

A PLAY

Roommates

A Romantic Comedy in Three Acts

Laura Anne Ewald

1990, 2011

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Roommates: A Romantic Comedy in 3 Acts

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ROOMMATES
By Laura Anne Ewald

Synopsis

Roommates is a three-act comedy about two young women who room together in New York City. Sara Benjamin is an easy-going, soft-spoken type who teaches Phys Ed at a city high school. She lives in a sweat suit and tennis shoes and usually wears a stopwatch and whistle around her neck. Christine Dagmar is high-strung, with an inner craziness that tends to come with genius. She is a computer wizard, working for a large international banking firm. People who don't know her consider her totally nuts, but because of her brilliance in her work, she can't be fired from her job—only transferred from one department to another as she shows up her various supervisors.

The story follows the roommates' parallel romances. Sarah is engaged to be married to Nick Huntington. He is the son of a very upper-crust family from Long Island. He has left the three-piece suit image behind him, but difficulties in their relationship arise as Sarah finds it impossible to reconcile her own Brooklyn tomboy with Nick's fourth-generation Harvard Law School. His parents only complicate matters.

Christine has almost resigned herself to spinsterhood. Having the world continue to tell her that she's crazy has begun to sink in and take hold. The only men of whom she is aware refuse to take her seriously as a person, so she's pretty much given up hope of ever finding the man of her dreams. That makes it a little tough on Jay Scott. The manager of the apartment building, he finds himself falling for Christine, but his shyness makes it difficult to approach her. But craziness has never bothered Jay—his own has evolved into a masterful imagination that has put his sci-fi/fantasy novels on the best-sellers' list. All he has to do is get up the nerve to tell Christine about it.

Both relationships have their ups and downs until, with a little help from Sarah's father and an understanding neighbor, both are resolved for an old-fashioned happily-ever-after ending.

Cast of Characters

- MISS RUBY EPSTEIN: A feisty, seventyish woman whose fashions tend to be thirty years out of date, MISS RUBY lives across the hall from and has become very fond of both roommates.
- JAY SCOTT: The building manager and handyman, JAY is the faded jeans and flannel shirt type, but well-educated. HE is friendly to everyone, though HE tends to be a shy towards those HE does not know well.
- CHRISTINE DAGMAR: Brilliant with computers and business but privately a real nut. CHRISTINE dresses very well for her job, but actually prefers jeans and sweaters. SHE finds her great escape in science fiction and fantasy and dreams of the day when SHE will meet someone who might actually understands her.
- SARAH BENJAMIN: A generally easy-going individual who lives in sweats and tennis shoes, SARAH teaches phys. ed. at a city high school, coaching football on the side. SHE loves NICK very much but is really insecure about his Long Island, high society family.
- STEPHEN NICHOLAS HUNTINGTON, IV: SARAH'S fiancé. Tall, dark, and handsome, NICK is far removed from HIS upper-crust background. The fourth eldest son to attend Harvard Law School, NICK has given up a position in his family's prominent firm for the public defense.
- TED BENJAMIN: SARAH'S widowed father is very easy-going with a tendency to act the same no matter what the company. TED knows how to enjoy life and wants very much for his daughter to find happiness with NICK.
- STEPHEN NICHOLAS HUNTINGTON, III: NICK'S father, HE is rather under the thumb of his overpowering wife, though possibly by choice. HE is trying to understand his son's "idiosyncrasies."
- VICTORIA ST. CLAIR HUNTINGTON: NICK'S mother, the epitome of the Dame of Society. SHE is habitually overdressed, stuffy, and

lacking all understanding of her son's voluntary leave from the social world.

CAT:

CAT always appears as a draping sort of fur piece. HE is an old animal who has been living in this apartment building for years, changing apartments as tenants come and go. HE never moves when anyone is around, though HE is discovered in various places throughout the apartment.

Scene

The entire action of the play takes place within the main room of, or in the hallway just outside, a small, slightly worn but clean, two-bedroom apartment in New York City.

