

The Veranda

by
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SYNOPSIS

Carl is a movie star. Carl's wife Evelyn is a movie star. Carl's friend John is a screen writer and novelist. Carl is happy. Carl is not happy. Carl and Evelyn have their lives together and their lives apart. They do not sleep with each others friends. Carl's parents are estranged and hate each other. Both parents blame each other for Carl's shortcomings, after all he is only a famous, rich movie star who married the wrong woman and doesn't care about his miserable parents. Possibly because they were miserable parents. Carl finds solace at his hilltop home (with a veranda, where the action takes place) designed by Architect George. George becomes friends with Carl. Oh did we mention the bathtub on the veranda? What about the girl who works in the pet shop? Things get complicated.

THE VERANDA

CAST

Carl ----- Thirties, movie star,
Sophie -----Fifties, Carl's Mother
Linda ----- - - - attractive not beautiful
John -----early forties, screen writer, author
Carl Sr. ----- Fifties, Carl's Father
Mother ----- Late fifties, used up, ghostly
Father ----- Late fifties, haggard, ghostly
Evelyn ----- Thirties, movie star looks
George ----- Late thirties, Architect

(The set is a large deck (Veranda) at the rear of a house on a hill overlooking the valley. Furnishings include
1) A claw footed tub or small Spa. D.R. 2) A table and two chairs. U.C. 3) A hammock. U.L. 4) A bar and some potted trees.

(Each scene will be titled. Either on a card or projected.)

ACT I

SCENE 1

THE END

Carl is seated at table. This scene replicates the scene as blocked in Act II Scene 9

EVELYN

So you can sit up here and enjoy the view or blow your fucking brains out I no longer give a shit.

She exits.

CARL

Well I guess she told me.

FATHER (V.O.)

Maybe you should take her advice.

END SCENE 1

SCENE 2

BEFORE THE BEGINING

Sophie is seated and Carl pacing.

SOPHIE

What was the matter with the other house? It wasn't good enough for you? Nothing was ever good enough for you. Nothing I done for you or that worthless father of yours. You was always after something better. Now you got it and what are you gonna do live here all by yourself. What am I supposed to do? Tell me that!

CARL

I'm getting married Ma, remember? Remember Evelyn?

SOPHIE

Oh yeah. What is she wife number four? You sure know how to pick em'.

CARL

Number two. She's my second wife and I know you hate her but I don't care.

SOPHIE

Good. She's your second wife. Then who were those other broads in between?

Handing her an envelope.

CARL

Here, take this.

SOPHIE

What is it?

CARL

The keys to a house and directions.

SOPHIE

So you are kicking me out.

CARL

You can't live here. Not the way you and Evelyn get along. I won't put up with that crap. Not here and not any more.

SOPHIE

You want me to just come by and clean the place for you? Like some kind of slave because you gave me a house?

CARL

I'm not giving you a house. I'm renting a house for you and I don't need you to clean my house. You were never any good at it any way.

SOPHIE

What am I supposed to do in return for such a generous gift?

CARL

Nothing. Just go and live at that address and leave me alone.

SOPHIE

Don't you even want me to come and clean the pool?

CARL

I don't want any thing from you and as for the pool, my father will be taking care of that.

SOPHIE

Your father! Where the hell did he come from?

CARL

He contacted me a while back. He's in bad shape, so I told him he could live in that shack at the bottom of the hill in return for taking care of the pool.

SOPHIE

That bastard is gonna live here and so your kicking me out is that it?

CARL

I am not kicking you out. You never lived here.

SOPHIE

So your kicking me out of the other house. Your turning out just like your father.

CARL

I sold the other house. I tried to toss you into the deal but the new owners wouldn't go for it.

END SCENE 2

SCENE 3

THE BEGINING

Carl stands UL with George. A young woman (Linda) stands D.R.

George is tap dancing but not well.

CARL

What the hell are you doing?

GEORGE

Come on, don't tell me you don't recognize tap dancing.

CARL

Tap dancing I recognize. What you are doing is something else all together. Don't tell me your taking lessons to impress some new starlet.

GEORGE

Not a starlet.

CARL

Moving up in the Hollywood world?

GEORGE

Yes I am. What's the next rung above starlet?

CARL

Don't remember. But I do remember the skiing lessons, you broke your leg.

GEORGE

And I needed TLC for two months. (*Imitating a female voice.*) "My hero, I can't believe you did this just for me. I must take care of you." Two months of tender loving care.

CARL

How about we start a pool? We'll try to guess which part you'll break or strain this time.

GEORGE

You can't break anything tap dancing. I checked.

CARL

I'll bet you can if you keep doing it on my deck.

GEORGE

Veranda. It's not a deck it's a veranda and I ought to know, I designed it.

CARL

You designed it and now you want to ruin it.

GEORGE

Not at all it's the view, I find that it relaxes me and helps my concentration.

CARL

You know something? For an architect you're a hell of a flake.

GEORGE

For a flake I'm a hell of an architect. Isn't that what you mean?

CARL

I will grant you that. You really saw my dream for this spot and made it a reality.

GEORGE

I still can't imagine this lot had been sitting here for so many years until you found it. Of course there are a lot of spots like it but none with an existing road. You never did tell me how you manage to find it?

CARL

I was in a wild mood that night. Every once in a while a guy has to cut loose. Any way I drove up what looked like an abandoned road with, (Pause.) With someone who shall remain nameless. To protect the innocent.

GEORGE

That's you in a nutshell. Protector of the innocent. I wonder how many innocent's identities you have protected over the years. I'm betting they were more likely someone with stars in their eyes and only one talent.

CARL

Don't be unkind.

GEORGE

Just calling them like I see them. Did you ever think of how many ...

CARL

No, George it never occurred to me. I just look at it this way. What's the sense in being a movie star if you can't put it to use. Any way, back to how I discovered this spot. At the end of the road I came upon this field which someone had cleared. I couldn't stop thinking how anybody could own this and not build on it?

(MORE)

CARL (cont'd)

When I found out who the owner was and that he had no plans to build on it, he just liked the view, well I persuaded him to sell it to me. He had two conditions. The deck ---

GEORGE

Veranda.

CARL

Veranda. He made me agree to the Veranda and allowing him to visit on occasion. I agreed to both conditions, figured out what I wanted to do with the land, then looked for an architect. And that's how I found and hired you.

GEORGE

Maybe you should get one of those dance pads. Any way, I thought the veranda was your idea.

CARL

I did too. That is until I just remembered the old guy. He was a bit of a dreamer. He bought the property built the road then ran out of money. He would drive up here and imagine a deck and enjoy the view. Then I happened along. A good deal for both of us I think.

GEORGE

I do too, a good deal for all three of us. I've designed a lot of houses since this one, but it's still my favorite spot. Especially the view from the veranda.

CARL

Everyone calls it a deck.

GEORGE

It's not. It's a veranda. Did I ever thank you for letting me build this edifice?

CARL

Only when you've had one too many. Did I ever thank you?

GEORGE

You don't have too. My career took off after this. Not to mention all the enjoyment this place has provided over the years.

CARL

Especially when I'm off on location. What's the big attraction? I'm just saying, what's wrong with that castle you built for yourself?

GEORGE

This veranda is in a dream location. Not to mention that this a movie star's house.

CARL

What are friends for? Me casa su casa, me veranda su veranda.

GEORGE

Somebody should write a book about this place. A load of memories, Carl, a load of memories.

CARL

There were memories here before there was a veranda here. When the veranda existed only as a deck in my mind. Our little secret?

