



Sample Pages from
Malled: Two One Act Plays for Young Women

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MALLED

TWO ONE ACT PLAYS FOR YOUNG WOMEN

ellenalicemonajune &
Yes, Virginia, There Is A Virginia
by *Colleen Neuman*



Malled: Two One Act Plays for Young Women

ellenalicemonajune

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Yes Virginia, There is a Virginia

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ellenalicemonajune

Characters

Four teenage girls: Ellen, Alice, Mona, June

Setting

The food court of a mall.

A trash bin, one table and four chairs required.

Additional tables and chairs, decorative touches optional.

Costumes

The girls wear clothing appropriate for a day of shopping at the mall. Ellen's clothing may be noticeably more expensive than that worn by the other girls. June wears a ring.

Props

Ellen: A Coke, a shake, a paper napkin, shopping bags that contain new underwear and a new orange sweater.

Alice: Shopping bags, watch, dish of Jell-O, plastic knife and fork, cup of water, purse that contains small plastic bags of carrots and celery.

Mona: Shopping bags, burger, fries, soda, ice cream, cell phone.

June: Shopping bags, meatball sandwich, fries, drink, cheeseburger, chocolate soft serve, paper napkin, salad.

The food court of a mall. ALICE and JUNE are seated at a table center. Several shopping bags are on the floor at their feet. ALICE has a dish of Jell-O and a knife and fork. JUNE has a meatball sandwich, fries and a drink. JUNE is eating. ALICE is not. ALICE is tense. Folded arms, tapping foot, looking impatiently around. She glances at her watch.

ALICE: June, it's almost twenty after.

JUNE: (*pleasant*) Alice, it's Saturday. We're at the mall. We shop, we eat. They'll be here.

ALICE stands and impatiently surveys the food court. Sits. Looks at watch, then shows it to JUNE.

ALICE: Twenty after.

JUNE: (*doesn't care*) Uh-huh.

ALICE: (*watching JUNE with distaste*) What is that?

JUNE: (*Very accommodating. Opens sandwich, displaying the inside of it to ALICE.*) Meatballs, onions, double Parmesan, double sauce on garlic bread. (*Closing sandwich, offering it to ALICE.*) Want a bite?

ALICE: (*polite disgust*) No, thank you.

JUNE: (*indicating Jell-O*) Aren't you going to eat your Jell-O?

ALICE: I'm letting it warm up. It has to be room temperature or it hurts my teeth.

JUNE: Jell-O hurts your teeth?

MONA and ELLEN enter carrying shopping bags and looking around. MONA spots ALICE and JUNE, then heads for their table. ELLEN pouts along behind.

ALICE: Cold Jell-O hurts my teeth. Sensitive teeth run in my family. My mother has to let her ice cream melt before she can eat it.

MONA: (*annoyed*) Here you are! You said to meet you at noon at Sears.

ALICE: I said the food court.

MONA: (*to JUNE*) What did she say?

JUNE: (*a guess*) Her mother drinks ice cream?

MONA: (*Fed up. Setting down bags.*) I'm eating.

ELLEN sits.

JUNE: (*to ELLEN*) Aren't you going to eat?

ELLEN: (*in a bad mood*) I'm not hungry. I just want a Coke.

MONA exits.

ALICE: What's in the bag?

ELLEN: (*a little impatient*) That orange sweater we saw here last week.

ALICE: The orange sweater with the palm trees that was a hundred and ninety-five dollars?

ELLEN: (*a little more impatient*) It was on sale! It was ten percent off!

JUNE: What's in the bag from Sears?

ELLEN: (*way too defensive*) Underwear. (*before they can comment*) I bought underwear! So what?

JUNE: Nothing. I love Sears underwear. (*getting up*) Mona's at Mr. Beefeaters. I'm getting a hamburger.

JUNE leaves. ELLEN pouts. ALICE starts cutting her Jell-O into little bites. ALICE notices a good-looking 'boy' walking right to left across the stage in front of the table. ALICE clears her throat, then nods in direction of the 'boy.'

ALICE: Ellen. Green jacket.

They follow 'him' with their eyes. ALICE is impressed. ELLEN isn't.

ELLEN: (*dismissing 'him' before 'he' is out of sight*) He has red hair. He can't be cute if he has red hair.

ALICE: On what planet?

ELLEN: Think of one good-looking guy with red hair. You can't, can you? Imagine Brad Pitt with red hair. And freckles.

ALICE does. It is not a good experience. JUNE and MONA return. JUNE has a cheeseburger. MONA has a hamburger, fries and drink. JUNE sets down her cheeseburger, returning to the meatball sandwich.

JUNE: Did you see that guy in the green jacket? He walked right by here. He had the best red hair.

JUNE is trying to get another glimpse of him.

ELLEN: (to MONA) Where's my Coke?

