

ANTIGONE

Without ever looking back. If you love me, swear it.

HEMON *(after a moment)*: I swear it.

ANTIGONE: Thank you. Now then. Yesterday first. You asked me before why I had worn one of Ismene's dresses, this perfume and this lipstick. I was stupid. I wasn't very sure that you really wanted me and I did all that in order to be a little more like other girls, to make you want me.

HEMON: So that was why?

ANTIGONE: Yes. And you laughed and we quarreled and my bad temper got the best of me. I ran away. *(She adds in a lower voice.)* But I had come to you last evening, so that you would make love to me, so that I might become your wife before. *(He draws back, he is about to speak, she cries out.)* You swore to me not to ask why. You swore to me, Hemon! *(She says in a lower voice, humbly.)* Please... *(And she adds, turning away, hard.)* Besides, I am going to tell you. I wanted to be your wife last night because that is how I love you, very strongly, and that—I'm going to hurt you, oh my darling, forgive me!—that never, never can I marry you. *(He remains stupefied, mute: she runs to the window, she cries out.)* Oh Hemon, you swore it! Go away, leave right away without saying anything. If you speak, if you take one step toward me, I'll throw myself out this window. I swear it, Hemon. I swear it to you on the head of the little boy that we have had together in a dream, the little boy that I shall never have. Now go, quickly. You will find out tomorrow. You will find out in a while. *(She ends with such despair that HEMON obeys and goes off.)* Please leave, Hemon. That's all you can still do for me, if you love me.

BILLY LIAR

by Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall

Billy (19) - Barbara (19)

The Play: Set in a dreary industrial town in the North of England, *Billy Liar* depicts the life of Billy Fisher, an imaginative teenager who is viewed by many in his community as little better than an idle, dishonest liar. But the play is more than a comedy about a boy who tells lies; it is a play that touches the very essence of all who long to escape the complacency of a mundane world. Billy, an undertaker's clerk, creates a world of fantasy far from his lower-middle class background—so much so that at times it is difficult to discern fact from fiction. His family is at a loss to understand him or control his habits; to them he is a hopeless good-for-nothing. Billy becomes engaged to three different girls simultaneously. When one offers him the opportunity to run away in search of a better life, he retreats into his dream world, preferring fantasy to reality.

The Scene: Billy has asked Barbara, his second fiancée, over for a visit—somehow he needs to get her engagement ring back so he can return it to Rita, the girl he first asked to marry him. Billy has some confessions to make, too.

BILLY LIAR

[BILLY: Barbara, I'm glad you asked me that question. About my sister.]

[BARBARA: What is it?]

[BILLY: Sit down, darling. (*BARBARA sits on the couch.*) Darling, are you still coming to tea this afternoon?]

BARBARA: What is it?

BILLY: Sit down, darling. (*BARBARA sits on the couch.*) Darling, are you still coming to tea this afternoon?

BARBARA: Of course.

BILLY: Because there are some things I want to tell you.

BARBARA: What things, Billy?

BILLY: You know what you said the other night—about loving me? Even if I were a criminal.

BARBARA: Well?

BILLY: You said you'd still love me even if I'd murdered your mother.

BARBARA: (*Suspiciously.*) Well?

BILLY: I wonder if you'll still love me when you hear what I've got to say. You see—well, you know that I've got a fairly vivid imagination, don't you?

BARBARA: Well, you have to have if you're going to be a script-writer, don't you?

BILLY: Well, being a script-writer, I'm perhaps—at times—a bit inclined to let my imagination run away with me. As you know. (*BARBARA is even more aloof than usual.*) You see, the thing is, if we're going to have our life together—and that cottage—and little Billy and little Barbara and the lily pond and all that... Well, there's some things we've got to get cleared up.

BARBARA: What things?

BILLY: Some of the things I'm afraid I've been telling you.

BARBARA: Do you mean you've been telling me lies?

