

Richard Farber

## **Auntie Em's Mediation Market**

a comedy with songs for three actors  
in two short acts

vers. May 2003

**The characters:**

**He and She** a married couple in their early thirties now in the process of divorce for the third time.

Auntie **Em**, in her fifties or sixties

The three should be able to sing as good actors often can.

There should be a pianist to accompany the songs that are sung live.

**the story:**

This play is a love story about two people in their thirties that cant live apart and cant be together without arguing.

They have agreed to mediation as a way to solve their problems.

They meet at Auntie Em's, whose mediation business they heard about through radio and tv ads.

As they talk about their relationship we return to the scenes they talk about in flash backs.

There is a happy end.

**the scenery:**

There is one basic set - the office of Auntie Em.

three chairs  
a table with a telephone  
a couch which features in the flashbacks

**the music and sound fx.**

The songs that appear in the flashback scenes are to be prerecorded.

The flashback scenes may be placed acoustically in the locations indicated:

Auntie Em  
04/01/2004

3

vers.

a school yard, a restaurant etc. by prerecorded sound.

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## ACT ONE

THE THREE ENTER.

ALL                    A minuet . . .

HE                    . . . about the unpredictability of factors one thinks unpermutble.

SHE LOOKS AT HIM AS TO SAY 'HE'S DONE IT AGAIN.'

ALL                    A minuet . . .

SHE                    . . . about life . . .

EM                    . . . that sets the scene of the play.

HE & SHE            . . . poco allegretto

MUSIC

ALL                    What is life if not a set of random meetings  
Some by chance some by design  
And others only wished for

Is all that happens in our stars ?  
His hand around us pushing hard ?  
Is fate aleatory ?  
Is Chance a fated story ?  
Oh tell me please  
I want to know  
                          and thanks a lot.

HE & SHE            We're a pair

That fate has joined  
In love forever.

EM I am here to make love work  
And fix the life that they have wished for

ALL Is all that happens in our stars ?  
His hand around us pushing hard ?  
Is fate aleatory ?  
Is Chance a fated story ?  
Oh tell me please  
I want to know  
and thanks a lot.

Three times we have been wed  
In matrimony.  
But each time that we've been joined  
Fate has pulled us hard asunder.

Is all that happens in our stars ?  
His hand around us pushing hard ?  
Is fate aleatory ?  
Is Chance a fated story ?  
Oh tell me please  
I want to know  
and thanks a lot.

MUSIC CONTINUES. EM SITS AT HER DESK. HE EXITS BEHIND THEATER  
DOOR. SHE EXITS COMPLETELY.  
HE KNOCKS ON DOOR.

EM Auntie Em. Come in please.

HE [ENTERING] Hi! We have an appointment.

EM Come in, come in. Take a seat.

HE I'm a few minutes early.

EM I see that you are. But good, good, good for you. [WRITING] . . .  
three and a half minutes early.

HE She should be here any minute.

EM [WRITING] . . . be here any minute . . . [TO HIM] Yes, of course she  
will . . . any minute now. Just don't you worry. PAUSE Auntie Em's  
Mediation Market Incorporated. Where did you hear about us?

HE Can't help but hearing, the radio is full of ads and jingles about you.

HE & EM Auntie Em, Auntie Em  
Mediate your troubles  
A waaaaaaaaaay.

Auntie Em, Auntie Em  
Don't hesitate  
Call to daaaaaaaaaay.

EM That's the way it should be,  
Mediation for everybody.  
Cheap but not quite free.

HE If you say so.

EM [SUDDENLY HARD] Is the fee schedule is clear to you?

HE Yes.

EM And you agree.

HE You can't make an omelette without buying the eggs.

EM Breaking them.

HE Buying, breaking, if you say so.

EM Yes, I do.

HE SIGH PAUSE Now where in God's name is she. She's always late.

EM [WRITING] . . . is always late. [ALLOUD] It's just one minute after the hour.

