



National Library  
of Canada

Bibliothèque nationale  
du Canada

Canadian Theses Service

Service des thèses canadiennes

Ottawa, Canada  
K1A 0N4

## NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

## AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

# **The Ladies Aid**

**Jean Jeacle**

**A Thesis  
in  
The Department  
of  
English**

**Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts at  
Concordia University  
Montreal, Quebec, Canada**

**July 1990**

**© Jean Jeacle**



National Library  
of Canada

Bibliothèque nationale  
du Canada

Canadian Theses Service    Service des thèses canadiennes

Ottawa, Canada  
K1A 0N4

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-315-64762-0

Canada

## **Abstract**

### ***The Ladies Aid***

**Jean Jeacle**

*The Ladies Aid* is a modern comedy encased in the format of farce. Various and varied individuals are introduced, and an improbable, but not impossible, situation is set up. The resulting humour arises from the individuals' reactions to the circumstances. These reactions may, on occasion, seem like over-reactions, but they are consistent with the characters of each as revealed by the dialogue.

As is usual in the tradition of farce, the situation itself functions as the antagonist and the group, rather than the individual, takes on the role of protagonist. All characters are shown as they appear to others, not as they see themselves; too much introspection detracts from farce in that it puts emphasis on the tragic rather than the comic (i.e. absurd) aspect of life.

All the action takes place at the present time, in continuous time, in the office of The Ladies Aid, a militant self-help group for the women of a contemporary Canadian town. Misunderstandings and misreadings abound as each character tries to bring her/his sense of order to a not-very-sensible situation. Physical action is frenetic but not, in the end, futile. A co-operative effort allows the group to win one small skirmish with circumstance.

**Cast of Characters**  
**(in order of appearance)**

**LIL: (over 50) — cynical and soft-hearted**

**MUFFY: (17) — shining with youth and inexperience**

**SALLY: (60 plus) — wholesomely unstylish**

**STACEY: (under 30) — defiantly unladylike**

**MERLE: (around 40) — not as "together" as she'd like to be**

**EV: (around 40) — pleasant...and male**

**FELICITY: (over 50, though reluctant to admit it) — silly and insecure**

**The action takes place at the headquarters of The Ladies Aid, a militant feminist organization, located in a typical Ontario town.**

## ACT ONE

(THE LIGHTS COME UP ON THE LADIES AID DROP-IN CENTRE AND OFFICE OF A FEMINIST SELF-AWARENESS GROUP. LIL, DRESSED FLASHILY IN POLYESTER AND COSTUME JEWELLERY AND WEARING A BROOKLYN DODGER BASEBALL CAP, ENTERS, GOES TO TAPE DECK AND PUTS IN CASSETTE. AS THE ROOM FILLS WITH THE SOUNDS OF "THE STRIPPER", SHE GOES TO A LOCKER, WHOSE INSIDE DOOR IS COVERED WITH SPORTS PICTURES, WHERE SHE PUTS THE CAP AND GETS OUT AN APRON AND SOME DUSTRAGS. SHE DONS THE APRON, TUCKS THE EXTRA RAGS IN THE POCKET, AND BEGINS DUSTING IN TIME TO THE MUSIC. SHE IS DOING A LAUGHABLE, SLIGHTLY LEWD STRIP ROUTINE, USING THE DUSTRAG TO GOOD ADVANTAGE, WHEN MUFFY, THE QUINTESSENTIAL TEENAGER, WALKS IN. MUFFY STANDS ENTRANCED UNTIL LIL NOTICES HER.)

LIL: Good God!

MUFFY: Good morning.

LIL: What're ya starin' at? Haven't ya ever seen anybody dust before?

MUFFY: Not like that.

LIL: I like to throw myself into my work...is that a problem for ya?

MUFFY: Oh, no...it was awesome...really...

LIL: But?

MUFFY: Pardon?

LIL: Your mouth quit...but your brain didn't. I could swear there was a big "but" beggin' to get out.

MUFFY: Well...it's just that...your dusting was impressive...but unliberated...I mean...all those... uhh...

LIL: Bumps and grinds?

MUFFY: Yes...those. They're not usually associated with...

LIL: With what?

MUFFY: Radical feminism.

LIL: Jesus!

MUFFY: So I didn't expect to see a radical feminist doing them.

LIL: Hey, listen! I'm a dustbuster not a braburner.

MUFFY: This is the headquarters of the Ladies' Aid, isn't it? (SHE LOOKS AT THE SIGN ON THE DOOR TO VERIFY THE FACT)

LIL: I'm the cleanin' lady...excuse me...person.

MUFFY: Oh...I'm sorry.

LIL: Why should ya be? Nothin' wrong with bein' a cleanin' person.

MUFFY: Please...I didn't mean that...I mean, I'm sorry I mistook you for a feminist.

LIL: Damn well should be! My mother us'd to be president of St. Swithin's Ladies Aid...and she'd come back from the grave, wavin' a hatchet, if she knew what this bunch was doin' under the name.

MUFFY: I thought it was clever of them to name a women's self-help and consciousness-raising group "The Ladies Aid."

LIL: Cripes! Have they suckered you into it too?

MUFFY: No...I'm here to get background on women's issues so I can write a paper for my "Man in Society" class.

LIL: What class?

MUFFY: Man In Society.

LIL: And you talk about women in it?

MUFFY: Yes.

LIL: Don't tell Stacey that or she'll be at the school with a warrant and a Winchester rifle.

MUFFY: It's funny...I never thought about the name before. I just take the course. But it should say "women" in the title, shouldn't it?

LIL: I could care less, kid, but the others...believe me, they care.

MUFFY: I need to learn everything they care about...(LIL LOOKS SKEPTICAL.) I don't want to especially, but I want to get into college. Will they be here soon?

LIL: Should be...but whether they'll have time to talk is another question. They're gettin' this fund-raisin' concert together and they're squirrelier than usual.

MUFFY: You sound as if you don't like them very much.

LIL: What's to like? Most of the things they do seem like a big waste o' time to me...(LOOKING AT WATCH) Speakin' of which...I gotta be at the bus stop at twelve noon.

MUFFY: Oh?

LIL: (SMILING DREAMILY) The Calgary Killer's comin' to town.



MUFFY: The wrestler?

LIL: (SIGHING) The wrestler.

MUFFY: You like him?

LIL: I love him...I'm president of his fan club...and I'm goin' to be there when his bus comes in.

MUFFY: I thought he was a bad guy.

LIL: He is...mean, nasty, rotten...

MUFFY: And you're going to meet him?

LIL: I am...if I ever get out of here. Stick around if you want, but I got work to do. (SHE IS CLEANING, SWIFTLY BUT SUPERFICIALLY, AND MUFFY IS BROWSING THROUGH A PAMPHLET WHEN SALLY ENTERS.)

SALLY: (APOLOGETICALLY) Excuse me.

LIL: For what?

SALLY: For...for interrupting, I guess.

LIL: It's a free world.

MUFFY: (PLACATINGLY TO SALLY) She's the cleaning lady...I mean person,... The real ladies aren't here yet.

SALLY: I'll wait.

LIL: (STILL MOVING) You sure you got the right place?

SALLY: Is this the Ladies Aid?

LIL: You got it. (SHE CONTINUES ABOUT HER BUSINESS.)

MUFFY: (TO FILL IN SILENCE) They're going to have a fund-raising concert.

SALLY: Good! I have some verses that go over well.

LIL: (TO HERSELF) Help me!

MUFFY: I'm not sure what they're raising the money for...

SALLY: Good works, I imagine.

LIL: Oh, sure...good works! They're probably goin' to buy salt petre to put in the stew at the Rotary Club luncheon.

MUFFY: What's salt petre?

SALLY: I don't know.

LIL: Good God!

SALLY: The funds are probably going to mission work...among the poor, the sick, and the homeless. That's what Ladies Aids are all about.

LIL: You're new around here, aren't you?

SALLY: Yes, I am. My husband died recently and I've come to keep house for Cousin Silas.

MUFFY: I'm sorry.

SALLY: I'm sorry, too...When he's watching television, he farts.

LIL: (STIFLING A LAUGH) So, in order to meet new people, you've come to join the Ladies Aid.

SALLY: Yes...I was recording secretary at home...and I thought maybe I could help out here.

LIL: With the good works.

SALLY: Yes.

MUFFY: Why did you choose this Ladies Aid?

SALLY: I saw the sign outside...This is close to Silas's house...and, after all, one Ladies Aid is similar to another. They all do...

LIL: Good works.

SALLY: Yes.

LIL: Well, Mrs...?

SALLY: Culvert...Sally Culvert.

LIL: Well, Sally...You're in for a treat. This group is always lookin' for new members.

MUFFY: (TO LIL) You can't!

LIL: I can.

SALLY: Can what?

MUFFY: You have to tell her.

LIL: I won't.

SALLY: Tell what?

MUFFY: That this Ladies Aid is...is...different.(THE DOOR BURSTS OPEN AND STACEY ENTERS AT FULL TILT AND TOP SPEED. STACEY IS CARRYING A SPORTS BAG.)

STACEY: The fruitcake...the friggin' fruitcake is down there at town hall, and we've got to do something about it. (SHE STOPS AND LOOKS AROUND) Where's Merle? (THE OTHERS SHRUG, IN TURN, AS IF TO SAY, "I DON'T KNOW.") I'll have to do the organizing myself then...Come on...I'll need help. (SHE MARCHES OUT AND SALLY STARTS TO FOLLOW HER.)

LIL: Where are you going?

SALLY: To Town Hall. You heard her...There's fruitcake there...Think of all the poor people we can feed with that. (SHE EXITS)

MUFFY: I didn't think she meant that kind of fruitcake.

LIL: She didn't.

MUFFY: Poor Mrs. Culvert...She doesn't know what she's getting into.

LIL: Nobody knows what they're gettin' into when they follow Fender Bender.

MUFFY: Fender Bender?

LIL: The steamroller that just went through...Real name's Stacey Bender...but the other seems so right.

MUFFY: I should have gone to protect her.

LIL: She's a big girl, kid. she can look after herself.

MUFFY: I hope so.

LIL: If you want to be a do-gooder, do good for me. I'm goin' to be late. (LIL THROWS MUFFY A DUSTRAG. MUFFY SEEMS UNSURE WHAT TO DO WITH IT.) Come on. (LIL BEGINS SINGING AS SHE DUSTS. MUFFY JOINS IN UNCERTAINLY BUT WILLINGLY. THE SONG IS "PAPER DOLL" AND MERLE WALKS IN IN MID-CHORUS. SHE INTERRUPTS THEM.)

MERLE: What kind of chauvinistic garbage is that?

LIL: It's only a song, Merle.

MERLE: A song in which a woman is referred to as a doll, Lillian. We are not dolls, or pets, or oopsie-poozie sugar plums. We are women...rational, reasonable human beings.

LIL: Then be reasonable and quit coming on like gangbusters.

MERLE: I did not...(PAUSE)... Maybe I did overreact...a bit, but these things are important. Women mustn't accept being treated as objects.

MUFFY: It was just a song.

MERLE: And who are you?

MUFFY: Muffy Henderson.

MERLE: Muffy?

MUFFY: It's better than Melisande.

LIL: Not much...(TO MERLE) She wants to learn about the group.

MERLE: It sounds as if she needs to.

MUFFY: I have to write a paper for my Ma...my sociology class.

MERLE: I don't have time for an interview right now...I'm swamped with things to do, but you can hang around and see what goes on here. Have a seat.

MUFFY: Thank you. Do you have any fashion magazines I can look at? (SHE SITS.)

LIL: What?

MUFFY: (EYING LIL'S ATTIRE) No...I guess not.

MERLE: I don't know where to start...the show, the secretary...

LIL: The sump pump...

MERLE: Oh, Lord, that, too. I forgot. Lil, could you...

LIL: No way! No time...and no desire. (SHE BEGINS TIDYING.)

MERLE: (RIFLING THROUGH PAPERS ON HER DESK) Those darn jokers at the Y.M.C.A.... They've heard about the show and they want to put an act in. They can just forget it. This is a feminist celebration and we'll have no sexist stuff...and no sexists either.

MUFFY: Excuse me, but if your group is fighting against discrimination, maybe you shouldn't practice it yourselves.

MERLE: (TO LILLIAN) I thought you said she was here to learn.

MUFFY: I'm sorry.

MERLE: Don't say that! Women are always saying they're sorry when they aren't...or shouldn't be. You said it; you meant it. Stick with it even if I don't like it.

MUFFY: I'm sorry. (MERLE LOOKS AT HER) I'm sorry I said I'm sorry.

MERLE: Work on it! (TO LIL) She has a point, though. If we don't let men in the show, they'll say we discriminated against them...but if we do let them in, they'll take over.

LIL: They'll sure as hell try. It's the nature of the beast.

MUFFY: Just because they try, doesn't mean they'll succeed.

MERLE: I'll have to give this more thought before I give them an answer, but I can't do it now. I have to get ready for the new secretary. Here Muffy...here's some literature for you to read.

MUFFY: Propaganda?

MERLE: Certainly not!

LIL: It's only propaganda when the other side puts out its views. This is information. (TO MERLE) So you finally got the money to hire help.

MERLE: Yes, thank goodness. The grant came through.

LIL: Who'd you finally choose...Lamebrain or Looselip?

MERLE: I wish you wouldn't make fun of our members.

LIL: Don't expect me to say I'm sorry. Real women don't need to.

MERLE: Once again, you've misinterpreted the message. Honestly Lil, you'd think you of all people would be receptive to the cause. You've been exploited all your life.

LIL: By women as well as men, Toots. People are no damn good: that's my motto...Now, are you goin' to tell me who the secretary is goin' to be?

MERLE: I didn't choose Lame...Lydia or Lucille. I thought it would upset the one if the other were picked.

LIL: And it would screw up the whole organization if either one was put in charge.

MERLE: The secretarial agency is sending over a highly suitable candidate...(LOOKING AT PAPER) by name of Evelyn Haugh.

