Sylvia, Richard, Clarke

ACT TWO

Lights rise on the same tableau as the end of Act One. Richard stands in the foyer, gun pointed at Sylvia. The door is still open. Wind blows, birds chirp. It's the shock of their lives.

SYLVIA. William?

RICHARD. *(Lowers his gun and drops his murderous disposition.)* Sylvia?

Richard slams the door shut.

Sylvia screams!

Everyone else in the house screams!

Richard screams! He aims his gun every which way.

The dialogue between Richard and Sylvia should be kept as secretive as possible to prevent the others from overhearing.

SYLVIA. But you're dead!

RICHARD. Is it really you?

SYLVIA. I could ask the same of you!

RICHARD. You look beautiful.

CLARKE. *(Calling from off.)* Be warned you criminal, I'm calling the constable!

Richard rearms himself. Sylvia swiftly moves back and forth between the bottom of the staircase and Richard.

SYLVIA. *(Calling off.)* No Clarke, don't!

CLARKE. *(Calling from off.)* Don't?

SYLVIA. *(Calling off.)* Please don't!

CLARKE. *(Calling from off.)* You screamed!

SYLVIA. *(Whispered to Richard.)* Are you going to kill me?

RICHARD. *(Whispered.)* Heavens no!

SYLVIA. *(Calling off.)* I'm fine!

CLARKE. *(Calling from off.)* Fine?

RICHARD. *(Whispered.)* Who's that?

SYLVIA. *(Whispered.)* My husband.

RICHARD. *(Whispered.)* I see.

CLARKE. *(Calling from off.)* I'm coming down!

SYLVIA. *(Calling off.)* No! No Clarke! Not yet. I'll let you know!

CLARKE. *(Calling from off.)* Well alright then, Sylvie, but let this be a warning!...

Beat.

SYLVIA. *(Calling off.)* Is that it dear? Was that the warning?

CLARKE. *(Calling from off.)* Right then.

Their dialogue continues hushed.

RICHARD. Is your husband *hiding* upstairs?

SYLVIA. Well, now you know he's there so I suppose he's done a poor job of it—can this be true? William Pierce? I was only just now talking of you! It's as if the universe heard me.

RICHARD. How grand!

SYLVIA. I thought I'd lost you forever!

RICHARD. And I you.

SYLVIA. How'd you find me?

RICHARD. I didn't.

SYLVIA. What?

RICHARD. I mean I'm not looking for you.

SYLVIA. But you've found me.

RICHARD. Thank God!

SYLVIA. Well if you're not here to find me, whatever are you doing here?

RICHARD. *(Remembering his mission—returning to his hunt.)* My wife has left me for another man and I've come to find him.

SYLVIA. *(Not hushed.)* You're Richard!

RICHARD. *(A gentle confession.)* It's my pseudonym.

He's back to the hunt.

SYLVIA. You're married to Dierdre!

RICHARD. *(Genuine surprise.)* You know her?

SYLVIA. Yes.

RICHARD. *(Pathetically emotional, despite unconsciously pointing the gun toward Sylvia.)* She's decided to leave me.

SYLVIA. Would you mind terribly putting your gun down while we determine why any woman would decide to leave you?

RICHARD. *(Politely.)* Oh! Sorry. Of course.

He sets his gun down.

SYLVIA. There now. A breath of relief.

They breathe in unison. Dialogue resumes hushed.

RICHARD. This is a lovely cottage.

SYLVIA. It belongs to my mother-in-law.

RICHARD. *(Sincere.)* I didn't mean to frighten you, Sylvie. Lord knows, in a million years, I never thought I'd find you here. God. You look ravishing.

SYLVIA. *(Flattered.)* Thanks. *(Back on task.)* But, that's quite besides the point. *(With joy.)* William, you're alive?!

RICHARD. I am!

SYLVIA. *(With despair.)* But your wife says…

RICHARD. *(Interrupting.)* Ex-wife.

SYLVIA. Most people do choose to divorce murderers, darling.

RICHARD. *(Confused.)* Murderers?

SYLVIA. I never would have thought it, William. You were always gentle as a lamb.

RICHARD. *(Hurt.)* But you can't think I've actually killed anyone?

SYLVIA. Haven't you?

RICHARD. *(Offended.)* Sylvie!

SYLVIA. Dierdre says there's a bloke buried in your back porch steps!

RICHARD. *(A realization.)* She really is gullible isn't she?

SYLVIA. And Gavin at the local pub?

RICHARD. *(A decision to explain.)* My ex-wife is a bit of a free spirit, Sylvia. I thought—

SYLVIA. What?