

# BECOMING DR. RUTH

by Mark St. Germain

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Everyone knows Dr. Ruth Westheimer from her career as a pioneering radio and television sex therapist. Few, however, know the incredible journey that preceded it. From fleeing the Nazis in the *Kindertransport* and joining the *Haganah* in Jerusalem as a sniper, to her struggle to succeed as a single mother newly-arrived in America, Mark St. Germain deftly illuminates this remarkable woman's untold story. BECOMING DR. RUTH is filled with the humor, honesty, and life-affirming spirit of Karola Ruth Siegel, the girl who became "Dr. Ruth," America's most famous sex therapist.

*"[Dr. Ruth's] story is certainly a stirring one ... [and this is] an illuminating portrait."*  
—The New York Times

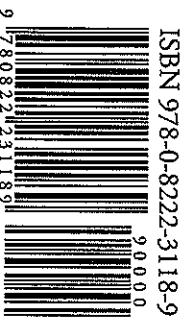
*"It's a simple premise ... but it works for Westheimer's story, which is fascinating (and heartbreaking) all on its own. [St. Germain] convincingly and humorously conveys Westheimer's surprising dignity, courage, and resilience."*  
—The New Yorker

*"Anyone who is interested in Dr. Westheimer ... or in true-life adventure tales of Holocaust survivors ... should find BECOMING DR. RUTH an enjoyable way to spend ninety minutes."*  
—Huffington Post

*"Mark St. Germain's heartfelt biography dutifully chronicles Dr. Ruth Westheimer's inspirational life story ..."*  
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BY MARK ST. GERMAIN

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#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks to Sydell and Lee Blarf, and Rosita Sarnoff and Beth Saper for commissioning this play. The author wants to acknowledge the hard and dedicated work of Barrington Stage Company's staff, crew, and interns. Julianne Boyd (Artistic Director) and Deborah Jo Rupp (Associate Artist) are the most talented and committed partners a writer could wish for.

Thanks as well to Dr. Ruth K. Westheimer's children, Miriam and Joel, and Minister of Communications Pierre Lehu for their cooperation and support.

The play is dedicated to Dr. Ruth, whose life inspires and whose friendship is cherished. *A sheyem dank.*

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

In the premiere production of BECOMING DR. RUTH, original sound design and image projection design were provided by Jessica Paz and Daniel Brodie, respectively. To acquire the original design materials, please contact their respective representation.

### For Jessica Paz:

Summit Entertainment Group, 10 Potter Hill Drive, Guilford, CT 06437. Attn: Jeff Eisenberg.

### For Daniel Brodie:

The Gersh Agency, 41 Madison Avenue, 33rd Floor, New York, NY 10010. Attn: Kate Navin.

## PRODUCTION NOTE

The original production elements have been included in this script. But the production design of BECOMING DR. RUTH can be very simple as well. For example, slides need not be used. For instance, when showing her family, Dr. Ruth might hold up the framed picture without a large projection of that picture behind her.

BECOMING DR. RUTH, then called DR. RUTH ALL THE WAY, premiered at Barrington Stage Company (Julianne Boyd, Artistic Director; Tristan Wilson, Managing Director) on June 19, 2012. It was directed by Julianne Boyd; the set design was by Brian Prather; the costume design was by Jennifer Moeller; the lighting design was by Scott Pinkney; and the sound design was by Jessica Paz. The production featured Debra Jo Rupp as Dr. Ruth K. Westheimer.

After playing at TheaterWorks in Hartford, BECOMING DR. RUTH was presented at the Westside Theatre in New York City, opening on October 29, 2013, with the same creative team, with the addition of Daniel Brodie as a projection designer.

BECOMING DR. RUTH is the first commission of Barrington Stage's New Works Initiative. This commission is courtesy of Sydelle and Lee Blatt & Rosita Sarnoff and Beth Sapery.

## CHARACTERS

Dr. Ruth K. Westheimer at 69 years old.

## PLACE

Washington Heights, New York.

Apartment of Ruth and Fred Westheimer, overflowing with memorabilia of their lives. Pictures crowd the walls; papers and books rise up from every tabletop.

## TIME

June 9, 1997.

# BECOMING DR. RUTH

*Lights slowly up to reveal the Washington Heights apartment of Fred and Dr. Ruth K. Westheimer.*

*The apartment is overwhelmed with memorabilia covering every surface, books filling shelves floor to ceiling, papers stacked on tables and pictures hugging every inch of wall.*

*There are several open-front dollhouses.*

*All is in transition, ready to be packed away. To make matters worse, moving boxes and materials compete for space.*

*Upstage are large windows that look out at the Hudson River. Stage right, a glimpse of a table can be seen that leads to a kitchen. Stage left is cabinets and a five-foot stack of cardboard boxes.*

*The curtain is pulled across, revealing Dr. Ruth's apartment. She stands with her back to the audience looking at the massive packing job behind her.*

DR. RUTH. *(On phone.)* Pierre? What time are the movers coming? I am a little behind ... No. These are things I must pack myself so they are safe. *(Dr. Ruth moves through the boxes, her back still to the audience. She is looking for her glasses.)* I can't find my glasses ... *(Jump to see shelf.)* Pierre, what did I tell you? No more television, no lectures. Not now! Who is Nate Berkus? An interior decorator? Tell Nate Berkus if he wants me to talk about interior decorating he should seek professional help ... No, Pierre! I will move tomorrow. When have you ever seen me change my mind? ... Have you been talking with my children? Then I will tell you what I told them: subject

closed! Pierre, wait. *(She finds her glasses, sees the audience. Thrilled.)* Pierre, hold on. I have company! *(Addressing the audience.)* This is Pierre Lehu, I call him my "Minister of Communications." He keeps my life in order. When my children can't find me they call Pierre. Be right back! *(On phone.)* Pierre, hug Joanne for me. Bye-bye. *(She hangs up the phone; to audience.)* I'm so glad you're here! This is much better than talking to myself. All my life I have loved to go to the theater. Tonight the theater comes to me. The audience, the lights coming up. *(Lights in the room and the window go brighter.)* Terrific! Now turn off your cell phones. I am very serious. We can visit while I pack. My mind is going in all directions. Fred and I have lived in this apartment for thirty-six years. Fred is the love of my life. And Husband Number Three. Later, we'll talk. *(Goes to windows.)* Here, look at this view. *(Clears boxes away from the view.)* How could you not love it? The Hudson River, the Palisades of New Jersey. Look to your left and there is the George Washington Bridge. To the right is the Tappan Zee. At night the bridges light up like strings of stars. *(Bridge lights up.)* But moving is the right thing, change is good. There is something restless inside me. *(Goes to wrap picture but stops, looking at it.)* Fred and I raised our two beautiful children here, Miriam and Joel. When they were little they loved Fred's jokes. "Where do you find a dog with no legs?" "I don't know." "Wherever you left him." *(She struggles.)* I don't get the jokes. I understand funny things, but not jokes. *(Takes a picture from the shelf and comes downstage.)* Can you see them? No? *(Projection: photos appear, one of Miriam, one of Joel, both in graduation robes. Confiding.)* Stage magic. They are beautiful, was I exaggerating? Family first. *(Wraps picture in newspaper and put it in a box; looks around.)* I am a pack-rat, yes. Fred says finding anything in this apartment would take an archeological dig. If we covered these piles with blankets we could ski down them. Freddie and I met on the ski slopes. Skiers are good lovers because they don't sit on the couch, they take a risk and wiggle their behinds. Good skiing is like good sex: it is all about instincts and movement and taking risks. Water skiing? That is even better. Water skiing is like a good orgasm. *(Phone rings, she looks at her caller I.D.)* The mover; I should take it. *(On phone.)* Hello? Yes, did Pierre call you? ... 3:00. Grrreat. What is your name? Mike? Mike, I am sure I'm in good hands ... Yes, you can ask me anything ... Now? Ah, you don't want your mover friends to hear. Fine ... Congratulations! When is the wedding? ... Are

you and Jillian using contraception? Good! What can I help you with? ... Stop rrrright there. Mike, there is no size for a "normal penis." Why do you think your penis is small? Did your fiancée tell you? ... I'm glad to hear that. What guys? ... You should stop staring at each other in the gym and do more exercise ... Mike, when you look down at it, your penis looks smaller. It's called foreshortening ... Listen to me, when you are aroused, stand in front of a long mirror and look at yourself, you will see what she sees. Love your penis! Tell Jillian to love her vaginal! Will you bring bubble wrap tomorrow? Thank you! Bye-bye. *(She hangs up, looks around her. To audience.)* Where to start? "God give me patience and give it now." *(Moves a stack of books, finds a music box.)* This is very special. It's from Paris. Dan gave it to me, Husband Number Two. *(Waves it off.)* Later, we'll talk. *(Opens box, we hear a faint mechanical version of "Do You Know How Many Stars are Spinning in the Sky?" Lyrics by J. Wilbermby, 1837, a German melody.)* Music is very important to me. It is the thread that connects my memories. But no music during sex; you should concentrate on each other. *(Recites lyric.)* "Weisst du, wieviel sternlein stehen ... " Don't you worry, I won't sing to you. It is not my German/French/Israeli/American accent, it is my voice. People leave the room, and quickly. When he was seven my son Joel asked me not to sing him "Happy Birthday." But this is what this song says:

DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY CHILDREN  
GO TO BED WITHOUT A SORROW  
WAKE AGAIN WITH MORNING LIGHT  
TO BE HAPPY THROUGH THE MORROW  
ONLY GOD ALONE CAN TELL  
GOD IN HEAVEN LOVES YOU WELL

*(Ruth closes the box; the music becomes faint but can still be heard.)* My parents sang me to sleep with this lullaby. Then I was not "Dr. Ruth." I was Karola Siegel when I was born on the 4th of June, 1928. I was an only child. We lived in a four-room apartment in Frankfurt, Germany, on the Brahmsstrasse. All streets in our neighborhood were named after composers.

