

SOME DISTANT DAY

A play

by

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ACT 1

SCENE 1    **I'M ALOUETTE**

ALOUETTE ENTERS

MARIANNE:        Hello? Hello? Is there anyone there?

HE:                There is always someone there.

MARIANNE:        Who are you?

HE:                I live here. This is my place. Who are you?

MARIANNE:        I'm ALOUETTE.

HE:                You only have one name? That's unusual.

MARIANNE:        I'm a singer. I sell a lot of records. Most people have heard of me. Where have you been?

HE:                Here. Always here.

MARIANNE:        Yes. Well. It's very nice.

HE:                No, ALOUETTE with one name who sings, nice is not really what it is, here.

MARIANNE:        I was being polite.

HE:                Unnecessary. Here, it is important to say what you mean. Now, can I have your details, please?

MARIANNE:        Details?

HE:                Yes. This is essential. Firstly, what is important?

MARIANNE:        What is this, an interview? I don't do interviews. I'm famous for not doing interviews.

HE:                You refuse? You refuse your details?

MARIANNE:        Yes. Damn right I do. Fuck off.

HE:                Too bad.

CLICKS FINGERS.

BLACK-OUT.

ACT I

SCENE 2    **YOUR FAMOUS SONGS**

HE:                    Tell me about your songs, your famous songs. Are they important?

MARIANNE:           They make an important amount of money.

HE:                    And how did you get your name, Alouette, where did you pick that up?

MARIANNE:           I picked it up from a stranger. It was sexually transmitted.

HE:                    And what are your songs about?

MARIANNE:           Oh, great question, no-one's ever asked me that one before.

HE:                    What are they about, Alouette?

MARIANNE:           What do you think they're about? They're about ... what all the other songs are about. They're about ... three chords, a red guitar, and love.

HE:                    And love?

MARIANNE:           And love.

BLACK-OUT

ACT 1

SCENE 3    **THE REAL THING**

HE:                    Darling.

MARIANNE:            What?

HE:                    Darling. Thank god you're here.

MARIANNE:            Do I know you?

HE:                    All my life I've been waiting for this meeting.

MARIANNE:            I don't know you, do I?

HE:                    This is it, the real thing, at last: love at first sight.

MARIANNE:            Excuse me?

HE:                    Love like a thief, a catastrophe; love that takes your toys away, love that cleans you out.

MARIANNE:            You do have have nice eyes...

HE:                    You have everything the heart could want.

MARIANNE:            What do you want from me?

HE:                    I want you to take a chance. I want you to fall, to fall forever; to fall for me.

MARIANNE:            And then?

HE:                    There is no 'and then'. No now, either. Just the falling, blissful, head over heels, like a falling angel, escaping from god.

MARIANNE:            You say some very strange things. In a nice way, mind.

HE:                    Love speaks through me, love only, always. Now: will you?

MARIANNE:            Will I what?

HE:                    Fall in with me. Fall for me. Head over heels.

MARIANNE:            Maybe. If we got to know each other. Have a meal together, go to a movie, talk a little, see what we have in common. I'd need to get to know you first. Find out what you're like. And then, if it all unfolds, if it opens up, yes, maybe, possibly.

HE:                   Maybe? Possibly? That's it? Some sort of perhaps?

MARIANNE:           Well, yes, of course.

HE:                   Too bad.

                          CLICKS FINGERS.

                          BLACK-OUT.

MARIANNE IS LOOKING INTO AN EMPTY FRAME AT THE BACK OF THE STAGE. IT BECOMES OBVIOUS IMMEDIATELY THAT SHE IS LOOKING INTO A MIRROR. SHE IS TIDYING HER HAIR, SMOOTHING HER EYEBROWS ETC.

HE ENTERS - HE IS A BIT LIKE DR WHO, AND VERY MUCH LIKE HARPO MARX, DRESSED IN A LONG, ABSURD, MULTI COLOURED OVERCOAT WITH MANY POCKETS

MARIANNE:            Who are you?

