

FIX NUMBER SIX

A New Play by Jerry Polner

FIX NUMBER SIX

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CHARACTERS

FRED - about 28

JANE - about 40

RICKY- about 35

HOWARD - Jane's boss at the travel agency, about 50

DIRK - Fred's nephew, exactly 20 and a half

TESSIE - Dirk's mother, about 40

FIONA - about 28

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Scene 1 – The travel agency

Scene 2 – Ricky's Office

Scene 3 – The travel agency

Scene 4 – Dunkin' Donuts

Scene 5 – Tessie's house

Scene 6 – The travel agency

Scene 7 – A dark street corner

Scene 8 – An abandoned nail salon

Scene 9 – Fiona's penthouse

Scene 10 – The refreshment stand at a soccer game

Scene 11 – The travel agency

Scene 12 – Tessie's house

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SCENE 1

A travel agency

FRED. Your sign says “Please go away.”

JANE. It’s a joke.

FRED. How is it a joke?

JANE. We’re a travel agency. “Please go away.” We want people to go away.

FRED. You don’t want them to come in?

JANE. Yes, we want them to come in. It’s just a joke.

FRED. Doesn’t it give people the wrong idea?

JANE. I'm sorry if you don't like it. May I help you with something?

FRED. Well I'm not sure. I'm kind of put off by the sign.

JANE. I'm sorry about the sign, I apologize for the sign.

FRED. Do you see my point?

JANE. Is this what you do? You just walk into places and complain about their signs?

FRED. I was just walking by.

JANE. Lucky for us. And of course you have no interest in traveling anywhere.

FRED. Not necessarily.

JANE. Why are you here?

FRED. That's such a narrowing question.

JANE. Do you have any idea what a covert operation is?

FRED. Wouldn't that be.....

JANE. No, of course you don't. Well I can't explain it to you because we have assets that need to be protected.

FRED. Okay, but don't you serve wine and cheese?

JANE. To clients. We serve wine and cheese to clients.

FRED. I could be a client.

JANE. In some fantasy life, perhaps. It's the end of the day. I'm

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tired. Why are you here? What do you want?

FRED. My girlfriend left me. She just.....left. She walked out.

JANE. This is a travel agency.

FRED. Well, yuh. But she left me.

JANE. I can't help you with that.

FRED. I don't know where else to turn.

JANE. Do I look like a bartender?

FRED. It happened so suddenly. She just got up and left.

JANE. I get the picture.

FRED. Why would someone leave me?

JANE. You know, I'm wracking my brain and I can't come up with anything.

FRED. I need a ticket to somewhere.

JANE. A ticket? You can get tickets from your computer. No one needs a travel agent to get a plane ticket anymore. We're not in that business. Our clients are travelers. People who want to go someplace remote and undiscovered and dangerous and spiritual.

FRED. I was thinking like Denver.

JANE. Were you referred to us by someone? Someone stupid and evil?

FRED. I need to take a trip someplace that will really impress my girlfriend so she'll want to come back to me.

JANE. Can you say that into the flowers? I'm recording this.

FRED. I want Fiona to come back to me.

JANE. Not that part. The stupid part.

FRED. I need to go someplace that's so grand, so expensive, so remote and intriguing that Fiona will see how exciting I am and she'll come back to me.

JANE. Her name was Fiona?

FRED. Is Fiona, yes.

JANE. And your name is?

FRED. Fred.

JANE. Your names are Fred and Fiona?

FRED. Is there something wrong with that?

JANE. Not at all. My boyfriend calls me 98.6 because I don't give him Fever.

FRED. But that's not your real name?

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JANE. Klorr. Jane Klorr. Speak into the flowers please.

FRED. (*Into the flowers.*) I have money. I have lots and lots of money.

JANE. Did you bring it all with you?

FRED. It's within reach. But I need you to give me a trip that will be so grand and so impressive that Fiona will come back to me. Can you do that?

JANE. Yes. Yes, we can definitely do that. Have you heard of Asia? It's very big this year.

FRED. Look, I know just what you're thinking.

JANE. Really?

FRED. You're thinking, "Why would Fiona leave me?"

JANE. Truthfully, that is not what I was thinking.

FRED. Let me tell you how it happened.

JANE. You don't need to tell me.

FRED. No, I want to tell you. Because you deserve to know.

JANE. I don't, really. I don't deserve to know. I'm not good enough to know.

FRED. There's no point in hiding the truth.

JANE. There is a big point in hiding the truth. There is a huge point.

FRED. It happened on a Saturday night. A beautiful, warm, summer night.

JANE. Forget it. I knew this wasn't going to work. You have to leave. (*She gets up and begins putting papers away, straightening the office, using a carpet sweeper.*)

FRED. I thought everything was going so well.

JANE. I can't listen to this.

FRED. I know. It hurts. It's painful. I can't stand hearing it myself.

