

Alexandra Moss

“Henrietta”

Professor Michael Dixon

Henrietta

A play in two acts

Cast:

SARAH, a college junior.

HENRI, her best friend.

HELEN, a friend of Sarah and Henri's.

ANNE, Helen's best friend and another friend to Sarah and Henri.

EMMA, Helen's conservative roommate.

ACT I

1900 dorm room. SARAH is laying out little cakes on a table for a spread. She mutters to herself about what is meant to go where. A knock at the door.

SARAH

Oh-!

She checks the time, tidies a last thing or two away, smooths her hair, and goes to the door. A shriek of delight.

Henri! You rascal, you're early! I'm not at all set up.

HENRI

Yes. I - need to speak to you about something.

SARAH

Of course. Goodness, is everything all right?

HENRI

I - need to tell you -

SARAH

What is it?

HENRI

I wanted to see if I could help you get set up.

SARAH

Henri! Don't do that to me, I thought something was actually wrong. Here, you can do the little plates. How was your summer vacation?

HENRI

What? Yes, it was very nice. My sister and Benny had their first - a little baby girl!

SARAH

How wonderful! You told me she was about to have a baby and then you stopped writing to me. But I forgive you.

HENRI

I know, I'm sorry. But - we needed all hands on deck to help out with little Edna. She wasn't quite right when she was born and we were afraid - well, she's all better now.

SARAH

Oh, Henri.

HENRI

Enough about me, though, how was your summer?

SARAH

The usual. I spent most of it in my father's library with Rose, tutoring her to help her prepare for boarding school this year. She's very nervous about leaving home, you know. I swear, every time I go home she's grown at least three inches!

HENRI

How old is she now?

SARAH

Eleven. No! Eleven? Yes, that's right - I just can't quite believe it. It seems that it was just yesterday that I first held her in my arms. There, that looks better. Have a cake.

HENRI

Aren't they for the spread?

SARAH

Go on, no one will miss two little cakes.

HENRI

All right then. Thanks. Oh! I'd forgotten how delicious they were.

SARAH

Yes, father always does send the best.

HENRI

Mmm. Sounds like you had a lovely summer.

SARAH

Yes. Well, the bit that I got to spend with Rose was nice. Mother insisted on dragging me to teas so that she could chat with her friends, but wouldn't you know, we only visited the ones with sons just about my age.

HENRI

Isn't that curious?

SARAH

Yes, quite. And wouldn't you know, they would seat us together at one end of the table and completely exclude us from their conversation so that we could get to know each other.

HENRI

How odd!

SARAH

Oh, stop! In all seriousness, it started to wear on my nerves. I'm sure they were lovely boys, but they all had the same reaction when I started talking about my studies.

HENRI

(sympathetic, condescending)

A woman in college! Well, isn't that nice, Miss Held? What do you study up at that little school of yours? Did you pass your course in stocking-mending? I hear that's a difficult one.

SARAH

(laughing again)

Henri! Unfortunately that's just about right. Not in so many words of course, but you know, the meaning was the same. That was a pretty good impression.

HENRI

Thank you.

(in a voice)

I have been working on refining the craft of acting.

SARAH

Are you going out for the junior play?

HENRI

Yes, I plan to. I want to be Tybalt.

SARAH

Why don't you try for Romeo? That's so much more romantic.

HENRI

But Tybalt gets to do more sword fighting.

SARAH

Yes, one must take the sword fighting into consideration. Oh dear, you have a bit of cake on your -

HENRI

There?

SARAH

Not quite, here let me - that's better.

HENRI

Thank you. Will you come see it?

SARAH

The play? Of course! I will watch you carouse around the stage with a sword. Besides, I've have a soft spot for that one ever since we did it in Miss Williams' class as freshies.

HENRI

That's right!

SARAH

I hadn't thought on it in a long time, but I had the most horrible smash on her!

HENRI

I remember.

SARAH

Good heavens. I agonized over getting every detail perfect on her essays, but she never gave me higher than a B, can you believe that?

HENRI

It was worse than that! It got so bad that you tried to do that thing that she always does with her hair - ?

SARAH

Yes!

Both girls pile their hair on top of their heads and laugh.

HENRI

(in a low, smooth voice)

"Now, ladies, take out your Shakespeare texts. Are there any volunteers to read aloud the 18th sonnet?"

SARAH

I was thrilled when we did *Romeo and Juliet* and I got to read Juliet, and Miss Williams had to read Romeo because no one else wanted to!

HENRI

I would have done it, but I was reading Tybalt.

SARAH

Of course you were. We were all very impressed with your reading, you know - even then you were quite the little actress. I decided there and then that I simply had to be your friend.

HENRI

Is that why you came over and spoke to me after class? I was so flattered when you did.

SARAH

Hush. We make such a good pair that I think we were destined to befriend each other. I know you were busy this summer, but I did miss your letters very much.

HENRI

I'm sorry.

SARAH

Let's promise to never fall out of touch with each other. I know sometimes you'll be busy - I'm sure I will be too - but I just couldn't stand the thought of college ending and never hearing from you again. Promise me, Henri?

HENRI

Well -

A knock at the door.

SARAH

That must be the other girls. Is my hair alright?

HENRI

Yes, fine. Is mine -?

SARAH tucks a loose strand behind HENRI'S ear.

Thank you.

SARAH opens the door to reveal ANNE and HELEN, two of the girls' other friends.

HELEN

Sarah! Henri! Did you have good summers? Tell me Henri, did your sister have her baby?

HENRI

Yes, she-

HELEN

Is Rose off to school now?

SARAH

Yes, I -

HELEN

I'm sorry, Henri, I'm just so excited to see you both! I found Anne in the corridor and I told her she simply had to come with me to see you.

HENRI

Hello, Anne. Good summer?

ANNE

Very nice, thank you.

SARAH

Come in, come in and have some cakes.

HELEN

Sarah, before I forget, I'd better warn you - I got stuck living with Emma this year - you remember her, don't you, from our Shakespeare class in our first year?

HENRI

Yes - she was just awful!

SARAH

Henri!

HELEN

Yes, well I've got to live with her now. Anyways, I wanted to tell you that she was positively following me around this morning asking where I was going and what I was doing, and I told her I was coming here which she took as an invitation to join us. I sent her back to the room to fetch a bottle of wine, but she's on her way over.

SARAH

Well, that's all right. I wouldn't want to leave her out. And besides, there are plenty of cakes.

HELEN

That's what you say. You haven't got to live with her.

ANNE

Yes, why haven't you got a roommate this year, Sarah?

SARAH

Well - my father decided it would be a nice treat for me to have space to myself so he, ah - paid a bit of a higher fee. To be honest, I miss the company.

HELEN

You can have Emma if you'd like.

A KNOCK at the door.

SARAH

That will be her. Be nice, girls!

(a flurry of giggles, and SARAH opens the door.)

Hello Emma! Won't you come in?

EMMA

Yes, thank you. Here, this is from Helen and I.
(handing her the wine)

SARAH

Oh - thank you. Wine all around, everyone?

EMMA

None for me, I don't touch spirits.

ANNE

It's not really "spirits," Emma, it's just a bit of wine.

EMMA

My mother has always taught me that it's not proper for a woman to drink. She's devoted her life to working for temperance.

HELEN

Really! I suppose you don't believe in women's suffrage either!

EMMA

My mother says that if God had wanted women to vote, he would have made us as smart as men.

HENRI

As smart as men! Honestly -

SARAH

(handing out the wine in glasses)

There you are, Henri. Well, have a cake then, Emma. There's plenty.

HELEN chugs her wine to spite her roommate.

HELEN

Fill me up, then, barkeep!

EMMA

Helen! What language!

HELEN

It's what my father says when he finishes his spirits after dinner.

SARAH

(refilling HELEN'S glass and trying to make conversation)

Henri and I were just talking about our freshman English class where we all met.

ANNE

That's right! That Miss Williams was such a hard grader. I don't think anyone got an A in her class!

HELEN

Henri did! I remember that - probably for her dramatic reading of Tybalt.

HENRI

Oh, bosh.

ANNE

I heard the Junior play this year is Romeo and Juliet. Are you going to try out, Henri?

HENRI

Yes, I think so.

EMMA

I'll be trying out as well.

HENRI

For which role?

EMMA

Mother says it will be a crime if I don't get Juliet, but I suppose I'll take whichever role I'm given. Are you going out for it, Sarah?

SARAH

Me? Oh, no! No, I'm not an actress.

HELEN

Is it Miss Williams who is in charge of it this year?

HENRI

Yes, I believe so.

ANNE

Didn't we all have such smashes on her when we were freshies!

HELEN

I know I did!

SARAH

So did I. Didn't you, Emma?

EMMA

I didn't.

SARAH

Really?

EMMA

My father says - he's a doctor, and he says there is something medically wrong with women who become infatuated with other women.

SARAH

Of course there isn't! All school girls have smashes on older girls and teachers, it's perfectly natural. Surely it must have happened to you as well!

EMMA

No. And I would be ashamed if it had.

HELEN

Come off it, Emma, we're all going to graduate and find men to marry, what's a bit of fun with a smash in college?

ANNE

Oooh, speaking of boys, I've got a beau!

HENRI

Have you! What's he like?

ANNE

I don't know. I haven't met him yet.

SARAH

Well, then he can't be your beau yet, silly.

ANNE

He can and he is! Mother has arranged for him to take me to tea a month from Saturday.

HELEN

Isn't that exciting! I've told her that we'd help her get dressed, won't we girls?

ANNE

Have any of you been to tea with a young man?

HENRI

Sarah has, loads of times.

SARAH

Just sons of my mother's friends, not anyone who I especially liked.

ANNE

That doesn't count, then.

HELEN

Anne!

SARAH

No, she's right.

ANNE

How about you, Emma?

EMMA

I - no. No one has ever asked me.

ANNE

Oh.

(beat)

Well, I'm sure someone will. Sometime. You know, in the future.

EMMA

Well, of course. We'll all be married someday.

HENRI

Until then, here's to us girls!

SARAH, HELEN, and ANNE join her in a toast with affirmations of "indeed!" and "hear, hear!" EMMA does not, perhaps because she does not agree, or perhaps because she has not been given a glass to raise.

SCENE 2: SARAH'S room. SARAH is half trying to do homework. HENRI is eating some of SARAH'S leftover cakes and sulking.

HENRI

Do you mind if I have another?

SARAH

Of course not - I've had them for over a week now and they're getting stale.

HENRI

(*dejected*)

Thank you.

SARAH

Come off it, Henri - I'm sure you'll be a very good Romeo.

HENRI

I suppose.

SARAH

Romeo's a much bigger part than Tybalt. That's something.

HENRI

Yes.

SARAH

They probably gave you Romeo because you were so much better than everyone else and you just had to have the biggest part.

HENRI

Oh, honestly.

