

hall. Hooker enters in a huff about the dance hall girls leaving, and he won't accept Sue Jack's apology. He calls her a "bad luck charm" and tells her to go.

To use as a monologue, omit Hooker's line.

SUE JACK: I'm not the same as I was, Reed. Go on and look at me. You see, I'm not the same. I'm not the same one who kept on hurting you by drinking, and brawling and gambling it all away. And I'm not the young, laughing girl you married with the rosy cheeks and pretty hands. I guess I'm not sure who I am. And, I tell you, it's been making me feel so strange. When I was in prison, the only being longing I had was this old photograph of myself that was taken just before I ran off from home. In it I'm wearing this straw hat decorated with violets and my hair's swept back in a braid and my eyes, they're just . . . shining . . . I used to take out that picture and look at it. I kept on pondering over it. I swear it confused me so much, wondering where she was—that girl in the picture. I could not imagine where she'd departed to—so unknowingly, so unexpectedly. (*a pause*) Look, I won't drink or yell or fight or shoot pool or bet the roosters or—

HOOKER: Yeah, yeah, and I guess I've heard all that till it's frayed at the edges.

SUE JACK: Please, I don't wanna lose any more. I'm through throwing everything away with both fists.

## The Altruists

BY NICKY SILVER

Sydney is in the middle of a rant at Ethan. She is in her apartment, dressed "chicly in a pink Richard Tyler suit," addressing Ethan who is under the covers in bed, perhaps asleep, perhaps not. Sydney, a successful soap opera actress, is "thirty-four, high-strung, shallow, and utterly self-absorbed." She is tired of Ethan's derision and disdain because she is not involved in social causes like he is and doesn't wear tattered East Village clothing. She is also tired of his friends stealing her belongings, and of his drunkenness and affairs with other women. The only positives on her list are Ethan's looks and sexual prowess ("you have beautiful eyes and the stamina of a ten-year-old").

SYDNEY: Was I hurt when you threw my plants out the window!? I was. I cared for those plants! I loved them! I watered them and loved them since they were seeds! They were like my children! But they were, after all, just plants. And, as you pointed out, you didn't hit anyone, you didn't kill anyone when you hurled the pots, the terra-cotta pots from the fifteenth floor! And you were drunk or high on some substance, purchased, no doubt with money taken from MY purse! So I released. I HAVE BEEN HEROIC! Only a heroine, only a mythic figure, could overcome the scolds and the scandals—when you told everyone we knew, my friends, my family,

MY THERAPIST, whom you had no business talking to in the first place—when you told everyone in New York City that I gave you syphilis, when we both know, we know without a doubt that Maria Portnoy gave you syphilis during that demonstration—and you in turn gave it to me! THAT WAS NOT FUNNY! I made allowances because every now and then, once a week, once a month, once in a blue moon, you made love to me and I saw fireworks, I heard orchestras! You made love to me and I remembered the beginning, when we made love nonstop, like Olympians! I put up with everything, I entered your world of East Village, Alphabet City, anti-trend-trendies, of sit-ins and marches and protests, because it felt good to have you inside of me! But no more! NO MORE, ETHAN! I'M A PERSON! I HAVE FEELINGS! I HAVE A BREAKING POINT AND I HAVE REACHED IT! Maybe I expect too much. Maybe I do. Maybe I'm looking for perfection. No man's perfect—BUT SOME ARE BETTER! And I have had it! LAST NIGHT WAS IT! When you refused to hold me, when you muttered some other name in your sleep, when you tried to kill me, when you held a pillow over my face, in an ugly, violent attempt to snuff out my life, I REALIZED . . . THINGS ARE NOT GOING WELL!

# The Nina Variations

BY STEVEN DIETZ

## SCENE 39

In *The Nina Variations* Steven Dietz has reimagined the last scene in Anton Chekhov's *The Seagull*. In fact, he has reimagined it forty-three different ways.

Treplev loved Nina and dreamt of writing great plays for her to star in, but she ran off with another man who eventually abandoned her. Years later, she visits Treplev in his study (where he has been trying to write), the place where they shared so many youthful dreams. She tells him of her unhappy life and her minor acting career, then leaves when he implores her to stay with him. He then kills himself.

In this monologue, in one of Dietz' versions of the how the last encounter between Nina and Treplev *might* have gone, Nina tells Treplev (also called Konstantin) about a terrible dream she had.

NINA: I dreamt you killed yourself and no one would tell me. I asked them—I asked your mother and Masha and Dorn, everyone—and they all said you'd gone away. That you'd returned to the city. That you were working on a new play. Why would I dream that? (She looks at him. He looks at her; but says nothing.) And, in fact, when I returned to the city, I saw your name on a marquee. A new