

NONA

—

A Play in One Act

by

Elizabeth Perkins

Cast of Characters

Simon: A waiter at Garden Cafe in his early 30s.

Karina: The head waitress at Garden Cafe in her mid 20s.

Frank: The middle-aged manager at Garden Cafe.

Fiona Harper: A nurse and frequent customer at Garden Cafe, in her late 20s.

Jack Harper: Fiona's father and the owner of Garden Cafe, in his mid 50s.

various customers, waiters, waitresses, and chefs

Scene

The Garden Cafe.

Time

The present.

Scene 1

SETTING: We are in the Garden Cafe, a clean, average sized, diner-style urban restaurant. One half of the stage is the kitchen, which is full of counters, stoves, ovens, a few cooks, and waiters rushing around to pick up food. The other half is the quaint dining room. A handful of customers sit at booths and tables, eating.

AT RISE: We see the silhouettes of KARINA and SIMON, who are standing in the kitchen, plating food. KARINA is talking excitedly to SIMON as they work, but we can not hear what she is saying. SIMON seems troubled, almost uncomfortable. Suddenly he bursts out...

SIMON

We' re not getting married!
(very long, silent, pause)

KARINA

What!?

(Lights up on KARINA and SIMON)

SIMON

(looking around)
I' ve tried to tell you for a long time–

KARINA

Are you serious?

SIMON

(slowly nods)

Yes. We're not right for each other. I just...feel it.

KARINA

(more to herself than to him)

But...-we talked about it. Oh, we *talked* about it-it was going to happen! How could you do this to me?

SIMON

I've tried to stop it for a long time. You wouldn't listen.

KARINA

We talked about it!

SIMON

No, Karina.

KARINA

Tell me you don't mean it. Simon, please...

SIMON

What else can I say to convince you?

KARINA

I love you, Simon.

(KARINA is on the verge of tears)

SIMON

I-I'm sorry.

KARINA

You-

(FRANK rushes past)

FRANK

Karina, hurry up! That old guy out there is anxious for his coffee. He's asked twice for it.

(calling offstage)

Peter-club sandwich with no mayo??

(FRANK leaves, and KARINA follows, nearly hysterical)

SIMON

(troubled)

What have I done?

FRANK (OFF)

(yelling)

Simon, Table 4!

(SIMON picks up some food, enters the dining room and goes to the table at which FIONA sits)

SIMON

Tomato soup and caesar salad. Green tea.

FIONA

(nod)

Thanks.

SIMON

Sure.

FIONA

(FIONA hesitates, then finally spits out her question.)

Do you-work here all the time?

SIMON

Pretty much.

FIONA

Yeah, I've seen you around.

(SIMON begins to hand FIONA the salad, but stops midair. He has finally noticed her, and stares at her for a long moment.)

SIMON

I have, too-

(SIMON, who is only paying attention to

FIONA, accidentally drops the salad. It falls on the floor.)

FIONA

Oh!

(he bends down to clean up the salad)

Excuse me. I'm sorry!

FIONA

(FIONA laughs)

Don't worry about it.

(beat)

I'm a nurse, part time.

SIMON

Okay.

FIONA AND SIMON

(together)

Are you single?

(a moment of embarrassed, awkward silence, then they accidentally speak in unison again)

Yes.

(Fiona laughs)

SIMON

I'm sorry.

(SIMON gets up, finished cleaning, and starts to leave.)

FIONA

You don't need to apologize. It's fine...

(Karina appears in the doorway, watching them)

Oh—I'll take the check now.

SIMON

(SIMON smiles.)

The bill's on us.

FIONA

Really?

SIMON

I don't mind.

FIONA

I don't mind either.

(picks a piece of lettuce off her lap)

Well, thanks. See you tomorrow.

(FIONA leaves and SIMON goes towards the kitchen. As he is about to enter the kitchen, he picks up FIONA's signed receipt and reads it)

SIMON

(reverently)

Fiona.

(SIMON smiles slowly, savoring the moment)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 2

SETTING: In the Garden Cafe, a week later.

AT RISE: KARINA and SIMON are in the kitchen.

KARINA

Simon, we need to talk.

(beat)

I don't understand...something's changed.

SIMON

Don't ask me about it again, Karina. We're not getting married.

KARINA

(quietly)

Who was is that girl who's always here?

FRANK (OFF)

Simon! Stop chatting and get to work!

SIMON

She's a customer. I dropped salad on her last week.

KARINA

Oh. She's been here every day.

