

HOT HUNG AND HORNY

A Comedy

By DAVID: Roddis

Performed by Homo Promos, 1992

CHARACTERS

DAVID: Mid-thirties urban neurotic. A touch of the "ageing hippie about his appearance.

ERIC: Late twenties. A leather-jacketed stud. Cool, calm and uninvolved. A streak of sadism.

MINOR CHARACTERS:

IGA CHECKOUT BOY
SCUZZIE AT CAR STOP
KEENING WOMAN
WAITER
VISITOR
BARMAN
ATTITUDE QUEEN
MYSTERIOUS STRANGER.

These parts to be taken by one additional performer

THE SET

Stage right - DAVID'S personal space. Table and chair, the table set with drink, several glasses (preferably contrasting colours for DAVID and ERIC), pill bottles, cigarettes, lighter, hair gel, sunglasses, book of Sylvia Plath, a fading rose, etc. etc.

Centre Stage, a long bench or similar object, representing variously a sofa, bar seating, car stop, coffin. A long, Isadora-like scarf on the SR end of the bench.

Stage left, an area representing the Supermarket checkout.

Lighting should contrast the table area with its intimate, middle-of-the-night feel, the fantasy sequences and the general "up" lighting of the bench and supermarket scenes.

TIME:

The present

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

The acting style should draw from the naturalistic, quasi-improvisational quality of, say, Woody Allen's films, with a free overlapping and variation of ERIC and DAVID's lines. Although I emphasize that the whole text should be included as written, extra "business" and improv are encouraged. The "business" included in the following pages is only included to reflect, fairly faithfully, one particular production.

[SUAVE MUSIC as lights fade to BLACKOUT. After a few moments of music, the LIGHTS COME UP to reveal DAVID: sitting centre stage. Black stretch-style trousers, white socks, sandals, T-shirt if desired and on top a wildly-printed shirt, perhaps Hawaiian style. HE is holding a photo of ERIC. Immediately HE starts running about the stage shrieking, always looking at the photo. He begins to tear up the photo with a sadistic expression on hi face. HE laughs in evil triumph. HE looks at the pieces of photo in his hands.]

DAVID: *[Horried]* What have I done? What have I done?!

[HE gets on the floor and frantically tries to put the pieces back together]

WHAT HAVE I DONE?! WHAT HAVE I DONE??!! etc.,

[A tantrum centre stage. DAVID: exhausted for a beat, then gets up]

DAVID: *[still unaware of the audience]* So the therapy's not going as well as I thought - so what? So what? So what if it's three in the morning!

[He moves to the table. Actions of pouring drink, lighting cigarette, some pills as required, similarly throughout].

Let's celebrate! There's always Crown Royal - and king-sized cigarettes - and - diazepam - lorazepam – alprazolam - triazolam –

[DAVID: notices the audience]

But did you know what that bastard did to me -?

[HE throws down the pieces of the photo which he is still holding, the drink, pills.]

[To audience] Look, I know I'm just covering the same ground over and over. But try and understand what happened. With me and ERIC.

[With bitterness] Me and ERIC! HA! That's a laugh!

[He pours an additional glass of booze]

You know something? It's all there in the first meeting. The entire relationship in miniature. That's why I should have known. 'Cause he was one of those people who had such strong opinions that I began to doubt the validity of everything I had ever believed.

[SCENE: LIVELY MUSIC, minimalist style. ENTER ERIC. Black leather jacket, ripped singlet, black jeans, studded belt, army boots, studsville. DAVID takes the drinks and crawls to ERIC on his knees, with knowing looks at the audience. HE is excited and kittenish. HE offers the drink, and begins chewing ERIC's leather jacket. ERIC is impassive.]

ERIC: Nice place.

DAVID: Thanks! Glad you like it!

[DAVID takes a sip of his drink]

This is great. Isn't this great?

ERIC: Great. Yeah.

DAVID: *[Untying ERIC's shoelaces with his teeth]* This music is wonderful. It's inspiring.

ERIC: Hmm...

DAVID: We're really getting to know each other. This is my favourite bit. *[Caressing ERIC's legs, his jeans]*

ERIC: This is minimalist New Age. You can't have a favourite bit. It's all the same.

DAVID: No, no, my favorite bit of a relationship

ERIC: *[alarmed]* Relationship - ?

DAVID: Well, we have to start somewhere -

ERIC: Do you think I should know your last name beforehand?
Or would that be rushing it?

DAVID: Just think, at eight pm I was a nervous wreck, lonely,
despondent, slightly pissed, and then -

ERIC: You threw up over my briefcase.

DAVID: [who has crawled between ERIC:'s legs and up on his
back] We said hello, and suddenly my life - changed!

ERIC: You were banned from the bar.

DAVID: This music's by Nick Cave [*or whoever*] I bet you're a
big Laurie Anderson fan as well.

[DAVID is on his stomach on the floor holding on to ERIC's ankle.]

