

BAILEY

A play in two acts

By Larry Maness

Copyright: Larry Maness

Contact: LJM@larrymaness.com

Characters

Bailey: A man in his 60s

Jennifer: Bailey's wife in her early 60s

Dr. Vorhees: A man in his 50s

Delores Crowley: A woman in her 50s

Police Officer: A man in his 40s

Bailey

A play in two acts

Act One

Time: The present.

Setting: The living room of a large house overlooking the skyline of New York seen clearly from the picture window in the back wall. The modern décor sharpness suffers from the clutter of several doors—some lean against walls, some create a ramp against the back wall forming a raised, second acting area.

An artist's easel, complete with a partially finished garish-colored canvas--a tortured zig-zag of harsh swoops and lines--competes for space with the dozen or so seedling trays under a grow light.

At rise: Jenny Vorhees, late 50s, dressed in a well worn artist's smock, contemplates bringing order into the room. She adjusts the light over the seedling trays; moves a tray or two, still not getting the result she wants. She abandons the trays and moves to a door leaning against one wall. She's about to move it when the sound of a pounding hammer shatters her will. She sags only to be rejuvenated by the ringing doorbell. She hurries to the front door and opens it.

Enter Dr. Morris Richie, late 50s, wary of what he's walking in to. Jenny offers the view of her house with the sweep on her arms.

Jenny

See what I mean? Disaster. I said as much to your receptionist. Didn't she tell you the situation here is getting worse?

Morris

I got busy.

Jenny

Busy?

(Beat.)

Since when are you too busy for me?

Morris

I didn't mean it that way. I meant that a patient needed...

Jenny

Needed you more than I did? Look around you, Morris.

(Louder hammering rumbles through the room again.)

A life in ruins, complete with sound effects. Which patient of yours about ready to jump from the ledge needs you more than me? I'd like a name.

Morris

I don't give out names and I don't rate patient need, Jennifer. That wouldn't be fair.

Jenny

All right then, forget that I'm a patient working out her multi-layered emotional problems through your prescribed art therapy, and rate me as your lover.

(Beat.)

Cat got your tongue?

Morris

Your sniping has my tongue.

Jenny

Sniping is down from rage.

Morris

(He doesn't want a fight.)

I think I'd just better leave.

Jenny

You just got here.

(She reconsiders her approach and softens.)

Look, I'm sorry, it's just that I've been calling you for two days and you never called back. A normal person would think there's a message in all that silence and we both know I'm not a normal person unless you're around. How about kiss? Come on.

(Their kiss is interrupted by more hammering.)

Jenny (cont)

Who could act normal while their husband dismantles the house?

Bailey (Off stage.)

Timber!

(A heavy object crashes to the floor. Bailey, early 60s, enters dragging another fallen door into the living room. It's a heavy burden, but Bailey manages with apparent ease. When he leans the door against others along the wall, his chest puffs with satisfaction.)

A job well done, wouldn't you say?

Jenny

If you like chaos served in little wooden pieces. That wasn't the back door, was it, Bailey? I don't want the neighbors seeing the state we're in.

Bailey

The back and front stay on to keep the riffraff out.

(He glares at Morris.)

Who's the riffraff?

Jenny

You remember Dr. Richie, don't you dear? You promised to pay him a visit as part of your Board's recommendation.

(Beat.)

Maybe 'recommendation' is not the best word. 'Requirement' is more accurate. Six visits, if I recall, just to sort out a few things in your mind.

(Bailey moves to the seedling trays.)

Bailey

It doesn't ring a bell.

Jenny

I'm not surprised. You didn't go.

(Bailey holds a tray, admiring the greenery.)

Bailey

Lovely little things when they sprout, aren't they? A miracle, really. If anyone says there are no such things as miracles, just hand them a tray of coreopsis.

Jenny

The Board wasn't very happy with you, Bailey.

Bailey

I wasn't very happy with the Board.

(He puts the tray down.)

All those years and what does it come down to? Pushed out. Tied to a rail while the trains roar down.

(He turns to Morris, studying him.)

Morris

What?

Bailey

You. I know we've met.

Morris

Probably here.

Bailey

You make house calls?

Morris

Not normally.

Jenny

You were out of town, dear. One of those dreadful trips you always make begging for money for your Foundation. You came home unexpectedly and...

Morris

...found me having my portrait done.

Jenny

Yes, that's right. I was painting his likeness.

(Bailey glances at the swirl of lines on the canvas on the easel.)

Bailey

Really?

Jenny

I'm out of my realism phase.

(She moves to the painting.)

I'm now into expressing my emotions, letting myself go free, living for the moment in hopes of capturing some spark. You get to a point in life when that becomes very important. As if out of desperation, you have to reassure yourself that there is some spark left.

Bailey

That doesn't sound like you, Jennifer.

Jenny

No. It's actually something Dr. Ritchie explained to me. But it makes sense. I suppose that was the very reason you telephoned Delores Crowley, isn't it, dear? You were looking for some spark, too; some change in direction.

Bailey

I don't remember saying anything about a spark.

Jenny

I said it. It's how I made sense of your calling another woman.

(To Morris.)

Right in front of me, if you can imagine. And not once, mind you, but fifteen or twenty times he picked up the phone and dialed, looking for her. When he finally made contact, he asked her...

Bailey

I don't really want to talk about it.

Jenny

That's what married people do, Bailey. They talk about things so little problems don't become big problems. But you were always away doing the Foundation's business.

Bailey

There was a time when you were right there with me.

Jenny

I volunteered, Bailey. I wasn't up in the rarified air like you. I was a worker bee. An immanently forgettable worker bee.

Bailey

I didn't forget.

Jenny

There's probably a difference opinion about that. No, I'd say there is a difference of opinion about that since we've definitely failed to talk about our little problems and now here we are in a house that's crumbling around us, and I'm sick of it. There, I've said it.

Bailey

You said the same thing yesterday, Jennifer.

Jenny

You didn't listen yesterday or the day before or the day before that.

(To Morris.)

It's like he's living in outer space. "Houston, we have a problem. I've lost contact with my husband."

Morris

And we want to get him back.

(Jenny's taken aback.)

Jenny

What did you say?

Morris

I said we want to get that contact back. We want to be able to talk to each other like reasonable people. We want to understand one another's feelings so that when we come to a decision on how best to proceed as couples, we can all live with that decision without acrimony.

Jenny

How do you get 'couples' out of three people? That's always baffled me about you, Morris. You toss something out and wait until I figure out what it's supposed to mean. Do you do that with all your patients?

Morris

You're missing the point, Jenny.

Jenny

I don't think I am. Bailey, do you remember what the point is? If you do, a little help would be appreciated.

Bailey

I remember all of it. I had to find where Delores Crowley was living since she left Idaho. Not an easy task when you consider I hadn't had contact with her in nearly forty years when she left Massachusetts. You get a sense how large the country really is when

Bailey (cont)

you're trying to find someone in it. I made all those calls to disconnected phone numbers, the wasted calls to people who'd never heard of Delores Crowley until by chance I dialed the correct number.

(Beat.)

Deedee has a wonderful voice.

Jenny

(To Morris.)

I ripped the phone from the wall so he didn't hear it very long.

Bailey

I wish you hadn't.

Jenny

I said the same thing, Bailey: "I wish you hadn't."

Bailey

(To Morris.)

Imagine you get a phone call from someone you hadn't heard from in years and years and years and before you can explain the purpose of the call, the line goes dead. For all I know, Deedee might have thought I'd gone mad.

Jenny

I wouldn't go there, Bailey.

Bailey

Why not?

Jenny

Because your Board had already come to that conclusion. You needed help. You needed to see a professional because you'd become unhinged, what with that nasty business with the police officer who arrested you in front of Saks. It was the top story in the city section. "Bailey Vorhees, CEO and president of the Foundation to Save Earth, spent the night in jail..."

Bailey

Embarrassing. The lowest point in my life. The absolute bottom.

(To Morris.)

That must have been about the time you came into the picture. A psychiatrist, you say?

Morris

That's right. After you refused to see me, Jenny suggested it might be easier on you if you came to see me together. Her presence might take edge off of your reluctance.

Bailey

My humiliation, you mean. My fall from grace. Why you?

Morris

Miles Osborne and I went to school together.

Bailey

Ahh, yes. Miles knows everybody and is on every board in the world, including mine. I'd kick him off if I had any power left. Since I don't, I stay in the house and work on the doors. Once they're all off, I'll put them back on. A man has to stay active or go daffy—which I'm not, nor is Jennifer as far as I can tell. Yet, she spends quite a bit of time at your office.

Morris

Your situation generated a lot of strain. Your wife sought a release.

Bailey

Is that all?

Morris

That's all.

Bailey

She does seem, other than today, more relaxed. You must be helping her.

Morris

Thank you.

Bailey

You couldn't have helped me, though.

Morris

Why is that?

Bailey

Because I don't believe in tinkering with what's in here.

(He taps the side of his head.)

A great, gray stew fermenting; brewing up ideas and plans and wonderful solutions to horrible ingrained problems, festering deep in the body politic. Do you realize, I took the shuttle from New York to Washington so often that I could fly the plane?

(A drum roll. The elderly Senator and his youthful, sexy Consultant enter on the back risers.)

Senator

Funny how an idea gets inside your head and rattles around. Won't leave you alone, will it?

