



Ronald Tavel, 1962

# **KITCHENETTE**

**a one-act play by Ronald Tavel**

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**KITCHENETTE was first published in *Partisan Review*, Spring 1967.**

Ronald Tavel

KITCHENETTE

CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE\*

FILMMAKER	<i>Harvey Tavel</i>	JOE	<i>Grover Noel</i>
JO	<i>Mary Woronov</i>	MIKEY	<i>Diane Dorr-Dorynek</i>
MIKIE	<i>Eddie McCarty</i>		

*A kitchen table downstage center; a high stool stageright side of the table; a kitchen chair upstage side of the table; a toilet commode left side of the table; a small box downstage front of the table; a chest near the right wing with dishes, a water basin, a malted machine, etc. The set is in complete disarray with ladders, flats, theater lights, etc., placed haphazardly here and there. The impression is that there has been virtually no preparation for the play about to be performed.*

*A FILMMAKER carrying a script enters upstage left with JO who is scantily dressed in a pullover and black mesh stockings. She carries a mascara case, mirror, makeup articles, etc.*

FILMMAKER: All right, Mary, sit over there (*indicating the stool*).

Eddie, are you ready? Let's get started. It's late.

MIKIE (*off-stage*): Coming, coming!

FILMMAKER: "Kitchenette"—take one. Roll 'em!

*MIKIE enters upstage left carrying a litter basket. He is dressed in torn undershirt, baggy trousers, very nervous, very neurotic look-*

\* First performance, January 6, 1967, Play-House of the Ridiculous, New York, New York. Directed by Harvey Tavel.

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*ing. He paces back and forth downstage fumbling with the basket. He throws it on the floor, seizes the edge of the table.*

*Jo, as if in a trance, applies her makeup.*

MIKIE (*the height of tension*): Litter basket!

FILMMAKER (*calmly*): No, that won't do. Take it again.

"Kitchenette"—take two.

*MIKIE picks up the basket, exits upstage left, returns immediately and repeats his performance with even greater tension and suspense.*

MIKIE: Litter basket!

FILMMAKER: Again.

MIKIE: Litter basket!

FILMMAKER: Again.

MIKIE: Litter basket!

FILMMAKER: Again. Slowly.

MIKIE: Litter basket!!!

Jo (*after very long pause*): What did you say, darling?

MIKIE: Lit-ter bas-ket!!!

Jo: Oh.

*Very long pause.*

MIKIE: I said litter basket!

Jo (*long pause*): I know, dear. You said litter basket.

MIKIE: Well, don't you care at all?

Jo (*long pause*): Of course I care about litter baskets, dear, but what do you want me to do about them?

MIKIE (*sitting on the commode*): Rummage around in them. . . .

Jo (*long pause*): I do rummage around in litter baskets, dear, that's how I found you.

MIKIE (*ecstatic, rushing over to her*): I love you, Jo.

Jo (*pause*): That's obvious, Mikie.

MIKIE: You see, Jo, I only brought it up because people are always throwing away worthwhile things. They're always throwing worthwhile things into the litter basket.

*Jo puts down her mascara equipment, gets up and goes over to the litter basket now lying near the small box. She bends over, rear end up and toward the audience, legs perfectly straight, and begins picking objects out and examining them. She finds panties and brassieres and empty beer cans. She makes two piles on the table, one of the undergarments and one of the beer cans. She*



*bends her head toward the audience without changing her position.*

Jo: You know, Mikie, you're right: half the things in this litter basket shouldn't have been thrown out.

*Jo neatly arranges the beer cans and then picks up the undergarments and throws them back into the litter basket.*

MIKIE (*tossing himself hysterically at the basket*): My clothes!!

Jo: Hush, dear, hush. . . . It's all right.

MIKIE (*crying, working himself up from the floor onto the commode*): They threw me away! They threw me into the litter basket. . . . and I'm a worthwhile thing.

Jo: Of course, you are, darling, of course you are. . . .

