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SF PERUSALS

Samuel French Acting Edition

The Men From The Boys

A Sequel to *The Boys in the Band*

by Mart Crowley

SAMUEL FRENCH

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The Men From the Boys
by Mart Crowley

had its World Premiere on October 26, 2002 at the New Conservatory Theatre Center, San Francisco, California, Ed Decker, Artistic Director. The scene design was by Eric Sinkkonen, the music by Larry Grossman, and the stage manager was Phillip Lienau. The play was produced and directed by Mr. Decker.

The cast was:

Donald.....Peter Carlstrom
Michael .....Russ Duffy
Emory.....Michael Patrick Gaffney
Scott..... Olen Christian Holm
Harold.....Will Huddleston
Hank.....Terry Lamb
Rick.....Rajiv Shah
Bernard.....Lewis Sims
Jason.....Owen Thomas

Special thanks to:

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THE MEN FROM THE BOYS
has been selected as a 2004 Lambda Literary Award Nominee

CHARACTERS

MICHAEL: 59, a comb-over, well groomed.

DONALD: 57, trim, ageing boy-next door.

EMORY: 62, pink, plump.

HANK: 61, distinguished.

BERNARD: 57, African American, good-looking.

SCOTT: 26, a beauty.

JASON: 33, pumped-up, sexy

RICK: 24, Asian American, cute.

HAROLD: 61, thin, pock-marked.

ACT I

THE SET: A deliberate reproduction of the concept for an East 50's Manhattan duplex (bedroom upstairs), designed by Peter Harvey for THE BOYS IN THE BAND: *a black-and-white photo blow-up collage of chic rooms (as seen in interior décor magazines), which completely covers all wall surfaces. Abstract and stylish.*

In the original production there were only "Deco" black Naugahyde chairs, a settee and a couple of chrome and glass side tables. That was it. In any case, the effect should be deliberately minimal, monochromatic and clean-lined without a single unnecessary item of dressing. Dramatic and anal. And, of course, it should positively scream "taste."

From a state of complete darkness the lights suddenly illuminate full-tilt to reveal a stage occupied by five characters from TBITB, *now thirty years older but still pulled-together. Their ages (and the state of their hair) are: MICHAEL, fifty-nine, thin-ish, or a meticulous, studied comb-over; EMORY, sixty-two, dyed auburn; BERNARD, fifty-seven, salt and pepper; DONALD, fifty-seven, blond/silver; and HANK, sixty-one, distinguished gray temples. HAROLD, sixty-one, with receding curly black hair, will enter eventually.*

This quintet is positioned formally at various interesting levels: standing with hands in pockets or arms folded; seated on a chair or a stool or the stairs. They all look directly at the audience, completely poker-faced (sad? dazed? imperious?), as if caught in an artfully composed still of the early Avedon/Stern school. All wear suits or jackets and ties: EMORY in a Charvet bow cravat

and black velour suit (minus the jacket); MICHAEL in a charcoal gray flannel two-piece Armani and solid charcoal tie. DONALD, has loosened his striped rep, unfastened his button-down collar and removed his navy Brooks Brothers blazer to sling it over his shoulder.

The "men" of the title are lit in hotter pools of light than three new "boys," who face upstage with their backs to the audience. They are SCOTT, twenty-six, JASON, a thirty-something, both Caucasians; and RICK, twenty-four, an Asian-American. They are all dressed in more relaxed, up-to-the-minute styles from slacks and pullovers to jeans and jackets with T-shirts. They are scattered among the originals, posed in more casual attitudes: draped against the stairs, lolling on the back of the sofa or lying on the floor, propped on an arm. Their facial attitudes are concealed, but their body language varies from studied casual to subtly provocative.

After the "shock illumination" of the frieze, there is what seems to be an interminable *pause. We hear only the sound of heavy rain and EMORY's delicately pulling a needle and yarn through a small, unfinished petit point pattern. The dimmer circles of light sneak to the level of the hotter ones. No one moves or speaks. The older characters continue to stare straight forward, enigmatic; the younger ones remain turned-away, their attitudes unknown. Then, just as the audience is about to break with restless nervousness, in reaction to the prolonged silence, stillness and scrutiny, EMORY starts to cough uncontrollably. Everyone else slowly, deliberately turns his head without moving his body to glare at EMORY (disapprovingly? sympathetically? affectlessly?) and hold until EMORY calms, heavily clears his throat.*

—Finally, EMORY sheepishly scans the sea of attention, chagrined at everyone looking at him ....

EMORY. *(Tongue-in-cheek.)* — It must be the excitement. — We're having too much fun here.

(No one cracks a smile. Not a titter. They all continue to look at EMORY a moment longer (contempt? compassion? indifference?), then DONALD breaks the mood, flings his blazer aside, goes to a drinks cart and pours a crystal tumbler of water from a pitcher.)

MICHAEL. *(Sardonically.)* Excitement, indeed! Some "celebration of life"! It's so fucking quite in here, you could hear boll weevils pissing on cotton!

DONALD. *(Palm to ear.)* Listen! I think I hear them! — No, it's just pissing with rain.

MICHAEL. Let's have some music, Bernard. Liven-up this taffy-pull.

BERNARD. *(Facetiously.)* Sure. I'll just put on a little gangsta rap.

(BERNARD goes to an étagère, begins to shuffle through some CDs.)

MICHAEL. *(Dryly, offhand.)* You do and there's gonna be some strange fruit hangin' from the poplar trees.

(EMORY, with an arched "Ahem!" clears his throat at MICHAEL's "wit." RICK, the exotically attractive Asian-American, speaks up ...)

RICK. *(To MICHAEL.)* Is that a racist remark?

BERNARD. *(Weary, tongue-in-cheek.)* — Well, Michael's not exactly out in a cornfield at midnight, burning crosses. His ambivalent generation of so-called Southern liberals has just got to *die*-out, before its tacit gut feelings are completely extinct. *(Dryly.)* — It shouldn't be too long now.

(Meanwhile, DONALD has crossed to EMORY, hands him a tumbler.)

DONALD. — Here, Emory, drink some water.

EMORY. Is it bottled or just from the tap?

MICHAEL. *(Quickly, on edge.)* It's from the toilet. It's toilet water. Every morning I submerge an empty Evian bottle in the toilet. It's multipurpose eau de toilette — you can either drink it or put it behind your ears.

(EMORY shoots MICHAEL a withering look, takes a sip from the tumbler, returns it to DONALD.)

EMORY. *(Sweetly.)* Thanks, Donald. You're a real sis'.

