

SCRAMBLE!

A Farce

by

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SCRAMBLE!

CHARACTER LIST

CARTER.....30's, filled with frantic energy, usually in sexual
overdrive

TEMPLE.....30's, very attractive, a cool but secretly insecure
beauty

JOHNSON.....20's, 30's, bit of a nebbish, shy

OTIS.....60's and up, old family Wasp but loopy, no memory

JANE.....20's, 30's pathologically shy, seething with
frustration

SAM.....50's, the lady boss, casually tyrannical, very sexual

ACT ONE

SCENE 1

The offices of a golf magazine. There are two playing areas, CARTER'S OFFICE and TEMPLE'S OFFICE. TEMPLE'S OFFICE has two desks, two chairs. CARTER'S OFFICE also has two desks and chairs. One of the desks, Carter's, is somewhat bigger than the other. A wall, real or imagined, separates the two offices. Each office has one entryway exiting offstage, left or right, which we will call a regular door (although an open entry will make the comings and goings much easier) that leads eventually to the rest of the building, and a door upstage center that leads to the equipment room. The doors to the equipment room are painted a different color than everything else and are actual doors that open and close. The offstage equipment room connects the two offices to the rest of the building and each other but, as we will learn, its negotiation is difficult.

Time: The present

AT Rise:

CARTER'S OFFICE. CARTER, 30's, is at work at his computer, typing away furiously--because he is furious and panicked. He works most of the time in a state of agitation just below rage, which is how he expresses his fear. Right now he's under pressure, harried, and irate.

TEMPLE'S OFFICE: TEMPLE 30's, beautiful, is at work at her desk. JANE, 20's or 30's, enters through regular door. Jane wears her hair up and big glasses on a chain around her neck like a stereotypical librarian. This is press day, the eleventh hour, and everyone is under great pressure.

TEMPLE

The print, where's the print?

JANE

(panicked)

Oh, my god! oh my god! oh my god!...which print?

TEMPLE

The one of the new golf ball with all the dimples.

JANE

Carter's got it!

TEMPLE

What's he doing, trying to mate with it?

JANE

Oh, my god...oh, my go--would he do that?

TEMPLE

Don't panic because we're going to press, Jane, I'm in charge.

JANE

You're not in charge. Who put you in charge?

TEMPLE

Go get the print from Carter and don't get all mumbley just because you're talking to a man--if we can call Carter that. I know you're soft on Carter but you've got to march in there and demand it from that over-sexed pea-brained mouth breather.

JANE

Oh, Temple, I couldn't do that...

TEMPLE

Oh, you poor thing, don't be frightened. Remember, there's nothing wrong with men that can't be cured by a set of pinking shears. Keep that in mind. Now fetch.

JANE

Why don't you do it?

TEMPLE

Jane, you know I have allergies.

Temple taps her watch to show the fleeting time.

JANE

I don't have a problem with men!

EXIT JANE, in a rush, fuming with frustration, through regular door.

CARTER'S OFFICE

Carter reviews his efforts on the computer screen and despairs.

CARTER

I can't do it! It's too hard, it's too much, it's too fast! You wouldn't treat a machine like this.

Carter hates and pities himself for a moment, then resumes frantic typing as Phone Rings.

CARTER

(continuing; Phone)

Yeh, Carter here! Yeh! Yeh! Yehyeh!... Six inches more!! Is that a joke?...I don't have six more inches in me, I'd need a transplant...No, you don't need another man for the job, I'll whip that right off for you...Five minutes to press time? No problem, Chief!

Hangs up phone.

CARTER

(continuing)

Nazi swine! While you're at it, why not take six inches of my large intestine?

Carter resumes work, banging away frantically.

ENTER JANE, racing in through regular door. She stops abruptly. She is always very shy in Carter's presence.

N.B. When Jane speaks in the presence of men other than Otis, she does it so fast that she is all but unintelligible. It is also mumbled. A suggestion of what she might be saying is printed as her dialogue, but it need not be understood by the audience.

JANE

(shyly)

Where's the print?

CARTER

What? What, Jane? What?

Jane tears through papers on his desk.

JANE

(restrained panic)

I can't find it!
I'm getting pinking shears!

Carter strains to hear.

CARTER
Pinking shears? What does that
mean?

JANE
(Clearly)
Where's the print, you oversexed
pea-brained mouth breather!

Carter reacts with alarm, shuffles through papers on his desk, finds the photographic print, gives it to Jane.

JOHNSON ENTERS Carter's office through regular door and watches, quietly, intimidated by all the steam. Johnson is meek, unassuming, retiring by nature.

CARTER
(Dignity hurt)
I am not a mouth breather..

JANE
(Sincerely, mumbling)
Terriblysorrydidn'tmeantosaythat.

ENTER JOHNSON

Jane crosses towards door, nearly colliding with Johnson.

JOHNSON
Pardon me, I wonder...

Jane dips her head shyly, mutters.

JANE
Notimenotime.

She points to watch indicating no time for chat.

EXIT JANE

CARTER
I can't do this! Woodward and
Bernstein couldn't do this!

JOHNSON
(meekly)
Hello.

Carter notices Johnson for the first time. He stares at him as if he can't quite comprehend his presence--which, in his present state, he can not. Carter returns to his work, moaning and keening. Johnson stands uncertainly in the middle of the room, looking around. He gravitates towards golf trophies on a shelf.

JOHNSON
(continuing)
I was told to come in here and uh,
sort of...wait?

Carter wails and keens over his work.

CARTER
I can't do it!

More furious typing.

TEMPLE'S OFFICE

ENTER JANE. She drops the photo print on Temple's desk.

TEMPLE
(condescending)
Oh, good job, Jane, good girl! You
see what happens when you show
them a confident front? If you
want to be a successful executive
like me you have to give the
illusion that you know what you're
doing.

JANE
You're not an executive. You're a
staff writer, just like me.

TEMPLE
Well, not just like you.

Jane turns her back to Temple, mouths the word "BITCH!" then
sits and resumes furious work.

ENTER OTIS. Otis is dressed, always, as if he has just
stopped by on his way to or from the golf course. This is
simply his sartorial statement. Otis is 60ish, always
pleasant but seemingly not always fully there. His speech has
been influenced somewhat by the British without actually
giving him an accent.

OTIS
Ah, the ladies.

Temple gives him a chilly stare.

TEMPLE
Otis, press day.

OTIS
Quite.

EXIT OTIS, chastened. Temple resumes work.

CARTER'S OFFICE

CARTER

(Of his work)

Puking Communist Fascist pig! Six inches! I deserve a Pulitzer for panic-induced writing...as if there were any other kind...

(truly surprised)

I can't believe I did it...

(to Johnson)

If Jeffrey Dahmer calls, say I'm in the bathroom.

JOHNSON

Who...who's Jeffrey Dahmer?

ENTER OTIS. Carter does not acknowledge him.

CARTER

(to Johnson)

New here, are you? The editor! Bloody in tooth and claw!

EXIT CARTER, angrily.

OTIS

Well, now.

JOHNSON

Yes.

Otis waves his fingers as if he touched something hot.

OTIS

Whew!

JOHNSON

Yes, I guess so.

Otis holds his right hand beside his ear, cocked and ready, as it were, to extend in greeting. A brief pause, Johnson doesn't know quite what's going on as Otis struggles to remember his name.

OTIS

We've met, little trouble with your name. Don't help me. Tip of my tongue...Memory just a tad elusive. Italian name, was it? Al Fonso? Al Fresco?

JOHNSON

Me?

OTIS
Give us a clue. Al Gonquin, Al
Dente, Al Layoop?

JOHNSON
I'm a little lost here.

OTIS
I know the feeling. Not to worry,
it will come to you. Name tags in
the clothing, does wonders...so,
like working here, do you?

JOHNSON
It's been exciting so far.

OTIS
Exciting, oh, I'll say. Your
friend Carter is quite a handful
on press day. Lovely fella most
of the time, don't get me wrong.
He has that tongue, of course.
Want to stay away from that. It
shoots out there like a...

Otis folds his arm so his hand touches shoulder, then
straightens it out quickly like a preying mantis' tongue. He
does it again with an accompanying "phhtt" sound.

OTIS
(continuing)
Phhtt. Phhtt. What am I thinking
of here?

JOHNSON
Aerobics?

OTIS
No, no, you miss the point. The
animal with the enormously long
tongue--not that Carter has a
particularly long tongue--as far
as I know--it's by way of a
metaphor.

JOHNSON
Giraffe?

OTIS
No, no, no, that's neck. A giraffe
is all neck. See here.

Otis demonstrates again.

OTIS
 (continuing)
 Phhtt, phhtt. We're getting
 nowhere here. I don't need to tell
 you about your friend's tongue.
 You'd know better than I.

JOHNSON
 He's not my friend, actually. I
 don't know anyone here. I ran into
 you in the lobby five minutes ago
 and you told me to wait in here.

OTIS
 Thought I knew you. Birnberger!

Otis goes through the cocking motion and offers his hand.

JOHNSON
 No, my name is Johnson.

OTIS
 I said it would come to you. Otis
 Birnberger here.

JOHNSON
 Oh. Sorry. I'm Ben Johnson.

OTIS
 Do you prefer Ken or Kenneth?

JOHNSON
 Uh...Ben?

ENTER CARTER, storming in, straight to computer. He reacts to
 the screen.

CARTER
 (Panicked)
 Not clear! Not clear!
 (to Johnson)
 You! Don't stand there shaking
 like a dildo. Do you read? Take a
 look at this!

JOHNSON
 Hi.

CARTER
 What's unclear about it?

TEMPLE'S OFFICE

TEMPLE
 I'll be back. Try to remain calm.

JANE
 (panicking)
 I'm calm! Why wouldn't I be calm!

EXIT TEMPLE

CARTER'S OFFICE

Johnson reads the screen, taps a few keys. Carter looks at screen, back at Johnson, back at screen.

CARTER
 Christ, a man off the streets can do it better than I can! I quit, I'm through, I'm going to get some post-its.

EXIT CARTER

Johnson hesitates a moment, looking at screen, then quickly sits and types furiously for a moment as dialogue continues.

OTIS
 Best to stay out of their way on press day.

ENTER TEMPLE

TEMPLE
 Ten minutes, Carter. Carter?...
 Where is that lizard?

OTIS
 Lizard! That's the word! Phtt!
 Phtt!

Otis triumphantly demonstrates the folded arm-tongue motion to Johnson.

TEMPLE
 Otis.

OTIS
 Johnson here thought I meant a giraffe, if you can imagine.

TEMPLE
 (Sternly)
 Otis!

OTIS
 (Instantly sobered)
 Yes, Temple.

TEMPLE

Has Carter been running in and out every five minutes? If he makes us late again I'll see to it he's catheterized.

Both men wince at this notion.

OTIS

Temple, I'd like you to meet the new man...

EXIT TEMPLE

OTIS

Lovely thing, isn't she?

JOHNSON

Very pretty.

JOHNSON looks at Carter's computer again. He can't help himself. He sits and types furiously for another few seconds before joining Otis. The typing does not seem to require his attention and he faces Otis as he types.

OTIS

An absolute ball-buster, of course.

JOHNSON

Oh, really? She seems uh...

OTIS

She wears Carter's like earrings. Carter follows her around bleating like a moon calf. Of course she walks slowly enough so he doesn't get lost. The two of them are just like Beatrice and...oh, the egg dish...Come along...Benedict. Madly in love with each other and too stupid to know it...Then again Jane's ga-ga as a goat for Carter and he doesn't notice that. Sam would pull a ligament to get at him, but you know Sam.

JOHNSON

N...no.

OTIS

Don't know how Carter will take to sharing the office harem with a ladies' man like you, fast hands, trysts in the copy room, eh, eh?

(more)

OTIS (cont'd)

You dog. Beware Carter's wrath,
he's as jealous as...the one with
the horns?

JOHNSON

Goat? Devil? Cuckold?

OTIS

Not a zoologist, are you? Horns,
horns.

JOHNSON

Elk? Moose?...Unicorn?

OTIS

Santa Claus.

JOHNSON

Uh...elves? Sleigh? Beard?

OTIS

No, no, pay attention. The rabbit
with the big foot, a forest fire,
mother lost, crying my eyes out,
I can see it clear as day, there
stands the big fella atop a rock,
big eyes, cute tail--what do you
call that?

JOHNSON

I, uh...

OTIS

Oh, what's that fella's name?
Moustache, they froze his body,
all those amusement parks...

JOHNSON

Disney?

OTIS

Bambi!

JOHNSON

Deer?

OTIS

Stag! Not so hard, was it? You
should do more nature reading.
Well, enough said, word to the
wise. Do you play golf at all?

