

Act One

Scene 1—Audition

Lights up on a raw, empty theater space.

Chairs.

A piano.

SHE

Sorry the train was—I'm so late—I'm so sorry—
Do you still want me to—?

DIRECTOR

No problem.

SHE

Great. Okay. Is this—?

DIRECTOR

Yes, Kevin will be reading with you.

SHE

Nice to meet you, Kevin. Do you want me to actually kiss Kevin, or Kevin do you mind if we kiss; you look young, I don't want to traumatize you.

KEVIN

No—please, go ahead.

SHE

Could you position your chair this way then? Sorry, is that weird? I had sort of pictured your chair this way. Should I start?

DIRECTOR

Whenever you're ready.

SHE

Okay. I'll start then. Wait, I'll just move my chair. Is that all right?

DIRECTOR

Great.

A pause.

SHE

Sorry—can I ask one thing?

DIRECTOR

Of course.

SHE

I just got the sides because my agent blah blah blah and I didn't have time to read the whole thing, so do you mind just telling me the plot a little bit because I only have these four pages—

During the following, She vocalizes some responses—ums and ohs—that register her narrative empathy and interest.

STAGE KISS

DIRECTOR

Sure. You're told in the first scene that you have a month to live. You have a rare degenerative disorder. And you say to yourself: I need to see my old love before I die. And you cable him and he comes for a visit, he lives in Sweden, so he stays with you for a month, in your penthouse in Manhattan. It's a very nice apartment as your husband is a very wealthy train mogul. You and your first love pick up right where you left off, but your husband is so noble that he doesn't object. And seeing your old love has reversed your disease and you are becoming healthier and healthier. In the third act your daughter comes home from Paris and your first love falls in love with your daughter, and takes her to Sweden. So you are left alone, to pick up the pieces.

And there are some really very funny bits in the middle when you're all living together under one roof but some really sort of sad bits, you know, when you're ill, and the generosity of your husband in letting your old lover stay with you. Which I find very moving. So it's tonally, very you know, slippery. And it was a flop on Broadway in 1932 but we think with the proper cast, a new score, and some judicious cuts it will be really very well received in New Haven.

SHE

Got it.

DIRECTOR

What else . . . there are one or two musical numbers.
You do sing, don't you?

SHE

Oh—yes.

DIRECTOR

So, have a go?

SHE

(To Kevin) Are you playing the husband *and* the lover?

Kevin nods.

SHE

All, right so I'll just pretend the husband is here (*Pointing in another direction, away from Kevin*) and you're there. (*Pointing to Kevin*)

KEVIN

Okay.

SHE AS ADA

(*Looking at an imaginary person off to the side*) I can't bear cocktails anymore, I'm afraid.

KEVIN AS HUSBAND

Water then?

SHE AS ADA

Yes.

KEVIN AS HUSBAND

In the solarium or in the study?

SHE AS ADA

The study I think. Have Jenkins put everything out.

The imaginary husband exits in the play, but of course, Kevin just sits.

SHE

(*To Kevin*) He just exited right?

KEVIN

Right.

She follows the imaginary husband out with her eyes and turns back to Kevin, with passion.

STAGE KISS

SHE AS ADA

(To Kevin, as the lover) God, I love you. I love you I love you
I love you.

END

They kiss.

SHE AS ADA

Your lips taste like—let me taste them again.

She kisses him again.

SHE AS ADA

Of cherries? No.

KEVIN

I'm so sorry, I'm so sweaty, the elevator's broken—

SHE

Oh no, you're beautiful.

She kisses him again.

SHE AS ADA

Of chestnuts.

Oh, God, I want to kiss you all day!

KEVIN AS LOVER

And I you.

She kisses him again. She starts laughing.

SHE

Sorry—there was a little crumb in your mouth.

KEVIN

Oh, sorry.

He wipes the crumb.