

A COUPLE OF KIDS FROM QUEENS: A One-Act Fugue

By

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Cast of Characters

RICKY: Male, 55-60

ALICE: Female, 55-60

Scene

Queens, New York. The Bicycle Path, an old highway in disrepair. Long-since closed to automobiles, its shoulders are overgrown with shrubs, vines, weeds. The set consists of nothing but a fallen tree trunk, or log, or bench.

Time

April, 2002; Daytime.

A COUPLE OF KIDS FROM QUEENS

Birdsong, continuing at irregular intervals through to the end. The sound of an airplane grows, then fades away as Ricky enters from down left in slacks and light jacket. He walks slowly, in a reverie, glancing here and there. He stops down right, fixes his gaze on a point close to him. Then Alice, in jeans and sweater and carrying a purse or handbag, strolls in slowly from up right. Oblivious to Ricky and her surroundings, she crosses to the left. Ricky turns, notices her.

RICKY

Alice?

Alice stops, looks at him. Pause.

RICKY

Alice, right? You went to P.S. 188?

(Pause.)

We were in kindergarten together. Remember Ricky from kindergarten?

ALICE

No.

RICKY

We were together in the first grade and the fourth grade, too.

ALICE

Ricky, huh? Hmm...

RICKY

I was the window monitor.

ALICE

The kid with the pole?

RICKY

Right! To open and shut those panels way up high.

ALICE

O-o-oh. Oh, yeah.

RICKY

I was that bright little boy! And you...you were a bright little girl.

(Pause.)

Your dad said I would find you here. **He** remembered me.

ALICE

No way my **mother** could.

RICKY

I didn't see **her**. It was your dad who came to the door. Was I surprised! Fifty years later, same house. And...amazing: you living with them! I went to every house of every other kid I could remember. Not a trace of one of them. It was my last chance, ringing your bell. And...bingo!

(Pause)

How are you, Alice?

ALICE

Didn't my father tell you?

RICKY

He told me you've been...not quite yourself. He didn't say why.

ALICE

No, he doesn't talk much.

RICKY

He used to. He was always really nice to me. The only thing he never talked about were those army medals of his, up on the wall. Once, when I asked, he said, "Ricky, there are stories you must never forget, but must never think about either."

ALICE

Good advice.

RICKY

But I wanted to know. About his medals, about everything.

ALICE

What's up?

RICKY

I just need to...touch base.

(Pause.)

If he was trying to protect me from unpleasantness way back then, he was making a mistake.

ALICE

What base is it you need to touch?

RICKY

New York. I live in Minneapolis, and I...needed to connect.

(Brief pause.)

When you're as young as I was---as **we** were---then, when your world is bursting open, they should allow you---no: they should encourage you...they should urge you---to take the whole great thing in. Uncensored, uncamouflaged, unadorned.

(Brief pause.)

You have kids?

ALICE

Three.

RICKY

I have two. Never kept a thing from them. The good, the bad. My own sorrows, and my joys. And they turned out fine. I have four grandchildren, Alice. How 'bout you?

ALICE

No. None.

RICKY

Yet.

ALICE

(A rueful laugh.)

None, at least, that I know of.

RICKY

(Pause. He fixes his gaze on that spot down right.)

Remember that forsythia?

(Turning back to Alice.)

We all want to protect our children, sure. But they see right through us when we hold back, or put on phony faces. You gotta be straight with kids: that's how you prepare them for the stuff they're going to need to deal with later.

(Pause. He looks again at that spot. )

We came here the spring we were in kindergarten. Our whole class came. The teacher, Miss...you remember her name?

ALICE

Unh-unh.

RICKY

Me neither. She called it a "nature walk." That forsythia...still there in that very spot! Arching over that very same backyard fence, and blooming now...all over again.

(Pause.)

I wonder: do kindergarten kiddies still come here on nature walks in April?

(Pause.)

I guess you weren't in the mood for this.

ALICE

I'm not very sociable.

RICKY

You used to be.