LIL: There used to be a ball player named Haw...H.A.U.G.H.

MUFFY: It spells better than it sounds. I bet she can hardly wait to get married and change her name.

MERLE: She'd better not...and you shouldn't either.

LIL: Oh, come on. I changed my name three times.

MUFFY: You've had three husbands.

LIL: Four...but I didn't change my name with the second one. I knew he was a mistake as soon as I sobered up.

MERLE: Enough, Lil, enough. Anyway, I don't know if she's married or not. The forms don't have such sexist questions anymore, thank goodness! She looks like a winner, though...typing, shorthand, bookkeeping...

LIL: Well, I'm glad you'll have help. The Blonde Bomber doesn't seem to have any office skills.

MERLE: Stacey's all right. A bit over-zealous, perhaps, in her defence of the sisterhood, but she'll calm down. She's young.

LIL: God, isn't she! She tires me out lookin' at her.

MERLE: By the way, where is she?

LIL: Town Hall.

MERLE: Oh no!

LIL: Why "Oh no"?

MERLE: Because Felicity Fairweather is supposed to be there.

LIL: Ah ha...The Fruitcake explained.

MUFFY: You mean the Total Woman?

MERLE: The same. She's in town to promote her book. (IN DISGUST) "Give Him What He Wants"... She's supposed to meet the mayor and present him with an autographed copy.

LIL: That'll be quite the meetin' of minds...a total idiot and a complete ass.

MERLE: I hid the announcement because I knew Stacey would get in a flap if she saw it.

LIL: She's flappin' alright!

MERLE: We can't get mixed up in this now...We're too busy with the show...Stacey's got to be stopped.

LIL: Got a Sherman tank handy?

MERLE: Go get her, Lillian...please...I've got to meet Ms. Haugh.

LIL: No way! I've got to get to the bus station...now...(SHE PUTS AWAY HER CLEANING MATERIALS, TAKES OFF HER APRON, PUTS ON HER CAP AND APPLIES LIPSTICK AND PERFUME. SHE DRINKS FROM THE PERFUME BOTTLE BEFORE PUTTING IT AWAY.) Hey, ya know . . Killer's gonna meet the mayor too...Get the key to the gym or somethin'. I may run into Stacey later.

MERLE: You may be too late. I'll go myself...She may have to be subdued.

MUFFY: Can I come?

MERLE: You wait here. When Ms. Haugh comes, tell her I'll be back as soon as possible. (MERLE AND LIL HEAD FOR THE DOOR. AS THEY TRY TO EXIT THEY RUN INTO MR. EVELYN HAUGH, BRIEFCASE IN HAND.)

EV: Good morning.

LIL: Good bye.

MERLE: We've got to go...Call again sometime.

EV: But I have an appointment.

MERLE: With whom?

EV: With Merle B. Anthony.

LIL: About what?

EV: My duties.

MERLE: As what?

EV: Her secretary.

LIL: Her what?

EV: Her secretary.

MERLE: Who are you?

EV: Evelyn Haugh.

LIL: (IN ASTONISHED DELIGHT) Haugh...ha, ha, ha, ha. ha. (IN IMITATION OF WOODY WOODPECKER)

MERLE: Go away Lillian.

LIL: Not on ycur life!

MUFFY: You'll miss the bus.

LIL: Nuts! I can't stand to miss this. You listen to every word, kid...every word. I want to hear about it later.

MERLE: (TO EV) I'd love to stay and get to know you, but my hormones are calling me away.

EV: Is your cap for sale?

LIL: I'd sell my mother first. I'm gonna be buried in it.

MERLE: Soon, I trust.

EV: I understand.

MUFFY: I don't.

MERLE: Who cares?

EV: It's the Brooklyn Dodgers.

MUFFY: Who?

LIL: God, I hate young people!

MUFFY: Why?

LIL: Because they're young.

MERLE: Lillian...Mister Haugh and I have something to discuss.

LIL: You sure do. Ta ta Merle...Muffy...Evelyn. (SHE CHORTLES AND EXITS LAUGHING, SAYING "EVELYN" AGAIN.)

MERLE: You don't have to stay, Muffy.

MUFFY: I don't have to go anywhere.

EV: I seem to have caught you at a bad time, Ms. Anthony, but I was expected wasn't I?

MERLE: No...(PAUSE) yes...(PAUSE) Oh, God!

EV: I'm ready to go to work.

MERLE: You can't.

EV: Why not?

MERLE: You never said you were a man.

EV: You never asked.

MERLE: You should have known it was important.

EV: Why?

MERLE: This is a feminist organization.

EV: I know.

MERLE: We're organized to fight the likes of you.

EV: Me!

MERLE: Oh God, I'm beginning to sound like Stacey! Look, Mr. Haugh...

EV: Ev.

MERLE: Ev...Look Ev...I don't hate you...I love you...I mean...I've got nothing against you.



EV: Good.

MERLE: But you can't be my secretary...I'd be laughed out of town if I hired you.

EV: I'm a very good secretary.

MUFFY: And your only alternatives are known as Lamebrain and Looselip.

MERLE: Don't remind me!

MUFFY: I think you should hire him.

MERLE: Did I ask for your opinion?

MUFFY: No...but think of it! What a status symbol. A male secretary! Better than a Laura Ashley original any day.

EV: And I don't have to be hand-laundered...unless, of course, you'd like to...(HE & MUFFY LAUGH.)

MERLE: This is not a laughing matter. There is no way that I could be persuaded to hire you.

EV: There must be...and I won't leave until I find it. I want this job.

MERLE: That's crazy!

EV: I know it is.

MERLE: There are hundreds of secretarial jobs available to someone with your skills.

EV: Not one of them has the appeal that this one suddenly does.

MERLE: You haven't even seen the workload.

EV: But I've seen the boss.

MUFFY: You're flirting with her!

MERLE: He is not!

EV: He is so.

MERLE: Well, he'd better quit.

MUFFY: Why?

MERLE: It's...it's unprofessional.

EV: You're quite right. I apologize.

MERLE: Good...now, good-bye.

**EV:** Uh uh...I'm going to change my tactics, not my mind. What would you like me to do first?

**MERLE:** I'd like you to leave.

**EV:** Besides that.

**MERLE:** Mr. Haugh...

**EV:** Ms. Anthony, I was told that you were in desperate need of a secretary. Was I misinformed?

**MERLE:** No...but...

**EV:** I'm a secretary.

**MERLE:** You're a man.

**EV:** (TO MUFFY) You heard that.

**MUFFY:** I didn't have to be told. I knew by looking.

**EV:** Just remember her words. You may have to repeat them for the judge.

**MUFFY:** What judge?

**EV:** The one who'll be deciding whether or not I have been discriminated against.

**MERLE:** Oh, come on now...

**EV:** (TO MUFFY) Your picture may even be in the paper.

**MUFFY:** I love it!

**EV:** Not as often as Ms. Anthony's, of course...

**MERLE:** Why you...! That's...

**EV:** Unconscionable?

**MERLE:** Yes.

**EV:** Despicable?

**MERLE:** Yes.

**EV:** I know. Do I get the job?

**MERLE:** No.

**EV:** Right! My lawyer will be in touch.

**MERLE:** Let's not be hasty...

EV: I accept your apology.

MERLE: I didn't offer one...I just...(THE SOUND OF A MALFUNCTIONING MACHINE INTERRUPTS HER)... Oh, damn! (SHE HEADS FOR A DOOR LEADING TO ANOTHER ROOM) Don't go away.

EV: Wild horses or naked women couldn't drag me off. (MERLE EXITS) I don't believe it!

MUFFY: Neither do I. (THE SOUND OF A FOOT KICKING A MACHINE IS HEARD) This assignment sounded so grim, but it's a gas!

EV: I just came here on a bet. (ANOTHER KICK IS HEARD)

MUFFY: You're not a secretary?

EV: Yes, I am...The gang at the employment agency bet me fifty dollars I couldn't get this job. I like a challenge.

MUFFY: You found one. I don't know if she'll give in or not.

EV: Help me, please.

MERLE: (OFFSTAGE) Damn! Damn! Damn!

EV: I think I'm in love.

MUFFY: Oh, wow!

EV: You can be the flower girl.

MUFFY: No way!... Fashion co-ordinator.

EV: Anything! (ANOTHER KICK AND THE MACHINE NOISE STOPS. EV AND MUFFY LOOK TOWARDS THE DOOR AS MERLE COMES LIMPING OUT.)

MERLE: Now, where were we? (EV TRIES TO HELP HER TO A CHAIR BUT SHE PUSHES HIM AWAY.)

MUFFY: Do you know anything about sump pumps, Ev?

EV: Should I?

MUFFY: I think so.

EV: Well, then...(HE IS INTERRUPTED BY THE ENTRANCE OF AN OBVIOUSLY EXCITED SALLY WHO, BLUBBERING AND BABBLING, LOOKS AROUND AND THEN RUNS OVER AND CLINGS TO MUFFY.)

SALLY: Please, don't let them get me...I didn't know what I was doing.

MERLE: Who are you?

SALLY: I refuse to answer...on the grounds that...that...

MUFFY: Mrs. Culvert, where's Stacey?

MERLE: Stacey!

SALLY: (STILL BLUBBERING) She...I...Ohhhhh...

MERLE: Muffy?

MUFFY: This is Sally Culvert.

MERLE: And...

MUFFY: She went with Stacey to Town Hall.

MERLE: And...

MUFFY: (TO SALLY) And?

SALLY: (SNIVELLING) I'm sorry I kicked him.

MUFFY: Kicked who?

SALLY: A silly little man...wearing a beard and a necklace.

MERLE: The mayor!

EV: You kicked the mayor!

SALLY: I know I shouldn't have...but they were going to kill Stacey.

MUFFY: Kill her?

SALLY: That's what they said.

MERLE: If they didn't, I may have to...What has she been doing?

SALLY: I...I...I think I need a lawyer.

EV: (TAKING SALLY'S ARM) Or a drink. (HE SITS HER DOWN, THEN GOES TO THE COFFEE URN AND BEGINS POURING OUT FOUR CUPS OF COFFEE.)

MERLE: Somebody will need a doctor if I don't find out what happened. (SALLY MOANS.)

EV: Calm down, boss lady.

MERLE: I am not your boss lady...and I am calm...now, WHAT IS GOING ON!

SALLY: I want my mother!

EV: Do you have anything stronger than coffee?

MERLE: (SITTING DOWN IN EXASPERATION) There's Lysol in the cleaning cupboard. Maybe I should have a cup of that.

EV: Tsk, tsk...such an untidy death...and just when we've met.

MERLE: Now listen here, Haugh.

MUFFY: Lillian drank some perfume.

EV: Sounds promising.

MUFFY: In that cupboard behind you.

EV: Thanks...(HE TAKES OUT THE BOTTLE AND SNIFFS IT.) Ahah...eau de 40 proof...(HE POURS SOME INTO THREE OF THE FOUR CUPS.)

MUFFY: Don't you drink?

EV: I do...but I don't serve it to minors.

MUFFY: Merle looks old enough to me.

EV: (HANDING MUFFY THE UNDOCTORED CUP) Shall I guess how old you are?

MERLE: It's not your place to guess anything. I'm in charge here.

EV: (CLASPING HANDS AND BOWING LIKE A SERVANT) Yes'm.

MERLE: Quit that!

EV: (BOWING AGAIN) Yes'm.

MUFFY: It's okay...I only drink Chivas Regal anyway.

SALLY: (WAILING TO NO ONE IN PARTICULAR) I thought it was fruitcake.

MERLE: What?

MUFFY: (PUTTING AN ARM AROUND HER) Stay cool, Mrs. Culvert. (EV GIVES SALLY HER COFFEE.)

SALLY: Is this a dream?

MUFFY: I don't think so. (EV GIVES MERLE HER COFFEE. SHE DRINKS IT IN ONE GULP AND HOLDS OUT CUP FOR MORE. EV GETS HER A REFILL.)

SALLY: Once I was wrestling with an orangoutang...I had him down too...but I woke up and found I had Harry in a leglock.

MUFFY: Harry?

SALLY: My husband.

EV: (TRYING NOT TO LAUGH) Did you hurt him?

SALLY: He said not...but he favoured his left leg for a few days...and he didn't speak to me for a week.

MUFFY: Too much!

SALLY: Of course, I didn't know he wasn't speaking to me until he told me...He never spoke much at the best of times.

MERLE: (DESPERATELY) Please, Mrs. Culbert...

SALLY: Culvert.

MERLE: Culvert...

SALLY: Like in the ditch.

MERLE: Of course...(PLEADINGLY) Mrs. Culvert, what happened at Town Hall?

SALLY: I don't want to talk about it.

MERLE: But Stacey...?

SALLY: She's a very excitable young woman.

MERLE: Tell me about it!

SALLY: And she lies.

MERLE: Not Stacey...Most of the trouble she gets into stems from the fact that she tells the truth...no matter what.

SALLY: Well, she said there was a fruitcake and I went to help her get it.

MUFFY: Mrs. Culvert believes in Good Works.

SALLY: All Ladies' Aid members do.

EV: So, what WAS there?

SALLY: A riot...(MERLE MOANS)... I mean, there wasn't one when we arrived but there was when I left.

MERLE: I may be sorry I insisted but...tell me everything.

MUFFY: Yes.

EV: Everything.

(AS SALLY RE-ENACTS HER EXPERIENCE AT CITY HALL, MERLE IS RESIGNED, MUFFY IS ENTHRALLED AND EV IS AMUSED.)

SALLY: When we went in, the first thing I saw was a group of reporters.

MERLE: Oh good!

SALLY: Then I saw the popinjay with the gaudy necklace.

MUFFY: The mayor?

SALLY: He was patting his hair and preening himself like our old rooster used to do.

EV: The mayor, indeed.

SALLY: He was smirking...(SHE THINKS ABOUT IT) Yes, it wasn't smiling, it was smirking...at this woman who was writing something in a book. She was wearing the strangest hat. I swear she had a bowl of fruit on her head.

