
SUNDAY in the **PARK**
with **GEORGE**

Cast of Characters

ACT I

GEORGE, *an artist*

DOT, *his mistress*

OLD LADY

HER NURSE

JULES, *another artist*

YVONNE, *his wife*

LOUISE, *the daughter of Jules and Yvonne*

A BOATMAN

FRANZ, *servant to Jules and Yvonne*

FRIEDA, *cook for Jules and Yvonne, wife to Franz*

A SOLDIER

MR. AND MRS. , *an American couple*

LOUIS, *a baker*

CELESTE#1, *a shopgirl*

CELESTE#2, *another shopgirl*

A BOY *bathing in the river*

A YOUNG MAN *sitting on the bank*

A MAN *lying on the bank*

ACT II

GEORGE, *an artist*

MARIE, *his grandmother*

DENNIS, *a technician*

BOB GREENBERG, *the museum director*

NAOMI EISEN, *a composer*

HARRIET PAWLING, *a patron of the arts*

BILLY WEBSTER, *her friend*

A PHOTOGRAPHER

A MUSEUM ASSISTANT

CHARLES REDMOND, *a visiting curator*

ALEX, *an artist*

BETTY, *an artist*

LEE RANDOLPH, *the museum's publicist*

BLAIR DANIELS, *an art critic*

A WAITRESS

ELAINE, *George's former Wife*

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ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

A white stage. White floor, slightly raked and extended in perspective. Four white portals define the space. The proscenium arch continues across the bottom as well, creating a complete frame around the stage.

GEORGE enters downstage. **He** is an artist. Tall, with a dark beard, wearing a soft felt hat with a very narrow brim crushed down at the neck, and a short jacket. **He** looks rather intense. **He** sits downstage on the apron at an easel with a large drawing pad and a box of chalk. **He** stares momentarily at the pad before turning to the audience.

GEORGE :

White. A blank page or canvas. The challenge: bring order to the whole.

(Arpeggiated chord. A tree flies in stage right)

Through design.

(Four arpeggiated chords. The white portals fly out and the white ground cloth comes off revealing a grassy-green expanse and portals depicting the park scene)

Composition.

(Two arpeggiated chords. A tree tracks on from stage left)

Balance.

(Two arpeggiated chords. Two trees descend)

Light.

(Arpeggiated chord. The lighting bumps, giving the impression of an early morning sunrise on the island of La Grande Jatte--harsh shadows and streaming golden light through the trees)

And harmony.

*(The music coalesces into a theme, "Sunday," as a cut-out of a couple rises at the back of the stage. **GEORGE** begins to draw, then stops suddenly and goes to the wings and brings on a young woman, **DOT**. **She** wears a traditional 19th-century outfit: full-length dress with*

*bustle, etc. When **he** gets her downstage right, **he** turns her profile, then returns downstage to his easel. **He** begins to draw. **She** turns to him. Music continues under. Annoyed)*

No. Now I want you to look out at the water.

DOT:

I feel foolish.

GEORGE:

Why?

DOT:

(Indicating bustle) I hate this thing.

GEORGE:

Then why wear it?

DOT:

Why wear it? Everyone is wearing them!

GEORGE:

(Begins sketching) Everyone ...

DOT:

You know they are.

*(**She** begins to move)*

GEORGE:

Stand still, please.

(Music stops)

DOT:

(Sighs) I read they're even wearing them in America.

GEORGE :

They are fighting Indians in America-- and you cannot read.

DOT :

(Defensive) I can read... a little. *(Pause)* Why did we have to get up so early?

GEORGE :

The light.

DOT :

Oh.

(GEORGE lets out a moan) What's the matter?

GEORGE :

(Erasing feverishly) I hate this tree.

(Arpeggio, A tree rises back into the fly space)

DOT :

(Hurt) I thought you were drawing me.

GEORGE :

(Muttering) I am. I am. Just stand still.

(DOT is oblivious to the moved tree. Through the course of the scene the landscape can continue to change. At this point a sailboat begins to side into view.)

DOT :

I wish we could go sailing. I wouldn't go this early in the day, though.

GEORGE :

Could you drop your head a little, please.

(She drops her head completely)

Dot!

(She looks up, giggling)

If you wish to be a good model you must learn to concentrate. Hold the pose. Look out at the water.

(She obliges)

Thank you.

(OLD LADY enters)

OLD LADY:

Where is that tree? *(Pause)* Nurse! NURSE!

DOT:

(Startled) My God! *(Sees OLD LADY)* She is everywhere.

(NURSE enters. She wears an enormous headdress)

OLD LADY:

NURSE!

NURSE:

What is it, Madame?

OLD LADY:

The tree. The tree. Where is our tree?

NURSE:

What tree?

OLD LADY:

The tree we always sit near. Someone has moved it.

NURSE:

No one has moved it, Madame, it is right over there. Now come along --

(NURSE attempts to help the OLD LADY along)

OLD LADY:

Do not push me!

NURSE:

I am not pushing, I am helping.

OLD LADY:

You are pushing and I do not need any help.

NURSE:

(Crossing the stage) Yes, Madame.

OLD LADY:

And this is not our tree!

(She continues her shuffle)

NURSE:

Yes, Madame.

(She helps OLD LADY sit in front of tree)

DOT:

I do not envy the nurse.

GEORGE:

(Under his breath) She can read...

DOT:

(Retaliating) They were talking about you at La Coupole.

GEORGE:

Oh.

DOT:

Saying strange things..

GEORGE:

They have so little to speak of, they must speak of me?

DOT:

Were you at the zoo, George?

(No response)

Drawing the monkey cage?

GEORGE:

Not the monkey cage.

DOT:

They said they saw you.

GEORGE:

The monkeys, Dot. Not the cage.

DOT:

(Giggling) It is true? Why draw monkeys?

OLD LADY:

Nurse, what is that?

NURSE:

What, Madame?

OLD LADY:

(Points out front) That! Off in the distance.

NURSE:

They are making way for the exposition.

OLD LADY:

What exposition?

NURSE:

The International Exposition. They are going to build a tower.

OLD LADY:

Another exposition...

NURSE:

They say it is going to be the tallest structure in the world.

OLD LADY:

More foreigners. I am sick of foreigners.

GEORGE:

More boats.

(An arpeggiated chord. A tugboat appears)

More trees.

(Two chords. More trees track on)

Sunday in the Park with George

DOT:

George.

(Chord)

Why is it you always get to sit in the shade while I have to stand in the sun?

George? Hello, George?

(Chord. No response) (Still no response) (Chord)

There is someone in this dress!

(Twitches slightly, sings to herself)

A trickle of sweat.

(Twitch)

The back of the--

(Twitch)

--head.

He always does this.

(Hiss) Now the foot is dead.

Sunday in the park with George. One more Su--

(Twitch)

The collar is damp,

Beginning to pinch.

The bustle's slipping--

(Hiss and twitch)

I won't budge one inch.

(Undulating with some pleasure, mixed with tiny twitches of vexation)

Who was at the zoo, George?

Who was at the zoo?

The monkeys and who, George?

The monkeys and who?

GEORGE :

Don't move!

DOT :

(Still)

Artists are bizarre. Fixed. Cold.

That's you, George, you're bizarre. Fixed. Cold.

I like that in a man. Fixed. Cold.

God, it's hot out here.

Well, there are worse things

than staring at the water on a Sunday.

There are worse things

Than staring at the water

As you're posing for a picture

Being painted by your lover

In the middle of the summer

On an island in the river on a Sunday.

*(GEORGE races over to DOT and rearranges her a bit, as if **she** were an object, then returns to his easel and resumes sketching. DOT hisses, twitching again)*

The petticoat's wet,

Which adds to the weight.

The sun is blinding

(Closing her eyes)

All right, concentrate..

GEORGE:

Eyes open, please.

DOT:

Sunday in the park with George...

GEORGE :

Look out at the water. Not at me.

DOT :

Sunday in the park with George...

Concentrate... concentrate..

*(The dress opens and **DOT** walks out of it. The dress closes behind her remaining upright; **GEORGE** continues sketching it as if **she** were still inside. During the following, **DOT** moves around the stage, continuing to undulate, taking representative poses as punctuation to the music, which is heavily rhythmic)*

Well, if you want bread

And respect

And attention,

Not to say connection,

Modelling's no profession.

(Does mock poses)

If you want instead,

When you're dead,

Some more public

And more permanent

Expression

(Poses)

Of affection,

(Poses)

You want a painter,

(Brief, sharp poses throughout the following)

Poet,

Sculptor, preferably:

Marble, granite, bronze.

Durable.

Something nice with swans That's durable

Forever.

All it has to be is good.

*(Looking over **GEORGE's** shoulder at his work, then at **GEORGE**)*

And George, you're good.

You're really good.

George's stroke is tender,

George's touch is pure.

(Sits or stands nearby and watches him intently)

Your eyes, George.

I love your eyes, George.

I love your beard, George.

I love your size, George.

But most, George,

Of all,

But most of all,

I love your painting...

(Looking up at the sun)

I think I'm fainting...

(The dress opens and she steps back into it, resumes pose, gives a twitch and a wince, then sings sotto voce again)

The tip of a stay.

(Wince)

Right under the tit.

No, don't give in, just

(Shifts)

Lift the arm a bit..

GEORGE:

Don't lift the arm, please.

DOT:

Sunday in the park with George...

GEORGE:

The bustle high, please.

DOT:

Not even a nod.

As if I were trees,

The ground could open,

He would still say "please."

Never know with you, George,

Who could know with you?

The others I knew, George.

Before we get through,

I'll get to you, too.

God, I am so hot!

Well, there are worse things

Than staring at the water on a Sunday.

There are worse things

Than staring at the water

As you're posing for a picture

After sleeping on the ferry

After getting up at seven

To come over to an island

In the middle of a river

Half an hour from the city

On a Sunday.

On a Sunday in the park with--

GEORGE:

(The music stopping)

Don't move the mouth!!

DOT:

(Holds absolutely still for a very long beat. As music resumes, she pours all her extremely mixed emotions into one word):

--George!

(Speaks)

I am getting tired. The sun is too strong today.

GEORGE:

Almost finished.

DOT:

(*Sexy*) I'd rather be in the studio, George.

GEORGE:

(*Wryly*) I know.

OLD LADY:

(*Looking across the water*) They are out early today.

NURSE:

It is Sunday, Madame.

OLD LADY:

That is what I mean, Nurse! Young boys out swimming so early on a Sunday?

NURSE:

Well, it is very warm.

OLD LADY:

Hand me my parasol.

NURSE:

I am, Madame.

(*NURSE stands up and opens the parasol for the OLD LADY. FRANZ, a coachman, enters; stares at the two women for a moment, then moves downstage. He sees GEORGE, and affects a pose as he sits*)

DOT:

Oh, no.

GEORGE:

What?

DOT:

Look. Look who is over there.

GEORGE :

So?

DOT :

When he is around, you know who is likely to follow.

GEORGE :

You have moved your arm.

DOT :

I think they are spying on you, George. I really do.

GEORGE :

Are you going to hold your head still?

(The NURSE has wandered over in the vicinity of FRANZ)

NURSE :

You are here awfully early today.

FRANZ :

(Speaks with a German accent) Ja. So are you.

NURSE :

And working on a Sunday.

FRANZ :

Ja..

NURSE :

It is a beautiful day.

FRANZ :

(Sexy) It is too hot.

NURSE:

Do you think?

OLD LADY:

Where is my fan!

NURSE:

I have to go back.

OLD LADY:

Nurse, my fan!

NURSE:

You did not bring it today, Madame.

OLD LADY:

Of course I brought it!

FRANZ:

Perhaps we will see each other later.

NURSE:

Perhaps...

OLD LADY:

There it is. Over there.

(OLD LADY picks up the fan)

NURSE:

That is my fan --

OLD LADY:

Well, I can use it. Can I not? It was just lying there...What is all that commotion?

(Music. Laughter from off right. A wagon tracks on bearing a tableau vivant of Seurat's "Une Baignade Asnières")

FRANZ :

Jungen! Nicht so laut! Ruhe, bitte!

(The following is heard simultaneously from the characters in the tableau)

BOY :

Yoo-hoo! Dumb and fat!

YOUNG MAN :

Hey! Who you staring at?

MAN :

Look at the lady with the rear!

(The YOUNG MAN gives a loud Bronx cheer)

BOY :

Yoo-hoo--kinky beard!

YOUNG MAN :

Kinky beard.

YOUNG MAN AND BOY :

Kinky beard!

(GEORGE gestures, as when an artist raises and extends his right arm to frame an image before him -- all freeze. Silence. A frame comes in around them. JULES and YVONNE, a well-to-do middle-aged couple, stroll on and pause before the painting)

No Life

JULES :

Ahh..

YVONNE :

Ooh...

JULES :

Mmm...

JVONNE :

Oh, dear.

JULES :

Oh, my.

YVONNE :

Oh, my dear.

JULES :

(Sings) It has no presence.

YVONNE :

(Sings) No passion.

JULES :

No life.

It's neither pastoral

Nor lyrical.

(They laugh)

YVONNE :

(Giggling) You don't suppose that it's satirical?

(They laugh heartily)

JULES :

Just density

Without intensity --

YVONNE :

No life.

(Speaks)

Boys with their clothes off --

JULES :

(Mocking) I must paint a factory next!

YVONNE :

It's so mechanical.

JULES :

Methodical.

YVONNE :

It might be in some dreary

Socialistic periodical.

JULES :

(Approvingly) Good.

YVONNE :

So drab, so cold.

JULES :

And so controlled.

BOTH :

No life.

JULES :

His touch is too deliberate, somehow.

YVONNE :

The dog.

(They shriek with laughter)

JULES :

These things get hung --

YVONNE :

Hmm.

JULES :

And then they're gone.

YVONNE :

Ahhh..

Of course he's young --

(JULES shoots her a look. Hasliy)

But getting on.

JULES :

Oh.

All mind, no heart.

No life in his art.

YVONNE :

No life in his life--

(JULES nods in approval)

BOTH :

No--

(They giggle and chortle)

Life.

*(Arpeggio. The **BOYS** in the picture give a loud Bronx cheer. The wagon with the picture tracks off. **JULES** and **YVONNE** turn and slowly stroll upstage.)*

NURSE :

*(Seeing **JULES**)* There is that famous artist--what is his name...

OLD LADY :

What is his name?

NURSE :

I can never remember their names.

*(**JULES** tips his hat to the ladies. The couple continues towards **GEORGE**)*

JULES :

George! Out very early today.

*(**GEORGE** nods as he continues sketching. **DOT** turns her back on them)*

GEORGE :

Hello, Jules.

YVONNE :

A lovely day...

JULES :

I couldn't be out sketching today--it is too sunny!

*(**YVONNE** laughs)*

GEORGE :

Have you seen the painting?

JULES :

Yes. I was just going to say! Boys bathing--what a curious subject.

(YVONNE stops him)

We must speak.

YVONNE:

(Sincere) I loved the dog.

(Beat)

JULES:

I am pleased there was an independent exhibition. We must speak. Really.

(Beat)

YVONNE:

Enjoy the weather.

GEORGE:

Yes...

JULES:

Good day.

(As they exit, YVONNE stops JULES and points to DOT)

YVONNE:

That dress!

(They laugh and exit)

DOT:

I hate them!

GEORGE:

Jules is a fine painter.

DOT:

I do not care. I hate them.

(JULES and YVONNE return)

JULES :

Franz!

YVONNE :

We are waiting!

(They exit)

FRANZ :

Ja, Madame, Monsieur. At your service.