*MIKIE continues to cry like a neurotic child and Jo goes over to him and sits on his lap. She kisses and soothes and pets him. She puts his head against her chest; it is all very maternal. Then, slowly, very slowly, she inches away from him and squirms up onto the table, like a kitten in heat, pouting and hissing.*

*MIKIE watches her with popping eyes, begins to drool. Jo moves her long, shapely legs temptingly before his face; he runs his hands tenderly over her shoes, mumbling "Well hello there," and begins to kiss the shoes. The FILMMAKER urges MIKIE on to more enthusiastic lasciviousness, "Eat them, eat them," etc.*

Jo (*groaning with delight, her head thrown back*): Oh! Sail on! Sail on! Behind you leave the grey Azores, behind the gates of Hercules. . . . .

*To the FILMMAKER.*

Leave him alone, Harvey, he's doing fine!

*MIKIE moves his lips around her ankles, then quickly starts kissing along her calves to her knees. Suddenly, she catches his neck sharply between her thighs.*

Jo (*disgusted*): OK, Columbus, you've discovered enough!

*Jo jumps off the table and resumes her seat on the stool. She continues applying makeup. MIKIE, left on the commode, makes discreet movements and readjustments to indicate that he is employing the facility.*

FILMMAKER: Comfy?

MIKIE (*softly*): More or less. . . .

*Very long pause.*

MIKIE: This afternoon I went to a shower, Jo.

Jo (*long pause*): What did you say, dear?

MIKIE: I said I went to a shower this afternoon, Jo.

Jo (*long pause*): Oh, how nice.

MIKIE: Yes, it was nice.

Jo (*long pause*): What happened at the shower, dear?

MIKIE: I had sex with someone in the shower.

Jo (*long pause, abstractly*): With the water running?

MIKIE: Yes, with the water running.

Jo (*long pause*): Oh, how nice.

MIKIE: Yes, it was nice, Jo.

Jo (*long pause*): Whom did you have sex with in the shower, dear?

MIKIE: With Joe.

Jo: Joe? Which Joe?

MIKIE: The other Joe.

Jo (*long pause*): Oh. How nice.

MIKIE: Yes, it was nice.

*Very long pause.*

Jo: Did you scrub each other's backs?

MIKIE: No, we just massaged.

Jo (*long pause*): Each other's backs?

MIKIE: No, each other's fronts.

Jo (*long pause*): Oh, how nice.

MIKIE (*quickly*): Yes, it was nice. We massaged and massaged and massaged each other's fronts!

*Growing very excited, jumping off the commode and rushing over to the FILMMAKER, attempting to massage him while speaking very rapidly.*

You know, Harvey, massaging is a system of remedial treatment consisting of kneading and kneading and rubbing and rubbing and pressing and pinching and pressing and pulling and pushing and mushing and squeezing the other person's body!!!

FILMMAKER (*tickled, indulging him*): Oh, stop it, Eddie, and get back on your bowl.

MIKIE *obeys; long pause.*

Jo: Oh, how nice.

MIKIE (*ferociously*): Yes, it is nice! Would you like me to massage you?

Jo: What did you say, dear?

MIKIE: I said would you like me to massage you?

Jo (*abstractly*): Well, just my medulla oblongata, Mikie.

MIKIE (*jumping over the table top to reach her*): OK, just your medulla oblongata.

*Massaging her neck while she calmly applies makeup.*

How tender your medulla oblongata is, Jo.

Jo: How tender your finger tips are, Mikie.

MIKIE: How tender is your skin.

Jo: How tender is the night.

MIKIE: How tender is your loin.

Jo: How tender is your limpo.

MIKIE: How tender is your foot.

Jo (*disgusted*): Oh, shut up!

MIKIE (*temporarily insane, choking her*): Don't tell me to shut up, Jo, don't ever tell me to shut up, Jo!!!

Jo: OK Nero, you've strangled enough!

MIKIE (*on his knees*): Forgive, forgive me, oh my mother!

Jo (*readjusting her hair*): Oh, I don't mind being strangled, it's just that you'll ruin my Man-Tan application.

MIKIE: I'll make it up to you, Jo: we'll go to the beach tomorrow.

Jo: Besides, you'll give me a complex about chokers.

