

GO LIKE SAINTS

by

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SETTING

Hollywood, California.
Washington, DC.

TIME

1951.

PROCTOR: They think to go like saints. I like not to spoil their names.

DANFORTH: Mr. Proctor, do you think they go like saints?

PROCTOR: This woman never thought she done the Devil's work.

--- *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller, 1953

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

(HENRY and ELIZA in isolation.
LYDIA and NELL in isolation.
Realistic or in space.)

HENRY/NELL

Are you now, or have you ever been, a member of the
Communist Party?

(Beat. LYDIA and ELIZA laugh. Dark on
LYDIA and NELL. HENRY glares at ELIZA.)

ELIZA

All right! All right.

HENRY

Are you now, or have you ever been, a member of the
Communist Party?

(Beat.)

(Beat.)

ELIZA

Can you repeat the question?

(HENRY sighs. Dark on HENRY and ELIZA.
Lights up on NELL and LYDIA.)

NELL

Are you now, or have you ever been, a member of the
Communist Party?

(Lydia takes a sip of her scotch.)

NELL

There will be no clinking of ice cubes on the stand
you know.

(Lydia takes a very obnoxiously clinky
sip.)

NELL

Are you *now*, or have you ever *been*, a member of the
Communist *Party*.

LYDIA

That's a nice inflection, darling, but next time could you try it as if your dog was just hit by a car in front of your very eyes.

NELL

Lydia.

LYDIA

Dig deep.

(NELL sighs. Dark on NELL and LYDIA.
Lights up on HENRY and ELIZA.)

HENRY

Mrs. Roth -

ELIZA

MS. Everett.

HENRY

They're going to call you Mrs. Roth.

ELIZA

Like hell they will.

HENRY

Fine, let's just go through this. Ms. Everett -

ELIZA

Thank you.

HENRY

Ms. Everett, what is your occupation?

ELIZA

I'm a writer.

HENRY

Are you employed in the motion picture industry?

ELIZA

Frequently.

HENRY

Are you currently under contract by Metro Goldwyn Mayer?

ELIZA

After today, we'll see.

HENRY

And you are under contract alongside your partner Henry Roth, who is also your husband, is that right?

ELIZA

...After today, we'll see.

(Dark on Henry and Eliza. Lights up on Nell and Lydia.)

NELL

Ms. Russell, are you a member of the Screen Actors Guild?

LYDIA

So they tell me.

NELL

Ms. Russell, are you a member of the Screen Actors Guild?

LYDIA

(sighs)

Yes.

NELL

Are you currently under contract by Metro Goldwyn Mayer?

LYDIA

These aren't the questions that need *rehearsing*, darling.

NELL

Read that back to me when you're on the stand presented on live television and you can't remember your own name.

LYDIA

There's not a man in America who could forget my name.

NELL

Read *that* back to me in *fifteen* years after you've been blacklisted and all but removed from history.

LYDIA

They'll call you too, you know.

NELL

They don't give a rat's ass about me.

LYDIA

If they call me, they'll call you.

NELLY

If they knew about me, we'd know it by now.

LYDIA

Unless of course they're saving it for a *special occasion*.

(Dark on Lydia and Nell. Lights up on Eliza and Henry.)

ELIZA

I don't want to play anymore.

HENRY

Okay, we'll switch.

ELIZA

I'm going to bed.

HENRY

It could happen any day now. We have to be prepared.

ELIZA

You can't *prepare* for this, Hal. You can't rehearse putting your friends on the chopping block, you can't practice ruining lives, and you *cannot* sit up straight and be a coward at the same time.

(Beat.)

HENRY

Stand tall.

ELIZA

What.

HENRY

Just a small edit. I'd say "you cannot stand tall and be a coward at the same time."

ELIZA

You're a deeply insufferable person, you do know that.

HENRY

I've heard it said.

ELIZA

I'm going to bed. I've got dreams about witch trials
and burning at the stake to get on to.

(Dark on Eliza and Henry. Lights up on
Lydia, now alone, slowly sipping her
scotch.)

(A few beats, then lights shift.)

SCENE TWO

(Eliza and Henry's living room. Music playing on the Victrola. LYDIA stands in the middle of the room, dancing a little. ELIZA fixes drinks and then dances her way to Lydia, handing her one. Lydia puts the script down and they dance with their drinks. Until the DOORBELL RINGS. They freeze. Whoever is closest to the Victrola stops it and then freezes again. The DOORBELL RINGS again. They listen. And listen. They hear a car engine start, wait a moment, then Lydia goes to the window and stealthily peers outside.)

LYDIA

Postman.

(They both breathe a palpable sigh of relief. After another breath, Eliza starts the Victrola again and gradually they get back into dancing with the drinks. This may go on for some time. When the song ends, they collapse on opposite ends of the couch.)

LYDIA

God I miss New York.

ELIZA

Really?

LYDIA

The pulse. The rhythm. That continuous humming...always something thrumming just beneath the surface. Los Angeles just doesn't have that same *energy*.

ELIZA

It has an energy all its own.

LYDIA

Stagnant energy.

ELIZA

It's just because you spend all your time on sound stages, you're not...out on the town.

LYDIA

Are you?

ELIZA

No.

LYDIA

No one is. There's no town. Not in the same way.

ELIZA

We're making magic indoors.

LYDIA

In soundproof rooms. See, it's right there in the name. *Soundproof*.

ELIZA

So go back.

LYDIA

(Scoffs)

Go back.

ELIZA

Go back and do theatre again.

LYDIA

Go back and go broke.

ELIZA

You'd make do.

LYDIA

I could do *one show*, make an appearance, embrace the novelty of it all, then I'd have to come right back here if I wanted to keep up momentum. The stage is where momentum goes to die.

ELIZA

Not if you're making a *career* on the stage.

LYDIA

The stage is merely a stepping stone to the screen for people who've really *got it*.

ELIZA

That's nonsense, Lydia.

LYDIA

It isn't.

ELIZA

If anything, the stage is for talent and the screen is for looks.

LYDIA

I beg your pardon.

ELIZA

What, you can insult the stage but the stage can't insult you?

LYDIA

You insulted me.

ELIZA

You had it coming.

LYDIA

You might try an honest conversation once in a while instead of a five-car pile-up of one liners.

ELIZA

What for?

LYDIA

I don't know, just for fun.

ELIZA

Life is bland, I'm just here to add a little flavor.

LYDIA

If that's all you are, what does that say?

ELIZA

I don't know but everyone *else* ought to say thank you.

(Lydia raises her glass to her then drinks.)

LYDIA

Louis wants to talk to Jack Warner about putting me and Bette in a picture together.

(Eliza sits up and nearly spits out her drink.)

ELIZA

What?

LYDIA

He's absolutely crackers but he's convinced it would be the ultimate cash cow.

ELIZA

So what, they'd co-produce something?

LYDIA

Suppose so.

ELIZA

What on earth -

LYDIA

Like an Olivia de Havilland sort of thing, the things Bette and Olivia have been doing.

ELIZA

To convince the public there *is* a feud between you or to convince them there isn't?

LYDIA

I haven't the slightest.

ELIZA

Was he a few sheets to the wind?

LYDIA

Dead sober.

ELIZA

Would you do it?

LYDIA

I will if she will.

ELIZA

One of you would have to break first.

LYDIA

I know.

ELIZA

So it would never happen.

LYDIA
Never.

ELIZA
Christ, he's mad.

LYDIA
Don't I know it.

(Pause.)

ELIZA
Hal and I could write it.

LYDIA
No.

ELIZA
Why not?

LYDIA
You're too close to it.

ELIZA
Who *wouldn't* be too close to it? A more incestuous place than Hollywood has yet to ever exist.

LYDIA
Anyone who isn't my best friend at the *very* least.

ELIZA
Would give you the advantage though.

LYDIA
You could write it on your own.
Couldn't you?

ELIZA
Certainly I could, but why?

LYDIA
Tickled by the idea of a woman writing a script for two women.

ELIZA
Does stand to reason.

LYDIA
And why not, frankly? If they'll let you do it with Hal. You're the most successful writing team at MGM by

far. Have you ever asked?

ELIZA

Never thought about it.

LYDIA

Really.

ELIZA

Honest.

LYDIA

You're a liar and a bad one. Hasn't there ever been a project you and Hal disagreed on?

ELIZA

Yes, but we just move on to something else if we can't work it out. Dory is fairly lenient with us as long as we keep churning out hits.

LYDIA

What if you wrote something yourself and didn't tell anyone.
Would Hal let you?

ELIZA

Oh, would he *let* me.

LYDIA

Figure of speech.

ELIZA

It isn't actually.

(Beat)

Would he let me put his name on something he had nothing to do with, you mean?

(Lydia nods.)

ELIZA

Hard to say. If he liked it, I suppose. If he thought it would sell.
But I'd have to pull double duty. Work on something with *him* at the same time. He wouldn't give me a moment's peace otherwise, the man simply cannot relax.

LYDIA

Send him off to the south of France.

ELIZA

(Dry)

Yes, why don't I. Why don't I just send him off to the south of France.

LYDIA

Get him out of your hair.

ELIZA

That's not how husbands work, Lydia.

LYDIA

(Drinks)

Well what do I know.

ELIZA

Precious little.

LYDIA

Precious, precious little.

(They clink glasses.)

LYDIA

Worth a shot, no?

ELIZA

It'll never happen.

LYDIA

But just think. If it *did*...

ELIZA

You know what it could be about?

LYDIA

Two aging actresses who can't stand the sight of one another?

ELIZA

You and me.

(Lydia laughs out loud.)

ELIZA

What?
Female friendship.

LYDIA

Female friendship!

In Hollywood!
On the screen!
 Oh, Eliza, you slay me, you absolutely slay me.

ELIZA

One of these days there's going to be a real market for that. Stories about friendship.

LYDIA

Yeah, when the studio system goes under and the Hayes Code dissolves and the interests of all-American filmgoers shifts to anything besides noir, romance, western, and war.

ELIZA

A gal can dream.

LYDIA

Well, sure, but what for?

(Eliza movies closer to her and hooks their arms together.)

ELIZA

A story of two plucky gals, filled with grit and grace, pulling themselves up by the heel-straps, making their way in the hard-knock world of showbiz with mere pennies to their names...

LYDIA

Awful.

ELIZA

Awfully *compelling*. And truthful.

LYDIA

Truthful?! This is the American cinema, Liza.

(Another jazzy song comes on. Eliza gets up and starts dancing with her drink. It's ostentatious and Lydia is shaking her head. Eliza taunts her with her dancing and tries to get her into it. Eventually she succeeds. They dance together.)

(Lights shift.)

SCENE THREE

(HAZEL is sitting at her vanity. She is in her mid-twenties and a fake blonde. We watch her put on her makeup, starting with powder - she uses too much and coughs up a cloud of it. Then she continues. Fake eyelashes. A bit too much rouge. Striking red lipstick. Her hands shake as she applies it all. But she tries to build herself up. In more ways than one.)

