

Suspect to Change

By Will Humble

Synopsis:

This comedy of errors involves love, friendship, misunderstanding, misplaced pride and mistaken identity. As the play begins, a policeman enters and tells Mrs. Teal that her daughter, Tina, was in an automobile accident and has been taken to the hospital. He offers to give her a ride. Mrs. Teal hastily writes a note for her husband: "There's been an accident—taken to hospital." A bit later Tina enters, finds the note and thinks her mother has been hospitalized. There's a kidnapping, a jewelry heist, a purse snatching and a fiancé wannabe who can't get in a word to pop the question.

Characters:

MRS. TEAL: Female; An easily excited, panic-prone, worry-wart who tends to jump to the most dramatic conclusion possible. A loving but overprotective mother, Mrs. Teal cares deeply about her daughter and often lets her imagination run away with her. She is emotional, expressive, and unintentionally hilarious as she tries to handle every new crisis that appears.

CLEATS: Male or female; A police sergeant, professional, but not cold or intimidating. Cleats approaches the chaos around him with patience and logic, attempting to sort through the many misunderstandings and conflicting stories. Despite the confusion, he remains focused on discovering the truth.

TINA: Female; *Mrs. Teal's* daughter, a strong-willed young woman who loves *Richard* but has a complicated relationship with *Sabrina*. Tina is passionate, quick to react, and not afraid to speak her mind. She can be dramatic and stubborn, but underneath her frustration she cares deeply about the people around her and wants to feel respected and understood.

RICHARD: Male; Quiet but sincere, Richard is caught between the strong personalities around him. He is thoughtful, loyal, and deeply in love with *Tina*, though his shyness often gets in the way of expressing himself. He tries to keep the peace while attempting to finally ask *Tina* the question he has been building up the courage to ask.

SABRINA: Female; *Richard's* sister and *Tina's* former best friend, Sabrina is bold, emotional, and a little impulsive. Her jealousy and hurt feelings cause her to make questionable choices, but she is not without compassion. Beneath her sarcasm and dramatic reactions is someone who still values her friendship with Tina and wants to make things right.

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SUSPECT TO CHANGE

***A Comedy of Mistaken Identity
in One Act***

**By
WILL HUMBLE**

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WILL HUMBLE

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ABOUT THE PLAY

This comedy of errors involves love, friendship, misunderstanding, misplaced pride, and mistaken identity. As the play begins, a policeman enters and tells Mrs. Teal that her daughter, Tina, was in an automobile accident and has been taken to the hospital. Mrs. Teal hastily writes a note for her husband—"There's been an accident. Taken to hospital."—and puts it by the telephone. She leaves with the policeman. A few minutes later Tina enters, finds the note and thinks her mother has been hospitalized.

There's a kidnapping, a jewelry heist, a purse snatching, and a fiance wannabe who can't get in a word to pop the question. It's funny, funny, funny.

"Hilarious is more like it," Linda Formet-Heath wrote in her review for the *Brazosport (Texas) Facts*. "Humble has drawn the characters to be someone everyone knows—and periodically wants to shake."

The play was written by 17-year-old Will Humble, a home school student, as a class project when he studied playwriting with the A. D. Players in Houston. "Suspect to Change" was first produced by Brazosport Center Stage as part of an evening of one-act plays.

Playing time is about 35 minutes.

AUTHOR'S DEDICATION

To Dad, Mom, Ruth, and Emily

SUSPECT TO CHANGE

Characters

MRS. TEAL—An easily excited, panic-prone, worry-wart

CLEATS—A police sergeant (male or female), professional, but not cold

TINA—Mrs. Teal's daughter. Loves Richard, hates Sabrina

RICHARD—Silent but strong. He's *trying* to propose to Tina

SABRINA—Richard's sister and Tina's ex-best friend

The Teals' Living Room

About eight o'clock on a rainy Friday night

First presented by Brazosport Center Stages under the direction of Marian Bonser with the following cast:

Mrs. Teal.....	Karen Kenyon
Sergeant Cleats.....	Chuck Hobizal
Kristina Teal.....	Christine Tankersley
Richard.....	Michael De Acetis
Sabrina.....	Stephanie Hickman

SUSPECT TO CHANGE

[AT RISE the room is dimly lit and opera MUSIC is blaring from the stereo. The DOORBELL rings. Pause. The DOORBELL rings repeatedly. MRS. TEAL enters, wiping her hands on a white dish towel. Loud, persistent KNOCKING disturbs her]

MRS. TEAL. I'm coming! I'm coming! Just a minute! *[She turns off the stereo (MUSIC out), turns on a LAMP, glances through the curtains, gasps, and opens the door]* Hello. Is something wrong?

CLEATS. Good evening, ma'am. *[He flashes his badge]* Sergeant Cleats—City Police Department. May I come in?

MRS. TEAL. Oh. Yes. *[CLEATS enters]* Won't you sit down?

CLEATS. No thank you. Are you related to Kristina Teal?

MRS. TEAL. *[Nervously fidgeting with her towel]* I'm her mother. She went shopping with Richard. They're very close. Sabrina—that's his sister—well, Tina and her are good friends. Although, they really haven't talked much lately. That's how she met him. Tina met Richard. She said they'd be back by seven, but that doesn't mean a thing. She's always late. She was even born late. A week after her due date. Has... has something happened?

CLEATS. I'm afraid this steady downpour has made driving conditions hazardous.

MRS. TEAL. *[Sitting on the sofa, prayerfully]* Oh dear Lord, no.

CLEATS. I regret to inform you that your daughter has been in an automobile accident. Her car apparently swerved and hit a tree on one of the back roads behind the shopping mall. *[MRS. TEAL struggles to control herself]* I have no information concerning her condition, but she and the driver were taken to Grace County Hospital.

MRS. TEAL. *[She puts her hand on her forehead and starts pacing]* Oh, why did she have to go out in this awful weather? What kind of a mother am I? She's practically an hour late and I don't even get the least bit concerned. She could be seriously injured. *[She stops and shrugs]* I guess I can forget the opera now!

CLEATS. Mrs. Teal, are you going to be all right?

MRS. TEAL. I'll be fine. I'm very good at handling coffee. I just need some stress.

CLEATS. Would you like me to drive you to the hospital?

MRS. TEAL. *[Heading for the door]* Yes. Let's go. Now. Please.

CLEATS. I'll wait for you to get your coat.

MRS. TEAL. Oh, yes. My coat. *[She struggles to pull it on quickly, still holding the dish towel]* It's a good thing you're driving. I'd probably swerve and hit a tree or something. *[She whirls around suddenly and grabs her hair]* Oh my husband!!

CLEATS. What? What's wrong?

MRS. TEAL. My husband's at a men's retreat at the lake! There's no way I can reach him! How am I going to tell him what's happened? I don't even know when I'll be back home!

CLEATS. Why don't you leave a message?

MRS. TEAL. Good idea. *[Reading as she writes]* "There's been an accident. Taken to hospital. Wife." Oh, this is going to ruin his weekend!

