

A Little Murder on the Side

by
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Copywrite 1997

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A LITTLE MURDER ON THE SIDE

Bradly Worth ----- Late thirties
Felicia Worth --- Brad's Wife. Mid Thirties
Ariana Worth -- Brad's Sister. Mid Thirties
Taylor Lofton -- Brads friend. Mid thirties
Victor Grosse --- Same actor as Brad
Evelyn Horne (Ruth) --- Mid thirties
Sgt Evelyn Horne --- Mid forties

The entire play takes place in the living room of a duplex apartment.
U.R. French doors to a terrace. U.C. Doors to Dinning room and
Kitchen (swinging) stage right of theses doors stairs to bedroom with
landing and door. U.L. Apartment door.

ACT I
SCENE 1

(Brad enters from kitchen with a coffee mug in one hand and a few manila files in the other. He hunts for and finds his briefcase as he calls to the second floor door which has been left ajar.)

BRAD.

Felicia! Darling I'm running late. Are you out of bed yet?

FELICIA.

(Mutters something unintelligible from the bedroom.)

BRAD.

Yes dear, I know. And I promise that I won't forget. In the meantime, have you seen my large briefcase? I can't seem to find it anywhere down here.

FELICIA.

(More mumbling.)

BRAD.

That's right, I completely forgot. Could you ---

(A briefcase flies out of the bedroom down to the floor.)

Thank you.

(More mumbling by felicia then she pokes her head just out of the door.)

BRAD.

I won't forget tonight, I promise. What are you doing for lunch?

FELICIA.

Mumble-mumble. Ariana. *(Coming out onto the landing.)*

BRAD.

I thought so. Why don't you meet me for lunch?

FELICIA.

I don't think so dear.

BRAD.

Ah, you're awake.

FELICIA.

Yes, I'm awake. Don't you look handsome this morning. Have a luncheon date do you?

BRAD.

I've just been turned down by my wife. I have to go.

FELICIA.

What about a goodbye kiss. Don't forget tonight. Cocktails at six. I've got the entire evening planned. (*Descending the stairs. She plants a big wet one on him.*)

Keep that with you during your meeting.

BRAD.

I think you need a cold shower. And I'm leaving before I do. Good-bye dear. (*He exits.*)

FELICIA.

(*Wrapping her arms around herself, in a self embrace.*) You devil you. (*She turns and exits into the kitchen.*)

(*The phone rings.*)

FELICIA. (O.S.)

Hello. Well good morning to you too.

FELICIA.

(*Entering with coffee and a portable phone.*) What time did you get out of bed? ---

Well you had better get a move on. --- We have a date. Or have you forgotten? ---

Of course we have time before lunch. If you hurry.

End scene 1

Scene 2

(*3:00 PM; same day. Felicia and Ariana enter from bedroom.*)

ARIANA.

Luncheon specials, it's hard to imagine anything more satisfying.

FELICIA.

(*Xing to stereo.*) You are the quirkiest girl. What would you like to hear? And no "Bolero".

ARIANA.

Of course not, though there is a time and place for every thing.

FELICIA.

And anything?

ARIANA.

I don't have a preference right now.

(Felicia at stereo turns it on. "Rhapsody in Blue")

ARIANA.

Are we still on for dinner Tuesday night?

FELICIA.

Yes. Just one hitch.

ARIANA.

Hitch?

FELICIA.

Bradley is not going out of town and he's invited some one.

ARIANA.

Now! That might prove interesting.

FELICIA.

A friend from his office.

ARIANA.

How boring. Those people are all so utterly boring. Who is it? Like anything from the fridge?

FELICIA.

Diet anything.

ARIANA.

Don't know how you can drink that stuff. *(Exits to kitchen.)*

FELICIA.

He didn't say who and I don't care, so I didn't ask. One bore is as boring as another.

ARIANA. (O.S.)

Maybe I'll just beg off.

FELICIA.

And leave me to suffer alone. Not on your life.

ARIANA.

After all the dinners I've had to sit through and all those boring people. Not to mention those non-alcoholic cocktail parties, with those boring people and their boring wives....

FELICIA.

(Speaking loud enough to be heard over music.) I can't hear you. Not a word. Not a word of what you're saying, can I hear.

(Phone rings. Felicia answers.)

FELICIA.

Brad, darling. --- Just got in the door. How was lunch? --- Oh, mine was just finger lickin'. --- What? Hold on a sec. *(Turns volume down.)* I had the music up too loud as usual. Now, what were you saying? --- Not again darling. Every time I plan a quiet evening at home alone, just the two of us, if you get my drift, something comes along to spoil it.

(Ariana returns with two glasses. Felicia cups receiver.)

Your brother. *(Into phone.)* Now that just isn't fair. I know but --- Well if you must, you must. No, I'm not angry. Just disappointed, that's all. Yes, well, see you tonight. Bye.

ARIANA.

More late meetings?

FELICIA.

Meeting my ass! That bastard, you'll excuse the expression, brother of yours, husband of mine has something going. I just know it. He's too damned happy for my money.

ARIANA.

So he's getting a little on the side. I thought all men did that.

FELICIA.

They probably do but who cares if it's someone else's husband.

ARIANA.

Soooo; Big bad Bradley won't be coming home till late. We've already done lunch. What do you say to a little dinner treat. *(Heading up the stairs undressing as she goes.)*

FELICIA.

(Changing music to "Bolero." Then following Ariana.) A time and place for everything.

ARIANA.

And anything.

End scene 2

Scene 3

(That Tuesday evening. Brad and Taylor enter from dining room with Brandy sniffers.)

BRAD.

Can I freshen that for you?

TAYLOR.

Only if you're having one. *(Sotto voce.)* With all the things you and Felicia do together. The skiing, boating, travel. How do you find the time?

BRAD.

Time?

TAYLOR.

Between work, travel, a home life and?

BRAD.

And?

TAYLOR.

You know. The other one.

BRAD.

Other One?

TAYLOR.

The girl?

BRAD.

Oh, you mean Ruth?

TAYLOR.

Yes. Ruth? That's her name? So how do you? ---

BRAD.

I manage. It's not easy. But I manage.

FELICIA. (O.S.)

We'll be done in a minute.

BRAD.

Soo! What do you think? *(Pointing to the cigar in Taylor's hand.)*

TAYLOR.

An excellent cigar. Where do you get them?

BRAD.

I have a secret supply.

TAYLOR.

Really?

BRAD.

Here you go. (*Handing Taylor his drink.*)

TAYLOR.

Thank you. If you don't mind my asking? Just where, do you get them?

BRAD.

It's not really a big deal. Do you know Tom Runyan, the actuary?

TAYLOR.

Don't think I do.

BRAD.

He belongs to some exclusive cigar club or something. If you're interested I'll talk to him.

TAYLOR.

Right now I'm more interested in how you manage the thing with Ruth. And where on earth did you find her? Are you sure Felicia doesn't suspect?

BRAD.

She's too busy with her own social world, doesn't have a clue.

TAYLOR.

Is Ruth, oh, I don't know, comfortable with, you know?

BRAD.

I know what?

TAYLOR.

That you're married.

BRAD.

I guess she is but you see she knows that I love her.

TAYLOR.

You love her? What about Felicia?

BRAD.

I doubt it. I don't think she even knows the girl exists. Just kidding.

TAYLOR.

You do love your wife,. Don't you?

BRAD.

Of course I do. I love them both.

TAYLOR.

How can you love two women at the same time?

BRAD.

Are you kidding? I could love five women at the same time if they would all cooperate.

TAYLOR.

What do you think would happen if she found out?

BRAD.

That's a reason to keep it to one mistress.

TAYLOR.

Why, exactly?

BRAD.

You can always confess to falling to temptation once. Fall on the sword as it were and beg forgiveness, promise never to fail her again and worm your way out of it. It's possible that she'll forgive.

TAYLOR.

And forget?

BRAD.

Felicia? She will never forget. She might forgive one but never a harem.

FELICIA. (O.S.)

You boys be patient. We're almost finished in here.

BRAD.

We're fine. Take your time. (*Changing the subject again.*) Why don't we go out on the terrace? Enjoy the view. The smoke. Felicia doesn't like the smell in the apartment. We can finish our drinks out there.

(*They exit to terrace. Then the women enter.*)

FELICIA.

Be a dear and help me clear these hors d'oeuvre trays. Taylor seems nice. Don't you think?

ARIANA.

He may prove to be boring in the future but I'd be willing to ---

FELICIA.

You are a barracuda. Do you know that?

ARIANA.

Now don't you tell me that you wouldn't go skinny dipping in the Plaza fountain if he asked you.

FELICIA.

Just help me clear this stuff into the kitchen before they come back in. And get your mind out of the underwear drawer.

ARIANA.

Easy for you to say, you've already got a man of your own.

FELICIA.

I'm just not so sure he's all mine alone.

ARIANA.

Temper, temper.

(They exit to kitchen. Then Brad and Taylor enter.)

BRAD.

Let me freshen that for you.

TAYLOR.

It's no wonder you married her. She sure can throw a feast together. And those mushrooms, they could have been a meal in themselves.

BRAD.

Here you go. How about some music? *(He turns on system and "Bolero" fills the room.)*

TAYLOR.

An interesting selection in after dinner music. I would have thought you'd save that for later, ---

(Ariana enters the room and fakes a swoon.)

when every one's gone home. Now look what you've done.

ARIANA.

Don't change it. I'll bet Felicia will just go wild.

FELICIA.

(Entering the room as if shot out of a cannon.) Must you play --- *(Sees everyone else and freezes.)* that, so loud?

ARIANA.

That's probably so it can be heard in the bedroom.

FELICIA.

You! Oh, never mind.
(Brad turns the volume down.)

What an interesting selection, dear.

TAYLOR

That's what I said.

BRAD.

I didn't select it. It was already in the machine. ---
(All direct knowing glance toward him and then at one another.)

However it got there, it's there. So. Does any one have a request?

FELICIA

TAYLOR.

Bolero.

Bolero?
ARIANA.

This could turn into an interesting evening.

BRAD.

(Turning the music off.) No it won't little sister. Isn't it about time you toddled off home and to bed? Excuse me. Scratch that last remark.

ARIANA.

Love you too, Bradley. Taylor, going my way? I could use a lift.

BRAD.

(Giving her an affectionate brotherly kiss on the cheek.) Taylor and I have a few things to kick around. Now be a good little girl and scoot.

TAYLOR.

Well, the least a gentleman can do is see you down in the elevator and safely into a cab.

FELICIA.

(Signaling Ariana.) Bradley, you're the host. It's your obligation to see your guests out.

ARIANA.

That's right, brother mine. Come show your little sister to a cab. It'll give us a couple of minutes alone to reminisce.

BRAD.

Very well. Come on kid, let's go.

(Putting his arm around her in friendly embrace. They exit as Ariana blows a kiss to Felicia.)

ARIANA.

Nycol.

FELICIA.

Get you another? (*Moving close to Taylor and putting her hand around his hand and his glass.*)

TAYLOR.

Not right at the moment, thanks.

FELICIA.

Get you anything else? (*Moving closer to him.*)

TAYLOR.

Like what?

FELICIA.

Like me. (*Kissing him gently on the lips.*)

TAYLOR.

That was unexpected. I mean I never thought, --

FELICIA.

That I am very much attracted to you? Have the hots for you?

TAYLOR.

Or anyone. I thought, ---. I'm not sure what I thought.

FELICIA.

(*Crosses to sound system and starts Bolero again.*) Don't think. Do!

TAYLOR.

This is not any thing I was prepared for. Not that I don't find it intriguing. (*She embraces him.*) But is it necessary to advertise? Brad is probably on his way back already.

