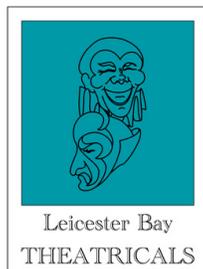


PERUSAL SCRIPT



Salt Lake City

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TANGENTS

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Cast of Characters

(In Order of Appearance)

Dr. Nancy Ellis -- Late 30s. An obsessive and gifted psychologist.

Dr. Fran Holt -- 50s. A stately earth-mother of a woman. Chair of the psychology department.

Beth -- 25ish. Painfully introverted. About 20 pounds overweight.

Trevin -- 25ish and very preppy. She's brilliant, caustic and manipulative.

Kelly -- 10-years-old. A precocious tomboy. (*Played by an adult.*)

Lara -- 4-years-old. A frightened, shy and gentle little girl. (*Played by an adult.*)

Kirsten -- 25ish. She is pure goodness. Kind, wise and understanding.

Time

The late 1980s.

Scene

In and around a college campus.

Locations

The stage is divided into different platformed sections. The Center section is the "office." Left is a desk with a chair behind it. Center is a chair (NOTE: This chair is referred to as the "Hot Seat") facing the desk. The Up Center section is a collection of various sized platforms and benches that extend upstage and "disappear" into the CYC. (NOTE: This section is referred to as the "unit".) The Right Section is a platform that "transforms" into a podium, a patio, a loving room, and a hospital room. The Apron is used as hallways, a street and another hospital room.

ACT ONE -- Scene 1 -- *A classroom, then Holt's office*

ACT ONE -- Scene 2 -- *Nancy's office*

ACT ONE -- Scene 3 -- *Fran's back patio.*

ACT ONE -- Scene 4 -- *Sandy's "home."*

ACT ONE -- Scene 5 -- *Nancy's Living Room*

ACT TWO -- Scene 1 -- *A hospital room and Nancy's office.*

ACT TWO -- Scene 2 -- *Nancy's office.*

ACT TWO -- Scene 3 -- *The lecture hall and two hospital rooms.*

ACT TWO -- Scene 4 -- *Nancy's office*

NOTES FOR THE PERFORMANCE:

- Unless otherwise noted, actors never leave the stage.
- In addition, whenever the term "Flashback" is used, side lights will rise, quickly.
- "Restore" refers to the lights then, returning to their previous level.
- A tape recorder is used, it could be changed to a more modern piece of equipment if you set the play in the present.
- File folders and other such record keeping could become an iPad or a Tablet, if set in the present.
- All roles should be played by adults. That is how the play is designed. Please do not use children for the 10 and 4 year olds.

ELIZABETH HANSEN -- Ms. Hansen is a Writers Guild Award winner and an EMMY-nominated screenwriter and consultant who has had a varied writing, directing, and acting career, that has taken her from the bright lights of Broadway working with the likes of Tommy Tune and Harold Prince, to the newsrooms of the Los Angeles Times where she had her own "Byline," to the classrooms of Brigham Young University where she taught screenwriting and playwriting from 1994-2000 as well as helped focus their Screenwriting Program.

After graduating with honors from the University of Utah, Ms. Hansen journeyed to Los Angeles to study musical theatre performance at the highly regarded Los Angeles Civic Light Opera Musical Theatre Workshop as well as acting technique with Charles Nelson-Reilly. From Los Angeles she moved to New York where she studied with the famed acting teacher Uta Hagen. Over the next few years she was seen on Broadway in *A Day In Hollywood/A Night In The Ukraine* and *Do Black Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Up*. In her acting career she has starred opposite Milton Berle in *Guys and Dolls*, James Mason in *A Partridge in a Pear Tree*, Carol Channing in *Hello, Dolly!*, and Rudolf Nureyev in *The King and I*, as well as numerous musicals Off-Broadway and in regional theatre.

In the late 80s, Ms. Hansen decided to focus on her writing and was accepted into the prestigious American Film Institute Center for Advanced Film and Television studies, one of the top five film programs in the U.S., where she received an MFA in screenwriting. Since then, she has written for nearly every film and video venue in the business: feature film, short film, television (long and short form), corporate video, documentary, as well as musicals and straight plays for the legitimate theatre.

She has spent numerous years as a script consultant, first with the Pasadena Playhouse, where she reviewed new and established scripts which were under consideration, as well as with Entertainment Business Group, an entertainment consulting company where she worked on "Campaign Breakdowns" and "Comparative Picture Analyses"

Also a film and stage director, she has directed a handful of short films and just completed directing *Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* for Sundance Summer Theatre.

In addition to her Writer's Guild Award and her Emmy nomination, Ms. Hansen was a finalist for the esteemed Humanitas Prize for excellence in children's television programming, a Telly Award for her work with the Foundation for a Better Life and has been awarded two Crystal Awards for excellence in corporate video writing as well as numerous screenwriting competitions.

TANGENTS by Elizabeth Hansen 7F. Several locations in one fluid space. 1980s Costumes or the play could be set in the present. Dr. Nancy Ellis, a gifted professor of clinical psychology, leads us on a journey into the troubled mind of Sandy Garrison, a young brilliant student with Multiple Personality Disorder. In a uniquely theatrical way, the personalities are portrayed by five different actresses, who battle, not only for control of "Sandy," but the doctor as well. Nancy finds herself intrigued with "Sandy's" different "selves:" Beth, quiet, kind-hearted, yet confused; Kirsten, filled with wisdom and compassion; Kelly, a bright and brave tomboy of 10; Lara, the 4-year-old, gentle and trusting, but full of pain and fear; and Trevin, Nancy's nemesis, with a genius intellect and a rapid-fire wit, but who has never experienced a moment of joy. Nancy and "Sandy" parallel each other as they struggle with the demons from their troubled pasts as Nancy finds herself battling "Sandy," the university, and herself, desperately trying to cope with "Sandy's" descent into chaos. Nancy's obsession to find the key that will free her bright protégé from the tangents locked within, forces the doctor to face and reconcile a recent tragic loss. At the same time, "Sandy" battles her own internal confusion as she tries to embrace the fragments of her "selves." At the dramatic conclusion, both Nancy and "Sandy" complete their journeys as they come to an understanding and acceptance of themselves and more importantly, their humanness. ...A footnote. W.H. Auden states, "The image of myself which I try to create in my own mind in order that I may love myself is very different from the image which I try to create in the minds of others in order that they may love me." Perhaps what Auden summarized for us is the poignant struggle we all engage in as our private and public selves contend for control. The possibility of humans splitting the self into several parts or "personalities" is not really the surprise in our development. The truly remarkable surprise accomplished by humans, is that most of us do have only one. These SEVEN women create a tour-de-force powerhouse of an evening in the theatre. VARIETY raved: "*Tangents* is a compelling and provocative psychodrama, pairing a spunky college shrink with a troubled student governed by multiple personalities. Playwright Elizabeth Hansen has devised a clever theatrical twist by creating roles for five actresses in the varied identities of the girl, each investing her side of the character with different mannerisms and speech patterns." Mature themes and language. **Order #3102**

ACT ONE

Scene 1

SETTING: *A classroom, then HOLT's office*

TIME: *The Late 1980s*

AT RISE: *The houselights dim to black, as the Rorschach Test inkblot #1 appears on a large screen hanging Down Center. A WOMAN'S VOICE is heard.*

NANCY'S VOICE: Are there any questions on the material we covered Monday...? Then let's continue. We've briefly discussed the colored and shaded areas of the Rorschach Test.

(The image changes to inkblot #2.)

NANCY: Now I'd like to do a similar overview of the white or negative spaces.

(The image changes to inkblot #3, as a dim pool of light rises on the podium. DOCTOR NANCY ELLIS, a woman in her late thirties, wearing a nondescript skirt and blouse, stands watching the screen.)

The fascinating aspect of this projective test is that even if your client refuses to address the dark areas...

(The image changes to inkblot #4.)

...by doing so he or she is, in fact, revealing their, shall we say, disposition.

(The image changes to inkblot #5 then to #6.)

By attending to the white space, and not addressing the shaded areas, the client is usually showing some sort of oppositionalism, a rebellion or hidden anger. Yeah, those white spaces always pissed me off.

(She looks to her audience, for a response. There's only silence.)

Or...it could be something as simple as the client not wanting to take the test, or not wanting to look like everybody else so they do something different.

(The image changes to inkblot #7 then #8.)

If a client doesn't address the shaded areas and only sees the white space, it could be a denial of depression. If they only see the white space that tells you that they're ignoring the obvious.

(The image changes to inkblot #9.)

They are screening out their depression. They are refusing to address the problem or problems that are causing that emotional response. Any comments...? Continue.

(The image changes to inkblot #10.)

Now, this one is my favorite. So many clues...so many possibilities. So many members that make up the whole.

(The image changes to a close-up of the top of inkblot #10.)

The Eiffel Tower...

(The image changes to another close-up.)

Snowflakes...

(The image changes to a close-up of the white space.)

Gene Autry in chaps...Gene Autry in chaps...It's going to be a long semester.

(The projector turns off and the screen rolls up.)

