

JOHNNY: Pop, I don't want to talk about it.  
 FATHER: You're not glad to see me, are you?  
 JOHNNY: Nobody's blaming you for anything. . . .  
 FATHER: You both always had a roof over your heads.  
 JOHNNY: Yeh, but when we woke up we didn't know what roof we were under.  
 FATHER: Waking up in a hotel room is no fun. . . .  
 JOHNNY: Nobody's blaming you. When you stand in the snow your feet get cold—if you fall in the water and you can't swim, you drown. We call you Pop, and you call us Son, but it never was. . . .  
 FATHER: You're a pretty cold-hearted cookie, Johnny.  
 JOHNNY: I don't save your letters. . . . and I never saved my money to try to help you out. Don't come around knocking Polo to me. . . . because he's my brother.  
 FATHER: And I'm not your father?  
 JOHNNY: Don't put words in my mouth. . . .  
 FATHER: What the hell's the matter with you—all the things you say? What are you—the lawyer in the case. . . . !  
 JOHNNY: I know you, Pop—either you clam up, or you start to push. . . .  
 FATHER: As I listen to you, it sounds like I don't even know you. . . .  
 JOHNNY: Don't start to steam!  
 FATHER: I don't even know you!  
 JOHNNY: All right, you don't even know me.  
 FATHER: I don't even know you!  
 JOHNNY: How the hell could you know me? The last time I saw you I was in the hospital. You came to see me for three days. Before that. . . . I saw you for two days, when I graduated school. How the hell could you know me? When you came to the hospital. . . . you said, Jesus, it must have been rough, kid, but it's all over. . . . that's all you had to say. . . . we shook hands, like two big men.  
 FATHER: If you felt that was wrong, why didn't you tell me?  
 JOHNNY: Tell you what? All I remember is laying there and smiling, thinking the old man's come to take me home.  
 FATHER: I live in a hotel, Johnny!  
 JOHNNY: Three big days, Six lousy visiting hours, and you run out. I was so glad to see you. . . .  
 FATHER: Your wife was there to take you home.

JOHNNY: I knew my wife for one year. I've known you for twenty-seven. Twenty-seven years. Your son! My boy Johnny. I didn't even know who she was.

## THE BOYS IN THE BAND

by Mart Crowley

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### ACT II

Michael is throwing a birthday party for Harold and has invited some close friends over to celebrate. Unexpectedly, Michael's old, "straight" roommate at college, Alan, calls him. Alan is very upset and desperately needs to talk with Michael. When Alan arrives at the party he finds that Michael is leading an openly homosexual life and that the guests include an assortment of friends ranging from a flamboyant "queen" to a male hustler who is Harold's birthday gift.

Michael suspects that Alan is really a homosexual. To confirm this he devises a telephone game where everyone calls the person they remember loving the most. When Alan makes his call, Michael is surprised to find that it is not a man, but his own wife that Alan has called.

In the following scene, Michael accuses Alan of being a "closet queen" and taunts him into making the telephone call. (The line by Harold may be ignored for scene-study purposes.)

ALAN: Michael, if you are insinuating that I am homosexual, I can only say that you are mistaken.

MICHAEL: Am I? *A beat.* What about Justin Stuart?

ALAN: . . . What about. . . Justin Stuart?

MICHAEL: You were in love with him, that's what about him. *A beat.* And *that* is who you are going to call.

ALAN: Justin and I were very good friends. That is all. Unfortunately, we had a parting of the ways and that was the end of

the friendship. We have not spoken for years. I most certainly will not call him now.

**MICHAEL:** According to Justin, the friendship was quite passionate.

**ALAN:** What do you mean?

**MICHAEL:** I mean that you slept with him in college. Several times.

**ALAN:** That is not true!

**MICHAEL:** Several times. One time, it's youth. Twice, a phase maybe. Several times, *you like it!*

**ALAN:** IT'S NOT TRUE!

**MICHAEL:** Yes, it is. Because Justin Stuart *is* homosexual. He comes to New York on occasion. He calls me. I've taken him to parties. Larry "had" him once. *I* have slept with Justin Stuart. And he has told me all about *you*.

**ALAN:** Then he told you a lie. *A beat.*

**MICHAEL:** You were obsessed with Justin. That's all you talked about, morning, noon, and night. You started doing it about Hank upstairs tonight. What an attractive fellow he is and all that transparent crap.

**ALAN:** He *is* an attractive fellow. What's wrong with saying so?

**MICHAEL:** Would you like to join him and Larry right now?

**ALAN:** I said he was attractive. That's all.

**MICHAEL:** How many times do you have to say it? How many times did you have to say it about Justin: what a good tennis player he was; what a good dancer he was; what a good body he had; what good taste he had; how bright he was—how *amusing* he was—how the girls were all mad for him—what close friends you were.

**ALAN:** We . . . we . . . were . . . very close . . . very good . . . friends. *That's all!*

**MICHAEL:** It was *obvious*—and when you did it around Fran it was downright embarrassing. Even she must have had her doubts about you.

