

*(SIDNEY enters, his head and shirt doused with water. He crosses to GLORIA at bar, carrying one shoe.)*

SIDNEY: Want a drink? Oh, I always forget--about you and your face, the tissues and all.

GLORIA: It's all right. Let the damn tissues fall! *(takes the glass)* I've quit, Sid. Really quit.

SIDNEY: *(changing the subject)* How did you -- hurt yourself?

GLORIA: Oh, that's the result of an evening with six and one half feet of psycho. My analyst insists I have a predi--what do you call it?

SIDNEY: Predilection?

GLORIA: Predilection for psychos and vice cops. This last one...I think he was trying to kill me. *(looks around)* This place is a wreck! When's Iris coming?

SIDNEY: She'll be along.

GLORIA: Hey--Sid, lookit me! *(she holds up the glass triumphantly)* Whiskey. I've joined the human race. No more goofball pills--I'm kicking everything. *(their glasses clink)* I did the whole gooey farewell bit with some of the kids. Adios, Muchachas! I'm going to marry him. Yes, I mean *after* we talk about it. I wouldn't unless I told him. I know girls who've done that. Doesn't work out: you run into people. Never works out. I'm going to sit down and tell him--*(a swinging, breezy recitation brimming over with confidence to conceal the lack of it)* "I was a nineteen-year-old package of fluff from Trenersville, Nowhere, and I met this nothing who took one look at this baby face of mine and said, "Honey, there's a whole special market for you. Slink is on the way out; all-American wholesomeness is the rage. You'll be part of the aristocracy of the profession!" Which is true. Only they don't exactly describe the profession. After that you develop your own rationales: (a) "It's old as time anyhow!" *(They clink glasses loudly and laugh.)* (b) *(hand on heart--for God and country)* "It's a service to society!" *(They clink again.)* and (c) "the *real* prostitutes are everybody else; especially housewives and career girls." *(Again they howl)* We trade those gems back and forth for hours. Nobody believes it, but it helps on the bad days. And, sweetie, there are a lot of bad days.

SIDNEY: Gloria--no matter what happens, honey, you've got to stick to that.

GLORIA: Okay, Sid, what is it--a letter or a phonograph record with violins?

SIDNEY: Gloria--

GLORIA: *(a supreme effort at self-control: to both steel herself for--and hold off--the inevitable)* I was on this date once, Sid. He had a book of reproductions by Goya. And there was this one--an etching, I think. Have you ever seen it? There's this woman, a Spanish peasant woman, and she's standing like this--reaching out. And what she's reaching for are the teeth of a dead man. A man who'd been hanged. And she is rigid with--revulsion, but she wants his teeth, because it said in the book that in those days people thought that the teeth of the dead were good luck. Can you imagine that? The things some people think they

have to do? To *survive* in this world? *(a beat)* Some day I'm going to buy that print. It's all about my life...

SIDNEY: He loves you, honey. He loves you terribly...

GLORIA: *(Demanding the letter)* Come on, Sidney!

*(SIDNEY hands her letter and she reads it. She crumples it.)*

SIDNEY: *(pours a drink fast)* Come on--drink this for me--

GLORIA: Get that out of my face, Sidney! *(She knocks it away and rises)* Get out of my way, Sidney. *(pulling free)* Let go! *(She gets her bag and downs pills.)* You see, no fuss, no muss...Drugs are the coming thing, Sid. Ha--you want to hear something! I was going to *marry* that vanilla dinge! Do you know what some of the girls do? They go off and they sleep with a colored boy--and I mean *any* colored boy so long as he is black--because that is the one bastard who can't look down on them five seconds after it's over! And I was going to *marry* one!

SIDNEY: Maybe he'll change his mind. He was sort of in a state of shock. I mean, try to understand about Alton--

GLORIA: Oh, so he's in a state of shock! Oh Jesus, that yellow-faced bastard!

*He's shocked!* Look, Sid, I'll bet you two to one that at this instant he is lying dead drunk in the arms of the blondest or blackest two-bit hooker in town. *Nursing his shock!* Telling his tale of woe! *His* tale! And she'll be telling it somewhere by morning to the girls and roaring with laughter. Like I'm doing!...Aw, what the hell am I carrying on for--the life beats the hell out of that nine-to-five jazz--*(suddenly, without pause or warning, a violent sob.)* SIDNEY! WHAT HAPPENED TO MY LIFE!? *(He tries to go to her; she holds up a hand to stay him.)* I'll be twenty-six this winter and I have tried to kill myself three times since I was twenty-three...I was always awkward...But I'll make it. *(long moment)* Well...that's enough gloom and doom, everybody! Come on, Sidney brother, cheer up! *(She weaves towards the phonograph)* Let's have some music. And none of that creepy stuff my creepy father used to play. *(She puts on a record--some very modern jazz, cool and eerie, throbbing and intense; starts to dance.)* Yeah...that's good. I have to have music...It closes things out...Come on, Sidney brother--*(She flicks off lamp, beckons and as moonlight fills the room SIDNEY moves into her arms. They dance in a tight embrace.)* Things as they are...are as they are...and have been and will be that way...because they got that way...because things were as they were in the first place! *(Above them, DAVID has entered and slowly descended the stairs. He smokes thoughtfully.)*

SIDNEY: "Society based on complicity in the common crime! We all suffer from the murder of the primal father who kept all the females for himself--and drove the sons away...*(DAVID continues down and watches at open door as the heat, half sensual, half poetic, mounts between them.)*" "So we murdered him and--cannibals that we are--WE ATE HIM!" *(SIDNEY "devours" GLORIA'S neck. They kiss tentatively, then hungrily.)*