CLEATS. But if he won't know until after—? How will it ruin—? *[MRS. TEAL exits, leaving him alone.]* Never mind. *[He turns off the LIGHTS and exits]*

[The room is briefly illuminated by a flash of LIGHTNING, followed by a crash of THUNDER. After a moment, TINA enters and immediately starts talking. RICHARD follows with his arms full of shopping bags and managing the handle of an open umbrella under his chin]

TINA. Hi, Mom! We're back! Sorry we're so late. I just lost track of the time. And the traffic was terrible. Some of those drivers are crazy! It's like they see a wet street and think, "Oh boy! It's slip-and-slide time!" I had to drive over eighty miles an hour to pass some of them. *[She tosses her rain coat to RICHARD]* Mom? Where are you? Mom? Richard, have you seen her? *[He shakes his head]* That's strange. She never said she was going out.

RICHARD. Well, she might have just—

TINA. How will I get in touch with her? *[Walks over to phone, sees message]* Oh, no. Richard! There's been an accident! She's at the hospital. *[She puts her hand on her forehead and starts pacing; unconsciously imitating her mother]* Oh, why did she have to go out in this awful weather? What kind of a daughter am I? I'm nearly an hour late and I never once called to check up on her. She could have broken her leg and there was nobody here to help her.

RICHARD. Tina, come on. Your mother doesn't call to check on you every time you're a few minutes late.

TINA. Oh, Richard! Remember that ambulance we saw? A car crashed into a tree. Mom could have been in a wreck!

RICHARD. Tina, calm down. She wasn't in a wreck. Her car is still in the driveway.

TINA. *[Very agitated]* Well *something* happened to her! She's at the hospital. *[Pause, thoughtful]* Maybe she had a heart attack.

RICHARD. How did she write this note?

TINA. I don't know! Don't you *care*?

RICHARD. Of course I do. I'll call the hospital.

TINA. Yes. Good idea. The number's on the emergency sticker. *[RICHARD heads for the telephone]* I need some coffee.

RICHARD. *[Speaking into the phone]* Hello? Do you have a patient by the last name of Teal? Yes, that's right, T-E-A-L. She was in a car accident?

TINA. I knew it.

RICHARD. *[To Tina]* She was only *involved* in a car wreck.

TINA. Oh. Maybe she wasn't *in* the car. Maybe she just saw it. Maybe she was run over by a car!

RICHARD. *[Still on the phone]* What is her condition? She's been discharged? I see. All right. Thank you.

TINA. Well? What happened? Where is she?

RICHARD. All I know is she wasn't hurt. She's been discharged.

TINA. Oh, thank You, Lord. Then she must be on her way home now. We'll just have to wait for an explanation. *[She sits on the couch]* But she's okay. That's what matters. All this confusion... I've got such a headache. Richard, there's some aspirin in my purse. Get it for me, would you?

RICHARD. Where is it?

TINA. Probably with my coat.

RICHARD. *[After looking]* No.

TINA. *[Holding her head in her hands]* See if I put it in one of the shopping bags.

RICHARD. Nope. No sign of it.

TINA. *[Exploding]* Are you looking on the ceiling?! It's got to be around here somewhere! *[She noisily searches. RICHARD sticks his arm down a sleeve of her coat, only to find his fingers]* I'm sorry, Richard. I'm just having a bad day. All this rain, the traffic, my mother's in the hospital—I still don't understand why—and my purse has vanished into thin air!

RICHARD. *[Leading her to the couch.]* This isn't exactly how I planned on doing this... But, now that your purse is gone, well... There's something I've been wanting to tell you.

TINA. Not more bad news.

RICHARD. *[He smiles nervously]* Oh, it's good. I hope. *[He blushes and hesitates a moment]* This was supposed to be a surprise.

TINA. You haven't spoiled the surprise yet. *[RICHARD looks uncomfortably shy]* Don't worry. You can tell me.

RICHARD. I don't exactly want to *tell* you something. It's more of a *question* really. It's something I'm hoping you will tell me. After I ask the question, I mean.

TINA. Go ahead.

RICHARD. *[He gulps]* Uh, Tina? *[She looks at him expectantly. He takes her hand in his]* You and I, we... I mean... In your purse, I... *[Abruptly changing his expression]* Do you want to check the Lost & Found at the mall and see if they have your purse?

TINA. *[Perplexed]* No. It'll turn up.

RICHARD. Maybe you just left it somewhere.

TINA. Is that all you wanted to ask me? Look, don't worry about my purse. There wasn't anything extremely valuable in it. I'll just cancel my credit cards and my checking account, replace my driver's license, renew my library card, change the locks on the doors, get an unlisted telephone number, buy a whole new collection of cosmetic accessories, and find the negatives so I can get reprints of my wallet pictures. It's no big deal.

RICHARD. *[With a sigh]* That's what you think.

TINA. What is that supposed to mean?

RICHARD. *[Grinning sheepishly]* I wrote you a letter and put it in your purse.

TINA. You did? You sly fox! *[She laughs and throws a pillow at Richard]* So *that's* why you're so worried about my purse! *[She feels his forehead]* I think you're suffering from a chronic case of lovesickness.

RICHARD. *[Very serious puppy-love face]* Oh yes.

TINA. You silly lover boy! So what did this letter say?

RICHARD. That's what I've been trying to tell you.

TINA. Oh! Well? Don't keep me in suspense.

RICHARD. Remember Valentine's Day?

TINA. *[Fondly]* Oh, I'll never forget. You and I were having a lovely dinner at that Italian restaurant... *[suddenly angry]* ...when your sister Sabrina had to butt in and ruin everything! Then she spilled my drink all over my sweater! I could have strangled her!

RICHARD. I was referring to the "lovely dinner" part.

TINA. Oh. Yes?

RICHARD. *[He nervously clears his throat]* Ever since that night I've been wanting to... to tell you how I feel. Tina, will you— *[He coughs]* Will you please—*[He starts having a coughing fit]*

TINA. *[Patting his back]* Are you okay? Let me get you a glass of water. *[She exits]*

RICHARD. *[Having recovered, he starts talking to himself]* Come on, Richard, you can do this. You didn't have any trouble asking the coat rack! Will you marry me? That's not right. *[He gets down on one knee in front of the couch]* Whenever I'm near you, something stirs within me. No, that sounds like a laxative advertisement. *[Experimenting with his voice]* Tina, darling, will you marry me? Oh boy. *[He rests his head on the sofa]*

TINA. *[Entering with a glass of water]* Richard! What's wrong? Are you sick?

RICHARD. *[Standing up]* No. I'm fine. Sit down. Please.

TINA. *[Quasi-therapist]* I'm concerned about you. You seem tense. Upset. *[She puts the water on the table]* What is it?

RICHARD. *[On bended knee]* Tina, darling, will you— *[The front door bursts open and a frazzled MRS. TEAL enters]*

MRS. TEAL. Oh my poor baby!

TINA. *[Rushing to hug her mother]* Mom! Are you okay?

MRS. TEAL. Yes dear, I know you're okay. Only minor bruises. They told me you'd been discharged so I came home as fast as I could.

TINA. I was so worried about you. Why did you go to the hospital?

