

THE NIGHT BROTHER
BY CRAIG KEE STRETE
AND
R. WRIGHT CAMPBELL

1.

At RISE: The curtain opens and we see dimly visible figures sitting up in bed. The lights come up until we clearly see MARCO and MARTIN two Siamese twins in their mid-thirties. The top cover is thrown back away from them, leaving only a sheet pulled over them. Only the bare legs of a woman, sprawled across the bed sideways is visible. The two men are obviously twins despite differences of temperament and habit. They are joined at the hip.

MARTIN

(unsteadily brandishing a bottle of whiskey)

Well, MARCO, it seems, to quote the poet, poison has unglued the photograph of night from its frame.

(MARCO tries to grab the bottle out of his hands) Departed guest, dancing on your naked bones in our bed, I bid you sit and hear our tale of woe.

(MARTIN starts to take a drink but his hands are shaking so badly he can't. There is an edge of hysteria in his voice.)

Good God, I'm drunk! What is proper MARCO? Shall I offer the corpse a drink?

MARCO

(furious but somehow fearful) Stop it! YOU HEAR ME! STOP IT!

MARTIN

No dear brother. You'll not stop me because there is this dead creature in our bed, dead and still hideous,

MARCO (pleading) Not tonight. Please God, don't lose control. Not now MARTIN!

MARTIN

Courage, MARCO, Courage! So she's dead. She's free of it. Left the sideshow. Why not celebrate her escape from freedom?

(He tilts the bottle back, finds his mouth and drinks deeply from it)

MARCO

(Recoiling in horror)

If you get too drunk, we'll fall asleep. We won't be able to move!

MARTIN Movement is overrated, except in the bathroom.

MARCO

(Furious)

Are you mad? Are you crazed? You'll get us drunk! We'll have to spend the night ..her draped across our legs....unable to move have to SPEND the night with THAT with with

the(Terrified) We'll sleep next to it all through the night. MY GOD!

MARTIN

(Shrugging, gesturing with the bottle)

Well, I don't know why you are so put out. Sleeping with a dead person ought not to be so hard. After all, we've had each other to practice on all these long years. I think it should be quite restful by comparison.

(Becoming almost contemplative)

Think of it ,MARCO. she staggers into our room, late at night! Who knows what's in her mind! She falls across our legs, naked. NAKED! Mustn't forget that. She heaves herself across us with either her last bit of strength or nonchalance and stops breathing. Curious is it not? Perhaps she was thinking of sex at the last moment though why she would have that kind of thought in our direction is beyond me.

(Waving the bottle for emphasis)

Maybe its some form of weird kamikaze sex?

MARCO

I'll hit you in the face! I swear I'll mark you for life if you don't put that bottle down! I can feel it! I'm getting drunk! WE'RE BOTH GETTING DRUNK!

(Now there is a note of real panic in MARCO'S voice) I tell you, you are gonna knock us both out. We'll be trapped! TRAPPED all night with a dead body, here in our own bed! ALONE! In the DARK! With...with THAT!

MARTIN (Taking a drink, then wiping his mouth with the back of his hand.)

There, there MARCO.

(Attempting to comfort him)

Don't take on so. I can t imagine why you get so upset. Sleeping with a dead person ought to be comforting in a way, almost reassuring. After all, she won't make any curious demands beyond our capabilities. She won't roll over on us in the night or snore irritatingly. She may well have cold feet , but I don't see how she could possibly shift them in the middle of the night into the small of our backs and freeze us.

MARCO

(Lunging at MARTIN trying to seize the bottle)

If you don't....

MARTIN

(Fending him off easily)

Its just the dark that upsets you brother. I always said you were a daytime person MARCO. Your mind does best in the light of day. It is the dark that bothers you. I'll put it right.

MARTIN reaches to the table beside the bed. He strikes a match and lights a candle. As he does, the lights go up.

MARTIN

Your own personal light MARCO.

MARTIN lifts the edge of the blanket up, peering at the body beneath the coverlet. The audience can not see what he sees. He stares, then hastily drops the cover back in place, shocked by what he has seen.

MARTIN

NOW you can see the horror. Is it a comfort?

MARCO

(Lifting the cover and then dropping it even faster than MARTIN did. He trembles)
GOD! She is the most hideous woman....creature....I've ever seen and death does her no favors.

MARTIN

I preferred her in the dark, unseen. I prefer the night, the kindly dark that hides us all.

MARCO

That is like you. You always were the night brother. What do you suppose caused it? Her dying, I mean? The stuff she takes with a needle? Heroin, do you think?

MARTIN

Her arm still bleeds where the needle tore out. Not that she needed any more wounds. Poor wretched creature. It is an ugly dying.

MARCO A nightmare. The death of a living one.

MARTIN But she is free MARCO as we should be free had we the courage.

(Taking another drink) I say let us celebrate her going away!

MARCO (Begging)

Don't drink! I'll have nightmares! We won't make it off the bed! Please don't! I beg you!

MARTIN

Oh buzz off! Not drink on this occasion! What was it father used to say.

(Quoting from memory in a theatrical manner)

I HAVE BEHELD THE OCEAN. I HAVE KNOWN THE RAGING SEA AND I TELL YOU
WATER HOLDS NO FURTHER TERROR FOR ME.

(Hiccoughing)

On the other hand, father said as he staggered off, I still ain't gonna drink it.

(Hiccoughing)

MARCO

(With renewed urgency")

We've got to get up! Call the police! Call an ambulance! We can't be found like this!

MARTIN

(Dismayed at finding the bottle empty, heaving it away carelessly)

And what better way to be found!

(Hiccoughing)

Bizarre death! Bizarre people involved! All in its proper season !

STRANGE LOVE TRIANGLE. PERVERTED ANGLES AND IMPROPER SIDES!

(Hiccoughing)

IMAGINE HEADLINES! DEAD WHITE FREAK SINS WITH SIAMESE TWINS!

(Waving his arm drunkenly)

STRANGE CARNIVAL DEATH!

(An absolutely glazed expression on his face)

EAST MEETS WEST GOING NORTH AND SOUTH!

MARCO You're stinking blotto,you stupid bastard! You're mad! You're insane!

MARTIN

Compared to who? Compared to, let us say, the body at our feet?

(Speech slurred with drink)

You look at the horror that might have wanted to make love to us in the dark were we caught

unawares. Then tell me I am insane !

He seizes the corner of the top cover, makes ready to throw it back.

MARTIN You want to see it again!

MARCO freezes in place, eyes wide with horror. No one moves. From off stage comes the voice of a carnival barker.

CARNIVAL BARKER STOP!

DO NOT GO IN THERE!

IF YOU HAVE A WEAK HEART, OR FEAR FOR YOUR SANITY OR CAN NOT RISK YOUR MORTAL SOUL! DON'T GO IN!

There is the murmur of voices in a crowd .

SHE CAN KILL WITH HER EYES, BOYS!

POISON WITH HER BREATH!

AND HER VOICE, BOYS, IT CAN RIP THE HEART RIGHT OUT OF YOU!

The crowd , as one, gasps.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, BOYS AND GIRLS! FOR ONE QUARTER, FOR ONE FOURTH OF A DOLLAR, FOR THE STRONG. FOR THE BRAVE, FOR THOSE NOT AFRAID FOR THEIR MORTAL SOULS INSIDE. . .INSIDE

..... AWAITING YOU IN THE DARK THE MOST HIDEOUS CREATURE ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH !!!!!

Suddenly, MARCO screams.

MARCO AEEEEEEEEEEEEEEI !

MARCO hides his face. MARTIN, relenting, lets go of the cover.

MARTIN

(Filled with sudden remorse, even tenderness)

I'm sorry.

(Patting the covered shape of the body.)

I am not trying to be unkind to her. I just can't help imaging how the world, how the parasites of the press will see all this. There will be cameras in the coffin, interviewing the worms!

MARCO

(Shuddering)

You are a ghoul. You are as much a creature of the night as she was. You have no respect for the dead.

MARTIN

(His face is flushed, the whiskey impairing his speech and bodily movements. He seems despondent)

I envy the dead, MARCO, She sleeps. She takes her rest. There is no more pain. How can I be sad for her brother when I wish we had the courage to join her. Can we really go on like this MARCO? Our every breath, every twinned lungful of life, is it not the hiss of the damned? Can you not envy what she has done?

MARCO

(As if suddenly discovering unexpected depths in his brother.)

Death is too easy. There's always a hope. There's always a tomorrow.

(Putting his hand comfortingly on his brother's shoulder.)

I did not realize how much this affected you. You are as upset as I. But you must not despair. We

must be here for some purpose. I'd hate to die before finding out what it is. We can't be defeatists, MARCO !

MARTIN

You're a ray of light, you are.

(Despair in his voice)

We were born with the dead. I find your unceasing hopefulness infuriating! You're God happy!

(Voice very slurred)

Be a sunbeam for the LORD! Throw a body block for the LORD! Rotate your goddamn tires!

(His eyes begin to close and he is near passing out)

MARCO

(His words now getting progressively slurred.)

I'm afraid...afraid you succeeded tonight. Am ..am getting too drunk to move, you did this you...you.

MARTIN

(Opening his eyes,not yet passed out but close. He trembles and we suddenly are aware that he is weeping)

I want to die! Death! Death, dear MARCO.

(Sobbing)

It is release....our only escape. I want to.....

MARTIN 's head flops back as he passes out.

MARCO begins to struggle, attempting to shift the unconscious bulk of his brother. He gets weaker and weaker.

A sudden draft from the window blows out the candle. The lights begin to dim.

MARCO

(In a voice of utmost terror) I CAN'T MOVE!

The stage goes dark.

There is a loud scream which is cut off

abruptly, like a light going out.

MARCO and MARTIN are lying on a couch in the office of Dr. Eugene Castor, a psychiatrist.

MARCO

Insanity is hereditary, you can get it from your children. God knows, our father got it from us.

MARTIN

He hated us. We didn't hate him. So why should we be the ones seeing a psychiatrist?

MARCO

It wouldn't hurt to get a little professional help. We both agreed. What could it hurt?

MARTIN

I have no faith in psychiatry. To me its like standing in front of a mirror with your eyes closed so you can see what you look like when you're asleep.

DR. CASTOR, a tall bearded, scholarly looking man comes into the office with a notebook and sits in a chair near the couch.

Dr. CASTOR

Sorry for the interruption. Now where were we?

MARCO We were talking about our father.

DR. CASTOR

(Consulting his notebook)

Ah yes, and had we not come to the conclusion that you had unresolved hostilities to your father for abandoning you?

MARTIN He didn't abandon us. He just left off living.

DR. CASTOR (Looking thoughtful.) And what do you really mean by that?

MARTIN I mean he hung himself. Suicide.

DR. CASTOR

Yes, often one has the feeling of doing in the father. Kill the father, sleep with the mother. A classic fantasy.

MARTIN What?

DR. CASTOR

Have you ever expressed this hostility to him? Do you think it would help you if you approached him with your feelings?

MARCO

I think you are not quite getting what we mean. We can't approach him. He's...he's dead you see. Killed himself!

DR. CASTOR

You'd be surprised how much hostility can be worked out by simply expressing it to the person it is directed to.

MARTIN I am beginning to feel a little hostility right now.

DR. CASTOR

Of course, your problem is much deeper than this unresolved conflict. That's an observation I've made.

MARTIN

(Sarcastic)

You can observe a lot just by watching.

