

# MANO ET MANO

By Phil Lewis

## SHORTENED **SAMPLE** VERSION

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*Approx: 6 minutes*

### Cast

**LOVER** Any age

**HUSBAND** 40+

A story of breakup.

## MANO ET MANO

(ONE MAN IS AT THE BAR, OR TABLE, THE OTHER JOINS HIM. THERE IS A FROSTY SILENCE – UNTIL....)

**LOVER:** We finally meet.

(HOLDS OUT HAND TO SHAKE. NO RESPONSE)

**HUSBAND:** I've got nothing to say to you.

**LOVER:** Okay. Fair enough. I, on the other hand have something to say to you.

**HUSBAND:** I'm not interested.

**LOVER:** Why don't we agree this. I will speak for three minutes, without interruption. You can then speak for three minutes without interruption from me. After that – let's see if either has changed our minds. How about that?

**HUSBAND:** (SHRUGS) See if I care.

**LOVER:** I'll assume that's a yes, then. Okay here we go.

You need to understand, and accept, that your wife was going to leave you anyway. No matter what. She could have run off with a local Gypsy, lothario, social worker, politician, immigrant, or....anyone. But she chose me.

I'm an honest, upstanding, reasonably intelligent and very loving single man. If I say so myself, she has chosen wisely. But the point is – she will be safe and happy with me. You at least should feel grateful for that.

**HUSBAND:** Grate.....

(HE IS SILENCED BY A HAND GESTURE FROM LOVER)

**LOVER:** Three minutes, uninterrupted. Your turn next and I promise not to interrupt. Now...I was not looking to take on a lover, wife, partner, whatever. But, she was. She wanted an out. She wanted to leave you and the lifestyle your marriage has become. You must understand – she was going to leave you anyway.

There's nothing you can do now that will persuade her otherwise. You can't use the kids as leverage, they are both about to leave home and should be capable of being independent from both of you.

Look. I don't want us to be enemies. I assume we'll never be friends, but neither should we be enemies. I'll take care of her. You need to take stock of your life and take care of yourself.

Take this change as a positive move. You've not been happy for a year or more. Time to find someone else to be your partner. Someone that can return the love and respect you say's been missing in your life.

(LOOKS AT WATCH) I think that's it.

**HUSBAND:** (AFTER A LONG PAUSE) You think I should be grateful to you! For stealing my wife? Disrupting my kids lives? Have you any idea how much this...hurts? How can we be anything BUT enemies?

(LEAVING A PAUSE LONG ENOUGH TO ENSURE HUSBAND HAS FINISHED)

**LOVER:** I'm just trying to say ..... you need to look at your situation in a different light other than anger. Accept the situation is not going to change, but you need to. Look.

(HE DRAWS A WET LINE ON THE BAR (OR TABLE) BETWEEN THEM)

First of all – happiness.

(HE MAKES A TICK ON THE HUSBAND'S SIDE OF THE LINE FOR EACH POINT).

Your wife's happier. Once you get used to it, you'll be happier. You'll have more freedom, less marital stress. You'll not be so miserable anymore. Your kids will be happier. No family rows. They'll see you both are less stressed, less unhappy.

It seems to me all the ticks are on your side of the line.

**HUSBAND:** You're talking a lot of tosh.

**LOVER:** But I am making sense. Even if you don't see that today, you will tomorrow. It's like the light at the end of the tunnel. The shorter we can make the tunnel, the sooner the light gets here. It's purely a matter of attitude.

EDITED