

TWO TO TANGO

**by
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About the play

Two to Tango is a comedy drama about contemporary, middle-class, heterosexual relationships. It explores different elements of relationships and the struggles of those in relationships to continue to make them work. It is a two-hander featuring the characters, Lisa Doyle and Andrew Stark, a married couple in their early-to-mid-forties, who have been married for about fourteen years. They have two daughters – Sarah, aged six and Gemma, who's 14 months old.

The structure

The play alternates in setting between marriage counseling sessions in which Andrew and Lisa speak to their counselor together or individually, and scenes that illustrate various aspects of their relationship.

Characters

Lisa Doyle is an architect in her early forties, a classic example of a contemporary professional woman. The one compromise she has made is to work half-time as her second child is still quite young.

Andrew Stark is a senior project manager at a national property development company. He is about the same age as Lisa, and is a devoted father.

Time

The play is set in contemporary South Africa, 2005.

Place

The setting is Cape Town.

Set

Given the multi-location nature of the play, it is recommended that the set be flexible and suggestive, rather than realistic. A sofa could double as the couch on which the couple sits when they're at marriage counseling, and as the sofa at home on which they spend much time watching television, reading, etc. The props are suggestive too e.g. a steering wheel for indicating that they're driving in a car, golf clubs to suggest them playing putt-putt, etc.

Scenes change rapidly, and in fact, the rhythm of the play at times depends on rapid scene changes, so that props and set are to facilitate this in serving the action, rather than being entities in their own rights.

Lights come up on Andrew and Lisa in a restaurant. They hardly talk to each other through the meal, making very small, awkward talk when they do. As opposed to the rapid-fire dialogue of the next scene(s), the pace of this dialogue is much slower.

Both have a menu, and are studying it. They don't look at each other as they speak. After a while, Andrew starts.

Andrew: *(without looking up)* What are you having?

Lisa: *(Pause)* I don't know. *(Pause)* And you?

Andrew: *(Pause)* I'm still looking....

Lisa: *(looking around)* I've never seen this place so quiet.

Andrew: *(still looking at his menu)* Ja....*(Pause)*

Lisa: Must be because it's the middle of the month....

Andrew: *(looking up)* Ja....

They both look up from the menus as if at a waitron who introduces herself and asks if they are ready to order.

Andrew: Yes, we're ready. *(Pause, as he looks at Lisa as if asking her to order. She shrugs and then he orders for her).* She'll have the grilled calamari. *(Pause)* Er, with rice. Yes, and a glass of white wine. Dry.

Lisa: And he'll have a Windhoek. And the Portuguese chicken. *(Pause)* With chips...definitely.

("Waitron" goes. They smile at each other...)

Lisa: It's been a while since we were out in the middle of the week.

Andrew: It's been a while since we've been out. Period.

Lisa: It will get better, honey. When the kids are older.

Andrew: We'll both be in wheelchairs....

Lisa: *(ignoring him, trying to keep the conversation upbeat)* It was nice of your folks to offer to babysit at our house.

Andrew: Their TV's broken....

Lisa: Still....

Andrew: Everybody loves Raymond...especially my folks. They haven't missed an episode.

Pause. They smile awkwardly at each other.

Lisa: Well, I love Andrew. *(She stretches her hand towards him on the table)*

Andrew: *(mechanically, taking her hand)* I love you too. *(releases her hand)*

Awkward pause.

Lisa: How was your day?

Andrew: So-so. *(Pause)* And yours?

Lisa: Fine.

Their drinks arrive. They say thanks to the waitron, and proceed to sip their drinks.

Andrew: How's your wine?

Lisa: It's...dry. *(smiles)*

Andrew: And...white. At least affirmative action hasn't made it to our wines yet. *(laughs)*

Pause

Lisa: How's your beer?

Andrew: Like it should be. Cold.

Lisa: It was warm today.

Andrew: Ja...27 apparently.

Lisa: I hope it continues through the weekend.

Andrew: Ja.

Lisa: What do you want to do this weekend?

Andrew: *Not* mow the lawn...

Lisa: We could go away....

Andrew: Like where?

Lisa: Hermanus...?

Andrew: Boring....

Lisa: What about Montagu?

Andrew: Too far....

Lisa: Franschoek?

Andrew: That's our honeymoon spot. We can't go back there with kids.

Lisa: *You* suggest somewhere.

Andrew: I might have a golf game.

Lisa: *(sighs)* When?

Andrew: Saturday....

Lisa: When were you going to tell me?

Andrew: When it's confirmed....

Lisa: *(plaintively)* Andrew....

Andrew: *(slightly mocking, equally plaintively)* Lisa....

(Andrew's cellphone rings)

Lisa: You're not going to answer, are you?

Andrew: *(checks number on the screen)* It's Jake. He's probably calling to confirm....*(reaches for his phone)*. *(When he speaks on the phone, he is noticeably more animated)*. Howzit bro! *(Pause)* Ja, no, no problem. I'm just chilling here with Lisa at Fabio's. *(Pause, then smiles hugely)* You're joking, really? *(turns to Lisa)* Jake got a hole-in-one on the seventeenth today. *(Lisa rolls her eyes)* That's

amazing, bro! Who were you playing with? *(Pause)* I want to see that card! *(Pause)* I'm sure you're framing it....*(laughs)*

Lisa's cellphone rings. She answers it and they talk simultaneously on their phones to their respective friends.

Lisa: Lisa, hallo...Oh hi, Cheryl. Where are you phoning from? I don't recognize this number...*(Pause)* Oh I see. I hope they give you a fat bonus for the hours you put in girl...

Andrew: Where did you hear that from? Did Stevie tell you? *(Pause, speaking in lower tones so Lisa doesn't hear)* Ja, it's pretty shit working there at the moment, and today was just one of those days....

Lisa: Well, last time it was at Eve's place...no, no. I don't think it's yours. It's definitely not my turn. It's in my diary...I can check...*(scratches through her handbag)*

Andrew: Not everyone can play golf during the week like you, bro! *(laughs)* Some of us have families! We have to bring home the bacon....

Lisa: Cheryl, I think I left it at home....no, we're at Fabio's. *(Pause)* The Portuguese place. *(Pause)* Andrew's parents are looking after them. We thought we'd get out and have some time together...like old times.

Andrew: So are we on for Saturday, bro? *(Pause)* When? *(Pause)* Will you come back to me with a time? *(quietly)* You know how Lisa gets....

Their food arrives.

Andrew: *(to waitron)* Other way round. She's having the calamari.

Lisa: Listen, my food's arrived...*(pause)* no, no...*(pause)*. I'll call you when I get home.

Andrew: Okay, will you let me know?

Lisa: I'm almost sure it's at Karen's place, but I'll check and let you know.

Andrew: *(clicks his fingers at the waitron)* Can I get some tomato sauce, please? *(to Jake on the line)* I don't mind. We can make it a four-ball. The more the merrier...*(starts eating with a fork e.g. dipping into the chips)*

Lisa: Are you done with the books you took the last time? *(Pause)* Are there any good ones? *(starts picking her food)* I want to read that...

Andrew: Eish, bro, this food looks good.

Lisa: Will you keep it for me?

Andrew: You could've joined us....

Lisa: I must go now.

Andrew: No, Lisa wouldn't have minded....

Lisa: Calamari...it *is* nice to do couple things again...

At this point, Lisa and Andrew improvise their conversations, each talking at the same time so that the audience can't really follow or hear what either is saying. As they do so, they are very animated in conversation, laughing and signaling to the other to speak quieter, or, in their body language, indicating this. Then, after about 40-60 seconds, the concurrent conversations end.

Andrew: Okay, cheers. See you Saturday, bro. *(ends cellphone conversation)*

Lisa: Oh, by the way, did you hear about Margie and Jeff? *(Pause)* It was inevitable, hey? No-one thought it would last....Ja, except Margie.

Andrew is eating his food, while Lisa talks and eats at the same time.

Lisa: That's true. I just feel sorry for the kids. *(Pause)* I think she said she's going to stay with her folks for a while. *(Pause)*

Andrew signals that Lisa should perhaps end the conversation by "cutting his throat" with his hand.

Lisa: Okay, listen, I must go. *(Pause)* Ja, I'll call you when I get home, okay? Chat later. Bye. *(ends conversation)* It was Cheryl.

Andrew, with his mouth full, acknowledges that piece of information with a grunt. They eat in silence, concentrating on their food, sometimes looking at each other and smiling. Then after a minute or so, Lisa starts.

Lisa: So, are you playing golf?

Andrew: Jake's gonna phone.

Lisa: I thought he just phoned...

Andrew: That was to tell me he got a hole-in-one.

They eat in silence again.

Andrew: I've never had a hole-in-one.

Lisa: Can you pass me the salt?

Andrew: I've had an eagle....

Lisa: How's your...birdie (*pointing to the chicken*)

Andrew: Very...Portuguese. (*Pause*)

Lisa: It's good?

Andrew: Ja...must have been "free range". (*laughs at his own joke*)

(Pause, Lisa doesn't respond)

Andrew: Get it?

Lisa: Get what?

Andrew: Free range...birdie. Like...golf range.

Lisa: Oh...ja. (*attempts a snigger*) The calamari's good too.

Andrew just grunts in response with a mouth full of food being chewed. Andrew keeps looking over Lisa's shoulder, and smiles.

Lisa: What's so funny?

Andrew: Don't look now...

Lisa: At what?

Andrew: There's a couple behind you. They were here before we arrived. They haven't said a word to each other the whole night. (*Pause*) (*Leans forward to Lisa and laughs. Lisa smiles uncomfortably.*) At least we communicate, hey.

Lights come up. Andrew and Lisa are seated on chairs facing the audience as if they are seated on chairs – or a three-seater sofa - facing their marriage counselor. They speak to the audience as if to their counselor. Their body language – each has her/his inner leg folded over the other away from her/his partner – provides a clue to their relationship at that point in time.

Lisa: I must just tell you that Andrew doesn't really want to be here.

Andrew: Damn right.

Lisa: He doesn't think we have a problem.

Andrew: Oh, I think we have a problem.....

Lisa: So now we *do* have a problem....

Andrew: Paying R350 an hour to a shrink...that's our problem.

Lisa: I told you that *I'm* paying for these sessions.

Andrew: Honey, 350 bucks could buy me five hours on a golf course.

Lisa: And how will that help our relationship?

Andrew: (*Pause*) Absence makes the heart grow fonder...?

Lisa: Yeah, right!

Andrew: Playing golf makes me happy. If I'm happy, I bring that happiness into our relationship....

Lisa: And in the meantime, I have happy hour – times five – with a six-year-old and a fourteen-month-old.

Andrew: You bought me the golf clubs, honey.

Lisa: That was an anniversary present. Before we had the kids.

(They've been talking to each other with body language still indicating alienation. They then both face the front, indicating that the shrink has just asked the question: "So why don't you think you need to be here, Andrew?")

Andrew: I don't think we need to be here because there's nothing special about our problems. Everyone has them. And everyone deals with them without having to run off for counseling. My parents

celebrated their 47th anniversary last year. They didn't go for therapy.

