

ONE TOO MANY

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A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences  
Morehead State University

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In Partial Fulfillment

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Master of

Arts in English

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by

Cindy F. Hall

April 15, 1988

ONE TOO MANY

Cindy F. Hall, M.A.  
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Director of Thesis: Marc Glasser, Ph.D.

This creative thesis, ONE TOO MANY, is a one-act play, the author's first. The theme of this work is the incompatibility of traditional American values and modern women's values.

As the audience views the play, it is hoped that they can see how women's liberation of the 1970s provided women too many choices and therefore too many conflicts. The men have been caught in the overflow without knowing enough of the proper responses.

The main characters are Jake and Jessie Arthur, a couple in their late twenties who have been married seven years. Jake wants to have a family and live by traditional values in that he is the breadwinner and Jessie is the wife and mother. Jessie wants to have a career and all the trimmings. She thinks that if she has children now, she loses her chance for professional success.

The conflict comes to the fore when a friend of Jake's, Susan, appears on the scene. Jake gets caught up in Susan's game of playing every man for a fool. While he is aware of what is happening,

Jessie has him so confused that he feels powerless to stop it.

When Jessie suspects that she is pregnant, she considers all her choices, including telling Jake. But Jessie's choices become limited when she finds Jake and Susan together. Jessie's decision to have an abortion seals the fate of the marriage.

The fourth character in the play, Bear, helps Jake to see Susan's game and provides expositional opportunities.

This midwestern American couple is pushed apart by the differences between their needs and desires. However, each sees reflected in the other's goal a certain legitimacy.

Accepted by: Marc Glaser, Chairman

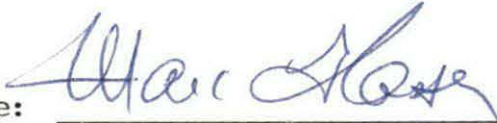
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\_\_\_\_\_  
Director of Thesis

Master's Committee:



\_\_\_\_\_, Chairman





April 15, 1988  
Date

JAKE ARTHUR: He is in his late twenties, below average height, but very muscular and handsome.

JESSIE ARTHUR: She is in her late twenties, of average height with an athletic body.

SUSAN RIGGS: She is in her mid-twenties and average.

BEAR: His age is indeterminate. He is a hairy mountain of a man.

THEME: This play is meant to dramatize the instability of family life since the advent of women's lib; the lack of definition of male/female roles in this transition period, and its effect on a marriage.

SETTING: The play takes place in the living room and kitchen of the Arthurs'. The decor is rustic, country, not quite Early American.

scene i

(Lighting is amber, soft. Jessie and Susan enter from the outside door. Kitchen remains dark, living room is cluttered, messy.)

Jessie: I'm so glad Jake and I ran into Bear at the Smoking Pot. This has turned into a pretty good anniversary celebration after all. Bear's the one who talked Jake into taking me dancing. Jake says the Fall Inn is just a red-neck beer joint. I wish there were somewhere else around here to go dancing.

(Jessie sets case of beer on table; they remove their coats)

Susan: I'm down there about four nights a week and I've never seen any bad fights or anything. Matter of fact, Jessie, I've never seen you and Jake together down there. That was a good band, wasn't it!

Jessie: Yeah, if you like country western.

Susan: I just like to dance. Bear's a really good dancer. Where'd you say he was from?

Jessie: I didn't, Susan. Tonight's only the second time I've ever met him. He works with Jake.

Susan: Is he married?

Jessie: Yes, but I think most of the time they go their separate ways.

Susan: Oh, God! I don't understand that! What's the point of being married if...

Jessie: I think it's perfectly understandable. They probably love each other. They just aren't monogamous. Well, not sexually. Jake disapproves, but he and Bear are pretty tight.

Susan: I didn't think Jake would go in with this open marriage stuff.

Jessie: Well, we've had problems, but we worked them out.

(Bear enters from outside door.)