FELICIA.

(*Kisses him then quickly moves away.*) You want to think about it?

TAYLOR.

You have no idea what's going on in my mind right now.

FELICIA.

I think a wild guess might hit the mark.

TAYLOR.

Might not.

FELICIA.

Try this on, for size. Brad leaves for three days in Chicago tomorrow. What's your favorite breakfast? Tell me and I'll have it ready at eight in the morning.

(Brad enters.)

BRAD.

I love that girl but she never knows when it's time to go home. *(Turns off the music.)* Get Taylor another drink, would you dear?

FELICIA.

I've already gotten him something.

BRAD.

What do you say 'T', is she the hostess with the mostesst?

TAYLOR.

She's quite something all right.

FELICIA.

Taylor is meeting me for breakfast tomorrow. Aren't you?

BRAD.

She's always telling me how the first hours after I've gone are when she misses me the most.

FELICIA.

Now we've solved that problem. Haven't we? Unless I can get anything else for you boys? *(Kissing Brad good night but making eye contact with Taylor.)* No?

Then I'm off to bed.

FELICIA.

Call first thing in the morning and we'll make arrangements. Good night, dear.

Pleasant dreams, Taylor.

(She ascends the stairs.)

End scene 3

Scene 4

(MORE)

A Little Murder on the Side.

(cont'd)

(The next morning. Felicia in her robe, seated in the living room. Bradley, dressed to leave enters from kitchen with mug of coffee.)

BRAD.

I thought you were meeting Taylor for breakfast?

FELICIA.

I am.

BRAD.

You're not even dressed.

FELICIA.

Oh, I'll slip out of this as soon as you're out the door.

BRAD.

I'm running late.

FELICIA.

I'll say you are.

BRAD.

(Leaning over and kissing her.) Bye darling, see you Friday afternoon .

(Intercom buzzer sounds. Brad moves towards the intercom.)

Oh, by the way where are you meeting Taylor?

FELICIA.

What?

BRAD.

(Into intercom.) Yes.

FELICIA.

Where are you meeting Taylor?

INTERCOM VOICE.

Mr. Lofton is here.

FELICIA.

He's picking me up.

BRAD.

(Into intercom.) What?

BRAD.

(To Felicia.) What?

FELICIA.

(Rising and moving to the stairs.) He's picking me up.

INTERCOM VOICE.

Mr. Lofton is on his way up, sir.

FELICIA.

(Climbing the stairs.) You'll have to entertain Taylor until I'm ready.

BRAD.

I've got a plane to catch.

(Felicia exits to the bedroom but does not close the door all the way. The door bell rings. Brad goes to the door and opens it.)

TAYLOR.

Good morn --- Brad?

BRAD.

Apparently this morning, I'm the butler.

TAYLOR.

Where's Felicia? I thought you had an early flight? I mean ---

BRAD.

(Grabbing his coat and briefcase.) Got off to a late start. Sorry I don't have time to entertain you. See you in a couple of days. By the way where are you taking her?

TAYLOR.

Don't know. She said she wanted to surprise me.

BRAD.

Be wary of her. She has exotic and expensive tastes.

TAYLOR.

You worry. She said it was her treat.

BRAD.

(Opens the door. Delivers a salute and exits.) There's still some coffee in the pot.

TAYLOR.

You have a good trip.

(Looking around the room for a moment then turns and heads toward the kitchen door as he exits to kitchen the bedroom door opens.)

FELICIA.

(Entering still wearing the same robe.) Hello, Taylor. Taylor? *(Peers over railing.)* Feeding time. *(Moving down the stairs and toward the stereo.)*

Breakfast will be served in the living room this morning. *(She turns on machine inserts a disc, "Bolero".)* Oh, Taylor. *(As she moves to stand in front of the kitchen door. Her back to the audience.)* Come and get it!

TAYLOR.

(Opens the kitchen door and enters, a mug in one hand and a roll in the other.)

Hello! --- You're not dressed for breakfast. --- Bolero?

FELICIA.

Oh, yes I am. *(Still facing upstage opens her robe facing him.)*

TAYLOR.

Oh. Oh! *(Drops the mug and roll and stares at her dumbfounded.)*

END SCENE 4

SCENE 5

(The next day at noon. Taylor's clothing is scattered about the room, along with Felicia's silk robe. The music playing is "Tale of the Vienna Woods". The apartment door opens. We hear Ariana imitating a man's voice from the hallway.)

ARIANA.

(Entering.) Honey, I'm home. Hello! It's me. Remember me?

They are not playing our song. --- Felicia! Felicia!

FELICIA.

(At the bedroom door in a towel.) Ariana, darling. What's today?

ARIANA.

Thursday. Thursday, the day we usually have lunch. *(Popping in "Bolero".)*

That's much better. Taken to cross-dressing, have we?

FELICIA.

What the hell are you talking about?

ARIANA.

(Picking up the pants.) On second thought, these aren't your size.

FELICIA.

Oh, yes they are. They're just my size.

ARIANA.

Are you standing me up?

(We hear Taylor's voice from the bedroom he is singing. "Wild Thing.")

FELICIA.

Do me a giant favor will you?

ARIANA.

Your wish is my command. As long as you let me in on the gory details.

FELICIA.

Later?

ARIANA.

All right.

FELICIA.

Invisible.

ARIANA.

What?

TAYLOR. (O.S.)

Felicia?

FELICIA.

(Indicating the front door.) Get yourself invisible, would you? *(Turning to bedroom door.)* Yes, you beautiful man. What is it?

ARIANA.

I get it.

FELICIA.

Good. Now, get it to the door!

TAYLOR.

Haven't you got any bigger towels. *(His hand appears at the door jamb.)*

ARIANA.

I'm going. *(She heads directly to the kitchen door and exits.)*

FELICIA.

What are you doing?

TAYLOR.

Doing? I'm not doing anything. *(Entering from bedroom covered by a too-small towel.)*

FELICIA.

You will be soon. *(Pushes him back into bedroom follows him in and closes the door.)*

ARIANA.

(Opens kitchen door, looks around. The door bell rings.) Oh, oh!
(The bedroom door opens. Felicia comes out pulling on her robe.)

FELICIA.

I know darling. Why don't you just take a nice warm shower and I'll be back in a jiff. *(Closing the door and spotting Ariana.)* I thought I asked you to leave.

ARIANA.

Told me to go. By the way, I know who's at the door.

FELICIA.

I suppose you're going to say that it's Bradley? And he lost his key? I don't have time for jokes.

ARIANA.

No, no. They told me at the desk when I came in. I just forgot to tell you. They're sending up a man to fix your dryer.

FELICIA.

I don't have a dryer.

ARIANA.

All right then, your dishwasher. You can't expect me to remember everything.

FELICIA.

They said it would take a while. That the maintenance man had quit.
(Door bell rings again.)

ARIANA.

They told me to tell that they've hired a new man. He started yesterday.

FELICIA.

You can't remember anything.

ARIANA.

I remembered we had a lunch date.

FELICIA.

(Indicating imaginary sign across her chest.) Ocupado.
(They have both crossed to the door. Felicia opens the door and standing there, in a maintenance uniform is a man who is the spitting image of Brad. Both women stand as if hit by lightning.)

FELICIA.

Wha --- I --- Who.

ARIANA.

Oh Shit!

VICTOR.

(Speaking in an accent. Any kind as long as it does not sound phony.)

I am Victor, I have come to fix dish washing machine.

(The two women look at each other almost in shock. Then they burst into peels of laughter.)

ARIANA.

(Winks at him.) Of course you have.

VICTOR.

Where is kitchen?

FELICIA.

It's the first door. Show the man the kitchen, would you darling?

ARIANA.

(Ushers him into the kitchen.) Certainly. This way, my good man.

FELICIA.

(Scurries around the room picking up Taylor's clothing.) I'm going to have a heart attack. I know it. *(Turns off the stereo crosses to and heads up the stairs.)*

(Taylor emerges from the bedroom.)

TAYLOR.

I thought you ran away from home.

FELICIA.

No, I didn't. But you are running away from my home and right now. I don't have time to explain. Please just get dressed and run away.

TAYLOR.

(Taking his clothes crossing to the door.)

What the hell is going on?

FELICIA.

Your suit and quickly. That's all I know. I'm not sure I want to know more. Now please get dressed.

(Moving back down the stairs and to the kitchen door, openings it. Ariana enters.)

FELICIA.

What's he doing in there?

ARIANA.

Apparently, he's fixing, 'dish washing machine' or...

FELICIA.

What? Do you mean to say he's? (*Opening the door and peering in, then turning out and letting the door close.*) Fixing the dish washer.

ARIANA.

Dish washing machine. He's Polish or Spanish or Irish or something, foreign.

FELICIA.

But he looks just like --- it can't be.

ARIANA.

Apparently it can.

(*Taylor appears at bedroom door dressed, with his shoes in his hand*)

TAYLOR.

Felicia, I can't find my socks.

ARIANA.

Taylor, Darling!

TAYLOR.

(*Even though he is dressed he attempts to cover up. Awkwardly.*) Ariana? --- I just stopped to get something I forgot the other night.

ARIANA.

Your socks? (*To Felicia.*) And did he get them?

FELICIA.

Yes his socks! Oh Jesus, never mind. Yes he got them. And more. Which is none of your business. Taylor, please just put your shoes on and go. (*Softening her tone.*) Please be a dear and do that for me, won't you?

(*Ariana crosses to terrace. Taylor comes down the stairs crosses to Felicia, an awkward kiss. Ariana exits to terrace. Victor enters from kitchen with a dish washer part in his hand.*)

VICTOR.

Need to replace vulva.

FELICIA.

(*Incredulous.*) Vulva?

TAYLOR.

Vulva? (*Thinking Victor is Brad.*) Oh, my God! Brad? --
- I Just stopped ---

VICTOR.

(*Showing a valve.*) Vulva.

FELICIA.

(*Laughing.*) Valve! Of Course.

VICTOR.

I come back later and ---

TAYLOR.

(*Falls into chair.*) I just stopped ---

VICTOR.

(*Crossing to Apartment door.*) I come back, later and --

TAYLOR.

(*Looking around frantically.*) to pick up my ---

VICTOR.

Finish. (*He exits.*)

ARIANA.

(*Entering from terrace holding a pair of socks.*) Socks?

FELICIA.

How the hell did they get out on the --- Oh, never mind.

ARIANA.

Wait. (*Calling after Victor but he doesn't hear her.*) Wait. (*Crossing to the door.*)

FELICIA.

Where do you think you're going?

ARIANA.

I'm going to find out. What I can find out. Aren't you curious?

FELICIA.

Suicidal is more like it.

TAYLOR.

Can someone tell me what's going on here. Who the hell was that guy?

FELICIA

ARIANA.

Don't know. --- Brad?

Don't know. --- Brad?
TAYLOR.

Oh, God, I thought but then I thought -- -

FELICIA.

Oh, God.

ARIANA

Oh, Boy!

End scene 5

Scene 6

(All through the following phone conversation we hear sporadic noises from the kitchen. Victor is working on the dish washer.)

FELICIA.

(Speaking into the phone.) Divorce? Divorce? Divorce him! I'd like it better if I never met him! --- Calm down? Who the hell are you telling to calm down? --- Yes, you're my lawyer. --- Yes, I called you for advice. But the son of a bitch --- Okay, all right. --- I'm listening. I can't believe he has me over a barrel like that. Half? Half of everything? I only signed that because I was in love. Does it still count if I don't love him any more? It was all my property, all of it. All he had, all he has is the job my father got him. --- Yes. I'll think about it and get back to you. --- No. I won't say a word to him. That rotten bastard! Goodbye Bobby. *(Hangs up the phone and walks over to the bar.)* Half?! Ha!