Carl rises and crosses down to the woman at the lip of the stage. This is the only area lit. As George taps off.

After I bought the land and before I ever told you about my dream.

(Speaking to the girl. As George exits.)

CARL (cont'd)

The house will be set back. Only the second floor and veranda will have a view of the valley.

(MORE)

CARL (cont'd)

All the other vistas will be of the surrounding hills and the sky.

LINDA

That's real beautiful. I bet it's going to cost a bathtub full of money.

CARL

The veranda will end right here. The bathtub will be located right out there at the edge of it. After I empty the money out of it.

LINDA

What bathtub? What money?

CARL

I don't actually have the bathtub yet. It's on order. A claw footed one. The money came from Universal.

LINDA

Say are you somebody real famous? Cause if you are you better give me your autograph.

CARL

I'll do better than that I'll have it tattooed on your butt.

LINDA

Do you mean like a brand or label? Because I don't want to be branded or labeled.

CARL

Never. You are the free spirit aren't you? I'll just get a blanket from the car. And maybe a little wine.

LINDA

Hey wait a minute. You're Carl Bell, I recognize you now. And an autograph would do just fine thanks.

CARL

How else do I get a look at what I'm sure is a beautiful butt?

LINDA

Well. You are kinda cute in a grown up little boy sort of a way.

CARL

That's what they say.

LINDA

Why are you standing there? Go and get that blanket. If you think we'll need it.

CARL

Maybe we won't.

He crosses to her and takes her in his arms.

LINDA

I don't think we will.

CARL

Let me show you where the bedrooms will be located.

LINDA

Just one will do for now.

END SCENE 3

SCENE 4

AFTER THE BEGINING

CARL SR.

Who'd of thought you'd be sittin' out here like this five, six years ago. Carl Samovitz, sittin' on top of the world. And I almost forgot the kid existed. I guess it pays to go to the movies every once in a while.

He moves to the bar, pours a drink then crosses to the table and sits, puts his feet up on the table and admiring the view.

CARL SR. (cont'd)

Now this here is the life. A nice drink a nice view, ain't life good. Just put your feet up and relax now Carl.

Carl enters, unseen by Carl Sr.

CARL

Don't you put your dirty shoes on my table old man. What the hell are you doing out here.

Carl takes the drink from his hand.

CARL SR.

And here, give that back. Ain't I entitled to relax a bit once in a while? This is no way to treat your own flesh and blood.

CARL

Your being my flesh and blood is a matter of biology and nothing more. That connection is what allows you to live on my property and eat my food. As far as I'm concerned you are just another employee.

CARL SR.

I'm just good enough to take care of the pool. I guess I ain't good enough to live in your big fancy house like the so called cook. I'm good enough to be treated like shit. Treated like the goddamn gardener and all those ---

CARL

The so called cook is a chef and she doesn't live here. Why the hell am I explaining myself to you? Just take care of the pool and stay out of my way.

CARL SR.

It's that mother of yours, ain't it? Always harpin' on how she had to do without this and put up with that and about being saddled with a kid. Nothing was ever good enough for her. She turned you against me.

CARL

Turned me against you? I barely remembered you until you showed up here five years ago. I still don't know why the hell I took you in.

CARL SR.

Took me in? I earn my keep.

CARL

I could pay a professional pool company half of what it costs for you to do what you do and I wouldn't have to house feed and cloth any one. Now go and tend to my pool and stay the hell off my deck.

CARL SR.

You mean stay off until I have to clean up after one of your parties. And, you don't have to bark at me like that. You should learn to show some respect. Didn't that woman teach you any manners?

CARL

I think you better shut your mouth and get out of my sight. I've had enough of the both of you. You who won't go away and her. She's dead to me and she still won't go away. Promise me something will you?

CARL SR.

What ever you want. What can I do for you?

CARL

After you die, just leave. Go away and leave me alone. Don't be like her, she won't go away.

CARL SR.

Don't you worry about me. When I'm gone I'm gone.

CARL

Right. I forgot. Last time you were gone for thirty years.

CARL SR.

I didn't know who you become. Never was much for movies. And your mother? That bitch isn't dead she's just stuck in your head, that's all. It's not like you killed her or nothin' like that.

CARL

What the hell is that supposed to mean?

CARL SR.

Some day you'll be the death of me. Ain't that what she always said?

CARL

Thanks for all the insight. Now go away and leave me alone.

CARL SR.

Sure, sure I can take a hint.

CARL

Then why are you sitting here. You have a place to stay, so stay there.

CARL SR.

It's a shack way down at the bottom of the hill. Say why don't you drop one those little starlets off down at the bottom of the hill for your old man? That would be nice, once in a while a little treat for the old man.

END SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SOME TRUTH

JOHN

You're pulling my leg?

EVELYN

That's how it happened. According to Carl. The first person he brought up here after he bought the property was a girl from the pet store. He said he had to show it to somebody and she was the first person he met. And you can bet he showed her more than the property.

JOHN

How the hell did he get a perfect stranger to come up here?

EVELYN

He was Carl. Just being Carl was enough. You might say he charmed her but there was much more to it with Carl.

JOHN

You are talking about the legendary Carl and his influence over women.

EVELYN

And men. There is that charm of course, yet more. It's almost messianic the way he can influence people.

JOHN

Did he ever let you in?

EVELYN

Never. What ever you learn about Carl you find by observing.

JOHN

He would be a fascinating study for a book. Has any one approached him about a book?

EVELYN

Several times. The studios are terrified of the idea and Carl isn't exactly mad about doing it.

JOHN

What's he so afraid of? Everybody has skeletons.

EVELYN

Not everyone has corpses. Besides, when was the last time you did a biography?

JOHN

Are you intimating that because I write screenplays that a Biography is beyond my abilities?

EVELYN

As they say in the old country, I wouldn't put anything past you. But he's not going to give you anything. Believe me.

JOHN

Maybe it's time to do a little research. Maybe a little undercover work?

EVELYN

Not under my covers, honey.

JOHN

What became of her? The pet store lady.

EVELYN

She sold him his first parrot and ended up with her own pet shop. "Exotic Pets for Exotic People." I guess he thought she was one of his "Exotic Pets."

JOHN

So, was she?

EVELYN

I think we had better let that subject lie.

JOHN

Are we just a we bit jealous?

EVELYN

I said let it be.

JOHN

My lips are sealed.

EVELYN

So are mine. Now, what shall we talk about?

JOHN

That tub, if I recall is the same one famous in song and story?

EVELYN

Yes it is and I have the lumps bumps and scars to prove it. Little miss pet store may have been the first one up here but I was the first one in that tub. Let me tell you, it was not designed for the purpose that Carl had in mind.

JOHN

Maybe you could show me how it's done sometime.

EVELYN

Maybe.

JOHN

Maybe?

EVELYN

Maybe I'll regale you with stories about it.

JOHN

Some snowy night in front of the fire?

EVELYN

It never snows here, remember?

She rises, caresses his shoulder brushes her cheek against his.

EVELYN (cont'd)

Some night in front of the fire and if it gets to hot maybe we can cool off in the tub. Darling.

She exits.

JOHN

Maybe some undercover work after all.

END SCENE 5

SCENE 6

THE LAST MOTHER AND FATHERS DAY

Carl Sr. is cleaning the tub with his back to the entrance when Sophie burst onto the scene.

SOPHIE

The front door wasn't locked so I let myself in. Do you always leave it unlocked? You shouldn't do that. You'll learn after somebody walks in here and ---

Carl Sr. Looking over his shoulder.

CARL SR.

Who the hell are you?

SOPHIE

Who the hell are you?