DR. CASTOR

If you could promise me that you'd try to talk this out with your father, I'm sure we'd see some real progress. You have to resolve all the conflicts in your past before you can deal with the future.

MARTIN You don't seem to be listening to what we've said.

DR. CASTOR On the contrary, I hear everything you say.

(Smiling brightly)

But what's important is what you don't say. That's what counts. That's what reveals the real you.

For instance, I think I've got you pretty well figured out after just half a session. A classic case really. A definite split personality.

MARTIN

What?

(Incredulous)

Are you out of your....

MARCO

(Placatingly.)

Now MARTIN don't jump to hasty....

DR. CASTOR

You pass yourself off as two people, two different and distinct people. Actually, you are just one very sick individual.

MARTIN

(Indignantly.)

It seems clear to me that you are the one...

DR. CASTOR It shouldn't be that clear.

(Looking up from his notebook)

If you aren't confused, it's because you aren't thinking clearly.

MARTIN

WHAT A GODDAMN STUPID IDEA THIS WAS!

(Really angry)

Anybody who goes to a psychiatrist ought to have his head examined!

MARCO

(Being sweetly reasonable)

Actually DR. CASTOR, the fact of the matter is. We are two people. We're Siamese twins.

DR. CASTOR (Sternly)

Nonsense. I've already developed my theory. If the facts don't fit the theory, they have to be disposed of.

MARTIN

I'm not paying for this!

MARCO

At least give him a chance.

DR. CASTOR

I believe....

(Consulting his notes.)

...one of your problems concerned public restrooms, am I right?

MARTIN

Let's get out of here!

DR. CASTOR

I think you mentioned that public restrooms are difficult for you. Perhaps it is because you secretly desire to use the ladies room?

(Writing in his notebook)

Sexual confusion is rampant in cases of split personality.

MARCO

(Patiently)

What I said about public restrooms was....well that...well for example, once we were attacked by three construction workers who thought we were queers....engaged in some kind of mutual weirdness. Linked as we are, it somehow suggests, uh.

(Not quite able to complete the thought)

Fortunately, a cop heard our calls for help and dashed in. He was able to distract them by shooting at us, which gave us a chance to escape out the window.

DR. CASTOR

(Looking delighted at this information)

An apparent suicide attempt after accosting three men in a public bathroom! It's a good thing you

came to me. You see, a condition like this, unchecked, can lead to madness.

(In a fatherly tone.)

My child, put your mind at ease. If you tell me your phobias, I can tell you what you are afraid of.

MARTIN rolls his eyes at this. Then he folds his arm across his chest. It is obvious from his stance that he doesn't want anything further to do with DR. CASTOR. To compensate for this, MARCO is still trying to get some sense out of DR. CASTOR.

DR. CASTOR

(Expanding on his theories)

Let us take this episode of your attempted homosexual tryst with three construction workers. I think the number is significant.

(Making a notation in his notebook)

Not one construction worker. Not two construction workers. But THREE!

(Looking up at them with benign confidentiality.)

No doubt you are familiar with the Freudian insight that two wrongs don't make a right...
but three do?

MARTIN

(In a conspiratorial tone)

We could kick him twice. In his condition, he'd insist he only had one bruise.

DR. CASTOR leans back in his chair, making a tent of his fingers. He gazes up at the ceiling and seems to be pondering some deep and profound subject.

MARCO and MARTIN seem increasingly restive.

DR. CASTOR

(Abruptly breaking his pose and rising to his feet.)

Sex may be the root of your problem. Now tell me what is sex? What does it mean to you?

MARTIN

To us it's a badly organized two car funeral.

DR. CASTOR

(Shaking his head, as if not satisfied with that answer.)

Tell me what this makes you think of.

He hands MARCO a small white card with an inkblot.

MARCO stares at it desperately, trying to find some kind of truth in it. He turns the card over, tries it from all angles but he hasn't a clue what it's supposed to be. MARTIN glances at the card over his shoulder.

DR. CASTOR

Come on, don't hold back. Tell me what you think.

MARCO

(Desperately)

I think somebody's been goddamn careless with the ink is what I think!

DR. CASTOR

(Mildly offended.)

There's no need to get hostile with me. I'm only trying to help you. After all, I'm not the one who has lurid encounters with strange men in public restrooms.

MARTIN

(Staring up at the ceiling)

I can't believe I let you talk me into this.

MARCO

Well look, we've already paid for the whole hour. We might as well get the full use of it.

MARTIN

That's an interesting theory. And if somebody throws a punch at us, we should lean into it, so we know we've really been hit, right?

DR. CASTOR

But take heart. You're not just another hopeless homosexual with a split personality. You're a unique hopeless homosexual with a split personality. Each of us, in our own way, is unique. But you're asking yourself, can Dr. Castor really cure me of this dread affliction?

DR. CASTOR stands before them, looking very smug. He nods his head yes and taps his own chest with his thumb, indicating that the answer does indeed lie within him.

MARTIN

We could step on his face. All four feet ought to make a convincing impression.

DR. CASTOR sits down once again, begins scribbling in his notebook.

DR. CASTOR

You've heard of shock aversion therapy? For instance, to get people to quit smoking when they have uncontrollable urges for cigarettes, one encourages them to smoke and then touches an electrode to them each time they do. The pain of partial electrocution can cure the smoking habit completely.

MARCO

You have to admit, for the money, one gets more information than anyone would ever possibly want to know.

DR. CASTOR

Since you have uncontrollable urges for strange men in public toilets, the same techniques could apply.

MARTIN

(Aghast)

CHRIST! HE'S GOING TO HOOK US UP TO AN ELECTRIC HOMOSEXUAL!

MARCO

(Nodding wisely)

So that's what they mean by gay power.

DR. CASTOR

Of course, we can't use an electric shock in this particular situation. No. It simply wouldn't do. But the technique is valid.

(With a smile of secret knowledge)

I can arrange something just as shocking and just as effective a cure.

(Triumphantly.)

I want you to throw yourself sexually upon a dead man!

MARCO and MARTIN

(In shocked unison.)

WHAT?

DR. CASTOR

Not too recently dead. The more decayed the better.

(Staring off into space, almost privately reflecting.)

You know some men will jump anything that moves. I say, why limit yourself.

MARCO

That's it! I've had it!

MARTIN

(As they both rise up, beginning to move forward in a menacing manner.)

We could do a dance on his windpipe with our accumulated weight.

MARCO

For once, I'm on your side.

MARTIN

Or we could shoot him.

MARCO

Wouldn't they give us the electric chair for that?

MARTIN

Not if it's not premeditated.

MARCO

(As they advance on him.)

What's that mean?

MARTIN

If we don't think about it, it's okay.

The lights go down. End of scene.

SCENE THREE

The lights come up and we see the interior of MARTIN'S and MARCO'S apartment. The room is full of a varied assortment of people, drinks in hand. The party guests seem a rather unusual assortment, either low lifes or at the very least, human odditys. This is definitely not a normal group of people. Some of the men look like derelicts off the street and some of the women are all too obviously prostitutes.

A bearded woman brings two drinks on a tray to MARTIN and MARCO. They are standing in front of their living room couch, looking very ill at ease. There is the sound of broken glass from somewhere off stage, the rattle of furniture being knocked to the floor. The twins both wince at the sounds.

BEARDED WOMAN

This is a great party. I wish my sister could be here to see this.

MARCO

(Being polite.)

I didn't know you had a sister.

A drunken man across the room throws an empty beer can over his shoulder. The bearded woman ducks out of the way, not in the least ruffled by it.

BEARDED WOMAN

(Watching the party with obvious delight.)

I don't.

MARCO

(Confused, reaching out to grab a bottle just as a drunk was ready to toss it over his shoulder

in imitation of the man who threw the beer.)

But you said...

BEARDED WOMAN

She ran off with a sword swallower at the circus. Later she joined up with a high wire act.

MARCO

But....

BEARDED WOMAN

The coroner said, if the wire had been as tight as she was, she might have survived.

The Bearded woman turns and moves off across the room.

MARTIN

(Calling after her.)

Thanks for the drinks.

MARTIN and MARCO stare at each other in secret amusement.

A badly dressed man staggers past them, bent over double, his arms and legs flopping at strange angles as he walks. He seems terribly uncoordinated. He almost falls, rights himself, then staggers on across the room.

MARCO

Who was that?

MARTIN

That was Mitsuko, the contortionist. You'll have to excuse him. When he gets drunk, he can't quite make ends meet.

Another bottle flies through the air and the twins both duck as it flies harmlessly over their heads.

MARCO

Who are all these weird people? It was a stupid idea to have a party.

MARTIN

(Sipping his drink quite happily.)

Oh quit complaining! Just a few sideshow people and their friends, what's the harm in that?

MARCO

The harm is, in that you'll use this as an excuse to get us drunk again. And then you'll do something dangerous and crazy.

MARTIN

Relax! If the police come, I intend to play AMAZING GRACE on the breathalyzer. They never arrest anyone who can stay in tune.

MARCO

If they start breaking up the furniture, I swear I'm going to...

A man engaged in conversation, obviously drunk, waves his arm to illustrate a point, and knocks a whole tray of drinks off the bearded woman's tray. The twins wince as the glasses crash to the floor.

A very provocatively dressed woman comes up to them and puts her arm around MARCO. She has a short skirt, high heel boots, and looks exactly like what she is, namely a prostitute. She has a newly acquired black eye and her lips are swollen and puffy from a beating. A tiny bit of blood dots the corner of her mouth.

MARTIN Hi Lillian. Where you been? Lover boy MARCO was getting lonely.

LILIAN

(Touching her eye, wincing.)

I was in the bathroom soaking up some of the local color.

MARCO

(Just noticing her injuries.)

MY GOD! YOUR EYE! Who did it! I'll break his...

LILIAN

(Bitterly)

Forget it. In this business, the customer is always right. Besides...

(Laughing triumphantly.)

..he's got very little left to break. He'll be limping bowlegged for a month!

MARCO uses his handkerchief to wipe the blood off her cut lip, acting very tender and concerned.

MARCO

My God Lillian. You could get killed doing this. Why don't you get out of this line of work?

LILIAN

I did once.

(Grimacing with pain as MARCO dabs at her lip.)

I actually went out and got myself married.

MARCO

(Still fussing over her.)

Didn't it work out? I guess it's hard for a man to...

LILIAN

(Interrupting.)

It worked fine. He was a great guy. Never had a problem with him. The problem was with me.

Being married was like having a library with only one book.

MARTIN

(Smiling.)

It all depends on the book.

MARTIN turns his head, and sees someone across the room. His eyes light up and he becomes very animated.

MARTIN

Would you look at that woman over there! My God, she's lovely! She's got eyes as blue as a night full of policemen .

MARCO looks in the direction MARTIN is staring, sees the girl he sees. The girl looks very shy, very much out of place in the room. She is very smartly dressed, in a sheath dress that shows a very modest amount of attractive leg. The dress is low cut in back, comes up to her neck in front. She has high heels, dark golden skin and long blonde hair.

MARCO

She's not for us, MARTIN .

MARTIN

She is if she'll have us!

MARCO

What I meant, MARTIN, is that she doesn't look like a prostitute or a freak. As a matter of fact, she looks amazingly normal. And therefore, she doesn't belong here. She must be lost.

MARTIN

(Not about to believe it.)

Oh you've just never seen the higher priced spread. One night with her and our bank account would be crawling under a duck. What a beauty!

MARCO

With that face, she could never be a prostitute!

