no man in the world I could ever love as I love you. There's no woman in the world you could ever love as you love me. Let's take that love; and all the rest, that so torments you – we'll leave that to others to worry about. Are you really such a terrible Don Juan? You look so handsome in the moonlight! Such a solemn face! It's a woman who's come to call, not a wild animal!

All right – if you really hate it all so much I'll go away again. Is that what you want? I'll go away, and everything will be just as it was before. Yes...? (she laughs) Idiot!

Take it! Snatch it! Seize it! What more do you want? Smoke it to the end, like a cigarette – pinch it out – tread it under your heel. Be human! You funny creature! A woman loves you – a woman you love – fine summer weather. What could be simpler than that? You don't realise how hard life is for me. And yet life is what I long for. Everything is alive, nothing is ever still. We're surrounded by life. We must live, too,

Misha! Leave all the problems for tomorrow. Tonight, on this night of nights, we'll simply live!

BALM IN GILEAD by Lanford Wilson

“Flick” – Young adult

Flick and Tig (a male prostitute) are at an all-night coffee shop in New York City

FLICK

I mean, I was just walking down the street and they came up on me like they was important, and they start pushing me around, you know. And they pushed me into this alley, not an alley, but this hallway and back down the end of that to this dark place at the end of the hallway and they start punching at me, and I just fell into this ball on the floor so they couldn't hurt me or nothing. But if I came down there with a couple of fighters, a couple of guys, like my friends, it wouldn't have to be you or anything, but just a couple or three guys, big guys, like walking down the street, you know. Just so they could see I got these buddies here.

See I'm on H, I mean, I'm flying and I gotta talk man, but I'm serious now; just a few guys and they'd leave me be, maybe, because they'd think I had these buddies that looked after me, you know; cause I – you know – they kicked me up, if I wasn't on H, man, they'd be pains all through me – you know – walking down the street by myself – I start looking around and wondering who's out there gonna mess me up, you know. I get scared as hell, man, walking down around here, I mean, I can't protect myself or nothing, man. You know what I mean? You know what I mean? You know what I mean? I mean if I had these couple – of big buddies – fighters – you – you know – if I had a couple of guys – like – big guys – that - you know, there's like nothing – I could – like, if you walked around with these buddies, I mean you could do, man – you could do anything . . .

DEATH OF A SALESMAN by Arthur Miller

Act 2

BIFF

Now hear this, Willy, this is me.

You know why I had no address for three months? I stole a suit in Kansas City and I was jailed. I stole myself out of every good job since high school. And I never got anywhere because you blew me so full of hot air I could never stand taking orders from anybody! That's whose fault it is! It's goddamn time you heard that! I had to be boss big shot in two weeks, and I'm through with it!

Willy! I ran down eleven flights with a pen in my hand today. And suddenly I stopped, you hear me? And in the middle of that office building, do you hear this? I stopped in the middle of that building and I saw - the sky. I saw the things that I love in the world. The work and the food and the time to sit and smoke. And I looked at the pen and said to myself, what the hell am I grabbing this for? Why am I trying to become what I don't want to be? What am I doing in an office, making a contemptuous, begging fool of myself, when all I want is out there, waiting for me the minute I say I know who I am! Why can't I say that, Willy?

Pop! I'm a dime a dozen, and so are you! I am not a leader of men, Willy, and neither are you. You were never anything but a hard-working drummer who landed in the ashcan like all the rest of them! I'm one dollar an hour, Willy! I tried seven states and couldn't raise it! A buck an hour! Do you gather my meaning? I'm not bringing home any prizes any more, and you're going to stop waiting for me to bring them home! Pop, I'm nothing! I'm nothing, Pop. Can't you understand that? There's no spite in it any more. I'm just what I am, that's all. Will you let me go, for Christ's sake? Will you take that phoney dream and burn it before something happens?

FAT PIG by Neil LaBute

CARTER

Dude, I understand. Like, totally.

I used to walk ahead of her in the mall or, you know, not tell her stuff at school so there wouldn't be, whatever. My own mom. I mean ... I'm fifteen and worried about every little thing, and I've got this fucking sumo wrestler in a housecoat trailing behind me. That's about as bad as it can get! I'm not kidding you. And the thing was, I blamed her for it. I mean, it wasn't like a disease or like some people have, thyroid or that type of deal ... she just shovelled shit into her mouth all the time, had a few kids, and, bang, she's up there at 350, maybe more. It used to seriously piss me off. My dad was always working late ... golfing on weekends, and I knew it was because of her. It had to be! How's he gonna love something that looks like that, get all sexy with her?

