

Coming Attractions

Kweenasheba

A Snappy San Francisco Comedy

1 Act in 2 Scenes

“Kweenasheba” was first produced by the Yonkers Production Company, San Francisco, premiering March 13, 1976, at the Society for Individual Rights SIR Center Theatre on a double bill with “The Madness of Lady Bright” by Lanford Wilson. The author adapted his 1975 play from his 1972 short story, “Sweet Embraceable You.”

Time: Christmas, 1972

Setting: San Francisco, Castro Street, Soap-and-Floral Shop

Four Characters: two women, two men

Ada Vicary: 30, with an MA, teaching in a junior college; her own woman; sveltely attractive; first married to CURTIS, she is now divorced and living with JOHN; independent; clever; as a girl she bound her own books, hunted bugs, and invented animal nicknames for her relatives. In many ways, ADA is a compensatory swinger; owner of a restored Victorian on San Francisco’s Castro Street.

John Stack: Early 30’s; a craftsman-motorcyclist; dark and handsome and into an ironic trip as owner of a Soap-and-Floral Shop located in Ada’s Victorian. JOHN, formerly the lover of KWEENASHEBA, is now ADA’s lover. JOHN is the straight foil to both KWEENASHEBA and CURTIS.

Kweenasheba: 29, formerly named Mary Margaret Chase until her lysergic rechristening in the Haight-Ashbury. She is amply endowed as any Rubens nude; she fancies herself “the one and only reincarnation of the Queen of Sheba”: Kweenasheba. Her body is a tracery of fads: a Janis Joplin tattoo, tote bags, saffron robes, and a pierced nose. Basically she’s been around and she’s winded. She is a photographer snapping her borrowed camera.

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Curtis Boughner: 34, pansexual; even more masculine of body and voice than John; sometimes lilting in manner of delivery when he chooses; as handsome in his fair way as John is in his darkness; Curtis, formerly Ada's husband, is now KWEENASHEBA's lover.

This comedy should be played light, lively, and fast—midway between the madcap comic style of vintage Hollywood and fast-paced TV sitcoms.

TWO SCENES. ONE SET.

Playing time: 40 minutes

SCENE ONE

A morning before Christmas in the storefront Soap-and-Floral Shop of a restored Victorian on San Francisco's Castro Street. The calendar says December 1972. Two couples share this house: Ada Vicary and John Stack, upstairs; Kweenasheba and Curtis, downstairs behind the shop.

The single set is decorated for Christmas and divided by the service counter to the left of which stand the soap baskets, the green plants in white wicker, and the inevitable macrame-bilia. To the right of the counter is strewn a combination work and living area. To the left is the street entrance. Coming down at rear center stage is the last curve and landing of a stairs from the second floor.

To the right, behind the clippers and styrofoam frogs and 1940's couch is a door curtained with nostalgic floral draperies. An old coffee dripolator sits steaming on a hotplate. A vintage 'Forties radio, receiving a contemporary station, plays Christmas carols.

John: (Off-stage, singing with the radio)

"Tis the season to be jolly;

Fa La La La La La La La La!

Time to sell the goddam holly!"

JOHN ENTERS

The shop is his and he readies it for the day. His voice is big enough to sing his own lyrics over the radio.

John: "Don we now our gay apparel..."

Ada: (Entering, switches off radio) Not you!

John: (Rising from plants) What?

Ada: I smelled the coffee.

John: (Closing in to embrace ADA) Then good morning. (He kisses her

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HOW TO LEGALLY QUOTE FROM THIS WORK

lightly)

Ada: Thanks for the stroking. I'm beat.

John: Tired?

Ada: All last night I could hear them.

John: Curtis and Kweenasheba? They'll be here forever.

Ada: They giggle. Too much. What could they have in common?

John: Your Curtis? My Kweenie? Once upon a time, each one of them had each one of us.

Ada: Comparing notes, I suppose. Curtis always was one to kiss and tell. God! I loathe the smell of fried bologna. What are they cooking back there?

John: Roses.

Ada: Roses?

John: In these boxes are 20 dozen roses.

Ada: You're the only florist in San Francisco who smells like fried bologna.

John: You think I like it? Your Ex and my Ex living in a room behind my shop.

Ada: (Pouring coffee) Darling....I own the building. The smell permeates. And I hate the way it curls up...

John: (Tossing yesterday's wilted flowers aside)... Everything curls up...

Ada: ...Bologna when it fries, curls up. I hate it.

John: My customers buy with their noses.

Ada: Business is off? It's Christmas!

John: They buy roses. They buy bayberry soap. They smell bologna.

Ada: I know what Curtis is telling Kweenie.

John: Flowers are one thing. Meat is another.

Ada: Those two have to move.

John: Said Mohammed to the mountain.

Ada: They've crashed here long enough.

John: Once you loved Curtis.

Ada: Once you loved Kweenie.

John: A good case of changing partners.

