

her. I've got to stop her and beg her forgiveness before it's too late. I want her to get on that plane with me and fly back to Cleveland. I want her with me all the time. I want to pamper her. I want to hear her laugh and speak . . . I'm sorry for carrying on like this, Allan, but you're the only friend in the world who would understand.

ALLAN: I . . . I understand.

DICK: Look, if she calls, tell her I'll see her home. Tell her I've got to speak to her, will you?

ALLAN: Sure . . . sure.

DICK: Thanks . . . thanks a lot. *He gets his coat and suitcase and exits.*

ALLAN, *sits on the coffee table*: I'm going to faint. How could I tell him? The guy's desperately in love with her. I never realized how much. He never realized how much. I couldn't do that to a stranger, much less a friend. But what if it's too late? What if Linda's really hooked on me now? You know, once a woman's been made love to by somebody who can really do it great! I was fantastic last night! I never once had to sit up and consult the manual. Love is very different for a woman. It's a complicated phenomenon. I don't know what to expect. I've never broken off with a woman before.

## CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF

by Tennessee Williams

### ACT II

It is Big Daddy's sixty-fifth birthday and the whole family is gathered at the plantation house to celebrate. But Big Daddy—unbeknownst to himself—is dying of stomach cancer; and, since he has never written a will, his son Gooper, and his daughters-in-law Mae and Margaret, are maneuvering for control over his considerable estate. Big Daddy has just returned from the hospital where he was lied to when he was told that he has only a

minor ailment. He has come home rejuvenated and determined to lead a full and pleasurable life without lies or pretense. He is also determined to find out why his fair-haired son, Brick, a former star football player, has turned into a failure and a drunk.

Prior to the following scene Big Daddy cleared everyone out of the bedroom/sitting room that Brick and his wife Margaret (Maggie) are occupying during their visit. He reveals to Brick his own recommitment to life (Brick knows the truth about the cancer) and wants to know why Brick has become so bitter and unmotivated. He also wants to know why Brick went jumping hurdles on the athletic field at 3 A.M. the night before (Brick broke his ankle during this drunken jaunt and wears a cast throughout the play); and, finally, he wants to know why Brick quit his job as a sports announcer, why his marriage is failing, and why he has become an alcoholic. Brick refuses to talk, but Big Daddy strikes a bargain with him: he will give Brick the drink he so desperately wants if Brick will answer his questions.

In this section of their scene, Gooper has just tried to get Big Daddy to return to the birthday celebration, but was thrown out of the room. Just before the interruption Brick said he was disgusted with mendacity, with "lyin' and liars." Big Daddy resumes his interrogation at this point.

BIG DADDY, *crosses to bar to pour Brick's drink*: Who's been lyin' to you? Has Margaret been lyin' to you, has your wife been lyin' to you about somethin', Brick?

BRICK: Not her. That wouldn't matter.

BIG DADDY: Then who's been lyin' to you, an' what about?

BRICK: No one single person an' no one lie.

BIG DADDY: Then what, what then? Then who, about what?

BRICK, *rubs head*: The whole, the whole—thing.

BIG DADDY, *crosses to Brick with drink*: Why are you rubbin' your head? You got a headache?

BRICK: No, I'm tryin' to—

BIG DADDY, *hands Brick the drink*: Concentrate, but you can't because your brain's all soaked with liquor, is that the trouble? Wet brain! What do you know about this mendacity thing? Hell, I could write a book on it! *Crosses downstage center, faces front*. I could write a book on it an' still not cover the subject! Well, I could, I could write a goddam book on it an' still

not cover th' subject anywhere near enough! Think of all th' lies I got to put up with! Pretenses! Ain't that mendacity? Havin' to pretend stuff you don't think or feel or have any idea of? Havin' for instance to act like I care for Big Mama! I haven't been able to stand the sight, sound or smell of that woman for forty years! Church! It bores the bejesus out of me, but I go! I go an' sit there an' listen to that dam' fool preacher! Clubs! Elks! Masons! Rotary! (*turns to Brick*) You I do like for some reason, did always have some kind of real feelin' for—affection—respect— (*bows on each word*) Yes, always, I don't know why, but it is! (*crosses to Brick*) I've lived with mendacity! Why can't you live with it? Hell, you got to live with it, there's nothin' else to live with except mendacity, is there?

**BRICK:** Yes, sir, yes, sir, there is somethin' else that you can live with.

**BIG DADDY:** What?

**BRICK, raising glass:** This!

**BIG DADDY:** That's not livin', that's dodgin' away from life.

**BRICK, drinks:** I want to dodge away from it.

**BIG DADDY:** Then why don't you kill yourself, man?

**BRICK:** I like to drink.

**BIG DADDY:** God! I can't talk to you. *Crosses upstage center.*

**BRICK:** I'm sorry, Big Daddy.

**BIG DADDY, turns to Brick from center:** Not as sorry as I am. I'll tell you somethin'. A little while back when I thought my number was up, before I found out it was just this—spastic—colon, I thought about you. Should I or should I not, if the jig was up, give you this place when I go? I hate Gooper an' those five screamin' monkeys like parrots in a jungle an' that bitch Mae! Why should I turn over 28,000 acres of the richest land this side of the Valley Nile to not my kind? But why in hell on the other hand, Brick, should I subsidize a dam' fool on the bottle? Liked or not liked, well, maybe even—loved! Why should I do that? Subsidize worthless behavior? Rot? Corruption? *Crosses downstage center, face front:* An' this I will tell you frankly. I didn't make up my mind at all on that question an' still to this day I ain't made out no will! Well, now I don't have to! The pressure is gone. *Crosses to Brick.* I can just wait an' see if you pull yourself together or if you don't.