BILLY: Well not lies exactly... But I suppose I've been, well, exaggerating some things. Being a script-writer... For instance, there's that business about my father. Him being a sea captain. On a petrol tanker.

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BARBARA: You mean he's not on a petrol tanker?

BILLY: He's not even in the navy.

BARBARA: Well, what is he?

BILLY: He's in the removal business.

BARBARA: And what about him being a prisoner-of-war? And that tunnel? And the medal? Don't say that was all lies?

BILLY: Yes. (*BARBARA turns away abruptly.*) Are you cross?

BARBARA: No—not cross. Just disappointed. It sounds as though you were ashamed of your father.

BILLY: I'm not ashamed. I'm not—I'm not!

BARBARA: Otherwise why say he was a prisoner-of-war? What was he?

BILLY: A conscientious ob... (*He checks himself.*) He wasn't anything. He wasn't fit. He has trouble with his knee.

BARBARA: The knee he's supposed to have been shot in, I suppose.

BILLY: Yes. Another thing, we haven't got a budgie, or a cat. And I didn't make the furniture... Not all of it, anyway.

BARBARA: How may other lies have you been telling me?

BILLY: My sister.

BARBARA: Don't tell me you haven't got a sister.

BILLY: I did have. But she's dead. If you're still coming for your tea this afternoon they never talk about her. (*BARBARA remains silent, her head still turned away.*) You remind me of her... If you're not coming, I'll understand... I'm just not good enough for you, Barbara... If you want to give me the engagement ring back—I'll understand.

BARBARA: (*Turning towards him.*) Don't be cross with yourself, Billy. I forgive you.

BILLY: (*Moving to kiss her.*) Darling...

BARBARA: (*Moving away.*) But promise me one thing.

BILLY: That I'll never lie to you again? (*BARBARA nods.*) I'll never lie to you again. Never, I promise... Darling, there is one thing. I have got a grannie.

BARBARA: I believe you.

BILLY: Only she's not blind. She's not very well, though. She's upstairs. Sleeping. She might have to have her leg off.

BILLY LIAR

BARBARA: *(Kissing him.)* Poor darling.
BILLY: *(Moving quickly towards the cocktail cabinet.)* Would you like a drink?
BARBARA: Not now, pet.
BILLY: *(Opening the cabinet.)* Port. To celebrate.
BARBARA: All right. Well, just a tiny one.
BILLY: I'm turning over a new leaf. *(Unnoticed to BARBARA he pours the drinks and taking a tablet from the "passion pill" bottle, places it in her glass. He crosses with the glasses and sits beside her on the couch.)* That's yours, darling.
BARBARA: *(Sitting on the edge of the couch she sips the port.)* Let's talk about something nice.
BILLY: Let's talk about our cottage.
BARBARA: Oh, I've seen the most marvellous material to make curtains for the living-room. Honestly, you'll love it. It's a sort of turquoise with lovely little squiggles like wine-glasses.
BILLY: Will it go with the yellow carpet?
BARBARA: No, but it will go with the grey rugs.
BILLY: *(Taking her in his arms.)* I love you, darling.
BARBARA: *(Moving away.)* I love you.
BILLY: Do you? Really and truly?
BARBARA: Of course I do.
BILLY: Are you looking forward to getting married?
(BARBARA takes an orange from her handbag and peels it and eats it during the following dialogue.)
BARBARA: I think about it every minute of the day.
BILLY: Darling... *(He again attempts unsuccessfully to kiss her.)* Don't ever fall in love with anybody else.
BARBARA: Let's talk about our cottage.
BILLY: *(Simulating a dreamy voice.)* What about our cottage?
BARBARA: About the garden. Tell me about the garden.
BILLY: We'll have a lovely garden. We'll have roses in it and daffodils and a lovely lawn with a swing for little Billy and little Barbara to play on. And we'll have our meals down by the lily pond in summer.

