

Slugs and Kicks
By John Fisher

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Slugs and Kicks

Characters

RORY, male, 20, also studying acting at Purgatoria State University

ANIS, female, 20, a college student studying acting at the same university

JERRY, male, 23, a graduate student who directs plays at the university

GILES, male, 22, English (has an English accent, but not posh), another undergraduate studying acting

CYNTHIA, 20, another student, Giles' girl friend

MARTY, male. 20, another student in another department who lives with RORY and ANIS

PORTER, male, 22, from South Hampton, New York (played by the same actor who plays Giles)

Location

Purgatoria State University, a huge public school in a long western state; New York City

Time

The mid-1980s

Slugs and Kicks

(Place: A huge public university and environs. Time: The mid-Eighties.)

(Set: Blank stage with a single two-seater bench upstage center.)

(As the lights fade on the preshow we hear The Thompson Twins' "Doctor, Doctor." This fades out.)

(At rise: We hear Theodore Bikel singing "Edelweiss" from *The Sound of Music*. The cast joins in from different parts of the stage and slowly drowns out the recording, which fades, leaving all of them singing the song a cappella. When the song ends only RORY is left onstage, with ANIS upstage center, dimly lit. He speaks to the audience.)

RORY

In my senior year in college I learned everything I needed to know about life. I just didn't realize it. I went to a huge public school, Purgatoria State University. The year was 1985 and I wanted to be an actor. Hey, there was an actor in the White House so why not? So I drifted into the drama department. (He walks stage left.) And that's where I met Anis. We lived together. I mean, we lived in the same house. You know. I mean we didn't, you know... (He makes finger through the hole gesture. Looks embarrassed.) Anyway. (Lights up on ANIS.) She also wanted to be an actor. Here she is auditioning for a school play. I just did my audition. So I'm outside waiting for her.

(He crosses upstage as ANIS comes downstage. They give each other a private hand single as they pass. She smiles to the audience.)

ANIS

(Out, as if talking to the director)

Hello. Hi. Anyone out there? Oh, hi. My name is Anis and this is a piece from *The Fall of the House of Utter*. (She "centers" herself and starts her audition monologue in a British accent.) "I did not say that. I did not. I said we were in love. I did not say we wanted to marry. I am the lover. You are the wife- " (She stops and looks out as if she were just cut off.) What? Oh, yes, it's a contemporary monologue. Yeah, I know it doesn't sound contemporary, but it is. *The House of Utter. Utter*. I think it's like "utter nonsense" or "utter shame" – like the adjective "utter." No, not like cow breasts. "Utter" not "udder." Yes. Yes, ok, I should work on my diction. What? Oh, yes, I could do something from Shakespeare, would you like that? Ok:

"O, yet, for God's sake, go not for these wars!
The time was, father, that you broke your word."

(Blackout. We hear Leo Sayer's "When I Need You." Lights up on ANIS and RORY sitting on bench up center.)

ANIS

Well he hated my monologue. He thought it was phony sounding and about breasts. Breasts! He thought it was about boobs. Tits! He thought I was doing a monologue about titties!

RORY

Yeah, I got it.

ANIS

So he had me do Shakespeare. I don't know what that has to do with playing the mother of an autistic kid but whatever.

RORY

I did my monologue and they loved it.

ANIS

Did you touch your penis?

RORY

What?

ANIS

You touch your penis when you do that monologue.

RORY

I don't touch my penis. That's disgusting.

ANIS

It sure is.

RORY

I adjust my crotch. Like I'm a stud. You know: "Yo!" (He adjusts.) You make it sound like I take out my-

ANIS

It's cheap, Rory.

RORY

What's wrong with you?

ANIS

Why is it he thinks the boys are cute and the women are annoying. Why is that?

RORY

Because he's a gay guy. Duh.

ANIS

Yeah, but he's casting a huge woman's role. The lead.

RORY

He's casting men also.

ANIS

The woman's role is most important. You know that. She has to cry. I can cry goddammit. I can cry! If he'd let me finish my monologue I would have cried! I would have shown them I could fucking cry! (She cries.)

RORY

Are you acting?

ANIS

No, I'm upset.

RORY

You want to go home? I'll walk you.

ANIS

Leave me alone. I want to be upset. Shit.

(JERRY enters from left holding a clipboard. He is very gay, a little older than them, wears a scarf.)

JERRY

That was very good you two.

(JERRY stands between them.)

RORY

Thanks.

JERRY

(Standing close To RORY)

Am I standing too close?

RORY

Yes.

JERRY

Do I scare you?

RORY

A little.

JERRY

Good.

(JERRY suddenly turns to ANIS.)

JERRY

Can you stick around?

ANIS

Sure.

JERRY

(Handing her script pages)

Look over these sides. We want you to come in and read for the lead. It's the scene where she realizes her husband has left her and her retarded daughter is dead. (ANIS is sniffing.) Are you all right? (He covers his mouth and nose with scarf.)

ANIS

Yeah, it's just allergies.

JERRY

It's not a cold?

ANIS

No. It's not a cold.

JERRY

Good. I always catch colds from girls. Don't stand so close. You're sniveling. There's germs in snivel, even if it's only allergy snivel

(ANIS moves way.)

ANIS

This ok?

JERRY

(Indicating the script)

Start here and go to here.

RORY

What about me?

JERRY

We've seen enough of you, Miss Rory. (Getting close) Is everything you do gay? Your monologue was very gay.

RORY

Was it? The character's straight.

JERRY

Well then you're not very convincing as a straight boy, are you? Woops, did I just say that? Oh, my goodness. Naughty-bitchy-naughty of me. It just slipped out. Are you coming over to my place later for sex?

RORY

I have to study.

JERRY

I bet you do. You're cute, Rory. But much too uptight.

RORY

I'm not uptight. I'm just not gay.

JERRY

You haven't met the right man yet.

RORY

Are you the right man?

JERRY

No, I'm the wrong one. Which means I'm the right one for you, you smut muffin. Oh, dear. Oh, no, did I just say that? Oooooo....

(JERRY exits left.)

ANIS

Ok, wish me luck.

RORY

Good luck's bad luck in the theatre.

ANIS

Then wish me "merde."

RORY

What's that mean?

ANIS
“Shit.”

RORY
Ok, “shit.”

ANIS
(Singing spontaneously, they do this a lot)
I'M SO EXCITED

RORY
AND I JUST CAN'T HIDE IT.

BOTH
AND I KNOW, I KNOW, I KNOW, I KNOW, I KNOW I WANT YOU.

(He kisses her on the cheek, squeezes her hand, and she exits left.)

RORY
(To the audience)
So I walked home. I liked to sing to myself as I walked:
(Singing and walking in place towards audience)
I'M THE GREATEST STAR.
I AM BY FAR BUT NO ONE KNOWS IT.

I am not gay! When I got home, I liked to watch old movies. (He mimes turning on TV with an “RC” and we hear John Wayne in *The Horse Soldiers*.) And eat Lucky Charms. (He gets a bowl of Lucky Charms and a book from off right and sits and stares out eating Lucky Charms from a bowl.) I also read a lot. Not whole books, just the first chapters. I don't like reading so much, I just like books.

(He is now sitting on floor eating, reading and watching TV. ANIS bursts in from left. She is excited.)

ANIS
So it went really well. He had me read the big monologue and then the big scene with Giles.

RORY
Giles?

ANIS
Yeah, I'm pretty sure they're going to give him the other lead.

RORY
He's a terrible actor.

ANIS

No, he's not. He's English.

RORY

That doesn't make him a good actor.

ANIS

It does if you're doing an English play.

RORY

He can't remember his lines.

ANIS

He can remember them. He just doesn't memorize them. When he memorizes them he remembers them pretty well.

RORY

(To audience)

Giles was this old, fat actor who hogged all the good roles.

ANIS

He wasn't old.

RORY

He was twenty-two. He was totally old. (To audience) And he never bothered to learn his lines. They gave him *Hamlet* last semester, for Christ's sake. Hamlet!

(GILES appears stage right as Hamlet.)

GILES

"Oh, that this too, too solid flesh would melt..."

(GILES pauses, can't remember his lines. RORY looks disgusted.)

GILES

"Thaw and resolve itself into a dew."

RORY

(To audience)

He always covered by taking these thoughtful pauses.

ANIS

He was thinking.

RORY

Thinking of his next line. (To audience) And he'd write his lines on his arm! On his arm!
It was so high school.

GILES

(Raising his right arm dramatically)

"To be or not to be." (He glances at his forearm, then continues.) "That is the question."

(RORY is disgusted.)

ANIS

He's natural.

RORY

(To GILES)

Why did you do it? Why didn't you memorize your lines?

GILES

(To audience)

I like to keep it spontaneous. Hamlet doesn't know what he's going to say next, why should I?

(GILES smiles at ANIS.)

ANIS

I think he's dreamy.

RORY

He's ancient.

ANIS

Older men are sophisticated. They're experienced.

GILES

(To audience)

I can't wait to be bald. Flesh is exciting to women.

ANIS

Hmm... hmhhh.

RORY

I can't believe you're defending his acting.

ANIS

He's charismatic.

He's fat. RORY

He's muscley. ANIS

Yeach... RORY

GILES
(Exiting right)
I am Schwarzenegger. I am Chuck Norris! I am Hulk Hogan!

(RORY is fake retching on the stage.)

ANIS
Well, he's going to play the lead so you better get used to him.

RORY
Why do I need to get used to him? I don't need to see the show.

ANIS
You do if you're in it.

RORY
What?

ANIS
I'm pretty sure they're going to use you as Teddy.

RORY
Teddy? Who's Teddy.

ANIS
You know, the middle-aged proctologist.

RORY
Really?

ANIS
Yeah. They were talking that way.

RORY
That means we're going to be in a show together.

ANIS

I know.

(They jump about screaming excitedly: Ahhhhhh!)

RORY

(Singing)

CURTAIN UP!

ANIS

LIGHT THE LIGHTS!

BOTH

WE HAVE NOTHING TO HIT BUT THE HEIGHTS.

RORY

That is so great!

ANIS

I know.

RORY

It's incredible.

ANIS

(Singing)

SHALL WE DANCE

(They polka about the stage humming the song excitedly. They stop, they are looking at each other. She touches his face, smiles. She gives him a little kiss. He moves his face away embarrassed.)

RORY

Hey, sorry.

ANIS

Don't be afraid.