(Lights shift.)

SCENE FOUR

(Lydia's home in Bel Air. LYDIA, ELIZA, HENRY, NELL, and HAZEL are setting up the dining room for dinner. Bringing in food, plates, and general dinnerware, all while dancing and drinking, moving in and out of the off-stage kitchen. Lydia takes every chance she gets to opt out, standing in a corner with her drink until she gets pulled back in.)

They all sit around the table with drinks. Lydia is standing in the corner.)

NELL

You going to join us, Lydia?

(Lydia moves to the table.)

LYDIA

You seem to be enjoying yourselves just fine without me.

ELIZA

Oh! Please! Can we have one meal without the Magnificent Martyr of MGM in attendance?

LYDIA

The Magnificent Martyr of MGM is the one hosting this little shindig, might I remind you.

HENRY

Lurking in the corner with a double scotch and soda counts as "hosting" now?

LYDIA

Since when am I on trial?

NELL

It's only a matter of time before we're *all* on trial.

HENRY

1951, the year it became a crime to believe in something.

HAZEL

Enough of that talk for tonight, all right?

ELIZA

I've had enough of Joe McCarthy for a lifetime.

HAZEL

Mother, I'm serious.

ELIZA

Yes, dear, I see that.

(Eliza drinks and makes a face at
Nell.)

HENRY

(to Hazel)

What are you so antsy about anyway?

ELIZA

She's given up cigarettes.

HAZEL

Just on the weekends!

NELL

And here I thought weekends were supposed to be fun
and relaxing.

HAZEL

I only smoke on the weekends. I've given them up
during the week.

HENRY

And from now on we only visit you on weekends!

HAZEL

Fine by me.

LYDIA

Careful now, Hazel, you know what they say: smoke
less, drink more.

HENRY

Who says that?

HAZEL

I find I've been drinking less, actually.

ELIZA

What on earth do you do with your hands?

HAZEL

Knit.

NELL

Knit! How quaint.

(They all chuckle.)

HAZEL

Don't make fun.

HENRY

Pardon us, Hazey, it's just so easy.

HAZEL

You know it's rather tiresome being the youngest person in the room.

ELIZA

Darling, you've been the youngest person in the room for twenty-five years, surely you've developed an immunity to the heavy burden that is youth.

HENRY

I remember it fondly.
The confidence. The ignorance. The raw animal magnetism.

(Eliza, Lydia, and Nell all raise dubious eyebrows at him.)

HENRY

You can all fuck right off.

NELL

Henry, in the twenty years I've known you -

LYDIA

In the *thirty* years I've known you -

ELIZA

The magnetism is much more raw *now*, honey, don't you worry.

(She kisses his cheek.)

NELL

Yes. *That's* what we were going to say.

HENRY

Why is it that I'm always at a table full of women?

LYDIA

Because you have no friends of your own.

HENRY

You have no friends outside of this table.

ELIZA

(To end this)

Fine thing you both have me then, isn't it!

(The doorbell RINGS. Hazel jumps up.)

HAZEL

Oh that's him!

(They all sit upright in alarm.)

ELIZA

That's who?

HENRY

Him?

NELL

Has she invited Ralph again?

HENRY

Didn't you hear? Ralph is history. She's got herself another agent.

ELIZA

A real agent.

NELL

Bravo.

(Hazel has disappeared into the hallway to answer the door. Eliza looks at Lydia.)

ELIZA

You're awfully quiet.

NELL

You know who it is, don't you?

LYDIA

I don't know a thing. Hazel said she had an announcement and wanted to invite a special guest. That's all.

HENRY

That sounds a lot like a thing.

LYDIA

Godmothers don't ask questions.

NELL

Right, that's what parents are for.

HENRY

Too many questions get you into trouble. This is America, don't you know.

(Hazel re-enters with CLIFF, who wears a crisp seersucker suit. Lydia and Nell stand. Henry and Eliza stay seated, and exchange pointed glances.)

HAZEL

Everyone, this is Cliff. Cliff, this is everyone!

NELL

How do you do, Cliff. Nell.

LYDIA

Pleasure to meet you.

CLIFF

Pleasure's mine, ladies, thank you for having me.

(He shakes hands with both of them. Hazel squares in on her still seated parents.)

HAZEL

(hissing slightly)

Oh get up!!

(Henry and Eliza reluctantly stand to greet Cliff.)

ELIZA
Eliza Everett.

HENRY
Henry Roth.

(They each shake hands with Cliff.)

CLIFF
Cliff Harvey, it's an honor to meet you.

ELIZA
(insouciant)
Yes, isn't it.

(Beat.)

LYDIA
Cliff, please sit.

CLIFF
Thank you.

(They all sit. Hazel pours Cliff a glass of wine while the rest of the table is quiet.)

HENRY
(Thinking)
Cliff Harvey.

(Beat.)

CLIFF
Yes, sir.

HENRY
Cliff Harvey...

LYDIA
Henry, don't let's be mysterious just now.

HENRY
I know the name, why do I know the name.

HAZEL
Cliff's just been elected to Congress, Daddy.

HENRY
Congress.

NELL

A politician.

ELIZA

The *United States* Congress?

CLIFF

...Yes, ma'am. California 40th.

HENRY

Which one is the 40th?

NELL

A politician.

CLIFF

Huntington Park, Maywood, East LA...

HENRY

OK, ok.

NELL

You seem a little young for a Congressman.

CLIFF

I'm thirty-four, ma'am, and not nearly the youngest.

NELL

Call me "ma'am" again and you won't live to be the oldest either.

ELIZA

This is it, Hazel?

HAZEL

What's it?

ELIZA

Your announcement. Is he your announcement?

HAZEL

The mere fact of him, no.

HENRY

(to Cliff)

What do you think about this un-American activities business?

CLIFF

Well -

HAZEL

Daddy, I explicitly told you not to bring that up.
Cliff, don't answer that.

CLIFF

It's all right, I -

HAZEL

Do not answer that.

ELIZA

What's he got to hide?

LYDIA

Maybe he's a Communist himself.

(Hazel looks at her, flush with
betrayal.)

CLIFF

All evidence to the contrary, Ms. Russell.

LYDIA

Lydia.

HENRY

Evidence, what evidence? I wasn't aware that *evidence*
had a thing to do with it.

HAZEL

Daddy, I swear to god.

HENRY

That's *your* business. Now -

ELIZA

Oh, let it go, Hal. Hazel's right, it's no fun amongst
mixed company anyway.

NELL

After all, whom can you trust.

HENRY

I trust everyone at this table. That is, almost
everyone.

LYDIA

I'm sorry I said anything, for god's sakes let's
change the subject.

ELIZA

We're all waiting for your announcement, Hazel.

HAZEL

Not now.

ELIZA

Oh, come on.

HAZEL

Not now.

ELIZA

Fine. Who has something interesting to say?

NELL

You're barking up the wrong table, Eliza.

CLIFF

Would you tell us about your next picture, Ms. Ru -
Lydia?

LYDIA

(Demurely)

What, and bore everyone to death?

ELIZA

(deadpan)

No. Please. Tell us.

LYDIA

Well, Louis B. Mayer came to me and he said, "Lyddie,
you have to trust me here, this one's gonna put *gold*
right into your hands."

CLIFF

Meaning -

ELIZA

(bored)

An Academy Award, what else.

LYDIA

And I said, "Louis, you know that's not what I'm
after" -

ELIZA

Ha!

LYDIA

But I tell you, the script is really something special.

ELIZA

Oh is it.

LYDIA

She's just sore because she didn't write it.

ELIZA

Hal and I don't *write* garbage.

NELLY

I read the script the other night - it really is something.

(Eliza drinks.)

LYDIA

Cary Grant thinks so too.

CLIFF

Really, Cary Grant?

LYDIA

Well, who else.

CLIFF

Boy, what a life.

LYDIA

You know, there might even be a role for Hazel.

CLIFF

Oh...

ELIZA

Christ.

HAZEL

Don't tease!

LYDIA

I'm just putting it out there into the universe. And maybe into George Cukor's brain.

ELIZA

Oh, of course Cukor's directing.

(Eliza gets up and exits into the kitchen with her drink.)

HAZEL

(to Cliff)

Mother doesn't much like surprises.

HENRY

(getting up)

Mother's also had a bit too much to drink.

(Henry exits into the kitchen after Eliza.)

NELL

(to Cliff)

We're all a little on edge these days. What with, you know...

(Hazel glares at her.)

NELL

I didn't say it!

CLIFF

I understand. It's a difficult time.

(Beat.)

HAZEL

I'll go see what's keeping them.

(Hazel exits into the kitchen.)

CLIFF

So, Nell - can I call you Nell?

NELL

I insist.

CLIFF

What is it you do?

NELL

I work in the Publicity office at Warner Brothers.

CLIFF

That must be exciting.

NELL

It's a grind but it pays the bills.

CLIFF

I bet you meet lots of interesting people.

(Nell and Lydia share a smile. Cliff
clocks it.)

NELL

It's mostly a lot of diva-wrangling and devising with
livelier names for very dull newly discovered starlets
from the Midwest. If I had a nickel for every "Sarah
Smith" who walked into my office...

(Lydia leans in.)

LYDIA

So now that the controversy police is in the other
room -- have you met our pal Joe yet?

CLIFF

You mean -

LYDIA

The savior of the western world, the minister of
morality, our country's conscience, Senator McCarthy.

CLIFF

I've met the man once or twice.

NELL

(Dry)

And is he as thoroughly charming in person as he in
the newsreels?

LYDIA

You know, we never asked, Cliff, are you a Republican
or a Democrat?

CLIFF

I'm a Republican.

LYDIA

Ah.

NELL

Hmm.

(Beat.)

LYDIA

And how's that going for you?

CLIFF

I was elected to Congress in the great state of California, so quite well, I'd say.

NELL

And what's your stance on all this un-American Activities nonsense?

CLIFF

Well I'm against it.

LYDIA

The Committee.

CLIFF

No, the Activities.

(Beat.)

CLIFF

I'm a member.

NELL

...not of the Communist Party.

CLIFF

Of the Committee.

(Hazel enters, dragging in Henry and Eliza.)

HAZEL

All right now, I've decided just to get on with it!

CLIFF

Hazel -

HAZEL

Cliff and I are getting married!

(All are stunned. Lights shift.)

SCENE FIVE

(Henry and Eliza's office. There are two desks pushed two together, each with a typewriter, facing each other. HENRY sits on one side, typing rapidly. ELIZA sits on the other, leaning back in her chair, feet up on her desk. Every once in a while, Henry will stop typing, look at her, then start again. Until:)

HENRY

All right, out with it.

ELIZA

Hmm?

HENRY

Since when are you a silent partner.

(Eliza looks at him, then puts her feet down.)

ELIZA

Hazel doesn't know, does she.

HENRY

Of course not.

ELIZA

You're sure.

HENRY

Sure I'm sure, aren't you?

