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### Characters

Daren: Twenty-nine. Husband to Karen. Son to Riley. Clark Kent without Superman. A staid fumbler.

Dennis: Twenty-two. Just out of undergrad. Assistant to Riley. Highly intelligent. A showoff.

Donna: Fifty-eight. A wealthy sophisticated woman with a nice figure and acrimonious face. A bit bombastic and bellicose. Mother to Karen.

Connie: Nineteen. A Puerto Rican pedicurists. Has a quality of overcompensating pugnaciance. Long designer fingernails.

Karen: Twenty-nine. Wife of Daren and daughter of Donna. Ten months pregnant. A sister school drop out with a neurotic streak.

Penelope: Twenty-two. Divorced. A Puerto Rican pedicurists with a six-month year old son. "Ghetto fabulous".

Riley: Sixty. An alcoholic Pritzker winning architect. Father to Daren. Not so innocently lecherous.

### Setting

The set is divided into three playing areas. On stage left sit two pedicure chairs, which Donna and Karen use during the entire play. On stage right are two stools where Penelope and Connie give their pedicures. Mannequin legs, which represent the legs of clients Karen and Donna, are attached to the stage directly downstage of the stools. Karen and Donna's actual legs, on stage left, should not be lit when sitting. Although the entire playing area contains a putting green - with the pedicure chairs and stools appearing to be set out on the putting green - the gentlemen, in the middle of practice, primarily spend their time center stage.

A note to the director and actors: although the play seems to be three plays happening at the same time, in truth the actions and dialogue of the characters in their own individual scenes very much effect the action and dialogue of the other characters. They may not consciously hear the other characters but the unheard dialogue does propel their actions.

A note to the questioning producer: The play has been cold read (on numerous occasions) and produced (a one-time only production). The audiences - according to their feedback - have easily been able to follow the story.

(Lights up on the entire playing space. DONNA is seated in a pedicure chair. She is reading a magazine. CONNIE, sits on a stool, stage right. Although they are on opposite ends of the stage CONNIE is working on DONNA'S legs and feet. RILEY and DAREN enter the putting green. DAREN carries a golf club and ball in his hand. RILEY has a martini in his.)

RILEY

Inside out/out side in. All of it together.

(mockingly)

Oh it's a battle. Minimalism, Organic, Mannerist, Baroque, Modernist, Post-Modernist. I've gotten so tired of keeping track of the ages. Perhaps it's a phase. Lovely at my age to be going through a phase.

(calling to DENNIS who is off-stage)

PUTTER.

DENNIS

(off-stage)

GOT IT.

(KAREN enters the pedicure area stage left, takes off her coat and eases into the chair during the following. She is gigantically pregnant.)

KAREN

Hi momma.

DONNA

(not looking up from her magazine)

You're late.

RILEY

I've been battling with this "Age of Information" thing.

DONNA

I started without you.

KAREN

I can see that.

DONNA

I don't want any grievance.

RILEY

All those numbers shooting across buildings like hieroglyphics, giving off information: stocks up and down, count downs, time.

DONNA

You're late - I start without you.

KAREN

I'm ten-minuets late.

RILEY

Digital orange telling the whole world of your losses and gains. Of the little old lady receptionist whose retirement fund has plummeted.

DONNA

I am on a schedule.

(PENELOPE enters the pedicure section, stage right, and starts work on the mannequin feet/legs next to CONNIE)

CONNIE

!Mira! How was the concert?

DONNA

I have tickets to Carnegie Hall tonight.

PENNOLOPE

Aight.

RILEY

Communication, so quickly zooming by, only an autistic child could understand it but still-

CONNIE

Puccini?

PENELOPE

Pollini.

CONNIE

Whatever.

DONNA

We don't have to continue having these sessions together if you don't want them.

RILEY

I do love it.

KAREN

Momma, I don't want to fight.

RILEY

So fiercely defiant of privacy, of ownership.

CONNIE

They got them minks and shit?

PENELOPE

Yeah.

RILEY

You think you own your actions, your thoughts. HA!

DONNA

I don't understand why a little promptness is so difficult.

Your property – HA!

RILEY

It's always been my problem.

KAREN

(demanding)  
You don't *have* a problem.

DONNA

You know I like the minks.

CONNIE

I'll snatch it up and broadcast it. Turn it into everyone's.

RILEY

Ooo she got them Caesar salad feet.

CONNIE

Oh you didn't.

PENELOPE

You should be used to it by now.

KAREN

It's rude and inconsiderate.

DONNA

So show up ten minutes late.

