

Living in a Great Big Way

A full-length play

by

Jay Dover

©2006 Jay Dover
Registered, Writers Guild of America, West

Jay Dover
gerald@dover41.com
310.918.9822

CAST

JO, late 40's, housewife
DICK, late 40's her husband
THE NUMBERS, their children (see below)
THE MAN OF THE HOUR, a big spirit dressed as Dean Martin
NAT KING COLE, a spirit
WILBUR WRIGHT, a spirit
LUCILLE, Dick's lover
EDDIE, Jo's romancer
THE FATHER, a priest
HERR DIRECTOR, a boss
A DOCTOR
A CONSCIENCE
A MAN
A WOMAN

Note: Casting can double up roles as follows:

MAN OF THE HOUR, EDDIE, and A MAN

LUCILLE and A WOMAN

NAT KING COLE, THE FATHER and A DOCTOR

WILBUR WRIGHT, HERR DIRECTOR and A CONSCIENCE

TIME & PLACE

The time is now, though stage times range between late 1940's to late 1960's.

Scenes take place in a bar, living room, bedroom, kitchen, pizza parlor, bingo hall, horseback riding trail, roller skating rink, backyard, hospital room, church office, the Place of Infinite Sadness and more.

Basic seating for Jo and Dick. All costume changes are done on-stage. Minimal props probably work best. Jo and Dick never leave the stage at anytime - except at the end.

Jo and Dick are dead.

THE NUMBERS

These represent Jo and Dick's children and should dominate the acting area. There are nine of them. The Numbers are purely representational and can be anything practically imagined, like balloons tied to metal roller skates, lamps with expressive shades, light boxes, or simply large

cardboard numbers clothes-pinned to a clothes line, etc., but we must see the numbers 1 through 9 displayed on them. Their function is much like a Greek Chorus. As such they are considerably active in the play and however they are represented, should adhere to the following:

- Able to be re-positioned.
- The audience should be able to tell when one of them are speaking (the lamp lights up, balloon wiggles, etc.).
- Interact with Jo and Dick, but are never touched by them.
- Gender specific," no more than 5 either male or female.
- Able to be easily removed.
- At no time are they ever referred to as children.
- The "sounding" of the Numbers should be playful, but not silly and always distinctly human. Most of their lines are specific, otherwise they are improvised and noted as "___"

Dick will wear roller skates at one point. Wilbur will be riding a bike that should have a bell. Nat's singing is denoted by "". There will be bubbles. There will also be a thick mist.

ACT I

Lights up.

Jo and Dick are seated facing the audience. Jo is at a small table, measuring flour from one bowl into the other and then back again all the while checking a recipe card, which is blank. Dick is reading from a stack of newspapers. Each paper's headline reads "THE THE THE THE" as well as all of the print. He'll pick up one paper, quickly scan, frustrated, then fold and return to the bottom of the pile, pick up the next and repeat.

Behind them, we see The Numbers. Their "sounding" will begin and increase in speed and intensity. Each sounding will cause a reaction from Jo (nervous resignation) and Dick (bothersome irritation) which they will both try to ignore. The Numbers will sound the following lines (which can repeat and overlap) in no particular order:

NUMBERS

The End. Snowflake. We didn't and we didn't. Miami Beach. The Yellow Door. My turn to fly. Shhhh. Don't tell. Even Stevens. Here's your paper. It's just what I do. Baking Christmas Cookies. Waiting for the Rapid. Bingo!

JO

Let's begin.

DICK

I'm reading my news.

JO

That's not the way it goes.

DICK

(to Numbers)

A day late and a dollar short. End of story.

NUMBER

That and a nickel!

JO

Don't be rude.

I am reading my news. DICK

They're waiting. JO

Knock your socks off. DICK

And now, the news. NUMBER

Exactly! DICK

You're being such an idiot. JO

I am trying to figure out what's going on here. DICK

So am I. I cannot figure out this recipe. JO

Yeah, well, that and a nickel. DICK

Cha-ching! NUMBERS

Can't you see those people sitting there. JO

They got eyes in their heads. Let 'em figure it out. DICK

"___" NUMBERS

JO
(to Numbers)
Now you see what I had to put up with?

"___" NUMBERS

DICK
(to Numbers)
Don't you people have leaves to rake somewhere?

Jo crosses to Dick, grabs at paper.

JO

We have an obligation!

DICK

Not anymore I don't! The only obligation I have is to read my news and going to READ IT!

JO

(to audience and Numbers)

They're waiting and they're waiting and you're being an idiot.

DICK

Yeah? Well I got news for everybody. Waiting is all there is. You gotta wait nine months to get born, then when you do, you can't wait to grow up, then when that happens, you wait for your ship that doesn't come in, and then finally you retire and wait to die, and even then, even then, you gotta wait three whole days until they stick you in the ground. Put that nickel in your meter.

NUMBERS

"___"

DICK

(to Numbers)

Don't you people have snow to shovel somewhere?

JO

If we do not begin, this is never going to end. We are never going to end. Never. N.E.V.E.R.

The following is sung to the tune of Row, Row, Your Boat and is repeated until Dick interrupts.

NUMBERS

N.E.V.E.R. Never gonna end. You're never gonna, never gonna end, never gonna end.

DICK

Goddamn it! You all wanna know how this is gonna end?

(rising, to audience)

The whole thing ends with us sitting here, like this, waiting for the whole thing to end. The End.

NUMBER

Put that sock in your dryer.

JO

We have an obligation, Dick.

DICK
NO. YOU have an obligation.

JO
NO! WE. WE have an OBLIGATION.

DICK
NO! I have ONE OBLIGATION and that is TO READ MY NEWS!

NUMBERS
(backwards spelling, repeated)
No it Agilbo. No it Agilbo. No it, Agilbo.

JO
(to audience)
In the word obligation, you can take out the letters, rearrange them to spell, BINGO. As in winning a great deal of money in a church basement, enough to leave everything behind and start living in a Great Big Way. Where I was Switch Station Supervisor in charge of four girls and I had puffed pastries to eat every Sunday morning and beautiful soft quilts to sleep away Saturday mornings and Miami Beach.

NUMBERS
Don't let the ice melt, Jo.

DICK
(to audience)
In the word obligation, you can take out the letters, rearrange them to spell GO. As in what I wish someone told me when I was alive and could leave everything behind and start living in a Great Big Way. Where I was a pilot flying solo from Boston to San Diego, building my own workbench with power tools, milkshakes while I watched TV and Norway.

NUMBERS
You need to go home, Dick.

JO
But you didn't go, did you.

DICK
No. Neither did you.

NUMBERS
We didn't and we didn't.

<u>JO</u>	<u>DICK</u>
We didn't and we didn't.	We didn't and we didn't.

JO
Wait. We're not at that part yet.

DICK

Well, we will be, now won't we. All we have to do is sit here and just wait for it.

Jo and Dick resume their seats and their activity at curtain. Suddenly the Numbers sound. The following is sung to the tune of the Halleluiah Chorus and repeated underneath Jo and Dick's exchange, increasing in volume and speed.

NUMBERS

Obligation! Obligation! Obligation! Obligation! Obliga-tion!

JO

Let's begin!

DICK

I'm reading my news.

JO

That's not the way it goes.

DICK

A day late and a dollar short. End of story.

JO

Let's begin, Dick!

DICK

I'm reading my news, Jo.

JO

That's not the way it goes.

DICK

A day late and a dollar short. END OF STORY.

JO

LET'S BEGIN!

DICK

I'm reading my NEWS!

JO

That's NOT the way it goes.

DICK

A day late and a dollar short. The end of the story!

JO

Please, please, please! Let's begin!

DICK
My news!

JO
No, no, no, no, no, no, no!

DICK
END OF STORY!

JO
Please, please. Let's BEGIN so we CAN END!

Numbers sound

DICK
Don't you people have dirt to dig somewhere!?

JO
Just BEGIN!

DICK
No, no, no! Not this time. I am not doing that anymore.
(to the Numbers)
You hear me! I'm doing that for you or anybody else! And nobody can make me! NOBODY!

Numbers stop. Change tune. Sung to the tune of Row, Row, Your Boat and repeated softly, weirdly underneath Jo and Dick's exchange. They are not a little bit scared.

NUMBERS
Jo and Dick are dead. Jo and Dick are dead. Dead, dead, dead, dead. Jo and Dick are dead.

Jo sneaks over to Dick's chair and grabs his stack of newspapers. Dick tries to retrieve, Jo resists fiercely. In the struggle, they eventually knock over Jo's flour. Jo begins to fling the newspapers at Dick, who will fling some flour at her. Much more flinging, chaos ensues.

DICK
Give me those, those are mine!

JO
I should have left.

DICK
Give those to me!

I should have left. JO

I should have left. DICK

I could have been happy. JO

I could have been happy. DICK

But I stayed here instead. JO

But I stayed here instead. DICK

Why didn't I just leave? JO

Why didn't I just leave? DICK

JO DICK
Stop torturing me! Stop torturing me!

JO
They said I wasn't allowed to leave!

DICK
They said I wasn't allowed to leave!

JO
I guess that made you happy!

DICK
I guess that made you happy.

JO
I got nothing but Big Fat Nothing.

DICK
I got nothing but Big Fat Nothing.

JO DICK
Why didn't I Why didn't I
leave! leave!

JO DICK
It was my chance It was my chance
to fall in love! to fall in love!

A doorbell is heard. It's a real doorbell combined with Man of the Hour saying "Ding Dong", rather seductively.

MAN OF THE HOUR

"Ding Dong" (o.s.)

Jo and Dick stop in their tracks.

MAN OF THE HOUR (CONT'D)

"Ding Dong" (o.s.)

What the hell?

DICK

It's the doorbell.

JO

MAN OF THE HOUR

"Ding Dong" (o.s.)

Ding dong, ding dong, ding dong.

NUMBERS

Should we get that?

JO

Jo! There is no door.

DICK

MAN OF THE HOUR

"Ding Dong" (o.s.)

Ding, dong, ding dong, ding dong.

NUMBERS

Don't be rude, Dick.
Come in.

JO

(straightening up a bit)

(then politely)

Lights out. A roving spotlight. The cascading opening of "Everybody Loves Somebody" is heard. The timapni rolls.

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and Gentlemen, Man and Woman, Busted Dream and Broken Heart, it's time now for what you've done all this waiting around for! Here he is, the man of the hours upon hours and a quite plenty more hours after those. Your host of hosts, the only of the onlies, the Big Wheel of the Oxcart. Please welcome... The Man of the Hour!!

"Everybody Loves Somebody" theme is heard along with canned applause.

The Man of The Hour enters, dressed brilliantly in a glittering black tux, puffy tux shirt and electric black bow tie. His manner is exactly like Dean Martin circa the Dean Martin Variety Hour in the 1960s, smooth, easy-going and one is left wondering if he may actually be drunk. His hair is stark, starchy white. He's holding a cocktail and cigarette.

MAN OF THE HOUR

(singing)

Everybody loves somebody, sometime. Everybody falls in love somehow.

(talking)

Hellos and salutations and gooten tag and bon jury and off veeder zain and off the couch and into the pool! So glad to be here, with all the little doggies in the ole OK Corral.

Applause

MAN OF THE HOUR (CONT'D)

We have a great show for you tonight with stars galore and stars "amore" and big stars and little stars and starry skies and American apple pie, and no need to wonder why, because the daring do as daring die, shake, rattle and roll the dice, throw seven, throw eleven and get us on up the road to heaven... hey, I'm a poet and didn't know it.

Drums - Cha boom

MAN OF THE HOUR (CONT'D)

Well, as they say in ole Chattanooga... keep a pourin' me the ole boozy. Everybody into the pool!

He blows a whistle. Bubbles fill the stage. Swinging party music.

DICK

Who in the Hell are you?

MAN OF THE HOUR

I am who I am. Are you?

JO

Are you Dean Martin?

MAN OF THE HOUR

Are you?

DICK

Hey, pal. What's going on here?

MAN OF THE HOUR

Here? Why, all and everything is going on. It's all over the news.

Sound of a newsroom.

NUMBERS

This just in! All and Everything, I repeat, All and Everything is going on. And now, back to our program.

Dick scrambles up his newspapers.

DICK

It's in the my news! See, Jo! I told you.

JO

You look just like Dean Martin.

MAN OF THE HOUR

And you look like you.

DICK

What section is it in? Sports, Business, Lifestyles? I don't see it anywhere in here. Hey, Pal, what's the news? What is the news?

MAN OF THE HOUR

The news is...

Timpani is heard.

MAN OF THE HOUR (CONT'D)

We need the room.

DICK

We need the room?

NUMBERS

(Row, Row, Your Boat)

R.O.O.M. We need the room. Get your ass, out of here, we need the room.

JO

Oh! Are we on the Dean Martin Hour?

DICK

He's not Dean Martin, Jo.

JO

Of course's he's Dean Martin, Dick. Can't you see?
(to MOH)
Aren't you.

MAN OF THE HOUR

Am I? Are you? Is anybody, anybody? Is everything, everything? And in the end, aren't we all, We?

DICK

What in the hell are you talking about?

MAN OF THE HOUR

The ROOM! Space! Storage. The cupboard and the porridge. The Room, babies, The roooooommmmm.

NUMBERS

Get your ass, out of here, we need the room.

MAN OF THE HOUR

Can't you see you folks have hitched your wagon to the post on ole main street far, far too long. There's only so much booze in the ole bottle. Why, just turn your eyeballs that-a-way... See?

DICK

(referring to audience)

What? Them?

MAN OF THE HOUR

Same as you, only not yet.

JO

Are they the studio audience?

MAN OF THE HOUR

Thousands and millions and hundreds and billions and a few and far between, that guy near, this gal here, all a waitin' anticipatin' to fly up into the sky, but you're holdin' up the line, takin' up time, not movin' the ole feet, there's a schedule to keep.

