

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE

SCENE 1 A small bungalow in West Hollywood

SCENE 2 The bungalow—later that evening

ACT TWO

SCENE 1 The bungalow—two weeks later

SCENE 2 The bungalow—midnight

SCENE 3 The bungalow—a little after 3 A.M.

SCENE 4 The bungalow—Sunday morning 11 A.M., a few days later

SCENE 1

The scene is a small bungalow in West Hollywood. It is a rather colorless affair with cheap, rundown furniture. There is a small kitchen off the living room, a small bedroom and one tiny bathroom. A door leads to a small backyard, with three trees.

As the curtain rises, it is about nine o'clock in the morning, a bright, sunny California morning. The radio is playing. A young girl, short, about twenty, wearing sawed-off jeans, sweat socks, hiking boots, a back-pack, an army jacket, a beret, and carrying an old valise stands outside the door. Her name is LIBBY TUCKER. She has an energy and a vitality that will soon make themselves apparent.

STEFFY BLONDEL, a still-attractive woman close to forty is in the bathroom combing her hair.

LIBBY rings the front doorbell. STEFFY turns off the radio, goes to the door and opens it.

STEFFY. Yes?

LIBBY. Hi!

STEFFY. Hi! Can I help you?

LIBBY. *(Looks into the room.)* I don't know. I'm not sure this is the place.

STEFFY. Who are you looking for?

LIBBY. Does Herbert Tucker live here?

STEFFY. Yes, he does.

LIBBY. Which Herbert Tucker is he?

STEFFY. I didn't know there were a lot of them. Which one are you looking for? *(She picks up a newspaper from the front steps)*

LIBBY. Is this the Herbert Tucker in show business?

STEFFY. Yes. . .

Libby. He's a writer?

STEFFY. Yes. What did you want? (*She comes back inside.*)

Libby. I wanted to talk to him. Is he in?

STEFFY. He's sleeping. Listen, I'm kind of busy. Could you tell me what this is about?

Libby. It's personal. . . Are you his wife?

STEFFY. No, I'm not. . . Are you a friend of his?

Libby. No, I'm his daughter.

(*There is a pause. STEFFY looks taken aback.*)

STEFFY. His daughter?

Libby. Libby. Libby Tucker. From New York City.

STEFFY. I see.

Libby. I think I stunned you.

STEFFY. No, not at all.

Libby. A little, right?

STEFFY. Yes, a little. . . Please come in. Sit down.

(*Libby comes in, puts her bag down.*)

He didn't mention you were coming.

Libby. That's because he didn't know. Is this like his office or something?

STEFFY. Well, both. He works here and he lives here.

Libby. I see.

STEFFY. It's not what you expected?

Libby. I don't know. You get this picture in your mind about Hollywood. I live this good in Brooklyn.

STEFFY. He usually has a woman come in and clean it a couple of times a week.

Libby. Couldn't make it this week, huh?

STEFFY. I don't know, I'm not here that often.

Libby. Oh. You don't live here?

STEFFY. No. (*Extending her hand.*) My name is Steffy Blondell.

Libby. Glad to meet you, Steffy Blondell.

(*They shake hands.*)

STEFFY. Are you just out for a visit?

Libby. (*Looking around.*) No, I'm sort of out on business.

STEFFY. I see. Can I get you anything?

Libby. A glass of water would be swell. I think I swallowed the state of Arizona.

STEFFY. (*Going to the sink.*) Wouldn't you like to take that thing off?

Libby. What thing?

STEFFY. That pack on your back.

Libby. Oh, Jeez, I forgot it was still there. (*She takes it off.*) After you carry it for three weeks, you think it's a growth.

STEFFY. He should be up in a few minutes. I hate to wake him. He hasn't been sleeping too well lately. (*She hands her the glass.*)

Libby. Yeah? Is he all right?

STEFFY. Oh, sure. Just a little rundown.

Libby. All his various multiple projects, I suppose. (*She drinks.*)

STEFFY. Well, he keeps busy.

Libby. (*Winces.*) Jesus, is this water? You could eat it with a spoon.

STEFFY. It probably tastes funny after the water in New York. He really should get a filter.

Libby. And a fishing pole.

STEFFY. That's something *he* would say. You sound a lot like him.

Libby. You mean the *Noo Yawk* accent?

STEFFY. No. Just the way you say things. I think you have his sense of humor.

Libby. Well, that's about all he left. (*She looks around.*)

STEFFY. You're not in school then, I take it.

Libby. You mean college? No.

STEFFY. Because your father mentioned a few weeks ago he thought you might be in college by now.

LIBBY. He's not exactly up on my current activities, is he? No, I just missed getting into Harvard by about three million kids . . . I'm an actress.

STEFFY. Really?

LIBBY. Yeah.

STEFFY. You mean professional?

LIBBY. Yeah. Sorta professional. I mean, I'm not a star. If I was a star you would have known who I was when I said "Libby Tucker."

STEFFY. What do you do, stage work mostly?

LIBBY. No, mostly I audition.

STEFFY. But you have studied.

LIBBY. You mean in acting school? No. I never had the time or the money. I had a part-time job in the notions department in Abraham and Straus. I was *almost* accepted for a scholarship at the Actors Studio.

STEFFY. What happened?

LIBBY. Nothing. They just didn't accept me.

STEFFY. I see. So you just decided to come. I mean, you didn't write or anything?

