

In the opening scene the lights come up on the left side of the stage, the living room of Caryl Kane, a well dressed woman in her 50's. She has opened her front door to let in her friend Lynn Somers, also in her 50's and whom she has not seen for some time. Lynn is also well dressed but not as ostentatious as her friend. She is very friendly but appears to be slightly nervous and uneasy, though she tries to hide this.

Caryl: Lynn, darling! *(She embraces Lynn rather showily)* It's so wonderful to see you again!

Lynn: Likewise, Caryl. It's been far too long!

Caryl ushers Lynn to the settee, and also seats herself

Caryl: Quite right you are! Please, sit. You simply must tell me all about what's been happening in your life lately!

Lynn: Well, I'm taking a well- earned break for now - I've been involved in a good many shows these past few years! And then I'll be working on a musical, early next year.

Caryl: Oh, how lovely, darling! It certainly sounds as though you've been a busy little bee!

Lynn: Rather! How about you? What have you been up to?

Caryl *(rather boastfully)* Oh, well, just last week the final curtain came down on "Summer Time Blues", a most successful production – rave revues, you know. It had such a long run – most demanding! I'm utterly exhausted right now. Clifford and I are planning to take a nice long vacation in Europe – we set off in 2 weeks time. Oh, I can't wait! I have been working on one production after the other since I don't know when!

Lynn *(as though reminded of something)* Ah, yes, Clifford...how is he?

Caryl: Oh he's fine, just fine.

Lynn: And Kelvin and Samantha - are they well?

Caryl: Oh yes! Both married and off our hands now, thank goodness! How is Kate? \

Lynn: Fine –she's just got engaged, actually.

Caryl: Oh, how wonderful, darling!

Lynn: I came up especially for the party and she's roped me in to staying a few days.

Caryl: Good for you! Can you believe the children are grown up already? My word, where has the time gone!?

Lynn: Yes, where indeed! *(A slight pause as Lynn thinks about what she is going to say next)* It seems like only yesterday we were working on "Times of our Lives" – do you remember?

Caryl *(Trying not to recall unpleasant memories)* Oh, yes, how could I forget that one! What a wonderful experience it was!

Lynn: Very much so! (*Lynn cautiously speaks again*) Do you ever... think about it?

Caryl (*innocently*) Oh, now and then, but I'm far too busy to spend much time on productions of the past.

Lynn (*even more cautiously*) No, I mean— the murder.

Caryl: Oh, that! (*An awkward pause*) Well, it does cross my mind sometimes, I suppose.

Lynn: Don't you ever wonder who did it? I mean, it was rather strange that the police never found out, don't you think?

Caryl: I suppose it was, yes. Another one of those things in life, destined to remain a mystery.

Lynn: Poor Christine....such a waste of talent and beauty.

Caryl (*jumping up*) Poor Christine my foot!!

Lynn (*taken aback*): What?

Caryl: She was nothing but a low down, two-faced cheat who got exactly what she deserved!

Lynn: Caryl! Shame on you! How can you say that? I thought you two were friends!

Caryl: Friends! Pah! She never knew the meaning of the word! I thought she was my friend, and for a while, we were actually quite close. We even made a pact, in the beginning (*she thinks back over the years as the lights fade to blackout on the left side and the right side lights come up. It is 30 years ago. Caryl and Christine are in Christine's dressing room*)

Christine: I am so very happy right now! Everything's going so incredibly well, I can hardly believe it! (*She looks at Caryl*) And you, dear Caryl are my best friend in the whole world!

Caryl (*smiling*): Thank you Christine, and you are mine.

Christine: The two of us are going to go very far – all the way to the top! I can feel it! And then, in say, 30 years time, when we look back, we will see a glittering path of continual success and glory! What wonderful stories we will have, to tell our grandchildren one day! (*She suddenly looks at Caryl then takes her hand*) Oh Caryl, promise me we will always be friends! Let's make a pact, right now!

Caryl: Okay, let's!

They join hands

Christine: As our hands are joined, may we stay united in friendship forever!

Caryl: Yes, for all eternity!

The lights dim to blackout on the right side of the stage and come up on the left side again, to Caryl and Lynn in Caryl's living room, in the present time.

Caryl: Stay united in friendship, she said, but all the time she was betraying me.

Lynn: Oh? How so?

Caryl: First, she managed somehow, to take the lead role from me. Oh, she pleaded innocence, said it had nothing to do with her, that it had been the director's decision that the two of us swap roles - probably slept with him for that no doubt! She was so convincing that I actually believed her. She even asked me if I would help her with some of her lines and silly, naïve me obliged. Imagine, helping her with a role that she stole from me! How young and stupid I was!

