

**Reflections of a Teenage
Jewish Lesbian**

**by
Gordon Blitz**

Characters:

All characters are sixteen years old except for the minister

Jennifer - Sexually confused; thin and wiry

Paula - Butch; slightly overweight

Sandy- Straight girl

Joseph - Religious boy

Minister – thirty-five; ornery, self-effacing

Torah Portion referred to in the play: Mishpatim (Exodus 21:1 – 24:18)

SCENE 1

Fairfax High School, 1969. PAULA, a 16-year-old wearing overalls and Doc Martens is on stage. We hear laughing and shouts of "Hey, dyke". Another girl, JENNIFER, comes out of a classroom. She's thin and wiry.

JENNIFER

Hey, are you from Bancroft Junior High? I don't remember you.

PAULA

No, Burroughs. Do you know where the bathroom is? I think I'm having my period. I hate it so much. God, I wish I was a boy, then I wouldn't have this stupid curse every month. You don't have a tampon, do you?

JENNIFER

Here, I've got a handkerchief. Use that.

PAULA

I'm Paula. Thanks.

JENNIFER

I'm Jennifer.

PAULA

I hate my name, by the way. I want to be called Paul. I think my parents actually wanted a boy, and they had the name Paul all picked out, but then they had to change it to Paula. Hey, do you belong to any of the school clubs?

JENNIFER

No. I'm really into music, though. Want to come over to my place? I'm just five blocks away. I have the new 45 by The Supremes. You've got to hear it.

PAULA

They're okay, I guess. I can't believe they fired Florence Ballard.

JENNIFER

Diana wanted her out. Now we have Cindy Birdsong.

PAULA

What about "The Leader of the Pack" by the Shangrilas? That's *my* kind of music.

As JENNIFER and PAULA walk offstage, the sounds of heckling are heard. "Bull dykes! Queer!" JENNIFER starts to run, but PAULA stops her.

PAULA (CONT'D)

We shouldn't run away. It's just going to make things worse. Fuck 'em!

JENNIFER

Those guys are idiots. I just ignore them. Let's get out of here!

A ball is thrown from offstage and hits PAULA in the stomach. She keels over. Cries out in pain as she holds her abdomen. Another ball comes from offstage trying to hit JENNIFER, but she moves away so that the ball misses her. She yells out.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Fuck off!

JENNIFER helps PAULA get up. Once PAULA is standing, JENNIFER continues to hold her. For a moment, they are both staring at each other.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

PAULA

Yeah. That ball really took the wind outta' me. Thanks.

JENNIFER

Why are you thanking me? I didn't do anything.

PAULA

You told those jerks off.

JENNIFER

You know, you're right! It felt good to do that.

PAULA

You scared them off.

JOSEPH runs onto the stage. Although he is muscular, wears a shirt that shows chest hair, and has long blond hair, there is a gentleness about him. Both PAULA and JENNIFER are scared thinking that they will be attacked again.

PAULA (*CONT'D*)

Get out of here!

JOSEPH

Are you girls okay? I saw those guys throwing stuff at you, but by the time I got here, they had run off.

PAULA

We're fine.

JOSEPH

I'm just trying to help.

JENNIFER

We don't need your help.

JOSEPH

Just trying to do my Christian duty.

PAULA

Leave us alone!

JOSEPH leaves the stage.

JENNIFER

Who was that guy?

PAULA

I've never seen him before. He was creepy.

JENNIFER

Yeah, but there was something sexy about him.

PAULA

Not to me. I'm not into guys like that.

JENNIFER

Do you still want to come back to my place and listen to music?

PAULA grabs JENNIFER's hand, and they run offstage as the lights dim.

SCENE 2

JOSEPH is sitting in the MINISTER's office.

MINISTER

Hi, Joseph. What brings you to my office?

JOSEPH

You know how you're always wanting me to find sinners to convert?

MINISTER

Yes. I know it can be difficult. I hope you're still not feeling guilty about that couple you tried to talk to.

JOSEPH

No. With your guidance, I understood that no matter what we do, there are some people that we just can't convert. Especially Jews; even when we tell them that they're going to hell! But this is something else, though. I saw two girls at school getting bullied by some guys throwing stuff at them and calling them "Dyke" and "Queer." I tried to stop it, but the girls somehow were able to run off.

MINISTER

Okay. Then what's the problem?

JOSEPH

If those girls really are queer, what am I supposed to do?

MINISTER

Just convince them that they have to be Born Again. What's the big deal with that?

JOSEPH

But what if they use that line about, "Hate the Sin, Love the Sinner." I don't understand that.

MINISTER

It's not important. It's just a back-end entrance into conversion. You show compassion for the sinner, but only if they are willing to convert.

JOSEPH

But that's not right.

MINISTER

Look, I'd love to chat with you about this stuff, but you shouldn't be worried. You're going to do fine.

The MINISTER leads JOSEPH out of his office. JOSEPH looks perplexed as the lights fade out.

SCENE 3

A month later. When the lights come up, JENNIFER and PAULA walk into the apartment where JENNIFER lives with her mother. They sit on some chairs.

PAULA

Hey Jennifer, where's your mom?

JENNIFER

She's at work. My mom works for Playgirl Magazine. She just started working there about two months ago. Have you heard about it? Just like Playboy except the centerfolds are naked men. It's *so* gross!

PAULA

Yeah, but sometimes I wish I could be like some of those guys with big muscles. You know when my parents aren't home, I go into my dad's closet and try to dress up like him. Wearing a tie, pants, a cap on my head so my hair doesn't look so long. Have you ever done that?

JENNIFER

No! That just seems so weird. You know, you have an accent. Since we moved from New York, I've been trying to get rid of mine. I get teased about it.

PAULA

Yeah, we lived in New York, too, before we moved here to Los Angeles.