HE PATS HIS POCKETS AND FINDS A BUSINESS CARD. HE PRESENTS HER WITH IT CEREMONIOUSLY - A COURTEOUS BOW AND A FLOURISH. BUT THE GESTURES SOMEHOW ALSO CONVEY AN INNOCENCE - AN INEPTITUDE. HE IS BOTH IN CONTROL IN HIS CLOWNING, AND CHILDLIKE. WE MUST ADORE HIM, WHILST BEING SLIGHTLY EDGY ABOUT HIS POWER. IT IS THE UNCOMFORTABLE POWER OF THE UNPREDICTABLE - AMUSING, LOVEABLE, WITH JUST A HINT OF DANGER.

MARIANNE:            It's blank!

HE GOES INTO AN ELABORATE MIME OF SHOCK-HORROR - TAKES BACK THE CARD - PATS MORE POCKETS - PULLS OUT ALL SORTS OF CRAZY ITEMS - A BIG PLASTIC FISH, A FEATHER DUSTER, A TOY PHONE, A SWANNEE WHISTLE THAT HE PLAYS A LITTLE TUNE ON. HE PUTS EACH ONE BACK IN THE POCKET IT CAME FROM, AND EVENTUALLY, WITH A GRAND FLOURISH, PRODUCES A WHOLE PACK OF CARDS. HE FANS THEM OUT AND INDICATES SHE MUST CHOOSE ONE. SHE IS RELUCTANT. HE INSISTS - AGAIN BOTH CHILDLIKE AND WITH AN UNCOMFORTABLY NON-NEGOTIABLE EDGE OF AUTHORITY. EVENTUALLY, SHE PICKS A CARD AND READS IT OUT.

MARIANNE:            Jack of all trades?

HE:                    At your service. Begin.

MARIANNE:       Begin what?

HE:               It's up to you. It's your story.

MARIANNE:       I don't think so. You've come to the wrong place.  
My story's over.

HE:               Ah ha! Then you've come to the wrong place. Your  
story's just beginning.

                  BLACK-OUT.



ACT 1

SCENE 5 **BEGIN**

LIGHTS UP ON DR HARPO AND MARIANNE, FROZEN IN THE POSTURES THEY WERE IN AT THE END OF THE PREVIOUS SCENE.

HE CONDUCTS HER TO A SEAT - HELPS HER ON TO IT CAREFULLY. THEN HE SITS, RESPECTFULLY, AT A LOWER LEVEL. HE TAKES OUT A REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK AND A PENCIL. HE LICKS THE PENCIL AND SITS, POISED TO WRITE, WAITING FOR HER TO START.

SHE GESTURES - HELPLESS. IT'S A "WHAT ON EARTH AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?" GESTURE.

HE STAMPS HIS FOOT

HE: Begin!

AS SHE STARTS TO SPEAK, HE SCRIBBLES DOWN WHAT SHE SAYS WITH GREAT INTENSITY.

MARIANNE: My name is Marianne Hanrahan. I am 28 years old and I come from a little village just outside Cork, and -

HE YAWNS - SCRIBBLES ON THE PIECE OF PAPER HE WAS WRITING ON. SHE LOOKS AT HIM, PERPLEXED.

HE GETS READY TO WRITE AGAIN AND STAMPS BOTH HIS FEET

HE: Begin!

HE STARTS TO SCRIBBLE AGAIN AS SHE STARTS TO SPEAK AGAIN

MARIANNE: I had a good, solid, Roman Catholic upbringing - though my father's a non-believer. I first went to school at -

HE GROWLS. SCRIBBLES OUT HIS WRITING

SHE'S GETTING DESPERATE TO PLEASE - GABBLES A BIT AND IS SMILING WILDLY

MARIANNE: OK OK! I am the talented singer known as Alouette - currently on tour in Ireland with the band called "Ring of Fire" and - -

HE LEAPS TO HIS FEET IN IMPATIENCE.

MARIANNE: Look. I'm doing my best here. What is it you want me to say?

HE BECKONS TO HER TO GET OFF THE DAIS.  
SHE DOES. HE PUTS A SCARF OVER HER EYES  
TO BLINDFOLD HER - IT'S A BIT MENACING  
- AND GUIDES HER OVER TO THE MIRROR  
FRAME. HE TAKES THE SCARF OFF. SHE  
LOOKS IN THE MIRROR. THERE'S NO  
REFLECTION, OF COURSE.

MARIANNE: Oh my God. There's no-one. Nobody at all!

