

I ought to be in ~~the~~ ~~title~~

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SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE

- 2 2 0 SCENE 1 A small bungalow in West Hollywood
- SCENE 2 The bungalow—later that evening

ACT TWO

- Collected Plays* SCENE 1 The bungalow—two weeks later
- SCENE 2 The bungalow—midnight
- of Neil Simon,* SCENE 3 The bungalow—a little after 3 A.M.
- SCENE 4 The bungalow—Sunday morning 11 A.M., a few days later

Volume III

Act One

SCENE I

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.

IN P

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 backpack, an army jacket, and 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 BLONDELL, 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 run-down.

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

STEFFY Well, he keeps busy.

LIBBY (Wince:) 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 missing 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.

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.

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

LIBBY Are you in the business too?

STEFFY Mm-hm. Makeup 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, then sits down. The telephone rings. She looks at the bedroom door, then rushes to answer it to avoid waking her father. Into the phone*) Hello? . . . Who? Oh, er . . . No. He's sleeping . . . No, this is er—sort of his daughter . . .

Yeah. Sure I know how to take a message. (*Picks up a pencil*) Wait a minute. I need a piece of paper. (*She starts to look through the mess on the desk. She finally finds paper in the top drawer. Into the phone*) Okay. Go ahead . . . "Stan Marx called. You got a turndown at NBC. Do you want to try CBS again?" Is that it? . . . Yeah, I got it . . . You're welcome. Goodbye. (*LIBBY hangs up. The bedroom door opens. A sleepy-eyed HERB TUCKER comes out in his pajama bottoms and an old T-shirt. He heads right for the coffee. She turns and notices him*) Oh! Hi!

HERB (*Doesn't look at her*) I didn't hear you get up.

LIBBY That's because I didn't sleep here.

HERB (*Looks at her*) I thought you were Steffy. (*He calls out*) Steffy!

LIBBY She went shopping.

HERB Steffy did?

LIBBY Yeah.

HERB Who are you?

LIBBY Libby.

HERB You're the cleaning girl today, Libby?

LIBBY No. Just Libby.

HERB Steffy's niece.

LIBBY No.

HERB Come on, kid. It's too early. Don't play games with me. Libby who?

LIBBY Libby Tucker.

HERB (*No reaction*) Libby Tucker?

LIBBY Libby Gladysce Tucker . . . Blanche's girl?

HERB What are you saying to me?

LIBBY I'm saying, I'm your daughter. I didn't mean to sneak up on you like this. It must be an awful shock, heh?

HERB Yeah. A little. A little . . . Could you wait one second? Let me get a little coffee down.
(*He pours coffee and sips some*)

LIBBY I suppose I should have called first, but it seemed harder to say over the phone than in person . . . Are you okay?

HERB I'm fine. I'm fine. I just want to get a little more coffee down.
(*He drinks some more*)

LIBBY I got out here yesterday, so I thought I'd just come by and look you up.

HERB You looked me up, heh?

LIBBY I found your address in the telephone book.

HERB Looked it up in the telephone book, heh?

LIBBY Uh-huh . . . This is coming at you a little fast, isn't it?

HERB Yeah, a little. This is really terrific . . . Where's what's-her-name?

LIBBY Steffy?

HERB Steffy. Where did she go?

LIBBY Shopping. She'll be right back. She went to get breakfast.

HERB Oh, that's too bad. I wanted her to meet you.