

Housewife '52

a mental exploration

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Book & Lyrics

John Wuchte

Music

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CHARACTERS

HOUSEWIVES

- Judy** She's lonely. Nearly invisible to her husband. She confides all her secrets to the laundry. She's about to crack.
- Dorothy** The perfect housewife. Believes in the role of husband and wife. Married the longest. Refuses to see the truth...until today.
- Nancy** The newlywed. She loves her husband but something is missing. She has a dream...and wonders if she made a big mistake.
- Helen** The youngest and newest to the cul-de-sac. A widow. Unwittingly about to be caught in a compromising position.

HUSBANDS

- Harold (Judy)** Typical dismissive 50s husband. Refuses to accept his wife is in trouble. Until the party.
- Raymond (Dorothy)** Perfect husband to perfect wife. But has a wandering eye. It wandered to Helen.
- Arthur (Nancy)** Everything's a joke. Good time guy. Oblivious to Nancy's dreams.

SYNOPSIS

A day in the life of 4 women and the men in their lives in 1952. Harold got a promotion and Judy is preparing for the big party. As the women wake, we learn of their dreams and fears and follow them through the day. Secrets are revealed, deceptions confronted, Tupperware burped, and laundry is folded.

SCENES

1. EVERY DAY COMING BACK TO ME - SONG
2. THE HOUSEWIVES
3. JUDY - THE SHIRT AND I – PART 1
4. FOLD THE LAUNDRY - SONG
5. THE HUSBANDS – CLICK, CLACK, CLICK
6. YOU SHOULD TASTE HER POT ROAST - SONG
7. DOROTHY – PRETTY PINK SWEATER
8. PINK SWEATER INTERLUDE - SONG
9. NANCY - NIGHT SCHOOL
10. UNDERNEATH THIS APRON LIES HEAVEN - SONG
11. TUPPERWARE PARTY
12. ALMONDS & BRIE - SONG
13. JUDY - THE SHIRT AND I – PART 2
14. ENSEMBLE - MUSICAL CHAIRS
15. GLIDE IN YOUR SLIDE - SONG
16. ROLL THE CUFF DOWN – SONG

EVERY DAY COMING BACK TO ME - SONG

EVERY DAY COMING BACK TO ME
EVERY DAY COMING BACK TO ME
NOW

EVERY DAY COMING BACK TO ME
EVERY DAY COMING BACK TO ME
NOW

EVERY DAY COMING BACK
NOW MY LIFE SEEMS LESS BLACK
EVERY DAY
COMING BACK TO ME NOW

EVERYDAY COMING BACK
STITCH THE SEAM
SEAL THE CRACK
EVERY DAY
COMING BACK TO ME NOW

EVERY DAY
COMING AROUND ME
EVERY DAY
BECOMING SO CLEAR

ALL I WANTED
WAS TO ASTOUND HIM
MAKE HIM LOVE ME
CALL ME MY DEAR

STARCH THE COLLAR
SEW ON THE BUTTON
HEM THE PANT LEG
SOMETIME THIS YEAR

SQUEEZE THE GRAPEFRUIT
HONOR HIS WISHES
DO THE DISHES
SPARKLING CLEAR

SCRUB THE TUB
POLISH THE SILVER
POUR THE COFFEE
DON'T SPILL A DROP

WEAR THAT DRESS
THE ONE WITH THE SHOULDERS
FOR TONIGHT
THE OTHER SHOE DROPS

KEEP IT GOING
NEVER DARE STOP

THE HOUSEWIVES

- JUDY We live in a cul-de-sac.
- DOROTHY We're safe. Embraced by this beautiful cul-de-sac.
- NANCY It's been only 6 months in the cul-de-sac.
- HELEN I feel silly being the only single gal in the cul-de-sac.
- ALL Cul-de-sac. (PAUSE) I believe that's French for dead end.
- JUDY I have a husband who works hard and lets me use his charge card. Without asking his permission. All I have to do is make sure the Salisbury steak is medium well and ready on the table at 7:20. He tells me how he gets headaches taking the train and I have to respect that. Only the softest of voices when greeting him at the door.
- DOROTHY My goodness, hamburger is 53 cents a pound. A man with the silly name Salk just invented a miracle vaccine, the world's first passenger jet was just unveiled, and we are that much safer with the advent of the first hydrogen bomb, with the darling code name, Mike.
- NANCY I like the routine. The sameness. I never have to think "what should I do next." I make little check lists and pin them on the cork board just to the right of the new Frigidaire. I'm using the stationery from the honeymoon lodge in Lake Zion. I only have 7 pieces left.
- HELEN I don't like to use the word widow. It's too macabre. And frankly, it was only 237 days. Is that really a marriage? And considering we had an ocean between us. I was always confused if he was in north or south. It all just seemed like a made-up land.
- JUDY He was working. I was just at home. Just cleaning and puttering around the house and doing dishes and making sure fresh flowers are filling the vases.

