

TOM. She's a little insecure, isn't she?
GREG. Why do you say that?
TOM. The way she checks back with you.
GREG. She loves me.
TOM. Ah.
GREG. She thinks I saved her life. I'm her knight in shining armor.
TOM. Uh-oh.
GREG. Now what's the matter?
TOM. You married?
GREG. Sure. Why?
TOM. Wife fond of Sylvia?
GREG. Not yet. Why?
TOM. Kids out of the nest?
GREG. Right. Why?
TOM. Be careful.
GREG. What do you mean?
TOM. You can get lost in it.
GREG. Oh yes?
TOM. Sure. A man and his dog. It's a big thing.
GREG. I guess it is.
TOM. Women sense it. They nose it out. My wife feels very threatened by it.
GREG. She does?
TOM. Oh God yes. And I imagine it's worse with yours.
GREG. Why?
TOM. No offense, but you're older. With older guys, it can become major.
GREG. Think so?
TOM. Oh sure. It's something to hold onto, on the way down.
GREG. Oh now.
TOM. Look, women with dogs, no problem. A dog is basically another kid to them. It's a maternal thing. But for guys, it's different. When I come home at night, I have to remind myself to kiss my wife before I say hello to Bowser.
GREG. Mmm hmm.
TOM. I even think about him at work. I keep wanting to

call him up and chew the fat. I don't think it's a gay thing, but I love that guy.

GREG. I can understand that.

TOM. And they say it's even worse if your dog's a female.

GREG. Really?

TOM. There was a guy here, had a dog named Debbie — half basset, half beagle — sweet little thing. His wife walked in on him giving Debbie a bath, and got so jealous she gave the dog away.

GREG. Christ! What did the guy do?

TOM. Sued her for damages. The judge was a dog owner and came down on his side. He said a man and his dog is a sacred relationship. What nature hath put together let no woman put asunder.

GREG. So what happened?

TOM. Well, the guy got Debbie back, and his wife back, and they all tried moving to Vermont. But it's still not good. Someone visited them recently and said it reminded him of the last chapter of *Ethan Frome*.

GREG. Good Lord.

TOM. There's a book out on the problem, actually. *Your Pooch and Your Partner*. It has one basic bit of advice. Always remember that your dog is simply a dog. Always keep reminding yourself of that fact. Not a person. Just a dog. Force yourself to think it. Otherwise you can get into deep dogshit.

GREG. Gotcha.

TOM. Well. Time to go. Better hold Sylvia so she won't follow Bowser.

GREG. Oh she won't do that.

TOM. She might. Bowser brings out the beast in them. (*He goes off. Music: something cozy and domestic, like "My Blue Heaven."** *Greg strolls off as the set becomes the apartment and Kate enters, settling at her desk.*)

GREG. (*Calling from off.*) We're home!

* See Special Note on Music and Recordings on copyright page.