Ada: Two bad cases of unrequited love. They've got to move.

John: A crime of passion might make us colorful in the neighborhood.

Ada: The unveiling of the mysteries inside all these marvelously restored old Victorians!

John: Curtis and Kweenie cling to each other...

Ada: ...because I love you and Kweenie loves you and you love me and Curtis loves me.

John: May I have the envelope please?

Ada: I never told you why I divorced Curtis.

John: Because Curtis likes...

Ada: ...what Curtis likes. No. Particularly why I divorced Curtis.

John: You promised to spare me the gory details.

Ada: You pumped Curtis about me.

John: You pumped Kweenasheba about me.

Ada: So what?

John: Fair is fair.

Ada: A dump is a dump.

John: What are you teaching this morning?

Ada: Children's literature.

John: Nice...

Ada: Kiddy litter.

John: Don't be cute.

Ada: To a bunch of reluctant adolescents who think they want to teach when they grow up. Hell. I don't even know what I want to be when I grow up.

John: You are a real junior-college thrill.

Ada: Listen. Curtis and I were on our first vacation. Driving down Route 1. Eating Four-Bean Salad from a Safeway can. I was feeding Curtis...

John: Now *that's* cute!

Ada: ...because he was driving. I'd eat a bite, then lean over and feed him a bite. He'd open his mouth and I'd fork in the beans.

John: That's why you were never invited to the French Embassy!

Ada: A whole year we'd been married and it hit me. Who is this person? How'd we get to be driving in the same car? Me feeding him.

John: Things happen.

Ada: How do things happen? I hardly remember meeting Curtis. I sort of always knew him. One day he said it seemed like a good idea to get married.

John: So you tied the bean cans to the car and took off to the No-Tell Motel.

Ada: Curtis made me promise to tell him all my fantasies.

John: Did you?

Ada: At night. In bed.

John: Sort of a game?

Ada: Sort of therapy. It got to be fun.

John: You were made for each other.

Ada: He seemed to love me better if we played games.

John: He performed better?

Ada: He seemed to love me more.

John: What kind of games?

Ada: Children's games, really. He called me "The Doll Lady" and once every week or so he became one of my baby dolls.

John: Freud lives...and he's dating Tennessee Williams.

Ada: Don't try and stop me now.

John: Not for the world.

Ada: He had two favorite dolls he liked to be. One was Baby Bunting.

John: You'd be his mother.

Ada: I'd bathe him and talcum him with baby powder. It was as exciting as...

John: ...*Oedipus Rex*.

Ada: I'd diaper him and we'd cuddle on the bed while I sang to him and he kissed me here. (ADA touches her breast) He made me feel like a Madonna. Then we'd make love.

John: Baby Bunting stuck it to Mommy?

Ada: No! When the loving started the gaming stopped.

John: It was always foreplay?

Ada: For me. But Curtis let the fantasy part stretch on longer and longer. He invented a new doll called Gladys Mae. I had to dress him up in little girl clothes from Macy's.

John: Curtis as Shirley Temple?

Ada: He kept the motions of loving me.

John: Sweet Jesus and Dear Abby!

Ada: He needed mothering.

John: He should marry Kweenie.

Ada: No more than I should marry you.

John: You played along?

Ada: Till I went mad.

John: Sure.

Ada: One of my liberated lady students wrote in her term paper, "With a man, a woman enters as Juliet and exits as Ophelia."

John: Virgin to virago.

Ada: I complained to him.

John: What did he say?

Ada: That I wanted to tie him down. That I was tying him down.

John: What did you say?

Ada: I was furious. I'd been a good sport all along.

John: I'd say so.

Ada: He made me so mad standing there looking so goddam cute, so

ridiculous in the cotton pinafore and white kneesocks. He stuck his tongue out at me. So I hit him.

John: Punched him?

Ada: Slapped him. Knocked him stunned into my vanity chair. He just sat there.

John: Really turned you off?

Ada: Then I tied him into the chair.

John: Tied him?

Ada: With cord from the electric blanket. Kind of poetic revenge. "Tied down?" I said. "I'll show you tied down."

John: He whimpered?

Ada: He cried.

John: You liked it.

Ada: I loved it. I faced him into the mirror and brushed lipstick and rouge all over his face. The powder caked in the tears on his cheeks.

John: You hurt him.

Ada: He was happy. I let him alone. I made him stare at himself in the mirror. I went into the kitchen and scoured the sink till the pad disintegrated.

John: How long?

Ada: I don't know. Twenty minutes. Then I started to worry about the circulation in his hands.

John: So you went back to the bedroom.

Ada: He was grinning.

John: From earring to earring.

Ada: I said: "What are you smiling at?" He wouldn't answer me. So I hit him again. You know what he said?

John: What?

Ada: This grown-man's voice. It came out of his powdered, dimpled doll-face and all he said, so matter-of-factly, was: "Curtis just came in Gladys Mae's panties.

John: That's the Big Secret? Pantyhose.