MARTIN

Nonsense! There isn't a woman here tonight, freaks included, who isn't available for unlimited horizontal bookings.

MARCO shakes his head no, staring at the girl across the room. The girl has now moved into the center of the room, obviously uncomfortable in the presence of the people around her.

MARTIN flashes her a huge smile and waves his drink at her cheerily.

MARTIN

Hello love, want your love bumps, bumped?

MARCO

(Embarrassed.)

Quiet! She'll hear you!

MARTIN

That's the idea. I wonder who she is.

LILIAN

(Looking at her for the first time, as if sensing competition.)

She's new to me. She looks like a babe in the woods. She doesn't look like she's in the life.

(Stepping back from the twins, taking her arm from MARCO'S shoulder.)

I need a painkiller for my eye. Gonna go get me a stiff drink.

LILIAN starts to walk away, heading for a table with a few already mixed drinks on it.

Suddenly, as if it had just occurred to her, she turns and looks back at them.

LILIAN

Hey Listen. My feet hurt standing around. I want to put some ice on my eye and I want to get some goddamn sleep tonight, ok?

MARCO

Soon. Real soon. We'll chase them out in a minute.

MARTIN

(His eyes on the girl.)

The hell we will!

(Excited.)

She's lovely to look at isn't she?

MARCO

All the more reason to give her a miss.

The bearded woman comes upstage and moves close to the twins. She is carrying a tray of

drinks. A very normal looking married couple stands a short distance from the twins. The woman takes a drink for herself. The man also reaches for a drink but the woman stops him.

BEARDED WOMAN

(To the man.)

Don't you want a drink?

WOMAN

(Answering for her husband.)

No. None for him.

MAN

(Touching his stomach.)

Delicate stomach.

WOMAN

If he has a drink, he gets indigestion and then he can't swallow the razor blades and broken glass. The bearded woman goes off. The twins have watched the entire exchange, momentarily distracted.

MARTIN

(Back on the subject.)

I feel faint. I may have to ask that gorgeous creature to give me the kiss of life.

MARCO

If she's got any sense at all, she'll give it to you with a bicycle pump.

MARTIN

(Flushed with excitement.)

She's seen me wave. She's heading this way.

MARCO

(As the girl moves toward them.)

BEHAVE YOURSELF.

(Sternly.)

Don't embarrass us!

The woman comes and stands in front of them, shyly, as if afraid to speak first.

MARTIN

(Making as if to bow.)

Allow me to introduce ourselves. I, the handsome and clever one, am MARTIN. MARCO is the plain and stupid one.

JULIANA

(With a delighted laugh.)

I'm Juliana.

(Holding out her hand very tentatively.)

Very pleased to meet you .both.

They shake hands awkwardly. Juliana's voice is a little odd, a high pitched contralto but it does not spoil the effect. She really is quite lovely.

There is an awkward silence. They are all suddenly struck with shyness.

MARTIN seems more affected by it than the others. He is obviously struggling for something to say.

MARTIN

Uh....well...now that I see you close up of course you aren't a prostitute uh..

(He realizes immediately that that is definitely not what he wanted to say.)

I didn't quite mean to say.....uh....

JULIANA

(Taken aback.)

Well....uh...yes, er no I'm NOT. Uh....

(Embarrassed)

Sexually I don't....I mean I haven't....I mean....

(Blushing.)

I'm a virgin.

(Hastily adding.)

But I'm not a fanatic about it.

MARTIN

A virgin? You're joking.

JULIANA

(Teasingly.)

Am I?

MARTIN

I can't tell.

MARCO

Sometimes its better to guess than to know.

(Trying to change the subject.)

How is it that you come to be here?

(Giving MARTIN a really nasty look.)

JULIANA

(Driven to further embarrassment.)

I don't know anyone here, actually. I sort of crashed the party, if you want to know the truth.

MARCO

Well we knew...that is to say...the kind of people here.

Uh

(Aware that he is on dangerous ground again.)

You certainly don't look as if you belong here.

(He winces as it sounds more like an insult than a compliment.)

JULIANA

(Not taking it an an insult.)

These people...

(Looking around, shuddering, uncomfortable.) these people are all rather.....

MARTIN

(Completing the thought for her.)

STRANGE? You're right of course. You see its our party.

JULIANA reacts, starts to back away, having just confessed crashing the party to the host.

MARTIN

(Catching her hand, patting it reassuringly.)

Relax. You're more welcome here than anyone we've invited. Besides, MARCO and I were just

about to ask all these people to leave. Would you like to stay on a bit after they've gone,
(Winningly.)

We'd be ever so glad to have you.

MARCO is preparing some kind of protest but MARTIN, not to be stopped, rushes on.

MARTIN

You wouldn't be crashing a party then, you'd be the one and only invited guest!

JULIANA

(Smiling shyly, nodding her assent.)

I should very much like to stay after they go. I only live down the street. I felt lonely and heard the party. Until I met the two of you, I was feeling quite lost here.

MARTIN

(Waving his arm, encompassing all the people at the party.)

Everybody here is lost. That's the whole point.

MARCO

A man only needs to be turned around once with his eyes shut to be lost in this world.

JULIANA

(Her face lighting up with recognition.)

OH! I know who that is. Thoreau, right?

MARCO

(Pleasantly surprised.)

I'm quite amazed you've heard of it.

JULIANA

I am, or rather was, an English teacher. But that was a couple years ago. I still read a good bit though. It fills the long nights.

MARTIN

(Grabbing a whiskey from the tray the bearded woman carries.)

And what do you do now? If you're not teaching?

JULIANA

(With a rather strange look on her face.)

I've been...

(Struggling with the explanation.)

ill. Yes, that's it. I've had an.... illness. I haven't done anything for a long time. I'm recovering from an operation.

MARTIN

(Being gracious.)

You look remarkably healthy, my dear. And I can't help thinking that...

He is interrupted by the sound of someone bumping into a table, sending it crashing to the floor.

MARCO

(Worried about the furniture.)

The troops are getting restless.

Two obviously drunken men are exchanging insults, begin shoving each other. Others crowd around and it looks like a real brawl is about to begin.

MARCO

They've all turned to drunken lunatics! How will we ever get them out of here!

The two men are raising their fists, about to strike each other. Several people near them begin picking up chairs and bottles for weapons.

JULIANA moves closer to them, becoming frightened.

MARCO

MY GOD!THEY'RE GOING TO WRECK THE PLACE.

MARTIN

(Confidently.)

Leave this to me.

(Cupping his hands to his mouth, yelling loudly.)

ORGY AT THE BEARDED WOMAN'S HOUSE! ORGY AT THE BEARDED LADIES HOUSE!

Everybody at the party stops what they are doing, conversation ceasing, weapons and fists arrested at the point of finding their targets.

The bearded woman lowers her tray in puzzlement as she hears her name unexpectedly announced. The drinks on her tray crash to the floor. People look at her expectantly but she just looks confused.

MARTIN

(Still yelling.)

FREE DRUGS!

Suddenly there is a rush for the front door as the guests stampede out. Even the bearded woman, caught up in the enthusiasm of the mob, goes dashing out the front door.

There is much shouting and confusion and shoving as the party guests all try to exit through the door at the same time. Within seconds, they are through the door and gone.

JULIANA

(A bit taken aback at the violence and abruptness of their departure.)

My God!

MARCO

You can fool some of the people some of the time...and offer drugs to all the rest.

MARTIN

Exactly!

(Pleased with himself, turning to JULIANA.)

Well, my dear, now that the thundering herd, has thundered off, what shall we do? What would please you most?

JULIANA

(Eying the disordered state of the apartment, which looks like the interior of a crashed plane.)

Perhaps we could go out somewhere for a drink?

The suggestion makes both twins uncomfortable.

MARCO

(Speaking for them both.)

I'm afraid you don't quite realize the difficulties of that.

JULIANA

(Plainly curious.)

Do other people bother you a lot because of your....condition?

MARCO

Let us just say that we do not pass unnoticed.

JULIANA

Well, then if it makes it difficult for you to go somewhere, let's just have a drink here then, shall we?

MARTIN

(Delighted at the idea.)

An enchanting idea. Why don't MARCO and I try to set some of this mess to rights while you make us all drinks? I'm sure our departing guests left more than enough for us.

(Pointing towards the kitchen.)

There's ice and glasses in there.

The twins bend forward, MARCO catching hold of a chair, setting it back on its legs.

MARTIN scarcely takes his eyes off of her.

MARTIN

(As she begins to move gingerly across the debris on the floor.)

You're really quite lovely, you know.

JULIANA is almost at the kitchen. She blushes at the compliment but is obviously pleased.

MARCO is frowning at this interchange. MARTIN is almost ecstatic.

JULIANA

(At the kitchen door.)

You are so kind to say that. Actually, I must look awful. I'm still not recovered from my....operation.

She disappears through the door.

MARTIN stares longingly in her direction.

MARCO only has eyes for the shambles that was once their apartment.

MARCO

(Kicking a fragment of broken chair.)

Who's going to pay for all this? Why I let you talk me into this party I'll never know. Your parties always end up this way. You always give the kind of parties where the guests end up cutting the hearts out of small children and inserting stereo components in their chests just to keep the police on their toes.

MARTIN

You exaggerate! Hardly a person killed the whole night. It was as close to a coma as I'll ever want to be.

MARCO

I can't figure out what would be better, try to clean it up or just set it on fire.

LILIAN comes into the room from the bathroom, sees the suddenly empty room.

JULIANA steps into the room again, with an ice tray in her hands.

JULIANA

Where do I find the glasses?

MARTIN

The cupboard above the stove.

LILIAN puts her hands on her hips, staring at JULIANA. From the first, it is apparent that she does not like her.

LILIAN

Hey! What's the big idea! What happened to the party? Is it a raid or what?

MARTIN

(Sarcastically.)

Lillian feels cheated, as if something interesting happened and she was smelling her armpit and missed it.

LILIAN

(Balling her hands into fists.)

I'd like to cut your....

(Leaving the thought unfinished.)

MARCO seems uncomfortable at LILIAN'S presence.

MARCO

The party went elsewhere.

LILIAN

(Angry at not being told.)

Where?

MARTIN

To a weenie roast in hell. An event too good to be missed.

JULIANA

(Eyeing LILIAN with some distaste, speaking to MARTIN.)

Is she with you?

MARTIN

(Speaking quickly, not wishing for there to be any doubt)

With MARCO. She's with MARCO.

JULIANA

Shall I make a drink for her too?

The two women stare at each other with open hostility, taking each other's measure.

JULIANA

(A little too politely.)

What are you drinking, dear?

LILIAN

AIR. But white wine does me up quicker.

JULIANA turns and leaves the room, returning to the kitchen.

LILIAN comes over and sits down on the couch, grabbing hold of MARCO'S arm as she does, forcing both of the twins to sit down abruptly.

LILIAN

I want to know what the score is here! Was I supposed to leave with the rest of the crowd or what? You trying to replace me with tall legs with the baby ducks under her blouse or what? You giving me the brush off or what?

MARCO

(Conciliatory.)

Of course not.

(Rather depressed about it.)

I always honor my commitments.

MARTIN

(Positively gleeful at MARCO'S discomfort.)
Each to his own and to all a pre-paid good night!

MARCO

Oh shut up!

LILIAN

(Yawning, glancing around at the messy apartment.)

What a dump!

(Leaning her head against MARCO's shoulder, somewhat weary and in need of sleep.)

I've seen toilets with better decors.