JANE. I have to close the office. You have to leave.

FRED. We were soul-mates. We went everywhere together. To work, to lunch, to dinner, to breakfast. To brunch. To the super-market. We were so in love.

JANE. You have to leave the office. (*Fred starts to cry.*)

FRED. We had had drinks and then had dinner and then gone dancing and then had dessert, and then had a carriage ride and then we were picking out a microwave oven together. But then she

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turned to me. My darling Fiona. She turned to me.

JANE. Please stop.

FRED. "I need to get my own life back," she said. "This isn't working," she said. Like...as if our relationship was a parking meter. We were so perfect together. We were so, so.....I can't.....I can't go on..... (*Jane throws a glass of water in Fred's face.*)

FRED. Thank you. I'm better. I can finish the story now. (*Jane turns on a noisy paper shredder and begins looking for items to shred.*) I said: What do you mean? And she said," We can't go on. We're not right for each other. I can't see you anymore. I'm giving you back the ring. And the bracelet. And the dirt bike." (*He shuts off the paper shredder.*) She asked me to give her back the breath mint that she had given me on our first date.

JANE. I'm sorry. I'm going to have to call one of our assets.

FRED. And that's why I have to take a long, long expensive trip abroad that I want you to arrange.

JANE. How do I know you're serious about this?

FRED. I'm giving you my money. Talk to my MasterCard.

JANE. Your MasterCard lies. People give me credit cards all the time. I do acres of work and then they change their minds and we get charge-backs.

FRED. I am an extremely well paid, successful, business consultant.

JANE. You mean you're out of work.

FRED. I work all the time. Don't these obviously expensive tailored clothes tell you anything?

JANE. They tell me you're ashamed that you're out of work.

FRED. Do you know anything about anything? Do you know the BBQ Group? (*He hands her a card.*)

JANE. You're a consultant on barbecuing?

FRED. If you knew anything about consulting, you would know that we are among the eight largest consulting firms in the world.

JANE. Show me your brochure.

FRED. We don't need brochures. We're online.

JANE. That's what everybody says who can't afford a brochure. (*Jane looks at the card and types a few strokes on her keyboard.*)

You're in black and white? With no photos? What kind of barbecuing do you do?

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FRED. I don't barbecue. I'm a consultant.

JANE. Yes, fine. But what do you do?

FRED. I'm an idea guy. I give people brilliant ideas. The best ideas of anyone, anywhere in the world.

JANE. Ideas about what?

FRED. I'm supposed to give you an idea for free? If you had hired me, you wouldn't be stuck with "Please Go Away."

JANE. How do I know you're not just some flunky at this barbecue place who scrapes the grill at the end of the day?

FRED. Fine. Did you know that Snickers bars help Olympic athletes to run faster and jump higher?

JANE. I didn't know that.

FRED. Many people don't.

JANE. So making Snickers the official snack food of the Olympics was your idea?

FRED. It could've been.

JANE. I don't have all day for this. Do you have enough money for an over-priced chi-chi, totally unnecessary, snob-oriented trip?

FRED. I already told you. Yes.

JANE. Are you wearing Italian shoes?

FRED. Of course.

JANE. Let me see. *(Fred raises one foot high in the air.)* The other one. *(Fred takes off a shoe and slams it on Jane's desk. She examines it.)*

JANE. Kind of badly scuffed, aren't they?

FRED. They are scuffed the correct amount. Keep my credit cards for security, take \$500 in cash and buy a comb for the snakes coming out of your head.

JANE. That's just what I was going to ask for. Have you heard of Bhutan? *(Fred tosses the cash on Jane's desk and begins pulling out his credit cards. Jane grabs the cash.)* Let us begin. *(Jane puts on Far Eastern music and begins to dance. She now speaks with a vaguely East Asian accent.)* The mountain beckons. You are alone. The sun hangs deep and huge in the Western sky. Just from the sun, you can tell there will be hot, desperate women tonight.

FRED. How do I know that?

JANE. There are no answers on Bhutan. Only questions. And

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mystery. *(The music gets louder and Jane begins to dance violently.)* You fly from Bangkok to the airport in Paro.

FRED. Is dinner included?

JANE. A landing is included. You land in Paro.

FRED. Does Southwest go there?

JANE. Only Druk Air goes there.

FRED. I'll try Delta.

JANE. You will try Druk Air. You will take Druk Air. The only airline which goes to Bhutan is Druk Air. The only legal way you can enter Bhutan is with Druk Air. Your guide will meet you at the airport.

FRED. I'll just get a cab.

JANE. No cabs. Rahala meets you at Gate One. "Drink this," he tells you. "You have a long walk to the camp. Full of birds and fish and danger." You look up and see a steep trail. And you must climb the hill to reach the City of Thimphu, where spiritual awakening is possible. Not included in the price, but possible.

