

Scandal
at
Hampton
Estate



Kayla Livous
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With contributions from the
Lee High School Senior Drama Class of 2000

Norman Maine Publishing

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*I dedicate this play to all of my students,
including the co-author of this play,
who have inspired me to do things
I didn't know I could do.*

Scandal at Hampton Estate
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Scandal at Hampton Estate was first performed April 12, 2000, at Louisiana School for the Deaf, Baton Rouge, LA: Caroline Brendov, lights; Robert Loyd, sound; Frank Hinton and Matt Parrish, stagehands; Luke Collins, prompter; and Jessica Payne, photographer.

IVANA: Kayla Livous
GERTRUDE: Jamie Griffin
PENELOPE: Kristin Sylvester
BARTHOLOMEW V: Luke Fritchie
ELLIE: Constance Barbin
BARTHOLOMEW VI: Leicester Landon
CHRISSEY: Shenetra McKnight
LILLY: Liz Zeretzke
ROSE: Leslie Campbell
MABLE: Amy Watson
MUNFREE: Price Keene
GEORGE: Lance Gremillion
CANDY: Erin Monachello
BILLY BOB: Sam Caston
SUE ELLEN: Angie Bennett
MARY LOU: Jamie Dupre
BETTY ANNE: Crystal Gaines
VICKI (MAYOR): Niki Tarleton
PATRICIA INDIGO: Kellie Kirkland
CHELSEA FINKLEY: Lakeisha Wells
PHOEBE TAYLOR: Kim Ballard
HOBO: Andrew LeBlanc
CRYSTAL: Tiffany Simoneaux
SAMANTHA: Mary Murphy
JOHN MACE: Curtis Oby
BEUFORD LUMPKIN: Graham Black
OFFICER O'NEAL: Cameron Martinsen

Characters

(6 M, 18 F, 4 flexible, opt. extras)

- GERTRUDE:** Elderly matriarch of Hampton Estate; wears a robe and fuzzy slippers and carries a cane; wears a Little Bo Peep costume with a hoop skirt that flies up when she sits to reveal wildly colored knee-length bloomers.
- IVANA:** Flirtatious head of household; wears a Cleopatra costume.
- PATRICIA INDIGO:** Ivana's snobby friend who loves to gossip; dressed as Maleficent from Disney's "Sleeping Beauty."
- CYNTHIA BEECHAM:** Ivana's overly dramatic, snobby friend; wears a Queen of Hearts costume from "Alice in Wonderland."
- CHELSEA FINKLEY:** Ivana's two-faced snobby friend; wears a Cruella de Vil costume from Disney's "101 Dalmatians."
- PHOEBE TAYLOR:** Ivana's snobby friend who agrees with everybody; wears a Wicked Witch of the West costume from "The Wizard of Oz."
- BARTHOLOMEW V:** Ivana's gruff brother who is unhappily married to Ellie; wears golf clothes; wears a Rhett Butler costume to the ball.
- ELLIE:** Bartholomew V's ditzy southern belle wife who came from a family of hicks; wears golf clothes; wears a Scarlet O'Hara costume with a hoop skirt that flies up when she sits (big dress with lots of hiding places/secret pockets.)
- BARTHOLOMEW VI:** Spoiled son of Ellie and Bartholomew V; wears tennis clothes; wears a John Smith costume as in "Pocahontas."
- CHRISSY:** Bartholomew VI's spoiled wife; wears tennis clothes; wears a Pocahontas costume.
- MUNFREE:** Butler; wears a tuxedo.
- LILLY:** Grumpy older maid who is in love with Munfree; wears a French maid's uniform and an apron with a pocket.
- ROSE:** Cheerful younger maid who yearns to be the Head Maid at the Hampton Estate; wears a French maid's uniform.
- MABLE:** Cook; wears a cook's hat and uniform.
- PENELOPE:** Gertrude's imaginary nurse who is invisible to everyone except Gertrude; wears a nurse's uniform, body glitter, opaque hose, baby-doll eye-makeup, and a blue wig.

GEORGE HAMPTON: Gertrude's elderly twin brother; wears a Hugh Hefner costume and carries a cane.

CANDY: 20s, George's attractive, air-headed fiancée; wears a Playboy bunny costume.

BILLY BOB: Ellie's hick brother from the country; wears hick clothes (overalls, etc.); wears a Fred Flintstone costume to the ball.

SUE ELLEN: Billy Bob's very pregnant wife; wears hick clothes; wears a Wilma Flintstone costume to the ball.

MARY LOU: 8, Sue Ellen and Billy Bob's daughter; wears hick clothes and has pig tails; wears a devil costume to ball.

BETTY ANNE: 5, Sue Ellen and Billy Bob's daughter; wears hick clothes; wears an angel costume to ball.

VICKY THOMPSON: Mayor of Crestville City; dressed in a queen costume.

CRYSTAL MITCHELL: Lifestyles TV reporter; wears a business suit and lapel pin.

SAMANTHA/SAM PAYNE: Camera person who doesn't like the reporter; wears casual clothes; flexible.

DETECTIVE JOHN MACE: Arrogant, incompetent detective who is having an affair with Ivana; wears suspenders, a trench coat, and a hat; male.

DETECTIVE BEUFORD LUMPKIN: Younger, knowledgeable sidekick; wears suspenders, trench coat, hat; flexible.

OFFICER O'NEAL: Cop; wears a police uniform; flexible.

HOBO: Stray guest who wanders in; flexible; wears ragged, dirty clothes and a red and white bag tied to a stick

DARK FIGURE: Wears black sweat suit, socks, shoes, face mask; non-speaking; flexible. (Can be played by anyone in cast.)

EXTRAS (optional): As Party Guests and Dark Figure.

NOTE: For flexible roles, change names and pronouns accordingly. Costumes for the ball can differ from the options listed above. Hick's costumes should look very out of place at the fancy ball.

Scandal at Hampton Estate

FARCE/MURDER-MYSTERY. To impress her snobby friends and to celebrate her new appointment as the city's Social Calendar Chairperson, Ivana Hampton has planned a fabulous costume ball and has invited all the city's upper crust citizens, including the mayor, to the Hampton Estate. Even a TV society reporter arrives to cover this important social event. The party goes smoothly at first for Ivana until a throng of hick relatives unexpectedly show up, Ivana's mother starts talking to her imaginary friend, a hobo crashes the party, and Ivana's elderly uncle arrives dressed as Hugh Hefner and introduces everyone to his 24-year-old fiancée. Then things really go downhill when the cook fails to prepare any food, the lights go out, the security guard gets murdered, the famous Hampton heirloom is stolen, and a ransom note demanding \$10 million dollars is discovered. When two detectives arrive to investigate the murder and announce that no one can leave the estate, the hungry guests find themselves trapped at what could be the worst party in the city's history!

Performance time: Approximately 120 minutes.

Setting

The posh Hampton Estate.

Set

Living room. Set should look as rich as possible with rugs, paintings, and fancy objects placed throughout. Furniture should have an expensive look. A grandfather clock is against the center of the back wall, and skirted tables with empty trays and bowls are on either side. USL is a small bar area with three barstools. A couch or loveseat (big enough for three people), chair 1, and an end table with the heirloom box are grouped CSR. Chairs 2 and 3 are grouped around a small table DSL, and a small table with a phone sits against the DL wall. The SL exit leads to the kitchen, library, and veranda. The USR exit leads to upstairs and the back door. The DSR exit leads to the front door and the hall bath.

Kitchen: Played before the curtain. There is a stool, a stove, a pot and a large spoon.

Veranda: Played before the curtain. There is a small outdoor table and chairs and some potted plants/flowers.

Synopsis of Scenes

ACT I

Scene 1: Living room.

Scene 2: Kitchen, moments later.

Scene 3: Living room, later that evening. The costume ball is in progress.

Intermission

ACT II

Scene 1: Living room, a short while later.

Scene 2: Living room, moments later.

Scene 3: Veranda, moments later.

Scene 4: Living room, moments later.

Props

Box for heirloom (Large enough to contain the stuffed dog)	Ransom note
2 Canes	Desk phone
Empty trays	Police badge
Bowls	2 Lollipops
2 Golf bags and equipment	TV camera
2 Small mirrors (for applying makeup)	Microphone
Wristwatch, for Ivana	Baby blanket
Old torn luggage	3 Sets of handcuffs
Crystal bowl (clear)	Gun
Makeup	Garter, for Ellie
Magazine	2 Airline tickets
Large spoon	Flashlight
Empty pot	Key, for heirloom box
Drink glasses	Rings and jewelry, for Ivana and Chrissy
Stuffed dog	Feather duster
Pitchfork	Trays of drinks
Caveman type bat	2 tennis rackets
	Reporter's notebook
	Pen

Sound Effects

"Mission Impossible" type music

Doorbell

Clock chiming nine times

Scuffling/confusion

Gunshot

Bump

"Dum da dum dum"

"This is
the worst party
I've ever been to."