HE She was even late for our wedding . . . and late for our divorce. . .  
PAUSE . . . and late for our second wedding . . . PAUSE Come to think about it she was late for our third wedding too.

EM What about the second divorce? Was she late for that?

HE Actually not. We were living together so I drove her. We both got there at the same time.

EM WRITING . . . living together at the time . . . ALLOUD That's what happens when you drive in the same car.

HE What?

EM Getting there at the same time.

HE Most of the time it does !?

EM And what do you feel about that?

HE About what? . . . about getting there on time?

EM No, about driving in the same car.  
Of course not . . . about her being late . . .

HE I thought this was mediation, not psycho-li-zation.

Em Sorry, must have picked that up from the Discovery channel.

KNOCK ON DOOR

EM & HE Come in SHE HAS ALREADY OPENED DOOR WITHOUT WAITING

SHE VERY FAST AND OUT OF BREATH Sorry I'm late. The alarm clock didn't ring and the bus was late all the lights were red and I couldn't find a pair of clean stockings and I broke a nail and the washing machine is broken but the man that promised to come and fix it didn't come and I called him and I called him and I called him but I couldn't get through so I had to wash my things by hand.

HE You're not late at all. You're on the second.

SHE I am not.

HE You are too.

SHE I am not !

HE You are too !

SHE I am not !

HE You are too !

SHE I am not !

HE You are too !

SHE Wait !! Just look at your watch . . . your second accurate digital seven Euro masterpiece.

HE OK. . .

SHE . . . and what time is it now.

HE One minute and forty seconds past three. Peep. PAUSE

SHE Alright than.

HE If you say so.

SHE I surely do and I will again.

HE Please do . . .

SHE Thank you . . . Alright then ! PAUSE I said so ! PAUSE  
and if I want to apologize for being late . . .

HE Yes dear, you surely will.

SHE TOGETHER I surely will.

EM Good afternoon. I'm Auntie Em. Foundress and sole proprietor of the Auntie Em Mediation Market, Incorporated.

ALL Auntie Em Auntie Em  
Mediate your troubles  
A waaaaaaaaaay

EM                    That's the way it should be,

HIM & HER            Mediation for everybody.

EM                    Cheap but not quite free.

SHE                    Good Afternoon. We have an appointment for mediation, not that I think that mediation isn't something we can't do ourselves, for ourselves, by ourselves and between ourselves . . . did I apologize for being late? Now where was I . . . oh yes, saying how optimistic I am about the success of your or should I say our common mediatory enterprise. If enterprise is the correct word for an endeavour based not only on scientific discipline, where endeavour as well as enterprise would be the correct term but on an artistic temperament, a socio-creative empathy, a biofeedbackial resonance, a multi harmonic musicality where enterprise endeavour and even edification would not justify the input that you will bring to the solution of our never ending or should I say once and future or even more correctly thrice and continuing existence ?

EM                    [ANSWERING QUESTIONS THAT SHE ASKED]      Yes. You're here. Enterprise is OK and thank you. PAUSE

EM                    WRITING VERY QUICKLY appointment mediation, do ourselves, for ourselves, by ourselves apologize temporal disorientation . . . being late . . .optimistic . . . pronounial disorientation . . .success your . . . I . . . common mediatory enterprise . . .scientific discipline, endeavour- enterprise-artistic temperament . . .socio-creative-empathy, biofeedbackial resonance, multi harmonic musicality . . .enterprise- endeavour-edification-input-solution . . .once and future or even more correctly thrice and continuing existence ?

ALoud                Yes, I agree, and you do understand our fee structure I take it?

SHE                    Expensive . . . but good things don't grow on bushes, and well worth it .

.. if it works, I mean when it works . . .I mean if and when . . .

HE [OVERLAP] She agrees, She agrees

SHE [CONTINUES] . . . especially considering the price of divorce lawyers.

