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Cast of Characters

ALEXANDER, early 30s

MARCUS, early 30s

TREVOR, 20s-30s

ROSEMONDE, 40s-60s

JASON, 22

DANIEL, 24

LANDON, 20s-30s

Time

Today.

Place

Marcus's apartment; a yard outside a church; Alexander's apartment; a coffee shop; Rosemonde's beach house.

Production Notes

Simple set and costume changes are preferred. Nothing should stop the flow of the play.

DANGEROUS

by Tom Smith

Inspired by the novel

Les Liaisons Dangereuses by Pierre Choderlos de Laclos

ACT I

Scene 1

(Marcus's apartment. Simple, elegant décor. At rise: ROSEMONDE is sitting on a chair opposite MARCUS. They are playing cribbage.)

ROSEMONDE. Don't you think it's odd?

MARCUS. What?

ROSEMONDE. Us here like this. A beautiful Saturday evening; the night is still young. Yet here we are playing cribbage like a couple of old spinsters.

MARCUS. Speak for yourself. I'm playing like a world champ.

ROSEMONDE. You know what I mean. I've told you before, when I make these jaunts into the city you don't have to baby-sit me. I'm perfectly content watching your overpriced cable and drinking until I pass out.

MARCUS. Nonsense, Rosemonde. You're a very special guest here, and I always look forward to your visits. How many points do you have?

ROSEMONDE. *(Counting cards:)* Let me see...fifteen two, fifteen four, and a pair for six.

MARCUS. Double run for eight, fifteen 10, fifteen 12, and nibs for 13.

ROSEMONDE. You're turning into quite the card sharp.

MARCUS. I learned from the best.

ROSEMONDE. But now, seriously, Marcus, why don't you go out and meet some nice young men and make merry? It'll relieve me of my guilt.

MARCUS. I can do that anytime, Rosemonde, but tonight I choose to spend with you.

ROSEMONDE. I worry about your loyalties. When I was young—
younger, that is—there wasn't anything that could keep me home
on a Saturday night. Especially not a middle-aged companion.

MARCUS. Rosemonde! You are neither middle-aged, nor my com-
panion. You're an old hanger-on and I won't hear another word
about it! Now, another round?

ROSEMONDE. Not much point if my luck keeps on like it has
been. I think I'll head off to bed.

MARCUS. You don't have to go to bed early just to give me an ex-
cuse to go out.

ROSEMONDE. I'm not. There's a book I've been trying to get
through and I want to read a little. A very interesting subject, quite
Aristotelian in its plot structure: it's all about a young lad who ap-
parently has gotten work as a pool boy for a movie producer. It's a
warm day, so he decides to clean the pool sans clothing. I'm just at
the point where the movie producer has come home unexpectedly
early. I'm very curious to see what happens next.

MARCUS. And the title of this great tome?

ROSEMONDE. Randy the Randy Pool Boy.

MARCUS. Sounds absolutely riveting. Do remember to tell me
how it ends.

ROSEMONDE. I suspect the end has something to do with
Randy's rear end, but I'll let you know for certain over brunch.
(Kisses MARCUS.) Goodnight, sweet boy!

MARCUS. Goodnight, Rosemonde. Wet dreams.

*(ROSEMONDE exits. MARCUS puts away the cribbage set. He
pours himself a drink, and kicks off his shoes. His cell phone rings,
and he answers it.)*

Hello? Alexander, it's been hours since I've heard your voice!
What's going on? No, I couldn't, I have old Rosemonde here. Truth
be told, he looks worse and worse every time I see him. Too bad he

avoided the plague; I could be in that beach house of his enjoying the view at this very moment. Right now?

(ALEXANDER opens Marcus's door, unbeknownst to MARCUS.)

I'm entertaining a wonderful friend of mine. He's ravishingly good-looking, and totally smitten with me.

(ALEXANDER approaches MARCUS. MARCUS has his back to ALEXANDER.)

Perhaps you know him. He's got a bad reputation all over town, and he was thinking of actually moving out of the city because he's afraid he's slept his way through it already. A cad by the name of *(He turns around and confronts ALEXANDER.)* Alexander Valmont.

ALEXANDER. You really shouldn't keep your door unlocked like that.

MARCUS. I didn't. You used the key you stole from me last January.

ALEXANDER. I returned that key months ago!

MARCUS. Forgetting it and returning it are really two different things. And I noticed you re-stole it from me last month.

ALEXANDER. *(Handing it over:)* And I was coming over to return it again.

MARCUS. Now that you've made a copy.

ALEXANDER. *(Handing over another key:)* You are so suspicious.

MARCUS. We've been friends a long time. So what brings you to my humble abode on prowling night?

ALEXANDER. I've come to console you.

MARCUS. Really? What for?

ALEXANDER. The death of your relationship with Grayson.

MARCUS. How wonderful! I knew nothing of the relationship, so the death of it leaves me as content as when you arrived.

ALEXANDER. Oh, but you do know something of it, dear friend. You two were seen whispering in dark corners of places not known for their discretion. That can only lead me to believe your purpose in patronizing such establishments was, in fact, to make your relationship known.

MARCUS. Whatever idle gossip may or may not have been spreading about Grayson and me, I assure you it was entirely fabricated.

ALEXANDER. Thank goodness. That makes what I'm about to tell you far less painful.

MARCUS. And that would be...?

ALEXANDER. Earlier this evening I spotted Grayson walking in to a local drinking establishment. Curious, I followed, intending to see you, my dearest and closest friend, awaiting him in a secluded booth. Imagine my surprise when I encountered Grayson kissing not you, but a boy no more than 21 or 22. I moved closer to make sure I wasn't hallucinating, but alas I was not. Grayson was cozying up to this young lad, clearly 10 years your junior. With an atrocious absence of style, I might add. Sort of a midwestern boy, completely angelic. I enquired to some friends as to your whereabouts, and was shocked to hear that you hadn't been seen all night. I was about to call you, to offer my undying condolences, but felt that perhaps a face-to-face meeting would ease the blow.

MARCUS. It's very curious, Alexander, that you always happen to be in the right place at the wrong time.

ALEXANDER. Perhaps it's the wrong place at the right time.

MARCUS. Either way, wherever there's drama, there's Alexander. It's a gift.

ALEXANDER. One I would not wish upon another living soul.

MARCUS. This boy that Grayson was kissing, I don't suppose you happened to notice whether or not he had—

ALEXANDER. —a tattoo of a Chinese symbol on his right forearm? I believe, from my many summers abroad in college, that it was the symbol for love. He also happened to have a small mole under his

left ear, but I really wasn't paying attention. I take it you know this boy?

MARCUS. Grayson's personal trainer at his gym. His name is Jason, and he's from Lawrence, Kansas, and he's not out to his parents. Yet. But just today I found myself composing an email to them that might change all that. I was going to send it but realized if I was going to make such a shocking revelation I should at least provide them with some photographic evidence to go along with it. I intended to go shutterbugging early next week, after Rosemonde returns home. I do so hate secrets, especially if they're not mine.

ALEXANDER. So you knew all along?

MARCUS. We all have gifts, Alexander, and mine happens to be the gift of observation. I noticed the quick turning off of the computer when I entered the room, the increased amount of time spent at the gym with little results, and, most incriminatingly, the credit card receipts with charges that were not incurred on business dinners. It's almost insulting how stupid Grayson must think I am. The flirtation has been going on for two weeks, but they landed the deal, so to speak, Thursday evening in the young lad's apartment. Poor boy was more inexperienced than Grayson anticipated: just adolescent groping in the dark. It seems he's waiting to give himself completely, as it were, until he finds true love. Which is why I intended to give you a call this evening.

ALEXANDER. You'd like me to beat Grayson to the punch?

MARCUS. Not only beat him to the punch, but do it in such a public manner that he'll be humiliated. I'd do it myself, but it would seem so vindictive. But you, if you were to do it... Well, it would just be another conquest for you. Grayson would find himself breaking up with the boy before they're even officially dating. Then, as he showers me with affection to ease his guilty remorse, I shall very publicly rebuke him, thus ensuring he pays for his crime with his dignity. He'll be cuckolded, and no one goes near a fool, save another fool.

ALEXANDER. Your request is quite inspiring.

MARCUS. But...?

ALEXANDER. I can't in good conscience proceed. It's too easy. This Jason is what...21, 22? There's no challenge for me. A few martinis, a soft shoulder to cry on, a kind word or two and he's flat on his back. Or on my front. No, it's insultingly simple.

MARCUS. And I suppose you have a greater challenge in which you're currently involved?

ALEXANDER. As a matter of fact I do.

MARCUS. And that is?

ALEXANDER. A priest. Or soon-to-be priest anyway.

MARCUS. A what?

ALEXANDER. You heard correctly. I've never had one before. He's completely pious. Going through some sort of training, a few weeks away from becoming ordained. Young, passionate, full of goodness, the whole nine yards.

MARCUS. I almost regret asking where you met him.

ALEXANDER. I was in church.

MARCUS. And it didn't get struck by lightning?

ALEXANDER. Surprisingly, no.

MARCUS. And your mission there?

ALEXANDER. I was attending the wedding of a good friend. Well, actually, he became a good friend. I saw him walking in in his tuxedo and my curiosity got the better of me. Tall, handsome—

MARCUS. —Well-spoken?

ALEXANDER. Couldn't tell you. Anyway, after a little coaxing and some lighthearted eye tag, I found myself in a Sunday school classroom relieving the tension of a very nervous groom. Funny thing: after spending all that money on the reception he never did get to cut the cake. We were caught, in flagrante, by the bride's father. While exiting out a back door I happened upon a little house where priest-to-be is living until he takes over the parish.

MARCUS. Do you really think you can convert him?

ALEXANDER. I know in some ways it seems less of a challenge than even the young boy—after all, you know all those rumors about priests. But I got the distinct impression after meeting him that the poor thing thinks he's straight. He actually asked me if I was the groom.

MARCUS. He couldn't tell by your attire?

ALEXANDER. Oh, I sort of ran off with the groom's tux. It was Armani, and it didn't seem like he needed it anymore. I left him my clothes, which are now probably the nicest things he owns, and figured it an even trade.

MARCUS. Now Alexander, surely you can take care of my situation while dealing with your own? You've done it before, I believe.

ALEXANDER. True, true, and it might be nice to have multiple projects on the burner, just to keep me occupied. Besides, my priest does work weekends... Well, all right, I will help you. However, I need to know up front what my compensation is to be.