(This remark is met with some audible groans from JASON, BERNARD and DONALD. (Note: There is an open bottle of Dom Perignon in a wine cooler on the cart and HANK and RICK each take a sip of champagne from flutes already in their hands.)
Everyone begins to shift, get up and move about. All except SCOTT, the loner with the knockout good looks, who noticeably remains apart from the group — perhaps leaning on the far side of the stairs, hands in pockets, staring into space.)

BARNARD. *(Generally, re: EMORY.)* Wouldn't you know she only drinks designer water.

EMORY. Don't say "she"! You, of all people, know that's *not* politically correct! *(Big flirty smile to JASON.)* — Is it, Jason? —

BERNARD. *(Quickly, to EMORY.)* Calling people "sis" is not exactly *enlightened.*

(JASON, proletariat activist, gym-body, sexy in an obvious way, turns at the mention of his name....)

JASON. It's all right, Emory. We make allowances for those who have gone before.

EMORY. *(Drawing himself up.)* Do I detect the remotest innuendo that I am slightly older than you?

JASON. *(To EMORY.)* You planted the redwoods, didn't you?

(Some scattered laughter. EMORY makes a quick decision to take the high road....)

EMORY. *(To JASON, mock-insulted.)* Oh, you're *terrible! (Coy, a beat.)* — But I like you.

(JASON looks indifferent, turns away. EMORY recovers with a certain practiced (and practical) dignity, joins BERNARD at the étagère to select CDs.)

DONALD. Did you know the U.N. declared this "The Year of the Older Person"?

JASON. I'm glad they *declared* something.

MICHAEL. *(Still on earlier thought.)* — I *am* the most liberal Confederate who ever lived! Why, when I was sixteen my father gave me a convertible, and do you know my best friend was a black gay boy. — Oh, he'd have to sit in the back seat, of course, so no one would say anything. It was the acceptable, hypocritical, *idiotic* way things were done.

BERNARD. If you'd had any guts, you'd have made him sit in the front.

MICHAEL. Then he'd have looked like the chauffeur.

BERNARD. In the *passenger* seat *beside* you!

MICHAEL. Funny thing, Bernard, dear. Neither of us wanted our balls between a split rail. We were smart. *We played the system.*

JASON. Somebody has to put their balls on the line sometime.

MICHAEL. *(Re: empty flutes.)* Jason, why don't you *act-up* like the old days and freshen everyone's drinks. You're so good at it.

JASON. That's why I'm a bartender *these* days — on my *working hours.*

MICHAEL. Oh, well, if you're offended and going to picket or protest this solemn occasion then ....

(JASON ignores MICHAEL, goes to the bar cart as RICK, the young Asian-American, speaks....)

RICK. *(To EMORY.)* You're the first real interior decorator I've ever been around.

EMORY. Designer. We prefer interior *designer*. Like flight attendants prefer "flight attendant" instead of "stewardess."

JASON. Or "steward," if you happen to be a man.

EMORY. *(Quick and pointed.)* So few are.

BERNARD. *(To JASON.)* You've had more careers that anybody I know.

JASON. *(Refills his flute.)* Mmm, I've careered from career to career, to quote somebody, and guess what? —

MICHAEL. You're still queer.

JASON. I'm still a major fuck-up.

DONALD. *(Crosses to JASON.)* I thought *I* held that title.

JASON. Just can't seem to find my calling.

BERNARD. Why *not* go into politics? Being a fuck-up seems to be a prerequisite.

JASON. *I'm* too old for that. Haven't got a law degree and haven't got the money to get one. Had to drop out, as it was. *(To DONALD.)* — What can I do for you, sir?

DONALD. *(Bit too flirtatious.)* Beer. — No, a glass of wine. — No, an extra dry Bombay martini on the rocks, please?

EMORY. Beer!-Wine!-Booze! Make up your mind! It's readiness that makes a woman!

JASON. — More champagne, Hank?

HANK. No, thanks.

JASON. *(Re: empty bucket.)* We need ice. —

MICHAEL. There's no ice? — I thought ....

DONALD. *(Picks up bucket.)* I'll get it.

SCOTT. — *I'll* get it. — Sorry.

(DONALD stops. Everyone reacts to SCOTT having spoken. He goes

to DONALD, takes the silver ice bucket.)

DONALD. *(To SCOTT.)* You don't mind doing it?

SCOTT. *(For MICHAEL's benefit.)* I'll do anything if I'm not humiliated.

MICHAEL. *(To SCOTT, calmly, seriously.)* Did I humiliate you? — Have I *ever* humiliated you? *(No answer.)* — Well? — *(SCOTT exits off left to kitchen.)* — I guess that was a rhetorical question.

EMORY. *(CDs in hand.)* — So, what are we going to do, kids? Put on some music and dance our tits off?

DONALD. *(Moving away.)* I'd rather be in a ditch.

EMORY. *(Ever the fun one.)* Well, then, I just heard about this marvelous new party game! Everyone takes his clothes off and forms two parallel lines, facing each other. And then, when someone yells, "Go!" the two lines make a mad stampede toward each other ... and the first one that get in gets a kiss! *(He breaks himself up, laughing. Nobody else cracks a smile, just glares at him again. Trying to save the moment.)* I forgot to say condoms are passed out first. — Does that it make it funnier? *(Silence.)* — Okay, why don't we all just pull on our wetsuits and grovel around on top of each other?

MICHAEL. *(Grimly, calmly.)* — There will be no dancing. There will be no games played. And for the duration of this event, no one is allowed to take off so much as a necktie. For that, you'll have to see some *serious* gay theatre. All-male nude Chekhov, that sort of thing.

BERNARD. *(To EMORY.)* No nudity tonight. Not with *this* crowd. *(Looks at JASON.)* — Well, not with *most* of this crowd.

RICK. *(Re: earlier thought.)* I'm glad we're not gonna play that game!

EMORY. *(To RICK, sympathy.)* Me, too, actually. Because of a few unwanted kilos. But, I'll soon have a new bod. I now have a personal trainer and he's marvelous. — He said to me, "First we lose the weight, then we sculpt."

BERNARD. That ought to be as simple as chopping a fifth face

on Mount Rushmore.

EMORY. I've lost four pounds! Can't you tell?

DONALD. Not from *this* angle.

BERNARD. *(Re: music.)* Whatta you want, Michael? *(Quickly.)* — EllaMabelJudyPeggyBarbara — or Bobby?

MICHAEL. You know I won't own any Streisand.

EMORY. *(Holding up a CD.)* Yes, you do, right here, The Second Album, the one that's got "When in Rome" on it.

MICHAEL. That belongs to Harold.

JASON. Is there anything that was written in the last forty years? *(MICHAEL gives JASON a look as SCOTT enters with the filled bucket. BERNARD puts on Chet Baker's recording of "Tenderly"* or a similar style recording. To SCOTT, taking bucket.)* Thanks, Scott. — What'll it be?