KAREN

You did not suggest that to me.

DONNA

She got the croutons. The parmesan cheese. The romaine lettuce.

CONNIE

There was a scandal.

RILEY

The anchovies.

CONNIE

Did I tell you?

RILEY

You betta stop.

PENELOPE

No.

DAREN

CONNIE

I'm just sayin'.

RILEY

No, of course. A child graffitied one of my buildings. The owners were aghast. "How could he defile it so? Oh those miscreants." But I must say, I rather liked it. Just a little squiggle. Communicating something to someone. A little spray paint piss mark. "I've been here". In unfocused yellow. "I own this too. This is my space too". Lovely.

DAREN

The age of information.

RILEY

Only sometimes the process can be so loud. A lack of ownership, a sort of everyman eminent domain, while maintaining some peace and quiet - that's my struggle. Yes?

PENELOPE

All day long I be workin' on them, "My shoes are too tight and too high" toes aight and then my treat to myself is to sit in them "It's so high I have to bring my inhaler" seats with all them bent out of shape, "My shoes are too tight and too high" people up front, axin' me where the baftroom is. Where they seats at.

DAREN

So now you're designing-

CONNIE

Oh no they didn't.

DAREN

Building, golf courses?

RILEY

Another scandal.

PENELOPE

Yes they did.

RILEY

"The once great architect - demoted."

PENELOPE

I'm all, Bitch do I have a dickey on my neck.

CONNIE

Oh no you didn't.

RILEY

"He has reduced himself to a second rate golf course."

PENELOPE

Do you see a doily?

RILEY

"What's next - bowler rinks?"

PENELOPE  
Am I in black?

RILEY  
“Parking lots? The wash and go?”

PENELOPE  
Do I have a flash light?

RILEY  
“Not even a Pebble Beach. Not even the golf *club*.”

CONNIE  
They betta not say that to me, I go and spend my savins on a ticket for some piano, get myself a baby-sitta, they betta not.

RILEY  
“Only grass on hills.

PENELOPE  
It’s aiight.

RILEY  
People whisper on golf courses, I don’t but people do.  
(shouting to DENNIS off stage)  
PLACES PEOPLE WHISPER?

DENNIS  
(off-stage)  
CHURCHES, ELEVATORS, AND GOLF COURSES.

RILEY  
Elevators. Lovely.

PENELOPE  
I put fings in perspective.

RILEY  
Simple, small, transient but with order. So many stories for a structure to absorb in an elevator.

PENELOPE  
You find out when you have a boo.

RILEY  
Waiting.

PENELOPE  
You don’t care so much about small stuff.

RILEY  
Constricted.

CONNIE

I ain't neva gonna stop carin' about stuff like that.

RILEY

Anxiety.

PENELOPE

You will. You just let it go.

RILEY

A little trickle of sweat. Up down up down. Three worlds in a matter of seconds.

(DENNIS enters with a club.)

RILEY(continued)

One leaving, one waiting, one entering. How to change the waiting to an experience? How to steal dominion on an elevator? How to give off a little info?

DENNIS

(to Daren)

Hi. I'm Dennis.

RILEY

(ogling him)

Yes you are.

DENNIS

(to Daren)

I've heard a lot about you.

DAREN

Well.

PENELOPE

You know, when they was video taping Naldo's head squeezin' out of my vagina-

CONNIE

Oh you didn't.

PENELOPE

No no listen. When they were showin' my insides comin' out, you know, the stuff only my man get to see - used to get to see - and here they video tapin' it and some stranga is all inside, you know with his hand, inside and my man ain't even gettin' jealous.

CONNIE

You had a male doctor?

PENELOPE

And my face is freakin' and my hair.

CONNIE

They just betta know the hair gonna be all over.



PENELOPE

And I'm finkin' I'm gonna be mortified when we have the family gatherin' where everyone all grouped together watchin' Naldo come out, but afta you been through that kinda fink, you ain't so reserved about your privates. It loosens you up.

CONNIE

I don't wanna be that lose.

PENELOPE

Not that I ain't showin' that trashy titty anyway. You know when I go out I am ghetto fabulous.

CONNIE

Aiight.

PENELOPE

They do not know what to do with me at Carnegie Hall. Only now my ghetto fabulous ain't so trashy. Still trashy yo, but it diminished. Now when I'm hangin' all out it that my baby gotta eat, okay then, pop it out.

CONNIE

Oh you didn't.

PENELOPE

Don't matta where, on the subway in the grocery sto, and people can just handle, they can just deal.

CONNIE

Oh no.