MERLE: And was SHE simpering?

SALLY: Yes...yes, she was.

MERLE: I figured as much.

MUFFY: Who was she?

SALLY: Stacey never said her name. She just called her "Dipstick".

MUFFY: To her face?

SALLY: Hers and everyone else's...I was looking around for the crock when I suddenly heard Stacey yell: "Hey, Dipstick, can you spell bullshit?"... Oh...excuse my language.

EV: It's excused.

SALLY: Of course, it's not really my language...it's hers.

EV: We understand.

SALLY: I don't talk like that...My mother wouldn't allow it.

EV: Very sensible of her.

MERLE: Please!

SALLY: The man looked up and said, "Oh no, it's you." (EV & MUFFY LOOK AT MERLE FOR AN EXPLANATION.)

MERLE: (SHRUGGING) They've met before.

SALLY: He yelled, "Get out or I'll throw you out." Then she said, "You and...you and..."

M&M&E: (TOGETHER) Whose army?

SALLY: That's right!

EV: Funny how we knew.

SALLY: I'm not sure what happened next...There was a tomato...It was in Stacey's hand...then it was on the mayor's shirt...The mayor grabbed Stacey and the reporters were laughing and the door burst open and a whole bunch of women ran in...no, wait...there were some men...a big one...I mean a really big one...and they were all screaming "Kill her, kill her". I couldn't let that happen, could I?

EV: Of course not.

SALLY: So I kicked him...where it hurt.

MUFFY: You didn't!

SALLY: I did...His shin will be sore for days.

MERLE: But where's Stacey now?

SALLY: I don't know. She pushed me through the crowd, said "Run for cover," then rushed back in. I did what I was told. I ran...and ran and ran and ran...miles I think.

MERLE: A block at least.

SALLY: I didn't want to go to Silas' so I came here...Am I in trouble?

EV: None that we can't get you out of.

MERLE: "We", Mr. Haugh? I'll thank you to leave this to me. The Ladies Aid can look after its own.

MUFFY: But I want to protect her, too.

SALLY: You're all so kind. And I don't even know you.

MUFFY: I'm Muffy. I'm a visitor.

EV: I'm Ev. I'm the secretary.

SALLY: You're not!

MERLE: That's right...he's not.

EV: But I will be.

MUFFY: He should be.

MERLE: He can't be...I've already explained.

(THERE IS A COMMOTION IN THE HALL. STACEY APPEARS IN THE DOORWAY, BLOODIED BUT UNBOWED. SHE HAS HER ADIDAS BAG IN ONE HAND.



IN THE OTHER HAND SHE HAS A ROPE. IT IS APPARENT THAT THERE IS SOMEONE OR SOMETHING AT THE END OF THAT ROPE JUST OFFSTAGE.)

- STACEY: Move it or lose it, sister. (SHE TUGS ON THE ROPE AND IN COMES FELICITY FAIRWEATHER, HER HAT ATILT AND TOMATO SPLOTCHED. HER ARMS ARE PINNED TO HER SIDE BY THE ROPE AND HER MOUTH IS COVERED BY STACEY'S HEADBAND. SHE IS MAD BUT MUTE.)
- MERLE: Stacey!
- SALLY: Stacey!
- MERLE: (PUSHING SALLY BACK IN AN EXAGGERATEDLY CALM WAY) Me first...(TO STACEY) Explain this little joke, please.
- STACEY: It's no joke...This is for real. (FELICITY STAMPS HER FEET. STACEY JERKS ON THE ROPE AND THE STAMPING STOPS.)
- MERLE: I probably don't want to know the answer to this, but...Who is under that hat?
- STACEY: (PROUDLY) Felicity Fairweather.
- MERLE: I knew I didn't want to know.
- EV: The Total Woman?
- STACEY: The total jerk! (FELICITY STARTS STAMPING AGAIN.)
- MUFFY: The total corpse, if she bursts a blood vessel.
- MERLE: (AS MUFFY UNBINDS ARMS AND EV TAKES OFF GAG) What's it feel like to have a stroke? I think I might be having one.
- FELICITY: (TO STACEY) I'll sue. I'll take you for every cent you've got...and if you've ruined my make-up, I'll kill you.
- EV: Apparently you'll have to get in line for that.
- STACEY: You haven't a leg to stand on. This is war...and you are our prisoner. We'll abide by the rules of the Geneva Convention...but you're not leaving here until you've been brainwashed.
- MUFFY: How do you do that?
- STACEY: I don't know...but Merle will tell us. She knows everything.
- FELICITY: Does she know that she and her cockamamy crew of girl guerrillas will be demolished when I'm through with them? (SHE NOTICES THE FINGER SHE HAS BEEN WAGGING AT THEM.) Oh no! My nail! It's broken! Now you are in Big Trouble.
- STACEY: I'm so scared.

MERLE: Look Ms. Fairweather...Let's be reasonable.

FELICITY: I don't want to be reasonable. I want to be vindictive. Do you know how much that nail cost?

MERLE: I'll buy you another. I'll buy you ten.

FELICITY: It's too late for bribery...although...ten...

MERLE: Twelve.

FELICITY: (SHE THINKS ABOUT IT FOR A MOMENT.) No! She ruined my press conference...and my hat. She had a tomato!

STACEY: I had two.

FELICITY: (PATTING SELF) Good Lord, I forgot the second one...Am I wearing tomato? (THIS REMARK IS GREETED BY SILENCE.) A mirror...get me to a mirror!

MERLE: Right away. We'll get you cleaned up and then we'll talk. (SHE LEADS HER TO THE DOOR FROM WHICH THE MACHINERY NOISE EMANATED EARLIER.)

FELICITY: We'll talk alright...through our lawyers. First a mirror, then a phone.

MERLE: Oh, please...(MERLE & FELICITY EXEUNT. THE OTHER THREE LOOK AT STACEY.)

STACEY: Some coup, eh?

MUFFY: I don't think Merle is too thrilled about it.

STACEY: She will be. Think of it...today, The Total Woman...tomorrow, the whole world.

SALLY: (BEWILDERED) I just thought it was fruitcake.

STACEY: Hey, Sally...Thanks for helping me out. I didn't know you were militant.

SALLY: Neither did I.

EV: How did you get hold of the fair Felicity?

STACEY: (REALLY NOTICING HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME) Who's asking?

EV: Ev Haugh.

MUFFY: The secretary.

STACEY: Whose?

SALLY: Yours.

STACEY: Are you nuts?

MUFFY: He isn't it yet...but he wants to be.

STACEY: (TO EV) What's the matter with you? Are you gay?

EV: Look here, Brunhilde (MUFFY STOPS STACEY'S ARM AS IT IS HEADED FOR EV'S PERSON.)

SALLY: How could any of us be gay? This has been an awful day. (THEY ALL LOOK BLANKLY AT HER UNTIL MUFFY CATCHES ON.)

MUFFY: That's not what they meant.

SALLY: Pardon?

MUFFY: Not gay as in happy but gay as in...you know. (IT BECOMES OBVIOUS FROM SALLY'S EXPRESSION THAT SHE DOES NOT KNOW.) You don't know.

EV: Nor do you need to. I'm sure we're all more interested in how Stacey effected the capture.

STACEY: You must be gay. Real men don't talk like that.

MUFFY: Stacey!

EV: It's okay, Muffy. Real men consider where insults come from before they decide whether or not to take offence.

STACEY: Shit, man...that wasn't an insult.

MUFFY: It wasn't.

STACEY: Hell, no! That was an observation. When I insult someone, I do it a lot more colorfully than that.

EV: I bet you do. Can you take it as well as give it out?

STACEY: Of course, I can. I'm a female. I've been taking crap since the day I was born.

EV: Asking for every bit, I bet.

MUFFY: This is great! It sounds like the beginning of one of those meaningful dialogues I came here to hear. Let me get my notebook so I can write it all down.

SALLY: You wouldn't write it down exactly?

MUFFY: Sure I would. I can speedwrite.

SALLY: Then you'll have to clean up your language, Stacey. Muffy can't put those dirty words on paper.

STACEY: Why not? Is her arm broken? (SHE LAUGHS AT HER JOKE.)

SALLY: Nice girls don't write them...or say them.

STACEY: Shit, Sal...I didn't realize you were one of them.

SALLY: One of who?

STACEY: One of those people who can't say "shit" even when your mouth is full of it.

SALLY: (GASPING IN HORROR) Cover your ears, Muffy.

STACEY: Sorry.

MUFFY: You still haven't told us about you and Felicity Fairweather.

STACEY: It was luck really...luck and stupidity.

EV: Yours?

STACEY: Hers! When I left Sally at the door, I went back because I love a good donnybrook. The wrestler and his groupies had arrived and they were confusing things beautifully...

SALLY: I knew I'd seen a big man.

STACEY: Those sappy women were grabbing his buns and yelling, "Killer, Killer"...

SALLY: I told you. "Kill her, kill her," that's what they were saying.

STACEY: Of course they were. That's who it was.

SALLY: Of course, that's what...Pardon?

STACEY: The Calgary Killer...that was him. Didn't you recognize him?

SALLY: Oh, dear, I...

STACEY: What's the matter? Are you wishing you'd asked for his autograph?

SALLY: (CRESTFALLEN) No...no, I...

MUFFY: Sally thought they were yelling, "Kill her"...like kill you.

EV: She kicked the mayor to save you.

STACEY: I didn't need rescuing from that little twerp!

SALLY: I made a fool of myself, didn't I?

MUFFY: It's okay, Mrs. Culvert.

EV: You were very brave.

STACEY: Huh? (SEEING THAT SALLY IS UPSET) Oh...sure. Look Sal, I might have been wrong. I mightn't have been able to get away. His grip was pretty good.

SALLY: You're just saying that.

STACEY: No bull, I swear. And I could have used you later for sure to save me from a concussion.

SALLY: Were you hurt?

STACEY: I'm fine now...I was standing there, watching the fun, when all of a sudden the mayor grabbed my arm and screamed, "Give me that bag, you bitch!"

SALLY: Why would he do that?

STACEY: I haven't the slightest idea...but I gave it to him alright. (SHE DEMONSTRATES) He dropped like he'd been hit by a lightning bolt.

SALLY: Dead?

STACEY: We should be so lucky!

MUFFY: I wonder why he wanted your bag...I mean, it's not as if it was one of the Gucci ones. Even I would kill for one of them.

STACEY: He wasn't the only one that wanted it. While I was watching His Worship warming up the floor boards, I got side-swiped by something that felt like a two-ton truck. I went ass over teakettle and ended up banging my head on the mayor's bust.

SALLY: Chest, dear. Men have chests. Women have busts.

STACEY: What?...Oh!..No, I mean one of those bronze things...As I'm lying there, the Calgary Killer bends over me, says, "Sorry, Sweetheart," and makes off with my bag. I was going to give chase, but then I saw three of him. I didn't know which one to go after, so I just lay back and rested.

SALLY: But you brought your bag back with you.

MUFFY: And the Total Woman.

EV: Just where was she in all of this?

STACEY: Would you believe, under the table?

EV: Why not? I've accepted everything else as Gospel.

STACEY: While I was having my little rest, I heard police sirens and I thought, "Uh oh, Stacey! If you want to go to the Tupperware party tonight, you'd better get out now."

EV: Tupperware Party!

STACEY: What's wrong with that?

EV: Hardly a feminist pursuit.

STACEY: We have left-overs too you know.

SALLY: Do you have the lettuce keeper. It's wonderful...almost a miracle.

MUFFY: What about Felicity?

EV: Who, when last heard of, was under the table.

STACEY: I dragged her out...and a sorry sight she was too. I was going to leave her there...stupid, cringing coward...but then I got this idea to save her...to point out to her the error of her ways...to help her find the truth...

SALLY: Are you a born-again Christian?

STACEY: Shit, no! I'm a radical feminist.

EV: (ASIDE TO MUFFY) The two must never be confused.

STACEY: (REFUSING TO BE DRAWN INTO THAT ARGUMENT) Anyway...I pulled her into the mayor's office just as the fuzz were piling in the front door.

SALLY: Fuzz?

STACEY: I knew we could escape through a side entrance I'd found the last time I had to make a quick getaway from there.

MUFFY: You do this often?

STACEY: I keep involved.

EV: You certainly give lie to the belief that you can't fight Town Hall.

SALLY: Why did you tie that woman up?

STACEY: She wouldn't come peaceably. I invited her politely.

EV: I'm sure!

STACEY: Well, I didn't say "shit."

EV: A veritable Miss Manners!

STACEY: She insisted she wasn't going anywhere without her make-up bag, so I grabbed a rope off the flagpole and...(SHE MAKES MOTIONS AS IF THROWING A LASSOO.)

MUFFY: You still haven't told us how you got your bag back.

SALLY: How many people did you pulverize?

STACEY: (TO SALLY) None! (TO MUFFY) It was just sitting there beside the mayor's desk. I couldn't believe my luck!

EV: I can't believe it either.

MUFFY: How did you get Mrs. Fairweather from there to here at the end of a rope? Didn't anyone try to stop you?

SALLY: Who'd dare?

STACEY: One guy did ask what was going on, but I just told him I was on "Thrill of a Lifetime." He believed me...said he wished they'd choose him.

SALLY: I know what he means. I've written them one hundred and twenty-seven letters.

MUFFY: I love it!

STACEY: One hundred and twenty-seven!..Shit!

EV: What could you want that much?

SALLY: To go hang-gliding with Bob Barker.

EV: The mind boggles.

STACEY: Right now my greatest thrill would be to wet my whistle. Anyone want to come for a brew?

SALLY: I'd love to. I prefer it brewed in a brown pot, don't you? It's just not the same in a china one.

STACEY: (AFTER SHE FIGURES THIS OUT) Sal, it's going to be fun having you around. There's so much I can teach you.

EV: What a frightening thought! Muffy and I will hold the fort while you're gone. We have business to discuss.

MUFFY: We do?

STACEY: Just make sure it's not any of our business. The Ladies Aid is not an equal-opportunity employer.

