SIDE 1
CHARACTERS

MIA
ATHENS
JUSTINE
LYLE
DENIS
HIPPOLYTA

MIA. (Off)

(At which point, **MIA DICARLO** *runs in. She's* **COOKIE** *at seventeen, played by the same actress. She's followed on by* **LYLE** *and another young man of the same age named* **DENIS**. *All three of them are Italian-Americans from New Jersey. For the boys this means that they're buff, self-confident, and use pomade. For the girls (and we'll soon meet another one) this means that they're cheeky, tan, and emotional. Like waterfowl, they migrate each summer to the Jersey shore for mating purposes.)*

(Racing in behind them is **JUSTINE DICARLO**, *Mia's mother, who, as we know, is Governor Athens' Chief of Staff. She was once a Jersey shore girl herself but now, alas, she is that nemesis of all things spontaneous and joyful, an adult.)*

MIA. *Governor, I gotta talk to you!*

ATHENS. Mia?

MIA. Governor, I need you to give me one of those whatdy-acallits. Dispensations. Y'know like the Pope does only then it's holy.

ATHENS. I don't know what you –

JUSTINE. Governor, I am *so* sorry. Mia should *not* be disturbing you like this –

ATHENS. Mia, what's the trouble? Maybe I can –

MIA. I want to get married, okay?! To Lyle here.

LYLE. How ya doon? How ya doon?

MIA. But Ma is saying no *for no good reason!*

JUSTINE. You are seventeen years old! How is *that* for a reason?! You may not get married without my consent until you are eighteen years old and that is the law! *(to* **ATHENS***)* She met him four weeks ago in a hot tub.

And now she wants to break up with *Denis*, who is like one of the family.

DENIS. Hey what's happenin'.

MIA. Ma, what do you want from me, I'm in love with Lyle.

JUSTINE. Oh, please.

MIA. Hey I'm Italian! I do things on impulse.

JUSTINE. Which should not include marrying a man you met under water!

JUSTINE. People buy groceries on impulse! Or books! But this is –

MIA. You know if you wanted an Irish girl you should have got one

MIA. *now would you please stop nagging!!*

JUSTINE. *Mia!! (to* **ATHENS,** *referring to* **LYLE***)* Do you hear that?! That is *his* influence.

LYLE. *(pleased)* D'ya think?

DENIS. She was *my girlfriend*, ya know. You stole her from me.

LYLE. Get outa here! She was tired of you and I wonder why.

DENIS. Do you wonder why?

LYLE. Yeah I wonder why.

(They shove each other.)

JUSTINE. *Boys, stop it!*

MIA. *Ma!*

JUSTINE. Everything was fine until this Lyle came along and started turning her head, bewitching her with *iTunes cards* and rings and bracelets made of his *greasy hair.*

MIA. *(showing off the bracelet to* **HIPPOLYTA***)* Pretty nice, huh.

HIPPOLYTA. Ooh I love it.

JUSTINE. I'll send you to boarding school in Switzerland, young lady! You can join the Von Trapp family and *go sing about GOATS ON A HILLSIDE!!!*

ATHENS. *(to* **MIA***)* What does your father say?

MIA. He's afraid to talk to her.

ATHENS. You do need your parents' consent until you're eighteen.

MIA. But that's eleven months away! *(She starts weeping.)* I mean you're killin' me here! You might as well send me to a convent or somethin'!

ATHENS. Mia, to you your mother should be as a god.

(Beat. Then the kids start hooting with laughter.)

And your mother obviously thinks a lot of Denis.

LYLE. Then *she* can marry him.

ATHENS. Was I speaking to you?!

LYLE. Hey Gov, I'm sorry, but I'm as good as he is, ya know. We're both in technical college. Our grades are the same. On top of which, he's been foolin' around with Helene, who's Mia's friend who works at the lobster place down in Matawan. And he took her to a *club* and now she *dotes* on the guy!

MIA. *(still in tears)* Governor, Lyle and I are deeply, deeply in love. Doesn't that count for *somethin' in this world?!*

ATHENS. I'm afraid it doesn't in this case, Mia. The law is the law. *(to* **HIPPOLYTA***)* Am I right?

HIPPOLYTA. *(clearly on* **MIA***'s side)* Don't touch me.

(She walks away.)

ATHENS. *(hard)* Denis. Justine. I'd like to speak to both of you if you don't mind. Now.

(He leaves, followed by **DENIS, JUSTINE** *and* **PHYLLIS.** *This leaves* **MIA** *and* **LYLE** *alone on stage.)*

MIA. Oh, Lyle, what are we gonna do?!

LYLE. "The course of true love never did run smooth."

MIA. Hey, that's good.

