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Doctor Anonymous

A Play By

Guy Fredrick Glass

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DOCTOR ANONYMOUS

by Guy Fredrick Glass

CHARACTERS

(In order of appearance)

EDWARD: *A straight psychiatrist in his fifties to sixties. Charismatic.*

MATTHEW: *A gay psychiatrist in his mid-thirties.*

JAKE: *Matthew's boyfriend; a gay activist in his late twenties to early thirties. Good-looking and assertive.*

DUDEK: *A self-hating gay man in his forties from a working-class background.*

JOHN: *Matthew's friend; a gay psychiatrist in his mid-thirties. A large, awkward man with low self-esteem. He is obviously and conspicuously gay.*

ANDREW: *A gay activist in his early twenties.*

MAN'S VOICE

SETTING

*Philadelphia. The prologue takes place in 1968.
The remainder of the play takes place in 1971-1972.*

ETC.

The play is to be performed without an intermission.

Doctor Anonymous premiered at the Zephyr Theatre, West Hollywood, California, March 29, 2014, with the following cast:

EDWARD	Barry Pearl
MATTHEW	Matt Crabtree
JAKE	Kevin Held
DUDEK	Richard Sabine
JOHN	Christopher Frontiero
ANDREW	Jonathan Torres

Directed by John Henry Davis. Set and light design by Joel Daavid; sound design by Chris Moscatiello; costume design by Shannon Kennedy; projection design by Troy Hauschild. Production stage manager was Laure Jamme.

Doctor Anonymous
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PROLOGUE

SETTING: Before the lights come up, we see images that tell us we are in 1968: television clips with stereotyped views of homosexuals, excerpts from "Laugh-In," archival footage of contemporary events. We hear popular music of the period. The images fade away and we are in Dr. EDWARD Bergman's Philadelphia office. A couch, a chair, a bookcase filled with books, a table, a door. Photos, an ash tray, a clock, a manila file on the table.

AT RISE: EDWARD is sitting on the chair, taking notes in a pad. Dr. MATTHEW Goldstein is sitting on the couch.

EDWARD

So. Let's hear a bit about your personal life.

MATTHEW

Personal?

EDWARD

That's what happens when you get as far as a second interview.

MATTHEW

I thought this was just a formality.

EDWARD

Now the real fun begins.

MATTHEW

They told me last week they were impressed with my credentials.

EDWARD

That was last week. *(Beat)* Psychoanalytic training is a giant commitment for you and for us. On the couch five days a week. Classes. Supervision.

MATTHEW

Which is why I'm prepared to devote myself one hundred percent. I really want to be one of you.

EDWARD

We just need to make sure we don't make any mistakes.

MATTHEW

Mistakes?

EDWARD

But we rarely do. Doctor...

MATTHEW

Goldstein. Matthew. Matthew Goldstein.

EDWARD

Goldstein, eh? We've got a Silverstein. That's a good start.

MATTHEW

Does that mean I get in?

MATTHEW laughs nervously, and EDWARD joins in. EDWARD stops laughing. MATTHEW continues, at first, to laugh, then abruptly stops.

EDWARD

(Suddenly serious) Not yet. *(Picks up and peruses MATTHEW's application; in a mock-German accent)* Very interesting. *(Without the accent)* Do you watch "Laugh-In?"

MATTHEW

Should I?

EDWARD

You won't be disqualified for watching TV.

MATTHEW

I guess I have watched it a couple of times.

EDWARD

Very good. Very good indeed.

MATTHEW

Maybe more than a couple of times. *(Beat)* Sock it to me, baby.

They both laugh. EDWARD makes a lengthy note in his pad. MATTHEW looks a bit alarmed. EDWARD looks up as if nothing has happened.

EDWARD
Med school?

MATTHEW
Penn.

EDWARD
Chief resident?

MATTHEW
Yes.

EDWARD
Born and bred on the Main Line. Gold stars all the way through fourth grade. A sweet old bubbe who thinks you walk on water. Very, very nice. But we kind of expect that, you know?

MATTHEW
Oh.

EDWARD
Those are not the kind of "things" that will make or break your application.

MATTHEW
They didn't tell me about any "things" last week.

EDWARD
You want to be a psychoanalyst, right?

MATTHEW
Doing well at anything is a question of answering the questions the right way.

EDWARD
It's a question of the truth. That is what psychoanalysis is all about. Sock it to me. (*Chuckle*)
Do you prefer Verdi or Puccini?

MATTHEW
Huh?

EDWARD
Verdi or Puccini? Who's your man?

MATTHEW
I don't—

EDWARD

Verdi or Puccini. What's your preference?

MATTHEW

My...?

EDWARD

You do know something about opera?

MATTHEW

Is that a prerequisite?

EDWARD

It's just that so few people nowadays, except those from certain backgrounds...

MATTHEW

Well, if you really want to know...I prefer Mozart.

EDWARD

You are from the Main Line, after all.

MATTHEW

They didn't like it at home.

EDWARD

Then where did you get it?

MATTHEW

Just picked it up, I guess. I just dabble in opera.

EDWARD

Really.

EDWARD stares at him, intensely.

MATTHEW

Is that good or bad?

EDWARD

I'm thinking.

MATTHEW leans forward apprehensively.

MATTHEW

Uh-oh.

EDWARD

About *(Takes a pack of cigarettes out of his pocket)* lighting up a cigarette?

MATTHEW

(Relieved) I've got the worst asthma in the world. I mean, I could go into anaphylactic shock and drop dead.

EDWARD

Nah. That would defeat the purpose.

*He puts the cigarettes down. They both laugh.
EDWARD snaps his fingers with an idea.*

Do you want to do something really fun?

MATTHEW

Sure.

EDWARD rises.

EDWARD

Let's trade places.

MATTHEW hesitates.

You want fun, you got fun. Plop down in my chair.

MATTHEW sits down.

Sitting in the driver's seat. It's what you always wanted.

MATTHEW pretends to put his hands around a steering wheel. He makes "vroom vroom" noises.

There are strings attached to sitting in that seat, young man. It's not just fun and games.

MATTHEW turns off the ignition.

There are people suffering out there. People who need my help. *(Dramatic pause)* People, dear Dr. Matthew Goldstein of the gold stars and the sweet old bubbe, who will need *your* help.

MATTHEW

My help. Does that mean I'm accepted?

EDWARD picks up the pack of cigarettes.

EDWARD

Have you got a girlfriend?

MATTHEW

(Coughs) Girlfriend?

EDWARD

A girlfriend.

MATTHEW

There's a girl I've seen a few times.

EDWARD

What's her name?

MATTHEW

Name?

EDWARD

She has one, doesn't she?

MATTHEW

Her name...is Ruth.

EDWARD

Just like Ruth Buzzi on "Laugh In." She must really enjoy watching TV with you.

MATTHEW

Oh yes.

EDWARD

Bet she's not into Mozart, though. Most women don't know their "Marriage of Figaro" from their "Lucia di Lammermoor."

MATTHEW

"Lucia di Lammermoor" is by Donizetti.

EDWARD

(Winking) I would say you're more than a dabbler when it comes to the finer things in life.

MATTHEW crosses his legs.

You are crossing your legs.

Huh? MATTHEW

You are crossing your legs. EDWARD

MATTHEW uncrosses his legs.

No, I'm not. MATTHEW

But you were. EDWARD

You...you were going to tell me about a case. MATTHEW

But you have told me so much more. EDWARD

I haven't told you a thing. MATTHEW

You've told me quite a few "things." EDWARD

(Gulping) Oh my God, I told you a "thing." MATTHEW

EDWARD
You have told me you are anxious, which, under the circumstances, is to be expected. You have told me there may be something you are attempting to conceal, which is not. And you have told me that...you may not be a candidate for this institute.

MATTHEW
If you let me in I promise I will never cross my legs again!

EDWARD
There is no girlfriend

MATTHEW gasps.

No girlfriend now. No girlfriend ever.

Of course there's a— MATTHEW

And the opera.
EDWARD

I...I've never been to one.
MATTHEW

You eat the stuff up!
EDWARD

I made it up to impress you.
MATTHEW

Come now.
EDWARD

I've led a very sheltered life.
MATTHEW

Don't play dumb with me.
EDWARD

Not once out of the Main Line.
MATTHEW

I look into the unconscious for a living.
EDWARD

I don't know what you're talking about.
MATTHEW

I think you know.
EDWARD

I thought this was a sure thing. Look at these recommendations!
MATTHEW

They're great, or you would never have gotten this far.
EDWARD

(*Rises*) What have you written in there? (*Crosses towards EDWARD*)
MATTHEW

Not so fast.
EDWARD

(*EDWARD tightly grabs MATTHEW's file.*)

MATTHEW

This whole thing is a mistake.

EDWARD

This was the best thing that could have happened to you.

MATTHEW

This is a nightmare. You are a goddamn...!

EDWARD

I've been called a lot worse than that.

MATTHEW

Let me see my application!

EDWARD

I had no idea you were capable of such heightened affect. Very impressively operatic.

MATTHEW

I'm applying to a training program, for God's sake. There's no reason to be treated like...

MATTHEW reaches for the file. They wrestle over it.

EDWARD

(Tenderly) You have been keeping an iron grip on things for such a long, long time. Hoping it would make the feelings go away. But they haven't, and they won't. Haven't you?

EDWARD suddenly loosens his grip on the file. MATTHEW clutches it.

Haven't you?

MATTHEW drops the file.

MATTHEW

(In a whisper) How did you know?

EDWARD

My son. You don't have to feel as if you're carrying the world on your shoulders.

MATTHEW holds back tears and turns his head away. EDWARD goes to MATTHEW and puts his hand on his shoulder.

I cannot accept you into the program.

MATTHEW

(Gasping) I can't believe this is happening to—

EDWARD

But if you are willing to change, I can take you into treatment. You have a personality disorder that is eminently treatable. You will be in the most capable hands in Philadelphia. Conversion therapy is the bread and butter of my practice.

MATTHEW

I have never not done well at something in my life. How will I face my colleagues, my friends? If there is some way I could audit, I would—

EDWARD

You really want this.

MATTHEW

I want it with all my heart and soul.

EDWARD

And you are a mensch. Anyone can see that. *(Beat)* It will be as simple as...getting a vaccine. And once it's all over, you will enter the program.

MATTHEW

Really?

EDWARD

Scout's honor. I will use you to inspire hope in other homosexuals.

MATTHEW flinches.

We don't have to use that word again if it bothers you. *(Beat)* Sexual inverts.

MATTHEW

Is that what I am, then? A condition? *(Goes to the door)* I have a lot to process.

EDWARD

Yes, you do.

MATTHEW

I want to go home and think about it.