Lisa: Your mother told me how many times she would liked to have left your father.

Andrew: The point is, she didn't. They worked through their problems themselves. And anyway, why's she telling *you* that?

Lisa: (*innocently*) Absolutely no idea....

Andrew: (*talking to the front to the counselor*) Look, with all due respect, I know this is how you make your living, but nowadays, we run off to get professional help at the drop of a hat. You don't like your baby after you give birth to it? See a shrink. Your child throws her broccoli on the floor? Call in the behavioral specialist. Your dog doesn't bark at strangers anymore? Take the bitch to a dog psychologist. For goodness' sake...!

Lisa: You have a problem with your golf swing? See a professional.

Andrew: (*glaring at Lisa, pause*) Exactly. That's exactly what I mean....

(*They turn again to look to the front to listen to the counselor's question: "So Lisa, why do you think you should be here?"*)

Andrew: One of Lisa's best friends – they know each other from primary school....

Lisa: He's asked me why *I* think we should be here. You've had your turn.

Andrew: I know, but I don't think you're going to give the real reason.

Lisa: (*to the counselor*) You see? This is one of the things I have to deal with. Andrew speaking for me.

Andrew: I'm not speaking for you. I just want the shrink to know what brought this on. (*to counselor*) Lisa's best friend has just told her that she and her husband of twelve years are getting divorced. They have three kids....

Lisa: What's that got to do with anything?

Andrew: Just let me finish. Lisa's been very jumpy since then. Anytime there's the slightest conflict between us, she wants us to go to therapy.

Lisa: So we can find an adult way to handle those conflicts.

Andrew: *(to Lisa)* We are not Jeff and Margie. Jeff's a prick and Margie's an airhead. We can work through our stuff ourselves. *(looks to counselor who's said: "Okay, let Lisa tell me why she thinks you need to be here")* Fine. Of course she can speak, but I just wanted you to know....

Lisa: It hasn't been *one* thing. It's been a series of things over a period of time. And I want us to get professional help to know how to work through them. So we don't repeat the patterns.

Lights come down on the therapy session. The come up on a domestic situation where Lisa and Andrew are arguing. Andrew is making himself a cup of tea. Lisa is sweeping the kitchen floor.

Lisa: You're always cutting in. Before I finish a train of thought, you cut me in.

Andrew: That's funny....

Lisa: It's not funny!

Andrew: It's funny because I think that's exactly what you do to me.

Lisa: *I cut you in?*

Andrew: Everytime....

Lisa: I do not.

Andrew: You do.

Lisa: *(indignantly)* I do not!

Andrew: I'm sorry to be the one to have to tell you, but you're not as perfect as you think, my little precious...

Lisa: Tell me when...

Andrew: When you cut me in?

Lisa: Give me just one example....

Andrew: You mean now?

Lisa: Any conversation that we've had over the last two days, or even the last week where....

Andrew: I can't remember that far back.

Lisa: See? You've just done it again.

Andrew: How do you expect me to remember....?

Lisa: You just cut in. Before I could say what I wanted to say.

Andrew: I *know* what you wanted to say.

Lisa: Excuse me!

Andrew: All you wanted to say was that I should tell you when I had cut in...*(corrects himself)* no, where *you* had cut in during the last two days or during the last week.

Lisa: You're not listening to me.

Andrew: I am listening to you, Lisa. You think I interrupt you all the time.

Lisa: It's frustrating.

Andrew: It's frustrating when you do it too.

Lisa: It's like you're impatient with me.

Andrew: *(rolling his eyes)* Okay, I'm sorry. Okay? *(picks up the cup of tea and magazine as if to sit somewhere)*

Lisa: Is that it?

Andrew: *(sighs, then, mechanically)* I'm sorry for cutting you in. I'm sorry for giving the impression that I'm impatient with you. I will try not to do it again.

Lisa: No, no, no, Mister Stark. You're not getting away with it that easily.

Andrew: *(plaintively)* Lisa, first you complain that I never say sorry. Now I say sorry, and you say that's not enough.

Lisa: I didn't complain....

Andrew: You said...

Lisa: Yes, but I didn't *complain* about your not saying sorry. You make me sound like a nag.

Andrew looks at Lisa, without saying anything. She sees him looking at her.

Lisa: What...?

Andrew: You're not having your period, are you?

Lisa: (*angrily*) You know how much I hate you saying that...like everytime we have a disagreement, it's because *I'm* having my period!

Andrew: I'm just asking....

Lisa: Well, don't!

Andrew: If I know it's because of your period...

Lisa: I am *not* having my period!

Andrew: I know, I know. All I'm saying is if I know that you are, then I'll know not to argue back.

Lisa: You can be such an asshole sometimes.

Andrew: (*trying to go again with his tea and magazine*) Okay, Lisa. I'm sorry for saying that you complained. I didn't mean to make you sound like a nag. And I'm sorry for asking if you were having your period. Can I go now?

Lisa: Andrew, you can't just stop this when *you've* had enough. We're having an argument, not sex!

Andrew: Oh, so is that what this is about? Sex?

Lisa: No, it's about communication. About listening. Not just listening, but *hearing* what your partner has to say. Relationships 101.

Andrew: Look Lisa, I don't know what more you want to say...or what you'd like *me* to say. I've conceded that, technically, I'm in the wrong, and I said sor...

Lisa: Technically?

Andrew: See, now *you've* just done it.

Lisa: (*ignoring him*) What do you mean, "technically I'm in the wrong?" Either you're wrong or...(*mischievously*) you're wrong.

Andrew: That's exactly it. Whatever I do or say, I'm wrong.

Lisa: (*with exaggerated irony*) You poor thing.

Andrew: Okay, so we have a problem. We both cut each other in before the other finishes (*Lisa tries to say something, Andrew puts up his hand and speaks louder to stop her*) what they are wanting to say.

Lisa: *You* have the problem.

Andrew: It takes two to tango, Lisa.

Lisa: You're dancing solo on this one.

Andrew: (*with good-humoured sarcasm*) Okay, *I* have the problem. *We both* do it, but it's *my* problem. So what are we going to do about it?

Lisa: I don't know.

Andrew: Of course not. That's because it's *my* problem, so *I* have to come up with a solution. (*Pause*) Let's see. What about if we say "over" after each time we're done? Like when you use a walkie-talkie. Lisa, Lisa, come in Lisa, over.

Lisa: Are you serious?

Andrew: Can you think of something better?

Lisa: That's so...mechanical.

Andrew: Not anymore than our lovemaking schedule. Tuesday nights. And Saturday mornings, sponsored by Cartoon Network. But at least we get to have sex.

Lisa: You know I'm not crazy about that either.

Andrew: You're the one who suggested it!

Lisa: To help with your short-term memory loss. You could never remember when was the last time we'd done it! So you were always needing to do it again!

Andrew: No, Lisa. It was the only way we could make sure that we were doing it twice a week. If it was up to you, we'd do it on my birthday. And Christmas. Like it's a present.

Lisa: Look, we're not talking about sex.

Andrew: No, we're talking about a way to solve our...alleged... communication problem. And I'm suggesting that we do it in the same way that we've dealt with our sex problem. Set rules. And then when it's going well, we can drop the rules.

Lisa: We've been doing Tuesdays and Saturdays for the last two years. Shouldn't we be a bit more spontaneous now?

Andrew: Sure. Tuesdays and Saturdays and any other day you want to be spontaneous.

Lisa: You're such a boy!

Andrew: If it ain't broke, why fix it?

Lisa: *(Pause)* Okay, let's try your idea. Over.

Andrew: *(eyeing her suspiciously)* Are you sure? Over.

Lisa: Well, it's better than having you cut in all the time.

Pause. Andrew wants to say something, but can't. Lisa looks at him....

Lisa: What?

Andrew: You didn't say "over".

Lisa: That's because I'm not done. Mmm, I could get into this. Just never say "over".

Andrew: That's fine by me. I'll just have a relationship with the television remote.

Pause

Lisa: You already do.

Andrew: Well, at least when I push its buttons, it responds....

Lisa: *(ignoring the implications of his comment)* You know what I think?

Andrew: No, but I'm sure you're going to tell me....

Lisa: If we can't communicate with each other without sounding like the highway patrol, maybe we need professional help.

Lights fade on this scene. Music. Lights come up on the next domestic little squabble. They are getting ready to go out. Andrew is drying his hair with a hairdryer. Lisa is fitting on a skirt in front of a mirror. They talk loudly above the noise of the hairdryer.

Lisa: What do you think?

Andrew: About what?

Lisa: Does my butt look big in this skirt?

Andrew: *(without looking)* Of course not, honey.

Lisa: You're not even looking!

Andrew: I don't need to look. I know the right answer.

Lisa: You're no help.

Andrew: Honey, the last time I gave you my opinion, you refused to go out for a week. And *then* I was agreeing with you.

Lisa: It was the way you said it.

Andrew: It was a big pimple.

Lisa: You didn't have to say that it looked like I was growing a second nose. *(takes off the skirt)*

Andrew: *Now* what are you doing? *(turns off the hairdryer)*

Lisa: I'm jumping into the shower. *(continuing to undress)*

Andrew: (*exasperated*) It's five-past-seven, Lisa. Tanya asked us to be at the restaurant by seven-thirty at the latest.

Lisa: Well, I'm sorry. I'm not going out without having a shower. I smell like one of Gemma's diapers.

Andrew: Honey, it's your brother's surprise birthday. The point about surprise birthdays...

Lisa: ...is that the person probably knows anyway.

Andrew: We're going to be the only ones to arrive late again. We already have this reputation.

Lisa: Well honey, next time, *you* bath the kids. *You* collect the babysitter. *You* feed the kids.

Andrew: The deal is, I take the babysitter home afterwards.

Lisa: That doesn't help very much with us getting to functions on time, does it? (*exits off-stage as if to shower*)

Andrew: (*louder*) Maybe you should just go by yourself.

Lisa: (*with a towel wrapped around her*) I am not going by myself.

Andrew: Then take the babysitter with you. I'll stay with the kids.

Lisa: What's your problem, Andrew? We're going to be ten minutes late. What's the big deal? (*She exits off-stage again, and they have this conversation while she's in the shower, so he's on stage, and she's off stage*)

Andrew: I'm tired of being ten minutes late. I'm tired of being late for every single function that we ever go to! It was okay when Sarah was a baby. We needed to get our routines right. But now, it's just a plain bad habit. We get there late, and then we're the first to leave. Because we have to take the babysitter home. Why don't we get a babysitter with a car?

Lisa: Why don't *you* find a babysitter with a car?

Andrew: Why can't the kids just sleep over at your mom's place?

Lisa: She's looking after Greg and Tanya's kids.

Andrew: So? I'm sure she would love to be surrounded by *all* her grandchildren.

Lisa: We've had this conversation before, Andrew. You can't expect a woman who's nearly seventy to look after six kids under ten.

Andrew: (*tongue-in-cheek, but she can't see although the audience can*) We could take them to my folks.

Lisa: No ways.

Andrew: Just kidding.

Lisa: *They'll* be asleep and the kids will still be up playing at the fireplace like the last time. (*she enters on stage, and starts dressing*)

Andrew: (*putting on his jacket*) Come, come, come, Lisa. We need to go.

