

FLORENCE, DAVID & ART

By Greg Atkins

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For Molly and Cassidy

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World Premiere:

Florence, David & Art had its world premiere on May 31, 2003 at South Coast Repertory in Costa Mesa, California. It was produced by David Emmes, Producing Artistic Director and Martin Benson, Artistic Director. The dramaturgs were Jennifer Kiger and Linda Sullivan Baity. The production team was as follows: Scenic Design by Krista Zaloudek, Lighting Design by Leigh Allen, Costume Designer Beth Steinberg, Stage Manager LisaMarie Goodell, Wig Master was M.K. Steeves. *Florence, David & Art* was directed by Laurie Woolery.

The cast (in alphabetical order) was as follows:

<i>Anna-Maria/Flight Attendant</i>	Lisa Ackerman
<i>Giovanna</i>	Diana Alvarez
<i>Christian</i>	Jamie Black
<i>Roxanne</i>	Britteny Chavez
<i>Liz</i>	Kelly Ehlert
<i>Helene</i>	Nikki Gross
<i>Bernardo/Airport Security</i>	John Hsiang
<i>Antonio/Flight Attendant</i>	Carlos Ibarra
<i>Connor</i>	Dylan (DJ) Johnson
<i>Joanne</i>	Jacqueline Legan
<i>Lynn</i>	Nora Mally
<i>Michelle</i>	Anna Matthis
<i>Daria</i>	Eden Routledge
<i>Sean</i>	Al Scholnick
<i>Kathleen</i>	Elise St. Clair

Synopsis:

When nine American high school students enroll themselves at Art School in Florence, Italy, little do they realize how their perspectives on life, love and Art will be changed forever. Battling culture shock, bidets, and homesickness is difficult enough, but add in summer romances, striking train workers, and a chaperone that disappeared five minutes into the trip and you have all the ingredients for a summer to remember.

With a cast of fifteen and using minimal sets and props, but relying on sound, lights and projections, Florence, David & Art is a comedy that touches the heart of the aspiring artist in all of us. Projections referred to in this play are discretionary and the Director is free to use their artistic license. Many scenes do NOT require projections, but can be enhanced with gobos and lighting.

We encourage inclusion of the name of the artist and artwork in the PLAYBILL and recommend linking a student or local artist “art show” with this play.

FLORENCE, DAVID & ART

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

KATHLEEN	A seventeen year-old budding artist. A natural, if unwilling, leader. (170 lines)
JOANNE	Forceful, bit of a know-it-all (100 lines)
MICHELLE	Looking to find herself through her art. Purple hair. (92 lines)
LIZ	Excellent artist that is seldom without a sketchpad in her hands. (175 lines)
SEAN	Funky comic book artist. (93 lines)
LYNN	Straight laced, first time away from home. (92 lines)
CONNOR	Funny and vulnerable. (103 lines)
HELENE	Totally into Italy and the culture. (63 lines)
DARIA	Knows how to get others to do the work for her. Shopaholic. Here to have fun. (75 lines)
CHRISTIAN	In Florence with his sister and parents. Going to a soccer camp. (Doubles as the Waiter.) (41 lines)
BERNARDO	Young Venetian spending his summer with his father at the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence. (Doubles as Airport Security Guard.) (85 lines)
ROXANNE	Christian's sister and soccer player. (Can double as Anna-Maria.) (34 lines)
GIOVANNA	Eighteen year-old Italian girl who models for art classes. (48 lines)
ANTONIO	Young Florentine that works in his family's leather shop. (Doubles as Airline Steward.) (56 lines)
ANNA-MARIA	Bernardo's ex-girlfriend. (Doubles as Airline Attendant.) (25 lines)
AIRPORT SECURITY GUARD	(Non-Speaking)
AIRLINE ATTENDANT	(Non-Speaking)
AIRLINE STEWARD	(Non-Speaking)
WAITER	(Non-Speaking)

BY GREG ATKINS
SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

SCENE ONE
PENSIONE ANGELO CUSTODE

SCENE TWO
LIFE DRAWING

SCENE THREE
STANZA DA BAGNO

SCENE FOUR
DAVID

SCENE FIVE
LIFE DRAWING DA CAPO

SCENE SIX
THE MUSEUMS

SCENE SEVEN
PIAZZA REPUBBLICA

SCENE EIGHT
HALLWAY OF THE PENSIONE ANGELO CUSTODE

SCENE NINE
VIGIL

SCENE TEN
DAVID DUE

SCENE ELEVEN
RESTAURANT LA DOLCE VITA

SCENE TWELVE
VINO E FORMAGGIO

SCENE ONE

PENSIONE ANGELO CUSTODE

As the AUDIENCE enters, they hear a prerecorded cross section of ITALIAN MUSIC interspersed with the CAST responding to a Berlitz Italian language lesson.

Setting:

The STAGE FLOOR is painted in a traditional Piazza chessboard pattern done in perspective [perhaps it has a M.C. ESCHER-LIKE quality to it a la "LIBERATION" or "DAY AND NIGHT"]. A BACKDROP/CLOTH is swagged across the back of the stage. PROJECTIONS appear on the fabric. Two OVERSIZED PICTURE FRAMES, large enough for the CAST to enter and exit through are placed stage right and left. The PICTURE FRAMES are set on PLATFORMS with steps leading up to them. SCRIM material fills the opening in the frames and is slit down the middle for easy passage. GOBOS of diffused light fill the frames and play across the BACKDROP. A FREESTANDING DOOR on wheels is placed down right. Empty PICTURE FRAMES hang from the ceiling. TWO SMALL BISTRO TABLES and TEN CHAIRS will be the only other set pieces.

