

START

BILL. Oh, no. That's okay.
NORMAN. I like talking about sex. Anything you want to know, just ask me.
BILL. Okay. I ... I do want to make sure I have this little matter clear in my mind. Chelsea and I *can* sleep together, right?
NORMAN. Yes! Please do! Just don't let Ethel catch you. *(There is the sound of footsteps on the porch steps, and Billy comes bounding in the door.)*
BILLY. Dad! I paddled a canoe! It's a boat, just like the Indians had! *(Bill stands.)*
NORMAN. Actually the Indians used a different grade of aluminum.
BILLY. Chelsea wants you to come down, Dad. She and Ethel are going skinny-dipping.
BILL. Skinny-dipping? *(He barely looks at Norman.)* Um ...
NORMAN. Go ahead. Permissiveness runs rampant up here on Golden Pond. *(Bill walks slowly to the front door. He turns.)*
BILL. Are there ever any bears around these parts?
NORMAN. Oh, sure. Black bears and grizzlies. One came along here last month and ate an old lesbian.
BILL. Uh ...
BILLY. Go on, Dad. He's bullshitting you.
BILL. Heh. *(He nods. Takes a deep breath and steps bravely out.)* God, I hope I live through the next few days. *(He exits. Norman watches Billy explore the room, picking up whatever makes him curious.)*
NORMAN. You like that word, don't you? Bullshit.
BILLY. Yeah.
NORMAN. It's a good word.
BILLY. You going skinny-dipping?
NORMAN. Nope. You?
BILLY. Naw. I try to be selective about who I flash in front of.
NORMAN. *(Not following.)* Oh?
BILLY. Chelsea says you're a real heavy-duty fisherman. She calls you The Old Man of the Sea.
NORMAN. Ah. I've caught a few. You fish?
BILLY. No.
NORMAN. Want to go sometime?
BILLY. Maybe.
NORMAN. All right. We'll see. What do you think of your father?
BILLY. To tell you the truth, he's not bad.
NORMAN. *(Watching him critically.)* Why do you walk with your

shoulders all bent like that?
BILLY. I have a lot on my mind.
NORMAN. Oh. *(He studies Billy for a moment.)* Well, what do you do out there in California, since you don't fish? I mean, what does one do for recreation, when one is thirteen and not in school?
BILLY. Cruise chicks.
NORMAN. Um...?
BILLY. Meet'em. Girls. Try to pick them up.
NORMAN. Oh. And what do you do with them when you have them?
BILLY. Suck face.
NORMAN. I beg your pardon?
BILLY. *(Explaining.)* You know. Kiss. Suck face — kiss.
NORMAN. Oh. *(He stares at Billy, then looks at the book he still holds.)* Ever read this book? *Swiss Family Robinson*?
BILLY. No.
NORMAN. Go read it.
BILLY. Now?
NORMAN. Yes. Go upstairs and read the first chapter. And give me a report tomorrow. *(He hands Billy the book.)* Go on.
BILLY. Well, I thought we were going to have a party.
NORMAN. I'll call you when the party's underway, if it ever is. Go on. Read the first chapter. You'll like it. *(Billy obeys. There's something in Norman's authority that Billy responds to, not unfavorably. He marches up the stairs.)* Let me see you stand up straight. *(Billy stops and scowls at Norman.)* Come on. Nobody has that much on his mind. *(Billy straightens.)* Ah! Very good! You should try that more often. It will make it easier to bear your heavy load.
NORMAN. *(Billy exits. Ethel comes bursting in the upstage door, fully dressed, and swatting at the moths.)* I thought you'd be nude.
ETHEL. Sorry. The water feels lovely, but I didn't want to overwhelm Chelsea's friend on his first night here. *(She comes down into the room.)* Have you been picking on him?
NORMAN. Yes. He found me fascinating. He said they want to sleep together.
ETHEL. I expected that. Well. Why not? They're big people.
NORMAN. Yes.
ETHEL. You and I did it. Didn't we?
NORMAN. Yes, I told him that.
ETHEL. *(Blushes.)* Well, you didn't have to tell him. I think I better get us some dinner together. You must be starved half to death.

END