SIMON

(trying to act casual)

She must think the food's fantastic or something.

KARINA

Well... What-

SIMON

Karina, do you still want to be my girl?

KARINA

I do, Simon—of course!

SIMON

Oh. Are you sure?

KARINA

(after a heartbreaking realization.)

You don't want me, do you?

(SIMON doesn't respond)

SIMON

Well, I just don't know—

KARINA

I see how it is. You don't—

SIMON

I'll be honest, Karina. I like you.

KARINA

Really?...

SIMON

I just—it feels like it wouldn't work out.

KARINA

But it would—

SIMON

Sorry, I need to go check on my table.

(SIMON rushes off, and KARINA exits. Just then, MR. HARPER and FRANK enter Mr. Harper's office. Frank has a piece of paper, a clipboard, and a pencil)

FRANK

So, Mr. Harper, Bill Johnson at the newspaper said he wants to do an article about you for the twelfth anniversary of the cafe. I told him you were very busy—

MR. HARPER

(obviously relieved)

Thank you.

FRANK

–but I need to ask you a few questions for him.

(MR. HARPER nods reluctantly,
and FRANK consults his paper)

FRANK

So, as a child, was it your dream to open a restaurant?

MR. HARPER

No.

FRANK

Well-okay. Next. What is your favorite menu item?

MR. HARPER

Uh...Ham and brie sandwich.

FRANK

(scribbling that down)

He also wants to know the story of how you started the
cafe.

MR. HARPER

I used to be a teacher. Then... I decided I needed a new career. So I thought it would
be–interesting–to go into the food industry. So, I bought this building and started
the Garden Cafe.

(FRANK finishes writing, and MR. HARPER
stares off into space, remembering.)

FRANK

Okay! That's perfect.

MR. HARPER

Hmm.

FRANK

Bill said here that it's advantageous if people think a business is a family thing, you
know. Do you have any family he could mention?

MR. HARPER

I–I have a daughter.

(beat)

Just one—don't write that down.

FRANK

What's her name?

MR. HARPER

I'm tired, Frank. Will you ask me the other questions later?

FRANK

Well—that's fine.

(FRANK exits reluctantly, giving a concerned glance to MR. HARPER as he leaves)

MR. HARPER

Nona...Nona.

(MR. HARPER picks up a picture frame on his desk. At the same time, FRANK enters the kitchen and sees KARINA. She is obviously troubled)

FRANK

Karina.....You look ready to blow up the whole world.

KARINA

Don't talk to me.

FRANK

Whoa—

(beat)

What's wrong?

KARINA

I need a break.

FRANK

Obviously. Are you sick? Or—?

(beat. KARINA doesn't answer)

Well, try to come back for the evening shift.

(pushes her out)

KARINA

Thanks.

(KARINA exits, leaving
through the dining room)

SIMON

(SIMON watches KARINA leave and then goes
to FIONA ' s table)

Head waiter ' s gone. I can talk.

FIONA

Good! I was thinking about what you said yesterday...

(KARINA enters to one side of stage, on her
way to her break. FIONA and SIMON don ' t
know she ' s there, and she isn ' t aware of
them.)

KARINA

He gave me a necklace three weeks after I started working at the cafe. I was a
dishwasher then. The next year, I was a waitress. Everyone loved me–Simon loved me...I
was accepted there. Simon worked hard–I liked that. I became head waiter. We ' d
known each other for three years...I talked about getting married.

(FIONA laughs)

SIMON

(smiling at her)

That ' s wonderful!

KARINA

He didn ' t disagree, and went along with it–
(voice breaks)

FIONA

My parents got divorced when I when I was young. Then my Dad left. I haven ' t seen
him since–all I remember is that he was an amazing guy.

SIMON

I ' m so sorry. But I admire how you ' re still so strong and sweet and kind.

KARINA

–He seemed as swept up in the dream as–me. Seemed. Now he seems nervous,
frightened. I don ' t know...he just got uninterested.

FIONA

Simon, let's meet for lunch on Friday, after you get off work. There's a new restaurant near the hospital...I'll treat, and the foods' great.

KARINA

(beat, then almost fiercely)

Gosh, I know he loves me back. And all I have to do is help him along 'till he realizes it. He'll come around soon enough.

(KARINA goes offstage)

SIMON

(suddenly stiff)

Well-I.

FIONA

Oh, Simon. Am I rushing?

SIMON

I don't mind. I like you.

FIONA

You're not too bad yourself.