LYLE. It's not mine. It's from that play we did last year about Helen Keller. But we're not alone in all of this, ya know. I mean there's like hundreds of reasons that love does not always run smooth in this world. For example, say the parents of the guy don't like the girl he's in love with so they put a contract out on her.

STOP

ACT TWO

Boardwalk

Scene One

(Somewhere on a rocky beach near the woods. Evening.)

(It would be a perfectly ordinary setting if it did not contain a world of fairies of all kinds: elves, sprites, brownies, pixies and pucks. Since these fairies live near the beach, they wear hip, fashionable beachwear.)

(As the lights come up, **MOONBEAM** *enters, all in a dither. She's carrying a tray with cups filled with flowers and bottles of dew and begins hurriedly setting them out for a party. As she dashes from table to table,* **ROBIN GOODFELLOW** *enters and watches her with amusement.* **ROBIN** *is a male puck but can be played by an actress as a trousers role.)*

ROBIN. How now, spirit?

MOONBEAM. *Ah!*

ROBIN. Wither wander you?

MOONBEAM. Under sun, under moon,
Through ocean, through waves,
Over beach, over sand,
Through castle, through caves,
I do wander everywhere,
Over here –

SUNFLOWER. *(popping up somewhere else on stage)* And over there!

SUNSHINE. *(ditto)* But at the moment, we have a party to put on.

PEASEBLOSSOM. *(scurrying in, carrying a present with a bow that isn't finished yet)* Aghhh! Look at the time! Here, quick, finger.

(She's asking **ROBIN** *to put his finger on the knot so she can finish tying the bow.)*

MOONBEAM. You aren't finished yet?

PEASEBLOSSOM. Don't start with me. Who got up early this morning and talked the crickets into providing the music?

(They all listen and we hear noisy crickets.)

SUNFLOWER. You call that music?

PEASEBLOSSOM. *(scornful)* They're tuning up.

(She snaps her fingers and rock music begins to play, the latest number-one single at the time of production. Simultaneously the lights change, the party starts and a new wave of fairies arrive in party dress. Candles flicker on the tables, fairy lights appear in strings, and drinks start getting passed around. Perhaps a mirrored ball descends from nowhere and starts spinning. Soon everyone is dancing.)

ROBIN. You're having a party?

SUNSHINE. The boy is quick.

ROBIN. But who's it for?

SUNFLOWER. The Queen.

ROBIN. The Queen?!

MOONBEAM. And *of* the Queen and *by* the Queen,

ALL THE FAIRIES. She shall not perish from the earth.

ROBIN. The Queen of the Fairies?!

SUNFLOWER. It's not the Queen of England, Sunshine.

ROBIN. I thought *you* were Sunshine.

SUNFLOWER. Sunflower.

SUNSHINE. Sunshine!

MOONBEAM. Moonbeam.

MOTE. Mote.

COBWEB. Cobweb.

TURTLE. Turtle.

ROBIN. Turtle?

TURTLE. I'm of mixed race.

ROBIN. Houston, we have a problem.

MUSTARDSEED. What's the matter?

ROBIN. The King doth keep *his* revels here tonight.
Take heed the Queen comes not within his sight.
They're having an argument.

TURTLE. Oh they argue all the time.

MOTE. At the drop of a hat.

COBWEB. Or a wing.

PEASEBLOSSOM. Or any old thing.

SUNSHINE. What's it about?

ROBIN. Don't you keep up with the palace intrigues? *(He pulls out a copy of* People Magazine *and starts pointing things out in one of the articles.)* Look. She forgot his birthday, and he wanted a Mustang.

SUNSHINE. The horse?

ROBIN. The car. He has the best muscle car collection in Fairy Land. He says it makes him feel young again.

(At this moment, **MIA** *and* **LYLE** *dash in, hand in hand. They stop suddenly and look back, hoping they haven't been followed.)*

MIA. *(to* **SUNSHINE***)* Excuse me. Have you seen an annoying old woman who's trying to suffocate her daughter by being too strict about *everything?*

SUNSHINE. My mother's here?

*(***LYLE** *and* **MIA** *rush off. A moment later,* **DENIS** *dashes in and looks around.)*

DENIS. *(to* **TURTLE***)* Hi, I'm Denis. I'm lookin' for a girl named Mia, about so high with a red scarf and a shoulder bag.

TURTLE. She went that way.

(A rainbow of invention. ROBIN looks up in alarm.)

But wait! Make room, fairy. Here comes Oberon!!

(Something extraordinary occurs in the atmosphere – a roll of thunder and a change in the sky – along with a wild electric guitar riff in the music – and **OBERON** *and* **TITANIA,** *the Fairy King and Queen, enter from opposite directions.)*

(They are extraordinary creatures – in looks, in dress, in attitude.)

OBERON. Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

TITANIA. What, are you jealous, Oberon?