SCOTT. *(Dryly.)* I'll have some of that toilet water. With a twist.

(JASON puts some ice in the martini he has made, hands it to DONALD.)

JASON. Donald. —

DONALD. Thanks. — *(JASON pours SCOTT an Evian water. SCOTT returns to the outer limits by the stairs. DONALD sips drink, reacts.)* Oh, yeah, Jason, that's good.

JASON. *(Smiles noncommittally.)* Thank you sir. —

(JASON walks away from the drinks cart with a can of Diet Coke just as EMORY says ...)

EMORY. I'd like some coffee. —

(JASON pops the top of the Diet Coke can and drinks. EMORY forces a stiff smile at being ignored. RICK puts down his drink, picks up

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a silver coffeepot and cup and saucer from the drinks cart.)

RICK. *(Pleasantly, to EMORY re: coffee.)* How do you like it?

EMORY. *(Campily sultry.)* Like I like my men.

BERNARD. *(To EMORY, re: RICK.)* Sorry, he ain't got no gay coffee!

EMORY. *(Snaps.)* I meant hot and café au lait!

BERNARD. He knows what you meant. And he still doesn't give a shit.

(EMORY sucks a tooth, nose in the air. SCOTT and MICHAEL exchange a look at the mention of "English" and "school." SCOTT turns away. RICK picks up the silver coffeepot, looks at it appreciatively.)

RICK. *(Ingenuously, not a trace of chichi.)* What a nice coffeepot. — Nice and simple, you know.

(RICK pours EMORY a cup....)

EMORY. And a lovely ice bucket too. Really too lovely for ice. *(To MICHAEL.)* You ought to float a pansy in it.

MICHAEL. *("Menacingly.")* I might just do that. Facedown.

(RICK hands the coffee to Emory....)

RICK. *(Pleasantly.)* There you go, Emory. —

EMORY. *(Taking the cup, with flirty charm.)* Merci, mille fois.

RICK. *(Innocently.)* Oh, you speak French?

EMORY. No, I was just .... Well, it's hard to explain exactly. It's what used to be called *charm.* — Of course, that was a while back. — *(A look to JASON.)* Only those who've "gone before" might remember.

RICK. *(Back a beat, to EMORY.)* — I just thought with a name

like Em-or-*ee* … and café au lait … *(Re: MICHAEL.)* and him saying the thing about Evi*an (French pronunciation of Evian: "Aye-vee-anh.")* … and ….

MICHAEL. *(Tolerantly.)* I have a name, too, and it's not *him*, it's Michael.

RICK. *(Conciliatory.)* — Sorry. *(Continuing to EMORY.)* — And *Michael* here, saying the thing about … well, I don't know, I just thought you might be French or something. — Cause *I* speak French.

(EMORY is silent, thinking this over.)

MICHAEL. *(To EMORY.)* Did you follow that? Or were you knocked senseless by *The Great Language Barrier Reef of Time?*

EMORY. *(To RICK, simply.)* Emory was my mother's family name and she wasn't French. — At least, if she was she never told *me.*

RICK. My mother *was* French. Well, French-Vietnamese.

MICHAEL. *(To RICK, slightly grand.)* — I don't believe we've been formally introduced. —

RICK. *(Extends his hand.)* Oh, I should have introduced myself.

MICHAEL. — I mean, you *look* familiar, but ….

RICK. *(Shakes hands with MICHAEL.)* I'm out of uniform.

(MICHAEL reacts oddly, takes this in.)

HANK. *(To RICK.)* Well, *I* know you. — I remember you nights — mostly nights.

RICK. *(To MICHAEL.)* — Yeah, the graveyard shift. I'm a practical nurse. Part time.

MICHAEL. Oh, of course, you are!

RICK. *(Tentatively.)* — When Larry couldn't sleep, we'd talk — or I'd just hold his hand. We … became quite close. — He gave me some of his artwork … stuff he had in his room. And some books. *(To HANK.)* — I hope you don't mind.

HANK. Why should I? They were his things.

RICK. *(To MICHAEL.)* — I know I wasn't exactly invited, but I thought it was kind of an open house ….

MICHAEL. *(Chagrined.)* Oh, it is. — Why, you're *very, very* welcome, Rick. I just don't remember you. I wasn't there much in the evening, but, then, Larry tended to keep people in his life rather compartmentalized.

JASON. It's kind of a gay thing, don't you think?

SCOTT. *(Involuntarily.)* Yeah. Friends, anyway. —

MICHAEL. *("Graciously.")* Well, now, Rick … what do you do when you're not *nursing*?

RICK. I'm an art student. Part time. Larry encouraged me to enroll in Parsons. He said if I'd go he'd pay for my tuition.

MICHAEL. I see. — *(HANK reacts with mild surprise. BERNARD looks to HANK. MICHAEL looks to SCOTT again — who turns away again — then to DONALD. Remembers; generally.)* Oh, uh, there are some hot hors d'oeuvres! — I don't know where my mind is.

DONALD. *(Re: SCOTT.) I* do.

(MICHAEL shoots DONALD a look.)

EMORY. *(To RICK; French pronunciation for "design.")* Michael has Cuisine "Duhzine" do the food! I love their takeout! They make the best Vol-Au-Vent. *(RICK stares at him blankly. NOTE: the name of the caterer is "Cuisine Design," but pronounced, as if in French. Getting up, sighs.)* Well, if no one else is going to do it…. So what else is nouvelle?

MICHAEL. *Don't* use the microwave.

EMORY. *(Very American accent.)* Jamais, sher*ee*. It dries 'em out.

(EMORY exits to the kitchen.)

BERNARD. *(To MICHAEL.)* Is Larry's mother coming?

MICHAEL. *(Shakes his head.)* Had to get back to Philadelphia.

HANK. — The older brother never liked me. He "disapproved." I called him when Larry got sick, but it was the same old story. I'm not surprised he didn't show. But Larry's mother and stepfather managed to get here before he died. They stayed with us … I mean, with me. — *(BERNARD comes over to HANK, puts his arm around him and comforts him. The group watches stoically. Quietly appreciative.)* Thanks, Bernard. This may sound strange, but you know, even after all these years I can't say I really knew Larry all that well. Do you find that some sort of demented statement?

BERNARD. No.

SCOTT. *(To no one in particular.)* Who ever knows anybody? You never know what's really going on with someone.

HANK. *(Absently.)* Yeah. —

(MICHAEL takes note of SCOTT's remark.)

BERNARD. I think we always keep some part of ourselves *to* ourselves.

