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SF PERUSALS

A Life in the Theatre

A Play

by David Mamet

PRODUCED ON THE NEW YORK STAGE AT
THE THEATRE DE LYS, BY JANE HARMON

A Samuel French Acting Edition



SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830

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This play is dedicated
to
Gregory Mosher.

A LIFE IN THE THEATRE, by David Mamet was produced by Jane Harmon at the Theatre De Lys, New York City, October 20, 1977. The play was directed by Gerald Gutierrez, scenery by John Lee Beatty, lighting by Pat Collins, costumes by John David Ridge, incidental music by Robert Waldman. Production stage manager: Frank Hartenstein.

CAST

JOHN ..... *Peter Evans*
ROBERT ..... *Ellis Rabb*
STAGE MANAGER ..... *Benjamin Hendrickson*

NOTE

The scenes in this play can be divided into *Onstage* and *Backstage* scenes.

In the *backstage* scenes we see *John* and *Robert* at various locations backstage in a theatre: a dressing-area, a make-up table, an exercise area, the wings, etc.

In the *onstage* scenes we see them actually "on-stage" in various plays, portraying various characters.

A beautiful solution for staging "A Life in the Theatre" in a proscenium house was arrived at by Gregory Mosher and Michael Merritt, the play's first director and designer, respectively. They decided that it might be provocative if a *second* curtain were installed—this one on the *upstage* portion of the stage. It is behind this curtain that the audience for the "plays" in which John and Robert play sits.

This curtain is opened when John and Robert are onstage, which is to say, playing in a "play."

Thus we see the actors backs during the *onstage* scenes, and we get a full-face view of them during their moments *backstage*.

THE CHARACTERS

ROBERT, *An older actor*
JOHN, *A younger actor*

THE SCENE: Various spots around a theatre.

"We counterfeited once for your disport
Men's joy and sorrow; but our day has passed.
We pray you pardon all where we fell short—
Seeing we were your servants to this last."

ACTORS
Rudyard Kipling

MUSIC INFORMATION

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A Life In A Theatre

Scene 1

Backstage, after a performance.

Robert. Goodnight John.

John. Goodnight.

Robert. I thought the bedroom scene tonight was brilliant.

John. Did you?

Robert. Yes, I did. (*Pause.*) Didn't you think it went well?

John. (*Shrugs.*)

Robert. Well, I thought it went brilliantly.

John. Thank you.

Robert. I wouldn't tell you if it wasn't so. (*Pause.*)

John. Thank you.

Robert. Not at all. I wouldn't say it if it weren't so.

John. The show went well tonight.

Robert. I think it did.

John. They were very bright.

Robert. Yes. They were.

John. It was . . . (*Pause.*)

Robert. What?

John. An intelligent house. Didn't you feel?

Robert. I did.

John. They were very attentive.

Robert. Yes. (*Pause.*) They were acute.

John. Mmm.

ROBERT. Yes. (*Pause.*) They were discerning.

JOHN. I thought they were.

ROBERT. Perhaps they saw the show tonight (*Pause.*) . . . on another level. Another, what? another . . . plane, eh? On another level of meaning. Do you know what I mean?

JOHN. I'm not sure I do.

ROBERT. A plane of meaning. (*Pause.*)

JOHN. A plane.

ROBERT. Yes. I feel perhaps they saw a better show than the one we rehearsed.

JOHN. Mmm.

ROBERT. Yes. What are you doing tonight?

JOHN. What am I doing now?

ROBERT. Yes.

JOHN. Going out.

ROBERT. Mmm. (*Pause.*)

JOHN. For dinner.

ROBERT. Yes.

JOHN. I'm famished.

ROBERT. Yes.

JOHN. I haven't had an appetite for several days.

ROBERT. Well, we've opened now.

JOHN. Yes. (*Pause.*) I'm hungry.

ROBERT. Good. (*Pause.*)

JOHN. It almost makes me feel . . .