Time

The not-too-distant present.

ACT I

Scene 1: In the hallway just outside the apartment, early Monday morning.

Scene 2: In the apartment, just following Scene 1.

Scene 3: In the apartment, late Monday night.

ACT II

Scene 1: In the apartment, about 4 p.m. Tuesday.

Scene 2: In the apartment, about 6 p.m. Tuesday.

Scene 3: In the apartment, very late Tuesday night.

ACT III

Scene 1: In the hallway just outside the apartment, Friday evening.

Scene 2: In the apartment, just following Scene 1.

Scene 3: In the apartment, about 9 p.m. Friday night.

ACT I

Scene 1

SETTING: The scene is the hallway of an apartment building. The décor is showing some age, but it has obviously seen good care.

AT RISE: MISS RUBY EPSTEIN ENTERS. SHE is taking her own trash out, and though SHE carries a cane, SHE uses it more to emphasize her words than to help her to walk.

(JAY SCOTT ENTERS. HE wears his usual faded jeans, flannel shirt, and worn work boots and carries a belt full of tools, most notably on this occasion, a pipe wrench.)

JAY

Oh, hey, Miss Ruby. I'd've taken that out for you.

RUBY

Well, I didn't want to trouble you so early. Besides, I need to get my exercise somehow.

JAY

Okay, but you be careful on those back steps.

RUBY

Don't you worry, child. I always am.

JAY

Good girl. Say, Miss Ruby...

RUBY

Hmm?

JAY

You, uh...wouldn't happen to know anything about that fella that's been hanging around apartment two-oh-five, would you?

RUBY

Mmm... I might.

JAY

I'm just curious. I mean, after all, a building manager needs to know who's coming and going. Tenant security and all that.

RUBY (not believing him)

Of course.

(Pause.)

JAY

Well?

RUBY

Well, what?

JAY

Do you know him?

RUBY (teasing)

Know who?

JAY

The guy!

RUBY

What guy? Oh, you mean Nick!

JAY (softly, uncertain)

Nick?

RUBY

Nick Huntington. He's engaged, you know.

JAY

Engaged...

RUBY

Yep. Sure is. They haven't set a date, yet. Seems his parents aren't too thrilled with the idea—Long Island upper-crust, and all that. His mother's something else, or so Christine tells me.

JAY (disappointed)

Christine.

RUBY

Yes. She's been holding poor Sarah's hand since this whole thing started. But never mind. Sarah's a dear, and Nick's a good sort. I figure it's only a matter of time before Christine'll be needing a new roommate.

JAY

Christine—I mean, Miss Dagmar... So this Nick fella, he and Miss *Benjamin* are... (obviously relieved) Oh, well. That explains everything.

RUBY (with a knowing smile)

It sure does. Say, you wouldn't be headed up to two-oh-five right now, would you?

JAY

Yeah. Miss Dagmar lost her contact down the drain again.

RUBY

My, my. That's the third time in as many months, isn't it?

JAY

I guess so. I lost count.

RUBY (chuckling)

Child, you'd just better watch yourself, or you are gonna be had.

JAY

Nah. She's just not very good with plumbing.

RUBY

That's what *you* think. Christine's a lot handier than you know. Why on Sunday afternoon, she came over, took my VCR completely apart, and fixed it for me. And last month, when you were out of town, she put a new wire on my toaster oven. Don't tell me that a girl who can do all that can't get into her own drain trap.

JAY

Well, she probably could with both her contacts *in*, only when one's down the drain, she can't see anything.

RUBY

That's her tale, if you're wanting to buy it.

JAY

Now, now, Miss Ruby, you've been talking like this about every pretty girl who's lived here in the last six years, and there hasn't been one to catch me, yet.

RUBY

Maybe not, but those other girls were coming out after you. This one's baiting a trap, and you're falling right into it. 'Course, it could be that you don't mind, this time.

JAY (laughing)

I don't think I want to touch that one, Miss Ruby.

