

# SYLVIA

## ACT ONE

*Before rise: Romantic music, evoking New York. A Benny Goodman Quartet, Gershwin, or something else suggesting the city.\**

*At rise: Greg and Kate's apartment. Sylvia comes on, followed by Greg, holding a leash and a newspaper. She is pert and sexy. Her hair is messy and she wears rather scruffy clothes: a baggy sweater, patched jeans, knee pads, and old boots. A small name-tag in the shape of a heart hangs around her neck. Greg wears business clothes, but his tie is loose. He watches Sylvia wander inquisitively around the room. She occasionally might take a sniff of something.*

GREG. What are you doing, Sylvia?

SYLVIA. Looking around.

GREG. Relax, why don't you?

SYLVIA. I gotta get used to things. *(She prowls again.)*

GREG. Sit, Sylvia. *(She tries kneeling, gets up immediately.)*

SYLVIA. I'm not ready to sit.

GREG. I said, sit.

SYLVIA. I'm too nervous to sit.

GREG. Down, Sylvia. Down.

SYLVIA. *(Checking the couch.)* I'm worried about where I sleep. Do I sleep on this couch?

GREG. *(Going to her.)* I said sit DOWN, Sylvia. *(As she comes by, he gives her a gentle smack on the butt with his rolled up newspaper.)* SIT. DOWN.

SYLVIA. Ouch.

\* See Special Note on Music and Recordings on copyright page.

GREG. Then sit!

SYLVIA. I'm sitting, I'm sitting. *(She sits.)*

GREG. Good girl. Now stay.

SYLVIA. I'm staying.

GREG. *(Patting her on the head.)* Good girl. That's a very good girl. *(He goes to his chair, sits, starts to read the paper.)*

SYLVIA. You don't have to hit, you know.

GREG. It didn't hurt.

SYLVIA. It most certainly did!

GREG. Then I'm sorry.

SYLVIA. You ought to be.

GREG. I just want you to be on your best behavior. Kate gets home any minute.

SYLVIA. Who's Kate?

GREG. My wife. O.K.?

SYLVIA. O.K. But you don't have to hit.

GREG. Then I won't. Ever again. I promise.

SYLVIA. O.K. *(He reads. Sylvia sits looking at him. Finally.)* I love you.

GREG. You do?

SYLVIA. I really do.

GREG. I think you do.

SYLVIA. Even when you hit me, I love you.

GREG. Thank you, Sylvia.

SYLVIA. *(Getting up.)* I think you're God, if you want to know.

GREG. No now sit.

SYLVIA. But I think you're God.

GREG. No now stay, Sylvia. Stay. And sit.

SYLVIA. I want to sit near you.

GREG. Well all right.

SYLVIA. Nearer, my God, to thee.

GREG. O.K. As long as you sit. *(Sylvia settles at his feet.)* Good girl. Now let me read the paper. *(He reads. She looks at him adoringly for another long time.)*

SYLVIA. You saved my life.

GREG. I guess I did.

SYLVIA. You did. You saved my goddamn life. I never would have survived out there on my own.

GREG. I did what anyone would do, Sylvia.

SYLVIA. Oh no. Someone else might have ignored me. Or shooed me away. Or even turned me in. Not you. You welcomed me with open arms. I really appreciate that.

GREG. Thanks, Sylvia.

SYLVIA. I hardly knew where to turn. I was beginning to panic. I thought my days were numbered. Then there you were.

GREG. There I was, all right.

SYLVIA. I felt some immediate connection. Didn't you?

GREG. I did, actually.

SYLVIA. I feel it now.

GREG. So do I. *(Puts down his paper; looks at her.)* I do, Sylvia. *(He scratches her ears.)* You're a good girl, Sylvia. I'll try to give you a good home.

SYLVIA. Thanks, Greg. And I'll try to show my appreciation. *(He returns to his paper. She sits staring at him adoringly, her chin on the arm of the chair. She sneezes. He smiles at her. Then suddenly she jumps to her feet.)* Hey!

GREG. What's the matter?

SYLVIA. *(Looking off.)* Hey! Hey! Hey!

GREG. What? *(He listens.)* Oh, that. That's the door. That's just Kate. Home from work.

SYLVIA. Hey! Hey!

GREG. Stop barking, Sylvia! She's a teacher. She likes an orderly classroom. Now show her you can be a good girl.

SYLVIA. *(Unable to control herself.)* Hey! Hey! Hey! Hey!

GREG. No, now quiet, Sylvia! Quiet down! Be a good, quiet girl.

KATE. *(Calling from off.)* Hello!

SYLVIA. Hey! Hey!

GREG. PLEASE, Sylvia. Please. Make a good first impression. *(Kate comes on, brisk, well-dressed, carrying a large tote bag.)*

KATE. Am I crazy? I thought I heard a — *(Sees Sylvia.)* Dog.

GREG. This is Sylvia, Kate.

SYLVIA. *(Approaching Kate.)* Hi.

GREG. Sylvia, this is Kate.

End