—Ms. Indigo

ACT I Scene 1

(AT RISE: Living room of the Hampton Estate. Lights are dim and "Mission Impossible" type music is heard. A Dark Figure dressed all in black clumsily moves about the room in a James Bond-wannabe manner, making his way toward a box on a table next to the sofa. The Dark Figure opens the box, picks up something from the heirloom box, puts something into the box, closes the box, and exits. Lights up full. Enter Gertrude and Penelope. Penelope is Gertrude's imaginary nurse and is invisible to everyone except Gertrude. Gertrude is dressed in a robe and big fluffy slippers. Gertrude sits on the sofa and Penelope stands near her.)

GERTRUDE: *(Stubbornly.)* I hate it! I hate it! I hate it! There is no way in the world that I'm going this year.

PENELOPE: Oh, come on, Mrs. Hampton, it won't be that bad. All your family will be there.

GERTRUDE: Exactly. That's why I don't want to go. All of them are so snobby and mean to me. The only reason they put up with me is for my money.

PENELOPE: Ellie's brother Billy Bob and his family will be there. You've always loved them.

GERTRUDE: Yeah, they remind of the way my family used to act before we got rich. But that still doesn't make me want to go to this stupid party.

(Penelope comforts Gertrude. Lilly and Rose enter SL, talking and cleaning.)

LILLY: *(To Rose, complaining.)* It's a shame. We dust, we scrub, and we vacuum, not to mention, we take care of the old crab, and we barely get paid minimum wage.

ROSE: Yeah, that's true, but at least we have a job. In fact, you have the job that I've always wanted...head maid of the Hampton Estate. Ms. Hampton isn't that bad. She's just getting old.

LILLY: Old, young, what's the difference? She's a loser just like the rest of them.

ROSE: Don't say that! She'll hear you.

LILLY: Who cares? She'll forget in about two seconds anyway.

GERTRUDE: I heard that and I'll remember... *(Under her breath.)*
...hopefully. *(To Penelope.)* See, even the hired help acts like
them—stuck up and ungrateful.

(Rose and Lilly look at each other and shrug.)

ROSE: Who are you talking to, Ms. Hampton? No one is there.

(Gertrude ignores Rose.)

LILLY: What did I tell you? She's going senile. I told you so.

PENELOPE: *(To Gertrude.)* If they could hear me, I'd give them a
piece of my mind.

GERTRUDE: Don't start causing more trouble now. I've already got
enough to worry about.

ROSE: *(To Gertrude.)* I'm not trying to start any trouble. I'm just
concerned about you.

GERTRUDE: I wasn't talking to you. I was talking to Penelope.

(Rose pulls Lilly to the side.)

ROSE: *(To Lilly, concerned.)* Maybe we should tell Mr. Hampton
about her talking to herself.

LILLY: Yeah, whatever, but now it's time for her medicine and a nice
nap so... *(To Gertrude.)* ...you won't be so grouchy.

*(Lilly and Rose go to the sofa to help Gertrude up. Gertrude pulls away and
shakes her cane at them.)*

GERTRUDE: No! I can do it on my own. I don't need any medicine,
and I don't need a nap. Ya'll try to keep me doped up so I won't
know what's going on. Uh-huh, didn't know I had your number,
did you? See, Penelope, I told you...brutality.

ROSE: Penelope? Who's Penelope?

LILLY: *(Rolls eyes.)* Yeah, yeah, Ms. Hampton. Come on, come on.

*(Gertrude exits, complaining and fighting. Penelope exits with Rose and
Lilly USR. Mable enters SL, carrying various empty trays and bowls. She
starts arranging them on the table in front of the sofa. Munfree enters DSR*

and starts checking to make sure that everything looks right. Mable perks up when she sees Munfree.)

MABLE: *(To Munfree.)* Hi ya, sweet cakes.

(Mable approaches Munfree.)

MUNFREE: Come on, Mable, not now, I'm busy. *(Mable continues to paw at Munfree as he tries to get away from her.)* No, stop, come on, stop, stop! *(Munfree points with a surprised look on his face.)* Look! Ms. Hampton!

(Mable pulls away from Munfree and looks behind her. Munfree darts past her.)

MABLE: Why's you treat me the way you do, my cute little penguin?

MUNFREE: Look, babe... *(Starts straightening out his clothes and hair and acting suave.)* ...don't worry about me right now. What we should be worrying about is getting all the details for tonight straight.

(Mable flops down on sofa.)

MABLE: *(Pouting.)* Do we gotta?

MUNFREE: Yeah, we gotta. *(Sits on the sofa next to her.)* Do you remember everything?

MABLE: Of course. Tonight, as soon as it turns nine o'clock, I's supposed to shut off all the lights to the house from the circuit box out in the laundry room. *(Mable points to heirloom box.)* Brutus will be standing next to the heirloom box, since he's the security guard, and when the lights go off, he opens the box with the key that you stole from the little old lady. Brutus then replaces the heirloom with the ransom note that says, "Ten million, or you'll never see this piece of junk again." From there, he hides the piece of junk in the dirty clothes hamper, which is the safest place for it because you know these snobs will never go near it. Once we make the call to arrange the drop-off and get our money, then it's up to you, sugar lips... *(Puts her hand under his face and squeezes his lips into a pucker.)* ...to buy three passports to France, where we will live like royalty—especially me's and you's.

(She pushes closer to him and he gets up. She pops up and starts hugging him like he's a teddy bear.)

MUNFREE: Let go, let go of me. Come on, now. Look! Ms. Hampton! Here she comes!

MABLE: Oh, honey, there's no way in the world I'm falling for that one again.

IVANA: *(Offstage USR.)* What is all that racket? *(Mable lets go of Munfree and he falls to the ground. Mable runs to the table, pretending to arrange the bowls and trays. Entering from USR wearing her Cleopatra costume, Ivana stands behind chair 1.)* What is going on in here? *(To Munfree.)* What are you doing on the floor?

MUNFREE: *(Formal.)* Oh, mum, I was looking for my other cufflink. *(Pretends to pick something up.)* Here it is. I'll just go put it on. Excuse me, mum. *(Gets up and exits SL.)*

IVANA: Mable, where are those maids? This living room is so dirty. It doesn't look like they've dusted a lick in here. Go and tell them to get their butts down here pronto... *(Mable starts to leave and then pauses.)* ...but not before you go and check on the good china in the kitchen. *(Walks around and makes large gestures. Mable imitates Ivana behind her back.)* Ooooh, I have so much to do, so little time. The guests should be here any minute. This 75th Annual Costume Ball has to be fabulous. We must make a grand impression. Everyone will be watching. The mayor will be here, reporters, the works. *(Turns to Mable.)* Get to work. What are you standing around for? Go!

MABLE: *(Formal.)* Yes, mum.

(Mable rolls her eyes as she exits SL. Ivana mutters about never finding good help while she rearranges things on the table and around the room. Bartholomew V and his wife Ellie enter USR, wearing golf clothes. She is carrying all kinds of golf equipment. Bartholomew V isn't carrying anything.)

ELLIE: *(Southern accent.)* Well, I really enjoyed myself this afternoon. What do you call that game again? Gawlf, guf, gruff... *(Bart V ignores Ellie and shakes his head.)* ...grolf gruff...?

BART V: *(Annoyed.)* Golf.

ELLIE: *(Flinching.)* Oh, I was just about to say that.

BART V: Oh, Ivana, save me!

(Ellie puts down the golf equipment, gets out a mirror, and starts fixing her makeup. Bart V joins Ivana CS.)

IVANA: I see we've had a hard day on the... *(Sarcastic.)* ...gawlf course today.

BART V: You don't know the half of it, but that's the least of my worries. What are we going to do about tonight?

IVANA: What about tonight?

BART V: You know that Mother doesn't want to be at this year's 75th Annual Costume Ball. She'll do anything she can to ruin it. Remember what happened last year? She didn't want to come, and we made her come anyway. And to get back at us, she put her teeth in the punchbowl. Everyone ran out of here like a herd of elephants. It was a disaster.

IVANA: You're right. I guess I've tried to block out that terrible memory. What can we do this year to keep her from doing something stupid like that again?

(They both think.)

BART V: Well, I guess we'll just have to keep close to her at all times. If one of us spots her unattended, we'll make it a point to go and keep her distracted.

IVANA: That's a good plan, but we should tell Junior and Chrissy, too.

BART V: I will as soon as they come in to get dressed for the party.