JOHNSON

Not at all.

OTIS
Have a slice myself. Plague of a
lifetime. Slice, do you?

JOHNSON
Well, no.

OTIS
Really? Envy you. We must play
sometime. Just let me show you how
things work. Equipment's in here,
shoes, clubs, what have you, all
you need and more. The closet's
something of an innovative
masterpiece. Designed it myself.
Hub of the wheel. Not just a walk-
in, a walk-through. Designed it
for easy access from anywhere. Get
to it from any office, use it as
a shortcut.

Otis struggles with the EQUIPMENT DOOR.

OTIS
(continuing)
Sticks occasionally.

His frustration grows as he is unable to open the door to the
closet. Finally he puts his shoulder to it, pushing as hard
as he can.

OTIS
(continuing)
All together now.

Johnson joins him in pushing with his shoulder against the
door. They finally give up.

OTIS
(continuing)
Yet sometimes as easy as one,
two...whatever. Baffling.

Johnson pulls the door towards them rather than pushing. It
opens immediately.

OTIS
(continuing)
Work out a lot, do you? Well, step
in, step in.

EXIT JOHNSON into Equipment Room.

JOHNSON
(from inside)

Wow!

OTIS
Oh, yes. Equipment in here going
back to Vardon's spoon. Light
switch is just to your right--or
possibly left.

Otis fiddles with the handle trying to figure out what's
wrong with it, then Exits into the Equipment Room himself and
closes the door behind them.

EXIT OTIS, through Equipment Door.

We HEAR the sound of equipment crashing in the equipment room.

ENTER CARTER. He sits at the computer. He stares at the
screen in astonishment.

CARTER
Elves?

He tentatively pushes the send button.

ENTER TEMPLE

TEMPLE
Hurry up, you eunuch. Everyone
else is done. If you make us late
again I'll...

CARTER
Me? Me? I'm finished. We'd get
things done a lot quicker if you
didn't walk around distracting
people with your beautiful...

TEMPLE
Say it, if you can afford the law
suit.

EXIT TEMPLE

EXIT CARTER, in pursuit.

TEMPLE'S OFFICE

EXIT JANE, through regular door.

The closet door rattles and shakes, there is the sound of
more equipment falling and the door finally opens.

ENTER OTIS, through Equipment Door, tumbling in amid a mild cascade of golf clubs.

Otis has managed to get himself entangled in a two strap golf bag in such a way that it takes him the rest of the scene to free himself.

OTIS
Here we are, simple as that. Have
to replace that light bulb.
Otherwise...Johnson? Johnson?

ENTER TEMPLE, ENTER CARTER in pursuit.

OTIS continues to struggle to disengage himself from the bag.

OTIS
(continuing)
Ah, children.

TEMPLE
(to Carter)
It was my idea to do that story on
the greatest advance in golfing
technology in 40 years!

OTIS
(seeking assistance)
Little help here?

CARTER
The same greatest advance we wrote
about six months ago.

A BELL RINGS LOUDLY.

CARTER
We've gone to press!

TEMPLE
We made it, Carter! We've gone to
press!

A Complete Transformation. The stress and hostility vanish and Temple and Carter embrace joyously.

OTIS
Little help?

Carter takes the collegial embrace a bit far and tries to hang on to Temple.

CARTER
Care for a nooner?

TEMPLE
 (Throw away)
 I'd sooner have an episiotomy.

CARTER
 Perhaps another time.

OTIS
 Anyone seen Johnson? Nondescript
 young chap, bit of an animal lover.

TEMPLE
 I'm for a drink.

Otis, entangled in the bag, gets in front of Temple.

OTIS
 Temple, a little help?

Temple gives Otis a fast embrace, paying no attention to his
 plight. Otis struggles to get an arm around her to return the
 embrace.

TEMPLE
 Another issue done on time, Otis!

OTIS
 Never doubted you.

TEMPLE
 You're sweet.

She gives him a kiss on the cheek.

EXIT TEMPLE

OTIS
 (winks at Carter)
 Still have the robust musky charm.

CARTER
 Get in my way with her and I'll
 crush you like a peeled grape.

OTIS
 (upbeat)
 Still, all's fair. I may have a
 look-in there.

EXIT CARTER

OTIS
 Seen the new man, have you,
 Carter?...Hope he's not afraid of
 the dark. Johnson? Johnson!

Still hobbled by the golf bag,

OTIS EXITS back into Equipment Door. Again, a crash of clubs falling.

CARTER'S OFFICE

The equipment door opens and Johnson hops in. One leg is stiff as a poker.

JOHNSON

Where am I? Mr. Birnberger?

Johnson takes a step, limps, then turns like a dog after his tail, seeking something behind him. We can see that a golf club is inside the back of his pants running down one leg but it takes him some time to find and extract it. When free of the club, Johnson sits at Carter's computer and starts looking through it with great and growing interest. He takes a Red Notebook from under his shirt. It is attached to a chain around his neck. He takes notes in the notebook.

ENTER JANE, rushing up to Johnson who hovers over the computer. Jane, mistaking him for Carter, embraces him from behind.

JANE

Gone to press, gone to press!

Johnson scrambles guiltily to hide the Red Notebook in his shirt.

JOHNSON

I wasn't spying, honest!

Jane realizes it's not Carter.

JANE

Oh.

(mutters shyly)

I thought you were...Carter.

JOHNSON

I know how it must look, but I was just...What did you say?

JANE

(mutters)

I don't remember I haven't a clue.

A rattling of the Equipment Door, then

ENTER OTIS through Equipment Door, still trapped by the golf bag.

OTIS

Here we are then. Ah, Jane, you've met the new man...Say hello, don't be shy.

JOHNSON

Hello. I'm Ben Johnson.

Jane mutters, extends a limp hand to Johnson while looking at Otis.

JANE

I'm very pleased to meet you.

JOHNSON

I'm sorry, I didn't catch...

Jane looks to Otis for help, mumbles again.

JANE

I'm Jane Carew.

OTIS

(Translating)

How do you do, I'm Jane Carew. Welcome aboard. We'll do everything we can to make your stay a pleasant one.

Johnson is bewildered, doesn't know whom to address.

JOHNSON

Uh, thank you, my name is Ben Johnson and I look forward to working with you.

JANE

Me too.

OTIS

(Translating)

One big happy family here, you'll fit right in.

JOHNSON

I'm so glad to hear that. I've always wanted a family...

Otis now translates for Johnson as well.

OTIS

(to Jane)

Says he's pleased as punch. Lacks the odd social skill but his heart is pure.

JOHNSON

Uh, uh, uh..

Johnson gestures that Otis has it somewhat wrong.

JANE

That's too bad I'm sorry to hear it.

OTIS

(Translating)

Don't expect sympathy from me, you
whey-faced toad, I have my own
problems.

JANE

I didn't say that!

OTIS

(Laughs)

Sorry, got that wrong.

Jane crosses towards exit.

JOHNSON

Wait!

EXIT JANE

Johnson is not sure what's just happened.

OTIS

Lovely girl, Jane. Pathologically
shy around men at first, but you
two certainly seem to be hitting
it off.

JOHNSON

I wasn't quite sure what...

OTIS

Fast mover, eh, Johnson? Must be
a married man.

JOHNSON

No, I...

OTIS

Ah, legion of pals and chums, that
sort of thing. That's the modern
way... Little help here?

Johnson helps Otis extricate himself.

JOHNSON

Actually, I don't have any friends, actually. People don't warm to me immediately, I don't know why.

OTIS

Personality. Bit of a cold fish, simple clod, something on that order.

JOHNSON

But underneath, I'm really...

OTIS

Warm, loving, devoted, loyal. The old story, kiss a toad, get a prince--but--fear of warts.

Johnson instinctively, and briefly, covers his crotch at the mention of warts.

OTIS

(continuing)

You'll fit right in here, Johnson.

JOHNSON

Really? Oh, I hope so. I really want to make some friends.

OTIS

One big happy family in this office. Everyone as friendly as lemmings in a hole.

JOHNSON

I just hope they'll let me join them. I feel like an orphan most of the time.

OTIS

An orphan? Good heavens. Not even a mother?

JOHNSON

Not that I recall.

OTIS

You should pay attention to these things. Older woman, larger than yourself, smells of talcum powder and sour milk.

JOHNSON

I was raised in foster homes.
That's why I tend to just blend
into the wallpaper. I get very
intimidated in certain situations,
get a little tongue-tied, can't
quite express myself.

OTIS

Seem to be nattering on
interminably to me.

JOHNSON

I feel strangely comfortable with
you.

OTIS

Because I'm recently orphaned
myself, you know. Lost the Mater
only last month. Knew her my whole
life. Bereft.

JOHNSON

I'm very sorry.

OTIS

Thank you, Ken. Just a pair of
waifs, eh? Buffeted by fate. We
must stick together in this cruel
world...Plunge into work, that's
the thing. This office is the
perfect place for the lost and
lonely. Look at Jane. Lorn as a
widowed goose to the naked eye,
but underneath that hapless
exterior...

JOHNSON

She's a widow?

OTIS

Jane? Good Lord, is she? Terrible
thing, one so young, forced to
dress in black the rest of her
days, squat in the corner making
tortillas...Oh, you and Jane will
hit it off like cheese and
crackers. Being a widow, bound to
lower her standards.

JOHNSON

No, I don't uh...

OTIS
 Oh, too good for her, are you, Mr.
 Hoity-toity?...
 (of golf bag)
 What's this doing here?

JOHNSON
 (to change the
 subject)
 What is your job here exactly, Mr.
 Birnberger?

OTIS
 I'll just return this to the
 proper place then tell you all
 about it.

Otis takes the golf bag to Equipment Door, makes a great effort to open it and, by chance, pulls it the proper way. He nearly falls, recovers and Exits through the Equipment Door, pulling it closed behind him.

EXIT OTIS through Equipment Door. We HEAR the sound of crashing equipment.

ENTER CARTER hurriedly. He stops abruptly, surprised to see Johnson.

CARTER
 Christ! I thought you were part of
 the woodwork.

JOHNSON
 I know. I'm Ben Johnson. We met
 earlier. You called me dildo.

CARTER
 (examines him)
 I can see that, but I don't
 remember you.

JOHNSON
 People frequently don't...

ENTER TEMPLE

CARTER
 Ah, it's daybreak and Juliet is
 the sun.

TEMPLE
 Take a pill or something, Carter.
 Who are you?

JOHNSON

I'm Ben J...

CARTER

He must be the replacement for
Gupta Singh.

TEMPLE

I miss Gupta. He was the only one
here who played golf...poor Gupta.

JOHNSON

What...what happened to him?

TEMPLE

He was last seen with Sam...and
never again.

CARTER

All we ever found was his left
shoe and the inseam of his pants.

JOHNSON

Sam?

CARTER

More like Son of Sam, if you
follow.

JOHNSON

(Terrified)

Son of Sam?

Carter spits ritually through his fingers.

CARTER

Never speak the name of the devil
aloud, man!

TEMPLE

Sam's after Carter, so you'll be
safe. Keep your eye on the gates
to the city. Carter's head will be
there on a pike in no time.

JOHNSON

But who, who...

TEMPLE

(to Carter)

Did I see Otis earlier wrestling
with a golf bag?

CARTER

Now that you mention it...didn't seem remarkable at the time.

JOHNSON

Ah, Mr. Birnberger. He seems very...What is his job, exactly?

CARTER

Job? Would you trust Otis with a job? Otis is the son of the founder of the magazine, Iron Jack Birnberger of blessed memory.

TEMPLE

Iron Jack is our hero. He fought back a takeover attempt by a big publishing corporation and sold 40 percent of his ownership just to keep the magazine private.

CARTER

He kept our little family intact, so we tolerate Otis out of respect to his memory.

TEMPLE

He just hangs around. Sort of like Carter, but he doesn't get in the way as much.

CARTER

You always hurt the one you love.

TEMPLE

(to Johnson)

Listen, Todd, if you're going to be working here you should know that I'm always on the look-out for fresh ideas, really innovative approaches to golf instruction, that sort of thing. Come straight to me with any thoughts, we'll work them up together.

CARTER

Better yet, come to me and I'll go to Temple. We have this rapport.

TEMPLE

You wish.

JOHNSON

But surely we're all members of the same editorial family. It would be like sharing with your brothers and sisters.

TEMPLE

Ah, but there's always that one sister who steals your clothes and sleeps with your boy friend.

JOHNSON

Really?

TEMPLE

Trust no one.

JOHNSON

Oh, never say that. All my life I have yearned for the comfort and security of a family. I need people who care about me, listen to me, want to be with me, and yet, somehow, in my life and work I am never even noticed. I, I, I, I, I....

