# **UNSPEAKABLE ACTS**

A full-length play based on historical events

by Mary F. Casey

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### CAST OF CHARRACTERS

### *MARTHA DEANE*

A professor of Physical Education in her mid-fifties, charismatic and dynamic.

### ROSALIND CASSIDY

A professor of Physical Education also in her mid-fifties, scholarly and sardonic.

## RUTH FULTON

Assistant Professor of Physical Education in her mid-thirties, fish out of water in academia.

### DAVID DOWD

An ambitious university dean in his mid-forties.

### PHYLLIS DOWD

Housewife, helpmate to David Dowd, in her early forties.

## ROBERT GORDON SPROUL

Powerful, self-assured President of the University of California, in his fifties.

## **SETTING**

The action of the play occurs between 1952 and 1955 in Los Angeles, California.

Stage Right is the outdoor patio of Martha's small but cozy 1940's modern home. There are patio chairs, plants and a well-stocked bar. Stage Left is David's office on campus with an appropriately large desk, chairs and appropriately impressive framed photos on the walls

In between, or above, Martha's and David's respective spaces is a third space, flexible and liminal. With different lighting, this can be a gym floor, a small insurance office, David's study or a plot of land.

## NOTE ON PHYSICAL MOVEMENT

Three of the characters are professional Physical Education teachers and thus acutely aware of human movement. Their movements should reflect a grace and comfort with their physical selves. This ease is in contrast to David Dowd's physical awkwardness; he's a man out of touch with his body.

## NOTE ON HISTORICAL SOURCES

"Unspeakable Acts" uses both history and fiction to tell the story of UCLA Professor Martha Deane's real-life fight to save her position and her good name.

Archives utilized in the creation of the play include the Library University Archives and the Library Center for Oral History Research, both at UCLA. Particularly informative were the oral histories of professors Martha Deane and Rosalind Cassidy, and Dean Paul Dodd.

A nationally recognized dance educator, Prof. Deane taught at UCLA for twenty-six years prior to the events described in the play.

Rosalind Cassidy was a distinguished Physical Education professor and scholar at Mills College and at UCLA.

University of California President Robert Gordon Sproul's long and distinguished career is well-known.

The character of Ruth Fulton is based upon the real-life UCLA Assistant Professor of Physical Education who lived with Martha Deane at the time the play opens.

Though a fictionalized composite, the character of David Dowd was inspired in part by the life and career of a UCLA administrator of the time. David's wife, Phyllis, is a character of fiction.

The published work of Professor Kathleen Weiler of Tufts University provided historical background and important perspective on Martha Deane and her milieu.

While the events surrounding Martha Deane's suspension from UCLA and her fight for reinstatement are accurately represented, dialogue between characters and certain situations have necessarily been invented. However, the historical record does suggest Martha and Ruth ultimately enjoyed a long life together up on the Tiger Tail.

### **ACT ONE**

The stage is dark.

MARTHA DEANE (O.S.)

Ladies!

SPOT UP on Martha Deane, a charismatic U.C.L.A. Physical Education professor in her mid-fifties. It is the autumn of 1952.

## MARTHA (continuing)

Ladies, welcome to your bodies. Yes, your bodies, ladies. That amazing conglomeration of muscle, skin, bones and sensations that has got you this far. Rule number one in preparing for a career in Physical Education – never forget you have a body. Rule number two: Consider carefully what it tells you. Chances are, it's right.

And allow me also to welcome you to your first day of training in your career as an instructor of Physical Education in the California school system. This will be the twenty-sixth year I have facilitated the Introduction to Teaching Methodology class. I assure you, you have made a choice you will never regret.

Your job will be to teach young ladies in junior and senior high schools across the state, many of them unaware they even have a body. You will teach them by offering each girl a series of experiences through which she will discover her own relationship to human movement. In so doing, in a larger sense, you will be helping her experience her own essential humanity.

While some people today question the place of Physical Education in the university, our philosophy is that Physical Education is a science as profound and complex as physics or medicine. What could be more important to the world today than teaching what it means to live and move in the world as a human being?

SPOT OUT on Martha.

Scene: The patio of Martha's house in Los Angeles. Small but cozy, it's ideal for modest indoor/outdoor modern California living.

At Rise: It's nearing sunset and a party is in progress (O.S.). Martha offers a martini to her best friend, ROSALIND CASSIDY. Also a professor, Rosy is in her mid-fifties, a respected scholar.

### **ROSALIND**

I'm sure it's delicious, Martha. But one was more than enough.

### MARTHA

Don't tell me I am in the presence of an academic with common sense.

## **ROSALIND**

The world is ever full of possibilities, dear.

### **MARTHA**

I've always feared women who could hold their liquor.

## ROSALIND

Rather subversive these days, isn't it?

#### **MARTHA**

Oh, everything's subversive, to hear the Republicans talk.

## **ROSALIND**

I wouldn't let the Democrats off the hook so quickly.

### **MARTHA**

Well, I don't recall Roosevelt looking for spies and microfilm in a pumpkin patch.

## ROSALIND

He's been dead since 1945. Surely you've noticed.

#### MARTHA

Only because you keep reminding me.

## **ROSALIND**

Oh, I suppose I'll vote for Stevenson like every other egghead. But he won't win. Not while McCarthy rules.

## **MARTHA**

I'd like to think we're safely out of that madness, but the Un-American Committee is practically next door.

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Home on the range. Where the deer and the antelope name names.

## MARTHA

You're altogether too clever and too sober for your own good.

RUTH FULTON enters, a strikingly attractive assistant professor in her mid-thirties. She's carrying a drink tray.

RUTH (to Martha)

Martha, what on earth did you say to Jim Barton?

Martha moves to help her re-fill glasses.

MARTHA

Not a thing that wasn't warranted.

RUTH

He practically bit my head off in the driveway. (To Rosalind) He's put in this swimming pool next door --

## MARTHA

I don't know which is worse -- the noise from the motor or having to admit we now live next door to someone who owns a swimming pool.

## ROSALIND

You mean that sound like a freight train outside the living room window?

MARTHA

I told him the noise was unacceptable.

RUTH

Martha!

MARTHA

Well, it is.

**RUTH** 

All right. Yes, it is. You win. But did you have to bring out all the artillery? Now you've really made him angry.

**MARTHA** 

Let him be angry!

He lives fifteen feet from us!	RUTH	
	MARTHA	

All the more reason he should respect the eardrums of his neighbors.

**RUTH** 

Oh, why do I even bother to argue with you?

ROSALIND

You may have noticed, Ruth, everything's a matter of justice to Martha.

MARTHA

There's another way in the world?

**ROSALIND** 

Complacency, I suppose.

MARTHA

Appeasement.

**ROSALIND** 

If only you'd been at Munich instead of Chamberlain.

**RUTH** 

The swimming pool motor is not a Nazi tank, Martha. Sometimes it's okay to compromise. In Nebraska, we called it getting along.

MARTHA

Your preference is to live in Nebraska?

Ruth touches Martha affectionately.

**RUTH** 

My preference is to live with Martha Deane and take my lumps.

**MARTHA** 

It can be a bit lumpy sometimes, can't it?

**ROSALIND** 

Ruth's mid-western politeness doesn't allow her to tell you you're a bull in a china shop, Martha dear. It's a wonder the swimming pool isn't littered with broken crockery.

MARTHA (to Ruth)

How's the party going?

### RUTH

David Dowd is telling us all about his last trip to some country in Africa to recruit an anthropologist.

MARTHA And Phyllis? RUTH Riveted. ROSALIND A brave soul, Phyllis. MARTHA Courageous. ROSALIND Ever sacrificing. MARTHA Ever sacrificed. ROSALIND and MARTHA (toasting) To Phyllis! RUTH Shhhhhh. He'll hear you. ROSALIND Ears ever alert for the slightest inchoate mutiny. You're very tolerant to invite the Dowds, Martha. MARTHA I'm trying to kill him with kindness. And my canapé recipe. RUTH So, maybe he won't cut the P.E. Department's program –

ROSALIND

-- if he tastes your hors d'oeuvres?

MARTHA

You both know me too well. I am nothing if not strategic.

She takes drink tray from Ruth

MARTHA (continuing)
RUTH
She takes back drink tray from Martha.
RUTH (continuing)
Ruth kisses Martha. Rosalind turns away politely.
MARTHA
RUTH
ROSALIND
MARTHA
ROSALIND Physical Education departments all my adult life. I ess to screaming fights over boyfriends.
Ruth exits with drink tray.
MARTHA
ROSALIND vely.
MARTHA that to a man about his wife, he's supposed to be
ROSALIND

I am happy.	MARTHA	
But ?	ROSALIND	
Does it sound like there's a "but"?	MARTHA	
Something is making you uncomfort you sufficiently.	ROSALIND able and you won't talk about it unless I browbeat	
I'm not saying there's a "but", Rosy	MARTHA –	
But if there were?	ROSALIND	
If there were, it would be that I live i	MARTHA n terror of having to admit I'm too old for her.	
Oh stop it, Martha.	ROSALIND	
It's twenty years	MARTHA	
She doesn't seem to care. That's wh	ROSALIND at matters.	
MARTHA I don't know if it's the actual years so much as the experience of them. Not that I'm wiser – by any means. But I'm not afraid. Ruth and her generation are cautious in a way ours isn't. Oh, when we were her age did we have a time, Rosy. Eleanor Roosevelt was in the White House –		

And there was mass poverty and millions of people went hungry. You have a selective memory.

## MARTHA

We got through the Depression somehow, Rosy, thank God. The War was horrible, of course, but it did open up all kinds of possibilities for women --

Which have all but disappeared now. No more Rosie the Riveter, the last I looked. They want us back in the kitchen where we belong. And those of us lucky enough to have careers make less than our male colleagues. Is it any wonder Ruth has caution radar?

### MARTHA

The pendulum will swing back. She just hasn't seen it swing as many times as I have. I must seem like a relic to her, a throw-back.

### **ROSALIND**

You've got past the first year with flying colors. Surely by now all your secrets have been revealed. She's seen you unwashed and unkempt. She's heard all of your stories at least once, many twice. She's tolerated innumerable faculty parties, including the likes of David and Phyllis Dowd, for God's sake. Martha, I think it's safe to say the girl isn't going anywhere.

### **MARTHA**

Knock on all the wood you can find.

#### ROSALIND

It must be nice to have someone to come home to every night.

### MARTHA

At my age it would be nice to think that part of my life is settled.

## ROSALIND

Well, my life is certainly settled, I suppose. But in a different way.

#### MARTHA

What about the new fellow in architecture?

## ROSALIND

Married. Well, separated. Very touch and go. The wife doesn't understand him, etc. etc. etc.

## **MARTHA**

I knew I shouldn't have wasted the good silver on him.

### ROSALIND

You need to accept my obvious spinsterhood, Martha dear. God knows I have. I love teaching and having a career and that truly is enough for me. And that's a good thing because it's damn hard to find a man willing to marry an intelligent woman over thirty.

## **MARTHA**

For all intents and purpose, I suppose we're both spinsters. As far as the world knows.

Your spinsterhood, however, appears to be significantly more satisfying than mine.