BLACK-OUT.

when all is said and done, my love  
when all is said and done  
there are no easy answers love  
when all is said and done

whatever they ask you  
wherever you may be  
only don't know love  
only don't know  
whatever they ask you  
whoever they may be  
only remember this  
only please don't know

when all is said and done, my love  
when all is said and done  
there are no easy answers love  
when all is said and done

seeker of truth I beseech you  
be patient now - be still  
let all your requests fall silent  
let your questions wait until  
you may find yourself some distant day  
happily knowing there is nothing left to say

let the answers that you long for let you live  
life fully now

living the questions till we meet some distant  
day

let the answers that you long for guide you  
safely on your way

live life fully though you don't know what to  
say

love the questions as they are, and live them  
simply as you are

loving the questions till we meet some distant  
day

loving the questions till we meet some distant  
day

when all is said and done my love

when all is said and done

there are no easy answers love

when all is said and done

BLACK-OUT.

ACT I

SCENE 7    **TODAY OF ALL DAYS**

MARIANNE:            Today. Today of all days. Our first big concert  
back here. Our first serious gig back home.

PAUSE

I wonder what they'll tell people? I wonder if  
there'll be a minute's silence?

Maybe two minutes? One for each of us. Is that what  
they do? In alphabetical order perhaps - like it is  
on the contracts. No. Probably not. Just one minute  
for the two of us. Two minutes is a hell of a long  
time to be in silence. A lifetime.

PAUSE

I wonder where they've put him?

PAUSE

What am I supposed to do next?

PAUSE

I wish Simon were here - he'd know what to do.

PAUSE

Maybe we'll be on the news. It's a good story.

BLACK-OUT.

ACT 1

SCENE 8 MARIANNE HANRAHAN

Marianne Hanrahan

won't you write another song?

Marianne Hanrahan

don't you know where you belong

put your heart in one last song

in the morning you'll be gone

oh Marianne dear Marianne

my love

Marianne Hanrahan

stay and hear your true love's song

Marianne Hanrahan

love is tender love is long

let me sing you one last song

in the morning I'll be gone

oh Marianne dear Marianne

my love

BLACK-OUT.

ACT I

SCENE 9    **CHOOSE ME**

HE:                    Choose me.

MARIANNE:            Pardon?

HE:                    Me. Choose me. I'm the one who'll make you happy. I'll make everything all right.

MARIANNE:            Really? You mean it?

HE:                    Oh yes. I'm the reliable sort. An old fashioned type of guy. The boy next door. The graduation beau. The thoroughly good sort.

MARIANNE:            And?

HE:                    And! You want more?

MARIANNE:            Well yes. A girl does you know.

HE:                    But I'm a good sort. I've studied it. Rehearsed it. Perfected it. This is as good as it gets!

PAUSE

Look. Listen. Learn.

She was unhappy when I first met her. A glittering career. A broken heart. No home to speak of. No stability. No-one to hold her. No-one to hold.

But I took care of her. I had a steady job - a regular, decent wage. Three weeks holiday a year. Not many luxuries you understand, but a comfortable home. Comfortable. Yes. A home. The kids -

MARIANNE:            Kids?

HE:                    Yeah. Billie, Billie Jean and Little Billie Joe - we sent the kids to good schools. I made sure of that. And us. The ideal couple. We had supper in the dining room. She turned out to be a surprisingly good cook in the end. Once I'd explained that I liked things plain and simple. No fuss. Simple. Plain and simple.

MARIANNE:            And the music? The songs?

HE:                    Yes. Of course. The kids had piano lessons. I made sure of that. She helped them with their practising. Regular practice. Practice makes

perfect. Their little concerts. But she made sure everything was quiet by the time I came home in the evening. A man needs peace and quiet after a day at the office. Oh yes.

HE: There you are. What more could you want?

SHE IS TEMPTED - YOU CAN SEE THAT CLEARLY. HE HOLDS OUT HIS HAND AS IF TO A SIMPLE CHILD. CHILDLIKE, SHE LOOKS AT HER OWN HAND - IS ABOUT TO GIVE IT TO HIM - ALL MOVEMENTS VERY SLOW AND DREAMLIKE. THEN, SHOCKINGLY, OUT OF NOWHERE, THERE IS A HUGE ROAR

MARIANNE: YOU MUST BE FUCKIN' JOKING!