Any questions so far...? Any at all? Any...at all...I see, well, either I'm more brilliant than I thought or you are. So since you appear to know everything there is to know about the Rorschach we'll have an exam on the first five chapters of the book Friday that will account for one half of your grade. Dismissed.

(She picks up her books and briefcase and crosses to her office as the lights rise. The place is obsessively neat and organized. NANCY settles herself in as DOCTOR FRAN HOLT, a stately earth-mother of a woman in her fifties enters, a folder in hand.)

FRAN: You make my life a living hell.

NANCY: That's what they pay me for.

FRAN: I had fifteen kids lined up outside my office.

NANCY: Good. At least I know they're awake.

FRAN: But one-half their grade? Nancy, it's the first week. You can't—

NANCY: I'm not. I'm not going to grade them. I'm going to scare the shit out of them.

(FRAN shoots her a glance. NANCY relents.)

Oh, all right. Students take all the fun out of teaching.

FRAN: So...still glad to be back?

NANCY: Not right now.

(NANCY pulls out a cigarette and puts it between her lips.)

FRAN: Excuse me?

NANCY: I'm not going to light it. My lips are lonely. Hey, I finally saw Dean Frankl. You'll be interested to know I didn't flip him off.

(FRAN chuckles.)

FRAN: It is good to have you back.

NANCY: Thank you.

FRAN: But I sort of miss your cane. It gave you this regal, matronly quality.

NANCY: Yeah, but I'm not a regal matron yet. You want it?

FRAN: Smart aleck.

NANCY: So, what's on your mind?

FRAN: Why does anything have to be on my mind?

(A beat. NANCY gives FRAN a "FRAN" look.)

O-kay...Besides you...Who's the best shrink in town?

NANCY: Well, finally. Therapy would do wonders for you.

FRAN: Just answer the question, you little brat. Who's the best?

NANCY: Besides me...? Me.

FRAN: Yeah...That's the name I keep coming up with.

NANCY: Why?

FRAN: I need your help. While you were "recuperating" this summer—

NANCY: While I was "resting" this summer...

FRAN: While you were "relaxing" this summer...

NANCY: I like that one best.

FRAN: While you were "relaxing" this summer, the Chair of the English Department brought one of their graduate students to my attention. Do you by any chance remember, Sandy Garrison?

NANCY: No.

FRAN: Sandy "we were on her review board" Garrison? Sandy "Literary Essay Award" Garrison? Sandy "I.Q. of one hundred and eighty" Garrison?

NANCY: Oh...yeah...I do remember. What's wrong?

FRAN: Everything. She nearly flunked summer term. She couldn't even get it together long enough to pay her rent. I met with her, but you know me, if it's not on an M.R. scan, I can't read it.

NANCY: Yeah, you're lousy with a brain that's got a face on it.

FRAN: Her professors are concerned and I'm worried she'll lose her scholarship.

NANCY: You want me to do an evaluation?

FRAN: She's already had one.

NANCY: From whom?

FRAN: Well...As you know, procedure is——

NANCY: You sent her to Frankl?

FRAN: I have to follow procedure.

NANCY: You-sent-her-to-Frankl?

FRAN: I sent her to Frankl.

NANCY: Fran, he's an idiot!

FRAN: I know that.

NANCY: So, what happened?

FRAN: She saw him for the evaluation, then refused to go back. Said he was an idiot.

NANCY: She's perceptive.

FRAN: She also said he was "an arrogant, dimwitted, chauvinistic asshole."

NANCY: She's very perceptive. And what did he say?

FRAN: He said she was schizophrenic.

NANCY: Oh, for crying out loud, Frankl thinks I'm schizophrenic. And what did he base this transcendent diagnosis on? P.M.S.? Did he even bother to give her an MMPI?

(FRAN hands NANCY the folder.)

At least he did something right.

FRAN: But you know I can't interpret those things.

NANCY: Neither can Frankl. What's her background?

FRAN: She's been living off-campus in Woodmoor. She was raised by an aunt, who's also dead. Heaven knows where the parents are. It's all so...fascinating. We'll be sitting there exchanging brownie recipes one minute and the next she's talking about Kierkegaard.

NANCY: Interesting.

FRAN: So, what's it say?

NANCY: She's elevated on 9, 7 and 4.

FRAN: So, what's it say?

NANCY: Well, the "9" means she has extraordinarily high energy, the "7" that she's ritualistically compulsive, almost to the point of superstition, and the "4" means she's very angry and rebellious. Is she oriented in time and space?

FRAN: Yes, from what I've seen. She dresses appropriately, knows the day and date, that sort of thing.

NANCY: Then I doubt she's a schiz.

FRAN: I want to help this girl, Nancy. I've spent time with her and she's a good kid, she really is. She's bright and funny and so gifted. I don't know what it is. She's...a mess, but I don't want to lose her.

NANCY: Oh, come on, would you just ask me!

FRAN: Are you up to it?

NANCY: I feel fine...And I'm bored as hell. I didn't teach the entire summer, I didn't see private clients...I didn't flip the Dean off.

(FRAN pauses.)

It's an evaluation, for crying out loud. I'll meet with her, I'll ask her some questions and I'll tell you what I think. It'll keep me out of your hair.

FRAN: Deal.

(They shake.)

When do you want her?

(FRAN fades back a couple of steps as a light in the unit rises on BETH, a young woman of about twenty-five. She is twenty pounds overweight and is dressed simply. She rises and moves to the office door.)

BETH: Doctor Ellis? It's Sandy Garrison. Doctor Holt sent me.

NANCY: Yes, come in.

(BETH enters.)

Sit down.

(She sits in the hot seat.)

BETH: I don't know why I'm here. Doctor Holt wanted me to come. I promised her I'd come.

NANCY: She says you're having some problems.

BETH: She does?

NANCY: Are you?

BETH: No...no...everything's fine. Ooo, there's a spot on your desk.

NANCY: Where?

BETH: Right there. I'll wipe it off.

NANCY: Here's a Kleenex.

BETH: I got it with my sweater. This sure is a nice office. But your desk is really messy.

NANCY: Messy?

(Her desk is spotless.)

BETH: What kind of books do you read?

NANCY: Mysteries. Doctor Holt says you——

BETH: What do you think of me?

NANCY: I just met you.

BETH: But a really good therapist would know when I walked in, wouldn't they?

NANCY: Sandy, I'm not a psychic...Doctor Holt says you're having trouble keeping things straight.

(From up in the unit, a light rises slightly on TREVIN, another young woman of twenty-five, dressed in khakis, a button-down shirt and oxfords.)

NANCY: Sandy?

BETH: I have a headache. Can I walk around?

NANCY: Sure. So why don't you tell me a little bit about yourself?

BETH: Not much to tell...

NANCY: Where did you grow up?

BETH: Do you like children?

NANCY: Yes.

BETH: You do?

NANCY: Yes.

BETH: You have kind eyes...

NANCY: How are your classes this semester?

BETH: Fine.

(TREVIN'S light bursts up.)

TREVIN: Sit down.

NANCY: What kind of——

BETH: Do I have to sit down?

NANCY: No.

BETH: Good, 'cause I don't want to.

TREVIN: Sit!

(BETH sits.)

NANCY: Did you change your mind?

BETH: About what?

(Beat.)

NANCY: What day is it?

(TREVIN bolts down to BETH and puts her hand on BETH'S shoulder. Note: This will be referred to as "Piggybacks.")

BETH AND TREVIN: This is so rudimentary. You're just like Frankl.

NANCY: No, actually, I'm good. Now what day is it?

BETH: It's——

(TREVIN'S piggybacks with BETH.)

BETH AND TREVIN: ——the 19th.

(TREVIN releases BETH.)

BETH: No, it's not. I don't know why I said that. It's the 22nd.

NANCY: Did something distract you?

BETH: It's Friday the 22nd.

NANCY: That's right...good. Now, I want you to look at me...

(BETH looks down.)

No, Sandy, stay with me. Sandy, what is it?

BETH: It's that spot on your desk.

NANCY: There's no spot on my desk...Sandy, there's no spot.

BETH: I don't know what to say to you.

TREVIN: Or what you think she wants to hear.

NANCY: Does that bother you?

(TREVIN piggybacks BETH'S.)

BETH AND TREVIN: Of course, it bothers me, you stupid ass.

(NANCY is curious, but shows no affect throughout their encounter.)

TREVIN: *(To BETH.)* Get out of that one.

(TREVIN returns to the unit.)

BETH: Oh, my gosh, I'm sorry! I don't know why I said that! I would never say anything like that. Do you like movies? This is silly. This isn't what I'm supposed to talk about....

(Her breathing becomes labored.)

NANCY: What are you supposed—

BETH: I can't...study. I start...reading and when I get to the bottom of the page...it's three hours later.

TREVIN: Get out.

BETH: I have to g-g-get out.

TREVIN: Kelly!

(A light rises in the unit on KELLY, a tomboy of ten, wearing a baseball cap, tennis shoes and cutoffs, who pops up.)

KELLY: Come on, Beth, let's go.

(KELLY springs down the unit towards the office.)

BETH: I...c-can't.

(KELLY stops at the imaginary "line" that separates the unit from the office.)

NANCY: Can't...what?

BETH: Somebody's holding—

(TREVIN is at the "line.")

TREVIN: Don't tell!