He turns to face her and they stare at each other.

CARL SR.

Sophie?

SOPHIE

Carl?

CARL SR.

I thought you weren't supposed to come around here. Don't you live somewhares else?

SOPHIE

What are you doing out here? Ain't you supposed to be the pool guy who lives in that shack?

CARL SR.

I take care of the place. I work here I belong here. I'm his father.

SOPHIE

You are the caretaker and I came here to see my son.

CARL SR.

Yeah, well that's to bad. Cause the way I see it he don't want to see you. And I couldn't agree more.

SOPHIE

That's because of you. If you hadn't of come back after all those years he wouldn't have kicked me out. You made him do it.

CARL SR.

He was just fed up with your bullshit. You was gonna' be gone any way. It had nothin' to do with me.

SOPHIE

You say so and I'm supposed to believe that. Speaking of bullshit that's what you are, nothing but bullshit.

She cross to him and kicks him in the ass.

SOPHIE (cont'd)

You got no right to be here, not after the way
you ran out ---

CARL SR.

You kick me one more time and I'll break most of
your bones. Can't you get it through your head
he hates both of us. I know what you did after I
left. You was suddenly to busy for him. You
treated him like he was in the way.

SOPHIE

Why you rotten son of a bitch.

*She attempts to kick him again and he turns and grabs
her.*

You get your hands off of me. I'll call the
cops.

CARL SR.

You'll call the cops. You're the one whose
trespassing, I'll call the cops.

She pushes him away.

Sophie

Go ahead. Call them. No wonder he turned out
like he did. Look what he had for a father

CARL SR.

He kicked you out because you was a lousy mother.
Just like you was a lousy wife. He finally
couldn't stand you any more --

*They both stop and just stare at each other. Then
lunge towards each other yelling and screaming.*

END SCENE 6

SCNENE 7

THE NEW POOL MAN

Carl enters carrying some papers and two urns. He places them on the table and makes himself a drink. Evelyn enters.

EVELYN

Here you are. It was a very nice service.
Wasn't it?

CARL

I guess. You seen one you've seen them all. I do have to admit, it was a little bit different. The last relations.

EVELYN

I didn't expect you to be upset. After all you didn't speak to her and you hardly spoke to him.

CARL

He may have been a lousy father but he took good care of the pool.

EVELYN

That's the eulogy you should have given.

CARL

I should have and then I could have asked if any body knew a good pool guy.

EVELYN

That would have lightened the moment. What are you going to do with those?

She indicates the urns.

CARL

I was thinking maybe I would dump them where they died. They obviously went over the edge together.

(Taking the urns to the lip of the stage.)

CARL (cont'd)

Maybe they can spend the rest of eternity together.

He removes the tops and as he begins to dump them.

EVELYN

Don't. They hated each other. This is sick and cruel.

CARL

Your probably right. But it's the kind of cruelty I learned from them. It would serve both of them right, being near each other for ever.

He chuckles.

CARL (cont'd)

Kind of brings a tear to my eye.

As he dumps the urns.

CARL (cont'd)

But it sure makes me feel good. No more Mother's days, no more Father's days. Goodbye, both of you.

END SCENE 7

SCENE 8

THE SNAKE

John in a bathing suit is seated alone at the table. Evelyn enters, wrapped in a towel and stands behind him. Both are looking out at the sunset.

EVELYN

Howdy, pardner. Why are you sitting out here all by yourself? You do know that there is a party going on inside, don't you?

JOHN

To much air conditioning and clothing going on in there. I prefer the solitude of the deck. Excuse me, veranda.

EVELYN

How boring. Care for a little company?

JOHN

I could care for a lot of your company.

EVELYN

You are too kind.

JOHN

Not just kind. Enthralled by the beauty.

She sits in the other chair never taking her eyes off John until she speaks.

EVELYN

Another beautiful sunset, like clockwork they just keep coming. This must be the fifth one this week. And this one, it's so, oh I don't know.

JOHN

Magnificent?

EVELYN

That's it. Magnificent. Can you make a wish on a sunset the same as on a star?

JOHN

I tell you what I wish. I wish I could freeze it half way over the mountain. That glow. A glimmering glow of blazing star light. A piece of heavens embers sitting on a mountain top. Shinning for us to bask in it's dieing ecstasy. And embrace the coming night's gentle breezes.

EVELYN

Are you writing or talking? What ever it is don't stop.

JOHN

In a spray of orange-gold burning light. The heavens beckon toward the night. Giving us pause at Helios last light to hold each other as if in fright, that some other force may our love smite.

She crosses to him and puts her hands on his shoulders.

EVELYN

More. Tell me more. And I'll tell you about the tub.

JOHN

As the dark shadows of this splendid night Engulf us in it's cool embrace Our ardor will consume us as our love takes flight.

EVELYN

Where's that from.

JOHN

I wrote that for you.

EVELYN

When?

JOHN

Just now. Tell me about the tub.

EVELYN

Not out here.

*She crosses in front of him takes his hands in her's
and as he stands.*

In front of the fire.

JOHN

I wouldn't have it any other way.

*She exits in a sexually charged giddiness and tosses
the towel back at him after she exits.*

JOHN (cont'd)

Maybe a little undercover work after all.

LIGHTS FADE

END SCENE 8

SCENE 9

THE PERFECT TIME FOR WHAT

*Carl with drinks in hand approaches John seated at the
table.*

JOHN

This is the perfect time. People are interested.

CARL

I don't want to relive my life. I don't want to
review my life. I want to continue with my life.
That is all there is to do. Go forward. Anyone
who does not have the intention of moving forward
until they die might as well be dead already.

JOHN

It's not a review. It's a retrospective. Call
it a long look back.

CARL

A long look back at looking back longingly?
Don't bullshit me. Look, you want to look back?
Good, hop on the back of my pick up and keep an
eye out. Cause the truck will be moving forward.

JOHN

How about answering a few questions?

CARL

How long have we known each other?

JOHN

Long time.

CARL

You've been a writer the whole time?

JOHN

Yes.

CARL

How many times have I asked you about your life?

JOHN

Truth?

CARL

Truth.

JOHN

Don't remember.

CARL

Never. And you know why? Because I don't give a
shit. I already know everything I want to about
you and what I don't know, being a reasonably
intelligent person I can surmise.

JOHN

How would you do that?

CARL

I would recreate you as a character. In fact I
would say that after knowing you I probably
already have.

JOHN

Why not recreate you as a character?

CARL

So you can write it all down and, bang, another book. I'd prefer that we stay friends. No good can come of any retrospective. Not while I'm alive. Talk to my friends, my kids. Talk to any one who knows me but do it after I'm dead. I don't have the slightest interest in my past and would probably disagree with your interpretation any way. So let's just drink cognac lie to each other about shit that doesn't matter and stay friends. What do you say?

JOHN

How about this? Just tell me about acting.

CARL

What about it? What do you want me to tell you that you don't already know?

JOHN

About character. Tell me about creating a character.

CARL

The thing you need to know is this. Is the character habitable? When you move into a new place you bring your stuff with you. Your stuff, your baggage is what you need in order to be able to inhabit your surroundings. It's the same with character. The baggage you bring to inhabit a character is the baggage of your life. Your experiences, your past, your pains and pleasures. In short, just as you can only stay in but not inhabit an empty space, you cannot inhabit an empty character.

JOHN

I think I get it. You need to know who the character is in order to play a role? Is that it? Yes I think I understand.

