

LOVE AND LOATHING

A play in one act by
David Gorsky

Characters

Mark Halloran - A man in his twenties.
Meredith Kirsten - A woman in her twenties.
June(*on phone*) - A woman in her twenties..

Time: The present, early evening.
Place: Anywhere (*places changeable*)

CONTACT:
(908) 590-1544
davidjohngorsky@gmail.com

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(Lights up. MARK's apartment. Center stage, a couch. An endtable with papers and envelopes on it. Another endtable with a phone and answering machine. MARK is painting a canvas. We hear a knock on the door.)

MARK

It's open!

(MEREDITH walks in hastily.)

MEREDITH

Mark, I gotta talk to you!

MARK

Meredith. What a surprise. O.K. I'll be with you in a minute. Have a seat.

(MEREDITH sits down.)

MARK

(cont'd)

Just a few strokes more.

(She begins to cry. MARK immediately reacts.)

MARK

(cont'd)

Meredith! What's wrong? Jesus. Is everything alright?

MEREDITH

No.

MARK

Well, what is it? Are you some kind of trouble?

MEREDITH

I don't know.

(MARK embraces her, tries to comfort her.)

MARK

O.K. Listen, calm down. Alright. What's going on? Something wrong with your mother?

MEREDITH

No, not that wench.

MARK

Oh, yeah. I forgot that you haven't spoken to her since your last book report.

(She sighs, maybe a chuckle.)

MARK

(cont'd)

Meredith?

MEREDITH

Mark, I hope I'm not interrupting anything.

MARK

Oh, nothing much. Although my blues and my browns are clashing as we speak. But that may be a good thing. Just what I need. Hey, gotta help me out a little.

(Pause.)

MARK

(cont'd)

I know...It's what's his name...

MEREDITH

Charlie.

MARK

Yes, Charlie. Sounds like you guys must have had a massive argument or something. Is that it? Did you break up?

MEREDITH

No.

MARK

He didn't hit you. Did he?

MEREDITH

No.

MARK

You caught him with another woman.

MEREDITH

No.

MARK

Oh, I know what. He forgot to get those Van Morrison tickets for you when he came to the Beacon last month. And that's something that I would never have forgotten, if you remember.

MEREDITH

It's not that.

MARK

Well, I see that you have every reason to be distraught.

MEREDITH

Oh, Mark. This isn't what I need right now.

MARK

Sorry. Where's Charlie now?

MEREDITH

He's out playing volleyball at the Y. He plays once a week.

MARK

A guy has to get his exercise. There's nothing wrong with that, I suppose. Hell knows I can use some. C'mon Meredith. What the hell is going on with you?

MEREDITH

Mark, I'm frightened.

MARK

Of what?

MEREDITH

Mark, I'm about to make the biggest and most important decision of my adult life and I just don't want to blow it. You get it?

MARK

Big decision? What are you talking about?

MEREDITH

Mark, I'm like - getting married in a couple of weeks. Get with it, will you?

MARK

Getting married? This is something new. Jesus, when were you gonna tell me? Treat me as if I were a total stranger.

MEREDITH

I did tell you. I sent you an invitation two weeks ago. Didn't you receive it?

MARK

Gee, I don't know. I haven't been routinely checking my mail lately. A simple phone call would've sufficed.

(MARK goes to his pile of mail.)

MEREDITH

That would be great if you would answer your phone once in a while. I know you all too well.

(MARK searches through his papers and mail.)

MARK

True, true. Although that problem should be remedied by my new answering machine. See, I finally caught up with the times. Maybe by the time I'm eighty I'll get a beeper. Let's just hope I check that now on a regular basis. But I must admit this marriage thing is indeed all too sudden.

MEREDITH

Yeah, it was a real rush job. The invitations. The renting of the hall for the ceremony and reception. Everything was done in a flash.

MARK

I've got so much shit I gotta go through, it's pitiful. Visa bills. Student loans. Wow. What's this?

