

## *Fifth Decade 1970-1979*

### **Plaza Suite, Neil Simon, selection Visitor from Hollywood with cuts (1972--73)**

*(Knock outside of door, then Muriel enters Jesse's hotel suite.)*

MURIEL: *(Smiles, cocks her head)* Jesse?

JESSE: ...Muriel, I can't believe it. Is it really you?

MURIEL: It's me, Muriel.

JESSE: Well, come on in, for Pete's sake, come on in.

MURIEL: I can only stay for a few minutes.

JESSE: My God, it's good to see you.

MURIEL: I just dropped in to say hello. I can't really stay...because I've got to get back to New Jersey. I'm parked in a one-hour zone. Hello, Jesse, I think I'm very nervous.

JESSE: Hey! Hello, Muriel....Come here, let me take a good look at you.

MURIEL: Oh don't, Jesse. ...I've been stuck in the Holland Tunnel for two hours. What time is it? Tell me when it's three o'clock. I can't stay.

JESSE: Muriel, I can't get over it. You look absolutely wonderful.

MURIEL: Well, I *feel* absolutely wonderful.

JESSE: ...And how are you?

MURIEL: I'm all right...I don't know why I'm so nervous, do you?....Should I be here?

JESSE: Why not? Is there anything wrong with it?

MURIEL: Oh, no. No, of course not. There's nothing wrong in it. My God, no. I don't see anything wrong. I just dropped by from New Jersey to say hello. What's wrong with that? I just don't think I should be here. Is it three o'clock yet?

JESSE: *(Moving toward her.)* Little Muriel Tate, all grown up and married. How many kids you not now?

MURIEL: Three.

JESSE: No kidding? Three kids...What are they?

MURIEL: A boy and a girl.

JESSE: A boy and a girl?

MURIEL: And another boy who's away in camp. I can't even think straight. Isn't this terrible?

JESSE: What's wrong?

MURIEL: I don't know, I can't catch my breath. Well, it's you, that's the simple explanation. I'm nervous about meeting you.

JESSE: Me? Me? Jesse Kiplinger, your high school boy friend from Tenafly, New Jersey. Ohh, Muriel.

MURIEL: You know what I mean, Mr. "Famous Hollywood Producer" staying at the Plaza Hotel.

JESSE: Mr. Famous Hollywood Producer. Muriel, you know me better than that. I haven't changed. I made a couple of pictures, that's all....you're going to sit down and have a drink. There's a million things I'm dying to ask you.

MURIEL: Oh, no drinks for me.

JESSE: One little drink.

MURIEL: No, no, no. You go ahead and have a drink. I have a five o'clock hairdresser's appointment.

JESSE: You don't drink?

MURIEL: Oh, once in a great while. Anyway, I've got to get home. I shouldn't even be in the city...I just dropped by to say hello.

JESSE: What'll you have?

MURIEL: A vodka stinger.

JESSE: Coming right up.

MURIEL: And then I've got to go....Whooo, I finally took a breath. That felt good.

JESSE: Will you relax? Will you, Muriel? Come on now. I want you to stop being so silly and relax.

MURIEL: ...I feel funny sitting here drinking in a hotel room...I mean, I'm a married woman....we're here, we might as well stay...just for a few minutes. I've got a six o'clock hairdresser's appointment.

JESSE: I thought it was at five?

MURIEL: It's flexible...Is it warm in here?

JESSE: ...Muriel, you are delightfully and incredibly unchanged. How long has it been? Fifteen, sixteen years?

MURIEL: Since our last date? It'll be seventeen years on August sixth...,I still have the swizzle sticks from Tavern on the Green.

JESSE: No, time hasn't changed you, Muriel. You're still so fresh and clean. You even smell the same way.

MURIEL: Now, you and your nose just behave yourself...I did not come to the Plaza Hotel to be smelled.

JESSE: And now you've blossomed and matured...You look younger and fresher...well, you know what I mean. I just think you look absolutely fantastic.

MURIEL: (*Pulling herself together.*) You going to be in New York long Jesse?

JESSE: Possible just till the weekend. I've got to sign a director for my picture...I might stay over another few days. It depends...on what happens.

MURIEL: I've never been in the Plaza before. It's beautiful. (*looks off stage*) What's in there?

JESSE: The bedroom. You can go in.

MURIEL: ...Never mind...Maybe I haven't seen you in seventeen years, but I know an awful lot about you, Mr. Jesse Kiplinger...

JESSE: ..Hey, can we stop talking about me for a while?...I'm very bored with me. I'm much more interested in you...But first let's have our drinks.

MURIEL: And then I've got to go.

JESSE: Let's say, to renewing old acquaintances...Muriel, it is so exciting seeing you again. The minute you walked in that door, I got a—a tingle, all over, the way I used to...You know what I mean.

MURIEL: I'm sure I don't. I have three children and I'm very happy and I have a wonderful life and I have no business being in a hotel room in New York at three o'clock...(Jesse kisses her) Any particular reason you did that?

JESSE: I wanted to. Desperately.

MURIEL: Do you always blithely go ahead and do whatever you want to?

JESSE: If I can get away with it...As a matter of fact...if you don't object too strenuously, I'm going to kiss you again.

MURIEL: ...And then I've got to go. (*Jesse kisses her again tenderly on the lips.*) Woo...that'll be enough of that...Wow, that vodka stinger has really gone to my head.

JESSE: It's even better when you drink it.

MURIEL: Now, don't confuse me. ...Cheers. (*Drinks*) Was it good?

JESSE: What? The drink?

MURIEL: The kiss.

JESSE: The kiss? Yes, the kiss was very good...Is it possible that you are the last sweet, simple, unchanged, unspoiled woman living in the world today?

MURIEL: I'm sure I don't know what you're talking about. (*Looking in a compact mirror,*) Oh, God, look at my lips....What time is it?

JESSE: Twenty after.

MURIEL: Three? Already? I've got to go....Why did you call me yesterday?

JESSE: I called you because, believe or not, I've been thinking about you....I don't want to force you to stay here. You know what's best for you.

MURIEL: I'll finish my drink...

JESSE:.. Muriel...I had to see you...Just to talk to you, to have a drink, to spend five minutes, to reaffirm my faith that there are decent women in the world...even if it's only one...if somebody like you exists, Muriel, then maybe there's still somebody for me...Now you finish your vodka stinger and then I'm going to let you go.

MURIEL: (*Pouring herself another drink*).Oh, I've got plenty of time. Larry's never home till seven. Cheers. ..Larry and I are very happy. (*She has another drink*) I mean we've had our ups and downs...Larry's a wonderful guy...but no one else seems to care for him. (*drinks*)

JESSE: Are you sure you're going to be alright? I mean, driving?

MURIEL: If I had to worry about getting home every time I had three vodka stingers, I'd give up driving.

JESSE: Do you want to lie down for a while?

MURIEL: ..What's the point? You're going back to Hollywood in a few days...Oh God, I'm sorry Jesse...

JESSE: ...My life is empty, Muriel. Empty. But you can fill it for me. You can. We can talk. One hour Muriel...whatever you way...whatever you want. (*he gazes tenderly in her eyes*)

MURIEL: Did you go to the Academy Awards dinner last year? (*Jesse kisses her.*)

SCENE