(FRANZ, who has been hiding behind a tree, eyeing the NURSE, quickly dashes offstage after JULES and YVONNE. GEORGE closes his pad. DOT remains frozen)

GEORGE :

Thank you.

(Beat)

DOT:

(Moving) I began to do it.

GEORGE :

What?

DOT :

Concentrate. Like you said.

GEORGE :

(Patronizing) You did very well.

DOT :

Did I really?

GEORGE :

(Gathering his belongings)

Yes. I'll meet you back at the studio.

DOT :

(Annoyed) You are not coming?

GEORGE :

Not now.

(Angry, DOT begins to exit)

Dot. We'll go to the Follies tonight.

(She stops, looks at him, then walks off. GEORGE walks to the NURSE and OLD LADY)

Bonjour.

NURSE :

Bon jour, Monsieur.

GEORGE :

Lovely morning, ladies.

NURSE :

Yes.

GEORGE :

I have my pad and crayons today.

NURSE :

Oh, that would --

OLD LADY :

Not today!

GEORGE :

(Disappointed)

Why not today?

OLD LADY:

Too warm.

GEORGE:

It is warm, but it will not take long. You can go--

OID LADY:

(Continues to look out across the water)

Some other day, Monsieur.

(Beat)

GEORGE:

(Kneeling)

It's George, Mother.

OLD LADY:

(As if it is to be a secret)

Sssh...

GEORGE:

(Getting up)

Yes. I guess we will all be back.

(He exits as lights fade to black)

ACT ONE

SCENE TWO

(GEORGE's studio. Downstage, DOT [in a likeness of Seurat's "La Poudreuse"] is at her vanity, powdering her face. Steady, unhurried, persistent rhythmic figure underneath)

Color and Light

DOT:

(As she powders rhythmically)

George taught me all about concentration. "The art of being still," he said.

(Checks herself, then resumes powdering)

I guess I did not learn it soon enough.

(Dips puff in powder)

George likes to be alone.

(Resumes powdering)

Sometimes he will work all night long painting. We fought about that. I need sleep. I love to dream.

(Upstage, GEORGE on a scaffold, behind a large canvas, which is a scrim, comes into view. He is painting. It is an in-progress version of the painting "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte")

George doesn't need as much sleep as everyone else.

(Dips puff, starts powdering neck)

And he never tells me his dreams. George has many secrets.

(Lights down on DOT, up on GEORGE. A number of brushes in his hand, he is covering a section of the canvas --the face of the woman in the foreground --with tiny specks of paint, in the same rhythm as DOT's powdering)

GEORGE:

(Pauses, checks)

Order.

(Dabs with another color; pauses, checks, dabs palette)

Design.

(Dabs with another brush)

Composition.

Tone.

Form.

Symmetry.

Balance.

(Sings)

More red...

(Dabs with more intensity)

And a little more red..

(Switches brushes)

Blue blue blue blue

Blue blue blue blue

Even even...

(Switches quickly)

Good...

(Humming)

Bumbum bum bumbumbum

Bumbum bum..

(Paints silently for a moment)

More red...

(Switches brushes again)

More blue...

(Again)

More beer...

(Takes a swig from a nearby bottle, always eyeing the canvas, puts the bottle down)

More light!

(He dabs assiduously, delicately attacking the area he is painting)

Color and light.

There's only color and light.

Yellow and white.

Just blue and yellow and white.

*(Addressing the woman **he** is painting)*

Look at the air, Miss--

(Dabs at the space in front of her)

See what I mean?

No, look over there, Miss--

(Dabs at her eye, pauses, checks it)

That's done with green..

(Swirling a brush in the orange cup)

Conjoined with orange..

*(Lights down on **GEORGE**, up on **DOT**, now powdering her breasts and armpits. Rhythmic figure persists underneath)*

DOT:

Nothing seems to fit me right.

(Giggles)

The less I wear, the more comfortable I feel.

(Sings, checking herself)

More rouge..

(Puts puff down, gets rouge, starts applying it in small rhythmic circles, speaks)

George is very special. Maybe I'm just not special enough
for him.

(Puts rouge down, picks up eyebrow tweezers, sings)

If my legs were longer.

(Plucks at her eyebrow)

If my bust was smaller.

(Plucks)

If my hands were graceful.

(Plucks)

If my waist was thinner.

(Checks herself)

If my hips were fatter.

(Plucks again)

If my voice was warm.

(Plucks)

If I could concentrate.

(Abruptly, her feet start to can-can under the table)

I'd be in the Follies.

I'd be in a cabaret.

Gentlemen in tall silk hats

And linen spats

Would wait with flowers.

I could make them wait for hours.

Giddy young aristocrats

With fancy flats

Who'd drink my health,

And I would be as

Hard as nails...

(Looks at her nails, reaches for the buffer)

And they'd only want me more...

(Starts buffing nails rhythmically)

If I was a Folly girl...

Nah, I wouldn't like it much.

Married men and stupid boys

And too much smoke and all that noise

And all that color and light...

*(Lights up on **GEORGE**, talking to the woman in the painting. Rhythmic figure continues underneath)*

GEORGE :

Aren't you proper today, Miss? Your parasol so properly
cocked, your bustle so perfectly upright. No doubt your
chin rests at just the proper angle from your chest.

(Addressing the figure of them as next to her)

And you, Sir. Your hat so black. So black to you,
perhaps. So red to me.

DOT:

(Spraying herself with perfume)

None of the others worked at night...

GEORGE:

So composed for a Sunday.

DOT:

How do you work without the right

(Sprays)

Bright

(Sprays)

White

(Sprays)

Light?

(Sprays)

How do you fathom George?

GEORGE:

(Sings in a mutter, trancelike, as he paints)

Red red red red

Red red orange

Red red orange

Orange pick up blue

Pick up red

Pick up orange

From the blue-green blue-green

Blue-green circle

On the violet diagonal

Di-ag-ag-ag-ag-ag-o-nal-nal

Yellow comma yellow comma

(Humming, massaging his numb wrist)

Numnum num numnumnum

Numnum num...

*(Sniffs, smelling **DOT**'s perfume)*

Blue blue blue blue

Blue still sitting

Red that perfume

Blue all night

Blue-green the window shut

Dut dut dut

Dot Dot sitting

Dot Dot waiting

Dot Dot getting fat fat fat

More yellow

Dot Dot waiting to go

Out out out but

No no no George

Finish the hat finish the hat

Have to finish the hat first

Hat hat hat hat

Hot hot hot it's hot in here...

(Whistles a bit, then joyfully)

Sunday!

Color and light!

DOT:

(Pinning up her hair)

But how George looks. He could look forever.

GEORGE:

There is only color and light.

DOT:

As if he sees you and he doesn't at all at once.

GEORGE:

Purple and white...

DOT:

What is he thinking when he looks like that?

GEORGE:

... And red and purple and white.

DOT:

What does he see? Sometimes, not even blinking.

GEORGE:

(To the young girls in the painting)

Look at this glade, girls,

Your cool blue spot.

DOT:

His eyes. So dark and shiny.

GEORGE:

No, stay in the shade, girls.

It's getting hot...

DOT:

Some think cold and black.

GEORGE:

It's getting orange...

DOT:

But it's warm inside his eyes...

GEORGE:

Hotter...

DOT:

And it's soft inside his eyes...

(GEORGE steps around the canvas to get paint or clean a brush. He glances at DOT. Their eyes meet for a second, then DOT turns back to her mirror)

And he burns you with his eyes...

GEORGE:

Look at her looking.

DOT:

And you're studied like the light.

GEORGE:

Forever with that mirror. What does she see? The round face, the tiny pout, the soft mouth, the creamy skin...

DOT:

And you look inside the eyes.

GEORGE:

The pink lips, the red cheeks...

DOT:

And you catch him here and there.

GEORGE:

The wide eyes. Studying the round face, the tiny pout...

DOT:

But he's never really there.

GEORGE:

Seeing all the parts and none of the whole.

DOT:

So you want him even more.

GEORGE:

But the way she catches light...

DOT:

And you drown inside his eyes...

GEORGE:

And the color of her hair...

DOT:

I could look at him
Forever...

GEORGE:

I could look at her
Forever...

(A long beat. Music holds under, gradually fading)

GEORGE:

(At his work table)

It's going well...

DOT:

Should I wear my red dress or blue?

GEORGE:

Red.

(Beat)

DOT:

Aren't you going to clean up?

GEORGE:

Why?

DOT:

The Follies, George!

(Beat)

GEORGE:

I have to finish the hat.

*(He returns to his work. **DOT** slams down her brush and stares at the back of the canvas. **SHE** exits. Lights fade downstage as the rhythmic figure resumes. As **HE** paints)*

Damn. The Follies. Will she yell or stay silent? Go without me or sulk in the corner? Will she be in the bed when the hat and the grass and the parasol have finally found their way?...

Too green...

Do I care?...

Too blue...

Yes...

Too soft...

What shall I do?

(Thinks for a moment)

Well...

Red.

(Continues painting; music swells as he is consumed by light)

ACT ONE

SCENE THREE

*(Afternoon. Another Sunday on the island. Downstage right **GOERGE** sketches a **BOATMAN**; a cut-out of a **black dog** stands close by; **NURSE** and **OLD LADY** sit near their tree. **Celeste #1** and **Celeste #2**, young shopgirls, sit on a bench stage left.)*

BOATMAN:

The water looks different on Sunday.

GEORGE:

It is the same water you boat on all week.

BOATMAN:

(Contentious)

It looks different from the park.

GEORGE:

You prefer watching the boats to the people promenading?

BOATMAN:

(Laughing)

People all dressed up in their Sunday best pretending?
Sunday is just another day.

*(**DOT** and **LOUIS** enter arm in arm. They look out at the water)*

I wear what I always wear - then I don't have to worry.

GEORGE:

Worry?

BOATMAN:

They leave me alone dressed like this. No one comes near.

(Music under)

CELESTE #1:

Look who's over there.

CELESTE #2:

Dot! Who is she with?

CELESTE #1:

Looks like Louis the baker.

CELESTE #2:

How did Dot get to be with Louis?

CELESTE #1:

She knows how to make dough rise!

(They laugh)

NURSE:

(Noticing DOT)

There is that woman.

OLD LADY:

Who is she with?

NURSE:

(Squinting)

Looks like the baker.

OLD LADY:

Moving up, I suppose.

NURSE:

The artist is more handsome.

(DOT and LOUIS exit)

OLD LADY:

You cannot eat paintings, my dear - not when there's bread in the oven.

(JULES, YVONNE, and their child LOUISE appear. They stand to one side and strike a pose.

Music continues under, slow and stately)

JULES:

They say he is working on an enormous canvas.

YVONNE:

I heard somewhere he's painting little specks.

JULES:

You heard it from me! A large canvas of specks. Really...

YVONNE:

Look at him. Drawing a slovenly boatman.

JULES:

I think he is trying to play with light.

YVONNE:

What next?

JULES:

A monkey cage, they say.

(They laugh)

BOATMAN:

Sunday hypocrites. That's what they are. Muttering and murmuring about this one and that one. I'll take my old dog for company any day. A dog knows his place, respects your privacy. Makes no demands.

(To the dog)

Right, Spot?

SPOT (GEORGE):

Right.

Gossip

CELESTE #1:

They say that George has another woman.

CELESTE #2:

I'm not surprised.

CELESTE #1:

They say that George only lives with tramps.

CELESTE #2:

I'm not surprised.

CELESTE #1:

They say he prowls through the streets

In his top hat after midnight ---

CELESTE #2:

No!

CELESTE #1:

-- and stands there staring up at the lamps.

CELESTE #2:

I'm not surprised.

BOTH:

Artists are so crazy...

OLD LADY:

Those girls are noisy.

NURSE :

Yes, Madame.

OLD LADY :

(Referring to **JULES**)

That man is famous.

NURSE :

Yes, Madame.

OLD LADY :

(Referring to **BOATMAN**)

That man is filthy.

NURSE :

Your son seems to find him interesting.

OLD LADY :

That man's deluded.

(**NURSE** thinks, nods)

THE CELESTES :

Artists are so crazy.

OLD LADY AND NURSE :

Artists are so peculiar.

YVONNE :

Monkeys!

BOATMAN :

Overprivileged women

Complaining,

Silly little simpering

Shopgirls,

Condescending artists

"Observing,"

"Perceiving"..

Well, screw them!

ALL:

Artists are so ---

CELESTE #2:

Crazy.

CELESTE #1:

Secretive.

BOATMAN:

High and mighty.

NURSE:

Interesting.

OLD LADY:

Unfeeling.

BOATMAN:

What do you do with those drawings, anyway?

(DOT and LOUIS re-enter)

DOT :

(To LOUIS)

That's George.

*(All heads turn, first to **DOT**, then to **GEORGE**)*

JULES :

There's a move on to include his work in the next group show.

YVONNE :

Never!

JULES :

I agree.

(Pause)

I agree.

(They exit. Music stops)

CELESTE #1 :

He draws anyone.

CELESTE #2 :

Old boatman!

CELESTE #1 :

Peculiar man.

CELESTE #2 :

Like his father, I said.

CELESTE #1 :

I said so first.

*(**LOUIS** escorts **DOT** to a park bench stage left and exits. **SHE** sits with a small red lesson book in hand)*

DOT :

*(Very slowly, **she** reads aloud)*

"Lesson number eight. Pronouns."

*(Proudly, **she** repeats the word, looking towards **GEORGE**)*

Pronouns.

*(**She** reads)*

"What is a pronoun? A pronoun is the word used in the place of a noun. Do you recall what a noun is?"

(Looks up)

Certainly, I recall.

*(**She** pauses, then quickly flips back in the book to the earlier lesson on nouns. **She** nods her head knowingly, then flips back to the present lesson. **She** reads)*

"Example: Charles has a book. Marie wants Charles' book."

(To herself)

Not Marie again...

(Reads)

"Marie wants his book. Fill in the blanks. Charles ran with Marie's ball. Charles ran with..."

*(**She** writes as **she** spells aloud)*

h-e-r ball.

(To herself)

Get the ball back, Marie.

*(**LOUISE** dashes in upstage)*

OLD LADY:

Children should not go unattended.

NURSE:

She is very young to be alone.

OLD LADY:

I do not like what I see today, Nurse.

NURSE :

(Confused)

What do you see?

OLD LADY :

Lack of discipline.

NURSE :

Oh.

OLD LADY :

Not the right direction at all.

BOATMAN :

Fools rowing. Do you call that recreation!

GEORGE :

Almost finished.

*(LOUISE has come up to pet **the dog**. BOATMAN turns on her in a fury)*

BOATMAN :

Get away from that dog!

*(All eyes turn to the **BOATMAN**. LOUISE screams and goes running offstage crying)*

GEORGE :

That was hardly necessary!

BOATMAN :

How do you know what's necessary? Who are you, with your fancy pad and crayons? You call that work? You smug goddam holier-than-thou shitty little men in your fancy clothes - born with pens and pencils, not pricks! You don't know...

*(BOATMAN storms off. GEORGE, stunned, begins to draw **THE DOG**)*

CELESTE #1:

(To **GEORGE**)

Well, what are you going to do – now that you have no one to draw?

CELESTE #2:

Sshh. Don't talk to him.

GEORGE:

I am drawing this dog.

CELESTE #2:

His dog!

CELESTE #1:

Honestly...

GEORGE :

I have already sketched you ladies.

CELESTE #1:

What!

CELESTE #2:

You have?