RUBY

Well, ignore all the symptoms if you like, child, but just don't say I didn't warn you!

(RUBY gives JAY a quick kiss on the cheek and is chuckling and humming to herself as SHE EXITS.)

(JAY starts to laugh with her, stops suddenly, and looks thoughtful for a moment, as though seriously considering the possibility for the first time himself. Then, shaking his head, HE EXITS.)

(CURTAIN)

(End of Scene 1.)

ACT IScene 2SETTING:

The scene is the main room of a small apartment, consisting of kitchen, dining area and living room. The kitchen is situated on a one-step riser. The sink, stove and refrigerator run along one wall. The kitchen is separated from the rest of the apartment by a counter. Sitting against the DS end of the counter is a bookcase loaded with brightly-colored paperback books. A telephone sits on the counter. The main door is center stage. Directly DS of the door a table with three chairs is placed against the counter. The fourth chair sits at a computer desk upstage opposite the kitchen. There is a small couch facing DS, a coffee table in front. At the center of the wall opposite the kitchen is a hallway leading to the bathroom and SARAH's bedroom. A T.V., VCR/DVD player and stuffed chair sit DS of the opening. A large bookshelf is near the desk. A door DS of the kitchen and opposite SARAH's room leads to CHRISTINE's bedroom.

The room is decorated with framed movie posters. One from Classic *Star Trek* hangs on the wall above the computer desk, upon which is other science fiction paraphernalia. Two Cary Grant posters, one from *The Philadelphia Story*, hang above the T.V. and chair. Mickey Mouse, in his *Fantasia* pose, hangs in the kitchen along with a Mickey Mouse clock.

AT RISE:

A black fur ball (CAT) can be seen sleeping on one end of the couch.

(The phone begins to ring and we hear a crash off stage. CHRISTINE ENTERS from her bedroom. SHE wears a dressy blue business suit, but only one high-heeled shoe. SHE is searching for the other as SHE stumbles along. SHE carries a coffee mug and toothbrush in her right hand and covers her left eye with the other. Her need for the lost contact lens is clear as SHE runs into everything trying to get to the phone. SHE answers it on the third try.)

CHRISTINE

Yes! What! Hello! ... Oh, hi, Nick... No, Sarah had to leave early... Faculty meeting, I think... I *think* so. At least I'm on my own for dinner tonight, so I assume she's still planning to go out with you.... I don't know exactly, but there's a coaches' meeting after football practice, so plan on a late dinner... No, I'm fine—just running a little late, that's all... No, don't worry about it. I can't do anything until the manager gets here and finds my contact... Yes, that's me—grace personified. ... The left one again... No, "Consistent" is my *middle* name... (laughing) Thanks a lot!

(The doorbell sounds.)

Oh, hey, Nick, I have to go... Okay. And I'll leave a note for Sarah... Right... 'Later!

(CHRISTINE misses the phone with the receiver a couple of times then finally, using both hands, manages to get it home. SHE trips getting to the door. SHE opens it to JAY.)

Hi!

JAY

'Morning. Sorry I took so long.

CHRISTINE

That's okay. I'm sorry I had to call you so early.

(JAY ENTERS.)

JAY

No problem. I was up early, so I could do some writing...uh, that is, so I could get some paperwork done.

CHRISTINE

Well, it's in the same place as the last time.

JAY (Holding up a pipe wrench.)

Consider it found.

(JAY EXITS to bathroom. CHRISTINE trips back up into the kitchen and feels around for her coffee mug. Finding it, SHE tries to drink, but it is empty. SHE makes for the coffee pot, but after trying to see it clearly, both with and without her left eye covered, SHE finally gives up. SHE accidentally finds her toothbrush and begins to brush her teeth.

JAY (From off stage.)

Maybe you should get some glasses—for a backup.

CHRISTINE

I have a pair—but I can't really see anything with them.

(SHE feels around in a drawer for a note pad and pen. Finding both, SHE covers her left eye again in order to write the note for SARAH.)