PENELOPE

No, but aside, you know aside from uptight people, I fink it defuses the sexual vibe.

CONNIE

You be buggin'.

PENELOPE

Yo, it's true. Men ain't all up in my business, cause they have some shame gettin' sexual with a woman while she tendin' to her dependent.

CONNIE

Ooooo you crazy, I ain't taken my titty out on no subway.

PENELOPE

Ain't nobody gonna do nofin'

CONNIE

My baby can just wait 'till we get home.

PENELOPE

Just wait till he start cryin'.

CONNIE

I been around babies, I know what it sound like.

PENELOPE

It differnt when it yo'wn.

CONNIE

Ain't that different.

PENELOPE

It different.

CONNIE

Puh-lease.

DONNA

How's the lurid little pupa coming along?

DENNIS

Congratulations.

KAREN

Please don't refer to it like that.

DENNIS

The baby. Congratulations.

DAREN

Oh. Right thank you.

DONNA

You look deranged.

DENNIS

You're father's so excited.

KAREN

I'm not sleeping.

DONNA

No, I wouldn't expect you to be.

DENNIS

It's all he talks about.

RILEY

(raging - meaning the putter)

THIS IS NOT THE RIGHT ONE.

DAREN

Dad!

RILEY

IT'S NOT THE GOD DAMN MOTHER FUCKING RIGHT ONE.

DENNIS  
HEY! RILEY.

RILEY  
NOT THE RIGHT-

DENNIS  
TIME OUT. That is inappropriate behavior. Do you understand me?

RILEY  
(almost crying)  
It's not the right one.

DENNIS  
Inappropriate. Do you understand? DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

RILEY  
Yes.

DENNIS  
Okay?

RILEY  
Yes.

DENNIS  
I'll be back. With the *right* club.  
(DENNIS exits.)

CONNIE  
People go crazy on me, I pull my titty out.

PENELOPE  
!Mira! I'm telling you, they too happy my boo ain't cryin' to get all up in my business.

KAREN  
She hardly moves.

CONNIE  
They can just deal.

KAREN  
Did I tell you that?

CONNIE  
They ear drums can just split.

KAREN  
The baby.

CONNIE  
Shoot I'll get my earplugs. I'll get a bottle.

KAREN

Ten months pregnant and she hardly moves.

DONNA

Be thankful.

CONNIE

That's what bottles are for. Okay then.

DONNA

You did Pilates in the womb twenty-four seven.

PENELOPE

!Mira! You gotta breast feed.

KAREN

I have nightmares my womb is a giant arroyo. Coyotes licking bones.

CONNIE

I ain't gotta do nofin'.

PENELOPE

You want your baby to grow up with all sorts of allergies?

CONNIE

That's old wives.

PENELOPE

You want your baby to grow up allergic to grass and animals and Q-tips and stuff.

CONNIE

Ain't no baby gonna grow up allergic to Q-tips.

PENELOPE

!Mira! It's true. My cousin Jennife, she's allergic to Q-tips. God's honest truf. All cause my aunt couldn't produce enough milk, so she feed her formula and now Jennife has to clean her ears out with this plastic squeegee fing. You gotta breast feed.

RILEY

My liver hurts.

DAREN

You ever think about trying to stay sober?

DONNA

This article says there comes a time when a woman has to choose between her figure and her face.

RILEY

Functionalism is so rare to find in a museum. But such a delight.

KAREN

I wish she'd come out already.

Dad?	DAREN
A baby girl?	RILEY
That's what they say.	DAREN
Lovely.	RILEY
Do you believe that?	DONNA
You're looking good.	RILEY
My dilatory demon.	KAREN
Baby.	RILEY
Daaaad. (a reprimanding whine)	DAREN
My lacuna.	KAREN
Daaareeen.	RILEY
Please don't call me baby.	DAREN
Oh.	RILEY
It...	DAREN
Yes.	RILEY
Thank you.	DAREN
Only I meant <i>the</i> baby.	RILEY
	DAREN

*The baby?*

RILEY

Yes.

DAREN

Well that was stupid.

RILEY

No.

DAREN

Yes, a little stupid.

RILEY

How is she?

DAREN

She's wonderful, I mean not, I mean she hasn't come...

RILEY

...hasn't come-

DAREN

Out yet but...

RILEY

...she's wonderful.

DAREN

Yes.

RILEY

Lovely.

DAREN

I mean that's what the doctors say that she's-

RILEY

Wonderful.

DAREN

And overdue.

RILEY

And...

(forgetting her name)  
your wife?

DAREN

Karen.

RILEY

Yes.

She's a little...