VICTOR.

(Enters from kitchen.) Dish washing machine is fixed. I come back in some minutes to clean mess. But everything okay. Okay?

FELICIA.

Thank you Victor. Oh, would you care for a drink?

VICTOR.

Thank you miss ---

FELICIA.

What can I get ---

VICTOR.

but I have work ---

FELICIA.

Of course you do. Go along.

VICTOR.

Thank you miss. *(He exits.)*

(Felicia takes a drink crosses to and turns on the radio.)

RADIO VOICE.

That's the sports wrap up. Now for the weekend outlook. Sunny and mild in the city most of the weekend with a 60% chance of a late afternoon shower on Sunday. The present temperature is 72 degrees and the humidity is 60%. Locally, the body of a man was recovered from the river this afternoon. Police say that he had not been in the water long but so far attempts to identify him have failed. The man is approximately, *(Description to match that of Brad.)* wearing a blue suit. The police are asking any one with information to call 555 5347. In other news. The Senate today approved a

FELICIA.

With my luck it probably isn't him.

(The door bell rings. Felicia turns radio off crosses to door and opens it. Victor stands there holding a mop, pail etc. She stares at him intently for a moment.)

Victor?

VICTOR.

Yes, miss.

FELICIA.

Nothing. *(Still staring at him.)*

VICTOR.

Yes, miss. *(Regards her strangely, enters and then exits into kitchen.)*

FELICIA.

(Picks up phone and dials.) Hi! It's me and I'm naked. Oh! Why not drop over for a drink on the way home. Brad has another one of his meetings. --- Well, not you too? No, no, that's all right. I know. How about breakfast tomorrow? ---

Good. Can't talk any more now. I've got a lot to do.

(She turns and exits to kitchen.)

Victor. Victor, I was wondering if you might be able to help me out with a little something --

End scene 6

Scene 7

(The next morning. "Bolero" is playing. Taylor enters from dining room wrapped in linen table cloth. Clothing is strewn everywhere. He crosses to the terrace doors which are open, steps out picks up his socks (Big smile.) and comes back in with socks which he drops on top of his shoes, as Felicia enters wearing a robe.)

TAYLOR.

Now! That's what I call, "The breakfast of champions."

FELICIA.

And the food wasn't bad.

TAYLOR.

(He kisses her.) A little dessert?

FELICIA.

Let's just sit. Could we?

TAYLOR.

Just sit? Is that Felicia speaking?

FELICIA.

No, no. You've probably got your mind all twisted around in the wrong direction.

I just wanted ---

TAYLOR.

To sit and talk. I heard you. I also know that it's not like you.

FELICIA.

I'm going to divorce Brad.

TAYLOR.

You're what? Now hold it a minute. I don't think --

FELICIA.

Not asking you to think. And it has nothing to do with you.

TAYLOR.

Good. What do you mean, it has nothing to do with me?

FELICIA.

Brad has been seeing someone else and I'm not going to put up with it.

TAYLOR.

Brad is having an affair. And what do you call this?

FELICIA.

Sex. I call it sex. And It doesn't give him the right to cheat on me.

TAYLOR.

And so you find that a reason to divorce him, but it has nothing to do with me. Are you sure?

FELICIA.

Well actually, I'm not.

TAYLOR.

Sorry I asked.

FELICIA.

What I'm not sure of is whether I'm willing to let him have half of everything I own in order to punish him and get rid of him.

TAYLOR.

Half? Not much in the way of punishment.

FELICIA.

What am I? Chopped liver? (*Siting in his lap. Kissing him.*)

TAYLOR.

I didn't mean to imply.

FELICIA.

My lawyer advised me against signing a pre-nup and now tells me that there is not some 'legal' way of getting rid of him and keeping what is mine.

TAYLOR.

Have you said anything to Brad?

FELICIA.

No. I'm so angry but I don't know what to do.

TAYLOR.

Well, I guess that settles it then. You'll just have to keep on the way you've been going.

FELICIA.

No. You are wrong.

TAYLOR.

Do you intend to confront him? Do you have any evidence?

FELICIA.

Not actually. But there are signs. Unmistakable signs. A pattern in his behavior. Late meetings at the office followed by a very satisfied expression on his face the morning.

TAYLOR.

Can you see that? Really? Just curious.

FELICIA.

I have a plan. --- I said, I have a plan.

TAYLOR.

I heard you. You have a plan. Why don't I like the sound of that?

FELICIA.

Want to hear my plan?

TAYLOR.

I'm not sure that I do.

FELICIA.

(Reaches down and takes both his hands in hers and he stands.) I think we have time for some of that sex we talked about. *(She puts her arms around him he puts his around her.)*

End scene 7

Scene 8

(The next Morning. Felicia, wearing a dressing gown enters from kitchen with coffee and a bagel. She walks over to stereo turns it on. "Bolero." She ejects it and replaces it with another selection. She walks to terrace doors opens them steps out and stops. Brad enters from bedroom comes down the stairs and exits to kitchen. Felicia turns, a look of satisfaction on her face, stands a moment, then picks up the phone and dials. Brad enters from kitchen, coffee in hand.)

FELICIA.

Hello, front desk?

BRAD.

Running late as usual.

FELICIA.

How did your meeting go last night? Building maintenance, please.

BRAD.

Meeting? Right. Highly unproductive. I almost forgot about it all together.

Thanks for the reminder. (*Busies himself gathering up his briefcase, newspaper etc.*)

FELICIA.

Yes, good morning. Yes, 1242. Yes. No. Yes, I was wondering, the man you sent up to fix our dish washer, could you send him back up this morning. No, no. There's nothing wrong with the dish washer, really. I mean, he did a fine job, it's just that, well, I'd like him to have a look at the door. --- No, there's nothing wrong with my apartment door. That's why you don't have a work order.

BRAD.

Got to run. (*Kissing her on the cheek.*)

FELICIA.

I just thought, maybe he could come up and turn the color panel on the dish washer door. You see, I bought all new accessories for the kitchen and -- Why am I telling you this? Could you just send the man up, please? Thank you. Yes, I can hold.

(*To Brad.*) Late? (*Into phone.*) No, no. I'll wait.

BRAD.

Late. (*As he exits, front door.*)

FELICIA.

Hello, hello? Hello! --- Taylor? Oh, good, I thought maybe you hung up. No, it was just that Brad was still home. I thought he'd already left. You know what a stickler he is for punctuality. By the way, did you know, he's going out of town tomorrow? --- Morning. --- Pittsburgh, I think. Two days. Oh, no. Don't say that. You said it. You know how much I enjoy having you for breakfast. Hmm, I'll assume that lunch is out of the question. Then you'll come for dinner. We'll make it a sleep over. (*Looking over to the terrace doors.*) Yes I hope it's a nice night too. (*Door bell rings.*) There's someone at the door. Tomorrow night. Seven thirty. --- What? Argyle socks? You deliciously bad boy.

(MORE)

A Little Murder on the Side.

FELICIA. (cont'd)

(Door bell.) Got to run. Bye, til tomorrow. *(Hangs up phone. Starts to door. Stops picks up phone dials.)* Building maintenance please. *(Door bell.)* Be right with you! I'm on the phone! Hello, this is Apartment 1242. Could you please send Vict --- that new maintenance man up when you can. I have something I'd like him to take a look at. Thank you.

(Hangs up phone and crosses to door. Bell rings as she opens the door. In marches Ariana.)

ARIANA.

Look at you.

FELICIA.

Hello? Ariana, what are you doing here?

ARIANA.

You have a Doctors' appointment at eleven. Then, you and I had a date to do a little shopping and then have lunch. Have you forgotten?

FELICIA.

Oh, God! Of course I forgot. My mind was preoccupied with something else. I completely forgot. What the hell time is it?

ARIANA.

Eight forty-five, and you're not even dressed. What have you been doing all morning?

FELICIA.

Doing? Nothing. I have been doing nothing all morning. Brad was late getting out of here for one thing. And nothing has gone right since. *(Running up the stairs.)*

I'll just barely have time to get dressed and made up to make it to the Doctors.

Sorry about the shopping trip.

(Exiting into bedroom.)

ARIANA.

Think nothing of it, I can think of several ways that you can make it up to me.

(Door bell rings.)

FELICIA. (O.S.)

Who in the hell can that be?

ARIANA.

Want me to get it?

A Little Murder on the Side.

FELICIA. (O.S.)

Be a dear. Would you?

ARIANA.

(Opens the door and freezes. Victor is standing there. Then.) I doubt that I'll ever be able to get used to this. Felicia, darling! It's that nice repairman.

FELICIA. (O.S.)

What is happening to my mind? Just show him into the kitchen would you? That's a good girl.

ARIANA.

(Leads Victor into the kitchen and immediately re-enters.) Why am I showing him into the kitchen? Felicia!

FELICIA.

(Half dressed, skirt bra and putting on her blouse, enters and leans over the railing.)

Wait, one minute while I remember why he's here.

ARIANA.

He's a little taller than Brad, you know. And a lot more muscular?

FELICIA.

Get your mind out of the underwear drawer.

ARIANA.

The sock drawer?

FELICIA.

I remember. I want him to change the decorative panel on the front of the dish washer. *(Exiting to bedroom.)*

ARIANA.

Why?

FELICIA.

Because that's what I told Taylor when Brad thought I was on the phone with building maintenance.

ARIANA.

Now everything is crystal clear.

FELICIA.

(Entering. She is now dressed.) Could you tell him for me? I think there's a gray one in there. I've got to find some shoes. That's the one I want. *(Exiting once more into the bedroom.)*

ARIANA.

And I'll see if he needs any help. Maybe someone to hold his shirt.

FELICIA.

(Sticking her head out the door while putting on a shoe.) God, you're awful. He could be Brad.

ARIANA.

(As she exits into kitchen.) But, he's not. Oh, Victor my love.
(Noises coming from kitchen.)

FELICIA.

(Sitting on the stairs to put on her shoe.) Oh, my God.

ARIANA. (O.S.)

Oh, my God!

FELICIA.

(Stands and comes down the stairs. Crosses to kitchen door.) I suppose this means that you're not coming with me?

ARIANA. (O.S.)

(Breathless.)

Think I'll just give Victor a hand.

FELICIA.

I should be back in two hours.

(Applause from the kitchen.)

FELICIA.

(As she exits front door.) Leave enough of him to do the dish washer won't you?

That girl is amazing.

(Ariana. Enters from kitchen. Partially dressed. Carrying a pair of socks in one hand and pulling Victor along behind her with the other. He is wearing only boxer shorts. They cross to terrace doors. Ariana notices musical selection, stops for an instant looks at stereo then back at Victor, waves off stereo and they exit out to the terrace.)

ARIANA

I hope I can remember what she said to do with the socks.

(The door closes behind them. In silhouette we see them embrace. She waves the socks and they disappear out of sight. Now the only sound is that of the music.)

(MORE)

A Little Murder on the Side.

ARIANA (cont'd)

After a beat we hear a key in the lock and then the door opens. Felicia enters. She looks around the room then exits to kitchen.)

FELICIA.

I just saw Bradley in the lobby. He's on his way up. *(Coming back out of kitchen.)*

Where the hell are you? *(Opening the dining room door and peering in.)* Victor?

(Opening kitchen door and looking in.) What a mess! *(She closes the door and heads up the stairs to the bedroom door.)* If you're in there you had better get a move on. *(Opening bedroom door.)*

Your brother is on his way up here. Where the hell could she be?

(Felicia comes back down the stairs and into the kitchen. Noise from kitchen. She emerges from kitchen carrying Ariana's and Victor's bundled up clothing. She stands there for a moment looking for a place to put them.)

