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Dramatic Publishing

Ask Any Girl

Comedy. By Winifred Wolfe.

Cast: 5m., 12w., extras. Meg Wheeler comes to New York intent on enlarging her horizon. She moves into a boarding house in Manhattan that's filled with attractive girls, most of them just as eager as Meg to find the ideal man. Meg has a unique ability to invent plausible statistics, such as "82.4% of girls over 16 are allowed to stay out till midnight." But, when she tries her homemade facts on Miles Doughton, head of an advertising firm, her system fails. Meg is fascinated by snaring Evan but, in the course of it all, he and Meg fall in love with each other! *One int. set.*

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Ask Any Girl

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A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

WINIFRED WOLFE'S

Ask Any Girl

DRAMATIZED BY

CHRISTOPHER SERGEL



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY



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(ASK ANY GIRL)

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Ask Any Girl

A Comedy in Three Acts

FOR FIVE MEN AND TWELVE WOMEN

CHARACTERS

MEG WHEELER.....	<i>the girl</i>
MRS. WHEELER.....	<i>her mother</i>
MR. WHEELER.....	<i>her father</i>
AUNT FERN.....	<i>a doting aunt</i>
AUNT LETTIE.....	<i>another doting aunt</i>
ADA	
LISA	
RUBY	}..... <i>residents of Madison Avenue Girls Hotel</i>
HEIDI	
JEANNIE	
TERRI	
VINCE.....	
ALVIN.....	<i>a steady worker</i>
MILES DOUGHTON.....	<i>head of "D and D"</i>
EVAN DOUGHTON.....	<i>his younger brother</i>
ELLEN }	}..... <i>newcomers to Madison Avenue Girls Hotel</i>
JANE }	
CONDUCTOR	
TELEPHONE OPERATOR <i>offstage voices</i>

PLACE: *New York City.*

TIME: *The present.*

SYNOPSIS

ACT ONE: *The lounge of Madison Avenue Girls Hotel. One afternoon.*

ACT TWO: *The same. Mid-evening, several weeks later.*

ACT THREE: *The same. Mid-evening, several weeks after Act Two.*

NOTES ON CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

MEG WHEELER: (Played by Shirley MacLaine in the motion picture.) She is a pert, attractive girl of twenty, filled with the all-American desire to move to New York, have a career, and find a handsome and wealthy husband—all of which she does. Early in life Meg discovered the value of statistics, and she uses them to suit her various purposes. There is a cheerful frankness about Meg that is most engaging. In the first act she wears a suit, in Act Two smart business clothes, and when she appears in Act Three she has changed to a high-style dress and sophisticated make-up.

MILES DOUGHTON: (Played by David Niven in the motion picture.) He is an impeccably dressed and most successful young businessman. His austere manner hides a warm charm and wit that occasionally show through. His manner makes him seem a little older than he is. He wears conservative business clothes throughout.

EVAN DOUGHTON: (Played by Gig Young in the motion picture.) He is Miles' younger brother, and he is glad to leave all business problems for Miles. "Dame Fortune has smiled on Evan," someone observed, "as do *all* women." Evan is charming, and his clothes are as casual as his brother's are formal.

MRS. WHEELER: Meg's mother is a lovely woman who tries hard to keep her daughter in hand. While Mrs. Wheeler understands fifty per cent more about her daughter than her daughter realizes, it is also true that she understands fifty per cent less than she thinks she does. While her clothes are not expensive, she is well dressed.

MR. WHEELER: Meg's father is pleasantly strict with his daughter, but she has very little trouble influencing him as she pleases—much to his wife's irritation. Mr. Wheeler is still

young, and while he is rather successful, he watches expenses carefully. He wears business clothes.

AUNT FERN: She is a little older than Mrs. Wheeler, and a great deal fussier. However, she loves her niece, Meg, very much, and is glad to stand up for the girl. Her clothes are a little old-fashioned and fussy.

AUNT LETTIE: She happens to think there is very little good in any man, but she is genuinely happy about Meg's romance. Like Aunt Fern, she, too, will stand up in Meg's interest. Her clothes are like Aunt Fern's.