POLICE SIREN (O.S.)

MARTHA

Oh, for heaven's sake!

ROSALIND

Barton again?

**MARTHA** 

Who else would complain about the noise made by a group of addle-pated academics?

ROSALIND

I'm almost flattered he finds us a nuisance.

MARTHA

Don't tell that to Ruth or she'll have your head.

ROSALIND

You'll be polite to the nice officer?

MARTHA

When have you known me to be anything but the soul of discretion?

They laugh.

LIGHTS DOWN.

LIGHTS UP SL on David Dowd's office on the campus of U.C.L.A.

PHYLLIS DOWD, a woman of gentle strength in her forties, looks at the framed photo on the desk while her husband, Dean DAVID DOWD, rummages through some papers. Once a man on a fast-track ascent, he finds himself now in his midforties, engine idling.

**PHYLLIS** 

Gad, David. Where did you find this?

**DAVID** 

What's wrong with it?

The angle. I look like I'm a hundred	PHYLLIS and ten.
Hardly.	DAVID
We've got all those Hawaii pictures.	PHYLLIS Put one of them in.
I like that one, Phyllis. I like looking	DAVID g at you at the Boardwalk.
With the wind howling and the water think I've let myself go.	PHYLLIS spraying. Please, David. All your colleagues must
I'm the only one who looks at it.	DAVID
All the more reason.	PHYLLIS
What brought you by today, Phyllis?	DAVID
I can't just drop by spur of the mome	PHYLLIS ent to have lunch with my handsome husband?
You haven't been here in months.	DAVID
All the more –	PHYLLIS
Why?	DAVID
You know why, sweetheart.	PHYLLIS
You can stop worrying about me.	DAVID
You're tired all the time. Distracted	PHYLLIS 

I work hard –	DAVID
Too hard.	PHYLLIS
Now is my chance to –	DAVID
move up. Yes, I've heard all this b	PHYLLIS pefore, David.
I'm fine, Phyllis.	DAVID
You need a vacation.	PHYLLIS
We just got back from Hawaii.	DAVID
That was a year and a half ago.	PHYLLIS
Okay, okay. Let me pencil you in.	DAVID
Dorothy says they're looking for a C	PHYLLIS hancellor at one of the teachers colleges
No.	DAVID
David, maybe you should consider it	PHYLLIS
U.C.L.A. is my home.	DAVID
I know it wouldn't be as prestigious	PHYLLIS 
I <u>am</u> moving up, Phyllis. You know	DAVID that. It just takes –

A fresh start might be just the thing.	PHYLLIS	
time.	DAVID	
It couldn't hurt to think about it.	PHYLLIS	
It just takes time.	DAVID	
You seem tense. You're fighting wit	PHYLLIS h Martha again, aren't you?	
She's got forty teachers all doing Grant	DAVID oup Process, whatever that is. If I had my way –	
Yes, I know. You'd cut her program	PHYLLIS n.	
It's an educational –	DAVID	
frill. So I've heard.	PHYLLIS	
Do I really talk about it that much?	DAVID	
Yes, constantly. But I don't think th	PHYLLIS at's what's really bothering you	
Nothing's bothering me.	DAVID	
	PHYLLIS what that Pagent appropriate said	
David, listen to me. It's just a rumor,	DAVID	
What?	PHYLLIS	
It doesn't mean anything. To me or to anyone else. He's just an ignorant fool.		

Will you stop bringing that up, Phyll	DAVID is!
	She stares at him in surprise, silent.
Oh, I'm sorry, dear. You're right, I a	DAVID (continuing) am tense these days.
	He kisses her.
What about France this year, David?	PHYLLIS
	The phone rings.
France?	DAVID
	He picks up phone.
We've never been.	PHYLLIS
Oh, hello, Mr. President.	DAVID (on phone)
You've always wanted to.	PHYLLIS
Yes, of course.	DAVID (on phone)
	He hangs up.
Another time.	DAVID (to Phyllis)
You don't want to go? Why not?	PHYLLIS
Talk about it, I mean. Another time.	DAVID

It's just, you've been so –

PHYLLIS

I'm fine.	DAVID
So. How is President Sproul?	PHYLLIS
He's in town from Berkeley.	DAVID
And he needs to speak with you. Rig	PHYLLIS ght now.
It's highly confidential.	DAVID
	PHYLLIS him. You drop whatever you're doing, he swears ing he wants you to take care of and you can't sleep
That's not true, Phyllis.	DAVID
He may be the President of the Universident and soul.	PHYLLIS ersity of California, David, but you don't owe him
It will be quick, dear. Do you mind?	DAVID
Does it matter?	PHYLLIS
Of course it matters.	DAVID
But Robert Gordon Sproul matters m	PHYLLIS nore.
He pays the bills. And for the trip to	DAVID France.
So he does. I'll wait outside.	PHYLLIS

Thanks, honey.	DAVID
	Phyllis exits.
	He picks up phone.
Please send him	DAVID (on phone)
	Long-time President of the University of California ROBERT GORDON SPROUL, enters. A middle-aged man, he has retained the dynamism of youth. His presence is imposing.
Mr. President.	DAVID (continuing)
Phyllis is looking well.	SPROUL
Oh, you bumped into her ?	DAVID
	They shake hands. Sproul walks around the room restlessly. He looks at the photo on David's desk.
Windy that day, wasn't it?	SPROUL
Very.	DAVID
How do you like Adlai's chances?	SPROUL
It would be nice to have an intellectu	DAVID all in, for a change.
	SPROUL s. I'd have my hands full. Look, Dave, there's a ng to the Regent's counsel about taking care of it.

DAVID

A situation -- ?

An unfortunate one.	SPROUL
I'd be happy to handle it	DAVID
It could get messy.	SPROUL
Fair warning.	DAVID
<u> </u>	SPROUL ney say Communists are infiltrating your school paper ime – investigating the Daily Bruin.
The situation ?	DAVID
It's regarding Martha.	SPROUL
Martha Deane?	DAVID
I don't like putting you in this positi We've both known her for years.	SPROUL on. Investigating a colleague is never easy.
She was the campus representative t	DAVID o –
ž ž	SPROUL Yes, and she gave a marvelous speech. Some would man on campus – certainly when Clarence Dykstra
She's quite an advocate for the wom	DAVID nen's P.E. program.
Bulldog, I think you mean to say.	SPROUL
Has there been a complaint of some	DAVID kind?

Complaints.	SPROUL	
From students?	DAVID	
No.	SPROUL	
Parents?	DAVID	
Neighbors.	SPROUL	
Neighbors? Martha's neighbors?	DAVID	
SPROUL  Look, I know you've seen a lot of the world, Dave. That war service in Washington, all the traveling you've done. As a dean, you deal with people a lot. You've read the Kinsey findings? Well, skimmed it – no one reads the whole thing.		
I've glanced at it.	DAVID (uncomfortably)	
SPROUL I'll stop beating around the bush. You know as well as I do it's not just Communists they're letting go at the State Department. I've heard they're firing a homosexual a day right now. I suppose it was bound to hit the academy sooner or later.		
I'm not sure that I'm following –	DAVID	
There have been complaints from ne	SPROUL ighbors about Martha's activities.	
Activities?	DAVID	
At her house. A young woman. A r	SPROUL oommate.	
Inappropriate activities?	DAVID	

### SPROUL

Seen through an uncurtained window. I don't want to go into it further. The implication for the university -- well, it's most unfortunate. The neighbor's an alum. He contacted the head of the alumni committee – he's got a daughter in Martha's department – and he says he'll go to the papers if we don't get this taken care of right away.

**DAVID** 

I'll look into it, Mr. President.

**SPROUL** 

You have the authority to take whatever action is necessary to facilitate the investigation and to protect the University.

**DAVID** 

She's tenured, of course.

SPROUL

I'm well aware of that. We all know there are very few reasons tenure can be revoked – Look, Dave, I have known Martha Deane for over twenty years. I consider her a friend as well as a colleague. She is a particular favorite of Mrs. Sproul.

**DAVID** 

I understand the difficulty for you.

**SPROUL** 

Sometimes our jobs have unpleasant but unavoidable aspects. If I could, I would let this one die on the vine. But we don't have that option. I just ask that you allow her to retain her dignity as much as possible.

DAVID

I'll talk to her today.

**SPROUL** 

About the roommate --

DAVID

Oh, yes.

**SPROUL** 

A young graduate student or assistant professor or something. Quite striking girl, as I recall. I remember her creating a certain stir when she arrived.

**DAVID** 

I believe I know who you mean.

Talk to her first.	SPROUL
All right.	DAVID
War Board Now I'm not suggesting	SPROUL ation before? I assume in your labor work or at the ng Tailgunner Joe tactics. The girl's new here. From t quietly resign. You'll have more trouble with
Could I get more details ?	DAVID
	Sproul opens a briefcase and hands David a file.
	LIGHTS DOWN on David's office.
	BASKETBALL FURIOUSLY DRIBBLING (O.S.)
	LIGHTS UP on Martha's patio, later that day. Ruth stands tensely dribbling a basketball. She tosses it away, then begins to pace the room, adrenalin pumping.
	Ruth stops at the bar and tries to pour herself a drink, but her hands are shaking too much. She paces more.
Martha?	ROSALIND (O.S.)
	Ruth does not answer.
Did I get the time wrong?	ROSALIND (O.S.) (continuing)
	Ruth tries to light a cigarette, but can't. Back to pacing.
	Rosalind enters patio.
Oh, Ruth. I'm sorry. Martha said to	ROSALIND (continuing) come by after 4:00 –

	Ruth tries to pour herself a drink again.
What on earth?	ROSALIND (continuing)
	She moves to bar.
Here. Let me.	ROSALIND (continuing)
	She pours drink for Ruth.
What on earth is wrong, Ruth?	ROSALIND (continuing)
	Ruth takes sip of drink, puts it down, starts pacing again.
Ruth!	ROSALIND (continuing)
	Rosalind stands in front of Ruth and puts her arms on her shoulders, stopping Ruth in her tracks.
Tell me what is going on!	ROSALIND (continuing)
Martha	RUTH
What about Martha? What's happen	ROSALIND ed to her? Is something wrong with Martha?
She's with Dowd.	RUTH
	Ruth sits down, tries to sip drink again.
Martha's with Dowd? Well, I suppo	ROSALIND se that is enough of a horror on its own –
He knows.	RUTH

ROSALIND He knows what, Ruth? What are you saying?	
	Ruth cries out, gets up again. Rosalind stops her.
Let me up, Rosy.	RUTH
Tell me what's going on.	ROSALIND
I can't.	RUTH
ROSALIND I've known Martha forever, dear. She's my closest friend in all the world. If something's wrong with her, you have to tell me.	
	Ruth forces Rosalind's arms away from her as she rises.
Dowd knows about us. About Marth	RUTH na and me. He brought me into his office –
Damn!	ROSALIND
RUTH He asked mel just wanted it over.	
What did you say?	ROSALIND
I could hear ringing in my ears.	RUTH

Ruth -

RUTH

I couldn't hear what he was saying and his mouth kept moving and all I heard in my head was talking and then he was waiting, he was waiting for me to talk and all I could say was –

ROSALIND

Stop!	ROSALIND
Martha! All I could say was Martha.	RUTH
It's all right now, Ruth. It's over.	ROSALIND
It's not over. You don't understand.	RUTH
Ruth, I certainly understand how you	ROSALIND must have
No you don't! How could you? You	RUTH  1're not like us.
	Beat.
I suppose you're right.	ROSALIND
I'm sorry, Rosy –	RUTH
	ROSALIND think I understand, it isn't the same for me. I don't ut it. It's rather like discovering there's always been beene, but you just never saw it.
Forgive me, Rosy. I'm not angry wi	RUTH th you –
You'll find another job.	ROSALIND
,	RUTH of like you two. I don't love the university life. I on't love the politics. But it's losing Martha I'm Martha! Do you understand?