Lisa: I'm going as fast as I can.

Andrew: Gemma's getting teeth faster than that.

Lisa: Andrew, stop it!

Andrew: Are we going to try to stop being late for everything?

Lisa: Do you really want to have this conversation now?

Andrew: When's a good time?

Lisa: Why don't you go and talk to the girls and the babysitter downstairs?

Andrew: I don't want to talk to them. I want to talk to you.

Lisa: Okay, that's it. You go.

Andrew: What?

Lisa: I'm not going. You go.

Andrew: It's *your* brother's birthday dinner.

Lisa: If you're in *this* mood...I won't have a very pleasant evening.

Andrew: Lisa...!

Lisa: Just go. And drop off the babysitter along the way.

Andrew: *(puts his arm around her, more gently)* Hey...come on.

Lisa: *(close to tears)* What's happening to us?

Andrew: What do you mean?

Lisa: We fight all the time.

Andrew: No we don't....

Lisa: We need counseling.

Andrew: *(exasperated)* Ag, not this *kak* again Lisa...

Lights fade on scene. Music. Lights come up on Andrew and Lisa in the marriage counselor's rooms.

Andrew: *(speaking directly to the audience as if to the counselor)* All the examples that Lisa's given are normal, right? Every couple experiences them.

Lisa: But what if they happen often? It's like a bad habit. That can't be good?

Andrew: *I* don't think they happen all that often.

Lisa: Even if it's every three months, it's too often.

Andrew: *(to the counselor)* What do you think?

Andrew: *(in response to counselor who agrees with him on a point).* Exactly. *(Pause, then smiles at Lisa triumphantly)* Exactly...!

Then they both listen to the counselor who makes a series of points that supports Lisa's views.

Lisa: Exactly. *(Pause)* Exactly. *(Pause)* Exactly.

Andrew: *(to Lisa)* Okay, I don't think it's very healthy if we get into point-scoring.

Lisa: *(half to Andrew, and half in response to another point from the counselor)* Exactly!

Lights come down on this scene. They come up on Andrew lying stretched on the sofa. Lisa is also on the sofa, reading Fair Lady. Andrew's head is resting on Lisa's lap. He's watching "The Weakest Link" on TV.

Andrew: Do you think she's sexy?

Lisa: Which one?

Andrew: Not the contestants...Fiona.

Lisa: What do *you* think?

Andrew: I suppose...in a spanking kind of way.

(Lisa goes back to reading her magazine and stroking Andrew's hair)

TV: Who is the Afrikaans person beginning with "V" who's the butt of many South African jokes?

Andrew: *(answering quickly)* Van der Merwe!

TV: Complete the sentence: "Diamonds are a girl's best...?"

Andrew: Friend!

TV: In which province is the town of Bethlehem?

Andrew: *(answering quickly again)* Free State! *(Pause as answer is given)* Yes! *I* should be on this programme, Lees.

TV: Which South African author wrote the book, *Heart of Redness*?

Lisa: *(still reading her magazine, while Andrew says "Pass")* Zakes Mda.

Andrew: Never heard of him.

TV: Which South African singer serves as a UNESCO Children's Ambassador?

Andrew: Johnny Clegg.

Lisa: *(looking up)* Miriam Makeba.

Andrew: You're good, honey.

TV: Which South African flyhalf beginning with “J” scored the winning drop goal in the 1995 World Cup?

Andrew: *(answering quickly)* Jannie de Beer!

Lisa: Wasn't it Stransky?

Andrew: Oh ja, Joel.

TV: Which of the following is NOT a South African Nobel Prize winner? JM Coetzee, FW De Klerk, William Kentridge, Albert Luthuli.

Andrew: Luthuli...

Lisa: William Kentridge.

Not pleased that Lisa knows more than he does, Andrew changes channels with the remote control.

Lisa: What are you doing?

Andrew: Seeing what's on the other channels.

Lisa: I thought we're watching....

Andrew: It's boring, man.

Music. Lights fade and comes up on Lisa and Andrew playing scrabble. There's a scrabble board with words on it, and each has their seven letters. There's a dictionary next to the board.

Lisa places letters on the board.

Andrew: No way!

Lisa: *(counting her score)* Sixteen times triple word...forty eight.

Andrew writes down her score. Lisa picks up new letters.

Andrew: *(grudgingly)* You're on a roll, honey.

Andrew places letters on the board.

Lisa: Cat?

Andrew: (*counting his score*) Two, three, four and double letter for “t”, so that makes it five. (*writes down his score*)

Lisa: (*teasingly*) Shall I get a calculator?

Andrew: (*defensively*) I’ve got crap letters.

Lisa: (*trying to pick up the dictionary*) I just want to see how you spell this word.

Andrew: (*takes the dictionary out of her reach*) No, you can’t.

Lisa: Come on, Andrew.

Andrew: That’s the rule Lisa. Tell me the word and how you want to spell it, and I’ll look it up.

Lisa: Ziggurat...

Andrew: What?

Lisa: I want to check if it has two “g’s” or one.

Andrew: That’s not even a word, Lisa. (*flips through the dictionary*)

Lisa: It is. I came across it when I was studying architecture. It’s a pyramid...

Andrew: How many letter word is that?

Lisa: Depends if it has two “g’s” or one. It could have seven....

Andrew: Seven? And it has a zed in it? Then it’s definitely not a word! (*he finds the word in the dictionary*)

Lisa: So?

Andrew: (*reading disbelievingly*) “ziggurat” – a pyramid-shaped tower in ancient Mesopotamia surmounted by a temple, built in tiers...

Lisa: (*triumphantly*) See!

Andrew: (*not able to hide his displeasure at her being right*) Okay, okay...

Lisa: One “g” or two?

Andrew: (glumly) Two...

Lisa: (disappointed) Ah...I only have one.

Andrew: (excitedly) Yes!

Pause and silence as Lisa reconsiders her options. After a while, Andrew shifts around impatiently, does stretching exercises while seated, etc.

Andrew: Who's turn is it?

Lisa: Andrew, you're disturbing my concentration....

Andrew: "Ziggurat"...you can still make "rat". (Pause) Or "zit" (sniggers)

Music. Lights fade on this scene and comes up on Andrew and Lisa with putters in their hands. They're at a putt-putt course.

Andrew, with experienced golfer style, is putting towards the audience. He just misses the hole, and reacts accordingly.

Andrew: Damn!

Lisa: (generously) Nearly, honey.

Andrew goes up to the ball, and "taps" it in.

Andrew: Two. (writes in his score)

Lisa stands with all the style of an inexperienced golfer, holding the putter awkwardly. Andrew "sneezes" deliberately as Lisa hits. She also goes up and taps it in for a two.

Lisa: Two.

Andrew: (finding it difficult that his wife has a similar score to his) It would be very different on a golf course....

Lisa: (patronisingly) I'm sure, honey.

They "go" to the next hole.

Andrew: This next one will sort out the men from the boys.

Lisa: Okay, boys first.

Andrew putts, this time at ninety degrees to the audience.

Andrew: Ag, nooit, man! *(he goes up to the ball, and putts again, this time the ball swivels round the edge of the cup, and rolls away)*
(incredulously) Did you see that? How did that happen?

Lisa: The hole didn't like your ball....

Andrew: *(putts again)* Three.

Lisa: *(putting, gets a hole-in-one, jumps in the air)* Yes!

Andrew: This game is like the lotto. There's no skill involved....

Lisa: Honey, just relax and enjoy the game. We're here to have fun.

Andrew: It's okay for you to say...you're winning.

Lisa: There are still five holes to go....

Andrew: *(getting ready to play the next hole, this time with his back to the audience)* When last did we do this?

Lisa: Like...never...?

Andrew: Have we never played putt-putt?

Lisa: Not with me...

Andrew: Maybe that's why I'm so rusty.

Lisa: Okay, play. There are people behind us.

Andrew: *(lining up his putt)* This is so corny. I'm sure we could have come up with something better.

Lisa: Well, we didn't. So he made this suggestion.

Andrew: *(gets a hole-in-one)* Yes! At last!

Lisa: Not bad, honey.

Andrew: *(imitating the marriage counselor)* "I want you to make a date with each other". Such...psychobabble. And to think we're paying this guy to tell us to do this.

In the meantime, Lisa has played and tapped in her ball after two shots.

Lisa: Two

Music, lights go down. They come up on Lisa and Andrew seated on the sofa at a counseling session.

Andrew: Well, we did as you suggested. *(Pause as counselor asks "And?")*
And...it was okay.

Lisa: Ja, it was fine. We had fun.

Andrew: We played scrabble, watched a bit of TV....

Lisa: Played putt-putt...

Andrew: Lisa cleaned me up. *(Pause)* Both. Scrabble and putt-putt.

Lisa: It was a fluke, really. Andrew was a bit...rusty.

Andrew: The thing is, Lisa's just so good at everything.

Lisa: *(modestly)* No, I'm not.

Andrew: *(to counselor)* She is.

Lisa: *(to counselor)* Andrew's a little...competitive. It's just a...male thing.

Andrew: I always feel I have to prove myself against her.

Lisa: *(surprised and almost a bit sorry for him)* You've never told me that before.

Andrew: That's because I've only told myself in the last week...I'm sure it's a male thing, but it's more pronounced with Lisa. Obviously, when you do something, you do it to the best of your ability. Or when you play, you play to win. I compete with my male buddies, like, when we play golf. But with Lisa, I compete even harder.

Lisa: Really? I thought that's how you were with everybody. You even have to be beat Sarah at snakes and ladders when you play.

Andrew: I don't know where it comes from. *(Pause)* I know Lisa's cleverer than me. When she was working full-time, she...earned more than

I did. Sometimes, it's difficult...Maybe that's why I feel I need to prove myself...

Lisa: *(recognizing his insecurities)* Ah, honey...*(they look at, and reach towards each other, then, after the counselor asks them to tell him what they do for a living)* I'm an architect.

Andrew: I work for a property development company. We specialize in residential villages and cutting edge office blocks.

Lisa: *(Pause as Counselor says "you're in similar fields")* Yes, we're in similar fields, but we didn't know that when we met.

Andrew: Lisa went to varsity. And I did quantity surveying at technikon. *(in response to a question from the counselor)*.

Lisa: Sure. But there are two versions. I'll tell you my version of when we first met....

Andrew: My version's not so different...

Lights go down. They come up on Andrew and Lisa when they first meet – about twelve years before their counseling sessions. This is Lisa's version of their meeting. It's in a bar. Lisa's at a table, waiting for a friend. Andrew comes over to her. In this scene, he's a lot more modest, less confident than in the scene that follows.

Andrew: *(awkwardly)* Hi...

Lisa: Hallo.

Andrew: Can I get you a drink?

Lisa: Sure...

Andrew: Cool. What can I get you?

Lisa: Can I have a look at your cocktail menu?

Andrew: *(realizes she's mistaken him for a waitron)* Oh, no, I don't work here.

Lisa: You don't?

Andrew: Well, not as a waiter...

Lisa: Oh, I thought....

