

The Plot **Thickens**

Or

It's All in the Script

A Melodrama within a Melodrama

A Play in Two Acts

By

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Description

A young woman, Katie Preston, brings a world of troubles into the rehearsal hall where she is the heroine of a melodrama currently in rehearsal. The other cast members play within her personal melodrama with little recognition of the parallels between her world and the plot of the play. The cast of the melodrama each play their “civilian” selves during non-melodrama periods.

Synopsis

The stage manager, Randi, provides a glimpse into each of the characters as they prepare for the evening's rehearsal. The director, Roscoe the Ratbag, is as mean as his nickname implies. Cal has replaced "he whose name shall not be mentioned" as the villain, but is having trouble getting up to speed with the script and opening night is rapidly approaching. The hero, Jack, hints about having feelings for Katie, but doesn't want to intrude into the relationship she already has going. Natalie, Katie's true friend on the set, attempts to help get Katie's life in order. But Katie's relationship continues to sour, as does her working relationship with Roscoe. Monica, Katie's real world rival, doesn't help the situation by increasing her criticism and prima donna attitude. Sparks fly as the true nature of the Katie/Roscoe relationship unfolds. In his anger, Roscoe quits the show, leaving it up to Randi to pull things together and save the day.

Setting

A small community theater stage setting. (The original set was split down the middle, with one half being the Hawthorne/Pureheart home living room and the other half being Worthington's office. During rehearsals, the scenes being played out which were not actually set in those rooms, are rehearsed there anyway with references in the script to these misplaced settings.)

Time

Present day, with the melodrama being rehearsed set near the turn of the 20th century.

Scenes

<u>One</u>	A Thursday evening rehearsal
<u>Two</u>	The following Monday
<u>Three</u>	The following Thursday
<u>Four</u>	The next evening, Friday
<u>Five</u>	In performance

Cast of Characters

Katie Preston/Kathleen Pureheart:

A woman in her early 20's, the heroine of the melodrama. She has had a difficult life. Her father died while she was young. Her mother remarried a man Katie can't stand. Her personal life is a mess and she carries these burdens into rehearsal.

Jack Taylor/Johnny Tremaine:

A man in his mid-20's to early 30's. The hero of the play, desperately in love with Katie, but too much of a gentleman to intrude on her present relationship.

Roscoe Henderson:

A man in his late 40's to early 50's. Director of the play and villainous to the core. Envisions himself as a film director as evidenced by his signature line.

Monica Lawrence/Melanie Longbottom:

A woman in her late 20's. Katie's unfriendly rival. Cast as the 'trusted friend' despite wanting the lead, she's forced to play second fiddle, again.

Natalie Holloway/Nell Hawthorne:

A woman in her 40's. Katie's true friend; yet plays her unloving mother in the play.

Cal Wallace/Crenshaw Worthington:

A man in his 30's. The replacement villain in the play and a jester at heart.

Randi(y) Watterson:

Either a woman or man, with the appropriate change in spelling. Late 30's to 50's. The play's Stage Manager and keeps the audience up to speed in the developing story.

For dialogue simplicity, during the melodrama scenes, characters will be identified by their "civilian" names not their melodrama character names.

The inserted melodrama dialogue is italicized.

Staging Notes

In several scenes, Roscoe and Randi begin the scene on stage but then blend into the background as the scene unfolds, only to interrupt as things fall apart. Moving them to a still visible place in the wings, into or behind the audience will create a bit more interaction with them.

Roscoe's list of various diseases can be altered to accommodate any particularly current epidemics.

The number of Cal's (evil laughs) can be modified to suit the character as portrayed.

In the original production, for the sake of time, costume pieces were added as off stage time allowed so that by Scene Five all characters were in full costume.

Original Production Notes

The premiere performance of “The Plot Thickens or It’s All in the Script” was presented by the Springs Theatre Company of Pagosa Springs, Colorado in June 2009.

Cast:

Katie Preston/Kathleen Pureheart

Jack Taylor/Johnny Tremaine

Roscoe Henderson

Monica Lawrence/Melanie Longbottom

Natalie Holloway/Nell Hawthorne

Cal Wallace/Crenshaw Worthington

Randi Watterson

Played by:

Brittany Connor

Adam Logan

Michael DeWinter

Nicole Dominguez

Maggie Greenwood

Rick Artis

Elizabeth Baldwin

Directed by:

Betty Schwicker

Set Design:

Betty Schwicker

Costume Design:

D’Ann Artis

TOC

Scene 1

SETTING: A Thursday evening rehearsal. Present day stage setting depicting a turn of the 20th century melodrama set.

AT RISE: Randi, the Stage Manger, is engaged in pre-rehearsal set dressing.

<p style="text-align: center;">RANDI</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(working busily until noticing the audience. Addresses them.)</p> <p>Oh, hi. I didn't realize you were already here. It's not often that I get to actually talk to the audience, That's because I'm the stage manager. I'm usually in the back making sure everyone is in their places with everything they need. My name's Randi, or as I like to see myself, "the glue that holds this whole mess together". My hobbies include skydiving, spelunking, and collecting antique dueling pistols. But, enough about me... I don't have to tell you it's been crazy around here this last week. Roscoe the Ratbag, that's what the cast calls our</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(sarcastically)</p> <p>beloved director, Mr. Henderson, has been absolutely unbearable since having to re-cast our villain, Crenshaw Worthington.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ROSCOE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(bellowing from off stage)</p> <p>Randi, I want these people in their places and ready to go in three minutes... no, make that <u>two</u> minutes...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">RANDI</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(still to audience)</p> <p>Speak of the devil...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(to ROSCOE)</p> <p>I got it covered.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(back to audience)</p> <p>As I was saying. He had to re-cast the villain. The first one nearly had a nervous breakdown. Right there.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(points to spot on stage)</p> <p>It wasn't pretty. Ratbag, I mean Roscoe was so hard on him, he just quit. Right in the middle of a scene, he started to tear up... then just walked out. Didn't even say another word. I'm not sure I would have been able to do that. But, boy do I want to. But, that's another story. Now we have Cal. Ah... dear, sweet, Cal, you gotta love that little prankster, but if he doesn't stop putting that plastic vomit on my</p>	
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emergency sewing kit, I'm gonna bop him on the head.

(CAL enters)

CAL

Hey Randi, I can't seem to find my cape and top hat. Do you know where they are?

RANDI

Did you try looking under your fake barf?

CAL

Oh...yeah...pretty funny, huh? So, do you know where they went?

RANDI

They're in the costume room. As always, safely stowed on the top shelf next to Monica's hats so they won't get lost. You do know you don't need them tonight, right? We don't start costume rehearsals until next week.

CAL

I know, but wearing them helps me get into character. Thanks. See you in a bit.

(CAL exits. Natalie enters.)

NATALIE

Randi, sweetie, did my big, gaudy, gold necklace get put somewhere it doesn't belong? It's not in my jewelry bag.

RANDI

Cal and Jack were goofing around with it and broke the clasp. I sent it out to be repaired. The jeweler promised me it would be back on Friday.

(NATALIE freezes. RANDI speaks to audience.)

That's Natalie. She's such a sweetheart. Always on time and totally prepared. Always a kind word. Always encouraging. What a saint.
(cynically)

I have no idea how she got tied up in this production.

(back to NATALIE)

Can you do without it for a couple of days?

NATALIE

No problem, hon. Just making sure it didn't get lost. Back in a few.

(NATALIE exits. MONICA enters.)