ROBERT. Go on.

JOHN. As if I'd earned the right . . . (*Pause.*) I was going to say "to eat," but I'm not sure that that is what I really meant.

ROBERT. What *did* you mean?

JOHN. A show like tonight's show . . .

ROBERT. Yes?

JOHN. Going out there . . .

ROBERT. Yes, go on.

JOHN. It makes me feel fulfilled.

ROBERT. Ah. (*Pause.*) Well, it can do that. (*Pause.*)

JOHN. I liked your scene.

ROBERT. You did?

JOHN. Yes.

ROBERT. Which scene?

JOHN. The courtroom.

ROBERT. You liked that?

JOHN. Yes.

ROBERT. I felt it was off tonight.

JOHN. You didn't.

ROBERT. Yes.

JOHN. It wasn't off to me.

ROBERT. Mmm.

JOHN. It did not seem off to me.

ROBERT. I felt that it was off.

JOHN. If you were off you didn't look it.

ROBERT. No?

JOHN. No.

ROBERT. Mmm.

JOHN. The *doctor* scene . . .

ROBERT. Yes?

JOHN. May have been a trifle . . .

ROBERT. Yes?

JOHN. Well . . .

ROBERT. Say it. What? The doctor scene was what? (*Pause.*)

JOHN. Brittle. (*Pause.*)

ROBERT. You thought that it was brittle?

JOHN. Well, I could be wrong.

ROBERT. I trust your judgement.

JOHN. No, I could be wrong. I have been out-of-sorts . . . my eating habits haven't been . . . they've been a little . . .

ROBERT. And you found it brittle, eh?

JOHN. Perhaps. I may have found it so. A bit.

ROBERT. *Overly* brittle?

JOHN. No, not necessarily .

ROBERT. (*Pause.*) The whole scene?

JOHN. No, no. No. Not the whole scene, no.

ROBERT. What then?

JOHN. A part. A part of it, perhaps.

ROBERT. I wish that you would tell me if you found the whole scene so.

JOHN. It's only an opinion—of a portion of the scene, and, in the last analysis, we're talking about a *word* . . .

ROBERT. (*Pause.*) Yes.

JOHN. I'm sorry if I sounded . . .

ROBERT. Not at all. I value your opinion.

JOHN. Yes. I know you do.

ROBERT. Young people in the theatre . . . tomorrow's leaders . . .

JOHN. (*Pause.*) Yes.

ROBERT. Both of us, or was it only me?

JOHN. Of course not. I told you that I thought *you* were superb. (*Pause.*) *She* was off.

ROBERT. You felt that too, eh?

JOHN. How could I not?

ROBERT. I know. You felt that, eh?

JOHN. I did.

ROBERT. Specifically tonight.

JOHN. Perhaps tonight especially .

ROBERT. Yes. (*Pause.*) Especially tonight.

JOHN. Yes.

ROBERT. Interesting. (*Pause.*) Yes.

JOHN. To me it's a marvel you can work with her at all. (*Pause.*) But to work with her so *well* . . .

ROBERT. You do the best you can.

JOHN. It's enviable.

ROBERT. The show goes on.

JOHN. I find much in that I must admire.

ROBERT. Well, thank you.

JOHN. Not at all. (*Pause.*)

ROBERT. You have a job to do. You do it by your lights, you bring your expertise to bear, your sense of rightness . . . fellow feelings . . . etiquette . . . professional procedure . . . there are tools one brings to bear . . . procedure.

JOHN. No, it's quite inspiring.

ROBERT. Thank you. (*Pause.*) The mugging is what gets me, eh?

JOHN. Mmm.

ROBERT. Stilted diction and the pregnant pauses I can live with.

JOHN. Yes.

ROBERT. The indicating and the mincing, these are fine, I can accept them.

JOHN. Yes.

ROBERT. But the mugging . . .

JOHN. Yes.

ROBERT. It rots my heart to look at it.