You didn't tell Dowd anything?

	Ruth shakes her head.
	ROSALIND (continuing)
Nothing?	
No.	RUTH
Cood airl	ROSALIND
Good girl.	RUTH
I just resigned.	KUIH
	LIGHTS DOWN on patio.
	LIGHTS UP on David's office.
	Martha enters holding a large paper bag.
Martha, hello.	DAVID
	She hands him bag.
	MARTHA
Phyllis's dessert dish. It was nice seeing you both the other night.	
Look, Martha –	DAVID
,	She notices framed photo on desk.
	MARTHA ast year. Phyllis looks so happy on that boat. vid. You know I've often thought I'd like to go to
There's a matter of some urgency –	DAVID
	MARTHA

Oh, for heaven's sake, David. Is this about department staffing again? Really, let's just call a truce and have done with it, shall we? You agree not to cut my budget and I agree not to go behind your back and get it reinstated. Deal?

	DAVID
This isn't a budgetary matter, Martha	1.
Well, I'm relieved to hear that. Sorry	MARTHA y, David. I didn't mean to jump down your throat –
I've just been talking to Ruth.	DAVID
Ruth. Fulton?	MARTHA
Yes.	DAVID
	Beat. Martha knows something's up.
She didn't mention it.	MARTHA
I just saw her now.	DAVID
Oh, you did.	MARTHA
I asked her to come in to answer som	DAVID ne questions.
Questions.	MARTHA
Look, Martha. This is very difficult years.	DAVID for me. You and I have been colleagues for many
Yes, we have, David.	MARTHA
Phyllis and I have spent a number of	DAVID lovely evenings in your home.
I'm glad you've enjoyed yourselves.	MARTHA

I don't relish having to do this –	DAVID
Don't relish doing what?	MARTHA
I want you to understand that.	DAVID
Get to the point, David. Is there a pr	MARTHA coblem with Ruth?
Actually, the problem is with you.	DAVID
	A beat. Not what Martha was expecting.
What do you mean?	MARTHA
The university will be initiating an in	DAVID nvestigation regarding you, Martha.
What on earth are you talking about	MARTHA?
Your activities.	DAVID
MARTHA My "activities"? I am a tenured professor. I have been at this institution longer than you have. What exactly am I being investigated for?	
The details are confidential, Martha.	DAVID I'm sorry.
I'm being investigated but I'm not a	MARTHA llowed to know what about?
In a general sense, your fitness to tea	DAVID ach.
My fitness? I'm healthy as a horse, health.	MARTHA David, so you can't possibly mean my physical

### **DAVID**

Your overall fitness. Mental, psychological. Moral.

### MARTHA

This is an outrage! If you don't back off immediately, David, I will make an official complaint about you to Bob Sproul --

### DAVID

The Privilege and Tenure Committee will be making a recommendation on your overall fitness to teach here.

MARTHA

Privilege and Tenure – I am on that committee.

**DAVID** 

Oh, yes, of course.

MARTHA

I was one of its original members.

**DAVID** 

We'll need to have you step down until this is settled.

MARTHA

Step down!

**DAVID** 

This is very difficult for me to say, Martha, but it's necessary for the university to have you step down from your teaching as well.

## **MARTHA**

I will not "step down", as you keep saying, just because you have the temerity to question my ability as a teacher.

### DAVID

You will do as I say, Martha. Effective immediately, you are suspended from the university.

MARTHA

Have you lost your mind?

**DAVID** 

I will be preparing a report on the investigation for Privilege and Tenure. Once they've reviewed it, a decision will be made at that time whether to reinstate you and continue your salary –

	MARTHA
Reinstate?	
	DAVID
or proceed with the termination p	process.
You're telling me I am suspended v	MARTHA without pay indefinitely?
Yes.	DAVID
	She picks up the phone on his desk.
Who are you calling?	DAVID (continuing)
Bob.	MARTHA
Put the phone down, Martha.	DAVID
Yes, hello, Roberta? Fine, thanks. in?	MARTHA (on phone) Yes, nice to hear your voice, too. Is President Sproul
I advise you not to speak with Press	DAVID ident Sproul right now.
When will he be in, then?	MARTHA (on phone)
He authorized the investigation, Ma	DAVID artha.
Yes, I would. Just ask him to call I	MARTHA (on phone) Martha at his earliest convenience. Thank you.
	She hangs up.
What's going on, David?	MARTHA
Ruth admittedwell, certain things	DAVID s about your relationship

What things, David?	MARTHA
She said very little, actually.	DAVID
We're roommates. Neither of our sa would be of concern to you.	MARTHA alaries allows us to live alone. I wasn't aware that
Aren't you a bit more than roommat	DAVID es, Martha?
No. We're not.	MARTHA
You are entitled to seek legal counse	DAVID el –
For what reason? What charge am I	MARTHA defending myself against?
I believe you know there are very fe conduct is one of them	DAVID w actions that can break tenure. Unprofessional
You can't be serious, David! I'm no	MARTHA o more guilty of unprofessional conduct than you are
I am truly sorry.	DAVID
	A beat. A hundred angry retorts run through Martha's mind. She controls herself with effort.
So am I, David. So am I.	MARTHA
	She exits.
	David moves agitatedly around his office, stopping to stare at the photo of Phyllis.

LIGHTS UP on Martha's patio. It's twilight now and Ruth sits in the half light smoking and slowly sipping a drink.

The front DOOR SLAMS loudly (O.S.)

Martha enters and stops. She and Ruth stare at each other for a moment, gauging the other's response. Martha holds out her arms.

**MARTHA** 

Oh, darling.

Ruth runs to her and they embrace.

**RUTH** 

I'm so glad you're home, baby. I was worried.

MARTHA

Are you all right?

**RUTH** 

I don't know. It's all so...strange. Like a nightmare. I keep thinking it's not happening Hold me closer...How are you?

MARTHA

Oh, I'm fine. I can't believe it, Ruthie. I can't believe that pompous little ass had the nerve to suspend me. Suspend me! I have been at this university longer than he has. He has no right to do this to me!

She disentangles from Ruth and exits to living room.

**RUTH** 

Where are you --?

MARTHA (O.S)

He's lucky I didn't get hold of Sproul on the spot. I've always thought he was incompetent.

Martha enters with phone and long cord. The cord keeps getting tangled and she irritatedly jerks it after her.

MARTHA (continuing)

But I tried to give him the benefit of the doubt. Idiot! Privilege and Tenure will never agree to this. They will never back David Dowd.

RUTH

Let me help you, baby.

Ruth easily untangles cord.

MARTHA

I've got to get Mac. Employment law is his specialty.

RUTH

What did you say to Dowd?

MARTHA

I never imagined in a million years I would need legal advice.

**RUTH** 

Martha, what did you say to him?

MARTHA

Not a damn thing. I will fight that man to the grave, Ruthie.

**RUTH** 

We need to talk a minute.

MARTHA

Hopefully his and not mine.

**RUTH** 

Before you call Mac.

**MARTHA** 

If he thinks he can destroy my program by destroying my reputation, then he's got another –

RUTH

Damn it, Martha!

Ruth takes the phone out of Martha's hands.

RUTH (continuing)

Will you just listen to me!

We have to speak to Mac!	MARTHA
I have to speak to you!	RUTH
We have to do something. Right no	MARTHA w. I can't just stand here and
I resigned.	RUTH
You what?	MARTHA
I resigned, Martha. Mac needs to kr	RUTH now that.
Oh no, Ruthie.	MARTHA
I tried to call you but they said you v	RUTH were already in his –
And I've been going on and on. I ju	MARTHA st assumed
That I'd put up a fight? I'm not you	RUTH , Martha.
	Martha hugs her.
Why didn't you just tell me to shut u	MARTHA up?
Well, you were right. We do need to	RUTH o call Mac.
Dowd had no right to ask either of u answer, Ruthie. Our private life is n	MARTHA s about our private life. We don't owe him an one of his business.
You know that and I know that. But	RUTH we're not the ones making the rules.

### **MARTHA**

If I went by the rules I'd be a housewife in Wilkes-Barre. What did Dowd say to you?

### **RUTH**

I don't know if I remember. I know I don't want to remember. Something about living with you, what you mean to me – the room started to spin and my stomach...I knew what was coming suddenly and I could feel my body tense, all the muscles in my back and along my shoulders. And then he was asking questions and I couldn't say anything, Martha. I was so...so embarrassed...and humiliated. David Dowd asking me that kind of question – David Dowd!

**MARTHA** 

Bastard.

RUTH

And I thought of my mother and my father and my poor grandfather and the way his face always lit up when I came in the room –

MARTHA

He won't get away with this. Don't worry.

**RUTH** 

I felt like a bad child, like I'd been caught stealing candy and now the whole world would know and I would be punished and my grandfather would never smile at me again.

**MARTHA** 

I'm so sorry.

RUTH

I just wanted it over, Martha. I thought if I resigned they would leave you alone. I can't imagine what you would do if you didn't teach, sweetheart. And I can't imagine what I would do if I didn't have you.

**MARTHA** 

I can't imagine that either.

They kiss. Ruth breaks it off.

**RUTH** 

Is it okay for us to --? I mean...

**MARTHA** 

It's our home. If it isn't safe here --

**RUTH** 

It must have been Barton. Who went to Dowd, I mean.

### **MARTHA**

Yes, I suppose it was. God knows what he saw or thought he saw.

## **RUTH**

I think it was that time last month, when it was so hot and the window was open and – I feel like he's watching.

## MARTHA

He can't see us on the patio. Come here.

They embrace again, trying hard to make it feel natural.

MARTHA (continuing)

We'll get through this, Ruthie. Don't worry. You'll get another job. Privilege and Tenure will reinstate me.

RUTH

How can you be so sure?

## **MARTHA**

Because ...Because the sun keeps coming up every morning. Because it's how I see the world. Because I have you.

**RUTH** 

I'm glad you're not a housewife in Wilkes-Barre.

**MARTHA** 

Are you sure?

They kiss, neither relaxed. Martha leans over and turns off the light.

LIGHTS DOWN on patio.

LIGHTS UP on David's office, later that evening.

David stands staring out the window.

PHYLLIS (O.S.)

David?

He doesn't notice her.

PHYLLIS (O.S.)

Honey, I saw you through the window as I was walking up. Open the door, David.