(MORE)

So, pack your bags, buy your ticket, check your luggage, hail a cab and be like good little doggies and head on down that Ole Trail of Love and Eventuality, just past the Big Red Barn of That's All She Wrote on the Edge of Town, Where Everybody Loves Somebody, Sometime.

JO

Dick, I think we're on the TV.

DICK

We are not on the TV, Jo. We're dead. Remember. Coffin, grave, stiff, cold, dark...

JO

(upset)

Yes, Dick! I REMEMBER!

NUMBERS

"___"

DICK

(to MOH)

You see what you did. She's all upset now.

MAN OF THE HOUR

I did? She is?

DICK

(to Jo)

I'm just trying to figure this all out, Jo. Don't you want to figure this out so we can get out of here? I mean, this can't be the end. We can't end up here. It's the same as before, right? Doesn't it feel the same? It's not supposed to be the same. That's what everybody said.

(to MOH)

Right, pal? This is supposed to be better than anything there ever was. Singing, dancing, happiness, laughter, tidings of comfort and joy. Big green fields, blue skies, crystal clear water in babbling streams, chirping birds, playful squirrels, frolicking deer. Right, Jo. Ain't that what they said? Ain't that why we spent our few precious days on our knees praying? Right, Jo?

JO

(to MOH)

Is Sammy's eye okay?

DICK

Jo.

JO

Where's Joey Bishop?

DICK
Jo, I'm talking here.

JO
I just asked him.

DICK
Well don't ask him anything.

JO
Don't tell me I can't ask Dean Martin a question.

DICK
He's not Dean Martin!

JO
Yes he IS!

Actors ad lib

<p><u>JO (CONT'D)</u> It's all your fault, Dean, obligation, won't begin..</p>	<p><u>DICK</u> You're so full of it, my news, talking here, torture..</p>
--	---

MAN OF THE HOUR
Okay, okay! Stop the music! Let's STOP all the ole music!

Music stops

MAN OF THE HOUR (CONT'D)
Looks we got ourselves a pickle the size of Frank's ego...
and let me tell you, that's a one big pickle...

Drums ca boom.

JO
Are you God?

DICK
Aw, Hell.

MAN OF THE HOUR
Are you?

JO
I don't think so.

DICK
Jesus Christ Almighty.

MAN OF THE HOUR

Are you?

DICK

What?

JO

I don't think he is, Dean.

Actors ad lib as before.

JO (CONT'D)
It's all your
fault, Dean,
obligation, won't
begin..

DICK
You're so full of
it, my news,
talking here,
torture..

MAN OF THE HOUR

(to audience)

Looks like we got to take this whole number from the top of the top.

(blows loud whistle)

Everybody out of the pool.

The bubbles stop. Jo and Dick suddenly can't open their mouths. They struggle, as MOH puts them back in their seats.

MAN OF THE HOUR (CONT'D)

There. That's my nice little doggies. Now, I've got a Big Show to do here. All over the world, ladies and gents in their fine finery want to get themselves on the Ole Trail of Love and Eventuality, just past the Big Red Barn of That's All She Wrote on the Edge of Town, Where Everybody Loves Somebody, Sometime. You see, Love isn't a many splendered thing, a trip to the moon on gossamer wings or even just one of those things. It's the deepest part of a woman's heart. The farthest reach of a man's dreams. And those places, my little doggies, can take more than a lifetime to fathom and to sound.

NUMBERS

L is for the way you look at me. O is for the only one I see. V is very, very extraordinary.

MAN OF THE HOUR

E is even more than any one lifetime. So. Both of you need to get movin' and doin' the doin' that needs doing. For we need the room. THE ROOM! Understand? Because, my little doggies, like they say in ole Patagonia, you bettas straighten up, or yous a gonia!

Jo and Dick's mouths open. They gasp for breath. Bicycle bells are heard.

NUMBERS

"___"

MAN OF THE HOUR

Hey, hey, by the sound of the ole bells I can tell it's time now, to bring out, our Guest Stars! Guest Stars to help you make it through the night, begin to see the light, get on that flight... It's Nat King Cole and Wilbur Wright!

Nat and Wilbur enter. Walk on music, lights, etc. They greet the Man of the Hour. Nat is clearly more comfortable on stage than Wilbur, who is a bit stiff, formal. They both carry large suitcases, emblazoned with Jo and Dick's name

JO

Nat King Cole?! Dick, it's Nat King Cole!

DICK

Wilbur Wright?

JO

(to Nat)

Is it really you? Are you Nat King Cole?

NAT

"Darling, Je vous 'em beaucoup..."

DICK

You invented flight.

WILBUR

Discovered.

DICK

(to MOH)

Is he really Wilbur Wright?

MAN OF THE HOUR

Is he?

JO

Sing another one, Nat. Sing "Ramblin' Rose."

MAN OF THE HOUR

Sorry, my little puppy, no time for a private engagement.

NUMBERS

Tick, tock, tick, tock, goes the clock, tick, tock.

MAN OF THE HOUR

Time is of the essence of time. Your Guest Stars are here to help you see what seeing there is to see and believe what is to believe so you can answer the question of the lesson of your livin', so we can get it written on the wall of the Big Red Barn of That's All She Wrote.

DICK

What question?

JO

What question?

NUMBERS

Why didn't you leave and fall in love?

WILBUR

(to Dick)

Why didn't you leave and fall in love?

DICK

(sincerely)

I don't know.

NAT

(to Jo)

Why didn't you leave and fall in love?

JO

(sadly)

I don't know.

MAN OF THE HOUR

Now ain't that the saddest bell that was never rung.

NUMBERS

Awwwww.

Sound of a race track bell.

MAN OF THE HOUR

Ding, ding, ring a ding ding and they're off, it's Broken Heart followed by Busted Dreams, it's Broken Heart, it's Busted Dreams on the outside, Broken, Busted on the outside, Busted, it's Broken Heart by a length and a half, but here comes Busted Dreams hard on the outside, it's Broken, it's Busted, it's Broken, it's Busted... You get the ole picture.

Numbers sing Carol Burnett Theme song.

NUMBERS

I'm so glad we had this time together, just to have a laugh and sing a song.

(they la-la the rest underneath)

MAN OF THE HOUR

And that's my cue!

Walk off music. The Man of the Hour tours the stage, shakes a few hands.

JO

Do we begin now? Nat? Dick? Should we begin now? Dean? Mr. Martin?

DICK

He's not Dean Martin, Jo.

JO

Do you want us to begin now? Dick? I think we have to begin now.

DICK

No, no. This is not right. All of this is not right.

JO

But Dean said we had to answer the question.

DICK

I don't care what he said and for the last time, HE'S NOT DEAN MARTIN!

(to Numbers)

Do you people have paint brushes to clean somewhere!

JO

But he said something bad is going to happen to us.

DICK

Nothing is going to happen to anybody, Jo.

JO

Yes it is. We couldn't talk or move and then... Dean! Mr. Martin. Is something bad going to happen to us? If we don't answer the question, will something bad happen? I didn't do anything wrong. I wasn't bad. I was good. I did what I was suppose to do. I don't want anything bad to happen to me. Dean? Dean? I'm afraid.

The Man of the Hour stops his tour, takes Jo's hands, an intimate moment.

MAN OF THE HOUR

Only so many go rounds on the ole merry go round, my dear.
 Others must ride, but they can't until you step off. Look.
 See. Others. Like you. Only not yet. The line never ends.
 It winds around the bend of hope and ambition, over the
 mountains of fear and desperation, over the seas of lust and
 tribulation, down the byways and highways and skyways of
 living and dying and loving and crying and it never ends its
 wind and winding end. You must learn the lesson of your
 livin' so we can get it written. For without Last, there is
 no first. Without Answer, no question. Without Love, No
 Life. Without Death, no Birth. Time for you...

(to Dick)

...and you,

(to Jo)

...to step off.

NAT
 Time to step off.

WILBUR
 Time to step off.

MAN OF THE HOUR (CONT'D)

And End.

NUMBERS

The End.

MAN OF THE HOUR

Or else.

NUMBERS

Or Else. Or Else. Or Else.

JO

Or else?

DICK

Or else what?

MAN OF THE HOUR

Or else you will go to The Place of Infinite Sadness.

NAT
 Infinite Sadness.

WILBUR
 Infinite Sadness.

JO
 Infinite Sadness?

DICK
 Infinite Sadness?

*Blackout. The Place of Infinite
 Sadness. Man of the Hour, Nat and
 Wilbur put on the masks of Infinite
 Sadness, which glow in the dark. Nat
 and Wilbur drone. The Numbers join in.
 Jo and Dick crawl the stage, blind.*

JO
I can't see.

DICK
I can't see.

JO
Dick?

DICK
Jo?

JO
Where are you?

DICK
Where are you?

MAN OF THE HOUR
(deliciously evil)
The Place of Infinite Sadness. No feeling, no touch, no thought, no sound, no light, no ground, no white. Shout and no one will hear. Look and no one will see. No sleep, no rest, no hunger, no sex. No music, no art, no food, no parks, no dogs, no cats, no llamas, no bats. Wandering and wondering, lost and alone in thoughts of confusion, of loneliness and illusion.

JO
Where are you,
Dick?

DICK
Where are you, Jo.

MAN OF THE HOUR (CONT'D)
The Mist of Nothing Ever will creep and weep and trap and wrap around your feet, over knees, smother thighs, slime the belly rise, clogging heart, choking neck, swallow mouth, nostril trek, brain rewired, eyes expired until you're nothing, like The Mist... of Nothing Ever. Nothing Ever.

*Lights to normal. Jo and Dick are re-
animated.*

MAN OF THE HOUR (CONT'D)
And we're back!

DICK
Jo? Are you okay?

JO
I don't want to go to The Place of Infinite Sadness, Dick. Never, ever. Promise me we won't. Promise me you won't let go to the Place of Infinite Sadness.

DICK
Nobody is going anywhere, Jo.

JO
Promise me!

DICK

I promise.

MAN OF THE HOUR

So, did you see the ole seeing you need to see?

Jo and Dick nod.

MAN OF THE HOUR (CONT'D)

Good little doggies. Now, Mr. Wright and Mr. Cole will show you what you need to know. Pay attention to their inventions, and do not question their intentions. And you will arrive at your destination for which you've been doing all of this waitin'. And we can get written, the lesson of your living on the Wall of the Big Red Barn of That's All She Wrote on the Edge of Town.

Numbers begin to La-La the Carol Burnett Theme song.

MAN OF THE HOUR (CONT'D)

Yes, and now it's finally time for the ole man to shuffle off, lighten the load, make it one for my baby and one more for the road.

A big swig.

MAN OF THE HOUR (CONT'D)

And for my parting to gift to you and the ladies and gents gathered here in their fine finery, a poem. "If when you die, one soul cries, that's amore." Good night, everybody!

A big kiss to the audience, Man of the Hour exits. Numbers continue walk off music until cut off by Nat and Wilbur. They open the suitcases. Nat takes out a drink with an umbrella, hands it to Jo.

NUMBERS

Don't let the ice melt, Jo.

Wilbur takes a small yellow door (like from a dollhouse), hands it to Dick.

NUMBERS (CONT'D)

You need to go home, Dick.

Dick and Jo regard the items, precious, full of memories of loss and regret, then address the audience.

Let's begin. JO

Let's begin. DICK

We have an obligation. JO

To tell you a story. DICK

Of love. JO

It has music. WILBUR

"And now the purple dust of twilight time." NAT It has wings.

One hundred and twenty feet. WILBUR

With objects of affection. NAT

A first-class airline ticket to Miami Beach. JO

And objects of desire. WILBUR

An apartment in Norway. DICK

A moment of truth. NAT

Baking Christmas cookies. JO

A moment of decision. WILBUR

Waiting for the train. DICK

And being as it is a love story... NAT

A tremendous amount of love. WILBUR

Loads and loads. NAT

Miles and miles. WILBUR

And one enormously huge question. NAT

A billion thousand times the size of Earth. WILBUR

What if your chance for love only came in one moment... NAT

A snowflake out of millions... WILBUR

Falling from a cold, dark sky... NAT

And somehow you could see it... WILBUR

And all you had to do... NAT

Was stick out your tongue... WILBUR

And gather it in.... NAT

And it would melt on your tongue... WILBUR

And then be inside you... NAT

No doubts or fears... WILBUR

No regrets or tears... NAT

No chances untaken... WILBUR

No desires foresaken... NAT

And then there would be no more waiting... WILBUR

NAT

For everything to end...

WILBUR

Because love was inside you...

NAT

And you would never want that to end.

WILBUR

This is your question...

NAT

This is your story...

WILBUR

When you see your snowflake...

NAT

Will you stick your tongue out?

NUMBERS

The Yellow Door. Miami Beach. Why didn't you leave? And fall in love?

DICK

We have an obligation.

JO

To tell you our story of love.

NAT

That started a long time ago.

WILBUR

In a place called Cleveland, Ohio.

A bar, 25 years ago. Jo and Dick change costume. Dick wears company overalls, Jo a vintage telephone operator uniform.

DICK

I met Jo in this bar I went to most nights after working at Hopkins on janitorial for United. You know, cleaning airplane toilets. I was with my drinking buddies from the day crew. Jo was there with a bunch of her friends, but I spotted her a mile off because there's nothing like a nice rack trying to bust loose under a uniform. I made my way over.

(MORE)

(to JO)
Hey doll. What's doing?

JO
Are you talking to me?

DICK
I ain't talking about a toy. What you drinking there?

JO
A high ball.

DICK
A high ball, huh. You like high balls?

JO
Yes, very much.

DICK
Well, you're in luck, girlie, girl. You're looking at Mr. High Ball.

JO
Oh. Do you work at the airport?

DICK
That's right, doll. Just about got my pilot's license.

JO
An airline pilot?

DICK
A suit, a cap and a pair of wings. Stick those apples in your pie.