Ada: I never let him touch me again.

John: Because of the games?

Ada: Because at that point I was included out.

John: Joe Namath wears pantyhose.

Ada: Curtis' only love object was Curtis.

John: You gave up too easy.

Ada: Easy!?

John: You could have dressed up like Gladys Mae yourself.

Curtis: (Enters through floralized drapery door) And to think students think their teachers hang in suspended animation between classes.

Ada: Curtis, I want you to move.

Curtis: Who kisses and tells? Walls have ears, doll. Good morning, John.

John: Hello, Curtis.

Ada: You and Kweenie both. Out!

Curtis: If they fired the weirdos, they'd have to close down every school in California.

Ada: Don't threaten me.

Curtis: Do you feel threatened?

Ada: I feel crowded.

Curtis: Crowded? By a cast of thousands.

John: It's San Francisco karma. If you've got an extra bed in your apartment, somebody from the Midwest will crash in it.

Curtis: The Midwest is the pits. Whatever happened to the Midwest?

John: I'm still figuring what happened to you.

Curtis: Someday I'll tell you the whole truth. If awful "Ophelia" doesn't tell you first.

Ada: Someday I'm going to cut you up in itsy bitchy pieces. Very little pieces.

Curtis: Your favorite size.

Ada: As John Wayne said in *Red River*....

Curtis: I live and breathe movies.

John: Movies are such garbage.

Ada: As John Wayne said, Curtis, in *Red River* to all the fat cows: "Move out"

Curtis: Ada Tomata!

Ada: Curtis Schmurtis!

John: Kiddies!

Ada: How can an adult respond to THAT?

Curtis: You're just jealous because my parents live on the planet Krypton.

Ada: As I recall your parents....

Curtis: My mother said you'd do for a first wife.

Ada: She did?

Curtis: You didn't.

John: Before dawn I was at the Flower Mart on Harrison Street. I watched the sunrise over the East Bay.

Curtis: You're so pure.

John: I saw wet dew in Dolores Park.

Curtis: You felt "peace."

John: I hosed down the sidewalk out front.

Curtis: May the Castro Street merchants pin a rose on you.

John: But my head cannot get behind the trip you two lay on each other.

Curtis: Still crazy after all these years.

Ada: I'm sorry.

John: This is a big house and we're adults.

Ada: Adults!

Curtis: Keep saying it, Ada. Adults! Clap your hands and believe with all your heart and Tinker Bell will menstruate.

Ada: (Pulls on her sweater with a vengeance. She moves in on CURTIS, thumb-tip to thumb-tip, forefingers up at right angles to her thumbs framing CURTIS' face for a mocking movie close-up) How's that, Mr. DeMille? Is it a take? Or is it a fake?

Curtis: (Blows the sounds of "raspberries" all over ADA's palms)

Ada: (Retreating) Some adult!

Curtis: My diary entry about you today won't be nice.

Ada: It never is.

Curtis: You've read it.

Ada: You leave it lay out on purpose. (She tosses the diary to him)

Curtis: It was a test.

Ada: Then I failed.

Curtis: God will get you.

Ada: Curtis?

Curtis: Yes, darling?

Ada: Move out. You and Kweenie. Together. Separately. Bag, baggage: out! I want you and Kweenie gone. I want to smell John's roses. I loathe your fried bologna. I want my privacy back. (ADA picks up books and satchel, slams door, and exits)

Curtis: She once was so sweet.

John: What happened?

Curtis: She became a teacher. Why Ada teaches is beyond me. Sensitive people used to go into teaching. Kindly gentlemen like Robert Donat in *Good-bye, Mr. Chips* and nice ladies like Jennifer Jones in *Good Morning, Miss Dove*.

John: Sensitive people still teach.

Curtis: For sure. If they can balance a textbook with a whip, a chair, and a pistol. I personally am thinking of turning to a life of crime.

John: You could use a career.

Curtis: A career I got. A job I need. All these film schools turning out hundreds of little Francis Ford Corpulents.

John: Class tells.

Curtis: What's that mean?

John: Get a job. Get an apartment.

Curtis: There's not much call for film editors right now.

John: Use your connections.

Curtis: What connections?

John: Your famous gay underground.

Curtis: *My* famous? *My* gay? *My underwear!*

John: Come on, Gladys Mae; admit it. *Newsweek* says the gay mafia controls the media.

Curtis: I'm not gay.

John: Neither is your closet full of underwear. Pour me some more coffee.

Curtis: You ought to have your consciousness raised.

John: Women raise my...consciousness.

Curtis: (Pouring coffee) We also shovel who only stand and pour....Your consciousness about men.

John: I never think about men.

Curtis: About alternative ways of being a man.

John: I'm sick of your gay *schmerz*.

Curtis: I'm sick of your macho paranoia.

John: Okay, Curtis. The Bottom Line: as a person, I like you. As a fag, you're a drag.