JENNIFER

My father died right after my bat mitzvah. Mom wanted to be with her family here on the West Coast. It was so difficult taking care of our Cape Cod on Long Island. The blizzards were horrible.

PAULA

How did your father die?

JENNIFER

He had cancer of the spine. He'd had this pain on the right side of his chest for years. They kept telling him it was in his head. Then when he had a spinal tap, they discovered a tumor. You know, he was in a

wheelchair at my Bat Mitzvah, and he died two months later.

PAULA

I'm sorry. You know, I didn't have a Bat Mitzvah. I was afraid to be in front of all those people, and my parents didn't push it. And I hated the thought of going to Hebrew School. Did you go?

JENNIFER

Yeah. At first, I thought it would be okay since it was all Jewish, but they were just as bad about making fun of me. And I went for four years! My grandfather was very Orthodox, so I think that's why my dad made me go. My mother told me that my dad, knowing that he would see me become a "responsible Jewish adult" at my Bat Mitzvah, was why he stayed alive. He didn't want to miss it.

The lights go down at this point, and lights come up at another point on the stage where there is a lectern (bimah). JENNIFER walks over to the bimah and begins her bat mitzvah speech.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

We are at a moment of quiet at the opening of my Torah portion today. Last week, the Torah was filled with thunder and lightning and fire and earthquake and the sounding of the shofar as God's voice was heard from Mount Sinai intoning the words of the Ten Commandments. And at the end of today's Torah portion, Moses will ascend into the smoke and the mist and the clouds to the top of Mount Sinai and remain with God for forty days and forty nights to receive the remainder of the Torah. And then there will be God's uncontrollable anger as he descends the mountain to find the Israelites cavorting around the Golden Calf. But as we begin today's portion there is quiet in the midst of the Mount Sinai happenings. Today, there is an insertion of statutes, fifty-three of them to be exact, the first of several such insertions, to help the Israelites form a new society in the Promised Land of Canaan in the midst of outside influences. At this point, I want to thank my parents and my teachers for leading me toward an interest in Judaism and the Torah. My father is here, and I want to say that he is such a brave man, and I thank God that he felt well enough to attend my bat mitzvah, in spite of his sad

diagnosis of cancer.

As JENNIFER finishes, the light on her dims as she moves back into the now lighted scene of her apartment with PAULA.

PAULA

And you went to the funeral and all that when your father was buried?

JENNIFER

Yeah. The funeral was so awful! All that crying. And people coming up to me saying, "Your father died so young. I am so sorry. Your poor mother. A widow at thirty-six." The part that really made me cry was when everyone had to throw dirt on top of the coffin. There was this pile of dirt, and we couldn't leave until all the dirt was put into the grave.

PAULA

Gross! I can't imagine what it must have felt like. So was it hard moving out here?

JENNIFER

Well, I had no friends back in New York, so I was glad we moved here. And we were the only Jews in our neighborhood. I felt so isolated. And Dad's family wasn't very helpful. At least my mom has a brother here in Los Angeles. You know another reason we moved? My grandfather told my mom that in the Jewish tradition, the widow is supposed to marry the brother of the deceased.

PAULA

Eeww! I can see why you moved. Fairfax High is so Jewish, but they're awful to me.

JENNIFER

Oh, it's a little better than Bancroft Junior High, but you're right. There are all these cliques, and again I don't have any friends. Oh, what do you think of these pink socks? I got them at Orbach's. Don't you get tired of always wearing *white* socks?

PAULA

Who cares about socks? I'm not into all that girlie stuff, anyway.

JENNIFER

And they match my pink blouse. You know, *you* need a new look. You can be my new project!

PAULA looks disgusted.

JENNIFER (*CONT'D*)

Well, okay. Do you like movies? I want to see *Valley of the Dolls*.

PAULA

I just finished the book. Let's go this weekend.

JENNIFER

Great! So who do you have for Physical Education?

PAULA

Mr. Bain. I hate him. He treats me like a little girl. I think he's afraid that I'll do better at baseball or basketball than the boys.

JENNIFER

On Long Island, we only had gym once a week because of the weather. Here it's every day! It's awful running around the track in the early morning. I wish I had a broken arm or a broken leg. Then I could be excused.

PAULA

And the showers are disgusting. It smells awful, too.

JENNIFER

and I'm always getting towel whipped . . . and it hurts my butt!

PAULA

I'd punch them in the mouth if they ever did that to me!

JENNIFER

And I hate having to climb ropes. I never get it right, and when I slide down, it burns off the skin on my hands. It's torture! And I'm always picked last for baseball or basketball. I can't catch or throw a ball. My father kept hounding me every weekend to throw a ball around with him. He wanted to toughen me up. When he was throwing the ball at me, I was afraid I

would get hit. Have you told your parents about being made fun of?

PAULA

No. I'm afraid they'll think I'm sick. My mom had a breakdown and stayed in a mental rehab hospital for a couple of months. I don't want to upset them.

JENNIFER

Since my dad died, my mom remarried twice to the same man, Griffin, but it was a disaster. She had both marriages annulled. You know, I was responsible for the second annulment.

PAULA

What do you mean?

JENNIFER

When he was my stepdad, he was very affectionate. Hugging me and kissing me on the cheek. I didn't really mind because my mom was kinda' cold. She rarely ever touched me. But then Griffin kept saying, "C'mon, give your old man a kiss." At first, it was just a peck on the cheek, but then it turned into a quick kiss on the lips. I thought it was innocent enough, until I could feel his tongue in my mouth. I told him to stop it, but he kept it up. When my mom finally saw what was going on, she screamed, "Get the fuck out of here, Griffin!" and just like that, he was gone.

PAULA

Good for your mother.

JENNIFER

I wanted to ask you about that kind of stuff the first day we met, and those guys were harassing us. That wasn't the first time stuff like that happened to you, right? It seems like people are always whispering and laughing when I come into a classroom. They must think I'm an idiot and can't hear them. "Hey girlie; hey, queer." Does that happen to you?

