

DILLY (*She snaps her fingers*): You think Esposito's good looking?

JENNIFER: Good enough.

DILLY: He watches you.

JENNIFER: He watches you.

DILLY: Do you like me? No, do you? (*JENNIFER nods yes*) Would you give me something of yours if I wanted it?

JENNIFER: What thing?

DILLY: Just something.

JENNIFER: Say what?

DILLY: I don't know what. I just mean would you? (*They look at each other. JENNIFER doesn't answer*) You look different.

JENNIFER: I've never had on cowboy boots before.

DILLY (*Snaps her fingers*): Happened to your parents. (*JENNIFER looks down*) I'm sorry.

JENNIFER: Mother calls it a period of adjustment.

DILLY: Shirt has a tear. There's more in the chest.

JENNIFER (*Opens the third drawer by mistake*): Mother says that because we live and learn there are times when one or the other goes on ahead and then that one must wait or the other must hurry and catch up.

DILLY: Sure. That must be it.

Source: Samuel French, Inc.

❖ Women of Manhattan

.....JOHN PATRICK SHANLEY

CHARACTERS: BILLIE (30), RHONDA (28)

SETTING: RHONDA's apartment in Manhattan, the present.

RHONDA LOUISE and BILLIE sit at the dining room table, each holding a glass of wine. RHONDA LOUISE hails from the Deep South and is slightly drunk. BILLIE is a native New Yorker who has a dramatic view of life. As the scene opens, both women confront their friendship and an evening without men.

BILLIE: Don't we look great?

RHONDA: You look beautiful.

BILLIE: You look beautiful! You look like a firefly in a nightclub. What does that mean?

RHONDA: It was your remark.

BILLIE: It was a compliment of some kind, Rhonda Louise. Trust me. But here we are. And I'm stumped, sister, stumped, I really truly am. Cause you are stunning and I am stunning, and this room is just ideal to show how stunning we really are . . .

RHONDA: Like the oysters.

BILLIE: Exactly! But where are the men?

RHONDA: You told me not to invite any men.

BILLIE: I know. I know I did that. But where are the men?

RHONDA: That was the whole point.

BILLIE: I know. But where are they?

RHONDA: The three of us would just deck out and look great for each other and fuck the men.

BILLIE: I know, I know, but don't you feel we're wasting our gorgeousness on each other?

RHONDA: No.

BILLIE: Just a little?

RHONDA: No.

BILLIE: I understand why you're saying that, but come on.

RHONDA: Wait. I know what you're hinting at. That ain't what's going on. Anyway, you're married.

BILLIE: So what?

RHONDA: So you're here without a man cause your husband's out

building buildings somewhere.

BILLIE: So what? You're here alone, I mean, without a man, because you threw Jerry out.

RHONDA: Stop. Right there. That's a black lie. I'm here alone tonight cause you knew your husband whadn't gonna be around tonight and you don't cheat so you suggested this girls' night which is fine with me, but don't you then turn around and tell me I don't have a date cause I threw this one guy outta my life. That's just a detail.

BILLIE: Sorry.

RHONDA: If I wanted a guy here tonight there'd be a guy here tonight. I'm dressed up cause you wanted me to dress up. I'll tell you why you're cryin out Where's the men? It's cause we're dressed for men. These clothes evolved outta a situation where observations were made about which kinda garments are effective to wear to attract the male of the species. It's really like female fashion's premier designer is Mister Charles Darwin. The point is these kinds clothes are bait. We're wearin bait. These clothes are just like worms only there's no fish to bite.

BILLIE: Worms!

RHONDA: Bait.

BILLIE: It's weird to think of my clothes as a worm.

RHONDA: And you yourself as a hook.

BILLIE: Especially when I've already landed my fish. Bob. Bob the big-mouthed bass.

RHONDA: Well, that's cause you gotta keep in shape.

BILLIE: What do you mean?

RHONDA: You gotta know, if it came to that extreme, that you could catch another gentleman. My father use to practice fly-fishing in the living room. He'd be casting this fly in and about a sewing hoop to the consternation of my mother. He was practicing outwitting the trout. It's the comparable same thing to happily married women who flirt. They're casting flies in the living room.

BILLIE: Is that what you think of me, Rhonda Louise?

RHONDA: Well. Billie. You are one of the worst flirts I know.

BILLIE: Do you honestly think I flirt to keep in shape in case Bob leaves me?