ELLIE: Come on now, it was just some poor defenseless teeth. They can't hurt nobody 'cept if they were in her mouth, cuz lord knows that little critter gotta bite on her.

(Ivana and Bart V roll their eyes and ignore her. Ellie shrugs her shoulders and giggles to herself.)

BART V: Anyway, I meant to tell you, Lilly told me that Mother has been talking to herself a lot lately.

IVANA: Oh dear.

(Bart VI and his wife, Chrissy, enter USR. They both wear tennis outfits.)

BART VI: Hello, Mother. (*Approaches Bart V and Ivana.*) Hello, Father, Auntie.

BART V: Hello, Son. Your auntie and I were just discussing your grandmother's behavior at the party tonight.

BART VI: Oh, that must be because of the year that she took off all of her clothes and ran around streaking in front of all of our guests.

(*All look very concerned and disgusted except for Ellie, who giggles in the background.*)

BART V: No...

BART VI: Oooh, then you must be speaking of the year before last when she mooned the senator and his wife.

IVANA: No, we—

BART VI: You have got to be referring to the time when she ate all of those beans and—

BART V: Son! (*Agitated.*) It doesn't matter what she's done in the past. We just need to find a way to prevent anything like that from happening again.

IVANA: We've decided that one of us should stay near her at all times.

CHRISSEY: I don't think so! (*Whining, to Bart VI.*) I'm afraid of that woman. There is no way I'm watching over her unless somebody is watching over me, too.

BART VI: (*Consoling her.*) It's all right. You don't have to do anything you don't want to, okay?

CHRISSEY: Okay, snuggle bunny.

(*Chrissy tries to rub noses with Bart VI.*)

BART VI: Not in front of Daddy, sweetie.

(*Chrissy looks away, pouting.*)

IVANA: (*Looks at watch.*) Oh dear, look at the time. The guests will be here any minute.

ELLIE: (*Excited.*) I can't wait till my brother Billy Bob and his family git here. (*Breaks into song.*) "I'm so excited, and I just can't fight it." (*Spoken.*) Lord, I better start getting dressed. Sue Ellen is gonna

just die when she sees my costume. (*Picks up the golf gear and exits
USR.*)

CHRISSEY: What?! Her family is coming this year? The party was so much nicer without them last year. Well, I guess they got their truck fixed.

BART VI: Why are they even invited? They certainly don't fit in with the rest of our guests. (*To Ivana.*) Auntie, isn't there something you can do? I mean, this is practically your home.

IVANA: While Mother's still alive it's her home, and you know she loves those people. (*To Bart V.*) This is all your fault. If you hadn't married that country girl against everyone's wishes, we wouldn't have this problem now.

BART V: You're right, Sis. That was a mistake I made when I was a young rebel. I guess I saw something in her then. She was beautiful, but looks aren't everything.

BART VI: Don't forget that you're talking about my mother. I do love her, but I have to admit, it is embarrassing when she talks of tossing cow patties for recreation and making her clothes out of flour sacks. I wish we lived much further away from her side of the family. It's so difficult to be polite to those uncivilized people.

IVANA: Well, you know how Mother feels about those people. Pull yourselves together. They usually only stay for a weekend anyway. (*To Chrissy.*) Come, come, dear, let's go check on the cook and make sure everything is ready. (*As they exit SL.*) Have you noticed that some of our silverware has been disappearing?

BART VI: (*To Bart V.*) Um, Father, there is something I've been meaning to talk to you about...

BART V: Yes, Son?

BART VI: It's about you and Mom. Lately, I've been noticing that you two aren't getting along very well.

BART V: Why, Son, what are you talking about? Your mother and I go together like wine and cheese.

BART VI: No, you are more like ice cream and caviar...you don't mix. Look, Dad, I'm old enough to notice that you and Mom are on the verge of splitting up. Have you and Mom talked about getting a divorce?

BART V: (*With relish.*) A divorce. (*Pause.*) Well, sort of.

BART VI: What do you mean "sort of"?

BART V: I've talked about it...to myself...in my dreams. I seriously think that your mom has no idea that our marriage is at the

breaking point. It's just that she is so... (*Aggravated, building to a crescendo.*) ...doltish, moronic, witless, dense, simple...*stupid!*

BART VI: I get the point, Dad. Look, she is my mother and I don't want you to think I'm encouraging divorce or anything. All I'm saying is that I would rather see you happy apart than unhappy together.

BART V: Maybe you're right, Son. (*As they exit USR.*) Let's talk about this later. Right now we have to get ready for the party.

(*Doorbell rings. Ivana enters SL.*)

IVANA: (*Shouts.*) Munfree, get the door, get the door! (*Munfree enters and is at the DSR exit about to go open the door as Ivana straightens her costume.*) Wait, wait! Hold on... (*She strikes her most dramatic pose.*) Now, Munfree. (*Ms. Beecham, Ms. Finkley, Ms. Taylor, and Ms. Indigo enter. All are in costume.*) Well, just look at all of you! Your costumes are just perfect.

BEECHAM: (*With open arms.*) Darling!

IVANA: (*With open arms.*) Darling! (*They walk up to each other and give each other very exaggerated air kisses on both sides.*) Your Queen of Hearts costume is just perfect.

(*Ms. Finkley and Ivana exchange air kisses.*)

FINKLEY: (*To Ivana.*) Your Cleopatra costume is simply lovely.

IVANA: Thank you, love, and you look stunning as Cruella de Vil. (*Turns to Ms. Taylor.*) Oh, Phoebe, I see you've dressed as the Wicked Witch of the West. Simply smashing!

TAYLOR: (*More air kisses. Insincere.*) And your dress is riveting! Very nice. I've never seen you look better. (*Turns away and snickers.*)

IVANA: (*To Ms. Indigo.*) Oh, and look. Aren't you the villain from Sleeping Beauty? What was her name...?

(*Ivana attempts the air-kiss routine, but Ms. Indigo sticks out her hand instead. They shake hands.*)

INDIGO: (*Coldly.*) Maleficent.

IVANA: (*Ignoring the snub, speaking grandly.*) That's right. I am so glad that all of you could make it. Now where are my manners?

Would you like to have a seat? *(Guests sit on the sofa and chair 1. Ivana stands.)* Munfree, that will be all.

MUNFREE: *(Under his breath as he walks off.)* You psychotic witch.

IVANA: What was that, Munfree?

MUNFREE: Oh, Mum, I said I was going to check on the main dish.

(Exits SL.)

IVANA: Oh.

INDIGO: Sooo, I heard the mayor is coming tonight.

IVANA: Yes, she is. I felt I had to invite her because, after all, she did make me the SCC for the CCC, which we all know means The Social Calendar Chairperson for the Crestville City Community.

(Beams.)

FINKLEY: Ivana, is your Uncle George coming tonight?

IVANA: Yes, I do think so. I heard he was engaged. We should all be meeting her tonight.

TAYLOR: I heard she was of a low social class.

BEECHAM: I heard they met through a phone service.

INDIGO: I heard she shops at Kmart.

(They all gasp and look disgusted. Mable enters SL.)

MABLE: Ms. Hampton, can you come here for a moment? *(Exits SL.)*

IVANA: Excuse me, ladies. There must be a problem with the food. I shall return soon.

(Ivana exits SL. Guests lean forward to gossip. Ms. Indigo checks to make sure Ivana is out of earshot.)

INDIGO: Did you see that dress? It looks a bit odd, don't you think?

TAYLOR: Yes, it does. Planning this party must have really taken a lot out of her. Did you see the bags under her eyes? It looks as if she hid two weeks worth of garbage in them!

FINKLEY: Can you imagine...her 84-year-old uncle dating a 24-year-old? That is truly sick and disgusting.

ALL: Umm-hmm.

BEECHAM: I heard that those low-class relatives from the country are coming again.

FINKLEY: Me too. I suppose they'll have their offspring with them.

(Shudders.) I hope they don't bring all twelve!

INDIGO: When those uncultured people come in, I think we should all just ignore them.

ALL: Umm-hmm.

TAYLOR: I wonder how Bart will behave tonight. Lately, he's been so openly critical of Ellie. Of course she deserves it because she is part of that uncultured family. I don't know why he married her to begin with.

FINKLEY: Well, surely, it wasn't for money because she doesn't have any. And, surely, it wasn't because of her charm because she simply doesn't have any of that, either. So I've come to the conclusion that it had to have been blackmail or bribery. That's the only way a man of Bart's status would have married someone like her.

ALL: Umm-hmm.

INDIGO: Did you all see the way Ivana was bragging about being the SCC for the CCC?

BEECHAM: Yes, and I thought it showed very poor taste.

FINKLEY: *(To Ms. Indigo.)* You poor thing, you must feel so insulted. She knows how much you wanted that position.

