

Safe Hands

a new musical

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10 page excerpt

(Act 1, Scenes 7 & 8)

CONTEXT:

When Bunnie falls at a dinner party she's hosting, she convinces Lydia to drive her to a secret abortion clinic under the guise of a "knitting club" to receive help. After a brief visit, the two ladies return to their neighborhood...

ACT 1, SCENE 7 - “Better Than This (Reprise)”

THE STREET, outside BUNNIE’s home. BUNNIE and LYDIA enter.

BUNNIE

Well, that was a big fuss over nothing. I’m sorry to drag you all the way across town.

LYDIA

It’s alright. Are you alright?

BUNNIE

Peachy keen. I better get going, Roy’s probably wondering where I ran off to. You let me know if you need any help with writing the invitations for the party, alright?

(suddenly)

Oh, Lydia...

LYDIA

Yes?

BUNNIE

Your cardigan—I left it at the club. Why don’t I pick it up for you? Or, you know what, I’ll need a ride. You just let me know when you’re free and we can / go together...

LYDIA

Bunnie. I know it’s not a knitting club.

BUNNIE

(beat. She can’t find an excuse)

Oh, Lord. Lydia. What must you think of me? You won’t tell anyone, will you?

LYDIA

No.

BUNNIE

Maybe we—let’s just pretend this never happened.

BUNNIE (cont.)
WE CAN SWEEP IT UNDER THE RUG
DON'T SAY A PEEP IF IT DOESN'T COME UP

LYDIA
You're really gonna do that?

BUNNIE
Do what?

LYDIA
Pretend it's all peachy keen. It's me, Bunnie. You don't have to lie to me.

BUNNIE
Really, I'm okay.

LYDIA
You're okay? Going to that part of town all by yourself...

BUNNIE
It was the best I could do.

LYDIA
You couldn't find a doctor?

BUNNIE
You know one?

LYDIA
You could get on a plane. I had a girlfriend in college who went to Europe—/

BUNNIE
No, you're right. I guess I should've applied for a passport and used my secretary money to book a round trip to Europe.

LYDIA
But to go see those women...

BUNNIE
They're not dangerous.

LYDIA

You don't know that, Bunnie. You don't know what kind of people they are.

BUNNIE

I do know them. I worked for them. *(beat)* I didn't have the money, but they let me pick up and drop off the girls to pay it off. Until—

LYDIA

Is money so tight Roy couldn't cover it? *(beat)* He doesn't know.

BUNNIE

No. He doesn't know about the first one either. It would compromise him, I couldn't...

LYDIA

I could never hide something like that from Floyd.

BUNNIE

Roy's dealing with enough as it is. It's not a good time to bring another kid into the house. He just got demoted, and I don't want to put any more on his plate... with the way he gets...

LYDIA

How does he get?

BUNNIE

What do you mean?

LYDIA

You just said /

BUNNIE

Look, I don't need you to interrogate / me—

LYDIA

All I'm saying is, if I were you, I never would've gone down to see those women. I would've /

BUNNIE

Well, you're not me, Lydia. You don't know everything about me.

LYDIA

But I am your friend, Bunnie, and I'm / worried about you

BUNNIE

Friends? Why? Because you can't put a halfway decent dinner party together and I offered to help? Because you've been prancing around the city with your friends for so long you never had to handle any real responsibilities? I felt sorry for you. That doesn't make us friends.

Silence.

LYDIA

Okay, fine. We'll drop it. It never happened.

BUNNIE

Thank you.

LYDIA

If you have time next weekend I'd love some help with the invitations.

BUNNIE

Here, I'll make it easier for you. One less invitation to worry about.

LYDIA

Bunnie—

BUNNIE

Just make it a smaller affair. You only need to invite your friends. Here.

(BUNNIE writes out an address on a distinct scrap of paper and tries to hand to LYDIA.)
43 Hemler Way. You can pick up the cardigan yourself.

LYDIA

I'm not setting foot in that place again.

BUNNIE

Fine. Thanks for the ride.

LYDIA

Bunnie...

BUNNIE

I have to go. My husband is waiting for me.

BUNNIE puts the paper in her purse and exits to her house. LYDIA watches her leave and enters her own home.

LYDIA's HOME.

FLOYD is sprawled out, working.

LYDIA

I'm sorry, honey, that took longer than I anticipated.

FLOYD

I'm glad you're back, I was just getting to a good place to pause. I have something I wanted to talk about. You can't talk about me in front of people like you did tonight. Especially if we're going to have the boys from the office over for a housewarming. I'll never be taken seriously if my wife's telling everyone she's the only reason I got the job.

LYDIA

That's not what I said. I was just being / honest.

FLOYD

Please, don't embarrass me. *(beat)* Look, I'm kind of swamped tonight. I'll be down in a couple hours. I'm sorry, I didn't even—how was the knitting club? Do you like the other girls?

LYDIA

Yeah, we really hit it off.

LYDIA kisses his cheek. FLOYD exits to office, leaving LYDIA alone.

4. "Better Than This (Reprise)"

LYDIA

NO, NOTHING ON EARTH COULD BE BETTER THAN THIS
YOU COULD DO WORSE, DON'T WASTE YOUR WISHES
SO YOU'LL FAKE FOR THE WORLD WITH A SMILE AND A KISS
LIKE A GOOD GIRL—FOREVER
WHAT COULD BE BETTER?

ACT 1, SCENE 8 - “Convince Myself”

BUNNIE’S HOME. *BUNNIE* washes dishes in the kitchen and picks up dinner, still shaken. *ROY* enters with an empty glass in hand.

