

## **The Disappointment Song - Assignment**

*In the Next Room or the vibrator play*

For this assignment, you're to write a ballad for the character of Catherine Givings in the play *In the Next Room or the vibrator play* by Sarah Ruhl. In an imagined musical version of the play, your song takes place during a scene which doesn't exist in the play. It would occur about midway through the first scene, when Mrs. Givings goes out for a walk in the gardens with Mr. Daldry. In the TCG publication, this offstage scene occurs when Mrs. Givings exits on page 18.

In the scene you're to imagine, Mrs. Givings goes for a walk with Mr. Daldry, who is married to one of Dr. Giving's female patients. Neither Mrs. Givings nor Mr. Daldry understands what exactly the doctor is doing "in the next room" with his patients. At the moment in the show in which your song is to take place, Mrs. Givings is slowly beginning to admit secretly to herself that she's unfulfilled and that there's probably more to life than what she's experiencing. In the walk in the garden, clearly Mrs. Givings opens up a little to Mr. Daldry, for she comes back "laughing and drenched," having cavalierly thrown off the need for an umbrella while walking in the rain. Your song takes place somewhere in that offstage scene, in the garden.

**Lyricists:** write the lyrics, as well as a description about what each stanza is hoping to accomplish. Include some notes about Mrs. Givings' subtext, as well as perhaps some ideas of what she might be thinking about how her future might or might not change after the thoughts she voices on this walk.

**Composers:** write the music, as well as a brief description about Mrs. Givings' state of mind, and how you're hoping that is reflected in your music. Include some notes about how you're trying to use the music to convey the future that Mrs. Givings is contemplating, or resigning herself to go without.