MONA: (eating) You didn't tell me to get you a Coke.

ELLEN: I told you to get me a Coke.

MONA: Ellen, you didn't tell me to get you a Coke.

ELLEN: I said I wasn't hungry. I just wanted a Coke!

MONA: Well, you didn't tell me to get you one or I would have done it!

ELLEN: Forget it, I'll get it myself! (stomps off)

JUNE: What's her problem?

MONA: (A glance at ELLEN's retreating back. Confidentially.) She and Roger broke up last night.

ALICE: Finally!

JUNE: I can't believe she spent four months of her life dating a guy who wears leather pants.

ALICE: So why is she in a bad mood?

MONA: He broke up with her.

ALICE and JUNE didn't see that coming.

Then he said he wouldn't mind keeping their date for the prom anyway but he already has a better offer...

ELLEN sits with her Coke. Awkward silence.

ELLEN: What?

MONA: Nothing.

ALICE: Nothing.

JUNE: Nothing.

ELLEN: (to MONA) You have such a big mouth.

MONA: They asked.

ELLEN: So you told them. Did you also tell them I don't want to talk about it?

MONA: She doesn't want to talk about it.

ALICE: Fine.

JUNE: Fine.

They eat. Tense silence.

Well, look at it this way, Ellen. Now you get to go to the prom without Roger. So you could actually have a good time.

ELLEN: I'm not going to the prom.

JUNE: Why not?

ELLEN: I don't have a date.

MONA: You don't need a date.

ELLEN: I'm not going.

JUNE: People get broken up with every day. It's a condition of life. They don't stop going places.

ELLEN: You know nothing about this.

JUNE: Fourth grade. I told Richie Pacheski I loved him. Next recess he hit me in the forehead with a red plastic baseball bat. Broken up with. And injured. At least you don't have a dent in the middle of your forehead. With little pieces of red plastic stuck to it.

Pointing to forehead, leaning forward.

I still have a scar. Right there.

ALICE: *(Has heard this story too many times. Without even looking.)* You do not have a scar.

JUNE: So that was the day I got over Richie Pacheski. You don't have to hit me in the head twice.

ALICE: Once is usually enough.

JUNE: Plus, my dad left when I was ten. I know everything about this.

ELLEN: Anyway, I don't want to go to the prom.

MONA: You don't want to go without a date.

ALICE: Get a date. Ask somebody.

JUNE: I asked Sneezer.

ELLEN: Sneezer goes to another school. You can ask somebody from another school to your prom. You can't ask somebody from your school to your prom.

MONA: Assuming that's true, which it isn't, ask somebody from another school.

ELLEN: I don't want to go with somebody from another school.

MONA: (*Disgusted. Getting up.*) I'm getting ice cream.

ELLEN: (*sarcastic*) Would you please get me a shake?

JUNE: I'll have chocolate soft serve.

ALICE: (*getting up*) I'm coming.

MONA: What kind of shake?

ELLEN: The kind I always get.

MONA: I don't have it memorized!

ELLEN: A large strawberry shake!

MONA: Fine!

MONA and ALICE exit.

ELLEN: Don't I always get a large strawberry shake?

JUNE: I don't know.

JUNE continues eating.

ELLEN: Your dad left when you were ten?

JUNE: Yes.

ELLEN: Was it awful?

JUNE: Yes. Actually, it was.

ELLEN: How come you never talk about it?

JUNE: Because it was awful. Because it was six years ago.

ELLEN: Do you like your stepfather?

JUNE: (*thinks it over*) No.

MONA and ALICE return. MONA has a large strawberry shake and a dish of ice cream. ALICE has a glass of water.

MONA: (*Sets shake down in front of ELLEN. A little sarcastic.*) Shake. Large. Strawberry.

ELLEN: (*Handing over some money. Too polite.*) Thank you.

MONA: (*Taking the money. Too polite right back.*) You're welcome.

ALICE: (*to JUNE*) And there's no chocolate soft serve.

JUNE: (*alarmed*) What do you mean?

ALICE: Mr. Softie is gone. Mr. Pretzel is now in that location. Selling pretzels.

JUNE: (*stunned*) But it's Saturday. I always have chocolate soft serve on Saturday. (*to ALICE*) What did you get?

ALICE: Room temperature water.

JUNE: (*Sees something startling behind ELLEN. Doesn't want ELLEN to see it.*) Ellen!

Making it up as she goes along.

Did I ever tell you about this great... thing I have?

ELLEN: What?

JUNE: This great... (*noticing her own ring*) Ring! See? (*holds out her hand*) Look at my ring!

ELLEN: (*glances*) It's your class ring. I've seen it a million times.

JUNE: I know, but in this light it's a whole new color. See? (*wiggling it around*) It's blue, then it's green, then it's blue...