*The FILMMAKER notices that Jo has no choker. He leaves the stage in search of one and returns a minute or two later with a long cord which he tosses on the table, mumbling, "Here, Mary."*

*Jo plays with the cord from time to time, using it as a ribbon with which to bind her hair. The conversation continues oblivious of the FILMMAKER's movements.*

MIKIE: Jo, let's go to the beach tonight!

Jo: Tonight?

MIKIE: Yes, yes, tonight, because when it's dark and there's no one around — then — then — we can, we can. . . . .

Jo (*standing, brushing off her pullover*): Oh, don't be silly, Mikie, you know how the sand hurts.

MIKIE: Well, what were you planning to do tonight?

Jo (*reaching the table's left side*): Oh, I thought we'd spend the night here, here in the kitchenette.

*Very sexy.*

Just the two of us, here alone together — in the kitchenette. . . .

MIKIE (*drooling, bending over the table*): How oral!

Jo (*bending over the table to meet him*): How moral.



MIKIE: How formal.

JO: How normal.

MIKIE: How rural.

JO: How un-en-dur-able!! Besides, we can't go out tonight, I have nothing to wear.

MIKIE (*broad advertising voice and gestures*): But any outfit will do. You don't have to wear something expensive.

JO (*a model's stroll across stage*): Oh, I never wear anything expensive. I feel one should dress inexpensively — but flashily — you understand?

MIKIE (*rushing to her*): I understand only that you're beautiful, Jo.

JO: That's obvious, Mikie.

MIKIE (*taking her in his arms*): I'd like to change your mind about going to the beach tonight. . . .

JO (*her features distorting hideously*): You'll have to change my face first.

*Change a fool against his will,  
He's of the same opinion still.*

MIKIE (*tenderly*): You're such a jokable, chokable female.

JO: Mikie, Mikie, does my humor overwhelm you?

MIKIE (*pulling out of her arms*): It whelms me.

JO: It whelms you? What does that mean?

MIKIE: Well, it whelms me, it whelms me, it doesn't overwhelm me.

JO (*stepping back onto the commode, crying, while MIKIE grimaces deliciously to the audience*): Oh, Mikie, Mikie, what are you saying?! Then I've really failed you haven't I? As a lover and mother I've failed you! In the end, I've failed you!

MIKIE (*winking*): No, in the end you haven't failed me.

JO (*screaming*): Don't you dare wink at your mother in that disrespectful manner! Where do you think you are? With your friends? With your bummy friends?

MIKIE (*triumphant*): Well, I always said you can choose your friends, but you can't choose your relations.

JO (*pitiful*): Mikie, Mikie, what are you saying? Didn't you choose me for relations? Didn't you? It was free choice, wasn't it — I mean, I never forced myself upon you, did I?

MIKIE (*tenderly*): On the contrary.

JO: And isn't a mother a boy's best friend?

MIKIE (*at the table*): Sure, she is. Sure, she is.



Jo (*screaming, menacing*): Then what the hell are you complaining about, you ungrateful bastard???!!!

MIKIE (*cowering, on his knees*): I'm not complaining, I'm just depressed, that's all. . . .

Jo: Shall I get your father's claw and scratch that depression out of you?

MIKIE: No, Jo, please, please don't scratch me!!

Jo (*opening the commode and removing a long-nailed claw from it*): Over my knee I tell you, over Mama's knee. . . .

MIKIE *scurries under the table and up over Jo's knees. Jo, seated on the commode, applies the claw to MIKIE's rear and thighs. The FILMMAKER urges her on. MIKIE groans with sensual delight. Finally, he spills over onto the floor; both are exhausted, satisfied. She eyes him with vixen mockery.*

Jo: Now go and do your lessons and see that you behave yourself, you bad boy.

MIKIE *crawls around the table to the upstage chair.*

The other seat, stupid. . . .

MIKIE *moves to the stool, runs a pencil down a page. He sucks his thumb and begins singing. As he sings, he slips from the stool, squirms out from under the table and nearly reaches Jo's shoes. Both are in the throes of poetical sensuality.*

MIKIE (*singing*):

*Wary of worrisome worrying weariors,  
Pretending progenitors and superiors,  
Pretentious idiotic inferiors,  
Ample hips and expansive posteriors  
Guard the corridor-like interiors.*

Jo: How beautiful are thy poems without rhyme!

