

ALL THREE.

"There's no love song finer,

But how strange the change from major to minor

Ev'ry time we say goodbye."*

(Kate goes off one way, Greg the other. Sylvia remains on the couch.)

SYLVIA. *(Suddenly alert.)* Hey, hey hey! *(Ultimate relief.)* Knew it! It's him! He's home! *(She runs off eagerly as the music ends.)*

Music: Urban and hectic. Daytime. The apartment. Phyllis comes in. she wears a light-colored jacket.)

PHYLLIS. *(Looking around.)* This is lovely, Kate. I was expecting something more naive. I mean, for new arrivals. I mean, sometimes when people come to New York, they bring the provinces with them. I have a friend who moved from Tampa and brought her entire collection of sea shells. There were shells on the tables, shells on the chairs, shells everywhere you looked. I said, these shells are lovely, Sheila, but where do you shit? — I mean, sit. I mean ... *(Kate comes on, carrying a stack of mail.)* I like your apartment, Kate.

KATE. *(Laughing.)* Well it's simple and convenient. *(She crosses to her desk.)* Anybody here?... No, thank God. They must be in the park. For the umpteenth time.

PHYLLIS. Who?

KATE. Don't get me started.... But how lucky we ran into each other on the street, Phyllis!

PHYLLIS. *(Starting to take off her jacket.)* That's New York for you. The biggest small town in the world.

KATE. I'm discovering that.

PHYLLIS. Well now you and Greg are here, Hamilton and I want to give you a small dinner party. *(Phyllis is about to toss her jacket onto the couch.)*

KATE. WAIT!

PHYLLIS. What?

KATE. Not there! *(Takes the jacket.)* You'll ruin that nice jacket. She leaves these great, grubby hairs. *(She carries the jacket off.)*

PHYLLIS. Who?

KATE. *(From off.)* Sylvia.

* See Special Note on Music.

PHYLLIS. Sylvia?

KATE. *(Returning.)* The dog.

PHYLLIS. Oh. *(She checks where to sit.)* You let the dog onto the couch?

KATE. *(Brushing off the couch.)* I do not. I absolutely forbid it. But she.... I'd prefer not to talk about it.

PHYLLIS. Good for you. We New Yorkers all have parts of our lives we keep to ourselves. I mean, we all have private parts. I mean ...

KATE. *(Laughing.)* You haven't changed since Vassar, Phyllis ... I hear you and Hamilton are the toast of the East Side.

PHYLLIS. Oh well. We circulate.... Who would you like to meet? Kitty Carlisle Hart? Charlayne Hunter Gault? Boutros Boutros-Ghali?

KATE. Anyone interested in the New York schools.

PHYLLIS. Fine. I'll organize an evening which will focus strictly on the educational —

KATE. She waits, you know. She literally waits, until I'm out the door, and then she leaps onto that couch.

PHYLLIS. The dog?

KATE. Sylvia. And when she hears my key in the latch, she jumps off.

PHYLLIS. Are you sure?

KATE. I am. Once I sneaked back in, and caught her red-handed.

PHYLLIS. I hope you punished her immediately.

KATE. I tried. But she practically laughed in my face. She only listens to Greg.

PHYLLIS. Then Greg should punish her. Dogs are like children. They need to be thoroughly disciplined from the ground up.

KATE. Greg? Discipline Sylvia? Don't make me laugh.

PHYLLIS. *(Takes her memo book out of her purse.)* Let's talk dates for the party. Hamilton and I are booked solid ... *(Flips through pages.)* ... through October, but how about November 6th?

KATE. Fine.

PHYLLIS. *(Writing it in.)* Good. There are no friends like old —

KATE. I have the strong suspicion that when I'm out of the apartment, they sit on the couch *together*.

PHYLLIS. Greg and Sylvia?

KATE. They do everything together. Once I caught them sharing an ice cream cone.

PHYLLIS. How disgusting!

KATE. And she uses his hairbrush. I mean, he uses it. On her.

PHYLLIS. Hamilton has taken up goldfish.

KATE. At least they stay in their bowl.

PHYLLIS. Not necessarily.

KATE. What?

PHYLLIS. Sometimes he takes them into the bathtub.

KATE. No!

PHYLLIS. I swear! If you bring it up, he'll deny it, but I swear I caught him at it.

KATE. Good Lord.

PHYLLIS. Look at us! Here we are talking about animals when we should be planning our party.

KATE. You're absolutely right. Let's have a drink. What would you like, Phyllis? Wine? Vodka? What?

PHYLLIS. Just fizzy water, please. I'm trying to give up alcohol.

KATE. Good for you. I'll get it. *(She goes off.)*

PHYLLIS. *(Towards off.)* Now fill me in on this school thing, Kate. I saw Madge MacKenzie at the Colony Club and she says you're roaming around Harlem, reciting Shakespeare. *(Kate returns with two glasses.)*

KATE. That's why I want to meet people with pull, Phyllis. I'm trying to put Shakespeare into the junior high curriculum.

PHYLLIS. Is that possible? I mean, at that age? I mean, these days? I mean, up there?

KATE. I hope so. If we can hook children in junior high, we might have them for life, Phyllis.

PHYLLIS. I wish I could believe that, Kate.

KATE. It's not just Shakespeare, Phyllis. It's language in general. These kids are fascinated by words. They rap, they rhyme, they invent these exciting phrases and metaphors just the way

Shakespeare did. If we can take their energy and curiosity and imagination, and give them words, more words, good words in significant contexts, then maybe — *(Pause.)* She wants to sleep in our bed, you know.

PHYLLIS. Sylvia?

KATE. Sylvia wants to sleep in our bed.

PHYLLIS. You said no, I hope.

KATE. Of course I said no. Not even outside the covers.

PHYLLIS. I should hope not.

KATE. But Greg fought me all the way. And continues to, on every issue. When we visited our friends the Wardwells up in Williamstown, he insisted on taking her with us.

PHYLLIS. At least it's the country.

KATE. But it was our *anniversary*, Phyllis! How would you like to be driving through that lovely New England scenery with Sylvia drooling down the back of your neck.

PHYLLIS. I see your point.

KATE. And when we arrived, the Wardwells put us all in the same room.

PHYLLIS. You and Greg and Sylvia?

KATE. There we were, holed up together. Greg and I spent our wedding anniversary with Sylvia wandering restlessly around the room, peering over the bed, and panting.

PHYLLIS. How horrible.

KATE. I mean, here I am, breaking my back trying to instill some sense of civility in American life and.... She drinks from the john, you know.

PHYLLIS. Sylvia.

KATE. She drinks from the toilet. Sometimes, when we're trying to have a decent dinner, you can hear these great gulping sounds coming from the loo.

PHYLLIS. Good heavens.

KATE. Then she comes back in, and sits slobbering by the table, eyeing us all through the meal.

PHYLLIS. You see? They're like children. They have to be exiled while we eat.

KATE. Don't I wish. *(Getting up.)* But how about a refill, Phyllis?