MRS. TEAL. I'm your mother! What did you expect me to do?

TINA. What happened?

MRS. TEAL. You don't remember? Oh, no. This must be delayed shock. You'd better lie down.

TINA. I don't understand. How were you involved in a car accident? Richard called the hospital, but—

MRS. TEAL *[Noticing him for the first time]* Oh, hello, Richard. What are you doing on the floor?

RICHARD. *[Quickly standing]* Uh, nothing. Why were you taken to the hospital?

MRS. TEAL. That nice police sergeant—what was his name? He offered me a ride. After he told me what happened, well... *[perfectly composed]* I nearly trembled.

TINA. Why did the police have anything to do with you? What did they ask you? What did you say to them?

MRS. TEAL. The police always report accidents. It's their job. *[The TELEPHONE rings. TINA moves to answer it]* I'll answer that. You just relax.

TINA. No, Mother, let me get it. You sit down and rest.

MRS. TEAL. Tina, you've gone through a lot already. Now that you're finally home safe, I want you to take it easy.

TINA. What are you talking about? Yeah, we had a little trouble on the road because of the rain, but—

MRS. TEAL. A little trouble? You're lucky to be alive!

RICHARD. *[The PHONE has continued to ring]* I think I'll answer the phone.

MRS. TEAL. *[Going to the phone]* That's okay Richard, I can take care of it. You just keep her calm.

TINA. Keep me calm?

RICHARD. *[Feigned seriousness]* Would you like a tranquilizer?

MRS. TEAL. Hello? Cleats! Of course! I was trying to remember your name. *[Looking at Tina]* Yes, she's right here. She seems all right. Still a bit shook up, though. I want to thank you for all your help.

TINA. Richard, she's not making any sense. Whatever happened must have been more than her nerves could handle.

MRS. TEAL. *[Still on the phone]* Why should I be alarmed? What?! Yes, but— No! I refuse to believe that Kristina would ever— *[She stops and smiles at the others]* Excuse me just a minute. *[She stretches the phone cord into an adjoining room to continue her conversation out of their hearing]*

TINA. What was that all about?

RICHARD. We can clear things up when she gets off the phone.

TINA. Richard, she may never get off the phone. She's talking about me. *[She paces nervously]*

MRS. TEAL. *[From the other room]* What?!

TINA. *[Unable to bear it any longer]* I'm going to see if I left my purse in the car. *[Flinging her coat over her head, she exits. MRS. TEAL hangs up the phone]*

MRS. TEAL. *[Forced cheerfulness]* Okay! Where were we? Oh, Tina, I think— Richard, where's Tina?

RICHARD. She left to—

MRS. TEAL. She left? Why? Where?

RICHARD. She went to the car to look for her purse.

MRS. TEAL. Oh! *[Suddenly very serious]* Richard, I have to tell you something. That was Sergeant Cleats on the phone. He said... he said Tina is a prime suspect in a recent robbery! I told him that's ridiculous.

RICHARD. There must be some mistake.

MRS. TEAL. But what if it's *not* a mistake? I trust Tina. She's my daughter. But why would the police suspect someone if they didn't have a good reason? *[She inhales sharply]* Richard, remember when I first mentioned the police?

RICHARD. You said a police sergeant drove you to the hospital.

MRS. TEAL. That seemed to upset Tina, didn't it? Oh dear. Tina could be in some kind of trouble.

RICHARD. Surely not. I still don't understand why you went to the hospital.

MRS. TEAL. *[Sympathetically]* I know. It's hard to take in so much at once. I'd planned on going to the opera this evening, but that was before my white dish towel was tossed in this dark load.

RICHARD. Huh?

MRS. TEAL. *[She starts pacing]* Sergeant Cleats will be here in half an hour. He asked me not to say anything and told me to make sure she doesn't leave.

RICHARD. Why? I mean, what does he think she did?

MRS. TEAL. He wouldn't say. *[Choking back a sob]* He didn't want me to get upset! *[Very melodramatic]* "Just be careful," he said. "She may be armed!"

RICHARD. What?!

[TINA enters. There is a crash of THUNDER. RICHARD and MRS. TEAL try to act nonchalant. They both smile at her]

TINA. What? Why are you looking at me like that? *[Jokingly]* Whatever it is, I didn't do it.

MRS. TEAL. I believe you, honey! I promise to testify on your behalf.

TINA. *[Skeptical of her mother's sanity]* Uh-huh. Maybe you ought to lie down. You've had a hard day. *[Helps her take off her coat]* It's getting late anyway.

MRS. TEAL. What crime is it?

TINA. Crime?

MRS. TEAL. Time! What *time* is it? Oh, maybe I should just lie down. *[She wilts into a chair]*

RICHARD. *[To Tina]* It wasn't there?

TINA. What wasn't where?

RICHARD. Your purse. It wasn't in the car?

TINA. No, I couldn't find it anywhere. Richard, didn't you pick it up when we left the shoe store?

RICHARD. No, I'm sure I didn't.

TINA. I'm beginning to think my purse was stolen.

MRS. TEAL. *[Aghast]* Stolen! Oh, Tina! Most people *pay* for things when they go shopping! I'd have given you the money! *[To Richard]* I admit in the past I let her go without certain luxuries. I never gave her a raise in her allowance because I wanted her to make wise financial decisions. I never thought she'd resort to stealing!

TINA. Muh-ther! I didn't steal a purse! I said somebody stole *my* purse from me!

MRS. TEAL. Oh.

TINA. You don't really think I would do something like that, do you? *[MRS. TEAL is reluctant to answer]* Do you?

MRS. TEAL. Of... of course not, Tina. *[Hurt, TINA turns away and ignores her mother]* Oh honey. I'm sorry It's just—

TINA. *[Sitting beside Richard]* Well, I guess my old bag is gone. And so is that letter you wrote me. You never finished telling me what it said.

RICHARD. I didn't? *[He nervously pulls away]* Oh, yeah! I really don't think now would be a good time.

TINA. Why not? *[She scoots closer to him]* I thought you wanted to ask me something *urgent*.

RICHARD. Yes, but... I'm having second thoughts.

TINA. Second thoughts?

RICHARD. *[Jumping up]* I mean, uh... every second that goes by I learn so much uh... more... about you! *[He smiles weakly. The DOOR-BELL rings.]*

MRS. TEAL. Oh, no. He's here already! But it hasn't been thirty minutes yet. *[Forcing herself to sound calm]* Tina, darling, would you get me a glass of water?

TINA. *[Heading for the door]* Sure, after I get the door.

MRS. TEAL. *[Shouting harshly]* DON'T ANSWER IT! *[TINA stares at her mother]* My throat is really dry.

TINA. Take the glass on the coffee table. Nobody's touched it *[KNOCKING at the door continues]*

MRS. TEAL. It's not cold. I've got to have cold water. Now.

TINA. All right, all right. I'll get you some cold water. Just sit down. *[She exits]*

RICHARD. I'm going to open that door. Don't you dare try to stop me.

MRS. TEAL. *[Surprised at him]* Really!

RICHARD. *[After opening the door]* Sabrina!

