

COWBOY. (*To LARRY.*) Is he going to call Charlie for you?

(*LARRY breaks into laughter. HANK starts to dial.*)

LARRY. Charlie is all the people I cheat on Hank with.

DONALD. With whom I cheat on Hank.

MICHAEL. The butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker.

LARRY. Right! I love 'em all. And what he refuses to understand – is that I've got to *have* 'em all. I am *not* the marrying kind, and I never will be.

HAROLD. Gypsy feet.

LARRY. Who are you calling?

MICHAEL. Jealous?

LARRY. Curious as hell!

MICHAEL. And a little jealous, too.

LARRY. Who are you calling?

MICHAEL. Did it ever occur to you that Hank might be doing the same thing behind your back that you do behind his?

LARRY. I wish to Christ he would. It'd make life a hell of a lot easier. Who are you calling?

HAROLD. Whoever it is, they're not sitting on top of the telephone.

HANK. Hello?

COWBOY. They must have been in the tub.

MICHAEL. (*Snaps at COWBOY.*) Eighty-six!

(*COWBOY goes over to a far corner, sits down.*)

BERNARD enters, uncorking another bottle of wine. Taking note.)

One point.

HANK. ...I'd like to leave a message.

MICHAEL. Not in. One point.

HANK. Would you say that Hank called? Yes, it is. Oh, good evening. How are you?

LARRY. Who the hell *is* that?

HANK. Yes, that's right – the message is for my roommate, Larry. Just say that I called and...

LARRY. It's our answering service!

HANK. ...And said...I love you.

MICHAEL. *Five points!* You said it! You get five goddamn points for saying it!

ALAN. Hank! Hank! ...Are you crazy?

HANK. ...No. You didn't hear me incorrectly. That's what I said. The message is for Larry, and it's from me, Hank, and it is just as I said: *I...love...you.* Thanks.

(*He hangs up.*)

MICHAEL. Seven points total! Hank, you're ahead, baby. You're way, way ahead of everybody!

ALAN. Why? ...Oh, Hank, why? Why did you do that?

HANK. Because I do love him. And I don't care who knows it.

ALAN. Don't say that.

HANK. Why not? It's the truth.

ALAN. I can't believe you.

HANK. (*Directly to ALAN.*) I left my wife and family for Larry.

ALAN. I'm really not interested in hearing about it.

MICHAEL. Sure you are. Go ahead, Hankola, tell him all about it.

ALAN. No! I don't want to hear it. It's disgusting!

(*A beat.*)

HANK. Some men do it for another woman.

ALAN. Well, I could understand *that*. That's *normal*.

HANK. It just doesn't always work out that way, Alan. No matter how you might want it to. And God knows, nobody ever wanted it more than I did. I really and truly felt that I was in love with my wife when I married her. It wasn't altogether my trying to prove something to myself. I did love her, and she loved me. But...there was always that something there...

ALAN. Always?

HANK. I don't know. I suppose so.

EMORY. I've known what I was since I was four years old.

MICHAEL. Everybody's always known it about *you*, Emory.

DONALD. I've always known it about myself, too.

HANK. I don't know when it was that I started admitting it to myself. For so long I either labeled it something else or denied it completely.

MICHAEL. Christ-was-I-drunk-last-night.

HANK. And then there came a time when I just couldn't lie to myself anymore... I thought about it but I never did anything about it. I think the first time was during my wife's last pregnancy. We lived near New Haven – in the country. She and the kids still live there. Well, anyway, there was a teachers' meeting here in New York. She didn't feel up to the trip and I came alone. And that day on the train I began to think about it and think about it and think about it. I thought of nothing else the whole trip. And within fifteen minutes after I had arrived, I had picked up a guy in the men's room of Grand Central Station.

ALAN. (*Quietly.*) Jesus.

HANK. I'd never done anything like that in my life before, and I was scared to death. But he turned out to be a nice fellow. I've never seen him again, and it's funny, I can't even remember his name anymore.

(*A beat.*)

Anyway. After that, it got easier.

HAROLD. Practice makes perfect.

HANK. And then...sometime later...Larry and I met at a party my wife and I had gone in town for.

EMORY. And your real troubles began.

HANK. That was two years ago.

LARRY. Why am I always the goddamn villain in the piece! If I'm not thought of as a happy-home wrecker, I'm an impossible son of a bitch to live with!

HAROLD. Guilt turns to hostility. Isn't that right, Michael?

MICHAEL. Go stick your tweezers in your cheek.

LARRY. I'm fed up to the teeth with everybody feeling so goddamn sorry for poor shat-upon Hank.

EMORY. Aw, Larry, everybody knows you're Frieda Fickle.

LARRY. I've never made any promises and I never intend to. It's my right to lead my sex life without answering to *anybody* – Hank included! And if those terms are not acceptable, then we must not live together. Numerous relations is a part of the way I am!

EMORY. You don't have to be gay to be a wanton.

LARRY. By the way I am, I don't mean being gay – I mean my sexual appetite. And I don't think of myself as a wanton. Emory, you are the most promiscuous person I know.

EMORY. I am not promiscuous at all!

MICHAEL. Not by choice. By design. Why would anybody want to go to bed with a flaming little sissy like you?

BERNARD. Michael!

MICHAEL. (*To EMORY.*) Who'd make a pass at you – I'll tell you who – nobody. Except maybe some fugitive from the Braille Institute.

BERNARD. (*To EMORY.*) Why do you let him talk to you that way?

HAROLD. Physical beauty is not everything.

MICHAEL. Thank you, Quasimodo.

LARRY. What do you think it's like living with the goddamn gestapo! I can't breathe without getting the third degree!

MICHAEL. Larry, it's your turn to call.