TAYLOR: I think something should be done about this. Ms. Indigo would be a much better Social Calendar Chairperson for the Crestville City Community.

INDIGO: *(Conspiratorial.)* Well, maybe I should have a little talk with the mayor about this...

ALL: Umm-hmm, I agree, definitely...

(Ivana enters SL and stands behind chair 1.)

IVANA: What are you all agreeing on?

FINKLEY: Oh, we were just discussing...how nice it would be...if your uncle had a summer wedding.

IVANA: Yes, Uncle George is always happier during the summer, but on the other hand...

(Billy Bob, a very pregnant Sue Ellen, Mary Lou, and Betty Anne burst in DSR loaded down with a lot of old torn luggage. They drop luggage along the SR wall between the two exits. Ivana and Snobs turn and gasp.)

BILLY BOB: Howdy! *(To Sue Ellen.)* Would you look at all these purdy ladies in here!

(Billy Bob approaches and vigorously shakes the Snobs' hands. Sue Ellen follows and does the same. The Snobs are disgusted. Ivana is mortified. Billy Bob, Mary Lou, and Betty Anne go CS. Sue Ellen goes to SL table and picks up a bowl.)

SUE ELLEN: *(To Ivana.)* Is this real crystal?

IVANA: *(Ignoring her.)* That's an awful lot of luggage for just one weekend...

(Sue Ellen joins family at CS.)

BILLY BOB: Well, we're figurin' on stayin' a whole week this time.

IVANA: Well, you should have called. We have plans. We're attending the cricket championships this year and they just happen to be next week. Sorry.

MARY LOU: We like ketch'n crickets. *(To Sue Ellen.)* Mama, Mama, can we go, too?

IVANA: No, dear, I don't mean the insect. I mean the game, which is only played by certain people.

MARY LOU: What kind of people, Aunt [I-van-a]? *[Pronounced Eye-van-a.]*

IVANA: Not your kind, dear.

SUE ELLEN: Whatcha mean, "your kind"? You mean yungins?

IVANA: *(Sarcastically.)* Yes, that's exactly what I mean.

SUE ELLEN: Well, if that's the case, me and Billy Bob might just come and see what this cricket is all about.

(Ivana is about to object but doesn't have a chance.)

BILLY BOB: *(Yells.)* Ellie! Come on in [hya] and see yore kin. *[Here]*

(Ivana covers her ears and walks over to the Snobs to apologize and comfort them.)

IVANA: *(To Snobs.)* I'm so dreadfully sorry. We all know Mother would be so disappointed if they didn't come.

INDIGO: Until you get the situation under control, we'll be on the veranda having tea.

(Snobs exit SR, shaking their heads. Sue Ellen struggles to sit in the chair due to her large size.)

SUE ELLEN: Ivana, you wouldn't believe the drive up here.

(Ivana sits on the couch.)

IVANA: Oh, really, what happened?

(Ivana and Sue Ellen look over at Mary Lou, who is balancing the crystal bowl on her head.)

SUE ELLEN: *(To Mary Lou, yells.)* Will you stop that?! *(To Ivana, calmly.)* I was so uncomfortable. *(To Mary Lou, yells.)* Don't you make me come over there! *(Mary Lou rolls her eyes. Yells.)* Don't you roll those eyes at me! I'll pop them right outta yore head! *(To Ivana, calmly.)* Anyway, these kids are driving me crazy. I can't believe I'm having another one. *(To Billy Bob, talking to him like she talks to the children. Yells.)* Billy Bob, get yur [chirren]. *[Children]*

BILLY BOB: On my way, sweetie.

SUE ELLEN: Takin' care of a household is warin' me out.

IVANA: I know what you mean. Where are those maids? This place is a mess. *(To Sue Ellen and Billy Bob.)* Excuse me, I have so much to do.

(Ivana exits SL. Billy Bob comforts Sue Ellen. Ellie enters USR, wearing a costume. Ellie hugs her relatives and then stands near the couch. Children come and play at Sue Ellen's feet.)

ELLIE: *(To Billy Bob.)* Hey there, Brother. You haven't changed a lick. And, Sue Ellen...you, you, well, you gained a little weight, don't ya think?

SUE ELLEN: Well, that's cuz I'm havin' another baby.

ELLIE: *(Confused.)* Oooh! So, Billy Bob, how's Uncle Big Eye? Is he still pillin'?

BILLY BOB: Yep. Aunt Celia May's still following him around with a broom and dustpan.

ELLIE: That's a shame. What about cousin Cobra Dog?

BILLY BOB: Well, Ellie, I'm sorry to say...cousin Cobra Dog died.

ELLIE: That's just terrible. How did he die?

BILLY BOB: Some friends were driving him home one Sunday after a long day of fishin'. He was ridin' in the back of the truck when the truck lost control and ran off into the lake. Cousin Cobra Dog drowned 'cuz he couldn't get that stupid tailgate down. *(Pause. Shakes his head.)* Those things can be tricky at times.

ELLIE: Oh, dear...

SUE ELLEN: I just love yore dress. They just ain't gone be satisfied until they turn you into city folk.

ELLIE: *(Bashfully.)* Well, it might be purty, but I won't be able to sit down all night. *(Makes a motion that indicates that her dress would fly up if she sat down.)*

BETTY ANNE: Mama, Mary Lou just touched me.

SUE ELLEN: *(To Mary Lou.)* Don't play, girl. Now is not the time.

MARY LOU: She touched me first, Mama.

(Sue Ellen intervenes in a hushed mommy voice.)

ELLIE: *(To Billy Bob.)* They're just growin' up so fast.

BILLY BOB: Yup. We had to leave the other ten at home.

SUE ELLEN: *(To Children.)* Would ya'll please stop?! I'm gonna end up hangin' the both of you from yore toenails just like last week.

(Mary Lou and Betty Anne start whining.)

BILLY BOB: *(Over the Children's whines.)* Sooooo, Ellie, where's that security guard Brutus?

SUE ELLEN: Don't even start with that now.

BILLY BOB: What do you mean don't even start? I was just asking a question.

SUE ELLEN: Well, don't.

BILLY BOB: I can ask anything I wanna.

ELLIE: Come on now. What happened between Sue Ellen and Brutus is over. That happened two years ago, now hush.

(Doorbell rings. Hushed bickering continues as Munfree enters and answers the door. George and Candy enter from the front hall and make their way CS.)

GEORGE: *(To Munfree.)* Ivana, you're looking as beautiful as ever. *(Hugs Munfree.)* Your face is a little sticky, though.

(Munfree drifts back to the bar area.)

ELLIE: Hey, Uncle George, I'll get Ivana for ya. *(Yells.)* Ivana!

(Billy Bob approaches George and shakes his hand.)

BILLY BOB: Howdy, sir. Remember me? I'm Ellie's brother Billy Bob. *(Looking at Candy.)* And who might this sweet thang be?

CANDY: *(Giggling.)* I'm Candy. *(Sticks out her hand. He takes it and kisses it.)* Nice to have met you, um, I mean ya'll.

SUE ELLEN: *(Watches with growing anger.)* Billy Bob, watch the chirren. *(Billy Bob hesitates. Sue Ellen gets angrier.)* The chirren, Billy Bob!

(Billy Bob gives in and walks over to join his family. Ivana enters SL. Candy entertains herself with a mirror and makeup.)

IVANA: *(To Ellie.)* Haven't I told you time and time again not to yell in this house? It's improper. Munfree, you may leave now. Go upstairs and tell Brutus to get down here. The party is about to begin and no one is guarding the heirloom. Now hurry. *(Munfree exits. Ivana hugs George.)* Hello, Uncle.

GEORGE: Who are you?

IVANA: Ivana, who else?

GEORGE: *(Confused.)* Ivana? I thought I just saw you a few seconds ago.

IVANA: No, no, no. You must mean Ellie. She is married to my brother Bart.

ELLIE: No, not me. I think he was talkin' about Munfree.

IVANA: *(Insulted.)* No, of course not. He couldn't have been referring to Munfree, Ellie. *(To George, indicating Ellie.)* Poor dear, she gets mixed up sometimes.

GEORGE: Who answered the door?

IVANA: Why, I do think it was Munfree.

GEORGE: Yep, I did think Munfree was you.

IVANA: *(Rolls eyes, yells.)* Mother!

(Mary Lou runs up to George.)

MARY LOU: Hey, Uncle George. (*Indicating Candy.*) Is this yore daughter? Can we play with her please? Please?

GEORGE: Everyone, I'd like you all to meet my fiancée, Candy.

CANDY: (*Shaking Ivana's hand.*) Hi, ma'am. Nice...to have...made your acquaintance. (*To George.*) Did I say it right?