MARTIN

(Staring at MARCO as he shifts uncomfortably against the unwelcome weight of LILIAN on his shoulder.)

Isn't this cozy?

MARCO

I can't seem to stop you, can I?

(Lowering his voice so it will not carry to JULIANA in the kitchen.)

What do you think you're going to prove? She is a nice girl after all, as I said, and not for us.

MARTIN

Perhaps I mean to have her.

MARCO

Are you mad?

(Upset.)

I won't let you make a...

MARTIN

(His face suffusing with anger.)

Who died and made you cosmic air controller? She likes me! I can tell. I don't need to...

MARCO

(Trying to shush him.)

Lower your voice! She'll hear you!

MARTIN

(Defiant.)

I don't care if she does.

(Lowering his voice nonetheless.)

I think I'm falling in love!

LILIAN seems not to be listening to what they are saying. Her eyes are closed.

MARCO

Impossible. Forget it!

MARTIN

Nothing. Is impossible. Nothing! I never believed in flying saucers until I accidentally goosed a waitress.

Marco

Can't you be serious? Stop being such an ass. She's a decent girl. She'll have none of you, of us.

Best to let it alone.

MARTIN

(Really furious.)

And suppose, just suppose, she feels differently. Am I so terrible that someone like her couldn't love me?

MARCO

(Shaking his head, almost sorrowfully.)

We've been through it time and time again, dear brother. Through the nights and the days, and always the answer is the same MARTIN, The things that are fine and decent....as much as we ache for them for the sweet love in them not for us, dear brother and you know I am right....not for us.

MARTIN

(Vehemently.)

Says you. But this is different. I tell you, she could love me!

(Desperately wanting to believe it himself.)

It could happen!

(Looking forlorn.)

I want it so badly.

There is a look of despair on MARTIN'S face. His toughness, his cynical humor now seem more like masks to hide his vulnerabilities than weapons.

MARCO looks at him affectionately, understanding him. He almost seems prepared to hug him but holds back.

MARCO

Only the sick or the crippled or the lame could love us as we are. Never someone as good as her. It's a tempting dream, but we are the children of nightmares and what we are born to we can never escape.

MARTIN

I have the strength for one more try. Before we get too old. Maybe I'll find my love and to hell with you.

(Almost in tears.)

I need it. I need to be loved. My soul will wither and die without it.

(Anguished, his head bowed.)

It's not wrong to want to be loved.

MARCO turns his head away, overcome with emotion, unable to bear the pain that his brother suffers. There is little he can say to comfort him.

LILIAN sits up straight, then rises to her feet. Her sudden movement breaks the mood that has come over the twins. They stare up at her.

LILIAN

I got a cramp. I got to go to the John.

MARCO winces at her crudity.

As LILIAN exits, JULIANA comes back into the room with a tray of bottles and glasses.

JULIANA

I'm afraid I'm not very good at making drinks. I...I.... never entertain, actually.

(Smiling shyly.)

You see you're my first men visitors since....well since my operation.

MARTIN

(Attempting to be light hearted.)

And what an honor to be first, lovely lady.

She blushes and sets the tray on the coffee table in front of the sofa.

JULIANA

(Looking around.)

Where is..

The bathroom door bangs open. LILIAN staggers out, her skirt hitched up rather high over her thighs.

Exhaustion makes her seem almost drunk.

LILIAN

You're out of toilet paper.

(Giggling.)

Guess what I used instead of....

MARCO

(Cutting her off hurriedly.)

Oh come and sit down, will you! Have a drink! Have a dozen drinks!

LILIAN walks around JULIANA, staring at the woman with curious and quite overt hostility.

JULIANA is bent over, unscrewing the tops of whiskey bottles on the tray, as the other woman goes by.

LILIAN

(Sarcastically.)

You're a first class piece, you are.

MARCO

Goddamn it, sit down Lillian!

LILIAN staggers over and plops down beside MARCO belching indelicately, her skirt still riding high on her legs.

MARCO

(With some heat.)

You might at least pull down your dress.

LILIAN

(Complying grudgingly.)

Maybe I'm protecting myself against rape. A woman can run faster with her dress up than a man can with his pants down.

MARTIN

(Coughing, eager to change the subject.)

I believe I'll have that drink.

JULIANA runs her hands over the bottles on the tray, is unable to make a choice.

JULIANA

There's rum, not much gin, I'm afraid and some vodka. I'm going to let you mix what you want. I can never seem to get the darn things to come out right.

The twins bend forward, shifting the bottles on the tray, emptying the contents into glasses.

JULIANA settles into a chair across from them. She crosses her legs demurely and regards the twins warmly.

Drinks are dispensed and they settle back into their chairs. LILIAN puts her head on MARCO'S

shoulder and seems to fall asleep.

MARTIN raises his glass to JULIANA in a silent, private toast, him to her. Marco stares up at the ceiling with his eyes closed, trying to shut them out.

The lights dim. MARTIN and JULIANA begin what is obviously a very intimate and personal conversation. The audience can not hear what they are saying.

They are entranced with each other. She leans forward across the table, taking MARTIN'S hand in hers. He strokes her face gently with one hand.

Their heads are close together, totally absorbed in an earnest and loving way in each other.

The lights dim, then go out.

There is a short pause to suggest the passage of time.

Then the lights come back on.

All is as before. MARTIN and JULIANA are leaning across the table, arms going around each other, about to kiss.

This tender moment is spoiled by the sudden stirring of LILIAN.

LILIAN

(Loudly.)

HEY! IT'S REAL GODDAMN LATE!

MARTIN and JULIANA startled, pull back from their embrace, the mood spoiled.

LILIAN yawns, then scratches herself indelicately under her armpit.

LILIAN

Let's cut out this crap and get to bed! I'm dead assed tired!

LILIAN gets to her feet, reaching back for MARCO'S arm. She looks at JULIANA with obvious contempt.

LILIAN

(To the twins.)

I just hope your bed is big enough for foursies.

MARTIN is outraged. Her crudity has shocked him past the point of reason.

MARTIN

(Screaming.)

SHUT UP! HOW DARE YOU SPEAK TO...

LILIAN turns on him angrily, backing away from the couch, until she is standing near JULIANA.

LILIAN

Listen you bastard! Don't tell me to shut up! I don't complain when you go for a queer! You don't tell me when to shut up! Understand!

JULIANA, white faced, slowly rises to her feet, now very uncomfortable and looking as if she would rather be some place else.

MARTIN

(Raging at her.)

You cheap little....

(Struggling to rise, unable to shift the resisting bulk of his brother's body.)

I'll kill you!

MARCO refuses to move, wanting to avoid the fight.

JULIANA has stiffened, her face anguished. She has one hand folded over her stomach as if

warding off a blow. There is a strange, betrayed look on her face, foreign to the person she is supposed to be.

MARCO seems the only one aware of JULIANA'S sudden transformation.

MARTIN

(With less vehemence.)

I'll kill you, I swear!

LILIAN

(Taunting him, hand on her hips, giving him a mocking wiggle.)

QUEER LOVER!

The meaning of the words slowly penetrates MARTIN'S consciousness. He turns to look at JULIANA, unable to comprehend.

LILIAN turns on JULIANA with sudden violence.

LILIAN

(Moving toward her.)

Show us your breasts! Show us your pretty breasts!

JULIANA

(Recoiling in horror.)

YOU HAVE NO RIGHT!

Shocked, the twins rise out of their seats.

MARCO

Stop it!

MARTIN can only stare wordlessly at JULIANA.

JULIANA

(Pushed to the breaking point, erupting into violence.)

Get out of here!

(She strikes LILIAN on the arm, the force of the blow almost spinning LILIAN around.)

GET OUT OF HERE, YOU goddamn WHORE!

(She spits on her.)

LILIAN wipes the spit from her face. She doesn't take that from anyone. She jumps at JULIANA, hands extended like claws, seizes the neck of her dress and with one heave, rips the dress down to the waist.

Then we see, that JULIANA is a man.

JULIANA shrieks, tries desperately to cover her flat chest with her arms.

JULIANA

(Her eyes on MARTIN.)

They'll grow! They'll grow! I've had shots!

LILIAN

GOD DAMN OUEER!

LILIAN'S revenge is not yet complete. Her hand comes up quickly, snatches at JULIANA'S blonde hair. The wig rips off, revealing a short cropped head of dark hair.

JULIANA turns and runs toward the bathroom door, clutching the remnants of her ruined dress to her. As she goes, LILIAN turns in triumph, holding up the blonde wig like the scalp of a vanquished enemy.

She tosses the wig at the twins. Unknowingly, MARTIN catches it in his arms.

LILIAN sees the look of utter horror on MARTIN'S face, the stunned look on MARCO.

She laughs.

LILIAN

GOD! THIS IS RICH!

(Indicating MARTIN.)

Look at his face! The dumb bastard didn't even know!

MARTIN folds his arms across his chest, hugging the wig to him. Suddenly, his body's racked with wild uncontrollable sobs.

The lights begin to go down.

MARCO

(Grieving.)

How I hated to hear the hope for love in your voice.

(Putting his arm around MARTIN.)

OH GOD, MARTIN!

(Holding him.)

I'm sorry, so very sorry.

The stage goes dark. END OF ACT ONE.

ACT .TWO

MARCO and MARTIN are sitting on the couch in their living room. It is the same room they were in before. Their bed has been folded up and tucked back in place. The details of the room are, in most part, unimportant.

On a table beside the couch, there is a neat stack of books, notepaper, and pens and pencils in a small vase. This is on MARCO's side of the couch.

On MARTIN's side of the couch, is an orange crate littered with overflowing ashtrays, empty glasses, magazines with the covers torn off and several empty cartons of sake, each with a bent straw dangling out of it.

The front door with mail slot is upstage.

MARCO is wearing spectacles of an old fashioned type and seems engrossed in a thick, obviously scholarly book.

MARTIN is idly leafing through a men's magazine, turning it sideways to look at the fold out section. He has a small paper carton in one hand, and is sucking on it dispiritedly, through a straw.

The sound of passing traffic comes up. The street is apparently beyond the stage toward the audience.

MARTIN suddenly tossed the magazine over his shoulder and looks out the window toward the audience. He waves his fingers at someone on the street.

MARTIN

A picture window is like a people aquarium. People fish.. See them swim in and out.

(He makes a paddling motion with his hand.)

My little carp! Beautiful fish. What a sweet little dorsal fin you have.

MARCO does not look up from his book.

MARTIN

Would you like a quick splash in my aquarium?

(He waves vigorously, trying to attract her attention.)

Look MARCO! Wave to the nice gentlemen, you two breasted finny wonder. Look at that girl's tits, MARCO They're incredible. You can see them coming for years, like a poet with promise or a street improvement.

MARCO grunts noncommittally, absorbed in his book.

MARTIN

LOOK FOR GOD SAKES!

MARCO looked up calmly, nodded vaguely in the direction of the window then went back to his book.

MARTIN

(Waving even more frantically.)

That's it, passion carp. Wave vigorously. It makes you bobble so deliciously.

MARCO

(Not taking his eyes from the book.)

She may read lips.

MARTIN

(Belligerently.)

LET HER. I hope she does. Read this...

(Exaggerating the mouthing of the words)

I WANT TO GRAB YOU BY THE...

(The thought is so overpowering, words fail him.)

MARCO

(Turning a page.)

She's not looking at you any longer.

MARCO falls to reading again and MARTIN sucks at the flat tasting carton of sake, The silence between them lengthens.

