

Paperweight

Stephen McGill

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Final Draft

Cast Page:

Mateo Garcia – Late 30's. Author of very successful novels. Addict.

Tom Evans – Mid 40's. Agent with very unscrupulous practices.

Michael Tabor – Mid 20's, up and coming actor, many jobs.

Jack Reynolds – Mid 30's movie star. Biggest movie star on the planet.

Heather Anderson – Mid 40's. Executive of Mangold pictures (Warner Bros. type)

Harvey Kline – Mid 30's. Small time Agent. Works for Tom Evans.

Mirabelle Rodriguez- Early 30's. Bartender at a popular hotel. Aspiring painter.

The play takes place in a series of snippets from one year in the life's of the characters. Los Angeles, California is the setting.

Acts/ Scenes:

Act 1:

Scene 1: The Limo

Scene 2: The Hotel

Scene 3: The Bar

Intermission

Act 2:

Scene 1: The Bar Revisited

Scene 2: The Office

Scene 3: The Conversation

(Intentionally left blank)

Act 1

Scene 1

The Limo

Tom and Mateo stand on the side of a building waiting for a limousine to pick them up. Tom is visibly upset and impatient, while Mateo seems more reserved and at ease.

Tom

(looking at watch)

I told them to be here at six. This is the problem with the service industry. You tell them to be somewhere at a given time and they never show up on time.

Mateo

(Looking at watch)

It is 6:02; it is not a big deal.

Tom

It is to me. When you pay for a limo to pick you up at a certain time and they do not arrive at the time, it should be considered a big deal.

Mateo looks up and down the street.

Tom

I was really hoping to have the limo here when you got out of the center. It's almost like you can't trust people anymore. I already paid them, for all I know they could be in a crack house right now.

Mateo and Tom locks eyes and Mateo disapproves of his last comment.

Tom

Sorry.

They break eye contact and look away in awkwardness.

Mateo

I am sure it will be here soon.

Tom

I certainly hope so.

Mateo

It is not a big deal Tom. I know that your intentions were pure.

Tom

Pure as the driven snow.

Mateo and Tom locks eyes and Mateo disapproves of his last comment.

Tom
Sorry.

Mateo
It is fine. I don't want you to worry about acting a certain way around me. I am the same person. I just had to be treated for a disease.

Tom
I don't understand why people call it a disease. If you want to do drugs, then just do them. If you want to get off drugs, then just stop.

Mateo
Your simplistic point of view is always appreciated.

Tom
Thanks.

Mateo
That was not a compliment.

Tom
Are you sure?

Mateo
Pretty sure.

Tom looks up and down the road for the limo.

Tom
I feel like I want to buy a limo company just to show people about punctuality.

Mateo
What, because you're always on time? You didn't even show up for friends and family day.

Tom
I had to work and I don't get in front of the camera. That is not my game. I am more of the "behind-the-scenes guy". I thought you were the same, but you broke that pact.

Mateo
I needed the cash.

Tom
Speaking of cash; so, I got your pages from the center and I have the publisher set for a July release.

Mateo

I am glad that you got the pages. Did they make sense?

Tom

How should I know, I didn't read it, I just sent it to the publisher. (pause) Wait did you want me to read it?

Mateo

Why would I send it to you if I didn't want you to read it?

Tom

See, here is where the confusion lies. I wasn't sure if you wanted me to read it. I mean, I made a point to leave in my e-mail box in order to one day read it. Then, I thought about the fact that I had never read any of your stuff before sending it to publisher before. You see I was in a moral dilemma.

Mateo

The subject of the e-mail was "read this."

Tom

Are you sure that was the subject? Because I swear that it was something else. Like "Hey" or "Thinking of you."

Mateo

Why would I ever send you something titled "thinking of you"?

Tom

What, you never think about me? What, am I so unattractive that no one, not even you, my best friend and favorite client, could possibly use a subject line such as, "thinking of you"?

Mateo

I do not think I have ever titled an e-mail "thinking of you".

Tom

You should really think about that.

Momentary silence

Tom

Where is this limo?

Mateo

What about the advance?

Tom
What advance?

Mateo
The advance for my book?

Tom
See, this is the issue with the limo. I had this all played out in my head. We were going to be in the limo and I was going to tell you all the good news.

Mateo
I would prefer if you just told me now.

Tom
Well, you know, these kinds of things are complicated.

Mateo
So complicated that you will not tell me?

Tom
I am not sure about your mental state right now.

Mateo
(impatient) Tom, I am fine.

Tom
You say that, but I am waiting for you to fall on your face out here.

Mateo
What a good friend you are.

Tom
I have been Tough-Love Tom for the last ten years of our relationship and you never complained before.

Mateo
You were never Tough-Love Tom. Who is Tough-Love Tom?

Tom
That's me. My new character name. You are Sweet-Potato Mateo and I am Tough-Love Tom.

Mateo
This is why I am the writer and you are the agent.

Tom
Did Tough-Love Tom upset you already?

Mateo
Really?

Tom
Okay, okay. Here is the deal. I could only pull, like, twenty grand from them.

Mateo
Twenty? What about the movie option you told me about?

Tom
Movie option?

Mateo
You told me in the center that you had sold the movie rights.

Tom
Oh, I just told you that to make you feel better.

Mateo
You did sell the movie rights though?

Tom
The movie deal; that is a whole other bottle of wax.

Mateo
What does a "bottle of wax" have to do with the movie rights?

Tom
I think you get what I am saying.

Mateo
Not really.

Tom
I have published six of your novels and we have optioned three screenplays, You should understand by now that you get no money upfront. You do get one percent off the back end.

Mateo
Last time that was only ten thousand dollars! That is just not enough!

Tom

You know this is a good deal. Manchild was a terrible movie. Honestly, we should have paid the studio to make it.

Mateo

I have been back out in the real world for ten minutes and you have already disparaged my entire catalogue.

Tom

I am Tough-Love Tom now. Wait, disparaged, that's bad, right?

Mateo

Oh yeah. It is pretty awful.

Tom

Well, then maybe that *is* me.

Mateo

I just cannot be broke.

Tom

Listen, I am not your accountant and you just went to a rehab that cost ten grand a week, so you might want to figure out your next move fast.

Mateo

Wait. Wait. You are my agent. This was all your idea.

Tom

Oh, come on! I laid out the best options for you, at the time. That's what I do for you, buddy! I mean, you were really going off the deep end there. I was starting to get really worried about you. The benefit of going to rehab is that you landed a publicity deal to be on the Show and it is supposed to be a great show. The public loves a comeback story!

Let's give it to them! Think of it. This is like your own re-launch vehicle.

Mateo

(Angered)

I did not want my own re-launch vehicle, I wanted my life back. Now everyone is going to see me going through my own personal hell on the television.

Tom

You did it to yourself.

Mateo

Did what?

Tom
Put yourself in a position of need.

Mateo
I don't think you understand the big picture here. I have genius in me still. You seem to think that because I went to rehab and quit drugs and alcohol, that the gift is gone? The gift is not gone. In fact, the gift is about to rear its ugly head.

Tom
You just wrapped filming a television show called Rehab. People are either going to love you or hate you, depending on some guy in an editing room. That has nothing to do with me. That has more to do with the sensationalism that they are attempting to create. By the way, maybe that genius should learn how to stop doing lines of cocaine so he doesn't end up in rehab again.

Mateo
Is this more Tough-Love Tom?

Tom
I am just trying it out. Much like you and cocaine, three years ago. You told me that something about you didn't like it, but it smelled delicious. Just don't go to rehab again and you will have your career back.

Mateo
It is not like graduate school. It is not like you can go again and again and again.

Tom
If people planned it correctly, maybe it could be.

Mateo
How would they plan it right?

Tom
All I'm saying is, with the right procedures in place you could leave rehab with a sense of education instead of a sense of loss.

Mateo
I do not feel a sense of loss.

Tom
Oh, I think you do. Deep inside you are feeling alone and lost.

Mateo
Maybe alone, but not lost.

Tom

Oh man, are you lost! You don't even know who you are anymore. I read those letters you wrote, man...Lost.

Mateo

Those letters were meaningful to me.

Tom

Those letters were the desperate cry from your confused inner-child. Your inner-child was saying 'I'm lost.'

Mateo

You have no idea what you are talking about.

Tom

I know you lost yourself in that place.

Mateo

(quiet for a moment. Contemplating)

You told me that it was the smart thing to do and that the public would love me for it. You actually said that it was a good business move. Are you taking that back now?

Tom

I admit that the publicity we are getting from this is great, but the whole idea that you are bitching about this is just completely prosaic.

Mateo

You are using the word "prosaic" now?

Tom

It means.....

Mateo

I know what it means, Tom. I am a writer; it is my job to know what the word "prosaic" means. Prosaic, to be matter of fact or unimaginative.

Tom

Did you just look up words in the dictionary while you were in rehab?

Mateo

Are you trying to upset me?

Tom

Are you done yet?

Mateo
Done with what?

