

# ***AFTER DARK***

*a play by*

***STEVE KLUGER***

*Later on we'll conspire  
As we dream by the fire  
To face unafraid  
The plans that we made  
Walking in the winter wonderland*

FOR LICENSING AND PRODUCTION INFORMATION:

rights@stevekluger.com

Lisa Callamaro: (310) 274-6783

Gail Hochman: (212) 840-5760

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## Cast of Characters

**RYAN:** Mid-thirties and appealing (in a conservative way), he's short on patience and could clearly use a little loosening up. Correction. A *lot* of loosening up.

**CRAIG:** Early thirties, fast-talking and streetwise, he comes across as part punk and part politician. Nothing fazes this guy. Well—*almost* nothing.

The entire play takes place in a rundown diner in Los Angeles at 3:00 in the morning, shortly before Christmas.

### **ACT I**

Some Time During the Nineties

### **ACT II**

Five Years Late

## ACT ONE

*(As the house lights fade, we hear strains of “Winter Wonderland”, sung by Vic Damone. The music continues as the curtain rises.)*

*We’re in a seedy diner somewhere in Los Angeles in the middle of the night. The place has clearly seen better days—the grease spots on the plaster are so consistent, you get the feeling they were put there deliberately as part of an avant-garde wallpaper pattern. A tattered booth is set against the upstage wall, in between a beat-up jukebox and a long counter. Downstage left and right are a pair of tables opposite one another, with the usual condiments on top of each. The diner’s entrance is stage left; stage right is an alcove leading to the restroom. A calendar on the wall tells us it’s 1996. By now, Vic Damone’s voice has faded out in the house and is coming through the jukebox instead.*

*Oh, yeah. A cheap green and red tinsel sign reading “Merry Christmas” hangs on the wall next to a brown wreath that looks like it died the same day Kennedy did.*

*At present, the joint is empty. After a moment a lone figure emerges from the restroom, holding the bathroom key—which is attached to the end of a long serrated spoon. He hangs it up on a hook at the end of the counter and returns to the booth. This is RYAN. Appearing to be in his mid-thirties, he’s relatively well-built, generically good-looking, and dressed in a Versace shirt (open at the collar) and a pair of well-fitting slacks. A cup of coffee and a donut in front of him, he’s immersed in a newspaper he’s reading. A stack of papers and a couple of pens sit to his right.*

*After a moment, the door opens and CRAIG enters. This one’s short but compact, muscled and in his early thirties, dressed in a white t-shirt and jeans, and clearly a punk—but a really hot one. When he discovers that nobody’s minding the store, he tosses his*

*jacket onto the counter, crosses behind it, and pours himself some java.)*

CRAIG. *(Calls out.)* Yo, Tony! It’s only me. I’m not stealing anything. *(Silence.)* Hey, guess what I heard at the bars? Three hundred horny Marines hit Long Beach at midnight.

*(He reaches into his pocket, pulls out a small box, then sticks his head offstage and tosses the box in the direction of the kitchen.)*

CRAIG. Here. Tiramisu-flavored condoms. Just in case one of ‘em shows up.

*(He turns, sees Ryan, and stops in his tracks.)*

CRAIG. *(Under his breath.)* Semper Fi, Mac.

*(He crosses to the front of the counter and sits two stools to RYAN’s left. After a beat, he turns and eyeballs RYAN top to bottom, then goes back to his coffee. Another moment passes, then RYAN turns to CRAIG and gives him the once-over as well. Satisfied, he returns to his paper. Seconds later, they both turn at exactly the same time, realize they’re cruising each other simultaneously, and quickly turn front again.)*

CRAIG. *(Hesitant.)* Philip?

RYAN. *(Not looking up.)* No.

CRAIG. Oh. Sorry. You look like Philip. He’s this guy.

RYAN. I’m not him.

CRAIG. Right. Merry Christmas.

RYAN. Yeah. You too.

*(A pause.)*

CRAIG. Hey. You know what time it is?

RYAN. Twenty after three.

CRAIG. Thanks.

*(Another beat. Resorting to a last-ditch effort, he pulls a cigarette out of his pocket and jams it into his mouth.)*

CRAIG. You got a—

RYAN. *(Not looking up.)* I don't smoke.

CRAIG. *(Tosses it over his shoulder.)* I shouldn't either.

RYAN. You said it, I didn't.

*(Deflated, CRAIG glances at the newspaper RYAN's reading.)*

CRAIG. What are you doing?

RYAN. Purifying uranium.

CRAIG. Is that the *Advocate*?

RYAN. No.

CRAIG. *Out?*

RYAN. No.

CRAIG. *Stroke?*

RYAN. No! *Sporting News*. The Jets just lost Johnson.

CRAIG. Serves 'em right for sidelining Esiason. I'm Craig.

*(For the first time, RYAN looks up with interest.)*

RYAN. What do you know about Esiason?

CRAIG. He replaced Kenny O'Brien. My hero. I'm Craig.

RYAN. Ever watch O'Brien pass? Three yards and his arms fell off.

CRAIG. I wasn't looking at his arms.

RYAN. I didn't think you were.

CRAIG. Notice how far his cup sticks out? Every time he scratches his dick, Hebrew National goes up eleven points.

RYAN. That's not why I watch football.

CRAIG. Oh, bullshit, Ryan. It's why *everybody* watches football. How much would you pay for his jockstrap?

RYAN. I wouldn't.

CRAIG. What about Troy Aikman? Dallas.

RYAN. Give it up.

CRAIG. Eric Karros. Dodgers.

RYAN. Forget it.

CRAIG. Dan Marino. Dolphins.

RYAN. Nope.

CRAIG. Brady Anderson. Orioles.

*(There is a pause; Ryan hesitates.)*

CRAIG. Did I hit a g-spot?

RYAN. *(Irritated.)* How do you know my name is Ryan?

CRAIG. Oh, *now* you want to talk.

RYAN. How do you know I like jockstraps?

CRAIG. *(Points.)* *Sporting News?*

RYAN. So?

CRAIG. Blue Miata out front?

RYAN. So?

CRAIG. California plates that say RYAN GWM?

RYAN. So what?

CRAIG. You don't need a fuckin' degree, sweetheart.

RYAN. I'll keep that in mind. Nice meeting you.

*(He goes back to his newspaper as CRAIG moves to the stool next to him.)*

CRAIG. Man, are you built. How do you stay so thin?

RYAN. Intestinal parasites.

CRAIG. You're not making any points here.

RYAN. I'm not trying to. Can't you take a hint?

CRAIG. Guess not. What line of work are you in?

RYAN. Political assassinations.

CRAIG. No, seriously.

*(RYAN looks up from his paper.)*

RYAN. Seriously? I degrade the human spirit, I mangle the soul, I crush virtue, and I annihilate hope.

CRAIG. No kidding. What law firm?

RYAN. Walker, Horton, Kelly—

CRAIG. Is that why you can't sleep?

RYAN. —Halper, Burge and Wollendorf. Who says I can't sleep?

CRAIG. My boyfriend Kevin. He never slept either. Three years out of law school he'd won 18 out of 21 cases. One time he even sued a twelve-year-old girl for falling out of a Honda. Figured the best defense was a good offense. Man, he was awesome. *(Pause.)* What an asshole. Are you single?

RYAN. Could you keep it down?