DAREN

(relaxing into the pedicure)

KAREN

Oh god that feels good.

Pregnant.

RILEY

Yes, that too. Ten months and counting.

DAREN

Well that's what happens when you have a baby - you start counting.

RILEY

(beginning to cry)

KAREN

Oh god.

DAREN

She's a bit hysterical actually. Karen.

DONNA

Don't act like the general population Karen.

DAREN

Cries a good deal of the time.

RILEY

Well there's a-

DAREN

Thing inside of her.

RILEY

A thing?

DONNA

There's no choice between a figure and a face.

DAREN

The human body, it's-

DONNA

I refuse to be one of those women.

RILEY

Remarkable.

DONNA

Those women who take up space simply for the sake of it.

DAREN  
 Yes. I see that.

DONNA  
 Pudgy women, they say have an easier time during menopause.

DAREN  
 See how astonishing it is everyday.

DONNA  
 Estrogen in the fat cells.

DAREN  
 I work, I mean essentially, I work with the human body and everyday it's a wonder to me.

DONNA  
 Repulsive.

DAREN  
 That something alive could grow inside-

DONNA  
 Why would anyone want to devote time to this?

DAREN  
 I have to say it's a little creepy.

DONNA  
 This whole movement to sensationalize corpulence.

DAREN  
 A little extraterrestrial.

DONNA  
 I say shame on them. Shame.

RILEY  
 Extraterrestrial?

DONNA  
 Only people with no taste become obese. If you have any sense of refinement you don't need every ounce of the universe. You learn to marginalize.

DAREN  
 Well.

DONNA  
 Financial greed is one thing but sensual avarice.

DAREN  
 It's not so comforting to be in my position.

DONNA



They should be shamed, not renowned.

DAREN

To only witness things from the outside. And I think about animals in nature and how the men are, the males are kind of secondary, if even involved at all and so there's this envy that I have for the woman's position. I mean, mom was saying when she had a baby the milk would, she would feel the milk drop in her breasts and then the baby-

RILEY

You.

DAREN

Yes. Me. Whatever. *Then* the baby would start to cry. *After* she felt the milk fall. Not the other way around. And that a father can't understand that, that you never hear about father's intuition... and so I'm envious and at the same time a little apprehensive about this thing growing in my wife's belly and, well work-

KAREN

Would you feel her? Maybe she'll kick for you.

DONNA

Stop ruminating Karen.

KAREN

I'm not.

DAREN

I spend a lot of time at work.

DONNA

You might as well put a piece of gum in your mouth.

DAREN

I mean I want to but-

KAREN

It's just so odd. I mean she hardly every moves.

DONNA

Hardly?

KAREN

Three times. I've counted three times.

DONNA

And what does the doctor say?

KAREN

She's fine. Perfectly healthy.

DONNA

Then don't push it.

CONNIE

I still ain't gonna breast feed on no subway. My baby can just wait 'till I get home.

PENELOPE

They don't wait. I'm tellin' you.

CONNIE

You gotta teach them mama ain't gonna pop her titty out on the subway just cause you got a little stomach growl.

RILEY

(matter of fact)  
I never molested you right?

DAREN

What?

RILEY

My father molested me but I never-

DAREN

He-

RILEY

I never did that to you correct?

DAREN

No.

RILEY

You haven't-

DAREN

God no.

RILEY

You haven't shown up out of the...gray to accuse me-

DAREN

Of course not.

RILEY

I'm simply asking because the memory.

DAREN

No! You never.

RILEY

Not that I have Alzheimer's.

DAREN

You have Alzheimer's?

RILEY

No-

DAREN  
Thank God.

RILEY  
I'm saying I don't, but you always see-

DAREN  
Why would you think-

RILEY  
You always see those talk shows all the time and all those Canadian novels, all about people suddenly realizing they were molested by their parents and then the parents are told and they don't remember a thing but it turns out, yes indeed they did.

DAREN  
Dad. Really. Nothing.

RILEY  
Turns out the past hides away in little smudge marks.

DAREN  
Honest. You weren't ever around long enough to play catch, let alone... Don't worry.

KAREN  
It's like she's not even there sometimes.

DONNA  
Except you're as big as a hippopotamus.

RILEY  
People forget things. Horrible things.

DAREN  
I didn't know. About your father-

RILEY  
Well it's not the sort of thing you tell a child.

DAREN  
I'm not a child.

RILEY  
Get them focused on creating it themselves. Mind-fucking. Did I mind fuck you?

DAREN  
Daaaaad.