Tom
Arguing with me. I am trying to fix your terrible career and you are trying to pick a fight.

Mateo
What do you mean, "Am I done, yet"? I gave up everything for this.

Tom
You are acting a little like a wounded girl right now. Are you a woman? Do you want to stay home and cook the dinner, put it on the table only to have the man say it's garbage?
Is that you, man? Do you need to be punched around a bit?

Mateo
What is this attitude, all of a sudden? You are acting like a jackass.

Tom
I can accept that, if you can accept the fact that Manchild was terrible.

Mateo
That is fair.

Tom
Plus, I got you a meeting with the President of Mangold Films.

Mateo
They made Manchild.

Tom
So they have made some mistakes in their career. You wrote the script for it and for some reason they have a thing for your work.

Mateo
How about I get the money upfront. I am just tired of going through the motions with this.

Tom
And that is exactly why I got you the meeting. They have hinted at the fact that they might want you on the set. That means a set fee as the writer.

Mateo
How much is that?

Tom
Remember the days when you didn't ask "How much is that"? You just enjoyed it as your
bank account swelled over millions of dollars.

Mateo
That was before cocaine.

Tom
(pondering)
Oh the days before cocaine.

Mateo
Don't do that.

Tom
What?

Mateo
Make me think about when I used.

Tom
You got to think about something, sometime, someplace. So ,you used for a while. This is
Hollywood! They hand out crack to visitors as they enter the airports, here. Who cares?

Mateo
I care. I wanted to be the best novelist and I ruined it with drugs.

Tom
Drugs and whores. Don't forget the whores.

Mateo
I never slept with whores.

Tom
Oh, yeah. That was me.

Mateo
I have been married for seven years.

Tom
And there is honor in that. Meanwhile I have been divorced four times and it hurts every-
time I have a bowel movement. I mean, you have won. Accept that.

Mateo
What are you talking about?

Tom
I once read that for every ending comes a new beginning.

Mateo
What does that mean?

Tom
Well, about that.

Mateo
About what?

Tom
Kendra might have left.

Mateo
What?!

Tom
Kendra left and filed for divorce.

Mateo
(distraught)
She what?!

Tom
Left

Mateo
Kendra left?!

Tom
And filed for divorce.

Mateo
How come you didn't tell me until now?!

Tom
You were in rehab and I didn't want to mess with your deal there. You were writing away on a typewriter and I was busy hiring people to transcribe your chicken scratch, yet somehow I am the bad guy. Plus there was a writers strike. Do you know how difficult it is to get people to write something for you if there is a writers strike? No commercials, movies or television shows were being produced.

Mateo
When did she leave?

Tom
I am talking about movies and television shows and all you want to talk about is your wife?

Mateo
Tom. What happened?

Tom
It all started with the show Maxwell, you know the show about the little kid and the parents who were both Doctors but he can heal people? That was the show that started it all, they wanted to cut into scale and I came to bat for them. I told those Producers that we meant business, but they kept pushing and pushing and then bam a writer's strike.

Mateo
I am not really too concerned with the strike right now.

Tom
Well, you really shouldn't be. We re-negotiated the contracts three weeks ago and it is all water under the bridge. You know where that saying comes from? (Pondering) I believe it was the French.

Mateo
Tom.

Tom
(pause)
Okay, okay....Remember the day I dropped you off at rehab?

Mateo
Of course.

Tom
You know, you were all 'I am not leaving without my good shoes' and 'All I need is my good shoes, a handkerchief and this lamp.' Remember that?

Mateo
No.

Tom

Well she did. I mean I thought it was funny, but she left the minute you checked in to the center. That shows very little loyalty, if you ask me. So, you had a problem? Who cares, really? People have issues. I thought the way you handled going to rehab was both the funniest and most tragic thing I had ever seen.

Mateo
What?

Tom

The part about the funniest or the part about the tragic?

Mateo
Both.

Tom

I mean those are opposite emotions. It would be terribly difficult to describe them both at the same time without a blackboard and a lot of chalk.

Mateo

That is not what I mean. How could she do that to me?

Tom

Here is what we are going to do. We are going to roll with this problem and come to a solution. This is not the end of the world. This is not that big of a deal. People get divorced and it is no big deal. This is Hollywood, the home of the rich and famous. Unfortunately for you, you are neither rich nor famous. I mean you were rich until the drug problem and you were famous until.....Your drug problem. You know, I still don't get why some people in this town get a pass, but you, you wind up destitute. Did I use that word correctly?

Mateo
Yes.

Tom

Don't worry, your agent is here to make it all better. Do you want to hug?

Mateo
No.

Tom

I went my entire life attempting to dodge hugs but for some reason this year I have decided that this is the year I bring the hug back. You know why they call it a hug?
(Pondering) I believe it was the French.

Mateo
It was not the French.

Tom
All of a sudden you know things?

Mateo
My personal history doesn't go back that far but I would not trust your slanted point of view on the history of compassion.

Tom
The French are a very loving people.

Mateo
I am sure they are.

Tom
So you tell me the answers. You tell me how you plan to fix all of this? You have no wife, and very little career left. And yet, I am here for you.

Mateo
Get me one of those commercials you used to always ask me to do.

Tom
You know the tragedy to all of this is that in six months, when the show runs, you will be famous! Until then, it is going to be difficult to get you work.

Mateo
Therein lies the rub.

Tom
That, indeed, is the rub.

Mateo
So, what about a commercial? You always told me that was an easy way to make some quick cash?

Tom
That train is gone, plus we can't soil your image at this point.

Mateo
I just finished taping a show called Rehab, I am pretty sure that my image is soiled.

Tom
(Continuing)

I will look into the commercial thing but only because I don't want to find you lying in a ditch outside of my house, calling me names that you can't mention on basic cable, because I didn't put you in a commercial for deodorant. Do you know who does those kind of commercials? People who are just starting out and boxers. You know the boxers that take too many punches to the head?

Mateo
You asked me to do a commercial last year.

Tom
That was last year, this is a new time.

Mateo
You know the idea of you representing me in any fashion is frightening.

Tom
Just bring on the insults now. Is that all you have?

Mateo
I am just saying I am at a very vulnerable state and you are making it worse.

Tom
I think it was the French who.....

Mateo
No, it wasn't....

A long moment of silence passes.

Mateo
So, when is this meeting?

Tom recognizes the limo.

Tom
Right now. Here's the limo.

Mateo looks at Tom with disappointed eyes.

(Blackout and end of Scene 1, Act 1)

(Intentionally left blank)

Act 1

Scene 2

The Hotel

Tom and Mateo sit on a lounge couch with a small coffee table in front of them. The lounge is set-up with a bar on one side where Mirabelle and Michael stand waiting in Hotel attire. The lounge area has a large couch, two chairs, and a long coffee table. Tom is at ease while Mateo is nervously shaking his leg.

Tom
Could you stop doing that?

Mateo
What?

Tom
You are shaking your leg like you are being interrogated.

Mateo
Tom, I just got out of rehab.

Tom
And you are trying to get your career back in order, don't mess it up by making her think that you are coming out of an insane asylum.

Mateo
Would that be better for my career?

Tom
Probably.

Mateo stops shaking his leg and stands up and nervously chews on his nails.

Mateo
Is this better?

Tom
If you are auditioning for Chainsaw Massacre than it is perfect.

Mateo
What do you want me to do? I have all of this nervous energy and nowhere to expend it.

Tom
Just sit down and relax. You know what? Let me get you a drink.

Mateo sits down.

Mateo
I can't drink. That is a gateway.

Tom

Mateo, it is only a gateway if you let it be. Just you know (waves to bartender) we will get you something to make you feel better.

Mirabelle walks towards them from behind the bar.

Mirabelle

Hello, I am Mirabelle, I am the bar manager here. What can I get for you guys?

Tom

Vodka straight up for me, and for my nervous friend here, get him a Scotch on the rocks.

Mirabelle

(To Mateo)

Oh, you're a scotch man.

Mateo

Apparently I am today.

Mirabelle

Well, I will be right back with your drinks.

Tom

Also, get yourself something to drink as well I feel a toast coming on.

Mirabelle

Oh, some kind of special night tonight.

Tom

Today is the first day of the rest of my friend, Mateo's, life.

Mirabelle

And that equates scotch?

Tom

I think so.

Mirabelle

Sounds good. I will be right back.

Mirabelle returns to behind the bar.

Tom

So, what do you think?

Mateo

Not sure what to think. Three hours ago I was in a rehabilitation facility and now I am in a bar. It seems kind of counter-productive.

Tom

No, no. About the girl?

Mateo

Tom, you have got to be kidding. I just found out that my wife left me, three hours ago!

Tom

But, you have been single for three months. You just didn't know it. Thus an opportunity. You should ask her out.

Mateo

You have no regard for other people, do you?

Tom

I have high regard for others, as long as they are contributing, either directly or indirectly, to my client's well being.

Mateo

What am I doing here?

Tom

You are here to jump start your career and make the next step in your life.

