

JIM. Terms may be more appropriate for the *locker room* than the —  
BEV. (*To Jim.*) I *told* you so. I *told* you what it's like. And he uses these ugly words in other people's presence (*To Russ.*) and I'm not some kind of *matron*, but what in the world is wrong with *civility*?  
RUSS. Honey? I am not going to stand here with you and Jim and discuss —

BEV. (*Overlapping.*) Well, you're being *ugly*, and I don't like *ugliness*.

RUSS. (*Continuous.*) — *private* matters, matters that are between me and the memory of my son —

BEV. (*To Jim, overlapping.*) I think his *mind* has been affected, I really do.

RUSS. (*Continuous, overlapping.*) — and if the two of you want to talk about Kenneth on your own time, if that gives you some kind of *comfort* —

BEV. And what's wrong with comfort? Are we not *allowed* any comfort anymore?

RUSS. Well, Kenneth didn't get a whole lotta comfort, did he?

BEV. He was *sick*, Russ! And for you to use nasty words to Jim —

JIM. Nothing I haven't heard before.

RUSS. (*Moving upstairs.*) Changing my shirt.

JIM. I was in the service, too, you know.

RUSS. (*Bitter laugh.*) Oh right. And tell me again. How many people did *you* kill?

BEV. *Oh, for god's sake, stop it!!*

RUSS. Sat behind a *desk*, didn'tcha? Goddamn *coward*. (*The doorbell rings. All stand in silence. Bev covers her mouth. At the front door, we can see Albert peer through a small window.*)

ALBERT. (*From off.*) Hello? (*And still no one moves.*) Anybody home? (*Bev looks to Jim, who opens the door.*)

JIM. Afternoon.

ALBERT. (*To Jim.*) Uh, how d'you do? I'm just here to —

BEV. *Francine? Albert's here.*

FRANCINE. (*Calling, from off.*) *Yes, ma'am. I'm coming.*

BEV. She's on her way.

ALBERT. Thank you, ma'am. (*Russ turns and exits up the stairs. Jim does not know whether to invite Albert in or not. He turns to Bev. Bev turns back to Albert.*)

BEV. Albert, would you like to wait inside?

ALBERT. Uh. All right, thank you, ma'am.

BEV. I bet it's warm out there, isn't it?

ALBERT. Ohhh, yes it is.

BEV. Can I offer you some iced tea?

ALBERT. No. Thank you, though.

BEV. Well, I'm sure she'll be right along.

ALBERT. Thank you. (*Albert sits near the door, but within earshot of Jim and Bev.*)

JIM. (*To Bev, whispering because of Albert.*) I think maybe it's time for me —

BEV. (*Rapidly, whispering.*) Oh please don't go, please don't, I just don't want to be alone with him right now. It makes me feel so alone —

JIM. (*Overlapping.*) You're not alone.

BEV. (*Continuous.*) — the way he sits up all night long. Last night he was just sitting there at three in the morning —

JIM. (*Overlapping.*) I know. I do.

BEV. (*Continuous.*) — and I say to him, say, don't you feel sleepy? Do you want to take a *Sominex*, or play some cards maybe, and he says *I don't see the point of it* as if there has to be some grand justification for every single thing that a person — (*And now she notices Albert rising and heading for the door. To Albert.*) — Wait. Yoo-hoo?

ALBERT. (*Having overheard.*) 'S all right.

BEV. Something wrong?

ALBERT. No no.

BEV. She said she's on her way.

ALBERT. I can wait outside.

BEV. (*Calling off.*) *Francine?*

FRANCINE. (*From off.*) *I'm coming.*

BEV. There she is. (*Francine enters in street clothes, with two large bags of hand-me-downs. She stops to put on her earrings.*)

FRANCINE. I'm sorry. I guess I'm moving a little slower than usual.

BEV. And here's Albert waiting so patiently, if only I had *door-to-door service like Francine!*

FRANCINE. So, I'll see you Monday, then.

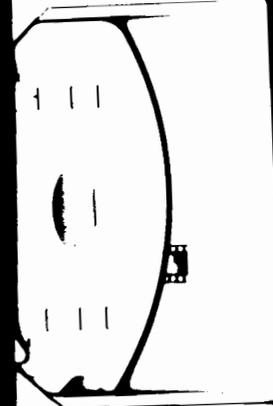
BEV. Albert, isn't this place just a *catastrophe*?

ALBERT. Oh, yes it is.

BEV. (*To Albert.*) I tell you, I don't know *what* I would do without a friend like Francine here, and on a *Saturday*, I mean she is just a treasure. What on earth are we going to do up there without her?