ALICE

I used to be someone else.

(Pause. Then she offers him her hand.)

It's...well, **interesting** to see you, Ricky.

They shake hands.

RICKY

I'm full of my childhood. I don't spin myths about it, you understand. I have no abstract imagination. But I am brimming with memories---concrete memories---and distinct, powerful feelings that never went away.

ALICE

My father, I'm sure, would love to talk to you. If he could.

RICKY

Does he have that oxygen on him all the time?

ALICE

Yes, but still can't finish a simple sentence in a single breath.

RICKY

Is that the reason you've been down?

ALICE

Who says I'm down?

(Brief pause.)

My father has survived long enough to get old. That is cause to be happy.

RICKY

(With a knowing laugh.)

Yeah, right. Ah...New York irony! You know, Midwesterners do irony---or think they do. It is pathetic. They are completely incapable of cutting to the bone with it like we do.

ALICE

My father's being alive at his age, Ricky, is---and I say this without qualification or attitude---genuinely cause to be happy.

RICKY

(Shamed, apologetic.)

Oh, I didn't mean to...please, Alice, don't misunderstand! I agree! I wasn't suggesting---

ALICE

I am an ordinary woman. And I have ordinary intelligence: I am not smart enough to get too bitinglly clever.

RICKY

(Pause.)

My 2002 New Year's resolution was to track down as many high school friends as I could. I did. Then, junior high. I did that, too. Then...to come see if there was anything left of where I began. This place, that time. I can't tell you how glad I am I found you!

(Pause.)

I'm in device drivers. Everyone calls me "Richard" now. I started out in monitor drivers, moved on to modems. At the moment, I'm in scanners and bios.

ALICE

Ricky, I don't want to hear about hardware.

RICKY

Software.

(Pause.)

Have you lived with your parents all along?

ALICE

No.

RICKY

When did you move back in?

ALICE

A few months ago.

RICKY

God, they must be married sixty years. That's great. A good marriage that lasts. I guess your dad needs looking after.

ALICE

Yes he does.

RICKY

I guess your mom's not up to it?

ALICE

She needs looking after *more*.

RICKY

*I* have a good marriage. To a girl, would you believe, from Cedar Rapids?!

ALICE

Why shouldn't I believe?

RICKY

A New Yorker like me with a **Hawkeye**?!

ALICE

A what?

RICKY

A...someone from Iowa. But I'm still a New Yorker. Though it's been...lord, nearly forty years since I lived here.

(Pause.)

They're lucky to have you taking care of them. If it gets you down...I can understand that.

ALICE

It does not get me down. Touching base with New York...really? Or aren't you just a mid-lifer pining for your youth?

RICKY

I admit I do pine from time to time. I can get nostalgic about, oh, "The Shadow" on radio, and "Winky-Dink" on TV. Remember "Winky-Dink?"

Alice, bemused, slowly shakes her head.

RICKY

My wife does. They sold you this plastic sheet you stuck on the screen, so you could draw on it during the show. Very interactive. Prescient, almost. My wife and I, we reminisce about old Chevy convertibles, Pez, Elvis. All that stuff. Sputnik. Air raid drills. You do remember those?

ALICE

I haven't thought about...but, yes. I can't say I've forgotten them.

RICKY

Did they scare you?

ALICE

Ricky, the past...it doesn't register for me.

RICKY

What did you mean: "as far as I know?"

(Pause.)

The subject was grandchildren.

ALICE

Oh...my son. Bill. Methamphetamines, and sex with anything that breathes. So, for all I know: call me "grandma."



RICKY

A junkie for a son, huh? **That's** why you're depressed!

ALICE

If I **were** depressed, that would hardly be sufficient reason.

RICKY

(Pause.)

You see: though my wife grew up a thousand miles from here, some of her experience---what you might call her "pop" experience---wasn't altogether different from my own. So when I do "pine" for my youth---for its frivolities and ornamentation, though not its heart and its soul and its guts, I have her by my side to soothe me with the pillow talk of a woman who's been there. No, Alice, I'm not here to pine, but to reconnect with...New York, New York. Tell me what you know about this road.