MONICA (fuming)

Listen, moron. The next time you touch my stuff I gonna come in here and smack you.

RANDI

(peeved enough to get in her face)

Just doing my job, your highness. You left your crap all over the dressing room, again. Next time you might be a bit more considerate of the other cast members. Everyone has to share the same space, you know.

(MONICA exits muttering. Then to audience)

Now Monica, on the other hand, is definitely no saint. And since I don't have anything good to say about her, I won't say anything...But, if I did say something, it would be, 'she's a royal pain in the a'...

(JACK enters and interrupts the thought)

JACK

Hey, Randi, where is everybody?

RANDI

Hi, Jack. They're all in the back getting ready. Rat..., I mean Mr. Henderson wants to start in a minute.

(JACK freezes. To audience)

And then there's Jack. Talk about your squeaky-clean, do-gooder, Boy Scout type. Now, don't get me wrong, I mean that in the nicest possible way... He's like Wally Cleaver on niceness steroids.

(KATIE enters, lost on her own thoughts. She gets to position and freezes.)

And then there's our true princess. I mean that in a nice way, too. For most of her life, it's been pretty tough. Her father died when she was about four. Apparently, her stepfather is a big jerk. And last week, her boyfriend got more than a little out of hand. I suggested that she get a restraining order. But, she says she still loves him.

(in resignation)

What's a body to do? Oh...I gotta go get my box of hand props.

(exits)

JACK (tentatively)

Hi, Katie. You look very nice today.

KATIE

What? Oh hi, Jack. Thanks. Sorry, I was off in my own little world there for a sec.

JACK

Is everything ok?

KATIE

Yeah... well sort of...No, not really. It's just that...

ROSCOE

(bellowing as he enters)

Randi, is everyone on set?... Where is everyone? I told you I wanted them out here right now.

(RANDI appears with the box of props)

RANDI

You said you wanted to begin with Scene Four. That starts with just Kathleen and Johnny. Katie and Jack are both already here.

ROSCOE

But, now I want to talk to everyone. Get 'em out here!

RANDI (mockingly)

One moment please...

(exits and is heard off stage)

On stage everyone. Looks like Director's notes before we start.

CAST

(ad libs as they enter)

Oh geez...

Not again...

What now?

Etc.

ROSCOE

Ok, listen up. I am not happy about the progress we've made since last week's little fiasco...

(ALL look at breakdown spot on stage)

But, since I like to start with the positive...Monica, nice job on scene six. At least somebody was paying attention.

(MONICA gives everyone a patronizing smile)

Natalie, you're doing fine, except for your inflection. Still seems a bit stilted. See if you can smooth it out a bit.

NATALIE

Sure. I'll keep working until you're happy with it.

ROSCOE (condescendingly)

Katie, I'm sure that somewhere in your massive resume you have some sort of experience that will somehow impact this performance, 'cuz so far Kathleen is as boring as any character I've ever seen. Get it together already.

(Katie turns away, tearing up)

Jack, Johnny just isn't remotely believable, at all. I mean, even for a melodrama. There's no depth to him. And no life. Can you make it look like you've done this at least once before?

JACK

But, I...

ROSCOE

I don't want excuses. I want perfection... And then there's Cal... Cal, Cal, Cal... I thought you were a professional. I hired you because you told me you'd be ready. Now after a solid week of rehearsals, you're still in the book, your blocking is sloppy, and your character is weak. We're three weeks out from opening night and I still don't have a villain. Geez, you're no better than that last clown.

JACK

Well perhaps, if you hadn't called
(makes quote marks in the air)
'He whose name shall not be mentioned',

(ALL look at spot breakdown spot again)

an 'overweight, jerk-face moron, with the acting skills of an epileptic baboon', we wouldn't be in this situation. No offense, Cal.

CAL

None taken, Jack.

ROSCOE

Hey, I happen to like that phrase, especially the baboon part. But if

you'd like to join, Mr. No-Name, just keep it up, Jack. I'm still the director and I can still fire you... Now let's get to work. Perhaps we can keep this show from being a total disaster... Ok, from Johnny's entrance at the top of Scene Four.

(all but Katie exit. She gets into position and character.)

Aaaaaaaaaand...Action.

(JACK immediately re-enters)

JACK

What is it, Kathleen? Why are you crying?

KATIE

Oh Johnny, it's our boss, Mr. Worthington. He won't leave me alone.

JACK

But, I thought he was engaged to your mother.

(CAL enters unseen by the others)

KATIE

He is engaged to Mother. But he's a wicked, wicked man. Why just today, he called me into his office and grabbed me. Then... he tried to kiss me.

JACK

Oh, the horror of it all. I mean those teeth and that breath. Ugh.... How did you get away?

KATIE

I pushed him away and told him that if he didn't leave me alone, I'd go to mother and see that their engagement was called off.

JACK

And what did he say to that?

KATIE

He said...

(CAL approaches. KATIE reacts with horror at his appearance)

CAL

(in cape and top hat over street clothes)
I said, 'Go ahead and tell mommy'. She'll never believe you. Besides, she loves my money more than she loves you.
(evil laugh)

JACK
(moving to protect her)
Be gone, you foul, despicable creature. If I have my way, you'll never bother either of them ever again.

CAL
You had better be careful, Johnny. I'm a very powerful man. If you cross me, you will never work in this town again.

JACK
(getting in his face)
You can fire me right now for all I care. But, I will never stop hounding you until you get everything you deserve.

CAL
So be it, Johnny Tremaine. From this day hence, you and I are mortal enemies. You will rue the day...
(breaking character)
Crap, why can't I remember that line.

ROSCOE (disgusted)
Geez... Randi, give him the line.

RANDI
(consults production notebook)
The line is, 'So be it, Johnny Tremaine. You will rue the day you crossed paths with Crenshaw Worthington. From this day hence, you and I are mortal enemies.' Followed by an evil laugh.

ROSCOE
(still disgusted)
Do you have it now?

CAL
(under his breath)
So be it...rue the day... from this day hence... Yeah, I got it.

ROSCOE
About time. Start again, from that line. Aaaaaaaaand... Action.

CAL

So be it, Johnny Tremaine. You will rue the day you crossed paths with Crenshaw Worthington. From this day hence, you and I are mortal enemies.

(evil laugh. Then exits.)

KATIE

Oh, Johnny, what are you going to do?

JACK

What I promised. I'm going to make sure that evil man never bothers you again.

(they briefly hug)

ROSCOE

Ok, stop, you're giving me shingles. I wouldn't call that good, but at least it's better than it was. Randi... have everybody take five and get set up for Scene Six.

RANDI

Which one's six?

ROSCOE

Geez... Doesn't anybody else know this show yet. Six is the 'cry-baby' scene with all the women. And I have a question for Monica; have her meet me out back.

(he exits)

RANDI

Monica!

MONICA (off-stage)

Whaddy want, creep?

RANDI

Roscoe wants to chat with you, again. Usual place...

(to audience)

Let me translate that last little bit for you. Roscoe is headed out back, that means he needs a smoke... or three... and he has a question for Monica; that means he wants to see if she'll "go out" with him again after rehearsal. If you know what I mean... It's kinda creepy if you ask me, with her in her 20's and him in his 50's. Oh well, not my concern. Back to work.

(to the wings)

Katie... Natalie, are you ladies about ready for Scene Six?

NATALIE (off stage)

Can you give us a minute or two, sweetie? Katie's a bit indisposed.