PAULA

Oh, god, yeah! That's why I can't wait to graduate. It must be better in college.

JENNIFER

Yeah, I bet when we're adults, everything will be okay. Come on, let's listen to that new song, "Reflections" by The Supremes.

JENNIFER puts the record on her turntable.

PAULA

The beginning of that song sounds like aliens are landing. That's how I feel sometimes. Like I'm an alien. That there is no one like me at school or even in the world.

JENNIFER

Do you want to dance?

PAULA

It's a slow song. I don't know how to dance.

JENNIFER

It's easy. Haven't you ever seen your parents dance?

JENNIFER puts her arms around PAULA. They listen to the rest of the song as they are dancing. At the end, JENNIFER starts tickling PAULA.

PAULA

Stop it!

JENNIFER

You're so ticklish.

PAULA turns the tables and begins tickling JENNIFER.

PAULA

You're just as bad.

They both fall to the floor laughing. They start to wrestle. During the wrestling, PAULA and JENNIFER freeze and we hear their inner thoughts.

JENNIFER

Why am I getting turned on? This is so wrong. I'm supposed to get turned on by boys. I can't believe I'm doing this. I don't understand. It's like I've become a different person when I'm with Paula. I'm all mixed up. I should be happy, but I'm not, but she feels so good. I hate it! And she's reaching between my legs! Oh, god, I feel something wet. Did I just piss? It feels like when I do myself, but not really. I want to stop,

but I can't. I didn't realize she was so much stronger than me. It feels great to be pinned by her, and look how I'm squirming. She's got such power over me. I do want to roar, but I'm scared. I can't make up my mind. I *do* feel like an alien at school because I don't act like anyone else. It was only when I met Paula that I saw a sort of reflection of me.

PAULA

I wish I could kiss her. She's so cute. I don't care that I'm hurting her. I bet it's a good kind of hurt. I think she's enjoying this. I imagine her hugging me. I want to trap her and keep her pinned to the floor. She's so different from me. I can feel she's getting damp. It's like those times when I'm in gym class, and I have to hide the fact that I'm getting turned on from looking at all those naked girls.

JENNIFER and PAULA unfreeze. PAULA tries to kiss, but JENNIFER looks scared and moves away from PAULA. Lights dim.

SCENE 4

JENNIFER's apartment the next day. There's the sound of a doorbell, and JENNIFER opens the door. SANDY enters the apartment. She has nerdy-looking glasses, a blouse buttoned up to the neck, and walks with a limp.

SANDY

Hey, want to go to the Natural History Museum near USC? They've got this neat science exhibit.

JENNIFER

Sure, why not?

SANDY

So, I saw you hanging around with Paula. Why are you friends with her? She acts like such a dyke. She's weird.

JENNIFER

Uh, let me get my coat so we can leave.

SANDY

You didn't answer my question. You're not a dyke, are you?

JENNIFER

No, I hardly know Paula. I was helping her with her Spanish.

SANDY

I saw you eating lunch with her yesterday.

JENNIFER

I'm tutoring her. I'm not queer.

SANDY

You're going to get a reputation if you're seen with her.

JENNIFER

You should talk. You don't even have a boyfriend. Have you ever gone on a date, huh? It's like you're afraid of boys. And I saw you in dance class. You were a disaster! It's like you had two left feet.

SANDY

Don't remind me. But you have to admit it was funny when I kept stepping on Cynthia's feet. Remember when she started screaming, "Sandy is doing this on purpose! I ruined my shoes because blood got on them!" And you have to thank me for getting you involved in the Basketball team. Didn't your father teach you anything?

JENNIFER

You know my father's dead. And for your information he *did* try to teach me, but I was so uncoordinated. I tried swimming, but I kept swallowing water. I got a pain in my chest when I ran the track. I couldn't even play ping-pong!

SANDY

Well, at least you're good with a bicycle. That's something. Anyway, do you like my new glasses? I don't look too nerdy, do I?

JENNIFER

No. You look like a...

SANDY

Like a *what*? You creep! They love my look in the Advanced Home Economics class. Hey, you should get Paula to join, but they'd probably throw her out of there thinking she was a boy.

SANDY starts to laugh, but JENNIFER ignores her.

JENNIFER

Let's go to the museum before it closes.

SANDY

You see my limp, don't you? It turns out that one leg is a little shorter than the other. There's a surgery they can do to correct it, but my parents say it's too expensive and risky. What if it doesn't work and makes things worse? I try to disguise it at school. It's really hard to do, but I don't want anyone bullying me and shouting "cripple." When I was in grade school, I had it rough. So that's why I mentioned Paula. Stay away from her. You don't want to give anyone an excuse to put you down.

Lights fade out.

SCENE 5

A month later at JENNIFER's apartment. PAULA is wearing a pastel-colored shirt.

PAULA

I feel so stupid wearing this shirt. It's not *me*. I don't know how I let you buy this for me.

JENNIFER

You'll get used to it. Now, let's see, I think something is missing. Let me check you out.

JENNIFER looks at PAULA, then touches PAULA's lips.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

You need lipstick.

PAULA

No way, girl!

JENNIFER

You know, I've been thinking about our friendship, and I really think it's super. I've never had a best friend before.

PAULA

What about that jerk, Sandy. Isn't she your friend?

JENNIFER

Oh, she's okay, I guess, but not like you. I love going to the movies with you. And talking on the phone every day. And the best part, I hate being on guard. Having to watch what I say.

PAULA

Actually, me too. It's nice having someone to talk to. You're lucky you can look feminine if you want. I don't have that choice. Your body type is way more feminine than mine.

JENNIFER

And I've been having these strange feelings about you.

PAULA

What do you mean?