CARL

No matter where you go or what you do the baggage is right there with you. It is who you are or were. You draw on these experiences all the time, mostly subconsciously and they influence what you do all the time. But, in acting you unpack the bags look through the stuff and draw out what you need. You don't filter out the junk it may come in handy some time. What you do is assemble from all that stuff which you have dumped on the floor of your mind the building blocks of another human being. Preferably within the structure of the writers image of that person.

Father's ghost enters.

CARL (cont'd)

All the time walking amid the piles of junk cast about all around you. That shit never goes away and so you must be mindful not to go around picking up pieces indiscriminately. Everything must have a purpose. Just as every sentence every word in a play must have a purpose. That is to lead to the end, the climax. Yet the character must remain in the moment having no idea where his actions must lead him. Only the playwright should know what is going to happen in a moment or two or by the end. Characters must be in the moment and spontaneous.

JOHN

I don't think that's the way most writers see it.

CARL

The ones who write plays must.

JOHN

More. Tell me more.

CARL

That's what acting coaches do. They help you deal with dealing with shit in your life to draw out the emotions strewn about supposedly on the floor of your mind which in turn help you to become the character.

FATHER

Bullshit! What do you need with all that crap? You just learn your words and when they yell action you talk. Besides what kind of shit you got in your live? You got it made. Look around you.

CARL

Every time I have to do a difficult scene, one that calls for bringing forth deep emotional trauma, there's always something I can draw on from when I was a kid. And, every time, instead of using it to cleanse myself I breathe it into the character and I end up with another stone around my neck. Another stone which I thought was long buried.

Turning to the father.

CARL (cont'd)

Another stone that you put there. One more memory to live with and not be able to sleep with.

FATHER

What the hell are you talking about?

As he begins to speak Carl rises and faces his father.

CARL

I think I'm talking about being alone surrounded by people.

John in tableau.

CARL (cont'd)

Never knowing human warmth. Warmth you never showed me.

FATHER

Didn't I always take you to ball games and stuff?

CARL

Yeah. Once every couple of years. And then you just hung out with your pals and drank.

FATHER

I could have left you at home with your mother.

CARL

Stop this. Look, I don't blame you ---

FATHER

Blame me? For what? I took care of you and your mother.

CARL

Until I was what? Three! Three fucking years old.

FATHER

I was there.

CARL

When?

FATHER

A lot. Remember the beach?

CARL

What beach? You never took me to any beach. That must have been some other son.

FATHER

Funny. Very funny. But you see I'm not laughing.

CARL

Neither am I.

Addressing John.

CARL (cont'd)

Have you ever noticed that when a thing is funny or strikes you funny laughter is automatic? Then you look around you and no one else is laughing.

JOHN

And I feel stupid. Like the joke is on me.

CARL

That's because it may only appear funny to you in that moment. That's why a character reacts each time to a funny situation. The same way every time with slight variations even though the actor has experienced the same situation many times. And after a time may find it stale. Spontaneity, staying in the moment and actually being surprised is the key.

FATHER

What do you want from me?

CARL

Nothing. You have given me everything you were capable of giving. You gave me the tools of my trade.

Mother's ghost enters.

FATHER

What about that mother of yours? What kind of tools did she give you?

CARL

She's the one who taught me how to use them. How to manipulate others and how to internalize my own emotions. She taught me how to bury myself.

MOTHER

That boy, he doesn't know how to keep his mouth shut. He's always telling stories. Why he even invents people. I don't know where he gets it from. Must be his father. Come on over here Carl. Mama needs a hug. She's had a very rough day.

FATHER

You mean a rough night. That's what she means.

MOTHER

What the hell is he doing here. What are you doing here you don't live here any more. You have your life to lead. Wasn't that it? Son of a bitch.

FATHER

I'll just be leaving now. Sorry I can't take you with me son.

MOTHER

Say good bye to that man and come over here son.

CARL

To John as father exits.

An actor needs to pluck those experiences from his life which will help overcome barriers to the character. Yet, cannot allow the sense memory to become the conscious reality. If it does, that's when all hell breaks loose. You must keep the real reality in the subconscious.

MOTHER

Carl! I said come over here. Did you do your home work assignment and clean your room?

CARL

Why should I clean my room? You don't clean yours.

MOTHER

Do I have to get the broom handle?

Carl walks back to the table. Mother exits. John moves down to the table.

JOHN

I've heard some interesting stories about that tub.

CARL

All through with the acting lessons, John?

JOHN

We can stay with that if you want.

CARL

I don't want. What about another?

JOHN

Hit me. How about the tub then? Evelyn told me something about it, but not much in the way of details.

CARL

I'll fill you in a little on it's history. You won't get any names if we do talk about it. OK here's how it started. It arrived before the house was finished. The first use required transporting water in buckets from the well. Damned thing didn't look like it would hold four people.

JOHN

What did you do set up a bucket brigade?

CARL

That's what we did. Like a naked bucket relay.

JOHN

Are you pulling my leg?

CARL

Yes I am. You didn't really want to do anything but soak in that thing. Now, I'm going to do something uncharacteristic. (Pause.) Tell me about yourself.

JOHN

What? I thought you didn't give a shit.

CARL

I don't. I'm just curious.

JOHN

I knew it. As you wish. What would you like to know.

CARL

Just enough to know if my character recreation of you would be correct. You see I don't actually want to know anything about you personally. Merely a character study. I don't need a personal history. A few little insights is all I need. Why do you write?

JOHN

It's what I do. You act, I write.

CARL

But why? Why not carpentry or dentistry? I act because I wouldn't know what else to do. I don't know who I am most of the time. When you write, what happens?

JOHN

I don't understand.

CARL

Is it you alone or is there an alter ego who comes out? Are you just a word machine? Does it give you a high? Do you have a muse? Do you control it or does it control you? Now the good one. Where do you get your ideas?

JOHN

Holy shit. Slow down. Slow down a minute.

CARL

Another drink?

JOHN

No. No! (Pause.) Got it. You don't want to know about me. It's the writer. How the writer works.

You already know how a drunk works, or functions. Are you doing research for a film?

CARL

Just tell me what goes on inside. Not about the subject. What happens to you when you write. Is there euphoria, pressure? Is it lonely? Come on pour it out.

JOHN

How about if I breath a little? Here it is. When I do my research. Tedium. Boring mostly, monotony for sure, yet somehow at the same time exhilarating. It's like being a detective only boring. Then when the writing begins things pick up, adrenaline begins to pump. I think I'll have that drink, thanks.

Carl takes his glass and fills it.

JOHN (cont'd)

Pressure releases and a kind of cerebral high envelopes me.

(MORE)

JOHN (cont'd)

That's when the words begin to flow. It's like a natural drug, nothing compares to it. And it builds until the end is in sight. Near completion it's like seeing light at the end of a tunnel and I rush toward it in a frenzy of words until it's finished.

He takes a swallow and leans back exhausted.

CARL

And then?

JOHN

Nothing. Emptiness. Almost despair, like cutting the legs out from under a table. For a moment all is lost. Creativity has stopped. For that moment, in that instant I am aware that it may never start again. Leaving me alone and without hope. (Pause.) I imagine it is something like postpartum depression. Eventually, on to business and I call my editor and tell him it's done.

BLACK OUT

END SCENE 9

SCENE 10

MY PETS

Mother and father U.L. Carl sits at the table.

MOTHER

Filthy slut. Why didn't he marry somebody more like his mother? Someone who could have given him so much more.

FATHER

Like a permanent headache. And a giant pain in the ass like you gave me? You was always stickin' your nose in where it didn't belong.

MOTHER

And you was always sticken your business where you had no business sticken it. I was his mother and I had to take care of him after you ran off.