(MARK discovers an envelope, opens it and reads it.)

MARK

Well, it's about fucking time! I've been waiting for these guys to get back to me. Let's see: "Dear Mr. Halloran, We are sorry to inform you that the book you requested for search, The Bastion Guide To The World's Mushrooms, is out of print. Our search for this title in all our databases showed nothing. Please request our services again. Thank You." Shit. So much for trippin'.

MEREDITH

Mushrooms?

(MARK discovers the invitation and examines it.)

MARK

Oh, look. This must be it. Cheap paper, looks almost like copy grade. Where did you get these printed up, at the Office Max?

MEREDITH

Gimme a break, Mark. It was all done spur of the moment. God.

(He's about to read the invitation.)

MARK

Alright, alright. Let me at this: "Meredith Ann Kirsten will be married to Charles David Collins on Friday, June 27 1997 at 7P.M.(to the point). The ceremony and reception will be dually held at the...Y.M.C.A. of Montclair on Park Ave." You have got to be kidding me. The Y.M.C.A.?

MEREDITH

I know it sounds ridiculous. It was at the last minute. We couldn't get no other hall.

MARK

Who's gonna be the wedding band, The Village People?

MEREDITH

Listen, Mark. You don't understand. Charlie doesn't have much family so he wanted to make this wedding a very private and simple affair. And because of my situation, I wanted that too. And we didn't want to spend a lot of money either. But, you know it still took me a lot of work. The invitations, the food, the hiring of the Schleps.

MARK

The Schleps?

MEREDITH

Danny Landau's band's playing.

MARK

Oh, no kidding? They can do a grundge version of the chicken dance.

MEREDITH

We even got Father Mahon to do the ceremony.

MARK

Father Mahon's pretty cool. One of the few priests I can actually talk to without being excommunicated.

MEREDITH

Yeah. But I practically had to bribe him with a case of Guinness so he could fit it into his schedule, keep the cops out, et cetera. And after all that preliminary work I feel drained, exhausted and now scared shitless, like I'm about to enter the great unknown.

MARK

So what did you come here for?

MEREDITH

I don't know. I guess I'm just scared and I felt this need to air these things out.

MARK

To me? Well I certainly hope you feel better.

MEREDITH

Mark, I can see you're not very interested in my plight. Which is the most I should have expected from you. God, I'm such a doofis!

MARK

What, you're trying to make feel guilty now? Hey, I'm sorry. I just don't get you sometimes. You pop up here, out of the blue, for some advice, some...I don't know spiritual guidance to your next phase of life with this guy. I can't tell what to do with your life. I'm an ex-boyfriend, not a therapist. What the hell do I know? I mean, I guess I was not the most sensitive guy around when we were together. Taught me a thing or two.

MEREDITH

Mark, it was not entirely your fault.

MARK

O.K. But that's in the past, a fact that we've accepted and grown with, right? And besides, you're talking to somebody who's been out of commission for over three months.

MEREDITH

You mean, you're not seeing anyone? C'mon, a guy like you? Nobody?

MARK

No. Of course, just after we broke up, I did do the "Getting Even With Meredith" thing, but lately I just haven't had much luck.

MEREDITH

What about that girl at your show? And that was two months ago, I believe.

MARK

Oh, yeah. Lisa Chang. She was the proprietor of the gallery.

MEREDITH

She seemed more than that when I saw you. She was all over you.

MARK

Meredith, that's how I got the show in the first place.

MEREDITH

I see.

MARK

Yeah. I prostituted myself just so I can have some of my work displayed. Not something I'm proud of but looking back on it I felt I did what I had to do. Lisa was the exception though. She wasn't for me anyway - had ten years on me. After her, I've had nobody. Not one.

MEREDITH

I still find that hard to believe; you were a typical gigolo before I met you.

MARK

Thanks, Meredith.

MEREDITH

What happened, Mark?