(*George nods. Candy squeaks and giggles proudly.*)

IVANA: So this is who everyone has been talking about...

CANDY: People have been talking about me?! I feel so honored.
(*More giggles, squeaks, etc.*)

(*Lilly and Gertrude enter USR.*)

GERTRUDE: George!

GEORGE: Gertrude!

(*Gertrude and George shuffle toward each other and end up in front of the couch. They embrace and then do their secret dance. Conversation continues. Ivana pulls Lilly to CS.*)

IVANA: (*To Lilly.*) What took you so long to get down here?

LILLY: (*Unconcerned.*) She had to finish putting on her dress. Well, actually, I had to talk her into putting her dress on. She wanted to come down here in her robe.

IVANA: Oh, I would have been so embarrassed if she had come down here in her robe. Doesn't she look cute in her Little Bo Peep costume? (*At this point, George sits in chair 1 and Gertrude sits on the left end of the couch, the hoop of her underskirt pushing her skirt up to reveal wildly colored knee-length bloomers. Penelope enters USR and sits next to Gertrude. Ivana gasps, shakes her head, and continues.*) Look, where's Brutus? He was supposed to be down here at 7:30. He knows that's when the guests are supposed to arrive. It's already after eight. (*Stage whisper, fiercely.*) Go find him and get him down here now.

(*Ivana smiles and waves to the others.*)

LILLY: Ms. Hampton, Munfree went upstairs earlier and Brutus wasn't there. No one has seen him since last night.

IVANA: He better hope I'm in a good mood later, because if I'm not, I'm going to kill him. He's going to ruin my party. Now, how would it look to everyone watching this event on national television if the most important secret heirloom in world history wasn't guarded? *(With disgust.)* We might look common to our fans. Whoever finds Brutus gets a bonus in their check this month. Now take these people up to their rooms before I have a nervous breakdown.

LILLY: Yes, ma'am.

(Lilly approaches Billy Bob and his family and helps them with their bags.)

ELLIE: *(To Betty Anne as they prepare to exit.)* You and Mary Lou come see what I have in my room.

BETTY ANNE: What, Aunt Ellie?

ELLIE: I bought you a bunch of new toys and you can play with any one you choose.

BETTY ANNE/MARY LOU: Oh, goody, I can't wait!

(The Hicks, Ellie, and Lilly exit USR. Ms. Finkley enters from the veranda and goes CS. She catches Ivana's arm just as Ivana is about to approach George, Candy, Gertrude, and Penelope.)

FINKLEY: Ivana, I've been meaning to tell you something all night. Patricia is very upset that you were chosen as the SCC for the CCC instead of her.

IVANA: Well, if I were Patricia, I would be jealous, too!

MS. FINKLEY: No, Ivana, you don't understand. She's planning to speak to the mayor tonight.

IVANA: What does she plan to say?

FINKLEY: She will say just about anything to make you look bad. You're my dearest friend... *(Ms. Indigo, Ms. Beecham, and Ms. Taylor enter from the veranda. George, Gertrude, and Candy pantomime conversation in the background.)* ...that's why I thought you should know.

INDIGO: You thought she should know what, Chelsea?

FINKLEY: I thought she should know...my grandmother's recipe for Chicken à la King. You know, since she's having so much trouble with the food and all.

IVANA: Oh, that reminds me...I must go check and see how the main dish is coming along. I don't know what's wrong with Mable tonight. She usually doesn't act like this.

TAYLOR: I agree. You usually have such excellent food at your parties.

IVANA: Well thank you, Cynthia. *(To others.)* If you all will excuse me. *(Exits SL.)*

INDIGO: You see what she's doing, girls? She's acting as if her cook is better than ours.

BEECHAM: Oh, that crab dip last year was just ghastly.

TAYLOR: I agree. It tasted so artificial, so fake.

INDIGO: Speaking of fake...Chelsea, just what were you and Ivana discussing when we walked in?

FINKLEY: I was just telling her about...you know, what I told you earlier...

TAYLOR/BEECHAM: *(Lean forward suspiciously.)* Yeeees, Chelsea...

FINKLEY: You know, that thingy...

GEORGE: *(Indignant.)* Dingy! Who are you calling dingy? My Candy is a fine young woman!

(Snobs approach George.)

FINKLEY: Oh, no, no, no. That's not what we said at all. We were saying—

GEORGE: Oh, never mind, I know what you were saying.

INDIGO: So this is your fiancée? We've heard so much about her. *(To Candy.)* Hi, I'm Patricia Indigo and this is Chelsea Finkley, and that is Cynthia Beecham, and to her right is Phoebe Taylor.

(Characters are positioned in the following ways: George is sitting in chair 1, Finkley is left of the chair, Candy is hovering around George, Indigo is standing between the chair and sofa, Gertrude is sitting on the left end of the sofa, Penelope is sitting next to her, Beecham is sitting on the right end of the sofa, and Taylor is standing right of the sofa.)

CANDY: *(To all.)* Nice to have...made your...acquaintance. *(To George, excitedly.)* I got it right again! *(Silly giggle.)*

GEORGE: You're so smart, darlin'. *(To Ms. Finkley.)* You'd have to be blind not to see it.

FINKLEY: But I didn't mean—

(Ms. Finkley makes a big gesture and almost knocks over the heirloom box. All gasp and those closest to the box try to keep it from falling.)

GERTRUDE: *(To Ms. Finkley.)* Be careful!

GEORGE: *(To Ms. Finkley.)* Watch out!

BEECHAM: *(To Ms. Finkley.)* You almost knocked over the precious heirloom!

FINKLEY: I'm so sorry.

TAYLOR: You know, I've always wondered what was in that box. Will it ever be revealed?

PENELOPE: Oh, these nosy snobs!

GERTRUDE: *(To Penelope.)* Oh, just shut up. Not now.

TAYLOR/BEECHAM/PENELOPE: Excuse me!

GERTRUDE: You heard me.

TAYLOR: I was just asking a simple question. I didn't mean to offend you.

GERTRUDE: You didn't offend me, dear. I was defending you.

PENELOPE: Who would defend someone like her?

GERTRUDE: I would.

BEECHAM: You would what?

GERTRUDE: I would what, what?

TAYLOR: What?

BEECHAM: *(To Ms. Taylor, indicating Gertrude.)* What is she talking about?

(Ms. Taylor shrugs.)

PENELOPE: *(To Gertrude.)* I think their costumes are affecting their intelligence.

GERTRUDE: *(To Penelope.)* Why are you always making trouble?

BEECHAM: *(Overly dramatic.)* What?!

TAYLOR: *(Trying to explain.)* Ms. Hampton, I would have never asked the question if I had known it would cause this much confusion.

GERTRUDE: What question? What are you talking about?

BEECHAM: The question about the heirloom.

CANDY: What heirloom? I'm confused. I think ya'll lost me.

INDIGO: I'm sure we did, dear.

(All look at Candy like she's a complete idiot. George gets up and walks toward DSC.)

GEORGE: Let me tell you about the famous Hampton heirloom. It's the most sacred inheritance of any kind. It's been passed down through five generations—

PENELOPE: *(To Gertrude.)* Here he goes again...

GERTRUDE: Shush!

OTHERS: What?

GERTRUDE: *(Louder.)* Hush up!

(All look at each other, confused. During George's speech, all lean forward excitedly as they wait for the secret to be revealed.)

GEORGE: The only living people whose eyes have looked upon the glorious piece of creation that sits in this box are my lovely sister and me. My sister, Gertrude, is the holder of the only key to the box. She, and only she, will decide the next key holder in her will before she passes on. It was my great-great-great-grandfather's most precious possession, and he painstakingly prepared it for future generations to treasure. I feel honored to have beheld its beauty. The Hampton heirloom is—

CANDY: *(Gasps and wails.)* Oh, no, look at this!

ALL: What?

CANDY: I just got my nails done last night, and the polish is chipped already.

(George rushes to Candy. Others roll their eyes and express aggravation over Candy's interruption.)

TAYLOR: *(To other Snobs.)* I can't believe she interrupted just as he was just about to reveal what the famous heirloom is. That airhead.

INDIGO: That reminds me...where is Ivana? Didn't she go check on the food?

TAYLOR: Yes. I wonder what's taking so long.

(All look SL. Blackout.)

Scene 2

(AT RISE: Kitchen at the Hampton Estate, moments later. Played before the curtain. Mable enters, sits on a stool, and looks at a magazine. Ivana enters SL. When Mable sees Ivana approaching, she hops off of her stool, gets a spoon, and pretends to stir an empty pot on the stove.)

IVANA: Mable, do you smell anything?

(Mable stops stirring.)

MABLE: No, ma'am.

IVANA: (Shouts.) Exactly! What's going on in here? Where's the food?