MARCUS. Compensation? After all the affection I've given you throughout the years?

ALEXANDER. I can't offer my services gratis. I devalue myself as an artist that way.

MARCUS. Then name your price.

ALEXANDER. Well, I don't wish to take advantage... Because you are a friend, I suppose I can do it for...an evening together.

MARCUS. Just one?

ALEXANDER. With you.

MARCUS. I suspected. And?

ALEXANDER. That's all. You and me for one glorious night. Unbridled passion. Raw, sweaty lust.

MARCUS. That's easily arranged.

ALEXANDER. But you must spend the entire night with me. In my arms. No rushing home, no sudden engagements, no excuses.

MARCUS. You know I don't do that with people I like.

ALEXANDER. That is my offer. Of course, if you feel you can find someone else to complete the job for a more competitive wage then I'm more than happy to resume my sole attention on my burgeoning cleric.

MARCUS. No. This is a matter with some delicacy that needs your hand.

ALEXANDER. Among other body parts.

MARCUS. If you can bring me proof before next weekend that you have indeed accomplished this goal, do so and what you request shall be amiably granted.

ALEXANDER. You must hate Grayson very much.

MARCUS. Hate is such an ugly word. I prefer abhorrence. I abhor him.

ALEXANDER. It is at this juncture that I would normally request a small cocktail to toast the deal, but considering I only have six days to achieve my task I suspect my time would be better spent seducing. *(He starts to leave.)*

MARCUS. Alexander—you're a good friend.

ALEXANDER. And you, Marcus, have always needed one. Good-night.

(MARCUS sips his drink as the lights fade to black.)

Scene 2

(Marcus's apartment, later. MARCUS reading email on his laptop.)

MARCUS. *(Or ALEXANDER voiceover:)* “And so, dear friend, I was able to set into motion the first step of my plan. While the hour is much too late—or rather, too early—to discuss it in any great detail, I can tell you this: Jason will soon be mine, perhaps in record time. I did find it troubling that your boyfriend was spending the night, so I paged him with an urgent message that his dear uncle was in the hospital after a horrific car accident. Lucky for me Grayson actually has an uncle, and I spied him rushing off to catch a redeye. For now, however, I must rest a few hours before resuming my hectic schedule. After all, today is Sunday, and I’m feeling so guilty about my lie that I might just have to go to confession. Love, Alexander.”

(Blackout.)

Scene 3

(A yard outside a church. TREVOR exits, walking past ALEXANDER who is on a bench, crying.)

TREVOR. Excuse me. Are you all right?

ALEXANDER. Oh, Father, it’s you.

TREVOR. I’m afraid I don’t remember your name.

ALEXANDER. Alexander Valmont.

TREVOR. And we met...?

ALEXANDER. Last weekend. Outside your house.

TREVOR. That’s right. I didn’t recognize you without your tuxedo. Or, truth be told, the groom’s tuxedo.

ALEXANDER. You know then?

TREVOR. Everything. You created quite a stir.

ALEXANDER. I feel absolutely horrified by my actions.

TREVOR. As well you should. The couple has split, you know. Even though Father George offered them counseling, they decided to end it.

ALEXANDER. In some ways I'm glad.

TREVOR. How can you say that?

ALEXANDER. I know it may sound cruel, and I may be many things but never that, but I believe it is always better for a person to know who they are before the commitment rather than after. Imagine if I had met the groom next week? Or after the birth of his first child?

TREVOR. I suppose that's true, but it certainly doesn't forgive the sin.

ALEXANDER. I know, Father, I know.

TREVOR. I'm not ordained yet, so officially it's improper to call me Father.

ALEXANDER. What should I call you then?

TREVOR. Trevor.

ALEXANDER. That's why I'm here, Trevor. I was so disgusted with myself over the pain and anguish I caused last week, that I began examining my life. Closely. And I discovered that somewhere along the line I became someone I don't respect. I had no right to follow that man in the church, and I certainly had no right to do what I did. Even if he did beckon me.

TREVOR. He beckoned you?

ALEXANDER. I thought he simply needed help with something. I had no idea when I went into that room that— I suppose it makes little difference. I was weak. I gave myself so easily.

(He begins to cry.)

TREVOR. May I sit with you for a moment?

ALEXANDER. Please.

TREVOR. If indeed it is true that you are truly repentant, then you must confess to God. Only He can absolve you of your sins.

ALEXANDER. I know, Father—Trevor—I know. That's why I'm here. I came to attend mass this morning, to start over again. But when I got here I couldn't do it. All I could think about was the tremendous pain I've caused, and I felt unworthy to go inside. I would sully the goodness within.

TREVOR. Alexander, God's house is for everyone. For people like you most of all. To find comfort and salvation.

ALEXANDER. My head knows that, Trevor, but my heart won't allow it.

TREVOR. Is that were you crying when I came over?

ALEXANDER. I want...so much...to be good again. I want to change. I want to change.

TREVOR. Then do it! If you're devoted enough, you'll find the strength to make whatever changes you need to make.

ALEXANDER. You're right, of course. It's just—

LANDON. (*Entering, dressed shabbily:*) Excuse me, sir. I don't want no trouble.

TREVOR. Can I help you?

LANDON. It's him I want. Excuse me, mister. Remember me?

ALEXANDER. No, I'm afraid I don't.

LANDON. Of course you do. You just came and talked with me over in the park for nearly half an hour.

ALEXANDER. What can I do for you?

LANDON. I don't want any trouble, mister. I don't know if there's some kind of camera around, or what, but I ain't having it.

ALEXANDER. Please, just go—

TREVOR. Having what?

LANDON. This, Father. *(He thrusts out a thousand-dollar bill.)* I was just sitting there, minding my own business, asking for a few quarters, and he gives me this. I thought it was fake. Then he starts convincing me to give up alcohol, telling me about the wages of sin, and so on. Then he's gone, but this \$1000 bill is still there. No one gives away that kind of money for nothing. This is a TV show or something, and I'm not going to be made a fool of! Not for no amount of money! So take this back and leave me the hell alone! Pardon me, Father.

ALEXANDER. Please, sir, I have no idea what you're talking about.

LANDON. Yes, you do. It was you. You was going on and on about how you're a sinner too. I remember. Now take it and leave me alone. I don't want no trouble. I don't want no cops chasing me.

ALEXANDER. *(Pulling LANDON aside:)* Please, it was given as a gift. Accept it for what it is and be done with it.

LANDON. No way, mister. I'm out of here.

(He starts to leave.)

ALEXANDER. Wait! Will you at least accept \$50?

LANDON. Make it \$20, and if there's a cop that tries to come after me saying I stole it I've got this priest to vouch for me. See, Father, he's giving me \$20 and there's no strings attached, right?

TREVOR. It appears that way.

(ALEXANDER whispers in his ear, placing the \$1000 in his pocket.)

LANDON. OK, but like I said, this better not be a trick.

(He rushes off.)

ALEXANDER. That was embarrassing.

TREVOR. What did you whisper to him?

ALEXANDER. I'd rather not say. But it was completely honorable.

TREVOR. I didn't suspect otherwise.

ALEXANDER. I can't believe the homeless are so suspicious of charity.

TREVOR. It was very kind of you to give away your money like that. I don't mean to sound critical, but you can't buy your way to a better life, you know.

ALEXANDER. I understand that, Trevor. I was just trying to relieve myself of ill-gotten gain. If I am to start over again, I need to purge all reminders of my old life.

TREVOR. That sounds very promising.

ALEXANDER. You'll find I'm full of promise, Trevor. *(Pause.)* He was the reason I was crying: that homeless man. I was talking to him and I realized that he was such a good person, an honest and good person who had nothing; and I was his exact opposite. I was crying at the injustice of the world.

TREVOR. May I suggest finding counseling of some kind? To give you support during your time of transition?

ALEXANDER. I heard that there's a counseling center here at the church.

TREVOR. There is. That was why I was assigned this parish.

ALEXANDER. So you'd be my counselor?

TREVOR. Yes. But I must ask a favor of you.

ALEXANDER. Anything, Trevor.

TREVOR. Please seek counseling elsewhere. I don't feel like I could be completely objective.

ALEXANDER. I don't understand.

TREVOR. After talking to one of the groomsmen last weekend, I was told of your reputation and I don't feel like I could impartially counsel you after being given such a negative first impression.

ALEXANDER. A groomsman? Who was it?

TREVOR. I'd rather not say.

ALEXANDER. Trevor, I will admit that my reputation is not, shall we say, pristine, but you must also realize that rumor and gossip have fueled it more than my actions ever could.

TREVOR. I understand. But I still feel like it would be in your best interest to find someone else.

ALEXANDER. As you wish.

TREVOR. But I don't want to discourage you from seeking help, if you truly need it.

ALEXANDER. I do. I feel so adrift.

(He holds TREVOR, seeking comfort.)

TREVOR. Let me know if there's any other way I can help.

(He gets up, feeling awkward about the physical contact, and leaves. A few moments later, LANDON re-enters.)

LANDON. Did he fall for it?

ALEXANDER. Of course. He's the kind of person whose natural inclination is to see the good in people. This may be less of a challenge than I anticipated. Did you do what I asked?

LANDON. I put the money in an envelope and dropped it in the collection box. Kind of an expensive ploy, isn't it?

ALEXANDER. Landon, when I look back on my life I want to be remembered for two things: he was generous to a fault, and he once paid \$1000 to fuck a priest.

LANDON. Soon-to-be priest.

ALEXANDER. No difference. Now, let's go back to my place. All this goodness has made me horny.

(Lights fade to black.)

Scene 4

(Marcus's apartment. Reading email.)

MARCUS. “And with that I am closer and closer to unclothing a man of the cloth. Lustfully, Alexander.” *(Hits reply and begins typing.)* My precious, how wonderful it must feel to be winning the race, but have you forgotten that you are in a biathlon? You may be closing in on your finish line, but another day has passed, and you are no closer to mine that you were yesterday. How disappointing. I’ve always respected your whorish ways, but if you keep up this inactivity, I might have to finish the job myself. Perhaps you have overestimated your prowess. Then again, maybe it’s not really your fault. Age can be such a hindrance. In other news, I have been invited to Rosemonde’s on Thursday and since I am curious about his will, I have accepted the invitation in hopes of stumbling upon the document and getting a better sense of my potential earnings. What that means, dear friend, is that I might not be here for your victory, and so it becomes even more imperative that I have photographic proof. Tick-tock, tick-tock: time’s passing, and you’ve spent too much time reading this email already. Affectionately, Marcus. P.S. To make your win sweeter I have completely abstained from my twice-a-day self-pleasuring. It would be such a shame if you fail your mission and I am forced to offer that ultimate gratification to a stranger.