He still doesn't notice. PHYLLIS (O.S.) David! He rouses himself to open the door. Phyllis enters. She goes to hug him but he moves away from her. PHYLLIS (continuing) What's happened, David? **DAVID** Oh, sorry, Phyllis. Hard day at the salt mines. Did you come for a visit? PHYLLIS We were going to meet for dinner, remember? DAVID Oh, yes. That's right. **PHYLLIS** You stood me up for lunch. **DAVID** Yes, yes. It's all coming back – **PHYLLIS** And then you had another meeting. **DAVID** Yes. With Martha. **PHYLLIS** And we agreed we'd meet in the Village at 8:00 for dinner. **DAVID** Yes, well and here you are. **PHYLLIS** Yes, well and it's nearly midnight and I never heard from you. DAVID Oh, forgive me, dear. It's been a very complicated day.

PHYLLIS What's going on, David?
DAVID Nothing's going on.
PHYLLIS Am I a fool not to think you're having an affair?
DAVID An affair? What are you talking about?
PHYLLIS It just doesn't seem like you, but you're so distracted, missing appointments, hardly remembering your own name –
DAVID I'm not having an –
PHYLLIS Then what is it, David? You're not being honest with me about something.
DAVID It's just this position. You see, Phyllis, sometimes –
PHYLLIS you forget I've heard all this before, David. "It's just this position. You see, Phyllis, sometimes there are things I can't tell you. Confidential things."
DAVID Is that what I say?
PHYLLIS Over and over. This is about Martha, isn't it?
DAVID How did you know it was about Martha?
PHYLLIS Most things about Martha upset you.
DAVID I'm not upset –
PHYLLIS You're pretty upset for someone who's not upset.

I'm tired.	DAVID
Is there a new problem with Martha?	PHYLLIS
Some complaints.	DAVID
It must be more than that.	PHYLLIS
He wants me to investigate.	DAVID
Investigate Martha? We just had dir	PHYLLIS uner at their house.
He has no choice, Phyllis. He has to	DAVID maintain the university's reputation.
And Martha somehow threatens it?	PHYLLIS Martha Deane?
You probably think I'm jumping for	DAVID joy, but I'm not.
Wasn't she the campus's representat	PHYLLIS ive at his twentieth ?
Yes, yes. That was before any of this	DAVID s came to light.
	PHYLLIS would think all the skeletons would be out of the rible you have to drop what you're doing and
She and Ruth Fulton have apparently	DAVID had an illicit relationship for some time.
And President Sproul wasn't aware of years. He's not deaf. Why all of a s	PHYLLIS of this? There have been rumors about Martha for udden are you?

## **DAVID**

The complaints allege unspeakable acts observed through uncurtained windows.

# **PHYLLIS**

Oh, you can't be serious! What on earth is an "unspeakable act"? Oh, I'm sorry, honey, I'm embarrassing you. It's just hard to imagine, even in this day and age, that the University has you investigating two women through a window.

**DAVID** 

You don't understand how important –

**PHYLLIS** 

It just seems so beneath him, David, and you. She's always been a complete lady when she's been around me.

**DAVID** 

Why are you defending her?

**PHYLLIS** 

I'm not. I just hate to see you brought in as a hatchet man to do someone else's bidding.

**DAVID** 

I'm not a hatchet man!

LIGHTS UP on Martha's patio, simultaneous. Rosalind and Martha are in a heated discussion.

Intercut scenes.

ROSALIND

You should listen to Mac. He's an attorney for goodness sake.

MARTHA

I listened to him.

ROSALIND

In one ear and out the other.

MARTHA

It's his job to advise. It doesn't mean I have to take his advice.

ROSALIND

You're digging your heels in.

**MARTHA** 

I'm considering his counsel.

## ROSALIND

He's right. Consider mine, too.

## **MARTHA**

I need time to think. You can't expect me to decide something like this without at least talking to her –

ROSALIND

Then talk to her. Now.

MARTHA

No.

ROSALIND

Mac says you can't wait. Do it now. Tonight. Before something happens.

MARTHA

It's easy to give advice from the sidelines, isn't it? When it doesn't affect you one way or the other.

# ROSALIND

Your life affects mine every day, Martha. I'm sorry, I know it could be a few months until Privilege and Tenure –

# **MARTHA**

A few months! You say that as though it's nothing.

# **ROSALIND**

Listen to me, Martha. You two can't risk being seen together. You don't know what kind of cameras or surveillance –

# MARTHA

Surveillance! My God, am I Alger Hiss suddenly? Ethel Rosenberg? Have I committed some horrible crime?

ROSALIND

Apparently to some, you have.

## MARTHA

I need Ruth with me, Rosy. Now more than I ever have. This whole investigation, this insanity, is about us, our relationship, who we are to each other. You can't expect me to give her up – that's doing exactly what they want. That's letting them win.

Ruth enters wearing a robe and with a towel over her head from a shower.

It's temporary.	ROSALIND
It's too much to ask. I'll take the ris	MARTHA sk.
Don't be a fool.	ROSALIND
Too late.	MARTHA
Oh, you are so aggravating sometime	ROSALIND nes.
	Rosalind stalks past Ruth to the door and exits.
I'm sure I don't know what she mea	RUTH (lightly) ans.
	She kisses Martha on the cheek.
It feels good to be clean finally. Wh	RUTH (continuing) nat were you and Rosy fighting about?
Nothing.	MARTHA
You and Rosy were fighting about r	RUTH nothing?
We weren't fighting.	MARTHA
I've never seen you two even raise y	RUTH your voices at each other before –
Forget it, Ruth.	MARTHA
Stop protecting me, Martha.	RUTH
I'm not –	MARTHA

	DUTU	
You are. I know that tone in your vo	RUTH pice What did Mac say to you?	
He thinks Privilege and Tenure will	MARTHA vote to reinstate.	
That's wonderful news, baby –	RUTH	
That's wonderful news, baby –		
We just have to get through the next	MARTHA five or six months.	
	RUTH	
It could take that long?		
	MARTHA	
David Dowd is nothing if not thorou	gh.	
W	RUTH	
What else did Mac say?		
Don't let's talk about it right now, a	MARTHA ll right?	
FineWhen, then?	RUTH	
•	MARTHA	
Later.		
When you've decided it's the right t	RUTH ime?	
Oh, darling. Don't let's fight.	MARTHA	
	RUTH	
I'm not fighting with you. Just like		
	MARTHA	

Will you let us have just a moment's peace. We haven't had a chance to really hold each

other since this whole thing blew open.

Martha opens her arms to Ruth, who doesn't move.

Tell me what Mac said, Martha.	RUTH
Leave it alone, Ruthie. I'm asking y	MARTHA rou.
We're in this together.	RUTH
He thinks I have a chance.	MARTHA
But ?	RUTH
But it's a hard road to hoe.	MARTHA
Because of me.	RUTH
No. Not exactly.	MARTHA
Because of ourrelationship.	RUTH
Please, Ruth –	MARTHA
Because of how it looks with us living	RUTH ng together –
All right – yes, damn it! Mac thinks we didn't see each other.	MARTHA it would look better during Dowd's investigation if
Not see each other!	RUTH
I didn't say I agreed with him –	MARTHA
Not see each other for six months!	RUTH

Back to David Dowd's office. **PHYLLIS** What is President Sproul's hold over you, David? I'm not understanding this. **DAVID** Well, he didn't come right out and say it... Beat. **PHYLLIS** Oh, my God. Forgive me. She hugs him. PHYLLIS (continuing) I'm sorry, David. I've been thoughtless. **DAVID** But I'm sure it's on his mind. **PHYLLIS** No, no, sweetheart. You're wrong. The President asked you because he trusts you and he knows you'll do a good job. Not because he's trying to test you – DAVID Don't let's talk about it any further. PHYLLIS But we have to, don't you see? Not talking about it is what's eating you up – eating us up. DAVID It's been a long day, Phyl. Did you park the car near? **PHYLLIS** It's just outside. Please don't shut me out, David.

Back to Martha's patio.

**MARTHA** 

I'm not arguing with you! I told him six months was impossible. That's why Rosy's angry.

**RUTH** 

I can't imagine a day without you, Martha, let alone six months.

You know I feel the same way.	MARTHA
I'm in love with you. Your life is so ends and the other begins.	RUTH o much a part of mine I don't even know where one
I haven't a clue either. I need you ri	MARTHA ight here beside me during this. We need each other.
What did he say, then?	RUTH
You mean after I told him I was going	MARTHA ng to ignore him and take my lumps with you?
Yes. What did he advise?	RUTH
Oh, you know lawyers and their adv	MARTHA vice.
You're doing it again. You're prote What did he say after that? I'm aski	RUTH ecting me from something you think I shouldn't hear. ing you –
And I'm asking you not to ask me.	MARTHA
Why?	RUTH
Because I need you to stay. More th	MARTHA nan anything.
Why wouldn't I stay, baby? That's	RUTH what I want, too. More than anything.
Then please, please, leave it at that,	MARTHA Ruthie.
	Back to David Dowd's office.
I'm tired.	DAVID

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Speak to me!

**DAVID** 

You take the car. I'll make my own way home.

He moves toward the door.

**PHYLLIS** 

David! Are you crazy? You're letting a piece of gossip tear you apart.

**DAVID** 

I don't want to talk about this!

**PHYLLIS** 

Well, I do.

He opens door.

PHYLLIS (continuing)

I don't care if that Regent thinks you're a homosexual. He's wrong. I should know, for heaven's sake.

**DAVID** 

The word he supposedly used was "pansy."

**PHYLLIS** 

Forget it, David. You don't know he said it. Even if he did, who cares? It doesn't matter.

**DAVID** 

You're wrong, Phyllis. It matters. That one word matters more than anything else about me. More than all the professors I've recruited from all over the world, all the budgets I've balanced, the classes I've taught, the students whose hands I've held through one crisis or another over the last twenty years. I thought I knew what mattered, Phyllis. Hard work. Effort. Experience. But now my whole career, my chance for advancement, the respect of my peers – it all boils down to that one word. Don't tell me it doesn't matter.

He exits.

She starts to follow him, then stops.

Back to Martha's patio.

RUTH

Oh my God, Martha. I just realized why you won't tell me.

MARTHA

Slow down, sweetheart. You're getting upset --

RUTH

He told you to get another lawyer, didn't he?

MARTHA

I'll fix you a drink.

She moves toward bar. Ruth stops her.

RUTH (continuing)

Didn't he?

MARTHA

I'll fix us both drinks.

RUTH (continuing)

But he said you wouldn't be able to find one, right?

Martha does not respond.

RUTH (continuing)

Because as long as I stay in this house, you have no defense. Isn't that what he said, Martha?

MARTHA

All right. Yes, damn it! That's what he said.

Ruth exits to living room.

MARTHA (continuing)

Where are you going? Ruth, please. We need to talk this through.

Ruth enters with suitcase and some clothes.

She begins to pack hurriedly.

RIITH

Six months! Martha, I can't imagine being away from you for six months.

MARTHA

Then stop. We'll figure something out. Don't go, Ruth.

RUTH

But I can't just stand here and watch you lose.