BETH: Can't t-t-tell!

NANCY: Why? What can't—

BETH: "Cee!"

NANCY: See what?

TREVIN: Shut up!

NANCY: Can you see something?

BETH: "Cee," "Cee"—

NANCY: Can you tell me what you see?

BETH: I-I, "Cee," "Cee,"—

(TREVIN shoves BETH out of the hot seat and changes places with her. Note: Hereafter referred to as "switches.")

TREVIN: Nothing.

NANCY: Are you okay?

TREVIN: Of course. You're having trouble staying with me, aren't you, Doctor?

NANCY: No. But you do seem...anxious.

TREVIN: I'm comforted to know you're so mindfully observant.

(BETH and KELLY watch from the "line.")

KELLY: Shut up.

TREVIN: You sense, you perceive. You use your “instinct.” That’s an important commodity in a shrink, isn’t it...your “instinct?”

NANCY: You’re not stuttering.

TREVIN: I never did. Tell me, what does that keen “instinct” tell you about me?

NANCY: I don’t know, yet.

TREVIN: Liar. How come you’re just a psychologist and not a psychiatrist? Not smart enough?

NANCY: I didn’t want an M.D.

TREVIN: Liar. That’s two, Doc. I’m on full scholarship. Did Doctor Holt tell you?

NANCY: Yes. And that you seem to be struggling of late.

TREVIN: She’s wrong.

NANCY: Is she? Then why are you flunking all of your classes?

TREVIN: I’m not flunking my fucking classes!

NANCY: What do you call “Ds” and “Fs?” Honor roll?

TREVIN: Fuck you.

(TREVIN springs for the office door.)

NANCY: What’s getting in the way?

(TREVIN stops.)

TREVIN: You are piece of work. You need something to “get-in-the-way,” don’t you?

NANCY: Why do you say that?

TREVIN: So you have a reason to be.

NANCY: Really?

TREVIN: Really.

NANCY: And what’s your reason to be?

TREVIN: Would you stop answering everything with a question!

NANCY: All right.

TREVIN: And don’t patronize me.

NANCY: I’m sorry. I didn’t realize I was.

TREVIN: You still are.

NANCY: Would you like to ask me some questions?

TREVIN: Is this reverse psychology, Doctor?

(She eases back into the chair.)

Ooo, fun. Are you married?

NANCY: No.

TREVIN: Ever been?

NANCY: ...No.

TREVIN: Really?

NANCY: Really.

TREVIN: You a virgin?

NANCY: My business.

TREVIN: Sure it is. But since when do we care about that?

NANCY: Which “we?”

TREVIN: The royal “we.” Shall we go on? Are you happy?

NANCY: Who can answer that?

TREVIN: You’re not asking the questions. I repeat, are you happy?

NANCY: I repeat, who can answer that?

TREVIN: Anyone who’s happy.

(She settles in for the kill. NANCY is professionally unaffected.)

Let’s see if you can keep up with me, “Doctor.”

NANCY: Let’s.

TREVIN: Are you a good teacher?

NANCY: Yes.

TREVIN: Are you a good therapist?

NANCY: Yes.

TREVIN: Do you have a lot of patients?

NANCY: Yes.

TREVIN: Do your patients get well?

NANCY: Yes.

TREVIN: If they do, then why do you have a lot of patients? Am I perplexing?

NANCY: Yes.

TREVIN: Am I intriguing?

NANCY: Yes.

TREVIN: Am I infuriating?

NANCY: Yes.

TREVIN: Am I sick?

NANCY: ... Yes.

TREVIN: Prove it.

NANCY: I will.

(TREVIN stomps to the door.)

TREVIN: I have to study.

NANCY: Liar. Let’s see if you can keep up with me, Sandy.

(TREVIN hurls BETH into the office and switches with her.)

BETH: I have a t-t-test tomorrow.

(Beat.)

D-Doctor?

NANCY: Tell me, what did we just talk about?

BETH: You told me to t-t-take a d-d-deep breath.

(She takes a deep breath.)

I’m sorry, I don’t mean to s-s-stutter. It just happens sometimes when I get frustrated.

NANCY: Why don’t you drop by tomorrow, around...5:30?

BETH: Okay. Thank you. Good night, Doctor Ellis.

NANCY: Good night, Sandy.

(BETH exits. NANCY can finally breathe.)

Ho-ly...shit...

(NANCY picks up the phone and dials.)

This is Doctor Ellis. Would you send over Millon's (pronounced "Mil-an's") "Toward a D.S.M. IV" and Catham's "Narcissistic and Borderline Personality Disorders." Yeah, thanks. Oh, hey...while you're at it, send me Kluft's "Childhood Antecedents of Multiple Personality Disorder." Thanks.

(She hangs up. Then the lights cross-fade to the podium. NANCY moves to it.)

NANCY: ...No, no, I disagree. In my opinion, that assumption is inaccurate. Neurosis and depression are the popular mental illnesses that in your careers you will see with nauseating regularity. But what troubles our society goes much deeper. Neurosis and depression are only by-products. As you pursue your studies you'll see how the continuing fragmenting of our lives, the constant eroding of who we are, causes and perpetuates mental illness. Both severe and rudimentary.

(Beat. TREVIN'S light surges in the unit.)

To put it simply...we've splintered ourselves.

(The lights rise on the apron as NANCY collects her things. FRAN enters and they walk towards each other in the "hallway.")

FRAN: Hi.

NANCY: Hey!

FRAN: How's it coming?

NANCY: I'm up to my eyeballs at the library. I always used to make-out there, but they're good for studying, too.

FRAN: And...?

NANCY: Well, she's either "Borderline," a "Multiple," or an alien. And right now I'm leaning towards the latter.

FRAN: Nancy, I need that evaluation yesterday. It's been over three weeks and we have to allocate scholarship monies. I'm working with a deadline here.

NANCY: You want a deadline, she's schizophrenic.

(The lights rise slightly on NANCY'S office. TREVIN peruses the books and files on NANCY'S desk.)

You want an evaluation, you wait.

FRAN: You want her in school?

(This stops NANCY.)

NANCY: You'll have it Friday.

(She starts off.)

Sorry. I got a client.

FRAN: Don't forget faculty meeting——

(NANCY ignores her and exits.)

——tomorrow...

(FRAN strides off as the lights cross-fade to NANCY'S office.)

ACT ONE

Scene 2

SETTING: *NANCY'S OFFICE.*

AT RISE: *As the lights rise fully, TREVIN now rifles through NANCY'S desk. BETH sits at her place in the unit watching.*

BETH: What are you doing...?

TREVIN: Kelly.

(KELLY bounds into the office.)

Watch the door!

(KELLY guards the door. TREVIN finds a very old book.)

What's this...?

KELLY: Cheese it! The cops!

(KELLY bolts to the hot seat.)

TREVIN: Get out!

KELLY: But I want to meet her.

(TREVIN shoves KELLY back into the unit.)

TREVIN: Beth.

BETH: Do I have to?

*(BETH starts for the office as NANCY enters wearing a rain coat. BETH stops at the "line."
NANCY catches TREVIN.)*

NANCY: Sandy...I wasn't sure you'd...Who let you in?

KELLY: *(To NANCY who does not hear.)* I did.

TREVIN: Your secretary.

NANCY: You mean the one who left an hour ago. I'm sorry I'm late. It's been raining so much my car stalled...

(She takes off her coat.)

What are you reading?

TREVIN: A book.

BETH: *(To TREVIN.)* You shouldn't—

NANCY: Yes, I can see it's a book. What book?

(TREVIN holds up the book.)

Yeats...First edition...from my drawer...Do you know Yeats?

TREVIN: Not personally.

(Hands the book to NANCY.)

NANCY: "Come away, oh human child, to the waters and the wild, with a faery hand in hand..."

(TREVIN switches with BETH, then heads back to her place in the unit.)

TREVIN AND NANCY: "For the world is more full of weeping than you can understand."

NANCY: You missed your last three appointments. Can you tell me why?

(Pause. BETH shakes her head.)

Did you happen to remember to bring your receipts this time?

BETH: Yes, I did.

(She hands NANCY a shoe box.)

NANCY: You organized these very well.

BETH: Thank you. Your suggestions were helpful. I wish I would have thought of it earlier.

NANCY: Earlier? You mean before college?

(BETH nods.)

Did you keep the records in your house?

BETH: I kept everything.

NANCY: That must have helped your mother very much.

BETH: She was gone by then.

NANCY: Do you know where she went?

(BETH shakes her head.)

What about your father?

BETH: I never knew him.

NANCY: Do you know if he's alive?

(BETH shrugs. NANCY looks in a file folder.)

But it was around the time your mother left that your aunt took you in.

BETH: Yes.

TREVIN: Oh, great.

NANCY: And how old were you?

(A light rises in the unit, almost imperceptibly, on LARA, a child of 4, wearing a "little girl" dress.)

BETH: When?

NANCY: When you went to live with your Aunt Cecilia.

TREVIN: Don't answer!

BETH: Just Celia, not "Cecilia." Aunt C-Cee.

TREVIN: You idiot.

NANCY: "Cee?" You called her "Cee?"

(BETH nods.)

Tell me about her?