My parents were short, but from the day I was born they worried I was too small. They brought me to doctors, fed me as much as I'd eat and made me swallow two teaspoons of fish oil a day. Nothing worked, you see that. My mother would put me in the laundry basket for safekeeping. *(Dr. Ruth goes to the shelf and takes down a*

*picture of her mother that now appears larger on her wall for the audience to see.)* This is my mother, Irma Hanauer. *(Projection of mother.)* She is smiling here but I don't remember her smiling often. I think this was one reason. *(Projection: photo of Selma Siegel.)* My grandmother Selma Siegel, on my father's side. My mother had come from a village farm to work as a household helper at my grandparents' apartment in Frankfurt. That is where she met my father, Julius. Julius was not part of her job description. *(Projection: photo of Julius Siegel.)* When my mother got pregnant they had to marry, that was that. Grandmother Siegel was not happy; she looked down on my mother; her parents were farmers and had no higher education. She thought her son married beneath himself.

One thing made Grandmother Siegel happy: Me. Since my mother was busy helping my father with his work, it was my grandmother who read to me and played all day. She told me, "Always smile and be cheerful, you are loved."

My father had the greatest influence on me. From him I learned the importance of education; no one should ever stop learning. He inherited his father's business, wholesaling all kinds of notions, handkerchiefs, buttons, everything you could think of. He would tie boxes on his bicycle and go from store to store. Our apartment was filled with all he collected. *(Gestures around her.)* I blame it on him. We were Orthodox Jews, very religious. Jews cannot touch money after sunset on the Sabbath, so when we walked to synagogue on Friday evenings my father made sure he had coins in his vest pocket to buy me ice cream before the sun went down. *(Projection: photo of synagogue.)*

I would sit with him and the other men. They lived to love God and to love God you loved learning. They would talk and argue and then we'd sing. *(Music: an acoustic version of "Esher Chayil" ["Woman Of Valor"].)*

We sang even more when we gathered with mother and grandmother for the Shabbos dinner. My father would rise up from his chair and sing to my mother, "Who can find a woman of valor? There are many good women out there who do good things, but you are the best of them all." I think these are the most sexually arousing words a man could ever say to a woman.

And on Shabbos it is a double mitzvah, a double blessing, for a husband and wife to make love. It is a day for rest, eating, family, and terrific sex.

Sex! When I was nearly ten I first learned about sex. *(Goes to bookcase, tries to make her way through boxes and climb to get a book above her head.)* There is a book up there, a copy of the book I learned from. *(Looks around.)* Did I bury the stool? No. *(Finds it and carefully climbs.)* My parents kept a book on the top shelf of their closet that I saw my mother hide away. So then I had to see it. I piled books on a chair to reach; I risked my neck to learn the facts of life.

*(Gets the book, climbs down and reads the title.)* "The Ideal Marriage. Its Physiology and Technique." *(Projection: from The Ideal Marriage, in color: A man and woman make love. She looks at the book as if just as excited as when she saw them for the first time.)* What are that man and woman doing? Ohhhhh. That's why my parents close the door at night! They wrestle with no clothes on! *(Projection: baby in birth canal.)* There's a baby hiding in a bag! *(Turns pages: Projection: baby being pulled from womb with forceps.)* Oh no, now they found him! They're pulling him out by his head! No wonder he's crying! *(Closes the book.)* Someone opened the front door; I threw the book back into the closet. My father and mother never noticed I had found it. They had too much else to think about. *(Projection: Hitler smiling, posing with children.)* By the time of the 1932 elections the Nazis were the largest party in the Reichstag. In 1933 Adolph Hitler was named Chancellor. He called the Jew the greatest enemy of all, the incarnation of evil. Jews were forced out of government service and universities. Jews could not marry persons of German blood.

In 1938, 7,000 Polish Jews were driven back across the border into Poland and the Poles drove them back. Then came *Kristallnacht*, Night of Broken Glass. *(Projection: photo of Frankfurt synagogue in flames. It fades out, leaving only a light on Dr. Rath. Low sound of flames.)* Jews were murdered, our synagogue and many others were burned down. *(Projection: photo of vandalized shops on the street.)* One week later, on November 15th, 1938, I was walking down the street holding my father's hand. I looked at all our shops, windows broken, swastikas painted everywhere. Our neighbor, Mr. Kovner, stopped us; he said, "Julius, we must get out, terrible things are about to happen." My father said, "No, nothing's going to happen tomorrow. It's a Catholic holiday."

The next morning the S. S. came to our apartment. Big men with shiny boots. My mother cried. My grandmother took money from the seam of her skirt and put it in one of the men's hands and said, "Please take good care of my son."

I looked out the window and saw my father brought to a truck. The truck was covered; I couldn't see if there were others inside. Papa must have felt me staring. He turned and saw me and smiled. Then he stepped into the truck and was gone.

They sent my father to a work camp. They were not concentration camps. Not yet.

There was a conference of the allied nations in Evian, France. Thirty-two countries took part. The question: what to do with the Jews of Germany. Their answer: almost nothing.

Switzerland, the Netherlands, Belgium and France agreed to accept the delivery of Jewish children. Three hundred apiece; Britain was the only country that would take more. This was from the German Jewish population of over half a million children.

My mother got a phone call from a Jewish organization saying there was a place for me on the *Kinder* transport. After that call, for the first time I saw mother and grandmother hug.

I had been selected to go to Switzerland, one of the three hundred children. All had to be German Jews under sixteen, either orphans or with a father in a camp. If my father had still been home I would not have been on that train and I would not be alive today.

I was 10. My mother and grandmother took me to the Frankfurt Hauptbahnhof. (*Projection: photo of Frankfurt Hauptbahnhof, sounds of a train station.*) I had one suitcase with a doll in it: Mathilde. She had painted blonde hair, blue eyes and a pink dress with flowers on it. On her back was stamped a tiny turtle.

Mama lifted me up and hugged me. She said, "Be good and study hard. It will be nice in Switzerland. We will see you soon!" My grandmother said, "You'll get so much chocolate! Always smile and be cheerful, and trust in Almighty God."

Then I was on the train. I looked through my window as we pulled away. Mama and Grandmother were running after it, waving goodbye. My grandmother looked so old, running. I wouldn't cry. I made myself smile, like my father smiled at me, so they would not be sad.

I am a *Jecke* (*Pronounced "yehka"*); a "Jecke" is a German Jew. *Jeckes* don't cry. We keep our emotions here. (*Touches her chest.*) Think of a duck gliding on the lake so peacefully, but under the water the duck never stops paddling.

I opened my suitcase and saw Mathilde and a chocolate bar my

grandmother packed. And one thing more: a washcloth I took from my house. I'm not sure why; maybe because it had my initials sewn on it. I wish I had taken more. But I didn't; I thought I'd be back soon.

The girl sitting next to me — her name was Marga. She was crying. She was only five; she needed my doll more than I did. So I gave her Mathilde.

The washcloth I still have. When we moved in here I packed it away where I'd never see it. Why look at it again? It would only make me sad.

There was one person who could make any sadness go away! (*Projection: Shirley Temple dances to "The Old Kent Road" with Mr. Bertie in the film The Little Princess. Ruth dances along.*) Shirley Temple! She was a little princess, her dimples, her curls, and she could sing and dance! I loved to dance, too, and no one complained unless I sang! Shirley Temple made everyone around her happy. And that is what I was taught to do. (*Projection: Warheim comes into view.*) They sent us to a home for Swiss children. It was called Warheim — in English it means "Place to Wait."

On our first night we slept in the second story of a barn. I found an opening in the floor where the heat from the stove below came up, so of course I pecked down.