FATHER

I was driven off. Like that damned cocker spaniel or those other strays he brought home. And you told them they went to uncle Sidney's farm. Stupid kid. You didn't even have an uncle Sidney.

MOTHER

It never stopped the little bastard from bringing those damned animals home. Maybe he was tryin to replace the love he never got from you.

FATHER

Shit!

Linda enters.

LINDA

Hi there.

CARL

Linda, nice to see you. This is an unexpected visit.

LINDA

I just stopped by to get the Macaw set up in the aviary. It's really something. I mean it's a birds paradise.

CARL

I'm glad you approve but you didn't have to deliver it.

LINDA

It was on my way home.

CARL

Who are you kidding? I don't live between anywhere and anywhere that's one of the reasons why I bought this property.

LINDA

It's real beautiful. With the deck and all.

CARL

Yes it is. And George likes us to call it a veranda.

MOTHER

I've told him and told him to stay away from those kind of girls. They are nothing but trouble.

LINDA

George? Who's George? And what's a veranda?

FATHER

No shit. You were one of those kinds of girls and look where I ended up. Strapped to you and a kid. Hey Carl! Your mother doesn't want you getting any this afternoon so send the strumpet packing.

CARL

A veranda is a deck pretending to be something more elegant, I guess. Come on over and have a seat.

LINDA

Is that the bathtub full of money?

MOTHER

What the hell is she talking about?

CARL

Yes it is and I emptied the money out of it.

LINDA

It looks like it's only big enough for one.

CARL

It's a little like origami but if done right it works for two.

LINDA

I like origami. Say do you remember promising me your autograph?

CARL

Vaguely.

LINDA

Well you never gave it to me. The autograph, I mean.

CARL

I'll do better than that I'll have it tattooed on your butt.

LINDA

That's what you said the last time. I know who you are now. So no kidding, I want that autograph.

CARL

No kidding this time.

As he takes a piece of paper and begins to sign his name she crosses down to edge of veranda.

CARL (cont'd)

Would you like a personalized dedication? What should I say? I know, 'To my good friend and pet provider.' How's that?

LINDA

I don't really care. You can write anything you want. I just want the autograph. I love this view from up here. This place really is beautiful. It's just like you described it. And that aviary, I love it. Do you live here alone?

CARL

I never get the chance. I have to many relatives. Well I used to have to many. Now most of them are dead. I have a day like this once in a while. Evelyn is off shooting a movie in Africa.

LINDA

Is she your wife? Evelyn. Is she a movie star too?

CARL

Yes she is.

LINDA

Yes she is? She's your wife or she's a movie star?

CARL

Both. Enough about me, how about a dip in the tub.

LINDA

How about a dip in the pool. I don't think I want to get in the tub with a married man. I mean I don't want to, you know, with a married man.

CARL

That didn't bother you last time.

LINDA

I didn't know you were married last time. I don't date married men. Wives can be the meanest things on earth.

CARL

How do you know that?

LINDA

Lets just say that I learned the hard way. I mean if I was a wife I'd probably act like that too.

CARL

Like what?

LINDA

Never mind, mister married movie star.

MOTHER

Well, it's about time some girl put him in his place. Show him a little heartache and pain this time.

CARL

Okay, okay. Let me ask you a question.

LINDA

Sure, but no mater what I'm not getting in that tub with you.

CARL

Fine, fine. A different topic all together.

LINDA

Ask away.

CARL

How long have you been working in that pet shop?

LINDA

Since I was sixteen.

CARL

Well maybe you won't be there much longer.

LINDA

What's that supposed to mean.

FATHER

That's my boy. Make your move.

CARL

Do you work there because you like animals?

LINDA

And I like to eat. The pay is good. And I love animals. See I'm from here and I know how hard the movie business is. So a good job doing what I like I'm a lot better off than all these kids from nowhere with their degrees in theater waiting to be discovered. I know who I am and every once in a while I meet a movie star. That's all I need.

CARL

How much would it cost to start a pet shop?

LINDA

I have no idea.

CARL

Go and find out. Find out how much and let me know. Now go on and get lost.

FATHER

Asshole!

LINDA

How about that dip in the pool?

FATHER

The pool is closed.

CARL

(Becoming aware of the parents.)

What the hell?

(To Linda.)

Maybe you better go.

LINDA

Are you the moody type?

CARL

Maybe. --- look I'm sorry. Look into the pet shop thing and we'll talk another time OK?

LINDA

Sure. See you.

CARL

Are you getting a little moody yourself? I like you kid. Now go and find out what it would take to start up a pet shop. A fancy one.

LINDA

If you say so.

Linda exits.

CARL

What the hell are you doing here.

MOTHER

Would you listen to the mouth on that?

FATHER

That's your fault. You raised him to be disrespectful.

CARL

Do you have any idea why I inflict pain on people?

MOTHER

I know it's not because of anything I did.

CARL

I think it's because I don't think they understand the pain I have endured. They seem to think that it's all made up somehow. So I make them understand, not in the same way that I can make audiences understand but in a more visceral way. Not, no pain no gain. More like no pain no comprehension of pain. And by the way, you were probably my number one contributor.

MOTHER

How can you say that to me? You had more than most growing up in the depression.

CARL

Or a lot less than most. It all depends on how you keep score. I don't have time for you people.

FATHER

(Mimicking mother's voice.) I know it's not because of anything I did. Who are you trying to fool with that?

MOTHER

Look at the way he treats women. Like something to toy with have his way with and then discard. He didn't learn that from me.

FATHER

Thank god he learned something from me. Never give a woman anything but a good screwing. Otherwise you end up stuck to something like you.

MOTHER

That's all I ever got from you. Never any good sex! Just a good screwing!

She covers his ears.

CARL

Exactly what I wanted to hear. Leave me alone. Go away and leave me alone

MOTHER

We're not done with you yet!

FATHER

We're not done with you yet!

Carl buries his head in his hands and sobs.

END SCENE 10

END ACT I

ACT II

SCENE 1

CO-STARS

Carl & Evelyn enter arm in arm.

CARL

Ah, home sweet home. I missed you veranda.

EVELYN

So did I. It is nice to be home. But what an adventure. Say I have an idea.

CARL

So do I. Let's never make another picture together.

He sits.

EVELYN

I agree. It's not as much fun sleeping with your co-star if you are married to them.

Pulling her down on his lap.

CARL

It was different, I'll grant you that. But for now what do you say we try it out at home and see how it compares.

EVELYN

What will the fan mags say?

CARL

"Husband and wife have affair on movie set."

EVELYN

"And then try it out again at home." I do love you Carl.

CARL

Especially when I'm your co-star?

EVELYN

Especially when we're at home.

They kiss. Then stand and kiss again.

CARL

Say, what about a second honeymoon?

EVELYN

I'd love to.

CARL

Where should we go?

EVELYN

How about the bedroom?

CARL

How about the tub?

They embrace again, passionately.

END SCENE 1

SCENE 2

EXOTIC PETS

Carl is seated at the table. Linda enters.

LINDA

Hi partner.

CARL

Don't call me that. I'm not your partner. I'm not anybody's partner.

LINDA

I couldn't have opened "Exotic Pets for Exotic People" without you.

CARL

I need to talk to you about that. You see I am not known for doing nice things for people. So, I would appreciate your not spreading the word. It's not our pet shop it's yours. Every once in a while I may need a new pet, which I expect you to provide, that's it.

(MORE)

CARL (cont'd)

Besides every time I drive by the place no one but you and I know why I'm smiling. And by the way, you still have a great ass. Met any movie stars lately?