RANDI

No problem, Ratbag's still feeding his nicotine addiction and who knows what else. He'll be a few more minutes, but not too many. Let's see if we can be in place when he gets back and perhaps avoid another tirade.

NATALIE

Sure, Randi. Won't be long.

RANDI

I tell ya', that guy is a real piece of work. Nothing's ever good enough for him. No matter how hard they try, the poor actors can never perform up to his expectations. Frankly, I'm surprised only one of them quit. If I didn't need the money so badly, I'd be gone, too.

(KATIE enters from one side and get into positions. KATIE appears to have been crying. ROSCOE and MONICA enter from the other side a moment later.)

ROSCOE

Let's go from the top of the scene. Keep the pace up. This one's always too slow.

(JACK enters and watches the scene with RANDI from the side, out of the sight of ROSCOE.)

KATIE

Are you ready to start?

ROSCOE (condescendingly)

Any time, princess.

KATIE

Melanie, I need your advice.

MONICA

About what? What's wrong?

KATIE

It's Mother. You know that Mr. Worthington proposed marriage and she accepted.

MONICA

Yes, everyone has known about their engagement for some time now. What's wrong with that?

KATIE

What's wrong is; he is an evil, wicked man, who doesn't really care for her at all. I don't even know why they became engaged.

MONICA

What makes you say he is wicked? He's a well respected community leader, a businessman of some renown. You know he is always generous when giving to the 'widows and orphans fund'.

KATIE

Yes, he is definitely pure as snow on the outside, but inside his heart is as black as coal. You know he called me into his office today.

MONICA

Yes, you mentioned that before. Did something happen?

KATIE

Yes, let me tell you... When I first arrived, he began telling me what a lousy employee I am, how I have no skills and am always coming in late, even though that almost never happens. But then...he grabbed me and tried to kiss me...and told me I must kiss him whenever he wants.

MONICA

You poor thing—

(breaking character)

This is just not working for me.

ROSCOE (peevd)

You do know that it's the director who is supposed to stop the scene, right?

MONICA

Yeah, I know. But did you see how it was going? How am I supposed to act across from something like that?

KATIE

Wait a minute. There was nothing wrong with my performance.

MONICA

Really? You saw nothing wrong with that drivel? You're kidding, right? That was awful. I've worked with fourth graders who can act better than you.

KATIE

Fourth graders? That sounds about right for your level of work—

ROSCOE

Ok, ladies, that's enough. We need to finish this scene, but, to avoid another cat fight, let's move on the Nell's entrance.

(calls off stage)

Natalie, are you ready to salvage this mess?

NATALIE (entering)

I'll do what I can. I'm sure it wasn't all that bad... on either part.

(KATIE smiles at her, MONICA scowls)

ROSCOE

Alright, in the interest of sanity, that would be my sanity, we'll go from Kathleen's first line after Nell enters. Katie, that last scene was a bit weak, so step it up a notch, ok?

(MONICA moves to position but remains uninvolved with the scene)

KATIE

(gives ROSCOE the evil eye before beginning)

Mother, I've been meaning to talk to you about something. Something important.

NATALIE

(she's in a light-hearted mood)

What is it, Kathleen? You won't be trying to ruin my exceptionally good mood, will you?

KATIE

Of course not, but this is important...Are you sure you want to go through with this? The wedding I mean.

NATALIE

(her mood sours)

Of course, I want to go through with the wedding. Why wouldn't I? Crenshaw, I mean, Mr. Worthington treats me very well and he's very rich. And besides, out of the goodness of his heart, he's even given

you a very good job. You, of all people, a worthless child with no schooling and no skills. You should be thankful that you still have a job. Today I heard that he actually fired that hotheaded boyfriend of yours, Johnny Tremaine.

KATIE

He's not hotheaded. He was just looking out for me... and you.

NATALIE

Me? Why on earth would Johnny Tremaine be looking out for me? I can take care of myself.

KATIE

Because Crenshaw Worthington is a wicked man. I hate to tell you this, Mother, but he made a pass at me in his office today. That's why Johnny stood up to him and got himself fired.

NATALIE

You insolent child! I will not have you defaming my future husband in my own home. He has only been good to you and you should be grateful for his leniency concerning your sloppy work and insubordinate attitude.

KATIE

But it's the truth. He even tried to kiss me.

NATALIE

That is not true, Kathleen Pureheart, and you know it. I want you out of my house at once. If you're not out of here by tonight, I will personally have the servants toss your belongings into the street. Do you understand me?

KATIE

(starting to cry)

Yes, Mother, I understand. That evil man and his money mean more to you than I do.

NATALIE

Humph. You will be out of here... By tonight.

(storms out)

MONICA

("comforting" her, but still seething)

There, there, Kathleen. It will be alright. I'm sure your mother truly cares about you. She just doesn't know how to show it.

KATIE

She showed her true feelings for me just now. Money is all she cares about. Certainly not her own flesh and blood, her only child.

ROSCOE

Cut! Natalie back on stage.

RANDI

(under her breath to audience)

Cut? What an idiot.

(NATALIE enters)

ROSCOE (mockingly)

That was very moving, very moving indeed. (Just like my morning bowel movement.) Katie can you at least pretend like you know what you're doing?

NATALIE

What was wrong with that? I thought Katie did very well.

ROSCOE

Well your opinion doesn't really matter that much at the moment, Natalie... I don't think I can stand to watch that again. It's giving me meningitis. Let's move on. We'll fix it next time. We're going back to Scene Three. Randi, get setup. Just the desk in the middle. We won't there be too long, so don't set the whole scene. I'll be out back...Coming, Monica?

(ROSCOE, MONICA, KATIE and NATALIE exit)

RANDI

Jack, can you give me a hand with the desk?

JACK

Sure, no problem.

(they move the desk into position)

Can I ask you something? It's kinda personal.

RANDI

Sure. What's up?

JACK

Well...uh... I've been noticing that Katie hasn't been all that happy recently. And I've been kinda, you know, concerned.

RANDI

Would that be personally concerned or romantically concerned?

JACK

What do you mean? Why would you think I'd be romantically concerned?

RANDI

Come on, Jack. You've got the look.

JACK

What look?

RANDI

That totally smitten, I'll follow you anywhere, puppy dog look. You've had your eye on her for a while now. I can tell.

JACK (sheepishly)

Is it really that obvious? ...I do think she's pretty special. She's the kind of girl that any guy would be proud to have as a girlfriend.

RANDI

Don't worry. It's not that obvious. I may be the only one who's noticed. And Katie is very special. But, apparently not every guy shares your opinion.

JACK

What do you mean?

RANDI

I probably shouldn't be telling you this, but, last Thursday, when Katie came in late, it was because she had a fight with that sleazeball she calls a boyfriend. It seems that, he'd been drinking and got mad 'cuz she had to be at rehearsal and he threatened her.

JACK

(getting angrier)

Threatened her how?

RANDI

At first it was just stupid stuff like, 'Any girl'd be happy to have me around' and 'I may not be here when you get back'. Yeah, like that's a big loss. But, when she didn't cave, he got right in her face and screamed at her. That's when she told him she never wanted to see him again and ran out.

JACK

What a jerk. Uh...Anything else?

RANDI

So then, while she was on her way here, he called and sort of apologized. Saying how it wasn't his fault, he'd had too much to drink and how he really wanted to be supportive of her acting career. Blah, blah, blah.

JACK

And she took him back.

RANDI

And she took him back.

