

Cupid Agonistes

A comedy in one act by

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Cast of Characters

Brook Robertson – early 30's, already going to seed, but with remnants of what had been his charm.

Janice Robertson – early 30's, his wife. A woman who doesn't see the oncoming train until it's too late.

Marcia Schaeffer – late 20's, his girlfriend. Crafty and confident. Like one of those inflatable bozos - you can knock her down, but she's always going to roll back up.

1980 – Spokane, Washington

For Wendi.

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CUPID AGONISTES

Setting: The family room of a spanking new suburban split level home, Spokane, Washington, summer, 1980.

At rise: BROOK ROBERTSON is alone in the family room of his new home. The room features a wet bar, at which stand four brand new barstools. There is also a couch and an occasional chair or two. A half-assembled lamp sits on the floor on one side of the sofa. An unopened carton containing a matching lamp sits on the other. BROOK is therefore forced to use the overhead lights. There are other cartons scattered around the room waiting to be unpacked.

The wood paneling on the walls may be actual wood given the house's location. The floor is covered with vibrant orange shag wall-to-wall carpeting, with flecks of brown and gold, that also runs up the stairs leading to the foyer, R.

BROOK is not assembling the lamp, he is not unpacking cartons, he is reverently polishing his prized possession, a baseball bat autographed by Willie Stargell.

From above we hear Fleetwood Mac's "Fleetwood Mac," perhaps the last few bars of "Say You Love Me" and the first few of "Landslide." The sound of an electric hairdryer cuts over the music.

The sound of the hairdryer doesn't register at all with BROOK. When the hairdryer cuts off, Fleetwood Mac has moved on to "World Turning." A finger hits the off button on a cassette player and the music stops abruptly.

After a beat or two, JANICE calls down from the landing.

JANICE

I'm going.

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BROOK grunts his acknowledgement.

JANICE

Honey, I said I'm going ...

BROOK grunts more cordially.

JANICE enters from R. She is tall and was clearly once slender. It has been three years, but she's still carrying 15 lbs of "baby weight." She is dressed casually, something like bell-bottom cords, a sweater vest and a blouse with sleeves even more belled than her cords. Her dark hair is feathered back into perfect wings.

JANICE

Brook!

BROOK

I heard you. You said you were going.

JANICE

And why does that matter?

BROOK

Because I'll miss you more than I could ever say?

JANICE

Ha. Ha. (a beat) Well, your progress down here has been ... deliberate.

BROOK

Look, I've got the stand hung. I just need to get the bat polished before I put it up.

JANICE

And then the room will have a focus.

BROOK

I tried to get Danny to wait 'til we moved. ... I can't believe I'm being such a jerk!

JANICE

Well now ...

BROOK

He got this for me ... this thing so far beyond cool ... and I am so ungrateful that I'm whining that he didn't wait 'til we moved to send it to me.

JANICE

It was very thoughtful.

BROOK

He knew that I could never in this lifetime do something so cool for him. He probably just did it so he'd always be one up on me.

JANICE

You did ask him to be Christopher's godfather.

BROOK looks at her uncomprehendingly.
Then the coin drops.

BROOK

You mean, you think that having Danny hold Christopher while some geezer poured water on his screaming head is equivalent to giving me a bat autographed by Willie Stargell. Not just a bat, but the bat Willie Stargell used to hit a home run in the first game of last year's World Series.

JANICE

A game that the Pirates still lost!

BROOK

What?

JANICE

I know, I was watching it with you.

BROOK (more in sorrow than in anger)

There are some things that women aren't meant to understand.

JANICE

You are lucky I'm not holding that bat.

BROOK

Lookit, something happens to Chris, we can always make another baby, Dan can still be its godfather. There will never be another eighth inning of the first game of the 1979 World Series. This bat is totally irreplaceable. What kid can you say that about?

JANICE

Certainly neither of your mother's sons.

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BROOK (after a beat)

What? (again, the coin finally drops) Oh. Very funny.

JANICE

Once this room has that all important focus, perhaps you could focus on finishing the lamps, or unpacking the bar glasses you had to have ...

