

break through. Oh, Ruth, it's all too much. He went to a cowboy film.

RUTH: Well, you know, that's how it is.

KATHY: Ruthie!

RUTH: Well, I mean, you know, like maybe he's serious. Mike's got this thing about physics. He really digs it and his advisor says he's a genius, okay, maybe he is, like what do I know about physics? The thing is, he knows he's gonna end up working for his old man in the lumber business. It's all laid out from the start. You have to just sort of fit in.

KATHY: You don't want him to do that, do you? I mean, if the guy is really into physics you have to stand behind him and make it all happen for him.

RUTH: I don't know. You have some kids and everything. I mean, it's not like you can't have a meaningful life if you get married and have kids. Look, I don't want the guy to saw wood for the rest of his life but what can I do about it? Why shouldn't he get into wood? Like, what if he does physics for the rest of his life and he's a genius and ends up head of department at some asshole university. You find out one day he's being financed by the CIA.

KATHY: These guys. They think they don't need you so you go away and they fall to pieces. You should've seen Bob when I first met him.

RUTH: I did.

KATHY: He used to compose all this really shitty music and like when he did something good he didn't even know it. I had to keep telling him yes, it's good, it's really great. A whole year it took him to believe it. He's writing some brilliant stuff now, ever since, you know, I told him he was the first guy.

RUTH: Yeah, and look at him now.

KATHY, weeping: I don't know. You think you're really relating like crazy and then, suddenly, it's a whole new scene.

RUTH: Maybe you ought to stop relating so hard.

FATHER'S DAY

by Oliver Hailey

ACT I

Marian, Estelle, and Louise are three divorcées sharing an afternoon in the sun while their former spouses spend Father's Day with the children. During the course of the play they reveal and share their thoughts on marriage and sex, their fears of a future without mates, and their struggle to maintain a sense of security in an insecure world. In the end each has to confront the reality of her shattered marriage and learn to face the future.

The scene below takes place on the terrace of the Manhattan apartment house in which they live. The three women have been chatting about their past married lives and discussing preparations for a Father's Day party later that day which their ex-husbands will attend. Estelle, the youngest and most naïve of the three has just left to get some of her homemade gazpacho. Marian and Louise are sophisticated, articulate women whose scerbic wits are often directed at each other. When left alone they begin to gossip about Estelle. Their conversation quickly turns to their broken marriages and, with humor that belies their painful sense of rejection, they share their concerns about their families. (The "Fred and Sammy" mentioned by Marian are the roommates of Harold, Estelle's ex-husband.)

LOUISE, a long beat as Louise stares at Marian: I don't like her gazpacho either.

MARIAN: There is nothing worse than bad gazpacho. *A beat.* Unless it's bad Quiche Lorraine. Have you ever had bad Quiche Lorraine?

LOUISE: I've had bad everything.

MARIAN: I always thought Estelle's gazpacho might have been one of the reasons Harold left her. Whatever else you say about Fred and Sammy, they make *marvelous* gazpacho.

LOUISE: Any theories on why Tom left me? I don't even make gazpacho.

MARIAN: You hated each other, didn't you? I believe you've made that clear enough.

LOUISE: It's the reason I give—yes—but, God, I don't know a good marriage that doesn't have a chunk of hate mixed in. I'd like to say something kind, Marian.

MARIAN, *stunned*: To me?

LOUISE: Yes, I envy you. That's why I'm so bitchy with you. I'm sorry.

MARIAN: Envy?

LOUISE: You know *why* you divorced your husband. You caught him committing adultery and you divorced him. That's such a good, solid, middle-class reason.

MARIAN: I thought you were going to say something kind.

LOUISE: That is kind. I have great respect for middle-class logic. It doesn't make for great essayists, of course—and I'm afraid that's your problem there. But as for Richard, you caught him with another woman and you kicked him out. That's so simple—a woman can live with that.

MARIAN: I am not middle-class! My father was a Communist and probably still is!

LOUISE: It'd been raining a couple of weeks the morning Tom and I decided to split.

MARIAN, *and then muttering to herself*: Middle class!

LOUISE: And I suppose Tom and I got nastier when it rained—close quarters—but it finally cleared. We slept late—and when we woke, he turned to me and said, "Why don't we quit playing this game?" I smiled and said, "Wonderful idea." I thought he meant the game of hating one another. But he said, "Fine. I'll call the lawyer right now." He meant the game of being married to one another.

MARIAN: Oh, poor Louise.