ALICE

The Bicycle Path?

RICKY

"The Queens Bicycle Path." Designated as such by Robert Moses at its opening in 1938. Once upon a time, I actually went and rode my bike on it. Moses didn't build this thing, mind you. William Vanderbilt did that, thirty years before. "The Long Island Motor Parkway," the first through-road **ever** with bridges to jump over intersections. And I bet you thought it all started in L.A.

(Brief pause.)

I rode my bike that day...couldn't have been a hundred yards. The old motorway...hey, look! Damn! They've fixed it up! It's not all rubble, like it was back then. Yeah, I shredded both my tires, just like that!

(Brief pause.)

Your other kids, Alice...how 'bout them?

ALICE

Margaret does biomedical research. Drew is a police officer.

RICKY

Nothing to upset you there.

(Pause.)

This road ran forty-five miles from Flushing to Lake Ronkonkoma. Jay Gatsby must have driven it a thousand times. And paid a lot of tolls. The Northern State Parkway's free, of course. So when they got around to building **it**, our "Long Island Motor Parkway" here went under. Megalomaniac Parks Commissioner Mr. Moses then took over and...not too long after that, we came here on a nature walk.

(Pause.)

You must be married?

ALICE

Ricky, you are still a New Yorker. You've convinced me. Please understand that my job at home is very taxing. This is my retreat. When I have an hour or so, this is a place I can be by myself.

Alice turns, goes to the fallen tree (or bench), and sits, looking down at the ground in front of her.

RICKY

(Pause.)

What's the matter with your mother?

ALICE

Her head.

RICKY

Alzheimer's?

ALICE

Uh-huh. And before you ask: no, her condition has nothing to do with my being...introverted.

RICKY

*I've* wanted to be alone from time to time. Some of those times, I discovered that what I really needed was company.

(Pause.)

*I* remember those air raid drills. Kneeling, bent over underneath our desks. Me, the other boys, and...all those girls.

(He sighs.)

Oh my, what a spectacle! All those dresses to look up.

ALICE

**That** certainly is a concrete image.

RICKY

You're damn straight it is! And don't think I didn't look up **yours!**

(Pause.)

My heart and soul and guts. It all came from here. Here, where I looked up dresses, where I shredded my tires, and did much much much more! Bought ices from the ice cream truck. Played boxball against the candy store wall, basketball in the playground, stickball in the street. And **stoopball...off** the **stoop!** Pete the Greek and his ice cream truck. The 1955 Dodgers were the greatest, most spectacular team in the entire history of that phenomenal sport called baseball. "What flavor ices you got today, Pete?" We asked him every day, and every day his answer was the same. Mom took me to Broadway on the E train: fifteen cents a ride. "Orange, lemon, cherry, grape and root beer." I wish I could

(MORE)

RICKY (cont'd)

say that with the magnificent Hellenic accent that noble man had. School trips to the Metropolitan: Egyptian tombs; and that hall of pageantry, with case upon case of iron suits, helmets with visors...medieval armor. What an outfield! Left to right: Amoros! Snider! Furillo! I always got the root beer. Not colorful like the fruity ices, but pale and tan...on top, that is. Cousin Jeff was lots older than me, worked at the Journal-American and lived on Fifty-Second Street, right by Birdland. Hey, Alice, you went on those school trips, just like I did. What'd you think of The Museum of Natural History?

The sound of an airplane, crescendo. Alice looks up. Then, Ricky does.

RICKY

Low. It's landing.

Airplane sound decrescendo.

ALICE

Yes. At JFK.

Airplane sound gone.

RICKY

No, at "Idlewild." That is the airport's original name. Its real and true and proper name. One night, eating at my dad's favorite Chinese restaurant way down Union Turnpike, there was Rocky Marciano! And I went right over to him, and I shook his hand. "Paint Your Wagon" was the first Broadway show I ever saw. It was at the Shubert, in 1951. Those ices were hard; we would roll the cups in our hands, to soften 'em up. Aunt Steffy lived in The Village. Hey, tell me, Alice: what did you think of them dinosaur bones at The Museum of Natural History?!