At Rise:

As the LIGHTS fade, the MUSIC changes to a perky American beat song [perhaps K.D. Lang's "Summerfling"] and CAST MEMBERS begin to, individually and in couples, cross the stage carrying/rolling their backpacks and bags. There is an expectant, excited quality to their crossing. HELENE stops to take a picture. MICHELLE grabs her arm and pulls her off stage. KATHLEEN and LIZ walk together, CHRISTIAN, in dark glasses, crosses carrying a sports bag and checks out LIZ as she walks past, SEAN crosses drinking from a Starbucks cup, MICHELLE is wearing headphones, DARIA is on her cell phone, etc. Each STUDENT crosses a few times. BERNARDO, dressed as an airport security officer in a blazer, dark glasses, and carrying a METAL DETECTION WAND waves the CAST through one of the FRAMES as if it was a metal detector. When SEAN walks through he is stopped (maybe because of his skull and crossbones T-shirt) and BERNARDO passes the wand around his body, then lets him go. HELENE checks out the cute SECURITY GUARD and stands in front of him, lifting her arms ready to be searched. MICHELLE grabs her hand and drags her off again. DARIA walks through the metal detector and smiles at the GUARD, who lowers his glasses to get a better look. CONNOR crosses through the metal detector and does a little "I got through Security" victory dance. The GUARD waves him away and exits as the STUDENTS reenters (reenter)stage right in single file as if they are moving down the aisle of a plane. They are carrying their bags and sit on the steps of the stage left PICTURE FRAME. The FLIGHT ATTENDANTS enter and mime pointing out the exits; the STEWARD hands an OXYGEN MASK to the ATTENDANT who holds it by its tube, drops it and shows how to put it on. The STEWARD holds up a FLIGHT SAFETY CARD. They exit as the CAST reacts, in unison, to the plane taking off...they lean back, lean left, lean right, and then sit up straight. The ATTENDANTS return with a DRINK CART. The CAST tries to get a drink, but the ATTENDANTS shake their

BY GREG ATKINS

heads and exit. HELENE takes out her camera and the GROUP squeezetogogether for a photo.

On the CAMERA FLASH the LIGHTS FADE. **A PROJECTION of the exterior of a MODEST PENSIONE** appears on the backdrop. The LIGHTS come up on KATHLEEN, JOANNE, MICHELLE, SEAN, JOANNE, LYNN and LIZ standing looking up at the front of their hotel with their luggage scattered around.

KATHLEEN: (Looking at a piece of paper.) This is it.

JOANNE: (Looking up above the audience. Unimpressed.) This is it?

MICHELLE: (Doubtful.) Are you sure? It's supposed to be a hotel.

SEAN: No, it's a pensione (Pronouncing it "pen-see-oh-knee.")

KATHLEEN: Sean, that **is** a hotel and it's pronounced pensione. (Pen-see-own.)

SEAN: Then why does the word have an "e" at the end if you don't need it?

JOANNE: Why don't they pronounce your name as Seen instead of Sean? You don't need your "e" either.

SEAN: Well, Joanne, (He pronounces it Jo-ann-ee.) I could say the same about **your** name.

LYNN: (Along with her bag she carries a small stuffed animal.) Come on everyone, I know we're tired and jet lagged, but let's try to keep it together until we get into our rooms, okay? (JOANNE gives her a look.)

LIZ: Then let's go in. It's hot out here.

KATHLEEN: I know, but Ms. Tabor told us to wait for her. (LIZ gives a groan and sits on her suitcase. She pulls out a sketchpad and begins drawing.)

SEAN: Who was that guy that met us at the train station?

JOANNE: That's Tabor's Italian boyfriend. He's a sculptor.

CONNOR: (Entering and pulling/dragging his wheeled suitcase.) It must be 100 degrees. These streets are ridiculous! There must be a million Vespas out there? It sounds like someone's using a beehive as a piñata!

LIZ: (Not amused.) Funny, Connor.

KATHLEEN: Where have you been?

CONNOR: You try pulling this thing across all these rocks.

JOANNE: Cobblestones.

CONNOR: What?

JOANNE: Cobblestones. These are cobblestone streets.

CONNOR: Haven't they heard of cement?

SEAN: I'm starving.

KATHLEEN: We're waiting for Ms. Tabor.

LYNN: I've got some Euros.

SEAN: Those Italian sandwiches?

JOANNE: You're thinking Gyro's (Yee-rows), and anyway they're Greek.

LYNN: Euros are Italian money.

CONNOR: No, they're not.

LYNN: Yes they are. Does anyone know today's exchange rate?

JOANNE: (To CONNOR.) Didn't you do any research before you came here?

CONNOR: Yeah, I got this book. (He pulls a torn travel guide out of his back pocket.) *Italy for Lovers.*

LIZ: (Rolling her eyes.) Whoo, boy.

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CONNOR: (*Looking in the book.*) And for your information, the *Lira* is the official currency of Italy.

JOANNE: When was that book published?

CONNOR: (*Looking at the cover.*) 1992.

KATHLEEN: (*Exasperated.*) Connor...

CONNOR: What? Like this place has changed in the past thousand years?

HELENE: (*Entering.*) Buon giorno! Buon giorno! Ah, the hotel looks buono!

(*She takes a deep breath.*) I love the way Italy smells.

MICHELLE: (*Sniffing.*) All I smell are diesel fumes.

SEAN: I smell food. Let's go get dinner.

HELENE: It's only 5:00.

SEAN: Yeah?

HELENE: Italians don't eat dinner until 9 o'clock.

SEAN: What?! Okay, that's it. (*He begins to rummage through his backpack.*)

HELENE: Why aren't we going in?

LIZ: Yeah, let's go in. I'm melting in this sun.

KATHLEEN: Ms. Tabor told us to wait for her.

HELENE: She said she'd see us later tonight.

LYNN: (*The next few lines overlap.*) Oh, that's just great.

JOANNE: I knew this was going to happen. Tabor pulled the same thing with Tina Williams' group *last* summer. (*SEAN pulls a jar of peanut butter out of his bag and begins eating it with his finger.*)

MICHELLE: We're supposed to have a chaperone with us at all times.

LIZ: I'm telling you, we should just go in!

KATHLEEN: Okay, quiet! (*They settle.*) This isn't a big deal. I guess...I guess we'll just check in. (*They all begin to pick up their bags.*)

MICHELLE: Hey, where's Daria?

JOANNE: Yeah, where **is** Daria?

KATHLEEN: Oh, great. (*She drops her bags.*)

LYNN: Not again.

LIZ: I think she has Travelers A.D.D.

HELENE: She was right behind me.

CONNOR: (*Looking offstage.*) I don't see her.

LYNN: You can't miss her, she has like 20 bags.

SEAN: Maybe they fell and crushed her.

MICHELLE: Kathleen, Daria won't have any idea how to find this place.

KATHLEEN: Okay, you guys stay here. Joanne and I'll go look for her.

CONNOR: Never mind, here she comes.

DARIA enters with ANTONIO carrying her bags. DARIA looks like Audrey Hepburn in a white skirt suit and wide brimmed hat.