ADA: She is a bored but witty girl in her early twenties. She wears a neat suit and earns a little extra money by doing desk duty at the Madison Avenue Girls Hotel.

LISA: She is a stunning girl in her early twenties who lives at the Girls Hotel. In the first act she wears toreador pants and a bright blouse. In the second and third acts, she has costume changes as indicated in the script. Lisa is aggressive, especially where eligible males are concerned.

JEANNIE: She is a delightful girl in her early twenties, who is a little on the plump side. (However, she is *not* fat.) She wears a plain bathrobe on one occasion, and a much nicer one on another. She also wears an extremely attractive dress at the end of Act Three. Jeannie has a heart of gold, and in spite of her determination to make a success of things in New York, she follows her heart.

ALVIN: A good-looking young man who, like Jeannie, is just a little on the plump side. He believes in hard work, and he's entirely cheerful about it. If someone takes advantage of Alvin, he's still slow to resent it. He wears ordinary work clothes in the first two acts, and a handsome conservative suit in Act Three.

VINCE: He is a young man, a native-born New Yorker, who believes in working the angles to get ahead. In spite of a certain surface sharpness, Vince is a very decent person with a genuine interest in modern art. He wears ordinary work clothes.

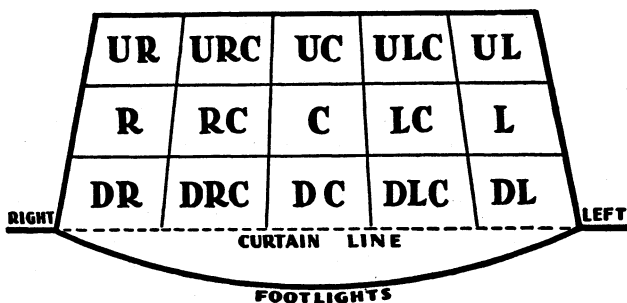
TERRI: She is an attractive and successful young career girl who wears smart clothes and carries herself with considerable

poise. She is a warm-hearted girl, and glad to give a hand to a friend.

RUBY and HEDI: These are two pretty girls in their late teens who are getting into a premature panic because they aren't already married. They don't feel entirely sure of themselves in this city, but they dress well, and if they sometimes stay home without a date, it's because they're a little choosy about whom they'll go out with.

JANE and ELLEN: These are two young and attractive girls—a little younger than the other girls in this play—who arrive late in the third act at the Girls Hotel in New York. They are starry-eyed and full of hope. Their clothes are quite simple.

CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS

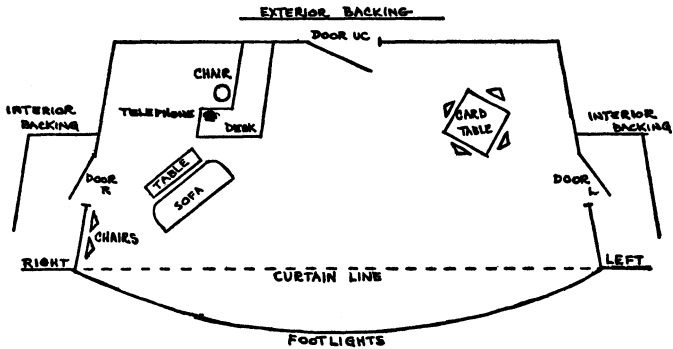


STAGE POSITIONS

Upstage means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: U R for *up right*, R C for *right center*, D L C for *down left center*, etc. One will note that a position designated on the stage refers to a general territory, rather than to a given point.

NOTE: Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

STAGE CHART



PROPERTIES

GENERAL: Several chairs, table, sofa, card table and four chairs, small hotel desk, straight chair, switchboard and telephone, hotel register on desk, folding screen, other furnishings as desired. **ACT ONE:** Dominoes on card table, wrapped cardboard box (presumably containing cake) behind desk, Scotch tape in desk drawer, small scale (for weighing mail) behind desk, pad of paper and pencils, etc. on desk. **ACT TWO:** In front of curtain: small stand with telephone on it, another telephone; stack of books on hotel desk. **ACT THREE:** Playing cards (for bridge) on card table.