The staff of Warheim was opening our suitcases. They made fun of our clothes. They found the chocolate my grandmother had given me and ate it. We thought they were there to take care of us. They thought we were there to be the servants of their Swiss children. Do their laundry, serve their food, clean their toilets.

We were ordered to stay away from their children, as if we would infect them. In one way that was a good thing. All of us from the transport had no one to turn to but each other. We became as close as brothers and sisters.

Maybe to the Swiss we seemed too happy. One night one of the women in charge named Fraulein Riesenfeld called us into the parlor.

(*As Riesenfeld.*) "Kinder, you must stop asking me every day if I have a letter for you. If I have it, you'll get it. It is time you look at your situation clearly. We did not tell your families, 'We want your children.' You were given away. Do you think if your parents truly loved you they would have done that? They are not like we are. They are *schlangenehtern*, snakes that eat their young. You



should be grateful they write you at all. Remember you are here because of the charity of the Swiss people. Remember how lucky you are."

How could we complain? We were lucky. We were alive. (*Projection: photo of children of Warheim gathered outside the building*) Look! I'm on the ladder, there, do you see me? I'm trying to look taller. I'm smiling, because for the first time in my life I had fallen in love. His name was Walter. (*Points to boy in picture*.) There he is! Behind all the girls. He was a younger man, I was thirteen and he was twelve. Walter was intelligent and so good looking. And he sang to me! The first American song I ever heard. (*A young voice is heard. After first verse the volume decreases and Dr. Ruth talks over it as she packs.*)

WALTER. (*Recorded.*)

YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE, MY ONLY SUNSHINE  
YOU MAKE ME HAPPY WHEN SKIES ARE GRAY  
YOU'LL NEVER KNOW DEAR HOW MUCH I LOVE  
YOU

PLEASE DON'T TAKE MY SUNSHINE AWAY

DR. RUTH. (*Speaking over song.*) I love sad songs. Maybe because I feel happy when they are over. Walter was clever; he lived on the floor above me and he came up with a way to send notes back and forth. (*Looks up; whispers.*) Walter! (*Singing stops. A string with a message descends. She unhooks it.*) No one ever caught us. (*As Walter.*) "Dear Karola Baby,"

WALTER. (*Recording.*) "Did you know that a baby robin can eat 14 feet of worms a day? Your friend, Walter."

DR. RUTH. He was so romantic. Having a boyfriend meant everything! We were both lonely. I thought that I was short and ugly and stupid, and that no man would be interested in me. But he was. It made me happy in a way I never felt before. (*Sound of a violin being played.*) There was a school at the home. We had one teacher, Ignatz Mandel, who had a humback and played a violin. The women made fun of him, but not me. (*Dr. Ruth finds a stack of blue notebooks, sifts through them.*) He wanted us to learn. He encouraged us to write, to keep diaries. To keep dates. (*Opens a blue notebook and looks at date.*) Dates are very important. Mr. Mandel told us they are anchors for our memories. We don't know who we are if we don't remember who we were. (*Reads.*) July 20th, 1941. God, where are You? Will I ever see Mama and Papa again? I know

that I must not lose hope, but it is not easy. What does it mean to be a Jew? If You don't think of us, I won't think of You. Even on Your holidays.

July 29th. My romance with Walter is through forever. We do nothing but quarrel. I told him today to comb his hair straight back but he insists on combing it sideways. Enough. It's over.

August 30th, 1941. A letter from Aunt Ida. (*To audience.*) Aunt Ida was my mother's youngest sister. She wrote from Izhica, a labor camp near Lublin. She said, "I am always ... " (*She stops, collects herself.*) "I am always hungry."

November 2nd. A woman came to the school and talked about the Auschwitz concentration camp. (*She quickly flips the page.*) December 8th, 1941. America is now in the War against Japan. Bread will probably be rationed. (*Puts down diary.*)

That's all I wrote about it. I don't know why. All I knew was that America had food and Shirley Temple and wonderful songs and dances. They began to teach us American songs we didn't understand. We sang "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" and wondered who Boogie Woogie was.

What we were taught was Zionism. (*As Youth Aliyah recruiter.*) "Palestine! When the war is over, and it will be, Palestine wants you. Together we can build a homeland that will be safe for you and your children. Palestine is YOUR country. Yours, Karola, yours, Walter! Palestine needs you to come home!"

If I went with them they promised I could go to school again. I could be a teacher for the Jewish children! I always wanted to be a doctor, but that was impossible. I might as well have wanted to be Shirley Temple. My grandmother had always told me I should be a kindergarten teacher because I would fit so nicely in their chairs.

And then the war was over.

It was a Friday evening. We were sitting at the table finishing our dinner when the phone rang. We heard Fraulein Riesenfeld say "Oh! Are you certain?" Then she was there in the doorway with tears in her eyes. "*Kindler*, I have just received some very important news: the war is over. The Allies have won."

There should have been shouts and cheering but no. Complete silence. Every one of us was thinking of their parents. Are they still alive? What now, what will become of us?

The Red Cross sent lists of people to Warheim who survived the concentration camps. Fraulein Riesenfeld made us gather together

and read them to us instead of posting them for us to see. She read name by name and we held our breath. Two weeks after the war ended she finished reading. There was not a single name on the list we recognized. She told us to go back to work, but told Walter to wait. I stood outside the doorway and listened.

*(As Riensfeld.)* "Walter, we have gotten word that there is a record of your parents being sent to Buchenwald. They are not among the survivors."

Walter said nothing. He looked past Fraulein Riensfeld and then he started to laugh. He laughed harder and harder until Fraulein Riensfeld slapped him. Maybe she had to. I don't know, I didn't care. I ran in and shouted, "Don't touch him! I got a letter from my father! He and my mother and grandmother are safe in Tel Aviv! My father has a job on a farm! We have a little house all to ourselves! Walter can come with me! Everyone can come with me!"

*(As Riensfeld.)* "Karola, I never read that letter."

Of course she didn't. It was all lies. Lies I needed to go on.

*(Phone rings. Dr. Ruth picks it up.)*

Hello? Joel-chen! *(It means "Little Joel.")* She covers phone.) It's Joel. *(Back on phone.)* How is Barbara? How are my beautiful grandchildren? *(Covers phone.)* I have four! *(To Joel.)* Everything is terrific, I am almost finished packing. *(Looks around at all she has left to do.)* I don't want to talk about this again! All I am doing is moving across town! Your mother is a wandering ... I know what you and Miriam think! Joel, I can't live here anymore. This is my decision and it's made! ... *(Stops and collects herself.)* I have to go. I have guests. I love you too. Bye-bye. *(Puts phone down. Silence for a moment.)*

Sometimes when children grow up they forget their parents are still adults. *(She seems uncertain whether to say more, then spots a picture on the wall, a perfect way to change the subject.)* President Clinton! *(Projection: photo of Clinton and Dr. Ruth.)* Look: his arms around me! Both arms! He's Bill Clinton! I was at his inauguration. Why? Because I told him to run for President.

My Miriam was national director of a terrific program for home-schooled youngsters.

In Arkansas in the 1980s it was a great success; Hilary Clinton was on the board and so was I. When I went down for a meeting, someone said to me, "Ruth, do you want to meet the governor?" I said, "Of course!"

When we walked in to his office, Governor Clinton stood up

and said, "Dr. Ruth?" He knew me! We had a wonderful conversation. And Bill Clinton is not only a Rhodes Scholar but he's so good-looking. *(Projection: photo zooms in to a close-up of Clinton's face.)* Am I wrong?

But his greatest gift is that he knows how to look at a woman so she feels she is the only person in the room and at the same time he is looking at every other woman in the room.

I said to him, "Governor Clinton, you should run for President and I'll vote for you." The rest is history. Ah! I have to show you this, too. *(Picks up framed photo off a shelf. Projection: photo of Dr. Ruth with Paul McCartney. They are both in faculty graduation gowns. He is holding her hand, both are beaming.)*

Here I am with a Beate! We were at Commencement at Yale. He was walking down the aisle and he recognized me! He said, "Hi, Ruthie!" I said, "Sing to me!" He held my hand and sang, "He loves you, yeah, yeah, yeah." I told Miriam I met a Beate and she asked which one. I said I don't know their names, but I know there were four, so he's one of them. *(Wraps, places the photos in a box. Pulls out a shooting target, five holes in the bullseye.)*

This is the target from when I took my grandson Ari to a county fair. He was so surprised when I shot five bullets right into this bullseye. He didn't believe me when I told him I was a sniper in Palestine. *(Points to man.)* You don't believe me either. I see that! Then you'd better hope I don't have to prove it. *(Projection: photo of kibbutz.)* Palestine — it felt like a dream. It was a new world, my third. I was 17.

Our kibbutz was called Ramat David; it was near the village of Nahalal. Two hundred people lived there growing oranges and raising cows and chickens.