CARTER

Just skip that part.

TEMPLE

Sing. People don't stutter when they sing.

JOHNSON

I...I...I...

TEMPLE

(Command voice)

Sing!

JOHNSON

(Singing)

Haarooo! The continental, it's very daring/ the continental, it's strictly entre nous.

Carter and Temple look on, baffled.

CARTER

At least he isn't stuttering.

ENTER JANE in a near panic.

JANE
 Runforyourliveshe'sontheway!...
 (Clearly)
 Sam!

General panic.

TEMPLE
 Everyone stay calm.

JANE
 (To Temple)
 Hide me.

CARTER
 You!? Hide me!

JOHNSON
 What, what?

TEMPLE
 (to Johnson)
 For god's sake, don't pee down
 your leg the way Carter does.

CARTER
 I had an infection! I'm going to
 get some paper clips!

Carter hurries towards the door, but he is too late.

ENTER SAM. Carter recoils into the room. Sam is a woman in her fifties. She does not appear to be so frightening.

SAM
 Ah, here you all are, huddled
 together for comfort.

Sam eyes the group, seeing but not seeing Johnson.

SAM
 (continuing)
 There seem to be more of you than
 usual but with all the cowering
 it's hard to tell.

Jane and Carter point trembling fingers towards Johnson. Johnson raises a trembling hand. Sam regards him with a speculative eye. It should be noted that Sam is sexually voracious.

SAM
 (continuing;
 seductively)
 What's this scratching at my door?

JOHNSON
 N..new man.

SAM
 Yes, that's right, you're here to
 fill in for dear departed Gupta,
 aren't you? There's nothing like
 a new man to change your outlook.
 Isn't that right, Jane?

JANE
 (meaning Me?!)
 Murfff?!

SAM
 We must get acquainted, you can
 tell me your interests. Do you
 ride?

JOHNSON
 Ma..ma..Ma'am?

SAM
 Horses are so like people, don't
 you find? Take young Carter there,
 skittish as a colt, afraid of the
 saddle, doesn't know what's good
 for him...but a show pony like
 yourself, you'll run rings around
 him in no time, won't you, new man?

JOHNSON
 (sings)
 Harooo, the continental...

SAM
 We'll discuss that later...Do you
 know anything about golf?

JOHNSON
 N...n...nothing.

SAM
 Good, you won't be bothered by
 preconceptions. Maybe we'll get
 some real writing done around
 here, eh Carter? Oh, and Carter,
 one small thing?

CARTER

Ja wohl?

SAM

The feature article? How shall I put this. Your first draft, was that a literal translation from some language--which you do not speak? Urdu, perhaps?

CARTER

You felt it lacked felicity of phrasing?

SAM

(sexual innuendo)

Then when I got--stern--with you, you suddenly got up for it. Your final rewrite was a veritable explosion. Could it be you need more discipline?

CARTER

(trying to laugh)

Just the occasional lash, ha-ha.

SAM

Is that what you need to spur you on? I can do that...I'm always happy to help you when you can't rise to the occasion, Carter.

CARTER

So grateful.

SAM

The rest of you barely scraped by, as usual. But it's your last free ride, there are going to be changes around here. The magazine's been put on the market, there's a corporation sniffing around, I'm told. Brush will be cleared, deadwood stacked and burned. Only the strong will survive. And if I have to throw the more egregiously incompetent among you under the bus to maintain my control of this vehicle, consider yourself part of the pavement.

ENTER OTIS from the Equipment Door, stumbling in, accompanied by a crash of clubs behind him.

OTIS
Simple as that.

SAM
Anything you care to add, Otis?

OTIS
(Lost)
Ahhh....Re...?

SAM
Remember, new man, any questions,
any problems, my door is always
open...wide open. Any time. Isn't
that right, Carter?

JOHNSON
Thank you, Ma'am.

SAM
Just call me Sam, we're all family
here.

JOHNSON
I'm so glad to hear that. A family
is all....all...all..
(Sings)
All I need is love, love/ love is
all I need.

EXIT SAM

JOHNSON
She seems very nice.

TEMPLE
(Terror)
We're going to be sold to a
corporation? They'll bring in new
executives!

CARTER
They'll want real writers!

JANE
I can't work anywhere else!

TEMPLE
They'll want new ideas!

CARTER
They'll fire the staff! We're
doomed!

TEMPLE
I can't afford to lose this job,
I have allergies!

CARTER
I'll provide for you. Throw
yourself on my charity.

TEMPLE
That's what you call it.

JANE
(doleful)
Who'll take care of my mother?

TEMPLE
...oh, Jane, you thing. Who will
ever hire you?

JANE
(indignant)
Murf?! What about you?

CARTER
We have to stay united. We're all
in this together. We're a team.

JOHNSON
(brightly)
Like siblings!

The others all look at Johnson for a moment, then turn back
to each other.

CARTER
We will provide each other with
moral support.
(to Temple)
I will comfort you...

He puts a consoling arm around Temple.

CARTER
(continuing)
And Jane you can...

Jane leans into him.

CARTER
(continuing)
...We'll work something out. Let's
go get some Mexican and make a
plan.

TEMPLE

I'm sure I'll have some ideas by then.

CARTER

Nothing like a Margarita, a cold beer and a big plate of previously eaten beans to make you think.

They start towards the exit, Carter with his arm around Temple, Jane wrapped around Carter's waist.

OTIS

Oh, I say, I quite fancy...

Temple pushes Carter's arm away. Jane leans into him until Carter becomes aware of her and removes her arms from him.

EXIT TEMPLE, CARTER, JANE

OTIS

(Deflated)

...a drink myself.

(to Johnson)

A bit clannish at times, nothing personal...Make the best of a bad bargain though. You and I together, thick and thin. Two Musketeers, one for all, and, uh, the other thing. Care for Mexican?

JOHNSON

My stomach's a little delicate. I have quite a reaction to Mexican food.

OTIS

Runny mucus, diarrhea?

JOHNSON

Projectile vomiting.

OTIS

Should make for a change. Shall we?

ENTER JANE. She eyeballs them both. Otis preens hopefully. She points to Otis.

JANE

I can't talk in front of Carter.

OTIS
 (to Johnson)
 In some need of a translator.
 (to Jane)
 Right you are, my dear. Didn't
 wish to impose myself. All part of
 the family though, aren't we?

EXIT OTIS AND JANE

Johnson is left. Alone again. Feeling very sorry for himself, he sighs voluminously, then sags into dejection. After a moment he takes the Red Notebook from his shirt and begins to scribble intensely.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 2

Time: A few days later.

The offices are empty.

TEMPLE'S OFFICE

ENTER CARTER. He peers in, then enters the office on tip toe. He holds a bouquet of roses. He looks for something to put them in, finds nothing, empties some pencils from a mug on Temple's desk and puts the flowers in it.

He then takes a collection of inscribed Post-its from his pocket and pastes them on objects in Temple's work space. He HEARS a NOISE OFF of someone approaching. Carter dashes into the Equipment Door.

EXIT CARTER through Equipment Door.

ENTER TEMPLE. She notices the roses.

TEMPLE
 Flowers? Carter will never learn.

Temple sneezes, then takes a deep breath, holds it, and puts the roses on Jane's desk then notices the Post-its. She collects and reads them as she goes.

TEMPLE
 (continuing; reading)
 Must...your...disdain... keep
 us... apart?...then shrivel, fade
 and die...my...heart.

Temple negligently drops the accumulated Post-its on Jane's desk.

TEMPLE
(continuing)
Not without appeal, in an over-
reaching glandular way.

CARTER'S OFFICE

We HEAR OFF a Sound of crashing equipment.

ENTER CARTER through the Equipment Door. He kicks some equipment back into the equipment room, then crosses to his desk. He stretches, looks at the computer screen, lifts his hands as if to write, then falls instantly asleep.

TEMPLE'S OFFICE

SAM ENTERS

SAM
Temple...

TEMPLE
Yes, Sam?

SAM
The old clock on the wall tells me it's time to do the article on golf fashion again. Care to take a whack at that?

TEMPLE
I think my talents could be better used than writing women's articles--say in an executive position as managing editor--which would allow me to oversee the others and relieve your own work burden.

SAM
Ah, you feel I'm giving you "women's work". You feel demeaned and insulted. You yearn for advancement beyond your skill level. I admire ambition, no matter how laughably overreaching. Of course such a post would require a good deal of creative thinking, coming up with new ideas for articles and series and so forth. Any new ideas, Temple?

TEMPLE

The article on golf tees was mine.

SAM

Memorable. Readership soared.

TEMPLE

Of course I have many other articles in various stages of development. I wouldn't want to give them to you prematurely.

SAM

There's no satisfaction when things are premature, it's true...but isn't it curious that the new man has been here only a couple days and yet he's spewing ideas like a garden hose. Even Jane has ideas--many of them weird and incoherent to be sure--but you seem to have none.

TEMPLE

I have tons of ideas! I'm just refining them.

SAM

I hope you have them ready by the time the hatchet man arrives.

TEMPLE

The hatchet man?

SAM

When ownership changes there's always a hatchet man. He slips in like a bad odor and decides who's pulling his weight and who's getting by on her youth and tartish good looks. Oh, and then the heads roll, there's blood running in the gunnels. We'd hate to lose someone with your youth and tartish good looks just because you haven't got an original thought in your head...So I'll give the article on fashion to Jane, shall I? She likes a good insult, hardly notices.

TEMPLE

I'll do it.

SAM

She may write about "a dozen ways to dress in burlap," but it'll be interesting...

TEMPLE

I want to do it.

SAM

Jane will be disappointed, but it's yours.

SAM EXITS, leaving Temple to fume.

TEMPLE

Pustulant cow.

JANE ENTERS on Temple's line and is briefly taken aback. She sees the roses on her desk. Jane picks up the roses and approaches Temple.

JANE

What's this?

TEMPLE

(with disgust)

From Carter.

JANE

(puzzled)

From Carter?

Thrilled, Jane does a little whirl, bringing the flowers close to Temple.

TEMPLE

Keep those away from me, you know how allergic I am...Now I have to take a pill.

TEMPLE EXITS.

Jane reads the Post-its that are now out of sequence.

JANE

(reading)

Your...heart... must...shrivel
fade and die.

(normal)

That is so sweet...Oh, Carter, you care!

Jane waltzes with the flowers, then puts them on her desk and addresses the imaginary Carter.

JANE
 (continuing)
 Take me you fool!

With her back to the audience, she wraps her arms around her self so that it looks as if someone else were kissing her, running his hand through her hair, etc.

JANE
 (continuing)
 No, you mustn't!
 (as Carter)
 I must have you!
 (as Jane)
 Very well...Oh, you great, greedy
 beast!

TEMPLE ENTERS

TEMPLE
 Who you talking to?

JANE
 No one!

TEMPLE
 You're losing it, Jane.

JANE
 Oh, I was just, uh, thinking what
 to say to my man.

TEMPLE
 You have a man? Who is it?

JANE
 Oh, no one.

TEMPLE
 Well, imaginary friends are good,
 too. You know, you wouldn't look
 blander than tofu if you let down
 your hair and took off those
 glasses.

Temple whips off Jane's glasses.

TEMPLE
 (continuing)
 There!

Jane is blind as a bat without her glasses. She staggers around with her hands in front of her, groping for something to hold on to.

JANE
Temple? Temple?

TEMPLE
Never mind, bad idea.

She returns the glasses to Jane.

TEMPLE
(continuing)
Just remember, Jane, you have to set the terms with a man right at the beginning. Let him know there are boundaries. I find that if you start things off by giving him this...

Temple thrusts a fist upward, slapping the other hand to her bicep in the sign of "up yours".

TEMPLE
(continuing)
...it tells him where he stands.

JANE
But I could never do that.

TEMPLE
Men will get in the way of your career if you let them think you're available.

JANE
I don't have a career, I'm taking care of my mother.

TEMPLE
Let her out of the attic, Jane. It's time...If you want to get ahead, you have to project an image of strength and independence.

Temple does it again, this time with bared teeth and a snarl.

JANE
It seems--hostile--somehow.

TEMPLE
Works for me. Remember, Jane, when the hatchet man comes you'll have to make some changes. Maybe even--speak.

JANE
Oh, I, I don't see how I could...

TEMPLE

Just a thought, Jane. No need to panic.

TEMPLE EXITS.

JANE

I'm not panicked!

CARTER'S OFFICE

ENTER JOHNSON. He is carrying coffee in a styrofoam cup and pastry on a napkin for Carter. He puts them down next to sleeping Carter, tip toes to his desk and removes the Red Notebook from his shirt. He scribbles in the Notebook.