HANK. — Larry had his secrets, of course. But that, in its way, had its allure. He was always a little bit of a mystery to me. And, I think, to a degree, to himself too.

BERNARD. I sure don't think I know myself. —

JASON. Does anyone, really?

BERNARD. — I mean … I don't think I can *explain* myself.

HANK. I know that even at my age I'm still finding out things about myself.

RICK. Me, too.

HANK. Now that it's over, I feel relief. And that's the truth. I feel so *relieved* that the nightmare is finally fucking over.

(A moment of silence. EMORY enters with a silver tray of canapés. All heads swivel to him—a repeat of the opening tableau when he

coughed. The room is hushed. All heads follow EMORY as he crosses to HANK.)

EMORY. *(To HANK.)* Doughnut, soldier? — Sorry, *finger food?*
HANK. *(Has to laugh.)* No, thanks, Emory.

(EMORY passes among the group.)

EMORY. — Cheese puffs? Meatballs? Rumaki? — If that dates me, how about: cellulars, nicotine patches, sex toys?
RICK. *(Re: the tray of food.)* Very artistic, Emory. — The presentation.
EMORY. I'm a born stylist.

(There are reactions of "Mmmm." Some take a canapé and a paper napkin from him, some do not. He comes to MICHAEL, who does not take anything, just stares icily at him ....)

MICHAEL. You used the microwave, didn't you?
EMORY. No, I didn't.
MICHAEL. *Liar.*
HANK. *(Picking up thought.)* — The time had long since past when we were physical with each other, but emotionally, we couldn't have been closer. He wanted to die. And he wanted me to *help* him die.
RICK. *(To HANK.)* And did you?
HANK. I would never to able to go on living with myself if I'd actually fed him the pills. — That's funny, because I think I'm capable of *anything* — even killing someone. — Anyway, I agreed to be with him — stay with him up to the point where he would swallow them — but I told him I wanted to leave before he did.
JASON. You have to be so careful of the fucking law.
HANK. — I said I'd give him a scrambled egg so there'd be a little something in his stomach — give him a Dramamine so that he

wouldn't vomit and strangle. But he'd have to actually *do* it himself. Swallow the pills alone. But in the end he didn't.

MICHAEL. *(Looks at his watch.)* Oh, where the hell is Harold?!

JASON. He must be caught in the rain.

EMORY. Oh, rain or shine, Harold'll be late for his *own* memorial.

BERNARD. I saw him at the service. — Didn't you see him, Donald?

DONALD. *(Nods.)* With something very blond. — Well, from the neck up.

(The front door buzzer sounds....)

MICHAEL. Speak of the devil.

(MICHAEL goes to the panel beside the front door down right, presses a release button, tears open the door and goes out into the hallway.)

HANK. *(To no one in particular.)* — Larry conned every doctor in town out of pills. He made sure he had a stash. He never told anybody, and he never took them. Not a single one. — But he made sure he had them ... and yet, he wouldn't take them. — Explain that.

EMORY. I'd have had Kevorkian on the speed dial.

(MICHAEL returns.)

EMORY. Is it Hallie?

MICHAEL. No, it's the super. — Scott, did you chain your bike in the entry?

SCOTT. Yeah, to the radiator. Why, is it in the way?

MICHAEL. He wants to mop up the rainwater or something. Bring it up here.

(SCOTT puts his glass on the stair rung, crosses and goes out.

MICHAEL shuts the door.)

HANK. *(Weeps.)* — Forgive me, I seem to be the only one wallowing in this.

DONALD. Don't be ridiculous, Hank.

(BERNARD helps sit HANK down, takes HANK's handkerchief out of his jacket pockets and dries his eyes for him.)

HANK. *(Re: his tears.)* I'm sorry, I really am. This is supposed to be a "Celebration of Life."

EMORY. Frankly, if I never attend another "Celebration of Life" as long as I live, it'll be too fucking soon! — And *if* I receive another invitation to a "Celebration of Life," I *hope* there's a scratch-and-sniff cyanide capsule enclosed! — These post-funeral "Cocktail Huddles" only make you wonder who's next?!

BERNARD. How can you say such a thing!

EMORY. I'm just saying for *me*, all these things have begun to blur. — I know it sounds polit …

MICHAEL. If you say "politically incorrect," I'm going to rip out your tongue and slice it for sandwiches.

(The sound of a key in the lock in the front door is heard. The door is opened by SCOTT, who rolls his bike inside and recloses it. He leans it against the wall. JASON crosses to the bike, stoops to "investigate" it.)

JASON. *(Re: SCOTT's bike.)* There's not a mark on it. Looks just like it did the night I sold it to you. From the way you were talking, I thought ….

SCOTT. It's just the idea that it was stolen out of my apartment that made me feel so ….

JASON. It had to be an inside job. — Maybe one of your friends was just playing a trick on you. After all, it was returned to you.

SCOTT. I found it in the foyer of my building. Lying under the stairs, like it'd been dumped.

(SCOTT looks to see MICHAEL is staring at him and JASON. So is RICK. SCOTT moves away from JASON and remains apart from the group as EMORY bites loudly into a celery stalk. Everyone turns to stare at him.)

HANK. *(Continuing.)* — Larry loved his students and by God, he would go to class when he really didn't have the strength to even stand up. He taught when he was in such pain most of us would have ...

DONALD. Begged for a morphine drip ....

BERNARD. But Larry was clean and sober. Like Michael and me. We all wound up in different "rooms."

MICHAEL. *(Almost to himself.)* Ah, those rooms. Some dead, some dying.

BERNARD. *(Upbeat.)* But some saved.

HANK. *(Smiles to himself.)* — My son said we needed God in the bullpen, but He was out of town with another team.

MICHAEL. What I don't understand about Christian Science is that you can have a million facelifts, but you won't go to a doctor.

BERNARD. Larry never had a facelift! Some people just look that good.

HANK. And he wasn't a Christian Scientist. He was a Scientologist.

DONALD. He *was.*

HANK. Well, for about five minutes.

BERNARD. He liked to try everything. I'm all for that.

EMORY. Remember when he was in EST? — Once upon a time. *(To JASON.)* I know you weren't born yet, so just cut me in half and count the rings.

BERNARD. *(Re: drugs and booze.)* And he *Just Said No* up until he had to be taken to the hospital and then other people — doctors —

started making the decisions.

RICK. *(Reflectively.)* I only met him after he was first hospitalized.

JASON. Did he ever come to terms with it?

BERNARD. Come to terms with what?

JASON. Being ashamed of what he had?

HANK. Ashamed?

JASON. — Come on, guys, we've really got to get over this stigma thing.

(A slight pause ....)