(JAY ENTERS, forefinger and thumb of one hand together.)

JAY

Success!

(CHRISTINE stumbles down from the kitchen, and JAY has to take her arm to keep her from falling.)

Careful...

CHRISTINE (Embarrassed.)

Thanks.

(SHE carefully takes the contact lens from JAY.)

JAY

You ever think about getting a second pair, just in case?

CHRISTINE

This one is from a *third* pair.

(CHRISTINE EXITS to bathroom.)

JAY

Oh.

(JAY stands and studies the movie posters, looking from Cary Grant to *Star Trek* and back then glances towards the bathroom and sighs.)

(Shyly.) Is there, uh...anything else I can do for you...while I'm here?

(CHRISTINE ENTERS.)

CHRISTINE

No. But thank you.

JAY

It's just that you looked like you were in kind of a hurry.

(CHRISTINE looks at her watch.)

CHRISTINE

Oh, Jiminy!

(SHE starts towards her bedroom then realizes SHE still has only one shoe on.)

You know, if you're really not in any rush, I *could* use a hand finding my other shoe.

JAY (Smiling.)

Can do.

(HE starts to look around the living room as CHRISTINE EXITS to her bedroom. CHRISTINE RETURNS, carrying her coat and briefcase.)

CHRISTINE

Oh, well. I guess I'll have to settle for the brown ones, though I have a meeting with Ms. Trevor this afternoon, and she's bound to make some stupid comment about wearing brown shoes with a blue suit...

JAY

Hang on! I think I've got something!

(By now HE has shed his tool belt and is lying flat on his stomach in order to peer under the couch. HE pulls out her blue shoe.)

One blue shoe, coming right up!

CHRISTINE

Oh, thank you!

(SHE accepts the shoe and slips it on.)

You've saved me from a fate worse than...well, you've at least saved me from humiliation á la Ms. Trevor, and I'm indebted to you.

JAY (Pleased.)

Any time.

(CHRISTINE is caught off guard by the sincerity of his offer. Their eyes lock for a long moment.)

CHRISTINE (Nervously.)

Yes, well. I do have to be going.

JAY

Yeah. Right. I'll just get my tools.

CHRISTINE (Shyly.)

You wouldn't have to leave right away. What I mean is, you could stay for a cup of coffee. It's a fresh pot, and Sarah made it, so it's good. I have to run, but you can hang around, if you like. Just be sure the door's locked behind you.

JAY

You know, I think I'll take you up on that. That coffee does smell pretty good. Thanks.

CHRISTINE

Thank *you*. I guess I'll see you later.

JAY

You bet.

(CHRISTINE EXITS CS, smiling. JAY finds a mug and pours coffee.
HE crosses to the couch and sees CAT.)

Well, hi there, Cat.

(HE pets the unresponsive mound of fur.)

I guess you figure an old man like you doesn't have to say much, huh. You know something, Cat? For a guy who seems to go through life picking roommates out of a hat, you made out pretty well this time around. Yes, sir, you've found yourself a couple of terrific ladies. They sure beat the pants off of that couple who lived here before. I wasn't sure you'd stick around long enough for somebody else to move in, but I guess you knew what you were doing.

(HE pauses to sip his coffee.)

Boy, that Miss Dagmar is something special, isn't she? Oh, I know you don't play favorites—whoever brings home the Nine-Lives today gets your vote—but for me... Oh, I don't know...what do you think? I mean, do you think that a guy like me and a girl like her...?

Ah, what am I saying? She's got Park Avenue written all over her. I never see her unless I have a monkey wrench in my hand or a mouth full of screws. You're absolutely right, Cat. I should take my flannel and denim and go back to where I belong. What would a girl like Christine Dagmar want with a guy like me, anyway?

(Pause.)

JAY (cont.)

Well, I'll tell you! I'm not such a bad fella. It's not like I *have* to be a plumber—or even a building manager. I keep this job, because I like people. Well, I like *watching* people. But I could quit any time. After all, I'm really a writer. No, not just a writer—a full-fledged, by-God, professional, *published* author. Been on the best-sellers' list my last three outings.