(As TREVIN moves down toward BETH, a dim light rises in the upper most part of the unit on KIRSTEN, a young woman of twenty-five. She is dressed simply and is very weak.)

KIRSTEN: Trevin...

(TREVIN hesitates, then continues.)

NANCY: Sandy...? Can you tell me about your aunt?

TREVIN: Don't tell, don't tell...

BETH: I don't remember much.

NANCY: What do you remember?

(TREVIN bolts down and piggybacks with BETH.)

BETH AND TREVIN: Nothing!

NANCY: Do you remember anything about your childhood?

BETH AND TREVIN: No!

(BETH pulls away.)

BETH: I kind of remember junior high school.

TREVIN: No!

NANCY: Good. What?

BETH: Cooking class.

TREVIN: Shit!

NANCY: What about cooking class?

BETH: Cookies. I liked baking cookies.

TREVIN: Oh, gawd...

NANCY: Any special kind?

BETH: Christmas cook——

KELLY: Christmas cookies!

BETH: Just cookies.

NANCY: Who did you bake them for?

BETH: Aunt Cee.

NANCY: So you do remember your Aunt?

BETH: ...Yes.

TREVIN: Dammit! Are you crazy?

NANCY: What do you remember?

BETH: She d-d-didn't like the way I c-c-cleaned the house.

NANCY: What would she say?

BETH: I d-d-don't remember.

NANCY: Was she unkind?

BETH: What do you m-mean?

NANCY: Did she ever yell at you or hit you?

TREVIN: Don't tell her anything!

BETH: I don't know.

NANCY: Who does?

(LARA raises her hand then reacts like she was slapped.)

LARA: Ow.

BETH: My head hurts.

NANCY: Okay, it's all right, just take a deep breath and listen to my voice.

LARA: No, no, no, no...

(LARA starts down the unit.)

BETH: My head...it's pounding.

NANCY: Tell me what's happening.

TREVIN: Shut up!

NANCY: Honey, what's happening?

LARA: Bad blood.

(LARA piggybacks with BETH.)

BETH AND LARA: Bad blood...Bad blood...

NANCY: Honey, where are you?

BETH: I'm-I'm in the corner... I can't get away...!

NANCY: From whom? Who is it?

KELLY: Run to the top of the hill.

BETH: Cee...

TREVIN: No!

BETH: Hitting...She's hitting...!

TREVIN: No!!

BETH: She's hitting and hitting and hitting——

(Pandemonium erupts.)

LARA: Mama!!

(LARA flies into NANCY'S lap. She speaks rapidly as she pounds on her head.)

She's hitting my head, she's hitting my head, she's hitting my head!

TREVIN: *(To LARA.)* She'll kill us!

LARA: Stop it, stop it, stop it...etc.!

TREVIN: This can't happen!

NANCY: Sandy, honey, it's me, it's Dr. Ellis. Listen to my voice, it's Dr. Ellis.

LARA: Go 'way, go 'way, hurt!

NANCY: Aunt Cee is gone, she can't hurt you, I won't let her. Shhh, it's okay...it's all right. You're okay, now.

I've got you. That's good. Shhh...

(LARA calms. A light rises on KIRSTEN.)

KIRSTEN: Trevin...

(Firmly.)

Trevin.

(TREVIN returns to the unit and sits at her place facing sideways.)

NANCY: Are you all right...? Sandy...?

LARA: Lara...I'm Lara.

(NANCY hesitates, an takes it in.)

NANCY: Lara... That's a pretty name.

(LARA nods.)

Boy, that was scary stuff, huh?

(LARA nods.)

Better now?

(LARA nods.)

Yeah...me too.

(LARA buries her head in NANCY's neck.)

LARA: You smell pretty.

NANCY: Thank you. Lara...I haven't met you before, have I?

(LARA shakes her head.)

How old are you?

(LARA holds up four fingers.)

Four? You're four years old? You're a big girl for four.

(LARA nods.)

What's bad blood? Can you tell me what's bad blood?

(LARA points to herself.)

You are? A sweet little girl like you?

(LARA nods.)

Who says? Can you tell me who called you that...?

TREVIN: *(TREVIN chants softly.)* Don't tell, don't tell...etc.

NANCY: Was it your mother?

(LARA shakes her head.)

Was it your aunt?

TREVIN: No...!

LARA: Can't tell.

(KIRSTEN puts a hand on TREVIN'S shoulder. TREVIN backs down.)

NANCY: I know. I'll ask you a question and you can nod "yes" or "no." That way you won't tell. Okay?

(LARA hesitates and looks to KIRSTEN for her approval. Then both LARA and KIRSTEN nod.)

Did your Aunt Celia hit you?

(LARA nods.)

Did she call you bad?

(LARA nods.)

Do you remember your mother?

(LARA nods.)

Was she mean?

(LARA shakes her head.)

She was nice?

(LARA nods.)

But she went away?

LARA: She died.

NANCY: I bet that made you feel sad.

(LARA nods. TREVIN tries to move down, but KIRSTEN still has her. TREVIN pulls steadily against her grip. As NANCY continues, KIRSTEN'S light slowly fades.)

NANCY: Do you have any brothers and sisters?

(LARA looks up at the unit, then shrugs.)

LARA: ...Kelly?

NANCY: Kelly. Who is Kelly?

(In the unit KIRSTEN'S light is very dim and TREVIN is able to pull away.)

LARA: She helps me run away when——

(TREVIN moves down.)

TREVIN: *(Gently.)* Lara...Sweetie, ask Doctor Ellis about her brothers and sisters.

LARA: Do you have brothers and sisters?

NANCY: I have a sister.

TREVIN: Do you like her?

LARA: Do you like her?

NANCY: Yes.

TREVIN: Does she have children?

LARA: Does she have children...like me?

NANCY: Yes, but they're older than you.

TREVIN: Do you have children?

LARA: Do you have children?

NANCY: No. I don't have children.

(TREVIN senses something.)

TREVIN: But did you?

LARA: But did you?

NANCY: Yes.

TREVIN: What happened to them?

LARA: What happened to them?

NANCY: Just one. A little boy.

LARA: Where is he?

NANCY: He died.

LARA: Like my mommy?

NANCY: Yes...

LARA: Did you love him?

NANCY: Yes.

LARA: Did you tuck him in, and sing to him and kiss him?

NANCY: ...Yes.

LARA: Do you miss your little boy?

NANCY: Yes.

(TREVIN piggybacks LARA.)

LARA AND TREVIN: Ain't that a fucking shame.

(NANCY is stunned.)

TREVIN: *(To BETH.)* Get us outta here.

(TREVIN grabs LARA and yanks her out of NANCY'S lap. BETH switches with LARA and sits in NANCY'S lap.)

BETH: Oh, my gosh!

(She vaults from NANCY'S lap.)

I'm so embarrassed. How did I get here?

NANCY: You just flew into my lap.

BETH: I would never do that.

NANCY: No, you wouldn't...But Lara would.

BETH: Lara...? Lara...The one who cries...?

NANCY: Yes! Yes, the one who cries!

TREVIN: Shut up and get out!

NANCY: When? When have you heard her cry? What happens when she cries?

BETH: I don't know. Please, Doctor Ellis, I can't think.

(NANCY reins herself in.)

NANCY: Okay...it's okay.

BETH: I'm sorry Doctor Ellis.

NANCY: No, no, we did some good work today.

BETH: I better go.

NANCY: Yes...All right, but I'll see you tomorrow. You will come tomorrow?

(BETH nods as LARA comes down to BETH from the unit.)

BETH: What's happening, Doctor Ellis?

NANCY: ...A lot...of good things.

BETH: Good-bye, Doctor Ellis.

(BETH and LARA walk out. LARA turns and waves. NANCY smiles and waves back. BETH and LARA exit into the unit.)

NANCY: Oh, good Lord.

(NANCY takes a cigarette from her desk drawer and contemplates it, then places it back as the lights cross-fade to the "patio.")

ACT ONE

Scene 3

SETTING: *FRAN'S back patio.*

AT RISE: *Two Adirondack chairs move on as FRAN enters, bundled against the chill, reading he evaluation papers.*

NANCY: In-fucking-credible.

(NANCY yanks on her coat and joins FRAN.)

FRAN: That's an understatement.

NANCY: My, God, it's extraordinary! You should see her. She's three different people! I'm dealing with three totally different girls and probably more. And I'm not just talking mood swings here, I'm talking about separate people with different mannerisms, different speech patterns and different thought processes.

FRAN: How many do you think there are?

NANCY: I don't know. As many as she needed to survive.

FRAN: Could she be faking? I've read about cases where M.P.D. was suspected but——

NANCY: No, no way. Not at this level of complexity. Something happens in the brain, in the neural substrate. Well you know, you've seen the research, each multiple has different brain scans. Each personality's brain image has a different configuration. Now, you and I can be in a pretty bad mood, but our cerebral blood flow doesn't change that quickly.

FRAN: Then I think we should——

NANCY: It's the most amazing thing I've ever seen. I sit there and try to act cool and professional while I watch this girl fly around my office.

FRAN: Why now? What made her coping system break down now?

