Mary Dickson

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TAR 149 003

*My Sister Eileen* by Joseph A. Fields and Jerome Chodorov

**Characters:** Ruth Sherwood: Mary Dickson

 Eileen Sherwood: Payton Travis

**Super Objective:** I want to prove I am better than Eileen by crushing her success and building mine with hard work.

**Scene Objective:** I want to repeatedly make Eileen feel awful for the stress she causes me.

**Given Circumstances:** This scene takes place at 14 Gay Street, Greenwich Village, New York City, apartment 233 1-A. It is approximately 9:35 p.m. on July 31, 1936. It is toward the end of the middle of summer and it is extremely hot, even at night. I am tired and I hate this apartment.

**External Obstacle:** Eileen never thinks straight. She messes up and makes me deal with the consequences. Talking to her is like talking to cardboard.

**Internal Obstacle:** I am very tired and irritated at most of the things Eileen is saying; I just want to sleep.

**Moment before:** Eileen and I have come upon an apartment complex and we meet Appopolous, the landlord. Appopolous shows us the apartment he wants us to rent. I hesitate because it looks trashy. Eileen says she is tired and gives Appopolous our money. A massive blast occurs underneath us shaking the floor and making a huge sound. Appopolous explains to us that they are building a subway underneath this building. I beg him for our money back. Appopolous refuses. He says he will refund our money if we are still unsatisfied in 30 days. He shuts me down, says goodnight, and leaves.

**1. I want to embarrass her by drilling her into the ground.**

RUTH: You were in such a hell of a hurry to get to bed.

ST- Look what you got us into!

PSA- Motion to the gross appearance of apartment.

EILEEN: How did I know they were blasting underneath us?

IM- Did you not feel the floor come up with the blast? Did you not hear a boom?!?!

PSA- Open eyes wide.

**2. I want to criticize her by stomping on her brain.**

RUTH: I had an instinctive feeling the moment I saw this place. –But all a man has to do is tell you how beautiful you are, and your ping changes to a purr!

ST- You never trust the right people!

PSA- Begin to look around apartment, starting at stage left.

RUTH: Model kitchenette! Eileen, promise me you’ll ever go in there! And look at that! Thank God we took a bath before we left Columbus!

ST- I refuse to use any of these rooms or eat any of the food you make in there. This bathroom is disgusting.

PSA- Walk over to stage left curtain, open curtain, motion with my arm to room, close curtain and stand in front of it, plead to Eileen with both hands clasped, search stage left for bathroom, open curtain, sigh, look into bathroom while speaking, and close curtain.

EILEEN: Oh Ruth, --what are we going to do?

IM- You mean what are you going to do? This is your fault.

PSA- Walk towards Eileen.

**3. I want to educate her by gluing her to my side.**

RUTH: We’re going to do thirty days.

PSA- Walk to stage left table and sit down. Rub eyes.

EILEEN: Don’t you think he’d be willing to give us at least half our money back?

IM-You are so blind to what little we have.

PSA- Put hands on table.

**4. I want to wake her up by shaking her.**

RUTH: And take a loss of twenty-seven fifty, or whatever it is? Do you realize that we’ve got exactly forty-nine dollars and seventy-one cents to last us until one of us gets a job?

ST- We have no money. We can’t lose anymore!

PSA- Count on fingers, throw right arm at Eileen. Smack hand on table.

EILEEN: And remember what that boy I met on the bus told us? You’re not eligible for relief until you’ve lived here three years.

IM- Stop with the facts. You don’t even know what relief is.

PSA- Rub temples pretending to care.

**5. I want to encourage her by shoving her.**

RUTH: And while we’re on the bright side—we can’t get unemployment insurance until one of us gets a job and is fired.

ST- We clearly know which one of us will get fired first.

PSA- Shove hand out at Eileen.

**6. I want to scare her by exposing her.**

RUTH: You know this bedroom could be a little more private.

ST- I’m really happy that people can see EVERYTHING that goes on in here!

PSA- Run to window to see if there is a shade.

EILEEN: Ruth, maybe we shouldn’t have come to New York just yet—maybe we should have gone to Cleveland first.

IM- Do you even think before you speak?

PSA- Look for shade.

**7. I want to deride her by pinching her.**

RUTH: Yes—I hear they’re very short of writers and actors in Cleveland.

ST- Do you even know anything about your profession?

PSA- Walk to bed and pick up suitcase.

EILEEN: At least a few people in Ohio know us.

IM- Then why are you here?!

PSA- Abruptly stop to look at Eileen with confusion.

**8. I want to question her by slapping her.**

RUTH: Wasn’t that why we left?

PSA- Stand still looking at Eileen.

EILEEN: I wonder what Billy Hunnecker thinks now?

IM- He isn’t thinking about you.

PSA- Walk toward dresser.

**9. I want to provoke her by dangling candy in front of her.**

RUTH: He’s probably at the country club this minute with Annie Wilkinson, drinking himself to death.

ST- He probably doesn’t even remember who you are.

