

PERUSAL SCRIPT

WEDLOCKED

The musical story of one couple's daring escape

by
Marvin Payne and Steven Kapp Perry



Newport, Maine

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WEDLOCKED

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CAST 1M 1W

Beth Utley -- 35

ValJean Utley -- 40

Hank -- character in a made-up movie

Monique -- character in a made-up movie

NOTE: These two characters must be pre-recorded. It is suggested that the actors playing Beth and Val, also record Monique and Hank. If that is not possible, the SFX CD contains all the music and sound effects with the dialog of the original cast over it, fully ready for production.

MUSICAL NUMBERS (All the following are recorded in piano only tracks on the CD)

#1 -- Overture

#2 -- THE WOMAN'S FRIEND WILL LISTEN

#3 -- Friend Playoff

#4 -- WEDLOCKED #1

#5 -- WEDLOCKED #2

#6 -- Wedlocked Button

#7 -- WHERE THE WORLD BEGAN

#8 -- CAN WE TALK? (*ACAPPELLA*)

#9 -- Door Slam Button

#10 -- IF YOU WERE LISTENING

#11 -- IF YOU WERE LISTENING (Reprise)

#12 -- SLEEPING WITH A STRANGER

#13 -- I WANTED EDEN

#14 -- CAN WE LIGHT ANOTHER CANDLE?

#15 -- Bows

SFX CD (all dialog, music underscore and SFX in the 'movie' are contained in the mix on the CD)

a -- *sink*

b -- Escape to Eden

c -- By The Rail

d -- *solo phone ring*

e -- On The Raft

f -- After Popcorn

g -- Rocks!

h -- Rewind of "Rocks!" & continuation

i -- White Water

j -- Light The Fire!

k -- Talking To Stars

l -- Film Ends

MARVIN PAYNE is an actor, writer, songmaker, and recording artist living in Alpine, Utah. After attending BYU on Music Performance and Creative Writing scholarships, he released a dozen albums of original songs and toured the country extensively as a solo concert artist throughout the decade of the seventies.

In the early eighties, his career expanded into the world of theatre and film, where he became the Man who Searches for Happiness, Sweeney Todd, El Gallo, and the Phantom, but is most often recognized in the mall as the guy behind daddy's nose in Saturday's Warrior. His acting has shown up on the Disney Channel, the major networks, and PBS. He is a familiar lead at Sundance. He is an inventor of Scripture Scouts (he is Boo Dog!) and the Allabout Family, and in the nineties focused increasingly on creative projects for children, which include writing and performing in Alexander's Amazing Adventures and directing for MacMillan/McGraw Hill their Share The Music series, two hundred audio episodes for teaching musical principles to the nation's elementary school children. He co-authored the musical plays The Planemaker, Sweet Redemption Music Company, Charlie's Monument, Utah, Wedlocked, The Trail Of Dreams, and Take the Mountain Down, all of which have enjoyed extensive production. Along the way, he wrote Love And Oranges (The Love Book), Vivian, The Prodigal, a series of historical novels, and published some prize-winning poetry. In the new century, he is combining previous pursuits, recording and concertizing again. He is the father of eight children, all of whom follow their art professionally (except the babies), and the husband of Laurie Koralewski, a teacher, director, and actress.

STEVEN KAPP PERRY is a full-time songwriter and playwright whose musical adventures include everything from singing the National Anthem at Wrigley Field for the Cubs to leading the music in LDS General Conference and singing Mozart from atop the altar in Notre Dame in Paris. As part of Peace Mountain MediaWorks, he helped create "The Scripture Scouts," "Alexander's Amazing Adventures," and "The Allabouts" with his co-writers Marvin Payne and Roger & Melanie Hoffman. He has written projects for National Geographic, Prime Recordings, Deseret Book, and other companies. He is also a volunteer for Reach the Children, a non-profit organization providing education, nutrition, and vocational training (learn more at www.reachthechildren.org). He has eleven albums of original music. Steve loves music, cream cheese on bagels, his wife Johanne, and whichever of their four children slept through the night. Steve's website is www.stevenkapperry.com.

WEDLOCKED by Marvin Payne and Steven Kapp Perry. 1M 1W. About 90 minutes. 2 interiors. (*For production by Professionals, Community Theatres, College-University Theatres.*) Val and Elizabeth Utley are a Seattle couple best described as "typical." Elizabeth, through whose eyes most of the story is told, is a harried and overworked housewife who feels ignored by her husband, who, despite being an accountant, mainly wants to have fun and avoid serious issues. In an attempt to "start over," Elizabeth drags Val back to Salina, Utah, where they spent their honeymoon. Val, being impossibly thick-headed, hasn't the first clue that Elizabeth is trying to put the spark back in their marriage, or that sparks are even missing. Eventually, everything comes to a head, and the problems are dealt with in a fashion where not everything is resolved, but enough to realize they need to get back to what they had before; that what they have lost is mostly reclaimable. **Order #2064**

WEDLOCKED

ACT ONE

MUSICAL # 1 -- OVERTURE (ALL I WOULD SAY, IF YOU WERE LISTENING)

PROLOGUE: THE WOMAN'S FRIEND WILL LISTEN -- Light rises on a tastefully decorated bedroom in a suburban home. BETH UTLEY, 35, enters from DL wearing an apron decorated with a large jack-o-lantern. She is sweeping, with determination. She sweeps around a chair and notices a magazine lying on the floor.)

BETH: "The Woman's Friend."

(looks at her watch, picks up the magazine)

Okay, friend, I can give you four minutes.

(Starts leafing through the magazine. Suddenly snagged, she reads)

"How is your marriage? The Woman's Friend wants to know! Write an article, and if you win, you'll read it in our Valentine's Day weekend edition, and receive two airline tickets to any place in the United States! Fifty other articles of "Honorable Mention" will receive a personal written response..."

(looks up)

Written response? I could use any response!

(plops down the magazine, returns to sweeping, looks back to the magazine)

Fifty...

(back to sweeping, looks back to the magazine)

Even if I was number 47... Somebody's gonna be number 47.

(back to sweeping, back to the magazine, picks it up, reads)

...must be mailed by October 31st, 1998, to The Woman's Friend at..."

(Beth throws down the broom and rummages through the magazine rack for a legal pad, pen, and envelope. Preparing to write, she commands the broom.)

Stay!

So what's a good image?