Momentary silence. Mateo nervously taps his leg. Tom looks at him and shakes his head. Mateo stops as if her were shamed by a parent. Mirabelle walks back to the table/ lounge and hands the drinks to Mateo and Tom. She carries a drink in her hand that is in a long flute. Tom raises his glass and Mateo and Mirabelle raise theirs as well.

Tom

Well, here we are. Thanks to Mateo and his gift of the language.

Mirabelle

Wait, Mateo Garcia?

Tom

We don't normally use full names in toasts, but, to my best friend and favorite client, Mateo Garcia.

Mirabelle

Wait, (point to Mateo) You are Mateo Garcia?

Mateo
I used to be.

Tom
Don't let him be modest.

Mirabelle
What does 'I used to be' mean?

Mateo
Life is really confusing now.

Tom
There is still greatness in there somewhere, I hope.

Mirabelle
When I was in college, your book Manchild was my favorite.

Tom
That seems to be the one that everyone likes but man it was a terrible movie.

Mateo
I really appreciate that.

Tom
You do know he wrote other books. Like Playing Soldier and The Forgotten Dream.

Mirabelle
Those were excellent as well. I am really just in awe. You know I work here and there are a lot of actors and directors that walk in. Usually they are not as impressive as their work is but with a writer it is all about the vision that is shown with the words.

Tom
So, with all that said to Mateo.

Mirabelle
The short story that you wrote about the runaway in Tucson was amazing.

Mateo
Thank-you.

Tom
So, with all that said.

Mirabelle

I would love to be able to just buy you a cup of coffee at some point and ask you about.... You know I just have a lot of questions about your work habit and.....

Tom

I am trying to make a toast here.

Mirabelle

Oh, okay.

Tom

So, to Mateo and his many talents.

Tom

To Mateo.

Mirabelle

To Mateo.

Mirabelle, Tom and Mateo drink out of their glasses. Mateo and Tom put their glasses back on the table and Mirabelle returns to behind the bar.

Tom

You see? People still like you.

Tom and Mateo sit in silence.

Mateo

Is he or she ever going to get here? I mean I have a life to try and pull back together here.

Tom

A.) You don't really have a life to pull back together and B.) She is a she, she is the best bet we have and I think you might want to take this a little more seriously.

Mateo

Take it seriously? You have got to be kidding me. I am here attempting to mend my career and you are going to tell me I need to take it more seriously, huh?

Heather Anderson, a thin blond woman, walks into the lounge and towards the table that Mateo and Tom are sitting at.

Heather

I can only assume that you two have been chatting each others' ears off by now.

Tom and Mateo stand up and shake hands with Heather. They all sit back down with Heather sitting on Toms' side so they can both stare at Mateo.

Mateo
We have met before right?

Heather
I am the President of Mangold films.

Tom
He knows he is just messing with you.

Heather
I know. Mateo and I go way back.

Tom
This should be good. How far back is that?

Mateo
Far back enough that the stories have become more fictionalized than truth.

Tom
But the truth will set you free.

Mateo
(sarcasm)
I wonder where you got that from?

Tom
Oh, don't call plagiarism on me, friend.

Mateo
Why would I? You already own my soul.

Heather
What just happened here? Am I in the middle of a lover's spat?

Mateo
Probably.

Heather pulls out a cigarette; she does not light it and continues her conversation.

Heather
I believe it was what 1994, we were both in the audition room for a pilot called.....Oh
don't worry Tom this was way before you.

Tom

I am not worried. Do I look worried? No worry over here. I do want to talk business eventually.

Heather

Anyway, Mateo and I are in the same audition. He is there to read for something like the Uncle and I am there to read for the Aunt. It was a little strange, but in the scene we were like this married couple. Although, the pilot was about the kid more than anything. So the Uncle and Aunt were just some bull part to allow the kid to have some sort of semblance of family. In the script we are suppose to kiss and we had never met before,. The Casting director told us that we did not have to do the kissing scene and to not even worry about it. So, we are reading through it, and this is way before Mateo decided to be a big, famous novelist, and I get to start an up and coming Production company. Which by the way, "Manchild" nearly bankrupt. The first movie I Produce and it loses a lot of money. I mean what was I thinking? Great book, lousy film.

(Pause)

Ok, so we are in this scene and we just look at each other and start making out like crazy. I mean we are feeling each other up and getting wild. So the Casting director yells cut and without hesitation...

A waiter (Michael) walks by the table. He is wearing an appropriate uniform with tie; he stops at the table after he notices that Heather has a cigarette in her hand.

Michael

Excuse me, ma'am. There is no smoking in this restaurant.

Heather

Can you not see that I am in the middle of a story? I am telling my friend here, Tom, that Mateo and I, you know Mateo Garcia the famous author and Tom.....

(Pause)

You know, Tom, I always forget your last name.

Tom

Evans

Heather

(Continuing)

Thanks Tom. Mr. Evans here is very upset by you ruining my story about when Mateo and I made out like a couple of school children. Do you think I could continue my story without you bothering me?

Michael

Ma'am it is just that there is no smoking and.....

Heather

It's not even lit! But, if you want to take away from me that one joy I have in life, then go on and take it.

The waiter looks confused.

Heather

Take it! Take it before I change my mind.

Michael

Come on ma'am, I just can't.

Heather

I am telling you that I want you to take the love of my life out of my hand. Are you man enough?

Michael looks around the restaurant and then nervously takes the cigarette out of Heather's hand.

Heather

Tell Bill the owner that you bothered me and see what he says.

Michael leaves to help other tables. He is ashamed and embarrassed. Mateo pulls out a sugar packet, opens it, and with a credit card, sorts the sugar into lines, similar to lines of cocaine. He snorts one line up and then looks up, smiling.

Tom

Oh Mateo, what are you doing?

Heather

At least it is not the real stuff.

Mateo

I am an addict and difficult situations make me tense.

Tom

Snorting up sugar is not the way.

Mateo

It gets me through the day.

Tom

Through the day? You should be seizing the day! You should be breathing in the air and saying, I am a better man than I was yesterday and I will be a better man tomorrow.

Mateo
But I won't.

Tom
You are telling me, in front of Heather, that you, Mateo, will not be better tomorrow than today?

Mateo
That is what I am telling you.

Tom
I don't know if you realize this or not but you were just snorting sugar.

Mateo
Yes, but it was not cocaine.

Tom
I don't think that is the point.

Heather
I have to agree with Mateo on this one.

Tom
You are out of your mind. How is snorting sugar better than main lining cocaine?

Heather
I am pretty sure that if you asked someone on the street they would say.....

Tom
We should ask someone.

Mateo
You cannot just ask someone if cocaine is better to snort than sugar. You would have to word it something like 'Hey, how are you today? My name is Bill and I have no affiliation whatsoever to Tom Evans, famous Hollywood agent, and I want to ask you a completely unbiased question based solely on wonderment. Cocaine or sugar?'

Heather
I tell you what, Mateo; I understand what you are going through. I mean I was right there with you. Now, I only do prescription stuff from a doctor. That is how I justify it; I mean at least it is from a doctor right?

Tom
This is awful.

Mateo snorts another line.

Heather

So anyways back to my story, we are making out and feeling each other up when, bam he calls cut and we walk away to not see each other for another three years. I wanted to see him again because I thought he was a good kisser and I thought he was handsome. The next time I see him is at a book release party and he is now this famous writer.

Mateo

You missed the best part.

Heather

Oh yes, after they said cut, we both said “TADA”

(Blackout of side-stage with Heather, Mateo and Tom. Light up of side of stage with Michael and Mirabelle)

Mirabelle

Did you know that Mateo Garcia is sitting over there?

Michael

Who is Mateo Garcia?

Mirabelle

Remember that movie Manchild?

Michael

I love that movie.

Mirabelle

Well, he wrote the book.

Michael

I don't really read books.

Mirabelle

But you do understand that before a film is made that the words are written down on paper and sometimes the stories are taken from books.

Michael

Of course. Everyone knows that.

Mirabelle

My apologies, from your comment before I figured I was speaking to a seven year old.

Michael

I am only seven on the inside. I am all man on the outside.

Mirabelle

I don't know why I let you speak to me like that.

Michael

If we weren't related you would probably not let me.

Mirabelle

That is it; you are my least favorite relative from now on.

Michael

I am the only relative you live near and we live together.

Mirabelle

Not by choice. You told me you needed six months and it has been four years.

Michael

I like to think of it as an extended visit.

Mirabelle

You know how hard it is to work with you and live with you.

Michael

It is difficult to hear my awesome thoughts when you are always talking.

Mirabelle

Awesome thoughts? Yesterday you told me that you had an audition for a cat commercial but all you did was watch a marathon of Real Housewives.

Michael

That is a great show.

Mirabelle

What happened to the audition?

Michael

My manager called and told me that they were re-casting it with all females.

Mirabelle

You mean our neighbor Bill.

Michael

Don't get mad at me because Bill is my manager.

Mirabelle

Bill is an unemployed trust fund baby.

