

TWO DUDES FROM DAYTONA

A one-act comedy by
Matt Buchanan

Loosely adapted from William Shakespeare's
Two Gentlemen of Verona

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

VAL, a young man bound for stardom.

THEO, a young slacker.

SPEED, an enterprising teen .

JULIA, a young Daytona Beach woman.

* LUCY, her friend.

* TANYA, Theo's wealthy mother.

SYLVIA, an up-and-coming leading-lady type.

LANCE, an aging pool boy.

SKIP THURIO, a successful leading-man type.

WILMA DUKE, Silvia's mother and Theo and Skip's agent.

FRANKY, a street kid.

GLORIA, a street kid.

QUEENIE, a street kid.

IRVING, a street kid.

* OTHER STREET KIDS

* MIKE, a car thief.

* BAND OF MUSICIANS

* A BARTENDER

* VARIOUS NEW YORKERS

* VARIOUS OFFICE WORKERS (optional)

* EDDIE MOORE, a cheap private detective.

* One or more POLICE OFFICERS

* Indicates roles that can be easily doubled.

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTES

Although the characters and story line differ significantly, this play is structured very like the Elizabethan original. For this reason it is very important that only minimal sets be used, so that scene changes can take place more or less instantaneously. Otherwise the rhythm of the play is disrupted. In general, if the specific setting for a particular scene is really important, the characters mention it in the dialogue, so it is not necessary for the set to make the setting clear. Any set dressing should be small enough that the actors themselves can carry it on.

The following characters can be either male or female, though for convenience the male pronoun is used in the stage directions:

Speed

Franky

Other Street Kids

Mike

Band of Musicians

Bartender

New Yorkers

Office Workers

Police Officers

In addition, while they should be played AS male, other characters could probably be played BY girls if necessary.

Costumes can be as over-the-top or as naturalistic as you choose, but they should match. (In other words, if you choose to over-play the surfer looks at the beginning of the play, you should over-play other characters' looks, such as the street kids, Eddie Moore, etc. later on.)

(Daytona Beach. No set is necessary. VAL, in traveling clothes, and THEO, in surfer casual, are saying goodbye.)

VAL: Dude, stop. You're not going to talk me out of it, so stop trying.

THEO: But Daytona Beach won't be the same without you!

VAL: So come with me. The big city awaits. But I know you can't. *(Mocking:)* You're in love.

THEO: I admit it. Julia is in Daytona Beach. So I'm staying.

VAL: Suit yourself, but I think you're crazy. Nothing ever happens here. I'm heading for the Big Apple. Love is for wusses.

THEO: If you're going to call me names...

VAL: I want culture. I want sophistication. Besides, how many famous actors come from Daytona? Broadway, here I come!

THEO: But that's where you and I are different. I like the simple life.

VAL: Don't try to kid me. You like Julia.

THEO: If you were in love, you'd understand.

VAL: Who knows? Maybe I'll meet some hot chick in the big city.

THEO: Well, if you do, I want to hear all about it.

VAL: Count on it, dude.

(They shake hands elaborately and Val exits. After a moment, enter SPEED, rapidly, on his skateboard. He is dressed in skater apparel.)

SPEED: Yo, Theo. Have you seen Val? I've got his plane ticket.

THEO: You just missed him. Did you give my letter to Julia?

SPEED: Oh, I gave it to her. For all the good it did me.

THEO: What did you expect? A tip?

SPEED: Hey, if you two are going to treat me like a messenger boy, it's the least she could do.

THEO: So she sent a reply, then?

SPEED: Did I say that?

THEO: She didn't?

SPEED: I didn't say that either.

(Theo takes a semi-playful swipe at Speed, who dodges him easily.)

THEO: Listen, you little...are you going to tell me what she said?

SPEED: What's it worth to you?

THEO: Oh, fine...here's five bucks.

SPEED: *(Pocketing the bill with a flourish:)* Pleasure doing business with you.

THEO: Now what did she say?

SPEED: Not a thing. Ha!

THEO: Why you little...give me back my five!

SPEED: *(Dodging Theo:)* No way! I did what you paid me for—I told you what she said. It's not my fault she had nothing to say. You know, I don't think you've got much of a shot there, sport.

THEO: Mind your own business.

SPEED: I always do, baby. I always do. Later, dude.

(Speed exits on his board, followed by an exasperated Theo. Enter JULIA and LUCY, in beach cover-ups over swimsuits.)