CRAIG. Hey, you ever wonder what Clinton and Gore do when they're alone together?

RYAN. Look, I'm trying to—

CRAIG. Wouldn't it be hot to have a butt pirate in the White House? There'd be a new First Lady every week. Are you single?

RYAN. Hey! Do you have an on/off switch?

CRAIG. Yeah. Right below my belly-button. Go for it.

RYAN. In your dreams.

CRAIG. Know what I can't figure out?

RYAN. *(To himself.)* Oh, my God...

CRAIG. What's the big scream about letting us into the military? I mean, it's not like we aren't there already.

RYAN. Bad for morale. Craig—

CRAIG. Yeah? Maybe they'd better check the barracks after Taps. You ever see those enlistment posters with the smiley straight boys on the front?

RYAN. So?

CRAIG. Why do you think they're smiling? Are you single?

RYAN. I have a boyfriend.

CRAIG. Like hell you do.

RYAN. What tipped you off?

CRAIG. Three things. One: you would have told me so right off the bat.

RYAN. Says who?

CRAIG. Ryan, *everybody* wants a boyfriend. It's like getting a Maserati or winning the lottery. You don't hide it. Two: no hick-eyes, no ring, no grin. Ballgame's over, you lose.

RYAN. What's the third thing?

CRAIG. You been scoping me out ever since I sat down.

RYAN. I've been reading the NHL scores!

CRAIG. With one eyeball. *(Points to himself.)* The corner of the other one's been glued right here, pal.

RYAN. Get over yourself.

CRAIG. Want me to prove it?

RYAN. You can't.

CRAIG. Who's your favorite relative?

RYAN. My cousin Sally. She's a Lesbian.

CRAIG. Swear on her life.

RYAN. Swear what?

CRAIG. That you weren't doing the corner-of-the-eye thing.

*(A pause. When RYAN speaks, it's through gritted teeth.)*

RYAN. I was only doing it a little!

CRAIG. What color are my Reeboks?

RYAN. Blue and white.

CRAIG. Socks?

RYAN. Grey.

CRAIG. How many buttons on my fly?

RYAN. I don't—

CRAIG. How many?

RYAN. *(Seething.)* Four.

CRAIG. Which one's open?

RYAN. Second from the bottom.

CRAIG. Distinguishing characteristics?

RYAN. A crooked eyebrow and a zit behind your right ear.

*(CRAIG reaches behind his ear hastily.)*

CRAIG. Where?

RYAN. Gotcha, you little shit.

CRAIG. WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO GET INTO YOUR  
JOCKEYS—AN ACT OF GOD?

*(RYAN leans in earnestly. He means it.)*

RYAN. I'll tell you what it takes. A drive to Santa Barbara with the top down, dinner at Chad's with champagne and candles, a walk along the beach holding hands, a room with a view, and a night that doesn't end. Think you can measure up?

*(A pause.)*

CRAIG. I have eight dollars and a really big cock. That's the best I can do.

RYAN. Craig, you don't know me, I don't know you, and—

CRAIG. I was born in Dubuque. Now can we fuck?

RYAN. NO, WE CAN'T—

CRAIG. Oh. I forgot. You get a turn too. Tell me something.

*(A beat.)*

RYAN. I don't wear Jockeys, I wear Calvin Kleins. Okay?

CRAIG. You're right. This is working. Keep going. Who did the nicest thing for you anybody ever did?

RYAN. My Satanic paternal grandfather.

CRAIG. What did he do?

RYAN. He died.

CRAIG. Mine was my boyfriend.

RYAN. Kevin?

CRAIG. Jake. He had my name tattooed on his ass. *(Pause.)* Come to think of it, what the hell was *that* supposed to mean?

RYAN. Why don't you take a walk around the block and figure it out?

*(He puts away his Sporting News, picks up a legal document from the stack to his right, and begins editing it with a red pen.)*

CRAIG. How old are you?

RYAN. Not a chance.

CRAIG. Over 40?

RYAN. I'M 37!

CRAIG. How old do you think I am?

RYAN. *(A groan.)* You're going to make me ask—*aren't* you?

CRAIG. Not if you don't want to. A lot of guys think I'm older than I am because of street smarts, but on the other hand they won't let me into Revolver unless I show them four pieces of—

RYAN. *(Head in his hands.)* How old are you?

CRAIG. What? I can't hear you.

RYAN. GODDAMNIT, HOW OLD ARE YOU!

CRAIG. *(By rote.)* 32, 5'10", 172, brown/blue, clean-shaven, gym body, 30-inch waist, 8 by 6 cut, hot mouth.

RYAN. This isn't Male Fone.

CRAIG. Sorry. Force of habit. I was born the day Goldwater got his ass kicked. That was 1964. *(Pause.)* Anything happen in '59?

RYAN. *Gypsy* opened.

CRAIG. Who?

RYAN. *Gypsy.* *(Pause.)* With Ethel Merman?

CRAIG. You know, I never got her. She had a face like a dog and a lousy body.

RYAN. So what?

CRAIG. So how come they kept putting her in all those bathing suits?

RYAN. That was Esther Williams.

CRAIG. Oh. *(A pause.)* Then who the fuck was Ethel Merman?

*(There is an incredulous beat.)*

RYAN. What kind of a queer *are* you?!?

CRAIG. You're the one with Calvin Klein underpants. That's thirty-five bucks a pop. What do you have—a platinum dick?

RYAN. I don't suppose you ever saw *All About Eve*?

CRAIG. My boyfriend made me watch it.

RYAN. Jake?

CRAIG. Travis. He had this thing for Judy Garland—

RYAN. That was Bette Davis.

CRAIG. Like I care. I never figured Garland out either. She felt up a scarecrow and OD'd in the crapper. Where's the kick?

RYAN. Keep talking. You just set an entire movement back 75 years.

CRAIG. Yeah, but at least I made you smile.

RYAN. I'm not going to sleep with you.

CRAIG. That's what *you* think. My boyfriend said the same thing.

RYAN. Travis?

CRAIG. Kyle. It only took me twenty minutes to get him into—

RYAN. Define "boyfriend".

CRAIG. Somebody you want to spend the rest of your life with.

RYAN. What if they don't want to spend the rest of their lives with *you*?

CRAIG. I haven't nailed that down yet. God, I hate first dates. Trevor was the worst. He took me to dinner and a gang bang.

RYAN. Who was getting banged?

CRAIG. Me. But he forgot to mention that part. Men are such assholes.

RYAN. How long did Kyle last?

CRAIG. Five hours.

RYAN. What happened?

CRAIG. We drifted apart.

RYAN. In five hours?!?!?

CRAIG. Okay, he stole my wallet too. Maybe it was a bad call.

RYAN. Sorry, but I seem to be missing something here. What's the difference between a boyfriend and a trick?

CRAIG. At least four inches.

*(An admiring pause.)*

RYAN. Did you ever think of running for Congress?

*(CRAIG puts a hand on RYAN's knee.)*

CRAIG. Would you vote for me if I did?

RYAN. I'm not going to sleep with you.

CRAIG. Tell me that in the morning.

*(He glances at the document RYAN's been editing and picks it up.)*

CRAIG. Hey, what's this?

RYAN. Do you mind?