MARTIN

(Abruptly.)

Thirty years, MARCO. We have lived thirty years. Thirty, cruel, caged, unremarkable years.

MARCO

(Murmuring.)

Scarcely unremarkable.

MARTIN

(As if he had not heard the comment.)

A living testimony to togetherness. Brotherly love. The mystical nature of twinning. The transcendence of the spirit above the binding of the flesh.

MARCO turns another page.

MARTIN

I hate it. The idea is bad enough. The reality is bad enough. But the Goddamn name is worse.

SIAMESE. SIAMESE GODDAMN WHAT DO YOU MEAN JOINED AT THE HIPS TWINS!
It sound s like something that should only happen to Orientals who stake their ancestors at cards
and lose them.

MARCO seems unmoved by this witticism.

MARTIN

(Infuriated.)

Happy birthday, dear brother]

MARCO

(Absent mindedly.)

Uh, as you say whatever.

MARTIN rips the book out of MARCO'S hand.

MARCO

(Turning his head, not surprised, regarding his brother without visible signs of irritation.)

I am sorry...

(Very sincerely.)

Happy birthday MARCO .

MARTIN

(With open contempt.)

You're a forbearing bastard aren't you? When the sun is out, you 're practically a sunbeam. Don't
you ever get mad?

MARCO

I enjoy the days if I can.

MARTIN

Gloating cheerful swine, that what you are.

MARCO

(Reaching to take his book back.)

You might try to learn a bit of patience.

.MARTIN

(Snorting derisively.)

A bit of patience! A bit of good manners! A bit of maturity!

(Holding the book farther away from MARCO.)

You must develop a bit of maturity, MARTIN. Father often said that to me. Never to you

MARCO.

MARTIN stares bitterly at MARCO .

MARCO

(Laughing good naturedly, almost placatingly.)

WELL, after all, I AM the eldest.

MARTIN

(Made even angrier.)

Now how the goddamn hell can that be? How can that goddamn well be?

MARCO

We are twins but I was actually born first.

MARTIN tucks the book under his arm, preventing MARCO from taking it.

MARTIN

(Angrily.)

Just like you. Shoved me aside in your rush to get to the exit!

(The expression on his face changes. He laughs with delight.)

My older brother! Well, then, it is explained. It is proper that you should be the sober sides in the family. Thoughtful. Mother always said that. Father considered you thoughtful. Had great hopes for you, did father.

MARCO

(Reaching for the book again, getting a hand on a corner of it sticking out from under MARCO'S armpit.)

For both of us. Father had great hopes for both of us.

MARTIN

That's a lie. He had very little hope for us. Father was a terrible liar. A great pretender.

MARCO

He tried to cope as best he could.

MARTIN

(Appalled.)

Is that what you call hanging oneself by the neck in the garage? Is that COPING?

MARCO

(Yanking the book away from MARTIN.)

I said he tried to cope That's all any of us can hope to do.

He opened his book , found his place and began to read again.

MARTIN

So happy birthday again.

MARCO

Indeed.

MARTIN

Better still, happy wedding anniversary That's much' s better. Has any man or woman ever been as closely wedded as we?

MARCO

(Sighing.)

Not this afternoon, MARTIN. Tell me you're not going to do one of your things. It is too much.

Give it a rest. Really.

MARTIN

(Going on.)

Have any partners in wedlock ever embraced one another as unrelievedly?

MARCO

(His voice rising.)

I haven't the patience to listen to it all again just now.

MARTIN

Have a drink then with me, you sinister first born bastard! Let's send out for some paper hats and noisemakers. Let's send out for some powerful sake, goddamn it!

(Waving at someone on the street.)

Let's send out for some take out sex! Maybe a couple of American Collegiate cheerleader types with short skirts and pom poms over their hoodoos!

MARCO is silent.

MARTIN

How about it MARCO? You human log! You human insect! How about a week in bed one night with a cocktail waitress who's lived life too long and discovered only what's between her legs? Then ten cartons of horrendously bad sake to wash the taste of her out of our mouths?

MARCO

(Evenly.)

I don't want anything to drink right now...I'd like to finish reading this book.

MARTIN

(Disgusted.)

Oh my aching double ass!

He sucks loudly on his carton of sake.

MARCO

(Staring at the carton.)

Sake through a straw?

MARTIN looks out the window.

MARTIN

Here comes another of the little darlings. How I love looking at you. There are so many many pretty ones of you. So impossible to have you all, to even have one of you, and yet, I WANT ONE,

(Almost shouting.)

I WANT THEM ALL!

(Sighing.)

I suppose I shouldn't dream about it MARCO. Shouldn't imagine one of those beauties in love, Yes, in LOVE with me. Better to do as you do MARCO, Live my life in a book, follow lives lived out on paper and not worry about having one of your own.

MARCO

You exaggerate everything. You ought to be content with what you get.

MARTIN

I don't get love. HOW IN HELL AM I SUPPOSED TO BE CONTENT WITH THAT!

MARCO

We get sex sometimes.

(Teasing.)

You insist. Get cranky if we don't. Be happy with that.

MARTIN

(Waving frantically at another girl)

SEX! Speaking of sex! Did you see her MARCO? What a cheerful rump she had and so quickly gone. MARCO have you thought about women's rumps? I suppose in the beginning, the excessive curves of them were just a novelty, just an evolutionary mating toy, but over the ages, a sufficient number of them have been amassed.

(Sucking noisily on his straw as a counterpoint to his thought.)

Now they are a mythology, powerful. Infinite! All women's rear ends that have gone before drive you on to others yet to come!

MARCO

(Frustrated in his attempt to read.)

Stop babbling.

MARTIN

Women's rumps have an illusion of timelessness fostered by their regular, indomitable appearance.

MARCO pretends not to be listening.

MARTIN

The appeal of women's rear ends is the fear of death.

(Undaunted by MARCO's lack of reaction.)

I ought to be content just to sit here and watch them go flashing by.

MARCO

(Snapping at him.)

Then why don't you? And do it quietly.

MARTIN

After all MARCO, for one of my, or rather our, limitations, it is a mild possession, devoid of all risk. I can't do much more than look, now, can I? And with an image, there is no attendant danger.

He sucks very loudly on his straw, making so much noise MARCO can't ignore it.

MARCO

Where did you develop that extraordinary bad habit?

MARTIN

You mean sake through a straw? Why I developed it secretly of course, while you were off in a corner somewhere by yourself, gargling with cheap gin.

MARCO

I wish you wouldn't drink any more for a while. You know what happens to us both if you keep on drinking.

MARTIN

Not drink on our goddamn birthday?

MARCO

But we agreed to begin the party when ANNE arrives.

MARTIN

(Staring into his carton of sake.)

That's alright for you MARCO but I'm going goddamn crazy with waiting. I've got to drink or go mad.

MARCO

GO EASY, brother. You aren't doing yourself any good working yourself up into a state. Put the drink up for now. Please wait at least until ANNE comes. I'm as agitated as you are.

MARTIN

AS HOPEFUL?

MARCO

Yes.

MARTIN

AS TERRIFIED?

MARCO

Perhaps even more than you are. That's why I don't want you to fall asleep from drinking. When you do, I'll be awake in a kind of twilight in my soul. Thoughts scream at me at such times. I am unable to sort them out. I am terrified in the night as you well know and its a long time before I can fall asleep as well.

MARTIN

But I don't know. I never know! Why do I always fall asleep first? Drinking or not, I always fall asleep first. I would like to be awake while you slept. Just once. Just once! Perhaps then I could examine your secret face. I would like to know that I was conscious and alone in the dark.

ALONE!

(Angrily.)

I want to be alone on birthdays and at Christmas. At Easter and New Years. When everyone in the world wants to be with someone, I want to be alone. Do you understand?

MARCO

Is there anyone else who really can?

MARTIN

But I wonder if you really do? I wonder even if I really understand you. Sometimes I think we understand each other in the same way two corpses in a single coffin could be said to understand one another.

MARCO

(Shuddering, recoiling, almost losing his book.)

GOD! Your images are severe!

MARTIN

(Grinning impishly.)

That tore you away from your book, did it?

MARCO

(Staring out the window.)

Bizarre.

MARTIN for his part seems to enjoy the effect he has achieved.

There is a noise outside the door of their apartment. MARTIN alert, begins to rise, then falls back unable to singly move them both.

MARCO

(Rousing sharply.)

What is it?

MARTIN

Postman, I think. Come along.

MARCO and MARTIN rise. Joined at the hip, they move in practiced rhythm toward the door. They are angled in such a way that as one brother walks straight forward, the other must nearly sidle in that direction.

The mail drops through the slot in the door and lands in a heap at their feet. Acting as one they both stoop to reach for it. MARCO 'S hand comes up with the bundle of letters.

MARTIN

(Petulantly.)

Why do you always get to sort the mail? You damned octopus!

MARCO

(Startled.)

I didn't know it mattered to you.

MARTIN

Well it does.

MARCO

(Handing over the mail.)

After thirty years, we learn something new every day.

MARTIN

Oh Christ. My aching double

MARCO

True enough. And quite amazing when you stop to think about it.

MARTIN

Show me someone who's had every kind of sexual experience possible before the age of two....now that's what I call AMAZING!

They return to the couch and sit down, a somewhat awkward process.

MARTIN

(Pointing out the window.)

Look! There goes Mrs. BREWSTER. She never looks directly at us. She must have excellent peripheral vision. What do you suppose she'd do if I suddenly exposed myself?

MARCO

Oh shut up and tell me who wishes us birthday greetings.

(Taking some of the letters from MARTIN shuffling through them nervously, sensing another of MARTIN'S onslaughts.)

Here is one from our dentist.

MARTIN

She couldn't very well run to the police because then she'd be giving herself away. She'd have to admit that she sees us!

MARCO

(Holding out a birthday card, forcing a smile.)

Its addressed only to you.

MARTIN takes it, glances at it perfunctorily, then dismisses it.

MARTIN

Mrs. BREWSTER is dawdling. She's tempting me MARCO . I feel dangerous.

MARCO

Leave off, MARTIN , will you, for Chris sakes!

(Sorting frantically through the letters for something to distract him with.)

Here's a card from Dr. Bradley Seto. You remember him. He's that professor of Japanese who liked that short story I wrote about us. Remember?

MARTIN

(Not to be put off.)

What say? Shall I whip it out?

MARCO rolls his eyes, expecting the worst.

MARTIN

I think the old battleaxe would faint dead away. THEN she'd have to admit that she's seen us

when they ask her why she fainted!

MARCO

You must shut up!

MARTIN

You'd deny that I flashed her, of course. You'd tell the police I had blue dragon tattoos on it so it couldn't possibly have been me. They'd believe you. That honest, long suffering face!

MARCO

LEAVE OFF!

MARTIN

Do you think that Mrs. BREWSTER secretly desires to meet us, that she secretly welcomes an introduction to us, as we are?

MARCO sighs deeply.

MARTIN

Mrs. BREWSTER reminds me of someone. Do you want to know who? I'll tell you all the same.

Mrs. RANDOLPH . Do you remember Mrs. RANDOLPH ?

MARCO

(Without much hope.)

The butcher sends his wishes for our continued well being.

MARTIN

Mrs. RANDOLPH, was quite beautiful, wasn't she? How old were we?

MARCO

(Blurting out in spite of himself.)

SEVENTEEN!

(Wincing at the memory, he thrusts a letter at MARTIN, chuckling insincerely as he pretends he has just found something very interesting.)