LIBBY. Yeah. When I was nine . . . He answered when I was twelve. (*Looking around.*) Just one bedroom?

STEFFY. Yes. I was just about to go out shopping. Your father's not very good about keeping his refrigerator filled.

LIBBY. You don't have to go on my account. I mean, that water was a meal in itself.

STEFFY. If I don't do it, he never will. It's just down the block.

LIBBY. You know him long?

STEFFY. About two years. We date on and off.

LIBBY. Two years and you just see him "on and off"?

STEFFY. Well, I work and I raise two children. It's difficult.

LIBBY. Yeah, I know. My mother has the same problem. (*Steffy lets that pass.*) So what's he like?

STEFFY. You mean you have no idea?

LIBBY. No.

STEFFY. I'm sorry.

LIBBY. It's no big deal. I'm okay. I came very close to growing up neurotic but I got over it.

STEFFY. I'm glad. . . Your mother raised you?

LIBBY. (*Raises her hand waist-high.*) Up to here. The rest I did myself. Mom was working all the time and she had my brother Robby to take care of. Actually, my mother and my father was my grandmother. Grandma gave me a sense of direction. She gave me confidence in myself. I'm sure you noticed my confidence. It's the one thing about me you can't miss.

STEFFY. I noticed it the minute you said "Hi" . . . How'd you get out here?

LIBBY. I took the bus to Denver, then I hitchhiked. If you're not gorgeous, you hike more than you hitch. Listen, it wasn't bad. I got to see America, they got to see me. We both made a big impression.

STEFFY. Maybe I should wake him up, huh? Tell him you're here.

LIBBY. No, that's okay. I sort of have it all planned in my mind what I wanna say. I can handle it.

STEFFY. I was worrying how *he's* going to handle it.

LIBBY. Oh, you mean the shock? He doesn't have a bad heart, does he?

STEFFY. No.

LIBBY. Maybe I should slide a note under his door first.

STEFFY. Listen, he'll be fine. Maybe I just worry about him too much.

LIBBY. I don't even know what he looks like. I've never even seen a picture of him. I don't even know what to call him.

STEFFY. You don't know what to call him?

LIBBY. Well, he isn't exactly "Poppa" and I don't think "Mr. Tucker" is gonna win him over.

12 I OUGHT TO BE IN PICTURES

ACT I

STEFFY. Look, if it's a problem, just tell him. He'll understand. He's really a nice man, you know.

LIBBY. Really? Like, what's nice about him?

STEFFY. Well, why don't you wait. Make up your own mind.

LIBBY. That's what Grandma told me to do last week at the cemetery.

STEFFY. Someone died?

LIBBY. Yeah. Grandma. About six years ago. But I go out there every few weeks to talk to her.

STEFFY. I'm not sure I understand.

LIBBY. I know. It sounds weird. When I told my mother Grandma still talks to me, she wanted me to take laxatives. . . It's hard to explain to most people. But I sort of always depended on Grandma. And when I need her the most, somehow she gets through to me. (STEFFY stares at her.) You're looking at me funny. I swear I'm not one of those people who sees miracles. This isn't *The Song of Bernadette* or anything.

STEFFY. No, I think I know what you're saying.

LIBBY. She tells me if I'm eating too much or not getting enough sleep. Last week she didn't have much to say because she just had a fight with Grandpa. He's in the grave next to her.

STEFFY. Does he talk to you too?

LIBBY. He doesn't talk to Grandma, why should he talk to me?

STEFFY. I'll tell you the truth, it's something I've always wanted to do myself. Just go to the cemetery and talk to my mother, tell her what's going on with my life. But I always felt foolish. (She goes to the telephone and dials.)

LIBBY. Oh, don't I know. I had a girlfriend sleep over one night and three o'clock in the morning I had this conversation with Grandma. My friend didn't even stay for breakfast.

ACT I I OUGHT TO BE IN PICTURES

13

STEFFY. (Into the phone.) Three-seven-seven. Did the studio call for me?

LIBBY. Are you in the business too?

STEFFY. Min-hm. Make-up lady. I work over at Columbia.

LIBBY. Columbia Pictures? The movie studio? I'm having heart palpitations.

STEFFY. (Into the phone.) If the studio calls, tell them I'll be in at ten-thirty. Thank you. (STEFFY hangs up.)

LIBBY. Who do you make up? Any actual stars?

STEFFY. Sure.

LIBBY. Sure, she says. Like I have this conversation every day. Name me one star. A big one. Who was the biggest?

STEFFY. I don't know . . . Jane Fonda?

LIBBY. JANE FONDA? You've touched Jane Fonda's face? I mean, Jane Fonda is the one actress in the world I most identify with. I patterned my whole life after hers. I feel I have so many of her qualities. They just haven't surfaced yet.

STEFFY. Well, one day if you're not busy you can come out to the studio, I'll show you around.

(STEFFY picks up her purse and goes to the front porch.)

LIBBY. (Following after STEFFY.) What do you mean, if I'm not busy? How many phone calls have I got since I'm here?

STEFFY. It's no problem. I'll set it up.

LIBBY. God's truth: I liked your face the minute I saw it through the door. Maybe I should forget my old man and move in with you.

STEFFY. Is that what you're planning to do? Move in with him?

LIBBY. I don't know. Let's see if I get a handshake first. (STEFFY stands on the doorstep pondering LIBBY's last remark as LIBBY goes into the house and closes the front door. STEFFY leaves. LIBBY looks around the room.)