LOUISE: No—dumb Louise. When he asked which of us should make the trip to Tia Juana, I can remember my big thought was how much I loved Mexican food. On the way down on the plane, I kept thinking, "I'll have a good meal and then I'll go to whomever you go to—but when they see my papers—how legally married I am—church *and* state—they'll say, 'Oh, señora, we can't do anything about this one—not even in Mexico!'" Well, those Goddamn Mexicans had me divorced in twenty minutes! All those wonderful churches down there—all that fucking religious art. What God has joined let no man

put asunder. Hal! To this day I haven't been able to eat another enchilada. And now she's in there pouring up that Goddamn gazpacho.

MARIAN: That's Spanish—gazpacho.

LOUISE: Yeh? Ever meet a Mexican who didn't tell you he was? Suddenly a piano is heard playing Chopin in the distance. The selection is Ballade No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 23. There goes that Chopin nut again. What floor does he live on anyway? That damn thing sounds like it's coming from above *and* below. Ever have sex with a pair of twins, Marian?

MARIAN, *shocked*: No.

LOUISE: Well, neither have I—but that's exactly what that Goddamn piano sound makes me think of—above *and* below.

MARIAN: You have an incredible mind.

LOUISE: Thanks. *And then shouting at the ledge*: Hey, there—I got a cat down here. My cat hates Chopin. How about a little Debussy for my pussy?

MARIAN, *she jumps up, tries to hide against the wall from fear of being spotted by anyone on the other decks*. Really, Louise—he's quite a sensitive young man.

LOUISE: You know him?

MARIAN: Ronnie? Not well—but I've spoken with him.

LOUISE: Ronnie who?

MARIAN: Ronnie Michner.

LOUISE, *again at the ledge—shouting*: Ronnie! Ronnie Michner! CUT THAT SHIT OUT! *The music stops abruptly.*

MARIAN: To refer to Chopin in such a manner. Oh, Louise, I must say I've never seen you quite like you are this afternoon.

LOUISE: There's a reason.

MARIAN: Oh?

LOUISE: I hoped it wouldn't show so quickly—but it does, doesn't it?

MARIAN: Well, you're always unpleasant, of course—but no, I'll be fair—you've reached your nadir today.

LOUISE: They want to take Christopher away.

MARIAN: Away? Christopher? Who?

LOUISE: Who do you think? Tom and the Fat One. They want him to come live with them.

MARIAN: You mean permanently?

LOUISE: That's right. I'll get visiting privileges, of course. Mother's Day—things like that.

MARIAN: But Christopher's only seven. A child always stays with his mother.

LOUISE: Marian—you are *so* middle-class.

MARIAN: Medea killed her children rather than let Jason take them. And what kind of class was she?

LOUISE: That kind of behavior shows no class at all.

MARIAN: How could Tom ask such a thing? It was cruel even to ask.

LOUISE: Chris is his son, too. And he wants him. What's cruel?

MARIAN: I'd lie. If it came to that I'd lie. I'd swear Augustus was not Richard's son.

LOUISE, *she suddenly laughs sharply*: That's very funny.

MARIAN: What's funny?

LOUISE: Well . . . if you're going at it that literally, I'm not sure Chris is.

MARIAN: Not Tom's son?

LOUISE: Not *sure*.

MARIAN: Are you lying again? You lie a lot, you know.

LOUISE: All right, skip it.

MARIAN: Whose son is he?

LOUISE: I just said I'm not *that* sure. I was an actress, remember? And a very popular one—offstage. When I found I was with child, I decided on Tom. He knew it was going to be a seven-month baby. He assumed *his* seven-month baby. Me, I was never that sure. All those bad jokes about "only the mother knows for sure." Well, here's one mother who really doesn't have the foggiest. There were three very serious contenders.

MARIAN: I'm shocked, Louise.

LOUISE: Oh, you're not.

MARIAN: I know I'm not supposed to be, but I am. I was just saying to Estelle that nothing shocks today. Well, that's a lie! I'm shocked every day of my life! I don't know how much more my system can take. Every day new outrages. I'm glad the *Tribune* didn't live to have to print them! And now this. Why did you tell me? I don't want to know things like this, damn it!

LOUISE: All right, I'm sorry.

MARIAN: Who were the other two? Anyone I knew?

LOUISE: No one worth naming. After me they both went gay. The life of an actress is not that easy.

MARIAN: Well, if they became homosexuals, then Tom prob-

ably *is* the father—since he's the only one of the three who chose to assume the role of a father.

LOUISE: There's not a court in the country could follow that reasoning. *A beat*. They leave in a month.

MARIAN: Leave? You mean leave New York?

LOUISE: They're moving to Iowa. Sioux City.

MARIAN: Tom's changing jobs?

LOUISE: No—the whole firm's moving. It's another one of those "We've had it with New York" company moves.

MARIAN: They want to take Christopher to Iowa? To Sioux City, Iowa? My God, that place is in the Midwest, isn't it?

