

ARNOLD: Ma . . . David is gay.

MA: But he's only been here six months.

ARNOLD: He came that way.

MA: No one comes that way.

ARNOLD: What an opening!

MA: By you everything is a joke.

ARNOLD: The whole reason David was placed with me is so he could grow up with a positive attitude about his homosexuality.

MA: That's it. I'm finished. The world has gone completely insane and I'm heading south for the summer.

ARNOLD: You make it very difficult to have an intelligent conversation.

MA: You want an intelligent conversation? Do what I do—talk to yourself! Arnold, you want to live like this? *Gay gezzinteh hait*. I don't care anymore. You're not going to put me in my grave like you did your father.

ARNOLD: Now I killed my father?

MA: No! He was thrilled to have a fairy for a son. What do you think, you walk into a room and say, "Hi Dad, I'm queer," and that's that? You think that's what we brought you into the world for? Believe me, if I'd known I wouldn't have bothered. God should tear out my tongue, I should talk to my child this way. Arnold, you're my son, a good person, a sensitive person with a heart, *kennohorrah*, like your father. And I try to love you for that. But you won't let me. You've got to throw me in the gutter and rub my face in this. You have not spoken a sentence since I got here with out the word "gay" in it.

ARNOLD: Because it's who I am.

MA: (*Pointing toward the bedroom*) If that were all you could

leave it in there where it belongs. No. You're obsessed with it. You're not happy unless everyone is talking about it. I don't know why you don't just wear a big sign and get it over with.

ARNOLD: Try to imagine the world the other way around. Imagine that every book, every magazine, every TV show and movie told you that you should be homosexual. But you know you're not. And you know that for you this is right. . . .

MA: Stop already. You're talking crazy.

ARNOLD: You want to know what's crazy? After all these years I'm still trying to justify my life.

MA: You call this a life? This is a sickness. But it's what you've chosen for yourself.

ARNOLD: Ma, I'm gay. I don't know why. But that's what I am. For as far back as I can remember. Back before I knew it was even different . . .

MA: You haven't heard a word I've said.

ARNOLD: (*Exploding*) I know you'd rather I was straight, but I'm not. Would you also rather I had lied to you? I have friends who'd never dream of telling their parents. Instead they cut their parents out of their lives and they wonder, "Why? Why is my child so distant?" Is that what you'd rather?

MA: It doesn't have to be our every conversation.

ARNOLD: You want to be part of my life? I'm not editing out the things you don't like.

MA: Can we end this conversation?

ARNOLD: No! There's one more thing you'd better understand. I have taught myself to sew, cook, fix plumbing, do taxes . . . I can even pat myself on the back when neces-

sary. All so I don't have to ask anyone for anything. There is nothing I need from anyone except for love and respect. And anyone who can't give me those two things has no place in my life. You are my mother. I love you. I do. But if you can't respect me then you have no business being here.

MA: You're throwing me out?

ARNOLD: I'm trying to tell . . .

MA: Throwing me out. Isn't that nice. Listen, Mister, you get one mother in this world. Only one. Wait. Just you wait.

*(Ma heads off to the bedroom leaving Arnold.)* **STOP**

*Blackout.*

### SCENE THREE

*A park bench. Night.*

*Ed and David enter just finishing hot dogs.*

DAVID: How's your hot dog, big spender? Teach you to forget your wallet.

ED: Come on. I've got to walk this off.

DAVID: We're supposed to wait here. *(Pointing)* Our window's right there. This is the bench. This is where it happened. Arnold never brung you here?

ED: No.

DAVID: They were walking back toward the street, Alan and the other guy, when the kids jumped them here. You can see, nowhere to run. There's still a stain on the sidewalk. Well, that's what Arnold says.

ED: He showed you this?

DAVID: Day I moved in. I figured he was trying to scare me from going in the park at night. Figured he was being overprotective, y'know? But I think it's more. No candle in the window yet.

ED: They've got a lot of yelling to catch up on.

DAVID: So, what'd Laurel want with you?

ED: Nothing.

DAVID: Sure.

ED: Really. It was nothing.