When we arrived we had to change our German names to Hebrew. I was now Ruth K. Siegel. "Ruth" for "companion."

I kept the "K" for Karola so my parents could find me.

It had been four years and five months since their last letter.

The life was hard, but that is what I expected. What I didn't expect was to feel like I did in Switzerland — a second-class citizen. There it had been Swiss Jews who looked down on us, here it was the Polish Jews. They said we were not smart enough to leave Germany before the war started.

I worked eight hours a day, two in the kitchen, two cleaning rollers, two in the fields picking olives and grapes, and two more

doing whatever they told me. I was a servant again. I wanted to work in the kindergarten but they said no. They said I was a good worker and that the most important person in the kibbutz was the one who could work everywhere. (*She's upset by the memory, immediately moving to another box, another subject. She pulls out a book.*) "*Dr. Ruth's Guide to Teens and Sex Today.*"

This is not an easy decision, deciding when to have sex for the first time. So many pressures, from movies, from friends, from our own bodies.

If you have a pot of boiling water and try to hold the lid down, if you let go even for a second that lid is going to burst off because of the pressure. On the kibbutz, my top popped.

I first had intercourse on May 9th, 1946. I can't tell you who it was with because I am still friends with him and his wife. But I can say it was beautiful and romantic.

I remember that first time so clearly. I remember how in love we were. And my first time was wonderful because of that.

The kibbutz wanted families so they would have more members. If a guy and a girl saw only each other people said to them, "Do you want a room?" Of course they did! It was better than sleeping in tents, and it led to marriage and children.

Not for me. I wasn't ready for either. I had been part of this group dream, now I dreamed about doing something on my own.

I met a couple named the Goldbergs when they visited. Mrs. Goldberg said, "Ruth, I can help you find a school where you could study to be a kindergarten teacher. But you would have to leave here and go to Jerusalem."

Jerusalem? I was living in a community of less than 200 people. Jerusalem had 250,000. I had just turned 18, I had no money and I couldn't speak Hebrew, how could I leave? I said, "Mrs. Goldberg, I'll be packed in twenty minutes." (*Sounds of the city street. Different languages, the noises of the markets. Projection: photo of the Wailing Wall.*) Jerusalem is not just a city; it is the living past.

On my first day I borrowed a bicycle and peddled as close as I could get to the Wailing Wall, all that was left of the Temple of Solomon, two thousand years old. The Wall was under Jordanian control, so Jews were not allowed to come near it. But I got close enough to see the green of little plants that grew between the cracks in the wall. Even through the stones they grew. They are just like us. Survivors.

I not only got accepted into school but I got a scholarship.

I started school while the conflict between Jews and Arabs grew, each wanting Palestine for their own. In 1947, the United Nations voted to divide the country into a Jewish state, an Arab state and a small international zone.

Good news? No. Immediately came the guerrilla wars between Jews and Arabs. Not only by soldiers but civilians, too. I was one of them. I wanted to defend the Jewish people. I joined the *Haganah*, the Jewish underground army. I learned how to take machine guns apart and put them back together with my eyes closed. I learned how to teach children arts and crafts by day and throw a hand grenade by night.

That is when I learned to shoot. I'm a very good sharpshooter. (*Projection: photo of Dr. Ruth as sharpshooter.*) I was short and fast so I was used as a messenger because there was less of me to shoot at.

Nights I stood on a roof with my rifle watching over a barricade at the city's entrance where Israeli soldiers stopped every car to check it.

I had been on surveillance only three weeks when I went home late at night to the youth hostel where I was living. As soon as I got to the door of my room, the sirens sounded. We were told to run down the stairs to the basement.

On the way down I thought, "I can do my homework." Who knew how long we'd be down there? I ran back up to the lobby. (*Sounds of explosions, sirens and bomb warnings.*) It was June 4th, 1948. My twentieth birthday.

The bomb's shrapnel tore into the walls. People screamed and plaster fell from the ceiling. The girl here on my right fell to the floor, killed. Then a soldier, then another girl. There must have been a second explosion because I was thrown into a wall. When I tried to sit up, a girl — my friend Hannelore — was trying to unlace my shoes.

I shouted, "Why are you doing that?" Then I saw my legs and feet were covered with blood.

"Hannelore, do I have to die?"

An ambulance took me to the hospital. There was shrapnel dug in all over my body, the biggest pieces in my neck. My ankles and legs were cut and bleeding. The top of my right foot was blown off. The surgeon, Dr. Eli, told me I was lucky not to have lost both feet.

He operated and they brought me to a room downstairs that was once a cloister. The cots were filled with wounded soldiers. There were no more bunks but I was so small I could fit on a bookshelf and that's where they put me. Some of the soldiers were in bad shape.

One lost both his hands from a grenade. Another was blinded. But we all tried to help each other, so morale was high. Mine was highest because I was the only woman in a room packed with men. I could have recuperated for years!

It took me months to walk again, but thanks to Dr. Eli I did. And he gave me an even better gift. It was thanks to Dr. Eli I met David. (*Pronounced Dab-VEED.*) David was in the army, stationed near Jerusalem.

He was handsome, well-educated, he wanted to be a doctor and he was short. He climbed over his camp's fence to see me. He had a motor-scooter and we would ride into the country to have picnics. I hung on to him tightly even when I didn't have to.

After two months David said he loved me and proposed. I thought, how lucky I am that someone is willing to marry me. And I wouldn't just be marrying David, I'd be marrying his entire family, aunts and uncles who loved me too. David's father, not so much. He thought we were too young and that David shouldn't marry an orphan refugee. He didn't come to our wedding. He said he was away on business. (*Indicates, "You believe that one?"*) When I heard the wedding prayer I realized I was looking through the crowd for my father and mother and grandmother. Sometimes I still do. (*Looks around the apartment for the next thing to pack; pulls down a board game and shows it to the audience.*)

"The Dr. Ruth Good Sex Board Game"! Did you ever play it? There are little plastic pawns and Sex Clinic cards. You move around the board and collect Arousal points.

You played it, didn't you. (*Looks to audience member who she spoke to before.*) I knew you did! This game is fun and educational, isn't it? Did you know only 30 percent of women have an orgasm during sex. The Talmud says that a husband owes his wife sexual satisfaction. It even specifies the timetable for sexual union. For wealthy men, intercourse every day. For working men, twice a week, for donkey drivers, once a week, for camel drivers, once in thirty days; for sailors, once in six months. I told my daughter, "Don't ever marry a sailor." (*Song low behind Dr. Ruth, rises slightly when she talks about Piaf. Song: "Padam Padam" — Edith Piaf.*)

PADAM, PADAM, PADAM  
IL ARRIVE EN COURANT DERRIERE MOI  
PADAM, PADAM PADAM  
IL ME FAIT LE COUP DU SOUVIENS-TOI PADAM ...  
Paris!

The music, the movies, the *Comédie-Française!* Edith Piaf (*Quoting song.*) "Remember all your loves, remember there's no reason not to cry."

There were no medical schools in Israel for David, so we had to go abroad. On our first day in Paris we couldn't walk down the street without stopping every step to look at the buildings and the beautiful women standing on the corner, smiling at us. I said, "David, the women dress so beautifully! If I had clothes like that I would stand on the corner to show them off, too!" David said, "Ruth, they're prostitutes." So what? They were sophisticated prostitutes! Sophisticated is something I never knew before.

I took classes at the Sorbonne and became the director of a Jewish kindergarten. My life was changing, and so fast. So was David's. He decided not to become a doctor. In 1954 we went back to Israel for the summer. In the fall I came back alone. David's father was right. We married too young. I didn't want a husband, I wanted a family. David wanted to stay in Israel. It was his home. I wanted an education. And to find my home. I asked for a divorce and he agreed. Sometimes life is not romantic like a song of Piaf's. (*Time to change the subject. She picks up a porcelain turtle and wraps it.*) There are more turtles in this apartment than the Bronx Zoo. I love turtles; maybe because of the turtle mark on my doll Mathilde's back? A turtle has only two choices: He can stay in his shell and go nowhere. Or he can stick his neck out and go forward. Turtles are *jeekes*.

David and I are still friends. He became a press secretary for the Israeli government and we see each other when I fly there or he comes here. Fred likes David very much. Fred asks him, "Why didn't you keep her?" and David says, "I'm glad you have her." Maybe they get along too well.

Fred had a great love of his own. Gustaf. The car. (*Projection: photo of a 1964 Volvo.*) Fred named him after the king of Sweden. Fred only remembers our son Joel's birthday because it's on March 14th, the same date he bought Gustaf. We all had to get in the car and sing "Happy Birthday" to Gustaf every 10,000 miles. Fred's Volvo dealer had a birthday cake for Gustaf when he reached 450,000 miles.