RILEY  
Just don't tell me I did. I have no memory of it and I'm giving you an opportunity to tell me now and if you tell me later I won't be interested in hearing it. You don't show up unexpected when you never show up unless you want to confront Daddy about his misgivings.

DAREN  
Is this because I thought you called me baby?

RILEY  
I DID NOT CALL YOU BABY!

DAREN  
I KNOW.

RILEY  
I might have.

DAREN  
I know you didn't.

RILEY  
I very well might have, it's a good thing you warned me. I think you're a little homophobic.

DAREN  
What?

KAREN  
Maybe she'll move for you.

RILEY  
You are a homophobe.

DONNA  
Did you know hippopotamuses kill more humans than any other animal on the planet?

RILEY  
You think because I'm a homosexual, I'm going to call you baby.

DAREN  
Daaaad.

RILEY  
Which is true, I would.

KAREN  
Daren treats me like a porcelain doll.

DAREN  
I'm sorry.

KAREN  
He's afraid if he touches me I'll have a stillborn.

DAREN  
I didn't-

RILEY  
I do call people baby. It's something I do.

Okay. DAREN

Because I am a homosexual. RILEY

I saw it on PBS. DONNA

Homeboys call each other baby. RILEY

Maybe if you just felt to make sure she was still there. KAREN

I heard them do it one time. But I call people baby because I am a homosexual. I have more estrogen than most men. RILEY

There's an article about vasectomies I want you to read. DONNA

Momma! KAREN

Not that I mind it. RILEY

I'm going to tear it out for you. DONNA

Gay/straight, inside out/outside in. All of it together. RILEY

(DONNA tears out the article while DENNIS enters and hands it to KAREN at the same time he says "here you go" and hands the golf club to RILEY.)

(entering) DENNIS

Here ya go.

Are you listening to me? KAREN

Of course I am. Something about Daren. Such an unfortunate name. DONNA

(to DAREN) DENNIS

He tell you we're going to Tokyo?

DONNA

I just can't get over how unfortunate.

DENNIS

Deconstructionism tying its knot.

RILEY

Place your finger there.

(RILEY puts his finger on DENNIS'S belly button and tickles him)

DONNA

And added to Karen.

DENNIS

Check out Sendai and then to Paris, Corb's Ronchamp, Berlin, Bilbao, Aalto, come back for a little Fallingwater, Venturi's mom's in Philadelphia...

DONNA

Karen and Daren.

DENNIS

Maybe the Getty.

RILEY

I never agreed to the Getty.

DONNA

For this name you left Vassar.

DENNIS

I have an education to assimilate.

RILEY

Then off to Winnemucca, Nevada.

DENNIS

Winnemucca?

RILEY

I'd like to lay in hot dust for awhile. Daren?

DAREN

Yes.

RILEY

No, the other Daren.

DENNIS

Dennis.

RILEY

Dennis?

DENNIS

Yep.

RILEY

Right. I need a refill.

DENNIS

(meaning - "then you'll have to get it yourself")

And?

RILEY

(to DAREN)

I should stop drinking. I have one of those fleshy drinker faces don't I? Each day is full of the possibility of getting better when you're young. I like that old age returns you to childhood. Circular. Triangles, squares and circles.

(RILEY exits for another martini)

CONNIE

Shoot you think all them men are, what you say? Defused. Shoot they that and so they don't want no titty. I do not believe it.

DONNA

For this name you show your vagina to every student doctor in the tri-state area.

CONNIE

Men want titty.

KAREN

Mother.

CONNIE

That's all they want. They see it, they want it.

DONNA

I don't approve.

CONNIE

Men get jealous, he see what he missin'.

DAREN

You've got him wrapped around-

DENNIS

It's not so hard.

DAREN

I guess not.

DONNA

You know I don't approve.

DENNIS

Placebos. Is that right, you study placebos?

Um, well,

DAREN

I don't just show my vagina.

KAREN

I'm involved in double-blind clinical trials.

DAREN

Double-blind?

DENNIS

I'm teaching. I'm making a difference. It's meaningful what I do.

KAREN

You wouldn't understand.

DAREN

Try me.

DENNIS

Some obstacles should be left for other people to tackle.

DONNA

A bunch of people with similar medical and psychological problems, come in,-

DAREN

I want to do it.

KAREN

We split them up into two groups.

DAREN

I enjoy doing it.

KAREN

One group is given an active drug; the other, a placebo. No one in the groups knows about the placebos. Usually these studies are done to collect data on the effect of the active drug, but my group, we... we study the effects of the placebo.

DAREN

And what are you figuring out?