- DOROTHY We always know whose car is rounding the bend, and when a stranger has to complete the turn and head back out.
- NANCY There is such a sense of accomplishment when I'm able to take a newly sharpened pencil and boldly strike a clean, straight line through "2 suits/dry cleaner/4pm".
- ARTHUR "keep those lines straight, darling." [Nancy lip sync]
- HELEN But that funny, handsome boy just would not give up till I went to the justice of the peace. I still have the pink sweater...
- MEN (hushed) pink sweater
- HELEN ...I wore that day. I hadn't been in this house more than 2 weeks when I got the visit from 2 men in uniform carrying an envelope just before new year's '52.
- JUDY I never want for any cleaning supplies. I'm afforded the best detergent money can buy. I have latex gloves so my fingers will never prune and are kept soft to rub his feet before I put his slippers on and lift them gently up to the ottoman.
- DOROTHY Just last week, my hard-working husband, told me for the 3rd time this month not to keep his plate in the warming oven. He snagged a new client ...
- MEN (hushed) new client
- DOROTHY ...and it was possible he wouldn't be home till past 11.
- NANCY When I complete the list after a typical week, I unpin the paper, making sure not to tear the edge. Just one clean pin hole. I'll walk over to the big picture window looking out on our cul-de-sac.
- HELEN I told the girls that would not put a damper on the annual New Year's Eve party. They were so supportive knowing how alone I was. Amazingly, Raymond was especially attentive.
- RAYMOND "Helen, help me break up this darn ice." [Helen lip sync]

JUDY I spend 90 minutes, at a minimum, caring for his shirts. Starch it, press it, crease it.

MEN (hushed) Starch it, press it, crease it.

DOROTHY I'm sure not all husbands are that thoughtful and would have their wife worrying sick.

NANCY I close one eye and lift the paper up and peer through that teeny, tiny hole. I see the world outside in a perfect little circle. So neat, so clean.

MEN (hushed) So neat, so clean.

HELEN He thought it was so funny when I would shake up the ice bucket.

RAYMOND "Come on, now, put your back into it." [Helen lip sync]

JUDY The collar always needs special attention.

DOROTHY Pulling aside the curtain every 5 minutes

NANCY My beautiful life is inside that circle.

HELEN Grinning while I would shake away.

JUDY He's the only one I can confide in.

DOROTHY Feeling the headlights spread across my face.

NANCY I can't see past the edges.

HELEN That grin turned into something I never expected.

JUDY Roll the cuff.

DOROTHY Must be some new client

NANCY Is there anything past the edges?

HELEN I'm just so lonely.

JUDY - THE SHIRT AND I – PART 1

SHIRT There's a bit of a smudge on the cuff from the copy machine yesterday.

JUDY Oh, I see. Well, darn it.

SHIRT Now Judy...

JUDY I just have so much on my mind.

SHIRT Like the washing machine?

JUDY You remember

SHIRT You've mentioned it 37 times in the past 2 weeks

JUDY Well, the agitator is broken. I mean it just keeps agitating. I leave the room and when I come back, it's as though it walked across the floor. I'm afraid to pull the plug with electricity and all. I know it has to be fixed. It just shouldn't agitate that way. It needs a soft cycle. A slow cycle. For my delicates. I can't get it to stop.

SHIRT I told you how to approach him.

JUDY But he would never listen to me

SHIRT Wonder why?

JUDY Well now you're not helping

SHIRT At the moment the slipper is being placed upon the foot I find is when he is most open...aware...content.

JUDY You know him so much better. Spending all those hours with him in the office

SHIRT As if I had a choice

JUDY but what an adventure. Every day new people and projects

SHIRT and droppings from coleslaw, and spilled coffee from eager secretaries with ponytails pulled taut, and perspiration from the anxious client looking for a better tagline.

JUDY Yet you get to hang on him. Cling to him. To his smell. His arms. Oh, what is it like when he undoes his cufflink? And begins to roll up this sleeve.

SHIRT He's very precise.

JUDY I knew it.

SHIRT I appreciate that.

JUDY Well, you are a bit special among the others

SHIRT How so?

JUDY I bought you for our 12th anniversary.

SHIRT Well, well...

JUDY I'd misbehaved that week. Forgetting his suit at the cleaner.

SHIRT Oh, and you thought I would solve everything.

JUDY I just thought it would make him forget for a moment.

SHIRT You didn't think of giving him a foot massage?
Serving him a soft-boiled egg with a tiny spoon in bed?
Waiting more than 7 minutes before you complain he's too heavy?

JUDY You weren't here to give me advice

SHIRT Now ya got me.

JUDY Oh, this button seems a tad loose. Was he playing with it today?

SHIRT He was nervous about the promotion. He kept twisting it on the train.

JUDY I think I can save it

SHIRT Can you match the thread?