SIMON

Fiona, I have to tell you something.

FIONA

Yeah?

(KARINA enters and passes by, crossing the stage. SIMON sees her)

SIMON

This is hard to say.

FIONA

(slightly giddy)

What is it...

SIMON

Well, I have-had a girlfriend. She's the head waitress here, Karina.

FIONA

(nothing but shocked)

But you said–

SIMON

Don't worry, we're not dating anymore. But–she doesn't realize that I'm serious out breaking up... She still talks about getting married.

FIONA

So...?

SIMON

So.

(beat)

.....what time for lunch?

FIONA

(hugs him)

Thank you, Simon.

(KARINA exits, and SIMON quickly goes back into the kitchen, where KARINA stops him.)

KARINA

(as if nothing has happened)

Simon, let's go out on Friday. I'll treat, and the food's great.

SIMON

(remembering FIONA saying the same thing)

No. Thanks.

KARINA

Simon. Come on, we're still going strong together. You'll-

SIMON

I have plans...I'm sorry.

(SIMON exits)

KARINA

(watching SIMON)

Plans–?

(Beat)

Oh...I've lost him.

FRANK

(walking past)

Karina, come on. Mr. Harper wants to talk to us.

(FRANK exits, and KARINA shouts after
SIMON)

KARINA

You *should* be sorry, Simon! You don't know what I can do!

(KARINA dashes to the cash register. She takes
a wad of cash out and stuffs it in her apron.
Then she hurries off to follow FRANK.)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 3

SETTING:

In MR. HARPER' s office,
immediately following.

AT RISE: MR. HARPER is sitting at his desk,
staring at the picture of FIONA
that sits in a frame on his desk,
when KARINA and FRANK enter.

FRANK
(trying to get MR. HARPER ' s attention)
Hmmp.

MR. HARPER
(almost jumps)
Oh.

FRANK
Hi Boss!

MR. HARPER
(he gently sets the picture of FIONA down)
Right.

(beat)
Time for the meeting.
(FRANK and KARINA sit)
So. As both of you know, our profits have dropped.....business
is slow. I-

KARINA
We probably need to cut our staff?

MR. HARPER
(nod)
We need to reduce spending. Frank, you explain it.

FRANK
Yeah...The money we brought in this month was half of what it was last year. Tourism
has dropped with the start of school. The new hospital restaurant is competition.

FRANK (CONTINUED)
None of the nurses need to leave to eat lunch like they did last year. Now we appeal to a
small clientele who doesn ' t eat out frequently. We can ' t afford to bring prices up. The
newspaper article coming up will hopefully boost business, but that ' s no guarantee.

KARINA

So...?

MR. HARPER

You two are the head of our staff. I don't know the employees very well, so I want you to decide who has to get fired.

FRANK

I don't know if-

KARINA

Well, there's-

FRANK

I don't think anyone deserves to be-

KARINA

Simon's been slacking off. Last night he took money out of the register. I saw him do it. I am so glad you wanted to talk to us, Mr. Harper, because I've been meaning to tell you. Simon doesn't deserve the job.

(HARPER looks at FRANK for confirmation)

FRANK

(shrug)

I'm surprised at Simon, Karina wouldn't lie.

KARINA

(with a smug nod)

Thank you.

HARPER

(oblivious)

Well, that was an easy decision. Frank, please tell Simon that he no longer is employed here.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 4

SETTING:

In the Garden Cafe, the next day.

AT RISE:

SIMON is in the Dining Room.

FRANK sticks his head in and calls to SIMON.

FRANK
Simon, I need to talk to you.

SIMON
Okay.

FRANK
Uh..let' s sit down.

SIMON
Is something wrong?

FRANK
Well, Simon, Mr. Harper decided that we need to cut down staff. You' ve been a good employee. I just don' t understand why you would do something like steal...but we have to fire you. A thief just isn' t someone we want to have around.

SIMON
What...

FRANK
I always thought you were a good guy, but times are rough. And Karina saw what you did.

SIMON
(forcefully)
What-did Karina say?

FRANK
She saw you take that money from the register the other day. So-

SIMON
I didn' t to it, Frank. I don' t know what you are talking about.
(almost frantic)
I swear! I don' t even know what-

FRANK
Simon-

SIMON
Of course you believe Karina over me. I-I...

FRANK
You can work today if you want-as a last. Go check on Table 4.
(SIMON nods and, after a long moment, goes

out into the dining room. He goes to FIONA ' s
table.)