DARIA: Ciao, everyone, ciao! (*EVERYONE just stares.*) Buona sera. Is that right, Antonio?

ANTONIO: Molto bene.

DARIA: Everybody this is Antonio. Antonio this is Kathleen, Lynn, Connor, Joanne, Liz, Michelle, and Sean.

JOANNE: (*Noticing SEAN.*) Where did you get the peanut butter?

SEAN: My mom packed me 5 jars in case the food here sucks.

BY GREG ATKINS

HELENE: (*Incredulous.*) We're in Italy! They...they...*invented* food!

LYNN: I think it was the Chinese that originally invented pizza.

ANTONIO: Daria, I must get back to the shop. (*Setting the bags down.*) I bring the rest of your bags later?

DARIA: (*Smiling at him.*) That would be wonderful.

ANTONIO: Sì. A piu tarde. Arrivederci, Daria. (*He kisses her hand. As he exits.*) Arrivederci, everybody. (*All give back a halfhearted "Arrivederci," except for HELENE who says it with gusto.*)

KATHLEEN: What shop?

DARIA: What?

KATHLEEN: Antonio said he had to get back to his shop?

DARIA: Yes, he works in a little leather shop a couple streets over. I bought a few things.

MICHELLE: She's been shopping!? We've only been here 20 minutes!

KATHLEEN: (*Picking up her bag.*) Okay, everybody, let's check in.

LIZ: About time. (*EVERYONE grabs their stuff and exits.*)

MUSIC. The LIGHTS change as the CAST is on the move. DARIA stands there waiting for someone to help her with her bags. No one does. She looks off and motions to someone offstage. CHRISTIAN dressed as a WAITER comes to the rescue, grabs her bags and follows her off.

*The PROJECTION changes to a **PENSIONE BEDROOM**. KATHLEEN with her bag, pushes the scrim aside, and steps through the stage right FRAME.*

KATHLEEN: (*Checking out the room.*) Not bad. Kinda cute even. (*Looking around, to herself with mounting horror.*) Where's the bathroom?

LIZ: (*Entering with her bags and out of breath. She leans against the frame.*) No elevator. Thank God we're only on the 3rd floor. Turn on the air conditioning.

KATHLEEN: There is no air conditioning.

LIZ: No air conditioning?

KATHLEEN: Not that I see.

LIZ: There must be a... (*She looks around.*) Where's the bathroom? (*She exits leaving her bags.*)

JOANNE: (*Peeking through the scrim.*) We're all in 302? I thought we had doubles?

LYNN: (*Bumping JOANNE.*) Keep moving, I'm in here.

JOANNE: (*Angry, but allowing her in.*) So am I.

LYNN: No, I'm supposed to be in a double with Kathleen.

KATHLEEN: Just put your stuff in here until we figure it out. (*JOANNE and LYNN enter with their bags. They look around.*)

TOGETHER: Where's the bathroom?

LIZ: (*LIZ appears at the opening.*) Oh, my God, there is only one bathroom on this floor...and it's in the hall! (*In total shock, JOANNE and LYNN drop their bags at the same time.*)

LYNN: I want to go home.

JOANNE: I want to go to the bathroom.

LIZ: (*Looking down the hallway.*) You better hurry. There's already a line.

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LYNN: I'm tired. I'm hot. I feel gross. And I want a bath.

DARIA: (*Walking into the room.*) Kathleen, there's three of us in our room.

JOANNE: Well, you have one less than we do.

DARIA: We're supposed to have doubles.

JOANNE: So are we.

CONNOR: (*Enters.*) Hey, your room is bigger than ours!

LYNN: That's because there are four of us in here.

CONNOR: You should have sprung for a double.

LYNN: We did!

JOANNE: Where's Tabor?

SEAN: (*Entering. He has a large, bulging manila envelope.*) Hey, your room is bigger than ours.

LIZ: (*Taking out her sketchpad.*) Shut up.

SEAN: (*To CONNOR referring to LIZ.*) Someone has Jet Hag. (*To KATHLEEN.*) The concierge dude gave this to me to give to you. (*Handing it to her.*)

KATHLEEN: What is it? (*Opening the envelope and rifling through it.*)

SEAN: Iduhknow.

MICHELLE: (*MICHELLE enters.*) May I come in?

LIZ: Why not? We've almost got that locker room stench going in here. (*MICHELLE takes a step back.*)

DARIA: (*To MICHELLE.*) We were looking all over for you. Where were you?

MICHELLE: The bathroom. I just had to wash my face. (*LYNN starts to exit.*) Now there's a line. (*LYNN groans and sits back down.*)

JOANNE: What's in the envelope?

KATHLEEN: Maps, lists of restaurants, revised class schedules, museum tickets, Do's and Don'ts, emergency numbers.

LYNN: I take it that this means we won't be seeing Tabor until the flight home.

LIZ: If then.

MICHELLE: I think it's wonderful that she is having a summer romance.

JOANNE: (*Sarcastic.*) Yeah.

DARIA: She sure doesn't have anything going for her at home.

CONNOR: You know what this means don't you?

KATHLEEN: Yeah, were stuck with these rooms.

MICHELLE: Someone could open a window.

CONNOR: No, it means we have absolutely no supervision.

DARIA: He's right!

KATHLEEN: (*The full realization setting in and she's not too thrilled.*) We're on our own?

SEAN: In a foreign country.

LIZ: I'm taking the train to Rome this weekend!

SEAN: I'm going with you!

JOANNE: Me too!

DARIA: I hear they've got the most amazing nightclubs in Rome.

CONNOR: How about Venice?

DARIA: Venice is like the most romantic place on Earth.

LIZ: I'm in!

JOANNE: Me too!

DARIA: Anyone up for a shopping trip to Milan?

BY GREG ATKINS

KATHLEEN: Hold on! No one is going anywhere.

SEAN: Says you.

CONNOR: Why not?

SEAN: When did you become the Alpha female?

JOANNE: Yeah, since when do you get to be the new tour leader?

KATHLEEN: *(At a loss.)* Since...since...*(finally holding up the envelope)*...since, Tabor put my name on this envelope!

MICHELLE: Kathleen's right, I think we ought to wait until we talk to Tabor before we go to another city.

LYNN: Yeah, maybe we should check out Florence before we go anywhere else.