RORY

I'm not afraid, I'm just...

(She sighs, releases him.)

ANIS

Can I have some Lucky Charms?

RORY

Sure. (ANIS exits right. He speaks to audience.) Ok, I've never had a girl friend, never even made out with a girl so I'm... naturally nervous. But I'm not gay. I know this is like a gay play so everyone thinks it's going to end up being about how I came out of the closet and was deep down gay all the time but I'm not. I just... Anis seems pretty obvious to me, as a girl friend. I mean, everyone thinks she's my girl friend so that would be just lame.

(ANIS enters with a bowl. She's obviously been crying.)

RORY

Maybe it's because Anis is from LA and I'm from the Bay Area. We're different species. I don't know.

(ANIS sings Anne Murray's "I Just Fall in Love" to herself as she watches RORY exit. As she sings she stuffs Lucky Charms in her mouth miserably.)

ANIS

*AND OH I JUST FALL IN LOVE AGAIN
JUST ONE TOUCH AND THEN IT HAPPENS EVERY TIME
THERE I GO BY, JUST FALL IN LOVE AGAIN AND WHEN I DO
I CAN'T HELP MYSELF, I FALL IN LOVE WITH YOU.*

(She is drowned out by Anne Murray singing the same song as JERRY, RORY, and GILES enter. JERRY comes on with clipboard. When all are assembled ANIS and Anne Murray stop singing and JERRY talks to everyone.)

JERRY

Ok, here we are, first day of rehearsal. I know you're all nervous. Well, you should be. This is my Master's Thesis and you all better be brilliant. (Standing beside GILES) Miss Giles already is brilliant because she's English, aren't you handsome? (GILES blows him a little kiss, JERRY acts like his heart melts; RORY makes a gagging gesture.) The rest of you are going to get brilliant. I know I have a reputation for doing "the campy musical-comedy, faggy-faggy, swish-swish" thing but that's not the whole me. This one is going to be Method, real Actor's Studio crap. We're going to do it by the book. It's a naturalistic play and we're going to approach it naturalistically. I know my stuff is usually "wink-wink, nudge-nudge, step-step-kick-turn, 'Look ma, I'm dancing!'" This one will be about connection, realism, and focus. Stanislavsky! We're going back to Stanislavsky! Got it? Ok, I always begin rehearsal with a group warm-up. Let's sing "Edelweiss" from *The Sound of Music*.

(They sing "Edelweiss" and then move about the stage "warming up," JERRY barking orders like "Sing Out!" and "Physicalize!" When they

stop moving GILES and ANIS are holding scripts and playing a love scene. JERRY is watching.)

ANIS

(With an English accent, caressing GILES's face)

“When I met you, you were so handsome, sitting there reading *The Guardian*, eating cashews.”

JERRY

(Interrupting)

You love this guy, dear, so love him. Love him.

ANIS

I do. I mean, I feel like I am.

JERRY

No, you're acting like puppy love, like you're Olivia Newton-John in *Grease*. He's your husband, not Miss John Travolta. (Pause.) Treat him like he's the first guy you've blown and swallowed.

ANIS

(With an English accent, caressing GILES's face)

Ok. (She swallows.) “When I met you, you were so handsome, sitting there reading *The Guardian*, eating cashews.”

JERRY

It's terrible dear. Terrible.

ANIS

I'm sorry. But I don't know how else to play love.

JERRY

If he was a jelly donut you'd know how to love him. If he was a burrito supremo with extra sour cream you'd love him to death. (She whimpers a bit.) What do I have to do, cast a piece of chocolate cake in his role to get some love out of you?

(She starts to cry.)

JERRY

Good. Now play the scene.

ANIS

“When I met you, you were so handsome...” (She is crying. She holds GILES, squeezes him. GILES squeezes her. JERRY crosses to them.)

JERRY

Good work, Anis. Good work. Let me in here.

(He gets in between them in the embrace.)

JERRY

Now squeeze. (They squeeze again making a sandwich. JERRY talks to ANIS.) I believe in the abuse school of directing. Lee Strassberg used to scream in Marilyn's face to get her to act. She was too pretty. So he screamed until she cried and then, when her make-up was all runny and she looked like crap, he let her play the scene. Don't hide behind your smile and your sincerity.

ANIS

Ok.

JERRY

(To GILES)

You're fine, Miss Giles. (To RORY) You're hopeless. Hopeless. But you're miscast so it's not your fault. You should be fat and forty. Instead you're svelte and twenty. It's a disaster.

RORY

You cast me.

JERRY

Because I wanted to fuck you not because you can act. But we haven't fucked so why are you still here? (Pause.) It's not a rhetorical question. (Pause.) We'll get you a fat suit and some heavy shoes. Maybe clown boots. That should keep you from flouncing around the stage like Tinkerbell. (To GILES) Why are you so straight?

GILES

It's just how I was born. There're no gay people in England.

JERRY

And you're so fucking clever. That's what bugs me about you. Why can't you be straight and dull?

GILES

There're no dull people in England.

JERRY

I'd still do you. But I know it would be meaningless to you. You'd be sitting there letting me suck you off but you'd be thinking of Carol Doda or Brooke Shields or something.

GILES

Not Brooke Shields.

JERRY

Bo Derek.

GILES

Yeeeah. I like women named after oil drills.

JERRY

Still, I'd do you. You're so hot. Hot. (To everyone) Ok. That's it for tonight. Before tomorrow, cast, please learn how to act!

(CYNTHIA enters left. JERRY turns to see her.)

JERRY

Hello, can we help you? (Pause.) It's a rhetorical question. It means "get out."

GILES

She's here to see me. She's my girlfriend.

JERRY

(To GILES)

You tease. (To CYNTHIA, who gives him a sweet smile) Do you have a brain? Oooo... now I'm doing it to strangers. Back to charm school for me.

CYNTHIA

It's ok. My mother and father were abusive. I'm used to it.

JERRY

(Holding her hand sympathetically)

It must be a comfort to have parents who prepared you for life. Good night everyone.

(He exits left.)

GILES

Good work, Anis.

ANIS

Thanks.

GILES

Oh, this I my girlfriend, Cindy.

CYNTHIA

Cynthia.

Hi. ANIS

Hey. (Like he knows her) RORY

Hey. CYNTHIA

You two know each other? GILES

We have class together. CYNTHIA

Ancient History. We go way back. (He laughs at his dumb joke. No one else does.) RORY

You want a beer? (To CYNTHIA) GILES

Sure. CYNTHIA

(They exit left arm in arm.)

They're such a happy couple. ANIS

It's because they're drunks. You can tell. They're co-dependent. RORY

Why are you so hostile? ANIS

I was just joking. RORY

You weren't joking. You're jealous of everyone so you go around saying hostile things about them. ANIS

What got up your butt? RORY

You think I'm fat, don't you? ANIS

What? RORY

Say it. Say to me, "You're fat." ANIS

I'd never say that. RORY

But you think it. ANIS

I don't think that at all. RORY

You think I'm skinny? ANIS

I don't think anything. I don't care. RORY

So you do think I'm fat but you don't care. ANIS

I don't think you're fat and I don't care. RORY

Well, that's the most obnoxious thing I've ever heard. ANIS

You're upset because of rehearsal. RORY

No, I'm inspired because of rehearsal. I can't believe I've let you turn me into your faghag, your fat chick. ANIS

You're not. RORY

I am. ANIS

RORY

First of all I'd have to be a fag for you to be my hag and secondly you'd have to be fat to be my chick.

ANIS

Kiss me. Right now. Kiss me.

RORY

No.

ANIS

Why not?

RORY

I just don't feel that way about you.

ANIS

I feel that way about you. That's enough. That's enough for both of us. Kiss me.

(He gives her a little peck on the cheek.)

ANIS

That was awful. What am I? Your grandmother?

RORY

Sorry.

ANIS

I get so frustrated with you.

RORY

Obviously.

ANIS

Let's go home.

RORY

Ok.

(They take two steps in place towards the audience then ANIS stops.)

ANIS

Rory.

RORY
Yes?

ANIS
I'm going to the library.

RORY
Ok.

ANIS
I have a paper to write. For psychology. On sexual frustration.

RORY
Bye.

(ANIS exits left.)

RORY
(To audience)
So I headed home. I was feeling a little blue. Like, why doesn't anyone laugh at my jokes and why do studs like Giles always have cute girlfriends and I don't? Of course I could have one but... anyway, I was depressed.

(Singing)

WHERE'S THAT BOY WITH THE BUGLE

MY LITTLE LOVE WHO WAS ALWAYS MY BIG ROMANCE.

And I ate Lucky Charms and watched old movies and held a book.

(He's gotten his Lucky Charms and book and flicked the "RC." We hear Kirk Douglas in *Seven Days in May*. MARTY enters from right. He is very crunchy looking – jeans, Birkenstocks. Some growth. MARTY is the same age as RORY.)

RORY
Hey.

MARTY
Hi.

RORY
(To audience)
Our roommate Marty. Not an actor. Forestry and Conservation of Natural Resource Studies.

(MARTY is just staring at the TV.)

RORY

Are you high?

(MARTY just laughs.)

RORY

You want some Lucky Charms?

MARTY

Thanks, Bro. (He takes them.)

RORY

(To the audience)

Marty and I had been to New York the summer before. Neither of us could think of anything better to do so we flew to Manhattan. I went and saw every show on Broadway and he got high and walked around slums like Harlem and the South Bronx.

(We hear New York sounds – cars honking, sirens, lots of sirens.)

MARTY

I saw a fire today. Whole tenement going up in smoke. It was cool.

RORY

I saw *Sugar Babies* with Mickey Rooney and Ann Miller.

MARTY

Mickey Rooney? Isn't he dead?

RORY

I don't think so.

MARTY

Tonight I'm going to the Lower East Side, to Alphabet City.

RORY

Tonight I'm seeing *My One and Only* with Tommy Tune and Twiggy.

MARTY

Maybe I'll come with, they have some cool projects right next to that theatre. In Hell's Kitchen.

RORY

Isn't it kind of dangerous walking around the projects?

MARTY

Today someone tried to drop a bag of screws on me from the thirty-fifth floor of one of them, it landed on the roof of this car and blew out all the windows. It was wild.

RORY

Aren't you afraid of being mugged?

MARTY

A guy asked me for a dollar today. I said no and then he chased me from 145th Street to Central Park.