JENNIFER

I don't know. I'm very confused. I think this is something like "falling in love." I'm not used to talking about this. I'm embarrassed to tell you. Sometimes I stare at other girls. I want to be like them. Popular. Have lots of friends, I think. And I want to be *with* them. And they all have this perfect hair. Don't you want that?

PAULA

Oh, god, I can't see that for myself at all! But I feel close to *you*. Like I could tell you secrets. And I think I do love you, Jennifer. I think about you all the time.

JENNIFER

You don't have any secrets. We've told each other everything, right?

PAULA

Well, there is this one thing. I'm not supposed to talk about it, but I want to tell you. It was when we first moved to Los Angeles. I was thirteen and went to the dentist. I was getting braces. I would take my bicycle so my mom didn't need to drive me. While the dentist was attaching the braces, he would start touching me. You know, my breasts. I got scared, but it sort of felt good. And every time I saw him, he started doing other things to me. He would unzip my pants and play around down there.

JENNIFER

Really? God, I don't believe you. Why would a dentist do that?

PAULA

He must have been a perv or something. And then he put his mouth on my bush, and I giggled. He told me to stop giggling. That it wasn't funny. He thought I would like it. And he seemed angry, and he said he was going to tell my parents that I was a bad girl. I knew something was wrong. I ended up telling my parents.

JENNIFER

No! I can't believe you told your parents! What did they do?

PAULA

I don't know. I mean they found me a new dentist, and I had to go to therapy. They said they were worried that I was *traumatized*, and I should talk to someone about it.

JENNIFER

What did you tell them?

PAULA

I didn't want to go, so I went and just told them, "I'm okay now." I only went that one time, and my parents never talked about what happened, but they did say I shouldn't tell anybody.

PAULA and JENNIFER awkwardly kiss.

JENNIFER

I've never done this before. Does this mean we're homosexual?

PAULA

I don't know.

JENNIFER

Your lips felt so mushy. I didn't even know where to put my tongue.

PAULA

It's called "French kissing" where you use your tongue.

JENNIFER

Can we try it again?

They try kissing again. PAULA caresses JENNIFER.

PAULA

Have you ever had sex?

JENNIFER

No. I don't even know what we would do.

PAULA

We could masturbate.

JENNIFER

I'm afraid.

PAULA

Of what?

JENNIFER

I don't know. This is so scary. Is it okay, or are we sick?

PAULA

I like you, Jennifer.

JENNIFER

Sometimes I wish I had a boyfriend so no one would make fun of me.

PAULA

I don't like boys. I can't imagine being with a boy. I would never want to get married or get pregnant.

JENNIFER

Just think. It would be so easy. I'd be popular. I wouldn't worry about other people screaming "dyke" at me. Don't you hate it?

PAULA

I told you I'm used to it. And if I really get mad, I would put up a fight.

JENNIFER

But I *want* to get married when I grow up. I would cook and clean just like my mom, vacuum and dust. And I would do the gardening, too. Sometimes I sit in the living room in our apartment and just stare at the beautiful furniture. It's perfect; everything in its place. My mom sprays Lemon Pledge on the coffee table and the end tables, and it smells wonderful. And I *want* to be a mother. I'd probably do a better job than my own mom.

PAULA

You're crazy! Don't you want to get a job and make lots of money? That way you could buy really neat

orange bell bottoms and black and white checkered platform shoes. And get a special haircut.

There is a knock at the door.

JENNIFER

Who's that? I didn't expect anyone.

She goes to the door and looks through the peephole and shouts.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Oh, Sandy. I didn't know you were coming over.
Hold on a minute!

JENNIFER runs back to PAULA.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

You've got to hide, Paula. Go inside the closet until Sandy leaves.

PAULA

Why? What's wrong?

JENNIFER pushes PAULA into the closet.

JENNIFER

Just listen to me. Stay in there and keep quiet.

JENNIFER goes back to the front door and lets SANDY in.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

What's going on? I didn't think we were doing anything today.

SANDY

It's a gorgeous day. Grab your bicycle.

JENNIFER

I'm doing homework.

SANDY

Bo-orinngg! Come on!

JENNIFER

No, I've got to do a book report, too.

SANDY is wandering around the apartment. JENNIFER nervously follows her.

SANDY

You're acting strange. Is there something going on here?

SANDY sees album covers on the floor.

SANDY (CONT'D)

Why do you listen to this crap? You told me you only listen to The Rolling Stones.

JENNIFER

Careful with the record. It's brand new. Look, Sandy, this isn't a good time. I'm busy. We'll do something tomorrow.

After SANDY leaves and slams the door, JENNIFER goes back to the closet where PAULA is hiding.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

You can come out now.

JENNIFER takes PAULA's hand and leads her out of the closet.

PAULA

I can't believe you made me hide.

JENNIFER

It's nothing. I don't want Sandy to think we're friends. She's a jerk sometimes. I want to listen to "Reflections" again. It's going to be #1 next week.

PAULA looks confused and the lights fade out.

SCENE 6

Fairfax High, outside the classroom door. JOSEPH leaves the classroom. He walks briskly. JENNIFER notices him and follows him. She sees him sit down. He opens a book and starts reading. He stops, closes his eyes and is talking to himself. JENNIFER is intrigued. Suddenly, as if coming out of a trance, he looks up and sees JENNIFER.

JOSEPH

Hey! You're in my history class. Did you write down the homework assignment?

JENNIFER

Something about how the Cold War started. Uh, hey, do I know you? I haven't seen you around. The history teacher, Mr. Franklin, seems like a hippie-communist. I was surprised that he mentioned that he's against the war in Vietnam. Do you like him?

JOSEPH

I don't know. I just transferred from Hamilton High because we moved. My name is Joseph.

JENNIFER

I'm Jennifer.

JOSEPH

Want to have lunch?

