

comment about mating?

Rita. Oh. No.

Peter. You don't like kids?

Rita. No, I love them.

Peter. But you don't want to have them?

Rita. No, I don't, but ...

Peter. Why not?

Rita. I just don't.

Peter. Your career?

Rita. What career? No, I think kids are great, I just don't think it's fair to raise them in the world. The way it is now.

Peter. Where else are you going to raise them? We're here.

Rita. I know, but ...

Peter. It's like what you were saying about the Socialists.

(Rita hesitates.)

Say.

Rita. Like ... the woman in *The White Hotel*. People really do struggle their whole lives just to die in lime pits—kids taken from their parents and stuck in cages. Women go blind from watching their children being murdered.

Peter. Not in this country they don't.

Rita. No, they get shot in their own back yard by cops who get off scot free. And even—not that it's the same—but what you went through with your family, being passed from one parent to another like an unwanted stocking stuffer or something—

Peter. I survived... (Pause.)

Rita. I'll be lying in bed at night and I'll look at the light in the room and suddenly see it all just go up in a blinding flash, in flames, and I'm



Side 1 page 2 (as herself)

the only one left alive ... I can't look at you sitting there without
imagining you ... dying ... bursting into flames ...

Peter. No wonder you can't sleep.

Rita. The world's a really terrible place. It's too precarious. *(Pause.)*

You want kids, obviously. I wish I could say I did.

Peter. It's okay.

Rita. What's your dirtiest fantasy?

Peter. Excuse me? No, I thought you just said what's my dirtiest fantasy.

Rita. What?

Peter. No, I can't—

Rita. Yes, you can. Please?

Peter. I'm sorry, I can't. What's yours, though? I'd be curious.

Rita. *(overlapping)* I asked you first. Come on.

Peter. Oh god.

Rita. Please.

Peter. Well, they change.

Rita. Sure. What's one?

Peter. One?

Rita. Uh-huh.

Peter. Well ... One?

Rita. Uh-huh.

Peter. Might be that someone ... you know—

Rita. Uh-huh.

Peter. —who might just happen to be around the apartment—

Rita. Uh-huh.

Peter. Uh-huh, uh-huh. Might ... sort of just, you know, spontaneously
start crawling across the floor—

Rita. Uh-huh.



Rita side 3 (as old man)

(Beat.)

Rita. I wanted it, that's all. That's all I know. I'm not hiding anything from you; I don't know any more than that. I started out to take a walk. To just try and get as far away from me as I possibly could, I didn't care. I took the first bus I saw at Port Authority: "Englewood Cliffs." It sounded romantic enough.

Old Man. Englewood?

Rita. Yeah. I got off at the first street corner; dogs came up to play. And what's this? A wedding. Young people starting a life. I had some champagne, nobody bothered me. What did it matter what I did? I wished to god I were that young bridegroom starting out. Or the bride, for that matter. Look at the shine in those eyes.

Old Man. You're kidding. I was freaked from the moment I woke up.

Rita. Yeah?

Old Man. I was terrified.

Rita. No, I thought to myself, If I could shine like the light of that girl over there, I'd never take another drink, I'd let my liver hang on another decade, stay out of the sun, eat right. This time I would floss.

Old Man. I remember now. It was you. Oh god, it was your eyes shining back. And you kissed me and, let me be over there, please, let me skip to the end of all this hard part. I wanted to be you. For one second of one day, what would it be like to just be. And—

Rita. Yes.

Old Man. —not be afraid.

(They begin to overlap one another ever so slightly.)

Rita side 2 page 1 (as Old Man)

40.

Rita. Oh, it's so beautiful, isn't it? It's great to be alive. And young.

There will never be a more perfect night. Or a better chance for two people to love each other. If they don't try so hard. *(Beat.)* I remembered the recipe for Long Island Ice Tea. White rum, vodka—

Peter. You don't have to prove anything to me, Rita. *(Pause.)* You know...I was thinking about you growing up. What—like, what was it like having surgeons for parents?

Rita. Oh...well, it was nice. I always thought, they help people.

Peter. What about your brothers and sisters? How did they feel about it?

Rita. You'd have to ask them.

Peter. *(to us)* Nobody's memory is that bad! Or was she toying with me? That wasn't like her at all. Unless something was terribly, terribly wrong.

Rita. Peter? Make love to me.

Peter. Here?

Rita. No one'll see. I want to have your baby ... I want your baby inside me.

Peter. You don't know how that makes me feel.

Rita. Yes I do.

Peter. You don't want babies, don't you remember? You've read Freud's case histories and your parents are dentists, not surgeons. You don't have brothers and sisters.

Rita. Why are you telling me all this? ...

Peter. What, you were teasing me?

Rita. Of course I was teasing you. Did you think I didn't know those things? ... Sweetie?

Peter. You never call me that or "puppy-puppy," you never say "Don't be a silly" or "Bring home the bacon" or pull the skin off your