Andrew: I saw you sitting there...and...

Lisa: Oh, I'm sorry....

Andrew: No problem. (*Awkward pause*) So...can I buy you a drink?

Lisa: (*teasingly*) You'll have to ask my boyfriend.

Andrew: I'm sorry. I thought you were alone....

Lisa: (*pointing with her head*) He's the one with the muscles and the tattoos....

Andrew: The bouncer?

Lisa: No, the guy over there. (*smiles*) Pulling out the gun.

Andrew: (*looks around, sees no-one, realizes she's teasing him*) You're funny. I like a woman with a sense of humour. (*Awkward pause*) I've never seen you here before.

Lisa: Is that your version of "do you come here often?"

Andrew: You must hear a lot of chat-up lines.

Lisa: (*shrugs, then, bored*) "I've lost my number. Please can I have yours?" "So what's a beautiful woman like you doing in a dump like this?" "If you're not available, I hope you have a sister..."

Andrew: (*laughs*) I must remember those...

Lisa: Is there a book with chat-up lines that all guys get at the age of 13?

Andrew: No, we just pick them up from the graffiti on the toilet walls...(they both laugh) So, what can I get you?

Lisa: I'm not sure I'll have time for a drink. I'm meeting a friend.

Andrew: It will be my pleasure anyway.

Lisa: That's very sweet, thank you.

Andrew: Are you meeting a boyfriend?

Lisa: Girlfriend.

Andrew: Oh...good.

Lisa: (*teasing him again*) She's leaving her husband for me...

Andrew: (*awkward pause*). Really?...Are you...(realizes she's being funny)
You're not serious....

Lisa: You look like you're about to faint. Can I buy *you* a drink?

Andrew: I asked first. What will it be?

Lisa: A Bellini.

Andrew: Bellini?

Lisa: It's a cocktail.

Andrew: Oh, sure. I thought you meant the wine.

Lisa: There's a wine called Bellini?

Andrew: (*busking*). Ja...Italian.

Lisa: What about you?

Andrew: I'll just get an Amstel.

Lisa: No, I meant, do you come here often?

Andrew: Every Friday.

Lisa: Really?

Andrew: Just about. Fridays they do karaoke.

Lisa: Karaoke?

Andrew: You know...the audience comes up and sings...

Lisa: I know what karaoke is. I just can't believe that that's why you come here.

Andrew: Is that a good "can't believe" like "how amazing" or is it bad like..."that's really un-cool"

Lisa: Are you going to get that Bellini, or shall I?

Andrew: So it's bad, huh?

Lisa: Oh look. My friend's just arrived.

Andrew: *That* bad? At least tell me your name.

Lisa: Sushi.

Andrew: Sushi?

Lisa: It's a Japanese cultural export that I don't really mind.

Andrew: Have a drink with me, and I promise...I'll give up karaoke.

Slow fade. Lights come up on the same scene, but this time, the way Andrew remembers it. He's much more confident in this scene.

Andrew: Hi.

Lisa: Hallo.

Andrew: Would you mind if I bought you a drink?

Lisa: I was hoping you'd ask.

Andrew: Cool. What can I get you?

Lisa: A glass of white wine. Dry.

Andrew: What about a Bellini?

Lisa: Is that a kind of wine?

Andrew: Actually, it's a really cool, light cocktail. Women love it.

Lisa: Okay. I'll try it.

Andrew: *(snaps fingers at waitron)* Could I get a Bellini for the lady and...I'll have a...*(thinks he's really cool)* Sex on the Beach please. *(turns attention back to Lisa)* I'm not going to ask..."do you come here often?"

Lisa: Good. Then I won't have to answer "Never here, but sometimes on the beach."

Andrew: *(laughs)* A babe with a sense of humour...I like that! *(puts out his hand)* I'm Andrew.

Lisa: *(taking his hand)* Lisa.

Andrew: *(slowly letting go of her hand)* Soft hands...

Lisa: So what's a guy like you hanging out in a place like this?

Andrew: I'm one of the resident...musicians.

Lisa: Wow! Really?

Andrew: Well, not full-time. Mainly Friday nights.

Lisa: That's amazing.

Andrew: Are you meeting someone?

Lisa: Yes. A girlfriend. She's just got a new job. So we're having a celebratory drink. She suggested this spot.

Andrew: Good choice.

Lisa: There she is now. *(calls and raises her hand)* Cheryl...!

Andrew: I'm going to have to go and...sing. Will you have a drink with me later?

(Lights fade on this scene, and come up on Lisa and Andrew dancing later at the club. The music – popular 90s bar music - is loud, but they are able to talk above it. Lisa dances quite well; Andrew's a bit more stiff, but thinks he's a really cool dancer. Music goes softer when they speak, but they still give the impression of straining their voices above the music, moving closer to each other when they speak, but never really touching)

Andrew: Where'd you learn to dance?

Lisa: Natural rhythm. *(Pause, and dance)* My grandfather was black...

Andrew: *(cottoning on to the fact that she's a bit of a teaser)* Yeah, right.

Medium pause, music, dance.

Lisa: Your voice...

Andrew: What about it?

Lisa: It's not bad.

Andrew: Thanks.

Short pause. Dance.

Lisa: I can't promise to come to another karaoke night though.

Andrew: I've only been doing it as a babe magnet.

Lisa: Has it worked?

Andrew: Divorcees and single mums...mainly.

Pause, music and dance.

Andrew: You're not divorced, are you?

Lisa: *(shaking her head)* Single mum.

Andrew: *(playing along)* Twins I suppose?

Lisa: Not me. My mum. I'm going to tell her to come here next week.

Andrew: Are you ever serious?

Lisa doesn't answer. She just continues dancing, becoming increasingly wild in her dancing.

Lisa: I'm having fun.

Andrew: Me too.

Pause. Music, dance.

Andrew: Can I ask you something?

Lisa: Will you marry me?

Andrew: What?

Lisa: Just don't ask me that....

Music, pause and dance.

Lisa: What were you going to ask?

Andrew: Forget it.

Lisa: Come on...ask.

Andrew: Are you involved at the moment?

Lisa shakes her head and just keeps on dancing.

Andrew: Me neither.

Lisa: Cool. I'll tell my mother.

They laugh. Lights fade on this scene and come up on Lisa and Andrew having a drink.

Andrew: What are you looking for in a guy?

Lisa: Sense of humour. *(Pause)* Brain. *(Pause)* Commitment.

Andrew: The usual.

Lisa: And you?

Andrew: Good looks. Good cook. Good lay.

Lisa: *(not impressed)* Was that your sense of humour audition?

Andrew: Only if you found it funny.

Lisa: Let's try brain....

Andrew: Okay. Ask me anything.

Lisa: How do you feel about all those divorcees and single mums?

Andrew: *(thinks a little)* They're like...charity.

Lisa: Charity?

Andrew: These are women whose relationships have ended. They're hurting.

Lisa: And you're like an emotional SPCA.

Andrew: I provide a service. A romantic song. A bit of flirting. A drink, maybe.

Lisa: Sex...?

Andrew: Sorry?

Lisa: Is that part of the service you offer?

Andrew: I hardly know you....

Lisa: *(pause, then, with irony)* I suppose you've been saving yourself....

Andrew: For what?

Lisa: I don't know. For the right woman. For marriage. For a rainy day.

Andrew: *(smiles)* I don't think I've met a woman as funny as you.

Lisa: Funny strange, or funny ha ha?

Andrew: Ha ha. *(pause)* What about you? Are you saving yourself for a rainy day?

Lisa: *(with understatement)* I've already had a few...rainy days.

Andrew: Really? How...how active were they?

Lisa: What do you mean?

Andrew: I mean...*(he's awkward)*

Lisa: Say it.

Andrew: What?

Lisa: You want to know...were they sexually active rainy days.

Andrew: *(lying)* N-n-no...

Lisa: You sure?

Andrew: No. I mean...were they?

Lisa: Sexually active?

Andrew: Yes.

Lisa: *(thinks)* Some were more active than others....*(pause, she looks at the awkward expression on his face)* Don't tell me you're also looking for a virgin....

Lights come down on this scene. The wedding march plays. Lights come up on Lisa and Andrew giving a joint speech at the tenth anniversary of their marriage. They're standing next to each other in the middle of the stage, each with "speech cards" in their hands.

Andrew: It's wonderful to have all of you here today. Not all of you were at our wedding.

Lisa: And not everyone who was at our wedding is here. There were some of our friends who thought that we wouldn't last.

Andrew: That's why they're no longer our friends. Even some of our family didn't expect us to last this long.

Lisa: And that's why they haven't been invited to today either. We thought we would celebrate with those who send out positive energy.

Andrew: To be honest, sometimes, *I* didn't think we'd last...

Lisa: Neither did I...

Andrew: But we gave ourselves special permission to be here....My parents thought that we had rushed into marriage.

Lisa: *(ironically)* After a whirlwind romance of eighteen months....

Andrew: People want to know our secret. There are no secrets really. Like any couple, we've had our ups and downs.

Lisa: Indeed, many has been the night that I have found Andrew on top of me, going up and down, up and down....

Andrew: Shame. And all poor Lisa wanted to do was read.

Lisa: Part of our recipe for success is in the vows we made to each other. It was important for us to sit down and talk through what these vows meant for us, and not just mouth them as part of some ritual that would make us husband and wife.

Andrew: “Do you take this woman to be your lawfully wedded wife?” I really had to think about it. Why *this* woman? Why not Jane or Suzy or Siobaghn?

Lisa: Because they were all single mums, maybe?

Andrew: Why “lawfully-wedded wife”? Why not just live-in lover whom I could kick out once I got bored?

Lisa: Good question. Till he somehow saw my bank balance....

Andrew: That’s true, actually. It really helped me to say “for richer or for poorer” with a clear conscience after I opened Lisa’s bank statements by mistake. I knew we’d be safe...

Lisa: Andy’s always said that love may be blind, but it shouldn’t be dumb as well.

Andrew: I accepted that I would have to forsake all others...

Lisa: But it was still really hard for him to move out of his mom’s place. *(Pause)* I told Andy that I would be happy to be with him in sickness and health, except for one thing. I will never clean up his vomit.

Andrew: That’s what I like about Lisa. She has standards.

Lisa: It’s early days yet. But we survived the first year which everyone says is the most difficult in terms of adjusting from singlehood.

Andrew: We’ve survived the weekly bitch, the monthly glitch and the seven-year itch.

Lisa: And we survived having a child.

Andrew: More than a wedding ring, or the off-putting thought that if we split up, we would have to go through all of this again with someone else, it is our beautiful little Sarah who has helped us to bond even more.

Lisa: Andrew's such a sappy dad...I think the first time he felt any real emotion – since the 1995 World Cup Rugby final - was when Sarah was born.

Andrew: Like Lisa said, it's early days yet, but "till death us do part" doesn't seem like such a heavy burden anymore.

Lisa: And we agreed that "till death do us part" didn't give either of us the licence to do each other in. (*Pause as they register the uncomfortable shock of their guests.*) Hey, this is South Africa....

Andrew: It's ten years, but I can still remember Lisa coming down the aisle in her stunning white gown.