How exciting.

DICK
Yep, pretty soon, I'm gonna fly DC8's and 707s all over the world. New York, Paris, Sweden, maybe even to Bora, Bora.

JO
I work at the telephone company.

DICK
You sure do.

JO
This is my uniform.

DICK
You sure do.

JO
My Switch Station is West 117th, sectors 4 through 9.

DICK
So you're a Big Wheel, huh?

JO
What's a Big Wheel?

DICK
You call all the shots.

JO
Oh, well, not yet. But in a few months, I'll be in line for Switch Station Supervisor, with four girls under me. Won't that be something? Imagine me in charge of four girls! After that, the sky's the limit.

DICK
I'm Dick.

JO
Josephine. Call me Jo.

DICK
Hey bar keep! Get my switchboard station supervisor telephone lady here one of my special high balls.

JO
Oh, you don't have to.

DICK
I never do anything I have to. That's why you and me are gonna be together.

NUMBERS
Gonna be together.

Lighting change to reveal Jo's apartment.

JO
(to audience)
We drank high balls until two-thirty then went back to my apartment.

Jo lays down on her bed, her face backwards to audience. Dick on top of her. During the exchange, Nat, Wilbur and the Numbers provide sound FX.

JO (CONT'D)

I don't remember how we started. I was lost somewhere between yes and no and too tipsy to know the difference.

DICK

I love you babe, I love you...

JO

Back then, sex was like the door to the basement. It was better left closed because you could fall in and get killed.

DICK

You're so beautiful...

JO

I didn't know how to say stop.

DICK

Terrific, doll...

JO

So I just lay there real quiet.

DICK

Telephone lady!...

JO

Just like my mother did when my father came home.

DICK

So great...

JO

I could hear from behind my door to my room. He would first clump on the stairs, going, "Little boo, boo. I'm coming to get you!"

DICK

Oh, babe...

JO

He opens their bedroom door, and shuts it.

DICK

Beautiful...

JO

Then the bed starts creaking.

DICK

Beautiful...

JO
He's breathing and the bed's creaking.

DICK
Gorgeous...

JO
He's moaning and groaning. Only him, never her. And the bed is creaking and squeaking.

DICK
Yes, yes...

JO
And he's breathing and groaning and groaning and breathing. And the bed creaks and crackles and shakes and rattles with him, louder and louder and louder and then he goes really loud...

DICK
Jo! Jo!...

JO
Boo Boo!

Dick groans

JO (CONT'D)
Then everything goes all quiet. Then their door opens and he goes to the bathroom.

DICK
I'll be right back.

*Dick exits (or just turns around).
Sound of a toilet flush. Jo sits up.*

JO
Then a baby gets born.

DICK
Are you sure?

JO
Yes.

DICK
When?

JO
October.

DICK
Well, ain't this a busted fence.

JO
What will we do?

DICK
Do what we have to do.

JO
You don't have to.

DICK
(resigned)
I never do anything I have to. That's why you and me are going to have to be together.

NUMBERS
Gonna have to be together.

Lighting and costume change. A hospital operating room. Jo sits on a chair, spreads open legs. Nat, as The Priest / Doctor, hovers nearby. Jo addresses the audience.

JO
I didn't like what happened.

DICK
Neither did I.

JO
I was going to be a switchboard supervisor.

DICK
I was going to be a pilot.

JO
But it was 1948.

DICK
And there were rules.

Numbers hum a Catholic Church hymn.

NUMBERS
Ah, ah, ah, ah,

NAT
(sing-song, like in Church)
Thou shalt not beer thyself stupid and fornicate.

NUMBERS

A-men.

JO

Certain things were just not allowed. We were Catholic.

DICK

I'll never go against the Goddamn church!

NAT

(as before)

Blessed be the Father of Allowance and Submission.

NUMBERS

A-men.

JO

St. John's Hospital. Downtown. Room 1109. Tuesday afternoon. He said he would be there, but he wasn't.

DICK

Some people around here had to work for a living!

JO

So I had to do it all by myself.

DICK

This is all my fault? They wouldn't allow me to leave!

JO

Likely story.

DICK

Hey, you're the one with the womb!

JO

Which was doing fine until you came along.

DICK

(to audience)

See what I put up with?

JO

(to audience)

See what I put up with?

NAT

Blessed art thou among the cat boxes and blessed is the gin and tonic of thy womb Jesus.

NUMBERS

A-men.

JO

Well, I can't argue you with you now. I'm in the middle of experiencing the Joy of Motherhood!

Nat positions himself to deliver Jo's baby. Wilbur rides in on his bike, takes one of Numbers, places it in his basket and circles the stage.

JO (CONT'D)

(screaming)

AHHHHHH!!

NAT

Okay, Push.

JO

No! We have to wait for him!

NAT

Push!

JO

He said he would be here! HOLY MOTHER OF GOD!

NAT

We can't wait! PUSH!

JO

But he promised!

NAT

PUSH!

JO

AHHHHHH!

A baby cries. Wilbur gives the Number to Nat, who hands it to Jo.

NAT

A baby girl!

JO

Number One. Many years from now when my heart blows up like a balloon from adult on-set diabetes and eventually kills me, Number One will cover me with my blue afghan blanket and keep me warm.

NAT

Thy Holy Shroud of Knitted Blue Yarn.

NUMBERS

A-men.

Wilbur gently takes the Number from Jo, puts in his basket, parks behind her.

JO
Dick finally showed up later that night. He'd been drinking.

DICK enters.

DICK
Hey, hey Jo! Whaddya know?

JO
Where were you?

DICK
Van bought me a beer to celebrate.

JO
You said you would be here.

DICK
They were passing out cigars!

Dick gives Jo a cigar.

DICK (CONT'D)
And a kitten!

Dick presents a small shoe box with holes in it. Kitten cries. Jo rolls over.

DICK (CONT'D)
What? You said you wanted a cat.

JO
I'm tired. I need to sleep.

DICK
Oh. Well, how did it go? I went down to the nursery. Boy, we got a real looker, boy. Are you mad, Jo? I wasn't allowed to leave. I tried. Then Van came over and... What do you want me to do? Jo? What do I do now?

JO
Go home and wait.

Dick shuffles away from Jo. Address the audience.

DICK
In the years to come, the kitten would become Jo's favorite cat. She would name it...

JO
Cray-Mar.

DICK

Just one of her imaginary names for different parts of a feline anatomy.

JO

The line between a cat's nose and it's mouth.

DICK

Practically every year of it's life, Cray-Mar would have a litter of kittens. Jo called them...

JO

Cupcakes.

DICK

I tried to get Cray-Mar fixed but Jo wouldn't have it. She said they were...

JO

Sisters in Placenta.

DICK

Before we moved to the suburbs, Cray-Mar died and we buried...

JO

NO! Not yet! Not yet.

DICK

Okay, Jo. Not yet.

NUMBERS

And now, back to our program.

JO

(to audience)

Oh, yes. And so it went. The same story over and over.

DICK

(to audience)

They just kept coming and coming and coming.

JO

We couldn't seem to stop it.

DICK

Like eating a big Goddamn bag of cheese puffs!

NAT

Thou must make thy fingers orange and sticky.

NUMBERS

A-men.

JO
We could have used just a little help, Father.

NAT
Neglect not thy Puffs of the Lord!

NUMBERS
A-men.

DICK
It was a Goddamn thunderstorm and I wasn't allowed to put on a raincoat!

NAT, WILBER & NUMBERS
Blasphemy!

Sudden thunderclap and lightning. It begins to rain. Thunder, lightning and rain underscore the scene which is staged like an assembly line. Wilbur hands a Number to Nat, who hands it to Jo who hands it to Dick who hands it to Wilbur who rings his bell, hands Dick a beer, who chugs, hands it to Jo, who chugs, etc. Eventually, all are chugging, passing the Numbers, bell ringing, etc. If desired, the Numbers can underscore hum "Hi-ho, Hi-ho" from Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Jo's "AHHHs" should sound increasingly matter-of-fact.

JO
Number Two.

NAT
Push!

JO
AHHHHH!

A baby cries.

NAT
It's a boy.

WILBUR
Congratulations!

DICK
But you said it was the right day!

JO
Friday! I said wait until FRIDAY!

WILBUR
And so the seeds of Friday were sewn.

NUMBERS
A-men!

JO
Number Three.

NAT
Shove!

JO
AHHHH!

A baby cries.

NAT
It's a girl.

WILBUR
Down the Hatch!

JO
The Ladies Home Journal said it was suppose to work!

DICK
I'll never eat anything with olive oil again!

WILBUR
And so the olive tree oiled it's loin.

NUMBERS
A-men!

JO
Number Four.

NAT
Push!

JO
AHHH!

A baby cries.

NAT
It's a boy.

WILBUR

Welcome to the 4-H Club!

DICK

I was picturing Eleanor Roosevelt!

JO

Naked! Not with clothes on!

WILBUR

And so the New Deal went forth unto the land.

NUMBERS

A-men!

JO

Number Five.

NAT

Push!

JO

Ahhh.

*A baby cries.*NAT

It's a girl.

WILBUR

It's standing room only, folks!

JO

Why didn't you use the big rubber bands!

DICK

Hey, I still can't pee straight!

WILBUR

And so the circles of rubber remained unbroken.

NUMBERS

A-men!

JO

Number Six.

NAT

Shove!

JO

Ahhh.

A baby cries.

NAT

It's a boy.

WILBUR

No running around the pool!

DICK

You don't drink the prune juice.

JO

I couldn't find the turkey baster.

WILBUR

And so the prunes wrinkled the turkey.

NUMBERS

A-men!

JO

Number Seven.

NAT

Push!

JO

Ahh.

A baby cries.

NAT

It's a boy.

WILBUR

Fire! Fire!

JO

I did have all my clothes on!

DICK

Well, I was wearing my parka!

WILBUR

And so the unpenetrable was penetrated.

NUMBERS

A-men.

JO

Number Eight.

Shove. NAT

Ahh. JO

A baby cries.

It's a boy. NAT

We're taking on water! WILBUR

The wind is blowing again! DICK

Lock all the shutters and doors! JO

And so the wind blew it's minions across the land. WILBUR

A-men. NUMBERS

Number Nine. JO

Push! NAT

Ah. JO

A baby cries.

It's a girl. NAT

Abandon ship! WILBUR

<u>DICK</u>	<u>JO</u>
(exhausted)	(exhausted)
You name it.	You name it.

NAT & WILBUR
 One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine! Whew!
 Whew.

<u>DICK</u>	<u>JO</u>
Whew. Jackpot.	Whew. Jackpot.

NUMBERS

A-men!

Lighting change. Wilbur and Nat return the Numbers upstage. A fanfare sounds which segues into a 60's family sitcom theme. Nat and Wilbur unload cumbersome-looking backpacks loaded with oversized towels, sponges, diapers, bottles, etc., from the suitcases. Nat will put a neckbrace around Jo.

NAT

And now, we present...

WILBUR

Twenty-two years...

NAT

Of married life.

WILBUR

The condensed version.

NAT

Brought to you by...

WILBUR

Campbell's Put-That-Down-Don't-Touch-That-I-Said-NO! Soup.

NAT

Good enough for us...

DICK

Wait...

WILBUR

And it better be good enough for you.

DICK

(to Wilbur)

Hold on a second. Do we really have to do this part? We know what happens. We're not going to learn anything here. Let's just move along to the next part. Right, Jo?

JO

Yes, can we skip ahead? My womb is so sore from the last part.

NUMBERS

Why didn't you leave and fall in love?

DICK

Jesus Christ. We told you already.

JO

We didn't and we didn't.

DICK

We didn't and we didn't. There. No let's move on to the part where we can answer the question, so you guys can get writing it on a wall somewhere and we can all just move on. Why in the hell do we have to go through every little thing?

WILBUR

Your busted dream...

NAT

Your broken heart...

WILBUR

Will be laid to rest...

NAT

After you pass your test.

DICK

Test? What test? There's a test now? Do you hear this, Jo?

JO

Couldn't we, I don't know, take a little short cut?

NAT

You must learn the notes before you sing.

JO

But I can't sing, Nat.

WILBUR

You must fly the kite before you take wing.

DICK

Okay, that's it. I'm not doing this part.

NUMBERS

"___"

DICK

Don't you people have quicksand to disappear into? I held up my part of the bargain. Food, clothes, a roof. What more did you want from me? From her?

NUMBERS

Why didn't you leave and...

DICK

I wasn't allowed. Okay? Neither was she. Right, Jo?

JO

I think that's right. We weren't allowed.

DICK

We weren't allowed to do anything. That's your answer. Write that on the barn and get us out of here.

Nat and Wilbur take out decorative rope from the suitcase and loosely tie up Jo and Dick, which paralyzes them. They sit them down in their chairs, and are unable to move. The Numbers underscore to the tune of the Campbell's soup commercial theme.

NUMBERS

Mmmm, mmmm, good. Mmmm, mmmm, good. Sit down, shut up, mmmm, mmmm, good.

DICK

I can't move.

JO

What's happening!

DICK

Don't do this part! Please don't do this!

JO

I can't move. I'm trapped!

Nat and Wilbur put on the backpacks. It should be clear that Nat is Jo, and Wilbur is Dick. Nat and Wilbur cut off the Numbers. They will harmonize and croon the following.

NAT & WILBUR

Sit back and wait. While we demonstrate. Twenty years, of married life!

NUMBERS

The super extra condensed version.

The following action is a highly-stylized, over-the-top sequence showing Jo and Dick's chaotic, out-of-control household. All dialogue is improvised accordingly.

It begins with Nat and Wilbur exchanging call-outs at each other:

NAT

Number One.

WILBUR

Number Three.

NAT

Number Seven and Number Five

WILBUR

Number Two, Number Four, Number One, Number Eight.

