

The Party Play

By

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"All the winter torrents are going forth to the sea, yet  
the sea itself is not full."

--*Ecclesiastes*

"Oh! thought Clarissa, in the middle of my party, here's  
death"

--*Mrs. Dalloway*

## Characters

### The Women:

Janalyn, mid-late 20s

Kiki, mid-late 20s

Tamar, early 30s

### The Men:

Paul, mid-late 20s

Carl, early-mid-20s

Dustin, late 20s-early 30s

## Setting

Paul and Carl's 2-bedroom, converted-industrial-loft type apartment. Kitchen and living room. An emerging Brooklyn neighborhood. Friday night. Spring. The present.

The scenes in this play run in reverse chronological order. So scene 1 is late in the course of the party, while scene 17 is the beginning of the evening.

The set for this play should be minimal and amorphous. The scenes take place in a variety of small, specific spaces within the common areas of the apartment. It is never possible for the audience to view the whole living space at once. This helps to explain why we never see more than these six characters all night, in spite of the fact that there are obviously many others at the party.

Although there are references to physical objects throughout the play, it is not essential to have most of them represented as props on stage. Often these things - paper plates, plastic cups, fans, sound equipment, beverage bottles, food, posters, etc. - are mentioned in the dialogue when they appear, and most if not all others can be readily generated through gestures and pantomime. In many cases it will be more interesting if all concerned are engaged in pretending a given object is actually there.

Scene 1

(All six characters are onstage in the living room/kitchen area of the apartment. There are fans set up in different parts of the room to provide extra ventilation. CARL is by the food table and accidentally knocks over a stack of paper plates. They fly into the stream of one of the fans and some of them become airborne.)

DUSTIN

Hey! Dude, look at those plates!

PAUL

They're airborne!

DUSTIN

Get the rest of the plates!

(DUSTIN, CARL and PAUL, followed by TAMAR, JANALYN and KIKI, throw the remaining plates in the air streams of the fans. They fly up and out, scattering all over the floor of the apartment. Not only is it fun to make the plates fly, but also to bat them down or catch them once they are in the air. When they run out of the initial stack of plates they grab the fallen ones off the floor to relaunch.)

CARL

Relaunch!

JANALYN

Frisbee!

PAUL

Oh hey! Watch the poster!

JANALYN

Sorry.

PAUL

It's all okay.

KIKI

Try it like this.

DUSTIN

Whoa.

CARL

(holding plate in airstream with fingers)

Look. You can balance it. Hold it in the airstream.

TAMAR

Let me.

KIKI

Cool.

TAMAR

Yeah! This is awesome!

(the plate gets away from her)

Aagh!

PAUL

Move over.

(PAUL floats a plate in the airstream.)

CARL

How many can we get? How many at once?

DUSTIN

What do you think?

CARL

I don't know.

PAUL

That's two.

KIKI

Three.

TAMAR

Four?

JANALYN

Yeah.

TAMAR

Yeah!

KIKI  
They look like clouds.

PAUL  
Or parachutes.

DUSTIN  
UFO's!

TAMAR  
Or angels.

CARL  
Or really giant snowflakes.

JANALYN  
Look at them in the lights. They sparkle. Then you can see the shadows.

KIKI  
You guys! You guys! We have to put this on Facebook! Come on!

(KIKI takes out her camera and takes a bunch of pictures. The others pose individually and in groups with the plates and fans.)

PAUL  
No, hold that. Over there. (pause) Cool.

DUSTIN  
We should get some kind of, guy shot.

TAMAR  
These are going to be awesome.

JANALYN  
Wait! I want to take some too!

(JANALYN and the others alternate taking pictures, posing, throwing the plates, etc.)

CARL  
Look. From this angle, you get the whiteness of the plates against the backdrop of the view.

PAUL

All that black sky and city lights. Wow. The colors.

CARL

Yeah. (pause) I'm going to miss this place.

END OF SCENE

Scene 2

TAMAR

You guys sure have a nice view here.

PAUL

Yeah. It's one of the benefits of the fourth floor. Only benefits. If you go out on the fire escape, during the day, and lean all the way to the left, there is an angle there where you can actually see Manhattan.

TAMAR

Cool.

PAUL

Yeah. And if the sky is clear enough, sometimes you can see the Statue of Liberty, just the top of her head, and then the torch. (pause) At night, when it's all lit up, even this part of Brooklyn does not look that bad. You can make out the topography of the neighborhood without noticing the sordid details. See those projects buildings, the tall ones there on the right?

TAMAR

Uh-huh.

PAUL

At night the windows are all lit up in nice even rows. That big light over there is the Atlantic Pacific clock tower.

TAMAR

That makes sense.

PAUL

And see that dark patch, sort of straight ahead?

TAMAR

Uh, that one?

PAUL

Yeah, that's it. That's the park. They close it down and lock it after dark.

TAMAR

It looks like all the lights are dangling somehow, hanging from little hooks. Like Chinese lanterns on a lake. Or, oh.

From that game. Remember? Megaman. Yes, Megaman. The first one, for regular Nintendo.

PAUL

Of course! I loved that game!

TAMAR

There was a water level. Aquaman. Aquaman was the boss of the world, the one you had to beat at the end of it, so you could take his powers. And there were these giant fish, much bigger than you, than Megaman. And they had these little hooks curling off the top of their heads and at the end was a round glowing globe light. They were sort of pretty, but if you got too close they would jump out and eat you.

PAUL

Yeah, those fish were downright evil. I used to get eaten all the time.

TAMAR

What were all those other worlds? All the different kinds of men that were the enemies. I can't remember any of the other men.

PAUL

There was. Ironman? I think there was an Ironman. Sandman. That was the desert world. Ice Man - I'm pretty sure about Ice Man.

TAMAR

I also sort of remember a jungle. Jungle Man?

PAUL

It gets confusing because I am pretty sure there were actually two Megaman games for regular Nintendo and then at least one more for the Super Nintendo once it came out. It was a really popular game. It had a whole bunch of sequels to itself.

TAMAR

I would believe that.

PAUL

All of the enemies and the enemy worlds kind of blur together after a while. There was a certain amount of repetition.



TAMAR

And then after you defeated all the different men there was the extra evil, mad scientist behind it all, that you had to defeat to win the game. Dr. Wily.

PAUL

Yeah! I remember Dr. Wily. He had a super evil laugh.

TAMAR

Those classic Nintendo games were the best.

PAUL

Yeah, I know. Like, I liked the original version of SimCities much better than the computer ones that came later.

TAMAR

I remember how long my parents resisted getting us that first Nintendo when it came out. They wouldn't get it the first year. They worried, it's expensive, it will interfere with schoolwork, chores, the whole nine yards. We had to beg and beg and talk about how all of our classmates had it. They finally caved.

PAUL

Mine tried to sell me on how cool their old Atari was, with Pacman and the black and white graphics. But of course it wouldn't play any of the new games.

TAMAR

How far we have come.

PAUL

It's a cycle that just keeps repeating, this cycle of new systems and then new games and then more new systems, with new controllers thrown in every now and then, sometimes, a bright orange Duck Hunt gun just for good measure. I was pretty much ignoring it for a while, that cycle, but now that Dustin has the Wiii I spend like four times more time at his apartment than I did before. We used to go out more often. We used to go out to bars.

END OF SCENE

Scene 3

JANALYN

Can you play that song? The one by Metallica?

DUSTIN

Oh yeah good idea. I'll put it on next.

JANALYN

Awesome. Thanks. Dustin. You rock man.

DUSTIN

Oh yeah. I know.

END OF SCENE

Scene 4

(DUSTIN is at the DJ station. Everyone else is dancing wildly. DUSTIN pushes a button, changing the song, and then joins them on the dance floor. The new song is a mix, prompting varying types of dancing. This continues for some time.)

END OF SCENE

Scene 5

CARL

How many people do you think are here now?

PAUL

Tons! It's great!

CARL

Yeah I know! Do you think we might have sixty?

PAUL

I think we might. Folks are really sticking around.

CARL

And we might get even more!

PAUL

You never know.

CARL

What might happen.

END OF SCENE

Scene 6

(Throughout this scene Tamar and Dustin are in one area of the party (Area A), Kiki and Paul are in a second area (Area B), and Janalyn and Carl are in a third area (Area C). The three groups do not interact or overhear each other. At the party, all three conversations are occurring more or less simultaneously. However, the dialogue below does not overlap and the audience is able to hear all of it clearly.)

(Area A)

TAMAR

You guys always have the best parties. You four. I don't know how you do it. I never have this much success.

DUSTIN

Hmmm. There is no one secret to it, being the perfect host. Some of it is accidental. Often, it is collaborative. A collaborative effort. It does help when there is more than one person. One host.

TAMAR

Like that one that you had. At your factory, your workshop studio building. Back in the spring. It sort of kicked off the summer.

DUSTIN

Yeah. But you know what? None of those bands were supposed to be there. To this day I am not sure how they ended up being there, and playing. They turned it into a concert for themselves.