JULIA: Lucy, what do you think about love?

LUCY: Depends on who you love, I suppose.

JULIA: Well then, who should I love? Who's the cutest boy in Daytona Beach?

LUCY: Well, that's a tall order. Name a few and I'll tell you what I think of them.

JULIA: *(Giggling:)* Well, there's Larry English.

LUCY: Oh, he's cute! And rich, too.

JULIA: I know!

LUCY: But you can do better.

JULIA: Oh. Well, how about Mark Cato?

LUCY: Well, he's rich, too, but that's about all you can say about him.

JULIA: Yeah.

LUCY: I mean, that lisp alone...

JULIA: *(Over-casual:)* Okay...how about Theo?

LUCY: Oh, no! He's a real dork.

JULIA: *(Furious:)* What?!?

LUCY: Ha! I knew it!

JULIA: What?

LUCY: You're in love with Theo!

JULIA: Okay, what if I am? I'm not saying I am, but what if I am? He is not a dork!

LUCY: No, of course not. I was just pulling your leg.

JULIA: He's pretty cute, I guess. But he's never shown the slightest interest in me, so why should I care?

LUCY: Oh, stop! You love him. We both know it. And I know something else. (*Producing a letter:*) Check this out.

JULIA: Where did you get this?

LUCY: From that little punk Speed. I'm pretty sure he was supposed to deliver it to you in person, but you know how he is...always in a hurry.

JULIA: And where did he get it?

LUCY: Duh! From Theo!

JULIA: (*Giving it back. Haughtily:*) Take it back, then. I don't want it. Theo is nothing to me.

LUCY: (*Giving it back again:*) Well, I don't want it either. It's your letter.

JULIA: Fine, then.

(She tears the letter into tiny pieces without reading it, dropping the pieces on the ground.)

If Theo has something to say to me, he can say it to my face, instead of sending notes by teenage hoodlums. What are we, in third grade?

LUCY: If that's the way you want it. Well, I have a lesson with my tennis pro, Alhandro! What a backs...I mean backhand! See you.

(Lucy flounces off. Julia looks with chagrin at the fallen pieces of paper.)

JULIA: Oh, what did I do that for?

(She picks up a few of the fragments and tries to read them.)

Oh, look! "Lovely Julia." Stupid Julia. (*Tosses it away:*) Oh! "Love-starved Theo!" (*Kisses the paper:*) That goes here—by my heart.

(She puts the fragment in her top and drops to her knees to search the rest.)

Maybe he wrote his name more than once. Here! "Poor, sad Theo!" Oh, don't ever be sad, sweet, sweet Theo! Oh, and here's a big piece! It says here, "Holy Julia." Holy? And here "Passionate Theo." If I fold the paper... (*She does so.*) ...I can put our two names together.

(She puts the folded paper in her top.)

I'd better pick up the rest. Don't want to be a litterbug.

(She carefully gathers up all the fragments and exits. Blackout. Lights up on Theo, reading a letter.)

THEO: Oh, heavenly Julia!

TANYA: (*Off:*) Theo!

(Theo tries hastily to hide the letter as TANYA enters.)

THEO: Oh, hello, Mother.

TANYA: What's that letter you were reading?

THEO: Oh...er...just a letter from Val in New York.

TANYA: Val? What does he say? Let me see the letter.

THEO: Oh, he doesn't really say anything. Just begs me to join him in the city.

TANYA: That's exactly what I wanted to talk to you about.

THEO: (*Uneasy:*) Oh, yes?

TANYA: Oh, yes. I think you should go to the city like Val.

THEO: (*In a panic:*) You want me to be an actor? Why?

TANYA: No, of course I don't want you to be an actor. In fact, I forbid it. But I'm sick of watching you while away your life, bumming around the beach. It's time you made something of yourself. And New York is the place to do it.

THEO: But I am something! And I'm happy here!

TANYA: You're not something a son of mine should be. If you want to keep spending my money and driving my cars, I'm afraid I'm going to have to insist. In fact, I've already scored you a job...the boss owes me a favor. You start tomorrow.

THEO: But, Mother...

TANYA: But me no buts, Theo! You're just going to have to suck it up and give it a try. If you still hate it after three months, you can come home.

THEO: But...

TANYA: This conversation is over, Theo. I suggest you start packing.