ERIC: Ugh! Laurie Anderson! That cynical bitch. She is just *so*
manipulative –

*[ERIC walks toward seating area, and DAVID is spun around on the floor,
grabbing his glass as this happens]*

[Always overlapping, free and improvisational]

DAVID: Don't you think, though, that her style –

ERIC: - I don't think there's a word of sincerity in anything she
does -

DAVID: But what about the similarities between –

ERIC: - you know, I listened to "Oh Superman", once. I nearly
went crazy. Absolutely, completely

DAVID: But you see, that's the whole point, the tension that -

ERIC: I think I managed to get through one side of one of her albums. That was enough for me. That did it.

DAVID: [increasingly doubtful] Maybe you've got something - but the lyrics, the lyrics -

ERIC: I don't know. It just never worked, for me

[Silence.]

DAVID: *[unsure]* That cynical bitch ... You know, until you mentioned it, 'I never quite realised how much I truly *disliked her* ...

[DAVID: sits on the bench. To audience:]

DAVID: I hated the way I just capitulated. I really despised myself for that. But he was one of those people who are so disarmingly attractive that you have to forgive them. Anything. After we'd known each other for the regulation two hours, it was time for the good old standby - sex ...

[MUSIC Yma Sumac. In this fantasy sequence, DAVID dances erotically for ERIC. HE turns into Conchichi. They do a tango, both with their pants around their ankles. BLACKOUT.]

[Three brief tableaux -

1. ERIC, his back to the audience, DAVID on his knees in front of ERIC and his massive member; [BLACKOUT]

2. DAVID leaning forward with ERIC behind him, with ERIC going in for the kill; [BLACKOUT]

3. DAVID up on the bench, legs right over his head. He holds this position for the first part of the next scene. The music grinds to a halt.]

[SCENE: ERIC leaves abruptly]

ERIC: *[breezily]* Gotta go

DAVID: *[Looking at ERIC from between his legs]* What – What -

ERIC: I'm sorry, you know, it's - I'm sorry, look I –

DAVID: What's happening?

ERIC: Yeah. Well, it's just not - just not happening for me, you know, I mean it's not you, it's me –

DAVID: That means it's definitely me –

ERIC: It's just not happening. *[Silence]* You've gone quiet ...

DAVID: Yes. I guess I'm not used to being rejected until after the first date, I don't know –

ERIC: But it wasn't happening for me. I wasn't letting getting into it. I just wasn't enjoying it. 'Couldn't let go.

DAVID: *[Pants still down, he crosses his legs. Conversationally, to audience]* I thought I was going crazy. I mean, I was having a great time. How could my perceptions be so - wrong, so out of kilter? What was the matter with me?

ERIC: I mean, you wouldn't want me to fake it, would you?

[A pause. DAVID is thinking]

ERIC: Would you?

DAVID: Well - Maybe - just for a bit?

ERIC: Christ ...

DAVID: *[To audience]* He was one of those people who always puts the burden of responsibility on the other guy. *[Pulls up pants, comes downstage]* I had to be understanding and mature. What I wanted was to be honest and

express my anger. But instead I swallowed my feelings and kept the peace. As usual.

[He returns to bench]

ERIC: I suppose you're going to sulk now _

DAVID: I'M NOT SULKING!

ERIC: You've gone quiet again.

DAVID: Look, do you want to talk about it before you go? You do want to go, don't you?

[During the following, ERIC makes as though to leave DSR with each of his statements, while DAVID stands to speak then sits down.]

ERIC: Do you want me to go?

DAVID: No, I don't want you to go, I want to know if you want to go -

ERIC: I'll go if you want me to –

DAVID: I just said I don't want you to go-

ERIC: Maybe I should go _

DAVID: Don't go unless you want to go –

ERIC: Maybe -

DAVID: Stay or go. One or the other

ERIC: Maybe I'll go –

DAVID: Why are you going –

ERIC: I think you want me to go.

DAVID: Please don't go -

ERIC: I just get this feeling you'd be better if I go –

DAVID: Go if you want to –

ERIC: I don't want to go, I just think it's better –

DAVID: Alright, go -

[ERIC starts to leave. Pause.]

ERIC: I'm going.

DAVID: Wonderful, so go, that's fine

ERIC: You're Sure you want me to?

[DAVID shrieks at ERIC then tries to regain composure]

ERIC: *[working out his thought, painfully]* Look, Donald - er – Daniel - uh -

DAVID: David

ERIC: Look, David, it's not that I don't want to be with you -

DAVID: Here we go -

BOTH: BUT -

ERIC: I've just met you, I don't know you and to be perfectly frank I don't trust you enough to be alone with you tonight.

DAVID: Oh, I'm pretty wild. You've got something there all right. I mean, there's no telling what happen to you. I might - tie you down and force to watch some terrible video _

ERIC: Do you understand what I mean _

DAVID: - Maria Callas at Lincoln Center _

ERIC: I mean, I've got to be honest, haven't I?

[DAVID pauses, thinking]

ERIC: Haven't I?

DAVID: Well -

ERIC: Fuck ...