JOANNE: *(Getting into LYNN's face.)* Lynn, maybe you should keep out of everyone else's business! Do you always do everything you're told?

LYNN: Joanne, you don't even know me.

JOANNE: And what's the story with that stupid stuffed animal? *(She grabs the stuffed toy from LYNN and throws it to SEAN. He and CONNOR begin to play "keep away" with it.)*

LYNN: That's mine! It was a going away present from my mom!

LIZ: Leave her alone, Joanne!

MICHELLE: Yeah.

KATHLEEN: *(Angry.)* Everyone just calm down! *(To CONNOR.)* Give me that! *(She takes the stuffed animal from him and gives it back to LYNN. LYNN hugs it tightly.)* Maybe this is why we need a chaperone to begin with! *(They all stand there looking at each other. Tired, hot, dirty and cranky. A perky HELENE comes through the FRAME.)*

HELENE: Isn't this great! It'll be like one big slumber party!

SCENE TWO

LIFE DRAWING

MUSIC. CAST MEMBERS place the chairs in a semi-circle. As the LIGHTS come up LYNN and JOANNE are discovered sitting with their sketchpads on their laps. LYNN has a class schedule.

A PROJECTION of “FOUR STUDIES OF A WOMAN” by Jacob de Gheyn II fades up on the screen at center.

LYNN: Yeah, it's right here. (*Reading from the brochure*) “Offer promising artists full scholarships to return the following summer.”

JOANNE: (*Fanning herself with her sketchpad.*) Did you think they just lied in the orientation?

LYNN: (*Folding up the brochure.*) I just wanted to see what kind of scholarship it was.

JOANNE: Whatever it is, I hope I get it. (*MICHELLE walks in.*)

MICHELLE: Get what?

JOANNE: The scholarship for next year.

MICHELLE: (*She sits.*) How'd you wash your hair?

JOANNE: The sink in the room.

MICHELLE: I would have, but Helene is washing her clothes in our sink.

LYNN: (*There is a pause.*) Anyone else nervous?

JOANNE: About what?

LYNN: Being here?

JOANNE: No.

MICHELLE: A little.

JOANNE: (*To MICHELLE.*) What are you worried about?

MICHELLE: I'm not worried, just a little nervous. Going to another country. Art school. Not knowing what to expect. You know.

JOANNE: All I know is I plan on having some fun. No parents, no Tabor, no big brother threatening every guy that looks crossed-eyed at me. Just freedom. I couldn't wait to get on that plane.

LYNN: My mom and Ms. Tabor thought going to Italy would be good for me. Sort of bring me out of my shell. (*As an afterthought.*) And I like art. (*Art and Art School are sometimes capitalized and sometimes not – go with art and art school*)

JOANNE: (*To her, LYNN is pathetic. To MICHELLE.*) What about you, Michelle?

MICHELLE: I dunno. I might want to be an artist; I'm not sure yet. My dad says he wants me to have something else to fall back on, like teaching. (*They BOTH make a face.*)

JOANNE: I'm going to be an interior designer so this'll look great on my resume. (*resume'*)

HELENE walks in.

HELENE: Buon la mattina, Come sta?

BY GREG ATKINS

JOANNE: Hey, how did you get ready so fast this morning?

HELENE: The early bird gets the bathroom.

MICHELLE: I didn't even care if I took a shower. I just wanted to wash my hair.

HELENE: Here's a little tip. While one of you is in the tub the other can use the little floor sink.

JOANNE: The what?

HELENE: They have a small sink in the bathrooms just to wash your hair. Like in a hair salon?

JOANNE: (*A pause, thinking it through.*) This small sink, is it next to the toilet?

HELENE: Yes, but not that close.

JOANNE: (*She laughs.*) Helene, that's a bidet.

HELENE: Whatever you call it, it's sorta like a salon sink, but closer to the ground.

JOANNE: (*MICHELLE joins in on the joke.*) Helene, it's a BIDET!

HELENE: Okay! So it's a bidet. (*Indignant.*) That is if you are even pronouncing it right. Just so you know, my Italian is much better than either one of yours.

CONNOR: (*Walking in with DARIA, LIZ, KATHLEEN, and LIZ.*) I am so tired.

DARIA: We all have jet lag, Connor. (*He leans his head against LIZ's shoulder and she pushes him away.*)

LIZ: Buck up, Bucko. It's gonna be a long day.

CONNOR: And this heat isn't helping. I just want to put my head down for a little nap. (*He leans his head on DARIA and she pushes him away.*)

KATHLEEN: Connor, it's our first day and our first class. Can you hold off embarrassing us until week two?

MICHELLE: What did you think of orientation?

DARIA: I love they way they treated us like adults, not like some high school kids on a vacation.

KATHLEEN: Daría, we're not *on* vacation.

DARIA: Maybe you're not. I plan on spending every dime my father gave me.

JOANNE: This better be a good art school, it costs enough.

LIZ: (*Looking at a brochure.*) Hey, Connor, do you realize your father is a modern day Medici?

CONNOR: A what?

LIZ: A Medici. In Florence they were the rich patrons of the arts.

CONNOR: He's not one of those. He's a CEO of a printing company.

LYNN: No, she means he's always giving money to the arts. He supports the arts. That's what she's trying to say.

DARIA: Yeah, it's not a bad thing.

CONNOR: Isn't anybody else tired?

SEAN: (*Entering in a rush and finding a seat.*) Oh, my God, I met the most beautiful girl I've ever seen.

MICHELLE: Where?

SEAN: She just walked out of orientation. I think she's a student.

DARIA: Where's she from?

SEAN: I don't know, but they don't have girls like this back home.

DARIA: What's her name?

SEAN: Giovanna.

LIZ: Yeah, that name isn't too common in Louisville, Colorado.

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CONNOR: How'd **you** get up the courage to talk to her?

SEAN: I didn't. She came up to me. She wanted to look at my... *(In his "sexy" voice.) ..."portfolio".*

LIZ: Did you impress her with your comic book art?

SEAN: As a matter of fact, yes.

LIZ: Did you show her your female super villain, Copperhead?

SEAN: That's not in my portfolio.

LYNN: That's because the Italian authorities won't let that kind of *(She does the quote marks in the air.)* "art" into the country.

SEAN: There is nothing wrong with comic book art.

LIZ: Especially if you are an adolescent boy.

SEAN: Liz, not all of us can draw the ceiling of the Sistine from memory like you can.