(The **CELESTES** approach **GEORGE**)

CELESTE #1:

I do not believe you.

CELESTE #2:

When?

(During the above, the **OLD LADY** and **NURSE** have exited)

GEORGE:

A few Sundays ago.

CELESTE #1:

But we never sat for you.

GEORGE:

I studied you from afar.

CELESTE #2:

No!

CELESTE #1:

Where were you?

CELESTE #2:

I want to see.

GEORGE:

Some day you shall.

THE CELESTES:

When?

GEORGE:

Good day.

(GEORGE moves upstage)

CELESTE #1:

He did not so much as ask.

CELESTE #2:

No respect for a person's privacy.

CELESTE #1:

I would not sit for him anyway.

CELESTE #2:

Probably that's why he did not ask.

(They exit)

GEORGE :

(From across the stage to DOT)

Good afternoon.

DOT :

(Surprised)

Hello.

GEORGE :

Lesson number eight?

DOT :

Yes. Pronouns. My writing is improving. I even keep notes in the back of the book.

GEORGE :

Good for you.

DOT :

How is your painting coming along?

GEORGE :

Slowly.

DOT :

Are you getting more work done now that you have fewer distractions in the studio?

GEORGE :

(Beat; HE moves closer)

It has been quiet there.

(LOUIS bounds onstage with a pastry tin)

LOUIS :

Dot. I made your favorite -

*(He stops when he sees **GEORGE**)*

GEORGE :

Good day.

*(He retreats across the stage. **DOT** watches him, then turns to **LOUIS**)*

LOUIS :

(Opens the tin)

Creampuffs!

*(The bench on which they are sitting tracks offstage as **DOT** continues to look at **GEORGE**.*

***GEORGE**, who has been staring at his sketch of **SPOT**, looks over and sees they have left.*

*Music. **HE** begins to lose himself in his work. Lights change, leaving **THE DOG** onstage.*

***GEORGE** sketches the dog)*

The Day Off

GEORGE :

If the head was smaller.

If the tail were longer.

If he faced the water.

If the paws were hidden.

If the neck was darker.

If the back was curved.

More like the parasol.

Bumbum bum bumbumbum

Bumbum bum...

More shade.

More tail.

More grass...

Would you like some more grass?

Mmmm...

SPOT (GEORGE) :

(Barks)

Ruff! Ruff!

Thanks, the week has been

(Barks)

Rough!

When you're stuck for life on a garbage scow -

(Sniffs around)

Only forty feet long from stern to prow,

And a crackpot in the bow - wow, rough!

(Sniffs)

The planks are rough

And the wind is rough

And the master's drunk and mean and -

(Sniffs)

Grrrruff! Gruff!

With the fish and scum

And planks and ballast,

(Sniffs)

The nose gets numb

And the paws get calloused.

And with splinters in your ass,

You look forward to the grass

On Sunday.

The day off.

(Barks)

Off! Off! Off!

Off!

The grass needs to be thicker. Perhaps a few weeds.

With some ants, if you would. I love fresh ants.

Roaming around on Sunday,

Poking among the roots and rocks.

Nose to the ground on Sunday,

Studying all the shoes and socks.

Everything's worth it Sunday,

The day off.

(Sniffs)

Bits of pastry.

(Sniffs)

Piece of chicken.

(Sniffs)

Here's a handkerchief

That somebody was sick in.

(Sniffs)

There's a thistle.

(Sniffs)

That's a shallot.

(Sniffs)

That's a dripping

From the loony with the palette.

*(A cut-out of a pug dog, **FIFI**, appears)*

FIFI (GEORGE) :

Yap! Yap!

(Pants)

Yap!

(High voice)

Out for the day on Sunday,

Off of my lady's lap at last.

Yapping away on Sunday

Helps you forget the week just past -

(Yelps)

Yep! Yep!

Everything's worth it Sunday,

The day off.

Yep!

Stuck all week on a lady's lap

Nothing to do but yawn and nap

Can you blame me if I yap?

SPOT:

Nope.

FIFI:

There's just so much attention a dog can take

Being alone on Sunday,

Rolling around in mud and dirt -

SPOT:

Begging a bone on Sunday,

Settling for a spoiled dessert -

FIFI:

Everything's worth it

SPOT:

Sunday -

FIFI:

The day off.

SPOT:

(Sniffs)

Something fuzzy.

FIFI:

(Sniffs)

Something furry.

SPOT:

(Sniffs)

Something pink

That someone tore off in a hurry.

FIFI:

What's the muddle

In the middle?

SPOT:

That's the puddle

Where the poodle did the piddle.

*(Cut-out of **HORN PLAYER** rises from the stage. Two horn calls. Music continues under.*

*Enter **FRANZ**; **FRIEDA**, his wife; the **CELESTES**, with fishing poles; and **NURSE**)*

GEORGE:

Taking the day on Sunday,

Now that the dreary week is dead.

Getting away on Sunday

Brightens the dreary week ahead.

Everyone's on display on Sunday -

ALL:

The day off!

*(**GEORGE** flips open a page of his sketchbook and starts to sketch the **NURSE** as **SHE** clucks at the ducks)*

GEORGE:

Bonnet flapping,

Bustle sliding,

Like a rocking horse that nobody's been riding.

There's a daisy -

And some clover -

And that interesting fellow looking over ...

OLD LADY:

(Offstage)

Nurse!

NURSE AND GEORGE:

One day is much like any other,

Listening to her snap and drone.

NURSE:

Still, Sunday with someone's dotty mother

Is better than Sunday with your own.

Mothers may drone, mothers may whine -

Tending to his, though, is perfectly fine.

It pays for the nurse that is tending to mine

On Sunday,

My day off.

(The CELESTES, fishing. Music continues under)

CELESTE #2:

This is just ridiculous.

CELESTE #1:

Why shouldn't we fish?

CELESTE #2:

No one will notice us anyway.

(SOLDIER enters, attached to a life-size cut-out of another soldier, his COMPANION)

CELESTE #1:

Look.

CELESTE #2:

Where?

CELESTE #1:

Soldiers.

CELESTE #2:

Alone.

CELESTE #1:

What did I tell you?

CELESTE #2:

They'll never talk to us if we fish. Why don't we -

CELESTE #1:

It's a beautiful day for fishing.

(She smiles in the direction of the SOLDIERS)

SOLDIER:

(Looking to his COMPANION)

What do you think?

(Beat)

I like the one in the light hat.

(LOUISE enters, notices FRIEDA and FRANZ, and dashes over to them)

LOUISE:

Frieda, Frieda ---

FRANZ:

Oh, no.

FRIEDA:

(Speaks with a German accent)

Not now, Louise.

LOUISE:

I want to play.

FRANZ:

Go away, Louise. We are not working today.

LOUISE:

Let's go throw stones at the ducks.

FRIEDA:

Louise! Do not throw stones at the ducks!

LOUISE:

Why not?

FRANZ:

You know why not, and you know this is our day off. So go find your mother and throw some stones at her, why don't you?

(He begins to choke LOUISE; FRIEDA releases his grip)

FRIEDA:

Franz!

LOUISE:

I'm telling.

FRANZ:

Good. Go!

(LOUISE exits)

FRIEDA:

Franz! -- relax.

FRANZ:

Ja... relax.

(*HE opens a bottle of wine. GEORGE flips a page and starts to sketch FRANZ and FRIEDA*)

GEORGE AND FRIEDA:

Second bottle...

GEORGE AND FRANZ:

(*As FRANZ looks off at NURSE*)

Ah, she looks for me...

FRIEDA:

He is bursting to go...

FRANZ:

Near the fountain...

FRIEDA:

I could let him...

FRANZ:

How to manage it?

FRIEDA:

No.

You know, Franz - I believe that artist is drawing us.

FRANZ:

Who?

FRIEDA:

Monsieur's friend.

FRANZ:

(*HE sees GEORGE. They pose*)

Monsieur would never think to draw us! We are only people
he looks down upon.

(Pause)

I should have been an artist. I was never intended for
work.

FRIEDA:

Artists work, Franz. I believe they work very hard.

FRANZ:

Work!... We work.

We serve their food,

We carve their meat,

We tend to their house,

We polish their

Silverware.

FRIEDA:

The food we serve

We also eat.

FRANZ:

For them we rush,

Wash and brush,

Wipe and wax --

FRIEDA:

Franz, relax.

FRANZ:

While he "creates,"

We scrape their plates

And dust their knickknacks,

Hundreds to the shelf.

Work is what you do for others,

Liebchen,

Art is what you do for yourself.

(JULES enters, as if looking for someone. Notices GEORGE instead)

JULES:

Working on Sunday again? You should give yourself a day off.

GEORGE:

Why?

JULES:

You must need time to replenish -- or does your well never run dry?

(Laughs; notices FRIEDA and FRANZ)

Drawing my servants? Certainly, George, you could find more colorful subjects.

GEORGE:

Who should I be sketching?

JULES:

How about that pretty friend of yours. Now why did I see her arm-in-arm with the baker today?

(GEORGE looks up)

She is a pretty subject.

GEORGE:

Yes...

(BOATMAN enters)

JULES:

Your life needs spice, George. Go to some parties. That is where you'll meet prospective buyers. Have some fun. The work is bound to reflect -

GEORGE:

You don't like my work, do you?

JULES:

I did once.

GEORGE:

You find it too tight.

JULES:

People are talking about your work. You have your admirers, but you -

GEORGE:

I am using a different brushstroke.

JULES:

(Getting angry)

Always changing! Why keep changing?

GEORGE:

Because I do not paint for your approval.

(Beat)

JULES:

And I suppose that is why I like you.

(Begins to walk away)

Good to see you, George.

(JULES crosses as if to exit)

GEORGE :

(Calling after him)

Jules! I would like you to come to the studio some time.
See the new work...

JULES :

For my approval?

GEORGE :

No! For your opinion.

JULES :

(Considers the offer)

Very well.

(He exits. GEORGE flips a page over and starts sketching the BOATMAN)

GEORGE AND BOATMAN :

You and me, pal,

We're the loonies.

Did you know that?

Bet you didn't know that.

BOATMAN :

'Cause we tell them the truth!

Who you drawing?

Who the hell you think you're drawing?

Me?

You don't know me!

Go on drawing,

Since you're drawing only what you want to see,

Anyway!

(Points to his eyepatch)

One eye, no illusion ---.

That you get with two:

*(Points to **GEORGE's** eye)*

One for what is true.

(Points to the other)

One for what suits you.

Draw your wrong conclusion,

All you artists do.

I see what is true...

(Music continues under)

Sitting there, looking everyone up and down. Studying
every move like you see something different, like your
eyes know more -

You and me, pal,

We're society's fault.

*(**YVONNE, LOUISE, OLD LADY** enter. **GEORGE** packs up his belongings)*

ALL:

Taking the day on Sunday

After another week is dead.

OLD LADY:

Nurse!

ALL:

Getting away on Sunday

Brightens the dreary week ahead.

OLD LADY:

Nurse!

(GEORGE begins to exit, crossing paths with DOT and LOUIS, who enter. HE gives DOT a hasty tip-of-the-hat and makes a speedy exit)

ALL:

Leaving the city pressure

Behind you,

Off where the air is fresher,

Where green, blue,

Blind you –

(LOUIS leaves DOT to offer some pastries to his friends in the park. Throughout the song, HE divides his time between DOT and the others)

Everybody Loves Louis

DOT:

(Looking offstage in the direction of GEORGE's exit)

Hello, George...

Where did you go, George?

I know you're near, George.

I caught your eyes, George.

I want your ear, George.

I've a surprise, George...

Everybody loves Louis.

Louis' simple and kind.

Everybody loves Louis,

Louis' lovable.

FRANZ :

*(Greeting **LOUIS**)*

Louis!

DOT :

Seems we never know, do we,

Who we're going to find?

(Tenderly)

And Louis the baker -

Is not what I had in mind.

But...

Louis' really an artist:

Louis' cakes are an art.

Louis isn't the smartest -

Louis' popular.

Everybody loves Louis:

Louis bakes from the heart...

The bread, George.

I mean the bread, George.

And then in bed, George...

I mean he kneads me -

I mean like dough, George...

Hello, George...

Louis' always so pleasant,

Louis' always so fair.

Louis makes you feel present,

Louis' generous.

That's the thing about Louis:

Louis always is "there."

Louis' thoughts are not hard to follow,

Louis' art is not hard to swallow.

Not that Louis' perfection --

That's what makes him ideal.

Hardly anything worth objection:

Louis drinks a bit,

Louis blinks a bit.

Louis makes a connection,

That's the thing that you feel...

We lose things.

And then we choose things.

And there are Louis's

And there are Georges -

Well, Louis's

And George.

But George has George

And I need -

Someone -

Louis -!

(LOUIS gives her a pastry and exits)

Everybody loves Louis,

Him as well as his cakes

Everybody loves Louis,

Me included, George.

Not afraid to be gooey,

Louis sells what he makes.

Everybody gets along with him.

That's the trouble, nothing's wrong with him.

Louis has to bake his way,

George can only bake his ...

(Licks a pastry)

Louis it is!

(She throws pastry away and exits. Enter an American southern couple, MR. and MRS., followed by GEORGE, who sketches them. They are overdressed, eating French pastries and studying the people in the park)

MR. :

Paris looks nothin' like the paintings.

MRS. :

I know.

MR. :

(Looking about)

I don't see any passion, do you?

MRS. :

None.

MR. :

The French are so placid.

MRS. :

I don't think they have much style, either.

MR. :

What's all the carryin' on back home? Delicious pastries, though.

MRS. :

Excellent.

MR. :

Lookin' at those boats over there makes me think of our return voyage.

MRS. :

I long to be back home.

MR. :

You do?

MRS. :

How soon could we leave?

MR. :

You're that anxious to leave? But, Peaches, we just arrived!

MRS. :

I know!

MR. :

(Gives it a moment's thought)

I don't like it here either! We'll go right back to the hotel and I'll book passage for the end of the week. We'll go to the galleries this afternoon and then we'll be on our way home!

MRS. :

I am so relieved.

(As they exit)

I will miss these pastries, though.

MR. :

We'll take a baker with us, too.

MRS. :

Wonderful!

(They exit)

The One on the Left

CELESTE #1:

You really should try using that pole.

CELESTE #2:

It won't make any difference.

CELESTE #1:

(Starts yelping as if she had caught a fish)

Oh! Oh!

CELESTE #2:

What is wrong?

CELESTE #1:

Just sit there.

*(She carries on some more, looking in the direction of the **SOLDIER** and his **COMPANION**, who converse for a moment, then come over)*

SOLDIER:

May we be of some service, Madame?

CELESTE #1:

Mademoiselle.

CELESTE #2:

She has a fish.

CELESTE #1:

He knows.

SOLDIER:

Allow me.

*(**SOLDIER** takes the pole from her and pulls in the line and hook. There is nothing on the end)*

CELESTE #1:

Oh. It tugged so...

SOLDIER:

There's no sign of a fish here.

CELESTE #1:

Oh me. My name is Celeste. This is my friend

CELESTE #2:

Celeste.

(SOLDIER fools with fishing pole)

CELESTE #1:

Do you have a name?

SOLDIER:

I beg your pardon. Napoleon. Some people feel I should change it.

(The CELESTES shake their heads no)

CELESTE #2:

And your friend?

SOLDIER:

Yes. He is my friend.

CELESTE #1:

(Giggling, to SOLDIER)

He's very quiet.

SOLDIER:

Yes. Actually he is. He lost his hearing during combat exercises.

CELESTE #1:

What a shame.

SOLDIER:

He can't speak, either.