JOHN. I know.

ROBERT. No soul . . . no humanism.

JOHN. No.

ROBERT. No fellow-feeling.

JOHN. No.

ROBERT. I want to kill the cunt.

JOHN. Don't let it worry you.

ROBERT. It doesn't worry me. It just offends my sense of fitness.

JOHN. Mmm.

ROBERT. If I could do her in and be assured I'd get away with it, I'd do it with a clear and open heart. (*Pause.*)

JOHN. Mmm.

ROBERT. That she should be allowed to live—not just to *live* . . . but to parade around a stage . . .

JOHN. Yes.

ROBERT. And be *paid* for it . . .

JOHN. I totally agree with you.

ROBERT. She would make anyone look brittle.

JOHN. Mmm.

ROBERT. You bring me the man capable of looking flexible the moment that she, or those of her ilk, walk on stage.

JOHN. I can't.

ROBERT. No formal training.

JOHN. No.

ROBERT. No sense of right and wrong.

JOHN. She exploits the theatre.

ROBERT. She does.

JOHN. She capitalizes on her beauty. (*Pause.*)

ROBERT. What beauty?

JOHN. Her attractiveness.

ROBERT. Yes.

JOHN. It isn't really beauty.

ROBERT. No.

JOHN. Beauty comes from within.

ROBERT. Yes, I feel it does.

JOHN. She trades on it.

ROBERT. She'll find out. (*Pause.*) Perhaps.

JOHN. It is a marvel you can work with her.

ROBERT. It's not a marvel, John, you learn. You learn control. (*Pause.*) Character. A sense of right from wrong.

JOHN. Yes.

ROBERT. (*Pause.*) I tune her out.

JOHN. Mmm.

ROBERT. When we're on stage she isn't there for me.

JOHN. Mmmm. (*Pause.*)

ROBERT. How'd you like the table scene?

JOHN. I loved it.

ROBERT. My, that scene was *fun* tonight.

JOHN. It looked it.

ROBERT. Oh, it was.

JOHN. I wanted to be up there with you.

ROBERT. *Did* you?

JOHN. Yes.

ROBERT. Where?

JOHN. Up there.

ROBERT. At the dinnertable? (*Pause.*) You mean up there around the dinnertable, or up upon the stage? (*Pause.*)

JOHN. In the house.

ROBERT. Around the dinnertable?

JOHN. Yes.

ROBERT. Oh, yes, that scene was heaven. (*Pause.*) It made me glad to be alive.

JOHN. It showed.

ROBERT. The *audience* . . .

JOHN. Yes.

ROBERT. That scene was a little play. It was a *poem* tonight.

JOHN. Yes.

ROBERT. Just like a little *walnut.*

JOHN. Yes. (S.D. *Pause.*) How do you mean?

ROBERT. *You* know . . .

JOHN. No. (*Pause.*)

ROBERT. Well, I mean that it was *meaty* . . .

JOHN. Yes . . .

ROBERT. Uh, meaty on the *inside* . . .

JOHN. Yes?

ROBERT. And tight all round.

JOHN. Ah. (*Pause.*)

ROBERT. Now *that* is superior theatre.
JOHN. Yes. (*Pause.*) Mmm hmm.
ROBERT. Where did you say you were off to?
JOHN. Now?
ROBERT. Yes.
JOHN. I was going for dinner.
ROBERT. Ah.
JOHN. I've been feeling like a lobster.
ROBERT. Ah.
JOHN. All day.
ROBERT. Mmm. Shellfish.
JOHN. Yes. (*Pause.*)
ROBERT. I can't eat at night.
JOHN. No.
ROBERT. No. My weight.
JOHN. You're having trouble with your weight?
ROBERT. Yes, always. It's a constant fight.
JOHN. But you're trim enough.
ROBERT. Do you think so?
JOHN. Yes.
ROBERT. Then that makes it worthwhile. (*Pause.*) Thank you.
JOHN. Not at all. What are you up to this evening?
ROBERT. Now, you mean?
JOHN. Yes.
ROBERT. I thought I might go home and read.
JOHN. Ah.
ROBERT. Perhaps take a walk.
JOHN. Ah. (*Pause.*)
ROBERT. Why'd you ask?
JOHN. No real reason.
ROBERT. Oh.
JOHN. Just asked. I'm just asking.
ROBERT. Well, *I* thought that I'd take a walk.
JOHN. Mmm.