[SABRINA enters. Her long dark hair is wet and tangled, her face is smudged, and her clothes are rumpled. She is wearing a blue rain slicker and a purse is dangling from her hand]

SABRINA. Richard, I... I was... *[She bursts into tears]*

MRS. TEAL. Sabrina? What's wrong? *[To Richard]* Why is she crying?

SABRINA. *[To Richard, between sniffles]* I followed you and Tina at the mall. And then I... Oh Richard, please forgive me! *[She buries her head in his shoulder. TINA enters with a glass of water]*

TINA. Here's your water, Mom. Who was at the door? *[She stops; instantly jealous. Her smile is tight, her tone is acid]* Richard, aren't you going to introduce me to your little friend? *[SABRINA looks up. The girls exchange glares of recognition, then turn their backs to each other.]* What is she doing here?

SABRINA. *[Sarcastically]* It's good to see you, too.

TINA. *[To Richard]* Your sister could have at least brushed her hair before barging in on us, like this.

SABRINA. My hair would be gray if I had to wait for an invitation!

MRS. TEAL. Stop it, both of you. Why aren't you getting along? You've always been such good friends.

TINA. Things have changed, Mother. *[She deposits the glass in her hand]* We aren't just brainless school girls, any more.

SABRINA. Brainless? Speak for yourself. You're the one who constantly borrowed my homework!

MRS. TEAL. *[To Tina]* Is that true?

TINA. Well... She *let* me!

RICHARD. *[To Sabrina]* What did you do at the mall? Tell me what happened.

SABRINA. This morning I heard you telling Mom and Dad about your... *[She glances at TINA, then pulls him aside]... plans.* That made me so angry! Not at you, though. At *her*. I wasn't thinking straight. *[Holding up the purse]* When I saw this sitting in that chair—

TINA. *[Snatching it away]* That's *my* purse! What are you doing with it? I knew you had a nasty side, but I never thought you'd sink this low.

SABRINA. Oh give me a break! You've taken my purse before. Only I made it all the way to the check-out counter. I couldn't pay for that dress because *you* had my purse!

TINA. That was April Fools Day!

SABRINA. Ha, ha. Very funny. *[Mimicking Tina]* "Look on the bright side, Sabrina. At least you couldn't overextend your credit cards!" I was humiliated. Besides, it's not like I mugged you and ran off with your purse just for the fun of it. You carelessly left it at the store. I was going to give it back.

TINA. *[Sarcastic; sickeningly insincere]* Thank you so much, Sabrina! Let me call my stock broker and see if I can afford a big, fat reward!

SABRINA. Don't pretend to know my motives. You haven't let me explain anything!

TINA. By all means. Go right ahead! I'm sure it will be fascinating to hear what circumstances led you to justify stealing my purse.

SABRINA. *[Nervously pushing strands of hair out of her face]* That... That's not important.

MRS. TEAL. *[Not unkindly]* I thought you wanted to explain.

TINA. *[Unkindly]* Yes, aren't you going to give us all the juicy details?

SABRINA. All you can think about is yourself. So you didn't have your precious purse for a few hours. That's nothing. I was kidnapped! *[She plops down on the sofa. The OTHERS ad lib strong reactions]*

TINA. Yeah, right! You were abducted by little green aliens who took you to see Elvis, is that it? I'm sure you can think of a better excuse than that. One that doesn't sound like a grocery store tabloid!

SABRINA. I am telling the truth!

RICHARD. *[To Tina]* Let her finish her story.

SABRINA. It's not a story!

TINA. *[Stepping threateningly towards Sabrina]* I don't care what it is! *[Raising her arm, she gestures vehemently]* You forfeited your right to be heard the minute you stole my purse!

MRS. TEAL. *[Grabbing Tina's arm]* No, Tina! Don't you dare strike her! Richard, help me! She's gone violent!

TINA. Mother! Let go of me! Richard! *[RICHARD hesitates before jumping up and grabbing her other arm. SABRINA starts crying hysterically. MRS. TEAL and RICHARD force TINA into a chair and hold her there]*

MRS. TEAL. *[To Richard]* We've got to keep her under control. You-know-who will be here in less than half an hour.

RICHARD. Maybe we should separate them.

MRS. TEAL. Why don't you take her in the other room for a while?

TINA. Yes! Come on, Richard, let's get out of here. The weather is much too cold. *[SABRINA is still crying]* And wet! *[RICHARD and TINA exit]*

MRS. TEAL. Now, Sabrina, it's just the two of us. *[She helps her peel out of her rain slicker. SABRINA jerks her arms and wails loudly]* There now. *[She waits for her to stop crying]* You can tell me exactly what happened. *[She offers her a tissue]* Can I get you some coffee? *[SABRINA continues blubbing. Out of patience, MRS. TEAL hands her the entire box of tissue]* Will you puh-leeze get control of yourself!

SABRINA. *[Finally stopping]* I'm ashamed of myself. Richard loves Tina, but he's just so shy. That's why he secretly put a love letter in her purse.

MRS. TEAL. *[Clasping her hands]* How romantic!

SABRINA. *[Irritated]* Yeah, well he also put in an engagement ring.

MRS. TEAL. Oh! Oh! *[She starts blinking back tears and taking deep, exaggerated breaths]* A proposal! *[SABRINA gives her a tissue to dab her eyes]*

SABRINA. Lately, Tina has been acting like such a jerk. I couldn't bear the thought of actually being related to her. *[She shudders]*

MRS. TEAL. *[Annoyed]* So you took her purse. Sabotaged everything. Being a loyal friend?

SABRINA. I suppose I got what I deserved. But let me tell you *my* side of the story. *[She strikes a dramatic pose]* It was dark and stormy. I bumped into a man in the parking lot. He grabbed me! I tried to scream, but his hairy arm was covering my mouth! He forced me into his car, swearing and growling—

MRS. TEAL. Oh, Sabrina! He didn't... take advantage of you, did he?

SABRINA. No. I was praying out loud that he wouldn't. I was terrified! That monster drove like a maniac! It was impossible to see through the rain. Suddenly, there was a tree right in front of us! I had my seat belt on, but he didn't. His head smashed right into the steering wheel. The horn jammed! The piercing blare went on and on!! Hhuuunnnggg!!! *[MRS. TEAL jumps, startled]*

MRS. TEAL. Sabrina! Please!

SABRINA. Next thing I knew I was in the hospital.

MRS. TEAL. Wait a minute. Tina! Come here! *[To Sabrina]* She was in a wreck, too.

SABRINA. Did the police tell you that?

MRS. TEAL. Yes, I went to the hospital, but—

TINA. *[Entering with RICHARD behind her]* Mother, what's the matter?

MRS. TEAL. Sabrina was also in a car wreck.

TINA. Is that what she told you? Mother, she's just trying to get your sympathy.

SABRINA. Are you calling me a liar?

TINA. Let's see here, first you steal my purse. Then you say you were kidnapped. Now you're telling us you were in a wreck. What am I supposed to think?

MRS. TEAL. Tina, don't pass judgment so quickly. You haven't heard all the facts.

TINA. Give me some facts that aren't subject to change.