LIZ: *(She shrugs.)* It's a gift.

SEAN: So is drawing comic book characters. It's still art...

KATHLEEN: *(Noticing someone downstage.)* Shhhhh. We're gonna start.

SEAN: *(He looks up. The silhouette of a FEMALE [GIOVANNA] appears on the scrim of the stage left PICTURE FRAME.)* That's her! The girl from orientation.

CONNOR: That's her? *(To himself.)* Wow.

SEAN: Yeah.

LIZ: *(Whispering.)* She talked to you?

SEAN: *(Whispering.)* Yeah.

CONNOR: *(Whispering.)* You are so luck...

LYNN: *(Whispering.)* What is she doing in that robe?

KATHLEEN: *(Whispering.)* I think she's...

MICHELLE: *(Whispering.)* Is she a...?

SEAN: *(Cutting them off quickly.)* What class is this again?

KATHLEEN: Life Drawing.

SEAN: *(Whispering.)* Oh, my God.

LYNN: *(Whispering.)* She's not going to take her..? *(We see the silhouette of GIOVANNA dropping her robe down.)*

JOANNE: Yes, she is. *(The CAST, except for LIZ, seems unprepared for this. EVERYONE reacts and SEAN sits there slack jawed. A moment, then...)*

SEAN: I love Art.

BY GREG ATKINS

SCENE THREE

STANZA DA BAGNO

MUSIC. The CHAIRS are removed as the BATHROOM DOOR is placed Stage Right. CONNOR is sitting on the floor leaning against the door. LIZ sits next to him drawing, KATHLEEN is pacing, CONNOR occasionally bangs his head against the door. JOANNE walks up. She is a little hung over.

A PROJECTION of the HALLWAY OF THE PENSIONE appears center

JOANNE: Who's in there?

ALL: Daria. (*JOANNE sits.*)

LIZ: When you see Helene, ask her how to say, "I would like to buy some Depends," in Italian.

CONNOR: (*A sleepy MICHELLE walks in wearing a robe and carrying a bottle of shampoo and a toothbrush. She stops, looks at them, turns and exits. Hitting the door with the side of his head. JOANNE reacts to the noise.*) My body clock is still all screwed up. I'm wide-awake at 3 a.m. and want dinner at 6 a.m. Everything is out of whack. How about you guys?

KATHLEEN: (*Ignoring him.*) Today we're getting a private tour of the Galleria dell'Accademia. Do you know how amazing that is?

JOANNE: I know.

LIZ: I can't wait.

CONNOR: (*Staring at them.*) And on top of all that, obviously I'm invisible. (*To the door.*) Come on, Daria! (*He gives the door a good whack with his head. JOANNE can't handle the noise. He gives a sigh and leans against the door again. DARIA opens the door and CONNOR falls through.*)

DARIA: (*Stepping over CONNOR.*) Even Florence has a homeless problem.

JOANNE: Daria, we're starting a sign-up sheet for the bathroom.

DARIA: (*Walking by.*) Good. Put me down for 7 to 8 am. Thanks. (*CONNOR scampers into the bathroom.*)

LIZ: (*To the closing door.*) Don't take too long!

JOANNE: What happened after I left the café last night?

KATHLEEN: Nothing much.

JOANNE: What about those guys that were talking to you and Helene?

KATHLEEN: They were like ancient. They had to be 30.

JOANNE: But they were very cute. (*Holding her head.*) Oww. You know, the weirdest thing is happening here. When we go out to eat, it is so not like in the U.S., here the waiters don't care if we order beer or wine, but at home it seems so, I don't know...

LIZ: Illegal?

JOANNE: No. Rebellious, I guess. That first night I think I threw up for an hour.

KATHLEEN: And Lynn was nice enough to take care of you.

JOANNE: Yeah, she's okay. I know I was tough on her when we first got here.

It's a bad habit I got from my brother...he's a bit of a bully. (*CHRISTIAN walks up.*)

CHRISTIAN: Hi.

ALL GIRLS: Hi.

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CHRISTIAN: (*Referring to the bathroom.*) How long?

LIZ: Our best guess? Wednesday.

CHRISTIAN: I can wait. (*He smiles.*) Is it okay? If I wait?

LIZ: Sure. (*CONNOR comes out of the bathroom.*)

CONNOR: See you in class. (*JOANNE and KATHLEEN both go in ahead of LIZ and close the door.*)

LIZ: Hey! (*A moment.*)

CHRISTIAN: (*Referring to her sketchpad.*) What are you working on?

LIZ: (*About her sketchpad.*) These are just some sketches for a class project.

CHRISTIAN: Impressive.

LIZ: Thanks. I am having a little trouble with the expression, it's difficult to capture his emotion. Do you see the way the head is turned? It has to...(*realizing she's about to go off on a tangent*)...sorry, my mom says that if you ask me the time I'll explain how to draw a clock.

CHRISTIAN: Actually, I was interested.

LIZ: Thanks. (*A pause.*) Are you here on vacation?

CHRISTIAN: No, but my parents are. My little sister and I are going to soccer camp. It's at this cool old Medici castle north of here. Lorenzo the Magnificent was raised there.

LIZ: Lorenzo the Magnificent? Sounds like a magician.

CHRISTIAN: Watch what you say about the Medici around here, one guy at camp said something derogatory and he ran laps for hours.

LIZ: Gotcha. Don't want to run laps. (*A bit of an uncomfortable silence...then:*) It's a cool looking castle, huh?

CHRISTIAN: Very.

LIZ: I'd love to draw it. I like to break up my figure drawing with architectural stuff.

CHRISTIAN: I'll take you there if you want. It's only 10 minutes away.

LIZ: Sounds like fun. (*Another pause.*) So you're a soccer player?

CHRISTIAN: Yeah.

LIZ: Any good?

CHRISTIAN: My team went to the State finals.

LIZ: And?

CHRISTIAN: And?

LIZ: (*Waiting for him to fill it in.*) You..?

CHRISTIAN: Won. Why, are you into soccer?

LIZ: No.

CHRISTIAN: (*He laughs.*) Then why do you care?

LIZ: I have this rule that I only talk to guys that make it to State finals and above.

CHRISTIAN: I see. Lucky for me I scored that final goal. Little did I know how it would effect my life in Florence.

LIZ: (*She holds out her hand.*) I'm Liz.