(writes)

'Staying Afloat In The Sea Of Bliss' by Elizabeth Utley

First of all, beware of sharks."

Yeah.

(She writes, folds, and seals the article as she sings.)

MUSICAL #2 -- THE WOMAN'S FRIEND WILL LISTEN

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THE WOMAN'S FRIEND WILL LISTEN.
I DON'T WANT TO WIN, I JUST WANT SOME INSTANT
SYMPATHY, VALIDATION,
CHICKEN SOUP, RESTORATION
OF MY RIGHT TO FEEL.

THE WOMAN'S FRIEND WILL LISTEN.
I DON'T WANT TO WIN. I JUST NEED A CINDER-
ELLA DRESS, PUMPKIN CARRIAGE.
I'M A MESS IN MY MARRIAGE.
LET THIS DREAM BE REAL!

THE WOMAN'S FRIEND WILL LISTEN TO ME!
A FAIRY-TALE GODMOTHER WILL BE
RESPONDING TO EVERY APOSTROPHE!
HAVE I STUMBLERD ON HYPERBOLE?
NO!

THE WOMAN'S FRIEND WILL LISTEN.
I DON'T WANT THE GOLD. I NEED TO BE TOLD THAT
IT'S OKAY WHAT I'M THINKING.
I CAN PRAY WHILE I'M SINKING
THAT I MIGHT BE HEARD!
I HAVE A JILLION WORDS
I FINALLY CAN UNLOAD.
(MY HUSBAND WOULD IMplode!)

NO WORRY THERE! I'LL TAKE THE DARE
FOR HONORABLE MENTION,
IF IT MEANS SOMEONE AT LAST
WILL PAY ME SOME ATTENTION!

MUSICAL # 3 -- WEDLOCKED PLAYOFF

(During the "play-out" of the song, Beth exits through a door DR to mail the letter. The door is on wheels, and has the suggestion of her bedroom wall attached to its sides. At the conclusion of the music, she shouts from offstage.)

Austin, I'm starting your mac-n-cheese!

SCENE ONE: MACARONI RAINBOW

BETH: *(immediately reappears without the apron, revealing a Christmas decoration on the front of her shirt. She regards the instructions on a macaroni-and-cheese box she holds in her hand.)* "Seven minutes." Okay, bed, I can give you seven minutes.

(She marches across the room, past the central bed, and deposits the box on what was the "writing" chair. She goes to work furiously changing bedding, seeming oblivious to the voice of her husband VAL, 40, who is coming home from work.)

VAL: *(Offstage, ad lib. from "Oklahoma")* "There's a dark drippy haze in Seattle! All the statues are standin' like cattle!

(comes through the door with a letter and a briefcase)

I got ya a letter t' read when ye're done!"

(In the character of "Curly," he drops the letter on the dresser just inside the door and throws his coat on the bed.)

Ma'am, I fetched up yer male!

BETH: *(choosing not to be "Laurie," does not look up from her bed-changing)* Anything good?

VAL: *(quickly self-appraising)* The very best, I reckon!

BETH: Just drop it on the dresser.

VAL: *(seems confused, then looks at the mail on the dresser)* Jumpin' hoptoads! You got me wrong, ma'am. Not that mail, this male!

BETH: *(still not looking)* Don't you think "Curly" is a little bit of a stretch?

VAL: *(as himself, hands her the letter.)* From the Woman's Friend. Must not've paid your subscription.

BETH: Doesn't look like a bill...

VAL: *(sweeps up behind her, gathers a handful of her hair and presses it to his cheek, ecstatically. He is now the gothic lover.)* Lady Utlely! When will you leave your dreary husband and fly away with me?

BETH: *(wriggling away, annoyed)* Val! I detest gothic romances!

VAL: Forgive me, I was driven mad by the scent.

BETH: *(disbelieving)* Of my hair?

VAL: *(dropping the character)* No. Of macaroni and cheese! My favorite!

BETH: Austin's favorite. I promised him.

VAL: *(seeming to read from the box)* "Macaroni and cheese is a nutritionally sound fortification against the early onset of various hysteria that might be induced by associating with boisterous baby eagles."

BETH: Not scouts tonight!

VAL: It is indeed Wednesday.

(He opens his briefcase, removing a nerf basketball and basket, which he begins mounting on the door.)

BETH: You work all day in professional basketball and then run off to shoot hoops with little boys.

VAL: *(takes a free throw and misses)* It's for church!

BETH: Basketball is not church!

VAL: Show me a chapel that's designed around a shuffleboard court.

BETH: It's a cultural hall.

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VAL: (*hook shot misses*) Gym.

BETH: It has a stage.

VAL: For the scorekeepers' table! Didn't Ted say anything about tonight?

BETH: Nor Sarah. She'll have an activity tonight, too.

VAL: (*flirtatious again, as he saunters over and stands on the edge of a sheet that is draped from the bed onto the floor*) We could have an activity tonight.

BETH: (*unwavering in her commitment to the bedding, pulls the sheet, nearly toppling him*) Is it still raining?

VAL: Does Seattle love the Sonics? I had to swim in from the car!

(*goes to an imaginary window DR that faces the audience, mimes pulling aside a curtain, and the light grows brighter on his face*)

Woh! For the second time in my life, I am wrong! Beth, look at this!

BETH: (*not looking at this*) When was the first time?

VAL: First time what?

BETH: The first time you were wrong.

VAL: A minute ago, when I said your husband was dreary. This is like a blanket of gold on the hills! And a rainbow you could walk on! You gotta see this!

BETH: (*meaning the bed, on which she continues to work*)

I can't look at that and this.

VAL: It looks like one end of this rainbow is shooting out of the Space Needle!

BETH: It could be a sky full of Winslow Homer! I still couldn't...

VAL: It's gorgeous!

BETH: I don't care if it's Van Gogh!

VAL: Go? Yes! You're still a genius! Let's go for a walk! You can wear my coat!

BETH: I can't go for a walk! The mac-n-cheese will scorch!

VAL: Turn off the stove.

BETH: (*with labored patience*)

It's fifteen minutes until Tiffany's nap. I have this very small window of opportunity in which to feed...

VAL: We'll grab them something on our walk!

BETH: The macaroni and cheese...

VAL: ...cost about eighty-nine cents. Feed it to the disposal!

BETH: I promised Austin.

VAL: (*trying to help her on with the coat*) I'll buy him a happy meal.