Fairies, skip hence! I have refused his bed and company.

(She starts to leave.)

OBERON. *Wait!* Am I not your lord and master?

TITANIA. Ha! Then I would be your lady, but I can't be that because I know about your escapades and infidelities with Harriet and Semele and Nausica and Ginger and–

OBERON. *THAT'S ENOUGH!*

(This is accompanied by a tremendous crack of thunder.)

How dare you, when everyone knows how you worship that Governor Athens creature, and turned yourself once into Hippolyta, his fiancée, to get a kiss and cuddle from him, "Oh Chris dear let me handle your constituents…"

TITANIA. These are the forgeries of jealousy;
And ever since the middle summer's spring,
Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,
By pavèd fountain or by rushy brook,
Or in the beachèd margent of the sea,
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
But with your brawls, you have disturbed our sport!
The heavens open up,

(Crash!)

the rivers flood.
The tides go in and out at will so that
The fishermen are almost drowned by night!
The wind sucks up the fog and then it rains
For days and then it snows and rains again
and all this comes from our dissension
Which is caused by you!

ROBIN. Or it could be global warming, I suppose -

BOTH. *Shut up!*

*(***ROBIN** *exits.)*

OBERON. The arguments of the gods have always changed the weather here on Earth.

TITANIA. But we aren't gods, we're fairies.

OBERON. Technicality! And you *can* prevent all this, you know. You could stop it like *that! (snap!)* Just buy me the Mustang.

TITANIA. The horse?

OBERON. The *car.* And you know it.

TITANIA. Buy it yourself. You have the power.

OBERON. It's not the same thing! It's my birthday! I want a present! A present shows affection and without affection there's no relationship.

TITANIA. You should have thought of that before you fooled around.

OBERON. I didn't "fool around." I'm a fairy. It means I'm naturally gregarious!

TITANIA. Liar!

OBERON. Liar yourself!

(Slap! She slaps him hard across the face. He stares at her. Then slap! He slaps her back, just as hard. They glare at each other.)

OBERON. *(to the audience)* It's hard sustaining a relationship.

TITANIA. Fairies away!
We shall downright fight if I longer stay!

*(***TITANIA** *takes up her train and sweeps out.* **OBERON** *is fuming.)*

OBERON. *(to himself)* Oh I will torment you for this injury.
Puck! *Where are you?!*

ROBIN. *(appearing)* What's the prob?

OBERON. It's that *woman.* You'd think as a Fairy King I wouldn't have to put up with all this heartache. Now listen carefully. I have an idea. Do you remember how you and I once sat on that ledge over there overlooking this beach and saw Cupid, the God of Love, armed with his arrows? He took aim at one of the local girls and loosed his love shaft smartly from his bow -

ROBIN. I beg your pardon?

*(***TITANIA** *takes up her train and sweeps out.* **OBERON** *is fuming.)*

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ROBIN. I beg your pardon?

OBERON. He shot his arrow.

ROBIN. Oh.

OBERON. And he missed the girl, but the arrow landed on a little white flower that instantly turned purple. It was next to a discarded jar of hair pomade, that greasy stuff that all these hormonal teenagers use to streak their hair and make themselves think they're god's own gift to the opposite…what are you doing?

*(***ROBIN** *is pomading his hair while checking himself out in a mirror.)*

ROBIN. Oh. Sorry.

OBERON. *Will you listen to me!!* Go fetch me that flower *now!* I assume you know its power.

ROBIN. Well…

OBERON. If you squeeze the juice of the flower on the eyelid of someone who's asleep, he or she will fall instantly in love with the first live creature that it sees.

ROBIN. Sounds big.

OBERON. You have no idea. Go fetch it immediately. I'll wait here.

ROBIN. "I'll put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes!"

OBERON. Why?

ROBIN. To find the flower.

OBERON. But I just told you, it's right over there.

ROBIN. Oh. All right. I'll be right back.

(He exits.)

OBERON. *(alone, to the audience)* You see my plan, don't you. Once I have the juice, I'll put it on Titania's eyes when she's asleep. Then, when she awakes, she'll fall in love with whatever she sees first – be it a bear, or a monkey, or an ape! Ha ha! Though what *they* would be doing at the beach I have no idea. But who's that coming? I am invisible and I will overhear their conference.

*(***DENIS** *enters, followed by* **HELENE.***)*

DENIS. Helene, would you leave me alone! Now where are Lyle and Mia? You told me they were meetin' here to run away! ...You tricked me, didn't you?! Just to get me here!

HELENE. No, of course not!

DENIS. Then why are you following me?

HELENE. Because I can't help it! You're like a magnet to my heart. When you run away it's like I'm drawn to you.

DENIS. Have I said *anything* to lead you on? Haven't I been totally honest with you?