EDWARD

You must think about it, Matthew, every minute of every hour, every second of every minute.

MATTHEW

I mean, before I give you my answer. *(Turns the doorknob)*

EDWARD

There can be only one right answer.

MATTHEW

Because, actually, didn't Freud say it was a normal part of human sexual expression?

EDWARD

Freud was our Moses, schlepping the Torah down from Sinai. But he was, shall we say, a bissel meshuggah. The man analyzed his own daughter!

He gets up from the couch and sits in his chair.

Let's start right now. Before resistance poisons your mind.

MATTHEW

Dr. Bergman...

EDWARD

Shhh... (*Gestures at the couch*) Say anything that comes into your head. Anything at all.

MATTHEW backs away from the door.

MATTHEW

No one ever told me I could do that before.

EDWARD

You're going to be okay. Matthew Goldstein. (*Picks up the file*) Just get your tuches on that couch.

MATTHEW hesitates, then lies down. LIGHTS DIM: Video of demonstrations. In silhouette, we see MATTHEW in therapy with EDWARD. Also in silhouette, masked protesters carrying signs, raising their fists, chanting. They peel off their masks and throw them into a coffin. One of them is JAKE. The scene changes to a bar, late at night. Dance music. JAKE appears on one side of the stage, MATTHEW on the other. MATTHEW approaches JAKE, and they begin to dance. LIGHTS FADE OUT.

END OF PROLOGUE

SCENE 1

SETTING: Dr. MATTHEW Goldstein's office. 1971. It contains more or less the same elements as Dr. Bergman's office, perhaps arranged differently. A picture of Freud hangs on the wall.

AT RISE: DUDEK, a patient, lies on the couch, staring at the ceiling. MATTHEW sits behind him, on a chair, so that the patient cannot see him, and takes notes on a pad.

DUDEK

Heard you just finished shrink school. Hope it wasn't in this crappy city.

MATTHEW

I was at the Philadelphia Institute of Analysis. But I left before finishing.

DUDEK

Hey, half a shrink is better than none.

MATTHEW

I'm still a whole psychiatrist.

DUDEK

Thank you for clearing that up. *(Beat)* So can I pay you half your fee?

MATTHEW

I'm seeing you on a sliding scale. I'm aware of your situation.

DUDEK

Yeah, I'm from the wrong side of the tracks. But do I still get to ask you a whole question?

MATTHEW

Fire away.

DUDEK

Why didn't you finish?

MATTHEW

(Pause) Theoretical differences.

DUDEK

Whoa. Shrinks practicing mind games on each other? Remind me to stay outta that neighborhood.

MATTHEW

Think I'll do the same.

DUDEK

You must be doing something right. This is goddamn Rittenhouse Square.

MATTHEW

Only for the last three months.

DUDEK

And you sound wicked young. 'Course for all I know you could be a hundred and five.

MATTHEW

Let's talk about you.

DUDEK

Didn't get a good look before you told me to lay down. *(Tittering)* By me, that happens a lot.

MATTHEW

Oh?

DUDEK

That was supposed to be a joke. But it's part of my problem.

(MATTHEW nods and makes a note in his pad.)

How does this thing work? *(Fidgets with the couch)* Ain't this one of them couches with magic fingers? They got 'em in a lot of motels in the Poconos.

MATTHEW

Mr. Dudek, it's not unusual to be nervous when you're telling your story to a stranger. But if I'm going to help I need to know something about what brought you in.

DUDEK

(Evasively) I...got arrested.

MATTHEW

(Makes note in pad) Tell me about—

DUDEK

Ever thought about moving to Florida? Sure, it's charming here when the snow's coming down on these cobblestoned streets. For about fifteen whole minutes. Then it turns into black goo. They don't call this Filthydelphia for nothing. City of Brotherly Love. That's a good one.

MATTHEW

So you have "issues" with Philadelphia.

DUDEK

"Have issues with." I kinda like that.

MATTHEW

But what you really hate is yourself.

DUDEK

Might not hate myself in Florida.

MATTHEW

If you hate yourself in Rittenhouse Square you will hate yourself in Florida.

DUDEK

I got a good reason to hate myself.

MATTHEW

Does it have anything to do with getting arrested?

DUDEK

(A startled grin) This is why we pay you the big bucks. But first you gotta agree that Philadelphia bites the big one.

DUDEK gestures.

MATTHEW

If it helps you uncover your feelings, I'll agree that Philadelphia...

DUDEK

Even Rittenhouse Square...

MATTHEW

Just for the sake of argument...

DUDEK

Bites the big one.

MATTHEW

Bites the biggest of the big.

They both laugh.

DUDEK

Doctor, you're okay.

MATTHEW

I hope so.

DUDEK

I can tell you won't fuck with my head.

MATTHEW

Not any more than I have to.

They both laugh again.

DUDEK

I shouldn't even be laying down on this genuine imitation leather. *(Tittering)* No offence meant.

MATTHEW

No offence taken.

DUDEK

I've got a tarnished soul.

MATTHEW

(Taken aback) Oh.

DUDEK

I don't want my tarnish to mess up your upholstery.

MATTHEW

Tarnish comes off. With cleaning
or with psychotherapy.

DUDEK

This stuff won't come off.
It's the real thing.

DUDEK

There's a foulness in me. Like roadkill, doctor. Only I'm alive.

MATTHEW

We can make it better.

DUDEK

We can't.

MATTHEW

If you believe that, why—

DUDEK

I need you to witness. The way I am. To confirm. The verdict. And to spit on me. Like I spit on me.

MATTHEW

Spit?

DUDEK

The last shrink said we had no superego. We were all id. Fucking and shitting and eating like amoebas.

MATTHEW

We?

DUDEK

What am I, an invertebrate? I'm a human being, aren't I, doc?

MATTHEW

You're a human being like everyone else.

DUDEK

Then you don't understand. *(Covers his face with his hands)* I'm like a vampire.

MATTHEW

Mr. Dudek. *(Puts down his pad)*

DUDEK

'Course I didn't come here to trash Philadelphia. Although believe me, it does suck. I came to tell you I am a...homosexual. There, I said it.

MATTHEW

A homosexual.

DUDEK

Heard of that, right?

MATTHEW picks up his pad.

Aren't you supposed to say something sympathetic? Like when somebody dies?

MATTHEW

I'm...I'm sorry.

He begins to write in his pad.

DUDEK

That's better.

MATTHEW

And you want to change?

DUDEK

(Relieved) Even better.

MATTHEW

If you want to, there might be a way...that is, there are people who do that kind of...

He doodles absentmindedly in his pad.

DUDEK

Doctor, you were flaking out for a minute there.

MATTHEW

I—

DUDEK

For every minute you flake I get a dollar thirty-two credit.

MATTHEW stops writing.

Based on the forty-five minute hour. Forty-five minute hour. Now that's a racket.

MATTHEW puts down his pad.

MATTHEW

Suppose I told you it was something to explore. Not something to condemn you for.

DUDEK

Eh?

MATTHEW

Suppose I told you there were new ideas floating around.

DUDEK

I'd tell you you shouldn't have dropped out of the institute.

MATTHEW

Suppose that's why I dropped out.

DUDEK

Didn't you take the Hippocratic Oath? Don't you want to help me?

MATTHEW gets up.

MATTHEW

I am going to help you. In the right way. *(Picks a book out of the bookcase)* Right from the Holy Scriptures. Sigmund Freud himself. Letter to an American mother. 1935.

MATTHEW, *Continued*

(*Reads aloud from the book*) "Homosexuality is assuredly no advantage but it is nothing to be ashamed of. No vice. No degradation." (*Closes the book and smiles*) Deuteronomy. Chapter twenty-eight. Verse four.

DUDEK

Finished with your bible reading?

MATTHEW

Well, I—

DUDEK

'Cause Siggie didn't know what it was like to live in my head. No living soul knows that.

MATTHEW

Don't you feel relieved I don't see you as being sick?

DUDEK

Doctor Goldstein, out of everyone I thought you'd get me. Especially you.

MATTHEW

(*Anxiously*) Especially me?

DUDEK

Being Jewish and all.

DUDEK

You are Jewish, aren't you? You can understand what it means to be spit on.

MATTHEW

Oh, yes, it's just because I'm Jewish.

DUDEK

I shoulda gone to Auschwitz. Jews are the chosen people. But fags, that I can understand.

MATTHEW

We don't take that approach here.

DUDEK

What do you mean?

MATTHEW

I try not to pass judgment.

DUDEK

I'm paying you sixty bucks an hour. (*Beat*) Forty-five minutes. And you're not going to tell me I'm sick?

MATTHEW

I'm not.

DUDEK

I need to be told the truth. Don't whitewash it. Spit on me!

MATTHEW

I'm not spitting on you.

DUDEK

Tell me the truth, asshole. I'm a piece of crap.

MATTHEW

I'm not spitting on anyone.

DUDEK

If I'm not sick, there's no cure. I'll have to live with myself like this.

He hits himself on his head with his fist, repeatedly.

MATTHEW

Mr. Dudek!

DUDEK

Give me a lobotomy, for Christ's sake! (*Begins to get up*) I'll bring my own ice pick.

MATTHEW

Please lie down. I'm sure we can—

DUDEK

Fuck you, doctor. If you had to walk a mile in my shoes, you'd have cut off your feet.

He springs up from the couch.

MATTHEW

Mr.—

DUDEK

You sure as hell ain't no hundred and five!

MATTHEW gently restrains him.

MATTHEW

I just—

DUDEK grabs MATTHEW's wrist and looks into his eyes.

DUDEK

(Grinning) I'd lie down on a goddamn bed of nails if I could get a piece of that.

DUDEK pinches MATTHEW's ass. MATTHEW pushes him away. DUDEK flings the door open. The picture of Freud falls from the wall and breaks. DUDEK exits.

DUDEK, *Offstage*

Life sucks and then you die. Still, on the whole...I'd rather be in Philadelphia.

Sounds of derisive laughter, fading into the distance. MATTHEW sinks into the couch as LIGHTS FADE OUT.

END OF SCENE

SCENE 2

SETTING: Later that day; MATTHEW's office.

AT RISE: MATTHEW and JAKE discussing the incident

JAKE

You're not hurt, are you?

MATTHEW

It fell on the floor. I cleaned it up hours ago.

JAKE

You could have gotten cut.

MATTHEW

I'm fine.

JAKE

You don't mind if I fuss over you.

MATTHEW
Doing what I do is not easy.

JAKE
It only looks that way.

MATTHEW
This is not TV.

JAKE
(*Smiling*) You just gave me one of those Marcus Welby looks.

MATTHEW
Sorry.

JAKE
It makes me weak at the knees.