Jessie: Come on in, Bear! Make yourself at home! But I better warn you, it's strictly self-serve around here!

Bear: Mountain feminism. This is a great place. I really like this.

Jessie: Thanks! Jake and I are really proud of it. It took us a long time to build it, but we did most of the work ourselves.

Bear: Means a lot to Mighty Mouse, doesn't it.

Jessie: Mighty Mouse? Oh, Jake. Yes, it really does. The house is as much a part of him as I am. Where is he, anyway?

Bear: Oh, he said he was going to check on the dogs.

Jessie: I'm so glad we ran into you tonight!

Bear: Well, old Jumbo Jake had to take you dancing. It's your anniversary. Besides, anyone who puts up with Jiminy Cricket for seven years deserves a night out.

(Jake enters from outside door.)

Jake: Hi, Babe. Hey, Susan! You should have been with us. You missed a hell of a ride. Instead of coming down the road, we decided to cut through the field and raise a little hell! Hey, Jess! Get everybody a beer.

Bear: (with his arm around Jessie) Hey, Jumbo! Jessie here says it's self-serve.

Jake: Self-serve, my ass! That's what I keep her around here for.

Jessie: What's the matter, Too Tall? A little short on humor tonight?

Jake: Aren't you the witty one! Way to go--kick me when I'm down.  
Pardon the pun.

Bear: The truth's really out now. I hear you're quite the little dishwasher, Moochie.

Jake: Oh yeah, you air-head. If you'd crawl out of the bottle once in awhile, you might enjoy doing windows. They're my specialty.

Susan: Well, I'm just glad I rode home with Jessie. You all look like you're both in the bottle.

Jake: Yeah, well, it's about time you and Jess got better acquainted.

Jessie: Jake, you and Susan can talk over your old high school days. I want to get better acquainted with Bear. Find out what you guys really do on break.

Jake: Oh, yeah! Blow up old mellon-head's ego a little more.

(During the following conversations, Jake and Susan get cozier until Susan is lying in Jake's lap. Jake pets her face and occasionally kisses her forehead. Soft rock music is playing. Jake and Susan are sitting on floor in front of stereo; Bear and Jessie sit at table upstage. Spots begin highlighting each couple as they talk, but only gradually, not noticeably.)

Bear: I thought Susan was with a date at the bar.

Jessie: Me, too. What do I know? She seems kind of down tonight.

Bear: Well, if anybody can cheer her up, Jumbo Jake can.

Jessie: Yeah. He really thinks a lot of her. You know, they went to school together. She's just recently divorced and Jake said he really hated seeing her waste herself on those red-neck bars all the



time. I guess Jake's heart is the biggest thing about him.

Bear: Yeah. Old Too Tall is aces in my book.

Jessie: I know. He thinks an awfully lot of you, too. He says if he didn't have you to work with, he'd go nuts in the plant.

Bear: It's pure hell. Speaking of work, what have you been doing since you quit teaching? Why'd you quit, anyway? You and Jake finally gonna make babies? (Sound of infant crying heard off stage)

Jessie: Oh, I hated teaching! It was the administration as much as the kids. Most of the kids were okay. But the administration? You wouldn't believe! I realize we live in the Bible Belt, but my God! I would have been fired if I had tried to teach Tennessee Williams or Donne's secular...

Bear: Go easy, Jess. What's Donne?

Jessie: I am...with teaching. No, Donne was a Jacobean poet and...

Bear: What about babies? (Sound of infant crying)

Jessie: Not yet, I'm not ready. But maybe sooner than I...Well, what do you think of our place here? Jake and I are really proud of it.

Bear: I can see why. How long did it take you all to finish it?

Jessie: About two and a half years.. We could have been done sooner, but Jake's really particular. He wouldn't take any short cuts. Is he that way at work?

Bear: Depends on the job.

Jessie: Would you like to see the pictures we took as we built the house?