ELIZA

Evidently not.

HENRY

Hazel does not know.

(Beat.)

ELIZA

He might.

HENRY

What good would it do him to get mixed up with Hazel if he knew?

ELIZA

Maybe it's espionage. Two can play at that game you know.

HENRY

I'm aware.

ELIZA

I'm just saying -

HENRY

He does not know.

ELIZA

We can't be sure.

HENRY

If he knew, if he had any evidence at all, don't you think we'd have been called upon by now?

ELIZA

I don't know, Hal, and neither do you.

HENRY

Then it's no use speculating.

ELIZA

What do you suggest we do?

HENRY

Oh, I don't know. Write maybe.

ELIZA

My nerves are too frayed. I'm getting a drink.

(She gets up.)

Want one?

HENRY

At 11am, no thanks.

ELIZA

It's just one drink, Hal, don't be such a pilgrim.

(She exits.)

HENRY
(correcting her)

Puritan!

(Lights shift. Time passes.)

(Henry sits at his desk. Eliza paces
back and forth slowly, drink in hand.)

ELIZA
She hasn't got a goal.

HENRY
He has a goal.

ELIZA
He is not she.

HENRY
They don't both need goals.

ELIZA
That's not what Roz will say when she reads it.

HENRY
Roz has all the good lines.

ELIZA
But no character development.

HENRY
That's not true.

ELIZA
We've given it all to Jimmy's character.

HENRY
Well it's his story.

ELIZA
And what is she?

HENRY
Part of his story.

ELIZA
It's 1951. Can they not *both* have a story?

(Henry sighs.)

HENRY

All right so her goal is to get married, to marry him.

(Eliza raises a strongly worded eyebrow at him. Lights shift and time passes.)

(Eliza sits at her desk, with a drink, staring. Henry is typing at her typewriter, standing.)

ELIZA

(a bit tipsy)

What do you think happens when two bees show up to pollinate the same flower?

(Beat. He turns to look at her.)

HENRY

Is that a metaphor?

ELIZA

(Genuinely wondering)

I don't know, is it?

(Henry takes her glass from her and throws back what's left in it. Lights shift. Time passes.)

(Henry and Eliza stand on opposite ends of the room, facing away from each other, deep in thought. A silence. Then they both turn around at the exact same time, poised to speak.)

HENRY

You go.

ELIZA

No, you.

HENRY

I insist.

ELIZA

It's probably nothing.

HENRY

Tell me anyway.

(Beat.)

HENRY

All right I'll go.
 (Beat)
 It's gone.

ELIZA

Mine too.

(Lights shift. Time passes.)

(Henry and Eliza are making out on top of both desks. Lights shift. Time passes.)

(Henry and Eliza sit at their respective desks, a little disheveled. They are both either deep in thought or deeply bored of their own thoughts. Silence.)

ELIZA

She's had an abortion.

HENRY

What.

ELIZA

Maybe she's had an abortion.

HENRY

We can't -

ELIZA

Well, we won't say she's had an abortion, it'll be implied.

HENRY

Liza, we can't *imply* -

ELIZA

Oh like Mayer's gonna get it.

HENRY

He might. And if he doesn't, someone else will, and that someone else will tell him.

ELIZA

Roz will like it.

HENRY

Roz doesn't have us under contract.

ELIZA

Worst case scenario they make us cut it. Best case scenario we give Roz a helluva scene to play.

(Beat.)

HENRY

You really want to draw any more attention to ourselves than we have to? Right now?

(Beat.)

ELIZA

If this is our last picture we might as well go out with a bang.

HENRY

Or a coat hanger.

(Beat.)

HENRY

This is not our last picture.

ELIZA

Okay.

HENRY

It's not.

ELIZA

Fine.

(Beat. Eliza starts typing feverishly. Henry watches. Then she looks up suddenly.)

ELIZA

What would you say if I wrote something on my own?

HENRY

A picture?

ELIZA

For instance.

HENRY

I think I'd ask why.

ELIZA

Say it's a picture suited to me, less suited to you.

HENRY

(Suspicious)

Say.

ELIZA

Yes.

(Beat.)

HENRY

I'd have questions.

ELIZA

...Mm.

HENRY

...Mm-*hmm*.

(Beat.)

(Eliza goes back to typing feverishly.
Henry watches.)

(Lights shift.)

SCENE SIX

(An outdoor Hollywood set. LYDIA sits in her chair, a script in her lap, sunglasses on, in costume. HAZEL enters like a bandit on the run and pulls an empty chair toward LYDIA.)

HAZEL

I didn't know.

(Lydia turns her head to look at her.)

LYDIA

I believe you.

HAZEL

(suddenly haughty)

Mother doesn't.

(Beat.)

LYDIA

You've broken things off?

HAZEL

Broken things off?

LYDIA

With Joe McCarthy, Jr.

HAZEL

...It wasn't his choice.

LYDIA

He's a Republican Congressman, Hazel. If you don't think the Un-American Activities Committee was first on his list -

HAZEL

It wasn't! He swears it. Says it was the bottom of the barrel. He has zero seniority so he gets last pick.

LYDIA

Don't be naive, Hazel.

HAZEL

I have no reason to doubt him.

LYDIA

Aside from all the reasons you have to doubt him.

HAZEL

I love him.

LYDIA

(sighs)

You've known him six months.

HAZEL

What's that got to do with it?

LYDIA

The man had a whole life before you knew him.

HAZEL

You had a whole life before I knew *you*.

LYDIA

I'm not on a Congressional committee that promises to destroy not only your livelihood but that of everyone around you.

(Beat.)

HAZEL

I really thought you'd understand.

LYDIA

Based on what exactly.

HAZEL

You've always understood before. When they didn't.

(Beat.)

LYDIA

I like my job, Hazel. And not only do I like it, but I don't know how to *do* anything else. Take it away from me, and what do I got?

HAZEL

No one's going to take it away from you.

LYDIA

Tell that to the Ten. And not a one of them was even
(lowers her voice)
homosexual.

(Beat.)

HAZEL

He won't tell. I won't let him tell.

LYDIA

For god's sake, Hazel, this isn't a Frank Capra picture, he's a politician. His one professional goal is to *get ahead*. They're going to call me to testify, no question about it, and when they do, little girl, *when they do*...the man won't be able to help himself.

(Beat.)

HAZEL

...It's not as if I have a *choice*.

LYDIA

Be careful who you say that to in this town.

(Beat.)

HAZEL

You really will like him if you give him a chance.

LYDIA

Is it *worth* it, Hazel?

(Beat.)

LYDIA

Love isn't the only thing, you know.

(Beat. Hazel gets up and scurries away. Lydia doesn't watch her. She turns back to her script. Lights shift.)

SCENE SEVEN

(Lydia's home. LYDIA sits with ELIZA. Both are sprawled out in the living room, drinks in hand.)

(An inebriated silence.)

ELIZA

We could do what the Barzmans did with Bernard Vorhaus.

LYDIA

What?

ELIZA

Switch houses.

LYDIA

Switch houses? To what end, pray tell.

ELIZA

Their whole families switched houses to avoid the marshals. They'd show up with a subpoena at Bernard's house, and Ben Barzman would say "nope, no Vorhaus here." Show up with a subpoena at the Barzmans' and, "nope, no Barzmans here." Took the marshals weeks to figure it out and by then they'd all fled the country.

LYDIA

You writers are all so clever.

ELIZA

Well, we're the ones with our heads on the chopping blocks. You don't see Bette Davis up there getting the third degree, do you.

LYDIA

(scoffs)

Bette Davis.

(She drinks.)

LYDIA

Actors could never go to meetings anyway without being recognized.

ELIZA

Who cared about being recognized in 1937? I didn't.

The Russians were our *allies*.

LYDIA

Avoid political allegiances altogether. That's what you gotta do when you're in the public eye.

ELIZA

Then don't be friends with writers. We actually *have* convictions.

LYDIA

You can have convictions without putting up a neon sign somewhere along the 101.

ELIZA

Can you?

LYDIA

Oh, skip it.

(Quiet.)

ELIZA

I'm trying to talk Hal into Paris.

LYDIA

...Into Paris *what*.

ELIZA

Moving.

LYDIA

Moving to Paris.

ELIZA

They have pictures in Paris. French cinema is really on the rise.

LYDIA

Hal doesn't speak French.

ELIZA

I'll teach him.

LYDIA

You try to teach that man something he doesn't know and you'll end up divorced.

ELIZA

Beats jail.

LYDIA

They're not going to put a woman in jail.

ELIZA

Tell that to Ethel Rosenberg.

(That stings. Both of them.)

LYDIA

Jesus.

(They both drink.)

LYDIA

You still on the outs with Hazel?

ELIZA

Listen. I know you're close, I know you get a real rise out of taking her side over ours, but see it from our point of view: I can think of no better revenge to take on one's parents than putting their beliefs, their entire worldview on trial. Hazel's not an innocent. I love the girl, but she's crafty. Actually, no buts, *and*. I love the girl *and* she's crafty. I'm very proud of that. But it also means I don't trust her worth a dime, or even a nickel. Her trust is worth a penny on a good day and I'm saving mine.

LYDIA

The kid's not looking for *revenge*, Liza. You and Hal may not be her favorite people on the whole earth but she's not out to get you.

ELIZA

We'll revisit the subject when my subpoena comes in.

LYDIA

You've only dodged it this long only because you don't put your political convictions on the *page*. You write pictures for all of America's sweethearts. Witty banter, no propaganda.

ELIZA

Not like Trumbo was goddamn Leni Riefenstahl.

LYDIA

I'm asking you to be realistic.

ELIZA

That's not my job.

LYDIA

Yeah, and pretty soon no one's gonna hire you to do that job.

ELIZA

You've had one too many.

LYDIA

So have you.

(Beat. They don't drink. Beat.)

LYDIA

You know, it's possible Hazel's boy is on the side of the heretics.

ELIZA

He's a Republican.

LYDIA

He's from California.

ELIZA

So's Richard Nixon.

(They drink.)

ELIZA

So you and Nell.

LYDIA

Don't ask.

ELIZA

Back together?

LYDIA

Eliza.

ELIZA

What.

LYDIA

Now's not exactly the best time for us to be, you know.

ELIZA

Rekindling old flames.

LYDIA
We're friends now. And friends only.

ELIZA
Good. You should lay low.

(Beat.)

LYDIA
Can you imagine if someone ever said that to you?

ELIZA
"Lay low"?

LYDIA
The sentiment behind it.

ELIZA
You mean if somebody ever told me I couldn't have sex with Hal or I'd end up in jail?

(Beat. They drink. Beat.)

ELIZA
Would you do it? If they knew. If they threatened to expose you. Would you name names?

LYDIA
(wearily)
I don't know, Liza. I don't know a whole lot of Communist sympathizers anyway.

ELIZA
You know two.

(Beat.)

LYDIA
What will you say. When they ask you. Plead the Fifth? Make a statement about moral ambiguity. Insult the Committee.