Michael

I would love to be an unemployed trust fund baby.

Mirabelle

You see that is where the problem is.

Michael

I don't see a problem.

Mirabelle

What has he put you in or sent you out to audition for?

Michael

These things take time.

Mirabelle

Michael you have been at this for four years and you haven't done anything. Why don't you go and try to get on the extra's listing?

Michael

Come on. I played that game for three months and I got tired of it. All I did was play cards and tell stories about who I would sleep with when I became famous.

Mirabelle

At least you were on movie sets.

Michael

I got kicked off of two for looking at Julia Rogers.

Mirabelle

I still don't believe that story.

Michael

Something to do with her finding her character. Something about distracting her.

Mirabelle

What did you do?

Michael

She couldn't handle being around my awesomeness.

Mirabelle
Is that even a word?

Michael
If it isn't it should be.

Mirabelle
I hope that Jack Reynolds doesn't come back here.

Michael
What is your issue with Jack Reynolds; he is only the biggest movie star on the planet.

Mirabelle
He hits on me every time he is here. It is getting old.

Michael
He always tips you well.

Mirabelle
That is because he is trying to stop me from suing him for sexual harassment.

Michael
It must be difficult having girls throw themselves at you.

Mirabelle
You are just as bad as he is aren't you?

Michael
I can't even imagine having girls throw themselves at me.

Mirabelle
You do fine.

Michael
I could always do better.

Mirabelle
I am beginning to think that all men are like you.

Michael
When was the last time you had someone in your life?

Mirabelle
I have Buddy.

Michael
Buddy is your cat.

Mirabelle
All I need is Buddy.

Michael
I know how long it has been, I was just seeing if you would tell me.

Mirabelle
It has been at least two years.

Michael
I think it might be closer to three.

Mirabelle
Two, three what is the difference?

Michael
Twelve months.

Mirabelle
I live a very fulfilling life.

Michael
All you do is work and paint. Is that a fulfilling life?

Mirabelle
I also read. When was the last time you read something?

Michael
Do comic books count?

(Blackout of side-stage with Michael and Mirabelle. Light up of side of stage with Heather, Mateo and Tom)

Jack Reynolds enters lounge wearing sunglasses and an overcoat.

Jack
I would not recommend going out there. There are paparazzi everywhere.

Jack removes Jacket and places it on an empty chair.

Jack

You three. I mean no offense but you have nothing to worry about.

Heather

And I give you the star of the movie Jack Reynolds.

Jack

No need for applause. I am only here for the catering. Oh, and an Oscar.

Heather

Jack here has won three Oscars.

Jack

But who is counting right? I mean after the first one people are like ‘oh, this guy again.’
But I do appreciate the love from my fans. (looking around) I do like this bar though. I
have never been here before.

Tom

Mateo has a fan. The waitress Mirabelle over there.

Jack

(To Mateo)

Isn't it exhausting? I mean you give and you give. (pause) Maybe I have been here before
that girl loves me. I have been meaning to....

Heather

Jack.

Jack

Yes ma'am, Jack Reynolds reporting for duty (half hearted salute)

Heather

Jack I was wondering what you thought of the script that I sent you?

Jack

Well, I must be honest with you. I don't really read the scripts but my assistant Richard
read it and told me that I would be a fool to not consider the part of Marlo.

Heather

He means Mateo

Jack

Are you sure? Because he told me (puzzled) Mario, Marlo, Michael, Martin.....

Heather
Mateo.

Jack
Yes, that might be it.

Heather
So I want to introduce you to the writer of the screenplay Mateo Garcia.

Mateo and Jack shake hands.

Jack
You are Mateo also. I have never heard of this name before and now today. I hear it twice.

Heather
Mateo wrote the story based on his own life experience with drugs.

Jack
Wow. This just blows my mind. So you are the kind of guy who just lays it all out there?

Mateo
I suppose I am.

Jack
Well, I can certainly respect that.

Heather
Mateo has a lot of respectable qualities. Isn't that right?

Mateo
I try.

Heather
Oh, you do more than try. You know Mateo and I have known each other for a long time.

Jack
Really? I would ask how long but I don't really care.

Tom
I respect honesty. Tom Evans, I am Mateo's Agent.

Tom and Jack shake hands.

Jack

I didn't know this was an agent thing. I can call mine and he can be here in ten minutes. You know that is the funny thing about grossing three billion dollars at the box office, you can get your agent anywhere you want in ten minutes.

Heather

No, no, this is more of an informal meeting. We aren't signing papers or making promises here. This is more of a meet and greet. We wanted to gauge your interest in our project.

Jack

I think I should at least call.

Heather

You could call or you could just take a seat and see where it goes.

Jack

Well you do make a convincing argument.

Tom

Arguments are supposed to be convincing that is what makes them interesting.

Jack

Okay. Tom is it? I am starting to not like you.

Heather

Jack, there is no reason to get upset about all of this.

Jack

I am not upset. You know I am just blindsided by all of the people here and the meeting and I didn't get to bring my agent and I have all of these people outside trying to take my photograph.

Tom

Let me get you a drink.

Tom waves toward Mirabelle.

(Blackout and end of Scene 2, Act 1)

(Intentionally left blank)

Act 1

Scene 3

The Bar

Michael stands alone behind the bar. Jack sits on a stool next to the bar.

Jack
Yes, I am Jack Reynolds. I know you were wondering.

Michael
I know who you are sir.

Michael pours a scotch in glass and hands it to Jack.

Michael
I also know what you drink.

Jack
(to drink)
Oh how tempting the poison we are.

Michael
Sir?

Jack
Oh, I am just enjoying the relationship between the beverage and I. Sometimes it is the little things that make me happy.

Michael
I am sure it is sir.

Jack
You know...What is your name?

Michael
My name is Michael; I have been here for four years working with my sister.

Jack
Michael, I asked you for your name and you gave me a brief bio. Is that something you do often?

Michael
No.

Jack
Well, now that we have established what you don't do often let's move on to a brighter topic. Michael, I want you to know that I am just like you.

Michael
What do you mean?

Jack

Well, have you ever had that dream where you are looking deeply into a beautiful woman's eyes and she is staring back at you in full committed infatuation?

Michael

Yes.

Jack

I live that every day, but you dream it. You see the connection we have?

Michael

Can I pour you another drink?

Jack downs his drink and then hands the glass to Michael. Mirabelle enters the room and finds her way to behind the bar.

Michael

You see, I am under the impression that as long as the studio is paying for this after party I should keep your glasses full.

Michael hands the glass back to Jack.

Jack

I like your style Michael. I appreciate a man who knows.....

Jack stops mid sentence to realize that Mirabelle has entered the room.

Jack

Do you want to go home with me tonight?

Mirabelle

No thanks.

Jack

No? No one says no to me.

Mirabelle

I have said 'no' to you roughly two hundred times and four times tonight so far.

Jack

Oh, you are a woman that I will someday enjoy the nectar of.

Mirabelle

I am pretty sure you won't.

Jack
You don't know. I am heartbroken and you don't seem to care.

Mirabelle
Who broke your heart this time?

Jack
Oh, it was the sweet angel on the set. I thought that it was true love but....You know she kind of looked like you, that might have been why I was so into her.

Mirabelle
Well, that is a shame isn't it.

Jack
You do know who I am right?

Mirabelle
Of course I do and as much as it pains me to keep saying no to you I will continue to say no to you.

Jack
You see you are one of the few women who have ever said no to me and it only makes me more determined to win your affection.

Mirabelle
I have had the same boyfriend for the last six months.

Jack
Who is this man that you speak of?

Mirabelle
You know the guy who wrote the movie you were just in?

Jack
Mateo? I played him in the movie.

Mirabelle
Oh, but he is better in real life.

Jack
I have three Academy Awards. I am pretty sure that I could fool you.

Mirabelle
You obviously don't have a lack of ego.

Jack

You see some people see it as ego and others see it as exactly proportional amount of confidence.

Mirabelle

I see it as ego.

Jack

I have a broken heart though. You wouldn't shy away from a man so broken would you?

Mirabelle

You tell me that same story every time you are in here.

Jack

Oh, but this time it is true.

Mirabelle

I don't believe you.

Jack

You would think that after all of the times I have told you that you would believe me at least once.

Mirabelle

And why should I believe you this time?

Jack

Because my movie wrapped today and I am a man without a script. I am here wounded for you.

Mirabelle

You are hardly wounded.

Jack

My lady I swear that my sincerity is real.

Mirabelle

While I highly doubt your sincerity I do appreciate your candor.

Jack

I am not lying about the broken heart. I do have a broken heart.

Mirabelle

I am sure that you do.

Mirabelle loads a tray full of assorted beverages and exits. Once Mirabelle exits Jack leans towards Michael.

Jack

So I open the trailer naked with a bow around, you know my.....

Michael

Your member.

Jack

Ok, lets go with member....So I feel this heat between us, because we have these love scenes together and because of the method, I am a little involved in the story and the character and what the character would do.....

Michael

So what happened?