BETH: (*Pulling away, she drapes the coat over his head.*) I planned macaroni and cheese!

VAL: Mac-cheese can be unplanned. There have been many cases...

BETH: I planned it this morning.

VAL: ...in which mac-n-cheese has not only been unplanned, but...

BETH: Valjean Utley, would you listen to me?!

(*big silence*)

VAL: I'm listening.

BETH: You always want to play.

VAL: (*handing her the Nerf ball*) "The couple that plays together..."

BETH: *(throwing it aside)* I think it's "prays together."

VAL: ...stays together."

(He chases the ball, takes a shot.)

BETH: Maybe you haven't noticed that moms can't play so easily. Except maybe trying to make some inane Mary Poppins game out of picking up toys.

VAL: She could slide up bannisters.

BETH: *(with surprising fury)* I can't!

MUSICAL #4 -- WEDLOCKED (part 1)

VAL: *(a beat of appreciation. He puts down the ball into his briefcase, which is lying open.)* Hey. Maybe we need to get away from Mary Poppins and mac-cheese.

BETH: *(still hopeless)* What do you mean?

VAL: Like a night on Vancouver Island, or just out on the Sound someplace.

BETH: We can't afford to!

(returns to bedding)

VAL: We can't afford not to!

(not for Beth to hear)

WHAT'S THAT WAILING SOUND I'M HEARING
ANYTIME WE TWO ARE NEARING
ANY INTERSECTION OF OUR LIVES?

SIRENS SOUNDING, WARNINGS FLASHING,
STILL WE ALWAYS END UP CRASHING.
IT'S A WONDER ANYONE SURVIVES.

I'M THE ONE WHO JUGGLES NUMBERS,
THAT'S THE WORK I DO,
SO HOW DO I ACCOUNT WHEN
ONE AND ONE CAN'T MAKE TWO?

EVERYDAY I'M WORKING HARDER
JUST TO SEE HER CRACK A SMILE,
HOW MUCH WILL IT TAKE TO MAKE HER
STOP AND RELAX FOR A WHILE?

CAN'T START, CAN'T STOP,
CAN'T MOVE, ROADBLOCKED!
CAN'T BREATHE, CAN'T TALK,
RED LIGHT, WEDLOCKED!

(MUSIC continues as underscore.)

VAL: I bet there are ways. Every bank in America is trying to give me a gold card.

BETH: No cards!

VAL: Doesn't have to be far.

BETH: Well... If we didn't eat out at all between now and...

VAL: Nary a happy meal until we've done this thing.

BETH: *(justifying)* It will be our anniversary in two months.

VAL: Valentine's Day.

BETH: What a memory.

VAL: Thanks.

BETH: But if we start planning now...

VAL: *(grabbing his planner)* You know, those are kind of busy weeks in the NBA.

BETH: I know, but if we planned ahead...

VAL: Maybe if we went a day early.

BETH: Why?!

(MUSIC stops abruptly)

VAL: We're playing the Jazz on the 14th!

BETH: It's a home game?

(Val nods.)

No plane tickets? No reservations? No per diem? They don't need you!

VAL: Beth, I'm part of the organization, I go to the games.

BETH: Val, you're the accountant! You could do your whole job on the phone from home.

VAL: We're talking about Unity. I'm that kind of guy.

BETH: It's our anniv...

VAL: The Jazz, Beth!

BETH: A day early. Okay.

(into planning)

We could make a lot of our Christmas presents.

VAL: I'll be captain of the elves!

(light bulb)

Woh! Christmas! Christmas! Beth, they're talking big bonus in the front office...

MUSICAL # 5 -- WEDLOCKED (PART 2)

BETH: Val! If there's extra money, we have things that need catching up! Ted's teeth are a disaster...

VAL: With that bonus! Oh, wow...

BETH: Sarah really needs to get back with a violin teacher.

VAL: We could go to Hawaii!

BETH: Val!

(not for Val to hear)

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HONKING, GRINDING, GEARS ARE STRIPPING,
MEN AT WORK, CONSTRUCTION RIPPING
ALL THE WAYS WE EVER USED TO MEET.

ONCE THE RIDE WAS SMOOTH AND FLOWING.
NOW WE ARE COLLIDING, GOING
DIFFERENT WAYS ALONG A ONE-WAY STREET.

I'M THE ONE WHO WAS THE WRITER,
THE ONE WHO'S GOOD WITH WORDS,
SO WHY CAN'T I EXPRESS MYSELF
SO I CAN BE HEARD?

EVERY DAY I'M WORKING HARDER
JUST TO MAKE THE FAMILY RUN,
HOW MUCH WILL IT TAKE TO MAKE HIM
NOTICE THAT LIFE'S MORE THAN FUN?

CAN'T START, CAN'T STOP,
CAN'T MOVE, ROADBLOCKED!
CAN'T BREATHE, CAN'T TALK,
RED LIGHT, WEDLOCKED!

(She resumes gathering old bedding. MUSIC continues as underscore.)

VAL: The island of Kauai! The Na Pali coast! I have dreamed of taking you there! No place like Eden to give you a taste of eternity!

BETH: *(grimly holding up two dirty socks she has discovered)* Eternity?

VAL: Yeah. It's in our marriage contract. Oh, man. Kauai!

BETH: I don't think we should use a bonus check to...

VAL:

EVERY TIME I TRY TO REACH HER,
TRAFFIC'S IN THE WAY.

BETH:

HE CAN ALWAYS FIND A DETOUR
PAST WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY.

BOTH

CAN'T START, CAN'T STOP,
CAN'T MOVE, ROADBLOCKED!
CAN'T BREATHE, CAN'T TALK,
RED LIGHT, WEDLOCKED!

VAL:

LIKE A TIME-BOMB...

BETH:

WE REALLY...

VAL:

GOING TICK AND...

BETH:

WE REALLY NEED TO...

VAL **BETH**

...TOCK! ...TALK!

BOTH

WEDLOCKED!

(He's leaving the room.)

BETH: Hey, where are you going?

VAL: *(from offstage)* Just dump some of that mac-cheese into a tortilla! I gotta get to scouts! Ted, you bringing the ball?

BETH: It's too runny! It has to set up for...

VAL: I'll get a happy meal! 'Bye!