(Pause.)

Okay, it's not your father, and it's not your mother, and it's not your son. It's cumulative, isn't it? All of them together?

ALICE

Ricky, to have a father who can't breathe, and a mother who can't think, and one bad kid out of three, is ordinary. Sooner or later, lots of people end up in a situation more or less like mine.

RICKY

(Brief pause.)

So...I would stay over at Jeff's place, and listen through the walls, and out on the street. Getz, and Fats Navarro.

(MORE)

RICKY (cont'd)

Clifford Brown. Bird himself. You softened up that chunk of root beer, and wedged your spoon---this flat wooden thing---into the squish around the sides. Steffy was artsy. She took me to a de Kooning opening, and Coco Chanel was there, and I shook Coco's hand. "Sy Ho," that was the Chinese restaurant. Saw "Godot" when it finally came here from across the water. E. G. Marshall, of all people, was Didi. And Gogo was...The Cowardly Lion himself! School trips...lots of 'em: the U.N. All kinds of humanity in funny outfits, with funny accents...and with languages of their own that were funnier yet. Every kind of humanity...and not just there by the East River, either, but all around the town. You slid the mush up the sides of the cup, and licked---root beer flavor with a tinge of wood---and finally that ice chunk shrank to where---oh my---you could flip it right over. When I was really young, Aunt Steffy took me to Franz Kline's studio, and I---

ALICE

---shook his hand.

RICKY

Shook Bert Lahr's, too. And the hands of the ambassadors from Peru and Malaya. There was still a plain old "Malaya" back then. Shook Dorothy Parker's, twice. In the medieval armor room---you will recall, won't you?---they gave us red cushions to put on the floor and sit on, and then a lady told us stories.

ALICE

I didn't much care for the armor. **Or** for the dinosaur bones.

RICKY

So...you flipped the ice over, and the bottom came up on top, and there it was: this deep, dark brown...glistening...dazzlingly rich, stunningly sweet.

ALICE

I did like the Hayden Planetarium.

RICKY

Fantastic! Oh, that was fantastic!

ALICE

And, at the Met: the paintings.

RICKY

Which paintings?

ALICE

Oh...the old ones.

RICKY

For Old Masters, Alice, the Frick beats the Met hands down.

ALICE

They never took us **there**, did they?

RICKY

**I** took **myself**. The Frick, of course, doesn't have wall space like the Met, but what they do have...they don't waste an **inch** of it. Fantastic! As was...Mr. Campanella, right behind the plate. You ever eat at "Sy Ho?"

ALICE

I don't know. I guess.

RICKY

Oh, those sounds I heard, over by Jeff's! One time: here we are, walking along, and out of this club pops...hey, Alice, get this: Miles!

ALICE

Where was it you shook Dorothy's hand?

RICKY

Dorothy? **Which** Dorothy?

ALICE

You were telling me---

RICKY

Oh, **that** one. And I shook Dorothy Thompson's, too. You wanna know what? Miles was one man got himself a bad bum rap. He was nasty, they said, but when I shook **his** hand and he looked me in the eye---only sort of looked, because he was obviously shy as could be---I could tell this was nothing but one beautiful cat. I could tell because I was a kid, and kids...hey, dig it: kids know everything!

ALICE

**I** didn't.

RICKY

Sure you did.

ALICE

I didn't know you looked up my dress.

(Standing up.)

Come here.

Ricky walks towards Alice.

ALICE (cont'd)

Did you like what you saw when you looked?

RICKY

Yes. Each and every time.

ALICE

Lean over. Towards me.

Ricky leans toward Alice, his face suggestively close to hers. She slaps him abruptly, though gently.

RICKY

(Laughing, as he straightens back up.)