I'm just a kid at the time, but I can remember thinking that. Yeah, it's whatever, but ... this once, in the grocery store, we're at Albertsons and we're pushing four baskets around – you wanna know how humiliating that shit is? – and I'm supposed to be at a game by seven, I'm on JV, and she's just farting around in the candy isle, picking up bags of “fun size” Snickers and checking out the calories. Yeah. I mean, what is that?!

So, I suddenly go off on her, like, this sophomore in high school, but I'm all screaming in her face ... “Don't look at the package, take a look in the mirror, you cow! PUT 'EM DOWN!” Holy shit, there's stock boys – bunch of guys I know, even – are running down the isle. Manager stumbling out of his glass booth there, the works.

But you know what? She doesn't say a word about it. Ever. Not about the swearing, the things I called her, nothing. Just this, like, one tear I see ... as we're sitting at a stoplight on the way home. That's all.

FOOL FOR LOVE by Sam Shepard

EDDIE

And we walked right through town. Past the donut shop, past the miniature golf course, past the Chevron station. And he opened the bottle up and offered it to me. Before he even took a drink, he offered it to me first. And I took it and drank it and handed it back to him. And we just kept passing it back and forth like that as we walked until we drank the whole thing dry. And we never said a word the whole time. Then, finally, we reached this little white house with a red awning, on the far side of town. I'll never forget the red awning because it flapped in the night breeze and the porch light made it glow. It was a hot, desert breeze and the air smelled like new cut alfalfa. We walked right up to the front porch and he rang the bell and I remember getting real nervous because I wasn't out for a expecting to visit anybody. I thought we were just out for a walk. And then this woman comes to the door. This real pretty woman with red hair. And she throws herself into his arms. And he starts crying. He just breaks down right there in front of me. And she's kissing him all over the face and holding him real tight and he's just crying like a baby.

And then through the doorway, behind them both. I see this girl. She just appears. She's just standing there, staring at me and I'm staring back at her and we can't take our eyes off each other. It was like we knew each other from somewhere but we couldn't place where. But the second we saw each other, that very second, we knew we'd never stop being in love.

KEY EXCHANGE by Kevin Wade

Act I, Scene 4

PHILIP

So great. So we get keys made for each other's apartments. So then you know what happens? I'll tell you what happens. Maybe one night I'm at a party, a bar, whatever, and I meet a girl, and right off we know it's a mutual attraction situation, and we have a little chat and a drink maybe, and next thing you know we're in a cab, and there's a physical thing that's happening, and we're chewing each other's faces and trying to decide where to go, you know, your place or mine, only hold the phone here, there is no decision to be made, because you've got a key to my place, and I don't know if you've dropped by or what, and I don't want to chance putting either you or me in that awkward situation, so it's off to her place somewhere in the East Eighties where I've got to climb over her two roommates and three cats to do it on a foam mattress on the floor real, real quiet like because Sally my roommate has a commercial callback at nine-thirty in the morning and this whole time I'm having some resentment towards you because your having a key meant that it had to be the cats and the floor and Sally the roommate asleep or nothing.

KEY EXCHANGE by Kevin Wade

Act I, Scene 5

MICHAEL

If you really want to know, married life sucks. My wife left me.

The composer. The guy she's been working with. He tells her he can't help himself.

And she can't help herself. So they're out there somewhere helping themselves.

I can't believe it. We're in bed. I'm trying to get something started, and she up and turns on the light and starts to cry and says we've got to talk. "There's this man,

Michael. You've met him. Eric. The musician. I don't know how this happened. I have, we have feelings for each other. I've been trying to rationalize them away, pressure from the wedding, the intimacy of working together, but I can't. I'm with you now, but I'm thinking

about him, and that's not fair to either of us. I can't sneak around on you. I have to figure out what I'm doing. I can't just live in this limbo." Then we're in the bathroom, and she's putting all her makeup and shit into a bag, and she's telling me that it's nothing I've done, this Eric

guy is totally different, they connect on a whole other level. I still can't believe it. She starts to pack up her diaphragm and jelly, and I say can't you hold off on the fucking until you know a little better just what the fuck you are doing? And she says physical attraction is part of

what's between them, and it's her body. We fight. She's really crying hard now, and she goes back into the bedroom. I see the tube of diaphragm jelly lying next to the sink. I'm nuts, you

know, I'm really crazy. I empty the tube of jelly into the toilet, take my tube of muscle

liniment, hold the two tubes nozzle to nozzle, and fill up the jelly tube with Tiger Balm.

RED by John Logan

Quiet Ken has been a dutiful apprentice to the very demanding and difficult - but brilliant modern artist – Mark Rothko.