MIKIE: How beautiful are thy shoes without feet.

Jo: Mikie, Mikie, kiss my shoes without feet. . .

*He starts to obey but she switches attitude, jumps up.*

No, no, don't bother, not now. We did that before. And besides, it bores me; I know, I'll spray my shoes instead.

*She sprays polish on her shoes without removing them.*

MIKIE (*enthralled*): Only Cinderella had so small a foot.

Jo (*unromantically*): But my foot is not small. As a matter of fact it's too large for these shoes.

MIKIE (*bewitched*): No, the shoe is too small for your less smaller feet.

*Advertising voice.*

You can enlarge the shoe by placing it under hot water.

Jo: Really, Mikie! I'll do just that right now.

*She goes to the chest, lifts her foot and places it into the basin, a contorted, erotic position.*

Ooooooooooooooooooooo! . . . . . that feels so so nice!

Ooooooooooooooooooooo. . . . . weeeeeeeeeeee! —Mikie!

MIKIE (*rummaging through the basket*): Yes, Jo?

Jo: Was it like this when you were taking the shower?

MIKIE: I don't know. How can I tell?

Jo: Well, you had sex in the shower didn't you? You had sex with Joe in the shower.

MIKIE: Yes, Jo, I did.

Jo: Well, this is just like having sex in the shower. It's just like having sex in the shower with Joe.

MIKIE: Oh.

Jo: Yes.

MIKIE: How nice.

Jo: Yes, it is nice.

*Tossing the basin away, into the audience.*

But it's also boring.

MIKIE (*frigging his thumb*): It's all, all so boring, boring. . . .

*Picking the panties, slips, brassieres, etc., from the litter basket, suddenly screaming.*

Why did you throw my undergarments away, Jo????!!!

Jo (*drying her shoe with a towel*): What did you say, dear?

MIKIE (*screaming again*): I said why did you throw my undergarments away, Jo????!!!

Jo: You'll have to speak more softly, darling, you know I can't understand you when you shout.

MIKIE (*attempting to control himself, showing great strain*): Jo, Jo love, whatever possessed you to throw my — MY UNDERGARMENTS into the litter basket?

Jo: They were mildewed, dear.

MIKIE: Mildewed?

Jo: Yes, dear, they were mildewed.

MIKIE: What does that mean?



Jo: Well, it's a euphemism. Actually, they had dew — the panties had dew stains, dear.

*She drops her towel; he simultaneously drops the garment.*

MIKIE: Oh, well, I've never looked as good with clothes on as without them — so what's the use of trying.

Jo: Oh, don't be so insecure, Mikie. You could look splendid with the right clothes; *those* clothes just aren't you.

MIKIE: Think so?

Jo (*advertising voice*): Of course, you just don't know how to shop. Tomorrow we'll go shopping together, we'll get you some nice outfits. We'll start at The Miracle on 57th Street—The House of Second Hand Furs.

MIKIE: Do you think so?

Jo: Certainly, I know so, Mikie; some of their furs are in such good condition only the label betrays their former owner.

MIKIE: I'd love to shop at The House of Second Hand Furs.

Jo (*sour*): Would you, love?

MIKIE: Oh, yes, I would. Only one thing bothers me.

Jo (*shouting, very tough*): Don't let anything bother you, Mikie!!

MIKIE: But one thing does: when you wear hand-me-downs somehow you're not yourself completely. I mean you take on something of the former owner's — personality. Because, I mean, clothes are personality and furs are hair — do you understand? So I have someone else's pubic hair wrapped around my shoulders. And then there are those foxes, the whole animal, and you become a dame destined to have a *whole* fox wrapped around your neck, including the fox hole, and all. A foxy dame. Fox. Lox. Shocks. And so on. You understand? Now if and when I go shopping and buy me hand-me-downs I try to figure out who the former owner was and if he had a personality similar to mine. That way my own personality doesn't alter that much by wearing his clothes, you understand, Jo? And that way I can still understand my own personality but also get to understand a little of his personality, or if they are the same I can understand his personality and so get to understand my own. But if I can't understand my own personality at least I can get to understand his personality by wearing his clothes. I always said, if you can't understand yourself, you might as well understand someone else. Because somehow someone else, all the other someone elses in the world, when you put together all the someone

elses in the world, then you actually, you see, (*etc., etc., etc., etc., etc., . . . .*).