(Lights fade to black.)

Scene 5

(Alexander's apartment. He is in bed with LANDON, having just had sex.)

LANDON. I don’t think I could do it.

ALEXANDER. After that romp, I think there’s very little you couldn’t do.

LANDON. Have sex with a priest, I mean.

ALEXANDER. He isn’t a priest yet.

LANDON. Even so. He’s going to be one.

ALEXANDER. You were an altar boy. Can you honestly tell me that in regard to priests your thoughts were always pure?

LANDON. Always!

ALEXANDER. Not mine: I've lusted after them for years. It doesn't even matter what they look like; it's the principle of the thing.

LANDON. Do you really think you'll get him?

ALEXANDER. I am fortunate that I was born with the ability to get any man I want. It doesn't matter if they're younger than me, or better looking, or more powerful. If I want someone, I have them. It's as simple as that.

LANDON. Haven't you ever failed?

ALEXANDER. Never. It is a record unparalleled. It's what's earned me my reputation. Many have tried to resist, but ultimately curiosity gets the better of them and they want to see what all the fuss is about. It's an engine that refuels itself. *(The doorbell rings.)* Get that, will you?

(LANDON rises, puts on a pair of boxer briefs, answers the door.)

LANDON. Hello?

TREVOR. Oh, I'm sorry; I must have the wrong address.

ALEXANDER. Trevor?

(Rises, puts on robe. LANDON quickly rushes back to the bed and dresses.)

Come in, Trevor. What a surprise.

TREVOR. Alexander, I didn't mean to— I'll come back later.

ALEXANDER. Nonsense. Landon was just leaving.

LANDON. Hello, Father.

TREVOR. Really, I—

ALEXANDER. Please, come in. Forgive the mess. Landon was just giving me my daily massage.

TREVOR. Aren't you the homeless man I met on Sunday?

LANDON. I—uh—

ALEXANDER. Yes, of course he is. After leaving you, I went back to try to convince him to take more money. He refused, of course, being stubbornly proud. I then took him to a department store and offered him clothing and lunch, which he graciously accepted. We began talking, and it was disclosed that he had previously been a trained massage therapist. He lost his business in a fire, and when he tried to rebuild a nasty contractor ran off with all his money. That's what put him out on the streets. And, since I couldn't convince him to take charity, I offered him work. He's really quite good, Trevor. If you like I could have him—

TREVOR. No, thank you.

LANDON. Well, uh, sir, I guess I'll be going now.

ALEXANDER. Oh, Landon?

LANDON. Yes, Mr. Valmont?

ALEXANDER. Let's do this again same time tomorrow?

LANDON. Yes, sir.

(He rushes out.)

ALEXANDER. When did simple charity become so difficult to accept?

TREVOR. There's a certain pride involved in working for money rather than accepting handouts.

ALEXANDER. I suppose so. Unfortunately, I've never known that pride. In case you hadn't figured it out already, I haven't worked a day in my life. I was handed my wealth through a much beloved gentleman I met when I was 16.

TREVOR. I see.

ALEXANDER. I wanted to give most of it away, but youthful pride wouldn't allow it. Youth and wealth are a dangerous combination. Wicked habits started developing. Money completely destroyed my life.

TREVOR. Bad intentions destroy a life, not money.

ALEXANDER. You got me there. I was weak, and it came to devastate my life and my reputation. But forgive me for going on about myself; what can I do for you, Trevor?

TREVOR. The church received a large sum of money on Sunday in the collection box.

ALEXANDER. That's wonderful!

TREVOR. I have reason to believe it came from you.

ALEXANDER. From me? Nonsense.

TREVOR. It was a \$1000 bill. It appeared between the 10 o'clock and the 12 o'clock mass. The same time you stuffed a \$1000 bill in Landon's pocket.

ALEXANDER. I had no idea he was so charitable.

TREVOR. Please, Alexander, don't be coy. Every day since there's been a \$1000 bill put in the collection box.

ALEXANDER. Does it say from whom?

TREVOR. It's anonymous. Always in a blank envelope.

ALEXANDER. If it was me, I can assure you I would put my name on it. For tax purposes at least.

TREVOR. I've just come over to tell you to stop.

ALEXANDER. What do you mean, stop?

TREVOR. I understand you're trying to rid yourself of what you regard as dirty money, but I'm concerned it might mean something more.

ALEXANDER. Like what?

TREVOR. As a counselor, I'm trained to look for patterns. Usually, a person who is depressed, who is dissatisfied with their life, who starts giving away their worldly possessions— Well, usually that person is contemplating harming himself.

ALEXANDER. You think I'm suicidal?

TREVOR. I think you're confused and you need guidance. Have you started seeing a counselor?

ALEXANDER. I can't find one who understands me. I don't think this will come as a shock to you, but I'm not heterosexual. When I find straight therapists, they see me as aberrant. They never say as much, but when I begin telling them about my past I see disdain filling their eyes and I shut down completely. Unfortunately, my reputation among my own community has predisposed the gay therapists to blame me for my actions. Some won't even accept me as a client. I'm left with no one.

TREVOR. Surely if you just keep looking...?

ALEXANDER. To face more disdain, more guilt? Trevor, I am a criminal who is free from jail but is still thought a criminal. No one trusts me. No one is willing to give me a chance. There's no one I can turn to.

TREVOR. And is that why you seek comfort in Landon?

ALEXANDER. I'm not sure I understand what you mean.

TREVOR. I'm not blind. Most masseurs do not massage their clients on their beds. Dressed in nothing but their underwear.

ALEXANDER. You're right, of course. I told you a lie to save both you and Landon embarrassment. I am seeing Landon...for comfort. I pay him. We don't even—I mean—I just pay him to hold me. This is horrifically embarrassing to admit, but...I'm impotent. I have so much shame associated with the act of sex now that I can't even... I'm as chaste as you.

TREVOR. There are therapies that can help.

ALEXANDER. But no therapists. Please, Trevor, couldn't you—I mean, I know you said you wouldn't, but there's no one else. I trust you. I need help, and you're the only one who can help me. Please, don't deny me. (*Getting on his knees, hugging TREVOR's legs:*) I need you. I don't know what I'll do if you say no.

TREVOR. Shhh...shhh...there, there. Listen, I've been called away for a few days to counsel young married couples at St. Jude's. I'll be back early next week. We can set up a time to meet then.

ALEXANDER. You're so good. You're so good.

TREVOR. Now listen to me, Alexander. I want you to call me if you're ever plagued with feelings that you'll harm yourself. I'll give you my cell phone number. Don't hesitate to use it. Day or night.

(He writes the number down on a business card and hands it to ALEXANDER.)

ALEXANDER. I feel like such a fool. I had no intention of anyone seeing me like this.

TREVOR. The thing that attracted me to the priesthood was the opportunity to help people. I'm just glad I was here for you. Now, please, I want you to stop leaving anonymous donations. If, after some counseling, you still feel obligated to do so, then we will gladly accept your kindness. But not before then.

ALEXANDER. You're a good man, Trevor. And you'll make a wonderful priest.

TREVOR. I'll talk with you when I return. Goodbye.

(ALEXANDER rushes and hugs him. Surprised, TREVOR returns the hug then quickly exits. ALEXANDER picks up his cell phone and dials. He talks while getting dressed.)

ALEXANDER. Rosemonde? Hello dear heart, it's Alexander Valmont. Listen, Marcus is in the shower or he would have called himself, but he wanted me to ask if it was all right for me to join you at your house this week? I was planning a little trip out of the city, and he suggested your place. I promise, it won't be like last time and if it is, then I'll make sure to get one or two for you as well. *(He laughs.)* All right, blondes. Oh, and Rosemonde, one more thing. Are you still volunteering at St. Jude's? Well, if it's all right with you, I know a future priest who's planning to be there for a few days. Could you swing it to have him stay in your house? You always say the more the merrier, and we've never had a priest before. Oh, no, nothing like that. He's become a friend of mine, and I don't want him to be lonely out there. Thank you. Love you too. Bye!

(Lights fade to black.)

Scene 6

(A table outside a coffee shop. MARCUS and ALEXANDER chatting.)

MARCUS. Are you serious? You actually convinced Rosemonde to let you stay at his house again? After what happened last time?

ALEXANDER. He enjoyed it as much as I did. You saw him filming the whole thing. He probably watches that tape every night. But, I still haven't told you the best part. I've gotten my young priest to join us.

MARCUS. How on earth did you do that?

ALEXANDER. Long story, but Rosemonde is quite the volunteer at that little church of his and offered to put him up while he's visiting.

MARCUS. Does Trevor know you'll be there too?

ALEXANDER. I thought I'd save that as sort of a surprise.

MARCUS. Poor Rosemonde. He'll have a full house.

ALEXANDER. Have you invited someone too?

MARCUS. As a matter of fact I have. I've been so appalled at your complete lack of motivation to assist me in my little predicament that I've invited young Jason to join us.

ALEXANDER. You what?

MARCUS. Yes. Last Sunday I requested a personal trainer for my workout, and lo and behold, after a little finagling, it was Jason.

ALEXANDER. Did he know who you were?

MARCUS. Apparently not. I don't believe I've ever come up in conversation between him and Grayson. Anyway, between reps I revealed to him my fabricated midwestern upbringing, my desire to get a Chinese tattoo, and my torrid affair with an attorney who'd been called out of town on what was supposed to be the death of his uncle. "Do you know," I proclaimed indignantly, "that I found out he had seven other lovers. He doesn't even have an uncle at all. He was just rushing off to see another lover." You could literally see

the moment when young Jason's heart broke. He rushed off to the locker room, where I found him, inconsolable. To make matters worse, he admitted that just that morning his parents had received a very telling email which he was now certain was sent by his former love. I bought him a health drink, which led to dinner, which led to my place.

ALEXANDER. You didn't!

