

"Now, come on, don't go all cold and sarcastic on me again. We were doing so well a minute ago."

"I hadn't noticed."

"Sure, you were laughing and everything. Really sort of loosening up, know what I mean? You were right here; you wouldn't have missed it. What's your name, really?"

"Anne."

"There, that's better. Mine's Alan."

"You told me."

"I know, but I'm running out of ideas. I did all my best stuff already."

"That was your best stuff? You're in trouble."

"Well, help me out. What kind of a person are you to leave me floundering around for something to say like this? I mean, this is really embarrassing. The least you could do is hold up your end of the discussion."

"I didn't start this ridiculous conversation—if you can even call it a conversation. I don't see why I have to take any responsibility for keeping it up."

"What kind of an attitude is that? What if everybody felt that way? What kind of a world would this be?"

"Quiet."

"Boring."

"Peaceful."

"Not necessarily. If nobody communicated with anybody else there'd be wars all the time."

"There *are* wars all the time."

"... Uh, yeah. Well. Good point. Would you—um—like me to rub some suntan oil on your shoulders?"

"No, thank you."

"Would you like to rub some on mine?"

"Not particularly."

"Look, Anne, I'm getting desperate here. Where did I go wrong? Did I come on too strong?"

"Yes."

"A little heavy on the wit and charm?"

"Hey, I like wit and charm as much as the next person, but—"

"I overdid it."

"Yes."

"It was the toes, wasn't it? I really turned you off with that stuff about your toes."

"Yes."

"It was just what you call a conversational gambit. You know, an ice-breaker. I mean, not that I don't think your toes are extremely attractive—"

"Alan—"

"All right, all right, I swear I'll never mention your toes again. From this minute on, as far as I'm concerned, your toes don't exist. It's just—well, what *should* I have said?"

"What's wrong with hello?"

"Hello? Just hello? But what about after that? What happens after I say hello?"

"Who knows? If you don't try it you'll never find out."

"All right. Here goes. But I don't think this is going to work.... Hello, Anne."

"Hello, Alan. How's the water?"

"Uh, it's very cold when you first go in, but it warms up after a while."

"A lot of things are like that, don't you think so, Alan?"

"I... I think I see what you mean."

"I felt certain you would..."