MATTHEW
Oh.

JAKE kisses MATTHEW.

JAKE
How's that, doctor?

MATTHEW
I'm thinking.

JAKE
I mean, this is your office and everything.

MATTHEW
I'm still thinking.

JAKE
Freud was hanging on the wall until this morning.

MATTHEW
I think...I think I have to see more before I can pose a proper diagnosis.

JAKE
Might that involve a rubber glove?

MATTHEW
It might involve a little mouth-to-mouth.

JAKE

Let's call a cab.

MATTHEW

Well...I was thinking... (*Tentatively*) Let's spend the night here.

JAKE

Really?

MATTHEW

After all. He's shattered in a million pieces. He can't see a thing.

JAKE

I must be dreaming.

MATTHEW

(*German accent*) Tell me about it.

JAKE

You know, you would never have suggested that before. Not even a few months ago.

MATTHEW

I'm trying. You know I am. (*Bravely*) I even tried something new at work today.

JAKE

Like a new way of dusting off your couch?

MATTHEW

Like a new way of dealing with a homosexual patient.

JAKE

Oh, yeah?

MATTHEW

Like what we talked about the other day.

JAKE

You mean, you didn't try to make him straight?

MATTHEW

I had to think about it for a minute. Just kidding.

JAKE

Uh-oh. I'm calling Dr. Bergman.

MATTHEW
Don't even say that as a joke.

JAKE
And so how did it go?

MATTHEW
What?

JAKE
Your medical breakthrough.

MATTHEW
Let's just say I need more practice.

Offstage, we hear a soprano sing Butterfly's Act I entrance music.

That what I think it is?

JAKE puts his hand to his head.

JAKE
Forgot all about it.

MATTHEW
I'll have to reschedule your physical.

JAKE
He won't be here long. He's dropping off a cassette.

MATTHEW
He's always dropping off a cassette.

The music gets closer.

JAKE
Be nice. Don't forget, you dissected a cadaver together in medical school.

MATTHEW
Don't remind me.

JAKE
How they let you psychiatrists get a diploma is a mystery to me. You don't even know where the spleen is.

MATTHEW
What's a spleen?

JAKE
Oh God, the picture!

MATTHEW
He won't notice.

JAKE
I'll bet he does.

MATTHEW
It's not an opera. He won't even—

The door opens. JOHN, a large, ungainly man carrying a small tape recorder, enters, mouthing the words and acting out his own campy version of Butterfly. MATTHEW and JAKE applaud the "performance." JOHN goes, melodramatically, to the empty spot on the wall.

JOHN
My picture! (*Shuts off the music abruptly*) I practically broke a nail putting it up. But perhaps my initial intuition was right. The father of psychiatry is not what one wants to see when one is pouring one's heart out. (*Sighs*) Maria Callas.

He gestures to the wall, then puts his hand to his chest.

JAKE
Forgive us, casta diva. We had a little accident.

JOHN
He took it down.

JAKE
You're jumping to conclusions.

JOHN
Let him speak for himself.

MATTHEW
I liked it a lot. It's just—

JOHN

And I who gave away my Birgit Nilsson tickets to help you pick out your couch.

MATTHEW

Which was the perfect choice.

JOHN

Think so?

JAKE and MATTHEW look at each other.

JAKE and MATTHEW

(Together) We do.

JOHN

Eh bien. Still good for something.

MATTHEW

I'll help you furnish your office when you're ready to leave that hospital.

JOHN

"That hospital" is called Norristown State.

MATTHEW

It's not such a bad place.

JOHN

Not if you have schizophrenia.

There is an awkward pause.

MATTHEW

I'll go see if the waiting room is clean.

JOHN

I brought you my latest acquisition.

MATTHEW

It'll only take a minute.

JOHN

You did the same thing last time.

MATTHEW

I have to make sure there's plenty of Kleenex.

JOHN

We're talking about a rare pirated recording. The feds could barge in with a warrant and confiscate it.

MATTHEW exits.

I thought he liked Puccini.

JAKE tucks in JOHN's shirt.

JAKE

I have promised to deliver you one opera queen-in-training.

JOHN

Oh, cherie. I'm terminally single.

JAKE

You make it sound like a disease.

JAKE straightens out JOHN's posture.

JOHN

I bet he doesn't even listen to my tapes.

JAKE

Listen, Brunnhilde. I'll take you straight to Valhalla.

JOHN

Is this an offer to fly me to the Bayreuth Festival?

JAKE

This is an offer to fly you to a demonstration on Chestnut Street. There'll be lots of hot guys there.

JOHN

(Groans; sarcastically) Knocked off any police commissioners lately?

JAKE

Frank Rizzo will be mayor over my dead body.

JOHN

(Quivering) Quelle brute!

JAKE

You see how I carry signs in the Philadelphia winter? How I shout my goddamned head off? That's for you. And for everybody who has no voice.

JOHN

You should hear how voiceless Tebaldi has become.

JAKE

If we get someone in office who stands up for our rights, you might get a better job.

JOHN

(Shrugging) One pays one's Sam Goody bill at the end of each month, and that's all that matters.

JAKE straightens out JOHN's posture. JOHN slouches.

JAKE

But we're making progress. Slowly but surely.

JOHN

Yes, we are. A year ago you couldn't even pronounce "Elisabetta, Regina d'Inghilterra." Now you're humming it.

JAKE

Never mind, Cio Cio San. I'll find you a Pinkerton if it's the last thing I do.

MATTHEW

(Enters; yawning) Well, it's been a long day.

He opens the door for JOHN.

JOHN

Matthew, this is quadraphonic sound.

MATTHEW

We'll get together soon. Just like old times.

JOHN stiffly allows MATTHEW to hug him, then he gestures at the tape recorder.

JOHN

And Renata Scotto...she's positively divoon.

JAKE tucks in JOHN's shirt.

If the feds come, unravel the evidence.

JOHN exits. MATTHEW shuts the door.

MATTHEW

Hope you made sure his sideburns are trimmed.

JAKE

I just don't want him to be alone.

MATTHEW

He'll snag someone.

JAKE

I snagged you, my sweet doctor. Like an apple off a tree.

He reenacts this, and pecks MATTHEW on the cheek.

MATTHEW

Is that what I am to you? A fruit?

JAKE

There you go again.

MATTHEW

What do you mean?

JAKE

I mean the way you think. You won't set foot in any place that is frequented by gays, won't let me meet your colleagues, won't bring me to your family. But you are a great kisser.

MATTHEW

I'll come to a meeting. It's the next step in my... deprogramming.

JAKE

We can talk about it later. (*Kisses MATTHEW*) Right now I have a doctor's appointment. (*Gently pushes MATTHEW towards the couch*) But there is a meeting at Mystique next Saturday. You could help me make up posters.

MATTHEW

I'm busy then.

JAKE

But of course.

MATTHEW

I guess there's still a piece of Edward Bergman in here— (*Pats his head*) somewhere.

JAKE

Then what we need is an exorcist.

MATTHEW

I'll come to a meeting sometime soon.

JAKE clutches MATTHEW.

JAKE

You won't ever throw me out, will you?

MATTHEW

It's only a meeting.

JAKE

I can't go back to my family, you know. Not ever.

MATTHEW

If it's that important to—

JAKE

I can't go back to that place that fired me when they found out.

MATTHEW

Jake.

JAKE

I'm running out of money.

MATTHEW

Let's talk about something else.

JAKE

That piece in your head...

MATTHEW

All right. I'll undergo an Edward-ectomy. (*Winks*) They perform them now at Jefferson.

JAKE

Do you promise me?

MATTHEW

I promise.

JAKE

Will you say that thing I like to hear you say?

MATTHEW

Bey mir bist du sheyn.

JAKE

God, I love it when you talk dirty.

MATTHEW

(Sweetly) Yankl, Yankl, Yankele.

JAKE

Grrr.

JAKE leads MATTHEW to the couch and lies him down. The door drifts open. JAKE seduces MATTHEW. Long pause.

DUDEK, *Offstage*

Anybody there? *(Pause)* Doctor Goldstein?

DUDEK enters, disheveled and intoxicated, carrying a package wrapped in brown paper and a bouquet of flowers.

I brought you some... *(Sees JAKE and MATTHEW)* Jesus fucking H Christ!

He drops the package and bouquet, and quickly exits. MATTHEW gets up and rushes to the door as LIGHTS FADE OUT.

END OF SCENE

SCENE 3

SETTING: MATTHEW's office two weeks later.

AT RISE: MATTHEW is sitting alone in the dark. JAKE enters, and turns on the light. He does a double take when he sees MATTHEW.

JAKE

What are you doing in the dark? *(Pause)* Can't get a word in edgewise. *(Pause)* Bet you could handle a back rub, honey. Might be nice after a long hard day.

JAKE rolls up his sleeves and puts his hand on MATTHEW's back. MATTHEW shudders.

JAKE, *Continued*

Was that a sensitive spot? *(Pause)* I'll be more careful.

MATTHEW

It's okay.

JAKE

I know you—

MATTHEW

It's really okay. I'm not made of porcelain.

JAKE

Do you want me to keep going? *(Pause)* That a yes or a no? *(Pause)* Earth to Matthew.
(Pause) I'll take that as a yes.

*He takes a small container out of his pocket,
opens it, oils his hands.*

Don't worry, the door is closed this time. *(Snickering)* It's not like you're the first shrink in history who ever boffed a cute guy on his couch.

*JAKE begins to rub MATTHEW's back.
MATTHEW pulls away.*

MATTHEW

Not tonight.

JAKE

You usually love when I—

MATTHEW

(Sharply) Usually?

JAKE

What's gotten into you?

MATTHEW

I'm just tired.

JAKE

You sure?

MATTHEW

I'm sure.

JAKE

That's good. (*Kisses MATTHEW's neck*) I had a brainstorm that could revolutionize the porn industry. Hot, horny manic-depressive accosts inhibited, bespectacled psychiatrist. Bring in an eight-millimeter camera and start rolling. Let's put an ad in the Bulletin,

MATTHEW pushes him away, violently.

(*Gasping*) What the—

MATTHEW

Who do you tell when you go out?

JAKE

Out?...

MATTHEW

Who knows about us? About our...phoney life together?

JAKE

I—

MATTHEW

You put an ad in the Bulletin.

JAKE

That was a joke.

MATTHEW

That was no... (*Turns off the light*) I broke off with the institute...for you. I left my analysis...for you. (*Goes to the door*)

JAKE

It's locked, I swear.

MATTHEW

Who else knows you're here?

JAKE

Why would anyone know
or care?

MATTHEW

Did the doorman see you
go upstairs?