Bailey

You can say that again, Senator.

Jenny

Who are you talking to?

(Bailey's attention is on the Senator's Consultant who wiggles for a moment like an exotic dancer. She stops.)

Consultant

I'm on the books as a consultant to the senator. I've been working on him for months.

Senator

Not on, we don't say "working on". That sort of language might easily be misconstrued and bring all sorts of trouble. Enough of that "working on".

Consultant

(A lusty wiggle.)

You never get enough.

Senator

We're conducting the people's business, here.

Consultant

He had funny business in mind when we met. We went out for a drink one night, then he kept calling and calling, saying he wanted me to consult with a new committee. That's what he said. Truth be told, I got bored. All those meetings. All that blathering. Who ever does anything? Me. I'm a woman of action who took it upon herself to shake...

(Pure temptress.)

...shake, shake things up on my own. Want to hear the outcome of my con-sult? Even if you don't, here goes:

(Sings.)

Consultant (cont)

“Fly me to the moon, and let me play among the stars, let me know what spring is like on Jupiter and Mars...”

Senator

It was an amendment to an appropriations bill. A million dollar pork barrel add on to come up with a new national anthem or something like that. Get a tune everybody could sing, I think was the purpose behind it, although I don't really remember. Money well spent, don't you agree?

(He pats the Consultant's rear and looks at his watch.)

I'm afraid we're running out of time, Mr. Vorhees. I know you came down here to present to the committee about some Foundation you're starting, but we're going to have to ask you to come back when we can give our undivided attention to, what was it you wanted to talk about?

Bailey

The environment.

Senator

That's right.

(He's uncontrollably drawn to Consultant.)

Bailey

I have startling figures proving rampant degradation of air quality unfit to breathe and water unfit to drink. If we don't do something now,...

(Consultant stares down at Bailey.)

Consultant

Don't look so sad.

(She fills her lungs and sticks her chest out.)

It's not that bad.

Bailey

It is that bad. Like everybody else, you chose to ignore it, but the problems won't go away. If you'd just give me a few minutes of your time...

Senator

Next time. You put some more figures together and come back. We'd love to have you. I mean it.

Consultant

Sing along, it might cheer you up. “Fly me to the moon and let me swing among the stars. Let me know what life is like on Jupiter...”

Bailey

“...and Mars.”

(Senator and Consultant dance off.)

Jenny

You didn’t answer, Bailey. Who were you talking to?

Bailey

Myself, I suppose. I was remembering my first trip to Washington. It seems like a million years ago.

(Beat. To Morris.)

Have you ever thought about changing the national anthem?

Morris

Hasn’t everybody?

Bailey

To “Fly Me To The Moon?”

Jenny

See? I explained all this to your receptionist. We’ve got a medical emergency unfolding and you’re nowhere to be found.

Morris

Bailey, why don’t you sit down over here?

Bailey

Why?

Morris

So we can talk.

Bailey

I haven’t the time.

Morris

What are you supposed to be doing?

Bailey

Working on my resignation speech.

Morris

Is that why you were taking down all these doors? You were putting off saying goodbye?

Bailey

The Foundation to Save Earth is my life. I can't just fold the tent and walk away. I can't. I had to keep busy. I had to think things out.

(Beat.)

You're probably too young to remember this, but when congress wouldn't listen to me, I took matters into my hands. Over forty years ago, I organized a concert in Central Park. From that little seed, word got out and my Foundation grew to what it is today. We're international. Even the Chinese take pains to ignore our warnings.

Morris

You're to be commended.

Bailey

One might think so, but you have to wonder when your own Board wants you out.

Morris

That must have been quite a shock.

Bailey

Try a thousand volts while you're soaking in the tub.

(Morris leads Bailey to the sofa. Bailey sits.)

Morris

How did you and the Board get to that point, Bailey?

Bailey

They saw on the news I was in jail.

Morris

Jail was the bomb exploding. What happened before the incident at Saks to light the fuse? What was the beginning?

Bailey

Beginnings are never that dramatic, are they? They're like chips in the paint; recognition of a slight imperfection not noticed for the longest time. Then, one day, it can't be ignored. Even when you close your eyes, it's the brightest light in the room.

Morris

What was the imperfection?

Bailey

I'm never really sure I put my finger on it.

Morris

A disagreement between you and your Board, perhaps?

Bailey

That's the thing, the fuse--as you put it--had nothing to do with the Foundation, at least not directly. It had to do with my personal life. I could feel Jenny pulling away from me, but I couldn't understand why since I love her more than anything. I tell her, but I don't think she believes me anymore.

Morris

You need to make time for those important in your life. You're a busy man.

Bailey

Who isn't? I'm sure you're a busy man, doctor. Do you have troubles at home?

Morris

Not anymore, I'm divorced.

Bailey

Really?

Morris

I'm afraid so.

Bailey

Interesting.

Morris

How so?

Bailey

I would have thought your wife would have wanted your portrait done. A man doesn't usually commission one for himself, does he? Who wants to sit alone, looking at a picture of himself? Or, maybe I'm just speculating that you are alone.

(Beat.)

I'd like to see that picture sometime. I can imagine it, but the real thing would certainly help me clear things up.

Morris

There is nothing to clear up, Mr. Vorhees. Your wife and I share a professional relationship. There is nothing more to it.

Jenny

I've told you that, Bailey. I don't know why you don't believe me. Dr. Ritchie and I talk. Period.

Bailey

And, tell him what? That your parents were quite normal in the normal run of things? No dysfunction to the naked eye. A warm upbringing, a fine education, a reasonable engagement to yours truly, then marriage, children of our own who also were raised warmly, if not fondly, educated at the finest and so the family saga goes and goes and goes until the genetic well dries.

Jenny

I don't care to tell you what Dr. Ritchie and I talk about.

Bailey

I thought that's what married people do, they talk.

Jenny

You're exasperating, do you know that?

Bailey

I'm just trying to understand, that's all. The thought occurred to me that another man...

Jenny

Don't be absurd.

Bailey

Let me finish. The thought occurred to me that another man might be in your life.

Jenny

If there is, it isn't Dr. Ritchie.

Bailey

Then, you don't deny it.

Jenny

I deny everything. Besides, you have no room to talk, Bailey Vorhees.

Bailey

And, why is that?

Jenny

Delores Crowley. How do you think that made me feel when all you could think of was phone numbers and phone calls until she finally answered? Do you think that wasn't a knife right through me?

Bailey

You don't understand.

Jenny

Because you never explained.

Bailey

I can't explain. Not in a way that makes much sense.

Morris

Why don't you give it a try?

Bailey

I have tried. It only jumbles my brain.

Jenny

I think you owe me an explanation, Bailey. At least a good try at one.

Bailey

(Beat.)

All right. I'll try. It started when I was away at Prep school.

(He stretches out on the sofa and folds his arms across his chest.)

If you've never been to Phillips Exeter, you're missing out on a beautiful part of the country. Rolling hills lined with perfectly straight stone walls and dotted with enormous maples that burst with color every October. The clear lakes reflect the reds and yellows so that on a calm day, it's like looking at a painting on glass. One lake in particular had a swimming platform moored fifty yards or so away from the sandy beach. On summer nights when everyone else was asleep, I'd sneak out of my dorm room and meet Delores Crowley out on that platform.

Morris

And nowhere else?

Bailey

During the summer, there was nowhere else.

(Beat.)

Bailey (Cont)

In the fall, when the mountains were full of leaf-peepers, she liked to spend time in Boston's Aquarium. In the winter to avoid the skiers, she liked to ice skate on a little pond so remote I could never find it again. And, in the cold and wet spring, she liked hunting for lady slippers along the National Seashore down on the Cape. All these places were Deedee's idea. If I was to see her at all, it had to be in places she choose where the chances of us being seen together by someone who knew her were slim.

Jenny

That's preposterous.

Bailey

Why?

Jenny

Isn't it obvious? She was embarrassed to be seen with you.

(Bailey sits up.)

Bailey

That's one of the things that drew me to Delores Crowley in the first place. Nothing was ever about her, it was always about me. And, no, she wasn't embarrassed to be seen with me, she was afraid that my being seen with her might embarrass me.

(Beat.)

She wasn't one of 'us'. She wasn't one of the privileged. The closest she got to a private school was when she picked her mother up from the kitchen's back entrance.

Jenny

Her mother was kitchen help?

Bailey

Kitchen staff, I believe is more politically correct nowadays.

Morris

Still, you became infatuated with this young woman.

Bailey

At that age, most would call it love.

Morris

How old were you?

Bailey

Seventeen.

Morris

How long did your interest last?

Bailey

You mean, did I get what my hormones demanded and then move on?

Morris

I wasn't being crass.

Bailey

(Beat.)

And I'm not being purposefully evasive. Do you hear that, Jennifer? There are ten million people in New York, if I wanted to have an affair, I'd have gone into the city and had one. This...the only word that comes close is manic. This manic state that I was in drove me to find Delores Crowley. I needed to see her. I needed to hear her voice.

Jenny

What could she possibly say that you needed to hear?

Bailey

It's not always the words, Jennifer, it's sometimes how they're spoken. I wanted to hear caring in someone's voice. I wasn't sure anyone nearby could provide that, so I went out and grabbed it from the past.

Jenny

How can you say that? It's ridiculous.