BETH: *(not even hoping to be heard)* Valjean Utley, you're gonna ignore me to death some day!
(picks up the letter and weighs it in her hands)

Not much of a response. I thought they were serious about responding. I kind of needed that.
(opens the letter and collapses onto the bed, appalled. MUSIC tapers to silence)

No response. I won. He'll read it. I'm dead.

VAL: *(enters, having forgotten his coat, and notices her shock)* What's the matter?

BETH: *(suddenly painfully bright)* I've won us that anniversary getaway!

MUSICAL #6 -- WEDLOCKED BUTTON

BLACKOUT

TRANSITION: WHERE THE WORLD BEGAN

BETH: And I know right where we'll go! Where we spent our honeymoon!

MUSICAL #7 -- WHERE THE WORLD BEGAN

(clears and re-dresses the dresser as Val exits to change costume)

I'M ON MY WAY TO WHERE THE WORLD BEGAN!

I HOPE I WILL FIND MAGIC THERE,

I PRAY THAT I CAN!

I NEED TO SMELL THE BREATH OF EDEN--

JUST ONE WOMAN AND MAN
MAKING MIRACLES, BACK WHERE THE WORLD BEGAN!

IT WASN'T FAR FROM WHERE I WAS A GIRL.
I WROTE DOWN ALL MY DREAMS AND PLANS,
A GLITTERING WHIRL!
MY TEACHER THOUGHT I WAS SO CLEVER,
STRINGING WORDS INTO PEARLS,
WAY BACK IN THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD.

VAL: *(as he re-enters and together they re-dress the bed)*

IT WAS A PLACE OF FLIGHT AND WONDER,
WHERE A MAN FIRST KNOWS HIS WIFE.
I CAN REMEMBER LIGHT AND THUNDER
AND THE PROMISE OF NEW LIFE!

BETH:

OR WAS IT JUST THE TENDER WEATHER
OF THE TWO OF US TOGETHER?
WAS IT REAL, OR DID THE MEMORIES EXPAND?
WE'LL FIND OUT WHEN WE'RE
WHERE THE WORLD BEGAN!

VAL: *(prepares luggage and rolls on a VCR-TV combo from DR, as Beth exits to change costume)*

IT WASN'T FAR FROM WHERE I WAS A BOY,
WITH HAY TO HAUL, AND BASKETBALL,
AND GIRLS TO ANNOY.
AND THEN I MET SOMEONE WHO MADE ME
WANT TO DROP EVERY TOY,
AND TAKE A GROWN-UP SHOT AT FINDING JOY.
IT WAS A PLACE OF FLIGHT AND WONDER,
WHERE A MAN FIRST KNOWS HIS WIFE.
I CAN REMEMBER LIGHT AND THUNDER
AND THE PROMISE OF NEW LIFE!

BETH:

OR WAS IT JUST THE TENDER WEATHER
OF THE TWO OF US TOGETHER?
WAS IT REAL, OR DID THE MEMORIES EXPAND?

(During the following, Val and Beth roll the door to UC.)

BOTH

THE MIRACLE'S ARRANGED.
PLEASE SAY IT HASN'T CHANGED!
WE'LL FIND OUT WHEN WE'RE
WHERE OUR WORLD BEGAN!

WE'LL FIND OUT WHEN WE'RE
WHERE OUR WORLD BEGAN!

(During applause, they spin the door around, revealing a dusty swordfish hanging over it.)

SCENE TWO: TRYING TO TALK AT THE TIKI INN. Val and Beth enter through the doorway. There is a starfish-festooned fishnet draped from the sides, which is echoed by the covering on the dresser. The new bedspread is some garish tropical motif. They freeze for a moment, wide-eyed.

VAL: It's not Kauai.

BETH: It hasn't changed!

VAL: A bit.

BETH: *(quickly into the room, faking enthusiasm)* Not since our honeymoon! The Tiki Inn! I feel magic in every corner!

(gestures, tries to hide the fact that she suddenly needs to wipe cobwebs from her fingers)

VAL: *(examining)* The same wallpaper.

BETH: *(bravely)* I kind of like it.

VAL: *(disdainfully)* The same carpet.

BETH: A little jungle!

VAL: The same drapes!

BETH: Little fishies! I think.

VAL: If they'd been cleaned once a year since our honeymoon, they'd be history. Has anything been cleaned?

BETH: *(hopefully)* Val, this sort of is history.

VAL: *(pulling back the bedspread, lifting and sniffing a pillow)* What perfume did you wear on our honeymoon?

BETH: *(mercifully distracted by what she sees offstage)* Val! The shower!

VAL: Still on a pedestal? Like a trophy case.

BETH: You might not be too shy to use it this time.

VAL: C'mon! Every groom's dream: to go on display like a life-size Academy Award!

BETH: *(seductively)* You didn't mind the hot tub.

VAL: *(softening, gives her a squeeze)* No, that was okay.

BETH: Okay?

VAL: It was great!

(What the heck.)

And the one feature of the Tiki Inn I've been looking forward to! I'll save you a place!

BETH: *(starting to unzip his shaving kit)* Anything you want in here?

VAL: *(snatching it away)* I'll take that.

(He exits in the direction of the hot tub. She picks up the phone and dials.)

BETH: Elaine?

(realizes she's been switched to voice-mail)

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You are always on the phone! Who's watching our kids while you're on the phone? They could be drowning in the... Yes, I will leave a brief message at the sound of the...

(suddenly warm)

Elaine. This is Beth. Would you please call me at that number I left? You're terrific! 'Bye."

VAL: *(reappearing, chagrined. Drops the shaving kit into the dresser drawer.)* Well.

BETH: What?

VAL: Not everything is unchanged.

BETH: What?

VAL: It's a planter.

BETH: What?

VAL: There are plants. In the hot tub.

(She crosses him to gaze offstage. He doesn't turn.)

Plastic plants.

BETH: How about the pool?

VAL: Closed for the winter.

(wistfully, looking out of an imaginary window L)

Beth, have you heard of Po'ipu Beach? On the south shore of Kauai. Doesn't close for the winter. It's an "aloha" thing, I guess--leaving the Pacific Ocean open all year 'round.

BETH: Val...

VAL: And moonlight on the sea. They have this moonlight. Similarly unregulated.

BETH: Can't we have affection without an ocean?

VAL: *(no longer wistful)* A hot tub would have sufficed.

BETH: *(exiting on the "plumbing" side of the stage, miffed)* So what does water do for affection?