NANCY: Stress... anxiety...fatigue. When you're an adolescent you're supposed to be...nuts. But it's not until you get into college or adulthood that there is a certain appropriateness of behavior that's expected and it puts pressure on. If you had to be more than one person at a time wouldn't you be tired? Her internal self helper, the one that tells who to come when, is exhausted and has stopped functioning.

FRAN: Have you met that one?

NANCY: Not yet.

FRAN: Well, what techniques can you use?

NANCY: The ones I'm using.

FRAN: What do you think the time frame is here?

NANCY: I don't know, Fran! I've only seen her——

(NANCY catches herself.)

I don't know.

(FRAN closes the evaluation folder.)

FRAN: So...what's the next step? Do we pull her out of school, put her in a hospital——

NANCY: No!

(That was a little too quick.)

No. That would be the worst thing for her now. She needs to retain as much normalcy around her as possible during treatment.

FRAN: All right. Who do we get to see her?

(NANCY is stunned.)

NANCY: ...Me.

FRAN: Oh, no. Our deal was an evaluation. That's all.

NANCY: But I already know her. I know the complex organization of her mind. She trusts me! I did in four weeks what it would take months for someone else to do.

FRAN: But what's best for Sandy?

NANCY: I'm what's best for Sandy.

FRAN: Isn't this out of your area of expertise?

NANCY: No, it isn't. Granted, I've never treated a multiple before. But there's no one on this campus, in this town, that knows Personality Disorders like I do. Look who have you got. Frankl's an idiot——

FRAN: Established.

NANCY: Williams is short term group, Tempest is strictly cognitive-behavioral, Harlan is in the process of screwing up his first Borderline...

FRAN: Bravermann?

(NANCY'S stopped there.)

NANCY: She's good...I'm better. I can help her. I know I can. Fran, do you know how rare she is? Maybe one in a hundred thousand!

FRAN: And you've got her.

(NANCY'S caught. Pause.)

NANCY: Wouldn't it be nice just to compartmentalize your emotions and never feel them all at once?

FRAN: You envy her.

NANCY: Fran, she's sick.

FRAN: But you envy her.

(Pause.)

I miss Jonathan, too.

(Beat.)

NANCY: It's such a beautiful day.

(FRAN ponders a moment.)

FRAN: All right. On one condition. You sign a contract with her——

NANCY: Okay——

FRAN: ——that gives permission to release information regarding her condition if——

(NANCY begins to speak.)

——If the Board should require it.

NANCY: Right, fine. Yes, yes, agreed.

FRAN: Good.

NANCY: Thank you. Thank you.

(Flashback. Lights up on TREVIN.)

TREVIN: Are you happy?

NANCY: I am now.

(Restore.)

FRAN: What?

NANCY: Huh?

FRAN: What are you now?

NANCY: You just asked me...Nothing, I was just...Never mind.

(FRAN watches her closely.)

FRAN: You're right...It is a beautiful day.

(FRAN exits as the chairs move off. A moment. Then the lights cross-fade to the podium. NANCY changes into a sweater, looking slightly unkempt.)

NANCY: That's a good question. Dissociative states...How's the best way to answer it? Historically, when you look back at psychological nomenclature and how disorders were named, people were described as having hysterical neurosis. By hysterical it meant that they let their feelings flood them so badly that they couldn't think reasonably. In dissociate disorders we find that the person isn't crazy, but they're so anxious, anxiety is at the root of it, they are so anxious they can't maintain a steady stream of immediate memory and regulate their feelings.

(Flashback. TREVIN and LARA'S light rise.)

TREVIN AND LARA: Ain't that a fucking shame.

(Restore.)

NANCY: So...So when you...encounter this disorder...Don't ignore the obvious. Concentrate on finding and de-intensifying the root problem.

(The lights cross-fade to the office. LARA sits huddled on the floor by the hot seat. NANCY moves to LARA and crouches next to her.)

NANCY: ...That's good. Now, I'm just going to touch your shoulder.

(A dim light rises on KIRSTEN in the unit. LARA holds still as NANCY gently taps her shoulder.)

Good...That's good. You're a very good little girl.

LARA: I'm a bad little girl.

NANCY: Why are you a bad little girl?

LARA: I move too much. I move around too much. Stop fidgeting, stop fidgeting, young lady. I have to hold very, very, very still.

NANCY: But you're just a little girl.

LARA: Hold still, hold still, don't breathe.

NANCY: Why? What will she do?

LARA: No, no, don't, I'll be good. I'm What is she doing...? Where are holding still. Don't move, don't you...? Are you in your house? move, don't move, don't move!

(LARA hits her head.)

Bad. Bad blood...

NANCY: Are you in your room...? Lara, No, no, no, no! Bad, bad blood, sweetie, listen to my voice. It's me, it's Doctor Ellis. You're not bad and they can't hurt you.

(LARA pulls away and continues her mumbling.)

NANCY: Damn...

(She takes a different tact.)

Lara...Sweetie, listen to me. Do you have a friend? A friend that's older than you that helps you? That tells you what to do when you get confused? That's real nice and doesn't yell at you?

(LARA is quiet.)

Do you have a friend like that?

(TREVIN'S light rises quickly. She stares at LARA who huddles, terrified.)

It's all right, I'm here, no one's going to hurt you.

KIRSTEN: Trevin...turn around.

(TREVIN hesitates then slowly turns upstage as her light goes out. LARA calms.)

NANCY: Someone that tells the smart one when to go to school...and tells you when you go to sleep...

LARA: Kirsten.

(KIRSTEN'S light rises to full.)

NANCY: Kirsten. Can I talk to her?

LARA: She's real tired. She sleeps all the time. She never used to sleep all the time.

NANCY: Is she awake now?

(LARA looks up to the unit and nods.)

Where is she?

LARA: Inside.

NANCY: Inside where?

LARA: The dark place.

NANCY: Will she get mad if I ask to talk with her?

LARA: She never gets mad. She's perfect. She talks to me real soft, like I never did anything wrong.

NANCY: That must be nice... Can I talk with Kirsten, do you think?

LARA: Ask her.

NANCY: O-kay. Kirsten...This is Doctor Ellis. I need to speak with you.

(KIRSTEN rises and descends the unit.)

I need your help. Can you...come out and...talk to me?

(KIRSTEN replaces LARA on the floor. The light on KIRSTEN is weak but grows throughout the scene. LARA returns to the unit.)

Can you hear——

KIRSTEN: Hello, Doctor Ellis.

NANCY: Kirsten?

KIRSTEN: Yes.

NANCY: Really?

KIRSTEN: Yes.

NANCY: You mean, I just...call you and...poof.

KIRSTEN: Usually.

NANCY: O-kay...

(KIRSTEN loses her equilibrium.)

Are you all right?

KIRSTEN: It's been so long since I've been out. I'm a little shaky.

NANCY: Would you like to sit down?

KIRSTEN: I am sitting down.

NANCY: I meant on a chair.

KIRSTEN: Oh, yes, thank you.

(NANCY helps her to the hot seat.)

Hmmm...I've never actually sat in this chair.

NANCY: How does it feel?

KIRSTEN: Hard. You've read a great deal about us...about me, haven't you? The "Internal Self-helper" I believe I'm called.

NANCY: Yes.

KIRSTEN: Do you believe what you've read?

NANCY: I do if it's true. Is it? Are you "all good?"

KIRSTEN: Are you?

NANCY: No.

KIRSTEN: But there is a good side to you, isn't there?

NANCY: The spirit? The soul?

KIRSTEN: If that's what the book says.

(KIRSTEN touches her head and sighs.)

NANCY: Can I get you anything? A glass of water...?

KIRSTEN: No, thank you. I'm not the one that eats or drinks.

NANCY: That eats or drinks? So your functions can be that specific, like eating, drinking, schoolwork...crying...

KIRSTEN: Doctor...You know all that.

NANCY: Humor me.

(KIRSTEN smiles.)

So whose function is...eating and drinking?

KIRSTEN: Well, Beth mostly.

NANCY: Beth...?

KIRSTEN: She's the first one you met.

(NANCY nods.)

And Trevin eats "Doritos."

NANCY: Trevin?

KIRSTEN: She's the one that's not too happy with all of this.

NANCY: Yes, I know the one you mean.

KIRSTEN: You threaten her, you know.

NANCY: I don't mean to.

KIRSTEN: You can't help but.

NANCY: Do I threaten you?

KIRSTEN: I'm here for Sandy's good, not mine.

NANCY: Who is Sandy? Is the first one I met...Is Beth...Sandy?

KIRSTEN: No.

NANCY: Then who is?

KIRSTEN: All of us.

(KIRSTEN'S light peaks in intensity, and holds.)

NANCY: None of you is Sandy, yet all of you are Sandy?

KIRSTEN: Yes.

(TREVIN'S light rises very slowly and she starts down the unit. KIRSTEN looks to her.)

Go back.

(They hold a moment. Then TREVIN returns to the darkness. KIRSTEN'S light dips in intensity and slowly fades throughout.)

NANCY: Kirsten...?

KIRSTEN: I haven't much time. I know you have questions.

NANCY: Oh, yeah.

KIRSTEN: Ask.

NANCY: I wouldn't know where to start.

KIRSTEN: Start with one.

NANCY: Do you all know about each other?

KIRSTEN: We do inside.