SARAH

Why did you want to be Tybalt anyway? He doesn't do very much.

HENRI

Hmph! Yes he does! He gets to be brazen and loud and run around with a sword.

SARAH

Romeo does that too, doesn't he?

HENRI

Well - technically yes, but he's so romantic.

SARAH

That isn't a bad thing!

HENRI

I suppose not.

SARAH

Who got Juliet?

HENRI

Emma Mason.

SARAH

Oh.

HENRI

Now do you understand why I'd rather be Tybalt?

SARAH

Come now, she can't be all that bad. She's just a bit - fussy.

HENRI

Fussy! Last year when we did *A Midsummer Night's Dream* she screamed in the middle of a performance because I tread on her dress!

SARAH

I'd forgotten about that. I'm sure she was just surprised.

HENRI

Well, I was Puck. It was my responsibility to keep the mortals on their toes.

SARAH

Quite literally, as we all saw.

HENRI

Oh, hush.

SARAH

Listen, I can help you learn your lines if you like. That way you won't have to practice so much with Emma.

HENRI

Would you!

SARAH

Of course!

HENRI

Can we start right away?

SARAH

All right, if you want to.

HENRI

Here, come over here, you can share my book. Now, the monologues I can learn by myself, but it's the parts where they talk to each other - here.

SARAH

Oh, it's me. Ahem.

(SARAH'S reading starts off flat, but as they progress it becomes more alive.)

"Yon light is not day-light, I know it, I:
It is some meteor that the sun exhales,
To be to thee this night a torch-bearer,
And light thee on thy way to Mantua:
Therefore stay yet; thou need'st not to be gone."

HENRI

"Let me be ta'en, let me be put to death;
I am content, so thou wilt have it so.

I'll say yon grey is not the morning's eye,
'Tis but the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow;
Nor that is not the lark, whose notes do beat
The vaulty heaven so high above our heads:
I have more care to stay than will to go:
Come, death, and welcome! Juliet wills it so.
How is't, my soul? let's talk; it is not day."

SARAH

It is, it is: hie hence, be gone, away!
It is the lark that sings so out of tune,
Straining harsh discords and unpleasing sharps.
Some say the lark makes sweet division;
This doth not so, for she divideth us:
Some say the lark and loathed toad change eyes,
O, now I would they had changed voices too!
Since arm from arm that voice doth us affray,
Hunting thee hence with hunt's-up to the day,
O, now be gone; more light and light it grows.

HENRI

"More light and light; more dark and dark our woes!"

*(HENRI realizes that the scene has gotten
intense between them. To break the mood, she
does the nurse's line in one of her voices)*

"Madam!"

SARAH

"Nurse?"

HENRI

(as NURSE)

"Your lady mother is coming to your chamber:
The day is broke; be wary, look about."

SARAH

"Then, window, let day in, and let life out."

HENRI

"Farewell, farewell! one kiss, and I'll descend."
Do you know, Emma has already gone to Miss Williams and informed
her that she absolutely refuses to kiss me here?

SARAH

What? Why?

HENRI

She gave a whole list of reasons, chief among them being that it was immoral to portray a young man and a young woman sneaking around to be alone and *kiss*, and that anyways, it is unnatural for two girls to kiss *like that*.

SARAH

Like how?

HENRI

How on earth should I know? I told you, she's incredibly fussy.

SARAH

That's absurd! No one will believe a Juliet that refuses to kiss her Romeo! And besides, my school friends and I used to kiss each other all the time - it was just how we showed that we loved our friends. She must have done the same. Didn't you?

HENRI

I - had one friend who let me kiss her, yes.

SARAH

See? Of course you did. Poor Emma, I suppose she has just never had close friends.

HENRI

In any case, Miss Williams has informed her that Romeo will be kissing Juliet here, and that if she refuses to do it then she will have to give up her part.

SARAH

I bet that quieted her.

HENRI

You should have seen. Her face got so red and she squinted her eyes so much that they nearly disappeared from her face!

SARAH

The poor dear. Still, I'm sure that would have been a sight!

SCENE 3: SARAH is in her room reading.

HENRI

(OS, knocking on door)

Sarah! Sarah! Sarah open up!

SARAH

(opening the door)

Good Heavens, Henri, is everything alright?

HENRI

(handing SARAH a letter)

Read it.

SARAH

"My dear Henrietta, I hope this letter finds you doing well at college."

HENRI

No, skip to the important bit, further down.

SARAH

"Little Edna rolled over by herself for the first time last week-"

HENRI

Give it here. "One last thing, Henrietta - your father and I have discussed the matter and we've decided that it is time to introduce you to some nice young men. Your father has written to one Jack Obler (you may remember him, dear, he spent Christmas with us when you were small). He attends a college quite close to yours, so he will be calling for you. Do try to make a good impression, Henrietta. Love from home, Mother." What am I going to do?

SARAH

What? You're going to go, silly.

HENRI

I - but - I'm not any good at talking to "nice young men." I always find myself talking to men the same way that I talk to the girls. You know, just friendly, not...special.

SARAH

What do you mean?

HENRI

You know, how some girls talk to boys.

(in a voice)

"Oh hello, Jacob, oh dear me, it seems I've dropped my handkerchief, could you get it for me Jacob?"

SARAH

(laughing in spite of herself, taking the letter)

Yes that will never do, especially since it says here that his name is Jack.

HENRI

Oh, bosh.

SARAH

Just pretend you're playing Juliet!

(HENRI makes a face)

Alright, then. I suppose I never talk to boys in any special sort of way, but I haven't exactly got any beaus.

HENRI

What about all of those gentlemen from home?

SARAH

What, mother's friends? Oh, they're very nice, but I don't think they like me very much.

HENRI

Sarah! Why on earth not?

SARAH

You know what I mean. They don't like me in that way.

HENRI

Well, do you like any of them in that way?

SARAH

No, I don't suppose I do.

HENRI

That's all right then.

SARAH

It's just that one has to get married some day, and I'd rather it be someone who lives close to my family so I can still see Rose whenever I want.

HENRI

Yes I suppose. But not all women get married, you know.

SARAH

Yes, but Henri, educated women like us are expected to-

HENRI

Expected! By whom?

SARAH

I don't know - by everyone! By our parents, by-

HENRI

And we must just do as they say without a thought for our own happiness? And if so, what is the point of all this?

SARAH

All what?

HENRI

This - this! We come to college and study biology and learn Latin so that we can what? Look after children and keep house for the rest of our lives? Sarah, I don't want to get married, I don't want to give this up!

SARAH

What?

HENRI

This! This freedom! I - every night when we were children, my sister and my brothers and I would sit by my father's feet and he would read to us. He wouldn't read us stories, but whatever he was reading - books about politics, or history, or when my mother insisted on it, the Bible. And when we got older, we would take turns reading out loud. My father believed in education, Sarah - he always used to say, "education will set you free." He worked day and night to send all of us to school because he believed in it *so much*. And this summer when my sister had her baby, I saw what her life has become - cooking and cleaning, and taking care of Edna, and managing the house, and entertaining for Benny and she does all of this and no one ever asks her what she *thinks*. Bless her, she's happy, but - I want more than that. Sarah - I do not want to have tasted the freedom of education just caged by marriage.

SARAH

Oh, Henri. You always had a flare for the dramatic.

HENRI

I'm not being dramatic, I'm being serious! I want to make a difference in the world! I want to be surround by people like you - I can say to you "I have an idea" about anything - about Shakespeare, or science, or politics, and you will listen to me

like what I have to say is important. I refuse to believe that I have learned to think only to spend my life filling my head with dust.

SARAH

Not all marriages are like that, you know.

HENRI

Really?

SARAH

My mother is educated, and she's happy enough.

HENRI

Is she? Have you asked her? Have you said "Mother, are you happy?"

SARAH

Of course not.

HENRI

And what use is her French when she is having tea with the mothers of your potential beaux?

SARAH

I suppose - not very much. But if you want to surround yourself with educated women, I suppose you could always teach.

HENRI

Teach?

SARAH

Yes. Plenty of girls are planning to stay on after they graduate - I think Helen has her eye on eventually becoming the head of the biology department-

HENRI

Sarah, I don't want to stay here and teach! I've seen the way that the teachers get treated here, and they get treated just like the girls. Every minute of our day is scheduled for us, we're chaperoned day and night - I want to make my own decisions, I don't want to be told what to do for the rest of my life!

SARAH

What are you going to do, then, Henri? What are you going to do with yourself if you don't get married and you don't want to teach?

HENRI

I want to go into politics.

SARAH

Politics!

HENRI

Yes. I want to work for what I think is right! I know it's not a perfect plan - it's not exactly lucrative work and I don't want to end up becoming a burden to my family - but it would be so exciting. I would be able to say what I believe and work to make my voice heard. I'd organize protests and write letters to the President, and - Sarah? Have you never thought about political work?

SARAH

I - had not.

HENRI

Oh.

SARAH

But when you talk about it, it sounds almost alright. You make it sound like an adventure, Henri.

HENRI

It would be! And you'd be around other women who respect you and treat you as an equal, not tied up with some man who expects you to cook his meals and shine his shoes.

SARAH

I suppose it would make you feel important.

HENRI

Because you would be important! We'd be changing the way that women are treated in this country. We'd change the way men think about women, and the way women think about themselves!

SARAH

Yes, I can just see you tromping around with a protest sign and getting all frustrated because your dress is getting in the way of your marching.

(they laugh)

It is a nice fantasy. In the meantime, though, you must appease your mother and meet this nice young man.

HENRI

I suppose I must.

SARAH

Have you decided what you're going to wear?

HENRI

I haven't even thought about it. I don't think I have anything suitable to go out in - perhaps I should write mother and ask for some money for a new dress -

SARAH

Don't be silly! You can borrow one of mine.

HENRI

Really?

SARAH

Of course. Now let's see... I've just had this one made, but I'm sure you'll be careful. I - what is that face for? Don't you like it?

HENRI

Well, I'm sure it would look lovely on you, but...well it's just got so many - frills.

SARAH

My dear, that's the fashion.

(HENRI makes a face)

Very well, we shall find something else. Let's see what else I have in here...This one?

HENRI

Frills.

SARAH

Alright, well it will be hard to find one without them, they are the style.

HENRI

What about the one you wore to the freshman-sophomore dance last year? You looked absolutely beautiful in that.

SARAH

I - thank you. I think I still have it, but it's not quite as stylish anymore - yes, here.

HENRI

Ooh, it's lovely.

SARAH

Here, I'll help you try it on.

HENRI

Oh no, I can manage.

SARAH

Don't be silly, the bit in the back can be tedious. Here -

SARAH undoes the back of HENRI'S dress and helps her out of it. A beat while HENRI is in her underthings. SARAH gently helps HENRI into the other dress.

SARAH

How's that?

HENRI

Goodness, how did you breathe in this thing?

