Scene Four

Fifteen years earlier. Spring. Late afternoon. Blinds drawn. Jonathan’s bedroom in his parents’ house in Brooklyn, complete with the artifacts of a lower-middle-class boyhood, the notable exception being a sewing machine. Wearing a vest, suit trousers and socks, Jonathan is curled up on a bed. His hair is long. There is a tentative knock. Patricia enters. A beat.

PATRICIA (Whispers): Jonathan: (She waits, whispers again) Jonny?

She looks around the room, gravitates toward the bookshelf and begins scanning the titles. After a while, he sits up and sees her looking at a paperback.

I love your little-boy handwriting. So round. The loopy J in “Jonathan,” the o, the a’s. “This book belongs to Jonathan Waxman.” (Laughs, shows him the book) The Man from UNCLE. I wish I knew you then, Jonny. (She returns the book to the shelf and continues looking)

JONATHAN: What are you doing?

PATRICIA: I love looking at people’s books.

JONATHAN (Still awaiting a response): Patty . . . ?

PATRICIA: It’s like looking into their brain or something. Everything they ever knew. Everything they ever touched. It’s like archeology. Lets you into all the secret places.

JONATHAN: Patty, what are you doing here?

PATRICIA: Only took me two years to get in the front door. Hey, not bad. —Why isn’t Franny and Zaney at your place?

JONATHAN: It is. I have doubles.

PATRICIA: Oh.

Pause. They look at one another.

PATRICIA: You look handsome in your suit.

JONATHAN (He begins to put on his shoes): Thanks.

PATRICIA: I don’t think I’ve ever seen you in a suit. Have I?
must have. Did you wear a suit at graduation? No, you wore a cap and gown. What did you wear underneath it? Anything?

JONATHAN: What time is it?

PATRICIA: I don’t know. (A beat) Your dad kissed me. When he came in? He kissed me. On the lips. He’s very sweet, your dad. Said he was glad to see me, he was glad I came. See? He wasn’t upset to see me. I told you you were overreacting. He’s always kind of had a crush on me I think. You know the Waxman and their shiksaas. They’re legend.

JONATHAN (Fixing his shirt): I should go back down.


She tries to touch his hair, he moves away.

(On his rebuff) So this is where you and Bobby grew up. (sits on a bed)

JONATHAN: That’s right.

PATRICIA: Funny, it’s just how I pictured it. Like one of the Smithsonian recreations? You know: those ropes-off rooms. “Jonathan Waxman’s Bedroom in Brooklyn, Circa 1970.” The desk upon which he toiled over algebra.” “The bed in which he had his first wet dream…”

JONATHAN: That one, actually.

PATRICIA (She smiles; a beat): I loved the oil-painting bar of vah portraits of you and Bobby over the sofa by the way.

JONATHAN: What can I tell ya?

PATRICIA: Oh, they’re great. (A beat: she sees the innocent sewing machine) Sewing machine?

JONATHAN: She moved it in when I moved out.

PATRICIA: Ah.

JONATHAN: The only woman on record to die of emphysema syndrome.

PATRICIA (She goes to him and hugs him): Oh, Jonny, I’m so sorry.

JONATHAN (Trying to free himself): Yeah. You know I should go back down. My father.

They kiss, again and again: he’s bothered as her kisses more fervent.
JONATHAN: I meant the whole thing.

PATRICIA: What whole thing.

JONATHAN: The funeral, shiva.

PATRICIA: You mean I was supposed to keep away from you during all this?, like for a week?—isn't shiva like a week?

JONATHAN: Patty...

PATRICIA: Do you know how ridiculous this is? Don't you think you're taking this guilt thing a little too far? I mean, your mother is dead—I'm really really sorry, Jonny, really I am and, okay, we know she wasn't exactly crazy about me...

JONATHAN: I'm so burnt out, Patty... My head is...

PATRICIA (Continuous): Not that I ever did anything to offer the woman personally or anything. I just happened to be born in a certain persuasion, a certain incompatibility persuasion, even though I'm an atheist and I don't give a damn what religious life somebody happens to believe in. But did she ever bother to know me, even a little bit?

JONATHAN: Oh, Patty, this is—

PATRICIA: It's like I was invisible. Do you know how it feels to be invisible?

JONATHAN: What do you think, my mother's dying wish was to keep that shiksa away from my funeral? Come on, Growth! Not everything is about you. I know that may be hard for you to believe, but not everything is in the world...

PATRICIA (Over "in the world"): Oh, great.

JONATHAN (A beat): Let's face it, Patricia, things haven't exactly been good between us for months.

PATRICIA: What do you mean? Your mother's been dying for months. How can you make a statement like that?

JONATHAN: What, this is a surprise to you what I'm saying?

PATRICIA: Hasn't your mother been dying for months?

JONATHAN: I don't really have the strength for this right now.

PATRICIA: Hasn't she? So how can you judge how things have been between us? Her dying has been weighing over both of us, for so long, it's colored so much...

JONATHAN (Over "it's colored so much"): Look... if you must know—

PATRICIA: What.

JONATHAN: If you must know... (A beat) I was the one who didn't want you there. It wasn't out of respect to my mother or my father or my grandmother, it was me. I didn't want to see you. I didn't want you there, Patty. I didn't want to have to hold your hand and comfort you because of how cruel my mother was to you. I didn't want that... I didn't want to have to deal with your display of—

PATRICIA: Display?

JONATHAN: Your display of love for me. Your concern. It was all about you whenever I thought about how it would be if you were with me! I didn't want you there, Patty. I'm sorry. (A beat) I guess when something catastrophic like this happens... you get to thinking.

PATRICIA: Yes? Well?

Pause.

JONATHAN: I don't love you, Patty.

He smiles lamely and reaches for her as if to soothe her as she goes to get her bag. She groans, lashes out at his arm with a single punch, and goes. He stands alone for a long time before moving slowly over to the sewing machine. He clutches a pillow and gently rocks himself. As he begins to cry, the lights fade to black.