JO *has been applying makeup during the speech and at this point is instructed by the FILMMAKER to turn on the malted milk machine. While the machine grinds away, MIKIE begins his speech all over again and then rambles on and on, becoming more and more neurotic as he gets less and less attention. His appeals to the FILMMAKER terminate in his being forcefully led to the rear of the stage to continue his complaint there. He talks to the walls, into the wings, mounts the ladder where he carries on a two-part conversation with himself, spies on the neighbors' open bedroom window, bemoans his acrophobia, etc. He descends, peeks into the commode — "My God! — she has no clothes on!", and finally sinks, completely exhausted, onto the open commode.*

FILMMAKER: OK, Mary, you can turn off the machine.

JO (*obeying the order*): Thank God that awful noise is over!

*Very long pause.*

I just can't stand the sound of that awful machine. It drowns out what a person is saying. I mean, you just can't hear yourself think when that machine is grinding away.

*Long pause.*

Mikie, did you hear what I said?

MIKIE: What, dear?

JO: I said did you hear what I said?

MIKIE: Yes, Jo. You said you can't hear what you're saying.

JO: No, I said you can't hear what I'm saying. I said I can't hear what I'm thinking.

MIKIE: Oh? Are you thinking?

JO: No, believe it or not, I am!

JOE, *attired in beach-wear, enters running and screaming up-stage left. He carries a mattress on his head.*

JOE: Good friends should lie together!

JO: We always do, dear! — Joe, how are you? Do put your mattress down and make yourself comfortable.

JOE: I think I will. Heavens, but business was bad today!

JOE *drops the mattress on the floor, revealing MIKEY, a blonde wearing a long fur coat, standing behind him.*

MIKIE: Mikey, love, how are you?



MIKEY: How's yourself, Mikie? How are you, Jo?

MIKIE: Do put yourself down, Mikey, and I'll make you — I mean — and make yourself comfortable.

*He ushers MIKEY to the box downstage.*

JO (*jealous*): She doesn't have to make herself too comfortable. She isn't staying long.

MIKIE: Then neither am I.

JO (*quick switch, very eagerly*): Oh, could I fix you two some coffee?

JOE (*standing on the upstage chair*): Oh, I thought you'd never ask!

JO (*patting JOE's crotch*): Coming up! Yes . . . coming up. . . .

MIKIE: What kind of business did you say you were in, Joe?

JOE: In the mattress business, of course, can't you see?

MIKIE: Oh, of course.

JOE: Yes, and is business bad these days! Up and down Gren Ave, up and down, I tell you, and not a single corner!

JO (*preparing coffee at the chest*): Coming up. . . .

JOE (*indignant*): The other side of the street, Madame!

MIKEY (*dumbly*): Joe is so enterprising.

JOE: As I was saying, the mattress business is not lucrative. But it does have its little compensations. Like, for instance, the people you meet.

MIKEY (*on the box, facing the audience*): Oh, Joe, tell Jo and Mikie about the kind of people you meet.

JOE: Silence!!

MIKIE: Yes, do tell us Joe.

JOE (*standing on the table top, needing no encouragement*): Well, the other day I met this Turkish dancing girl on the street: and she did the dance of the seven veils right on the street! Only she reduced the dance of the seven veils to two veils, just two veils.

*Belly-dancing, placing a veil in his belt, and a second one over his face.*

One of them she took off right away. . . . .

*Discarding the veil hooked on his belt.*

The other she never took off. . . .

JO: How do you like your coffee, Joe?

JOE: I like my coffee like I like my men: — hot, sweet, and black!

MIKIE (*shocked, insane*): BLACK??? You really like them black?

JOE: Oh, well — black, white, yellow or red — they all have one little brown spot — and that's all that interests me!

