

# un becoming

by Rick Schweikert

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**For Nora Coffey**

## Introduction

Nora W. Coffey, President HERS Foundation

Twenty-one years after establishing Hysterectomy Educational Resources and Services (HERS) Foundation, I was searching for a new, broader approach to accomplish our mandate.

With direct services HERS had provided information and counseling to more than 700,000 people and indirectly, via media, to millions. Not a small number, but considering that there are 21 million hysterectomized women alive in the United States and at least another 680,000 women will be hysterectomized this year, I felt it was imperative to take the next step and was struggling with exactly what that course would be.

I had assisted in the production of two documentaries about hysterectomy, which were well received but poorly circulated. I was at a loss for a better way to bring these issues to the public eye. The frustrating search for a documentary filmmaker was nearing a year. When their work was technically proficient, they did not grasp the issues. When they seemed to grasp the issues, their technical work was not acceptable.

Then I met Rick Schweikert. We quickly moved beyond the incidental reason for our meeting. His questions were perceptive, insightful. His listening was unflinching. Hysterectomy. Castration. Sexual loss. Pain. Suffering. Most cannot bear it. I would soon learn that this exceptional man, who cared deeply about the human condition, was a gifted playwright.

A few months later when it was clear that we would do this together, for the first time I began to share my own “un becoming.” Rick listened, gathered it, shaped it, questioned it, read the stacks of research I gave him, and then added his own research.

As I began to tell incredulous colleagues, family and friends about the play, the most frequent questions and comments were, “Why do you think a man can write about something only women can experience?” and “Women will not come to see a play about a women’s issue written by a man.” I never felt it necessary to defend what we were doing. The once-skeptics are now *UN BECOMING*’s staunch advocates.

It should be seen by every woman, man and child.

With laughter and tears, Schweikert’s *UN BECOMING* breaks the barrier of silence to reveal the roles each of us chooses that shape society—for better or worse.

## Preface

“So, what’s next?” Paul Ray asked, nudging his glass forward to indicate he was ready for another. It was an unwritten, self-imposed Beer Theater rule that we would rehearse our little plays in Karlis Rekevics’ Viaduct Studio in Seattle as little as possible and perform them once (and once only). So much preparation goes into even the smallest theatrical production that those involved often find themselves standing around bewildered in the end, schedules so recently brimming over with preparations suddenly empty and wanting. And the answer to the inevitable question is always the next audition, a new venue, another play.

For me there was something sacred about retiring to the saloon around the corner where I’d bury my only copy of the latest script in the garbage never to be performed again...sipping a whiskey before returning to the Viaduct Studio merrymaking. It was the spring of 1991, and my daughter Sage was just a few months old. Paul and other members of our sometimes company had just performed *A PAIR OF DIMES*, my one-act about a pregnant woman finding spiritual self-actualization in the days leading up to the birth of her child. Many of those scripts are best forgotten, but a few of them haunt me from time to time.

I was also a founding board member of Seattle Public Theater, but I was more of a wide-eyed student than anything else, watching the masters work. Workshop-generated scripts by SPT that were influenced by Boal and the Federal Theatre Project would be featured on National Public Radio, addressing timely and politically-charged issues like homelessness (*SHOW ME THE WAY TO GO HOME*) and deforestation (*TIMBER*), under the guidance of Beth Amsbary, Mark Fullerton and Bob Marion, who also presented plays by Arrabal, Brecht and Giraudoux. And I was in my own groove, writing little plays for Beer Theater whenever Karlis or Bob asked me to, but only when asked.

Not long thereafter I left Seattle, almost without notice, not really knowing why I was leaving and many days regretting it, back to Nebraska to watch Sage grow as fast as corn in June, to meet my partner Sherrie Flick and to eventually end up in Pittsburgh with those memories tucked away like a photo album in a dusty box in the attic.

Eleven years after my last evening at Beer Theater, with the question still haunting me across the years and the miles, I met with Jeffrey Edward Carpenter, artistic director of Bricolage, at the bar around the corner from our homes on Pittsburgh’s South Side Slopes. I told him I was fed up with the political climate and was threatening to return to writing plays again. We worked ourselves into a frenzy that night and agreed something would come of it.

A few days later I happened to meet Nora W. Coffey, President of the HERS Foundation. She told me a little bit about herself, and vice versa, but she wasn’t satisfied with my story. She pressed me to dig deeper into myself, and before I knew it, as if the question had just been asked of me the day before, there was the answer. It was the same question (“So, what’s next?”), the same old answer (another play), but suddenly there was the clarity of vision my life lacked...it was clear that I’d left the comfort zone of Seattle to challenge myself to do more.

After that initial meeting with Nora I went home and looked up “hysterectomy” and “castration,” which the dictionary defined as the removal of the uterus and removal of the ovaries. So I looked up “ovaries” and “uterus,” which it described as sexual organs that produce eggs and where the fetus develops. I didn’t know much more than the obvious about my own sexual anatomy, let alone the sexual anatomy of women, but although I hadn’t really thought about it much before then, I immediately grasped what Nora told me. The research that ensued proved what I already intuitively knew to be true. I understood that regardless of their role in reproduction, removal of these vital endocrine organs would be akin to erasing a woman’s sexual fingerprint (as one woman would later describe it to me) and would effectively enslave her to the medical/pharmaceutical industry for life (as many of the women I would interview characterized themselves) because of the resulting aftereffects. So, why were those surgeries so prevalent? Is our society so profit-motivated and male-centric that it would allow the medical industry to do this to our sisters, our

mothers, our daughters? Why do we trust doctors more than we trust mechanics or lawyers? From the beginning there were (and are) more questions than answers.

There was a day when a radical minority was tortured for suggesting that the Earth is round. Today it's difficult to imagine anyone believing the world could be flat. It's also difficult to imagine that the Nobel Prize in Medicine & Physiology was awarded in 1949 for work perfecting prefrontal lobotomy. The procedure was widely abused, even it's strongest proponents failed to provide evidence of the positive effects of lobotomy (although legal reforms against it in America didn't come until the 1970s), and the doctor who was awarded the Nobel Prize was forced into retirement when he was shot in the back by one of his patients. What I soon found out in my research is that the medical industry, like any of us, can be very wrong.

I conducted a series of several hundred interviews over a six-month period before I began writing anything of consequence on the subject. Mostly I interviewed women, but also doctors, nurses, children of hysterectomized women, midwives, psychiatrists, and many long conversations with Nora Coffey.

Nora held nothing back from me. She sent me emails from women who praised what HERS was doing, and she also sent me hate mail from doctors who condemned everything HERS stood for. My education took me as far as London, where a friend of Nora's had successfully brought suit against a "royal surgeon" for an unconsented hysterectomy, and I incorporated the opinions of medical professionals as far away as Bombay. And by August of 2003, a draft of this play was complete.

When Nora suggested that the play should be produced in New York, I enlisted the help of Jeffrey, and we were off and running. Together we assembled a group of actors (including my now twelve year old daughter, Sage) who, through a series of etudes and workshops, helped me whip the script into shape just in time for our February 5th, 2004 premiere. The original cast and stage managers were amazing in those workshops, and it became a truly collaborative effort at that point...I wish I could list each of them and Nora under the title with me.

The most frequently asked question of me has been "Why did you, being a man, write this play?" Again, more questions than answers. In fact, I believe this particular question is more interesting than the answer. Who should've written this play?

I don't believe that my position on hysterectomy and castration is a matter of opinion anymore than the first discordant voices against lobotomy believed their stance on that inhumane procedure came down to points of view. There are anatomical facts, and few of us understand our own sexual anatomy. But to know something intellectually and academically is to know it halfway at best. Until you know something in a way that relates to you personally, you're getting half the picture. Theater is an effective way to complete a portrait I saw as less than half painted. Each person who walks out of a performance of *UN BECOMING* will at least know the issue halfway—in a way that is relevant and immediate.

When I met Nora, writing a play about hysterectomy and castration of women was about the furthest thing from my mind. In the last days of the New York production, she asked, "So what's next?" This play has reunited me with my friends in Seattle who taught me that art can be a weapon against ignorance, and Nora has provided me with a bridge between who I was, who I am and who I want to be.

I attempted to recreate the environment of hysterectomy as it was presented to me, and to give a unified voice to the untold millions of unnecessarily hysterectomized and castrated women. In many ways I don't feel like *UN BECOMING* is my play. It is their play...my name is there under the title so there's no doubt that the writer stands behind his words.

Rick Schweikert  
June 16, 2004

Cast of Characters (in order of appearance)

Emma Douglas, artist

Dr. Sam Morgan, Emma's husband, anesthesiologist

John Tracey, Emma's friend

Dr. James Ridge, Emma's gynecologist

Susan Herse, Dr. Ridge's patient

Dr. Rose Parker, gynecologist in Dr. Ridge's practice

Halley Ridge, wife of Dr. Ridge

Megan Ridge, Halley & Dr. Ridge's daughter

Notes:

- The inspiration for Emma's work is the artist Linn Meyers, [www.linnmeyers.com](http://www.linnmeyers.com)
- The sheet music for "How Was Your Weekend, Mavis?" written by Rick Schweikert is available by permission upon request

Original Production

45<sup>th</sup> Street Theater, New York

February 5, 2004

One act, no intermission.

The original cast and stage managers were instrumental in developing *UN BECOMING*.

Laura Flanagan, as Emma Douglas

David McCamish, as Dr. Morgan

Jeffrey Edward Carpenter, as John Tracey

Tami A. Dixon, as Halley Ridge

Benjamin James Moore, as Dr. Ridge

Sage Fitzgerald, as Megan Ridge

Brigitte Villieu-Davis, as Dr. Parker

Naomi Barr, as Susan Herse

Directors, Jeffrey Edward Carpenter & Rick Schweikert

Production Stage Managers, Babette Roberts & Marina Bridges

Set, Jorge Cousineau & Karlis Rekevics

Lighting, Rob Long

Sound, Eric DeArmon & Siobhan Tull

Sound Editor/Mix, Hank Aberle & Cliff Hahn Sound

Costume Design, David M. Henderson

Poster/Postcard Design, Jessica Z. Coffey & Neil Duxtader

Program Design, David McCamish

*The place: Suburbia. The time: Summer.*

Scene One

*Studio. Wednesday. EMMA paints. Each repeated mark she makes begins with an inhalation, a series of lines, each one beginning at the top of the work pulled down by gravity at her elbow, ending at the bottom at the conclusion of each exhalation.*

Scene Two

*Studio. DR. MORGAN enters, interrupting EMMA'S work.*

DR. MORGAN

This review isn't so bad....

EMMA

Sam, please!

DR. MORGAN

At least he gets it.

EMMA

Give me a break. I'd prefer that he liked it.

DR. MORGAN

"This reviewer is exhausted with charlatans claiming their place in history simply for having been the first to arrive at the latest momentarily engaging device." Ouch. But, he doesn't exactly call *you* a charlatan. "Douglas' systematic rows of marks cascade down the surface without any real sense that she knows what the end result may look like." Well, anyway, I think you're brilliant. And you're gorgeous.