CELESTE #2:

Oh. How dreadful.

SOLDIER:

We have become very close, though.

CELESTE #1:

(Nervous)

So I see.

(Music)

SOLDIER AND GEORGE:

(Sudden and loud, sing)

Mademoiselles,

I and my friend,

We are but soldiers!

(Rumble from the COMPANION: SOLDIER raises hand to quiet him)

SOLDIER:

Passing the time

In between wars

For weeks at an end.

CELESTE #1:

(Aside)

Both of them are perfect.

CELESTE #2:

You can have the other.

CELESTE #1:

I don't want the other.

CELESTE #2:

I don't want the other either.

SOLDIER:

And after a week

Spent mostly indoors

With nothing but soldiers.

Ladies, I and my friend

Trust we will not offend,

Which we'd never intend,

By suggesting we spend -

THE CELESTES :

(Excited)

Oh, spend -

SOLDIER:

- this magnificent Sunday -

THE CELESTES :

(A bit deflated)

Oh, Sunday -

SOLDIER:

- with you and your friend.

(SOLDIER offers his arm. Both CELESTES rush to take it; CELESTE #1 gets there first. CELESTE #2 tries to get in between the SOLDIERS, can't, and rather than join the COMPANION, takes the arm of CELESTE #1. They all start to promenade)

CELESTE #2 :

(To CELESTE #1)

The one on the right's an awful bore...

CELESTE #1 :

He's been in a war.

SOLDIER :

(To COMPANION)

We may get a meal and we might get more...

(CELESTE #1 shakes free of CELESTE #2, grabs the arm of the SOLDIER, freeing him from his COMPANION)

CELESTE #1 AND SOLDIER :

(To themselves, as they exit):

It's certainly fine for Sunday...

It's certainly fine for Sunday...

(Dejected, CELESTE #2 grabs the COMPANION)

CELESTE #2 :

(As SHE exits, carrying COMPANION)

It's certainly fine for Sunday...

(GEORGE is alone. He moves downstage as FIFI rises. He sits)

Finishing the Hat

GEORGE :

(Leafing back through his sketches. Sings)

Mademoiselles...

(Flips a page)

You and me, pal...

(Flips)

Second bottle...

Ah, she looks for me...

(Flips)

Bonnet flapping...

(Flips)

Yapping...

(Flips)

Ruff! ...

Chicken...

Pastry...

*(Licks lip; looks offstage to where **DOT** has exited)*

Yes, she looks for me - good.

Let her look for me to tell me why she left me -

As I always knew she would.

I had thought she understood.

They have never understood.

And no reason that they should.

But if anybody could...

Finishing the hat,

How you have to finish the hat.

How you watch the rest of the world

From a window

While you finish the hat.

Mapping out a sky,

What you feel like, planning a sky,

What you feel when voices that come

Through the window

Go

Until they distance and die,

Until there's nothing but sky.

And how you're always turning back too late

From the grass or the stick

Or the dog or the light,

How the kind of woman willing to wait's

Not the kind that you want to find waiting

To return you to the night,

Dizzy from the height,

Coming from the hat,

Studying the hat,

Entering the world of the hat,

Reaching through the world of the hat

Like a window,

Back to this one from that.

Studying a face,

Stepping back to look at a face

Leaves a little space in the way like a window,

But to see -

It's the only way to see.

And when the woman that you wanted goes,

You can say to yourself, "Well, I give what I give."

But the woman who won't wait for you knows

That, however you live,

There's a part of you always standing by,

Mapping out the sky,

Finishing a hat...

Starting on a hat...

Finishing a hat...

*(Showing sketch to **FIFI**)*

Look, I made a hat...

Where there never was a hat...

*(**MR.** and **MRS.** enter stage right. They are lost. The **BOATMAN** crosses near them and they stop him in his path)*

MR. :

Excusez, Masseur. We are lost.

BOATMAN:

Huh?

MRS. :

Let me try, Daddy.

(Slowly and wildly gesticulating with her every word)

We are alien here. Unable to find passage off island.

BOATMAN:

(Pointing to the water)

Why don't you just walk into the water until your lungs fill up and you die.

(BOATMAN crosses away from them, laughing)

MRS. :

I detest these people.

MR. :

(Spotting LOUIS, who has entered in search of DOT)

Isn't that the baker?

MRS. :

Why, yes it is!

(They cross to LOUIS. GEORGE brings on the HORN PLAYER cut-out. OLD LADY enters)

OLD LADY:

Where is that tree? Nurse? NURSE!

(Horn call. DOT enters, and suddenly she and GEORGE are still, staring at one another. Everyone onstage turns slowly to them. People begin to sing fragments of songs. DOT and GEORGE move closer to one another, circling each other like gun duellers. The others close in around them until DOT and GEORGE stop, opposite each other. Silence. DOT takes her

bustle and defiantly turns it around, creating a pregnant stance. There is an audible gasp from the onlookers. Blackout)

ACT ONE

SCENE FOUR

*(Music. Lights slowly come up on **GEORGE** in his studio, painting. **DOT** enters and joins **GEORGE** behind the painting. **HE** continues painting as **SHE** watches. **HE** stops for a moment when he sees her, then continues working)*

DOT:

You are almost finished.

GEORGE:

If I do not change my mind again. And you?

DOT:

Two more months.

GEORGE:

You cannot change your mind.

DOT:

Nor do I want to.

(Beat)

Is it going to be exhibited?

GEORGE:

I am not sure. Jules is coming over to look at it. Any minute, in fact.

DOT:

Oh, I hope you don't mind my coming.

GEORGE:

What is it that you want, Dot?

DOT:

George. I would like my painting.

GEORGE:

Your painting?

DOT:

The one of me powdering.

GEORGE:

I did not know that it was yours.

DOT:

You said once that I could have it.

GEORGE:

In my sleep?

DOT:

I want something to remember you by.

GEORGE:

You don't have enough now?

DOT:

I want the painting, too.

(GEORGE stops painting)

GEORGE:

I understand you and Louis are getting married.

DOT:

Yes.

GEORGE:

He must love you very much to take you in that condition.

DOT:

He does.

GEORGE:

I didn't think you would go through with it. I did not think that was what you really wanted.

DOT:

I don't think I can have what I really want. Louis is what I think I need.

GEORGE:

Yes. Louis will take you to the Follies! Correct?

DOT:

George, I didn't come here to argue.

(JULES and YVONNE enter)

JULES:

George?

GEORGE:

Back here, Jules.

DOT:

I will go.

GEORGE:

Don't leave! It will only be a minute ---

JULES:

(Crossing behind canvas to GEORGE)

There you are. I brought Yvonne along.

YVONNE:

May I take a peek?

DOT:

I will wait in the other room.

YVONNE :

(Sees DOT)

I hope we are not interrupting you.

(SHE and JULES step back and study the painting. GEORGE looks at DOT as she exits to the front room)

JULES :

It is so large. How can you get any perspective? And this light...

(GEORGE pulls a lantern close to the canvas)

GEORGE :

Stand here.

YVONNE :

Extraordinary! Excuse me.

(YVONNE exits into the other room. DOT is sitting at her vanity, which is now cleared of her belongings. YVONNE and DOT look at each other for a moment)

Talk of painting bores me. It is hard to escape it when you are with an artist.

(Beat)

I do not know how you can walk up all those steps in your condition. I remember when I had Louise. I could never be on my feet for long periods of time. Certainly could never navigate steps.

DOT :

Did someone carry you around?

YVONNE :

Why are you so cool to me?

DOT :

Maybe I don't like you.

YVONNE:

Whatever have I done to make you feel that way?

DOT:

"Whatever have I done...?" Maybe it is the way you speak.
What are you really doing here?

YVONNE:

You know why we are here. So Jules can look at George's work.

DOT:

I do not understand why George invites you. He knows you do not like his painting.

YVONNE:

That is not entirely true. Jules has great respect for George. And he has encouraged him since they were in school.

DOT:

That is not what I hear. Jules is jealous of George now.

YVONNE:

(Beat)

Well... jealousy is a form of flattery, is it not? I have been jealous of you on occasion.

(DOT looks surprised)

When I have seen George drawing you in the park. Jules has rarely sketched me.

DOT:

You are his wife.

YVONNE :

(Uncomfortable)

Too flat. Too angular.

DOT :

Modeling is hard work. You wouldn't like it anyway.

YVONNE :

It is worth it, don't you think?

DOT :

Sometimes...

YVONNE :

Has your life changed much now that you are with the baker?

DOT :

I suppose. He enjoys caring for me.

YVONNE :

You are very lucky. Oh, I suppose Jules cares—but there are times when he just does not know Louise and I are there. George always seems so oblivious to everyone.

(Lower s her voice)

Jules says that is what is wrong with his painting. Too obsessive. You have to have a life! Don't you agree?

(DOT nods)

JULES :

George. . . I do not know what to say. What is this?

GEORGE :

What is the dominant color? The flower on the hat?

JULES :

Is this a school exam, George?

GEORGE :

What is the color?

JULES :

(Bored)

Violet.

(GEORGE takes him by the hand and moves him closer to the canvas)

GEORGE :

See? Red and blue. Your eye made the violet.

JULES :

So?

GEORGE :

So, your eye is perceiving both red and blue and violet.

Only eleven colors — no black — divided, not mixed on the palette, mixed by the eye. Can't you see the shimmering?

JULES :

George. . .

GEORGE :

Science, Jules. Fixed laws for color, like music.

JULES :

You are a painter, not a scientist! You cannot even see these faces!

GEORGE :

I am not painting faces! I am —

JULES :

George! I have touted your work in the past, and now you are embarrassing me! People are talking —

GEORGE :

Why should I paint like you or anybody else? I am trying to get through to something new. Something that is my own.

JULES :

And I am trying to understand.

GEORGE :

And I want you to understand. Look at the canvas, Jules.
Really look at it.

JULES :

George! Let us get to the point. You have invited me here
because you want me to try to get this included in the
next group show.

GEORGE :

(Beat -- embarrassed)

It will be finished soon. I want it to be seen

(YVONNE, who has been eavesdropping at the studio door; leans into the room)

YVONNE :

Jules, I am sorry to interrupt, but we really must be
going. You know we have an engagement.

JULES :

Yes.

YVONNE :

Thank you, George.

JULES :

Yes. Thank you.

GEORGE :

Yes. Thank you for coming.

JULES :

I will give the matter some thought.

*(They exit. GEORGE stands motionless for a moment staring at the canvas, then dives into
his work, painting the girls)*

GEORGE :

He does not like you. He does not understand or
appreciate you. He can only see you as everyone else
does. Afraid to take you apart and put you back together
again for himself. But we will not let anyone deter us,
will we?

(Hums)

Bumbum bum bumbumbum bumbum —

DOT:

(Calling to him)

George!

(GEORGE, embarrassed, crosses in front of canvas. He begins to speak. DOT tries to interrupt him)

GEORGE:

DOT:

Excuse me—speaking with
Jules about the painting—
well, I just picked up my
brushes—I do not believe
he even looked at the
painting, though—

You asked me to stay,
George,
and then you forget that I
am even here.
George!

DOT:

I have something to tell you.

GEORGE:

Yes. Now, about "your" painting—

DOT:

I may be going away.

(Beat)

To America.

GEORGE:

Alone.

DOT:

Of course not! With Louis. He has work.

GEORGE:

When?

DOT:

After the baby arrives.

GEORGE:

You will not like it there.

DOT:

How do you know?

GEORGE:

(Getting angry)

I have read about America. Why are you telling me this?

First, you ask for a painting that is not yours—then you tell me this.

(Beginning to return to the studio)

I have work to do.

(Chord; music continues under)

We Do Not Belong Together

DOT:

Yes, George, run to your work. Hide behind your painting. I have come to tell you I am leaving because I thought you might care to know— foolish of me, because you care about nothing—

GEORGE:

I care about many things—

DOT:

Things—not people.

GEORGE:

People, too. I cannot divide my feelings up as neatly as you, and I am not hiding behind my canvas— I am living in it.

DOT:

(Sings)

What you care for is yourself.

GEORGE:

I care about this painting. You will be in this painting.

DOT:

I am something you can use.

GEORGE:

(Sings)

I had thought you understood.

DOT:

It's because I understand that I left,

That I am leaving.

GEORGE:

Then there's nothing I can say, Is there?

DOT:

Yes, George, there is!

You could tell me not to go.

Say it to me,

Tell me not to go.

Tell me that you're hurt,

Tell me you're relieved,

Tell me that you're bored- Anything, but don't assume I know.

Tell me what you feel!

GEORGE:

What I feel?

You know exactly how I feel.

Why do you insist

You must hear the words,

When you know I cannot give you words?

Not the ones you need.

There' s nothing to say.

I cannot be what you want.

DOT:

What do you want, George?

GEORGE:

I needed you and you left.

DOT:

There was no room for me-

GEORGE:

(Overriding her)

You will not accept who I am.

I am what I do-

Which you knew,

Which you always knew,

Which I thought you were a part of!

(He goes behind the canvas)

DOT:

No,

You are complete, George,

You are your own.

We do not belong together.

You are complete, George,

You are alone.

I am unfinished,

I am diminished

With or without you.

We do not belong together, and we should have belonged together.

What made it so right together

Is what made it all wrong.

No one is you, George,

There we agree,

But others will do, George.

No one is you and

No one can be,

But no one is me, George,

No one is me.

We do not belong together.

And we'll never belong--!

You have a mission,

A mission to see.

Now I have one too, George.

And we should have belonged together.

I have to move on.

(DOT leaves. GEORGE stops painting and comes from around the canvas. He is left standing alone onstage. The lights fade)

ACT ONE

SCENE FIVE

*(The set changes back to the park scene around him. When the change is complete, **he** moves downstage right with the **OLD LADY**, and begins to draw her. They are alone, except for the cut-out of the **COMPANION**, which stands towards the rear of the stage. There is a change of tone in both **GEORGE** and the **OLD LADY**. She has assumed a kind of loving attitude, soft and dream like. **GEORGE** is rather sullen in her presence)*

OLD LADY:

(Staring across the water)

I remember when you were a little boy. You would rise up early on a Sunday morning and go for a swim...

GEORGE:

I do not know how to swim.

OLD LADY:

The boys would come by the house to get you...

GEORGE:

I have always been petrified of the water.

OLD LADY:

And your father would walk you all to the banks of the Seine. . .

GEORGE:

Father was never faithful to us.

OLD LADY:

And he would give you boys careful instruction, telling you just how far to swim out . . .

GEORGE:

And he certainly never instructed.

OLD LADY:

And now, look across there- in the distance- all those beautiful trees cut down for a foolish tower,

(Music under)

Beautiful

GEORGE:

I do not think there were ever trees there.

OLD LADY:

How I loved the view from here. . .

(Sings)

Changing. . .

GEORGE:

I am quite certain that was an open field...

OLD LADY:

It keeps changing.

GEORGE:

I used to play there as a child.

OLD LADY:

I see towers

Where there were trees.

Going,

All the stillness,

The solitude,

Georgie.

Sundays,

Disappearing

All the time,

When things were beautiful...

GEORGE:

(Sings)

All things are beautiful,

Mother.

All trees, all towers,

Beautiful.

That tower

Beautiful, Mother,

See?

(Gestures)

A perfect tree.

Pretty isn't beautiful, Mother,

Pretty is what changes.

What the eye arranges

Is what is beautiful.

OLD LADY:

Fading. . .

GEORGE:

I'm changing.

You're changing.

OLD LADY:

It keeps fading. . .