MATTHEW

One person saw us here already. And that was one person too many. (*Begins to shake*) Give me back my key. (*Beat*) I don't mean that.

JAKE turns the light back on.

JAKE

You haven't talked this way since you ended your "therapy" with that...I don't even know what to call him. That antichrist.

MATTHEW

Turn it off.

JAKE

You were in a bad, bad place. But I saw what you could become. I brought you home. And I loved you.

MATTHEW

Let me sit here alone.

JAKE

I helped build you back up from scratch. So you could do what you were meant to do.

MATTHEW

I need to handle this alone.

JAKE

Matthew, it's Jake. Don't you love me?

MATTHEW

(Nodding) And I am paying for...my love. I am paying. *(Picks up an envelope from the table)* Here.

*He hands the envelope to JAKE.
JAKE examines it.*

JAKE

The American Psychiatric Association. Embossed. Certified.

JAKE goes to open it.

MATTHEW

I've got it all memorized. *(Takes the envelope back)* The ethics committee. Someone filed a complaint.

JAKE

But you're so careful.

MATTHEW

They used the term "improper advances."

JAKE

Like something sexual?

MATTHEW

"Improper advances." (*Sarcastically*) Like the dirty movie you were joking about.

JAKE

I know this looks bad. But in case you forgot, you're as gay as a goose. There's no woman—

MATTHEW

It was not a woman. But that would have been better. Now what do I say? I live with a man. I sleep with a man. There goes my credibility. There goes my career. This is a disaster, total and complete.

JAKE

It's not. Because we will deal with it. Together.

MATTHEW begins to weep.

MATTHEW

There'll be an investigation. They'll send someone to review the charge.

*JAKE goes to him again, and this time
MATTHEW allows it.*

JAKE

You have so much going for you. So much.

MATTHEW

I'll lose my license. I'll never practice medicine again.

JAKE

It's all a mistake.

MATTHEW

It was a mistake for me to have seen him in the first place. It was a mistake for me to have treated him with respect. It was a mistake...

*From underneath the table MATTHEW retrieves
a previously opened package wrapped in brown
wrapping paper. JAKE takes a framed picture
and a card from the paper.*

JAKE

(*Reading the card*) "Here's a replacement for the picture I busted. You'll like looking at this a whole lot more." Ugh. (*Drops it on the table*) I don't even want to touch it.

MATTHEW

I've seen one or two before. I'm a board-certified homosexual. I'm even a board-certified doctor, for now. If it wasn't so twisted, it would be hilarious. Why, we'll probably laugh when it's all—

JAKE

You pushed me away.

MATTHEW

No.

JAKE

Pushed like you wanted me out. I never saw you like that.

MATTHEW

I didn't push you. *(Beat)* Did I?

JAKE

That piece of Edward is still inside you.

MATTHEW

I haven't gotten around to scheduling the procedure.

JAKE

You wouldn't take away my key, would you? *(Silence)* Would you?

MATTHEW

I wonder sometimes if what we feel isn't real. All the textbooks say so.

JAKE

We are not in a classroom. Look in my eyes and tell me you're with me.

MATTHEW

Of course I am.

JAKE

Bey mir bist du sheyn.

MATTHEW grabs him.

MATTHEW

I want to be with you. Forever. And I want to be myself. *(Beat)* I want to be the kind of doctor who helps people like me. Because I never had that.

JAKE

That's the Matthew I know and love.

MATTHEW

Maybe I'll just write my own textbook.

JAKE

Why don't you just start by coming to one of my meetings?

MATTHEW

(Reassuringly) Yankl...Yankl...Yankele. *(They kiss.)* No way am I giving this up.

There is a long pause. Finally JAKE speaks.

JAKE

Do you still want me to give you back my key?

BLACKOUT.

END OF SCENE

SCENE 4

SETTING: Edward's office; a few days later.

*AT RISE: EDWARD has just opened the door.
MATTHEW stands at the doorway.*

EDWARD

Let me get this straight. You want help with your relationship?

MATTHEW

I know you don't approve.

EDWARD

(Flabbergasted) I don't believe it!

MATTHEW

I've come to your door three or four times in the last few days. But I couldn't knock.

EDWARD

I don't understand.

MATTHEW

You and I didn't end in the best way.

EDWARD

You sure there's not some other explanation?

MATTHEW

You're the only one who really knows me. Really.

EDWARD

I thought I knew you. (*Looks at MATTHEW penetratingly*) This day has been chock full of surprises. (*Gestures to MATTHEW*) Come in.

MATTHEW enters.

MATTHEW

I know you believe there's a cure. But I didn't come to hear your spiel.

EDWARD

Very well. (*Beat*) Are you sure you're not putting me on?

MATTHEW shakes his head.

No ham radio? (*Looks outside the door*) No television cameras?

MATTHEW

If you'd rather I left...

EDWARD

No, no. I won't tell you about my hundreds of testimonials. Scout's honor.

MATTHEW

Good, I—

EDWARD

Not a word about how they call me the goddamned messiah. People living successful lives.

MATTHEW

These "people" have wives and children.

EDWARD

Thanks to me.

MATTHEW

What you don't know is that they leave their wives and children at two in the morning.

EDWARD

Not everyone is a perfect subject.

MATTHEW

The fallout from your office ends up in my office.

EDWARD

You make your living as a bottom feeder. You are far too gifted for...

MATTHEW steps towards the door.

Sit down.

MATTHEW sits on EDWARD's couch.

EDWARD sits on a chair.

What is his name?

MATTHEW

Jake.

EDWARD

The famous Jake you gave up your salvation for. (*Groaning*) This would be so much easier if it had been Sarah.

MATTHEW

Are you going to help me or not?

EDWARD

You know, some evenings I think I can see you.

MATTHEW

My office is right across the square.

EDWARD

I mean, see you sitting right here. And here you are. Do you remember your interview? I let you sit in this chair.

MATTHEW

Yes.

EDWARD

I have fantasized many times about you coming to see me.

MATTHEW

It feels strange to hear you say that.

EDWARD

My fantasies? You are not my patient anymore.

You are not mine. MATTHEW

Tell me about...your friend. EDWARD

Jake. MATTHEW

Yankl. EDWARD

(Surprised) That's what I call him. MATTHEW

We won't go anywhere you don't want to go. *(Nods almost imperceptibly)* EDWARD

Only for a minute. *(Lies down)* MATTHEW

How does it feel, comfortable? EDWARD

I won't be here long enough to get comfortable. MATTHEW

Of course not. EDWARD

This is not a session. MATTHEW

This is nothing like a... EDWARD

EDWARD quietly takes a pad and a pencil from the table and begins taking notes.

What did you say his name was again?

Name? MATTHEW

EDWARD

What's it feel like now?

MATTHEW

Like a cough drop on a sore throat.

EDWARD

(Nodding) You didn't need to suffer. I told you right off the bat.

MATTHEW

You gave me words to describe how I felt. Words I had never—

EDWARD

The detached father. The overprotective mother. It was all there.

MATTHEW

I believed I could change. I did everything you asked. *(Embarrassedly)* Even...

EDWARD

(Winking) Didn't know you had it in you, eh?

MATTHEW

I wanted, so much, to be...

EDWARD puts the pad and pencil down.

EDWARD

I want to show you something. *(MATTHEW reacts.)* Just relax. You remember my wife, Judith?

MATTHEW

Yes.

EDWARD

You'd better. You had dinner with her a least a dozen times.

MATTHEW

Uh...sure.

EDWARD flips a switch on his desk. We hear a machine turn on.

EDWARD

Take a look at these slides of our trip to the Grand Canyon.

We see a blank slide projected on the wall.

EDWARD, *Continued*

I'm dying to show them to someone.

MATTHEW

You keep a projector in here?

EDWARD

Only because I just had these developed.

MATTHEW

Huh?

EDWARD clicks a device. We see a scenic slide of the Grand Canyon.

EDWARD

What do you think of this?

MATTHEW

It's very nice. But—

EDWARD clicks. We see a slide of him and his wife at the Grand Canyon.

EDWARD

You were like a member of the family, you know. (*Clicks; another scenic slide*) And what do you think of this?

We see a slide of a sexy, naked woman. MATTHEW gasps.

How does that make you feel, Matthew?

MATTHEW

Feel?

EDWARD

This time we won't settle for five days a week.

MATTHEW shakes his head as if he's just woken up.

Freud saw his tough cases even on Shabbos.

MATTHEW springs up from the couch.

EDWARD, *Continued*

We'll nip the resistance in the bud.

MATTHEW

How could I let you get inside?

He jiggles his head.

EDWARD

Nothing that wasn't in there already.

MATTHEW

I came with a simple problem.

EDWARD

There are no simple problems. (*Calmly takes a letter off his desk*) You want me to contact the ethics committee.

MATTHEW

I...I...

EDWARD

"I want help with my relationship." Du machst mir meshuggah! What were you thinking I would give you and...and...

MATTHEW

(*Angrily*) Jake!

EDWARD

Couples therapy?!? I'm the only one who knows you. Who will ever know you inside and out. Can you say the same thing of...Yankl?

He goes to rip up the letter.

MATTHEW

(*Gasping*) The ethics committee!

EDWARD

The ethics committee. The ethics committee. I chair the fershtunkineh ethics committee.

He puts down the letter.

MATTHEW

You...

EDWARD

You know full well what you want.

MATTHEW

This is not what I want.

EDWARD

I'll give you professional courtesy.

MATTHEW

This is not at all what I—

MATTHEW goes to the door.

EDWARD

I can make this letter and everything that goes along with it magically disappear.

MATTHEW

But I—

EDWARD

How did you feel when I showed you that picture, Matthew?

MATTHEW

I refuse to get into it.

EDWARD

Don't tell me you felt nothing.

MATTHEW

I refuse to listen.

EDWARD

I refuse to take that as a response.

MATTHEW

I...I'm not sure anymore.

EDWARD

This is a no brainer.

MATTHEW

Please, I—

EDWARD

When was the last time you were offered something so valuable for absolutely nothing?
(Imploringly) My dear boy! Say anything that comes into your head, for God's sake.
Anything at all. *(Long pause)*

MATTHEW

You...were the only one who ever told me I could do that.

EDWARD approaches him. MATTHEW backs away from the door as LIGHTS FADE OUT.

END OF SCENE

SCENE 5

SETTING: Inside "Mystique" – a gay bar – several weeks later.

AT RISE: JAKE and ANDREW are hand lettering demonstration signs. Some of them say "Frank Rizzo for Mayor? Never!" and "Impeach Police Commissioner Rizzo."

JAKE

So this is your first zap. You're a zap virgin. *(Beat)* You haven't just come out, have you?

ANDREW

Oh no. I mean, I think I always knew.