EV: Enjoy your tea.

STACEY: Tell Merle I'll be back soon to watch the brainwashing.

SALLY: I want to see that. (SALLY & STACEY LEAVE.)

EV: Muffy, what am I going to do?

MUFFY: About what?

EV: About Merle B. Anthony.

MUFFY: What do you want to do?

EV: (GAZING LASCIVIOUSLY INTO SPACE) Words cannot describe...

MUFFY: I get the picture.

EV: You look too young to know as much as you seem to know.

MUFFY: I watch a lot of TV. Frankly though, I'm surprised at your interest. I thought you'd be past it.

EV: What!

MUFFY: No offence, but...You're not exactly in your prime...sexually speaking.

EV: According to whom?

MUFFY: Seventeen magazine.

EV: Ahhh! It must be true then...but couldn't you have broken it to me more gently? It's devastating news.

MUFFY: Are you making fun of me?

EV: A little.

MUFFY: Well, even if you aren't past it, you'll never get it looking like that.

EV: Run that by me again.

MUFFY: Like...it's about your wardrobe.

EV: What's wrong with it? I was told this was a good suit for business.

MUFFY: It is...if your business is undertaking.

EV: It cost me four hundred dollars.

MUFFY: Awesome! Totally awesome! The gullibility of a full-grown male!

EV: Hey, now...

MUFFY: Trust me...I'll make you over. Do you have a charge card?

EV: Yes.

MUFFY: Oh bliss!

EV: Look...I want to win the heart of a woman, not get my name on the Best-Dressed list.

MUFFY: Stick with me and you'll do both...My fashion instincts are unerring. Now, stand still and let me look at you.

EV: (AWKWARDLY STRIKING A FASHION-MODEL POSE) I don't believe I'm doing this!



(FELICITY ENTERS, FOLLOWED BY MERLE.)

FELICITY: Now the phone!

MERLE: Is there nothing I can say to persuade you not to make that call?

FELICITY: Nothing. I have been mistreated, and I intend to tell the world about the terrorist tactics employed by your troupe of militant marauders.

MERLE: Oh, come now...one over-enthusiastic member...

FELICITY: And that blubbering banshee!

MERLE: Oh, yes...Mrs Culvert.

FELICITY: Do you know that when she hurled herself at the mayor she was yelling, "Death to the tyrants"?

MERLE: Why doesn't that surprise me?

FELICITY: Enough of this chitchat...Where's the phone?

MERLE: We...we don't have one.

FELICITY: I'm sure! There's not a woman alive who could live without a phone. (SHE SPIES IT.) Ah ha! (AS SHE IS GOING TOWARDS IT, EV REACHES DOWN AND PULLS OUT THE WIRE.)

EV: Sorry...It seems to be out of order.

FELICITY: And you call yourself a man! You should be rescuing me.

MUFFY: His shining armor is at the cleaners.

FELICITY: O MERLE) Shame on you! Corrupting children with your crackpot ideas! You mustn't be allowed to get away with it...I'll find a phone somewhere. (DURING THE PRECEDING SPEECH, EV HAS PICKED UP THE ROPE. HE NOW PLACES HIMSELF BETWEEN FELICITY AND THE DOOR TO OUTSIDE.)

EV: Shall I stop her? (SEEING THE ROPE, FELICITY RETREATS.)

MERLE: No. Our weapons are words, not ropes.

EV: Thank heavens! I haven't the slightest idea how to use this thing.

FELICITY: (BACKING TOWARDS DOOR, IN ORDER TO KEEP AN EYE ON THEM) You'd better get all the words ready that you can...You'll be needing them to get you out of this mess. (HER PROGRESS IS HALTED IN THE DOORWAY BY A BUMP FROM BEHIND, DELIVERED BY LILLIAN WHO, IN HER HASTE TO ENTER, HAS NOT SEEN THE WOMAN. LIL HAS IN HER HAND A BAG IDENTICAL TO STACEY'S. WHEN CONTACT IS MADE, FELICITY SCREAMS AND TURNS.)

LIL: For Christ's sake! (THEY STARE AT EACH OTHER.)

FELICITY: (TENTATIVELY) Lily?

LIL: Fanny?

MERLE: You know each other? (DURING THE FOLLOWING REUNION, LIL AND FELICITY IGNORE MERLE.)

FELICITY: Snotty-Nose!

LIL: Droopy Drawers! (LIL DROPS THE BAG AND THEY WHOOP, HOLLER AND HUG, THEN BURST INTO AN OLD BUT NOT FORGOTTEN SCHOOL CHEER.)

MERLE: They know each other!

F. & L.: (TOGETHER, WITH APPROPRIATE CHEERLEADER GESTURES) Whoopie doo, whoopie doo/ We're the gang from Number Two./ We're the greatest; we've got class/ Don't believe us? Kiss our...aspidistra, rutabaga, broccoli cream pie. Yeahhh Two! (MCRE HUGS.)

MERLE: We're saved! Lil will save us!

MUFFY: Maybe Sally was right...maybe this is a dream.

EV: Or a nightmare.

MERLE: You never told us you knew...

L. & F.: (TOGETHER) How did you find me?

FELICITY: I wasn't looking for you.

LIL: Well, I sure as hell didn't have the dogs out lookin' for you.

FELICITY: You mean you don't want to apologize?

MERLE: Of course she does.

LIL: For what? Callin' a spade a spade?

FELICITY: That's not the way it was.

LIL: Okay...an asshole, an asshole.

FELICITY: He's my husband!

LIL: Jesus Murphy! You married him!

FELICITY: I did...with six bridesmaids and a reception at the yacht club. It was a glorious day.

LIL: But a piss-poor night, I bet.

FELICITY: Who told you?

LIL: A little birdie.

FELICITY: I got better. I read a book.

LIL: I mighta known...Fanny Dilworth, the friggin' doormat, still takin' the blame for everythin'.

FELICITY: Please, don't start...

MERLE: Don't upset her.

LIL: What do you mean "you" got better? He was the one had some betterin' to do.

FELICITY: He didn't...he doesn't...he's a man...

LIL: Damn poor one!

FELICITY: Oh, Lily...don't! It's been an awful day.

LIL: Christ, what am I yellin' at you for? It's been thirty years...

FELICITY: (LOOKING TOWARDS OTHERS) Twenty!

LIL: Still lyin' about your age, eh? Used to be you made yourself older.

FELICITY: Nobody admits to being fifty.

LIL: Jane Fonda did.

FELICITY: A fine example she is!

LIL: How about Gloria Steinem?

FELICITY: Hush your mouth! Unnatural women, the both of them.

MUFFY: I think they're neat....

EV: Amen to that!

MUFFY: For older women, that is.

FELICITY: See!!!

LIL: What the hell, Fanny! Thirty years or twenty...either 's too long to be not speakin' to my best friend. Give us a hug.

FELICITY: Oh, Lily! (THEY EMBRACE. OVER FELICITY'S SHOULDER, LIL SEES EV.)

MERLE: Lil, maybe you could help us out with a little problem.

LIL: He's still here, eh?

**MERLE:** Yes, but that's not...

**LIL:** How's it goin', Evelyn? (MERLE GIVES UP IN DESPAIR.)

**EV:** Just fine, thanks.

**FELICITY:** (TO LIL) You know this man?

**LIL:** Not in the Biblical sense.

**FELICITY:** (SUDDENLY WARY) What are you doing here?

**LIL:** That was my question.

**FELICITY:** I asked first.

**LIL:** I work here.

**FELICITY:** Oh, no!

**LIL:** Oh, yes.

**FELICITY:** You're one of them!

**LIL:** Say that again and we won't speak for another thirty years.

**FELICITY:** Lily, they're animals!

**LIL:** (LOOKING AT THE THREE WHO ARE TRYING TO APPEAR INNOCENT AND HARMLESS) Pussycats! Now, what brought you here?

**FELICITY:** An Amazon. (LIL OBVIOUSLY DOES NOT UNDERSTAND.)

**MERLE:** Stacey.

**LIL:** Where'd you run into Fender Bender?

**FELICITY:** Town Hall.

**LIL:** Wasn't that a gas? (FELICITY SHUDDERS.) Hey, you must be a member of Killer's fan club too.

**FELICITY:** As a matter of fact, I am...but that's...

**LIL:** Have I got somethin' to show you!

**FELICITY:** Not now. You've got to rescue me first.

**LIL:** From what?

**FELICITY:** (POINTING) Them.

LIL: Quit puttin' me on. If you could put up with that beast you married, you can handle these tame tabbies.

FELICITY: You don't understand.

LIL: Dammit, why can't I remember his name?

FELICITY: Whose?

LIL: The asshole's.

FELICITY: Lily!

LIL: Wait a minute! It's comin'...Filbert!

FELICITY: Fergus.

LIL: Fergus...Fergus Fairword...no, Foreward...no, Foreplay...(LAUGHS) Foreplay? Fanny Foreplay!

FELICITY: Fairweather.

LIL: Fairweather. Of course. Just like that stupid broad that...Oh Christ, No! (MERLE NODS YES.) No! (EV AND MUFFY NOD YES.)

FELICITY: "Felicity" is so much more refined than "Fanny."

LIL: Droopy-Drawers Dilworth is the Total Woman! Jesus! You're even battier than you used to be.

MERLE: So much for being saved!

MUFFY: Could I ask Mrs. Fairweather a question, please?

LIL: Go ahead. I'm too stunned to say anythin' more.

MUFFY: Did you really greet your husband at the door wrapped in Saran Wrap?

FELICITY: (PROUDLY) I did.

LIL: Christ!

EV: Why would you do such a thing?

FELICITY: To keep him.

MUFFY: Can't you cook?

FELICITY: I do a lot with Jello.

MERLE: I bet you do.

LIL: I still can't figure how you got tied up with Stacey.

MERLE: It's hard to explain.

EV: You had to see it.

FELICITY: She abducted me...and she's not going to get away with it. When I'm through with her and her cohorts, the Ladies Aid will be no more.

LIL: Hey, take it easy! We're talkin' about my job.

FELICITY: Get another one.

LIL: Easier said than done for a fifty year old ex-GoGo girl.

FELICITY: I'm sorry Lil, but I'm adamant. I'm going to sue this organization for everything it has.

MERLE: Please....

LIL: Your lawyer's fees'll be ten times more than the worth of this outfit.

FELICITY: It's the principle, not the money.

EV: There speaks someone with money.

FELICITY: I have been harrassed and humiliated for my belief in hearth and home...and I'm going to put a stop to it. I'm mad as hell, and I'm not going to take it anymore.

MUFFY: I saw that movie. That guy was totally awesome...totally bananas too.

FELICITY: You're bananas! You're all bananas...and dangerous too.

LIL: Whoaaa! You're the one they call the Fruitcake...As to dangerous, forget it. They're harmless.

FELICITY: Oh,yes! Look at my nail.

MERLE: We'll come good for that. (RUMMAGING IN DESK DRAWER FOR MONEY, SHE CAN ONLY COME UP WITH ONE DOLLAR.)

FELICITY: No, thank you. (EV, NOTICING MERLE'S PREDICAMENT, GIVES HER A TWENTY FROM HIS OWN POCKET.)

MERLE: Thanks. Muffy, run across the street to the drugstore and buy a dozen fingernails.

FELICITY: I can't be bought.

MERLE: (TO MUFFY) Go! (MUFFY GOES.)

FELICITY: (TO MUFFY'S BACK) Number Four...(TO OTHERS) Might as well have the right size...but, believe me, there is nothing you could give me that would keep me from telling the world about your treatment of me.

MERLE: Nothing?

FELICITY: Nothing.

LIL: Fan, do you still have Bert Perl's old toothpaste tube?

FELICITY: Of course...It's under glass.

EV: You mean in a display case?

FELICITY: Yes.

MERLE: Why?

FELICITY: As a happy memento of happy times. (SHE STARTS SINGING.) "Keep happy with the Happy Gang."

EV: I seem to be missing something.

MERLE: Not as much as she's missing.

LIL: How about Fred Astaire's cousin's mother's autograph?

FELICITY: In the trophy case...with a light trained on it.

LIL: Then I think you and I can talk a deal.

FELICITY: I don't want your old Brooklyn Dodger baseball.

LIL: As if i'd offer it!

FELICITY: I remember too well what we had to go through to get it.

LIL: And I'd go through the same to keep it. Nobody touches it but me...but I do have something...

FELICITY: Something good?

LIL: Somethin' very good. You say you're a Calgary Killer fan...

FELICITY: Want to see my card?

LIL: (HOLDING UP BAG) Well, it just so happens that this sports bag belongs to none other than the Killer himself. (FELICITY SCREAMS AND MAKES A GRAB FOR THE BAG. LIL PUSHES HER AWAY.) OH, no. The bag is now mine. Touch it and you're dead.

FELICITY: What about our friendship?

LIL: To hell with it. I nearly got killed gettin' this bag and I'm keepin' it. (FELICITY IS POUTING) The contents, however, may be negotiable.

FELICITY: Oh, Lily, let's see. (SHE GRABS AGAIN AND LIL PULLS BACK.)

LIL: Not so fast, Miss Glad Wrap...

FELICITY: It was Saran.

LIL: The deal is this: you forget all about causin' trouble for the Ladies Aid and you can have your choice from this bag...subject to my approval.

FELICITY: That's not fair.

LIL: Take it or leave it.

MERLE: Take it.

EV: It sounds too good to pass up.

MERLE: Who knows what treasures you might find in there.

EV: Sweat socks.

MERLE: A towel.

EV: A jock strap.

FELICITY: Do you suppose?

LIL: If it's there, it's mine.

FELICITY: Awwww.....!

LIL: There'll be something good for you. (SHE SHAKES THE BAG.) It's heavy.

FELICITY: Well...(AS SHE IS THINKING ABOUT IT, SALLY COMES RUNNING IN. SHE SEES EV AND RUNS BEHIND HIM.)

SALLY: Hide me...hide me.

MERLE: Now what?