BROOK

What would be the point of a bar without glasses?

JANICE

It's beyond my tiny feminine brain to fathom.

BROOK

You weren't like this when I married you.

JANICE

Sadly, you were. So I have no one to blame but myself.

BROOK

People always say moving is stressful. I moved seven times when I was single and not one of those moves was stressful

JANICE

Well you're not single now. And, even though he's completely replaceable, I'd rather not have to replace Christopher this week.

BROOK

I'll be done with this in just a few, then I'll go up and sit cribside until he wakes up.

JANICE

He doesn't sleep in a crib. He hasn't slept in a crib for 11 days!

BROOK

Force of habit. What are you so het up about?

JANICE

I guess because moving is so stressful!

BROOK

Right.

JANICE

Look, Chris hasn't been in his big boy bed long ...

BROOK
How long?

JANICE
Eleven days.

BROOK
Just checking.

JANICE
If he wakes up and is disoriented, he's liable to fall out and hurt himself. So please, please, please, listen for him to stir or call out.

BROOK
This from a woman who could play a cassette and run a blow dryer while her innocent toddler slept.

JANICE
I'm his mother. I would hear him stir if he was here and I was up at Albertson's.

BROOK
I'll listen. You make it sound like I want the kid hurt.

JANICE
If you're not paying attention, it doesn't matter what you want, he'll end up hurt.

BROOK
It's not like he's made of glass.

JANICE
Am I supposed to find that reassuring?

BROOK
You know what my father says, "If the fall is less than three stories, he'll recover from all his injuries. Kids are funny that way." And he should know, he was a fireman.

JANICE
Maybe I'll just stay.

BROOK
I was kidding.

JANICE
If I stay you can concentrate on getting things set up down here.

BROOK

I swear, I won't sleep until everything down here is unpacked.

JANICE

I can hear the glasses breaking now.

BROOK

Aren't you going to be late?

JANICE

It's just Jazzercise.

BROOK

You know how you'll feel if you miss it.

JANICE

I'll be home by 3:30.

BROOK

Have a good time.

JANICE

Chris will be up before 3.

BROOK

I know.

JANICE

That means you'll have to do more than get him out of bed. Like watch him and maybe even play with him.

BROOK

Don't we have a cage?

JANICE blows him a raspberry.

BROOK

How does he do on a leash? You've been saying it's hard to meet the neighbors ... put Chris in the front yard on a leash and I bet they'll be over in no time.

JANICE

Don't rub your bat too long. I hear it causes blindness. Which would be a terrible burden on top of your deafness.

Before BROOK can respond, JANICE is up the stairs R and out.

BROOK resumes polishing his autographed Willie Stargell baseball bat. When the bat is polished to his satisfaction, he leans it gingerly against the sofa. He takes two clean cloths, picks up the bat and carries it reverently to the display rack mounted on the U.S. wall. Just as he is about to place the bat in the padded brackets, the doorbell rings. This startles BROOK and the bat slips from his grasp. After a frantic scramble, he keeps it from hitting the floor. The doorbell rings again. Brook leans the bat gingerly against the sofa. And crosses R.

BROOK (climbing the steps)

Did you forget your key? Or are you just trying to make sure that Chris is awake before you leave? (The doorbell rings again) I hear you!

MARCIA (from off)

Good.

BROOK (from off)

On my ... M ... M ... M ... How ... What ... How ...

MARCIA (from off)

Isn't the word you're looking for "Hello"?

BROOK (from off)

Sure. Right. Hello.

MARCIA (from off)

And now you invite me in ..

BROOK (from off)

No.

MARCIA (from off)

Oh yes you do!

BROOK (from off)

Wait! Let's go downstairs. It's much cozier.

MARCIA SCHAEFFER enters from R. She is short and curvy and four or five years younger than BROOK. She is wearing bell bottomed cords and a cowl-necked blouse under a belted

wrap sweater with padded shoulders and pockets. Her hair is feathered back into perfect blonde wings.