Bear: Sure.

Jessie: Okay.

(Jessie gets photo album from the desk. During Jake and Susan's conversation, Jessie shows photo album to Bear.)

Jake: Shhhh, Susan. It's okay.

Susan: (tearfully) Oh, Jake. I'd like so much to have a man just hold me and love me without wanting anything else.

Jake: Will I do?

Susan: Oh, Jake. You're so sweet. Why is it we never got together in high school?

Jake: Don't know.. (pause) Tell me.

Susan: I don't know either. You weren't going with anyone. As a matter of fact, isn't Jessie the only girl you ever got serious about?

Jake: Yeah. Not till after high school.

Susan: You really care about Jessie?

Jake: (defensively) Yeah, I love her.

Susan: Then how can you sit here like this and hold me?

Jake: I think a lot of you. Hate to see you wasting down there at sleazy bars every night. You're better than that.

Susan: Am I, Jake? You know, all I really want to be is a wife and mother. I'm really a stay-at-home kind of person.

Jake: You're already a mother. (sound of infant crying)

Susan: Yeah, Stephanie and Steven are my whole life now.

Jake: (chuckling) That Steven! Do you know what he said the other

day at the cub scout meeting?

Susan: (snuggling a little closer) No, what?

Jake: He said, "Mr. Jake, are you my mom's boyfriend now?" I said, "No, why?" He said, "Well, you always walk her to the car and open the door and stuff after cub scouts."

Susan : As much as you love kids...you're so good with boys, how come you and Jessie never had any? (sound of infant crying)

Jake: She doesn't want any. I love kids.

Susan: So do I. I worship my kids.

(Fade spots. Jessie crosses downstage left and stops at upstage arm-chair.)

Jessie: (smiling) Well, aren't you two cozy!

(Bear goes to kitchen for beer and resumes seat.)

Jake: (rising) Jessie...

Susan: I'm going to the bathroom. (exits down hall)

Jake: (walking over to Jessie) Jessie, Susan's just a little down tonight. She just wanted to talk.

Jessie: That's fine, Jake. I'm not mad.

Jake: Honest, Honey. That's all it is.

Jessie: Hey, I said it's okay.

Jake: (crosses to Bear) What's going on here, Punkin' Head? You deciding what kind of house you're going to build when she gets the insurance money?

Bear: (rising) Why, no. You know you can trust old Bubby. (Jessie follows.)

Jake: (laughing) Yeah, like a weasel in a chicken house.

Bear: Jiminy Cricket, do you think I'd steal from you? You're really hurting old Bubby's feelings now.

Jake: What feelings! You've got the feelings of a pit viper. Old Jess would probably go right along with you.

Jessie: Hey, guys! I'm not a reading lamp standing here!

Jake: Yeah, you are! (grabs her breasts) And here's your dimmer switches. (to Bear) She's usually on dim anyhow. (Jake puts both arms around Jessie.) You old beautiful hunk of femininity, why don't you go get me a beer so old buddy Bear can catch his breath. You're about to wear him out.

(Susan enters from hallway, then follows Jake to the kitchen.)

Jessie: Get it yourself, Stubby. It's self-serve, remember?

(Jessie leads Bear to the armchair and sits crosslegged in front of him.) Hey, Bear. What do you do for kicks--besides drink and whore around? Jake says you have twin boys.

Bear: Yeah.

Jessie: He tells me about them all the time.

Bear: Yeah, he ought to have some of his own. (sound of infant crying)

Jessie: No. Well...Maybe...He keeps plenty busy with other people's kids--what with cub scouts, the youth group at church, little league.

Bear: Well, maybe. You never did tell me why you and Jake don't have any kids.

Jessie: Does Jake talk to you about that?

Bear: Sometimes.

Jessie: Jake says you're teaching the twins how to bowl.

Bear: Well, we gave that up after William dropped the ball on his toe and broke it.