ROBERT. Why did you ask me that?

JOHN. No real reason at all. (*Pause.*) Unless you'd like to join me for a snack?

ROBERT. A snack. I really couldn't *eat* . . . (*Pause.*)

JOHN. Well, then, some coffee. I could use the company.

ROBERT. I'll walk with you a ways, then.

JOHN. Alright.

ROBERT. Good. (*Pause.*)

JOHN. You have some make-up on your face.

ROBERT. Where?

JOHN. There. Behind your ear.

ROBERT. Yes?

JOHN. Here. I'll get it. I'll get you some tissue.

ROBERT. It's alright.

JOHN. No. Wait. We'll get it off. (JOHN *goes after tissue,* ROBERT *stands on the stage. He does vocal exercises.*)

ROBERT. Did I get it on my coat?

JOHN. (S.D. *Returning with tissue.*) No. (*He moistens tissue with his saliva. Rubs it on* ROBERT'S *face.*) There.

ROBERT. Did we get it off?

JOHN. Yes.

ROBERT. Good. I didn't get it on my coat?

JOHN. No.

ROBERT. Good. Good. Thank you.

JOHN. Not at all. (*Pause.*)

ROBERT. Shall we go?

JOHN. Yes. (JOHN *casually tosses the crumpled tissue towards the trash receptacle stage right. It misses the container and falls on the floor.*)

ROBERT. Mmm. One moment. (ROBERT *crosses right, picks up the tissue and deposits it in the appropriate receptacle.*) Alright. All gone. Let's go. (*Pause.*) Eh?

JOHN. Yes.

ROBERT. I'm famished.
JOHN. Me too.
ROBERT. Good. (*They exit.*)

SCENE 2

ROBERT *and* JOHN *in the Wardrobe area. Dressing to go onstage in World War I play, dressed as "Doughboys."*

ROBERT. (S.D. ROBERT *hands* JOHN *a helmet.*) Your hat. (*Pause.*)
JOHN. Thank you.
ROBERT. Like an oven in here.
JOHN. Yes.
ROBERT. Got no space to *breathe.*
JOHN. No. (*Pause.*) Am I in your way?
ROBERT. No. Not at all. (*Pause.*) Quite the contrary.
JOHN. (*Handing* ROBERT *a helmet.*) Your hat.
ROBERT. I thank you. (*Pause. Soliloquising.*) My hat, my hat, my hat. (*Pause.*) Eh?
JOHN. *Mmm.*

SCENE 3

S.D. *This is an* onstage *scene. That is, it is a play-within-a-play.*

In all onstage *scenes, we see the two as if from upstage; that is, as if from the side of the stage* away *from the audience. So, we see the* back *of flats, etc.*

Also, as per the set diagram, in all onstage *scenes, we see an open curtain on the* real *upstage side of the set, and, beyond that, an auditorium.*

AT RISE: JOHN *and* ROBERT *dressed as Doughboys, smoking the last cigarette, in a trench.*

JOHN. They left him up there on the wire.

ROBERT. Calm down.

JOHN. Those bastards.

ROBERT. Yeah.

JOHN. My God. They stuck him on the wire and left him there for target practice.

ROBERT. (*Of cigarette.*) Gimme that.

JOHN. Those dirty, dirty bastards.

ROBERT. Yeah.

JOHN. My God.

ROBERT. Calm down.

JOHN. *He* had a home, *he* had a family. (*Pause.*) Just like them. *He* thought that he was going home. . . .