CHRISTIAN: (*He shakes it.*) I'm Christian.

LIZ: (*She looks at her watch.*) And I'm late to see David.

CHRISTIAN: Boyfriend?

LIZ: 14th Century statue. (*She grabs her stuff.*)

CHRISTIAN: Have fun. (*She begins to exit.*) Maybe I'll see you later?

LIZ: It's a date. (*Catching herself. Embarrassed.*) I mean...you know...sure!
(*She exits through a PICTURE FRAME. CHRISTIAN smiles and exits.*)

BY GREG ATKINS

SCENE FOUR

DAVID

*MUSIC. We are now in the Rotunda of the Accademia. A **PROJECTION of the HEAD of the STATUE OF DAVID** appears on the center curtain. **FULL BODY PROJECTIONS OF DAVID** appears on the scrims of the left and right **PICTURE FRAMES**. KATHLEEN walks slowly toward center as if she is sleepwalking. She looks over the audience at "DAVID." She is in total awe. For her, it is a life changing moment.*

KATHLEEN: *(To herself.)* Oh, my God. *(She attempts to take it all in.)* He's...I had no idea. *(She stops DSC. KATHLEEN is overcome with emotion.)* How can a human being sculpt something that beautiful? *(The rest of the CAST enter and stare at DAVID. BERNARDO enters and notices KATHLEEN. BERNARDO watches her for a moment, then walks up and stands next to her.)*

BERNARDO: *(Quietly.)* Is he not magnificent?

KATHLEEN: *(Not turning.)* It's beyond that. I can't imagine having the talent to accomplish something so...*(she is at a loss for words.)*

BERNARDO: I wonder if Michelangelo ever felt like that? *(KATHLEEN turns to look at him. Their eyes lock. For the second time she is in awe. He smiles, then.)* Scusi. *(BERNARDO moves stage left.)* Welcome art students! *(MICHELLE, HELENE, and JOANNE cross to get a better look at BERNARDO.)* I am Bernardo Fusco. My father is Antonio Fusco, the acting curator of the Accademia. He is away on business, so he has asked me to be your guide for this evening. *(He clears his throat.)* In 1501, Michelangelo wrote in his diaries that the Florentine City Council asked him to carve a colossal David from a nineteen-foot block of marble that was so damaged that no other sculptor would work with it. He locked himself away in a workshop and hammered and chiseled at the towering block for three long years. Once in place, all Florence was astounded. This David was a warning that whoever governed Florence should govern justly and defend it bravely. *(He gestures out over the audience at David.)* Look at David...eyes watchful...the neck of a bull...hands of a killer...the body, a reservoir of energy. He stands poised to strike. *(Pause.)* Studentes, the Rotunda is yours for the evening, to sketch...to look...to enjoy. I will be here to answer any questions you may have. Grazie.

LIZ: *(Leans over to KATHLEEN.)* Wow.

KATHLEEN: *(Looking at David.)* I know.

LIZ: No, not David. Bernardo Fusco.

KATHLEEN: *(A warning.)* Liz.

LIZ: *(She smiles. With faux irritation.)* Stop talking to me, I've got drawing to do. *(She nudges KATHLEEN, causing her to drop her pencil, and crosses to the OTHERS.)*

BERNARDO: *(KATHLEEN bends down to pick up the pencil, but not before BERNARDO picks it up and hands it to her. They stand together.)* Did you

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know that 60% of the world's most important works of art are located in Italy and approximately half of these are in Florence?

KATHLEEN: No, I didn't.

BERNARDO: Did you know I stayed up until 3 a.m. last night studying so I would know all this information?

KATHLEEN: *(She smiles.)* No, I didn't.

BERNARDO: My father sprung... *(He stops and looks at her quizzically.)* ...sprang? *(She shrugs.)* This on me yesterday. I wanted to be sure on my facts and my English.

KATHLEEN: Your English is better than mine. Sprang, sprung?

BERNARDO: Boarding school and summer trips to New York. *(He pronounces it "Noo Yawk" as a joke.)*

KATHLEEN: Are you from Florence?

BERNARDO: No, I am from Venezia.

KATHLEEN: Do you live here now?

BERNARDO: No, like you I am only here for a short time. Firenze is a beautiful city, is it not? My father is a University professor and spends summers working at different museums all over the world.

KATHLEEN: That sounds exciting.

BERNARDO: *(He laughs.)* I love your accent.

KATHLEEN: I don't have an accent. You're the one...oh, wait, I guess I do to you.

BERNARDO: Where is it from?

KATHLEEN: *(A little confused.)* It's from...Colorado?

BERNARDO: *(He laughs.)* My name is Bernardo.

KATHLEEN: I'm Kathleen.

BERNARDO: Tomorrow, my friends and I will be at the Piazza Republica. Maybe you and your friends would like to join us?

KATHLEEN: Yeah, I'll ask. That would be fun.

BERNARDO: Good. Then I will leave you to your drawing. Arrivederci, Kathleen.

KATHLEEN: Arrivederci, Bernardo. *(She watches him exit then crosses to DARIA who was watching the entire encounter. CONNOR crosses center.)*

CONNOR: He's naked.

JOANNE: *(Sketching.)* Good eye, Connor.

HELENE: What did you expect?

CONNOR: A fig leaf or something.

LIZ: There's nothing embarrassing about the human body.

CONNOR: Then why am I embarrassed?

LIZ: You have no idea of the importance of this piece, do you?

CONNOR: It's another statue. This place has thousands.

HELENE: It's Michelangelo! It's...Art!

CONNOR: It's something alright.

JOANNE: You didn't seem to have any trouble with nudity in Life Drawing yesterday.

CONNOR: *(Looking at SEAN and grinning.)* Yeah, but that was different. *(He looks up at the statue.)* Why'd he call him David? Why not Dave? Or Phil or Jack?

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JOANNE: The only reason you're here is to embarrass us, isn't it? He's David!

(She waits.) David? From David and Goliath?

CONNOR: *(A realization.)* Oh! *(EVERYONE begins to leave.)*

DARIA: *(Crossing to CONNOR.)* I believe, and I know everyone here will agree with me, that you were put on this planet as an appetite suppressant.

CONNOR: Hey, it was an honest mistake. I didn't know.