(She stalks off, leaving Theo looking after her in frustration. Blackout. Lights up on Val and Speed, in New York. Again, no special scenery is needed.)

VAL: I still don't know what you're doing in New York, Speed. I thought Daytona Beach was your turf.

SPEED: I go where I want. I figure I need a bigger scope for my talents. Besides, you tip better than Theo. Though lately you're just as sickening to be around.

VAL: Oh, that's nice. What are you talking about?

SPEED: You're in love.

VAL: Oh, come on! How do you know that?

SPEED: Please! You've been wandering around Manhattan like a lovesick schoolboy for weeks.

VAL: (*Ruefully:*) That obvious, huh?

SPEED: And you better be careful.

VAL: Why do you say that?

SPEED: Dude, if I can see it, so can other people. And she's your agent's daughter. Crossing Wilma Duke is no way to get a good part.

VAL: I don't know. Maybe Wilma won't care. And living in her house, just think of how many opportunities I'll have to see Sylvia.

SPEED: You're dreaming. Won't care! Wilma Duke is the most powerful agent in New York. She's not going to want her only daughter marrying some bit player.

VAL: Hey!

SPEED: I call 'em like I see 'em. I don't even know how you scored her as an agent. I don't exactly see Broadway beating down your door, sport.

VAL: Give me time! I've only been here a month. Anyway, Sylvia's got her eye on someone else.

SPEED: Oh, yeah?

VAL: She told me so.

SPEED: Oho...so we've progressed to conversation, have we? Instead of just staring at her with your mouth hanging open?

VAL: (*Offended:*) Yes, we have. Last night she had me help her write a love letter to this Don Juan.

SPEED: Who is it?

VAL: She wouldn't tell me. Probably some smarmy leading-man type.

SPEED: I hope you torpedoed the letter.

VAL: I did not. I did the very best I could.

SPEED: Oh, well...it's probably lousy anyway, knowing you.

VAL: Shut up.

SPEED: Don't look now, but here comes the lady herself. Later, dude.

(He exits on his skateboard, as SYLVIA enters. During the following, Speed re-enters quietly and watches.)

SYLVIA: There you are.

VAL: *(Suddenly shy:)* Sylvia! I...erm...I finished your letter. *(Producing it:)* But it was hard to write.

SYLVIA: *(Haughty:)* Well, if it was too much trouble...

VAL: No, no! Anything for you. I was glad to do it. It was just hard.

SYLVIA: *(Suddenly shy:)* And why was that?

VAL: Well, it would have been easier if I had known who it was for.

SYLVIA: Oh. *(Pause.)* Well, I'm still not going to tell you. Thanks, though. *(Taking the letter:)* I'll go send this. *(Teasing:)* And don't you go following me to see where it goes! On second thought, take it back. I guess I don't want it.

(She exits.)

SPEED: Dude, you need help.

VAL: *(Startled:)* I thought you left.

SPEED: I'm here, I'm there, I'm everywhere.

VAL: I wish you were nowhere.

SPEED: Dude, she gave you the perfect opening and you blew it.

VAL: What are you talking about?

SPEED: When she asked you why the letter was hard to write, you should have said, "It gave me pain to write such words of endearment to my rival." I bet that's what she wanted you to say.

VAL: Oh, I can just see myself saying something that wet! And why do you even know words like "endearment?"

SPEED: (*Offended:*) I read! I may be a punk, but I'm not *just* a punk.

VAL: I just don't know how to get her to notice me.

SPEED: You really are as thick as a post, you know that?

VAL: Don't you have someplace to be?

SPEED: Fine. Don't listen to me. But I think it's obvious she *has* noticed you.

VAL: How do you figure?

SPEED: Why else would she give you a love letter?

VAL: She hasn't written me any love letters!

SPEED: Dude, why should she, when she can get you to write 'em yourself? You still don't get it, do you? It's Cyrano de Bergerac in reverse.

VAL: (*Protesting:*) What are you... (*Realizing what Speed said:*) ...Cyrano de Bergerac? The things you know constantly amaze me.

SPEED: Like I said, I read.

VAL: So you're saying this other jerk she loves is me?

SPEED: Jerk is right. Yes, peabrain. She got you to write to yourself. Didn't she hand you the letter?

VAL: *(Light dawns.)* I guess she did.

SPEED: There you go. Come on...it's dinner time. You're buying.

(They exit. Blackout. Lights up on Theo and Julia.)

THEO: Please don't cry. It's only for three months. It will go by fast.

JULIA: It would go by faster if you didn't go.

THEO: I have to. My mother will disown me.

JULIA: So what? If we love each other, what do we need with her money? *(Realizing what she's said:)* Okay, scratch that...we do need her money. I'm not living in a trailer, even for you. But I wish you didn't have to go.

THEO: I'll write all the time. Meanwhile, take this.

(He takes a ring off his finger and presses it into her hand.)

It's my grandfather's ring. Every time you look at it, you can think of me.

JULIA: Then you take mine, too.

(Gives him her ring.)

THEO: I'll wear it over my heart all the time.

TANYA: *(Off:)* Theo!

THEO: Gotta go. *(Kissing her:)* It will feel like an eternity. Wait for me?

JULIA: Always.

(They exit in opposite directions, slowly, without taking their eyes off one another. When they're gone, LANCE enters,

looking, as he always does, like Jimmy Buffett on a bad hair day. With him, as always, is CRAB the dog. [If you have one that will behave, a live dog would be fun, but a stuffed one will do.]

LANCE: *(To the audience:)* You know, I think my dog, Crab, is the most unsentimental beast on the face of the earth. When they heard I was moving to New York, the family almost lost it, man. My old lady was crying in her soup. My old man was punching walls and bawling. My sister was inconsolable. So was my brother, the little wuss. But not Crab. Dude, this dog never shed one single tear. Not one. I'll show you how it was:

(Lance begins shedding clothing – nothing risqué – to illustrate his story.)

This flip-flop is my father. No, wait, this one is my mother. No, that can't be right, man. Wait, it is right. Or left. This one has a hole in the sole, so this one is my mother. She never had much soul. This other flip-flop is my father. This belt is my sister. See how skinny she is? She never eats! This hat is my brother. He's always got to be on top of everything. Give himself apoplexy one of these days, man. I am the dog. No, wait...the dog is the dog. *(Pause.)* Then who am I? Oh! I am me, and he is him. Or he. Anyway...

(He does an elaborate puppet show as he narrates.)

Now, here's my old man. *(To the shoe:)* Pops, I'm moving up North. *(As the shoe:)* Oh, boo, hoo, hoo! Oh, no, not our boy! A day I hoped would never come! *(To audience:)* And here's my old lady. *(To the other shoe:)* Ma, I'm going to New York. *(As the shoe:)* Ahhh! Oh, noooooooo! Whatever will we do? *(To audience:)* And here's my sister. *(To the belt:)* Sis, I'm off to find my fortune. *(As the belt:)* No, you can't! I'll miss you so! Oh, boo, hoo, hoo! *(To audience:)* And my bro. *(To the hat:)* Bro, I'm done cleaning pools for a living. I'm off to the big city, man. *(As the hat:)* Oh, no! We love you so much! We need you! Don't go! *(To audience:)* And all this time, what does

Crab do? He sits there. Not one word does he say, man! No feelings at all. Come on, you unfeeling cur.

(Lance exits with Crab. Blackout. Lights up on Val, Sylvia, and SKIP THURIO. Skip is dressed in flamboyant Hollywood movie-idol fashion, complete with Ascot and beret. He is very obviously "chatting up" Sylvia as Val looks on in irritation.)

SKIP: *(To Sylvia, a hard sell:)* So, yeah, that part really bumped me into star status. I'm a household name these days.

SYLVIA: *(A little irritated by the attention:)* Oh, I'm sure you are.

SKIP: Yep, the girl who finally snags me will be sitting pretty.

SYLVIA: *(To Val:)* Val, you seem sad.

VAL: I do seem sad.

SKIP: *(Sneering:)* Seem? Do you "seem" things you're not?

VAL: Sometimes. So do you.

SKIP: Oh, yes? What do I "seem" that I'm not?

VAL: *(Boldly:)* Smart. Cool.

SKIP: And how can you tell I'm not?

VAL: Well, there's your scarf, for one thing.

SKIP: *(Contemptuously:)* My "scarf" is an Ascot.

VAL: Doesn't make it any less stupid.

SKIP: *(Angry now:)* You want to be careful, my man. I'm a name in this town.

VAL: A stupid name. What kind of name is "Skip?"

SKIP: This from a guy named "Val." Isn't that a girl's name?

SYLVIA: Guys, watch it...here comes Mother.

(The two men assume attitudes of studied casualness as WILMA DUKE enters. She looks every inch the hard-as-nails theatrical agent she is.)

WILMA: Well, Sylvia, you seem to have all the male attention you need for one day. Gentlemen, how are you?

SKIP: In the pink, Wilma, in the pink.

VAL: And me. Any news on a part for me?

WILMA: Be patient, kid. You've only been making the rounds a month.

VAL: I know, I know... "never give up, never give in."

WILMA: That's right. Meanwhile, there's some joker in a suit outside the office looking for you. He looks like a surfer dressed as a banker.

VAL: Theo!

WILMA: I tried to tell him you weren't here, but he seemed to think this is where you could be found. Turns out he was right. Skip, come with me. I need to talk with you privately.

SKIP: The Angelina thing?

WILMA: Privately.

(Wilma ushers Skip off. Val grabs Sylvia excitedly.)

VAL: Theo is here! This is the guy I told you about.

SYLVIA: The one who would have come with you, except he was in love with a girl back in Daytona Beach?

VAL: My best friend, yes. Only his mother made him come anyway. Got him a job in some bank.

(Enter Theo. He does indeed look like a surfer in a suit.)

Theo!

THEO: Val! (*Embracing him:*) And this must be the famous Sylvia.

SYLVIA: I'm not famous yet, despite my mother.

THEO: You are to anyone who's been talking to this guy!

VAL: (*Aside, to Theo:*) Easy, man! (*Aloud:*) I may have told him all about you.

THEO: (*Kissing her hand:*) My lady, your servant.

SYLVIA: (*Giggling:*) I like your friends, Val.

VAL: (*Joking, or pretending to:*) Back off, fella. I saw her first.

SYLVIA: You so didn't. Skip Thurio did, bless his conceited little heart. Well, I'll leave you two to catch up.

(*Sylvia exits. Theo and Val embrace again.*)

VAL: So, Theo, how's the love of your life?

THEO: Oh, I won't bore you with my story. What about you? I thought love was for wusses!

VAL: (*Laughing:*) Okay, I admit it. I've gone over the wall. Oh, Theo, isn't she fantastic?

THEO: (*Casually:*) Oh, I don't know...she's all right, I guess.

VAL: Don't make me hurt you!

THEO: (*Laughing:*) I'm kidding! She's perfect. Congratulations.

VAL: Don't congratulate me yet, pal. I think she's just toying with me.

THEO: Is there somebody else?

VAL: Maybe. I can't even tell. Oh, Theo, I can't sleep, I can't eat. She's all I think about!

THEO: My friend, this is payback for making fun of me all those times.

VAL: You got time for some lunch?

THEO: Sorry...unlike some people, I actually have a job.

VAL: Hey! I have a job. Do you think it's easy running from audition to audition all day?

THEO: Anyway, I'm already late for my first day of work. Stay loose. I'll see you later.

(Exit Theo and Val, separately. Enter Lance, with Crab; and Speed, on his skateboard; separately.)

SPEED: Lance! What are you doing here, dude? Has everybody left Daytona Beach?

LANCE: Oh, I thought I'd see what I could make up here. I'm tired of cleaning other people's pools all day, man.

SPEED: All day? Like you ever did a whole day's work in your life!

LANCE: Well, I don't want to become a workaholic.

SPEED: How are things back home?

LANCE: About the same.

SPEED: What about that little gal of Theo's? Julia? Will she wait for him while he's here trying to bust Wall Street?

LANCE: Oh, she'll wait. For a while. A better question is, will he wait for her, man?

SPEED: You got that right. This town is going to eat him alive. And speaking of eating...

LANCE: I know, I know...I'm buying. Come on, then.

(They exit together. Blackout. Lights up on Theo.)

THEO: What am I going to do? If I leave my Julia, I'm a real jerk. If I love Sylvia, I'm twice a jerk. Plus, I'd be doing down my best friend, Val. Three times a jerk. And yet...she's so...New York. So beautiful and sophisticated. She makes Julia look like a hayseed. *(Pause.)* I did love Julia. I did. But it's like I was in love with a twinkling star, and then I saw the sun. It's only Sylvia for me! *(Pause.)* And that makes Val my rival. Well, so be it. For Sylvia's sake I'll betray my friend. And here he comes.

(Enter Val.)

VAL: Theo! My friend! Have you turned the banking world on its ear yet?

THEO: *(Laughing;)* Not yet. But I want to hear about you. How goes the love life?

VAL: I'm glad you asked. Can I tell you a secret?

THEO: I'm all ears, my friend. *(Uncomfortable;)* You know you can trust me.

VAL: She loves me!

THEO: Sylvia? How do you know?

VAL: She told me so! In fact, we're planning on getting married tomorrow night!

THEO: Tomorrow night! So soon?

VAL: Well, when you're in love, why wait?

THEO: And what does her mother think of all this?

VAL: Well, er...that's why it's a secret. We haven't told her. I think she has someone a little more...successful in mind.

THEO: You haven't told her? But won't she be a little annoyed when you come home married?

VAL: Well, yeah...I expect there will be a scene. But Julia thinks it will be easier to ask for forgiveness than to ask for permission. Once Wilma sees that she's got a son-in-law whether she likes it or not, she'll make the best of it. She might even work harder for me.

THEO: How do you figure that?

VAL: Julia thinks if Wilma can't have a son-in-law who's already famous, she'll try to make the one she has famous instead.

THEO: And what about Skip Thurio? Is that an enemy you can afford to make?

VAL: Theo, I don't care! I love Sylvia and she loves me.

THEO: Well, I wish you luck, I really do. Sylvia is a great girl.

VAL: She's the only girl...except for your Julia, of course.

THEO: What? Oh, right. Except for her.

VAL: Well, I'll see you later, Theo. I've got so much to do. Gotta get a license, find a ring...you'll be best man, of course?

THEO: Just tell me where and when.

VAL: I will. Later, dude.

(Exit Val.)

THEO: *(To Audience:)* Tomorrow night! I've got to work fast!

(Exit Theo. Blackout. Lights up on Julia and Lucy.)

JULIA: It's been weeks and weeks, Lucy!

LUCY: It's been a couple of weeks.

JULIA: It feels longer. Oh, I miss him so much. And I can't stand to think of all the sophisticated New York girls. They're probably all over him!

LUCY: So go to New York to see him. I mean, it's not exactly the sixteenth century. There's this nifty new invention. It's called an airplane.

JULIA: But how can I go see him? I promised I'd wait for him. I promised I'd trust him!

LUCY: So?

JULIA: If I show up in New York he'll know I don't.

LUCY: Don't you?

JULIA: (*Hesitating:*) Well, I do...I do trust him. But I don't trust those New York women. But I don't want him to think I don't trust him.

LUCY: So stay and wait then. What do you want me to say?

JULIA: (*Frustrated:*) Oh, I don't know! If only I could just see him.

LUCY: If you see him, it stands to reason he'll see you.

JULIA: Wait! That's it! I'll go in disguise!

LUCY: As what...a loose New York floozie?

JULIA: (*Still working it out:*) No...I don't want to test him. Just see him. I know! As a boy!

LUCY: Come again?

JULIA: I'll go as an office boy. That will give me an excuse to get close to him without him knowing.

LUCY: If you say so.

JULIA: No, Lucy, it's perfect. Come on...you can help me with my disguise.

(They exit. Blackout. Lights up on Wilma Duke and Skip Thurio.)

WILMA: I'm sorry about this, Skip, but they insist on an audition. It's just a formality.

SKIP: But I'm Skip Thurio! I don't audition! It's an insult!

WILMA: I told them that, but they insisted. And it is a great part. Look...they assured me the part's yours. Just go through the motions.

SKIP: It is a good part. Fine, I'll do it. But I won't like it.

(Exit Skip as Theo enters. Theo gives Skip a dirty look in passing.)

THEO: Er...Ms. Duke?

WILMA: Yes? Who are you? What do you want?

THEO: Er...I'm Val's friend...Theo. Remember?

WILMA: Oh, yes...now I do.

THEO: Do you have a minute?

WILMA: If you really mean a minute, yes.

THEO: What I have to say is very hard for me. Val is my friend.

WILMA: Don't worry about that. He's my client. We're kind of in the same boat.

THEO: *(Not sure how to take this:)* I guess so. Anyway, I just thought you ought to know. It's been worrying me.

WILMA: What has...you've got thirty seconds left.

THEO: It's your daughter, Sylvia.

WILMA: I know, I know. He thinks he's in love with her. Him and half of the actors in town. So?

THEO: She thinks she's in love with him too.

WILMA: That's not so good. Are you sure?

THEO: I'm afraid so. In fact, they're planning to be secretly married...tonight.

WILMA: I see.

THEO: I felt it was my duty to let you know. I love Val, but I think he's making a mistake. Your daughter is far too successful and sophisticated for him.

WILMA: I agree. I've been hoping for some time that she'd take up with someone successful...like Skip Thurio.

THEO: Of course. Or maybe a successful banker or something?

WILMA: (*Considering it:*) Well, yes...there's no rule that says an actress has to marry an actor.

THEO: Exactly. Well, I just thought you should know.

WILMA: And I appreciate it, young man. I really do. If you ever decide to give up banking and tread the boards, you've got an agent.

THEO: Here he comes. Be kind. He is my best friend.

WILMA: Trust me.

(Theo exits one way as Val enters another.)

Val! Stop a minute? I want to talk to you.

VAL: Sure, Wilma. Another audition?

WILMA: No, not yet. Patience, kid. No, I want to talk to you about Sylvia.

VAL: (*Nervous:*) Oh?

WILMA: I've noticed you and she have been spending a lot of time together lately.

VAL: We're just friends, honest!

WILMA: No, no, that's not it. I just thought you might know what's going on in her head. I'm worried about her.

VAL: Really?

WILMA: Really. I'm afraid she's falling for that Lothario Skip Thurio.

VAL: Oh.

WILMA: And I think it's a mistake. She's at the beginning of her career. If she hooks up with an established star like Skip she'll always be Skip's wife. I want her to make a name in her own right. Like I did.

VAL: I see.

WILMA: To tell you the truth, I'd been sort of hoping she'd come to like you.

VAL: (*Hopefully:*) Really?

WILMA: Yes. I mean, you're even less well-known than she is.

VAL: (*Ruefully:*) Tell me about it.

WILMA: But as you say, you're just friends. Too bad, but there it is.

VAL: Well, actually...

WILMA: Yes?

VAL: Well, since you put it like that, I guess I can tell you. We're not just friends.

WILMA: Oh?

VAL: In fact, we're engaged.

WILMA: Engaged?

VAL: In fact, we're planning on getting married tonight. We were going to tell you...

WILMA: I knew it! I knew I could trust that young surfer-banker!

VAL: Theo? He told you?

WILMA: He told me all about it. (*Suddenly cold:*) So I suppose you think you've hitched your wagon to a real star, eh?

VAL: What?

WILMA: My services not good enough for you, huh? You thought you'd marry into the profession.

VAL: (*Confused:*) No! What? But you said...

WILMA: Do you really think I'd let my daughter marry a nobody like you?

VAL: But...

WILMA: I know what I said. I was testing you. And it's a good thing I did!

VAL: But I love her!

WILMA: Hah! I can't believe you'd betray me like this! I let you stay in my house, for Pete's sake!

VAL: But...

WILMA: But no more!

VAL: WHAT?

WILMA: I want you out of my house! This instant. But because I like you, I'll give you fifteen minutes to pack.

VAL: I don't care if you throw me out into the street! But don't take my Sylvia from me!

WILMA: If you ever speak to her again, I'll have you killed.

VAL: WHAT?

WILMA: And don't think I can't. I know people.

VAL: Well, go ahead. I can't live without Sylvia anyway! Put out a hit...see if I care!

WILMA: You have ten minutes now. I'd start packing if I were you!

(She storms out. Blackout. Lights up on Lance, with Crab, laboriously writing in a notebook.)

LANCE: *(To himself:)* Okay, pro: she can cook. Con: she never does if she can help it. Pro: her hair is blonde. Con: it would be nice if she had more of it. Pro:...

(Enter Speed, on his skateboard.)

SPEED: Hey, big dude. What're you writing?

LANCE: *(Hastily trying to hide the notebook:)* Nothing, man.

SPEED: It didn't look like nothing. I didn't even know you could write. Let me see.

LANCE: It's private, man!

SPEED: *(Snatching the notebook:)* Why else would I want to read it? *(Reading:)* "Pro: she's pretty smart. Con: she's smarter than me. Pro:" *(To Lance:)* What is this...a shopping list?

LANCE: If you must know, man, I've met a lady, and I'm trying to decide what to do about it.

SPEED: Dude, if you don't know that, I can't help you.

LANCE: Hey, man, I don't remember asking for any help.

SPEED: Well, what's the problem?

LANCE: She won't leave me alone! I'm not so sure I'm down with that, man.

SPEED: *(Reading:)* "Pro: she likes me." *(To Lance:)* Well, that in itself ought to seal the deal. How often does that happen? *(Reading:)* Con: she likes everybody." *(To Lance:)* Well, that

could be a problem...

LANCE: (*Snatching back the notebook:*) Give me that! So, you heard Val is out on the street?

SPEED: It'll be good for him. Too much luxury is dangerous.

LANCE: Too much work is dangerous, man. That's my philosophy.

SPEED: (*Ironically:*) Good you came to New York, then. Nobody works too hard here.

LANCE: I worry about Val, though. He's not as tough as you and me, man.

SPEED: Let's go look for him. I hope he's not going near any bridges.

LANCE: Lead, and I'll follow. But watch the pace. I don't like to sweat, man.

(They exit. Blackout. Lights up on Wilma Duke, Skip Thurio and Theo.)

WILMA: Don't worry, Skip. Now that that snake in my bosom is out of the picture, Sylvia will come to see what's good for her.

SKIP: It doesn't look like it to me. All she does is storm around cursing you and crying for Val.

WILMA: Give it a little time. Theo, you agree?

THEO: Well, I do, but —

WILMA: But?

THEO: Well, we might hurry it along. If I could have some time to work on her —

SKIP: Wait a minute —

WILMA: No, Skip, I think I see where he's going.

THEO: If I could speak with her alone, I feel sure I could convince her it's foolish to keep on after Val. After all, no one knows him better than I do. Who better to tell her why he's not worthy of her?

SKIP: Okay, granted, but just because she stops loving Val doesn't mean she'll start loving me.

THEO: Well, so I can work on that, too. I'll tell her all your virtues. Er...what are they, by the way? I assume you have some?

SKIP: What's that supposed to mean?

THEO: Nothing, nothing! But Skip, you need to work harder too. You may think you're a good catch...

SKIP: Again, with the insults...

THEO: ...but you can't trust to that. You have to really go after her. Pull out all the stops.

SKIP: What do you mean?

THEO: You need to show her how much you love her. Sing under her window. Write her poetry...

SKIP: Poetry?!

THEO: Send her flowers. Anything you can think of.

SKIP: I could buy her a car!

THEO: Let's not get carried away. No, on second thought, why not? Good idea.

SKIP: Well, I'll take your advice. But you will tell her about me as well?

THEO: Count on it.

SKIP: I was wrong about you, Theo. You're all right.

WILMA: That's settled, then. Skip, come with me. I want to talk about that audition.

(Wilma and Skip exit.)

THEO: Perfect! That's Skip out of the way. He's sure to make a blithering idiot of himself, and she'll hate it. Now to see if I can sell me.

(Exit. Blackout. Lights up on Val, Speed, Lance, and a collection of colorful STREET KIDS. [Note: it is very important that these kids not feel like a real "gang" in the gun-toting, drug-selling sense of the word, and also that they not represent ethnic stereotypes. They are basically innocent kids playing at being tougher than they are.] Among them are FRANKY, GLORIA, QUEENIE and IRVING. The Street Kids surround the three non-New Yorkers.)

SPEED: Let me do all the talking.

FRANKY: You three look like you're lost.

SPEED: No, no. Not lost. How's everybody doing?

GLORIA: *We're* doing great.

IRVING: *You* might not be.

(A few Street Kids laugh.)

SPEED: We don't want any trouble, friends.

QUEENIE: Oh, so now we're your friends. When did that happen?

(More laughter, nods of agreement, a few "yeahs.")

LANCE: Hey, dudes...every man is my friend, man.

QUEENIE: Just the men?

SPEED: *(Aside, simultaneously:)* I said let me do the talking!

FRANKY: What are you doing in our neighborhood, ("Air quotes:") "friends?"

VAL: Looking for a place to stay. I got kicked out of my house.

FRANKY: Awe, that's sad. (*To other Street Kids:*) Isn't that sad?
(*Murmurs of sarcastic agreement.*)

GLORIA: Why?

VAL: Well, see, I fell in love with my agent's daughter, and...
(*Speed elbows him hard in the ribs.*)

...Er – I mean...I killed a man!

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