TAMAR

Two of them were actually good.

DUSTIN

Yeah, the first one and the last one. The two in the middle just sucked.

TAMAR

Yeah. But at least the one had alien spaceman costumes. Those were entertaining.

DUSTIN

True.

(Area B)

KIKI

Remember those Waterside parties?

PAUL

Oh yeah.

KIKI

Those were some awesome parties. I remember how when I first moved to New York, as soon as I had unpacked, my first thought was: now I want to have a giant party. It was my mission. My quest. For a while I thought I was the only one, until I met you, and Dustin, and Janalyn, and found out all of you were actually thinking the same thing.

PAUL

There were some false starts.

KIKI

Yeah, some party ideas that epicly failed, and some where we were just trying to fit too many people into too small an apartment. But then Waterside happened.

(Area C)

CARL

Were you at Tamar and Christopher's wedding?

JANALYN

Yes! And more critically, Tamar and Christopher's wedding's afterparty.

CARL

I never heard there was an after party.

JANALYN

There was! The thing was, there was only wine and beer served at Tamar's wedding because there were some people on Christopher's side who were alcoholics, or something, anyway people in his family who had no control and they were worried about them getting massively drunk and embarrassing. They decided to play it safe. And the beer was basically Bud or Bud Light, something gross like that,

and the wine was just as bad, very acidic and bad tasting. You couldn't drink that much of it even if you wanted to. And I think they ran behind schedule at the reception, because there was only maybe a half hour of dancing after the dinner, the cake, the taking of casual photographs, the table visits by the bride and groom, and so forth. Anyway everyone wanted to drink at the end. And dance. And drink while dancing. Hence, the discussions concerning the Afterparty which occupied a considerable extension of time while all of the reception staff were trying politely to get us to leave.

(Area B)

PAUL

Yeah. That guy. I forget which of you found him, that superindendent guy?

KIKI

Actually it was Janalyn. But I was the one who had the burst of inspiration, the idea. Those community rooms in those luxury apartment highrises. I knew, it being Waterside, they would have to have them. And it turned out that, yeah, Superindendent Guy could book those rooms whenever the regular tenants weren't booking them, which was a lot of the time.

(Area C)

JANALYN

Somehow Kiki and I were persuaded to have it in our hotel room. It was probably Paul who persuaded us. His roommate at the time was a really light sleeper, and a pretty giant nerd who wasn't having it in his room, no way.

CARL

Paul is always complaining about that roommate.

JANALYN

Yeah. Well, he had cause. We knew that guy was never going to make it here. He hated New York. The last I heard he had moved to Texas, with a house, a wife, kids, the whole deal. Probably some dog. Anyway. Paul was sharing his hotel room with that roommate and that was how it ended up being in my room and Kiki's.

(Area B)

PAUL

That room was sweet.

KIKI

Yeah even I had no idea that community room was going to turn out to be so awesome.

(Area A)

TAMAR

There was something about the experience of being in a new place. None of us had seen your workshop before. There was all this big equipment, with razors and blades, dangerous looking, although securely roped off, for safety. There were ladders to climb, to view the bands. It had a hallway, where the bathrooms were. That was helpful because it gave us a quieter place to talk, away from the music and the dancing. It was cool there, by which I mean, colder. At the end, it had an open window. You could see the sky and the stars.

(Area B)

PAUL

I remember you would walk in, and there would be two entire walls of windows looking out over the water.

KIKI

Yeah, straight ahead and the short one to your right. The coat rack to your left. Good place for coats and bags. And the separate bathrooms, just for that particular room. A place for the food table near the windows -

PAUL

That area was nice because it was quieter there and you had the view and you could eat food and actually talk to people. There was a space where you could hear.

KIKI

And a place for the liquor table closer to the sound system we would have Dustin bring in and the dance floor.

PAUL

The apartment towers would reflect off the water and we would see them there, reflecting.



(Area C)

CARL

What did you guys do.

JANALYN

Everyone brought a whole bunch of alcohol, all the hard stuff we couldn't have at the wedding plus mixers, and cups. Stopped off at the liquor store or the grocery on the way over.

(Area A)

DUSTIN

People were really generous, bringing lots of liquor. That always helps. Whiskey and wine.

(Area C)

JANALYN

We played music on the flat screen TV. We four were the only ones staying in that hotel. It was a pretty nice hotel but we could afford it on account of Paul's roommate's corporate discount. He was working for some kind of real company and had some pretty good corporate discounts. A lot of the other out of towners were staying with different friends in Baltimore - that's what Dustin was doing. Paul's old roommate hated Dustin.

CARL

I heard that.

(Area B)

KIKI

We got so many people to come to those parties.

PAUL

Yeah, the word spread about how awesome the room was, and we had twice the people at the second one as we did at the first.

KIKI

And there was no limit to how late we could stay. No curfew or hours, and no neighbors to worry about because it was just community rooms on that floor, maybe the gym, and the water outside it.

PAUL

We danced until like 4 AM!

(Area C)

JANALYN

Right. We were unbelievably loud but amazingly enough no one complained. I think they saw the four of us coming and put us on an empty floor. So we got to do some dancing there. The guys made up a lot of funny songs about Tamar and Christopher. And the ironing board - there was an ironing board in the closet, and someone found it, and we took turns surfing on it while playing Beach Boys songs, you know, Surfing U.S.A. And then Dustin broke it. I still have the picture I took of Dustin on the ironing board at just the moment when it broke. You can see this anguished look on his face. He had just figured out something was wrong but not what yet. The board had just started to collapse.

(Area A)

TAMAR

The one thing I would say is, the spray paint was a bad idea. There was not enough ventilation in the main room.

DUSTIN

I've heard that from a whole bunch of people.

TAMAR

I had the worst headache the next day, and I didn't even drink that much.

DUSTIN

It was the fumes. I did too - woke up with the mother of all hangovers, only it wasn't an actual hangover. I didn't even write on the wall.

TAMAR

A lot of people did though.

DUSTIN

Yeah. The idea was, it would give everyone something else to do. And I was bored anyway with all the empty space on that wall. But then the bands came, and it was kind of irrelevant.

(Area C)

JANALYN

But, I don't mean to minimize the wedding. It was outside, by this river, well, I guess technically a canal, in the Baltimore Zoo. And for the reception, if you have your wedding there, you get to have a guest animal of your choice during the cocktail hour.

(Area B)

KIKI

Those parties are famous. I still meet people now and they say, wait, didn't I actually meet you at that Waterside party?

PAUL

And then you can be like - which one! There were three!

KIKI

And I was the host! One of the hosts.

(Area C)

CARL

A guest animal?

JANALYN

Yes. You could choose between a macaw and an emperor penguin - those were the most popular, the zoo handler said, because when they are waddling around it looks like they are wearing a miniature tuxedo. But Tamar and Christopher chose the macaw. We all got to take photos with the macaw on our shoulder, our wrist, or our head.

(Area B)

PAUL

It really did take all four of us to organize. Something that massive.

KIKI

Yeah you were in charge of the food, and Dustin was in charge of the music -

PAUL

You were in charge of the alcohol, and Janalyn was in charge of the guest list.

KIKI

The guest list, and the administrative details.

(Area A)

TAMAR

It made me think of the parties I used to go to in high school, in spite of the fact that there is no other obvious relationship. Sometimes I think about them, and the people I used to know, who just somehow disappeared. Vanished from my life. There are all these people I used to hang out with in high school, all the time, that I used to feel close to. We had our own collective memories, our own private jokes. And then they leave, or you leave, for school, for work, and it fractures, this sense of collectivity, when you are not looking, when you are focused on something else, something important, and you hardly even think of it again. (pause) Do they?

(Area B)

PAUL

The administrative details?

KIKI

Yeah, like the Evite. We would put her down as the contact. She would answer the inevitable questions.

PAUL

What to bring. The directions -

KIKI

Clarifying the directions, especially for the out of town guests.

(Area A)

DUSTIN

Sometimes they do come back.

(Area B)

PAUL

We got so many people from other states.

(Area A)

DUSTIN

Sometimes they find you on Facebook.

(Area B)

KIKI

The entire East Coast.

(Area C)

CARL

You had a macaw on your head?

(Area B)

PAUL

DC to Boston!

(Area C)

JANALYN

Yes, yes, I did.

(Area A)

TAMAR

Yeah. Sometimes.

(Area C)

JANALYN

I chose the head shot.

(Area B)

KIKI

And beyond.

END OF SCENE

Scene 7

(JANALYN and KIKI)

KIKI

Are parties more like lines, or circles?