EMMA

Sam, please....I need to get some work done.

DR. MORGAN

Yes. So. I'll see you at nine, right? Nine o'clock in James' office?

*(but EMMA is engrossed in her work again)*

Meet you there? Meet you there? I'm sure you've noticed...the roof is falling in? Yep. Shame, really....That wall the contractor removed was load-bearing....

*(he breaks off when EMMA finally looks away from her work to make eye contact)*

Hm. Did you get more wine glasses for Friday?

EMMA

No. Oh, John gave me these amazing blue goblets for...um, that we can use.

DR. MORGAN

Blue? For wine? Hm. Okay. I'll see you at James' office?

EMMA

Yes, Sam.

*DR. MORGAN exits.*

Scene Three

*Studio. EMMA paints. JOHN quietly enters through the Courtyard, carrying a gift bag. He stands on the other side of the doorway leading into the Studio, watching her work. He enters the Studio singing "Happy Birthday," startling EMMA, and hands her the gift bag containing a bottle of Scotch.*

EMMA

John, I love the glasses. They're perfect. But my birthday's not 'til Friday. And, what're you doing here?

JOHN

Can I help it if Trendwood happens to be on my way to the university? I need to borrow that last issue of Art In America.

EMMA

Oh, is that why you had me get a subscription, so you could borrow them before I have a chance to read them myself?

JOHN

Yes. Man, I don't know about this teaching gig. Each year I think I'm getting old, but it's these kids...they're boring! I mean, weren't we curious?

*(but EMMA is distracted, stares into the painting she's working on)*

Hey. What's the matter?

EMMA

Oh, nothing. James got the results back from the tests. I have an appointment with him this morning.

JOHN

Is that today? Good. It's good for you to get out of here once in a while, remind yourself there's a whole world out there. Right outside that door. How're you feeling?

EMMA

I'm fine.

JOHN

Is everything...I mean, has it...stopped?

EMMA

No. I mean, yes...it's pretty much stopped. It's none of your business. Don't worry.

JOHN

What do you mean it's none of my business?

EMMA

Come on, I've got to go.

JOHN

And I am worried. It's not something I turn off and on.

EMMA

James will explain it all to me today. I'll see you here Friday for dinner.

JOHN

I can't believe you're making me have dinner with...the doctors.

EMMA

It'll be fun.

JOHN

I'll push the wine. I'm in an ornery mood lately. Call me after your appointment?

EMMA

See you Friday.

*EMMA prepares to exit, but then pauses to consider the painting she's working on. She remains there as the set changes around her, so the painting she was considering in her Studio becomes a painting on the wall of DR. RIDGE'S Office.*

Scene Four

*Doctor's Office in the Hospital. EMMA stares at the painting while DR. MORGAN reads a golf magazine.*

DR. RIDGE

Well, if it isn't the famous Emma Douglas!

EMMA

Hello, James.

DR. RIDGE

How are you?

EMMA

I'm pretty good I guess.

DR. RIDGE

Both pretty and good? Look familiar? That one's my favorite.

EMMA

It's still strange seeing my work on someone else's wall. That looks nice there.

DR. RIDGE

I love it.

EMMA

How are you, James?

DR. RIDGE

Never been better. Loved that review in the paper today...

EMMA

Yes, the polite reviewers never have anything interesting to say....The mean ones never have anything nice to say.

DR. MORGAN

It wasn't that bad.

*DR. PARKER enters, delivering EMMA'S medical records to DR. RIDGE.*

DR. PARKER

Hello, Emma.

DR. RIDGE

Emma, you've met Dr. Parker, right?

DR. PARKER

Of course we know each other James, you say that every time I see her.

EMMA

Yes, hello Rose. We're hoping to see you Friday at dinner, but I never heard back from you.

DR. PARKER

Oh? I RSVP'd to Sam, didn't I?

*DR. RIDGE's pager goes off. He drops it to the floor, silencing it.*

DR. RIDGE

Damn!

EMMA

Did you? He doesn't tell me anything.

DR. MORGAN

Yes, I guess I forgot to tell you Rose called.

DR. RIDGE

Well, we gathered that much, pal!

DR. PARKER

Anyway, of course....I wouldn't miss it.

EMMA

Good.

DR. RIDGE

Now that we've got that out of the way...I'm about to be called downstairs, so excuse us?

DR. PARKER

Of course.

EMMA

See you Friday.

DR. PARKER

Oh, can I bring anything?

DR. MORGAN

Wine?

EMMA

Yes, some wine would be nice.

DR. PARKER

See you then.

*DR. PARKER exits.*

DR. RIDGE

Emma, how are you feeling?

EMMA

I'm fine...I guess.

DR. RIDGE

No, you just tell me what's going on...

(to DR. MORGAN)

...and I'll do the guessing.

EMMA

Well, it's over...for now.

DR. RIDGE

Your period?

EMMA

Yes, it's over...for now.

DR. MORGAN

For now, meaning...?

EMMA

Almost nothing yesterday, almost nothing today.

DR. RIDGE

Emma, I could've done this over the phone, but I thought it'd be better if we spoke in person.

EMMA

Yes?

DR. RIDGE

As I suspected, you have more fibroids than I initially thought, and one of them is rather large.

EMMA

Really? How large?

DR. RIDGE

And they'll become very uncomfortable and cause more and more pain and bleeding. Sam, she has six uterine fibroids—

DR. MORGAN

Yeah, you told me.

DR. RIDGE

And one of them is submucosal...Inside her uterus...about six centimeters....Anyway, the fact is, Sam...Emma...they've got to go. We need to take a look and see if we can excise the fibroids that are causing the bleeding.

EMMA

Really? Even though it's not so bad right now?

DR. MORGAN

Not so bad?

DR. RIDGE

They won't just go away on their own. We need to schedule this thing right away.

EMMA

Schedule what thing?

DR. RIDGE

First I'll do an exploratory laparoscopy, so I can see what's going on...as Sam can tell you, it's a very common procedure. And then I'll make a bikini-line incision above the pubic bone, and you'll be a new woman! No more of that messy bleeding.

EMMA

You're not talking about a hysterectomy, are you?

DR. RIDGE

No, I don't think so. I don't think that'll be necessary. The procedure itself will take a couple of hours and you'll be as good as new.

EMMA

I wasn't aware I was looking old.

*DR. RIDGE's pager goes off again.*

DR. RIDGE

That's me. They must be ready.

DR. MORGAN

I should be down there by now.

DR. RIDGE

*(to DR. MORGAN)*

We're fine!

*(and then, admiringly)*

Emma, you look like a million bucks...a million bucks! And I intend to keep you looking that way.

EMMA

Well, I'm sure we'll have plenty of time to talk about all this, right?

DR. RIDGE

I hope so. I don't have many openings, but this must be dealt with now. Hm, it looks like we've got you down for Monday.

EMMA

Monday? This Monday? As in five days from today? I don't know...I'll have to check my schedule.

DR. RIDGE

I find Mondays work well for me, and then you should be back up to speed in a few weeks.

*DR. RIDGE, right, continues to read EMMA'S records while DR. MORGAN, left, consults his palm pilot, so EMMA is between them.*

EMMA

A few weeks?

DR. RIDGE

Well, they're not just going to go away on their own.

DR. MORGAN

We're away in August, so what's six weeks from—

EMMA

Sam, we need talk about this first, right?

DR. MORGAN

Of course. But listen to James...

*(to DR. RIDGE)*

...he's the best in the business.

DR. RIDGE

I've got you down for Monday and we can go from there. And yes, we'll have plenty of time to discuss all the details, so you'll know what to expect. All right, they're waiting for us.

*DR. RIDGE exits.*

EMMA

But....

DR. MORGAN

You okay?

EMMA

Yeah, I'm okay.

DR. MORGAN

Good. I'll see you tonight.

DR. RIDGE

*(from off)*

All right, then!

DR. MORGAN

Coming!

*DR. MORGAN exits. EMMA, left alone in the Office, paces for a moment and then crosses to take a look at her patient file. The set begins to change around her.*

Scene Five

*Operating Room. SUSAN lies on the operating room table, beginning to feel the effects from the drugs administered through the IV in her arm. DR. MORGAN and DR. PARKER enter in full surgical garb, quickly pull the curtains closed around the operating table and begin to attend to SUSAN. SUSAN periodically puts her hand in front of her eyes to block the intense light above the table, and each time the doctors gently push her arm back to her side so she has to close her eyes.*

DR. PARKER

We're all set. Dr. Ridge will be right in.

DR. MORGAN

Susan, did you remember NPO, nothing to eat after midnight?

SUSAN

Yes, I remembered.

DR. MORGAN

Good. How are you feeling?

SUSAN

I feel a little funny.

DR. MORGAN

That's normal.

DR. PARKER

It's the IV kicking in. Susan, did I hear you're a drama teacher?

SUSAN

Yes. I'm hoping to make it to our production of *Jersey Girls* this Friday. Dr. Ridge's daughter, Megan, is the lead.

DR. MORGAN

Friday? This Friday? Who told you you'd be up and around by then?

SUSAN

Well, no one, I guess. But I told Dr. Ridge—

DR. PARKER

Well, anyway. The show must go on, right? I've done some acting myself.

*(leaning over SUSAN toward DR. MORGAN)*

I always thought I'd be a Broadway actress when I was a girl.

DR. MORGAN

*(returning the flirtation over SUSAN)*

Did you really? I didn't know that.

DR. PARKER

There are a lot of things you don't know about me.

DR. MORGAN

Do tell....

SUSAN

I always wanted to be a doctor.

DR. PARKER

Really. Isn't that interesting. We just need you to sign this, and we'll get started.

SUSAN

What is it?

DR. PARKER

It's just a consent form. It just says you're aware of what's going on here today.

SUSAN

*(signing the consent form without reading it)*

I have to tell you, I'm a little nervous.

DR. MORGAN

That's normal.

DR. PARKER

Don't worry. You're in good hands.

SUSAN

*(sitting up quickly)*

Oh, my husband! He'll be here soon.

DR. PARKER

*(coaxing back to lying down on the bed)*

That's nice, dear.

DR. MORGAN

You just lie down, now.

DR. PARKER

We'll let him know you're okay.

*DR. RIDGE enters dramatically, through the curtains.*

DR. RIDGE

How are we doing, Susan!?

SUSAN

I feel funny.

DR. RIDGE

Funny...you feel funny? I wish I felt funny. I've been entirely too serious lately. Maybe some of that funny will rub off on me, hm? Okay, Sam, let's get started. Dr. Parker, can we get some music please?

*DR. MORGAN puts the mask for the anesthesia over SUSAN'S mouth. DR. PARKER hits the remote control.*

DR. MORGAN

Susan, can you please count backwards for me, from a hundred?

SUSAN

100, 99, 98...91....

*The music, Mozart perhaps, continues through the set change for Scene Six. The set is changed so the Operating Room table of Scene Five quickly becomes the Dining Room table of Scene Six.*

Scene Six

*Dining Room. Friday, two days later. During the scene change, EMMA sets the table with the blue goblets. DR. MORGAN has had too much to drink. The scene opens with laughter.*

DR. RIDGE

I don't know, John. I don't concern myself with things I can't control.