Curtis: ...said the Flower Queen. (JOHN threatens) Excuse me. King. Flower King.

John: Men used to box.

Curtis: I didn't mean because you were interested in flowers that you were a "flower." I swear by St. Genet, NO!

John: You implied.

Curtis: You inferred what I did not imply.

John: I love women. Like I love Ada.

Curtis: I can love anyone.

John: How catholic.

Curtis: You really get your rocks off dumping on me.

John: You make good coffee.

Curtis: Someday you'll have the empathy to understand.

John: Coffee-making?

Curtis: When a man and a woman make love....

John: "Strangers in the night, beedoobedoobee."

Curtis: ...among other things they do is celebrate their co-sexuality. When two women make love...

John: Interesting!

Curtis: ...they celebrate, yes, celebrate their femininity.

John: Why don't you wake up Kweenasheba?

Curtis: She's tired. We were...celebrating.

John: Kweenie's tired all right.

Curtis: Kweenie's a hot woman.

John: And I thought it was burning bologna!

Curtis: What you won't let me say, John, is that I'm freer than you.

John: Freer and queerer.

Curtis: Hold on to this wire.

John: Why?

Curtis: So your death will look accidental.

John: Go arouse Lady Astor.

Curtis: When I want to celebrate manhood, I bed down with a man.

John: I admit: you're honest.

Curtis: I'm natural.

John: You're not normal.

Curtis: I'd rather be natural than normal.

John: I think you're unemployed.

Curtis: Film companies are hiring only women editors.

John: Go roll out Kweenasheba.

Curtis: Women are chic. From the silent movies on, they've always been the best editors. Dede Allen cuts all of Arthur Penn's films: *Bonnie and Clyde*.

John: I need her to dust up the shop.

Curtis: Kweenasheba?

John: The one, the only, the original.

Curtis: Get off Kweenie's case.

John: "A case of do or die..."

Curtis: Shut-up.

John: I run this shop.

Curtis: Ada owns this house.

John: So I should shut-up?

Curtis: I'm going to marry Kweenie.

John: You and the Marines.

Curtis: I'm going to marry her and move her out of this house.

John: In a world of terrorists and pay toilets, you want to marry Kweenasheba?

Curtis: We'd be a team. A couple. Judy and Mickey. Tracy and Hepburn. Sonny and Cher.

John: A fag and his hag.

Curtis: Those words today are not acceptable.

John: May you have twins. You can name them Butch and Nellie.

Curtis: (Amused) Why do I like you?

John: You think marrying Kweenasheba will make you straight?

Curtis: But I *do* like you.

John: Your brain's in neutral. Your mouth idles on.

Curtis: You are a Straight Chauvinist. (Expansively dramatic) "The Adventures of Macho Man"!

John: Sue me. I'm a white Anglo-Saxon male.

Curtis: Macho do about nothing!

John: We males are an endangered species.

Curtis: I can see why.

John: Just man-to-man trying to protect you, boy. Kweenie's been around and she's winded.

Curtis: You whirled her around in the Haight-Ashbury when she was still Mary Margaret Chase.

John: And I fed her valiums for a month after a freaked-out methadone Marxist baptized her in acid. He told her she was the reincarnation of the one, the only, the original Queen of Sheba.

Curtis: And she's loved you ever since.

John: You drill that old rig, Curtis, you better dynamite through a million layers of old deposits.

Curtis: *Oklahoma Crude!*

John: You'll really get off thinking of all the dudes who beat you to first base. Hell. To Home Plate.

Curtis: All four of us have been around.

John: One rock musician after another.

Curtis: Is that all? Kweenie's dated the United Nations. With your bad-boy vocabulary, I expect you can peel off some really cute names for Blacks, Latins, and Asians.

John: Besides a Turk or twelve. And now a reformed faggot. That figures.

Curtis: So she has a talent for loving a lot of men.

John: Armies have marched over that chick.

Curtis: You stood in line.

John: Poor old cow.

Curtis: Stop, pig!

John: I guess I loved her once.

Curtis: I guess you maybe still do.

John: In a way....You freak me out, Curtis.

Curtis: Why?

John: I guess I'm a little jealous. Kweenie will marry you. Ada won't marry me.

Curtis: Sure.

John: I guess I'm a little shocked.

Curtis: I'm a little shocked myself.

John: Ada will freak out when I tell her.

Curtis: I know. So will Kweenie.

John: You haven't asked her?

Curtis: Marriage just seems like a good idea at this time.

John: You better go wake her up.

Curtis: Sleeping Beauty.

John: What will she say?

Curtis: She'll say, "Wow!" She'll say, "Far out!" She'll say, "YES!"

Kweenie: (Appearing grandly through the floral draperies and holding a big bologna sandwich) I'll say, "NO!"