And here is a hilarious verse especially written to us from cousin MICHELE. Shall I read it for you?

MARTIN

FIFTEEN. We were FIFTEEN when Mrs. RANDOLPH came to write us up for that scholarly journal. At least that's the reason she gave us for her curiosity.

MARCO

(Desperately going ahead.)

ROSES ARE RED RAVENS ARE BLACK IF YOU GIMME YOUR CHEEKS I'LL GIVE YOU A SMACK.

Their eyes meet, the nonsense breaking through their separate streams of thought,

MARTIN

(Raising one eyebrow.)

Did cousin MICHELE write that all by herself or did she have outside help?

MARCO

Got to be with outside help.

MARTIN

Edna St. Vincent Millay can rest quietly in her grave for yet awhile.

MARCO

(Hoping this bit of nonsense has served to deflect MARTIN.)

Now why don't you check out your half of the birthday greetings?

MARTIN

(With renewed vigor.)

Mrs. RANDOLPH was a married woman, wasn't she? Mother of two. Respectable. Most respectable. And how greedy to know what there was to know ABOUT US?

MARCO

She was mother's good friend. She was concerned.

MARTIN

She was hungry. HER BODY WAS HUNGRY.

MARCO

(Panicked.)

I don't want to think about it!

MARTIN

I knew right then, in the greedy arms of dear seducing Mrs. RANDOLPH, that we had a career ready made for ourselves.

MARCO

(Desperately.)

Enough!

MARTIN

(Caught up in the fantasy.)

We could have been the professional lovers of the most beautiful women in the world.

MARCO

(Shuddering.)

We would have had to look at their faces.

MARTIN

Beautiful faces. Don't forget that.

MARCO

I'd rather it went the other way around. The ladies of the night have less curiosity. Less sympathy. They've seen enough to believe that they've seen it all. They don't wince. Neither are they avid for the sight of us.

MARTIN

But they are greedy, all the same. All of them greedy, one way or another.

MARCO

But the prostitutes know how to laugh. They never offered us harm.

They relieved us if not exactly comforted us at least...they took us for what we are.

MARTIN

Oh! You defend them now do you. Well then, why is it you always complained about how vulgar they were and afterwards, you'd force us to take a bath until my fingertips shriveled up like prunes?

MARCO

I'd rather not talk about it. Nor am I interested in some sick fantasy about us being professional lovers. Would you really like to be left feeling bought and used? The way Mrs. RANDOLPH-made us feel?

MARTIN

Made you feel, perhaps MARCO . I was too busy having my jollies. Mrs. RANDOLPH was certainly abandoned for a mother twice over.

MARCO

I think we can agree that abandon might well be one of the qualities that lead to motherhood.

MARTIN

Glad to see that you haven't completely lost your sense of humor about our dear childhood seducer. But don't kid yourself MARCO , no matter which way the cash goes, we're still curiosities of splendid depravity. How lucky the woman who has a chance to bed a monster, a CREATURE of LEGEND!

(Sighing.)

Perhaps we should have stayed with the sideshow.

MARCO

I was willing. It was you that never wanted to.

MARTIN

Because you made a sermon out of our condition. 'Look at us you sinners and rejoice that you are not so afflicted. No matter how heavy the cross you bear, know that the cross we suffer under needs the strength of two men.

MARTIN looks at the door nervously, seems suddenly apprehensive.

MARTIN

I wonder what's keeping ANNE ? She should be here by now.

MARCO

It's early yet.

MARTIN

How early?

MARCO

(Looking at his watch.)

Six o'clock. Why don't you wear a watch?

MARTIN

I don't like time. It weighs too heavily. I can't stand this waiting. Damn it MARCO. I'm not going to wait for ANNE. I intend to have a real drink in a few minutes. Birthday party or no birthday party. I am sick and tired of this apartment, this room! This boring picture window!

MARCO

We could take a holiday if you like.

MARTIN

Why not? Why not Atlantic City Why not Bermuda or the Riviera? We could pack our despair into a four legged bathing suit. If you're going to be depressed, you might as well have a tan.

MARCO

If you like. But you know such crowded and public places present extraordinary difficulties for us.

MARTIN

Not if we learned to tap dance.

MARCO

What?

MARTIN

We could work up a little act.

(Making dancing motions with his arms.)

Dancing, songs and snappy patter.

(Making the buzzing noise of such instruments.)

You on the kazoo and me on the comb and tissue paper.

At MARTIN'S urging, they rise up from the couch and begin to dance madly about the room. It is utterly chaotic. They bump into chairs, are always hopelessly out of step.

MARCO , temporarily caught up in the madness, makes the sound of a kazoo. They stagger across the room, legs hopelessly entangled. They collapse in a heap on the couch. They are out of breath.

MARCO

(Breathing hard.)

Whee!

(Smiling.)

You're a fool.

MARTIN

If you don't count the expense....

(Breathing heavily.)

of the crutches.....we'd make our expenses and perhaps a bit more.

MARCO

Putting that sort of nonsense aside....and it is nonsense... are you sure you'd want to go through that sort of thing again? It would be like the sideshow all over again.

MARTIN stares off into the distance, painful memories spoiling the mood of fun they had just shared. He bows his head in sadness.

From off stage comes the voice of the carnival barker.

CARNIVAL BARKER THEY'RE ALL ALIVE INSIDE! SEE THE FREAKS! SEE THE FREAKS!

MARTIN lifts his head slowly.

MARTIN

Yes, of course. We'd get it all again at the beach. The looks. The startled glances. Who wouldn't notice two grown men walking the beach arms around shoulder and waist. That odd way we scramble about, one always scuttling sideways like a crab who can't find the damn beach, one always angled rump to rump like a link of sausages. CHRIST! If we're lucky if we're very lucky.....they might mistake us for flaming queens!

MARCO

It bothers you. Why do you pretend, most of the time, that it doesn't.

MARTIN

(With exaggerated theatricality.)

And now a song about two Siamese twins in a ball bearing factory.

(Bending his head as if taking a bow)

MARTIN, the handsome one, loses his bearings.

And MARCO, the ugly one, loses his....

MARCO

(Cutting in quickly.)

TEMPER!

MARTIN

We could dance the fandango.

(Putting one hand above his head in the manner of a flamenco dancer, snapping his fingers.)

I'll hold the fan and you can hold the dango.

MARCO

You see, it does bother you!

MARTIN

(In mock disbelief.)

Bother me? BOTHER ME? If you don't shut up, I'll sit on your arm. You always hate it when I sit on your arm.

MARCO shudders at the thought, turns to look at the window. He waves a greeting to someone in the street.

MARCO

(As if trying to change the subject.)

She seems a nice girl. She never fails to wave.

MARTIN

With a chest like that, she has no choice. If her bra could sing, we'd be hearing THE HILLS ARE ALIVE WITH THE SOUND OF MUSIC.

(Sighing.)

Still though she has a curious gleam in her eyes, I doubt it gleams for the likes of us.

MARTIN opens another carton of sake, puts a straw into it and begins to suck on it noisily.

MARCO

(Staring unhappily at the sake.)

Couldn't that wait until ANNE joins us?

MARTIN

She is dawdling somewhere.

MARCO

She's on a difficult mission in our behalf.

MARTIN

She's lingering over a cup of tea.

MARCO

She's finding out what the surgeon has to say.

MARTIN

Or sake in some dimly lit sushi bar, melting under the seducing glance of some rapist.

MARCO

(Insistent.)

She's carrying hope to us.

MARTIN

And suppose the surgeon says that it can at last be done?

MARCO

Hold to that thought.

MARTIN

(In a dark mood.)

Suppose the surgeon says we can be separated now but we can not both survive? Well?

MARCO

You know the answer. It would be murder. It could not be done legally.

(Patiently.)

We've discussed it the three times new methods were announced and new examinations made.

MARTIN takes a long sip of his drink. He acts as if it tastes bad.

MARTIN

But there are surgeons, certain doctors, men who would do anything for money. They must exist.

If one of us wanted it badly enough! Suppose the separation of nerves and small blood vessels would leave you alive and me a corpse upon the operating table. Would you have the courage to demand the surgery?

MARCO

(Lowering his head, uncomfortable.)

The game you play offends me.

MARTIN

Why are you ashamed to say that you'd demand your chance to live and damn all to the dead brother?

MARCO

(Unable to meet his brother's eyes.)

It seems a needlessly cruel thing to say. I don't see the need to put it into words.

MARTIN

(Angry.)

Coward ! You want me to say it ! You want me to be the villain!

MARCO

(Heatedly.)

Be anything you damn well please!

MARTIN

(Smiling.)

Alright I welcome the chance to walk alone even if your death is the consequence of it.

How's that?

MARCO?

Clear enough.

MARTIN

Can you be as honest?

MARCO

(Impatient.)

If it will make you feel any better. YES. DAMN IT YES. I would accept your death if it were the price of my freedom.

MARTIN

(With a bitter laugh.)

You see one can catch a shark on a line baited for goldfish. The truth comes out at last. The REAL truth between us.

MARCO

I refuse to talk to you about it anymore.

(Looking at the front door.)

I wish ANNE would get here.

MARTIN

(Also looking at the door.)

As if it would matter. We've waited so long for our ship to come in, the pier has collapsed.

(Somewhat anxious.)

Christ! What could be keeping her?

The door bursts open, startling the twins with its suddenness.

ANNE stands in the doorway, hesitating like a bird poised for flight at the first hint of trouble.

Her arms are full of packages. Although age had faded her beauty and put the first lines of age around the corners of her eyes, she would still turn heads when she walks in the street.

She moves forward into the room and it is then that we discover that she is lame, dragging one leg stiffly after her.

She seems to be steeling herself against some inner turmoil.

ANNE

(Singing, trying to appear cheerful.)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

MARTIN

(Rolling his eyes.)

Oh my aching double ass.

ANNE comes to the couch, puts the packages on MARCO'S neatly arranged table and bends down toward the twins.

ANNE

(Playfully.)

Can you stand the excitement of a well meant birthday kiss?

MARCO obediently kisses her on the proffered cheek, hesitating in the process, a somewhat lingering kiss that makes ANNE uneasy.

MARTIN, staring at the packages in dismay, kisses her in a perfunctory, abstracted way.

Then he looks up startled, as if he has just realized what he has just done,

MARTIN

A kiss? Why is it ANNE, you kiss us, but never on the lips? I've often wondered. Don't you ever kiss anyone on the lips?

ANNE

(Blushing, averting her eyes.)

Only when it's going to lead to...when it's...

She is unable to finish the sentence. MARCO seems embarrassed for her, shifts uncomfortably.

MARTIN, however, smiles impishly.

MARCO

(Stating it more as a question.)

You're late, ANNE.

ANNE

(Glancing at MARCO, nodding her head ever so slightly.)

I'm late because.... because your gifts weren't quite ready.

(Averting her eyes.)

But they're quite ready now.

MARCO reacts to this with a visible shudder, as if he had just discovered some dark and terrible secret only he and ANNE knew.

ANNE grabs up the packages, offering them to the twins. She comes around behind the couch, leans over the back, her head between theirs.

ANNE

Go on. Open up your presents.

MARTIN

(As if ready to fling the packages from him.)

What the hell are you playing at? Who gives a damn about any lousy presents! What did the goddamn surgeon have to say?

ANNE bites her lips and turns to look at MARCO for help but MARCO turns his head away.

ANNE looks ready to burst into tears.