MEG: Suitcase, handkerchief.

ADA: Newspaper, pencil, large book with title in large letters "UNDERSTAND MODERN PAINTING."

JEANNIE: Towel, wrapped parcel (same box Ada hands her earlier), engagement ring on finger (Act Three).

AUNT FERN: Piece of chocolate cake.

ALVIN: Armload of cartons containing paper, pencils, boxes of cigarettes, large ash tray, etc.; large painting (wrapped).

TERRI: Papers (tabulation forms) and clipboard.

MILES: Umbrella cane, wrist watch, cigarette lighter, pencil

and small pad of paper, address book, small bottle of perfume (wrapped), cup of coffee.

MR. WHEELER: Letter in sealed envelope, wrist watch.

EVAN: Corsage.

ELLEN *and* JANE: Suitcases.

PRODUCTION NOTE

Nothing adds more to the polish of a production than the quick picking up of cues. Unless there is a definite reason for a pause, train your actors to come in with their speeches "on the heels," so to speak, of the preceding speeches. When a production lags, audience interest likewise will lag.

It is always advisable during the last week of rehearsals to hold one or more sessions during which the actors merely sit around in a circle and go through lines only, with the express purpose of snapping up cues.

ACT ONE

AS THE HOUSELIGHTS DIM OFF, *there is the sound of a train coming to a stop. As the sound subsides, an announcer speaks over a public address system.*]

ANNOUNCER. Train for New York City boarding at track three.
Train for New York City at track three.

[*A light has come up at the left side of the stage in front of the curtain revealing MEG WHEELER, a pert, attractive girl of twenty, dressed for a trip and holding a suitcase. On the other side of the stage, in front of the curtain, there is a group consisting of Meg's MOTHER, her FATHER, and her two aunts, FERN and LETTIE.*]

MEG. Someone once said to a girl about to leave her home in a small town and move to New York City—someone once said, "Never do anything you'd be ashamed to tell your mother."
[*She takes a breath.*] It was my mother.

ANNOUNCER. Empire State Train leaving for New York City.
Track three. Thank you.

MEG. The one thing that makes it possible for me to take that train is a discovery I made when I was fourteen years old. I discovered "*statistics.*" Words like "home" and "mother" used to be the most respected of all words, but not any more. Now it's "*statistics.*"

MRS. WHEELER [*calling across to her daughter*]. Meg—you're only fourteen years old, and that's too young to wear lipstick.

AUNT FERN. And all that eye make-up.

AUNT LETTIE. At *your* age!

MEG [*putting down the suitcase and talking back*]. According to statistics, ninety-five point two per cent of all girls over fourteen wear lipstick.

MR. WHEELER [*to his wife*]. That many!

MRS. WHEELER [*apologetically*]. I didn't realize.

MEG [*back to the audience*]. The battle was as good as won. That was when I discovered statistics—and how they could help a girl over the rough spots.

MR. WHEELER [*calling to MEG, with authority*]. Meg—you're only sixteen, and you'll be home before eleven.

MEG [*answering*]. Eighty-two point four per cent of all girls over sixteen are allowed to stay out till midnight. [*As they turn to each other, defeated again, MEG turns back to the audience.*] Everybody listens to statistics, but no one ever asks where they come from.

MRS. WHEELER [*reasonably*]. Darling, don't you think seventeen is a little young to be wearing a backless evening gown?

AUNT LETTIE. With sequins.

AUNT FERN. It isn't so much the backless that worries me. It's the *frontless!*

MEG. Eighty-six point five per cent of the girls over seventeen wear modern clothes.

MRS. WHEELER. I was afraid of that.

MR. WHEELER [*to his wife*]. Still—if it's usual. . . .