JUDY Of course. If you tell me more...I'll even replace your collar stay

FOLD THE LAUNDRY - SONG

TELL ME WHAT IT'S LIKE
TELL ME HOW IT FEELS
WHEN YOU PRESS AGAINST HIS ARM
AS HE STARTS THE BIG REVEAL
THE ROLLING OF HIS SLEEVE
AT NOON

HOW IS IT HE SMELLS
MIDWAY THRU THE DAY
AS HE ELEVATES YOUR CUFF
AND SAFELY TUCKS AWAY

*ARROW, CRISP AND WHITE
THE STARCH IS EXTRA LIGHT*

FOLD THE LAUNDRY
THERE ARE SECRETS TO BE SHARED
THE DAYS GO ON FOREVER
DON'T FORGET HIS UNDERWEAR

FOLD THE LAUNDRY
IF I DO HE'LL NEVER TELL
THAT TOMORROW AND TODAY
I'M JUST NOT WELL
[SHE'S JUST NOT WELL]

DOES HE ROLL IT TWICE
IN MY DREAMS IT SEEMS TO BE
DOES HE EVER SAY MY NAME
AS YOU BRUSH AGAINST HIS KNEE
THE ROLLING OF HIS SLEEVE
AT NOON

AS DAYLIGHT TURNS TO DUSK
AND HE SETTLES IN THE TRAIN
DO YOU SENSE IF HE'S RELIEVED
RETURNING TO THE SAME

*ARROW, CRISP AND WHITE
THE STARCH IS EXTRA LIGHT*

*FOLD THE LAUNDRY
THERE ARE SECRETS TO BE SHARED
THE DAYS GO ON FOREVER
DON'T FORGET HIS UNDERWEAR*

*FOLD THE LAUNDRY
IF I DO HE'LL NEVER TELL
THAT TOMORROW AND TODAY
I'M JUST NOT WELL
[SHE'S JUST NOT WELL]*

*THE HOURS I HAVE SPENT
HEARING HIM COMPLAIN
OF THE LIFE
YOU USE TO SHARE
I CAN'T TELL WHO IS
TO BLAME
THE ROLLING OF HIS SLEEVE
AT NOON*

*THINK ABOUT TONIGHT
WHEN HE UNBUTTONS
AND RETURNS
MY WRINKLED
CRUMPLED SELF
TO YOUR LOVING ARMS THAT YEARN
ARROW, CRISP AND WHITE
THE STARCH IS EXTRA LIGHT*

NOTES:

Maybe he joins in on the first *arrow, crisp and white* and she takes the first chorus with him echoing her at the end.

Then joins in again and they harmonize the second chorus

Then he has a verse, which maybe musically can change up a bit? and then we move to the full ensemble rising on the last chorus.

Not sure where the bridge goes.

THE HUSBANDS – CLICK, CLACK, CLICK

(RHYTHMIC)

HAROLD Every morning click, clack, click, clack, click

ARTHUR Then she buys another knick, knack, knick, knack, knick

RAYMOND To stick up on the shelf

ARTHUR by the sink

HAROLD near the toaster that I bought her

RAYMOND in the color of her choice

ARTHUR Mustard?

HAROLD Avocado

(PAUSE)

HAROLD She never understands

RAYMOND The pressures of the office

ARTHUR The congestion of the train

HAROLD Take today for example

RAYMOND Got a story?

HAROLD It's a whopper

ARTHUR Click, clack, click

RAYMOND Knick, Knack, Knick

HAROLD See a fella on the train

ARTHUR Car 3?

RAYMOND Cabin 2?

HAROLD He was chattin' up a lady
RAYMOND Kind you thought about at 12
ARTHUR but you never dared to dream
 (PAUSE)
HAROLD Legs crossed
RAYMOND At the ankle
ARTHUR Tilt the heel
RAYMOND Now strike
 (PAUSE)
HAROLD He takes a seat
ARTHUR Just across
RAYMOND To the side
HAROLD with an angle just for viewing
ARTHUR Those legs
RAYMOND Those heels
HAROLD That whiff of sweet perfume
ARTHUR That she dabbed on in the morning
RAYMOND Wearing nothing but a smile
 (PAUSE/NATURAL)

HAROLD A rush of wind from the connecting doors
 Tosses her scent in the air
 The train lurches forwards
 It begins to pick up speed
 The bumping and the swaying
 Makes a scene you can't believe
 Her skirt
 So fresh
 So sharp
 Mint green
 Slowly inches higher
 And it's barely 6:15

(PAUSE/CONVERSATIONAL)

ARTHUR Aw jeez

RAYMOND Lucky dog

ARTHUR These girls they act so fragile

RAYMOND So demure

ARTHUR "I'm so pristine"

HAROLD Yet beneath the surface

RAYMOND Lurks a tiger

ARTHUR with a longing

RAYMOND Click clack click clack click

HAROLD And it's only 6:15

ALL Choo choo, choo choo

ARTHUR Did you think?

HAROLD I sure did

RAYMOND Just for you?

HAROLD Who else was watching

ARTHUR You're a cad

HAROLD I'm just a man

RAYMOND Who's on the train

ARTHUR As it goes bumping through the night

HAROLD Click clack click

RAYMOND Tic tac tic

HAROLD Chicka chicka chicka chicka

ALL Chick chick chick

 (PAUSE)

RAYMOND I hear Judy's entertaining

HAROLD She's been planning since last week

ARTHUR That promotion was a doozy

HAROLD Yet she's still on me in a blink

RAYMOND Saying stuff?

ARTHUR A little strange?

RAYMOND oven knobs still angry?

ARTHUR Toaster acting odd?

HAROLD She's eccentric, what's it to ya?

ARTHUR/RAYMOND Makes the best green goddess salad this side of the Hudson

HAROLD You should taste her pot roast

WOMEN How was your day?