Bailey

Is it? Then, you explain what happened to me. Every day for years, I've crawled out of bed, showered, dressed, drank my coffee and dashed for the train into the city. Then, one day, instead of going to my office to learn what other natural catastrophe awaited, I walk into a Barnes and Nobles and start hurling all the Roger Tory Peterson Field Guides around the store. They're up on the second floor, and I'm slinging these paper bombs on the customers below. Pow! Pow! Look out below! Before I'd cleared the last shelf, an employee tried to stop me. We were this close.

(Bailey jumps to his feet and acts out the fight.)

He threw a right. I blocked it and came back with a punch of my own. In came another right and a left and another right. I didn't know my own strength, and when I finally landed, I thought I'd killed the poor man. In a panic, I ran down the escalator and out the door trailing a throng of screaming book lovers. I ran up Fifth Avenue where I mistook horse's hooves for the sounds of my pounding heart. I tried the doors of a limo, but the driver wouldn't let me in. The next thing I knew, I'm standing on the hood of this big,

Bailey (cont)

black car, looking into the startled face of one of New York's finest who's pointing a gun my way. I raised my hands in submission. I had no fight left.

Morris

But, that's what you are, Mr. Vorhees. You've been a fighter all your life. The Foundation is a testament to that.

Bailey

I told you, this has nothing to do with the Foundation, this has to do with a man I can't clearly see.

(Bailey stands inches from Morris.)

I think I see him, but then I'm not all that sure. And I want to be sure.

Morris

Before?

Bailey

That depends on Jennifer to a large degree. If she...

(A clock chimes. Bailey glances nervously at his watch.)

That can't be the right time, can it? Dear God, I've got to change. I've got to be in court.

(Bailey exits.)

Jenny

He knows.

Morris

He suspects. There's a big difference.

Jenny

What are we going to do?

Morris

That's why I came over, Jennifer. We need to talk about that. Circumstances change, as you well know.

Jenny

I don't like the sound of this.

Morris

Yes, well, as I said, circumstances change. When I asked you to come live with me...

Jenny

I couldn't just walk out on Bailey. I should have. It would have served him right, but I couldn't bring myself to do it. I don't want to hurt him anymore than I have, but by the same token, the idea of that other woman in my house puts me over the edge.

Morris

What woman?

Jenny

Delores Crowley. Bailey invited her here.

Morris

That's why he tracked her down?

Jenny

I'm afraid so.

Morris

What did she say?

Jenny

She said no, of course. She's got a life of her own somewhere.

Morris

Then, what's the worry?

Jenny

Women change their minds, Morris. It's what we do best. To demonstrate the point, I think I should move in with you. We enjoy each other's company, don't we? We share good times. I'm nothing like your former pushy wife. I'm coming to grips with what my life means. I'm getting accustomed to its limits, its shortcomings, its disappointments—like you, for example, for not calling me back. Maybe you should pay more attention to your receptionist. She must have been doing something else instead of sending you my messages.

Morris

I got your messages, Jennifer. I was trying to decide how to respond to them, that's all. I don't want anyone in this situation to get hurt.

Jenny

Situation? Is that what we have, a situation? Funny, I thought it was much more than that. Or, should I have brought along a translator to explain what you meant when you said you loved me? What sort of game are you playing, Morris?

Morris

It's not a game. I just don't want us to make a mistake, that's all.

Jenny

You're getting cold feet. You're having a case of the vapors. You're...

Morris

I'm trying to explain to you that Carroll wants to get back together.

Jenny

What?

Morris

It came as quite a shock to me, too. The phone rang. I picked it up and she was on the other end. That's where I've been the past few days. Carroll and I went to Atlantic City to discuss our options. That's why I didn't come over sooner.

Jenny

You've been with your wife?

Morris

Still former, but, yes.

Jenny

In an Atlantic City hotel room in bed? How could you do this to me? How could you be so cruel?

Morris

I didn't initiate any of this. It's not like I planned the whole mess.

Jenny

At least we agree it's a mess.

Morris

Besides, I haven't said I'd go back to her.

Jenny

Haven't said to whom? Me or Carroll?

Morris

Either. It's all happened so quickly. She just called...

Jenny

And you went running. Didn't it ever occur to you that you'd already pissed on that tree?

Morris

Be fair.

Jenny

Be fair? You come here and tell me you've just spent two days with your wife, and you want me to be fair. What am I missing?

Morris

I understand you're angry.

Jenny

I hope you're not going to bill me for that insight. But, now I understand how you get "couples" out of three people. There were really four all along, you just didn't have the nerve to tell me.

Morris

I didn't have the opportunity. Or would you have preferred me to bring it up when your husband was here?

Jenny

Don't be cruel.

Morris

I am trying to be reasonable.

Jenny

Love is not an intellectual decision, Morris. You shouldn't have to weigh and measure each woman to see which provides the most joy per pound. It shouldn't be like that at all. And you ought to know that. I suppose you do and that I was just one of those women you hear about all the time being taken advantage of by their doctor.

Morris

Now, you're the one being cruel.

Jenny

Maybe I have a right to be. My husband's invited another woman into my house, and now you reveal you're contemplating going back to your wife. Where does that leave me?

Morris

I can't answer that. Not yet.

Jenny

Oh, well, a timetable would ease my mind. Shall we say the fifteenth of the month? Or has Carroll given you another date? Or does she even know about me?

(Beat.)

Was I a topic of conversation in Atlantic City or do I even exist anymore?

Morris

Don't be ridiculous.

Jenny

That's not an answer.

(Beat.)

Did you tell your wife you were in love with someone else?

(Beat.)

I didn't think so.

(Beat.)

You shouldn't go around telling lonely middle-aged women you love them, Morris. Some of them might believe you.

Morris

You're a beautiful, complex person, Jennifer.

Jenny

Don't. There is nothing beautiful about me or the situation I've put myself in. Complex yes, beautiful, no. I don't see an obvious way out, do you? Putting aside that Bailey might run off with Delores Crowely and that you might go back to your wife, what's my obvious way out? Suicide?

Morris

Don't even joke about that.

Jenny

Who's to say I'm joking?

Morris

I am.

Jenny

Oh, I forgot. You have been exploring my mind, among other things, for the past few months. You do have insights. Care to share?

Morris

I'll share what I've shared from the start. You still love your husband.

Jenny

I do not.

Morris

You do and you always have. My eyes were wide open to that fact. Why do you continue to close yours?

Jenny

I close mine because I don't want to see Bailey fall into the abyss. He's on the edge. His balance is a little off. It won't take much until he's tumbling through the air.

Morris

Pull him back.

Jenny

Don't you think I've tried? Bailey doesn't see me anymore. He doesn't hear me reaching out to him. If he did he never would have called Delores Crowley. There would have been no need.

(A frantic Bailey enters wearing a sport jacket, his shirt collar open.)

Bailey

Wouldn't you know it? The closet doors are all off and I still can't find the right tie. Jenny? Can you help someone who's running way behind? A tie, please.

(Jenny exits.)

Fine woman, don't you agree? Like a little bird in some ways, always seems to be just learning to fly.

(Beat.)

How long have you two been seeing each other?

Morris

I told you, Miles Osborne...

Bailey

Yes, yes, after the introduction from Miles and the office appointments, when did you start seeing Jennifer in a social sense?

Morris

You mean a romantic sense.

Bailey

Yes, that's what I mean.

Morris

There's no need to go there.

Bailey

Really? Why?

Morris

Because it won't do anyone any good.

Bailey

Except me.

Morris

Especially not you. If there were ever anything between your wife and me—other than a professional acquaintance—it's over. I'll never see her again.

Bailey

Romantically?

Morris

Romantically, socially, professionally. All of it.

Bailey

Are you suggesting she's cured? Her problems are over? Or will she have to find someone else to take your place?

Morris

She has that someone, Mr. Vorhees: you. You just need to pay more attention. But I'm sure you know that. I'm sure the realization regarding how distant the two of you have become was in some part responsible for your breakdown.

Bailey

And your advice?

Morris

Stop saving the world and start saving your marriage.

Bailey

Spoken by someone who couldn't do that himself. How many times have you been divorced, doctor?

Morris

Once is enough.

Bailey

You saw it coming?

Morris

Everyone sees it coming. Not all of us admit it.

Bailey

You mean me. Do I see the problems Jen and I have?

Morris

Do you?

Bailey

Yes.

Morris

And did nothing?

Bailey

When you're driving a thousand miles an hour, a stop sign doesn't always prevent the crash. It's more like a red blur whizzing by. You can scream "Oh, shit!" but it doesn't do any good. Besides, I told Jennifer that what I had to do with my life would not be easy on either one of us. I would have to travel. When a seagull died in an oil spill off the coast of Maine, I needed to be there. When a baby seal was being bludgeoned in Alaska, I needed to be there, too. I was the world's witness to our collective ruin. I was the one who reported to Congress so they could pass the bills to clean up our mess. How could I make my case if I didn't see horrors with my own eyes?

(Senator and Consultant appear on back risers.)

Senator

What's on the docket today, my dear?

Consultant

Bailey Vorhees.

Senator

Again? Didn't he get a few bucks last year?

Consultant

He wants more.

Senator

Everybody wants more. Shoo the damn fly away.

Consultant

He won't go.

Senator

Try harder.