(Mable pauses and thinks.)

MABLE: Have I ever let you down before?

(Mable moves to block Ivana from the stove.)

IVANA: No, you haven't, and you better not tonight! This is my first social event as the SCC for the CCC.

MABLE: What's that?

IVANA: My dear, I've been appointed by the mayor to be the Social Calendar Chairperson for the Crestville City Community, and, as such, it is my responsibility to set the standards for future social engagements of the coming year.

MABLE: Sure.

IVANA: So how is the menu progressing?

MABLE: (Blocking stove.) Don't worry, Ms. H., I've got everything under control.

IVANA: What did you call me?

MABLE: (Pretending she doesn't know what Ivana is talking about.) I called you Ms. Hampton likes I usually do. I would be crazy to call you anything else.

IVANA: Yes, Mable, whatever you say. I'm counting on you.

(Ivana exits SL. Mable makes a mean face and makes a gesture behind Ivana's back.)

MABLE: *(Mimicking Ivana.)* Hi, I'm Ms. Hampton, and I want food for my little party. *(Sarcastically.)* Hmmph, by the end of the night, no one will be worried about food.

(Munfree enters SR.)

MUNFREE: I can't find Brutus anywhere, and it's almost nine o'clock.

MABLE: He better not let us down or I'll pound him. I can't stand working for this woman another minute.

MUNFREE: I haven't seen him since last night. You don't think he backed out on us, do ya?

MABLE: No, sugar lips, he's getting just as much out of this as we are.

(Mable tries to hug Munfree, but he pushes her away.)

MUNFREE: I'm going to look for him one more time. Hey, look, turn off the lights as planned whether you hear from me before nine or not. *(Exits SR.)*

MABLE: Sure thing, sweetie!

(Mable exits SL. Blackout. Stage hands clear kitchen props.)

Scene 3

(AT RISE: Hampton Estate living room, later that evening. The party is in progress. All Guests are in costume. Bart VI is sitting in chair 2, Chrissy is standing to his right, Bart V is sitting in chair 3, Ellie is standing to his left, Munfree is making drinks at the bar, Billy Bob is sitting on a barstool and Sue Ellen is standing near him. Betty Anne is sitting on the floor near the back left table playing with a wrapped-up stuffed animal [the heirloom]. Ms. Indigo, Ms. Beecham, Ms. Finkley, and Ms. Taylor are standing in a group DSR, George is sitting in chair 1, Candy is sitting on the arm of the chair, Gertrude and Penelope are sitting on the sofa, and Mary Lou is sitting to the right of the sofa playing with her pitchfork and her dad's Flintstone bat. Ivana enters SL and stands between chairs 2 and 3.)

IVANA: *(To Bart V.)* Bart, don't lose your cool, but I just returned from the kitchen, and to my surprise, the food wasn't even close to being ready.

(Bart V stands.)

BART V: *(Yells.)* What?!

(Ivana looks around and assures Guests that everything is fine.)

IVANA: Calm down, Bart. You're making a scene. I don't know what's gotten into Mable. She's been acting strange lately.

BART VI: So has Brutus. It's very strange that he's not down here yet.

IVANA: *(Yells.)* What?! *(Stage whisper. Tense.)* What do you mean he is not down here yet? *(Bart V looks around and assures Guests that everything is fine. Composes herself.)* Okay, we won't worry about that right now. Who's been watching Mother?

(They all look around at each other.)

ELLIE: Oh, I'll go. *(Ellie walks over and stands between Gertrude and Candy. She grabs Candy's hand and admires her nail polish.)* What a pretty color.

CANDY: Why, thank you. The people who did them loved me so much that they gave me a special deal! One hand for the price of two!

ELLIE: Oh, that is a good deal. Before you leave, you have to give me the name of the shop you went to.

PENELOPE: *(To Gertrude.)* That sounds like the same deal they got on their brains—one for the price of two.

(Gertrude pushes down her skirt and laughs out loud.)

ELLIE: Well, Gertrude, what's so funny?

GERTRUDE: I just had a thought.

GEORGE: Speaking of a thought... *(Rises and goes DSC.)* ...I remember when I had to get up at three in the morning and milk the cows and churn the butter and help Mama in the kitchen. Those were the good ol' days. Back then, we didn't worry about colored nails and pretty hairstyles and scraping feet and slapping paint on them too...

(Mary Lou sneaks up behind George and hits him in the back of the knee with the Flintstone bat. George falls and Bart VI and Chrissy run to his aid. Billy Bob and Sue Ellen run to Mary Lou. Candy slowly moves toward George.)

SUE ELLEN: *(To Mary Lou.)* You know better than that, chile. You can't go around hittin' little old men on the back of their legs.

(Sue Ellen drags Mary Lou back to the bar. Chrissy and Bart VI try to help George up.)

GEORGE: *(Struggling to get up.)* What old man? Who called me an old man? Back in my day, 84 wasn't considered old.

CHRISSY: Poor, poor Mr. Hampton.

CANDY: *(Dramatically.)* Oh, darling! Are you all right? Did you break any ligaments?

GEORGE: I'm okay. Sometimes my knees just give out on me. I guess I am getting a little old.

BART VI: Okay, Uncle George, let's get you back to your seat.

(Chrissy and Bart VI help George back to chair 1.)

BILLY BOB: *(To Candy at DSC.)* Um...I'm sorry about what happened to your grandpa...I mean your father...I mean your fiancé Mr. Hampton.

CANDY: Oh, that's okay. He's used to it. You know what? *(Flirtatious.)* I like Fred Flintstone. He's so big and strong.

BILLY BOB: *(Bashfully.)* Thanks. That's mighty sweet of ya to say. *(Sue Ellen walks over and stands behind Billy Bob.)* I like cute little bunnies with little fluffy tails.

SUE ELLEN: *(Clears her throat. To Candy.)* Excuse me, ma'am, but would you mind if I talked to my *husband* for a minute please? Thanks.

CANDY: Oh, okay, I better go and check on by baby cakes. I almost forgot about him. *(Goes to George.)*

SUE ELLEN: *(To Billy Bob.)* You just won't stop until you get me back, will ya?

BILLY BOB: What you talkin' 'bout, Sue Ellen?

SUE ELLEN: You know good and well what I'm talkin' about. All that mess with Brutus. You need to forget about that. I should have listened to Mama and married Jethro. Right now I'd be in Hollywood living it up in high society.

BILLY BOB: Doesn't Jethro work as a hotdog vendor on Hollywood Boulevard?

SUE ELLEN: So what, Billy Bob? So what? I'd rather be turning wieners than watchin' my man tryin' to take Candy from an old man.

(Sue Ellen storms back to the bar. Sulking, Billy Bob follows her. Chrissy and Bart VI approach Bart V and Ivana.)

CHRISSY: *(To Bart VI.)* Bart, did you see what that little hoodlum did? I don't think I can take staying a whole week with those common people. Let's go out of town, just until they leave. *(Gives him puppy dog eyes.)* Please...

BART VI: We'll talk about this later.

(Chrissy pouts.)

BART V: *(To Ivana.)* As I was saying—before I was so rudely interrupted by that little brat's barbaric display—just because you

are the eldest, doesn't mean you'll be the next to own the family heirloom.

IVANA: Dear brother, think about it...who does Mother like the best?

BART V: Neither of us, Ivana, and you know it.

IVANA: Yes, that's true, but who does she depend on the most?

BART V: You. So what? Everyone knows that it's only natural for a mother to depend on her daughter more than she depends on her son. Ah-ha! I've got it. I know for sure that when Mother croaks that heirloom is mine.

IVANA: And what is it that makes you sooo sure?

BART V: Ellie.

IVANA: Ellie?

BART VI/CHRISSEY: Ellie?

BART V: *(To Ivana.)* We both know that Mother loves Ellie. She can't leave the heirloom to Ellie because it would be against tradition, so she'll leave it to the person closest to Ellie, and that's me.

BART VI: He's got a point there, Auntie.

IVANA: *(To Bart V.)* Oh, Bart, everyone knows that your and Ellie's marriage isn't holding together. Even Mother knows that. The only poor soul who probably doesn't know is Ellie.

(Everyone looks over at Ellie, who is looking at her nails.)

CHRISSEY: She's got a point there, Mr. Hampton.

BART V: Well, we'll just see about that. *(Bart V approaches Ellie. Ivana watches.)* Oh, Ellie, you are just as beautiful as the day I met you.

ELLIE: *(Shocked and flattered.)* Why, thank you Bart.

PENELOPE: *(To Gertrude.)* Now that's a lot of bull.

GERTRUDE: You can say that again.

ELLIE: Thank you too, Mrs. Hampton.

(Bart V holds Ellie in his arms.)