**Lights hold three solid beats
freezing the action to
END SCENE ONE**

**Lights fade down for five beats
and then come up on
SCENE TWO**

Evening of the same day. The shop is closed. Incense is burning. Christmas lights are a glow. Alone, KWEENIE whistles boisterously a couple lines of "Silent Night." She has obviously been photographing, without much satisfaction, a still-life of soap and flowers. She seems ponderous and pondering. She addresses her soliloquy to the absent ADA and JOHN and CURTIS.

Kweenie: May I speak? May I speak without being spoken to? May I make a personal remark?...A personal remark? Oh my....Oh yes. A personal remark? Please do. (Then flatly) I think I'll go kill a rock star....Nothin', huh? How do you get somebody's attention? "You can tell us anything." (She snaps a flash picture) My parents always said that. I'll bet every parent on the block, every parent in the nation, in the western hemisphere, in the world, in the mind of God has said, "You can tell us anything. We'll understand." Call *The National Enquirer!* EXTRA! EXTRA! Read All About It! BLIND PARENTS RAISE

INVISIBLE CHILD!" I'll bet even killer sharks pump their kids for information. (She lines up another picture and snaps it) Personally, I prefer still-life. (She whistles one more line of "Silent Night") I must not whistle. What was it the nuns at good old Misericordia taught us? "When a girl whistles, the Blessed Virgin cries." (She whistles a fast "wolf" whistle) Who runs the Kleenex concession in heaven? "Bless me, Father, for I have whistled." I am the by-product of a long procession of parents and priests and nuns. They told me to be good. I'm good okay. Very good. But, mommy, what's "good"? Be good. You and daddy never finished that sentence. Be a good what? A good lawyer. A good doctor. Anything but a good virgin-martyr-saint. Right now I'm good...and pregnant. (Sings) "Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child." Tch! They'd never believe that!

Ada: (Entering) Is this the mad scene from *Hamlet*?

Kweenie: Just helping an old lady across the street...of her life.

Ada: Found an apartment?

Kweenie: You missed supper.

Ada: A-part-ment. As in a-part.

Kweenie: Maybe I should marry Curtis and be a housewife in Daly City.

Ada: Somehow that must be against zoning laws.

Kweenie: My nose hurts.

Ada: That's more barbaric than pierced ears.

Kweenie: It's PRIMAL!

Ada: Primal? It's positively Neanderthal.

Kweenie: It's only my left nostril.

Ada: ...and what a lovely saffron robe.

Kweenie: I may join that Dervish group.

Ada: And shake your tambourine for the tourists down at Powell and Market.

Kweenie: The same old Ada. (KWEENIE pulls out a joint)

Ada: The same old Kweenie. (ADA tosses KWEENIE a box of footlong fireplace matches) Where's John?

Kweenie: Out. (KWEENIE has struck the match and lets it burn close to her face)

Ada: Just us girls then.

Kweenie: Am I just another candlelight beauty? (KWEENIE waves the match before her face. She is baiting ADA as the "older" woman) What does youth do to a face?

Ada: Usually it leaves.

Kweenie: (Blows out match) Say, does Johnny still leave the toilet seat up?

Ada: We're off and running.

Kweenie: Johnny always used to leave the toilet seat up. More than once with that man I crawled out of bed in the dark of night and plopped my fanny down into the cold water.

Ada: How refreshing. Did you have to change your jammies?

Kweenie: Peroxide. I need peroxide. For my nose.

Ada: John stores a first-aid kit under the counter. (ADA busily waters plants)

Kweenie: Let me recite my latest poem.

Ada: You're so creative. Photography. Poetry. Hooking.

Kweenie:

"Chameleons are not furious.
They color themselves to fit their world.
Suddenly, this long here...."
What do you think so far?

Ada: Terrific. I hate it.

Kweenie:

"Suddenly, this long *here*,
I no longer speed on the urgency of *there*.
Chameleons are..."

Ada: Stop!

Kweenie: You'll make me forget.

Ada: You and Coleridge.

Kweenie: He was into opium.

Ada: He was also a poet. Let me squeeze this cotton over your nose. Someone interrupted his composition of a poem. Hold still. He never could finish it.

Kweenie: But I finished mine.

Ada: Like I said: he was a poet.

Kweenie: "Chameleons are adaptable."

Ada: Move aside.

Kweenie:

"Chameleons will be here long after
the rest of life,
extinct,
has died of a bleeding ulcer."

Ada: That's it?

Kweenie: Far out, isn't it?

Ada: Care for some tea?

Kweenie: I have some ginseng in my tote.

Ada: Thanks, dear, I'd as soon not swallow anything in your bag.

Kweenie: Don't act superior. Just because your toilet seat is down.

Ada: (Very angry) You were forbidden ever to go upstairs!

Kweenie: You've broken Johnny, paper-trained him like a little dog.

Ada: Ridiculous.

Kweenie: Signs and omens are everywhere.

Ada: When I was eleven, I connected a wire between two soup cans. I could barely hear my best girl friend.

Kweenie: In the universe. In the cosmos. It's all allegorical.... My horoscope says I should leave San Francisco.