FELICIA.

For heaven's sake, where the hell are you? *(She hears the sound of a key in the lock. Looks quickly around once more then opens terrace door and throws the bundle out and closes the door.)*

(Brad enters.)

BRAD.

What are you doing here? I thought you had a doctors' appointment?

FELICIA.

I do. Just on my way out. *(Headed for the door. Stops and turns.)* By the way, what are you doing home? *(She spots Ariana at terrace door. Raises her voice.)*

Never mind. You can tell me later. Bye, Brad see you later.

(Felicia exits. Ariana gets the message and ducks back out of sight on the terrace but does not close the door all the way.)

BRAD.

(Picks up the phone and dials.) Front desk? Yes, this is Mr. Worth, apartment, 1242. I'm expecting a guest, a Mr. Mains. Please buzz me and let him come right up. Thank you.

(Brad hangs up the phone and exits into kitchen. Ariana enters and crosses to kitchen, hears a noise from inside and returns to terrace. Brad enters from kitchen with glass in hand. He crosses to stereo and changes the selection. Then turns and goes up the stairs. Ariana is watching from terrace as Brad exits to bedroom. She enters closing the terrace door behind her then crosses to the kitchen and exits. The intercom buzzer sounds just as Ariana is entering from kitchen with Victor's shoes. She ducks back into kitchen. Brad enters from bedroom.)

(MORE)

A Little Murder on the Side.

BRAD. (cont'd)

He comes down the stairs looks at the terrace door now closed and shrugs. He crosses to intercom.)

BRAD.

Yes?

INTERCOM VOICE.

Mr. Mains is on his way up, sir.

BRAD.

Who?

INTERCOM VOICE.

Mr. Mains? You said to send him up and buzz you, sir?

BRAD.

Oh, Yes. Thank you. *(He exits to kitchen.)*

(Ariana enters quietly from dining room with Victor's shoes. As she crosses to terrace the doorbell rings.)

BRAD.

Coming. *(Entering from kitchen.)*

(Ariana having no time to hide lies down on the stairs. Brad crosses to open the door. Ariana slips quietly up the stairs and into bedroom, leaving the door ajar.)

BRAD.

(Opening the door.) Taylor. What the hell is so important?

TAYLOR.

Is she gone? *(Looking around furtively.)*

BRAD.

Felicia? Yes I told you she's got a doctors appointment. Although you didn't miss her by much. Now, would you mind telling me what the hell is going on? What is all this cloak and dagger nonsense? What's with the, Mr. Mains bit?

TAYLOR.

It's me! It's like a code name.

BRAD.

I know it's you. Code name? Why?

TAYLOR.

No record of my coming here today.

BRAD.

Sounds to me like you think you're in the CIA or something.

TAYLOR.

Maybe you ought to be sitting down. What are you drinking?

BRAD.

Just some iced tea. Would you like some?

TAYLOR.

That would be nice.

BRAD.

In the fridge. Come to think of it I could use a refill myself. *(Indicating kitchen door and following Taylor.)*

TAYLOR.

Good. We can talk in the kitchen.

(They exit to the kitchen. Ariana enters from bedroom dressed in one of Felicia's robes and comes down the stairs and crosses to terrace, carrying only one shoe. She opens the doors and steps out closing the door. In silhouette we see Victor flailing his arms then opening the door and shoving Ariana back inside. He disappears from view. Ariana is frozen for a moment, then a loud crash from the kitchen. Ariana heads for the stairs and the bedroom door.)

BRAD. (O.S.)

You son of a bitch! How the hell ---

TAYLOR.

(Bursting into the room backwards.) I think you'd better listen to me before you go off the deep end.

BRAD.

How could you do this to me? A friend? You rotten bastard. I ought to strangle you.

TAYLOR.

I don't think you should. Not until you've heard everything I have to say.

(The two men are now on opposite ends of the sofa.)

BRAD.

Why should I listen to anything you have to say? You rotten bast --- Oh! I already said that didn't I? You! You, I don't know what the hell to call you.

TAYLOR.

I am a son of a bitch, a bastard and anything else you can think of--

BRAD.

Judas!

TAYLOR.

Yes. If you insist, that too.

BRAD.

Judas!

TAYLOR.

Right! I'm a Judas. I betrayed my friend ---

BRAD.

Judas!

TAYLOR.

All right! Just listen to me for a minute. Will you?

BRAD.

Why should I listen to anything you have to say? *(He walks around in front of sofa and sits.)* What the hell is going on here?

TAYLOR.

(Walks around to front of sofa.) I want you to know that I am genuinely sorry but there is something more important I have to tell you.

BRAD.

(Standing.) What? That the two of you are running away together?

TAYLOR.

No.

(Punches Taylor. Brad is in agony, he has hurt his hand. Taylor stunned drops to his knees.)

BRAD.

Oh! Son of a bitch! I think I've broken my hand.

TAYLOR.

I don't think you've done my face any real good. Jesus, that hurts.

BRAD.

(Heading to the kitchen door.) I've got to get some ice on this. Well, are you going to stand there until I come back with some ice for you?

TAYLOR.

(Standing up and covering his face.) End of round one?

BRAD.

T. K. O. End of fight. Come on, lets see what kind of damage we've got.

TAYLOR.

I still have a lot to tell you. *(Crossing to kitchen with Brad.)*

BRAD.

I think I'd wait until after the bleeding stops, if I were you. *(As they exit.)*
(Now dressed in something of Felicia's and carrying the other shoe Ariana enters from bedroom, descends the stairs and exits to terrace. A hand reaches out and pulls her onto the terrace.)

ARIANA.

Not now. Get dressed.
(She pushes him away and finds herself back inside the room. She closes the terrace door and stands there for a moment. She tip toes over to the kitchen and tries eavesdropping but nothing. Gets the bright idea to go into the dining room. But first looks over to see that Victor is not visible at terrace door.)

(Taylor enters and walks over to where he had dropped his glasses. He has an ice pack on his face.)

TAYLOR.

Now, isn't that just perfect. *(Picking up his broken glasses.)*

TAYLOR.

Thank God I'm not completely blind without them.

BRAD. (O.S.)

Did you find them? Ouch! You know, I think I may have actually broken something in my hand.

TAYLOR.

(Getting up from sofa crosses to kitchen door.) Hold on a minute. Let me have a look at it. I don't think you hit me hard enough to have broken anything. Although you did a pretty good job on my glasses.

(Indicating the broken glasses to no one and exits into kitchen.)

(Victor enters from terrace leaving the door open. He is dressed but disheveled.)

TAYLOR. (O.S.)

Just let me pick up the other lens. *(He enters from kitchen. Spots Victor, who freezes.)* What the hell?

VICTOR.

Am here to fix dish washing machine.

TAYLOR.

On the terrace? *(Sotto Voce.)* Never mind.
(Calling into the kitchen.)

There's somebody at the door. I'll get it?

VICTOR.

They send me here for fix machine and then everything happen. This lady is crazy. Beautiful! But crazy. I fix machine now? *(He exits to kitchen. Returns, stunned. As if having seen a ghost.)* I come back some other time?

TAYLOR.

Yes, you come back some other time.
(Victor exits, happy to be going.)

TAYLOR.

(Crosses to and closes front door.) Wonder what Brad thinks?
(Exits to kitchen.)

BRAD. (O.S.)

Who the hell was that?
(Ariana enters from dining room. Crosses to terrace, exits and quickly returns with her clothing does not close door all the way.)
(As Ariana ascends the stairs Taylor enters and goes over to sofa to look for his eye glass lens.)

TAYLOR.

Damn it! I forgot the lens.
(Finding lens. Lots of business.)

TAYLOR.

There you are!
(Ariana, stunned for a moment, stops and turns around. Then realizes that he has not seen her and exits into bedroom.)

TAYLOR.

(Trying to replace lens.) If my glasses weren't broken this would be a lot easier to do. My mother was right. No good deed ever goes unpunished. I should have known ---

(Brad enters from kitchen. Hand wrapped in an ice pack.)

BRAD.

Who the hell are you talking to now? And who was that at the door?

TAYLOR.

One question at time. The person at the door was the maintenance man who wanted to fix dish washing machine. Did you recognize him?

BRAD.

No. I think he looked awfully familiar though.

TAYLOR.

He's new. Familiar? As to your second question, I was speaking to no one in particular. I think you really ought to take the opportunity to meet the new handy man.

BRAD.

Any particular reason?

TAYLOR.

Think about it. You might find it amusing. Now. Back to business.

BRAD.

Is that what this is?

(By now both men are seated and cannot see Ariana at the bedroom door.)

TAYLOR.

Actually, now comes the hard part. Felicia is convinced that you are having an affair.

BRAD.

Excuse me but isn't the shoe on the wrong foot? As it were?

TAYLOR.

I would tend to agree with you but apparently Felicia sees it in a totally different light.

BRAD.

Go on.

TAYLOR.

Yes, well, when I questioned her about the same subject she said it was different because you were having an affair with another woman, while she was merely having sex, with me.

BRAD.

And so, consequently I am the bad guy and --- and --

TAYLOR.

Felicia. Was just having sex.

BRAD.

Could we substitute a euphemism?

TAYLOR.

For sex?

BRAD.

Yes!

TAYLOR.

Fun?

BRAD.

Not much better but I guess it will do. Go on.

TAYLOR.

Now comes the matter of --- Divorce.

BRAD.

What!

TAYLOR.

It's not time to get excited yet.

BRAD.

No? There's another word I don't like. Please be sure to let me know when to get excited.

TAYLOR.

I'm coming to that but first, about the divorce.

BRAD.

Could we ---

TAYLOR.

Find another euphemism? Won't be necessary. You see after consulting her attorney, she changed her mind.

BRAD.

TAYLOR.

Prenup.

Prenup?

TAYLOR.

Precisely. Which is how I came into the picture.

BRAD.

I see. She decided to use you to get even. Is that the grand scheme?

(Taylor crosses to the bar. As he moves, Ariana exits into bedroom.)

TAYLOR.

I'm going to have a little of your cognac, if you don't mind.

BRAD.

A little early in the day but help yourself.

TAYLOR.

You might want one also.

BRAD.

Thank you. No.

TAYLOR.

Please remember that I offered.

BRAD.

Continue.

TAYLOR.

It would appear that Felicia thought that if she could seduce me that I would be willing to do anything for her.

BRAD.

For instance? You are going to give me a for instance, are you not?

TAYLOR.

For instance, yes. Now this is the hard part. She thought that I would be willing to kill you.

BRAD.

I'll have that drink now.

TAYLOR.

I thought you would. *(He pours two cognacs and hands one to Brad.)*

I must say that you've taken this a lot better than I did. Christ, she scared the hell out of me.

BRAD.

I assume that she has a plan.

TAYLOR.

Sort of.

BRAD.

Not like her. She always plans things to the nth detail. What did she say?

TAYLOR.

Apparently the idea was triggered by a radio report of a man's body meeting your description being dredged up down by Battery Park. It seems that the police were not able to identify him.

BRAD.

And that's her plan? To drown me in the river. Were you going to shoot me or stab me first or just tie a rock to me and toss me in?

TAYLOR.

No, no, nothing like that. Actually, where I think this was headed, was that you should simply disappear and never be seen again.

BRAD.

And how is that to be accomplished?

TAYLOR.

It's not. That's why I'm here. I thought that if I told you how angry she was, you might break off your affair and try to make a go of it with Felicia.

BRAD.

Are you off your trolley? That bitch wants me dead. I'm getting a little on the side, she's getting a little on the side and I've got to go. Permanently! And whether you like it or not, you're in it up to your ears. --- Now, what I need is a scheme of my own. A little something to take care of her permanently.