JENNIFER

I bring my lunch, but I can sit with you. What are you reading?

JOSEPH carries a book in his hand with lots of scraps of small paper used as placeholders.

JOSEPH

It's a new version of the Bible. It's The New Testament. I read it every day and use it to pray.

JENNIFER

What is it?

JOSEPH

It's just a continuation of the Old Testament -- the story of Jesus told by different disciples. You should read it. There are lots of groovy parables. Have you

ever thought about becoming a Christian? Have you accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior?

JENNIFER

Uh, I'm Jewish.

JOSEPH

Jesus was a Jew.

JENNIFER

When I was growing up on Long Island, the kids at school told me that the Jews killed Jesus.

JOSEPH

Do you ever go to temple?

JENNIFER

No, I haven't been since I had my Bat Mitzvah. I don't even know if I believe in God. My grandfather was very Orthodox. Grandpa supposedly put a lock on the refrigerator on the Day of Atonement when Jews fast for twenty-four hours.

JOSEPH

I don't think Jews believe in the New Testament; that Jesus is the son of God. But it's really true. It changed my life. When my parents got divorced, I was so angry at both of them. I was in detention, getting grounded all the time and fooling around with girls. But then I found Jesus. Well, actually it was this born-again Christian group. I had a complete turn-around. You should come to church with me. They have this really cool band at the Presbyterian church in Hollywood. We'd have fun.

JENNIFER

I guess so. I don't have much fun being Jewish. I used to enjoy the holidays -- Chanukah and Passover, but since we moved to Los Angeles, my mother never mentions it. But once my father died, she probably stopped believing in God.

JOSEPH

Everyone there is friendly, and if you became Christian, you could invite Jesus into your head. He would save you from your sins.

JENNIFER

No one ever talks about religion here. I guess because most people are Jewish. Have you always been Christian?

JOSEPH

I wasn't religious. We never went to church, except on Christmas Eve and Easter. My parents never sent me to Bible study. I was unhappy, and I didn't know why.

JENNIFER

You seem happy.

JENNIFER reaches out and holds JOSEPH's hand. JOSEPH looks surprised, but doesn't do anything about it.

JOSEPH

You know, there's a group called Jews for Jesus. We could go this Saturday night. I hear the band is fantastic.

JENNIFER

Yeah, okay. I guess it's a date.

Lights fade out.

SCENE 7

JENNIFER's apartment. She is opening the door and lets SANDY in who is cradling her arm and has a bandage on her face.

JENNIFER

What happened to you?

SANDY

I fell off my bike. I was worried that I had hurt my leg, but I just got banged up a little. My arm took most of the fall.

JENNIFER

Why did you fall? That's not like you. I've never fallen off my bicycle and you know what a klutz I am. You look kinda' weird. What's going on?

SANDY

OK, I'll tell you. This guy, Rich, jumped me. I'm embarrassed to talk about it.

JENNIFER

Why?

SANDY

He was making fun of how I walk, and I shouted back, "you shithead." He threw me off my bike and he was going to kick me, but one of his friends was driving by, and Rich just got in the car and left me alone.

JENNIFER

I can't believe you talked back to him. That was stupid. You should've just ignored him.

SANDY

But if you don't fight back, these guys just keep doing it.

JENNIFER

I've never been in a fight. I wouldn't know what to do. But listen, I've met this boy named Joseph. I think I want to have sex with him. He seems to like me.

SANDY

Amazing. I haven't even gotten to second base with a guy.

JENNIFER

He's handsome and smart. The best-looking boy I've ever seen at school. Maybe we'll go steady. I bet we could be so popular that we would be voted King and Queen of the Prom.

SANDY

Don't get carried away, fool.

JENNIFER

I've always wanted a boyfriend.

SANDY

Do you even know how to have sex?

JENNIFER

How hard could it be?

SANDY

You have to get him to use a rubber or you'll get pregnant.

JENNIFER

Where do I get a rubber?

SANDY

I have some; I carry them around for an emergency, in case I ever get to do it with a boy.

JENNIFER

But you said you've never even gotten to second base.

SANDY

You never know. Here, I can give you one, so you can have one just in case.

JENNIFER

Where did you buy it?

SANDY

Come on, I'll show you. Let's go to the drug store.

Lights dim.

SCENE 8

The following day outside of JENNIFER's apartment, PAULA is seen leaving and SANDY approaches her.

SANDY

Hi, can I talk to you?

PAULA

Who are you?

SANDY

I'm Sandy, a good friend of Jennifer's.

PAULA

Okay. So what?

SANDY

I wanted to talk to you about Jennifer.

SANDY stares at PAULA's hiking boots and keys hanging out of the belt of her Levi jeans.

PAULA

What are you looking at?

SANDY

Nothing.

PAULA

Hey, I need to get home. Can't talk to you now.

SANDY

It'll just take a few minutes.

PAULA

All right. What's this all about?

SANDY

So here's the thing. I've been friends with Jennifer for a long time. We look out for each other. I don't want to see her get hurt.

PAULA

You've got to be kidding me. It sounds like you're a parent and want to threaten me if I do anything bad to your daughter; that you would kill me.

SANDY nervously laughs.

SANDY

I just worry about Jennifer. She doesn't have any other friends besides me. Her mom is a widow, and I don't think Jennifer gets much support from her.

PAULA

I still don't really get what this has to do with me.

SANDY

She's vulnerable and she rushes into things without thinking. I just know how girls can be mean. I just don't want her to be made fun of.

PAULA

You've lost me there, and I still don't understand what this has to do with me. Unless . . . you have the nerve to suggest that *my* relationship somehow is bad for Jennifer. You better not go there because I would be forced to hurt you . . . hurt you bad! For your information, if anyone tried to bully Jennifer, I would do anything to protect her. Okay? I've really got to go now. You don't have to worry about your friend.