JAKE

Then you're a bar virgin. This is your first time in a gay bar.

ANDREW

No way, I'm like here all the time.

JAKE

(Points at ANDREW's sign) "Gay is good." Make sure those words really stand out.

He hands ANDREW a magic marker.

ANDREW

Of course, my old man would go ape if he knew.

JAKE

What is it his business, if you don't mind my asking?

ANDREW

It's his business 'cause I still live with him.

JAKE

That's kind of sweet.

ANDREW

I'm still in school. I go to Penn Law.

JAKE

My...lover went to Penn Med.

ANDREW

So...you live with a dude. That...that's too bad. (*Blushing*) I mean, that's groovy.

JAKE

I'm not living with him now. For the past few weeks, anyway.

ANDREW

What happened? If you don't mind my asking.

JAKE

What did you say your name was again?

ANDREW

I'm Andrew.

JAKE

Well, Andrew, I decided it would be best to move in with a friend, for a while anyway.

ANDREW

That's a bummer. (*Beat*) Does that mean you're available? (*Beat*) 'Cause if you are, maybe we could...do something sometime.

JAKE

Six months is a long time.

ANDREW

Six months! Wow, that's like fifty years in breeder years.

JAKE

As they say, it ain't over till the fat lady sings.

ANDREW

Now you're talking my language. I am a total opera fanatic.

JAKE

And your father doesn't know?

ANDREW

Tell me about your lover. Does he have a name?

JAKE

I'd rather not talk about him.

ANDREW

I don't even know their names, usually.

JAKE

I'm trying to forget it.

ANDREW

Excuse me for saying this, but you really truly love him. The man with no name.

JAKE

You just met me five minutes ago.

ANDREW

In fact, it's like a love story in some old movie. The kind that makes you cry your frigging head off.

JAKE

Bullshit.

ANDREW

Hey. It's cool. *(Picks up a sign)* That's what we're doing all this for. I've got my life all planned out. First I want to get laid a whole lot. Then I'll hit thirty. Then I'll pick out a china pattern at Wanamakers. *(Beat)* Six months! That's like out of the Guinness book of records. Right next to the world's butchest dyke.

JOHN awkwardly stumbles into the bar. He is overdressed and conspicuous. JAKE catches sight of him.

JAKE

Oh, there's my friend. *(Waves to JOHN)* Hey John!

ANDREW

Who's that?

JAKE

The guy I'm staying with. Say, maybe you'd like to meet him. (*Calling to JOHN*) Come over here and meet Andrew.

JOHN approaches. His casual demeanor changes as soon as he realizes JAKE is trying to introduce him to a man. He becomes stiff and pretentious.

See, Kimba. I've brought you fresh meat.

JOHN

(*Awkwardly*) Bonjour.

He tentatively puts out his hand. ANDREW pulls away. JAKE takes JOHN's hand and firmly puts it back on ANDREW's hand.

JAKE

This is an opera queen. Say something in opera and impress him.

JOHN

I really don't know that much.

JAKE

(*Shaking his head*) The man is like a walking encyclopedia. (*Tickles JOHN's chest*) Don't you have a tattoo of Maria Callas on your chest with a heart and an arrow?

JOHN

Really, Jake.

ANDREW

(*To JOHN*) Did you catch Eleanor Steber at the Academy of Music? The high notes are starting to go, but she still like totally blows my mind.

JOHN

(*To ANDREW*) Her latest album...desert island material. Do you like Leontyne?

ANDREW

To die for. Did you hear the broadcast of "Aida?"

JOHN

Broadcast? I was there.

ANDREW

You go to the Met?

JOHN

All the time.

ANDREW

Neat. Maybe I can hitch a ride with you sometime.

JOHN

Hitch a ride? (*Condescendingly*) I sit in the grand tier.

ANDREW

(*Beat*) Well, it was...nice talking to you. (*To JAKE*) I'll go get some masking tape.

ANDREW exits.

JOHN

I really know how to clear a room.

JAKE

What the hell is wrong with you?

JOHN

He looks like he comes from money. I can't tell him I'm in standing room.

JAKE

He's a student.

JOHN

See, he's too young. (*Beat*) Why does this place seem so empty tonight?

JAKE

So we're finished with Andrew? Rizzo has cracked down on the bars. The man who said he'd make Attila the Hun look like a faggot. But most of the usual queens are here.

JOHN

He won't see you, will he? (*Beat*) Won't talk to you?

JAKE

Won't even return my calls. But it doesn't matter. I'm going to wash that psychiatrist right out of my hair.

JOHN

Oh.

JAKE

In fact, if he called right now I wouldn't even remember his name.

JOHN

I thought you'd be in really bad shape.

(We hear a siren.)

What's that?

JAKE

(Shrugs) Chestnut Street. What were we talking about? *(Chuckling)* You see, I've forgotten him already.

JOHN

Je t'aime, cherie. Tell me about all the subversive schemes you're cooking up.

JAKE

(Grinning) You don't really want to know.

JOHN

I asked you, didn't I?

JAKE

You're best off not hearing about it. Well... *(Looks around and whispers in JOHN's ear)* We're going to picket a psychologist who hooks penises up to electrodes. Claims he can turn you straight with a flick of a switch.

JOHN

Aversive conditioning?

JAKE

Medieval torture. But it's just a rehearsal for...the big event.

JOHN

The...

JAKE

American Psychiatric Association. At the Civic Center in May. Forget I told you. You're not...one of us.

JOHN

Last time I checked I was a card-carrying friend of Dorothy.

JAKE

I mean...you're not part of the Gay Liberation Front.

JOHN

(Beat) What do I have to do to join?

JAKE

(Taken aback) We could sure use a shrink to advise us.

JOHN

You should have told me.

JAKE

I brought it up a hundred times!

JOHN

Can't a girl change—

JAKE

You rat! You would never ever discuss this bef—

JOHN dismisses JAKE with his hand.

JOHN

Is Andrew a member?

JAKE

Andrew is a member. *(Smiling)* I thought he was way too young.

JOHN

Could I bring the Price recording of "Trovatore?"

JAKE

This is not a social club.

JOHN's face falls.

Bring the record and you can play it afterwards. I don't think anyone will mind.

JOHN makes a romantic operatic gesture, and slowly begins to exit. Suddenly, there is off stage commotion. JOHN stops dead in his tracks.

JOHN

What's that racket?

We hear sirens and car doors slamming.

JAKE

There are cops outside.

ANDREW runs in.

ANDREW

(Breathlessly) Somebody press the buzzer!

JAKE

(Shakes his fist) Goddamn you, Frank Rizzo!

BLACKOUT.

END OF SCENE

SCENE 6

SETTING: The next day. The stage remains dark. We hear the shouting and chanting of demonstrators, then a scuffle with police, and the sound of broken bottles. The sounds of protesters outside are drowned out by MUSIC.

AT RISE: Fade in EDWARD and MATTHEW, sitting together, looking at slides of naked women.

EDWARD

Does she excite you?

MATTHEW

I don't really feel anything.

EDWARD

Perhaps she's just not your type.

He changes the slide to another naked woman.

This may be more to your liking. Which do you like better?

MATTHEW

It's possible. Just possible I may be getting an erection. *(Beat)* Well, maybe not.

EDWARD

What about this?

EDWARD changes the slide to a naked man.

MATTHEW

Definitely not.

EDWARD

No? Well, then. I call that progress.

LIGHTS FADE OUT.

END OF SCENE

SCENE 7

SETTING: The gay bar; Stools are overturned, and there is debris on the floor. MUSIC PLAYS.

AT RISE: JAKE sweeps up debris with a broom and dustpan. He puts them down, goes behind the bar and turns down the music. MATTHEW enters, holding something in his hands.

MATTHEW

You left these at the station.

He hands a set of keys to JAKE.

JAKE

I thought you never wanted to see me again.

MATTHEW

John has no job now because of this. What were you thinking?

JAKE

I'm really—

MATTHEW

It's not every day I get a call to bail people out of jail.

JAKE

I'll pay you back every cent.

MATTHEW

You know the money means nothing.

JAKE

I broke my promise, I realize. It's just that...just that I didn't have anyone else to call.

MATTHEW

Oh?

JAKE

With that kind of money. There are lots and lots of people I can call, of course. But not...

MATTHEW

(Disappointed) Oh.

JAKE

These are yours.

JAKE holds up the keys MATTHEW just gave him.

MATTHEW

I haven't asked for them back.

JAKE

You might as well have.

MATTHEW

But I haven't. I'll let you know when I figure it all out. In the meantime, keep them.

JAKE

That's awfully big of you. I'll just put my entire existence on hold till I hear from you.
(Pause) Then maybe I can come home.

MATTHEW

Stay out of trouble, okay?

They look at each other. MATTHEW exits. JAKE moves out from behind the bar, and picks up the broom and dustpan. The protesters start up again. A pause. He drops the broom and dustpan and exits. DUDEK enters. He turns up the music. He sits on a stool, facing forward, and picks up a bottle of coke. EDWARD enters, carrying a briefcase. He looks around, then sits on the stool next to DUDEK, also facing forward.

DUDEK

Fuckin' can't hear myself think.

EDWARD

The music is very loud.

DUDEK

Fuckin' demonstrators.

EDWARD

Scandalous. The ruckus they make. Just look at these disgraceful flyers.

He picks up a flyer from the bar.

DUDEK

I did quite a few Flyers in the men's room last week. (*Shudders*) And to think they might win the Stanley Cup.

EDWARD

Next thing you know the paranoid schizophrenics will be marching for their "rights." (*Shakes his head*) Philadelphia used to be such a civilized city.

DUDEK

If it was any more civilized I'd fall asleep standing up. Can't even get a drink on Sunday in this hellhole.

EDWARD

Blue laws. They're meant to keep the order.

DUDEK

Too much order, if you ask me. Tell you a secret. I'm heading down to Lauderdale. First chance I get.

EDWARD

What's down there?

He fetches a pad and pen out of his briefcase and gets ready to write.

DUDEK

Palm trees. Piña coladas seven days a week, by the pool. And lots and lots of Spanish cock. Uncut and gigunda. (*Demonstrates the size with his hands*) I can't hardly wait.

EDWARD

Fascinating. (*Makes a note on his pad*) Tell you a secret. I'm actually not a homosexual.

DUDEK briefly turns to look at EDWARD, then turns around and faces forward.)

DUDEK

And there I was buttering you up like you was my next conquest. A mercy fuck now and then keeps the old plumbing working.

EDWARD

A—

DUDEK

You a cop or something? Writing me out a ticket?

EDWARD

I'm here to meet someone.

He puts the pad and pen away.

DUDEK

Listen Miss "I'm-actually-not-a-homosexual." Your piss stinks just like everyone else.