DAVID: He was one of those people who were so goddamn honest –

[DAVID: gives ERIC a shove out of the way as he returns to the table area. EXIT ERIC. During the speech another drink, some more pills]

DAVID: - that was part of the problem. He just came out and said all the things I always wanted to say. But never said, because I thought it would hurt his feelings. Or alienate him. Or sound cruel. Or he'd come up with things that I could never even think of. Or, worse, think of five days later at the checkout, when it was totally inappropriate...

[SCENE: The 24-hour supermarket. DAVID and CHECKOUT BOY. DAVID, drink in hand, walks SL with his shopping basket towards the checkout. He is in a kind of trance, bitching at the not-present ERIC:]

CB: That'll be - ten dollars and fifty-three cents.

DAVID: Money, money, money! It always comes down to that, doesn't it?

CB: I'm sorry - ?

DAVID: Well maybe it's time you heard some of my demands. Maybe I need some time on my own, too! Maybe you're not the only one who needs some space -

CB: It's sort of empty in "Household Goods". Or you could try "Cheeses of the World" - third aisle on the left -

DAVID: Why can't you be strong and supportive for a change?

CB: Er ... would you like me to double-bag in that then?

DAVID: Forget it. Take your money. If that's all you're after, you can just forget it. Take your money and get out of my life!

[The CHECKOUT BOY slaps DAVID:]

CB: Snap out of it!

DAVID: Where am I?!

CB: You're in the 24-hour supermarket.

DAVID: Christ, not again! Why can't I think of these things at the right time, I just go blank, I don't know what's wrong with me _

[The CHECKOUT BOY puts his arm around DAVID:'s shoulder an walks him across the stage as he gives his advice]

CB: Be more bold. Share, tell him. Let him know your needs. Where you're coming from right now.

DAVID: You really think so?

CB: No doubt about it.

DAVID: OK - I'll do it! Tonight!

CB: Remember - be bold. That's ten dollars and fifty-three cents.

DAVID: Keep the change! Same time next week?

[Exit Checkout Boy]

[To audience, from the table, MAUDLIN MUSIC, More drinks, pills. DAVID dabs himself with Clinique toner, adds some to the drink,]

DAVID: Don't get me wrong, I'm not bitter. Well, hardly at all. And life alone in my new apartment suits me. The view over the cemetery is a conversation piece. I rarely have a conversation in this apartment with anyone but myself. At 3 or 4 in the morning. This view of the cemetery only disturbs me on those nights when I wake up in the dead hours of the early morning - light a cigarette and feel my heart pounding. If I squint, I can just about obscure from sight the slabs of the tombstones, leaving me free to concentrate on the tree tops. I could almost imagine I was in the country - except for the endless stream of cars down the Westway. The odd siren. The traffic never stops here, not even at 3 or 4am. I listen to my heard pounding. I guess this is life, I think. Sometimes I say it aloud. Sometimes I'd say it to him. *[Snapping out of it]* To Him!

I started to realize it was impossible for me to make contact with someone else. That was when I became aware that I was stuck in an existentialist dilemma. He was one of those people with whom you have absolutely nothing in common -

[HE picks up the Sylvia Plath book from the table and moves to the bench]

DAVID: - but you keep on and on revealing your inner self , your secret activities, your hidden desires, in the hope of finding some small piece of common ground.

[SCENE: DAVID: is on the bench reading Sylvia Plath's "Lesbos". ENTER ERIC, eating a banana.]

ERIC: Sylvia Plath? Oh gawd, that's getting a bit kitchen sink, isn't it?

[DAVID continues reading behind ERIC]

ERIC: Poetry! It's a completely dead art-form! Total ivory tower stuff! I can't think of any think of anything more useless, more bourgeois -

DAVID: Actually -

ERIC: Complete intellectual masturbation. That's what it is.

DAVID: *[shyly]* I've been writing some poetry.

[ERIC makes a violent barfing noise]

ERIC: What kind of poetry?

DAVID: Nothing fancy. I call it "obstetric existentialism, confessional school".

[ERIC barfs again]

DAVID: Would you like to hear?

ERIC: I don't - well - OK, sure. Yeah, go ahead.

[DAVID: takes the scarf- which he keeps with him from this point on - and runs DS and strikes a pose. He gathers his forces, coughs and declaims with gut-wrenching sincerity.]

DAVID: Sylvia, Sylvia, who are you?
What
Are you?

Your groggy cry arouses me from
Lethal sleep. Lost in the dark womb
Of morning
I stagger from my bed, pie-eyed and
Blowsy in my Edwardian night-shirt.

The gases seep, seep.
My heart, a red balloon
Blooms hilariously in my mouth;

Its cool rubber mocks
My abortive fumbblings.

Somewhere, high over Mississauga,
The geese fly, in opposite
Directions.

They, too,
Ask nothing
Of me.

[PAUSE. DAVID takes a bow.]

DAVID: What do you think - ?

ERIC: You really want to know?