Okay. I had that coming. You know why that Chinese place was called "Sy Ho?" Its owner was Seymour Horowitz.

ALICE

Get outta here!

RICKY

It was too! So...Campy catching. You tell me: who pitched?

ALICE

Who cares?

RICKY

Johnny Podres, for one.

ALICE

The 1954 Giants were the greatest, most spectacular team in the entire history of that phenomenal sport called baseball.

RICKY

The **Giants**?!

ALICE

They won the Series that year.

RICKY

They beat garbage.

ALICE

No. They beat the Indians, who had a regular season record of a hundred eleven and forty-three. That's a seven-twenty winning percentage, Ricky. Only the 1906 Cubs have ever had a better record than that.

RICKY

In '55, we beat the...you know, **that** team. The one from the Bronx.

ALICE

It took you seven games. The Giants swept.

RICKY

Infield: right to left: Hodges on first. And don't give me no Whitey Lockman.

ALICE

Dorothy Parker was too cute for my taste.

RICKY

Gilliam on second.

ALICE

You shook her hand **twice**?

RICKY

Yeah, she was in the audience at this reading, or lecture, or whatever-it-was my big sister took me to. Pee-Wee at short.

ALICE

And the other time?

RICKY

At the same place. First, before it all begins, I go up to her. We shake. We go our separate ways. At intermission, I have a Coke; she's nowhere to be seen. Then, when it's all over, there she is in the lobby. Now **she** comes up to **me**---blotto---and grabs on like I---this pre-pubescent boy---was her oldest, dearest friend.

(Brief pause.)

Well, at least you weren't a Yankee fan. I shook Harry Truman's hand.

ALICE

The President's?!

RICKY

He was former Prez by then. See, my neighbor...he **was** a Yankee fan. To be a Yankee fan, Alice: it wasn't just lame and pathetic, like being a Giants fan. It was despicable...degenerate...depraved. Anyway, my neighbor has this extra ticket, so he takes me to the Stadium. Harry's sitting behind the dugout...**their** dugout. I go up and ask for his autograph.

ALICE

You "go up?" Just like that?

RICKY

They had no security back then. Nothing that wasn't laughable, at least. You could walk right up to anyone. "I

(MORE)

RICKY (cont'd)  
 don't sign autographs, young man," he says. Then reaches for my hand, and pumps it.

(Brief, climactic pause.)  
 Last, and not just not least, but most and best of all, we have, at third base---

ALICE  
 Jack Roosevelt Robinson. **I** shook **his** hand.

RICKY  
 Get outta here!  
 (Brief pause.)  
 Alice! You **hated** the Dodgers!

ALICE  
 I did?

RICKY  
 You were **supposed** to! Where did **you** come off shaking **Jackie Robinson's** hand?!

ALICE  
 It was at a Little League dinner.

RICKY  
 There were no girls in Little League then.

ALICE  
 There were boys. It was a father-son dinner. And my brother, it so happens, was...a boy.

RICKY  
 You lied to me. You **are** smart enough to be bitingly clever.  
 (Brief pause.)  
 All right: how did you get to go to the father-son dinner?

ALICE  
 I threw a tantrum. They had to take me along.

RICKY  
 But how could the Little League let you in?!

ALICE  
 When we got there, I started to throw another one.

RICKY  
 Oh, yeah, Alice, you **are** "ordinary," ain't you? **Some** ordinary, what you did! Giants fan...yecchh! You did not have the right to shake Jackie Robinson's hand!

(Brief pause.)  
**I** shook Woody Guthrie's. Reinhold Niebuhr's, Cardinal Spellman's, Anna Freud's. Ed Sullivan's, too. I shook the

(MORE)



RICKY (cont'd)

hands of C. Wright Mills, and Balanchine. Michael J. Quill, with a brogue so thick it must have bruised his tongue. Mr. and Mrs. Trilling, Mr. and Mrs. Luce. Miss Subways of July, 1953. The Walter boys: Lippmann and Winchell. Albert Einstein, Alfred Cortot. The Kaufmans: George S. and...Murray! Marian Anderson and Marianne Moore. Felix Frankfurter, Ernie Kovacs, James Baldwin, Hannah Arendt, John Cameron Swayze---.

