

SOMETHING'S GOT TO GIVE

A Play in One Act

Sandra de Helen

©2006

to contact the author:

Sandra de Helen

941 NW Naito Pkwy

Apt 404

Portland, OR 97209

USA

503 734 7964

info@SandradeHelen.com

www.SandradeHelen.com

Quarter-finalist, 2001
Moondance Film Festival - Stage Play Division
FINALIST, Kernodle New Play Competition, 2001

For Norma Jeane

© Sandra de Helen

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that *Something's Got to Give* is subject to a royalty. It is fully protected under the copyright law of the United States of America, the British Commonwealth, including Canada, and all other countries of the Copyright Union. All rights, including professional, amateur, motion pictures, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, CD-ROM, electronic publishing, audio and video cassette and any other medium of duplication or distribution, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

Inquiries regarding performance and publications rights should be addressed to the author at:

Sandra de Helen

941 NW Naito Pkwy

Apt 404

Portland, OR 97209

USA

503 734 7964

info@SandradeHelen.com

www.SandradeHelen.com

The author welcomes correspondence regarding this and her other work.

Thanks to Karin Magaldi-Unger and John Duncan at Portland State University for their assistance and support in developing this piece.

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

MARILYN MONROE: 35 year old blonde movie star

XANA MATELLA: 19 year old African-American woman.

NATALIA: Any race woman; older than Xana.

TIME:

June, 1961

PLACE:

Famous Actors' Academy

SCENE ONE

AT RISE: Rehearsal hall, containing three stools, two in background, one in foreground. On the walls are glossy photographs of James Dean, Marlon Brando, Shelley Winters, Eli Wallach, Kim Stanley and Marilyn Monroe. There is also a sign on the wall, the motto of the acting academy. "Acting is doing." XANA is discovered, alone. She wears a gingham blouse, full skirt, and flat shoes. She has a sweater tied around her shoulders.

XANA

(Pacing. She checks her watch, looks toward door. Crosses to door, looks out. Crosses to stool, sits.) Hate waiting. Oh! (Stands next to photo of Marilyn. Assumes pose of ingenue. Uses her sweater as if it were a fur stole. With head down, looks up, flirting with invisible lover. Giggles.) Hmm.

(Tries another pose. This time, Xana stands next to photo of James Dean. She tries out his facial expressions. Tries his walk. Crosses to door, strains to hear. Crosses back to stool.) Work, that's it, do the work.

(Tries another pose. She stands next to Kim Stanley. This time, she's a mother with a baby. Using her sweater as a "baby" she rocks it, she strokes its face, tucks it in. SINGS) Rockabye, baby, in the tree top, (continues, humming. Just as baby is "asleep", Xana hears something. She jumps up, dropping "baby", crossing to door.) Hello? Oh. (Looks at watch.) Sure, keep me waiting. I'm new, I don't matter.

(Beat. She turns back to stool, notices that she has dropped the "baby".) Oh no! Poor baby, poor little baby, mamma didn't mean to drop you. Baby? Baby? Why aren't you crying? (Holds baby, listens to baby's chest. Tries to find a pulse.) God, no! Breathe! Breathe, baby! (She holds it away from her, stares at it. Places it on the floor. Sinks to the floor herself, begins to cry. [NOTE: If actor is capable, she should cry real tears.]) Stop it! Stop it!

(Jumps up, dries eyes. Crosses to door, looks at her watch, crosses back. Stands next to photo of Brando. Tries to mimic him. First she does his stance, then his facial expressions.)

ENTER NATALIA. She stands, un-noticed by Xana, watching Xana work.

XANA (Continued)

Stella! My baby doll's left me! Stell-lahhhhh! I want my baby down here. Stella, Stella! STELL-LAHHHHH!

NATALIA

(Stands and watches until XANA notices her.) Good. But why are you doing that?

XANA

I was trying to understand what drove him to bellow like a cow giving birth.

NATALIA

What did you learn?

XANA

He enunciates clearly when he's yelling?

NATALIA

Hmmm. Maybe. What else?

XANA

(Serious now) That Stanley was in a great deal of pain.

NATALIA

Good! Speaking of pain, let's talk about today's work, shall we?

XANA

Of course.

