

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

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*

offers him a chair) — and I'll just finish this off, I won't be a minute. *Reg hesitates, glances at Joey's desk and bookshelves and lights a cigarette. Ben pretends to go on marking, makes a few exclamations under his breath. Not looking up:* What brings you down here, anyway?

REG: I just thought I'd look in.

BEN, *writes furiously:* Have to make my script illegible so that they don't find out about my spelling. There. *He pushes the essay away.* To check up, eh?

REG: Check up?

BEN: Joey's always saying that if you got your hands on our little room, which is an everywhere, or rather on me, eh? as I'm responsible for the mess we're in— *(laughs)* But you should see our flat. Even Joey's room is like a pigsty—naturally, I'm the pig that made it that way. You really must come around and help us out. He says you've done wonders with your little kitchen.

REG: I'm in publishing.

BEN, *puzzled:* Yes?

REG: Not in interior decorating. *He sits on the hard chair by Joey's desk.*

BEN: Oh God, yes. *Laughs.* I'm sorry about that. No, I don't get your job wrong any more. It would be inexcusable. I'm always making Joey tell me about it, in fact.

REG: I know. He's always telling me about having to tell you about it.

BEN: He says you're a marvelous cook.

REG: I'm glad he eats well.

BEN: And keeps his figure, lucky sod. *Little pause. Gets up and sits on hard chair opposite Reg.* You know, Reg, I'm very glad to have the chance to speak to you privately—I behaved abominably the last time we met. I do hope—well, you've forgiven me for your shoes. I never apologized properly.

REG: It's all right. These things happen.

BEN: But your shoes survived, did they?

REG: They were suede.

BEN: Oh dear. Suede.

Pause.

REG: Look, you must want to get on. I'll go back to the porter— *(He gets up.)*

BEN: No, you mustn't do that. *He gets up.*

REG: I don't mind. In point of fact we were doing a little business together. He's an Arsenal supporter.

BEN: Good God. Is he really? In point of fact?

There is a pause.

REG: So I can let you get on with—

BEN: Have a drink? *He goes to his desk, opens the drawer.*

REG: I don't think I ought to.

BEN, *coming back with the Scotch and two soiled glasses:* You are lucky. Then you'll really enjoy it. *He pushes one of the glasses into Reg's hand. Reg peers down into the glass, winces at its condition. Ben dashes Scotch into it, then into his own.* I understand you've met my friend Tom. Tom Weatherley, by the way.

REG: I know Tom, yes.

BEN: You know all my domestic news, too, I gather. I only heard it myself today.

REG: Yes, I heard something about it. I'm sorry.

BEN: Do you detest warm Scotch? I don't know how you drink it in your part of the world?

REG: This is fine.

BEN: Good. Cheers.

REG: Cheers.

BEN: Thanks. *He drinks. Reg goes to Joey's bookshelves.* Its nice to have some company. These last few hours I've felt quite like Antony at his close—the air is full of the gods' departing musics. So do forgive any tendency to babble, eh?

REG: No, that's all right. I understand.

BEN: Cheers. *He sits on the hard chair by his desk.* Actually what this whole business has brought home to me is how dependent I am on my past.

REG, *turning to him:* But it was—excuse me—but it was quite a short marriage, wasn't it?

BEN: No, I was talking about Joey.

REG: Oh.

BEN: It's as if my marriage were an intermission, if you see. Now I'm catching up with my past again, which is where I suppose my future is also.

REG: Really?

BEN: Sorry. I'm being literary. But I always think of you as a

born romantic. From Joey's descriptions of *your* past. A touch of the butterfly, eh?

REG: Really? And what does Joey say to make you think that?

BEN: Oh, I don't know—the way you've pulled up your roots in the North, what I imagine to be your emotional pattern, your love of the bizarre.

REG, *pause*: And how does that express itself?

BEN: Joey's always recounting your experiences—for example with the Gurkhas. You were with them, weren't you?

REG: I was stationed with them, yes. About ten years ago, during my National Service.

BEN: Exactly. And I scarcely knew what a Gurkha was—I still tend to think he's something you get with a cocktail.

REG: Do you?

BEN: They must be tough little towsers.

REG: They are. *He sits at Joey's desk.* You didn't do your National Service, I take it.

BEN: Oh Christ! Sorry, I mean no.

REG: How come?

BEN: I got took queer. *There is a pause. Reg puts his glass down.* Oh! You're ready for another one.

REG: No, I—in point of fact, I'd rather not.

BEN: This is an altogether different suburb. *He refills Reg's glass.*

REG: Sorry? What suburb?

BEN: Oh, it's a little joke of Joey's. Almost impossible to explain out of context. *He pours himself a drink and leans on the front of his desk.* But how is the world of fiction?

REG: Can't complain.

BEN: Cheers. What have you got coming out at the moment?

REG: At the moment I'm doing two cookery books, an authoritative guide to bird watching in Lincolnshire, the only intelligent account of the farce of El Alamein—by an N.C.O. needless to say—and a New Testament Commentary.

BEN: That's your *fiction* list?

REG: No, that's our list for next month.