MARCUS. Of course not. He wanted to, naturally, but I told him he was too vulnerable. That merely fanned the flames. I sent him home in a cab, with an invitation for a weekend away to heal his heart-break. A bouquet of flowers to me marked his acceptance, and viola! It seems we have a very interesting weekend planned.

ALEXANDER. But how did you know I would go?

MARCUS. Do you honestly think I don't know everything about you? You're my second half. I know what you'll do before you do it and who you'll do it to. I assumed you'd go the moment I told you I was, and set my plan in action.

ALEXANDER. Both targets in the same house? You are sadistic, Marcus.

MARCUS. Not sadistic: aggressive. I've always known that I was put on this earth to dominate others. If I wanted something, I simply took it. And that included you. When we first met, I knew I had to have you. My ego demanded it. You thought you were seducing me, but it was actually I who was seducing you. I needed you. I needed someone who was my equal, someone who could have anyone they wanted but couldn't help but choose me. Then, after our brief night together, I accepted the ultimate challenge: to make you want me again. You were a good adversary, and fought a good fight, but eventually you succumbed. I needed you for the challenge. You needed me for the experience. Together, we were quite a team.

ALEXANDER. We still are. I still want you. And you me. Otherwise, you would never have agreed to the terms of our arrangement.

MARCUS. True. But I want you for reasons you'll never understand. It has nothing to do with lust. It has all to do with power. I was brought up in a small town where revealing who I was would get me killed. I saw others beaten for it, and I quickly realized that deception was the mask I was forced to wear. I would put it on, having others believe I was who they wanted me to be: the good student, the good son, the good friend. I realized that as long as I wore that mask I could get anything I wanted. Then one day I fell in love and had a choice to make: I could either take the mask off and reveal my true self, or I could choose to live in it forever. I chose the latter. And now, I am everything to everyone and nothing to all. The only person I've ever admitted behind the façade was you. And more as an experiment to see what would happen.

ALEXANDER. You're not unique in that. I have a mask too, you see.

MARCUS. Yes, but you're too vain to wear it. Others see your true self every time you go out, every time you disappear into a back room or a poorly lit bathroom. You think yourself impenetrable, when in reality you're exposed to the entire world.

ALEXANDER. Mask or no mask, I've still fucked you more than you've ever let anyone else.

MARCUS. You've been fucking yourself! All you're thinking about as you're rutting away is your own pride and vanity. You can't help but congratulate yourself for getting me into bed one more time.

ALEXANDER. And you? What do you think about? While I'm rutting away?

MARCUS. I think about my grocery list, and the next time I need to get an oil change, and how simple it is to fake passion.

ALEXANDER. I don't believe you. You're just trying to rile me up to make me want you more.

MARCUS. If that's what you need to believe.

ALEXANDER. Enough of this. I've got to go home and pack. I'm leaving this evening for a friend's.

MARCUS. By the way, in addition to both my Jason and your Trevor being there, I've invited one more person.

ALEXANDER. Who?

MARCUS. No one you know. His name is Daniel. He's the musical director at Rosemonde's church.

ALEXANDER. And I should care about this...why?

MARCUS. I sent Jason ahead with the white lie that I was called back to comfort a suicidal friend, namely you, and an email I received this morning from Rosemonde informed me that Daniel and Jason are getting quite chummy. Jason, God help us, has a bit of a musical theatre background and Daniel's offered to give him free lessons.

ALEXANDER. You are a wicked man.

MARCUS. Flattery will get you everywhere. Except maybe in Jason's bed. You only have three more days, Alexander. Tick-tock. *(Rises and grabs the bill.)* I'll get the check.

ALEXANDER. No need, Marcus. I have an understanding with the cashier.

MARCUS. You're a whore and I love you.

ALEXANDER. Au contraire, dear friend. A slut, but never a whore!

(MARCUS kisses ALEXANDER passionately then leaves as the lights fade to black.)

Scene 7

(Rosemonde's summer home on the beach. At rise: JASON is singing scales as DANIEL coaches.)

DANIEL. A little fuller sound. Think of the source being below your belly button. Here.

(He puts his hand below JASON's stomach.)

JASON. I'm just a little nervous. It's been a while since I sang.

DANIEL. You have a nice voice.

JASON. Thank you.

DANIEL. You should join a choir. There's a lot of opportunity to sing if you really want to.

JASON. I just never thought I was good enough. I do love it, though. It feels like it gets out all that stuff inside of me, all that emotion.

ROSEMONDE. (*Entering:*) Don't mind me, dear ones; I'm just passing through for a little more coffee.

JASON. Rosemonde, thank you again for allowing me to come visit. Your house is so beautiful. And it's so serene on the beach.

ROSEMONDE. I felt the same way my first time here. When I was your age I lived in the city and thought I would never leave: it seemed to have everything. But as I got older, I began looking for something that I couldn't find there.

JASON. What was that?

ROSEMONDE. Peace of mind. There was always so much distraction in the city that I never had to focus on myself. I found myself doing all sorts of naughty things: drinking, drugging, going to the baths. Just to avoid thinking about myself. Then, when that nasty plague hit and my friends started dying, it put it all in perspective. I knew I had to leave the city and start over.

JASON. I'm starting to feel that way and I've only lived there a year.

ROSEMONDE. Nonsense, you need to experience bad things before you can enjoy the good. Otherwise you'll end up like Daniel here: living in the middle of nowhere, a spinster at 24.

DANIEL. Thanks a lot!

ROSEMONDE. The only men he runs into out here are my age or older. It's chastity by default!

DANIEL. Rosemonde! Behave yourself.

ROSEMONDE. Well, it's just very nice to have young men in my house again. Especially ones I didn't pay for. Now, I'll leave you two alone.

(He exits.)

JASON. He's so funny. Have you known him a long time?

DANIEL. Kind of. I moved out here when I was 21. He was the first one I came out to. He's been trying to set me up ever since.

JASON. Is it true that there aren't a lot of young guys out here?

DANIEL. Only a few. None that interest me. The ones that are here are looking to hook up with older guys for their money.

JASON. Why did you move here?

DANIEL. I don't like the cities: they're too impersonal. I don't like mass transportation or crowds or shuffling down the street not looking anyone in the eye. I like freedom. And this is just a really beautiful place. There's the beach, and the quiet mornings, and the live and let live attitude. It's easy to be yourself here.

JASON. I've been looking for a place like that all my life.

(There is a brief, charged moment.)

DANIEL. Well, should we try a song now? Any requests?

JASON. Just one.

(He kisses DANIEL.)

Sorry.

DANIEL. Don't be.

JASON. I'm usually not that forward.

DANIEL. It's ok.

(He kisses JASON.)

JASON. I should tell you that I haven't... I mean... I'm still pretty new at this.

DANIEL. I don't have any expectations. Whatever happens, happens.

ALEXANDER. *(Entering from one of the rooms:)* I hope I'm not interrupting.

JASON. You must be Alexander.

ALEXANDER. In the flesh. And you are...?

JASON. Jason. I'm a friend of Marcus's.

ALEXANDER. And his, from the looks of it. You're...?

DANIEL. Daniel. I'm—

ALEXANDER. —the musical director at the church. Yes, Rosemonde's told me.

JASON. Do you need help with your luggage?

ALEXANDER. No, I actually came in late last night. Where's Rosemonde? I want to let him know I'm already here.

DANIEL. I think he's on the upstairs deck. Should I get him for you?

ALEXANDER. If you would, that would be lovely. Thank you!

(JASON rushes off.)

I was told about you.

JASON. Really? By whom?

ALEXANDER. Rosemonde isn't known for his discretion when it comes to young love.

JASON. I'm so embarrassed!

ALEXANDER. And from my entrance, it looks like he was right on the mark. There's nothing to be embarrassed about. Young love is more precious than anything in the world. You'll spend the rest of your life trying to recreate it.

JASON. So you're a friend of Marcus's?

ALEXANDER. Yes, and I feel as his friend that I should break a confidence. You'll find I'm quite blunt about some things, but that's only my nature; I never mean any harm by it. I feel I should tell you that even though Marcus is fond of you, he's not expecting anything this weekend, if you catch my meaning.

JASON. He's not?

ALEXANDER. No. He knows he's too old for you, and he purposefully made sure Daniel came by to meet you. He told me you're healing a broken heart.

JASON. Oh, gosh...

ALEXANDER. I told you, don't be embarrassed. I believe in love at first sight; I hope you believe in it too, because you might be experiencing it right now with Daniel.

JASON. We just met...

ALEXANDER. Which is no excuse for not pursuing him, especially since there's such a limited time frame. I want you to trust me completely. If there's anything I can do to help you two get together, just let me know. I am entirely at your service.

JASON. Thank you.

ALEXANDER. Someone once helped me that way, and I've made it my life's goal to help others. He's very cute, isn't he?

JASON. Yes, he is. And so talented.

ALEXANDER. I hope in all areas.

(ROSEMONDE and DANIEL enter.)

Ah, Rosemonde, I didn't think you woke up before noon.

ROSEMONDE. Only on good days. You caught me on a bad one: no hangover to nurse. I see you've met Daniel and Jason already.

ALEXANDER. I have indeed.

ROSEMONDE. You've slept through breakfast. Can I get you some coffee?

ALEXANDER. Please.

(They exit into the kitchen.)

JASON. He seems awfully nice.

DANIEL. Does he?

JASON. This is sort of embarrassing, but he told me that there's already gossip about us.

DANIEL. You're kidding!

JASON. Afraid not.

DANIEL. I don't think there's ever been gossip about me. I'm usually so boring.

JASON. I find that hard to believe. I think you're fascinating.

DANIEL. Well, I suppose I should get back to the church. I have to prepare the music for choir rehearsals tonight.

JASON. Maybe I could come and listen. Would you mind?

DANIEL. Not at all. I'd like that, actually. It's at seven o'clock.

JASON. Ok, I'll be there.

DANIEL. See you then. *(Starts to leave:)* Maybe we could go to my place afterwards. For a late dinner or something.

JASON. I'd really like that.

(There is a quick awkward kiss.)

DANIEL. Bye!

(He exits.)

JASON. Bye.

ROSEMONDE. *(Reentering with ALEXANDER:)* Where's Daniel?

JASON. He had to go back to work.

ROSEMONDE. Such a shame. Is he coming back?

JASON. I'm going to see him at choir rehearsal tonight. He's invited me to his place afterwards for dinner.

ROSEMONDE. Lovely. Just lovely. You two make a wonderful couple.