MEN Same as usual
WOMEN What did you do?
MEN Nothing new.
WOMEN How was the train?
MEN Hot and bumpy

YOU SHOULD TASTE HER POT ROAST - SONG

*YOU SHOULD TASTE HER POT ROAST
THE JELLO MOLD IS NEAT
HAVE SOME BAKED ALASKA
IT MADE MY LIFE COMPLETE*

*YOU SHOULD SEE HER BUTTER TOAST
THE CRUMBS ARE OBSOLETE
LISTEN TO HER LAUGHTER
SO SIMPLE AND SO SWEET*

*AND EVERY NIGHT AT 8PM
SHE RUBS MY TIRED FEET*

*YOU SHOULD WATCH HER SQUEEZE THE JUICE
EACH TWIST IS TO BELIEVE
AND WHEN SHE SWEEPS THE FRONT PORCH
THE BRISTLES SING TO ME*

*THE WAY SHE STUFFS THE GARBAGE
INTO THE WAITING SINK
I BOUGHT HER THAT DISPOSAL
TO MAKE HER LIFE SUCCINCT*

*AND EVERY NIGHT AT 8PM
SHE RUBS MY TIRED FEET*

DOROTHY – PRETTY PINK SWEATER

DOROTHY I saw you.

RAYMOND Me?

JUDY I saw you.

RAYMOND You said.

NANCY I saw you.

RAYMOND Where?

DOROTHY The park by your office.

(PAUSE)

RAYMOND You should have—

ALL You had your arm around her waist.

RAYMOND Wait...

DOROTHY She was holding a pretty pink sweater in one hand and you were walking in a fashion I didn't recognize.

(PAUSE)

RAYMOND Jim Henderson.

DOROTHY What?

RAYMOND Henderson. Jim.

HELEN Who?

RAYMOND I don't think I can make it through the week without at least 3 people mistaking me for Henderson.

WOMEN Jim.

RAYMOND Exactly.

(PAUSE)

DOROTHY It was your hat I saw.

RAYMOND When did you become an expert on men's hats?

DOROTHY I've never met a Henderson.

RAYMOND Jim.

JUDY/NANCY Never.

RAYMOND Well, maybe if you ever paid a visit to my office.

DOROTHY But you told me...

RAYMOND A lot of other wives find the time.

DOROTHY When I stopped the day before Thanksgiving you told me I was disrupting work and your boss didn't want wives distracting.

RAYMOND It's so funny the things you hear.

(PAUSE)

DOROTHY I heard her laughing.

RAYMOND The sweater?

DOROTHY She sounded so amused.

RAYMOND Henderson's a funny guy.

DOROTHY During *Son of Paleface* last week at the Rialto you told me I was laughing too loudly.

RAYMOND Bob Hope isn't that funny.

HELEN Why would you want to stifle my laughter?

RAYMOND Henderson told the funniest story just yesterday.

JUDY Jim?

RAYMOND He was at the automat and put a nickel in thinking it was a piece of pecan pie

NANCY Jim.

RAYMOND But, when he reached in...

HELEN Jim.

RAYMOND He pulled out a piece of liver.

DOROTHY You've always loved my liver on Thursdays.

RAYMOND Jim?

DOROTHY I sliced my finger and had to call Judy over to finish chopping the onions last Thursday.

JUDY Chop, chop, chop

RAYMOND Last Thursday?

DOROTHY I know you love it smothered in onions.

RAYMOND You never told me.

HELEN I didn't want to bother you.

RAYMOND But now you bother me with this silly tale of pink sweaters and stifled laughter.

DOROTHY Jim?

RAYMOND Jim.

DOROTHY Henderson?

RAYMOND Henderson.

WOMEN Jim.

PINK SWEATER INTERLUDE - SONG

*MY PRETTY PINK SWEATER
NOT BLUE OR GREY
MY PRETTY PINK SWEATER
THIS SHALL BE YOUR LAST DAY*

NANCY - NIGHT SCHOOL

NANCY I was thinking...

ARTHUR Thought you were off to Loehmann's today?

NANCY Actually, I stopped in at the junior college

ARTHUR Click, clack, click

(PAUSE)

ARTHUR College kids sure don't know the first thing about [life]

NANCY [Life] drawing classes are being offered Monday and Thursday

ARTHUR Thursday! Gonna be a big day.

NANCY Office helper gave me this brochure

ARTHUR Thursday we're having the official [drawing]

NANCY [Drawing] is something I used to do as a little girl

ARTHUR Hey, do you want to come down and spin the barrel

NANCY I always dreamed of drawing for a magazine one day

ARTHUR That's cute, darling

NANCY I really think I have a talent

ARTHUR Talent can be overrated

NANCY How would you feel...

ARTHUR The new brochure is a tri-fold...

NANCY If I wanted...

ARTHUR Folded twice...

NANCY To start going...

ARTHUR 2 creases...

NANCY To night school

ARTHUR Team wants Goudy Sans

NANCY Mondays or Thursdays at 7

ARTHUR I think that would be a bit precious

NANCY I could easily wrap dinner in tin foil and place in the warming oven

ARTHUR Already lost the battle on some commie looking logo

NANCY I'm thinking of sticking my head in the oven

ARTHUR Do you know we have to order at least 1,000 before any price break?