MIKEY: You see, Mikie, Joe doesn't waste any time, he gets right down to the heart of the matter. That's why he's such a good business man.

JO: Yes, Joe is coming up in the world.

MIKIE (*annoyed*): Are those coffees coming up?

JOE: My last meal is coming up.

MIKIE: So you go in for exotic types?

JOE (*downstage, into a spotlight*): Well, I go down for exotic types. Like Mexicans, for example. I just love those Mexican peasants in their full white costumes — you know the kind I mean, Harvey — the ones all in white, like they just got thrown out of a pajama party or something.

JO: Joe darling, I don't believe a word you're saying.

JOE: That's always the trouble, Jo darling, I don't have time — I just don't have time to be believed.

MIKIE (*on MIKEY's lap*): I hope you enjoy your coffee, Mikey.

MIKEY (*stupidly*): I hope you enjoy yours, too, Mikie.

*Jo brings the coffees to the table and manages to spill a cupful of the liquid onto MIKIE and MIKEY. JOE leaps off the stage.*

JOE: Calamité! Au secours!! Catastrophe! Scalding crotch!!!

JO: Oh, Mikie, I'm sorry, I'm dreadfully sorry!

JOE (*leaping back up on the stage*): Scalding crotch! Oh, your poor yummy-yummy!! (*etc., etc.*).

JO (*shouting above the din*): Could I get everybody some layer cake?

JOE (*startled*): I beg your par-doon?!

JO: I said some layer cake.

JOE: That's exactly what I thought you said, my dear. Come on, everybody, let's get some layer cake!

*There is a frantic scramble for position as JO exits upstage left; MIKIE sits on the commode, JOE on the upstage chair, MIKEY on the downstage box. Long, uncomfortable silence. Fidgeting.*

JOE (*to MIKIE, mumbling*): Can't you afford a better place?

JO (*reentering with an enormous four-tier layer cake, annoyed in the extreme*): Horn and Hard-on! — the only thing automatic about them is their monthly rise in prices!

*Holding out the cake, moving slowly to the right side of the table, morbidly.*

My life is just like that layer cake. Year after year, one year piled on top of the other, layer after meaningless layer.

JOE (*weeping, tying the veil around his head like a kerchief*): Don't cry, dear, that's the story of my life too. One meaningless layer after another. . . .

*Peeling off the complete top layer of the cake and shoving it savagely in Jo's face.*

Here, dear, cheer up: — have a layer!!!

*Peeling off the remaining layers and dealing them out to MIKIE, MIKEY and himself.*

Have a layer! Have a layer! Have a layer!

*Coming downstage, chewing the cake, vamping the audience.*

There is just something soooooo Elysian about everybody having his own layer. . . .

JO (*furious, tossing the tray at JOE*): But that's just it! that's just it! — I don't have a layer of my own! I never had a layer all my own!

*She rushes hysterically to stage right, the others leaping frantically after her.*

MIKIE: Mother, mother, please forgive me!

JO (*high drama, inconsolable*): No — No! don't say a word. Not a word!

MIKIE: Oh, Jo, you're so beautiful now — now, with tears in your hair.

JOE: It's that new spray-net she's using.

MIKIE: You know, Jo, you're really a very attractive girl.

JO: Attractive? — A two-headed girl is attractive!!

*She tosses the trio back across the stage; MIKIE and MIKEY embrace madly; JOE lands on the commode.*

JOE: Well your two heads are attractive, my dear.

JO (*rushing to JOE in an absolute rage, pulling him from the commode and tossing him to the floor*): What did you say? What did you say? What did you say?

JOE (*attempting to ward her off*): What did I say when?

JO: Just now! Just now!

JOE: Er — er — er — er!

JO: I'll bet the answer is just on the tip of your tongue!



JOE (*extending a long wet tongue, his eyes crossing as he looks down at the tip of it*): No, it ain't there, neither!

JO (*coming away angrily and screaming at MIKEY while JOE squirms sensuously along the footlights, vamping the audience like a sarong girl*): Do you dig sleeping with cripples???

MIKEY: What did you say, honey?

JO (*screaming*): I said do you dig sleeping with cripples?