*(CRAIG takes it away from him and scrutinizes it carefully.)*

CRAIG. "Motion to Dismiss". *(A frown.)* Sounds like a laugh a minute. You really do this every day?

RYAN. *(Grabs it back.)* You wouldn't understand.

CRAIG. Try me.

RYAN. If I do, will you take a hike?

CRAIG. Maybe.

RYAN. Deal. *(Leans in to him.)* Okay, we have a client who got sued with four other companies. You follow so far?

CRAIG. Hey. I'm not as dumb as I look.

RYAN. Prove it. *(Points to the pleading.)* Now, even though my guy may have broken a law, the co-defendants broke five of them.

CRAIG. So?

RYAN. So I'm asking the court to dismiss the lawsuit against my client.

*(A pause.)*

CRAIG. But he's guilty.

RYAN. Only a *little* guilty. By comparison.

CRAIG. Who gives a shit? He still fucked up.

RYAN. Not as bad as the other guys did. Which makes him look innocent.

CRAIG. And you can get away with that?!?

RYAN. As long as I'm willing to prostitute everything I believe in.

CRAIG. Oh.

*(RYAN rises, crosses to CRAIG and shakes his hand.)*

RYAN. It's been a lot of fun. See ya.

*(He returns to his stool and goes back to work.)*

CRAIG. You really want me to leave?

RYAN. Please.

*(Clearly disappointed, CRAIG picks up his jacket, glances at RYAN hesitantly, then heads for the door. Halfway there, he turns back.)*

CRAIG. Why don't you just bifurcate the issues?

*(RYAN is so startled, he nearly drops his coffee cup in his lap.)*

RYAN. Huh?

CRAIG. You said it yourself they're gonna nail you on at least one cause of action. So it's not like you got a chance in hell of prevailing on a motion to dismiss.

RYAN. *(Stammers.)* Yeah, but—

*(CRAIG returns to the counter and sits on the stool next to RY.)*

CRAIG. Here's what you do. You get 'em to bifurcate. That way, you cut yourself loose from the other schmucks, right?

RYAN. Well, yeah, but—

CRAIG. But nothin'. They sink, you swim. The worst that's gonna happen is that you take your lumps on the single count. Big fuckin' deal.

*(By now, RYAN is shell-shocked.)*

RYAN. How are you doing this?

CRAIG. I told you. My boyfriend was a scumbag too. Don't you ever listen? I'd be at the law library doing his P's and A's, and he'd be at the Faultline doing the bartender. I shoulda had my head examined.

*(There is a challenging pause.)*

RYAN. C.C.P. 2030.

CRAIG. Interrogatories.

RYAN. 2025.

CRAIG. Depo notices.

RYAN. 431.30.

CRAIG. General denial.

RYAN. Civil Code 3294.

CRAIG. Punitives. *Barker v. Lull* for \$200.

RYAN. Product defense. "The benefits of a chosen design outweigh—" *(Irritated.)* What the hell am I doing? I don't have to answer to you!

*(He turns away angrily and goes back to his pleading, editing the text as CRAIG looks over his shoulder.)*

CRAIG. B-I-F-U-R—

RYAN. I know how to spell it!

*(There is a pause as RYAN scribbles furiously.)*

CRAIG. Ryan?

RYAN. *(Not looking up.)* What?



CRAIG. You're doing the corner-of-the-eye thing again.

*(Tosses the pen down in disgust, RYAN turns to CRAIG.)*

RYAN. What do you do anyway?

CRAIG. I'm usually a top. But if you bite me on the—

RYAN. I mean for a living. Or is the pain in the ass thing a career choice?

CRAIG. Uh—that's a little complicated.

RYAN. I have all night.

CRAIG. Well, I hand out fliers for the Human Rights Campaign—

RYAN. You volunteer.

CRAIG. Yeah. And I work the phones at GLAAD—

RYAN. Volunteer.

CRAIG. I Shepardize cases for Lambda Legal Defense—

RYAN. Pro bono.

CRAIG. —and I counsel teenage kids whose dicks are pointing in a different direction than they counted on.

RYAN. Volunteer. What do you do for money?

*(There is a pause.)*

CRAIG. I'll bet you think you know already.

RYAN. Well, I have it down to either whore—

CRAIG. *(Pleased.)* I can live with that.

RYAN. —or lawyer.

CRAIG. *(Livid.)* Go fuck yourself.

RYAN. So who's been paying the bills? For real.

CRAIG. Disney.

RYAN. The studio?

CRAIG. *(Impatient.)* No, the shoe store.

RYAN. For doing what?

CRAIG. They hired me to work Disneyland. I'm Bashful.

RYAN. You could have fooled *me*.

CRAIG. No, asshole. Like Grumpy and Doc and Snow White. In the costumes with the big heads? They call it the Happiest Place

on Earth, but I don't know, man. When you're five years old and you scope a twelve-foot dwarf comin' right at you—

*(RYAN points to the pleading.)*

RYAN. 1961. Was that Cal.App.2d or Cal.App.3d?

CRAIG. Second.

RYAN. I always forget that. Whenever I draft a— *(A groan.)* Why am I telling *you* this?

CRAIG. Because you're horny and I have a trusting face.

RYAN. I'm not horny and you're about the last person in the world I trust. Does the gang bang routine ever work?

CRAIG. Once. In 1988 at the Mother Lode. That's where I met my boyfriend.

RYAN. Kyle?

CRAIG. Adam. But I didn't find out until I got him home that he was deaf. It's so goddamn loud in there anyway, who could tell? How did you know it was a routine?

RYAN. You don't need a fuckin' degree, sweetheart.

CRAIG. Hey, you want to get high? I scored some grass off of Roger Rabbit.

RYAN. Are you coming on to me again?

CRAIG. Duh.

RYAN. Why?

CRAIG. Because I need to be kissed by somebody with sexy eyes and a blue Miata and a potentially cute ass.

RYAN. I'm not going to sleep with you.

CRAIG. Can't you feel the sexual tension?

RYAN. No.

CRAIG. Keep telling yourself that.

*(A long silence as RYAN works on his papers and ignores CRAIG.)*

CRAIG. Hey, did I piss you off?

RYAN. Perpetually.

CRAIG. (*Concerned.*) Okay. I won't hit on you again. I promise.

(*No reaction.*)

CRAIG. Look, I can't help it if you punch the right buttons. We wouldn't even have to *do* anything. We could just fall asleep together.

RYAN. (*Not looking up.*) That isn't it.

CRAIG. It's because I smoke grass, right? Hey, I don't do it a lot. I even turned down a three-way with Pinocchio and Jiminy Cricket 'cause they're into crystal meth—

RYAN. I don't give a shit if you smoke grass.

CRAIG. Then what did I *do*?

(*RYAN tosses down his pen, exasperated.*)

RYAN. It's inconceivable that you've never heard of Ethel Mer-  
man!

CRAIG. What is she—your mother?!?

RYAN. Don't you have a political conscience?

CRAIG. Don't you have a *life*?

RYAN. She defined who you are!

CRAIG. Who asked her to?

RYAN. Why can't you get it?!? We're supposed to grow up on her. And Auntie Mame. And Fanny Brice. And Margo Channing. *I* did.

CRAIG. And that makes you a better rump ranger than me? Guess what? I grew up on Tom Seaver, and my dick works just as good as yours.

RYAN. Yeah, but I can talk both sides of the street—you can't.