Lisa: With no underwear....

Andrew: Which I only found out when I had to reach for her garter.

Lisa: We thought we'd mark our first decade together by celebrating it with you, our dearest friends.

Andrew: Those of you who were there will remember that we didn't do the waltz like everyone else. We wanted to be different. So we did the tango. It's become a metaphor for us in the last ten years. If we've discovered anything in that time, then it's that it really does take two to tango.

The next ten scenes – one for every year of marriage - move along rapidly, almost in fast forward motion, at least at a 15-20% faster pace than the previous scenes. Between each scene, appropriate "tango" music plays and Lisa and Andrew do different parts of a tango dance. When the music stops, they are in position to play the next scene, with each of these scenes being a picture of some aspect of their marriage in the last ten years, and collectively depicting a reasonably happy marriage.

Music, and they break into a 15-second tango sequence. When the sequence stops, they are in the kitchen, with Andrew washing the dishes at the sink, and Lisa drying them with a dishcloth.

Lisa: It has got nothing to do with your mother.

Andrew: I know, honey.

Lisa: Nor with your father.

Andrew: I agree with you.

Lisa: I didn't marry them. I married you.

Andrew: You're right, sugar.

Lisa: And don't call me sugar.

Andrew: Honey...!

Lisa: Sorry. I'm just a bit sensitive about what people call me right now.

Andrew: They're from another era.

Lisa: That's no excuse.

Andrew: I'm just saying...

Lisa: They should respect our decision.

Andrew: I'm happy for you to keep your name.

Lisa: And I'm happy for you to keep yours.

Andrew: They worry about the family name.

Lisa: They can call me Lisa. Why do they insist on calling me Mrs Stark everytime they see me?

Andrew: Obviously, they have a problem.

Lisa: You should talk to them.

Andrew: I will.

Lisa: It makes me not want to see them.

Andrew: Your mom doesn't help.

Lisa: What do you mean?

Andrew: She's been married three times.

Lisa: So?

Andrew: My parents probably think you haven't had a very good role model.

Lisa: And what does that have to do with me changing my name from Doyle to Stark?

Andrew: If you insist on still being Lisa Doyle....

Lisa: Yes?

Andrew: ...they think it's a matter of time before you bail out on me.

Music, and they break into a 15-second tango sequence. When the sequence stops, they are "seated" in a movie house, watching the ads before the start of the movie. They whisper loudly to each other.

Andrew: *(dipping his hand into the "popcorn" carton between them)* Phew! You put a lot of salt into this.

Lisa: Have some coke. *(offering him some of her drink)*

Andrew: Not good for my ulcer.

Lisa: *(pointing)* I can't understand that...

Andrew: What?

Lisa: People sitting on the wrong seats...don't they check their seat numbers?

Andrew: I know.

Pause as they watch an ad in silence. Then they both laugh at a particular point.

Andrew: That's a good ad.

Lisa: I remember the ad. I just never remember what they're advertising.

Andrew: You know what irritates me?

Lisa: What?

Andrew: People who come late to the movies.

Lisa: You mean like after the movie has started?

Andrew: Exactly.

Lisa: If they're in our row, I try to stamp on their toes when they walk past me.

Andrew: Really?

Lisa: Ja....

Andrew: Me too.

Lisa: (*pointing stage right*) I think the usher's calling you....

Andrew: What? (*listens to usher asking what seat numbers he has, then takes out his tickets*) (*whispers loudly*) J 10 and 11. (*pause*) This is J 10 and 11.

Lisa: What do you think happened?

Andrew: The movie house must have sold the same tickets twice.

Lisa: Let me see...(Andrew gives Lisa the tickets). Honey...

Andrew: What?

Lisa: We're in the wrong movie....

They both stare in front of them. Fast fade to "surreal" lighting. Music up, and they dance a 10-15 second tango sequence. When the sequence ends, Lisa is off stage and Andrew is slouching on the sofa. Lisa enters.

Lisa: Hello honey, I'm home.

Andrew: (*grumpily*) Where've you been?

Lisa: At book club, honey.

Andrew: Yes, I know, but it's nearly eleven o' clock.

Lisa: (*innocently*) Is that the time?

Andrew: I think I'm going to start a men's club.

Lisa: You haven't read a book for years!

Andrew: Not a book club!

Lisa: (*stands behind Andrew and starts massaging his neck*) What kind of club?

Andrew: Just a club.

Lisa: To do what?

Andrew: I don't know. To watch *Desperate Housewives* together.

Lisa: (*smiling*) Like a Desperate Husbands club?

Andrew: No, like a men's support group.

Lisa: (*ripping off the idea of a men's support group*) Hello, my name's Andrew. Since we had a child, we haven't had sex. "Hi Andrew...."

Andrew: Hey, I don't make fun of your bookclub.

Lisa: It's the one time in the month I get to do something for me.

Andrew: You come home with all these books.

Lisa: That's how it works, darling.

Andrew: Every night you fall sleep with another man. Tonight it's Ondaachie...

Lisa: Michael Ondaatjie...

Andrew: Tomorrow night, it's Andre Brink.

Lisa: (*patronizing, tongue-in-cheek*) I'm sorry, honey. I didn't know you were so jealous.

Andrew: You can spend five hours with any of them. Just give me twenty minutes.

Lisa: Twenty?

Andrew: Okay...less, but you're the one who's always going on about foreplay....

Fast fade to "surreal" lighting. Music up, and they dance a 10-15 second tango sequence. When the sequence ends, they are jogging together, facing the audience.

Andrew: (*panting heavily*) How long have we been going?

Lisa: Three minutes.

Andrew: Feels like thirty....

Lisa: Don't think about the time.

Andrew: Can we take a breather?

Lisa: We said after ten minutes.

Andrew: You're going to kill me.

Lisa: This is so you will live longer.

Andrew: Can't we walk a bit?

Lisa: Stop talking and conserve your breath.

Andrew: You're a slave driver

Lisa: Think of me as your personal trainer. A cheap one.

Pause as they continue to jog.

Andrew: I have a pain in my left shoulder.

Lisa: (*smiling*) Probably a heart attack coming on.

Andrew: You have no sympathy.

Lisa: Last week you had a brain tumour.

Andrew: I thought I did.

Lisa: The week before, you were going to have a stroke.

Andrew: That's what it felt like.

Lisa: And that was after you went down with stomach cancer.

Andrew: You're going to miss me when I'm not here.

Lisa: I'm trying to keep you here as long as possible.

Andrew: How long are we going to do this?

Lisa: Every second day for the rest of your life.

Andrew: I want a divorce....

Fast fade to “surreal” lighting. Music up, and they dance a 10-15 second tango sequence. When the sequence ends, Lisa is gardening and Andrew is cleaning the pool. They talk to themselves, imagining that they’re actually talking to each other, in their own worlds.

Lisa: *(on her knees)* There are so many weeds, it’s depressing.

Andrew: *(using a net to collect leaves out of the pool)* Just tell me again why we have a pool?

Lisa: The more you weed, the more they come back.

Andrew: The biggest waste of time. Cleaning something we never use.

Lisa: I know I wanted a house with a garden, but...

Andrew: Our next house will definitely not have a pool.

Lisa: What do you think about painting that wall green?

Andrew: I wonder how much we would save in chlorine....

Lisa: My mom wants to know what I want for my birthday. Maybe I should ask for a water feature.

Andrew: With the water restrictions, we’ll save on water too.

Lisa: You know what would be good in that corner is a lemon tree.

Andrew: We’re going to have to put up a fence to keep the kids out.

Lisa: We should get a gardening service.

Andrew: We should probably get a pool cleaning service.

Fast fade to “surreal” lighting. Music up, and they dance a 10-15 second tango sequence. When the sequence ends, the lights come up on Lisa waiting with a bag in hand. Andrew is pacing up and down, turning things upside down looking for his keys.

Andrew: Have you seen my car keys?

Lisa: They're *your* car keys...

Andrew: I know, Lees, I'm just asking if you saw them.

Lisa: Why don't you hang them up on the key board?

Andrew: I don't need a lecture. Just help me find the keys.

Lisa: You lost them.

Andrew: Lees, we're going to be late again.

Lisa: And this time it will be *your* fault.

Andrew: We don't know that. I'm not the one that changes everything around every week.

Lisa: That's completely irrelevant.

Andrew: One day the cupboard is here, the next day it's over there.

Lisa: What's that got to do with anything?

Andrew: Just when you get used to the cupboard being over there, it gets shifted back here.

Lisa: You're wasting air. Just find the keys.

Andrew: Things are never lost in this house. They just get moved. How do I know you haven't moved the keys from where I placed it?

Lisa: Because we go through this same ritual every time we go out.

Andrew: Not every time.

Lisa: Most times.

Andrew: Don't exaggerate.

Lisa: Have you checked your pockets?

Andrew: My pockets?

Lisa: Your jacket pockets?

Andrew: Would I be so stupid...?

Lisa: Just check your pockets.

Andrew: *(checks his pockets and finds the keys)* How did they get here?

Lisa: *(loudly, looks to the ceiling)* Is David Copperfield in the house?

Andrew: Why didn't you ask me that at the beginning?

Lisa: What?

Andrew: If they were in my pockets....

Fast fade to "surreal" lighting. Music up, and they dance a 10-15 second tango sequence. When the sequence ends, they are shopping for clothes for Andrew. Andrew is standing in front of a mirror fitting on a shirt.

Andrew: What do you think?

Lisa: *(smiles)* Pink's your colour, honey.

Andrew: It's not pink! *(looks in mirror)* Is it pink?

Lisa: Very fashionable, darling.

Andrew: Please tell me this is light maroon.

Lisa: It will go nicely with your white jacket.

Andrew: It's not white, it's cream

Lisa: You're a great new South African, honey.

Andrew: You mean I'm colour blind.

Lisa: You said it!

Andrew: That's what you always say.

Lisa: Isn't that why you bring me shopping with you?

Andrew: Lisa, you're not being very helpful.

Lisa: I've said what a good colour it is.

Andrew: But you make me sound like a poofter. Pink and white.

Lisa: For me, that's a sign of a true man.

Andrew: Wearing pink and white?

Lisa: And not worrying what other men might think of him.

Andrew: I'm not worried about what other *men* think.

Lisa: Why are you wriggling so much?

Andrew: I think my underpants are too tight.

Lisa: The pink ones...?

Andrew: Lisa...!

Fast fade to "surreal" lighting. Music up, and they dance a 10-15 second tango sequence. When the sequence ends, they are sitting down, having a cup of tea.

Andrew: I know it's not patriotic...

Lisa: Why not a local name?

Andrew: Like what?

Lisa: I don't know....Naas?

Andrew: Can you see our son being called Naas?

Lisa: Then think of another name.

Andrew: Imagine what the kids will do to him at school.

Lisa: What about Nic...like Nic Mallet?

Andrew: Naas one, Stark!

Lisa: Or Jake...like your mate Jake and Jake White.

Andrew: Naas try, Starkie.

Lisa: Okay, so why does it have to be a rugby name?

Andrew: It doesn't have to be...I just like that particular name.