JANALYN

I don't know. Parties have a life cycle: the setting up, the first guests arriving, a gradual crescendo to the party's heart. There is anticipation, a wondering sense of how long it will take to get to that heart. When will the next guest arrive, or a particular person. How long has it been since you last checked the time, asked that question. Then you cross an unnoticeable border into a flow of timelessness, when time flows much faster than it seems to, you are caught by the moment and pierced by its, the hunter's arrow, and have no immediate sense of its passage. Then suddenly you look at the clock -

KIKI

- Cinderella -

JANALYN

- Yes, and it is late, far later than you expected, and probably time to think about saying your goodbyes and making your way home.

KIKI

Where are we now? In the streams of time.

JANALYN

I don't know.

KIKI

Me either. It is like an unflowering. It is like a releasing of light. But what you are describing with time is more like your, number line. It is a kind of linear pattern. Like, on the poster.

(KIKI and JANALYN regard the poster.)

JANALYN

Yeah.

KIKI

Spatially, parties are laid out in a circle, or a series of concentric circles. There is a center, where people are clustered most densely, often the dance floor if there is one, or the liquor table. Then there are the outerlying circles -

JANALYN

- the circles of hell -

KIKI

- where people go with their plates of food, to eat, or to flirt, or to have a more involved conversation. Where there is less noise and crowding, more space. People shift from one orbital to another in waves of motion, in and out, in and out -

JANALYN

- like the tides -

KIKI

- according to their needs, desires, the flow of the evening's energy. There is a glow inside each person, an electron or a diamond that glows, adding its energy to the party's whole.

JANALYN

Line.

KIKI

Circle.

JANALYN

Line.

KIKI

Circle.

END OF SCENE

Scene 8

DUSTIN

I think the food table is out of paper plates.

PAUL

Okay, I'll just put the rest out then.

DUSTIN

You have more?

PAUL

Sure, they're right here in the cabinet. If you put them out too early, the stack gets too high, and someone always knocks them over.

DUSTIN

Oh, okay. I guess that will be enough.

PAUL

I would think so.

DUSTIN

Okay.

PAUL

You're going to have to figure these things out for yourself soon. You know, if you are going to actually pick up that party torch.

DUSTIN

I know. It's going to be on the ground, after this.

PAUL

The gauntlet.

DUSTIN

I'll have another one at my shop. Soon, before I leave. It'll happen. You'll see.

PAUL

I will, will I.

DUSTIN

You will.

END OF SCENE



Scene 9

(TAMAR comes to stand by JANALYN and KIKI)

KIKI

(to JANALYN, finishing a story, not noticing TAMAR)

And then she says, Weirdish!

(JANALYN and KIKI burst into hysterical laughter. It is some kind of private joke. TAMAR is not in on the joke. The laughing goes on long enough that she starts to feel uncomfortable. KIKI realizes that TAMAR is there, and starting to feel uncomfortable.)

KIKI

Oh, hey, sorry.

JANALYN

It isn't actually that funny.

(KIKI shakes her head, giggles, smothers it with her hand.)

TAMAR

Okay.

END OF SCENE

Scene 10

CARL

How many people do you think are here?

PAUL

It's at that stage. It's hard to count. I would guess around 45. But, you know, it is hard to count.

CARL

Yeah and there have been more people than that because some have already left. What happened to that group of girls from California?

PAUL

I'm not sure. I would have expected them to come by now, if they were coming. But you never know.

CARL

So, I think we're OK on space.

PAUL

Yeah man. We're not going to have a problem with that.

END OF SCENE

Scene 11

KIKI

So. What did you think of DJ Hour?

JANALYN

Pretty cool.

KIKI

Yeah?

JANALYN

Yeah, Kiki. You're practically a pro.

KIKI

That's the goal. And how did your round go?

JANALYN

So-so. A lot of the basic gossip. You know.

KIKI

Yeah.

JANALYN

But George. George has added a plot twist to his novel. He's telling those German girls about it now, from the beginning, because they haven't heard that part yet. That woman. Her lover and his son and his son's ex-wife. Florence, then Paris, then the brief events in Scotland. The handbag, handkerchief, laundry basket, band-aids, ancestral portrait, grapes, marching band, geometry, and hypnotism. Then the road trip. The dog. The popsicle. The station wagon. Identical twins, separated at birth. And that's where the plot twists - you find out they are not actually twins, not after all, they are just two men who happen to look extremely similar.

KIKI

Wait. You left out the part about the paperweight and the gladiator sandals.

JANALYN

Right! But where did that bit go again?

KIKI

Between the dog and the popsicle, before the station wagon.

JANALYN

Right. Now I remember.

KIKI

Has he started writing it yet?

JANALYN

No. Still talking about looking for an agent.

KIKI

Oh.

(pause)

JANALYN

How was your round?

KIKI

Kind of depressing. There are no cute guys at this party.

JANALYN

No. There really are not.

KIKI

Too bad for Tamar right?

JANALYN

Yeah. But wait, what about that one over there? Talking to Carl?

KIKI

He's much too young. He just graduated from college.

JANALYN

Oh.

KIKI

Yes. I thought I would have such an exciting dating life when I moved to the city.

JANALYN

Yeah. Me too. How is your work?

KIKI

It's all right. My boss is still annoying me. Just for the sake of being annoying. He thinks he is this big wave in the ocean, this tidal wave, that he is going to sweep all

the swimmers away, drown the surfers and the little kids on their boogie boards, or maybe eat them up like Jaws. Have such an impact. But he is so much smaller. Just big enough to be annoying.

JANALYN

I've moved into teaching math with the number lines again. My favorite part of the curriculum. The kids do not appreciate their power, their beauty. I envision the lines, stretching towards infinity in both directions, negative numbers, positive numbers, spreading their wings and arching away from zero. There is so much potential there. In second grade you're using them to subtract five from ten, ten from fifty, seventeen from sixty-four. Not even entering the negative realms. Skipping over the decimals, the fractions, playing it safe with the integers. Whole numbers. Even multiplication, division come later. Then they will see. Then they will know.

KIKI

I know how much you like them.

KIKI

Well. I think I want another drink.

JANALYN

Me too. Let's go see how the guys are doing.

END OF SCENE

Scene 12

(DUSTIN, CARL, and PAUL. It is still Kiki Guest DJ Hour.)

DUSTIN

(to CARL and PAUL)

I feel like we should be having a conversation about tools.

KIKI

(from DJ table, playing new song)

Remember this one? For your listening pleasure.

(plays echo effect on 'pleasure' so this word repeats with weird echo effect)

CARL

Oh. You mean like at your shop?

PAUL

The rotary saws and such? Or your welder?

DUSTIN

Yes. No. Well, tools in general. I mean, you guys are moving. You've been using that back end part of a hammer, you know the one I mean, to remove all of your picture hooks, from where you had all your pictures hanging.

PAUL

You mean the spiky one?

CARL

The opposite of the head. Hammer head.

DUSTIN

Yes! That one.

PAUL

I don't know. Have you been using any other tools, Carl, with your packing effort.

CARL

Hmmm. No. Not really. No, not unless you count the packing tape dispenser.

PAUL

Huh. Me neither. Wait, I used an Allen wrench to take apart my Ikea desk.

DUSTIN

I like Allen wrenches. They are surprisingly useful.

PAUL

But I only took off the top part, the surface, so it wasn't that big a deal.

DUSTIN

Or, art tools. You know, the tools of design. You must've used some to make that poster, right Carl?

CARL

Um, I wouldn't necessarily call them tools. It was just pencils, to sketch the design, lay it out on the space of the paper, and then different thicknesses of ink markers, black ink markers to make the various lines. I did use an eraser then, to erase the pencil marks that showed after the ink was finished. I don't know. I would be more inclined to call them instruments than tools.

DUSTIN

You didn't even use a protractor?

CARL

No. No, I didn't.

DUSTIN

Or a compass?

CARL

No.

DUSTIN

Well then, there are also gadgets. I've been thinking about getting the new iPhone.

PAUL

New one?

DUSTIN

I mean the last one. The most recent. But I can't decide whether it will really be better.

CARL

Depends on how you use it, I guess.

PAUL

I might replace my TV after I move to my new apartment. I want to wait and see how the space is, how my current one fits before I decide.

DUSTIN

That makes sense.

(pause)

CARL

I sold my bike when I moved from Rochester to the city. But now that I am going back, I will probably get a new one.

DUSTIN

I always think about getting into biking, but then I never do it.

CARL

It's really nice to travel short distances.

PAUL

And also, environmentally sound.

CARL

Yeah. There are many plusses.

DUSTIN

I would think, in the suburbs, that people also talk a lot about their cars.

CARL

I guess so.

PAUL

Cars are a pain. I didn't mind giving that up.

DUSTIN

Me neither. They are expensive wherever you go.

(pause)

PAUL



I've said this before, but I really like the controllers you have for your Wiii.

DUSTIN

Yeah, they are pretty awesome.

CARL

Yeah. They're really great for all the sports games. It's just like playing tennis.

PAUL

Just like.

DUSTIN

Yeah.

END OF SCENE

Scene 13

DUSTIN

Are there any more mixers?

PAUL

Right...should be...yes. Here in the fridge. We're OK.