CRAIG. Oh, no? (*Leans in.*) What was Ron Guidry's ERA in 1978?

RYAN. I forgot. So what? Who played opposite Pearl Bailey in *Hello Dolly*?

CRAIG. Bruce Springsteen. Ask me if I give a shit. What year was Johnny Unitas born?

RYAN. 1930-something. How much did Lucy and Ethel pay for Mrs. Hanson's Dress Shop?

CRAIG. Three thousand bucks.

(*A stunned silence.*)

CRAIG. See? I'm a lot queerer than I look. And Mrs. Trumbull's first name was Matilda and Ethel was born in Albuquerque and Fred always called her honeybunch. Fuck you.

(*A pause.*)

RYAN. I don't think you're getting it yet.

CRAIG. I don't think you are either.

RYAN. How old were you the first time you knew what you wanted?

CRAIG. Ten. I had a stiffy for Andy Wexler.

RYAN. I was 11.

CRAIG. Who got you hard?

RYAN. Elroy Jetson. But we couldn't tell anybody, right?

CRAIG. That'd be the day. My father would have keeled over.

RYAN. I used to lock myself in the bathroom with the Sears catalog. The underpants models were on page 381.

CRAIG. I used to swipe my sister's Ken dolls and make them 69.

(*An admiring pause.*)

RYAN. Oh, *that's* hot.

CRAIG. *I* thought so.

RYAN. You see? We dipped from the same well of loneliness. That's why most of us watched old movies and learned the words to *Call Me Madam*.

CRAIG. Speak for yourself.

RYAN. Why? What were *you* doing?

CRAIG. Playing first base and fucking Andy Wexler.

*(A beat.)*

RYAN. You're an anomaly.

CRAIG. You're an ascetic.

*(RYAN is thrown.)*

RYAN. What makes you think you're sagacious?

CRAIG. What makes you think you're erudite?

RYAN. *(Gets agitated.)* I'd rather be erudite than contumely.

CRAIG. And I'd rather be contumely than cavalier.

RYAN. I'm not cavalier! I'm punctilious.

CRAIG. Who are you kidding?!? You'd toss Damon and Pythias out of bed!

*(A challenging pause.)*

RYAN. Castor and Pollux.

CRAIG. Achilles and Patroclus.

RYAN. Pylades and Orestes.

CRAIG. Diomedes and Sthenelus. Give it up. You're gonna lose this one.

RYAN. You think so?

CRAIG. Orestes was your last card. I got three pair left.

*(They're staring directly into one another's eyes. A year from now, RYAN will tell you that this was the moment he fell in love.)*

RYAN. You know what a quisling is?

CRAIG. Yeah. A fake.

RYAN. Wear it in good health.

CRAIG. I never said I was a moron!

RYAN. You implied it!

CRAIG. You inferred it!

RYAN. Where'd you get your Master's?

CRAIG. Kent State. Where'd you get yours?

RYAN. Columbia. I did my thesis on Jack Kerouac.

CRAIG. I did mine on Eleanor Roosevelt.

RYAN. What was your major?

CRAIG. Poly sci. Yours?

RYAN. English lit. I minored in law.

CRAIG. I minored in men.

RYAN. Ever sleep with a girl?

CRAIG. Nope. I'm a thoroughbred.

RYAN. Same here. How come you picked Kent State?

CRAIG. Political conscience. How come you picked Columbia?

RYAN. Rich parents.

CRAIG. That's what I figured.

*(RYAN sits bolt upright, hit by a sudden idea.)*

RYAN. Hey, wait a minute. I just thought of something that might work.

*(He leans in to CRAIG energetically.)*

RYAN. Listen to me very carefully and follow my lead. *(A pause.)* Did you ever watch *The Lucy Show*?

CRAIG. The one with those two little boys who looked like they were boning each other in the broom closet?

RYAN. Right. Remember when a famous star moved in next door?

CRAIG. Yeah. And Mr. Mooney was afraid Lucy was gonna find out—

RYAN. So he told the star to change her name—

BOTH OF THEM. —to Agnes Schmidlap.

*(A pause.)*

RYAN. *That* was Ethel Merman.

(CRAIG is incredulous.)

CRAIG. (*Horried*) You're shitting me! With the potato-sack ass and the big mouth?!?!

RYAN. Hey! Show a little respect! She practically invented us!

CRAIG. Were we *that* hard-up?

(RYAN sighs patiently.)

RYAN. Craig, in two hours the sun'll be out. Don't you have to go to work?

CRAIG. (*Squirms.*) Uh—that's a little complicated.

RYAN. (*A groan.*) Oh, no. (*Pause.*) Why did they fire you?

CRAIG. You're not gonna like it.

RYAN. Craig? Look at me. (*He does.*) What did they fire you for?

(CRAIG hesitates.)

CRAIG. Blowing Dopey. (*Hasty.*) But I only did it once.

(*There is a long pause.*)

RYAN. Want to hear something really frightening?

CRAIG. What's that?

RYAN. I believe you.

CRAIG. I can explain. These things happen.

RYAN. No, they don't. Please tell me he wasn't wearing his costume.

CRAIG. Only the head.

(*A beat. RYAN is appalled.*)

RYAN. There's *so* much wrong with that.

CRAIG. That's because you're a tightass.

RYAN. No. Tit clamps I can understand. Even nipple rings. But where do you find anybody with a Seven Dwarf fetish who isn't already in jail?!?

CRAIG. AOL?

RYAN. That's the worst thing I ever heard in my life. How'd you even get *into* Kent State?!?

CRAIG. Scholarship.

RYAN. Yeah? Who'd you fuck for *that*—Fred Flintstone?

CRAIG. I played football.

(*Silence as RYAN turns to him slowly.*)

RYAN. You did?

CRAIG. (*A groan.*) Oh, Christ. Here comes the corner-of-the-eye thing again.

RYAN. (*Eager.*) What position?

CRAIG. Tight end.

RYAN. How many seasons?

CRAIG. Three.

RYAN. Best record?

CRAIG. 11 and 4. How's your adrenalin?

RYAN. I don't know what you're talking about.

CRAIG. You got one question left. Use it well.

(*A pause.*)

RYAN. Any action in the shower room?

CRAIG. Plenty.

RYAN. (*Breathless.*) Like what?

CRAIG. You didn't use it well. Can I ask you something? It's rhetorical.

RYAN. You're an asshole.

CRAIG. How come straight people think all we ever talk about is sex?

RYAN. Beats me. Can I ask *you* something? It's not rhetorical.

CRAIG. Shoot.

RYAN. (*Ignites.*) DID YOU HAVE TO BLOW *DOPEY*?!?

CRAIG. (*Mumbles.*) I *knew* you weren't gonna let that go.

RYAN. I *liked* Dopey! He was my favorite!

CRAIG. Hey! The Southern Baptists want to boycott? I'll give 'em something to boycott!

RYAN. I can't talk about this.

CRAIG. (*Smug.*) You're jealous as hell, aren't you?

RYAN. Jealous of what? He's an animated dwarf!

CRAIG. Yeah, but he's a *hot* one.

RYAN. (*To himself.*) Oh, my God.

CRAIG. Know what your problem is?

RYAN. Yeah. I stopped by for coffee.

CRAIG. You got the worst case of blueballs I've ever seen. How long since you got any?