LINDA

Only to sell pets to. Now they're customers. But the customer is not always right. Not for me.

CARL

I knew you were something special when I met you.

Linda speaks with a sense of pleading in her voice.

LINDA

Caarl?

CARL

Don't say Carl like that it makes me suspicious and I don't want to be suspicious of you.

LINDA

Sorry. It's just that one of the studios has approached me about providing domesticated exotics for some productions. And I'm not sure how to handle them.

CARL

You grab them by the neck and squeeze for all you are worth. Never back down to studio people or trust them for that matter. And never ever tell them that you are a friend of mine. Then they will try to eat you alive.

LINDA

Maybe I should just forget it.

CARL

I was bullshitting. Just make sure that you have a good lawyer, you'll make a fortune.

(MORE)

CARL (cont'd)

And if you ever want to try out that tub, you know where it is.

LINDA

Don't you ever give up?

CARL

Where the hell is the fun in giving up. Never give up. That's my motto.

LINDA

If you ever get divorced give me a call. Then we'll talk.

CARL

Talk my ass. If I ever get divorced your whole world might change. Now go on get out of here. I have work to do.

As she exits.

END SCENE 2

SCENE 3

STARS IN THEIR EYES

Evelyn is seated, George is parading around wearing a tam, sunglasses, tweed sport coat, spectators and carrying a pipe.

EVELYN

Who are you supposed to be?

GEORGE

Don't you recognize a producer when you see one?

EVELYN

The last time anybody saw one dressed like that was around nineteen fifty two. These affectations have got to go. A broken leg skiing, torn ligaments from dancing. There are lots of beautiful girls in this town, you've got to get over this obsession with actresses, before you end up in the hospital. I love you George but ---

GEORGE

But what? Sometimes I wish I was a movie star instead of an architect. Sometimes ---

EVELYN

You have no freaking idea what it's like.

GEORGE

I think I do. I've been around you and Carl all these years and you think that I have no idea what your lives are like. And what about my other clients? Don't you think I see what goes on in their lives?

EVELYN

Seeing isn't being.

GEORGE

It can be very close. I am a better observer than you might think. An architect has to be able to get into people's minds in order to determine what they really want. To know what they feel and believe in order to create for them a home they will comfortable in.

EVELYN

Blah, blah, blah. You build boxes for people to live in. If they don't like it you change it. Why you've built almost this identical house for how many clients? You may be able to adjust this or that feature to suit the tastes of someone and that's because they tell you what they like or don't like. You kid yourself when say that you get inside their heads. I've played enough roles to know that no matter how you interpret another person you can never know what they actually feel at any moment. You take any character based in reality or wholly fictitious, any thing that person says or does is the creation of a writer and subject to the interpretation of the actor. Yet no one knows what is going on in that characters head, no one other than the character itself. The same goes for you. You like to think that you can just about read peoples minds. You can't, because the human mind is a spontaneous thing. So I tell you that no matter what you observe you have no idea what it's like to be a movie star.

GEORGE

Hold on just a minute. Don't go getting defensive. Maybe I can't know for sure what it's like but as I was about to say, even though sometimes I might wish to live like a movie star, having observed it in person, I end up very satisfied not to be living in your fish bowl.

EVELYN

Forgive me. I had no reason to react like that.

GEORGE

Of course you did. You caught me peaking into you fish bowl and trying to be amusing about something that really annoys you. And that bothered you. So you tried to bite my head off. Of course I forgive you. (Still I wonder why it is you never defend yourself against all the gossip and shit? Let the world in on the truth.)

EVELYN

So you think I should? Write a memoirs? To what end?

You know that I love you both and I wish there was some way for you to avoid all the unpleasantness.

EVELYN

There you go wishing again.

END SCENE 3

SCENE 4

YOU WANT WHAT?

Carl is seated at the table reading the paper. Mother and father are reading over his shoulder. As Evelyn enters with another copy of the paper.

MOTHER

Done it again. He done it again.

FATHER

Done what? Done got his picture in the paper is what he done. Ain't movie stars supposed to do that?

MOTHER

Don't be stupid.

EVELYN

Did you see the paper? I guess you have. Can't a person have any privacy any more? Who the hell cares what happens on a movie set? I sure as hell don't.

CARL

To you and me movies and movie sets are not real things but to the public, the ticket buying, star gazing, don't have a life public it is life. They eat this shit up.

EVELYN

I want a divorce.

CARL

You want a what? Because a magazine says that I was screwing my costar on a movie set while you were here, with the house all to yourself for four months doing I don't care what? Don't be stupid. You can't give all of this up because of something in the papers.

EVELYN

I'm not going to give anything up.

CARL

You don't expect me to leave ---

EVELYN

No, no, don't be silly.

CARL

I smell a plan. What's up your devious little sleeve?

EVELYN

We get a divorce.

CARL

What grounds?

EVELYN

Irreconcilable, indifference, whatever.

CARL

Our differences are not irreconcilable.

FATHER

What the hell is he saying? They hate each other.

EVELYN

They are now.

MOTHER

They don't hate each other. Their jealous, is all.

CARL

How is that?

FATHER

Over who gets the most outside nookie?

EVELYN

I want a divorce and you don't.

CARL

You don't want a divorce any more than I do.

EVELYN

That may be the case but we need one. We need to get some privacy. So we get a divorce. As part of the settlement you build me a little house somewhere ---

CARL

Out of the way? Off the beaten path? What the hell do you think this is.

EVELYN

I mean an inconspicuous little house. I don't care where.

CARL

And you move out. Great idea.

EVELYN

And I keep living here and no one is the wiser.
And I'll have a place to go when we aren't
getting along. I won't give up the sex and you
won't have to either.

MOTHER

Is that all they ever think about?

CARL

And you think nobody will know?

EVELYN

It won't matter. What are they going to write
about? Two divorced people having sex with each
other? Booring! And if we have sex with other
people, nobody will care because it can't cause
us to get a divorce. You are free to live your
life, I'm free to live my life and we're both
free to live our life. It's perfect.

CARL

What about the children?

MOTHER

I was going to ask that.

FATHER

Shut up. Who knew she was so smart?

EVELYN

Those are from your first marriage and they don't
even come to visit.

FATHER

Why didn't we think of that?

MOTHER

Because I hate you.

FATHER

These movie stars are a different breed.

MOTHER

Well, we bred one of them.

CARL

I'll think about it.

EVELYN

What's to think about? Call the lawyers and check it out.

CARL

You call the lawyers.

EVELYN

As soon as I get to the phone.

She exits.

FATHER

Stupid son of a bitch. Once the lawyers get involved your ass will be screwed to the wall. Didn't you teach that kid anything useful?

MOTHER

I taught him to stay away from you.

FATHER

That didn't work. Did it? I lived here for ten years didn't I?

MOTHER

You were the caretaker and lived in a shack at the bottom of the damned hill. He only kept you here out of pity.

FATHER

Out of pity? What did he do for you with all his money? Nothing. That's what. Because you didn't deserve nothing.

MOTHER

I never asked him for nothing. You tried to turn him against me. You bastard.

FATHER

Turn him against you? He couldn't wait to get the hell away from you that's how he ended up with that bitch of a first wife and those two ungrateful snots. Some mother you were.

Carl stands slams the newspaper down on the table.

CARL

The hell with both of you.

He exits.

MOTHER

Now look what you've done. You upset him.

END SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SORRY WRONG NUMBER

Carl is in hammock, asleep and unseen by Evelyn and George. Evelyn enters wrapped in a towel. It is morning. George is sitting at the table holding his Sport jacket over his arm.