SARAH

Here, I'll let it out a bit. Is that better?

HENRI

A little.

SARAH

And if you did something like this with your hair - you're positively lovely.

HENRI

Thanks.

SARAH

No, I mean it. It will be a miracle if Jack can take his eyes off of you even for a second.

HENRI

I'm sure.

(low voice)

"Why Miss Jameson, how is it that you get your face so blue?"

(high voice)

"Oh, Mr. Obler, it's because I breathe only the finest oxygen, and when you're around I hardly find myself breathing at all!"

SARAH

(laughing)

You rascal!

SCENE 4: SARAH and EMMA sitting on SARAH'S bed. SARAH finds a handkerchief and gives it to EMMA.

SARAH

There now. That's better, isn't it?

EMMA

Yes. Thank you. I'm sorry to intrude on you like this.

SARAH

Nonsense! I wasn't going to not invite you back to my room when I saw you crying in the washroom.

EMMA

You're so nice. You're much nicer than - lots of the other people here.

SARAH

I'm sure that isn't true. Do you want to tell me what's in that letter you've got?

EMMA

Oh, I don't want to bother you with it.

SARAH

It's quite alright. Bad news from home can be difficult to read alone.

EMMA

It isn't bad news, exactly. My father is just very strict.

SARAH

Oh?

EMMA

Yes, well he makes me write to him every few weeks to update him on everything - my health, my marks, you know. Last time I wrote, I told him about your spread - it was so nice of you to invite me, by the way -

SARAH

Of course!

EMMA

-and I mentioned, you know, that there was wine, but that I didn't drink and - well, I won't repeat what he said because it's so awful -

SARAH

Let's see.

(taking the letter)

Ah.

EMMA

Don't worry, I didn't give him names, so you won't be in any trouble.

SARAH

Well, your father can't really control who you spend your time with, can he? If you want to befriend "hussies and whores," as he says -

EMMA

It sounds even worse when you say it out loud!

SARAH

-there's not very much he can do to stop you, now is there?

EMMA

I suppose not. But that would be - disobedient. And anyways, that's not the worst of it.

SARAH

There's more?

EMMA

Yes, I also told him that I'd be playing Juliet and not to worry about me getting soiled by kissing a young gentleman because a girl was to take the part, and he said that was even worse.

SARAH

Yes that's right, you get to kiss Henri.

EMMA

Not if I can help it. And not if my father has anything to say about it.

SARAH

It wouldn't be you kissing Henri. It would be Romeo kissing Juliet - and it's a romantic play, so Juliet probably would kiss Romeo.

EMMA

I know. It just that - I'm always very careful to do as my father says. He's always been very - strict - with me.

SARAH

How so?

EMMA

Oh, you know, I don't seem to have outgrown his cane. I understand, of course, he wants me to grow into a proper woman, but it does make me very careful -

SARAH

What does your mother say about all this?

EMMA

My mother - tends to agree with my father.

SARAH

And does he treat your brothers and sisters the same?

EMMA

I haven't got any.

SARAH

No brothers or sisters! Goodness, weren't you lonely growing up?

EMMA

I suppose so. A bit.

SARAH

Well, you're a college girl now, practically surrounded by sisters - you could do whatever you want and not tell him. Drink a glass of wine! Become a suffragette!

EMMA

Oh, Sarah, no! I could never - and I don't want to. I think my father has fine politics, for the most part. It's more that I know if I ever were to disappoint him - there would be consequences.

SARAH

It doesn't sound like you're disappointing him at all.

EMMA

I suppose not. Perhaps not right now.

SARAH

What do you mean?

EMMA

Promise me you won't tell?

SARAH

I promise.

EMMA

I lied to you the other day about Miss Williams. I had a horrible smash on her too.

SARAH

There's no harm in that!

EMMA

That's not what my father thinks.

SARAH

You've told him?

EMMA

No, I could never! But he's spoken to me before about not becoming too close to my friends, not admiring my teachers too much - you know. He even had reservations about me coming to a women's college because he was afraid that having to take a boy's part sometimes might make me masculine.

SARAH

I don't think that it has, do you?

EMMA

No, I suppose not. I just worry that he would pull me out of school - that's what it says at the end of the letter here. He threatened to make me come home if he heard that I was doing anything - unwomanly.

SARAH

No, Emma!

EMMA

Yes. And - my father has asked President Hunt to watch out for me - they're old college friends, you know - and President Hunt seems very keen to take me under his wing.

SARAH

How's that?

EMMA

He called me into his office, just to check in, and as I was leaving he said-

(whispers)

-that he had heard someone was trying to start a suffrage society on campus and to keep my ears peeled so I could report back to him.

SARAH

Are you going to do it?

EMMA

I've got to, haven't I? If something stirs up and he finds out about it, he'll think that I knew about it and didn't tell him.

SARAH

Have you found anything yet?

EMMA

No, not yet. Sarah! I lost track of the time - I didn't mean to be blathering on to you for so long. You must be quite fed up with me.

SARAH

Of course not. It's important to have someone to talk to.

EMMA

Yes. I do quite like having a - friend.

SCENE 5: SARAH is tidying her room. HENRI is following her.

HENRI

Please, Sarah, let me have one here.

SARAH

Henri, I've told you, we can't do that.

HENRI

I'd have it in my room but Ellen won't let me, and you haven't got a roommate to say no.

SARAH

Yes, but Henri, I am saying no.

HENRI

Oh, honestly Sarah, don't go and tell me that you're against the whole thing!

SARAH

I - no, not necessarily, not - I mean, not the principle of the thing, but -

HENRI

But what, then?

SARAH

Well - President Hunt said that we weren't supposed to have them.

HENRI

Oh, bosh! What does he know about any of this? He's a man.

SARAH

He said that anyone caught supporting female suffrage on campus would be called into his office! Remember at the opening ceremony? He said that we came to college to become more refined women, not to become unwomanly.

HENRI

Is that why we come to college? To go through the refinery so that we can be better enjoyed by our husbands? That's not why I'm here and it's not why you're here either.

SARAH

Yes - there's no need to shout Henri - it's not that I don't agree with you, it's just that I don't want to get caught. Think how awful it would be if I had to go before the President of the college! They would surely write home to mother and father, and what sort of example would I be setting then for little Rose?

HENRI

You're not going to budge, are you?

SARAH

No.

HENRI

Very well. What time is it?

SARAH

What? It's ten to three.

HENRI

I'd better go and find everyone, then.

(at the door)

If anyone turns up and asks about the "cabbage society" meeting, just send them on their way.

SARAH

Henri - you already invited them!

HENRI

I was certain you would say yes! For goodness sakes, Sarah, it's not as though we're plotting a murder. We're gathering to talk about ways we might help get the vote for educated and capable women like ourselves. Because I'll be damned if I'm going to let overbearing men like President Hunt tell me what to do for the rest of my life!

SARAH

Henri! Don't swear!

There is a KNOCK at the door. HENRI answers.

HELEN

(mock innocent)

Hello, I'm looking to learn how to sauté and boil cabbage? Have I come to the right place?

HENRI

I'm afraid you haven't. Better go on home, Helen.

SARAH

No, come in.

HENRI

What?

SARAH

Well, we might as well vote for which men we have running our lives, now mightn't we? I'm sorry, Helen, I had quite forgotten that we had a cabbage society meeting today, but I can run down to the kitchen and put on some tea..?

HELEN

Oh no, that's quite alright.

ANNE

(poking her head through the door)

Hello? I'm looking for other cabbage connoisseurs?

SARAH

Goodness, you gave me a fright! Come in, come in.

HENRI

Since we're all here, shall we get started?

HELEN

Is it just us?

HENRI

Yes - for now. I'm hoping to get more members but I don't really know how to ask people since -

SARAH

Since we're not really supposed be discussing cabbage.

HENRI

Yes. But I wanted to talk about that - how to get more people interested here, and also what we might be able to do to help the larger movement.

ANNE

Well, we could raise money. Everyone loves a nice baked goods sale!

HELEN

Yes, but then we'd have to say what it's for.

ANNE

In order to raise awareness about issues surrounding - cabbage growth?

HELEN

No, that would never do.

HENRI

I think the first thing we should do is concentrate on getting more members. If we're a big group, they'll have a much harder time stopping us from meeting.

HELEN

How are we going to do that if we can't talk about it?

SARAH

Perhaps - perhaps we could bring it up in class.

ANNE

In class!

SARAH

I'm not saying that we should announce that we're starting a suffrage society or anything, just ask our teachers about it out of curiosity about the political goings-on. If we keep our interest academic and philosophical they wouldn't suspect - and we could hear what other girls say about it, and the girls who support it we could approach after class.

HENRI

That's brilliant Sarah!

SARAH

And we could just say we were thinking about starting something, so that way if we've misread them, they can't squeal on us because it will sound like we haven't done anything yet.

HENRI

Oh, I could just kiss you!

ANNE

I think I can work it in to my political science class, that should be easy enough.

HENRI

And I can definitely do it in my English class - we're doing Caesar and that's plenty political.

HELEN

I'm a biology major, how am I supposed to talk about women voting when we're learning about cell structure?

HENRI

You can pretend you're confused about the whole suffrage movement, and ask if there is a biological reason that women should not be allowed to vote..?

HELEN

But what if the teacher says that there is!

SARAH

Even if the teacher says that there is, some of the girls might think there isn't!

ANNE

There isn't, is there?

HENRI

Of course not! Women are just as smart as men, given the right education.

A KNOCK at the door. The girls all freeze.

SARAH

Did you invite anyone else?

HENRI

No, just us!

SARAH

I'll see who - look casual!

SARAH opens the door to reveal EMMA.

SARAH

Hello Emma!

EMMA

Hello Sarah. How are you?

SARAH

I'm fine, thank you. Is there something I can help you with?

EMMA

Oh, yes - is Anne here?

SARAH

Anne - yes, do come in Emma.

ANNE

You were looking for me?

EMMA

I was. Perhaps you recall that in class on Friday Miss Neally instructed me to help you with the upcoming social sciences essay, since you had done so poorly on the last two. When you didn't turn up at my room at three like we had arranged, I came looking for you. Amelia told me that you were not in your room and that you were at a something called "the cabbage society"?

HELEN

(to ANNE)

You told your roommate about the cabbage society?

SARAH

Yes. That's this little meeting right here. We were just talking about how much we appreciate - cabbage.

ANNE

And all of the ways you can cook it.

EMMA

(not buying it)

I see. Well, as fascinating as that sounds, I have my own essay to finish so if you want help, Anne, I must insist that you come along.

ANNE

All right, I'm ready. I'm sorry I forgot.

EMMA

By the way, who is the faculty advisor to this cabbage society?

HENRI

We - haven't got one yet. We were just discussing who to ask.

EMMA

Ah. And that reminds me, Henri, you really must look over your lines. During the scene on the balcony, you keep calling me a

beast when you're meant to be telling me to have peace in my breast.