RYAN. Who's asking?

CRAIG. I am. How long?

(*RYAN turns away from him and mumbles.*)

RYAN. Couple of weeks.

CRAIG. Funny—I'd have said eight months.

RYAN. Three and a half!

CRAIG. Six!

RYAN. Five!

CRAIG. Who was he?

RYAN. Not telling.

CRAIG. Muscle stud?

RYAN. No.

CRAIG. FedEx guy?

RYAN. No.

CRAIG. Hot Filipino from the Buddha Lounge?

RYAN. No.

CRAIG. Ryan, if you tell me you scored a cop, I'll kick your ass.

RYAN. He wasn't a cop.

CRAIG. Then I give up.

RYAN. Opposing counsel. In the men's room at the federal courthouse. It was right after the hearing on my summary judgment papers.

CRAIG. What happened?

RYAN. (*Squirms.*) Well, you know, I— we just—it really wasn't much of a—

CRAIG. What happened?

RYAN. I lost the motion and sucked his cock. Ethically, I couldn't have done it the other way around.

CRAIG. Is that even *allowed*?

RYAN. Well, let's see. We violated the Business and Professions Code, the attorney-client privilege, all the Rules of Professional Conduct, and seven California statutes governing public decency. No, it's not allowed.

CRAIG. Did you bill for it?

RYAN. Yes.

CRAIG. I like your style.

RYAN. I was afraid you would.

CRAIG. I wanna know who broke your heart.

RYAN. Nobody broke my heart.

CRAIG. You don't sit alone in a hash house at 4:00 in the morning drinking caffeinated coffee unless somebody took a bite out of it good. Who was he?

RYAN. Drop it.

CRAIG. Just his name. You can learn a lot about a guy from his name.

RYAN. I'm not going to tell you his name.

CRAIG. So you admit you got your heart broken.

RYAN. By who?

CRAIG. By the guy whose name you won't tell me.

RYAN. Objection. Leading, calls for a conclusion, hearsay and irrelevant.

CRAIG. If I guess it will you tell me?

RYAN. You're not going to guess it.

CRAIG. How come? Is it a weird one like Dominic?

RYAN. No, it's a normal one.

CRAIG. Is it the kind with initials like B.J.?

RYAN. It has regular letters.

CRAIG. Is it a nickname like Duke or Binky?

RYAN. No.

CRAIG. But you're not gonna tell me.

RYAN. Now you're getting it.

*(A pause.)*

CRAIG. Alan. Albert. Alfred. Alex. Andy. Arlo. Arnold.

Archie. Arthur. *(No response.)* No? Bobby. Brian. Bruce.

Billy. Benjy. Blake. Brad. Buddy. *(No response.)* Not yet?

Clayton. Chet. Corey. Carl—

RYAN. All right! I'll tell you!

CRAIG. How come you caved in so fast?

RYAN. Because it's Zack!

*(An awestruck pause.)*

CRAIG. *(Breathless.)* You had a Zack?

RYAN. Uh—that's a little complicated.

CRAIG. Like hell it is. "Zack". Six-foot- four, blond with a crewcut, hairy chest, rugged face, tight butt. "Forget the bull—ride the cowboy." How close did I nail it?

RYAN. He's a five-foot-six Japanese American.

CRAIG. That's close enough. What kind of pants did he wear?

RYAN. Gap jeans. They were black. You've got one more question coming. You know the drill.

CRAIG. Slim fit, easy fit, loose fit or original?

RYAN. Slim fit.

*(CRAIG lets out a low whistle.)*

CRAIG. So the seam went right up the crack in his ass.

RYAN. "Sorry, panel. Time's up."

CRAIG. Smoke me. That wasn't a question, it was a statement. You're allowed to confirm or deny!

RYAN. Yeah? Show me the Code section that says so!

*(There is a pause. CRAIG puts a sympathetic arm around RYAN's shoulder.)*

CRAIG. He really hurt you bad, didn't he?

RYAN. *(A shrug.)* Big deal.

CRAIG. And I'm not helping.

RYAN. No. You're not.

CRAIG. I won't bring him up again, okay?

RYAN. You promise?

CRAIG. You have my word. *(Sits back down.)* So who was your first boyfriend?

RYAN. Jason. Sophomore year at Columbia.

CRAIG. Was he cuter than Zack?

RYAN. Hey!

CRAIG. *(Defensive.)* I'm talking about Jason!

RYAN. *Nobody's* cuter than Zack.

CRAIG. But Jason came close.

RYAN. He was a swimmer.

CRAIG. So he looked a lot hotter in Speedos than Zack did.

RYAN. I never saw Zack in Speedos.

CRAIG. You weren't missing anything.

RYAN. Yes, I was. Zack worked out. Jason didn't. He had abs and arms, but nothing else.

CRAIG. Zack?

RYAN. Jason.

CRAIG. So who needs deltoids? Jason had a sexier smile.

RYAN. Zack did. It could stop traffic on the San Diego Freeway.

CRAIG. What *couldn't*?

RYAN. Jason's couldn't.

CRAIG. Bet he had a hot butt.

RYAN. Zack?

CRAIG. Jason.

RYAN. Zack's was hotter.

CRAIG. Especially in Gap slim fits.

RYAN. You got *that* right.

*(A pause.)*

CRAIG. Did the seam go up the crack in his ass?

RYAN. What happened in the Kent State shower room?

*(A beat. CRAIG realizes he's just been had.)*

CRAIG. You fucker.

RYAN. How about it? I'll trade you one-for-one.

CRAIG. Forget it.

RYAN. Suit yourself.

CRAIG. You go first.

RYAN. *You* go first.

CRAIG. You think I'd snake you?!?

RYAN. I'd bet on it.

*(A grudging pause from CRAIG.)*

CRAIG. It was after the game with Ohio State. There were six of us.

RYAN. Who were they?

CRAIG. Three tailbacks, a quarterback and two tight ends.

RYAN. Including you.

CRAIG. Including me.

RYAN. What happened?

CRAIG. We hung around until everybody else left, and then we dropped the soap. Your turn.

RYAN. The seam went right up his crack and his jeans were two sizes too small. Like yours.

CRAIG. Muscle butt?

RYAN. Big time. You know in the middle where they have the double stitching?

CRAIG. *(Pants.)* Yeah?

RYAN. It looked like he had a bullseye painted on his ass. Your turn. Who was doing who?

CRAIG. Two of the tailbacks were blowing each other, I was smoking the third, and the tight end was our wild card.

RYAN. What about the quarterback?

CRAIG. His picture was on the cover of *Sports Illustrated* and he kept getting these fuck-me letters from women in Australia. Hated queers.

RYAN. How'd you talk him into it?

CRAIG. Who talked? One whiff of poppers and his feet were glued to the ceiling. *(Points at RYAN.)* You're up. What did you and Zack do the first time?

RYAN. He pulled one of my wisdom teeth.

*(Shocked silence.)*

CRAIG. *(In a Latin accent.)* Lucy? You got some 'splainin' to do.

RYAN. I told you it was complicated.

CRAIG. So it wasn't exactly a date.

RYAN. Actually, it was more like a dentist appointment. *(Pause.)* Do you believe in love at first sight?

CRAIG. I'm working on it.

RYAN. I called him Zacky and he called me Ry-Ry. Right from the start.