SABRINA. It wouldn't do any good if they were carved in stone. You simply refuse to believe the truth because you're still mad at me!

MRS. TEAL. Now, look. You've both suffered through a car accident—*[The following lines overlap in rapid-fire succession, their VOICES increasing in volume]*

SABRINA. That's right!

TINA. I was *not* in a car accident!

MRS. TEAL. But you haven't had time to adequately recover!

SABRINA. Have a little compassion!

TINA. And I seriously doubt that she was!

MRS. TEAL. Let's just sit down and discuss this quietly!

SABRINA. I came here to solve some of the problems I started—

TINA. You were taken to the hospital, Mother!

MRS. TEAL. Neither one of you are...

SABRINA. But every time I open my mouth...

TINA. We should be concerned about you...

MRS. TEAL. ...in any condition to be fighting!!

SABRINA. *[Pointing at Tina]* ...you have to jump down my throat!!

TINA. *[Pointing at Sabrina]* ...not this hysterical purse pincher!!

RICHARD. Ladies, please! If you would just—

MRS. TEAL. This isn't getting us anywhere! We've got to get this mess untangled.

TINA. I was *supposed* to do some light shopping today and then have a quiet, peaceful evening. Just me and Richard.

SABRINA. All you can talk about it how *you* have been mistreated! *[Here the conversation splits and all three WOMEN begin shouting simultaneously]*

MRS. TEAL. If Cleats walked in right now and saw us babbling like a bunch of headless chickens I wouldn't be a bit surprised if he arrested us all on the spot!!

TINA. But, no! I'm stuck here with a petty thief! And my mother is barely coping with mental anguish caused by reckless drivers!!

SABRINA. It's impossible to get a word in edgewise! I'm cold! I'm wet! I'm dirty! And you still haven't let me tell you what the police have done!! *[Before they can finish, RICHARD interrupts them in a thundering voice]*

RICHARD. QUIET! [*The WOMEN drop their jaws in stunned silence*] Sit down! All of you! We need some solid information! I'm going to ask the questions. I want you to answer as *concisely* as possible. Mrs. Teal, were you in an automobile accident?

MRS. TEAL. No, not today. But once my husband and I—

TINA. But mother, you told me—

RICHARD. Thank you! [*To Sabrina*] Were you in a car wreck?

SABRINA. Yes.

RICHARD. [*To Tina*] I was with you all day, but just to be fair, were you in a wreck?

TINA. No. [*Just a hint of sarcasm*] Your honor.

MRS. TEAL. [*To Tina*] You weren't? But Sergeant Cleats told me— [*noticing the look RICHARD is giving her*] Oh. Sorry. [*SABRINA raises her hand*]

RICHARD. Yes?

SABRINA. I think I can explain that. Like I told Mrs. Teal, as I was leaving the mall a decidedly unscrupulous individual forced me into his vehicle and departed at high speed. When I woke up at the hospital, I discovered that because I had this purse—

TINA. [*Slapping away Sabrina's hand*] You keep your hands off my purse!

RICHARD. Please continue.

SABRINA. Well, the police used Tina's driver's license to identify me. [*To Mrs. Teal*] That's why they told you that your daughter was in a wreck.

TINA. But, Mother, I thought *you* were in a wreck. That's what your message said. And the hospital receptionist told us—

RICHARD. Her message just said there'd been an accident. And the hospital only said the woman was registered under the name of Teal.

SABRINA. Which was really *me*, not your mother.

MRS. TEAL. Oh now I get it! [*To Sabrina*] But why didn't you correct them? You could have spared me a few wrinkles.

SABRINA. I was scared, that's why. I felt guilty. [*TINA rolls her eyes and guffaws*] Yes, Tina, I do have a conscience. I was afraid of getting in trouble. So I let them think I was Kristina Teal. I just had to get out of there.

MRS. TEAL. You lied to the police?

SABRINA. No! I told the truth. Just not the whole truth.

TINA. You deliberately deceived the police. In one evening you've already added two offenses to your criminal record.

MRS. TEAL. Tina, there's something I must know. Are you carrying a gun?

TINA. *[Shocked]* NO!!

MRS. TEAL. What have you done that could make you a criminal suspect?

TINA. Nothing! Mother, why are you interrogating me? She's the one committing the crimes!

SABRINA. I never would have touched your purse if you weren't trying to sink your fangs into my brother!

TINA. Don't blame it on me! You're the one who introduced us in the first place!

SABRINA. Only because you were desperate for friends and nobody else would talk to you!

TINA. *[Hurt]* That's not true.

SABRINA. Oh, Tina. I didn't mean that.

RICHARD. I care very much about both of you. Why can't you settle your differences?

TINA. I have nothing to settle with her. She's the one who has hurt me.

SABRINA. Ha! It's the other way around. I'm the wounded victim!

MRS. TEAL. I think you're both to blame. You've got to forgive each other. A police sergeant will be here any minute now.

SABRINA. *[Alarmed]* But... why?

MRS. TEAL. Now, Tina, promise me you won't get excited.

TINA. *[Very excited]* Mother, I'm not the least bit excited!!

MRS. TEAL. Sergeant Cleats wants to ask you some questions. He's investigating some recent crime.

TINA. Stolen purses, perhaps? *[TINA and SABRINA give each other dirty looks]*

MRS. TEAL. No, *you* are his prime suspect.

TINA. Well he's just going to have to change his suspects, that's all there is to it.

RICHARD. Did the sergeant specifically say he suspects Tina?

MRS. TEAL. Yes. I already told you.

RICHARD. Was Cleats the same sergeant who told you Tina was in a wreck?

MRS. TEAL. *[Confused]* Yes.

RICHARD. Then when he said Tina, it was really Sabrina.

SABRINA. But I haven't done anything wrong! The purse. Oh, no.

TINA. Your troubled past is catching up with you.

MRS. TEAL. But, why would the police start a criminal investigation over a purse?

RICHARD. Sabrina, what happened to that man who dragged you into his car?

SABRINA. He's still at the hospital, I guess.

RICHARD. He must be an escaped convict or something, and since you were with him the police want to question Tina.

MRS. TEAL. Huh?

RICHARD. Because he thinks she's Tina.

MRS. TEAL. Who does?

RICHARD. Sergeant Cleats. The driver was probably linked to a recent crime.

SABRINA. Of course he was. He kidnapped me!

MRS. TEAL. That's what we'll tell Sergeant Cleats when he comes to talk with Kristina, who he thinks is Sabrina because she had Tina's driver's license. Tina, uh, Tina, I mean *Sabrina* can explain that she had nothing to do with that man!

TINA. You don't think the police are going to wonder what she was doing with *my* driver's license? If you're going to give a list of broken laws, you'll have to include a confession of your own.

SABRINA. She's right. How can I point my finger at that man when I haven't been completely honest with the police, myself? I didn't even use my real name.

RICHARD. We've got to report what that man has done.

MRS. TEAL. Even if it means putting Sabrina at risk?

TINA. *[Disturbed]* What are you suggesting?

MRS. TEAL. I just thought maybe Sergeant Cleats doesn't need to know which one of you is really Tina.