I taught Joel how to drive in Gustaf. Our first lesson I looked down at his foot on the gas and saw the street racing by underneath it. Gustaf's bottom had rusted out and Fred just kept putting bigger aluminum sheets on the floor. I said, "Fred, the car isn't safe!" He said, "It's safe as long as you keep your feet on the pedals!"

The day he sold Gustaf — can you believe somebody bought him? — Fred drove Joel to school and all Joel's friends were wearing black armbands. Fred mourned for weeks.

Even when he watched Diane Sawyer on the news. Fred loves Diane Sawyer. Whether she gives good news or bad news Fred is always happy to see her.

Fred never talks to reporters. That is my world; he has his. Except the day Diane Sawyer came here to interview me for *60 Minutes*. Then I could not get rid of him. He sat next to me right here on the couch and the first question Diane Sawyer asks is, "Mr. Westheimer, how is your sex life?" Freddie doesn't blink, he looks right into the camera at millions of people watching and says, "Diane, the shoemaker's children don't get any shoes." (*Phone rings. She looks around her: the phone isn't in sight. As it continues to ring she searches for it, more and more frantically, looking in and under boxes.*)

Did I pack it? This is not good. (*Finds phone, answers it. On phone.*) Hello? Miriam! How are you? The children? ... Good ... Your Joel? (*Covers phone, to audience.*) Miriam's husband is a Joel, too. Six foot two and a terrific hugger. (*On phone.*) Yes, I am making progress! (*Looks around her.*) You would not believe how much progress ... Yes, I talked with Joel. Miriam, change is good! Look at me; I've moved all my life, country to country — (*Interrupted, upset.*) Running away? How can you say that to me? I've never run away from anything in my life! No. No! This is not your decision! You are not the one alone! (*She stops, self-conscious at her outburst.*) *Projection: photo of 1964 Volvo fades away.* Miriam, I have to go now. I will call you back. (*She puts the phone down.*)

Fred died on April 3rd, 1997. Two months ago. And six days. I came home from an Academy Awards party. Freddie was sitting on the bed. He couldn't get up. He said, "Ruthie, I think I've had a stroke." I called Miriam, Joel. Once he got to the hospital, Fred never opened his eyes. I could do nothing.

There are some things not easy to talk about. Even for Dr. Ruth. I ... (*She is lost. Not certain what to say or do. She sees Fred's photo on*

*the bookshelves and picks it up, wraps it. Phone rings. She slowly packs away the photo and picks up the phone. On phone.*) Hello? Hello, Mike. You are very welcome. I have helped many men with their penises ... Yes, you can give her my number. See you tomorrow. Bring strong friends. Bye-bye. (*Hangs up; to audience.*) Mike's grandmother wants to call. This is good. People don't look at the elderly as sexual beings. Worse, some older people don't see themselves that way.

Do you know the most important sexual organ? The brain. The libido, which causes you to be aroused, is in the brain and it can work properly until you're in your nineties. And I keep raising that number every year.

From the window of my new apartment I can see the Statue of Liberty. I saw it the first time from the deck of the *Liberté* on September 9th, 1956. Dan and I — Husband Number Two — sailed from Paris to New York Harbor. The German government sent me a check for 5,000 marks, about 1,500 dollars. It was for German Jews who had been denied their schooling because of the Nazis. I never sought out restitution from the Germans. But here was money right in front of me, and I knew what to do with it.

"Dan, let's go to the United States. I'll buy you a suit." Dan loved clothes; he was a snappy dresser and very good-looking. I met him in a coffee house in Paris after my divorce from David. Dan was a French Jew, and we began a wonderful love affair.

We bought fourth-class tickets for the bottom of the ship. We were told to stay down there the entire trip — the deck was only for the first-class passengers. But when we neared New York we climbed up the fire exit stairs to the deck and we stayed up all night, waiting for daylight and America. (*Projection: photo of NYC skyscrapers, looking up at them from the street.*)

I don't remember getting off the ship, just looking up at the buildings, so many and so high, they made me feel even smaller. I remember ice cream carts on every corner, and I stared at every face; I was sure I'd see Shirley Temple.

The first thing I did was pick up a copy of a German-Jewish newspaper called *The Aufbau*; we needed a cheap room to rent.

I saw a big advertisement from the New School of Social Research announcing a scholarship for a victim of the Nazis. As soon as I saw it I said, I'm going there to apply. Now. Today!

We found a room in Washington Heights for seven dollars a week. I called the New School to leave my address and they told

me I won the scholarship! It was our second week in New York! Where else could this happen but America?

I said, "Dan! We have to celebrate! Let's see the famous Times Square! ... Don't worry, we don't need a car! We can walk!"

Seven miles later, we were there. (*Projection: photos of Times Square, 1956. Sound of NYC streets. Starting up, turning to see all.*) The Latin Quarter, the Orpheum, Playland, a sign smoking! Wow! It's like they took the biggest cities in the world and schmooshed them together! Neon signs for Coca-Cola, Kleenex tissue, Camell! So many things people buy here!

I was twenty-eight and trying to master my fourth language. I didn't have time or money to take English classes and I couldn't understand difficult books so I bought *True Confessions* and read them from cover to cover: (*Projection: True Confessions magazine covers.*) "Shacktown Girl." "They Said I Was Man Hungry?" "Paid To Be Party Girls." (*She pulls one out of a box and reads it haltingly, as she did then.*) "Now I'll take care of you, you dirty man snatcher!" She pulled my hair and I screamed in pain. She ripped off my dress as she laughed hysterically. "You'd better not go near Rodrigo again or I'll kill you!" (*Puts it down.*) This was my Dickens and Shakespeare.

I was passing my courses, but I didn't like Experimental Psychology. Rats running around mazes are not as interesting as what runs around inside people's heads. I switched my major to Sociology, especially of the family.

Just as I learned I was having a child of my own.

This was joy. Dan and I got married and I threw up every morning for three months with a smile on my face. When it came time, we had no money for a private hospital so we went to the Bronx Municipal Hospital. The nurse must have been the American cousin of Fraulein Riesenfeld.

(*As Riesenfeld.*) "Seventeen hours and you're still not ready. You'll need a Caesarean."

(*As Dr. Ruth.*) "What does that mean?"

(*As Riesenfeld.*) "It means you've had your fun. Now you'll pay for it." (*Ruth closes her eyes then opens them, looking down at the "baby" before her. Song: reprise of "Do You Know How Many Stars are Shining in the Sky?" / "Weisst du wieviel."*)

This beautiful child, this miracle, this first time ever any woman gave birth! Miriam. My daughter.

Someone loaned me a beautiful French baby carriage, which was as tall as I was. I pushed Miriam to visit every friend I had met. I knew they were thinking: How could she have this child with that little body of hers? I was thinking the same thing.

When I pushed Miriam home I stopped before the Ohav Shalom synagogue; I didn't belong to it, I didn't know if I wanted to even if I had the money. But when I picked Miriam up and held her close I felt I was hugging my family who came before me and all those yet to come.

Later, I joined that synagogue. Today I belong to two. When one asks where I was last week I can say I was at the other.

Dan was a kind man. A simple man. He was good to Miriam. But between the two of us? Marriage can withstand many pressures — the one thing it cannot bear is boredom. Physical stimulation is a wonderful thing. But without mental stimulation you can sleep through it.

When Miriam was one-year-old Dan and I divorced. We realized that what we had was a fabulous love affair but nothing more, nothing that could last a lifetime. He was ... debonair. A snappy dresser.

My rent was fifty-five dollars a month. Miriam and I ate egg sandwiches. I had three blouses and one black corduroy suit I washed and brushed and wore every day until it fell apart. Being a single mother wasn't easy. If I kept busy enough I wouldn't think about it. I took turns babysitting with my neighbors so that I could find work and go to school.

I got a job doing market research for one dollar an hour. I called people on the telephone to ask their opinions. I never had a phone in Paris or Jerusalem. I thought no one could hear me unless I shouted. (*As if calling for the survey.*) HELLO? I'M CALLING FOR HARRIS RESEARCH. CAN I ASK YOUR OPINION ABOUT TOWELS? ... DO YOU LIKE THE COLOR BLUE, RED OR YELLOW THE BEST? (*Surprised.*) NO, I'M NOT ANGRY! ... THERE'S NO WRONG ANSWER! JUST PICK ONE!

After work every night when I walked home I thought, here is a new American Dream: someday I will be so successful I'll have a Frigidaire and a maid one day a week.

When I got my master's degree from the New School in 1959, I promised Miriam nothing would stop me from becoming

a doctor. I went on for my doctorate of education and had my thesis approved. "Orphans Of The Holocaust." Then I took my orals.

ERIC GROHL. *(Recorded.)* Ruth! Come in! Please call me Eric. We'd like you to speak about your very puzzling paper where you disagreed with the thrust of my book, *Hitler's Rise and America's Disgrace*.