And so forth. The Numbers here can be random. With each call-out, they will throw something from their backpack at the Numbers. Jo and Dick will watch, trying to free themselves, proclaiming their innocence. Their ad libs should be along the lines of:

JO

I didn't do that, watch it, don't throw that in the house...

DICK

That's not me, you almost broke something, we never did that.

The mayhem increases. Nat and Wilbur throw more things at the Numbers, then at each other. The 60 sitcom theme morphs into the "William Tell Overture" which gradually plays at half-speed. Sounds of bombs exploding. Wilbur and Nat will come to blows, all in slow motion and highly exaggerated, accentuated perhaps by a strobe light effect. Jo and Dick continue to struggle, more so Dick, than Jo. Eventually, Wilbur chokes Nat to the ground. Jo silently watches as Dick struggles desperately to free himself, when he does, he throws Wilbur off of Nat. He speaks directly to Nat at first, then to Jo. All music and noise stop, an eerie silence.

DICK

I didn't mean to do it. It only happened that one time. Right, Jo? Right? I was just so mad. They drove me crazy. Her too. Right, Jo? They drove us crazy. All day and night!

(MORE)

It never end, constantly, on and on, not one minute to think, not one single Goddamn minute to think about anything! It never end! I didn't mean to do that, Jo. You know that, right? Right?

JO

I guess.

DICK

I apologized! I said I was sorry all the time. It never happened again! Remember? Remember?

JO

I remember.

DICK

I was just so mad. We both were. Don't I have the right to be mad? I worked all day and night and I have the right to be mad! You can't blame me! No one can blame me for being mad! I earned it!

NUMBERS

(singing, as before)

Mmmm, mmmm, Good. Mmmm, mmmm Good. You're not allowed, mmmm, mmmm, Good.

DICK

SHUT THE HELL UP!!!

Jo removes her neckbrace, hands it to Nat, takes her seat. Dick takes his seat.

DICK (CONT'D)

(to Jo)

It wasn't all bad, was it?

NAT

Twenty years...

WILBUR

Of married life.

NAT

The...

WILBUR

End.

NUMBERS

A-men.

Lights out. End of Act I

ACT II

Lights up on a cafeteria. Jo and Dick are seated and performing the same ritual at the top of Act I. Sleigh bells are heard.

Lucille enters, dressed in a vintage 60's stewardess uniform holding a plastic food tray in one hand, rolling a small suitcase in the other. She poses center stage. Dick stares at her, mesmerized, puts away his papers.

Wilbur enters riding a bike, a pair of roller skates in his basket, ringing his bell.

NUMBERS

December. Listen. Yellow Door. The secret of flight. You need to go home, Dick. December. December. December.

WILBUR

It's December. The snow is falling in the cold dark sky.

DICK

December.

NUMBERS

December.

DICK

The month I fell in love.

Wilbur hands Dick the skates, rides off. Dick puts on the skates, will roll up to Lucille.

DICK (CONT'D)

(to audience)

The cafeteria of the Lufthansa German Airlines Air Cargo Terminal at Hopkins International Airport in Cleveland, Ohio. Lunch time. She was wearing her official Lufthansa Stewardess uniform. She wore wings on her lapel. She wore perfume. She wore stockings. She flew the world. She was where I wanted to go. She was everything, everywhere, and all the time. I was 43 years old. Her name was Lucille.

Lucille turns to Dick.

LUCILLE

What's with the skates?

DICK
It's how I get around. Round here.

LUCILLE
They allow that, do they?

DICK
Sure. Germans love efficiency. My idea, too.

LUCILLE
You don't say.

DICK
I do say. Lick that stamp and put in your mailbox.

Lucille pulls out a pair of skates from her bag.

LUCILLE
And to think. It was my idea, too.

Swinging Big-Band music.

DICK
(to audience)
See, with other gals it was flip, flop, flam, bing, bang, boom, thanks for the ride, see you real soon. But Lucille? She was a whole new kind of air travel. Once I got on her plane, I was in big trouble.

Dick falls to his knees and laces up Lucille's skates.

LUCILLE
I see that you're married.

DICK
(to Lucille)
Yes.

LUCILLE
Good. Less complicated that way.

DICK
(to audience)
Huge trouble. As my conscience never stopped reminding me.

Wilbur, as Dick's Conscience enters holding a cafeteria tray with a halo, made out of straws on his hat.

WILBUR
What do we think we are doing, Dick?

DICK

I'm lacing her up.

LUCILLE

You work for Lufthansa, too?

DICK

(to Lucille)

Yep. Air Cargo Sales Manager for the Midwest.

LUCILLE

I've never seen you on one my flights.

DICK

Well, I'll have to do something about that, now won't I.

WILBUR

We don't think she's a good idea.

DICK

She's not. She's a great idea.

LUCILLE

I fly the Chicago-Frankfurt route, mostly.

DICK

Around the world and back, huh?

WILBUR

We shouldn't be doing that, like that.

DICK

Don't you have a kite to crash somewhere?

LUCILLE

Of course. Why should I have one little home, when I can have the whole world?

DICK

You're International.

LUCILLE

The only way to fly.

WILBUR

Oh my gosh. A Modern Woman! That spells Trouble!

DICK

You know what else it spells?

NUMBERS

My ship has come in!

WILBUR

We should not go skating with her at all.

DICK

Oh, go tighten some spokes.

(to Lucille)

What are you doing in Cleveland?

LUCILLE

I grew up here. My parent's live in Mayfield Heights.

DICK

Well, ain't that a barrel of shiny apples.

LUCILLE

And a box of Swiss chocolate.

WILBUR

We should be thinking about Jo.

DICK

(to Wilbur)

We should be thinking about Trolean Polkas, music of the Alps.

(to Lucille)

I love Swiss chocolate.

WILBUR

We have obligations.

DICK

All of which hate rollerskating, as you know.

LUCILLE

You lace me up very well.

DICK

I'm an internationally renowned skate lacer upper.

NUMBERS

(snickers, a guffaw or two)

Corny!

DICK

Don't you people have nails to straighten somewhere?

WILBUR

We should run away now, Dick. Very fast.

DICK

(to Wilbur)

This is my turn, now. And what do you know about love? You've never been in love.

Yes we have. WILBUR

When? DICK

December. WILBUR

What was her name? DICK

One hundred and twenty feet. WILBUR

Smart ass. DICK

I'm going to Skateland tonight with some friends. LUCILLE

Well, ain't that a full set of socket wrenches. So am I. DICK

We'll regret this as long as we live. WILBUR

I sure in the hell hope it's a lot longer than that. DICK
 (to Wilbur)
 Ready? (to Lucille)

Wheels up! LUCILLE

We have obligations! WILBUR

Rotate! DICK
 (to Lucille)

*Lighting change, like a roller rink.
 Roller rink music. An inflatable globe
 is tossed on stage. Wilbur grabs it,
 as Dick and Lucille skate around him.
 They should eventually be holding
 hands, encircling him closely.*

In London, I saw the Queen. LUCILLE

Really? How is she? DICK

Short. LUCILLE

And in Paris? DICK

I ate rabbit with french fries and played Bocci with old Italian men at the Place D'Italie. LUCILLE

Teach me to play Bocci. DICK

In Iceland, snow falls on lava and the horses grow their own wool sweaters. LUCILLE

I want to wear a horse-hair sweater. DICK

When you kayak in Sweden, watch out for the jumping cod. LUCILLE

I would catch them like footballs. DICK

Greek men cheat at dominoes. But never when playing a woman. LUCILLE

Thai food? What's that? DICK

In Venice, the water smells like oregano. LUCILLE

I would love to smoke a cigar with you. DICK

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine? LUCILLE

Yep, Bavarian beer is the best beer in the World. DICK

When do you sleep? LUCILLE

Yep, I'm going to fly solo, Boston to San Diego. DICK

When do you eat? LUCILLE

Yep, let's yodel in Switzerland. DICK

When do you think? LUCILLE

Yep, let's go to the opera in Sydney. DICK

When do you breathe? LUCILLE

Yes, let's lean over the Great Wall of China. DICK

I can save you. LUCILLE

Tango in Spain. DICK

Breathe. LUCILLE

Canadian sunset. DICK

I can free you. LUCILLE

The Pyramids. DICK

Breathe me. LUCILLE

Breathe you. DICK

Me. LUCILLE

You. DICK

Wilbur ducks underneath them, bounces the globe. Lucille and Dick kiss.

NUMBERS

(to Row, Row, Your Boat)

S.K.A.T.E. Skate her all night long. Slip and fall, crack your ass, Skate her all night long.

She skates away, but not off stage.

WILBUR

Are we satisfied?

DICK

Hey, you had your Kitty Hawk. Now I get mine.

WILBUR

But I crashed.

Numbers make crash noises.

LUCILLE

I have a layover in Chicago next week. Want to eat some deep dish pizza with me?

DICK

(to Jo)

It's just a dumb business trip.

JO

(innocently)

Call me when you get there.

DICK

(to Lucille)

Windy City it is.

Lucille exits. Wilbur deflates the globe.

WILBUR

Ice on the runway. Hard to stop. Watch your crosswind.

He hands Dick the deflated globe, he takes his seat. Lighting change.

NUMBERS

And now a word from our sponsor.

Cheesy commercial music. Nat enters, stands at a microphone, Wilbur joins him. Jo listens intently.

NAT

Ladies, when your husband has an affair and falls in love, he becomes equally infatuated with household chores and thus, a very, very productive member of the house.

WILBUR

(imitating Dick)

I took out the trash and painted the garage.

NAT

Your home suddenly becomes clean and sparkling.

WILBUR

(imitating Dick)

I fixed the disposal and got rid of the wasps.

NAT

And what happy homemaker doesn't love a hunky-dorry home.

WILBUR

(imitating Dick)

Say Jo, what say I steam clean the carpets this weekend?

NAT

So next time Dad sows his wild oats, just remember....

JO & WILBUR

Smell that spring time freshness.

NAT

And now ladies, here's how your house keeps getting dirty.

NUMBERS

The Brookpark Motor Inn!

DICK

Aw, Jesus Christ. Do I have to?

JO

Oh, what's the big deal. I know all about her. Besides, this is kinda fun. Like watching the Carol Burnett Show.

Dick takes off his pants.

NUMBERS

The Brookpark Motor Inn! December 21st, 1965. 7:30 PM in the Evening.

DICK

No! Not that one!

NUMBERS

The Yellow Door!

Too late.
WILBUR

Lucille enters, finishing getting dressed, she primps at a mirror.

LUCILLE
You should get dressed. It's almost eight.

DICK
So what about it?

LUCILLE
I don't know. We'll see.

DICK
Come on. The big pow-wow in Frankfurt isn't all business. We can do whatever we want. There's a ton of beer halls to go to. We can get drunk on wheat beer, wrap ourselves in a goose down blanket, sit out on the balcony over looking the Wiegartten Strasse, and watch the sun come up. Live life like we're the biggest pickles in the jar.

LUCILLE
I usually have afternoon flights the next day.

DICK
Not if I get you into rollerskates, first.

Dick grabs Lucille, big long kiss.

LUCILLE
Come on, Dick. It's almost eight.

DICK
(playfully)
Oh, don't be a broken crayon.

LUCILLE
You have to get to the tree place by nine.

DICK
I'm not getting a tree this year.

LUCILLE
Yes you are.

DICK
No I'm not.

LUCILLE
Yes you are, and we're not having this conversation again.

DICK

No tinsel, no lights, no ornaments. Not a branch.

LUCILLE

Don't be ridiculous.

DICK

Works for you. Works for me.

LUCILLE

I don't have children.

DICK

Then you know.

LUCILLE

You cannot have your children wake up on Christmas morning and not see a tree. They are expecting it.

DICK

They should learn not to expect too much. Sooner they learn that little nugget of life, the better off they'll be. They way I see it, I'm doing them a favor.

NUMBERS

(sung to "Oh Christmas Tree")

No Christmas Tree, No Christmas Tree, Na, na, na, na, na.

DICK

Jesus didn't have a tree and he turned out just fine.

LUCILLE

Jesus had a Christmas tree.

DICK

But he was just born. How did they know to have a tree for him? It's not in the Bible. I looked.

LUCILLE

It wasn't a "tree" tree, it was a branch or.... Okay, we're not doing this again. Get dressed, you're getting a tree.

DICK

No, I'm serious. You're right. Christmas has got to mean more than a tree or a branch or tinsel getting stuck in the carpet, or tangled and knotted bunches of lights that don't work, or toys that break an hour after they open them.

NUMBERS

Hot Wheels! Rock-em' Sock-em' Robots. Easy Bake Oven!

DICK

(to Numbers)

And this year, we're all gonna find out what that is.

LUCILLE

Well, that's too bad.

DICK

They'll get over it.

LUCILLE

So where are you going to put my presents for you?

DICK

What are you talking about?

Lucille retrieves a large bag, takes out nicely-wrapped Christmas gifts.

LUCILLE

Your Christmas presents. I guess I'll have to return them all now since there's no Christmas tree to put them under. How sad.

DICK

Are these for me?

LUCILLE

Yes and no. No, I gave you your present an hour ago. Yes, they are for you to take home to give to your kids as presents under a Christmas tree. There's a necklace for a girl, Russian cupie dolls, airplane models and Swiss army knives for the boys, or girls. A big box of Swiss chocolates. Here's a list of everything, sorted by the color of the wrapper. You can label them when you get home. Say they're from Santa. Do they still believe in Santa?

NUMBERS

Here comes Santa Claus, here comes Santa Claus...

DICK

I don't know. I guess.

LUCILLE

Well, it's too bad you don't have a tree. I guess you'll never find out. Too bad you can't take them. I'll give them to the Salvation Army.

DICK

No, wait. I'll take 'em. We were a little short this year, so it will fill out their lists.

LUCILLE

Under the tree, right?

DICK

Sure, sure.

(sincerely)

I don't know what to say. I got you a present. I just forgot to bring it. I didn't know we were exchanging...