MARTHA

I won't lose.

**RUTH** 

Don't be so damned stubborn!

MARTHA

This is outrageous! They can't do this to us, to me –

**RUTH** 

They can and they have. Let's just not make it any worse, Martha.

MARTHA

Stop it, sweetheart. Stop packing. I wish I'd never told you –

RUTH

You should have told me the minute you got off the phone with Mac. I'm not that twenty-one year old wide-eyed Midwestern girl you met in 1938. I'm not one of your students any more. I stand toe to toe with you, baby, whether you like it or not. I'm your friend, your companion, your confidante. But most of all, Martha, I'm your lover.

She kisses Martha with passion, then pulls away.

She exits. Martha moves to follow, then stops.

LIGHTS DOWN

END OF ACT ONE

# **ACT TWO**

The stage is black.

ROSALIND (O.S.)

Ladies!

SPOT UP on Rosalind as she addresses a class of P.E. students. It is Spring, 1953.

Ladies! May I have your attention. I've asked you to assemble today so that I could meet you each personally and as a group. Miss Deane, who has handled these duties so well for so many years, continues to be on a leave of absence to handle some compelling family matters. We've all missed her presence over the last six months and I know we all hope things will be quickly resolved. Were she here, she would tell you at this juncture that you are on the noblest of paths and one which you will never regret, as she has not. She would tell you to listen to your body – and you would laugh, wouldn't you? Because it's funny and odd and very Martha Deane. But in time I think you will come to see her point – the importance of listening to and observing the body and understanding it.

The scientific study of the body's muscles and their movement has been a practice since the time of Aristotle and Archimedes. However it was only recently, with our society's eagerness to name every last concept, creature, malady and human act, that we have a scientific word for it. Kinesiology. As we begin to explore kinesiology this semester, you will start to notice how people live – or don't live – in their bodies. Who is comfortable...and who is not.

(CONTINUED)

# ROSALIND (continuing)

You will study body language: people who talk with their hands...people who slouch in dejection...people who invite our interest. You will study how people's bodies mirror what they feel...and who they are.

Many people outside our field – some even in academia – see the study of Physical Education as a lesser field, something vaguely about calisthenics, unworthy of actual academic significance. But through Physical Education we study so much more than sports – we are actually exploring the individual and his relationship to himself, his body and his world. What better occupation for any of us in these difficult times than the study of humanity and its betterment.

SPOT OUT on Rosalind.

LIGHTS UP on Martha's patio, night. It is the spring of 1953.

Rosy watches as Martha brings the telephone from another room and plugs it into the wall. Martha places the phone right next to her, willing it to ring.

**ROSALIND** 

What time did Mac think the committee vote would come?

**MARTHA** 

An hour and twenty minutes ago. Drink?

**ROSALIND** 

Yes, thanks.

Rosalind notices that Martha keeps glancing at the phone.

ROSALIND (continuing)

Perhaps there's hope for Ike after all.

MARTHA

Olive?

**ROSALIND** 

Please.

**MARTHA** 

What's he said? I haven't been following the papers.

He called McCarthy "a pimple on the	ROSALIND e path of progress."
Apt enough.	MARTHA
Oh, it won't take long now, his publi	ROSALIND ic demise.
You're awfully optimistic.	MARTHA
They're in office now so the Republi	ROSALIND icans don't need him.
	Martha hands her drink.
You're trying to distract me by talking	MARTHA ng about politics.
Well, clearly it isn't working.	ROSALIND
Engage me, then.	MARTHA
Any suggestions?	ROSALIND
Something meaningful.	MARTHA
How's Ruth enjoying insurance?	ROSALIND
	Beat.
Well, you're engaged now, aren't yo	ROSALIND (continuing) u?
Indeed. Well, she loves it. She's a r she'll do quite well.	MARTHA natural. It runs in the family, apparently. I suspect

ROSALIND

It's a talent. I couldn't sell ice cream to Eskimos.

They probably make their own.	MARTHA
Does she visit?	ROSALIND
We were advised not to see each other	MARTHA er.
You were advised not to do many thi	ROSALIND ngs, as I recall.
Occasionally even I follow the rules, hourly.	MARTHA Rosy. We write, we call. Daily. Sometimes
I think I'm uncomfortable talking abo	ROSALIND out this, for some reason.
You're worried you're invading my p	MARTHA privacy.
Am I?	ROSALIND
If I had privacy to invade, you would	MARTHA l be.
It must be difficult for you both.	ROSALIND
MARTHA Difficult! It's excruciating. Pretending to the world we have no feelings, no needs. Isn't it all rather baffling – that half the world thinks we have no sexual feelings at all and the other half thinks we have nothing but?	
It's all Kinsey's fault, and Freud beforeverywhere.	ROSALIND ore him. Sex didn't exist before 1948 and now it's

MARTHA

I do miss the quieter days, Rosy. When you could live happily with another woman and no one batted an eye.

## **ROSALIND**

You mean in 1893?

# **MARTHA**

It wasn't that long ago, was it? It seemed like after the War, everything changed somehow. There's all this bother now about masculinity and femininity and men feeling threatened if their wives work

# ROSALIND

Well, your neighbor was certainly anxious living next door to two spinsters.

# MARTHA

Ah, yes. And one so young and attractive – what a waste. Must get those perverts out of the neighborhood.

**ROSALIND** 

Times do change, Martha.

**MARTHA** 

But love is eternal. At least that's what I'm hoping.

ROSALIND

I'll knock on all the wood I can find.

The telephone rings. Martha quickly picks

it up.

MARTHA (on phone)

Hello, Mac?

She listens attentively. Her face breaks

into a smile.

MARTHA (continuing)

Yes! Thank God!

She hangs up phone.

MARTHA (continuing)

It's over, Rosy.

LIGHTS DOWN.

LIGHTS UP on David Dowd. He's sitting in his darkened study, next to a telephone.

# PHYLLIS (O.S.)

It's over now, David. You did the best you could. It's not your fault you couldn't get any witnesses –

DAVID

There were witnesses.

PHYLLIS (O.S.)

You mean that neighbor?

DAVID

Yes, that neighbor who saw Martha and that young woman --

PHYLLIS (O.S.)

Ruth Fulton

**DAVID** 

-- through the window.

Phyllis enters wearing an apron.

PHYLLIS

That wasn't enough for the committee, apparently.

**DAVID** 

It should have been.

**PHYLLIS** 

It's over, David. You can have your life back – all those things you've put on the back burner. Even better, we can have our life back. We've put off France for months now –

DAVID

It's not over.

**PHYLLIS** 

What do you mean? Privilege and Tenure –

**DAVID** 

It's an incompetent committee.

**PHYLLIS** 

But you've always supported its decisions.

**DAVID** 

I've told President Sproul I think the committee's verdict should be over-ruled.

Over-rule Privilege and Tenure?	PHYLLIS
They're all Martha's friends.	DAVID
This is Sproul's idea?	PHYLLIS
He agrees.	DAVID
So it's your idea. Can't someone els	PHYLLIS se take this on?
She refuses to resign.	DAVID
An attorney? The Regent's counsel?	PHYLLIS P Surely a legal person should –
The committee was spineless.	DAVID
take over. Martha willl fight you	PHYLLIS tooth and –
Someone has to protect the University	DAVID ty's interests.
claw. Tooth and claw. The Unive	PHYLLIS ersity could lose, David.
I have to do this!	DAVID
	She stares at him for a beat.
Why, David?	PHYLLIS
the neighbor had gone a bit overboar	DAVID m convinced of it, Phyl. You know, at first I thought rd with the complaint and all. I thought, who really ome? But I could see this was serious to him. He e.

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PHYLLIS From Martha?
DAVID Yes, from Martha. From things that frightened him, things he didn't understand. You know what it was like living through the Depression. The fear you wouldn't have enough to eat or you'd lose your house. We all remember. We all just want to keep what we have and not go backward. The times are different now, thank God. But the fear doesn't go away.
PHYLLIS You don't have to do this, David. There are other ways to show you're as tough and smart as any of the rest of them. Let President Sproul or the Regent's counsel or Staff Warren handle this.
DAVID Please understand, Phyllis. I have to see this through.
Beat.
PHYLLIS All right. How much longer will this take?
DAVID I don't know.
PHYLLIS Six months? A year?
DAVID I said I don't know.
PHYLLIS It's my time, too, David. You've forgotten my life gets put on the back burner right next to yours. We are in this together, at every point, lock-step. Husband and wife. I need to know how much time it will take until I have you back.
He does not respond.

PHYLLIS (continuing)

DAVID

It's cold now.

What?

Your dinner.	PHYLLIS
	She exits. He picks up the telephone.
	LIGHTS DOWN.
To justice!	MARTHA (O.S.)
	LIGHTS UP on Martha's patio.
	The phone has been moved back into the living room. Rosy and Martha are clinking champagne glasses. An open bottle of champagne sits in an ice bucket.
To reinstatement.	ROSALIND
To having Ruth home!	MARTHA
To Ruth!	ROSALIND and MARTHA
How long until that giant scarlet letter	MARTHA er on my forehead fades?
No one cares, Martha.	ROSALIND
Everyone cares. It's titillating. I'm	MARTHA a topic of conversation.
Martha!	RUTH (O.S.)
The girl drives quickly.	ROSALIND
	The phone rings (O.S.)
Tell Ruth I'll only be a minute.	MARTHA

You think it's Sproul?	ROSALIND
He's overdue.	MARTHA
	Martha exits. Ruth enters.
RUTH I don't know when I've been so happy.	
	She hugs Rosalind.
I have my Martha back.	RUTH (continuing)
I do, too, thank God. I can't tell you complete chaos on the best of days.	ROSALIND a how little I like teaching there without her. It's
RUTH You've been a good friend to her, Rosy.	
ROSALIND I've been a horrid pain in the ass is what I've been. The mark of a true friend.	
She thinks the world of you.	RUTH
When she doesn't curse my name for	ROSALIND or lecturing her unabashedly and at regular intervals.
RUTH Rosy, there is one thing. I lost my temper with you back in the fall –	
Forget it. I have.	ROSALIND
No. It's important. I hurt your feel	RUTH ings.
You pointed out the obvious.	ROSALIND
I didn't mean –	RUTH

that I'm not part of the club?	ROSALIND
It doesn't matter.	RUTH
ROSALIND  No, it matters. It makes all the different in the world, in fact. You were right. David Dowd would never have called me into his office, sat me down and interrogated me about my relationships. It would never have happened, Ruth. Through no fault of my own, I am apparently incapable of committing unspeakable acts. Lucky me.	
That bastard.	MARTHA (O.S.)
	Martha enters. Upset, she picks up a champagne glass and throws it across the room. She sits down and puts her head in her hands.
ROSALIND Martha, what on earth has happened?	
I haven't had a minute's peace and n	MARTHA low it's going to just keep on
But Privilege and Tenure –	RUTH
Dowd's over-ruled them.	MARTHA
What?	ROSALIND
He's continuing the investigation.	MARTHA
That sanctimonious little ass.	ROSALIND
Does Sproul know?	RUTH

MARTHA

He's blessed it. I can't believe it, Rosy. I've known Bob Sproul for twenty years.