ROBERT. Relax, we'll all be going home.

JOHN. On the last day, Johnnie, on the *last day* . . .

ROBERT. That's the breaks, kid.

JOHN. Oh, my God, they're signin' it at noon. (*Pause.*) Poor Mahoney. Goes to raise the lousy flag, the Jerries cut him down like wheat . . . Johnnie, two more hours and we're going home. (*Pause.*) And those bastards went and cut him down. (*Pause.*)

ROBERT. That's the breaks.

JOHN. No. Not by me. Uh *uh.* Not by a long shot. (S.D. *Cocks his rifle.*)

ROBERT. What are you doing? (JOHN *gets up and peers over the trench.*) What are you doing, Billy? (JOHN *starts over the top.*)

JOHN. You hear me, Heinies? Huh? This is for

Richard J. Mahoney, Corporal A.E.F., from Dawson, Oklahoma. (*Pause.*) Do you hear me? It's not over yet. Not by a *long* shot. Do you hear me, Huns? (JOHN *jumps over trench.* JOHN *runs off right. A single shot is heard, then silence.* ROBERT *draws on his fag deeply, then stubs it out. He uncocks his rifle.*)

ROBERT. Well, looks like that's the end of it. . . .

SCENE 4

Backstage.

ROBERT *and* JOHN *have just completed a curtain call for an Elizabethan piece. They are dressed in Elizabethan garb and carry épées.*

ROBERT. Say, keep your point up, will you?

JOHN. When?

ROBERT. When we're down left, eh, right before the headcut. You've been getting lower every night.

JOHN. I'm sorry.

ROBERT. That's alright. Just make sure that you're never in line with my face. I'll show you: Look: (ROBERT *begins to demonstrate the fencing combination with* JOHN.) You *parry . . . parry . . . THRUST* (S.D. JOHN *thrusts épée near* ROBERT'S *face.*), but, see, you're thrusting high . . . aaaand *headcut.* May we try it one more time?

JOHN. (*Nods.*)

ROBERT. Good. (*They strike a pose and prepare to engage. They mime the routine, as* ROBERT *speaks lines.*) And: "But *fly* my *liege* and *think* no *more* of me." Aaaaaand *Headcut.* Eh? You're never in line with my face. We don't want any blood upon the stage. (ROBERT *"knocks wood" on the stage.*)

JOHN. No. (*Pause.*)

ROBERT. Please knock on wood. (*Pause,* JOHN *knocks.*) Good. Thank you.

SCENE 5

ROBERT *and* JOHN *are in a Dance Room.* JOHN *is lounging, sweaty, after working out a bit.* ROBERT *is working at the* barre.

ROBERT. Isn't it strange . . .

JOHN. Yes?

ROBERT. That people will spend time and money on their face and body . . .

JOHN. Mmm?

ROBERT. On smells, textures and appearances . . .

JOHN. Uh huh.

ROBERT. And yet are content to sound like shopgirls and sheepherders.

JOHN. Ummm. (*Pause.*)

ROBERT. It's quite as important as physical beauty.

JOHN. On the stage, you mean.

ROBERT. On the stage and otherwise.

JOHN. Mmmm.

ROBERT. *Sound!*

JOHN. Yes.

ROBERT. The Crown Prince of phenomena.

JOHN. Quite.

ROBERT. An ugly sound to me, is more offensive than an ugly odor.

JOHN. Really?

ROBERT. Yes. To me, an ugly *sound* is an extension of an ugly soul. An indice of lacking aesthetic. (*Pause.*)

I don't like them. I don't like ugly sounds. I don't like the folks that make them. (*Pause.*) You think that's harsh, don't you?

JOHN. Not at all.

ROBERT. You don't?

JOHN. No.

ROBERT. I know. I'm strange about this. It's a peeve of mine. To me it's like an odor. Sound. For it emanates from within. (*Pause.*) Sound and odor germinate within, and are *perceived* within. (*Pause.*) You see?