ELLEN: (*glances again*) No, it's not.

JUNE: You're not looking close enough.

JUNE pushes ELLEN's head down to look right at ring. ALICE sees what JUNE has seen behind ELLEN.

ELLEN: (*sitting up*) It looks like your class ring.

ALICE: Ellen! (*slaps hand over eye*) I lost my contact! It bounced over there by you.

ELLEN: Where?

ALICE: Maybe on the floor. You look on the floor. I'll look on the table.

ALICE searches the surface of the table.

JUNE: I'll help.

JUNE and ELLEN get on the floor, looking for the contact lens.

MONA: You don't wear contacts.

ALICE: Yes, I do.

MONA: You do not.

ALICE: I do too!

ALICE turns MONA's head so she sees what has startled ALICE and JUNE.

MONA: Roger!

MONA claps her hand over her mouth too late.

ELLEN: Roger?

Hits her head on the underside of the table. 'Roger' is now walking by. ELLEN and JUNE follow his feet. ALICE and MONA follow the rest of him. ELLEN peers out after him from under table.

And Gina Torpelenski?

ELLEN stands, grabs her bag and starts to leave.

MONA: Ellen, sit down. You can't leave...

ELLEN stomps off.

ALICE: (*to MONA*) Go after her.

MONA: I'm not going after her.

ALICE: She's leaving!

MONA: She can't leave. I have the car.

MONA, JUNE and ALICE look left at 'Roger and Gina.'

ALICE: Gina Torpedoes.

JUNE: And Roger who, if he was upholstered, maybe could get a job as a chair.

ELLEN: (*Returns. To MONA.*) Give me your keys!

MONA: I can't! My mother hardly lets me drive our car.

ELLEN: Then you drive me!

MONA: Where?

ELLEN: Home!

MONA: Sit down.

ELLEN: I'm not staying here.

MONA: Sit down!

ELLEN: (*sits*) I want to go home.

MONA: We came to the mall for the day. I never get the car and I finally have the car and I don't have to have the car back until five and I'm not leaving. If you want to go home, take the bus.

ELLEN: Fine. I'll take the bus.

MONA: Fine. Do it.

ELLEN: I will.

MONA: Fine.

ELLEN: Fine. (*pouts*)

JUNE: (*finishes her sandwich*) I'm going to browse. (*wanders off left*)

ELLEN: It wouldn't kill you to drive me home.

MONA: Ellen, stop throwing a fit.

ELLEN: I'm not throwing a fit!

MONA: You've been throwing a fit all morning, acting like a... (*stops*)

ELLEN: (*a dare*) A what?

MONA: (*takes the dare*) A brat. (*and double dare*) A spoiled brat.

ELLEN: (*feeling very sorry for herself*) Oh. Okay. Fine. So now I know what you really think of me. And my parents. Just because my parents have a little money...

MONA: You drive a Jaguar.

ELLEN: It's my mother's!

MONA: You drive it! There's a helicopter parked in your backyard.

ALICE: Your house does have a ballroom.

ELLEN: Daddy uses it for work! It was there when we bought the house!

MONA: We don't care where you live. Roger went out with you because of where you live. And because of that car.

ELLEN: Oh, thank you very much.

MONA: You began driving that car and people like Roger began noticing you and you turned into a... (*stops*)

ELLEN: A what?

JUNE: (*Returns with chocolate soft serve. Thrilled.*) I found chocolate soft serve. They sell it at Mr. Muffin.

MONA: A snob.

ELLEN: (*getting up*) I'm taking the bus.

MONA: You don't know how to take the bus!

ELLEN: I'll ask a poor person! (*stomps off*)

JUNE: Ellen?

ELLEN: (*Stops. Glaring.*) What?!

JUNE: Roger wants to talk to you.

ELLEN: (*Hurries back. Breathlessly.*) What?

JUNE: He's over there next to Mr. Greek God. (*indicating left*)

ELLEN: (*eagerly*) What does he want?

JUNE: (*remembering*) Large gyro, large fries, vanilla shake.

ELLEN: With me!

JUNE: I don't know.

ELLEN: (*fluffing hair, smoothing clothes*) Is Gina with him?

JUNE: I didn't see her.

MONA: Don't go over there, Ellen.

ELLEN: (*leaving*) Why not? This is what all the brats and snobs do.

ELLEN exits.

JUNE: I missed something, didn't I?

ALICE: Mona called her a spoiled brat. And a snob.

JUNE: I can't leave you people alone for one minute.

MONA: It's true.

ALICE: Ellen's not a spoiled brat. She's just used to getting everything she wants. All the time.

JUNE: Actually, Ellen is spoiled rotten. Always has been. But she was never a snob until... Roger.

They all send 'Roger' a dirty look.

MONA: Men are morons.