NANCY Or seal the cat in our new Tupperware cake round

ARTHUR Where does a dead cat go?

NANCY Arthur...

ARTHUR Purr-gatory.

(MUSIC STARTS)

NANCY I think this was a mistake

ARTHUR Meatloaf on Tuesday is never a mistake

NANCY But didn't it seem a bit dry

ARTHUR Sweet and juicy as always

NANCY I guess I got the burnt edge

ARTHUR Can't win 'em all.

UNDERNEATH THIS APRON LIES HEAVEN - SONG

OH, MY EYES OPEN WIDE
AND I SEE WHAT'S INSIDE
NOW I KNOW

OH, THE DAYLIGHT HAS GONE
THERE'S A NIGHT LIGHT SWITCHED ON
FAR BELOW

UNDERNEATH THIS APRON
LIES HEAVEN
UNTIE ME AND LET ME FREE

THERE'S A WORLD THAT EXIST
BEYOND CHECKING MY LISTS
LET IS SHOW

WHERE I'M ABLE TO CRY
AND TELL A WHITE LIE
FEEL ME GROW

UNDERNEATH THIS APRON
LIES HEAVEN
UNTIE ME AND LET ME FREE

THERE'S MORE TO ME
UNDERNEATH THIS APRON
MORE TO SEE
UNDERNEATH THIS
OH, THE POSSIBILITIES
THAT ARE HIDDEN IN THIS BRIDE

MORE TO ME
THAN THE SEWING CIRLE
MORE TO SEE
THAN SOME SHINY PRIZE
CAN'T YOU SEE
WHAT'S STANDING
RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU
I NEED YOU TO

HAVE THE CHOICES I MADE
LEFT ME AFRAID
NO, NO, NO

PLEASE TURN AND LOOK
PUT DOWN THAT BOOK
SAY HELLO

UNDERNEATH THIS APRON
LIES HEAVEN
UNTIE ME AND LET ME FREE

THERE'S MORE TO ME
UNDERNEATH THIS APRON
MORE TO SEE
UNDERNEATH THIS
OH, THE POSSIBILITIES
THAT ARE HIDDEN IN THIS BRIDE

MORE TO ME
THAN THE SEWING CIRLE
MORE TO SEE
THAN SOME SHINY PRIZE
REMEMBER THERE'S A SECOND HALF
OF "WE"

UNLOCK ME AND SET ME FREE
UNLOCK ME AND SET ME FREE

TUPPERWARE PARTY

DOROTHY Candy-colored plastic cocktail shakers, plastic cigarette holders, plastic hors d'oeuvre dishes, plastic storage containers, plastic bowls and plastic sets of tumblers, drink stirrs and wagon-wheel coasters.

NANCY So many colors.

JUDY Do they serve more than one function?

DOROTHY Time, space, money-saving features.

ALL Time, space, money-saving features.

HELEN I feel like my containers already serve me well.

JUDY The lids seem so tight.

HELEN Do they come in blue?

JUDY There are just too many options

DOROTHY The 2-quart container is the most popular to start.

HELEN Will I eventually need a full set?

JUDY How will I remember which lid goes where?

NANCY Do they wash easily.

DOROTHY This is my favorite.

HELEN This one looks like something purely for show.

JUDY I can't abide by the burping.

NANCY And you say it will make my life easier?

DOROTHY Loads.

JUDY But so many choices

DOROTHY Imagine, for a moment, arriving at a party with a tray of freshly baked cookies, only to have the tin foil slip between your fingers, and a mess is had in front of the hostess.

All Oh!

DOROTHY Now imagine, for a moment, that same party, cookies firmly locked beneath a lid, sealing in the freshness, where even the clumsiest won't be left in tears. This was the dream of Earl Tupper.

HELEN I was looking at this one.

DOROTHY So sorry, Helen, this is my display model.

HELEN But this is exactly what I've been wanting.

DOROTHY The assortment is endless, dear.

HELEN I've had my eye on this since we first walked in

DOROTHY Ladies, more than enough to go around.

JUDY I don't like how they smell.

DOROTHY Smell?

HELEN Why are you smelling them?

JUDY Too make sure they would be safe for my children.

DOROTHY They aren't meant for children.

JUDY Children do all sorts of things.

NANCY I'm not sure I want children
(TUPPERWARE DROPS. DOROTHY FLUSTERED, BUT CONTINUES)

DOROTHY Each container has a lid...

JUDY I've often wondered

DOROTHY ...that fits perfectly no matter the direction placed...

HELEN Your wedding dress is still warm

DOROTHY ...although interchangeable...

JUDY If he would have looked at me longer

DOROTHY ...the desirable lid completes the designated bottom...

HELEN Isn't that part of being a newlywed?

DOROTHY ...which you will want to keep together...

JUDY Once Billy learned to say mommy, daddy got quiet

HELEN I refuse to be an old maid at 28, like Betty Foster.

DOROTHY I don't really comprehend what your problem is. You've been given a gift that you can unwrap every morning. Your husband works weekends, so you can afford to buy that new sweater.

JUDY Get that permanent once a week.

HELEN Do you think lip stick grows on trees?

DOROTHY I'd hate to say your ungrateful but if someone were to ask me what's a 10-letter word for Nancy? Well... How do think it makes all of us look? One of us does it, they think we all do it.