VAL: More than it does for those plastic ferns.

(SFX: water running in a sink.)

What are you doing?

BETH: *(calling from offstage)*

Filling the sink.

VAL: Why?

BETH: Thought you might like to hold hands.

VAL: What'd we come here for anyway?

BETH: Well, I thought we might talk.

MUSICAL #8 -- CAN WE TALK? (ACAPPELLA)

VAL: *(Backs up as if recovering from a physical blow. Not for Beth to hear, he begins musing, in broad rubato as if making it up spontaneously and searching for words, the following, only loosely patterned after the song "Shall We Dance?")*

"CAN WE TALK?"

(BA-DUM-PUM-PUM)

NEVER MEANS "CAN WE TALK ABOUT THE JAZZ?"

(BA-DUM-PUM-PUM)

"CAN WE TALK?"

(BA-DUM-PUM-PUM)

MEANS "ABOUT ALL THE FAULTS THE HUSBAND HAS!"

(BA-DUM-PUM-PUM)

"CAN WE TALK?"

MEANS A LIST OF A HUNDRED THOUSAND NEEDS

THAT A MAN SHOULD BE FILLING.

EVEN IF THE MAN IS WILLING

YOU CAN'T SQUEEZE WATER FROM A ROCK!

WHY DOES THIS MERE FLIRTATION

SEEM TO DRIP WITH ACCUSATION?

"CAN WE TALK?"

"CAN WE TALK?"

BETH: (*enters and says*) "Can we talk?"

VAL: (BA-DUM-PUM-PUM!)

BETH: (*disengaging*) Val, what is wrong with you?

VAL: You're not gonna tell me?

BETH: Somehow I think not now.

VAL: What I keep thinking about is Kauai.

BETH: I wish you would be happy where we are.

VAL: (*gesturing out the "window"*) Salina, Utah? You know, for only the same air miles as it took to get here we could have gone to Carmel?

BETH: Everybody goes to Carmel.

VAL: Or Alaska?

BETH: What's in Alaska?

VAL: Salmon! Or Saco!

BETH: That's a fish?

VAL: No, a town. Saco, Montana. Same air miles.

BETH: What've they got in Saco, Montana?

VAL: It's what they haven't got.

BETH: What haven't they got in Saco, Montana?

VAL: (*at the window again*) Your mother seventeen miles away in Richfield.

BETH: Val, she doesn't even know we're here!

VAL: She'd eat us alive.

BETH: She just likes to be with us.

VAL: And spit out the bones.

BETH: She doesn't know!

VAL: I'm kind of hungry.

BETH: We just ate.

VAL: (*reaching into his suitcase*) There's nothing to do!

BETH: (*risking flirtation*) You didn't feel that way fifteen years ago.

VAL: (*producing his Nerf hoop and fumbling with installation*) Correction: We're here a day early. Fifteen years ago tonight we were getting married the next day! We went to the Pahvant Cinema and actually watched the movie.

BETH: Oh, yeah.

VAL: (*trying a free throw and missing*) Now we can't even do that. It's a fabric store!

BETH: I saw.

VAL: (*noticing the VCR*) Well, the one evidence of the passage of time at the Tiki Inn.
(*gestures*)

A VCR. I'm going out for a video. They have them in Salina, now. I read it in USA Today.

(*as he exits in the proverbial huff*)

On the plane.

MUSICAL # 9 -- DOOR SLAM BUTTON

(*Beth organizes a chair into the middle of the room.*)

BETH: (*seating the imaginary Val and rehearsing the reading of the article*) Here, Val, make yourself comfortable.

(*aside, as she reaches for a small bag*)

For as long as you can.

(*to the chair again, pacing with pasted-on authority*)

I want to read you this article. I need to read you this article. Trouble is, if I just read it right now, the way we are, a couple of emotional light-years apart, you'll go Cuckoo! Or, at the very least, betray me to the Borg and throw yourself into a rift in the space-time continuum. That's why we came here to Salina, Utah--Salina instead of Kauai, or Alaska, or...whatever it was, Montana. Salina, one place on earth where I might expect a miracle. Yes, Val, you heard me right, a miracle--an Intimacy Miracle. I brought you to Salina, where once we said what we felt, without being afraid. Without hurting each other. Without you telling a joke, or getting bored, or changing the subject, or turning on the TV!

(*punching the article*)

So I could read you this article!

(*recovers from her fervor, gets serious*)

Before the Pacific Northwest reads it. Including our ward. It wasn't supposed to win and get published, but hey, bad luck. Of course I can't possibly read this to you until after you're so in love with me again that what I wrote won't break us apart.

(*a moment of bleakness, then back to the posturing*)

So. Any ideas about how to pull off this little intimacy miracle? Speaking ecclesiastically, miracles are your department. No ideas? Okay, I brought a kit, a "miracle kit."

(*grabs the small bag, rummages around inside*)

Stupid slinky nightgown? Check. No-doz? Check. Tic-tacs? Check. A copy of the world's thinnest book, "All The Known Ways To Make Your Husband Listen To You And Like It."

Still no miracle ideas? Okey-dokey, here go the dice! Hold this!

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(drops the miracle kit into his "lap" and reads)

"Staying Afloat In The Sea Of Bliss. By Elizabeth Utley.

First of all, beware of sharks..."

(Imaginary Val is getting up to leave.)

Where are you going? Hold on! You have to hear this! Val! You're not a shark!

(He's going out the door. She follows, opening it and looking after him, closing it. The air is out of the balloon.)

Val.

MUSICAL # 10 -- ALL I WOULD SAY, IF YOU WERE LISTENING

ALL I WOULD SAY, IF YOU WERE LISTENING
WOULD FILL UP YOUR HEART.
WHERE WOULD I START?
MAYBE I'D SAY, IF YOU WERE LISTENING,
THAT ALL THROUGH THESE YEARS
I CAN STILL HEAR YOU
WHISP'RING MY NAME IN THE PAY TELEPHONE.
HOW DID YOU KNOW I WAS FEELING ALONE?
YOU LEFT THE LIBRARY, RUNNING FOR HOME.

ALL I WOULD SAY, IF YOU WERE LISTENING
MIGHT SADDEN YOUR HEART.
MAYBE I'D START
BY ASKING WHERE ROSES AND POETRY WENT,
SO CLUMSILY WRITTEN, SO LOVINGLY SENT.
YOU PAID MY TUITION INSTEAD OF THE RENT!
WE HAD NO TV. YOU WOULD LISTEN TO ME.