GEORGE:

I'll draw us now before we fade, Mother.

OLD LADY:

It keeps melting

Before our eyes.

GEORGE:

You watch

While I revise the world.

OLD LADY:

Changing,

As we sit here-

Quick, draw it all,

Georgie!

OLD LADY AND GEORGE:

Sundays-

OLD LADY:

Disappearing,

As we look-

GEORGE :

Look! . . .

Look! . . .

OID LADY :

(Not listening, fondly)

You make it beautiful.

(Music continues)

Oh, Georgie, how I long for the old view.

*(Music stops. The **SOLDIER** and **CELESTE #2** enter arm-in-arm and promenade)*

SOLDIER :

(Noticing his COMPANION)

I am glad to be free of him.

CELESIE #2 :

Friends can be confining.

SOLDIER :

He never understood my moods.

CELESTE #2 :

She only thought of herself.

*(**MR.** and **MRS.** Enter. **He** is carrying a big steamer trunk. **She** is carrying a number of famous paintings, framed, under her arm. They are followed by **DOT**, who is carrying her baby bundled in white, and **LOUIS**.)*

SOLDIER :

It felt as if I had this burden at my side.

CELESTE#2 :

She never really cared about me.

SOLDIER :

We had very different tastes.

MR.

This damned island again! I do not understand why we are not goin' straight to our boat.

MRS. :

They wanted to come here first.

MR :

That much I figured out-
but why? Didn't you ask
them?

CELESTE#2:

She had no taste.

SOLDIER:

MRS.:

She did seem rather pushy. I don't know.

CELESTE#2:

Very! And he was so odd.

SOLDIER:

*(MR. and MRS. Are stopped by the
SOLDIER's line, "He is not odd")*

(Angry) HE IS NOT ODD!

CELESTE#2:

No. No, I didn't really mean odd. . .

(They exit . LOUISE runs onstage. BOATMAN rushes after her)

BOATMAN:

(Mutters as he chases after LOUISE)

. . . you better not let me get my hands on you, you
little toad.

*(LOUISE puts her hand over her eye and stiffens her leg in Imitation of the BOATMAN. As
he chases her offstage)*

Now stop that!

MR.:

Are we ever going to get home?!

(MR. and MRS. exit. DOT crosses downstage to GEORGE)

GEORGE:

(Not looking up)

You are blocking my light.

DOT:

Marie and I came to watch.

GEORGE:

(Turning towards DOT):

Marie. . .

(Back to his sketch pad)

You know I do not like anyone staring over my shoulder.

DOT:

Yes, I know.

(She moves to another position)

George, we are about to leave for America. I have come to ask for the painting of me powdering again. I would like to take it with me.

GEORGE:

(He stops for a moment)

Oh? I have repainted it.

(He draws)

DOT:

What?

GEORGE:

Another model.

DOT:

You knew I wanted it.

GEORGE:

Perhaps if you had remained still-

DOT:

Perhaps if you would look up from your pad! What is wrong with you, George? Can you not even look at your own child?

GEORGE:

She is not my child. Louis is her father.

DOT:

Louis is not her father.

GEORGE:

Louis is her father now. Louis will be a loving and attentive father. I cannot because I cannot look up from my pad.

(She stands speechless for a moment, then begins to walkaway; GEORGE turns to her)

Dot.

(She stops)

I am sorry.

(DOT and LOUIS exit. GEORCE drawing OLD LADY)

OLD LADY:

I worry about you, George.

GEORGE:

Could you turn slightly toward me, please.

(She does so)

OLD LADY:

No future in dreaming.

GEORGE:

Drop the head a little, please.

(She does so. CELESTE #1 enters and goes to the COMPANION)

OLD LADY:

I worry about you and that woman, too,

GEORGE:

I have another woman in my life now.

OLD LADY:

They are all the same woman.

GEORGE:

(Chuckles)

Variations on a theme.

OLD LADY:

Ah, you always drifted as a child.

GEORGE:

(Muttering)

Shadows are too heavy.

OLD LADY:

You were always in some other place- seeing something no one else could see.

GEORGE:

Softer light.

(Lights dim slowly)

OLD LADY:

We tried to get through to you, George. Really we did.

(GEORGE stops drawing. He Looks at her. Looks at the page)

GEORGE:

(Laments)

Connect, George.

(Trails off)

Connect. . .

(FRIEDA and JULES enter. They seem to be hiding)

FRIEDA:

Are you certain you wish to do this?

JULES:

(Uncertain)

Of course. We just have to find a quiet spot. I've wanted to do it outside for a long time.

FRIEDA:

Franz would kill you-

JULES:

(Panics)

Is he in the park?

FRIEDA:

I am not certain.

JULES:

Oh. Well. Perhaps some other day would be better.

FRIEDA:

Some other day? Always some other day. Perhaps you do not really wish to-

JULES:

(Subservient)

I do. I do! I love tall grass.

FRIEDA:

Ja. Tall grass. You wouldn't toy with my affections, would you?

JUIES:

No. No. Of course not.

FRIEDA:

I see a quiet spot over there.

JULES:

(Pointing where she did, nervous)

Over there. There are people in that grove-

(FRIEDA places his hand on her breast. They are interrupted by the entrance of CELESTE#2 and the SOLDIER, FRIEDA, then JULES, exits; as he leaves)

Bon jour.

SOLDIER:

Do you suppose there is a violation being perpetrated by that man?

CELESTE #2:

What?

SOLDIER:

There is something in the air today...

CELESTE *1:

(To the COMPANION)

Being alone is nothing new for me.

SOLDIER:

(Noticing CELESTE#1)

Look who is watching us.

CELESTE #1:

Sundays are such a bore. I'd almost rather be in the shop. Do you like your work? I hate mine!

CELESTE #2:

I do not care if she never speaks to me again.

SOLDIER:

She won't.

(Chord. FRANZ and the NURSE enter as if to rendezvous)

YVONNE :

(Entering)

FRANZ!

Franz, have you seen Louise?

(NURSE exits. YVONNE goes to FRANZ)

FRANZ :

(Angry)

Nein, Madame.

YVONNE :

I thought Frieda was going to care for her today.

FRANZ :

But it' s Sunday.

YVONNE :

What of it?

FRANZ :

Our day off!

YVONNE :

Oh, But I have just lost my little girl!

(FRANZ shrugs his shoulders and begins looking for LOUISE)

SOLDIER:

Let' s go say hello to Celeste.

YVONNE :

(Calling)

Louise?

CELESTE #2 :

(Indignant)

I do not wish to speak with her!

SOLDIER:

Come. It will be fun!

(SOLDIER takes CELESTE #2 toward CELESTE #1. LOUISE comes running in, breathless. She immediately goes to YVONNE' s side)

YVONNE :

Louise! Where have you been, young lady?!

LOUISE:

With Frieda.

YVONNE:

(To **FRANZ**)

There, you see.

FRANZ:

Frieda?

LOUISE:

And with Father.

YVONNE:

Your father is in the studio.

LOUISE:

No, he's not. He's with Frieda. I saw them.

FRANZ:

Where?

LOUISE:

Over there. Tonguing.

(**FRANZ** exits. Music under, agitated)

OLD LADY:

Manners. Grace. Respect.

YVONNE:

(Beginning to spank **LOUISE**)

How dare you, young lady!

LOUISE:

It's true. It's true!

(**SOLDIER** and **CELESTE #2** reach
CELESTE #1)

CELESTE #1:

What do you want?

(**JULES** enters, somewhat sheepishly)

SOLDIER:

We've come for a visit.

YVONNE:

Where the hell have you
been? What are you doing
here?

JULES:

Darling, I came out here
looking for Louise.

LOUISE:

(Crying)

You came to tongue.

CELESTE#1:

I don' t want to say hello
to her. Cheap Christmas
wrapping.

CELESTE#2:

Cheap! Look who is talking.
You have the worst
reputation of anyone in
Paris.

CELESTE#1:

At least I have a
reputation. You could not
draw a fly to flypaper!

(BOATMAN enters and begins chasing LOUISE around the stage, MR. and MRS. enter and are caught up in the frenzy. All hell breaks loose, everyone speaking at once, the stage erupting into total chaos)

YVONNE:

How dare you, Jules!

(She goes to him and begins striking him)

SOLDIER:

Ladies, you mustn't fight.

CELESTE #2:

I seem to be doing just
fine.

JULES:

Nothing, I swear.

YVONNE:

Nothing. Look.

(FRANZ drags in FRIEDA)

Have you been with my
husband?

FRIEDA:

Madame, he gave me no
choice.

FRANZ:

What do you mean he gave
you no choice?

CELESTE #1:

Hah. With a diseased
soldier!

SOLDIER:

Wait just a minute.

CELESTE #1:

Disgusting sores
everywhere.

JULES:

(Letting go of LOUISE, who drifts off to the side)

That is not so. Your wife lured me.

FRIEDA:

Lured you! You all but forced me-

JULES:

you are both fired!

FRANZ:

FIRE! You think we would continue to work in your house?

YVONNE:

Jules, you cannot change the subject. What were you doing?

CELESTE #2:

Don't say that about him.

SOLDIER:

Yes, don't say that-

CELESTE #1:

I'll say whatever I like. You are both ungrateful, cheap, ugly, diseased, disgusting garbage...

SOLDIER:

Listen here, lady, if in fact there is anything lady-like about you. You should be glad to take what you can get, any way you can get it and I-

CELESTE #2:

You think you know everything. You are not so special, and far from as pretty as you think, and everyone that comes into the shop knows exactly what you are and what-

(Everyone has slowly fought the way to the middle of the stage, creating one big fight. GEORGE and the OLD LADY have been watching the chaos. GEORGE begins to cross stage to exit. Arpeggiated chord, as at the beginning of the play. Everybody suddenly freezes in place)

Sunday

OLD LADY :

Remember, George.

(Another chord, GEORGE turns to the group)

GEORGE :

Order.

(Another chord. Everyone turns simultaneously to GEORGE. As chords continue under, he nods to them, and they each take up a position on stage)

Design.

(Chord. GEORGE nods to FRIEDA and FRANZ, and they cross downstage right onto the apron. Chord. GEORGE nods to MR. and MRS., and they cross upstage)

Tension.

(Chord. GEORGE nods to CELESTE #1 and CELESTE #2, and they cross downstage. Another chord. JULES and YVONNE cross upstage)

Balance.

(Chord. OLD LADY crosses night as DOT and LOUIS cross center GEORGE signals LOUIS away from DOT. Another chord. SOLDIER crosses upstage left; LOUISE, upstage right. Chord. GEORGE gestures to the BOATMAN, who crosses downstage right)

Harmony.

(The music becomes calm, stately, triumphant. GEORGE turns front. The promenade begins. Throughout the song, GEORGE is moving about, setting trees, cut-outs, and figures — making a perfect picture)

ALL :

(Sing)

Sunday, By the blue

Purple yellow red water

On the green

Purple yellow red grass,

Let us pass

Through our perfect park,

Pausing on a Sunday

By the cool

Blue triangular water

On the soft
Green elliptical grass
As we pass
Through arrangements of shadows
Towards the verticals of trees
Forever...

(The horn sounds)

By the blue
Purple yellow red water
On the green
Orange violet mass
Of the grass
In our perfect park,

GEORGE :

(To DOT)

Made of flecks of light
And dark,
And parasols:
Bumbum bum bumbumbum
Bumbum bum. . .

ALL :

People strolling through the trees
Of a small suburban park
On an island in the river
On an ordinary Sunday. . .

(The horn sounds. Chimes. They all reach their positions)

Sunday. . .

*(The horn again. Everyone assumes the final pose of the painting. **GEORGE** comes out to the apron)*

Sunday. . .

*(At the last moment, **GEORGE** rushes back and removes **LOUISE's** eyeglasses. **He** dashes back on to the apron and freezes the picture. Final chord. The completed canvas flies in. Very*

*slow fade, as the image of the characters fades behind the painting with **GEORGE** in front,
Blackout)*

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

Lights fade up slowly, and you see everyone in the tableau. There is a very long pause before we begin. The audience should feel the tension. Finally, music begins. One by one, they sing.

It's Hot Up Here

DOT:

It's hot up here.

YVONNE:

It's hot and it's monotonous.

LOUISE:

I want my glasses.

FRANZ:

This is not my good profile.

NURSE:

Nobody can even see my profile.

CELESTE #1:

I hate this dress.

CELESTE #2:

The soldiers have forgotten us.

FRIEDA:

The boatman schwitzes.

JULES:

I am completely out of proportion.

DOT:

It's hot up here.

SOLDIER:

These helmets weigh a lot on us.

OLD LADY:

This tree is blocking my view.

LOUISE:

I can't see anything.

BOATMAN:

Why are they complaining? It could have been raining.

DOT:

I hate these people.

ALL:

It's hot up here.

A lot up here.

It's hot up here forever.

A lot of fun.

It's not up here.

It's hot up here, no matter what.

There's not a breath of air up here,

and they're up here forever.

It's not my fault I got up here.

I'll rot up here, I am so hot up here.

YVONNE:

(To **LOUISE**)

Darling, don't clutch mother's hand quite so tightly.
Thank you.

CELESTE #1:

It's hot up here.

FRIEDA:

At least you have a parasol.

SOLDIER, NURSE, YVONNE, AND LOUISE:

Well, look who's talking, sitting in the shade.

JULES:

(To **DOT**)

I trust my cigar is not bothering you – unfortunately, it
never goes out.

(*She pays him no attention*)

You have excellent concentration.

SOLDIER:

(To **COMPANION**)

It's good to be together again.

CELESTE #2:

(To **CELESTE #1**)

See, I told you they were odd.

CELESTE #1:

Don't slouch.

LOUISE:

He took my glasses!

YVONNE :

You've been eating something sticky.

NURSE :

I put on rouge today, too...

FRIEDA :

(To **BOATMAN**)

Don't you ever take a bath?

OLD LADY :

Nurse! Hand me my fan.

NURSE :

I can't.

FRANZ :

At least the brat is with her mother

LOUISE :

I heard that!

JULES :

(To **DOT**)

Do you like tall grass?

FRIEDA :

Hah!

YVONNE :

Jules!

BOATMAN :

Bunch of animals...

DOT:

I hate these people.

ALL:

It's hot up here

And strange up here,

No change up here

Forever.

How still it is,

How odd it is,

And God, it is

So hot!

SOLDIER:

I like the one in the light hat.

DOT:

Hello, George.

I do not wish to be remembered

Like this, George,

With them, George.

My hem, George:

Three inches off the ground

And then this monkey

And these people, George –

They'll argue till they fade

And whisper things and grunt.

But thank you for the shade,

And putting me in front.

Yes, thank you, George, for that...

And for the hat.

CELESTE #1:

It's hot up here.

YVONNE:

It's hot and it's monotonous.

LOUISE:

I want my glasses!

FRANZ:

This is not my good profile.

CELESTE #1:

I hate this dress.

(Overlapping)

CELESTE #2:

The soldiers have forgotten us.

CELESTE #1:

Don't slouch!

BOATMAN:

Animals...

JULES:

Are you sure you don't like tall grass?

NURSE:

I put on rouge today, too...

FRIEDA:

Don't you ever take a bath?

SOLDIER:

It's good to be together again.

OLD LADY:

Nurse, hand me my fan.

DOT:

It's hot up here.

YVONNE:

It's hot and it's monotonous.

LOUISE:

He took my glasses, I want my glasses!

FRANZ:

This is not my good profile.

ALL:

And furthermore,

Finding you're

Fading

Is very degrading

And God, I am so hot!