LUCILLE

You didn't get me a present. You can't. You know and I know you can't and I don't want one. We have a perfect game going, Dick. We have fun, have sex, no ties, no worries, no obligations. Nothing but a couple of hours when it's just me and you and nothing or nobody else. I know you'll be here when I come home, you know I'll always call. It's the perfect game. Let's not spoil it with Christmas presents.

NUMBERS

"___"

Dick breaks the scene

DICK

Okay, that's enough. Let's go on to the next one.

JO

What's the matter?

DICK

Everybody knows I had an affair with Lucille, which ended. End of story. Nothing else to see here. Let's move it along. It's your turn.

JO

You have to finish.

DICK

I don't have to finish nothing.

NUMBERS

No Christmas Tree, No Christmas Tree, Nothing for you, nothing for me. Na, na, na, na, na, na.

JO

They're not going to let you.

DICK

(to the Numbers)

It was my turn to fly!

Dick rejoins Lucille, resumes scene.

DICK (CONT'D)

Then what's with all these presents?

LUCILLE

They're for your kids.

DICK

Exactly.

LUCILLE

It's Christmas?

DICK

Exactly.

LUCILLE

What are you talking about?

DICK

You just said you don't want us to give each other presents but I'm looking at a whole bag of 'em that you want me to put under the tree so they can open them up at five in the morning. That doesn't sound like a very modern thing to do.

LUCILLE

Careful, Dick.

DICK

No, I wanna know why. Why did you buy these presents?

LUCILLE

Does it matter?

DICK

Does it matter? I'm gonna be sitting there watching them tear into these, knowing full well they're from you and looking at Jo, who's looking at me thinking I'm either the greatest father in the world or an unbelievable son of a bitch on Christmas morning of all things so I say it matters a whole lot. These go home with me, then you go home with me and that changes everything.

LUCILLE

I thought I already went home with you.

DICK

You know what I mean.

Lucille packs up the gifts, prepares to leave.

DICK (CONT'D)

Now, wait. Wait just a minute. I didn't mean...

LUCILLE

Forget it. I was just wanted to do something nice for your kids and apparently that's too modern for your tastes.

DICK

Hold on a second. I didn't say that.

LUCILLE

Then what did you say?

DICK

Look... I'm gonna take the gifts, okay? They'll love 'em, and I'll tell Jo something. All I wanted was to know why you did it, that's all. That's all I'm asking.

NUMBERS

Come fly our friendly skies. Coffee, tea or me.

LUCILLE

Okay. I'll tell you. I'm twenty-nine years old.

DICK

So?

LUCILLE

In June, I turn thirty. That means I'm out. It's over.

DICK

What are you talking about?

LUCILLE

They want girls. Only single girls under thirty can be stewardesses. Didn't you know that? Slim, coy, not too shapely. That's what gets the bulls in the seats. That's how Lufthansa gets the money to pay men like you.

DICK

They can't do that.

LUCILLE

They can, they do and they will. At thirty you're too old and out you go. Lemmings off a cliff.

DICK

That's terrible.

LUCILLE

Yes, it is. But I can't do anything about it. So, I've been thinking about what to do when it's all over. I suppose I could find a guy, get married, live in a small house in Mayfield Heights, have a bunch of kids. Be like you. Sometimes, that actually sounds nice. But the problem is, I don't want to be married. Ever. Married life isn't for me.

(MORE)

Another set of rules by men and I have had ten years of that from Lufthansa. But I like kids. I think I'm good with them. I've been thinking about kids a lot.

NUMBERS

Tick, tock, tick, tock, goes the clock, tick, tock.

LUCILLE

I'd want the kid, but not the husband or the house in Mayfield Heights that goes with it. I just want me, one kid and the whole world. I've got me. I've had the world. Maybe you can give me the one kid.

NUMBERS

Yea! Ten fingers and ten toes!

DICK

What?

LUCILLE

Knock me up. Give me a baby.

DICK

What?

LUCILLE

Not now. Next spring or summer. You don't have to leave your wife or your house. You don't have to pay for it. No one would ever know. A perfect game going.

DICK

What?

LUCILLE

All I need is a glass of wine, your sperm, a dead rabbit, and then me and my baby would just disappear. You've got nine. You're pretty potent, I'd say.

NUMBERS

Tick, tock, tick, tock, goes the clock, tick, tock.

JO

I didn't know anything about this.

DICK

Are you crazy? You want me to get you pregnant?

LUCILLE

(after a pause)

Bad joke. I'm sorry.

DICK

Wait. You want me to get you pregnant?

LUCILLE

I was joking. Forget I said it. Jesus, it's after eight.

DICK

Wait a minute. Just hold the phone a second.

LUCILLE

Forget it, Dick. You have to get to the tree place by nine.

DICK

Wait, I don't understand. I don't understand any of this.

LUCILLE

Dick. We have a perfect game going. Why would I ruin it with a baby? Huh? Bad joke.

DICK

You want me to give you a baby?

LUCILLE

Just mix those in with the other presents. Tell Jo you got them from Duty-Free in the concourse. And don't get the tree from that cheap place in Rocky River. Get a good one from the lot off 150th. Merry Christmas, Dick.

DICK

Wait a minute. We have to talk about this. Can I at least think about it?

Lucille exits. Wilbur enters on his bike, jingling sleigh bells. He will place the presents in his basket.

WILBUR

The secret of flight. Is the turn. Left or right. No difference. Otherwise, you just float. Like a kite on a string. Flying, but going nowhere. Turn.

Lighting change. Jo jumps up from her seat.

JO

(to audience)

My Turn!

(to Dick)

My Turn!

Dick retreats to his chair.

JO (CONT'D)

(to audience)

Of course I knew about her. I didn't know about the baby.

NAT

(sing-songy, church-like)

Thou shalt know of the perfect game baby in due time.

NUMBERS

A-men.

JO

I went to visit The Father to go over my options.

A church confessional. Jo falls to her knees, Nat as The Father stands next her, hand on her shoulder in a, well, fatherly way. The Numbers intone.

NUMBERS

Ah, ah, ah, ah, ah.

JO

Bless me father, it's been two days, four hours, and thirty-seven minutes since my last confession.

NAT

Yes, I know.

JO

Dick is cheating on me.

NAT

Yes, I know.

JO

You do?

NAT

All is known to those for whom it is to be known unto.

JO

Well, this one is different. He likes her. A lot. He's going to get us in trouble. I don't like it. What can I do?

NAT

The Lord Thy God shall smite thy rollerskating heathen into the eternal fires of Hell and Damnation.

NUMBERS

Smite, smite, smite.

JO

Okay, that's fine. But I was thinking more about me. Lately, I have been having... impure thoughts. And since he started it first, I was thinking, that maybe I can go ahead and, that maybe I could do the same thing that he's doing.

NAT

BLASPHEMY!

NUMBERS

Thunder and lightning, fire and brimstone, oh my!

JO

But he gets to. Eye for an eye. Even Stevens.

NAT

Thou shalt not covet the wangle dangle of thy neighbor.

JO

That's not fair!

NAT

NO! Wangle Not Thy Dangle!

NUMBERS

So shall it be written, so shall it be done!

*Large church door slams. Lighting change. Jo rises.*JO

(to audience)

Shhhh. Don't tell. Even Stevens.

NUMBERS

Shhhh. Don't tell. Even Stevens.

*Lighting change. A picnic in a park. "Orange Colored Sky" is heard.**Eddie enters with two orange soda pops. He's average looking, a bit pudgy, but full of self-confidence and innocent charm.*JO

(to audience, Numbers)

I met Eddie at Dick's annual company picnic in the Valley. It was a beautiful Spring day. Sunny, warm, not a cloud in the sky. I was wearing one of my favorite sun dresses that I made myself. I bought a special hat to match. I colored my hair. It was Spring, after all. Time to bloom.

NUMBERS

"___"

NAT

"I was walking along, minding my business..."

JO

I was milling about when Dick came over with Eddie. He actually introduced us!

NAT

"When out of an orange colored sky."

NUMBERS

Sky... sky... sky... sky... sky... sky...

Music stuck, like a record. Dick has been reading his news. Jo clears her throat to get his attention, motions. Dick joins her, like it's a bother.

DICK

(monotone)

Eddie, this is my wife, Jo. Jo, this is Eddie.

JO

(to audience)

Now do you completely see the situation I am in?

Dick saunters back to his news.

NAT

"Crash! Bam! Ala Kazam! Wonderful you came by!"

EDDIE

Orange pop?

JO

Thank you.

EDDIE

Dick tells me you have nine.

JO

We hit it off right away.

(to Eddie)

That's right.

EDDIE

Well I think that is just amazingly amazing.

JO

Oh, it's just what I do.

EDDIE

How do you stay so beautifully beautiful after all that birthing?

JO
Well, it's just what I do.

NUMBERS
"___"

EDDIE
Say, would you like to ride the horses? They're wonderfully wonderful creatures.

JO
I've never ridden a horse.

EDDIE
Marvelously marvelous! Let's go.

Lighting change. A horse trail.

The Numbers make the sounds of horses as Jo and Eddie ride. "Lazy Hazy Crazy Days of Summer" is heard.

NAT
"Roll out those lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer"

JO
(to audience)
It was... magically magical. The horse were so big and strong. We road all through the valley. The sun was coming through the trees. We crossed the river. I was afraid to go fast so he stayed with me the whole time.

EDDIE
Isn't the funnest fun?

JO
Oh, yes.

EDDIE
I have a feeling of many more greatly great times to come.

JO
(to audience)
We rode and rode. I didn't want it to end but my horse kept stopping to pee and poop so he thought it best we go back.

Eddie helps Jo down, close moment, like in those corny romantic movies.

JO (CONT'D)
Thank you.

EDDIE

My pleased pleasure.

JO

And then he kissed my hand.

*Eddie kisses her hand. The Numbers
whistle.*

JO (CONT'D)

Just like in the movies. Like what I always wanted. Just once. Didn't my hand deserve a kiss?

NUMBERS

Even Stevens.

JO

Under a shady tree, he told me all about himself.

EDDIE

I am a bachelor. Successfully successful, with a nice car, a modest apartment, a selection of Italian after-shaves. But Jo, lately I find myself, I don't know, gazing at stars, hearing guitars, like I want to be someone... someone...

NAT & THE NUMBERS

"Like someone in love."

EDDIE

I want to have a family, provide them a home with all the modern amenities. Three-ply carpeting, matching furniture, frozen TV dinners, perhaps even a pool. This my destiny.

JO

Sounds wonderful.

EDDIE

But I'm in a bind. Despite my best efforts to the contrary, I am getting older.

NUMBERS

Tick, tock, goes the clock, tick, tock.

EDDIE

And I have not found that especially special woman that I can love, honor and purchase fine jewelry for. Until today.

JO

Really? Who is she?

EDDIE

You.

Me? JO

The moment I first saw you in your sunny sun dress and matching hat, how the sun shone on you and made you an angel, I knew you were my destiny.

Me? JO

EDDIE
Yes, you Jo. And now I feel like someone I never felt I was before. Like someone... Someone....

NAT & THE NUMBERS
"Like someone in love."

JO
My head was spinning! No man has said those kind of things to me before. Was it a dream? I went to see The Father.

Quick lighting change, church confessional, as before.

JO (CONT'D)
Bless me Father, blah, blah, blah. He's fun and sweet and he kisses my hand. Can I please have your blessing?

NAT
Wangle the Dangle and thou shalt suffer the Rod of Insolence!

NUMBERS
So shall it be written, so shall it be done!

JO
Even Stevens!

NUMBERS
Shhhh. Don't tell.

Lighting change, Jo returns to Eddie.

JO
Things between Eddie and me got faster fast.

The Numbers provide sound FX accordingly underneath the following exchange. Jo and Eddie fake walk hand in hand.

EDDIE
A movie.

Bowling. JO

A double header. EDDIE

Motorcycle riding. JO

Ice skating. EDDIE

Dancing. JO

Shopping for pumpkins. EDDIE

Sledding. JO

Mowing the lawn.. EDDIE

Making cupcakes. JO

Raking leaves. EDDIE

Soup for the flu. JO

Shoveling the driveway! EDDIE

Waiting at the post office. JO

Weather stripping the front door. EDDIE

They embrace. A polite kiss.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
Tonight, perhaps you could spend the night in my apartment.
It could use a woman's touch. So could I.

JO
Oh, Eddie, I don't know. This is all such a whirly
whirlwind. I am overwhelmingly overwhelmed.

EDDIE

Then I shall wait some more, for I am sure the wait will be worth waiting for. See you tonight for dinner?

Eddie exits quickly. Jo primps. Dick notices.

DICK

You going out?

JO

Yes.

DICK

Where?

JO

Do I ask you where you go?

NUMBERS

Shhh. Don't tell. Even Stevens.

DICK

Don't you people have gutters to clean somewhere?

A doorbell rings.

"For Sentimental Reasons" is heard.

NAT

"I love you, for sentimental reasons..."

The music skips as before. Jo clears her throat, get's Dick's attention. He saunters over. Music unskips.

DICK

Eddie.

EDDIE

Dick.

DICK

You're all dressed up.

EDDIE

I'm taking Jo to Stouffers for dinner.

DICK

Downtown?

EDDIE

Of course.

JO
I'm almost ready, Eddie.

EDDIE
Wow! You look spectacularly spectacular! Doesn't she, Dick?

DICK
A regular twenty dollar bill.

JO
I just need to put my coat on.

EDDIE
Allow me.

Eddie helps Jo on with her coat.

JO
There's hamburgers in wax paper in the oven for you.

EDDIE
Nice seeing you, Dick.

Jo and Eddie cross and sit at a table.

NUMBERS
(singing to the tune of
Halleluiah Chorus)
Even Stevens, Wangle Dangle, Even, Stevens, Wangle Dangle.