Jessie: Speaking of bowling...did Jake ever tell you the saga of my red, white, and blue striped bowling ball?

Bear: No.

Jessie: Well, anyway, when he found out it was a gift from a former boyfriend--now this ball had my name engraved on it, too--anyhow, when we moved out of the apartment, Jake dropped it off the second-floor balcony. It was so funny! Do you know what happened? Well, it hit the concrete and bounced into the back of the truck we were hauling our furniture in. Do you think that stopped him? Not that pig-headed puss! No! Next time we went to the lake, he borrowed a boat and hauled it out to the middle of the lake and dumped it! Can't you just see someone a hundred years from now dredging up a red, white, and blue striped sphere with three holes and 'Jessie' emblazoned across it!?!

Bear: Slow down, Jess. I see why Jake really has his hands full with you.

Jessie: Are you referring, sir, to my mind or my body? Poor Jake. He thinks I live in the suburbs of sanity.

Bear: Jess, you got anything stronger than beer?

Jessie: Not to drink.

Bear: Well?

Jessie: I'll roll one and you go run those two out of the kitchen.  
(1960s head music plays faintly as Jessie rolls a joint. Jake enters from kitchen. Light dims in living room and comes up harshly in kitchen. Bear is trying to corner Susan.)

Bear: Hey, Susan. What happened to your date at the Fall Inn?

Susan: Well, his wife showed up. Where's your wife?

Bear: She's out with the girls tonight. You know, I've seen you at other bars.

Susan: (very cool) Really? I don't remember seeing you.

Bear: Yeah, well, you were usually otherwise occupied. (Puts his arm around her) You know, you dance real good. You're a little tall for Jake, (puts both arms around her) but we fit pretty close.

Susan: (very carefully) Bear, I hear from Jessie that you're not much on fidelity.

Bear: Fidelity? Oh, you mean I fool around?

Susan: Yeah.

Bear: (nuzzling her neck) Yeah, well, I've been known to snuggle in the dark, if you know what I mean.

Susan: (accommodating him) Is Jake the same way?

Bear: (backing off) Oh, now, wait a minute. We're talking about the crown prince of morality. Why do you ask, as if I didn't know.

Susan: (puts her arms around him and rubs her cheek on his chest) Oh, Bear, let's not talk anymore.

Bear: (takes both her arms and holds her away from him) I know you! There are lots of you. You back off on old Jumbo Jake! He's

not like me. His conscience couldn't handle it. If you need a warm body, I'm available. Don't you go dirty up Jake's life.

Susan: (throws up her hands and turns away) Hey! You don't understand. Jake and I are just friends.

Bear: Okay, Okay. (puts arms around her from behind) How 'bout you and me...

Susan: (turns in his arms and hushes him with a long kiss) Bear, (very sweetly) why don't you come to my place later. Jake and Jessie don't have to know.

(As light fades in kitchen, it comes up in living room. Jake and Jessie on love-seat, Jessie sitting cross-legged facing Jake.)

Jessie: Jake, what's going on between you and Susan?

Jake: What do you mean?

Jessie: (sarcastically) That's an original response. Are you falling in love with her?

Jake: What!? Why would you ask that?

Jessie: Well, you know, I've been watching the two of you and...

Jake: (rises and paces) If you're talking about tonight, she needed a friend.

Jessie: But Jake, what about me? Wouldn't a female friend do?

Besides, I saw you kissing her.

Jake: (defensively) Just on the forehead!

Jessie: Don't you think she might misinterpret something like that? Can you see that?

Jake: (turning on her) Did I misinterpret you going to bed with Doug last year?

Jessie: Don't try to turn this back on me! Oh! Are you sleeping with her?

Jake: NO! Just because you have no sense of loyalty!

Jessie: Oh, God! Aren't you ever going to let that die? I thought surely, on this one day...

Jake: Remember our anniversary last year? I didn't even know where you were!