FRED. I'm not looking for awakening.

JANE. You are warned of the dangers of the infamous Lunana Snowman Trek. Eighteen days on foot. Extreme heat. Cold. More heat.

FRED. I don't really want to do that.

JANE. You will be warned that the Lunana Snowman trek is the toughest trek in the world because of its altitude, its distance, its climate, its remoteness. And the number of times you will have to say Lunana.

FRED. I don't want to take any trek.

JANE. You will be warned not to go unless you're in the very best physical condition.

FRED. I'm not doing it.

JANE. Fiona would want you to go.

FRED. Alright. I'll go.

JANE. You will go. From Paro, you visit Ta Dzong, Rinpung Dzong and Kyichu Lhagang.

FRED. Okay, and then it's over. That's the whole trek, right?

JANE. Fool! It is not the whole trek. The trek has not yet started. To acclimatize, you visit Thimphu, the capital. The city rests in a

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fertile valley, at an altitude of 8,000 feet. To leave your hotel in Thimphu is to take a step into the past. An almost untouched enclave of medieval Buddhism.

FRED. I'm not a Buddhist.

JANE. Of course not. You haven't put your deposit down yet. At Geondamji, you will make camp.

FRED. Camp? I will make camp? I don't make camps. I'm not in the camp business.

JANE. You need to make camp.

FRED. I need Fiona. I need Fiona back.

JANE. The discussion of that issue is complete.

FRED. I just want to be sure that.... *(Jane stops the music and drops the accent.)*

JANE. Are you doing this or not?

FRED. What are you, some kind of foreign intrigue, espionage, secret agent buff or something?

JANE. Not all of us can answer our true calling. Trip or no trip?

FRED. Is it going to work?

JANE. The airplane? Of course it will work. And if it crashes, you get your money back.

FRED. Not the plane, the trip. Is it going to work with Fiona?

JANE. Of course it will work.

FRED. I need a plan.

JANE. I gave you the plan. You take the trip to Bhutan, you come back, Fiona falls in love with you.

FRED. It lacks plausibility. I need the details.

JANE. What do you think I gave you the eleven brochures for?

FRED. Not about the trip. About the plan. How does she find out I'm in Bhutan? I can't call her, I can't write to her.

JANE. She has friends, correct? People you both knew?

FRED. They're not speaking to me anymore.

JANE. Big surprise. So you send them postcards from Bhutan.

FRED. Saying what?

JANE. Saying I'm cleansing my soul, I'm fulfilling my spirit, I'm eating plant food, and I thought of you.

FRED. I'm telling her friends this?

JANE. Exactly. You're telling her friends.

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FRED. But isn't it possible her friends would just make fun of me?

JANE. No. It's an absolute certainty they'll make fun of you. Did you hear what that asshole Fred did? Fiona must have totally destroyed him. I thought he was an asshole before, but now look at him. Now he's a total asshole.

FRED. They'll really say that?

JANE. I guarantee it. And they'll tell each other Don't tell Fiona, Don't tell Fiona. Which means that at least one of them will tell Fiona.

FRED. But wouldn't she think I'm an asshole too?

JANE. Not as much as previously. See now, you're still a repro-bate, but you're a complicated one. This is where you begin to plant the seeds of redemption.

FRED. What seeds?

JANE. Just take the trip and we'll work on Step 2 when you get back.

FRED. Okay, fine. It's settled.

JANE. It's settled?

FRED. I know what I'm doing.

JANE. Good.

FRED. How much for the trip?

JANE. \$10,000.

FRED. \$10,000?

JANE. Not counting bottled water and gratuities. Which card do you want to use?

FRED. I'll give you \$20,000.

JANE. You're not going to drink that much water.

FRED. I'm not going to Bhutan.

JANE. Then why are you.....

FRED. I want to hire you. You Jane. You personally, not the travel company. And they don't need to know about it. \$20,000 for one month. More, if it turns out to be a good fit.

JANE. What do I look like, a time share?

FRED. How much do you want?

JANE. I'm not for rent. And I have a job.

FRED. You're too good for this place. But keep your job, I don't care. I'll only need your help a few hours a week.

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JANE. I happen to be older than your mother, in case you didn't notice. That desperate ache of sexual desire you feel for me now won't last for more than a few days. A week at the most.

FRED. I'm not attracted to you in that way. I'm sorry if I.....

JANE. It was a joke. Amateur. What do you want me for? What illegal act am I performing for \$20,000 a month?

FRED. I want you to supervise my life.

JANE. What does that mean?

FRED. Tell me what to do. Sort through my problems. Give me the solutions.

JANE. You mean like a shrink?

FRED. No, they would just look for something that's wrong with my mind. There's nothing wrong with my mind.

JANE. Anyone can see that. What is it you want me to do?