(Beat.)

ELIZA
I don't know, I'm thinking about just getting up on the table and tap dancing.

LYDIA
Ooh, good, that's good.

ELIZA

You?

LYDIA

Might throw my arms around a few Committee members and sing "Danny Boy."

ELIZA

Careful, I hear you can now get arrested for being Irish too.

LYDIA

And short, being short is out now.

ELIZA

Liking jazz, that'll get you thrown right out of the country.

(They smile at each other, then drink.)

ELIZA

I've started something.

LYDIA

(Slightly inebriated)

What?

ELIZA

For you and Bette.

(Lydia sits up.)

LYDIA

Have you talked to Mayer?

ELIZA

Not yet.

LYDIA

Well how much've you got?

ELIZA

Not much. Few pages. Vague outline of an idea. Possible treatment in the works.

LYDIA

What's it about?

ELIZA

I told you what it's about.

LYDIA
No.

ELIZA
Us.

LYDIA
Oh for christ's sake.

ELIZA
Can't get it out of my head.

LYDIA
But the truth. The truth is so *boring*.

ELIZA
Not the way I write it.

LYDIA
The way I *lived* it, it was.

ELIZA
I'm giving you better dialogue. You were a bit clumsy then.

LYDIA
Oh like you were the quip queen.

ELIZA
I was.

LYDIA
Have you told Hal?

ELIZA
He was there.

LYDIA
About the script.

ELIZA
Oh. No, not as such.

LYDIA
Not as such.

ELIZA
Not like it'll ever be green-lit.

LYDIA

If it's good enough.

ELIZA

It is not and will never be a meritocracy. Of course, if they put me on the stand...

(Pause. Lydia is suspiciously quiet.
Eliza eyes her.)

ELIZA

What.

LYDIA

What? Nothing.

ELIZA

Lydia.

LYDIA

Nothing, it was just nice to talk about something else for a change.

(A pause in which they are each in very different worlds.)

ELIZA

You know what's really starting to get me?

LYDIA

(Taking a sip)

What's that.

ELIZA

As much as we like to pretend otherwise, it's become an every man for himself sort of shindig.

LYDIA

Could argue that it *has* to be, really.

ELIZA

Everyone's out here trying to figure out how to save *themselves*. No one's given a thought to how to *stop it*.

LYDIA

How to stop it.

ELIZA

I mean, where does it end? With half the country in

jail? And *then* what?

LYDIA

These kinds of questions cannot be *answered*. Therefore it's unclear exactly what the problem is that needs to be *solved*.

ELIZA

...Not sure I can live with that response if I'm being honest.

LYDIA

What other option do you have?

(A pause as before. Then Eliza gets up suddenly.)

ELIZA

We should just eat without Hal. No sense in waiting any longer.

(She exits quickly into the kitchen. Lydia throws back the rest of her drink.)

(Lights shift.)

SCENE EIGHT

(The same Hollywood set. Outdoors. HAZEL sits in a director's chair, a script in her lap. She holds up a compact and checks her makeup. Her script is unopened.)

(CLIFF enters in a suit and comes up behind her.)

CLIFF

Good god, is that rising Hollywood starlet Hazel Alexander?!

(Hazel is startled, then laughs.)

HAZEL

Oh, you.

(He kisses her.)

HAZEL

What are you doing here?

CLIFF

Got back into town early, wanted to see my girl.

HAZEL

Lucky girl.

CLIFF

Lucky *me*. When do you knock off?

HAZEL

Not for a while, I'm afraid. We lost a few hours of daylight with that freak rainstorm earlier.

CLIFF

My plane nearly couldn't land!

HAZEL

So funny how no one ever knows what to do when it rains in Los Angeles.

CLIFF

Every time's like the first time.

HAZEL

What brings you back to town so early?

CLIFF

Got lonely is all.

HAZEL

Since when do you have time to be lonely?

CLIFF

Since I met you.

HAZEL

Not sure if I find that sweet or sad.

CLIFF

Wouldn't be the first time they went hand in hand.

(A bell RINGS. Film set commotion.)

HAZEL

I better go over these sides a bit before they call me back.

CLIFF

Pick you up for dinner?

HAZEL

If we finish for the day in time, sure! I'll give you a ring?

CLIFF

You'd better.

(She smiles. He kisses her cheek.)

HAZEL

Cliff. Are there rules? About family members?

CLIFF

Where, honey.

HAZEL

Family of Committee members being called to testify. Is that a...conflict of interest?

(Beat.)

CLIFF

No.

(Beat.)

HAZEL
Will it be long now?

CLIFF
No. Not long.

HAZEL
How many will there be?

CLIFF
You know I can't say.

HAZEL
More than last time?

CLIFF
(A hesitant nod)
More than last time.

HAZEL
We should get on with it then. Don't you think?

CLIFF
...You mean the wedding.

HAZEL
We should do it now.

(Beat)
We may not be able to later.

(Beat. Lights shift.)

SCENE NINE

(Lydia's home, shortly after Scene Six. The living room is empty. Off-stage, we hear LYDIA and HENRY in the foyer.)

LYDIA

(off-stage)

Well I don't mind telling you old Archie's still got it, you know.

HENRY

(off-stage)

He lets you call him that?

LYDIA

(entering)

"Lets" is perhaps too strong a word. Here he is, Liza!

(LYDIA and HENRY enter. ELIZA enters from the kitchen.)

ELIZA

As I live and breathe.

(He kisses her.)

HENRY

Traffic.

LYDIA

Never heard of it.

ELIZA

"Traffic," he says.

HENRY

I'm the one who was left high and dry for our meeting with Dory so you could come here and...what is it you're doing exactly?

ELIZA

Imbibing heavily.

HENRY

That's right, so you could come here and *imbibe heavily* with Lydia, and now somehow I'm late for someplace I didn't even know I was supposed to *be*

after I was *abandoned* by -

ELIZA

Oh for god's sakes shut up, will you, no one else is as enamored with the sound of your voice as you are.

LYDIA

...I'll go see if I can scrounge up some nibbles.

(Lydia exits into the hallway. Beat.)

ELIZA

She invites us for dinner then has nothing edible in her kitchen.

(Henry glares at Eliza. She holds his gaze, then looks down at her drink.)

ELIZA

I'm sorry.

HENRY

Yes, I'll say.

(She hands him her drink.)

ELIZA

Here, take this.

HENRY

Apology accepted.

(He takes a sip. She goes to the bar to make herself another drink.)

ELIZA

The doorbell rang today.

HENRY

...Yes...

ELIZA

While you were at the Brown Derby with Leo and Bill Holden, the doorbell rang.

HENRY

So I've gathered.

(He goes to her, trying to puzzle her out. She takes a sip of her fresh new

drink. Then notices him just looking at her.)

ELIZA

I snapped, all right?! I was terrified, I swallowed half a Seconal and took to my bed as they say.

(Beat.)

HENRY

...You thought it was a marshal.

ELIZA

I won't be subpoena'd alone, Hal. If I'm going down, I'm taking you with me.

HENRY

You might've said earlier, Liza.

ELIZA

It *could have been* a marshal.

HENRY

If it was, we'd have heard about it by now, I haven't heard about a single subpoena going out today.

(Beat. She tips forward into his chest and he puts his arms around her. After a moment, she pulls back and looks at him.)

HENRY

You've recovered quite well from half a Seconal, I will day.

ELIZA

Layers and layers of powder.

(He kisses her.)

HENRY

I'll be home. I promise. Whenever it happens, it will happen to us both.

ELIZA

It won't happen at all if we away to Paris.

HENRY

If we "away to Paris," we'll have a whole other set of problems on our hands.

ELIZA

What, like which adorable *patisserie* to frequent?
Where to buy the chic-est clothes? How long to walk
hand-in-hand along the Seine at dusk?

(Beat.)

HENRY

You wanna go to Paris?

ELIZA

I'd like to *breathe* once in a while.

(LYDIA enters.)

LYDIA

All right, I've got *cheese*, I wouldn't call it a
cheese *plate*, though it is *on* a plate, there's no
crackers, no nothing, I've barely even sliced it up
for you.

HENRY

What a charming hostess.

ELIZA

A regular Margo Channing in our midst.

LYDIA

Eliza, do you *hate* me?

HENRY

Lydia, if you don't mind, I think I'm going to take my
wife out to dinner.

(Eliza makes a surprised face at Lydia,
who rolls her eyes.)

LYDIA

You two are much more fun when you're fighting.

ELIZA

Why don't you go on and call Nell to come over?

HENRY

There's an idea.

LYDIA

Oh, get out, the both of you.

(Eliza gathers her things, then goes to

kiss Lydia's cheek.)

ELIZA

Thanks for the drinks, darling.

LYDIA

(good-natured)

Get out.

(ELIZA and HENRY exit. LYDIA sits for a moment with her drink, then gets up and finds her script. She sits back down with it, trying to study it. But she's already had a few too many and it's a no-go. She puts the script down. She walks around the room aimlessly. Then she stands still in the middle of the room deep in thought. Then she goes to the phone, and dials.)

LYDIA

(into the phone)

It's Lydia Russell. Fine, fine. How much longer? Look, it's one thing to wait in suspense to find out if it's *going* to happen, it's another thing entirely to -- I understand that. All right. All right.

(She hangs up the phone. Lights shift.)

SCENE TEN

(ELIZA and HENRY's living room. Glenn Miller is playing on the Victrola, and they are slow dancing close together in the middle of the room.)

ELIZA

Think of all the cafes...the bread...the wine, Hal, think of the wine.

HENRY

(chuckling)

We have all those things here.

ELIZA

Bite your tongue!

HENRY

It's not worth it. You wanna go to Paris, we'll go for vacation, it's not worth...

ELIZA

What? What would we be giving up exactly?

HENRY

If you're not sure what it is we'd be giving up then I'm not sure why you're so worried about testifying in the first place.

(Beat.)

ELIZA

Stop talking.

HENRY

Fine.

(They dance.)

HENRY

This was always what you wanted, Liza. From the time I met you. To live here and write pictures. If we give all that up, how do you qualify the last twenty years?

ELIZA

You don't qualify. You just keep going. Life is not one place or one thing, it's...

(she falters)

HENRY

It's what. Please, tell me more about what life is.

ELIZA

I'm saying there's no reason it has to be like this forever. There are other places, other things. We could write a novel.

HENRY

Not writing a novel with you.

ELIZA

Hey now.

HENRY

Pictures are one thing. A novel and I'd kill you.

ELIZA

Don't be so dramatic, Hal, we both know I'd kill you first.

HENRY

That *would* be simpler for me.

ELIZA

Wouldn't it.

(He smiles at her.)

HENRY

I love you.

ELIZA

I know that.

HENRY

I'd marry you again tomorrow but I won't move to Paris.

(Beat.)

ELIZA

Rome?

(A bit of commotion off-stage, then HAZEL enters swiftly.)