NATALIA

I have a script for you. I want you to prepare a scene to present in front of the class on Friday. It's a scene from *Antigone*. I know you've read it before, with Shelley and Eli. Today, I want you to read it with Marilyn.

XANA

Not Marilyn?

NATALIA

(Misreading her) I know, I know. She's a big movie star, but so is Shelley, so don't feel intimidated. She's just your partner for a scene. She's here, like everyone else, in order to become a better actor. Don't treat her any differently than you would any of the other actors. Besides, I think you're ready. You can handle it. Actually, she's a little insecure, and I thought working with someone fresh and smart with a young attitude might help her.

XANA

But, I ...

NATALIA

I'll just go bring her in. She's waiting in the hall. (Crosses to door, exits briefly.)

ENTER NATALIA AND MARILYN.

Marilyn wears jeans, white blouse, red neckscarf, flat shoes. She carries a large tote bag, a copy of the New York Times visible. Her hair is in braids (a la *The Misfits*)

NATALIA

Marilyn, this is Xana Matella. Xana, Marilyn.

XANA

(Crossing to meet them, right hand extended) Glad to meet you.

MARILYN

Charmed, I'm sure.

NATALIA grabs a stool for Marilyn. MARILYN, meanwhile, grabs a stool for herself.

NATALIA

(Sees that both she and Marilyn are holding stools.) Oh. Okay, go ahead and sit down. Everyone has a script? Fine. As you probably know, we have thirty minutes to prepare something to do for the class. *Antigone* is a tragedy set against the background of the Oedipus legend. He's the one who kills his father and marries his mother? It's a family entertainment. Remember? Good. This one takes place later on. We are in Thebes, in front of the palace. Antigone's brothers, Eteocles and Polynices [She pronounces it Pol-IN-eece], have just killed each other, and Creon, the ruling king, he's Antigone's uncle or cousin, or both. It's confusing. Anyway, he decides to give the one brother a hero's burial, but the other brother, Polynices has to rot in plain view.

XANA

(Showing off her knowledge) Antigone and Ismene are the daughters of Oedipus. Antigone defies King Creon and buries her brother. She argues that the law of the gods overrules the tradition of allowing enemies of the state to go un-buried. Creon sentences her to death, so later she hangs herself.

MARILYN

Yes, very sad.

NATALIA

In this scene, Antigone tries to convince her older sister, Ismene, to help her bury their brother, but Ismene doesn't want to go against the king. (To Xana) Ismene feels that she's just a woman and has no power. She can only follow the rules and do what she's told. Antigone thinks that if the rules made by men are wrong, they should be broken. Any questions?

XANA

Who is playing what?

NATALIA

Marilyn will play Antigone, you'll be Ismene.

XANA

But Ismene is the older sister!

NATALIA

But see, this is acting.

XANA

Marilyn, how do you see the relationship between the two sisters?

NATALIA

Don't talk -- do! This is no time for chit chat. Get to know each other through your work. (Takes their scripts from them) No scripts to begin with, set up some improvisations for Antigone and Ismene. You will find the relationship.

MARILYN

What about the sandbox exercise?

XANA

Where we're little kids?

NATALIA

Good idea.

MARILYN

Yes. You be, I don't know, 8? I'll be 4?

NATALIA

Excellent! Start when you're ready.

MARILYN

Look, Ismene! I'm making a sand dune!

XANA

Do you want to help me with the castle? See, it's got turrets, a drawbridge ...

MARILYN

No! I'm making sand dunes, lots and lots of sand dunes.

XANA

Watch out! Don't get your sand dunes in my moat!

NATALIA

(Coaching Marilyn) Big wind.

MARILYN

Whee! Look, sister, I'm making a sandstorm!

XANA

Hey, look out, you're gonna knock over my castle

MARILYN

(Blowing) Whoosh! It' a great big wind! A huge sandstorm, the dunes are falling down, the sand is going everywhere!

XANA

Stay over on your own side. (Protecting her castle), Antigone, I am not kidding, you stay over there and ... If you knock down my castle, I'm gonna tell Mom ...

MARILYN

Big wind! Whoosh! (Blowing all over the sandbox)

XANA

Hey! You got sand in my eye!

MARILYN

Sorry.

XANA

Get out. Get out of the sandbox. Go play over there. I'm going to be by myself.