JUNE: Sneezer's not a moron.

MONA: What's his real name anyway?

JUNE: I don't know.

ALICE: You've been going out with him since Christmas and you don't know his real name?

JUNE: We've only gone out three times. And I don't want to know his real name. I like that he's a mystery.

ALICE: How did he get the nickname 'Sneezer'?

JUNE: I don't know. (*realizing with a thrill*) Another mystery.

ALICE: (*to MONA*) And Todd isn't a moron or you wouldn't go out with him. He's very funny. He gets good grades. He doesn't have red hair.

JUNE: What's Todd's real name?

MONA: *(can't believe the question)* Todd.

JUNE: *(can't believe the answer)* Really?

ALICE: And Brian Burbidge could never be a moron. I will marry him someday. We will have beautiful blond children. Brian is perfect. *(to JUNE before she can ask)* And Brian is his real name.

JUNE: *(very involved with her food)* Brian is whose real name?

MONA: What about Roger?

They look over toward 'Roger.'

ALICE: Oh, Roger's a moron.

JUNE: Big, big moron.

MONA: A big, big moron in red leather pants.

ELLEN returns, sits, stares straight ahead.

JUNE: How did it go?

ELLEN picks up paper napkin and starts tearing it into very tiny, angry pieces. Tense silence. ALICE takes a bite of a carrot stick. JUNE notices.

What are you eating?

ALICE: *(hiding carrot)* Nothing.

JUNE: It's a carrot stick, isn't it? *(takes carrot away from her)* Where did you get it?

ALICE: *(lying)* I bought it. At Mr. Greenleaves.

JUNE: *(doesn't believe her)* Get her purse.

There is a scramble for ALICE's purse. MONA ends up with it, standing a little distance from table.

MONA: *(opens purse)* Carrots!

Takes out a small plastic bag of carrots, tosses it on table. Sees something else.

And celery!

Takes out a small plastic bag of celery, shakes it accusingly at ALICE, then tosses it on table.

ELLEN: You're on a diet again.

ALICE: No, I'm not!

ELLEN: What did we tell you about being on a diet?

JUNE: (to MONA and ELLEN) I was suspicious about that glass of water.
(To ALICE, reproaching her.) Room temperature Jell-O.

ALICE: I am not on a diet. I'm just eating healthy food.

*ALICE tries to gather up the celery and carrots, which
JUNE tries to take away from her.*

JUNE: What are we going to do with you?

ALICE: Leave me alone! You're making me tense!

MONA: Alice, you were born tense.

JUNE: You eat tense food. Carrots and celery are tense. (*snaps carrot
in half*) They snap! Eat chocolate soft serve and even your teeth
relax. Well, maybe not your teeth. Your teeth are sensitive. Your
teeth would snap!

ALICE: Give me my carrots.

JUNE: Okay.

*Shoves a couple carrots into the ice cream, pushes the
dish to ALICE.*

Eat it.

ALICE: I'm not eating that.

JUNE: We'll tell Brian what you said about him. About how the back of
his neck...

ALICE: You wouldn't dare.

A moment while they consider.

MONA: (*getting out a cell phone*) What's his number?

ELLEN: Call information. He lives on East River Lane.

JUNE: In a red house.

ALICE: All right!

ALICE very reluctantly takes a bite of a carrot covered with ice cream.

JUNE: You're chewing! She is chewing chocolate soft serve!

ALICE: I have to chew the carrot!

JUNE: Don't eat the carrot! Just lick off the soft serve. Do it again and do it right this time.

ALICE licks off the soft serve.

Now, did you experience the soft serve?

ALICE: No! And I can't eat while everyone is looking at me.

They all turn away. ALICE takes a bite of a carrot. They turn back to her.

JUNE: She is chewing!

ALICE: I have to chew the carrot! You're making me tense!

JUNE: You were born tense!

MONA: We just had this conversation!

Taking charge. Switches Jell-O and JUNE's cheeseburger. To JUNE.

Here. You eat the Jell-O.

JUNE: *(in disgust)* It's warm. *(even more disgusting)* And it's cut up into all these little pieces. It's like it's been murdered.

MONA: Eat it!

JUNE takes a bite of Jell-O. To ALICE.

And you eat the cheeseburger.

ALICE: I can't eat this.

MONA: Alice, people who don't need to lose weight don't go on diets. Eat the cheeseburger.

ALICE: Do I have to experience it or can I just eat it?

MONA: Just eat it.

ALICE: Don't look at me! (*they turn away*) I was worried about fitting into my prom dress. (*takes a tentative bite*)

ELLEN: You better worry about your prom dress falling off!

JUNE: Mona, are you going to finish your fries?

MONA: (*grabs her fries*) Yes!