HAZEL

Don't worry, I've brought a bottle with me.

(She holds up a bottle of gin. Eliza and Henry separate, and look at her a little flummoxed.)

HENRY

You know, the polite thing to do is *call*.

HAZEL

I won't tell Emily Post if you don't.

HENRY

(grumpy)

I *might*.

(Hazel starts pouring them gin and sodas.)

ELIZA

To what do we owe this great honor.

HAZEL

I'd like to clear the air.

(Henry and Eliza exchange suspicious glances.)

ELIZA

Please provide a context, dear, the air is quite polluted at the moment.

(Hazel hands them both glasses.)

HAZEL

I'm sorry I sprung Cliff on you. I should have introduced you sooner, done the whole thing properly.

(Henry and Eliza do not know what to say.)

HAZEL

All right?

HENRY

We're waiting for a "but."

(Beat.)

HAZEL

But you could be more supportive.

ELIZA

And there it is.

(Eliza goes to sit down. Henry sits on the edge of her chair.)

HENRY

What are we supporting exactly, Hazel? Your marriage to a man we hardly know? In fact could hardly know less?

HAZEL

My happiness.

ELIZA

Bit abstract.

HENRY

A man who's on the side of government fascists, who in fact - actually, no, not merely on the side of our government fascists but a government fascist himself.

HAZEL

There are reasonable-minded human beings on the Committee.

HENRY

Name one.

HAZEL

He's just doing his job, Daddy.

HENRY

So was Eichmann.

HAZEL

Oh for Pete's sake.

ELIZA

Hazel, all your father's trying to say is that your fiancé is ruining this country and desecrating everything it has ever stood for and if he ever comes near me again I'll put arsenic in his tea. Is that so hard to understand?

HAZEL

This isn't fair. I brought *gin*.

HENRY

Gin may be mother's milk, my dear, but it is not a lobotomy.

ELIZA

Which your fiancé should consider, by the way.

HAZEL

You see? This is why you're only just meeting him. This is why I never come around anymore. You're thoroughly impossible to talk to, it's like trying to run a marathon with Laurel and Hardy.

HENRY

A healthy dollop of self-preservation is a key component of old age.

ELIZA

Develops with time. Exacerbated by emotional trauma inflicted upon one by one's daughter.

(Hazel steels herself and takes a deep breath.)

HAZEL

What exactly is it that I have to do to be taken seriously by you two? You sabotage my career, my relationships -

HENRY

I strenuously object.

ELIZA

Apathy is very different from sabotage, my dear.

HAZEL

I don't want apathy! You're my parents, I want...enthusiasm, compassion, maybe a hint of *support* on occasion.

HENRY

Perhaps when you start making better *choices*...

HAZEL

What's a better choice then? Tell me 'cause I'm stumped. What would it take?

(A silence. Henry and Eliza attempt to communicate silently but there's some sort of block and it leaves them both

highly unsettled. And once again not focused on Hazel.)

HAZEL

That's it, I'm leaving, and I'm taking the bottle with me.

HENRY

By all means, we have buckets more where that came from. Bathtubs, some might say.

HAZEL

Jail might be the best place for you two.

ELIZA

We'd never survive apart, they'd have to hang us in the town square.

HENRY

Contingent upon whether or not we *float* of course.

(Hazel grabs the bottle of gin and exits in a huff. Eliza and Henry are oddly pleased with themselves, and reassured after their momentary block.)

HENRY

Some of our best work I think.

ELIZA

The lobotomy was a nice touch.

HENRY

Couldn't have done it without your whole arsenic in the tea bit.

(They clink glasses.)

ELIZA

What do you think she'll do next?

HENRY

Elope, I suspect.

ELIZA

Can Congressmen get away with that sort of thing?

HENRY

In order to marry a beautiful young starlet, certainly! It's like free press.

ELIZA

It would be quite glamorous, wouldn't it.

(Eliza gets up and goes to the bar.
Henry watches her.)

HENRY

Liza.

(She looks up and she has tears in her
eyes. He knew she would.)

HENRY

We'll try again tomorrow. She'll understand.

(Eliza puts the glass down and exits
the room. He takes a sip and continues
drinking alone.)

(Lights shift.)

SCENE ELEVEN

(Lydia's living room. LYDIA is making a drink for NELL who stands nearby.)

NELL

So you've been stood up.

LYDIA

I haven't.

NELL

Yes, you have, you've had plans fall through or you've been abandoned somehow, or -- oh, or is it you just don't feel like drinking alone tonight? I've heard them all.

LYDIA

And yet you came.

NELL

And yet.

LYDIA

And not for the first time.

NELL

Oh will you get on with it? I haven't the same patience for your smugness that I used to have.

(Lydia hands her a drink. They clink glasses and each take a sip.)

LYDIA

Sit.

NELL

No thanks.

LYDIA

Please.

(Nell sits on the couch. Lydia stays standing.)

NELL

Take your own advice.

LYDIA

Think I'd better stand.

(Beat.)

NELL

You've done something naughty.

(Lydia says nothing.)

NELL

I'm leaving then.

(Nell gets up.)

LYDIA

They know about us.

(A beat, then Nell sits.)

NELL

Who.

LYDIA

....

NELL

Don't make me drag it out of you, Lydia.

LYDIA

They know. About us.

(A long pause.)

NELL

They can't know a thing unless it's been corroborated.

LYDIA

Wouldn't it be nice if that were true.

NELL

How do you *know* they know.

(Lydia doesn't respond.)

NELL

Was it Hazel's congressional plaything? He came to you.

(Lydia doesn't respond. After a moment,
Nell nods slowly.)

NELL

You made a deal with them.

(Lydia is trembling.)

LYDIA

Yes.

NELL

In exchange for what.

(Lydia doesn't respond.)

NELL

Lydia. *In exchange for what.*

(Lights shift.)

SCENE TWELVE

(Eliza and Henry's living room. ELIZA and HENRY sit on the couch. He faces forward, and she is sitting lengthwise with her feet in his lap. He rubs them absently. They both have a drink in hand and the scene begins with silence. They have probably been silent for some time.)

HENRY

...Did think this night would go differently.

ELIZA

Yes, I know.

HENRY

Still time for it to turn around, you think?

ELIZA

Probably.

HENRY

Must be *some* way for me to turn you on.

ELIZA

Not yet.

HENRY

All right.

(Silence.)

ELIZA

Lydia thinks they already know.

HENRY

Not necessarily.

ELIZA

Thinks it's a foregone conclusion that I'll be served.

HENRY

Lydia is just doing the thing where she hurts you so that she'll hurt less. You know she does that.

(Eliza drinks.)

HENRY

Liza.

(Eliza drinks.)

HENRY

That's why she's made a point of being so close to Hazel.

(Beat)

It's true, you know it is. Nell will say the same.

(Beat)

I adore Lydia, I'm her biggest fan, but she is a deeply unhappy person.

ELIZA

I don't know what that means.

HENRY

It's what it sounds like.

ELIZA

Doesn't sound like *anything*, what is unhappy?

HENRY

It's Lydia.

ELIZA

Hal.

HENRY

She's the most miserable person I know.

ELIZA

Ha. You're forgetting someone.

(Beat.)

HENRY

After Spencer Tracy.

ELIZA

Thank you.

HENRY

God, he's a sad son of a bitch.

ELIZA

It's the Catholicism.

HENRY

Oh I know it's the Catholicism.

ELIZA

And the marriage of course.

HENRY

Well the two go hand in hand in this case. He's Catholic because he's married and he's married because he's Catholic. Poor bastard.

(Eliza holds up her glass.)

ELIZA

To Spence.

(He clinks his against hers.)

HENRY

Short may his misery reign.

(They drink.)

HENRY

Anyway, point being, Lydia doesn't know a goddamn thing, there are no foregone conclusions, and nothing means anything at this point.

ELIZA

Hmm.

HENRY

(glib)

The only thing we know for sure is that *Kazan's* going down and he's going to take us all with him.

ELIZA

We *don't* know that for sure.

HENRY

That man is *absolutely* going to be subpoena'd and when he does he's going to sing like a canary, no question about it.

ELIZA

If *Kazan's* taking us all down, then what is it we're waiting for exactly?

HENRY

(oddly gleeful)

Going to watch it all go down in flames.

ELIZA

Hal. It'll be *us* going down in flames.

HENRY

Right. Well. At least we'll only have Kazan to blame and not each other.

ELIZA

What's that supposed to mean?

HENRY

It means we should have sex while we can.

(Beat.)

ELIZA

You're doing a very bad job of flirting with me.

HENRY

You're my wife, you're supposed to come pre-seduced.

(She raises a strongly worded eyebrow at him.)

HENRY

I seduced you once twenty-five years ago, surely that hasn't worn off *already*.

(The phone RINGS. Henry jumps up to answer it.)

HENRY

(into the phone)

Yes.

Slow down.

Yes, yes, I can hear you.

Say again.

...Okay. All right. Thank you.

(He hangs up the phone. By this time, Eliza has gotten up and been standing anxiously at his side.)

HENRY

Pack a bag.

ELIZA

What?!

HENRY
Pack a bag, come on.

ELIZA
Where are we going?

HENRY
Paris.

(He grabs her hand and starts dragging
her toward the bedroom. The doorbell
RINGS. They freeze. Lights shift.)

SCENE THIRTEEN

(In darkness: a cacophony of phones ringing. Over and over, louder and louder.)

(Lights rise on Hazel, at her vanity, doing her makeup as before. Her telephone rings. She picks it up.)

HAZEL

Yes?

(She listens. She is stricken. Lights shift.)

SCENE FOURTEEN

(ELIZA in isolation, as in Scene One.)

VOICE

Please state your full name for the record.

ELIZA

Elizabeth Jane Everett Roth.

VOICE

Mrs. Roth, what is your occupation?

(Eliza does not respond.)

VOICE

Mrs. Roth.

ELIZA

I don't answer to that name.

(A long pause.)

VOICE

Ms. Everett.

ELIZA

Yes.

VOICE

What is your occupation?

ELIZA

I'm a writer.

VOICE

Are you employed in the motion picture industry?

ELIZA

Frequently.

VOICE

Are you currently under contract by Metro Goldwyn Mayer?

ELIZA

I am.

VOICE

And are you under contract in conjunction with your writing partner Henry Roth, who is also your husband?

ELIZA

Frequently.

VOICE

Frequently?

ELIZA

(acquiescing)

Yes.

VOICE

Are you a member of the Screenwriter's Guild of America?

ELIZA

Yes.

(A long pause.)

VOICE

Are you now or have you ever been a member of the American Communist Party?

(A long pause.)

ELIZA

Yes.

(Blackout. End of Act One.)

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

(LYDIA and ELIZA, each in isolated light as in the top of Act One. Outside of time.)

VOICE

When did you first become a member of the Communist Party of America?

ELIZA

1931.

(Beat.)

VOICE

When you were twenty-five years old.

ELIZA

That's correct.