EVELYN

I thought you left.

GEORGE

I'm sorry.

EVELYN

What for?

She crosses to the tub and getting in.

GEORGE

You know. I'm going to tell Carl and apologize.

EVELYN

Apologize? Apologize for what? Don't be silly, it's not as if we are still married. Besides, nothing happened.

GEORGE

You know that and I know that. But it could have. Being drunk is no excuse.

EVELYN

No it isn't. But it is a good reason why it almost happened yet didn't.

GEORGE

Don't remind me.

EVELYN

You have nothing to be ashamed of. Besides it was all my fault. I was mad at Carl and used you as a weapon. For that I apologize to you. You are too good a friend to have done that to. I mean that.

Carl, who has been asleep stirs seen by audience but not by George and Evelyn.

GEORGE

You're beautiful. You know that don't you?

EVELYN

Stop, George. One stab at that was enough. And of course I'm beautiful. I'm a movie star. You almost got to sthuup a movie star.

GEORGE

Oh! I've done that before. This is Hollywood.

Carl stirs as he watches. The other two remain unaware of his presence.

EVELYN

George?

GEORGE

Yes?

EVELYN

We had a lovely night together. Did we not?

GEORGE

Yes we did, I just thought that, well under the circumstances. That is if you are still mad at Carl ---

EVELYN

Say good night George.

GEORGE

Good night Gracie.

He kisses her gently on the lips and exits. Lights up on Carl in hammock. He crosses upstage from Evelyn who doesn't see him.

CARL

You are going to be like a huge white raisin with red hair. How long have you been in that thing?

EVELYN

How long have you ---

CARL

What time did you get up?

EVELYN

I didn't go to sleep.

CARL

Don't kid a kidder. I was in the same bed.

EVELYN

You passed out, I came out here. The sky was so beautiful. As the sunrise began I jumped in here. I think I'm going to become a religious recluse. How much a month do you want for this little spot?

CARL

I will share it with you, on occasion. You may even have it to your self now and then, but it ain't for rent. Now it's time to get out. Before you shrivel up.

EVELYN

Just a few more minutes, please?

CARL

I have a meeting in an hour and you shouldn't be here. It's not as if we are still married.

EVELYN

A stab at humor in your ascending middle age? The air is a little chilly, I forgot to bring a robe.

Walking toward her slowly undoing his robe.

CARL

So I made an unfunny joke. It was still a joke. Here take mine. I do love it here. This is the best spot on earth.

EVELYN

For making whoopee?

CARL

For making anything. This deck is the best idea I ever had.

EVELYN

The deck is the best idea George ever had.

CARL

Veranda. It's a veranda. Just ask him. What time did he leave?

EVELYN

Not sure.

CARL

What do you want out of life?

EVELYN

Strange question.

CARL

I mean now. After the divorce.

EVELYN

I don't think I know, for sure. Maybe go on tour with a company. Get away from the movies for a while.

CARL

Ask me what I want out of life.

EVELYN

Where is this going?

CARL

Don't know.

As he turns to exit.

CARL (cont'd)

Be back in about a week. Gotta keep one foot in the air.

EVELYN

Where are you going? What about your important meeting?

CARL

Tell them to enjoy the veranda. And the tub, if you're in the mood. See you in a week.

EVELYN

Son of a bitch.

END SCENE 5

SCENE 6

THIS ISN'T WORKING

A year later.)

Evelyn and Carl seated. Mother is present.

MOTHER

Don't you think it's time you straightened this out?

CARL

This isn't working out the way you thought it would.

EVELYN

What? ---

CARL

I said ---

EVELYN

I heard what you said. What are you talking about?

MOTHER

I told you she was a bitch but would you listen to your mother?

CARL

This marriage. The divorce. This divorce thing isn't working out.

EVELYN

What makes you say a thing like that?

MOTHER

Has she got nerve , or what?

CARL

You still live here when you want and don't when you don't. I feel for all the world like I'm still married and you apparently don't feel the same.

EVELYN

The only time you feel married is when you can actually see me. When I'm not around who knows what you do. Who knows and who cares. Besides the tabloids. So what's your problem? Why isn't this arrangement working, exactly?

CARL

Well, for one thing when you lived here this is where you were when you weren't on location. Now, I don't know where you are most of the time or for that matter when you might show up here. Unannounced and ---

EVELYN

Cramping your style?

CARL

Come back. Move back in. Let's get married again.

MOTHER

Don't do this. You've got her right where you want her. You just got rid of the broad.

Father enters.

FATHER

Why you wanna clog up your life again?

EVELYN

Who am I talking to? And why? We have a nice life divorced. And you want to ruin that?

(MORE)

EVELYN (cont'd)

Why the hell would I want to marry you again and by the way that was really a romantic proposal. Somebody should write that into a movie.

MOTHER

This time I'm telling you to listen to your father.

CARL

You're right. How about if I get down on one knee?

EVELYN

That would be better than the two previous proposals.

MOTHER / FATHER

What.

CARL

I really mean it this time. No more screwing around. It worked once.

EVELYN

As strange as it seems, it did work once.

She crosses to him and just looks in his eyes.

FATHER

There goes your freedom dummy.

MOTHER

Maybe their actually in love.

FATHER

Shit.

EVELYN

I'll tell you what. Let me think about it. Give me a few days.

CARL

What's to think about.

FATHER

Maybe somebody else is in the way. Maybe you ain't the only game in town.

She takes his hands in hers and kisses him gently.

EVELYN

Just a few days, I promise.

As she exits.

EVELYN (cont'd)

I promise.

MOTHER

Maybe she loves you after all.

FATHER

I think you'd lose money on that bet.

MOTHER

Shut up for once will you. Maybe they can work it out.

FATHER

Maybe if they get rid of the other guy.

MOTHER

What other guy. There isn't another guy.

Mother's instinct. A mother knows. I think I might have been wrong about her.

END SCENE 6

SCENE 7

RETURN OF THE SNAKE

JOHN

This is an unexpected change.

CARL

Yes it is.

JOHN

You were so resolute in your convictions about the book.

CARL

So, I've had a change of heart. A lot of things have changed.

JOHN

Whatever. I'm ready when you are. But realize that what ever caused you to change your mind will eventually be discovered.

CARL

So what, I've turned a new leaf. Things are different now. I have asked Evelyn to marry me again.

JOHN

Big step. After the divorce and all that's happened. What did she say?

CARL

She wanted a few days before responding.

JOHN

She didn't just say yes?

CARL

No and I don't know why. Or perhaps I don't want to know why.

JOHN

She must have her reasons. Didn't she give you a hint.

CARL

She just said she needed a few days kissed me and left.

(Pause.) What do you think, John?

JOHN

Me, think? Why I have no idea what to think?

CARL

I know she loves me, I'm sure of that.

He crosses to face John.

CARL (cont'd)

Do you think there is someone else? Oh, I don't mean some one she's screwing around with. Some one else in her life.

He stands starrng at John.

CARL (cont'd)

Well?

JOHN

How the hell would I know something like that?

CARL

You know all the characters. If you were writing a book who would it be? Who could it possibly be?

JOHN

I can't really say. In a novel a close friend would probably fill the bill. Say somebody like -
--

CARL

Like you?

JOHN

Me? No no not me. But, if you're serious. What about George? I'm kidding of course. But he is always hanging around here isn't he.

CARL

So are you. But I wouldn't pick you all you care about is the damn book. I think for now you had better go.

JOHN

What about the book.

CARL

Another time. I have some thinking to do.