RICHARD. *[Quietly]* That's called obstructing justice.

[ALL pause. They're startled by a flash of LIGHTNING and a loud clap of THUNDER]

SABRINA. Look, I appreciate your concern for me, but I want everything straightened out.

MRS. TEAL. I'm sure Sergeant Cleats will understand. It's not like anyone is pressing charges against you. *[TINA folds her arms across her chest]* Tina, tell me you're not considering...

TINA. She's got to accept the consequences of her actions. Even if she was temporarily insane!

SABRINA. I can't believe you would do this to me. All those years of friendship meant absolutely nothing to you! You are selfish, ruthless, unfeeling, and I don't know what Richard sees in you!

TINA. Richard obviously went looking for a woman with better qualities than those of his sister! I'm glad you haven't poisoned his opinion of the entire opposite sex!

RICHARD. Neither one of you are very appealing right now.

MRS. TEAL. This is positively ridiculous! What is it between you two?

TINA. *[Struggling to think of something]* She's... I have... Well, for one thing she's always late.

SABRINA. Late?! *You're* the one who's always late! You'll probably be late to your own funeral!

TINA. I hope so! It'd be pointless to have a funeral if I wasn't the *late* Tina Teal.

SABRINA. *[Patronizing]* Oh, that's real cute! Just like you were late for your graduation ceremony, right?

TINA. How dare you bring that up! You know I had so much—

MRS. TEAL. Tina! It's just a purse! Don't let a stupid misunderstanding ruin your friendship.

TINA. That's not the only reason. It goes much deeper than that. My purse was just the straw that broke the beggar's back.

RICHARD. You mean the *camel's* back.

TINA. Whatever!!

SABRINA. She's one camel who's done more than her fair share of spitting!

RICHARD. Bouncing insults back and forth only makes things worse.

MRS. TEAL. They always were good at tennis.

RICHARD. You should talk about your problems and try to resolve them.

[TINA and SABRINA look at the floor, then make eye contact. In unison they turn and glare at Richard]

SABRINA. This is none of your business. *[Shoving him away]* Stay out of it!

TINA. Yeah! Don't try to be our referee!

RICHARD. All right! *[He sits down and loudly turns the pages of a magazine]*

MRS. TEAL. At least they agree on *something*.

TINA. *[To Sabrina]* I have plenty of grievances to discuss with you. *[Dripping with venom]* Let's start with Valentine's Day. My pink sweater will never be pink again!

SABRINA. You know perfectly well that was an accident. I never meant to knock over your drink.

TINA. Then why did you stand there laughing? You seemed to think it was hilarious.

SABRINA. I couldn't help it. And lighten up. *[Smiling genuinely]* Years from now you'll realize the significance of that evening with Richard and how... *[hinting about the ring]* ...that led to your purse and you'll think it was pretty funny too!

RICHARD. There *is* more to this than you know.

TINA. I'll just giggle with glee and all my hurt feelings will disappear.

SABRINA. Oh, you're a fine example of being considerate of other people's feelings! You knew I wanted that opera ticket, but you deliberately snatched it away from me!

TINA. What opera ticket?

SABRINA. Don't play dumb. There was only one ticket left, but you managed to deprive me of it!

MRS. TEAL. *[To Sabrina]* You wanted to go to the opera performance tonight?

TINA. I had no idea there was a performance until you started ranting and raving about it.

SABRINA. Oh yes you did. I asked the box office manager and he told me the last name on the list was Teal. And you are the only Teal in the phone book so don't try to deny it!

MRS. TEAL. Uh, Sabrina... There's more than one Teal in this family.

RICHARD. You mean, *you* bought that ticket? [*Mrs. TEAL smiles weakly*]

SABRINA. You?! But I thought... [*She points at TINA, who turns her back on Sabrina*] I seem to have made a mistake.

TINA. I'll say.

SABRINA. I guess, I sort of jumped to conclusions. I apologize. [*RICHARD spins her around and pushes her toward Tina*] Tina, I'm sorry. And I'm sorry for ruining your sweater. It was terrible for me to laugh at you like that. Please forgive me.

TINA. [*Angry*] Now you're begging my forgiveness! You're not sorry. I can see right through you. [*Mocking*] "Please don't press charges"—that's what you're really saying. Isn't it?

MRS. TEAL. [*Shocked*] Tina!

SABRINA. [*Crushed*] I can't do anything to satisfy you. I'm being sincere and you think it must be an evil trick. [*The DOORBELL rings. They all stiffen and freeze. Silence*]

RICHARD. Hey, relax. The Grim Reaper wouldn't bother to ring the doorbell.

MRS. TEAL. [*To Tina*] You answer it. You're the one he wants to talk to.

TINA. No I'm not. Sabrina should answer the door. She needs to tell him her real name.

SABRINA. But I've never met him before. [*To Mrs. Teal*] He'll recognize you. [*RICHARD heaves an exasperated sigh and opens the door himself*]

MRS. TEAL. [*Growing increasingly excited*] Oh, it's probably just a delivery boy! Or,...or a vacuum cleaner salesman! Why should it be Sergeant Cleats? [*Turning, she is startled to find CLEATS standing right beside her. She screams*] AAaarrgghh!

CLEATS. Hello.

MRS. TEAL. Oh, Sergeant Cleats! What a surprise! Why, we were just talking about you, weren't we girls? Come right on in? You don't look anything like a vacuum cleaner salesman! [*She giggles hysterically. Seeing the others' solemn expressions, her laughter disintegrates to a feeble whimper*] How about a little music? [*She turns on the STEREO to a screeching soprano, but quickly turns it off*] Maybe not.

CLEATS. Mrs. Teal, I'd like to ask your daughter some questions about the man who was in the car with her.

MRS. TEAL. Tina had nothing to do with that criminal! Sabrina is your real suspect, but you'll change your mind after you hear what that man did to her. I know you thought she was Tina, but that was only because she had Tina's driver's license!

CLEATS. Who's Tina? I mean, who's Sabrina? No, just tell me who is Kristina Teal.

MRS. TEAL. This is. She goes by Tina. She thought I was in a wreck, but I wasn't. I bought the last ticket that Sabrina wanted. She was in the wreck. I went to the hospital because you told me Sabrina is my daughter. But she's not.

TINA. Richard, get my mother some coffee. *[He exits]*

CLEATS. *[To Sabrina]* You were at the hospital, weren't you?

SABRINA. Yes, but I was discharged.

MRS. TEAL. When you called and said you suspected her, I thought you meant *my* Tina. But it was actually my *other* Tina. I mean Sabrina. The one who was kidnapped by that insane—

CLEATS. Did you say kidnapped? *[RICHARD enters with a mug]*

TINA. *[Taking the mug]* Mother, take this. You're under a lot of stress.

CLEATS. Now let me get this straight. Which one of you was kidnapped?

SABRINA. I was.

CLEATS. *[Writing in his note pad]* And your name is Sabrina?

SABRINA. That's right.

CLEATS. And who was it that kidnapped you?

SABRINA. I don't know his name!

RICHARD. He just grabbed her and threw her into his car.