Jack

So I am in the character and it encompasses my being, I am in deep, I sleep and breathe Mateo Garcia, I live this guy I am this guy and this woman is Mateo's wife.....

Michael

Ok so you are into the character, you are walking, talking and being this man.

Jack

No you don't get it, I no longer exist. Mateo exists; I am just the vessel for the character to come out of me. Well, one day I am naked with only a bow tie on my member as you put it, and I am not shy because this is my, Mateo's wife and I feel comfortable with it, so the day the movie wrapped.

Michael

Didn't the movie wrap yesterday?

Jack

It may have.

Michael

So this all happened yesterday?

Jack

What are you trying to say?

Michael

The way you talk about it, you make it sound like it was years ago and it was something like twelve hours ago.

Jack
Can I finish my story or should I stop talking?

Michael
No, go on.

Jack
Veronica, that is her name, well the actress, her name is Veronica, the character is Renee,
(to self)

Should I call her Renee or Veronica?

Okay so I go to her trailer and I am in my outfit, I imagine opening her trailer door and she looking at me and the two of us making passionate love together, I imagine her response, I imagine her looking at me and telling me how she has been waiting for this her whole life and I am all she has ever wanted. You see in the back of my mind I know I am Jack Reynolds the actor, but I feel like I am Mateo, it was a very confusing time for me, I was Mateo but I was conscience that I was there also. I saw what I was doing but I really didn't know what I was doing, because I was passionate about love and I knew she loved me.

(Pause)

I open the door and she is on the phone with her agent, Producer, boyfriend, girlfriend who really knows, she is half in wardrobe and half in her home clothes, you know because it is the end of the day. She looks up at me and her face drops. I stare her right into her soul drop my pants and yell "Supersex"

Michael
Did she ask for the soup?

Jack
(Pause)

No she called security and I was escorted off of the set, I was told that I was done filming so there was no point in me staying, people I loved turned on me because of this one thing, people looked at me like I was a freak, I just wanted to prove my love to her. I was so convinced that she and I should be together, not the me and her in front of you, the characters, the characters on screen. I was lost.

Michael
So what are you going to do?

Jack
(To self)
I think I am done.

Michael
What do you mean?

Jack
I am going to leave this town.

Michael
From one incident?

Jack
I lost who I am, I could not disconnect myself from the character, I lost it. Do you know what it is like to lose it and not know how to control it?

Michael
No, not really.

Jack
You don't do you? You will never understand.

Michael
What?

Jack
I could not control me, I was just the vessel. I have to quit.

Michael
(Shock)
You are one of the best actors in town.

Jack
It has nothing to do with acting. I represent a clothes hanger who reads lines.

Michael
You have success and real ability to share your gift with the world.

Jack
I am just a guy, I am just a man who is giving it all up, and it will never be as good as it was, it will never just be you and the audience.

(Pause)
You know I used to do theater.

Michael
Why did you stop?

Jack
I always thought that you go to Hollywood and become a movie star.
(Pause)
I suppose I was wrong.

Michael
I moved here from Seattle.

Jack
Why did you move?
(Pause)
Why did you move?

Michael
Opportunity.

Jack
Opportunity is why you get in trouble, why do you think there are serial killers out there?
Opportunity. You can take a bit of opportunity and the ability to pretend and you wind up
hacking people to death.

Michael
You are way too intense for me.

Jack
You could be great kid. You could be a winner if you just were in the right place at the
right time, you see people want to have it handed to them every day. Everyone wants to
think that they are special. Everyone wants to suck on the teet but no one does the real
work. No one pounds the pavement. You know what pounding the pavement means?

Michael
I really have no idea what you are talking about.

Jack
I am talking about marrying the idea of being an actor. You take your headshot to every
single Producer in town and you say 'here I am' You tell him that if he doesn't like you
now wait six months until your craft has been perfected. You find anything and
everything that you can act in, if it is community theater or a multi-million dollar
production, you make yourself known. You light that stage on fire like you own it. You
take that small opportunity and make it bigger and bigger until one day it is your name on
the marquee and someone is asking you how to become the next star. (pause) so what are
you really here for?

Michael
I am here to be an actor, just like you.

Jack
You want to be an actor like me?

Michael

Well not exactly like you but.....

Jack

(Shocked)

Like me? Like me huh? Let me tell you about my life, I have been divorced twice. I have been adored by people who I do not know who call me by my characters name, my characters name. My name is Jack, I am not Tom Kelly or Walter Jenkins. These were characters I played.

(Pause)

You know that every person I meet knows me already?

Michael

What do you mean?

Jack

What I am telling you is that every day, I am thrust in the homes of people who think they know who I am so all my relationships are ruined. I meet a pretty girl, she doesn't want to love me or be with me, she wants to be with the movie star. I am not even a real person anymore, I am a product.

Michael

A product that makes you very wealthy.

Jack

Money cannot buy you happiness.

Michael

It can buy you joy until happiness comes along right.

Jack

What are you talking about?

Michael

You are a multi-millionaire, I made twenty grand last year and you are going to tell me that it is so bad to be rich and famous. I guess you can look down to the poor people in life. I find it surprising that you need to try and impress me with your talk about acting, how it is so difficult to have money and to have people love you for just being on the television or the big screen.

Jack

Listen, it is not all puppy dogs and rainbows on this side of the bar. If you are a bartender or a movie star it is all the same, it is all part of the problem.

Michael

Are you talking about communism now?

Jack

No, no, listen I am just saying that we are both the same, we are both on the same plane flying to the same destination.

Michael

What does that mean?

Long pause.

Jack

I will pay you money to go back to Seattle and do plays, how much do you think it would cost me to do that for you? You see I have the money, I have the money to do this and if I can save one soul, then I have done something good for society.

Michael

I don't want to go back to Seattle; I am here to make it.

Jack

Make it? Do you want to be an Actor or a movie star, because there is a difference, there is a big-big difference, you want to be a movie star, you can blow Jim Marcus, he is here you know, oh of course you know you have been feeding him Jack and coke all night, you know that is a real drink, you drink Jack and Coke you are a real man, I mean anyone but Marcus, he is an jerk, he is the jerk who told me to leave the set today and then only a few hours later at the cast party.....This cast party, it is like nothing happened, all is forgiven, well all is not forgiven in my book. I am not a person who forgets, my third grade teacher was Miss Dawes. I remember everything. What was my point? Okay, acting in one corner and movie star in the next. If you want to be an actor go back to Seattle and do local theater, this is Los Angeles, there is no art here, it is all ass kissing lunches and meetings about how much you love each other's work. Let me tell you a story.

Michael hands Jack a drink.

Jack

Thanks. So a famous actor once told me that I should go back to Miami, that is where I am from Miami. Last time I was in Miami I got the key to the city, why would you give some actor key to the city? Just because I played a character in some movie? This actor told me and this guy was extremely famous. (Pause) He said the Denver Philharmonic orchestra was flying to some gig and these guys spend many months away from their families, I mean most of these guys are single because they spend so much time with their craft. They are married to playing their instruments, so they whole orchestra is on a plane and the plane has to take an emergency exit in some small town between Denver and Chicago, why they were flying to Chicago, I will never know, so they make this

landing in the middle of some city and they get a rental car and it is pouring rain, I mean really pissing on them and they are soaked, it is cold and they are shivering, anyways they all get to this hotel and end out in this bar, flute player is there, the drummer, the piccolo, and all of that nonsense, anyways they are at this bar after this horrible day of traveling and in the bar, I suppose the bar was like a bar slash restaurant, because in the corner there is a family sitting there smiling at each other and there is the young boy with his Mother and father, they all look like they are having so much fun. Just happy people right? Happy people who are just together and they have the family thing going; it is all smiles and giggles. That old story. So all of the musicians are looking at this and looking at themselves, I mean they are wet and really just in some city where they don't know anyone and none of them have families. There is a few moments of silence between these guys, I mean there is dead silence. The musicians are just (whisper) quiet. Finally the percussionists says "Screw that" and the other musicians as an orchestra would all say "Fuck them" together as if it is a song in unison "Fuck them" You know why they said that?

Michael
Why?

Jack

Because the family chooses to be mediocre while the musicians are creating. This family has chosen to have little Billy, or Suzie, while these guys, these artist get to be part of something big every-day, they get to create, everyday they wake up and get to be the part while Billy and Suzie are the same every-day, just like actors, actors get to play different things every-day, movie stars are themselves with a bunch of special effects, it is isn't acting anymore. If you want acting go back to Seattle, if you want truth go back to Seattle, if you want to be an arrogant movie star then you are at the right place.....

Jack looks around the room.

Jack

Some of the best movies are made when people, actors, forget about their agent, publicist, hair and makeup team and life coach, which is the newest Hollywood trend. On my payroll alone, I have enough people to start a sports team. I am who I am because I have at least ten people working for me.

Michael

It's not that I want to make it big, it is just that I want to work on characters that...

Jack

When you are a movie star it is all gone. The characters have been clouded by explosions on the screen. Do you think the average person sitting in the theater gives a crap if you are from Chicago or Denver?