JACK

It just doesn't seem fair, you know. She's smart and pretty and talented. She could have any guy she wanted and she seems stuck on some loser.

RANDI

Love is a fickle animal, my friend. A fickle animal indeed. Oh! I think I hear the Rat coming back. I gotta get Cal and Katie out here.

(while exiting)

Cal, Katie, places for Scene Three.

(CAL, with script in hand, and KATIE enter. JACK moves to exit, places a hand on her shoulder for a moment. She reaches up and holds it there for a moment. ROSCOE enters.)

ROSCOE

(while entering)

Alright, let's get going. We're burning daylight.

(the moment ends. JACK exits.)

CAL

(under his breath)

How can we burn daylight after dark?

(with more enthusiasm)

OK, what do you want us to do?

ROSCOE

I want you to do Scene Three, perfectly, just like we blocked it last week. And why exactly do you have a script in your hand?

CAL (mockingly)

Because I don't know all the words, perfectly, exactly in order, yet.

ROSCOE

Watch yourself, mister. I can still make your life a living hell.

CAL

(under his breath)

Like you're not already.

ROSCOE

What was that?

CAL

Just agreeing with you, Mr. Director, Sir.

ROSCOE

Well... good. Let's start the scene.

(CAL and KATIE move to appropriate positions)

Aaaaaaaaand... Action.

CAL

I assume you're wondering why I called you to my office, Miss Pureheart.

(more sinister)

Or shall I call you, Kathleen?

KATIE

What is it, Mr. Worthington, did I do something wrong?

CAL

As a matter of fact, you did several things wrong, Kathleen. I've been watching you closely and I am beginning to wonder if I made a terrible mistake in hiring you. Your work skills remain minimal. Your craftsmanship is shoddy and your incessant tardiness is inexcusable.

KATIE

But, I try so hard to do everything right. And I've only been late once this month. You remember, the day of the freak snow storm. The drifting snow blocked my door and I had to dig my way out. And as I

remember, I was the only one who even made it in to work at all that day.

CAL

Do you care to argue with me? As I recall, you have no education and have never held a job of any kind before. What would your mother say if you forced me to turn you out? Where would someone as pitiful as you find another job?

(evil laugh)

KATIE

I don't know where I would go. Please don't fire me, Mr. Worthington. I need this job. What can I do?

CAL

Well... now that I think about it. There are some things you can do to help secure your position.

KATIE

Just tell me what they are and I'll do them.

CAL

First, you must work harder to become better at your task. Second, you must be to work early every day...And —

KATIE

And what?

CAL

(grabs her and holds her tightly)

You must kiss me whenever I want.

(evil laugh)

KATIE

(pushing him away)

No, no, a thousand times no. You are a foul and despicable man, Mr. Worthington. You're engaged to be married to my own mother. If you persist, I will be forced to tell her what kind of man you really are.

CAL

Go ahead and tell mommy. She'll never believe you. Besides, she loves my money more than she loves you.

(evil laugh)

KATIE

That isn't true. To assure my happiness, she'd toss you aside in a

heartbeat.

CAL

We shall see, my dear. We shall see.
(evil laugh)

ROSCOE

Alright, that was almost good. Nowhere near perfect but almost good. We don't have time to work on it more tonight. Besides, it's giving me swine flu. Let's go to the other office scene with Crenshaw and Nell. Randi, get Natalie.

(RANDI calls to NATALIE off stage. KATIE exits.)

RANDI

Natalie, Scene Five is up. You're needed on stage.

NATALIE (off-stage)

On my way, sweetie. On my way.
(enters)

Mr. Henderson, before we get started on this scene, may I ask you a question?

ROSCOE (arrogantly)

Oh, that is so much better. It's nice to see the director being treated with the respect he deserves. So what's your question, my dear Natalie?

NATALIE

Last week when we did this scene, you mentioned something about my character's motivation that I didn't quite understand. You said Nell wouldn't react to Crenshaw's allusion to Kathleen with so much voracity. Can you explain that to me again? I'm not sure I understand why she would be passive when he was threatening her child.

ROSCOE

(to the others, whether on stage or not)

See everyone, how easy that was? Natalie was listening carefully when I gave an instruction. When she didn't fully understand the instruction, she asked me to repeat it to be sure she was getting my intention. It really is just that easy.

RANDI (to audience)

Oh brother.

ROSCOE

Ok, here it is again. Nell is more concerned about herself and her future than she is about her daughter. She doesn't want to appear to be standing up for Kathleen and thus jeopardize her own potential future position. Even if she has a strong maternal instinct, which is doubtful, she can't show it or risk losing Worthington's money. See?

NATALIE

But that seems to go against the natural way of things. Doesn't it?

ROSCOE

(a bit puzzled)

Do you think so? Well, I guess. Perhaps, to some degree. It simply depends on how sociopathic the character is. And how strong is her own self-serving nature.

NATALIE

So are you seeing Nell as being more sociopathic or more strongly self-serving?

ROSCOE

I see her as more sociopathic, but it doesn't really matter, as long as she disregards her child and looks out for her own self interests. Are you ready to try it?

NATALIE

Yes. Let's see if I'm getting it.

ROSCOE

Places... Aaaaaaaaand... Action.

NATALIE

(takes a moment to get prepared)

Crenshaw, darling, it's me, your most happily betrothed.

CAL

(with feigned cheerfulness)

Ah, Nell. It's so very good to see you, my dear.

(gives her a peck on the cheek)

What brings you to me this bright and beautiful day? A day now brighter and more beautiful because you're a part of it.

NATALIE

Oh you say just the sweetest things. Can't a girl come by the see her future husband just because she wants to?

CAL

Of course she can. No reason is as good a reason as any.

NATALIE (tentatively)

By the way, Crenshaw dear, have you decided when it is that we can actually be married?

CAL

(not nearly as cheerful)

Darling, we've already discussed this, remember. We decided that sometime next year would be soon enough.

NATALIE

Yes, I know, but I was thinking that maybe... we might, perhaps... want to see about setting a specific date. You know, so I can tell all of our friends and start making plans. Just silly bride-to-be stuff.

CAL

Ah yes, now I see.

(aside)

All too well I see. If she wasn't so eager to get her hands on my fortune, I could put her off, forever. And, if I didn't want to get my hands on, I mean, get closer to Kathleen, I would put off the old bat... permanently.

(back to Nell)

Now darling, this just isn't a good time. You see, the factory is running a bit behind and some of the employees are becoming insolent to the point that I had to fire one.

NATALIE

Oh my. Who did you have to fire?

CAL

That hotheaded boyfriend of your ungrateful daughter, Johnny Tremaine. And I almost had to fire Kathleen as well.

NATALIE

Oh my! Really? What did she do?

CAL

First, she had the audacity to argue with me about my assessment of her work performance and then she became insubordinate, denying me my rights as her employer to demand improvement. She even threatened to tell you that I had been mistreating her.

NATALIE

Well, I'm sure you put her in her place.

CAL

I was in the process of doing so when that Tremaine fellow stuck his nose where it didn't belong. So now he's out of a job and on the wrong side of my good graces.

NATALIE

I'm sure he only got what he deserved. But, what about Kathleen? Are you going to let her go, too?

CAL

No. I think I'll keep her on a bit. Who knows, maybe she'll come to her senses and see the wisdom of my ways.

NATALIE

I'm sure she will. I'm sure she will.

CAL

*But if she doesn't...
(evil laugh)*

NATALIE

If she doesn't, then what?