CLEATS. Who are you?

RICHARD. Sabrina's brother. I was at the shoe store with Tina.

CLEATS. What is your name?

RICHARD. Oh. *[He grabs his head and shakes it]* Richard.

MRS. TEAL. So you see, Sergeant, she really was kidnapped. It wasn't just a bunch of little green Elvis men!

TINA. Drink your coffee, Mother.

CLEATS. The more I hear the more confused I get.

TINA. Do you need some coffee, too?

CLEATS. No. I'm going to tell you what I know about this situation. Then maybe you'll be able to tell me something that makes sense. *[Reading from note pad]* At approximately seven-thirty this evening a maroon Oldsmobile crashed into a tree on Bend road. Both occupants were taken to Grace County Hospital. The passenger was identified as Kristina Teal.

TINA. That's me! But it wasn't really me.

SABRINA. It was me.

CLEATS. We'll work that out in a minute. I then notified Mrs. Teal.

MRS. TEAL. Steal?! Who said anything about stealing? I didn't steal anything!

RICHARD. He didn't say *steal*! He said *Mrs. Teal*!

MRS. TEAL. Oh. What did he say about me?

CLEATS. I notified you.

MRS. TEAL. *[Completely lost]* Of what?

ALL. OF THE AUTO ACCIDENT!!

MRS. TEAL. Okay! Okay! I remember! Now I know where we are. *[TINA and SABRINA groan loudly]*

CLEATS. The young woman sustained only minor bruises and was discharged. The driver however, remained unconscious. His thumb print revealed he is a convicted felon known as "Slippery Sly."

MRS. TEAL. *[To Sabrina]* Slippery? I thought you said he was hairy. *[CLEATS loudly clears his throat]* Oh, excuse me.

CLEATS. Just before the accident, the owner of "Gorgeous Gems" jewelry store in the mall reported that a man matching Sly's description pulled a gun on him and demanded several expensive rings. He was last seen driving away in a maroon Oldsmobile with a young woman. She had long dark hair and was wearing a blue rain jacket. *[He points his pen at Sabrina and the blue slicker draped over the couch]*

SABRINA. I never saw that man before in my life! If he hadn't hit that tree I'd still be his hostage!

CLEATS. Did anyone actually see him grab you?

SABRINA. No.

CLEATS. What happened at the hospital?

SABRINA. I had passed out. Because I had Tina's purse with her driver's license, the paramedics assumed I was Tina.

RICHARD. That's why you notified Mrs. Teal. She believed Tina was in a wreck.

TINA. I certainly was popular this evening.

CLEATS. *[To Sabrina]* Did "Sly" inflict bodily harm upon you, in any way, before the accident?

SABRINA. No. He just threatened me.

CLEATS. Did you have anything with you he might have taken?

SABRINA. I bought some things at the mall.

CLEATS. Could you tell me exactly what you purchased? *[Writing in his note pad]*

SABRINA. A new magazine for the bathroom, because I've read all the other ones. Some red finger nail polish to repair my sunglasses. The paint has started chipping.

MRS. TEAL. Oh, I never thought of using finger nail polish for touch-up jobs! What a good idea!

SABRINA. I also bought some Baby Smooth pimple prevention cream for Richard.

TINA. *[To RICHARD, who is embarrassed]* You use Baby Smooth?

CLEATS. Just the facts please. Did you buy anything else?

SABRINA. *[Avoiding TINA's eyes]* Yes. I bought a pink sweater for... *[softly, but full of feeling]* ...a friend. *[TINA is surprised to hear this. It profoundly affects her]*

CLEATS. I'll see if I can locate these items for you. There is still one thing I don't quite understand. What were you doing with her purse?

SABRINA. I knew it would come to this eventually. I confess. I st—

TINA. *[Leaping to her feet]* She picked it up for me. I had carelessly left it at the shoe store. Sabrina here was nice enough to bring it back to me. *[SABRINA looks at her. TINA smiles reassuringly]*

CLEATS. I see. *[To Sabrina]* I'm sorry to inconvenience you but I have to ask that you return with me to the Police Department.

TINA. *[Alarmed]* But why? Nobody's pressing charges against her!

CLEATS. I'm afraid it's necessary. There is no evidence to support your claim that you were *kidnapped* by "Sly." You are still suspected of being his accomplice and the stolen jewelry has not been recovered.

MRS. TEAL. That's preposterous! Sabrina would no more rob a jewelry store than I would! *[CLEATS gives her a scrutinizing look]* I didn't say I did!

RICHARD. Was the car searched?

CLEATS. Yes, but there was nothing important except for several unregistered handguns in the trunk.

SABRINA. *[In despair]* What can I say to defend myself?

TINA. *[To Cleats]* Wait! Just wait a minute! You need evidence? Right? I can prove that Sabrina is innocent! She never touched that stolen jewelry. *[Growing increasingly melodramatic]* You can search her from head to toe. If you find just one diamond ring or one necklace, *then* you can legitimately arrest her. She had this purse with her all evening. Go ahead and search it, too! *[She thrusts the purse towards Cleats. The OTHERS immediately try to stop her, grabbing her arms and shouting almost at once]*

MRS. TEAL. NO, TINA!!

SABRINA. WAIT!!

RICHARD. *[Snatching the purse]* DON'T!!

CLEATS. Hey! What's going on here!

TINA. *[To Sabrina]* I'm trying to help you!

SABRINA. You don't know what you're doing!

MRS. TEAL. There is a ring in that purse!

TINA. *[In horror]* Oh, Sabrina! How could you?

CLEATS. Where did this ring come from?

MRS. TEAL. *[Extremely upset]* Don't worry! It wasn't stolen. At least I don't think it was. It better not have been! Stolen rings! Stolen purses! Stolen guns! What next? We'll all get kidnapped! Or arrested! Or smothered in stained pink sweaters! First Tina had a wreck! Then it was Sabrina! Now I'm a nervous wreck! *[She collapses on the couch and begins moaning]*

TINA. Mother, are you all right? Her blood pressure must be sky rocketing!

SABRINA. Has she been getting enough sleep?

TINA. I doubt it. Now she's falling apart!

SABRINA. *[Fanning her with a magazine]* Oh, I feel like this is all my fault!

TINA. We haven't done her fragile nerves any good, that's for sure!

SABRINA. My great-grandmother used to have spells like this, but not any more!

TINA. Why? What happened to her?

SABRINA. She's dead.

TINA. Oh, please Mother!! Speak to me!!

[RICHARD puts an end to their frantic fussing by picking up the glass of water on the coffee table and splashing MRS. TEAL in the face. He hands the glass to Cleats]

MRS. TEAL. *[Seeing Cleats holding the empty glass]* Oh, really, Sergeant Cleats! That was totally uncalled for!

RICHARD. Tina, listen to me. I put a very special letter in your purse.

TINA. I know. You told me. I just haven't had a chance to read it yet.

RICHARD. I also gave you a ring.

TINA. You put a ring in there? Sabrina, I had no idea. Richard, how could you do a thing like that to your sister? She could've been arrested! If Sergeant Cleats had—

RICHARD. *[Down on one knee]* Tina, will you marry me?