Michael
What do you mean?

Jack
The more successful you get the less important the acting is and the more important the explosion is. You know that Hollywood as an industry has script doctors who add in more sex and violence. I mean what ever happened to writing a moving story that people can relate to?

Michael
I guess it is gone.

Jack
It is gone man. It has been replaced with big time action stars and explosions man.

Michael
So how do we?

Jack
Listen.....Shhh, shh.....Listen.....You hear that?

Michael
Hear what?

Jack
(Pause)
That sound.

Michael
(Shocked)
What are you talking about?

Jack
That is the sound of all of the people who really care about me.

(Blackout and end of Scene 3, Act 1)

INTERMISSION

(Intentionally left blank)

Act 2

Scene 1

The Bar Revisited

A continuation of the previous scene.

Jack

There is this economics term. It is called the law of diminishing returns. It states that no matter how much input you place into any one system, the output would be the same thus people only care about the output not the sheer volume of input.

Michael

I am sure that people care about you.

Jack

What my agent, my ex-wife, my publicist, my managers?

Michael

Sure

Jack

They all live off of me.

Michael

That can't be true.

Jack

Oh, I assure you that it is true and what makes it worse is that I let them. I ask them to be in my life and then I pay them to be in my life. That is a pretty good relationship on their side isn't it?

Michael

I suppose.

Jack

You suppose?

Michael

I suppose that if you are emotionally satisfied living a life where you have become a source of wealth than that can happen.

Jack

I need a re-fill.

Michael takes the glass, re-fills it and hands it back to Jack.

Jack

Did you know, and I am a bit of a history buff. Although, I still don't know why they call it history buff. They should call it how the world works and why your future is going to be terrible. I mean it is not like.....

(gathering himself)

Ok, in 1966 Muhammad Ali, who was the heavyweight champion at the time, decided that he did not want to be in the Army due to some draft issue.

So he gets banned from the boxing in 1967 and all of his friends leave him. They all just go away. Poof they are gone, but when he is re-instated in 1970, everyone comes back

Jack (Continues)

because they are all leaches. That is what my life is like. If I moved on to something else and stopped making films, I would have no one. They are all just leaches waiting for the scraps I leave them. I am more alone with success than I ever was without it.

Michael

I don't think that is really the case.

Jack

I am telling you it is. I would much rather do.....

(Pause)

In high school there was this exercise that I think everyone does it, you know it is like one of those.....

(Air quotes)

If you could do anything, and I mean any profession and not have to worry about the amount of money you were paid, if all that was already taken care of and you could do anything for the fun of just doing it.

Jack downs the remainder of his drink. Michael refills the drink with a bottle at the table.

Michael

So, what would you have done?

Jack

I would have been a nurse.

Michael

Like a male nurse?

Jack

Yes, there is nothing wrong with that. You help people and are like a liaison for the doctor, you are sort of like a flight attendant for the sick.

Michael

You can still do that?

Jack

I can't be a nurse now.

Michael

You have the money to do whatever you want; you can move to a different place and live

out your dreams. You could do whatever you want. You could just get a job with little to no real responsibility.

Jack
I am trained for nothing.

Michael
I am sure that you could go to school to learn how to do something.

Jack
I am thirty-five; I can cry on cue, I am not sure there are a whole lot of jobs that involve hitting your mark with make-up on and crying on cue.

Michael
Maybe a clown.

Jack
Yeah maybe or maybe I just move to some far away land without paparazzi and live a totally boring and uninspired life where I wait to die.

Michael
I just don't get it man.

Jack
Objection counselor.
(Pause)
Sustained.

Michael
What are you talking about?

Jack
I am talking about the pain man.

Michael
The pain?

Jack
I am talking about moving on.

Michael
Like running away from everything right?

Jack
More like running towards the light.

Michael

Are you sad or depressed? Something like that?

Jack

It is not that I am sad or depressed, or that I am going to tear up over here. I am not going to commit to doing something without thoughtfully thinking it over first. I don't just jump into things without already wrapping my mind around all of the choices in front of me. I am saying that I have become one of those people. You know one of the people who looks down on unsuccessful people and feels bad for them.

Michael

You feel bad for me?

Jack

I feel nothing for you man, the fact that we are having this conversation is actually me doing a favor for you and it really shouldn't be that way. I shouldn't feel this contempt and disregard for other people.

Michael

You have lost your connection with the rest of the world. Is that what you are trying to say?

Jack

I am trying to say that I am as flawed as you are, yet for some reason I look down on you. I look at you and think that you are not as good as I am. I am on billboards and you are working at the bar. This bar where you wait for people to give you money for their poison.

Michael

Wait. Do you pity me?

A long pause.

Jack

(Beat)

Pity is such a strong word.

Michael

What word would you use?

Jack

I suppose it comes down to feeling sorry for you.

Michael

I have a decent life; there is no reason to feel sorry for me.

Jack

You just don't get it. It is more of a pain that I feel for you for wanting what I clearly don't want.

Michael

By why don't you want it?

Jack

The exact reason you do want it.

Michael

I want it for the fame and the success.

Jack

Those are two opposing forces. You see you can be successful building a chair. You know you wake up and look at a piece of wood and say 'I am going to make something out of that.' I look at words on paper and say I am going to make something out of that, it is no different. I create a character out of thin air, just like a skill crafted chair maker builds out of pine or birch. (pause) I really have no idea how chairs are made.

Michael

I am sure that they are no longer made from hand.

Jack

You are missing the point entirely. I want you to understand that success is in your head. You can live and breathe success every day, you can wake up one morning and decide that on that particular day you are going to run outside or go to the park. I, on the other hand look outside my window and hope for a member of the paparazzi to fall out of the tree that they climbed to get a snap shot of me from across the street.

Michael

Why can't you just go outside, give them their photographs and move on?

Jack

Because it never ends. They follow me and they take pictures of me all the time. If I have dinner with anyone I am getting married to them or I am having an affair. If I am having a bad hair day they might report that I am wearing a wig on my head. It is an awful way to live life. Have you ever seen the movie The Wall?

Michael

About the guy who shaved off his eyebrows?

Jack

It is about a bit more than that but.....It goes back to my original question. You need to know if you want to be an artist or a movie star.

Michael

I don't see how those have to be mutually exclusive.

Jack

You are either for the art or for the wealth. Because wealth spoils the art but art never spoils the wealth. In fact art is the wealth if you play it right.

Michael

I just think that you are going through a dark period in your life.

Jack

I have no excuse.

Michael

I will tell you this much, there is no way that I will have anything to do with this bull.

Michael walks back to the table from behind the bar; he brings the bottle of scotch with him. He sits down opens the bottle and fills up both Jack and his glass.

Michael

I think a little scotch will do wonders.

Jack

Do you even hear what I am saying?

Michael

I do.

Jack

No, I don't think that you are listening to me.

Michael

What would give you that impression?

Jack

Well, the fact that you are day dreaming while I am speaking. Your generation is full of day dreamers but no one that wants to actually do the work.

Michael

I am at work now.

Jack

Life is pain and I want you to know that every day I feel as though I am getting punched in the face.

Michael

You know there are bigger problems to have than being too famous.

Jack

There are many problems that I see with the world. This is not how I wanted it to turn out when it all began.

Michael

So how did it all begin?

Jack

You know I was in a play off Broadway. When I say 'off Broadway' I mean community theater. And I auditioned probably six or seven times to get this role. I was fat and lazy. I was less about the art and more about the being involved in an activity that women were in. I have always been the kind of guy who chases women, your sister included. So I finally got the part.

Michael pours Jack another drink and hands it to him.

Jack

Suddenly it is show time and I am feeling the real nerves of the show. I have my entire family at the show. I can feel them looking at me. I don't feel the character in me yet. I don't feel that distance between me personally and the character that I am playing. I feel as if it is me on stage. I am standing at the side of the stage waiting to enter the scene and I look at Roger Stockett, who might be a genius, he is in the scene before me and I am staring at him, I am just drowning in his talent and the stage hand is waiting for me to enter the scene, in fact she is behind me pushing me on stage, but I didn't want to go on stage. I just wanted to watch Roger Stockett act. I just wanted to see more of his character. I knew all of his lines but he delivered them like as if... You know it was as if I was in a trance and he was controlling it. I was overwhelmed by his beauty and the effortlessness that was being shown. From that moment forward I pushed and pushed to find the character. That was when it was real.

Michael

And it is not real now?

Jack

The relationships I have are the same ones I had in High School.

Michael

Isn't that the standard though?

Jack
How to figure that?

Michael
We have established ground rules for the way that people interact with each other, they use the place us all in the same groups that they did in High School. You have the jocks, the nerds, the guys with a motorcycle, the drama nerds, it is all the same.

Jack
Maybe it shouldn't be.

Michael
If this was a quality of life based society we would have less divorce but that is just the way it is. People emulate the interactions that they see in the movies and base their entire lives on it.

Jack
Is that what you see?