Act 1, Scene 4

KEN

Bores you?! Bores you?! — Christ almighty, try working for you for a living! — The talking-talking-talking-Jesus-Christ-won't-he-ever-shut-up titanic self-absorption of the man! You stand there trying to look so deep when you're nothing but a solipsistic bully with your grandiose self-importance and lectures and arias and let's-look-at-the-fucking-canvas-for-another-few-weeks-let's-not-fucking-paint-let's-just-look. And the pretension! I can't imagine any other painter in the history of art ever tried so hard to be SIGNIFICANT!

You know, not everything has to be so goddamn IMPORTANT all the time! Not every painting has to rip your guts out and expose your soul! Not everyone wants art that actually HURTS! Sometimes you just want a fucking still life or landscape or soup can or comic book! Which you might learn if you ever actually left your goddamn hermetically sealed submarine here with all the windows closed and no natural light — BECAUSE NATURAL LIGHT ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU! ...

THE MATCHMAKER by Thornton Wilder

CORNELIUS

Isn't the world full of wonderful things.

There we sit cooped up in Yonkers for years and years and all the time wonderful people like Mrs Molloy are walking around in New York and we don't know them at all. I don't know whether - from where you're sitting - you can see - well, for instance, the way (pointing to the edge of his right eye) her eye and forehead and cheek come together, up here. Can you? And the kind of fireworks that shoot out of her eyes all the time.

I tell you right now: a fine woman is the greatest work of God. You can talk all you like about Niagara Falls and the Pyramids; they aren't in it at all. Of course, up there at Yonkers they came into the store all the time, and bought this and that, and I said "Yes, ma'am", and "That'll be seventy-five cents, ma'am"; and I watched them. But today I've talked to one, equal to equal, equal to equal, and to the finest one that ever existed, in my opinion.

They're so different from men! Everything that they say and do is so different that you feel like laughing all the time. Golly, they're different from men. And they're awfully mysterious, too. You never can be really sure what's going on in their heads. They have a kind of wall around them all the time - of pride and a sort of play-acting: I bet you could know a woman a hundred years without ever being really sure whether she liked you or not. This minute I'm in danger. I'm in danger of losing my job and my future and everything that people think is important; but I don't care. Even if I have to dig ditches for the rest of my life, I'll be a ditch-digger who once had a wonderful day.

THE MAN WHO COULDN'T DANCE by Jason Katims
ERIC

I don't know why I can't dance. But it's - I can't. I can't make my body move in these ways that the music is demanding that I move. It's just so goddamn embarrassing. The situation. I mean, standing in public around hundreds of people who are displaying their purist, truest selves. I mean, it takes them no more than two drinks and their souls are out there on the dance floor. Their goodness. Their sensuality. They're sharing and loving. I watch that, look at that. But my body fights it. I start to analyze the music. The rhythm. The time signature. I understand the theory of dancing. The idea of spontaneously sharing in this moment that exists now and only now. The give and take with your partner. Two mirrors on a land where gravity holds you to this point and then leaves you free. And that the universe happens right there and then. Like, truth. I understand this intellectually. But Gail, I never have experienced it. I can't dance.

Because it was the dam holding the water. If I let that out. That one thing, everything would follow. I couldn't dance. I couldn't have a normal talk about the weather with a neighbour without getting into a conversation about God, love and eternity. I mean, after all, the weather has these huge connotations. I couldn't act correctly in social situations. I couldn't sacrifice truth for a relationship. I couldn't hold you when you needed to be held because I wanted you to be stronger. Because I wanted to be stronger. I couldn't ask you for the warmth of your touch out of need. I couldn't let myself. I would only ask for your touch out of strength. Out of something that wouldn't become sick and interdependent and symbiotic. I wasn't able to do these things.

I don't know, Gail. I mean, you marrying Fred didn't really say anything to me. It was like something in this continuum. This cycle. I mean, it was this thing that happened in my life.

The love of my life got married to another man. It didn't seem permanent.

But the fact that Elizabeth ... The fact that this angel ... this unbelievable gift isn't mine. And will never be mine. This is killing me.