Ruth hugs Martha. Gently, Martha pushes her away. MARTHA (to Ruth) You'll have to leave now. ROSALIND What kind of investigation? **RUTH** No, Martha --MARTHA (to Rosalind) Witnesses, oaths, depositions. The whole nine yards. ROSALIND I'd love to wring his smarmy little – MARTHA (to Ruth) Please, Ruth. Go now. **RUTH** We haven't even had a moment alone --**MARTHA** We can't be seen together. Mac says it's even more important now than before. Rosalind sizes up the situation, hugs Martha. ROSALIND (to Martha) Call me later, dear. **RUTH** Then you're going to keep fighting this? Rosalind exits. **MARTHA** Tooth and claw. He's trying to ruin me! I have to fight back. I have no choice.

**RUTH** 

It is always about justice for you – Rosy's right.

## **MARTHA**

Justice! Of course it's about justice. It's about standing up and doing what's right. If this were happening to someone else, I would be just as outraged. But it's also about me, damn it, living my life. Ruthie, if I stop now, I have nothing. No job, no income, no pension –

**RUTH** 

You have me.

MARTHA

What a catch I am these days! Savings run through now, legal bills --

**RUTH** 

I would support us both.

**MARTHA** 

I know you would, darling, but this would always be hanging over my head. "The Martha Deane Scandal." I can't let him run my name into the ground. I don't care what it takes!

**RUTH** 

Oh, Martha, don't do this! You could waste years – you could waste the rest of your life trying to get justice from David Dowd and the Board of Regents. It's not going to happen.

**MARTHA** 

Why do you say that?

**RUTH** 

They hold all the cards.

MARTHA

They're in the wrong!

**RUTH** 

Sometimes that doesn't matter, Martha! Do you think McCarthy is in the right? Look how many lives and careers he's destroyed.

MARTHA

So we turn our backs and let him triumph?

**RUTH** 

Of course not --

**MARTHA** 

I'm going to fight this, Ruth. You can be by my side –

RU	T	ГΤ	т
κι	1	It	-1
$\mathbf{r}$	Ι.		

No, I can't! That's the whole point. Why won't you get it through your stubborn head -- if you fight this, I have to disappear again for – what, months? Years? I have to pretend we're not lovers, that I don't have my whole world wrapped around you. I need you, Martha. Doesn't that matter to you?

**MARTHA** 

Of course it matters. But I can't let them do this to me --

RUTH

Well, I can't let them do this to me, either.

Martha does not respond.

RUTH (continuing)

I mean it. The last six months have been unbearable for me. And now, not to know how much longer –

MARTHA

We'll get to the end of this together Ruth. I promise.

RUTH

Together?

MARTHA

Yes, of course, together.

**RUTH** 

When?

MARTHA

Later. When it's over.

**RUTH** 

It may never be over. I can't wait that long.

MARTHA

Well, damn it, maybe you should just go then. Go on and make a new life for yourself. Find someone who's less difficult for you. Someone your own age.

RUTH

That's a cheap shot.

## **MARTHA**

You're at the beginning of your career, Ruth. Starting over is different for you. I'm at the height of mine. I have seven to ten good years left when I can really accomplish what I want. Leave my mark. I can make it all matter. To give up that chance – not to fight to clear my name -- you ask too much of me.

#### RUTH

I never thought you would pick something – anything -- over me.

## **MARTHA**

You're the one who's forcing me to choose.

#### RUTH

We can start over together, Martha. Leave California – maybe it would be easier in New York or Europe --

## **MARTHA**

This is my home. Why should I leave it? I've done nothing wrong. I am a good person, a sane person, a moral person – regardless of what David Dowd and the Regents may think of me. My darling girl, I love you more than I can say, but I have to do this. Rosy says I'm just an old fool, and maybe she's right. But I have to do this. They have no right to treat me this way!

Beat.

**RUTH** 

Damn you!

She hugs Martha fiercely, then exits.

LIGHTS DOWN.

LIGHTS UP on David's office, the next day.

He sits at his desk, distracted.

There's a KNOCK (O.S.)

**DAVID** 

Yes?

Rosalind enters.

DAVID (continuing)

Ah, Rosalind.

	ROSALIND
David.	
Sit down. Thank you for coming by	DAVID
You did call.	ROSALIND
Yes, yes. You're probably wondering	DAVID ng why.
I am assuming it's not because you vis much less sordid than I would pref	ROSALIND wish to interrogate me about my private life. Which fer, I must say.
No, of course not.	DAVID
Well, one can't take anything for gra	ROSALIND anted these days, can one?
	He gives her a look, then continues.
Look, Rosalind, I've been speaking vyou could take over the leadership of	DAVID with Ben Miller and, well, it would be most helpful if the women's P.E. program.
Why, David?	ROSALIND
Why?	DAVID
I'm not sure I'm following you.	ROSALIND
	DAVID re the obvious choice. You're the senior professor ed, your scholarship is recognized nationally –
What about Martha?	ROSALIND

## **DAVID**

The program lacks leadership right now, Rosalind. It's a bit adrift. We wanted to bring in a rudder.

# ROSALIND

I suppose I should be flattered. I've never been called a rudder before.

**DAVID** 

So you will accept the chairmanship?

ROSALIND

Certainly.

**DAVID** 

That's marvelous, Rosalind. We both thank you –

ROSALIND

On an interim basis.

DAVID

Why interim?

ROSALIND

Until Martha returns.

DAVID

That may well never occur.

ROSALIND

Well, once the whole thing is resolved, we can speak again, then.

She rises.

# **DAVID**

Wait. Professor Cassidy, the University badly needs your assistance. This is a very difficult time. We are all aware of your allegiance to Miss Deane, but what matters here is the program and the girls we are bound and obligated to teach. I urge that you strongly consider the situation.

# **ROSALIND**

I have strongly considered it, Dean Dowd, and my answer remains the same: I would be honored and happy to take over on an interim basis, pending the long-awaited return of Miss Deane.

DAVID

You assume she will return.

### **ROSALIND**

Oh, I assume nothing. Believe me.

# **DAVID**

All right. Perhaps we can address some of the issues that may concern you. We are all aware that the chairmanship of a program may require significant time above and beyond a teaching and research load. Additional compensation is certainly to be considered here.

# ROSALIND

David, I understand the pressure you are under. It must be formidable. I understand you and Ben want to do what's right for the program and I appreciate the offer of the chairmanship. But Martha Deane is my friend.

**DAVID** 

That is not relevant

## **ROSALIND**

But it is. She recruited me down here from Mills. She helped me find a place to live. She introduced me to Clarence and to Bob Sproul and made me feel welcome. Her friends were my friends. Martha is the reason I came here and the reason I have been successful here.

DAVID

Your loyalty is commendable –

ROSALIND

-- but I am paid to do a job, is that what you were going to say?

DAVID

We all work at the University's pleasure.

**ROSALIND** 

The pleasure has gone out of my University work.

DAVID

You must separate your own feelings from your duty as a professional.

**ROSALIND** 

Then let us both agree that I must do what is best for the young women for whom I am responsible.

DAVID

Agreed. I am glad we have reached the point of amity, Rosalind.

## ROSALIND

As am I, David. So, in that case, I will be the interim chairman of the program until the matter with Martha is resolved.

DAVID

You are every bit as impossible as she is!

ROSALIND

I consider that a compliment.

DAVID

Professor!

Beat. David slowly wilts physically, his body too exhausted to fight another battle. His voice is now oddly gentle, calm. He is for a moment the man Phyllis fell in love with.

# DAVID (continuing)

Rosalind. I do understand your dilemma. Like you, I value friendship more than gold. In many regards, Martha is a fine woman, an excellent teacher. A good cook, too, as we both know. A wonderful conversationalist. All of these things can remain true at the same time we acknowledge that for certain reasons she can no longer be a part of the University.

# **ROSALIND**

Certain ridiculous, foundationless "reasons" --

#### DAVID

I won't argue the point with you – Rosy, isn't it? That's what Martha calls you, I know. This whole matter has quite exhausted me and I have no fight left. In good faith I have tried to do what was asked of me. Perhaps in your eyes I have failed. Certainly in my wife's eyes I have come up short. It is a painful time for me and one I do not think I will ever look back on without regret. If you will agree to be the interim chairman, I am sure Ben will be pleased. Thank you, Rosy.

Beat.

## ROSALIND

I appreciate your candor, David. I know this is not easy for you. Regarding the interim chairmanship, I hope that perhaps an interim salary adjustment might be possible in light of the extra duties you've mentioned. I support my mother, you know, as well as myself.

David pulls himself together, his old demeanor quickly returning.

# DAVID

I will discuss the matter with Ben. I should forewarn you, however, the department's budget remains tight.

Rosalind exits quickly.

LIGHTS DOWN.

LIGHTS UP on Martha's patio at dusk. She is sipping a drink listlessly and watching the sun set.

Phyllis enters, startling Martha.

PHYLLIS

Hello, Martha.

MARTHA

Phyllis.

**PHYLLIS** 

The back door was open.

MARTHA

I was watering the flowers.

PHYLLIS

I've tried to call you.

MARTHA

I've been in and out.

PHYLLIS (overlap)

I wanted to talk to you.

MARTHA (overlap)

It's not a good time.

PHYLLIS

I'm sorry for how this has turned out.

MARTHA

You really must go.

**PHYLLIS** 

He's not himself these days. It's the stress.

You'll excuse me.	MARTHA
Whatever you may think, Martha. I	PHYLLIS t isn't personal.
That's a relief. Why are you here, P	MARTHA Phyllis? Why did you call me?
I want this all to stop as badly as you	PHYLLIS u do.
No one could want this to stop as ba	MARTHA dly as I do.
Then stop, Martha.	PHYLLIS
It's hardly that simple.	MARTHA
They'll give you money.	PHYLLIS
It isn't about money.	MARTHA
Listen to me, Martha! I don't condo some level.	PHYLLIS one what David is doing. I think you know that on
If you don't condone it, then your co	MARTHA onversation should be with your husband, not me.
I think this whole thing is a witch-hu David keep on.	PHYLLIS unt. It's the pressure from the regents that's making
He should learn to resist pressure.	MARTHA
Well, he can't.	PHYLLIS

And you want me to stop this whole	MARTHA e thing because he can't, because he won't.
I suppose that's what I'm saying.	PHYLLIS
Then talk to him, Phyllis.	MARTHA

PHYLLIS

I have.

MARTHA

And?

**PHYLLIS** 

And he's a man. You know how it goes with men. Well, I mean –

MARTHA

I know what you mean.

**PHYLLIS** 

It's like a bear fighting a bull. You're both locked in this mortal combat.

MARTHA

I prefer to think of myself as the bear, in that case.

**PHYLLIS** 

But those kinds of fights don't stop until one or the other – or both -- are dead.

MARTHA

I didn't begin this, Phyllis. Your husband did. He could have stopped with Privilege and Tenure's decision, but he didn't. No, this is his fight. As much as I might take it personally, this is not about me. I understand that now. It's about him. It's about his career. This fight will either make it or break it.

**PHYLLIS** 

I know.

