

UPDATE (2023) FOR "SPEAKING OF CHARLIE": Substitute pages)

ALISON: Hardly. I wouldn't have suspected that he sleeps with guys, too.

MARTHA: Not even considering the bar you met him in?

ALISON: I told you I didn't know.

MARTHA: Never?

ALISON: You don't seem too all broken up about it. But then, it's only my life; so what the hell.

MARTHA: Didn't you march during the NOW and ERA protests? What did it mean, if anything?

ALISON: That's different!

MARTHA: Isn't it always!

ALISON: That's out there—it's neutral. This is right here—in my gut. Personal. Salary levels and abortions are a far cry from having a boyfriend who's . . . *queer*.

MARTHA: Oh, yes. The polite conventions. The values that all "decent" people hold without question. The fact that abortion and poverty and wife-beating and child-molesting didn't exist until last week shouldn't cause us to question those conventions, should it? Did no one have hemorrhoids before Jimmy Carter? No drinking problem before Betty Ford?

ALISON: Well, no swingers in the White House. (ALL NEW MATERIAL FOLLOWS):

MARTHA: Really? You're very young . . .

ALISON: Are you pulling rank, or what?

Charlie—Script chg—Act II--p45-B

MARTHA: No. Only noting the surprising behavior of a prominent politician at a political convention . . . or the bold and whispered behavior of a matron once residing in the White House.

ALISON: (Dismissing) How can you know that!

MARTHA: Few secrets are really secret . . . unless for a few centuries. A fighting force of homo-sexual Greek lovers was uncovered in 1818—by accident, of course. A grave holding 127 pairs of lovers—some hand-in-hand—was wiped out in the Battle of Chaeronea, in 338 BCE. They were accepted as a human condition. Obviously, that's not a product of our "current licentious society," as the religions claim. Want more?

ALISON: If it's true.

MARTHA: I can't prove it, but according to her biographers, Wallace, Duchess of Windsor, tattled on the nobility of Europe who practiced bisexuality, as did she. Evidently, religious rules are intended for those who are willing to pay to observe them . . . and then to villify the non-believers among us.

ALISON: That can't be true . . .

MARTHA: Can't it? Because you don't want to acknowledge unwanted truths? Or, do you think you have a superior belief system, like the Religious Wrong pretend?

ALISON: (No answer.)

MARTHA: (CONTINUING): And if this problem really matters to your gut, then you'd better decide what you think about it. And act accordingly. I don't think you've thought it out..

ALISON: Queerness is quite a handicap, Mother. Why think about it?

MARTHA: "Queer," Alison? Where does it begin? Does he use the ladies' room instead of the men's? Or has he experimented once or twice? Or is he merely bisexual and so, quite ordinary . .

.according to a late 'Sixties report by Dr Kinsey It was killed because of pressure from the religions. Horrors! Don't question dogma with truth!

(PAUSE, WHILE WAITING FOR ALISON'S RESPONSE. NONE.)

Charlie—Script chg—Act II—p45-B

MARTHA: Two hundred thousand years ago, early humans needed every new body in order to survive. So any non-fertile practice was seen to cheat the small bands in a dangerous world. Now, the world is over-populated, with unwanted children who get physically and sexually abused and even abandoned. Yet, the dogma of a two thousand year-old book remains unchanged.

ALISON: You certainly make light of it—in theory, of course.

MARTHA: You needn't marry him. But a man has a whole range of faults and attributes that are more important. Does he have warmth? Character? Integrity? That's what make a man a *man*. The rest is only maleness, however polished or crude. Thurston could become a dear friend. Real friends are rare, and to be cherished.

ALISON: Bully for cool, dispassionate, third-party appraisal. But what would you say if it had happened to you?

MARTHA: About the same thing, I suppose: "What are his compensating qualities?"

GO TO:

ALISON: (p46: "You are unreal!")

(RETURN TO ORIGINAL SCRIPT, page II—p46) ("You are unreal!")