

SCENE 2

KLEIN HOME, BROOKLYN

Sitting at the humbler piano with her back to us is a WOMAN. SHE plays Moonlight Sonata. She gets halfway in, stops. Then her hand appears with a lit cigarette. She inhales, blows out a puff, resumes playing. Then CAROLE, age 16, in skirt that does not match her blouse, comes in excitedly holding a piece of notebook paper. The woman is Carole's mother, GENIE.

CAROLE

Ma, what're you doing? I thought you were writing your play.

GENIE

I got stuck. This relaxes me.

CAROLE

Do you mind?

GENIE gets up. CAROLE sits, puts the paper in front of her and sings:

WHAT SHOULD I WRITE?

WHAT CAN I SAY?

HOW CAN I TELL YOU HOW MUCH I MISS YOU?

(Speaks)

New intro. What do you think?

GENIE

Carole dear, remember when you used to play Mozart? I'd be so proud if you played Mozart again. So would your father, God rest his soul.

CAROLE

Ma, you're just divorced, he's not dead.

DOORBELL.

GENIE

He's dead to me.

CAROLE

Daddy never loved that other woman. He always tells me he loves you.

GENIE

He just says that so you'll think I'm bitter and unforgiving. I'll never forgive him for that.

BETTY Enters.

BETTY

Hi, Carole. Hi, Mrs. K. Carole, you want to study for the history test?

CAROLE

I can't. I'm going into the city to sell my RAIN UNTIL SEPTEMBER song.

GENIE

What? 12 places turned that down—

CAROLE

I got a new guy to go to, Donny Kirshner.

GENIE

Where is Donny Kirshner's office?

CAROLE

1650 Broadway. Times Square.

GENIE

Times Square. If there were only two places on earth, Hell and Times Square, the nice people would live in Hell. That's not a proper place for a 16 year-old girl.

CAROLE

Betty'll come. She's 18. Combined, we're 34.

GENIE

It's not just Times Square. It's show business. I know how hard it is— every time they send my plays back, it's like a knife. Get your degree and be a teacher.

CAROLE

I don't want to do that anymore. I want to be a songwriter. Ma, when I hear a good song, I feel like someone understands me. Even if I'm all alone, it's like I've got a friend in the room. I want to do that for people.

GENIE

It's not practical. Girls don't write music. They teach it.

CAROLE

Look. AMERICAN BANDSTAND's on right now. If you feel my song isn't as good as whatever hit song they're playing, I won't go.

GENIE

Deal.

THEY turn the TV on. They hear:

DICK CLARK

Ok, kids, here from Brooklyn, singing a song to his special girl, is Neil Sedaka.

BETTY

What?