ALEXANDER. Now, Rosemonde, they've just met. There's plenty of time to pick out a china pattern later.

ROSEMONDE. Did Marcus come in with you, Alexander?

ALEXANDER. No, he's supposed to be here any minute now. He was leaving early this morning.

ROSEMONDE. Well, I'll go make sure his room is ready. Anyone need anything else?

ALEXANDER. I'm fine.

JASON. No thanks!

ROSEMONDE. Just help yourself to anything you find.

(He exits.)

JASON. He's so nice. I hardly know him, but I already feel closer to him than my own family.

ALEXANDER. He's a wonderful man. So, you're going to see Daniel tonight?

JASON. Yes.

ALEXANDER. And how old is he again?

JASON. Twenty-four? I think he's about two years older than me.

ALEXANDER. Too bad. You're still young enough where that matters.

JASON. What do you mean?

ALEXANDER. Well, two years age difference for me is nothing. It's preferable, if anything else. But for you... Well, he's got two more years experience than you do. I remember when I was your age I dated a boy two years older. We were just infatuated with each other. I thought I knew everything there was to know, but I was wrong. The first time we consummated our relationship I realized I was in a little over my head.

JASON. Really?

ALEXANDER. He knew far more than I did. Two years in your sexual prime gives you plenty of opportunity for experimentation. I knew what to do, but not how to do it. I felt so clumsy around him, so awkward. It completely ruined everything.

JASON. But surely he knew because you were younger than you were less experienced?

ALEXANDER. He did. And he liked it at first. He thought he could train me to do things the way he liked them done. But then he got tired of what he called “teaching a newborn to dance,” so he just ended it. We were alike in every way except that one. I can’t help but think he could have been my soul mate.

JASON. That’s horrible! You really broke up over sex?

ALEXANDER. We did. But, live and learn. I’m sure having lived in the city you’ve spent a little time perfecting your techniques. And tonight you may have the chance to show off a little; you know, show the country kid how it’s done city-style. Well, I’m going to go enjoy what’s left of the morning on the beach. Do you want to come?

JASON. Maybe a little later.

ALEXANDER. See you.

(He exits.)

JASON. What am I going to do?

MARCUS. *(Entering:)* Jason, I’m so glad to see you. I’ve felt so guilty about sending you on ahead. I hope Rosemonde has been a good host?

JASON. He’s been wonderful.

MARCUS. Excellent. What is it? You look ill.

JASON. No, it’s just that...I was just talking to Alexander...

MARCUS. Oh, good, he’s arrived.

JASON. This is so embarrassing... I’m...

(He bursts into tears.)

MARCUS. What is it? Sit over here with me and tell me what's going on.

JASON. I am in love. Deeply, painfully in love. With Daniel.

MARCUS. The music director from the church? But that's wonderful!

JASON. But it's not! He's more experienced than I am. I'll behave like an idiot. He'll pull away and leave me for someone who knows what he's doing!

MARCUS. What do you mean by "more experienced?"

JASON. Sexually. I'm not very experienced. I've only been with two guys in my whole life, and that was just messing around, nothing serious. I've never even, you know...

MARCUS. What?

JASON. I haven't ever...given myself completely, you know? I mean, I'm still innocent.

MARCUS. You mean, you've never...? Well, that nothing to be ashamed of!

JASON. I know this sounds stupid, but I was waiting for the guy I fell in love with. But now...

MARCUS. You're afraid to get intimate with Daniel because you're sexually inexperienced?

JASON. Yes!

MARCUS. Tell me something. How much do you like Daniel?

JASON. A lot. A lot a lot. I know I've only known him for a day, but it's been the best day of my entire life! Whenever I dreamed of what my husband would look like, it always looked like him. He's so nice, and spiritual, and—

MARCUS. —Ok, ok, then listen to what I'm about to tell you. If you're really that concerned that he's going to drop you because of a silly little thing like that—

JASON. Please don't say, "then he's not worth having to begin with." Because he is! He is!

MARCUS. I was going to say no such thing. If you're really that concerned, then you'll just have to practice.

JASON. What do you mean?

MARCUS. Before you get behind the wheel of a car, you take a traffic safety course. Why shouldn't it be the same with sex? What I propose is that you seek out someone experienced, perhaps someone like...Alexander. Ask him to teach you what you need to know. I am certain that he'll gladly oblige.

JASON. You mean, have sex with him? But I don't love him.

MARCUS. I happen to know that Alexander would make an excellent teacher. He's very discreet, very patient, and no one but the three of us would ever know. That way when Daniel starts to do things, you'll know how to respond, and how to reciprocate.

JASON. But I'm not— I mean, I've never...

MARCUS. If you really love Daniel then you owe it to him to do everything in your power to make him happy. I wouldn't tell you this if I didn't care for you so much. I just don't want to see you single and unhappy. Like poor Alexander.

JASON. You are such a good friend. *(He hugs him.)* Thank you!

MARCUS. Now, go find Alexander. Tell him about our little talk. The sooner your training begins, the sooner you'll be free from all this anxiety.

JASON. Thank you, Marcus! Thank you!

(He rushes off.)

MARCUS. My God, what they say about farm boys is true!

ALEXANDER. *(Entering:)* Then the sheep should be nervous! So you've arrived!

MARCUS. And not a moment too soon. I come in to find the boy on the verge of a nervous breakdown.

ALEXANDER. He really is such an innocent.

MARCUS. I've handed him to you on a plate, you know. He's looking for you, to request some lessons in the way of love.

ALEXANDER. Really? That didn't take long.

MARCUS. I can't believe I actually had to help you with this one.

ALEXANDER. I didn't ask you to.

MARCUS. If I hadn't talked to him when I did he probably would have taken the next train back to the city, crying all the way home.

ALEXANDER. I hardly think that.

MARCUS. Well, he's out there looking for you. Aren't you going to go make your whereabouts known?

ALEXANDER. Let him look a little longer. I like to torture them a little.

MARCUS. Speaking of torture, how's your other conquest?

ALEXANDER. As yet unconquered. In fact, I was just looking for him but it seems he's leading some marriage-counseling group. He was just finishing his morning session, and I'm sure to see him any minute. Would you like to stay and see what happens?

MARCUS. Strangely, no. I'm more interested in looking for a rather private document of Rosemonde's and thought I'd do it before he awoke.

ALEXANDER. Too late. He's been up for hours playing dorm-mother. He's cleaning your room at this very moment.

MARCUS. Then I shall have to be discreet. If you'll excuse me...
(He starts to leave.) Oh, and I hope you've brought your camera. I still require photographic proof!

(He exits. ALEXANDER sits down and glances through a magazine. A few moments later, TREVOR enters.)

TREVOR. Alexander?

ALEXANDER. Trevor? What on earth are you doing here?

TREVOR. I was about to ask you the same thing. Are you all right?

ALEXANDER. I'm fine. I just needed to get out of the city for a few days and came to visit my old friend Rosemonde. What are you doing here?

TREVOR. The church I've come to work at is St. Jude's. Father Co-thrun put me up here for my stay.

ALEXANDER. What a small world!

TREVOR. How do you know Rosemonde?

ALEXANDER. We're old acquaintances, from way back. Actually, friends of friends. He stays with my friend Marcus whenever he comes to the city. Marcus is here too, somewhere.

TREVOR. I haven't met him yet. Are you feeling all right? I've been worried about you.

ALEXANDER. Trevor, I am a new man. After our talk I went to confession for the first time in my life. I know this sounds crazy, but I physically feel lighter. I walked out of that church sobbing because I felt like me again. The real me. And I haven't touched a drop of alcohol or drugs since. I know it's only been a few days, but still, I feel like I'm reborn.

TREVOR. That's wonderful. And therapy?

ALEXANDER. I found a counselor right before I left: a wonderful lesbian, who isn't judgmental and who has no knowledge of my past.

TREVOR. I'm so happy for you, Alexander!

ALEXANDER. I owe it all to you. I knew I needed to change, but I didn't know how. You really helped put me on the right path, Trevor.

TREVOR. It was God's doing. I was just the conduit.

ALEXANDER. Thank you.

TREVOR. Well, I suppose I should go prepare for my afternoon session. I guess I'll see you around the house!

ALEXANDER. I guess you will!

(TREVOR exits.)

But first, a little exercise. *(As he exits:)* Jason? Are you looking for me?

(Blackout.)

Scene 8

(Later that afternoon. MARCUS on his laptop, reading an email.)

MARCUS. *(Or ALEXANDER voiceover:)* “Forgive the rather peculiar circumstance of emailing, especially since your room is less than 20 feet away, but I was already on the computer for a matter about which you will soon read and I wanted you to get this news in writing. You would think that such a young boy could outlast a man of advancing years such as me, but that appears not to be the case. After relieving the poor boy of the thing to which he held most tightly, in many more ways than one, I have finally relinquished him of both his guilt and his innocence. I know you wanted photographic proof of this, and at one point I actually thought about stopping to go and find you and have you observe, if not join us, but thought instead that this other way might be more to your liking. By visiting the following website via this link, you’ll see the events of the afternoon unfold moment by moment. Landon was kind enough to loan me a video spy cam and gave me instructions on its use. I believe I might have, accidentally of course, posted the live feed to a national website, and I apologize if you’re not the first to see it. I do know for a fact that before sending this email I sent one to Grayson, who might be watching as we speak. I sincerely hope this is a public enough manner for you. In any case, one race is won, a full two days before the deadline, and I look forward to recharging my batteries enough to claim my reward. See you at dinner, Alexander Valmont.”

(Lights fade to black.)

Scene 9

(Late that night. TREVOR sitting alone in the dark. ALEXANDER enters.)

ALEXANDER. Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't know anyone else was down here.

TREVOR. I couldn't sleep. I guess I'm not used to all the quiet.

ALEXANDER. I'm not used to sleeping alone.

TREVOR. This is such a beautiful house. When Father Cothrun first told me I'd be staying here, I didn't expect this.

ALEXANDER. Rosemonde inherited his money the same way many of us do. When he was 18, he had a lover some years his senior. When he passed away, he left Rosemonde this house, and quite a healthy bank account.

TREVOR. I see.

ALEXANDER. But Rosemonde didn't play by the rules.

TREVOR. What rules?