JUDY We're not all the same.

HELEN I'm not like you.

DOROTHY I worship my man. I'm glad to be home. Waiting on the ottoman, drink in hand. He works so hard for all of us. What do you think will happen if you start taking this class? What? You take this class and...what... next year enroll full time?

JUDY Spend the next 4 years frolicking around campus?

HELEN Meet up for study sessions at the library?

DOROTHY Develop your own thoughts and goals?

JUDY Attend seminars to learn how to be your own person?

HELEN Argue with the professor over Nietzsche's writings?

DOROTHY Start eating with co-eds at the commissary?

JUDY Realize that the world holds more than just serving your man?

 (PAUSE)

DOROTHY But let's not forget that Earl Tupper discovered that polyethylene
slag, a waste product of the oil refining process, would afford us air
tight, locked in secrets.

NANCY Wash thoroughly with soap and water.

HELEN Towel dry

JUDY Prevent mold

ALL Wash it
 Burp it
 Seal it
 Flaunt it

JUDY Harold told me I could buy a new stove

DOROTHY 4 burners?

JUDY 5

NANCY Self-cleaning?

JUDY I'm embarrassed to say

HELEN Avocado?

JUDY White

 (GASP)

JUDY His shirt needs attention.

DOROTHY Party this evening

JUDY So much to do

DOROTHY The aesthetic value of parsley

NANCY Deviled eggs need a pinch of parsley or they appear weak

HELEN Carrots have replaced celery

DOROTHY Crunch with color

NANCY Toothpicks?

DOROTHY Careful

JUDY A misplaced toothpick can ruin a vacuum like no other

HELEN It's smart to be careful. There's no substitute for accuracy.

NANCY I married the first man who told me I was someone.

ALMONDS & BRIE - SONG

WHY CAN'T I SEE
WHAT IS IN FRONT OF ME
LIKE THE ALMONDS AND BRIE
FOR THAT PARTY AT 3

IF I DON'T FIND THEM NOW
THERE WILL BE HELL TO PAY
WITH THAT LOOK ON HIS FACE
OF DISGUST AND DISMAY

WHY DOES THIS SEEM
TO BE ALL THAT I HAVE
WHEN I LOOK AT MY HOUSE
MAKES ME LONELY AND SAD

FIND ME A WIFE
WHO HAS MORE TO CONCEAL
HAS THE SECRETS
THE LONGINGS
I FEEL

SO, STITCH THE SEAM
NOW FEEL THE THREAD
FIND THE EYELET
SEARCH THE EDGES IN THE SUNLIGHT
DREAM OF DAISES
OR ANOTHER LIFE INSTEAD

POKE THE FABRIC
PULL IT THROUGH
COMPLETE THE STITCH
INSPECT THE SEAM
RELEASE THE NEEDLE CAREFULLY
REMEMBERS MORNINGS
WITH JUST YOU

IS THIS THE TIME
WHEN IT STARTS TO BE REAL
WHEN THE APRON COMES OFF
AT THE 6:15 MEAL

THE POT ROAST IS DONE
AND THE GRAVY CONGEALED
THE PARSNIPS ARE COLD
THEIRS A STAIN ON MY HEAL

SO, STITCH THE SEAM
NOW FEEL THE THREAD
FIND THE EYELET
SEARCH THE EDGES IN THE SUNLIGHT
DREAM OF DAISES
OR ANOTHER LIFE INSTEAD

POKE THE FABRIC
PULL IT THROUGH
COMPLETE THE STITCH
INSPECT THE SEAM
RELEASE THE NEEDLE CAREFULLY
REMEMBERS MORNINGS
WITH JUST YOU

ALMONDS AND BRIE
ALMONDS AND BRIE
ALMONDS AND BRIE

JUDY - THE SHIRT AND I – PART 2

SHIRT Is that the only crease you're going to give me today? I'm nothing without you. You fold and crease carefully placing your warmth on the spots that are needing the straightening of time. Your love shows no anger. It finds the way between my buttons. Careful to make my collar strong and bold as I present it to the world. Clean white fingers gliding through the day. The collar stays thank me for the care they receive. Allowing them to lay so flat. Embracing the knot of my Windsor. Each fold seems final yet I know a release will soon come. Please, press me. Crease me. Allow me to live fully. I fear when his suit coat takes center stage and aggressively covers me. Let me be free.

JUDY I'm so sorry. I've just been distracted. The party tonight.

SHIRT How can I forget. You haven't stopped talking about it

JUDY Promotion. But you already knew that.

SHIRT You'll want to look extra special tonight

JUDY You're so lucky. You get to be so close to him every day.

SHIRT So can you

JUDY What?

SHIRT Judy, I'm right here.

JUDY I know

SHIRT Then do it.

JUDY What?

SHIRT Playing coy isn't going to work. I know you too well.

JUDY I couldn't

SHIRT And why is that?

JUDY It's...just so silly.

SHIRT I have a flair for casual smartness

JUDY Well...maybe just for a minute

 (SHE PUTS ON THE SHIRT)

SHIRT Aaaaahhhhh...That's my girl
Slip your arms inside me.
Feel the weight.
Feel the heat.
Let's only look for all cotton in the future.
Yes, more ironing.
But, less sweat.
Pull the tie around your neck.
A bit tighter.
A double Windsor seems appropriate.
No, you don't need a tie clip.
Let it hang loose.