SIMON

(giving FIONA the regular spiel)

Hi. What can I get for you today?

FIONA

(bewildered and disappointed)

Don ' t you know?

SIMON

Oh--tomato soup and salad. Right.

FIONA

Simon...

(beat)

What ' s wrong? Is it...something--

(beat)

Karina?

SIMON

(almost violently)

No.

FIONA

(seriously)

Simon....

SIMON

(He sighs and turns to go)

I swear, I ' m fine.

FIONA

No, you ' re not. Tell me the truth.

SIMON

(finally giving in and plopping down in the chair
next to FIONA)

No...I ' ve told the truth again and again--and things are all
mixed up!

FIONA

What is it?

SIMON

(beat)

Karina told our boss that I stole money from the register.

FIONA

But of course you didn't—

SIMON

Everyone believed the lie...Frank did, my boss did. Now—I'm fired. This is my last day.

(beat)

The only two things that used to matter to me were Karina and my job. Things between Karina and I—don't exist any more.

(SIMON frowns deeply)

...well, now I am losing my job, too. I didn't even do it! Nothing's left.

FIONA

(quietly)

You have me. I love you, Simon.

(SIMON does not answer. They sit in silence for a moment. KARINA, meanwhile, enters the dining room and sees SIMON. She rushes off as FIONA continues.)

FIONA

Go see your boss and tell him the truth, Simon. Like always.

SIMON

I—can't. They will always believe Karina. Not me.

FIONA

Do you want me to come along?

(FIONA stands up)

SIMON

No, Fiona. I can't. I'm ruined.

FIONA

Well, then I'll go tell him for you.

(FIONA makes a move as if she is

about to leave)

SIMON

Fiona!

(SIMON jumps up. He looks at FIONA for a moment. Then SIMON walks past her.)

Scene 5

SETTING: In MR. HARPER 's office,
immediately following.

AT RISE: The office is empty. KARINA
rushes in, assuming that MR.
HARPER is in it. She calls to him
as she enters.

KARINA

Mr. Harper! Sir! Simon is working in the dining room today! Frank let him work, but—
(she realizes that MR. HARPER is not there)

Oh... Mr. Harper?

(SIMON rushes in, also looking for Mr. Harper.
He is surprised to see KARINA.)

Karina. SIMON

Simon. KARINA

Where's Mr. Harper? SIMON

I don't know. KARINA

SIMON
(beat. SIMON nearly whispers)
How could you?

KARINA
That's what *I* wondered.

SIMON
How?

KARINA
You lied to me.

SIMON
No—you just didn't want to believe it when I told you. I was honest.

KARINA
Ha!
(she gives a sarcastic smile)
It doesn't really matter to me. It didn't break my heart. Oh— No!

SIMON
You—you don't think *you* hurt me too, do you? You think that I'm to blame.
(SIMON takes a deep breath.)

I used to respect you, so I tried to be gentle.
(beat)

Now I love another girl. Fiona. Because...
(SIMON pauses and swallows hard, fighting

tears)
she deserves it more than–

(Mr. Harper enters. He is surprised to find
KARINA and SIMON in his office.)

Mr. Harper! I didn't take any money from the register. Karina is lying. I didn't do anything like that! (beat) You see, we have been dating for a few years...the other day I told her that we weren't going to get married.

KARINA

I–

MR. HARPER

Sit down.

(FIONA enters the office now. SIMON sees her
and continues.)

SIMON

She was mad at me, even though I tried to be gentle about it. So she tried to get me fired. She lied. She wanted revenge.

(beat)

Please–

KARINA

Mr. Harper. I promise–I wouldn't lie!

MR. HARPER

(MR. HARPER sighs)

It's going to be easier to believe Karina.

SIMON

Have you ever loved someone?

(MR. HARPER turns away, as if wounded.)

Then you can imagine how hard it would be to let her go.

MR. HARPER

(under his breath)

I...remember.

(beat. Suddenly MR. HARPER speaks again.)

And why aren't you broken, too?

SIMON

I have someone else, sir.

(SIMON looks at FIONA)

She is right for me, not Karina.

MR. HARPER

Karina, you're fired.

(KARINA bristles for a moment, as if she is about to deny her charge or plead innocence.)

KARINA

(viciously)

I hate you, Simon.

(with a hateful look at SIMON, she sweeps out of the room. SIMON takes a deep breath, not sure how to respond.)

SIMON

Well—sorry to interrupt you.