FRED. Fix things. Fix Number One. Fix Number Two. So forth and so on.

JANE. What am I fixing?

FRED. You're fixing what's wrong. Look at me. You don't see things that are wrong?

JANE. I didn't say that.

FRED. You want more money?

JANE. I didn't ask for that.

FRED. You want cash? Unmarked bills?

JANE. Nothing under the table. And at the end of the year you're giving me a 1099.

FRED. Fine. Be that way. We'll do a check for the first five thousand. Once it clears your bank, you start working. *(He writes the check and hands it to her.)*

JANE. Once it clears my bank?

FRED. Not a moment sooner.

JANE. When do we talk about Fix Number One?

FRED. Someone will call you. His name doesn't matter. *(He leaves.)*

JANE. Can I also have a car? Fred? *(She runs after him. Dance music.)*

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SCENE 2

Ricky enters and does a dance move to the music. The music stops. Fred drags in two chairs.

FRED. Ricky! Hey! Be right with you. *(Ricky sits. Fred attempts to set up five massive display boards and they keep falling apart.)*

RICKY. Will you please stop doing that?

FRED. I'm just so excited, Ricky. Thank you for letting me come in today. This is so exciting. I can't tell you how exciting this is. I've prepared some marketing concepts for you to look at. They're just concepts. But they've very, very...conceptual. They're just so exciting. I can't really decide if they're more conceptual or more exciting.

RICKY. You brought me marketing crap. Didn't I tell you not to bring me marketing crap?

FRED. Just let me show them to you. You're going to get really excited.

RICKY. You're not with BBQ anymore?

FRED. Who, me?

RICKY. Yuh, I'm talking to you. Are you still with BBQ?

FRED. Truthfully?

RICKY. No, Fred. I want you to lie to me. Go ahead and lie. Let's see how well you do it.

FRED. Truthfully, Ricky, there was no value added at BBQ. They weren't supporting any of my clients. All they were doing was taking half of everything I brought in without providing any support. I'm about support. Support is what I do.

RICKY. So you quit.

FRED. Essentially, yes. I'm much better off working on my own. And if I may, it's better for you too, Ricky. Much better. We're creating something here, are we not?

RICKY. I'm creating something, yes.

FRED. Exactly. We're creating something beautiful. So really all that takes is you and me. It doesn't take BBQ. Am I right?

RICKY. I'll reserve judgment. Let me tell you about what I'm doing.

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FRED. You know what Ricky? I think we should start with some concepts first. *(He begins to set up the display boards again.)* Let me show you these boards. These could be for print, for TV, for web content, whatever you want. We could do anything with these.

RICKY. Let me first tell you about what I'm doing.

FRED. I know what you're doing. You're starting a bank.

RICKY. We talked for 30 seconds on the phone. How could you know what I'm doing?

FRED. I understand. You're starting a bank. A bank means trust. You have to inspire trust and security. That's your objective.

RICKY. No it is not.

FRED. No it is not?

RICKY. That is not my objective. Will you please keep your ass in one place for a minute so I can tell you what I'm doing?

FRED. If that's the way you want it.

RICKY. Assuming you want to work on this with me.

FRED. Of course I want to work on this with you.

RICKY. Fine. This is a bank for people who don't like banks.

FRED. I like it. I love it. I love everything about it.

RICKY. You don't love it because you don't know what it is.

FRED. I know what a bank is.

RICKY. You don't know what I am. I am an outlaw. I stand outside of society. I am a public enemy.

FRED. Yes. Yes. I know exactly what you mean.

RICKY. No. You don't know what I mean. I'm starting out by lending my own money to people the regular banks wouldn't touch. I've made \$5 million in loans so far. Which is very small by industry standards, but 23 businesses have already been started because of what I've been able to do.

FRED. I love it. Who are these people you're lending to? What do they do?

RICKY. I'm getting to that. You heard of cereal bars?

FRED. You mean those chewy candy bars made out of cereal?

RICKY. Not those kind of bars. I'm talking about cafés where they only serve cereal and milk. But all kinds. Banana Wackos, Sugar Pops, Captain Krunch, Fruit Loops, Count Chockula. You could go crazy.

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FRED. Why would I go crazy?

RICKY. From all the flavors. You could go crazy.

FRED. How would that make me go crazy?

RICKY. It's a café-bar-saloon place where all they serve is cereal. Cereal and milk. Nothing else.

FRED. It doesn't make sense. They go in there for breakfast?

RICKY. It's not open for breakfast. They don't open until noon. It's very big on college campuses. And this customer of mine is opening them all over the place. No bank would touch him. I lent him a lousy hundred grand and he's turned it into millions.

FRED. I don't understand.

RICKY. You don't have to understand, Fred. The point is that I'm making good money with these loans and I'm ready to open a depository institution. I need someone to help me take this to the next level.

FRED. Who would want to.....