MARILYN

(Pause. Moving away) Sister! Izzy! Look at this. I found a dead bird.

XANA

Annie, put that down, it's disgusting.

MARILYN

No! I'm gonna bury it.

XANA

Ewww, it's all dried up and falling apart. Put that down before I tell Mom.

MARILYN

No! You move over, I'm gonna bury it right here in the sandbox.

XANA

Absolutely not! Mom! Mom!

NATALIA

(As "Mom") Antigone, that's disgusting. Why can't you be more like your sister?

MARILYN

(Mimicking Xana) "Put that down before I tell Mom."

XANA

(Mimicking Marilyn) Oh, boo hoo, poor little me, I'm such a baby.

THEY get into shoving match.

NATALIA

(As herself) All right. That accomplished nothing. Agreed?

XANA

That's because I should be playing the role of Antigone. I'm younger; I feel stupid trying to be Marilyn's older sister.

NATALIA

This is not about being realistic, Xana. This is about finding the part inside of your that is more responsible, more respectful of authority, of the rules. That's what we need for Ismene.

XANA

(Mumbling) This is stupid.

NATALIA

What dear?

XANA

Nothing.

NATALIA

Marilyn, do you mind if I make a suggestion?

MARILYN

I'm sorry, was I too baby-ish?

NATALIA

No. My suggestion is regarding the improvisation. That one was too juvenile for us. We need something a little older. Let me set up a scene. (Arranges the stools into a semblance of a lunch counter.) Let's see. We need something with rules that are unfair -- based on power alone. Got it. Okay, this is a lunch counter. You two are here for lunch. Ismene you be 18, Antigone 14. I'll be the soda jerk behind the counter. You've just found out that the drugstore won't serve your brother, Polynices. Let me know when you're ready.

XANA

Why?

NATALIA

So we can proceed.

XANA

No, why won't they serve Polynices?

NATALIA

Because of his skin color.

MARILYN

Aren't we all the same color? He's our brother.

NATALIA

Because he's homosexual.

MARILYN

I didn't know that!

NATALIA

No, no, no, not really. Xana needs a reason, I'm giving you a reason.

XANA

Never mind. It doesn't matter.

NATALIA

Shall we go on?

MARILYN

Natalia?

NATALIA

Yes?

MARILYN

I ... I ...

NATALIA

What is it?

MARILYN

I looked up the names in the dictionary last night.

NATALIA

Excellent.

MARILYN

It's just that the dictionary says his, our b-b-brother's name is pronounced Polly-nye-sees.

XANA

Polynices?

NATALIA

Are you sure?

MARILYN

Polynices. Like nicey-nicey, many nicey-s.

XANA

He's like the male version of Pollyanna!

THEY LAUGH.

MARILYN

He's our NICE brother.

XANA

Figures he'd be the one killed.

MARILYN

Only the good die young!

NATALIA

Actually, both brothers are killed, but I'm glad to see you can have fun with this. Can we get ready now?

XANA

Yeah, sure. (Takes deep breath, stands erect, shakes her body loose.) Ready.

MARILYN takes out her braids, combs through her hair with her fingers. She ties the scarf over her hair. Takes a deep breath, gives a slight nod to Natalia. XANA stares at Marilyn throughout the process. She continues staring at her, thereby losing her own readiness. NATALIA (after Marilyn nods) looks at Xana. When Xana neglects to look at Natalia, Natalia stares at Xana, until Xana finally feels her staring at her, and looks up. XANA gives a nod.

NATALIA

(Brushing hands together) Well, girls, what can I get you today?

XANA

I'll have a coffee and a doughnut, please. (Gets up and grabs the newspaper out of Marilyn's bag.)

MARILYN

Nothing for me.

NATALIA

(Turning to the cook) Cuppa mud and one hunk of lead! (To Xana) It'll be right up. Here's your waters. (She turns away)

XANA

(Reading the newspaper) So, what about Alan Shepherd, huh?

MARILYN

Alan Shepherd, the astronaut?

XANA

Yes. The one who just went up into space. The first American in space, you know who I mean?

MARILYN

Of course, I do. I'm not stupid. I read that President Kennedy says we'll have a man on the moon before the end of the decade.