(SIMON gets up to go, taking FIONA's arm. But FIONA suddenly grabs a picture frame off MR. HARPER's desk and looks at it very closely, almost violently. Then she looks at MR. HARPER, searching his face)

SIMON

What's wrong, Fiona?

FIONA

(to MR. HARPER)

Do—Do you know someone named Jack Harper?

MR. HARPER

(staring at FIONA)

What— (beat)...Nona?

(FIONA nods, a sob catching in her throat. FIONA and MR. HARPER begin to weep, and they slowly hug each other.)

SIMON

What—

Scene 6

SETTING: A few days later.

AT RISE: FIONA is sitting in Mr. Harper's office.

FIONA

I saw my dad for the first time in sixteen years. I was ten back then, when he left. My mom got remarried the next year, to a well-off banker. I missed my dad... He used called me Nona. Just him—no one else. When he left I was just Fiona. Fiona. That's even what my mom called me—it was...like Nona was the name of a girl I used to be. And now I have her back. Have Dad back.

(SIMON enters)

FIONA

Well—

(smile)

Hello.

SIMON

Hello. Do you remember our conversation the other day? You said something, and I didn't answer.

(FIONA nods)

FIONA

I said, I love you.

SIMON

Yes—I love you back. Nona.
(they kiss)

(CURTAIN)

NONA

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Cast of Characters

Simon: A waiter at Garden Cafe in his early 30s.

Karina: The head waitress at Garden Cafe in her mid 20s.

Frank: The middle-aged manager at Garden Cafe.

Fiona Harper: A nurse and frequent customer at Garden Cafe, in her late 20s.

Jack Harper: Fiona's father and the owner of Garden Cafe, in his late 50s or 60s.

various customers, waiters, waitresses, and chefs

Scene
The Garden Cafe.

Time
The Present.

Scene 1

We are in the Garden Cafe, a clean, average sized, diner style urban restaurant. One half of the stage is the kitchen, which is full of counters, stoves, ovens, a few cooks, and waiters rushing around to pick up food. The other half is the quaint dining room. A handful of customers sit at booths and tables, eating.

SIMON: We're not getting married! (very long, silent, pause)

KARINA: What!?! (Lights up on Karina and Simon)

SIMON: (looking around) I've tried to tell you for a long time—

KARINA: Are you serious?

SIMON: (slowly nods) Yes. We're not right for each other. I just...feel it.

KARINA: (more to herself than to him) But...—we talked about it. Oh, we talked about it—it was going to happen! How could you do this to me?

SIMON: I've tried to stop it for a long time. You wouldn't listen.

KARINA: We talked about it!

SIMON: No, Karina.

KARINA: Tell me you don't mean it. Simon, please...

SIMON: What else can I say to convince you?

KARINA: I love you, Simon. (Karina is on the verge of tears)

SIMON: I—I'm sorry.

KARINA: You—

FRANK: (rushing past) Karina, hurry up! That old guy out there is anxious for his coffee. He's asked twice for it. (calling offstage) Peter—club sandwich with no mayo?? (Frank leaves, and Karina follows, nearly hysterical)

SIMON: (troubled) What have I done?

FRANK (off): Simon, Table 4!

SIMON: (Simon picks up some food, enters the dining room and goes to the table where Fiona sits) Tomato soup and caesar salad. Green tea.

FIONA: (nod) Thanks.

SIMON: Sure.

FIONA: (Fiona hesitates, then finally spits out her question.) Do you—work here all the time?

SIMON: Pretty much.

FIONA: Yeah, I've seen you around. (Simon begins to hand Fiona the salad, but stops midair. He has finally noticed her, and stares at her for a long moment.)

SIMON: I have, too— (Simon, who is only paying attention to Fiona, accidentally drops the salad. It falls on the floor.)

FIONA: Oh! (he bends down to clean up the salad) Excuse me. I'm sorry!

FIONA: (FIONA laughs) Don't worry about it. (beat) I'm a nurse, part time.

SIMON: Okay.

FIONA and SIMON: (together) Are you single? (a moment of embarrassed, awkward silence, then they accidentally speak in unison again) Yes. (Fiona laughs)

SIMON: I'm sorry. (Simon gets up, finished cleaning, and starts to leave.)

FIONA: You don't need to apologize. It's fine... (Karina appears in the doorway, watching them) Oh—I'll take the check now.

SIMON: (Simon smiles.) The bill's on us.

FIONA: Really?

SIMON: I don't mind.