DICK
Don't you people have a bike to fall off somewhere.

Dick returns to his news.

Lighting change. A nice restaurant.

EDDIE
You've hardly touched your pork chop, Jo. Something amiss?

JO
I think we need to go.

EDDIE
But our food has just arrived.

JO
It just seems like you're ready to propose or something.

EDDIE
It's an ideal idea.

NAT

Wangle Not Thy Dangle.

NUMBERS

Shhhh. Don't tell.

JO

This is awkwardly awkward. I think we should leave.

Jo beings to get up.

EDDIE

Please sit down, Jo. There's something I got to tell you.

Jo sits.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I know how all of this looks. Stouffer's. the candles, the music, the delicious pork chops.

NAT & THE NUMBERS

"Like someone in love."

EDDIE

But I believe in destiny and it's telling me that you and I should be together. I like you, Jo. Our times together are great but make me achingly ache for more. I know things are complicated but our destiny can't be denied. It should be me and you, Jo. Not you and Dick. There. I said it. Whew!

JO

I think we should go.

EDDIE

Don't you like me, Jo?

JO

It's not that. You're so nice and good to me. I don't know what to do sometimes.

EDDIE

Then what is it?

JO

I don't know. Everything is so... hurried up.

EDDIE

Too quickly quick?

JO

Yes! Quickly quick.

EDDIE

I see.

JO

That's how things started with Dick. And now...

EDDIE

Yes, I see. I understand.

JO

Do you?

EDDIE

Yes. We shall slow this horse down from a gallop to a meander. We shall leave Stouffer's at once and I will take you anywhere you want to go. The grocery store, home, church, anywhere. I am your serving servant.

JO

I am kind of hungry.

EDDIE

What about your pork chop?

JO

It's too rich.

EDDIE

Of course.

JO

Angelo's Pizza?

EDDIE

Angelo's Pizza?

JO

I love their pizza.

EDDIE

Well, then. So do I!

*Lighting change. Angelo's Pizza shop.
"Moon River" is heard. Nat enters
wearing an apron, pizza hat and holding
a pizza paddle. He'll sing throughout,
humming most of the way, The Numbers
joining in.*

NAT

"Moon River, wider than a mile, that Huckleberry smile..."

JO
Angelo's Pizza.

EDDIE
Angelo's Pizzeria.

JO
Where the jukebox played "Moon River."

EDDIE
Where I wiped your chin with my napkin.

JO
They have the best pizza!

EDDIE
And I asked you to dance!

JO
And you took my hand.

EDDIE
And I led you to floor.

JO
Right next to the RC Cola cooler.

EDDIE
Whose light shone on your face and made you an angel.

JO
You twirled and swirled me.

EDDIE
And I held you tight to me.

JO
I never wanted to leave Angelo's Pizzeria.

EDDIE
Where the angels dance.

JO
My head spun in a trance.

EDDIE
Your eyes, the beauty of years ago.

JO
Was it the time or circumstance?

EDDIE
Of love forgotten and hardly known.

JO
Do I take the chance?

EDDIE
So my desire born that night.

JO
And stop the dance?

EDDIE
Dancing by the RC Cola Light

JO
And dare romance?

EDDIE
To warm your winter of love, beauty and snow.

JO
I will go. I will go. I will go!

*Jo and Eddie kiss passionately. The
Numbers whistle and hoot. Dick rises.*

DICK
(to Nat and Wilbur)
Hey, come on now. Do we really need to see this?

JO
I didn't interrupt you.

DICK
(holding a rollerskate)
Jesus Christ, Jo. At least I used a metaphor.

JO
This is My Turn! MY TURN!

NUMBERS
Shhh. Don't Tell. Even Stevens.

DICK
Don't you people have an interstate freeway to run across
somewhere?

(to Nat and Wilbur)
Can we at least have some decency around here?

*Nat and Wilbur produce a large blanket
which reads, "Thy Holy Shroud of St.
Even Stevens", hold it in front of Jo
and Eddie. They Velcro a cardboard
moon to the blanket, remove it, then
Velcro a cardboard sun.*

Eddie and Jo change costume, Eddie into a robe, Jo just getting dressed. The Numbers sing the following to the children's rhyme "Sitting in a Tree"

NUMBERS

Jo and Eddie sitting in a tree. K.I.S.S.I.N.G. Jo's afraid, but gets laid. And now she's Eddie's Destiny.

A rooster crows.

EDDIE

What a beautiful morning! Do you have to leave so soon?

JO

Yes. But I had a wonderful time.

EDDIE

I promise it won't be the last. Will you think about what I said?

JO

Yes.

EDDIE

Destiny, Jo. We deserve to have last night be every night. I don't want to be lonely anymore. And I don't think you do either. It should be me and you, Jo.

He kisses her.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

See you tomorrow?

JO

Okay.

Lighting change. Nat moves to Jo, stands behind her, manipulates her arms and hands during the following. The Numbers hum "Moon River" underneath.

NUMBERS

"Moon River, wider than a mile, that Huckleberry smile..."

NAT

The secret of romance is in the hand. Open to give. Open to receive. No difference. But always open. Otherwise fear locks romance inside. And love disappears into wishful dreams. And waking nightmares. Open. Open.

Nat opens Jo's arms and hands wide.

NAT (CONT'D)

Why didn't you leave and Miami Beach?

Jo slowly closes up.

JO

Too fast. Too much.

DICK

(from behind his paper)

Too afraid.

Jo marches to Dick, pushes away paper, slaps him across the face. She returns to her seat, measuring flour. Dick, stunned, but not a little expecting it, gathers his paper, folds it neatly, rights himself, stands and addresses the whole contingent.

DICK (CONT'D)

Okay folks. There you have it. We've done our parts. Thank you, Nat King Cole. Thank you Wilbur Wright. Man of the Hour, wherever he is. You've seen the marriage, the affairs, the circumstances, the rules. Now you know why we didn't leave and we didn't fall in love.

NUMBERS

We didn't and we didn't.

DICK

Bingo. She was afraid. I had responsibilities. That's it. That's all it ever was. So, you two can write that on the Barn of Whatever and we can get out of here. Show's over. Thank you for coming. The end.

(to Jo)

Okay, Jo, come on. Let's get the hell out of here.

JO

Where are we going?

DICK

I don't know, but I have had enough of this.

NUMBERS

Yellow Door, Miami Beach, Yellow Door, Miami Beach!

DICK

NO! You've seen those a thousand times already!

NUMBERS

(to Row, Row, Your Boat,
repeatedly)

(MORE)

Jo and Dick are dead, Jo and Dick are dead. Dead, dead,
dead, dead, Jo and Dick are dead.

*Dick argues with The Numbers,
eventually Jo collapses, Dick comes to
her aid, blaming The Numbers.*

DICK

(ad libbing)

Stop, we're done, shut up, now look what you people did, etc.

*Nat and Wilbur will stop The Numbers.
A quick silence.*

NAT & WILBUR

Okay boys! Hit it!

*Lighting change. A Vaudeville stage.
A "bouncy C" is heard. Nat and Wilbur
wear Vaudeville hats and canes, and
sing to the tune of the "Bugs Bunny"
cartoon theme, "Overture".*

NAT & WILBUR (CONT'D)

Dick and Jo. Jo and Dick. They don't know. They got zip.
But they'll have to see. Or into the Mist... Of In-fi-
nite... Sad-ness.... They'll be!

The "bouncy C" underscores quietly.

NAT

And now, ladies and gentlemen...

WILBUR

We present...

NAT

Eight months of hands closing...

WILBUR

And floating kites...

NAT & WILBUR

Hit it!

NUMBERS

(to the tune of "Overture")

Da, da, da. Da, da, da. Da, da, da, etc..

*Lucille and Eddie enter. Nat and Wilbur
position Jo and Dick respectively on
opposite ends of the stage. Wilbur
hands Dick a pearl necklace, Nat hands
Eddie orange pops.*

NUMBERS (CONT'D)

(singing last line of
"Overture")

The Brookpark Motor Inn!

*Lights up on Dick and Lucille. They
are rubbing two rollerskates together.
He gives her the necklace.*

LUCILLE

Where did you get the money for this?

DICK

I'm on a business trip. I have expenses.

LUCILLE

They're Germans, you know.

DICK

They lost the war. We're in charge of the sauerkraut now.

Lights up on Jo and Eddie.

NUMBERS

I-19, I-19. BINGO!

JO

Darn it! These cards are jinxed!

EDDIE

I can buy you that new oven, Jo. The self-cleaning one.

JO

No. It has to be my money. Only my money that's mine.

NUMBERS

Next game. X-Out.

JO

X-out! My favorite!

Lights up on Dick and Lucille.

NUMBERS

Brookpark Skateland!

DICK

Oslo, Norway, huh? Snows a lot.

LUCILLE

It's a very modern city. Just my style.

DICK

Well, I guess I can learn to like snow. Good exercise.

LUCILLE

The apartments are very small.

DICK

I'll just bring a toothbrush.

Lights up on Jo and Eddie.

NUMBERS

Angelo's Pizzeria!

EDDIE

They call them "condominiums."

JO

And it's right on the beach?

EDDIE

Not just any beach. Miami Beach. I'm sick of the snow.

JO

I'd love to go to Miami Beach one day.

EDDIE

Yes. I know.

Lights up on Dick and Lucille.

NUMBERS

Brookpark International House of Pancakes!

DICK

You're not gonna eat your pancakes?

LUCILLE

My stomach's a bit upset.

Lights up on Jo and Eddie.

NUMBERS

The laundrymat!

JO

Seventh, tenth and eleventh grade, next September. Why?

EDDIE

Miami has great high schools for kids! No snow days either!

Lights up on all. The Numbers begin screeching cat cries.

JO

What?

EDDIE

I want to be a father to your kids, Jo.

DICK

What?

LUCILLE

I think I might be pregnant, Dick.

*The cat cries crescendo then die away.*JO

CRAY-MAR!!

DICK

Oh no.

*Lighting change. Eddie and Lucille exit. A funeral dirge is heard. Nat as The Father, carries the shoe box from earlier. Wilbur hands a shovel to Dick. Nat places the shoebox center stage, takes Jo's hand. All stand around the shoebox.*DICK (CONT'D)

(to audience)

Jo found Cray-Mar curled up in our closet behind some shoes. She was over twenty years old. All those cupcakes. Wonder where they are now? I put Cray-Mar in her shoebox that Jo kept all these years and buried her in the backyard next to our oak tree. We had a little ceremony.

*During Nat's song, Jo lays down next to the shoe box.*NAT

(singing to the tune of "Nature Boy")

There was a cat. A very furry, purry cat. Who got knocked up in every way, every day, to birth in May, it seems. The greatest thing. She ever learned. Was just to mate. And be mated, in return.

NUMBERS

A-men.

Wilbur takes the shovel from Dick, hands him the "St. Even Stevens" blanket. He covers Jo.

DICK

(to audience)

She stayed out next to Cray-Mar all night.

(to Jo)

Maybe you should come in now. You could catch pneumonia.

JO

Sister in Placenta.

DICK

(to audience)

She came in the next morning and didn't say a word for 3 days. I felt bad. I didn't know what to do.

Jo returns to her flour.

DICK (CONT'D)

NUMBERS

No last, no first. No death, no birth.

DICK

(to Jo)

One of the neighbor's cats had some cupcakes a couple of weeks ago. They got a calico. What do you say?

(to audience)

Then she spoke her first words since that day.

JO

Would I have to watch it die?

NUMBERS

No life, no love.

DICK

(to audience, somewhat aside)

One night, soon after, I came home from work late and saw that it was all dug up. Parts of the shoe box were, you know.... One of the neighbor's dogs must have... I never knew if she knew.

NUMBERS

Shhhh. Don't tell.

Jo breaks down.

DICK

I filled up the hole. But I guess there some things you can't fill up again. Some things don't come back.

Lighting change. Wilbur enters ringing a large dinner bell.

NUMBERS
SUPPER TIME!

NAT
Our specials tonight....

WILBUR
Sauerkraut.

He hands Dick a letter.

NAT
And onions.

He hands Jo a letter.

NUMBERS
Come and get it!!

Dick reads his letter, shaking his head in disgust and fluster. Wilbur, as Herr Director, sits at a desk.

DICK
Son of a Bitch! "Please report to the Midwest Operations Manager, Herr Director, upon receipt of this letter."

NUMBERS
The Germans! Sprechen ze fucked in de assen!

DICK
Herr Director? You wanted to...

WILBUR
Shut ze door. Sit.

DICK sits.

DICK
So...

WILBUR
SILENCE! You've read ze letter?

DICK
Let me just explain, I...

WILBUR
SILENCE!

NUMBERS
Sprechen ze noosen tighten around ze necken!

WILBUR

Vee at Lufthansa are fond of thinking of our employees az children. And when children misbehave, they must be severely punished. Surely, with zo many prodigy of your own, you understand the necessity of such action.

DICK

Oh, boy do I. Why just last week...

WILBUR

SILENCE! Vee discipline children to become better children. Better children, better people. Better people, happy people. Happy people, good verkers. Good verkers, strong Fatherland. Is this not correct, mein herr?

DICK

Yes.

NUMBERS

Sprechen ze goose steppen on mein face-en!

WILBUR

But you, mein herr, have been a very, very bad verker, haven't you. A very bad child of ze Fatherland.

Wilbur opens a large file of papers.

DICK

(to audience)

So I squeezed off a little extra sauerkraut on a couple of "business" trips with Lucille. A couple of drinks, some perfume, a king size bed. Well, she had to sleep somewhere!

(to director)

I can explain.

NUMBERS

SILENCE!

WILBUR

Ze Brookpark Motor Inn. Ze Parma Stardust Dancing Parlor. Ze Brookpark Motor Inn. Ze Hoffbrau Haus. Ze Brookpark Motor Inn. Madame DuPres Beauty Salon, Ze Brookpark Motor Inn. Ze Brookpark Motor Inn! ZE BROOKPARK MOTOR INN!