MIKEY: What did she say, Mikie?

JO: Oh! You must! Because he's cripple-minded! Cripple-minded, that's what he is!!

*Crying in earnest, sitting on the commode.*

MIKIE (*going to JO and putting her head in his lap as if she were his daughter*): There, there, little girl, my little girl, don't you cry. . . . . don't you bother your little head about what he says. . . . . don't you bother both your little heads about what he says. . . . .

JO (*simpering*): If you really love me, Mikie, you'll say something mean to Joe like he said to me.

MIKIE (*stalking the recumbent JOE*): Hey, Joe, how would you like to eat my sausage (*pronounced: saw-sâgé*)???

JOE (*exotic accent*): Why do you call eet your saw-sâgé — is eet because eet is so hot?

JO: You know, I saw him in another movie — only he was called Madame Maria Ouspensakya in that movie.

JOE: Well, I always live my parts, my dear.

JO: I always live my parts, too. Only I can't figure out what my part in this movie is.

FILMMAKER: That's funny 'cause I can see it from here. — CUT!

*All four break and scramble for sitting positions: JO on the stool, MIKEY on the box, JOE on the commode, MIKIE on the upstage chair. A very long, tense pause; sense of expectancy.*

JO (*suddenly kicking MIKEY in the back*): Hey, honcy, what did you say your name was?

MIKEY: Mikey.

JO: Well, you see, that mixes me up, because his name is Mikie also.

MIKEY: Then you can call me by my second name. You can call me Miss Crocus.

JO: Miss Croak-us??



JOE: Miss Croak-ass.

MIKIE (*rising behind JOE, completely insane*): What did you say?

JOE: Miss Croak-ass!

*Repeat "What did you say?" and "Miss Croak-ass" a dozen times, faster and faster until it reaches a frenzied pitch; then:*

JOE: I said you can call me Miss — er — Mr. Croak-ass.

MIKIE: Oh. How nice.

JO: Yes, it is nice.

MIKEY: Yes, we're both nice. All four of us are nice.

JOE (*pulling a rose from MIKEY's hair*): All this talk of crocuses reminds me of roses.

MIKIE (*exotic accent*): How do crocuses remind you of roses?

JOE (*throwing the rose into MIKIE's coffee cup*): Float roses in a dish for a party effect.

MIKIE (*standing furiously, grabbing JOE's hair*): What the hell did you do that for?

JOE: For a party effect, for a party effect! Julia Childs says float roses in a dish for a party effect! Don't get so upset! For goodness sake — all these excitable people——

*Standing, whimpering toward the FILMMAKER.*

Harvey, I'm never gonna be in a movie again where there are so many excitable people. . . .

*MIKEY stands suddenly and throws on her fur coat. She steps down off the stage and runs out into the audience, loudly complaining. A spotlight follows her to the back of the house.*

MIKEY: Excitable people! Excitable people! That's what's wrong with this world. A girl like you — you're supposed to be studying journalism, aren't you? Well, aren't you? So what are you doing going around with a bum like that? No wonder girls like you get raped! Standing around in dark doorways and kissing and mushing and he squeezes your titties — he squeezes your titties in dark doorways! — well, doesn't he? And what else does he do to you in the dirty hallways — dirty things, dirty things, doesn't he? Well, never mind what dirty things — you know what dirty things, I don't have to list them for you, he does dirty things between your legs! Your legs! YOUR LEGS! That dirty bum does dirty things between your legs so it's no wonder, I say, that girls like you get raped! You ask for it! Can't you go and sit on a bench in the park with your date? What do you have to stand up for? Now,

look, all right, some rapes happen in the subway — I mean people like me go to work every day, we're respectable, we take the subway to work and sometimes there's a rape in the subway. Now, that can't be helped. I mean if I get raped late at night in the subway, or if it's early in the morning and I get raped in the subway, well, now, that can't be helped, can it? But a young girl like you — you're supposed to be smart, right? You're supposed to be studying journalism, right? So what are you going around with a bum like this for??

*The FILMMAKER pulls her back up on stage.*

They ask for it, Harvey, I tell you they just ask for it!!