MARK

Who knows? Maybe I found some plusses in monogamy.

(She notices the painting that MARK was been working on.)

MEREDITH

What do you have here?

MARK

Something new. Since I have a lot of time on my hands, I've been putting more of my energy into my work, which is a good sign, I guess.

MEREDITH

What are you calling it? Is that supposed to be Manhattan?

MARK

Nope. Close. It's Hoboken. I'm calling it Waterfront Escape.

MEREDITH

It's good.

MARK

Think so? I like it too. I'm experimenting with various spatial relations. See these apartments that are lit up? They're far apart, in remote buildings.

MEREDITH

There's people inside. Silhouettes. You're really into detail, which is not quite you. The sky looks like it's not finished yet.

MARK

I'm trying to get the right mix of tones to depict the gloominess of the tenants.

(MARK reaches for another painting that has been finished and shows it to MEREDITH. The painting should be abstract or Cubist style, with some or all of the work done with magic marker.)

MEREDITH

(reacting to the glum comment)

Okay.

MARK

Hey, remember, this?

MEREDITH

How could I forget?

MARK

My most simple, yet one of my favorites, of course. Notice the way I captured your breasts in an almost Picasso manner. It's amazing what one could do with a felt-tipped marker.

MEREDITH

You're still talking about the canvas, right? I still cannot believe that I actually posed for you.

MARK

Well, at times you could be a real sport, Meredith. Really.

MEREDITH

Thanks.

MARK

Ptt.Ptt. Come here.

(MARK still senses that MEREDITH is troubled. He offers a comforting embrace, and they do embrace.)

MEREDITH

I don't know what to do!

MARK

So, you're confused. I hear you. Well, I say we must put a stop to your confusion immediately. And I think what is needed is the healing power of some high quality smoke.

(MARK goes to a little box on the endtable and takes out a dime bad of marijuana with some pre-rolled joints in it.)

MEREDITH

Uh. No. No. I am not getting high with you.

MARK

(getting a bag of pot)

C'mon. You'll enjoy it. My buddy came through for me over the weekend. Grown in the Midwest. Don't ever say I don't buy American.

MEREDITH

I'm telling you Mark, I'm not into that anymore. The last time I did that stuff...

MARK

You fail to see the charitable act I'm trying to do here. This stuff is not just to get high off of. You can use it as a tool.

MEREDITH

A tool?

MARK

To meditate with. Search into yourself. Find out who you really are and solve real problems. To regress.

MEREDITH

What do you mean, regress?

MARK

You can go back in time. Centuries. Milleniums. You know that fag Rudy that lives upstairs? He came over here last week to watch his favorite coming out movie on my VCR because his was broken. It's baffling, Rudy's been with ten different guys in the past year and he still has this need to come out. And I was in a block so I decided to get loose and watch the movie with him, which I think was called Eat Your Heart Out, David Bowie. I just got a shipment in of Hawaiian Sativa. Real rad stuff. So I rolled a joint for each of us. Within a half an hour we were both baked. Gone. We smoked it all. And then, all of a sudden, I don't remember which one of us noticed it first...hair started to grow all over our bodies in a matter of seconds. Our lower jaws then quickly protruded outward. Rudy then perched up onto the couch and before you know it, our knuckles were dragging on the floor. It suddenly dawned on both us that we both returned to primitive man. We became apes. Neanderthals, Cro-Magnon whatever. It was incredible. Even the actors in the movie we were watching were ape-like. We then went to the refrigerator. We spent hours eating everything in sight, including the ice cubes. We were invincible. It seems our appetite and strength increased trifold.

MEREDITH

Oh, come off it, Mark.

MARK

Wait. There's more.

MEREDITH

Oh, no!