CAL

If she doesn't succumb to my will, I will have to take drastic action. Action that just might impact our future plans, as well.

NATALIE

Whatever do you mean? You don't mean you'd call off the wedding. Over a sniveling brat like her? You wouldn't. You couldn't.

CAL

It could happen, my dear. It could happen. You know what they say, 'the apple doesn't fall too far from the tree'. 'Like daughter, like mother', so to speak.

NATALIE

*(becoming more flustered)
Surely, you don't think... I didn't raise her to... She couldn't possibly...*

CAL

*(enjoying the fluster)
Perhaps you should have a little chat with her.*

NATALIE

I will. You know I will. Nothing is more important to me than our happiness.

CAL

It would be good for you to remember that, my dear.

ROSCOE

See, Natalie. That was much better. With Nell caring less about Kathleen and more about herself, she comes across as both weaker and stronger. It's a really choice bit of cognitive dissonance for the audience to experience.

NATALIE

(still perplexed)

OK, whatever you just said.

ROSCOE

And Cal, for the briefest of moments, I thought I saw a hint of the Crenshaw I'm looking for. And then... poof, he was gone. Get him back!

CAL

(under his breath)

Yeah, I'll get right on it.

ROSCOE

Randi, notes.

RANDI

Everyone on stage for notes.

(all CAST not on stage enter and take disinterested positions)

ROSCOE

Alright people. That's more than enough punishment for one night. I don't think I can stand another minute of it. I'm sure I'm developing gout. So, we'll do full notes on Monday before we get started. Randi, what's on tap for next time?

RANDI

(looking in production notebook)

Scenes one, two, and three and then whatever you want after that. Call for everyone is 6:30. Don't be late.

ROSCOE

That's right, it's six thirty, not six thirty-one. Six thirty. Got it?... Randi, get the lights before you leave.

(ROSCOE exits. RANDI heads for the light board)

CAST

(as all but Monica are leaving)

Yeah, yeah.

Six thirty. Not six thirty and a half.

Blah, blah, blah.

What a piece of work.

Etc.

(Lights dim. MONICA remains on sofa)

MONICA

(to no one in particular)

I hate this show. No, I really hate this show. I really hate my life.

RANDI

What's that, Monica?

MONICA

I wasn't talking to you, dork.

ROSCOE

(from off stage)

Monica, you coming?

MONICA

(deep sigh)

Yeah, I'm coming.

(she exits)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)



Natalie's all together except for her necklace, which is being repaired, and her hat. We're still trying to find a way to keep it from falling off and yet allow her to take it off when she needs to. And... let's see, since he's much trimmer than "he who's name shall not be mentioned", Cal's pants are much too big and still being altered. They should be ready before the weekend. Everyone else seems to be good to go.

ROSCOE

Excellent, at least we're ahead of schedule on something. And, gee, if things don't come together this week... we can always just send the empty costumes on stage for the performances.

JACK

(under his breath)

That would certainly make the director look like a genius.

ROSCOE

Instead of Director's notes now, we'll do them after. You've probably all forgotten what we worked on last week, anyway... Alright, let's go from the top. Randi, count us down.

(JACK and MONICA exit)

RANDI

(once they're in place)

And... curtain... lights coming up... lights... Aaaaaaaaand—

KATIE

Wait a sec. Before we start, I have a question about my blocking in this scene. It doesn't make sense for me to cross to the corner after my 'servant line'. You have me coming right back. Since it would require only one cross, I think it would make more sense to stay closer to Mother, waiting until after she mentions her gentlemen callers to move.

ROSCOE

So you think that makes more sense, do you? Perhaps, you think you can direct this whole show better than I can.

KATIE

I didn't say that. I just thought the blocking seemed a bit awkward and might tighten up a bit if I moved later.

ROSCOE

Your thoughts on the matter really mean nothing to me right now.

The blocking is perfect just the way it is.

KATIE

I was only trying to...

ROSCOE

Yes I know exactly what you were trying to do. You were trying to undermine my authority as director. Well, it's not going to work.

KATIE

(getting madder)

I am not trying to undermine your authority. The blocking sucks and—

ROSCOE

Enough! Now, you're just being stupid.

KATIE

(nearly yelling)

I am not being stupid. I was simply expressing an opinion—

ROSCOE

And you know what they say about opinions and behinds, don't you?... We need to start the scene. Randi, count us down, again.

(everyone scurries to get into opening positions)

RANDI

(once they're again in place)

And... curtain... lights coming up... lights... Aaaaaaaaand...
Action.

KATIE

(still mad. Plays the scene all wrong.)

Oh, Mother, I'm so excited. I just can't believe Mr. Worthington hired me to work in his factory. Finally, a real job. Soon I'll be able to help you out financially and maybe, if there's any money left over, I might even be able to buy myself some new clothes and some new shoes.

ROSCOE

(cutting her off)

Stop. Stop. Stop! That's terrible. No, it's worse than terrible. It's giving me appendicitis. I know you're stilling pouting, Katie, but get over yourself already. At least try to do the scene properly.

KATIE

I'm not pouting. I'm—

ROSCOE

Then do it right... if you can.

KATIE

(takes a deep breath and plays it correctly.)

Oh, Mother, I'm so excited. I just can't believe Mr. Worthington hired me to work in his factory. Finally, a real job. Soon I'll be able to help you out financially and maybe, if there's any money left over, I might even be able to buy myself some new clothes and some new shoes.

NATALIE

I can't believe it either. I didn't think anyone would ever give you a job. I mean, what do you have to offer an employer? You're nearly twenty-one years old. You haven't been to school in years. You've never had a job before. You have no skills of any kind. What could Mr. Worthington be thinking?

KATIE

Oh, Mother. You make it sound like the accident was my fault. How was I to know that some stupid snake was going to spook my horse and I was going to fall on that huge rock, receive a severe head injury and very painful snakebite, and then spend the next five years in a coma?

NATALIE

I suppose you're right, but I want you to keep in mind just exactly who took care of you, night and day, for those five, long years.

KATIE

I always assumed that the various house servants took care of me for those five, long years.

NATALIE

Yes, they did. And who was responsible for hiring and paying for all those servants?

KATIE

If things were like they are now, Judith, the downstairs maid, would be responsible for keeping the house properly staffed and Daddy's trust fund would have paid for everything.

NATALIE

Yes.... And just who do you think had the prudence to hire Judith and just who has to be sure the monthly check is correctly

deposited?

KATIE

Oh, now I see what you're getting at. That would be you, mother. I see clearly that it was, in fact, you, no matter how indirectly, who is ultimately responsible for seeing me through my most dark and difficult time. And since it was you who suggested that I find a job, you must be responsible for my new found financial independence, as well.

NATALIE

Yes, yes, yes... That's exactly right. I'm the one who has created this new chapter in your life... And don't you forget it. Do you think any of this has been easy for me? How many gentlemen callers do you think I've had during the five years you've been lying about?

KATIE

How could I possibly know how many boyfriends you've had while I was in a coma?

NATALIE

Well, the answer is nearly none. Only twenty-three... no wait... twenty-four. That's fewer than five gentlemen per year. And not one of them came a-callin' for more than three or four months. Once they learned about you, in your sad, pathetic state, poof, they were gone. These past five years have been no picnic for me.

KATIE (cynically)

Oh, I can definitely see how my affliction has certainly rained on your social parade.

NATALIE (oblivious)

And if I hadn't taken up with Doctor...uh... 'what's his name', you'd still be lying there in that stupid coma. Making my life miserable.