DENNIS

Well, it's-

DAREN

Imagine if you went to the gynecologist and he or she was actually caring.

KAREN

A lot of the time they have an equal effect, the placebos and the active drug.

DAREN



KAREN

Could actually assuage-

DAREN

Really though only about 20% of common medical treatments have been proven to work. So who's to-

KAREN

Actually talked to you about what you were afraid of.

DAREN

What's exciting is the actual program.

KAREN

Explained what was happening to your body.

DAREN

We're revolutionizing the way doctors treat their parents...patients.

KAREN

In a caring way.

DAREN

The placebo patients get a lot more than just a pharmacologically inert substance. They're given attention really.

KAREN

How many women am I saving from a traumatic experience?

DAREN

A chance to talk about their problems, their condition, we give them a complete medical assessment, explain things to them, ask about their fears.

KAREN

Think about the women that won't ever go back.

DAREN

It was my wife's idea really.

DENNIS

Karen.

DAREN

(slight pause meaning "you know her name"))

Yes. We train the doctors and nurses to be optimistic considerate, informative *and* forthright. We're incorporating her-

KAREN

Women that would rather suffer than go back to their gynecologist.

DAREN

Her...um...program... into ours. We're figuring out a good deal of the healing process has to do with how the patients are treated and what kind of, well, encouragement they're given.

KAREN  
It makes a difference.

DENNIS  
And you needed a program to figure this out?

DAREN  
Well, I'm simplifying. It entails a lot more.

DONNA  
I don't understand why they have to practice on you.

DAREN  
I wouldn't expect you to understand it.

KAREN  
That's the whole point.

DENNIS  
Placebo. Latin for, "I shall please."

KAREN  
People aren't anatomically correct dolls.

DONNA  
What kind of a husband would encourage this activity?

CONNIE  
He can just wait 'till mama get home.

DONNA  
It's perverse.

DAREN  
Is he paying you to be his...

DENNIS  
Assistant.

DAREN  
You seem fairly bright. I'm sure there's something other than...

DENNIS  
Other than...?

DAREN  
He's not going to suddenly make you a great... whatever it is you want to become. There's not much of him left. You missed the boat. He was never one to share himself but now, he can barely have a focused conversation. You're young. I'd recommend not wasting your time. On a golf course. Fetching clubs. Doing other things.

DENNIS  
Other things?

DAREN

I don't know what your home life is like but prostituting yourself to -it's probably not the best solution to whatever problem you might be having and I mean I suppose all this might be good for an anecdote one day but-

DENNIS

Wow.

KAREN

How's daddy?

DONNA

Perhaps I would have been better off marrying a homosexual like the Pritzker father in-law. At least we'd have an understanding.

DENNIS

He may be a lush and a leech and a bit of a Blanch Dubois but... his work-

DAREN

I understand it meant something to other people, at one point but now, I just-

DONNA

I think hell is the belief in metempsychosis.

DAREN

At least he used to design buildings.

DONNA

A world full of Pythagoreans.

DAREN

Now it's just holes in grass.

DENNIS

It's a love affair, appreciating his work.

(KAREN begins to cry again.)

DONNA

(scolding)

Oh what now?

KAREN

For once I'd like you to tell me everything is going to be all right. Simply be a mother figure. Someone who comforts.

DONNA

I'm not prescient darling. Next time I get to pick the salon. I like my working class to have some anonymity. How can you trust your feet in the hands of women with designer fingernails?

KAREN

Nothing is good enough for you.

Charming.

DONNA

Maybe I should have stayed home.

KAREN

My.

DONNA

Let's just sit quietly and get through this.

KAREN

My.

DONNA

You enable him.

DAREN

So give him a pill Daddy-O, solve the dependency. I like your father.

DENNIS

Oh come on.

DAREN

He sculpts space. Turns it into... You think I think I got it all figured out? I'm just a kid who's happy to have bland to mediocre sex with a senior citizen for the sole reason that he knows how to design space better than anyone on the planet.

DENNIS

(meaning: "enough")

Okay.

DAREN

I don't have anything figured out except when space gives me a hard-on.

DENNIS

I'm sure.

DAREN

Your babies gonna be fine. She's gonna be a girl. You already broke the cycle of father/son inadequacies, what are you worried about?

DENNIS

Maybe I don't want to talk to you anymore.

DAREN

An epidemic took most of my father figures away and the ones that are left have so much survivor guilt, I usually end up taking care of them.

DENNIS

(slight pause)

DAREN

I'm sorry?