MARK

It was during this reverie that it hit me. We were standing in front of the fridge, feeling the cool air and then we suddenly became engulfed in fear that the next Ice Age was coming and we needed to get away, to hibernate or something. But then we looked down and noticed the condensation on the floor and realized we were saved. Then it came to me: Water - Front - Escape. I felt liberated. I went straight to the canvas to paint this very work. Meanwhile Rudy was ecstatic too because he discovered that there was such a thing as gay apes. So, we both benefitted.

MEREDITH

Well, that's one fantastic story, Mark. But I don't think pot will help me.

MARK

No go, huh?

MEREDITH

No.

MARK

Well, it was worth a shot. I am trying to help. But no matter what, in the end, the answer has to come from you, Meredith. Do you love him?

MEREDITH

I don't know... I guess I do...I...I...Oh, Mark.

MARK

It's a bitch. Isn't it? Try asking yourself this question: Does he fulfill your expectations?

MEREDITH

My expectations?

MARK

Does he meet the requirements in what you want in a guy. Make a list if you'd like. Here's a pencil and paper. For starters. Is he financially stable? Is he nice looking? Is he a gentleman with the utmost courtesy and compassion. Hell, is he good in bed?

MEREDITH

That's a very personal question, Mark. And besides, sex was a never big deal for me in a relationship.

MARK

You're so full of shit, Meredith.

(She smiles.)

MARK

Well, how is he? I'm curious.

MEREDITH

Don't try to be funny, Mark. You're embarrassing me.

MARK

You're right. I'm getting obnoxious. And why dwell on something that I'm not getting. Now, what other questions shall you ask yourself? Is he a man of fortitude and virtue. Is he hard worker? Does he work too hard? Are his parents cool? Do they like you? How does your mother...oh, that's right. You couldn't give a rat's pater about what your mother thinks.

MEREDITH

You got that right.

MARK

You know she always liked me. Anyway, you make a tally of Charlie's qualities and faults. And if the number of Charlie's qualities exceeds the number of faults, then he's the guy. If it's the other way around, then perhaps he's not.

MEREDITH

Sounds too practical. But I don't know where to begin.

MARK

You can start with whether or not he's good in bed.

MEREDITH

Mark!

MARK

O.K. O.K. Question number one: Is he...honest?

MEREDITH

Honest? Yes.

(She has the paper and pencil handy.)

MARK

That's it. Write it down. Let's see, here. Question two: Is he handsome?

MEREDITH

Yes.

MARK

Does he pick the lint out of his navel..

MEREDITH

As a matter of fact, he does. *(Pause.)* What do you think of him, Mark?

MARK

Me? Oh, well, he seemed very nice. And when you guys came to my exhibition--- That was the only time I met him. He seemed cool. We only spoke for a total of around fifteen minutes throughout the entire night for I was mingling with everybody. It's hard to tell on first meeting. But I do recall he liked my art, and that is a point in his favor. Put that down: likes Mark's artwork. I'm curious; where did you meet him? I'm not sure if I asked you before.

MEREDITH

I met him at Ray's Pizza.

MARK

Oh. Wait...isn't that where we met?

MEREDITH

Yes..you're right. Jesus. Duh. I don't know where my head was at. I got it now. Charlie and I met at a used car establishment. I was there with Karen who took her car in for a recall job. Charlie was there because he was having trouble with his fuel pump.

MARK

Figures.

MEREDITH

What did you say?

MARK

Oh, nothing...I burped...Excuse me...Go on.

MEREDITH

Well, we started talking, and before you know it, he asked me out.

MARK

How was the first date?

MEREDITH

It was good.

MARK

Can you expand on that a bit?

MEREDITH

He knows how to treat a girl on the first date. He made a very good impression. He took me to see The Phantom Of The Opera. He works for Ticketmaster. So he gets a good deal on those things. He got this package deal complete with a dinner at the Waldorf Astoria. It was fantastic.

MARK

Wow! Where did I take you on our first date?

MEREDITH

An R.E.M. concert.

MARK

Huh. Not quite the Waldorf Astoria, was it?