END SCENE 7

SCENE 8

REQUIEM

*George is seated at the table, doing magic tricks.
Carl enters.*

CARL

What are you up to now?

GEORGE

Card tricks. Magic.

CARL

Magic? Well I guess it is safer than tap dancing.

GEORGE

That was an accident.

CARL

Maybe you're just clumsy. Any way I wanted to talk to you.

GEORGE

I gathered as much when I got the invitation. "Get your ass up here. Love, Carl." What could be so important?

CARL

I'll get to it. I thought you'd like to spend the day up here. You always loved this place.

GEORGE

Another beautiful day on Carl's mountain. What's not to love? And if I might ask, what's up?

CARL

Could you put the toys away, please.

GEORGE

They are not toys and they cost enough.

CARL

George!

GEORGE

Okay, okay.

He puts his tricks into a box.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Let her rip. There is something gnawing at you, I can tell. Let's have it.

CARL

There's something I don't understand.

GEORGE

Some thing? You mean unlike the rest of us mere mortals who have a boatload of things we don't understand.

CARL

Don't hand me that crap George. You know everything.

GEORGE

Maybe I do know everything. That doesn't mean that I understand everything.

CARL

One thing I understand is this. Following my directions and giving me what I wanted, you designed this house. Then you redesigned it for yourself, then for that Boots fellow and then for countless others.

(MORE)

CARL (cont'd)

You became rich off of my ideas by rebuilding this house all over southern California. So here's the thing I don't understand. Why do you spend so much time here in this house? This house which is in reality my design. Why aren't you freeloading off the other clients in their revised versions of my ideas?

GEORGE

Where the hell is all this coming from?

CARL

Answer my question. You smug son of a bitch. All you seem to know is how clever you are at appropriating other people's ideas. Is that what they teach you in 'I'm an Architect school'? Is that all you think about? How smart you are? How to improve on nature, on God's handiwork? You're just a damned salesman, that's all you are.

GEORGE

I can't stay long. New clients another commission. They are dying to see the first drawings.

CARL

In my business they say dying is easy, comedy is hard.

GEORGE

I've heard that.

CARL

And you are also about to experience it.

GEORGE

Beginning a new career in comedy Carl? At this stage? Not that you haven't made some funny films over the years.

CARL

No! I'm not thinking of turning to comedy.

Producing a gun from behind the bar.

CARL (cont'd)

You on the other hand are going to experience death.

GEORGE

Aha. So it's comedy after all. The gun startled me at first.

CARL

It's going to do more than startle you. Now you'll think twice about screwing around with somebody else's wife.

GEORGE

What the hell are you talking about? This isn't funny.

CARL

You're damn right it isn't.

Carl cocks the hammer of the gun and takes aim. He squeezes the trigger, the hammer strikes but the gun does not fire. George turns away and attempts to escape as Carl fires a round in the air. George collapses grasping his chest.

CARL (cont'd)

Oh, shit!

END SCENE 8

SCENE 9

LAST BLAST?

Carl And Evelyn are seated at the table.

EVELYN

What a beautiful night. A fitting sunset.
George would have loved that eulogy. I wish he
could have heard it.

CARL

Oh, he heard it alright.

EVELYN

What do you mean?

CARL

Did you and George ever get together?

EVELYN

What? (Pause.) You mean? (Pause,) George? Me
and George? No. Never. George and I were
friends. You know that.

CARL

Not even once?

EVELYN

What are you trying to do here Carl? We buried
him today. He was our friend.

CARL

Even after the divorce?

EVELYN

Did you stop your meds? George was a lot of fun
and a good friend after our divorce. So what?
What the hell are you getting at?

CARL

Do you remember a party about a year after the
divorce?

EVELYN

Not particularly.

CARL

It was the one you threw for John.

EVELYN

When his last book was published?

CARL

He bugged me all night about doing a book on me. I couldn't sleep that night I kept thinking about that biography, just couldn't get it out of my head. Like a song that keeps repeating and repeating, and so came out here on the hammock. You didn't notice me. I didn't realize it til then but the hammock offers very good concealment. I was surprised that George hadn't realized it himself. Him being the great architect and lover.

EVELYN

It's been nice seeing you again. Give my regards to your shrink.

CARL

Where are you going?

EVELYN

Do I have to wait until I'm dismissed? (Pause.) I didn't think so. You never wanted to be married to me. You wanted to marry a movie star to improve your image. You didn't know the first thing about acting. I taught you every thing. I gave you legitimacy. You were blessed with that sweet and sour little boy face and an ability to manipulate people. Me included.

CARL

We learn what we learn. How we put that learning to use is another thing.

EVELYN

Now I'm off to decide whether your just acting for my benefit or if I should call the cops.

CARL

Don't go making a fool of yourself. "Fading Hollywood star imagines murder plot."

EVELYN

Fuck you Carl.

(She turns to exit.)

CARL

Evelyn!

EVELYN

What?

CARL

George was cremated!

EVELYN

What's your point? You must have a point. With that pained expression you're probably sitting on it.

CARL

Think about what happens if you call the police. Do you think they'll send a C.S.I. unit up here?

EVELYN

All right. Have it the way you want. But whatever happened to George can never leave your head. It's in there now like the rest of the baggage you carry around with you. It's in there and you will deal with it the rest of your miserable life.

Mother and father enter.

EVELYN (cont'd)

So from now on it's you and Mom and Pop and George and God only knows what other dark figures all competing for little pieces of what's left of your sanity. You don't stand a chance. Not with those ghosts of yours.

(MORE)

EVELYN (cont'd)

I never slept with George. I tried once when I was very angry with you, but it didn't happen. I did however screw the daylights out of John.

CARL

John?

EVELYN

Yes, John.

CARL

That snake.

EVELYN

So you can sit up here and enjoy the view or blow your fucking brains out I no longer give a shit.

She exits.

CARL

Well I guess she told me.

FATHER

Maybe you should take her advice.

Carl takes the gun from the bar. As the lights begin to fade slowly

MOTHER

Why? Because you're dead and no longer need the meal ticket?

FATHER

No! Because even though he amounted to something, he never really amounted to anything good.

MOTHER

You bastard! If you had been a decent father.

Lights begin a slow fade.

FATHER

Me, a decent father? Look at what the hell he had for a mother. A drunken slut never learned how to keep a house let alone raise a kid. ---

Carl stares at the gun and begins to laugh.

MOTHER

If you hadn't run off or been able to keep a decent roof over our heads. You never held a job long enough ---

Carl continues to stare at the gun. Then as the lights fade

CARL

The wrong guy died, (Laughter) The wrong guy!

THE END

ACT I

Scene 1 -----THE END
 Scene 2 -----BEFORE THE BEGINNING
 Scene 3 -----THE BEGINING
 Scene 4 ----- AFTER THE BEGINING
 Scene 5 ----- SOME TRUTH
 Scene 6 -----THE LAST MOTHER & FATHERS DAY
 Scene 7 -----THE NEW POOL MAN
 Scene 8 ----- THE SNAKE
 Scene 9 ----- THE PERFECT TIME FOR WHAT?
 Scene 10 ----- MY PETS

ACT II

Scene 1 -----CO-STARS
Scene 2 -----EXOTIC PETS
Scene 3 -----STARS IN THEIR EYES
Scene 4 ----- YOU WANT WHAT?
Scene 5 ----- SORRY WRONG NUMBER
Scene 6 ----- THIS ISN'T WORKING
Scene 7 ----- THE SNAKE RETURNS
Scene 8 ----- REQUIEM
Scene 9 ----- LAST BLAST