JO: Will someone turn on the malted milk machine?

JOE: What the hell is she talking about? Harvey, she must have wandered onto the wrong set.

MIKIE: Hey, lady, go where you belong!

JOE: The other side of the street, Madame!

JO: She's just a raving maniac. I never listen to other women, anyhow.

FILMMAKER: I wonder why.

JO: You would.

JOE: She must be in that other movie, you know, playing opposite whachamacallit who's in love with that Negress — whasername — Dietrich? — with the greycreeper eyes. Yeah, Harvey, he flops in love with Negr—

MIKIE: Joe, Jo and I were planning to go to the beach tonight.

JOE (*singing, dancing*):

*Under the boardwalk  
We'll be having some fun,  
Under the boardwalk,  
In the noonday sun—  
Under the boardwalk,  
Under the boardwalk — Woooo!*

MIKIE: You want to go to the beach with us?

JOE: Well, what are the sexual aspects?

MIKIE: I beg your pardon, I hardly know you!

JOE: I mean what are the sexual prospects?

JO (*vamping JOE*): Good friends should lie together.

JOE: Stop stealing my lines, Mary, get your own writer.

JO (*very sexy*): Hey, Joe, wanna spend ten bucks?



JOE: The other side of the street. Madame!!!

MIKIE: Well, I said it once and I'll say it again: Good friends should lie together.

JOE (*fiercely masculine*): I agree, sonny boy, you're perfectly right! — Here, lemme show you!

*JOE pushes everything off the table: cups and saucers, beer cans, etc., all go clattering onto the floor. Then he picks up the mattress and places it on top of the table. He grabs MIKIE and pushes him on the mattress and leaps on top of him.*

JOE: Mikey, Mikey, I just flopped in love with you!

MIKIE: Hey, let me up, will you? I ain't Mikey, I'm Mikie!

JOE: That's what I said: Mikey, I love you.

*He pushes MIKIE face down on the mattress.*

MIKEY (*jumping about in confusion*): He's not Mikey, I'm Mikey!

JOE: Well, why the hell does everybody around here have the same name? How am I supposed to know who to have sex with?

JO: You have sex with more than a name, don't you?

JOE (*the height of innocence*): What do you mean?

FILMMAKER: Dear.

JOE: Dear.

JO: Oh, you just seem to have sex with everyone!

JOE: Not everyone, my dear — but anyone!

*Resuming his activity with gusto.*

MIKIE: Let me up, will you?

JO: Coming up.

MIKIE (*pushing himself and JOE off the mattress*): I'm not coming at all!

JO: Oh, yeah? — well you look it!

*A dramatic freeze with all four tensed around the table. JO is to the right of the table, the others to the left.*

JO (*breaking the freeze*): I know: I'll toast marshmallows! Toasted marshmallows for everybody!

*MIKEY removes marshmallows from her V-neck and hands them to JOE who eats one and throws others into the audience.*

JOE: Yum-yum, toasted marshmallows — it's just like eating tit-ties. . . . Here, Harvey, you have one too.

*JO spears a marshmallow with a fork, then eats it slowly, viciously, staring with triumph at MIKIE. MIKIE slowly moves around the table toward her, stalking her as it were. JO and MIKIE*

watch him with apprehension. Suddenly JO stabs MIKIE with the fork. MIKIE allows the fork to rest in his flesh for a long moment, then pulls it out and slams it against the wall. MIKIE, MIKEY and JOE break into a high, eerie soprano sound and gather about JO: they lift her up and place her on the mattress, head downstage. MIKIE begins to garrote JO with the long cord she has played with throughout the abruptions. The eerie soprano shrill ends suddenly.

JOE (*astonished*): Hey, what does he think he's doing — that's his mother, ain't it?

*Moving forward to get a better look.*

Will you dig that? — Matricide on a mattress!

MIKEY (*crying bitterly*): He went through with it!

JOE (*coming down to the footlights and repeating the phrase in as many intonations as possible while the stage lights slowly dim*):

Matricide on a mattress!

Matricide on a mattress!

Matricide on a mattress!

Matricide on a mattress!

*Etc., etc., etc.*

CURTAIN