DUSTIN

Great. Thanks.

PAUL

Yeah. I guess I better put the rest out.

END OF SCENE

Scene 14

(DUSTIN is at the DJ table. KIKI approaches and joins him.)

KIKI

Hey there.

DUSTIN

Hey.

KIKI

So I think it's just about time.

DUSTIN

Oh it is is it.

KIKI

Yes. But you'd better show me how the mixer works. What does this button do?

DUSTIN

Don't - that button is not good to push because that is the reset button. It resets everything you have programmed and then you have to wait for it to power down and then to power up. It takes a long time.

KIKI

Well, it's a good thing I didn't push it then.

DUSTIN

You can see how many more channels this mixer has. There are three for the songs, two for the sound effects and this one here is for the microphone.

KIKI

Cool. Wow, there are a lot of them.

DUSTIN

It's much more advanced than the one I had before.

KIKI

I can see that.

DUSTIN

These green slides control the volume.

KIKI

Okay.

DUSTIN

I got some new sound effects too. This is the menu of new stuff that it's fun to play around with. You can mess with these, and they've all been pretty cool so far. Try that one.

(KIKI pushes a button. This one creates an echo effect.)

KIKI

Echo. Echo. Echo.

DUSTIN

Yeah, I like that one. Then there is this kind of alien spaceman sound.

(DUSTIN pushes button and creates alien spaceman sound effect.)

KIKI

Just like what it says.

DUSTIN

Yeah. You can't go wrong with this menu.

KIKI

Great. So, I have a set list made up. You haven't played any of it so far.

DUSTIN

Surprise.

KIKI

So get yourself some drinks buster, and leave this to me.

DUSTIN

Break a leg.

(DUSTIN leaves DJ table and heads over towards CARL at the liquor table while KIKI takes over the DJ station and orients herself.)

DUSTIN

(to CARL)

Who brought those hot German girls?

CARL

We've established that they are visiting friends of Alicia's, and also that they are sisters. They have been here for a week so far and I think they are about to head up to Boston.

DUSTIN

Sisters huh. Which one is older and which one is younger?

CARL

That's the part we're not sure of yet. They seem pretty close together so it's hard to tell. Paul thinks the short one is older, but I think she is just wearing more makeup, and the ages go along with the heights.

DUSTIN

Yeah, maybe. Tough call. It's always tempting but you can't just assume that. Sometimes the shorter girl is also the older one.

(The last song DUSTIN set up now concludes.  
KIKI plays some kind of cheesy intro music.)

KIKI

(into DJ mike)

Hey boys and girls! Guess what time it is! Kiki Guest DJ Hour! Yeah! Just what you've all been waiting for. First, let's give a big shout out to Paul and Carl for hosting this awesome party! Yeah! Whoo! And to Dustin of course for providing the sound equipment and this guest DJ op to yours truly.

(KIKI plays a bunch of random sound effects)

And let's hear it for Dustin's new mixer!

(KIKI plays a sound effect)

Ooops, I meant to do that one.

(plays different sound effect)

Ah, the possibilities. But now we're going to slow it down for just a moment -

(KIKI puts on "Forever Young" by Alphaville)

DUSTIN

Ha-ha, Napoleon Dynamite.

CARL

Oh.

PAUL

Yeah.

KIKI

As most of you know this is the last weekend for Paul and Carl in this, their wonderful party apartment, and thus, the last time they will be hosting such an event together. It was the best of times; it was the worst of times, the age of wisdom, ah, the age of foolishness, and so forth. Paul will be moving to Windsor Terrace - and we look forward to your upcoming housewarming party bro - but Carl, alas, will be departing from us, back to whence he came. That's Rochester, ladies and gentlemen. George has written a short poem in honor of his departure.

(KIKI reaches into her pocket for the poem, fails to find it, tries a different pocket, her purse, underneath the set list, fails to find it.)

KIKI

Um, I seem to have lost the paper - but thank you George, for writing it, I'm going to find that copy you gave me really soon - you don't have an extra one do you? (pause) Rats. Rotten rats. Ladies and Gentlemen, it's just perfect for the occasion. I'm going to find it. But until I do, here it is, you know the rules: Everyone has to dance during Guest DJ Hour! To kick things off, this one goes out to Tamar!

(KIKI executes an incredibly non-subtle crossfade into "Single Ladies" by Beyonce. There is a long moment when no one is dancing. JANALYN is sitting with TAMAR. JANALYN grabs TAMAR's hand.)

JANAYLN

Come on!

(JANALYN and TAMAR dance. PAUL, CARL and DUSTIN watch from over near the liquor table.)

PAUL

Whoa. Check out Janalyn and Tamar.

CARL

Breaking it down.

DUSTIN

So, I feel bad that they are the only ones dancing.

PAUL

But, there is no way I am going to dance to that song.

DUSTIN

Come on ladies.

CARL

Yeah-there! Let's hear it for those German girls.

PAUL

Yeah.

DUSTIN

Whew.

CARL

Whoa.

END OF SCENE

Scene 15

JANALYN  
Hey Tamar.

TAMAR  
Hey Janalyn.

JANALYN  
Good party so far.

TAMAR  
Yeah. There are starting to be a lot of people.

JANALYN  
It's great to see you out again.

TAMAR  
Thanks.

JANALYN  
I think you are going to be happy you decided to move back to Brooklyn.

TAMAR  
I think so too. It's closer to more of our friends. My friends. And that much farther away from Christopher.

JANALYN  
Yeah.

TAMAR  
Do you think Dustin will have another party at his shop this year?

JANALYN  
I hope so. We've been working on him.

TAMAR  
That's good. The last one was really fun.

JANALYN  
Yeah. And it will really be his turn now, after this. Kiki and I had a wine and cookies party back this winter, over break.



TAMAR

I missed that one. But I remember getting the Evite.

JANALYN

Yeah. It was smaller, because our living room is pretty small. Much smaller than this one anyway. Fewer people. But nice. Cozy.

TAMAR

Cozy is nice.

JANALYN

Yeah. His is a much bigger space.

(pause)

JANALYN

How is your family doing?

TAMAR

They are well, for the most part. My parents are continuing to age with relative grace. My brother is trying to sell his house.

JANALYN

Oh.

TAMAR

Yeah, that's not going so well.

JANALYN

To be expected.

TAMAR

Probably. One of my cousins just got engaged -

JANALYN

Cousin -

TAMAR

But you might not remember her. She was at the wedding, but not in the wedding party. I have four cousins. There were too many. And another one is applying to master's programs. She is the one who is a teacher.

JANALYN

Oh. Wait, I do remember meeting that one.

TAMAR

Yeah. That is about it for family news.

(pause)

JANALYN

I guess, as a single person, it is depressing to hear about a divorce.

TAMAR

I can see that.

JANALYN

A specific instance of one. One of your friends. I mean it's not like I really view coupledness as a fairy tale - right, but -

TAMAR

Yeah.

JANALYN

Right. Why do you think he did it, in the end? I mean what do you think.

TAMAR

I'm not sure whether there are multiple reasons people cheat, competing narratives that you have to pick from, or whether all of these little plot lines are just different tiny windows into one big, complex Cheating Story.

JANALYN

Hmmm.

TAMAR

At any rate, there are a lot of. Parallels. Or, commonalities.

JANALYN

Commonalities. I can see that.

TAMAR

Yes. A vague sense of dissatisfaction with life. Ennui. Boredom. Selfishness. Insecurity. Pride. Manly appetite. A lust for power. Personal weakness. General monstrosity.

JANALYN

It is monstrous. It is a monstrous thing, to cheat on your wife. It makes me think of global warming.

TAMAR

There were definitely, scenes of domestic bliss. The first year. Or at least, the first six months. Cuddly movie nights. Romantic home cooked meals. Shopping for furniture. Towels. But it didn't help when his mom got arrested for shoplifting and she kept on defending herself. Or when my brother kept asking us for money, or our cat got cancer and died. You never think of those things.

JANALYN

No.

TAMAR

You never think of those things when you are getting married, or dating someone. There was all of this unexpected stress. He might have been looking at porn, in secret. In fact I strongly suspect that that was the case. It was probably really terrible, degrading porn. I'm sure it was the sickest kind there is. So there was that, and also we both were working a lot. But in the end, there is always that blank space between you and the other person, that can never be crossed. Or just for one moment of time, perhaps, suspended between all of the others. You will never know just what they are thinking, or when they start to change.

JANALYN

Yeah.

TAMAR

That's the scary part.

JANALYN

Yeah.

TAMAR

You just have to hope for the best.

JANALYN

I can see that.

TAMAR

Hope he has hideous coworkers.

JANALYN

Yeah.

TAMAR

And I'm sure there were things I could have done better too. Ways I could have been a better wife. Less distracted. There are all these small things I regret.

JANALYN

None of us ever predicted it. You were always, the cutest couple. The best of the dancers. Oh look. I think Kiki's taking over the DJ station.

