

# FINE ART

TEN MINUTE PLAY

By Abigail Taylor

Copyright © MMXII by Abigail Taylor

All Rights Reserved

Heuer Publishing LLC, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

**The writing of plays is a means of livelihood. Unlawful use of a playwright's work deprives the creator of his or her rightful income. The playwright is compensated on the full purchase price and the right of performance can only be secured through purchase of at least three (3) copies of this work. PERFORMANCES ARE LIMITED TO ONE VENUE FOR ONE YEAR FROM DATE OF PURCHASE.**

**The possession of this script without direct purchase from the publisher confers no right or license to produce this work publicly or in private, for gain or charity. On all programs and advertising this notice must appear: "Produced by special arrangement with Heuer Publishing LLC of Cedar Rapids, Iowa."**

This dramatic work is fully protected by copyright. No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without permission of the publisher. Copying (by any means) or performing a copyrighted work without permission constitutes an infringement of copyright.

**The right of performance is not transferable** and is strictly forbidden in cases where scripts are borrowed or purchased second hand from a third party. All rights including, but not limited to the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, broadcast, recitation, lecturing, tabloid, publication, and reading are reserved.

**COPYING OR REPRODUCING ALL OR ANY PART OF THIS BOOK IN ANY MANNER IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN BY LAW.**

***PUBLISHED BY***

**HEUER PUBLISHING LLC**

**P.O. BOX 248 • CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA 52406**

**TOLL FREE (800) 950-7529 • FAX (319) 368-8011**

**FINE ART**  
**By Abigail Taylor**

**SYNOPSIS:** A wealthy shopaholic regrets making a major purchase that she cannot return.

**CAST OF CHARACTERS**  
*(ONE MAN, ONE WOMAN)*

BARBARA (f) ..... Female, mid 40's – early 50's. A typical East Side lady who lunches. Self-involved and a bit of a compulsive shopper.

RICHARD (m) ..... Male, mid 40's – early 50's. Her beleaguered husband. Well-intentioned but a pushover.

**SCENE**

Richard and Barbara's luxury apartment in Turtle Bay, a wealthy neighborhood in East Midtown Manhattan.

**TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS**

Absolutely minimal. No special lights and sound are required and scenery can be limited to a few pieces of furniture.

*FINE ART* premiered July 14, 2011 at the City Theatre of Independence in Independence, MO. The production featured Mary L. Wilkens and J. Michael Wimpy and was directed by Crystal Robison Gould.

**AT RISE:**

*An apartment in a high-rise building on East 57<sup>th</sup> St. in Manhattan. BARBARA sits glumly in an overstuffed chair. She is staring at a frame positioned on an easel several feet in front of her. The audience can only see the back of the frame. She sighs audibly. RICHARD enters. She hears his footsteps and turns to him.*

**BARBARA:** I hate it. I absolutely hate it.

**RICHARD:** Please don't say that, darling.

**BARBARA:** I do. I hate it.

**RICHARD:** Barbara, please—

**BARBARA:** It's hideous.

**RICHARD:** That's a very strong word.

**BARBARA:** Disgusting.

**RICHARD:** You just have to get used to it.

**BARBARA:** Grotesque. I hate it. I do. All that money...

*She begins to sob.*

**RICHARD:** Don't cry.

**BARBARA:** Eleven thousand dollars.

**RICHARD:** I know.

**BARBARA:** That's a safari in Kenya.

**RICHARD:** I know.

**BARBARA:** Ten Burberry trench coats.

**RICHARD:** I know.

**BARBARA:** The down-payment on a house in Poughkeepsie. Not that I'd ever live in Poughkeepsie.

**RICHARD:** Of course not, darling.

**BARBARA:** That Rifkin is a con man. He should be locked up.

**RICHARD:** He came highly recommended.

**BARBARA:** By Doug and Sylvia. I should have known.

**RICHARD:** Barbara—

**BARBARA:** Sylvia's always had it in for me.

**RICHARD:** Don't be ridiculous.

**BARBARA:** She has. You know she has. Even as we speak, she's probably chanting spells over one of my clipped toenails, retrieved from our bathroom wastebasket. That's how all this happened. Oh, God, what will Margot say?

**RICHARD:** Unless it has something to do with that rugby player she's dating, I doubt she'll care.

**BARBARA:** What does she see in that hooligan? She ought to care. I'm her mother.

**RICHARD:** Well, she won't.

*BARBARA notices the remote control in his hand.*

**BARBARA:** What are you doing?

**RICHARD:** Giants are on. I thought I'd watch the game.

**BARBARA:** You want to watch football at a time like this?

**RICHARD:** It's the play-offs.

**BARBARA:** Richard!

**RICHARD:** With all due respect, darling, you've talked about nothing else for the past five weeks. Maybe it's time to—

**BARBARA:** How can you be so insensitive? *(She begins to cry. Trapped, he places the remote control on the table and sits next to her.)* Rifkin's a true artist, Sylvia said. Yes, he's an artist – a scam artist. *(RICHARD looks as if he is hearing this for the hundredth time.)* I hate it. I hated it from the moment I took the wrapping off—

**RICHARD:** Nearly a month ago. *(She stares at him icily.)* I don't see what you hate about it so much. I think it's nice.