TINA. Carry you? Why should I carry you? I'm not strong enough to pick you—

RICHARD. MARRY!! Will you *marry* me? *[TINA is speechless; catatonic. Her breath comes in short gasps]*

MRS. TEAL. Tina, are you okay? *[She shakes her]*

TINA. Oh! *That* kind of ring! Oh, yes Richard! Yes! *[She hugs him, then grabs her purse]* Where is it? I want to see it! Oh, Richard! I love it! Mother, look!

MRS. TEAL. Oh, honey! An emerald ring!

RICHARD. *[High-pitched, surprised]* Emerald? Uh, Tina... That's not the ring I bought for you.

TINA. It's not? *[She snaps the ring box shut and looks in her purse]* Oh my goodness *[Turning her purse upside-down, dozens of velvet jewelry cases tumble out]*

CLEATS. The treasure hunt is over.

MRS. TEAL. Sly must have stashed the stolen loot in Tina's purse when Sabrina wasn't looking!

CLEATS. After Sly was revived at the hospital I confronted him with this crime. *[To Sabrina]* He told me that you were his partner. But if I accused you of this, you'd say he kidnapped you and that you'd never seen him before in your life.

TINA. She said that because it's true!

CLEATS. How do you know it's true?

TINA. Because she said so!

CLEATS. She also said she was you.

SABRINA. [*Slowly sitting*] I have no alibi. There were no witnesses. I was alone.

RICHARD. No you weren't. Sly was with you.

MRS. TEAL. That's the problem. It's his word against hers.

RICHARD. That's it! Let's use his word against *him*! Sly says they were in it together, but he doesn't know she's really Sabrina!

TINA. Oh! So if he swears that she's me, that would prove that she's not guilty!

CLEATS. I was expecting a wild story, but this is outrageous!

MRS. TEAL. Oh please call the hospital, Sergeant Cleats! This will clear her name. Her *real* name!

SABRINA. How can they have a happy marriage if I end up an outlaw? *In-laws* are bad enough.

CLEATS. All right. May I use your telephone?

MRS. TEAL. Yes! It's right here!

CLEATS. [*He picks up the phone while the OTHERS all hold their breath*] Hello, this is Sergeant Cleats. Please connect me with the guard in room 245. Mac? Yeah, it's me. I'm at the suspect's house. Ask our slippery pal what his partner's full name is. [*Sarcastically*] Does he know his *own* middle name? Uh-huh. And what does Kristina Teal look like? Long dark hair, brown eyes [*adjust to fit your Sabrina*] uh-huh, okay. I've got a real whopper to tell the boys on patrol! Yeah, good-bye. [*He hangs up*] Your story must be valid. It checks out clean at this end. [*They ALL heave a big sigh of relief*]

ALL. [*Ad lib*] Thank heavens! You saved me! It worked! What a relief! Etc...

CLEATS. [*To Sabrina*] But please remain available for further questioning. I'll be on my way as soon as I gather up this jewelry.

TINA. Stop! One of those rings is *mine*!

CLEATS. Oh, that's right. Congratulations, young man!

RICHARD. [*Shaking his hand*] Thanks.

TINA. [*Holding up a ring*] Oh, Richard! Is this the one?

RICHARD. [*Emphatically*] Nooo! [*He grabs his chest*]

TINA. [*Disappointed*] Oh. Are you sure this isn't it? How about this one? [*RICHARD and CLEATS help TINA search through the rings*]

MRS. TEAL. My husband thought I'd have a dull, boring weekend. Wait'll he hears about *this*!

SABRINA. *[Pulling TINA aside]* Tina, there's one more thing I haven't told you yet. Now that we're friends again you'll understand, won't you?

TINA. *[Suspicious]* Sa-bri-na? What have you done?

SABRINA. After I picked up your purse, I felt bad about it. That's when I bought that sweater for you. *[Behind them, RICHARD pantomimes finding the right ring]*

TINA. That's why I decided to forgive you! *[She gives her a hug]* It's okay if the sweater was lost in the wreck. I know you were thinking of me.

SABRINA. Uh... That's not all.

TINA. *[Apprehensive, eyebrows raised]* Oh?

SABRINA. I used your credit card to pay for it!

TINA. WHAT?! Why you vicious little—!

[TINA lunges towards Sabrina. RICHARD and CLEATS grab Tina's arms. MRS. TEAL tries to stop SABRINA from throwing the sofa pillows at Tina. One of the pillows hits the STEREO, adding opera to the chaos and everybody is shouting like one big happy family!]

THE END.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Properties

Stereo—on stage

Lamp—on stage

White dish towel—Mrs. Teal

Policeman's badge—Cleats

Telephone with long cord (or a portable phone)—on end table

Notepad and pencil—on end table beside telephone

Shopping bags, open umbrella—Richard

Glass of water—Tina

Purse, containing many plush ring boxes—Sabrina

Box of facial tissue—Mrs. Teal

Magazines—on end table or coffee table

Coffee mug—Richard

Notepad and pen—Cleats

Costumes

Modern clothing befitting the age and personality of each character. Mrs. Teal has a top coat; Tina a raincoat (any color except blue), and Sabrina a blue raincoat. Other coats, hats, etc., may be added as desired to indicate the rainstorm. Sabrina's clothing is rumpled as the result of the accident she has just been in. Her hair and make-up are also in disarray.

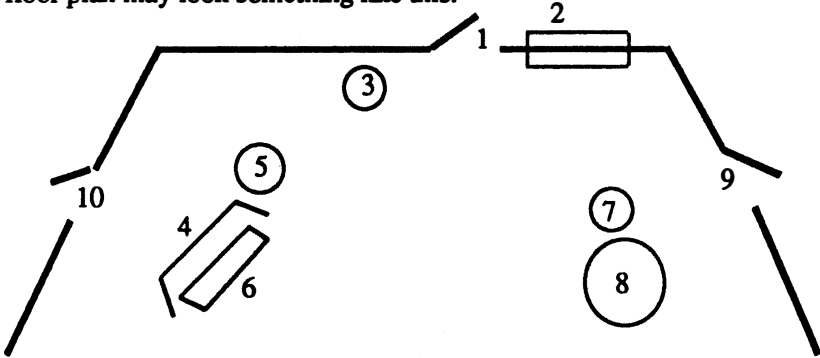
Lights, Sound, Special Effects

Very little special lighting is called for. The stage directions indicate that the room is dimly lighted as the play begins and brightens when Mrs. Teal turns on the lamp.

Music is heard coming from a stereo. There is *lightning* and *thunder* (the lightning, of course, must appear through the window or an open door). *Doorbell* and *telephone* are other sound effects called for.

The Set

The entire play takes place in the living room of the Teal home. The floor plan may look something like this:



- 1 Front door
- 2 Window with curtains
- 3 Hall tree
- 4 Sofa, with pillows
- 5 End table with lamp
- 6 Coffee table
- 7 End table with telephone
- 8 Easy chair
- 9 Door to interior
- 10 Door to kitchen

Add trim props and decorations as desired.

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