TAMAR

She's still doing Guest DJ Hour?

JANALYN

Yeah, every time.

TAMAR

Is it ever a whole hour?

JANALYN

No, that's just the name. Listen.

END OF SCENE

Scene 16

(CARL is hanging out by the liquor table looking glum. KIKI approaches.)

KIKI

Hey Carl. What's happening?

CARL

Not much. How are you?

KIKI

Good. You know, I think this is going to be a really fun party. I mean, I've definitely been looking forward to it.

CARL

Oh yeah?

KIKI

Sure. Janalyn and I always plan our outfits together, way in advance. Sometimes our makeup too. And plus, I can't wait to try out Dustin's new sound stuff.

CARL

Yeah, he has been really excited about his new mixer.

KIKI

Guest DJ Hour will be coming at you soon. (pause) I don't know whether this will make you feel any better, but I'm sure we will still be talking about you long after you're gone.

CARL

Um, thanks?

KIKI

Yeah. It's one of those things people always do at parties, talk about friends who have left. Permanently, or just temporarily, a leave of absence. Graduate school. Internships. Amy moving to the DR that year to do volunteer work. Or Paul's roommate getting married and moving to the suburbs. You know, the one that everybody hates.

CARL

Yeah. Yeah, I know him.

KIKI

Even sometimes people who are just on really long vacations. Or my sister, you've met her.

CARL

Yeah.

KIKI

Yeah, ever since she moved back in with my parents, she's been coming up here like every other weekend. But now, she's going to Nashville, you know, where she went to college, so she still knows a bunch of people who are still there. She is going to start a blog. A, Millennial Slog. She has made it her goal to have 100 informational interviews in 100 days, while she is staying on different people's couches. She thinks, by the end, she will have a job for certain.

CARL

That is a good plan.

KIKI

Thinks, if that doesn't do it, nothing will.

CARL

Is she a good writer?

KIKI

Yeah, she basically is. She can be pretty funny. That is her back up plan, in fact. She thinks, if it still doesn't work out for her, maybe she can turn her blog into some kind of book deal. And that would be really cool.

CARL

Really cool.

KIKI

She's got to set it up first. Online.

CARL

It's good to have a goal.

KIKI

Yeah. I think so, too. (pause) So, it was great talking to you, Carl. I'm trying to finish my round before my DJ Hour breaks through.

See you.

CARL

Kay, bye.

KIKI

END OF SCENE

Scene 17

(PAUL visits DUSTIN at the DJ station. The music is really loud there.)

PAUL

How are things at your shop?

DUSTIN

Busy.

PAUL

Busy is good.

DUSTIN

Yeah. There have been a lot of orders coming in so far this month. Lot of new cabinetry, and a couple of tables. I might need to find a new shop again though.

PAUL

Oh?

DUSTIN

Yeah, it's a bummer but the person who is in charge of it is not very organized. I've been double-booked on equipment a whole bunch of times which is not too convenient. And also, there's been a leak below the bathroom sink for weeks now and he keeps on not getting it fixed. It's not the end of the world but it is annoying to get your feet wet every time you wash your hands.

PAUL

Yeah.

DUSTIN

Doesn't bode well for handling more serious problems, either.

PAUL

No.

DUSTIN

Yeah. And how are things with you?

PAUL

Good. Steady.



DUSTIN

Steady is good.

PAUL

Yeah, I can't complain. Nice flow of work. Some of it is boring, but, you know, enough of it is not.

DUSTIN

Good.

PAUL

Yeah.

DUSTIN

That's good.

PAUL

Yeah.

END OF SCENE

Scene 18

(TAMAR, PAUL, CARL, JANALYN. The movie title in TAMAR's line below should be a recently released film.)

TAMAR

Have you guys seen the new movie yet?

CARL

Which one?

TAMAR

(Insert movie title) I just saw it last night.

PAUL

Oh yeah. I saw it the first weekend it came out.

JANALYN

Me too.

CARL

Yeah.

PAUL

I was surprised, but I didn't have any trouble getting tickets.

TAMAR

What did you think?

PAUL

Well, the reviews have been kind of mixed. But I liked it. The sense of atmosphere. The mood.

CARL

I thought it was impressive that they had such a strong female character.

PAUL

I know the one you mean. She is a really great actress, too.

JANALYN

Yeah, I try to see all of her movies.

PAUL

And also, she's really hot. That also helps.

CARL

Yeah.

JANALYN

Some of the scenes could have been better written, though. I liked the beginning, and I liked the end, but the middle, some parts of it were kind of slow.

TAMAR

Yeah.

PAUL

They could have picked up the pace. People get impatient.

CARL

I found myself losing interest from time to time.

PAUL

But, on the whole, a pretty strong film.

JANALYN

I would recommend it.

TAMAR

Yeah.

PAUL

Yeah.

CARL

Agreed.

END OF SCENE

Scene 19

(PAUL, CARL, DUSTIN, TAMAR, JANALYN and KIKI are each by him- or her-self in a different part of the room, texting. This becomes established.)

No way.	KIKI
That sucks.	JANALYN
Huh.	TAMAR
Oh.	CARL
Yes.	PAUL
Come on.	DUSTIN
Grrr.	KIKI
Ouch.	JANALYN
Your head?	TAMAR
That hurt.	CARL
Finally.	PAUL
I do need a new phone.	DUSTIN
Wow.	KIKI

Whoa.	JANALYN
Awesome.	TAMAR
Sorry.	CARL
No.	PAUL
Whatever.	DUSTIN
You got it.	KIKI
No way.	JANALYN
Hmmm.	TAMAR
After that.	CARL
Cool.	PAUL
Argh.	DUSTIN
Oh.	KIKI
	END OF SCENE

Scene 20

(PAUL, KIKI, TAMAR, and CARL)

PAUL

Has anyone been to that new beer garden on Fourth Avenue?

KIKI

What new beer garden?

PAUL

One of the girls at my work was telling me about it. It's new - it just opened up last month. They just have indoor seating for now but soon they are going to open up the back.

TAMAR

That could be really nice in summer.

KIKI

Yeah.

TAMAR

Nice to have a new place.

KIKI

We'll have to check it out some time.

TAMAR

Yeah. Do they just serve beer, do you know? Or do they have food as well?

KIKI

Is it also a kind of restaurant?

PAUL

I'm not sure, but they are supposed to have at least sausages, potato salad, that kind of thing.

TAMAR

They certainly should.

KIKI

More authentic.

CARL

Yeah.

TAMAR

It's nice to have bar snacks, someone always gets hungry.

KIKI

Yeah.

CARL

Usually me.

PAUL

It's a common problem.

CARL

Yeah.

END OF SCENE

Scene 21

TAMAR

Is somebody in the bathroom?

KIKI

Oh! No, go ahead. I'm just, ah, taking a break from my round.

TAMAR

Okay.

KIKI

Okay. Sure.

END OF SCENE



Scene 22

CARL

How many people do you think are here?

PAUL

Well, it's still a countable number. We have our original six, plus George, and Jason and his brother, and Kiki's friends from work, and that other teacher and her new husband. Janalyn invited them. So I guess that makes fourteen?

CARL

No, fifteen. I think one of Kiki's friends is in the bathroom.

PAUL

Okay then.

CARL

That's not bad.

PAUL

The night is still young.

CARL

Oh. No worries. More beer for us, right?

PAUL

That's the spririt.

END OF SCENE

Scene 23

(TAMAR joins CARL at the liquor table.)

TAMAR

Hey Carl. Thanks for having me.

CARL

Hey. So, thanks for bringing this whiskey. What can I get you to drink?

TAMAR

Hmmm, I'll just have some of that red wine. That is an amazing bottle.

CARL

Yeah, I've never seen one with a giant rooster like this before. I can't remember who brought it.

(CARL pours some red wine for TAMAR and she takes it.)

TAMAR

Thanks. (tastes) Hmmm, yeah, I guess it lives up to the rooster.

CARL

Nothing like living up to the rooster.

TAMAR

How's the packing going?

CARL

I'm getting there. Just about finished.

TAMAR

Are you sad about leaving New York?

CARL

Uh, yes and no. There are definitely the things I won't miss. Like this neighborhood, I know Paul picked it, but it has turned out to really suck. And the subway, the subway was really smelly last summer. But also, the things that were good. The bars and the concerts. You don't have live music just everywhere in Rochester. And it is depressing to move back in with my parents.

TAMAR

Yeah. Yeah, I guess that's a pretty big downer.

(Pause. CARL takes the last sip of his drink and mixes himself another.)

CARL

How are things going with you?

TAMAR

Good. I mean, as good as can be expected. I feel sort of liberated, but in a sad way.

CARL

Yeah. Yeah, I can see that.

TAMAR

There are all these logistical details to be worked out. That is the weirdest thing. They just drag on and on.

CARL

Your apartment search?

TAMAR

Yeah! I haven't done this for so long. And I think I must have repressed those memories. I don't think you should feel too bad about your work, here. I mean, you know it, you're really good. It's just the times.