DAVID: Absolutely.

ERIC: Straight out -?

DAVID: Straight out. Off the cuff.

ERIC: You're sure about this?

DAVID: Be spontaneous.

[ERIC Walks up to DAVID and places the banana in his hand. Pause]

ERIC: It's preposterous. Totally ridiculous, self-indulgent,
sensational, maudlin -

DAVID: Let me get this right -

ERIC: - self-pitying, hackneyed, dated -

DAVID: Don't try and spare my feelings _

[DAVID, tail between legs, walks back to the bench]

ERIC: - talentless, overblown, self-referential, smug, contemptible CRAP.

DAVID: You didn't like it - ?

ERIC: You may be many things -

DAVID: That's positive, I can relate to that _

ERIC: But as a poet you stink. There, that's it.

DAVID: Do you have any suggestions? I mean, if I killed myself, would my work have more resonance?

ERIC: Maybe, in retrospect. Just make sure you burn it first.

[ERIC exits. DAVID to audience]

DAVID: The whole relationship was a mess. I decided I needed psychotherapy. Finally, here was an opportunity to get it off my chest -

[DAVID is seated at a bus stop, two seats away from the SCUZZIE who coughs, spits, and tries to ignore DAVID:'s ramblings]

It's getting worse and worse. Sometimes I feel that no-one sees me, no-one listens to me. Thank god you're listening. My lover has all the cuddly warmth of a pet rock. He doesn't even try to fulfil my needs. Self-love is great, but whoever heard of self-involvement? I mean, the other morning, I offered my right hand a cup of coffee and my phone number.

It must stem back to my parents. They were always traumatising me. My mum was a chronic depressive. She never cooked me a meal. She got her fibre by crushing a Valium into her coffee. My only solace was watching TV. I was so isolated, I sent a Mother's Day card to Lucille Ball. And my first sexual experience was a disaster –

[He is interrupted by a clanging bell]

Oops, there's my streetcar. I've got to get to my Psychotherapy group. It was really nice talking to you. Do you always wait at this stop...?

(The SCUZZIE falls over, dead drunk.)

DAVID: I found I was telling my problems to anyone who would listen – and several who wouldn't. Here I was, saying my problems related to my parents. In fact, they stemmed back to my very first encounter with Eric. He was one of those people who could never let you forget a faux pas. Or an awkward moment.

[SCENE: DAVID is in the bar. BARMAN wiping the counter. DAVID orders a drink, and stands uncertainly by the bar.]

BARMAN: Excuse me - *[beckoning with index finger]*

DAVID: *[Hopefully]* Yes - ?

BARMAN: Would you mind moving your fat butt away from this section of the bar which is CLEARLY MARKED "service Area"? Can't you read, buddy?

DAVID: Oh - sorry -

BARMAN: Wanker!

[Change of focus. DAVID: moves away and approaches one of the chairs. An ATTITUDE QUEEN is by the table, chatting in mime to "friends". DAVID sits down in the vacant chair]

AQ: Hey, smell you! That chair's taken _

DAVID: Taken - I - there's no one here -

[The ATTITUDE QUEEN is pointing at an empty bottle]

DAVID: You're pointing at an empty bottle -

AQ: That's my friend's. It's his drink. For crying out loud, can't a guy go to the BATHROOM without some nerd taking his chair?

DAVID: Heavens, I didn't realize - gosh, I –

AQ: Christ...

[Yet another change within the scene. ERIC is standing beside another chair, staring ahead in a bored manner. DAVID approaches with trepidation. He starts to sit down in the chair, thinks better of it, and decides to ask permission]

DAVID: Excuse me - are you sitting in this chair?

[ERIC: slowly turns to look at him. With grotesque sarcasm which gains in intensity:]

ERIC: Yes! Yes, I am sitting in this chair! How perceptive of you! Most people would think I was standing beside this chair, but not you! You weren't born yesterday, oh no! You've seen straight through my clever ruse! Shouldn't it be obvious? I am sitting, at this very moment in this chair as I sip my drink and look around at this pathetic collection of third-rate, professional alcoholics and no-hopers; but now that I know that you have escaped from whatever squalid mental institution was forced, against its better judgement, to take you in, and you are roaming the bars completely and dangerously at large, I will probably get down from this chair and stand beside it, so that my escape from your clumsy, completely unsolicited and totally unwelcome come-on will be more easily facilitated. Does that answer your question, ASSHOLE?!?!

[ERIC turns away]

DAVID: Have I - bothered you in some way?

[ERIC leaves in disgust]

DAVID: At least I had learned how to get a seat in a gay bar. I keep forgetting that in a puritanically-based society, life is meant to be a challenge. It's the pioneer spirit.

[A MYSTERIOUS STRANGER now stands at the opposite side of the "bar". He is attractive, slightly dangerous-looking. He stares ahead impassively, except where indicated]

DAVID: Like that guy over there. I always think to myself, "Is he the one?" For a full hour we've been nursing our drinks. Making eye contact. The thrill of the chase! Subtle shifts in body language.