JOANNE: Do you think Michelangelo just starts sculpting the marble and midway through he says, "Oh, this one looks like a Fernando?" Or, "Hey, I think I found a Jesus in this one?" *(She whacks him in the back of the head.)* Moron. *(She exits. CONNOR, a bit dejected, exits. MICHELLE follows him out. BLACKOUT.)*

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SCENE FIVE

LIFE DRAWING DA CAPO

*MUSIC. The projection of DAVID dissolves into a **PROJECTION of "THE THINKER"** by Auguste Rodin on the upstage curtain as the CAST brings the CHAIRS on stage. SEAN is seated, in the same position as "The Thinker", waiting for the Life Drawing class to start. LIZ enters looks at SEAN and shakes her head.*

LIZ: You're disgusting.

SEAN: What?

LIZ: You're disgusting.

SEAN: So I like Life Drawing.

LIZ: Yeah, I can tell.

SEAN: I want to be a comic book illustrator. It's all about the human form.

What's so wrong with that? Weren't you the one that said we shouldn't be embarrassed by the human body?

CONNOR: (*Entering quickly. To SEAN.*) Did you talk to her?

SEAN: I haven't seen her yet.

CONNOR: Man, you've got to talk to her again.

SEAN: I will.

CONNOR: You can't wimp out on this.

SEAN: I know! Shut up, I don't need the stress.

LYNN: (*As she enters with KATHLEEN.*) No, the cute British guy is the one that got the scholarship last year. I was just talking to him about it. The school is paying for everything.

MICHELLE: (*As she enters with DARIA.*) What I don't understand is how you can have already gone shopping. The stores aren't even open yet.

DARIA: Michelle, there are many, many things you don't understand.

JOANNE: (*As she enters with HELENE.*) What I don't get is how you can be ready before the rest of us?

HELENE: You guys are obsessed with the bathroom thing. You need to... (*She takes a deep breath and lets it go.*) ...let it go.

JOANNE: I have one word for you, Helene. Bidet.

HELENE: Okay, one little mistake. You make everything such a big deal.

CONNOR: (*Childishly.*) Potty head!

HELENE: Okay, I've had... (*She whacks at Connor with her sketchpad.*)

KATHLEEN: (*Hissing.*) Oh, for Gods sake, would you guys stop?! We're here representing our school, and for that matter, the U.S., so can we stop, just while we're here, stop acting like total idiots? Between Sean's obsession with Giovanna and him bringing peanut butter into every restaurant we've gone to, Helene and Joanne's fascination with drinking as much as possible in the shortest amount of time, and Connor's insistence on embarrassing us at every opportunity...

CONNOR: Hey.

MICHELLE: Why does everyone pick on Connor?

KATHLEEN: Look, I didn't choose to be the leader of this little cultural exchange program, but until Tabor decides to actually do her job, someone's got to do it

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and unfortunately that someone is me. Now, unless one of you wants to deal with the school, the hotel, cover for Tabor, and help Lynn replace her missing passport...

LYNN: (*Overlapping.*) I know it's in the room somewhere.

KATHLEEN: ...then be my guest, but until then let's show everybody how mature we are and stop acting like it's our first time away from home! (*A moment of silence. The CAST looks around sheepishly.*)

LYNN: (*Quietly.*) It is my first time away from home.

KATHLEEN: What?

LYNN: (*Louder.*) It is my first time away from home. (*She begins to tear up.*)

LIZ: Oh, no.

KATHLEEN: (*Feeling bad.*) Oh, Lynn I didn't mean to make you...

LYNN: (*Trying to hold it together.*) I looked everywhere for it. (*JOANNE, HELENE and MICHELLE go to her.*)

JOANNE: It'll turn up.

LYNN: I thought it was in my backpack.

JOANNE: It's okay.

LYNN: I can't get back in the United States without a passport.

MICHELLE: We'll check the room again.

KATHLEEN: And if we can't find it we'll go to the American Embassy and get a new one.

LYNN: I'm sorry, I guess I'm just a little...(*she begins to cry*)...homesick.

DARIA: (*Rolling her eyes.*) Great, like this isn't embarrassing.

JOANNE: (*Giving her a dirty look.*) Go spend daddy's money.

MICHELLE: (*To LYNN.*) We have plenty of time to get another one.

KATHLEEN: Yeah, we'll work it out.

LIZ: And if we can't get another passport, we'll smuggle you out in one of Daria's steamer trunks.

LYNN: (*She smiles and wipes her eyes.*) I'm sorry. It's just that my mom thought me coming here might be good for me, you know, to experience life outside of the U.S. It's just that everything here is so different.

JOANNE: It's okay. Don't worry about it.

KATHLEEN: I think we're going through a little culture shock.

SEAN: I know I am. I'm dying for chili cheese fries.

LIZ: (*Unbelievable.*) Sean.

LYNN: I'm alright. Really, I'm alright.

KATHLEEN: You sure?

LYNN: (*Pulling herself together.*) Yeah, thanks.

LIZ: Got it under control?

LYNN: I think so.

LIZ: (*Looking up.*) And anyway, look at the bright side, if you were stuck here, you'd get to look at guys like him.

CONNOR: (*Looking up.*) Who is that guy?

DARIA: Maybe he's a sub.

KATHLEEN: No, I think he's...(*The silhouette of a MALE [ANTONIO] appears on the scrim of the stage left PICTURE FRAME.*)

MICHELLE: (*Reacting. Shocked.*) Oh, boy.

JOANNE: He's not our model, is he?

MICHELLE: He's taking off his...(*The silhouette of the MODEL drops his robe.*)

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SEAN: *(Turning his head and looking at CONNOR.)* He's naked.

CONNOR: This is so not right.

SEAN: You know, they could have prepared us for this.

LIZ: You are disgusting.

CONNOR: *(Concentrating on sketching.)* I'm drawing in a fig leaf.

HELENE: What is it with American men? Why do they spaz out over male nudity?

JOANNE: They spaz out over female nudity, too. *(They begin sketching, each with their own emotion regarding the assignment. A pause, then LIZ leans over to SEAN with a wicked gleam in her eye. Mimicking SEAN from before.)*

LIZ: I love Art. *(He gives her a look.)*

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SCENE SIX

THE MUSEUMS

*MUSIC. The CHAIRS are removed. LIZ and LYNN walk center, as a PROJECTION of **"THE BIRTH OF VENUS"** by Alessandro Filippelli Botticelli appears CENTER. As usual, the actors face the audience when "seeing" the paintings. CLASSICAL ITALIAN MUSIC underscores the scene.*

LYNN: *(Reading from a museum guide.) The Birth of Venus, by Sandro Botticelli was painted circa 1484. (She looks up.) My mom has this picture on a Franklin Mint plate in our living room.*

LIZ: That drives me crazy! The American concept of Art is that it has to be practical. It's got to be on a plate, a mug, a T-shirt. . .