ELLEN: June, Alice never eats anything and you are like a vacuum cleaner. You had doughnuts in the car, nachos when we got here and now a meatball sandwich, fries, a Coke, chocolate soft serve...

JUNE: With carrot sticks. Which is surprisingly not bad.

JUNE eats the carrot sticks with the chocolate soft serve as a dip.

MONA: June, maybe you should think about why you eat so much.

JUNE: Oh, now you're going to fix me? Now I have a problem with food? Food is a condition of life.

ELLEN: What are you talking about?

JUNE: It's like climbing a rope in gym class. Do you like it? No. Do you do it? Well, no. But you try. And you get a C. The next day in gym class you play basketball which you happen to be pretty good at and you get an A.

Shoots crumpled napkin at trash bin. Misses. If she makes the shot, she can say, "An A plus!"

Well, an A minus.

Some days we get C's, some days we get A's, some days we flunk – depending on the conditions of life that day. We don't get to pick the conditions. Life does. And conditions change. The trouble with most people is they forget that. They have one bad day and they fall apart. Remember this, girls. (*Pauses to make sure they're listening. They are.*) Conditions change. (*enjoying her food again*) And food is a condition of life that produces joy. I eat, therefore I am joyful. Analyze that. These carrots are so good. I'm getting a salad. (*exits left*)

ELLEN: (*looking after her, shaking her head*) She really is turning into a lunatic. (*In spite of herself, thinking about what JUNE said. To MONA.*) What's the worst day you've ever had?

MONA: When my grandma died. Grandmothers aren't supposed to die in car accidents.

ELLEN: (*wishing she hadn't asked*) I'm sorry, Mona. It was a stupid question. I shouldn't have asked such a stupid question...

MONA: It's not a stupid question. (*turning to ALICE*) Alice, what's the worst day you've ever had?

ALICE: (*absolutely sure*) The day I was born.

ELLEN: We're being serious.

ALICE: So am I. That's the day I was named Alice.

MONA: And?

ALICE: I hate the name Alice. I've always wanted a name like Kimberly or Heather or Tiffany...

JUNE: (*returns with salad*) Who's Tiffany?

ELLEN: Alice hates her name. She wants to be a Tiffany.

JUNE: (*absolutely serious*) Alice, I love your name. Only Alices get to go to Wonderland.

ELLEN: It could be worse. My mom has this friend from college who named her kids after months.

ALICE: Of the year?

ELLEN: It was the sixties. Her kids are January, February and March and then she got her tubes tied.

ALICE: That is so stupid. Who would do that?

MONA: Who would name their kids after the months of the year?

JUNE: (*has stopped eating*) Gee. I can't imagine.

The others realize they have insulted her.

MONA: We didn't mean you, June.

ELLEN: June is a real name.

ALICE: If you were July and your brother was September, then you'd have a problem.

JUNE: I like my name.

Yes, Virginia, There Is A Virginia

Cast

Shopper Survey Person Number 12	Policewoman
Virginia	Angie
Woman 1	Eleanor Roosevelt
Woman 2	Ann Landers
Woman 3	Voice Over 1
Score	Voice Over 2
Mom	Voice Over 3
Aunt Flossie	

Additional women may be seated at tables. They do lines and actions for ALL. Otherwise, they eat, read and are oblivious to the action.

Set

Small tables set up to resemble a food court at a mall – five or six tables with two or three chairs at each one.

Costumes

Shopper Survey Person Number 12: Business suit.

Virginia and Angie: Teenage clothing appropriate for the mall. Virginia wears a red sweater.

Woman 1: Something a little offbeat.

Woman 2: Something a little offbeat.

Score: A man's suit, shirt, tie and hat that are a little rumpled and too big.

Mom: House coat, cardigan sweater, slippers, a few rollers in her hair.

Aunt Flossie: Polyester pantsuit, fruit jewelry.

Policewoman: Police uniform.

Woman 3: Ruffled blouse, skirt, heels. Very schoolteacherish.

Eleanor Roosevelt: Sensible suit, hat, handbag and shoes dating to the thirties.

Ann Landers: T-shirt that says “Ann Landers” on the front, suit with a jacket that conceals the t-shirt, heels, purse. Hair should be exactly like Ann Landers’ newspaper picture.

Props

Shopper Survey Person Number 12: Clipboard, pen, and a purse that contains a small black box like a radio, ink pad, hospital bracelet, whistle, roll of money, gavel and a small notepad.

Virginia: Food including French fries, shopping bags.

Woman 1: Newspaper

Woman 2: Magazine

Score: Large white napkin, bowl of soup, spoon.

Mom: A can of Pledge and a dust cloth.

Aunt Flossie: Deck of cards.

Angie: Two pieces of cloth.

Eleanor Roosevelt: A high school yearbook.