ROY

You coming to bed?

BUNNIE

Just a minute. I left out your pills.

ROY

Yeah, I saw.

He goes to pour himself another glass.

BUNNIE

Honey, you can’t take them with alcohol.

ROY

Then I’ll take ‘em tomorrow.

BUNNIE

Dr. Koch said your cholesterol / levels—

ROY

I know what he said. Hurry up, you’ve been at this for over an hour.

BUNNIE

Well, if you’d picked up a little while I was out...

ROY

You would’ve liked to see that, huh? Didn’t humiliate me enough at dinner. (*scoffs*) Dean Martin.

BUNNIE

Oh, pumpkin. She was kidding...

ROY

Yeah, she’s a stitch. Seems like you two had a lot to laugh about. What else you tell her? Huh?

BUNNIE

Nothing. Keep your voice down. Craigy's sleeping...

ROY

I don't need folks knowing my business. And I sure as hell don't want them taking cracks at me under my own roof. You and your Goddamn mouth.

BUNNIE

I'm sorry.

ROY

And you wonder why we don't have company. *(beat)* I don't want to catch you with that woman again. You don't need to be gallivanting off to hers when you have your own house to run. You hear me?

BUNNIE

I hear you.

ROY

Alright. You've been taking all year, come to bed.

BUNNIE

It's gonna take as long as it takes. You don't like it, grab a towel.

ROY

Fine.

ROY starts to furiously scrub the dishes, throwing a tantrum.

BUNNIE

Roy. Stop.

ROY

What? I'm helping.

BUNNIE

Give me that.

BUNNIE takes his drink. ROY grabs her wrist. BUNNIE gasps and drops the glass. It smashes. ROY lets go.

ROY

Oh, Christ—is that the bad hand?

(He reaches out to her. She flinches.)

Goddamn it, Bunnie, I didn't mean to—

He punches the wall, knocks the platter of clean dishes off the counter, furious at himself.

BUNNIE

Roy! Stop!

Craig starts to cry. BUNNIE crosses to Craig's room. ROY follows her.

BUNNIE

Shh, shh... It's okay, baby, it's okay..

OH WHEN THE SUN RISES
IN THE EVENING
THAT'S WHEN I'LL LEAVE
YOUR SIDE
MMMMM

ROY

(gently)

I'm sorry, baby... I don't know what came over me.

BUNNIE

I know. *(to baby)* Shh.

I'LL LOOK AFTER YOU
BECAUSE YOU'RE...

There we go.

She puts the baby down. ROY takes her face in his hands.

ROY

I love you so much, you know that right? So fucking much it makes me crazy. I'd be lost without you.

BUNNIE

I love you too, Roy. Why don't you head up to bed, okay? Let me clean up a bit. I'll be upstairs in a minute.

5. "Convince Myself" 🎧))

ROY exits. BUNNIE cleans up the shattered glass and dishes.

BUNNIE

IT'S EASY TO CONVINCING MYSELF
THAT THIS IS THE WAY IT'S ALWAYS BEEN
RUNNING THOUGHTS LIKE PAGES
THINKING BACK AND BACK AND BACK
RESTARTING THIS DOGEARED CHAPTER AGAIN

'CAUSE IF HE WAS ONCE SHINING
MAYBE I WAS ONCE TOO
I REMEMBER HOW THE LIGHT DANCED IN HIS EYES
IF WE WERE ONCE HAPPY
WHO SAYS IT'S NOT STILL THERE?
SOMEWHERE JUST OUTTA SIGHT
OUT OF PLACE WHERE I CAN'T FIND IT
BOXED UP IN THE ATTIC
AND I'M JUST UNAWARE

She adjusts some photographs knocked askew when ROY punched the wall.

YES, IT'S EASY TO CONVINCING MYSELF
THERE'S NO EVIDENCE THAT ANYTHING HAS CHANGED
SAME AS ALL THESE PHOTOGRAPHS
FROM WAY BACK AND BACK AND BACK
A THOUSAND HAPPY, SUNNY, LOVING FRAMES

BUT I MUST HAVE BEEN SHINING
ALL THOSE YEAR AGO
THEY USED TO TALK ABOUT THE FIRE IN MY EYES
NO, YOU COULDN'T STOP MY DREAMING
I'D COUNTER ANY SPITE

IT ALL SEEMS SO FAR AWAY

IT'S SINKING DEEPER AND I'M FLOATING
WITH NO WAY OF KNOWING
WHICH DIRECTION THE TIDE'LL TAKE

BUNNIE unwraps the bandage from her wrist, revealing the bruises on her skin. She takes a look at herself, as if seeing her situation for the first time. She tends to her wrist.

NO NOTHING'S SHATTERED
NOTHING'S SCATTERED
NOTHING'S BREAKING
BUT MY CHEST

I'VE CONVINCED MYSELF OF LOVE ENOUGH
BUT I CAN'T KEEP ON KEEPIN' IT UP

DON'T KNOW HOW I DON'T REMEMBER
WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO MY GAZE
BUT THE FIRE'S TURNED TO EMBERS
AND I'M SCARED IT'S GONNA FADE

ROY (O.S.)

Are you coming to bed?

BUNNIE

Just a minute.

BUNNIE wraps her wrist in a fresh bandage.

OH, IT'S EASY TO CONVINCING MYSELF
THAT THIS IS THE WAY IT'S ALWAYS BEEN
RUNNING THOUGHTS LIKE PAGES
THINKING BACK AND BACK AND BACK
RESTARTING THIS DOGEARED CHAPTER AGAIN