JOHN

No?

DR. RIDGE

No. The fact is, I love old books. I love the way they feel, the way they smell, and the fact that so many great books are out of print when they continue to publish the pulp that's out there boggles the mind. Anyway, this Dr. Thackery was a nut. He called himself a conjugologist, a specialist in the "psychology of romance" and the institution of matrimony.

JOHN

How old is Megan?

DR. RIDGE

Twelve.

JOHN

You'll be lending her that book of yours before long.

DR. RIDGE

Bite your tongue. Where did she run off to anyway?

HALLEY

*(distracted)*

Oh, she's...watching TV.

EMMA

She's fine. She's such a cool kid. What are twelve-year-olds into these days?

HALLEY

Megan's a kid who'll go through all the phases. This year it's musicals. She refers to the cheerleaders at school as "Barbie Dolls," and she wants James to buy a Harley.

DR. MORGAN

That'll be the day.

DR. RIDGE

Loves to read...At the moment she's into mystery novels.

EMMA

Nancy Drew?

DR. RIDGE

No.

DR. PARKER

You read Nancy Drew?

EMMA

Didn't everyone? The Clue In The Diary...

DR. PARKER

The Secret of the Golden Pavilion...

DR. MORGAN

What about the Hardy Boys?

JOHN

The Roaring River Mystery.

DR. RIDGE

No, Megan's into real thrillers...Sir Arthur Conan Doyle...real suspense.

DR. PARKER

Really, well then define suspense.

DR. RIDGE

Suspense? Suspense is knowing what's about to happen but not being capable of doing anything about it.

*DR. RIDGE pours himself another glass of wine.*

HALLEY

Don't worry, I'll drive.

DR. RIDGE

I'm fine.

JOHN

I thought you guys lived out here in Trendwood.

DR. MORGAN

Trentwood. It's Trent-wood.

JOHN

I guess why walk when you can drive.

DR. RIDGE

We used to live in the city.

HALLEY

Now we live in a museum.

DR. RIDGE

I'll admit, collecting art is an obsession of mine.

EMMA

You could charge admission.

HALLEY

At this point we could start our own gallery...of Emma Douglas paintings alone.

JOHN

Perhaps you should consider more sculpture.

DR. RIDGE

Do you have your portfolio with you?

HALLEY

James....

JOHN

No, but Emma has a piece of mine in the courtyard.

DR. RIDGE

One of these days I'd like to take a few months off, South of France, maybe, and try my hand at sculpting. How long did it take you to make that piece?

JOHN

All my life, isn't that the infamous retort?

DR. RIDGE

Yes, I guess so. What do you get for one of those?

JOHN

That one was a gift, but, I don't know...let's see—

DR. RIDGE

You know, I wonder how much of the GNP is generated by art?

DR. MORGAN

Do they include art in the GNP?

EMMA

I should hope so....Art's one of the few things actually produced in America these days.

DR. MORGAN

Really? Then define "product."

DR. RIDGE

She takes raw materials—paint and canvas—and converts them into finished products.

EMMA

Which are then sold on the open market.

JOHN

With any luck.

DR. RIDGE

No such thing as luck. It's a crazy symbiosis, capitalism.

EMMA

Symbiosis?

HALLEY

*(studying the hem of the tablecloth)*

There's also a symbiotic relationship between wolves and sheep.

JOHN

That arrangement doesn't do much for the sheep, now does it?

DR. MORGAN

Nah-ah-ah-ah.

DR. RIDGE

It certainly is each man for himself. And although I wouldn't normally think of medicine, the *art* of healing, and capitalism in the same breath, the same economic factors are at play in both, I think.

JOHN

I wonder how much of the GNP is generated by medicine?

*(and when he gets no answer from the DOCTORS, this to HALLEY who is checking the time on her watch)*

Anyway, I don't doubt you might live longer if you have an Emma Douglas original on your wall.

HALLEY

Then we should live forever.

DR. RIDGE

Anyway, I'd love to change places with either of you for a while.

DR. PARKER

Now there's a good idea. Yes, let's see....Why *don't* you two trade places some day? John *you* observe one of James' surgeries, and James *you* go watch John sculpt...give each other a quick lesson, and then try it on your own?

DR. RIDGE

Sounds good to me.

JOHN

I don't think I'd be a very good doctor.

DR. PARKER

No, John...probably not. But why do you say so?

JOHN

Oh, I don't know. I'm sure it's not the case with you guys, but a lot of modern medicine seems like playing darts in the dark...keep throwing until you hit something.

DR. PARKER

Oh come on. My experience with patients is they don't feel like their appointment is complete unless I write them a prescription. People have an innate craving for medicine.

HALLEY

Is it innate or learned?

EMMA

What do you mean, Halley?

DR. RIDGE

She means patients learn to get what they need.

HALLEY

That's not what I said.

JOHN

No, you're right. I read somewhere....What was her name? Dr. Lima, Lopa....

DR. RIDGE

You read somewhere....

DR. MORGAN

Nothing a doctor hates to hear more than "I read somewhere." Pass the wine.

JOHN

Anyway, I can email you the article...a doctor in Bombay who says the life expectancy is the same for people who get treated for cancer as it is for those who just live with it.

DR. PARKER

What?

DR. MORGAN

Haven't heard this one yet....

EMMA

I think I read that article.

JOHN

Not only that, when it comes to women's health—

DR. RIDGE

Bunk. A lot of people say a lot of things. Yes, Dr. Loma something-or-other, I believe her name is. Pure poppycock! Not a shred of scientific evidence to support—

*MEGAN enters.*

MEGAN

Pure poppycock!

EMMA

There she is....

*MEGAN snaps a Polaroid of the dinner party.*

MEGAN

Mom, I'm bored.

*MEGAN pulls the Polaroid out of the camera and sets it on the table in front of HALLEY.*

HALLEY

Nothing good on TV?

EMMA

Megan, you can play in my studio if you want.

MEGAN

Oh, alright!

HALLEY

You don't mind?

EMMA

Of course not. Why don't you draw us a picture?

DR. RIDGE

We won't be much longer, babe.

MEGAN

Okay. Call me when you're ready.

EMMA

Just yell if there's something you can't find.

*MEGAN exits to the Studio.*

JOHN

That was great, "Pure poppycock!"

DR. RIDGE

Isn't she amazing?

DR. MORGAN

Yes.

EMMA

What sign are you, James?

DR. RIDGE

Sign?

EMMA

You know, your astrological sign.

DR. RIDGE

No way.

EMMA

When's your birthday?

DR. RIDGE

Nope.

EMMA

Come on. Halley, when's his birthday?

HALLEY

James is a smart, straight, white, man. Every day of the year is his birthday.

DR. RIDGE

Oh boy, here we go again.

EMMA

Well then....Happy birthday, gentlemen!

ALL

Here here. Salute. I'll drink to that.

JOHN

Emma's a Gemini.

*(when no one seems to "get it" and EMMA gives him a dirty look, JOHN proceeds)*

Anyway, this doctor says when the poor in India go to the clinic and the doctor tells them they have cancer there's nothing to do but turn around and go back home to live-out the best life they can. But those who have the money get the treatment, the best the west has to offer. And their statistics, which they've been tracking since the 50s, say the life expectancy for those who get the treatment and those who don't is almost the same.

EMMA

But what does that mean?

JOHN

The same is true for other treatments too—

DR. MORGAN

There's a lot more homeopathy over there...has been for centuries....that might account for it.

DR. RIDGE

Homeopathy? Sam, please. This is what happens...a bit of hearsay, and the next thing you know we're prescribing herbs and grandma's remedy for whatever ails you.

JOHN

The same is true with cold medicine. It might take care of one symptom but it just makes me feel bad in a different way. What do they call that? There's a word for it.

EMMA

Iatrogenic.

JOHN

That's right, iatrogenic.

EMMA

It's when the treatment makes the patient sick, and—

DR. RIDGE

There are no perfect systems, but I think the odds are with us.

JOHN

Maybe. There certainly are a lot of charlatans out there, and lord knows the art critics have a hard time telling which is which. And there are a lot of charlatan doctors out there too, but how do we know when the prescription is motivated by economics or something else?

DR. MORGAN

John, don't forget we're doctors...we know a little bit about this ourselves.

JOHN

And there was another report that just came out, in the Post I think—

DR. MORGAN

Oh, please....

JOHN

...That GPs in America only correctly match the prescription to the symptom like fifty percent of the time, or something like that?

DR. RIDGE

Give me a break.

JOHN

I'm sorry, I don't have much faith in modern medicine.

DR. MORGAN

Well who asked?

HALLEY

Maybe what we need is a post-modern medicine.

DR. RIDGE

Capital idea....Let's start a chain of blood-letting spas.

EMMA

Now that's funny.

DR. PARKER

But, John, you're not saying doctors knowingly prescribe harmful treatments, are you?

EMMA

No, I don't think that's what he's saying...are you, John...?

JOHN

As Sam said, you guys know more about this than I do. But certainly, money makes the machine of modern medicine go. For my own part, I became a sculptor because I wanted to sculpt, and I do that whether the world wants more sculptures or not. Maybe there are too many artists, but I don't think there's any harm in having too many sculptures. But if there are too many surgeons...we have too many surgeries. And unnecessary surgeries are a bad thing, right?

DR. RIDGE

Of course they are, John, but it's not the same thing.

JOHN

So maybe it's the money, or maybe it's the power...I don't know—

DR. MORGAN

The power?

JOHN

But the bigger the surgery the more they get paid, right?

DR. RIDGE

They? Which "they" are you pointing your finger at now?

JOHN

I wasn't pointing my finger at anyone.

DR. RIDGE

Of course surgeons make more money for more complicated surgeries, and the sicker you are, the more complicated the requisite treatment. But have you been reading the malpractice headlines? I'm involved in a lawsuit right now claiming the hospital allowed a surgery that wasn't needed, and I've got a friend who's being sued for not suggesting a surgery that *was* needed. You can't win.

JOHN

Oh, is that what those "Save Our Doctors" signs are about?

DR. MORGAN

Yes. And I noticed you've got a "Feed The Poets" pin on your satchel.

JOHN

Hospitals are non-profit organizations. They don't pay taxes. And if malpractice suits are on the rise they just limit our ability to sue. Can't win? Don't you mean can't lose? All I'm saying is the best thing would be for everyone to get to know their own bodies better...prevention. For example, men aren't told they need to have their gonads inspected routinely, but women are taught that they're...ticking time bombs!

DR. PARKER

Who says women are ticking time bombs?

DR. MORGAN

Ticking time bombs?

EMMA

James do you think of me as a ticking time bomb?

DR. RIDGE

No, of course not. I don't even know what that means. What do you say, Emma? John here implies that you ought to cancel your surgery and just live with these problems you've been having.

JOHN

What?

HALLEY

Surgery?

EMMA

I really didn't want to discuss that here.

JOHN

You didn't tell me you were having surgery....