SALLY: They're after me...maybe.

LIL: Who?

SALLY: The mayor and the fat guy and a couple of others. Oh, please...(SHE IS BLUBBERING .)

EV: Get the perfume. (MERLE GETS IT.)

LIL: Hey, that's my private stock.

EV: I'll repay you. (HE GIVES SALLY A DRINK.)

LIL: Damn right you will! I'm a working girl, not Lady Bountiful. (NOTICING THAT FELICITY IS TRYING TO GET INTO THE BAG, LIL WHIRLS AND POINTS AT HER.) Freeze, Dilworth!



FELICITY: Lily...

LIL: Away...away from it right now. (SHE TAKES BAG.)

FELICITY: I'll negotiate.

MERLE: Thank God!

LIL: When I'm ready.

MERLE: Now...Please...

LIL: You heard me. First I want to hear more about those guys chasing Sally. (TO SALLY) What kind of aphrodesiac did you slip them?

SALLY: Pardon?

LIL: What's your secret? Oysters? Musk oil?

SALLY: I...I can't...

LIL: Come on. Be a sport...share. (WHEEDLINGLY) Maybe there's somethin' in this bag for you, too. You know...you rub my back and I'll rub yours.

SALLY: That sounds very nice but I can't do it now. I have to be ready to run. (TO EV) Please...get me out of town 'till this blows over.

MERLE: What has Stacey been up to this time?

EV: And where is she?

FELICITY: Fallen down a manhole, I hope.

SALLY: She went one way and I went the other. They followed her, I think...but I don't know. I didn't look back.

LIL: Do you realize how little sense you're making?

EV: It's a long story.

MERLE: And getting longer. Concentrate, Mrs. Culpepper.

SALLY: Culvert.

MERLE: Culvert.

SALLY: Well, I...she...they...

EV: Settle down. You're safe with us. Now, begin at the beginning.

SALLY: I was born in Waubashene. My father wanted a boy...

MERLE: Not that beginning!

EV: What happened after you and Sally left here to get a brew?

SALLY: Oh...well...we got one. Did you know it wasn't tea?

EV: I suspected.

SALLY: A brew is a beer.

LIL: Everybody knows that, for God's sake.

FELICITY: I didn't.

SALLY: Stacey is very knowledgable about drinking habits.

LIL: She should be. She's a student of them.

MERLE: Could we, please, forego discussing what she is and get to talking about what she's been doing?

SALLY: Nothing. I mean, we were just bending our elbows and shooting the breeze...She taught me to talk like that...Actually, it wasn't the breeze she said we were shooting...

LIL: Jesus! You're harder to follow than my mother...and she's in the home.

FELICITY: Is she really. That's too bad.

LIL: What the hell, she's ninety eight...time she got a rest.

FELICITY: My mother-in-law is eighty nine and she still bowls.

MERLE: (COMING ON LIKE A SERGEANT-MAJOR) Now hear this: we will listen, carefully and quietly, while Sally tells us, concisely and precisely, why she is here and Stacey is not. If she cannot, or will not, do this, we will do harm to her person. Is that understood?

ALL: Yes, ma'am.

MERLE: Good. (TO SALLY) You may continue.

SALLY: We were sitting in a booth beside the payphone. All of a sudden, Stacey crouched down and went "shhhh," so I shhh'd and crouched down too. (SHE CROUCHES.) Then I heard, (IMITATING A MAN'S VOICE) "We know the Bender dame belongs to the Ladies Aid. We'll catch her going in or coming out." (NATURAL VOICE) He hung up and then said to somebody else: (MAN'S VOICE) "And if that hysterical hyena that kicked me in the shin is around, then I'll mix a little pleasure with business and kick her back." (OWN VOICE, SEMI-HYSTERICAL) I don't want to be hurt! I can't stand pain.

EV: (PUTTING ARM AROUND HER) It's okay...it's okay.

MERLE: No one is going to hurt you, I promise. Just tell us what happened next.

SALLY: I wet my pants.

FELICITY: Do we have to hear all the sordid details?

LIL: This is better than "Days of our Lives!"

MERLE: (SCREAMING) Be quiet! (NORMAL VOICE) Please. (VERY CALMLY) And then?

SALLY: Stacey said **not** to worry, she'd get rid of them. I was to come back here and tell you **not** to start the brainwashing without her. You didn't, did you?

MERLE: Of course not.

EV: We found there was no brain to wash.

LIL: How did Stacey lure them away?

SALLY: She yelled, "Your Honour sucks eggs," then ran out the back door. They saw me when they ran past our booth but they followed her, I think...I hope.

MERLE: So the mayor is running around town trying to catch Stacey.

LIL: You can quit worrying about her then. He couldn't catch the clap if he was in bed with the town tart.

EV: Something doesn't make sense. The mayor seems to be over-reacting to an ordinary, everyday, messed-up press conference. God knows he should be used to that by now.

MERLE: You're right.

LIL: There've been some lulus.

FELICITY: But this one was mine!

SALLY: Maybe one of you could talk to him...tell him I'm sorry and I'll never do it again...(MUFFY ENTERS WITH A BAG IN HER HAND.)

MUFFY: Ms. Anthony, something weird is going on.

MERLE: You've just noticed?

MUFFY: I mean out there.

FELICITY: Did you get my nails?

MUFFY: Yes. (HANDS BAG TO FELICITY.) I hope they're all right.

FELICITY: Where's the polish?

MUFFY: Polish?

FELICITY: You'll have to go back.

MUFFY: I'm sorry, but...no way! (TO MERLE) Is Stacey here?

MERLE: No.

MUFFY: Then maybe you'd better call the police.

MERLE: Why?

MUFFY: The mayor is waiting for her downstairs with the Calgary Killer and a couple of his friends.

LIL: The Calgary Killer!

FELICITY: You wouldn't joke about something sacred?

MUFFY: It's him. His name is emblazoned in pink letters on their orange silk jackets. (SHE GAGS IN DISGUST.)

LIL: (TO SALLY) You said it was a fat guy.

SALLY: It was...it is.

FELICITY: He's not fat, he's solid.

MUFFY: Solid blubber.

LIL: He doesn't want to see Stacey; he wants to see me.

MUFFY: I don't think so.

LIL: He wants his bag.

FELICITY: No!

LIL: If I have to give it back, I can at least get his autograph...maybe even a ringside ticket for tonight.

FELICITY: Two tickets.

MUFFY: Look, Lil...

LIL: My God! I'll finally get to touch him. Those groupies today wouldn't let me near him...that's why I stole his bag...to have somethin'...

FELICITY: I want to touch him.

LIL: Jesus! I can't meet him lookin' like this. I gotta do my face.

FELICITY: Me too.

LIL: Protect that bag...I'm gonna make myself beautiful. (SHE HEADS TOWARDS THE DOOR TO THE ADJACENT ROOM.)

FELICITY: (GETTING HER PURSE) Where's my lipstick?

LIL: I wonder how he knew I had his bag. (LIL & FELICITY LEAVE.)

MUFFY: He doesn't know it. He thinks Stacey has it...and he's mad.

EV: How do you know all this?

MUFFY: I heard him and the mayor talking about it in the drugstore.

MERLE: That's nonsense. Stacey doesn't have to steal anybody's bag. She has one of her own.

SALLY: It has tomatoes in it.

EV: (GOING TO STACEY'S BAG) It looks exactly like the one Lillian brought in.

MUFFY: The Bi-Way special...all the nerds in town have one.

EV: That qualifies the mayor as an owner. Do you suppose this isn't the bag Stacey thinks it is?

MERLE: She said she found it in the mayor's office.

SALLY: Just sitting beside his desk.

MUFFY: Oh, wow! This is getting weirder and worse. They're looney-tunes...but they might be nasty.

MERLE: Oh God...Stacey!

EV: (PUTTING ARM AROUND MERLE) She'll be fine. (MERLE ACCEPTS THE EMBRACE NATURALLY, AT FIRST. THEN, REALIZING WHO THE EMBRACER IS, SHE PULLS AWAY.)

MUFFY: They haven't found her.

SALLY: I knew she'd get away.

MERLE: I hope she has the sense to stay away. (AS SHE IS SPEAKING, HANDS APPEAR ON THE LEDGE OF THE PARTLY-OPENED WINDOW, S.L.)

STACEY: (OFFSTAGE) Merle...open the window.

MERLE: What? (SALLY SEES THE HANDS, SCREAMS AND GRABS A BOOKEND TO HIT THEM.) No! That's Stacey's ring. (MERLE OPENS THE WINDOW AND ALL HAUL STACEY IN OVER THE LEDGE.)

STACEY: (BRUSHING HERSELF OFF) Let the brainwashing begin!

MERLE: (ADVANCING MENACINGLY ON STACEY) Perhaps we'll start with a little brain surgery first. Anyone ever done a lobotomy? (EV RESTRAINS HER.)

STACEY: Where's Dipstick? You didn't let her escape?

MUFFY: She's fixing her face.

STACEY: A bag over her head is the only thing to fix that.

MERLE: Stacey, I've tried to work with you.

STACEY: I know you have. You've been great.

MERLE: I've tried to help you...

STACEY: Just like a mother...and I love you for it.

MERLE: You're not making this easy.

STACEY: What?

MERLE: I'm trying to tell you off.

STACEY: Oh...sorry! I didn't know. You're not swearing enough I guess.

MERLE: Damn, damn and fudge!

EV: Fudge?

STACEY: That's getting better.

MERLE: Things seem to be out of control. You may be in serious trouble.

STACEY: I can look after myself.

MERLE: I'm not sure you can. Would you open up your bag for us, please?

STACEY: Awww Merle...

MERLE: I'm sorry...but I have to see inside it.

STACEY: (TO SALLY) You told!

SALLY: About what?

STACEY: The eggs.

SALLY: I didn't see any eggs...just tomatoes.

STACEY: (TO MERLE) I know I promised never to throw eggs again, but I had to have them. I mean...the Total Woman!

MERLE: It's not eggs I'm worried about.

STACEY: Okay, then...(UNZIPS BAG)...There's nothing else to worry about...(SHE PUTS BOTH HANDS INTO THE BAG)...What the...! (SHE PULLS OUT A

COUPLE OF PLASTIC BAGS FILLED WITH WHITE POWDER)...Shit!...(ALL BUT SALLY STARE IN HORROR.)

SALLY: Powdered eggs?

EV: I wish!

(LIL & FELICITY ENTER.)

LIL: The jockstrap's hers...our troubles are over.

MERLE: (GAZING AT POWDER) I don't think so, Lil...I really don't think so.

(BLACKOUT)

PAGINATION ERROR.

ERREUR DE PAGINATION.

TEXT COMPLETE.

LE TEXTE EST COMPLET.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA.

BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE DU CANADA.

CANADIAN THESES SERVICE.

SERVICE DES THESES CANADIENNES.



## ACT TWO

(WHEN THE LIGHTS COME UP, EVERYONE IS IN THE SAME POSITION AS AT THE END OF ACT ONE.)

LIL: What's going on?

FELICITY: (TO STACEY) What are you doing with our bag?

STACEY: Yours! Thank God! (SHE HANDS THE BAG TO FELICITY.)

LIL: (SEEING HER BAG WHERE SHE LEFT IT) That's not ours. This is.

FELICITY: Oh. (SHE HANDS THE BAG TO STACEY WHO WILL NOT ACCEPT IT.)

STACEY: I don't want it! (FELICITY LEAVES THE BAG ON THE FLOOR. EV AND MERLE GO TO INSPECT ITS CONTENTS.)

SALLY: I didn't know you meant powdered eggs.

STACEY: I didn't.

MUFFY: They'd be no fun to throw. No splat!

EV: Stacey, I think you've just become a millionaire...and a marked woman.

STACEY: Shit!

MERLE: You could be wrong.

EV: About somethings...yes; about this...no.

MERLE: You really think it's what I don't want to think it is. (EV NODS.)

LIL: Let me have a look at that. (SHE LOOKS, SMELLS, AND TASTES.) Holy Jesus, Bender! I always knew you were crazy, but I didn't think you were insane.

STACEY: I told you...it's not mine. (SEEING LIL'S) That one must be. (SHE REACHES FOR THE SECOND BAG.)

FELICITY: (PUTTING BAG BEHIND HER) You're not getting the jock strap.

LIL: (TAKING BAG FROM FELICITY) Don't try pushing that stuff onto us.

FELICITY: (GRABBING A HANDLE TO HOLD THE BAG WITH LIL) We don't want powdered eggs.

STACEY: Are you really that stupid? (SEEING THEM READY TO LUNGE AT EACHOTHER, LIL GRABS FELICITY AND MERLE GRABS STACEY.)

MERLE: Naive might be the more tactful word.

STACEY: But not the more appropriate.

MUFFY: What's the difference?

SALLY: It isn't powdered eggs, Mrs. Fairweather. Stacey said so...and Stacey doesn't lie.

STACEY: Thank you.

FELICITY: What is it then?

SALLY: I don't know. Talcum powder, maybe.

MUFFY: You haven't been to many good parties lately, have you?

MERLE: Muffy!

MUFFY: Just kidding.

LIL: Does your mother know where you are at night?

MUFFY: In my bedroom, mostly...with my homework...but I have a very active fantasy life.

LIL: You shouldn't be fantasizing about sniffing and snorting.

EV: There's nothing glamorous about that.

SALLY: As if she'd think there were! She's a girl, not a pig.

FELICITY: I don't know what's the matter with everybody. It's only powder.

EV: This, my dear, is very bad stuff.

LIL: Or very good stuff.

MERLE: It's illegal.

STACEY: And lethal.

SALLY: Lethal?

MUFFY: Deadly.

SALLY: You mean...(ALL BUT FELICITY NOD "YES.")...Well, what on earth is she doing with gunpowder?

FELICITY: Gunpowder! (SHE DIVES BEHIND CHAIR.)

EV: What are you doing?

FELICITY: It might explode.

MERLE: (TO MUFFY) In answer to your previous question...(POINTING AT SALLY) that's naivety, and...(POINTING AT FELICITY) that's stupidity.