FIONA: I don't mind either. (picks a piece of lettuce off her lap) Well, thanks. See you tomorrow. (Fiona leaves and Simon goes towards the kitchen. As he is about to enter the kitchen, he picks up Fiona's signed receipt and reads it)

SIMON: (reverently) Fiona. (Simon smiles slowly, savoring the moment)

(Blackout) (End of Scene)

Scene 2

SETTING: In the Garden Cafe, a week later.

AT RISE: Karina and Simon are in the kitchen.

KARINA: Simon, we need to talk. (beat) I don't understand...something's changed.

SIMON: Don't ask me about it again, Karina. We're not getting married.

KARINA: (quietly) Who was is that girl who's always here?

FRANK (off) Simon! Stop chatting and get to work!

SIMON: She's a customer. I dropped salad on her last week.

KARINA: Oh. She's been here every day.

SIMON: (trying to act casual) She must think the food's fantastic or something.

KARINA: Well... What—

SIMON: Karina, do you still want to be my girl?

KARINA: I do, Simon—of course!

SIMON: Oh. Are you sure?

KARINA: (after a heartbreaking realization) You don't want me, do you? (SIMON doesn't respond)

SIMON: Well, I just don't know—

KARINA: I see how it is. You don't–

SIMON: I'll be honest, Karina. I like you.

KARINA: Really?...

SIMON: I just—it feels like it wouldn't work out. And that's the truth.

KARINA: But it would–

SIMON: Sorry, I need to go check on my table. (Simon rushes off.)

KARINA: (bitterly) I—I don't want the truth. (Karina exits. Just then, Mr. Harper and Frank enter.)

Mr. Harper's office. Frank has a piece of paper, a clipboard, and a pencil)

FRANK: So, Mr. Harper, Bill Johnson at the newspaper said he wants to do an article about you for the twelfth anniversary of the cafe. I told him you were very busy–

MR. HARPER: (obviously relieved) Thank you.

FRANK: –but I need to ask you a few questions for him. (Mr. Harper nods reluctantly, and Frank consults his paper)

FRANK: So, as a child, was it your dream to open a restaurant?

MR. HARPER: No.

FRANK: Well—okay. Next. What is your favorite menu item?

MR. HARPER: Uh...Ham and brie sandwich.

FRANK: (scribbling that down) He also wants to know the story of how you started the cafe.

MR. HARPER: I used to be a teacher. Then... I decided I needed a new career. So I thought it would be—interesting—to go into the food industry. So, I bought this building and started the Garden Cafe. (Frank finishes writing, and Mr. Harper stares off into space, remembering.)

FRANK: Okay! That's perfect.

MR. HARPER: Hmm.

FRANK: Bill said here that it's advantageous if people think a business is a family thing, you know. Do you have any family he could mention?

MR. HARPER: I—I have a daughter. (beat) Just one—don't write that down.

FRANK: What's her name?

MR. HARPER: I'm tired, Frank. Will you ask me the other questions later?

FRANK: Well—that's fine. (Frank exits reluctantly, giving a concerned glance to Mr. Harper as he leaves)

MR. HARPER: Nona...Nona. (Mr. Harper picks up a picture frame on his desk. At the same time, Frank enters the kitchen and sees Karina. She is obviously troubled.)

FRANK: Karina.....You look ready to blow up the whole world.

KARINA: Don't talk to me.

FRANK: Whoa— (beat) What's wrong?

KARINA: I need a break.

FRANK: Obviously. Are you sick? Or—? (beat. Karina doesn't answer) Well, try to come back for the evening shift. (pushes her out)

KARINA: Thanks. (Karina exits, leaving through the dining room)

SIMON: (Simon watches Karina leave, then goes to Fiona's table) Head waiter's gone. I can talk.

FIONA: Good! I was thinking about what you said yesterday...(Karina enters to one side of stage, on her way to her break. Fiona and Simon don't know she's there, and she isn't aware of them. As Karina speaks, Fiona and Simon silently continue to pantomime a conversation.)

KARINA: He gave me a necklace three weeks after I started working at the cafe. I was a dishwasher then. The next year, I was a waitress. Everyone loved me—Simon loved me...I was accepted there. Simon worked hard—I liked that. I became head waiter. We'd known each other for three years...I talked about getting married. It all seemed like a dream that I'd wished for my whole life and never thought would happen. And suddenly it was coming true— (Fiona laughs, and Karina pauses.)

SIMON: (smiling at Fiona) That's wonderful!