NANCY: When you are inside, do you know what's going on outside?

KIRSTEN: If you want to.

NANCY: And if you don't...?

KIRSTEN: You don't.

NANCY: As simple as that?

KIRSTEN: Hardly.

NANCY: How do I find out——

KIRSTEN: Doctor, you have to get Trevin to——

(As TREVIN inches down, KIRSTEN weakens. To TREVIN.)

I said, go back.

NANCY: Get Trevin to what?...Kirsten?

KIRSTEN: ...embrace...

NANCY: Embrace...What?

KIRSTEN: ...the day...Sandy...

NANCY: I'm sorry, I don't know what you mean? Can you help me?

KIRSTEN: I can try...

TREVIN: Sure you can.

KIRSTEN: I'm sorry, Doctor Ellis.

(KIRSTEN nearly passes out. TREVIN switches with KIRSTEN as NANCY catches her.)

NANCY: Are you all right?

TREVIN: Why, Doctor, I didn't know you cared.

NANCY: Kirsten?

TREVIN: Who?

NANCY: Shit, fuck, piss.

TREVIN: I love your method of expression, Doctor.

NANCY: I can understand why. It's so closely akin to yours.

TREVIN: Fuckin' "A."

NANCY: It's Trevin, isn't it?

(Beat.)

What made you come?

TREVIN: An appointment.

NANCY: Very clever.

TREVIN: Glad you approve. So...we had a nice little chat didn't we?

NANCY: "We," you and me?

TREVIN: No, "we" me and your chair. I'm talking about you, me and baby makes three...

NANCY: With Lara? You heard what went on with Lara?

TREVIN: Every word.

NANCY: So you admit it? You admit there are others.

(TREVIN motions to a tape recorder on NANCY'S desk.)

TREVIN: Turn that fucking thing off.

(NANCY switches it off.)

Sorry to hear about your kid. How did he die?

NANCY: How did your mother die?

TREVIN: Shot herself. Your turn.

(Pause.)

Questions getting too tough for you, Doc?

NANCY: I'm going to read something to you.

TREVIN: That's not fair, Doc. I tell you, you tell me. Quid pro quo. How did he die?

NANCY: I'm not playing, Trevin.

TREVIN: Well, why?

NANCY: Because I'm the doctor.

TREVIN: Oh, that's right. It slips my mind 'cause it's not that obvious.

NANCY: Tell me if you've experienced any of this. "Lost time, blackouts or amnesia."

TREVIN: Well, if you're not going to tell me, I'll have to guess.

NANCY: "Mood swings. Depression."

TREVIN: Leukemia?

NANCY: "Self-destructive or suicidal behavior."

TREVIN: Cancer?

NANCY: "Headaches. Sleep disorders or recurrent nightmares. Anorexia."

TREVIN: Car accident?

(NANCY stops.)

You see. Doctor's have files, too.

NANCY: "Unexplained pain."

TREVIN: You were driving.

NANCY: "Auditory hallucinations."

TREVIN: What happened, Doctor? Did you lose control?

NANCY: The voices often being——

TREVIN: What did it feel like? Can you tell me what it felt like? And how do you feel now? Do you have headaches, sleep disorders or recurrent nightmares? Unexplained pain? Auditory hallucinations?

NANCY: The voices often being hostile or critical and coming from within the head. Visual hallucinations.

TREVIN: That's also the list for about fifty other disorders, "Doc," including severe mental trauma! For instance the loss of a loved one?

NANCY: Your coping system is breaking down which is why everything is getting confused!

TREVIN: Cut to the chase, Doctor.

NANCY: You're a Multiple Personality, Trevin.

TREVIN: ...You're fuckin' nuts.

NANCY: Let me talk to Kirsten.

TREVIN: You're fuckin' nuts, not me.

NANCY: Kirsten...

TREVIN: There's only one person here, Doc. Otherwise, it'd be a little crowded, don't you think?

(TREVIN starts for the door.)

NANCY: Kirsten!

TREVIN: Don't call me "Kirsten!"

(KIRSTEN'S light rises in the unit. TREVIN immediately calms.)

KIRSTEN AND TREVIN: Yes, Doctor.

NANCY: I need your help.

KIRSTEN AND TREVIN: Of course.

NANCY: Draw me some pictures? Can you do that?

KIRSTEN AND TREVIN: Me?

NANCY: Whoever wants to.

KIRSTEN AND TREVIN: All right. If it'll help.

NANCY: It will.

(KIRSTEN'S light fades.)

TREVIN: *(Deadly calm.)* Don't ever call me "Kirsten."

(TREVIN storms out of the office and into the unit. NANCY moves to her desk and fetches a cigarette, lights it and takes a long anxious drag. She pulls the tape recorder to her, rewinds, and plays it. Recorded voices are heard.)

NANCY'S VOICE: ...you admit it? You admit there are others!

TREVIN'S VOICE: Turn that fucking thing off!

(Silence. NANCY turns off the recorder.)

NANCY: Shit.

(She takes the tape and puts it in her drawer. After a moment the light rises on the podium. FRAN stands off to the side, waits a moment, then crosses to the podium.)

FRAN: Well, it looks like Doctor Ellis is going to be late so...what have you been talking about...?

(In her office NANCY "comes to" and looks at her watch.)

NANCY: Shit.

(She collects her jacket and briefcase.)

FRAN: Obsessive behavior...I see...Look, why don't you just use this as a study time until Doctor Ellis——

(NANCY crosses to the podium as the office lights fade.)

NANCY: I am really sorry. I got lost in some research.

FRAN: Uh-huh...I need to speak with you in the hall.

NANCY: Fran, I can't——

FRAN: I-need-to-speak-with-you-in-the-hall.

NANCY: *(To the class.)* Five minutes.

(A light rises LEFT of the podium. NANCY and FRAN cross to it.)

FRAN: We're in trouble.

NANCY: Fran, I met her. I met Kirsten. I met her soul.

FRAN: I need you to come and talk to the——

NANCY: Didn't you hear me? I met her!

FRAN: Nancy, the Board is meeting to review Sandy's academic status.

NANCY: What do you mean review her "academic status?"

FRAN: Her scholarship is in jeopardy. They're meeting this Thursday.

NANCY: Well, you're the Chair of the damn department, stall them.

FRAN: I've stalled them since November. We need to explain her situation.

NANCY: No! Don't you even suggest betraying that privilege.

FRAN: We're not betraying anything, you have a contract with——

NANCY: No! No, I don't.

(Pause.)

It would have jeopardized everything——

FRAN: Did you even ask her?

NANCY: She wouldn't have signed it.

FRAN: Did you ask her?

(Pause.)

What do I tell the board?

NANCY: Tell them...Tell them anything you want.

(She starts for the podium.)

FRAN: Nancy...I can't do this alone.

(NANCY stops.)

NANCY: Then tell them... Tell them they'll just have to trust me.

(NANCY returns to the podium. FRAN exits.)

Okay, turn to chapter four in Moy—— No, chapter five in Moyle...

THE LIGHTS BLACKOUT

ACT ONE

Scene 4

SETTING: *Sandy's "home."*

AT RISE: *The lights quickly rise on everyone in the unit. LARA and KELLY, paper and crayons in hand, sit on the floor drawing. Even BETH takes out a pad and sketches. KIRSTEN oversees the goings on as TREVIN watches.*

(NOTE: Three small screens move on above the unit. These are used to project different perspectives of the drawings.)

TREVIN: It's a fucking art class.

(To KIRSTEN.)

Would you do something about this?

(KIRSTEN hands TREVIN a piece of paper.)

KIRSTEN: Here.

TREVIN: Don't try that crap on me.

LARA: Give me the pink.

TREVIN: *(To all.)* Aren't you afraid she'll come back?

KIRSTEN: That's very good, Lara.

LARA: Yeah...And I stayed in the lines.

TREVIN: Oh, gawd. Who gives a shit? Next you'll be having fucking Tupperware parties.

KELLY: Just shut up and do one.

TREVIN: Are you all out of your minds? Aunt Cee will come back. She said she would and she always kept her word.

BETH: Doctor Ellis said she won't.

TREVIN: And Doctor Ellis walks on water, right?

(TREVIN grabs KELLY'S picture.)

KELLY: Hey!

TREVIN: Our purpose here is to study.

KIRSTEN: That's your purpose. Not theirs. Give it back...Please.

(TREVIN hurls the drawing back at KELLY.)

TREVIN: You're all a mass of emotional shit.

KIRSTEN: I can't fight with you, Trevin, so if you don't want to do one, go away.

KELLY: Okay, okay, okay, look at this.

(Different views of KELLY'S picture appears on the screens. It is a primitive drawing of a spider trying to grab a little girl whose head is implanted in a wall.)

KIRSTEN: Ooo, that's good.

(TREVIN grabs her head, responding to the picture.)

TREVIN: Ow.

KELLY: Guess why my head's in the wall?

KIRSTEN: To escape the pain.

KELLY: But guess who's the spider?

KIRSTEN: Aunt Cee.

KELLY: How'd you know?

LARA: Look.

(She shoves her picture in KELLY'S face.)

KELLY: Cool.

(Then LARA shows KIRSTEN. The pictures on the screens change. The image is of a stick figure with five heads attached and pins sticking in them. TREVIN winces in pain.)