RICKY. People who hate banks. All my customers hate banks. Not just because the banks turned them down. Because the banks think they're better than you are. They produce nothing. They make all this money from producing nothing. When you walk into our bank, you'll know immediately that it isn't like that.

FRED. How will you know?

RICKY. Well first, you'll hear the live house band.

FRED. The live house band.

RICKY. It was going to be a DJ, but honestly which would you rather see? Live music. That's what people love. My kind of people like to dance. I like to dance.

FRED. I don't like to dance.

RICKY. Well I like to dance.

FRED. People don't go into a bank to dance. They just want to drop off their money and leave. It's an accepted fact.

RICKY. Accepted by who? The reason they want to rush off is because the place is designed to make them feel small and poor. We're the bank. We have all this money so we must be smarter and better than you. The bank wants you to think you're nothing. Who wants that feeling? And then on top of it, you got to wait in line to be told you're nothing?

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FRED. So the idea should be to get them in and out very fast.

RICKY. No. Wrong. Totally wrong. The idea should be to give them a reason to stay. Sip a latté, listen to the music, try on each other's clothes, meet someone interesting.

FRED. So it's a bank for single, bored people?

RICKY. No, Fred, it's a bank for independent self-employed people. That's who my clients are. And they want to meet other people who own their own businesses because that's what makes their businesses grow.

FRED. Is this written in stone? Down to the last detail?

RICKY. No, not every detail.

FRED. Good. I feel better. Ricky, I am a professional. I know what works and what doesn't work. And this idea will never fly. Let me show you my marketing plan. After you see this, you're going to forget all your old ideas. This marketing plan will destroy you. Then after you've seen the marketing plan, we'll adopt your bank idea so it fits the marketing plan.

RICKY. You expect me to change my business idea, which you didn't even hear until two minutes ago, to fit your marketing plan?

FRED. Well not by yourself. I'll help you.

RICKY. You were fired from BBQ, weren't you?

FRED. I wasn't fired.

RICKY. You were fired.

FRED. I wasn't fired.

RICKY. You were fired.

FRED. You know why my work was not appreciated there? You know why I had to leave?

RICKY. Because you were fired.

FRED. Because they wouldn't listen. Thirteen partners and not one of them would listen. Do you know what it's like to have someone who just won't listen?

RICKY. You need to leave here and never come back. *(Ricky gets up and leaves. Fred is alone.)*

FRED. So you're giving me the contract, right? Right? Just say you want me and I'll take care of everything else. Just say you want me. Ricky! *(Fred runs after Ricky.)*

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SCENE 3

We hear a busy signal as Howard and Jane enter. Jane hangs up the phone and the busy signal stops.

HOWARD. What do you mean, there were no messages?

JANE. There were no messages.

HOWARD. I was out for six days. How could there be no mess-ages?

JANE. There were no messages for you.

HOWARD. The phone never rang?

JANE. The phone rang. All the calls were for me.

HOWARD. That's impossible.

JANE. Why is that impossible?

HOWARD. Because I own the business. Doesn't that strike you as peculiar?

JANE. It doesn't strike me at all. I am not stricken.

HOWARD. What have you been doing all day?

JANE. Selling travel. Booking groups. Collecting \$12,000 in commissions. Talking to your wife.

HOWARD. My wife called?

JANE. You could draw that conclusion, yes.

HOWARD. You said there were no messages for me.

JANE. There weren't.

HOWARD. She didn't leave any message?

JANE. Why would she leave a message? She was calling for me.

HOWARD. Why would she be calling for you?

JANE. That's none of your business.

HOWARD. She thinks I'm doing something with you, doesn't she. What did you tell her I was doing with you?

JANE. Annoying me. That's what you're doing with me. That's all you're ever doing with me.

HOWARD. She must've got it from somewhere. I know her.

JANE. Yes, I'm glad you know her, Howard. She's your wife. That's a good sign.

HOWARD. She thinks you and I are doing something together.

JANE. What could we be doing together? I'm in the office all day

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and you're never here.

HOWARD. I'm outside doing business, don't worry about it.

JANE. When exactly are we going to see all this business you're doing?

HOWARD. Don't worry about it.

JANE. I asked Steve where you were all day. He had no idea.

HOWARD. What are you doing talking to Steve?

JANE. He owns the business.

HOWARD. I thought I set you straight on that. Steve is one of the owners of the business. He's my partner. You work for me. You don't work for Steve. You don't talk to Steve. You don't talk to him about me, you don't talk to him about my wife.

JANE. What would you like me to not tell him about your wife?

HOWARD. I don't need you sucking up to him.

JANE. I'm not sucking up to him. I talked to him.

HOWARD. You talked to him about what?

JANE. About the business. Unlike you, Steve and I are both interested in the travel business.

HOWARD. You're both interested in the travel business. What is there to be interested in? You go, you come back.