(Brad taking his & Taylor's glasses crosses to the bar.)

TAYLOR.

This thing has already gone too far. Make a deal with her. Work out a compromise. Forget about the prenup.

BRAD.

She's not going to compromise. You can see that. Look how far she was willing to go. Murder. She's willing to risk going to jail for the rest of her life to keep from splitting the property with me. Wait! Something is germinating up here.

(Pointing to his head.)

BRAD.

That guy. The repair man. Now I get it. That poor son of bitch looks like me.

TAYLOR.

Brad?

BRAD.

Now listen to me.

TAYLOR.

I don't want to listen to you, any more than I wanted to listen to her.

BRAD.

I've got it! We go along with her scheme, only when it's time for me to disappear, I don't. I mean I do. I disappear and that poor zlub's body shows up and gets identified as me.

TAYLOR.

Slow down here, I'm not going to go around murdering innocent people because you and your wife hate each other.

BRAD.

How about for a million bucks? Now listen to me. After she collects the insurance, I re-appear. At the very least they get her for insurance fraud. If we play our cards right we can even let her get nailed for the murder of the handyman.

TAYLOR.

I came here to tell you in privacy that I thought Felicia was going off the deep end. It was and is my hope that somehow opening all this up might help the two of you to get your lives back in order. *(X's up to kitchen door.)*
(Brad follows him.)

BRAD.

You really are a self righteous son of a bitch aren't you? Get our lives back in order? Aren't you the guy who is screwing my wife?

TAYLOR.

Who's being self righteous here? Didn't your wife come to me because you are having an affair?

(As the two men exit into the kitchen, Ariana enters and begins to descend the stairs. Taylor comes back through the door but does not see her. She freezes. He walks over to pick up the ice pack and putting it back over his face returns to kitchen door. It appears that he has not seen her. She lets out a sigh of relief. He gets one foot into kitchen and stops. Then backs up slowly, stops and looks up on the stairs. Both stand still for a moment. Ariana makes her decision and begins to descend again, a knowing smile on her face.)

TAYLOR.

(Moving in front of her.) How long have you been ---
(Ariana puts her fingers to her lips to silence him.)

TAYLOR.

(Sotto voce.) What are you doing here?

BRAD. (O.S.)

Did you say something?

ARIANA.

Socks? *(Indicates the terrace.)*

TAYLOR.

I dropped the ice bag. Just a groan. *(Turning Ariana towards front door.)*

ARIANA.

(Sotto voce.) We must have a chat soon. Killer.

(Putting her fingers to her lips again but this time touching them to his lips. She exits.)

TAYLOR.

(To no one.) You bet we will.

BRAD.

(Entering) I have the same trouble with Felicia. I can't understand any thing you just said. Did you say you were going home?

TAYLOR.

No, I didn't. But come to think of it, that wouldn't be a bad idea. This has been a strange morning.

BRAD.

Listen to me for a minute. Maybe, just maybe, I got a little carried away. After all, don't you think Felicia over-reacted?

TAYLOR.

I think you both over-reacted.

BRAD.

True. We should probably say nothing more about, about the, the --

TAYLOR.

Spousal elimination's?

BRAD.

Murder plans.

TAYLOR.

Best idea you have had today. I feel rather awkward saying this. I hope we might continue to be friends when all this is settled.

BRAD.

If it does get 'settled', you will have been instrumental.

TAYLOR.

Let's leave it at that. Shall we?

BRAD.

Good.

TAYLOR.

Now I think I had better get going.

BRAD.

You're not the only one! We'd both better get going before Felicia gets home and we have to explain that and why the hell we are here. *(Pointing to Taylor's face.)*
(Key in the lock. The two of them freeze.)

FELICIA.

(Enters sees Taylor and is just about to grab him.) Isn't this a pleasant surprise.

TAYLOR.

(Stepping out of the way to reveal Brad.) Hi, Felicia, Brad and I had a little business to take care of.

BRAD.

Nothing important, something we didn't want to discuss at the office. We ate lunch here and took care of it. So, how was the doctor visit?

FELICIA.

A necessary evil, I guess. You really don't want to know about it.

(Turning to Taylor.) Or do you?

TAYLOR.

Not me.

BRAD.

Nor I.

FELICIA.

What the hell is that?

BRAD.

What?

FELICIA.

That mark on his face. Now what have you been up to?

(Brad looks at Taylor. Says nothing.)

TAYLOR.

Nothing. Slipped.

BRAD.

Slipped. On the kitchen floor.

TAYLOR.

Went in to get something --

BRAD.

To drink. Wet floor.

FELICIA.

Wet floor?

BRAD.

Dish washer.

FELICIA.

Dish washer? Oh! Dish washer. Did the man from the building come up.

BRAD.

Man, what man?

TAYLOR.

What man?

FELICIA.

The maintenance man. You remember, I called him this morning to come up and change the door on the dish washer.

BRAD & TAYLOR.

Oh, yes. (*They look at each other.*)

FELICIA.

Never mind.

BRAD.

Never mind, sounds good to me.

TAYLOR.

Got to run, really.

BRAD.

Same here. See you for dinner.

FELICIA.

(As they exit.)

Something? (*As in something seems strange. She exits into kitchen, after a beat returns and picks up the phone, dials.*) Building maintenance, please. --- Hello, this is Mrs. Worth. 1242. This morning I made arrangements for someone to change the front panel on my dish washer. That's correct. --- Yes he was here but I had to go out --- Oh boy! --- No, nothing, I wasn't speaking to you. In any event, could you arrange to have the man come back and take care of the unfinished business? --- Right away? Thank you. (*She hangs up.*) Wait till I get my hands on Ariana. (*She crosses to and opens the terrace doors, looks out.*)

(MORE)

A Little Murder on the Side.

FELICIA. (cont'd)

Closes the doors, turns and heads up the stairs, opens the door and looks into the bedroom.) Are you still in here? Answer me! *(She turns and closes the door, descends the stairs and crosses to and picks up the phone. She dials.)* Ariana darling, this is your sister-in-law. You know the one. The one with the dish washer. --- Pick up the phone. I know you're there, now pick up the phone. There'll be no more little treats for you. --- There you are. Would you mind telling me what the hell went on here this morning? --- No! --- You didn't. You wouldn't have dared. I don't believe. You didn't? --- You did? Oh, god. What did he --- *(The door bell rings.)*

Some one's at the --- Oh! Hell what did he do then? *(To door.)* One moment! *(Into phone.)* He what? No! On the terrace? *(Door bell.)*

FELICIA.

Hold on. But don't hang up I want to hear everything. *(Puts phone down crosses to and opens the door. Victor enters.)*

Hellooooo, Victor.

VICTOR.

This time fix door. Other lady not here?

FELICIA.

(She has been giving him the once over.) No. *(Then remembering Ariana.)* You just go along into the kitchen. I'll be right in. *(He exits to kitchen. She crosses back and picks up the phone.)*

FELICIA.

It was him, at the door. --- Victor. --- Yes, he is. At least I think so. --- He what? No, no, you can stop telling me. Ariana. I'm begging you. Oh, no, he didn't. He didn't, stop! Don't stop. Never mind, I'll talk to you later. Right now I think I know of a man who needs a helping hand. *(Hangs up the phone and moves to and exits into kitchen.)*

Victor, keep your shirt on, I'm coming.

END SCENE 8

Scene 9

(The next morning. Felicia enters from bedroom, wearing a dressing gown. She descends the stairs, looking around. Walks over to kitchen door.)

FELICIA.

Brad? *(Neither expecting or wanting to find him.)* Good, he's gone. *(Crosses to stereo and puts on the radio. Music semi-classical.)* Oh, God, what time is it? *(She exits into kitchen.)* Damn it! *(Bursting back through the door.)* It's Nine-fifteen. Where in hell is Taylor. *(Picks up the phone and dials.)* Good morning, Mr. Lofton, please. --- I'll hold. --- Taylor, darling, you must be starving. --- Because you missed our breakfast. --- Yes, no? No apology required. It's just that I hate having breakfast alone. Till tonight then. What? Oh no. Why? --- Is it because of the other day? If it is, please reconsider. I've had a change of heart. If you know what I mean? All right if that's the way it has to be. Maybe next week, we can do lunch. Bye now. *(She hangs up the phone and exits to kitchen. She returns with a coffee mug and a bagel, takes the newspaper and sits.)*
(The intercom buzzes.)

FELICIA.

(Crosses to I.C.) Hello.

INTERCOM VOICE.

Mrs. Worth?

FELICIA.

Yes, what is it?

INTERCOM VOICE.

Maintenance wants to know if you are home. Their man forgot something when he was up there yesterday.

FELICIA.

Oh, contraire. He didn't forget a thing.

INTERCOM VOICE.

Excuse me miss?

FELICIA.

Nothing, nothing.

INTERCOM VOICE.

Well he would like to come up and pick up his things. Would that be okay?

FELICIA.

He can pick up what ever he wants.

INTERCOM.

Can he come up now, miss.?

FELICIA.

Yes, of course. Send him right up. (*Grabs phone then dials.*) Ariana, hello.

What are you up to? --- Well no. He, well, if you must know he kind of stood me up. --- That would be nice. --- But I'm not even dressed yet. That would be nicer.

Come right up. Bye, bye. Wait, I wanted to tell you. Victor is on his way up.

Apparently he mislaid a tool. --- As far as I can remember he didn't miss-lay anything. See you, bye. (*Hangs up the phone. Takes her cup and goes out on to the terrace. Leaving the doors open.*)

(*Door bell. After a beat, Felicia enters from terrace and crosses to door.*)

FELICIA.

Yes? Who is it?

VICTOR.

Is Victor. Misses.

FELICIA.

(*Opening door.*) Misses?

VICTOR.

(*Notices what she is wearing.*) Sorry to bother --- Only come for tools. Boss say I get no work done yesterday.

FELICIA.

How about just a cup of coffee? Honest, then you can take your tools and go.

VICTOR.

Maybe is okay, a cup of coffee. Thank you.

FELICIA.

(*Crossing to kitchen door.*) Right this way,

VICTOR.

Maybe I wait here? Thank you.

FELICIA.

Suit yourself. But you're going to have to go in there to get your tools. How do you like your coffee?

VICTOR.

Black, thank you.

FELICIA.

I would have bet on that. *(She exits into kitchen.)*

VICTOR.

(Looking around the room.) Is nice place, America. Maybe I never go home.

FELICIA. (O.S.)

Did you say something?

VICTOR.

(Yelling so as to be heard.) I said America is --

(As Felicia enters with coffee he is embarrassed and lowers his voice.)

--- nice place. I like very much it, America.

FELICIA.

(Putting coffee down next to sofa.) Yes, it is, isn't it? Here's your coffee. Won't you sit down?

VICTOR.

(Picks up the mug and crosses over to sit in chair.) Thank you, Misses.

FELICIA.

You can call me Felicia. When we're alone, that is.

VICTOR.

I try to remember that.

(Intercom buzzes.)

VICTOR.

If it my boss, tell him I leave right now.

FELICIA.

(Crosses to intercom.) Hello.

INTERCOM VOICE.

Mrs. Worth. Miss Ariana is on her way up.

VICTOR.

I leave now.

FELICIA.

Thank you. Victor, relax. She won't bite.

VICTOR.

(Standing and crossing to the door.) I'm not so sure as you.

FELICIA.

Aren't you forgetting something?

VICTOR.

Coffee? Coffee is good but I must get back. Thank you.

(Door bell rings. Felicia opens the door. In flies Ariana.)

ARIANA.

Hello, you naughty boy.

(Victor does not know what to do.)

FELICIA.

Victor just dropped in to pick up a little something he forgot yesterday. Isn't that right, victor?