VOICE

And where were you located at the time?

ELIZA

New York City.

(Shift to Lydia.)

NELL

What exactly did you tell them?

LYDIA

It wasn't...a well thought out statement.

NELL

You didn't write it down?

LYDIA

No.

NELL

You...improvised your way through your betrayal.

(Lydia does not respond. Shift to Eliza.)

VOICE

What was your occupation at the time of joining?

ELIZA

Writer.
Broke writer.
Possibly failed writer.

VOICE

Were you supporting yourself as a writer.

ELIZA

No.

VOICE

Was your husband?

ELIZA

Frequently. I was at home with our daughter much of the time.

VOICE

But you would not consider your occupation at that time *mother*?

ELIZA

(cold)
No.

(Shift to Lydia.)

NELL

You gave them my name.

LYDIA

They knew your name.

NELL

You confirmed it.

LYDIA

I didn't have to, Nell, they knew it.

NELL

...Because of Cliff. Because of Hazel. It was Cliff you told.

LYDIA

It was Cliff who *blackmailed* me.
I did what I had to do to keep off the stand.

NELL

How is this any different?

(Shift to Eliza.)

VOICE

What was the impetus for your decision to join the Communist Party?

ELIZA

The Scottsboro Trial.

VOICE

What about the Scottsboro trial?

ELIZA

The Party put its full support behind those two boys. And that is what I wanted to align myself with.

VOICE

Did your husband join with you?

ELIZA

I won't answer that.

VOICE

Where did you attend meetings?

ELIZA

A private home in Greenwich mostly.

VOICE

Whose home?

ELIZA

I won't answer that.

VOICE

And who were some of the people in attendance?

ELIZA

I won't answer that.

(Shift to Lydia.)

NELL

So if you didn't give them my name. Whose name did you give.

(Lydia doesn't respond.)

NELL
Was it more than one?

LYDIA
No.

NELL
Just one. Just the one name.

(Lydia nods slowly.)

NELL
Please dear god tell me you gave them Odets.

LYDIA
They already had Odets. I went through every name I
could think of. They had them all.

NELL
Until.

LYDIA
Until.

(Beat.)

LYDIA
She has a husband. She'll survive.

(Beat. Blackout.)

SCENE TWO

(Lydia's living room. HAZEL sits with LYDIA. They are staring dumbfounded at the television, watching Eliza's hearing. Silence to start.)

HAZEL
I.

(Beat.)

HAZEL
Did you -

LYDIA
No. Did -

HAZEL
No. Not a clue.

(Beat.)

HAZEL
Oh look there's Dad!

(They both lean in.)

LYDIA
...Take it he didn't know either.

HAZEL
They're not going to - *oh*.

LYDIA
Hazel, don't watch.

HAZEL
Shh.

LYDIA
Hazel.

HAZEL
I'm *twenty-five*.
Oh god.
They're just going to -
They can't just -

(Lydia raises her hand to cover Hazel's eyes. Hazel slowly pushes it down.)

LYDIA

(deadpan)

Oh look.
There's Cliff.

(Beat. Lights shift.)

SCENE THREE

(ELIZA and HENRY, somewhere, probably unclear. They sit side by side. Eliza is exhausted, spacey, staring straight ahead. Henry is visibly in anguish, antsy. The scene begins with silence.)

ELIZA

How much was it?

HENRY

\$5,000.

ELIZA

Cheap.

HENRY

Well, they took your passport. You're no longer a flight risk.

ELIZA

See about *that*.

(Beat.)

HENRY

Did they feed you?

ELIZA

No.

HENRY

(suddenly outraged)

They kept you for thirty-six hours.

ELIZA

(to calm him)

They tried, I refused.

(He shakes his head at her. Another silence.)

HENRY

Did you know you were going to -

ELIZA

Yes.

(He tries to sublimate his anger.)

HENRY

Is it worth asking why you didn't tell me.

ELIZA

You know why.

(A long pause.)

HENRY

Did you...

(She turns and looks at him sharply. He looks away and nods.)

HENRY

Okay.

Cliff says it will likely be a few weeks before they can put together a full trial.

ELIZA

Cliff can go fuck himself.

HENRY

Cliff is the reason they let you out on bail.

ELIZA

Cliff is the reason I'm here in the first place.

HENRY

You don't know that.

ELIZA

I do know that.

You know how?

(He looks at her.)

ELIZA

Oh don't make me say it, Hal.

It's no secret that our daughter hates us.

HENRY

If that's true how come *I'm* not on the stand too?

ELIZA

You weren't at any of the meetings.

HENRY

Yeah but *she* doesn't know that.

ELIZA

She remembers *me* being gone as a child. Not you.

HENRY

Too young to remember any of that.

ELIZA

She was six, Hal.

HENRY

I don't remember a thing from when I was six.

ELIZA

That is entirely beside the point although it is a subject I assure you we will return to eventually. She *knows*, Hal, I'm telling you. I'm *telling* you.

(A long pause.)

HENRY

So what do we do now?

ELIZA

Go home. Get our affairs in order. Stay inside.

(Lights shift.)

SCENE FOUR

(HAZEL is lying on the floor next to a stack of books. In the stack: *State and Revolution* by Vladimir Lenin, *The Conquest of Bread* by Peter Kropotkin, *History of the Russian Revolution* by Leon Trotsky, and a number of books by Karl Marx. She holds and reads from *The Communist Manifesto*.)

HAZEL

"When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character. Political power, properly so called, is merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another. If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organize itself as a class, if, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms, and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class.

In place of the old bourgeois society with its classes and class antagonisms we shall have an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."

(Beat.)

Gol-ly.

(She turns over onto her stomach and continues reading voraciously. Lights shift.)

SCENE FIVE

(Lydia's living room. ELIZA is sitting on her couch drinking her alcohol. Alone for a while. LYDIA enters, startled to see her. Eliza has her back to her.)

LYDIA

Jesus.

ELIZA

Always knew one day you'd regret giving me that key.

(Eliza stands. After a beat, Lydia rushes to her and hugs her fiercely, almost knocks the drink out of her hand. When they separate, Lydia whacks her arm)

LYDIA

What the *hell* were you thinking.

ELIZA

I was thinking why not tell the truth.

LYDIA

When was the last time *that* ever worked out for anyone in this town?

ELIZA

First time for everything.

LYDIA

Were you in jail? What happened? We saw them handcuff you on live television.

(Lydia guides Eliza to sit down on the couch with her.)

ELIZA

Thirty-six hours in the pen. I'm a hardened criminal now.

LYDIA

They questioned you?

ELIZA

Do they ever do anything else?

(A pause. Lydia clearly has a question she wants to ask. Eliza senses it.)

ELIZA

I'm not going to answer that.

LYDIA

Not even to me.

ELIZA

Not even to Hal.

LYDIA

You know that implies you have something to hide.

ELIZA

I don't care what it *implies*. Besides, it's mine to hide, whatever it is, *if* ever it is.

(Beat.)

LYDIA

Has Louis reached out? Do you still have a job?

ELIZA

Not a word. Did have some lovely hate mail waiting for me upon my return though.

LYDIA

From who?

ELIZA

There were hundreds. Mostly unsigned of course.

LYDIA

But you didn't name anyone in front of the Committee.

ELIZA

I named *myself*. I'm a traitor to the cause.

LYDIA

The cause barely exists anymore!

ELIZA

I defied principle. By answering at all, I have acknowledged the validity of the question. They've arrested me and now no one will know what goes on behind closed doors.

LYDIA

That's ludicrous.

ELIZA

It's not, really.

(A long pause.)

LYDIA

Why, Eliza.

ELIZA

We're all going down one way or another. I'll go down telling the truth.

LYDIA

They'll make you sing. You know they will.

ELIZA

How do you know they haven't already?

LYDIA

Well.

(Eliza raises an eyebrow at her.)

LYDIA

I know.
I *know*, Eliza.

ELIZA

No one else does.

(They sit quietly for a moment. Then Lydia reaches for Eliza's hand.)

LYDIA

There's no right answer.
There was no right answer for you to give.
The subpoena alone is a death sentence.

(Beat. Eliza looks at her.)

ELIZA

Is that supposed to cheer me up?

LYDIA

Yeah. Did it not?

(They smile at each other.)

LYDIA

What's next?

ELIZA

Trial in a few weeks.

LYDIA

Will Cliff be there?

(Eliza glares at her.)

LYDIA

It might...I just wonder if there might be things he can do. Now that he and Hazel are married.

ELIZA

What?

LYDIA

What?

Oh.

Oh.

Eliza...

ELIZA

When?

LYDIA

...Just before you left for Washington. I thought...you'd *chosen* not to go. And I didn't want to rub it in by bringing it up before.

ELIZA

You were there.

LYDIA

She begged me. Pleaded with me.

ELIZA

With *you*.

LYDIA

I thought it was because you'd already said no. No one else was there. Just me and...one of Cliff's friends, I don't know. Witnesses. Simple courthouse affair.

ELIZA

Did she say I'd already said no.

LYDIA

I made an educated guess.

ELIZA

Not so educated, turns out.

(Beat.)

LYDIA

I'm sorry.

(A long pause.)

ELIZA

Do you ever worry.

LYDIA

Worry about what.

ELIZA

That I'll give you up.

(Eliza looks at her, then gets up,
slams her glass down at the bar, and
exits. Lights shift.)

SCENE SIX

(HAZEL and CLIFF at the dinner table. A long silence.)

CLIFF
Your mother's back at home now?

HAZEL
You'd know better than I would, wouldn't you?

(Cliff looks at her.)

HAZEL
She's not taking my calls.

(Beat.)

CLIFF
I told her it wasn't you.

HAZEL
(Dryly)
Yes and I'm sure she had no trouble believing you.
Given the circumstances.

(A pause.)

CLIFF
Probably best we no longer discuss it.

HAZEL
And just how will that work exactly?

CLIFF
Well by not discussing it, I imagine.

HAZEL
You promised there was rhyme and reason to it.

CLIFF
There is.

HAZEL
Not if you've arrested my mother.

CLIFF
She *confessed* to it, Hazel.

HAZEL

My mother is not a danger to this country. You know it, I know it. So what is it you're after, exactly?

CLIFF

You know what we're after, Hazel.

HAZEL

More names.

CLIFF

That's right.

HAZEL

More names and more names still.

(Beat.)

HAZEL

And then what? How many names is enough names? And what will you do once you've gotten them?

CLIFF

Make this country safer, of course.

HAZEL

Safer how.

CLIFF

Free of traitorous -

HAZEL

Define traitorous.

CLIFF

Honey, we cannot discuss this. You knew it would be this way. You knew. I've never pulled any punches with you.

HAZEL

You said it was about weeding out the rats, and so I thought I was safe. I thought my *family* was safe. They'd just give you a few names and -

CLIFF

Honey -

HAZEL

These aren't rats, Cliff. My mother is not a rat.

(Cliff leans forward.)