DR. RUTH. I agree with many points, Professor —  
ERIC GROHL. *(Recorded.)* Eric.

DR. RUTH. Yes, Eric. America should have entered the War earlier. And yes, they should have accepted Jewish children —

ERIC GROHL. *(Recorded.)* You are a Jew, are you not?  
DR. RUTH. *(Pause.)* Yes.

ERIC GROHL. *(Recorded.)* Then you should know better than anyone, America did nothing. Their response was inexcusably late and your forgiving that is even more inexcusable.

DR. RUTH. Yes, their response was late. But America helped defeat Hitler. America took me in. Without this country how do you think I'd ever be standing here today?

*(To audience.)* I failed the exam. I took it again. I failed again. Never in my life have I felt so humiliated. I had let Miriam down. I would never be a doctor, why did I ever think I could be? What now? I would be a single mother who would spend the rest of her life talking about towels. *(She reaches out for the doll on the shelf, puts it down on the boxes in front of her.)* Do you know what this is? This is a *Stehaufmannchen* doll. *(Pushes it over; with its lead base it bobs back up.)* If you knock it down it bounces back up again. When I am knocked down I say "Done" and move on. What other choice is there? *(She takes the Stehufmannchen doll and concentrates on wrapping it carefully as she speaks.)* Fred bought this for me when I saw it in a shop. I will tell you about Fred. We met on January 3rd, 1961 at the Bel Air Resort in the Catskills. Skiing. *(Recalling earlier reference to sex and skis; sees someone smiling.)* That's right. Skiing. You remember. *(The more she talks of Fred the more she eases into it.)* I drove there with my friend Hans, who was part of a ski club. Do you know what a T-Bar is? Two people sit on a bar of metal that drags you up a mountain. This is a problem when one person is four foot seven and the other is over six feet tall. When the bar was under Hans' behind it was under my neck, when it was under my behind he was stretched

out like rigor mortis. It was a long ride.

At the top of the mountain Hans introduced me to his club's president. Dark hair, glasses, a big smile. And he was short. I said, "Hans, next time I ride up the mountain I'll do it with that short guy." So I did.

We started talking when we got on the lift. We talked all that day, and that night, until two in the morning. When I got home I called my friend Debbie and said, "I just met the guy I'm going to marry. His name is Manfred Westheimer." Fred tells people it was the biggest skiing accident he ever had.

Fred is sensible, I'm impulsive. I like to spend, he likes to save. He calls it "thrifty." I like to go out, he likes to stay home and watch *The Odd Couple*. Fred is Jewish, he and his family escaped Hitler and went to Portugal. Now we were both here.

He was handsome, interesting and employed. A chief engineer. He liked children and played Jewish folk songs on his guitar and harmonica. What could be better?

It would be better if he didn't have two girlfriends. Two! And they were real competition. One gave long back rubs and Two made great herring salad. Plus Herring Salad was one of six people Fred rented a house with at Lake Oscawana that summer.

I wanted to get a room in the same house as Fred and Herring Salad, but they wouldn't allow children and I wouldn't go without Miriam.

So now what? Stay home and say goodbye every weekend? Not me. I found out the bungalow next to Fred's was for rent. That was good, but for five hundred dollars, not so good.

I decided to sell shares. I told friends there was a beautiful lakefront house we could rent but we must keep Oscawana our secret and never mention its name or else all New York would be up there. Three calls and the house was full. Fred even bought a share — but said he would go up to the other house for meals since he had already paid for them. "Thrifty."

Still, Freddie took more doing. When we got back to New York from the "Lake House," I wanted to impress him with my cooking but I couldn't boil water. It was time for what I later called a "Westheimer Maneuver."

I asked my friend Karhe Bauman to cook a wonderful Rosh Hashanah dinner and told my guests to pretend it was mine and praise my cooking in front of Fred. They did, but I heard one friend

whisper to another in Hebrew that Kathe made a great meal. Israelis have the habit of talking to others in Hebrew and thinking no one else can understand them.

Fred helped me clear the dishes and in the kitchen he said, "Everything was delicious! I wish I could speak better Hebrew to tell Kathe myself." Freddie never let me forget that one.

Freddie faced the inevitable on the day he took Miriam and me out driving in his Renault. Miriam said, "If you two get married, will this be my car, too?" Fred almost drove into the lake.

I said, "Miriam, Fred has no interest in marriage. We'll get a car of our own. Freida Hirsch's son, Peter ... Yes! The handsome one — sells sport cars. He keeps asking me to come by: he says he can give me a deal that will make my head spin."

The next weekend we were hiking in the Catskills when he said, "Ruth, I think we should get married." I said, "Freddie, whatever you want." He did say there was one condition: we had to get married before the end of the year for tax reasons.

On December 10th, 1961 we had our wedding at the Win-dermere Hotel on the Upper West Side. Met and married in less than one year. *My greatest* Westheimer Maneuver.

Fred and I both wanted another child. Six months after the wedding I was pregnant. Joel was born on March 14th, 1963, at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital. (*Taking down another photo, ready to wrap it. She stops.*) I raised Joel the same way I raised Miriam. Zionism and idealism were important. They went to kibbutz summer camps. No spoiled kids. No pony rides.

When they were in school I took a part time job at Planned Parenthood. I was hired to supervise a survey of the contraception and abortion history of 2,000 women in Harlem.

My job was training the women who would collect the data: how to interview a subject and fill out a questionnaire. Sometimes I went with them — not to supervise but to sit and listen. I sat quietly, yes, quietly, and I learned about their lives. The choices they made, but mostly the ones they didn't.

You see my dollhouses? (*Shows off one of the dollhouses.*) A friend made this one for me. Can you see the family inside? Mother, father, children. Here, in the nursery, a baby with miniature baby toys. The furniture looks so real: all of it was made between World War One and Two.

I left my first dollhouse behind when I was sent to Wartheim.

Now I have six. I collect them, I decorate them. But I don't let my grandchildren play with them. The little furniture, the little families stay exactly where I put them. They never leave. They are as happy as I want them to be. In the first ten years of my life I had a family who loved me. That is so important. Because of that love I survived being an orphan. With my dollhouses I have the control I never had in my world. I wanted to give the women of Harlem the same control of their own lives.

At Planned Parenthood I realized that I wanted to teach sex education. To me, sex is such an important part of the human relationship. It's the reason we are here, so basic to who we are. I had to learn more.

I decided to have courage and take one course at Columbia Teachers College. I was so afraid of failing again — but I got an "A"! It was all I needed; I went full speed ahead. I was awarded my degree, a doctor of education, in June of 1970. I was a doctor. Me. Dean's list. I marched at the front of the procession in my cap and gown and waved to the children. I never wanted to take that gown off. If my father could have seen me ... (*A moment of hesitation; she moves on.*) That summer I became an instructor at Lehman College in the Bronx. I still love to teach! I'll never stop. Lehman or Princeton or Yale, I learn from my students as they learn from me. I set rules for myself. I'd never ask personal questions. A person's sexuality is a private thing unless they bring it up themselves.

I decided this when I heard a physician at a seminar say, "I'm going to reveal something I've never told anybody else, not even my wife. I get very aroused, with a strong erection, whenever I see a cow." Nobody said anything; people are polite. But the next day when he walked into his office I know everyone who saw him was thinking, "Moo."

Do you know Dr. Helen Singer Kaplan? She worked with Masters and Johnson and wrote *The New Sex Therapy*. It was the bible for sex therapists! I went to see her speak; she was so smart. When she asked for questions I wanted so badly to come up with one. But I was the only person in the auditorium who was not a medical doctor. (*Makes the decision. Hand up.*) "Dr. Kaplan. I agree that men who have premature ejaculation problems do not have this problem because they dislike women. So do you think, then, that instead of analysis they can be helped by education?"



She did. Good question! I rushed up to her afterwards. "Doctor, I have admired your work for many years. Could I possibly visit your sex therapist training program at Cornell? She said yes. This was on a Wednesday, I was there Thursday.

Once a week we all sat behind a two-way mirror and observed Dr. Kaplan conduct sex therapy. She and her patient talked about the most intimate details. They were comfortable; my face was red through every session. I'm very old fashioned. I am. A big square.

But I took every class, and I realized I really wanted to be a sex therapist. A psychiatrist I met once told me this made perfect sense. After I left the hugs I had at home I was not touched until I met Walter. Touching, kissing, expressing myself physically was very important, it brought back the intimacy, and family, that I no longer had. He said that studying with Dr. Kaplan was the logical next step — because I realized how important this is to everyone.

I decided there were two conditions I would not treat. Sado-masochism, because a therapist has to visualize and I don't want to. And bestiality. I am not a veterinarian.

One day a letter came to the Institute asking if one of us would address the community affairs managers of all the radio stations in New York on the need for sex education.

I called and said I could come and talk. No fee? Fine.

