

GEMINI

by Albert Innaurato

ACT I, SCENE 2

Francis Geminiani is about to be twenty-one years old. He is a Harvard student who has returned home on vacation to the South Philadelphia house of his father, Fran. He is paid an unexpected visit by two friends from college, Judith and Randy Hastings. Their family background is wealthy and Waspy, while Francis's is decidedly working-class Italian-American. This situation proves to be embarrassing for the young man when his visitors try to socialize with Francis's eccentric, boisterous neighbors. Adding to his discomfort is the fact that Judith is in love with him, while he has (or thinks he has) a crush on her brother Randy.

The following scene takes place in the backyard of Francis's house. Judith is trying to find out why Francis is no longer interested in her. By way of explanation, he confides his attraction to a young man. She does not know he is referring to her brother. (The "Bunny" referred to near the end of the scene is a neighbor whose kitchen window faces the backyard.)

JUDITH: Lucille and your father are—well, you know, aren't they?

FRANCIS: I don't know, they drink an awful lot of coffee.

JUDITH: Stimulates the gonads— (*She embraces Francis and kisses him. He looks uncomfortable.*) What's the matter?

FRANCIS: I'm sorry.

JUDITH: Sorry about what? *He looks away.* You know, I think you are an eternal adolescent, a German Adolescent, a German Romantic Adolescent. You were born out of context, you'd have been much happier in the forties of the last century when it was eternally twilight.

FRANCIS: Do I detect a veiled reference to *Zwielicht* by Eichendorf?

JUDITH: I took Basic European Literature also, and did better than you did.

FRANCIS: You did not.

JUDITH: I got the highest mark on the objective test: 98! What did you get? *She laughs.*

FRANCIS, bantering with her: My SAT verbal and achievement tests were higher than yours.

JUDITH: How do you know?

FRANCIS: I looked them up in the office. I pretended to go faint, and while the registrar ran for water, I looked at your file.

JUDITH, entering into his game: I find that hard to believe; I had the highest score in the verbal at St. Paul's and also in the English Achievement Test.

FRANCIS: That's what it said alongside your IQ.

JUDITH, taken aback in spite of herself: My IQ?

FRANCIS: Very interesting that IQ. It was recorded in bright red ink. There was also a parenthesis, in which someone had written: Poor girl but she has great determination.

JUDITH: I find jokes about IQ's in poor taste.

FRANCIS: Then you are an adolescent, a German Adolescent, a German Romantic Adolescent.

JUDITH: And before this edifying discussion you were about to say: "Fuck you, Judith."

FRANCIS: Don't put it that way . . .

JUDITH: But more or less it was get lost, see you later, oh yes, have a nice summer—and maybe, just maybe, I'll tell you why later. You seem to want to skip that part, the why. *She picks up the end of a garden hose, and points it at Francis like a machine gun, and with a Humphrey Bogart voice, says:* Look, I came to see you, that's ballsy, now you've got to reciprocate and tell me why . . . *She puts down the hose, and the accent.* Do I bore you? Do you think I'm ugly? Do I have bad breath?

FRANCIS: Oh, come on!

JUDITH: Hey, Francis, we're just alike, can't you see that?

FRANCIS, indicates the house and yard: Oh yeah.

JUDITH: Two over achievers. Really. I know my family is better off than yours; but we're just alike, and there was something last winter and now you're telling me . . .

FRANCIS: Look, I'm going to be twenty-one tomorrow. Well . . . I don't know what to say.

JUDITH: Is there a reason?

FRANCIS: I don't think I can say.

JUDITH: That doesn't make any sense.

FRANCIS: I think I'm queer.

JUDITH: Why don't we back up a bit. I said: "We're just alike etcetera," and you said you were going to be twenty-one tomorrow, and I looked at you with deep set, sea blue eyes, and you said . . .

FRANCIS: I think I'm queer.

JUDITH, *laughs*: Well, I guess we can't get around it. Do you want to amplify? I mean this seems like quite a leap from what I remember of those long sweet ecstatic nights, naked in each other's young arms, clinging to . . .

FRANCIS: We fucked. Big deal. That's what kids are supposed to do. And be serious.

JUDITH: I am serious. Is there a particular boy?

FRANCIS: Yes.

JUDITH: An adolescent, a German Adolescent . . .

FRANCIS: Not German, no.

JUDITH: Do I know him? *Francis doesn't answer. Reciprocal?*

FRANCIS: It was just this spring. He began to haunt me. We became friends. We talked a lot—late in my room when you were studying. Well, I don't know, and you see—I've had well, crushes before. I dreamed of him. It's not reciprocal, no, he doesn't know, but it became more and more obvious to me. I mean, I'd look at him, and then some other boy would catch my eye and I'd think—you see?

JUDITH: Well, I suppose I could start teaching you the secrets of make up. *Francis turns away, annoyed.* Well, how do you expect me to react? You seem to think I ought to leap out the window because of it. But it's like you're suddenly turning to me and saying you are from Mars. Well, you might be, but I don't see much evidence and I can't see what difference it makes. I'm talking about you and me, I and thou and all that. All right, maybe you do have an eye for the boys, well so do I, but you . . . you are special to me. I wouldn't throw you over just because a hockey player looked good, why do you have to give me up?

FRANCIS: I don't think that makes any sense, Judith. I mean, if I were from Mars, it would make a difference, I'd have seven legs and talk a different language and that's how I feel now. *Judith embraces him.* Don't touch me so much Judith, and don't look at me . . .

JUDITH: Then you're afraid. That explains that fat and ugly nonsense and this sudden homosexual panic. You're afraid that anyone who responds to you will make demands you can't meet. You're afraid you'll fail . . .

FRANCIS: Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen, Texaco Presents: "Banality on Parade!"

JUDITH: You're afraid to venture. That's why you've enshrined someone who doesn't respond to you, probably doesn't even know you're interested. If the relationship never happens you are never put to the test and can't fail. The Over Achiever's Great Nightmare!

FRANCIS: That's crazy!

JUDITH: I bet this boy who draws you is some Harvard sprite, a dew touched Freshman . . .

FRANCIS: He was a Freshman.

JUDITH: In Randy's class and that proves it. Look at Randy—what kind of response could someone like that have but the giggles? And you know that. You're afraid of commitment. And remember what Dante says about those who refuse to make commitments. They're not even in Hell, but are condemned to run about the outskirts for eternity. *Francis, who has heard enough, has stuck his head inside Bunny's kitchen window, and brought it down over his neck like a guillotine. Judith now runs over to the fence, and starts climbing to the top. Ed io che riguardai vidi una insegna che girando correvva tanta ratta, che d'ogni posa me pareva indegna . . . ! She leaps off the fence. Francis runs to her aid.*

FRANCIS: Judith! Jesus Christ!

JUDITH, *as he helps her up*: You see? I ventured, I made the great leap and remained unscathed.