ALICE

Ricky, the names you're dropping don't impress me.

RICKY

...Edward Weston, Hopalong Cassidy, Norman Thomas, Carmine De Sapio---

ALICE

And I never heard of half of them.

RICKY

Sure you did. You just forgot. And I wasn't dropping names. I shook Pete's hand, too, when he came back from a family wedding in Greece. And our gardener's, and the barber's, and this bus driver's...he was a regular on the Q 44-A. And this corporal's, too: the guy was stationed at the Nike missile site on Seventy-Third Avenue, over by Francis Lewis Boulevard. And the lady behind the counter at the deli...I shook her hand, and the hands of your own mom and dad, and of lots of other people no one ever heard of. Through them...through them all---the famous and the obscure---I touched everyone. I became a tiny part of them, and of all the people they went on to touch, just as all of them became a part of me. And **you** did the **same**.

ALICE

I'm afraid I didn't get around as much as you.

RICKY

**Jackie Robinson**, Alice!

ALICE

Ricky, I am nothing but a spectator. Always have been.

RICKY

No way! You participated!

ALICE

All I was...**both** of us...we were just a couple of kids from Queens.

RICK

**Yes!** That is **exactly** what we were! **New Yorkers!**  
**Not** spectators! Not even acolytes. We were novitiates...no,  
 not even that! We were **initiates**, into the mind and spirit  
 of the whole wide human race.

ALICE

Speak for yourself.

She sits.

RICK

My wife is a music nut. Classical. On our first date, we're  
 having the usual "getting-to-know-you" conversation, and I  
 happen to mention that, as a kid, I heard a great  
 performance of Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony. "Where?," she  
 asks. "At Carnegie." "Carnegie...**Hall?**" "Yeah," I say.  
 "Where else?" "Who conducted? Was it Bernstein?" "No," I  
 tell her, "it was before Lennie got big." "Then it must have  
 been Mitropoulos," she says. "Unh-unh. Some Italian guy."  
 "Not Toscanini?" "No, it was...Guido something." Her eyes  
 get wide. "Guido?!" "Yeah. Guido...Guido Cantelli." She  
 screams. "Guido Cantelli?! You saw Guido Cantelli conduct?!"  
 It was incomprehensible to her, like another universe. For  
 me, that concert was just...part of another day.

ALICE

Did you shake Guido's hand?

RICK

Whadda **you** think?

(Brief pause.)

Six or seven years later, I finally get a chance to bring  
 her here. We go everywhere. I gotta tell you, Alice, there  
 is no greater kick than watching a hick hit this town for  
 the very first time. We see this, we see that. And we walk,  
 and we walk, and we walk.

ALICE

I used to love to walk around the city.

RICK

Alone?

ALICE

With my husband.

RICK

So you **are** married.

(Pause.)

One day---we've been pounding the pavement for hours, our  
 feet are killing us---I take her inside. We sit, we drink.

(Pause.)

(MORE)

RICK (cont'd)

Or are you two...no longer together?

ALICE

Sometimes I let myself imagine we're together.

RICKY

You "let yourself?" I would never have thought an imagination was something you could turn on and off.

ALICE

An imagination, if you don't control it, will drive you mad.

RICKY

So, we finish our drinks. Batteries re-charged. We step into an elevator, zoom up, hop out and...there it is. From over Yonkers around to Staten Island, from Rockaway to the North Shore.

(Pause.)

Did you divorce, or...?

ALICE

He died.

RICKY

Oh. I'm so sorry.

(Brief pause.)

But...that's not what's eating you either, is it?

(Pause.)

"There's the Upper Bay," I tell her. "There's the Palisades."

(Pause.)

I mean, being a widow is "ordinary," too. Isn't it?