HENRI

Yes I shall surely have to fix that.

EMMA

Yes. Well, good afternoon, Sarah. Come along, Anne.

As they leave, ANNE mouths "I'm sorry!" to the rest of the group. They wait a moment to hear that EMMA has gone before they start speaking.

SARAH

That was a near miss!

HELEN

I don't think she believed that we were talking about cabbage.

HENRI

Of course not, but what proof does she have?

SARAH

None, I suppose, but I think we need to be very careful around her.

HELEN

Do you think we should still try and recruit new members?

HENRI

Yes, I do. Perhaps not in classes that we share with Emma, since I have a feeling that she already suspects, but if we're going to do anything we need more than just the four of us. We'll just have to be careful. You'll have to be really cautious, Helen, since you live with her. And we need a better name than the "cabbage society."

SARAH

Yes, who on earth came up with that?

(a grin from HENRI)

I should have known.

SCENE 6: SARAH, alone onstage, distracted. Perhaps she is trying to study, but it is not going very well. She checks the time

more than once. She might stick her head out the door to see if anyone is coming, look out the window, etc. She gives up - and HENRI bursts through the door without knocking.

SARAH

There you are! I was starting to get worried.

HENRI

It took longer to get back than I expected - were you waiting for me?

SARAH

I - no. Not particularly. I thought you would come see me when you got back.

(a beat)

How was it?

HENRI

It was - nice.

SARAH

Oh? Tell me about it.

HENRI

Well, we had some lovely little cakes and some very nice tea. And we chatted and got to know each other a little.

SARAH

Yes that does sound - nice.

HENRI

Yes.

SARAH

Are you seeing him again?

HENRI

I - don't know. Oh Sarah, I can't keep up this farce in front of you - I tried so hard to like him but I just couldn't stand him! I was trying to be polite and courteous and all of those things that one is supposed to be when she goes out with a "nice young man," but I just got so upset!

SARAH

What happened?

HENRI

Well, he told me all about how he's studying politics - he's completely against women's suffrage, of course - and I tried to tell him about the things that I've studied, every time I said something he had to prove that he knew more about it than I did.

SARAH

How awful!

HENRI

Yes. And - what really bothered me was that he did know more about everything that I brought up!

SARAH

No! How could he? You're the best student in our year.

HENRI

I know! I don't mean to sound conceited, but I know that I am an intelligent woman, and I sat there puzzling over how on earth he could simply know more about *everything*. About half-way through I realized just how much better an education you can get at men's college - and it made me so angry that got up and left!

SARAH

Henri! You didn't!

HENRI

I most certainly did. I walked right out of the tea shop and went to the park. That's why I'm so late - I didn't quite know how to get back and it took me some time to figure it out.

SARAH

Oh, Henri. Weren't you afraid being out in town by yourself?

HENRI

No - I was too angry to think about it much, really. I couldn't stop thinking about how Jack knew more about every subject than I did, and how he just casually attributed his knowledge to the virtue of his sex, not his privileged education. It made me want to fight for decent education for women and - not get married!

SARAH

Henri, we've talked about this. We'll all have to get married someday.

HENRI

Not if I become a politician! I want to campaign for women to be able to vote - and I want to campaign for a reform of women's education! Jack has made me realize what I want to do with my life, but it - just doesn't involve him! Before I wanted to get into politics because I thought it would be exciting and an adventure, but now -I want to do it so that I can make a difference in women's lives. If we are ever to be men's equals - in marriage or in suffrage, we must be equally educated.

SARAH

That's admirable Henri, but have you thought about what your family will say?

HENRI

No, I haven't mentioned it to them yet. The thing is that even if I didn't want to go into politics, I don't know that I ever could get married anyway. I don't think that I could ever love a man as my companion they way that I love you, and our friends.

SARAH

Well of course not, that's just the way it is with men! You can't expect to be as close to you husband as you are with your friends. All marriages are like that.

HENRI

Why? Why are we not allowed to spend our lives with the people we love the best and why are we never allowed to become close with the people we're meant to marry?

SARAH

I don't know, Henri. That's just the way things are.

HENRI

That's not good enough! I want to change the way things are!

(beat)

I'm sorry, Sarah, I didn't mean to shout at you. I was just so incensed from earlier - forgive me?

SARAH

Of course. Henri? Did you mean what you said before?

HENRI

What?

SARAH

The bit about loving me - us - better than any man?

HENRI

Of course I did. You're my dearest friend, and I love you more than anyone else in the world.

SARAH

And you are mine. It's lovely to hear you say that - we must promise to stay the closest of friends even if one of us does get married.

HENRI

Yes - that is a refreshing view.

SARAH

Did you think I wanted otherwise?

HENRI

No, of course not - it's just that I have been getting an earful at rehearsals from Emma about unnatural relationships between women. To be quite honest, I think Miss Williams is having regrets about casting her.

SARAH

What do you mean? What could be unnatural about female friendship? It's one of the most natural bonds in this world!

HENRI

Yes, *I* know that, but Emma has been constantly saying how we really shouldn't be doing Romeo and Juliet at all because two women becoming too close to each other is *unnatural*.

SARAH

Oh, honestly!

HENRI

And do you know what Helen told me about her? That she thinks that it is unwomanly to want suffrage and unwomanly to discuss one's studies with a man, and that her dearest ambition is to become the president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and move to outlaw the sale of alcohol in America!

SARAH

I suppose she comes from a traditional family in that respect.

HENRI

Traditional is hardly the word! She has her head stuck in the last century and will go to great lengths to try and stick everyone else's heads there too.

SARAH

I suppose. Besides, what she says about unnatural friendships between women couldn't possibly be true. Nearly all of the girls here have one friend who they love better than the others. If it were unnatural, it wouldn't be so common. Just look at Anne and Helen - they're the same way.

HENRI

That's true enough. Although Anne has a beau.

SARAH

And someday so will we.

HENRI

You will, perhaps.

SARAH

Don't be silly, you will too. I'm sure that Mr. Jack Obler will not recount your running away from him to every man in the country.

HENRI

That isn't what I mean. I was serious about what I said before.

SARAH

Henri, you weren't. You were speaking in anger and frustration-

HENRI

I most certainly was serious. If I am ever asked to go out again, I will decline. Today has made me resolute. I cannot be respected as an educated woman if I am married to a man.

SARAH

Yes, but Henri, your family-

HENRI

I know they might not think that's right, but I feel it's what I need to do. I would be disappointed with myself and my life if I did anything else.

SARAH

All right, but Henri -

HENRI

It's not really any use, Sarah, I simply will not be persuaded otherwise. It's hardly even about me wanting to do it anymore - I feel like it's something I have to do.

(beat)

I was also serious when I said that I hoped you might come with me.

SARAH

I will give it some thought, Henri, but I cannot make you any promises.

HENRI

I see.

SARAH

I should certainly like to - some of the happiest memories of my life have been made with you. And - I don't think men are all bad, but you're right, I cannot be myself with them the way I can with you. It's just that - goodness knows I'm not as brave as you are. But I meant what I said - I will consider it.

ANNE and HELEN burst into SARAH's room.

ANNE

You're back! We want to hear all about it!

HELEN

Was he just dreamy, Henri? I'll bet he was. I was spying out the window when he came to pick you up.

SARAH

Helen!

HELEN

I couldn't help myself. I just had to catch a glimpse of Henri's beau.

HENRI

I would not say that he's my beau.

SARAH

Henri stormed out and left him sitting in the tea house!

ANNE

Oh, Henri!

HELEN

You didn't!

SARAH

Apparently he was against women's suffrage.

ANNE

All men are like that. My Christopher doesn't like for me to talk about it at all. It will just have to be something that we women bring them around to, won't it?

HENRI

I suppose so, yes.

SARAH

Speaking of, how is everyone doing with finding fellow suffragettes?

HELEN

I've talked to lots of girls and most of them are very excited - it seems there are more of us here than we thought!

HENRI

Probably more than President Hunt thinks are here as well.

SARAH

When should we try to have our next meeting?

HENRI

I think the first question might be where - exactly how many girls have we spoken with?

HELEN

I've talked to at least a dozen.

ANNE

Same here, maybe more.

HENRI

Well, we certainly won't all fit in here.

SARAH

Perhaps - we'd have to be very careful, of course, but perhaps we could use a classroom?

HENRI

I don't think it would be a good idea to tell a teacher what we're doing. Even if she supported us, she could get in trouble if she didn't report us to President Hunt.

SARAH

Well that's the thing - we wouldn't be *telling* her, exactly. I was thinking - maybe you could ask Miss Williams to let us use her classroom? You could say that you needed the space to practice sword-fighting, or something -

ANNE

That's brilliant!

HELEN

What, you mean, lie to Miss Williams? Couldn't she still get into trouble?

HENRI

I don't think so - not if she doesn't actually know what we're doing in there.

SARAH

That's what I thought. Will you do it then?

HENRI

I suppose it's worth a try. I'll ask her tomorrow.

ANNE

Wonderful! Votes for women!

HELEN

Shhh!

ANNE

Sorry.

(softer)

Votes for women!

HELEN

That's better.

SARAH

Now that's settled. Oh! I've just realized - you all came in in such a hurry that I didn't even offer you anything! That was horribly rude - would anyone like some tea?

HENRI

I think I've seen enough tea for today, thanks.

ANNE

I'd love a cup, but only if you're having one.

SARAH

Yes, I will. I'll just go down to the kitchen - oh!

SARAH opens the door to reveal EMMA, who tries to pretend she has not just had her ear pressed to the keyhole.

EMMA

Oh, hello Sarah. I was just - looking for - Henri. I wanted to offer to help her work on her lines. She's still saying some of them wrong.

SARAH

Oh! Yes, she's here - how did you know?

EMMA

I was over at her room first - Ellen says that she spends more time over here than she does in her own room. I supposed that she was visiting her - friend.

HENRI

Yes, I was. And I think I've got the lines just fine, thank you very much.

EMMA

Very well. Just remember, when opening night comes, you can't say that I never offered to help.

(exits)

HENRI

The nerve of her! It's her who can't remember her lines half the time, not me!

HELEN

Are you still calling her a beast in your love scene?

HENRI

I will be tomorrow, that's for certain.

SARAH

How much do you think she heard?

HELEN

Well she certainly heard this one shout "votes for women!"

SARAH

Do you think we should still go on with the meeting?

HENRI

I do. As long as we don't let slip when we're having it, I think we'll be all right.

HELEN

It's a bit risky, but that's half the fun now, isn't it!

ANNE

Yes!

(in a whisper)

Votes for women!

ALL

(also in whispers)

Votes for women!

*SCENE 7: SARAH and EMMA in SARAH'S room.
EMMA is visibly nervous. There are
significant pauses between each topic in
the conversation.*

SARAH

It's so nice of you to come by and visit me.