RORY

You must have been terrified.

MARTY

Yeah, but I wanted to see the park so it worked out fine.

RORY

Tomorrow I'm going to the revival of *Show Boat* with Donald O'Conner and Lonette McKee.

MARTY

Tomorrow I'm going to South Hampton on the train. See how the stinking rich live. You want to come with?

RORY

Ok. Show's not till eight.

MARTY

I might go with you. I read somewhere that Donald O'Conner is a huge coke fiend.

RORY

(To audience)

So we rode out to South Hampton. (Train sounds, they bounce.) Got off the train and walked through out the town.

RORY

(Looking around)

Wow. Nice.

MARTY

Yeah.

RORY

It's like Marin.

Yeah. MARTY

Are you high? RORY

Yeah. MARTY

Beach is this way. RORY

(They walk towards audience.)

There's no sidewalk. RORY

Rich people don't walk anywhere. Walking's very bourgeois. MARTY

So you're really into this whole socio-economic disparity thing. RORY

That's where the Fords live. Behind that huge hedge. MARTY

I mean this is a far cry from Harlem. RORY

And the Carnegies have a summer house here. Behind those trees. MARTY

You can't even see it. RORY

I know, invisibility is so classy. Here's the public beach. MARTY

Let's set up over here. RORY

Ok. MARTY

(They move to the left side of the stage. PORTER, a young man in swim trunks and hat, meets them stage left.)

Hey. PORTER

Hi. RORY

How you doing? PORTER

We're cool. How're you, bro? MARTY

I'm cool. This is the country club beach. (Indicating limits) From here that direction. PORTER

Oh. RORY

Sorry guys. Just doing my job. They'd fire me if I didn't ask you to move. PORTER

The sands so beautiful over here. MARTY

Yeah, we rake it every morning. PORTER

It's like a Robert Ryman painting. MARTY

Yeah, or installation by Antoni Tapies. PORTER

Cool. Ok, we'll get back to the plebes beach. MARTY

Thanks, bro. PORTER

It's cool. MARTY

(They cross to stage right and begin stripping down to bathing suits.)

RORY

That doesn't piss you off?

MARTY

Nah, it's South Hampton. It's just like getting chased from 145th Street to Central Park. We don't belong.

RORY

Hey, I'm from Marin. I belong.

MARTY

You're upper-middle.

RORY

No, I'm lower-upper.

MARTY

Well I'm middle-middle so that makes us, as a couple, lower-upper-middle.

MARTY

Are you going in?

RORY

Yeah, it looks beautiful.

(They walk upstage as if wading into the water and then turn around as if they were submerged up to the necks, arms floating beside them.)

RORY

God, this is great. The water's great.

MARTY

Yeah, not at all like Stinson.

RORY

I want to live here.

MARTY

Yeah, New York is cool. I want to go to graduate school at Columbia.

RORY

Columbia. Cool. I want to go to NYU.

MARTY

Cool. How you feeling?

RORY

Like I'm in a gay play.

MARTY

Yeah, we better get out.

(They come out of the water by crossing downstage. They lay on the stage, facing the audience.)

RORY

We're going to get burnt.

MARTY

Yeah.

RORY

I've never been sunburnt.

MARTY

It's cool. It hurts.

RORY

It does?

MARTY

But in a good way.

(They lay on their backs.)

MARTY

Amityville is near here.

RORY

What's that like?

MARTY

Pretty good. Except for the Amityville Horror House. You know that book? Scary as hell.

RORY

Isn't that where *Jaws* takes place. In Amity?

MARTY

Yeah, but that's fiction. The Amityville Horror House is true.

(They stand and get dressed.)

RORY

(To audience)

About three hours later we got dressed.

(PORTER enters and waves.)

MARTY

Hey Bro.

PORTER

Hey Broski

MARTY

So I have a question for you. If we were drowning, would you save us?

PORTER

Bro. I would like totally save you. If you felt yourself drowning and you swam over to my side of the beach, I'd save you.

MARTY

Ok, what if I school of venomous psychotropic jellyfish attacked us, would you save us then?

PORTER

Totally. I'd be all over that. I'd like punch those jelly fish in the face, like, "Stop it jelly fish, whoah!" But it has to be on my side of the beach. My boss said I can't like save any poor people.

MARTY

I get it. Rules are rules. See ya, Bro.

PORTER

(Exiting left)

Tubular.

RORY

So we got on the train and went back to New York. On the train I freaked out on my sunburn. (To MARTY) It's pretty red.

MARTY

Yeah.

RORY

How can I tell how burnt it is?

MARTY

If you touch it and it leaves a white mark it's bad. If the white mark disappears really fast it's really bad.

(MARTY presses his finger to RORY's arm and removes it.)

MARTY

Shit. That was fast.

RORY

Do it again.

(He does.)

MARTY

Shit. You might have skin cancer.

RORY

Really?

MARTY

It's ok. Everyone has skin cancer nowadays. Robert Redford. Dustin Hoffman. Bo Derek. Brenda Vaccaro.

RORY

Is it fatal?

MARTY

No, they'll just do a skin graft.

RORY

Where do they get the skin?

MARTY

From your ass.

RORY

I don't think there's enough skin back there to cover my arms.

MARTY

They can take it from your back as well.

RORY

But my back's sunburnt too.

MARTY

Maybe they can take it off a cadaver. Or you can get a donor. You might be able to buy skin from a third world country, India or Indonesia or something.

RORY

But what if it's the wrong shade. Like would Indian skin really work on me?

MARTY

I didn't think of that. Too bad your ass isn't bigger. I wouldn't worry about it.

RORY

(To audience)

That night we went to *Show Boat*.

(They sit on bench and stare amazed. We hear "Bill" sung by Lonette McKee.)

RORY

(To audience as they rise and walk in place)

Then we walked in Hell's Kitchen which was terrifying. (To MARTY) You sure this is ok?

(We hear a gunshot and a woman's scream.)

MARTY

It's fine.

RORY

(To audience)

And we were so jazzed up afterwards we went to a midnight screening of the new James Bond movie. It was called *Octopussy* with Roger Moore and Maud Adams.

(They sit on bench and stare amazed. We hear Roger Moore in *Octopussy*, followed by the theme music "We're an All Time High" sung by Rita Coolidge.)

MARTY

(To audience)

Then we went to Burger King and ate a ton of food.

(They sit on bench and "munch food.")

RORY

Tomorrow I'm going to see the revival of *Private Lives* with Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor.

MARTY

Tomorrow I'm going to Newark.

RORY

And tomorrow night I'm going to *Lena Horne: The Lady and her Music* with Lena Horne.

MARTY

Tomorrow night I'm going to walk through the South Bronx.

RORY

(To audience)

And that was my summer in New York with Marty.

(ANIS has entered behind them from left.)

ANIS

That sounds like a lot of fun. Yawn.

(MARTY stands and exits right singing "We're an All Time High.")

RORY

Why don't you like Marty?

ANIS

He's a pothead.

RORY

Like everyone else at Purgatoria. (To audience) Next night at rehearsal.

(GILES enters right and stands with ANIS center; CYNTHIA enters and stands with RORY right watching; JERRY enters from left and also watches.)

RORY

Cynthia and I were watching Giles trying to get through a scene.

ANIS

"I love you Reggie. I love you."

(GILES can't remember his line. ANIS mouths it to him.)

GILES

"I love you."

JERRY

(Truly pissed off)
Miss Giles, please learn your fucking lines!

GILES

Sorry.

JERRY

(Calming down)
I'm sorry to get so uptight. I'm sorry.

GILES

(To ANIS)
I'm sorry.

JERRY

Don't apologize to her. Apologize to me.

GILES

(To JERRY)
I'm sorry.

GILES

(Calm)
I'm sorry.

ANIS

I'm sorry.

JERRY

That's it for tonight. This bitch is thirsty! Good night.

(He exits left.)

CYNTHIA

You want me to wait?

GILES

I'll see you at the bar.

CYNTHIA

(Exiting left)
Ok. Later.

(Awkward moment. ANIS stares at RORY as if to say "get lost.")

(Exiting left)
Bye, you two.

RORY

You all right?

GILES

When are you going to learn your lines?

ANIS

By opening night.

GILES

That's not funny.

ANIS

It's tough for me. I don't have a photographic memory.

GILES

You never even look at them outside of rehearsals, do you?

ANIS

Can you help me with them? I'm getting worried.

GILES

Don't be worried.

ANIS

Ok but I could use some help. It's easier for me when I work with someone.

GILES

Ok. You wanna come over tomorrow. I'll make you something to eat.

ANIS

Yeah, great.

GILES

I'll make you dinner.

ANIS

Oh, ok.

GILES

And we'll work.

ANIS

(They exit right. JERRY and RORY enter from left. They were spying on them.)

RORY

Do you always eavesdrop?

JERRY

Yeah, it's fun. I've been a spy since birth. My mother said I took so long coming out because I wanted to stay in there and wombspy the rest of my life.

RORY

You're such an asshole to him.

JERRY

Miss Giles is barely tracking. She needs to snap out of it.

RORY

You said he was perfect for the role, could play it in his sleep.

JERRY

She can. But she has a problem I know too much about. Are you jealous of her?

RORY

Listen, I want to be perfect for my role. I don't just want to be the skinny kid playing the middle-aged proctologist.

JERRY

You got a lot of hang-ups, Marilyn.

RORY

I know. I'm just an upper-middle class boy from the suburbs.

JERRY

Yes, we have to beat that complacency out of you.

RORY

Will you help me? I do want to be good.

JERRY

Ok. Why don't you come over tomorrow?

RORY

To your place?

JERRY

Don't get nervous. It's not a date, Miss Monroe. You're coming over to work. And this is where I exit. Provocatively. Stage left.

(JERRY exits left as ANIS enters from right.)

ANIS

You ready?

RORY

Yeah. Were you spying?

ANIS

Yes, Rory. I'm a spy. We're all spies.

(They walk in place as if walking home.)

RORY

Frustrating, isn't it? I mean, the acting.

ANIS

Rory stop.

(They stop walking.)

RORY

What?

ANIS

Why don't you like me?

RORY

I do like you. You're my best friend.

ANIS

I don't want to be your best friend. I want to be your girl friend.

RORY

I'm just not ready for all that. It makes me feel weird.

ANIS

But I think about you all the time. I do.

RORY

I know you do. But I'm just not ready.