(HE stops himself.)

No...wait a minute. I could never tell Miss Dagmar that. She might want to read my stuff. Park Avenue would never understand popular sci-fi. Miss Benjamin would, but not Park Avenue. (HE sighs.) What *do* you think I should do, Cat?

(HE looks at CAT's silent form.)

Right. You think I should get the heck out of here and quit disturbing your nap. Okay.

(JAY returns his coffee mug to the sink.)

But don't get your hopes up, Cat. Another couple of chapters and I'll be back. I've never written a story yet that didn't have an outwardly hopeless romance in it. And in my fantasies, they *always* live happily-ever-after!

(JAY EXITS, without his tool belt, locking the door behind him.)

(CURTAIN.)

(End of Scene 2.)

ACT I

Scene 3

SETTING: The same as Scene 2.

AT RISE: The stage is dark. It is late that same day. CAT is now stretched out on top of the T.V. JAY's tool belt is under the coffee table.

(SARAH and NICK ENTER CS, and SARAH flips on the lights. SHE is carrying a small bag of groceries, which SHE takes into the kitchen and begins to unpack. Included in the bag are some cans of cat food and a box of tea. SARAH opens the tea and plugs in an electric tea kettle. SHE then crosses to pet CAT.)

(NICK wears a sports jacket over a turtleneck sweater, and SARAH wears a heavy fleece sweat jacket over gray sweat pants and a pink polo shirt. She wears a small but sparkly diamond engagement ring on her left hand.)

NICK

You've been awfully quiet all evening.

SARAH (Distracted.)

Have I...?

NICK

Sure have.

(HE goes to lay his hands on her shoulders from behind and kisses her lightly. SARAH does not respond.)

Hey, wait a minute. Something is wrong. Sarah, what is it? What's bothering you?

SARAH (Shrugging.)

I'm sorry. I'm just tired, that's all.

NICK

You know, you haven't even mentioned today's practice. You're usually so excited about the first football of the season. What's the matter? The team not as good as all of you had expected?

SARAH (Smiling faintly.)

It's not only not as promising as we'd expected, it's far worse than we'd ever feared.

NICK

What happened?

SARAH

Well, let's see... For starters, our best linebacker broke his leg last week—skateboarding, no less; the kid who was supposed to start this year as quarterback has developed a severe allergy and won't be able to play any outdoor sports; and the twin brothers who were the anchor of our offensive line moved to Milwaukee.

NICK

Wow! No wonder the coaches' meeting went overtime. But hey, that's high school football. I thought that kind of challenge was what you liked about coaching, and now that you're a full assistant...

SARAH (Shaking her head.)

That's not the worst of it.

NICK

No?

SARAH

One of the city's top defensive secondary men can't play, because he failed two classes last spring during track. He's barred from school athletics, until he gets his grades up.

NICK

If I know you, not having him on the team isn't what's really bothering you.

SARAH

Classes start next week, Nick, and he's not registered. If Clyde can't play football, I'm afraid he's going to drop out. Damn it! That kid is so talented—and I don't just mean as an athlete. He's smart, he's imaginative. He can be disciplined, with the right kind of incentive. Oh, if I had only had him in one of my classes last semester! I would have seen what was happening, and maybe I could have done something before it came to this!

NICK

It's not your fault, Sarah. You have to let the kids take some of the responsibility.

SARAH

I know. It's just that it's such a waste.

NICK

I hear you. Believe me, I do. The really sad part is that I'll probably meet Clyde someday—and have to defend him in court. But as hard as it is, Sarah, you can't do it for them.

SARAH

Yeah. I know. He's like so many of them. Peer pressure is the driving force. If he could just get away from those screwballs he hangs out with, I think he'd be okay, but they're so hung up on being macho and streetwise and cool... Wait a minute. Maybe that's the answer...

NICK

What is?