[The STRANGER abruptly turns his back on DAVID].

[A sequence where the STRANGER and DAVID cruise, with DAVID avoiding his glances. Every time DAVID tries to sneak a look at the STRANGER he is caught out.]

DAVID: I try to avoid the obvious question - if he is such a great catch, what is he doing standing alone, nursing his drink in a bar at 6.30 pm?

[THE STRANGER puts his drink down firmly. HE slowly approaches DAVID]

DAVID: He's acknowledged me! My first conversation in a gay bar! Six months suddenly seems like a short time to wait! My best smile, my friendliest aspect - Is he the one?

STRANGER: *[PAUSE. ugly]* What the fuck do you think you're staring at? *[HE exits]*

DAVID: He's - not the one ...

[To audience] See what I mean? Impossible to make contact. An existentialist dilemma. It was exactly the same with Eric.

[He moves back to the table. HE is now showing signs of tiddliness. He has the scarf with him, and as well as drinking and pill-popping, he gels his hair.]

DAVID: - [continuing] After our first night of unbridled lust, I thought he had disappeared from my life forever. But then he would appear and re-appear on the horizon, shimmering like a fantastic mirage. Eric, the Great White Whale, and me the Captain Ahab of Compton Street. He was completely impassive, absolutely uninterested, and totally, utterly desirable. If I was going to be ignored, I couldn't think of anyone I'd rather have ignore me. *[Readying his scarf and sunglasses]* And that's when I hit on my master plan. A small ad so bold, so artfully designed, it couldn't fail to attract him ...

[DAVID dances about to disco music. We are now in the phenomenon known as the gay bar plus restaurant. A WAITER comes by and hands him the "Pink Slingback", a toxic fluorescent glass festooned with a jungle of fruit and veg. Exit WAITER. DAVID sits on the bench. Enter ERIC, also in shades. THEY remove their glasses and exclaim simultaneously]

BOTH: You!

DAVID: Quel surprise!

ERIC: It's you -

DAVID: Gotcha!

ERIC: Box 3026?

DAVID: Yep.

ERIC: Hot, Hung and Horny??!!

DAVID: Not so loud

ERIC: Not so loud??!! Is this your idea of a joke?

DAVID: Eric, don't be silly, I had no idea _

ERIC: I'll SUE - I can't believe this –

DAVID: Calm down, calm down - you know it was bound to happen sooner or later. The scene is very small, everyone gets to have a go with everyone else, that's the whole point of it –

ERIC: Deceived. Trapped. Humiliated.

DAVID: Well don't take it so hard, already. Look - is my hair too short - what's wrong -

ERIC: Don't be stupid -

DAVID: Well am I too short - too fat –

ERIC: For heaven's sake -

DAVID: I'm too old. That's it. You think I'm from the wrong age group -?

ERIC: I think you're from the wrong species –

DAVID: Have a drink. Go on, relax –

ERIC: What is this ?

(DAVID: lists the ingredients. ERIC: keeps attempting to have a sip, only to find that the list continues ...)

DAVID: It's called a "Pink Slingback". Gin, unsweetened cranberry juice – *[attempt]* - a sprig of borage, some spearmint, a twist of lemon - *[attempt]* - maraschino cherries, grated orange peel all shaken with crushed ice - *[will he make it this time? - no ...]* - and garnished with kiwi slices and fresh celery sticks.

ERIC: How about a few snails to keep the glass clean?

DAVID: You'll like it.

ERIC: *[sniffs suspiciously]* It feels warm. I think this drink is creating its own micro-climate.

DAVID: Eric, just try it.

[Tries the drink. PAUSE. DAVID smiles expectantly, makes a "Whaddya think?" gesture.]

ERIC: Do you know what the trouble with you is?

[DAVID holds gesture and smile, turns to audience]

DAVID: "Do you know what the trouble with you is?" He was one of those people who wants to change you all the time. I mean, why choose me in the first place?

[Exit ERIC]

I often fantasized that he was one of those people who would only appreciate me when I went away. Who'd finally realize my true qualities when I was dead - and gone - and out of his life - forever ...

[A fantasy sequence within the scene. Funereal music, e.g. Mozart Requiem. DAVID puts on his sunglasses and lies on the bench. KEENING WOMAN, wearing a shawl, enters and wails over DAVID:'s body.]

KW: Oh poor David! Blessed - fruit - of Mary! Sweet bleeding body of Christ! He was so stable! So mature! So well-adjusted! Oh God, take me instead! [etc., etc., ad lib.]

[SHE ends up flat on the ground, wailing. The music changes. Up tempo ballet. ERIC dances onstage ecstatically, doing a "jetée" over the KEENING WOMAN, who then runs offstage. ERIC dances happily.]

DAVID: WHAT THE FUCK IS GOING ON HERE!

ERIC: This is my interpretive dance! Dedicated to spring! To life!

[He dances]

DAVID: You're supposed to be crushed! Wracked with uncontrollable sobs –

ERIC: Who needs it? My dance for renewal of the earth! *[He continues]* Affirmation of existence!