BEN: No novels at all then?

REG: Well, just one of those historical romances where the hero shoves his sword into assorted villains and his cock into assorted ladies. It won't get the reviews but it'll make us money.

BEN: If he did it the other way around you might get both.

REG, *laughs briefly*: But the point is, you see, by putting that one through we can afford to do something worthwhile later. For instance, I've just made a decision about a novel on National Service life.

BEN: Oh, one of those. I thought that vogue was eight years dead.

REG: No, not one of those. This is something special, in my opinion. Of course it mightn't interest you as you didn't do National Service, but personally I found it moving, witty, gracefully organized—genuinely poetic.

BEN: The National Service? Good God! Those qualities are hard enough to come by in art. It's never occurred to me to look for them in life, especially as run by the armed forces. Cheers.

REG: Nevertheless I expect you *will* be curious in this case. Theoretically I can't tell you our author's name as the board doesn't meet until tomorrow, but if I just mention that he's a comprehensive school teacher—*(he raises his glass slowly)* Cheers.

BEN, *after a pause*: Well, well. *He sits in the armchair.* The most boring man in London strikes again.

REG: I'm sorry.

BEN: Why?

REG: It must be painful for you.

BEN: Why?

REG: Because of his relationship with you. It was wrong of me to have mentioned it.

BEN: On the contrary. It was the correct move. Has Joey read it?

REG: Not yet. It was offered to me in strict secrecy—at least until I'd made up my mind. But I can tell him about it now. I think he'll like it.

BEN: That's because you don't know him very well, perhaps. He may be something of a dilettante in personal relationships, but he holds fast to standards on important matters. We once drew up a list of the five most tedious literary subjects in the world. National Service came fifth, just behind the Latin poems of Milton.

REG: Really? And what occupied the other three places?

REG: What things?

BEN: No complications?

REG: What kind of complications would there be?

BEN: In that our routine doesn't interfere with your—plural meaning—routine.

REG: Plural meaning? Meaning what?

BEN: Yours and his. Your routines together.

REG: Ah. Well, it has done, frankly, yes. Now you ask. But I don't think it will from now on.

BEN, *sits on the hard chair opposite Reg*: Then you're beginning to get the hang of it? Good. Because sometimes I've suspected that our friendship—going back so far and including so much—so much of his history and so much of my history which has really become *our* history—singular meaning this time—must make it difficult for any new people we pick up on the side.

REG: Like your wife, do you mean?

BEN: Well done. Yes, like poor old Anne. She must have felt her share amounted to a minor infidelity, really. I speak metaphorically, of course, but then I suppose marriage is the best metaphor for all our intense relationships. Except those we have with our husbands and wives. *Laughs*. Naturally.

REG: So you think of yourself as married to Joey, do you?

BEN: Metaphorically. *A pause. The telephone rings. Ben picks it up. Butley, English. Oh, hello, James—no, I'm afraid I still can't talk properly. I'm in the middle of a tutorial. He winks at Reg. O.K. Yes. Goodbye.*

REG: What metaphor would you use when you learned that Joey was going to move in with someone else? Would that be divorce, metaphorically?

BEN, *after a long pause*: What?

REG, *laughs*: Sorry. I shouldn't do that. But I was thinking that it must be odd getting news of two divorces in the same day.

BEN, *pause*: Joey hasn't said anything.

REG: No. I'm giving the news. You might say that when he comes to me our Joey will be moving out of figures of speech into matters of fact. Ours will be too much like a marriage to be a metaphor.

BEN, *little pause*: I thought you didn't admit to being—what? different?

REG: There are moments when frankness is necessary. No, our

Joey's just been waiting for the right queen, fruit, fairy, poof, or homosexual to come along. He's come.

BEN, *after a pause*: Well, isn't he lucky.

REG: Time will tell. I hope so. But I'm tired of waiting to make a proper start with him. I'm tired of waiting for him to tell you. You know our Joey—a bit gutless. No, the truth of the matter is I've been trying to get Joey to bring you around to dinner one evening and tell you straight, so we could get it over with. I knew he'd never find the nerve to do it on his lonesome. But he's kept dodging about, pretending you were busy, one excuse after another. It's worked out quite well though, hasn't it?

A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

by Robert Bolt

ACT II

When Henry VIII failed to obtain a church divorce from Catherine of Aragon, he rebelled against the Catholic church and the Pope. He issued an Act of Supremacy making himself spiritual as well as temporal leader of England, and he required all his subjects to sign the document. His Lord Chancellor, Sir Thomas More, would not sign. More knew he was placing himself in jeopardy by upholding the authority of the Pope, but he was a profoundly devout Catholic with a strong conscience, and was morally incapable of lying about his convictions. Pressure from Henry and his henchman, Thomas Cromwell, increased. Various plots and threats were used to force More to comply, but to no avail. Charges of treason were then brought against him and he was executed.

The scene below takes place in Cromwell's study. More has been summoned for questioning. Cromwell tries to frighten him with false evidence implicating him in treasonous acts. More replies with solid evidence absolving himself on each count. Their conversation is being transcribed by Master Rich.