BLACK-OUT.



ACT 1

SCENE 10 **WHY DO YOU HAVE A TOY TELEPHONE?**

MARIANNE: I've been meaning to ask you something

HE: Ask! Ask!

MARIANNE: Why do you have a toy telephone?

HE PATS HIS POCKETS. PULLS OUT A STRAY OBJECT OR TWO - A RED SPOTTED HANDKERCHIEF, AN ONION, A SMALL PUPPET THAT HE INTERACTS WITH BRIEFLY. HE FINDS THE PHONE - PULLS IT OUT AND GIVES IT TO HER.

MARIANNE: Why are you giving it to me? It's just a toy phone?

HE GESTURES TO HER THAT SHE SHOULD DIAL A NUMBER - SHOULD HOLD THE RECEIVER TO HER EAR - SHOULD USE IT.

SHE HESITATES - INDICATES SHE THINKS IT'S RIDICULOUS.

HE SNATCHES IT BACK.

BLACK-OUT.

SHE ENTERS A CAFÉ. SHE CLICKS HER FINGERS. AN INVISIBLE WAITER ARRIVES. SHE ORDERS AN ESPRESSO. THE WAITER GOES. SHE SITS AT A TABLE. SHE OPENS A PACKET OF GAULOISES. TAKES ONE OUT AND HOLDS IT - PATTING HER POCKETS FOR A LIGHTER. HE, DRESSED IN BLACK SIMPLICITY, APPEARS OUT OF THE DARKNESS BEHIND HER, AND LIKE AN ELEGANT DANCER, LIGHTS IT FOR HER FROM BEHIND. SHE IS AT EASE WITH THIS; IT IS FAMILIAR TO HER. SHE TURNS TO SMILE HER THANKS. BUT HE HAS DISAPPEARED (INTO CURTAINS OR SOMESUCH).

THE INVISIBLE WAITER RETURNS. SHE INTERACTS WITH HIM - RECEIVING THE COFFEE - STARTS PATTING HER POCKETS FOR CHANGE. THE MYSTERIOUS FIGURE, THE ELEGANT DANCER, APPEARS AGAIN FROM OUT OF THE DARKNESS AND, STILL BEHIND HER, PRODUCES MONEY. LEANING OVER HER TO DEPOSIT IT ON THE TABLE. SHE IS STILL VERY MUCH AT EASE WITH THIS. THE INVISIBLE WAITER GOES. SHE TURNS ROUND TO SMILE HER THANKS. THE ELEGANT DANCER HAS DISAPPEARED INTO THE DARKNESS - HAVING DROPPED A RED ROSE AT HER FEET. SHE PICKS IT UP - BREATHES IN ITS SCENT - DRINKING IT IN HAPPILY.

MARIANNE: Ah the elusive Jean Michel. Now that was a summer to remember.

SHE LAUGHS - A DAINY TINKLING LAUGH, AND MOVES DOWNSTAGE LOSING ABOUT 17 YEARS OF AGE AS SHE DOES SO - BECOMING, THEREFORE, ABOUT EIGHTEEN YEARS OLD. SHE SITS ON THE FLOOR. HE REAPPEARS FOR THIS SCENE OF MEMORY. HE SITS BESIDE HER - PRODUCES AN IMAGINARY BOTTLE OF WINE AND TWO GLASSES. HE POURS CAREFULLY - OFFERS HER ONE GLASS - TAKES ANOTHER HIMSELF.

MARIANNE: I've never been in an artist's studio before.

HE IS A MATURE MAN. AN EXPERIENCED MAN.  
HE IS A LITTLE BORED BY HER  
GIRLISHNESS, BUT DOESN'T STOP HER, AS  
SHE CHATTERS.

MARIANNE: Well except for my cousin Patrick. In Dublin. But his was more of an office you see. A design studio, he called it. But they weren't real paintings like these. More drawings you know. Technical.

HE SHRUGS ENIGMATICALLY. HE IS WATCHING  
HER. HE IS ELUSIVE.

MARIANNE: No-one's ever wanted to paint my picture before. This is the real thing isn't it? Real art I mean?