CLIFF

Can you be *sure*?

HAZEL

(Insulted)

Of course.

CLIFF

What does it say that you were so sure your mother would give us what we want? So *certain* that you were willing to give her up?

HAZEL

Well. I know how important her career is to her, and frankly she doesn't have that many friends -

(Cliff looks at her sadly.)

CLIFF

How much do you *really* know about your parents, Hazel?

HAZEL

Enough.

CLIFF

Enough for what?

HAZEL

Enough to know they're not a threat to this country.

CLIFF

Tell that to the Rosenbergs' children.

(Hazel glares at him, then picks up her plate and exits. We hear the plate crash into the sink. Lights shift.)

SCENE SEVEN

(Henry and Eliza's office. HENRY sits at his typewriter. ELIZA enters, dressed as she was in Scene Four.)

ELIZA

What are you doing?

HENRY

Writing. Heard of it?
We have a draft due Friday.

ELIZA

...Still? Are you sure?

HENRY

I don't know. But.

(Exhausted, she sits down at her desk,
facing away from her typewriter. Beat.)

ELIZA

Hazel got married without us.

(Beat)

Still think it wasn't her?

(Henry stops typing. Looks at her. She
meets his gaze. Lights shift.)

SCENE EIGHT

(The film set. LYDIA is trying to learn her lines. NELL enters, carrying a banker's box. She drops it on the floor in front of Lydia. They stare at each other for a long moment.)

NELL

Funny, isn't it, how even three years since we've broken up -

(Lydia looks around in alarm, hoping no one has heard her. Nell very much does not care if anyone does.)

NELL

- My relationship with you has still somehow managed to end my career.

(Beat.)

LYDIA

Not *end*.

NELL

What then? *Postpone*?

(beat.)

I have a mortgage too you know. And no husband. But you didn't think of that.

LYDIA

It wasn't *me* who turned you in.

NELL

...It sort of *was*.

(A brief silence.)

NELL

Still you managed to save *yourself*.

LYDIA

...That's how it *is* now.

NELL

What, every Communist and lesbian for herself?

(The answer, of course, is yes, but Lydia won't dignify it with a response.)

NELL

That's what you should call the film, by the way. *For Herself*.

LYDIA

What film?

NELL

That's *really* the funny thing. The last memo that came in before they sacked me. Bette and Jack Warner have agreed to your little buddy film. It's been greenlit.

(A pause.)

NELL

Don't suppose you know any screenwriters who *haven't* been blacklisted.

(Nell picks up her box.)

NELL

It's going to get awfully lonely, Ms. Russell.

(Nell exits. Lydia sits in her chair, and exhales.)

(Lights shift.)

SCENE NINE

(HAZEL on set sitting in her chair with a script in her lap. HENRY enters.)

HAZEL

Daddy.

HENRY

Don't come around the house anymore.
Don't ask for things.
Don't call.

Don't mention us in the press.
Don't send us holiday cards.
Don't try.

You've crossed a line, little girl, several lines in fact, and I don't believe in unconditional love. I believe in trust and trust can be broken, no matter who you are. So.

Don't pretend to need us.
Don't make us feel guilty.
Don't cry.

Oh. And mazel tov on your wedding, may you be blessed.

(Henry exits. Lights shift.)

SCENE TEN

(Eliza and Henry's living room. ELIZA sits in the middle of the floor, covered in hate mail. HENRY enters from upstage, behind her. HE watches her briefly.)

HENRY

Is this a good use of your time?

(A long pause.)

ELIZA

I thought I was doing the right thing.

(Another pause.)

HENRY

The right thing for who?

(A beat, and he exits from whence he came.)

ELIZA

(calling off-stage)

The right thing for *whom*!

(She sifts through more letters. Eliza rips one up. NELL enters.)

NELL

I hope this isn't your latest script.

ELIZA

The dialogue's awfully unimaginative.

"Bitch."

"Commie bitch."

"Pinko bitch."

"Traitor bitch."

NELL

...Getting it from all sides, are you?

ELIZA

Up, down, left, and right.

(Beat.)

ELIZA

Have you come to beg me to keep your name off the list? You're not the first.

NELL

Never attended a meeting in my life.

ELIZA

Homosexuals hold meetings now?

(Nell comes to sit on the floor beside Eliza.)

NELL

How are you doing?

ELIZA

...No one's asked me that yet.

NELL

I know you're not a traitor.

ELIZA

I think even Hal's not so sure.

NELL

Doubt that very much.

ELIZA

I now know how it feels to be radioactive.

NELL

And what does that make me right now?

ELIZA

Dead, I think.

ELIZA

My career will be ruined anyway. You watch. I didn't understand it before, I didn't understand that we've all been on trial long before we were called to testify. The testimony itself is a confession. Now something I did when I was twenty-five will ruin my career.

NELL

Something I was born with will ruin mine.

(A beat. Eliza looks at her and nods slowly.)

NELL

I lost my job today.

ELIZA

?!
What reason did they give?

NELL

"Shoddy workmanship." Also known as, "working while homosexual."

ELIZA

But why now, after all this time?

(A pause.)

ELIZA

Nell.

NELL

Lydia made a deal with Cliff.
To keep her own sexuality out of the papers, and off
the stand.

(A pause.)

ELIZA

...You.

NELL

Yes.

ELIZA

...And me.

(Nell just looks at her. Lights shift.)

SCENE ELEVEN

(Eliza and Henry's office. ELIZA and HENRY sit at their desks facing one another, typewriters at the ready.)

ELIZA

Well, she has to cross him. If she doesn't cross him, what are we left with?

HENRY

Not satisfied with the abortion, now you feel the need to -

ELIZA

The abortion's only *implied*, if it even makes it to the final cut, which is tenuous at best, only a quarter of the audience will get it. He has earned every *bit* of her ire, Hal, and we owe her that.

HENRY

So what is it you want exactly.

ELIZA

An honest conversation.

(Henry just looks at her. Time passes. Eliza is lying flat on top of her desk staring at the ceiling. Henry is aimlessly roaming the room. After a moment of this, Henry pauses.)

HENRY

You want a drink?

ELIZA

Ten-thirty in the morning, Hal.

(He stares at her. Oh the hypocrisy. He rolls his eyes, shakes his head, and exits for a drink. Time passes. Henry is back at his desk, drink at his side, typing furiously. Eliza is sitting on the edge of his desk.)

ELIZA

She has to tell him the truth. It's that easy, it's all she -

HENRY

Hang on, hang on.

(He continues typing furiously.)

ELIZA

I think -

HENRY

Wait.

(Beat.)

ELIZA

If we just -

HENRY

One second.

(Beat. She grabs the paper in his typewriter and yanks it out. Then throws it across the room.)

ELIZA

I'm writing it.

(She goes back to her desk. Time passes. Eliza is typing furiously. Henry sits on the edge of her desk drinking. After a moment, she stops, rips the paper out, and hands it to him.)

ELIZA

It's *her* story now.

(Blackout.)

SCENE TWELVE

(CLIFF sits with Hazel's stack of Communist books, in wait. HAZEL enters. She stops when she sees him.)

CLIFF

Under the bed, not very subtle.

(Beat. Hazel is thrown, but quickly recovers.)

HAZEL

No need for subtlety, I wasn't trying to hide them.

CLIFF

Then why not leave them out on the coffee table?

(Beat.)

CLIFF

You walked right up to a cash register and bought these.

HAZEL

...No one saw me.

(With a smile)

I took good care to conceal all my best features, even disguised my voice.

CLIFF

You can't be certain of that.

HAZEL

Well, it's not in the papers, is it? Besides I'm no hot commodity yet.

CLIFF

Once people realize they can connect you to me, you will be.

HAZEL

Thanks for that.

CLIFF

This is incredibly irresponsible, Hazel.

HAZEL

Can a girl not do some *research*, Cliff?

CLIFF

What's to research?

HAZEL

You're right. Communism bad, capitalism good. That's all I need to know.

CLIFF

You can't take it back, Hazel. No amount of...*compassion* is going to erase whatever - regrets - you seem to be -

HAZEL

I'd just like a little information on what my parents were so wrapped up in.

CLIFF

Parents.

HAZEL

...Mother.

CLIFF

You said parents.

HAZEL

I meant mother.

(Beat. Cliff files that moment away for safekeeping.)

HAZEL

Anyway I'll read whatever I like.

CLIFF

Except these once I burn them.

(Hazel stares at him. She's suddenly horrified.)

HAZEL

I thought you...you said you didn't *choose* to be on the Committee, that you didn't *want* -

CLIFF

Doesn't mean I don't believe in the work.

HAZEL

In the witch hunt.

CLIFF

In the *work*.

(There is a long silence as Hazel works through something in her mind. Cliff watches her. Finally she turns to face him again.)

HAZEL

There are any number of young starlets you could have cozied up to. Who could have given you access. Any number of gullible...needy...

(She trails off, then finds her point again.)

You're all just as bad as they are, you know. There's no difference.

(Hazel exits. Lights shift.)

SCENE THIRTEEN

(Lydia's living room. LYDIA is knee deep in a bottle of gin. She holds a script in her hand and paces back and forth, reciting, or slurring, to herself.)

(ELIZA enters, holding a bound script. Lydia hears the door slam and whirls around. Eliza walks straight over to the couch and throws the script on top of it.)

Done. ELIZA

What? LYDIA

You. Bette. ELIZA
Us.

You wrote it. LYDIA

So the evidence would suggest. ELIZA

You actually wrote it. LYDIA

In two days. ELIZA

(Lydia reaches for the script.)

I meet with Mayer a week from Tuesday. If I'm not in jail. ELIZA

(A long pause as Lydia examines the script.)

And if you are in jail? LYDIA

ELIZA

If I'm in jail you better *believe* you are too.

(A long pause. They stand facing each other, several feet in between, suddenly at a standoff.)

LYDIA

Who told you.

ELIZA

You've got quite a lot of nerve asking *that* question.

(Pause. Lydia throws back what's left in her glass, then goes for the bar.)

LYDIA

Drink?

ELIZA

No.

(Lydia starts fixing herself one. Eliza goes and takes the bottle of gin out of her hand.)

ELIZA

I want you at least somewhat lucid when we have this conversation.

LYDIA

Too late for *that*.

(Eliza pours Lydia a glass of water, but does it grudgingly, slamming things as she does so. She hands it to her. Lydia stares at her, then drinks it.)

ELIZA

You let me blame Hazel.
You let me blame my *daughter*.

LYDIA

You were more than willing to go there. What does it say that your mind was so open to that notion? Hardly took any convincing.

ELIZA

You let me *believe it*.

LYDIA

Wasn't it easier? It made sense to you.
You weren't surprised, you were barely even hurt.

ELIZA

(through her teeth, seething)

Fuck you.

LYDIA

You've been looking for an excuse to write Hazel off
for years! I thought I was doing you a favor.

ELIZA

Can you even hear yourself right now?