Lynn (*pondering*) I...I didn't realise things went so bad between you – back then.

Caryl: And that's not all! Evidently, the lead role wasn't enough for her – she also tried to get her clutches into Clifford!

Lynn: Some friend!

Caryl (*reminiscing*): I'd say! (*Then vehemently*) She wanted it all you see, even if it meant trampling on good friends to get there.

Lynn (*spurring Caryl on*) That must have hurt you terribly. I can well see why you might've...

Caryl (*Alarmed, cutting her off*) Lynn! What are you saying?

Lynn (*Choking*): Nothing! (*Pause*) It's just...let's just say, if one of my friends had treated me the way Christine treated you, I might've been tempted to...

Caryl: Well I didn't. But my heartiest congratulations to whoever did!

Lynn: Caryl! What a wicked thing to say! You can't mean that!

Caryl: I most certainly do! She brought the consequences of her evil actions upon herself! (*Pause*)

Caryl: I will never forget the day I went to Christine's dressing room to run through some lines with her, as usual. I was a little early and burst dramatically through the door, as always – it was a joke between myself and Christine to burst into each other's dressing rooms uttering a dramatic phrase, in jest - and there they were, Clifford and Christine, all over each other!

(The lights go down on the left half of the stage and come up on the right side, the theatrical dressing room, 30 years earlier. A young man (Clifford Dunn) is sitting on a chair with a young woman (Christine) on his lap. They are kissing. Caryl enters dramatically, but funnily upstage left, script in hand.)

Caryl: Stand to attention for her majesty the... (she stops and stares at the two people on the chair, one of which is her boyfriend. The couple quickly break apart, Christine jumping up first and moving away, then Clifford rises hastily, coming face to face with Caryl)

Clifford: Caryl! I was...

Caryl: Don't even try to explain! I'm not blind!

Christine: Caryl, I'm so sorry! I...

Caryl: Shut up!

Clifford: Please, let me explain (he takes her arm)

Caryl (jerking Clifford's hand off her arm) Don't bother! (She turns and addresses Christine harshly) You two-faced, back-stabbing cheat! This time I won't forgive you, ever! (She bursts into tears and runs out of the room)

The lights go down on the right side of the stage and come up on the left to the present day. Caryl and Lynn are still in Caryl's living room.

Caryl: That witch took everything I had! And I was a fool for letting her!

Lynn: But you have Clifford now, at least.

Caryl (suddenly changing her attitude) Yes, I do don't I? Fortunately, he came to his senses after Christine's death.

Lynn: Yes, I remember (pause) It didn't take him all that long either, did it?(Quickly going on before Caryl can react) It's obvious then that Christine was merely a passing fancy and that you were always going to be his one and only!

Caryl (feeling flattered): Yes, of course I was. After all, we had been together over a year before Christine came on the scene.

Lynn: And you're still together after all this time.

Caryl: Yes. Isn't it wonderful? (Slight pause) Of course, back then he needed a lot of consoling and I was there for him. I still remember fondly how we came together again. It was not too long after Christine's death, that we sat talking about all that had happened. And then he told me he was still in love with me...(She thinks back, smiling)

The lights fade on the left side of the stage and come up on the right, Christine's dressing room, 30 years back. Clifford is sitting and gazing into space when young Caryl enters)

Claryl: Oh, there you are! What are you doing in here?

Clifford: Christine's...the dressing room door was open - I couldn't help coming in (He looks up at Caryl) I was just wondering...(Then, irritated)I can't for the life of me think who would want to do such a terrible thing to Christine – and why? I mean, even the police are baffled!

Caryl (Coming in to the room and sitting next to Clifford): I guess we'll never know (She puts an arm around Clifford's shoulder, comfortingly): Don't upset yourself. Let's just be happy that we are still alive. It could have been one of us, you know.

Clifford: You're right, I suppose (He realizes that Caryl's arm is around him) Why are you even talking to me! Don't you want to be as far away from me as possible, after what I've done?

Caryl: None of that matters now. I just want to see you happy again, that's all. I still care, you know.

Clifford: You...do?

Caryl: Yes Clifford, I do.

(There is a momentary pause)

Clifford: Oh, Caryl! I'm so sorry for what I did to you. I've been an absolute fool! I was just so taken by her beauty....can you ever forgive me? I know it's a lot to ask and ...

Caryl (Interrupting him, smiling): I think I can do that.

Clifford: You can! Caryl, will you...I mean can we...Oh heck, could we start over again! Will you take me back, please?

Caryl (pretends to think for a moment): Yes, I will!