Carter awakens, Johnson hurriedly and clumsily stuffs the Red Notebook back in his shirt.

CARTER

So, Johnson, ever have a woman in a sleeping bag...on the back of a motorcycle...during a pollen alert?

JOHNSON

Uh...I brought your coffee.

CARTER

Janice Markowitz, camp Muckabout, August, 1989.

Carter takes the coffee and pastry.

CARTER

(continuing)

No plate?

JOHNSON

Do you usually nap at work?

CARTER

The beauty of working at a monthly magazine is that nothing gets done for the first three weeks before press time...It's our company culture.

JOHNSON

Oh, I see.

SAM

(Off; seductively)

Ohhh, Cart-er!

Carter reacts with horror.

CARTER
 (to Johnson)
 It's the Butcher of Buchenwald.
 I'm going for printer paper!

SAM
 (off)
 Ohhh, Carter-Warter...

Carter tries to hide but there is no place to conceal himself. He positions Johnson in front of him. Johnson is now terrified, too.

CARTER
 Quick, pretend you're me.

ENTER SAM

SAM
 Cart...Oh, new man. Seen Carter
 around?

JOHNSON
 I...I...I...I...
 (Sings)
 Harooo, the continental...

SAM
 You don't need to go into detail.
 ...Oh, Carter, is that you I see
 cowering like the cutest little
 bunny on the edge of his hidey
 hole?

CARTER
 Oh, hi there, Chief. Didn't hear
 you come in. Wrapped up in my work.

Sam sits on Carter's desk, crosses her legs in what she considers a provocative manner. Carter grips Johnson and makes a sub-vocal apprehensive noise.

SAM
 Well, now, Carter.

CARTER
 At your service.

SAM
 Carter, Carter.

CARTER
 We aim to please. No job too
 small.

SAM looks at the computer screen.

SAM

I wonder, Carter, if you might explain your reputed humor piece about golfing in Afghanistan.

CARTER

How much do you like it?

SAM

What does it mean, why have you done it, what possessed you to write it? Or, to put it another way, change it completely, would you? Make it humorous. Just as a favor, all right, Carter?

CARTER

Yes, sir, I'll get right on it!

SAM

Thank you. And new man, nice work on that travel piece. Travel writing is so often--flaccid--but yours touched me in all the right places. Keep it Up.

JOHNSON

Thank you.

EXIT SAM

CARTER

(Fiercely mocking)

Thank you! Thank you! Christ, Johnson, why don't you lick her filthy boots while you're at it! Why not prostrate yourself in front of her? I, for one, will not kiss her...

ENTER SAM, again.

SAM

And Carter...

CARTER

Ja wohl, mein Herr!

SAM

If I could have that rewrite before lunch.

CARTER

Your slightest wish, my liege.

SAM

You know, Carter, the hatchet man is on his way. He won't be nearly as patient and understanding as I am...Of course I could put in a good word for you--if I could think what it was. If you have anything to say for yourself, you know where to find me...My door is always open...and of course we can close it, if need be...Meanwhile, fix the--uh--specimen--you left in the computer.

CARTER

Mein Kommandant.

SAM EXITS. Carter peers out the door to make sure she's really gone.

CARTER

(continuing)

Change it! It's constructed like a Swiss watch. I couldn't redo this before next week!

JOHNSON

Would you like me to look at it?

Johnson looks at computer screen.

CARTER

She has me in her sights, my fate is sealed, I'm dead as cheese. If Sam doesn't get rid of me the hatchet man will... I'll tell you the truth, I deserve it. I can't write, I'm not a writer. I might as well squat on the screen and get it over with. And the worst part is, I love this magazine. My father used to read it. I'd watch him poring over the instruction series and he'd nod his head and get out of his chair and try Ben Hogan's test tip, and he'd nod his head again. He found truth in the glossy pages of our little book.

(more)

CARTER (cont'd)

He couldn't find it in his life,
but here, in the tired advice of
some hack like me writing the same
shop-worn stuff we write today he
glimpsed an eternal verity about
the swing path and the flight of
the ball. I want to continue that
tradition, Johnson, I want this
magazine to be a beacon for those
troubled in mind and restless in
spirit to turn to! I want it to be
more than just a golf magazine, I
want it to be Truth!...Christ,
that's banal! I'm a halfwit!

JOHNSON

That's such a beautiful sentiment,
Carter!

CARTER

Well, it's all over, I've failed,
when the hatchet man comes he'll
lop me off like a goiter. I'll die
in a ditch.

JOHNSON

Your ideas are good, it's the way
you express them.

CARTER

You mean the words. See, that's
the part about writing that always
gets me. It's no use, I'm for the
crapper.

JOHNSON

May I?

CARTER

What harm could you do?

Johnson types with incredible speed.

CARTER

(continuing)

Who are you, Mozart?

TEMPLE'S OFFICE

Jane is mooning about the flowers.

ENTER OTIS

OTIS
Ah, Jane. Interesting occurrence
at the golf course...

JANE
Not now, Otis.

OTIS
Righty-oh.

OTIS EXITS

CARTER'S OFFICE

With a flourish Johnson finishes typing and presses the send key.

CARTER
You took out all the good stuff.

JOHNSON
Logic doesn't matter in comedy,
speed is what counts. A man with
his foot stuck in a bucket is
better than ten pages of clever
dialogue.

CARTER
It doesn't matter. Sam will never
like anything with my name
attached to it. I won't sleep with
her, that's why she hates me...
Well, I may have to...

JOHNSON
You'd do that?

CARTER
To keep my job? I'm a writer,
Johnson, I'm basically
unemployable...I need her to put
in a good word for me with the
hatchet man--well, a whole damn
thesaurus.

JOHNSON
Still...isn't sex in the workplace
dangerous?

CARTER
Well, don't do it while operating
heavy machinery.
(more)

CARTER (cont'd)
I'm all for it in theory but I
want to be sure I'll survive it
ungelded. Sam is a horsewoman,
man! Remember Gupta! She'll ride
me like a palomino. Think of the
spurs, Johnson, good god the spurs!

JOHNSON
But...is sex in the office a good
idea in general?

CARTER
Got a better one?

OTIS ENTERS

OTIS
Ah, lads...

CARTER
Otis, sex in the office, what say?

OTIS
Good lord, where? Horny as a
hatrack myself. Even thinking
about the girl in accounting, the
grateful one. What's her name,
some kind of antelope...Oh, I can
see them now, bounding, bounding.

CARTER
Giselle.

OTIS
The very same. I was thinking only
today...

CARTER
Not now, Otis.

OTIS
Quite right, nose to the
grindstone. Carry on.

OTIS EXITS

CARTER
Need I say more? The idea appeals
even to the halt, the lame and
those packed in salt.

JOHNSON
But--with someone you work with,
isn't that harassment?

CARTER

Good God, man, you don't harass them. You woo them. You're with these people eight hours a day, five days a week, you don't spend that much time with your family. Look at yourself, Johnson. You want to fit in, right?

JOHNSON

Oh, yes, very much.

CARTER

You want to be part of the group, one of the family, you want to be interesting, you want people talking about you behind your back. What would you say is your primary characteristic in most people's mind? Boring, tedious, clueless? Am I close?

JOHNSON

Well, I would hope...yeah, something like that.

CARTER

Have an affair, you'll be interesting immediately.

JOHNSON

Oh, I wouldn't know how to do that. I'm very shy around women.

CARTER

Couldn't be simpler. Show genuine interest in her life. Inquire about her health, her state of mind, her family and her pets, especially the pets she thinks are talking to her. Learn to say, "I know, I know" as if you knew. Figure out the color of her eyes and when you forget, ask somebody, never guess, the odds are bad. Let her know you truly care about her, no detail too small or incomprehensible. If all that fails, try alcohol...So, who do you like, Giselle?

JOHNSON

Well, I like...

CARTER
True, she braids her armpits, we
feed her with a stick, but once
she's sedated....

JOHNSON
Well, I thought...

CARTER
How about Jane? She's nice, don't
you think?

JOHNSON
Very nice.

CARTER
Possibly mental, of course, but
think of her as a woodland
creature--probably lives in a moss-
lined hole--timid, harmless, mute,
and that gives you more time to
talk about yourself.

JOHNSON
Oh, there's nothing much I can say
about myself.

CARTER
I've noticed that. You hiding
something? You in witness
protection?

JOHNSON
My only life is here, in the
office.

CARTER
Well, it's a start. I'm sure
Giselle would be grateful to hear
that much. She finds the human
voice soothing.

JOHNSON
Temple seems to like me...

CARTER
What!?

JOHNSON
She's always asking if I have any
ideas about...

CARTER
Temple is mine!

JOHNSON

But...she doesn't care for you.

CARTER

Of course she cares for me!

JOHNSON

She doesn't act like it.

CARTER

That's how they show it. Have you ever even talked to a woman?

JOHNSON

Temple and I talk quite a bit.

CARTER

(crumbling)

She talks to you? Why? What do you do? Tell me, tell me. I would give a bowel to have her like me back. Tell me what you do.

JOHNSON

Sort of...nothing.

CARTER

(Himself again)

Nothing? You do nothing? I can't do that, you imbecile. I'm hyperactive!

JOHNSON

I guess it works because we get along real well...

CARTER

Let me be blunt. If you go anywhere near Temple, I will eat you. Belt and all.

JOHNSON

You asked me who I should have sex with...

CARTER

Out of my office! Out, out, I banish you...Argh!

JOHNSON

What's wrong?

Carter's leg is in great pain. He hops a bit, howling.

CARTER
 (in pain)
 Old football injury...trick knee.

JOHNSON
 What can I do?

CARTER
 Why not drive a spike in it, you
 Judas... Out, I want you out of
 here! Out! Out!

JOHNSON
 Should I call someone?

CARTER
 Call the hatchet man and tell him
 to get rid of you before I do,
 because it won't be pretty. Out,
 out, out, you traitorous little
 swine!

Carter comes after Johnson, hands stretched out to strangle him, lurching as he walks--a bit like Frankenstein. Johnson runs off in fright.

JOHNSON EXITS

Carter limps about a bit, wagging his leg, trying to get the knee back in place then proceeds to scribble things on Post-its and stick them to Johnson's computer and other furniture, making a trail to Carter's terminal screen where he triumphantly posts the last one. He reads them aloud as he writes and sticks.

CARTER
 Quisling, this treachery...shall
 not pass...pucker up and kiss
 my...rosy red...

TEMPLE ENTERS as Carter writes and posts the last, unspoken, note.

TEMPLE
 So, Carter, still practicing self-
 abuse?

CARTER
 Some things you can't be too good
 at.

TEMPLE
 Stay with it, you'll figure it out.

Temple perches on his desk, crosses her legs, displays a great deal of seductive leg.

CARTER
(responding to her
leg)
Oh, roast me over slow coals.

TEMPLE
Yes, I know. Where's Todd?

CARTER
He's gone to deal with his herpes.
What do you want with that little
newt that I can't give you? Name
it and it's yours.

TEMPLE
New ideas for the magazine. Todd
is full of ideas. Haven't you
noticed him always writing in that
notebook he wears around his neck?
Why else would he try to hide it
if it weren't good ideas?

CARTER
Oh, my god...I just realized.
Those aren't ideas for new
features...oh, my god.

TEMPLE
What now?

CARTER
Those are notes about us. He's
the man who came to assess the
staff. Johnson is the hatchet man!

TEMPLE
Are you sure?

CARTER
He writes down everything we
do!...I admitted I can't write! He
saw me sleeping! I talked to him
about sex in the office. He knows
everything about me.

TEMPLE
That little cipher is the hatchet
man?

CARTER

And I just threatened to kill him.
I'm done for!...I've got to win
him back, the perfidious little
swine...Which way did he go?

TEMPLE

Wait for me!

CARTER EXITS, limping and rushing.

TEMPLE EXITS, rushing out.

TEMPLE'S OFFICE

JOHNSON ENTERS, dejected from his session with Carter, but
determined to try.

Jane looks up from her work, on her guard in the presence of
a man.

JOHNSON

Hello.

Jane does not answer, eyes him warily.

He enters and perches on the edge of Jane's desk.

JOHNSON

(continuing)

Those are lovely flowers...

JANE

Getawaydon'ttouch!

He doesn't understand her, of course.

JOHNSON

I agree, probably...I like
flowers, too.

He makes a move as if to touch them. JANE SNARLS like a dog.
Johnson recoils and gets off the desk.

JOHNSON

(continuing)

I notice your eyes are--yellow?...

JANE

Ididn'tmeantostartleyoubutthesefl
owersareveryspecialtomeperhapswe
shouldstartagain.

JOHNSON
(understanding
nothing)
OoooKayyyy...how's your mother?

