

SHE: No.

HE: I tell you—share with you—some of my deepest feelings . . . and you make fun of me? You better get yourself a smarter therapist, sweetheart. You don't have any trouble with aggression—only you disguise it in bitchy, sarcastic remarks. *He starts to leave.*

SHE, *going after him*: No, I mean it. It's sad. I mean I really think what you're saying is sad. It really made me feel sad. I'm sorry it sounded sarcastic, but Dr. Monska says that that's another one of my problems, showing compassion. He says I can't show anger and I can't show love.

HE: Yeah, well, that doesn't leave much does it? Look it doesn't matter anyway. We just don't . . .

SHE: No please, give me a chance. It's my problem . . . Please . . . Let me work on it. I do feel sad . . . I do . . . for you. *She starts to cry. I do.*

HE: Hey, don't. Please don't.

SHE: No, let me. *Her crying is very full.*

HE: Come on.

SHE: It feels so good. Dr. Monska will be so proud.

HE: You don't have to . . .

SHE, *an idea*: Hey, Jerry, would you do me a favor?

HE: What?

SHE: Would you let me watch you play basketball?

HE: What? You're kidding?

SHE: No. I'd really like to watch you play.

HE: Oh, that's ridiculous. I'd feel foolish.

SHE: Are you still good?

HE: Well, yeah, I'm still pretty good. I mean, I don't play much anymore. Sometimes I take jumpshots in front of the mirror, and I still look almost as good as Bob Cousy. You ever hear of Bob Cousy?

SHE: Sure I did . . . sure.

HE: Cousy was the greatest. Cousy, Carl Braun, Max Zaslofsky, they were some players. And they weren't much bigger than me. It's a game for giants now.

SHE: Is there a basketball court around here?

HE: Yeah, there's one just over there.

SHE: Play for me, Jerry. I'll cheer and I'll clap. I always wanted to be a cheerleader. Play for me, please. I'm serious. For me, so I can tell Dr. Monska that I can show enthusiasm.

HE: It's ridiculous.

SHE: Please Jerry.

HE: Oh . . . I don't know . . . Okay.

SHE: Oh, great, great.

HE: When?

SHE: How about tomorrow, same time . . . *(suddenly remembering)* Oh my God, I better go or I'll be late. Do I look okay?

HE: Fine.

SHE: Not too frazzled?

HE: You're just fine. Be a little frazzled. You never know, he might like challenges in his work.

SHE: Yeah, maybe you're right . . . maybe you're right . . . Hey, you're not a fag are you?

HE: No!

SHE: Didn't think so . . . Tomorrow?

HE: Yes.

SHE: Do you have a basketball?

HE: Yes.

SHE: Okay—see you tomorrow.

HE: Hey, what's your name?

SHE: Sheila. *Rushes off. He is delighted, but then . . .*

HE: Holy God . . . I must really be crazy. What did I do? Play for her? I can't do . . . *About to call her back, then hesitates. He pantomimes dribbling and a jumpshot. Shouts: I'll see you tomorrow, Sheila. Exits.*

THE ONLY GAME IN TOWN

by Frank D. Gilroy

ACT I, SCENE 5

Joe is a compulsive gambler (and inveterate joker) who plays the piano for a living in a Las Vegas nightclub. His goal is to save up \$5,000 in order to move back to New York City. One

night he meets Fran, a chorus girl, and goes home with her. Fran has been trying to end the unsatisfying ten-year-old involvement she has had with a married man. Her guarded nature and self-protective style do not make it easy for her to enter into a new relationship.

At the time of the following scene, Joe and Fran have known each other for a few days. A day earlier Joe won \$8,000 in a casino, more than enough to set up his new life in New York; and last night, ready to bid a fond farewell to Las Vegas, he took Fran out on the town to celebrate. The scene takes place at 7:00 the next morning. Fran is alone in her apartment, still dressed from the night before. She is watching television, sitting "in an attitude of troubled preoccupation." There is a knock at the door. Joe enters, "a little drunk, a little disheveled, and totally spent." (The Harold C. Carver referred to is someone Joe met at the casino during his big win.)

JOE: Top of the morning. "Won't you come in?" "Don't mind if I do." *He enters; closes the door; regards her.* Okay, say it.

FRAN: What is there to say?

JOE: For openers you could call me a fool, a jackass, a moron, an idiot.

FRAN: Would that make you feel better?

JOE: A little.

FRAN: All right: You're a fool, a moron, a weakling, a baby.

JOE: Stick to the script.

FRAN: I thought you wanted to be punished.

JOE: I think I'm in the wrong apartment.

FRAN: So do I.

JOE: So much for small talk—can you lend me twenty bucks?

FRAN, *shocked*: You lost it *all*?

JOE: Every farthing—every sou.