**MARTHA** 

Why did you come to me?

PHYLLIS

Because –

**MARTHA** 

I'm a woman?

Phyllis nods.

MARTHA (continuing)

And you think women are more likely to back down.

**PHYLLIS** 

We're more sensible.

**MARTHA** 

Indeed we are. Now would you please leave before I fly into a sensible but very loud rage?

**PHYLLIS** 

Martha --

**MARTHA** 

I am not kidding, Phyl.

**PHYLLIS** 

Damn you.

Phyllis exits. LIGHTS DOWN on patio.

SPOT UP on Rosalind, the spring of 1954. She is addressing a small gathering of women.

## **ROSALIND**

Ladies, thank you for coming tonight. Special thanks to Josie for providing the living room and the coffee. I know we all feel safer exchanging information here than in the ladies room in Royce Hall. We just hope that Josie's neighbors are less inquisitive than Martha's

Speaking of Martha's neighbors – we understand that some of them have now come forward with their concerns about her and are being interviewed by David Dowd and his people. Dean Dowd continues to refuse to speak with any of us in a civil manner regarding any of this. We have been told repeatedly and in no uncertain terms that the Martha Deane case is not to be discussed on campus in any way and that it is purely an administrative matter.

I know you are all wondering about how Martha is doing, how she is holding up throughout this difficult and crazy time. Most of you haven't seen her since she left campus nearly two years ago. In many ways, I think you would find her the same old Martha – fit as a fiddle, still passionate and opinionated about everything. I saw her

(CONTINUED)

# ROSALIND (continuing)

last week and she was so very appreciative of the checks you continue to send. That is what is sustaining her now, your help and your friendship. She thanks you for your support and she knows how difficult this is for all of you, her friends. She understands very well the consequences you might face in openly showing support for her.

POLICE SIREN (O.S) startles Rosalind. It takes her a moment to continue.

# ROSALIND (continuing)

If anyone had ever told me I would be meeting in shrouded secrecy like nothing so much as an underground cell, I would have laughed them out the door. But times change – sadly, often – and we do what we must. Let's hope that by this time next year it's Martha who is addressing us and celebrating her return to the University.

LIGHTS DOWN on Rosalind.

LIGHTS UP on patio. The patio is virtually bare now. Dressed in robe and slippers, Martha stacks a last box on a pile. Three boxes remain on the floor.

The DOORBELL RINGS (O.S.).

**MARTHA** 

Rosy?

SPROUL (O.S.)

No, Martha. It's me, Bob.

Martha stops in her tracks. With effort, she pulls herself together.

**MARTHA** 

Bob. What a surprise. You're alone?

SPROUL (O.S.)

No. Hoover and Nixon are here with me.

Martha smiles despite herself.

SPROUL (O.S.) (continuing)

Forgive my poor attempt at humor.

•		Dr	DT T	
M	lΑ	R	ГΗ	Α

Haven't I always?

SPROUL (O.S.)

Touché. I'm alone. Ida's in the car reading Sunset.

**MARTHA** 

How is Ida?

SPROUL (O.S.)

Hale and hearty. She sends her best.

MARTHA

The door's open, Bob. Tell Hoover and Nixon they can wait on the step in the heat.

Sproul enters wearing casual clothes, as if he is on the way to a golf game. He carries a briefcase which catches Martha's eye.

MARTHA (continuing)

Forgive my appearance. I've been under the weather a bit lately.

SPROUL

Was that a television set I saw in the living room? I never took you for a tv viewer.

MARTHA

Rosy suggested I might enjoy the hearings.

SPROUL

I hadn't realized the Senator from Wisconsin was a particular favorite of yours.

MARTHA

So we're off the record?

SPROUL

Regent's Counsel was told only that I was considering contacting you in some fashion. Casual attire and feeble attempts at a light ambiance were not discussed and would not have been encouraged.

He looks around the patio.

SPROUL (continuing)

It's a good market to sell in, I hear.

MARTHA

The scotch and gin are packed away. Sorry.

You know why I'm here, I suspect.	SPROUL	
You were in the neighborhood?	MARTHA	
That's right.	SPROUL	
So you thought you'd drop by.	MARTHA	
Exactly. Go on.	SPROUL	
Let me guess. You've been thinking	MARTHA g it over now for quite some time.	
That I have.	SPROUL	
MARTHA We've been colleagues and friends for many years, you and I, and you've been President of the University for many years. This has presented for you an irresolvable conflict and you have been forced to delegate to others duties you wish you had been able to retain. You have not been at all times been pleased with the results.		
That's right, Martha.	SPROUL	
MARTHA You want this resolved now. You have the authority to end it today – if we are in agreement. And if I sign on the dotted line whatever document you have in your briefcase.		
There's full back pay.	SPROUL	
A resignation?	MARTHA	
The university would not contest you	SPROUL ur right to your pension.	

M/	۱R۲	ΉΑ

Which I've been paying into for years.

SPROUL

No more interviews, no more depositions.

**MARTHA** 

No more allegations that I solicit my students and set fire to orphanages.

SPROUL

You would have your life back.

**MARTHA** 

My life teaching? No, of course not... So what do you think my response will be to your kind offer?

SPROUL

My official thoughts? I think you'll see the light of day, take the offer, allow the department to give you an appropriately moving send-off and allow the Regents to do something other than tear their hair out at every meeting.

**MARTHA** 

And your unofficial thoughts?

**SPROUL** 

Off the record? I think you'll throw me out of here on my ear – but politely and without obvious undue anger. Your parting words will be to tell me to give your regards to Ida.

She smiles. Gets out handkerchief and dabs eyes.

**MARTHA** 

Excuse me. Allergies. You know I won't resign, Bob.

SPROUL

Yes, I know that.

**MARTHA** 

So why -- ?

**SPROUL** 

Look, Martha, the Regents are for the most part very successful businessmen. They didn't get that way by being patient and reasonable. Regent's Counsel told me this morning they'll take the offer off the table if you don't come around soon.

So I should take what I can get before the offer goes away, is that it?

SPROUL

I will not denigrate our friendship by telling you I am here solely out of concern for you. Clearly, I am not. But I did think you had a right to know the current thinking among the Regents. Dowd, incidentally, is unaware of it.

MARTHA

As he is of so many things.

SPROUL

An odd man, David Dowd. I had no idea. Regent Pauley can't stand the sight of him.

MARTHA

So the rumors go.

SPROUL

As to why he didn't get the Vice Chancellorship?

MARTHA

I try never to repeat gossip.

**SPROUL** 

High minded of you. Truly, Martha, it was never my intention to release the dogs of war upon you.

MARTHA

They descended upon me nonetheless.

**SPROUL** 

Yes, they did. But they haven't been able to defeat you.

MARTHA

Why does it feel like you're patronizing me?

SPROUL

Because you don't trust me any more.

**MARTHA** 

Hoover and Nixon must be getting parched.

SPROUL

Thank you for your always gracious hospitality.

SPROUL

My pleasure.

He moves the box with effort. It's heavier than

it looked. Martha smiles.

**MARTHA** 

Those, too. Thanks.

These two boxes are heavy, too, but Sproul moves them. When he's done, he grins a bit ruefully and holds out his hand for her to shake. Game over.

SPROUL

Goodbye, Martha.

MARTHA

Goodbye, Bob.

He moves to exit.

MARTHA (continuing)

Be sure to give Ida my regards.

SPROUL

I will.

He exits.

LIGHTS DOWN on patio.

LIGHTS UP on Ruth. She sits at a desk

doing paperwork, talking on the telephone. It's a

nice office. She's doing well.

Rosalind enters and watches her for a moment until

Ruth looks up. It is early fall, 1954.

ROSALIND

Hello, Ruth.

**RUTH** 

Rosy. What a nice surprise.

	They hug.
	ROSALIND
You're looking well.	
So are you.	RUTH
·	ROSALIND
You're lying, but I appreciate the the be these days I am afraid.	ought. The hallowed halls are not a pleasant place to
How's the program?	RUTH
Wobbly.	ROSALIND
I'm sorry to hear that.	RUTH
The insurance business, on the other	ROSALIND hand, appears to be booming.
Looks can be deceiving, but it's going	RUTH ng well, Rosy.
A mutual friend of ours always thou	ROSALIND ght insurance would suit you.
	RUTH rably lower than in academia. I can work hable correlation between effort and reward.
Quite different from my line of work	ROSALIND K.
How is our mutual friend?	RUTH
As you might expect, I suppose. An	ROSALIND ad you?
Me?	RUTH

You are well?	ROSALIND
Well enough.	RUTH
Still playing basketball?	ROSALIND
Every Saturday. A little golf now an joined the League of Women Voters.	RUTH d then. And you would be proud of me, Rosy. I've
Ah, our mutual friend's influence?	ROSALIND
	RUTH world a little differently. Perhaps a bit less selfishly iece of land up on the Tiger Tail. That's taking all
Oh, I'm envious!	ROSALIND
A few acres. I'm going to build on it	RUTH t.
I remember you always were handy.	ROSALIND
Has she been able to keep the house,	RUTH our mutual friend?
	Rosalind shakes her head.
She loves that house! Look, I would	RUTH (continuing) be happy to loan her –
There's no point. Living there would	ROSALIND dalways remind her of what she's lost.
Is there any chance ?	RUTH

She'll win in court?	ROSALIND
	Rosy shakes her head no.
My poor Martha.	RUTH
• •	ROSALIND of cases. He thinks she should settle before the had it a few months now and they're running out of
Settling would be hard for her.	RUTH
She's successfully fought them to a c same as a victory.	ROSALIND lraw – which in this case everyone knows is the
Everyone but Martha.	RUTH
You know her well.	ROSALIND
Only Martha would	RUTH
Would what? Jeopardize her entire f	ROSALIND a matter of principle?
She doesn't see it that way.	RUTH
Oh, you always take her side.	ROSALIND
She doesn't see it that way, either, I's	RUTH m afraid. Why haven't I heard from her, Rosy?
You walked out on her, Ruth, as I red	ROSALIND call.
Didn't she tell you ?	RUTH

#### **ROSALIND**

No. What?

### **RUTH**

The next day I realized what an ass I'd been, leaving her when she really needed me. I called her. The phone just rang and rang. I called her in the middle of the night and even then she never picked up. So I wrote. And wrote. But the letters just came back to me. Over and over I tried to reach her. Nothing. No response, Rosy. No damned response. I assumed she was so angry she never wanted to speak to me again.

### **ROSALIND**

I wish you had told me. I just assumed, after a year or more –

**RUTH** 

-- fifteen and a half months --

ROSALIND

-- I just assumed you had...gone on with your life.

**RUTH** 

Well, that's true enough, I suppose. What was the alternative?

ROSALIND

To be honest, Ruth, I thought perhaps you'd met someone else.

**RUTH** 

Met someone else! When would I have done that? In between crying and screaming and slamming basketballs against the floor?

ROSALIND

I'm sorry. I didn't know.

**RUTH** 

Well, I'd be lying if I said that trying to meet someone else hadn't crossed my mind after awhile.

**ROSALIND** 

I don't know how that sort of thing works in your world.