THERE ARE DETAILS, DEAR,
THAT I NEED YOU TO HEAR,
IF WE EVER HOPE GET THROUGH.
DETAILS, DEAR,
THAT I NEED TO BE CLEAR,
LITTLE DETAILS, LIKE DO I LOVE YOU?

(Val appears upstage, with a hat and/or some other age-disguising and youth-suggesting apparel. He's come from fifteen years ago to participate in her memory.)

WHEN YOU WERE YOUNG, AND YOU WERE LISTENING.
YOU SAID,

VAL:

COME AND SIT DOWN.

WHY SUCH A FROWN?
TELL ME WHAT'S WRONG, YOU KNOW I'M LISTENING.
IF IT MATTERS TO YOU,
IT TOUCHES ME, TOO.

BETH:

I REMEMBER WE FELT

BOTH:

JUST LIKE ADAM AND EVE...

VAL:

ALONE IN OUR EDEN.

BETH:

HOW COULD WE BELIEVE
WE'D STAY THERE FOREVER
AND NEITHER WOULD LEAVE?

VAL: *(overlapping her long last note)*

WE'LL STAY HERE FOREVER,
WE NEVER WILL LEAVE!

(Val is leaving.)

BETH:

THERE ARE DETAILS, DEAR,
THAT MY HEART NEEDS TO HEAR,
IF I EVER HOPE TO HOLD ON.
DETAILS, DEAR,
THAT I NEED TO BE CLEAR,
LITTLE DETAILS, LIKE WHERE HAVE YOU GONE?

ALL I WOULD SAY, IF YOU WERE LISTENING
JUST MIGHT BREAK YOUR HEART,
TAKE YOU APART.
TERRIBLE THINGS, IF YOU WERE LISTENING,
MIGHT OPEN YOUR EYES,
SHOCK AND SURPRISE.

PLEASE DON'T RUN AWAY--
THAT'S NOT ALL I WOULD SAY
IF YOU WERE LISTENING.

SCENE THREE: "ESCAPE TO EDEN"

VAL: *(enters, breathless and hopeful, waving a video cassette and carrying a bag of popcorn)* "Escape to Eden"!

BETH: Not the one...

VAL: Yes! The one we watched at the Pahvant Cinema.

BETH: (*unexcited*) You're kidding! It was thirty years old even then.

VAL: With the delectable Monique! It's been out on video for a year!

BETH: I was jealous of Monique, you know.

VAL: (*inserting the video into the VCR*) Digitally restored. Hmm, I wonder whose digits restored her?

BETH: Val!

VAL: Relax. I can't even remember her real name.

BETH: I think she returned to waitressing.

VAL: I can't believe I found this.

BETH: It was a pretty stunning comeback, I hear.

VAL: Be excited, wouldya? I even brought popcorn!

BETH: (*has spent too many evenings watching Val watch TV*) Or would you call it a "Goback"?

VAL: What?

BETH: I'm excited.

(SFX: Sweeping Movie Theme)

VAL: Catch the light, okay?

(Beth obliges, and the set goes flickery blue-gray, a key light emitting from the "TV." Beth remains at the light switch.)

V.O. SERIOUS NARRATOR

(from the movie. Henceforth, movie character names and movie dialogue will be in italics, indented, and in a new font.)

Somewhere in the Pacific. It is World War II. Global forces wrestle for mastery of the planet. Millions man the machines of war, from the factories that spew out munitions to the individual rifles that spew out individual death.

BETH: Eeww!

VAL: Shh.

(Beth looks at the ceiling, disgusted.)

NARRATOR: *But ours is a love story, the ripple of a miracle:*

(Beth looks at the TV as though it had spoken her name.)

...one man and one woman caught like flies in the web of war...

BETH: (*under her breath*) Oh!

(Beth moves to the bed, suddenly thinks maybe this will be constructive, eases onto the bed next to Val, hoping to initiate some intimacy.)

NARRATOR: *...two tiny lives, two simple souls, unarmed and quiet, yet the beating of their hearts will vibrate along the entire web, like the pulse of hope.*

(Music: changes from sweeping theme to period danceband.)

(SFX: shattering glass)

MONIQUE: *Allez!*

HANK: *Oh! Sorry ma'am! Let me get you another drink!*

MONIQUE: *No, no, no! I should not drink, anyway. I need a clear head on this voyage. It is nothing!*

HANK: *Well, let's take care of this mess. Steward!*
(back to her)

Feet like boats. I'm always tripping over them.

BETH: Val, do think that after the movie we could read this article that I...

VAL: Hang on, this is the setup for the whole story.

MONIQUE: *You are a soldier?*

HANK: *No, rejected. My feet again.*

MONIQUE: *Because they are like boats?*

HANK: *Because they're flat.*

MONIQUE: *Why then are you are out here on this dark ocean, with enemies in the sky!*

HANK: *Yes, and under its surface, too. I have my reasons.*

MONIQUE: *And I have mine.*

BETH: *(awkwardly seductive)* And I have mine.

(Val absently gestures for her to be quiet.)

HANK: *It sounds like we're both keepers of secrets.*

MONIQUE: *It is a lovely evening. Have you been shown the Southern Cross?*

HANK: *Not by you. Do you trust these feet to walk you out by the rail?*

(Music: Danceband fades, replaced by moonlighty music and SFX: footsteps to the rail, gentle water and wind)

MONIQUE: *(Her voice, and the whole movie audio, fades as Beth turns down the volume on the remote.) I think you are altogether too critical of your feet...*

BETH: *(overestimating the intimacy, risking some talk)* Well, Monique's being pretty obvious.

VAL: Push pause, at least.

(She does.)

What, obvious?

BETH: She's manipulating that guy into some intimacy.

VAL: Something wrong with that?

BETH: *(caught)* No. I, no.

(points the remote, resumes movie)

MONIQUE: *And so "Hank" is the short way of saying "Henri"?*

HANK: *No, that'd have to be "Awngk."*

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(Beth calculates to lay her head on Val's shoulder, glancing back and forth from her target to his unwatching face. She tries and he shifts slightly. She calculates again.)

MONIQUE: (laughing) You are teasing me!

HANK: Just "Hank." And you are?

MONIQUE: (still recovering) Monique.

