

Andrew - George

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ACT TWO

GEORGE
Probably. I regret everything.

NICK
I mean, I'm going to make you regret this.

GEORGE (*Softly*)
No doubt. Acute embarrassment, eh?

NICK
I'll play the charades like you've got 'em set up. . . . I'll play in your language. . . . I'll be what you say I am.

GEORGE
You are already . . . you just don't know it.

NICK (*Shaking within*)
No . . . no. Not really. But I'll be it, mister. . . . I'll show you something come to life you'll wish you hadn't set up.

GEORGE
Go clean up the mess.

NICK (*Quietly . . . intensely*)
You just wait, mister.
(*He exits. Pause. GEORGE smiles at MARTHA.*)

MARTHA
Very good, George.

GEORGE
Thank you, Martha.

MARTHA
Really good.

GEORGE
I'm glad you liked it.

Walpurgisnacht

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MARTHA
I mean. . . . You did a good job . . . you really fixed it.

GEORGE
Uh-huh.

MARTHA
It's the most . . . life you've shown in a long time.

GEORGE
You bring out the best in me, baby.

MARTHA
Yeah . . . pigmy hunting!

GEORGE
Pigmy!

MARTHA
You're really a bastard.

GEORGE
If I?

MARTHA
Yeah . . . you.

GEORGE
Baby, if quarterback there is a pigmy, you've certainly changed your style. What are you after now . . . giants?

MARTHA
You make me sick.

GEORGE
It's perfectly all right for you. . . . I mean, you can make your own rules . . . you can go around like a hopped-up

Arab, slashing away at everything in sight, scaring up half the world if you want to. But somebody else try it . . . no sir!

MARTHA
You miserable. . . .

GEORGE (*Mocking*)
Why baby, I did it all for you. I thought you'd like it, sweetheart . . . it's sort of to your taste . . . blood, carnage and all. Why, I thought you'd get all excited . . . sort of heave and pant and come running at me, your melons bobbling.

MARTHA
You've really screwed up, George.

GEORGE (*Splitting it out*)
Oh, for God's sake, Martha!

MARTHA
I mean it . . . you really have.

GEORGE
(*Barely contained anger now*)
You can sit there in that chair of yours, you can sit there with the gin running out of your mouth, and you can humiliate me, you can tear me apart . . . ALL NIGHT . . . and that's perfectly all right . . . that's O.K. . . .

MARTHA
YOU CAN STAND IT!

GEORGE
I CANNOT STAND IT!

MARTHA
YOU CAN STAND IT! YOU MARRIED ME FOR IT!
(*A silence*)

GEORGE (*Quietly*)
That is a desperately sick lie.

MARTHA
DON'T YOU KNOW IT, EVEN YET?

GEORGE (*Shaking his head*)
Oh . . . Martha.

MARTHA
My arm has gotten tired whipping you.

GEORGE
(*Stares at her in disbelief*)
You're mad.

MARTHA
For twenty-three years!

GEORGE
You're deluded . . . Martha, you're deluded.

MARTHA
IT'S NOT WHAT I'VE WANTED!

GEORGE
I thought at least you were . . . on to yourself. I didn't know. I . . . didn't know.

MARTHA (*Anger taking over*)
I'm on to myself.

GEORGE
(*As if she were some sort of bug*)
No . . . no . . . you're . . . sick.

MARTHA (*Rises—screams*)
I'LL SHOW YOU WHO'S SICK!

GEORGE
All right, Martha . . . you're going too far.

MARTHA (*Screams again*)
I'LL SHOW YOU WHO'S SICK. I'LL SHOW YOU.

GEORGE (*He shakes her*)
Stop it! (*Pushes her back in her chair*) Now, stop it!

MARTHA (*Calmly*)
I'll show you who's sick. (*Calmly*) Boy, you're really having a field day, huh? Well, I'm going to finish you . . . before I'm through with you. . . .

GEORGE
. . . you and the quarterback . . . you both gonna finish me . . . ?

MARTHA
. . . before I'm through with you you'll wish you'd died in that automobile, you bastard.

GEORGE
(*Emphasizing with his forefinger*)
And you'll wish you'd never mentioned our soul!

MARTHA (*Dripping contempt*)
You. . . .

GEORGE
Now, I said I warned you.

MARTHA
I'm impressed.

GEORGE
I warned you not to go too far.

MARTHA
I'm just beginning.