ALICE

Way back then, Ricky---bent over under my schoolroom desk---I **was** scared.

RICKY

"Look at all those bridges," I say. And I point them out to her, one by one.

ALICE

I was terrified of what might come in through the windows, from where the skyline sat on the horizon.

RICKY

I couldn't imagine anything to be scared about. The whole business was too unreal.

ALICE

I was terrified of a flash, and a roar. Of exploding glass, and hellish heat, and the ceiling coming down, and the floor giving way.

RICKY

It was too far-fetched. There were those girls' crotches to look at. "Threat?" **What** threat? It was beyond me. It was crazy.

ALICE

So then, Ricky: you didn't need the protection of grown-ups, did you?

RICKY

You mean that because I couldn't conceive of the inconceivable, I didn't need adults to pretend everything was hunky-dory?

ALICE

Not to pretend, no. Just to reassure you by hiding their fear. And hiding their grief...the grief that had come with their years.

RICKY

Alice, I told you: you can not hide anything from kids.

ALICE

Are you sure?

(Pause.)

Even if you're right, and you can't hide anything from them, you can show kids your love by trying to.

RICKY

I wrap my arm around my Hawkeye, and point out that patch of park to her, right in the island's heart. And elsewhere, everywhere: building upon building, sprung up from the earth like stalks.

ALICE

No kid, Ricky---no adult---no being on this planet should have the waking daytime nightmares I did.

RICKY

Between the buildings, in the canyons: people, barely visible, smaller than ants. And there are more people, uncountable---out of sight, but their energy is there---people in every nook and every cranny. You feel their vibrancy...the pulse of their lives.

(Pause.)

Alice, you had your daytime nightmares long ago. **Why** are you the way you are **now**?

(Pause.)

And there is the Empire State, lording it over Midtown...lording it **below** us. Hawkeye turns to me and says: "I am really in New York, I guess, 'cause New York sure has gotten into **me**."

(Long pause.)

(MORE)

RICKY (cont'd)  
It's in you, too, Alice. What is **wrong** with you?!

The sound of an airplane,  
crescendo. Both look up. Airplane  
sound decrescendo, then gone. Ricky  
goes and sits at arm's length from  
Alice.

RICKY  
(Pause. Looking at the ground.)  
How did he die?

ALICE  
September eleventh.

Ricky begins to weep.

ALICE (cont'd)  
(Pause.)  
Why are you crying?

Ricky weeps.

ALICE (cont'd)  
Did **you** lose someone then, too?

Ricky weeps.

ALICE (cont'd)  
Did you lose someone; then walk and walk and walk, through  
the filth and the stench, around the city you once had loved  
to walk around, looking and looking and looking? And  
finding...what? Not the one you were looking for,  
but...other people just like yourself: walking, looking...  
(Pause.)

**Did** you lose someone?

RICKY  
(Weeping.)  
No. Nobody.

ALICE  
Then **why** are you **crying**?

RICKY  
(Weeping.)  
I mean, I lost nobody...nobody I **knew**.

Pause. Alice gets up, walks to the  
right, and fixes her gaze on that  
forsythia point downstage. Pause,  
as Ricky keeps weeping.

Stop that stragglng! A WOMAN'S VOICE OFF STAGE LEFT

Alice turns, crosses to stage left, and takes a long look off into the distance.

LEFT (cont'd) A WOMAN'S VOICE OFF STAGE  
I told you kids to stick together!

Alice turns back, walks over to Ricky, and sits again, right next to him.

Ricky? ALICE

Ricky does not respond, but goes on weeping.

ALICE (cont'd)  
(Taking tissues out of her bag, poking him.)

Hey!  
(Handing him the tissues.)  
Here. Children are coming. Fix your face.

Ricky takes the tissues, blows his nose, wipes his face, composes himself. Then Alice and Ricky, side-by-side with downcast eyes, sit still. At the distant sound of children's whoops and squeals of delight, they raise their heads and look left. The joyful noise swells to a crescendo. They smile.

**###THE END###**