Ada: Good-bye. Good luck.

Kweenie: Good riddance, you mean. You've never liked me.

Ada: I could cheerfully murder you. Hand me your cup.

Kweenie: I tried to leave once before.

Ada: Try again. Try moving tomorrow.

Kweenie: I tried to leave when I thought that Johnny had married you.

Ada: Hurry. I have a short attention span.

Kweenie: I called you from the bus station in L. A.

Ada: Collect.

Kweenie: You've never liked me.

Ada: I accepted the collect call John had refused.... Why should I like you? John's old....

JOHN AND CURTIS ENTER TOGETHER

John: (Pushing CURTIS aside) May I cut in?

Ada: Kweenie-says-she's-leaving-San-Francisco-She-promises-never-to-call-again-Not-even-collect-and-she-said-she-is-a-chameleon.

Kweenie: Ada, you're a stitch.

Ada: In time, I'll save nine. What's wrong with Curtis?

Kweenie: Curtis wants me to marry him.

Ada: Wonderful. You can move out bride and baggage.

Kweenie: I won't marry him.

Ada: That's wonderful too. You can move out separately.

Kweenie: Never will I marry him.

Ada: You're nobody's fool.

Curtis: (To ADA) You married me.

Ada: Curtis, you and I weren't married long enough to fight for custody of the cake.

Curtis: Kick me when I'm down.

John: (To CURTIS) Were you beaten as a child?

Ada: For the extra point, I could dropkick you into the street.

Curtis: I'd feel right marrying Kweenasheba.

Ada: Sometimes "no" is a positive answer.

Curtis: (Pulls KWEENASHEBA into a clinch almost like tight dancing)
Marry me, Kweenasheba.

Kweenie: Let go of me, you big ape.

Curtis: Marry me.

Kweenie: You're suffocating me.

Curtis: Marry me.

Kweenie: I'm getting claustrophobic.

Curtis: I can't let go of you.

Kweenie: Let go of me.

John: (To ADA) Let's go watch Channel 12's Big Time Wrestling.

Curtis: I need you.

Kweenie: I don't need you. Let loose!

Curtis: You can change your mind.

Ada: Five'll get me ten, she won't.

Kweenie: Wicker bedpans in hell!

Curtis: We're never too far into anything that we can't turn back.

Kweenie: I got along without you before I met you.

Curtis: I can't get along without you now.

Kweenie: Let loose.

Curtis: I can't let go of you.

John: May I have this dance? (JOHN softly hums "Silent Night")

JOHN AND ADA DANCE SLOW, CLOSE

Kweenie: Can't you tell where you're not wanted?

Ada: Neither one of them can tell where they're not wanted.

Kweenie: You have to let go of me.

Curtis: No!

Kweenie: I'm leaving you.

Curtis: No!

Kweenie: I'm leaving San Francisco.

Curtis: I can't deal with this.

John: (Sings *sotto voce*) "Sleep in heavenly peace."

Kweenie: Let go of me.

Curtis: I'll go with you.

Ada: Go get their suitcases.

Kweenie: No.

Curtis: Why can't I go with you?

Kweenie: I won't let you. You *must* let go of me.

Curtis: I'll never let you go.

John and Ada, dancing, are just going into a dip. The next line freezes them at the bottom of the dip where they do a "take" until John's line.

Kweenie: Speaking of 'round yon Virgin and Child...I'm going to have a baby. (Curtis releases Kweenie)

John: That's good. We were about to go to sleep.

Curtis: I don't believe it.

John: Cute. A baby brother for Gladys Mae.

Ada: Look at her face, Curtis. You can tell a pregnancy in a woman's face.

Curtis: You have a ring through your nose.

Kweenie: I had it pierced this morning coming from the clinic.

Curtis: I don't believe it.

Kweenie: Curtis! The rabbit died!

Curtis: Honey-babe, we're never into anything so far we can't change our minds.

Kweenie: My mind's made up.

Ada: Like a hide-a-bed.

Curtis: Now you have to marry me.

Kweenie: No.

Curtis: Then you have to chuck the brat.

Kweenie: Says who?

Ada: That-a-girl.

Curtis: I say.

Ada: "The little Bummer Boy."

Kweenie: You constantly antagonize me.

Ada: Curtis calls it foreplay.

John: I think, Ada, we'll take a walk.

Ada: Says who?

Kweenie: You don't want to see a man nag a pregnant woman?

Curtis: I once let go of a balloon in St. Louis in 1957. Where did it go?

John: The same place electricity goes when the lights go out.

Kweenie: Don't try to worm out with your philosophy, Curtis.

Ada: We're all on to your rhetorical tricks, Curtis.

Curtis: I ought to belt you.

John: If you want to box....

Curtis: I mean her.

Ada: Curtis wants to hit Kweenie. That's one of the ways Curtis turns on.

It makes a big man of him.

John: I don't want to hear this.

Ada: You wanted to know why I divorced Curtis.