XANA

You read that, huh? I'm the one who taught you to read, don't forget, little sister. Where's our food? I'm starving.

MARILYN

I don't see how you can just sit here and eat.

XANA

I can always eat. So you read the papers, huh?

MARILYN

(Breaking character) It was my newspaper in the first place.

XANA

You weren't reading it.

MARILYN

Please, be my guest.

NATALIA

(Coaching) Stay in character.

XANA

What about that Roger Maris? They're saying he might break records this year.

NATALIA

He wouldn't be breaking any records if Satchel Paige were still pitching.

MARILYN

I don't like baseball. You want to play current events all day?

XANA

Okay. What do you want to talk about?

MARILYN

Boycott.

XANA

Boy what?

MARILYN

You know what I'm talking about. Not eating here because they won't let Polynices eat here.

XANA

My going hungry isn't going to help Polynices.

MARILYN

Yes it would help him, because Polynices looks up to you. (beat) Go ahead, ignore the problem; that's just like you.

XANA

And this is just like you. You'll go hungry, then you'll get sick. Then guess who has to take care of you?

MARILYN

Polynices.

XANA

That'll be the day.

MARILYN

Polynices always takes care of me.

XANA

You always need somebody to take care of you, don't you?

NATALIA

(Delivering the order) Will there be anything else? Cream?

XANA

No thanks. I take it black.

MARILYN

Our brother likes his with cream and sugar.

NATALIA

Excuse me?

XANA

Never mind her. Our brother is not here.

MARILYN

Yeah, he is not here because your bosses won't allow him.

NATALIA

Sorry, I have to go to the kitchen.

MARILYN

Oh sure! Run off to the kitchen. Just do your stupid, mindless little job.

XANA

Antigone! Stop making a scene.

MARILYN

You want a scene? I'll show you a scene. I'm going to sit here until they decide to let Polynices eat here.

NATALIA

No you're not. We don't DO sit-ins at this restaurant. Now get out of here or I'll call the authorities. We reserve the right to refuse service to anyone.

XANA

Antigone, don't be ridiculous!

MARILYN

You're the one being ridiculous. You're eating their food, drinking their coffee, paying our money to support this bigoted place.

XANA

Oh what? Now you think you're some kind of freedom rider or something?

MARILYN

I'm Antigone. I'll do what I please. Anyway, he's my brother. That means he's your brother too.

XANA

(Breaking character) Natalia, this is crazy. I can't keep doing this! It feels completely backward. I'd be the one sitting in at the lunch counter, not her!

MARILYN

You think I wouldn't sit in at a lunch counter?

NATALIA

You two are going to have to find a way to work this out. Xana, you need to let go of your personal politics, and focus on the character. Marilyn, you know what to do.

XANA

Wait! You can't just leave us here like this.

NATALIA

I'm sorry, but I have to go check on Marlon. He said he wanted me to help him with his mumbling problem. (EXITS)

XANA

That's just great. (To herself) She just left us here.

MARILYN

(Pause) We can do this. Why don't we just run the lines?

XANA

Fine. I'll run the lines, if I get to be Antigone.

MARILYN

Look, kid, I've been taking these classes for three years. I've earned the right to play a role that makes a difference.

XANA

But look at the characters! You're no Antigone. Sure, you're a movie star, but what do you know about risking your life just to honor your brother?

MARILYN

You think because I don't have a family that I don't know what it's like being left out? Looked down on? Made fun of? Did you grow up in an orphanage? I don't think so. Look at you, you come from a middle class family, two parents, a good education. You have a family. You had a home.

XANA

So what? Being middle class doesn't mean much in this country when you're black. I'm young, I'm black, I'm in America. What more do you need to know?

MARILYN

Being poor's no fun either, but that doesn't mean I trade on it just to get my way.

ENTER NATALIA. SHE STANDS LISTENING.

XANA

No, you trade on being a movie star, a big name.

MARILYN

My name got me in here, but I still have to do the work.

NATALIA

She's right, Xana. Marilyn does do the work.

XANA

So do I. What are you doing back? I thought you were helping Marlon.

NATALIA

He left a message. Something about being late, or gaining weight ...

XANA

Maybe you can help her understand that just because I'm not as old as she is doesn't mean I don't work as hard as she does.