CARL

Yeah.

TAMAR

I've never regretted it, not going on in school, being just sort of a drafting engineer for my company. Who needs a master's degree? An Area of Professional Specialty? Those real engineers, they are so stressed out, constantly, working all the time. And hey, they are the ones who are getting laid off.

CARL

Yeah, it's not a very fair system.

(TAMAR shifts in her seat and knocks over her cup of wine. It flies off the counter and onto the area rug nearby.)

TAMAR

Oh no I just spilled wine all over your rug.

CARL

Ah, technically, that's Paul's rug. But, it's OK! We have seltzer.

TAMAR

What?

(CARL takes a bottle of seltzer from the fridge and opens it.)

CARL

We got this trick from Dustin, actually - it was at, not the last party here, but the second one back before that - three parties ago. It doesn't matter, red wine, pizza sauce, any kind of even dark liquid stain causing substance, if right after it falls, you pour some fresh nicely carbonated seltzer all over it.

(He demonstrates.)

TAMAR

Wow, look at all that fizzing - but won't that make it worse?

CARL

In fact, no. You let it fizz and fizz until it stops.

(more fizzing)

Wait for it.

(fizzing gradually stops as they watch)

What that fizzing is doing is shifting the foreign element out of the carpet. Okay, now it's stopped. And now you just put a whole bunch of paper towels over the stain -

(CARL puts paper towels over the stain)

CARL

- and you press gently down on the towels.

(He does so.)

The wine comes right out.

(He removes the towels)

Now all that's left, is regular water. And that will dry.

TAMAR

Wow. I don't know Carl. That's amazing.

CARL

Yeah, it's a really great party hosting trick. We use it all the time. There is some kind of scientific basis for it, that he sort of explained. The fizzing gets between the carpet hairs, or maybe it bonds to the stain. I forget. You should ask him.

TAMAR

Yeah, I might do that. I don't think I actually have any carpets. But it's the kind of thing, you never know when it's going to be useful.

CARL

Yeah. Just like that.

END OF SCENE

Scene 24

(KIKI enters, carrying flowers. DUSTIN, PAUL and JANALYN are still eating chicken wings and drinking beer.)

KIKI

Hey guys! Sorry I'm late.

JANALYN

Kiki!

(They hug.)

PAUL

Hey Kiki.

DUSTIN

Hey.

KIKI

Tamar's not here yet?

JANALYN

No, I think she's running late too.

KIKI

Whew.

JANALYN

You brought flowers to a party?

KIKI

I brought them because I knew that no one else would bring them. We always had flowers at parties when I was growing up no matter what the occasion. My mother would cut them fresh from the yard if we were just having people over for dinner, or for fancy parties, get a bouquet from the florist's.

JANALYN

That's so cute. Here, let's give them to Paul for the food table.

(KIKI gives the flowers to PAUL.)

PAUL

Oh, these are pretty. Thanks. I'll just get a vase for them. We must have a vase here somewhere.

(PAUL goes to look for a vase or vase substitute. He looks for a long time.)

PAUL

(to CARL offstage)

Hey Carl.

(PAUL goes into CARL's room to see if he has a decent vase.)

DUSTIN

Yeah, I guess I'll start the real party music now that the real party is here.

(DUSTIN slaps KIKI five, crosses to the DJ station and starts the real party music.)

KIKI

How's your new mixer?

DUSTIN

Awesome.

KIKI

I can't wait to try it out. Kiki Guest DJ Hour is coming your way!

DUSTIN

As always.

JANALYN

You should get a drink, Kiki.

KIKI

Don't mind if I do.

(KIKI makes herself a drink from the liquor table goods.)

KIKI

What time is Paul's move again? Did that ever get decided?

JANALYN

The truck is coming at ten.

KIKI

Ten. Ok. I'm excited to see his new place.

JANALYN

Yeah. He says it's much smaller.

KIKI

That figures.

JANALYN

Yeah.

(The doorbell for the building rings.)

DUSTIN

You guys. That must be her.

(DUSTIN presses the button to release the door,  
then returns to his station.)

JANALYN

Well, we can't just be staring at the door.

KIKI

We have to be talking about something.

JANALYN

How many friends from your office are coming?

KIKI

Three. I think. At least three for sure.

(TAMAR enters, carrying a bottle of whiskey.)

TAMAR

Hey guys.

KIKI

Hey Tamar.

JANALYN

Hi. Oooh, you bought whiskey!



TAMAR

Yep.

DUSTIN

Oh hey, good call.

(KIKI, JANALYN and DUSTIN give TAMAR little hugs of welcome.)

TAMAR

(referring to whiskey)

I wonder where I should put this?

JANALYN

Hey Paul! Tamar's here!

(PAUL and CARL emerge from CARL's room.)

PAUL

Hey Tamar.

(PAUL gives TAMAR a little hug.)

TAMAR

Hi.

CARL

Hey.

(CARL gives TAMAR a little hug.)

TAMAR

Hey.

CARL

(referring to whiskey)

I can take that. Thanks.

(CARL takes the whiskey to the liquor table, rearranges the bottles and cups.)

CARL

(to TAMAR)

Would you like something to drink?

TAMAR

Maybe just a beer?

(PAUL gets one from fridge, opens it for her,  
hands it to TAMAR.)

PAUL

Here you go.

TAMAR

Thanks. (notices poster) That's a really nice poster.

PAUL

Uh, thanks. Actually Carl made it.

TAMAR

You made it?

CARL

Yeah. It's just paper and ink.

TAMAR

It's very complex.

CARL

Thanks.

TAMAR

There are so many lines and spaces.

(pause)

PAUL

Uh, I'm sorry, I still have to find a vase for these  
flowers.

DUSTIN

I can help.

(PAUL and DUSTIN continue looking for a vase.  
CARL rearranges the liquor table some more.)

KIKI

(to TAMAR)

How's your apartment search coming.

TAMAR

Well, it's coming.

JANALYN

Hard, right?

TAMAR

It's just so much work. And half of it ends up being a total waste. Like this place I saw yesterday. It was a small building and all the apartments were small, like close together, you clearly were going to be having contact and noise and stuff from your neighbors. And the landlord occupant shows me the studio, and I'm getting excited - it's a good price, good neighborhood, nothing obviously wrong - and then on the way out, she's like, by the way, we all smoke a lot of pot. There is this awkward pause and she's just kind of blocking me on the stairwell. I wouldn't want you to get surprised or anything. I did think about it, but geez! I don't want to end up in this crazy drug house. That is not what I need right now.

(PAUL finally finds an awkward, but usable vase substitute.)

PAUL

This glass thing should work, I guess.

(PAUL puts water and then flowers into vase substitute, places it on the food table.)

PAUL

And the hot stuff should be done by now.

DUSTIN

I can help with that too.

(PAUL takes the hot food out of the oven and adds it to the food table. DUSTIN assists.)

KIKI

It's really good to see you out again.

JANALYN

Yeah.

TAMAR

This is actually my first party now as a single woman.

KIKI

Whoa, you should totally talk to some guys. (pause) Or not.

JANALYN

It must feel weird.

TAMAR

Yeah. It does. It's hard to know who to talk to, where to stand. There are so many decisions now. But, in a good way.

JANALYN

That's the spirit.

KIKI

You have to stay positive.

(PAUL and DUSTIN rejoin the women, as does CARL. Everything is now ready.)

PAUL

All right. Food is set. Music is set. Fans are set. Everybody good with drinks?

CARL

Okay.

JANALYN

Yeah.

TAMAR

I'm fine.

KIKI

Uh-huh.

DUSTIN

Yup.

PAUL

Great. That's great. Wonderful.

(They stand in a circle, holding their drinks.)

JANALYN

Does anyone have any vacation plans coming up?

TAMAR

No, not really.

CARL

No.

PAUL

I will probably go to the beach again this summer, with my sister and the nephews. My parents might come too this time. The whole fam. It will probably just end up being the New Jersey shore, like the last time. Or maybe somewhere out on Long Island.

JANALYN

Kiki and I like to go to Long Beach.

KIKI

Yeah, in the summer they run express trains that take you straight there. It's faster than you would think.

JANALYN

The beaches are cleaner than the Brooklyn ones, and the bathrooms have toilet paper, which is nice for a change.

TAMAR

Yeah. Yeah, I can see that would be a plus.

DUSTIN

My parents are going on a walking tour of Europe.

PAUL

A walking tour of Europe?

KIKI

Um, isn't Europe kind of big to walk around?

JANALYN

Yeah, you'd get pretty tired.

DUSTIN

That's what I said. But then they said it's a company. The walking tour is the alternative to the busing tour, which is for the true geezers, they said, the ones who can no longer walk. The ones with canes, and wheelchairs, and such.

TAMAR

Oh.

DUSTIN

And they're not walking around all of Europe. Just Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. They take trains between the cities, and then once they are there, that is when they do their walking.