CRAIG. And you even got to suck his fingers.

RYAN. Are you giving me a rough time?

CRAIG. Ry-Ry, I'm trying really hard *not* to.

*(A pause.)*

RYAN. I had my teeth cleaned fourteen times last year. But I still didn't know what his story was.

CRAIG. Except for the seam up his crack.

RYAN. Except for the seam up his crack. So I told him somebody'd given me three free tickets to the National League Playoffs but I could only use one of them.

CRAIG. Then you offered him the other two so you could see who he'd bring with him.

RYAN. (*Nods.*) I figured as long as it was a guy, I had a chance.

CRAIG. Been there, done that, got the t-shirt. Did he accept?

RYAN. Oh, yeah. (*Pause.*) But first I had to buy the playoff tickets.

CRAIG. (*Groans.*) How much?

RYAN. Three hundred dollars. I *told* you he had a killer smile.

CRAIG. Jesus Christ, Ryan. You could have gone to Man's Country for ten!

RYAN. It wasn't about sex!

CRAIG. Did he still have the seam up his crack?

RYAN. Yes.

CRAIG. It was about sex. (*Leans in.*) So who did he bring with him—a boy or a girl?

RYAN. Neither. (*Excited.*) He brought his mother.

(*An awed silence.*)

CRAIG. (*Impressed.*) Wow!

RYAN. That's what *I* thought. How Tennessee Williams can you get? But you know how it is in Japan—they actually love their parents. So it wasn't necessarily conclusive.

CRAIG. You didn't ask him out?

RYAN. Not right away—but I knew I had to see him again. So I pretended I had this really bad pain in one of my upper left molars.

(*A stunned pause. A year from now, CRAIG will tell you that this was the moment he fell in love.*)

CRAIG. Ry-Ry, this is way over the top.

RYAN. No. The root canal was way over the top.

CRAIG. You didn't.

RYAN. I had to. It meant four visits in four weeks.

CRAIG. For a root canal you didn't need!

RYAN. But I got to look up into those big brown eyes for six hours. (*A shrug.*) Fuck teeth.

CRAIG. (*Exasperated.*) Why didn't you just tell him?

RYAN. Because he had a drill in his hand, Craig. What if I was wrong?

CRAIG. He let you call him Zacky, didn't he?

RYAN. So what?

CRAIG. The last time anybody called me Craigy, we didn't fall out of bed for six weeks!

RYAN. It gets worse.

CRAIG. It couldn't possibly.

RYAN. Right after I paid him \$900 for the crown, he introduced me to his fiancée.

(*A pause.*)

CRAIG. The kind without balls?

RYAN. (*Glum.*) Yeah. That was three months ago and I haven't seen him since. (*A sigh.*) Now I know how Glenn Close felt in *Fatal Attraction* when Michael Douglas—

CRAIG. Hold it.

RYAN. What?

(*Clearly agitated, CRAIG begins to pace.*)

CRAIG. You never played Hide-the-Wiener with this guy.

RYAN. No.

CRAIG. You never went bare-butt together.

RYAN. No.

CRAIG. Not even in underpants.

RYAN. No.

CRAIG. And it's a cinch you never grabbed his dick because he's into girls—which dings any chance he's gonna throw you a boner in the first place.



RYAN. Right.

CRAIG. You never told him about it—

RYAN. No.

CRAIG. —but you killed a tooth.

RYAN. Yes.

(*A beat.*)

CRAIG. That's perverse.

RYAN. Oh. And blowing Dopey isn't.

(*CRAIG leans in earnestly.*)

CRAIG. You mind if I ask you something really personal?

RYAN. Now you need permission?!?

CRAIG. Why'd you give up on Kerouac?

RYAN. I never gave up on Kerouac! I own eleven copies of *On the Road*. Do you?

CRAIG. That's the view from the cheap seats. Didn't he say something about loving every minute of your life?

RYAN. Craigy, if you're going to quote Kerouac, don't fuck it up. He said, "The only people for me are the ones who are mad to live."

CRAIG. So how come you dumped English Lit, sold out to the state bar, and wouldn't even make a play for the only guy who ever popped your cork!

RYAN. Who sold out? I love practicing law!

CRAIG. You couldn't possibly.

(*RYAN picks up his motion to dismiss and brandishes it.*)

RYAN. You see this? *This* is how I make a difference.

CRAIG. No. A polio vaccine makes a difference. A motion to bifurcate doesn't—

RYAN. Motion to dismiss.

CRAIG. I thought we agreed to bifurcate!

RYAN. *You* agreed to bifurcate.

CRAIG. We're not gonna get a dismissal, Ry-Ry. Trust me on this one.

RYAN. You haven't even read the statement of the case!

CRAIG. Okay, shoot. What are the facts?

(*RYAN straightens up, like Clarence Darrow facing a jury.*)

RYAN. A moving van's parked at the top of Coldwater Canyon.

CRAIG. Right.

RYAN. When the driver turns on the ignition, the rear axle snaps, the rim falls off, and one of the tires rolls down the hill.

CRAIG. Got it.

RYAN. Two blocks south, an old lady's walking her chihuahua.

CRAIG. Oh, no.

RYAN. Oh, yeah. Dead on arrival at Cedars-Sinai.

CRAIG. Did it get the dog too?

RYAN. No. The dog had a heart attack. Call it.

(*A pause.*)

CRAIG. Res ipsa loquitur.

RYAN. You bet. Somebody screwed up *somewhere*. But who was it? The people who made the tire, the people who made the truck, the people who serviced the axle, or the poor schmuck who hit the gas?

CRAIG. Can't we blame the old lady?

RYAN. We tried to—but what are we supposed to say? That she failed to use the subject sidewalk in a reasonably foreseeable manner? Where are we going to find a judge dumb enough to buy *that*?

CRAIG. Try the Supreme Court's website.

RYAN. I thought we had it easy. We represent the tire, and everybody knows it was the axle's fault. Then I found out that our tire was a re-tread—we passed it off as new, which by the way is illegal.

CRAIG. We're in deep shit.

RYAN. Duh. But how am I going to prove that it still didn't cause the accident?

CRAIG. You can't.

RYAN. (*A smirk.*) I did. Four and a half weeks of working nights and weekends, but I found the cite. *Bock v. Kelley*, 8 Cal.App. 234. A tire fell off a Dusenberg in 1927 and the same thing happened. And then—

(*He stops cold and appears to have lost his train of thought.*)

CRAIG. Yeah?

RYAN. (*Distracted.*) Uh—I was at the research library 'til 4:30 in the morning. And then.... (*Pause.*) And then....

(*His voice trails off. He looks a little shell-shocked.*)

CRAIG. You okay?

RYAN. (*Dazed.*) I billed 114 hours on this.

CRAIG. At least.

RYAN. For a tire.

CRAIG. I noticed that.

RYAN. A fucking tire.

CRAIG. That tell you something?

RYAN. You know what I could have done with 114 hours?

CRAIG. (*Quotes Sondheim.*) “Add ‘em up, Bobby.”

RYAN. I could have been at the Jets-Packers game in Green Bay. I could have listened to *Annie Get Your Gun* nineteen times. I could have driven through the Midwest and played ball at Field of Dreams. I could have— I could have—

CRAIG. You could have taken a shower with me.

RYAN. (*Nods.*) I could have taken a shower with you.