(Beth tries again. Val shifts and she fails.)

HANK: Is the laughter part of the pronunciation?

MONIQUE: You may say it however you wish.

HANK: I think I may always hear it with laughter, no matter how it's said. And laughter goes well with roses.

MONIQUE: Roses?

HANK: Must be your perfume.

(Beth closes her eyes in a try at ecstasy, unspontaneously leans.)

(SFX: Enormous explosion. Sirens. Crowds screaming.)

(Music: Sudden change to "disaster" feel.)

(Val sits up, Beth topples sideways into empty air behind him.)

MONIQUE: Hank! Don't let go of me! I will fall!

(Val looks right and left over each shoulder, curious about the disturbance behind him.)

HANK: Hang on! No jap submarine's gonna make a clay pigeon out of you!

(SFX: Phone rings)

(Val picks up the phone while Beth scrambles to push pause.)

VAL: Hello? ...Oh, Elaine! Yeah, sure. Hang on.

(to Beth, with his hand over the phone)

Why is Elaine McCormick calling us?

BETH: She has our children.

VAL: Oh, yeah. Here.

BETH: *(taking the phone)* Hi Elaine ...The flight? Uh, good! Went up, came down. Saw the Great Salt Lake! Is Austin behaving? ... Tiffany feels secure? ...Oh, good. I appreciate that, Elaine.

(Val, having a bright idea, goes to the far corner of the room and secretively places a call on his cell phone.)

Thanks so much for taking them. We couldn't have come, otherwise. Has Sarah gotten out her violin?

(turns away from Val, mimes more conversation)

VAL: I'd like a number in Salina. ...the one in Utah. ...Any florist. ...Yeah, try them. ...Thanks.

BETH: I'd like her to practice, even a little...

(fades, mimes more conversation)

VAL: This is Val Utley, staying at the Tiki Inn, I wonder if you could set aside a dozen...

(mimes more conversation)

BETH: Well, think of some way I can repay you. ...Oh, you have? ...You'd like me to speak at the... No, I couldn't just read the article.

(turns away from Val)

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It's just, not that kind of article, really. ...No, there's no reason I wouldn't want to speak on "secrets of a happy marriage."

VAL: Thanks. Tomorrow, then. Y'know, anniversary. Thanks.

(hangs up)

BETH: Val too?! Uh, I can ask.

(covers the phone, speaks to Val)

Val?

VAL: *(bootlegging the phone)* What does she want? Souvenirs?

BETH: She wants to know...

VAL: *(at the window)* We could bring her a little bag of cement. There's a factory just down...

BETH: She wants to know if I could speak at the Relief Society Valentine's Day thing.

VAL: *(sincerely, if not sensitively)* Why?

BETH: She thinks I'm an expert on marriage.

VAL: No offense, but...

BETH: Very funny. I'm having an article published.

VAL: Oh yeah. Well, fake it. You know hundreds of words.

BETH: And she wants you to speak, too.

VAL: Me?! Tomorrow? Uh, I don't think I could.

BETH: Val, she's on the...

VAL: I mean, I'd have to make a change!

BETH: *(glimmer of hope)* A change? You would?

VAL: We play the Jazz tomorrow night!

(sees he has disappointed her)

What'd I say?

BETH: I thought you meant change your life, not your calendar.

VAL: Change my life?

BETH: People do.

VAL: Some people need to.

BETH: Val, is there some reason you wouldn't want to speak on "Secrets of a Happy Marriage"? You know some, don't you?

VAL: The Jazz!

BETH: *(fierce whisper)* She's watching our kids!

VAL: Is this a hostage issue?

BETH: Come on! It's for church!

VAL: *(sighs)* I'll call the coach.

BETH: *(back to Elaine)* Elaine? How do we dress? ...Okay. Thanks. See you on the fourteenth. Hug the kids.

'Bye. Oh, and Elaine...

(hangs up and says to Val)

She's gone.

VAL: Good riddance. Relief Society Valentine's...

(SFX: phone rings)

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I'll get this one. I don't want any more speaking engagements.

(almost beligerently)

Hello?

(bouyant)

Ohhh! What a surprise! ...Oh! Yeah! She's right here!

(hand over mouthpiece, huge dismayed whisper)

It's your mother!

BETH: Give me that! Mom? ...Oh, Elaine gave it to you! Well, how are you?

(Val looks on with intense apprehension.)

You spoke with the kids? ...No, no, that's good! I mean, they've been alone now for nearly four hours!

(apologetically)

Listen Mom, I meant to tell you that we were coming...

VAL: No!

(Beth glares, appalled. Val tries to recover, singing ad lib.)

"N-ng-Oklahoma, where the wind comes sweepin' down..."

(fades singing and mouths)

Sorry.

BETH: Oh yeah, just loves to sing.

(to Val)

Mom says hi.

VAL: *(shouts deflatedly)* Hi mom. Thanks for calling.

BETH: Oh you're not worried about the long distance?

(puzzled, mouths to Val)

Long distance?

(Val shrugs, Beth goes back to Mom)

...Oh yes! The eight hundred number!

(Both visibly relax.)

No cost at all!

(Rolls her eyes.)

...Sure, we can talk as long as we want.

(Beth suddenly stiffens.)

The Tiki Inn? They answered "Tiki Inn"?

(Val freaks.)

...Well, it's a chain, you know...Oh, yeah, well, not in Utah. I think mostly in, uh, Florida!

(They look at each other, she wallowing in shame at lying, he shaking his head, appalled at how poorly she lies.)

Oh, we thought it would be romantic. Remember we spent our honeymoon at the one in Salina--the original...Yes! Just down the road from you! ...I remember those hot cinnamon rolls you brought us in the morning, so thoughtful!

(Val shudders.)

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No, Val will be with me the whole time. ...Mom, this is a vacation! ...No, his trips are with the team. That's part of his work.Mom, he doesn't abandon me!

VAL: Abandon?

BETH: *(clearly turns away, as though shielding Val from her Mom's criticism.)* He helps a lot! ...Well, he drove the soccer van. That one time.

VAL: One time?

(wheels away)

BETH: ...Well Mom, what's up with you? How's the weather out there? ...Here? Uh, similar. No! Different! Probably a lot sunnier! I mean, sunnier!

Val's folks? ...Oh, I know you see them all the time. Please, bring me up to date!

(Val is suffering too much. She stretches the phone cord toward the wings.)