HELENE. Yeah. And I love you for that, too. I love you for everything. It's like I'm your dog, ya know. Your spaniel. You can whack me, you can ignore me, you can forget to feed me, it doesn't matter. I'll just drool on you and love you more.

DENIS. Look, just, just don't tempt me. All right? You could get yourself in trouble out here. You're a girl and it's dark out. And you're all alone except for me, and I could take advantage of you!

HELENE. It doesn't feel like night when I'm with you. It feels like day. And I'm not alone, cause you're the world to me, ya know?

DENIS. I'll run. I will, I swear, and leave you at the mercy of whatever comes along.

HELENE. It kinda doesn't matter. I'll just run after you anyway.

(She takes his hand and he pulls it away.)

DENIS. *Would you stop that!*

HELENE. *No!* And would you stop yelling at me! You hurt my feelings! *I'm the girl!* You're supposed to be chasing me! *You think I like this!!*

(He tries to answer her, but he's so frustrated and angry that he just grunts and gestures and jumps up and down and shakes his fist – and then he runs out.)

HELENE. *(to the audience)* He's just so cute when he gets mad like that.
I'm comin' after you!
And if chasing him turns all my life to hell,
I'll die upon that hand I love so well.
Whoa. Dramatic.

(She runs out after him.)

OBERON. Fare thee well, Nymph. Before you leave these woods, *he'll* be chasing after *you.* Ah, Puck.

ROBIN. I'm back.

OBERON. What are you doing?

ROBIN. Nothing.

OBERON. I mean what is *that.*

ROBIN. Where?

OBERON. Behind your back.

ROBIN. I don't see anything.

OBERON. You're holding something behind your back.

ROBIN. Oh I don't think so –

OBERON. *PUCK!*

ROBIN. *(bringing it out, almost swooning with excitement and pleasure)* Oh, sir, it is so magnificent. I won it last night at Bingo on the Beach! It's called an iPhone. You can do a thousand things with it. It's magic!

OBERON. We already do magic.

ROBIN. No, this is real magic. Watch this. Email. App Store. Angry Birds. *(or whatever's the hottest game app at the time of production)* Ohh! And here's the best part. Here, take this, I got you one. Now stand there.

(ring!)

Answer it, the green button.

(talking to the image in the phone)

"Hello, Oberon, can you see my face?" It's called FaceTime! Isn't it amazing!

OBERON. But I can see you there. In person.

Feel The Love Tonight" by Elton John, about 20 seconds of it. It's quite beautiful and **TITANIA** *falls asleep.)*

MOONBEAM. Hence, away! Now all is well.
One aloof stand sentinel.

(The Fairies exit. After a moment, **OBERON** *enters and anoints* **TITANIA***'s eyelids with the nectar of the magic flower.)*

OBERON. What you see when you awake,
Do it for your true love take.
Love and languish for its sake.
Be it lynx or cat or bear,
Surfer dude with spiky hair,
Good old boy with gut of beer,
DJ with a cringing leer,
Wake when some vile thing is near!

(He exits. As he exits, **LYLE** *and* **MIA** *enter.)*

LYLE. We're lost! I can't believe it! I'm never lost!

MIA. You should have asked for directions! Oh! I am so tired! My back hurts, my bones are creaking. I feel like I'm thirty years old or somethin'.

LYLE Look, I'm sorry. I'll find the road in the morning, I promise. Let's bunk down here for tonight.

MIA. Oh all right. *(she sees a grassy spot:)* I'll sleep here.

LYLE. Ooh yeah, that looks comfy. We can share it.

(He starts to lie down with her.)

MIA. Uh, Lyle?

LYLE Yeah?

MIA. I think you should sleep over there.

LYLE. D'ya think? Wait. I feel some poetry comin' on.
Three blades of grass,
Two bodies,
One love.

(He grins at her for approval.)

It's called a Haiku. Which is a very short Swedish poem.

MIA. Hey, that's really good. And I got one for you, too.
Let's see …
One love.
Two bodies.
And if you touch me before the wedding I'll kill you.

LYLE. Hey, c'mon! Nothin's gonna happen. I swear! Look, you've said to me that you love me as much as you love yourself. Right? So by lying here with me, you'll be alone, cause you'll be sleeping with yourself!

MIA. Now that's cute. *But,* if you slept here I'd feel like, oh what's the word, they use it in poetry all the time, it's a really fancy word, oh yeah, it's called a *SLUT!* So get your backside outa here and go over *there.*

LYLE. Okay, okay. *(he goes)* Feel better?

MIA. Yeah. Thanks. And just think, after we're married we'll be lyin' next to each other *forever.*

(He smiles…and then the implications of this hit him and he suddenly looks very worried.)