BERNARD. Larry didn't die of AIDS.

JASON. Well, I know that's the official story.

BERNARD. That's the *true* story! He died of *cancer.*

MICHAEL. — Cancer without the "quotes." The respectable kind. The *esteemed* kind. The kind you get where it doesn't show.

EMORY. Pancreatic.

RICK. — Yeah, that's what was on his chart.

JASON. I though it was ....

MICHAEL. We know what you thought! Gay men *do* die of other things! They do die of prostate tumors and heart attacks and get blown up on planes and all the rest of those good things, just like real people!

EMORY. Or they're *murdered.*

MICHAEL. Or — they just die of old age. Their medical profiles are impeccable but they're so old that when they pee, sand comes out.

DONALD. *(Absently.)* The thing about a real good heart attack is that it's fast.

EMORY. The good thing about Alzheimer's is that you get to hide your own Easter eggs.

BERNARD. What's good about *that*?

EMORY. Forget it. *(Realizes.)* — Sorry!

HANK. What's good about cancer?

BERNARD. Nothing, except it's possible to beat it, and that's good.

EMORY. *(Generally.)* You can get over a heart attack. Michael did.

JASON. *(Sarcastically.)* You can't get over a *fatal* one. *(To EMORY.)* — Are you sure Michael had a heart attack. Maybe it was just a pain down in his arm from the weight of his Rolex.

MICHAEL. You'll be happy to know I can't afford a Rolex and disappointed to hear I *do* have a heart.

JASON. It's only disappointing that you have such a *strong* one. — You know, Michael, you may be the most cynical person I've ever encountered....

MICHAEL. Then they oughtta let you out more often!

BERNARD. *Please.* Could we just ....

MICHAEL. — I see no reason for *"Forced Family Fun."* Must we *pretend* to be gay — and by that I mean it in the linguistically traditional sense of the word, gay?!

JASON. That is the one thing you'll never have to pretend, in any sense.

EMORY. *(Privately amused, to JASON, coyly.)* Oh, you're *terrible*! — But I like you.

JASON. *(Heated.)* I'm sick of self-centered retros like you, who wouldn't get their Guccis stepped on, fighting for what they believe that are ...

HANK. *(Rises, the peacemaker.)* Now, wait a minute, fellas! This is not why we're here. —

MICHAEL. I'm beginning to wonder why some of us *are* here.

RICK. You mean me.

MICHAEL. *(Bluntly, tolerantly.)* I *said* you were welcome!

JASON. He means *me*. He's never liked me and never liked the fact that Larry liked me.

MICHAEL. *(Testily.)* Doesn't anyone of this enlightened generation know how rude it is to refer to someone in the third person who happens to be standing in his presence.

JASON. You hate me and my political agenda. And you hated my relationship with Larry — which was none of your goddamn business.

MICHAEL. You didn't even know what he died of! What *relationship*?!

JASON. We were friends. Sometimes *loving* friends. At one time Larry and I happened to be what he called "occasional regulars."

(HANK looks away.)

RICK. Does that mean what I think it means?

JASON. It means what it means. I mostly bumped into him at Fire Island. —

EMORY. Are people still going there?

JASON. You can't kill human nature. You can *die* of it, but you can't kill it.

EMORY. *(Placating JASON.)* I see nothing wrong with patrolling the lush, dark, tedious Pines — if you play safe....

BERNARD. *(To EMORY, bluntly.)* You have hookers. That's hardly safe!

EMORY. I do not!

BERNARD. Bullshit. You don't know whether they're going to infect you or cut your fucking throat.

JASON. — When I saw him in the hospital, I was blown away. He'd been so hot ... for an older guy. *(To MICHAEL.)* — So I made a mistake about what he died of! So, sue me!

MICHAEL. It's the city *you* ought to sue — for those legs.

JASON. What?

MICHAEL. You've got Sue-The-City-Legs. You ought to sue the city for building the sidewalk so close to your ass!

DONALD. *(To MICHAEL.)* You ought to keep your personality on a leash.

MICHAEL. You thought he'd been punished by God for his way of life!

JASON. That sounds more like something *you'd* think. I'm just sorry I jumped to a conclusion.

EMORY. If you're going to jump, you may as well dive. — It gives a better line.

JASON. *(To HANK.)* I went to Larry's funeral *because* of the feeling I had for him. *(To MICHAEL.)* And I'm *here* because of it. Throw me out if you want to! *You're* not my friend! Larry was! I'm here for *him.* — And for myself.

BERNARD. If this is going to turn into something other than what it's meant to be, I'm going home. I've learned my lesson in this living room.

MICHAEL. Yeah, here we are back in the same old living room.

BERNARD. *(Moving to leave.)* With the same old queens!

DONALD. Wait, Bernard ... we're *all* upset.

EMORY. And you're all acting like kids!

HANK. *(After a moment.)* — Well, the grown-ups are acting like kids. The kids are acting quite grown-up. Rick has barely opened his mouth. And Scott hasn't said a word at all. — *(SCOTT shifts uncomfortably, crosses to the bar cart to pick up a Diet Coke and go behind the stairs, his back to the group. Calmly.)* Look ... we're here to share our sorrow and we're free to act as angry and frustrated and scared and sad and depressed as we feel.

MICHAEL. *(Musically, "great star" largesse; lovely smile.)* — *And* as "happy." — *(For JASON's benefit.)* Or ... we're free to feel just as sad as if he *had* died of AIDS.

DONALD. *(To MICHAEL.)* Why don't you have a double Shirley Temple and cool it.

(MICHAEL bristles at DONALD's remark. The door buzzes.)

EMORY. Well, final*ment*!

(EMORY sits on the floor, behind the coffee table, leaning against the sofa. MICHAEL goes to press the release button, opens the front

door, goes out into the hallway.)

HANK. Is it Harold?
MICHAEL. *(Offstage.)* No. Flowers, I think.
JASON. Who needs a refill?

(JASON goes to the bar cart, takes the Dom Perignon out of its cooler and goes to refill glasses — HANK's, EMORY's, RICK's. MICHAEL returns with beautiful, elegantly arranged, home-grown cut flowers in a vase.)

EMORY. *(Impressed.)* Oh, my, who sent that?!
MICHAEL. Do I know? They're for Hank.
EMORY. I can live without food, but I can't live without flowers.
BERNARD. Then you better lay off the chocolate-covered nasturtiums.

(HANK opens the card.)

HANK. *(Reads card.)* They're from Patsy and Jessica.
EMORY. The butch dykes who run the animal clinic? *(Quickly corrects.)* — The rather male-identified professional women in the country ...?
RICK. *(To MICHAEL re: flowers.)* Where're you going to put them.
EMORY. Well, Lady Astor always said, "Build a garden under a lamp." *And she oughtta know.*

(MICHAEL gives EMORY a look, plonks the bouquet in the middle of the coffee table, completely covering EMORY from view.)