KARINA: He didn't disagree, and went along with it—(voice breaks)

FIONA: My parents got divorced when I when I was young. Then my Dad left. I haven't seen him since—all I remember is that he was an amazing guy.

SIMON: I'm so sorry. But I admire how you're still so strong and sweet and kind.

KARINA: —He seemed as swept up in the idea as—me. Seemed. Now he seems nervous, frightened. I don't know...he just got uninterested.

FIONA: Simon, let's meet for lunch on Friday, after you get off work. There's a new restaurant near the hospital...I'll treat, and the foods' great.

KARINA: (beat, then almost fiercely) God, I know he loves me back. And all I have to do is help him along 'till he realizes it. He'll come around soon enough. I'll find the truth in himself. (Karina exits)

SIMON: (suddenly stiff) Well—I.

FIONA: Oh, Simon. Am I rushing?

SIMON: I don't mind; I like you.

FIONA: You're not too bad yourself.

SIMON: Fiona, I have to tell you something.

FIONA: Yeah? (Karina enters and passes by, crossing the stage. Simon sees her.)

SIMON: This is hard to say.

FIONA: (slightly giddy) What is it...

SIMON: Well, I have-had a girlfriend. She's the head waitress here, Karina.

FIONA: (nothing but shocked) But you said—

SIMON: Don't worry, we're not dating anymore. But—she doesn't realize that I'm serious about breaking up... She still talks about getting married.

FIONA: So...?

SIMON: So. (beat).....what time for lunch?

FIONA: (hugs him) Thank you, Simon.

(Karina exits, and Simon quickly goes back into the kitchen, where Karina stops him.)

KARINA: (as if nothing has happened) Simon, let's go out on Friday. I'll treat, and the food's great.

SIMON: (remembering Fiona saying the same thing) No. Thanks.

KARINA: Simon. Come on, we're still going strong together. This is real love.

SIMON: For you, not me. And, I have plans...I'm sorry. (Simon exits)

KARINA: (watching Simon) Plans—? (Beat) Oh...I've lost him.

FRANK: (walking past) Karina, come on. Mr. Harper wants to talk to us. (Frank exits, and Karina shouts after Simon)

KARINA: You should be sorry, Simon! You don't know what I can do!

(Karina dashes to the cash register. She takes a wad of cash out and stuffs it in her apron. Then she hurries off to follow Frank.)

(Blackout) (End of Scene)

Scene 3

SETTING: In the Garden Cafe, the next day.

AT RISE: Simon is in the Dining Room. Frank sticks his head in and calls to Simon.

FRANK: Simon, I need to talk to you.

SIMON: Okay.

FRANK: Uh..let's sit down.

SIMON: Is something wrong?

FRANK: Well, Simon, Mr. Harper decided that we need to cut down staff. You've been a good employee. I just don't understand why you would do something like steal...but we have to fire you. A thief just isn't someone we want to have around.

SIMON: What...

FRANK: I always thought you were a good guy, but times are rough. And Karina saw what you did.

SIMON: (forcefully) What—did Karina say?

FRANK: She saw you take that money from the register the other day. So—

SIMON: I didn't do it, Frank. I don't know what you are talking about. (almost frantic) I swear! I don't even know what—

FRANK: Simon—

SIMON: Of course you believe Karina over me. I—I...

FRANK: You can work today if you want—as a last. Go check on Table 4. (Simon nods and, after a long moment, goes out into the dining room. He goes to Fiona's table.)

SIMON: (giving Fiona the regular spiel) Hi. What can I get for you today?

FIONA: (bewildered and disappointed) Don't you know?

SIMON: Oh—tomato soup and salad. Right.

FIONA: Simon... (beat) What's wrong? Is it....something— (beat) Karina?

SIMON: (almost violently) No.

FIONA: (seriously) Simon....

SIMON: (He sighs and turns to go) I swear, I'm fine.

FIONA: No, you're not. Tell me the truth.

SIMON: (finally giving in and plopping down in the chair next to Fiona) No...I've told the truth again and again—and things are all mixed up!

FIONA: What is it?

SIMON: (beat) Karina told our boss that I stole money from the register.

FIONA: But of course you didn't—

SIMON: Everyone believed the lie...Frank did, my boss did. Now—I'm fired. This is my last day. (beat) The only two things that used to matter to me were Karina and my job. Things between Karina and I—don't exist any more. (Simon frowns deeply) ...well, now I am losing my job, too. I didn't even do it! Nothing's left.