ENSEMBLE - MUSICAL CHAIRS

(HELEN ALONE ON STAGE HOLDING HER PINK SWEATER)

HELEN The concept of One Hour Martinizing was pioneered by a New York chemist named Henry Martin in 1949.

RAYMOND Fresh as a flower in just one hour.

HELEN At the time, dry cleaning was done with flammable solvents, so the plants were located remotely from the storefronts.

RAYMOND In the park, on the bench, near the lake.

HELEN By using a non-flammable solvent...

RAYMOND [HELEN LIP SYNCH] ...the use of which was discovered by Martin...

HELEN ...dry cleaning plants could now be located much more conveniently...

RAYMOND [HELEN LIP SYNCH]...and the process carried out in a much timelier manner.

HELEN Operationally, this has been termed "on-site cleaning."

(THE MEN GATHER)

ARTHUR I didn't know that about you

RAYMOND You never asked

HAROLD This isn't the first time

ARTHUR Keeping secrets

HAROLD Hold it tight

RAYMOND The hem of her dress was soiled

HAROLD Don't say anything more

RAYMOND The water in the lake was 37 degrees

HAROLD This isn't up for debate

RAYMOND Sunset is 7:42

ARTHUR Is this the 1st time?

HAROLD Second chances are over-rated

ARTHUR That sweater is a real drape shape

HAROLD Ready Hedy

ARTHUR Able Grable

ART/HAR Chicka, chicka, chick

RAYMOND Seems I've bitten off more than I can chew

(JUDY ENTERS WEARING THE SHIRT)

JUDY Surprise

NANCY Is this a costume party?

HELEN How adorable

DOROTHY Judy, what is this?

NANCY You never told us to dress

ARTHUR I would have worn my googly eye glasses

RAYMOND Your wife certainly is the life of the party

HAROLD Is that my lucky shirt?

NANCY Stitch the eyelet

DOROTHY Pull the thread

HAROLD And my new Wembly synthetic Dracon knit tie?

ARTHUR Click, clack, click

JUDY I just wanted to feel you

NANCY Who spiked the punch?

JUDY Every day, coming back to me

ARTHUR Maybe this is charades

HELEN A book

RAYMOND A movie

NANCY *The Pajama Game*

HAROLD You're making a spectacle

HELEN This is spectacular

ARTHUR She's a stitch

NANCY Stitch in time

DOROTHY Never saved anyone

JUDY I can finally feel

NANCY Are you seeing the edges?

(DOROTHY WAVES THE PINK SWEATER)

DOROTHY Whose pink sweater is this?

HELEN I'm sorry...?

(HAROLD PULLS AT THE SHIRT)

JUDY Leave him alone

DOROTHY Whose is it?

HAROLD Take it off

NANCY I love this linoleum

HELEN and the new dishwasher makes the glasses sparkle like diamonds

JUDY I did an expert cycle just be sure

RAYMOND You dog, making us all look bad

NANCY Husband of the year

ARTHUR Ah, jeez, it's just a tri-fold

RAYMOND Helen, can you help me shake up the ice?

HELEN I'm done shaking

 (HAROLD GRABS JUDY TIGHTLY)

HAROLD Enough!

JUDY Don't touch the fucking shirt!!!

GLIDE IN YOUR SLIDE - SONG

(ALL)

WITH A GLIDE IN YOUR SLIDE
AND A DIP IN YOUR HIP
YOU KEEP GOING ROUND
TIL THEY TELL YOU TO SIT
BUT ONE IN THE GROUP
WILL BE LEFT ALL ALONE
WITH A SECRET TO SHARE
OR A SIN TO ATONE

(HAROLD)

JUDY DON'T EMBARRASS ME
OUR FRIENDS ARE TO CELEBRATE

(JUDY)

HAROLD JUST RELAX, ENJOY
I PROMISE NOT CRACK TIL 8

(ALL)

JUDY HAROLD
DOROTHY RAYMOND
NANCY ARTHUR
HELEN

AS YOU MAKE YOUR WAY ROUND
AND THE CHAIRS DISAPPEAR
JUST BE CAREFUL TO SIT
AND TO SWALLOW YOUR FEAR
THE GAME IS FOR KIDS
WHICH WE'RE NOT ANYMORE
IF I HAPPEN TO SCREAM
THEN JUST SHOW ME THE DOOR

(RAYMOND)

DOROTHY DO YOU STILL BELIEVE

(ARTHUR)

THIS SWEATER IN A SHADE OF PINK

(DOROTHY)

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU TOLD HIM THAT

(NANCY)

ARTHUR YOU ARE SUCH A FINK

(ALL)

JUDY HAROLD
DOROTHY RAYMOND
NANCY ARTHUR
HELEN

(HELEN)

A SERIES OF BUTTONS
A BUNDLE OF WOOL
PASSED DOWN BY MY MOTHER
MY FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL
BUT NOW IT REVEALS
JUST HOW LONELY I FEEL
AS I WALK THROUGH THE PARK
WITH THE HOPE I CAN STEAL