PAUSE

MARIANNE: Do you think that it's fate that we met? Destiny? Was it meant to be? Shall we be together always? I'll be your muse. I'll amuse you. Yes. That's it. Right here in Paris. This is where we'll be. You and me. Always.

HE DRINKS SOME MORE WINE - LEANS BACK -  
WATCHING HER. BIDDING HIS TIME. HE IS  
ENJOYING THE DANCE OF DELAY.

MARIANNE: Will you paint me now? Shall we start? Where do you want me?

HE: (WITH A FAINT TRACE OF A FRENCH ACCENT) Later. I paint you later.

BLACKOUT.

THE DR HARPO FIGURE ENTERS. FURTIVELY. MAKING MUCH PLAY OF LOOKING ALL AROUND TO CHECK NO-ONE ELSE IS THERE. HE PUTS HIS FINGERS TO HIS LIPS SAYING "SSHH" TO THE AUDIENCE. THERE IS SOME INTERACTIVE PLAY WITH A PERSON IN THE FRONT ROW - GETTING THEM TO HOLD THINGS AS HE PATS HIS POCKETS AND TAKES OUT STRANGE OBJECTS - A VERY LONG SCARF, A RUBBER DUCK THAT SQUEAKS. EVENTUALLY, HE FINDS THE TOY PHONE AND PUTS IT CEREMONIOUSLY ON A TABLE HEIGHT BOX CENTRE STAGE, TOGETHER WITH A BOOK. HE COLLECTS THE STUFF BACK FROM THE PERSON IN THE FRONT ROW, AND MAKES MUCH PLAY OF GETTING OFF STAGE NOISELESSLY. MARIANNE ENTERS AND EXAMINES THE BOOK. IT HAS A PICTURE OF HER ON THE COVER BUT IS BLANK INSIDE

THE PHONE RINGS. SHE IS STARTLED. SHE GOES TO ANSWER IT. THEN STOPS AND THINKS BETTER OF IT. IT CARRIES ON RINGING.

SHE THINKS ABOUT ANSWERING IT AGAIN - PUTS OUT A HAND NERVOUSLY. IT STOPS RINGING WITH HER HAND STRETCHED TOWARDS IT.

BLACKOUT.

ACT I

SCENE 13 **ARE YOU STOPPING?**

IN THIS SCENE, HE IS A MUCH OLDER MAN.  
TACITURN. PROBABLY HER FATHER. A LONELY  
MAN. A MAN WHO DOESN'T SHOW EMOTION.

HE: So you've come back then?

MARIANNE: I suppose I have

HE: Are you stopping?

MARIANNE: Stopping? Stopping what exactly?

HE: Here. Are you stopping here?

MARIANNE: I don't know yet. Maybe. Maybe I will

HE: Maybe? What sort of answer is that?

MARIANNE: It's the only truthful answer I have at the moment.

HE: (MAKING A NOISE TO EXPRESS HIS ANNOYANCE AND HURT)  
Phah!

PAUSE

HE: I told you it would come to nothing in the end.

MARIANNE: You did.

HE: I warned you. I told you you were getting too big  
for your boots.

MARIANNE: You did.

HE: "Too clever by half" I said.

MARIANNE: You did.

HE: So are you stopping then?

MARIANNE: Why do you keep asking me the same thing?

HE TURNS HIS BACK TO HER. HE IS IN A  
SORT OF CONTROLLED ANGUISH. WE HEAR IT  
IN HIS VOICE.

HE: Because I love you.

HE LEAVES. SHE IS LEFT STANDING.

BLACK-OUT.

ACT 1

SCENE 14 **IT'S FOR YOU**

MARIANNE IS SITTING, WRITING SOMETHING.  
ABSORBED IN IT.

THE DR HARPO FIGURE ENTERS, CARRYING  
THE TOY PHONE. IT RINGS. HE PICKS UP  
THE RECEIVER AND LISTENS. HIS FACE  
EXPRESSES A RANGE OF EXAGGERATED  
EMOTIONS. HE HANDS HER THE RECEIVER.

HE: It's for you

MARIANNE: Don't be ridiculous

HE: It is. It's for you

MARIANNE: Who is it? No-one knows I'm here.

HE GESTURES - SHAKING THE RECEIVER AT  
HER. SHE, EXASPERATED, GRABS IT

MARIANNE: Hallo. Yes it is. Who is this please?