FRAN: You still had five thousand when I left.

JOE: Want to search me?

FRAN: How *could* you?

JOE: It was easy.

FRAN: *I've had enough jokes!*

JOE: Give me the twenty and I'll never darken your door again.

FRAN, *placing herself between him and the door, mimicking cruelly*: "I used to gamble a little. Haven't touched the stuff in months."

JOE: Do I get the twenty—yes or no?

FRAN: "As soon as I have five thousand I'm going to flee this cesspool."

JOE: I didn't come here for a lecture!

FRAN: Do I detect anger?

JOE: *Get out of my way or . . .*

FRAN: Or what?

JOE, *caving in*: Or you're going to see a grown man cry.

FRAN: I'd prefer that to jokes.

JOE, *close to tears, he turns away*: I had eight thousand dollars. Had it in my hand. Am I crazy—or what? *Slams the fist of one hand against the palm of the other.* God damn me! *God damn me!*

FRAN: I can't tell you how sorry I am.

JOE: Eight grand . . . *Eight thousand dollars.*

FRAN: How about a drink?

JOE: Got any hemlock?

FRAN: I'll see. *She prepares drinks.*

JOE: Did you know that Las Vegas has the highest suicide rate, per capita, in the country?

FRAN: I don't like that kind of talk—even kidding.

JOE: Who's kidding?

FRAN: Now look—

JOE: Relax. I don't have the guts. If I did, I wouldn't be here.

FRAN: Maybe you better stick to jokes. *She hands him his drink.*

JOE: All I needed was *five* thousand—and I had *eight*.

FRAN: Shut up and drink your whiskey.

JOE, *raising his glass*: To Harold C. Carver—may he rot in hell. *He drinks.* All I needed was *five*—and I had *eight*.

FRAN: Why do you need *anything*? Why can't you just leave?

JOE: You have to be in New York six months to get your eight-o-two card. Until you get it, you can only work one nighters.

FRAN: You need five thousand dollars to live six months?

JOE: I'm a big tipper.

FRAN: That's two hundred dollars a week.

JOE: *I'm not in the mood for an economics lesson.*

FRAN: Sorry.

JOE: Speaking of economics—do I get the twenty?

FRAN: No.

JOE: Why not?

FRAN: You'd go to the nearest casino and blow it.

JOE: You've got it all figured out.

FRAN: Well, wouldn't you?

JOE, *drains his drink*: Thanks for the use of the hall. *Starts out.*

FRAN: Hey . . . You're welcome to spend the night.

JOE: Is that an indecent proposal—or pity?

FRAN: Pity.

JOE: In that case—I accept. The fact is I'm not up to the other.

FRAN: How would you like a warm bath?

JOE: I wouldn't.

FRAN: It'll relax you.

JOE: I don't want to relax.

FRAN: I'll scrub your back.

JOE: I don't want my back scrubbed.

FRAN: Get undressed. I'll run the water. *She exits into the bathroom.*

We hear the sound of running water.

JOE: Five grand—and I had eight . . . Five, and I had eight. *He breaks down; cups his head in his hands.*

FRAN, *returning*: The bath will be ready in a—*(she sees him; stops; goes to him; puts her arms about him)* You'll be all right.

JOE: How could I do it? . . . How?

FRAN: Tomorrow it will hurt less. The next day, a little less. The next day, still less . . . You'll see . . . Come now—take your bath.

THE SUBJECT WAS ROSES

by Frank D. Gilroy

ACT I, SCENE 3

Timmy Cleary comes back from World War II (to the New York apartment of his parents) an independent and self-assured young man. His arrival is greeted joyfully by his parents, John and Nettie. But soon it becomes clear that his presence only exacerbates the friction and frustration that have come to dominate their interaction. The failure of their marriage quickly infects each parent's attempt to get close to Timmy, and soon he decides to leave home and make his way on his own.

Prior to the following scene, the family went out for a night on the town. John and Timmy came back tipsy and playful and John began reminiscing about his courtship of Nettie—the first dance, the early romance. But Nettie, in no mood for either playfulness or amorous recollections, sends Timmy off to bed. Before putting herself to bed she takes care of the roses that were given to her earlier in the day (she believes by John, but they actually were sent by Timmy). John's amorous mood quickly incites an ugly scene of sexual advances and rejections. (The Ruskin mentioned by Nettie is a business associate of John's.)

NETTIE: Home two days and both nights to bed like that.

JOHN: He's entitled. You should hear some of the things he's been through. They overran one of those concentration camps—

NETTIE: —I don't want to hear about it now.

JOHN, *crosses to her left*: You're right. It's no way to end a happy evening.

NETTIE: I think we have some aspirin in the kitchen. *She moves into the kitchen. He follows; watches her take a bottle of aspirin from counter drawer.*