JUST A MOMENT IN THE BUSHES
A SECOND ON THE BENCH

I KNOW HE'S NOT MINE
AND IF TABLES WERE TURNED
EVEN A GLANCE
I'D BE SO CONCERNED
I WANT TO BE STRONG
AND STAND ON MY OWN
WALK THROUGH THE FIELDS
AND DOWN COBBLESTONES

BUT JUST A MOMENT
IN THE BUSHES
ONE MORE SECOND
ON THE BENCH

MY PRETTY PINK SWEATER
NOT BLUE OR GREY
MY PRETTY PINK SWEATER
THIS SHALL BE YOUR LAST DAY

(ALL)

JUDY HAROLD
DOROTHY RAYMOND
NANCY ARTHUR HELEN

HAROLD You will not do this tonight

JUDY He's all I need now

ALL Oh!?

ARTHUR Competition man

NANCY Shut up, Arthur

ARTHUR What was that?

RAYMOND What harm is a little shake

HELEN You promised just the park

DOROTHY How's Jim Henderson?

RAYMOND Henderson's just fine

DOR/HEL Jim?

RAYMOND Jim

ARTHUR Baby, sweetie, honey pie, what about Lake Zion?

NANCY One piece of stationery left.

ARTHUR I love jokes about stationery but rulers are where I draw the line.

JUDY He understands me

HAROLD Who?

JUDY He lets me be close

DOROTHY Judy must have taken one too many of her little helpers today

JUDY I stopped last week.

HAROLD There you go

HELEN What did the doctor say?

JUDY He's not living my life

HAROLD Judy

JUDY He lets me slide inside

ALL Judy

JUDY I use extra starch to make him stiff and crisp

HAROLD You're acting like you did that summer...

ARTHUR Click, clack, click

HAROLD ...we moved into our first apartment

JUDY 237 Joanne Lane. 3rd floor rear.

HAROLD There was plenty of light

JUDY Stairs creaked like a Hitchcock film

NANCY *The Lady Vanishes*

ARTHUR Click, clack, click

JUDY You took a night shift

HAROLD Room was \$84 a month

JUDY Alone all night

HAROLD You were 21 for God's sake

JUDY That creaking

ALL Click, clack click

HAROLD 7 in the morning I have to get a call

JUDY I told them not to

HAROLD Wife on the stairs again

ALL Click, clack click

JUDY It always felt like someone was coming

HAROLD Neighbors complaining how you let the vacuum run for hours

JUDY It was comforting

ALL Click, clack click

HAROLD Judy

JUDY Harold

RAYMOND Dorothy

DOROTHY Raymond

ARTHUR Nancy

NANCY Arthur

HELEN Helen

(MUSIC)

HELEN I fell asleep that night wearing the pink sweater. The next day I tossed it off the bridge in the park. It stayed floating for 2 minutes and 37 seconds. As it sank, the left sleeve stayed up just long enough to wave goodbye.

NANCY I enrolled the next morning in drawing 101. Both Mondays and Thursdays. Arthur found out when he got home and read my note on that final piece of stationery from Lake Zion. It didn't have any pin holes.

DOROTHY As I was washing, burping, sealing, and flaunting the cake holder next morning, I turned the water hot, hotter, hottest. As my hand turned a shade of red dye #4 I vowed never to give him reason for another pink sweater.

JUDY

I woke before dawn wrapped like Tutankhamun in the shirt. Although wrinkled, the starch held the collar just magnificently. I rolled to my side and felt that warm embrace. I went to hang him in the closet and noticed Harold's other shirts were gone. I stepped inside the closet and silently slid the door shut.

ROLL THE CUFF DOWN – SONG

ROLL THE CUFF DOWN
FIND THE SEASON
FOLD THE HANDKERCHIEF
WITH EASE

CLICK CLACK CLICK
CLACK CLICK CLACK
CLICK CLACK CLICK
CLACK CLICK CLACK

PLACE THE TIE
UPON THE TABLE
MAKE SURE THE KNOT
IS SOFT AND FREE

THE CURTAINS HANGING
AT AN ANGLE
I FIND MYSELF
NOW ILL AT EASE

THE CURTAINS HANGING
AT AN ANGLE
I FIND MYSELF
NOW ILL AT EASE

IF I CAN MAKE IT
THROUGH TOMORROW
WILL HE THEN SEE ME
JUST FOR ME

IF I CAN MAKE IT
THROUGH TOMORROW
WILL HE THEN SEE ME
JUST FOR ME

CLICK CLACK CLICK
CLACK CLICK CLACK
CLICK CLACK CLICK
CLACK CLICK CLACK

CLICK CLACK CLICK
CLACK CLICK CLACK
CLICK CLACK CLICK
CLACK CLICK CLACK

THE STREET, THE CURB
THE OPEN WINDOW
REVEALS A WORLD
IN SLIGHT DEGREES

THE LIPSTICK SMEAR
UPON HIS COLLAR
I SCRUB AND RINSE
SO CAREFULLY

ROLL THE CUFF DOWN
FIND THE SEASON
FOLD THE HANDKERCHIEF
WITH EASE

PLACE THE TIE
UPON THE TABLE
MAKE SURE THE KNOT
IS SOFT AND FREE