DENNIS

Whatever. Sometimes things eat ass. Like every building in the world was designed by the Fox and Fowle corporation. Nothing but overcompensating monotony. And then I think of your father or other artists like him. Great ingenious men. They're a salvage. And sometimes those men, straight men too, with their little trophies, they're all just spoiled brats who should be ashamed of themselves, who should know better - that all we want is a little guidance, and comfort. Not wiggly fingers at our flies. But we're their dreams come true. Some young hot thing who knows how pathetic your daddy really is but is enamored by him regardless, and who daddy is ever so-slightly surprised by, not enough to make him feel undeserving but enough to give him a tilt of the head. Something quizzical and fuckable. That's what I am. And maybe a replacement for you. I mean he's kinky but not that kinky.

DAREN

(as in: "enough already")

Okay.

DENNIS

Baby he can't even remember my name - you think I'm gonna stick around? Most of the time he passes out before he can get his swollen hands on the first button.

DAREN

I don't want to hear this.

DENNIS

(slightly overlapping)

Can design all this but can't stay awake long enough to hold someone's cock. Those men don't have the slightest idea how to take care of anything but their work. Not even themselves. Wandering about, longing to be little boys again. So young nothing's their fault. So don't be like that with your baby girl. Don't make a placebo more important than who she's going to the prom with. To see the Piazza Navona as Main Street. Main Street as the Piazza Navona. That's all I'm working towards. In everyone. Even you. But first you gotta spend some time in Rome. That's what your poppa is. The Piazza Navona. Besides sex - not such a big deal, yeah? You het-

(as in: heterosexual)

people turn it into such a big deal. Try to make laws against butt fucking. You have no idea. You're so uptight you couldn't even fathom the kinds of things I do.

DAREN

I don't want to know.

DENNIS

Exactly. You can't even see how beautiful this course is. Can't even see it. How can you turn into a person who can't see that?

CONNIE

Men get jealous, he see what he missin'.

PENELOPE

I'm tellin' you it ain't like that.

CONNIE

He wanna get in there even more.

PENELOPE

I ain't lien.

CONNIE

I watch the PBS.

PENELOPE

You too?

CONNIE

Listen. I watch the PBS and there's this show about lions, and the girl lions-

PENELOPE

Lioness.

CONNIE

The lionesses are hangin' out with their boos aight.

PENELOPE

Yeah, no, I think I seen this one.

CONNIE

And the daddy lions are somewheres else.

PENELOPE

Yeah.

CONNIE

So some horny other male lion is all sniffin' up the lionesses private business. Only she won't give him any, not cause she all faithful but more cause she got herself a kid and she don't want to get her business on in front of her boo. But the lion is persistent and he know the mama lion ain't gonna do the do with him as long as the baby lion's hangin' out, so what does the mother fucker do, he kill the baby lion so he can get it on with the mama lion.

PENELOPE

No.

CONNIE

She won't go in heat until her baby lion all grown, so the step-daddy go and kill the baby cause he impatient.

PENELOPE

And she let him?

CONNIE

It's like she don't have a choice.

PENELOPE

You gonna do it with someone afta they kill your baby?

CONNIE

My point bein', men be crazy yo and you betta watch out, showin' them your titty on the subway, they libel to kill your little boy so they can get to sucklin'.

PENELOPE

I ain't gonna let no man kill my baby let alone let him in my bed afterward.

CONNIE

He might kill your baby fast like, before you can do anyfing, he might rape you, you might not have a choice.

PENELOPE

Why you gotta ruin everyfin'?

CONNIE

I'm just tryin' to protect you.

PENELOPE

I was tellin' you somfin' precious and you go and tell me some story-

CONNIE

Pullin' yo titty out on the subway is precious?

PENELOPE

It's somfin above normal. Somfin unique. It says I'm not just some bitch on the train. I'm someone's mama. Someone's everyfing. I'm a provida. At night I wake up at least thirty seconds befo Naldo starts cryin'. Not afta he start. It's not just instinct. Not just intuition. It's special. Impenetrable. I have a job betta than scrapin' some caesar salad shit.

KAREN

She's like you I think. The baby. She's resentful of me like you.

DONNA

We should find you a nice reconnaissance to attend.

(RILEY enters with another martini.)

RILEY

It was always a disappointment and a relief to me Daren that you didn't turn out either gay or better looking than me.

DAREN

Thanks.

RILEY

Everybody wants to have the talent of Einstein but nobody wants to look like him.

DENNIS

I guess I'll leave the two of you-

RILEY

(childishly alarmed)

Leave?

DENNIS

Just for a bit.

RILEY

Oh.