ANIS

You beat off, don't you? I mean you masturbate?

RORY

Jesus, Anis!

ANIS

Well, you do.

RORY

That's disgusting.

ANIS

Wouldn't you rather have sex? Wouldn't you rather have the real thing?

RORY

I can't believe you're saying these things. It's gross.

ANIS

I mean, well, even if you're gay...

RORY

I'm not gay!

ANIS

But even if you are, I have a butt. I mean, women have butts too.

RORY

That is just disgusting, please stop.

ANIS

Are you a bottom? I mean I assumed you were a top but if you're a bottom I could wear a strap-on.

RORY

Jesus Christ, Anis, I barely know what you're talking about.

(Pause.)

ANIS

Ok. Well. I'm going to the library. I have a paper to write. On humiliation.

RORY

Are you all right?

ANIS

No. It's fine. My father doesn't love me, why should you be any different?

RORY

Oh, my God, Anis. I'm not your father.

ANIS

Thank God. Don't worry about it. I'm sorry... I'm sorry about what I said, about beating off. You need your exercise. And it's probably good for your complexion.

RORY

Jesus, Anis, would you stop talking about beating off, all right?

ANIS

Sorry.

RORY

It's fine just... you're grossing me out. Let it go.

ANIS

Ok.

(She exits left. He shakes off a feeling of disgust.)

RORY

That was so awkward! (To audience) And incidentally, I don't... well... oh, never mind.

(RORY exits right. Doorbell. ANIS enters left and meets GILES, who enters from right holding a bag.)

GILES

Hey. Thanks for having me over.

ANIS

Just look at me when you forget a line, it'll come to you. "I love you."

GILES

"I love you."

ANIS

Just like that.

GILES

Ok. What smells so good?

I made dinner. It's Shepherd's Pie.

ANIS

Shepherd's Pie?

GILES

Like from the show.

ANIS

Smells good.

GILES

You didn't even remember it's from the show.

ANIS

I did.

GILES

I'm trying to be Method. You know, live like the character.

ANIS

Sure. It smells great.

GILES

And I've got music. (She mimes the "RC." We hear Gilbert O'Sullivan's "Alone Again, Naturally.")

ANIS

Oh, I love this song!

GILES

It's from the show.

ANIS

Yeah. Right. Oh, I brought something too, to get us into character.

GILES

What's that?

ANIS

(Holding up bag)
Foster's.

GILES

Oh. Great. Yeah, let's have some Foster's.

ANIS

(Doorbell. JERRY enters right in smoking jacket and cravat, very Noel Coward, holding a martini. He meets RORY, who enters from left.)

RORY

Wow, you look great.

JERRY

Let's warm-up.

(Singing)

BUT EVERYTHING

BOTH

WAS BEAUTIFUL AT THE BALLET.

(The lights will now cross from left to right as we shift in scene from ANIS/GILES [right] to RORY/JERRY [left]. Cross to ANIS and GILES drinking Foster's and laughing. MARTY enters from right.)

MARTY

Hey.

ANIS

Oh, hey, Marty. This is Marty.

GILES

Hi, Marty. Pleasure to meet you. You reek of weed, Marty.

MARTY

I do indeed. Do you want some?

ANIS

No, Marty.

GILES

Of course we do. A little ganja always helps my memorization.

MARTY

(Producing a pipe)

I just happen to have a pipe handy.

(Cross to JERRY and RORY. They are singing – from *Damn Yankees.*)

JERRY

*SIX MONTHS OUT OF EVERY YEAR
HE LIVES BY THE TELEVISION SET.*

RORY

HE'S OUT, HE'S SAFE, HE'S OUT...

JERRY

*IF YOU SEE THAT MAN
HOW DOES HE LOOK?*

RORY

WHOAAAA.....

JERRY

I FORGET.

RORY

HE'S SAFE!

JERRY

Wait, wait, wait. (Running offstage right getting air freshener) I see this with air freshener, very Busby Berkeley. (Re-entering) Here. I'm in the middle, you're the chorus of husbands.

(He positions the two of them for the number – when they do it he will revolve in place and spray as RORY moves around him pretending to watch TV.)

JERRY

Go!
*SIX MONTHS OUT OF EVERY YEAR
HE LIVES BY THE TELEVISION SET.*

RORY

HE'S OUT, HE'S SAFE, HE'S OUT...

JERRY

*IF YOU SEE THAT MAN
HOW DOES HE LOOK?*

RORY

WHOAAAA.....

JERRY

I FORGET.

RORY

HE'S SAFE!

(Shift to MARTY on the guitar playing as he and GILES sing Dan Hill's "Sometimes When We Touch." ANIS looks annoyed. Shift to JERRY/RORY, JERRY now playfully spraying RORY with air freshener.)

RORY

Is this how we're working tonight?

JERRY

You're way too uptight, Miss Whorey.

RORY

It's how I was raised.

JERRY

This is college. Time to let your hair down. You should be having sex and singing Mary Martin songs. You know some. I know you do.

RORY

Ok. I do.

JERRY

Do you know "I Am Sixteen Going on Seventeen?"

RORY

That's not a Mary Martin song.

JERRY

It's from *Sound of Music*.

RORY

But it's not her song. It's Liesl and Rolf's song from the second act-

JERRY

Shut up.

I AM SIXTEEN GOING ON SEVENTEEN.

(Back to MARTY, GILES and ANIS. MARTY hits a chord.)

MARTY/GILES

YESTERDAY...

ANIS

(Yanking guitar away from Marty.)

That's it. We need to rehearse. (She drops a script in his lap.) Marty, you're on book.

(MARTY holds the script. GILES and ANIS get ready to act. Back to RORY and JERRY singing final lyrics of “Sixteen” in each other’s arms.)

JERRY/RORY

I’LL TAKE CARE OF YOU.

(JERRY is about to kiss RORY but JERRY discreetly turns upstage, puts something on his face, then turns back to RORY wearing a Hitler mustache.)

JERRY

And I turn out to be Hitler. Hiel! (He bursts out laughing and swigs his martini.)

RORY

You’re kind of drunk.

JERRY

Situation normal. Does it scare you?

RORY

No, you smell like my father when he’s drunk

JERRY

Oooo, Daddy complex. You like your father?

RORY

Not in that way.

JERRY

(Moving in)

“I will kiss thy mouth. I will kiss thy mouth, John the Baptist.”

RORY

What?

JERRY

It’s a line from *Salome*: “Let me kiss thy mouth, John the Baptist.”

RORY

I’d rather you didn’t.

JERRY

That’s what he says. That’s what John the Baptist says to Salome.

RORY

And then what happens?

JERRY

She dances naked in front of him then cuts off his head. Mmmm! Now that's sex!

(Cross to MARTY, GILES and ANIS. GILES and ANIS are acting.
MARTY is on book.)

GILES

"I love you."

ANIS

"I love you."

(They start kissing.)

MARTY

(Prompting them.)

No, now you say: "But what are we going to do about Deborah?" Hey, you say, "But what..." (He sees they're kissing. He looks through script to find that moment, doesn't see it.) Yeah, you don't kiss here. You have more lines. (He looks at them.) Oh, I get it... You guys are making out. Ok. (He lies back and watches.)

(Cross to JERRY and RORY.)

JERRY

I think you're a good actor. I just think there are a lot of barriers between you and your emotion. You think of acting as some kind of put-on, like a con, a game, you think of it as a way of hiding. It's actually exactly the opposite. It's a way of exposing yourself, making yourself available to strangers. It's like sex. It's an act of trust. You're saying to total strangers, "Here, look at me, accept me, love me, for what I am not for what I can pretend to be." That's what the audience has to do. They have to pretend to be things – they have to pretend to be good employees or loving fathers or faithful wives, they pretend all day. They don't want to come see someone pretend to be something, they want to see them actually be something, something real. You're not real, you're false.

RORY

Is that why you're so gay when you're onstage?

JERRY

Yes. And it hurts. I don't want to be the little faggot up there. I don't. But I am. That's the reality I have to offer. And they like it. They love it. Because if they could just be themselves, whatever that is, if they could just be themselves like I am every night they think, they imagine they would be happy. That's the illusion of theatre, it provides the audience with a simulation of happiness.

RORY

Well, I'm still a student, I'm not an actor yet.

JERRY

It's not about studying acting, It's about studying yourself. Being yourself. Until you've lived you can't portray life.

RORY

And living's having sex with you.

JERRY

Have you ever had sex with a man?

RORY

No.

JERRY

You should. You should try things. I'd love to fuck you. And you need to get fucked.

RORY

Ok.

JERRY

Ok?

RORY

But I'll need some drinks.

JERRY

Oh, we can get you those.

(Back to ANIS and GILES kissing. MARTY is asleep.)

ANIS

(Breaking out of the kiss)

What about Cynthia?

GILES

She'll be devastated.

(They resume kissing.)

ANIS

You haven't eaten any of your Shepherd's Pie.

GILES

Oh yeah.

(They resume kissing.)

ANIS

I made bread to go with it.

GILES

Fuck the bread.

ANIS

No, fuck me. I mean, shit, I didn't mean that. (She breaks away.) I mean, I did mean it I just can't believe I said it. (Moving to exit right.) Here, let me check the bread.

GILES

Don't be afraid. I won't bite you.

ANIS

Oh, but I want you to bite me. I just don't want it to get hard. The bread, I mean. I'll be right back.

(She exits right. Cross to RORY/JERRY.)

RORY

(Very drunk, with a vodka bottle in hand)

I have one thing to say! One thing! My father's an asshole! A total asshole!!! He thinks he's so great. He's not. He's nothing. Worse than nothing!

(JERRY is just staring at him, shocked. Shift back to MARTY asleep and alone onstage. He wakes up and sees there's no one there. He turns on TV, with "RC," watches Judy Garland movie – *I Could Go on Singing*. Sex sounds from off stage right – GILES and ANIS. MARTY is confused, thinks it's the TV, fiddles with the "RC", changes channel. Sex sounds get louder. He turns off the TV. Sex sounds loud, ANIS crying: "Yes! Yes! Yes!" MARTY smiles and lays back on stage just enjoying the sex sounds. ANIS cries, loud: "JESUUUUUS!")

(Cross to RORY/JERRY. Next morning. RORY on floor in his jeans only, JERRY enters right in a kimono with tray of coffee, water, aspirin.)

RORY

What happened?

JERRY

You passed out.