LARRY. I can't take all that let's-be-faithful-and-never-look-at-another-person routine. It just doesn't work. If you want to promise that, fine. Then do it and stick to it. But if you *have* to promise it – as far as I'm concerned – nothing finishes a relationship faster.

HAROLD. Give me Librium or give me Meth.

BERNARD. (*Intoxicated now.*) Yeah, freedom, baby! Freedom!

LARRY. You gotta have it! It can't work any other way. And the ones who swear their undying fidelity are lying. Most of them, anyway – ninety percent of them. They cheat on each other constantly and lie through their teeth. I'm sorry, I can't be like that, and it drives Hank up the wall.

HANK. There is that ten percent.

LARRY. The only way it stands a chance is with some sort of an understanding.

HANK. I've tried to go along with that.

LARRY. Aw, *come on!*

HANK. I agreed to an agreement.

LARRY. Your agreement.

MICHAEL. What agreement?

LARRY. A ménage.

HAROLD. The lovers' agreement.

LARRY. Look, I know a lot of people think it's the answer. They don't consider it cheating. But it's not my style.

HANK. Well, I certainly didn't want it.

LARRY. Then who suggested it?

HANK. It was a compromise.

LARRY. Exactly.

HANK. And you agreed.

LARRY. I didn't agree to anything. You agreed to your own proposal and *informed me* that I agreed.

COWBOY. I don't understand. What's a me...mena-a...

MICHAEL. A ménage à trois, baby. Two's company – three's a ménage.

COWBOY. Oh.

HANK. It works for some.

LARRY. Well, I'm not one for group therapy. I'm sorry, I can't relate to anyone or anything that way. I'm old-fashioned – I like 'em all, but I like 'em one at a time!

MICHAEL. (*To LARRY.*) Did you like Donald as a single side attraction?

(*Pause.*)

LARRY. Yes. I did.

DONALD. So did I, Larry.

LARRY. (*To DONALD, referring to MICHAEL.*) Did you tell him?

DONALD. No.

MICHAEL. It was perfectly obvious from the moment you walked in. What was the song and dance about having seen each other but never having met?

DONALD. It was true. We saw each other in the baths and went to bed together, but we never spoke a word and never knew each other's name.

EMORY. You have better luck than I do. If I don't get arrested, my trick announces upon departure that he's been exposed to hepatitis! One more shot of gamma globulin and my ass'll look like a pair of colanders!

MICHAEL. In spring, a young man's fancy turns to a fancy, young man.

LARRY. (*To HANK.*) Oh, Hank. Don't look at me like that. You've been playing footsie with the penguin all night. I supposed you'd like the three of us to have a go at it.

HANK. At least it'd be together.

LARRY. That point eludes me.

HANK. What kind of an understanding do you *want*!

LARRY. Respect – for each other's freedom. With no need to lie or pretend. In my own way, Hank, I love you, but you have to understand that even though I do want to go on living with you, sometimes there may be others. I don't want to flaunt it in your face. If it happens, I know I'll never mention it. But if you ask me, I'll tell you. I don't want to hurt you, but I won't lie to you if you want to know anything about me.

BERNARD. He gets points.

MICHAEL. What?

BERNARD. He said it. He said "I love you" to Hank. He gets the bonus.

MICHAEL. He didn't call him.

DONALD. He called him. He just didn't use the telephone.

MICHAEL. Then he doesn't get any points.

BERNARD. He gets five points!

MICHAEL. He didn't use the telephone. He doesn't get a goddamn thing!

(LARRY goes to the phone, picks up the receiver, looks at the number of the second line, and dials. A beat. The phone rings.)

LARRY. It's for you, Hank. Why don't you take it upstairs?

(The phone continues to ring. HANK gets up, goes up the stairs to the bedroom. Pause. He presses the second-line button, picks up the receiver. Everyone downstairs is silent.)

HANK. Hello?

BERNARD. One point.

LARRY. Hello, Hank.

BERNARD. Two points.

LARRY. ...This is Larry.

BERNARD. Two more points!

LARRY. ...For what it's worth, I love you.

BERNARD. Five points bonus!

HANK. I'll... I'll try.

LARRY. I will, too.

(He hangs up. HANK hangs up.)

BERNARD. That's ten points total!

EMORY. Larry's the winner!

HAROLD. Well, that wasn't as much fun as I thought it would be.

MICHAEL. THE GAME ISN'T OVER YET!

(HANK moves toward the bed into darkness.)

Your turn, Alan.

(MICHAEL gets the phone, slams it down in front of ALAN.)

PICK UP THE PHONE, BUSTER!

EMORY. Michael, don't!

MICHAEL. STAY OUT OF THIS!

EMORY. You don't have to, Alan. You don't have to.

ALAN. Emory...I'm sorry for what I did before.

(A beat.)

EMORY. ...Oh, forget it.

MICHAEL. Forgive us our trespasses. Christ, now you're both joined at the goddamn hip! You can decorate his home, Emory - and he can get you out of jail the next time you're arrested on a morals charge.

(A beat.)

Who are you going to call, Alan?

(No response.)

Can't remember anyone? Well, maybe you need a minute to think. Is that it?

(No response.)

HAROLD. I believe this will be the final round.

COWBOY. Michael, aren't you going to call anyone?

HAROLD. How could he? He's never loved anyone.

MICHAEL. *(Sings the classic vaudeville walk-off to HAROLD.)*

NO MATTER HOW YOU FIGGER,

(Indicates BERNARD.)

IT'S TOUGH TO BE A NIGGER,

BUT IT'S TOUGHER

TO BE A JEEEW-OOOUU-OO!

DONALD. My God, Michael, you're a charming host.

HAROLD. Michael doesn't have charm, Donald. Michael has counter-charm.