JOHN. No.

ROBERT. (*Pause.*) All that I am saying is that it comes from within. (*Pause.*) Sound comes from within. You see?

JOHN. Mmmm.

ROBERT. I am not opposed to odors. (*Pause.*) On principle.

JOHN. No. (*Pause.*)

ROBERT. Do you know when I was young my voice was very raspy.

JOHN. No.

ROBERT. But I was vain, I was untaught. I felt my vocal quality—a defect, in effect—was a positive attribute, a contributory portion of my style.

JOHN. Mmm.

ROBERT. What is style?

JOHN. What?

ROBERT. Style is *nothing.*

JOHN. No?

ROBERT. Style is a paper bag. Its only shape comes from its contents. (*Pause.*) However I was young. I made a fetish of my imperfections.

JOHN. It's a common fault.

ROBERT. It makes me blush today to think about it. (*Pause.*)

JOHN. Don't think about it. (*Pause.*)

ROBERT. You're right. (*Pause.*) You start from the beginning and go through the middle, and wind up at the end.

JOHN. Yes.

ROBERT. (*Pause.*) A little like a play. Keep your back straight.

JOHN. Mmm.

ROBERT. We must not be afraid of process.

JOHN. No.

ROBERT. We must not lie about our antecedents.

JOHN. No.

ROBERT. We must not be second-class citizens. (*Pause.*) We must not be clowns whose sole desire is "to please." We have a right to learn. (*Pause.*)

JOHN. Is my back straight?

ROBERT. No. (*Pause.*) Do you *follow* me?

JOHN. I think I do.

ROBERT. We must not be afraid to *grow*. We must support each other, John. This is the wondrous thing *about* the theatre, this potential.

JOHN. Mmmm.

ROBERT. Our history goes back as far as Man's. Our aspirations in the Theatre are much the *same* as man's. (*Pause.*) Don't you think?

JOHN. Yes. (*Pause.*)

ROBERT. We *are* society. Keep your back straight, John. The mirror is your friend. (*Pause.*) For a few more years. (*Pause.*) What have we to fear, John, from *phenomena?* (*Pause.*) We are explorers of the *soul.* (*Pause.*)

JOHN. (S.D. *Looking in the mirror.**) Is my back straight?

ROBERT. No.

SCENE 6

The end of the day. JOHN *is on the backstage telephone.*

JOHN. Oh, no. I can't. I'm going out with someone in the show. (*Pause.*) No, in fact, an Actor. (*Pause.*) I don't know . . . Midnight. (*Pause.*) I'd like that very much. (*Pause.*) Me, too. (*Pause.*) How have you been? (ROBERT *enters.*)

ROBERT. You ready?

JOHN. (*Covering phone.*) Yes. (*Into phone.*) I'll see you then. (*Pause.*) Bye. (*He hangs up telephone.*)

ROBERT. We all must have an outside life, John. This is an essential.

JOHN. Yes.

ROBERT. Who was it? (*Pause.*)

JOHN. A friend.

*NOTE. The "mirror" is imaginary. It is on the downstage lip of the stage, so in looking in the mirror the actors are looking out into the audience.

SCENE 7

A short scene in which JOHN *and* ROBERT *encounter each other coming into the theatre for an early morning rehearsal.*

ROBERT. Good morning.

JOHN. Morning.

ROBERT. 'Nother day, eh?

JOHN. Yes.

ROBERT. Another day. (*He sighs.*) Another Day.

SCENE 8

Before a performance. Both dressed in "Lawyer" clothes. At the make-up table, both facing out *making up for the night's performance in imaginary mirrors.*

JOHN. May I have the tissue, please? (S.D. *Tissue is passed.*) Thank you. How do you feel this evening?

ROBERT. Tight. I feel a little tight. It's going to be a vibrant show tonight. I feel coiled up.

JOHN. Mmm.