Jane gives him the "up yours" sign.

JOHNSON
(continuing)
I...I...
(sings)
Adieu, adieu, to yieu and yieu and
yieu...

JOHNSON EXITS, singing but more dejected than ever.

CARTER'S OFFICE

SAM ENTERS

SAM
Oh, Carter-Warter...

She looks around, sees no one.

SAM EXITS

TEMPLE'S OFFICE

CARTER ENTERS, dashing in. His leg is better now.

CARTER
Is he here? Is he here?

Jane jumps to her feet.

JANE
Ohhhh.

She holds out a rose and a handful of Post-its.

CARTER
Down, Jane, down.

TEMPLE'S OFFICE

TEMPLE ENTERS, rushing in.

TEMPLE
Have you seen Todd?

Jane indicates she gave him the "up yours" sign.

TEMPLE
(continuing)
He's the hatchet man!

JANE
Johnson?

TEMPLE
Don't panic, Jane! I have it!

Carter notices the Post-its in Jane's hand.

CARTER
Oh, no! I left him a paper trail
in my office telling him what he
could do.

Carter grabs the Post-its from Jane, finds one particular one.

TEMPLE
That was your death warrant.

CARTER
Not necessarily. I'll tell him you
did it.

CARTER EXITS, rushing out.

TEMPLE
I need this job! I have allergies!

JANE
Johnson...hatchet man?

TEMPLE
(panicking)
Don't panic, Jane! I have it!

JANE
(panicked)
I'm not panicked!

TEMPLE
(panicked)
Why not?! Do you know something?

JANE
We're doomed!

TEMPLE
We can't leave Carter alone with
him!

JANE
Run!

TEMPLE

Run!

JANE and TEMPLE

Run!

While trying to run, they get in each other's way. They finally make it through the door and rush off.

EXIT JANE, TEMPLE

CARTER'S OFFICE

JOHNSON ENTERS. He pokes his head in cautiously, then enters. Johnson notices the first of the Post-its.

JOHNSON

(reading)

Quisling, this treachery...

(next Post-it)

...shall not pass...

(next Post-it)

...Pucker up and kiss my

(next Post-it)

...rosy red...

CARTER ENTERS, rushing in.

CARTER

Johnson!

JOHNSON

I know, I'm going.

(next Post-it)

...rosy red...

As Johnson searches for the final Post-it, Carter takes the Post-it that he took from Jane and slaps it on his chest. It won't stick so he picks up a pencil and tries to pin it to his chest with that. Only after he's stuck himself does he realize what he's done.

Johnson looks for the final Post-it (which is on the terminal, shielded by Carter's body) sees Carter gesturing mutely to his chest (and trying to stifle a scream).

JOHNSON

(continuing)

...heart!

(Melting)

Carter.

CARTER

Johnson! Ben! My pal, my friend!

JOHNSON

Your friend?

CARTER

More than a friend, really. You must have sensed that I'm enormously fond of you. I don't always show it, I'm reticent by nature, but I think of you as more than a buddy. I think of you as a brother.

JOHNSON

(melting)

A b-b-brother?

CARTER

Like a twin, separated at birth.

JOHNSON

I've always wanted a brother.

CARTER

May I call you bro?

JOHNSON

I thought you were mad at me.

CARTER

That was merely an excess of my desire to do the very best I can for the magazine. Like champagne in a glass I just bubble up with enthusiasm for my work, can't help myself.

JOHNSON

You called me a Judas...

CARTER

In the best way.

JOHNSON

...a swine and a traitor.

CARTER

In fun! We jest with one another in the office, we jest!

JOHNSON

I think fun is an important part of the office family.

CARTER
We can get together and throw a
ball to each other...

TEMPLE'S OFFICE

OTIS ENTERS the empty office.

OTIS
Anyone for lunch?

OTIS EXITS

CARTER'S OFFICE

ENTER TEMPLE, rushing in.

TEMPLE
Todd!
(points at Carter)
Don't believe him! Have I got
ideas for you! Not like the things
Carter...

Temple points at the computer to indicate Carter's work and then sees the remaining post-it with the last word for which Carter substituted "heart". She is temporarily taken aback.

ENTER JANE, rushing in.

JOHNSON
Oh, there's more to the poem.

Carter gasps. Jane sees the offending note and snatches from the screen. Johnson reaches for the note. Jane puts it in her mouth.

CARTER
(relieved and
desperate)
Hungry, Jane? Must be time for
lunch!

SAM ENTERS

SAM
So, my bravos. Who's for the old
feed-bag? Let's saddle up.

Carter puts his back to Johnson and says "thank you" silently to Jane. He chastely kisses her on the head. Jane grasps him around the waist and hangs on.

TEMPLE
 (seductively)
 Todd, let's you and I do lunch. I
 have sooo many things I want to
 talk to you about.

CARTER
 But he's promised me, haven't you,
 my brother?

TEMPLE
 No fair, you get him in your
 office all day. I get so little
 time alone with you...Toddie.

CARTER
 (to Johnson)
 Just us guys together, swapping
 lies...

SAM
 What the hell is this?

Jane whispers the truth in Sam's ear.

TEMPLE
 I know the perfect place.

Jane takes post-it from her mouth.

JANE
 I'llgowithhim!

Jane releases Carter and wraps herself around Johnson's
 waist. Carter puts the post-it back in Jane's mouth.

Sam leaps into the spirit.

SAM
 I hate to pull rank, but I think
 new man should have lunch with me.

JOHNSON
 (overwhelmed)
 Could...could we all eat together,
 like a family?

ALL
 Oh, yes, please! Whatever you want!

JOHNSON
 You want me to choose?

ALL
 You know best! Tell us, tell us.

JOHNSON

Well...I don't know...I don't eat
out very often. What is there?

CARTER

There's a great Mexican place.

JOHNSON

Mexican?

ALL

What a good idea, wonderful choice!

JOHNSON

Uh...Mexican?

ALL

Perfect! Love it!

JOHNSON

I may need a bib.

Temple takes one of Johnson's arms, Carter the other. Jane scurries around from side to side, trying to get hold of him, too, but Temple and Carter keep fending her off. They head towards the door. Jane manages to grasp him around the middle again. Sam comes from behind and massages his shoulders as they exit, rather like the entourage around a boxer entering the ring--except for Jane around his middle.

EXIT ALL

Pause.

ENTER OTIS to an empty room.

OTIS

No one for lunch?

Otis looks around rather plaintively.

BLACK OUT

ACT TWO

SCENE 3

Several days later.

Johnson is seated at Carter's desk, his feet up on the desk. He looks every inch a king and is obviously installed at the bigger desk now. He plays with some office toy.

ENTER JANE. She carries coffee and a pastry which she offers to Johnson with the deference of a servant to royalty.

JOHNSON

Oh, how nice of you. Thank you,
Jane...Styrofoam?

Jane detects a tiny note of dissatisfaction. Johnson spells "styrofoam" in his unique sign language. He points to his eye for "sty", mimes rowing a boat for "ro", blows "foam" off of his coffee.

JOHNSON

(continuing)

Styrofoam...I wonder why Temple
always brings me a porcelain cup.

JANE

Mumble, mumble.

Jane mouths "The Bitch!" to herself, then gives two thumbs up, indicates she can't wait to run errands for him and scoots out with the offending styrofoam cup.

JOHNSON

Only if you're going that way
anyway.

EXIT JANE

Johnson takes out the red notebook and scribbles.

ENTER TEMPLE

Johnson quickly hides the notebook by collapsing over it so his head is almost on his desk. Temple is dressed in a fashionable golf shirt and skirt and visor with pom-poms on her socks.

TEMPLE

Todddd...I'm not disturbing you,
am I?

JOHNSON
Just thinking of a short nap.

TEMPLE
Of course. What a good idea. I was just going to ask your opinion-- you know how I value your opinion-- do you think this skirt is too revealing?

JOHNSON
Nah.

TEMPLE
(veiled annoyance)
Is it revealing enough?

JOHNSON
Up to you.

TEMPLE
Up to my what?

JOHNSON
Just going to rest my eyes for a few minutes.

TEMPLE
(crestfallen)
You're...indifferent, then?...
Oh...I'll go practice my golf swing while you rest. I have so many new and original ideas about the golf swing...If you'd like to come watch later...

Temple takes a couple of clubless swings with an emphasis on her hip action. No response from Johnson. Temple leaves, very discouraged.

TEMPLE EXITS

Johnson sits bolt upright and scribbles in his notebook.

ENTER OTIS

OTIS
Ah, Johnson. Beavering away, busy as a...an insect. Taking notes.

JOHNSON
No, no, I wasn't, honest...

Johnson quickly stuffs the red notebook into a drawer.

OTIS

Letter home? Shopping list? Tic
tac toe?

JOHNSON

No, no, just...some observations.

OTIS

Lay of the land, subtle chemistry,
inner workings, that sort of thing.

JOHNSON

Well, sort of, yes. I do pay
attention to detail. I think it's
very important. It's how I bring
order out of chaos.

OTIS

Well, for chaos you can't do
better than here. How is the staff
taking to you so far, gathering
with torches at the castle walls,
selecting stones of appropriate
size?

JOHNSON

(complacently)

I've only been here a week and
I've won all of them over--just
charm, I guess--they treat me as
one of the family now. More like
a big brother, actually, seeking
advice and so forth. Except for
Sam. Sam is a little...

OTIS

Oh, my yes.

JOHNSON

Just a bit...

OTIS

I'll say.

JOHNSON

A little...

OTIS

Ouuuh.

JOHNSON

I haven't quite figured out what
to do with her.

OTIS
Play dead, lie absolutely still,
she'll lose interest. Worst thing
to do is run...

JOHNSON
But once I get Sam figured out
I've got them all sized up.

OTIS
Really? Quick as that.

Johnson makes a definitive key stroke at his computer.

JOHNSON
Well, my work here is finished.

OTIS
Done already?

JOHNSON
I like to get things over with
quickly, why drag it out?

OTIS
Surgical cut, chop, like hacking
through a chicken.

JOHNSON
Whatever you say. Now if you'll
excuse me --

OTIS
Righty-oh, off you go. Hack,
slash, salt the fields, take no
prisoners.

EXIT JOHNSON

TEMPLE'S OFFICE

ENTER TEMPLE. She carries a Medicus golf club. [The Medicus is a hinged training device that looks like a golf club but collapses on its hinge when swung improperly.] Temple tries to swing it, it keeps collapsing, to her bafflement.

CARTER'S OFFICE

ENTER CARTER

OTIS
Ah, Carter. Just having a chat
with your friend Jackson. His
work's all done.

CARTER
Oh, god. Did he say when?

OTIS
Just now.

CARTER
Did he say who?

OTIS
Taking notes.

CARTER
I've got to get hold of that
damned notebook.

OTIS
Shouldn't be too hard. He locked
it in the drawer.

Carter frantically tries to open the desk drawer, first by pulling, then by prying with pencils, rulers, etc.

CARTER
(As he struggles)
I knew I'd have to kill him
eventually. I have toadied,
praised, fawned...

OTIS
Should work.

CARTER
Groveled, sucked-up, kow-towed.

OTIS
Ought to be good enough.

CARTER
(Still working
frantically)
Otis, none of us can afford to
lose our jobs! What other magazine
would hire a writer who can't
write? Temple has allergies.
Jane...Jane doesn't interview
well...Do corporations have to
control everything? This company
makes a profit, a corporation
would demand that it make a
fortune.

OTIS
Valid point.

CARTER

Small companies are a haven for the just so-so, the not-so-bad, the squeaker-by. That's most of us, isn't it? Here I'm surrounded by people in the same boat that I can annoy freely because they can't get away, the mutual misery of enforced labor...And damn it, we love it. Without it we'd have no lives at all...Oh, god, I need this job!

OTIS

Couldn't have put it better myself.

CARTER

I swear to you I'll kill him. You may want to avert your eyes.

In his desperation, Carter is now standing on the desk and trying to pull the drawer open that way. He has his back to the door as

ENTER JOHNSON

CARTER

I'll skewer him like a shish kebab, grind his bones to bake my bread.

EXIT OTIS, slipping out.

JOHNSON

Carter?

Carter sees Johnson.

CARTER

Johnson!...there you are, my honey. Otis and I were just talking about...Otis?

But Otis is gone.

JOHNSON

What are you doing?

CARTER

Just looking for a notebook, my liege.

JOHNSON

My notebook?

CARTER

Do you have a notebook, too? I think I left mine in the drawer here when I bequeathed you my desk in a gesture of extreme friendship.

Johnson takes out key, unlocks drawer, removes his red notebook.

JOHNSON

I don't think there's anything else in there.

CARTER

Did you hear Sam?