KATIE (sarcastically)

Needless to say, Mother, I am ever so grateful that you had the foresight to date a man with the necessary skills to both tend to your every need and also bring your only child back from death's doorstep. How very propitious of you. How very propitious, indeed.

NATALIE

Are you making fun of my hardship during your all consuming illness?

KATIE

Oh no, Mother. That would make me appear to be so very ungrateful.

(knock at the door)

That must be Melanie. I can't wait to tell her the good news.

(as Monica attempts to enter, she slips and turns her left ankle)

MONICA

Yeowwwww!!!

(RANDI, who is nearby, rushes to her)

ROSCOE (impatiently)

Now what happened?

RANDI

Monica slipped and turned her ankle. Oh man. This looks bad. It's already starting to swell.

(others rush to see what's going on, ROSCOE waits impatiently)

We need to get it elevated. I'm going to get some ice.

KATIE

Lets' get her up on the sofa. Carefully. —

(JACK and CAL lift MONICA onto the sofa)

Set her down... gently... gently.

NATALIE

What can I do to help? Should I call the paramedics? Do we need to take her to the emergency room? Should I get my car?

JACK

Wow, that's so weird. Does all this seem somehow familiar to anyone else? It's like I can hear my own dear, sweet mother, after I fell and scraped my knee when I was five.

(as KATIE begins, RANDI enters with ice bag attempts to treat

MONICA's ankle, in the process
jostles her)

KATIE

I know. It's so weird. In the back of my mind I can hear my mother,
too. When I was small, she'd say—

MONICA

Yeow. You idiot. Can't you do anything right? You'll never amount to
anything.

KATIE

No, that's close, but not quite it. She'd say, "Katie, don't be stupid.
Get an education or you'll spend the rest of your life slingin' burgers
at Cappy's diner."

MONICA

All of you just shut up. Sorry, Roscoe, I don't think I'll be able to do
any more tonight.

ROSCOE

Well, that figures. Alright. Alright. We'll have to work on ... Scene
Two. Natalie, Cal help Monica out to her car. I assume you can drive
yourself home.

MONICA

(peevied at his insensitivity. Mimicking him.)

Yeah, I can drive myself home. Fortunately, it's my left foot.
(under her breath)

Ya big jerk.

ROSCOE

Ok, then. Randi, get her stuff together. Cal and Natalie, you guys
take off as well. We'll finish with Scene Two tonight. It needs so
much work; we'll have to go to the end of rehearsal time, at least.

(NATALIE and CAL each take one
of MONICA's arms and help her
off stage. RANDI collects her
personal items and the ice bag,
follows them out.)

ROSCOE

Back to work. Scene Two. Jack, you're off stage to start.

(JACK exits. KATIE takes her place.)

Start with the knock. Aaaaaaaaand... Action.

(JACK knocks on set wall off stage)

KATIE

Whoever can that be?

(goes to answer door. JACK enters with her.)

Yes, what is it?

JACK

Please excuse me for barging in like this. You are Miss Pureheart, aren't you?

KATIE

Yes, and who are you and what business do you have with me?

JACK

My name is Johnny Tremaine and, our boss, Mr. Worthington asked me to drop by to see if you might be able to start work tomorrow instead of waiting until next Monday. It seems one of the other workers is very sick and he needs you to take her place as soon as possible.

KATIE

So, you work for Mr. Worthington, too?

JACK

Yes, I've been at the factory for about a year now. But, this is the first time I have ever enjoyed my work.

(aside)

Oh, my. Can such a creature truly be real? Miss Pureheart is, by far, the most beautiful girl I have ever seen. My heart is all aflutter.

(back to KATIE)

This is the best day of my life.

KATIE

Whatever do you mean by that?

(aside)

Is this really happening? Am I dreaming? Can this day be true? Just this morning becoming gainfully employed and now I see there is such a handsome lad sharing my place of employment. My heart is all aflutter.

JACK

Pardon me for being forward, Miss Pureheart.

KATIE

Please call me Kathleen, Mr. Tremaine.

JACK

If you will call me Johnny.

KATIE

Alright, Johnny. As you were saying.

JACK

As I was saying, pardon me for being forward, Kathleen. But, you are the most beautiful girl I have ever met. And if I might ask, do you have a steady beau?

KATIE

Mr. Tremaine, I mean, Johnny. You are being quite forward...but I don't mind. And, no I don't have a steady beau. I haven't been myself lately. There haven't been very many fellas hanging around for quite some time.

JACK

I find that hard to believe. I would expect someone as beautiful as you to have fellas knockin' down your door both day and night. How can this be?

KATIE

(crossing to sofa, sits facing away from him.)

Well, you see, I had a terrible accident. A snake spooked my horse. I fell and hit my head on a large rock, suffered a painful snakebite and have been in a coma for over five years.

JACK

(sits next to her, takes her hand)

What a fortunate turn of events.

KATIE

Fortunate?

JACK

I mean, tragic for you, but fortunate for me. If it hadn't been for that snake, I may never have met you.

KATIE

I see. And, yes, I too feel like fortune has certainly smiled on me today, Johnny.

JACK

Kathleen, at the risk of being forward again, I'd like to ask if I might be that steady beau who's been missing from your life these past five years.

KATIE

Oh, Johnny, this is so sudden... I think that would be wonderful.

(as they go to hug, their eyes meet and both pull back, then awkwardly embrace. Look at each other embarrassed.)

ROSCOE

What was that all about?

JACK

Sorry, that was all my fault. I lost my focus for a second.

(KATIE turns away from him)

ROSCOE

Are you over it now so we can go back to work here?

JACK

I think so. Katie, are you ready to go on?

KATIE

I think so...no, wait. Can we take a couple of minutes here?

ROSCOE

Why, do you want to change the blocking again? Maybe you can redesign the set while you're at it.

KATIE

(becoming more perturbed)

The blocking is just fine. I would just like a couple of minutes, alright?

ROSCOE

Do either of you realize how much work we have to do? This show is a very long way from being ready.

KATIE

Of course we know. And even if we didn't, you'd be only too happy to tell us what a crappy job we're doing. Believe me, two minutes is not going to make much of a difference.

ROSCOE

You know, Katie, a professional actor would be able to put aside her petty problems and focus on her job. But, since we don't have the luxury of a professional cast, why don't you just go ahead and take ten minutes?

(bellowing)

Randi!

(RANDI pokes her head around the edge of a flat)

RANDI

What's up, boss?

ROSCOE

Our little princess here needs a break. So we're taking ten. Did you managed to get that special coffee I requested?

RANDI

Of course, Columbian Double Delight, super fine grind. Just like you asked for. A fresh pot is in the make-up room.

ROSCOE

You idiot! Not Columbian, Moroccan Double Delight. Moroccan. Geez.

(he exits)

RANDI

(to audience)

I know it's Moroccan. I was just yankin' his chain. It's fun for me.

(to ROSCOE, as she's exiting)

Hey, boss, why don't you head on out back? I'll bring a cup out to you.

JACK

What a jerk. Doesn't he know how foolish he looks?

KATIE

Most likely not. He's always been like this.

JACK (skeptically)

What do you mean, always? Have you two met before this show?

KATIE

(afraid of giving away a secret)

Oh, he's known my mother for a long time. Every time I've seen him,

he's just the same, a totally, classless buffoon.

JACK

Or maybe an epileptic baboon.

(KATIE pauses for a second
before getting his joke. They both
laugh.)