JASON. *(To EMORY.)* Don't you have any consciousness at all?
EMORY. *(Rising into view.)* I'm kidding, for Christ's sake!! That was a joke, you serious, solemn, sex machine! — *Although*, I must tell you, dykes do not eat egg salad sandwiches and they don't pack their

clothes in tissue paper. *That* is a verite.

(BERNARD looks away. JASON shakes his head.)

HANK. *(Ignoring everyone.)* — I haven't been to the country for weeks, and Patsy and Jessica have been so good about the dogs and the plants and the pipes — they've really taken care of the place for us. — Well, for me, now.

JASON. I don't know that gay men are going to be as supportive. Can you see us marching for breast cancer?

DONALD. Yeah, we're not really interested in their culture — I mean, we don't read lesbian novels or see the latest lesbian film, when it's almost a supposition that they support gay men's art. —

MICHAEL. Gay guys are so much more self-involved. They'll just continue in their me-me-me, gym-gym-gym, sex-sex-sex, business-as-usual way.

HANK. *(Continuing.)* — Larry was only sixty. That's too young to die.

RICK. With all due respect, that's old to me. He seemed so much younger.

JASON. *(To HANK.)* Was he really sixty?

HANK. He knocked a few years off, but he was sixty. It was hard for him to get old. He was the kind of guy who was meant to be young and handsome forever.

MICHAEL. There's no such thing as fair — there's just luck. If I had to be born at all, I'd rather been born male than female, rich rather that poor, straight instead of gay. It would have made life much easier *not* to have been gay. *(Looks at BERNARD.)* — And some of us got a double whammy, right Bernard?

BERNARD. I'm surprised you didn't say, "Some of us got it in spades." If you want to hate, there's always something to hate about everybody.

MICHAEL. — I'd rather be white instead of black, brown, yellow or red. And that's just the way I feel. — I'd rather be gentile

rather than Jewish, Protestant rather than Catholic. Actually I'd rather have been religion-free.... *(RICK, DONALD react.)* — It's *easier* that way.

DONALD. What's so great about the easy way out?

MICHAEL. Only a fool would want the *hard* way out. — I'd rather be good-looking instead of plain — why couldn't we all truly have been created equal? It would have been just as easy, but, oh, no, that's not life. Some of us had to be born "interesting." And some of us, *not* so interesting. Some of us flat-out ugly. Some of us started out okay and wound up like toads. I want it easy! I want it all aces. I want something not so uphill as ... life, *grinding, luckless life!*

JASON. You need help, Michael. Professional help. Your mind is like a bad neighborhood. You shouldn't go in there alone.

EMORY. *(To JASON, re: MICHAEL.)* He's here, he's veneer, get used to it.

(RICK crosses to the terrace doors, looks out....)

RICK. It's stopped raining. —

DONALD. Yeah, why don't we all move outside?

SCOTT. Good idea, it's getting pretty stale in here.

DONALD. Michael has sucked all they oxygen out of the air. That's about all he's permitted to do these days.

(MICHAEL ignores DONALD as JASON opens the doors.)

MICHAEL. Emory just blew a fucking fortune fluffing it up up for the summer.

EMORY. *(Gets up.)* I want to see if that hunky guy from the nursery did just what I told him to do with the pots of geraniums.

JASON. I'd kill for a cigarette.

BERNARD. Me, too, but my wife and I finally gave it up. Booze first, then tobacco.

JASON. Your wife?

HANK. *(Offhandedly.)* Things change.

BERNARD. — She was my first sponsor.

JASON. You met her in a twelve-step program?

BERNARD. *(Nods.)* It was a slow process. We'd both been hurt — and dealt with it the wrong way. So … we talked a long time, and then lived together a long time, and then…. I'm sorry she couldn't be here. She's in Detroit with my mother, who's not well.

JASON. *(Curiously.)* She know you're … well, whatever it is you are?

BERNARD. *(Smile, nods.)* We know all about each other. She was married to a very nice, ordinary guy, but she says he treated her in a way that was … well, like what you might call "sexual bigotry" — although he didn't have a clue. He just behaved that way as a matter of course. With me, she says she feels like an equal. We have fun together. *(With meaning.)* All kinds of fun. —

JASON. Are you happy?

BERNARD. *(Drolly.)* You mean, in spite of my flying in the face of being gay and "going hetero"?

JASON. I'm just trying to understand.

BERNARD. Well, then … I guess I've come to think happiness is habit. And so, yeah. — And, yeah, we love each other but, more important, we're each other's best friend. — I use to not like sleeping with my friends — the people I laughed with and told everything to. But now, she's the only person I actually trust. And, oh, yeah, "the other" sometimes goes through my mind, but I've been there. And it didn't work out. I guess something could happen again, but I'm not planning on it.

EMORY. *(Quietly.)* But, *I'm* your best friend.

BERNARD. *(Calmly, sincerely.)* No, I'm *your* best friend. You're my best *male* friend. *(To JASON.)* — I have to admit — it all scares the shit out of me.

EMORY. *(Sighs.)* Yeah. Like finding your own shade of rouge.

(JASON removes a pack of cigarettes and goes outside.)

RICK. I could stay in this room forever. — This must be what they call "soignee."

BERNARD. I think this child has been seduced by décor.

EMORY. *(With meaning.)* It wouldn't be the first time.

(BERNARD gives EMORY a look as EMORY exits to terrace. RICK wanders the room, studying things. The phone rings.)

MICHAEL. *(Into phone.)* Hello? — Yeah ... oh, *hi*! — Yeah, he's fine.

HANK. I bet that's my son. —

(RICK stops, looks up.)

MICHAEL. *(Into phone.)* We'll see that he gets home. —— You both looked great too. Sorry you can't drop by, but I understand. Let me know when the big day arrives. Promise? Right. — Bye. *(Hangs up. To HANK.)* It's too uncomfortable for Kate to get around till the baby comes.

DONALD. When's it due?

HANK. Any minute.

BERNARD. Hank's second grandchild!

(BERNARD crosses to check on HANK as RICK watches, curiously. JASON takes out a cigarette, puts it between his lips, exits to the terrace, searching his pockets for matches. HANK drops his head and turns away.)

EMORY. *(Loudly, off stage.)* — That goddamn dumb, muscle-bound, son-of-a-bitch from the nursery!! I told him no fucking vulgar Puerto Rican pink geraniums!! I said I only wanted pale Martha Washington colors!! — But what did *he* know about *subtlety*!!