DR. RIDGE

And I apologize for that, Emma.

DR. MORGAN

It's okay.

DR. RIDGE

No, really, my apologies, but allow me to assure each of you that Sam can count on me to make sure Emma Douglas will be here for him into their old age.

HALLEY

Be here?

DR. MORGAN

John...James, Rose and I have become good friends and colleagues. And we didn't invite them here to defend the medical industry.

DR. RIDGE

Oh, Sam, stop.

DR. PARKER

He's got a right to his own opinion.

DR. MORGAN

And what about that bicycle accident you were in, John? Wasn't it modern medicine that resuscitated you? If it weren't for the paramedics and the ER you wouldn't be here to heckle James at my dinner table.

JOHN

I didn't think I was heckling anyone....

DR. RIDGE

Sam, relax. Next you'll be asking John how many lives he's saved with his sculpting.

JOHN

Don't worry, I'm not going to chain myself to your Cadillac Escalades or anything. Besides, emergencies are different.

DR. PARKER

Well John, not every medical decision looks like a TV show. And I'm sure you wouldn't turn down a commission on one of your sculptures that had a few more zeroes on the price tag. Besides, although it's not so obvious in some as others, I think we'd all like to think there's a bit of a Marxist tree-hugger in each of us.

JOHN

Marxist tree-hugger?

DR. MORGAN

Now, Rose....Not everyone who criticizes capitalism is a communist....

DR. PARKER

That's not what I meant.

JOHN

And not every surgeon is a butcher.

DR. PARKER

And not every anesthesiologist is an accomplice?

EMMA

Well, we're just one big happy family!

DR. MORGAN

At any rate, John, you're not the first contrarian Emma's invited to dinner.

JOHN

Now I'm a contrarian. I prefer....

*(stands, as if for roll-call)*

Tree-hugging, card-carrying, anti-establishmentarian!

*(bows when EMMA applauds, and sits)*

And you, Sam?

DR. MORGAN

Me? Let's see. Well, I guess I'm...the Sand Man!

DR. PARKER

Oo, scary.

HALLEY

Butcher's wife.

ALL

Whoa!

DR. RIDGE

"I am not an animal—"

DR. RIDGE & DR. MORGAN

"...I'm a human being!"

JOHN

And you, Emma. Sound off.

DR. MORGAN

Yes, Emma.

EMMA

Charlatan!

DR. RIDGE

We all know otherwise.

EMMA

Well, that's what Jeremy Fogle said in his review today.

DR. RIDGE

The man should be whipped!

*Pause.*

JOHN

Well! I'm stuffed! An incredible meal, Emma.

DR. RIDGE

You elevate lasagna to a gourmet delight fit for kings. And I love your new work. They're hypnotizing.

DR. PARKER

They do seem to draw you inward. Like there's some secret in there somewhere.

EMMA

Well...thank you, Rose. But if you find any secrets, let me know....

DR. RIDGE

It's as if a great weight threatens to pull each line right off the canvas, and yet they hover there, inexplicably.

JOHN

She's the hardest working artist I know.

EMMA

I'm very lucky. I don't really consider it work.

DR. MORGAN

To me they have a textile feel to them....I keep telling her she should use a ruler.

EMMA

Yes, Sam...I know you'd prefer that I took up knitting.

HALLEY

I used to knit.

*Pause.*

DR. RIDGE

Anyway, you certainly are prolific, Emma. It's mind-boggling, really. I envy your creativity.

JOHN

You envy her creativity?

DR. RIDGE

Yes, I do. I really do. I'd give anything to live the life of an artist.

JOHN

Give it a try.

DR. RIDGE

No, the grass is always greener. For now, the best I can do is collect it, John...study it. And that gives me a great deal of pleasure, I assure you. Hm? At any rate, Sam, we have an early tee time, tomorrow.

DR. MORGAN

Yes we do.

DR. RIDGE

Thank you, Emma, Sam, everyone, for an enchanting evening.

ALL

Yes. Thank you. You're welcome.

*DR. PARKER exits. DR. RIDGE exits to retrieve MEGAN from the Studio.*

JOHN

Emma, I forgot your Art In America, but I'll swing by on the way to school tomorrow.

DR. MORGAN

Goodnight, John.

JOHN

Goodnight, Doctor.

*JOHN exits.*

HALLEY

Goodbye, Emma. Thank you.

EMMA

Of course, Halley. Thanks for coming.

*MEGAN enters with DR. RIDGE.*

EMMA

Oh, Megan! It was so nice to finally see you again.

MEGAN

Thank you for dinner.

EMMA

You're welcome.

MEGAN

Here, I made you a fortune teller.

EMMA

A fortune teller?

MEGAN

You move it back and forth for each word in your question, and then you lift the flap for the answer.

HALLEY

Maybe you should show her.

MEGAN

She can do it, Mom, it's easy.

EMMA

I can do this...I was a kid once too, you know.

MEGAN

I put my own answers on it, but you can make up your own if you want.

EMMA

Thank you, Megan.

DR. RIDGE

Oh, Meggie, what next?

MEGAN

Dad, don't call me Meggie.

HALLEY

Emma, we should get together...for coffee.

EMMA

I'd like that.

DR. RIDGE

You just had coffee. Well, happy weekend, everyone.

*DR. RIDGE, HALLEY and MEGAN exit.*

Scene Seven

*Dining Room. Continuation from Scene Six.*

DR. MORGAN

Wow. Hm, just like that....Well, you've outdone yourself once again, darling.

EMMA

What do you mean?

DR. MORGAN

Inviting John to dinner with James?

EMMA

I thought it was great fun.

DR. MORGAN

There're a lot of people we could've had to dinner. Why them? You trying to set him up with Rose?

EMMA

John and Rose? Hah! Oil and water. Besides, you and I have always had separate friends. I barely know James for all the time you've spent with him. And Halley and I haven't seen each other in ages. I thought it was an interesting group to get together.

DR. MORGAN

Next time I'd like to help decide who we're inviting to dinner, is all. Okay? What's the matter with you?

EMMA

*(beginning to exit)*

Nothing. Yes...okay. Hey, I think I'll...paint a while.

DR. MORGAN

Okay. Well, goodnight. Aren't you going to give me a kiss?

EMMA

*(returning to confront DR. MORGAN)*

I cook dinner, I invite your friends over, and all you can say is why did I invite John?

DR. MORGAN

It was just a question.

EMMA

Let me ask you a question, Sam....Do you think you deserve me?

DR. MORGAN

Do I deserve you? No. I don't think I do. And it's terribly unfair.

*EMMA kisses DR. MORGAN.*

EMMA

Very funny.

*When EMMA turns away from him, DR. MORGAN grabs her arm and pulls her close again.*

DR. MORGAN

You sleeping around on me?

EMMA

What? Are you serious?

DR. MORGAN

Yes I'm serious. You sneaking John into your studio to play with after I go to sleep?

EMMA

I don't sneak him anywhere. What're you talking about? John and I are friends, he stops by whenever he feels like it. Besides, if I can't have guy friends without you getting jealous—

DR. MORGAN

Oh, relax. Can't I give you a hard time without you taking me so serious...ly?

EMMA

Sometimes it's hard to tell when you're serious and when you're not, Sam. Besides, you wouldn't know, so what difference would it make?

DR. MORGAN

I'd know.

EMMA

Then why are you asking? Well? Am I or aren't I?

DR. MORGAN

Go paint. I have an early day tomorrow.

DR. MORGAN & EMMA

Goodnight.

*EMMA takes a pack of cigarettes from a drawer and puts a cigarette in her mouth.*

DR. MORGAN

I thought you quit....

EMMA

Anyone can quit just once. It takes a real woman to quit as many times as I have.

*EMMA exits.*

DR. MORGAN

Yeah, yeah, yeah...goodnight.

*DR. MORGAN exits.*

Scene Eight

*RIDGE residence Kitchen. MEGAN sings "How Was Your Weekend Mavis?" to herself for a moment before HALLEY enters.*

HALLEY

*(troubled, struggling to appear that all is well)*

I know one little girl who's up past her bedtime.

MEGAN

*(mocking her)*

"I know one little girl who's up past her bedtime." I mean, yes, mother. Whatever mommy says.

HALLEY

That's more like it.

MEGAN

Hey, does Emma give art lessons?

HALLEY

What? Oh, I don't know....

MEGAN

If she does, can I take lessons with her?

HALLEY

Maybe. Ask your dad.

MEGAN

That'd be cool...to be an artist, like Emma.

*(no response from HALLEY)*

What's the matter?

HALLEY

Nothing. I...Hey, why don't you practice your song for me before you go to bed?

MEGAN

Only if you sing it with me. Somebody has to sing with me....

HALLEY

Ask your dad.

MEGAN

No, I want you to. You never sing with me anymore.

HALLEY

Megan....

MEGAN

Please....

*(no response from HALLEY, she attempts to hand the script to her, repeating...)*

Please?

HALLEY

*(finally taking the script)*

Oh, okay. But just a little bit.

MEGAN

Okay, you start.

HALLEY

*(stumbling through the melody at first)*

Okay....*How was your weekend Mavis?*

MEGAN

*So, so....*

HALLEY

*Mine was perfectly divine.*

MEGAN

*Do tell....*

HALLEY

*Henry's out of town, I had the house to myself—*

MEGAN

*You should of called me Trudy.*

HALLEY

*I should've called you Mavis.*

HALLEY & MEGAN

*But then...*

MEGAN

*All we'd do is complain.*

HALLEY

*Ho hum.*

MEGAN

*What we need are wives....*

HALLEY

*...A working woman needs a wife....*

*HALLEY begins to get the hang of the song...just as DR. RIDGE enters.*

HALLEY & MEGAN

*...So every weekend can be divine.*

DR. RIDGE

*And how!*

MEGAN

*(crossing to DR. RIDGE)*

Dad!

DR. RIDGE & MEGAN

*To get ahead, these days,  
a woman's gotta look like a girl,  
she's got to act like a man, work like a dog,  
and find joy in the Joy of Cooking.*

*Runs all day and never walks,  
Often murmurs, never talks;  
It has a bed and never sleeps;  
It has a mouth and never eats.*

MEGAN

That's enough.

DR. RIDGE

No way, this is the best part.

MEGAN

*I'll do it, Trudy.*

DR. RIDGE

*That's the spirit!*

MEGAN

*The worst they can say is no.*

DR. RIDGE

*That's right.*

DR. RIDGE & MEGAN

*And so long as we're friends...  
To the end...  
We're the luckiest girls in Jersey!*

DR. RIDGE

Hey-hey!

MEGAN

Good job, Dad.

DR. RIDGE

At this point I know your lines as well as you do. When is this play anyway?

MEGAN

Next Friday.

*DR. RIDGE pours himself a drink.*

DR. RIDGE

Isn't she great, Mom? Of course she's great. But I don't see how that song made it by the language police. And is that why you didn't finish your dinner tonight, so you could come home and eat some crackers?

HALLEY

James, don't you think you've had enough of that?

DR. RIDGE

Just a little nightcap.

HALLEY

That's more of a nightgown at this point don't you think?