BART V: Your radiance is — *(Pushes Ellie aside and directs his attention to Candy. To Candy.)* I don't believe we've met.

(Ms. Indigo approaches Bart V.)

INDIGO: *(Teasing.)* Well, Bart, I see you haven't met your soon-to-be auntie.

BART V: What? My aunt?

INDIGO: Yes, this is your Uncle George's future wife.

CANDY: *(To Bart V.)* Hi, nice to meet you. I'm Candy.

(Candy attempts to shake Bart's hand, but he grabs her hand and kisses it.)

ELLIE: *(Oblivious.)* All right, Bart. I'm ready for you to finish whisperin' sweet nothings' to me, baby.

BART V: *(Staring at Candy.)* Frankly, I don't remember whispering anything to anybody. *(Pushes Ellie away again.)* So, Candy, how long will you be in town?

PENELOPE: Long enough to wrap you around her finger like she does just about every man.

GERTRUDE: Yup. Not too long at all.

BART V: How do you know, Mother?

GERTRUDE: How do I know what?

BART V: Oh, never mind, Mother. So, Candy, how did you and Uncle George meet?

CANDY: I believe I was just leaving Big Daddy's House of Pizza—that's where I used to work before I met Georgy Porgy. Anyway, as I was walking down the street, everyone had their eyes on me, so I pulled out my handy dandy compact to make sure that what they were looking at was perfect, as usual. Then all of a sudden, I bumped into George. He fell and started wiggling all over the ground on his belly. I couldn't see his cute little face, so I got his wallet out of his back pocket so I could find a picture of him. And as soon as I saw what was in that wallet, I knew that he was the man I was going to spend forever with.

(Ms. Indigo looks shocked and starts walking back to join Ms. Taylor, Ms. Beecham, and Ms. Finkley.)

BART V: Wow!

PENELOPE: *(To Gertrude.)* Forever shouldn't be too long for him!

GERTRUDE: Hey, that's my twin brother you're talking about.

CANDY: I know. He told me last week. Which, I might add, was our two-week anniversary!

ELLIE: That was the most purdiest love story I done ever heard.

GEORGE: See, you children don't know anything about love until it plumb knocks you down, which reminds me of a story Grandma Tilly used to tell when I was a young child. It starts with a poor young woman...

(George tries to get out of his chair, but Candy pushes him back down. His voice fades and people around him pantomime listening to his long, boring story.)

INDIGO: *(To Snobs.)* Girls, girls! Have I got some juicy gossip for you! *(Ms. Finkley, Ms. Taylor, and Ms. Beecham move in closer.)* I know how the old bag and the tramp met!

BEECHAM/TAYLOR/FINKLEY: How?

INDIGO: She had just left her Big Daddy's house to go walk the streets, if you know what I mean. Then she saw poor, unsuspecting Mr. Hampton and ran into him, knocked him down, and took his wallet. She got halfway up the street before she noticed the contents of the wallet and then she went back for the rest, which brings us to the present.

FINKLEY: She said that?

INDIGO: Does [Bill Gates] have a bank account? *[Or insert the name of another millionaire.]*

BEECHAM: Oh, how sad!

TAYLOR: Have you all noticed anything peculiar at this party?

BEECHAM: Yes, there's no food.

FINKLEY: Exactly! I was just wondering to myself what kind of party this is with no food anywhere.

INDIGO: Well, that's a strike against Ivana. If you're going to be the SCC for the CCC, you must be prepared. And she's obviously not prepared tonight.

FINKLEY: Maybe we should speak to Ivana about this. *(They all agree and go DSC.)* Ivana, may we speak to you for a moment?

(Ivana moves to meet them DSC.)

INDIGO: So, Ivana, will the hors d'oeuvres be coming out soon?

IVANA: Oh, yes, the food. It's being taken care of as we speak.

INDIGO: You know, as the SCC for the CCC, I would think you would have all of these little details under control.

IVANA: The cook is finishing up all of the last-minute details. I'm sure the food will be out any minute. *(Doorbell rings. Munfree heads toward the door.)* Excuse me. Munfree, answer the door.

MUNFREE: *(Rolls eyes.)* Yes, ma'am.

(Munfree walks offstage DSR to answer the door. He enters followed by the Mayor Vicki Thompson, Crystal Mitchell, Samantha Payne, and the Hobo. Samantha is carrying TV camera equipment. Ivana greets the new guests. Ms. Taylor, Ms. Beecham, Ms. Indigo, and Ms. Finkley move behind Bart VI and Chrissy.)

IVANA: *(To Mayor.)* Oh, dahling, I'm so glad you're here.

(Ivana and the Mayor exchange air kisses as the Hobo walks in without acknowledging any of the other Guests. Hobo walks to the sofa and sits to the right of Phoebe.)

CRYSTAL: *(Aggravated.)* Samantha, set up over there. *(Points to DSC. Samantha stands still and ignores her. To Ivana.)* I am so sorry we were late, Ms. Hampton. The van had a flat on the way here, and Samantha took her time changing it. Samantha, didn't you hear me? I said, set up over there.

SAMANTHA: *(Moving to set up the camera equipment.)* Yeah, okay, whatever.

CRYSTAL: *(To Ivana.)* Oh, I didn't even introduce myself. I'm Crystal Mitchell from Channel 1, WNFO: "If you're rich and powerful, don't look for us because we'll surely find you." This party is one of the biggest stories of the year and covering it will help me launch my career. I've always dreamed of being the top lifestyle reporter in the nation.

IVANA: Well, dear, that's nice—

CRYSTAL: *(Gushing.)* Oh, look at your house. It's so beautiful, and those paintings...they are simply to die for. The furniture is just exquisite. And would you look at all of these rich and powerful people—

IVANA: Yes, they are my guests, and I must be getting back to them.

CRYSTAL: Oh, you're absolutely right. *(Backs up as she apologizes.)* I didn't mean to keep you from your guests. I'm here to cover the party, not to interfere. I'm sorry. So, so sorry. *(Backs into the camera.)*

SAMANTHA: Watch it, you bumbling idiot.

CRYSTAL: Don't talk to me like that. Remember, my daddy signs your paychecks.

(Samantha and Crystal pantomime bickering. Mary Lou wanders over to Ivana.)

IVANA: Well, Vicki, or should I say, Mayor Thompson? I'm so glad you could make it. And I love your costume. It just fits your personality perfectly.

MAYOR: Thanks, Ivana. Everything looks lovely. I just came from a fundraising meeting and I'm starving.

MARY LOU: I'm hungry, too, Auntie Ivana.

IVANA: Oh, I checked on the food, and it should be out anytime now.

MARY LOU: But I want to eat now.

(Crystal points to Mary Lou, and Samantha focuses the camera on her.)

IVANA: Not now. Don't you hear your mommy calling you?

MARY LOU: *(Throws a fit, whining.)* I want food, I want food, I want food!

(Ivana tries to shush Mary Lou. Sue Ellen and Billy Bob approach Mary Lou.)

SUE ELLEN: What's wrong with you?

BILLY BOB: *(To Mary Lou.)* Now, come on, and quit all that cryin'.

(Mary Lou continues crying.)

SUE ELLEN: *(To Mary Lou, impatient and upset.)* We fed you veanner sawsages 'fore we got here.

(Mary Lou continues crying.)

BILLY BOB: *(To Mary Lou.)* Now hush up, 'fore yore mama do what she done last time. You know yore still recovering from it.

SUE ELLEN: *(To Mary Lou.)* I think we brought somethin' that'll shut you up. If'n I remember right, it's still out in the truck.

(Sue Ellen exits DSR. Billy Bob drags Mary Lou to chair 3 and kneels in front of her.)

BILLY BOB: *(To Mary Lou.)* Now see what you gone and done. Now yore mama is as mad as a wet hen.

(Betty Anne begins to work her way over to Ivana. Ivana approaches Crystal.)

IVANA: *(To Crystal.)* If you want to advance your little career, dear, then you'll make the right decision about showing these family tiffs on television.

(Ms. Taylor, Ms. Finkley, Ms. Indigo, and Ms. Beecham approach Mayor DSR.)

CRYSTAL: *(Scribbling in reporter's notebook. To Ivana.)* So these people are your family. *(Jots something in notes.)*

IVANA: Did I say *family*? What I meant was—

BETTY ANNE: *(Tugging on Ivana's dress.)* Aunt Ivana, I can't find my mama.

IVANA: *(Laughing it off.)* Well, your father is right over there. *(Points to Billy Bob.)* Why don't you ask him?

BETTY ANNE: Thank you, Auntie Ivana. *(Walks off cheerfully.)*

IVANA: *(To Crystal.)* Just ignore her, she gets mixed up sometimes. I'm about to welcome my guests. Make sure you get this. *(To all.)* Gather around, everyone.

