

the kitchen. DONALD and LARRY move to a corner of the room, sit facing upstage, and talk quietly.)

ALAN. *(To MICHAEL.)* This is a marvelous apartment.

MICHAEL. It's too expensive. I work to pay rent.

ALAN. What are you doing these days?

MICHAEL. Nothing.

ALAN. Aren't you writing anymore?

MICHAEL. I haven't looked at a typewriter since I sold the very, very wonderful, very, very marvelous *screenplay*, which never got produced.

ALAN. That's right. The last time I saw you, you were on your way to California. Or was it Europe?

MICHAEL. Hollywood. Which is not in Europe, nor does it have anything whatsoever to do with California.

ALAN. I've never been there, but I would imagine it's awful. Everyone must be terribly cheap.

MICHAEL. No, not everyone.

(ALAN laughs. A beat. MICHAEL sits on the bed.)

Alan, I want to try to explain this evening...

ALAN. What's there to explain? Sometimes you just can't invite everybody to every party, and some people take it personally. But I'm not one of them. I should apologize for inviting myself.

MICHAEL. That's not exactly what I meant.

ALAN. Your friends all seem like very nice guys. That Hank is really a very attractive fellow.

MICHAEL. ...Yes. He is.

ALAN. We have a lot in common. What's his roommate's name?

MICHAEL. Larry.

ALAN. What does *he* do?

MICHAEL. He's a commercial artist.

ALAN. I liked Donald, too. The only one I didn't care too much for was – what's his name – Emory?

MICHAEL. Yes. Emory.

ALAN. I just can't stand that kind of talk. It just grates on me.

MICHAEL. What kind of talk, Alan?

ALAN. Oh, you know. His brand of humor, I guess.

MICHAEL. He can be really quite funny sometimes.

ALAN. I suppose so. If you find that sort of thing amusing. He just seems like such a goddamn little pansy.

(Silence. A pause.)

I'm sorry I said that. I didn't mean to say that. That's such an awful thing to say about *anyone*. But you know what I mean, Michael – you have to admit that he *is* effeminate.

MICHAEL. He is a bit.

ALAN. A bit! He's like a...butterfly in heat! I mean, there's no wonder he was trying to teach you all to dance. He *probably* wanted to dance *with* you!

(Pause.)

Oh, come on, man, you know me – you know how I feel – your private life is your own affair.

MICHAEL. *(Icy.)* No. I *don't* know that about you.

ALAN. I couldn't care less what people do – as long as they don't do it in public – or – or try to force their ways on the whole damned world.

MICHAEL. Alan, what was it you were crying about on the telephone?

ALAN. Oh, I feel like such a fool about that. I could shoot myself for letting myself act that way. I'm so embarrassed I could die.

MICHAEL. But, Alan, if you were genuinely upset – that's nothing to be embarrassed about.

ALAN. All I can say is – please accept my apology for making such an ass of myself.

MICHAEL. You must have been upset, or you wouldn't have said you were and that you wanted to see me – *had* to see me and had to talk to me.

ALAN. Can you forget it? Just pretend it never happened. I know I have. Okay?

MICHAEL. Is something wrong between you and Fran?

ALAN. Listen, I've really got to go.

MICHAEL. Why are you in New York?

ALAN. I'm dreadfully late for this dinner.

MICHAEL. Whose dinner? Where are you going?

ALAN. Is this the loo?

MICHAEL. Yes.

ALAN. Excuse me.

(Quickly goes into the bathroom, closes the door. MICHAEL remains silent – sits on the bed, stares into space. Downstairs, EMORY pops in from the kitchen to discover DONALD and LARRY in quiet, intimate conversation.)

EMORY. What's-going-on-in-here-oh-Mary-don't-ask!

(Puts a salt cellar and pepper mill on the table. HANK enters, carrying a bottle of red wine and a corkscrew. Looks toward LARRY and DONALD. DONALD sees him, stands up.)

DONALD. Hank, why don't you come and join us?

HANK. That's an interesting suggestion. Whose idea is that?

DONALD. Mine.

LARRY. (To HANK.) He means in a conversation.

(BERNARD enters from the kitchen, carrying four wine glasses.)

EMORY. (To BERNARD.) Where're the rest of the wine glasses?

BERNARD. Ahz workin' as fas' as ah can!

EMORY. They have to be told everything. Can't let 'em out of your sight.

(Breezes out to the kitchen. DONALD leaves LARRY's side and goes to the coffee table, helps himself to the cracked crab. HANK opens the wine, puts it on the table. MICHAEL gets

up from the bed and goes down the stairs. Downstairs, HANK crosses to LARRY.)

HANK. I thought maybe you were abiding by the agreement.

LARRY. We have no agreement.

HANK. We did.

LARRY. You did. I never agreed to anything!

(DONALD looks up to see MICHAEL, raises a crab claw toward him.)

DONALD. To your health.

MICHAEL. Up yours.

DONALD. Up my health?

BERNARD. Where's the gent?

MICHAEL. In the gent's room. If you can all hang on five more minutes, he's about to leave.

(The door buzzes. MICHAEL crosses to it.)

LARRY. Well, at last!

(MICHAEL opens the door to reveal a muscle-bound young man wearing boots, tight Levi's, a calico neckerchief, and a cowboy hat. Around his wrist there is a large card tied with a ribbon.)

COWBOY. (Singing fast.)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU,

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU,

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DEAR HAROLD.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU.

(And with that, he throws his arms around MICHAEL and gives him a big kiss on the lips. Everyone stands in stunned silence.)

MICHAEL. Who the hell are you?

(EMORY swings in from the kitchen.)

EMORY. She's Harold's present from me, and she's early!

(Quick, to COWBOY.) And that's not even Harold, you idiot!