BROOK comes to the bottom step, but doesn't move off the stairs.

MARCIA

I see what you mean. This place couldn't be cozier, could it? It has a man's touch.

BROOK

Yeah ... well ...

MARCIA

This is quite an impressive bachelor pad.

BROOK

I've been makin' good money since I came here. Figured I'd put some of it into a home.

MARCIA just looks at him.

BROOK

It's been seven years. 'bout time I admit I'm not gonna be movin' on.

MARCIA

And it must be a relief to be out from under the thumb of that "real religious" landlady.

BROOK

Oh yeah. Definitely. Like you wouldn't believe ...

MARCIA

The one who didn't want you bringing anyone home for the night.

BROOK

Yeah.

MARCIA

This new arrangement will be great then, won't it?

BROOK

You mean the house ...

MARCIA

Sure. Now when we hook up you won't always have to come back to my room ...

BROOK

I wasn't exactly planning ...

MARCIA

I can stay here.

BROOK

It's so far from the airport.

MARCIA

We'll find a way to work around that.

BROOK

I don't ...

MARCIA

We haven't seen you at Shorty's in a while.

BROOK

The move. Y'know. Busy with the move.

MARCIA

Would you stop standing on those stairs like there's something upstairs I'm going to steal!!

BROOK

It's not ... No ... Right.

BROOK comes into the room. MARCIA has her back to him.

MARCIA

Okay. Now you have two choices.

BROOK

Yeah?

MARCIA

You can ask me to sit down or you can ask me to dance.

BROOK

There's one other.

Yeah? MARCIA

I can ask you to leave. BROOK

MARCIA turns. She has removed a small revolver from her sweater pocket.

No. You can't. MARCIA

Holy shit! You can't ... Put that thing ... BROOK

Here's a lifesaving hint: You aren't the one giving the orders here. Got it? MARCIA

BROOK nods.

So what'll it be? MARCIA

BROOK has no idea what she's talking about, but she's still pointing a gun at him so he's terrified of giving the wrong answer.

This is the last time I get involved with a guy with a girl's name. MARCIA

Hey! Brook is not a girl's name. BROOK

HEY. Who has the gun? MARCIA

You. BROOK

What is Brook? MARCIA

A girl's name. BROOK

MARCIA
Very good. Now, sit or dance?

BROOK
Please have a seat

MACIA
Thank you.

BROOK starts to sit.

MARCIA
I said you could offer me a seat. I didn't say you could sit.

BROOK
Sorry.

MARCIA
You have to start paying attention. I'm a crack shot. The first two or three bullets, I'll put into extremities. Maximize your suffering. I won't kill you 'til I'm almost out.

BROOK
Why would you want to kill me?

MARCIA
Who was that woman?

BROOK is again speechless and paralyzed with fear.

MARCIA
You get a full point for not insulting me with "what woman?" So, who is she? The religious landlady? The cleaning woman? Your sister?

BROOK
I don't have a sister.

MARCIA
The mystery deepens, since I know you don't have a wife.

BROOK
Yes ... I do.

MARCIA

You do? That poor woman is your wife? And, close as we are, you never thought to mention her before today?

BROOK

I didn't ... It didn't seem ... I ...

MARCIA

Does she know about your little hobby?

BROOK

What?

MARCIA

Picking up stewardesses and god knows what else in the bar at the Ramada Inn?

BROOK

No.

MARCIA

What does she think you're doing?

BROOK

Sleeping off a drunk at a buddy's until it's safe to drive home. A man works hard, provides for his family, he's entitled to a night out.

MARCIA

As long as his wife doesn't get how far out. So, are you going to tell her or am I?

BROOK

Now why would you need to do something like that?

MARCIA

I've discovered feminism. It's an act of sisterly solidarity.

BROOK

Come on, we were just having a few laughs ...

MARICIA

... and sighs and gasps and moans ...

BROOK

No strings.

MARCIA

There weren't supposed to be rings either.

BROOK

And if you hadn't found out, we still wouldn't have a problem.

MARCIA

I should just go ahead and shoot.