DICK

It's not what it looks like.

WILBUR

You have stolen from ze Fatherland! For a voooman!

Wilbur barks like a wild dog into Dick's face. The Numbers join in until Wilbur cuts them off.

WILBUR (CONT'D)

I vonder what your wife will say when she learns of your thievery and indiscretions.

NUMBERS

Sprechen ze don't sticken ze dicken in ze wicken!

DICK

Please don't tell her. I'll pay back everything. Just don't tell Jo.

WILBUR

(feigned politeness)

Of course not. Vee at Lufthansa vould never do such a thing.

Wilbur suddenly grabs Dicks's hands, pulls and counts his fingers in German. The Numbers join in

WILBUR & NUMBERS

Ein, zwei, drei, vier, fünf, sechs, sieben, acht, neun!

The Numbers bark underneath the following.

WILBUR

OBLIGATIONS! It is because of your OBLIGATIONS vee are not pulling off your fingernails vith rusty pliers, chopping your fingers off vith a cleaver, stuffing zem into your pockets, throwing you out into ze street to be devoured slowly by rabid and starving German shepherds. Verstehen Sie?

DICK

Yes sir, I understand.

NUMBERS

Sprechen ze poken ze eye out vith ze red hot poker!

Wilbur hands Dick a paper and pen, forces him to the ground to sign the paper.

WILBUR

You vill cease all relations vith the voooman at vonce. Twenty percent pay reduction until you have repaid what you have stolen from ze Fatherland.

DICK

Twenty percent?

WILBUR

SILENCE! Would you prefer ALL of your money, your job and your life! Mein Herr!

DICK

Twenty percent is fine.

NUMBERS

Sign ze paper!

Dick signs the paper. Wilbur takes it from him.

WILBUR

I hope you enjoy the pleasure of informing your wife vhy you are bring home less "sauerkraut". I know I vill.

DICK

I'm sorry about this. I won't happen again...

WILBUR

LEAVE NOW!

Lights out on Wilbur. The Numbers bark a little, drawing Dick's attention. He speaks to them.

DICK

(at first laughing, then to
Numbers, Audience, Jo)

Well, well, well, well, well. Did you all like that? Did everybody have fun watching that Hitler cocksucking asshole shove a red hot swastika up my ass! WELL?!

The Numbers quiet down.

DICK (CONT'D)

(defiant, sincere)

I was in love! Couldn't I be in love? They had enough sauerkraut! They were buying jumbo jets like hot dogs at an Indians game. So what I help myself to the pile. I didn't hurt anybody! All I wanted was a one lousy little bowl of sauerkraut so I could, for once in my life, live like a man. It's because of YOU PEOPLE! You people get everything you want and I get kicked in the head by Goering and Goebbels every Goddamn day! Doesn't everybody get a bowl of sauerkraut? Doesn't everybody get to see the smile on her face when I give her new ear rings? Or smell the new perfume on her neck? Or touch the curve of her back while she sleeps? Kiss the gloss of her lips? I was in love! Don't I deserve that? Don't I!?

NUMBERS

Sprechen ze missin ze point-en.

DICK

Don't you people have a life to ruin somewhere.

(to audience)

That night I dreamed I was flying in between clouds of sauerkraut. On one of them, Lucille was rollerskating.

Dick returns to his seat. Lighting change. Church organ is heard. Nat as The Father enters, sits on a church throne. Jo approaches him.

NAT

Enter, my child.

Jo sits.

JO

Thank you, Father, for seeing me on such short notice but I didn't know what else to do.

NAT

Your troubles, my child.

JO

As I explained on the phone, we're in trouble. It's Dick. They almost fired him for stealing money. We were almost OUT ON THE STREET WITH NOTHING because he couldn't KEEP IT IN HIS PANTS!!

NAT

Thou shalt not dangle thy wangle will nilly.

JO

Stealing money to pay for perfume and earrings and rollerskates, for HER! GALAVANTING with HER for God knows HOW LONG...

NAT

He does, my child. He does.

JO

What?

NAT

What good if a man profit the sauerkraut and lose his wings?

JO

We ALMOST LOST EVERYTHING! If he doesn't work... I don't know what to do! Where would I go? How would I eat? I don't want to sleep in a tent under the freeway!

NUMBERS

A miraculous miracle!

JO
Maybe with Eddie, I could...

*Eddie appears on stage, wearing a apron
and vacuuming.*

EDDIE
Just finished the living room, Jo. On to the rugs!

JO
But that's a sin! I made a vow. I would go to Hell and burn
for all eternity! Oh, Father, I don't know what to do.

NAT
Though shalt not commit the vacuuming of they neighbor's
three-ply carpet.

Jo falls to her knees.

JO
Please, Father. I beseech you. I need your blessing to
divorce Dick. If I have your blessing, then I know I won't
go Hell and burn for all eternity. I will go to extra mass,
confession everyday, wear the Rosary, bathe in Holy Water...
Please, Father. Help me.

NAT & NUMBERS
So shall it be written. So shall it be done.

Nat hands Jo a letter.

JO
Onion skin paper! It's Holy.

NUMBERS
Blessed by the Holy Hand of Saint Even Stevens.

JO & NAT
(reading)
Dear Jo. Sounds like a plan. You're good to go. Love and
kisses, The Father.

NUMBERS
Free at last! Free at last!

JO
(to the Numbers)
I'm free?

NAT
All are worthy in the eyes of the worthy.

Nat exits.

JO

But what do I do? Where do I go?

EDDIE

How about some strawberrily, strawberry pancakes, Jo?

JO

(to Numbers, Dick and audience)

I don't know any other life than this. I was going to be a Switchboard Station Supervisor in charge of four girls. I was young. I was smart. I rode a motorcycle. I was going to live in New York City. I wanted to have my own house with my own yard and grow tomatoes and beets and plant azaleas. I wanted love. I wanted my own bed, my own sheets and pillow and blankets and they would smell like me and felt like me and loved the heat of my body because they held on to it all night long. I wanted one morning, one sunrise just for me, instead of everybody else. Doesn't everybody get their own sunrise? Didn't I deserve that?

(toward Eddie)

But I'm old now. Nine lives have come out of my body and have taken parts of me with them. Without you (Numbers), or you (Dick), who am I?

Eddie exits.

JO (CONT'D)

(to all)

I'm tired now. I don't have the strength to find myself anymore.

Jo puts the letter into her apron pocket, returns to her flour.

NUMBERS

Shhhh. Don't tell.

Lighting change. Falling snow.

The Numbers hum "Christmas Time is Here." Nat and Wilbur take center stage address the audience. They will expand a large, paper cut-out snowflake on each of their lines.

NAT

The Moment of Truth.

WILBUR

The Moment of Decision.

NAT

One Snowflake.

WILBUR

Among Millions.

NUMBERS

Miami Beach. Don't let the ice melt, Jo.

NAT

She is in the kitchen baking Christmas cookies a few days before Christmas. The table is dusted with flour and sugar and salt. Cracked egg shells clutter in a bowl that props up her worn Betty Crocker cookbook, crusted and coated with the ingredients of recipes over the decades. The kitchen is hot and she is tired. The unborn cookies demand fruition and will not let her off the hook until they are made, admired and devoured. This will not be disobeyed. It is her sacred duty. It has always been. This is just what she does.

Eddie enters, next to Jo. Small background noise of TV mingles with the hummed "Christmas Time".

EDDIE

So, he's wearing this Santa suit, beard coming off, jumps up on the bar, starts swinging this big leather strap of sleigh bells, and goes...

(singing)

"JINGLE BELLS, JINGLE BELLS, JINGLE ALL THE WAY! DRINKING BEER ALL NIGHT LONG IN A BEAT UP CHEVROLET! HEY! Then Martha yells out, "hey Santa, I wanna sit on your lap!"

JO

His wife was there?

EDDIE

Yeah! So she hops up there, pulls out this mistletoe thing and they start doing this weird shimmy.

EDDIE shimmies

JO

On the bar?

EDDIE

On the BAR! Then Van goes completely crazy and goes, "Hey girlie girl, have you been nice or "naauughty", like that, "naauughty!" And so we're all, Holy Tomatoes! And then Martha leaps on top of him, they fall down on the bar, drinks flying everywhere, and then they start going at it right there. And we're all watching this going, Holy Tomatoes! It was incredibly incredible. Like one of those Blue Movies.

JO

Those people are crazy.

EDDIE

I don't know about that. Married twenty-three years and still acting like they just met. Sounds good to me?

EDDIE makes a move on JO, nothing very wicked, perhaps kissing her neck.

JO

Hey, stop it.

EDDIE

Still be wildly wild...

JO

Not in my kitchen.

EDDIE

Excitingly exciting...

JO

They're right in the other room.

EDDIE

Fearlessly fearless....

Loud, child-like arguing from the Numbers, drawing Jo's attention.

NUMBERS

"___"

JO

(to the numbers)

I don't care who's turn it is. If you can't watch it together, you both won't watch it at all.

NUMBERS

"___"

Eddie helps himself to some dough.

JO

Because I said, that's why.

(to Eddie)

I swear there's always two shows going on in this house. One on the TV and the one in front of it. Hey!

EDDIE

Why do you make so many cookies?

JO

Because that's what I do.

NUMBERS

"___"

*Eddie sneaks in and works some dough.*JO

(to Numbers)

If I told you once I told you a million times, do not fart on the TV. You could start a fire!

NUMBERS

"___"

JO

The TV is going off if I hear another word. Another word!
(to Eddie)

Hey!

EDDIE

No, no. I made you a cookie. Do you know what it is? Guess. If you guess right, you win a prize.

JO

I don't know. A dinosaur?

EDDIE

It's a beach umbrella! See! A beach umbrella.

JO

Oh. I see.

EDDIE

It goes with your Christmas present.

EDDIE takes out a small wrapped box from his overcoat pocket.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Merry Christmas.

JO

For me? You shouldn't have got me a present.

EDDIE

Why not? You've been a good girl, you're marvelously marvelous and you deserve presents at Christmas. Open it.

JO

I shouldn't. Maybe later.

EDDIE

No later, now. It's Christmas.

JO
I always open my gifts last. Maybe next week.

EDDIE
NO! I am Santa Claus and the rule is that you open your gift NOW.

(seductively)
You don't want to be a naaughty little girl now, do you?

JO opens the gift. A necklace and an envelope

JO
Oh my God. Eddie. It's beautiful.

EDDIE
It's Sapphire. Your birthstone.

Eddie begins to put it on, Jo protests slightly.

JO
I can't wear it now. I'm in the middle of making my cookies.

EDDIE
And I'm making you beautifully beautiful. There. Wow.

JO
It's very beautiful. Why did you do this.

EDDIE
Because it's just what I do.

JO
I don't know what to say.

EDDIE
Wait, open the other one.

JO
What other one?

NUMBERS
"___"

JO
Okay, THAT'S IT! One more word out of either of you and off you go to bed, the BOTH OF YOU. You hear me!?

NUMBER
"___"

One word! JO

Eddie offers the envelope.

JO (CONT'D)
Eddie. I really need to finish....

EDDIE
You must. This is your real Christmas present.

JO opens the envelope. An airplane ticket.

JO
An airplane ticket? Miami Beach? This is in my name.

EDDIE
I bought that condominium. Closed the deal just last week. It's all mine and I want it to be yours, too.

JO
Eddie, I don't know...

EDDIE
I know, I know. All I want now is for you to come down next weekend and spend New Year's Eve with me. Just two nights.

JO
This is too much, I...

EDDIE
Just two nights. And if it isn't right, then it's not meant to be. But we'll never find out unless we get away from here. Just two nights. I want to be with you, Jo. I want what Van and Martha have. I want us on the bar, not ashamed. But I can't wait forever. I can't. Say yes, Jo. Say yes.

JO
I'm not allowed.

NUMBERS
Shhh.

EDDIE
That Letter?!

NUMBERS
Don't tell.

EDDIE

They do not have the right to say you can't get a divorce. They don't know what you've gone through, what you put up with all these years. They don't know how much I love you. How dare they tell you, you can't be in love.

JO

But it's from the Church on onion skin paper.

EDDIE

Where is this letter? Let me see it. I'll show you what it really says.

JO

No. No one is allowed ever to see it.

NUMBERS

SHHHH.

EDDIE

What? That's ridiculous! Let me see it!

NUMBERS

DON'T TELL!

JO

I'm telling you that I'm NOT ALLOWED!

NUMBERS

SHHHHHH!!! DON'T TELL!!

*Jo crosses to Numbers stomps her feet.
Immediate silence.*

JO

GO TO YOUR ROOM NOW! DON'T you DARE give me that look!

Jo returns to her flour and Eddie who gets coat, prepares to leave.

EDDIE

On New Years Eve at at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, I'll be on my deck waiting for you. I'll have a whiskey high ball there for you, just the way you like it. I will wait for you until the ice melts. If it does, then okay. I will have your answer. And I will never see you again.

NUMBERS

(quietly)
Shhh. Don't tell.

JO

It's onion skin paper.

Eddie kisses her.

EDDIE

It's supposed to be me and you, Jo. Don't let the ice melt.

Eddie crosses, but doesn't exit.

NUMBERS

Don't let the ice melt.

JO

(to the Numbers)

I wasn't ALLOWED!

Nat stands next to Eddie, addresses the audience.

NAT

Eddie moved permanently to Miami Beach shortly thereafter. On a chartered fishing excursion, he met a woman and a serious relationship ensued with overtones of marriage proffered between both parties. Unfortunately for Eddie, the woman's husband had several objectionable objections and soon after his release from the hospital, Eddie came to accept his True Destiny as Perpetual Bachelor. He was never a husband. He was never a father. But he did become Math Teacher of the Year at Dade County Junior High School fourteen times during his distinguish twenty-five year teaching career.

