

ANNE: Ye didn't tell her it was seven, twenty times each—

WILL: Not with all.

ANNE: Why not, they didn't think much of ye?

WILL: Gets boring.

ANNE: For a boy I been feeling sorry for, ye—have a grand gift to surprise me—

WILL: But God gives each of us a fruit, and one way or another I mean to eat it, before I die, before I die.

ANNE: When did ye start on them, I didn't guess one?

WILL: While you were—I'm sorry—carrying the— (*He indicates upstairs.*)

ANNE: Twins. *She nods.* Yes, that I knew, I had them all by myself, yes. And if ye hands itched for me ye'd—get the milk keeps them alive, not too pleasing to a lover, lad, is it.

WILL: It's not that.

ANNE: And I'm running around here with diapers and dish-rags, nobody's picture of a—doxy ye can't keep ye hands off—

WILL: Not that.

ANNE: Ye couldn't wait, what?

WILL: Oh, I could wait, yes, but—Not take a wife any longer who suckles and swaddles and wipes me like a babe in public, no. *A wait.*

ANNE: Ye liked it, lad.

WILL: Don't call me that. I'm not always seventeen. I'm not—yours, you said I was, I'm mine, and out of whatever love you stalked in as mother tigress tonight, your tongue licks me with contempt. I like it: I loathe it. Be strong, be strong with—others, you're throttling a lover to death. And that I think is the answer.

A silence, their eyes on each other across the table.

ANNE: Is that—the worst ye have to say? *Will gazes at her.* It's a question, la—love.

WILL: No.

ANNE: What else? *Will picks up the text, stands up.*

WILL: No, the game is over.

ANNE: No it isn't, not till both of us say, and I have to know. *Will is silent.* Tell me, ye—milk-sop, what's the worst ye think, ye'll leave me?

WILL: I think, she's older, she'll die first.

Anne hides her face in a hand, and this time does cry, it begins with a jerky breath, she keeps the crying in her gut, but at last it breaks her open. Will comes back, tosses the text on the table, stands behind her racked figure, to finger her nape.

ANNE: Don't—touch—

WILL: Anne, nothing's impossible—the schoolteaching, family and fidelity, even Gilbert is possible—if I can— (*with both hands he caresses her hair, ears, eyes*) —ripen with it, that's all I mean by enough. Your cheek is wet. Is that the only thing? *He draws her body back against his groin, she stiffens, slowly moves against him.*

ANNE: None of—ye business—

WILL: Oh, I think it is. *His hands come down over her, bosom, belly, then he twists to the candle, he sees the marigolds, picks a few, sits beside her, and puts a flower in her hair.* That's for the dishrags. *She bites at his hand, he puts another into her bodice.* For the diapers. Yes, he— (*a last flower in his fingers, he twists to blow out the candle*) —did kiss her. You have no idea where I mean to put this one— (*Anne begins to laugh, in the dark, it is a marvelous laugh, also up out of her gut, hearty and prolonged, but it ends presently in a little gasp.*)

ANNE: Not here—

WILL: Here.

BUTTERFLIES ARE FREE

by Leonard Gershe

ACT I, SCENE 1

Don Baker is an attractive young musician living in his own apartment, in New York City, for the first time. Jill Tanner is an attractive young woman who, by happy coincidence, hap-

pens to live in the apartment next door. Not only is she attractive, but she is also very forward, and after hearing Don's voice through the door that separates their apartments, she invites herself in for a cup of coffee. All the pieces are thus neatly set up for a lovely romance to ensue, except that Jill (and the audience) soon discovers that Don is blind. But love does emerge and the rest of the play concerns the trials and tribulations of these young lovers who eventually overcome all obstacles, including Don's very meddling mother.

The scene below takes place shortly after the first meeting. They have been talking for a while—about blindness, about Don's former girl friend, Linda, and about Jill's intolerably long six-day marriage. Jill then suggests to Don that a locked door separating their apartments be opened so that they can have access to each other's rooms without going into the hall. Don accepts the suggestion. As the excerpt begins, Jill, who has been going at the lock with a knife, is about to give up on getting the door open.

DON: Let me try. *Jill places the knife in Don's hand. He feels for the lock and maneuvers the knife around in it. He takes the knife from the lock and, delicately, works it between the door and the lock. I felt something. Suddenly the door opens. Jill crosses below Don and into doorway.*

JILL: You did it! It's open! *We can see part of Jill's bedroom with a lot of her things strewn about, untidily. Quickly, embarrassed:* Oh, don't look! It's an absolute pigsty!

DON, *covering his eyes:* I won't.

JILL, *sinking; crosses downstage left and sits downstage end of coffee table on rug:* I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

DON: Stop being sorry.

JILL: I'll get the hang of it. I just don't know when. *Don closes the door. Let's leave it open.*

DON, *opens the door again, then crosses to kitchen to put the knife away:* Okay, but tell me if you close it again. I don't want to break my nose on it. *Don crosses above table to right of downstage left post.*

JILL: Do you wish it were Linda living there instead of me?