All characters except VIRGINIA, ANGIE and POLICEWOMAN are seated at the tables in the food court of a mall. They are eating, reading, quietly visiting. Everything looks normal. The only empty table is down center. Music is playing over the loudspeaker. VIRGINIA, wearing a red sweater, enters with food and shopping bags. Looks around for someone, doesn't see her. Goes to the empty table, sits and starts to eat. Music breaks off abruptly.

VOICE OVER 1: (*phony cheerfulness*) Sunnyview Mall Shoppers' Hint Number 117: It's easy to lose your car in our Sunnyview parking lot because that's a lot of parking lot out there, isn't it, folks? So tie a balloon to your antenna! Or leave your car radio on – real loud!

Music abruptly resumes. It is a different selection, louder and more grating. SURVEY PERSON NUMBER 12 – carrying a purse, clipboard and pen – gets up and approaches VIRGINIA, timing it so she speaks at the moment VIRGINIA takes a bite.

NUMBER 12: (*very bright and perky*) Excuse me!

VIRGINIA: Mmmfff?

NUMBER 12: I'm Sunnyview Shopper Survey Person Number Twelve.

She offers her hand and waits for VIRGINIA to take it, which she reluctantly does.

I wonder if you might have just a moment to be a Sunnyview Shopper Survey Participant?

VIRGINIA: Mmmmmfff.

NUMBER 12: (*not releasing VIRGINIA's hand*) Excuse me?

VIRGINIA: (*finally swallowing, trying to politely extricate her hand.*) Actually, I'm waiting for someone...

NUMBER 12: (*very warm*) It won't take a moment...

VIRGINIA: She'll be here any second.

NUMBER 12: ...and I will be offering you a lovely Sunnyview Shopper Surprise as a token of our appreciation.

VIRGINIA: (*doesn't want to*) Well...

NUMBER 12: (*releases VIRGINIA's hand and sits*) Great.

VIRGINIA: I guess it will be okay.

NUMBER 12: (*Looks VIRGINIA straight in the eye. Very warm.*) Hi.

VIRGINIA: (*not sure about this*) Hi.

NUMBER 12 sets a small black box like a radio on the table.

VIRGINIA: What's that?

NUMBER 12: The volume.

NUMBER 12 cranks the dial and the loudspeaker music screeches up. She then cranks it right back down. VIRGINIA is the only one who reacts to it. NUMBER 12 pushes a button on the box several times in rapid succession. Each time she does, the music changes – from reggae to boogie-woogie to rock and then to a public service announcement:

VOICE OVER 2: (*very calm, reassuring*) Proceed to the nearest exit. No running. No shoving...

NUMBER 12 pushes button.

VOICE OVER 3: (*older woman*) ...half a head of broccoli, two teaspoons nutmeg, three...

NUMBER 12 pushes button. Soothing music.

NUMBER 12: Ah. Interview music.

VIRGINIA: Wow. Neat... (*reaching for button*)

VOICE OVER 2: Do not touch. You are an unauthorized person.

VIRGINIA: (*Pulls hand back. A little rattled.*) Oh. Sorry. (*reaches for a French fry*)

NUMBER 12: (*sharply*) You'll have to stop eating. (*very warm*) Just for the duration of the interview.

VIRGINIA: Oh. Okay. (*Sets down French fry. Pushes food aside.*)

NUMBER 12: Now. (*clicks pen open like a surgical tool*) Are you a typical American female? (*starts taking notes*)

VIRGINIA: (*A shrug. Giggles.*) I don't know. I guess so.

NUMBER 12: (*cold*) You will be allowed one answer per question. Which answer do you wish to have recorded? (*referring to her notes*) "I don't know" or "I guess so."

VIRGINIA: (*doesn't know which to choose*) I don't know.

NUMBER 12: (*the slightest hint of disapproval*) Fine. (*Writes something down. Becomes extremely efficient.*) Full name. Last, middle, first.

NUMBER 12 doesn't allow VIRGINIA to finish any of these responses, always cutting her off with the next question, speeding up the entire process almost to a race.

VIRGINIA: Ah... Madden. Alice. Virginia...

NUMBER 12: Address.

VIRGINIA: 292 Argonne Court, Medford, Illinois...

NUMBER 12: Age.

VIRGINIA: I'm fifteen...

NUMBER 12: Phone number. Area code first.

VIRGINIA: 212-555-9998...

NUMBER 12: Height.

VIRGINIA: Five feet five and a half inches...

NUMBER 12: Weight.

VIRGINIA: (*Getting out of breath. Can hardly keep up.*) One hundred twenty-eight...

NUMBER 12: (*Race stops. A suspicious look.*) Is that in pounds?

VIRGINIA: Yes.

NUMBER 12: (*doesn't believe her*) Hah! Blood type.

VIRGINIA: I don't know.