Jessie: Wait a minute. Let's back up. Is she in love with you?

Jake: I don't know. (very wearily) Don't know how she feel. I'm just...

Jessie: You're just what? You're in love with her!

Jake: NO! Well, I care a lot about her--as a friend. She...

Jessie: She what, Jake? Finish it!

Jake: She's a nice girl who's having trouble...well...adjusting. Told me she'd love to be married if she could marry someone she really loves. She loves kids and you KNOW how I feel about that subject! (sound of infant crying)

Jessie: Oh, I see. We're back to that again. Jake...I might be...

Jake: (holds up his hands to ward off the speech he thinks is coming) I know! I know! My God! I've heard it a thousand times. When you finish your master's and get your career off the ground, then we'll talk about it. Talking doesn't make babies.

Jessie: Oh, so you're going to "make babies" with Susan!

Jake: (sarcastically) We haven't discussed it.

Jessie: What have you discussed? The divorce you're going to get?



Just drop it.

(Bear and Susan enter from kitchen.)

Bear: Necking with your wife, Mooch? Original idea!

Jake: And I suppose you and Susan have been discussing your recipe for spoon bread?

Bear: Sure.

Susan: I think I'd better go home. My baby-sitter will think I've left the country.

Bear: I'd better be rolling, too.

Jake: Bear, why don't you take some of that beer with you. You bought it.

Bear: (heading toward the kitchen) Sure..

Jake: Jessie; go find him a bag to put it in.

Jessie: Well...okay. (follows Bear to kitchen)

Jake: (urgently) Susan, I'll call you tomorrow.

Susan: (touches his face) Sure, I'll be home. Maybe we can get together.

Jake: I'll try. You're going home alone?

Susan: Of course. Who...oh, Bear. Forget him.

(Jessie and Bear enter, good-byes said all around; Jake goes off down hallway, Jessie sits and lights joint as light fades to black.)

scene ii next day

(As ordinary daylight comes up, Jake is letting Susan in the door. They embrace wordlessly, he removes her coat, they cross to center of living room.)

Jake: (hands on her arms) I'm so glad you came.

Susan: Where'd you say Jessie was?

Jake: She had a doctor's appointment in Tomsville today.

Susan: What for?

Jake: I don't know.

Susan: When will she be back?

Jake: She has some friends there. She shouldn't be back till about dark. Come on. Let's sit down. Want a beer? Glass of wine?

Susan: (sitting on love seat) No, thanks. How about some music?

Jake: Sure. Anything special?

Susan: No, you pick.

Jake: (moves to stereo) How are the kids? Do you pick them up at school?

Susan: No, they ride a bus to the sitter's (soft rock music) See, normally, I'd be at work today.

(Jake starts toward her, stops uncertainly.)

Jake: I think I'll get a beer.

Susan: (kicking off her shoes and tucking her feet under her) Oh, come on, Jake. It's too early. Let's talk. (holds her arms toward him, light begins fading, slowly, not noticeably)

Jake: (sitting beside her) Susan, why did you come here today?

Susan: Why did you call me?

Jake: Okay. I just don't know what you expect. I don't know what I expect.

Susan: Jake, (touches his face) I only know how I feel about you. You're the most wonderful thing to ever come into my life. You understand me better than myself.

Jake: (rising and turning away) Oh, God! That sounds so trite.

Susan: (goes to him and embraces him) Jake, it would be so easy to fall in love with you.

Jake: (holding her) Susan. (long silence) I don't know if I can explain this. I don't know if I understand it.

Susan: Oh, Jake...

Jake: No, wait a minute. (He walks to love seat, sits, she follows. He sits with his head in his hands.) I love Jessie. I really do. I admire the way, oh, I don't know, the way she sort of ATTACKS life. She sure keeps me going. But, there just seems to be something missing.

Susan: Like what?