ALEXANDER. He fell in love. He didn't know that you were only supposed to fake that part to make the inevitable separation easier. When his lover died, he was heartbroken. Instead of using his inheritance to ease the pain, he invested it and made more money. He foolishly believes that unless he finds love as strong as the first, he should never date again. But no love can ever be stronger than first love. Now he's richer than God and has no one to leave his money.

TREVOR. I'm sure he's made provisions.

ALEXANDER. I'm not so sure. He's an incurable romantic, and I suspect he still thinks he's going to find that perfect someone with whom he'll spend his remaining days.

TREVOR. It's possible. He's not that old.

ALEXANDER. No, but he's very sick. The reason he travels into the city so much is to see his oncologist. He has cancer, you see.

TREVOR. I didn't know.

ALEXANDER. It's ironic that the good people in the world, people like Rosemonde, are no more blessed than us lowly sinners. He's lived a good life yet he's dying. I've lived a devious one yet I'm still going strong.

TREVOR. God has His plans.

ALEXANDER. I suppose he does.

(He rushes over and kisses TREVOR.)

TREVOR. What are you— ?

ALEXANDER. I cannot pretend to seek comfort from God when it is only you with whom I seek it. This weekend has been a charade. I knew you were coming. I solicited an invitation. I came here because the thought of living one more day without you was too painful to bear.

TREVOR. This cannot happen. I have vows.

ALEXANDER. You have not yet taken those vows, Trevor. I know you feel it too. I see you look at me; I see it in your eyes: you love me!

TREVOR. I can't!

ALEXANDER. But you do! And if you deny me now I cannot be responsible for my actions. I would rather die than live without you!

TREVOR. I am a man of God. There are expectations—

ALEXANDER. Only those you put upon yourself!

TREVOR. I can't. Don't you see? I can't.

ALEXANDER. Look at me. Look at me and tell me what you feel. Not what the priest feels, but what the man feels. I know what you're feeling, because I feel it too. Just say the words. Offer me salvation.

TREVOR. I...love...you.

(He crumples to the chair in anguish, hyperventilating. ALEXANDER rushes upstairs. A few moments later, he comes down with ROSEMONDE.)

ALEXANDER. I found him here like this. Shall I call someone?

ROSEMONDE. What is it, Trevor? Are you ill?

TREVOR. No! I just need... I'm all right.

ALEXANDER. I'm sorry for waking you, Rosemonde, but I thought you should know.

ROSEMONDE. I'll take care of him, Alexander. You go back to bed. Perhaps it's just nervous exhaustion.

ALEXANDER. All right then, Rosemonde. Please let me know if you need me. Goodnight, Trevor. You're in my prayers.

(He exits.)

ROSEMONDE. What is it, Trevor? Should I call a doctor?

TREVOR. No, I don't need a doctor. I need a friend.

ROSEMONDE. Then confide in me. What's happened?

TREVOR. I have broken my vows of faithfulness and piety. I am in love!

ROSEMONDE. With whom?

TREVOR. One I cannot name. This wasn't supposed to happen! I belong to the church! I've shocked you, haven't I?

ROSEMONDE. Do you think you're the first to be tempted by forbidden love? There are many men who have experienced the pain before you, and there will be many more after you, to be sure.

TREVOR. I must leave here tonight. I cannot stay.

ROSEMONDE. Nonsense. You have friends here, Trevor, lean on us for support. Unless...?

TREVOR. Unless one of my friends is the cause of my misery. It's true. It's Alexander Valmont.

ROSEMONDE. Then you must do what you feel is best. It would hardly be fitting having you counsel young marrieds when you yourself are in such turmoil. *(He comforts TREVOR.)* There, there.

TREVOR. It wasn't supposed to be like this. I had vows.

ROSEMONDE. Unless you've acted on your feelings, there is no sin. There, there...

(ALEXANDER peeks out at the scene as the lights fade to black.)

ACT II

Scene 1

(Alexander's apartment. LANDON is lounging. At rise: ALEXANDER enters with his luggage.)

ALEXANDER. Landon, what an unexpected surprise! Emphasis on unexpected.

LANDON. Did you have a good trip?

ALEXANDER. Wonderful. You should try getting out of the city for a while. It does wonders for your self-esteem.

LANDON. The camera appears to have worked out nicely.

ALEXANDER. Very much so. So small and unobtrusive: I might just have to invest in one.

LANDON. How about the email? I set up an account under Rosemonde's name, like you asked.

ALEXANDER. From which I've been corresponding to Trevor. Poor boy thinks Rosemonde is on the other end of the line. The old coot doesn't even own a computer.

LANDON. It seems like a lot of work just to get in this priest's pants.

ALEXANDER. It's not his pants I'm getting into. It's his heart.

LANDON. Whatever. Now how about what you promised me for helping you out? After all, I did go above and beyond...

ALEXANDER. Dear Landon. One of the things that occurred to me in my many moments of solitude was that we've been taking each other for granted. I expect you to be at my beck and call, and you are. It just doesn't seem right.

LANDON. I don't mind.

ALEXANDER. But I'm afraid I do. We need a little time apart. As a rather ribald poet once wrote, absence makes the hard grow longer.

LANDON. You're dumping me?

ALEXANDER. I don't want you to get too attached. It ruins the spark, and I don't want anything to mar the memory of our time together.

LANDON. So that's it? Just like that? After all I've done for you?

ALEXANDER. Yes.

LANDON. Go to hell!

(He storms out, bumping into JASON as he exits.)

ALEXANDER. See you there!

JASON. Who's that? He looks really mad.

ALEXANDER. Just a service man. I told him I didn't need his services any more.

JASON. I came as fast as I could. You said you had news about Daniel?

ALEXANDER. I do, indeed. After you left this morning, I took a walk on the beach. There I saw Daniel, and we got to talking. He's quite smitten with you, you know.

JASON. These past three days were magical! We're planning to see each other again next weekend. He's coming down to the city.

ALEXANDER. That's the problem, you see. He was upset because he was trying to think of a way to let you know he wasn't coming after all.

JASON. What do you mean?

ALEXANDER. I'm not sure if I could make it any plainer than that. He mentioned that although he was falling in love with you, he was worried that you might be in different places in your lives.

JASON. He didn't mention any of this to me.

ALEXANDER. I know. I think while you were there he was completely infatuated. But after you left and he had some time to think things through... Well, he just feels that you're a bit too green for him. Of course, I'm talking sexually.

JASON. How can he say that? I gave myself to him! I did things with him I've never done with anyone else! Ever. He said the same thing.

ALEXANDER. I think he was just trying to spare your feelings. He told me he was looking for an equal partner, in all ways. He said he actually felt guilty making love to you because you still seemed so innocent.

JASON. What does he expect from me?

ALEXANDER. I told you, an equal partner. You know, I might be able to offer assistance again, if you'll accept it.

JASON. Of course. What can I do?

ALEXANDER. Resume your studies. An opera singer doesn't take a few lessons and sing Wagner. He works up to it, training every day, learning more advanced techniques.

JASON. But I thought Daniel and I could share that discovery together.

ALEXANDER. Haven't you been listening to a thing I've been telling you? He doesn't want to discover together. He wants to move the relationship to the next level, but he can't if he has to focus all his attention on this one area. I offered you help, as a friend, because I like you, but it's obvious you don't know a good thing when it's offered. Or perhaps you don't love Daniel as much as you say you do.

JASON. I do! I love him with all my heart!

ALEXANDER. Then make up your mind before I retract the proposal. I don't get any pleasure from this, you know. I don't go around training young boys to get any sort of self-gratification.

JASON. I know. And you're being very generous to help me.

ALEXANDER. Then make a decision.

JASON. All right. If you really think it will help.

ALEXANDER. How could it hurt?

JASON. *(Taking off his shirt.)* I'm ready when you are.

ALEXANDER. What are you doing? Do you think I have nothing better to do with my day? Come back tonight, around midnight. Knock twice. I'll answer the door, and we can begin your training then.

JASON. *(Quickly puts back on his shirt.)* Thank you, Alexander. You're a very good friend to me. Do you really think this will work?

ALEXANDER. A few days of training and I'll call him and insist he come down this weekend for a second try. I imagine he'll be quite impressed with your progress.

JASON. I'll see you tonight, then.

ALEXANDER. Until then...

(JASON just stands there.)

You can go now.

JASON. Oh, right. Goodbye!

(JASON exits. ALEXANDER picks up his cell phone and calls MARCUS.)

MARCUS. *(Answering:)* You're home?

ALEXANDER. Just this minute.

MARCUS. What have you been up to?

ALEXANDER. No good.

MARCUS. Specifically...?

ALEXANDER. I am now Rosemonde. To Trevor, anyway. I've been emailing him, passing myself off as that old queen, and Trevor's taken to confessing all. I've offered him the wisdom that comes only from one who has lived so long.

MARCUS. You're really quite a marvel sometimes.

ALEXANDER. Sometimes? When am I not? But enough of my minor victory. I am calling on a matter of business.

MARCUS. I suspected.

ALEXANDER. I would like to set up an appointment to receive my handsome reward.

MARCUS. My, just returned and already clambering. You're like a kid at Christmas.

ALEXANDER. And like Christmas, you only come once a year.

MARCUS. Much more than that; just once with you.

ALEXANDER. Be that as it may, is this afternoon good for you?

MARCUS. I'm afraid not.

ALEXANDER. This evening then?

MARCUS. No.

ALEXANDER. Tomorrow? This weekend?

MARCUS. I'm afraid none of those are really good for me.

ALEXANDER. And may I ask why not?

MARCUS. I'm a little busy.

ALEXANDER. Don't tell me you've taken Grayson back?

MARCUS. Heavens no, what would be the point of that? A new one. Someone you don't know. I would hate to cheat on him so early in our relationship.

ALEXANDER. Oh, so now it's a relationship?

MARCUS. An understanding.

ALEXANDER. But you promised me.

MARCUS. And I'll pay. Just not right now.

ALEXANDER. Where did you meet him? On the train ride home?

MARCUS. I met him through a friend. I was so inspired by your selfless mentoring of young Jason that I thought I'd give back to the community myself.

ALEXANDER. Oh, a young one, eh?

MARCUS. Full of energy.

ALEXANDER. Well, I'll leave you to it. I trust you'll call me when you tire of him?

MARCUS. Of course.

ALEXANDER. Then I'll expect to hear from you tomorrow. Good-bye, Marcus.

(Lights down on ALEXANDER.)