EDWARD

I'm looking for a fellow named Dudek. I understand one can find him here most afternoons.

DUDEK

(Suspiciously) Was that in a stall at the Bellevue-Stratford? I should've erased that.

EDWARD

(Turns to face Dudek) Are you Mr. Dudek? I'm Dr. Bergman.

DUDEK

Now I put two and two together. *(Turns to face EDWARD)* You're the shrink I talked to on the phone.

EDWARD

You are clearly a highly intelligent man. *(Beat)* Would you consider yourself a typical homosexual?

DUDEK

(Thinks for a moment) I'm probably better hung than most.

EDWARD

And why did you come to see Dr. Goldstein?

DUDEK

I heard he was an expert at treating people with my kind of problem.

EDWARD

I am an expert at treating people with your kind of problem.

DUDEK

I hope you do better at setting people straight than Dr. Goldstein. Some of us have been suffering for a long time.

EDWARD

You must live a life full of torment and anguish.

DUDEK

(Perking up) You got that right. *(Slyly)* Say, we here to talk about Dr. Goldstein, or you trying to drum up business for your own head-shrinking factory?

EDWARD

I am here in my capacity as a representative of the American Psychiatric Association...and I have a two-year waiting list.

DUDEK

I probably couldn't afford you anyway.

EDWARD

We may be able to work together in a way that won't cost you a red cent.

DUDEK

You said—

EDWARD

How would you like to make a contribution to science?

DUDEK

A shrink asking me for help. *(Beat)* What do I gotta do?

EDWARD

Come to my symposium. Just be yourself. That you are suffering from a painful condition couldn't be more apparent if you had a disfiguring growth on your forehead.

DUDEK

(Mesmerized) You sucked the thoughts out of my brain like a real Svengali.

EDWARD

It is likewise apparent to me that you wish to drop the complaint against Dr. Goldstein.

DUDEK

It is?

EDWARD

Then it's settled. *(Takes a card out of his briefcase)* Call me tomorrow morning.

DUDEK takes the card.

By helping me you can ensure you will never again be trivialized. Picture a room full of psychiatrists who will be hanging onto your every word.

DUDEK, overcome, falls off his stool.

DUDEK

I didn't know better I'd take you in back and show you a little gratitude in one of the stalls.

EDWARD rises.

EDWARD

Good day, sir.

DUDEK rises and goes to the door.

DUDEK

(Winking) See ya at the Merry-Go-Round.

DUDEK exits. We hear a scuffle outside, then cheers. EDWARD moves to a corner of the room and absentmindedly looks through his briefcase.

JOHN, *Offstage*

Get him in here.

ANDREW and JOHN help JAKE in. He has multiple cuts and bruises, and is a bit unsteady. ANDREW carries a camera which he puts down at the bar. JAKE falls into a chair.

JAKE

(Grinning, somewhat dazed) Did you get any good pictures of me?

JOHN

What you need is a glass of water.

JOHN gets a glass of water from behind the bar and hands it to JAKE. JAKE pushes it away and stands up. He is still unsteady.

ANDREW

Not even one day out of the slammer, here we are again at the scene of the crime, and you with your face all cut up, I mean, it's like totally—

JAKE

Insane. I know.

ANDREW

Outta sight! Man, this is better than Pavarotti hitting the high C's! (*JAKE grins.*) I'll get some wet paper towels. You look like a South Philly pizza.

ANDREW exits.

JAKE

What will you do about your job?

JOHN

Easy come easy go.

JAKE

How will you pay your bills?

JOHN

I'll figure... (*Beat*) Do you think he likes me?

JAKE

What?

JOHN

Mais oui.

JAKE

Losing your job was always your greatest fear.

JOHN

He said he digs this better than opera. Opera is my life. What do I do now?

JAKE

(*Shakes his head*) You're really far gone. (*Beat*) Where is he anyway? Obviously he got... (*Coughs*) ...stuck in the men's room.

JOHN

Obviously trying to tell me he wants someone with more money, or biceps or something.

JAKE

(Sighing) The two of you, like Carmen and Don José. Mark my words, by the final curtain he'll be swooning in your arms. *(Beat)* Damned if Frank Rizzo is going to get the best of me. Follow me outside, or feel sorry for yourself in here.

JOHN

But Andrew is—

JAKE

I'm not waiting for Andrew. I'm not waiting for anyone.

JAKE exits. ANDREW enters with paper towels. He runs out to try to catch JAKE. We hear off stage cheers. EDWARD takes some business cards out of his briefcase and puts them in a neat pile at the bar. When JOHN recognizes EDWARD, he does a double take. JOHN approaches him.

JOHN

Excuse me, sir. Have you got the time?

EDWARD

(Looks at his watch. gruffly) Five to two.

JOHN picks up a card.

JOHN

Mind?

EDWARD

It's what they're there for.

JOHN

You're Dr. Bergman.

EDWARD

Any fool can see that. I just put the damn things down.

EDWARD begins to exit. Then he suddenly turns back to JOHN.

(Smiling, sweetly) How would you like to have a chance at a normal life?

JOHN

Excuse me?

EDWARD

I can help you become a productive member of society.

JOHN

You can?

EDWARD

With psychoanalysis.

JOHN

Psycho...

EDWARD

...A, N, A, L, Y, S, I, S.

JOHN

You know, I think I may have read something about that. In the Reader's Digest.

EDWARD

(Beaming) I was quoted in the recent article "Could Sexual Deviants Be Teaching Your Daughter Gym?"

JOHN

On second thought, I was thinking of something that was supposed to make people feel happy.

(JOHN shakes EDWARD's hand.)

Dr. Bergman. I'm John Dwyer. Dr. John Dwyer.

(EDWARD retracts his hand.)

EDWARD

We rejected you. If you ever got a job it wasn't through my doing.

JOHN

I got a job all right. In fact, I got a fantastic job.

EDWARD

Remind me never to set foot in that hospital.

JOHN

I don't work for a hospital. I work for a... *(Looks around; sees camera at the bar) ...a newspaper. (Picks up the camera)* And I would love to get a photo of you, in here, for the next issue of the Christian Science Monitor. *(Pretends he's about to snap a photo)* You tell me about Matthew Goldstein and I won't send your picture in this notorious gay bar to the Associated Press.

EDWARD

Don't you need a little more light?

JOHN

(Taken aback) Huh?

Noise of protesters begins up again off stage.

EDWARD

I'm a bit of a photographer myself.

JOHN

You're not even a wee bit...shook up?

EDWARD

This will be the best publicity I never paid for. Let me show you a thing or two about that camera.

JOHN

Good God.

EDWARD

Want to see a queue that stretches all the way to Market Street?

JOHN

You sure think a lot of yourself.

EDWARD

I think a lot of the lives I save. I think a lot of Matthew Goldstein.

JOHN

Then we've got something in common.

EDWARD

If you thought much about him at all, you'd see he has a chance for a better life. And you'd leave him alone.

JOHN

(Puts down camera) Get out of here and don't come back. This is one place in Philadelphia where you're not welcome.

Off stage sounds of cheering. JOHN pushes EDWARD's cards off the bar.

EDWARD

(Shrugs) Those poor tortured souls will get to me somehow.

EDWARD picks up his things and begins to exit. A clock strikes two. More cheers.

JOHN

At two o'clock they were going to take off their masks and throw them in a coffin. I have always kept mine on for dear life. Thank you, Dr. Bergman, for changing my mind.

EDWARD

Dr. Dwyer, you are not wearing a mask.

JOHN

Yes, I am.

EDWARD

No, you're not.

JOHN

Yes, I am.

Sounds of cheering.

And now it's two o'clock.

BLACKOUT.

END OF SCENE

SCENE 8

SETTING: Later that day.

AT RISE: MATTHEW, alone, spotlit, lying face up on a couch.

MATTHEW

I am not gay. I repeat, I'm not gay. *(Beat)* I went through a phase. And I realize I made a mistake. I'm sorry if I hurt you, or anyone who thought I was something I'm not. That's what I'm going to say. I thought I loved you. But I was deluded. Now I'm ready to make up for lost time. There's a woman. Her parents go to the same temple as mine. We'll make lots of babies, and she'll stay home with the kids. Her parents are already planning the bris, which is pushing things ridiculously fast, don't you think? *(Beat)* After all, our first child could be a girl. I'll give up my office on Rittenhouse Square and open one that's more masculine in Bryn Mawr. I won't have to walk past the park on my way to the car. *(Scornfully)* It's brimming with faggots, especially at dusk. We'll go into the city now and then, but our lives will revolve around the country club. I'll be like everyone else. I'll be happy. And I hope you'll be happy too. Please don't call me at home. *(Beat)* Ever. Drop me a line, at my office, once a year, and let me know how you're getting on. But don't come after me in any way. And don't try to make me change my mind. *(Beat)* I am not gay. I am not gay.

Still lying down, he turns around. We now see that he is in EDWARD's office. EDWARD, dimly lit, taking notes, nods.

Are we finished now? There's nothing left to say.

BLACKOUT.

END OF SCENE

SCENE 9

SETTING: Several days later; the gay bar.

AT RISE: JAKE, alone, reads a letter. After finishing, he stares at the page for a moment, then stuffs it in his pocket. JOHN and ANDREW enter, arguing.

JOHN

It was the Italian version.

ANDREW

French.

JOHN

Italian.

ANDREW

French.

JOHN

One year of law school and he thinks he...Hullo Jake.

JAKE

If it ain't the La Scala sisters, toasted from Tuscaloosa to Trieste. Having a little tiff. I'll try not to interrupt.

JOHN

Don't interrupt.

ANDREW

We're having a little tiff.

JAKE

(Clears his throat) Perhaps I should ring the Metropolitan Opera, collect, and demand that Sir Rudolf Bing himself intercede lest the entire city of Philadelphia falls into a sinkhole.

ANDREW

Hey, this is a serious matter.

JOHN

Certainement. One homosexual's honor depends on it.

JAKE

You'd think that Joan Sutherland had cancelled her opening night "Madama Butterfly" from the look on your faces.

JOHN and ANDREW titter and wink at each other.

ANDREW

(Suppressing laughter) Joan Sutherland doesn't sing "Madama Butterfly."

JOHN

And if she did, you'd have to call it "Madama Butterball."

JOHN and ANDREW burst into hysterics.

JAKE

You queens have fun at my expense.

ANDREW wanders off.

Yo, Tristan. *(Pats JOHN on the back)* Aren't you glad I found you an Isolde?

JOHN

(Embarrassedly) Jake, he might hear you. We haven't even listened together yet to the Liebestod.

JAKE

(Smirking) By the way, I heard from that person you went to school with.