(HANK dries his eyes, hands the handkerchief to BERNARD....)

HANK. *(Re: handkerchief.)* Thanks, Bernard.
BERNARD. That's yours, baby.

(BERNARD takes the handkerchief and tucks it in HANK's suit breast pocket.)

HANK. *(Nods.)* Oh, yeah, so it is. Thanks.
EMORY. *(Enters, almost in tears.)* This Celebration of Life is ruined! Just *ruined*!

(EMORY whips back outside. HANK looks to see RICK staring at him. They exchange a smile.)

DONALD. *(To RICK, flirting.)* I thought you wanted some air.
RICK. *(Forces a smile.)* I do. How about you?
DONALD. *(With a twinkle.)* Yeah, I'd love to come up for air.

(MICHAEL takes stock of DONALD as he goes outside, buzzing in RICK's ear.)

EMORY. *(Offstage, outraged.) I ... DON'T ... FUCKING ... BELIEVE IT*!!!

(MICHAEL has crossed to the stairs and SCOTT.)

MICHAEL. Champagne?
SCOTT. No, thank you.
MICHAEL. Not even for your birthday?
SCOTT. My birthday was two weeks ago.
MICHAEL. I know very well when your birthday was. Since we haven't spoken, I was wondering how it went.
SCOTT. As you might expect, thanks to my father.
MICHAEL. And how *is* your father?
SCOTT. The same. After he asked me what I wanted for my

birthday and I told him, he didn't give me anything.

MICHAEL. He didn't give you a present of *any* kind?

SCOTT. He blustered into my place drunk; didn't even shake my hand.

MICHAEL. It seems that all you can really count on with him is for him to let you down. *(He puts his hand on SCOTT's shoulder as DONALD enters from the terrace. SCOTT sees DONALD, shrugs off MICHAEL's hand. MICHAEL looks at DONALD. To DONALD, re: RICK.)* How are you, shall we say, making out?

DONALD. *(Re: SCOTT's shrug.)* I'd say about the same as you. — The chairs are all wet.

MICHAEL. *(With an edge.)* I'd say get some towels and dry them off.

DONALD. Right. *(Finishes his drink.)* First things first.

(DONALD goes to the bar cart and freshens his martini for MICHAEL's benefit. MICHAEL makes a disapproving face as EMORY flies inside.)

EMORY. *(Petulantly.)* — What are we having to eat? I'm absolutely rav!

MICHAEL. Just some chicken hash and a little endive and watercress salad.

(RICK re-enters.)

EMORY. *(Flirty, to RICK.)* Richarr, shall you and I heat up the Cuisine "Duhzine"?

RICK. Why don't I just wipe off the chairs. I'm better at cleaning up.

(Crestfallen, EMORY exits to the kitchen. DONALD crosses to stairs, drink in hand.)

DONALD. *(To MICHAEL, with disgusted awe.)* — Caterers and decorators.

MICHAEL. *(Defensively.)* I just got a job!

DONALD. And you're already spending what you haven't made yet.

MICHAEL. *(Dismissive.)* Yeah-yeah-yeah.

DONALD. I thought you told me you had to dip into your pension fund because you hadn't work in so long.

MICHAEL. I did. Anyone who doesn't live beyond his means suffers from a lack of imagination!

(DONALD gives SCOTT a look, goes upstairs and into the bath.)

SCOTT. *(Re: DONALD.)* He's jealous of me, isn't he?

MICHAEL. He's jealous of *me.* He just resents *you.*

SCOTT. Well, he doesn't have to feel threatened by *me.*

(MICHAEL is silent. SCOTT finishes his Diet Coke. MICHAEL turns to the group.)

MICHAEL. *(Graciously, but swallowing dryly.)* How're everybody's drinks?

HANK. *(Holds up empty flute.)* Mind if I get a beer?

MICHAEL. Of course not. There's some in the fridge. *(HANK exits to the kitchen. Sotto, to SCOTT.)* — I was genuinely happy that you called this morning and suggested we go to the service together. I wanted to see you before I left for California.

SCOTT. Is it a good job?

MICHAEL. Just a TV rewrite.

SCOTT. How long will you be gone?

MICHAEL. A month or so.

SCOTT. *(After a moment.)* — I'm so confused about our so-called friendship. —

MICHAEL. Scott, I really don't think this is the proper time to

get into all that.

SCOTT. Do I have to make an appointment?

(BERNARD and RICK look up. MICHAEL turns to them, smiles awkwardly. BERNARD takes a soft drink, opens it. MICHAEL turns away.)

MICHAEL. No. — You don't have to make an appointment. *(After a moment.)* Why don't you go up to the bedroom, and I'll come up in a minute.

SCOTT. I think I'd just better leave.

MICHAEL. No, Scott, please, don't.

SCOTT. *(After a moment.)* I'm sorry I forgot to put the ice out.

(DONALD comes downstairs to hear MICHAEL's plea. They exchange an uneasy look.)

DONALD. *(Hands over towels.)* Here, Rick, start on the chairs, I'll get the cushions.

(RICK exits to the terrace with the towels.)

MICHAEL. *(Sotto, to SCOTT.)* — Please? — Go on. I'll be up in a minute.

(SCOTT crushes his Diet Coke can, passes DONALD on the stairs, goes up, tearing off his T-shirt, continuing off into the bathroom. The bedroom light fades.)

DONALD. *(Re: SCOTT.)* It'll never work.

MICHAEL. Why?

DONALD. Because he doesn't make you laugh.

MICHAEL. *(Shaken, edgy.)* Something you read in a book? — Or has the booze finally reached what's left of your wet brain?

(MICHAEL glares at DONALD, as EMORY exits the kitchen with a stack of ceramic plates.)

EMORY. *(Sing-song.)* Behind you!

(MICHAEL moves aside to let EMORY pass as JASON enters from the terrace, exhaling from a discarded cigarette. He waves his hand to disperse the smoke.)

JASON. It's nice out.
EMORY. *(Whizzing past.)* Then *leave* it out!

(EMORY exits to the terrace. In the bedroom SCOTT paces, sits on the bed, the quickly gets up, smoothes the cover. Downstairs, DONALD replenishes his drink.)

MICHAEL. *(Not to DONALD.)* — Will somebody roll the bar outside and get the wine while I see about the food?

JASON. If you'll cease fire, I'll do the bar. — I'm good at it, remember?

MICHAEL. *(Lightly, but unrelenting.)* You're sure you don't have a date on a float somewhere? — *(Sighs, to JASON.)* Okay … time out. *(Indicates up right wall.)* The corkscrew and wine buckets are in the cabinet. — The wine's in the fridge.

