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SF PERUSALS

One for the Road

(from *Other Places*)

A play

Harold Pinter

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ONE FOR THE ROAD

First performed at the Lyric Theatre Studio, Hammersmith, in March 1984, with the following cast:

Nicolas, mid 40s	Alan Bates
Victor, 30	Roger Lloyd Pack
Gila, 30	Jenny Quale
Nicky, 7	Stephen Kember and Felix Yates

It was subsequently presented as part of the triple bill *Other Places** at the Duchess Theatre, London, in March 1985, with the following cast:

Nicolas	Colin Blakeley
Victor	Roger Davidson
Gila	Rosie Kerslake
Nicky	Daniel Kipling and Simon Vyvyan

The action takes place in a room

**Family Voices, A Kind of Alaska* and *Victoria Station* are available separately in Acting Editions published by Samuel French

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ONE FOR THE ROAD*

A room. Morning

Nicolas is sitting at his desk. He leans forward and speaks into a machine

Nicolas Bring him in. (*He sits back*)

The door opens. Victor walks in, slowly. His clothes are torn. He is bruised. The door closes behind him

Hello! Good-morning. How are you? Let's not beat about the bush. Anything but that. *D'accord?* You're a civilized man. So am I. Sit down.

Victor slowly sits. Nicolas stands, walks over to him

What do you think this is? It's my finger. And this is my little finger. This is my big finger and this is my little finger. I wave my big finger in front of your eyes. Like this. And now I do the same with my little finger. I can also use both . . . at the same time. Like this. I can do absolutely anything I like. Do you think I'm mad? My mother did.

He laughs

Do you think waving fingers in front of people's eyes is silly? I can see your point. You're a man of the highest intelligence. But would you take the same view if it was my boot—or my penis? Why am I so obsessed with eyes? Am I obsessed with eyes? Possibly. Not my eyes. Other people's eyes. The eyes of people who are brought to me here. They're so vulnerable. The soul shines through them. Are you a religious man? Which side do you think God is on? I'm going to have a drink.

He goes to sideboard, pours whisky

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* N.B. Paragraph 3 on page ii of this Acting Edition regarding photocopying and video-recording should be carefully read

You're probably wondering where your wife is. She's in another room.

He drinks

Good-looking woman.

He drinks

God, that was good.

He pours another

Don't worry, I can hold my booze.

He drinks

You may have noticed I'm the chatty type. You probably think I'm part of a predictable, formal, long-established pattern; i.e. I chat away, friendly, insouciant, I open the batting, as it were, in a light-hearted, even carefree manner, while another waits in the wings, silent, introspective, coiled like a puma. No, no. It's not quite like that. I run the place. God speaks through me. I'm referring to the Old Testament God, by the way, although I'm a long way from being Jewish. Everyone respects me here. Including you, I take it? I think that is the correct stance.

Pause

Stand up.

Victor stands

Sit down.

Victor sits

Thank you so much.

Pause

Tell me something . . .

Silence

What a good-looking woman your wife is. You're a very lucky man. Tell me . . . one for the road, I think . . .

He pours whisky

You do respect me, I take it?

He stands in front of Victor and looks down at him. Victor looks up

I would be right in assuming that?

Silence

Victor (*quietly*) I don't know you.
Nicolas But you respect me.
Victor I don't know you.
Nicolas Are you saying you don't respect me?

Pause

Are you saying you would respect me if you knew me better? Would you like to know me better?

Pause

Would you like to know me better?
Victor What I would like . . . has no bearing on the matter.
Nicolas Oh yes it has.

Pause

I've heard so much about you. I'm terribly pleased to meet you. Well, I'm not sure that pleased is the right word. One has to be so scrupulous about language. Intrigued. I'm intrigued. Firstly because I've heard so much about you. Secondly because if you don't respect me you're unique. Everyone knows the voice of God speaks through me. You're not a religious man, I take it?

Pause

You don't believe in a guiding light?

Pause

What then?

Pause

So . . . morally . . . you flounder in wet shit. You know . . . like when you've eaten a rancid omelette.

Pause

I think I deserve one for the road.

He pours, drinks

Do you drink whisky?

Pause

I hear you have a lovely house. Lots of books. Someone told me some of my boys kicked it around a bit. Pissed on the rugs, that sort of thing. I wish they wouldn't do that. I do really. But you know what it's like—they have such responsibilities—and they feel them—they are constantly present—day and night—these responsibilites—and so, sometimes, they piss on a few rugs. You understand. You're not a fool.

Pause

Is your son all right?

Victor I don't know.

Nicolas Oh, I'm sure he's all right. What age is he . . . seven . . . or thereabouts? Big lad, I'm told. Nevertheless, silly of him to behave as he did. But is he all right?

Victor I don't know.

Nicolas Oh, I'm sure he's all right. Anyway, I'll have a word with him later and find out. He's somewhere on the second floor, I believe.

Pause

Well now . . .

Pause

What do you say? Are we friends?

Pause

I'm prepared to be frank, as a true friend should. I love death. What about you?

Pause

What about you? Do you love death? Not necessarily your own. Others. The death of others. Do you love the death of others, or at any rate, do you love the death of others as much as I do?

Pause

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