CRAIG. (*Lights up.*) Would you?

RYAN. No. But I could have.

(*Taking advantage of the moment, CRAIG rises, crosses to RYAN, and puts his hands on RY's waist.*)

CRAIG. Hey, sooner or later you're gonna have to let *somebody* wash your back. It's in the cards.

(*Against his will, RYAN begins toying hesitantly with one of CRAIG's biceps. CRAIG lets him.*)

RYAN. One tempest at a time, huh?

CRAIG. I can wait. After we get your ass out of that law firm—

RYAN. Not so fast. You know what they say about middle-of-the-night decisions.

CRAIG. Bullshit. You'll only change your mind. How long could you live on what you've got stashed away?

RYAN. Eighteen months.

CRAIG. I couldn't last eighteen *minutes*. And you don't catch *me* looking over my shoulder.

(*A pause. RYAN finally hears what he's saying and sees what he's doing. Hastily, he pulls away.*)

RYAN. This is crazy!

CRAIG. No. What's crazy is that you're 37 and you don't have anybody to kick your butt or buy you a pizza or get naked with.

RYAN. (*Defiant.*) What about Rick?

CRAIG. Rick who?

RYAN. Rick from the Internet. We talk on the phone and he sends me e-mail.

CRAIG. Ever boink him?

RYAN. No. He lives in Vegas.

CRAIG. Nice town. You can fuck a whore but you can't make a u-turn. (*Pauses.*) Where do you meet guys? Real ones.

(*A beat.*)

RYAN. Elevators.

CRAIG. Not good enough. Where else?

RYAN. The supermarket. Usually in the meat department.

CRAIG. You're on the right track. Where else?

RYAN. At the gym.

CRAIG. What are you up to on the pec deck?

RYAN. Eighty pounds.

CRAIG. I can do ninety.

RYAN. Kiss my ass.

CRAIG. *(Lights up.)* You mean it?

RYAN. Hey!

CRAIG. Sorry. How's your street cruise?

RYAN. I get by.

CRAIG. You know the 1-2-3 turn?

RYAN. I thought it was the 1-2-3-4 turn.

CRAIG. *(A groan.)* You beat off a lot, don't you?

RYAN. Excuse me! Nobody sent me the upgrade!

CRAIG. You want to see how it works?

RYAN. No.

CRAIG. Okay. Say we're walking down the boulevard in opposite directions and for some like-really-weird reason you thought I was cute.

RYAN. Hey. Just because I'm not going to sleep with you doesn't mean I don't think you're cute.

CRAIG. *Do* you?

RYAN. Well, yeah. But only in a—in a sexy kind of way.

CRAIG. Hold that thought.

*(He positions RYAN center stage and steps back a few feet so they're face-to-face.)*

CRAIG. We'll do your version first. Ready?

RYAN. Set.

BOTH OF THEM. Go.

*(They walk toward each other as though they were cruising Santa Monica Boulevard on a Saturday afternoon. At precisely the same moment, their eyes meet and lock. Then they pass one another. Three steps beyond, CRAIG glances over his shoulder at RYAN, who's still walking forward. He shrugs and turns front, just as RYAN glances over his shoulder at CRAIG. They've missed connecting by a single step.)*

CRAIG. See? No wonder you're blowing lawyers in bathrooms.

RYAN. Don't talk to me about ethics. *You're* the one who sucked off a cartoon.

CRAIG. Try it on three this time.

*(They resume their poses.)*

CRAIG. Ready?

RYAN. Set.

BOTH OF THEM. Go.

*(They walk toward each other, glance into one another's eyes, and then pass. Three paces later, they both turn at exactly the same moment and stare at one another. Faking casual, they move toward center stage from opposite directions.)*

CRAIG. Hey.

RYAN. Hey.

CRAIG. I'm Craig.

RYAN. I'm Kenneth.

CRAIG. *Kenneth?!?*

RYAN. Well, how do I know you don't have body parts in your freezer?

*(CRAIG rolls his eyes.)*

CRAIG. Okay, we'll skip this section. *(Resumes the routine.)* You live around here?

RYAN. Yeah. You?

CRAIG. Yep. What are you up for?

RYAN. I think I could fall in love with you.

*(CRAIG groans.)*

CRAIG. You wouldn't.

RYAN. It's provocative, stupid.

CRAIG. It's irresponsible. Lesson one: if you can't say "I love you" without getting a hard-on, fuck him and go home. Try it again.

RYAN. So where are you from?

CRAIG. Iowa.

RYAN. Where in Iowa?

CRAIG. Dubuque.

RYAN. Is that near Mason City?

CRAIG. No. Do you really pick up guys this way?

RYAN. Not so far.

CRAIG. Big surprise. We could have come three times by now. Show me your bar pose.

RYAN. *Here?*

CRAIG. You heard me.

*(RYAN crosses stage left, leans against the wall with one foot up, sticks a tentative thumb in his belt loop, and cocks his head to the right with a frozen smile on his face.)*

RYAN. What do you think?

CRAIG. No offense, but you look like a terrorist.

RYAN. Then show me yours.

CRAIG. *(Shrugs.)* You're the boss.

*(He strikes his own pose against the wall—shoulders back, arms crossed, biceps flexed to full advantage, hips thrust out and an irresistible pout on his lips. RYAN is mesmerized; it's clear that*

*he's beginning to fall like a ton of bricks. We see it, CRAIG sees it, RYAN doesn't.)*

RYAN. Okay, okay. So your way is better.

CRAIG. For starters. But we still gotta make you over. *(Points toward RYAN's cock.)* You hanging to the left or the right?

RYAN. That's none of your business.

CRAIG. It is now. You've got to pull everything up in the middle and then tuck it around so it makes your fly puff out. Think Kenny O'Brien. Like this.

*(He reaches out as though he were going to give RYAN a helping hand.)*

RYAN. *(Irritated.)* I can do it, thank you very much.

*(He turns his back on us and jams his hands down the front of his pants.)*

RYAN. *(Mumbles.)* I must be out of my fucking mind.

*(When he turns front, he's displaying a relatively impressive bulge between his legs. CRAIG lets out a low whistle.)*

RYAN. You happy now?

CRAIG. Jesus Christ. How big is that thing?

RYAN. Somewhere between a boyfriend and a trick.

CRAIG. This is gonna take a lot less work than I thought. Who cuts your hair?

RYAN. A guy in Santa Monica.

CRAIG. Dump him.

*(He runs his fingers through RYAN's hair and effects a nicely tousled look.)*

RYAN. You're kidding, right?

CRAIG. The hell I am. *(Eyes the shirt.)* And Versace's okay, but you're not in a fuckin' courtroom.

*(He unbuttons the top three buttons and separates the shirt so that RYAN's chest is showing. RYAN glances down at himself warily.)*

RYAN. I look like a condom ad.

CRAIG. You look hot. Trust me.

*(He pushes RY back against the wall and positions him like a stud.)*

CRAIG. Now pretend you're Mike Henson in *The Young and the Hung*. Ever see it?

RYAN. I have it on laser disc.

CRAIG. Remember his "catch me-fuck me" smile at the beginning of the three-way?

RYAN. That wasn't a smile. He had two dicks in his mouth.

CRAIG. Fake it.

