

BICKHAM: Ya wanna know somethin', Pete?
WINTERS: Sure. What?
BICKHAM: Straight stuff. You're the nicest guy on this island.
WINTERS, genuinely moved: Well, thank you, Bickham. I really appreciate that . . . coming from you.
BICKHAM: There's only one thing wrong with you.
WINTERS: What's that?
BICKHAM: You're like a rich man . . . a very rich man.
WINTERS: Oh? In what way?
BICKHAM: I don't mean uh . . . *really*. I mean uh . . .
WINTERS: Figuratively.
BICKHAM: Yeah, that's right. Figuratively. And what it is, see, it's like this. You walk around with your pockets full of gold, see, and we're a bunch of apes. Every now and then you throw us a piece. It's great . . . and we love it . . . we need the gold *all* the time. Only catch is, lots of times you throw it only when *you* want to throw it. You hip to that, Pete?
WINTERS, with a touch of sadness: Maybe I'm not as rich as you think I am.
BICKHAM, slight pause: Yeah. Maybe you ain't.

A HATFUL OF RAIN

by Michael V. Gazzo

ACT II, SCENE 2

This is the story of the Pope family and the destruction of that family by drugs. Johnny Pope is a drug addict. He was a hero in the Korean War, a prisoner of war who would not reveal secrets. In an army hospital he was given addictive drugs to ease the pain of the wounds inflicted on him while a prisoner. Now he is living in a New York City apartment with his pregnant wife, Celia, his brother, Polo, and an expensive daily heroin habit. He has become increasingly inattentive to his wife (who only learns of his addiction toward the end of the play), and has

used up the life savings of his brother. The family gets an unexpected visit from Johnny and Polo's father. He has quit his job, invested all his money in a business, needs a few thousand dollars more for an outright purchase, and has come to collect on Polo's promise to loan him money. When he learns that Polo has no money to give him, he ignites old family feuds, accuses Polo of being ungrateful and irresponsible, and seeks an ally in his favorite son, Johnny.

Just prior to the following scene, Johnny has come home during the morning after being out all night looking for drugs. He has been given a deadline to pay off his debts and asks Polo for more money. Polo has none to give. The father enters and initiates a bitter exchange with Polo. Johnny, resolved to confess his addiction and to exonerate the brother who has protected him, asks Polo to leave him alone with their father.

FATHER: A good rain cleans the streets . . . huh?
JOHNNY: You're up early, Pop.
FATHER: I didn't get much sleep. I was wondering about something, Johnny. Is today your day off? I mean, how can you take in the ball game if you're working?
JOHNNY: I'm not working.
FATHER: You say you and your wife are getting along . . . ?
JOHNNY: Yeh . . .
FATHER: Last night, when I went back to the hotel, I kept thinking about what your wife said, about believing. About what ~~do~~ I believe in. She's right, I got you kids to believe in. Like I come up here—you got a wife, a little home, a kid on the way, you're making a home for your brother. You did a good job of bringing yourself up . . . but what the hell's your brother doing? Holing up in some dame's apartment? Twenty-five hundred is a—
JOHNNY: I don't know. . . .
FATHER: You talk in awful short phrases, Johnny. . . .
JOHNNY: I'm not used to talking to you, Pop.
FATHER: That's right, we don't talk very much, do we?
JOHNNY: No. . . .
FATHER: I like the letters you write me, Johnny. . . . Life plays funny tricks on people. Hello and Good-bye . . . and nothing in between, but I like the letters you write me.

JOHNNY: I'm glad you do, Pop.

FATHER: You take this believing thing—after your mother died, I used to read to you and your brother . . . Hi Diddle Diddle, the Cat and the Fiddle, Easter Bunny, Santa Claus and all that crap. You'd believe everything. I'd tell Polo Santa Claus was coming, and he'd look at me like I was out of my mind. You understand what I mean . . . ?

JOHNNY: I'm trying to, Pop. . . .

FATHER: Well, some people can talk, they have all the words. There are some things I feel that I don't have the words for. Maybe you're a little bit like me because you don't seem to be able to talk to me. . . .

JOHNNY: I always wanted to talk to you, Pop, but it's like you never wanted to talk to me, like you were afraid . . .

FATHER: What I want to say is that I care what happens to you. . . .

JOHNNY: Thanks. . . .

FATHER: And I love you—that's the thing, see?

JOHNNY: You what?

FATHER: You heard me the first time. Don't make me say it again.

JOHNNY: I feel the same way, Pop—

FATHER: How's that?

JOHNNY: You know what I mean—Polo, you and me, we're all kinda—Pop, willya do something for me. I never asked you for anything. When the kid comes back, tell him it's all water under the bridge. . . . Oh. . . .

FATHER: What's the matter?

JOHNNY: Headache . . .

FATHER: You wouldn't know anything about what happened to that money. Or would you? He doesn't pay a hundred dollars a week board here, does he?

JOHNNY: I'm asking you for something now. When Polo comes—

FATHER: That's the difference between you and Polo, you never asked me for anything.

JOHNNY: He never asked you for anything either, Pop.

FATHER: Yeh, but the way he looked at me sometimes—Maybe I never gave you much either.

JOHNNY: You gave me a coat once!

FATHER: A coat?

JOHNNY: Yeh, you came to the home, and you took me out to a department store—and you let me pick out a coat. And then you took me to a restaurant and made the guy give me some wine. . . .

FATHER: Your brother doesn't gamble, does he?

JOHNNY: No. . . .

FATHER: I always kinda thought that you and your brother and I had a special thing. I thought we were just kinda three men. . . . Your brother did a lot of shouting last night.

JOHNNY: Pop, you did a little shouting yourself last night.

FATHER: I lived with my father until I was twenty-two years old, and I never raised my voice above a whisper . . .

JOHNNY: He lived with his father for nine years. What did you expect, Little Lord Fauntleroy?

FATHER: I expect the same thing I get from you. You don't go around crying like a kid in a crib. I like the letters you write me—'cause they're a man's letter. Dammit, you had a tough life but you made the best of it. Ever since he left home . . .

JOHNNY: He didn't leave home. He was sent away. Every time he gets a letter from you, he goes into his room and reads it. He's got a box of them in there. . . .

FATHER: Yeh. . . . ?

JOHNNY: Yeh.

FATHER: Well, how would I know that!

JOHNNY: He's missed you for a long time, Pop. You shipped him out to uncles and aunts . . .

FATHER: And what was I doing? Gambling, drinking, laying on my can in Bermuda. I don't know anything about him. . . .

JOHNNY: Well, when he comes in, you ask him about that time in the orphan home when he wet the bed and they made him stand on a staircase all day long with the wet sheet over his head . . .

FATHER: I shipped him—What was I supposed to do, buy a house, work nights, wash clothes during the day? Uncles and aunts, thank God he had them . . .

JOHNNY: All right, Pop . . .

FATHER: A man has only two hands.

JOHNNY: All right, Pop . . .

FATHER: And don't go around all-righting me. When I came yesterday, I had a funny feeling. Right now I got it again. You're not glad to see me, are you?

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

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