ROBERT. But I don't feel tense.

JOHN. No?

ROBERT. No. Never feel tense. I almost never feel tense on stage. I feel ready to act. That's a lovely brush.

JOHN. This?

ROBERT. No. The quarter-inch.

JOHN. This one?

ROBERT. Yes. Is it new?

JOHN. It's an eighth-inch.

ROBERT. That one?

JOHN. Yes.

ROBERT. That's an eighth-inch?

JOHN. Yes.

ROBERT. (*Pause.*) Well, it's awfully splayed, don't you think?

JOHN. No.

ROBERT. It's not splayed a bit?

JOHN. No.

ROBERT. Well, it's not *new* . . . Is it new?

JOHN. No, I've had it a while.

ROBERT. A while, eh?

JOHN. Yes.

ROBERT. A long while?

JOHN. Yes.

ROBERT. What is it, camel?

JOHN. It's sable.

ROBERT. (*Pause.*) Sable brushes. You keep your things well.

JOHN. Mmm.

ROBERT. It's impressive. No. It's one of the things which impressed me first about you.

JOHN. Mmm.

ROBERT. You take excellent care of your tools. (*Pause.*) May I ask you something, John?

JOHN. Of course.

ROBERT. Could you do me a favor?

JOHN. What?

ROBERT. (*Pause.*) In our scene tonight . . .

JOHN. Yes?

ROBERT. Mmmm . . .

JOHN. What?

ROBERT. Could you . . . perhaps . . . *do* less.

JOHN. *Do* less?

ROBERT. Yes.

JOHN. *Do* less???

ROBERT. Yes . . . (*Pause.*)

JOHN. Do less *what???*

ROBERT. You know.

JOHN. You mean . . . what do you mean?

ROBERT. (*Pause.*) You know.

JOHN. Do you mean I'm walking on your scene? (*Pause.*) What do you mean?

ROBERT. Nothing. It's a thought I had. An aesthetic consideration.

JOHN. Mmm.

ROBERT. I thought maybe if you *did* less. . . .

JOHN. Yes?

ROBERT. *You* know . . .

JOHN. If I *did* less.

ROBERT. Yes.

JOHN. Well, thank you for the thought.

ROBERT. I don't think you have to be like that.

JOHN. I'm sorry.

ROBERT. Are you?

JOHN. I accept the comment in the spirit in which it was, I am sure, intended.

ROBERT. It *was* intended in that spirit, John.

JOHN. I know it was.

ROBERT. How could it be intended otherwise?

JOHN. It couldn't.

ROBERT. Well, you *know* it couldn't.

JOHN. Yes, I know.

ROBERT. It hurts me when you take it personally. (*Stands. Starts to zip trousers.*) Shit!

JOHN. What?

ROBERT. My zipper's broken.

JOHN. Do you want a safety pin?

ROBERT. I have one. (*Looking for safety pin.*)

JOHN. (*Rising, starting to leave.*) Do you want me to send the woman in?

ROBERT. No. No. I'll manage. Shit. Oh, shit.

JOHN. You're sure?

ROBERT. Yes.

JOHN. You don't want the woman?

ROBERT. No. I do not want the woman. Thank you.

JOHN. You want me to pin it for you?

ROBERT. No.

JOHN. I'll do it. Let me pin it for you.

ROBERT. No. Thank you. No. I'll get it.

JOHN. Oh, come on. I'll do it. Come on. (*Pulls out chair.*) Get up here. Come on. Get up. (ROBERT *gets up on the chair.*) Give me the pin. Come on. (ROBERT *hands* JOHN *the pin.* JOHN *drops it on the floor.*) Shit. (JOHN *gets down on hands and knees to look for it.*)

ROBERT. Oh, Christ.

JOHN. You got another one?

ROBERT. No. Oh, Christ, come on. Come on.

JOHN. I'm *looking* for it, for God's sake.