Michael
That is what everyone sees. You think that people don't look up to you do you?

Jack
Of course they do.

Michael
They want to be like the character that you represent, not the person that you truly are. If you showed who your truly were no one would respect you.

Jack
Of course they would.

Michael re-fills Jack's drink.

Michael
You think that people want to take pictures with you because you are a humanitarian?

Jack
You don't understand how this game is played.

Michael
I do know that I moved out here to be an actor and you have ruined that with your fake tan and pearly white teeth.

Jack
You have no idea.

Michael
Oh, I think I do. I think that the you that you showed up in Los Angeles with is not the you that stands now in front of me. You no longer respect yourself. So here is what is going to happen. You are going to finish your drink and leave this bar. Shortly following that I am going to walk out of this bar and move back to Seattle to have a real life. More specifically to never have to deal with another movie star clown such as yourself; you ruin everything you touch due to your own narcissism.

Jack
As long as the results are the same, I don't care how you came to the conclusion.

Michael
As well you shouldn't.

Jack
And we should celebrate that decision!

Michael
It is a decision that is not to be celebrated. It is an ultimate realization that you should have figured out a long time ago. There is no creativity here.

Jack
Pour me another drink. I have saved another confused soul.

Michael
Do you really think you saved me?

Jack
More than anyone saved me.

Michael
You have terrible friends then.

Jack
I think I mentioned that before.

(Blackout and end of Scene 1, Act 2)

(Intentionally left blank)

Act 2

Scene 2

The Office

Tom Evans sits behind a large desk with a phone on the table. He is reading files and looking around seemingly day dreaming, he looks around for at least a full minute before the scene opens.

Tom
Harvey!!!! Come in here.

Harvey
What is all the screaming about?

Tom
Harvey, I have a very important job for you.

Harvey
Really? What is it? Do you want me to sign someone really important?

Tom
No Harvey, what I have for you is a very special to me. It would be a huge personal favor to me.

Harvey
What is it?

Tom
Well you see Harvey, all of this talk about movies and books and meetings has got me thinking. I mean what is my legacy Harvey? What have am I going to hand down to my kids besides bad genes and borderline obsession with parallel lines.

Harvey
What?

Tom
You see at some point of a man's life he looks at himself in the mirror and says is that all I have to give? Have I given enough of myself today?

Harvey
I try to not look into mirrors they freak me out.

Tom
Is it the reflection of your own shortcomings or is the reflection of your personal failure?

Harvey
I am pretty sure it is my receding hairline.

Tom

Aren't you supposed to be an Agent? You should probably take care of that.

Harvey

I will, I will. It is just hard to get an appointment and I am not sure that surgery is right for me....

Tom

Silence. (pause) Harvey, this moment we are having here. I have to be honest I want to hear more about me and less about you.

Harvey

So like every conversation we have ever had?

Tom

More or less.

Harvey

More not less.

Tom

Harvey

Harvey

Yes

Tom

I have something very important to share with you.

Harvey

You have been saying that.

Tom

Harvey I want to share my life story with you.

Harvey

I feel like I have to vomit now.

Tom

What?

Harvey

I get really nauseous when I get anxious.

Harvey

Really?

Tom
Now don't make me regret telling you this.

Harvey
Why would you regret it?

Tom
I am telling you Harvey I want to share my life story with you.

Harvey
Why?

Tom
You shouldn't be asking why.

Harvey
You do realize that I am a partner and that is more of a secretary's job right?

Tom
That is why it is so special. Plus you are only a junior partner and I have seen your sort through garbage. I mean really Harvey that is not your job.

Harvey
I was looking for my retainer.

Tom
Harvey you are well into your 30's you should not have a retainer.

Harvey
Sometimes my teeth feel like they are crowding each other and it makes me feel self-conscious.

Tom
You would think that that hairline would make you feel more self-conscious.

Harvey
Well, I have tried to change shampoos but they never....

Tom
Harvey, remember this is about me now.

Harvey
Of course, you were going to share your life story with me.

Tom
I was but now I am feeling a big indifferent to the entire thing.

Harvey
You were so excited a minute ago.

Tom
Now I am less excited about it and more concerned about your overall attitude about it.

Harvey
You called me in here and I came running in as if there was a fire in here, but I don't see a fire.

Tom
What if there was a fire. Would you have saved me?

Harvey
Only because I would want to protect the firm.

Tom
Ha, so you are concerned for my well being.

Harvey
I am a partner and all.

Tom
Junior partner. You have a blue badge, I have an orange badge.

Harvey
You keep mentioning that but I think the blue badge looks better.

Tom
Harvey, remember this is not about you.

Harvey
It does match my tie.

Tom
So, when I signed my first client I was twenty-three or twenty-four. I remember that Clinton was President and I watched a lot of those debates with my girlfriend Kate. Kate was a wild woman, she always spoke with her lips and not her mouth which made me.....Are you not writing this down?

Harvey
I am a partner.

Tom

Harvey these are valuable lessons you can learn. I am talking about sharing experiences with you that I have not shared with my own therapist.

Harvey

You have a therapist?

Tom

I call her Miss Rose, although her name is Violet or Shannon, something exotic. We talk about my travels throughout the amazon.

Harvey

You never go on vacation though.

Tom

It is Freudian therapy; very dream orientated.

Harvey

You talk to your therapist about your dreams?

Tom

I dream a lot, I am a man that is not bound by earthly possessions or the lands that surround me. I am a restless soul who constantly seeks out new adventure either imaginary or not.

Harvey

I would open your book with that. "Either imaginary or not."

Tom

You can't open a book like that; you have to use happy words like "in the beginning" or "Once upon a time." Yes that is how we will begin my story. In the beginning there was time and space and the Agency of Evans Anderson Jenkins and Kline.

Harvey

That is really an awful way to start a book.

Tom

What do you know plus I still don't see you writing anything down.

Harvey

Maybe you should think about what you want to write about and then call me back in your office.

Tom

Now that is a good way to start the book. It starts with me calling you into my office to start writing and then it morphs into the story of me walking in on my sister with her boyfriend.

Harvey

And why would that be interesting to a reader?

Tom

Because what they were doing is illegal in ten States.

Harvey

Wow.

Tom

Oh, but who am I to judge?

Harvey

I am pretty sure that you as a judge would not work out.

Tom

I would be a terrific judge. I would look fantastic in a robe. Sometimes, I just walk around the house in a robe and I feel empowered.

Harvey

Are we talking a tv judge like Judge Judy or one of those judges on the Supreme Court?

Tom

This is your problem Harvey.

Harvey

You have listed many problems that I have so far. I might not be able to emotionally take any more.

Tom

You need to have a thick skin in this business.

Harvey

My skin is amazing. I moisturize all the time.

Tom

Really?

Harvey

My skin is soft and.....

Tom
Just admit that it is a disaster already.

The phone rings and Tom answers it on the third ring waiting each long ring with baited breath as if the third ring was special.

Tom
Hello? (pause) Yes. (pause) Well, let him in.

Tom hangs up the receiver and looks at Harvey.

Harvey
So who was it?

Tom
It looks like Mateo is here and he wants to talk about his career. I mean his film just wrapped and already he wants to discuss more projects. I certainly hope he brought pages this time.

Harvey
He didn't last time and all he wanted to talk about was some waitress he had met.

Mateo enters the room

Tom
Mateo, how wonderful it is to see you.

Tom and Harvey stand to shake Mateo's hand.

Tom
You know we were just talking about you. How your career is really taking off again. Plus with all that nasty divorce stuff and she wanted money and you had to make a deal for the house and then she wanted future earnings but.....

Harvey
You know he probably doesn't want to discuss all of that right now. I mean do you Mateo?

Mateo
No, not really.

Tom
So what is on your mind my friend?

Mateo
Well you know how I have always held you in the highest esteem right?

Tom
I would hope that at this point that you could at least call me friend.

Mateo
Tom, I have known you my entire career.

Harvey
That is not really saying that you like him at all though.

Tom
Harvey let him speak.

Mateo
I just wanted to tell you before it got out in the tabloids.

Harvey
Wait... Have you been using again?

Tom
Harvey.

Harvey
I know you were thinking it.

Mateo
So, I think I am met someone.

Harvey
Oh that is great news!

Tom
Wait, why are you concerned with meeting someone?

Mateo
I am not, it just happened.

Tom
Well, why did you let it happen?

Harvey
I don't think you can control that kind of thing.

Tom
You can control everything, it takes total commitment though.

Harvey
He is not talking about a job he is talking about love.

Tom
Wait do you love this girl?

Mateo
It is a little early to think about it in those terms.

Tom
How is it going to affect your work?

Harvey
Oh, I don't think it will.

Tom
Who asked you?

Harvey
No one but that never stopped me before. I think it is going to change his life in a good way.

Tom
I have seen too many people walk through those doors and tell me that their world is changing. That change has ruined them.

Harvey
Why did it ruin them?

Tom
It is the way that the world works. You are successful why would you want it to change?

Mateo
I am not really that successful.