MEREDITH

Well, it was a step above Ray's Pizza. Don't get me wrong, Mark. We did have a lot of fun.

MARK

I remember now. You laid on your back and let the whole audience carry you around. And I was getting insanely jealous because all the guys were copping a feel of your ass.

MEREDITH

Ah, yes. Times were good.

MARK

What the hell happened?

MEREDITH

I guess we just grew tired of each other's bullshit.

MARK

I guess so. So, how was the Waldorf?

MEREDITH

Let me tell you, Mark. The interior design is impeccable. The decor alone is worth going there and splurging fifty dollars on a whole dinner just once. The food was good, too.

MARK

Whoa. What did Charles think?

MEREDITH

I don't remember what his opinion was. It was part of the theater package, which is why he took me there.

MARK

How about the musical? Did he like that?

MEREDITH

I'm sure he did.

MARK

What does he like?

MEREDITH

What does he like? He likes...he likes...he likes...

MARK

Playing volleyball on Tuesday nights.

MEREDITH

Yes. He likes that a lot.

MARK

He likes my paintings.

MEREDITH

Yes he does.

MARK

If I painted a portrait of a volleyball, he'd really dig that.

MEREDITH

Shut up.

MARK

Did he perhaps say anything to you about my work that he particularly liked? I'd like to know. My ego is in dire need of a boost.

MEREDITH

A boost?

MARK

I mean did he say anything profound or earth-shattering about my stuff, even if it seemed completely bogus?

MEREDITH

What do you mean...bogus?

MARK

Look, Meredith. Any artist just doesn't want to hear if what he does is good or bad. He wants to hear why his stuff is good... what makes what he does rise above the rest. And, so, I was hoping for a more substantial opinion.

MEREDITH

Why would YOU need one? You're good, Mark.

MARK

Aw, Meredith. Sometimes one gets to think that sheer talent isn't enough these days. You know how hard it is nowadays just to get a showing and get people to come see your stuff? To take time from their rudimentary lives to support what I do?

MEREDITH

You gotta advertise, Mark. That's the way it is now. Think about it. Would the Beatles have made it without Brian Epstein? Zeppelin without Peter Grant? Michael Jackson without Pepsi? You gotta make yourself be seen.

MARK

What the hell for?

MEREDITH

Because Mark, the world must know that you are a genius. Look at what you're doing now, it's beautiful.

MARK

You know, you're right. Your opinion is important to me. Always was. So tell me more about Charles. How old is he?

MEREDITH

He's twenty-eight.

MARK

And you're twenty-eight.

MEREDITH

Yep.

MARK

Okay, so you're not marrying Tony Randall. Well, tell me more, Meredith. There must be something worthwhile of him to talk about for more than one sentence or phrase.

MEREDITH

What do you want, a whole biography and analysis? I don't know what to tell you.

MARK

Maybe there's simply nothing to tell.

MEREDITH

Nothing to tell?

MARK

Meredith I'm afraid I can't help you. I mean, it's not my fault that Charlie sounds like a real bore, bore, bore.

(MEREDITH is shocked by this remark. Pause.)

MEREDITH

Listen here, Halloran. Charlie is anything but boring. He's successful, pursuing a master's degree.

MARK

Boring.

MEREDITH

Was a co-founder of his fraternity chapter at school....

(MARK makes a loud snoring noise.)

MEREDITH

...and he's...

MARK

I don't care, Meredith. He's a fucking wet mop!

MEREDITH

As opposed to who, you?

MARK

I cannot tell a lie.

MEREDITH

Well, well, well. Take a good look at yourself, Mark. Doesn't look too good, does it? I know what, Mark. Let me make a list of you qualities and faults. Item One: Are you working now?

MARK

No, I'm sitting here talking to you.

MEREDITH

I mean, faggot, are you currently employed?

MARK

No.

MEREDITH

Aha!