PAUL

Sounds like fun.

DUSTIN

There is a catalogue, a catalogue of all the different walking tours you can take, to the different countries. If they like it enough, they might wait a few years, and then do Italy.

JANALYN

How romantic.

KIKI

It's like a second honeymoon.

DUSTIN

That's the idea, I think. Get out while they still can.

PAUL

Might as well.

TAMAR

Yeah.

CARL

One thing that Rochester does have is a pretty nice park.

PAUL

Oh yeah?

CARL

Yeah. There are bike trails and hiking trails, and a part where you can take a picnic.

TAMAR

I'm sure ready for some warmer weather.

JANALYN

Yeah, this winter has been a cold one.

KIKI

Spring is my favorite season anyway. The most optimistic.

PAUL

It is nice, to see all the trees starting to bud.

KIKI

I can never keep track, of the official first day of spring.

PAUL

It's always somehow later than you would think.

KIKI

Yeah. Yeah, I do remember that.

(The door buzzer rings and PAUL's cell phone goes off at the same time. He gestures to CARL to buzz the door while he answers his phone.)

PAUL

(taking call on cell phone)

Hello? Yes, I can't hear you. Wait. Okay. Where are you again? No. You're on the wrong side. Go back a ways. Now, you want to turn left at the stop light, and then right at the stop sign. You're by yourself? I don't want to scare you but yeah, you should probably walk kind of fast there. Be determined. Yes, the giant paint can - good. Okay. Okay. I'm buzzing you in. (hangs up.) Whew.

TAMAR

I'm going to check out this food.

DUSTIN

I better change the song now that we have more people.

(PAUL and CARL open the door to the apartment to see where the new people are.)

PAUL

(to new people offstage)

Oh hey guys. Come on in.

JANALYN

We should probably make a round.

KIKI

Yeah, I think we'd better split up.

JANALYN

Right.

(JANALYN makes a funny splitting gesture, and she and KIKI part in different directions. JANALYN moves to get another drink while KIKI heads towards the door to greet the newcomers.)

END OF SCENE



Scene 25

(CARL has returned to packing. PAUL is still working on the hot food. The illustration is still in the kitchen, perhaps propped up on the counter against the wall for safety. The buzzer rings - someone is at the door outside the building. PAUL crosses to the buzzer, pushes the buzzer.)

PAUL

Who is it?

JANALYN

(voice through the buzzer)

It's Janalyn.

PAUL

(to himself, not through the buzzer)

Wow, she's early.

(into the buzzer)

Okay.

(buzzer sound of door to building being released. A moment passes while Janalyn makes her way through the building to the apartment. She knocks on the door to the apartment. PAUL goes out and lets her in.)

JANALYN

(possibly still offstage)

I'm sorry I'm so early. I didn't mean to be this early. Is Carl here?

PAUL

Yeah he's still in his room. Still packing.

(They are back in the kitchen by now. JANALYN is carrying a large, covered tray of food.)

JANALYN

I brought the enchiladas. I made them with those mini wraps, the ones you suggested. With chicken, and cheese, and some of them with both chicken and cheese.

PAUL

How did those wraps work out for you?

JANALYN

Oh yeah, you were right. Much easier than having to cut up the regular sized ones into those awkward pieces, or just having party food that is really too much food for a party and then runs out after the first ten people.

PAUL

Good. I thought they were a neat solution.

JANALYN

How is your packing going?

PAUL

Well. I'm actually done, except for the things I need in the next two days. But I'm sure there will be a lot of last minute stuff.

JANALYN

There always is. How's Carl doing?

PAUL

Less well. In a lot of ways, his job is much harder. For me, if it got to the point where I really couldn't decide, should I keep this? I just threw it in a box to take. It's not that big a deal. But for Carl, his dad has a station wagon, but it's still just a car. It was already full when he got here, and now he has got so much more stuff.

JANALYN

Yeah, I bet.

PAUL

So he's really got to go through it. Throw stuff out. Like this - look at this awesome poster he gave me. (gestures towards the framed marker poster)

JANALYN

Wow. Carl made that?

PAUL

Yeah. I know.

JANALYN

(studying it thoughtfully)

It reminds me of MC Escher. MC Escher, but with a whole lot of youthful optimism and soul.

(pause)

I don't think I saw this the last time I was here.

PAUL

When was that - like two months ago?

JANALYN

Yeah, that sounds about right.

PAUL

It's pretty recent. Carl is really talented. That's why this is so sad.

JANALYN

That is an amazing poster.

PAUL

All of his work is like that. It's so specific, to such a small scale - very precise, yet still somehow impressionistic. His work has so much heart.

JANALYN

Yeah. It makes sense, even to me.

PAUL

He's more talented than I am. I mean, honestly. It's rotten luck. But there's no market, no market at all for stuff like this now.

JANALYN

Yeah.

PAUL

Everybody's cutting back. Whatever they can do with a computer graphic or something they bought before they do.

JANALYN

When is he leaving again? I mean, exactly.

PAUL

Early on Sunday.

JANALYN

Will he be gone before we get here with the truck?

PAUL

Yeah, that's his plan. They have a long trip and I think they want to get back to Rochester before dark. Take a lunch break somewhere.

JANALYN

I'll have to say goodbye tonight then. It is really sad. And I forget. I know we'll see it on Sunday. Where exactly is your new apartment again?

PAUL

Windsor Terrace. It's a studio in Windsor Terrace.

JANALYN

Which train stop is yours?

PAUL

Fort Hamilton Parkway.

JANALYN

That's a nice area.

PAUL

I was ready for it, after this.

JANALYN

You certainly deserve it.

PAUL

Yeah, I'm ready for a change. Still, I will miss having these parties.

JANALYN

Yeah that is a big perk. You guys have so much space here.

(pause)

JANALYN

You remember Rachelle, from my work?

PAUL

She teaches third grade, right?

JANALYN

That's the one. Anyway, she just got married, and she's bringing her new husband. You'll get to meet him.

PAUL

That's great.

JANALYN

He was her high school sweetheart. They broke up when they went to different colleges, but then after they finished school, they got back together.

PAUL

That worked out well.

JANALYN

It's very cute. He moved here from Pennsylvania a few months before the wedding.

PAUL

Well, the more the merrier. Are you hungry? We could eat some of these snacks.

JANALYN

What's on the menu?

PAUL

Well, apart from the enchiladas, we have two kinds of chicken wings - I mean two different kinds of sauce, Swedish meatballs, mini ravioli, - that's all the hot stuff, it's in the oven. Now, out here we have the usual, potato chips, corn chips, pita chips, pretzels, jelly beans, baby Snickers bars, brownies, chocolate chip cookies, and then in the fridge yet we have a whole bunch of different kinds of dip for the wings, the chips, and the vegetables. It needs to stay cold for a little while longer. I made one of those big things of Mexican bean dip to go with the corn chips. You know, with cheese and guacamole and stuff.

JANALYN

Yum. I love that bean dip.

PAUL

I guess we could eat some now if you want.

JANALYN

Okay.

(PAUL gets the bean dip out of the fridge.)

PAUL

You want a Corona to go with that?

JANALYN

Sure.

(PAUL gets out two Coronas, cuts up part of a lime, adds the limes, hands one beer to JANALYN and starts drinking the other.)

JANALYN

Yeah, this is really good. It makes me think of that time when we all decided to become vegetarians.

PAUL

Oh yeah! That seems like such a long time ago.

JANALYN

Two years? Something like that. It was in the fall.

PAUL

That was a time of lots of beans.

JANALYN

Yeah all we ate was beans and we would talk about beans too. All the different kinds we were discovering that we never had before.

PAUL

Lima beans.

JANALYN

White beans.

PAUL

Black beans.

JANALYN

Red beans.

PAUL

Green beans.

JANALYN

Pinto beans.

KIDNEY BEANS.  
 PAUL  
 JANALYN  
 GARBANZO BEANS.  
 PAUL  
 AZUKI BEANS.  
 JANALYN  
 MUNG BEANS.  
 PAUL  
 Yeah! That one. And those little ones with the dots -  
 JANALYN  
 FAVA BEANS.  
 PAUL  
 Right.  
 JANALYN  
 And the non-bean-name ones, lentils and chickpeas. Peanuts.  
 PAUL  
 I remember long discussions about the relative advantages of soy chicken versus soy beef.  
 JANALYN  
 And then we all just started eating meat again. Only no one wanted to confess to the others.  
 PAUL  
 Dustin ate that sausage that morning at his grandmother's house - and without knowing it I picked that same day to finally eat a burger for lunch. With all kinds of cheese and fries.  
 JANALYN  
 My friend from DC was in for a visit and we were looking at menus to order lunch, and she was like, Janalyn, I think you should eat meat. There is no reason that you are a vegetarian. And anyway, you're not a real vegetarian, just a pescovegetarian. You eat fish. PESCO.  
 PAUL  
 Pesco?