MARCO.

Open your gift, MARTIN.

MARTIN

(Grabbing ANNE'S wrist.)

GOD DAMN IT! WHAT DID THE SURGEON SAY?

ANNE pulls her wrist free and walks away from the twins, in a state of great agitation. Her whole body shakes with emotion.

MARCO

(Softly.)

Don't be a fool, MARTIN .

MARTIN

I want to KNOW!

MARCO

Don't make it difficult for her.

MARTIN

Difficult for her? Whose feelings are we trying to protect?

MARCO

(Sighing.)

Hers. She can be hurt but we've got calluses on our souls.

MARTIN

Your soul MARCO , not mine, you cold hearted literary son of a bitch! You're content to sit all day reading your books and scribbling in your damned notebooks, but I GET DRUNK, you swine, because I STILL HURT!

MARTIN struggles to his feet, forcing MARCO to rise also. MARTIN 'S eyes flash back and forth between ANNE and MARCO. The twins move forward at MARTIN'S impetus, pursuing ANNE .

MARTIN

(Again taking her arm.)

Now tell us! In gory detail!

ANNE

(Throwing his hand off and bursting into tears.)

Oh God, I'm so sorry!

MARCO

(Putting a comforting hand on her shoulder.)

Don't cry. There's worse yet to...

(Letting the sentence trail off, his face transformed by some dark secret only he knows.)

ANNE

(Tearfully.)

The surgeons conferred, have consulted at great length...

MARTIN

(Relentlessly.)

Go on! Spit it out!

ANNE

It can't be done!

A silence settles over them all. ANNE turns her back on them.

ANNE

(Speaking to the walls like an actress reading a part outside her range.)

They said the new techniques can't apply in your case. The nerves, the network of veins and blood vessels, are too intimately intertwined.

She turns abruptly, her eyes meeting MARCO'S briefly, then she looks back at the street through the window.

ANNE

(Sounding strangely distant.)

I am so dreadfully sorry.

MARTIN

Intimately intertwined! It sounds vaguely incestuous.

The twins turn and go back to the couch. MARTIN grab up his carton of sake from the littered table, his face set in a vindictive line.

MARTIN

Well MARCO, ANNE is HERE. What say we put Carrie Nation to bed with a sake enema?

MARCO has no immediate reply.

MARTIN

I suppose I CAN have that drink now?

MARTIN sucks noisily on the straw in in the carton of sake.

MARCO

(Resigned to it.)

Of course. We'll all have a drink. A nice cocktail for each of us, if you can tear yourself away from your sake, MARTIN..

In tandem, the twins move to a small sideboard bar. MARTIN angles MARCO aside, so that he can make the first round of drinks.

MARTIN

(Being overly generous with the whiskey he pours in each glass.)

I've always wondered, when snakes get drunk, do they see us?

MARCO

(To Anne.)

And how is Doctor Cantrell?

ANNE

(Her voice a bit too loud, unnatural.)

He asked me....to tell you not to lose faith. Not to despair.

MARCO

Oh, we won't.

ANNE

(In the same manner.)

There are new developments surfacing every day.

MARCO Oh yes, science is moving forward by leaps and bounds.

MARTIN

(Having none of it)

Big advances in freak separation research! I can see the goddamn headlines even now!

(Sarcastically) I'll just bet!

ANNE

You're not to give up. The surgeon says it could happen any day now.

MARCO puts his arm around his brother.

MARCO

(With forced cheerfulness) We won't give up, will we MARTIN ?

MARCO and ANNE are suddenly very aware that MARTIN'S shoulders are convulsed with weeping. MARCO pats him awkwardly on the shoulder.

ANNE stands in front of them, frozen with pity.

There is a painful silence as MARTIN cries.

MARCO

(Handing out the drinks MARTIN has made with some haste) A toast! Give us a toast, dear ANNE !

ANNE

(Hesitantly lifting her glass, proposing)

To to the one

(Going deathly pale) To the two I love most in the world!

MARCO

(His hands shaking as he drinks.)

Thank you.

MARTIN wipes the tears from his eyes and belts down his drink in one gulp. He reaches mechanically to make another but MARCO'S hand snatches the glass away from him.

MARCO

Here, let me. I'll make this one especially for you.

The tremor in MARCO'S hands has increased as he mixes another drink for MARTIN. He sets the glass off to one side, his body blocking MARTIN'S view. He seems to be hiding something in his other hand. It is a small bottle,

MARTIN

(Drying the last of his tears.)

So you love the two of us, do you ANNE?

ANNE

(Mid-sip, chokes on her drink.)

You know I do.

(Taking the glass away from her lips.)

I always have since we were children, growing up together.

(She tries to smile but is not far from tears herself.)

MARTIN

(With sudden heat.)

But we're not children anymore. We're all quite grown up. Do you love us in that way, ANNE?

Do you love us in a grown up way?

ANNE

(Shyly.)

You mean have I ever thought what it would be like...what it would be like if we all were lovers.

MARCO

(Shocked.)

IMPOSSIBLE!

MARTIN

(Amused.)

More unlikely than impossible.

(Laughing.)

It would have all the delicacy of a Salvation Army band being raped by a flamenco dance troupe.

(Delighted at the conjured image.)

But certainly no more difficult than two elephants trying to mate through a knothole in a wooden fence.

ANNE turns away, holding her back stiff and unyielding.

MARCO

You go to far.

MARTIN

How could that be when I'm not going anywhere.

MARCO

With that as a destination, you've arrived.

MARTIN

(Looking at them both.)

Why not a marriage?

(Pleased at their shocked reaction.)

A trial marriage! Yes, of course, it would have to be. Nothing could be more a trial.

MARCO and ANNE stare at each other, sharing a guilty secret.

MARCO

(Strained.)

Marriage? Who said anything about..

MARTIN

(Slyly insistent.)

Oh but we must. It's too good to resist. I'd say we are faced with an insurmountable opportunity.

ANNE

Sometimes MARTIN you just talk too much.

(Angry.)

One gets tired of your constant teasing. Besides its not funny. Its just unkind words.

MARCO

His vocabulary is small but the turnover is terrific.

ANNE

(Still angry.)

It's amazing how he always manages to enter a room voice first.

MARTIN

(Unruffled.)

It is more blessed to be glib than to perceive.

ANNE

I don't know why we have to fight. We were always so close as children .

MARCO

As one gets older, its only natural that we drift apart.

MARTIN

Drift apart! Christ! We're under full sail!

MARCO

Oh leave it alone, will you?

ANNE

You still haven't opened your gifts.

MARTIN

(Not about to be distracted.)

Did MARCO tell you he was engaged to be married once before?

MARCO

Why that's absurd, I never

MARTIN

(Very pleased with himself.)

Oh yes. He was engaged to a girl with a wooden leg.

(Pausing significantly.)

But he got mad at her and had to break it off.

ANNE

(Not at all amused.)

You are so cruel!

MARCO

You're a goddamn...

MARTIN

(Continuing with the jest.)

You see he got mad because she said she loved him more than anybody else in the whole world.

(Smiling.)

He figured she was a comparison shopper.

(Abruptly coming back to his subject.)

But let's discuss our marriage. I fear it's doomed. MARCO is an agnostic and I am an atheist.

We'd probably have constant fights about which religion not to bring the children up in.

ANNE still has her back turned to the twins. Her stiff position mirrors her continuing outrage.

MARTIN

(Ashamed.)

Have I said something to offend you?

Her silence is an answer in itself. MARTIN shrugs and reaches for the drink that MARCO has mixed for him.

MARCO scoops up the glass, as if having a sudden change of heart. He deliberately keeps it out of his brother's reach.

MARCO

I....I don't know if you should have another. I don't know but what you're already dangerously drunk!

MARTIN

(To ANNE.)

For Christ sakes, I'm sorry. You know I didn't mean it!

ANNE

No, no. It's alright.

MARTIN

It's unkind and I'm sorry I said it.

(Ashamed.)

Lost hope makes one cruel.

ANNE

Actually, I'm glad you said it.

(Turning to face them.)

To face the truth is always a relief.

MARTIN

(Stunned.)

What are you saying?

MARTIN drags MARCO forward, propelling them ahead until they face ANNE squarely.

MARCO

I think she's said quite enough.

MARTIN

(Giving him a brief and angry look.)

Let her finish!

ANNE

(Self consciously.)

Will you pull the drapes? I feel the world peering in at us.

Together the twins moves across, the room and pull shut the heavy curtains.

ANNE moves about the room nervously, favoring her bad leg.

ANNE

That's better. I remember when we were children and I came to play, the parlor of your mother's house was always closed off against the sun. It was always cool and shadowy.

MARCO

Cool shadows in which we hid.

ANNE

Perhaps. But is it wrong to hide from all that bright, sunny viciousness and cruelty. We were happy then. Do you remember how we played? How we crept about the floor and pretended to be creatures of mythology?

MARTIN

I remember how it went!

ANNE

(Seized by the memory.)

I was always a princess in a magic garden!

MARTIN

(Enraptured.)

Always!

MARCO

(His love for her showing in his voice.)

Always.

MARTIN

(Remembering.)

And we were the enchanted monster!

ANNE

Yes!

MARTIN

Under the spell of the wicked witch!

MARCO

(Softly.)

Yes.

ANNE

(Putting her hands on both their shoulders.)

Waiting to be released from the terrible enchantment by the kiss of a beautiful princess.

MARCO

(Eyes closed in dreamy reverie.)

Yes.

ANNE bent forward to give and receive a kiss. They seem suspended in some twilight between a childish heaven and an adult hell. Just as the kiss is about to be given, MARTIN pulls back.

MARTIN

(Spoiling the mood.)

But we never turned into the goddamn prince! We stayed a monster, heart in hand, sitting there like a four legged mouse, forever ready to crawl up the right pair of pants but always ending up like a country that did not win in world war two.

MARCO

You can't even allow us one pleasant memory You have to ruin everything! Talking to you is like talking to a blank space on a death certificate.

MARTIN

Hah! If you wrote like you talked, nobody would read you.

ANNE

Perhaps we have had enough of childhood memories anyway. We are grownup. And that is the

heart of the problem.

MARTIN

What do you mean?

MARCO

(Nervously.)

That's enough. Don't say another word.

MARTIN

Damn it! Let her say what she wants to say!

MARCO

(Looking grim.)

I won't allow her to throw herself off the cliff.

ANNE

(Suddenly whirling around, wild eyed.)

I can't go through with it! I CAN'T!

MARCO gasps, looks extremely troubled.

MARTIN

(Sensing events happening beyond his ken.)

With what? What's going on?

ANNE

It's too late MARCO. Much too late. I fell off the cliff a long time ago.

MARCO

You must. You will!

MARTIN

(Upset.)

What's going on! What's between the two of you?

ANNE

I do love you MARCO,

MARTIN

WHAT! Oh I get it. YES! I get it alright. The two of you have fixed yourselves up behind my back. IS THAT IT?

MARCO

(Trying to laugh it off.)

ANNE's just having birthday joke.

ANNE moves to the bar, reaching for the drink that MARCO has made for MARTIN desperately needing a drink. She seems close to hysteria.

MARCO

(Terrified, ripping the drink from her hands.)

DON'T DRINK THAT!

ANNE gasps and looks at MARCO. Their eyes meet and they seem to share a common secret.

ANNE puts her hand over her mouth, looking as if she might at any second scream. MARCO glares at her, as if he could control her by staring her down.