DAVID: *[Getting up in "corpse" mode]* Now that I'm gone, you're supposed to be distraught –

ERIC: *[Stops for a moment]* Oh, I do miss you, David, I do I do - *[he blows a perfunctory kiss and resumes dancing]* But life must go on- !!

DAVID: Without me -- ?

ERIC: There will always be an empty space - we will forever polish the brass plate above your favourite bar stool -

DAVID: Wait a minute -

ERIC: *[Resuming the dance]* But we can't grieve forever. Earth! Gaia! Love! Life! Affirmation!

[He dances ecstatically, illustrating each word. DAVID interrupts him]

DAVID: WAIT - STOP!

[ERIC stops and waits]

DAVID: I've changed my mind. *[He runs back to the bench]* I'm back.

[Cut back to restaurant scene. DAVID fiddles with his scarf and glasses, but just can't get them right.]

ERIC: Do you know what the trouble is with you? The trouble with you is, you can't make up your mind about anything.

DAVID: I don't know about that...

ERIC: You're completely indecisive -

DAVID: Maybe you're right, maybe not –

ERIC: You don't know whether you're coming or going –

DAVID: On the other hand -

ERIC: You're utterly wishy-washy –

DAVID: If you say so -

ERIC: Take a look at yourself! Sandals with white socks! Your hair - what's left of it – looks like a polyester wig! Imitation polyester!

DAVID: Do you mind if I smoke?

ERIC: Do you mind if I have an asthma attack? Develop some style! Stop isolating yourself! Give up on me! Go out! Get involved! Enjoy life!

DAVID: Like those guys over there. Do you ever wonder why gay men have perfected the art of dancing alone?

ERIC: Cruise! Have some fun!

DAVID: Well, alright - how about that one? He's kind of nice _

ERIC: He's kind of femmy -

DAVID: I don't think he's femmy –

ERIC: Definitely femmy -

DAVID: At least he's not queeny –

ERIC: Just a bit femmy -

DAVID: He's femmy-fem, but he's not queeny-fem

ERIC: I can't stand femmy types. Look - the guy in the check shirt and moustache –

DAVID: All those guys look the same! Clones! Like a convenience food! No thought involved – instant style - just add facial hair and serve. No substance at all! The popcorn of gay sex.

ERIC: You're hopeless. You can't be so choosy all the time.
[Sipping his drink] And these drinks are wonderful! You know, these could be habit-forming. Waiter -!

DAVID: *[Mary Tyler Moore]* Oh Eric!

[HE takes the drink from ERIC and snuggles up]

Can't we stop playing these silly games for one minute?
We've been here for long enough. Isn't it about time I invited you back for - coffee?

[HE takes ERIC's hand]

DAVID: And on this, a marriage was built.

[MENDELSSOHN wedding march. DAVID and ERIC, arm-in-arm, walk down the aisle]

[To audience]

DAVID: Our lifestyles were so different, our tastes so incompatible, the combination of our personalities so grating - that living together was inevitable.

[SCENES FROM A MARRIAGE - To the sound of e.g. "Love Story". A short mime sequence illustrating the following scenes:

1. *DAVID and ERIC are apartment hunting. DAVID pleads with him. They take it.*
2. *THEY are moving in. DAVID staggers in under huge box; ERIC carries a tiny one.*
3. *DAVID paints while ERIC reads the paper; DAVID playfully flicks some paint on ERIC, who is not amused.*
4. *A FRIEND visits bearing an ugly plant.*
5. *DAVID and ERIC's sex life is a yawn*
6. *DAVID watching TV while ERIC snoozes and snores. Disenchantment.]*

DAVID: *[Sarcastic and increasingly drunk]* And what a splendid catch I'd made.

[HE goes to the table and grabs the bottle. He speaks to the audience from DSR]

DAVID: Eric would have been happier living with a single cell life form. He was one of those people with an imagination for disaster.

ERIC: *[DSL. Hysterical]* DON'T WALK ON MY CLEAN FLOOR!

DAVID: I hadn't realised I was entangling myself with a latter-day Louis Pasteur.

ERIC: DON'T DRINK OUT OF THE MILK BOTTLE! WE'RE ALL GOING TO GET SALMONELLA!

DAVID: I suppose I should have been grateful for a tidy lover -

ERIC: USE A PLATE! YOU'LL END UP WITH WORMS! WHY NOT JUST GET THE CAT TO SIT ON YOUR MUFFIN FOR CHRISAKE!

DAVID: Live and let live, I said -

[Back at the table, DAVID: pours more and more booze, drinks from the bottle, pours pills into his mouth, lights two cigarettes at once, etc. etc. HE and ERIC top each other's hysteria. We hear horror music - e.g. from "PSYCHO"]

ERIC: YOU KEEP THROWING YOUR CLOTHES ON THE FLOOR. DO YOU WANT TO GET BITS OF GLASS IN YOUR UNDERWEAR?