EMMA

Of course.

(beat)

How have you been?

SARAH

Quite fine, thank you. And yourself?

EMMA

Quite fine.

(a silence)

SARAH

How's the play coming along?

EMMA

It's coming along well.

SARAH

Henri tells me there's going to be an exciting swordfight.

EMMA

Yes.

(another silence)

SARAH

I've been helping Henri practice her lines for the balcony scene. Hopefully she's got them all.

EMMA

The balcony scene? The one with the kiss?

SARAH

Yes, that's the one.

EMMA

I'd noticed that she was particularly good - in that scene.

SARAH

I'm glad our work has been paying off, then.

EMMA

Mmm.

(silence)

SARAH

Can I get you some tea?

EMMA

(overlapping)

I was wondering - if you would like to go to the dance with me?

SARAH

What?

EMMA

The dance - it's next week, and -

SARAH

Oh - yes - that's very kind, Emma, but I'm afraid I'm going with Henri.

EMMA

Yes, that's what I figured, but I thought I might still ask.

SARAH

Well, thank you. I'm quite flattered.

EMMA

Listen - I know you that you might not like me all that much because I'm very convicted in some of my beliefs -

SARAH

No! Emma, that's not true.

EMMA

It's all right, I've heard Helen talk about it. But I just thought - well, you and Henri get on fine and she's just as convicted. Her beliefs are just - different from mine. I think you are lovely and kind and I should very much like to be your friend.

(beat)

Would you save me at least one dance on your card?

Before SARAH can answer, HENRI rushes in waving a piece of paper. She is out of breath.

HENRI

Sarah! Have you seen them? It's that horrible Emma, I'm sure of it!

SARAH

Henri!

HENRI sees EMMA and stops. EMMA looks like she is about to cry and hurries out of the room.

EMMA

I was - just going.

(exit)

SARAH

That wasn't very nice.

HENRI

I wouldn't have said if I knew she was here. What did she want, anyway? To interrogate you about the suffrage meeting?

SARAH

No. She was here to ask me to the dance.

HENRI

Sarah! You didn't say yes, did you?

SARAH

No, I told her that I was going with you.

HENRI

Good.

SARAH

Not that you have bothered to ask me yet.

HENRI

I'm sorry.

(taking SARAH'S hands)

Sarah, will you go to the junior-senior dance with me?

SARAH

Of course. You really should be nicer to her, you know. She's very upset.

HENRI

Have you seen what she's done?

SARAH

What's this? Oh, my.

HENRI

They're tacked up all over the campus proclaiming that-

(in her best President Hunt voice)

-anyone who tries to, secretly or openly, support the suffrage movement will be summoned before the administration. I'm sure she's gone to the president and tipped him off about what we're doing. She's just horrid!

SARAH

She's not, Henri.

HENRI

How can you say that after seeing this?

SARAH

Do you know what she told me just now? That her convictions are just as strong as yours. They just happen to be different.

HENRI

Yes, but my "convictions," as you call them are the right ones.

(beat)
Don't you think so?

SARAH
Yes, Henri, you know I agree with your politics. That doesn't give you the right to make Emma cry.

HENRI
All right. You're right, I know you're right. I'm sorry.

SARAH
You should apologize to her, not to me.

HENRI
All right, I will. Next time I see her.

HELEN and ANNE come bursting into SARAH'S room.

HELEN
Have you seen these? I can't believe her!

SARAH
Yes, we've seen.

HELEN
What are we going to do? These will have scared half of the girls off, I'm sure of it!

ANNE
We still have to have the meeting!

HENRI
Of course we do! I asked Miss Williams about the room, and she said she would leave it unlocked for me this Saturday. We just can't let the date get out and we should be fine.

ANNE
We should fight back in kind! Let's tack up our own posters!

HELEN
Don't be silly, we can't do that.

HENRI
Yes we can! In fact, I think we must! We'll never do anything useful by just sitting around and talking about the fact that we

want suffrage. I'm sick of whispering "votes for women!" I want to shout it!

HELEN

But we're sure to get caught hanging up posters!

HENRI

Not if we do it secretly.

HELEN

How on earth would we do that? There's always people around campus before curfew. And I'm sorry, but I don't think we should sneak out to hang suffrage posters because if we got caught we would be in twice the trouble.

SARAH

She has a point, Henri.

HENRI

Yes, I know. How about this, then? Our meeting is the same day as the dance, so if we make the posters in the morning we could hang them up on our way there. If we leave a little late, everyone else should be at the dance, and we won't have to worry about getting caught.

HELEN

I still think it's risky.

ANNE

I like it!

HENRI

Sarah?

SARAH

Let's put it to a vote at the meeting.

ANNE

Yes! Votes for women!

SCENE 8: SARAH'S room, empty. A knock at the door.

EMMA

(offstage)

Sarah?

(peeking in)

Sarah?

A moment while she decides whether or not to go into the room. She enters, and sits down to wait for Sarah to return. Gradually, she realizes that she has full access to Sarah's most personal space. She explores - and notices Sarah's diary. Another moment while she decides, and then she begins to read.

EMMA

Oh, Sarah...

(beat)

Always Henri.

She hovers between tears and outrage for a moment, and then slams the diary down and storms out of the room.

SCENE 9: HENRI, SARAH, ANNE, and HELEN in their party clothes. HENRI and ANNE are seated, SARAH and HELEN are behind them fixing their hair. They are getting ready for the dance. HENRI is not used to having her hair done up, and throughout the scene she moves her head and SARAH moves it back. There are posters that say "Votes for Women!" and "Say Yes to Women's Suffrage!" strewn across the room.

HENRI

Ouch! Do you have to pull so much?

SARAH

It wouldn't hurt if you'd just stay still.

HENRI

(muttering)

I am still.

SARAH

Oh, that's going to look lovely when you're done, Helen.

HELEN

Yes, I think it will.

ANNE
(wrenching her head around)

I want to see!

HELEN
Stay still! Goodness, you have been exceptionally excitable today.

ANNE
It was that suffrage meeting. It's gotten me all riled up.

SARAH
We had a pretty good turn-out, didn't we? I never knew there were so many of us here.

HENRI
And so many of them said that they would bring friends next time! Ouch!

SARAH
Did anyone get a proper headcount?

HELEN
I counted thirty-two near the end.

ANNE
And to think, a few weeks ago it was just us four.

HENRI
And there was no sign of that - I mean, of Emma peeking through the curtains, so I think we're safe.

HELEN
Until we hang these posters up, that is.

ANNE
No one will be able to prove it was us.

HENRI
Besides, the college administration should know what they're dealing with. This is a *women's* college, for goodness sakes, where they aim to educate *women*. I don't know about you, but I say what good is it to be taught how to think if you can't ever *do* anything?

ANNE
Hear, hear! Ouch!

SARAH

Still, we must prepare ourselves for a bit of chaos in the morning when they've found them - I think you're done, Henri.

ANNE

Am I done? Ouch!

HELEN

No, sit *still*.

SARAH

(handing Henri a looking glass)

Here, have a look.

HENRI

Well I must say, you've really performed a miracle on this mane of mine.

HELEN

You look lovely, Henri.

SARAH

You do. If Jack saw you now he'd be sorry that he chased you away.

HENRI

I - thank you.

HELEN

There, all finished.

ANNE

Thank goodness.

(taking the looking glass)

Oh, that's very nice. Thank you, Helen.

HELEN

You remember our arrangement?

ANNE

Of course. You do my hair and I'll let you wear my brooch. Shall we go get it now?

HELEN

Yes, let's.

ANNE

Now don't leave without us, girls! We want to help you hang up the posters!

(exit ANNE and HELEN)

SARAH

Yes, all right.

HENRI

I'm sorry I haven't got a brooch to lend you for fixing my hair.

SARAH

Oh, it's quite all right. I'll wear this brooch - and you can put on this necklace.

HENRI

Oh, Sarah I couldn't! It's too lovely!

SARAH

Nonsense, of course you can!

(she puts the necklace on HENRI)

My father gave it to my mother when they got engaged, and then my mother gave it to me this summer when I was calling on the sons of her friends with her. But I think it looks better on you. There. You look beautiful.

HENRI

Thank you. So do you, you know. Look beautiful.

SARAH

Dance with me.

HENRI

There's no music!

SARAH

I don't care.

HENRI

All right.

HENRI and SARAH waltz around the little room.

SARAH

It's much more fun dancing with you than with some silly old boy.

HENRI

And when have you danced with a boy?

SARAH

Over the summer. One of my mother's friends was showing off her latest purchase - a phonograph - and my mother insisted that I dance with her son to the music. Alexander, I think was his name. But it wasn't very much fun. He kept treading on my feet.

HENRI

Well I shall have to be very careful of your feet, then.

SARAH

Oh, Henri.

HENRI

And I shall have to be sure to commandeer your dance card as soon as we arrive, to make sure no one else might tread on your precious toes.

SARAH

All right. All but one, of course. I promised Emma I'd save a dance for her.

HENRI

You did?

(they stop dancing)

SARAH

Yes. I thought I'd told you that. She's really not so bad, Henri.

HENRI

Not so bad! You don't have to act with her every day!

SARAH

You haven't got to like her, but that doesn't give you any right to be mean to her.

HENRI

I'm not mean to her. I apologized to her, didn't I?

SARAH

Only when I insisted.

HENRI

Well, I didn't realize the two of you were quite so close. Perhaps you would have liked to go to the dance with her instead of me.

SARAH

That isn't what I said, Henri.

HENRI

Heaven forbid you should say what you mean. I can hardly get a straight answer out of you anymore.

SARAH

What on earth do you mean by that?

HENRI

I mean, I asked you ages ago if you'd like to get into politics with me after college, and you told me you would think about it. And every time I've brought it up since, you've avoid me.

SARAH

That's a big decision, Henri! I told you, I would think about it.

HENRI

I don't think you mean that. And now all of this business with Emma - it's almost as if you'd rather be her friend than mine.

SARAH

I did mean what I said. And hear me say this - you do not get to decide who I do and do not talk to, who I am and am not friends with, and who I do and do not dance with. All I ever hear you talk about anymore is that you want freedom - freedom to *do* what you want, freedom to *think* what you want. And when someone challenges anything that you do or think, you act as if they had absolutely no right to do so! I will not be told what to think and how to act.

HENRI

Are you becoming friends with her just to spite me?

SARAH

How dare you! Did you ever stop to think that perhaps it has nothing to do with you? I am friendly towards her because *I* believe in being kind to people. I am allowed my own feelings, aren't I?

HELEN and ANNE come into the room without knocking.

ANNE

We're back! Shall we hang these flyers so we can get to the dance?

HELEN

Anne and I were talking - we should split two and two, that way we can cover more ground.

SARAH

(grabbing a stack of flyers)

Perfect. I'll go with Anne.