Consultant

I did.

(Beat.)

Besides, you said I could have a few words with him about the results of my newest consult.

Senator

I did?

Consultant

You did.

(Beat.)

Pleeeeeeeze?

Senator

Show the pest in.

(Consultant swings open the “double doors”.)

Bailey

Thank you, thank you for agreeing to see me again.

Senator

About that, Mr. Vorhees. When, as near as you can estimate, do you think you and your staff at... What was the name again?

Bailey

The Foundation to Save Earth.

Senator

Right. When do you fellows think you're going to accomplish that? I mean, you fly down here with the regularity of a ticking clock. You put a new report on some such into the public record and present a budget for a new economic request. Ten billion for cleaner air, fifty billion for the waterways, a hundred billion for God knows what, but it never seems to be enough. Why is that?

Bailey

Complex issues are very expensive to resolve. In some instances, not everyone agrees that there is a problem, even though the Foundation's reports based on our detailed research clearly shows that there is. Convincing people that an environmental problem exists can take years and millions of dollars. Secondly...

Senator

Before you get to seconds, let me point out that money is not an unlimited resource, Mr. Vorhees.

Bailey

I am aware of that, Senator. I travel with my hand out in the private sector as well.

Senator

And the results?

Bailey

Most businesses see environmental issues as having an impact on their bottom line. Usually a negative impact, but not always. On the whole, you'd be wrong to say that I am welcomed anywhere with open arms.

Senator

The hardworking folks across the country are afraid you're going to put them out of business.

Bailey

Some fear that. If nothing else, they fear corrective measures that improve the environment will significantly reduce their profits. That's why government policy is so critical, Senator. You're not in the business to make a profit.

Senator

It's not a business at all, Mr. Vorhees, it's a calling. We put ourselves in front of the camera everyday so the folks who've put us here see we're punching the clock.

(Consultant as Sunday News Show pundit.)

Consultant/Pundit

Senator, would you clarify once and for all...?

Senator

You don't know how glad I am you asked that question. There is too much misinformation out there, some generated by the press to get ratings or sell newspapers. So, let me clarify what the real issue is. The first thing you need to know is that I wasn't the only one who voted for that bill. My learned colleagues on both sides of the aisle, in true bipartisan spirit saw the value—all across this great land of ours, mind you, all across this great land of ours—to modify, notice I did not say radically change, I said 'modify' the National Anthem. It is still a song. We debated long and hard on that. Everyone in the committee held firm that we should have a song, not a dance number or a magician up in front of a sold out football stadium doing slight of hand. We all wanted a song, so that was never the question. The question was, what tune? Song: one-hundred percent agreement. What tune? That's where the debate began.

Consultant/Pundit

That wasn't the question I wanted you to address, Senator. What about the rumors that the woman who accompanies you everywhere, and, who is not your wife...?

Senator

We all employ staff. Being in the senate is not a forty-hour a week job. I wish it were, I truly do. I would love to spend more time with my family. One person cannot do this job alone, we need staff. Now, I will say in my defense, that my small staff... Hold on a second, here. Some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have over twenty minions on their payroll. Why aren't you looking into my staff?

Consultant/Pundit

The question, Senator, is about the woman and her qualifications.

Senator

The best consultant I ever had. Judge for yourself.

Consultant

Another con-sult, another committee, another fantastic idea brought forth by yours truly.

(Beat.)

After the anthem got settled.

(Sings.)

"Fly me to the moon...

Bailey/Consultant

(He joins in.)

"...and let me live among the stars, let me know what life is like on Jupiter and Mars. In other words, darling kiss me..."

Consultant

Like I said, after that song business and seeing that exhausted Mr. Vorhees winging his way down to Washington again, I put on my environmental thinking cap to help him and tossed out a few basic principles every blue-blooded American should abide by. To wit: Don't drive when you can walk. Car pool when you drive. Check your tire pressure to save gasoline. Drive the speed limit. Keep the thermostat down to sixty-eight degrees in your home. Make sure...

Bailey

We're beyond catch phrases.

Consultant

You haven't even heard my catch phrases. "Love your trash." "Recycle like you mean it." "Every little bit hurts."

Bailey

It's "litter bit."

Consultant

I like that. "Litter bit." "Every litter bit hurts." Cute.

Bailey

As I said, we are beyond the cliché and the catchy phrase. What we need now is action, not more time wasted in committees and more money spent on worthless consultants.

Consultant

(To Senator, shocked.)

Did you hear that? He called me worthless.

Senator

Inside these halls, we debate, Mr. Vorhees. We do not cast aspersions.

Bailey

We'll I am delighted to finally know what you do. Until now, I wasn't sure.

Senator

I don't have to take that.

Bailey

The fate of the earth is at a crossroads, Senator. It's not too late to take appropriate corrective measures, but time is running out. That's why I'm here. That's why I'm always here. We can no longer apply band aids and convince ourselves that we are solving the critical issues. We need a global approach; we need committed leaders who will fight for a planet worthy of leaving to our children.

Senator

Isn't that *your* job?

Bailey

I used to think so.

(Beat.)

Arrogant of me, wasn't it? The height of conceit thinking that putting myself as president of the Foundation to Save Earth, I could actually do it. Me, Bailey Vorhees, a shining armored knight swooping down to correct the evils. The truth is, in the beginning, I

Bailey (cont)

actually believed I could do it all. I believed I could make a difference that no one else could. Now, I no longer have the energy.

Senator

You need a vacation.

Bailey

I told my wife that very thing. I said, Jennifer, we should take some time, go away together, reconnect. It's like we don't even know each other anymore; we're just living like strangers together in the same house. When she didn't jump at the chance, I was convinced there was another man.

(Beat.)

It was an amazing moment. All my life I've wondered how I would behave in certain situations. A robber pulls a knife on me at an ATM; a man calls for help in a rip current; the shuttle I'm on to Washington is about to crash. What do I do? How do I digest that information and act? In each case, I am calm and heroic. Without increasing my heart rate, I take away the robber's knife and shove the man out the door. I rip off my shirt and plunge into the sea. I make the last few moments of the passenger beside me as pleasant as can be. But when I pictured another man in bed with my wife, I wasn't calm at all. I picked myself up from the floor and ran out the door in a rage that spun out of control with the first Roger Tory Peterson book I hurled over the second floor railing.

Morris

Then, you do love her. Still.

Bailey

I do. And, I have a plan to prove it to her. It all just takes a little time that I don't seem to have.

(A clock chimes.)

Good God, the court gets in a foul mood when the defendant comes in late. I...

Consultant/Bailiff

(She bangs a gavel as Senator steps beside her.)

Calling Bailey Vorhees. The court calls Bailey Vorhees to come forward and hear the charges against you.

(She bangs the gavel again and again. Bailey panics.)

Bailey

One moment, please. I'm not completely dressed.

(The gavel bangs and blends with someone knocking on the door. Bailey hears the distinction.)

Jennifer? My tie and there's someone at the front door. Jen?

(Bailey rushes to the door and opens it. He backs away as if struck. Following him inside is Delores Crowley, 50s, carrying an overnight bag. There is something daring about her. She looks around the room.)

Delores

My, my. I hope you didn't pay the architect.

(Enter Jennifer carrying a dark tie. Bailey catches his breath.)

Bailey

I didn't think you'd come. I know I didn't make much sense over the telephone.

(Beat.)

I can't believe it. You're really here.

Delores

Of course, I'd come. Who could turn down an invitation like that?

(Delores moves easily to Jennifer and offers her hand.)

Delores Crowley.

(Jenny hesitates. They shake awkwardly.)

Jenny

Jennifer Vorhees. My friend, Dr. Ritchie.

Delores

Pleased as punch, I'm sure.

(She notices the tie in Jenny's hand and opens her bag. She takes out a gaudy tie.)

Some colors, huh? Bold like Bailey. At least as I remember him. I didn't know what else to bring for your generosity.

Jenny

Not my generosity, I'm afraid.

Delores

I see.

(A chilling pause. The gavel breaks the silence. Bailey springs into high energy action. He grabs Delores's tie and puts it on, giving Deedee a kiss on the cheek as he positions himself in front of the Judge. But Bailey can't contain his gleeful enthusiasm and dashes back for another kiss on Deedee's other cheek. They both seem like playful lovers. Bailey scurries back to court.)

Bailey

The most remarkable thing, Your Honor.

Senator/Judge

You're late.

Bailey

I am, I admit it. I apologize, but a woman I haven't seen in nearly forty years showed up at my door.

Senator/Judge

If we might proceed?

Consultant/Bailiff

You have been charged with one count each: destruction of private property in the amount of thirty-five hard and soft cover books, assault on a bookstore employee, and resisting arrest from one of New York's finest. How do you plead?

Bailey

Not guilty in the normal sense.

Senator/Judge

Excuse me?

(Bailey taps the side of his head with one finger.)

Bailey

A crack in the banana, Your Honor.

Senator/Judge

You're saying you're crazy?

Bailey

You'll have to be the judge, sir. I have been under considerable strain, I do admit to that.

Senator/Judge

And took it out on a bookstore cashier.

Bailey

I hit that poor boy so hard I didn't think he'd ever come down.

Senator/Judge

He said it was a glancing blow. The Field Guide to the back of his head hurt worse.