What? ...That's because I am walking. Just want to watch the surf out the window as we talk. "Carpe diem," you know. ...No, it's Latin, Mom.

(stepping offstage and fading)

It means "Watch the surf."

SCENE FOUR: POPCORN. Val points the remote.

(SFX: lapping water)

MONIQUE: *There were lifeboats. I saw them.*

HANK: *I don't reckon there was time enough to lower even one.*

MONIQUE: *So we float on a banquet table, so ornate.*

HANK: *Pretty cruel joke, if you ask me.*

MONIQUE: *The joke?*

HANK: *Those are sharks out there.*

VAL: *(to himself)* That's funny, Hank.

MONIQUE: *Oh! Hank!*

(Music: Ominous theme arises, giving us something to fade to whenever Beth and Val talk.)

BETH: **(enters with phone)** Lying to my mother makes me so hungry!

HANK: *Just stick close to me. And try to look unappetizing.*

VAL: Popcorn?

(Beth reaches for popcorn, which Val absently makes unreachable. She rounds the bed, climbs on, and reaches again, with the same unsatisfactory results.)

MONIQUE: *I will stick very close. And I will try to look unappetizing.*

VAL: Good luck.

HANK: *Be glad there's room for two of us.*

MONIQUE: *Oh, Hank, please hold me!*

BETH: Could that popcorn possibly be put where I can reach it?

VAL: Oh, sure, here.

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(Puts it between them.)

Sorry.

BETH: It doesn't have to be between us.

VAL: Wherever.

BETH: *(Moving the bowl to the side, she looks at the kernels and gets an idea.)* Y'know who this popcorn reminds me of?

VAL: *(absently, watching the video)* Popcorn reminds you of somebody?

BETH: Sarah.

(He looks confused while she places kernels in a row between them, scooting farther away with each.)

And Ted, and Austin...

VAL: *(unconsciously drifting right to his edge of the bed)* They're great kids. I kinda miss 'em.

BETH: And Tiffany.

(She pauses the video. They have hit a distinctive pose, as far apart as they can be without falling off the bed.)

VAL: I've called them pumpkin seeds and doodlebugs, but never popcorn.

BETH: We used to sit together in church.

VAL: I'm lost.

BETH: Then this happened.

(pushes pause)

VAL: We've never taken popcorn to church. We take Cheerios to church.

BETH: How do we sit now?

(gestures to the line of kernels. She and Val are lying quite far apart, looking awkward.)

VAL: I get it. Object lesson.

BETH: Am I right?

VAL: It's a security measure. So no kid is out of pinching range.

BETH: I don't pinch!

VAL: It's why we can never have more children than our cumulative arm-span will accommodate.

BETH: Couldn't we try to sit closer?

VAL: Well, we're not in church now.

(popping them one by one into his mouth while scooting closer to her)

Sarah, Ted!

(offers her a kernel)

Austin?

(She disdains, he pops Austin, offers another.)

Tiffany? Dessert!

(She grabs the kernel and chucks it into his mouth.)

Good lesson, teacher.

BETH: *(cuddles beside him)* Let's see how good a student you are.

VAL: I'm always good when there are treats.

(starts the video)

(Music: Back to the movie, Cheezy Romantic)

HANK: *Monique, your hair is like a sweet forest back home.*

(It's obvious that Beth's hair is tickling Val's nose. He pulls away some.)

MONIQUE: *Tell me about your home.*

HANK: *Aw, just hills and woods mostly. But I had this dream.*

MONIQUE: *A dream? Oh please. Tell me.*

HANK: *I wanted to build things, big beautiful things that would remind people of canyons and forests and star-filled skies.*

(Beth starts idly twisting her foot in a circle, scoots her hinder parts away from Val to get more comfortable.)

HANK: *I became an engineer.*

MONIQUE: *But how beautiful! The things you would make!*

HANK: *(sarcastically) Right. My first big contract brought me out here, to help the Seabees build ugly airfields. So that we could blow up all we can of Japanese civilization.*

MONIQUE: *You should have an eden, a new place to build beautiful things. Still, we must bring our gifts now to the altar of war. Why did you not tell me on the boat?*

HANK: *(playfully) Please, you might have been a spy.*

MONIQUE: *(laughing suddenly) Oh, but I am a spy!*

HANK: *Wait a minute...*

(Beth yawns enormously.)

MONIQUE: *I am the very beginning spy. I was returning on the boat from San Francisco, where I had delivered secret documents.*

HANK: *But how did a girl like you...*

MONIQUE: *A girl like me! What is "a girl like me"?*

VAL: *Alarmingly photogenic?*

(Beth scoots further.)

MONIQUE: *I am not the trained artist of espionage. My father is the governor of Tahiti. I had information for the Embassie Francais.*

HANK: *Information?*

MONIQUE: *(laughing again) Number of canoes, how many spears or coconuts to throw, I don't know. It seemed important.*

HANK: *Now it's important to stay alive.*

MONIQUE: *Somehow I feel more alive now than before the torpedo.*

BETH: *Oh, brother.*

VAL: *Hey.*

HANK: *I dreamed of more than just building things.*

MONIQUE: *Tell me.*

HANK: *They're dreams I've never shared with a woman before.*

MONIQUE: *You may never have the chance again.*

HANK: *Yes...*

MONIQUE: *It is good to have a strong arm around me. I think it will not fail me...until...*

(breaks into tears)

(Val wriggles his arm free from around Beth. She glances his direction.)

VAL: Arm's falling asleep.

HANK: *Easy, easy. Stay close, now. Some people never get to be this close.*

(Without planning, or even recognizing it, Val and Beth have now reached the exact distance from each other and the exact pose in which they landed back when the popcorn demonstration was completed.)

MONIQUE: *We will not wait in silence for death. We will share our secret dreams, dreams that will never be fulfilled.*

HANK: *Shush!*

MONIQUE: *You are telling me "Shush"?*

HANK: *Look! 'Way off there.*

MONIQUE: *Is it...?*

HANK: *Land!*

(Ad lib. burst of glee, and)

(Music: Enormous "South Pacific" theme.)

(Beth suddenly notices the distance between them, quickly replays in her head the process of distancing, makes a decision, and reaches for the remote. Beth pushes stop and the MUSIC theme is cut off abruptly.)

24 MORE PAGES OF SCRIPT TO THE END.

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