

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!

COWBOY. You said whoever answered the door.

EMORY. (*Quickly, to group.*) But *not until midnight!* He's supposed to be a *midnight cowboy!*

DONALD. He *is* a midnight cowboy.

MICHAEL. He looks right out of the chorus of a bus-and-truck *Oklahoma!*

EMORY. (*To COWBOY.*) ...Not until midnight and you're supposed to sing to the right person, for Chrissake! I *told* you Harold has very tight, tight, black curly hair.

(*Referring to MICHAEL.*)

This number's practically bald!

MICHAEL. Thank you, and fuck you.

BERNARD. It's a good thing *I* didn't open the door.

EMORY. Not that tight and not that black.

COWBOY. I forgot. Besides, I wanted to get to the bars by midnight.

MICHAEL. He's a class act all the way around.

EMORY. What do you mean – get to the bars! Sweetie, I paid you for the whole night, remember?

COWBOY. I hurt my back doing my exercises, and I wanted to get to bed early tonight.

BERNARD. Are you ready for this one?

LARRY. (*To COWBOY.*) That's too bad, what happened?

COWBOY. I lost my grip doing my chin-ups, and I fell on my heels and I twisted my back.

EMORY. You shouldn't *wear* heels when you do chin-ups.

COWBOY. (*Oblivious.*) I shouldn't do chin-ups – I got a weak grip to begin with.

EMORY. A weak grip. In my day it used to be called a limp wrist.

BERNARD. Who can remember that far back?

MICHAEL. Who was it that always used to say, "You show me Oscar Wilde in a cowboy suit, and I'll show you a gay caballero."

DONALD. I don't know. Who *was* it who always used to say that?

MICHAEL. (*Katharine Hepburn voice.*) I don't know. Somebody.

LARRY. (*To COWBOY.*) What does your card say?

COWBOY. (*Holds up his wrist.*) Here. Read it.

LARRY. (*Reading card.*) "Dear Harold, bang, bang, you're alive. But roll over and play dead. Happy birthday, Emory."

BERNARD. Ah, sheer poetry, Emmy.

LARRY. And in your usual good taste.

MICHAEL. Yes, so conservative of you to resist a sign in Times Square.

EMORY. (*Glancing toward stairs.*) Cheese it! Here comes the socialite nun.

MICHAEL. Goddamn it, Emory!

(*ALAN comes down the stairs into the room. Everybody quiets.*)

ALAN. Well, I'm off... Thanks, Michael, for the drink.

MICHAEL. You're entirely welcome, Alan. See you tomorrow?

ALAN. ...No. No, I think I'm going to be awfully busy. I may even go back to Washington.

EMORY. Got a heavy date in Lafayette Square?

ALAN. What?

HANK. Emory.

EMORY. Forget it.

ALAN. (*Sees COWBOY.*) Are you...Harold?

EMORY. No, he's not Harold. He's *for* Harold.

(*Silence. ALAN lets it pass. Turns to HANK.*)

ALAN. Goodbye, Hank. It was nice to meet you.

HANK. Same here.

(*They shake hands.*)

ALAN. If...if you're ever in Washington – I'd like for you to meet my wife.