Bailey

Newly revised and updated Field Guide to the Birds, two pounds easy.

(Beat.)

I suggested to my wife that we go away for a few days to reconnect. Maybe I should have suggested we go to South America to do a little birding in the Amazon. Maybe she would have said yes. You see, Your Honor, the combination of my job and the rest of my life became too much. It was like a great weight pressing down on me. No matter what I did to shake it off, I couldn't. It was there, always, getting heavier and heavier and heavier and only one idea, one thought, gave me any peace.

(Beat.)

Have you ever had an idea, a single thought take over? Whatever you do, it nudges all else out of your mind and presents itself as the only available option you have. Eventually, you can do nothing but pay absolute attention. You have to do it. No matter how odd it sounds, you have to do it.

Senator/Judge

Do what Mr. Vorhees?

Bailey

Tracking down Miss Crowley. Finding her after all those moves during all those years. Finally, I hit pay dirt. She came to the phone and I blurted it out: "Deedee, you're the only one I could ever ask this of. No other. None.

(He pulls in a deep, relaxing breath.)

"Deedee, would you go away with me?"

Senator/Judge

To where?

Bailey

To the moon.

Senator/Judge

You didn't run to the moon, Mr. Vorhees, you ran out of the bookstore to Saks. The officer said you sat on the hood of a limousine and refused to give your name.

Bailey

I was so embarrassed, I wanted to die.

Senator/Judge

Instead, you sang the National Anthem.

Bailey

I did?

(Beat.)

Which one?

---End Act One---

Bailey

Act Two

Time: One week later.

Setting: The Vorhees living room where some of the doors have been removed to reduce the clutter.

At Rise: A New York City police officer, 30s, dressed in his uniform paces. Morris is at the bar mixing a drink. Jenny, at the easel paints furiously. Morris hands the officer a cocktail.

Officer

I really shouldn't, not on duty, but how much can one guy take?

(He sips.)

Very nice, Dr. Ritchie, thank you.

Morris

Don't mention it. Jennifer?

Jenny

No thanks.

(Beat.)

You know, this is ridiculous. It's been a week, one full week, and no sign of Bailey and that...that...

Morris

...that rather odd woman.

Jenny

That's putting it mildly. Where are they? Somebody tell me.

Officer

I don't know that I can do that, but I do have an update on the investigation. That's why I asked to see you. Thank you for letting me come over. I have assumed—unofficially--the leading role in finding your husband, Mrs. Vorhees. I'm just sick about all this.

Jenny

So you've said.

Officer

You don't believe me? I worship your husband, Mrs. Vorhees. I mean, I saw him running up Fifth Avenue, wild-eyed, in a panic...

Jenny

I'll never understand why you arrested him if you knew who he was.

Officer

I didn't want to, but I had my duty. Besides, there were a thousand people jamming that intersection. A thousand potential witnesses to preferential treatment. I had to arrest him even though it ripped my heart out. Did I tell you that on Saturdays, my father used to take me to the arboretum and without fail would say "If it weren't for Bailey Vorhees, all we'd have to walk through is another parking lot."

(He moves to the grow light.)

You have lovely coreopsis.

Jenny

Bailey planted them.

Officer

That's not all he planted. He spoke to my high school and gave me goose bumps. He looked down from the dais right at me and said "The world is on a teeter-totter, and you people will have to make the difference if we are going to save the planet. In every endeavor, there is a way to be green. Find it, live it, and we will all be better for it."

Morris

So, that explains why you're on a horse instead of a motorcycle.

Officer

That's right. Just doing my part. The irony is that horse led me to an arrest I will regret for the rest of my life. I worship that man, and now, wherever he is, I'm sure he hates me.

Jenny

Bailey doesn't hate anyone. But, if we could move beyond your feelings and find him, assuming he's still alive. For all we know, he could be...

Officer

Don't go there. Not yet. Besides, Bailey being dead doesn't fit with what I have to tell you. I've been doing a little checking what with the free time I have between interviews on the talk shows. Did either of you see my few minutes on Good Morning America when I announced the reward?

Jenny

We both saw it. Thank you, Morris. Fifty thousand was very generous.

Morris

It's the least I could do.

Officer

I'd add money of my own, but I'm holding back until I see if I need to hire an attorney. You can't imagine what it's like, the ridicule, the pointed fingers and shouts. "Hey, you! Aren't you the cop who rode that horse up Fifth Avenue and lassoed the most famous environmentalist America has ever known? You're a bum!"

Morris

You don't hire an attorney because somebody yells at you. If you did, we'd all spend half our lives in court.

Officer

I know why you hire an attorney. You hire an attorney to divvy up the assets.

(Beat.)

My wife is a little upset over this mess. She can't stand the looks she gets on the subway, but what's worse are the fights our kids get into at school. Imagine them out there on the playground protecting their old man's reputation with their little fists. Tragedy is they haven't won a fight yet. Maria says one more bloody nose, and she's out the door with the kids in tow to her mother's in Queens.

Jenny

All the more reason to find Bailey and put a stop to all of this chaos.

Officer

We're on the same page, Mrs. Vorhees, so let me bring you two up to date. We've run the usual checks at the hospitals, the jails, the homeless shelters, and as you know, no sign of your husband or Delores Crowley. As near as we can tell, neither one left the city by bus, train, or airplane. And, the Crowley woman's rental is still in your driveway, which seems to rule out that they drove anywhere on their own.

Morris

We know all that.

Officer

But what you don't know is the news that came in today regarding Delores Crowley. What do either of you know about her?

Jenny

Very little.

Morris

Bailey knew her from prep school.

Officer

Which she did not attend. Deedee Crowley graduated from Lowell Tech and Trades with a diploma emphasizing retail sales and fashion design.

(He takes a notepad from his shirt pocket.)

She was a cheerleader as a freshman. Then, when her father left the family for greener pastures, Miss Crowley helped her mother out around the house to the extent that Deedee got a part-time job at K-Mart to cover expenses. No more cheerleading.

Jenny

I don't think Bailey's ever been inside a K-Mart.

Officer

Raising the questioning: how did town and gown meet?

Jenny

Through Deedee's mother. She worked at Phillips Exeter.

Officer

I thought you knew very little.

Jenny

That's the extent of it.

Officer

Then, you don't know that Bailey fell quite hard for this young woman. He fell about as hard as you can fall from what I've been able to find out from Bailey's classmates.

(Senator and Consultant appear of the back riser.)

Senator/Judge/Classmate

He used to—I was about to say walk across campus, but it was more like he floated across—but however he moved, he sang some girl's name. I used to ask who she was, but he would never say.

Consultant/Classmate

There was a glow about Bailey. That's the only way to describe it: a glow. I've seen that look since then, and every time the cause was love.

(They exit.)

Morris

And Deedee's feelings toward Bailey?

Officer

About the same. Two teenaged kids head over heels in love, but whose lives—as we know from hindsight—were going in different directions. Bailey went on to Princeton, to Yale Law, and to a career that’s the envy of everyone in my family. Miss Crowley married right after Lowell Tech and traveled to Boise, Idaho with husband, Ron Huckaby who established an insurance business there. I spoke to Ron on the phone. He’s suffering from severe depression, he said. John Hancock has fifty-plus stories in Boston and he’s making do out of a cement block storefront. He and Delores split up after ten years.

Morris

Why did she and Bailey split up?

Officer

It just happens, doesn’t it? They were kids.

Jenny

Why do you ask?

Morris

Maybe we’re underestimating Miss Crowley.

Jenny

How so?

Morris

Wouldn’t most women in her position see a meal ticket? Her parents are divorced, she and Mr. Huckaby did the same. For all Delores knows, her life won’t get much better. Given a second chance, wouldn’t she hang on to Bailey instead of letting him walk away?

Jenny

She’s a gold digger?

Morris

It’s a possibility.

Jenny

That winch! Do you think she kidnapped Bailey?

Morris

Like I said, it’s a possibility.

Jenny

What do you think?

Officer

I think it's a strong possibility, if you put aside for a moment that we have not received a ransom note. But the facts speak for themselves. When Miss Crowley left Bosie she landed in Lubbock, Texas where she holed up in a motel during one of the worst heat waves ever in recorded history. She spent as much time as possible in the motel's pool, which is where she met Teddy Bosa, husband number two. The only problem was Teddy had a wife and five kids in Mexico he failed to mention to Delores.

Morris

Not good.

Officer

That's what Deedee said when the kids showed up at her front door wanting Dad to come home.

Jenny

I hope she ditched the bastard.

Officer

She did.

Jenny

And found husband number three?

Officer

They're not married, but she did find Carl and has been with him in Sante Fe for the past fifteen years. Carl runs a jewelry store specializing in Indian silver and turquoise. I spoke with him, too.

Jenny

And?

Officer

He said everything was fine with life in Sante Fe. Deedee ran the shop when he needed a few hours off or went on a buying trip. He thought she was happy. He was—until he answered the telephone and Bailey was on the other end.

Morris

Bailey, the meal ticket.

Officer

That's what I'm thinking. I did a little digging regarding Carl's shop. Business is pretty good in the winter months, but not so good over the summers. Last year was the slowest in the past ten.

Morris

Carl and Deedee could be in this together.

Officer

Makes sense. I mean, what other explanation is there? Now, I'm ready to go back to my supervisors and run with this, but there's one thing I need clarification on. I read the court transcript several times and that business with Bailey inviting Deedee to the moon had to be a misprint, right?

