

*(SIDNEY puts a record on and IRIS slips out of dress into tights and bra. The music comes up. It is a white blues out of the southland, “Babe I’m Gonna Leave You”: a lyrical lament whose melody probably started somewhere in the British Isles centuries ago and has crossed the ocean to be touched by the throb of black folk blues and then, finally, by the soul of back-country crackers. It is, in a word, old, haunting, American, and infinitely beautiful, and mingled with the voice of Joan Baez. SIDNEY beckons and IRIS crosses into his arms. They kiss, embrace playfully, then sink onto the couch. He reaches for the pins in her hair.)*

SIDNEY: Take down your hair for me, Mountain Girl.

IRIS: *(she breaks away, laughing)* Sidney, I just got home...*(replaces the pins; she does a few warm up dance plies. SIDNEY watches, then imitates. She does plie and extends an arm. He follows suit. She does so again, but this time whacks his stomach. He desists, she continues. Then, too casually:)* Ben Asch was in for lunch.

SIDNEY: *(Sobers)* So?

IRIS: He said they’re doing a tent production of *South Pacific* out on the island. Casting now. And guess who’s doing it? *(SIDNEY says nothing, deliberately busies himself at the drawing board)* Harry Maxton! *(no response)* Sidney, Harry Maxton! Remember, he *loved* me when I read for him that time? *(She shuts off the record, drops to knees and sings with the fixed “Oriental” smile and hand gestures of the original. He sobers and looks away)*

“Happy talk, keep talkin’ happy talk

Talk about things you like to do.

If you don’t have a dream...”

Remember? He really flipped for my Liat!

SIDNEY: And he hired somebody else. And you know perfectly well you won’t show up for the audition. *(He is immediately sorry)*

IRIS: You rotten, cruel, sadistic, self-satisfying son of a bitch!

SIDNEY: I’m sorry. I don’t know why I do that.

IRIS: Then why don’t you *find out* and give us both a break!

SIDNEY: Does Dr. Steiner really tell you to go around drumming up business for him like that?

IRIS: *(with superiority)* I have *not* mentioned Dr. Steiner! And I am *not* going to. I am *not ever* going to mention Dr. Steiner in this house again. *Or* my analysis. You don’t understand it. You can’t//unless you’ve been through it yourself!

SIDNEY: unless you’ve been through it yourself! “Happy talk, keep talkin’ happy talk...”

IRIS: Well, that happens to be true!

SIDNEY: Iris, honey, you’ve been in analysis for two years and the only difference is that *before* you used to *cry* all the time. And now you *scream*. *(a beat)* Before you cry. *(He crosses to bar and mixes drink.)*

IRIS: YOU DON'T GET BETTER OVERNIGHT, SIDNEY, BUT IT IS HELPING ME! Do you think I would have been able to say the things I just said if I wasn't going through a TREMENDOUS change?

SIDNEY: (*genuinely curious*) What things?

IRIS: I just called you a sadistic, self-satisfying son of a bitch to your face--instead of just *thinking* it. (*He looks at her blankly*) Well, don't you remember when I couldn't say things like that? Just *feel* them -- but not *say* them?

SIDNEY: Which amounts to you paying that quack half your paycheck to teach you how to swear. Lots of luck!

IRIS: It's *my* paycheck. And that's not the point!

SIDNEY: I'm sorry. Swear *out loud*.

IRIS: (*through her teeth*) For someone who thinks that they are the great intellect of all times, the top-heaviest son of a bitch that ever lived--

SIDNEY: (*cupping his hands like a megaphone*) Another step toward mental health!

IRIS: For someone who thinks they've got the most *open* mind that was ever opened, *you* are the most narrow-minded, provincial//insular and parochial bastard alive!

SIDNEY: "insular and parochial"

IRIS: (*coyly*) And I'll tell you this: I may be whacked up, sweetie, but I really would hate to see the inside of your stomach. Oh-ho I really would! St. John of the Twelve Agonies, I'll tell you.

SIDNEY: (*quietly amused*) I am *not* agonized.

IRIS: *Everyone* is agonized!

SIDNEY: Look, Iris, three years ago you practically tore up our marriage looking for a sex problem, because one fine day you decided we *had* to have one -- because "*everybody* has one." We even *invented* one for six months to keep Steiner happy.

IRIS: (*darkly teasing*) I happen to know some things about you *in bed* that you don't know.

SIDNEY: Then tell me about them so we can discuss them.

IRIS: *Oh no!* No sirree. Get thyself to a professional. You're not going to catch *me* engaging in parlor analysis!

SIDNEY: There was nothing to analyze. It was merely a little matter of technique. (*huskily sexy*) There are just some things in bed I like -- (*embracing her*) -- and some I like MORE!

IRIS: (*playfully*) That just shows you: nothing about *sex* is *just* technical. And I must say for a contented man, who just *happens* to have an ulcer, you drink one hell of a lot.

SIDNEY (*sore spot*) It's *my* ulcer!

