

BINGO!
(Excerpt)

(There is a sharp knock on the front door.)

DAVID. Just a sec.

(Another knock. DAVID opens the front door. MARGARET BIP, a middle aged academic, severely coiffed and agitated, is standing outside.)

DAVID. Margaret.

MARGARET. *(entering)* I've got to talk to you, David. It's about George.

DAVID. He's on the phone. Just a sec. *(into phone)* George? She's just arrived.

MARGARET. *(grabs receiver from DAVID and brays into it)* You are boring! Do you hear me? BORING!!! *(She slams receiver down and turns to DAVID.)* Don't ask me how I am, David. I'm distraught.

DAVID. Would you care for a drink?

MARGARET. A scotch straight up, thanks. I hope I'm not imposing.

DAVID. Not at all.

MARGARET. Good. Make it a triple.

DAVID. You *are* distraught.

MARGARET. I'm wired. Would you please help me in with my bags?

DAVID. Your bags?

MARGARET. Never mind. Just deal with the scotch. *(exiting out the front door)* It was the last straw. I'm sorry, David, but there are limits. I draw the line.

DAVID. Pardon?

MARGARET. *(re-enters with two Samsonite suitcases saying --)* Now I may not be a swinger and maybe I don't wear dresses that leave nothing to the imagination unlike some people I could mention like Miss Swanson, rubbing against men in the cafeteria lineup and she thinks she's so subtle. Well I don't do that but I'm telling you, David, I am not repressed! And I am not a prude!

DAVID. Of course not.

MARGARET. Because if I was I'd mention the little trollop I passed in your driveway.

DAVID. Linda's a student.

MARGARET. Hah! I taught her last term. She chewed gum from Austen to Eliot. She's not for you, David. Trust me. She hasn't the brains of a Twinkie!

DAVID. Now just a minute, Margaret. We were discussing a sonnet. (*hands MARGARET scotch*)

MARGARET. Of course you were. Never mind. It's none of my business. But I'll tell you what *is* my business. George.

DAVID. What about George?

MARGARET. He's a pervert. And you're not to repeat that.

DAVID. George?

MARGARET. That's right. My husband. Chairman of the department. The worm in grey flannels. He's a regular 'Jeckell-Hyde'. I'm telling you, David, tonight I've been living a gothic novel. For months I'd warned him I was going to clean out his drawers if he didn't do it himself. Well he didn't so I did. On top, oh yes, on top was a structuralist analysis of Chomskian root metaphors. But underneath -- underneath was a stack of magazines with photographs of young women who ought to have known better.

DAVID. George has erotic photographs?

MARGARET. Erotic, no. Dirty, yes. I don't know about you, David, but I don't know anyone who skydives naked. It's hard to be erotic holding a pose at 20,000 feet. Especially *that* pose. Why would he want those things anyway? Am I that unattractive?

DAVID. Not at all.

MARGARET. I was deeply hurt, David. Hurt and appalled and angry and I should go now.

DAVID. You should sit down, have another drink and calm down. (*He gets another drink.*)

MARGARET. Thank you. Of course mother warned me. But would I listen? No. He was my dreamboat. My Apollo in glasses. And he quoted Milton. Well naturally he didn't have any friends. So he was mine. All mine! And on warm, moonlit nights we'd sit out under the stars and he'd hold my hand and look deep into my eyes and recite *Paradise Lost*. He was such a klutz. But I didn't care. And when we walked down that aisle and he slipped that ring on my finger and tried to kiss me through the veil, I said to myself, "This is it, Margaret. He's yours. For keeps. We're not talking a couple of hours. We're not talking a few days. We're talking *forever*." Do you know what 'forever' means, David? Well I'll tell you what it means. It means *forever*. It's an awfully long word.

DAVID. (gives her drink and sits) It's all right.

MARGARET. It's not all right. The man I married may not have been a prince but at least I thought I knew where I stood -- that my life had stability, meaning. But no. Suddenly -- poof -- he turns out to be a stranger and it's over.

DAVID. Maybe there's an explanation.

MARGARET. Those weren't research papers.

DAVID. Perhaps not. But at least talk to him. Express your concern.

MARGARET. I did. In no uncertain terms.

DAVID. What did he say?

MARGARET. He called me a prude! Can you believe it?

DAVID. He was under duress.

MARGARET. *He* was under duress?

DAVID. Yes and I'm sure he'll apologize because Margaret -- whenever I see George look at you I see a man in love.

MARGARET. YOU SEE A PERVERT!!!

DAVID. Come on, Margaret.

MARGARET. I might have known you'd take his side.

DAVID. I'm not taking sides.

MARGARET. Of course you are. He's Chairman of the Department, you're under his wing. You little proteges are all alike.

DAVID. Margaret, I like you both.

MARGARET. Hah! You like him. You hate me.

DAVID. I don't.

MARGARET. You will. Oh David, I did something terrible. Something awful. I did something God is definitely going to remember.

DAVID. What?

MARGARET. If I tell you you'll never speak to me again.

DAVID. Of course I will.

MARGARET. You won't. In fact you'll want me out. Out on the streets!

DAVID. Nonsense.

MARGARET. Well, David, when he called me a prude I got so angry I couldn't see straight. I mean *he's* got the porno and *I'm* the one with the problem??? I was absolutely livid. And all of a sudden I found myself speaking in tongues.

DAVID. Speaking in tongues?

MARGARET. English, mostly. But the things I was saying! I told him... I told him...

DAVID. What did you tell him?

MARGARET. I told him we were lovers.

DAVID. Pardon?

MARGARET. I told him we were lovers.

DAVID. You told him we were lovers???

MARGARET. I wanted to make him jealous. And guess what.

DAVID. It worked!

DAVID. But it's absurd.

MARGARET. We do have adjoining offices.

DAVID. What's that got to do with it?

MARGARET. Who cares? It was enough for George.

DAVID. He'll be coming here.

MARGARET. You want me out, don't you?

DAVID. No. I don't want you out.

MARGARET. Oh David, you're a saint!

DAVID. In fact I want you right here. Because when George arrives you're going to tell him the truth.

MARGARET. Never!

DAVID. If you don't he'll think I've betrayed him!

MARGARET. So?

DAVID. Margaret -- George got me my posting, supported my grant applications, read my manuscripts --

MARGARET. Bought your soul.

DAVID. He trusts me, Margaret. It's a question of honour.

MARGARET. Honour? You'd humiliate me and call that honour?

DAVID. Humiliate you?

MARGARET. Oh David, don't you see? If I tell him the truth I'll look like a fool. I'll have to apologize! Me! Not him! And I'm the victim, dammit! Can't you see how unfair that is?

DAVID. Unfair? This is between you and George. I want no part of it.

(knock on the door)

MARGARET. Too late.

DAVID. He's here.

MARGARET. Don't panic, David. Just think Wagner!