MARTIN stares at them as if they had both gone suddenly and irretrievably mad.

MARTIN

What the hell is wrong with you two? Have you both lost your minds?

MARTIN frowns, staring first at one, then the other.

MARTIN

And why shouldn't she drink it MARCO?

MARCO takes the drink from her hands and puts it back on the sideboard. He stares fixedly at the glass.

MARCO

Because its grown warm. We've been telling fairy tales for so long, its grown warm. I'll make her a fresh one.

MARCO busies himself at the bar, his hands shaking so badly he almost drops a whiskey bottle.

MARTIN

Make me one too. That drink's the one you made for me and I never got.

ANNE

(Still on the ragged edge of panic.)

I haven't finished what I had to say.

MARCO

(Firmly.)

Yes you have dear. Besides, we're growing much too serious for a birthday celebration. Perhaps we should all get a little drunk!

(Giving her a withering look.)

It's just the thing when courage is needed. It'll bolster us all up!

MARTIN

(With suddenly renewed enthusiasm.)

Now you're making sense! Let's get toilet hugging drunk!

ANNE

Oh MARITN, you'll only get fuzzy and sleepy. You won't understand what I'm trying to say.

Marco

(Trying to warn her off.)

It's better that way.

ANNE

(Undeterred.)

No MARCO, I have to at least say it.

Grimly, MARCO hands them each a new drink. The warm drink intended for MARTIN and almost consumed by ANNE, sits prominently displayed on the bar. MARCO keeps staring back at it.

ANNE

(Uncertain.)

I think there's something you should know. ...before. . .before it's too late something you should know.

MARCO chokes on his drink, involuntarily spraying the air with some of his unswallowed drink.

MARTIN looks first at his brother, then back at ANNE'S strained face .

MARTIN

You're both acting strange.

ANNE

I'm in love with MARCO,

MARTIN

(Shocked.)

What? You can't mean it!

ANNE

Oh but I do,

MARTIN

With all that implies?

ANNE

That I want to sleep with him? Yes.

MARTIN

(Stunned, repeating the word.)

Sleep.

ANNE

Make love.

She stares at MARCO, who stands before with lowered head. He looks distressed. MARTIN shakes his head, staggering under the weight of the revelation, just beginning to understand the implications.

MARTIN

I think I get it now. The two of you have talked this over, haven't you. WELL HAVEN'T YOU!

MARCO

(Anguished.)

Gently, MARTIN, gently.

MARTIN

(Raging.)

Nights when I fell asleep first as I always do, the pair of you talked it over. Weighed the pros and cons! In loving goddamn consultation, you tried to work your way around.....around...GODDAMN YOU BOTH!

MARCO

This is hardly the proper time to talk about it.

MARTIN

There will never be a better time. Did MARCO tell you that he loved you?

(Turning the full force of his wrath on ANNE.)

DID HE? DID HE SAY HE LOVED YOU! THAT HE WANTED YOU!

MARCO

(Almost begging.)

For god sakes, let it alone.

ANNE

Yes. YES!

MARTIN

Do you mean it?

ANNE

I think I do, even if it does sound crazy. If I'm going to try to be sensible about love, I'd be incapable of it.

MARTIN

And have you tried to figure a way for the two of you to have your love, your MARRIAGE without me?

MARCO

(Struggling to control himself.)

Now MARTIN, who would be so foolish to discuss the impossible?

MARTIN

Impossible? Why impossible? Its been known to happen in cases like ours!

MARCO

(Sternly.)

Yes, impossible. Impossible for men of our sensibilities. For a woman of Anne's sensibilities.

MARTIN

Leave me out of that, MARCO. I wouldn't mind if ANNE didn't mind. But you'd mind!

MARCO

(Angry.)

YOU'RE GODDAM RIGHT I WOULD MIND!

MARTIN

Exactly. So where the hell does all this leave you, this new development? Where do the two of you go from here?

ANNE

MARCO and I are in love. That means...

(Uncertain what it means.)

..well, its enough for now to know that we are.

MARTIN

(With a bitter laugh.)

Just the two of you. Almost, I seem to be in the way, aren't I? I'll ALWAYS be in the way!

ANNE

I love you too MARTIN. But differently!

MARTIN

(With renewed bitterness.)

Oh, god dam it, YES. In a sisterly fashion! That's what you'll tell me.

(Throwing his glass to the floor, smashing it.)

CHRIST! Let's get drunk! DRUNK!

ANNE

(Reaching out for him, wanting to sooth his hurt feelings.)

Please dear MARTIN. Don't be so....

MARTIN

(Beyond consolation.)

Please dear monster? Please dear freak, isn't that what you mean?

(Almost hateful.)

I'm awfully awfully sorry I'm messing up your great and no doubt torrid love affair.

MARTIN pushes her roughly away from him and she bursts into tears.

MARTIN seems unaware of her sorrow. MARCO puts a comforting arm around her.

MARTIN

(Staring off into space.)

Yes. I can see how the marriage will work. You needn't wait until I fall asleep. Simply crack me over the head with a hammer.

(Laughing.)

I'll wake up the next morning with a blinding headache and a fuzzy spot on my head that will turn to jelly after a couple months of nightly poundings.

(Rubbing his head as if it had already been struck with a hammer)

I'd never wake up but I would have recurring nightmares. Sometimes I would dream that I was a tennis ball but mostly I would dream that the entire chorus line of a musical variety show was kicking my head in!

ANNE sobs hysterically. MARCO is unable to comfort her.

MARTIN at last becomes aware of it, but he is unrelenting, unable to forgive the great wrong he thinks has been done him.

MARTIN

(To ANNE.)

That's it. Get hysterical! I'm keeping you from your great love, right? Your precious, sneaking passion!

This last is too much for ANNE to bear. Sobbing violently, she flees the room, slamming the door behind her as she goes.

MARCO says nothing, his eyes closed. MARTIN stares after her, his eyes riveted on the door through which she has just gone.

MARTIN

(Very much ashamed of himself.)

I seem to have ruined our birthday party, haven't I? I've driven all our guests away.

MARCO

(Lifting his head, weary.)

No matter, MARTIN, Things will work out. Let me make a drink for you.

They move back to the bar. Taking the lid off the ice bucket, Marco puts a small handful of ice cubes into the drink on top of the bar that had been discarded. He hands the drink to MARTIN.

MARCO

(His voice trembling with emotion.)

Here's that drink I made for you so long ago. Swish the ice cubes about, let it cool.

MARTIN

(Listlessly.)

Shall we sit then and have our drinks?

(Glancing up at the window.)

I think I want the drapes pulled back first. Some light in this dull life of ours, if you don't mind.

MARCO

Of course not, dear brother.

They move as one to the window, pulling the drapes open, revealing the fall of night.

They stand looking out at the street for a moment.

MARTIN

(His face lighting up.)

Ah, the street lights are lit. People are starting to leave their houses. Going to restaurants. Going to call on their friends, Or perhaps to the theatre.

They turn around slowly and make their way back to the couch, settling down on it comfortably, staring out at the street.

MARCO reaches into the pocket of his coat, takes out a small gift wrapped package, hands it to MARTIN

MARCO

Here, MARTIN .

MARTIN (Tearing the wrapping off with his teeth, the drink still poised untasted in one hand.)
What's this?

The wrapping comes off easily.

MARCO

A small birthday gift.

MARTIN

Now how in the hell did you manage that without my knowing?

MARCO

(Shrugging.)

There are ways. There are ways.

MARTIN

(As the package is at last unwrapped.)

Christ!

(Closing his fist over it as if hiding it.)

A watch!

MARCO

You mustn't be afraid of time.

MARTIN

It's very heavy.

MARCO

Even so. Everyone has to carry it around with them. One way or another.

MARTIN

(Staring at his closed fist.)

Perhaps ...perhaps we could work it out somehow? You and ANNE . I mean.

MARCO

(His manner suggesting the opposite of what he says.)

Oh, yes, I think we can.

(Staring at the glass in his brother's hand.)

Have your drink, brother.

MARTIN

(Smiling affectionately.)

If I drink this, I'll get stuporous and then you'll pick it up in your bloodstream and get stuporous as well.

He prepares to drink.

MARCO

That's alright MARTIN.

MARTIN

But it's not fair that you should sit up awake on your birthday and listen to your drunken, swinish

brother snore away.

MARCO

It'll only be for an hour or so before all the alcohol in you.....all the....before it puts me to sleep as well. It doesn't bother me really.

MARTIN tilts back the glass, drinking deeply. MARCO watches the act carefully,

MARTIN

(Coughing.)

Gaaaaah! It's very strong tasting!

MARCO

(Ominously.)

I know.

MARTIN

I drink myself to sleep, MARCO, because I so desire oblivion. You know that?

MARCO

Yes.

MARTIN

And understand, MARCO.?

MARCO

Very well.

MARTIN

(Licking his lips, grimacing.)

That drink was much stronger tasting than alcohol is meant to be.

MARCO

Yes.

MARTIN

(Regarding his brother with wonder.)

And in this way, you'll kill us both? I never would have thought you had the courage.

MARCO

(Staring out the window.)

I've got more courage than you imagine. At least, I hope I have.

MARTIN

When did you decide?

MARCO

Some time ago. I decided that if this hope that the surgeon held out to us failed to come through yet another time, well then, I didn't want to go through it ever again.

MARTIN

And ANNE, MARCO? What of her? Aren't you supposed to be in LOVE with her?

MARCO

All the more reason. I love her more than life itself, enough to free her of an impossible love.

MARTIN

You astonish me more every second.

MARCO

She'll make out. She'll have what she wants someday....if she's strong enough.

MARTIN

It just doesn't sound at all like you dear brother. You, always so logical, so cold and reasoned, now lapsed into something almost mysterious. I confess, I'm amazed.

(Dropping the glass to the floor, staring at it.)

Have you taken this way out because you hated it all as much as I?

MARCO

(Shaking his head, remembering.)

There were pleasures.

MARTIN

I never found them.

MARCO

We were given the opportunity to know another human being more intimately than practically everyone else in the whole world.

MARTIN

Disgusting.

MARCO

It needn't be. At least I don't think so.

MARTIN

(Letting out a soft cry as he feels a heaviness starting deep inside him.)

Oh my God! MARCO ! I feel it already! In my guts! I....Oh Christ!

(Beginning to feel pain.)

I hope we don't shame ourselves!

MARCO

(Smiling.)

It doesn't matter.

MARTIN

(Staring out the window.)

Are the street lights getting dim?

MARCO

A bit perhaps.

MARTIN

(Seizing his brother by the shoulder.)

Tell me the truth, the goddamn truth!

(Weakening.)

You have hated me, haven't you?

MARCO

(Putting his arm around his brother.)

NEVER! I swear it! Only the condition in which we were trapped.

MARTIN

(His eyes beginning to glaze.)

So tired... seem so tired, MARCO. I'm.... slipping away. Oh Christ! Hold my hand!

MARCO takes his brother's hand in his as his brother begins to fade away.

MARTIN

(Dying.)

Now....we are legend.

His head slumps forward, his whole body going limp along side of MARCO .
MARCO holds the dead body of his brother.

MARCO

(As he too begins to feel the drug.)

Poor brother! You always hated it so much that you always fell asleep first.

(Growing weaker.)

But the truth is you only missed....

(Barely able to hold his head up.)

...a little more time to be lonely.

(With the last of his strength.)

Yes. Now we are legend..... when we would have preferred.....just to be men.

The stage goes dark.