*(***MIA** *rolls over and falls asleep. Then* **LYLE** *shrugs and does the same. They both snore gently.)*

*(***ROBIN** *enters)*

ROBIN. Through the forest green and yellow
But I haven't spied the fellow.
He with greasy hair and shades
Who breaks the hearts of trusting maids.
Night and silence! There he is! Let's see… Ray Bans, leather jacket… That's the boy. And look at this. Separate beds. She probably wanted to sleep next to him but the churl said, "No! Sleep over there! I don't love you anymore!" I'll fix him good.

(He starts to squeeze the magic flower onto **LYLE***'s eyes, but stops.)*

ROBIN. Oh what the heck.

ACT THREE

Scene One

(Titania's bower. Enter the **CLOWNS**. *They don't see* **TITANIA** *asleep nearby.)*

PATTI. *(in high producer mode)* On time, all here, and it's the perfect setting for rehearsal. Now this flat part here will be our stage, we can change behind the shower.

NIKKI. Patti?

PATTI. Yes, oh Nikki Bottom?

NIKKI. I've been reading the script and I think there are parts that could be problems.

PATTI. Such as?

NIKKI. Well first of all, won't the audience be afraid of the lion?

PATTI. I've thought of that, so I've written a prologue. It's very post-modern. *(as if to us)* "Ladies and gentlemen. The part of the lion this evening will be played by Miss Janet Snug, Manicures. She's very sweet and doesn't bite people, except her mother when she gets excited." And then we'll fix the costume so that Janet's face can be seen coming through the lion's neck. Ergo no fear, problem solved.

OTHERS. Excellent. / Sounds good to me. *(etc.)*

ROBERT. Excuse me, but I see two more problems. First, the play says that Romeo and Juliet meet at night *under the stars.* But what if it's cloudy that night and we can't even see the stars?

PATTI. I've thought of that as well. We all have lights with us, now don't we. And we can *pretend* they're stars.

JANET. What do you mean?

PATTI. Our cellphones. They're always glowing. We'll just hold them up and let them drift across the sky like little stars and galaxies.

OTHERS. Ooh good idea. / Good thinking. / That's smart.

ROBERT. All right, but then there's the balcony. The play says, "Romeo and Juliet kiss on a balcony." And we don't have a balcony.

OTHERS. That's true. / He's right. *(etc.)*

NIKKI. ...Wait. I'll solve this... Something's coming... Yes! I have it! One of us will *play the balcony*. She can lie on her back and hold her arms like *this* and we can put some railing at her fingertips.

ROBERT. I like it.

TERRI. That's perfect!

PATTI. Now let's start the rehearsal. You stand here. You here. And the rest of us are "offstage" at the moment in the "wings." Oh my god I love theater talk. Now Romeo, you begin, and when you've said your lines, you "exit" behind the trees and on we go from "cue to cue." Are we ready?!

(Enter **ROBIN GOODFELLOW.***)*

ROBIN. What lusty locals have we lounging here
So near the cradle of the Fairy Queen?
It looks like Amateur Night at a church production
of *Our Town*.

PATTI. Speak, Romeo. Juliet, come forward.

NIKKI. "But soft, what kite through yonder window breaks?"

PATTI. "Light," not "kite!" "Light!"

NIKKI. Sorry. "What light through yonder window breaks?
It is the East, and Juliet is the sun.
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grease."

PATTI. *"Grief."*

NIKKI. You're sure it's not "grease?"

PATTI. *"Grief."*

NIKKI. Got it. And now I exit!

ROBIN. And I follow!

*(***NIKKI** *exits, followed off by* **ROBIN.***)*

FRANCI. Do I speak now?

PATTI. Yes, because you realize that Romeo has gone to look at a noise he's heard and he'll be right back.

FRANCI. "O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name,
Or, I'll no longer be a Catapult."

PATTI. "Capulet!" A *catapult* is a machine, dear. And Capulet is your family name, and Romeo's family name is Montague and they're all good Italian-Americans. Romeo! Stand by! She'll give you your cue again, and when you hear it, you should enter. All set?

NIKKI. *(off; muffled)* All set!

FRANCI. "Romeo! Romeo! Wherefore art thou, Romeo?!"

(Enter **NIKKI** *as Romeo, but transformed into an ass, i.e. wearing an ass head.* **ROBIN** *follows him on.)*

NIKKI. "O, speak again, bright angel, for thou art
As glorious as the neee-haaaaw!"

(The girls and **ROBERT** *see* **NIKKI***'s transformation and they scream!)*

ALL. *Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!*

PATTI. Ahh! How horrible! Girls, we're being haunted! Run, girls, run!

(The girls run in circles and then run off.)

ROBIN. *(chasing them) Hahahahahahaha!*

ROBERT. Oh, Nikki, what's happened to you?!

NIKKI. Where? Why? What? What are you talking about?! You're being an ass!