DAVID: It was strangely comforting to have someone around the house - to hear someone else's voice in the morning -

ERIC: THERE'S A PUBIC HAIR ON MY TOOTHBRUSH!! AND IT'S NOT ONE OF OURS!!

DAVID: - to have someone to make lunch for -

ERIC: THESE SANDWICHES HAVE GONE STALE. CAN'T YOU REMEMBER TO BURP THE TUPPERWARE?

DAVID: - and to give me a feeling of security -

ERIC: YOU LEFT THE FRONT DOOR UNLOCKED AGAIN! WE'RE ALL GOING TO BE MURDERED IN OUR BEDS!

DAVID: At last, here was someone I could pass the time with -

ERIC: HOW ABOUT A QUICK ARGUMENT BEFORE DINNER?

DAVID: SURE, ERIC!!. JUST LET ME FINISH WIRING UP YOUR BATH!

[DAVID loses it with an open bottle of pills in each cigarette-stuffed hand. HE collapses onto the table. He comes to, slowly. He is now very drunk. To audience:]

And so our life together continued in its quiet rhythm. But somehow I began to sense Eric's unease. He was one of those people who would never admit his worries. Poor baby, he was so uptight about everything. He was

afraid to show his feelings. I just hope he realizes it's me
– I'm the one- who helped him open up a bit.

[SCENE: The 24-hour supermarket. DAVID walks over to it, glass in hand. He and ERIC are at the checkout, buying any embarrassing product the actors or director may wish, ad. lib. From time to time ERIC recognizes a friend and tries to pretend all is well.]

DAVID: *[Swaying]* Oh god, it's one of my attacks...

ERIC: Not here - we're in the middle of the supermarket, for heaven's sake -

DAVID: I feel dizzy -

ERIC: Do you mean dizzy or light-headed - ?

DAVID: I'm about to fall Over! Why are you arguing about terminology?

ERIC: I think you're just hyperventilating –

DAVID: There are large, purple and orange spots in front of my eyes –

ERIC: Here, put this bag over your head –

DAVID: I. think I'm dying - I don't want a bag over my head! I'm about to croak in the all-night supermarket! You always trivialise how I'm feeling –

ERIC: - really, you're just showing a classic psychosomatic response, agoraphobia and projected guilt reaction –

DAVID: I'm not dying in the 24-hour supermarket with a fucking bag over my head!

ERIC: - just take the bag –

DAVID: - just tell me you love me -

ERIC: - so that's it -

DAVID: - just say it, for once in your life, please -

ERIC: You're always doing this to me –

DAVID: - everything's going dark –

ERIC: - well it's not going to work –

[DAVID: faints at ERIC's feet.]

ERIC: David - *[Sighs]* All right, all right. *[Pause. Whispers]* I love you. I love you. *[Losing it]* I love you I love you I love you I LOVE YOU!!!
[Waving at a friend] Don't ask me why... *[He gives DAVID a kick]*

DAVID: *[Slowly coming round]* I think my breathing is a bit better.

ERIC: Do you think you can walk home?

DAVID: I think so. *[Pause. With heavy sarcasm]* Thanks for being there.

ERIC: I can't always be there, you know.

DAVID: In that case - do you mind if I keep the bag with me?

[ERIC stuffs the bag into DAVID's hand and exits. DAVID staggers back to the table. Dead, dead drunk. To hell with the glass, he brandishes the whiskey bottle.]

DAVID: "I can't always be there -" He meant what he said. Those tiny flickers of emotion would never be enough for me. Because he was one of those people who changed in love. *[To ERIC, who is now sitting on the bench]* Suddenly that sexy hunk turned into the Incredible Hulk. The charming conceit became unbridled arrogance.

[DAVID moves to the bench, Carrying the bottle with him.]

Cool, shy reserve was transformed into a brick wall.

[SCENE: DAVID and ERIC are sitting at the table. ERIC is eating an apple]

DAVID: I think it's time we had a talk.

ERIC: Ummmm ...

DAVID: I don't think we're 'Communicating as much as we used to.

ERIC: *fa big bite]*

DAVID: We're growing apart. I know we are.

ERIC: Yep.

DAVID: I have a confession to make. I don't know how to tell you this, but - I was unfaithful to you last night. There, it's out. There's nothing I can do about it.

ERIC: Oh...

DAVID: Yes. I'm ashamed of myself, but you've driven me to it, you know you have. We haven't had sex in weeks. You don't talk, you don't spend time with me -

ERIC: Mmmff ...

DAVID: I couldn't take it anymore. I went out, got pissed as a newt – ran to the baths, ordered deluxe room 428" - that's the one with the waterbed, piped music, silk sheets, resident hairdresser and two-way mirror - and left the door open. That was before I discovered that the Upper New York State Mattachine Brass Band was in town for school concerts. After three hours of non-stop polyphony I was voted "Man Most Likely to Adjust His Embouchure"

ERIC: Pass the muffins –

DAVID: *[Doing so]* Now that I've been spoiled for choice, the simple, uncomplicated love of one man can never again satisfy me –

ERIC: Go for it.