MEG [*back to the audience*]. But *nothing* helped me to meet the right boy. Then four years of an all-girl college within walking distance of the house, and I was getting desperate. If I stayed around here, I'd end up an old maid for sure. I had to *do* something—so I told my parents how I felt stifled in this little town, and that I could lead a much fuller life in New York City. They said—

MR. WHEELER [*briefly*]. No.

MEG. I tried to point out the limitations of life in a small town. They said—

AUNT LETTIE. Just because you're staying home a few nights—

AUNT FERN. Aren't there enough boys around here—is that it?

MR. WHEELER [*sarcastically*]. I suppose you want to become a

sophisticated New Yorker, marry some handsome young executive, and live in a penthouse!

MEG [*her expression at this suggesting she has just caught her first whiff of Chanel Number Five; shrugging at the audience*]. They forced me to it. [*Then addressing her family.*] Seventy-one point two per cent of all girls over twenty develop mentally and emotionally by living away from home for at least a year.

MRS. WHEELER. No, no. [*MEG starts toward them, and they take each other's hands for support.*]

MEG. According to the latest research, independent surveys, and a United Nations report——

MRS. WHEELER [*backing away*]. Just the same——

MR. WHEELER. In our opinion——

MEG [*scornfully*]. Your unsubstantiated personal opinion.

ANNOUNCER [*interrupting*]. All aboard for New York City!

MEG [*implacably*]. You're not arguing with *me*——It's Remington Rand—Univak—it's your petty prejudice against International Business Machines! [*They have been cowed into speechlessness. MEG turns now and starts back. She pauses; speaks to the audience.*] I had to do it! If a person doesn't want to spend her future knitting doilies and raising cats, sometimes she *has* to take action—even with her own people!

ANNOUNCER. All aboard!

MEG [*picking up her suitcase again*]. Ask any girl. [*Lights are out. The sound of the train starting up and pulling away is heard, and then it fades away.*]

THE CURTAIN RISES *on the lounge of the Madison Avenue Girls Hotel, right in the heart of Manhattan, New York City. There are several chairs, a sofa, a card table and doors right, left, and center. There is a small hotel desk U R C, on top of which is a register and behind which there is a straight chair and a small switchboard, only the top of which is visible. ADA, a bored girl in her early twenties, wearing a neat suit, is behind the desk. She is studying an open newspaper, pausing to*

mark certain items with a pencil. LISA, a stunning girl wearing toreador pants and a bright blouse, is draped over a chair doing her nails. RUBY and HEIDI, two attractive girls in their late teens, are at the card table L C playing dominos. For a moment no one speaks. Then the telephone rings. Without looking up from the paper, ADA reaches down and picks up the telephone.]

ADA. Madison Avenue Girls Hotel. [*All the girls have turned eagerly at the ring, LISA half rising from her chair. They wait.*] About the vacancy? [*The girls all relax.*] I'm sorry, we've already rented it—a girl coming in from out of town. [*She hangs up.*] That's the fourth call. They should expand this place.

RUBY [*unhappily*]. More girls.

HEIDI [*to ADA*]. Where's this one from?

ADA [*back with her paper*]. Some little town. [*From off L, a voice calls loudly.*]

JEANNIE [*offstage L*]. Is there a man in there?

RUBY [*to HEIDI*]. She's kidding.

JEANNIE [*offstage L, calling again*]. If there's a man in there, tell him to look away.

[*At this point, JEANNIE, a charming young girl who is a little overweight, dressed now in a bulky bathrobe with a towel around her head, enters L and crosses toward R.*]

JEANNIE. The rent we have to pay, there should be a scale on the second floor. Every time I weigh myself I have to come downstairs. [*Goes out R.*]

LISA. The thing I can't stand—every time she gets on those scales she screams, "Tilt!" [*They all look up for an instant. Jeannie doesn't disappoint them.*]

JEANNIE [*off R*]. Tilt! [*LISA shudders. HEIDI leans forward to RUBY.*]

HEIDI [*confidentially*]. The reason she overeats—she's insecure.

RUBY [*equally confidential*]. Every unmarried girl over fourteen is insecure.

