

Tom Todoroff

S T U D I O

## I OUGHT TO BE IN PICTURES

by Neil Simon

*Libby*

I was wondering if I could discuss something with you. It's about sex. Don't get nervous. If you get nervous, I'll get nervous. I'm in trouble...I mean...I don't know how to do anything sexual. Most of the people left the party. And Gordon and I were sitting at the bottom of the hill in a car. And he wanted to fool around. He's not gorgeous but he's kinda cute. And I felt very grateful to him, and I didn't want to hurt his feelings. And I wanted to fool around too. Only I didn't know what was right. I didn't want to be one of those girls they call "easy," but I didn't want to be impossible either. So I just kissed him and got out of the car and decided not to deal with it. But this Saturday night I think I'm going to have to deal with it. I never talked about these things with my mother because she doesn't trust men too much. You can guess why. And Grandma.. well, sex isn't her best subject. I brought it up a couple of times but she pretended she was dead. I know how sex works. I don't have any mechanical problems. I've seen five X-rated movies. I could pass a test on it. I just don't know what to expect—emotionally. And I need to discuss it and you're my father. And what you think means a lot to me. If it's a major trauma for you, I understand. I mean, I could always take a couple of glasses of wine and just plunge in. I've got to have my first time sometime. If it's not Gordon, I could always use the information. Should I ask you some questions? Well . . . Emotionally, is it different for the man than it is for the girl? It *is*? How old were you the first time? FIFTEEN? Who was the girl? Okay, nevermind. So, what was it like with Mom? ... That's a very personal question, isn't it? Did you do it with her before or after you were married? She said after. I knew she lied. She just couldn't talk to me about those things. That's why I'm talking to you. I wanted to know how she felt. If she was scared or excited. Was it fun? Was it painful? I didn't think it was an unreasonable question. I mean, if she could teach me how to walk, why couldn't she teach me how to love? So what was she like? Making love. Because she was so angry when you left. So bitter. I don't think she ever slept with another man after you were gone. It's like when you left, you took her with you. That's why I was so angry with you. It was bad enough you were gone, but you could have left my mother there for me. She used to hug me so hard sometimes. Like she was trying to squeeze all the love out of me that she wasn't getting anywhere else. So instead of growing up to be me, I grew up to be a substitute—I know Grandma's dead. I know she probably can't hear me. But I speak to her everyday anyway because I'm not so sure anyone else is listening. If I have to go for an interview, my heart pounds so much you can see it coming through my blouse. . . If you want the God's honest truth, I don't even want to be an actress. I don't know the first thing about acting. I don't know *what* I want to be. . . (*Beginning to break down.*) I just wanted to come out here and see you. I just wanted to know what you were like. I wanted to know why I was so frightened every time a boy wanted to reach out and touch me . . . I just wanted somebody in the family to hold me because it was *me*, Libby, and not somebody who wasn't there. (*Crying*) I love Mom so much. I didn't mean to say anything against her. It's just that she won't let me inside. When she holds me, all I can feel is her arms . . . but I never feel what's inside. (*Crying openly now; turns away.*) Boy oh boy . . . Really opened up the old waterworks. I never expected to do that. I hope you have flood insurance.