John: Because of Gladys Mae's pantyhose.

Curtis: You have to repeat everything!

Kweenie: Shut up, Curtis.

Ada: Shut up, Curtis.

Curtis: What is this, the OK Corral?

John: Shut up, Curtis.

Ada: Do what you want, Kweenie.

Kweenie: I'm beginning to.

Ada: But don't listen to him.

Kweenie: I can't even hear him.

Ada: He beat me up and then he knocked me up.

John: You were pregnant?

Ada: Give me a cigarette. (JOHN starts to light it for her) For godsake, I
can light it for myself.

John: You were pregnant?

Ada: Yes.

John: Curtis made you pregnant?

Ada: In a motel on Highway 1. Right after the Four-Bean Salad.

John: But I thought Curtis was...

Curtis: You are what you plug.

John: I ought to belt you.

Curtis: For making my own wife pregnant?

John: Really belt you.

Curtis: For making both these ladies pregnant?

John: Really hit you.

Curtis: I could punch you out with one hand.

John: Says you.

Kweenie: (Disgusted) Omigod!

Ada: You're worse than little BOYS!

John: So where's "Little Curtis"?

Ada: Cured down some drain. God. I hate smoking. (ADA begins to
cry) What do you mean "Little Curtis"? It might have been "Little
Ada."

Kweenie: This night is going to run up a lot of karmic debts.

Ada: You're the same as Curtis.
John: Don't get down on me.
Curtis: There isn't enough soap in this shop.
Ada: I'm not any man's incubator.
Kweenie: Who says I am?
Ada: I know, John, what you borrowed from Curtis. Those magazines of Asian women bound in tied-up situations.
Kweenie: Curtis keeps that disgusting junk under the bed.
Curtis: A man needs fantasies.
Ada: Signs and omens are everywhere.
Kweenie: For sure.
Ada: Move out! This is my house. You, Kweenie, out. You, Curtis, double out ...and now that I think about it, you, John, you...out too!
John: Why me?
Ada: Why not you?
John: I'm supposed to be your lover.
Ada: You're a tenant with a lease on a shop.
Curtis: Primitive people always eat the god they worship.
Ada: I'm going to my room.
John: It's *our* room.
Ada: Tonight it's my room again. I'm going up there and have a good cry for Little Ada.
John: This is all a guilt syndrome.
Ada: Out! All of you!
John: No woman should feel guilty about an abortion.
Ada: You utter idiot! I'm not whining for that little Ada. I'm letting it out tonight for *this* Little Ada. The one who counts. Me. The one who lives and breathes and teaches and tries to give up smoking while her lover wants to box, for godsake, with her ex-husband.
John: Don't dare go up those stairs alone.
Ada: Try and stop me. You or the Queen of Sheep Dip.
Curtis: I rather enjoy this.
John: We promised never to end an argument with separate beds.
Ada: This isn't an argument. This is a decision.
Curtis: Ada means not tonight, John. She has a headache.
Ada: Ada means sometimes people just need "alone-time."

ADA EXITS

Curtis: Good-night, Greta Garbo.
Kweenie: So here I stand with the two men in my life. One the soul of the

middle class. The other, the heel.

Curtis: What's next?

John: (Pointing upstairs to ADA) First: getting out of Ada's life. (Pointing to Kweenie) Second: getting out of Flower Girl's life.

Kweenie: Not on my account, Johnny.

John: I'm taking my motorcycle out. I'm going across the Golden Gate. I want to feel fog in my face.

Kweenie: Why don't you just go upstairs to Ada.

Curtis: That wouldn't be fog in his face.

John: I'm not in the mood to rape.

Curtis: What about these wilting roses? What about this awful herbal soap?

John: (Tosses Kweenie some keys) Kweenie, open up tomorrow?

Kweenie: Sure, Johnny.

Curtis: I mean what about the shop?

John: My lease has three more months. Curtis, why don't you buy me out? Lock, stock, and barrel.

Kweenie: Maybe Ada will change her mind.

Curtis: Ada Vicary started life as a parson's daughter. Once she starts moralizing on that....

Kweenie: Ada is an Aries with Scorpio rising. She'll change.

John: Ada can sit upstairs in her restored Victorian rocker till she's 90...

Kweenie: Ada will always be full of surprises.

John: ...till she's 95 and drooling in her needlepoint.

Curtis: Remember when making love was fun?

Kweenie: Fun gets complicated.

Curtis: In every grade-B mummy movie, the diamond in the tomb always has curse on it.

John: ...or a Curtis.

Kweenie: Where will you go? It's late.

John: It's early. To the Russian River. A friend has a cabin. The key's under a rock by the porch.

Kweenie: You'll come back?

John: Probably. For awhile. Then I may cycle up the coast to Vancouver.

Curtis: Ada likes plays the way I live movies.

Kweenie: She thinks everything is *Romeo and Juliet*.

Curtis: A good thing those two kids aren't alive today.