SANDY

Uh, okay, I guess.

Lights fade out.

SCENE 9

Saturday night at JENNIFER's apartment.

JOSEPH

So, what did you think about the music and the Halleluiahs to Jesus?

JENNIFER

It was all right, but I like Motown music; The Temptations and The Supremes.

JOSEPH

Didn't you like the way the band did Norman Greenbaum's "Spirit in the Sky"? It was a big top-thirty hit. Here, I brought you a copy of the New Testament. I want you to read it. And then we can discuss it. It's a great book.

JENNIFER

Are you going to test me?

JOSEPH laughs. JENNIFER tries to hold JOSEPH's hand, but he moves away.

JOSEPH

I want you to meet my pastor. Maybe you'll come to Sunday services with me tomorrow morning.

JENNIFER

Am I allowed?

JOSEPH

Why not? I like spending time with you. I'm kinda' lonely at school. I keep thinking people are staring at my face because of my acne.

JENNIFER

You look very handsome to me. You have a beautiful face. I don't notice the acne.

JOSEPH

Thank you. I've been praying that it will go away. That Jesus will cure my pimples.

JENNIFER

I can't remember the last time I prayed.

JOSEPH

Oh, I pray every day. Jesus helps me with tests at school. When I feel depressed, Jesus cheers me up.

JENNIFER

Wow! That sounds nice.

JENNIFER starts kissing JOSEPH, and she takes his hand and brings it to her breast. She starts to unbutton his shirt.

JOSEPH

Oh, Jesus!

JENNIFER

No, I'm Jennifer.

JOSEPH

Hey, wait a minute! No so fast! I want you to accept Jesus as your Savior. You know that when the end of the world comes, those who haven't accepted Him will go to hell.

JENNIFER keeps kissing JOSEPH and moves her hand toward his crotch.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

You've got to convert.

JENNIFER

But I brought a rubber with me.

JOSEPH

I'm a good Christian boy. I can't have sex with someone who isn't Christian.

JENNIFER takes the rubber from her pocket and starts unbuttoning JOSEPH'S pants.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

No! My body is my temple.

JENNIFER

Hey, I went to church with you. Isn't that enough? Why do I need to convert? Aren't Jews the chosen people?

JOSEPH

They just need to accept Jesus as the Son of God and receive the Holy Spirit.

JENNIFER

You make it sound so simple.

Lights fade out.

SCENE 10

It's a week later. JENNIFER is facing a set of stairs at a church. The sound of Neil Armstrong walking on the moon is heard. The sound of JENNIFER's inner voice is heard as she ascends each step. She is carrying a piece of paper.

JENNIFER

What will grandma say when she hears I'm converting? She was expecting me to have a big Jewish wedding in a temple. My parents paid for four years of Hebrew school and a Bat Mitzvah, and this is how I pay them back? My dad and Orthodox grandpa will be flipping in their graves. How am I going to get baptized? *Oy vey!* While Neil Armstrong is stepping on the moon, I'm going to be putting my feet in holy water. What kind of Jewish girl am I? And I hope I pass the Jesus Pop Quiz. One of the questions is easy. It's about stations of the cross. That's a bakery where you buy hot cross buns. I am going to nail this test. Joseph really likes me, and we can have sex if I convert.

When JENNIFER gets to the top of the stairs, she knocks on the door

MINISTER

Come in, sweetheart. Don't worry I'm not going to bite. Just kidding.

JENNIFER

I'm so nervous, but I'm ready to accept Jesus.

The MINISTER appears and leads JENNIFER into the room.

MINISTER

Hello, it's Jennifer, right? Joseph told me you wanted to convert. Did you bring the pop quiz with you?

JENNIFER

Yes, here it is. Joseph said if I convert then I won't go to hell. Does it matter that I'm a Jew? Do I need to do anything special?

MINISTER

I want to know why you really want to convert. We don't get many young Jewish girls asking for

salvation. Come to think of it, young Jewish boys never come here for that reason either.

JENNIFER

I like Joseph. I'm sad at school. Kids make fun of me. Joseph says that if I believe in Jesus, I'll be happy all the time. I don't go to temple, anyway.

MINISTER

Did you get Bat Mitzvahed?

JENNIFER

Yes, but why does that matter? I really want to believe in Jesus. I want to change.

MINISTER

And you are sure there isn't another reason? Does this have anything to do with Joseph?

JENNIFER

No. I mean, I like him, and I think it would be better for me to be a Christian. Well actually, I am confused about my sexuality. I'm sure you can't relate to that though.

The MINISTER is startled and changes the subject.

MINISTER

Do your parents know you're doing this?

JENNIFER

Not really, I may have told them I went to church with a girlfriend.

MINISTER

I hope you didn't give them this address, and especially not my name.

The MINISTER puts his hand on JENNIFER's shoulder.

MINISTER (CONT'D)

Do you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior? Are you ready to accept the Holy Spirit? Do you believe in the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost?

JENNIFER

I want to say yes, but I don't understand everything about being Christian. I have been taking the

sacraments; the wine and a special wafer. Hey, you didn't even look at my test. Did I pass?

MINISTER

Oh, for Christ's sake! Sorry, let's see how you did. Not bad. Except what is this about the Virgin Mary being vodka and tomato juice? That's a *Bloody Mary*!

JENNIFER

Do I need to be baptized?

MINISTER

Not unless you want to. You want a clean body before you let the Holy Spirit in. And this is special holy water. I'll just sprinkle it on you.

The minister splashes the water on JENNIFER's face.

JENNIFER

Really? I don't feel anything. Shouldn't it be burning?

MINISTER

Oh, you've been watching too many movies. Remember cleanliness is godliness. I need to say a few prayers now.

The MINISTER mumbles the prayers.

MINISTER (CONT'D)

Now I'm going to ask you again . . .