Lisa: The kids will rip off that name too.

Andrew: No they won't.

Lisa: How many local kids do you know who are called "Zinzan"?

Andrew: So, he'll be unique. Zinzan Stark.

Lisa: We may as well call him Tin Tin.

Andrew: Okay, so what do you suggest?

Lisa: There's no rush.

Andrew: Ja, but it's good to start early.

Lisa: We've still got about six months.

Andrew: I don't want us to have a no-name brand kid.

Lisa: Have you ever thought about girls' names?

Andrew: It's not going to be a girl.

Lisa: We should have a few girls' names too.

Andrew: I've been eating carrots, cucumbers, celery. Penis food.

Fast fade to "surreal" lighting. Music up, and they dance a 10-15 second tango sequence. When the sequence stops, Andrew is reading the sports pages of a newspaper, and Lisa is knitting.

Lisa: Are you sure about this?

Andrew: We've had this conversation, Lees. (*note: pronounced "Lease"*)

Lisa: I know. But I can't understand why you're so dead against a girl's school?

Andrew: I went to a co-ed, and it was just fine.

Lisa: I went to a girl's school, and I've turned out just fine.

Andrew: *You* did. But look at your sister.

Lisa: What about her?

Andrew: I love Michelle...

Lisa: But?

Andrew: She's a dyke.

Lisa: So?

Andrew: That's what happens when you go to single-sex schools.

Lisa: Andrew, are you crazy?

Andrew: There's a poofter at work. He went to a boys-only school.

Lisa: That is such crap!

Andrew: I'm not saying it doesn't happen at co-ed schools...

Lisa: You probably know two gay people and it's complete coincidence...

Andrew: Single-sex schools are breeding grounds for dykes and poofters.

Lisa: How did I marry such a bigot?

Andrew: I've got nothing against them. I just don't want my children to be exposed to that.

Lisa: Sometimes, you sound like your father.

Fast fade to "surreal" lighting. Music up, and they dance a 10-15 second tango sequence. When the sequence ends, they are on the sofa, lying on top of each other with the following sequence being part of a bout of foreplay. The talk is appropriately gentle, loving.

Lisa: You left the seat up again.

Andrew: Which one?

Lisa: The one in our bathroom.

Andrew: It wasn't me.

Lisa: You're the only one in this house who needs to lift up the toilet seat!

Andrew: It's Sarah.

Lisa: You talk such crap sometimes.

Andrew: Sarah knows how pissed you get when I leave the seat up...

Lisa: And she did it to make me mad at you?

Andrew: I refused to buy her jelly tots on the way back from school.

Lisa: (*laughs*) Andrew...Andrew...Andrew....

Andrew: You know what she said to me tonight?

Lisa: What?

Andrew: I told her we were going to bed early. She asked if we were going to make another baby.

Lisa: Where does she get that from?

Andrew: She said Darren told her.

Lisa: I'm going to box her little cousin's ears next time I see him.

Andrew: That's what I said.

Lisa: Let's do this so we can go to bed.

Andrew: What happened to you honey?

Lisa: What do you mean what happened?

Andrew: When we first met, you were like a rabbit.

Lisa: I'm exhausted...try having a kid.

Andrew: Now you're like one of those bunnies that *isn't* on Duracell.

Lisa: This is not sexy talk....

Andrew: I'm sorry...(kisses her)

Lisa: Oh, did I tell you...

Andrew: That you love me?

Lisa: Sue's husband had a vasectomy.

Andrew: Paul?

Lisa: She says sex is a whole lot better now...

Andrew: This isn't sexy talk, Lisa...

Musical interlude. The next scene is with them back at counseling, which started about three years after they celebrated their tenth wedding anniversary.

Lisa: I've been thinking about it since our last session. The first ten years were fine. Pretty normal for a married couple. But you asked if there's been anything major that's happened to us in the last few years. I suppose having our second daughter, Gemma, could count as major.

Andrew: But I wouldn't say it's had a major, negative impact. We have less sex and less sleep, but it's not any more stressful than it was with Sarah. And we got through that just fine.

Lisa: But there have been other things... Things that maybe we're not even aware of just how they affected us. Individually and in our relationship.

Lights come down on this scene. Spotlights come up on Andrew and Lisa talking on their cellphones to each other, from different parts of the stage.

Andrew: Lisa?

Lisa: Hi honey...

Andrew: Where are you?

Lisa: I'm at the office in town. Why?

Andrew: I just got a call from the security company. Our alarm's gone off.

Lisa: Oh no. Not again.

Andrew: I'm stuck in a meeting with a client. Are you able to go home?

Lisa: Not really. I'm just about to do a meeting myself.

Andrew: It has to happen on Pinky's day off. Okay, look. I'll go.

Lights down. Lights come up on Lisa and Andrew on their phones again. The conversation is more animated as Andrew has discovered that they've been burgled. Andrew is edgy, irritated. Lisa tries to be calm.

Lisa: How did they get in?

Andrew: Through one of the kitchen windows. I told you we should have put bars there.

Lisa: So now it's my fault.

Andrew: No, honey, we should have done it.

Lisa: What did they take?

Andrew: *(walking around the stage)* I'm still walking around the house. Shit!

Lisa: What?

Andrew: My laptop...

Lisa: Oh no!

Andrew: Shit man!

Lisa: I'm sorry, my love....

Andrew: And the CD player...

Lisa: My birthday present....

Andrew: ...and it looks like a whole bunch of CDs too.

Lisa: That's okay.

Andrew: No, Lisa! It's not okay....

Lisa: Honey, it's not as bad as your computer.

Andrew: Where are the spare keys?

Lisa: What spare keys?

Andrew: To the house and the cars....

Lisa: Where we always hang them. Next to the shelf with the CD player.

Andrew: They're gone.

Lisa: What?

Andrew: They've taken them.

Lisa: Are you sure?

Andrew: Why did we leave them hanging there?

Lisa: Because that's where we hang all our keys...

Andrew: No, Lisa! I've told you hundreds of times to put the spare keys in a safer place!

Lisa: Andrew...

Andrew: What?

Lisa: Don't be mad at me, honey. We'll deal with this.

Andrew: You're right. I'm sorry for shouting at you.

Lights come down on this scene. They come up on Lisa and Andrew sitting on the sofa at home, a bit calmer, talking about the burglary.

Lisa: We were lucky. Jake and Sharon had their whole house cleaned out.

Andrew: Bobby was telling us the other day that there were burglars in their house *while* they were asleep. They woke up the next morning to find everything valuable downstairs had been taken.

Lisa: Bobby Rabinowitz?

Andrew: Ja....

Lisa: Where do they live?

Andrew: Gardens.

Lisa: That's scary....

Andrew: His girlfriend's in therapy now.

Lisa: (*Pause*) I think we should move.

Andrew: Let's not over-react, Lisa....

Lisa: They might come back. They have our house keys. Our car keys. And they're probably watching our house. That's why they know that Pinky wasn't here today.

Andrew: Sharon and Jake live in the southern suburbs. Bobby's in the City Bowl. It happens everywhere. Where do you want to move to? Perth?

Lisa: I'm not going to feel safe here anymore.

Andrew: Lisa, we can't just...move. We finished major renovations less than six months ago. We survived that. We can survive this.

Lisa: What if they had come here while Pinky was here with the girls?

Andrew: (*plaintively*) Lisa....

Lisa: What if they come back tonight before we are able to put in any extra security?

Andrew: Let's stay with your mom tonight.

Lisa: What will we tell Sarah? I don't want to scare her.

Andrew: Let's just tell her that Granny is babysitting all of us tonight.

Lisa: What are we going to do?

Andrew: (*going up to her and hugging here*) I don't know, honey. But we'll do the right thing when we have more time and space to think.
(*Pause*) Honey...

Lisa: What?

Andrew: Are you still against me getting a gun?

Lights fade on this scene. They come up on Lisa and Andrew at the Counselor's rooms.

Andrew: What do you mean "what happened?" We moved, of course.

Lisa: He loves the new house.

Andrew: *(tongue-in-cheek)* It's fantastic. State of the art electric fence. Boom gates. Armed response. Bicycle patrol.

Lisa: It has a beautiful fireplace....

Andrew: *(resigned)* And a swimming pool...

They both listen to the Counselor as he asks them "Did you get the gun?"

Lisa: No. Definitely not. I'm not having a gun in my house.

Andrew: Lisa's one of those bleeding heart liberals who doesn't want a gun in her house, but has no qualms about paying an armed response company to patrol our area.

They both listen again.

Lisa: That's why I raised it. I don't think we realise how traumatic that was for us. *(Pause)* No, neither of us went to therapy afterwards. *(Andrew rolls his eyes)* And we had major renovations done. When it was done we were so happy. And then there was the burglary, and we moved house...yes, all very traumatic. Then there were also the hassles that Andrew was having at work.

Andrew: Look, I'm not going to talk about them here.

Lisa: Andrew....

Andrew: I'm not talking about it Lisa. You can talk about it if you want. But I'm outa here. *(gets up and goes)*

Lights down, and come up on the following sequence has Lisa talking privately to the therapist alternating with Andrew illustrating what she says, or supplementing the story. Spotlight on Lisa who is seated, alternating with the spotlight on Andrew who generally stands.

Lisa: Andrew came home from work one day really upbeat.

Andrew: *(excitedly)* I have a meeting with James on Monday at 10. He asked to see *me*, Lisa! I think this is it!

Lisa: The whole weekend, he was excited. Like a kid counting down the number of sleeps to his birthday.

Andrew: We'll be able to pay off our share of the golf house! And I'd love to take the kids to Disneyland. Like Jake and Sharon did last year.

Lisa: There'd been hints of promotion for Andrew for a number of months. Sandy, a colleague of his who joined the company at the same time had just been made into an area manager which, in their company, is quite a major promotion with a huge salary increase.

Andrew: You must see what Sandy's driving. She and Lionel are off to Bali for two weeks next month.

Lisa: I was happy for him. He's been with the company for about thirteen years. He's paid his dues. And he's good at what he does.

Andrew: Rumour has it that the area manager in the Hout Bay/Constantia area is retiring soon. That's most likely the position I'll get.

Lisa: I told him not to count his chickens...but he was really excited. Then, Monday came and I didn't get a call from him after his meeting with his boss like we'd arranged. So I called him, and just got his voicemail. I left four or five messages for him, and he didn't return my calls. First I thought...maybe they were out showing him the new area office. Then he didn't come home. And I thought maybe he was having a celebratory drink with some of his colleagues. Eventually he came home at about nine. Quite drunk.

Andrew: (*pissed, loudly*) Bastards! Bloody bastards!

Lisa: I asked him to be quiet. The kids were sleeping. He just kept on...I'd never seen him like that.

Andrew: (*emotionally, close to tears*) Bloody honky bastards! Affirmative action pricks!

Lisa: I tried to calm him down. I asked him what had happened. He just broke down.

Andrew: (*emotionally*) They appointed Bongi. Bongi for fuck's sake. He only started at the company four years ago.

Lisa: I asked him why they had wanted to see him.

Andrew: They want me to look after Bongi. So he doesn't make any major mistakes. "Sorry Andrew, equity requirements". They want me to be a bloody nanny.