Did we? RORY

Almost. JERRY

Almost? RORY

Yeah, we got close a couple of times but you kept falling asleep. JERRY

My head hurts. Did I take my clothes off? RORY

No, you got as far as you are now. JERRY

Did we make out? RORY

Yes, for about four hours. JERRY

Then what happened? RORY

Well I took my dick out hoping we could move forward and you started laughing, and then you got all giggly, then you screamed and I felt like I was deflowering a vestal or something so I let you pass out. It was pretty lame. JERRY

So I'm still a gay virgin. RORY

I guess. At some point, I kind of lost interest. JERRY

My head kills. RORY

You drank like a reservoir full of vodka. JERRY

RORY

I thought we were drinking martinis.

JERRY

They started out as martinis, then you wanted straight vodka and then you were just sucking it from the bottle. (Holding out aspirin container and water.) Here.

RORY

What's this?

JERRY

(Handing them to him individually)

This is aspirin and this is water. I was wrong about you.

RORY

This tastes like candy.

JERRY

It's children's aspirin. Eat it. You're kind of a mess, aren't you?

RORY

I thought I just needed to get laid.

JERRY

I didn't say laid, I never say laid, it's not one of my words. I said fucked. I said you needed to get fucked.

RORY

Can I have some more, they taste good.

JERRY

Yeah, have a handful. They're for children so they don't really do anything anyway. No, I thought if you got fucked it would lighten you up but you couldn't even get to being fucked there was so much crap that had to come out. I think you're emotionally constipated.

RORY

That's how I was last night?

JERRY

No last night it was like emotional diarrhea. I feel like you sprayed diarrhea all over me. (He wipes his eye.)

RORY

All about my father, right?

JERRY

Yeah. At first I thought he molested you or something but I think he didn't and you were disappointed.

RORY

He didn't pay attention to me. I loved him and he ignored me.

JERRY

I wish my father ignored me. He just called me Nancy.

RORY

At least he noticed you.

JERRY

Oh, yeah, he noticed me. He noticed me with a yardstick, and a belt, and once with a lit cigarette.

RORY

Sorry I didn't put out.

JERRY

It's ok. You think I really wanted it but it was just a whim for me.

RORY

You really wanted it.

JERRY

Yes, but just in an abstract kind of way. I thought it would be nice to be the one to fuck that smirk off your face, like a public service. Here's your shirt.

RORY

You throwing me out?

JERRY

I am a student and I do study. Usually in the morning when I feel bad about things.

RORY

What do you feel bad about?

JERRY

Drinking, usually drinking. And the things I do when I drink.

RORY

Like what?

JERRY

Seducing undergraduates to make myself feel powerful. I drink way too much.

RORY

Why don't you stop?

JERRY

I'm going to. But I want to enjoy myself as much as possible before I do. That way I'll have plenty of memories.

RORY

Do you think I'm gay?

JERRY

I think you're unhappy. You're going to have to take care of that before you can be gay.

RORY

Maybe being gay will make me happy.

JERRY

I doubt it. It never made me happy. It just made me gay. They're not mutually exclusive but they're very different.

RORY

Have you lost interest in me?

JERRY

Oh no, you were great fun. Let's do it again. I'm serious – you're very nasty when you're drunk, like an über bitch. I love Wagnerian strength bitchiness. But for now, get out.

RORY

Ok.

(Cross to ANIS and GILES standing stage right looking awkwardly at each other. It is the morning after. MARTY sleeps on the floor.)

ANIS

So, ummm...

GILES

Yeah.

ANIS

I... I really...

Yeah... Me too.	GILES
What?	ANIS
Huh?	GILES
You too what?	ANIS
Just.	GILES
Yeah...	ANIS
Sorry.	GILES
Don't be sorry.	ANIS
No?	GILES
No.	ANIS
Ok.	GILES
Just...	ANIS
Yeah...	GILES
Forget it.	ANIS
Ok.	GILES

So, I'll... ANIS

Yeah, me too. GILES

(They kiss.)

Ok, so... ANIS

Yeah... GILES

I mean... ANIS

Yeah... GILES

(MARTY wakes up, sleepily waves, starts to exit.)

Marty. ANIS

(She gives him a “zip the lip” let’s keep this a secret gesture. He gives her the thumbs up and exits right. GILES and ANIS resume kissing. JERRY enters left. They are suddenly at rehearsal. CYNTHIA and RORY have also entered and are watching.)

Much better. Much better, Miss Giles. Miss Amis. Much better. More authentic. JERRY

Thanks. GILES

We worked outside of rehearsal. ANIS

(To RORY)
Even you. Much better. I saw some bitterness tonight. Authentic father hating bitterness. JERRY

Thanks. RORY

JERRY

It still seems like teenaged bitterness but the fat suit will ground it.

RORY

Do I really have to wear a fat suit?

JERRY

Yes. Forty year olds are fat. They just are. Miss Amis could play a forty year old. Oh my God, did I just say that? Did I? Oh, no. It just slipped out. Break! (He exits left.)

RORY

(To ANIS)

You're not fat.

ANIS

I know I'm not fat, Rory. Jesus.

RORY

I just...

ANIS

Never mind.

GILES

(To CYNTHIA)

I'll see you at the bar later.

CYNTHIA

Ok, but-

GILES

We're running lines.

(GILES exits with ANIS right running lines as they go:)

GILES

"I love you."

ANIS

"I love you. But what are we going to do about Deborah?"

RORY

(To CYNTHIA)

You want me to walk you? (To audience) It was one of those urban campuses. Step outside after dark and you die.

CYNTHIA

You're such a gentleman.

(They are "walking.")

RORY

You like watching rehearsal?

CYNTHIA

Oh, yeah. I've been watching you.

RORY

Yeah?

CYNTHIA

Yeah, you're pretty cute in your role.

RORY

Yeah? I'm supposed to be pompous and clinical.

CYNTHIA

You're pretty cute.

RORY

How long have you and Giles been together?

CYNTHIA

Three years. How about you and Anis?

RORY

She's not my girl friend.

CYNTHIA

Yeah, but she's got the hots for you. I can tell.

RORY

Yeah, well...

CYTNHIA

You're pretty cute up there.

(She exits left as GILES and ANIS come on from right and start kissing. JERRY has also entered and watches them. CYNTHIA will eventually enter.)

RORY

(To audience)
Next night at rehearsal.

JERRY

No, no, no, no.

GILES

Jerry, you're being unreasonable.

JERRY

No, I'm being the director. There's too much kissing.

GILES

But married people do kiss.

JERRY

There's too much passionate kissing.

GILES

But married people kiss passionately.

JERRY

Yes but it's disgusting. The audience is gay. They don't want to see straight people making out all night.

RORY

But I think-

JERRY

Butt out, Trixie True! You're a supporting player. This is my time with the principals.

ANIS

Jerry please-

JERRY

Listen, Miss Anus, I hired you because you could cry on command not because you could shove your lizard tongue down every gaping orifice. Stick to the text and let me set the smooches. That's ten. And am I an alcoholic? Yes. And do I need my four martinis? Yes! Break! (He exits left.)

GILES

Jerry, listen, please. Anis and I have worked a lot on this moment-

(GILES and ANIS follow JERRY off. RORY looks at CYNTHIA.)

Here, I'll walk you. RORY

(They are walking.)

How you doing? CYNTHIA

Not so good. RORY

You look cute in that sweater. CYNTHIA

Thanks. RORY

I like your hair like that. Very boyish. CYNTHIA

Really? RORY

Yeah. CYNTHIA

(They stop.)

Why are you always complimenting me? RORY

I think you're cute. That's all. I like cute little guys like you. CYNTHIA

You mean I'm not a big buff beautiful water polo player. RORY

No. You're cute. CYNTHIA

I like you too. RORY

I just wish. I wish we could be closer. CYNTHIA

CYNTHIA

You should come over. We can work on your kissing some more. You're getting better at it.

(CYNTHIA exits left.)

RORY

(To audience)

So we, uh, I mean, well... not everything but... well.

(She comes on and snaps to get his attention and exits. RORY exits quickly. Almost immediately RORY's head reappears.)

RORY

(To audience)

Next night, at rehearsal.

(RORY enters whistling happily from left. ANIS enters smiling happily from left. It is the next night. GILES and CYNTHIA come on from down left, holding hands.)

RORY

Hey.

GILES

Hey.

ANIS

Hey.

CYNTHIA

Hey.

(They all stand and smile awkwardly. Weird pause. JERRY enters left.)

JERRY

Oh, my God, I am so hung over. I discovered a new gay bar last night. It's called The White Swallow. And it's not named after a bird! (He laughs raucously.) Oh, my God! Let's start.

(He exits right.)

ANIS

Hey, we're going inside.

GILES

Yeah.

(ANIS and GILES exit right. RORY and CYNTHIA make out.)

RORY

We have to stop this. It's shameful and disgraceful and we're going to get caught.

CYNTHIA

You're right.

(They kiss.)

RORY

What would he do if he caught us?

CYNTHIA

Get drunk and beat you.

(They make out.)

RORY

Stop it. Just stop it.

CYNTHIA

You're too cute to stop. I like your teeth. (Kissing.) Come over late, super late.

(CYNTHIA exits left.)

RORY

(To audience)

Ok. I mean, what is going on? I'm confused. Marty, what do you think? You're a philosopher.

(MARTY enters from right.)

MARTY

Hmmm... You know what your problem is?

RORY

I'm not high?

MARTY

Well that's everybody's problem but you specifically... Your problem is you're experiencing your adolescence very late. You're working through crap that most of us

passed through in high school. Your emotions are confusing not because they're confusing but because you're too old for them.

RORY

I'm Twenty.

MARTY

Yeah, you see, that's old. Kids in the economically depressed neighborhoods are already old by then, with children by several mothers and huge responsibilities to their gangs and to their parole officers.

RORY

But I'm not economically depressed.

MARTY

No. So you should be high, you should be relaxing and enjoying the wealth your parents have extracted from the poor in third world countries.

RORY

But I like to kiss her.

MARTY

That's ok. Kissing's good. Decadence is your birthright.

RORY

But what if he finds out and beats me.

MARTY

Impossible. The British haven't fought the Americans since the War of 1812. Margaret Thatcher would never beat up Ronald Reagan.

RORY

He's bigger than I am.

MARTY

He has other things on his mind.

RORY

What's that mean?

