

# Before it Hits Home.



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Wendal, a jazz musician who has never managed to make it big, has just been diagnosed with having the AIDS virus. To a string of questioning doctors, he indignantly denies having had any sexual relations with others but by the end of the first act we see him in two simultaneous bedroom scenes, one between him and his fiancée, Simone, who is pregnant, and one between him and his male lover, Douglas, who is actually a married man and father. In these combined scenes, Wendal's denial and confusion are painfully obvious as he tries to hide the truth about his health from both of his partners; he seems especially intent to hide from Douglas the extent of his undisclosed promiscuity. In the second act, Wendal has drifted away from both Simone and Douglas, unable to sustain the lies that had been keeping his two worlds apart and in balance. He returns home to his mother and father, but upon confiding the truth to them, he is abandoned by his mother who, in a wrathful explosion of raw emotion, indicts Wendal for immorality and takes with her his teenage son from a previous marriage. Wendal's father, however, overcomes his facade of masculine pride and takes up caring for Wendal in his final days, eventually enacting a tentative reconciliation between the family members only in time for Wendal to die. The final image of the play lingers as Simone reappears, her own health and the life of her unborn child in question.