PAUSE

MARIANNE: What?

PAUSE

MARIANNE: Who?

PAUSE

MARIANNE: Look. Who are you? I didn't make any bloody call.  
You've got the wrong number.

SHE BANGS THE RECEIVER DOWN - GIVES THE  
PHONE BACK TO DR HARPO. SHE IS FURIOUS

BLACKOUT

what did you want  
when you called my number  
what were you offering  
what did you know  
what did you want  
when you called my number  
what did you want from me?

the time's out of joint and the daylight is  
fading

I'm a ship far from shore and all on my own

I'm lost in bad weather wondering why i am  
waiting

I'm a bone weary traveller far from my home

what did you want  
when you called my number  
what were you offering  
what did you know  
what did you want  
when you called my number  
what did you want from me?

the atmosphere's strange and my confidence  
failing

I'm out on a limb I could fall like a stone



I'm a bird on a wire wondering why I am waiting  
I'm a bone weary traveller far from my home

I wonder quite simply do you know the answer  
my fast fading link to what I once knew  
my fair weather friend won't you give me a  
chance or

leave me your number and let me call you

what did you want  
when you called my number  
what were you offering  
what did you know  
what did you want  
when you called my number  
what did you want from me?  
what did you want  
what did you want  
what did you want from me?

BLACK-OUT.

MARIANNE: It's a stage name, obviously. Alouette. Alouette, gentille Alouette, he would sing, quietly, Alouette, je te plumerai. And then he would plume me, pluck me, please me, yes. And then he went away, as they do, and left me a name, a nice name, a feeling, an emptiness, yes, and a name.

And so I took the name and made songs for it, good songs, really; and the name stood up and sang them, in pubs and clubs and on stage, it sang, to men and cameras and microphones and they all liked it a lot. And so I would go all over the place and be seen by many, so many, who saw the name in my face, and loved it, and wanted it. Je te plumerai la tête, Alouette, et les bras, et le corps, et les jambes, Alouette, body and soul, bones and skin, they sucked me in. Oh, love, I know everything about love, I am so loved, my life is a pleasure garden, full of flowers and money. And Marianne Hanrahan, where is she? Waiting in the wings. Waiting, waiting, waiting in the wings.

BLACK-OUT.

ACT 1

SCENE 17 **WAITING IN THE WINGS**

She is waiting – she is waiting  
she is waiting in the wings  
she is waiting for the moment  
when the alouette who sings  
will finish her performance  
she will leave this passing show  
she is waiting for her entrance  
in a part she doesn't know

and what do you imagine  
will the understudy do?  
and where do you imagine she will go?  
when the songbird flies away  
when the final verse is through  
what will guide her in a life she doesn't know?

and who do you imagine  
will the understudy trust?  
and who do you imagine she will be?  
when the songbird flies away  
when she exits as she must  
who will guide her in her struggle to be free?

she is waiting – she is waiting  
she is waiting in the wings  
she is waiting for the moment

when the alouette who sings  
will finish her performance  
she will leave this passing show  
she is waiting for her entrance  
in a part she doesn't know

she is waiting – silently waiting  
she is waiting – silently waiting  
she is waiting – she is waiting in the wings.

BLACK-OUT.

ACT I

SCENE 18 **ANOTHER CRAP PERFORMANCE**

SIMON: Another crap performance. We should change the band's name.

ALOUETTE: It was a great performance. And Ring of Fire is a great name.

SIMON: Ali, it was crap. We should call ourselves The Haemorrhoids.

ALOUETTE: It would bring in the gay fraternity, that's for sure.

SIMON: Yes, wouldn't it. You could be the Bet Midler of -- Ballsbridge.

ALOUETTE: Sings -- big: 'Somewhere, over the rainbow, way up high'.

SIMON: You're mixing up your gay icons, darling.

ALOUETTE: It wasn't that crap, anyway. The voice held out.

SIMON: You were flat.

ALOUETTE: Shit, Simon, I'm Irish, I'm a folk singer, I'm supposed to sing flat, where have you been?

SIMON: Here, always here.

PAUSE; LOOKS AT HIM.

ALOUETTE: OK, I've got one. What do you call someone who hangs out with bands?

SIMON: A drummer?

ALOUETTE: Damn, you've heard it.