SARAH

If his peers are the problem, maybe we can find him some new ones.

NICK

Terrific idea, but where do you plan to look for them?

SARAH

That boys' club where Pop's been working. They work with teens, too.

NICK

Right. A Christian boys' club. How do you plan to get him there—kidnapping?

SARAH

No...bribery!

NICK

You'd *pay* him to go there? Oh, that's a good plan.

SARAH

Not with money, you dope. Something with an even greater pull for a guy like Clyde.

NICK

Greater than money? What?

SARAH

Sports.

NICK

You're kidding.

SARAH (Getting excited.)

Nope. They have an intercity basketball team—one of the best in town. Clyde's got to burn off all that extra energy somehow, and organized basketball is bound to beat out whatever he's doing now.

NICK

That still doesn't guarantee he'll stay in school.

SARAH

It's one of the team rules—written by the kids themselves, by the way—and they check up on each other.

NICK

That doesn't sound a whole lot better than the deal he has at school.

SARAH

It's not better—just another chance.

NICK

Okay. You've sold me. But I'm not the important one.

SARAH

I can at least talk to him.

NICK

If he doesn't show up at school, how are you even going to find him?

(SARA crosses to the bookshelf by the desk and pulls out a notebook.)

I have the addresses and phone numbers for last year's players here somewhere... Here it is: Clyde Bannum. No phone number, but there's an address.

(NICK crosses to look over her shoulder.)

NICK (Alarmed.)

You're not planning to go down there by yourself, are you!?

SARAH (Smiling.)

No. I was going to go with you.

NICK

Oh. You don't suppose he might mistake me for your bodyguard, do you...and take it wrong?

SARAH

Come on, Nick. I'm not going to introduce you as "Stephen Nicholas Huntington the Fourth, wealthy attorney at law." To him you'll just be my fiancé.

NICK

Good idea.

SARAH

Then you'll come?

NICK

Sure. When?

SARAH

Tomorrow morning?

NICK (Shaking his head.)

I suppose if I don't come, you'll go by yourself.

SARAH

Probably.

(NICK chuckles and moves to give SARAH a hug.)

NICK

You have too much of your old man in you for your own good, but I guess if you can come up to Long Island tomorrow night and spend a whole evening with my mother, the least I can do is go talk to one of your kids for a couple of hours in the morning.

SARAH

Thanks, Nick. It means a lot to me.

NICK

I know.

SARAH

I love you.

NICK

And you don't think that has a lot to do with it? I love you, too.

SARAH

I know. Why do you think I'm going to your parents' house tomorrow?

NICK

Aw, come on. It won't be that bad.

SARAH

No? Let's see... I'm borrowing an evening dress from Christine, yesterday I spent sixty-seven dollars on a new pair of shoes and fifty-two dollars on the right kind of underwear to wear under the dress, and the only reason I'm not spending another fortune on my hair and make-up is because Christine offered to do it for me.

NICK

You don't have to do all that. Just come as you are.

SARAH

Right. Complete with baggy sweats, tennis shoes, stopwatch, and whistle. Oh, yes. That would really go over well with your mother.

NICK

Well, maybe not the whistle...

(SARAH punches him lightly and crosses to the kitchen.)

SARAH

Tea okay?

NICK

Sure, if it won't keep you up.

SARAH

No. You know me—nothing but herbal after eight p.m.

NICK

Sounds good to me.

SARAH (Fixing two mugs of tea.)

What time are we leaving tomorrow night?

NICK

Sixish okay?

NICK

Yeah. I guess Christine can have me done by then.

NICK (Chuckling.)

You make it sound like a complete rebuild.

(SARAH hands NICK his tea.)

SARAH

That's about right.

NICK (Seriously.)

Not if she sees the same woman I do.

SARAH (Embarrassed.)

Thank you.

NICK

You're welcome. (HE notices the kitchen clock.) Oh, hey... (HE checks his watch.) I have to go. I'll need to get some things done early tomorrow, if I'm taking a couple of hours out in the morning.