MARK

Don't stoop to lecture me, Meredith. I hate it when you do that. So, I've been collecting for a couple months. I'm in what you might call a transitional period.

MEREDITH

Boy, Mark, your whole life is one big transitional period. Tell me Mark, is there ever an end to the transition? I betcha you got fired from your last job, am I correct?

MARK

Yes...I made myself get fired. And it was worth the trouble too because my boss was a fucking jerk.

MEREDITH

You just can't handle a normal job like everyone else in the world.

MARK

O.K. You got me. I'll admit it. I'm an outsider, I just cannot buy into the whole real job thing or corporate mentality; it just seems so lame and regurgitative compared to the more on the fringe, artistic climate. And to be perfectly bold, I don't think you really go for that crap either. I mean you were always complaining about your job managing that kid's clothing store when you'd rather be pursuing your dance studies.

MEREDITH

At least I still work there. I didn't quit or get fired.

MARK

But you still hate the job; hate it with an abiding passion. And for that reason your life is interesting. Now let's take a look a Charlie boy. He works at a silly day-go nine-to-five job doing what?

BOTH

Customer service.

MARK

See what I mean? A mundane monotone job that involves phone calls and P.C.s all day.

MEREDITH

O.K. Maybe he doesn't have the most stimulating occupation in the world. But he's responsible, can handle his assets well and isn't a friggin' pot head. Don't you see? That kind of stability in a man is something I needed. As a matter of fact, being with Charlie made me discover what an idiot I was for even going out with you.

MARK

Oh, that hurt.

MEREDITH

Yes, I periodically ask myself, "Why did I ever consider falling in love with such an exceedingly decadent dope addict like you?"

MARK

Maybe it's because you're a dope yourself.

MEREDITH

That's very funny, Mark. But over the past two years since we've broken up, I've come to realize a number of things. One is that you're an irresponsible jerk-off who can't even make the next rent. Two: you never listen to the advice of others who care about you because you're caught up in your own little world. And thirdly...you're paintings suck!

MARK

Now my paintings suck, eh. Alright. Go ahead. Lay it on, bitch!

(MEREDITH grabs a hold of the abstract drawing.)

MEREDITH

I'm being honest, that's all. Look at this! Is this how you see my body? That is not an accurate description at all of my body. Captured the essence of my breasts...BULLSHIT! All these obtuse angles. Looks more like a hashish-laden geometry lesson than a nude drawing.

MARK

Gimme a freaking break. I was in a Cubist mode at the time. You should be grateful!

MEREDITH

Any woman who takes a painting like this as a compliment should be declared pathologically insane as I was when I was with you. But I'm not insane any longer!

MARK

Oh, no?

MEREDITH

No. I have matured, finally, and am completely in touch with my womanhood.

MARK

In touch with you're womanhood. What is that? What are you, pregnant?

MEREDITH

No, I am not pregnant. And I think I have had enough of your stupid shit!

MARK

That's just like you. You never want to listen to reason, Meredith.

MEREDITH

Fuck off!

(She's about to leave.)

MARK

You really wanna know why I depicted you this way? All these angles? I'll tell ya. It's because you are so full of angles. Mysterious angles. You could never come out with a point directly. Instead you chose some roundabout method to make your demands be known. And even then I was not sure what they were. You always had a certain mystery to your ways that I can never this day encode. So your right. This is not a complimentary piece about your physique, but rather a graphic representation of your mysterious ways.

MEREDITH

What mysterious ways are you referring to?

MARK

Mm?

MEREDITH

What are these mysterious ways of mine that you find so impossible to encode?

(Pause. MARK must think about this.)

MARK

O.K. Whenever we wanted to go out to eat, you could never give me a definite answer. I would ask you, "Where shall we go?" And you would say, "Oh, I don't know. Wherever you wanna go." We'd be cruising down Route Forty-Six for two hours before settling on someplace interesting, like White Castle.

MEREDITH

I didn't respond because everytime I was in your car I was frozen in fear over the fact that you were very stoned and still insisted on driving.