JANE. You're not a traveler, Howard. You're sending retired teachers to Rangoon and you're afraid to go to Canada.

HOWARD. I'm not afraid to go to Canada. I don't like the meat there. They don't understand meat in Canada.

JANE. Why are you in the travel business if you don't like travel?

HOWARD. I'm in business. I make money.

JANE. What do you know about making money? Steve told me you lost a 200-person group going to Thailand because you left an anti-Asian joke on their answering machine.

HOWARD. Steve is a lying piece of scum and you are not supposed to be talking to him.

JANE. Why are you in business with him?

HOWARD. My father was in business with him. My father actually liked him, the asshole. That doesn't mean I have to like him. And it doesn't mean you have to suck up to him. He comes in, you tell him to shut up and leave you alone, and then you go back to work.

JANE. You know what Steve said about you?

FIX NUMBER SIX

HOWARD. What?

JANE. I'm not allowed to tell you.

HOWARD. Is he paying you on the side?

JANE. If he was, would I tell you about it?

HOWARD. Who's paying you on the side?

JANE. I'm not working on the side.

HOWARD. You smell like money all of a sudden.

JANE. Well I don't like you smelling me, what do you think of that?

HOWARD. It's coming from somewhere all of a sudden, Jane. Since when are you so well off that you're buying shoes that come all the way from China? You think I don't understand the implications of that?

JANE. Thank you, Mr. MBA. Don't you have liposuction on Tuesdays?

HOWARD. You think I don't see you dressing up all of a sudden? When did you get that thing? You never had that thing before.

JANE. What thing?

HOWARD. That thing. That thing you're wearing. I don't even know what it is.

JANE. I bought it.

HOWARD. Since when do you buy anything?

JANE. I can't buy a sweater?

HOWARD. Oh is that what you call it?

JANE. Yuh, that's what I call it.

HOWARD. You're doing work for Steve on the side, aren't you?

JANE. I am not working for Steve on the side.

HOWARD. You got something going on with him and I can see it a mile away. What's that lipstick on your cheek?

JANE. There is no lipstick on my cheek.

HOWARD. Not since you just wiped it off, no.

JANE. Steve doesn't wear lipstick.

HOWARD. And how would you know that?

JANE. Because I looked in his cosmetics bag. Get out. Get out of here right now.

HOWARD. You don't tell me to get out. I pay the rent here. I own this place and I own you.

FIX NUMBER SIX

JANE. Are these the new rules? I can't wear shoes, I can't buy a sweater, and I'm not allowed to get any work done. Is this what you want? (*Fred enters wearing a mask. He looks around to make sure he has not been followed.*)

HOWARD. Oh, like you care about what I want. Fine. It's over. I'm going to leave now because I have an appointment. But don't think for one second that I'm not on to you. I see every move you make.

JANE. Fine.

HOWARD. You got twenty dollars? I left my wallet at home. (*Jane takes out a twenty, crumples it, and tosses it offstage. Howard exits after it.*)

SCENE 4

Fred takes off the mask.

JANE. Why couldn't I come to your office?

FRED. It's too dangerous.

JANE. What are you afraid of?

FRED. I'm afraid of nothing. I thought you would be afraid.

JANE. Afraid of what?

FRED. Being seen with me.

JANE. Are you trying to convince me that you're famous now?

FRED. I didn't say I was famous, I said I was wanted.

JANE. By who?

FRED. I can't talk about it. I have decisions to make. This is a very serious business here.

JANE. Is that why we're meeting in a Dunkin' Donuts?

FRED. I chose someplace convenient to you. I'm the one who had to come all the way across town.

JANE. I appreciate it.

FRED. You should appreciate it. How long have you been with me now?

JANE. With you? I'm not with you.

FRED. Working for me. How long have you been working for me?

FIX NUMBER SIX

JANE. I haven't started.

FRED. Why?

JANE. Because you didn't ask me to do anything.

FRED. Well I expect my staff to take initiative.

JANE. Who else is on your staff?

FRED. I can't talk about that here.

JANE. I need some orientation. What am I supposed to be doing? I can't get your girlfriend back.

FRED. I'm not asking you to. We're done. It's over. I understand it's over.

JANE. You're sure about that?

FRED. Of course I'm sure. It's unrequited. There's no point in prolonging the agony.

JANE. Then you admit it. Fiona is totally gone.

FRED. Why did you have to mention her name?

JANE. I'm sorry.

FRED. If you hadn't mentioned her name, I would've been fine.

JANE. I'm sorry.

FRED. It's okay. I'm over her. It's over. I have problems to solve and that's what I need you to be doing.

JANE. And how was I supposed to find out what those problems were?

FRED. You couldn't have asked me?

JANE. Maybe if you answered my phone calls, I would've asked you.

FRED. I had to change my phone number.