LIL: It's coke, Fanny.

SALLY: Don't be silly. That comes in bottles.

LIL: Snow...crack...cocaine.

FELICITY: (PEERING OUT FROM BEHIND THE CHAIR) Like the drug?

LIL: Just like.

FELICITY: I knew it! As well as being crazy fanatics, they're dope peddlers.

STACEY: That's it, Dipstick! (SHE HEADS FOR HER. FELICITY DUCKS AND MERLE STOPS STACEY.)

MERLE: Rational and reasonable, Stacey...rational and reasonable. Those are our watchwords.

EV: She can't follow them; she can't understand them.

STACEY: I can too...I just don't see how they can help me to attain my goals.

MUFFY: (GRABBING FOR HER NOTEBOOK) More meaningful dialogue!

MERLE: This is hardly the time to debate the point.

EV: If this isn't Stacey's...

STACEY: It isn't!

EV: Then someone is probably going crazy trying to find it...and her.

MERLE: The mayor!

SALLY: And the fat guy.

LIL: Not Killer!

FELICITY: He's not a shover.

MUFFY: Pusher.

EV: He's with the mayor...and they were talking about Stacey's bag.

MUFFY: The mayor said it was his bag and Killer seemed to think it was his.

MERLE: Good Lord! They're downstairs somewhere.

SALLY: You should phone the police.

EV: (HEADING TOWARDS PHONE) Good idea.

MERLE: (DANGLING RIPPED-OUT WIRE) Bad idea.

EV: Look out the window. See if they're still there.

SALLY: (LOOKING OUT) I don't see them. (SHE STAYS AT THE WINDOW, STICKING HER HEAD OUT AND LOOKING AROUND.)

LIL: (HEADING FOR SIDE DOOR) That's the back alley.

STACEY: (FOLLOWING LIL) The front window is through here. (MUFFY AND EV FOLLOW STACEY.)

MERLE: Don't you go, Stacey. We don't want them to see you. (THE OTHERS GO OUT AS STACEY POUTS IN DOORWAY.)

STACEY: I'm not afraid.

MERLE: I am.

SALLY: (BRUSHING LEDGE WITH HANDKERCHIEF) You must have a lot of pigeons here.

FELICITY: I don't care what anyone says...Killer couldn't be a criminal.

STACEY: Why not?

FELICITY: He's a wrestler. (MERLE, SALLY AND STACEY ARE NONPLUSSED BY THIS NON SEQUITER AND ARE STARING AT FELICITY WHEN LIL, MUFFY AND EV ENTER.)

LIL: They're there all right.

EV: All four of them.

MUFFY: They look like they're having a conference.

MERLE: You can bet it's not about the state of the Free Trade negotiations.

SALLY: Here birdie...Come to Sally...Have a bicky.

EV: I've been thinking about what Mufy heard. It sounds as though there might be three of these bags.

MUFFY: There are millions of them.

MERLE: We'd better see what's in yours, Lil.

FELICITY: You can't have anything until after I choose.

MERLE: Ms. Fairweather, this is serious.

FELICITY: You're darn right it is.

LIL: (HANDING BAG TO EV) You look...I'm afraid to.

SALLY: (STILL AT WINDOW) Come on sweetheart...Coo...coo...coo.

(EV UNZIPS THE BAG, PUTS HIS HAND IN, AND

## BRINGS OUT STACKS OF MONEY.)

LIL: Jesus, Mary, Joseph!

MUFFY: Is it real?

MERLE: (TAKING OUT MORE BUNDLES) I'm afraid so.

FELICITY: If there is no jockstrap, the deal is off.

MERLE: Please!

STACEY: Shit!

SALLY: (SHE HAS NOT NOTICED ANY OF THE FOREGOING.) Oh dear! (SHE DUCKS DOWN BELOW THE WINDOW LEDGE.) It's the mayor and another man.

LIL: Let me see. (SHE PEEKS AROUND CURTAIN.)

SALLY: It's not your fat friend.

MERLE: Be careful, Lil. We can't let them see you either.

LIL: Why not?

MERLE: You took a bag too.

LIL: Nobody saw me.

EV: Are you sure?

LIL: Sure...I think. Christ, I don't know! I didn't look, I just took.

MERLE: You get away from the window. I'll look out nonchalantly. (SHE DOES THIS VERY INEPTLY) Oh...Good day, gentlemen. Lovely jacket. (SHE HITS HER HEAD ON THE SILL AS SHE BRINGS HER HEAD BACK IN.)

LIL: No Oscar for that performance.

(THE SUMP PUMP NOISE IS HEARD AGAIN.)

MERLE: Oh, damn! (MUFFY ELBOWS EV AND URGES HIM TO ACT.)

EV: (HOLDING UP HAND TO STOP MERLE FROM GOING) Allow me.

MUFFY: Go for it!

EV: I'm here to work. (HE EXITS TO SIDE ROOM.)

SALLY: What is that noise?

MERLE: The sump pump.

SALLY: (HEARING THE SOUND OF A KICK AND A CURSE) And that?

MUFFY: The sump pump being repaired.

LIL: (TO MERLE) You should do something about that thing.

STACEY: (HOLDING UP BAG OF COKE) You should do something about this too.

MERLE: Why me, Lord?

SALLY: (SPOTTING MONEY) My goodness...what...where?

MERLE: Don't ask.

MUFFY: What are we going to do?

LIL: We could start snortin'

MERLE: Lil!

FELICITY: I'd rather start suing.

LIL: If it's money you need, help yourself here. Don't mess up my job.

FELICITY: I don't need money. I've tons more than that, I'm sure.

MERLE: Why her, Lord!  
(EV APPEARS UNNOTICED IN THE DOORWAY. HE HAS A PAINED EXPRESSION ON HIS FACE AND IS FAVORING HIS LEFT LEG AS HE CLUTCHES THE DOORFRAME.)

STACEY: We've got to come up with a plan of action.

FELICITY: We need a man to tell us what to do. (ALL LOOK AT HER IN DISGUST.)

EV: (BRACING HIMSELF) Can I be of service? (ALL TURN AND LOOK AT HIM IN DISGUST.) Only trying to help. (DURING THE FOLLOWING CONVERSATION, HE BECOMES NOTICEABLY WEAKER...BUT NOBODY ON STAGE NOTICES HIM.)

MERLE: We don't need your help, thank you.

SALLY: What if they come up here?

STACEY: (GOING TO DESK) I'll be ready for them. (SHE TAKES OUT PAPER AND BEGINS TEARING IT UP.)

FELICITY: What are you going to do?

STACEY: Make spitballs. (SHE PROCEEDS TO DO SO.)

LIL: Fat lot of good that will do!

MERLE: Think, Merle, think!

MUFFY: They won't come up.

LIL: How do you know?

MUFFY: They were acting so weird in the drugstore, I locked the downstairs door.

SALLY: So they're locked out.

STACEY: And we're locked in.

LIL: (FONDLING MONEY) With about a million dollars....and a bag of coke.

MERLE: (WARNINGLY) Lillian!

LIL: I need something to calm my nerves.

SALLY: You wouldn't?

STACEY: (LOOKING UP FROM HER SPITBALLS) She would.

LIL: They'd never miss the bit I'd take. They've got enough here to service the whole county.

MERLE: They'll never get a chance to try.

SALLY: Right! We'll die before we let them have it.

FELICITY: Now, let's not be hasty.

EV: (FROM DOORWAY) Speaking of dying...(ALL LOOK AT HIM.) I'm sorry to add to the confusion, but I think I might be.

MUFFY: What's wrong?

EV: Well, I...(HE STAGGERS.)

MERLE: You'd better sit down. (HE TRIES TO TAKE A STEP; HIS LEG BUCKLES AND HE ENDS UP ON THE FLOOR.)

SALLY: She meant on the couch.

MERLE: (GOING TO HIM) Take my hand.

EV: Gladly. (HE PULLS HIMSELF UP AND PUTS HIS ARM AROUND HER SHOULDER. LIL STEADIES HIM ON THE OTHER SIDE.)

LIL: Upsa-daisy.

MUFFY: (FROM COUCH) Put him here.

SALLY: Where's a pillow?

FELICITY: Be careful! Don't hurt the poor man.



EV: (NUZZLING MERLE) Isn't it wonderful?..Woman the nurturer! (MERLE REACTS WITH DISMAY AND LETS HER SIDE GO. LIL STEADIES HIM. MUFFY CATCHES HIM. THEY PUT HIM ON THE COUCH WHERE SALLY AND FELICITY HOVER SOLICITOUSLY.)

STACEY: (HAVING WATCHED BUT NOT AIDED IN THE RESCUE) Trust a man to screw up the simplest repair job.

EV: I fixed it, didn't I?

STACEY: Fixed your foot, too.

MUFFY: I'll get a doctor.

EV: No!

MUFFY: But you'll die!

STACEY: You don't die of a sprained ankle.

SALLY: It's broken I'm sure.

FELICITY: You must be in pain.

LIL: (HOLDING UP A BAG OF COKE) We've got something here for that.

EV: No thanks.

MUFFY: (TO MERLE) What are you going to do?

MERLE: I don't know.

FELICITY: I told you we needed a man.

MERLE: (GLARING AT FELICITY) We'll figure something out. Meanwhile, we should have lookouts to see what they're up to out there.

LIL: (GOING TO WINDOW) I'll take the first watch.

MERLE: No!

LIL: I'll be careful. (SHE WRAPS HERSELF IN THE CURTAIN AND PEERS OUT.)

MERLE: We'll need someone at the front too.

SALLY: I'll stand on guard. (SHE SALUTES.)

STACEY: Tell us if they do anything funny.

SALLY: I will. (SHE SCURRIES TO DOORWAY, THEN TURNS TO THEM.) Don't do anything exciting without telling me.

MUFFY: We won't.

SALLY: I haven't felt this alive in years. (SHE EXITS.)

LIL: Let's hope she stays that way.

MERLE: Now, don't go exaggerating the situation.

LIL: I don't notice any life insurance agents banging at the door, begging us to buy policies right now.

FELICITY: (IN PANIC) You mean we might die? Oh, God, Lil...I can't. Don't let it happen! I've never even had an orgasm.

LIL: Never?

FELICITY: Never. I try too hard, I think.

LIL: I'll do my best to save you for that experience...(FELICITY TRIES TO HUG HER THROUGH THE CURTAIN BUT LIL PUSHES HER AWAY)...but if it comes to a question of me or you, you're on your own.

MERLE; Nobody is going to die.

MUFFY: Except my mother when she hears about all this.

MERLE: All we have to do is notify the police...They'll handle it from there.

LIL: And how are you gonna do that?

MERLE: I've been thinking, and I don't see any reason why I shouldn't just walk out the door and go to the phone booth across the street.

EV: There are four reasons...two out front and two out back.

MERLE: They're there to stop Stacey, not me. They don't know I know anything.

LIL: (FROM WINDOW) They suspect though.

MERLE: How do you know?

LIL: They're cuttin' the telephone line.

FELICITY: Ha ha on them! They didn't even need to.

EV: Excuse me if I don't laugh till later.

MUFFY: They're going to make sure she doesn't get in touch with you.

MERLE: How do they know she hasn't already?

LIL: They don't...that's why they'll never let anyone out of here...just in case.

MERLE: How could they stop me?

LIL: I can think of lots of ways...each more horrible than the other.

MUFFY: (LOOKING AT EV) I think he's going to faint. (STACEY SNORTS.)

EV: (STRUGGLING TO SIT UP) If she says, "You must be gay" again, I'll deck her. (STACEY SHRUGS AND CONTINUES TO MAKE SPIT BALLS.)

MERLE: Do you want some aspirin?

EV: Hand holding would do...(MERLE SHAKES HER HEAD.)...or perfume.

MUFFY: (REACHING FOR BOTTLE) It's empty.

LIL: There's more in back. (TO MUFFY) You take over here, kid, and I'll get it. (MUFFY GOES TO WINDOW.)

MERLE: I could use a drink myself.

MUFFY: Me too.

LIL: I'll make a batch. Come on, Fan, put down that money and lend me a hand.

FELICITY: (POINTING TO SIGN SHE HAS JUST NOTICED WHICH ANNOUNCES "SINGERS AND DANCERS NEEDED") Who wants singers and dancers? I sing...and dance. (SHE DANCES OFF BEHIND LIL.)

STACEY: I guess we should forget the brainwashing.

MERLE: I'm glad you realize you were wrong.

STACEY: She's an airhead!

MERLE: And you're too quick to condemn.

STACEY: You're not going to tell me you think she's Nobel Prize material.

MERLE: Of course not.

STACEY: Well then...

MERLE: Few people are as smart as you seem to think they should be.

STACEY: They would be if they'd listen to me.

EV: Tomato throwing is smart?

STACEY: When it's done for a good cause.

EV: And what was today's cause?

STACEY: Stopping the total woman from spouting her drivel.

MERLE: I keep telling you...if it's drivel, let her spout. People will recognize it for what it is.

STACEY: Oh yeah! Then how do you explain the 24 branch chapters of the Total Women's Club.

MUFFY: You get ten free dancing lessons when you sign up.

STACEY: That's subversive.

MERLE: It isn't. A bit silly, perhaps, but...

STACEY: If they're dancing, they're not listening.

MUFFY: To what?

STACEY: The truth.

EV: Which is?

STACEY: Women must learn to stand up for themselves. They must do their own thing.

MUFFY: What if their own thing is dancing lessons?

STACEY: Very funny.

MUFFY: I didn't mean it to be.

STACEY: You need to be educated.

MERLE: And you need to be reminded, Stacey, that your way isn't everybody's way.

STACEY: It should be...It's the right way.

(SALLY APPEARS IN THE DOORWAY.)

SALLY: They're doing it.

STACEY: Doing what?

SALLY: Something funny. You told me to tell.

MERLE: (ALARMED) What are they doing?

SALLY: Burping.

OTHERS: Burping?