**BARBARA:** Sure.

**RICHARD:** Well, anyway, I told you not to get it.

**BARBARA:** What? You said you were behind me one hundred percent.

**RICHARD:** Did I? Oh, well, then I was lying.

**BARBARA:** What?

**RICHARD:** I was lying. I was not telling the truth.

**BARBARA:** What?

**RICHARD:** I was not behind you one hundred percent. I was not behind you at all. Lies. Falsehoods. Untruths.

**BARBARA:** I knew it. When I asked if you thought it was a good idea, you said yes, but you brushed your hair out of your face when you said it. You always brush your hair out of your face when you're lying.

**RICHARD:** I lied because I thought it was a bad idea, and I knew you'd get it regardless. You never know what you want, so then you get the wrong thing and everyone else has to suffer.

**BARBARA:** Richard—

**RICHARD:** The sofa, the summer in Maine, the Portuguese water dogs. None of it was what you actually wanted.

**BARBARA:** This is a different case entirely.

**RICHARD:** Is it? In my opinion, the only difference from all the other cases is that this particular venture was far more expensive.

**BARBARA:** It's completely different.

**RICHARD:** Just another impulse buy. What is it you're trying to purchase, Barbara? Because I think it's probably something that's not for sale.

**BARBARA:** Don't give me that psychobabble, Richard.

**RICHARD:** You know what I'm talking about. *(He picks up the remote.)* I'll be watching the Giants.

**BARBARA:** Richard—

**RICHARD:** I don't want to discuss this anymore. *(He exits and she collapses in tears, sobbing loudly enough for the neighbors to hear. After a few moments, he returns sheepishly.)* I'm sorry.

**BARBARA:** No, you're not.

**RICHARD:** Yes, I am.

*He sits next to her and takes her in his arms.*

**BARBARA:** What you said about me trying to find something by buying things—

**RICHARD:** I didn't mean it.

**BARBARA:** But maybe you're right. I don't know.

**RICHARD:** Let's not talk about that right now. *(He kisses her forehead.)* But something that I said that I did mean – I think it looks nice.

**BARBARA:** Really?

**RICHARD:** Yes, really.

**BARBARA:** I still hate it.

**RICHARD:** Try looking at it a little closer.

**BARBARA:** No.

**RICHARD:** Maybe it'll look better to you up close. You know, like a Monet.

**BARBARA:** Monets look worse up close, Richard.

**RICHARD:** Or a Seurat?

**BARBARA:** Same thing.

**RICHARD:** You know what I mean. *(He motions for her to approach the frame.)* Come on, Barb. Give it a shot.

**BARBARA:** It is a Monet. Worse up close.

**RICHARD:** Maybe from a different angle, then? *(He picks up the frame and turns it around so that the audience sees that it is actually a mirror. He turns it to face her from the side.)* How about now?

**BARBARA:** Even worse. *(She touches her nose. It should now be apparent that the "art" is her nose job.)* It's hideous. Absolutely hideous.

**RICHARD:** Don't say that. *(He kisses her on the nose.)* Maybe Margot's rugby player boyfriend can break it for you. Then the do-over will be covered by insurance.

**BARBARA:** Not funny.

**RICHARD:** Yes, it was. Although I still don't think you need a do-over. It looks nice.

**BARBARA:** *(Softening.)* Thank you. *(She starts to cry again.)* Oh, Richard, I'm so sorry.

**RICHARD:** It's all right.

**BARBARA:** I promise I won't say anything more about it.

**RICHARD:** Thank you, darling. Care to watch the Giants lose?

**BARBARA:** Yes, please. *(He picks up the remote and starts to exit.)*  
You really think it looks nice?

**RICHARD:** It's beautiful.

*He brushes the hair out of his face.*

**BARBARA:** What was that?

**RICHARD:** Nothing. I really like it.

*He brushes the hair out of his face again.*

**BARBARA:** Oh, God.

**RICHARD:** What?

**BARBARA:** You're lying. You brushed the hair out of your face. You hate it.

**RICHARD:** I don't hate— *(He looks at her, defeated.)* Barb, I don't— *(He sighs.)* I'll let you know who wins.

*He exits, and she returns to the overstuffed chair, staring at the mirror on the easel.*

**BARBARA:** I hate it. I absolutely hate it.

**THE END**

Perusal Only  
Do Not Copy