JENNIFER

How many times do I have to say that I believe Jesus is the Messiah. I believe in holy ghosts too, but I'm not sure about the virgin birth. By the way, is this going to cost me anything?

MINISTER

Just give me everything you've got.

JENNIFER looks confused.

MINISTER (CONT'D)

Okay, just a little joke. I believe you. You're starting to convince me. So, I'll ask you again. Do you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior? Are you ready to accept the Holy Spirit?

JENNIFER

Oh Jesus! I mean, Yes. Yes. Yes.

MINISTER

Perfect! You are now a true-blood born again Christian. Congratulations.

JENNIFER

How do I prove to Joseph that I'm straight? . . . uh, I mean Christian?

MINISTER

Don't worry. He'll know when he sees you.

JENNIFER

I don't feel any different. Am I really going to be changed? Are you sure it worked?

MINISTER

I promise you that Jesus is in your heart. He will take care of you. You won't go to hell, and you'll have eternal life.

JENNIFER

You mean like a vampire? I'll never die?

MINISTER

Look, I would love to talk, but I'm exhausted. I need to take a nap, and I have a line of people wanting to convert.

The MINISTER lies back in his chair and goes to sleep. As JENNIFER leaves the office, she sees a large cross on the wall. She looks at it and decides to remove it and take it with her.

JENNIFER

I know I shouldn't be stealing, but it's for a good cause. I didn't see a price tag; maybe it's free.

The lighting changes on the stage so the audience realizes that the MINISTER is dreaming. He picks up a phone.

MINISTER

Hello, can I help you? Oh, you're Jennifer's father? A Hasidic Jew? Oh, sorry! Oh, I thought you knew what Jennifer was doing? You are going to kill me if I make her convert? I am so sorry. What do you mean you don't care? Wait a minute! You are coming over

here now? With a gun? Can't we talk about this?
Maybe Jennifer can be converted back. How about a
colonic to get the wine from the blood of Christ
removed from her system. No, she didn't eat the
wafer. She said she was gluten intolerant.

The MINISTER wakes up and leaves the office telling his secretary (offstage)

MINISTER (*CONT'D*)

I'm not feeling well, and I'm going home. Be careful
if an angry parent comes by.

Lights dim.

SCENE 11

At Fairfax High. JENNIFER is wearing the large crucifix around her neck. It covers her chest down to her abdomen. She runs up to JOSEPH.

JENNIFER

Well, I did it! I converted!

JOSEPH

Oh, I'm so proud of you. I can tell you look different. We should celebrate at church.

JENNIFER throws her arms around JOSEPH.

JENNIFER

You're the first person I've told.

JOSEPH

Ouch, that's an awfully big crucifix. Where did you get it? Oh, my god. I'm bleeding. The cross must have stabbed me. Get me a band-aid.

JENNIFER

I took it off the wall. There were so many crosses, I figured they wouldn't mind if one was missing. It's awfully heavy around my neck. I was thinking about wearing the crown of thorns to prove to you I was Christian, but it looked dangerous.

Lights dim.

SCENE 12

JENNIFER and JOSEPH are at JENNIFER's apartment. They are dancing to the song, "Reflections."

JOSEPH

Why did you pick this song?

JENNIFER

I don't know. I like the lyrics. It's "*Reflections*" by the Supremes. You know it used to make me feel like I was an alien because I was alone. I didn't have any friends. But then when I met you and became Christian, all that changed.

JOSEPH

I am so happy for you. I told you it would change your life. You know, *Christianity* is very important. It's all about reflections. We are supposed to step back and reflect on our hearts. If we don't preserve this deep understanding, then it might interfere with relationships with others and even God.

JENNIFER

Gosh, I never thought of this song that way. Christianity makes it so groovy!

JOSEPH backs away from JENNIFER.

JOSEPH

Uh, I saw you hanging around with Paula.

JENNIFER

What do you mean? How do you know about Paula?

JOSEPH

Well it's pretty obvious she's gay. You can tell by what she wears. Even how she walks and talks. You will never be saved unless you break off your friendship. She is the Devil. You'll burn in Hell if you continue to associate with her. You've got to tell her immediately.

JENNIFER

But she's a good friend.

JOSEPH

It doesn't matter. She's evil and will destroy you. The Old Testament says homosexuality is a sin.

JENNIFER

So, I have no choice?

JOSEPH

Please do it for Christianity . . . and for me.

JOSEPH leaves the apartment. Lights dim.

SCENE 13

Later. JENNIFER's apartment. PAULA is there.

PAULA

I haven't seen you for weeks. We used to go to the movies every week. What's wrong? Why are you wearing that cross around your neck?

JENNIFER

I'm Christian now. Joseph says we can't be friends any more. He says you're a homosexual.

PAULA

I don't understand! You're not Jewish any more? And who is Joseph?

JENNIFER

I met him a few months ago at lunch. We've gone out a few times. Yes, I converted to Christianity.

PAULA

Does he know we've fooled around?

JENNIFER

No, maybe I'm bisexual. But you're a bad influence. Look, I am so tired of being harassed. I hate it. I want to be like everybody else. And Joseph can be my boyfriend. No one will talk behind my back. Just think if you had a boyfriend.

PAULA

But I don't like boys. I like *you*, Jennifer. I thought we were best friends. You kept saying you never had a friend before. Someone you could really talk to and not be afraid of what you said. And didn't you say something about love?

JENNIFER

You have to leave. I don't want to be friends any more.

PAULA

You can't shut me out! Don't do this! You said you loved me!

JENNIFER

Stop it, Paula! I didn't know what I was feeling. I was stupid.

PAULA

Come on. Please! I don't have any other friends.

JENNIFER

I'm sorry Paula. I can't continue. This is it. Goodbye.