GEORGE
(*Calmly, matter-of-factly*)

I'm numbed enough . . . and I don't mean by liquor, though maybe that's been part of the process—a gradual, over-the-years going to sleep of the brain cells—I'm numbed enough, now, to be able to take you when we're alone. I don't listen to you . . . or when I *do* listen to you, I sift everything, I bring everything down to reflex response, so I don't really *hear* you, which is the only way to manage it. But you've taken a new tack, Martha, over the past couple of centuries—or however long it's been I've lived in this house with you—that makes it just too much . . . too much. I don't mind your dirty underthings in public . . . well, I *do* mind, but I've reconciled myself to that . . . but you've moved bag and baggage into your own fantasy world now, and you've started playing variations on your own distortions, and, as a result. . . .

MARTHA
Nuts!

GEORGE
Yes . . . you have.

MARTHA
Nuts!

GEORGE
Well, you can go on like that as long as you want to. And, when you're done. . . .

MARTHA
Have you ever listened to your sentences, George? Have

you ever listened to the way you talk? You're so fringing . . . convoluted . . . that's what you are. You talk like you were writing one of your stupid papers.

GEORGE

Actually, I'm rather worried about you. About your mind.

MARTHA

Don't you worry about my mind, sweetheart!

GEORGE

I think I'll have you committed.

MARTHA

You WHAT?

GEORGE (*Quietly . . . distinctly*)

I think I'll have you committed.

MARTHA

(*Breaks into long laughter*)

Oh baby, aren't you something!

GEORGE

I've got to find some way to really get at you.

MARTHA

You've got at me, George . . . you don't have to do anything. Twenty-three years of you has been quite enough.

GEORGE

Will you go quietly, then?

MARTHA

You know what's happened, George? You want to know what's *really* happened? (*Snaps her fingers*) It's snapped, finally. Not me . . . it. The whole arrangement. You can

go along . . . forever, and everything's . . . manageable. You make all sorts of excuses to yourself . . . *you* know . . . this is life . . . the hell with it . . . maybe tomorrow he'll be dead . . . maybe tomorrow *you'll* be dead . . . all sorts of excuses. But then, one day, one night, something happens . . . and SNAP! It breaks. And you just don't give a damn anymore. I've tried with you, baby . . . really, I've tried.

GEORGE

Come off it, Martha.

MARTHA

I've tried . . . I've really tried.

GEORGE (*With some awe*)

You're a monster . . . *you are*.

MARTHA

I'm loud, and I'm vulgar, and I wear the pants in this house because somebody's got to, but I am *not* a monster. I am *not*.

GEORGE

You're a spoiled, self-indulgent, willful, dirty-minded, liquor-ridden . . .

MARTHA

SNAP! It went snap. Look, I'm not going to try to get through to you any more . . . I'm not going to try. There was a second back there, maybe, there was a second, just a second, when I could have gotten through to you, when maybe we could have cut through all this crap. But that's past, and now I'm not going to try.

GEORGE

Once a month, Martha! I've gotten used to it . . . once a month and we get misunderstood Martha, the good-

hearted girl underneath the barnacles, the little Miss that the touch of kindness'd bring to bloom again. And I've believed it more times than I want to remember, because I don't want to think I'm that much of a sucker. I don't believe you . . . I just don't believe you. There is no moment . . . there is no moment any more when we could . . . come together.

MARTHA (*Armed again*)

Well, maybe you're right, baby. You can't come together with nothing, and you're nothing! SNAP! It went snap tonight at Daddy's party. (*Dripping contempt, but there is fury and loss under it*) I sat there at Daddy's party, and I watched you . . . I watched you sitting there, and I watched the younger men around you, the men who were going to go somewhere. And I sat there and I watched you, and *you* weren't *there*! And it snapped! It finally snapped! And I'm going to howl it out, and I'm not going to give a damn what I do, and I'm going to make the damned biggest explosion you ever heard.

GEORGE (*Very pointedly*)

You try it and I'll beat you at your own game.

MARTHA (*Hopefully*)

Is that a threat, George? Humh?

GEORGE

That's a threat, Martha.

MARTHA (*Fake-spits at him*)

You're going to get it, baby.

GEORGE

Be careful, Martha . . . I'll rip you to pieces.

MARTHA

You aren't man enough . . . you haven't got the guts.

GEORGE

Total war?

MARTHA

Total.

(*Silence. They both seem relieved . . . elated.*)

NICK (*re-enters*)

NICK (*Brushing his hands off*)

Well . . . she's . . . resting.

GEORGE

(*Quietly amused at Nick's calm, off-hand manner*)

Oh?

MARTHA

Yeah? She all right?

NICK

I think so . . . now. I'm . . . terribly sorry. . . .

MARTHA

Forget about it.

GEORGE

Happens all the time around here.

NICK

She'll be all right.

MARTHA

She lying down? You put her upstairs? On a bed?

NICK (*Making himself a drink*)

Well, no, actually. Uh . . . may I? She's . . . in the bathroom . . . on the bathroom floor . . . she's lying there.