(Beat.)

Right?

Jenny

Does it matter?

Officer

It does. I mean, if you take the business at the bookstore and him singing some nutty tune on top of that limo and add to it a moon landing, well...

Jenny

Bailey has been under a good deal of strain recently. Part of which, I take responsibility for.

Officer

Not feeling well?

Jenny

As a matter of fact I'm not.

Officer

Maybe if you had a seat.

Jenny

That wouldn't help, I'm afraid.

Officer

Some water?

Jenny

I'm angry. Water won't help.

Officer

I'm sorry, Mrs. Vorhees, but I can assure you the NYPD is doing all it can to find...

Jenny

Not at you. Although I don't know why you get a free ride, I'm angry at Morris and Bailey and that other woman. I'm angry at myself. I'm angry at my life. I'm angry with all of it, so I must be angry with you, too.

Morris

Jennifer, I'm disappointed. We've talked about a positive direction for...

Jenny

You're disappointed? You? You are disappointed?

(To Officer.)

If you and your wife do decide to break up, don't let her go to a psychiatrist for advice, especially Morris Ritchie.

Morris

Jennifer...

Jenny

He's got other uses for his couch.

Morris

That's quite enough. After all I did put up a fifty thousand dollar reward for...

Jenny

Your conscious. That's all it was. Conscious money. It makes you feel like you've done nothing wrong.

Morris

I haven't done anything wrong.

Jenny

No? What about misleading me? What about making me feel I was special? I was the only woman in your life. You led me to believe that.

Morris

Did I ever say such a thing?

Jenny

Your actions, Morris. Actions *do* speak louder than words. Or perhaps I should say louder than shrieks and moans from the bedroom. You used me and I let you.

Morris

Stop it.

Jenny

I won't stop it. I was an emotional holiday for you, wasn't I? That's what affairs are. You don't have to think about the plumber or the dry cleaner or the mortgage payment, you only think about each other in bed. When the vacation ends, you crawl back to your wife.

(Beat.)

Tell me the truth. Did you leave your wife, or did she kick you out because you're such a bastard?

Morris

(Beat.)

She did the kicking but realized that she'd made a terrible mistake.

Jenny

You must have thought the same. Being with me was a terrible mistake.

Morris

That's not the way I felt, and you know it.

Jenny

That's the problem, Morris. I don't know it. It's all a blurry pack of lies. How long did you say you were married?

Morris

Eighteen years.

Jenny

Is that the truth?

Morris

It is.

Jenny

Eighteen miserable years with a woman who never took the time out from her committee work to understand what a perfect man you really are. Is any of that true?

Morris

Not entirely. Carroll is an artist.

(Jenny holds up her paintbrush.)

Jenny

Not by any chance a painter?

Morris

I'm afraid so.

Jenny

And, this therapy you promote, don't tell me it's a husband-wife collaboration.

Morris

I got the idea from her yes, but...

(Jenny flings her brush toward the easel.)

Jenny

You really are a bastard, Morris. Why did she want a divorce?

Morris

She wanted to be happy.

Jenny

Join the club.

Morris

She said she loved me, but wasn't happy. I was the symbol of her unhappiness.

Jenny

Not the cause?

Morris

Apparently not since she wants me back.

Jenny

And, you're going? Your former wife snaps her fingers, and you scamper back like a little dog?

(A large, dark shadow arcs past the back window. Jenny, Morris and the Officer all notice as it swings slowly back the other way.)

Morris

What was that?

(Officer draws his gun.)

Officer

I don't know, but everybody stay calm.

Jenny

It went up over the house.

(Jenny looks up at the ceiling. Morris and Officer follow her eyes. Slowly, the gondola of a hot air balloon descends to the risers. Bailey and Deedee are in it.)

Officer

Explain this, doc.

Morris

The power of suggestion. All of us want Bailey to be found, and in our imaginations we produce him.

Officer

You mean, he's really not here? He's only in our minds?

Morris

You need to understand the power of the human mind...

Jenny

Shut up, Morris. It's really Bailey.

(Bailey and Deedee wave as the gondola touches down.)

Delores

I think we'd better duck, Bailey, someone's pointing a gun at us.

(The Officer touches Bailey.)

Officer

It's him.

(He touches Delores.)

Her, too.

Bailey

Who else? Put that gun away, and help us out of this thing.

(The Officer puts away his weapon and opens the gondola's door. Bailey, a pure gentleman, helps Delores out. He follows, his face a glow. The basket ascends. Jenny and Morris are speechless.)

Bailey

What's this policeman doing here, Jennifer? Has there been a robbery? Jen? Jenny?

Officer
No robbery, Mr. Vorhees, an investigation.

Bailey
Into?

Officer
Your whereabouts and how you came to be wherever you were. There's a suspicion that you were kidnapped.

Bailey
Don't be absurd. Who would want to kidnap me?

Officer
Delores Crowley for one.

Bailey
Have you been drinking?

Officer
One Manhattan.

Bailey
You can't handle your liquor. I think you're drunk, or daft.

Officer
Makes it all the easier to ask this question, Mr. Vorhees. Would you explain this business about your going to the moon?

Bailey
(Beat.)

Who are you?

Officer
You don't recognize me?

Bailey
(Beat.)

No, but you do look remotely familiar.

Officer
The horse? The handcuffs? I want you to know how terrible I feel, Mr. Vorhees. I don't know how you came to be here, but I do know that I feel absolutely terrible about it all.

Bailey

That's a shame because I feel wonderful.

Delores

We both do. 'Marvelous' would be an understatement.

Officer

I'm glad for you both. But I can't go home until I get an explanation, something I can go home and tell my wife who has stopped sleeping with me. That's not asking for much, is it? Come to bed. Curl up beside me. I have not ruined the man's reputation. I haven't.

Bailey

She thinks that?

Officer

I'm afraid she does. What can I tell her, Mr. Vorhees? What can I say that will put my life back together?

Bailey

A tall order putting lives back together. I don't know that I can offer that much since I haven't done very well with my own.

Delores

Try, Bailey. He seems like such a sweet boy.

Officer

Please?

Bailey

I wouldn't want to bore anyone here.

Jenny

Like he said, Bailey, say something that will put our lives back together. I'm all ears.

Bailey

All right. Well, I came home after my court appearance and found Deedee all by herself. You and Morris had left. The fact was at that very moment, I thought you might have left with Morris for good.

Delores

Bailey was shattered and so exhausted, I could see the dead-bone tiredness in his face.

Bailey

I wanted to lie down, to put everything behind me, to rest but I had a resignation speech to write. That's what the judge ordered.

(Senator appears on the risers.)

Senator/Judge

Guilty, Vorhees. Counts one, two, and three strikes you're out. But, the court is not without mercy. Your resignation will do. I understand you've been reluctant to step away.

Bailey

It's been harder than I thought, Your Honor.

Senator/Judge

Well, the bell has rung on round fifteen. You are history, Vorhees. The fight is over. I'll give you one week to turn in your resignation, or you're looking at jail time. Understood?

Bailey

One week.

(Senator exits.)

I'd been so busy remodeling the house that I couldn't get around to writing my farewell.

Delores

He had to get away.

Jenny

To where?

Bailey

Where I might find a little peace. Where I might think things over.

Delores

We went back to the lake.

(Bailey and Deedee sit on the back risers, dangling their feet in the cool, lake water.)

It's amazing how warm this water is. It feels like a bath.

(Beat.)

Delores (cont)

How are you feeling after a night's sleep?

Bailey

Better. We haven't had a chance to talk since you knocked on my front door.

Delores

That's all right.

Bailey

It isn't all right. I've been a terrible host. I invite you back and spend most of the afternoon defending myself in court.

Delores

You didn't know when I was coming.

Bailey

I didn't know if you were coming. Why did you?

Delores

You invited me, Bailey.

Bailey

That's not much of a reason.

Delores

But it is. I've followed your career every step of the way. Every televised hearing in front of congress, every interview you did on TV. I saw them all.

Bailey

I don't believe it.

Delores

You get to spend a lot of time watching television living in Idaho and Texas. I remember one Sunday morning, "Meet the Press" maybe, but some serious looking newsman leaned over the table at you and asked, "Are you really in love with the world, Mr. Vorhees?"

Bailey

I was too damn naive at the beginning.

Delores

"I'm afraid I am." That was your answer. "I'm afraid I am." And you weren't naive, you were honest.

Bailey

Not always the best policy. But it's all in the past now; all history.

Delores

Why do you say that?

Bailey

Because I'm leaving the Foundation.

Delores

The newspapers said you were asked to leave.

Bailey

You shouldn't always believe what you read in the newspapers.

Delores

What are you saying?

Bailey

I'll ask the questions. You never really answered why you accepted my invitation.

Delores

I'd never been invited to the moon before. Some made me a promise of it, but no one had ever asked to take me there. If anyone could figure out how to arrange that, it had to be you. How could I turn that down?

Bailey

You're not disappointed it's only our lake?

Delores

I'm delighted it's our lake. It's wonderful here with beautiful clear water, the trees dotting the shore, a sliver of moon hanging there just so. Do you remember the first time I brought you here?

Bailey

I remember every time you brought me here.