SIMON: Darling, I wrote it.

ALOUETTE: So how's your new best friend, then?

SIMON: Oh, fine, very good. We are made for each other. It's a very pure relationship.

ALOUETTE: Pure??

SIMON: Yes, pure lust. Refreshingly unadulterated.

ALOUETTE: No contact possible to flesh allays the fever of the bone.

SIMON: Jesus, Ali, the things you do come out with. Did you write that?

ALOUETTE: No, someone else did. For now. Listen, you, listen to me. You were good tonight.

SIMON: Yes, I know.

ALOUETTE: That little acoustic intro you dropped on us out of nowhere, that was really good. Clean as country water, that was.

SIMON: Yes, I know. You, however, my darling Ali, Alouette of my dreams, you are the one who is going to make it.

ALOUETTE: I am?

SIMON: You are. You have – edge. Like I've never seen before. Edge.

ALOUETTE: What the fuck is edge?

SIMON: Edge is what those various men did to you, your gentlemen friends. They cleaned you out. They hollowed you out like a big old bell, and left nothing behind but music. You, my dear, friend of my heart, are going to be a great big star. Because you have nothing else to be and nowhere else to go.

ALOUETTE: Don't fuck with me now, Simon, do you mean that?

SIMON: What do you think, chérie, do you think I mean it?

ALOUETTE: Yes, I do. Oh, god, I do. And when I do, if I do, you are coming right with me, do you hear that, all the way. Every suffering inch of the way, do you hear?

SIMON: Right, so it's you and me, then, is it?

ALOUETTE: Yes. You, and me, and the fever in the bone.

ACT 1

SCENE 19 **THIS IS A TEST, RIGHT?**

MARIANNE: What am I doing here, anyway?

HE: Waiting.

MARIANNE: Waiting for what?

HE: Waiting until you can go on to the next thing.

MARIANNE: What's the next thing?

HE: That depends on what you do here.

MARIANNE: This is a test, right? Some sort of jump through the hoop thing, win a banana, is it? What if I won't play? Snap the fingers and out go the lights?

HE: Yes. And, maybe, next time, the lights won't go back on again, have you thought of that?

SNAP.

BLACK-OUT.

ACT I

SCENE 20 **TELL ME THE SECRET**

HE: OK, it's time. Tell me: the secret.

MARIANNE: What secret?

HE: Don't fool around with me. Tell me the secret.

MARIANNE: Which one?

HE: First the one you only tell a few people. Then the one you tell no-one. Then the one you don't know you have.

MARIANNE: I won't. I won't do it. Do that thing with the click, the darkness. Do it, I don't care.

HE: Tell me.

PAUSE

MARIANNE: My mother didn't want me.

HE: I'm not surprised. Tell me your secret.

MARIANNE: Bastard.

(PAUSE)

My mouse. my little mouse with red eyes, white he was, with the whiffly sniffy pink nose (SHE IS SIX YEARS OLD) and he would scurry here and scurry there and hide and seek and wash his face and he was sweet.

HE: Go on.

MARIANNE: And I forgot.

HE: Go on.

MARIANNE: Just a little forget it was, he was playing and happy on the garden seat and I was watching him and my new best friend came round and I was pleased to see her because she was my new best friend and she had a late birthday present for me, it was all wrapped up, it was so big, and.

HE: Go on.



MARIANNE: The cat got him. It was so quick. In his mouth, and  
run away, oh, my white mouse, he bit him dead. SHE  
IS CRYING, HOPELESSLY.

HE: Bullshit. There was no mouse. You're lying.

HER FACE IS SET HARD, DESPERATE.

MARIANNE: Bastard.

BLACK-OUT.

MARIANNE: It was the songs. It's not so easy, to write songs. And there is so much money depending on the songs. And so much cruelty, waiting, waiting, for a bad one. And so many people, watching, all the time watching, for you to do something they can be cruel about.

However I had a friend, my silver friend. Silver white, full of light, like magic water, drink me, she would say, so friendly, and I did. And then the songs would come. And then I could be high and happy, I could laugh, I could sing, I could be me, Alouette, gentille Alouette.