ANNE

We thought you and Henri would -

SARAH

No. Come on, Anne. Helen, see that you close the door when you leave.

HELEN

All right.

ANNE

(from offstage)

Votes for women!

HELEN

Is she all right? Did something happen while we were away?

HENRI nods and then starts to cry.

ACT II

SCENE 1: HELEN and SARAH are seated in SARAH'S room.

HELEN

Honestly, Sarah. I don't see why the two of you can't make up already.

SARAH

I'm not going to stop being angry with her until she tells me she's sorry.

HELEN

You know how Henri is. She's not any good at apologizing.

SARAH

Well if she wants to continue to be my friend, she's going to have to change that.

HELEN

She's sorry, Sarah. I know she is. I just don't think she knows how to say it.

SARAH

How do you know?

HELEN

Have you seen her at all this week? She's been absolutely miserable! She even turned away dessert tonight at dinner, and I've never seen her do that before.

SARAH

It must be serious then.

HELEN

It's not funny, Sarah. She's been very upset. She's been up with Anne and I every night, crying and saying that she's worried you'll never forgive her-

SARAH

She said that?

HELEN

Yes. Although I don't think she would want you to know.

SARAH

Has she said anything else?

HELEN

She's worried that you don't love her anymore - I told her that was nonsense, but she wouldn't listen...

SARAH

Huh.

HELEN

I was right, wasn't I? You do want to be her friend again, don't you?

(beat)

Sarah, if you don't make up with her it will just break her heart.

(beat)

Does this have to do with Emma?

SARAH

What do you mean?

HELEN

It's just - well, I've come into some information. I know that Emma has a bit of a smash on you.

SARAH

She told you that?

HELEN

No, not exactly - she left her diary open on her desk! I went to close it for her, and I couldn't help but notice that she was going on about how thrilled she was that she got to dance with you and how she hoped that you would someday love her back. She's a bit of a sentimental fool if you ask me.

SARAH

She did ask me to the dance with her.

HELEN

Did she! I walked in on her crying a few weeks ago, and she said it was something about going to the dance with someone, but I didn't realize it was you. Still, I can't blame you for not wanting to go with her. Let me tell you, spending an evening with her is dismal.

SARAH

She's not all that bad.

HELEN

If you say so. Now don't get angry, Sarah - but Henri also told us that you had been spending time with Emma - you know, instead of her -

SARAH

How dare she! Let me set the record straight - Emma has nothing to do with why Henri and I are fighting. I'm angry with her because she can't stop telling me what to do. I admire her passion and her drive to no end, but sometimes her mouth runs away with her and she doesn't know when to stop, or when to apologize. And anyways, I've only been spending time with Emma because my other friends seem to have taken Henri's part.

HELEN

It's not like that, Sarah.

SARAH

Isn't it?

HELEN

No. She just seemed to need us more. I haven't seen you crying and moping around all week.

SARAH

Well you haven't been around, have you?

HELEN

I - suppose not. Sarah, I'm sorry.

They embrace. A knock at the door - HELEN answers.

HELEN

Hello Henri. Come on in.

(beat)

I suppose we should get ready for the meeting.

SARAH

Yes. I've set out pencil and paper for you, Helen, so that you can take notes.

They sit in silence. HELEN taps her pencil nervously and checks the time repeatedly.

*HENRI steals glances at SARAH, SARAH
pretends not to notice.*

HELEN
Anne isn't usually this late.
(a few beats)
Maybe I should go look for her.

SARAH
I'm sure she's just running behind, Helen.

HELEN
I don't know - I feel like I should go check. Perhaps she's
forgotten or something.

SARAH
If you must.

HELEN
I'll be back - soon.

*A few more beats of silence, until HENRI
can no longer stand it.*

HENRI
Sarah?
(beat)
I know you might not want to speak to me -

SARAH
No, I don't just yet.

HENRI
I suppose I expected as much. I just wanted to say that I
thought about what you said -

SARAH
Have you?

HENRI
Yes. And - you were right. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to tell you
what to do, and how to think. Of course you can be friends with
whoever you want. I'm not saying that I like Emma, but if you
do, I will be friendlier towards her. For your sake.

(beat)
I've missed you.

SARAH

Is that all?

HENRI

I suppose so, yes.

(beat)

I shouldn't have come tonight, Sarah. Helen and Anne can fill me in on the meeting.

(goes to leave, changes her mind)

It's just - the play is this weekend, and they've given us each a free ticket to give to a friend.

(she sets it on SARAH'S bed)

I'll just - leave it there. In case you want to come. I'll understand if you don't.

(exit)

SARAH

(picks up the ticket, deciding. Calls out the door)

Henri!

HENRI

(returning to the room)

Yes?

SARAH

Do you know, that is the first time I've ever heard you admit to being wrong?

HENRI

I - no.

SARAH

It may be the first time I've ever heard you sincerely apologize.

HENRI

What do you want, Sarah? For me to feel ashamed of myself? Believe me, I do - I've said the same and much worse to myself this past week.

SARAH

I know. I know you. I know you would be harsher to yourself than I ever would be.

HENRI

I've spent the whole week wishing it wasn't so. If you'd only talk to me - I wouldn't have minded insults, if only you would look at me again, and speak to me again.

SARAH

Oh, Henri - you must have known I would forgive you sometime. I can't stay angry with you for long.

HENRI

I didn't know for sure. Not this time.

SARAH

I've missed you too. It's difficult to get through the day without your dearest friend around. And you must know - even when I'm upset with you, I still love you more than anyone else in the world.

HENRI

I'm sorry that I let my mouth run away with me.

SARAH

Your conviction is one of the things I love about you, but I stand by what I said before. I will not be told what to do.

HENRI

I know. I promise not to tell you what to do. No one should have to abide that.

(a hug, or a kiss on the cheek - they have made up)

SARAH

I really did miss you, you know.

HENRI

Haven't you had Emma around to keep you company?

SARAH

Emma? She's come around a few times, but it isn't the same.

HENRI

I see.

SARAH

Please don't be like that Henri - I'm just trying to be nicer to her because when she came here to ask me to the dance, the poor

dear was nearly in tears because she felt like she has no friends.

HENRI

I know. She's just so - fussy.

SARAH

Henri.

HENRI

You at least must admit that.

SARAH

I know she's fussy, Henri, and I disagree with her politics, but I don't necessarily think that should make her an outcast. It's not easy for her.

HENRI

All right. You know, I think she knew we were fighting. Juliet has been very smug towards Romeo this week. I suppose that's why I thought the two of you -

SARAH

Henri - she could never replace you.

HENRI

I guess I knew that.

SARAH

Good. I hear you told Helen and Anne that I was spending time with her too?

HENRI

I'm sorry. I was upset and I told them you might be. Anne wanted to have suffrage club meetings without you, in case you were slipping her information, but I told her that was ridiculous and that you would never do such a thing.

SARAH

Well, I never!

HENRI

I know, you never! She saw reason eventually. We're going to have the meeting here, aren't we?

SARAH

Yes, I suppose so. Have you had other meetings without me?

HENRI

No, no. Helen and I put a stop to all that. Don't be angry with Anne, Sarah - you know her, she can be a bit silly sometimes.

SARAH

Mmm.

HELEN and ANNE come into the room without knocking.

HELEN

You'll never believe what happened to Anne! President Hunt -

ANNE

I'm not really supposed to talk about it.

HELEN

You can tell them, they're our friends.

SARAH

Good heavens, Anne, what happened? You're white as a sheet.

ANNE

I - I'm not supposed to tell you.

HENRI

Tell us what?

ANNE

What happened.

SARAH

Anne, what's going on?

ANNE

You can't tell that I told you, otherwise I'll really be in trouble.

HENRI

Of course! Now what is it?

ANNE

Helen found me on my way back from President Hunt's office. Someone tipped him off that I'd helped hang the posters, and he told me that if I had any further involvement with the suffrage movement, he'd have me expelled.

SARAH

He didn't!

HENRI

Anne, I'm so sorry. You must have been frightened.

ANNE

I was. And he asked me - who else was involved.

HELEN

(after a beat)

You didn't tell me that before.

HENRI

Did you say, Anne?

ANNE

(beat)

No. But - he wouldn't stop asking me who had helped put the posters up. And I didn't tell him but - he told me that I had one week to think about everything, and if I didn't give him names next time he called me in, he would take disciplinary action even if I haven't done anything else with the movement.

HELEN

Oh, Anne. You didn't have to take all of the blame yourself.

ANNE

I did. I didn't want to get you in trouble too. But next week - I don't know what I'll say. I can't get expelled!

SARAH

Of course not, Anne, we won't let that happen.

(after a beat)

Perhaps we should just stop. That way you can tell him that you put a stop to everything and it won't happen again.

HENRI

No! We can't stop now, we've done so much!

HELEN

You're going to let Anne take all of the blame? It wasn't even her idea - it was yours!

HENRI

Of course not. And I know it was my idea and I'm sorry that I've put you all at risk. But - I thought you understood what you

were getting yourselves into! Getting the vote isn't going to be easy - we're up against powerful men, and they're not just going to hand it to us.

ANNE

Henri - we are up against powerful men, and there's nothing we can do about that. We don't have any way to threaten them back -

HENRI

Yes we have! And we've already done it. President Hunt is treating us like a threat, isn't he? I say we show him that we are a threat.

HELEN

That's very inspiring, Henri, but we can't let Anne get into trouble for us.

HENRI

That isn't what I'm suggesting. What if - before Anne has to - what if we all turned ourselves in?

SARAH

Henri, we'd all be expelled for sure.

HENRI

I don't mean just us four, I mean all of us. Think about it - if we can get every single girl who supports suffrage to speak up, he can't expel all of us. That's over half the school!

SARAH

I suppose she has a point. The reaction to the posters was overwhelming. We've really gotten the campus talking. The girls are just buzzing with the news - I overheard a group of sophomores wondering aloud who hung them and wanting to help!

HENRI

That's exactly what I'm talking about!

SARAH

We're going to need plenty of help if we try and do something else.

HENRI

How about a suffrage march through the campus?

HELEN

Oh, no! We couldn't do that! We would certainly all get in trouble.

SARAH

Yes, I think that would be very risky.

HENRI

I think it could work if we've got enough people. Like I said before - they can't expel all of us and they can't punish Anne without punishing everyone else too.

HELEN

What if they do punish everyone, though? What if they throw us all out? What would our parents say?

HENRI

They can't possibly - not if we've got enough people.

HELEN

Yes, but can we really count on getting so many?

HENRI

I think we can. We had such a good turnout at the last meeting and everyone was so excited about the posters.

HELEN

That doesn't necessarily mean that they're willing to risk their necks marching with us.

HENRI

Well, the only way to find out is to ask. Shall we put it to a vote? Henri - aye. Sarah?

SARAH

I suppose I'm for it. Only if we can get enough other girls, though.