Delores

Well, that's why I accepted your invitation, so we could share one more memory. Not to relive the past but to move ahead. That's always been my direction, Bailey. One foot in front of the other, straight ahead, always forward.

Bailey

But you must have thought how things might have turned out if you hadn't run away?

Delores

I didn't run. And, yes, I think about it. I would have held you back, Bailey. You know that's true. The world is round. There are no level playing fields when you start as far back in the pack as my family did. Everyday is uphill. You were born at the top of that hill. I'm happy for you. That's where you belong.

Bailey

No, it isn't.

Delores

Deny all you want, but you've proven me right. Look at you, look at what you've accomplished. My track record isn't so glorious. I got married right out of school to a sweet boy with family in Idaho. I'd never been farther west than Albany, but I figured Idaho would put enough distance between you and me.

Bailey

Like I said, running away.

Delores

I got married, Bailey, maybe for the wrong reason. Not that Ron didn't love me. I think he probably did. But he wanted to leave Massachusetts and be closer to family and I wanted to leave Massachusetts to get out of your way—and not only for your benefit; for mine, too. I wasn't going to hook my star to some man who one day would realize that he'd married the wrong woman. I wasn't going to do that when I already knew in my bones that I was the wrong woman for you. Girl, really. Think about it, Bailey, being together for ever and ever may have been in our heads, but we were kids. We shouldn't even have had those thoughts.

Bailey

I couldn't help it.

Delores

(A self-conscious admission.)

I couldn't either.

(Beat.)

Don't you think we ought to get down to business?

Bailey

Is that a proposition?

(Delores laughs.)

Delores

It's an offer to help you write your speech. That's one reason we came up here, isn't it? The peace and quiet will help you collect your thoughts. You need to leave your position like a gentleman, Bailey, someone we'll all be proud of. You need to make us forget what led up to your resignation.

Bailey

The horse, you mean.

Delores

What happened?

Bailey

I don't know, really. I was at a fundraiser up on the East side, and someone asked me where Jenny was. The question unnerved me. Why wasn't she with me like she often was? I didn't have an answer. It was like I'd gone off and left her but didn't know where. I left the event early, an empty feeling in the pit of my stomach. When I got home, Morris Ritchie was there. Jennifer made up some story about painting his portrait, but I knew. I could see the complicity on their faces. Apparently, their affair had been going on for months.

Delores

I'm sorry, Bailey. You must have been devastated.

Bailey

I don't know how to describe it. It was like I'd stepped off a cliff. My marriage in trouble? Preposterous. I'm the man who saves the earth. I'm the man who feels the need of every living creature. How could I not see the trouble in my own house?

Delores

And, when you did, you snapped.

Bailey

I went on a mini rampage out in the open so all could see.

Delores

It reached New Mexico on the national news.

Bailey

Which was the whole point. I wanted everyone to see it—especially Jennifer. I wanted her to see what she'd done to me. I can live with many failures, but not Jennifer with another man.

Delores

Have you told her this?

Bailey

I haven't told anyone, Deedee. There was no one I could tell but you. That's why I had to find you. You're...you're the only person who would understand.

Delores

I'm honored, Bailey, but that can't be true.

Bailey

Oh, but it is. Do you remember the night we sat out here on the dock, and I told you I had this dream that I reached out and caught a falling star headed straight for earth? In moments, it would hit with such force that all living things would die in an instant. The only thing that saved us was me.

(Beat.)

Stupid as that was, you didn't laugh. I could tell you anything and you never laughed. I know you won't laugh now when I tell you that I wanted the Board to force me to resign.

Delores

You what? Why?

Bailey

Because I couldn't walk away from my life's work. I couldn't turn my back on the Foundation. So much remains to get done and there aren't enough hours in the day to do it all. But, I know myself well enough to realize I'd be miserable if I just closed my eyes and walked away. I'd feel like I'd given up. But, if I were forced out, if I had no choice but to resign, maybe I could do something to get Jennifer back. At least, I'd have time to devote my full attention to her. She deserves that and for too long, I didn't pay enough attention.

Delores

So you planned your own demise?

Bailey

Jennifer's affair gave me little nudge, but yes, I planned the whole thing. Ingenious, wasn't it?

Delores

Except that everyone thinks you've lost your mind.

Bailey

Everyone thought I was crazy when I started the Foundation. Nothing has changed except that I might lose Jenny. I can't let that happen without a fight.

Delores

Dr. Ritchie seems a formidable opponent. What are you going to do?

Bailey

I haven't figured that out yet.

Delores

Have you considered the direct approach?

Bailey

How direct?

Delores

Like how you handled that offish footballer nearly twice your size who swam out to the dock and started in on me.

Bailey

Tried to pull you in, didn't he?

(Policeman/Footballer appears on the risers.)

Delores

He tried to pull my top off is what he did.

(Policeman/Footballer yanks at Deedee's top.)

Bailey

I wouldn't if I were you.

Policeman/Footballer

Screw you.

Bailey

We're out here minding our own business...

Policeman/Footballer

Didn't you hear? Get lost. I know the business the likes of this girl wants. You too stupid to figure that out?

(He challenges Bailey.)

Huh? Smart boy like you?

(Bailey stands to his full height.)

Bailey

I'll give you one more chance to leave us alone.

(Policeman/Footballer swings. Bailey ducks. They tussle, clearly the Footballer is winning. Bailey goes down. Deedee pushes the Footballer away. He exits. Bailey sits up, holding his nose.)

Delores

Thank you, Bailey. You were wonderful.

I think he broke it.

Bailey

Does it hurt much?

Delores

No. Maybe a little.

Bailey

(Deedee examines Bailey's wound.)

Still a little crooked after all these years.

Delores

Why did you want me to remember that humiliation?

Bailey

I wanted you to remember the fight. You tried to be fair. What you want to do with Jennifer is win. This time, leave the fairness to someone else.

Delores

You are very wise.

Bailey

I'm a survivor, Bailey. I only know enough to keep going.

Delores

(Beat.)

As I said before, shall we get down to business and write that resignation?

(Bailey and Deedee rejoin the others.)

And so for days and days, I wrote and rewrote and read my letter to Deedee who listened thoughtfully and offered advice to the extent that...

Bailey

(He removes a paper from his pocket.)

...I have it.

(Consultant appears on the risers followed by Senator/Judge.)

All rise. This court is now in session.

Consultant/Bailiff

Senator/Judge
Mr. Vorhees? Do you have the required document?

Bailey
I do.

Senator/Judge
Would you care to submit it to the court?

Bailey
I would prefer to read it into the record.

Senator/Judge
Proceed.

Bailey
(Occasionally he glances at his notes.)

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board, my friends, and, most of all my family for remaining faithful all the many years that I've dedicated to the Foundation. My time here, because of all of you, has been a reward in itself. Along the way, we have shared many victories, some small in the eyes of many, some extraordinary in the eyes of most. I won't recount them all, but none were easily achieved.

(He begins to pace.)

All required study, a plan to carry out a reasonable solution, and money that was often not easily come by to finance that plan. Most of all, every step taken, necessitated...

(He slows near Morris.)

...necessitated an ability to compromise, to reach a balance between a rare salamander nearing extinction because its food supply ended up on one side of a road that never should have been built, and the needs of a small, rural community that needed that road in order to prosper.

(He stops in front of Morris and studies him as if for the first time.)

Has anyone ever told you you are a dead ringer for that salamander?

Morris
I don't think anyone has.

Bailey
A snake with little legs some would call it. I could never warm to snakes. I always

Bailey (cont)

fought the urge to grind them into the dirt, even though I knew I should just let them crawl off under their own rock.

(Morris feels the threat.)

Morris

You're fighting that urge now, aren't you, Bailey? You'd like to grind me into the dirt, wouldn't you?

Bailey

I would.

Morris

You're like a loaded gun, cocked and aimed but unable to fire. I can see the restraint on your face. It's driving you crazy, but it's there, which is a good thing, because there is no reason to fight with me.

Bailey

I have my own reasons.

(Bailey is in Morris's face when the Officer steps in to break them up.)

Officer

Gentlemen, gentlemen, I don't want to pull rank, but...

Jenny

Don't stop them.

Officer

But, my job is to...

Jenny

A woman should be fought for once in her life. It's my turn and I don't want you to spoil it.

(Beat.)

You came home just in time, Bailey. I had just finished packing my bag when you flew in. Does it matter to you that I'm moving in with Morris?

Morris

It's time to tell the truth, Jennifer.

Jenny

I'm talking to my husband at the moment. Does it matter?

Bailey

Of course it matters.

Jenny

I wish I could believe you. But the truth is, Bailey, Morris and I found ourselves in this horrible little place where the people we were married to didn't seem to want us anymore.

Bailey

That's not true. I do want you.

Jenny

We were pushed into a corner, feeling, I suppose, like an endangered species might feel. Only what was about to disappear, to vanish from this house, was love.

(Beat.)

Do you remember those frilly night clothes I bought that weren't really me? All the colors of the rainbow in those horrid little designs? I rather thought I looked like that little South American butterfly you saved from extinction. The thought occurred to me that if I fluttered around the house looking like that poor creature, you'd notice. But, it didn't work.

(Beat.)

You don't remember any of that do you? I even had my hair changed, I bought a new wardrobe...

Bailey

I commented on your hair.