Jake: I don't know. Kids maybe. (sound of infant crying)

Susan: I don't see how anyone lives without kids. I know Jessie thinks her school and her career are important, but aren't your feelings important, too?

Jake: (holds her) Oh, Susan. (despairingly) I'm not sure that's it. I'm not sure of much these days. I know I love Jessie. But I watch you when you pick up Steven, I watch fathers come pick up their kids; I just ache inside. I get so frustrated.

Susan: (planting little kisses all over his face) Jake, you and I

could have such beautiful babies. Jake, I'd do anything to make you happy. Anything!

Jake: Susan, this isn't right.

Susan: Shhhhh!

(During the next few minutes, Susan is the aggressor and Jake doesn't resist. She takes off his shirt, her shirt, etc., however far the director sees fit for the audience. By this time the light has faded considerably, but has a yellowish, cheap cast to it. At whatever point the director stops the sexual activity, Jessie enters and light comes up somewhat, very harsh. Sound of infant crying heard off stage.)

Jessie: (after long shocked silence) Get out! You goddamn whore!  
Get out!

(Jake and Susan scurry into their clothes.)

Jake: Jessie! Jessie!

(Jessie tries to physically attack Susan, but Jake continues to restrain her while Susan dresses.)

Jessie: (hysterically) You no-good slut! You're slime! You're filth!  
I hate you! I hate you! You'll rot in hell!

Susan: Jessie, please!

Jake: Susan, just get the hell out of here! NOW! Jessie!

(Susan exits and Jessie turns on Jake. She fights him, throws things at him, screaming hysterically.)

Jessie: How could you! How could you! I hate you! I hate you!

(Jake continues trying to soothe her while trying to protect himself. After several minutes of this, Jessie subsides into a steady sobbing.)

Jake: Jessie, Jessie. Please. I'm so sorry. I'm so very sorry.  
Please. Jessie. I was wrong. I was dead wrong. Please, Jessie.  
Jessie. Jessie, I love you. I do. I don't know why I did that.  
Jessie. Jessie. I love you. Please. Jessie.

Jessie: (still crying) Love me?! Love me?! My God! (now intensely quiet) Goddam you, Jake. Goddam you to hell.

Jake: Please, Jessie.

Jessie: Please what!? Please what! Why, Jake? Can you tell me that? WHY?

Jake: Oh, Jessie. I don't know.

Jessie: You don't know. Ho! That's good, Jake. You don't know. How long, Jake? How long have you been fucking that whore? Huh? How long, Jake?

Jake: Oh, Jesus, Jessie. This was the first time. I swear it!

Jessie: First time? So there's going to be more?

Jake: No, Jessie. No! Never again. No!

Jessie: Okay, Jake. Okay. Explain it. Tell me what happened. Tell me what's so goddam appealing about that slut. She's so fucking common! What's she got, what does she do for you? Tell me.

Jake: Oh, Jessie. I don't know what happened. I really don't. I enjoy talking to her. You know I've got her son in my cub scout troop. We talk when she picks him up.

Jessie: Cut the shit! Why was she here today?!

Jake: Well,...I called her. I asked her to come over--just to talk. I feel really comfortable with her. I like her kids. They're so sweet.

Jessie: Oh my God! Oh God! I see it now. I see it all. Can't you see? Or you just won't admit it. (sound of infant crying)

Jake: What! What, Jessie. You think I'm trying to get back at you because of Doug? You think I'm trying to even the score? Is that it? Because if you think that, you're wrong. You're dead wrong. I forgave you for that. I forgave you, remember?

Jessie: Forgave me?! My God! There isn't a day goes by I don't hear about that. You may have forgiven me, but you sure haven't forgotten. You really don't see it, do you?

Jake: See what? I don't know what you're talking about.

Jessie: She's a fucking brood-mare! It's the kid thing again. You think you can blackmail me, force me into having a kid this way. I can hear it now. "Jessie, either you have my baby or I'll find someone who will." Oh, that's rich, Jake. That's a really novel approach.