BROOK

No. No, please come on ...

MARCIA

I was ready for ... lots ... but not married. I didn't see married coming.

BROOK looks at her haplessly.

MARCIA

Know how I found out?

BROOK

Shorty?

MARCIA

Bingo.

BROOK

What? Did you blow him? He'll tell you anything if you've got his dick in your mouth.

MARCIA

And you know this from first hand experience?

BROOK

Hey now! Hey. Watch that.

MARCIA

A man looking at the business end of a gun is in no position to be getting all pissy about anything. And he's a real fool to be insulting the woman holding the gun.

BROOK

Sorry.

MARCIA

That 's why most women won't suck cock. They know that if they do it will get flung back in their faces forever.

Not if they swallow.

BROOK

MARCIA shoots. The bullet grazes BROOK's left bicep.

BROOK grabs his arm while biting into his right bicep to muffle the sound of his cries and moans. He looks back toward the stairs several times. MARCIA watches him impassively. Finally:

Why the hell did you do that?

BROOK

I warned you about your mouth for the last time.

MARCIA

BROOK drops to his knees.

Would you look at that! This carpeting is as miraculous as they say. Stains do just disappear. I can't see a drop of blood anywhere.

MARCIA

BROOK moans into his right bicep.

You're lucky I wasn't aiming for your elbow. Much more painful and almost completely irreparable.

MARCIA

BROOK jerks his head toward the pile of polishing cloths. MARCIA sees the bat.

What's this?

MARCIA

Bat. It was a gift from my brother.

BROOK

Mighty shiny.

MARCIA

It's kinda special.

BROOK

MARCIA
Every man thinks his is special.

BROOK
If it wasn't, would you be here?

MARCIA hands him one of the polishing cloths.

MARCIA
We'll talk about that when you're cleaned up.

BROOK struggles for a moment and then holds out his arm to MARCIA.

BROOK
Please ...

MARCIA
Help you?

BROOK nods.

MARCIA
Lets see, I could put down my gun ... here, where you can reach it ... then kneel in front of you and use both my hands to tie off a bandage ... leaving your right hand free to smack me or to grab my gun or both? In a pig's eye.

BROOK returns to his awkward one-armed struggle.

MARCIA
You better hope you're never snakebit alone in the woods.

BROOK finally finishes.

MARCIA
I've never seen you this sweaty with your clothes on.

BROOK just stares at her, clearly exhausted.

MARCIA
I don't remember your stamina being this bad either.

BROOK
Just go ahead and finish me off, if that's what you need to do. Just leave Janice out of this.

MARCIA

I intend Janice no harm. This is all about you and me. Remember I didn't know there was a Janice until this morning.

BROOK

Really?

MARCIA

Yes, really. I really don't sleep with married men.

BROOK

You really bought that line about the religious landlady?

MARCIA

Yes.

BROOK

Wow. I didn't think it was that good a line.

MARCIA

Watch it. Next shot takes out a knee.

BROOK (terrified)

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

MARCIA

Shorty ... who I only had to overtip a little ... gave me your old address.

BROOK looks puzzled.

MARCIA

I don't know. He's a bartender. They have their ways. I went by. I didn't know what I thought I was going to find. I had a bad feeling I wasn't headed for a rooming house. The new people weren't home. I sat in the rental car for 20 minutes or so, not sure what I was going to do next. A woman came out of the house across the street.

BROOK

Chubby red head? Two fuzzy rats she insists on calling dogs?

MARCIA nods.

BROOK

Rachel Washer. Is there anything more pathetic than a woman without children lavishing all that attention on a couple of stupid dogs?

MARCIA

I told her I was an old friend of Mr. Robertson's. She didn't seem to believe me, which only made her happier to give me this address, as well as very clear, detailed directions.

BROOK

I'm surprised she didn't ask you to wear a wire so she wouldn't miss a minute of the fun.

MARCIA

Do you think Janice will miss you?

BROOK (terrified)

Please ...

MARCIA

Oh for god's sake, I'm not going to kill you.