RHONDA: Yes. Fear! I think that's one of the reasons. But I think you do it too cause you'd like to screw the socks off the lot of 'em.

BILLIE: Is that what . . .

RHONDA: Yes! Horniness! Definitely! And I think you do it too as a

sorta check you run to make sure you still exist. That's the most existential reason. I flirt therefore I am. And I think you do it too to . . .

BILLIE: I'M GOING TO TELL YOU WHY I FLIRT.

RHONDA: Why.

BILLIE: Habit.

RHONDA: Oh.

BILLIE: There was probably a dozen reasons why, at one time, but they're all dead now. Still standing up but dead. Like stuffed birds in the Museum of Natural History. Like me. (BILLIE starts to cry)

RHONDA: What's the matter, Billie?

BILLIE: I feel dead. I feel dead.

RHONDA: You're not dead, honey.

BILLIE: Yes, I am.

RHONDA: No, you're not. You just feel dead.

BILLIE: The other night, Bob asked me to marry him.

RHONDA: But . . . you are married to him.

BILLIE: He forgot!

RHONDA: He what?

BILLIE: Oh, it was sweet, really. We had this dinner and we drank some champagne and he'd brought me these pink pink roses, and the moment was just so . . . He got carried away and proposed.

RHONDA: But that's just so dear.

BILLIE: Oh, it was precious, it really really was. But it was also just exactly what it is about my marriage that drives me insane. I mean, I could kill!

RHONDA: I don't get it.

BILLIE: It's the courtship. He can't give it up. We can't give it up. It's been three years and we're still on the balcony, if you know what I mean. I thought that marriage was supposed to lead somewhere, not just be some frozen terrific moment. I thought it was supposed to be this great adventure. Like death.

RHONDA: It's hard for me to sympathize, Billie.

BILLIE: Oh, I'm sure it is. Nobody ever sympathizes with me. Their troubles are always worse.

RHONDA: Well. You've always done well that I could see.

BILLIE: And terrible!

RHONDA: You've always had money.

BILLIE: Yes, I have.

RHONDA: And some guy that adored you.

BILLIE: Almost always.

RHONDA: And you're good looking and you have nice clothes and you've always lived in some place that was great . . .

BILLIE: But it's always been like photographs! And I want to be in a movie! An adventure movie where half my clothes are torn off by a gorilla and I marry the chief and I'm thrown in a volcano but I survive and become a Hollywood star and give it up and become a nun in an insane asylum in France and learn about being silent and unknown, and I invent something . . . useful and good . . . that the government and the corporations want to steal and twist for evil . . .

RHONDA: Billie! Billie! Billie!

BILLIE: What?

RHONDA: What are you talking about?

BILLIE: I just wish that my existence was more . . . picaresque.

RHONDA: And for this you want my sympathy?

BILLIE: No, not for that, Rhonda Louise. I want your sympathy for an ache in me that knows no name.

RHONDA: Alright. For that you have got my sympathy. Ready for dessert?

Source: Dramatists Play Service, Inc.

Man-Man Scenes

✦ Amongst Barbarians

.....MICHAEL WALL

CHARACTERS: RALPH (20's), BRYAN (20)

SETTING: Prison cell in Penang, Malaysia, the present.

RALPH and BRYAN face the death sentence for drug-trafficking. As the scene opens, both men contemplate their past life and their grim fate.

RALPH: I've done a lot of travelling, Bryan.

BRYAN: Well I wish you fucking hadn't. I wish you'd stayed home and sat in front of the telly, instead of . . . Why the fuck couldn't you have left me alone? I was all right.

RALPH: Oh yeah!

BRYAN: I was.

RALPH: Yeah, you were wonderful.

BRYAN: I ain't saying I was wonderful; I'm saying I was all right. I didn't need . . .

RALPH: You needed the money! Well, you wanted it. Quit telling yourself lies, why don't you? You did it for the bread. 25,000 and a first-class flight on to Australia — you couldn't resist it. A fortnight in Oz then back home like the fucking Sugar Plum Fairy — Look Ma! You're a victim of your own greed. The new English disease, or haven't you heard . . . ?

BRYAN: Bollocks . . .

RALPH: . . . That's why you were perfect. Or we thought you were perfect.

BRYAN: I wasn't perfect, was I?

RALPH: You were not. You were a complete asshole.

BRYAN: You're lucky I haven't broken your fucking neck for you by now.

RALPH: I am?

BRYAN: Fucking lucky. I tell you, they shouldn't've put us in the