DANIEL. *(Entering in his underwear:)* Who was that?

MARCUS. Rosemonde, making sure we've arrived safely.

DANIEL. You didn't tell him why I was really coming down here, did you?

MARCUS. Of course not. Now let's resume your training, shall we? I don't want you to feel as inexperienced as you did with Jason. Let's start with some foreign terms: Greek and French...

(Lights fade out.)

Scene 2

(Alexander's apartment, a few days later. TREVOR enters and sits down.)

TREVOR. Thank you for agreeing to see me.

ALEXANDER. You ran off.

TREVOR. I know I did.

ALEXANDER. The next morning when you weren't there I got worried.

TREVOR. Rosemonde said he would explain my absence.

ALEXANDER. And he did. He said you were called away by the church. But I knew better.

TREVOR. Rosemonde is a kindhearted man.

ALEXANDER. Yes, he is.

TREVOR. I've been emailing him since I left.

ALEXANDER. The counselor being counseled?

TREVOR. I'm usually the one helping others with their problems, not confronting my own.

ALEXANDER. And I'm a problem.

TREVOR. For me.

ALEXANDER. And what conclusions have you come to through your counseling?

TREVOR. Rosemonde suggested I talk to you in person. I would have rather let the whole thing be, but he convinced me it was important to speak face-to-face. What happened between us was wrong. It was inappropriate, on both our parts.

ALEXANDER. I disagree.

TREVOR. You had no right to kiss me, and I had no right to turn my back on God's will.

ALEXANDER. God's will is to love one another. God created love.

TREVOR. That is not the point. I have taken vows of chastity. Not just physical...but emotional.

ALEXANDER. And now you feel you've broken those vows?

TREVOR. I do. I've come here today to tell you that we must never see each other again. You'll need to find another parish. If you cannot respect my wishes, I'll ask to be transferred.

ALEXANDER. I want no such thing. I need you!

TREVOR. You must not contact me in any way. Soon, I'll be ordained, and I can put all this behind me. You can move on to someone else, and we can pretend none of this ever happened.

ALEXANDER. Do you really think it's that easy? Do you honestly think that I can simply replace you, like an old light bulb? There is no one else for me. I eat, drink and sleep you. The air I breathe, my dreams at night, my every waking moment is filled with nothing save the thought of you.

TREVOR. You must resist your urges.

ALEXANDER. Why? To be a good Christian? Christianity isn't about denying ones feelings; it's about embracing them.

TREVOR. I won't allow this! It can never work. You'll never convince me otherwise. I have nothing more to say on the matter.

ALEXANDER. I see.

TREVOR. I'm sorry, but that's just the way it has to be.

ALEXANDER. Well then, there's nothing left to say except goodbye.

TREVOR. Goodbye.

(TREVOR holds out his hand to shake. ALEXANDER pulls him into an embrace.)

ALEXANDER. Remember me when I am gone. Remember this moment.

TREVOR. What are you talking about?

ALEXANDER. Do you honestly think I can live knowing that somewhere out there is a man I love but cannot have? A man who means everything to me? Who abhors my very being?

TREVOR. I don't abhor you.

ALEXANDER. Physical torture is nothing compared to the emotional anguish that awaits me every day without you. It would be better to kill myself and have it done with.

TREVOR. You mustn't think of suicide. You'll go to hell!

ALEXANDER. Life without you is already hell! Goodbye, Trevor.

TREVOR. No, I won't let you!

ALEXANDER. Go; get out of here! Every second is killing me!

TREVOR. No, please!

ALEXANDER. There's nothing you can say to make me change my mind! Let me end my suffering once and for all!

TREVOR. No!

(He grabs ALEXANDER and kisses him. It turns passionate. They start to undress each other as the lights fade to black.)

Scene 3

(Alexander's apartment, the next morning. ALEXANDER is dressing as a key in the door is heard. MARCUS enters.)

ALEXANDER. I didn't know you had a key.

MARCUS. I'm a man of mystery. And so, it seems, are you. Why didn't you return my calls last night?

ALEXANDER. I was busy.

MARCUS. Resuming your lessons with Jason?

ALEXANDER. Forgive me, Marcus, for I have sinned.

MARCUS. You didn't?

ALEXANDER. Victory!

MARCUS. I can't believe it. You finally had your priest. And was it everything you hoped it would be?

ALEXANDER. More. So much more.

MARCUS. Do tell. And don't leave out any details. I live a very vicarious life, you know.

ALEXANDER. It was an evening that words cannot accurately describe. In fact, I find myself speechless for the first time in my life. I can only say that it was the most incredible night of passion I have ever experienced.

MARCUS. *(His expression drops:)* Really?

ALEXANDER. It was exquisite. He unleashed in me raw sexuality that transported me to a new plane of existence. It was as if there were no boundaries or limits.

MARCUS. I see.

ALEXANDER. I found myself crying in the middle of it: actually crying. Not from the physical release, but the emotional one. We were naked together: body and soul. Isn't that phenomenal?

MARCUS. You're not describing sex; you're describing love.

ALEXANDER. Perhaps I am.

MARCUS. You don't mean to tell me that you've fallen in love with him?

ALEXANDER. Of course not. I'm immune to love.

MARCUS. Good.

ALEXANDER. Let's just say that for the first time, I was completely without my mask.

MARCUS. So you are in love.

ALEXANDER. Nonsense, I'm just glowing from my greatest victory, and the satisfaction of a job well done. And speaking of satisfaction, or rather lack of it, have you tired of your new one yet?

MARCUS. Just about. We're going away for a few days. I suspect I'll end it upon our return.

ALEXANDER. Where are you going? Certainly not back to old Rosemonde's?

MARCUS. As a matter of fact, yes.

ALEXANDER. How can you bear to spend time with that old eunuch?

MARCUS. I found his will the last time I was there. He's leaving everything to me. I just want to make sure that his last few months on earth are filled with fond memories together. I'll call you upon my return. Then we can schedule your reward.

ALEXANDER. You're driving me crazy, you know. It's exquisite torture.

MARCUS. Isn't it? Goodbye, Alexander.

(He leaves as lights fade to black.)

Scene 4

(Alexander's apartment, the next day. ALEXANDER typing on his laptop, JASON in bed. There is a knock at the door. ALEXANDER answers it. It is TREVOR.)

ALEXANDER. Good morning!

(He kisses TREVOR.)

TREVOR. Are you ready to go?

ALEXANDER. Let me grab my coat.

TREVOR. It's not that cold— *(He notices JASON.)* What is he doing here?

JASON. *(Waking up:)* What time is it?

ALEXANDER. Just after 10.

JASON. I've overslept. I have to get to work. *(He starts getting dressed.)* Good morning, Trevor.

TREVOR. Jason...what are you doing here?

JASON. It isn't what you think.

TREVOR. I'm not thinking anything.

JASON. I love Daniel.

TREVOR. So I thought.

JASON. Nothing happened here.

TREVOR. We don't need to discuss it.

JASON. I've got to go. Thanks, Alexander.

(He rushes out, still getting dressed.)

ALEXANDER. Shall we grab a latté on the way?

TREVOR. You haven't answered my question. What was he doing here?

ALEXANDER. He was out at some club, and got a little drunk. I found him passed out in the street and brought him up here to doze it off.

TREVOR. Did you sleep with him?

ALEXANDER. I only have one bed.

TREVOR. You know what I mean.

ALEXANDER. Where is this coming from?

TREVOR. Tell me!

ALEXANDER. Of course not.

TREVOR. Don't lie to me. Not now.

ALEXANDER. What's going on here? You call me last night, and invite me to go to the park with you this morning. And when you come over you hurl unfounded accusations.

TREVOR. I told you I loved you. I gave up my life for you! The priesthood. My calling. And this is how you reward me? *(He begins to attack ALEXANDER.)* How could you do this to me? I gave up everything. Everything!

ALEXANDER. *(Calming TREVOR down:)* I told you nothing happened. Trevor, why would I do this in front of you? Why wouldn't I get him out of here before now?

TREVOR. But...

ALEXANDER. I knew you were coming over. Trevor, I have no secrets from you.

TREVOR. Oh God, I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry. *(Hugs ALEXANDER.)* I was just so confused when I saw him in your bed like that. I've never been with anyone in my life before you, you know that. I don't always know how to act.

ALEXANDER. Just be yourself.

TREVOR. I'm not sure I know who that is anymore.

ALEXANDER. Remember when I talked once about timing? About how it was better to know things about yourself before it was too

late? We were supposed to meet. We were supposed to fall in love before you were ordained. It was God's hand guiding us together.

TREVOR. I believe that now.

ALEXANDER. You are a gift that has been given to me. I would never hurt you.

TREVOR. Forgive me.

ALEXANDER. Your jealousy—it's so...sexy.

(They climb into bed as the lights fade out.)

Scene 5

(Marcus's home. MARCUS cuddling with DANIEL. ALEXANDER enters. DANIEL tries to hide under the sheets.)

ALEXANDER. I must have misheard you last night. I thought you were going out of town this weekend.

MARCUS. I was. I've decided against it. I see you have another key.

ALEXANDER. I was just coming over to return it. What's this? Daniel? What are you doing here?

DANIEL. I...uh...

ALEXANDER. Aren't you supposed to be home right now? Yes, you are, because that's where I sent Jason. I put him on a train a few hours ago so he could surprise you. What a horrific shock it will be to not only not find you there, but to be sent a text message that the reason for your absence is due to your dalliance with Marcus! It will break his heart!

DANIEL. No, you can't tell him! I'm doing this for him.

ALEXANDER. You are? I don't believe anyone's ever cheated for his lover's benefit before. How noble. Then I'll definitely contact him. He should know the great lengths of your love.

DANIEL. Please, Alexander, promise me you won't tell him! I didn't even want to do this, but Marcus insisted!

ALEXANDER. He insisted?

DANIEL. I love Jason.

ALEXANDER. You couldn't simply send him a dozen roses?

DANIEL. Please don't tell. I'll do anything you want. Anything.

ALEXANDER. Very well. I'd hate to break up young love. But remember that you are indebted to me. Now get out of here. I can barely look at you.

DANIEL. Thank you, Alexander, thank you.

(He starts getting dressed.)

ALEXANDER. Dress in the hall. I just told you I didn't want to look at you.

DANIEL. Ok. Sorry. Thank you. Sorry. I'm... Goodbye. Sorry.