BROOK (not sure)

Really?

MARCIA

You're no good to me dead.

BROOK does not look reassured.

MARCIA

Here. (she puts the gun back in her pocket.) Better?

BROOK nods.

BROOK

Why did you come here with a gun?

MARCIA

Single girl, alone in strange cities a lot. I'm never without it.

BROOK

You could have left it in the car.

MARCIA

I thought I might need to get your attention.

BROOK

You have it.

MARCIA

Back to my original question: Will Janice miss you?

BROOK

Are you going to kidnap me?

MARCIA

No. You're going to leave Janice and marry me.

BROOK

Oh shit.

MARCIA

You are.

BROOK

I can't ... we don't ... it was just ...

MARCIA

I don't love you. You don't love me. I'm not stupid.

BROOK

Then why?

MARCIA sits, lip quivering.

BROOK

What ...

MARCIA

I'm pregnant.

BROOK (after a beat)

Do you know whose it is?

MARCIA, after a beat, grabs the bat and smacks him in the side of the head.

BROOK

Wait.

Dazed, he falls to his knees.

BROOK

You'll smudge it ...

MARCIA cracks him hard on the other side of the head. BROOK goes down for good.

After a beat, MARCIA sits. She's a bit taken aback, but not in an "Oh my god, what have I done" way. Her reaction is much more in the vein of "Well that wasn't the plan, what do I do now?" She is distracted enough to still be holding onto the bat.

Eventually, she hears a key in the lock. Fortunately, the door is unlocked, so the key locks it. JANICE jiggles the doorknob for several seconds before she realizes what she's done and unlocks the door.

MARCIA springs into action. She quickly drags BROOK's body behind the sofa. (Ah adrenaline!) He moans and she gives his now concealed skull one final firm smack with the bat.

MARCIA

Ew. The brain is really grey.

MARCIA quickly wipes down the bat, shoves the cloth in her pocket and sits demurely on the chair farthest from the sofa.

JANICE (from the landing)

I forgot my damn socks.

SHE continues upstairs, which gives MARCIA a moment to fully regain her composure.

JANICE (making her way downstairs)

I can't believe your luck, he's still asleep. (sees MARCIA.) Oh. Hello. How did ... Who ...

MARCIA

Your husband let me in. I'm Marcia Schaeffer, with Welcome Wagon.

JANICE

Oh.

MARCIA

Moving is such a trial, isn't it?

JANICE

I'll say.

MARCIA

And you and your husband have been here ... nearly two weeks?

JANICE

We're really much more settled in upstairs.

MARCIA

It's that way in so many homes I see. The basement is the man's world and ... well ... we know how they are.

JANICE

Sometimes you just want to clobber them. Him.

MARCIA

I'm sorry it has taken me so long to get by.

JANICE

That's okay. If you have a packet of brochures I'd be happy to take them and look them over. I'm sure we'll be able to use some of the discount coupons.

MARCIA

Oh, no. No, no, no. That's the old model. Shilling for local businesses. All very commercial. No, I represent the new vision of Welcome Wagon. A true welcome. Just a neighbor dropping by to say hello. To see if you have any questions. Welcoming.

JANICE

That's nice. Thank you. People seem to keep to themselves here.

MARCIA

It's hard to make a subdivision into a true neighborhood, don't you think?

JANICE

Seems like it.

MARCIA

Maybe because everyone is new. Your husband ...

JANICE

Brook.

MARCIA

Brook was telling me that people in your old neighborhood were much more involved and outgoing.

JANICE

I think I'd like to find a happy medium.

MARCIA

Have you and Brook found a church yet?

JANICE

We're still going across town. We're Methodists.

MARCIA

Sometimes it's good to maintain some familiar ties. Makes the move seem less disruptive.

JANICE

And it lets Chris see his grandmother at least once a week.

MARCIA

Chris?

JANICE

Our son.

MARCIA

Oh.

JANICE

Brook didn't mention our son?

MARCIA

No. No he didn't.

JANICE

He can be such a jerk. Where is he? I can't believe he just left you ...

