

DAVID: *(Continued)* Anyone care to repose and repast?  
 ED: *(Grabbing the kid.)* Come, Kissinger. I'll teach you to play chess.  
 DAVID: My sandwich . . .  
 ED: You'll concentrate better on an empty stomach.  
*(Ed and David go out toward the bedrooms.)* **START**

ARNOLD: So, is this it? We gonna just stare into space in silence?  
 MA: You want I should do a Bubble Dance?  
 ARNOLD: I need a drink.  
 MA: Arnold, you've done a lot of crazy things in your life, but this . . . ?  
 ARNOLD: It's not a crazy thing. It's a wonderful thing I'm very proud of.  
 MA: If you were so proud how come you were too ashamed to tell your mother? Everything else you tell me. You shove your sex life down my throat like aspirin every hour on the hour. But six months he's been here and not a word.  
 ARNOLD: You're not the easiest person in the world to talk to.  
 MA: What did I say? Do I tell you how to run your life? No. I learned long ago that no matter what I said you and your brother were going to do just as you pleased anyway. So, I wouldn't say a word. On purpose! You want to know why you didn't tell me? I'll tell you why. Because you knew it was wrong.  
 ARNOLD: It's not wrong.  
 MA: Then why?  
 ARNOLD: I don't know.  
 MA: You would if you listened.

ARNOLD: Ma, this isn't something we decided to do overnight.  
 MA: Who we?  
 ARNOLD: Alan and I.  
 MA: The two of you were doing this together? Now I've heard everything.  
 ARNOLD: That's what I love about you. You're so open-minded.  
 MA: All right. So, Alan's not here. Why's the boy?  
 ARNOLD: Because with everything else I forgot about the application. Then, one day, the phone rang. They had David for us. I told them about Alan but they said I could probably take David anyway. . . .  
 MA: And you said, "Send him on over."  
 ARNOLD: Not at first. But then I thought about it and said yes. I was just so tired of widowing.  
 MA: Wida-whatting?  
 ARNOLD: Widowing. It's a word of Murray's.  
 MA: And a nice one at that. What's it supposed to mean?  
 ARNOLD: You know.  
 MA: I don't know.  
 ARNOLD: Widowing. Feeling sorry for yourself. Cursing every time you pass a couple walking hand in hand. Watching tear-jerkers on TV knowing they could only cheer you up. Christ, of everything going on here I never thought that would be the thing I had to explain.  
 MA: How should I know about whatchamacallit? Did you ever say a word to me?  
 ARNOLD: I didn't think I had to. It's only been three years since Daddy died.

MA: Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. Are you trying to compare my marriage with you and Alan? Your father and I were married for thirty-five years, had two children and a wonderful life together. You have the nerve to compare yourself to that?

ARNOLD: I'm talking about the loss.

MA: What loss did you have? You fooled around with some boy. Where do you come to compare that to a marriage of thirty-five years?

ARNOLD: You think it doesn't?

MA: Come on, Arnold. You're not talking to one of your pals.

ARNOLD: I lost someone I loved very much.

MA: So, you felt bad. Maybe you cried a little. What would you know about what I went through? Thirty-five years I lived with that man. He got sick, I brought him to the hospital, and you know what they gave me back? I gave them a man, they gave me a paper bag with his watch, wallet, and wedding ring. It took me two months until I could get into my bed alone. A year to learn to say "I" instead of "we." And you're going to compare that to you? How dare you!

ARNOLD: You're right, Ma. How dare I. I couldn't possibly know how it feels to shove someone's clothes in a trash bag and watch garbage men take them away. Or what it feels like to forget and set his place at the table. How about the food that rots in the refrigerator because you forgot how to shop for one? How dare I? Right, Ma? How dare I?

*(They are both hollering over each other now.)*

MA: May God strike me dead, whatever I did to my mother to deserve a child speaking to me this way. The disrespect! I

only pray that one day you have a child and that he'll open up a mouth to you like the one you opened to me. How dare you talk to me this way?

ARNOLD: *(Continued)* Listen, Ma, you had it easy. You have all those years to remember. I have five. You had your children and friends to comfort you. I had me. My friends didn't want to hear about it. They said, "What are you griping about? At least you had a lover." And you . . . You lost your husband in a nice clean hospital. I lost mine out there. They killed him out there on the street. Twenty-three years old, laying dead on the street . . .

*(Arnold's words penetrate Ma's hearing and she stops as he rails on.)*

ARNOLD: *(Continued)* . . . his head bashed in by a bunch of kids with baseball bats. Killed by children. Children taught by people like you. 'Cause everybody knows that queers don't matter. Queers don't love. And those that do deserve what they get!

*(Ma flees to the bedroom. Door slams.)* **STOP**

*(Arnold catches his breath. He sits.)*

DAVID: *(Sticking his head into the room)* Wanna keep it down out there? There are people trying to concentrate.

ARNOLD: Sorry.

DAVID: Round one over?

ARNOLD: I didn't mean to say any of that. It all came pouring out. I felt like I was fighting for my life.

DAVID: A duel to the death over little old me. *(Cuddling)* I think you're wonderful.

*(Ed enters.)*