IRIS: Basically, Sidney, you are an ambivalent personality. You can't admit to disorder of any sort because that symbolizes weakness to you, and you can't admit to health either or because you associate that with superficiality/

SIDNEY: Iris, please, shut the hell up, I can't stand it when you're on this jag! *(He reaches for her again: this precious foolishness is all a game he loves)*

IRIS: Then why didn't you marry somebody you could talk to then! *(It hangs for a second, absorbed with minor melancholy by SIDNEY who tries to rise above it...)*

SIDNEY: Because -- *(lifting his drink like Cyrano)* "what did please the morning's academic ear did seem indeed-- *(bringing the hand down defeatedly)* to repel the evening's sensuous touch.

*(IRIS looks at him blankly)*

SIDNEY: What you were supposed to say was: "In such regard and diluted esteem doth my master hold his own sweet Iris--"

IRIS: I don't know the piece. What is it?

SIDNEY: *(dully)* Nothing.

IRIS: What?

SIDNEY: Plutarch or some damn body!

IRIS: Well, whatever it's from, it said you really do think I'm stupid!

SIDNEY: It said: I love you. It said, girl, that I love my wife. Curious thing. *(he stops her lips with a kiss)*

IRIS: Meaning frivolous mind and all.

SIDNEY: You make a silly fishwife. Stop it.

IRIS: Can't I say *anything*?

SIDNEY: Not in this mood, it's driving me crazy!

IRIS: *(resolute anger)* And one thing is clear: You prefer picking at me to talking to me.

*(She crosses into the bathroom to brush her teeth with door open)*

SIDNEY: I do not! And tell that Dr. Steiner to take his love-hate obsession and -- *(restraining himself)* Look, let's talk about how we are going to get you to that audition.

IRIS: Sidney, why can't you understand about the blocks that people have?

SIDNEY: I do understand about them and I know that if they are nurtured enough they get bigger and bigger and --

IRIS: All right, Sidney. All right. *(She finishes in the bathroom and marches out)*

So I haven't worked out my life so good. Have you? Or are those glasses I see before me a MIRAGE!

SIDNEY: No, Iris, they are not a mirage. Look, nobody's perfect. I may have made a few slight miscalculations, but...Aw, what do you know about it?

IRIS: *(undulating with triumph)* I know there is no great wisdom in opening a folksong nightclub where there are something like twenty such in a radius four blocks square. I know that, darling-pie!

SIDNEY: *(painfully: old refrain)* It wasn't supposed to be a nightclub--

IRIS: Don't remind me. *(she crosses into bedroom and returns with a sweater and tight high-water pants which she pulls on)* And what are you going to do with all those glasses?

SIDNEY: How do I know right now? There have to be places that need 150 sturdy restaurant glasses, don't there? I'll take care of it.

IRIS: You know when they *audit* the place they're going to think it's awfully funny that they're no glasses, I mean, a night-- (*smiles*) --*spot* with no customers, maybe...but no *glasses!*? What're you going to say happened to them?

SIDNEY: How should I know what happened to them? Maybe somebody broke in and stole 'em. Why should I know every little detail?

IRIS: (*giggling*) Auditors *love* details, Sid. They specialize in details.

SIDNEY: I said I'll take care of it! You oughta be grateful I had the foresight to at least salvage something out of it *before* they audit! (*Tickles her to change the subject. She escapes*)

IRIS: Right. I'm grateful. "Foresight." (*She turns back the cover of SIDNEY'S pad to reveal the layout on which he had been working; picking it up*) So now what? You're going to be an artist? This is *aw-ful*. (*a fit of appropriate giggling*)

SIDNEY: It's not supposed to be a drawing. It's the layout for the new-- (*He halts*)

IRIS: For the *what*, Sidney? For the "new" *what*?

SIDNEY: Harvey Wyatt met this chick--

IRIS: Yes, *and--?*

SIDNEY: --he decided to go live in Majorca, forget the whole scene and just like that go live in Majorca...I mean you know Harvey, he's a great--

IRIS: Yes, *and--*

SIDNEY: So he *had* to unload the paper.

IRIS: Oh my God, no. Oh, please, God, don't let it be true. Unload it on -- *whom*? Oh, Sidney, you haven't...?

SIDNEY: I know it's hard for you, Iris, to understand what I'm all about--

IRIS: I don't believe this. I don't believe you could come out of --of *that--(she gestures to the glasses and then to the pad)* and get into *this!* Aside from anything else, what did you conceivably tell Harvey you were going to pay him?

SIDNEY: We made an arrangement. Don't worry about it.

IRIS: I'm not worried about it what kind of arrangement, Sidney?

SIDNEY: An arrangement. I know what I arranged.

IRIS: Where in the world are you going to get the money to pay for a newspaper?

SIDNEY: It's a *small* newspaper. A weekly.

IRIS: Sidney, you can't afford a *yearly leaflet!*

SIDNEY: Look, this is a real rich babe Harvey's hooked up with. He's not worried about the money.

IRIS: Good.

SIDNEY: Just yet.

IRIS: When? (*a beat*) And when he *is*, Sidney?

SIDNEY: Why isn't it ever enough for me to tell you that I know what I'm doing? I'll raise it, that's all. I raised it for Walden Pond! I'll raise it for the *Village Crier*. In order to *do* things you have to *do* things!