MARTY

Woops. Slipperoo. Damn. (MARTY exits right.)

RORY

(To audience)

What's that mean?

(CYNTHIA enters stage left and takes RORY in her arms. They kiss.)

CYNTHIA

Yeah, you're getting much better at this.

RORY

Life experience.

(GILES and ANIS enter and kiss stage right. MARTY enters right and strums on guitar. He sings...)

MARTY

*ALL I WANTED WAS A SWEET DISTRACTION FOR AN HOUR OR TWO.
HAD NO INTENTION TO DO THE THINGS WE'VE DONE.*

JERRY

(Entering with a bottle and glass, drinking)

*FUNNY HOW IT ALWAYS GOES WITH LOVE, WHEN YOU LOOK, YOU FIND.
BUT THEN WE'RE TWO OF A KIND, WE MOVE AS ONE.*

ALL

*WE'RE AN ALL TIME HIGH,
WE'LL CHANGE ALL THAT'S GONE BEFORE.
DOING SO MUCH MORE THAN FALLING IN LOVE.
ON AN ALL TIME HIGH,
WE'LL TAKE ON THE WORLD AND WIN.
SO HOLD ON TIGHT, LET THE FLIGHT BEGIN.
SO HOLD ON TIGHT, LET THE FLIGHT BEGIN.*

(Blackout. Lights back up on RORY alone onstage. Bench has been moved to DC.)

RORY

(To audience)

As my life got more complicated I found I liked to take days off, a lot of days off. It also turned out Marty had a car.

MARTY

(Entering from left with keys)

A Triumph. A Triumph Spitfire.

(They are getting in the car, which is the bench.)

RORY

How come you never told me you owned such a cute little sports car?

MARTY

People make socio-economic judgments based on material possessions. I didn't want you formulating a classist-based opinion of me.

RORY

It's really cool. I love convertibles.

(MARTY "puts in" a *Flashdance* cassette and we hear "The Love Theme." They relax and enjoy the ride.)

RORY

(To audience)

He drove very fast and very well. It was like we were in a movie. (Referring to the music) What's this?

MARTY

Giorgio Moroder. *Flashdance*.

RORY

Haven't seen it.

(MARTY "slams on the brakes.")

MARTY

You haven't seen *Flashdance*?

RORY

No.

MARTY

It's the greatest cultural event since the completion of the Sistine Chapel.

RORY

Well I haven't seen it.

MARTY

It's the best musical ever made. And not a bad parable about class struggle.

RORY

So we drove into the city and saw *Flashdance*.

(We hear Irene Cara singing "What a Feeling." They sit and watch as if in a movie theatre, their eyes shifting left to right in amazement. The music stops.)

RORY

That was cool.

(They are back in the car.)

MARTY

Now we can listen to *Flashdance*.

(MARTY “presses play.” We again hear Giorgio Moroder’s “Love Theme.”)

RORY

You are fresh!

(They drive around listening to *Flashdance*. MARTY “turns down” the music.)

MARTY

You know what’s playing at the Northpoint?

RORY

No?

MARTY

The remastered *A Star is Born*.

RORY

Wow.

MARTY

You wanna go see it?

RORY

Sure.

(They are now watching Judy Garland singing in *A Star is Born*. We hear “The Man That Got Away.” They can barely stay awake. Music stops – end credits music plays.)

RORY

That was so relaxing.

MARTY

Yeah, like mama singing you to sleep.

RORY

You wanna go look at some projects?

MARTY

Sure. Geneva Towers is the tallest but Hunter's Point is the most dangerous.

RORY

Hunter's Point.

(They drive listening to *Flashdance*.)

RORY

So tell me Marty, what do you like? Boys or girls?

MARTY

I like French.

RORY

French?

MARTY

Yeah, I'm studying it.

RORY

I took French in high school.

(They speak in French, very bad French.)

RORY

Est-ce que tu fais?

MARTY

Tu fais bien. Et tu?

RORY

Je ne connais pas.

MARTY

Comme-ci, comme-ca.

RORY

Bueno.

MARTY

Listen to this.

(He “puts in” a new cassette and presses play. We hear Serge Gainsbourg singing with Jane Birkin “Je t’aime.”)

RORY

It’s horrible.

MARTY

It’s Serge. You can’t love French properly without loving Serge and smoking Gitanes.

(He takes out a box of Gitanes, hands one to RORY, takes one himself, lights them both with the “car lighter.” They smoke Gitanes and listen to Serge. RORY listens closely but only makes a face. The Gitanes make him cough. MARTY stands and leaves right singing along with Serge. Music fades.)

RORY

(To audience)

And then one night, Cynthia and I, we actually...

(CYNTHIA enters left and is buttoning up her shirt.)

RORY

(To CYNTHIA)

Oh, my God, that was incredible. You’re the most beautiful woman in the world.

CYNTHIA

(Laughing)

Thank you, Rory.

RORY

You are, you’re like a goddess.

CYNTHIA

A goddess? You just like my hair.

RORY

No, you’re incredible. I want to get married. And you’re hair is amazing.

CYNTHIA

Can I ask you something?

RORY

Yes, yes of course I’ll marry you.

CYTNHIA

That wasn’t the question.

RORY

Ok.

CYNTHIA

Have you ever had sex before? I mean, with another person?

RORY

Sure.

CYNTHIA

You're acting like a total virgin. (He looks embarrassed.) That's ok. I like little virgins.

RORY

You do?

CYNTHIA

Oh, yeah.

(She exits left as MARTY enters right and they sit back in the car.)

RORY

Play the love theme from *Flasdance*.

MARTY

That's incidental music.

RORY

Just play it.

MARTY

It's not a significant composition.

RORY

I like it.

MARTY

It's trivial.

RORY

It's how I feel right now.

(We hear the "Love Theme.")

MARTY

You see you're problem is you're too objective. You're already sentimentalizing your life even as you're living it. You need to be in your life as opposed to surveying it. (Placing his hand on RORY's knee.) Think like an actor, you're supposed to be in the moment not observing yourself as an actor in the moment.

RORY

What's that?

MARTY

My hand on your knee.

RORY

Oh, come on.

MARTY

What? I like your knee.

RORY

You're kidding.

MARTY

No. Not a bad thing to like a person's knee.

RORY

You're gay?

MARTY

I'm a person who likes your knee.

RORY

Wow. (Pause.) I'm not gay.

MARTY

Neither am I.

RORY

(To audience)

So somehow I'd gone from being a total loser to being someone everyone liked.

JERRY

(Entering from left)

I always liked you.

RORY

But you're a disgusting drunk.

JERRY

True. (He exits left.)

RORY

It all, well, it all had a very bad effect on me.

(CYNTHIA enters left as MARTY exits right.)

CYNTHIA

So, where you been?

RORY

Oh, you know, messing around.

CYNTHIA

I haven't heard from you in a week.

RORY

I... Well, I just think this thing is pretty weird. With Giles and all. I mean you're not really my girl friend if I can't tell anyone.

CYNTHIA

So tell people.

RORY

I don't want to get beaten.

CYNTHIA

I was joking about that. He probably doesn't even give a shit. Why do you ignore me?

RORY

I don't. I've just been busy.

CYNTHIA

Messing around?

RORY

Yeah.

(She leaves left. MARTY enters from right.)

MARTY

The thing you've got to understand is partners require a lot of attention. Once you've had coitus with someone they need your undivided attention.

RORY

She's not even my girl friend. She's like my closet girl friend.

MARTY

That guy's not any threat. I think you'll find him complacent.

RORY

He scares the hell out me. Have you seen his biceps?

MARTY

(Placing his hand on RORY's shoulder)

He has other things on his mind.

RORY

Your hand's on my shoulder.

MARTY

Men put their hands on each other's shoulder.

RORY

But you're kneading it.

MARTY

I like your shoulder. I like it's moldability.

(MARTY exits left; ANIS enters from right.)

ANIS

Hey.

RORY

Hi.

ANIS

Oh, my God, can I just say I am so happy being in this play. It is so worth the abuse and pain of working with Jerry. I think I'm going to be terrific. Isn't Giles great in it? Just great?

RORY

Yeah.

ANIS

I think he's got major star potential. Major star.

RORY

Yeah.

ANIS

I'm really excited.

(She exits right as JERRY enters left.)

JERRY

Ok, Sprinkles, here's the news. You're a good actor. You're not great but you're good. Like I'm not street person yet but I am a lush. You're like me. You're on the way to something.

RORY

Thanks.

JERRY

You've relaxed. You seem different. Not as puppyish and eager. What's changed?

RORY

Nothing.

JERRY

You seem unconcerned about my opinion. Something's changed.

(JERRY exits left as CYNTHIA enters right.)

CYNTHIA

Hey.

RORY

Hi.

CYNTHIA

The only time I see you seems to be when I run into you.

RORY

Yeah.

CYNTHIA

Do you even get my messages?

RORY

Yeah, I get them.

(CYNTHIA exits right as MARTY enters left holding a Macy's box.)

MARTY

It never works being mean to girls.

RORY

The whole thing makes me feel sleazy.

MARTY

Sleazy is the way the world works. No one's going to leave a previous boyfriend until they have a new one set up. It's like looking for a new job: don't give up the old one until you're all set with the new. She's in the difficult position of being betwixt and between.

RORY

No she's not. She has him still.

MARTY

I guess.

RORY

You guess?

MARTY

(Handing him the box)

Here. I bought you a sweater. It's blue. To match your eyes.

RORY

Thanks.

(RORY puts on the sweater and strikes poses as MARTY laughs. MARTY exits right as ANIS and GILES enter left tickling one another and giggling. RORY watches them. JERRY enters left.)

JERRY

No, no, no. Now you've added tickling? I won't let you slobber all over each other so now you're going to tickle constantly? No! I mean, what's going on? Are you two fucking? Is that the thing? Are you having sex offstage?

GILES

Jerry.

JERRY

Yes, Miss Giles.

GILES

You're being inappropriate, man. Cool it, ok?

(JERRY exits left. ANIS and GILES exit right. RORY is left thinking. We hear: "When I Need Love." CYNTHIA enters left.)

RORY

So he was messing around on you so you messed around on him.

CYNTHIA

I don't know.

RORY

But you knew about him and Anis.

CYNTHIA

No.

RORY

But he does mess around so you mess around.

CYNTHIA

I don't know.

RORY

Is that how you guys always are? Are you "swingers?"