**RUTH** 

It works about as badly in my world as it does in yours, Rosy. Particularly if you're still in love with someone else.

**ROSALIND** 

Yes, that can be a problem.

#### RUTH

I had dinner last month with a perfectly nice social worker from Van Nuys. Funny, kind, lovely, intelligent. From the Midwest, even. At the end of the evening she smiled and said I talked so much about Martha that she felt like she was dating her and not me.

#### ROSALIND

That would actually be something of an improvement over some of the dinners I've had with men. At least you were allowed a word in.

RUTH

So is that why you're here, then? To see how I still feel about Martha?

ROSALIND

I wouldn't make a very good secret agent, would I?

**RUTH** 

Is she sleeping much?

Rosalind shakes her head.

RUTH (continuing)

That was always the first thing to go with her.

ROSALIND

She barely eats. Some days she doesn't get out of bed.

RUTH

Oh my God.

## ROSALIND

Ruth, I wouldn't be here if it weren't important. Mac says they'll pull the offer on Monday if she doesn't take it. The rest of us have tried to talk to her, but I think you are the only person she'll listen to.

**RUTH** 

She won't even talk to me, Rosy, why on earth would she take my advice?

ROSALIND

It's very simple, dear. She loves you. And no matter how hard she may try not to let you know, she always will.

Beat. Ruth is too moved to speak.

**RUTH** 

It was lovely seeing you.

You, too, Ruth.	ROSALIND	
	She turns to exit.	
Invite me to the ground-breaking.	ROSALIND (continuing)	
	Rosalind exits.	
	LIGHTS DOWN on Ruth.	
	LIGHTS UP on Martha's patio, that evening. Martha sits drinking and staring out at her garden. The patio is bare now.	
	Ruth enters.	
Hello, Martha.	RUTH	
Ruth.	MARTHA	
Rosy suggested I come by.	RUTH	
	Beat.	
MARTHA I finally had to give up on the fruit trees. I just couldn't seem to keep them going. I'm sorry. I know how much you loved them.		
I'd like to talk to you, Martha. But i	RUTH f you want me to leave, I'll go.	
I never wanted you to leave, Ruthie.	MARTHA	
I never wanted to go.	RUTH	
It all seems so long ago now. A life	MARTHA time.	

I was wrong, Martha. I know that now	RUTH v.
No, no! You had to do what was right	MARTHA t for you –
I didn't understand. My feelings were	RUTH e hurt.
Of course they were.	MARTHA
	RUTH ve and strong and all I saw was my own pain.
I put you through so much –	MARTHA
I should have stood by you, taken my	RUTH lumps –
Not everything's about justice.	MARTHA
But this was. You were right to fight	RUTH with everything you had.
Well, it didn't get me so very far, did	MARTHA it? All my rantings and ravings.
You've fought them to a draw. No on	RUTH ne else could have done that.
Well, now they've made me a final of	MARTHA fer. They say a final, final.
Rosy told me.	RUTH
	MARTHA photos right and left. Recording all those
Do you want to take it?	RUTH

I want my life back, I know that. My old life.		
It was a terrific life, Martha. Teachin valued and respected. And you were	RUTH ng, directing the program. You were loved and every happy.	
Yes, I was.	MARTHA	
So was I.	RUTH	
	Beat.	
I think you're supposed to ask how I	RUTH (continuing) 'm doing these days.	
Rosy already told me.	MARTHA	
She gets around, I see.	RUTH	
You bought some property up on the it	MARTHA Tiger Tail. Several acres. You're going to build on	
Martha, it's too much space for one p	RUTH person.	
Perhaps you'll find a room-mate.	MARTHA	
Darhans	RUTH	
Perhaps.	Martha gets out her handkerchief and dabs her eyes.	
My allergies.	MARTHA	
You don't have allergies.	RUTH	

Can't you leave me any illusions?	MARTHA
If I can't have them, neither can you.	RUTH
They took away my life, damn it.	MARTHA
	RUTH our money. They've even taken your house. But get to wake up every morning and be Martha Deane, ver known.
Perhaps you should go now, Ruthie.	MARTHA
Why? Because we're finally getting	RUTH a chance to talk?
Because I'm too old to start over!	MARTHA
Don't be ridiculous!	RUTH
I am old, Ruth. Do you hear me? I a	MARTHA am old and unemployed and cantankerous –
and stubborn	RUTH
and you deserve someone who can	MARTHA make you happy.
Damn it, Martha! Why didn't you re	RUTH eturn my calls, my letters ?
You left me!	MARTHA
All right, I was wrong! But you wou	RUTH ıldn't talk to me!

I couldn't think straight! I felt like I was being attacked on all sides. I stopped knowing who I was, much less who you were.

## **RUTH**

We would be building the new house the first year or two. There really wouldn't be much time for you to think about being old or anything else, for that matter.

MARTHA

You're not listening to me!

**RUTH** 

You've always wanted to spend more time with the League of Women Voters and do some acting again in Pasadena. Travel more – you always wanted to go to Hawaii.

**MARTHA** 

Damn you, stop it!

**RUTH** 

Do you want me to leave, Martha?

Beat. Ruth turns toward the door to exit.

**MARTHA** 

I was tenured faculty, Ruthie!

Ruth moves to her and they embrace.

**RUTH** 

I know, baby, I know. ... Take the offer, Martha. Start a new life.

MARTHA

How can you ever forgive me, sweetheart? I put you through so much over this.

**RUTH** 

It's you who needs to forgive me.

MARTHA

I suppose we're both human, when you get down to it... As well as notorious lesbians, apparently.

**RUTH** 

That's how we will live out our days, then. Notorious lesbians on the Tiger Tail, living lives of quiet dignity behind tall trees.

Very tall treesDon't go, Ruth. Do	MARTHA n't ever go again.
	They kiss.
	LIGHTS DOWN on Martha's patio.
	LIGHTS UP on David's office. It's early in 1955.
	DAVID fusses busily with things on his desk.
	There's a KNOCK at the door (O.S.)
	Sproul enters.
Hello, Dave.	SPROUL
Oh, Mr. President.	DAVID
I just wanted to come by to thank you	SPROUL u –
A chair?	DAVID
5 1	SPROUL y for the hard work you did with the Martha Deane ult process. We've finally got all parties signed off

DAVID

Thank you, sir. That means a lot.

SPROUL

Phyllis is well?

and the papers filed.

DAVID

Off to France.

SPROUL

France? You're meeting her there?

No. No indeed. She's off with a couhere, you know.	DAVID usin. I encouraged her to go. So much going on
Well, it's over now.	SPROUL
There's always plenty to do here. I'duties.	DAVID m looking forward to getting back to my regular
Oh, about that.	SPROUL
Sir?	DAVID (hopefully)
The Regents are very grateful for the do well as the new Chancellor.	SPROUL e role you've played. They're eager to see Ray Allen
Oh yes, Ray. I've known Ray for ye	DAVID ears.
It would be a big help if you could s	SPROUL mooth the rails some for him if there's a problem.
Smooth the rails. Yes, of course.	DAVID (deflated)
He's a good man.	SPROUL
So, it is over, then? The Deane case	DAVID
Yes. She's formally accepted the Re	SPROUL egent's Counsel's final, final offer.
Back pay?	DAVID

SPROUL

Yes.

DAVID
Pension, of course.
SPROUL At the level current at suspension. She'll miss the bump from last year. Bad timing for her.
DAVID Yes. Too bad the whole thing couldn't have waited a year or two, you know. What will she do now?
SPROUL I don't know. Mrs. Sproul is still in touch with her. Perhaps I'll ask. Is something troubling you, Dave?
DAVID
No, not really.
SPROUL Good.
DAVID It's just we had that sworn statement from the neighbor. About what he'd seen. Yet I never could get Martha to admit she'd done anything, anything inappropriate.
SPROUL Don't let it trouble you. You were just doing your job.
DAVID
Yes. A difficult one it was, you know.
Sproul looks at his watch.
DAVID (continuing) I suppose we never will resolve it further now.
SPROUL Resolve what, exactly?
DAVID Oh, I don't know that it matters. What she did, what they were doing. Would you say the Regents won, Mr. President?
SPROUL I hadn't thought about it all in quite those terms.

DAVID But if you did?	
SPROUL  Martha beat us, Dave. Between you and me, I don't think it's a bad outcome. Now I can't guarantee you Martha agrees with me – she has a tremendous amount of pride. But my guess is in time she'll see it.	
DAVID Regent Pauley would agree with you, then?	
SPROUL Why the interest in Regent Pauley? Not much you can do about his opinion. I wouldn't worry too much about it. Life goes on.	
DAVID Thank you –	
SPROUL Interesting times we live in. The Senate finally voting to censure Joe McCarthy.	
DAVID End of an era. I wonder what happens to him now, do you suppose? Now that the tent's packed up and the circus is over.	
SPROUL I don't know, Dave. I really must go.	
Sproul exits.	
DAVID picks up the telephone.	
DAVID (on telephone) Oh hello. Yes, I was hoping to call a number in Paris, in FranceThe number is	

LIGHTS DOWN on DAVID.

The stage is black.

MARTHA (O.S.)

Ladies!

SPOT UP on Martha as she addresses a group of friends on Tiger Tail Road a few months later. Healthy, full of vitality, she's dressed in a Hawaiian shirt.

# MARTHA (continuing)

Thank you all for joining us today for the Tiger Tail ground-breaking ceremony. You'll find Polynesian drinks on the bar. Rosy will be doing that new dance craze, the hula, for us later. No? Oh, excuse me. Dr. Rosalind Cassidy will be doing a scholarly analysis of the hula for us. That should be fascinating.

I want to thank you all for the support you've given me over the last two and a half years. I have no words to express my gratitude. I am both happy and humbled to be able today to return to each of you the money you loaned me during that difficult time. I have checks for each of you, with interest and with my deepest thanks. It was the only income I had for many, many months.

For years I told my students at UCLA that becoming an instructor of Physical Education was a choice they would never regret. I still believe that, deeply. As you all know, it has been difficult for me to accept that the days of teaching are behind me now. You know that was not my choice. But I am proud of the program we built together and of every single young woman who passed through it on her road to her career. I celebrate them.

Indeed, life goes on. And so do I. As many of you know, Ruth and I recently returned from Hawaii. Thus the party theme. While we must wait for Dr. Cassidy's scholarly analysis to fully understand the significance of hula, I thought we might begin with a demonstration for those new to it. As I used to tell my first year Physical Education students in the Methodology of Teaching class, you've got to learn to listen to your body and hear what it's telling you. Mine tells me I am older, but not old. Wiser, but not yet wise. Happy but not as happy as I will become. Lord knows I will undoubtedly hula until I drop.

HULA MUSIC begins (O.S.).

Imagine a pink sunset sky on an exotic island. You're with the person of your dreams. You have a drink in one hand and not a care in the world. The worst is behind you and you have your life ahead. Ah, imagination rules the world.

She begins to dance the hula, rather well as a matter of fact.

MARTHA (continuing)

We begin with the hips.

LIGHTS slowly DOWN on Martha.

Hula music continues (O.S.)

Blackout.

END OF PLAY