He takes the letter out of his pocket and briefly shows it to JOHN, then puts it back in his pocket.

Don't bother. He's not coming back. *(JOHN reacts.)* Don't feel sorry. Kind of funny, isn't it?

JOHN

(Looks intently at JAKE) You okay? *(Feels JAKE's forehead)*

JAKE

(Smiling) Never been finer.

ANDREW returns.

(To ANDREW) Aren't you marching tonight? We've got to drown out Rizzo.

ANDREW

We've got tickets to—

JAKE

You said this gave you a thrill that was better than Marco Polo. (*ANDREW shrugs.*) Then I guess I'm going to the rally all alone.

JOHN

Be careful, chérie.

JAKE

Careful? (*JOHN takes JAKE's hand; to ANDREW*) Take care of mon ami.

ANDREW

Like he really needs—

JAKE

Don't worry about me. When I go, it's going to be in a blaze of glory. Like Bergonzi, Pavarotti, Corelli, and Domingo all singing "Nessun Dorma" at the same time.

ANDREW and JOHN exit. JAKE pulls the letter out of his pocket, and reads it again. He crumples it in a ball, and puts it back. MATTHEW enters. JAKE senses it and keeps his back to him.

(*Contemptuously*) You might catch something.

MATTHEW

Jake.

JAKE

The rest of the world belongs to you. To you and all the others. Let me keep just this little piece.

MATTHEW approaches him.

MATTHEW

Jake.

JAKE takes his keys out of his pocket.

JAKE

I was going to dump these in the mail.

He holds the keys out in his hand.

MATTHEW

That's not why I—

JAKE

Oh, yeah? Then—

MATTHEW

You act like I'm some kind of—

JAKE

How am I supposed to—

MATTHEW grabs JAKE'S shoulder.

MATTHEW

Let me just—

JAKE

Take your hands—

MATTHEW

Turn around and look at me.

JAKE shakes him off.

JAKE

(Raising his voice) Get off—

MATTHEW

Why won't you just—

JAKE

Just don't do that Marcus Welby thing again. I've seen men's heads bashed in where you couldn't recognize them. But that—

JAKE holds back tears. MATTHEW puts his hand on JAKE's shoulder again and turns him around.

Go home to your...whatever. *(Pause)* You're about to say you made all that crap up. That is what you came to tell me.

MATTHEW

I don't want to hurt you.

JAKE

Isn't it?

MATTHEW

There is a woman.

JAKE

You're doing a favor for friends of your parents.

MATTHEW

Her name is Deborah.

JAKE

They must be pretty desperate.

MATTHEW

Putting her down won't—

JAKE

Make sure before you bring her to a Seder she knows how to read and write.

MATTHEW

She's a pediatrician.

JAKE

We'll see how long this lasts once she discovers her boyfriend is a—

MATTHEW

I'm not her boyfriend.

He takes a ring out of his pocket.

JAKE

What the...

MATTHEW

(Quietly) I have finally come out of the closet.

JAKE

You came here to tell me Dr. Bergman made you—

MATTHEW
He never made—

JAKE
Here to apologize. Here to—

MATTHEW

I'm here to tell you I was never truly a homosexual.

JAKE does a double take.

JAKE

Excuse me, I fucking met you on your hands and knees in the back room at Mystique!

MATTHEW

I was confused and vulnerable.

JAKE

You were horny, like any other faggot.

MATTHEW

You don't see how you used me.

JAKE

Used you? You threw yourself—

MATTHEW

You can fool yourself into thinking I did that of my own free will.

JAKE

It was you who had me fooled. I had no idea I was dealing with a psych patient when I put your cock between my—

MATTHEW silences JAKE with his hand.

MATTHEW

You disgust me.

JAKE

Well, friend, who was never truly a homosexual. Let's just say you managed a pretty convincing imitation.

MATTHEW

Let's just say you are fooling yourself by thinking you ever meant anything to me at all.

JAKE

Get away.

JAKE pushes MATTHEW.

MATTHEW

Believe me. I'm getting out as fast as my legs can carry me.

JAKE

Get the hell away. And don't ever come back.

MATTHEW grabs JAKE's wrist and kisses him.

MATTHEW

Yankl. Yankl. Yankele.

JAKE unlooses himself from MATTHEW.

JAKE

What the—

MATTHEW

I thought—

JAKE

Stop thinking, goddamn you!

MATTHEW

—that with more therapy...

JAKE

Is this what you call therapy?

He takes the crumpled letter from his pocket and hurls it to the floor.

People's lives are being ruined every day because of what that man stands for.

He grabs ahold of an empty Coke bottle at the bar, smashes it, and brandishes the broken bottle in the air.

The only thing that matters is keeping that fascist from becoming mayor. Only thing that is keeping me...alive. *(Runs out with bottle)* And I am going to the rally. Even if I am the only fucking one!

MATTHEW rushes to the door.

MATTHEW

No, wait!

BLACKOUT.

END OF SCENE

SCENE 10

SETTING: Dark stage; immediately after.

AT RISE: Sirens, then a phone ringing. We hear the phone being picked up.

EDWARD

(Abrupt) Yeah?

MATTHEW'S heavy breathing is heard.

MATTHEW

Hello.

EDWARD

Somebody there?

MATTHEW

Hello.

EDWARD

Who is this?

MATTHEW

I'm not...I'm not...

EDWARD

(Pause) Matthew? You do realize you're calling me in the middle of the night.

MATTHEW

You told me I could call...I could call you...

EDWARD

We're not used to getting calls this late.

MATTHEW

I'm sorry. I'll—

EDWARD

You didn't come this week. Not to any of your appointments.

MATTHEW

I'm...

EDWARD

I've been worried sick about you. I even thought about coming to your house. (*Chuckling*) And I haven't made a house call since— (*MATTHEW sobs.*) Has something happened? Where are you?

MATTHEW

I'm sorry. So sorry I woke you up.

EDWARD

(*Chuckling*) The older you get the less sleep you need anyway. Where are you?

MATTHEW

I think I need a session.

EDWARD

Where?

MATTHEW

I just left the bar.

EDWARD

I thought we decided you wouldn't go back to that place anymore.

MATTHEW

I'd like to meet you at your office.

EDWARD

This is no time for a therapy session. (*Beat*) Judith got a pie from Horn and Hardart's. It's apple crumb, I think. Let's have a midnight snack, the three of us. Just tell the doorman—

MATTHEW

I've got...

EDWARD

We could watch old movies together.

MATTHEW

...got to find him.

EDWARD

What's that?

MATTHEW

Have to find...

SFX: Sound of sirens.

EDWARD

(Panicky) Are you in some kind of trouble, Matthew? *(Phone clicks off)* Matthew? Matthew?

END OF SCENE

SCENE 11

SETTING: The rally; then a few days later at MATTHEW's office.

AT RISE: In dim lighting, we hear jolly operatic music. JOHN and ANDREW, laughing, cross the stage. JOHN is dressed in a cape. Masked protesters, carrying signs, angrily raise their fists, chant and circle around a coffin. The chanting grows louder, rhythmic, more insistent. The protesters peel off their masks and throw them into the coffin. Sirens, then sounds of a car crash. Music changes to Siegfried's Funeral Music, by Wagner. JAKE, carrying a protest sign, climbs into the coffin. As the coffin is removed from the stage by the protesters, MATTHEW enters. MUSIC/LIGHTS OUT.

LIGHTS UP on MATTHEW's office. Several days have passed. ANDREW presents a box he is holding to MATTHEW.

ANDREW

...so like I said, I'm sorry to meet you under these circumstances.

ANDREW passes the box to MATTHEW.

John asked me to give this to you.

MATTHEW

Where is he?

ANDREW

Right outside. *(Pause)* Jake was a really cool guy.

MATTHEW

Yes, he was.

ANDREW

He could run away from the fuzz...with the best of them.

MATTHEW

Yes, he could.

ANDREW

Jesus, he had nine lives. Though it didn't help the other night.

MATTHEW

No.

ANDREW

Man, I'd be all freaked out.

MATTHEW

I'll be all—

ANDREW

Running through the streets with a broken bottle. Who would've thought he'd get hit by a car?

MATTHEW

Who would have?

ANDREW

Not even a police car. Just some old lady.

MATTHEW

I didn't—

ANDREW

He thought you were totally awesome. I mean, he loved you a lot.

MATTHEW

Thanks.

ANDREW

You hear all kinds of shit. You're a queer shrink, after all. I'm going to be a queer lawyer. I mean, I'm already queer, but I'm going to be a lawyer. *(Pause)* You're like an inspiration. I just want you to know.

JOHN enters, wearing his coat. JOHN and ANDREW somberly acknowledge each other.

ANDREW, *Continued*

Peace.

ANDREW makes a peace sign, then embarrassedly slinks out. JOHN mechanically embraces MATTHEW.

MATTHEW

I'm sorry we haven't—

JOHN

You've been hard to reach.

MATTHEW

It's all my—

JOHN

Not a question of who's at—

MATTHEW

It's been months. (*Referring to ANDREW*) He is cute. I should have congratulated—

JOHN

There's nothing to—

MATTHEW

But I thought things were moving in—

JOHN

He's not attracted to me.

MATTHEW

John.

JOHN

That's the story of my life. Like you and your mahogany furniture.

MATTHEW

It's actually just walnut.

JOHN

The big fancy office with the vue panoramique of the square.

MATTHEW

Actually, it's walnut veneer.

JOHN chuckles, rudely, and turns to leave.

JOHN

We'll see you at the memorial service. That is, if you debase yourself by showing up.

MATTHEW

Whoa.

JOHN covers his mouth.

You never spoke to me like that.

JOHN

I don't have the slightest clue of what just happened.

MATTHEW

You were always...

JOHN

...just a silly opera queen who brought you cassettes you never bothered to listen to?

JOHN

Although some of them were
extreme rarities that a lot of people
would have given their eye teeth for.

MATTHEW

If you feel that way them
maybe you'd better...

*JOHN begins to exit. MATTHEW stops him.
JOHN freezes.*

JOHN

(Angrily) You don't approve of me dating a man.

MATTHEW flinches.

You believe in the house with the white picket fence and the two point two kids.

MATTHEW

That would never work for you.

JOHN

(Snidely) Too far gone, huh?

*JOHN looks at himself as if he suddenly had
magical powers.*

MATTHEW

John. I'm your best friend.

JOHN

Best friend, hah. We met on the first day of class. You came out to me holding a gall bladder, for God's sake. This is not what I expected.

MATTHEW

Not what you expected. Not what anyone expected. Even Andrew expects something.

JOHN

Andrew?

MATTHEW

He said I inspire him. Do you know how many people I can't let down? You. Jake. Edward. About a hundred patients.