CYNTHIA

No.

RORY

What's up with you two?

CYNTHIA

Nothing.

RORY

I think this is all really creepy weird.

CYNTHIA

I just liked you Rory. It's not like that at all.

RORY

Have you been sleeping with him this whole time?

CYNTHIA

We barely slept with each other to begin with.

RORY

Why's that?

CYNTHIA

I don't know. He drinks a lot. I don't know. He was my boyfriend for a long time, then he started seeing other girls, you know, fooling around. I don't know.

RORY

You don't care?

CYNTHIA

Jesus. Why should I? He's just a guy.

RORY

Like me?

CYNTHIA

Oh, forget it.

(She leaves left as MARTY enters right.)

MARTY

What you've got to understand is no one at twenty wants to act like they're forty. She might have been jealous but she didn't want to act that way. And there's no reason why she couldn't have been in love with both of you. Legitimately.

RORY

How do you know so much about it?

MARTY

I've had a girl friend.

RORY

Had?

MARTY

Yes, we broke up because we were interested in different things. The sweater matches your eyes. Very nice.

(He exits left.)

RORY

(To audience)

Is this all code? Hieroglyphs? I don't understand. What am I missing?

ANIS

(Entering right)

Hey, I had to do something. I get lonely. You and I weren't getting anywhere.

RORY

Maybe we're just not right for one another.

ANIS

Rory, we hang out together, we love all the same stuff, how are we not right for one another?

RORY

Maybe we're just not right in that way?

ANIS

I'm not interested in being your faghag. I've done that enough in my life.

RORY

That's just hateful. To you and to me.

ANIS

Sorry.

RORY

He's sleazy.

ANIS

Well, maybe that's what I need right now.

RORY

He has like three girls going at once.

ANIS

So I'm flattered to be involved with such a popular guy.

RORY

You'll just end up a scalp in his belt.

ANIS

Maybe I'm flattered to be worth scalping. It's college, Rory. We're not here to be looking for husbands, we're here to be learning about life.

RORY

That's like a cliché from the student handbook.

ANIS

I'm an attractive woman. I am. Ok, maybe I'm not Cheryl Tiegs but I'm attractive. And all anyone sees of me is me hanging out with you and singing songs from old musicals. And when they ask if we're a couple I say, "Oh no" and they're like, "Then what are you?" So what are we?

RORY

Is that all you care about? Other people's opinion?

ANIS

Yes, at some point that matters. And sex. Companionship. Don't you get lonely? Don't you need someone to hold?

(Pause.)

RORY

I've got someone to hold.

ANIS

Who?

RORY

Never mind. I can't tell you.

ANIS

Ok, so you have a big secret, like me. So we're no different. Another similarity.

RORY

You lied to me about Giles.

ANIS

No, you never asked.

RORY

I've been seeing Cynthia. His girlfriend. She and I see each other.

ANIS

Oh, ok. Wow.

RORY

So you see, it's not because I'm gay. It's because you and I are just different. (Pause.) Don't tell him.

ANIS

Wow.

Yeah. RORY

Complicated. ANIS

Yeah. RORY

Ok. I don't know what to say. I mean... ANIS

What? RORY

She's not exactly... ANIS

What? RORY

Nothing. It's none of my business. ANIS

What? RORY

You haven't been seeing her recently. ANIS

Well, fairly recently. RORY

Ok, it's just... ANIS

What? RORY

Nothing. ANIS

(She exits right. MARTY enters left.)

MARTY

You see you have a huge ego. You want to move forward but you want everyone else to stand still. So you were getting a piece but it only made you happy if Anis was getting nothing. Then you wanted Cynthia to be loyal to you even as you were being disloyal to Giles and Anis. It's all too complicated. People are messy.

RORY

What the hell are you always talking about?

MARTY

You have to see people urbanistically. They are complex organisms, endlessly mutable. Our DNA may be stable but our everything else is like weeeeeee....

RORY

Who are you even talking about?

MARTY

There is no stasis. You want there to be but it's impossible. Entropy! At some point you have to succumb to the force majeure.

(Pause.)

RORY

You're not touching me. Or giving me presents.

MARTY

No. I've found a Frenchman.

(RORY groans. He looks at his watch, then runs in place. MARTY exits left. RORY stops, paces a little, then looks off right as if he's waiting. CYNTHIA enters right.)

CYNTHIA

What are you doing here?

RORY

I was rehearsing that fucking play, in my fat suit, and I suddenly missed you.

CYNTHIA

I'm busy.

RORY

This guy in the library took his clothes off and walked around naked and I got thinking of you.

CYNTHIA

I'm not a guy and I don't undress in the library.

RORY

No. It was an elliptical connection.

CYNTHIA

I have to go. I have to study.

RORY

Look. I know I was weird and mean and not a very good boyfriend and... (He trails off)

CYNTHIA

Uh, huh, keep going.

RORY

But I really like you. I think about you all the time.

CYNTHIA

Thanks.

RORY

And couldn't we like... I don't know... Go out for pizza or something.

CYNTHIA

Ok, look, I feel bad about all that sneaking around stuff. That was weird and I don't know why I did it. Actually, I do know. It got me away from Giles and that was good. But... I just don't think you're ready for a girl friend, you know what I mean? You're much too immature.

RORY

Ok.

CYNTHIA

I'm seeing someone else now. Another guy. He gets the whole boyfriend-girlfriend thing. He's really nice and we talk about stuff and... we're just like an ordinary couple.

RORY

What is he, like a rugby player?

CYNTHIA

Water polo. (Pause.) Sorry.

RORY

Wow. That's a total bummer.

CYNTHIA

Rory, you're too wrapped up in your own stuff all the time. You live in a little fantasy world of old musicals and old movies. We're real people, we're not characters in a play.

RORY

(To audience)

She actually didn't say that. But that's what I was thinking.

CYNTHIA

I'm sorry, Rory. I made a big mistake not hanging on to you. I loved sleeping with you, making love, being with you. (She touches his cheek.) You're so sweet. (To audience) I actually didn't say that either.

RORY

She just said,

CYNTHIA

I have to go inside, ok.

RORY

Cynthia, wait.

CYNTHIA

No, this is kind of weird Rory, I feel like you're stalking me, ok?

RORY

(To audience)

She actually said that.

CYNTHIA

See ya. (She starts to leave, stops.) Um... Look, I'll say this because it's what I think. I don't think you actually like me. I mean, you do like me but... I just think you liked the sex... with someone else. Another person. Anyway.

RORY

Anyway what?

CYNTHIA

You're finding yourself. I know it all seems screwed up and weird. It's always been that way for me... screwed up and weird. Sex. Everything. I think you're very different. That's why I liked you. But maybe you're too different.

RORY

What are you saying?

CYNTHIA

Nothing. I'll see you around.

(She exits right. We hear "When I Need Love." GILES and ANIS enter hand in hand and sit. JERRY enters.)

JERRY

Ok, it's opening night, just do what we rehearsed, don't get creative, don't get all high on the audience and start changing things.

ANIS

We wouldn't do that, Jerry.

JERRY

Just don't.

(GILES turns his back and walks away.)

JERRY

You have a problem, Miss Giles?

GILES

My name's Giles, Jerry. Just Giles.

(A tense moment.)

JERRY

Let's warm up. "Edelweis."

RORY

Can I make a request?

JERRY

No.

GILES

Yes.

RORY

Can we sing something that's not a show tune?

JERRY

Ok.

(RORY starts singing "All Time High." GILES and ANIS join in.)

JERRY

Oh, my God I love James Bond! Roger Moore is the best Bond ever, so much classier than Sean Connery. He is hot, hot-

(They deliberately start singing again to drown him out. As the song continues they leave the stage. The stage sits empty for bit and then RORY enters from left and talks to the audience.)

RORY

Well the show was not a success. All that work and what it came down to was us saying our lines in front of an audience. The stress, the strain, the trying to get better in our roles, trying to be the characters, trying, trying, trying... and the only person who came off good was Giles because he was English and Anis in a few scenes when she cried. All stuff that was there before rehearsals even began.

(JERRY enters right.)

RORY

When Jerry had to defend the project at the post mortem he said:

JERRY

(To the audience)

Well, the actors couldn't do what I needed them to do. They just weren't talented enough. Giles was good.

(JERRY exits right as ANIS enters left.)

RORY

(To audience)

We of course were appalled. (To ANIS) Wow.

ANIS

Yeah.

RORY

Why would he say that?

ANIS

He was defending himself. It was either his fault or our fault. He made it our fault.

RORY

But why would he do that?

ANIS

(Impatient with him)

It's what people do, Rory. They protect themselves. Why would he do anything else?

RORY
Oh, is that some profound piece of wisdom?

ANIS
Forget it.

RORY
Are you defending him?

ANIS
No, Rory. Jesus.

RORY
Do you think Giles was good in that show?

ANIS
He got a lot of laughs. People like him.

RORY
Are you still seeing him?

(She starts crying.)

ANIS
Sorry.

(He holds her.)

RORY
It's all right.

ANIS
It's so stupid. When we first got together I thought, "He's such a beer swigging lunk. I'd never introduce this guy to my parents. Never." And then when he dumps me I feel betrayed. It makes no sense.

(We hear Billy Joel's "Innocent Man." ANIS exits right.)

RORY
(To audience)
When we graduated I went to LA and tried to make it in movies. Mostly I sat around in my apartment eating Lucky Charms. (As he speaks the following he gets into blazer and tie.) One day I got a call from a friend of Anis. Her LA buddies were throwing her a surprise party, could I come? It would be at the Beverly Hills Hotel, very swank, I wore my blazer and tie. (He turns to ANIS who has entered right in a bright summer dress.)

VOICES

(Off)
Surprise!

RORY

Happy birthday.

ANIS

Hi. Thanks so much for coming.

RORY

Of course.

ANIS

You look so handsome.

RORY

And you look great.

ANIS

Shucks.

RORY

You do. Very beautiful. Like Spring.

(She blushes.)

ANIS

How's it going?

RORY

Ok. I got an interview at Cannon Films.

ANIS

To act?

RORY

No. To be copy boy.

ANIS

Oh, well, that's good. It might lead to something.

RORY

That's what I'm hoping. Meanwhile, I'm looking for a job in a bookstore.

ANIS
Are there bookstores in LA?

RORY
Two. They're very small.
(They smile.)

