

4 WOMEN  
by Ariel Stess

*About the play (from the playwright):*

Kara's husband is about to leave and run away with their 21-year-old babysitter, Emma. Emma's mother, Barbara, is being hassled by her ex-boyfriend to get back together. And REI employee Miranda is trying to find a way to stop living paycheck to paycheck. Set in Santa Fe, New Mexico, this comedy-drama is about breaking free from forces in your life that are holding you back—in order to start again.

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BARBARA—Female, 60s

*About the scene:*

Barbara is back in an unfulfilling relationship with Matt, and her daughter, Emma, has run away with her married employer. Barbara can't sleep and reflects on her life and her relationship with her daughter.

BARBARA

I *did* want to be alone tonight actually. I look down at myself from above—I often see myself from above, like I've already died and with my dead wisdom, I watch my inability to make things change, and the way I give up, fall asleep.

I wonder if Emma knows how alone I am, if she feels any kind of duty to take care of me now that I'm getting older.

I don't know how long it's been since we talked. Where is she again? Aspen? Working at a flower shop.

Does she know how to keep a man interested in her? How to find a man she can feel good to be around? You have to love him less than he loves you is what my mother always said. Love him less. That makes a strong marriage. Like a strong marriage can only work with one limb missing, limping along. They were strangers in their home by the time I was born. I was just a relic, I guess, of the time they loved each other, or some sad moment when they forgot they didn't.

Keep a man interested. Keep him always wanting more. Keep him chasing you. They like to chase. My mother's words of advice, still washing through me, and when I try and untangle them, I get stuck. Where am I in all this tangle? Where are *my wants*? I roll away. I roll back. Yooooohooo, *wants*, where are ya? Where did ya hobble off to? Where are ya hiding out, ya little fuckers?

Oh gosh.

Gosh gosh gosh. Mmmmm. Humans.

We're only human. We're human-humans.

We're just human-humans. It's okay for the night to just be a little lost and a little compromising. I'll wash my sheets tomorrow, and find a way to get him out of my life, again.