Jake: Oh, Jessie. You hurt me. You really do. I would never do that.

Jessie: Yes, you would. Oh yes you would. Your enotional blackmail for the last five years hasn't worked. So now you've put in the first string.

Jake: Jessie, you know how much I want a child. But I want it with you. I want us to be a family. We can't be a family without children.

(Jessie walks away--long pause--turns back to him with vengeance)

Jessie: Why not!? Why in God's name not!? I'm going to tell you this one last time. (yelling) Not Yet! Not Now! We both know whose career gets shot in the ass. We both know who gets chained down. Not Yet!

(Jessie walks away and stares out a window. Jake finally goes to her and tries to put his arms around her. She jerks away.)

Jessie: Don't touch me! (screams, then continues) I can't get the sight of you and that whore out of my mind! I'm leaving.

Jake: (despairingly) Where are you going?

Jessie: I don't know.

Jake: Jessie, I love you. Please don't go.

Jessie: Oh, for God's sake. Will you please stop whining. I'll be back--some time.

Jake: Jessie...

(As she exits, light fades to black and sound of infant crying is heard off stage.)

scene iii two days later

(As light comes up, Jake is letting Bear in. They move to bar area.)

Jake: Hey, Bear! What are you doing here?

Bear: Well, you're not on your death-bed yet. What's up?

Jake: What do you mean, what's up? What are you looking for, a piece of ass or a free drink??

Bear: Hey, man. You haven't been to work for three days. We're talking about management's star pupil in attendance. Now tell old Bubby what is going down.

Jake: Want a beer?

Bear: Sure.

Jake: Well, light somewhere. I'll be right back.

Bear: Hustle up, Mooch. I ain't got all day.

(Jake exits to kitchen returning promptly with two beers. Bear sits behind bar and Jake stands at end of it.) Now talk, Too-Tall. This is old Bubby here.

Jake: Who are you? Ann Landers? (Bear waits patiently.) I haven't seen you since...

Bear: Since the "anniversary party."

Jake: Oh. (long pause) God! I don't know what's wrong with me! I guess it all started last year when Jessie was fucking around with that...that low-life son of a bitch.

Bear: Doug?

Jake: Yeah. I guess it was my fault.

Bear: Since when?! That's not what you said...

Jake: I know. I know. But I've thought about it since then. She



tried to tell me. I got so caught up in those youth groups and everything. I bitched at her about school all the time. I sort of shut her out.

Bear: Is she fucking around again?

Jake: (very angrily) NO! She's not fucking around.

Bear: Okay. Okay. So why haven't you been to work.

Jake: You don't want to hear this shit. It's my problem. I'll work it out.

Bear: Jake, (very seriously) this is Bear you're talking to.

Jake: Well...it's Susan.

Bear: (faking surprise) Susan?

Jake: She came up the day after the party.

Bear: How come?

Jake: I asked her to.

Bear: I see.

Jake: No, you don't see! I just wanted to talk to her. Things got out of hand.

Bear: What'd she do? Wear you out so bad you can't make it to work?

Jake: I wish! (joking) No! I don't mean THAT! Jessie came home.

Bear: Uh-oh. I see.

Jake: She left and I haven't seen her since.

Bear: Susan or Jessie?

Jake: Jessie, you fool!

Bear: Do you know where she is?

Jake: I think so. I think she's staying with a friend in Tomsville.

Bear: Have you talked to her?

Jake: Yeah. She called last night.

Bear: Well?

Jake: Well? I don't know. She's got it in her head that I'm trying to blackmail her into quitting school and having a baby.

(sound of infant crying)

Bear: Are you?

Jake: Thanks! I really need that.

Bear: What about Susan?

Jake: She's called a few times.

Bear: Are you going to, you know, keep on with Susan?

Jake: I love Jessie. She's everything I want in a wife, but...God! I don't know. I'm just so confused.