JOHN

Give it up, Matthew. You're only—

MATTHEW

(Shakes his head) I am a doctor. I must be more than human.

JOHN

I don't have a private practice on Rittenhouse Square. I used to work in a stupid state hospital. Now I don't even have that.

MATTHEW

We need to talk.

MATTHEW takes off JOHN's coat. JOHN looks at the clock.

JOHN

(Sighing) There must be an opera about to start somewhere I could go to.

MATTHEW tosses JOHN's coat on the couch.

But...well, whatever it is I probably missed the first act anyway.

MATTHEW shoots him a look.

You know I'm not good at anything but going to the opera.

MATTHEW

I know you're smarter than all get out. I know you could have your own private practice with your eyes closed.

JOHN

What are you, a psychiatrist or something?

MATTHEW

I even know you don't speak French. (*Grinning*) Not one word.

JOHN

Sacre bleu! Don't tell Andrew.

MATTHEW

Andrew? I thought you and he—

JOHN

(*Impatiently*) You're no good at being straight. Just so you know.

MATTHEW

I may not be, but—

JOHN

I think there actually is a Met broadcast at two.

MATTHEW

You know, I'm not sure I'm ready to be gay.

JOHN

Cross my heart and hope to—

MATTHEW

How could I have sent that letter? How could I have...?

MATTHEW begins to cry. JOHN embraces him.

If only I had stopped him. If only I had never let him... (*Pause*)

JOHN

What do you know about zaps?

MATTHEW

Zaps?

JOHN

There will be more shrinks in Philadelphia than in Vienna.

MATTHEW

I'm not—

JOHN

The crème de la crème. The pièce de résistance. Well, I can't speak two words of French, but...this is what it was all leading up to. *(Beat)* Come to our meeting.

MATTHEW

What kind of meeting?

JOHN

Do it for Jake, if nothing else.

MATTHEW

You mean you're zapping the APA? You're zapping Edward's symposium?

JOHN

That man has you hypnotized like a cobra.

MATTHEW

(Terrified) I'm supposed to participate!

JOHN

I'll give you the information. *(Walks to the couch and goes to open up the pocket of his coat)*
You can make up to me for being such a...a...grande douche. *(Retrieves a flyer from his coat)*

MATTHEW

I'll take a look at it later.

JOHN

It's on Tuesday at seven.

MATTHEW

I don't know.

JOHN

Well, are you coming or not?

MATTHEW fails to respond. JOHN exits, angrily as LIGHTS QUICKLY FADE OUT.

END OF SCENE

SCENE 12

SETTING: Several weeks later; the annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Association. Before the lights come up we hear the Prelude to Act I of Bizet's "Carmen."

*AT RISE: A dimly lit auditorium. The stage is bare except for a row of folding chairs facing the audience. At the center of the row, a podium with a microphone. A banner on the podium reads "American Psychiatric Association, Philadelphia, 1972." ANDREW enters, dressed in black jeans and a black T-shirt. He taps the microphone to make sure he's not "live."
MUSIC FADES OUT.*

ANDREW

Come out come out wherever you are. *(Pause)* You deaf? I said, everything's copacetic.

JOHN, *Offstage*

The masks...they're in your backpack.

Enter JOHN, wide-eyed and trembling, also dressed, awkwardly, in black jeans and a black T-shirt, with a backpack on his back.

It's just...just that, I've never been on a stage before.

ANDREW

No shit.

JOHN hands the backpack to ANDREW.

JOHN

Aside from that time I understudied Callas in Barcelona.

ANDREW

(Impatiently) Take a chill pill, man. You used to push them on the psychos like every day was Halloween.

JOHN

You used to laugh at all my corny opera jokes.

ANDREW

You want to show me what you're really made of? Tonight's the night.

JOHN

Doesn't being incarcerated and losing one's sole source of income count for anything?

ANDREW

Take out the violins. (*Yawns*) One less trip to Sam Goody. Big hairy deal.

JOHN

But I—

ANDREW pulls JOHN towards him by the collar.

ANDREW

I'm going to need to see me some real he-man stuff before I go pledging my troth.

He releases JOHN's collar. JOHN goes to say something.

(Interrupting) And no more "ooh la la" neither. That's all, comment se dit, "bool sheet."

JOHN looks panic-stricken. EDWARD enters, carrying a bundle of papers which he puts on the podium.

JOHN

The maestro is about to take out his baton.

ANDREW

Saved by the bell. (*Beat*) For now.

ANDREW and JOHN exit. MATTHEW enters, wearing a suit.

EDWARD

Matthew, you came.

MATTHEW

I told you I would.

EDWARD

That was before you missed two weeks of—

MATTHEW

I...well, I—

EDWARD

Tell me about it tomorrow at eight. *(Beat)* Seven. I'll give you an extra hour. *(Pats MATTHEW on the back)* Now take a seat in the audience.

MATTHEW

Right here?

EDWARD

I need you handy. I'll call you up when it's time.

MATTHEW

I thought I was—

EDWARD

Cured. You're Exhibit B.

MATTHEW

Who is Exhibit A?

EDWARD

Your testimonial will make all the difference.

MATTHEW sits in the front row of the audience. LIGHTS UP on stage and in the auditorium. We hear noises of people taking their seats. EDWARD spots DUDEK off stage and anxiously gestures to him. DUDEK enters, and noticing there is an audience, grins and poses for them.

DUDEK

Sorry I'm late. I was casing the john for when I get bored.

EDWARD

(Chuckling) You are perfect. *(Beat)* Perfectly on time.

DUDEK

Where do you want me?

EDWARD

There.

DUDEK

How long will it take?

EDWARD

The symposium? About—

DUDEK

Screw the symposium. The cure.

DUDEK looks into the auditorium and is a bit awed by the scale.

(Impressed) This is like one of them megachurches. Where we all babble in tongues and pass out on the floor.

EDWARD

This is a scientific meeting.

DUDEK

Better not be just another brain fuck. You shrinks are famous for that.

DUDEK takes his seat, at the opposite end of the row from MATTHEW. EDWARD taps the microphone. We are now "live." EDWARD clears his throat.

EDWARD

(Speaks into the microphone) Anyone who's not here for "Psychiatry and the Homosexual Menace" is in the wrong place.

The auditorium is silent.

MAN'S VOICE, (V.O.)

Please welcome Dr. Edward Bergman, chair of today's symposium. Dr. Bergman is distinguished professor of psychiatry at— *(Interrupted by feedback from the microphone)* —psychoanalysis.

SFX: Polite applause. DUDEK soaks it up and waves to someone in the front row. EDWARD clears his throat. More applause.

EDWARD

(Into the microphone) The plight of the homosexual, fellow clinicians and academicians, the plight of the homosexual...is not...a happy one.

EDWARD turns to DUDEK who takes his cue and adopts an exaggerated look of anguish. A murmur from the audience. We are suddenly aware that ANDREW and JOHN, wearing black masks, have surreptitiously appeared in the far side aisle. JOHN whispers to MATTHEW.

JOHN

You came after all.

MATTHEW

Well, I—

MATTHEW turns away.

ANDREW

He's not on our side. Come on. We've got a job to do.

JOHN stares at MATTHEW. MATTHEW doesn't budge.

JOHN

When do we make our move?

ANDREW

First give him some rope to hang himself with.

JOHN looks at MATTHEW again. Then he and ANDREW slip into the shadows.

EDWARD

(Into the microphone) Make no mistake. We are fighting a war. Those of us on the frontline know that the metaphor is apt. That the homosexual menace is a formidable opponent. That every casualty we prevent is a man or woman who can lead a productive existence with a member of the opposite sex. To accept less than this is to accept that we have been vanquished. To accept less than this is to accept that we have failed in our role as healers. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome exhibit A: a candid and unrehearsed interview with a real live homosexual! Please welcome Patient Anonymous!

EDWARD turns to DUDEK. Applause. DUDEK beams, and, still sitting, bows to the audience. EDWARD detaches the microphone from the podium and shoves it in DUDEK's face. Applause stops.

DUDEK

It's an honor to be here, sir.

EDWARD

It's an honor to have you.

DUDEK

I feel a little nervous.

EDWARD

That's perfectly understandable. You're in good hands.

MATTHEW and DUDEK turn to face each other for the first time. DUDEK rubs his eyes.

DUDEK

(To MATTHEW) You who I think you are?

MATTHEW turns away.

Guess who's being dicked around. As fucking usual. *(To EDWARD)* You didn't tell me he'd be here.

EDWARD takes the microphone away.

EDWARD

Didn't tell you he wouldn't. *(Beat)* You're not angry, are you?

DUDEK

Oh no. I know just how to behave... *(Under his breath)* ...with scum bags.

EDWARD turns the microphone back towards DUDEK.

EDWARD

(Condescendingly) So how do we feel today?

DUDEK

(Points at himself) We feel great. *(Points at EDWARD; condescendingly)* And how do we feel?

Titters from the audience.

EDWARD

(Into the microphone) Heh-heh. He's learned from the master how to answer a question with a question. *(Covers the microphone; to DUDEK)* You're not here to get an Academy Award.

DUDEK

(*To EDWARD*) Oh. I didn't realize that.

EDWARD holds the microphone up to DUDEK.

EDWARD

Surely you feel miserable.

DUDEK

(*Makes a mournful face at the audience*) I feel miserable. Very miserable.

EDWARD

And why do you feel miserable?

DUDEK

I feel miserable because I am a homosexual.

EDWARD

(*Relieved*) And how long have you been a homosexual?

DUDEK has a blank look on his face. An awkward pause, then nervous laughter from the audience.

How long have you been a homosexual?

DUDEK

I...I forget what you told me to say.

Loud laughter from the audience. EDWARD wipes his brow with a handkerchief.

EDWARD

(*Into the microphone*) You can see what a pernicious scourge is this homosexuality. Our subject is no longer able to differentiate between fantasy and reality. (*Holds the microphone up to DUDEK*) Tell us about your history of psychiatric treatment.

DUDEK

You know.

EDWARD

(*Sharply*) What do I know?

DUDEK

You know I went to see Doctor Goldstein. He's a homosexual himself.

EDWARD

You went to a psychiatrist who admitted to being a homosexual? Impossible.

DUDEK

Who would've expected *you* would've tapped me, for this gig, in person, at the hottest gay bar in town?

Catcalls and mocking laughter from the audience. It's DUDEK's show, and he milks it for everything it's worth, mugging at the audience. In the general mayhem, ANDREW and JOHN appear again in the aisle, unnoticed. MATTHEW begins to exit. JOHN intercepts him.

JOHN

Where are you going? Can't take it anymore?

This is Not the End of the Play
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes