(Audition dialogue is highlighted for IDA and SAM, pp 29-33 and 67-68)

(*SHE gets up and Puts on*

*her coat. DORIS looks at Ida.)*

DORIS. Our bags?

(*IDA reaches under the*

*couch and pulls out the two*

*handbags.)*

SAM. You keep your bags under the couch?

IDA. Some people use a vault. We've always used the couch.

(*SHE hands Doris her bag*

*then gives Lucille hers as*

*DORIS puts on her coat.)*

SAM. *(To Lucille.)* It was nice meeting you. *Again.*

LUCILLE. You too.

SAM. *(To Doris.)* Good to see you.

DORIS. *(Halfheartedly.)* Yeah.

SAM. I'm sorry if I caused any inconvenience.

DORIS. Well ...

(*SHE turns away from him*

*and heads for the door. IDA opens it.)*

DORIS. Maybe we'll stop back in a little while.

IDA. No, you two enjoy yourselves. I'll call you tomorrow.

LUCILLE. Sure. We'll talk tomorrow.

(*DORIS and LUCILLE exit.*

*IDA closes the door behind them. SHE and SAM remain*

*standing. There is a long moment as both feel a little*

*awkward.)*

IDA. Thank you for bringing over the livers. It was really

very nice.

SAM. *(Bowing. Playfully gallant.)* It was nothing.

(*Pause.)*

IDA and SAM. So—

(*THEY laugh awkwardly.)*

IDA. *(Searching for a topic.)* So how's business?

SAM. Business is fine.

IDA. That's good.

SAM. Yeah. *(Pause. Searching.)* I've been having trouble

with the help though.

IDA. No.

SAM. Yeah. I don't know, kids today they don't want to work

so fast. Not like when we were young. Lately I've been

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thinking maybe I should sell the shop altogether.

IDA. You're kidding.

SAM. I keep asking myself why is it the kids I hire get

younger and younger? The boy I got now looks to me like

he's just out of diapers. But then I realize-the kids aren't

getting younger. People don't get younger.

IDA. No.

SAM. *(Pause.)* You uh ... you have a beautiful home.

IDA. Thank you.

SAM. *(Re: the piano.)* You play?

IDA. A little. The children took lessons when they were

young.

SAM. *(Looking at the many framed pictures on the piano.)*

That's quite a family.

IDA. You happen to be looking at a woman who's five times a

grandmother.

SAM. I've got my first on the way. Maybe you'll give me

some pointers.

IDA. That's the best part. You don't need any. You just enjoy

your grandchildren then sit back and smile as you watch

them do everything to your children that your children did

to you.

(*SAM laughs. His eyes focus*

*on a particular picture. IDA notices.)*

IDA. That's Murry and me on our twenty-fifth anniversary.

At the Concord.

SAM. Merna and I spent ours at Grossingers. I'll never forget

it.

IDA. It's nice to have such good memories.

SAM. What good? We were playing mixed doubles on the

tennis court, I had a heart attack at the net. My twenty-fifth

anniversary present was a double bypass. *(Jokingly.)* At

least it was something I could use.

(*IDA laughs. Pause. SHE*

*reaches for his cup which is*

*beside the pipe rack on top of*

*the humidor.)*

SAM. *(Re: the pipe rack.)* Funny, I don't remember Murry as

a smoker.

IDA. Mostly just after dinner. He didn't really smoke during

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the day. *(Pause. Changing the subject.)* You want some

more tea?

SAM. Sit. I'll get it.

(*IDA sits on the couch as*

*SAM refills the two cups. HE laughs to himself.)*

IDA. What?

SAM. I was just thinking about Sylvia Green. Doris made me

think of her.

IDA. What's funny about that?

SAM. Well, you probably know. I mean, it's a small

neighborhood.

IDA. *(Playing dumb.)* Know what?

(*SHE makes room for him on*

*the couch but HE shies away*

*and sits in the armchair.)*

SAM. Well ... we had this son of date a while back.

IDA. Really?

SAM. If you could call it that. The whole thing was a fiasco.

It all started at Lou's unveiling.

IDA. At the unveiling?

SAM. I know it sounds awful. It was all because of my son,

Richie. After Merna died he didn't like the idea of my

being on my own. He wouldn't stop buzjuring me to find

someone. I think what he was really afraid of was that if he

didn't find someone to move in with *me* I might move in

with *him.* So he kept saying what I needed was a "friend."

He loves to use that word "friend" for someone he thinks I

should spend the rest of my life with. Anyway, after a few

months I started thinking maybe I *could* find someone. So

I started to go out. Each date was worse than the one

before. Not that it was their fault. It was mine. Instead of

looking at what a woman was like I kept looking at how

unlike she was from Merna.

IDA. Not a fair thing to do.

SAM. No ... So my last date was with Sylvia. We were going

out for dinner and I was determined to have a good time. I

specifically picked a restaurant Merna and I had never

been to-The Majestic on Jewel Avenue. You know it?

IDA. The Majestic ... isn't that where Sylvia's husband had his

heart attack?

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SAM. *That's* the place. Who knew? I pulled up in front of the

restaurant and all of a sudden she starts screaming, "Take

me away from here! Take me away from here!" We drove

around for about an hour which gave her enough time to

calm down about Lou and me enough time to start thinking

about Merna. We both agreed that this was probably not

the best time for us to continue our date. I took her home,

apologized and said good night. We never tried again. I

guess even without the fiasco we knew we wouldn't have

been right for each other. We talk every now and then.

She's a good woman and a nice friend. Oy, don't let Richie

know I said that.

(*THEY laugh. Pause.)*

SAM. I shouldn't have been going out like that so soon after

Merna died. I don't know what I was thinking. Funny, how

after you lose someone, someone that close, you find

yourself doing things you never even dreamed of,

behaving in ways you never thought possible.

IDA. *(Confiding.)* I used to cook. Like a crazy woman, day

and night. I don't think I left the kitchen for about a month

after Murry passed away. I made meals that would put a

French restaurant to shame. Five course dinners; roasts,

chickens, breads, compotes, pies, you name it. Murry used

to love my food. He used to say that my dinners were what

brought him straight back home every day right after work.

So after he died I kept making the dinners. I thought

maybe if I made them, he—*(Stopping herself. Pause.)* I

don't cook that much now. I still bake for the kids every

once in a while.

SAM. You're close with them.

IDA. Oh yeah.

SAM. That's nice.

IDA. So, have you been going to the cemetery often lately?

(*SHE holds out the pot of tea*

*for him. HE gets up, lets her*

*refill his cup and then sits*

*beside her.)*

SAM. Not really.

IDA. And what made you decide to go today?

SAM. This week would've been forty years Merna and I are

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married. I felt I should go.

IDA. *(Relieved.)* So you didn't go for any other reason.

SAM. For what other reason would I go to the cemetery?

IDA. Of course.

SAM. While I was there I was thinking back over all the

years.

IDA. They do go by.

SAM. One day you're on your knee proposing, the next day

you're standing at a grave remembering how nervous you

were. *(Reflecting sadly.)* And somehow, before you know

it, forty years have passed between the two days. *(Pause.*

*Feeling very awkward.)* I should get going.

IDA. Wait. I'll get a bag, you'll take the rest of the cookies.

SAM. You don't have to.

IDA. It's my pleasure.

(*As IDA exits to the kitchen, SAM hastily gets his coat*

*from the closet.)*

IDA. *(Offstage.)* So the affair will probably go until late.

SAM. *(Nervously.)* What affair?

(*IDA reenters with a small*

*plastic bag and puts in the*

*remaining cookies as THEY*

*talk.)*

IDA. Selma's.

SAM. Oh ... I guess.

IDA. I'll tell Doris and Lucille to go themselves.

SAM. Were you all going to go together?

IDA. Yeah, but if you and I are

SAM. No. I mean, I don't want to put them out.

IDA. I'm sure they won't mind.

SAM. *(Resolutely.)* Maybe it would be best for you to go with

them.

IDA. *(Taken aback. Hurt.)* Oh ... Okay... Sure ... I mean, it

doesn't really matter. *(Hands him the bag.)*

SAM. Thank you.

(*THEY walk to the door and stand looking at each other.*

*The awkwardness builds.)*

SAM. It was nice talking.

IDA. Yeah.

SAM. We'll have to do it again sometime.

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LUCILLE. Asleep. We stayed up late after we got back. You

know women.

SAM. Could I talk to Ida alone for a minute?

LUCILLE. Oh sure. I'll uh ... I'll go make some tea. *(SHE*

*walks to the kitchen, holding on to each piece of furniture*

*along the way for balance. SHE exits.)*

SAM. *(Gathering up his nerve.)* I uh ... I uh '" I'm not sure

what I came here to say. I just knew that I had to come

over to see you. I guess ... I guess what I want to say is ...

is that I don't want to stop seeing you.

IDA. *(Firmly.)* You already did.

SAM. Only because ... because I started to realize that there

was the possibility that ... that maybe something was going

to happen ... I mean, that something was developing

between us that ... that

IDA. I wasn't ready for.

SAM. That *I* wasn't ready for. When I think back, I was

talking like such a big shot-ready to start a new chapter.

Who was I kidding? I was terrified. All I needed was a

door to run out of and Lucille and Doris gave me one. We

started talking about Selma's wedding and what it meant to

take you and

IDA. *(Angrily.)* So you asked Mildred.

SAM. Not because I had any real feelings for her. But because

I *didn't* ... It felt safe ... It wasn't a nice thing to do to you

or to her.

IDA. No.

SAM. Ida, that afternoon I spent here with you was one of the

nicest afternoons I had since Merna died. And the nights

we went out together felt wonderful. Each time I was with

you I thought about Merna less and less. And that's what

started to get to me. For the first time I wasn't comparing

someone to Merna. I was enjoying you for just being you

and ... and that frightened me.

IDA. *(Pause.)* I just want to know one thing. These last two

weeks ... did you miss me?

SAM. Oh yes. *(Almost fearful.)* And you?

IDA. *(Nonchalantly.)* You were on my mind.

SAM. *(Pause.)* I've lost one woman in my life because there

was nothing I could do to stop it. I don't want to lose you if

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there's still anything I can do to hold on.

(*IDA looks at him with tears*

*in her eyes as SHE starts*

*crying and laughing.)*

SAM. What?

IDA. I think somewhere right now Murry and Merna are

having one hell of a laugh.

SAM. You think so?

IDA. Yeah.

(*LUCILLE enters with the*

*tea and carefully sets the tray down on the table.)*

SAM. *(To Lucille.)* How about we forget the tea and go out

for something to eat?

LUCILLE. *(Her mouth drops open as SHE becomes nauseous*

*just at the thought.)* ... *Food?*

SAM. *(Excitedly.)* And then maybe we'll all go for some ice

cream. I feel like a kid again.

IDA. Ice cream?

LUCILLE. We'd love to. We haven't eaten a thing.

IDA. Not a thing.

SAM. *(To Ida.)* So go get dressed and wake up Doris. .

LUCILLE. *(To IDA.)* Yeah, go ahead. I'm sure she'll be

famished.

IDA. I'm sure. *(Exits upstairs to the bedroom.)*

LUCILLE. *(Going over to Sam.)* I'm sorry, Sam. Doris and I

should never have interfered.

SAM. *(Smiling, taking her hands.)* So where should we go to

eat?

LUCILLE. Where ever you want.

SAM. There's a great kosher Chinese place over on Linden.

LUCILLE. Klein's?

SAM. No. You're thinking of Klein's Korean Kitchen on

Union Turnpike. I'm talking Manny Peking.

LUCILLE. Oh, I know the place. Let me just put on some

make-up. *(SHE takes some lipstick out of her bag and*

*begins putting it on in front of the mirror.)* I want you to

know, you're the only man, besides Harry, who's seen me

without make-up ... and look what it did to him.

SAM. I think you look better.

(*IDA walks slowly down the stairs and stops. SHE stands*

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