Lisa: It took him a while to get over it. He thought about resigning. But I talked him out of it. He might not get promoted for a few years, but at least he had a job. Other companies would have employment equity requirements too. They might not even employ him. His confidence and self-esteem took quite a knock, and he became quite bitter.

Lights come down on this scene. They come up on Andrew telling a story to Sarah on the sofa, with a book on his lap, but he tells it, rather than reads it, only holding up the book to show her arbitrary pictures.

Andrew: *(reading)* The three bears went for a walk in the forest while they waited for their chocolate mousse to get cool down. *(Sarah says "No, dad, it's porridge).* *(with mock surprise)* Oh, you're right, sweetpea. They wanted their *porridge* to cool down. While they were out, a little girl with long, blonde hair called Sarah...that's right, her second name was Goldilocks, visited the house. Goldilocks sat in Daddy Bear's chair. Then she ate all Baby Bear's post toasties. And she drank all Mommy Bear's milo. When her tummy was full, she fell asleep in Baby Bear's bed. *(He yawns).* Just like Sarah is doing now. Then the three bears came back home. Daddy Bear said, "who's been sitting in my chair?" Mommy Bear said, "who's been drinking my milo?" And Baby Bear cried, "someone's eaten all my muesli!" They found Goldilocks in Baby Bear's bed and she woke with a fright. Which made her very cross. She was already cross with them. Because the three brown bears were now living in the house that she used to live in. But Daddy Bear just laughed his affirmative action laugh, and Goldilocks went home very sadly. She never went back to the forest again. *(Yawns again).*

Lights come down on Andrew with Sarah. They come up on Lisa talking to Sarah.

Lisa: Who's been speaking to you about affirmative action, darling?
(Pause) What did he say? *(Pause)* Well, you see sweetie, once upon a time, there were lots of bears who lived in the forest. And then along came people, and they chased the bears away from the forest. They chopped down lots of trees and built themselves very nice houses. Goldilocks and her mommy and daddy were among those who lived there. Meanwhile, the bears lived far away from the forest in cold caves. Then, one day, there was a new ruler in the land, and he said that the bears could go back to where they once lived. Goldilocks and her family were not very happy. But the bears were only getting back what had been taken away from them.

One day, it will be okay. The bears and Goldilocks will be able to play together in the forest, on the beach, and up the mountain.

Scene reverts to Andrew reading/telling Sarah another bed-time story. This time, he's at the other end of the sofa, signaling a different evening.

Andrew: Little Red Riding Hood was taking a basket of delicious things to her granny. Her mother had warned her not to stop along the way and talk to any strangers, especially big, bad, black wolves. But Little Red Riding Hood, like some little girls I know, didn't always listen to her mom. She stopped to smell the flowers, and bumped into a big black wolf who gave her a fright. When the black wolf found out where Little Red Riding Hood was going, he ran as fast as he could to her granny's house. When he got there, he tied up the granny, and hid her in the toilet. Then he put on Granny's clothes, climbed into her bed, and waited for Little Red Riding Hood to arrive with her delicious goodies....

Lights fade on this scene and come up on Lisa talking to Sarah about the previous evening.

Lisa: Wolves? Yes, you get white wolves and black wolves. Just like you get white sheep and black sheep, like (*sings*) "Baa, baa, black sheep, have you any wool..." Did daddy really say that? Yes, there are some bad black people. But there are also some bad white people. Bad pink people. Bad green people. And there are lots of good people. It doesn't matter what colour you are, you can be a wolf or a sheep. Yes, Pinky is black, and she's good. She's looked after you since you were a little baby....I don't know why she's called Pinky if she's black darling. Maybe it's because she's small, like a pinkie finger.

Lights fade on this scene. Lights come up on the next scene. The following banter is done in good-natured style. Andrew is on the sofa, channel-surfing.

Lisa: Andrew, we need to talk.

Andrew: It's Monday, honey. We only talk on Fridays...

Lisa: Sarah's been telling me about big, bad, black wolves and about Goldilocks who got thrown out of her house because of affirmative action....

Andrew: It's really amazing what kids pick up nowadays....

Lisa: I'm worried about the values we're teaching our children.

Andrew: What do you mean, honey?

Lisa: You can't go around filling the heads of little six-year-olds that white people are being done in by affirmative action or that all black people are potential wolves they must be careful of.

Andrew: I didn't say that.

Lisa: That's how it came across to her.

Andrew: Maybe she's even more sussed than we think....

Lisa: Andrew, we agreed a long time ago that we would agree to disagree about politics...

Andrew: Only because you insist on voting for the ANC....

Lisa: No, because you're incapable of having a rational conversation about politics.

Andrew: I feel an argument coming on.

Lisa: I don't want to have an argument.

Andrew: Oh please, let's! We always have such great make-up sex afterwards!

Lisa: (*ignoring him*) We can't always shield our kids from what's happening in the world, but we have to be careful about how we do it.

Andrew: Honey, I'm a victim of affirmative action. (*melodramatically*) Whether our daughters have bread on the table or a roof over their head is directly related to affirmative action.

Lisa: That's crap, Andrew, and you know it. Our kids will always have a roof over their heads. They'll always have bread on the table. We both have jobs, which is a lot more than many other people have. We have to teach our kids the contexts of these things so they understand...

Andrew: Understanding the context doesn't make it any better when you're the victim...

Lisa: What I'm saying is we must be careful of what we feed our children's minds. We must give them the bigger picture.

Andrew: They're kids, Lisa. We can't place an unbearable burden on them with the bigger picture.

Lisa: I don't want our children growing up learning to fear or having resentment towards black people.

Andrew: You know what? You're right. I don't want to have this conversation. Next you'll be wanting to send our kids to a Muslim school so they can learn about the *context* for suicide bombers...!

Lisa: See what I mean? It's impossible to have a rational discussion with you.

Lights go down on this scene, and come up on Lisa at the counseling session.

Lisa: There was the job thing. The burglary. Moving house. Having to move from the house we'd renovated into our dream house. We seemed to talk less and less. And Andrew was making decisions that had major implications for us.

Lights come up on Lisa watering the garden with a hosepipe. Andrew enters.

Andrew: Honey, do you have a couple of hundred for me?

Lisa: What for?

Andrew: I want to get some things at the café. I'll pay you back later.

Lisa: Look in my purse. *(Pause. As Andrew is about to go)* Telkom phoned.

Andrew: I hope you told them they're number 14 in the queue.

Lisa: Our bill's overdue.

Andrew: Really?

Lisa: And the bank called.

Andrew: Why did they call you?

Lisa: They couldn't get hold of you.

Andrew: What did they want?

Lisa: Is there anything you should tell me, Andrew?

Andrew: Andrew? You never call me Andrew unless it's something serious.

Lisa: Our bond payment didn't go through this month.

Andrew: Really?

Lisa: So, is it serious?

Andrew: I'm handling it, honey.

Lisa: Handling what?

Andrew: I can do this...I'm just a little over-exposed this month.

Lisa: You're not a spool. What are you talking about?

Andrew: It's a surprise, honey.

Lisa: I don't want any surprises when the bank comes to reclaim our house.

Andrew: I'll settle those accounts, I promise.

Lisa: Andrew, I'm your wife...I have a right to know.

Andrew: (*sighs*) I put down a deposit on a house in a new golf estate.

Lisa: You what?

Andrew: With Jake and Stevie. We're going to co-own it and use it like timeshare.

Lisa: Please tell me you're joking!

Andrew: It's just outside Hermanus. You love Hermanus.

Lisa: Andrew...!

Andrew: Honey, it was going to be a gift to you for giving me such a beautiful little daughter....

Lights come down and come back up on Andrew and Lisa at counseling.

Andrew: So let me see if I understand you correctly. You want us to....

Lisa: He wants us to take turns in saying something nice to each other. It's quite simple, Andrew.

They both listen as he says "start each time with the person's name, and 'what I really appreciate about you is....'"

Andrew: Okay, you start.

Lisa: No, you start.

Andrew: Ladies first...*(looks to the Counselor)* Isn't that right? *(Pause as Counselor says that Andrew should start)* Okay, okay *(throwing up his hands in mock surrender)*. *(Still looking at Counselor, his head turned to Lisa)* Lisa, what I really appreciate.... *(looks at Counselor who's telling him to turn towards Lisa with his whole body)* Fine. Lisa, what I really appreciate about you is...*(turning to Counselor)* Does it have to be superficial or deep or...Anything? Okay. Lisa, what I really appreciate about you is...*(pause)*

Lisa: *(to Counselor, with a touch of sarcasm)* Can you give him a multiple choice list, so he can make a selection from that?

Andrew: *(a little offended)* I was wanting to say something deeply meaningful.

Lisa: So say it. Is it really so difficult?

Andrew: Okay, why don't you start?

Lisa: Fine. *(with little warmth)* What I really appreciate about you Andrew, is the amount of time you spend playing with Sarah. I wish you would pay more attention to me, but I appreciate that....*(they look at the Counselor)*. Okay, fine. No qualifications. I really appreciate the attention you give Sarah.

Andrew: *(looks to Counselor)* Should she not have another turn? *(Pause)* It's like a backhanded thing. She's expressing appreciation, but really she wants to make me feel bad about not paying enough attention to her.

Lisa: *(frustrated)* Andrew...!

Andrew: Okay. No problem. *(takes a deep breath)* Lisa, one thing I really appreciate about you is that you try very hard to let our family eat healthily.

Lisa: *(to Counselor)* Must I continue? *(To Andrew)* Andrew, what I really appreciate about you is that you take responsibility for planning and organizing the family holidays every year.

Andrew: Lisa, I really appreciate your cooking.

Lisa: *(looks at Counselor)* That's the same as letting the family eat healthily, surely?

Andrew: Okay. I have another one. *(looking at Counselor)* What I really appreciate about Lisa...*(Pause as Counselor tells him to look at and talk to Lisa)* Oh, yes. Lisa, what I really appreciate about you is that you do all the shopping. I hate shopping.

Lisa: What I really appreciate about you Andrew, is that you've begun to clean the pool and mow the lawn without my having to ask you to do it.

Andrew: Lisa, I really appreciate it that you bailed me out with that golf estate house...*(senses a bit of tension from Lisa's side, and says something funny to break the tension)*. And Lees, I really appreciate it when you just put down the toilet seat when I forget. Without nagging me.

Lisa: Andrew, I appreciate it when you get up in the night to attend to Gemma when she cries. Even if it is only every fifth or sixth night.

Andrew: It's a pleasure.

Lisa: I wish it could be more often, but I really appreciate it even if it is only every few days. It allows me at least one decent sleep a week. I appreciate that.

Andrew: Okay. Cool. *(Looks at Counselor)* Something more personal? Like what? *(Pause)* Okay. Lees, what I appreciate about you is that you still look after yourself. You've had two kids, we're all getting older, but you still look great.

Lisa: *(smiling)* Thank you. *(To Counselor)* And thank you. That's the first nice thing he's said to me for a while.

Andrew: It's your turn, Lees.