RORY
(To audience)
And there was a surprise guest.
(GILES enters, dressed up.)

RORY
(To GILES)
Hello.

GILES
Anis.

ANIS
Oh, my God. You're here!
(She screams with pleasure. RORY rolls his eyes. GILES and ANIS hug.)

ANIS
You look great.

RORY
(To audience)
He had a TV show. Of course. He played the son of Roger Moore.

GILES
(To audience)
They liked my accent.

ANIS
You look so handsome.

GILES
Yes, they thought I looked like Roger with a beard.

ANIS
You do.

RORY

(To audience)
Roger fat and bald with a beard.

GILES

Hi, Rory.

RORY

(To audience)
It was so annoying how he was always so nice. Always nice. (To GILES) Hey.

(They shake.)

RORY

Congrats on the TV show.

GILES

Yeah. TV's good for me. I can read the lines off cue cards, teleprompters, it means I can just relax and concentrate on giving a good performance.

RORY

(To audience)
At least he could be honest about himself. And he said a weird thing. I've never quite figured it out.

GILES

You ever see Cynthia?

RORY

I covered really well. (To GILES) No! No! Never. I mean... Not in a long time.

GILES

Well, say hello when you do.

RORY

(To audience)
Did he know? (To GILES) I will.

GILES

Hang in there. You'll be a star one day.

RORY

Thanks.

GILES

(To audience, as he exits right)

I knew.

(ANIS smiles at RORY, roles her eyes, then follows GILES off.)

RORY

(To audience)

Of course that's not the end of the story. Something else happened before I left college, something I didn't tell you about. And after my LA sojourn – I never even got the job at Cannon Films, not even the job in the bookstore (there was only one) – but after my LA sojourn I went back to SF. I'd sort of planted a seed there and I figured it was time to let it grow. You see, just before graduation, when I was still smarting from the whole Jerry and the play fiasco, I was hanging around the house with Marty, whining as usual... well... (To MARTY who has entered left and sat on bench) You see my bothers and I played a game called "Slugs and Kicks." It worked like this, whenever someone farted you could beat up on them, you know slug and kick them, until they named the titles of three movies. So there was abuse but there were rules.

MARTY

Yes abuse can have rules. Like the Untied Nations.

RORY

But eventually it all turned into people saying "You farted!" when you didn't and hitting you and then still hitting you even after you'd named the three moves, in other words even the abuse lost its rules, it became arbitrary.

MARTY

Ok.

RORY

So that's how I feel now. Slugged and kicked and I never even farted.

MARTY

So you should fart more. Since you're going to be kicked anyway. Fart with impunity.

RORY

Good advise.

MARTY

You were good. In that play. In the moments when you just were. When you stopped acting and just were.

RORY

Thanks.

MARTY

And that fat suit made your costume very tight. That was a good thing. I liked looking at you in that tight costume.

RORY

Really?

MARTY

Sure. It gave you a big basket.

RORY

Maybe I just have a big basket.

MARTY

It was a very big basket performance.

RORY

Thanks. (Pause. They are looking at one another.) Are we having like an awkward moment here?

MARTY

You know, I got rid of that French guy.

RORY

Why?

MARTY

He wouldn't wear underarm deodorant.

RORY

Yeah, that's a bad thing with French guys.

MARTY

It's a cultural lacuna.

RORY

Yeah, well, I was kind of jealous of him.

MARTY

I figured. I kind of brought him into the picture to make you jealous.

RORY

So you were using him?

MARTY

It's ok. The French were used by George Washington to defeat the British in the Revolutionary War. I had a precedent.

RORY

But that's terrible. The French bankrupted themselves helping Washington and that's what brought about their revolution.

MARTY

He should have worn under arm deodorant. I just like you. I don't know why. Except we like to do the same things and I'm really comfortable around you.

RORY

We don't like to do the same things. You like socio-economic ecosystems and I like musical comedy.

MARTY

Ok. Well, we feel really comfortable around each other.

RORY

Because you're stoned all the time.

MARTY

Is that bad?

RORY

No. (Pause.) I do like urban adventures and looking at housing projects.

MARTY

And I like musicals. Especially ones with Judy Garland in them. (Pause.) I just... I think you're really fun and cute.

RORY

You do?

MARTY

Sure. I think you're adorable.

RORY

That sounds so strange coming from you.

MARTY

I know, I've never said it to a guy. Well, in English.

RORY

Say it again.

MARTY
You're adorable, Weenie.

RORY
Who's Weenie?

MARTY
It's just a little secret name I have for you. I'll keep it to myself if you want.

RORY
No, that's ok.

MARTY
My little weenie.

RORY
Ok, maybe you should keep it to yourself.

MARTY
Do you think I'm cute?

RORY
Sure. In a macrobiotic kind of way.

MARTY
What's that mean?

RORY
Forget it. I don't know what to say in these situations. I've seen too many movies.

(They kiss.)

RORY
(To audience)
So I can't explain it. He seemed the opposite of me and the opposite of queer. But we ended up kissing. I'm too hung up on labels I guess. Excuse me.

(He kisses MARTY again. We hear Elton John's "The Bridge." ANIS has entered from upstage right and is looking about. RORY stands and talks to the audience. MARTY sits and watches the scene, although he's not a part of it.)

RORY
Years later I was in New York. In a play, yay! I'd become an actor. And one day I got an e-mail from my brother that my father had died. Yeah, an e-mail. My family... anyway,

that's another play. So I made plans to go home but my flight didn't leave till five so I had the whole day, the whole awful day in New York waiting for my flight to go home to see my dead father. And somehow... I don't even know how... somehow I ended up in the Museum of Modern Art. I guess I thought those huge crazy paintings reflected my state of mind and if I stood in front of them and stared I'd somehow be distracted for four hours. And in the museum I'd be anonymous, lost – you see no danger of running into any other actors, they don't go to museums. But I was wrong. There, suddenly, after twenty years, was Anis.

ANIS

Oh, my God, I'm so sorry. That's terrible. Can I hug you?

RORY

Yeah.

(They hug.)

ANIS

Are you ok? I mean, I know you're not ok but... Is there anything I can do?

RORY

You can stare at the art with me.

ANIS

Wow. I met your father, you know.

RORY

Did you?

ANIS

Yeah, on opening night. He was a nice guy, very charming.

RORY

He was very charming.

ANIS

An attorney, right?

RORY

Yeah.

ANIS

Rory, that's so sad.

RORY

I know.

ANIS
You're in a play now, right? Off-Broadway.

RORY
Yeah.

ANIS
I wanted to come see it. I read you were in it.

RORY
Well I'm not in it for a couple of days for the...

ANIS
Yeah...

RORY
What about you?

ANIS
Oh, I'm married.

RORY
Congratulations.

ANIS
Yeah. Brian. He's Irish. Good guy. We have a daughter.

RORY
Congratulations.

ANIS
Thanks.

RORY
He's here?

ANIS
No, he's in Japan presenting... presenting something. And I teach. At Columbia.

RORY
Wow, Great.

ANIS
Yeah, it is great.

Psychology? RORY

Yeah, psychology. ANIS

(They laugh.)

You live here? ANIS

No, San Francisco. With Marty. RORY

Our Marty? ANIS

Yeah. RORY

You mean? ANIS

Yeah. RORY

(Happy for him)
Oh, Rory. ANIS

Yeah. RORY

That's wonderful. ANIS

RORY
I think so. He's my beautiful boy. I'm his... Well, I'm his Weenie.

(They laugh.)

Oh, God, Rory. I'm so sorry about your father. ANIS

Yeah. Shit. Listen. RORY

ANIS

Yeah. It's ok. You can tell me.

RORY

We fought, we fought my whole life, about everything. Money, career, being gay, awful fights. He just wanted me to be happy though. He just wanted me to be content. I know that. We just had such different opinions about what would make me happy.

ANIS

Rory, you are happy. I know you are. Look at you. (Taking something out of her wallet.) Here, let me show you something. I carry this in my wallet. (Handing him a picture.) Here. You see.

RORY

That's us.

ANIS

Yeah you, me and Marty. Look at us.

RORY

We could be so mean to each other.

ANIS

Yeah, I think that. But here we all are laughing. Right? Whatever we remember here's the reality. We're all laughing. God, Rory, we were so young. Such kids. It was fun though being on our own, wasn't it? For the first time?

RORY

Yeah.

ANIS

Your father loved you. I know that. I could tell the first day I met you. Here's a loved kid. Like I was loved. You can tell. You really see it when you're a parent. Here's the loved kid, here's a kid who is loved. You were one of those.

RORY

Thanks.

ANIS

And you still have Marty. That's love.

RORY

Yeah.

ANIS

I wish I was an actor. I really do. You hung onto that as well.

RORY

Well, I'm not Tom Cruise.

ANIS

Ugh, who wants to be? Look, um...

RORY

You gotta run.

(They hug. ANIS exits right.)

RORY

(To audience)

And later, at the airport, I saw...

JERRY

(Entering left)

Well at least you're finally gay!

RORY

Yeah.

JERRY

You look the same. Damn you.

RORY

(To audience)

He barely said anything about my father.

JERRY

Well, they all have to die sometime. At least he didn't move in with you and leave shit smeared diapers all over the place. I mean, I'm sorry.

RORY

Thank you. You still teaching?

JERRY

No, I've taken early retirement. Thank God.

RORY

You wanna get a drink?

JERRY

Nope. Never touch the stuff.

RORY

When did you quit?

JERRY

Shortly after our show together. I was twenty–three then and I knew it wasn't getting any prettier.

RORY

You were very amusing.

JERRY

Yes, that was very important to me. Being amusing. You know, I've lived my life backwards. Now, I'm finally acting after a life wasted being a sober academic. What a waste.

RORY

You must have enjoyed it.

JERRY

Nope. Not at all. I just wanted to be onstage. The whole time.

RORY

So now you are.

JERRY

Yep. And I'm fabulous! Maybe I'll start drinking again! (Exits right singing)

I AM WHAT I AM

I JUST WANT PRAISE, GIVE ME SOME PITY!

RORY

(To audience)

Cynthia I never saw again. Or heard anything about. I feel bad.

MARTY

You shouldn't. Life is full of complications, stumbling blocks. They form our character, make us see things holistically as opposed to in parts.

RORY

(To audience)

Yeah, he still talks to me that way.

(They kiss. We hear the Pet Shop Boy's "Winner." Lights fade to black.)

End of Play