*(RYAN adopts a half-smile, half-sneer that's actually pretty effective.)*

CRAIG. Now you're cookin', good-lookin'.

RYAN. What if nobody bites?

CRAIG. They will if you've got the balls.

RYAN. Assume that I do.

CRAIG. Okay. *(Points to an imaginary hunk.)* There he is. Standing by himself with a Miller Light. He's a construction worker.

RYAN. He's a football player.

CRAIG. With a forty-six inch chest.

RYAN. And a buzz cut.

CRAIG. Wearing 501s.

RYAN. Two sizes too small.

CRAIG. With the buttons in the front.

RYAN. And a white t-shirt.

*(By now, RYAN's really getting turned on. Though he seems to be unaware of it, he has just described CRAIG—who drapes a casual arm around RY's shoulder and moves significantly closer.)*

CRAIG. Man, look at those arms.

RYAN. Look at those pecs.

CRAIG. Uh-oh. He's scoping you out.

RYAN. But I pretend I don't notice.

CRAIG. Good.

RYAN. *(A grin.)* Thanks.

CRAIG. Now this is the critical part. Yawn twice and act bored. He'll panic 'cause he thinks you're gonna leave by yourself.

RYAN. Instead, I finish my beer, walk right up to him—

CRAIG. —and put your hands on his ass.

*(By now, they are face-to-face, their bodies touching. CRAIG, by way of illustration, has both of his arms wrapped around RYAN, with his hands on RY's butt.)*

RYAN. *(Hesitant.)* I do?

CRAIG. It gets easier.

*(Tentatively, RYAN grabs CRAIG's ass too. Both of them are beginning to lose it.)*

RYAN. Then what?

CRAIG. You press up against each other real close, and with one hand you reach into his shirt.

*(Their hips start gyrating together as CRAIG reaches into RYAN's shirt and begins playing with his pecs.)*

RYAN. Can't you get arrested for this?

CRAIG. Not at the Mineshaft.

*(RYAN's hands are beginning to move up CRAIG's torso.)*

RYAN. What if his shirt doesn't have any buttons?

CRAIG. Lucky you....

*(CRAIG buries his face in RYAN's chest and begins to kiss it. By now, they're both breathing pretty heavily.)*

RYAN. *(A moan.)* Oh, boy....

CRAIG. Mmmmmm. Ryan?

RYAN. "Kenneth".

*(RYAN's got his hand deep inside CRAIG's t-shirt.)*

CRAIG. *(A moan.)* Oh, God....

RYAN. Is that all you're going to say?

CRAIG. *(Mumbles.)* Where are you from?

RYAN. Maryland.

CRAIG. What part?

RYAN. Baltimore.

CRAIG. Is that near Pittsburgh?

RYAN. No.

*(Their faces move closer together; both mouths are beginning to part when RYAN pulls back.)*

RYAN. Wait. You positive or negative?

*(A pause.)*

CRAIG. I play safe. So should you.

RYAN. You didn't answer my question.

*(Another beat.)*

CRAIG. Do you like me?

RYAN. Yeah. I do.

CRAIG. I like you too. Even the Ethel Merman part. So what difference does it make?

RYAN. *(Gently.)* I don't sleep with anyone who's HIV-positive. It doesn't make sense. *(Pause.)* I'm sorry.

*(CRAIG pulls away. He ain't too happy.)*

CRAIG. I'm glad you told me that, Ry. Because there's something else you should know. My mother's part Polish. Just in case you have a problem with Polacks too. And then there's the Episcopalian thing—

RYAN. Craigy—

CRAIG. Don't call me that!

RYAN. You should have told me.

CRAIG. Told you *what*?

RYAN. *(Agitated.)* Don't you read the papers? They still haven't figured out how to stop this thing!

CRAIG. The only paper *I* ever read was the *San Francisco Chronicle!* And you know why? Because in Dubuque Fuckin' Iowa they had me thinking that God made 500 million people and one queer. Me. Even Andy Wexler was beating off to *Penthouse*, so how was I supposed to know that I was normal too? Then I swiped a copy of the *Chronicle* and I found Randy Shilts on page 8. Know what he told me? He told me there was this great city under this orange bridge where these great guys could hold hands at the movies and buy a house together and kiss each other right in the middle of Tower Records and use words like "boyfriend" even when they went to the office. So I learned all their names by heart. Harvey Milk and Bill Kraus and Harry Britt and Tim Wolfred and Cleve Jones. And when I got *that* licked, I even memorized the streets—Castro and Market and Van Ness and Folsom and all the rest. I didn't know the capital of Michigan, but I could tell you where to get the best damn apple pancakes in Noe Valley and what time the cutest guys usually showed up at the Elephant Walk. That's how I wound up in San Francisco. Nothin' but thirty-six

bucks in my ass pocket, two pairs of underpants, and a Master's from Kent State—but I got there anyway. And you know what I found? Everybody was dead, that's what I found. The Castro looked like Hiro-fucking-shima after the Bomb. You believe that? And I was pissed. I mean, it wasn't like I expected anybody to meet me at the bus—but *dead?!?* It felt like my whole life had ended just when it was supposed to start. *(Pause.)* Then I met Michael. Okay, maybe he was a dipshit and maybe I was one too. But it lasted five months. And guess what? We held hands at the movies and we ate apple pancakes in Noe Valley and we kissed each other in the middle of Tower Records and he had my picture on his desk at work. That's when I realized that I owed my life to Bill Kraus and Randy Shilts and Harvey Milk and a couple hundred thousand other guys I'll never get to meet either. Know why I love them? Because *they're all we've got.*

*(He crosses to the counter and picks up his jacket.)*

CRAIG. I'm HIV-negative, Ryan. And if that ever changes, so fuckin' what? Look at the company I'll be in. But it won't ever happen to you, so don't worry.

*(He turns toward RYAN.)*

CRAIG. Because you're not even in the game. Even Kerouac knew that.

*(He turns around and heads toward the door.)*

RYAN. *(Quietly.)* Craigy, wait.

*(He rises, crosses to CRAIG, wraps his arms around him from behind, and rests his chin in CRAIG's neck.)*

RYAN. I'm so sorry. I shouldn't have said that.

CRAIG. Then take it back.

RYAN. I do. I take it back. Just let me hold you.

*(He begins kissing CRAIG's neck gently. CRAIG closes his eyes and tilts his head back.)*

CRAIG. Did you really ding that guy in the men's room?

RYAN. *(Sheepish.)* No. Did you really blow Dopey?

CRAIG. Yes.

*(Ryan nuzzles Craig's ear.)*

RYAN. Incidentally—

CRAIG. Mmmmm?

RYAN. It wouldn't be a motion to bifurcate. It'd be a—

CRAIG AND RYAN. *(Together.)* —motion to sever.

CRAIG. I know. But I didn't want to scare you off.

RYAN. I like your style.

*(Craig turns around so that they're nose-to-nose.)*

CRAIG. Ry-Ry?

RYAN. What?

CRAIG. Say something romantic to me and pretend you mean it, okay?

*(A beat. RYAN runs his fingers through CRAIG's hair.)*

RYAN. Five years from now, are you going to remember the first time I ever kissed you?

*(CRAIG sighs.)*

CRAIG. Find out.

AFTER DARK

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*(They wrap their arms around each other and kiss deeply.)*

**ACT ONE CURTAIN**