DR. RIDGE

Don't tell me what to do in front of my daughter.

MEGAN

Stop it, you guys....

DR. RIDGE

Megan go to bed.

HALLEY

I'm not so concerned about what she hears. I'm more concerned about what she doesn't hear.

MEGAN

Mom, just cut it out!

DR. RIDGE

Megan, go to bed.

HALLEY

I'm more concerned about what's not being said around here these days. Like Emma, for example—

DR. RIDGE

What about Emma?

MEGAN

Mom...!

HALLEY

I wonder what she's not hearing.

DR. RIDGE

Don't talk to me about Emma!

MEGAN

Stop it!!

DR. RIDGE

Megan, it's time for bed!

MEGAN

No!! I'm not going to bed until you do!

DR. RIDGE

Come on, babe!

MEGAN

I don't want to go to bed!!

*MEGAN stomps off to bed. DR. RIDGE quickly returns to confront HALLEY again. HALLEY, unflinching, does not hide the desperation in her eyes. DR. RIDGE, seeing the desperation, quickly exits. HALLEY looks at the Emma Douglas painting on the wall, turns confused as if there's nowhere to go, grabs her keys, and exits.*

Scene Nine

*Courtyard. Having stepped outside, EMMA looks up to the stars. She tries to light her cigarette, but the lighter is out of fluid. JOHN is hiding behind her, but she doesn't know it. She does a cartwheel with the unlit cigarette in her mouth.*

JOHN

*(in a loud whisper)*

Bravo! Bravo!

EMMA

Oh, my god, you scared me!

*EMMA looks up to the window above the Courtyard to see if DR. MORGAN, who said he was going to bed, has heard them.*

JOHN

You did that with a cigarette in your mouth? The judges are going wild.

*They quickly enter EMMA's Studio.*

EMMA

There're a lot of things I can do you don't know about.

JOHN

Show me.

EMMA

I might. But don't push your luck.

JOHN

I made it through your dinner party without strangling anyone, didn't I?

EMMA

I appreciate that.

JOHN

You think Sam figured it out?

EMMA

In my own strange way, it was perfect. You feel like a voyeur when it's your birthday and no one knows.

JOHN

I knew...Gemini.

*(he steals EMMA'S cigarette from her, puts it into his own mouth)*

That was classic when you said happy birthday to everyone.

*(flirtatiously...)*

So, what's going on?

EMMA

*(misunderstanding the question)*

What do you mean?

JOHN

You know what I mean. Are you getting a second opinion?

EMMA

*(disappointed)*

I already got one!

JOHN

And....

EMMA

And he was a total creep, but he said the same thing.

JOHN

What did he say?

EMMA

He said, "James is a fine surgeon. He'll do the myomectomy, and if he can't," he said, "he'll take out the crib, but he'll leave the playpen."

JOHN

What?

EMMA

That's what he said.

JOHN

Take out the crib but leave the playpen!? So, obviously you need a third opinion.

EMMA

John, Sam and James are friends, okay?

JOHN

When is this operation?

EMMA

Monday.

JOHN

Monday! This Monday? What's the rush?

EMMA

John, it's my birthday. I don't want to talk about this.

JOHN

And you were going to tell me when? I have class on Monday. You could have told me so I could plan to be there, but now what am I going to do?

EMMA

I wasn't aware that I had to check in with you too!

JOHN

You know, it just amazes me that a woman as smart as you relies on the opinions of people who have no idea what's it's like to be you. What exactly are they going to do?

EMMA

They're just removing some fibroids. It's not a big deal.

JOHN

You know how I feel about it...don't have any surgery unless you're going to die tomorrow, and even then flip a coin. But I'm not the one with the problems.

EMMA

No, you're not.

JOHN

Do some research.

EMMA

I don't have time. I have to get myself prepared to be out of commission for I don't know how long! I can't sit still, I suffocate when I can't work! I have to arrange to strike this exhibition, and then it's moving to DC, and I have to finish this, and if I'm not up to it, I mean...I was hoping you would...help.

JOHN

Of course I'll help. I'll help. You know I will.

EMMA

Thank you.

JOHN

So, where's your husband in all this?

EMMA

Golfing.

JOHN

Give me a break. And tell me again, why are you with him?

EMMA

It's complicated.

JOHN

Yeah. You mean kind of like this?

EMMA

Yeah.

JOHN

I just don't want you to get hurt.

EMMA

I know. Come here.

*EMMA kisses JOHN passionately. JOHN responds by pulling her close at first, but then pushes her away.*

JOHN

Whoa....

*(ironically)*

Are you going to ask me to stay?

EMMA

Would you?

JOHN

No!

*EMMA and JOHN exit.*

Scene Ten

*Park. DR. MORGAN sits with DR. PARKER on a park bench, DR. PARKER whispering into DR. MORGAN'S ear.*

DR. MORGAN

Rose....Stop it. You're torturing me.

DR. PARKER

I just want you to myself for a while, is that asking too much?

DR. MORGAN

You're breaking the rules.

DR. PARKER

Breaking the rules....And what about Emma and John, do you think they're breaking any rules?

DR. MORGAN

What? Give me a break. There's no way Emma's having an affair with John, I can assure you of that.

DR. PARKER

You don't know that.

DR. MORGAN

She'd never be that blatant....Not her style.

DR. PARKER

Her style? Having an affair is a style? I don't care about Emma's *style!*

DR. MORGAN

Oh, come on, now. Besides, we have Denver.

DR. PARKER

Denver....

DR. MORGAN

Tell me about Denver.

DR. PARKER

Oh, Denver....Waking up together like normal people—

DR. MORGAN

Normal people...?

DR. PARKER

Having a normal relationship. I don't want to sneak around anymore.

DR. MORGAN

Whoa, whoa! We're not having this conversation again.

DR. PARKER

Why not?

DR. MORGAN

I don't want to talk about it. If I want this conversation I go home!

*(recovering when she pushes away from him)*

And now Emma's going in for surgery Monday. So I won't be going out much for a while.

DR. PARKER

Get an in-home nurse.

DR. MORGAN

Maybe. I don't know. I'll see.

*(pause)*

So, will James do a total hysterectomy?

DR. PARKER

What? Are you serious? Of course he will. Her fibroids are submucosal. James is a decent surgeon, but he's not going to mess around with submucosal fibroids.

DR. MORGAN

Why not? He could do a myomectomy.

DR. PARKER

Too messy. You have too much faith in Dr. James Ridge! He's good, but he's not that good. Besides, what difference does it make? Why don't you go ask him yourself!?! I'm tired of talking about Emma Douglas!!!

*DR. MORGAN looks around to see if anyone else might've heard DR. PARKER'S outburst. Satisfied that they are alone in the park, he pouts. Finally DR. PARKER takes DR. MORGAN'S hand in hers again.*

DR. PARKER

There's a lunar eclipse on Tuesday.

DR. MORGAN

I know.

DR. PARKER

We could watch it together....

DR. MORGAN

Sure....If you're good.

DR. PARKER

If I'm—

DR. MORGAN

*(silencing DR. PARKER with a finger to her lips)*

But no more talking tonight. That's the rule.

*DR. PARKER pulls DR. MORGAN close. The scene goes dark. They exit.*

Scene Eleven

*Studio. EMMA works. HALLEY enters. EMMA doesn't notice HALLEY standing outside her Studio door at first.*

EMMA

Halley!

HALLEY

Hello, Emma.

EMMA

Halley? You scared me! Well, hello. Um. Come in. Is everything okay? Did you leave something here?

HALLEY

No.

EMMA

Halley, what's the matter?

*HALLEY strolls around the studio, scrutinizing EMMA'S works on the walls.*

HALLEY

You're really making a name for yourself.

EMMA

I don't know about that....It's a difficult business.

HALLEY

Is that all it is? A business?

EMMA

No. Of course not. That's what my new series is about. It's like breathing for me. It sustains me.

*(pause)*

Halley, it's really late. Do you...? Hey, I got this unbelievable Scotch for my birthday, would you like some?

*EMMA pours two glasses of Scotch and hands one to HALLEY.*

HALLEY

When was your birthday?

EMMA

Today.

*(no response, she touches her glass to HALLEY'S)*  
Cheers.

HALLEY

I read the review of your exhibition in the paper today.

EMMA

Critics....All you can do is keep working. I'm very lucky.

HALLEY

*(taking a step toward EMMA)*

Yes. You are.

EMMA

Halley, is there something I can help you with?

*(when HALLEY moves away)*

Megan's great. It was great seeing her.

HALLEY

Megan wants to know if you teach art.

EMMA

Well...sure, I'd love to work with her.

*(again no response, HALLEY standing with her back to EMMA)*

It was nice seeing you, too. I haven't seen you in a while.

HALLEY

*(quickly turning around to face EMMA)*

She'll be happy to hear that. Listen....I should apologize for coming over so late.

EMMA

Is something wrong?

HALLEY

I was....I was thinking about you, and how you're feeling. James said....

EMMA

I'm fine. I have a lot of work to get done. I'm nervous about getting it done before the surgery. But I'm sure James will make sure everything's okay.

HALLEY

You have no idea.

*(and now it's EMMA who has nothing to say)*

I'm sorry, I have...well, I don't have the words. I have an idea.

EMMA

You have an idea...? Hm.

*(beginning to cross toward the Scotch)*

Would you like some more?

HALLEY

*(cutting EMMA off, stopping her)*

No! I mean....Listen, Emma. Just be careful.

EMMA

With what?

HALLEY

You have so much going for you. I'd...I'd hate for you to lose it.

EMMA

Halley, listen. I have a lot of work to get done, but if you have something to say, I wish you'd say it.

*(no response)*

I don't understand. I mean...Does this have something to do with my surgery?

HALLEY

*(profoundly)*

I have to...go.

*(throwing back the whiskey, she hands EMMA the glass)*

That is good whiskey.

*HALLEY exits.*

EMMA

Halley...Take care.

*EMMA stands looking out toward HALLEY'S exit. The set changes around EMMA while, from off, voices seem to play in EMMA'S head, such as a sampling of Scene Fifteen. EMMA exits. When the lights come up, it's morning.*

Scene Twelve

*Dining Room. EMMA emerges from her Studio and bumps into DR. MORGAN in the Dining Room polishing his golf clubs.*

EMMA

*(yawning, wiping the sleep from her eyes)*

Good morning.

DR. MORGAN

Morning.

EMMA

What're you doing up so early?

DR. MORGAN

Me? What about you? I see you slept in your studio again.

EMMA

I must've fallen asleep.

DR. MORGAN

I have an early tee time with James.

EMMA

Right. Sam, are Halley and James getting along okay?

DR. MORGAN

How would I know? You can ask him yourself, he'll be here any minute.

EMMA

Halley stopped by last night about one.

DR. MORGAN

She did?

EMMA

Yeah. And she really freaked me out

DR. MORGAN

Why? What was the matter?

EMMA

She seemed to want to talk about the surgery, but then she couldn't go there.

DR. MORGAN

How did she know?

EMMA

Because James told everyone at dinner.