Tom
That is because you keep trying to change things.

Harvey
I am excited for him, meeting someone to care about is important.

Tom
Making money is more important.

Harvey
Not as important as an intimate connection to another human being.

Tom
No one needs that.

Mateo
I do.

Tom
I just have some concerns Mateo. I mean it has only been six months since you got out of rehab. The wounds are still fresh.

Mateo
Tom, you know I really don't have family to tell so I want you to at least pretend that you are happy about this.

Tom
I am happy for you but I have some concerns. Any mental health professional would tell you that a year just isn't enough time plus you have a career to worry about.

Mateo
Tom, I have thought about this and decided that it was right.

Tom
How much thinking did you really do?

Mateo
I filled three journals worth.

Tom
But was it that sad 9th grade poetry kind of writing.

Mateo
Come on Tom I am serious.

Tom
I am too with the hearts and doodles.

Mateo
There were a few doodles.

Harvey
Well I am happy to hear this news.

Tom
Nobody cares if you are happy or not you are a junior partner. The only reason you're on the stationary is because your father bought your way in.

Harvey
That is not...okay, it is true...but, I...

Tom
Have a receding hairline.

Mateo
I just wanted to tell you about it and see if it meant anything to you.

Tom
That is a little soon, don't you think?

Mateo
You see that is what is great about it; I am just so caught up in love that I don't think about time anymore.

Tom
Is that why we are not getting pages from you?

Mateo
I just handed in 400 pages for my next novel.

Tom
Is it called "I love 'random girl's name'?"

Mateo
Her name is Mirabelle.

Tom
(pondering)
Where do I know that name from?

Harvey
Sounds like a waitress name.

Tom
Yes, she was the waitress at the bar.

Mateo
She isn't a waitress, she is a cocktail waitress.

Tom
That one extra word makes it all better.

Mateo
Sometimes the simplest words can make it seem classier.

Tom
Mateo, you can't spend time with a waitress. You are a successful writer and you have this movie and that tv show you were on.

Mateo
She is great and I have dated actresses before, they have nothing to say.

Tom
Than change the conversation to something that they are interested in.

Mateo
I have no idea what they would be interested in.

Tom
Have you tried talking to them about anorexia or bulimia?

Harvey
I have.

Tom
No one asked you Harvey.

Harvey
No one had to.

Tom
I think I just thought of my second chapter to my book.

Harvey
I am still not going to write it down.

Tom
So what is your new book called?

Mateo
The greatest Empire ever sold.

Harvey
I like that name. That is catchy. Little t-shirts with little plots of land on them.

Tom
T-shirts? Really?

Harvey
I think in design and you think in people. That is why I have more facebook friends than
you.

Mateo
This played out completely differently in my head.

Tom
It always does.

(Blackout and end of Scene 2, Act 2)

(Intentionally left blank)

Act 2

Scene 3

The Conversation

Living room at Mirabelle's house. Mateo stands in front of a tie rack and Mirabelle stares into a mirror fixing her makeup. A long pause as Mateo looks between three or four different ties, measuring their length and color. Mirabelle smiles and then frowns towards the mirror. She briefly looks over at Mateo and then looks back into the mirror. Mirabelle is in a dress and Mateo is in a suit.

Mirabelle

You can't wear that jacket to the premiere.

Mateo

Why not?

Mirabelle

It looks like you are going bowling.

Mateo

This is my bowling jacket.

Mirabelle

If you are suggesting that a bowling jacket is proper attire for a movie premiere than I will be supportive.

Mateo

That is all I have ever wanted.

Mirabelle

The jacket or the support?

Mateo

Probably both.

A long pause as Mateo continues to look at ties and Mirabelle adjusts her dress.

Mirabelle

We should be leaving soon.

Mateo

We are waiting.

Mirabelle

What are we waiting for?

Mateo

Tom is supposed to be taking us.

Mirabelle

I don't understand why Tom would take us to the premiere.

Mateo

Tom picked me up from rehab and promised to take me to the premiere if we ever got the movie made.

Mirabelle

I don't understand the relationship you have with him.

Mateo

He is kind of like my big brother. I have known him for longer than I can remember.

Mirabelle

It must be nice to have someone in your life like that.

Mateo

You have your brother.

Mirabelle

I did. He moved two months ago. He just came home one night and told me that he had to move to Seattle to start his life.

Mateo

I wonder what prompted him to do that?

Mirabelle

Something about a conversation with some movie star. He said he wanted to seize the day. He kept repeating Carpe Diem over and over again.

Mateo

Well, maybe he will find himself.

Mirabelle

I sure hope so. I worry about him.

Mateo

I worry about a lot of things in life. I worry from the moment I wake up until the moment I fall asleep and then when I finally get to sleep I worry about not being able to wake up.

Mirabelle

Have you mentioned this to your therapist?

Mateo

It is weird that I tell you everything.

Mirabelle

It isn't weird. This is how relationships are supposed to work.

Mateo

No relationship I have ever been in.

Mirabelle

Maybe that is why they have never worked.

Mateo removes his tie.

Mateo

What if I just went without a tie? I mean ties are really not very hip.

Mirabelle

I have never heard you concerning yourself with hip.

Mateo

Everyone wants to be hip just some people hide it better than others.

Mirabelle

There are more ties on the rack just try another one.

Mateo

This entire conversation is making me uneasy.

Mirabelle

It might be the tie.

Mateo

I think the tie is fine. I am more concerned about seeing my own story on the big screen.

Mirabelle

It will be fine.

Mateo

How do you know?

Mirabelle

Jack Reynolds has never been in a movie that was unsuccessful.

Mateo

That just means that he is due.

Mirabelle
What a defeatist attitude.

Mateo
I am just in touch with reality.

Mirabelle
Is this how you are going to be all night?

Mateo
No, at one point I will get tired thus grumpy.

Mirabelle
I don't know if I can handle you grumpy.

Mateo
Hold on. I have an idea.

Mateo grabs a notepad and scribbles on it.

Mirabelle
You always have these fancy ideas at the worst times.

Mateo
When inspiration comes the wise man seizes it.

Mirabelle
I hope it doesn't take too long.

Mateo
It takes as long as it takes.

Mateo continues to scribble on the page. The doorbell rings. Mirabelle exits the room to get the door and returns with Heather.

Mirabelle
Look who decided to join us?

Heather
That jacket looks terrible on you Mateo.

Mirabelle
That is what I have been telling him.

Heather

Well at least one of you has some taste in this house.

Mirabelle

I told him that it looks as though he is going bowling.

Heather

That is a spot on critique.

Mirabelle

I am glad that you agree.

Mateo feverously scribbles on the notepad.

Heather

Mateo, I come to you with some rather odd information.

Mirabelle

What is it?

Heather

Mateo?

Mateo looks up from the notepad.

Mateo

Yes?

Heather

I am afraid I have some very grim news to report. It seems as though character actor Jack Reynolds has decided that drinking and pontificating are no longer his favorite sports.

Mateo looks back down on his notepad completely concentrating on his writing and away from the people in the room.

Mateo

Who died?

Mirabelle

Wait did someone die?

Heather

I am sure that someone in the greater Los Angeles area did die but.....

Mateo

I am more concerned with the written word than with whatever news you have.

Heather

Mateo, are you being dismissive?

Mirabelle

He gets this way when he is into what he is working on.

Heather

What is he working on?

Mirabelle

I never know.

Mateo

It is of no concern until it is done.

Mirabelle

Don't mind him Heather. What kind of news do you have?

Heather

Yes, I did come here for a reason didn't I?

Mirabelle

I do that all the time.

Heather

What do you mean?

Mirabelle

Forget the reason behind my motivation.

Heather

Yes, yes..... Well, apparently last night Jack was at a bar telling a young man about leaving Los Angeles and the young man decided to beat him up and rob him.

Mirabelle

That is terrible.

Heather

Jack Reynolds is presently in the hospital in a coma.

Mirabelle

So what does that mean for the premiere?

Heather

Well, unfortunately the show must go on. We are just going to have to tell people that everything is fine.

Mirabelle

But everything isn't fine.

Heather

Where did you find her Mateo? She is cute.

Mateo

The art beats out the movie star every time.

Mirabelle

That is a terrible thing to say.

Heather

For every movie star that steps away there are a hundred more waiting to take their place.

Mateo

So what happens now?

Heather

Well the first thing you need to do is change that jacket.

Mateo

I am not changing the jacket.

Heather

Well at least wear a bag over your head.

Mirabelle

That is awful.

Heather

Not as awful as that jacket.

Mateo

The jacket is a choice.

Heather

Yeah, a terrible choice.

Mirabelle
It will be fine. We will just go and everything will be fine.

Mateo
Or will it?

Heather
The word will get around.

Mateo
What word.

Mirabelle
Choice.

Mateo
Are we talking about the jacket again?

Mirabelle
I certainly hope not.

Mateo
Do you think he is going to pull through?

Heather
I certainly hope not.

(Blackout and end of Scene 2, Act 3)

Curtain.