Well, there are worse things than sweating

By a river on a Sunday.

There are worse things than sweating by a river.

BOATMAN:

When you're sweating in a picture
That was painted by a genius.

FRANZ:

And you know that you're immortal.

FRIEDA:

And you'll always be remembered.

NURSE:

Even if they never see you.

OLD LADY:

And you're listening to drivel.

SOLDIER:

And you're part of your companion.

LOUISE:

And your glasses have been stolen.

YVONNE:

And you're bored beyond endurance.

LOUIS:

And the baby has no diapers.

CELESTE #1:

(To CELESTE #2)

And you're slouching.

CELESTE #2:

I am not!

JULES :

And you are out of all proportion!

DOT :

And I hate these people!

ALL :

You never get

A breeze up here,

And she's (he's) up here

Forever.

You cannot run

Amok up here,

You're stuck up here

In this gavotte.

Perspectives don't

Make sense up here.

It's tense up here

Forever.

The outward show

Of bliss up here

Is disappearing dot by dot.

(Long pause. Music continues for a long moment)

And it's hot!

*(They shake themselves loose from the pose for a brief moment, but at the last beat of the music resume their positions. **GEORGE** enters downstage and stands on the apron in front of the tableau)*

GEORGE :

A fascination with light. The bedroom where I slept as a child – it had a window. At night, the reflection of the light – that is, the light outside the window – created a shadow-show on my wall. So it was, lying in my bed, looking at the wall, I was able to make out shapes of night activity from the street. These images were not rich in detail, so my mind's eye filled in the shapes to bring them to life. Straying from the point. The point? Light and sleep. I didn't sleep. Well, of course I slept, but always when there was a choice, when I might fight the urge, I would lie awake, eyes fixed on the wall, sometimes until the bright sunlight of the morning washed the image away. Off and running. Off and running. First into the morning light. Last on the gas-lit streets. Energy that had no time for sleep. A mission to see, to record impressions. Seeing...recording..., seeing the record, then feeling the experience. Connect the dots, George. Slowing to a screeching halt – in one week. Fighting to wake up. "Wake up, Georgie." I can still feel her cool hand on my warm cheek. Could darkness be an inviting place? Could sleep surpass off and running? No. Lying still, I can see the boys swimming in the Seine. I can see them all, on a sunny Sunday in the park.

*(He exits. During the following, the characters break from their poses when they speak. Accompanying their exits, pieces of scenery disappear; by the time the **BOATMAN** exits at the end of the sequence, the set is returned to its original white configuration)*

CELESTE #2 :

Thirty-one...

CELESTE #1 :

It is hard to believe.

CELESTE #2 :

Yes.

CELESTE #1 :

It seems like only yesterday we were posing for him.

CELESTE #2:

We never posed for him!

CELESTE #1:

Certainly we did! We are in a painting, aren't we?

CELESTE #2:

It's not as if he asked us to sit!

CELESTE #1:

If you had sat up...

SOLDIER:

Will you two just keep QUIET!

(He steps downstage. The CELESTES exit)

I hardly knew the man. I would spend my Sundays here, and I would see him sketching, so I was surprised when he stopped showing up. Of course, I did not notice right away. But one day, I realized, something was different – like a flash of light, right through me, the way that man would stare at you when he sketched – I knew, he was no longer.

(SOLDIER exits. LOUISE breaks away from her mother and dashes downstage)

LOUISE:

I am going to be a painter when I grow up!

BOATMAN:

If you live.

(LOUISE runs off)

FRIEDA:

Honestly!

BOATMAN:

Keep your mouth shut!

FRIEDA:

It is my mouth and I shall do as I please!

FRANZ:

Quiet! George was a gentleman.

FRIEDA:

Soft-spoken.

FRANZ:

And he was a far superior artist to Monsieur.

FRIEDA:

George had beautiful eyes.

FRANZ:

Ja, he – beautiful eyes?

FRIEDA:

Ja... well... eyes that captured beauty.

FRANZ:

(Suspicious)

Ja... he chose his subjects well.

(They exit)

DOT:

I was in Charleston when I heard. At first, I was surprised by the news. Almost relieved, in fact. Perhaps I knew this is how it would end – perhaps we both knew.

(She exits)

OLD LADY:

A parent wants to die first. But George was always off and running, and I was never able to keep up with him.

NURSE:

No one knew he was ill until the very last days. I offered to care for him, but he would let no one near. Not even her.

(OLD LADY and NURSE exit)

JULES:

(Too sincere)

George had great promise as a painter. It really is a shame his career was ended so abruptly. He had an unusual flair for color and light, and his work was not as mechanical as some have suggested. I liked George. He was dedicated to his work — seldom did anything but work — and I am proud to have counted him among my friends.

YVONNE:

George stopped me once in the park — it was the only time I had ever spoken to him outside the company of Jules. He stared at my jacket for an instant, then muttered something about beautiful colors and just walked on. I rather fancied George.

(JULES looks at her)

Well, most of the women did!

(JULES and YVONNE exit)

BOATMAN:

They all wanted him and hated him at the same time. They wanted to be painted — splashed on some fancy salon wall. But they hated him, too. Hated him because he only spoke when he absolutely had to. Most of all, they hated him because they knew he would always be around.

(**BOATMAN** exits. *The stage is bare.*)

ACT TWO

SCENE TWO

*Lights change. Electronic music. It is 1984. We are in the auditorium of the museum where the painting now hangs. Enter **GEORGE**. He wheels in his grandmother, **MARIE** [played by **DOT**], who is ninety-eight and confined to a wheelchair. **DENNIS**, **GEORGE**'s technical assistant, rolls on a control console and places it stage right. An immense white machine rolls on and comes to rest center stage. Our contemporary **GEORGE** is an inventor-sculptor, and this is his latest invention, Chromolume #7. The machine is postmodern in design and is dominated by a four-foot-in-diameter sphere at the top. It glows a range of cool colored light. **MARIE** sits on one side of the machine, and **GEORGE** stands at the console on the other. Behind them is a full-stage projection screen.*

GEORGE :

Ladies and gentlemen, in 1983 I was commissioned by this museum to create an art piece commemorating Georges Seurat's painting "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte." My latest Chromolume stands before you now, the seventh in a continuing series. Because I have a special association with this painting, the museum director, Robert Greenberg, suggested I assemble a short presentation to precede the activation of my latest invention. I have brought my grandmother along to give me a hand.

(Introducing her)

My grandmother, Marie.

*(What follows is a coordinated performance of music, text [read from index cards by **GEORGE** and **MARIE**], film projections of the images referred to, and light emissions from the machine. The first section is accompanied by film projections)*

MARIE :

I was born in Paris, France, ninety-eight years ago.

My grandson, George.

GEORGE :

I was born in Lodi, New Jersey, thirty-two years ago.

MARIE:

My mother was married to Louis, a baker. They left France when I was an infant to travel to Charleston, South Carolina.

GEORGE:

Georges Seurat.

MARIE:

Born: December 2, 1859.

GEORGE:

It was through his mother that the future artist was introduced to the lower-class Parisian parks. Seurat received a classical training at the École des Beaux-Arts.

MARIE:

Like his father, he was not an easy man to know.

GEORGE:

He lived in an age when science was gaining influence over Romantic principles.

MARIE:

He worked very hard.

GEORGE:

His first painting, at the age of twenty-four, "Bathing at Asnières," was rejected by the Salon, but was shown by the Group.

MARIE:

They hung it over the refreshment stand.

(Ad-libbing)

Wasn't that awful?

GEORGE :

On Ascension Day 1884, he began work on his second painting, "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte." He was to work two years on this painting.

MARIE :

He always knew where he was going before he picked up a paint brush.

GEORGE :

He denied conventional perspective and conventional space.

MARIE :

He was unconventional in his lifestyle as well.

(Ad-libbing again)

So was I! You know I was a Florodora Girl for a short time – when I left Charleston and before I was married to my first husband –

GEORGE :

(Interrupting her)

Marie. Marie!

(She looks over to him)

The film is running.

MARIE :

Excuse me.

(She reads)

They hung it over the refreshment stand.

GEORGE:

Marie!

(He reads)

Having studied scientific findings on color, he developed a new style of painting. He found by painting tiny particles, color next to color, that at a certain distance the eye would fuse the specks optically, giving them greater intensity than any mixed pigments.

MARIE:

He wanted to paint with colored lights.

GEORGE:

Beams of colored light, he hoped.

MARIE:

It was shown at the Eighth and last Impressionist Exhibition.

GEORGE:

Monet, Renoir, and Sisley withdrew their submissions because of his painting.

MARIE:

They placed it in a small room off to the side of the main hall, too dark for the painting to truly be seen.

GEORGE:

The painting was ridiculed by most. But there were also a handful of believers in his work.

MARIE:

He went on to paint six more major paintings before his sudden death at the age of thirty-one. He never sold a painting in his lifetime.

GEORGE :

On this occasion, I present my latest Chromolume –

MARIE :

Number Seven –

GEORGE :

– which pays homage to “La Grande Jatte” and to my grandmother, Marie. The score for this presentation has been composed by Naomi Eisen.

(NAOMI enters, bows, and exits)

MARIE :

(She reads a stage direction by mistake)

George begins to activate the Chromolume machine as...

GEORGE :

Don't read that part, Grandmother.

MARIE :

Oh... don't read this.

(Music begins to increase in volume and intensity. Strobe lights begin emitting from the machine along with side shafts of brilliant light. Colors begin to fill the stage and audience, creating a pointillist look. Just as the sphere begins to illuminate, producing various images from the painting, there is a sudden explosion of sparks and smoke. The lighting system flickers on and off until everything dies, including the music. There is a moment of silence in the darkness.)

GEORGE :

(Under his breath)

Shit.

(Calling out)

Robert Greenberg?

GREENBERG :

(From the back of the house)

Just a minute, George!

(Some light returns to the smoke-filled stage)

DENNIS :

(Offstage)

It's the regulator, George.

*(Lights come up on **GEORGE**, who is looking inside the machine. **He** steps downstage toward the audience)*

GEORGE :

My apologies, ladies and gentlemen. For precise synchronization of all the visual elements, I've installed a new state-of-the-art Japanese microcomputer which controls the voltage regulator. I think that the surge from the musical equipment has created an electrical short.

(Beat)

Unfortunately, no electricity, no art. Give us a moment and we'll be able to bypass the regulator and be back in business.

*(After "no electricity, no art," **GREENBERG** has entered and stands to the side of the apron. **DENNIS** enters and joins **GEORGE** at the Chromolume)*

GREENBERG :

I am very sorry, ladies and gentlemen. We seem to be having a little electrical difficulty.

*(**NAOMI** has entered and rushed to the machine)*

NAOMI :

There's no juice!

GREENBERG :

You must realize this is the first time we have had a collaboration like this at the museum and it has offered some extraordinary challenges to us here.

(NAOMI and DENNIS exit arguing)

Now, I hope to see all of you at the reception and dinner which will follow the presentation. It's right down the hall in the main gallery, where the painting hangs. And we have a very special treat for you. As I am sure you have noticed, in order to raise additional funds we have chosen to sell the air rights to the museum – and some of the twenty-seven flights of condominiums that stand above us now will be open for your inspection after dinner. You may even wish to become one of our permanent neighbors! In any case I...

GEORGE :

We're ready, Bob.

GREENBERG :

Well...proceed. Proceed!

(He exits)

GEORGE :

(Into his headset)

Dennis! Lights. Grandma, continue.

(Lights dim and the presentation continues. Music gathers momentum. The Chromolume begins several seconds before the speaking resumes, with images from the painting projected on its sphere, illustrating the lecture)

MARIE :

When I was young, Mother loved telling me tales of her life in France, and of her work as an artist's model.

GEORGE :

Her mother showed her this great painting and pointed to this woman and said that it was she.

MARIE :

And she pointed to a couple in the back – they were holding an infant child – and she said that was me!

GEORGE :

Shortly before my great-grandmother's death, she spoke of her association with the artist of this painting. She told Marie that Seurat was her real father.

MARIE :

I was shocked!

GEORGE :

My parents never believed this story. After all, there was no proof. I do not –

MARIE :

(Produces a red book, unknown to GEORGE) My mother gave me this small red book.

GEORGE :

Marie!

MARIE :

Oh, George, I wanted to bring the book and show it.

(To the audience)

In the back are notes about his great-grandfather, the artist.

GEORGE :

Actually, this book is really just a grammar book in the handwriting of a child, and though there are notes in the

back which mention a Georges – they could be referring to anyone.

MARIE:

But they do not.

GEORGE:

I do not know that there is any validity to this story.

MARIE:

Of course, there is validity!

(To the audience)

He has to have everything spelled out for him!

GEORGE:

The facts are sketchy. The tales are many. I would like to invite you into my "Sunday: Island of Light." It will be on exhibition here in the upstairs gallery for three weeks.

ACT TWO

SCENE THREE

Music crescendos, as laser beams burst over the audience. When they complete their course, the sphere begins to turn, sending out a blinding burst of light. The painting flies in

*We are now in the gallery where the painting hangs and in front of which the reception is beginning. **HARRIET** and **BILLY** enter, closely followed by **REDMOND**, **GREENBERG**, **ALEX**, **BETTY**, and **NAOMI**. Cocktail music under*

BILLY:

Well, I can't say that I understand what that light machine has to do with this painting.

HARRIET:

Darling, it's a theme and variation.

BILLY:

Oh. Theme and variation.

GREENBERG:

(To **REDMOND**)

Times change so quickly.

REDMOND:

Lord knows.

GREENBERG:

That's the challenge of our work. You never know what movement is going to hit next. Which artist to embrace.

(*Rhumba music*)

NAOMI:

I thought it went very well, except for that electrical screw-up. What did you guys think?

ALEX:

Terrible.

BETTY:

Terrific.

(Short embarrassed pause)

Putting It Together

HARRIET:

I mean, I don't understand completely—

BILLY:

I'm not surprised.

HARRIET:

But he combines all these different trends.

BILLY:

I'm not surprised.

HARRIET:

You can't divide art today

Into categories neatly.

BILLY:

Oh.

HARRIET:

What matters is the means, not the ends.

BILLY:

I'm not surprised.

HARRIET AND BILLY:

That is the state of the art, my dear,

That is the state of the art.

GREENBERG:

It's not enough knowing good from rotten –

EDMOND:

(Sings)

You're telling me –

GREENBERG:

When something new pops up every day.

REDMOND:

You're telling me –

GREENBERG:

It's only new, though, for now–

REDMOND:

Nouveau.

GREENBERG:

But yesterday' s forgotten.

REDMOND:

(Nods)

And tomorrow is already passé .

GREENBERG:

There' s no surprise.

REDMOND AND GREENBERG:

That is the state of the art, my friend,

That is the state of the art .

BETTY:

(Sings)

He's an original .

ALEX:

Was.

NAOMI:

I like the images.

ALEX:

Some.

BETTY:

Come on.

You had your moment,

Now it's George's turn—

ALEX:

(Sings) It's George's turn?

I wasn't talking turns, I'm talking art.

BETTY:

(To NAOMI)

Don't you think he's original?

NAOMI:

Well, yes...

BETTY:

(To ALEX)

You're talking crap.

ALEX:

(Overlapping with NAOMI)

But is it really new?

NAOMI:

Well, no...

ALEX:

(To BETTY)

His own collaborator —!

BETTY:

(Overlapping with NAOMI)

It's more than novelty.

NAOMI:

Well, yes...