John: You guys better pack up your bologna and move.

Curtis: "Years from now when you speak of this, and you will speak of this, be kind."

John: Curtis, if you couldn't quote movies, you'd be silent.

Curtis: What silent movie would I be?

John: Whatever, you wouldn't be original. (To Kweenie) So long, kid. Do it. (John pecks her on the cheek)

Kweenie: I can live on *that* for a month. (John smiles, shrugs)

JOHN EXITS

Curtis: (Musing) What silent movie would I be?

Kweenie: *Intolerance*.

Curtis: And you're beginning to look like *Birth of a Nation*.

Kweenie: Why have you always wanted to change me?

Curtis: To perfect you. Why, Eliza, don't you recognize Henry Higgins?

Kweenie: You're hateful.

Curtis: I'm Pygmalion.

Kweenie: You're a pig.

Curtis: You're never happy unless you're miserable.

Kweenie: You're never happy unless you make me miserable.

Curtis: Made for each other. What's the matter?

Kweenie: My film seems stuck in your camera.

Curtis: Have you rewound it?

Kweenie: Of course.

Curtis: You probably pulled the last picture too far and yanked it from the cannister.

Kweenie: I wound it right.

Curtis: Let me see. Was the little light on? Could you hear it click when you rewound it? I hope you didn't wreck the strobe. (The flash camera goes off.) You have to pay attention.

Kweenie: I'm blinded!

Curtis: You're also irreversibly deaf and dumb.

Kweenie: Everytime I get near something electronic, you condescend.

Curtis: Dearly beloved, we are gathered here tonight because Kweenasheba's film is caught in my camera.

Kweenie: I surrender, Curtis.

Curtis: Surrender?

Kweenie: I never thought I'd come to this.

Curtis: You can't surrender.

Kweenie: I can. I do. I'm beat.

Curtis: You're backing away.

Kweenie: I accept you, have accepted you...the way you are.

Curtis: Time with you is better than time without you.

Kweenie: I'm tired....

Curtis: ...You're chicken...

Kweenie: ...of trying to change you.

Curtis: SQUAWK!

Kweenie: You'll always be lower class.

Curtis: We have that in common.

Kweenie: The only thing we have in common is neither of us has ever been married to Elizabeth Taylor.

Curtis: Touch your tummy and say that.

Kweenie: The little bugger's mine.

Curtis: How about marrying me?

Kweenie: I think I'll strangle you.

Curtis: I knew you couldn't surrender.

Kweenie: Go to bed.

Curtis: Tuck me in, mommy?

Kweenie: Go to bed.

Curtis: You used to say, "Come to bed." ...I love you, Kweenasheba.

Kweenie: You mean you want me to love you.

Curtis: I do no kidding love you.

Kweenie: Am I supposed to bat that ball back over the net for a love, game, set?

Curtis: When a person says "I love you," it's civilized to say you love that person back.

Kweenie: I don't.

Curtis: Kick me some more.

Kweenie: I won't.

Curtis: Kick me.

Kweenie: I can't.

Curtis: Why not?

Kweenie: I surrendered.

Curtis: Then for sure kick me.

Kweenie: Why should I?

Curtis: To the victor go the spoils.

Kweenie: I didn't win, Curtis. I surrendered.

Curtis: If you won't make love to me anymore, then you have to kick me.

Kweenie: No!

Curtis: Hit me!

Kweenie: I said no!

Curtis: For godsake, Kweenie, hurt me.

Kweenie: When something's over, whatever happened to shaking hands

and saying good-bye?

Curtis: Please.

Kweenie: (Amazed) I'm finishing an affair with a punching bag!

Curtis: Time, space, flesh have passed between us.

Kweenie: What's that mean?

Curtis: I can't deal with you leaving San Francisco.

Kweenie: Well good-bye, dear, and amen.

Curtis: Come to bed.

Kweenie: I haven't given up my free-will.

Curtis: I'll be under the covers when you're ready.

Kweenie: You're not hard to get.

Curtis: (Exiting) It's dark back here.

Kweenie: Get a nightlight.

Curtis: Where will you sleep?

Kweenie: Here on the couch.

Curtis: *Voulez vous couchez....*

Kweenie: Pack your pickup truck tomorrow morning.

Curtis: Orders straight from Wonder Woman.

Kweenie: You heard Ada.

Curtis: I hear you, Kweenie.

Kweenie: Sleep tight.

Curtis: I'm glad we don't have to bother to get a divorce.

CURTIS EXITS

Kweenie: (Making up the couch, sings) "...God rest ye merry gentlemen. Let nothing you dismay..." Everyone has gone off to sleep. Alone. (She toys with the blankets, then stands stock still as the realization fills her. She folds her hands across her stomach) I will see...I promise I will see my invisible child....I love you...I love you...I love you, baby. I am. I am the one. I am the only. I am the original Queen of Sheba.

LIGHTS SLOW FADE

CURTAIN