ROBERT. No, you are!

PATTI. Ahh! Oh bless you, Nikki. Bless you. You are translated!

OBERON. Is this like that "girdle round the earth" thing?

ROBIN. Sort of. To show you how fast I am.

OBERON. How fast are you?

ROBIN. I can get her here in thirty seconds.

OBERON. Do it in ten.

ROBIN. Twenty.

OBERON. Twelve.

ROBIN. Fifteen.

OBERON. Done! It's a bet! Go!

*(***ROBIN** *takes off at a run.* **OBERON** *pulls out the magic flower and squeezes it into* **DENIS***' eye, all the while reciting as fast as he can.)*

Flower of this purple dye,
Hit him like a cherry pie,
Cupid's arrow mystify,
When his love he doth espy.

Let her shine like butterfly
Or Venus of the starry sky,
And when he wakes and she is by,
She'll be the apple of his

ROBIN. Back! **OBERON.** Eye!

OBERON. I can't believe it, it's a tie!

ROBIN. Captain of our fairy band,
Helene the keen is here at hand!
And the youth whose name is Lyle,
Trailing her for mile and mile,
Dodging from behind a tree,
Pleading love on bended knee.
Shall we their fond pageant see?
Lord, what fools these mortals be!

*(***HELENE** *enters, trailed by* **LYLE***)*

LYLE. Why would you even *think* that I'd make fun of you?! Look at me! Do I look like I'm havin' fun here? This is *love.* I'm *miserable!*

HELENE. But you're in love with *Mia!*

LYLE. Not anymore. Don't you listen to me?

HELENE. She's my best friend and we all grew up together– *(hitting him)* and I don't even like you anymore! I'm in love with Denis!

LYLE. *But Denis doesn't love you, you're not his thing.*

(At which moment, DENIS *wakes up and sees* HELENE. *Ping!)*

DENIS. Oh Helene, my love, would you accept this ring?
And swear to me that you are mine forever.
And promise me that you will never ever
Chase another guy.
My God, you make me want to cry!!
I love you!

HELENE. You are such a crud! Both of you! I can't believe this! So what are you, sitting around one day and you say, "I know, let's make fun of Helene today."

LYLE. Helene, I love you!

DENIS. Well I love her more! So go back to Mia.

LYLE. Hey, guess what? I'm givin' Mia up to you. She's yours. Congratulations.

DENIS. Oh no she's not. She's yours.

LYLE. She's yours!

DENIS. *But I don't want her!*

*(*MIA *enters and they both look at her.)*

MIA. Lyle, I've been lookin' all over for you! Why did you leave me?

LYLE. Why should I stay with you when love was calling to me.

MIA. "Love?"

LYLE. *(taking* HELENE*'s hand)* What else would you call it when you look into somebody's eyes and see the world?

MIA. What are you saying?

LYLE. I'm saying that I'm in love with *Helene.*

(beat)

MIA. ...You must be sick. Come here, let me check.

LYLE. Would you cut it out. You are a pain in the neck!

HELENE. I don't believe this. *(to* **MIA***)* You're in on this, aren't you? It's not just them, it's all three of you! Mia! What happened to all the BFF, my best friend forever? We grew up together! We did our nails together! We went to concerts, ate ribs, played softball, texted, tweeted, we got dressed for dances together! You hypocrite! You double-dealing, two-timing, no good, lousy louse! *This isn't friendly and you're hurtin' my feelings!!*

MIA. I – I don't know what to say. Are you making fun of me?

HELENE. *Me?* You get Lyle to run after me and pretend that I'm the one he likes and then you get Denis here, the little weasel, to give me a *ring*, and I'm the one who's makin' fun of *you?!!*

MIA. I don't understand it ...

HELENE. Okay, fine, keep it up. Make faces at each other when my back is turned. Here. Go ahead! ...Ya finished? Cause I'm getting' outa here. *And if I die in this stinkin' woods tonight cause some pack of rabid chipmunks like attacks me when I'm not even lookin', let it be on all your HEADS!*

(She starts to stalk off.)

LYLE. She is so cute I could just...

MIA. Lyle? Are you makin' fun of her?

LYLE. Does *this* look like I'm makin' fun? *(He kisses* **HELENE.***)* Or *this?* Or *this?*

MIA. Lyle!

DENIS. *Just leave her alone! She's mine!*

LYLE. *She's mine!*

DENIS. *Do you wanna make somethin' of it?*

LYLE. *Yeah, I wanna make somethin' of it but I got a little problem here!*

(i.e. **MIA** *is hanging onto his leg)*

MIA. Am I a problem, Lyle? Is that what I am?! *(dancing like a boxer) Come on, take a swing! Let's go! I'll flatten you, you dumb ox!*

LYLE. *Hey!*

DENIS. *Watch it!*

LYLE. *Careful!*

HELENE. Is this how love can change us overnight
And turn what's right to wrong and wrong to right?