SALLY: Yes...they're having a contest. I know it's rude, but it's funny too.

MERLE: Thanks for telling us.

SALLY: You're welcome. (SHE EXITS. THE OTHERS GRIN AND SHAKE THEIR HEADS.)

STACEY: You know what I can't figure out...

EV: You mean there's an answer you don't have.

STACEY: How come I like her as much as I do?

MUFFY: She's kind and sweet.

EV: And gutsy.

STACEY: Maybe that's it. She's pathetically unpolitical...but I don't get pissed off with her like I do with Fluffety Furbrain.

MERLE: I have more sympathy for Ms. Fairweather now than before I met her.

STACEY: You couldn't!

MERLE: I don't like her exactly, but...

STACEY: Oh, please...

MUFFY: If you like guts, Stacey, you must love Lil.

STACEY: You know, I think I do...but if you ever tell her I said so, I'll tear the polo player off your shirt.

EV: (LOOKING MEANINGFULLY AT MERLE) I believe in letting people know you admire them. (HE SMILES AT HER AND SHE LOOKS AWAY. SHE GOES TO THE DESK AND, UNCONSCIOUSLY, BEGINS TO MAKE A SPITBALL. WHEN SHE REALIZES WHAT SHE IS DOING, SHE THROWS IT DOWN. MEANWHILE, FELICITY ENTERS, DANCING, AND CARRIES A STYROFOAM CUP OVER TO EV.)

FELICITY: Happy Hour, Mr. Haugh!

STACEY: What about us?

FELICITY: (IGNORING STACEY) Take a sip while I hold the cup.

LIL: (ENTERING WITH DRINKS) It's his leg that's broken, Fan.

FELICITY: Mine isn't though...I can dance anytime, anywhere.

MERLE: (REALIZING WHERE THIS IS LEADING) Forget it!

LIL: Well Merle, what's the answer?

MERLE: What's the question?

LIL: What are we gonna do?

MERLE: What do you think of just staying here and doing nothing?

FELICITY: For how long?

MERLE: Until we're rescued.

LIL: By who? The Lone Ranger?

MUFFY: I'd prefer Indiana Jones. *[or any current hero]*

MERLE: Surely somebody here has somebody at home who will soon miss her...or him.

EV: Do you?

MERLE: No.

EV: Thank goodness! Neither do I.

STACEY: My housemates are used to me not showing up. They just wait until they get the call for bail money.

LIL: My budgie will miss me...but he hasn't figured out how to use the phone yet.

FELICITY: Fergus is probably not home to know that I am not home. Anyway, he wouldn't know where I was if he were looking for me. I don't even know where I am.

MERLE: Muffy, you must have a family.

MUFFY: A mother and a father. I'm the only one in my class who has two parents under one roof.

MERLE: They'll miss you.

MUFFY: Yes, but they won't know where to look either. I'm skipping class to do this assignment.

EV: What about Sally?

LIL: It didn't sound likely.

MERLE: (CALLING TO OFFSTAGE) Sally! (SALLY APPEARS, GLASS IN HAND.)

SALLY: Yes?

MERLE: Does your cousin know you're here?

SALLY: I hope not.

STACEY: Why?

SALLY: He might come and take me home. (SHE LIFTS HER GLASS IN SALUTE, TAKES A SIP AND THEN EXITS.)

LIL: So much for being rescued. What's the backup plan?

MERLE: Well...I guess if you people could cause a diversion out front, I could sneak out the window when these guys go to see what's happening.

STACEY: Why you?

MERLE: Because I'm responsible here.

LIL: You're also afraid of heights...and we're on the second floor.

STACEY: It was hard enough getting up here. It'll be a bugger getting down.

MERLE: I'll manage somehow.

STACEY: No...I will. You're in charge of strategy; I'm in charge of operations.

FELICITY: How do you know these men will go look? Maybe they'll think it's a trick.

MUFFY: The mayor's not that smart.

FELICITY: The other guy might be.

EV: Not if he works for the Calgary Killer.

(SALLY ENTERS ON THE RUN.)

SALLY: They're coming...they're coming! I heard them. They think maybe they missed her so they're coming to check.

(A KNOCKING IS HEARD IN THE DISTANCE.)

FELICITY: Pretend we're not here.

MUFFY: They know I'm here. They saw me come in.

LIL: You and your damn fingernail!

(ANOTHER KNOCK)

MERLE: I'm going.

EV: (STRUGGLING UP) Not alone.

LIL: (PUSHING HIM DOWN GENTLY) No...with me.

MERLE: You can't, Lil.

LIL: He won't recognize me. He was too busy ogling the jailbait. (MORE KNOCKING) You stay out of sight, Stacey.

(LIL & MERLE GO OUT UPSTAGE DOOR AS MORE KNOCKING IS HEARD. EV SITS ANXIOUSLY ON THE COUCH, AND FELICITY PRACTICES DANCING. STACEY GRABS A BOOKEND AND SALLY GRABS A LAMP BEFORE EACH STATIONS HERSELF ON OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE

DOOR AND PEERS AROUND THE CORNER. MUFFY GOES TO THE WINDOW AND LOOKS OUT.)

MUFFY: (WHISPERING LOUDLY) These two are still here.

EV: What's happening down there?

STACEY: I'm trying to hear.

(THE SUMP PUMP NOISE BEGINS AGAIN; SALLY HURRIES OVER INTO THE SIDE ROOM. EV CRAWLS OVER TO THE ENTRANCE DOOR; MUFFY GOES TO HIM AND HELPS HIM UP. THE SUMP PUMP NOISES CEASE AND RAISED VOICES ARE HEARD FROM DOWNSTAIRS.)

LIL: (OFFSTAGE) Oh, yeah!

VOICE: (OFFSTAGE) Oh, yeah!

LIL: (OFFSTAGE) So's your mother!

(THE THUMPS AND BUMPS OF AN ALTERCATION CAN BE HEARD. EV GROPE HIS WAY OUT THE DOOR. MUFFY RESTRAINS STACEY FROM GOING. THE DOWNSTAIRS DOOR IS HEARD TO SLAM. UPSTAIRS, SALLY COMES OUT FROM THE SIDE ROOM, WIPING HER HANDS AND SMILING. FOOTSTEPS ARE HEARD. MERLE ENTERS SUPPORTING EV. LIL FOLLOWS, WIPING HER HANDS.)

MUFFY: I thought there was a fight.

LIL: (GETTING A DRINK FROM THE PITCHER) There was.

MERLE: (TRYING TO DISENTANGLE HERSELF FROM EV WHOM SHE IS TRYING TO SETTLE ON THE COUCH) The outcome was never in doubt.

LIL: He may know wrestling but I know Kung Fu.

MUFFY: Did you phone the police?

LIL: We couldn't get out of the doorway.

MERLE: Killer is down but not out...

STACEY: Always finish them off!

MERLE: And the other guy pulled a knife.

LIL: He wasn't askin' to play mumblety peg.

MERLE: I slammed the door.

FELICITY: On his foot, I hope.



LIL: From his cursing, I'd say you're right.

STACEY: (PUSHING UP SLEEVES) It's my turn to talk.

MERLE: No! Rational and reasonable...

STACEY: Bullshit!

MERLE: Stacey!

STACEY: Awww, Merle...

EV: We've got to get our acts together. They're getting desperate.

MUFFY: Do they know Stacey's here?

MERLE: No.

STACEY: They would if you'd let me down there.

EV: Obviously, they think you know something.

MUFFY: Right.

LIL: Wrong...They think Merle and I were having a lover's tryst.

MERLE: Killer called us a couple of bull dykes.

EV: The snake!

SALLY: (WONDERINGLY) Bull dyke?

MERLE: Some people think it's a synonym for feminist.

SALLY: Before I came here, I thought I understood English.

MUFFY: Couldn't you just die of embarrassment?

LIL: Why? He's the one with the dirty mind.

MUFFY: I know, but...

MERLE: Don't waste your energy, Muffy, worrying about what other people think.

STACEY: It's counterproductive.

LIL: Some people always think the worst, no matter what.

SALLY: You aren't just whistling...(SHE OBVIOUSLY FORGETS WHAT COMES NEXT)...whatever.

EV: It's small thanks you'll get for trying to behave as other people say you should.

FELICITY: Don't say that!

SALLY: Why not?

FELICITY: Because it might be true.

LIL: For Christ's sake! Of course, it might be...it is.

FELICITY: (PUTTING HANDS ON EARS) I won't listen!

MERLE: Not listening won't change anything.

FELICITY: My mother said if I was a good girl, good things would happen.

STACEY: She lied.

FELICITY: Help me, Lil.

LIL: How can I? I can scarcely look after myself.

MUFFY: Sure you can. You just beat the Calgary Killer.

LIL: Big bloody deal!

MERLE: I'm sorry, Lil. I know how much he meant to you.

LIL: C'est la vie, kid...c'est la goddam vie! My hero is an out-of-shape, over-the-hill dope dealer.

SALLY: Not much of a Prince Charming.

STACEY: There are no Princes Charming.

FELICITY: No knights in shining armor?

MERLE: No valiant heroes rescuing distressed damsels.

EV: I'd like to audition for the part...but if it calls for action, I'm out.

FELICITY: Speaking of auditions...

MERLE: No! Not in a thousand years...not for a thousand dollars!

LIL: You know, I like the occasional "funny" cigarette...and, God knows, I've been at a few parties where there was more powdered coke than liquid...but lookin' at these bags and knowin' the hell some people will go through because of them, I want to kill the guy who's sellin' them.

FELICITY: You almost did!

MUFFY: I wish you had.

SALLY: They mustn't be allowed to get away with it.

**EV:** They won't. (AS EV BECOMES MORE INVOLVED HE BECOMES MORE ACTIVE, BUT THE ACTOR PLAYING THE PART MUST REMEMBER THAT THE LEG IS INDEED CAUSING PAIN.)

**STACEY:** How are you going to stop them?

**EV:** I'm not...you are. I'll help, but the dangerous part has to be yours.

**FELICITY:** Dangerous!

**EV:** You've got to get out that window.

**STACEY:** Right!

**MERLE:** Those men!

**SALLY:** (GOING TO WINDOW) They're still there.

**EV:** So we have to incapacitate them.

**STACEY:** We!

**MUFFY:** How?

**EV:** I'm working on it. With one there'd be no problem, but with two....I need missiles.

**STACEY:** (HOLDING UP SPITBALLS) You got 'em!

**EV:** (LOOKING AT THEM DISDAINFULLY) Ones that might inflict at least a modicum of damage. They have to be bigger...with hard centres and a soft outside.

**SALLY:** That sounds like a chocolate.

**LIL:** Or a baseball. (SHE LOOKS AT EV SPECULATIVELY, THEN GOES TO LOCKER WHERE SHE RUMMAGES AROUND UNTIL SHE COMES UP WITH A BASEBALL IN A PROTECTIVE CASE. SHE LOOKS AT IT, HESITATES, THEN PUTS IT BACK.)

**STACEY:** Help me somebody.

**FELICITY:** Would I have to spit?

**MUFFY:** I'll do it. I'm a good spitter. I can even do it between my teeth.

**STACEY:** Tear some paper first.

**MERLE:** (HOLDING UP PAPERWEIGHT) Would this do for the centre?

**EV:** Perfect!

**MERLE:** How about cotton and string to go on the outside. (SHE GETS SOME FROM A DESK DRAWER.)

EV: Yes!...and another centre.

MUFFY: Why do we need a hard centre?

EV: We want to incapacitate the enemy.

STACEY: Why do we need a soft outside?

EV: We don't want to decapitate them.

LIL: Don't we?

EV: Maybe we do...but we'd better not.

LIL: You're probably right...damn it. Is there anything you want me to do as my part in this incapacitation caper?

EV: (NODDING AT EMPTY GLASS) I could use a refill.

LIL: Good thinkin'! (TO FELICITY) Come on, Droopy Drawers...you can man the shaker again.

STACEY: "Man" it, Lil?

LIL: Excuse me. You can woman the shaker.

FELICITY: I am good at it, aren't I? (LIL & FELICITY GO OUT.)

SALLY: (LOOKING OUT THE WINDOW) That mayor is a really strange man.

MUFFY: Tell us something we don't know.

MERLE: What are you going to do with the missiles?

EV: Throw them.

MERLE: Oh...

EV: Unless...hey! I'm sorry.

MERLE: For what?

EV: Isn't this where you say, "I'm in charge here"?

MERLE: Do I really come across as that defensive? (EV GOES TO SPEAK BUT SHE CUTS HIM OFF.) Don't answer that. Frankly, if I felt "in charge", you'd be the first to know it...but, at this moment, the best idea I can come up with is to close my eyes and hope that that (POINTING AT COKE) and that (POINTING AT MONEY) will go away.

EV: That's my favorite plan too.

MERLE: But you do have another...

EV: Well...if you don't mind my interfering...

MERLE: Look, I'm a feminist, not a chauvinist! If you can clear up this mess, please do.

EV: Well, my plan isn't what you'd call complete yet, but...

STACEY: Quit apologizing about it, and explain it.

EV: Distraction won't work. They never even heard Lil and Killer fighting it out, so we have to try for temporary elimination.

(LIL & FELICITY ARRIVE WITH DRINKS.)

SALLY: (FROM WINDOW) That mayor should do something about his twitch.

FELICITY: I didn't notice it this morning.

SALLY: It's getting worse as I watch him. (SHE DEMONSTRATES HIS "TWITCH" WHICH LOOKS LIKE THE MANIFESTATION OF A FULL- BLADDER PROBLEM.)

LIL: Don't worry about it. We see the same thing every week at the Euchre party. It'll go when he goes.

SALLY: You mean...

LIL: Yep...Nature's callin' Weak Bladder Willie.

EV: Perfect! If he has to leave, I'll only have one to deal with.

STACEY: What makes you think he'll leave?

FELICITY: Well, he wouldn't just relieve himself there.

STACEY: Why not?

SALLY: He can't!

LIL: He won't...not if you let him see you in the window.