MARILYN

Yes, but you got in here at, what? 18? You've had the schooling, the loving parents, people who encouraged you. And now you want to sit and whine because you're being asked to play the older sister! Mommy and Daddy paid your tuition to get here. (beat) I'm not asking you to feel sorry for me. I'm asking you to treat me like another human being. I was a young actress just like you.

XANA

What are you saying? I'm some poor little rich girl who always gets everything she wants?

NATALIA

If the shoe fits ...

XANA

And she doesn't get lots of "presents" for being Marilyn?

NATALIA

Marilyn doesn't deny there are some good things.

XANA

Like lots of money.

MARILYN

Enough money. But mostly, I have lots of good friends. Lots of good memories.

NATALIA

Lots of good jewelry.

THEY LAUGH

MARILYN

Frank just gave me the most beautiful emerald earrings!

XANA

Frank?

MARILYN

Sinatra.

XANA

I've heard of him.

THEY LAUGH AGAIN.

MARILYN

And then there are the people, the ones who see my movies, you know, the fans. The look on their faces, the applause. It can be so wonderful. I guess I'd have to say my favorite memory of all was when I went to Korea.

XANA

Korea? Really?

MARILYN

I have never been showered with that much love in my lifetime. It was, it was ...

XANA

Wonderful?

MARILYN

Oh, you can't imagine. Gee, I never thought I had an effect on people until I was in Korea. (She moves into spotlight. XANA fades into background). It was my honeymoon. Mine and Joe's. When I got to Korea, I was in a helicopter. I could see all those thousands of GI's on the ground, waiting for me. For me! I had two of the guys in the helicopter hold onto my legs, and I lay down on my stomach and scooted out as far as I could (SHE waves, laughs, blows kisses), I fed on it! Just ate it up. The helicopter circled four times. When we landed, I went backstage in a makeshift dressing room. There was a huge roar out front with music playing. An officer came backstage and told me I'd have to go on ahead of schedule. I went onstage in a skin tight number, no coat, even though it was snowing and the GI's were all wearing parkas ...

(SHE SINGS)

It was ... it was 13,000 men all yelling my name, cheering for me. That roar I heard, it was my name! They loved me. They thought I was pretty. No one ever told me I was pretty when I was a little girl.

XANA

You're an idiot.

MARILYN

A strawhead. A moron. Everyone always thinks that, but I know things!

XANA

You may know things, but you don't do anything with what you know! If I had what you have, I'd do something.

MARILYN

I started my own production company. I broke away from the studio system. Anyway, what do you know about it? You're just a girl, barely out of school! You don't think I've ever done anything important.

XANA

So what? I know that if I had the chance to stand up in front of 13,000 people, 13,000 GI's, for Pete's sake, I wouldn't waste it singing like a sex kitten.

MARILYN

Oh, you'd sing like Ella Fitzgerald, I suppose.

XANA

I wouldn't sing at all! I'd talk. I'd point out to them how the United States government is making slaves of them ... I'd ...

NATALIA

Do it then, go ahead, show me how it's done!

XANA

(Moving into the spotlight as MARILYN fades back) All right, I will. (Stands erect, chin lifted) Men! Look at yourselves, even in the United States Army, you arrange yourselves just as we are arranged in society: segregated! Divided by race! You think slavery has ended? No! We are all slaves to the Capitalist system, we ...

MARILYN

Boo! Boo! Show some skin! Shake it for me, baby!

XANA

We can change the system, but we have to fight! Sit down for freedom!

MARILYN

Boo! Hiss! Get off the stage! Get off! Go home!

XANA

(To Marilyn) Oh come on! Give me a chance!

MARILYN

(Laughing) You think I was hard on you? Multiply that by a few thousand.

XANA

Well, maybe you couldn't do it just like that, but there must be some way you can use your fame to change things for the better. Just a few weeks ago thirteen Freedom Riders took a bus through the South to protest segregation. Two hundred white people set that bus on fire. Then they get arrested -- not the white people, the Freedom Riders! Arrested and thrown in jail. There were some white people on the bus, one of them could have been you.

MARILYN

I think what you mean is, one of those people could have been you.

XANA

Well, yes! Maybe that is what I mean. Yes, I should have been on that bus. But my parents want me here in the academy. They think I'm too young to be out fighting for civil rights. My people are fighting for freedom in this country, and I should be out there with them. Not sitting in some acting school, learning how to entertain people.