LOUISE: You want to know my first thought? It was pretty horrible. I thought—thank God Tom and I aren't still married—I'd have to go to Iowa. This way it's only Christopher.

MARIAN: Don't talk like that. You'd never let him go. All the way to Iowa? With a man and woman he's probably not even related to?

LOUISE: I'm letting him decide.

MARIAN: Who? Christopher?

LOUISE: Yes.

MARIAN: A child? A child make a decision like that?

LOUISE: Who better?

MARIAN: *You* better—that's who better. This way all you're doing is testing his love. Don't. Because he'll go with the one who offers him the most. It'll have nothing to do with love. I'll tell you something. *A beat—this is not easy for her*. Augustus has tried to run off four times to live with his father.

LOUISE: I didn't know that.

MARIAN: I couldn't tell it for a long time. Until I came to understand why. And yet it's really quite simple. His father has more than I do. It's greed. They're hopelessly greedy little creatures. And nothing feeds that greed quite like divorce. Christopher is only seven. Augustus is almost twelve. I've heard him actually boasting to friends—what a great racket he's got going—what a great setup it is!

LOUISE: I don't want that to happen to my child.

MARIAN: Who the hell does?

LOUISE: Then I think he should have a crack at a set of parents . . . or, as Christopher puts it . . . "a mother and father who both live in."

MARIAN: I picked a parent, you know.

LOUISE: Your parents were never divorced.

MARIAN: No—but I picked one anyway. I loved my mother of course—but I picked my father. I listened to him. I modeled myself after him. My poor mother had virtually nothing to do. She died quite young, you know. Some take it better, of course. But I should never have picked a parent. No child should be permitted to.

THE DAYS AND NIGHTS OF BEEBEE FENSTERMAKER

by William Snyder

ACT I

Beebee Fenstermaker is a young woman just out of college and living in an American city on her own in her first apartment. Her aspirations are to live a creative and independent life. She tries writing and then painting, but is forced to recognize both the limitations of her talents and that, at best, she is a dilettante. Further deterioration of her self-esteem and hopes are brought about by the realities of having to work at a mundane full-time job, and by unsuccessful relationships with men. One by one her romantic illusions crumble as she is forced to confront her unrealistic expectations about men, her career, and her own abilities.

Nettie Jo is an unambitious, but fun-loving young woman who is Beebee's neighbor and friend. In the following scene Nettie Jo stops by Beebee's apartment on her way out on a date. She tells Beebee that she will soon be getting married and moving away. She expresses concern about Beebee's recent reclusiveness and tries to convince her to get out more often. During the conversation the two women begin to criticize each other's lifestyles and goals. Finally, Beebee confesses to herself that her approach to life is based on self-deception and her fear of failure.

NETTIE JO: Beebee?

BEEBEE: Hey, Nettie Jo. *Nettie Jo stands in front of armchair and takes a modeling pose. Beebee gets a sketchbook and pencil out of coffee-table drawer, sits on sofa, and begins to sketch Nettie Jo.*

NETTIE JO: You antsy about somethin'?

BEEBEE, *shakes her head*: Uh-uh.

NETTIE JO: Ever since you dropped your novel and took up art, you seem much more moody to me.

BEEBEE: I haven't dropped my novel. I put it aside to let the ideas solidify.

NETTIE JO: Since you put it aside then. You seem much more moody to me. *Crosses to kitchen, gets Coke out of refrigerator and opens it.*

BEEBEE: I don't think I am.

NETTIE JO: I do. I think you are.

BEEBEE: Hold still, Nettie Jo.

NETTIE JO, *returns to her position in front of armchair*: Don't you want me to be evanescent?

BEEBEE: Not tonight.

NETTIE JO: That's the way I feel tonight.

BEEBEE: You look very pretty.

NETTIE JO: Thank you. *She smiles.*

BEEBEE: Don't smile.

NETTIE JO: How's your new art teacher?

BEEBEE: I stopped goin to him.

NETTIE JO: Stopped goin to this one too? Why?

BEEBEE: He was talkin more than he was teachin.

NETTIE JO: Who will you go to now?

BEEBEE: Nobody for a while. I thought I'd work on my own. Hold still, Nettie Jo. I wish you'd have your hair cut. All I can see is hair.

NETTIE JO: Most people like it long. *Sits in armchair. Mother could sit on hers. I've got a picture of her doin it. Lookin up into a sterlin silver handmirror. Poses like her mother.*

BEEBEE: Come on now, Nettie Jo.

NETTIE JO: How many teachers have you been to?

BEEBEE: What difference does it make?

NETTIE JO: Two or three anyway.

BEEBEE: What difference does it make? None of them fit the bill. I don't either, I guess. When I first go to them they all