JANE. Why?

FRED. There are certain people who should not be part of my life.

JANE. May I have your new phone number please?

FRED. Yes, yes, yes. Later. I'll give it to you later. Are we ready to start? Fix Number One?

JANE. Fix Number One.

FRED. You have to tell me how to get rid of my nephew.

JANE. Get rid of him? I don't do assassinations.

FRED. That's not what I mean. He's a pest.

JANE. He lives with you?

FRED. He may as well. He's always expecting to come over, to be

FIX NUMBER SIX

invited to parties with my friends, to be recommended for business deals, to get job references, to get his drink refilled.

JANE. Did you promise him that you would do all those things for him?

FRED. Yes, but people say those things all the time. No one ever takes them seriously. That's the problem with Dirk. He's 20 years old. He's totally naïve. He doesn't understand that dishonesty makes the world go round. You try to explain it to him and he gets all moralistic. My sister keeps expecting me to create some wonderful life for him that she wasn't able to and I can't do it.

JANE. Do you have any intention of giving Dirk the help you promised to give him?

FRED. Absolutely not. It's impossible.

JANE. So you're asking me to make up for your generosity shortfall.

FRED. Exactly. You have to explain that to Dirk and to his mother in such a way that they don't unfairly resent me for the rest of their lives. And keep me from inheriting the beach house.

JANE. There's a beach house?

FRED. Why wouldn't there be?

JANE. Your sister controls the beach house?

FRED. According to her. Who has the time to fight these things?

JANE. Of all the things you've promised to do for Dirk, which ones are you willing to do?

FRED. None of them.

JANE. Fred, what do you expect me to bargain with? They're not going to just give you the beach house.

FRED. It's rightfully mine.

JANE. Why?

FRED. Who else knows how to steam the clams? They can't do anything without me.

JANE. You have to be willing to give him something.

FRED. I'll have lunch with him.

JANE. How often?

FRED. Once. Make it on a Friday so I can cancel easily.

JANE. Fred.....

FRED. The traffic in that direction is impossible.

FIX NUMBER SIX

JANE. You can't do this. You have to give him something.

FRED. Alright. Alright, alright, alright. I'll give you a raise.

JANE. A raise?

FRED. Here's an extra \$2,000. *(He gives her a wad of cash.)* I can't do this without you. Nobody knows how to do this but you. You know how hard it is to find a fixer? A real fixer. Believe me, I've looked. Just tell me what to do to take care of it.

JANE. You can't take care of it. I'll meet him, I'll take him to parties, I'll introduce him to some people.

FRED. And my sister. You have to talk to my sister also.

JANE. About the beach house.

FRED. Obviously. What else have we been talking about?

JANE. I can't guarantee that you'll get the beach house.

FRED. I need someone who can handle this.

JANE. Fine. I can handle it.

FRED. Thank you. Did you talk to my ex-wife yet?

JANE. How was I supposed to know you had an ex-wife?

FRED. Look at me. Don't I look like I have an ex-wife? Don't I look exactly like someone who has an ex-wife?

JANE. Yes. But you could've at least told me.

FRED. What are we, sweethearts? I'm telling you now. That's Fix Number Two. You have to make her go away.

JANE. What does she want?

FRED. What do ex-wives always want? Money. And yes, I know I have money and why should that be a problem for me. But I'm not just going to give her whatever she wants for absolutely no reason. We had an agreement and she breaks it left and right. Now she's blackmailing me, threatening to go to my clients and tell them I abandoned her.

JANE. Did you?

FRED. No.

JANE. Did you abandon your kids?

FRED. I don't have kids.

JANE. Are you sure?

FRED. Yes I'm sure. I think I would remember. But I wouldn't put it past her to lie about that too. She'll tell them anything to get her way. She doesn't need my money, she has money of her own.

FIX NUMBER SIX

Money coming out of her nose. She's nothing but a selfish, greedy gold-digger.

JANE. So, you still have feelings for her.

FRED. No.

JANE. What's her name?

FRED. What difference does that make?

JANE. How am I supposed to deal with her if I don't know what her name is?

FRED. Her name is Claire.

JANE. Claire. Fred and Claire. See that makes sense.

FRED. It made no sense. I knew she was trouble the moment I saw her.

JANE. But you just had to marry her.

FRED. You've never made a mistake in your personal life? You never had your emotions confused? You never idealized someone who was all wrong for you?

JANE. Of course not. I'm a woman. You're sure there are no children?

FRED. There are no children. Just a childish bastard of a woman.

JANE. I'll talk to her, but you're going to have to be willing to negotiate.

FRED. I can't get up in the morning and you want me to negotiate?

JANE. What is the matter?

FRED. I can't do all this. *(He kicks his chair away.)*

JANE. What is wrong with you?