BETTY:

(To ALEX)

It's just impersonal, but —

ALEX:

It's all promotion, but then—

ALEX AND BETTY:

(To NAOMI)

That is the state of the art,

Isn't it?

NAOMI :

(Caught between them)

Well...

BILLY :

(To HARRIET)

Art isn't easy—

HARRIET :

(Nodding)

Even when you've amassed it —

BETTY :

Fighting for prizes—

GREENBERG :

No one can be an oracle.

REDMOND :

(Nodding)

Art isn't easy.

ALEX :

Suddenly --

(Snaps fingers)

You're past it.

NAOMI :

All compromises—

HARRIET :

And then when it's allegorical —!

REDMOND AND GREENBERG:

Art isn't easy—

ALL:

Any way you look at it.

Here's George now!

*(Chord, fanfare. **GEORGE** makes a grand entrance with **MARIE** and **ELAINE**. Applause from guests. **GEORGE** and **MARIE** move towards the painting. Lights come down on **GEORGE**, who sings)*

GEORGE:

All right, George.

As long as it's your night, George...

You know what's in the room, George:

Another Chromolume, George.

It's time to get to work...

(Music continues under)

MARIE:

George, look, All these lovely people in front of our painting.

GREENBERG:

*(Coming up to **GEORGE**)*

George, I want you to meet one of our board members.

*(He steers **GEORGE** over to **BILLY** and **HARRIET**)*

This is Harriet Pawling.

HARRIET:

What a pleasure. And this is my friend, Billy Webster.

BILLY:

How do you do.

GREENBERG:

Well, I'll just leave you three to chat. (*He exits*)

BILLY:

Harriet was so impressed by your presentation.

HARRIET:

This is the third piece of yours I've seen. They are getting so large!

BILLY:

What heading does your work fall under?

GEORGE:

Most people think of it as sculpture.

BILLY:

Sculpture...

GEORGE:

Actually, I think of myself as an inventor as well as a sculptor.

BILLY:

It's so unconventional for sculpture. (*Lights down on GEORGE*)

GEORGE:

(To audience and himself, sings)

Say "cheese," George,

And put them at their ease, George.

You're upon the trapeze, George.

Machines don't grow on trees, George.

Start putting it together ...

(Lights up)

HARRIET:

I bet your great-grandfather would be very proud!

*(They are joined by **MARIE** and **ELAINE**, who have been nearby and overheard the conversation)*

MARIE:

Yes. He would have loved this evening.

BILLY:

How do you know?

MARIE:

I just know. I'm like that.

HARRIET:

Hi. I'm Harriet Pawling.

BILLY:

Billy Webster.

MARIE:

How do you do. This is Elaine--George's former wife.

ELAINE:

(Embarrassed)

Hello.

MARIE:

Elaine is such a darling, I will always think of her as my grand-daughter. I am so happy that these children have remained close. Isn't that nice?

BILLY:

Yes. Harriet has just gone through a rather messy divorce.

HARRIET:

Bill!

(Awkward pause)

What a fascinating family you have!

MARIE:

Many people say that. George and I are going back to France next month to visit the island where the painting was made, and George is going to bring the Lomochrome.

(Music)

GEORGE:

Chromolume. I've been invited by the government to do a presentation of the machine on the island.

MARIE:

George has never been to France.

GEORGE:

(Front, sings)

Art isn't easy—

*(He raises a cut-out of himself in front of **BILLY** and **HARRIET** and comes downstage)*

Even when you're hot.

BILLY:

(To cut-out)

Are these inventions of yours one of a kind?

GEORGE :

Advancing art is easy —

*(To **BILLY**, but front)*

Yes.

Financing it is not.

MARIE :

They take a year to make.

GEORGE :

(Front)

A vision's just a vision

If it's only in your head.

MARIE :

The minute he finishes one, he starts raising money for the next.

GEORGE :

If no one gets to see it,

It's as good as dead.

MARIE :

Work. Work. Work.

GEORGE :

It has to come to light!

*(Music continues under. **GEORGE** speaks as if to **BILLY** and **HARRIET**, but away from them, and front)*

I put the names of my contributors on the side of each machine.

ELAINE:

Some very impressive people!

HARRIET:

Well, we must speak further. My family has a foundation and we are always looking for new projects.

GEORGE:

(Front, sings)

Bit by bit,

Putting it together...

MARIE:

Family—it's all you really have.

GEORGE:

Piece by piece —

Only way to make a work of art.

Every moment makes a contribution,

Every little detail plays a part.

Having just the vision's no solution,

Everything depends on execution:

Putting it together—

HARRIET:

(To cut-out)

Actually, the Board of the Foundation is meeting next week ...

GEORGE:

Ounce by ounce

Putting it together...

HARRET:

You'll come to lunch.

GEORGE:

Small amounts,
Adding up to make a work of art.
First of all, you need a good foundation,
Otherwise it's risky from the start.
Takes a little cocktail conversation,
But without the proper preparation,
Having just the vision's no solution,
Everything depends on execution.
The art of making art
Is putting it together
Bit by bit...

*(The cut-out remains, as **BILLY** and **HARRIET** talk to it; **GEORGE**, working away, is cornered by **CHARLES REDMOND**. Music continues under)*

REDMOND:

We have been hearing about you for some time. We haven't met. Charles Redmond. County Museum of Texas.

GEORGE:

Nice to meet you.

REDMOND:

Your work is just tremendous.

GEORGE:

Thank you.

REDMOND:

I don't mean to bring business up during a social occasion, but I wanted you to know we' re in the process of giving out some very sizable commissions—

GREENBERG:

You're not going to steal him away, are you?

(GEORGE signals and another cut-out of himself slides in from the wings. He leaves his drink in its hand, then steps forward)

GEORGE:

Link by link,
Making the connections...
Drink by drink,
Fixing and perfecting the design.
Adding just a dab of politician
(Always knowing where to draw the line),
Lining up the funds but in addition
Lining up a prominent commission,
Otherwise your perfect composition
Isn't going to get much exhibition.
Art isn't easy.
Every minor detail
Is a major decision.
Have to keep things in scale,
Have to hold to your vision—

(Pauses for a split second)

Every time I start to feel defensive,
I remember lasers are expensive.
What's a little cocktail conversation
If it's going to get you your foundation,
Leading to a prominent commission

And an exhibition in addition?

(The guests promenade briefly, working the room, then sing)

ALL:

(Except MARIE)

Art isn't easy—

ALEX AND BETTY:

Trying to make connections —

ALL:

Who understands it --?

HARRET AND BILLY:

Difficult to evaluate—

ALL:

Art isn't easy—

GREENBERG AND REDMOND:

Trying to form collections —

ALL:

Always in transit —

NAOMI:

(To whoever will listen)

And then when you have to collaborate —!

ALL:

Art isn't easy,

Any way you look at it . .

(Chord. Cocktail piano. During the above, BIAIR DANELS, an art critic, has entered. GEORGE is approached by LEE RANDOLPH with MARIE)

MARIE :

George, you have to meet Mr. Randolph!

RANDOLPH :

Hello! Lee Randolph. I handle the public relations for the museum.

GEORGE :

How do you do.

(NAOMI joins them)

NAOMI :

There you are, George! Hi, Marie.

(To RANDOLPH)

Naomi Eisen.

RANDOLPH :

Delighted. You kids made quite a stir tonight.

NAOMI :

You see, George - that electrical foul-up didn't hurt our reception.

RANDOLPH :

There's a lot of opportunity for some nice press here.

(GEORGE gestures; a third cut-out of himself rises in front of NAOMI and RANDOLPH. GEORGE steps forward and sings)

GEORGE :

Dot by dot,

Building up the image.

(Flash. PHOTOGRAPHER starts taking pictures of the cut-out)

Shot by shot,

Keeping at a distance doesn't pay.

Still, if you remember your objective,

Not to give all your privacy away -

(Flash. Beat; HE glances at the first cut-out)

A little bit of hype can be effective,

Long as you can keep it in perspective.

After all, without some recognition
No one's going to give you a commission,
Which will cause a crack in the foundation.
You'll have wasted all that conversation.

(Music stops suddenly as DENNIS comes over, disheveled and apologetic. DENNIS is something of a nerd)

DENNIS:

I am really sorry, George.

(Cocktail music)

I spoke with Naomi in great detail about how much electricity her synthesizer was going to use - I computed the exact voltage.

GEORGE:

Dennis! It's okay.

DENNIS:

The laser was beautiful, George.

GEORGE:

It was, wasn't it? Now go get yourself a drink, Dennis. Mingle.

DENNIS:

George. I have one more thing I wanted to talk to you about. I was going to wait - no, I'll wait -

GEORGE:

What?

DENNIS:

I'm quitting.

(Music stops suddenly)

GEORGE:

Quitting?

DENNIS:

I'm going back to NASA. There is just too much pressure in this line of work.

GEORGE:

Dennis, don't make any rash decisions. Relax, sleep on it, and we'll talk about it tomorrow.

DENNIS:

Okay, George.

GEORGE:

(Front, sings, music under)

Art isn't easy...

(ALEX and BETTY approach)

BETTY:

Hey, it's the brains.

GEORGE:

Even if you're smart...

ALEX:

Little technical screw-up tonight, Dennis?

(DENNIS exits)

GEORGE:

You think it's all together,

And something falls apart...

(Music continues under)

BETTY:

I love the new machine, George.

GEORGE:

Thanks. That means a lot to me.

ALEX:

We saw you talking to Redmond from Texas.

GEORGE:

Yeah.

BETTY:

Did you get one of the commissions?

GEORGE:

We talked about it. You guys?

ALEX:

Her. My stuff is a little too inaccessible.

GEORGE:

I love your work, Alex. I'll put in a good word for you.

ALEX:

(Defensive)

He knows my work!

GEORGE:

(Uncomfortable)

It's all politics, Alex. Maybe if you just lightened up once in a while.

BETTY:

(Mollifying)

Texas would be fun!

(GEORGE beckons and a fourth cut-out slides in and heads toward BETTY and ALEX)

GEORGE:

(Front, sings)

Art isn't easy.

(Gesturing towards ALEX)

Overnight you're a trend,

You're the right combination -

(Behind him, cut-out #1 begins sinking slowly into the floor)

Then the trend's at an end,

You're suddenly last year's sensation...

(Notices the cut-out, goes to raise it during the following)

So you should support the competition,

Try to set aside your own ambition,

Even while you jockey for position -

(Cut-out #4 has slid in too far, and BETTY and ALEX have turned away; GEORGE, unflustered, spins it back around towards BETTY and ALEX, who resume talking to it)

If you feel a sense of coalition,
Then you never really stand alone.
If you want your work to reach fruition,
What you need's a link with your tradition,
And of course a prominent commission,
(Cut-out #1 starts to sink again; GEORGE hastens to fix it)
Plus a little formal recognition,
So that you can go on exhibit -

(Getting flustered)

So that your work can go on exhibition -

(Loud promenade, very brief, during which cut-out #1 starts to go again, but stops just as GEORGE reaches it. As he does so, BLAIR DANIELS comes up to him. Chords under)

BLAIR:

There's the man of the hour.

GEORGE:

Blair. Hello. I just read your piece on Neo-Expressionism
-

BLAIR:

Just what the world needs - another piece on Neo-
Expressionism.

GEORGE:

Well, I enjoyed it.

(Chords continue under, irregularly)

BLAIR:

Good for you! Now, I had no idea you might be related to
nineteenth-century France.

GEORGE:

It's a cloudy ancestral line at best.

BLAIR:

I'm dying to meet your grandmother. It was fun seeing the
two of you onstage with your invention. It added a
certain humanity to the proceedings.

GEORGE:

Humanity?

BLAIR:

George. Chromolume Number Seven?

GEORGE:

(Sings to himself)

Be nice, George...

(Gestures for a cut-out; it doesn't rise)

BLAIR:

I was hoping it would be a series of three - four at the most.

GEORGE:

You have to pay a price, George...

(Gestures again; nothing)

BLAIR:

We have been there before, you know.

GEORGE:

You never suffer from a shortage of opinions, do you, Blair?

BLAIR:

You never minded my opinions when they were in your favor!

BLAIR:

I have touted your work from the beginning, you know that. You were really on to something with these light machines - once. Now they're just becoming more and more about less and less.

GEORGE:

They like to give

Advice, George -

(Gestures offstage; nothing)

Don't think about it

Twice, George...

(Gestures again; nothing)

GEORGE:

I disagree.

(Music. **BLAIR** turns briefly away from him, rummaging through her purse for a cigarette. **GEORGE** takes advantage of this to rush offstage and bring on cut-out #5, which **HE** sets up in front of her during the following)

BLAIR:

Don't get me wrong. You're a talented guy. If you weren't, I wouldn't waste our time with my opinions. I think you are capable of far more. Not that you couldn't succeed by doing Chromolume after Chromolume - but there are new discoveries to be made, George.

(**SHE** holds up her cigarette and waits for a light from the cut-out)

GEORGE:

(Increasingly upset)

Be new, George.

They tell you till they're blue, George:

You're new or else you're through, George,

And even if it's true, George -

You do what you can do...

(Wandering among cut-outs, checking them)

Bit by bit,

Putting it together.

Piece by piece,

Working out the vision night and day.

All it takes is time and perseverance,

With a little luck along the way,

Putting in a personal appearance,

Gathering supporters and adherents.

(Music stops. **BLAIR**, getting impatient for her light, leaves the cut-out to join another group. **GEORGE** notices. Beat)

HARRIET:

(To **BILLY**)

... But he combines all these different trends...

(Beat. The cut-out with **HARRIET** and **BILLY** falters)

GEORGE:

(Moving to it smoothly as music resumes)

Mapping out the right configuration,

(Adjusting it)

Starting with a suitable foundation...

BETTY:

... He's an original...

ALEX:

... Was...

*(During the following, all the cut-outs falter sporadically, causing **GEORGE** to move more and more rapidly among them)*

GEORGE:

Lining up a prominent commission -

And an exhibition in addition -

Here a little dab of politician -

There a little touch of publication -

Till you have a balanced composition -

Everything depends on preparation

Even if you do have the suspicion

That it's taking all your concentration -

*(Simultaneously, with **GEORGE**)*

BETTY:

I like those images.

ALEX:

Some.

BETTY:

They're just his personal response.

ALEX:

To what?

BETTY:

The painting!

ALEX:

Bullshit. Anyway, the painting's overrated...

BETTY:

Overrated? It's a masterpiece!

ALEX:

A masterpiece? Historically important, maybe -

BETTY:

Oh, now you're judging Seurat, are you?

ALEX:

All it is is pleasant, just like George's work.

BETTY:

It's just your jealousy of George's work.

ALEX:

No nuance, no resonance, no relevance -

BETTY:

There's nuance and there's resonance, there's relevance -

ALEX:

There's not much point in arguing.

Besides, it's all promotion, but then -

BETTY:

There's not much point in arguing.

You say it's all promotion, but then -

GREENBERG:

It's only new, though, for now,

And yesterday's forgotten.

Today it's all a matter of promotion,

But then -

REDMOND:

Nouveau.

And yesterday's forgotten.

And you can't tell good from rotten.

And today it's all a matter of promotion,

But then -

HARRIET:

You can't divide art today.

Go with it!

What will they think of next?

BILLY:

I'm not surprised.

What will they think of next?

OTHERS:

Most art today

Is a matter of promotion, but then—

GEORGE:

The art of making art

Is putting it together -

Bit by bit -

Link by link -

Drink by drink -

Mink by mink -

And that

Is the state of the--

ALL:

That is the state of the art -

And art isn't easy.