DON: I never even thought about it. Why do you ask?

JILL, *crosses left of Don:* I was wondering if you're still in love with her.

DON: Did I say I was in love with her?

JILL, *crosses around to right of Don:* If I get too personal, just tell me to shut up. I get carried away. *Left hand on his chest, walks across him.* Were you in love with her? Are you?

DON, *crosses to sofa, sits center:* Every man should have some mystery. That'll be mine.

JILL, *crosses above table to upstage end of sofa:* What's she like?

DON: She's very pretty.

JILL: How do you know?

DON: I can feel someone's face and get a good idea of what they look like. I can tell from shapes and textures.

JILL, *crosses to upstage of him:* Do you wonder what I look like?

DON: Yes.

JILL, *kneels:* I'm gorgeous.

DON: Really?

JILL: I wouldn't lie about something like that.

DON: You know, I've always thought if I could see for just half a minute—I'd like to see how I look.

JILL, *leans in to him:* I'll tell you. Cute . . . and very sexy.

Don smiles and reaches a hand to Jill's face. Gently, he runs his finger up the side of her face, exploring. He runs his hand over the top of her head and takes hold of her long hair, lightly pulling it through his fingers.

DON: Your hair is very soft . . . and very long. Suddenly, Jill's long hair, which is a fall, comes off in Don's hand, revealing her own hair underneath. Don is startled as he feels the limp hair in his hand. Oh, Jesus! He falls back on the sofa.

JILL: Don't be frightened.

DON, *dropping the fall like a hot potato:* What happened?

JILL, *picks up the fall and puts it on the coffee table:* It's just a fall. It's a long piece of hair that you attach to your head.

DON: It's not your hair?

JILL: It's not even my fall. I borrowed it from Susan Potter. I have hair of my own. See? I mean feel? *Places his hand on her head. Don takes in the shape of her head, then moves his hand along her face, over her eyes. A false eyelash comes off in his hand.*

DON, rises, backs up onto platform, grabs downstage left post
God! Now what?!

JILL: Oh damn—a false eyelash. Takes the eyelash from him
and puts it in her pocket.

DON: Don't you have eyelashes?

JILL, kneels downstage arm of sofa: Of course, but these are
longer than mine. They make my eyes look bigger. Didn't Lin-
da wear them?

DON: No.

JILL: She probably has naturally long lashes. I hate her. Plac-
ing his hand on her cheek: Go on.

DON: This is scaring hell out of me.

JILL: It's all right. Everything's real from now on. Don runs his
fingers across Jill's mouth. Am I not the image of Elizabeth
Taylor?

DON: I've never felt Elizabeth Taylor.

JILL: We look exactly alike. Especially if you can't see. Jill
smiles at Don, oddly, as his fingers explore her throat. She takes
his hand and places it on her breast. That's my breast. All mine.
Both of them. Gently, she pushes him down on the table. She
kisses him full on the mouth. Don twists his head away from her
and gets off table. Suddenly, anguished, crosses above upstage
end of sofa. What's the matter?

DON: What do you think is the matter?

JILL, between sofa and coffee table: If I knew, I wouldn't ask.

DON: Why are you doing this? Is it Be Kind to the Hand-
capped Week or something? Don't patronize me! And don't feel
sorry for me!

JILL, hotly: I'm doing it because I want to do it! And I'll be
God damned if I feel sorry for any guy who's going to have sex
with me!

They kiss and sink onto the sofa.

THE DARK AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS

by William Inge

ACT I

The setting for Inge's family drama is the home of Rubin Flood, his wife, Cora, and their two children. The time is the early 1920s and the place is a small Oklahoma town. The Floods' daughter, Reenie, is an overly shy teenage girl who spends more time practicing the piano than socializing with her friends. Her mother, Cora, is worried about her. Without telling her husband, Cora has purchased an expensive dress for Reenie to wear to a local dance. When Rubin is told about the dress by a gossiping shopkeeper, he is furious. He enters the house and confronts Cora just as she is trying to encourage Reenie to attend the dance. The ensuing argument between the couple snowballs into an airing of grievances that ends with Rubin threatening to leave and Cora accusing him of adultery. (Reenie's brief entrance and Cora's response to her at the beginning of the scene may be omitted for scene-study purposes, as may the later entrance of her brother Sonny.)

RUBIN, bursting into the house: What the hell's been goin' on behind my back? Sees the innocent dress lying on a chair: There it is!

CORA: Rubin!

RUBIN, displaying the dress as evidence: So this is what ya wanted the extra money for. Fine feathers! Fine feathers! And ya buy 'em when my back is turned.

CORA: Rubin, we were going to tell you. . . .

RUBIN: A man has to go downtown and talk with some of his pals before he knows what's goin' on in his own family.

CORA: Who told you?