MIA. Oh shut up, Miss Know-It-All. You thief! You flirt! You *maypole!*

HELENE. Look who's talkin', the little puppet.

MIA. "Puppet?" *"PUPPET?"* Is that cause you're so tall and *wispy?* Cause you look like a *stick!* A *thread!* A piece of *dental floss with hair on top!*

*(***MIA** *attacks* **HELENE,** *who ducks and weaves to get away from her)*

HELENE. Stop it! Get back! She may be short, but she's mean.

*(***MIA** *screams and gets* **HELENE** *in a headlock.)*

Ow! Would you cut it out! I have *always* been there for you! Argh! I'll never follow you again, I promise!

*(***MIA** *lets her go and* **HELENE** *gasps for air.)*

We've been friends ever since you were little. And believe me, you've been little for a long time.

MIA. Did you say little?

HELENE. Yeah, should I say short? Small? Tiny?

MIA. Lyle, did you hear that?!

LYLE. Oh be quiet, you dwarf.

MIA. What?

LYLE. Midget. Toe jam. Ear bud.

(with a cry, **MIA** *goes after* **LYLE** *now)*

DENIS. Helene, come on, we don't need this.

WAGON

Scene Two

(We're inside a hairdressing salon along the boardwalk in a modest area of Atlantic City just after closing time. We see the usual chairs with dryers attached, along with mirrors, curlers, and those endless stacks of gossip magazines on all the tables. We also see a sign that says:

HAIR AND GONE.

HAIR. NAILS. TANNING. MANICURES.

When the lights come up, the employees [all female but one] are tidying up at the end of the day. **PATTI QUINCE** *is showing someone out.* **PATTI** *is the owner of the shop, a beanstalk in her mid-40s with bright red lipstick and unruly hair.)*

PATTI. Thank you for coming, Mrs. Falcone. You look ten years younger. If the men start getting frisky around you, just hit 'em with your cane. Good-bye, dear!

(When the client is gone, **PATTI** *pulls down the shade and calls out to her staff.)*

PATTI. Are we all here?!

NIKKI. *I'm here!*

FRANCI. Here.

TERRI. Yo!

ROBERT. Present.

JANET. *(the shy one)* I…yes.

NIKKI. I think you should call them one at a time and tell them what parts they have.

PATTI. Yes, I know. *Thank* you. Now here is the cast list with the names of all the actresses in the play which we hope *to God* will be chosen for the Governors' wedding day!

(squeals of delight)

NIKKI Yesss! Now tell them the name of the play and what it's about.

PATTI. The play is called *Romeo and Juliet* and it is about true love and its dreadful consequences.

ALL. Oooh.

NIKKI. It's by William Shakespeare who's very hot at the moment.

PATTI. Now I will call your names out one by one and tell you what parts you're playing. All right? Nikki Bottom, Stylist.

NIKKI. Ready! Ohhh, what part do I have? I can't wait!

PATTI. Nikki, I want you to play Romeo.

(Oooh. Aaah.)

NIKKI. Oh, I love that part! I love it! That is exactly who I wanted to play! But just remind me, is he good or bad?

PATTI. He is very good. He's a sort of Italian playboy who kills himself for love.

NIKKI. Ooh I like that, it's so touching. I'll weep buckets when I play him and the audience will suffer right along with me. *"Oh my love! I must end it all!"* And yet my favorite types are usually very strong women, like Bella in *New Moon*.

"Jacob! Don't you touch Edward! He can't help it if his teeth are sharp! That's how God made him!"

(applause from the other girls)

Thank you, thank you. Does Romeo have any moments like that?

PATTI. Not exactly. Franci Flute, Tanning Specialist.

FRANCI. I'm here, Patti.

PATTI. Franci, I want you to play Juliet.

FRANCI. Is he a playboy, too?

PATTI. No, she's a girl. The beautiful girl that Romeo is in love with. She also kills herself, but only after a long speech.

NIKKI. Oh let me play Juliet, too! You see I can pop in and out, I'm here, I'm there, I'm Romeo, I'm Juliet, they won't even notice. And I can play Romeo with a beard

and a very masculine voice, *"Oh Juliet, what light you shed in yonder breaking window!"*

PATTI. No, no, no! You will play Romeo and Franci will play Juliet!

NIKKI. All right, fine. Fine! Go on.

PATTI. Robert Sudds, Shampoo.

ROBERT. Right here, Patti.

PATTI. Robert, you'll play Juliet's mother.

ROBERT. You got it.

PATTI. Terri Thumbs, Massage.

TERRI. Yo.

PATTI. Terri, you'll play the Friar.