(JASON goes up right to an "invisible" cabinet: doors seamlessly cut into the photo blowup wall. He throws them open to reveal glass shelves which light-up and contain a stupefying supply of liquor and glasses.)

BERNARD. *(Reacts with anxious dismay.)* Good Christ, Michael!

(MICHAEL remains completely cool.)

MICHAEL. *(Sardonically.)* A fully stocked bar is a happy bar. — Besides, these days, you never know when there's going to be another Celebration of Life!

(HANK enters from the kitchen with a bottle of beer in hand....)

BERNARD. *(Unnerved, re: bar.)* The sight of that is *staggering* — in the classic sense of the word!

MICHAEL. *(Facetiously.)* A sip is not a slip. Is it, Bernard?

BERNARD. *(angrily.) You're not serious!!*

MICHAEL. *(Surprised and touched, actually.)* Oh, Bernard, I'm *kidding*! — Did I upset you?

DONALD. Of course you upset him!

MICHAEL. Well, I didn't mean to. It's just my warped sense of humor.

BERNARD. You're playing with fucking dynamite, man! How much time do you have?

MICHAEL. Seven years.

BERNARD. I slipped at nine!

MICHAEL. Oh, Bernard, I don't want to drink or use! But there's something comforting about having liquor on the premises. Like having prescription drugs. You just know they're there. I'd panic if there weren't any anesthetics in the house.

BERNARD. You sound like Harold.

HANK. Or Larry.

BERNARD. *(Quietly controlled.)* Fucking dynamite, man! Everything you say or do!

MICHAEL. I know and I'm sorry, okay?! I apologize!

BERNARD. *(Levelly.)* It's all right to hate, Michael. It's just not all right to act in a hateful way.

(BERNARD exits to the terrace, fuming.)

MICHAEL. *(Re: BERNARD's reaction.)* Christ of the Andes!

Where did *that* come from?

DONALD. *It wasn't funny.*

MICHAEL. What about *you.* Still knocking them back as if time had stood still! *(Re: BERNARD.)* Why doesn't he say something to *you*!

DONALD. I *want* to drink, Michael.

MICHAEL. Well, so do I, but I can't because I'm a drunk!

DONALD. And so am *I* and so *what*?! *(Drains his glass.)* Bernard understands this conversation is out-of-bounds. Larry would have — why can't you?!

(MICHAEL restrains himself. JASON, having found the corkscrew and wine bucket, exits to kitchen. DONALD goes up right center to another "invisible door," opens it and removes some new, smartly upholstered exterior chair cushions.)

BERNARD. *(Offstage.)* — Hey, Rick, my man, you really *do* know how to mop up!

RICK. *(Offstage.)* Well, I've cleaned enough toilets in my time.

BERNARD. *(Offstage.)* Yeah, what's one more or less, huh.

(MICHAEL stiffens, exchanges a look with DONALD, who closes the cabinet doors and exits to the terrace with the seat cushions.
HANK has gone to the étagère and put on a CD of Ella Fitzgerald's "Skylark" or similar style recording, which starts to play. JASON enters with several bottles of white wine which he puts on the bar cart, starts to roll it outside. EMORY enters from the terrace as JASON starts to lift the bar cart over the threshold....)*

EMORY. *(To JASON.)* Need a hand, big boy?

JASON. Thanks.

EMORY. I take it that you work out.

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JASON. Yeah, American Fitness.

EMORY. *(Nods, knowingly, play-on-words.) Or*, as we say: "Oh-Mary-Can-Ya-Lift-This" — ? The fit American goes to American Fitness. That's why Eighth Avenue between Fourteenth and Twenty-third looks like an open call for *Spartacus, the Musical.*

(They lift the bar cart over the jamb and exit to the terrace. MICHAEL sees HANK has picked up a photograph in a silver frame on the étagère and is looking at it. MICHAEL comes over to HANK....)

HANK. *(Re: Scott's photo.)* He's a handsome kid, Michael.

MICHAEL. — Scott's aunt took that of us.

HANK. He introduced you to his family?

MICHAEL. He just wanted me to meet his aunt. She's all he cares about — the only one who's ever been the least bit kind to him. We took her to lunch. I loaned Scott my dark blue cashmere blazer, and he looked so elegant. — His aunt was so proud of him. She held his hand on the top of the table for a long time after the plates had been cleared away, and he didn't seem uncomfortable at all.

HANK. Is he uncomfortable at a show of affection?

MICHAEL. From some people. At a genuine show of affection, I guess. *(Sardonically.)* I wouldn't know a thing about that.

HANK. He looks *very* proud of you, Michael.

(MICHAEL smiles, takes the picture of Scott from HANK, turns and goes up the stairs.
HANK now picks up a photograph of Larry and studies it a moment. DONALD and RICK come inside. RICK watches HANK.)

DONALD. *(To HANK.)* Nice shot of Larry.

HANK. I think so. Brazil was great. We had a good time there.

(HANK replaces the photograph and exits to the terrace. RICK goes

to the étagère, picks up the framed photograph of Larry. — Suddenly, RICK dissolves into tears. DONALD goes to him, puts his arm around him.)

RICK. *(Distraught.)* Oh, God, Donald, what am I going to do?!

DONALD. What you *can't* do is let Hank see you break down.

RICK. *(Sobbing.)* I loved him.

DONALD. I know you did. — Sort of like the hostage/captor syndrome in reverse, I guess.

RICK. Please, don't joke! — I helped him die. He begged me to turn up the drip till he was gone — then turn it down before I called the doctor. I *couldn't.* I … I … put some morphine suppositories on this bedside table, then I left the room. — When I came back, I took the empty foil wrappers and flushed them down the toilet so no one would know. Then, I did what he told me. I called the doctor. *(RICK falls against DONALD, sobs. DONALD puts his arms about RICK, kisses him on his cheek, forehead and, finally, sweetly on the mouth. RICK responds passionately. — JASON enters with the empty ice bucket, stops on a dime, watches them. — RICK's head goes limp on DONALD's shoulder.)* I wonder who else knows I loved him?

DONALD. I don't think anyone *here* knows … *(Looks up at JASON.)* — Well ….

JASON. I don't know a thing. Not a thing.

RICK. *(Recovering.)* There's nothing to know, really, except that I … felt about Larry the way I do. I think he just liked the idea that I was crazy about him. — *(To DONALD.)* — You never told Michael, did you?

DONALD. *Of course not.*

(JASON turns and exits to the kitchen.)

RICK. *(Looks at photo of Larry.)* He was so much fun. When he was in remission, after his classes, we had kind of a standing date. Nothing much, really — Starbuck's, the movies, my place. — He was

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