Can I ask you something? Something kinda personal?

KATIE (unsure)

I suppose.

JACK

Well, I couldn't help but notice that you haven't been particularly happy recently. And then during that last scene we both sorta freaked out during the hug. Is everything ok? I mean, did I do something to make you react like that?

KATIE

(places her hand on his)

No, no. It's not you. It's all me and my screwed up life. I don't like to air my problems in public. I'm pretty sure only Natalie knows about this...I've been seeing this guy for almost four years. Everything was fine in the beginning. You know how relationships go. Great at first and then it gets comfortable and then sorta loses steam, anyway. I've been getting some of those losing steam, mixed signals recently. Like things are going fine and then the next day things aren't so fine.

JACK

I know what you mean. Relationships are never easy, even under the best of circumstances.

KATIE

You got that right. Anyway, the last few weeks have been 'not so fine'. And for some reason when you and I were suppose to hug during the scene, I had this huge flood of stuff and didn't know how to deal with them.

JACK

What kind of stuff?

KATIE

All kinds. I felt hurt and resentment and confusion. That's why I reacted so badly.

JACK

I hope none of that was because you were hugging me.

KATIE

Oh, no. It wasn't you at all. In fact, part of the confusion was because I wanted to hug you, the real you, and then I felt unfaithful. Pretty wacko, huh?

JACK

Yeah, maybe a bit.

(pause, they both laugh)

If it's any consolation, I wanted to hug the real you, too. And that's why I pulled away. My personal feelings were getting in the way.

KATIE

And just what might those personal feelings be?

JACK

I'm a little embarrassed to talk about it.

KATIE

Why would you be embarrassed?

JACK

This is so unlike me. We've only known each other during the show, and yet I'm finding—

(he stammers)

KATIE

It's ok, Jack. Just spit it out.

JACK

I'm finding... that I think about you all the time. You're intelligent, talented, and witty, not too mention drop-dead gorgeous...I mean, remarkably attractive.

KATIE (embarrassed)

Now it's my turn to be embarrassed.

JACK

I didn't mean to... I just think you're really special and I like you... a lot... There, the cat's out of the bag.

KATIE

Believe it or not, the cat's been out of the bag for a while now. Don't

be mad at her, but Randi mentioned that you might have a crush on me.

JACK

Is that what she said, 'a crush'?

KATIE

No, 'crush' is my word. She just wanted to be sure that if you started acting weird around me I would know why. She said, "You know how boys are."

JACK

I guess we can be a bit goofy about stuff like this. And I guess I'm sorta glad you know... And by the way, Randi mentioned to me that things were not going so well between you and your boyfriend. Apparently, she overheard some things in conversation and—

KATIE

(with mock anger)

Why that little—

JACK

It's not her fault. I asked her about it. I think she wanted to be sure I knew that it wasn't me. That there were other things that might be affecting your mood.

KATIE

She certainly got that right.

JACK

(checking his watch)

Looks like our break's about over. Perhaps we should get ready to get on with this stupid rehearsal.

(he moves away from her)

KATIE

Wait a sec—

JACK

What?

KATIE

Come here.

(she opens her arms as an invitation to a hug, which they do)
Thanks.

JACK

For what?

KATIE

Everything.

(as they hold the hug ROSCOE enters)

ROSCOE

Isn't that sweet? I hope I'm interrupting something. Am I?

JACK

Not at all. We were just rehearsing that last scene.

ROSCOE

Yeah, right. Let's just see if we can get through the end of this. Shall we? If you can manage it, from the hug.

(skeptically)

You know, the one you were just rehearsing.

KATIE

Oh, Johnny, this is so sudden... I think that would be wonderful.

(they hug for too long)

ROSCOE

Stop. Now what's up? A couple of seconds is all it's gonna take for the audience to get the idea. Again.

KATIE

Oh, Johnny, this is so sudden... I think that would be wonderful.

(they hug for a couple of seconds and move on)

JACK

Yes, it is wonderful, isn't it? I can't wait to tell Mr. Worthington the good news.

KATIE

What good news? That you're going to be my new beau?

JACK

No, the good news that you'll be coming in to work tomorrow. I can hardly wait to see you again.

KATIE

Then why don't you call again this evening?

JACK

*Really? That would be terrific. I'll be by around seven.
(he spontaneously hugs her)*

ROSCOE

Stop. What's up with that? There's no hug here. Feeling frisky again there, Jack?

JACK

No, no, it's not that. It just seemed like something Johnny would do. He just got a new girlfriend. He'd be excited and happy. Why wouldn't he hug her?

ROSCOE

Remember your context here. Twenty-first century Johnny might feel that way, but nineteenth century Johnny would have a better sense of decorum. Despite the implied permission from the preceding scene, in 1896, he can't just go around indiscriminately hugging young women.

(lecherously)

Thank goodness times have changed, right Jack?

(KATIE is embarrassed by
ROSCOE's insinuation. JACK is
disgusted.)

Alright. Randi, get everyone ready for notes.

RANDI

You sent everyone home, remember.

ROSCOE

Yeah right. I forgot. Again that's enough punishment for one night. I could swear you've given me thrombosis. We are making progress, no matter how slowly. Let's be ready for some serious work next time. Opening is not so far away and you are nowhere near performance caliber.

(exits)

JACK

(when sure Roscoe's gone)

What a putz. Are you going to be ok going home?

KATIE

Yeah I think so. Thanks again.

(they hug again, when the hug
breaks, she gives him a brief kiss
on the cheek. JACK holds the
place she kissed as she leaves.)

(LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK)

(END OF SCENE)

TOC

Scene 3

SETTING: The following Thursday. Same set.

AT RISE: Stage is empty except for furniture and props.

<p>ROSCOE (bursting in, yelling) Randi!? Why isn't anyone here? It's 6:45.</p> <p>RANDI (entering) They're all in the back chillin'. We weren't sure if you were gonna show or not. You've never been late before.</p> <p>(OTHERS begin wandering in during RANDI's line)</p> <p>ROSCOE That's right. And I wouldn't have been late tonight, but somebody slashed my tire.</p> <p>RANDI Slashed your tire? Did you call the police? Do you know who did it?</p> <p>ROSCOE Do you think I'm a total idiot?</p> <p>RANDI (to audience) Not a <u>total</u> idiot.</p> <p>ROSCOE Of course, I called the police. They're all morons and no help at all. They said, without witnesses, there's no way to ever know who did it.</p> <p>CAL (to audience) They could start narrowing the search... to anyone who's ever met him.</p> <p>JACK We can all hear you, Cal. You do know that asides to the audience</p>	
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only work during the play, right?

CAL

Really? Then why can't we hear Randi when she talks to them?
(indicates audience)

ROSCOE

Both of you shut up. Opening night is exactly two weeks from tonight. We have work to do. Let's get going. Randi, get set up for my favorite, Scene Five.

MONICA

Why is that your favorite?

ROSCOE

(eyes JACK)

Because it's the scene where Johnny goes to jail. Somehow it just seems so very appropriate.

(brusquely)

Why are you all standing around? Let's go already.

(everyone scurries to places.
KATIE, as Kathleen, positions herself to hear what's going on, but is not easily seen by the men.)

Aaaaaaaaaand... Action.

CAL

(loud enough for others away from the office to hear)

Just what do you think you were doing in my office, Johnny Tremain?

JACK (sheepishly)

Mr. Worthington. I've just been sitting here waiting to see you.