ALBERT. Well, I trust ya'll can sort things out.

BEV. (*To Francine.*) Oh, and maybe Monday we can see about that big trunk, why don't we?



FRANCINE. We'll make sure and do that.  
BEV. I'd do it myself but I'm not a big strapping man like Albert here.  
JIM. Afraid I've gotta exempt myself —  
BEV. Oh no no no no no. Francine and I can manage.  
ALBERT. What's it, a trunk, you said?  
FRANCINE. (*With a shake of the head to dissuade Albert.*) A footlocker.  
ALBERT. Where's it at?  
BEV. No no no no no we just need to bring it down the stairs.  
ALBERT. I don't mind.  
BEV. Oh, thank you, but no.  
FRANCINE. (*To Bev.*) But definitely Monday.  
ALBERT. These stairs, here?  
BEV. Oh no no no — I mean, it wouldn't take but two minutes.  
FRANCINE. (*To Bev, re: her bags.*) It's just I got these things here to take care of.  
ALBERT. I can put them in the car.  
JIM. Oh, got yourself a car?  
ALBERT. Yes, sir.  
JIM. (*Looking out.*) Whatzat, a Pontiac?  
ALBERT. Yes, sir.  
FRANCINE. (*Significantly, to Albert.*) It's just that I'm afraid we're going to be late.  
ALBERT. (*Not getting it.*) Late for what?  
FRANCINE. The place we gotta be?  
ALBERT. The *place*?  
FRANCINE. Remember?  
ALBERT. (*To Francine.*) The — What're you — ?  
FRANCINE. (*Continuous, to Bev.*) I'm sorry.  
ALBERT. (*To Francine.*) Said two minutes is all.  
FRANCINE. (*Quiet, pointedly.*) Well, I've got my *hands* full.  
ALBERT. I just said I can put them in the —  
FRANCINE. (*Testily, as they start to go.*) I can put them in the car. I can do that.  
BEV. Did you get the chafing dish?  
FRANCINE. No ma'am, thank you, though.  
ALBERT. (*To Bev and Jim.*) Be right back. (*Albert opens the door to reveal Karl Lindner, about to ring the bell.*)  
KARL. (*An oddly formal and uncomfortable-seeming man.*) Ah. Unexpected. Uhhh...?

BEV. Hello, Karl.  
KARL. (*Relieved.*) Ah, Bev. Voilà.  
ALBERT. (*To Karl, squeezing past.*) Excuse us, if you don't mind?  
KARL. Not at all. After you, sir. (*Karl makes way for Albert and Francine to pass.*)  
ALBERT. (*To Francine, as they exit, barely audible.*) What is the matter with you?  
KARL. (*From the door, seeing him.*) Ah. Jim, too. Hello, lad.  
JIM. Karl.  
BEV. (*Unenthusiastically.*) Come on in, Karl.  
KARL. Uhhh ... (*As if working out a puzzle.*) Yes. *Could* do that. However, you'll recall, Bev, that Betsy currently happens to be, uh, how shall we say — ?  
BEV. Ohhh, is it almost that time?  
KARL. Uh, point *being*, that she did accompany me.  
BEV. What do you — you mean she's in the *car*?  
KARL. She is.  
BEV. Well, for heaven's *sake*, Karl! Don't leave her out in a hot *car*.  
KARL. Well, that was my thinking.  
BEV. Bring her *in* with you.  
KARL. Will do.  
BEV. Of all *things*.  
KARL. (*As he goes.*) Back in a flash. (*As Karl exits again, Russ descends the stairs in a clean shirt and shoes. Bev and Jim allow him to silently pass by them. He walks to the chair and collects the ice cream carton.*)  
BEV. You changed your shirt. (*Russ continues into the kitchen without responding. As soon as he is gone.*)  
JIM. (*Quietly.*) Bev.  
BEV. (*Whispering.*) I know I'm being silly. I know I am, but —  
JIM. (*Overlapping.*) Not at all. Not in the least.  
BEV. (*Continuous whisper.*) — it's just that after two and a half *years* you'd think that with *time*, because that's supposed to be the thing that helps, isn't it? A little bit of time —  
JIM. (*Overlapping.*) A great healer.  
BEV. (*Continuous whisper.*) — and I thought with the new job and the move I thought somehow he would start to let go of — (*Russ returns from the kitchen. Bev goes silent. He goes to a door beneath the stairs, opens it, pulls a string to turn on a light, and exits. Calling after him.*) Where are you going, the basement?  
RUSS. (*From off.*) Yup.

