

## Blocking Assignments

### ACT ONE SCENE ONE

#### GENERAL:

There is a list of props and the visuals to go along with the scene. On the big screen there needs to be a visual image of a backyard setting with a white picket fence down the middle. This visual is maintained throughout the entire scene. The seasonal tree is ever present and there is a small picket fence on the stage.

#### ACTION:

The scene opens with the visual appearing on the screen. Jessica makes her way through the audience along the runway A. She carries with her a load of laundry under her arm in a basket. As she enters centre stage at C she positions herself slightly left of center and drops her basket on the stage further to the left. The cue for Louise to enter the stage from runway D is when Jessica drops her laundry basket.

Jessica wipes her brow as she turns toward the audience. Louise is crossing the stage from right to left until she reaches her position slightly right of centre stage. While Louise is approaching her, Jessica delivers her first line.

Throughout this scene Jessica plays her part keeping her eyes on Louise and compensating for Louise's lack of focus. Whenever Louise speaks she never quite looks at Jessica but rather speaks off in the distance or toward the audience without appearing to be addressing them. These directions for Jessica do not need to be overly dramatic but the placement of her dialogue is important to the comic nature of the scene.

When Jessica responds with agitation, Louise is oblivious to her responses because in her own way she is absorbed by her own romantic notions of marriage. It's as if her mother is actually reminding her what she should do to get a husband. Therefore, the script has two meanings. One which Jessica hears contained in the words and the other that the audience also hears that is more about Louise. It's the confusion created by the script that allows the scene to be rendered comically and introduce the character of Louise.

Throughout the play it is important that Louise is totally unaware of the fact that she communicates more than one message; and that her words may be taken literally or figuratively. For example: when she says the line "well, it's probably none of my business what goes on in other people's lives" – she means what she says and Jessica hears in her voice and words a message directed at her. But Louise goes on to say "it shouldn't matter to me; should it now" which catches Jessica. That is why Jessica responds with "Louise, make your point! Are you trying to tell me something?" This line prompts her defining point of view which is a romantic view of married life and the fact that it has passed her by.

At this point Louise's eyes meet Jessica's for the first time as she gives one more nostalgic line, "I am still single" which it is all about her and her romantic notions concerning relationships. The shift in her visual placement takes place when she says "that Murray he sure stays away from you a lot". This prompts Jessica to smile, thinking that she has finally figured out what Louise has been talking about. This leads to the next comical interlude about Murray. Once again, Louise returns to being romantic

about motherhood which she perceives is a part of marriage in talking about her mother again. Jessica doesn't want to lose the focus and physically touches Louise to get her attention and delivers her line "Louise, I'm not expecting." According to the directions Jessica lets go of Louise as she stops in mid sentence and continues with her line which regretfully she admits that she is pregnant.

Louise now is fully engaged with Jessica and truly excited about the news she has just received. Jessica now takes us out of the scene by leading the conversation for the first time. Louise is now merely responding to Jessica. What the audience is left with is Jessica satisfied that Louise is going to help her out when Murray gets back and that Louise may never understand the situation between Jessica and her husband but Jessica is content to just let it go.

Louise this time exits down through the audience at runway A. She runs or rather scampers off the stage and then turns back to see Jessica wants more. Jessica in the meantime has been preparing to go back to her laundry when she pauses to feel her tummy. Jessica notices Louise who is crossing her arms across her chest and extending them out to Jessica. Jessica appreciates the gesture and waves back to Louise.

The visual scene on the screen is replaced by a black screen and the stage lights are turned off. Under darkness on stage Jessica takes her laundry basket with her and exits directly off stage from the middle back of the stage and through the arena skating rink opening and returns to the other side of the arena along the outside of the skating rink boards.

#### **PROPS LIST:**

One laundry basket with clothing

A small section of picket fence extending from center stage at runway A to a point that is midway to center stage C.

We will also need sufficient glow in the dark cam sticks or tape to mark out entrances and exit ramps in the dark.

The seasonal tree for summer.

#### **STAGE DIRECTOR NOTES:**

The picket fence is positioned prior to the opening of the scene and is removed at the end of the scene. Stage crews will enter from the centre rear of the stage. They are assembled in the penalty box area and they carry with them small LED lights to assist them in moving about during blackouts. The seasonal tree is positioned at all times on stage at the rear of the stage directly in front of exit E. There needs to be sufficient room for the movement of players and crew around the tree as they move on and off the main stage. The seasonal changes of the tree are part of the set preparation and conclusion. This set piece becomes a focal point for the play and also serves to mark the opening of exit E so that it can be easily found in the dark. Once again light reflecting tape on the stage floor must be used.

#### **COSTUMING:**

Both Louise and Jessica need to be costumed in light summer clothing. There should be no indication at this point that Louise is intending to do gardening as she claims. There is no need to costume Jessica as a pregnant mom since it is very early in the pregnancy and she is not yet showing. Detailed costume directions would include possibly Jessica a wearing an apron and perhaps Louise wears sunglasses that are obviously cheap and stylish. Another possibility would be to have Jessica wearing a kerchief in her hair.

**COSTUME NOTE TO LOUISE:**

Leave the sunglasses on until you reach, "Are you two getting a divorce?" at this point you remove the glasses and as noted above make better eye contact with Jessica.

**IMAGE SCREEN OPERATOR:**

While the audience is gathering the image on the screen will be the freeze dried tomatoes logo. When the play is about to start the image of a picket fence is shown and remains until the end of the scene. The sequence for lighting and image changes at the end of scenes is for the image to go to black followed by the lighting going to black.

**MAKEUP:**

There are no special requirements for each of the players. Each of the players in the scene will be responsible for doing their own makeup under the direction of the Makeup Artist. No special attention is required for this scene. Hairstyles should be indicative of the activity that Jessica is doing which means that she is wearing a kerchief while Louise on the other hand appears to have her hair in perfect order despite the fact that she claims she is about to work in the garden. Louise also needs to have her fingernails painted bright red and well manicured.

**MAKEUP NOTE TO LOUISE:**

As part of your opening line, you show off your nails and blow on them as if they are drying. You then speak your line "I plan to work outside today in the garden but it is just too hot." Always remember to act according to the following rule that the visual action must always precede the spoken lines. Otherwise the audience may miss the words you have just said.

**LIGHTING:**

The centre stage C is lit at the opening of the play and the area in front of the stage and entrance ramp A is also covered. There are no other lighting arrangements during the scene.