Jo returns to her flour.

Lighting change. A train platform. Lucille enters, dressed warmly stands downstage. Dick, dressed warmly, joins her. Wilbur, toying with a square. Distant sounds of trains.

NUMBERS

Yellow Door. You have to go home, Dick.

WILBUR

He is on a Rapid Transit train platform a few days before Christmas. He is waiting with her to catch a train home before leaving for Norway. They can hear the sounds of far-away trains clatter the tracks. A light snow is falling. It will be a cold, but snowless Christmas this year. He admires the flakes, how they appear on fire when falling underneath the street lamps. But this is only a temporary distraction.

DICK

Does it look like this in Norway?

LUCILLE

Like what?

DICK

Like this. If we look straight up and not look at anything else, we could be in Norway right now. Waiting for the train.

LUCILLE

You should go home.

DICK

Nah. I'm not going to go home. I am going to stay here and be in Norway. It's about the size of New Mexico, you know?

LUCILLE

You can't come with me.

DICK

(sticks his tongue out)

Shhh. We're in Norway. We have to wear warm sweaters all the time. We have a fireplace. I just finished shoveling. I drink hot chocolate and pretend to read the newspaper that's all in Danish. You're eating vegetable soup and looking at maps for our next adventure. The snow piles up just below the windows. I will need to go out and shovel again. The snow is whiter and colder than any snow in the world. We play records before we go to bed. The wind mixes with the music as we fall asleep. I like Norway.

LUCILLE

You can't come.

DICK

We'll see about that.

LUCILLE

You belong here.

DICK

I don't belong here. Haven't you been listening to me?

LUCILLE

Are you listening to me. Go home. It's almost Christmas.

Dick reaches into his pocket and pulls out the Christmas Bonus in an envelope. He admires the flip of so many twenties.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)

What are you doing? Someone will see you. Put that away.

He licks the envelope shut and takes out a pen.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)

You need to go home, Dick. You don't need to wait here.

DICK

"To: You. From: Santa"

He places it on a nearby bench.

DICK (CONT'D)

Did you know that the sun never sets in Norway?

LUCILLE

What are you doing?

Lucille tries to retrieve envelope, Dick blocks her.

DICK

It has 231 fjords.

LUCILLE

Get out of my way.

DICK

No. If I can't have Norway, then nobody can have anything else anymore. It's only fair.

LUCILLE

You don't know what you're saying.

DICK

Yes I do. Leave it there.

LUCILLE

Whatever is you think you're doing you can't do it and I won't let you.

Lucille gets, by Dick, grabs the envelope, attempts to give back to Dick.

DICK

I don't want it. You take it for your kid. It will help out, believe me.

LUCILLE

Are you out of your mind?

DICK

Yes and it's about Goddamn time. I don't want it!

LUCILLE

This doesn't belong to me or you. It belongs to your kids and too bad if you don't like that. Now take it and go home.

DICK

GODDAMN IT! Don't you think I know THAT! I know WHO it belongs to, for crissake. Can't you see that's the GODDAMN PROBLEM!

Lucille throws the money at his feet and starts to leave.

LUCILLE

Fine. Merry Christmas.

DICK

Wait, wait. Wait. I'm sorry, okay? I didn't mean it. I'm just sad you're leaving, that's all. Don't go right yet. I mean, the Rapid's almost here. Please.

Dick puts the money back in his pocket.

DICK (CONT'D)

I'm going to take it home, alright?

Lucille rejoins him, things calm down.

DICK (CONT'D)

I just wanted to see what it felt like to not be the paper boy for once.

LUCILLE

What?

DICK

A paper boy delivering the newspaper.

(resigned)

Every moment, every thought, is about the newspaper. Where is it, when is IT coming in, who has IT now, who wants some of IT, who needs some of IT? But no newspaper for me. I never get to read my newspaper.

Lucille turns to go.

LUCILLE

Good night.

DICK

No, no wait. I'm sorry.

LUCILLE

I told you I don't like that Sad Sack stuff, Dick. Cry in your beer with someone else. Not me.

DICK

I know, I know. It's just... It's Christmas. You know how things get. Makes you think of stuff. No more Sad Sack. I promise.

They wait for the train.

LUCILLE

I don't mean to be short. Things work out better when they're cut and dry. I know it's hard, but it's better for everybody all the way around.

DICK

Yeah. I suppose.

LUCILLE

Thanks for waiting with me.

DICK

Wouldn't miss it.

(beat)

Tell me about your apartment in Oslo.

LUCILLE

My apartment? Why?

DICK

I don't know. It's Christmas. Think of it as one last Christmas present. What's it look like?

LUCILLE

It's pretty small.

DICK

Yeah?

LUCILLE

They all are over there. Not like here.

DICK

What color are the walls? Purple? Blue? I know you love those modern colors.

LUCILLE

The living room is orange. The kitchen is blue. I painted it that way because it's the only way to tell where one starts and the other ends. The whole place is really only one big room.

DICK

No kidding. Wow. Imagine that.

Sound of a train whistle. They both look down the line.

DICK (CONT'D)

What does your front door look like?

LUCILLE

Don't do this.

DICK

What does it look like?

LUCILLE

It's an ordinary door.

DICK

What color is it?

LUCILLE

Yellow.

Sound of a train whistle. A bright spotlight grows.

DICK

If I were in Oslo and all the hotels and motels were full up and the train stations were closed and the restaurants were closed and the hospitals decided to take the night off because people are too friendly in Norway to get sick and I was there and I came to your apartment to see your orange living room and your blue kitchen and I had some instant hot chocolate in my pocket and some big band records and the day's Danish newspaper under my arm and a can a vegetable soup in my other pocket and I knocked on your yellow door... would you let me in?

The train has arrived. Lucille kisses him, boards the train. Lucille crosses but does not exit.

NUMBERS

Yellow Door. You have to go home, Dick.

DICK

(resigned)

Here's your paper.

Dick returns to his newspapers. Wilbur stands next to Lucille.

WILBUR

Lucy moved to Oslo, Norway after her forced retirement from Lufthansa where she gave birth to a daughter, Emily.

(MORE)

Dick was not the father. Emily was the result of a one-night layover in San Francisco with a United Co-Pilot - who was married. Lucille raised Emily on her own, first in Oslo, then Paris, Barcelona, and other cities. Emily is fluent in six languages and now owns and manages a chain of authentic Belgium waffle kiosks throughout Europe, headquartered in Brugge, Belgium. All of the kiosks are painted yellow.

Lighting change. Mist begins to fill the stage. The Numbers drone ominously. Nat and Wilbur begin to put on the cloaks as they wore in the Infinite Sadness. They will retrieve identical cloaks, Nat will begin to place it on Jo.

JO

What is this?

DICK

I don't know.

JO

What's happening, Dick?

DICK

I don't know.

Dick approaches Wilbur as Jo rises and wanders.

DICK (CONT'D)

Hey. What's going on? Is this the trail? Are we going to leave? We answered the question, right?

JO

Dick! I can't see! Dick!

DICK

What do you mean you can't see? Hey, Buddy! What the hell are you doing!

Nat points at Dick, pushes him back.

JO

I can't see! I'm blind! Oh my GOD! I'M BLIND!

DICK

What the Hell! Jo! Jo! Jesus Christ.

(to Wilbur)

Hey! What the hell is going on here!

JO

Help me!

DICK

Just hang on, Jo.

JO

I don't want to burn in Hell! Please, help! Please!

Jo, now on the ground, disappears under the cloak. Nat stands over her. Wilbur begins to remove each Number. With each removal, the Number will say:

NUMBER

Thank you, Goodbye.

Dick pleads with Wilbur up until the last Number is reached.

DICK

Hey! Listen to me. What's going on? She can't see. Is this the Infinite Sadness? Are we being sent to the Infinite Sadness? HEY! LISTEN TO ME! STOP. STOP! I promised her I wouldn't let this happen. GODDAMN IT. I ANSWERED THE QUESTION! STOP! PLEASE STOP!!!

Wilbur at the last Number, claps his hands. All droning and activity stop.

NUMBER

Why didn't you leave everything behind and fall in love?

WILBUR

What is your answer?

DICK

(desperate)

I told you. I had responsibilities. I had obligations. I couldn't leave. I didn't and I didn't! WHAT MORE DO YOU WANT?!

WILBUR

(after a pause)

Okay. Good.

Wilbur puts away the numbers and Dick's cloak.

DICK

Good? That's it? Is that the answer? Hey?

Wilbur retrieves an airline pilot's cap and wings lapel pin.

Is it?
WILBUR

Yeah. I told you. I've been telling you.
DICK

Have you?
WILBUR

Yes. What do you think all that was about?
DICK

Your responsibilities?
WILBUR

Yes, Goddamn it!
DICK

Okay. Good.
WILBUR

Wilbur gives Dick the cap, begins to pin the wings lapel pin, after which he'll get his bicycle.

What's this?
DICK

Your tickets. You need this to get on the Trail of Love and Eventuality, just past the Big Red Barn of That's All She Wrote on the Edge Town Where Everybody Loves Somebody Sometime.
WILBUR

I don't get it.
DICK

You don't?
WILBUR

Is it over?
DICK

Wilbur hops on his bike, taps the handlebars for Dick to hop on.

Welcome aboard. You are expected. You have many friends waiting to greet you at the gate.
WILBUR

Really? Well, ain't that a full set of socket wrenches. That was easy. Okay, just a second, let me get Jo.
DICK
(MORE)

(shaking Jo)

Jo. Hey, Jo. Come on, we can go now. It's all over. I got my wings and my cap. Come on, wake up. Rise and shine. Jo. Jo. Jo!

(to Wilbur and Nat)

What's the matter with her?

WILBUR

Oh no, not her. Too late for her. But not for you. Only you. Hurry, we must depart.

DICK

What do you mean it's too late for her?

NAT

She does not know the answer. Only you. Climb aboard.

NUMBER

Shhhh. Don't tell. I didn't and I didn't.

DICK

Wait just a minute.

WILBUR

No more waiting. It's all over the news.

NAT

That's what you wanted. Isn't it?

DICK

But what about her?

WILBUR

Sorry. No. You must depart.

DICK

I can't leave her here.

WILBUR

Yes you can. You always could.

NAT

And yet you continue to stay. Then and now.

WILBUR

Why?

NUMBER

Why didn't you leave everything behind and fall in love?

DICK

I told you.

WILBUR

Then fine. Hop on. Final boarding call.

DICK

Wait a minute. Please. Wait. I can't. I can't.

Dick takes off his pilot's cap.

WILBUR

Now you have truly answered the question of the lesson of your living.

NAT

This is what you have known all this time.

DICK

Yes.

WILBUR

And so you have waited all this time for her to know as well.

DICK

Yes.

NAT

But each of us must arrive at our destination alone.

DICK

Yes.

WILBUR

And this is the truth in your heart.

DICK

Yes.

NAT

She is the hole you can't fill back up.

DICK

Yes.

WILBUR

Yet you still try.

DICK

Yes.

NAT

The secret of love...

WILBUR

The secret of love...

The secret of love... NUMBER

Is in the giving. DICK

Dick hands Wilbur the pilot's cap.

If you remove your wings, you will return to the waiting. WILBUR

You will miss your flight. NAT

The tickets are non-refundable. WILBUR

There are no other scheduled departure times available. NAT

Dick removes his wings and hands them to Wilbur.

The mist returns. Nat removes the last Number.

Thank you, Goodbye. NUMBER

Wilbur places the cloak on Dick. Nat gathers the suitcases, props and exits. Wilbur mounts his bicycle.

Farewell, my friend. WILBUR Happy flying.

Wilbur rides off, exits. Dick approaches Jo. Shakes her.

Jo. Hey, Jo. DICK

Jo appears from out of her cloak.

Hey, Jo. Whaddya know? DICK (CONT'D)

Hi, Dick. I can see you. JO

I can see you. DICK

JO
Boy that was pretty close, wasn't it?

DICK
Yes.

JO
I was pretty scared there for awhile. Glad that's over.

Dick helps her up and they return to their seats.

JO (CONT'D)
Thank you. This is so much better. Whew.

Jo puts away her flour, Dick stacks his paper. They sit for a bit.

JO (CONT'D)
Kinda quiet around here. Where are we?

DICK
Somewhere, I guess.

JO
Well, wherever it is, it feels nice. Warm. I like this robe. It feels like a quilt. You know, I don't think I have ever felt so comfortable in all my life.

DICK
Ain't that something.

JO
Yeah. That is something. What do we do now?

DICK
Why don't we take a walk. Look around a bit. See what seeing there is to see.

JO
That sounds nice.

They rise. Dick reaches to take her hand.

JO (CONT'D)
Oh, you don't have to hold my hand.

Dick holds her hand.

DICK
I never do anything I have to. Ready?

They begin to walk. Dick puts his other hand in a cloak pocket, pulls out a snowflake.

JO

Oh! What a pretty snowflake.

DICK

Here. Why don't you hold on to it for awhile.

Dick gives Jo the snowflake.

JO

Okay.

Dick and Jo exit.

Lights dim.

The cascading opening of "Everybody Loves Somebody" is heard. The Man of the Hour enters holding a drink in one hand, and an electric fan in the other, blowing away the smoke. He moves smoothly, as if dancing. He can hum along with the music. He may pick up a prop or two, the general action is cleaning up. He exits blowing kisses to the audience.

The stage is quiet for a moment.

A Man and a Woman enter. The Woman holds a magazine with THE, THE, THE, THE written over it. The Man carries a carpenter's toolbox. Both carry a couple of Numbers.

They sit. A little confused, like reciting something from memory, a bit unsure, a bit surprised.

WOMAN

Let's begin.

MAN

We have an obligation.

WOMAN

An obligation.

MAN

To tell you a story.

A story of love.

WOMAN

Lights fade.

End of the Play.