VICTOR.

I forget tools.

ARIANA.

And are they in good working order this morning?

FELICIA.

They are in the kitchen. I'll get them.

VICTOR.

No, I get them.

FELICIA.

(Already headed for kitchen.) Don't be silly. He seems to be afraid you'll bite him.

ARIANA.

(Crossing to Victor and kissing his ear.) Only if he asks me nicely. See. That wasn't so bad.

VICTOR.

I thought maybe you did not want me to be with Mrs. Worth.

ARIANA.

Her name is Felicia. And right now I don't care but tonight it's you and me. Victor, honey. *(Nibbling his ear and rubbing his chest.)* Be there at eight sharp. I'll be waiting.

FELICIA.

(Entering with a small tool pouch.) These must be what you were looking for.

VICTOR.

Yes! Thank you. I go now?

FELICIA.

Unless you want to finish your coffee.

VICTOR.

(Looking at Ariana.) No, thank you. I go now. Good by. *(He exits.)*

FELICIA.

He certainly is nervous around you.

ARIANA.

And you don't make him nervous?

FELICIA.

I don't think it's quite the same. What ever did you do to that poor man?

ARIANA.

With him. Although I'm not one hundred percent sure about the sock thing.

FELICIA.

How about a little breakfast? *(Walking behind her and caressing her shoulders.)*

ARIANA.

Love some but I think I'll help myself to a cup of coffee first.

FELICIA.

I'll get it. *(Standing behind Ariana she removes the sash from her dressing gown which falls open and continues to caress her shoulders and neck.)* You know that sock thing isn't all that complicated. If you like. Someday, instead of explaining it to you, maybe I'll demonstrate it.

ARIANA.

I wonder if Victor would be willing to help out?

FELICIA.

He might, but for right now. How about that lesson? *(She takes the silk sash and ties a knot in the center of it. Then places it over Ariana's head and around her neck and begins to tighten it.)*

END ACT I

ACT II
Scene 1

(Two days later. Felicia enters from bedroom with the same dressing gown as the end of Act I but the sash is missing. This is made apparent when she holds the gown closed. She descends the stairs puts on music and exits to kitchen. There are articles of clothing scattered about the room. Ariana's blouse, Brad's suit jacket. Door bell rings. Felicia enters with coffee mug crosses to the door.)

FELICIA.

Who is it?

EVELYN.

Sergeant Horne.

FELICIA.

Whom did you say?

EVELYN.

Sergeant Evelyn Horne.

FELICIA.

Just a moment please. *(Crosses to intercom and presses button.)*

INTERCOM VOICE.

Front desk.

FELICIA.

Is it December?

INTERCOM VOICE.

Excuse me.

FELICIA.

What month is this?

INTERCOM VOICE.

I don't understand.

FELICIA.

This is not December but evidently you and The Salvation Army are unaware of that fact. Not to mention the fact that there is no soliciting allowed in this building.
(Door bell rings.)

INTERCOM VOICE.

I'm sorry Miss Worth.

FELICIA.

You are about to be a lot more than sorry ---

INTERCOM VOICE.

It's not the Salvation Army Miss. It's the police.

FELICIA.

The what?

INTERCOM VOICE.

I'm sorry I got distracted by something down here and forgot to buzz you.

FELICIA.

And so the police are outside my door and I'm practically naked. Thank you!

INTERCOM VOICE.

Naked? I'm -- I'm sorry -- I, I, Wow I -

FELICIA.

Don't get your DNA all riled up sonny. You're liable to hurt yourself. *(Crosses to door then opens it. Gathering her composure.)* Sorry to keep you out there so long. *(For the next few lines we experience a whirlwind socialite as Felicia overwhelms Sgt. Horne.)* The boy at the front desk forgot to buzz and tell me you were on your way up.

EVELYN.

He seemed a bit befuddled. And he did stare at me a lot.

FELICIA.

(Giving her the once over.) Who could blame him? At his age they're all controlled by their hormones.

EVELYN.

Kind of cute though.

FELICIA.

Hello. I'm Felicia Worth. *(Extending a hand.)*

EVELYN.

(Shaking Felicia's hand.) How do you do. I'm Sergeant Horne. Evelyn Horne. Sorry to arrive unannounced. I hope I'm not keeping you from anything.

FELICIA.

(Looking at her own attire.) Not at all but I will say, I have never started my day with a visit from the police. Oh, excuse me where are my manners? Would you like a cup of coffee? *(Crossing to kitchen.)* How do you take it?

EVELYN.

(Almost blown over by Felicia the whirlwind.) With a little cream. Please. Thank you.

FELICIA.

(Exiting to kitchen.) Back in a flash.

EVELYN.

Oh, that's all right. *(Sotto voce.)* What in the hell was that? *(Checking out the room. She notices the clothing.)* Interesting.

FELICIA.

(Returning with a mug.) Here you are, I hope you like it. It's mocha.

EVELYN.

Thank you. It smells good. Now Mrs. Worth, the reason for my calling on you this morning. *(Taking a sip.)* This is delicious. The reason I'm here this morning is because we think you might be able to help us. *(Taking another sip.)* This really is very good. Mocha you said?

FELICIA.

Yes. A special blend.

EVELYN.

Where was I?

FELICIA.

You thought I might be able to help you. With what, exactly?

EVELYN.

We're conducting an investigation --

FELICIA.

Investigation?

EVELYN.

We're looking into a homicide.

FELICIA.

(Very calm and together.) Homicide? Who? You're a real detective type detective?

EVELYN.

Didn't I mention that I'm with the homicide division? I'm sorry. We are interviewing people who knew the victim. To try to pin down their movements, prior to the crime. It's just a preliminary report we have to make.

FELICIA.

And you say I know this person? I'm not aware that any one I know is missing.

EVELYN.

That's a good answer. But not missing. Dead. Now, we do know about your relationship with --

ARIANA.

(Appears at the bedroom door. Partially dressed.) Where on earth did

EVELYN.

Mr. Grosse.

FELICIA.

(Somewhat taken aback.) Mr. Grosse? I don't know anyone by that name.

ARIANA.

Sorry. Didn't know you had -- *(Exits into bedroom.)*

FELICIA.

Sister in-law. Are you sure you have the right Mrs. Worth? Felicia Worth.

EVELYN.

(Referring to her note pad.) Mrs. Felicia Worth, apartment, 1242?

FELICIA.

Guilty. I take that back. If I can. Can I take things back?

EVELYN.

An unusual request. But sure, why not?

FELICIA.

Good. I guess?

EVELYN.

The victim in this case, was one Victor Grosse. I believe you know him. Apparently he had spent quite a bit of time in your apartment over the past several days.

(No response from Felicia.)

A repairman who worked in the building?

FELICIA.

Victor? Yes, Victor. *(Calling out.)* Ariana! --- Ariana.

ARIANA. (O.S.)

Yes.

FELICIA.

I think you had better come down here. This is awful.

ARIANA.

Coming. *(She enters and comes down the stairs.)*

FELICIA.

The sergeant here is with the police.

ARIANA.

Is there something the matter. Oh my God! Bradley?

FELICIA.

No, no. It has nothing to do with Brad. *(To Evelyn.)* My husband.

EVELYN.

Her brother?

FELICIA.

Yes.

ARIANA.

Thank goodness. What seems to be the trouble?

FELICIA.

No trouble. The Sergeant is --

EVELYN.

Investigating a murder.

ARIANA.

Who?

EVELYN.

Do you know a Mister Grosse --

ARIANA.

Not that I could swear to.

EVELYN.

A Mister Victor Grosse?

FELICIA.

Victor! For god's sake!

ARIANA.

Murdered? Victor? Victor murdered?

FELICIA.

Apparently.

ARIANA.

How? Why? That poor man. Who?

EVELYN.

We're filling in the details now. That's why I'm here. The maintenance log showed that he was here three days in a row last week. Repairing a dishwasher?

FELICIA.

Yes, he did come up to repair the dish washing machine, as he put it and then came back again to switch the panel on the door. At my request. He did a good job.

ARIANA.

Good with tools. --- He seemed a good worker.

EVELYN.

There was some question of a visit to this apartment two days ago which was not in the maintenance log. What was that about? That's what we'd like to know.

FELICIA.

Two days ago? Let me think.

ARIANA.

Wasn't that the day Brad left for Pittsburgh?

FELICIA.

Yes.

EVELYN.

The man at the desk can't seem to recall why he came here. He is sure that he did come up for something.

FELICIA.

Let me think a moment. I remember. He had forgotten some tool or other. He came up to retrieve it. Now, that I recall. Ariana, you were here, weren't you dear?

EVELYN.

Were you here that day, Miss Worth?

ARIANA.

Please. Ariana. Yes, I had come over for breakfast.

EVELYN.

(To Felicia.) Did you notice anything unusual about his behavior that morning?

FELICIA.

Unusual? Hard to say when you consider that I hardly know the man.

EVELYN.

He worked in the building, did he not?

FELICIA.

He was new.

EVELYN.

(Checking her notes.) Yes, he was a new employee.

ARIANA.

(Walking around picking up a few of her things.) May I be excused?

FELICIA.

I think he started last week. I remember now, because there had been a delay in sending someone up to fix the dishwasher because the maintenance man had quit or been let go or something.

ARIANA.

(Standing with her bundle of things.) Well?

EVELYN.

Yes, sure. You can go.

ARIANA.

(She begins to go up stairs.) Thank you.

EVELYN.

Only one other question. On the day he came to pick up his tool ---

(Ariana, giggles. Then exits into bedroom.)

EVELYN.

On the day he picked up his belongings. How long would you say he was here in the apartment?

FELICIA.

He just picked up his thing, things and left.

EVELYN.

No conversation? --- Small talk?

FELICIA.

His English wasn't very good. He arrived, took what was his and left.

EVELYN.

(Standing.) Thank you for your cooperation. There may be some follow-up questions. Will you be in the rest of the morning?

FELICIA.

Yes. Till about one actually. Hair appointment.

EVELYN.

Thank you again. And of course, for the coffee.

FELICIA.

(Opening the door.) Do you really like it? It's a special blend I have custom made. I could give you the name, if you like. The shop is right down stairs. Or you could stop in for another cup some time.

EVELYN.

Thanks. *(She exits.)*

FELICIA.

(Closing the door and crossing to below bedroom door.) Ariana!

ARIANA.

(Enters from bedroom.) Can you believe that? Poor Victor.

FELICIA.

Poor Victor, my ass. He's dead and we have a stronger connection to him than we let on. For God's sake, he was at your apartment the night before last.

ARIANA.

(Descending stairs.) And his finger prints must be all over everything in this apartment. Including you.

FELICIA.

Humor? At a time like this? Don't you realize that one or both of us could somehow be implicated in this?

ARIANA.

Don't be so dramatic. So he did more than manipulate the appliances.

FELICIA.

I love your choice of words. It's just that, well we did sort of lie to that policewoman. Isn't that some sort of crime?

ARIANA.

Probably but not one we have to worry about, really. After all, we didn't kill him. At least I didn't.

FELICIA.

Well, I certainly didn't kill him. I never even thought about killing anyone.

ARIANA.

I think I know differently.

FELICIA.

What on earth are you talking about?

ARIANA.

I know that you tried to get Taylor to kill Brad.

FELICIA.

Whatever put that preposterous idea into your head?

ARIANA.

I overheard Taylor telling Brad.

FELICIA.

What? Why, that bastard. What did he say?

ARIANA.

Brad or Taylor?

FELICIA.

Both! What? When? Where the hell did you --

ARIANA.

Right here. Actually, up there.

FELICIA.

You were up in my --

ARIANA.

Relax. I was hiding. I was here with Vict -- Oh God, that poor man.