THE SEAGULL by Anton Chekhov

KONSTANTIN TREPLEV

(Pulling off the petals of a flower, one by one). She loves me – she loves me not...She loves me – she loves me not... Loves me - loves me not. *(Laughing.)* You see, my mother doesn't love me. And why should she indeed? She wants to live, to have love affairs, to wear light coloured blouses, and here I am, twenty-five years old already. I'm always reminding her that she isn't young any longer. When I'm not about she's thirty-two, but when I'm with her, she's forty-three, and she hates me for it. Moreover, she knows that I have no use for the theatre. She loves the theatre, she imagines that she's serving humanity, whereas in my opinion the theatre of today is in a rut, and full of prejudices and conventions. When I see the curtain rise on a room with three walls, when I watch these great and talented people, these high priests of a sacred art depicting the way people eat, drink, make love, walk about and wear their clothes, in the artificial light of the stage; when I hear them trying to squeeze a moral out of the tritest words and emptiest scenes – some petty little moral that's easy to understand and suitable for use in the home; when I'm presented with a thousand variations of the same old thing, the same thing again and again – well, I just have to escape, I run away as Maupassant ran away from the Eiffel Tower which so oppressed him with its vulgarity.

THIS IS OUR YOUTH by Kenneth Lonergan

Act 2

WARREN

I don't really get what you're upset about. I thought we had a really good time together and I was actually in a fairly Up state of mind for once.

Well, I didn't mean that in any kind of lascivious way, so I don't know why you want to take it like that. I really like you.

I'm sorry I said anything to Dennis. I definitely caved in to the peer pressure. But I also definitely said as little as possible and was totally respectful of you in the way I talked about you. Even though I was pretty excited about what happened last night, and also about like, maybe like, the prospect of like, I don't know, like going out with you – Which I would be very into, if you were. But if you want to think the whole meant nothing to me, then go ahead because that's not the case.

It's totally weird, like, taking all your clothes off and having sex with someone you barely know, and then being like "What's up now?" You know? Like it's such an intense experience but then nobody knows what to fuckin' say, even though nothing really bad actually happened. You know?

I really like you... I don't really agree with most of your opinions...but I don't meet a lot of people who can actually make me think, you know? And who can hold their own in an interesting discussion. And who I'm totally hot for at the same time. You know?

It's a fairly effective combination.

THIS IS OUR YOUTH by Kenneth Lonergan

Act 2

WARREN

It is sort of amazing that one of us actually died. You know? *(Pause.)* It's like my Dad's always saying, "Do you know how bad you guys would have to fuck up before anything really serious ever happened to you? *(Pause.)* You and all your friends from the Upper West Side who went to that fuckin' school where they think it's gonna cripple you for life if they teach you how to spell? *(Pause.)* Do you know what happens to other kids who do the kind of shit you guys do? They die, man. And the only different between you and them is *my money*... It's like a big fuckin' safety net, but you can't stretch it too far, man, because your sister fell right through it." *(Pause.)* But the fact is, he's just so freaked out of his mind that he did so well, and it all blew up in his face anyway. Like he did this great enterprising thing for himself and his family, and made a fortune in this incredibly tough racket, and got a house on the Park without any help from anyone, and he never felt bad for anyone who couldn't do the same thing. But when he was at the height of his powers, he totally lost control of his own daughter, and she ended up getting beaten to death by some guy from the world next door to us. And there was nothing he could do about it. *(Pause.)* So...for the last nine years, he'd been trying to literally *pound* his life back into shape. But it's not really going too well, because he's totally by himself. *(Pause.)* You know?

ALL MY SONS by Arthur Miller

Act 1

CHRIS KELLER (late 20's to mid 30's)

Chris is speaking to Ann who he's planning marry. Ann was engaged to Larry, Chris's brother. He has died in the war.

CHRIS:

You remember, overseas, I was in command of the company?

Well, I lost them.

Just about all.

It takes a little time to toss that off. Because they weren't just men. For instance, one time it'd been raining several days and this kid came to me, and gave me his last pair of dry socks. Put them in my pocket. That's only a little thing ... but ... that's the kind of guys I had. They didn't die; they killed themselves for each other. I mean that exactly; a little more selfish and they'd have been here today. And I got an idea—watching them go down. Everything was being destroyed, see, but it seemed to me that one new thing was made. A kind of ... responsibility. Man for man. You understand me?—To show that, to bring back onto the earth again like some kind of a monument and everyone would feel it standing there, behind him, and it would make a difference to him.

And then I came home and it was incredible. I ... there was no meaning in his here; the whole thing to them was a kind of a—bus accident. I went to work with Dad, and that rat-race again. I felt ... what you said ... ashamed somehow. Because nobody was changed at all. It seemed to make suckers out of a lot of guys. I felt wrong to be alive, to open the bank-book, to drive the new car, to see the new refrigerator. I mean you can take those things out of the war, but when you drive that car you've got to know that it came out of the love of a man can have for man, you've got to be a little better because of that. Otherwise what you have is really loot, and there's blood on it.

I didn't want to take any of it. And I guess that included you.