Well it was great, it was wonderful. But it got a bit difficult to stay in the groove. I could get up and seek my silver friend and suck the white water and feel the high hit, and climb into the groove and into the day, but it got harder to stay there, to not fall over. And there were incidents and accidents. And my friend Simon, my guitarist, who knows me, who really knows me, who really cares--do you know Simon?

HE: Yes.

MARIANNE: My beautiful kind friend. He knew. So he checked me into a nunnery. A *nunnery*? I said, Simon you are mad. But he knew. So there I was for two months, behind the walls, I was Marianne Hanrahan, surrounded by silence, with these awful itchy vests, nuns for the use of, and no time of my own, oh I was out of time, scrubbing the silent floors.

And they sang. Oh, they sang, we sang, like a company of angels, we were, good Irish angels, we sang our virgin hearts out, it was nice to be a virgin again, I can tell you. I scrubbed, and sang, Marianne Hanrahan, pure as a periwinkle, in love with Our Lady, hopelessly, hopelessly, in love with the mother of god. And Irish as a misty hillside; Irish as a beautiful potato. It was: the very essence of heaven.

And at the end, after the two months, the Mother Superior sat me down in her little office. She was hard as hell and good as gold and round like a

round robin, and she said to me, Marianne, she said, I'm afraid you have the call. You can stay, she said, if you work hard, or you can go, but you will never leave, poor girl. You have the call. And she was right, I did. I do. I left.

HE: Why did you leave?

MARIANNE: Well, I needed a drink.

BLACK-OUT.

MARIANNE: Stupid bitch, said Simon, you should have stayed. Look Simon I said, no more scrubbing floors, I'm clean and cured and full of songs, you wait and see. Well, he gave me a long look, but I fooled him, I fooled them all. I did. The gin was my secret friend, my special friend, and we were very happy together, secret, silent, on a silver cloud.

HE: Where did you get it?

MARIANNE: Ah, yes, that was clever. There was an arrangement. Jack, you know jack?

HE: The roadie?

MARIANNE: Yes, he would help me out. And I would help him out, once in a while, once in a great while, when I was lonely, I would help him out. So we were both sort of happy, in a secret sort of way. It was a good arrangement.

I suppose you want me to tell you about the last night. You do, don't you?

HE: Yes, I do.

MARIANNE: When Simon came banging on my door.

HE: Yes.

MARIANNE: Bang, bang. He knew I didn't like to be disturbed, he knew I needed my sleep, my secret sleep, but it was an emergency, he had to get to the airport. Bang, bang. Wake up Ali, he said, wake up, I'm sorry, I need you to help me.

Well, I couldn't refuse, could I. He couldn't drive. We were staying in this little hotel in the hills, after a gig in Marseilles, high in the hills we were, and I was especially high, on a silver secret cloud. But I couldn't tell him, could I? I couldn't tell him I was drunk. It was a secret, wasn't it?

And so I drove him, fast, down the winding road. left and right it went, the zig zag road, and after a while, it went left and we went right, and then we were flying, flying, and. Oh, Simon, I am so sorry, I am so so sorry.

HE: Thank you, Ali.

BLACK-OUT.

ACT 1

SCENE 23 **IT'S NOT ENOUGH**

HE: There's more. It's not enough.

MARIANNE: More, you want more, damn you, I've nothing left.

HE: More. I want everything.

SHE IS COMPLETELY DRAINED; SHE HAS  
NOTHING LEFT. SHE STARTS TO CRY.

HE: Look at me, my dear.

SHE LOOKS AT HIM. GRADUALLY HER FACE  
SHOWS AMAZEMENT, WONDER, AWE, FEAR.

MARIANNE: Who—who are you?

HE: What do you see?

MARIANNE: Angels. Rainbows. Infinities. Death after death,  
birth after birth. Volcanoes, galaxies, the eye of  
a blackbird. It is: unbearable.

Who are you?

HE: I am you, my love; I am love. I am yourself. I am  
everything that remains of you, of me, of all the  
beings in all the worlds. I am love.

Can you see?

MARIANNE: Yes.

HE: From that yes, my love, my dear, sing.

SHE STEPS FORWARD. SHE STARTS TO SING,  
WORDLESS, HIGH, FLOATING NOTES. GRIEF,  
BUT A HINT OF THE CONVENT MUSIC. HER  
GESTURE INDICATES FINAL BLACKOUT.