(Eliza reaches for Lydia's water and
forces her to raise it to her own
mouth, pouring it sloppily down her
throat.)

ELIZA

Are you so far gone that all sense of moral
responsibility is lost on you?

(Lydia chokes a bit. She takes a
moment, walking away from Eliza.)

LYDIA

(muttering a bit)

It was only a matter of time. It could have been
anyone. Someone could have given you up, someone could
have given me up...the only thing I could think to do
was get ahead of it.

(Eliza follows her.)

ELIZA

Twenty-five years ago I found you passed out on
Christopher Street. I picked you up, I cleaned you
off, and I walked you thirty-five blocks, dragged you
really because you could barely stand upright, *in the
rain*, to your apartment because neither one of us had
money for a cab! I stayed up all night beside you so
you wouldn't choke on your own vomit.

Look at me.

I wrote you a *play*, I made Hal *cast you*, and I called
every agent in New York city to come and see you. *I*

did that. *I took you to Hollywood with me, you mad bitch, I got you here.*

LYDIA

And how the hell am I supposed to *stay* here if my name appears next to the word 'lesbian' in all the papers?!

ELIZA

(shaking her head)

I don't even know what to say to that. I don't - of all the *things*, of all the *people* - if you really felt you *had* to, out of *everyone* -

LYDIA

They had everyone else! Don't you think I tried? It's not as if your name was the first one out of my mouth, Eliza. I was *grasping*.

ELIZA

So you sacrificed my career for yours.

LYDIA

You have *Hal*. He can go on writing, you can write under a pseudonym, I can't *act* under a pseudonym.

ELIZA

You don't think Hal's going to be affected by this? You don't think being married to an alleged communist has its drawbacks maybe?

LYDIA

You're not a communist anymore.

ELIZA

It doesn't matter. Nothing that *should* matter *matters*. And you *knew* that, you've *known* that.

LYDIA

(Fully unraveling)

I was *terrified*!
I was...it's not *like* being outed as a Communist, Eliza, it's not *like* that. You weren't born a Communist and you haven't been one for some time. It's...*who I am*, it's fundamentally who I am that is on the chopping block here, and it is somehow *worse*, it is somehow *more shameful* than being *treasonous*. I had to protect myself. I had to protect not only my career but the things *inside* me, my heart, my desires, my *needs*. Things I have no *control* over. You feel

assaulted, you have *no idea*.
 I can't have a job and be myself at the same time. You
cannot know what that's life.
 There is more on trial in this country right now than
 just our beliefs.

(A silence. Lydia sits.)

ELIZA

(quietly)

And if the circumstances were reversed. If I'd been
 approached by Cliff and offered a deal. And given them
 you.

(Beat)

You *never* would have understood that.

LYDIA

(Almost a whisper)

No.

(Pause)

In the moment it felt like the only option.

(Beat)

I know you know what that feels like.

(A beat and Eliza sits too, some
 distance from Lydia.)

ELIZA

Here's what gets me, I think.
 You gave them my name.
 And you didn't think *for a second* that I might in turn
 give them yours?

LYDIA

...No.

ELIZA

(hollow)

That's really the kicker, isn't it. That's where you
 lose me. For you to *betray* someone you *trust* that
 much. I don't know where to put that.

LYDIA

...I know.

(A long silence. They don't look at
 each other.)

ELIZA

...Think you'll like the script.

(Lights shift.)

SCENE FOURTEEN

(Hazel and Cliff's. HAZEL stands opposite ELIZA. Hazel looks like a wreck. Eliza holds up a gift bag.)

ELIZA

Gin.

HAZEL

(With a half-smile)

I only drink on weekends.

ELIZA

Right, I'll come back on Saturday.

(She starts to exit. Hazel laughs.)

HAZEL

Mother.

(Eliza stays where she is.)

HAZEL

...Come in then.

(Hazel leads her further inside. Eliza takes the gin out of the bag.)

ELIZA

I could...

HAZEL

Actually, maybe better if we...*don't*? Unless you're...
Unless you're especially keen on it.

ELIZA

(thrown)

No, no, that's...no, fine, good.

(She puts the bag down. Hazel sits on the couch.)

HAZEL

(A nervous laugh)

Mother, sit.

(Eliza is clearly a bit lost without a drink in her hand.)

Right.

ELIZA

(She sits on the couch, but a fair distance from Hazel.)

HAZEL

So.

ELIZA

So.
I.
Um.
Sorry.

HAZEL

...Pardon?

ELIZA

I'm sorry.

HAZEL

Oh.

ELIZA

Yes.

HAZEL

Okay.

ELIZA

Okay. Yes.

(A long pause.)

ELIZA

So.

HAZEL

So...

(Beat.)

ELIZA

Hazel, you got married without a single word to us.

HAZEL

Oh.

ELIZA

So perhaps you might...I don't know...have something you'd like to say to *me*. As well.

(Pause.)

HAZEL

Does Daddy know you're here?

ELIZA

Does Cliff know *you're* here?

HAZEL

This is my house.

(Silence.)

ELIZA

Fine then.

(She gets up and starts toward the door. Hazel shoots up.)

HAZEL

It was me.

(Eliza turns back around. She waits, flummoxed.)

HAZEL

I --

ELIZA

You.

HAZEL

Lydia didn't -- well. She did. Cliff already knew. He knew because I told him.

(Eliza sits down on the edge of the couch, the air knocked out of her.)

HAZEL

I thought that I -- my life, my whole life, I --

I've played second fiddle to your career since I was five years old. You and Dad always had this...thing going on, this thing that you shared, that I could never be a part of, and --

Why do you think I decided to become an *actress*?

ELIZA

(Punctured)

Why does *anyone* become -

HAZEL

To join the family business. But even *that* didn't work. Even then I was never good enough, just a...desperate little talentless fame seeker. You two wouldn't even recommend me to your agents!

Still the interloper, *always* the interloper.

ELIZA

(Quietly, avoiding eye contact)

Nonsense.

HAZEL

It isn't nonsense, Mother.

(A long pause. Hazel cannot decide where to go next.)

HAZEL

I thought this might...force you to pay attention. To put your career aside, for once, and...see me.

Apparently at some point twenty-five years ago you saw fit to have a child and, for what? Maybe if your career was taken away from you, you'd remember why.

ELIZA

(Standing)

Hazel, you are *twenty-six years old*, you are not a *child* anymore. You are not a game and these hearings are not a *game*. Not even the most tearful, plaintive excuse could possibly...

(She becomes distracted. A long pause.)

There's truly no such thing as right and wrong anymore, is there? There's no...

The right thing ruins us and the wrong thing saves us. But if you're already ruined...

(An idea.)

I have to go.

HAZEL

What?

(Eliza starts for the door.)

ELIZA

Come with me if you like.

HAZEL

(following)

Mother...

ELIZA

Either nothing matters or everything matters now, and why should *they* get to decide which is which.

(She exits, Hazel on her tail.)

(Lights shift.)

SCENE FIFTEEN

(Eliza and Henry's living room. HENRY enters from the hallway followed by LYDIA. He finishes fixing himself a drink then moves to the couch, gesturing at the bar for Lydia to help herself. Lydia stands where she is, holding Eliza's script.)

LYDIA

She told you?

(Henry drinks.)

LYDIA

You're angry.

(Henry drinks.)

LYDIA

You should be.

HENRY

Honestly, Lydia, I don't know right from wrong anymore and more's the better 'cause it doesn't seem to matter much, does it?

(A long pause. Lydia drops the script onto the couch next to him.)

LYDIA

It's phenomenally good you know.

(He glances over at it halfheartedly.)

HENRY

She won't let me read it.

LYDIA

(Gestures at it)

Well.

(He looks at it again, then shakes his head.)

HENRY

No.

(Another long pause.)

LYDIA

Moral ambiguity's not a bad place to start, is it? For a writer.

(Henry drinks. Beat.)

LYDIA

Where is she?

HENRY

Search *me*.

(Pause.)

LYDIA

It really is every man for himself, isn't it?

HENRY

I had hoped not in a marriage. But evidence to the contrary. If you believe in that sort of thing.

LYDIA

In marriage?

HENRY

In evidence.

(A beat, then Lydia tentatively comes to sit on the couch, with the script between them. But they don't look at each other.)

HENRY

I got her into it. She'd never have gone to a meeting if I hadn't dragged her.

LYDIA

What on earth could that possibly matter now?

(Beat. He reaches for an open envelope on the coffee table and lightly tosses it at Lydia.)

HENRY

She goes back on the stand two weeks from today. Where her only choices will be to put herself in jail or put someone *else* in jail.

(Beat.)

LYDIA

Either way she'd be telling the truth.

HENRY

(bitterly)

Yes I guess there's that.

Pretty soon every left-leaning American will be behind bars and Hollywood will be under the auspices of the United States Congress, stage and screen merely a conduit for conservative propaganda and a crumbling democracy.

So *there's* something to look forward to.

(Beat. ELIZA bursts in, followed by HAZEL. Eliza clocks Lydia and it unmoors her briefly.)

ELIZA

If they're going to take me down, I'm going take them down with me.

(Blackout.)

SCENE SIXTEEN

(Congressional hearing, Washington DC. ELIZA is being questioned. HENRY, NELL, HAZEL, and LYDIA are all visible somewhere behind her.)

VOICE

Please state your name for the record.

ELIZA

Elizabeth Jane Everett Roth.

VOICE

Ms. Everett, you are here because you have admitted on oath before this Congress that you were, at one time, a member of the American Communist Party. Is that correct?

ELIZA

Yes.

VOICE

You have been asked, on more than one occasion, to name those with whom you came in contact during that time. Here before this Committee, we'd like to give you one last opportunity to change your mind. Would you like to offer first and last names for the record?

ELIZA

Yes.

(The room is abuzz. Pause.)

VOICE

Please do so.

(Eliza picks up a piece of paper and reads off of it.)

ELIZA

Congressman John S. Wood.
 Congressman J. Parnell Thomas.
 Congressman Richard M. Nixon

(The buzz grows louder)

Congressman James B. Frazier, Jr.
 Congressman Clifford M. Harvey.

Congressman Clyde Doyle.

(The buzz grows even louder. A gavel is heard banging.)

VOICE

That is *enough*, Ms. Everett.

ELIZA

Congressman Donald L. Jackson.

VOICE

You are in contempt of court.

ELIZA

Congressman Charles E. Potter.

(More gavel banging.)

VOICE

Bailiffs, please remove her from this courtroom.

ELIZA

Congressman Harold H. Velde.

(Lights start to dim.)

ELIZA

Senator Joseph R. McCarthy.
President Harry S. Truman.

(Lights fade out.)

SCENE SEVENTEEN

(In darkness:)

VOICE

Are you now, or have you ever been, a member of the
American Communist Party?

(HENRY in isolated light.)

(LYDIA in isolated light.)

(HAZEL in isolated light.)

(NELL in isolated light.)

(CLIFF in isolated light.)

(Beat. Blackout. End of play.)