Jenny

You did. You didn't like it. You said the wonderful thing about hair is that it grows back. I was running into a brick wall. Brick walls hurt, Bailey. Finally, I said, why bother? Other fish swim in the sea. I looked around at the other fish.

(Beat.)

I met Morris soon after.

Bailey

And you fell in love just like that?

Jenny

I fell in love with the attention, yes. I fell in love with the passion and the knowledge that someone cared about me. And, I made myself a promise. I promised that I would never be that lonely again.

(To Morris.)

Turns out, that was a foolish promise.

Bailey

It's not so foolish.

Jenny

No? You haven't a clue, Bailey. I don't know that you ever have.

Bailey

Maybe not, but I'm going to change. I have changed. The Foundation...

Jenny

Is your life, not me. Or, maybe Deedee is your life. All I know is that there isn't room for all three of us, so I'm giving up. I'm leaving.

Delores

That would be a mistake, Mrs. Vorhees. I've got a plane to catch back to Sante Fe. Carl doesn't know what to do with himself when I'm not around to offer suggestions.

Jenny

You're not staying?

Delores

I never planned to.

Jenny

Only a woman who loved my husband would accept such a crazy invitation.

Delores

To the moon? I thought it the most romantic invitation I'd ever heard. Of course, to understand that, you would have to know my first two husbands. They liked short car rides to fast food drive-ins. Carl, on the other hand, likes a Margarita or two then off to a little Mexican restaurant not far from our house. I go along mostly for the candle they put on each table. Makes it real nice but very predictable. It's like all the wonder is gone, and what is left is exactly the same as the day before. When Bailey called, I heard the possibilities in his voice. I had to come.

Jenny

(Sarcastically.)

What did Carl say?

Delores

You wouldn't be putting Carl down if you knew him.

(Beat.)

But, to answer your question, he didn't like the idea. Still, he drove me to the airport and kissed me goodbye.

Jenny

Did he know you'd be back?

Delores

I'm not sure that he did, which is why I respect him all the more. He loved me enough to let me come see an old, dear friend. He loved me enough to let me go where he could never take me.

Jenny

Then, why don't you stay?

Delores

Because I don't belong here now, like I didn't belong here all those years ago. You do, Mrs. Vorhees.

Jenny

I'm not so sure.

Delores

I am. I followed Bailey's career every step of the way. How many times did I read about him in the newspapers or see him on television? Hundreds. And, each time, you were right beside him, the pride shining in your eyes. Sometimes, there were just pictures of you talking to the little ones.

Jenny

The Foundation's school campaign. I don't know how I got involved with that.

Bailey

You were good at it. Very good. It's much easier to teach a child to respect the earth than it is to change a parent's bad habits.

Delores

And, then, you stopped for some reason.

Jenny

No one was listening—except Morris, but then, I was paying him by the hour.

(Beat.)

That's pathetic, isn't it? You get to a point in life where you book an hour to guarantee that someone is listening. You've become that insignificant. It makes me shutter to think that I've fallen so damn low.

(Bailey moves toward her.)

Bailey

Jennifer...

Jenny

Stay away. I don't want you, I don't want Morris, I don't want...

(She looks around and races to the easel. She grabs the painting.)

...this. Take it back to your wife, Dr. Ritchie. The two of you can look it over and have a good laugh.

(She stalks Morris with it.)

Morris

Jen? You don't want to do that. Jennifer?

(They circle, Jenny in pursuit. Morris cuts behind Bailey for protection. When Morris comes out in front of Bailey, Bailey grabs Morris's shoulder and turns him face on. He smacks Morris in the nose. Morris drops to his knees, cupping his face in his hands as Jenny crashes the canvas over Morris's head.)

Bailey

Feel better?

Jenny

Yes.

Bailey

Me, too.

(Stunned, Morris removes the painting from around his head. He presses his hands around his painful nose.)

Is it broken?
Jenny

I don't know. Probably.
Morris

You'll have two black eyes, you know. How will you explain that to your wife?
Jenny

I thought he was divorced.
Bailey

I was trying to explain. I'm going back. My ex and I are going to start over.
Morris

I'm delighted.
Bailey

It's not like we don't have some patching up to do. But, we're going to work at it. There's something there worth saving.
Morris

Do you hear that, Jennifer?
Bailey

No.
Jenny

You should. We don't have as much to patch as Morris does.
Bailey

How do you know?
Jenny

We're not divorced, are we?
Bailey

Maybe we should be.
Jenny

You don't mean that. Do you?
Bailey

I don't know, Bailey. We're in a deep hole. I don't know if we can dig ourselves out. Even if we do, what's left of us? How changed are we?
Jenny

Bailey

I can't give you a number or a percentage. All I can tell you is that when I hand in my resignation, the Foundation is on its own. I'm coming home to put our house in order.

Jenny

The doors?

Bailey

Back on.

Jenny

Every one?

Bailey

I promise.

Jenny

What about Delores?

Bailey

I'm glad she came. I'm glad we shared time together. I'm glad we went back, I can't deny that. She was there for me, Jennifer. You weren't.

Jenny

And whose fault is that?

Bailey

If I say mine, does that solve anything?

Jenny

No. But, you're not totally to blame, Bailey. It wasn't you who got distracted by her analyst.

Bailey

Is that all he was? A distraction? An annoying fly buzzing around?

Jenny

(She moves wistfully to Morris.)

No. That's not all he was. He was a dream of mine that didn't work out.

(To Morris.)

Jenny (cont)

You're making a mistake going back to your wife.

Morris

I don't believe that. Not for one second.

Jenny

You should.

Morris

Why?

Jenny

Because try as you might, long for those lost feelings as you might, you can't go back. Bailey tried. When love was its purest, its most innocent; when life was full of glorious promise, he and Deedee went back to revel in those magnificent memories one more time. Only they weren't there, they'd vanished like the mist over the lake.

(To Delores.)

Were you disappointed?

Delores

I am always hopeful regarding the men in my life. But, I don't expect much anymore, nor do I let myself get disappointed.

Jenny

I wish I had your strength.

Delores

It takes practice and experiences you've probably never had. You should be grateful for that, Mrs. Vorhees. Two husbands can teach a person a lot they don't really want to know. But we have to move ahead. As long as there is air to breathe, that's what we do, because, for most of us, love is just around the corner. We put one foot in front of the other hoping our eyes are open wide enough to recognize it. Love doesn't always have a sign on it identifying itself, and it isn't always as perfect as we'd like or pain free. In fact, it carries about as much pain as possible, but that's just the way it is.

(To Bailey.)

Sometimes it breaks your heart when you let yourself think for too long what life really would have been like had you done things differently. I didn't really want to see Idaho. I really wanted to stay right where I was with the man I always loved, but I didn't. But, that's all over now. Bailey and I had our moment and we went back and relived a bit of it again. I'm grateful for that. I always will be, but now I have to get back to Sante Fe.

Delores (cont)

If someone would write me directions to the airport, I'll be on my way. I have a plane to catch.

Bailey

Let me drive you.

Delores

No, Bailey. You stay here where you belong.

(Beat.)

Both of you.

(The Officer grabs Bailey's hand.)

Officer

I'll take care of her, Mr. Vorhees. I'll see that she gets to the airport. Don't worry. And, thanks.

Bailey

For what?

Officer

For coming back. For giving me and my wife something to think about. We'll be all right. I'm sure of it. We'll be fine.

Bailey

I'm glad someone is.

(Delores follows the Officer to the front door. Bailey goes after her, then stops. Officer and Delores exit.)

Morris

I guess I...

Jenny

Goodbye, Morris.

(Morris exits. Pause.)

I feel like an awkward kid not really knowing what to do next.

Bailey

I know.

Jenny

I'm glad Delores came, Bailey. Glad for you. Under different circumstances, I may have liked her.

Bailey

And, I may have liked Morris.

Jenny

Who are we kidding?

Bailey

No one. It's time for the truth, don't you think?

Jenny

You start.

Bailey

All right. What you said to Morris about going back, recapturing those long ago memories. You got it wrong, Jennifer. You can go back. Deedee and I did, not as far as the moon, but far enough. There was magic there. I felt it in my bones, like I was a kid again.

(Beat.)

There's no reason we can't go back to what we had, if we try. But, you have to believe we can. That's the key.

Jenny

I don't know, Bailey. What if we don't make it?

Bailey

Then we're where we are right now. I think the question is what happens if we don't try?

Jenny

I guess we walk away.

Bailey

Is that what you want? Really?

Jenny

I'm not sure. I don't want to be hurt anymore. That's the only thing I'm sure of.

(Beat.)

Jenny (cont)

It shouldn't be this hard, should it? I mean, you fall in love and then it turns into this ping-pong game. Once the little white ball falls to the ground, a little bit of that love gets dirt on it. What do you suppose the score is for us, Bailey?

Bailey

I don't know anything about ping-pong.

Jenny

What do you know about love?

Bailey

The same as the next guy: nothing. But, I know it's out there. I know we had it once, and I think we can find it again. The Foundation is behind us, Jenny. We've got nothing to do now but go look for it. Are you game?

(The gondola descends to the risers.)

Are you?

(Beat.)

Bailey opens the gondola's door. He offers Jenny his hand. After a pause, she takes it. They step into the gondola. It lifts up slowly as "Fly Me to the Moon" fills the stage.)

--The End--