[JEANNIE comes back in R, muttering to herself.]

JEANNIE. It isn't my fault. [*To ADA.*] My mother keeps sending things.

ADA [*this reminds her; putting out a wrapped cardboard box on the desk*]. For you.

JEANNIE. No. [*She hefts it; bitterly.*] Another chocolate cake.

LISA. So throw it out.

JEANNIE [*tearing open the box; to LISA, angrily*]. You think I can't?

LISA. Oscar Wilde said—"I can resist anything but temptation."

HEIDI. Who's Oscar Wilde?

LISA [*contemptuously*]. He pitches for the Yankees.

JEANNIE [*looking down into the box, at the point of tears*].

I can resist temptation all right—[*Takes the box and starts L.*] But chocolate cake—

RUBY [*after her*]. How many calories in a four-ounce piece?

JEANNIE. Two hundred and twenty. [*Pausing at the door; unhappily.*] My mother wants me a fat spinster. [*As she goes out L, a chime clock off R chimes the half-hour.*]

LISA [*looking R*]. That chime clock could overwhelm Big Ben. I can't sleep nights.

ADA [*glancing off at the clock*]. I like the chimes. [*The time registers on her and she looks back at them, puzzled.*] Two-thirty—what's everyone doing here in the middle of the afternoon?

HEIDI. We're guinea pigs.

RUBY. Doughton and Doughton Market Research.

HEIDI. My roommate, Terri, works for "D and D." She's bringing them over on a project.

ADA [*bewildered*]. What kind of research?

LISA [*bored*]. You fill out a form and they pay you three dollars.

ADA. For three dollars you're staying home all day? You should be out looking for jobs. [*Indicates newspaper.*] Listen to this

one. [*Reading.*] "Wanted. Gal Friday. Pleasant job in midtown Manhattan. Modern office on twentieth floor. Paid vacation. All benefits."

HEIDI. Terri says Doughton and Doughton are looking for a Girl Friday. And their office is a penthouse suite on Fifth Avenue.
LISA. And both Doughtons are young—and neither one of them is married.

ADA. There's one of them always phoning Terri to ask what's happened that day at the office.

HEIDI. That's Evan Doughton. Terri says he's so busy with outside research, he doesn't get into the office much.

ADA. If he looks the way he sounds—His voice makes me feel like a marshmallow over an open fire.

RUBY [*laughing*]. Terri says he's no better-looking than the average Greek god!

ADA [*folding her paper*]. I wish I'd had my hair done. [*There is a sharp rap on the door U C. They all look up.*] Could it be—[*They're all scrambling up, assuming what they feel are attractive poses. ADA crosses to the door and calls.*] Come in. It's open.

[*The door is opened and there in a tight, suspicious group are Meg's MOTHER and her two AUNTS.*]

MRS. WHEELER. Madison Avenue Girls Hotel?

ADA [*nodding*]. Yes. But we're full up.

MRS. WHEELER [*coming on in*]. We have a reservation. [*The girls all relax again.*]

ADA. That's impossible.

MRS. WHEELER. For my daughter, Meg Wheeler.

AUNT FERN. I'm her Aunt Fern.

AUNT LETTIE. We decided to make the trip with her.

ADA. We just have *one* vacancy.

MRS. WHEELER. We're *not* staying.

AUNT FERN [*pleasantly*]. We just wanted to look over the place.

AUNT LETTIE [*raising her eyebrows*]. Unless you've some objection?

ADA [*sbrugging*]. Help yourself.

LISA [*pleasantly sarcastic*]. Where's our prospective roommate?

AUNT LETTIE [*not caught so easily*]. We'll get to that in good time. What do you do?

LISA [*haughtily*]. I'm an actress—a method actress. I'm studying at the "Studio."

HEIDI. She only does wholesome television commercials. Things like "Drink more milk" and "Put your litter in the litter basket."

AUNT LETTIE [*to LISA*]. Good for you. The streets here are so messy.

RUBY. The rest of us are studying to be brides—which isn't easy.