NUMBER 12: Our records indicate that response has been given to Sunnyview Shopper Survey Question Number Three. (*a bright, phony smile*) Responses may not be repeated.

VIRGINIA: But I really don't know my blood type.

NUMBER 12: (*mildly irritated*) The multiple choice option is available to you at this time.

VIRGINIA: Ah, okay.

NUMBER 12: Choose one: A: A, B: B, C: C, D: O.

VIRGINIA: Ah, the last one?

NUMBER 12: I only hope for your sake and your family's sake that you have chosen correctly. If you have chosen incorrectly, a blood type will be assigned to you. Right thumb, please.

Takes VIRGINIA's hand, presses her thumb into an inkpad, presses thumb on paper. Snaps a hospital bracelet on VIRGINIA's wrist.

VIRGINIA: (*alarmed*) What's this for?

NUMBER 12: Identification purposes. We don't want to confuse you with the other Virginias.

VIRGINIA: There are other Virginias?

NUMBER 12: Of course. And at least two of them are states. How many major credit cards do you have?

VIRGINIA: (*surprised at the question*) None.

NUMBER 12: (*not happy about this answer*) None?

VIRGINIA: My parents would never let me have a credit card.

NUMBER 12: (*ominous*) You have parents?

VIRGINIA: Yes.

NUMBER 12: How many?

VIRGINIA: Two.

NUMBER 12: (*more ominous*) Hmmmmmm. (*makes an ominous note*)

VIRGINIA: (*This is all too weird. Leaving.*) Listen, I really have to be going...

NUMBER 12: (*very warm*) It's only going to take a moment.

*NUMBER 12 flashes a bright, bright, phony smile.
VIRGINIA slowly sits.*

Now. Today's Sunnyview Shopper Survey Question is: Do you believe Ann Landers is real?

VIRGINIA: What?

NUMBER 12: *(slowly)* Do. You. Believe. Ann. Landers. Is. Real?

VIRGINIA: What do you mean?

WOMAN 1: *(very loudly as she turns page of newspaper)* She means, "Do you believe Ann Landers is real?"

VIRGINIA is startled. NUMBER 12 hardly notices.

NUMBER 12: *(polite but unpleasant)* If the question needs to be repeated more than three times, there will be a substantial financial penalty.

VIRGINIA: Oh, well, yeah, I believe Ann Landers is real.

NUMBER 12: Prove it.

VIRGINIA: Prove it?

NUMBER 12: Prove it.

VIRGINIA: How am I supposed to prove it?

NUMBER 12: Are you asking me to cheat?

VIRGINIA: No!

NUMBER 12: *(a real threat)* Because if you're asking me to cheat...

VIRGINIA: I'm not! I swear!

NUMBER 12: *(believes her)* Very good. *(glancing around, conspiratorial)* Just remember this – *(gestures for VIRGINIA to lean in closer)* Proof is a consequence of existence. If she exists, there must be proof. Just don't tell anyone I told you.

NUMBER 12 holds a finger to her lips. They lean back.

VIRGINIA: *(confused, but not really that worried about all this)* Ah, well, she's real because... because her picture is in the paper. She answers all those questions for people who write her letters. So she's real.

WOMAN 1: (*very loud as she turns page of newspaper*) When I was a child I wanted to have curly red hair like Little Orphan Annie. I read her adventures every Sunday in the comics. Oh, I would have killed for that hair. Those red curls!

WOMAN 2: (*turning page of magazine*) I was always more of a Mary Worth fan myself.

WOMAN 1: I never cared for Mary Worth's hair. White. And no bounce to it. But, oh, those red curls!

NUMBER 12: (*oblivious to the interruption*) I'm waiting.

VIRGINIA: (*very distracted*) I just said – her picture is in the paper.

WOMAN 1: Little Orphan Annie and Mary Worth have their pictures in the paper – in color on Sundays – and they're not real.

WOMAN 2: You'll have to come up with something better than that.

VIRGINIA: But they're comics. Ann Landers is a picture of a real woman.

NUMBER 12: That hasn't been proven. Score!

SCORE has been hunched over a bowl of soup, methodically eating, oblivious to the action around her. When required to speak, she stops eating, wipes her mouth on a large white napkin, stands, speaks, sits and goes right back to soup. All lines are spoken as though she's saying, "Twelve o'clock and all's well" for the millionth time.

SCORE: Twenty demerits for faulty reasoning. Ten demerits for bad hair.

VIRGINIA: I don't have bad hair.

SCORE: (*stands*) Ten more demerits for lying about it. (*sits*)

WOMAN 1: What about lying about her weight? What about that?

SCORE: (*stands*) Ten more demerits for lying about her weight. (*sits*)

VIRGINIA: I'm not lying about my weight. I always weigh 128 pounds. You can ask Mrs. Moffet, my gym teacher.

