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HALLY from MASTER HAROLD AND THE BOYS by Athol Fugard

HALLY: [*To the telephone*] Hello, Mom ... No, everything is okay here. Just doing my homework ... What's your news? ... You've what? ... [*Pause. He takes the receiver away his ear for a few seconds. In the course of Hally's telephone conversation, Sam and Willie discreetly position the stacked tables and chairs. Hally places the receiver back to his ear.*] Yes, I'm still here. Oh, well, I give up now. Why did you do it, Mom? ... Well, I just hope you know what you've let us in for ... [*Loudly.*] I said I hope you know what you've let us in for! It's the end of the peace and quiet we've been having. [*Softly.*] Where is he? [*Normal voice*] He can't hear us from in there. But for God's sake, Mom, what happened? I told you to be firm with him ... Then you and the nurses should have held him down, taken his crutches away ... I know only too well he's my father! ... I'm not being disrespectful, but I'm sick and tired of emptying stinking chamber pots full of phlegm and piss ... Yes, I do! When you're not there, he asks *me* to do it ... If you really want to know the truth, that's why I've got no appetite for my food ... Yes! There's a lot of things you don't know about. For your information, I still haven't got that science textbook I need. And you know why? He borrowed the money you gave me for it ... Because I didn't want to start another fight between you two ... He says that every time ... All right, Mom! [*Viciously*] Then just remember to start hiding your bag away again, because he'll be at your purse before long for money for booze. And when he's well enough to come down here, you better keep an eye on the till as well, because that is also going to develop a leak ... Then don't complain to me when he starts his old tricks ... Yes, you do. I get it from you on one side and from him on the other, and it makes life hell for me. I'm not going to be the peacemaker anymore. I'm warning you now: when the two of you start fighting again, I'm leaving home ... Mom, if you start crying, I'm going to put down the receiver ... Okay ... [*Lowering his voice to a vicious whisper*] Okay, Mom. I heard you. [*Desperate*] No ... Because I don't want to see him when I get home! Mom! ... [*Pause. When he speaks again, his tone changes completely. It is not simply pretence. We sense a genuine emotional*

*conflict*] Welcome home, chum! ... What's that? ... Don't be silly, Dad. You being home is just about the best news in the world ... I bet you are. Bloody depressing there with everybody going on about their ailments, hey! ... How you feeling? ... Good ... Here as well, pal. Coming down cats and dogs ... That's right. Just the day for a kip and a toss in your old Uncle Ned. Everything's just hunky-dory on my side, Dad

... Well, to start with, there's a nice pile of comics for you on the counter ... Yes, old Kempie brought them in. *Batman and Robin, Submariner* ... just your cup of tea ... I will ... Yes, we'll spin a few yarns tonight ... Okay, chum, see you in a little while ... No, I promise. I'll come straight home. ... [*Pause — his mother comes back on the phone.*] Mom? Okay. I'll lock up now ... What? ... Oh, the brandy ... Yes, I'll remember! ... I'll put it in my suitcase now, for God's sake. I know well enough what will happen if he doesn't get it ... [*Places a bottle of brandy on the counter.*] I was kind to him, Mom. I didn't say anything nasty! ... All right. Bye. [*End of telephone conversation. A desolate Hally doesn't move. A strained silence.*]

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