Bear: (long pause) Jake, old buddy, I think I'd better tell you something before you fuck up your whole life over...

Jake: Hey, you better back off.

Bear: (patiently) She's just a whore.

Jake: (very angrily) Just shut the fuck up! She's just having a hard time right now.

Bear: (still patient) I was there when you called her that morning.

Jake: (stunned) What?

Bear: When we left here, we went to her place. I spent the night.

Jake: No.

Bear: Yes. I had breakfast with the kids--Stephanie and Steven.

(Jake walks away, pauses, comes back. Bear looks at his watch.)

Jake: Bear...

Bear: Hey, Moochie. I've gotta be going. Will you be at work

tomorrow?

Jake: I guess.

Bear: (at door) Look, if you need anything...

Jake: Yeah, you've already taken care of everything. How could she do that to those kids?

Bear: See you tomorrow. (Exits)

(Jake walks toward center stage. Bear sticks his head back in the door) Here comes Jessie.

(Jake waves him away and goes to sit behind bar. Jessie enters and crosses to center.)

Jessie: Hello.

Jake: (very tiredly) Jessie, where have you been?

Jessie: Do you really care?

Jake: Let's not argue.

Jessie: Okay. Where's Susan?

Jake: How the hell should I know?

Jessie: Have you seen her since I've been gone?

Jake: No.

Jessie: Have you talked to her?

Jake: Can't you let it go? I've apologized. It will never happen again. (pleading) Where have you been?

Jessie: It doesn't matter.

Jake: Why doesn't it?

Jessie: I've come to a decision.

(Jake crosses to her, takes her hand and leads her to the love seat.)

Jake: Wait a minute. We've got to talk. You think this whole thing

has to do with having a baby. Don't you.

Jessie: Yes. One child, two, three--how many padlocks, chains, and bolts do you want to put on my cage?

Jake: Jessie, please! That's not it at all. I'll admit, one time, only once, I thought, well, a ready-made family might be okay.

Jessie: You'd be satisfied raising someone else's kids? Ha!

Jake: (a little angrily) Yeah, well, someone else's would be better than none at all! No, wait a minute. I don't mean that.

Jessie, were you with Doug while you were gone?

Jessie: Damn you! Don't try turning it around again!

Jake: Look, Jessie. I forgave you for that, I just had to know if you had gone back. You're mine and I love you.

Jessie: Is your forgiveness payment for my soul, my life as your possession?

Jake: Jessie! Well, yeah, sort of. It should bind us together more closely.

Jessie: I see. If I forgive you for screwing around with Susan, then we'll be like siamese twins. We'll have our 2.3 children and live the American dream happily ever after.

Jake: Goddamn it, Jessie! Can't we just talk.

Jessie: (angrily) Yes! Let's talk! Let's talk about how the American dream has changed. Let's talk about how I want to do more with my life than cook, clean, and have babies.

Jake: Jessie, listen...

Jessie: No, Jake! You listen. Maybe we can have kids in...four... maybe five years. Maybe by then, you'll outgrow your fantasy. Maybe

I'll change. But right now--NO! I don't want another person dependent on me for his every need. I have more important goals! If Susan is your ideal, if she's what you need, chain her up. But you can't have both!

Jake: (very angry now) Who in the goddamn hell do you think you are!?! Why does everything have to be your way!? Doesn't what I want make any difference? You go out and screw around, say you're sorry, and I'm supposed to forgive and forget. I make one little mistake and your whole life is in jeopardy! You don't make any sense! You're a fucking Maniac!

Jessie: Really! Is that what you think! Okay, bud! Do you really want to know where I've been? Do you?

Jake: I knew it! Was it Doug or did you find yourself another stud?

Jessie: I found myself a doctor! I had an abortion! Forgive me this-- if you can and I'll bare my ass before the whole world for your brand!

(Light goes quickly to black with sound of infant crying on stage.)

3040 BK