TELEPHONE RINGS ON EM'S DESK

EM Auntie Em speaking, what can we mediate for you today. PAUSE  
Yes ? PAUSE Yes !? PAUSE Yes!! PAUSE Yes [DRY] PAUSE  
Yes ? PAUSE Yes !!! LONGER PAUSE Really? You don't say!  
He really did that. You cant be serious ? With a cow? You must be  
kidding. PAUSE And then with a Gorilla, poor Gorilla PAUSE  
OK. OK I agree. Let's mediate !!! How about Tuesday at three  
O'clock? PAUSE OK We're on.

Sorry about that. My em, secretary is at lunch [SHE IS LYING. SHE  
HAS NO SECRETARY.]

HE It's just after three o'clock

SHE Five minutes past

HE Time's passing. . .

SHE . . .and time is money.

EM She left early. Now where were we?

HE We were going to mediate.

SHE Yes and that doesn't grow on bushes. [FALSE

HE LOOKS AT SHE STRANGELY

EM            Do you see, you agree on something already. Most be my kindly face.

HE            ASIDE            Big and round . . .

SHE          ASIDE            . . . And wrinkled

HE            ASIDE            . . . hint of a moustache

SHE          ASIDE            I wouldn't call that a hint . . . its a statement !

EM            Now let's begin at the beginning. The first time, the very first time you met . . . mediation needs a common ground, shared experiences.

SHE          We have lots of those.

HE            It was in the fourth grade.

SHE          In Mrs. Stippler's class . . . I loved her.

HE            I didn't

HE & SHE    . . . at recess.

FLASHBACK            . A SCHOOL YARD. THE CHILDREN ARE ABOUT 10. BELL RINGS. CHILDREN POUR OUT INTO YARD. HE & SHE PLAY 10 YEAR OLDS. THEY CIRCLE AROUND EACH OTHER NEITHER WANTING TO BE THE FIRST TO SPEAK.

HE            Robert, wait for me.

THEY CONTINUE CIRCLING AROUND NEITHER WANTING TO SPEAK FIRST. HE STARTS WALKING AWAY TO WHERE HIS IMAGINARY FRIEND IS. HE THINKS FOR A MOMENT AND FINALLY TURNS TOWARDS SHE.

HE Hey you there !

SHE Me ?

HE Yes. PAUSE GETTING CLOSER You're new in class

SHE Yes, we moved here yesterday.

HE OK PAUSE ALOUD Robert wait a second !

SHE Is that all you wanted to say ?

HE What . . ?

SHE You spoke to me. Is that all you wanted to say ?

HE ALOUD Robert wait for me !  
[TO HER] I spoke with you ?  
I don't speak with new kids in class.

SHE You did !

HE I did not !

SHE You did !

HE I did not !

SHE You did !

HE I did not !

SHE You did too but never mind.

HE            Never mind what ?

SHE           Never mind that you spoke with me.

HE            Well alright then. I spoke with you. But I wont again. Never.  
LEAVING    ALOUD                            Robert wait for me !  
Wait a second

SCHOOLYARD SOUNDS FADE ON NEXT LINES.

SHE           You spoke to me first.  
You did. You did.

SHORT MUSIC BRIDGE LEADS INTO AUNTIE EM'S SONG.

EM            Mediation is a way of live  
                  of having a position, neither  
Left nor Right, Up nor down, but  
                  only of attrition

Getting them to move an inch  
                  and than to move another  
Slowly surely or in spurts  
                  until they find each other.

Mediation is a way of life  
                  of how to get cohesion, either  
Him with her or, her with him, But  
                  Not without elision, [derision]

Thinking fast upon your seat  
                  of how to get her lover  
Moving forward oh it hurts

until he finds he loves her

Lovers surely in much stress  
with mealy disposition, Not  
knowing what if good for them, What  
is the right prescription.

Surely she will cave right in  
with kisses will him smoother  
Until he with manly cool  
Will ask to call his mother.

Mediation is a way of live  
of having no position, neither  
Left nor Right, Up or down, but  
only of attrition

WE ARE BACK AT AUNTIE EM'S

**You have read just the beginning of the play. For a complete copy and information about performance rights please contact me or Mr. Guido Huller at Drei Masken Verlag**