**ALAN:** *Justin . . . lied.* If he told you that, he lied. It is a lie. A vicious lie. He'd say anything about me now to get even. He could never get over the fact that *I* dropped *him*. But I had to. I had to because . . . he told me . . . he told me about himself . . . he told me that he wanted to be my lover. And I . . . I . . . told him . . . he made me sick . . . I told him I pitied him. *A beat.*

**MICHAEL:** You ended the friendship, Alan, because you couldn't face the truth about yourself. You could go along, sleeping with Justin, as long as he lied to himself and you lied to yourself and you both dated girls and labeled yourselves men and called yourselves just fond friends. But Justin finally had to be honest about the truth, and you couldn't take it. You couldn't take it and so you destroyed the friendship and your friend along with it. *Michael goes to the desk and gets address book.*

**ALAN:** No!

**MICHAEL:** Justin could never understand what he'd done wrong to make you cut him off. He blamed himself.

**ALAN:** No!

**MICHAEL:** He did until he eventually found out who he was and what he was.

**ALAN:** No!

**MICHAEL:** But to this day he still remembers the treatment—the scars he got from you. *Puts address book in front of Alan on coffee table.*

**ALAN:** No!

**MICHAEL:** Pick up this phone and call Justin. Call him and apologize and tell him what you should have told him twelve years ago. *Picks up the phone, shoves it at Alan.*

**ALAN:** NO! HE LIED! NOT A WORD IS TRUE!

**MICHAEL:** CALL HIM! *Alan won't take the phone.* All right then, *I'll dial!*

**HAROLD:** You're so helpful.

*Michael starts to dial.*

**ALAN:** Give it to me. *Michael hands Alan the receiver. Alan takes it, hangs up for a moment, lifts it again, starts to dial. Everyone watches silently. Alan finishes dialing. Puts the receiver to his ear. . . . Hello?*

**MICHAEL:** One point.

**ALAN:** . . . It's . . . it's Alan.

**MICHAEL:** Two points.

**ALAN:** . . . Yes, yes, it's *me*.

**MICHAEL:** Is it Justin?

**ALAN:** . . . You sound surprised.

**MICHAEL:** I should hope to think so—after twelve years! Two more points.

ALAN: I . . . I'm in New York. Yes. I . . . won't explain now . . . I . . . I just called to tell you . . .

MICHAEL: THAT I LOVE YOU, GODDAMNIT! I LOVE YOU!

ALAN: I love you.

MICHAEL: You get the goddamn bonus. TEN POINTS TOTAL! JACKPOT!

ALAN: I love you and I beg you to forgive me.

MICHAEL: Give me that! *Snatches the phone from Alan. Justin!* Did you hear what the son of a bitch said! *A beat. Michael is speechless for a moment. . . . Fran?* *A beat.* Well, of course I expected it to be you! . . . *A beat.* How are you? Me, too. Yes, yes . . . he told me everything. Oh, don't thank me. Please . . . Please . . . *A beat.* I'll . . . I'll put him back on. *A beat.* My love to the kids . . .

ALAN: . . . Darling? I'll take the first plane I can get. Yes. I'm sorry too. I love you very much. *Hangs up, stands, crosses to the door, stops. Turns around, surveys the group.* Thank you, Michael.

## THE SIGN IN SIDNEY BRUSTEIN'S WINDOW

by Lorraine Hansberry

### ACT II, SCENE 3

The play focuses on the struggles of Sidney Brustein, an idealistic intellectual who runs a Greenwich Village newspaper, and his wife, Iris, an unsuccessful actress. Sidney clings to hope—hope for mankind, hope in a reform candidate, hope for the success of a friend's interracial marriage, hope for the renewal of his own foundering marriage. The events of the play confirm for Iris the futility of hope, affirm for her that the cheaters always win, that those with the basest aspirations always come out on

top. She sees her husband duped, she sees her sister discard her painful life through suicide, she sees her own dreams crumble under the weight of constant failure. Finally, at the end of the play, she is able to draw strength from Sidney. She comes to understand that the significant stakes are one's honor and integrity and not some elusive and transitory public recognition.

The scene that follows is between Sidney and Alton. They are in Sidney's apartment. The underdog "reform" candidate backed by Sidney's newspaper has just won the election. Sidney is elated, a bit tipsy, and has been rhapsodizing about the perfectability of mankind. Alton is a black man who "is, to the eye of the audience, white." He has worked side by side with Sidney, but is showing no sign of joy. He has learned that his fiancée, Iris's sister Gloria, has been a prostitute. Sidney has been singing "We Did It" (from *My Fair Lady*). He breaks off upon noticing Alton's joylessness.

SIDNEY: What the hell is the matter with you?

ALTON, *his eyes trained on Sidney*: Is it true, Sid?

SIDNEY, *knowing at once*: Is what true—?

ALTON, *rising*: We've hung out together a long time; don't crap around. Is it true? Is it true she's a hooker? And you were going to let me marry her? *Sidney says nothing; he sits on couch, exhaling a great troubled sigh.* Why didn't you tell me?

SIDNEY, *staring at the floor*: It wasn't my place to do so. It was for Gloria to tell you. People change. She'll change. She needs someone. Just don't make me sick today, Alton. Just don't act like a fraternity boy meeting his own girl under the lamppost. *Rises and crosses quickly to the bar for a drink.*

ALTON: How would you act? *To Sidney's back*: When you go into the mines, Sid, you get coal in your skin; if you're a fisherman, you reek of fish! . . . She doesn't *know* how to love any more, it's all a performance. It has to be.

SIDNEY, *avoiding a direct reply*: If you could understand it, there is a great compliment to you in how I treated this, Alt. The compliment that I thought you would be man enough to absorb, and help Gloria like you wanted to help the rest of the world once.

ALTON, *crosses to bar and whirls Sidney around to face him*.