FIONA: (quietly) You have me. I love you, Simon. (Simon does not answer. They sit in silence for a moment. Karina, meanwhile, enters the dining room and sees Simon. She rushes off as

Fiona continues.)

FIONA: Go see your boss and tell him the truth, Simon. Like always.

SIMON: I—can't. They will always believe Karina. Not me.

FIONA: Do you want me to come along? (Fiona stands up)

SIMON: No, Fiona. I can't. I'm ruined.

FIONA: Well, then I'll go tell him for you. (Fiona makes a move as if she is about to leave)

SIMON: Fiona! (Simon jumps up. He looks at Fiona for a moment. Then Simon walks past her.)

(Blackout) (End of Scene)

Scene 4

SETTING: In Mr. Harper's office, immediately following.

AT RISE: The office is empty. Karina rushes in, assuming that Mr. Harper is in it. She calls to him as she enters.

KARINA: Mr. Harper! Sir! Simon is working in the dining room today! Frank let him work, but— (she realizes that Mr. Harper is not there) Oh... Mr. Harper?

SIMON: (Simon rushes in, also looking for Mr. Harper. He is surprised to see Karina.) Karina.

KARINA: Simon.

SIMON: Where's Mr. Harper?

KARINA: I don't know.

SIMON: (beat. Simon nearly whispers) How could you?

KARINA: That's what I wondered.

SIMON: How?

KARINA: You lied to me.

SIMON: No—you just didn't want to believe it when I told you. I was honest.

KARINA: Ha! (she gives a sarcastic smile) It doesn't really matter to me. It didn't break my heart. Oh— No!

SIMON: You—You don't think you hurt me too, do you? You think that I'm to blame. (Simon takes a deep breath.) I used to respect you, so I tried to be gentle. (beat) Now I love another girl.

Fiona. Because... (Simon pauses and swallows hard, fighting tears) she deserves it more than— (Fiona enters. He is surprised to find Karina and Simon in his office.)

SIMON: Mr. Harper! I didn't take any money from the register. Karina is lying. I didn't do anything like that! (beat) You see, we have been dating for a few years...the other day I told her that we weren't going to get married.

KARINA: I—

MR. HARPER: Sit down.

SIMON: (Fiona enters the office now. Simon sees her and continues.) She was mad at me, even though I tried to be gentle about it. So she tried to get me fired. She lied. She wanted revenge. (beat) Please—

KARINA: Mr. Harper. I promise—I wouldn't lie!

MR. HARPER: (Mr. Harper sighs) It's going to be easier to believe Karina.

SIMON: Have you ever loved someone? (Mr. Harper turns away, as if wounded.) Then you can

imagine how hard it would be to let her go.

MR. HARPER: (under his breath) I...remember. (beat. Suddenly Mr. Harper speaks again.) And why aren't you broken, too?

SIMON: I have someone else, sir. (Simon looks at Fiona) She is right for me, not Karina.

MR. HARPER: Karina, you're fired. (Karina bristles for a moment, as if she is about to deny her charge or plead innocence.)

KARINA: (viciously) I hate you, Simon. (with a hateful look at Simon, she sweeps out of the room. Simon takes a deep breath, not sure how to respond.

SIMON: Well—sorry to interrupt you.

(Simon gets up to go, taking Fiona's arm. But Fiona suddenly grabs a picture frame off Mr. Harper's desk and looks at it very closely, almost violently. Then she looks at Mr. Harper, searching his face)

SIMON: What's wrong, Fiona?

FIONA: (to Mr. Harper) Do—Do you know someone named Jack Harper?

MR. HARPER: (staring at Fiona) What— (long beat)...Nona? (Fiona nods, a sob catching in her throat. Fiona and Mr. Harper begin to weep, and they slowly hug each other.)

SIMON: What—

(Blackout) (End of Scene)

Scene 5

SETTING: A few days later.

AT RISE: Fiona is sitting in Mr. Harper's office.

FIONA: I saw my dad for the first time in sixteen years. I was ten back then, when he left. My mom got remarried the next year, to a well-off banker. I missed my dad... He used called me Nona. Just him—no one else. When he left I was just Fiona. Fiona. That's even what my mom called me—it was...like Nona was the name of a girl I used to be. And now I have her back.

Have Dad back. (Simon enters)

FIONA: Well— (smile) Hello.

SIMON: Hello. Do you remember our conversation the other day? You said something, and I didn't answer.

FIONA: (Fiona nods) I said, I love you.

SIMON: Yes—I love you back. Nona. (they kiss)

(CURTAIN)