The meeting was at the St. Moritz hotel. In the elevator I wished I had said no. I was going to have a room full of these prominent people listening to me for fifteen minutes. How could I make fifteen minutes important? (*Stepping forward.*) Thank you for inviting me. I have some important words to tell you — Words you don't normally hear on your radio stations. Words like "contraception," "unwanted pregnancies," "venereal disease." And the most important word: "education."

So many young people, and adults, are not educated in the facts and responsibilities of their sexual conduct. To most people sexual education is left to their "significant others" — that is the sociological term for someone who can affect change in another person's life.

Parents, teachers, even if they do help, are not enough.

You broadcasters are "significant others." You should have programs on the air to educate your listeners about important issues. The philosopher Hannah Arendt once said, "Education is

the point at which we decide we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it."

It's up to us, all of us. Together, let us take responsibility. Can I answer any questions? (*To audience.*) Hands popped up — that I expected. But not what happened next. (*Lights change.*)

MALE ANNOUNCER. (*Recorded.*) Stay tuned for the premiere of WYNY's call-in show *Sexually Speaking*, with Dr. Ruth K. Westheimer. Listeners can call in at 212-873-7888. (*Sound of upbeat classical music, signaling the start of the show. Projection: "On Air" sign. Dr. Ruth sits behind a box, her "studio desk," with a special light on her. She puts on a headset.*) Hello —

WOMAN PRODUCER. (*Recorded.*) Doctor! The burton! The white burton! (*Dr. Ruth speaks into a microphone.*)

DR. RUTH. (*Thumbs up — got it.*) This is Dr. Ruth K. Westheimer and you are listening to *Sexually Speaking*. I am not a medical doctor and I do not do therapy on the air. I am here to educate. If there's anything you want me to talk about relating to sexual matters you can reach me at 212-873-7888. (*Pause. Concerned, she looks offstage at the "Woman Producer."*)

WOMAN PRODUCER. (*Recorded.*) Call on line one!

DR. RUTH. (*Relieved.*) You are on the air.

WOMAN CALLER #1. (*Recorded.*) Dr. Westheimer, our daughter walked in on my husband and me while we were having sex on our living room floor.

DR. RUTH. Tell me, how old is your daughter?

WOMAN CALLER #1. (*Recorded.*) Five. She was afraid and started crying but my husband just crawled behind the couch. She still won't talk about it. Neither will my husband. What should I do?

DR. RUTH. I'm glad you're asking this because it happens to many parents of small children. The first thing is that making love on floors and tables in any room in the house is wonderful as long as the doors have locks. The next is that you should take your daughter aside and say, "Honey, the other day when you came in Daddy wasn't hurting Mommy. Daddy and Mommy made love and it felt good." Use that term, "made love." "If there is moaning and groaning it's just because it feels good." And tell your husband to get out from behind the couch.

WOMAN CALLER #1. (*Recorded.*) I will. Thank you.

DR. RUTH. Bye-bye.

WOMAN PRODUCER. (*Recorded.*) Doctor, the board is lighting up!

DR. RUTH. (*Takes off headset. To audience.*) The show started at midnight and ran for fifteen minutes. On the third show I was given the name I'm best known for. (*Puts headset back on.*) You are on the air.

WOMAN CALLER #2. (*Recorded.*) Dr. West ... Western ... Dr. Ruth?

DR. RUTH. (*Beat.*) This is Dr. Ruth.

WOMAN CALLER #2. (*Recorded.*) I'd like your advice. I'm twenty-one and I've been seeing an older man for almost two years now.

DR. RUTH. How much older?

WOMAN CALLER #2. (*Recorded.*) He's thirty-seven.

DR. RUTH. Go on.

WOMAN CALLER #2. (*Recorded.*) We have a really good relationship except for one thing. He won't see me on the weekends.

DR. RUTH. Does this man work on the weekends?

WOMAN CALLER #2. (*Recorded. Hesitates.*) No.

DR. RUTH. Does he take care of his parents? Is he a volunteer?

WOMAN CALLER #2. (*Recorded.*) He isn't.

DR. RUTH. (*Realizing.*) He's married, yes? He is home with his family.

WOMAN CALLER #2. (*Recorded. Tentative.*) Yes, doctor.

DR. RUTH. Here is my advice. I will tell you what Nellie Forbus sang to us in the shower: "Wash that man out of your hair." When one person only takes and one only gives, it is not a relationship, it is using. Tell him Dr. Ruth said "enough."

WOMAN CALLER #2. (*Recorded.*) I will. Thank you, doctor.

DR. RUTH. Write to me and tell me you've left him! Bye-bye. (*Takes off headset. To audience.*) The show was extended to an hour. WYNNY printed up "Sex on Sunday" t-shirts. They had 3,000 requests. It's good to be Dr. Ruth. (*Puts headset back on.*) You are on the air.

YOUNG WOMAN CALLER. (*Recorded.*) Dr. Ruth, I've been going out with a guy for almost a year and I like him a lot. The only thing I don't like is that he wants me to have oral sex with him. I just can't do it. The worse thing is that he loves to give me oral sex and I love it. I feel so selfish, what should I do?

DR. RUTH. Whipped cream. Or chocolate sauce. Whatever is your favorite, rub it on his penis and see if you like it then. If you

still feel the same way about it, stop with the oral sex and get ice cream for the whipped cream and chocolate. (*Takes off headset. To audience.*) I felt something was happening. One morning I dropped coins into a blind man's cup and said, "Here you are. Bye-bye." He said, "Thank you, Dr. Ruth." That's when I knew I was right. The show started broadcasting nationally and in Canada. (*Puts headset back on.*) You are on the air.

MAN CALLER. (*Recorded.*) Doctor, when my wife and I make love I keep my pajamas on and just unbutton my fly. My wife doesn't like it. She says I have to take everything off.

DR. RUTH. Why don't you?

MAN CALLER. (*Recorded.*) Well ... I guess I feel silly with no clothes on.

DR. RUTH. Try this: Take your pajamas off and be naked except you can wear a necktie.

MAN CALLER. (*Recorded. Pause.*) Where should I tie it?

DR. RUTH. (*Laughs.*) Let your wife decide! But don't tie it too tight! Last call. (*Presses button again.*) You are on the air.

WOMAN CALLER #3. (*Recorded.*) Dr. Ruth, I'm very upset. I went into the living room last night and found my husband in front of the TV masturbating to *The Wild Kingdom*.

DR. RUTH. We are out of time. So everyone, good night and have good sex. (*Dr. Ruth gets up from the "microphone" and speaks to the audience.*) Articles appeared in the *New York Times*, the *London Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*. Someone wrote that my "warm giggle sounded like a gerbil in heat."

Why did they listen? I think it was this: People need to talk about sex, and suddenly here was a little matronly woman who did. I was not threatening. And my accent helped — they thought I sounded like Sigmund Freud. And I made them laugh. A lesson learned with humor is a lesson remembered. I had gone from being a professor to a celebrity overnight. I was famous and I loved it! Who wouldn't? And at fifty, I was no starlet with only fifteen minutes of attention.

I was invited to appear on *Johnny Carson* and *David Letterman*. I told David about the young man who called me on the radio to say, before having sex his girlfriend liked to toss onion rings on his erect penis. He pretended to be speechless and walked offstage.

I've done David's show many times, and before station breaks they show a picture of a plate of onion rings.

A woman named Mickey Dwyer called me to discuss doing my own television show for Lifetime Cable Network. (*Projection: A title card for Dr. Ruth's TV show.*) I did over 500 shows with my producer, John Lollo. And the guests we had! Joan Rivers told me she had her greatest orgasms going to Saks Fifth Avenue and saying, "Charge it." Elaine Boozler said her mother told her sex was a natural thing, like a heart attack. George Burns called me "Ruthie," and asked, "What is a nice girl like you doing in this sex business?"

You, I will tell. In the Jewish tradition sex has never been shameful, it is a celebration of love. In Hebrew there is a phrase: *tkun olam*. It means "repairing the world" ... I never thought it would be through sex therapy, but this is my way. It is my obligation because I have survived and one million five hundred thousand children did not. (*Phone rings.*) One moment. (*On phone.*)

Hello? ... Who? ... Yes, yes! (*Covers phone.*) Milke's grandmother. (*On phone.*) Elaine, hello. Tell me how I can help you? ... Yes I was born in Frankfurt ... Really? On Handelstrasse? Then you were only five blocks away! ... I'm a year older. Did you escape before ...

That's what happened to my family, too; they were in Lodz until they were sent to the camp. Elaine, did you know them? ... But they were not Westheimers, they were Siegels. My father is Julius, my mother is Irma and my grandmother's Selma. Did you ever ... Are you sure? You must have seen them at Lodz, or Auschwitz. If you saw their pictures you might recognize them. I will bring them to you ... Yes, good! Good! I will talk to your grandson tomorrow. Thank you, Elaine. *Herzlichen dank, God bless you! (Puts down phone. As she continues, lights close in slowly on her.)* A survivor. She might know more.