ALL:

Art!

(GEORGE frames the successfully completed picture of the guests and cut-outs with his hands, as at the end of Act I. As soon as he exits, however, the cut-outs collapse and disappear. MARIE is over at the painting; She is joined by HARRIET and BILLY)

GREENBERG:

Ladies and gentlemen, dinner is served.

(Most of the party exits)

HARRIET:

(To MARIE)

Excuse me, could you please tell me: what is that square form up there?

BLAIR:

(Who has been standing nearby)

That is a baby carriage.

MARIE:

Who told you that?!

BLAIR:

I'm sorry to butt in. I'm Blair Daniels and I've been waiting for the opportunity to tell you how much I enjoyed seeing you on stage.

MARIE:

Why, thank you. But, my dear, that is not a baby carriage. That is Louis' waffle stove.

BLAIR:

Waffle stove? I've read all there is to read about this work, and there's never been any mention of a waffle stove!

MARIE:

(Indicating red book)

I have a book, too. My mother's. It is a family legacy, as is this painting. And my mother often spoke of Louis' waffle stove!

BLAIR:

Louis. Yes, you mentioned him in your presentation.

(GEORGE re-enters; stays off to one side.)

MARIE:

Family. You know, it is all you really have.

BILLY:

You said that before.

MARIE:

I say it often.

HARRIET:

Excuse us.

(HARRIET and BILLY exit)

MARIE:

You know, Miss Daniels, there are only two worthwhile things to leave behind when you depart this world: children and art. Isn't that correct?

BLAIR:

I never quite thought of it that way.

(ELAINE joins them)

MARIE:

Do you know Elaine?

BLAIR:

No. I don't believe we've met. Blair Daniels.

ELAINE:

I've heard a lot about you.

BLAIR:

Oh, yes.

MARIE:

Elaine and George were married once. I was so excited. I thought they might have a child. George and I are the only ones left, I'm afraid.

(Whispers)

I want George to have a child - continue the line. You can understand that, can't you, Elaine?

ELAINE:

Of course.

MARIE:

Are you married, Miss Daniels?

BLAIR:

Awfully nice to have met you.

(SHE shakes MARIE's hand and exits)

MARIE:

Elaine, fix my chair so I can see Mama.

(SHE does. ELAINE crosses to GEORGE)

ELAINE:

George. I think Marie is a little too tired for the party. She seems to be slipping a bit.

GEORGE:

I better take her back to the hotel.

ELAINE:

I'll take her back. You stay.

GEORGE:

Nah, it's a perfect excuse for me to leave early.

ELAINE:

George. Don't be silly! You're the toast of the party. You should feel wonderful.

GEORGE:

(Edgy)

Well, I don't feel wonderful.

ELAINE:

Poor George. Well... tonight was a wonderful experience for Marie. I don't remember seeing her so happy. It was very good of you to include her.

GEORGE:

She is something, isn't she?

ELAINE:

Yes, she is...

*(ELAINE begins to leave; GEORGE stops her; they embrace. Then **she** exits. The preceding has been underscored with the chords from Act I. MARIE has been staring up at the painting)*

Children and Art

MARIE:

You would have liked him,

Mama, you would.

Mama, he makes things -

Mama, they're good.

Just as you said from the start:

Children and art...

(Starts nodding off)

Children and art...

(Awakens with a start)

He should be happy -

Mama, he's blue.

What do I do?

You should have seen it,

It was a sight!

Mama, I mean it -

All color and light -!

I don't understand what it was,

But, Mama, the things that he does:

They twinkle and shimmer and buzz -

You would have liked them...

(Losing her train of thought)

It ...

Him ...

(Music continues, speaks)

Henry... Henry?... Henry...

GEORGE:

(Coming over)

It's George, Grandmother.

MARIE:

Of course it is. I thought you were your father for a moment.

(Indicating painting)

Did I tell you who that was?

GEORGE:

Of course. That is your mother.

MARIE:

That is correct.

Isn't she beautiful?

There she is -

(Pointing to different figures)

There she is, there she is, there she is -

Mama is everywhere,

He must have loved her so much.

GEORGE:

Is she really in all those places, Marie?

MARIE:

This is our family -

This is the lot.

After I go, this is

All that you've got, honey -

GEORGE:

Now, let's not have this discussion -

MARIE:

(Before he can protest further)

Wasn't she beautiful, though?

You would have liked her.

Mama did things

No one had done.

Mama was funny,

Mama was fun,

Mama spent money

When she had none.

Mama said, "Honey,

Mustn't be blue.

It's not so much do what you like

As it is that you like what you do."

Mama said, Darling,

Don't make such a drama.

A little less thinking,

A little more feeling -

GEORGE :

Please don't start -

MARIE :

I'm just quoting Mama.

(Changing the subject, indicates LOUISE)

The child is so sweet...

(Indicates the CELESTES at center)

And the girls are so rapturous...

Isn't it lovely how artists can capture us?

GEORGE :

Yes, it is, Marie.

MARIE :

You would have liked her -

Honey, I'm wrong.

You would have loved her.

Mama enjoyed things.

Mama was smart.

See how she shimmers -

I mean from the heart.

(ELAINE enters and stands off to the side)

I know, honey, you don't agree.

(Indicates painting)

But this is our family tree.

Just wait till we're there, and you'll see -

Listen to me...

(Drifting off)

Mama was smart...

Listen to Mama...

Children and art...

Children and art...

(SHE falls asleep and ELAINE crosses to her and wheels her off. As they go:)

Goodbye, Mama.

(GEORGE looks at the painting for a moment)

GEORGE :

Connect, George. Connect...

(GEORGE exits; the painting flies out)

ACT TWO

SCENE FOUR

(The island is once again revealed, though barely recognizable as the trees have been replaced by high-rise buildings. The only tree still visible is the one in front of which the OLD LADY and NURSE sat. DENNIS kneels, studying his blueprints. GEORGE enters, camera in hand)

GEORGE :

Are you certain this is the best place for the Chromolume?

DENNIS :

George, this is the largest clearing on La Grande Jatte.

GEORGE :

Where's the still?

DENNIS :

It has been built and should arrive tomorrow morning in a few hours before the Chromolume. I wanted it here today, but they don't make deliveries on Sunday.

GEORGE :

And fresh water for the cooling system?

DENNIS :

We can draw it from the Seine. As for the electricity -

GEORGE :

Did you see this tree?

DENNIS :

No.

GEORGE :

It could be the one in the painting.

DENNIS :

Yes. It could.

(GEORGE hands DENNIS the camera and goes to the tree. DENNIS takes a picture of him in front of it)

GEORGE :

At least something is recognizable... Now, about the electricity?

DENNIS:

The wind generator's over there.

GEORGE:

You have been efficient as always.

DENNIS:

Thank you.

GEORGE:

I will miss working with you, Dennis.

DENNIS:

Well, I can recommend some very capable people to help you with the Texas commission.

GEORGE:

I turned it down.

DENNIS:

What?

GEORGE:

Dennis, why are you quitting?

DENNIS:

I told you, I want -

GEORGE:

I know what you told me! Why are you really leaving?

DENNIS:

George. I love the Chromolumes. But I've helped you build the last five, and now I want to do something different.

GEORGE:

I wish you had told me that in the first place.

DENNIS:

I'm sorry.

GEORGE:

Why do you think I turned down the commission? I don't want to do the same thing over and over again either.

DENNIS:

There are other things you could do.

GEORGE:

I know that. I just want to do something I care about.

(Beat. GEORGE puts camera in pocket and pulls out DOT's red book.)

DENNIS:

I see you brought the red book.

GEORGE:

Since Marie has died, I thought I would at least bring something of hers along.

DENNIS:

Marie really wanted to make this trip.

GEORGE:

I know.

DENNIS:

I hope you don't mind, but I took a look at the book. It's very interesting.

GEORGE:

It's just a grammar book, Dennis.

DENNIS:

Not that part. The notes in the back.

(GEORGE leafs through it to the back.)

Well, we just have to wait for it to get dark. I'm not certain about the ambient light.

GEORGE:

You go, Dennis. I'd like to be alone actually.

DENNIS:

Are you sure?

GEORGE:

Yeah. I'll see you back at the hotel.

(HE sits on the ground.)

DENNIS:

(Begins to exit)

George. I look forward to seeing what you come up with next.

GEORGE :

(Smiling)

You're not the only one, Dennis.

(DENNIS exits. Music. GEORGE sings, leafing through the book, reading)

Lesson #8

"Charles has a book..."

(Turns a page)

"Charles shows them his crayons..."

(Turns back a few pages)

"Marie has the ball of Charles."

(Turns the book to read writing in the margin)

"Good for Marie..."

(Smiles at the coincidence of the name, turns a page)

"Charles misses his ball..."

(Looks up)

George misses Marie...

George misses a lot...

George is alone.

George looks around.

He sees the park.

It is depressing.

George looks ahead.

George sees the dark.

George is afraid.

Where are the people

Out strolling on Sunday?

George looks within:

George is adrift.

George goes by guessing.

George looks behind:

He had a gift.

When did it fade?

You wanted people out

Strolling on Sunday

Sorry, Marie...

(Looks again at the name in the book)

See George remember how George used to be,

Stretching his vision in every direction.

See George attempting to see a connection

When all he can see

Is maybe a tree -

(Humorously)

The family tree -

Sorry, Marie...

George is afraid.

George sees the park.

George sees it dying.

George too may fade,

Leaving no mark,

Just passing through.

Just like the people

Out strolling on Sunday...

George looks around.

George is alone.

No use denying

George is aground.

George has outgrown

What he can do.

George would have liked to see

People out strolling on Sunday...

(DOT appears. GEORGE looks up and discovers her. HE stands)

DOT:

I almost did not recognize you without your beard. You have my book.

GEORGE:

Your book?

DOT:

Yes.

GEORGE:

It is a little difficult to understand.

DOT:

Well, I was teaching myself. My writing got much better. I worked very hard. I made certain that Marie learned right away.

GEORGE:

(Looks at the book)

Marie...

DOT:

It is good to see you. Not that I ever forgot you, George. You gave me so much.

GEORGE:

What did I give you?

DOT:

Oh, many things. You taught me about concentration. At first I thought that meant just being still, but I was to understand it meant much more. You meant to tell me to be where I was - not some place in the past or future. I worried too much about tomorrow. I thought the world could be perfect. I was wrong.

GEORGE:

What else?

Move On

DOT:

Oh, enough about me. What about you? Are you working on something new?

GEORGE:

No. I am not working on anything new.

(Music begins)

DOT:

That is not like you, George.

GEORGE:

I've nothing to say.

DOT:

You have many things...

GEORGE:

Well, nothing that's not been said.

DOT:

Said by you, though, George...

GEORGE:

I do not know where to go.

DOT:

And nor did I.

GEORGE:

I want to make things that count,

Things that will be new.

DOT:

(Overlapping)

I did what I had to do:

GEORGE:

(Overlapping)

What am I to do?

DOT:

Move on.

Stop worrying where you're going -

Move on.

If you can know where you're going,

You've gone.

Just keep moving on.
I chose, and my world was shaken -
So what?
The choice may have been mistaken,
The choosing was not.
You have to move on.
Look at what you want,
Not at where you are,
Not at what you'll be.
Look at all the things you've done for me:
Opened up my eyes,
Taught me how to see,
Notice every tree -

GEORGE:

... Notice every tree...

DOT:

Understand the light -

GEORGE:

... Understand the light...

DOT:

Concentrate on now -

GEORGE:

I want to move on.
I want to explore the light.
I want to know how to get through,
Through to something new,
Something of my own -

GEORGE AND DOT:

Move on.

Move on.

DOT:

Stop worrying if your vision

Is new.
Let others make that decision -
They usually do.
You keep moving on.

GEORGE:

(Looking around)

<u>DOT:</u>	
<u>Look at what you've done,</u>	<u>... Something in the light,</u>
<u>Then at what you want,</u>	<u>Something in the sky,</u>
<u>Not at where you are,</u>	<u>In the grass,</u>
<u>What you'll be.</u>	<u>Up behind the trees...</u>
<u>Look at all the things</u>	<u>Things I hadn't looked at</u>
<u>You gave to me.</u>	<u>Till now:</u>
<u>Let me give to you</u>	<u>Flower on your hat.</u>
<u>Something in return.</u>	<u>And your smile.</u>
<u>I would be so pleased.</u>	

GEORGE:

And the color of your hair.
And the way you catch the light...
And the care...
And the feeling...
And the life
Moving on...

DOT:

We've always belonged
Together!

GEORGE AND DOT:

We will always belong
Together!

DOT:

Just keep moving on.
Anything you do,

Let it come from you.

Then it will be new.

Give us more to see...

You never cared what anyone thought. That upset me at the time because I wanted you to care what I thought.

GEORGE:

I'm sure that I did.

DOT:

I am sure that you did, too.

GEORGE:

Dot.

(HE takes the book to her)

Why did you write these words?

DOT:

They are your words, George. The ones you muttered so often when you worked.

GEORGE:

(Reads slowly)

"Order."

(Chord. OLD LADY enters)

OLD LADY:

George. Is that you?

(GEORGE turns to her. He looks back to DOT, who smiles, then back to the OLD LADY)

GEORGE:

Yes.

OLD LADY:

Tell me! Is this place as you expected it?

GEORGE:

What?

OLD LADY:

The park, of course.

GEORGE:

Somewhat.

OLD LADY:

Go on.

GEORGE:

Well, the greens are a little darker. The sky a little greyer. Mud tones in the water.

OLD LADY:

(Disappointed)

Well, yes, I suppose -

GEORGE:

But the air is rich and full of light.

OLD LADY:

Good.

(Chord. As the OLD LADY leaves, GEORGE reads the next word)

Sunday-Finale

GEORGE:

"Design."

(Music begins: "Sunday." The downstage right building begins to rise. The CELESTES appear and begin to cross the stage)

"Tension."

(Two buildings rise stage right and left. More characters from the painting appear and begin to promenade)

"Composition."

(Building rises)

"Balance."

(Buildings rise. The stage is filled by the characters from the painting)

"Light."

(The large building in the back rises)

GEORGE:

Dot. I cannot read this word.

DOT:

"Harmony".

ALL :

Sunday,
By the blue
Purple yellow red water
On the green
Purple yellow red grass,
As we pass
Through arrangements of
Shadows
Towards the verticals of
trees
Forever

*(All bow to **GEORGE**)*

By the blue
Purple yellow red water
On the green
Orange violet mass
Of the grass...

GEORGE :

(Reading again, struggling with the words)

"So much love in his words
... forever with his colors
...how George looks... he can
look forever... what does he
see?... his eyes so dark and
shiny... so careful... so
exact..."

*(DOT takes **GEORGE** by the arm and turns
him to the group)*

DOT :

In our perfect park...

GEORGE :

Made of flecks of light
And dark...

ALL (EXCEPT GEORGE AND DOT) :

And parasols...
People strolling through the trees
Of a small suburban park
On an island in the river
On an ordinary Sunday...

*(The **COMPANY** has settled generally in the areas that they occupy in the painting)*

Sunday...

*(All begin to leave very slowly, except **DOT**, who remains downstage with **GEORGE**)*

Sunday...

*(**DOT** leaves **GEORGE**, crossing upstage into the park; **she** turns toward **GEORGE**. The white canvas drop descends)*

GEORGE :

(Reading from the book)

"White. A blank page... Or canvas. His favourite. So many possibilities..."

*(**He** looks up and sees **DOT** disappearing behind the white canvas. Lights fade to black)*