DR. MORGAN

Oh, right, that wasn't too smooth of him. Did she tell you why?

EMMA

No. She wouldn't say.

*At the sound of DR. RIDGE'S car horn, DR. MORGAN briefly exits to gather his things.*

DR. MORGAN

Hm.

EMMA

*(yelling to him in the next room)*

Sam will you have time to talk with me today about the surgery?

DR. MORGAN

*(from off)*

What about it?

EMMA

Just in general. What they're going to do. What the recovery will be like. I don't even know what they're—

DR. MORGAN

*(returning)*

Emma, we've been over this. What's there to talk about? Look, let's not think outside of the box, here. We've talked with James and this is a very common procedure. Isn't it obvious you need to get this cleaned up?

EMMA

Sam, the surgery's the day after tomorrow. I'm just planning my life here for the next month or so, and the fact is I don't know what to expect.

DR. MORGAN

What's there to be afraid of?

EMMA

That's just it, I don't know.

DR. MORGAN

You have to have faith in James. He's not just good, he's one of the best. And while you're recuperating I'll get you an in-home nurse to help out.

EMMA

I do trust James, but I think I should know what's going on, don't you?

DR. MORGAN

Look, after the surgery your periods will be over. Over. It'll be done. You won't have to think about this anymore. Besides, if we're not going to have children, what difference does a uterus make?

EMMA

Oh! So the only reason to not throw away my uterus depends on whether or not we're going to have a baby!?

DR. MORGAN

That's not exactly what I meant!

EMMA

And I didn't agree to a hysterectomy!

DR. MORGAN

The problem is the bleeding, so James will eliminate the problem.

EMMA

Sam, you're not talking to me!!

DR. MORGAN

Don't turn this back on me!

EMMA

I just don't think we've been honest with each other lately, and we need to talk.

DR. MORGAN

When things come up we talk, like every other couple.

EMMA

Do we? And what about these late night rendezvous and whispering phone conversations you've been having with Rose?

DR. MORGAN

What!

EMMA

Will we talk about that!?

DR. MORGAN

Rose is a colleague, and we've become friends. What're you doing!? I've been jealous of your friendship with John since the first day I met him, but do I ever say anything? Don't be hysterical....

EMMA

Nice choice of words. I'm not hysterical...I just want to know if I'm having a hysterectomy.

DR. MORGAN

I have to go. Where are my keys?

EMMA

Sam, please...we need to talk about this.

*DR. RIDGE enters as DR. MORGAN finds the keys in his pocket.*

DR. RIDGE

Sammie? Hey, Sammie, you ready?

DR. MORGAN

Yeah, let's go.

DR. RIDGE

Hello, Emma.

EMMA

Good morning, James.

DR. MORGAN

We'll talk later, okay?

EMMA

Okay. This must be an important game.

DR. RIDGE

They're all important, but this is a grudge match.

EMMA

James, how's Halley doing this morning?

DR. MORGAN

*(beginning to exit)*

Emma, please. We have to go.

DR. RIDGE

*(to DR. MORGAN, stopping him)*

She's fine.

*(to EMMA)*

Why?

EMMA

Never mind...I don't want to keep you from your game.

DR. RIDGE

I've got a minute, why do you ask?

EMMA

It's none of my business, really, it's just that...she was here last night.

DR. RIDGE

No kidding, so was I.

EMMA

But she came by a few hours after you guys left.

DR. RIDGE

Really? Why?

EMMA

Well, is everything okay?

DR. RIDGE

Sam...um, why don't you put your clubs in the trunk, and I'll be right there.

DR. MORGAN

Right.

DR. RIDGE

And bring your cigars, because today is victory!

DR. MORGAN

I accept nothing less.

*DR. MORGAN exits.*

DR. RIDGE

Emma, I'm sorry about last night. Look....Halley's really been having a rough time lately.

EMMA

Why?

DR. RIDGE

It's really kind of personal. It's a family matter.

EMMA

Sure, James, but I'm nervous enough about this surgery as it is—

DR. RIDGE

Well, what did she say?

EMMA

Nothing, really. I mean, it seemed like there was something she wanted to say, but she couldn't find the words.

DR. RIDGE

Do you know what it was about?

EMMA

It's hard to say? There was this moment when she seemed to want to say—

DR. RIDGE

Emma, Halley really has been fighting to keep it together.

EMMA

Is she depressed?

DR. RIDGE

Yes. Ever since she lost her business.

EMMA

She lost her business?

DR. RIDGE

Yes, about a year ago.

EMMA

I had no idea!

DR. RIDGE

Oh she puts up a good facade, but then she gets home and falls apart...like last night. I'm worried for Megan.

EMMA

Halley told me to be careful. I asked her why, but she didn't give me a straight answer.

DR. RIDGE

I asked her to go to therapy, but she refuses. It's really been a struggle for her, poor thing. She's had a rough time lately, Emma. She needs help.

EMMA

But James, she really made me nervous.

DR. RIDGE

I'm sorry.

EMMA

Is there any reason that I should be concerned?

DR. RIDGE

No. Really. No.

EMMA

If you can't take out the fibroids, what will you do?

DR. RIDGE

If I have to, but only as a last resort, I'll perform a hysterectomy.

EMMA

But James, I didn't agree to a hysterectomy.

DR. RIDGE

No. But only when I'm in there will I be able to assess what needs to be done.

EMMA

What does that mean?

DR. RIDGE

It's a last resort.

EMMA

*(after a moment's consideration...resigned)*

How soon will I be able to get back to work?

DR. RIDGE

You'll be out of commission for a couple of weeks, so get your things in order. But in no time at all you'll be a new woman. Look, I'm a fine surgeon. I'm one of the best at what I do. And I'll only do what's absolutely necessary. And I'll take care of Halley, she's a good girl.

*DR. MORGAN returns.*

EMMA

Is there anything I can do to help?

DR. RIDGE

No, don't worry, we'll be alright.

EMMA

Okay. But if you need anything, just ask me. I'd be glad to help...I always liked Halley.

DR. RIDGE

Thank you. Really. You're a good friend.

DR. MORGAN

All right then!

DR. RIDGE

All right then. Good morning, Emma....

*DR. RIDGE exits.*

DR. MORGAN

We'll talk later.

*DR. MORGAN exits.*

Scene Thirteen

*Dining Room. JOHN enters quickly, his arms full, carrying two cups of coffee.*

JOHN

Knock, knock. Hey, guess who was up all night trying to help you. Here, cream, no sugar.

EMMA

Thank you.

JOHN

You ain't seen nothin' yet....Okay, so I pulled a bunch of stuff off the web.

EMMA

What!?

JOHN

I've got testimonies from women who've had this operation, I've got websites for you to take a look at. Oh, man, this is going to freak you out.

EMMA

John, please!

JOHN

This is from the onekiloclub.org...it's this organization where gynecologists collect uteruses...like totems on a pole.

*(JOHN dramatically reads the poem from <http://www.onekiloclub.org/>)*

Oh, Lion, clamp gently.

Pull the womb respectfully out.

It had glorious days.

Remember, you floated in its warm water,

in its heavenly calm chamber,  
and grew on its soft bed of blood and silence.

EMMA

John, would you stop it with the political agenda shit?!

JOHN

Oh, it gets better.

Please, weigh it accurately,  
it might be a kilo, as good as gold and diamonds.  
It fed our children and wives—

EMMA

John!! Stop!

JOHN

No, really, check this out. I was up all night finding this stuff.

*EMMA takes the papers from JOHN and sets them on the table.*

EMMA

Thank you!

*(she picks up the fortune teller)*

In my leisure time I'll read it.

*JOHN picks up the papers again, follows after EMMA.*

JOHN

I really think you should take a look at this.

EMMA

Yes! I know you do! You know, I've got my husband and James telling me one thing, and I've got you telling me another.

JOHN

It's your decision. It's your body.

EMMA

Oh, thank you! Thank you for reminding me! Thank you very much!! But I don't need anyone else inside my uterus!!! This *is* my body, it *is* my decision, and you can't understand! You don't understand. I will read it.

JOHN

When, in the recovery room?

EMMA

I'll read it!

JOHN

You can't even stand to fly because someone else is in the driver's seat. And except for the inconvenience of the bleeding, you know...?

EMMA

It's a little worse than inconvenient.

JOHN

You look as healthy as ever. You're in no pain, you have lots of energy...all I'm saying is you should take a look at this.

EMMA

I...will...read it.

JOHN

Promise?

EMMA

That's it! John, go. I mean it. I just had a fight with Sam, and I'm not doing this.

JOHN

You know...I cancelled my Monday classes for you.

EMMA

Good. Thank you.

*(opening and closing the fortune teller as if it's the fortune teller telling JOHN goodbye, she snaps the fortune teller near JOHN'S nose)*

Now, good-bye!

JOHN

What is that?

EMMA

This? This is a fortune teller.

JOHN

A what?

EMMA

Megan gave it to me. You know what this is, don't you? Here.

*(handing him the fortune teller)*

You put your fingers in it like this...Good, that's right. Now I ask it a question and it gives me an answer.

And the number of words in my question is eight. So count to eight.

JOHN

*(without opening and closing the fortune teller)*

One, two, three—

EMMA

No, like this. Open and close it.

JOHN

Oh, right...One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight.

EMMA

Now I pick a color. And my color is...orange. Spell "orange."

JOHN

O-R-A-N-G-E.

EMMA

Now open it.

*JOHN unfolds the answer. They read it silently, exchanging confused glances. They exit.*

Scene Fourteen

*Hospital Room. SUSAN sits in the hospital bed, two days after her surgery. DR. RIDGE enters excitedly, gathers himself before speaking.*

DR. RIDGE

Susan, I asked your husband to step out of the room because I need to speak with *you*, not him. This is about *you* and *your* body, not his.

SUSAN

But he only wants what's best for me.

DR. RIDGE

And I only want what's best for you.

*(manufacturing a smile)*

The difference is I'm the doctor and I actually *know* what's best for you. Okay?

*DR. PARKER enters.*

DR. PARKER

Knock knock...can I come in?

DR. RIDGE

Of course, Dr. Parker. Now, Susan a little bit of blood in your urine is normal.

DR. PARKER

Of course it is.

DR. RIDGE

You've just had a major operation, so it's not uncommon—

SUSAN

But Dr. Ridge, this is not what I expected.

*DR. PARKER takes SUSAN'S blood pressure.*

DR. PARKER

Sh!

DR. RIDGE

Your vitals are fine, you have no fever. You've met Dr. Parker, haven't you?

DR. PARKER

Yes!

DR. RIDGE

Now Susan, it'll take a little bit of time for you to recover.

SUSAN

I'm sorry, Dr. Ridge, I know it's only been two days. But this isn't what we talked about, Dr. Ridge. I feel completely different. I...I don't feel like myself. It's like....I know this sounds strange...but it's like....I don't know. It's like this is someone else's body. I don't feel like myself.

DR. RIDGE

Really.

*(to DR. PARKER)*

Well, I haven't heard that before.

*(back to SUSAN)*

You have a very creative imagination, so I wouldn't worry about it.