TREVIN: Ahh...My head...

LARA: That's Lara, that's Kelly, that's Kirsten, that's Beth...and that's Trevin.

TREVIN: *(To KIRSTEN.)* What are you doing to me?

(TREVIN grabs LARA'S picture.)

KELLY: What the heck's the matter with you?

TREVIN: *(To KIRSTEN.)* I don't want their memories!

(TREVIN tears LARA'S picture into pieces.)

LARA: That's mine!

TREVIN: *(To KIRSTEN.)* You ever do that to me again——

KIRSTEN: Stop it. Now!

TREVIN: You have no idea what Ellis is really trying to do!

KIRSTEN: She's trying to help us.

TREVIN: She's trying to kill us.

KIRSTEN: Sit down!

(Pause.)

TREVIN: Good luck on your 19th Century Literature exam. Not even your precious Doctor Ellis can help you with that.

(TREVIN returns to her place in the unit.)

KIRSTEN: Well...is everyone finished?

(All but TREVIN nod.)

Then let's put everything away.

TREVIN: End of round one, eh?

(LARA tapes up her picture.)

BETH: What about me?

TREVIN: *(To KIRSTEN.)* End of round one.

(Pause. TREVIN stares at KIRSTEN who returns her gaze. TREVIN then acquiesces and turns upstage.)

KIRSTEN: *(To BETH.)* I'm sorry. May I see?

BETH: Yes. But only you and Doctor Ellis, okay?

TREVIN: Gawd...!

(The pictures change on the screens. It's a more sophisticated sketch of a box with chains wrapped around it. "The Secrets" title the page with an arrow pointing into the box.)

KIRSTEN: Very expressive.

BETH: Thank you.

KIRSTEN: “The Secrets.”

(Beat.)

Okay, who wants to take the pictures to Doctor Ellis?

KELLY: I do, I do, I do. Oh, please, oh, please, oh, please. I never met her, you guys all get to meet her, and I didn't get to meet her yet, and I know what I'm gonna say, I'm gonna say, “You look too pretty to be a shrink.” And I really, really, really——

KIRSTEN: Kelly...

KELLY: And... 'cause...I'm the only one that's not afraid of the dark.

KIRSTEN: All right. Just slip them under the door then come right home. Trevin needs to study.

KELLY: Roger.

(KIRSTEN'S light goes out. LARA lies down and goes to sleep. BETH turns upstage. KELLY runs toward the “street” on the apron and ducks in and out of shadows.)

TREVIN: Can't you act like a human?

KELLY: Hey, you came!

TREVIN: I couldn't let you go alone. You're just a kid.

(Motions to the pictures.)

You want me to carry those?

KELLY: No, that's okay. Hey, Trevin...How come Doctor Ellis calls us sick?

TREVIN: Because that's what she thinks we are.

KELLY: Why does she think that?

TREVIN: Because we're not like other people.

KELLY: How? Like because we all have to take turns being out and stuff?

TREVIN: Something like that.

KELLY: Don't other people have to take turns and stuff?

TREVIN: No.

KELLY: Don't they, like, get tired just having one out all the time?

TREVIN: I don't know.

KELLY: Trevin...are we sick?

(Pause.)

TREVIN: You know, I could deliver those pictures.

KELLY: No! “Bond, James Bond” must complete his mission. Money Penny, that's you, and Bond, James Bond, that's me, stalk their mortal enemy from “Spector.” Then shots ring out. Bond, James Bond takes one in the arm——

(KELLY drops to the ground.)

TREVIN: Dammit, Kelly, give me those.

(TREVIN reaches for the pictures.)

KELLY: No!...Kirsten trusts me.

(A pool of light rises on NANCY'S desk as she sits working. KELLY races to the office door, followed by TREVIN, and knocks, quickly. NANCY crosses to it.)

Hi!

NANCY: Hi...

(KELLY giggles.)

Are you Kelly?

(KELLY nods.)

It's good to meet you. I've heard a lot about you.

KELLY: Likewise.

(She grabs NANCY'S hand and shakes it...hard.)

I liked you from the very first, you look too pretty to be a shrink. I like Bond, James Bond, do you like—
Oh, I brought you the pictures.

(She gives the envelope to NANCY.)

NANCY: Thank you.

KELLY: Mission completed. Mine's the cool one with the spider and the kid with his head in the wall.

Everyone did one but Trevin. She was really being a butt. She was screamin' and swearin'...

(TREVIN whispers in KELLY'S ear.)

NANCY: Why was she screaming and swearing—

KELLY: Wow...Did your car really skid a hundred yards then flip over?

(NANCY is stunned. TREVIN smiles. Then, to KELLY.)

TREVIN: Come on.

KELLY: Gotta go.

(TREVIN and KELLY disappear into the unit. NANCY opens the envelope and pulls out the pictures.)

NANCY: Oh, my God...

(The lights cross-fade to the "living room." NANCY moves to it.)

ACT ONE

Scene 5

SETTING: *Nancy's Living Room*

AT RISE: *The "living room" is decorated for Christmas. NANCY changes into a woolly sweater, then lights a cigarette and takes a drag. She studies the drawings as the door bell rings.*

FRAN: Hi.

NANCY: Ah, hi...What are you doing here?

FRAN: And Merry Christmas to you, too.

NANCY: Sorry.

(They hug, NANCY awkwardly holds the lit cigarette at her side.)

FRAN: Your secretary told me you left early. So I decided to stop by...

(She sniffs.)

Is something burning?

NANCY: Oh, don't start.

FRAN: I didn't say a word.

(Pause.)

NANCY: So what can I do for you?

FRAN: I haven't seen you for awhile and I've missed you. And I...I just wanted to give you this.

(She hands NANCY a package.)

NANCY: Oh, shit. Actually, I have your present. I just haven't shopped for it yet.

FRAN: Of course, you haven't. Why break a seven year tradition? Open it.

(NANCY pulls the wrapping off.)

NANCY: A signed, first edition "Nancy Drew."

(Beat.)

Classy.

FRAN: I do try.

NANCY: And you succeed. Thank you.

(Awkward pause.)

Well...I'm glad you came by——

(NANCY starts for the door.)

FRAN: Actually, that's not the only reason I stopped by.

(Beat.)

The Review Board finally ruled on Sandy.

NANCY: But I thought——?

FRAN: I told you I needed you to speak to us about this, but you refused.

(Beat.)

As a result, we ruled without your input.

NANCY: And?

FRAN: She lost her scholarship.

NANCY: Shit...

FRAN: I'm sorry.

(Pause.)

Nancy, it was inevitable.

NANCY: Ah, yes... So tell me, Fran. How did you vote?

FRAN: To take it away.

NANCY: Right.

FRAN: Nancy, I had to. She is not functioning. Her behavior is erratic and her professors are continually complaining about her. My God, in her English Lit. class she went down to the blackboard and started playing "hangman." She needs time. Give her a chance to get well.

NANCY: What do you think I've been doing these past four months? The last thing she needs is to be abandoned by the school!

FRAN: We are not abandoning her.

NANCY: How do you think this will look on her records?

FRAN: She's flunking! How do you think that will look on her records? I've gotten them to agree to reconsider her scholarship once she's stable.

NANCY: Stable? What the hell do you mean "once she's stable?"

(Silence.)

Oh, Fran...

FRAN: I had to tell them.

NANCY: How dare you.

FRAN: Otherwise there was a possibility——

NANCY: That was completely unethical. How dare you betray my confidence!

FRAN: Let me explain——

NANCY: You had no right! No right!

FRAN: Nancy, calm down.

NANCY: You promised me——

FRAN: I kept every one of my promises.

NANCY: How could you do this to us?!

FRAN: What do you mean, “us?” This is not being done to you, it’s being done for her. You’re in so deep you can’t tell the difference.

(Beat.)

This is as much my fault as yours.

NANCY: I’m sure that will be very comforting.

(Beat.)

FRAN: I want you to send her to a doctor.

NANCY: I am a doctor!

FRAN: Send her to a real doctor.

NANCY: I am a real fucking doctor.

FRAN: No, you’re not! The girl should be in a hospital.

NANCY: The girl has a name!

FRAN: Fine! Which one do you want me to use?

(Flashback.)

LARA: That’s Lara, that’s Kelly, that’s Kirsten, that’s Beth and that’s Trevin.

(Restore.)

FRAN: I’m sorry. That was out of line.

NANCY: Go home, Fran.

FRAN: Nancy, she is sick.

NANCY: I know that!

FRAN: *(Points to her head.)* Up here you know...

(Points to her heart.)

In here you’re still numb. Nancy, she is not a child you are resurrecting.

(Flashback.)

LARA: Do you miss your little boy?

(Restore.)

NANCY: Are you done?

FRAN: Are you?

NANCY: Not quite. I’ve invited Sandy over. Excuse me, that’s inaccurate. I’ve invited Kirsten, Lara, Beth, Kelly and Trevin over for some yuletide cheer.

(Silence.)

That's right. I've invited a patient to my house. Something else you can discuss with the board.

FRAN: Nancy...I'm not the enemy.

NANCY: Oh, yes, Fran...you are.

