

(There is no curtain. The lights come up on a smartly-appointed duplex apartment in the East Fifties, New York, consisting of a living room and, on a higher level, a bedroom. Bossa nova music blasts from a phonograph. MICHAEL, wearing a robe, enters from the kitchen, carrying a scotch liquor bottle and one red rose in a vase. He crosses to set scotch on the bar, moves to the left table to place vase. He crosses to sofa, sits, and starts ribbon on package. The front-door buzzer sounds. MICHAEL stops tying package, goes to door, pushes button to release outside building door, opens apartment door, and turns off phonograph as DONALD enters. DONALD is dressed in khakis and a Lacoste shirt, carrying an airline zipper bag and a stack of books. He drops his books on sofa.)*

MICHAEL. Donald! You're about a day and a half early!

DONALD. The doctor cancelled!

(Puts the zipper bag on top of stairs.)

MICHAEL. Cancelled! How'd you get inside?

(Looks out front door.)

DONALD. The street door was open.

(As he comes back to sofa to pick up books and MICHAEL closes door.)

MICHAEL. You wanna drink?

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DONALD. (*Deposits his books on bar and sits on the end of the sofa.*) Not until I've had my shower. I want something to work out today – I want to try to relax and enjoy *something*.

MICHAEL. You in a blue funk because of the doctor?

DONALD. Christ, no. I was depressed long before I got *there*.

MICHAEL. Why'd the prick cancel?

DONALD. A virus or something. He looked awful.

MICHAEL. (*Goes to desk for shopping bag and returns to sofa.*) Well, this'll pick you up. I went shopping today and bought all kind of goodies – Sandalwood soap...

DONALD. (*Removing his socks and shoes.*) I feel better already.

MICHAEL. – Your very own toothbrush because I'm sick to death of you using mine.

DONALD. How do you think *I* feel.

MICHAEL. You've had worse things in your mouth. And, also for you...something called "Control." Notice nowhere is it called hair spray – just simply, "Control." And the words, "For Men," are written about thirty-seven times all over the goddamn can!

DONALD. It's called Butch Assurance.

MICHAEL. Well, it's *still* hair spray – no matter if they call it "Balls"!

(Goes above sofa, picks up bag, and goes to step landing.)

It's all going on your very own shelf which is to be labeled: Donald's Saturday Night Douche Kit.

(Shouting over shoulder as he takes bag to bathroom on second level.)

By the way, are you spending the night?

DONALD. Nope. I'm driving back. I still get very itchy when I'm in this town too long.

MICHAEL. I'll never know how you can tank up on martinis and make it back to the Hamptons in one piece.

DONALD. Believe me, it's easier than getting here. Ever had an anxiety attack at sixty miles an hour?

(DONALD goes to the bedroom, drops his shoes and socks. MICHAEL follows.)

MICHAEL. Why didn't the prick call you and cancel. Suppose you'd driven all this way for nothing.

DONALD. (*Removing his shirt.*) Why do you keep calling him a prick?

MICHAEL. Whoever heard of an analyst having a session with a patient for two hours on Saturday evening.

DONALD. He simply prefers to take Mondays off.

MICHAEL. Works late on Saturday and takes Monday off – what is he, a psychiatrist or a hairdresser?

DONALD. Actually, he's both. He shrinks my head and combs me out.

(Lies on the bed.)

Besides, I had to come in town to a birthday party anyway. Right?

MICHAEL. You had to remind me. If there's one thing I'm not ready for, it's five screaming queens singing "Happy Birthday."

DONALD. Who's coming?

MICHAEL. They're really all Harold's friends. It's *his* birthday, and I want everything to be just the way he'd want it. I don't want to have to listen to him kvetch about how nobody ever does anything for anybody but themselves.

DONALD. Himself.

MICHAEL. Himself. I think you know everybody anyway – they're the same old tired fairies you've seen around since the day one. Actually, there'll be seven, counting Harold and you and me.

DONALD. Are you calling me a screaming queen or a tired fairy?

MICHAEL. Oh, I beg your pardon – six tired, screaming fairy queens and one anxious queer.

DONALD. You don't think Harold'll mind my being here, do you?

MICHAEL. If she doesn't like it, she can twirl on it. Listen, I'll be out of your way in just a second. I've only got one more thing to do.

DONALD. Surgery, so early in the evening?

MICHAEL. Sunt! That's French, with a cedilla.

(He gives him a crooked third finger and goes to the mirror.)

I've got to comb my hair for the thirty-seventh time. Hair – that's singular. My hair, without exaggeration, is clearly falling on the floor. And *fast*, baby!

DONALD. You're totally paranoid. You've got plenty of hair.

MICHAEL. What you see before you is a masterpiece of deception. My hairline starts about here.

(Indicates crown.)

All this is just tortured forward.

DONALD. Well, I hope, for your sake, no strong wind comes up.

MICHAEL. If one does, I'll be in terrible trouble. I will then have a bald head and shoulder-length fringe.

(Runs his fingers through his hair, holds it away from his scalp, dips the top of his head so that DONALD can see. DONALD is silent.)