DR. PARKER

It's probably just the anesthesia, it's makes you feel a little woozy, doesn't it?

DR. RIDGE

You seem to be managing well, and everything went picture perfect.

DR. PARKER

Yes, you were great in surgery.

DR. RIDGE

And I'll talk with your husband about what he can do to help when you get home.

*DR. PARKER hands DR. RIDGE the patient chart.*

SUSAN

Well, did you get all the cancer?

DR. RIDGE

No, there was no cancer.

SUSAN

What do you mean?

DR. RIDGE

There was no cancer. Fortunately! But we *were* able to excise the problem.

SUSAN

I'm sorry? I didn't have cancer?

DR. PARKER

Isn't that good news? And we removed 99% of any further possibility of cystic growths.

DR. RIDGE

In fact! It was a beautiful surgery.

SUSAN

Forgive me, I'm a little in shock right now. I don't have cancer?

DR. RIDGE

No.

SUSAN

So why did you do the surgery if I didn't have cancer?

DR. PARKER

You have a strong history of cancer in your family, Susan.

DR. RIDGE

And there was no way to know until we got in there.

DR. PARKER

It was the safest option.

SUSAN

Safest option....Oh, my god, what options? This isn't what we talked about! Oh my god, I don't understand!

DR. PARKER

Susan, it's important that you don't overreact.

SUSAN

*(silenced more by pain in her pelvis than by DR. RIDGE'S consolations)*

But—

DR. RIDGE

You don't want your husband to see you like this, do you? There, there now....Look, I'll be back tomorrow to make sure things are improving for you. And remember, you can go home whenever you feel up to it.

SUSAN

But, Dr. Ridge....

DR. PARKER

The operation was a big success, Susan...congratulations.

*DR. PARKER exits.*

DR. RIDGE

I'm sure you'll be feeling much better tomorrow.

*DR. RIDGE exits. EMMA enters wearing a hospital surgical gown. The hospital PA blares, "Dr. James Ridge, please dial 333. Dr. James Ridge, dial 333." SUSAN exits.*

Scene Fifteen

*"Dr. Ritika Wadwhani, please dial 427. Dr. Ritika Wadwhani, dial 427." EMMA approaches the operating room table with the consent form in her hands as the following overlapping voices play in her head.*

SUSAN

The day before the surgery I met a friend for coffee—

HALLEY

You have no idea.

SUSAN

A former colleague who'd had the same operation.

DR. RIDGE

We've got you down for Monday.

SUSAN

She said, "I'll admit...for me sex wasn't exactly a priority...."

JOHN

Denial becomes truth out of the sheer magic of repetition.

SUSAN

...So I guess you can't lose what you never had.

DR. RIDGE

You look like a million bucks...a million bucks!

SUSAN

Everything she said, she said twice.

HALLEY

James and I weren't getting along very well.

SUSAN

She kept telling me she wanted to remember everything, but then she'd forget what she wanted to say.

DR. MORGAN

Look, let's not think outside of the box, here.

SUSAN

And I dismissed her.

DR. PARKER

We all believe what we want to believe.

JOHN

You look as healthy as ever.

DR. MORGAN

She doesn't want to have sex anymore, we can't have children, it's covered, I mean....

JOHN

Lies become truths out of the sheer magic of repetition.

DR. PARKER

Like there's some secret in there somewhere.

HALLEY

Don't we all have a wall...doesn't everyone have a wall inside?

DR. MORGAN

No.

DR. RIDGE

No more of that messy bleeding.

DR. MORGAN

Isn't it obvious you need to get this thing cleaned up?

MEGAN

My dad says, believe half of what you see, none of what you hear.

DR. MORGAN

What's there to be afraid of?

HALLEY

Believe nothing you can't feel.

DR. MORGAN

Don't be hysterical.

JOHN

Oh, Lion, clamp gently.  
Pull the womb respectfully out—

HALLEY

The truth is what is commonly believed to be true.

JOHN

...Please, weigh it accurately,  
it might be a kilo, as good as gold or diamonds.

*"Dr. James Ridge, please dial 362. Dr. James Ridge, dial 362." EMMA exits.*

Scene Sixteen

*Courtyard / Studio. Monday morning. Sun slowly rises. Silence except for morning sounds. After several moments of this, a car approaches. EMMA is heard behind the audience.*

EMMA

Just a minute. I'll be right back.

*EMMA enters through the audience giggling, wearing a hospital gown and slippers and carrying a clipboard. She's yelling to a taxi cab driver.*

EMMA

I live here, I'm not going anywhere!

*She runs into her Studio. She drops the clipboard, throws on a robe or smock to cover what the gown won't, rummages through a drawer, grabs a wad of money.*

EMMA

*(as she runs back to pay the cabbie)*  
You didn't think I had it on me, did you? Ha!

*A moment later EMMA runs back to her Studio. She begins to voraciously eat an apple. The phone rings. EMMA hesitates, but then answers it.*

EMMA

Hello? Hello, Sam. Well, yes, Sam...you called me, right? Sam, please, control yourself. Sam....Sam?

*EMMA hangs up the phone. She stops eating, sits there silently. She picks up the fortune teller, gets her fortune, and throws it aside. Still seated, she makes the familiar downward strokes as though pretending to paint, although the painting she's working on is across the Studio. She approaches the painting and touches it lightly. She sits in the middle of her Studio, continuing to eat her apple.*

Scene Seventeen

*Studio. DR. RIDGE and DR. MORGAN burst into the Studio.*

EMMA

Wow, that was fast.

DR. MORGAN

What in the hell's going on!

EMMA

I'm eating.

DR. MORGAN

Emma!!!! Goddamnit! Where the hell did you go!? Answer me! Now, goddamnit!!

*The Studio phone rings. EMMA picks up the receiver, but DR. MORGAN takes it from her and slams it back down.*

DR. RIDGE

Sam, stay calm now.

DR. MORGAN

James...this is my house!

DR. RIDGE

Alright....

DR. MORGAN

James calls me and says you disappeared, we search everywhere for you expecting the worst, like maybe you...I don't know...something! Thinking it's crazy to suggest you might actually leave the hospital I call back here and here you are sitting in your studio like nothing happened?

EMMA

Why did you expect the worst?

DR. MORGAN

I am fucking beside myself! I'm ready to crawl out of my skin!

EMMA

I'm not speaking with you unless you cool down and have a seat.

DR. MORGAN

I...goddamnit!! All right! All right, fine.  
*(DR. MORGAN wipes off a stool, sits, and then continues)*  
Okay. Now I'm better. Emma, talk to me. Talk to me!

EMMA

If anyone cares, I was scared!

DR. MORGAN

*(standing again)*  
James is a very busy man! He cancelled other appointments to take care of you today.

EMMA

I'm sorry.

DR. RIDGE

It's okay. Everything's fine. Sam, please. Emma, we just wanted to know what happened to you....

EMMA

I was scared! And sometimes it takes me a while to figure things out, but I said to myself, this is it....I'm going to be operated on but I still don't really know what's going to happen....Or I can stand up and walk away and think about this some more.

DR. MORGAN

Why didn't you call me?

EMMA

I did call you, but you weren't there!

DR. RIDGE

Either way, I've got to get back to the hospital. Sam, listen....Why don't you give us a few minutes. Alright? Just a few minutes.

DR. MORGAN

Fine.

*(DR. MORGAN returns the seat to where it was with a slam, and then exits)*

Fine!

DR. RIDGE

Whew! Emma, Emma, Emma....Wow. Well, this is a first for me. What were you thinking?

*(searching for a good tack)*

Look. I told Halley, you know, we wanted a creative, precocious, curious kid, and that's what we've got. And I live with it. And you know, Emma, I like you. I like you a lot. So I'm not in the least offended by any of this, but Emma, you need to get your priorities straight. Tell me, what would you do without Sam?

EMMA

Huh?

DR. RIDGE

I know you're a sensitive artist, but you need to take inventory here. You can't just turn your back on this. It's not uncommon for these fibroids to grow as big as a grapefruit.

EMMA

What? As big as a grapefruit? Wouldn't I know if there was something as big as a grapefruit in my belly?

DR. RIDGE

Well yes, if it was anterior and pedunculated, which is just to say that—

EMMA

Pedunculated? Like I know what *that* means....And James, didn't you say the biggest one was only six centimeters?

DR. RIDGE

Yes, something like that, but until I get in there—

EMMA

They brought me down to the operating room, and Sam told me they'd have me sign a consent form, so I told them they couldn't put the IV in until I saw the consent form.

DR. RIDGE

Why?

EMMA

So this nurse shoves a form in my face and says sign this, so I asked what am I signing? "It's just a standard consent form, ma'am," she says.

DR. RIDGE

She's just doing her job, Emma, it's S.O.P.

EMMA

S.O.P.?

DR. RIDGE

Standard operating procedure.

EMMA

Hah, pardon the pun, right? All this operating business is very standardized, isn't it? Anyway, I read that form, and I said I can't sign this. "Well, you'll have to sign it," she said, and went storming off. And then, well, I went for a walk.

DR. RIDGE

A walk....

EMMA

Well, it was a long walk.

DR. RIDGE

Yes, you did.

EMMA

And I took it with me.

DR. RIDGE

You took what with you.

EMMA

This consent form.

DR. RIDGE

Emma, I'm losing patience with you!

EMMA

The reason I left the hospital is because it says here, "The purpose of the procedure is to treat and/or diagnose the following conditions: myomectomy and possible TAH/BSO," which I now know means hysterectomy and removal of the ovaries.

DR. RIDGE

Emma, the purpose is to stop the bleeding and make you well.

EMMA

Okay, so let's put that in the consent form. The purpose is to stop the bleeding caused by fibroids. But removal of the uterus and ovaries isn't a purpose, it's an outcome. And what is that outcome? This isn't just anybody's body that'll be opened up, this is my body, and I want to be precise about the language.

DR. RIDGE

Fine. You write in there whatever you like. Here.

*DR. RIDGE hands her a pen.*

EMMA

What?

DR. RIDGE

Really, you write in there whatever you like. Whatever you're comfortable with.

EMMA

Really?

DR. RIDGE

Yes. You write in there whatever you like.

*DR. MORGAN enters casually.*

EMMA

Okay....

*EMMA starts to write on the consent form, but then stops to read more of it.*

DR. RIDGE

You feeling better, Sam? Everything's going to be fine. Emma was just nervous about the consent form.

DR. MORGAN

What about it?

DR. RIDGE

We agreed to change the stated purpose of the operation.

DR. MORGAN

I guess that's progress.

EMMA

Wait a minute....Below that it says here that I acknowledge that no result has been guaranteed to me?

DR. MORGAN

Guaranteed?

EMMA

I mean, you haven't guaranteed me anything, so I don't really have a problem with the way it's worded per se, but you can guarantee me some results from the surgery, right? If not, then why would anyone have it?

DR. RIDGE

Sam? I have to tell you, this is the first time I've ever had to talk anyone into letting me help them. My god!

DR. MORGAN

Emma, listen to James. He's trying to help you.