CAL

And what could you possibly want from me?

JACK

Well sir, I wanted to see if you might consider rehiring me. You see—

CAL

So, you've seen the error of your ways, have you?

(aside)

No doubt thanks to my efforts to make sure no one else in this city would hire him ever again.

(back to JACK)

And now you come crawling back to me. Well, guess what. I have no intention of rehiring you now or... after you've gone to jail... for breaking into my office and stealing the payroll money.

(evil laugh)

JACK

What!?! I never... You know I wouldn't... you couldn't—

CAL (loudly)

I caught you red-handed stealing the payroll money, Johnny Tremaine. You're a thief and I'm taking you to the police.

(pulls out a pistol and forces JACK off stage, assumed to the police station.)

Get moving. You're going to jail.

(they exit to the sound of his evil laugh)

KATIE

(crosses to center)

I can't believe what I just heard. My poor Johnny.

(exits)

(Lights fade for a few moments as CAL reenters and begins working at desk. Lights back up as MONICA enters. She's still limping from sprained ankle.)

MONICA

Mr. Worthington, I've just heard that Johnny Tremaine has been arrested. Is this true?

CAL

Of course, it's true. I caught him red-handed, breaking into my office and stealing the payroll money. I took him to the police myself. Whatever they do to him won't be nearly punishment enough.

MONICA

But it can't be true. Johnny would never do such a thing. He is a

most forthright young man.

CAL

Are you calling me a liar? Slander is very serious business, Miss Longbottom, and believe me, there's plenty of room in the jail cell next to Johnny's. Perhaps you'd like to join him?

(evil laugh)

MONICA

Oh, no, Mr. Worthington. I just meant that I can't believe Johnny could fall so low. He seemed like such a stalwart young man.

CAL

Things are not always as they seem, my dear. Take me for example. I'm sure you've been told that I am a hard man. A demanding man. Perhaps even a wicked man.

(playing up to her)

But nothing could be further from the truth. I'm really just a pussycat. Come here and see.

(reaches for her. Grows impatient.)

Come here!

(grabs her)

Now kiss me and you'll see how wrong you are.

(MONICA pulls out of his grasp and escapes to the door)

MONICA

I see exactly what kind of man you are. I wonder how your betrothed, Nell Hawthorne, will take the news of your duplicity.

CAL

Not so fast my pretty one, she won't believe you. And besides, there's nothing you can do. Whether what you say is true or not, and it isn't, Johnny Tremaine has already had his trial and the judge sentenced him to fifteen years of hard labor.

(evil laugh)

MONICA

How can that be?

CAL

It just so happened the circuit judge was in town this very day and he heard the case immediately. Now poor Johnny will rot in jail for years.

MONICA

This can't be. This just can't be.

CAL

It can be and it will be. You see, if you don't keep all of this quiet, you'll be the next one who goes to prison.

(evil laugh)

(MONICA slowly starts to make her way to Johnny's cell set, where he has appeared, but she is hampered by her sore ankle.)

ROSCOE (impatiently)

What's taking so long? Monica, what's the problem?

MONICA

If you haven't noticed, I've been limping around here all night. It's only my second day off crutches, thank you very much. Remember my sprained ankle?

ROSCOE (insincerely)

Oh yeah...right. Sorry, I forgot. Just go as quickly as you can. We'll make allowances for you... tonight. Randi, give her a hand.

RANDI

(RANDI starts clapping, when she sees ROSCOE is not amused, tries to assist, MONICA resists, then refuses and makes her own way to the cell set)

There we are. Good to go.

ROSCOE

Alright. Let's go from the opening of the Johnny/Melanie dialogue. Cal and Katie, get into your positions. For the sake of time, we'll finish the courtroom scene without the set pieces and props. Just stand where you normally would. And try and keep the energy up. Whenever you're ready.

(CAL takes his position.)

Aaaaaaaaand... Action.

MONICA

Oh, Johnny, what has Mr. Worthington done to you? This can't be true.

JACK

Of course it's not true, Melanie. I could never steal anything, certainly not the factory payroll money. I went back to ask about getting my old job back and I ended up in jail.

MONICA

But how could your case go to trial so quickly?

JACK

I don't really know. It's all a blur. I was standing in Mr. Worthington's office and the next thing I know, I'm in handcuffs and standing before the judge.

MONICA

What happened in the courtroom?

JACK

First the judge asked who was bringing the charges. Mr. Worthington stood up and said—

CAL

(from across stage)

I am, your honor. I caught this man red-handed, in my office removing the payroll money from my desk.

JACK

Then he held up a First National Bank bag, filled with money and took it up to the judge's table and left it there.

(CAL mimics the actions as JACK speaks)

MONICA

The bag said First National Bank on it.

JACK

As plain as day.

MONICA

Hmmm...Then what happened?

JACK

The judge asked him if there was any reason why I might do this.

CAL

Of course there is. Several weeks ago, I fired this hooligan for being insubordinate. After more than a year of sub-standard work, this lout had the audacity to tell me how I should run my business. And after being shown the door, he sneaks back to steal the money, which was hard-earned by his former co-workers.

JACK

Then he asked if I had anything to say in my defense.

MONICA

And did you?

JACK

I was still so flustered all I could say was, "I couldn't...I wouldn't..." And as the judge was saying, "If there are no more witnesses," Kathleen burst in—

KATIE

(rushing in)

I'm a witness your honor. I heard the whole thing. Johnny came back to ask for his old job and Mr. Worthington made up the rest to punish him for standing up for me. Everything he

(points to CAL)

said is a lie.

CAL

Your honor, this witness is not credible in the least. First of all, she's a woman. And secondly, she is this man's girlfriend, his confidante, perhaps his co-conspirator. She would say or do anything to keep him out of prison.

JACK

And when Kathleen tried to protest the judge told her to sit down and be quiet. Then he said, "Fifteen year at hard labor," and they led me out of the courtroom. As I was leaving I heard—

CAL

And as you miss, you're fired, too.

(evil laugh)

(CAL exits, swooping his cape over the money bag as he takes it offstage. KATIE puts her head in her hands and starts to sob)

JACK

Then Kathleen started to cry. And now I'm here in this cell.

MONICA

What happened to the money?

JACK

I don't know. It was on the table and then it wasn't. I didn't see where it went.

MONICA

This is terrible. Something is very wrong, very wrong indeed. We have to get you out of here!

JACK

I don't see that there's much I can do from inside.

MONICA

*Well, I'm surely going to do whatever I can. Starting right now.
(She starts to leave)*

JACK

Melanie?

MONICA

Yes, Johnny.

JACK

Why are you doing this for me?

MONICA

Because you're very special to me.

JACK

Tell Kathleen I love her.

MONICA

I will.

(she exits)

ROSCOE

Alright. That was just above tolerable. And as a result, we're going to have to fix it...tomorrow night.

CAST

What?!

That's not on the schedule.

I already have other plans.
Etc.

ROSCOE

Read your contracts people. The director can call extra rehearsals whenever he deems it necessary. And I deem it more than necessary. Tomorrow night, 6:30 sharp. If you come prepared to work, we'll be out of here by 8:00. If not, we may be here all night.

(CAST grumbles as they leave. MONICA is first one off stage.)

Randi, lock up... Monica?

(no answer, More forcefully.)

Monica!

MONICA

(pokes her head back on stage, perturbed.)

What?

ROSCOE

You up for a bite? Sure you are. Let's go.

MONICA (dejected)

Yeah, whatever.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)