HENRI

Helen?

HELEN

I'm with Sarah. I think it's risky and we should only try if we have a clear and absolute majority.

HENRI

Anne?

ANNE

I'll have to think about it. I'm sorry, Henri - I don't want to get expelled. President Hunt could blame me for the whole march.

HENRI

I know, Anne - but you've got to stand up to him.

HELEN

Don't tell her what to do, Henri.

HENRI

I'm just saying - that he threatened her, and now we have to threaten back. And look - if we get in trouble -

HELEN

When, you mean -

HENRI

-if we get in trouble, I will step up and take the blame. It was my idea, and I'm sorry you're the one who got called in.

ANNE

I'll think about it.

(beat)

It would really show him, wouldn't it?

HENRI

Yes! That's the spirit!

ANNE

That isn't a yes, Henri - I'd like to, but I'm worried. I'll let you know.

HENRI

All right. I'll start organizing the other girls - so we can see how many we have.

HELEN

Part of me hopes we do get enough girls behind us - I would just love to see Emma's face when she saw us marching! You all should have seen her when she got back from the dance. She was already sour about something before she even got there -

ANNE

Isn't she always.

HELEN

Yes, well she was about to pop over the posters - it was all I could do not to tell her that I'd helped put them up!

ANNE

I bet her face was just prime! And I should tell you - on my way out of the administration building, I overheard Miss Williams talking to Miss Marley - apparently President Hunt called a meeting with all of the faculty members and nearly exploded from rage!

HENRI

Just think how he'll look if we march! I hope you decide to do it, Anne - it would really be a slap in his face!

HELEN

In the meantime, you've had a rough day, and we should get you to bed.

ANNE

I suppose so, yes - I'm still a bit shaky from earlier, and it'd be good to go lie down.

HELEN

Unless there's anything else, we'll see you tomorrow. Let us know when you have those numbers, Henri.

(They exit.)

SARAH

Do you really think it's a good idea, Henri? To march through the campus like that?

HENRI

Of course I do! It's not just us demonstrating for the right to vote - it's us demanding the right to be heard at this college! Because the exact same thing is happening, Sarah - a group of men in the college administration is making decisions about what we women are and are not allowed to do!

SARAH

Yes, I know that, and I agree with the purpose of the march completely, I just worry about you taking all of the blame if it comes down to it.

HENRI

I have to, Sarah. I can't let Anne take the fall when it was my idea. I don't want her - or you, or Helen - to be punished for something I started.

SARAH

That's noble of you, but if you're serious about not getting married-

HENRI

I certainly am! Mr. Jack Obler has seen to that.

SARAH

-then you really can't afford to jeopardize your education! If you are to support yourself, you will need to have finished college.

HENRI

I have thought on that, yes.

SARAH

And you still want to go through with it?

HENRI

How can I ask others to do something that I am not willing to do myself?

SARAH

It's different, Henri - most of them will someday have husbands to take care of them, but if you do as you say you will and never marry -

HENRI

I can't marry, Sarah. I simply cannot do it. But I also can't stand by and ask my rights to be won for me. Don't you see? This is what I want to do with my life - I want to change the way that women are treated, in school and everywhere else. We should be taken seriously here! They have helped to teach us how to think, and now they must listen when we have something to say!

SARAH

You're so brave, Henri. I have always admired that about you. I just hope it doesn't get you into trouble.

SCENE 2: EMMA and SARAH in SARAH'S room.

SARAH

I don't understand what you're so upset about. I thought you'd be happy that I'm not moping around anymore.

EMMA

Of course I am. It's just - ever since you and Henri have made up, I hardly see you anymore.

SARAH

That's not true. You're seeing me now, aren't you?

EMMA

Yes - that isn't what I meant. I thought the two of us were really becoming friends.

SARAH

Of course we are!

EMMA

But - you spend all of your time with Henri now.

SARAH

Just because I spend time with Henri doesn't mean that I can't also find time to spend with you.

EMMA

I suppose so. Are you coming to see the play tomorrow?

SARAH

Certainly! I wouldn't miss it. Henri has been telling me about it since - but of course, I'm coming to see you too.

EMMA

I see.

SARAH

How's it going? Is it all going to be ready for the big night?

EMMA

Yes - I really adore my costume. I look quite nice in it if I may say so myself.

SARAH

I'm sure you do.

EMMA

Henri looks just like a boy in hers.

SARAH

Does she?

EMMA

Yes. Although I suppose that's the point.

SARAH

Well, she's a very convincing Romeo. I've been helping her practice - hopefully she's got all her lines right now?

EMMA

I - yes. You've still been helping her?

SARAH

Just running through lines and things. I keep telling her that she knows them all, but she's informed me that it's important to go over them every day. And anyways, what do I know about acting?

EMMA

I see.

SARAH

I'm so excited to see it tomorrow.

EMMA

Yes - perhaps we could do something after.

SARAH

Ah - I've already promised Henri that I'd be with her after the show.

(beat)

You'd be welcome to join us, of course.

EMMA

Yes, all right. Sarah - you weren't just pretending to be my friend to get back at Henri, were you? I know she's never been crazy about me -

SARAH

Emma, no! How can you say that? I'm your friend because I enjoy spending time with you.

EMMA

All right. It's just - I thought maybe you became my friend because you didn't have anyone else, not because you actually like me.

SARAH

That's not true at all. Emma - come spend the evening with Henri and I after the show tomorrow. I see no reason why we can't all celebrate together.

EMMA

Have you asked Henri if that's all right?

SARAH

I don't need to ask her. I'm friends with both of you and that's that.

SCENE 3: SARAH'S room, empty. People are excited in the corridor outside. It is the night of the play. The door bursts open, HENRI and SARAH come into the room holding hands, giddy with laughter. HENRI is still in her costume from the play.

SARAH

You were just wonderful up there!

HENRI

Why, thank you kind lady.

(kisses SARAH'S hand)

SARAH

Honestly! You really are a rogue.

HENRI

I shall take that as a compliment.

SARAH

I do see why they gave you Romeo, though. I don't think anyone else could have done it as well as you did.

HENRI

You're flattering me.

SARAH

Perhaps. I must say I was a bit jealous of your Juliet.

HENRI

You needn't have been.

SARAH

Oh?

HENRI

I could see you sitting in the front row - it was much easier to say my lines to you than to Emma.

SARAH

Stop it, you're making me blush.

HENRI

I do apologize.

(she recites)

"If I profane with my unworhiest hand
This holy shrine, the gentle fine is this:
My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss."

(to everyone's surprise, SARAH kisses her).

Oh!

SARAH

I'm sorry. I don't know what came over me.

HENRI

It's alright. Caught up in the moment, I suppose.

SARAH

Yes. As Juliet.

HENRI

And with me as your Romeo.

SARAH

Yes, I suppose that was it.

HENRI

(after a beat)

Sarah? I thought you had kissed plenty of your friends before.

SARAH

Yes, I have. Just not quite like that.

HENRI

Oh.

SARAH

Henri? You don't suppose there's anything wrong with me, do you?
Anything - unnatural?

HENRI

No, Sarah! Besides, it was you who has always told me how good and pure and *natural* women's friendships are. Certainly there is nothing unnatural about you.

SARAH

Yes, I know that's what I have said in the past, but now - I don't know.

HENRI

You don't know! Sarah, there's no need for that. You are the kindest, warmest, most wonderful person that I know. I am exceptionally fortunate to be your friend. It is simply not possible that there is anything wrong with you, or anything unnatural about you. If one of us is unnatural, it is me.

SARAH

Henri! How can you say that! Of course that isn't true.

HENRI

I've become increasingly worried that it is true. I ran away from the only beau I've ever had and I'd much rather spend my time with you than with any boy. For as long as I can remember I've been looking for a way around getting married - and now that I've found one I've tried to convince you to do the same. I'm sorry, Sarah, I never meant to make you unnatural too.

SARAH

But Henri - I kissed you. Not the other way around.

HENRI

I suppose that's true. But the fact remains - that I have wanted to kiss you like that for some time now.

SARAH

Oh?

HENRI

Yes.

(*she does*)

A note on these kisses: they are less innocent than what we have seen before, that is, the little pecks on the cheek that they exchange, but they are not at all scandalous by modern standards. They are slightly longer than a peck on the lips - romantic and sensual, but not overtly sexual by any means.

At this moment, EMMA, excited, with an armful of flowers, throws the door open.

EMMA

Sarah, I - Oh!

HENRI

You! What are you doing here!

EMMA

I - Sarah invited me.

SARAH

I'd - forgotten.

EMMA

Yes, I realize. I don't know why I even - clearly you weren't at the play to see me.

SARAH

I - of course I was. I was there to see everyone in the play. You did a lovely job.

EMMA

Not that I would ever - ever want you to come for me now, now that I know that the two of you - do you have any idea how sick, how disgusting -

HENRI

Don't you dare call her those things!

EMMA

You just wait! I'm going straight to President Hunt to tell him what I saw - he'll have you thrown out of here, and locked away!

SARAH

Emma, wait!

EMMA

Don't - touch me.

SARAH

I - all right. You're overreacting. Plenty of girls kiss their friends. You've kissed Henri too.

EMMA

That - was different. That was for a play. And besides, I didn't want to kiss her.

HENRI

I suppose she wouldn't know that girls kiss each other because she hasn't got any friends.

EMMA

How dare you!

SARAH

Henri.

HENRI

It's the truth. You're just jealous.

EMMA

Jealous? That's absurd.

HENRI

Honestly. You were thrilled when we were fighting - I suppose you thought you could come between us. And I saw how happy you were when you got to dance with her all night - it's no secret that you've got a smash on Sarah.

EMMA

I have not! Just because you're unnatural doesn't mean that I am-

HENRI

You love her exactly like I do, and you're upset that she picked me.

EMMA

That's a lie - Sarah, tell her -

SARAH

Henri, please calm down -

EMMA

See, Sarah? I told you that you should have been my friend instead of hers. I would never tell you what to do - or shout at you -

HENRI

You wouldn't know how to treat a friend if you had one!

EMMA

I've treated Sarah perfectly well this year! You think I don't know what you've been up to - with your suffrage club meetings and putting posters up all over the college. I know who's behind it! And even when I saw you hanging flyers - I didn't tell on you, did I?

SARAH

But you told on Anne.

(beat)

Emma? You did, didn't you?

EMMA

President Hunt dragged me into his office and told me that if I didn't tell him who was behind it, he would have to assume that I was involved. And I'd seen you and Anne hanging posters on my way to the dance - but I couldn't turn you in to him, Sarah.

HENRI

So you turned in Anne? She nearly got expelled for that, you know.

EMMA

I suppose I could have turned you in instead. I didn't see you hanging the posters, but I know you did. And I'm sure President Hunt would have believed me.

HENRI

Tell him! See if I care! He'll know soon enough.