JENNIFER pushes PAULA out of the apartment. PAULA stands outside the door and does not leave. She knocks on the door hoping that JENNIFER will answer, but JENNIFER ignores the knocking. PAULA keeps knocking while she is crying. The lights dim.

SCENE 14

Fairfax High School. JOSEPH is sitting reading his bible, and PAULA sadly walks by.

JOSEPH

Oh, god! What are you doing here? Get away from me!

PAULA

What the hell! What are you going on about?

JOSEPH

You lead an evil life! You need to be saved from a life of depravity! I warned Jennifer about you!

PAULA

What? You're the one who's causing me all this suffering? Wait! You look familiar. Shit! You were that guy who tried to help Jennifer and me that time, weren't you?

PAULA starts to cry.

JOSEPH

Yeah. That was me. Just trying to do a good deed.

PAULA

Damn! Well, we broke up because of you! We were so close. We told each other everything. Then suddenly, it's over! She doesn't want to see me anymore. I kept begging. "I love you. You love me. That's what you said." And after all the things we did together in bed.

JOSEPH jumps up.

JOSEPH

See; evil, depraved! That's a sin. You're not supposed to do that until you're married . . . to a man!

PAULA

What are you talking about. This isn't the 1950s. It's 1969!

JOSEPH

It doesn't matter what year it is. That's what Jesus wants us to do.

PAULA

Well, what would Jesus think about the fact that I'm having sex with a female.

JOSEPH

You're going to hell.

PAULA

Aren't you supposed to love thy neighbor and some sort of crap like that.

JOSEPH

I do love you; it's just that what you're doing is evil. You're depraved!

PAULA starts laughing.

JOSEPH(CONT'D)

What's so funny?

PAULA

You and all this religious stuff. You're talking like a robot, as if this was a script all written out. Who uses words like *evil* and *depraved*? And you know what? Your little speech here stopped me from feeling sorry for myself. So I guess in a way you saved me. Goodbye!

After PAULA walks away, JOSEPH sits back down. He opens his bible and tries to read a passage, but he can't concentrate. He puts his hands together to pray, but after a few moments, he stops and starts to cry. The lights dim.

SCENE 15

Fairfax High School quad the next day. JOSEPH and JENNIFER are together.

JENNIFER

Well, I broke off my friendship with Paula. I felt awful doing it, but I know you're right. I shouldn't have friends like that.

JOSEPH

Oh, thank God. I was worried that Paula would ruin your life. That you would never be allowed into heaven. You would be considered a heathen. I am so happy.

JENNIFER

It was so difficult to do. I hope you're right.

JOSEPH

I *am* right! You are finally free from that depraved person, even more evil than I thought. I've had my own terrible interaction with her myself, so I know!

JENNIFER looks puzzled by JOSEPH's words.

JOSEPH (*CONT'D*)

This is going to change your life. And you know, now that you're born again, you should try to get other people to convert. It is such a wonderful feeling to save somebody. I feel like it was my mission to do this. That this is something Jesus would want me to do.

JENNIFER

Joseph, I've been thinking about *us*. I really like you. I've never had a boyfriend before. And you have helped me so much. I even told my mom about being born again. She said I was crazy, but she was okay with it. She's not religious. In fact, I think after my father died, she doesn't even believe in God anymore. We've gotten really close though since he died. I think she just wants me to be happy whatever I want to do.

JOSEPH

You're so lucky you have that kind of relationship with your mother. My mom doesn't care about whether I'm happy or not. I don't understand her. She never talked about being Catholic before, and then just because I went to a Presbyterian church, she goes off on me!

JENNIFER

Listen, I've got some tickets for the Anne Murray concert this Saturday. I want to take you. Here, I'd like you to have this little cross that I bought for you so we can go steady.

JENNIFER takes the cross out of her pocket and tries to give it to JOSEPH.

JOSEPH

Wait! I just want to be friends with you. I'm not interested in you romantically.

JENNIFER

What are you saying?

JOSEPH

I'm not going to be your boyfriend.

JENNIFER

But Joseph, I've changed my religion. I broke off my relationship with my best friend.

JOSEPH

You should be grateful that I saved your soul. You should thank me. Hey, got another class. Gotta' run.

JENNIFER looks stunned. She takes off the crucifix and throws it in the garbage can. Lights dim.

SCENE 16

JENNIFER is back in her apartment with SANDY.

SANDY

I got the most amazing news. My parents took me to this new orthopedic doctor and he thinks shortening my longer leg will solve my problems. And it will be good for my whole body.

JENNIFER

Yeah, you're lucky.

SANDY

You don't really seem that excited for me. Do you want to go play miniature golf? Oh, and guess what, the math club is going to compete with Hamilton High. They've won the last four years, but I think we have a good chance to beat them this time. And there's this guy on the team named Henry, and I think he likes me. He hasn't asked me out yet, but we've talked on the phone. He's really smart, and he's shorter than me, but I don't think that matters.

JENNIFER

I'm happy for you, Sandy, but I don't feel like playing golf. Maybe another time.

SANDY

Oh, I forgot to ask you about your boyfriend, Joseph. Have you done it with him yet?

JENNIFER

No, he isn't my boyfriend

SANDY

What happened? Last time we talked about him, it sounded like he was really into you.

JENNIFER

I don't feel like talking about it. Maybe another time.

SANDY

Okay, I get it. Well, I think I'm going to call Henry and ask him if he wants to play miniature golf. Wish me luck.

SANDY leaves, and JENNIFER puts on music. She listens to "Reflections," but halfway through the song, she takes the needle off the record. She looks across the stage and sees PAULA. JENNIFER looks at her telephone contemplating whether to use it. Finally, she dials.

JENNIFER

Paula, I need to talk to you. I was wondering if you wanted to see the film, *The Gay Deceivers*, and I am so sorry. I was a real shit the way I treated you.

Lights fade out.

THE END