(NICK sets his mug on the counter.)

SARAH

Are you sure it won't be a problem?

NICK

It'll be fine. I'll just tell my boss that I'm going to be doing some...social preventative maintenance. I'm not due in court, so as long as I get the daily business done, she won't mind.

SARAH

I didn't realize it was getting so late.

NICK

Me either, but I guess we didn't get started until after seven.

SARAH

Thanks for waiting, by the way.

NICK

It was well worth it.

SARAH

The best wonton in the city.

NICK

Best company, too.

(As SARA and NICK kiss, the CS door opens and CHRISTINE ENTERS.)

CHRISTINE

Don't mind me. I'm just passing through.

(CHRISTINE EXITS to her bedroom.)

NICK

That's one of the things I really like about your roommate. She has an uncanny respect for privacy.

SARAH

True. (Loudly.) Though it's sometimes a bit selective...

(CHRISTINE sticks her head back in.)

CHRISTINE

What's that?

NICK (Chuckling.)

It's okay. We were pretty much finished.

(CHRISTINE ENTERS.)

CHRISTINE

Well, I certainly hope so. You wouldn't want to ruin Sarah's reputation, now, would you?

NICK (Thoughtfully.)

I don't think so.

SARAH

I'm glad to hear it. Your coat? (SHE hands it to him.)

NICK

Thanks. Don't worry Christine. Sarah's reputation is as safe with me as your own.

CHRISTINE (Laughing.)

Now *that* could be interesting...

(SARAH goes along with the tease.)

SARAH

Say "good night," Nick.

NICK

Good night, sweetheart. I'll call you in the morning as soon as I get free.

SARAH

Okay.

(SARAH and NICK kiss lightly.)

NICK

Good night, Christine.

CHRISTINE

'Night, Nick.

(NICK EXITS CS.)

Special man you've got there.

SARAH

Yes, he is.

CHRISTINE

It kind of makes me believe you two were made for each other.

SARAH (Surprised but pleased.)

Thank you, Christine.

(CHRISTINE smiles warmly then takes Nick's untouched mug of tea.)

CHRISTINE

So. What's happening in the morning?

SARAH

Nick's going with me when I go to talk to one of my students.

CHRISTINE

Overtime already?

SARAH

Let's just say it's a little bit of extracurricular counseling.

CHRISTINE

One of your kids in trouble?

SARAH

I think he may have decided to drop out of school.

Ouch! I'll be thinking about you.

CHRISTINE

Thanks. I'll need it.

SARAH

I take it tomorrow night's still on.

CHRISTINE

Yes.

SARAH (Not at all thrilled.)

Great! What time are you leaving?

CHRISTINE (Cheerfully.)

Sixish.

SARAH

Well, you get a nice long, relaxing shower and wash your hair, before I get home, and we should have plenty of time to get you ready.

CHRISTINE

Nick says it sounds like you're doing a complete rebuild.

SARAH

Nah—just highlighting what's already there.

CHRISTINE

You just want to see me in a dress and heels.

SARAH

Too true—but you're still going to be a knockout.

CHRISTINE

Thanks.

SARAH (Unconvinced.)

You're welcome. Now, what do you say we get started?

CHRISTINE

(CHRISTINE takes their mugs and crosses to the kitchen.)

Tonight!?

SARAH

CHRISTINE

Sure. A successful evening image *always* begins with a good night's sleep the night before. Now, I happen to know that without some help, you won't even close your eyes, so what'll it be... (SHE pulls two bottles of wine out of the refrigerator.) Red or white?

SARAH

For sleep, white, I guess. It somehow goes better with the sheep I'll be counting.

CHRISTINE

White it is.

(CHRISTINE takes two wine glasses from a cabinet and pours, handing one glass to SARAH. SHE holds out her glass for a toast.)

Here's to happy sheep!

(CHRISTINE and SARA clink glasses and drink.)

(CURTAIN)

(End of Act I)