(Pause. FRAN exits. NANCY stands in the middle of the room. After a long moment:)

BETH: *(OFFSTAGE)* Doctor Ellis?

NANCY: In the living room.

(BETH enters.)

How are you?

BETH: I saw Doctor Holt on the way in. Did she tell you?

NANCY: Yes.

(TREVIN bolts down from the unit and piggybacks BETH.)

BETH AND TREVIN: I am so fucking humiliated.

(BETH breaks away.)

BETH: She's going crazy in here.

NANCY: Trevin...? Trevin!

(TREVIN switches with BETH.)

TREVIN: Look what you did to me!

NANCY: I know what you must be feeling. But you can still go to school.

TREVIN: On what? Air? I go back to school in three weeks! Where are we supposed to get the money in three weeks, "Doctor?" Any bright ideas, "Doctor?"

NANCY: Perhaps it would be a good idea to take off a semester.

TREVIN: Do I have a choice? You don't understand! I have to go to school! I have to!

NANCY: I do understand, but I'm suggesting that——

TREVIN: Don't play analyst with me! You don't know what's it's like in here!

NANCY: Trevin, the process you're going through——

TREVIN: Oh, stop it! Where do you get all this psychological bull-shit? You stand there clutching at ancient doctrine that might have worked with your other pathetic patients, but not with this one, Doctor, because this time you-don't-know. You don't know anything! God, you're a lousy shrink because you haven't the slightest idea what to do right now. Do you? Do you! You lose all your children, don't you, "Doctor?" God, you are inadequate!

(BETH switches with TREVIN.)

BETH: I'm so sorry, Doctor Ellis. You're a wonderful doctor and I didn't say that, I promise I didn't. I would never say anything——

(KELLY switches with BETH and grabs NANCY'S book.)

KELLY: Hey! Nancy Drew! I love her! Can I read it, can I, Doc?

NANCY: Kelly, where's Trevin?

KELLY: Did you get me a present? I got you a present.

NANCY: Kelly!

TREVIN: *(To KIRSTEN.)* How could you let this happen?

KELLY: It's not really a present.

TREVIN: This is my life! It's all I have!

KIRSTEN: I know.

NANCY: Kelly!

(KELLY drops the book and switches with BETH.)

BETH: My head...

TREVIN: I need this... I need this.

NANCY: Beth? Kelly?

KIRSTEN: Let Doctor Ellis handle it.

TREVIN: "Handle it!" She fucking did it!

(TREVIN violently switches with BETH.)

God-damn-you!

(She backs NANCY to the wall.)

You came in here and thought you knew. You thought you were so fucking smart! Just open it up and fix it!

Well, you fixed it! Now I have nothing! Nothing!

NANCY: Trevin, I'll talk to them, I'll—

TREVIN: This time you're not killing Jonathan, you're killing me! And I can't do anything about it. I see you coming and I can't stop you. I can't do anything. I can't even cry! I don't know how.

(LARA cries.)

Somebody shut her up!

(BETH switches with TREVIN as LARA continues to cry.)

NANCY: Trevin. Trevin, come back. I need you to talk to me.

KIRSTEN: Trevin, sit down.

(TREVIN paces.)

NANCY: Please! Trevin!

KELLY: *(To TREVIN.)* Just tell them you need our scholarship!

TREVIN: Shut the fuck up.

KELLY: Why is everybody yelling at me!?

NANCY: Trevin!

TREVIN: I won't let it happen! I won't slip into oblivion!

(TREVIN runs to the upper most edge of the unit.)

BETH: No!

NANCY: What is it? What's happening? Talk to me!

(Everyone talks in one chaotic mess. LARA begins singing, then slowly crosses to BETH and piggybacks with her. They sing inaudibly as the rest yammer. NANCY moves closer to listen. Then:)

KIRSTEN: Quiet. Quiet!

(Everyone quiets down.)

BETH AND LARA: *(Anxiously singing.)* "What child is this who lay to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping."

NANCY: That's a pretty song.

(LARA and BETH nod as they switch. LARA sits on the floor as BETH returns to the unit.)

LARA: *(Singing.)* "What child is this—"

NANCY: Do you like Christmas?

(LARA shakes her head.)

LARA: “——Who lay to rest,” “On Mary’s lap is sleeping.”

NANCY: How come?

(LARA shrugs.)

LARA: “What child is this who lay to rest, On---

NANCY: Did something happen at Christmas? ”

(LARA stops.)

NANCY: Something did happen at Christmas, didn’t it?

KIRSTEN: Trevin. Turn around.

(TREVIN hesitates, then turns upstage. Her light dims.)

NANCY: Lara? Can you tell me?

(LARA pulls away.)

No one’s here but me. Nobody’s going to hurt you. Tell me what happened.

LARA: Th-th-they---he g-g-g-gives...

NANCY: Shh, it’s okay. Lara, I need to talk to Kirsten.

LARA AND KIRSTEN: Yes, Doctor Ellis.

NANCY: Kirsten...I want you to tell Lara to let you see what’s happening and to let you talk for her. Okay?

KIRSTEN: Yes, Doctor.

(To LARA.)

Lara?

(LARA looks to KIRSTEN.)

Is it all right?

(LARA nods.)

Then let me see...

KIRSTEN AND LARA: It’s Christmas. Lots of sparkly things. I reach up to touch——

(LARA winces.)

NANCY: What is it?

KIRSTEN: Aunt Cee slaps me.

LARA: No, no... Go ‘way.

NANCY: What do you see?

KIRSTEN AND LARA: Aunt Celia’s friend Harold, he wants me to call him "Uncle Harold.”

NANCY: What is he doing?

KIRSTEN AND LARA: He wants to give me a present. I don’t want it...

KIRSTEN: ...but Aunt Cee hits me hard and I take the box.

NANCY: What’s in it?

KIRSTEN AND LARA: A doll.

NANCY: Do you like it?

(LARA scrunches up her face.)

What’s the matter?

KIRSTEN: He says it has bad blood in it...just like me.

(LARA cowers. In the unit, KIRSTEN touches BETH and KELLY to “see” what’s happening.)

LARA: No! Go ‘way!

(LARA winces.)

Ow! I’m sorry, I’m sorry. Don’t, don’t——

NANCY: It’s all right. Kirsten, tell me what’s happening.

BETH: No, don’t.

KIRSTEN: Uncle Harold wants his present.

KELLY: He’s unzipping his pants...

KIRSTEN: He holds me down and—— Lara...? He touches——

LARA: No, no, no.

KIRSTEN: I tell him to...

KIRSTEN AND LARA: ...go away. Don’t touch.

KIRSTEN: He laughs and pulls down—— Lara, it’s all right. Let me see.

LARA: No, no. Bad, bad, bad blood, bad, go ‘way.

NANCY: Kirsten, what’s happening?

KIRSTEN: Lara, please.

NANCY: Lara, sweetie, it’s all right, nothing bad is——

KIRSTEN: He holds me down—— I see lights and sparkles—— He..

KIRSTEN AND LARA: ...kisses me.

KIRSTEN: And pulls down——

BETH: He’s going to do it in front of everybody.

LARA: No, no, no, no...

KIRSTEN: He wants——

KIRSTEN AND LARA: ...His——

LARA: His, his, no, no, no...

KELLY: They’re all laughing.

LARA: He hits and hits and hits, no, no, bad, bad blood, no, go ‘way, go ‘way, go ‘way, don’t, don’t...

(LARA nears hysteria.)

KIRSTEN: I can’t see, Doctor—— I’m sorry, Doctor.

LARA: Don’t, don’t, no, no, NO——

(Screaming.)

NO!

(LARA falls silent... And slips into catatonia as do BETH and KELLY in the unit. KIRSTEN moves down and switches with LARA who returns to the unit. All except TREVIN are catatonic.)

NANCY: Kirsten...? Lara? Oh, my God.

(She passes her hand in front of KIRSTEN’S face.)

Can you hear me...?

(She snaps her fingers.)

Kirsten!

(She tries again. Nothing.)

Shit.

(TREVIN turns downstage.)

TREVIN: What happened?

NANCY: Lara, it's Doctor Ellis. The bad people are all gone, they won't hurt you.

TREVIN: What happened!

NANCY: Can you hear me?

TREVIN: *(To NANCY.)* What did you do?!

NANCY: I'm just going to lift your arm.

(NANCY lifts KIRSTEN'S lifeless arm. It drops.)

Please...Please, dear God, no.

TREVIN: *(To NANCY.)* You son-of-a-bitch...!

NANCY: You have to tell Lara it's all right. I'll make everything all right.

TREVIN: You can't do this to me...!

NANCY: You can't do this to me...!

TREVIN: *(TREVIN grabs LARA.)* Say something!

LARA AND KIRSTEN: Mama!

(Shocked, TREVIN let's go of LARA, as NANCY looks around.)

NANCY: Jon——?

(A long pause. NANCY rises, lights a cigarette then moves to the phone and dials.)

This is Doctor Ellis...I'm bringing a patient of mine over...Okay.

(She hangs up. Flashback.)

TREVIN: God, you-are-inadequate...

(TREVIN'S light fades. After a moment, so does NANCY'S.)

BLACKOUT

END ACT ONE

21 more pages to the end of Act Two.