EMMA

What do you mean?

SARAH

Henri.

HENRI

What do I care if she knows? We'll all be making ourselves known tomorrow. We're marching, Emma - and there's nothing you or anyone else can do to stop us.

EMMA

Marching? Here?

HENRI

Yes. It's time that we make our voices heard.

EMMA

Sarah - not you too?

SARAH

Yes, me too. I'm with Henri on this - I believe that women should have the right to be heard, no matter what the administration says. And you shouldn't have done what you did to Anne.

HENRI

So go - tell President Hunt about me and Sarah and anyone else you want, but we'll be turning ourselves in soon enough.

EMMA

Not for this, though. Not for what I've just seen you doing.

SARAH

Emma - please. Girls kiss their friends all the time.

EMMA

Like that?

(beat)

That's what I thought.

SARAH

Emma, please - we're friends -

EMMA

No, you were my friend out of convenience. Henri was right about that, even if I didn't want to believe it.

SARAH

That's -

EMMA

-true, is what it is. But - I won't tell President Hunt, Sarah.

SARAH

What?

EMMA

I care for you very much, even if you don't return the affection. I'd never hurt you. I don't think I could. And I am sorry about Anne - I didn't know that he'd threaten to expel her. What is that look for?

HENRI

Nothing. I'm just surprised, is all.

EMMA

Surprised by what, Henri? That I have an ounce of decency in me? Sometimes I envy you - growing up as a doctor's daughter isn't as easy as everyone here seems to think. I thought I understood the world - and my place in it - and then I got here, and people had all of these ideas that I'd never heard of before, or had only heard as whispers through cracks in floorboards. I am being told what to think and how to feel from all sides and - it's difficult when what I think doesn't quite match up with how I feel. I'm sure you can understand that.

They are interrupted by ANNE and HELEN.

HELEN

What are you doing here?

EMMA

I was just leaving. I just wanted you to know - I'm not the monster you seem to think I am.

She goes to Sarah and gives her a kiss on the cheek. This is the first and only time that she shows physical affection during the play. Exit.

HELEN

What was that about? Was she bothering you?

HENRI

No. We were just - talking.

ANNE

What an obnoxious girl. I'm sorry you've got to live with her, Helen.

HENRI

She's not - she's all right.

HELEN

How can you say that? After all of the whining you did to me about having to kiss her! And you know something else? She's been very smug recently any time anyone mentions women's suffrage - I'm beginning to think she was the one who turned Anne in.

ANNE

Yes, we've heard your theory, but I told you - she couldn't have seen me without seeing Sarah as well and she certainly would have told on both of us. Anyways, that's not why we came up here - we wanted to tell you what a wonderful job you did in the play tonight, Henri.

HELEN

You were brilliant! I'm sorry, I didn't mean to dampen the mood. Your swordfight with Tybalt was thrilling!

HENRI

Thank you.

ANNE

And when you gave your speech in the balcony scene I think all of the girls in the audience swooned.

HELEN

I know I did!

ANNE

Although men don't actually talk like that - at least, Christopher certainly doesn't.

HELEN

Well, of course not, silly. If you want love sonnets you turn to your friends not to your beau. Isn't that right girls?

SARAH

Yes, I suppose so. Can I get anyone anything? I've been a terrible hostess having all of you in my room without offering anyone something to drink. Some tea, perhaps.

ANNE

I'm fine, thank you - we really did just want to stop by and congratulate you, Henri. But by the way - do you happen to have the numbers for the march tomorrow? Of how many girls said they would be coming, I mean.

HENRI

I - well, it's hard to say.

ANNE

How's that?

HENRI

It's just - everyone seems interested and willing if there are a lot of other girls. So if everyone shows up, we'll have loads of people. But if everyone is waiting to hear that everyone else is doing it -

HELEN

-then no one will show up. That's what you're saying, isn't it? And there's no way of knowing.

HENRI

Yes, but if everyone comes out - and if we take the lead on that, then -

ANNE

I can't do it, Henri. I'm sorry, but I need more assurance than that.

HENRI

But - you can't quit now. We're so close to really having an impact! And just a few weeks ago we had to quiet you because you were carousing through the corridors shouting "votes for women"!

ANNE

Yes - I know, but that was different.

HENRI

How? That was no different -

ANNE

It's different because it was fun and exciting then. It was exhilarating to do things in secret, to sneak around giggling when we nearly escaped getting caught. But then - when I was in President Hunt's office, I realized that this is not some

children's game we're playing - what we're doing has real consequences.

HENRI

That's what it was to you before? A game?

ANNE

I - it sounds awful when you say it like that. I agree with your politics and all, but I can't risk getting expelled.

HELEN

Anne's right. She can make her own decision on this, so don't try to tell her what to do. And - I'm sorry too, Henri, but I don't think I'll be marching either. I'm trying to stay on as a teacher after I graduate, and the covert things we did were fine but I don't think I'll be likely to get hired if I'm seen tramping around the grounds waving banners for women's suffrage. Besides, if everyone else you asked turns up, you won't miss the two of us.

HENRI

And what if everyone thinks like that? That other people are going to marches and working for their rights so they don't have to? Nothing would ever get done! We need people to be brave - we need people to step up and be leaders!

ANNE

I'm sorry, Henri. I just can't do it.

HELEN

I'm sorry too, but what you're asking everyone to do just isn't practical. You're not marching, are you, Sarah?

SARAH

Yes, I am.

HELEN

I think you're crazy.

SARAH

Perhaps. Or - perhaps - courageous.

SCENE 4: The next day. Sarah and Henri sitting in Sarah's room, in the same clothes as before. They haven't slept. Silence.

HENRI

Do you think anyone's down there?

SARAH

I don't know.

(a beat)

It doesn't sound like there's a big group getting ready to march. I'm sorry, Henri.

HENRI

I suppose you're right.

(beat)

Sarah?

SARAH

Mmm?

HENRI

Are you angry with me?

SARAH

About what?

HENRI

About last night - about - you know -

SARAH

No, Henri.

HENRI

Sarah, I'm sorry. I've been meaning to tell you for ages now.

SARAH

What are you talking about?

HENRI

It's just that - I've known for a long time, I suppose. That I love my friends more than perhaps I should. And that I've never really wanted to get married. When we met - I knew you had a smash on me, and I should have put a stop to it then, but I didn't. I realized at the end of last year that I couldn't - that I had to do something about it, because otherwise I might end up hurting you. That's why I didn't write to you all summer - I was trying to make you forget about me so that this would never happen. And when I came to see you at the beginning of the year, I meant to tell you that I couldn't be your friend

anymore, but then you opened the door and you were so radiant and just so thrilled to see me that I knew I couldn't do it. And this year - I've just gotten carried away, allowing myself to think that you love me as I love you. And - there have been so many times that I could have gotten up and walked out of your life, and I selfishly haven't. I feel like I'm mayhem with legs, getting all of my friends into trouble - first Anne, and now this - I don't think you should be around me anymore. I'm not good for you.

(she gets up to leave)

SARAH

Henri, wait -

HENRI

No, Sarah -

SARAH

Henri, please -

HENRI

It's what's best -

SARAH

Henrietta!

(beat)

I'm sorry. I know you don't like to be called that. But Henri - I don't want you out of my life. If that's what you want, then I suppose I understand, but please don't go because you think it's what's best for me.

HENRI

I'm just - afraid that I'll make you like me.

SARAH

Henri, you are the bravest, strongest, most wonderful person that I know. It is not an insult to be like you.

HENRI

That wasn't what I meant.

SARAH

I know, Henri. And it is sweet of you to try and protect me this way, but you have not made me any different from the way that I have always been. How you have loved me has not dictated how I have loved you, and whether it's natural or not, I love you more than anyone else.

HENRI

Oh. But I thought - you wanted to get married, and -

SARAH

I only wanted to get married because I thought I had no other option. And then I met you. You were full of ideas that I'd never dared to think before - women living together, fighting for our rights instead of getting married, saying what they really think instead of what they've been told to think - and I knew that I wanted to be your friend, and that I had to be around you. I'd like to be around you for the rest of my life.

HENRI

Sarah - do you mean that?

SARAH

Yes, I do. I've been thinking about it ever since you first asked me, and Henri - it has never been that I didn't want to, it has only been that I haven't been brave enough.

HENRI

That's wonderful!

(they go to embrace, HENRI pulls back)

SARAH

What's the matter?

HENRI

Do you think there's something - you know, wrong with us?

SARAH

I don't know. Do you think so?

HENRI

No. Perhaps. I'm not sure.

SARAH

I do know this - if I could marry you, I would.

HENRI

Sarah, don't say that!

SARAH

Why on earth not? How is that any different from what you spoke of - living together and doing political work?

HENRI
It is, somehow.

SARAH
How, exactly?

HENRI
I don't know - Sarah - what if there's something wrong with the way we love each other?

SARAH
How could there be?

*Silence while this sinks in. And then,
cheers from a small crowd below.*

HENRI
What's that?

SARAH
I don't know - you don't suppose -

HENRI
(rushes to the window)
Yes, it is! It's not a big group, but they've started marching!
And - come see, Sarah, girls are joining in as they go!

SARAH
That's wonderful!

HENRI
We've got to get down there.

SARAH
Yes - let's go. And Henri - no matter what happens down there,
we'll take it in stride, together.

HENRI
We will.
(she offers her hand)
Ready?

SARAH
(taking HENRI'S hand)
Ready.

*They exit as a pair, steady, determined,
defiant. BLACKOUT.*

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Research Process

The research for my play was divided into three major categories: I looked at female romantic friendship at the turn of the 20th century, college life for women around 1900, and the ways in which female-female romantic relationships have been previously represented on the stage. I used both Goucher's physical and online collections to access these resources, and the materials that Goucher did not own I was able to access through the Interlibrary Loan system. Additionally, Goucher's archives have proven to be an invaluable resource for this project. I was able to use primary sources such as yearbooks and scrapbooks to delve into my research about life at a women's college. I found a multitude of details that have helped to provide the play with the appropriate historical texture. While I was primarily focused on learning about daily life, I was pleasantly surprised when I stumbled upon mentions of romantic friendships between students. I learned the importance of reading and analyzing primary sources thoroughly and carefully. Since, unlike secondary sources, they rarely include indexes, discoveries are made by examining the source in total instead of immediately flipping to the relevant section. Therefore, finding highly pertinent information becomes all the more rewarding.

Furthermore, I learned how to synthesize factual information and creative impulses and to strike an appropriate balance between historical accuracy and artistic license. I found multiple (and occasionally contradictory) arguments about the emerging queer consciousness of the early 20th century and all of them informed my characters' perceptions of female romantic friendship. I evaluated the differing points of view for evidentiary accuracy and bias and I reached the conclusion that perhaps there are differing theories because there was more than one way of perceiving female-female love at the time. These variations are represented throughout the play.