LYNN: *(As they exit.) Don't you have a Van Gogh without his ear T-shirt?*

LIZ: I didn't say I wouldn't buy it, it just drives me crazy. *(They exit as KATHLEEN crosses the stage with JOANNE and a PROJECTION of **"LA DONNA VELATA"** by Raffaello Sanzio Raphael appears on the stage right scrim.)*

JOANNE: *(Scanning the museum guide.) Raphael's La Velata was sold to...yeah, yeah, date, year...perhaps this is a portrait of a common girl loved by Raphael.*

KATHLEEN: It's hard to think that these great artists were ever our age.

JOANNE: Yeah, Art History is all about old people.

KATHLEEN: I wonder what Raphael looked like when he was a teenager?

JOANNE: Bernardo Fusco? *(KATHLEEN gives her a look.)* Hey, I could be a common girl. They don't get more common than me. *(As they exit.)* Hey, you don't have dibs on him.

KATHLEEN: Yes I do. *(They exit as MICHELLE and HELENE enter as a PROJECTION of **"PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG MAN"** by Giovanni Bellini appears on the stage left scrim.)*

MICHELLE: *(They hold their brochures in front of their faces.) This is called Portrait of a Man. (They lower their brochures at the same time and tilt their heads to the left looking at the picture.)*

HELENE: *(With major sarcasm.)* Whoo, he's a hottie.

MICHELLE: Check out that hair. *(HELENE looks at MICHELLE'S hair.)* He has a Bozo thing going on.

HELENE: Bozo?

MICHELLE: Bozo. Bozo the Clown? *(The begin to exit.)* Big orange hair?

HELENE: Michelle, I don't think you have any room to talk about hair color.

MICHELLE: My hair color was a choice.

HELENE: Yeah, and I've always wanted to ask you...why? *(HELENE and MICHELLE exit. A PROJECTION of **"THE CUMEAN SYBYL"** by Andrea Del Castagno appears on the stage right scrim. DARIA stands behind the stage left scrim in the same position as Sybyl. A moment, then she walks through the scrim. ANTONIO follows her at a distance. CHRISTIAN and ROXANNE enter. A PROJECTION of Botticelli's **"PALLAS AND THE CENTAUR"** appears center. LIZ enters from the other side of the stage, watching them. Her jealousy and anger are palatable.)*

ROXANNE: (*Looking at the picture.*) Ouch.

CHRISTIAN: (*Agreeing.*) Yeah. What's this one called?

ROXANNE: (*They BOTH lean forward and squint as she "reads" the plaque on the "wall."*) Pallas and the Centaur. (*She pronounces it "Sen-twar."*)

CHRISTIAN: That's centaur. (*She pushes him with her shoulder.*) Pallas, huh? There's a woman you don't want to mess with. Let's get out of here, I don't see Liz anywhere. (*Referring to Pallas.*) Shouldn't she have a pooper-scooper instead of an ax? (*CHRISTIAN and ROXANNE exit. A dejected LIZ moves center. KATHLEEN enters. A PROJECTION of "THE VISITATION" by Mariotto Albertinelli appears center. LIZ motions to KATHLEEN and KATHLEEN goes to her. LIZ whispers to KATHLEEN and they pose like the painting. A moment, then they exit as a PROJECTION of "ADAM AND EVE" by Luca Cranach the Elder, appears center. CONNOR and MICHELLE pose, for a moment, like the Adam and Eve, CONNOR behind the stage right scrim, MICHELLE behind the stage left scrim. They cross through the scrim and meet center.*)

CONNOR: Hey, Michelle! Do you have a museum guide?

MICHELLE: (*Keeping her voice down.*) Sure. Do you want it?

CONNOR: Nah, you read the info out loud. We're gonna get quizzed on this stuff.

MICHELE: Okay. (*Reading from the guide.*) This pair of oils on panels of Adam and Eve were originally thought to be by Durer.

CONNOR: (*Pointing at the painting.*) I knew there were fig leaves! Where's Liz?

MICHELLE: Shhhhh. We're in a museum.

CONNOR: (*Spotting LIZ offstage. In a loud whisper.*) Hey, Liz, come look at this... (*MICHELLE follows him off as a PROJECTION of "MEDUSA" by Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio appears on the stage left scrim. SEAN and DARIA walk up.*)

DARIA: Where's the gift shop? (*Referring to the guide.*) Does this have a map?

SEAN: (*Looking up.*) Check out the Medusa! Snakes. Shrieking. Caravaggio would have created some great comic books characters.

DARIA: (*She looks up.*) Yuck.

SEAN: (*Ignoring her.*) Very cool. Reminds me of you. (*They exit. HELENE and LYNN enter as a PROJECTION of Caravaggio's "BACCHUS" appears center. HELENE isn't feeling too well.*)

HELENE: Is it hot in here?

LYNN: A little, but it's not that bad.

HELENE: I don't feel so good.

LYNN: Maybe you should sit down.

HELENE: No. I've got to get a decent grade on this quiz. (*Reading.*)

Caravaggio's *Bacchus* is one of the best illustrations of the artists'... (*She looks at the painting*) ...oh, my God, I can't even look at a painting of wine without feeling... (*Getting nauseous.*) I'll be back in a minute. (*LYNN sighs and follows her off. The "BACCHUS" dissolves and "MUSICIAN ANGEL" by Giovan Battista di Jacopo appears on the stage right scrim. MICHELLE enters and sits in a recreation of the painting. CONNOR reenters and stares at her, really seeing her for the first time. They move off as "JUDITH WITH THE HEAD OF HOLOFERNES" by Cristofano Allori appears center.*)

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CHRISTIAN and ROXANNE walk across the stage. LIZ is close behind, spying on them. CHRISTIAN is a bit down. ROXANNE looks at the painting and whispers in CHRISTIAN's ear. He laughs and puts his arm around her as they exit. LIZ stands center, heartbroken, as the PROJECTION and the LIGHTS cross fade into the next scene.)

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