DENNIS

I'll just be up at the club.

PENELOPE

It's important to believe people can see that it unique. That people can honor that and they don't just wanna destroy and take and all.

DENNIS

Take care Daren.

DAREN

Hm.

(DENNIS exits)

PENELOPE

That they even want to be a part of it. They want to set an example for somefin that ain't even theirs. That they can parent.

DAREN

He's kind of...

RILEY

Who?

DAREN

Dennis.

RILEY

Who?

DAREN

You're... assistant.

RILEY

Oh.

DAREN

He's kind of...

RILEY

Yes. Isn't he.

PENELOPE

It's important believin' people gonna do what's right. Like Pollini. Take care of Naldo but don't even know it. The only thing put Naldo to sleep -shit me too -the classical station on the radio - but not bored so we go to sleep, more someone there to take care of fings, so we



(More)

PENELOPE(continued)

just trust. I called up that station to get the name of the musician cause it better to have the CD than fall asleep and wake up to some ad, some old lady talking about her arfritis medicine or her coffin insurance. That kinda shit scare me, finking what I been hearing while I been sleeping, but the CD, we just sleep and wake up feelin' taken care of. And I fought - maybe I ain't goin' on no date with no man but I could go to the concert place. I could be calm, maybe can't take Naldo with me but I can bring that back to him. Have somfin to come home with other than just worn out. And there someone out there who represent people taken care. Doing their part. You go crazy finkin' everyone out to get you, everyone someone to protect your child from.

CONNIE

Maybe I'll feel different when I get one but-

PENELOPE

No, you right. I just like to fink sometime, you know.

KAREN

She won't even respond. Maybe I've addled her with all my insistance. I play music, read, talk to her, wheedle her along. Nothing. I sing songs. Oh McDonald. And there's nothing. No hint of who she might be, who I should prepare for, other than a lumpish, aloof, passive-aggressive, antagonistic nothing. Like you. You say nothing about her. Have nothing to give. You act like you don't want anything to do with this. Like it doesn't even exist.

CONNIE

You could breast feed in church.

DONNA

I won't turn into one of those soft loving old ladies, if that's what you want from me. The world doesn't revolve around your low self-esteem Karen.

KAREN

I just want...if you could just...here  
(putting her own hand on her stomach)  
if you could just... feel.

RILEY

It's like the puberty talk you know.

CONNIE

You could breast feed at Carnegie Hall. Why they gonna care if you bring Naldo to Carnegie Hall?

RILEY

You have to have the puberty talk and the, "Did I molest you" talk.

DAREN

We never had the puberty talk.

RILEY

No?

DAREN

No.

PENELOPE

They all ugly at Carnegie Hall. Can't feel anyfing they hearin'. You can sense all them notes bouncin' off the walls lookin' for someone who can absorb 'em, just bouncing around, nobody gonna let 'em in. I ain't gonna take my baby someplace so violent as that. He grow up hatin' me I take him someplace violent as that.

DONNA

If I do this, it doesn't mean I'm willing to go for strolls in Strawberry fields, looking haggard and hoary.

PENELOPE

That place be worse than a coffin insurance commercial.

RILEY

Daren?

DONNA

My molecules are not pilferage for sentiment.

KAREN

No.

DAREN

Yes?

RILEY

When a young man gets to the age of twelve or thirteen, changes start occurring.

DAREN

Really?

RILEY

Oh yes.

DONNA

And if I *should* decide to go on those walks, you have to promise me you won't be one of those women who suddenly feel childbirth exempts them from common shame.

KAREN

Of course.

PENELOPE

Freakin' croutons. Freakin' parmesan cheese.

RILEY

Maybe we'll take an excursion to New York. On our way to Tokyo. To welcome the new one into the world. Would that be acceptable?

(DONNA places her hand on KAREN'S stomach.)

Of course. DAREN

Would it be appreciated. RILEY

Yes. DAREN

CONNIE  
'Cept maybe you. You there. All them notes got someplace to go. He ain't gonna hate you for that. You crazy.

RILEY  
I apologize. For being a bit of a disappointment.

DAREN  
No.

PENELOPE  
I do like that Pollini.

CONNIE  
Hmm.

DONNA  
Maurizio. You should play her some Maurizio. Not too much of the Chopin. Make sure she gets in a little Stockhausen and Schoenberg. She'd like Schoenberg.

KAREN  
Thanks momma.

(DAREN and RILEY look out at the golf course. DONNA holds her hand on KAREN'S stomach. CONNIE and PENELOPE continue the pedicure. Lights fade. End of play.)