FELICIA.

Yes, yes, poor Victor. Get on with it. What happened?

ARIANA.

Well, Taylor told Brad that you were angry because you thought Brad was having an affair.

FELICIA.

Is.

ARIANA.

What?

FELICIA.

Is having an affair. Brad is two timing me.

ARIANA.

Well you've been two timing him.

FELICIA.

No, I'm not. I'm just having sex. He's carrying on a full blown affair.

ARIANA.

That's what Taylor said you said and then Brad said, well, I don't remember exactly what he said except that he asked Taylor to help him kill you.

FELICIA.

(Collapsing into a chair.) How could he do that? Kill me? After all I've done for him.

ARIANA.

In any event, you don't have to worry about it. Taylor said he wouldn't do it and Brad realized it wasn't any kind of a solution. So they scrapped the idea.

FELICIA.

Where does all this leave us?

ARIANA.

You're saying that you've never even thought of killing anyone?

FELICIA.

So, I thought about it. I would never have gone through with it. And as far as Victor,

I know, poor Victor. I have no reason, motive to kill him.

ARIANA.

Jealousy, maybe?

FELICIA.

Don't be silly. That was just a tumble. Nothing important. Not to me. But you, on the other hand.

(Door bell rings.)

FELICIA.

(Crossing to the door.) Who is it?

EVELYN. (O.S.)

Sergeant Horne again.

FELICIA.

(Looking at Ariana, then opening the door.) I didn't expect, oh, never mind. Come in please, won't you?

EVELYN.

(Entering.) Thank you. Mrs. Worth, Miss Worth, I haven't been completely candid with you, I must admit.

ARIANA.

Excuse me?

EVELYN.

I said---

FELICIA.

We heard what you said but what did you mean?

EVELYN.

Normally, during an investigation of this kind, we don't like to part with a lot of information which might tip our hand to any possible suspects.

FELICIA.

And am I a suspect? Are we suspects?

EVELYN.

Everyone and no one is a suspect.

ARIANA.

That's perfectly opaque to me.

EVELYN.

What I meant to say was, in the initial stages of an investigation, every one who had any association with the victim must be eliminated from the list of suspects.

FELICIA.

Have we been eliminated?

EVELYN.

Not yet. You see, some people are almost automatically eliminated because of various facts or circumstances.

ARIANA.

Such as?

EVELYN.

Any one who was out of town, or has an alibi of some kind that would place them somewhere else at the time of the crime.

FELICIA.

And we're not in that category?

EVELYN.

No.

ARIANA.

No?

EVELYN.

Don't be alarmed. I have a few questions to ask each of you which may help get you off the list.

ARIANA.

Fire away.

FELICIA.

Bad choice.

EVELYN.

(To Felicia.) Where were you yesterday morning between 4:00 and 6:00?

FELICIA.

Here, in bed.

EVELYN.

Can you verify that. Do you have a witness?

FELICIA.

My husband, of course.

EVELYN.

Where can I find him?

FELICIA.

Pittsburgh. He's in Pittsburgh, on business. Pittsburgh.

EVELYN.

When is he returning? We can question him then.

FELICIA.

Tomorrow.

EVELYN.

Good. *(Turning and looking at Ariana.)*

ARIANA.

Me? My turn? You want to know where I was? Home in bed. --- No, no witness. Not one living soul to testify as to my whereabouts the entire night. Does that make me a suspect?

FELICIA.

Ariana?

EVELYN.

No. It doesn't take you off the list of potential suspects but in and of itself it does not necessarily make you a suspect.

FELICIA.

Motive, means and opportunity. Oh, I think I read that somewhere.

ARIANA.

You probably don't even know what it means.

EVELYN.

It means that someone with a reason to see the victim dead and having the means, in this case the weapon and of course the opportunity to be physically present at the time of the murder. If all these elements exist, you make the list. Now I have to continue with my investigation. You did say that your husband would be home tomorrow? Could you tell me about what time? Or you could just have him call me when he has an opportunity. *(Taking a card from her pocket and handing to Felicia. Crosses toward the door.)* I'll see myself out, thank you.

FELICIA.

I'll tell him to call you. Good day, sergeant.

(Sergeant Horne exits.)

FELICIA.

Well one of us is still on the list.

ARIANA.

I'm not worried.

FELICIA.

You should be. Wasn't he at your place all night?

ARIANA.

I don't know.

FELICIA.

You don't know?

ARIANA.

I have to sleep some time. Don't I? When I woke up, he was gone.

FELICIA.

What time was that?

ARIANA.

I don't need you playing detective.

FELICIA.

(Going up the stairs.) Maybe what you need is a lawyer.

ARIANA.

(Following her.) Stop talking that way. You're beginning to frighten me.

FELICIA.

You have nothing to worry about. *(Exiting to bedroom.)* I wonder. When they discovered his body. If he had his socks on.

(Ariana stops dead in her tracks turns and sits on the stairs.)

End scene 1

Scene 2

(The following afternoon. Felicia is on the phone, waiting. She hangs up, paces back and forth, then exits into kitchen. She returns immediately and picks up the phone. She dials, then waits. Finally.)

FELICIA.

Where the hell have you been? I have been trying to reach you since noon

yesterday. --- I'm sorry. I know you don't. It's just that there has been a, a murder.

Yes, it was someone I know, knew. It was a man who worked in the building.

Listen, the police were here. --- No, I'm all right.

(MORE)

FELICIA. (cont'd)

It's simply that they were asking every one in the building who knew him where they were when he was killed. Checking alibi's. --- Yes, I have one. Brad. The problem is that Brad is out of town and --- I know he was due back this morning. That's why I called you. He isn't back. I have tried every way I know of but haven't been able to locate him. Now, I'm worried. --- Not because of the alibi, I hate that word, I'm worried about Brad. It's not like him --- Yes, worried. --- What? Oh, by the way thanks for running right to him with the news. I never meant to actually have anything happen to him. I was angry and hurt, you should have realized that.

(Door bell.)

There's someone at the door. I hope Brad forgot his key or something. Hold on, will you?

(She puts the phone down and crosses to and opens the door. Ariana bursts into the room.)

ARIANA.

It's terrible, awful, you simply won't believe what's happened.

FELICIA.

What is it? What's happened?

ARIANA.

The police ---

FELICIA.

The police, what?

ARIANA.

They really think that I. ---

FELICIA.

Killed him? That you killed him?

ARIANA.

That I'm a suspect. That woman, Evelyn. Evelyn, the detective, was at my building asking questions.

FELICIA.

What sort of questions did she ask you?

ARIANA.

Not me she didn't ask me anything. Yet.

FELICIA.

Yet?

ARIANA.

I left. Came here. I can't afford to have her search my apartment.

FELICIA.

Did she have one of those warrant things?

ARIANA.

I don't know. She's talking to my neighbors. Someone is bound to tell her that they saw Victor there the other night.

FELICIA.

That doesn't mean you killed him.

ARIANA.

But I lied to her. And then there is the small matter of the socks.

FELICIA.

The socks?

ARIANA.

Do you recall what you said yesterday about the socks? --- You wondered if he had his socks on. You know when they found his --- his --- body. Well I remembered. He couldn't have had socks on because, I had them.

FELICIA.

You have his socks? Why?

ARIANA.

Well, you know ---

FELICIA.

I know? --- Oh! I know. But what does that ---? How do you know he didn't put them on if he left while you were still asleep?

ARIANA.

I kept them. Hid them. I thought, maybe in the morning --- Never mind about that.

I can't find them and if the police find them ---

FELICIA.

I don't understand. If they can prove he was at your place, the night, you should excuse the expression, someone socked it to him. Sorry. I just had to. Any way, if they already know he was there the socks won't mean a thing.

ARIANA.

(Falling into a chair exhausted.) I made myself insane over something that doesn't matter? I need some rest.

FELICIA.

You need more than rest. You should call your lawyer.

ARIANA.

Yesterday, that was semi-funny. Today, I'm really scared.

FELICIA.

Just sit right there I'll get you a cup of coffee.

ARIANA.

Better, a drink.

FELICIA.

I don't think so. You need your head on straight. Let me get that coffee. Exiting to kitchen.

ARIANA.

I didn't do it, you know.

FELICIA.

(Poking her head back out the door.) What did you say?

ARIANA.

I am innocent. I had nothing to do with whatever happened to Victor.

FELICIA.

If I were you, another choice of words. After all innocent is not precisely how I would describe you.

ARIANA.

Are you having quite enough fun at my expense?

FELICIA.

Sorry, dear. It's just my perverse sense of humor. *(Suddenly remembers the phone, picks it up.)* Are you still there? --- Good. I can't talk now. I'll call you right back. In the meanwhile try to think of some way that we can get in touch with Brad, will you? Bye now. *(Hangs up phone and turns to Ariana.)* Now, what were you saying?

ARIANA.

Brad? That's right, he should be here. Isn't he?

FELICIA.

No. And I can't seem to be able to locate him anywhere. I called the hotel in Pittsburgh. He never checked in. So at first I thought he decided to stay somewhere else. Then the airline says he never made the flight, I can't imagine -- -
(*Door bell.*)

FELICIA.

(*She crosses over to door.*) Yes.

EVELYN.

Sergeant Horne, Mrs. Worth.

ARIANA.

Not now. (*Gets up and crosses toward the kitchen.*) I'm invisible.

FELICIA.

(*Takes a second to let Ariana get into kitchen. Then opening the door.*) Good afternoon Sergeant, won't you please come in. So much for building security.

EVELYN.

(*Entering and having a quick look around.*) Thank you and a good afternoon to you. Don't blame the concierge --- (*Showing a badge.*) This unlocks many a door.

FELICIA.

To what do I owe the honor of this visit?

EVELYN.

Just some follow up questions.

FELICIA.

How can I help you?

EVELYN.

For one thing, I thought it was about time we verify your alibi. So, the first questions I have are for your husband.

FELICIA.

My husband is not here.

EVELYN.

(*Checking her notes.*) You did say that he would be home this morning. Did you not?

FELICIA.

Yes, and he should have been.

EVELYN.

I'll assume that he didn't arrive as scheduled and that's why I didn't hear from him.

FELICIA.

That's it. You really are a detective aren't you?

EVELYN.

Yesterday. When I spoke with you and your sister-in-law, I was led to believe that the relationship you had with Mr. Grosse was strictly business. Maintenance business and that Miss Worth hardly knew the man. However, I came away with the distinct impression that something more was going on. Possibly another kind of 'maintenance'. With that in mind, I played a hunch. Sounds so television detective doesn't it? Played a hunch?

FELICIA.

I thought rather like a television detective would have phrased it. Yes.

EVELYN.

In any event, I decided to pay some of her neighbors a call. Hunch? It paid off, maybe big. Some of them remembered seeing a man, who resembled the deceased, come into the building with Miss Worth the night before he was murdered.

FELICIA.

Now that you mention it, I do recall Ariana saying something about seeing Victor but frankly I thought he might have been moonlighting.

EVELYN.

We're pretty sure it was that other kind of maintenance.

FELICIA.

Oh. By the way, what happened to him? What I mean is how did he? --- You know --?

EVELYN.

Strangled, possibly with his own socks, which were found in his pocket tied together in a knot.

(The sound of Ariana crying out then she falls into the room through the kitchen door.)

EVELYN.

Convenient.

FELICIA.

(Runs to Ariana's side.) Ariana!

ARIANA.

(A little woozy but okay.) I didn't do anything. I couldn't hurt any one. Not Victor, he was so nice.

EVELYN.

Frankly, I have trouble with a motive at this time. Why didn't you come clean yesterday?

ARIANA.

Are you saying that I'm not a suspect?