JOHNSON

Where?

Johnson looks around in alarm. Carter takes a wad of papers from his pocket and sticks it in the drawer while Johnson's back is turned, then pretends to find it.

CARTER

Carefully concealed with the aid of packing tape and stuck to the...

Carter withdraws a "notebook" of his own, the wad of loose papers held together by rubber bands.

CARTER

(continuing)

You see? We each have a notebook. Want to swap? I'll show you mine...

Johnson puts his red notebook on a chain around his neck.

JOHNSON

This isn't important.

CARTER

What interests you interests me, little brother, little Benjy Benjy Ben.

JOHNSON

(fondly)

It is amazing how close we've become, isn't it?

CARTER

Cain and Abel. And yet I felt this affinity from the first day you wandered in, looking as lost as a weasel in a shower stall. Ah, those carefree early days.

JOHNSON

At first I didn't understand the subtle interplay and dynamics, the sense of joy and fun and... well... romance... Can I ask you a favor? Unless it's against your principles...

CARTER

Bit of latitude there.

JOHNSON

I wouldn't ask you to do this but since we're such good friends...

CARTER

Siblings, DNA be damned.

JOHNSON

Go and steal the flowers from the reception area, would you? And take them to Temple with my compliments? And say something nice. One of those clever poems you do.

CARTER

You wish me to take the flowers to Temple. With your compliments.

JOHNSON

I know you used to like her a few days ago...

CARTER

Mere adoration, nothing more... But beautiful, sexy women are so often shallow, don't you find? Perhaps Jane would suit you better.

JOHNSON

Jane and I have a little trouble with communication. She keeps doing this...

Johnson demonstrates the "up yours" gesture.

CARTER
It's a friendly way of saying
hello. Popular in the
Mediterranean, I believe.

JOHNSON
No, Temple's been so--attentive--
lately. It's kind of unmistakable.
(chuckles)
Sort of embarrassing.

CARTER
I blush for you, mein Herr.

JOHNSON
But then everyone seems to have
taken to me.

CARTER
None more than I, old buddy.

JOHNSON
I know. It's wonderful...

Pause.

JOHNSON
(continuing)
What do you think?

CARTER
Milud?

JOHNSON
That little favor? Or don't you
want to do it for me?

CARTER
I am gone, Sahib.

EXIT CARTER, cursing to himself.

Johnson takes out his Red Notebook and writes.

TEMPLE'S OFFICE

ENTER OTIS

OTIS
Ah, Temple. Remarkable incident at
the course today. Chap teed off
without a ball...

TEMPLE
Otis...

OTIS
Not now, righty-oh, quite
understand...

TEMPLE
(Great interest)
No, no, keep going.

OTIS
Ahhh...lost the thread completely.

TEMPLE
You were talking about golf.

OTIS
Quite. Chap took a swing with a
seven iron--no ball, mind--walked
200 yards into the rough. "Sliced
it," he said. Thought it peculiar
myself, awfully long shot for a
seven iron, but didn't want to put
him off his game...

TEMPLE
Interesting...Otis, you like me
don't you?

OTIS
Good Lord, absolutely lap dog for
you. Romeo and the other fella.

TEMPLE
I'm so worried about this
situation with Todd.

OTIS
Done his work already.

TEMPLE
Really?...

OTIS
Like chopping a chicken.

TEMPLE
Otis--You're the only one here who
actually plays golf. I don't
suppose you have any ideas about
improving the magazine.

OTIS
Scads. Thought you'd never ask.

TEMPLE
Why didn't you tell anyone?

OTIS

Waiting for the highest bidder, ha-ha.

TEMPLE

Otis, I'm desperate, I'll do anything to keep this job. I can't work just anywhere. I have allergies, you know.

OTIS

Good Lord, one would never know. Had an allergy myself once. More of a rash, really. Chafed when I walked something fierce.

TEMPLE

Otis!

OTIS

My dear?

TEMPLE

Focus...Since we have so much in common, allergies and everything, would you consider sharing your ideas for the magazine with meee?

OTIS

Oh, well, pearls beyond price, don't you know. Nuggets of, um,...

TEMPLE

(Deep breath,
stealing herself)

Otis, I'll do...anything. Do you follow me?...I've always been fond of you, you know that.

OTIS

Ahh...missed a few of the indicators...

TEMPLE

Is there anything I can give you? Anything at all?

OTIS

Always open to negotiation. Been a long admirer of your...um...

TEMPLE

Yes, they are nice, aren't they?
 Why don't we meet and discuss this
 when no one can overhear us?
 Tonight? Here? At nine? Is that
 all right with you, just the two
 of us?

OTIS

Oh, I must say, eager as a...oh,
 builds dams...

TEMPLE

Silliness is a very attractive
 quality in a much older man.

OTIS

Oh, not that old. I've reached
 those attractive middle years.
 Still plenty of steam in the old
 whatnot...

TEMPLE

See you at nine, then...
 (caressing the name)
 O-tisss.

OTIS

I'll just go loosen up, shall I?

EXIT OTIS, incredulous about his good fortune.

Temple slaps her head in immediate regret for what she's
 gotten herself into.

CARTER'S OFFICE

ENTER JANE

Jane stalks up to Johnson, thrusts the porcelain coffee cup
 towards him.

JOHNSON

Ah, porcelain! Thank you!

He gives her thumbs up. Jane responds with "up yours!".

JOHNSON

(continuing)
 I understand.

He copies her "up yours" movement.

JOHNSON
(continuing)

Hi!

Jane looks at him askance. Thinking she does not understand, he goes through the performance again, then gives her the "up yours!" sign as a gesture of happy farewell as she walks away from him in disgust. Johnson winds up for a final "up yours."

EXIT JANE

ENTER SAM

Johnson mistakenly gives Sam the final "up yours."

JOHNSON
(to Sam)
Oh, hello.

SAM
Happy to see me.

JOHNSON
Jane and I were just coming to an understanding. It takes a while.

SAM
Jane's a bit of a slow learner, but I like diligence in a man. Keep at it until you get the job done, that's what I like.

Sam sits on his desk in a provocative pose.

JOHNSON
Ca...Ca...Carter isn't here.

SAM
Oh, I'm not here to see Carter. He's a silly boy, you know. Doesn't know a good thing when he has it spread-eagled in front of him...You, on the other hand, stick to a thing until you get it right, don't you?

JOHNSON
Yes, ma'am, that's my job. Assess the situation, analyze the factors involved, see what's required...

SAM
You are a real dark horse, aren't you?

(more)

SAM (cont'd)

At first glance you look like a spavined exercise pony, but, oh, the stories I hear about you. Otis says you've rounded the far turn and you're streaking into the home stretch, going to the whip with either hand.

JOHNSON

Ma..ma..ma'am?

SAM

Normally I like to bring my staff writers along slowly, take them under my wing, give them my tutelage, guidance...the odd bit of discipline, perhaps. I was going to treat you like that.

Sam positions herself in a variety of poses that she thinks are sexy through the rest of the scene.

JOHNSON

Like a mother?

SAM

You miss the thrust, slightly. ...but suddenly, here you are, almost to the wire. I'm afraid you'll be at the finish line before we've even saddled up. You haven't give me a fair run, have you, Newman? I can ride with the winners, you know--I have the withers for it...

JOHNSON

R...Really?

SAM

You do like to ride, don't you?

JOHNSON

Sssspurs?

SAM

Certainly, if you like. You are a high-stepping strutter, aren't you? Don't you love horses, Newman?

(more)

SAM (cont'd)

Don't you love all that quivering
flesh, the strength and power in
that superbly smooth muscle
pulsing and throbbing under you,
don't you love going bareback,
don't you love when it rears up
and demands to go and you're not
sure you can handle it, you're not
sure you can control it--but you
can, you can! Oooowheee, doesn't
it give you the shivers, just
thinking about it?

JOHNSON

Well...yes...

SAM

Tell you what, come back to the
office around nine tonight. We
have so little time. We'll get to
know each other--intimately--this
way.

JOHNSON

I...I...I...

(sings)

Harooo! The Continental...

SAM

We can try that, too... Nine
o'clock. Don't disappoint me.

SAM EXITS

JOHNSON

(terrified)

Guh...guh...guh...Gupta?

TEMPLE'S OFFICE

CARTER ENTERS carrying the flowers from reception. He goes to
one knee, offering the flowers.

CARTER

Oh, my angel, form divine/ accept
these gifts as though they're
mine...

TEMPLE

I'm allergic to those.

CARTER

They're from Johnson.
Inconsiderate swine.

Carter puts them on Jane's desk, disdainfully.

CARTER
(continuing)
That worm is under the impression
that you like him.

TEMPLE
There's something fascinating
about a man who can hand you your
head on a plate, don't you think?

CARTER
The man is a slithy tove, he
doesn't deserve you. Take me,
instead...In fact, take me now.

TEMPLE
Oh, Carter, don't press me right
now, I'm feeling very vulnerable
...I've done a terrible thing.

CARTER
What?

TEMPLE
I can't tell you. You'll yell at
me.

CARTER
I will swallow this before I yell
at you, I promise...

He indicates some object, an over-sized golf ball perhaps,
that will fit in his mouth but is clearly not swallowable.

CARTER
(continuing)
All right, you don't want to talk
about it with others in the
office. Meet me here tonight at
nine o'clock. I've got something
to show you.

TEMPLE
But that's just it. I have an...
engagement...with somebody else.

CARTER
Not that swine!

Temple nods agreement.

CARTER
 (continuing)
 You!...

Remembering his promise, he stuffs the golf ball in his mouth. At first he we hear the strangled sounds of his outrage, but those change to sounds of panic as he realizes the ball is stuck in his mouth.

TEMPLE
 I had to do it. I think he can
 save my job...Are you furious?

Carter's noises turn to panic. He gestures to his mouth to show her the ball is stuck. At no time does Temple realize he is in trouble. She assumes all of his gestures are in response to what she is saying.

TEMPLE
 (continuing)
 You mustn't take it personally.

CARTER
 Gargle, snargle, bargle.

Carter tries to pry the ball out using one finger.

TEMPLE
 This doesn't mean I don't care for
 you. You're the reason I love
 coming to work.

Carter puts his hands on his throat to indicate he's choking. She thinks he means "me?". She nods and points a finger at him, meaning, "yes, you."

TEMPLE
 (continuing)
 Yes, you! You're so frantic, so
 blatantly insincerely sincere.

Carter tries to pry the ball out with a pencil.

CARTER
 Flanfurfarr!

TEMPLE
 You won't hurt yourself because of
 this, will you?

Carter nods head up and down, indicates he's hurting himself right now.

Carter falls to his knees in front of her. She thinks he's imploring her not to keep her date.

CARTER
Gargle, gargle!!

TEMPLE
I know, I know, me too. But I have
to think of my job. Promise me you
won't do anything rash.

Carter shakes his head furiously side to side in a futile attempt to dislodge the ball. She thinks he means he is indeed going to do something rash.

Finally he manages to stagger out the door.

TEMPLE
(continuing)
No, you mustn't!

CARTER EXITS

TEMPLE
Oh, what have I done?

ENTER JANE

JANE
Is Johnson half-witted, or what?
He speaks in sign language. I hate
a man who won't enunciate.

TEMPLE
Otis says the hatchet man is going
to drop the ax right away. You'll
be sure to go Jane, so if you have
any last requests, put them in
writing and I'll deal with it.

JANE
Me!?

Jane notices the flowers on her desk.

JANE
(continuing)
Who brought these?

TEMPLE
Carter, of course.

JANE
(hyperventilating)
Carter! Again?

TEMPLE
It happens so often I don't even
tell you about it.

JANE
(melting)
...oooooh.

TEMPLE
He seemed suicidal when he left.
I think he's given up hope.

JANE
(horrified)
No.

TEMPLE
All this time with no
encouragement...

JANE
I must save him!

TEMPLE
Don't worry your head about it,
Jane. I'll deal with it.

JANE
As if it's up to you.

Jane scribbles a note, takes one of the flowers and starts
towards the Equipment Door.

TEMPLE
Jane, what are you doing? Don't go
in there!

JANE
Must hurry.

TEMPLE
You may never come out.

JANE
Have to try.

EXIT JANE THROUGH EQUIPMENT DOOR.

CARTER'S OFFICE

Johnson puts the Red Notebook back in his shirt and leaves.

EXIT JOHNSON

EQUIPMENT DOOR eases open a crack, Jane peeps in, sees the coast is clear and ENTERS--with the attendant noise of falling equipment--and places the single flower and the note on Carter's desk.

JANE EXITS THROUGH EQUIPMENT DOOR.

