

## BERNARD

The Boys in the Band · Audition sides · p. 80-82

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**MICHAEL.** Who is Peter Dahlbeck?

**EMORY.** The boy in Detroit whose family Bernard's mother has been a laundress for since he was a little black-eyed pea.

**BERNARD.** I worked for them – after school and every summer. I think I've loved him all my life. But he never knew I was alive. Besides, he's straight.

**COWBOY.** So nothing ever happened between you?

**EMORY.** Oh, they finally made it – in the pool house one night after a drunken swimming party.

**LARRY.** With the right wine and the right music, they're damn few that aren't curious.

**BERNARD.** ...And afterwards we went swimming in the nude in the dark with only the moon reflecting on the water.

**MICHAEL.** How romantic. And then the next morning you took him his coffee and Alka-Seltzer on a tray.

**BERNARD.** It was in the afternoon. I remember I was worried sick all morning about having to face him. But he pretended like nothing at all had happened.

**MICHAEL.** Christ, he must have been so drunk he didn't remember a thing.

**BERNARD.** Yeah. I was sure relieved.

**MICHAEL.** Odd how that works. And now, for ten points, get that liar on the phone.

*(A beat. BERNARD picks up the phone, dials.)*

**LARRY.** You *know* the number?

**BERNARD.** Sure. He's back in Grosse Pointe, living at home.

He just got separated from his third wife.

*(All watch BERNARD as he puts the receiver to his ear, waits. A beat. He hangs up quickly.)*

**EMORY.** D.A. or B.Y.?

**COWBOY.** What?

**EMORY.** That's operator lingo. It means "doesn't answer" or "busy."

**MICHAEL.** He didn't even give it time to find out.

*(Coaxing.)*

Go ahead, Bernard. Pick up the phone and dial. You'll think of something. You know you want to call him. You know that, don't you? Well, go ahead. Your curiosity has got the best of you now. So...go on, call him.

*(A beat. BERNARD picks up the receiver, dials again. He lets it ring this time.)*

**HAROLD.** Hateful.

**BERNARD.** ...Hello?

**MICHAEL.** One point.

*(He efficiently takes note on the pad.)*

**BERNARD.** Who's speaking? Oh...Mrs. Dahlbeck.

**MICHAEL.** *(Taking note.)* One point.

**BERNARD.** ...It's Bernard – Francine's boy.

**EMORY.** Son, not boy.

**BERNARD.** ...How are you? Good. Good. Oh, just fine, thank you. Mrs. Dahlbeck...is...Peter...at home? Oh. Oh, I see.

**MICHAEL.** *(Shakes his head.)* Shhhhhiiii...

**BERNARD.** ...Oh, no. No, it's nothing important. I just wanted to...to tell him...that...to tell him... I... I...

**MICHAEL.** *(Prompting flatly.)* I love him. That I've always loved him.

**BERNARD.** ...That I was sorry to hear about him and his wife.

**MICHAEL.** No points!

**BERNARD.** ...My mother wrote me. Yes. It is. It really is. Well. Would you just tell him I called and said...that I was...just...very, very sorry to hear and I...hope...they can get everything straightened out. Yes. Yes. Well, good night. Goodbye.

*(He hangs up slowly. MICHAEL draws a definite line across his pad, makes a definite period.)*

**MICHAEL.** Two points total. Terrible. Next!

*(MICHAEL whisks the phone out of BERNARD's hands, gives it to EMORY.)*

**EMORY.** Are you all right, Bernard?

**BERNARD.** *(Almost to himself.)* Why did I call? Why did I do that?