**BRICK:** That's right, Big Daddy.

**BIG DADDY:** You sound like you thought I was kiddin'.

**BRICK, rises:** No, sir, I know you're not kiddin'.

**BIG DADDY:** But you don't care—?

**BRICK, crosses above couch to right gallery doors:** No, sir, I don't care—

**BIG DADDY:** WAIT! WAIT, BRICK. *Crosses to above wicker seat, facing Brick:* Don't let's leave it like this, like them other talks we've had, we've always—talked around things, we've—just talked around things like some rotten reason, I don't know what, it's always like somethin' was left not spoken, somethin' avoided because neither of us was honest enough with the other—

**BRICK:** I never lied to you, Big Daddy.

**BIG DADDY:** Did I ever to you?

**BRICK:** No, sir.

**BIG DADDY, his arm on Brick's arm:** Then there is at least two people that never lied to each other.

**BRICK:** Yes, sir, but we've never talked to each other.

**BIG DADDY:** We can now.

**BRICK:** Big Daddy, there don't seem to be anything much to say.

**BIG DADDY:** You say that you drink to kill your disgust with lyin'.

**BRICK:** You said to give you a reason.

**BIG DADDY:** Is liquor the only thing that'll kill this disgust?

**BRICK:** Now. Yes.

**BIG DADDY:** But not once, huh?

**BRICK:** Not when I was still young an' believin'. A drinkin' man's someone who wants to forget he isn't still young an' believin'.

**BIG DADDY:** Believin' what?

**BRICK, starts back for downstage gallery door:** Believin'—

**BIG DADDY, following, above wicker seat, to left of Brick at door, downstage:** Believin' what?

**BRICK:** Believin' . . .

**BIG DADDY:** I don't know what th' hell you mean by believin', an' I don't think you know what you mean by believin', but if you still got sports in your blood, go back to sports announcin' an'—

**BRICK:** Sit in a glass box watchin' games I can't play. Describin' what I can't do while players do it? Sweatin' out their disgust an' confusion in contests I'm not fit for? Drinkin' a Coke,

half bourbon, so I can stand it? That's no dam' good any more—time just outran me, Big Daddy—got there first.

**BIG DADDY**, *turns to Brick*: I think you're passing the buck.

**BRICK**: You know many drinkin' men?

**BIG DADDY**: I have known a fair number of that species.

**BRICK**: Could any of them tell you why he drank?

**BIG DADDY**: Yep, you're passin' the buck, you're passin' the buck to things like time an' disgust with "mendacity," an'—crap! If you got to use that kind of language about a thing, it's ninety-proof bull, and I'm not buying any.

**BRICK**: I had to give you a reason to get a drink!

**BIG DADDY**: What did you say?

**BRICK**: I said: I had to give you a reason to get a drink.

**BIG DADDY**: You started drinkin' when your friend Skipper died.

**BRICK**: What are you suggesting?

**BIG DADDY**: I'm suggestin' nothin'. *Brick starts for the bar, crossing below Big Daddy.* But Gooper an' Mae suggested that there was something not right, exactly, in your—

**BRICK**: "Not right"?

**BIG DADDY**: Not, well, exactly *normal* in your—friendship with—

**BRICK**, *turning back to Big Daddy*: They suggested that, too? I thought that was Maggie's suggestion. Who else's suggestion is it, is it *yours*? How many others thought that Skipper and I were—

**BIG DADDY**: Now, hold on, hold on a minute, son. —I knocked around in my time.

**BRICK**: What's that got to do with it?

*Rev. Tolker enters from right on gallery and eases into the room through doors, right, to behind wicker seat.*

**BIG DADDY**, *crosses down center stage, front*: I said "Hold on!"—I bummed, I bummed this country till—

**BRICK**, *following*: Whose suggestion, who else's suggestion was it?

**BIG DADDY**: Slept in hobo jungles an' railroad Y's an' flophouses in all cities before I—

**BRICK**: Oh, *you* think so, too, you call me your son and a queer.

## BUTLEY

by Simon Gray

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### ACT II

The setting is the shared office of Ben Butley and Joey Keyston, English teachers at London University. With his irascible manner and acerbic wit, Butley has managed to alienate all those who have cared about him. His wife, Anne, from whom he is separated, is divorcing him, and Joey, his former student and present roommate and lover, is leaving him for another man, Reg. Joey has just informed Butley that he is not available for dinner, that he is dining with Reg, and that Butley is not invited. The "Tom" mentioned in the scene (also referred to by Butley as "the most boring man in London") is a mutual friend of Butley and Reg who is about to marry Anne and have his new novel published by Reg's publishing company. The scene begins with Butley marking exams, alone in his office, a while after having learned of his wife's intention to remarry and just after having argued with Joey about the evening's plans. There is a knock on the door.

**BEN**: Come. *The door opens. Reg enters. Ben goes on working at his essay. Minute please. Then looks up.*

**REG**: Is Joey here?

**BEN**: Good God, it's Reg, isn't it? Of course it is. *He gets up, goes over, holds out his hand. As they shake hands:* I'm terribly sorry, do come in.

**REG**: Your porter said he was here.

**BEN**: And so he will be. He just went off to have a brief word with a colleague in distress. How are you?

**REG**: Very well, thanks. And you?

**BEN**, *gestures toward his desk*: As you see. *Laughs.*

**REG**: Yes. *He glances at the desk, appalled.* Look, you're obviously very busy. If you just tell Joey I'm at the porter's desk—

**BEN**: Don't be silly. You sit yourself down over there— *(he*