ENTER CARTER, with a pair of pliers. He uses the pliers to remove the ball from his mouth with a pop that drops him to his knees.

He sees the flower on his desk, reads the note.

CARTER
(reading)
"Meet me here tonight at nine.
Don't despair. I can resist you no
longer."...She wants me! At last,
Temple wants me! I've done it,
I've worn her down!

He puts the rose in his teeth, does a dance.

ENTER OTIS

OTIS
Oh, I say, Carter. You wouldn't
have any quick ideas about the
magazine, would you? Rather at a
loss, myself.

CARTER
Tonight's the night, Otis.

OTIS
Indeed. Night of all nights.

CARTER
Big doings. Can't tell you what.

OTIS
Mum's the word.

CARTER
Won't mention the lady's name.

OTIS
Gentleman's code.

CARTER
This in no way diminishes my
respect and affection.

OTIS
Finest of ladies.

CARTER
But I'll bring my knee pads.

OTIS
Let Mongo off the leash.

Carter wordlessly mouths "Mongo?".

CARTER
Long time coming.

OTIS
Ooo--ooh. Nine's a bit of a stretch. Usually in bed by then...Take a nap now, then lots of coffee...

CARTER
Full frontal assault.

OTIS
Bound to come back to me, like riding a bicycle.

CARTER
Take no prisoners.

OTIS
Let Mongo feast tonight.

Carter, again, mouths "Mongo?".

OTIS
(continuing)
The old boy's gone through a bit of a famine the last decade or so.

CARTER
Yes, well, whatever you're talking about, good luck to you, Otis.

OTIS
And to you, Carter.

They link arms and go out together.

CARTER
Into the fray.

OTIS
Tally ho!

CARTER
Tonight at last!

OTIS
Tonight!

CARTER, OTIS EXIT

BLACKOUT

SCENE 4

The stage is dark, it is night time.

CARTER'S OFFICE

ENTER CARTER. He turns on light. Carter carries something in a small duffel bag. He removes it and we see that it is an inflatable air mattress. Carter inflates the air mattress with a foot pump.

We HEAR a great commotion from the Equipment Room. Carter freezes.

ENTER JANE from Equipment Door. She staggers in, groping her way blindly because she has lost her glasses. Her clothes are disheveled, her hair is down.

JANE
Help! Is anyone there! I saw the
light...Hello? Hello? Where am I?
How long have I been in there?

Carter beholds Jane with horror, then slowly tip-toes towards the exit.

Jane wanders about, bumping into things. Carter turns off the lights and

EXIT CARTER

Jane responds to the loss of light.

JANE
What, what, what?

TEMPLE'S OFFICE

ENTER OTIS. He turns on the light. He is dressed in a blue blazer with a foulard at his throat.

He carries flowers, a heart-shaped box of candy, a bottle of wine, two glasses, a silver candelabra with candles, all of which is a bit much for his coordination. Disaster threatens with each step.

OTIS

Anyone here? Came a bit early,
thought it best to limber up.

Otis manages to put the candelabra, flowers, candy, champagne and glasses on Temple's desk. He then proceeds to do some stretching. In a man of his age this should require a good deal of huffing and puffing and general failure.

CARTER'S OFFICE

ENTER CARTER.

CARTER turns the light on again. Jane can perceive light but not much else.

JANE

Is anyone there? Can you help me
find my glasses, if you are there?
Are you there?

Carter tip toes towards his partially inflated air mattress. There ensues a ballet in which Jane nearly touches him with her outstretched hands but Carter eludes her with contortions, manages to get the air mattress and tip-toes out again.

Carter turns off light.

EXIT CARTER

JANE

What, what, what?...Must be on a
timer.

Jane finds a desk in the gloom and sits down, exhausted.

TEMPLE'S OFFICE

Otis completes his stretching. He is completely worn out.

OTIS

Pray for a second wind. Hopefully
a following breeze, get my sails
up...Too much coffee, tend to that
at least.

EXIT OTIS, presumably to the bathroom

CARTER'S OFFICE

Jane rises from the desk and puts her foot in a wastebasket. Her foot is stuck. She gives up trying to free it and clomps around the room, one foot stuck in the wastebasket. Eventually she makes her way to the exit and goes clomping into the hall.

EXIT JANE

TEMPLE'S OFFICE

ENTER TEMPLE

She sees the wine, flowers, candy and candelabra on her desk.

TEMPLE

What have I done? I can't go through with this.

She picks up the flowers and moves them to Jane's desk and begins to wheeze with an allergic reaction.

TEMPLE

(continuing; wheezing)
Haaa...haaaa...haaa...

The wheezing is strong enough to freeze her in place for awhile. When she can get going again she hurries out of the office.

EXIT TEMPLE

CARTER'S OFFICE

ENTER SAM. She TURNS ON the lights. Sam is now sporting boots and a riding crop. The boots have spurs.

SAM

Anyone want to play horsie?...A little hide-and-seeK first, is it?

She looks under the desks, etc., can't find anyone.

SAM

(continuing)
That's all right, I like to make it hard.

EXIT SAM, smacking herself with the crop.

TEMPLE'S OFFICE

ENTER CARTER, carrying his half-inflated air mattress. He notes the candelabra, wine, candy, etc. on Temple's desk.

CARTER

Oh, my sweet. You thought of everything.

He puts the air mattress on the floor and starts pumping the foot pedal as fast as he can.

CARTER'S OFFICE

ENTER JOHNSON, rather glumly. He holds a small, limp bouquet of flowers. He looks morosely around the room. Doomed to his fate, he goes to his desk and sits.

TEMPLE'S OFFICE

Carter is pumping wildly when suddenly his leg injury acts up.

CARTER

(howling)

Owww, owww, owww...Not now!

He falls onto the air mattress his bad leg in the air. We HEAR the clomp, clomp, clomp of Jane approaching in the hallway. Carter has no idea what the sound is until

ENTER JANE

She gropes forward, clomping, her hands in front of her.

JANE

Light, I see light. Is anyone here? Hello?

Using his hands and his one good leg, Carter uses a swimming backstroke motion to slide himself and the air mattress towards the door. Again this requires a bit of a ballet to get past her. (N.B. Swimming on the air mattress is a bit ambitious. Carrying it while limping extravagantly will be easier to perform.)

EXIT CARTER, sliding on his backside. Jane bumps into her desk, smells the flowers, finds them, touches them.

JANE

(continuing)

Oh, Carter. You've been here, my love.

ENTER TEMPLE

She sees Jane, wastebasket and all, swooning over the flowers.

JANE

I will find you, I will find you,
I will find you.

TEMPLE EXITS, tip-toeing away in horror.

Jane clomps around a bit and makes her way out.

EXIT JANE

CARTER'S OFFICE

Johnson takes the Red Notebook from inside his shirt and writes in it.

TEMPLE'S OFFICE

ENTER OTIS. He sees the flowers on Jane's desk, moves them back to Temple's desk, rearranges everything to his liking. He LIGHTS CANDLES in the candelabra, then TURNS OFF the light. Otis begins a slow exercise/dance that might resemble tai chi as performed by a stork, for instance. He has his back to the door.

ENTER SAM. Otis has his back to her and is going through his gyrations in the gloom.

Sam advances swiftly and gives him a swat on the butt with her riding crop.

SAM
(triumphantly)
Gotcha!

OTIS
Yow!

SAM
Otis!

OTIS
Sam?

SAM
What are you doing here?

OTIS
Ah.

OTIS immediately goes back into the awkward stork pose.

OTIS
(continuing)
Mik, mik, mik!

OTIS stands on left foot, right foot tucked behind left knee. His arms are akimbo. His head moves back and forth, first on one side, then the other.

Sam watches him in bewilderment. OTIS takes a step towards her, repeats his head motion.

SAM
You've finally snapped.

OTIS
It's the mating dance of the--oh,
what do you call that thing? Mik.
Mik. Mik.

SAM
Irishman?

OTIS
No, no. It mates for life...
Johnson would know, he loves
animals.

SAM
That's a mating dance?

OTIS
Goose. The grey-lag goose. Mik,
mik, mik. It gives them the
stamina to mate for hours.

SAM
Now that's interesting. I didn't
know you thought about such
things, you old devil.

OTIS
More of a theoretical exercise,
these days, still...Mik.

SAM
(touched)
You must find me very attractive.

OTIS
Hum? You?...Oh, handsome woman.
Still quite lovely--allowing for
depreciation.

SAM
Keep dancing. I find it strangely
alluring.

Otis does a couple more moves as stork/goose.

OTIS
Mik. Mik.

In what she regards as a sexual signal of her own, Sam swats Otis on the butt with her quirt again. This adds a little hop to his dance.

OTIS
(continuing)

Mik!

Swat, mik, swat, mik, swat. And thus they make their way out of Temple's office. Otis is not quite sure how he feels about the swats, but he doesn't object enough to tell her to stop.

EXIT SAM, OTIS

CARTER'S OFFICE

Johnson is writing.

ENTER CARTER, slithering in on the air mattress.

JOHNSON
Carter!

CARTER
Johnson, you villain! What are you doing here?

JOHNSON
N..n...nothing.

CARTER
How dare you coerce my beloved into having sex with you to keep her job.

JOHNSON
I..I...I...I didn't.

CARTER
Fiend! The proof is in your note book.

Johnson tries to hide his notebook.

CARTER
(continuing)
Give it to me! Give it to me!

Carter tries to wrest the book from Johnson, which is hard on one good leg.

WE HEAR CLOMP, CLOMP, CLOMP from the hallway. They stop wrestling to listen.

JOHNSON

It's Sam! She's come for me, I've made a terrible mistake! All I wanted was to be liked!

CARTER

Sam!

Together they hide behind a desk. WE HEAR CLOMP, CLOMP, CLOMP outside in the hallway.

JOHNSON

She's got heavy weapons!

CARTER

Shhh!

The CLOMP, CLOMP, CLOMP comes close to the doorway.

JANE

(off; small voice)

Help...help...

She clearly has no expectation of help. The clomping stops, then resumes again, going away.

The men rise up from behind the desk--Carter as best he can--and Carter resumes his struggle for the book which becomes more lethal when he slips his hands down to Johnson's throat and starts to strangle him. Suddenly

WE HEAR MIK, SWAT, MIK, SWAT.

They duck below the desk again.

ENTER OTIS, running. He flattens himself against the wall next to the door. He is enjoying himself thoroughly.

ENTER SAM, chasing. She overshoots, stops, looks around, does not see Otis behind her. Otis, playfully, grabs Sam and gets her in a headlock.

OTIS

So you want to tussle, do you?
Used to do my fair share of
wrestling as a lad. I do a pretty
wicked, oh, uh, what do you call
it?

SAM

What the hell are you talking
about?

Otis has Sam's head locked in the crook of his elbow, holding her down around his waist.

OTIS
The wrestling hold. See here, it
goes like this.

Otis rubs his knuckles briskly against Sam's scalp. Sam
squirms with pain.

Carter and Johnson rise above the desk enough to watch this
proceeding with shock.

OTIS
(continuing)
Now what's this called? Something
French? No, no. Pitiful people,
the Froggies.

SAM
Release me, you idiot!

OTIS
Dutch rub, that's it!...This is a
noogie, of course.

OTIS raps his knuckles on Sam's head, demonstrating a noogie.
Sam yelps in pain with each rap.

Carter decides to escape. Holding the air mattress under one
arm, he hops on one foot, trying to time his hops so that
Otis and Sam don't notice him.

EXIT CARTER with air mattress during Otis's wrestling.

Otis gives Sam several more noogies as if she'd requested
them, then releases her.

OTIS
(continuing)
There you are.

SAM
Well, now. That was interesting
...You must be really glad to see
me.

OTIS
Delighted, as always.

She taps Otis's thigh.

SAM
What's that?

OTIS
Ah. That's my corkscrew.

SAM

I just bet it is. What's it good for?

OTIS

Opening wine bottles. Would you like to see it?

SAM

Yes, indeed.

Sam leans against a desk, wiggling her ass at Otis. Otis manages to extract the corkscrew from his pocket and waves it triumphantly.

SAM

(continuing)

Ta-da!

Johnson, horrified by the corkscrew and what might ensue, crawls from behind the desk and towards the equipment door.

EXIT JOHNSON into Equipment Room. Sam HEARS the crash of equipment from the equipment room.

SAM

(continuing)

Is someone in there?

OTIS

I call him Mongo.

WE HEAR Clomp, clomp, clomp off.

JANE

(off, without hope)

Oh, help...oh, help.

SAM

We have to go somewhere else.

OTIS

Ah, just the place.

He pulls her to the Equipment Door.

SAM

Not in there! Someone's in there!

OTIS

Well, he will be soon enough. I keep him with me wherever I go. Can't trust him on his own.