EVELYN.

No, I didn't say that. I just wish you had told the truth. It would have made things a little less murky.

(Phone rings. Felicia crosses to answer.)

EVELYN.

It never pays to conceal the truth, especially if you are innocent.

FELICIA.

Hello.

EVELYN.

It has a tendency to make you look guilty and makes my job more difficult. And by the way, you are still very much on the list.

FELICIA.

Who? No. There's no Evelyn here.

EVELYN.

That's me.

FELICIA.

Hold a moment. She's right here.

EVELYN.

I'm sorry I forgot to tell you, I was expecting a call from the coroner's office.

(Taking the receiver.) Hello? Tony? Yes, I've been waiting. What's up? ---

Definitely strangled. No signs of a struggle --- You mean while he was asleep.

Wow! Okay. Yes, I'm ready. What's the big surprise? --- No! Are you sure?

ARIANA.

What is it? What is she saying?

EVELYN.

(Cupping the receiver.) Excuse me, I'm on the phone here. Give me that again. All right, well, this sure puts a new face on the whole case. Talk at you soon, thanks Tony. *(Hanging up the phone.)*

FELICIA.

What was all that?

EVELYN.

Hold on to your garters, ladies. It turns out that the deceased was not Victor Grosse.

ARIANA.

Thank God.

FELICIA.

That's a relief.

ARIANA.

Who was it, if it wasn't Victor?

EVELYN.

Don't know yet. *(Crossing to the door and opening it.)* It was just some guy who apparently looked like him. Well, I guess I had better be going. *(Intercom buzzer.)*

FELICIA.

Yes, what is it?

EVELYN.

This whole thing has gone off in an entirely new direction.

INTERCOM VOICE.

Mr. Lofton is on his way up, miss.

EVELYN.

I've got a lot of re-thinking to do. *(She exits.)*

(Felicia and Ariana look at each other. They are dazed by the new information.)

FELICIA.

(To intercom.) Thank you.

ARIANA.

Well! I guess that takes me off the list.

FELICIA.

And both of us out of hot water.

ARIANA.

For a moment there I thought that I must have done it and just blanked out or something. I wonder what Taylor wants.

FELICIA.

You know damned well what Taylor wants. What all men want.

ARIANA.

No, no, I mean why is he here? What does he want now?

FELICIA.

He had said earlier that he might stop by.

(Phone rings.)

FELICIA.

Still I wonder who -- *(Picking up phone.)* Hello. --- Why, no, she just left. --- I'll see if I can catch her at the elevator. Hold on.

ARIANA.

(Crosses to door and exits.) I'll check. *(As she exits.)* Sergeant, Sergeant!

FELICIA.

My sister-in-law went to get her. Hold on. *(She puts phone down and exits to kitchen.)*

(Ariana, Horne and Taylor enter.)

ARIANA.

You know where the phone is Sergeant.

EVELYN.

Evelyn. Thank you.

ARIANA.

And what brings Taylor to our little party?

TAYLOR.

Felicia called me, she seemed a little upset ---

ARIANA.

Nothing to worry about now. I'm no longer a suspect.

EVELYN.

(Into phone.) Hello.

TAYLOR.

That's nice.

FELICIA.

(Entering from kitchen.) Taylor, darling, what a surprise.

EVELYN.
Are you sure?
TAYLOR.
I did some checking, as you asked.
EVELYN.
Absolutely sure?
ARIANA.
What checking? Checking what?
FELICIA.
Hush!
TAYLOR.
I can't seem to locate him anywhere.
ARIANA.
Who?
EVELYN. TAYLOR.
Bradley. Bradley.
EVELYN.
Worth?
FELICIA.
Bradley Worth? What about Brad?
EVELYN.
I'm afraid that they've positively identified our victim as Bradley Worth. I'm sorry,
Mrs. Worth.
FELICIA.
(*Stunned. Sits in chair.*) Oh, God!
ARIANA.
Brad? No, it couldn't be.
TAYLOR.
Felicia. You couldn't have. You did. You did it. You actually killed him?
EVELYN.
What the hell!
FELICIA.
No, no, no!
ARIANA.
You said you didn't mean it.

TAYLOR.

She swore to me that she didn't mean for any harm ---

EVELYN.

Hold everything! Everyone be quiet.

FELICIA.

Oh, no. No I didn't do any ---

EVELYN.

(Into phone.) Call this in. I need back up. *(Hanging up phone.)* Okay, now let's all try to calm down. First of all, sir, who are you?

ARIANA.

He's a friend of the famil ---

EVELYN.

Excuse me. I didn't ask you. You, sir. Who are you?

TAYLOR.

As Ariana told you, I'm a friend of the family. Taylor Lofton. I work with Brad.

EVELYN.

What did you mean when you said, "You actually killed him."

FELICIA.

It has to be a misunderstanding. He can't be dead. I never wanted him dead.

EVELYN.

Mr. Lofton, can you tell me what is going on here?

ARIANA.

I think you're going to need a lawyer, dear.

FELICIA.

Shut up and let me think.

EVELYN.

Mr. Lofton?

TAYLOR.

Well you see, apparently Felicia was under the impression that Brad was having an affair. And tried to employ me to kill him.

EVELYN.

Did you report this to the police?

TAYLOR.

Why, no.

EVELYN.

Why on earth not. Solicitation for murder is a crime.

TAYLOR.

I really didn't think she meant it. I even told Brad. The whole thing was dropped.

EVELYN.

Evidently not. Mrs. Worth, I'm afraid I'm going to have to ask you to come with me.

ARIANA.

I don't believe it.

FELICIA.

I didn't do it! I didn't kill any one. You must believe me.

BRAD.

(Entering through front door.) I believe you.

FELICIA

ARIANA.

Brad!

Brad!
FELICIA.

Where? Who?

ARIANA.

I don't understand any of this. Who's dead?

TAYLOR.

(Putting his arm around Evelyn.) We thought it might be a good lesson to show you what thinking about killing someone can lead to.

FELICIA.

(Collapses back into chair.) You bastard! No one is dead! We were the butt of a practical joke. A hoax.

ARIANA.

You're kidding. So, what you're saying is that there was no murder? Is that it?

BRAD.

That's it.

FELICIA.

Then who is this little number? Your girlfriend?

EVELYN.

Not any more. *(She kisses Taylor.)*

BRAD.

She and Taylor found each other. Well, we were sort of over at any rate. After all the divorce and murder talk, I took a good look at things and realized how wrong I was. (*Crossing to Felicia.*) I thought maybe, just maybe, we could put ourselves back together.

FELICIA.

Not right now. I'm still a bit out of sorts.

ARIANA.

So, if this was a big joke. Thank you, by the way for the near heart attack and now, tell me this. How did Victor figure in all this? And where is he?

TAYLOR.

He didn't figure in it at all. As for his whereabouts? It's Saturday. I'll bet he's at home.

ARIANA.

(*Crossing to door.*) All the same, I think I've had enough of Victor. Got to go.

FELICIA.

Sometimes, they fool you.

ARIANA.

Enough is enough. Bye all. (*Exiting.*)

BRAD.

Good night, dear.

ARIANA.

As for you -- -?

TAYLOR.

Bye, bye.

BRAD.

(*To Felicia.*) What do you say?

FELICIA.

I don't know. How can I compete with the Evelyn's of this world. I didn't even suspect that she was your type.

EVELYN.

As I said, not any more.

TAYLOR.

Happily for me.

FELICIA.

I have got a lot of thinking to do.

BRAD.

We both do.

FELICIA.

I could do with a cup of coffee. *(To Evelyn.)* There was a fresh pot of coffee on.

EVELYN.

If that's an invitation, I accept.

FELICIA.

Follow me, Evelyn.

TAYLOR.

It's Ruth. Her real name is Ruth.

FELICIA.

Even a made up name.

EVELYN.

Just borrowed.

FELICIA.

(Crossing to kitchen.) You went to a lot of trouble. I think we have a lot to talk about.

EVELYN.

(As they exit.) Yes, we do. And I want to know everything you know about socks.
(The men shake hands.)

TAYLOR.

A long way to go for a few laughs.

BRAD.

An object lesson. One should take murder very seriously.

End scene 2

Scene 3

(Later that night. There is music. Brad is seated on the sofa. His jacket off and shirt open. He has a coffee mug in his hand.)

BRAD.

That was a fabulous meal.

FELICIA. (O.S.)

There's a more fabulous dessert. *(She Shouts from kitchen.)*

BRAD.

Dessert?

FELICIA.

(Enters wearing dressing gown.) First let me freshen your coffee. *(She takes his cup and exits into the kitchen.)*

BRAD.

Dessert. When was the last time we had dessert? We used to do that a lot more.

Didn't we.

FELICIA.

(Entering with cup and handing it to Brad.) It's been too long. Now drink your coffee. *(Changes the music selection. "Bolero.")* Now, for a little treat. *(She crosses in front of him removing the sash from her gown. She then moves behind him and caresses his neck.)*

BRAD.

Do you want to know what I'm thinking?

FELICIA.

Just think about the music and dessert.

(As his head begins to slump forward she ties a knot in the sash and wraps it around his neck.)

BRAD.

I suddenly feel a bit drowsy. *(He begins to fade away.)*

FELICIA.

That's natural after a big meal. Now you just relax and let me take care of everything.

(Brad begins to slump forward. She Waits, takes a deep breath and begins to strangle him.)

BRAD.

Wait. Stop --- stop, you're --

End scene 3

Scene 4

(The next morning. Brad enters from kitchen with a mug of coffee. He crosses to sofa and begins to read the Sunday paper. Felicia enters wearing the same dressing gown as previous scene. She bends over and kisses him on the cheek.)

FELICIA.

It's amazing what a good nights rest can do. I know I feel refreshed. *(She walks over to him and kisses his neck.)* What about you?

(He turns his head and kisses her on the mouth.)

FELICIA.

(Sliding onto his lap.) I feel like a new person. Don't you?

BRAD.

(In Victor's accent.) Yes, I think, also.

(The intercom buzzes.)

FELICIA.

(Crossing to intercom.) Who could that be. I think we should submit your, Brad's letter of resignation first thing tomorrow morning. That will start tying up loose

ends. *(Into intercom.)* Yes? *(To Brad.)* Then a little vacation ---

INTERCOM VOICE.

There's a Detective sergeant Evelyn Horne to see you, Mrs. Worth.

FELICIA.

All right, we'll be waiting. Thanks. I wonder what Ruth wants?

VICTOR.

Who Ruth is?

FELICIA.

That's right. The two of you have never met.

VICTOR.

Maybe I wait in bedroom?

FELICIA.

You can stay right here. We'll just pretend you have a cold. If we can get by her, we should be able to fool everyone. Still, I wonder what the hell she wants? As I was saying, a month or so in Aruba and a good voice coach and everything will settle into place nicely.

VICTOR.

(Standing and crossing over to her.) I like America. I love you.

FELICIA.

Just be sure to remember that.

(They kiss. Door bell rings. Felicia reaches over and opens the door. There is a man standing in the door way.)

FELICIA.

(Breaking away from Victor.) Who the hell are you?

MAN.

Sergeant Evelyn Horne, Manhattan South.

FELICIA.

You are no such thing. There is no such person.

MAN.

I'm sure that I am very real Ma'am and I'm investigating an apparent murder-suicide

(The lights begin a slow fade.)

A man whom we believe worked in this building and a woman whom we are trying to identify were found dead this morning. Apparently she strangled him in some bizarre sexual practice and afterward took her own life. We are checking on some leads. Now we do not wish to alarm any one, but. We would like to know if you have a sister, Mr. Worth. A sister named Ariana? As of now, we believe that is her name and are checking all possible leads ---

THE END