MARK

You could've given me clues. I wasn't so stoned that I couldn't give half a crap!

MEREDITH

You're missing the point!

MARK

Alright, I have another one. Those Van Morrison tickets. Whenever he had a local gig, I'd show you the advertisement in the paper. You'd say, "Oh, cool." But you would never say "Take me there!" I had to figure out that you wanted to go and order the tickets. You couldn't just tell me. Why didn't you just say you wanted to go?

MEREDITH

Because, fuckface, I never wanted to go to the fucking Van Morrison concert!

MARK

No?

MEREDITH

You love Van Morrison; not me. I hate that fucking Van Morrison!

MARK

But--

MEREDITH

A long time ago, you took me to one show. When you asked me how it was, I said that it was nice, and I only said so I wouldn't hurt your feelings, which in hindsight was a complete and uttered mistake. After that, I never saw the end of it. One concert after another. Van Morrison at the Paramount Theater. Van Morrison at Carnegie Hall. Van Morrison at Jones Beach. Van The Man at Drew University. You bought me every CD of his. Moondance. Astral Weeks.

MARK

That's Astral Weeks.

MEREDITH

I don't care what it is. I hated them all! Didn't you notice that at my place I never played them?

MARK

Do you still have them?

MEREDITH

Are you kidding? I sold them the day after we stopped going together.

MARK

I see. A sort of closing of the book maneuver.

MEREDITH

That's right, Einstein.

MARK

You could've just told me you didn't like the Van show. Could've saved us two years of quasi-romantic nonsense.

MEREDITH

You got that right. It would've saved me from all the nights draggin' your drunken-assed body from the local bar every other night. It would've saved me from getting naked for this stupid abstraction. And finally, it would have prevented from nearly becoming a total degenerate to society among the likes of you.

MARK

I am not a generate to society. I am a very functional human being. So I alter my mind once in a while. I tell you I'm not as bad as I used to be. Lately, I've been smoking only three joints a week.

MEREDITH

Three joints weekly? Well, I'll tell you. I still think that's pathetic!

MARK

You know, I'm really glad you came here tonight because now I've realized what a total deranged and unkempt mind you possess. You come here seeking my advice about this banal fiance of yours. After being hesitant I give you an honest answer that you so humbly requested, and then, you start insulting me left and right. Well fuck you, Meredith. You know something, I don't think you know what the hell you want.

MEREDITH

Mark, you're just trying---

MARK

After we split, you grabbed the first bag of flesh that came along to replace me, without recognizing the potential boredom that would soon follow, namely because you wouldn't know a good time if it came up and bit you in the bush.

MEREDITH

My bush is being perfectly tended to, thank you.

MARK

Ha. By that blank page? I betcha when he's on top of you, firing away, you're either counting the ridges on your spackled ceiling or think about the new shoes you bought.

MEREDITH

Hey, he's doing better than you. At least he's getting some. Mr. Out For The Count!

MARK

What?!

MEREDITH

That's right. You heard me. The reason why you haven't gotten any in the past several months is because you probably cannot provide a woman with the proper, you know, equipment.

MARK

Meredith, believe me. I am perfectly capable. Just ask the handy man. Don't be ridiculous.

MEREDITH

Mark can't do it. Ha. Ha.

MARK

Please, Meredith, cut it out!

MEREDITH

You're as limp as a Caesar Salad.

MARK

I said, "Cut it out!"

MEREDITH

Oh, you're such a baby. What's wrong? You can't take a knock?

MARK

I can accept many knocks. But us men find it very hard(no pun intended) to take jokes about their required functioning.

(She lets out a chuckle.)

MARK

(cont'd)

Look, you're laughing.

MEREDITH

Yes, I am.

MARK

At my expense, as usual.

MEREDITH

Is there something wrong with that?

MARK

No, not at all. Matter of fact, I like when you laugh like that.