EMMA

I am listening, but who's listening to me?

DR. MORGAN

You're the one who has the problem. James isn't interested in what you have to say.

DR. RIDGE

Of course I'm interested! Now let's just let her finish.

EMMA

Sam, things haven't been so good for us, and I think this cruise we were planning to take will do us some good—

DR. MORGAN

This is hardly the time for us to be talking about a boat trip!

EMMA

...But I need for you to think about this from my perspective.

DR. RIDGE

*(separating them)*

It's okay! Sam!, please.

DR. MORGAN

Fine. Yes. Talk.

EMMA

Thank you. Okay, where was I? Right. I mean, isn't it natural to ask for some guarantee with something this important?

DR. MORGAN

Emma, the practice of modern medicine isn't an exact science.

EMMA

Wait...yes, it says that too, right here—verbatim—right here on the back. "The practice of modern medicine isn't an exact"—

DR. RIDGE

Emma...I don't know what I'll see until I get in there, so what would a guarantee mean?

EMMA

Of course, James. But it also says here it's been explained to me and I understand blah, blah, blah...But how can the patient know everything's been explained? Don't I only know what you told me? How can I, a mere lay-person to modern medicine, ever know that I've been sufficiently informed!

*DR. RIDGE snatches the clipboard from EMMA.*

DR. RIDGE

Emma! Look. You know, you're not the girl you think you are. And I appreciate the fact that you're an intelligent and investigative woman, but you know how the world works....

EMMA

No, I don't. I only know how my world works—

DR. RIDGE

*(interrupting her)*

Has!...the bleeding!...stopped!?!?

*(and then regaining his composure)*

No. It hasn't. Now Emma, you're sick. And if I don't get in there, I'm afraid that you will never be well again.

DR. MORGAN

We need to get you back to the hospital so you can put this all behind you.

DR. RIDGE

And I can personally guarantee you'll wake up and look in the mirror and say, "Emma Douglas is alive and well."

Scene Eighteen

*Studio. HALLEY enters carrying a newspaper.*

DR. RIDGE

Halley? What're you doing here?

HALLEY

Is there some reason I shouldn't be here? I see you got home okay.

EMMA

Yes, thank you.

DR. RIDGE

No way....Tell me you didn't have anything to do with this.

HALLEY

Emma called me from the hospital. She said she was scared and everything was moving too fast—

DR. RIDGE

And you did what?

HALLEY

...So I told her she should do whatever she thinks is best.

DR. RIDGE

And what makes you think you know what's best for my patients?

HALLEY

Did you see today's paper?

*HALLEY hands the newspaper to EMMA.*

DR. MORGAN

What?

EMMA

No.

HALLEY

There's a review of your exhibition in there I think you're going to like.

EMMA

*(searching for the review)*

Really?

DR. MORGAN

This is no time to be thinking about a newspaper article!

HALLEY

There's no charlatan in that review.

DR. RIDGE

That's great...But *we* were just talking about the hospital's consent form.

HALLEY

I signed one of those.

DR. RIDGE

Halley....

EMMA

*You* did? When?

HALLEY

Two years ago. Actually, two years, one month, and fourteen days ago.

EMMA

Why?

DR. RIDGE

This isn't about you, this is about Emma.

HALLEY

I went in for a cyst on one of my ovaries, so I signed the consent form, and when I woke up they'd taken both ovaries and my uterus, but I didn't have cancer.

DR. RIDGE

Halley, that is a family matter.

HALLEY

Yes. It is a "family" matter.

DR. RIDGE

And your family has a history of cancer.

HALLEY

I'm sorry, Emma.

EMMA

There's nothing to apologize for.

HALLEY

Listen to me. You have to decide for yourself. There's no undoing what's been done to me.

DR. RIDGE

This is about Emma, not you. You're not a doctor. I'm the one who went to medical school!

HALLEY

I'm the only one here who knows.

DR. MORGAN

Knows what?

HALLEY

Did you have a hysterectomy?

DR. MORGAN

What?! Halley, you're just complicating matters.

DR. RIDGE

*(handing DR. MORGAN the clipboard and leading HALLEY by the arm toward the door)*

Okay, come on....Let me take you home, Halley. Come on, let's go. Then we can talk about this and see what we can do to get you some help.

HALLEY

*(stopping, pulling her arm away from DR. RIDGE)*

James!! When was the last time we had sex!?

DR. RIDGE

*(privately)*

I am not talking about our sex life in front of Sam and Emma.

HALLEY

I loved you, James. I adored you. Now I can barely look at you. I don't want you to touch me, I don't want you to look at me.

DR. RIDGE

I know.

HALLEY

We haven't had sex because I have no sexual feelings. Not in my clitoris, my nipples, nothing...zero.

DR. RIDGE

Those are emotional responses!

HALLEY

...Because your friends cut out my sex organs!

DR. RIDGE

Those organs were useless trash!! It's nothing but a baby bag!!!

DR. MORGAN

*(stepping forward, struggling to restore order)*

Emma....James....Halley, you've come into my house and turned a very simple matter into a real mess!

DR. RIDGE

*(regaining his composure)*

All it does is carry babies, and if you're not going to have a baby you don't need it.

EMMA

James, I think you should leave now.

DR. MORGAN

What!?

DR. RIDGE

Me....

DR. MORGAN

I'm sorry about all this, James. Why don't you go and I'll take care of this.

DR. RIDGE

No Sam. It's okay. Really. I've already said...everything I needed to say.

*EMMA hands DR. RIDGE his pen back.*

EMMA

What else is there to say?

DR. RIDGE

I've got...*work* to do.

*DR. RIDGE exits.*

DR. MORGAN

Look, Emma. Everyone's got an opinion, and if you don't trust the doctors to tell you—

EMMA

I trust Halley's opinion.

DR. MORGAN

I'm not sure what you think you know is going on here, but—

EMMA

Sam! I think you should leave too!

DR. MORGAN

What!?

EMMA

Just go.

DR. MORGAN

This is *my* house!

EMMA

If you care for me at all, you'll go.

DR. MORGAN

Me! Just go! Just go, Sam, is that it!?!? Alright. Alright, Emma. That's it!! I'm going!

*DR. MORGAN exits. EMMA leans in the direction of DR. MORGAN'S exit, as if she's going to run after him, but stops herself. Instead she bows her head for a moment to consider what just transpired, and then slowly turns toward HALLEY, almost as if she forgot HALLEY was there.*

EMMA

Oh, Halley...Are you okay?

HALLEY

No. No, I'm not okay.

Scene Nineteen

*Studio. JOHN enters quickly.*

JOHN

Emma, what's going on? I tried to call you, but....

*JOHN crosses to EMMA as, smirking at the hospital gown she's wearing and noticing HALLEY, he realizes what happened. He hugs EMMA with a heavy sigh. EMMA cries in his arms. HALLEY watches them embrace for a moment before speaking.*

HALLEY

What will Emma Douglas do now?

EMMA

Me? Oh, god, I don't know.

HALLEY

I know what Dr. James Ridge will do. He'll go to work. That's what he does.

EMMA

I guess so.

HALLEY

And you, you'll do the same. You'll go back to work too.

EMMA

Thank you, Halley. All this just to get to the bottom of this thing? All this just to find out what I *don't* want to do. And at what cost? Oh, god, what am I left with?

HALLEY

What're you left with? Is that what you asked? You're left with the rest of your life. Now you have time. You're still Emma Douglas. You have no idea. The amazing thing is, no one has any idea what this is about, until it's too late. No one but the doctors, that is. And they know. The results are very predictable. Before and after. The old Halley and the new Halley.

*(pause)*

It all just went away. My business. My life. After the surgery I just stopped caring. One day, like I was sleepwalking, I took the pasta scissors from the kitchen drawer, cut off my hair, and washed it down the sink. Megan thought I was going punk. I don't know.

*(speaking now more to herself than to EMMA and JOHN, a self-actualization)*

There've been so many nights when I almost didn't make it to the morning. The other night I thought that was it. I couldn't take a minute more of it. I checked into a hotel. There was that horrible thunderstorm, and I was trying to get up the guts to swallow a bottle of James' sleeping pills. And then I thought about Megan. Megan always comes into my bed when it thunders, and I knew she'd be looking for me.

*(to EMMA again)*

And I thought, if this is happening to two women every minute of every day, maybe there's more that I can do. I can't tell you how angry I am. What those doctors did to me, what they want to do to you, is what you take your cat to the vet for. I wouldn't trust anyone to tell me what's best for Megan, and I'd take her around the world to take care of her, but when it came to me I just trusted what they said, so now her life has changed too. You have to decide if you have an actual medical problem or an inconvenience, and you have to figure it out for yourself. At least now you have options. There's no undoing what's been done to me.

*EMMA moves toward HALLEY, as if to comfort her. When HALLEY steps away from her, EMMA looks to JOHN, who motions for her to leave HALLEY alone. EMMA pursues HALLEY anyway.*

EMMA

Well, you know what confuses me? What about Rose? How can women gynecologists do this to other women?

HALLEY

Why? For all the same reasons men do. Because hysterectomy is a goldmine. And women who become surgeons do surgeries. They do it because it's legal. There's no law against mutilating and de-sexing

women for compensation. To be able to do that to women is a powerful thing. I've thought about it for two years now, and I still struggle to put it into words. It's many things.

*(to herself, again)*

Until you give your feelings a voice they're not quite real, are they? Before the surgery I was the one everyone came to for help, so I didn't know how to *ask* for help. I led my life. My life was full, it was rich, but I never really understood that until it wasn't there...until I gave my loom away, and I gave away my guitar, and my business just went away out of a sheer lack of desire to keep it going, and when I realized I had the radio on...just for the noise. Yes. And then one morning I woke up, and I said to James, "Sex isn't the same." He didn't say anything. He just got out of bed, went into the bathroom, dressed for work, and we never talked about it.

*(at this point HALLEY begins to break the fourth wall, addresses the spectators directly now, moving down stage)*

These last few days I started emailing women, calling them on the phone, meeting them for coffee. I didn't know what I was feeling was typical until I talked with other women who could talk about it. The fact is, it's easier to deny it. It's more comfortable to *not* know it.

*(pause)*

670,000 women were hysterectomized last year in America alone. Before she reaches sixty, one out of every three women you pass on the street will have her sex organs removed. What does that do to a society? How can it be true? This is something being done to women by doctors who are fathers and wives and husbands and lovers and sons and friends. They would never do that, right? No. No way. Not *my* husband. Hm. The fact is, we're far too polite of a society.

*(pause)*

The most unexpected thing about coming to the end is you're afraid of...nothing. James already let his friends do the worst thing that could've been done to me. Only *I* have to know that that's true. But now I know what I have to do. Every morning I wake up, I look out the window, and I'm amazed that women aren't screaming in the streets. Every life split in two should be an atomic explosion, instead it just results in more...silence. Every story is too unbelievable to be true. And yet, there's another one every 30 seconds, of every minute, of every hour, of every day.

*(pause)*

Something must be done...I'm through watching. This thing must stop.

*(pause)*

This *thing* must stop!

**un becoming**