CRYSTAL: *(To camera.)* This is Crystal Mitchell reporting from the Hampton Estate. Right now it is almost nine o'clock and Ms. Ivana Hampton is about to welcome all of her guests to this prestigious event.

(Guests stand and form a semicircle around Ivana and Crystal.)

IVANA: I would like to welcome all of you to the 75th Annual Hampton Costume Ball. I would especially like to welcome our mayor, Ms. Vicki Thompson, who appointed me the SCC for the CCC. But I didn't invite her here for that reason only. She is also a close and dear friend of mine who has been here for me through thick and thin. *(Brief dramatic pause.)* Anyway, if anyone wants to

know what the SCC for the CCC is, I will tell you. (*Ms. Beecham, Ms. Taylor, Ms. Indigo, and Ms. Finkley roll their eyes.*) That means she appointed me to be the Social Calendar Chairperson for the Crestville City Community, and I am honored to be the first person to ever hold that title. I vow to do my best to set the standards for social events in Crestville for as long as the Mayor sees fit. On another note, I am proud to share this moment with my dear mother, Gertrude, and her twin brother, George, who have attended all 75 of the Hampton costume balls. (*"Oohs" and "aahs" from Guests.*) Now, I hope you will all enjoy the rest of the evening.
MARY LOU: (*Loudly.*) How can I enjoy myself when I'm so hungry?

(*Everyone laughs, claps, and returns to their groups. Candy exits DSR and Bart V follows her.*)

IVANA: (*To Crystal.*) I trust you will cut that last remark, won't you?

(*Ivana exits SL. Crystal writes a few more notes and then looks around. Crystal approaches Bart VI, who is sitting in chair 2.*)

CRYSTAL: (*To Bart VI.*) Do you mind if I ask you a few questions on camera?

BART VI: No problem.

CRYSTAL: Samantha, set up over there. (*Crystal faces the camera, fluffs her hair, takes a deep breath, and cues Crystal.*) We are now talking to Bartholomew Frederick Hampton the VI. Until recently, he was considered the most eligible bachelor in the world. (*To Bart VI.*) So, Mr. Hampton, how is married life treating you?

BART VI: I've never been happier. (*Hicks wave at the camera and act obnoxious in the background.*) Chrissy is the best wife a man could have.

CRYSTAL: (*To Chrissy.*) Is he as charming in real life as he appears to the public eye?

CHRISSY: Oh, yes, and more.

CRYSTAL: Are you going to continue your modeling career now that you're married?

CHRISSY: I was planning to take some time off so that Bart and I can adjust to married life.

BILLY BOB: (*To Bart VI.*) Wait a minute. You mean to tell me that you allow yore women to work?

BART VI: I feel that it is up to the woman to decide whether or not she wants to work.

BILLY BOB: Well, hit me and call me a pig foot in the mud. Back where I'm from, we don't let our women work, even if they want to. They stay home and cook and clean and have babies all day long, and they don't even complain.

CHRISSEY: We are at the beginning of a new millennium, for goodness sake. Women can work and balance a family all at the same time.

BILLY BOB: I didn't realize that ya'll were so multi-talented. Ya'll must be adaptin' to the environment. I heard that fancy talk on tellyvision... "adaptin' to the environment." Well, I guess it's about time... all these goll-darn years that done past by.

CHRISSEY: (*Irritated, about to lunge at Billy Bob.*) Aaaugh! I can't take this anymore! I'm going upstairs to cool off. (*Exits USR.*)

CRYSTAL: Ooookay. So, uh, Bart, what can you tell us about the mysterious Hampton heirloom?

BART VI: Well, as you know, Crystal, only my grandmother and my Uncle George know what the heirloom is. But I'm looking forward to the day when it will be passed down to me.

CRYSTAL: I notice that no one is guarding the heirloom tonight of all nights. You know, with all of these people here it would seem—

BART VI: (*Uncomfortable.*) Oh, our guard, Brutus, is here. He must have just stepped out for a moment.

CRYSTAL: (*To Samantha.*) Cut. (*To Bart VI.*) Thanks. (*Shakes his hand. To Samantha.*) Tonight, we are going to get some good material on video. I can just feel it. Don't you turn that camera off for one second, do you hear me?

SAMANTHA: But, Crystal, we don't have a lot of tape.

CRYSTAL: Did you hear me?

SAMANTHA: Nitwit.

CRYSTAL: What?

SAMANTHA: I said, "I won't quit." I won't quit taping.

CRYSTAL: Oh, okay. Let's go over there to those people.

(*Samantha and Crystal approach George and Gertrude. Bart VI goes to the bar. Billy Bob and Kids exit SL. Ms. Beecham, Ms. Taylor, Ms. Finkley, Ms. Indigo, and Mayor go DSC.*)

INDIGO: (*To Mayor.*) Are you enjoying yourself, Vicki?

MAYOR: You can call me Mayor Thompson. And, yes, I am.

BEECHAM: Oh, dear, I am starving, just famished. What about you, Mayor Thompson?

MAYOR: Yes, I am very hungry, but Ivana said the food should be out soon.

FINKLEY: Yes, she said that at eight o'clock, and that was almost an hour ago.

INDIGO: Ms. Beecham, where did Ivana say the security guard was?

BEECHAM: I do believe she said he didn't feel like working tonight.

TAYLOR: She didn't seem to care. The heirloom must not be that important to her.

BEECHAM/FINKLEY/INDIGO/TAYLOR: Uh-huh.

MAYOR: All of this talk is making me thirsty.

(Mayor moves toward the bar. Clock starts to chime nine times. Blackout. Note: Sounds of confusion are heard until the lights come back on.)

ELLIE: What happened to the lights?

INDIGO: If we knew, they wouldn't be off, you nit.

GETRUDE: Everyone, stay still until the lights come back on.

MUNFREE: Ladies, stay calm. I'm sure it's just the fuse box.

(A bump is heard when the heirloom box is knocked over.)

CRYSTAL: Oops, I guess I knocked something over.

(A gunshot is heard DSR. Everyone screams.)

TAYLOR: Was that a gun?

GERTRUDE: *(Sarcastic.)* No, Phoebe, it was those beans I ate earlier.

What do you think? Of course, it was a gun.

BEECHAM: Oh my! We're all going to die.

INDIGO: This is the worst party I've ever been to. First, no food is served, now this.

ELLIE: I'm startin' to think the lights didn't go out on accident.

TAYLOR: *(Sarcastic.)* Ya think?

(Lights up.)

GERTRUDE: Is everyone okay? Check yourself for bullet holes.

(Ivana runs in SL.)

IVANA: What happened? I heard a gunshot. *(Sees the heirloom box and screams. Ms. Taylor and Ms. Beecham run to her.)*

BEECHAM: Are you okay, Ivana?

IVANA: The heirloom box!

(Ivana points to the heirloom box, which is lying on the floor. Everyone gathers around it.)

CRYSTAL: That must be what I knocked over.

IVANA: You took it. You took the heirloom!

CRYSTAL: No, I didn't. Where could I have put it?

IVANA: Well, who took it then? *(Starts looking in and around the box. She finds a note. Reads.)* "Ten million, or you'll never see this piece of junk again."

(Ivana faints. Ms. Beecham and Ms. Taylor catch Ivana and fan her face.)

GEORGE: Great-great-great-grandpa would turn over in his grave if he knew about this.

GERTRUDE: What are we going to do?

(Ivana wakes up and pulls away from Ms. Beecham and Ms. Taylor.)

IVANA: Our sacred family heirloom. This is the worst thing that could possibly happen.

(Rose screams from off SR, and everyone looks in that direction. Rose runs into the room DSR.)

MAYOR: What's wrong, dear?

ROSE: He's dead!

MAYOR: Who's dead?

(Candy runs in DSR.)

CANDY: He's dead!

ALL: Who's dead?

ROSE: Brutus. He's been shot.

CRYSTAL: Samantha, are you getting all of this?

IVANA: *(To Samantha.)* Turn that camera off.

INDIGO: I'm leaving.

IVANA: No one's leaving until we find out what's going on. *(Goes to the phone and dials.)*

PENELOPE: *(To Gertrude.)* All of these years, and you're the one to lose the most precious possession in your family.

GERTRUDE: But it's not my fault.

ELLIE: Why no one's blamin' you, Gertrude.

IVANA: *(Hysterically, into phone.)* Yes, give me the police. There's been a murder at Hampton Estate. And someone has stolen our precious heirloom. *(Seductively.)* And if you don't mind, send that strapping specimen of a man, Detective Mace.

(Ivana hangs up the phone and looks at audience. Blackout. Intermission.)

[END OF FREEVIEW]