MRS. WHEELER [*to ADA, firmly*]. What is your policy about men?

ADA. I think every married man should be required by law to wear a wedding band.

MRS. WHEELER. The *hotel* policy.

ADA. Very strict—on those rare occasions when we see one.

[MRS. WHEELER and the AUNTS exchange brief glances, and MRS. WHEELER starts for the door U C.]

AUNT FERN [*to ADA*]. Could I take a brief look at the room where my niece will be staying?

AUNT LETTIE. And I'd like to check your kitchen. [ADA *sbrugs her approval*. MRS. WHEELER *meanwhile has opened the door*.]

MRS. WHEELER [*calling out*]. I think we've come to the right place.

[MR. WHEELER *comes in, leading a reluctant and embarrassed MEG*.]

MRS. WHEELER [*reassuring her husband*]. They're very strict.

[*Pleased*.] And they only see men on rare occasions.

MEG [*a shushing whisper*]. Mother!

AUNT FERN [*to MEG*]. I was just about to look over your room.

MEG [*more embarrassed*]. Aunt Fern——

ADA [*to HEIDI*]. Would you show her?

HEIDI [*to AUNT FERN*]. She'll room with Jeannie. [*As they go*

out L.] Which has certain advantages—if you like chocolate cake.

ADA. Ruby—would you show this lady the kitchen?

RUBY [*to AUNT LETTIE*]. This way.

MEG [*to AUNT LETTIE*]. Do you have to?

AUNT LETTIE [*as she goes, cheerfully*]. Won't take a minute.

[*RUBY and AUNT LETTIE go out R.*]

MEG [*a whisper*]. I'm so embarrassed.

MR. WHEELER. We worry about you, that's all. You've never been away before.

MEG [*still whispering*]. But you don't have to treat me like a child!

LISA [*to MR. and MRS. WHEELER, patronizing*]. While you're here in the big city, you should do all the sights—top of the Empire State Building, the Statue of Liberty, Chinatown.

MRS. WHEELER. I'm afraid we'll have to wait till next trip.

LISA. At least take time for a hansom cab ride around Central Park. The tourists all love it.

MEG [*they've been patronized enough*]. We've better things to do than contemplate the rear end of a horse.

MRS. WHEELER [*sharply*]. Meg!

LISA. Honestly!

ADA [*amused*]. Would you care to register?

MEG [*after a quick glance at her father, who nods*]. Yes.

[*As MEG starts filling out the registration form, AUNT FERN comes back in L, chewing contentedly on some of Jeannie's cake.*]

MRS. WHEELER. How's her room?

AUNT FERN [*swallowing*]. Delicious.

LISA [*to ADA, loftily*]. Don't call me till those research people get here. [*For the benefit of the others.*] Unless it's my agent—or the Theatre Guild.

[*She is going out R as AUNT LETTIE and RUBY enter.*]

LISA. Find any bugs?

RUBY. Don't think we didn't look.

AUNT LETTIE [*to LISA*]. The New York water tastes funny. [*To*

MEG.] But I suppose you'll get used to it. [*LISA goes out R.*]

MEG [*to her relatives*]. Will you *please* stop embarrassing me?

MRS. WHEELER. We're helping you get settled.

MEG. You've helped enough.

MR. WHEELER [*with mock alarm*]. We'll miss our train! [*They all start. He winks at MEG, then speaks gently to her.*] Remember—we're only five hours away by train.

MRS. WHEELER. Three minutes by phone.

MEG [*smiling*]. I'm not wasting money that way—at least not till I get a job.

MR. WHEELER. If you get scared or lonely some night, call collect.

MEG [*pooh-poohing, but a little nervous*]. Why would I ever get scared or lonely?

MRS. WHEELER. We'll keep your room exactly the way you left it.

AUNT LETTIE [*amending*]. A little neater, maybe.

MEG [*bravado*]. I'm here to stay. Turn that old room into a study for Dad. [*They don't reply, and she tries to sound bright.*] It would make a very nice study.

MRS. WHEELER. We'll see. [*Kisses her.*] Good-by, dear.