MEREDITH

Oh, yeah?

MARK

Yeah.

(They kiss and basically get it on. Lights dim. We hear moaning and plenty of commotion. Lights up. MARK is sitting on the couch, head back, with pant zipper undone. MEREDITH is buttoning up her blouse. At the moment, they are both glad about what has just occurred.)

MARK

Whoa.

MEREDITH

Ah, yeah. Did you like it?

MARK

Oh, yeah.

MEREDITH

It seems so unreal that this is happening.

MARK

Yeah, but it is. Meredith, I've been meaning to say this for some time, but I never had the guts. I miss you so much, it hurts. That's why I haven't been with anybody.

MEREDITH

Really?

MARK

Yeah. And I have gotten better, really. I'm more productive and all, but I need that something. And that something is you.

MEREDITH

I didn't want to admit it, but I miss you too. I thought about you all the time. And I'm sorry about all those mean things I said to you tonight. But I only say those things because I care.

MARK

Like, that my paintings suck?

MEREDITH

Well, they're not all bad.

MARK

(disenchanted)

Oh.

MEREDITH

Seriously, that one you're working on right now. I love it. I mean it.

MARK

Thanks. It's moments like this when we both discover just how happy we can be. I'm speaking for myself when I say this, but you make me feel so good.

MEREDITH

You know what to do to make me feel good, too. Always did.

MARK

So, can we give it another shot, woman of my days and nights?

MEREDITH

Mmm. We'll see.

MARK

What about Charlie.

MEREDITH

Who? Oh, yes. What shall we do with him?

MARK

What are you gonna tell him?

MEREDITH

I'll have to gradually give it to him. Week one, call off the wedding, week two give him the "we should see other people bit," and week three let him go.

MARK

Sounds fair enough to me.

MEREDITH

Not too painful?

MARK

Oh, merciful one.

(They kiss again.)

MEREDITH

You know what?

MARK

What?

MEREDITH

I think that joint would be good right about now.

MARK

Well, alright! And to celebrate our renewed relationship, I'll break out my ceremonial bong!

MEREDITH

Oh, Mark. You don't have to-

MARK

Don't worry, it won't take long to find. I'll be right back.

(MARK exits. Answering machine activates. It's a recording of Van Morrison's "Have I Told You Lately?")

MEREDITH

Mark, it would certainly help if you left your phone ringer on once in a while, you know?

(A rattle backstage.)

MARK

(offstage)

What?

MEREDITH

Don't worry. I'll get it.

MARK

(offstage)

What?

(MEREDITH rolls her eyes to MARK's complacency. She proceeds to answer the phone. Just before she answer's it, the person calling comes on the machine to leave the message. It is a girl named JUNE, sounding

really in heat and wanting MARK badly.)

JUNE

(on machine)

Hey, Mark. It's June. You know, this afternoon was the best. I never felt this way before about anyone.

(Instantly shocked, MEREDITH becomes more and more insensed.)

JUNE

(cont'd)

So give me a call when you can because there's something that I forgot to do: give you my patented oral massage. Sound good? I'm ready for you. You know my number. Call me. Bye.

(MEREDITH stands erect, ready to let MARK have it. MARK comes out with bong in hand and innocently approaches MEREDITH.)

MARK

There's still residue from my New Year's Eve bash--

(MEREDITH punches him in the stomach, then grabs his hair.)

MEREDITH

Nobody else, huh? O.K., motherfucker. I should have smelled you lines of bullshit a mile away, but I didn't. So you got me to feel sorry for you this time, like you've done over and over again, but this is the last! Understand? Understand? Ugh!!

(MEREDITH throws him to the floor and grabs the Cubist painting. As MARK tries to get up and regain his oxygen, MEREDITH thrusts the painting on MARK's head, destroying the piece. MEREDITH then grabs the bag of pot, holds it up, and exits, slamming door behind her. Lights out.)

THE END

