

MICHAEL. Well, you're pushing it!

ALAN. ...Hank?

(A beat.)

HANK. Yes, Alan. Larry is my lover.

ALAN. But...but...you're married.

(MICHAEL, LARRY, EMORY, and COWBOY are sent into instant gales of laughter.)

HAROLD. I think you said the wrong thing.

MICHAEL. Don't you love that quaint little idea - if a man is married, then he is automatically heterosexual.

(A beat.)

Alan - Hank swings both ways - with a definite preference.

(A beat.)

Now. Who makes the first call? Emory?

EMORY. You go, Bernard.

BERNARD. I don't want to.

EMORY. I don't want to either. I don't want to at all.

DONALD. *(To himself.)* There are no accidents.

MICHAEL. Then, may I say, on your way home I hope you will yourself over an embankment.

EMORY. *(To BERNARD.)* Go on. Call up Peter Dahlbeck. That's who you'd like to call, isn't it?

MICHAEL. Who is Peter Dahlbeck?

EMORY. The boy in Detroit whose family Bernard's mother has been a laundress for since he was a little black-eyed pea.

BERNARD. I worked for them - after school and every summer. I think I've loved him all my life. But he never knew I was alive. Besides, he's straight.

COWBOY. So nothing ever happened between you?

EMORY. Oh, they finally made it - in the pool house one night after a drunken swimming party.

LARRY. With the right wine and the right music, they're damn few that aren't curious.

BERNARD. ...And afterwards we went swimming in the nude in the dark with only the moon reflecting on the water.

MICHAEL. How romantic. And then the next morning you took him his coffee and Alka-Seltzer on a tray.

BERNARD. It was in the afternoon. I remember I was worried sick all morning about having to face him. But he pretended like nothing at all had happened.

MICHAEL. Christ, he must have been so drunk he didn't remember a thing.

BERNARD. Yeah. I was sure relieved.

MICHAEL. Odd how that works. And now, for ten points, get that liar on the phone.

(A beat. BERNARD picks up the phone, dials.)

LARRY. You *know* the number?

BERNARD. Sure. He's back in Grosse Pointe, living at home. He just got separated from his third wife.

(All watch BERNARD as he puts the receiver to his ear, waits. A beat. He hangs up quickly.)

EMORY. D.A. or B.Y.?

COWBOY. What?

EMORY. That's operator lingo. It means "doesn't answer" or "busy."

MICHAEL. He didn't even give it time to find out.

(Coaxing.)

Go ahead, Bernard. Pick up the phone and dial. You'll think of something. You know you want to call him. You know that, don't you? Well, go ahead. Your curiosity has got the best of you now. So...go on, call him.

(A beat. BERNARD picks up the receiver, dials again. He lets it ring this time.)

HAROLD. Hateful.

BERNARD. ...Hello?

MICHAEL. One point.

(He efficiently takes note on the pad.)

BERNARD. Who's speaking? Oh...Mrs. Dahlbeck.

MICHAEL. *(Taking note.)* One point.

BERNARD. ...It's Bernard - Francine's boy.

EMORY. *Son, not boy.*

BERNARD. ...How are you? Good. Good. Oh, just fine, thank you. Mrs. Dahlbeck...is...Peter...at home? Oh. Oh, I see.

MICHAEL. *(Shakes his head.)* Shhhhiiii...

BERNARD. ...Oh, no. No, it's nothing important. I just wanted to...to tell him...that...to tell him... I... I...

MICHAEL. *(Prompting flatly.)* I love him. That I've always loved him.

BERNARD. ...That I was sorry to hear about him and his wife.

MICHAEL. No points!

BERNARD. ...My mother wrote me. Yes. It is. It really is. Well. Would you just tell him I called and said...that I was...just...very, very sorry to hear and I...hope...they can get everything straightened out. Yes. Yes. Well, good night. Goodbye.

(He hangs up slowly. MICHAEL draws a definite line across his pad, makes a definite period.)

MICHAEL. Two points total. Terrible. Next!

(MICHAEL whisks the phone out of BERNARD's hands, gives it to EMORY.)

EMORY. Are you all right, Bernard?

BERNARD. *(Almost to himself.)* Why did I call? Why did I do that?

LARRY. *(To BERNARD.)* Where was he?

BERNARD. Out on a date.

MICHAEL. Come on, Emory. Punch in.

(EMORY picks up the phone, dials information. A beat.)

EMORY. Could I have a number, please - in the Bronx - for a Delbert Botts.

LARRY. A Delbert Botts! How many can there be!

BERNARD. *Oh, I wish I hadn't called now.*

EMORY. ...No, the residence number, please.

(Waves his hand at MICHAEL, signaling for the pencil. MICHAEL hands it to him.)

...Thank you.

(A beat. And he indignantly slams down the receiver.)

I do wish information would stop calling me "Ma'am"!

LARRY. Who the hell is Delbert Botts?

EMORY. The one person I have always loved.

(To MICHAEL.) That's who you said call, isn't it?

MICHAEL. That's right, Emory Board.

LARRY. How could you love somebody with a name like that?

MICHAEL. Yes, Emory, you couldn't love anybody with a name like that. It wouldn't look good on a place card. Isn't that right, Alan?

(MICHAEL slaps ALAN on the shoulder. ALAN is silent. MICHAEL snickers.)

EMORY. I admit his name is not so good - but he is absolutely beautiful. At least, he was when I was in high school. Of course, I haven't seen him since and he was about seven years older than I even then.

MICHAEL. Christ, you better call him quick before he dies.

EMORY. I've loved him ever since the first day I laid eyes on him, which was when I was in the fifth grade and he was a senior. Then, he went away to college and by the time he got out I was in high school, and he had become a dentist.

MICHAEL. *(With incredulous disgust.)* A dentist!