

MARTHA. Very good, George.
GEORGE. Thank you, Martha.
MARTHA. Really good.
GEORGE. I'm glad you liked it.
MARTHA. I mean ... You did a good job ... you really fixed it.
GEORGE. Unh-hunh.
MARTHA. It's the most ... life you've shown in a long time.
GEORGE. You bring out the best in me, baby.
MARTHA. Yeah ... pigmy hunting!
GEORGE. PIGMY!
MARTHA. You're really a bastard.
GEORGE. I? I?
MARTHA. Yeah ... you.
GEORGE. Baby, if quarterback there is a pigmy, you've certainly changed your style. What are you after now ... giants?
MARTHA. You make me sick.
GEORGE. It's perfectly all right for you ... I mean, you can make up your own rules ... you can go around like a hopped-up Arab, slashing away at everything in sight, scarring up half the world if you want to. But someone else try it ... no sir!
MARTHA. You miserable ...
GEORGE. (*Mocking.*) Why baby, I did it all for you. I thought you'd like it, sweetheart ... it's sort of to your taste ... blood, carnage and all. Why, I thought you'd get all excited ... sort of heave and pant and come running at me, your melons bobbling.
MARTHA. You've really screwed up, George.
GEORGE. (*Spitting it out.*) Oh, for God's sake, Martha!
MARTHA. I mean it ... you really have.
GEORGE. (*Barely contained anger now.*) You can sit there in that chair of yours, you can sit there with the gin running out of your mouth, and you can humiliate me, you can tear me apart ... ALL NIGHT ... and that's perfectly all right ... that's OK ...
MARTHA. YOU CAN STAND IT!
GEORGE. I CANNOT STAND IT!
MARTHA. YOU CAN STAND IT!! YOU MARRIED ME FOR IT!! (*A silence.*)
GEORGE. (*Quietly.*) That is a desperately sick lie.
MARTHA. DON'T YOU KNOW IT, EVEN YET?
GEORGE. (*Shaking his head.*) Oh ... Martha.
MARTHA. My arm has gotten tired whipping you.
GEORGE. (*Stares at her in disbelief.*) You're mad.

MARTHA. For twenty-three years!

GEORGE. You're deluded ... Martha, you're deluded.

MARTHA. IT'S NOT WHAT I'VE WANTED!

GEORGE. I thought at least you were ... on to yourself. I didn't know. I ... didn't know.

MARTHA. (*Anger taking over.*) I'm on to myself.

GEORGE. (*As if she were some sort of bug.*) No ... no ... you're sick.

MARTHA. (*Rises — screams.*) I'LL SHOW YOU WHO'S SICK!

GEORGE. All right, Martha ... you're going too far.

MARTHA. (*Screams again.*) I'LL SHOW YOU WHO'S SICK.
I'LL SHOW YOU.

GEORGE. (*He shakes her.*) Stop it! (*Pushes her back in her chair.*)
Now, stop it!

MARTHA. (*Calmer.*) I'll show you who's sick. (*Calmer.*) Boy,
you're really having a field day, hunh? Well, I'm going to finish you
... before I'm through with you ...

GEORGE. ... you and the quarterback ... you both gonna finish
me...? And you'll wish you'd never mentioned our son!

MARTHA. (*Dripping contempt.*) You ...

GEORGE. Now, I said I warned you.

MARTHA. I'm impressed.

GEORGE. I warned you not to go too far.

MARTHA. I'm just beginning.

GEORGE. (*Calmly, matter-of-factly.*) I'm numbed enough now, to
be able to take you when we're alone. I don't listen to you ... or
when I *do* listen to you, I sift everything, I bring everything down
to reflex response, so I don't really *hear* you, which is the only way
to manage it.

MARTHA. Nuts!

GEORGE. Well, you can go on like that as long as you want to.
And, when you're done ...

MARTHA. Have you ever listened to your sentences, George?
Have you ever listened to the way you talk? You're so frigging ...
convoluted ... that's what you are. You talk like you were writing
one of your stupid papers.

GEORGE. I've got to find some way to really get at you.

MARTHA. You've got at me, George ... you don't have to do any-
thing. Twenty-three years of you has been quite enough. You know
what's happened, George? You want to know what's *really hap-*
pened? (*Snaps her fingers.*) It's snapped, finally ...

GEORGE. Come off it, Martha.

MARTHA. I've tried ... I've really tried.

GEORGE. (*With some awe.*) You're a monster ... you *are*.

MARTHA. I'm loud, and I'm vulgar, and I wear the pants in this house because somebody's got to, but I am *not* a monster. I am *not*.

GEORGE. You're a spoiled, self-indulgent, willful, dirty-minded, liquor-ridden ...

MARTHA. SNAP! It went snap. Look, I'm not going to try to get through to you anymore ... I'm not going to try. There was a second back there, maybe, there was a second, just a second, when I could have gotten through to you, when maybe we could have cut through all this crap.

GEORGE. I don't believe you ... I just don't believe you. There is no moment ... there is no moment anymore when we could ... come together.

MARTHA. (*Armed again.*) Well, maybe you're right, baby. You can't come together with nothing, and you're nothing! SNAP! It went snap tonight at Daddy's party. (*Dripping contempt, but there is fury and loss under it.*) I sat there at Daddy's party, and I watched you ... I watched you sitting there, and I watched the younger men around you, the men who were going to go somewhere. And I sat there and I watched you, and *you weren't there!* And it snapped! It finally snapped! And I'm going to howl it out, and I'm not going to give a damn what I do, and I'm going to make the damned biggest explosion you ever heard.

GEORGE. (*Very pointedly.*) You try it and I'll beat you at your own game.

MARTHA. (*Hopefully.*) Is that a threat, George? Hunh?

GEORGE. That's a threat, Martha.

MARTHA. (*Fake-spits at him.*) You're going to get it, baby.

GEORGE. Be careful, Martha ... I'll rip you to pieces.

MARTHA. You aren't man enough ... you haven't got the guts.

GEORGE. Total war?

MARTHA. Total. (*Silence. They both seem relieved ... elated. Nick reenters.*)

NICK. (*Brushing his hands off.*) Well ... she's ... resting.

GEORGE. (*Quietly amused at Nick's calm, off-hand manner.*) Oh?

MARTHA. Yeah? She all right?

NICK. I think so ... now. I'm ... terribly sorry ...

MARTHA. Forget about it.

GEORGE. Happens all the time around here.

NICK. She'll be all right.

MARTHA. She's lying down? You put her upstairs? On a bed?