DAVID: Now that our forty-six hearts have beat as one –

ERIC: Don't forget to write -

DAVID: - I can never again be Content with our meagre existence -

ERIC: And your point is - ?

DAVID: WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO TO GET A REACTION FROM YOU!??

ERIC: Don't worry about it. There's no need to feel guilty -

DAVID: What -

ERIC: Actually, I was unfaithful last night, too –

DAVID: I'll kill him.

ERIC: It wasn't like that –

DAVID: Who with? TELL ME!

ERIC: You're sure you want to know?

DAVID: I'll murder him! With my bare hands! I want to know every detail.

[DAVID reacts to the following ad lib.]

ERIC: [In a flat tone:] I Saw him Sitting on a bench in Allen Gardens. He was blond, about 22, with that little-boy-lost look. He invited me up for a white wine spritzer , He turned out to be reading English at University. He and his friend had just split up, he had lost his first and only love. So I became, for a few brief moments, his shoulder to cry on, his anchor in the storm. We held hands as he poured out his soul, his dreams. We laughed at the follies of our youth, enchanted by each other's company. Later, his tousled head resting in my lap, we read to each other from the collected works of Proust and Baudelaire – Barrett Browning and Eliot _

DAVID: You read poetry??!!

ERIC: [moving downstage in fantasy light, to the sound of e.g. Gregorian chant] - until, charmed by the magic of these verses, and our mysterious, almost mystical bond, we fell asleep in each other's arms, like Babes in the Wood, protecting each other. I left in the small hours of the mOrning. My kiss covered his brow, his lips. We were as innocent as two children. As I walked home, enriched by this fleeting glimpse of the unquenchable human spirit, I fancied the stars shone a little brighter.

DAVID: But how many times did you do it??!!

[LIGHTS back to normal]

ERIC: We didn't. It was nearly time for his early shift at the sauna. He's got a part-time job as a towel boy. And the Upper New York State Mattachine Brass Band left two days ago.

DAVID: You didn't do it, you two-timing bastard??!!

ERIC: I just felt like a good time.

DAVID: You were unfaithful - for no reason -

ERIC: No reason at all. Just for a laugh. HA. HA

[Exit ERIC]

[DAVID hurls the apple after him]

DAVID: THAT'S - IMMORAL!

[DAYS OF WINE AND ROSES. DAVID just about makes it to the table.]

DAVID: That's what I think of when I sit alone, with my cigarette, at 3 or 4 am. How we were always slightly out of synch. I'm getting less afraid of looking out of the window, these days. I mean, I don't need to close my eyes so much. Those gray slabs, those tombstones, are there, just like always. But now I try to acknowledge them. I don't want to feel invulnerable. I listen to my heart pound, to the traffic. I wonder if he's afraid. Naturally, he was one of those people whose timing was perverse. Now that we're splitting up, now that I'm on my own, I expect I'll be irresistible.

*[SCENE: DAVID's new apartment. DAVID and ERIC look
For the first part of the scene, their roles are reversed from the opening,
i.e. ERIC is trying his best to be kittenish and playful, DAVID is quite stony
and solid.]*

ERIC: So. Your new apartment. OOOOOOH! ! Parquet floors!
Nicce!

DAVID: Like the view?

ERIC: Cemeteries are peaceful.

DAVID: Just what I need

ERIC: David -

DAVID: Don't get any ideas, Eric. I mean, about staying the
night or anything -

ERIC: You'll never guess _

DAVID: - we made the decision, and I'm going to follow it
through -

ERIC: I've been listening to Laurie Anderson. Kind of grows on you -

DAVID: Oh very good, nice try, Eric. Well it won't work. I am absolutely not falling for this - don't even consider it -

[ERIC has been caressing DAVID sensually throughout his speech. DAVID's will is breaking down.]

ERIC: *[salacious]* Well... ?

[Pause]

DAVID: *[Giving in. The role reversal ends abruptly]* I'll make the drinks.

[He does so -]

DAVID: Actually - I nearly forgot - I have something for you -

ERIC: *[touched]* For me? - Really?

DAVID: - Yeah - just for old times' sake - you know -

ERIC: You make me feel like a real bastard -

DAVID: Do you want to hear?

ERIC: Hear - what _?

DAVID: My poem. *[ERIC: chokes slightly on his drink]* My present to you.

ERIC: *[all smiles and gratitude]* I'd love to.

DAVID: *[grabbing ERIC by the legs as at the opening. Declaiming with terrible triumph.]*

Eric, who are you?
What
Are you?

Your groggy cry arouses me from
Lethal sleep. Lost in the dark womb
Of morning
I stagger from my bed "

[As DAVID begins his love poem, ERIC turns to the audience and begins a slow, agonised scream - over this, DAVID continues to declaim Enthusiastically. The last notes of Laurie Anderson's "Oh Superman" are heard.]

BLACKOUT