

GUSSIE #1
RU-

Start

(Smiling)
how do I get to be you?

FRANK

The worst vice in the world is "advice," so I don't give any.

(RU starts to EXIT)

Hey...

(RU stops, turns back)

don't just write what you know.

(Points to his head)

Write what you know.

(Points to his heart)

Now get out of here.

(RU EXITS. FRANK and GUSSIE stand alone. PIANO MUSIC continues underneath. GUESTS are visible inside, dancing and enjoying the party. FRANK turns to leave)

GUSSIE

'The worst vice is 'advice'?' Did you get that off a tee-shirt, Frank?

FRANK

I'm sorry, what's wrong?

GUSSIE

You and that little punchboard are what's wrong.

FRANK

Please, please don't do this. We've got a party going on in there.

GUSSIE

You may have betrayed me but you're not going to humiliate me.

FRANK

Gussie, when are you going to let it go? I never said you were too old for the part. The studio said you were too old for the part.

GUSSIE

To think I divorced a husband who worshipped the ground I walked on to marry a pitiful excuse for a man like you.

End

u're everybody

GUSSIE
r eyes

Frank +

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Start

Act II Scene 2

Gussie

shuts the door behind her, the PARTY SOUNDS and MUSIC stop, though the party continues in pantomime)

Joe gave me this greenhouse as a wedding present. He has a tendency to worship me

FRANK

It's great.

GUSSIE

If you like it, take it home. I married Joe because he liked me and I liked this life. I married the one before him because, well I believed him when he said he could work. And the first one? Well, I don't think first ones really count, do you?

FRANK

This greenhouse seems as out of place in New York as I do.

GUSSIE

(Meaning more)

Only at first, darling. Now I find it the best thing about this dump. How old are you?

FRANK

Twenty-five. Which doesn't bother me. Then I think, "I'm a quarter of a century" and I panic. There's so much I want to do and I can't get started. I can't —
(Stops himself)

GUSSIE

Here's something I do when I want to get to know somebody very well, very fast. I play a game. I tell you something honest about me and you answer me right away with something honest about you. I call it "Trading Hostages." I'm not very happy.
(Pause)

Go on. 'I'm not very happy.'

FRANK

I'm very happy.

GUSSIE

Hmm. I'm inches away from the top.

FRANK

I'm miles away from the top. Make that hundreds of thousands of miles away.

GUSSIE

Performing is my life.

FRANK
Composing is my life.

GUSSIE
Success is not happening fast enough.

FRANK
Success is not happening at all.

GUSSIE
I've been in five Broadway shows.

FRANK
I've seen the second act of every one.

GUSSIE
Someone's cheating. I've done five Broadway shows.

FRANK
Me, I can't get started. I can't —

GUSSIE
My first love is singing.

FRANK
My first love is music.

GUSSIE
My second love is acting.

FRANK
My second love is music.

GUSSIE
I believe it's Fate that brought us together.

(A pause)

Anyhoo, I did all those Broadway shows, most which didn't last as long as this conversation, and Joe has just optioned a vehicle that can change my life. And yours. We both want you and your partner to do the score.

(Big smile. FRANK doesn't smile back)

Do I see disappointment on that sweet face?

FRANK
We were hoping he wanted to do "Take A Left." The show Charley and I auditioned for him.

GUSSIE

Oh no, darling, not at all.

FRANK

It's just that we've been working on it for three years.

GUSSIE

Well, you can do this one much faster. But he wants me to make sure you understand we want it fast, loud and funny.

#12C *Growing Up**(Gussie)*

I need a hit. What do you say?

*(No reply. A long beat. MUSIC begins underneath, slow and sinuous.**GUSSIE sings quietly, with understanding)*

LIFE IS KNOWING WHAT YOU WANT, DARLING,
 THAT'S THE THING YOU HAVE TO KNOW.
 YOU'LL GET EVERYTHING YOU WANT, DARLING,
 HAVE A LITTLE PATIENCE.

CLIMBING MOUNTAINS CAN BE SLOW, DARLING,
 TAKE IT EASY AS YOU CLIMB.
 I'D SAY YOU'RE A WINNER,
 ALSO A BEGINNER —
 ONE STEP AT A TIME.

GROWING UP,
 IT'S WHAT THEY CALL GROWING UP.
 IT'S WHEN WE'RE ALL STARTING OUT
 AND STARTING TO SWAY.

GROWING UP,
 YOU HATE THE DELAY,
 BUT AFTER TODAY
 YOU'LL BE ON YOUR WAY.
 SO WHAT DO YOU SAY?...
 HMMM?

(MUSIC continues underneath)

FRANK

(A long, painful, agonizing decision. Then quietly)

Okay.

End