NUMBER 12: (*very kind*) Mrs. Moffet is a pathological liar.

VIRGINIA: No, she's not. That's not true. Mrs. Moffet is a very nice person.

NUMBER 12: A person can be very nice and a pathological liar at the same time. Don't be naïve, Madden Alice Virginia.

VIRGINIA: (*has had enough*) I'm leaving. (*getting up, reaching for her bags*)

MOM: (*gets up and starts dusting tables with Pledge and a dust cloth*) Now calm down, dear. Just sit down and calm down and answer the lady's questions.

MOM nudges VIRGINIA back into chair while continuing to dust.

VIRGINIA: (*stunned*) Mom?

MOM: Just answer the lady's questions. I don't think that's too much to ask.

VIRGINIA: I thought you were at Aunt Flossie's house.

AUNT FLOSSIE: She is.

MOM: Can't you say hello to your Aunt Flossie?

VIRGINIA: Hello, Aunt Flossie.

MOM: (*noticing VIRGINIA's food*) And what's this? Junk food?

ALL: Junk food! (*shake heads in unison*) Tsk, tsk, tsk.

VIRGINIA: They're just French fries.

MOM: Just French fries?

WOMAN 1: Salt content, ninety-three percent.

WOMAN 2: Fat content, ninety-six percent.

AUNT FLOSSIE: Calories, four hundred ninety-seven percent. Ruin your health.

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT: Your skin.

WOMAN 3: Your teeth.

ALL: (*with increasing feeling, glaring at VIRGINIA*) Your nails, your face, your figure, get old, get fat, get bad hair!

EVERYONE except for MOM and AUNT FLOSSIE goes back to eating and reading as if nothing just happened.

MOM: Go ahead. Eat it. Die young. Break your mother's heart.

AUNT FLOSSIE: You did your best, Betsy.

MOM: I tried. I tried. God knows I tried.

VIRGINIA: They're only French fries. Everybody eats French fries.

MOM: Not Ann Landers. She'd have a nice salad with low-cal vinaigrette dressing on the side.

MOM returns to the table, stops dusting and sits.

Your deal.

AUNT FLOSSIE deals cards.

VIRGINIA: *(This is getting a little scary. Gets up, trying to be decisive.)* I'm going home now. With my mom. I'm taking my mom and going home.

NUMBER 12: *(very reassuring)* Your mother is at your Aunt Flossie's house. You said so yourself. And this is only taking a moment.

VIRGINIA: It's already taken more than a moment. *(still leaving)*

NUMBER 12: Your mother isn't done with her card game yet and, besides, what about Angie? *(slightly ominous)* Aren't you waiting for Angie?

VIRGINIA: *(stops)* How did you know that?

NUMBER 12: *(More ominous. With a smile this time.)* Don't you wonder what's happened to her?

VIRGINIA: *(not at all sure)* She probably just lost track of time. She's always doing that. She's always late.

NUMBER 12: *(gives a sharp blast on a whistle)* Security!

A POLICEWOMAN drags on ANGIE. ANGIE's hands are tied behind her back and there is a cloth tied over her mouth.

VIRGINIA: Angie!

Tries to go to ANGIE. NUMBER 12 intercedes.

NUMBER 12: So this is your friend.

Reading from her clipboard.

Crew, Mary, Angela, 19 Airy Place, Medford, Ill, 2125557712, five feet nothing, one hundred fourteen, hah!, A, no.

Disgusted. Looks ANGIE up and down.

Do you have anything to say for yourself?

ANGIE: Mmmmmffff.

NUMBER 12: *(Turning away. Casual disgust.)* Throw her back in her cell.

The POLICEWOMAN drags ANGIE off.

VIRGINIA: *(stopping them)* No! You can't!

NUMBER 12: You are such a little fussbudget. Fine. *(to POLICEWOMAN)* Drop her there.

Indicates a chair at VIRGINIA's table. ANGIE is dropped there.

Thank you, Officer. That was some impressive work.

Very effusive, peeling bills off of a big roll of money.

Go get yourself some coffee and donuts. On the house.

POLICEWOMAN: *(Taking money. Very appreciative.)* Thanks. Always glad to help, Number Twelve.

NUMBER 12: And then go patrol the parking lot. Turn off some of those car radios. Break some of those balloons.

POLICEWOMAN: *(happy to oblige)* Yes, ma'am. *(exits happily, eager to please)*

NUMBER 12: *(deadly serious)* If I were you, I'd prove it before she gets back.

VIRGINIA: *(really trying)* All right. Ann Landers is real because she gets all those letters. All those people write to her, don't they? *(warming to her subject)* And the letters get delivered so she must have an address. The post office delivers all those letters to her address. Only real people have addresses. So she is.

NUMBER 12: *(suspicious)* Is what?



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