MARCIA

He ... excused himself ...

JANICE

Funny, isn't it?

MARCIA

What's that?

JANICE

They're all so proud of standing to pee and they can still take twenty minutes in the bathroom.

MARCIA

Evidently most men can only read with their pants down.

JANICE and MARCIA share a conspiratorial laugh, which brings MARCIA to, but not over, the edge of tears.

JANICE

I miss having a friend in the neighborhood.

MARCIA

How old is your little boy?

JANICE

He's three. Do you have children?

MARCIA

I'm expecting my first.

JANICE

You and your husband must be so excited.

MARCIA (after a beat)

I'm not married.

JANICE

I'm sorry. I didn't mean ... no reason you should have to be in this day and age. There's not a thing wrong with that.

MARCIA

Yes there is.

JANICE

Now don't be harsh on yourself.

MARCIA

You don't understand

JANICE

I may not know all the particulars ...

MARCIA

First of all, you have to believe me. I swear to you. Swear to you! I didn't know he was married.

JANICE

The bastard.

MARCIA

It gets worse. I had no idea at all. None. Until you mentioned him. No idea that you and Brook had a child.

JANICE

Why would that matter?

MARCIA

Brook is the bastard in question. (looking at her stomach) One of the bastards. .

JANICE

Oh my god.

MARCIA

The biggest bastard.

JANICE

No ... he wouldn't ... even he ...

MARCIA

I am sorry. I really didn't know he was married.

JANICE

Where did you meet him?

MARCIA

This isn't going to help you ...

JANICE

Where did you meet him?

MARCIA

The bar at the Ramada Inn.

JANICE

And it never occurred to you that he was married?

MARCIA

No ring. No tell-tale tan line around the finger.

JANICE

A ring would be too dangerous on a construction site ...

MARCIA

Let the next one lose a finger. No ring is too dangerous in the rest of life.

JANICE

How did you come to be trolling the bar at the Ramada Inn?

MARCIA

Watch it.

JANICE

Please forgive me if I can't quite get to cordial with my husband's girlfriend.

MARCIA

This could get very ugly very quickly.

JANICE

As opposed to the bridge club chat we're having?

MARCIA

I'm a stewardess. Flight crews stay at the Ramada. It's not all that out of line for me to go down to the bar for a drink.

JANICE

I thought we were supposed to be saying "flight attendant."

MARCIA

A "flight attendant" is either a gay boy or a stewardess over 30. I'm happy to be a stewardess.

JANICE

Oh my god. That bastard. That bastard, that bastard, that bastard. My mother told me not to marry a man with a girl's name. That anyone whose mother hated him enough to give him a girl's name couldn't be right in the head.

MARCIA

We both should have listened to your mother. (to her belly) Let that be a lesson to you. Always listen to your mother.

JANICE

Oh my god ... you really are ...

MARCIA

Did you think I was jerking your chain?

JANICE

No ... but who else would talk to her belly? I did for seven months and haven't done it since. ... I'm going to kill him! Kill him!!

MARCIA

Maybe we could run up to Carl's Jr. by the turnpike first. I'd like about six burgers and two shakes.

JANICE

No fries?

MARCIA

Too greasy. I'd be spewing like that little girl in The Exorcist.

JANICE

And where is the turnpike?

MARCIA

Highway. A little holdover from my childhood back east.

JANICE

Working for an airline give you the chance to get home now.

MARCIA

Working for an airline was my ticket out. I wouldn't waste it to go back. Do you do better with your family?

JANICE

I'm an only child. My mom is a spectacularly bitter widow. Which isn't surprising, since she was a spectacularly bitter wife for 37 years before that.

MARCIA

And what spawned the asshole?

JANICE

Brook's parents retired to Hilton Head. His brother Danny works for the Pittsburgh Pirates. Brook came here to work on building the World's Fair and stayed. That bastard!!

MARCIA

I suppose it wouldn't be a good idea for us to go upstairs and check on your little boy.

JANICE

No. I'm sorry, but no.

MARCIA

Believe me. I understand.