MARILYN

Entertaining people changes things for the better.

XANA

In what way could you possibly think that "entertaining" like you do changes anything?

MARILYN

Entertaining the troops makes them feel better. Raises the morale.

XANA

Helps them kill better you mean.

MARILYN

Maybe it brings the men together. Let's them forget about the war.

XANA

Oh, please. Prancing around in tight skirts and wiggling your rear end only perpetuates the oppression. Sure it's good for capitalism, it sells tickets, probably buys you another car, another fur coat, another diamond, but what about civil rights? What about people who are starving?

MARILYN

You're right. It sells tickets. Look, do you think I'm not tired of the sex roles? I don't want to play sex roles any more. I'm tired of being known as the girl with the shape. That's why I'm here! I'm not interested in money. I just want to be wonderful.

XANA

There's that word again. Wonderful. Wonderful? Like this?(Standing over a grate that blows her dress up; still in Monroe persona) Oh, hee hee, that tickles! How's that, Mr. Wilder? Shall I turn? What about this? Oh, the photographers want to see my cleavage? You naughty boys! Isn't it enough that you can see right through my panties? (She continues to twirl, turn, pose, lifting her skirt, showing her assets, laughing, giggling, pouting, looking through heavy lids.) You boys are insatiable!

NATALIA

Stop it! You don't know ...

XANA

(Continuing to pose, and to lift her dress) Oooh, this fresh air just feels so goood!

MARILYN

(Transforming into Joe's personality, she storms into the spotlight with Xana, grabs her right arm). What the hell's going on here? No wife of mine is going to show her crotch like that, on the street! I don't go for this. Let's get the hell outa here!

XANA

Oh Joe, honey, I'm gonna be awhile yet, why don't you go on back to the hotel and wait for me?

MARILYN

(Grabs Xana by the left arm) I said come on! No more of this now. You're disgusting!

XANA

(Dropping the Marilyn persona) Hey! Come on, you're hurting me.

MARILYN

(Grabs Xana by the back of the neck, tries to march her out of the scene) Slut! You're no better than a whore!

XANA

Cut it out! I'm serious.

MARILYN

(Slaps Xana across the face.) You're going home. Now!

XANA fights back. MARILYN
punches Xana in the face.

XANA

Hey! (punches Marilyn in the stomach) What the hell is wrong with you?

MARILYN

(Winded, she snaps out of the Joe personality) I, I don't know.

XANA

I heard you were nuts, but I didn't know they meant you were psycho.

MARILYN

I'm sorry. Something came over me. I guess I lost control.

XANA

Yeah, I guess you did.

MARILYN

When I saw you there, making fun of that photograph, I mean to say, it's my favorite photo of myself, you know?

XANA

That's no reason to try to manhandle me.

MARILYN

It's just ...

XANA

What?

MARILYN

Well, that's what happens when you're famous.

XANA

People beat you up?

MARILYN

Not all people. Some people.

XANA

Some people? You mean some person?

MARILYN

One person, mainly.

XANA

Like your husband, you mean?

MARILYN

He was embarrassed.

XANA

He knew you were a movie star when he married you.

MARILYN

It was just too much. He expected me to be his wife, instead of him being my husband.

XANA

You mean he didn't want you to be famous for being a dumb blonde?

MARILYN

No, he wanted me to be a dumb blonde, but he wanted me to be his dumb blonde. He didn't want anyone else looking at me.

XANA

Good luck!

MARILYN

I know. It didn't last. We divorced a month after that.

XANA

After he hit you?

MARILYN

After that photo shoot.

XANA

After the photo shoot he beat you up?

MARILYN

We're still friends though.

XANA

Look, if being a movie star is so terrible, why do you keep doing it? Why not just do some plays, or something?

MARILYN

That's why I'm here. I want to learn to act, to really act.

NATALIA

But, Marilyn, you DO really act. What you do is wonderful.

MARILYN

Thank you.

XANA

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to ridicule you.