(He awkwardly exits.)

ALEXANDER. It looked like the poor boy was about to piss himself. Really, Marcus, Daniel? Could that possibly have taken less effort?

MARCUS. Alexander, I really must insist that in the future you provide me advanced warning of these little drop-in visits.

ALEXANDER. You say you know everything about me; I just assumed you already knew I was coming. I knew you were: coming, that is. I didn't mean to break you two up.

MARCUS. You've saved me the effort, really. We were concluding our relationship anyway.

ALEXANDER. There you go with that word again. You're getting soft in your old age. Sentimentally, I mean.

MARCUS. Tell me why you're here.

ALEXANDER. I've brought you something. *(Handing him a printed email:)* Proof. Unasked for, but generously provided. A quick glance will tell you the depth of feeling Trevor has for me. He's no longer a priest-in-training.

MARCUS. Impressive. So you're still pretending to be Rosemonde?

ALEXANDER. Not anymore, actually. After this correspondence I ended the email communication. I was selling my computer, I told him, to help pay for some cancer medications. Besides, technology was just keeping me from experiencing life. You'll notice in the second to last sentence that Trevor has also vowed to sell his computer. There's nothing he won't sacrifice.

MARCUS. What about you? What will you sacrifice?

ALEXANDER. I don't understand your question.

MARCUS. I had a friend once...

ALEXANDER. Oh, is it story time?

MARCUS. A friend who was very dear to me. He prided himself on many things, but most of all on the total control of his emotions. Many people tried to break down his resistance, to get him to love them back with the intensity that they loved him, but he would never do it. Everyone marveled at his restraint.

ALEXANDER. Is there a point to this?

MARCUS. One day, he met someone and fell in love, without even knowing it. He humored himself by believing he was still in control, but it was obvious he was not. He stopped going out at night, for fear he might miss a phone call or surprise visit. He quit drinking and smoking. He even found himself seriously contemplating monogamy. He was becoming the thing he most abhorred: common. So, do you know what my friend did next?

ALEXANDER. I suspect I'm about to...

MARCUS. He invited his lover to his house and announced he was ending it. Their relationship wasn't what he wanted after all. Of course, his lover cried and railed and begged and fought, but to every exclamation my friend simply replied, "Sorry." And of course by doing so, irrevocably shattered the relationship and was completely cured of his insanity.

ALEXANDER. A lovely story. But what did your friend get out of it? Why create the drama?

MARCUS. Two reasons: first, so when he claimed his reward from an earlier liaison, the victory was unencumbered by the distraction of emotion. Secondly, to save face. You see, gossip was abounding, and my friend was losing face among all those who previously admired him. He was becoming a fool.

ALEXANDER. Thank you. I've just remembered a previous engagement. I will be by later this evening to collect my reward. I trust you will be here, awaiting my arrival.

MARCUS. I'll make preparations to ensure it is highly memorable.

ALEXANDER. Goodbye, Marcus. And thank you for your cautionary tale.

(He exits. Lights fade to black.)

Scene 6

(Alexander's apartment. The doorbell rings. ALEXANDER answers the door. TREVOR enters with flowers.)

TREVOR. *(Kissing ALEXANDER passionately:)* I need a cocktail!

ALEXANDER. I didn't think you drank.

TREVOR. I came out today! It feels amazing! First, I called Father George and asked him to meet me for lunch. I told him the reasons for dropping out of the ministry and that I was in love. I thought, being the age he is, that he would completely disassociate himself from me. But he was so warm and loving, he gave me the courage to call my family. I just got off the phone with my brothers and my parents. They weren't so accepting. In fact, my father won't talk to me. But it still feels so good to be completely honest!

ALEXANDER. Sit down; catch your breath.

TREVOR. I feel freer than I ever have before! I was literally skipping over here. For the first time ever, I am who I want to be and everyone knows. God, I envy people like you who have been out forever. I wasted a lot of time ignoring who I was. I feel like it's my birthday! Where's that drink? I want to celebrate!

ALEXANDER. Trevor, there's something I've got to tell you.

TREVOR. (*Kissing him:*) What is it?

ALEXANDER. I can't do this anymore.

TREVOR. Can't do what?

ALEXANDER. This. I don't love you. I thought I did, but I don't. Sorry.

TREVOR. What are you talking about?

ALEXANDER. I don't know if I can make it any plainer. I don't love you. Sorry.

TREVOR. You said things to me... I don't understand. You told me you loved me. You told me you'd never loved anyone but me... You told me that!

ALEXANDER. There's someone else, a man I desire more than anyone in the world. I can't seem to refuse him. Sorry.

TREVOR. What other man? Who?

ALEXANDER. It doesn't matter. It's over. Sorry.

TREVOR. You said you loved me!

ALEXANDER. You'll be able to find another boyfriend now that I've broken you in.

TREVOR. Why are you doing this?

ALEXANDER. It's how it was always meant to be. Sorry.

TREVOR. (*Attacking him:*) I gave up everything for you: the church, my identity, my soul.

ALEXANDER. Sorry.

TREVOR. Shut up! You do love me! You do!

ALEXANDER. I can't. I don't. Sorry.

TREVOR. Why are you doing this to me? Why?

ALEXANDER. Sor—sorry.

TREVOR. Who are you? What kind of man are you? *(He staggers to the door.)* Why have you done this?

(He exits.)

ALEXANDER. Sorry.

(ALEXANDER breaks down into tears for a few moments. He dries his eyes, but the tears continue. MARCUS enters.)

MARCUS. There, there, Alexander, it wasn't as hard as all that.

ALEXANDER. How did you— ?

MARCUS. Do you honestly think I would want to miss this? I'm only sorry I had to enjoy it from the hall.

ALEXANDER. I've killed him, you know. I've killed him.

MARCUS. It would appear that way. You can almost smell the victory, can't you?

ALEXANDER. You call that victory? Destroying a good man?

MARCUS. No, destroying a vain one. Your heart reopened for that priest, Alexander. Your emotions flooded your reason. I can see your love for him in your eyes and those schoolgirl tears. The victory I'm referring to isn't yours over your priest. It was my victory over you. You were a little experiment for me. You see, I've studied you for years, and wanted to see if what I've always suspected was true: that vanity controls everything you do. And it appears it does. It was your own grossly inflated ego that drove you to this. Your fear of being called a laughingstock. You couldn't bear the thought of feeling powerless to your own emotions.

ALEXANDER. Regardless of your pathetic game, you owe me my reward. And I intend to collect.

(He grabs MARCUS, who pushes him away.)

MARCUS. I choose whom I fuck and when. And it is neither you nor now.

ALEXANDER. I'm not a boy! I will not be cast aside like your musical director!

MARCUS. Wake up, Alexander, you already have been!

ALEXANDER. You don't want to do this, Marcus. You don't want to know the lengths I'll go to get what I deserve.

MARCUS. You think this isn't what you deserve?

ALEXANDER. You will remove your clothing and give me what I've earned! No need to beat around the bush, Marcus. Just tell me where you wish to consummate our agreement!

MARCUS. Oh, very well then. *(Starts removing his shirt. Crosses and kisses ALEXANDER passionately.)* I'll see you hell!

(Blackout.)

Scene 7

(ALEXANDER at the coffee shop with LANDON.)

ALEXANDER. It's been a long time, Landon.

LANDON. Ever since you dumped me. You said you'd call.

ALEXANDER. And I have. You're here, aren't you?

LANDON. What do you want?

ALEXANDER. Is it so difficult to believe I just wanted to see you again?

LANDON. Yes, it is.

ALEXANDER. All right then, cards on the table. I need your help. There's someone who's been harassing me, and I need your expertise to put a stop to it.

LANDON. What do you want me to do?

ALEXANDER. Hack into some computers; make it look like he's bankrupt. Maybe transfer some funds to another account.

LANDON. Hacking's not that easy. It's also illegal.

ALEXANDER. I'll definitely make it worth your while. I've missed you, Landon.

LANDON. You knew where I was.

ALEXANDER. Come now, there's no hard feelings, are there? We had a great few weeks together.

LANDON. Yes, we did.

ALEXANDER. I'm offering a chance to begin again. You were my favorite, you know. You were the best lay I ever had.

LANDON. Do your other tricks fall for this crap?

ALEXANDER. Fine, cards on the table then. Help me and I'll pay you whatever you want.

LANDON. I can't be bought. Sorry.

ALEXANDER. Why won't you help me? I know you need money. I've got lots to give.

LANDON. Sorry.

ALEXANDER. Why are you being so stubborn?

LANDON. Sorry.

ALEXANDER. Quit...saying that.

(MARCUS comes to the table and kisses LANDON.)

MARCUS. I see you two know each other.

LANDON. We're old friends.

MARCUS. I didn't think Alexander had any friends. Were you two discussing the website?

ALEXANDER. What website?

MARCUS. Landon here has put together quite an interesting website about you: a fan site almost. It includes some rather naughty videos, all of which star you, as well as proof that you misrepresented yourself to Trevor as Rosemonde. I believe it even has recordings of conversations we've had. My voice edited out, of course. It's such a fascinating site that I immediately emailed all your friends so they could take a look. For some reason they didn't appreciate it like I did. Poor Jason is angriest of all: it seems he fi-

nally discovered you broadcast your afternoons of passion together. Everyone kept saying something about suing. We live in such litigious times.

ALEXANDER. You bastard!

MARCUS. Just last night I was at a club, and can you believe they were actually handing out the web address printed on napkins?

ALEXANDER. I'll sue you! Libel, slander, defamation of character—

MARCUS. To sue me, you'll have to prove it was me. Landon made sure that the site was posted anonymously. There's no way to point the finger at me and prove it in a court of law. You always talked about leaving town, Alexander. Perhaps now is as good a time as any. As far as this city's concerned, you're dead.

(The lights fade to black.)

Scene 8

(Marcus's apartment. ROSEMONDE and MARCUS are playing cribbage.)

ROSEMONDE. I haven't told you yet, but this is my last visit to the city.

MARCUS. What are you talking about?

ROSEMONDE. The doctors tell me it's only a matter of weeks now.

MARCUS. Nonsense. You're as healthy as a horse.

ROSEMONDE. A horse with cancer.

MARCUS. Stop joking like that.

ROSEMONDE. Joking is the only thing that makes it bearable.

MARCUS. How many points?

ROSEMONDE. Eight.

MARCUS. Another round?

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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