FRED. I'm fine. *(He sits on the floor.)*

JANE. Stand up. People are looking at you.

FRED. I can't stand up.

JANE. It's going to be okay.

FRED. It's not going to be okay. I can't function.

JANE. You need recreational drugs.

FRED. I need a different life.

JANE. You're a successful businessman.

FRED. It can all end. This is how people's lives end. Toxic marriages. Bad donuts. Clients that won't pay.

JANE. You didn't tell me about that.

FIX NUMBER SIX

FRED. I can't tell you everything. How much more do you want me to tell you? What do I have to do, destroy myself in front of you? Give me a knife.

JANE. I don't have a knife.

FRED. Get a knife and bring it to me.

JANE. I'm not going to bring you a knife.

FRED. Then bring me a fork.

JANE. Shut up.

FRED. I have to make holes in something.

JANE. Who isn't paying you?

FRED. This guy Ricky. Started his own bank. Begged me for a marketing plan. I give him a piece of gold. Platinum. With dia-monds. And now he's not even going to pay me for it?

JANE. He hasn't paid you anything?

FRED. Nothing. I want him poisoned.

JANE. I'll deal with it.

FRED. You have to get rid of all these people. You have to get them away from me. Once and for all.

JANE. I'll talk to them.

FRED. Don't talk to them. Threaten them. You're my lawyer.

JANE. I'm not a lawyer.

FRED. Just tell them you are.

JANE. That's against the law.

FRED. What do you think I hired you for? To be nice? Fix Number Three. I can't stand up.

JANE. Take a breath.

FRED. I can't. I can't, I can't, I can't. I'm being crushed, I can't stand up.

JANE. I'll take care of it. I'll do everything you need me to do. I'll impersonate an attorney. I'll lie for you. Just stand up.

FRED. I can't deal with these people.

JANE. I said I'd do it.

FRED. When are you going to do it? You're a travel agent.

JANE. Only during the day.

FRED. You have to quit.

JANE. I can use it as a cover.

FRED. You have to quit.

FIX NUMBER SIX

JANE. Alright. Alright, I'll quit my job. Take my hand.

FRED. Did you wash? (*Jane pulls him up and pushes him offstage. We hear a crash. She exits.*)

SCENE 5

Dirk enters and sets three bottles atop a long bar.

DIRK. What's the point? What is the flaming, flying, frigging point?

JANE. You need to calm down. (*He sweeps three bottles off the bar onto the floor. Nothing breaks.*) Sit down, Dirk. I want to talk to you.

DIRK. Do you know what it's like being mad at the world and not being able to break a stinking bottle? I have had no impact on this world. None.

JANE. You're 20 years old.

DIRK. Twenty and a half.

JANE. I'm sorry.

DIRK. You're sorry? How do you think I feel? Nobody gives a damn about Dirk Dunbar, so why should I? Why should I care about anything or anyone ever again? Let's have a drink.

JANE. Are you allowed to drink at home?

DIRK. What else can you do in a room like this?

JANE. I'm not sure. I don't think I've ever seen a family room designed to look like an Irish bar.

DIRK. My father loved Irish bars. He wanted this room to be authentic. He brought in carpenters from County Corke. He loves everything Irish.

JANE. Is he Irish?

DIRK. Serbo-Croatian.

JANE. Is he at home?

DIRK. He doesn't live with us.

JANE. Where did he go?

DIRK. Ireland. I try not to take it personally.

JANE. Of course. But I'm here to talk to you.

DIRK. You're here to see my mother. You're Uncle Fred's lawyer.

FIX NUMBER SIX

You want her to sign over the beach house. I know all about it.

JANE. I'll talk with your mother later. But I want to talk to you first.

DIRK. No you don't.

JANE. Yes I do, Dirk. Your uncle has told me so much about you.

DIRK. How sick he is of me pestering him?

JANE. No, he's told me that you're smart, you're ambitious, and you're very talented.

DIRK. He said I was a parasitic sop who would never amount to anything.

JANE. Yes, but that doesn't matter now. You have me. I know 10 times as many people as your Uncle Fred does. Important people. Influential people.

DIRK. What sort of influential people?

JANE. The kind you want to meet, Dirk. The kind you want to be with.

DIRK. Do they wear leather and drive fast cars and swear at their mothers?

JANE. Yes. Absolutely. They all do. That's exactly what they do.

DIRK. Do they blaspheme and curse and scare the living daylights out of people?

JANE. Is that what you want to do?

DIRK. I want to move mountains. I want to get people angry and excited and pissed off and thrilled and anguished and exhilarated and wasted with envy.

JANE. Yes. And you can do all that. You have the future all bottled up inside you.

DIRK. They won't let me.

JANE. Who won't let you do it?

DIRK. My mother and her stupid boyfriend and Uncle Fred and every teacher I ever had. They won't let me do anything. Because I'm a threat to them.

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