JANICE

Under other circumstances, I bet I could have liked you.

MARCIA

We'll never know. I do know I'm not going to get what I came here for, so I'm going to shove off. It's not as though I need to say goodbye.

JANICE

Is Marcia Schaeffer even your real name?

MARCIA

What?

JANICE

When you were being the welcome wagon lady ...

MARCIA

Yes. Yes it is. (Oh shit.) I told you my real name.

JANICE

I'm glad someone doesn't have to lie to me. That bastard. Oh god ... do you have any idea how it feels?

MARCIA

We don't want to start comparing those notes.

JANICE

No. (after a beat) I can't exactly say nice meeting you

MARCIA

No.

JANICE

God, I hate him. I hate being such an idiot. But I hate him more.

MARCIA

Stay with the anger.

JANICE

I want to kill him.

MARCIA

Not that angry.

JANICE

I do. I do. I just want to ...

MARCIA

Smash in his lying head.

JANICE

Yes! Using his damn Willie Stargell autographed baseball bat!

MARCIA

You can't.

JANICE

Well, no ... that would leave Christopher without either parent and I do love him more than I hate Brook. (Janice cocks her head.)

MARCIA

What?

JANICE

I was checking to see if that's true. It's neck in neck. As much as I love Christopher, I'm not sure that, in this moment, I don't hate Brook more.

MARCIA

I mean you can't because it's too late.

JANICE looks at MARCIA uncomprehendingly.

MARCIA

He's behind the sofa.

JANICE

Excuse me?

MARCIA

He's behind the sofa.

JANICE (looks behind the sofa)

Holy god. ... Wow. Brains are grey. How ... What ... I mean, I know generally ... but was there a moment?

MARCIA

When I told him I was pregnant he asked if I knew who the father was.

JANICE

Not just a bastard, but a total idiot.

MARCIA nods.

JANICE (picks up the bat)

And you got him with his precious bat.

MARCIA nods.

JANICE swings the bat as though reaching for the bleachers.

JANICE

Crack.

JANICE swings again.

JANICE

Crack. I'll bet you won't even serve six months.

MARCIA

I won't be going to jail at all.

JANICE (turning to face MARCIA)

I admire your confidence.

MARCIA has her gun out. She shoots JANICE.

JANICE is too startled to speak. She takes a step toward MARCIA.

MARCIA

Thank you.

MARCIA shoots JANICE again. JANICE drops the bat and collapses. MARCIA looks JANICE over very carefully, but doesn't touch her.

MARCIA sets her revolver down on a table, sits and takes a few breaths. When she has been able to compose herself, she takes another look toward JANICE who has not moved. MARCIA then begins to rehearse.

MARCIA

Oh my god, officer, it was awful. ... Just awful. ... I didn't know, I swear to you I didn't even know he was married until earlier today. She walked in on us and just went crazy ... I don't blame her a bit ... but she was ... well she was ... it was like she was possessed. When she took that bat and started whaling on him, I didn't know what to do. I just didn't think I could make the stairs in time. ... Make it to the stairs in time? Yeah. ... I just didn't think I could make it to the stairs on time. When she came at me with the bat, I knew I had to protect myself ... I knew I had to protect my baby. That's it. ... When she came at me with the bat, I didn't even think about myself, I knew I had to protect my baby.

CHRISTOPHER begins to cry from off, a moment or two of groggy sniffing, followed by a full-fledged wail. MARCIA takes a deep breath and crosses off R.

MARCIA (from off)

Hi little fella. Christopher? ... Ooh, you are a beautiful little guy, aren't you?

CRISTOPHER (from off)

Where's mommy?

MARCIA (from off)

She's resting, sweetheart. Aunt Marcia is going to take care of you for a little while.

CHRISTOPHER begins to snifle again.

MARCIA (after a beat)

Is this your tape player? How about some nice music? I know Christopher will like some nice music.

At the sound of a finger hitting a button, a cassette player resumes playing Fleetwood Mac's "World Turning" as lights fade to black.

End *Cupid Agonistes*.