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BARBARA: Do you think a lily pond is safe? What if the kiddies wandered too near and fell in?
BILLY: We'll build a wall round it. No—no, we won't. We won't have a pond at all. We'll have an old well. An old brick well where we draw the water. We'll make it our wishing well. Do you know what I'll wish?
BARBARA: *(Shaking her head.)* No.
BILLY: Tell me what you'll wish first.
BARBARA: Oh, I'll wish that we'll always be happy. And always love each other. What will you wish?
BILLY: Better not tell you.
BARBARA: Why not, pet?
BILLY: You might be cross.
BARBARA: Why would I be cross?
BILLY: Oh I don't know... You might think me too...well, forward. *(He glances at her face but can see no reaction.)* Barbara...? Do you think it's wrong for people to have—you know, feelings?
BARBARA: Not if they're genuinely in love with each other.
BILLY: Like we are.
BARBARA: *(Uncertainly.)* Yes.
BILLY: Would you think it wrong of me to have—feelings?
BARBARA: *(Briskly and firmly.)* I think we ought to be married first.
BILLY: *(Placing his hand on BARBARA's knee.)* Darling...
BARBARA: Are you feeling all right?
BILLY: Of course, darling. Why?
BARBARA: Look where your hand is.
BILLY: Darling, don't you want me to touch you?
BARBARA: *(Shrugging.)* It seems...indecent, somehow.
BILLY: Are you feeling all right?
BARBARA: Yes, of course.
BILLY: How do you feel?
BARBARA: Contented.
BILLY: You don't feel...you know—restless?
BARBARA: No.
BILLY: Finish your drink.

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BARBARA: In a minute. *(She opens her handbag and offers it towards him.)* Have an orange.

(BILLY snatching the bag from her he throws it down and oranges spill out across the floor.)

BILLY: You and your bloody oranges!

BARBARA: *(Remonstratively.)* Billy!... Darling!

BILLY: *(Placing his head on her shoulder.)* I'm sorry, darling. I've had a terrible morning.

BARBARA: Why? What happened?

BILLY: Oh, nothing. The usual. Family and things. Just that I've got a headache.

BARBARA: I'm sorry, pet. You know, you ought to see a doctor.

BILLY: I've seen doctors—specialists—I've seen them all. All they could give me was crêpe bandage. *(BARBARA, unimpressed, licks her fingers.)* You know, my darling, I think you have feelings, too. Deep down.

BARBARA: *(Examining her hands distastefully.)* Oooh, sticky paws!

BILLY: Wipe them on the cushion. *(He rises as a thought strikes him.)* You can go upstairs if you want. Use our bathroom.

BARBARA: Thank you.

BLUE DENIM

by James Leo Herlihy and William Noble
Arthur (15) - Janet (15)

The Play: First produced on Broadway in 1958, *Blue Denim* is a compassionate drama concerning the communication problem between the younger and older generations. The plot centers around Arthur Bartley, son of a retired Army Major, his mother, sister, friend Ernie, and his girl friend, Janet, and concerns the crisis that develops when Arthur finds out that he and Janet are about to become parents. Arthur is scared and alone; he can't turn to his parents for help, they just don't seem to speak the same language. When Arthur and Janet decide that an abortion is the only answer to the problem, Arthur turns to his friend Ernie for advice on how to handle the situation. Ernie advises against such action and urges Arthur to talk to his parents. They boy tries to do so, but is unable to make himself understood; his parents seem unwilling to truly listen. Ultimately, the play depicts the insecurity of youth and the failure of many parents to ever really come to know their children.

The Scene: Arthur and Ernie have been playing cards and generally hanging out in Arthur's basement. When Arthur's girl friend, Janet, appears, Ernie feels like the third man out. Ernie storms out, leaving Arthur and Janet alone.

Special Note: While the issues and concerns of *Blue Denim* remain timely, the language is that of the late 1950's when the play was written. Because of this, the play may be best served when set during that period.