MARILYN

I'm going to tell you a story. When I first started playing the sex roles, I wanted to imitate Betty Grable. I hoped I could be funny like she was, but I tried to find the real person in the character, you know what I mean? I tried to put my self, my true self, into the character. I find that if a person just tries to mimic the walk, the smile, the voice, and so forth, all they end up with is camp. But if you can make the character real, by putting yourself in the characters shoes, why then the role is much more real. My dream was to be a real actress, like Marie Dressler, or Olivia DeHavilland, do you see? And so when I play a role, whatever that role is, why I dream myself into it. What I mean to say is, I allow my dream of being a famous movie star to shine out through the character's eyes. Inside that blonde in "Seven Year Itch", inside her, looking out through her eyes, well, it's Norma Jeane. A little Norma Jeane looking out at the big wide world, seeing it like it's the first time. A little scared maybe, or a little excited.

XANA

Excited about playing a role you say you don't even want to do any more?

MARILYN

Oh yes! I was in the moment then.

NATALIA

And your work in "Don't Bother to Knock", that was an excellent portrayal of a disturbed girl.

MARILYN

Oh, that one was easy! My real mother suffered from mental problems, and I knew how she looked, how she acted at times. And sometimes I have felt very sad, sort of lost, you know? So it was easy to be that girl.

XANA

So you think it is easy to let your true self come out through the characters you play?

MARILYN

Sometimes it is easier than others. Do you know that in real life, one can't help herself from showing her true feelings. Often you think you're hiding what you are feeling, and maybe you are hiding it from yourself, but others can see it. Just like earlier when you were imitating me. You did mean to hurt me, whether you want to admit that or not. Your true feelings were showing,

NATALIA

Exactly! And showing your true self through the character, that's what you do so well, Marilyn. It's what the academy tries to teach actors. And you already do it. You're a pro. It's something you can learn from her, Xana.

XANA

Let's do "Antigone" then.

NATALIA

Okay. Marilyn, are you ready to try this again?

MARILYN

Of course, I'm a professional.

XANA

Can't we just TRY it with me as Antigone this time?

NATALIA

Marilyn?

MARILYN

No.

NATALIA

Well, somebody or something has got to give. Tell you what. Why don't you both do it?

MARILYN

You mean take turns reading the lines? Or what?

NATALIA

Forget the lines. You both know the story. Leave the scripts down. Just improvise it.

XANA

The whole thing?

MARILYN

With both of us being Antigone?

NATALIA

Take the burial itself. No one is there except Antigone and the dead body of her brother. Here, I'll be the body (lies down on the floor). Go when you're ready. (Closes her eyes and waits).

MARILYN

Cruel King! What have you done? Buried Eteocles with all honors, but left my Polynices to lie here and rot ...

XANA

Left him here to be eaten by dogs or vultures. Oh Gods of Thebes, you know I am doing the right thing ...

MARILYN

The only thing! The laws of the gods surely outweigh the laws of Creon?

XANA

I know they do. Polynices, tell me this is the right thing to do ...

MARILYN

Am I alone in my thinking? Polynices you have always taken care of me. You mopped my brow when I had fevers. You taught me to stand up for my beliefs, to fight for what is right.

XANA

Like you did, Polynices. Now there is only one thing left that I can do for you, and that is to ...

MARILYN

Bury you. Not with honors, but with love.

XANA

I have no tomb, but I will cover you with dust ...

XANA AND MARILYN BEGIN TO COVER
THE BODY WITH DUST.

MARILYN

Your cold limbs, your cold face ...

XANA

My brother ...

MARILYN

My poor brother ... my heart cries for you.

XANA

I wish I could have the burial rites for you. I would do anything for you...

MARILYN

I would die for you, Polynices. (Pause. Breaks character. To Natalia) So, how was that?

NATALIA

(Looking up from the floor) You tell me.

MARILYN

It felt good. That's what I want to do.

XANA

(Smiling) You don't want to sing "Diamonds" anymore.

MARILYN

I want to do both, because both can be honest.

NATALIA

Will you show us how to do the song?

MARILYN

Yes, but you have to really mean it.

MARILYN BEGINS TO SING. NATALIA AND XANA JOIN IN. THEY MOTION FOR THE AUDIENCE TO JOIN IN. THE LYRICS CAN BE PRINTED IN THE PROGRAM, OR ON CUE CARDS, OR AS A SEPARATE SONG SHEET.

END OF PLAY