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CAST:

MALVINA, a dancer who has suffered paralysis.

HOWARD, a painter.

ALDO, Howard's assistant.

Sc. 1. prologue. years ago.

(lights come up as Howard and Malvina begin a series of diagonal walks, from upstage right to downstage left.)

HOWARD

Malvina lost her shoes. After she realized it she let go of Howard's hand. She just stood then, and he couldn't convince her to come away. He couldn't console her with the fact that the shoes were somewhere, not far away. It made no difference to her. She asked Howard to describe the shoes, as though she'd never seen them.

MALVINA

Color? Shape? Howard, please?

HOWARD

She reminded me that I'd asked to carry her shoes. She could not be consoled. We'd reached the front lawn after a gloomy walk all along. And now more gloom. He looked at her feet and asked her, why so important, the shoes?

MALVINA

I gave you the shoes to hold and now the shoes are gone. Something has been terribly wrong for years, since you came to my room with your drawing things.

HOWARD

He pointed to her feet and asked her why she didn't

enjoy herself this charming afternoon. At least it might have been.

MALVINA

What do you mean. You, so *bon vivant*.

HOWARD

She told Howard that they were like two lovers tired of each other in a French movie. Who walk and walk, stand on bridges, that kind of thing.

MALVINA

You've lost my shoes.

HOWARD

She wanted to talk about times with him which had given her distress. I said give me your hand, but she was inconsolable. But we have been together. Remember Paris. Le Pont Alexandre.

MALVINA

The party of my friends that summer in the East. The full moon nightmare. You wanted so much to be worshipped. We hated each other and couldn't come apart.

MALVINA

After I let go of his hand...

HOWARD

So, now, she said.

MALVINA

You bastard.

HOWARD

I asked if she was cold. Her feet.

MALVINA

But it's summer.

Then. The body.

SC. I

(Ma, an old dancer. Da, her daughter. late afternoon. Ma has been invited to dance in a show, and has returned from her first rehearsal. she has called her daughter to come.)

Da
how was it?

Ma
I can't remember.

Da
I'm sure you can if you try.

Ma
I can't.

Da
I'm sure you can if you try. here, I'll stand with you.
try to think. where's the audience? let's say the audi-
ence is here. do you enter from the left, the right?
which?

Ma
I think I'm sitting. the lights come up. did he say
slowly? I think so. I can't remember. yes, facing the
audience.

Da
well, then, say you're sitting. the lights come up.
then what?

Ma
well, I can't quite remember.

(Da brings a chair. she helps Ma to sit.)

Da

try to remember. you're sitting facing the audience. the lights come up. he said they come up slowly? is everything slow? are you going to accomplish something particular? do you stand? maybe that's what you do. stand. slowly stand and walk. stand, walk, exit.

(Da takes a few steps backward, slowly. Ma stands, wanders away from the chair, turns, returns to the chair.)

Da

or does he have in mind that you give the idea of a woman, say, remembering some past thing. would it be like the choreographer to ask you to remember something from before? could that be it?

Ma

before what? before now? maybe something like that. I used to run. like the wind. shall I remember that? the running. the dogwood.

(silence. Ma sits in the most formal way.)

Ma
where are we Daughter?

Da
we live where we live.

Ma
is the row boat in the water?

Da
we don't live by the water now.

Ma
and your pretty sister?

Da
I know Ma that you wish for things.

(pause.)

Ma
I went early.

Da
you went early to warm up?

Ma
bowing my head asking forgiveness.

(pause.)

Da
did he start the rehearsal with you?

Ma
yes.

Da
others came? other dancers?