MUFFY: What difference will that make?

LIL: Look, he's an idiot and a fool...and he'd kill his mother if he thought he could make a buck on her death...but he wouldn't pee in front of a woman.

STACEY: Come on!

LIL: Trust me. It's the way they're conditioned.

EV: Let him see you, Sally. Talk to the birds. (SHE STICKS HER HEAD OUT THE WINDOW.)

LIL: See, he knows I'm right. They say it's out of politeness, but I think they're really afraid we'll laugh.

EV: Your perception astounds me.

SALLY: (TO OUTSIDE) Here birdie, birdie, birdie.

EV: Let's get ready. We want to be ready when he asks to be excused. (HE GETS UP, CLUTCHING THE EDGE OF THE COUCH.) Do I have any ammunition?

S & M: (BRINGING BALLS TO HIM) Here. (THEY ARE OBVIOUSLY USELESS. LIL GOES TO THE LOCKER, TAKES OUT THE BASEBALL, REMOVES IT FROM ITS PROTECTIVE CASE, KISSES IT AND HANDS IT TO EV.)

MERLE: No Lil!

EV: (LOOKING AT BALL) PeeWee Reese...

LIL: There's no other way.

EV: Duke Snider...

STACEY: I'm sorry.

EV: Roy Campanella...

LIL: It's my contribution to the war effort.

EV: Jackie Robinson...Lil, this is priceless. Are you sure?

LIL: Just take it, for God's sake...and be quiet about it.

EV: I'll knock the fellow out, Stacey, then you leave.

MUFFY: What if you miss?

EV: I won't.

MERLE: Pretty cocky aren't you?

EV: I've been making the throw from centre field to home plate since I was ten years old.

LIL: Jumpin' Jesus! Hee Haugh! (HE BOWS) I didn't recognize you in your clothes.

FELICITY: Lily!

EV: Explanations later. Help me over to that chair in front of the window. (MERLE & MUFFY STEADY HIM.)

SALLY: (TO OUTSIDE) Sorry...Am I disturbing you?

MERLE: (TO STACEY) You be careful climbing down.

FELICITY: Why is she climbing?  
LIL: Because she can't fly.  
MERLE: And it's too far to jump.  
FELICITY: Mightn't she hurt herself?  
EV: Yes. That's the dangerous part of the plan.  
SALLY: (TO OUTSIDE) Are you doing a survey?  
FELICITY: I'm not sure whether I care if she hurts herself or not, but still...why doesn't she use the rope? God knows, she knows how.  
EV: Of course!  
MERLE: Excellent idea!  
FELICITY: Really?  
LIL: Really.

(STACEY GETS THE ROPE AND TIES IT AROUND HER MIDDLE.)

SALLY: (TO OUTSIDE) Do you like sifting garbage?  
EV: Somebody should check the boys out front.  
FELICITY: I will. (SHE GOES.)  
MUFFY: May I say something?  
EV: Anytime.  
MUFFY: I think I'd better go with Stacey...and the coke had better come too.  
STACEY: I can look after myself.  
MUFFY: That's not the point.  
EV: What is?  
MUFFY: First of all, if Stacey just tells the police what's happened, they'll be able to rescue us, but they won't be able to arrest those men.  
MERLE: That's true! They can deny any knowledge of the drugs.  
LIL: The most they could be picked up for is loitering.  
FELICITY: (RE ENTERING) The Killer is moaning and the other one's picking his teeth.  
MUFFY: Stacey has to let them take the bag from her.

MERLE: No!

MUFFY: The police would be close behind to protect her.

SALLY: (TO OUTSIDE) I just love pigeons. Don't you?

STACEY: Okay...the bag comes.

EV: I should go for you...

STACEY: You can't...and you don't need to.

EV: Pack the bag. (MERLE PUTS THE COKE BACK IN AND GIVES THE BAG TO STACEY.)

SALLY: (TO OUTSIDE) Excuse me for a minute...(SHE DUCKS IN, REACHES FOR HER PURSE AND TAKES CANDIES FROM IT)...I'm keeping him talking.

MERLE: Give us a few more minutes.

SALLY: He's just about hopping. (SHE DUCKS OUT AGAIN.)

EV: Are we about ready?

SALLY: (TO OUTSIDE) Would you like a peppermint?

MUFFY: (REACHING FOR ROPE) I should go first.

EV: Wait a minute! We agreed to the bag going, not you.

MUFFY: I have to.

MERLE: Why?

MUFFY: From what I can see, Stacey is known to the police.

LIL: That's for sure.

MUFFY: And...excuse me for saying this, but...not as a model citizen.

LIL: A shit-disturber's more like it.

MUFFY: They probably know she started a riot this morning...

FELICITY: The television cameras were there.

MUFFY: So...they may not believe her.

EV: You may be right.

MUFFY: They'll believe me.

LIL: What makes you so sure?



MUFFY: The chief is my father. (STACEY TAKES OFF ROPE AND MUFFY STARTS PUTTING IT ON.)

FELICITY: You can't let her go. She's just a baby.

MERLE: I should go.

SALLY: (TO OUTSIDE) Pardon? Oh, of course, I'll excuse you...Yes? Well, I prefer cats myself. (TURNING TO OTHERS) He's got to see a man about a dog. (TO OUTSIDE) Bye for now.

EV: (TO SALLY'S BACK) Sally, when he's out of sight, get the other fellow looking the other way, then duck...The rest of you be ready to hold the rope.

SALLY: (TO OUTSIDE) There should be something interesting in those cans over there. The people throw really wild parties. (SALLY FALLS TO THE FLOOR, EV AIMS AND FIRES THE BALL.)

LIL: Bull's eye! (ALL START HUGGING MUFFY)

MERLE: Take care.

MUFFY: I'm off. (SHE GOES OVER THE LEDGE AND OUT. ALL HOLD THE ROPE AS IF LETTING A WEIGHT DOWN TO THE GROUND. LIL, AT THE FRONT OF THE LINE, LOOKS OVER THE SILL.)

LIL: She's off and running. (THEY REEL IN THE ROPE AND TIE IT TO STACEY WHO HAS THE BAG IN HER HAND.)

MERLE: (HUGGING HER) Do what the police tell you to do.

STACEY: Yes, mother. (SHE GOES OUT THE SAME WAY MUFFY DID.)

LIL: (ACKNOWLEDGING THAT STACEY IS ON THE GROUND) Good luck! (ALL GO TO PEER OUT THE WINDOW.)

EV: Well done, team. (ALL ENGAGE IN MUTUAL HUGS. MERLE ENDS UP EMBRACING EV.)

EV: Don't ever let me go! (SHE DOES AND HE COLLAPSES.)

MERLE: Oh, Lord! (SHE DROPS DOWN BESIDE HIM.)

EV: You can't fire me now...not after crippling me for life. (MERLE MOANS.)

LIL: (GRINNING) Cheap shot, Hee Haugh!

EV: I'll try anything.

SALLY: You make a lovely couple.

EV: Thank you.

**MERLE:** Watch the window.

**SALLY:** Yes, ma'am. (SHE GOES TO THE WINDOW BUT REMAINS A PART OF THIS CONVERSATION.)

**FELICITY:** What is this about Hee Haugh and no clothes?

**LIL:** I didn't say "no clothes", Fanny. You're just wishful thinkin'.

**EV:** Explain and spare my blushes.

**LIL:** I only saw him in his uniform.

**FELICITY:** You were a soldier?

**EV:** A baseball player.

**LIL:** I've got his bubble gum card.

**EV:** I was a utility outfielder in the majors and in the minors.

**SALLY:** I've got to get a dictionary as soon as I get out of here.

**MERLE:** So you're not a secretary at all. That was just a big joke.

**EV:** It was not. I am, indeed, what I say I am.

**SALLY:** He has to earn money. You don't get paid to play ball.

**LIL:** Tell that to Reggie Jackson.

**EV:** Actually, I got paid quite well...and now I've got my pension.

**SALLY:** For playing ball?

**EV:** Yes.

**SALLY:** What next?

**EV:** I put in twenty years, then I was let go.

**FELICITY:** Why?

**EV:** Too old.

**SALLY:** You're a kid!

**EV:** Not on the field. (SALLY SHAKES HER HEAD IN AMAZEMENT.) During the road trips, I got tired of doing crossword puzzles and watching soap operas, so I taught myself shorthand and bookkeeping. (TO MERLE) You'll get your money's worth out of me.

**SALLY:** (TO MERLE) You've got to take him.

MERLE: What's happening out there?

SALLY: (LOOKING OUT) Nothing. Do you know that that man's socks don't match?

FELICITY: (JOINING SALLY AT WINDOW) Fuschia and lime...how tacky!

SALLY: I wonder his mother lets him out looking like that.

LIL: (JOINING THEM) Can you see my ball?

FELICITY: Look, there's the mayor! (LIL PULLS HER BACK AND ALL THREE DROP TO THE FLOOR. IN CONCERT, THEY RISE TO THEIR KNEES AND PEER OVER THE SILL. FROM THIS MOMENT, THEIR ACTIONS SHOULD BE CHOREOGRAPHED LIKE A MARX BROTHERS' ROUTINE.) He forgot to zipper up.

SALLY: He sees his friend.

LIL: Look at the look on his face. (SUDDENLY, AS ONE, THE THREE WOMEN RISE AND WALK QUICKLY, IN SINGLE FILE AND IN STEP, ACROSS THE ROOM. )

FELICITY: He's going around to the front. (THEY GO OUT THE SIDE DOOR.)

EV: You wouldn't have to hire me for long.

MERLE: Is that so?

EV: You could get rid of me any time you wanted.

MERLE: Tell me how.

EV: I don't believe in office romances. When you decide to go steady with me, I'll quit and find another job.

MERLE: Rather a desperate solution, I think.

(THE THREE WOMAN RETURN, AS THEY LEFT, IN SINGLE FILE, CLOSE TOGETHER, AND THEY CROSS TO THE WINDOW WHERE THEY PEER SURREPTITIOUSLY AROUND THE CURTAINS. MERLE AND EV LOOK ON IN AMAZEMENT IF NOT IN AMUSEMENT.)

FELICITY: (WHILE CROSSING) They're all coming around here.

SALLY: Are they mad?

LIL: As in crazy. (ALL THREE DROP TO THEIR KNEES.)

FELICITY: Did they see us? (ALL PEEP CAUTIOUSLY, RISING SLOWLY UNTIL THEY ARE HALFWAY OUT THE WINDOW. THEY UTTER A COLLECTIVE GASP, THEN THEY SCURRY BACK ACROSS THE ROOM, STILL IN SINGLE FILE, AND DISAPPEAR AGAIN.)

EV: What's it like here on a quiet day?

MERLE: I don't know. I haven't had one yet.

FELICITY: (STICKING HEAD IN DOORWAY) Stacey's coming! (OUT)

SALLY: (HEAD IN) They've got her! (OUT)

LIL: (HEAD IN) They've got the bag. (OUT)

FELICITY: (HEAD IN) They're getting away! (OUT)

SALLY: (HEAD IN) They're not! (OUT)

LIL: (COMING IN, FIST RAISED) Score one for the fuzz!

FELICITY: (ENTERING) There are knights in shining armor!

SALLY: (ENTERING, THUMBS UP) Led by a damsel named Muffy!

(THE THREE DANCE, RING-AROUND-ROSIE STYLE,  
UNTIL THEY HEAR A KNOCK AT THE DOOR.)

MERLE: I'll get it.

LIL: (TO EV) We make a great team, HeeHaw. It's a pleasure to watch a pro at work.

EV: How about a bit of teamwork to get me off this floor.

LIL: No problem. Come on, girls...pitch in. (THE THREE GET HIM TO HIS FEET AS STACEY ENTERS.)

STACEY: (FIST RAISED HIGH) Yeahhhh! We did it!

EV: We certainly did.

STACEY: Of course, some of us did more than...

LIL: We all did it.

SALLY: Together. (MUFFY ENTERS WITH BASEBALL.)

MUFFY: (THROWING BALL TO LIL) Wasn't that awesome? (THERE IS A CHORUS OF GENERAL AGREEMENT.) Are you okay, Ev?

EV: Fine, just fine...almost.

STACEY: You know we'll be the laughing stock of the town if we keep you.

EV: Could be...for a day or two...but I'm worth it.

LIL: Where's Merle?

MUFFY: Talking to my father. She'll be up in a minute.

FELICITY: When she gets here, Lily, tell her how good I was when I did "The Good Ship Lollipop" at the Senior Prom.

LIL: You want me to lie?

FELICITY: Please...I want to be in the show.

STACEY: No way!

MUFFY: It's for feminists.

FELICITY: I'm a female...and I want to dance. (ALL HEADS BUT SALLY'S ARE SHAKEN IN DISBELIEF.)

SALLY: Merle said you couldn't...not for a thousand dollars.

FELICITY: I'll offer her two.

EV: Two what?

FELICITY: Two thousand. (ALL BUT SALLY ARE THUNDERSTRUCK.)

LIL: A sump pump!

SALLY: I didn't know you had to pay to be in it. Is there a discount for Seniors?

STACEY: You're offering two thousand dollars to be in The Revolutionary Revue?

FELICITY: You think she'll want more?

MUFFY: But your principles?

FELICITY: What about them?

LIL: Stop trying to confuse her. She wants to dance, let her dance.

STACEY: Merle will say "No." She won't compromise her principles for money.

EV: It's not that simple. The money's not for her; it's for the cause.

LIL: And for a sump pump.

SALLY: It's so we can do good works.

FELICITY: It's so I can do "The Good Ship Lollipop."

MUFFY: It just doesn't seem right. Merle was upset at the idea of the men horning in on her show...How can she accept The Total Woman?

EV: We don't know that she will.

STACEY: She won't.

**LIL:** She's crazy if she doesn't.

**SALLY:** Do you suppose I could make my payments in installments?

(MERLE ENTERS.)

**MERLE:** Now all our troubles are over.

**LIL:** Wanna make a bet?

(BLACKOUT)