Not good, huh?

DONALD. Not the greatest.

MICHAEL. It's called, "getting old."

(Turns to study himself in mirror, sighs.)

Well, one thing you have to say for masturbation...you certainly don't have to look your best.

(He slips out of robe, flings it at DONALD. DONALD laughs, takes the robe, and exits to the bath. MICHAEL takes a sweater out of a chest, pulls it on.)

What are you so depressed about? I mean, other than the usual *everything*.

(A beat.)

DONALD. *(Reluctantly.)* I really don't want to get into it.

MICHAEL. Well, if you're not going to tell me, how can we have a conversation *in depth* – a warm, rewarding, meaningful friendship?

DONALD. Up yours!

MICHAEL. *(Southern accent.)* Why, Cap'n Butler, how you talk!

(Pause. DONALD appears in the doorway, holding a glass of water and a small bottle of pills. MICHAEL looks up.)

DONALD. It's just that today I finally realized I was *raised* to be a failure. I was *groomed* for it. Naturally, it all goes back to Evelyn and Walt.

MICHAEL. Christ, how sick analysts must get of hearing how Mommy and Daddy made their darlin' into a fairy.

DONALD. It's beyond just that now. Today I finally began to see how some of the other pieces of the puzzle relate to them. – Like why I never finished anything I started in my life...my neurotic compulsion to not succeed.

MICHAEL. Oh, Donald, you're so serious tonight!
"FORGET YOUR TROUBLES, C'MON. GET HAPPY!"

(Sees DONALD isn't buying it.)

– What's more boring than a queen doing a Judy Garland imitation?

DONALD. A queen doing a Bette Davis imitation.

MICHAEL. Meanwhile – back at the Evelyn and Walt Syndrome.

DONALD. I've realized that it was always when I failed that Evelyn loved me the most – because it displeased Walt, who wanted perfection. And I began to fail on purpose to get love. Failure is the only thing with which I feel at home. Because it's what I was taught at home.

MICHAEL. Killer whales is what they are. Killer whales.

(Pause. MICHAEL suddenly tears off his sweater, throws it in the air, letting it land where it may. He whips out another and pulls it on as he starts down the stairs for the living room. DONALD follows.)

DONALD. Where'd you get *that* sweater?

MICHAEL. This clever little shop on the right bank called Hermés.

DONALD. I work my ass off for forty-five lousy dollars a week *scrubbing* floors, and you waltz around throwing cashmere sweaters on them.

MICHAEL. The one on the floor in the bedroom is vicuña.

DONALD. I *beg* your pardon.

MICHAEL. You could get a job doing something else. Nobody holds a gun to your head to be a charwoman. That is, how you say, your neurosis.

DONALD. Gee, and I thought it's why I was born.

MICHAEL. Besides, just because I *wear* expensive clothes doesn't necessarily mean they're paid for.

DONALD. That is, how you say, *your neurosis*.

MICHAEL. I'm a spoiled brat, so what do I know about being mature. The only thing mature means to me is *Victor Mature*.

DONALD. I can understand people having an affinity for the stage – but movies are such garbage, who can take them seriously?

MICHAEL. Well, I'm sorry if your sense of art is offended. Odd as it may seem, there wasn't any Shubert Theatre in Hot Coffee, Mississippi!

DONALD. However – thanks to the silver screen, your neurosis has got style. It takes a certain flair to squander one's unemployment check at Joe Allen's.

MICHAEL. What's so snappy about being over heels in debt. The only thing smart about it is the ingenious ways I dodge the bill collectors.

DONALD. Yeah. Come to think of it, you're the type that gives faggots a bad name.

MICHAEL. And you, Donald, *you* are a credit to the homosexual. A reliable, hardworking, floor-scrubbing, bill-paying fag who don't own nothin' to nobody.

DONALD. I am a model fairy.

(MICHAEL has taken some ribbon and paper and has begun to wrap Harold's birthday gift.)

MICHAEL. You think it's just nifty how I've always flitted from Beverly Hills to Rome to Acapulco to Amsterdam, picking up a lot of one-night stands and a lot of custom-made duds along the trail, but I'm here to tell you that the only place in all those miles – the only place I've ever been *happy* – was on the goddamn plane.

(He puffs up the bow on the package. A beat.)

Run, charge, run, buy, borrow, make, spend, run, squander, beg, run, run, run, waste, waste, *waste!*

(A beat.)

And why? And why? Finis. Applause.

(DONALD hesitates, walks over to MICHAEL, puts his arms around him, and holds him. It is a totally warm and caring gesture.)

There's nothing quite as good as feeling sorry for yourself, is there?

DONALD. Nothing.

MICHAEL. *(A la Bette Davis.)* I adore cheap sentiment.

(Breaks away.)

Okay, I'm taking orders for drinks. What'll it be?

DONALD. An extra-dry Beefeater-martini-on-the-rocks-with-a-twist.

MICHAEL. Coming up!

(DONALD exits up the stairs into the bath; MICHAEL into the kitchen. Momentarily,