PSA- Start putting clothes in drawers.

EILEEN: He can have her.

IM- Ha….you wish you meant that.

**10. I want to infuriate her by biting her.**

RUTH: Don’t you suppose he knows that?

ST- You can’t have everyone.

EILEEN: And she can have him too—with my compliments.

IM- Yeah right.

**11. I want advise her by sucking the life out of her.**

RUTH: That’s the advantage of not leaving any men behind—I don’t have to worry about what becomes of them.

EILEEN: Oh, it’s different with you—boys never meant anything in your life.

IM- Excuse me, what? Maybe if you would have paid attention to me ever!

PSA- Freeze in action. Slam drawer.

**12. I want to accuse her by punching her in the gut.**

RUTH: Not after they got a load of you, they didn’t.

PSA- Smack hand on dresser.

EILEEN: What?

IM- Really? You are going to pretend like we haven’t talked about his before?

PSA- Roll eyes

**13. I want to ignore her by burning her.**

RUTH: Oh, nothing.

ST- I’m not getting into this now!

PSA- Throw hands down in frustration

EILEEN: You may be right about Billy Hunnecker, but not with that Wilkinson girl. She’s not his type.

IM- And we bring it right back to you. Of course.

PSA- Stand up and move towards bed.

RUTH: That’s an outstanding feature about Columbus. Nobody there is anyone else’s type.

ST- I refuse to go back to Columbus ever again. Everyone is boring.

PSA- Stop at bed.

EILEEN: Ruth, we’d better send Mother and Dad a wire before they start worrying. And reverse the charges. Dad won’t mind.

IM- You mean I better send them a wire. Lord knows you aren’t going to.

PSA- Put suitcase underneath the bed. Run and grab phone.

**14. I want to reveal her by mocking her.**

RUTH: I’ll send it on a birthday blank. It’s only a quarter. Hello? Hello? Disconnected. Imagine Appopolous leaving a hot phone around.

ST- When I see him I am going to strangle him with this phone cord!

PSA- Pick up phone. Speak into phone. Hang up phone.

EILEEN: We ought to have it connected in the morning so we can start calling up for jobs.

IM- Did you just say calling up for jobs?

PSA- Rub eyes.

**15. I want to humiliate her by slamming her finger in the door.**

RUTH: You don’t call up for jobs, dear, you go out and look for them.

ST- Do you know anything? Are you that stupid?

PSA- Freeze and look at Eileen. Shake head.

EILEEN: Gee, I hope we land something soon so we can start paying Pop back.

IM- Well you’re never going to so I hope I do.

PSA-Continue to rub eyes and massage temples.

**16. I want to comfort her by stroking her head.**

RUTH: Don’t worry, darling—we will—we’ve got to.

ST- I have to solve this on my own. No one can help us but me.

PSA- Motion to bed.

EILEEN: It doesn’t seem fair—Poor Pop works so hard all his life and what’s he got to show for it?

IM- You are so oblivious to the world around you.

PSA- Get up and move toward light switch.

**17. I want to open her eyes by cutting her.**

RUTH: You’d be amazed at all the things that aren’t fair, Eileen.

ST- Maybe you should open your eyes to other things besides yourself.

**18. I want to remind her by kicking her.**

RUTH: I hope some fresh air gropes its way in here. It’s stifling.

PSA- Fan face with hand and pull shirt out. Turn off light. Walk forward. Pause.

RUTH: Didn’t I just put out the light?

ST- Why the hell does nothing work?!

PSA- Keep trying light switch.

EILEEN: There’s a lamppost right in front of the window. Pull down the shade.

IM- I have to get out of this place! And why can’t you do it?

PSA- Grunt.

RUTH: There isn’t any shade.

PSA- Motion toward window.

EILEEN: No shade! We’re practically sleeping on the street.

IM- Really? You, out of all people are the one complaining?

PSA- Walk angrily toward paintings.

**19. I want to frighten her by punching her in the face.**

RUTH: Just wait till I get that Appopolous!

ST- I am going to kill you first and then I am going to hunt him down and kill him.

PSA- Shake finger angrily at paintings.

EILEEN: Would it help any to close the window?

IM- It probably doesn’t even shut. But why don’t YOU see for yourself.

PSA- Walk toward the bed.

**20. I want to sympathize with her by joking with her.**

RUTH: If we do, we’ll suffocate.

ST- It’s hotter than hell in here in the first place.

PSA- Get into bed.

EILEEN: I’m afraid—you know a dog could chase a cat through there!

IM- I so wish that it would.

PSA- Laugh

RUTH: And probably will. Let’s go to sleep.

ST- I hope that you have a miserable night.

PSA- Lay down in bed.

EILEEN: Good night…

IM- What are we doing to do….?

PSA- Laugh

RUTH: Good night…

ST- I hate you right now.

PSA- Turn over. Sit up abruptly.

EILEEN: What was that?

IM- I am going to get killed before I can even sleep.

PSA- Look at Eileen with terror.

RUTH: It sounded like a machine gun!

PSA- Look at window.