

TIM enters stage L. and proceeds to cross stage R. Simultaneously, SARAH enters stage R. and crosses stage L. As they pass each other, TIM suddenly stops and turns.

TIM  
Wait!

(SARAH continues walking.)

TIM  
Wait...Sarah?

(SARAH stops and turns.)

SARAH  
Yes?

TIM  
(Crossing back towards centre stage.)  
Sarah! Good God, it *is* you! Well, I thought it was but...well, I wasn't a hundred percent.

SARAH  
(With a smile, somewhat confused.)  
Ah!

TIM  
Thought I was about to make a total fool of myself – not for the first time, I might add – ha, ha, ha! Well, how on earth are you?

(SARAH slowly crosses back toward TIM, working hard to mask her embarrassment at not being able to place him.)

SARAH  
Oh, I'm...I'm very well...thank you.

TIM  
You look well. God, how long has it been?

SARAH  
I...I'm not sure.

TIM

Well, I can't expect you to remember, but it's certainly been a while, that's for sure.

SARAH

(Still desperately trying to conceal her embarrassment.)  
Yes, it...it must've been.

TIM

So, how's Paul?

SARAH

Paul? Oh, he's um...he's – he's doing well.

TIM

Good, good. Still working at, uh...what's it called?

SARAH

Yes, yes, still there. He's um...he's thinking of going back to college, actually – finishing his Masters.

TIM

Good for him. Bit of a strain on you though, no?

SARAH

Well, I'll be the main bread winner for a while, so we'll have to tighten our belts a bit, but...

TIM

But worth it in the long run, right?

SARAH

Exactly...exactly.

TIM

Give him a bit of a leg up the old corporate ladder.

SARAH

Well, that's exactly it. I mean, the way things are there's not much room for him to advance.

(TIM nods in agreement. Beat.)

TIM

Well, you haven't changed a bit, I must say. Not that it's been *that* long, but you know.

SARAH

(With a feigned laugh.)  
No, no...but, um...as you say.

(Pause.)

SARAH

So, um...how are *you* doing?

TIM

Me? Oh, I'm fine. Can't complain. Well, I could, but who'd listen? Ha, ha, ha!

(SARAH laughs along with him, though not entirely convincingly. Beat.)

SARAH

Well, it's um...it's been lovely bumping into you again. Anyway, I'd better—

TIM

Yes, yes, it has. Listen, by the way, whatever happened with that spare room business?

SARAH

Spare room?

TIM

Yes, yes, now let me see...as I remember, Paul wanted to turn it into a games room and Justine was hell-bent on converting it into an artist's studio...or something like that.

SARAH

Oh, God yes! The spare room fiasco. I thought I'd never hear the end of that one.

TIM

So who won?

SARAH

(Beginning to relax a little.)  
Well, nobody really. We sort of reached an uneasy compromise. For the time being it'll be a games room, which placated Paul and made him feel like he got his way as usual.

TIM

Doesn't he always?

SARAH

Just about. And anyway, it would've been silly turning it into an art studio – I mean, for heaven's sake, Justine's only fourteen; she doesn't know what she wants to do yet.

TIM

Probably want to be an astronaut next week.

SARAH

Well, that's exactly it. *But* we did agree that when she gets closer to leaving school, if she decides she wants to go to art college and study it properly, then Paul's games will be confined to the garage and Justine can lock herself in there and paint away until the cows come home.

TIM

Family diplomacy?

SARAH

Something like that.

TIM

Justine's a feisty one.

SARAH

Don't I know it. She gets it from Paul, of course, not me. When those two lock horns it's best just to step out of the way.

TIM

You don't have to tell me – I've seen it enough times.

(Beat.)

SARAH

Yes.

TIM

In fact – and don't take this the wrong way – but I don't think you should let her talk to you the way she does sometimes.

SARAH

I'm sorry?

TIM

It's not good for them. I know she's just being a typical teen and the rest of it, but you have to draw the line somewhere, Sarah – especially with the girls.

(Beat.)

SARAH

Well, I...I'm not sure that I...

(Composing herself.)

Actually...Oh God, I feel like such an idiot. I don't...I don't think there's any way I can say this without sounding like a complete and utter fraud, but...

(Screwing up her face in embarrassment.)

Would you ever be able to forgive me if I told you that I've been trying for the life of me to recall your name, but for some ridiculous reason it's just not coming. I'm so, *so* sorry. Please don't be angry with me.

TIM

Angry? Why would I be angry?

SARAH

*Because!* Because I've been behaving like a social philistine. Because you obviously know so much about us, and you clearly know Paul and Justine *very* well, and because...well, I've been so insanely busy lately, and – and I don't mean this as an excuse – but honestly, I meet so many people in my line of work – public relations, as hard as that is to believe – and sometimes it's just hard to keep track of it all, and...well, actually I suppose I do mean that as an excuse, even if it is a poor one. But the fact is I do – meet so many people, that is. Not that that makes it any the less excusable. I mean, why didn't I just come clean from the outset?

(Beat.)

I don't know. God, I'm so embarrassed.

TIM

Sarah, *please*, why should you be? You don't know me – I'm nobody.