TERRI. The fryer?

PATTI. That's right.

TERRI. You mean like a chicken?

PATTI. No, that's a deep fryer. You play a religious friar, which is like a priest except you've got a robe and a tassel.

TERRI. *(touching her chest)* I wear a tassel?

PATTI. I'll explain later. And that leaves Janet Snug, Manicures.

JANET. I-I'm here, Patti.

*(***JANET** *is extremely shy.)*

PATTI. Janet, you'll play the lion's part.

ROBERT. Are you sure there's a lion in *Romeo and Juliet*?

PATTI. Well there wasn't, but I added one. Shakespeare is all well and good, but he can get tedious if you don't goose him up a little.

JANET. I-I hope you have the part written down because I'm a little slow of study.

PATTI. Not a problem. You can improvise because it's nothing but roaring.

NIKKI. Oh let me play the lion, too! You see roaring is my specialty! I-I-I go to the zoo all the time and listen to those strapping beasts and just let 'er rip. *Rooooar! Rooooar!*

our board of directors determined at their last meeting that these two individuals should *not* be invited to speak to you at our gathering today.

(groan)

However...on this occasion, I decided to *overrule* the board, because I know that you all worked very hard this year, and frankly, you deserve a break,

(The kids sit up straight and start listening)

and so, though I may end up regretting this decision, please welcome Mia DiCarlo and Lyle Fagioli, known throughout the country as Cookie and the Understatement.

(Very hip music starts blaring from the speakers and there is a roar from the audience. The kids go wild as **COOKIE** *(aka* **MIA)** *and* **THE UNDERSTATEMENT** *(aka* **LYLE)** *enter from the back of the theater and down the aisle. To judge by appearances, they are the* ne plus ultra, *the height of coolness, the bomb itself.)*

LYLE. Heya guys.

MIA. Yo, high school.

LYLE. Hey keep it cool, will ya? I'm goin' deaf up here.

(The crowd laughs and quiets down.)

MIA. So, anyway, like it's cool to be back, you know. Next to my Guido here.

LYLE. Yeah, that's me.

MIA. I mean, we don't have a lot to say up here, but then I never even got to assembly when I was a kid, I was in the Principal's office most of the day.

LYLE. Me too, though I am in fact quite a good pubic speaker.

MIA. That's *public* speaker, you idiot.

LYLE. Sorry.

Hey, don't criticize!

MIA. So the thing is, we've got like two announcements to make. Number one is, our television show, "Smokin'

Hot in Jersey: the Loose and the Luscious" has just been renewed for Season Six, startin' this Sunday at nine on the Mormon Channel.

(Kids: "Yeeahhhh!")

LYLE. And the other thing is, we've decided to come out in the open about somethin', which is … that Mia and I have been… well, we've been married since we left high school. About six years now.

*(Hubbub: "No way!" "I don't believe it!" "They're married?" "Go, Cookie!" – and now some of the kids (***JACK, LILI, CHELSEA, BAKARI, KIM,** *and* **OLIVIA***) stand up and start asking questions:)*

JACK. But Lyle, you're the Understatement! How could you do it?!

LYLE. You know how it is, man. Young and stupid.

*(***MIA** *gives him a dope slap.)*

Hey, I'm jokin', I'm jokin'!

LILI. Was it like a bun in the oven?

MIA. Are you kiddin' me?!

LYLE. Hey, come on, I respect this girl. She was my girlfriend!

CHELSEA. So how did it happen?

BAKARI. How'dja get married?

KIM. Who asked who?

MIA. Shall we tell 'em?

LYLE. They won't believe it.

MIA. Let's tell 'em anyway. We've got like a half hour left and I don't have nothin' else to say.

LYLE. You wanna start?

MIA. You go ahead.

LYLE. Okay. So. Everybody, I want you to close your eyes and imagine yourselves, six years ago – we were just outa high school – and we are at a rally for the Governor of New Jersey.

OLIVIA. The Governor Governor?

JACK. You mean Governor Athens?

MIA. Yeah, that's him. My mom works for him. She's his Chief of Staff. We were at this really cool election rally with posters and little flags and stuff, and it was about this time that the Governor was planning to get married himself.

(The set starts changing.)

LYLE. So I want you to think of us lookin' six years younger, and imagine yourselves at this rally. He's standin' there with his fiancé, Hippolyta Ginsberg.

MIA. And she's standin' over here, lookin' up at him hopin' he'll get reelected. And he turns to her and he says

LYLE. Now fair Hippolyta, our wedding hour
Draws on apace.

MIA. The Governor talks like that. He's an intellectual.

LYLE. Four happy days bring in
Another moon; but O, methinks how slow
This old moon wanes. She lingers my desires
Like to a step dame or a dowager
Long withering out a young man's revenue.