AUNT LETTIE [*kissing her*]. Write.

AUNT FERN [*shaking hands firmly*]. Write about *everything*. [*They're going. A wan MEG looks after them.*]

MEG [*her voice rising*]. Good-by—

MR. WHEELER [*pausing*]. Just one bit of advice. Don't feel you've got to touch everything that's marked with a "wet paint" sign.

MEG [*bewildered*]. What do you mean?

MR. WHEELER [*smiling*]. Think about it. Good-by, dear. [*They've all gone out U C, and as MEG looks after them, she bites her lip.*]

MEG [*swallowing*]. Did you notice the way they acted?

ADA. What do you mean?

MEG [*unhappily*]. As soon as I mentioned a study? They all started mentally rearranging the furniture.

RUBY. I didn't notice.

MEG. I feel funny.

RUBY. Didn't you *want* to come here?

MEG. I fought for it. But——

ADA. The first-day jitters. Everyone gets them.

MEG. Now I don't even have a room to go back to. It's obvious they don't want me any more. [*A weak attempt at a joke.*] I wasn't even wanted by the Blue Cross, who got stuck with the maternity bills.

RUBY. Would you like a Coke?

MEG. At the last minute they decided to escort me in. By the time we got here, they were ready to escort me right back. [*Curiously.*] Something must have happened when they came in here.

[HEIDI *is coming in L, licking the chocolate from her fingers.*]

ADA. We got on the subject of how few men there are around here.

RUBY. That's what did it.

MEG [*delighted*]. Of *course* it would! What a smart thing to tell them.

HEIDI [*nodding*]. As soon as they heard that, they knew they'd brought their daughter to the right place.

MEG [*admiring*]. You caught on to their attitude right away. I'm so grateful for what you said. [*With a wise smile.*] After all, why should they worry? [*With a wink.*] What they don't know won't hurt them.

RUBY [*frankly*]. Listen—what *you* don't know——

HEIDI [*aside*]. Let her find out for herself.

MEG [*beginning to enjoy herself*]. That other girl——

ADA. Lisa.

MEG. Expecting a call from the Theatre Guild. Imagine! [*Gives a sigh of pleasure.*] I suppose you girls spend quite a lot of time at the Stork Club and Twenty One, and the Copa.

RUBY. I've never even——

HEIDI [*cutting in again*]. Every day. You'll be shopping at Lord and Taylor, posing for fashion magazines, driving up Park Avenue with an account executive in his Jag convertible.

RUBY. And it doesn't matter what anything costs, because everyone belongs to the Diners' Club.

ADA. Fly now. Pay later!

MEG [*realizing situation*]. I see. [*Wryly*]. I'm talking like someone right off the boat. [*They all nod emphatically. Suddenly she's concerned.*] But you do meet people—occasionally? [*They all shake their heads emphatically.*] You're not serious?

ADA. Just other girls from out of town.

RUBY. I came here two years ago from Ohio to look around.

HEIDI. And she's still looking. Me, too. I'm from Indiana.

ADA [*as MEG looks at her*]. Wisconsin. [*Gestures R.*] The exotic actress wouldn't want it to get around, but she's from Kansas. Your roommate Jeannie's from Iowa. [*Looking at register.*] And you're from Pennsylvania.

MEG. That makes me the local girl. [*She won't let go of the dream.*] But it *can't* be that bad. In a place like New York, people meet people all the time.

RUBY. Not eligible males.

MEG [*persisting*]. What I mean, most girls fall in love with someone in the neighborhood. And New York is a pretty big neighborhood.

HEIDI. As far as I'm concerned, living here is like going to an all-girl college.

MEG [*almost a wail*]. I just came from an all-girl college.

HEIDI. No!

MEG [*nodding*]. Four years. [*Unhappily*]. I live in a tiny town with a tremendous college for girls.

RUBY. You poor kid.

MEG. Getting a date was like winning the Irish Sweepstakes.

HEIDI. I'm afraid you came to the wrong place.

MEG. Where *should* I have gone?