JANALYN

It was a dare. I had been dreaming about ham all week long and finally ordered some, in a sandwich.

PAUL

What happened to Kiki?

JANALYN

We lost her to a chicken caesar salad.

PAUL

Oh.

JANALYN

Vegetarianism. The Epic Tragedy.

(PAUL's cell phone goes off with some kind of very long and embarrassing ring tone.)

PAUL

Oh! Oh gosh. Sorry. Wait.

(He searches for the phone but has to figure out what pocket he put it into - then he finds it.)

PAUL

Hello Dustin? (listens) OK we'll be there. (hangs up)  
Dustin's almost here with the speakers - we have to go meet the car.

JANALYN

Oh let me help.

PAUL

(to CARL - offstage)

Hey Carl?

CARL

(offstage voice)

Yeah?

PAUL

Dustin's here with the speakers.



CARL

(offstage voice)

OK I'll be right there.

(By this time all three are offstage, trooping down the stairs to meet the car. Sound of their footsteps going down the stairs, maybe the front door slamming closed, then a pause, then it opening again, and four sets of footsteps trooping back up the stairs heavily laden with equipment. They arrive at the top.)

JANALYN

(offstage)

Oh here let me get the door.

(JANALYN is only carrying something relatively small and light, like a bunch of cables maybe. After her first PAUL, then CARL and finally DUSTIN enter, loaded down with large, heavy speakers and other sound equipment.)

DUSTIN

Are we putting this in the usual place?

PAUL

Yeah, just over here in this corner.

DUSTIN

OK. Wait, Carl, that one should go on the other side. Like that - great.

(The three boys and then JANALYN put the sound equipment down in the corner and regard the pile.)

DUSTIN

Whoo-hoo! You guys, this is going to be great. (to PAUL) Oh yeah, it was ten bucks for the car.

(PAUL gives DUSTIN ten bucks.)

DUSTIN

Great. Let's get this set up.

(They set up the sound equipment. There might be an actual table they set it up on.)

DUSTIN

(directing the operation)

We want that one up on top. Over here, Janalyn, can you unwrap these cables?

JANALYN

Sure.

DUSTIN

We'll just connect these two like this. And then this next one. Nice. All right. Check out this mixer. I just got it last week, special for this event. Look at these new channels it has. There are all these new special effects it can do for the transitions. (he shows them)

PAUL

Oh yeah there really are a lot of options.

DUSTIN

Yeah. Check out this one. (demonstrates)

PAUL

Wow.

JANALYN

Cool.

DUSTIN

And I really like this one too. (demonstrates)

PAUL

Neat.

CARL

Yeah. That's pretty awesome.

DUSTIN

What time are the guests supposed to arrive again?

PAUL

(checks his watch)

Pretty much any time now.

CARL

Just twenty more minutes. Ah, closer to twenty-five.

PAUL

But probably, people will be late. So they might come soon, but probably more like eight thirty.

CARL

By nine, I think, most people will have come.

PAUL

Yeah. Yeah, that's what usually happens.

DUSTIN

So I'm just going to put on some mood music. Some mood music for the set up. Yeah, this is a good one. (music plays)

PAUL

Where's Kiki? She's supposed to be here by now.

JANALYN

I know. I know, I'll text her.

PAUL

It's almost time for Tamar to come.

JANALYN

What time did you tell her?

PAUL

Seven forty-five. So she can get settled in before the other guests get here.

JANALYN

Good idea. Time to catch up. (pause) I think Kiki must be still on the train.

CARL

I'm going to go back to packing if that's okay. I still have a lot to get done.

DUSTIN

Uh, yeah, I'm all set.

PAUL

Yeah, everything's just about together here.

CARL

Okay.

(CARL exits back to his room. Pause.)

PAUL

I guess we might as well turn the fans on.

JANALYN

Okay.

DUSTIN

Yeah.

PAUL

(to JANALYN)

Can you get that one in the corner?

JANALYN

Sure.

DUSTIN

It's a good idea. Extra ventilation.

PAUL

I think so. Air circulation.

JANALYN

Can't have too much of that.

(Fans are now on. Another pause.)

DUSTIN

You guys need help setting up the food or something?

PAUL

No, we're good. I'm just finishing the hot stuff, I want to keep it hot in the oven.

DUSTIN

Cool. (pause) Do you mind if I eat some of this now?

PAUL

Sure man. Go ahead.

(DUSTIN starts eating.)

DUSTIN

Mmmm, this is really good.

PAUL

Beer?

DUSTIN

Sure.

JANALYN

Paul and I were just talking about that time when all of us decided to become vegetarians.

DUSTIN

Oh yeah, I remember that. Gosh, we were all so weird back then.

PAUL

Yeah. You know, just thinking about that makes me want to eat chicken wings.

JANALYN

Me too.

DUSTIN

Yeah.

(Paul gets out the chicken wings. They all eat chicken wings and drink beer.)

END OF SCENE

Scene 26

(PAUL is in the kitchen preparing food for the party. This may continue for some time. CARL enters.)

CARL

Hey man.

PAUL

Hey.

CARL

I really need a packing break. (pause) Can I eat some of this food?

PAUL

Sure. Uhhhh...all of the cold stuff is out except the stuff that has to stay in the fridge. I can heat you some wings if you want in the microwave. Otherwise the hot stuff is still getting hot.

CARL

Nah, that's fine. Cold stuff is cool.

(CARL munches on some of the cold stuff. PAUL continues to put the hot stuff together.)

PAUL

What time does your dad get here tomorrow?

CARL

Four. He is supposed to get here around four. The plan is to pack the car after that. Take a break somewhere for dinner. Then we can leave, start the drive first thing Sunday morning.

PAUL

That sounds like a good plan.

CARL

Yeah. That's the plan.

PAUL

I bet your parents are glad they made that trip out here last fall anyway.

CARL

Yeah. Well, kind of. To be honest they are not all that into New York. It was more about, you know, making sure I was okay. I think they were actually hoping I would be seriously dating some girl by then, have this kind of pre-fiancee I was hiding on them on account of the distance. That's what sucks about being the oldest. You know they really want grandchildren, bad.

PAUL

Yeah. Yeah I'm real glad they have my sister for that. Wait do you want some of that celery dip? I forgot I have that celery dip still in the fridge.

CARL

Oh yeah thanks. I really like that stuff.

(PAUL takes celery dip out of the fridge and CARL begins to eat some of it).

CARL

How is your move plan coming along.

PAUL

I think I'm all set. I have Jason's brother coming with his truck at ten, which I think will be after you and your dad leave-

CARL

Yeah, probably.

PAUL

--and Jason's going to help me pack it while his brother waits with the truck, and Dustin and Josh, and Kiki and Janalyn are coming too to help with the doors and the light stuff. Like the pillows and the odds, the ends. That stuff is good for girls.

CARL

Yeah. It's good you got so many people to help.

PAUL

Yeah I think it should go pretty fast. (pause) I'm going to miss it, this place.

CARL

Yeah.

PAUL

We have so much space here. It's been so great for all of these parties.

CARL

Yeah it's made us pretty famous.

PAUL

They've been some good times. I'm really not going to miss the neighborhood though. It's been such a giant pain.

CARL

Yeah, I remember how excited we were about how much space there was -

PAUL

This place was so much bigger than the others. And these appliances - these kitchen appliances are great -

CARL

But we saw it in the middle of the day.

PAUL

And I'm so sick of the long walk to the supermarket, the drug store, the laundromat -

CARL

Yeah it really has not been very convenient.

PAUL

And all of these really lame, half-hearted muggings.

CARL

Plus it's kind of a long commute.

PAUL

Yeah, for you. When you're working at all different places. Mine at least is only the one train, but it's still a pretty long ride. We've had some great times. Do you think you'll give New York another chance again? Maybe come back after the recession?

CARL

I don't know. I would say yeah, sure I'll definitely try, but you never know what's going to happen. I mean it hasn't even been close to working out, this year, after that first



big project ran out. I think maybe I just need to live someplace cheaper. You're moving up in the world though, right? So it can be done.

PAUL

In some ways, yes, I suppose so. It's definitely a better neighborhood. My own place. But still, a studio. The living room is not a room it's an area and it's pretty small and the kitchen does not even have an island to separate it it's just all lined up against the wall. There will be no more of these giant parties.

CARL

Yeah I will miss these too.

PAUL

You can always come back in town to visit. Just let me know. And I'm sure someone else, someone else is going to step up and seize the party torch.

CARL

Yeah, Dustin is always talking about it. Wait.

(CARL exits abruptly. He is gone for a moment while PAUL continues making the food. CARL returns carrying a giant, intricate black marker on paper illustration, framed.)

CARL

I want you to have this.

PAUL

What!? But Carl. That's your giant one. I mean it's amazing.

CARL

Maybe, yes, but it's not going to fit in the car.

PAUL

Wow Carl. Thanks.

(Together, they regard the drawing.)

END OF PLAY