Lisa: Andrew, I really appreciate it when you make me tea in the morning. Every morning.

Andrew: What I appreciate about you Lisa, is...is that you're still my wife.

Lisa: *(taking Andrew's hand)* I really appreciate your coming to these sessions with me. I know you thought they sucked. But it's helped me.

Andrew: It's helped me too...Not much. *(smiling)* But a little.

Lisa: Can I say something? I've been blaming Andrew for a lot of things in our relationship.

Andrew: You're probably right, honey.

Lisa: Maybe...but over the last few weeks, I've had to think a bit more about my own role...And I'm beginning to realise...you know...that maybe I'm responsible too.

Andrew: I've always said, honey, it takes two to tango.

Lights fade on this scene. Lisa is on the sofa, with her legs curled under her bum. Andrew's legs are stretched along the sofa, with his feet resting on Lisa's lap. Andrew is reading Fair Lady and Lisa is browsing through Men's Health.

Lisa: What is the percentage of couples who manage to stay together after an affair?

Andrew: Fifty?

Lisa: Seventy. What is the ratio of men who cheat on their partners?

Andrew: I dunno. Probably lots.

Lisa: One in six.

Andrew: Would you leave me if I cheated on you?

Lisa: You know what I've always said.

Andrew: Just checking....

Lisa: If you cheat on me, and if you lift your hand to me...it's goodbye.

Andrew: Fair enough.

Lisa: And if I cheat on you?

Andrew: Depends....

Lisa: On what?

Andrew: On who it was with.

Lisa: What do you mean?

Andrew: If it was my brother or a celebrity...

Lisa: What's the difference?

Andrew: If it was my brother, at least it's in the family. And if it was a celebrity, I could boast to my mates that my wife bonked so and so. Brad Pitt. Barry Ronge.

Lisa: Wayne Ferreira....

Andrew: No, I'd leave you if you did that. I'd be too embarrassed to tell anyone.

Lisa: I can't believe you're that shallow. That you'd be proud if I cheated on you with a celebrity.

Andrew: (*tongue-in-cheek*) Honey, think about it. We could sell the story to the tabloids and retire.

Lisa: (*reading the magazine again*) There's more chance of you cheating on me. It says here one in four wives cheat on their husbands but one in two husbands cheat on their wives.

Andrew: Depends on how you define cheat....

Lisa: According to this survey, 75% of women say it's cheating if her partner romantically kisses another woman, 43% say it's cheating if he holds another woman's hand and 38% think their husbands are cheats if they flirt with other women.

Lights down on this scene. They come up on Lisa and Andrew driving home after a function with Andrew driving.

Lisa: That was an okay corporate function for a change.

Andrew: They're all boring. There are too many of them. And I hate estate agents. They all seem to have facelifts.

Lisa: Like the houses they're selling.

Andrew: I must find a way to get out of these functions.

Lisa: You're right honey. I don't think I'm cut out to play the role of corporate wife.

Andrew: You did okay tonight.

Lisa: There were nice people there tonight.

Pause.

Andrew: Who's Rory?

Lisa: I introduced you to him.

Andrew: I know, but who is he? He couldn't take his eyes off you.

Lisa: (*smiles*) He's an old boyfriend.

Andrew: How come I never heard about him before?

Lisa: Because, honey, we agreed not to talk about our pasts. Anyway, we were together at varsity a long time ago, and then he left for Canada to avoid going to the army.

Andrew: Oh, so he's a poofter?

Lisa: No, he had a conscience. He didn't want to go into the townships.

Andrew: He couldn't keep his hands off you. He kept touching you, like he was a dressmaker.

Lisa: We haven't seen each other for seventeen years. It was such a surprise to see him.

Andrew: What's he doing now?

Lisa: He told you.

Andrew: Remind me...?

Lisa: He works for Terreblance and Tembe Construction.

Andrew: Our rivals.

Lisa: He came back about two years ago to Joburg. And he was transferred here three months ago.

Andrew: Is he married?

Lisa: Divorced.

Lights fade. They come up on Lisa at a table in a restaurant. She's clearly waiting for someone. Her handbag is on the table. After a while with her glancing at her watch, Andrew walks in on his way to another table. He sees her, but is surprised, not expecting to see her.

Andrew: Lisa...!

Lisa: *(more surprised that Andrew)* Hi....

Andrew: What are you doing here?

Lisa: I'm meeting a friend for lunch.

Andrew: Who?

Lisa: *(avoids the question)* And you?

Andrew: I have a lunch meeting with the architects for this new job we're working on. *(awkward pause)* You look great!

Lisa: Thanks. *(Pause)* Honey, I need the bathroom.

She exits, leaving her bag behind. Her phone rings. Andrew opens the bag and answers.

Andrew: Lisa's phone, hallo. *(Pause)* Oh, hi. *(Pause)* Yes, sure. Okay, I'll tell her.

Lisa enters.

Lisa: I forgot my bag. Lipstick...

Andrew: A girl's got to look good! *(as Lisa turns to go)* Rory called.

Lisa: Rory?

Andrew: *(with fake American accent)* Canadian Rory....

Lisa: Why's he calling you?

Andrew: No, he called your phone. He asked me to tell you that he's running about ten minutes late.

Slow fade. Music. Lights come up on Lisa and Andrew at home on the sofa. Andrew is reading a magazine. Lisa slowly sidles up to him. She starts to stroke his hair. Romantic music plays in the background.

Andrew: What are you doing?

Lisa: *(seductively)* Just massaging your head...

Andrew: You know where that leads....

Lisa: So?

Andrew: And the music?

Lisa: Your favourite CD to make love by.

Andrew: Honey, are you okay?

Lisa: I'm fine.

Andrew: But it's Thursday.

Lisa: So?

Andrew: Are we really going to....?

Lisa: *(putting her finger to her lips)* Ssshhh....

Andrew: Then we can bank it for a Tuesday when you have a headache?

Lisa: Just relax, honey. And enjoy it.

Andrew: Are you back on Duracell?

Lisa: Don't spoil the moment, Andy...

Andrew: You know how you always say that the way to get a girl to bed is to talk to her?

Lisa: Yes?

Andrew: Well, how come I didn't have to say anything *this* time?

Lisa: It's your lucky night...

Lights fade. They come up on Lisa and Andrew, post-sex, lying on the couch.

Andrew: That was good...

Lisa: You can fall asleep if you want....

Andrew: Honey, are you *really* okay?

Lisa: Unless you want to talk.

Andrew: About what?

Lisa: Anything....

Andrew: (*pause*) Do you...

Lisa: What?

Andrew: Do you ever fantasise about someone else when we make love?

Lisa: Like who?

Andrew: I don't know. Wayne Ferreira...

Lisa: (*almost offended by the question*) No....

Andrew: Really?

Lisa: Why? Do you?

Andrew: Just recently...

Lisa: Who?

Andrew: A Russian dancer.

Lisa: Barishnykov?

Andrew: Very funny...

Lisa: Where do you know a Russian dancer from?

Andrew: Teazers.

Lisa: From where?

Andrew: (*casually*) Teazers.

Lisa: The strip club?

Andrew: We went there for Jerry's bachelor party, remember?

Lisa: You didn't tell me...

Andrew: I did.

Lisa: No you didn't.

Andrew: Really?

Lisa: You went to a strip club?

Andrew: That's what all the guys decided. What could I do?

Lisa: Why didn't you tell me?

Andrew: Oh, it must have slipped my mind.

Lisa: I can't believe it.

Andrew: I don't know what all the fuss is about. It's pretty boring, really.

Lisa: Except for the Russian dancer.

Andrew: Jake and Steve clubbed together for her to do a lap dance on Jerry. She was hot.

Lisa: And then he went and got married the next day.

Andrew: I wonder if Jerry fantasized about the Russian dancer on their honeymoon.

Lisa: Men can be such little boys...

Andrew: (*ironically*) Women on the other hand, are always perfect.

Lisa: Did you have to tell me?

Andrew: (*smiling*) You're the one who always says we have to be honest with each other.

Lisa: Now everytime we make love, I'm going to wonder if you're thinking about the Russian stripper.

Andrew: Exotic dancer, not stripper. She didn't strip.

Lisa: I wish you hadn't told me.

Andrew: Okay, next time, I won't say.

Lisa: Sometimes...too much honesty gets in the way of a relationship

Andrew: So would you rather not know?

Lisa: What?

Andrew: Who I had lunch with today?

Lisa: Who?

Andrew: Maria...

Lisa: Your Greek goddess. (*trying to be cool about it*) Both of her?

Andrew: You can be such a bitch sometimes, Lisa.

Lisa: You told me that she's twice as beautiful now as when you were dating. But that it's the same beauty spread over double the size.

Andrew: You should see her now. She got divorced about three months ago. She went on a diet and got a personal trainer.

Lights fade. They come up on Andrew and Lisa at a restaurant. They're looking at menus.

Andrew: So, what are you having?

Lisa: I'm thinking fish. Probably sole.

Andrew: I'm going to have the ribs.

Lisa: Let's get a bottle of wine.

Andrew: White or red?

Lisa: Well, I'm having fish....

Andrew's phone rings.

Andrew: Maria, howzit? How did it go?

Lisa's phone rings.

Lisa: Hello? Hi Rory...really?

Andrew: Really? *(Pause)* I'm happy for you...

Lisa: Where are you going now?

Andrew: Have a great time.

Lisa: Enjoy.

Andrew: Okay, bye.

Lisa: Ciao.

Andrew: How's that, hey? I really hope it works out for them.

Lisa: They were in their own cars going to Maria's place.

Andrew: That was a good idea to them up. Maria and Rory...

Lisa: In all fourteen years we've been together, I've never thought of being unfaithful to you....

Andrew: And then Rory came along.

Lisa: I don't know what that was about, but I suddenly got scared. I swore to myself that I would never be like my mother. And suddenly with Rory coming back, my heart skipped a beat. I got scared for us. I was seven when my mom left my dad. Sarah's six.

Andrew: So you dragged *me* off to therapy...

Lisa: Well, we had issues...

Andrew: And then there was Margie and Jeff getting divorced...

Lisa: You never spoke about that day at the restaurant....

Andrew: With Rory?

Lisa: Why?

Andrew: I used it to my advantage.

Lisa: (*good-naturedly*) You're such a bastard! You took advantage of the guilt I felt...

Andrew: (*takes her hand*) Honey, I know that I can never satisfy all your needs. We're not an island. If you can have girlfriends, why not male friends too? As far as I'm concerned, you can have breakfast with Tom, lunch with Harry, just not dinner with Dick.

Lisa: (*picking up on the counseling session*) What I really appreciate about you Andy, is your sense of humour.

Andrew: What I really appreciate about you, Lisa, is that you're going to pay for our meal tonight...(*they laugh*)

Lisa: Do you think they'll work out?

Andrew: Maria and Rory? (*shrugs*) If not, we know a shrink we can recommend.

Lisa: Where's our waitron gone? They must come now. We have a threesome waiting.

Lights begin to fade

Andrew: Threesome?

Lisa: You, me and the Russian dancer....

Andrew: Oh, honey, it's okay. You can bring Wayne Ferreira.

Blackout