Otis pulls the door and, miraculously, this time he does it right and it opens. He hustles Sam inside.

OTIS
(continuing)
Nothing to worry about, small
problem with the light, a few
blind alleys, culvert or two...

EXIT SAM, OTIS into Equipment Room with NOISE OFF of crashing equipment.

ENTER JANE, clomping in.

Jane gropes her way around. Inadvertently she hits the light switch and TURNS OFF LIGHT.

JANE
What, what, what?

TEMPLE'S OFFICE

ENTER TEMPLE

She is no longer wheezing. She takes a deep breath, holds it, then transfers the flowers from her desk to Jane's desk again. Back at her desk she tries to open the wine bottle with pencils, paper clips, etc. She is finally reduced to gnawing at the cork.

ENTER CARTER, hopping, holding the air mattress, swinging his bad leg like a pendulum.

TEMPLE
Carter?

CARTER
There you are, my angel, at last.

TEMPLE
Why are you jumping around like that?

CARTER
Hopping with joy to see you.

TEMPLE
Are you infirm?

CARTER
Hardly.

Carter drops the air mattress to the floor.

TEMPLE
Have you seen Otis?

CARTER
We may have seen the last of Otis.
I think he's about to play Dobbin
to Katherine the Great.

TEMPLE
What on earth are you talking
about?

CARTER
Never mind...Otis won't trouble us.

TEMPLE
Oh, Carter, thank you. You came to
rescue me, didn't you?

CARTER
Uh...we can call it rescue.

He sweeps the flowers from Jane's desk and offers them to
her, putting them in her face.

CARTER
(continuing)
They don't do you justice, and
yet...

TEMPLE
(wheezing)
Haaa....haaaa....haaa...

CARTER
You're overcome by the gesture. I
understand.

Temple backs away from the flowers, wheezing, holding her
hands in front of her to fend him off. He pursues her with
the flowers. She makes the sign of the cross with her fingers
as if confronted by a vampire.

TEMPLE
Haaa....haaaa....haaa...

EXIT TEMPLE, wheezing.

CARTER
Temple...don't make me chase you...

He takes a few tentative hops, then stops.

CARTER
 (continuing)
 I give up. I quit, I'm through.
 That's the last time you torment
 me.

ENTER OTIS through Equipment Door in Temple's office. Otis
 manages to get only his head through the door.

CARTER
 (continuing)
 Not now, Otis.

OTIS
 Good God, man! Have pity!

Otis is yanked back into the Equipment Room.

EXIT OTIS through Equipment Door

Carter flops down on the mattress on his back, holding the
 flowers like lilies on a corpse.

CARTER'S OFFICE

ENTER JOHNSON from Equipment Door.

He TURNS ON LIGHT.

JANE
 (startled)
 What,

JOHNSON
 (startled by Jane)
 What,

JANE
 (continuing;
 continuing)
 what,

JOHNSON
 (continuing;
 continuing)
 what,

JANE
 (continuing;
 continuing)
 what?

JOHNSON
 (continuing;
 continuing)
 what?

JANE
 You're here at last! I've been
 looking everywhere for you.
 (more)

JANE (cont'd)

I've waited for you so long, I've loved you from afar, there, I've said it, I don't care because I know you've felt that way too but were too shy to say so, I understand shyness, it's been the curse of my life, but we've put that behind us at last, and here we are and come to me my darling and take me in your brawny arms, let me rip fistfuls of hair from your back as you ravish me with your unbridled lust, thrusting, thrusting, come to me, come to me...WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU!

JOHNSON

Uh...I...I...Yi...

JANE

Shut up and kiss me, you fool!

She puts her head back, opens her arms, puckers in a classic pose. Johnson thinks a moment, shrugs, then kisses her. Jane wraps herself around him, arms, legs, wastebasket and all in a huge kiss that will last until we return.

TEMPLE'S OFFICE

ENTER TEMPLE, no longer wheezing.

TEMPLE

Okay, continue.

CARTER

With what?

TEMPLE

Say something beautiful and desperate. I need to hear that right now.

CARTER

Nah. I'm through. I'm tired of making a fool of myself over you. I'm tired of feeling as if I'm going to burst every time I look at you. Let the other fools do it. You've worn me out.

TEMPLE

...You really feel like you're going to burst? That's so sweet.

CARTER

No, it's not. It's painful. It feels like something is sucking the breath out of your lungs. It makes you dizzy, it makes you panic, it makes you act like an idiot.

TEMPLE

But Carter...I didn't think you cared, I thought you were an idiot.

CARTER

I've been stupid, chasing after a woman who thinks of me as a moron. And tonight you're just toying with me again. Well, I said I had something to show you...

He digs in his pocket.

CARTER

(continuing)

And here it is.

He pulls out his wad of notes.

TEMPLE

What is it?

CARTER

What you wanted, isn't it? Ideas for the magazine. I've been saving them for years.

TEMPLE

Why?

CARTER

To give to you. I thought there might come a time when we could share them...but take them, it doesn't matter anyway. It's not the content of the magazine that matters. It's the graphics, the layout, the cover. Do you have enough articles with numbers in the title? Thirty ways, 16 secrets, 42 reasons.

TEMPLE
 (of notes, surprised)
 Carter, these ideas are good! I've
 misjudged you. Why, with ideas
 like these, a woman could, we
 could...

CARTER
 Take them. I tried to throttle
 Johnson because of you, he has to
 fire me now anyway.

TEMPLE
 Oh, how can I ever thank you?

CARTER
 Really...Well...as a parting
 gesture...

She kisses him. Carter tries to get her onto the mattress.

TEMPLE
 Not here. There are people in the
 office.

CARTER
 I have just the place.

He leads her to the Equipment Door, then hops back and grabs
 the mattress.

EXIT TEMPLE, CARTER through Equipment Door.

CARTER'S OFFICE

The kiss between Johnson and Jane ends.

JANE
 I knew you'd be a wonderful
 kisser, you have such trembling
 lips!

Johnson removes the wastebasket from her foot while kneeling
 before her.

JANE
 (continuing)
 Oh, my hero...Kiss me there, right
 there.

Johnson kisses her calf.

JANE
 (continuing)
 And there, and there...

She works him up her leg a bit. He obliges.

JANE
(continuing)
You know just what to do for me.
Take me now, you brute. Take me,
take me!

Johnson looks around for a place to take her, then leads her to the Equipment Door.

JOHNSON, JANE EXIT through Equipment Door.

JANE
(continuing; off)
What, what, what?

Everyone is in there now.

BLACK OUT

SCENE 5

LIGHTS UP almost immediately.

Sufficient time has passed.

Both offices are empty. From the equipment closet we hear various yips and sighs and animal noises. Jane's voice soars in a "Haarooo!" as all the noises come to a climax.

TEMPLE'S OFFICE

ENTER OTIS, SAM, holding hands. Sam carries the air mattress.

SAM
Oh, Otis, this was so good for me.
Younger men are so obsessed with
their performance.

OTIS
Callow youth.

SAM
But not you, Otis. You don't care
how you perform.

OTIS
Not a bit...eh?

SAM

Did you like what I did with your toes?

OTIS

My toes? Concentrating more on the ripping of hair off my back. Oddly stimulating.

SAM

Hair? Well, it doesn't matter... Oh, Otis, I've been so lonely.

OTIS

Have you, my dear? So have I.

SAM

It's so hard to meet any suitable men at my age. Men are all so young, these days.

OTIS

Yes, well...

SAM

Except for you, Otis.

OTIS

Very kind.

SAM

But that doesn't matter now. Tell me all about yourself.

OTIS

Ah, well, where to start? Born in the usual way, dark of night, mother cursing father, prophesies, divinations...

EXIT SAM, OTIS, holding hands.

CARTER'S OFFICE

ENTER TEMPLE, CARTER from Equipment Door

Temple carries the riding crop. He has his arm around her.

CARTER

Wow!

TEMPLE

I'm glad.

CARTER

And you?

TEMPLE

You were probably nervous...Just one question. When you had your head on my shoulder and were whimpering like a sissy...

CARTER

Wouldn't word it quite like that...

TEMPLE

...how did you manage to do that thing with my toes at the same time?

CARTER

Toes?

TEMPLE

That was wonderful.

CARTER

Ah, well. We aim to please.

ENTER JOHNSON, JANE from the Equipment Door.

Somehow Johnson has managed to get Jane's chain and glasses around his neck and Jane has Johnson's Red Notebook and chain around her neck, hanging down her back. Jane is draped all over Johnson.

CARTER

(continuing)

Johnson?

Jane recognizes Carter's voice, but doesn't understand why it's not coming from the body she clings to.

JANE

Carter?

TEMPLE

Jane?

JOHNSON

Temple?

JANE

Who?

Jane squints at Johnson, still can't make him out. She tries to feel his face to figure it out, and in the process comes across her glasses which she removes from his neck and puts on during the following.

ENTER OTIS, SAM, holding hands.

 TEMPLE
Otis?

 CARTER
Sam?

 SAM
Carter?

 OTIS
Temple?

Jane manages to get her glasses on, realizes she's been with Johnson all this time.

 JANE
Johnson?

 JOHNSON
Jane. You and me?

 JANE
And mother?

 JOHNSON
I've always wanted a mother!

 CARTER
So what now, hatchet man? Are you going to fire us all?

 JOHNSON
Hatchet man? I'm not a hatchet man.

 TEMPLE
Then how do you explain this?

Temple grabs the Red Notebook hanging down Jane's back, nearly garroting Jane in the process. Temple holds it up triumphantly.

 JOHNSON
Don't look, don't look!

Carter grabs the Red Notebook, garroting Jane again. Carter opens and reads it.

CARTER

Ha-ha!...

(puzzled)

What is this?

Temple grabs Red Notebook, Jane garroted.

TEMPLE

It looks like...notes for a novel?

SAM

(approvingly)

You're writing about us?

OTIS

(pleased)

In a novel?

TEMPLE

Well...that's all right.

JOHNSON

(ashamed)

It's not for a novel...it's for a play.

SAM

(appalled)

A play.

OTIS

Good Lor, Johnson. The theater?

TEMPLE

Who goes to plays?

OTIS

All that--talk. How do they remember it?

JANE

(to Johnson)

How could you?

CARTER

Does this mean you're not the hatchet man?...Then who is?

OTIS

Ah...well...not to put too fine a point on it, me, I. When the mater passed, I inherited the majority share of the magazine.

(more)

OTIS (cont'd)
Thought it wise to take a closer
look at the way things work. So I
slipped into your midst, cunning
as a...oh, dog-like creature...

The others are stunned into momentary silence.

CARTER
...what have you concluded?

OTIS
Well, at first I thought I might
have to sack the lot of you, but
something--a thing--has come over
the office lately. Carter is
writing better...

Carter embraces Johnson.

CARTER
Thank you, bro.

TEMPLE
I have ideas!

She waves the notes, then hugs Carter.

OTIS
...Jane has become more voluble...

JANE
(very rapidly but
intelligibly)
I don't know why people thought I was shy
I'm not so shy as I Johnson...

Jane embraces Johnson.

OTIS
...And Sam is friendlier--quite
affectionate, actually, in a very
vigorous way--

Sam gooses Otis.

SAM
Oh, Otis.

OTIS
So I've decided to keep the
magazine the way it is. And of
course one person gets credit for
all of this...Give credit where
it's due...

Everyone clusters around Johnson saying, yes, yes, yes.

OTIS
 (continuing)
 But, no need for thanks. Happy to
 help, just doing my job. Now what
 say we all go out for a drink?

General chorus of yes, yes, hooray, good idea.

OTIS
 (continuing)
 I think the Mexican place is still
 open.

They all go trooping happily out together without including Johnson in the general enthusiasm. He stays behind, excluded again.

EXIT OTIS, JANE, SAM, CARTER, TEMPLE

Johnson is alone again and crestfallen.

Pause.

ENTER ALL

JANE
 Johnnie.

TEMPLE
 Todd.

CARTER
 Come on, bro.

SAM
 Bottoms up.

OTIS
 Kenneth, lad.

Johnson, now our beamish boy, goes to the outstretched arms of the others.

JOHNSON
 I...I...I...

ALL

(Singing)

Harooo, the Continental, it's very
daring/ the Continental, it's
strictly entre nous/ the
Continental, it's very subtle/
because it does what you want it
to do...

(if needed)

It has a passion, the Continental/
an invitation to moonlight and
romance./ It's quite the fashion,
the Continental/ because you tell
of your love while you
dance...../ooooh, You kiss
while you're dancing, it's
continental/ and you will do the
Continental all the time.

EXEUNT OMNES, singing.

CURTAIN

THE END