ROBERT. There! (*Pointing.* S.D. JOHN *finds pin, turns to chair and starts to pin* ROBERT'S *fly.*)

JOHN. Stand still now.

ROBERT. Come on, come on. (JOHN *puts his face up against* ROBERT'S *crotch.*) Put it in.

JOHN. Just hold still for a moment.

ROBERT. Come *on,* for God's sake!

JOHN. Alright. Alright. You know, I think you're gaining weight . . .

ROBERT. Oh, fuck you. Will you stick it in?

JOHN. Hold still. There. (*Pins fly awkwardly.*)

ROBERT. Thanks a lot. (*He gets off the chair.*)

JOHN. Good show!

ROBERT. Thank you.

SCENE 9

S.D. *Onstage. A scene from a legal drama.* ROBERT *and* JOHN *dressed as Lawyers.*

Downstage right, a desk with an intercom and a cigar box and a lighter on it. Right of the desk,

a swivel chair, at which is seated ROBERT. *Upstage left an armchair.*

AT RISE: ROBERT *talking on the phone.*

N.B. *All directions refer to* actual *stage.*

ROBERT. Perhaps you find it harsh, but I do not. I've always felt that we were friends. (*Pause.*) I know you have, and so have I. (JOHN *enters the office,* ROBERT *motions him to sit. He sits.*) I know you have. I feel that there is some common ground, I feel our interests are similar. (*Pause.*) No, not identical, but similar, certainly negotiable. (ROBERT *offers* JOHN *a cigar from a humidor.* JOHN *refuses. Pause.*) I've always felt so. (*Pause.*) When? (*Pause.*) I'm sorry, I'm tied up the entire morning. (*Pause.*) Yes? (*Pause.*) Yes? (JOHN *rises and walks to look out the window.*) Alright then. (*Pause.*) And I'm sure this can be settled to our mutual satisfaction. (*Pause.*) So do I. I'll have my girl take care of it. (*Pause.*) Not at all. (*Pause.*) Not at all. (*Pause.*) And the very same to you. (*Pause.*) Good-bye. (*He hangs up the telephone. To* JOHN.) Forgive me, David.

JOHN. Not at all, I've just been admiring the view.

ROBERT. Lovely, isn't it?

JOHN. I should think one would get used to it.

ROBERT. Well, it's been *thirteen years* (S.D. *Stressing this line. It obviously is a plot point.*), and I haven't seemed to do so.

JOHN. Yes. (*Pause.*) It's funny, you know, how things attain the force of habit . . .

ROBERT. The force of habit . . . yes.

JOHN. Take me and Gillian. (*Pause.*)

ROBERT. Yes? (*Pause.*) Is that what you've come to talk about? (*The intercom rings.* ROBERT *into inter-*

com.) Hold all calls, please. (*To* JOHN.) Is there something wrong between you and Gillian?

JOHN. Gillian's going to have a baby.

ROBERT. Why, this is marvellous. How long have you known?

JOHN. Since this morning.

ROBERT. How marvellous!

JOHN. It isn't mine.

ROBERT. It's not.

JOHN. No.

ROBERT. Oh. (*Pause.*) I always supposed there was something one said in these situations . . . but I find . . . Do you know, that is, have you been told who the father is?

JOHN. Yes.

ROBERT. Really. Who is it, David?

JOHN. It's you, John.

ROBERT. Me!

JOHN. You!

ROBERT. No.

JOHN. Yes.

ROBERT. How preposterous.

JOHN. Is it?

ROBERT. You know it is.

JOHN. Do I?

ROBERT. Yes.

JOHN. Oh, John, John, John. (*Pause.*) I think that I'll have that cigar now. (S.D. ROBERT *hands* JOHN *cigar box. They each take a cigar.* ROBERT *picks up desk lighter and attempts to light cigars. Lighter does not work. He tries it again. It does not work. Again. It does not work.* JOHN *and* ROBERT *each sniff cigars and decide against smoking them, they replace them in the box.*)

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