All I know is that my father was sent home from the work camp for a short time before the Jews of Frankfurt were transported to the Lodz ghetto in 1940.

Thousands of Jews a day were put on trains to the death camps. More died in those camps than all Americans and British died in the war.

I know Auschwitz One was opened in May of 1940. Besides its gas chamber and crematorium, there was Block 11, where torture and interrogations took place.

I know Auschwitz Two was built in October 1941 specifically for the Final Solution. It had eight gas chambers and four crematoria.

I know Auschwitz Three was a complex of many camps to work prisoners to death. Those put to work in the factories lived no more than four months. Prisoners working in nearby mines lived one month.

I know the gassing of Jews began by January 1942.

The death marches began on January 18th, 1945. 58,000 prisoners were marched west to the German-Polish Border. S.S. Guards and the Hitler Youth were told to shoot any prisoner who walked too slowly.

I know the Soviets liberated Auschwitz on January 27th, 1945.

They found more than 7,000 prisoners, mostly sick or dying. I know my father, my mother, and my grandmother were not among them.

I know the last letter I received from my family was on September 12th, 1941.

Did they live four years? I don't know. I have no dates.

How can they be dead without dates?

Sometimes I dream they are alive.

That they found me in Jerusalem. That they came to America, met Fred and their grandchildren, and my papa says, "Mama, Karola is a doctor!"

I dream of us all together, my papa, my mama, my grandmother Selma, Fred, all here, home.

But they are here. Now it is me who is leaving. (*She hesitates, goes to the phone and dials.*) Pierre, can you ask the movers to come earlier tomorrow? As early as they can. I need them to help me unpack ... Yes. Unpack. I'm not moving. Call the realtors and tell them ... I don't know what you should say, you're my Minister of Communications. Oh, and Pierre, call that decorator. Yes. Call Nare Berkus. I will do his television show if he will help me reorganize my apartment. Tell him there's a little clutter. And tell him he can't charge me. (*Covers phone, to audience.*) Another Wescheimer Maneuver. (*To Pierre.*) We'll talk tomorrow. Bye-bye. (*She puts down the phone, goes to the bookshelves, and pulls out a picture, showing it to the audience: four small children.*) This is Michal, Leora, Benjamin and Ari. My grandchildren. When I look at them I know Hitler lost, and I won. (*She goes to the boxes, takes out the music box. She opens it and hears the lullaby "Do You Know How Many Stars are Shining in the Sky?" She pulls out a small towel.*) This is the washcloth I took from our home in

Frankfurt. (She shows the initials sewn into it.) K.S. Karola Siegel.  
This is me. (She holds up the cloth before her. Lights fade. As the  
curtain call, a picture of Dr. Ruth's beautifully redecorated apartment  
appears behind her.)

### End of Play

### PROPERTY LIST

Several open-front dollhouses  
Moving boxes and packing wrap  
Telephone with caller I.D.  
Eyeglasses  
Framed photographs  
A music box  
Book: *The Ideal Marriage: Its Physiology and Technique*  
Blue notebooks  
String with a note attached  
Book: *Dr. Ruth's Guide to Teens and Sex Today*  
The Dr. Ruth Good Sex Board Game  
Porcelain turtle figurine  
Radio studio microphone and headset  
Washcloth with initials "K.S." sewn in

## SOUND EFFECTS

## NEW PLAYS

Phone ringing  
Music box recording of 1837 melody, "Do You Know How Many Stars are Shining in the Sky?"  
Recording: acoustic version of "Esprit Chagyl," "Woman of Valor"  
Recording of violins  
City of Jerusalem sounds (1940): noisy markets, different languages  
New York City sounds (1956)  
TV show theme music: upbeat classical

★ **BENGAL TIGER AT THE BAGHDAD ZOO** by Rafiq Joseph. The lives of two American Marines and an Iraqi translator are forever changed by an encounter with a quick-witted tiger who haunts the streets of war-torn Baghdad. "[A] boldly imagined, harrowing and surprisingly funny drama." —*NY Times*. "Tragic yet darkly comic and highly imaginative." —*CurranUp*. [5M, 2W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2565-2

★ **THE PITMEN PAINTERS** by Lee Hall, inspired by a book by William Weaver. Based on the triumphant true story, a group of British miners discover a new way to express themselves and unexpectedly become art-world sensations. "Excitingly ambiguous, in-the-moment theater." —*NY Times*. "Heartfelt, moving and deeply politicized." —*Chicago Tribune*. [5M, 2W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2507-2

★ **RELATIVELY SPEAKING** by Ethan Coen, Elaine May and Woody Allen. In **TALKING CURE**, Ethan Coen uncovers the sort of insanity that can only come from family. Elaine May explores the hilarity of passing in **GEORGE IS DEAD**. In **HONEYMOON MOTEL**, Woody Allen invites you to the sort of wedding day you won't forget. "Firecracker funny." —*NY Times*. "A rollicking good time." —*New Yorker*. [8M, 7W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2394-8

★ **SONS OF THE PROPHET** by Stephen Karam. If to live is to suffer, then Joseph Douahy is more alive than most. With unexplained chronic pain and the fate of his reeling family on his shoulders, Joseph's health, sanity and insurance premium are on the line. "Explosively funny." —*NY Times*. "At once deep, deft and beautifully made." —*New Yorker*. [5M, 3W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2597-3

★ **THE MOUNTAINTOP** by Katori Hall. A gripping reimagination of events the night before the assassination of the civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "An ominous electricity crackles through the opening moments." —*NY Times*. "[A] thrilling, wild, provocative flight of magical realism." —*Associated Press*. "Crackles with theatricality and a humanity more moving than sainthood." —*NY Newsday*. [1M, 1W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2603-1

★ **ALL NEW PEOPLE** by Zach Braff. Charlie is 35, heartbroken, and just wants some time away from the rest of the world. Long Beach Island seems to be the perfect escape until his solitude is interrupted by a motley parade of misfits who show up and change his plans. "Consistently and sometimes sensorially funny." —*NY Times*. "A morbidly funny play about the trendy new existential condition of being young, adorable, and miserable." —*Variety*. [2M, 2W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2562-1

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## NEW PLAYS

★ **CYBOURNE PARK** by Bruce Norris. WINNER OF THE 2011 PULITZER PRIZE AND 2012 TONY AWARD. Act One takes place in 1959 as community leaders try to stop the sale of a home to a black family. Act Two is set in the same house in the present day as the now predominantly African-American neighborhood battles to hold its ground. "Vital, sharp-witted and ferociously smart." —*NY Times*. "A theatrical treasure...Indisputably, uproariously funny." —*Entertainment Weekly*. [4M, 3W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2697-0

★ **WATER BY THE SPOONFUL** by Quintera Alegria Hudes. WINNER OF THE 2012 PULITZER PRIZE. A Puerto Rican veteran is surrounded by the North Philadelphia demons he tried to escape in the service. "This is a very funny, warm, and yes uplifting play." —*Hartford Courant*. "The play is a combination poem, prayer and app on how to cope in an age of uncertainty, speed and chaos." —*Variety*. [4M, 3W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2716-8

★ **RED** by John Logan. WINNER OF THE 2010 TONY AWARD. Mark Rothko has just landed the biggest commission in the history of modern art. But when his young assistant, Ken, gains the confidence to challenge him, Rothko faces the agonizing possibility that his crowning achievement could also become his undoing. "Intense and exciting." —*NY Times*. "Smart, eloquent entertainment." —*New Yorker*. [2M] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2483-9

★ **VENUS IN FUR** by David Ives. Thomas, a beleaguered playwright/director, is desperate to find an actress to play Vanda, the female lead in his adaptation of the classic sadomasochistic tale *Venus in Fur*. "Ninety minutes of good, kinky fun." —*NY Times*. "A fast-paced journey into one man's entrapment by a clever, vengeful female." —*Associated Press*. [1M, 1W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2603-1

★ **OTHER DESERT CITIES** by Jon Robin Baitz. Brooke returns home to Palm Springs after a six-year absence and announces that she is about to publish a memoir dredging up a pivotal and tragic event in the family's history—a wound they don't want reopened. "Leaves you feeling both moved and gratifyingly sated." —*NY Times*. "A genuine pleasure." —*NY Post*. [2M, 3W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2605-5

★ **TRIBES** by Nina Raine. Billy was born deaf into a hearing family and adapts brilliantly to his family's unconventional ways, but it's not until he meets Sylvia, a young woman on the brink of deafness, that he finally understands what it means to be understood. "A smart, lively play." —*NY Times*. "[A] bright and boldly provocative drama." —*Associated Press*. [3M, 2W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2751-9

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