

**THE PLAYWRITING EXPERIENCE**

A Major Qualifying Report:

Submitted to the Faculty

of the

WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of Bachelor of Science

by

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Date: April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2006

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## **Abstract**

Playwriting is a much art as science. When playwriting, research and analysis oftentimes are just as critical as creative inspiration. Successful playwrights communicate their ideas effectively in their desired style. My play “Edge of the Map” is successful because of all the work creatively and intellectually that I put into the piece. By understanding what approaches worked best for many playwrights, I was able to learn through educated trial and error what would work for me. In doing so, I wrote my full length play, “Edge of the Map,” along with 5 one act plays.

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## The Process in Playwriting

*Reading plays as well as the playwrights' thoughts on them, in addition to playwriting in general, gives an objective view to the subject. Below are the digested thoughts of a dozen playwrights on the subject of playwriting.*

In playwriting, the only thing which matters is the product; the words that come from the actors' mouths. The process that each playwright uses to achieve that product can vary wildly. Some playwrights follow a specific structure to create a play with a well defined plot arcs. Other playwrights write free from and are often surprised at what they even type. However this is not to say that playwriting is easy or that it lacks in process.

Yes, how each playwright goes from idea to product is unique, but there are invariable similarities. A playwright, first and foremost must write. An idea in the head can never be fleshed out. Some playwrights start by outlining the plot, but many dive right into writing. The act of writing is itself a process. The common phrase is "Playwrights write because they must." In order to get the play from your head to the paper you must write. When writing it's important to remember that writing is a process of discovery. Christopher Durang reflected that, when writing his play *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All*, as he was writing it he didn't know one of his characters had a gun until they pulled it out. As the playwright writes they create characters. Characters can be argued to be the most important part of a play. If you have a character with a point of view you can easily write a monologue. Two characters with opposing points of view, as David Mamet says, is what you need for a play. If you don't have characters with opposing view points, why are you even writing?

Given characters, a plotline, and a bunch of pages in front of you, you either have a play or something resembling one. Each playwright usually has to put the tuning fork to his play first to see if it's getting the message across that he wants, be it social, political, or emotional. When the playwright feels he is telling the story he wants told he can do a number of things at this point. One logical next step would be to hold a reading of it. Having several people sit around a table and read through it can help a playwright hear what sounds right and wrong. From there they will go back and start doing rewrites.

What may look free form is a necessary process that varies from playwright to playwright and also play to play. A playwright writing a historical piece from another country would structure and write a play differently than that same playwright writing a piece set here and now.

The play is the medium by which the playwright communicates his ideas with the audience. As such, it must be altered until it says what the playwright desires. The playwright cannot be married to their play. It is constantly in flux and you must be willing to change aspects of it, in order to truly say what you desire.

## ***A Personal Perspective on Playwriting***

### **Approaching Writing**

The first thing to do when playwriting is write. Don't sit down and think about a brilliant idea. Don't try and get the whole storyline plotted out. Don't worry about intricacies of language as you're writing. Just write; go. The magic of playwriting revolves around the naturalism of speech. You as one person are writing for multiple characters in various contexts. In order for this to be natural you must write almost stream of consciousness. If you do not do so the dialogue will often end up stilted.

The first page I wrote when sitting down to write this play is the still first page of the play. While fairly uninteresting, it identified in the characters desires and conflicts. Most of the initial sections flowed straight out from my head to my fingers and were easy and natural to write. I could see the characters in my head and the banter that they were having and I was just writing it down. This created natural speech between characters.

The most important thing about these initial scenes is the act of writing them. Even if you throw them away later, they will teach you about the play in your head; the pacing, the characters, the environment, the relationships. It's all about you learning what's there. Once you know what you have to work with you'll be able to write more focused and productively without much effort.

My most prolific sections are approximately 25 pages long which I could write in only a few hours. The characters were taking and interacting, which made it easy to write. Other times I would sit for hours and struggle to get a page or two. The quality of the prolific sections is not necessarily higher or lower than the arduous sections.

## Breaking Through The Wall

With rare exception, most playwrights are unable to write an entire play in essentially one sitting. Eventually you will get “tapped out.” The characters will get to a plot point where you’re not sure what they’re doing, or for whatever reason you’re unsure of the next thing to write. It isn’t coming easily.

The next sections I attempted to write, after my initial expositional meeting-the-characters scenes, were either flashbacks or plot oriented. I found this difficult. It’s like my characters wouldn’t speak to me any more. For the sake of the plot arc, I had to force out certain sections. Once I had done this, it was like the floodgates opened up again and my characters were communicating again.

Some of the initial characterizations are not as clear on paper as they were in my head. This requires pulling back and rewriting. Looking at it from an outside perspective as to how the play should sound was the hardest part of the process thus far. I cannot connect as naturally with the story or character so at this point my play is constricted. The characters have their relationships and motivations but there are no central plot arcs or conflicts developed.

In addition to these plot-moving techniques, I also abandoned the play entirely for several weeks. In this time, I went on a shockingly prolific burst and wrote five one act plays which I’ve included in Appendix C. These plays were invaluable to learning about playwriting for me. In my main MQP play I learned that my style of writing was to have characters in my head and to have them start talking and essentially record the dialogue. Having now working with these same characters for several months, I found it a refreshing break to come up with completely new and unrelated characters and have them interact. Similarly to *Edge of the Map*, the first page of “Shot in the Heart” was the first

page I wrote. I knew in my mind I had these two characters and the type of conversation they were having that day. From there it evolved to a conflict between them; which became the central plot for the play. This play ended up just over 30 pages. From here I hit another prolific phase with my MQP play, *Edge of the Map*. The main thing I learned with these plays is the ability to break through my wall of stagnancy by writing about something different, and the ability to have a newly completed work in front of me to analyze for completion and clarity.

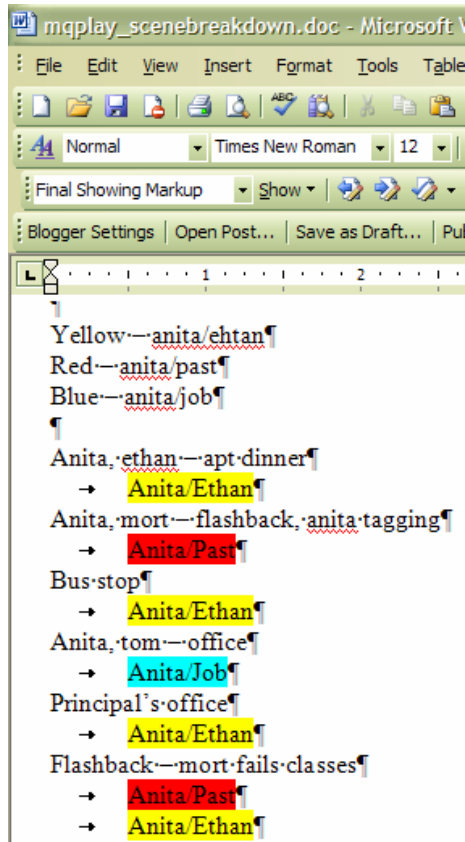
## **Making Sense**

The most important thing I've found when writing a play is staying true to your characters. What is the truth to the scene? If you're forcing the characters to talk or are forcing a plot point then it sounds contrived. And the characters won't be acting true to themselves. It will come back at you later because what you will have forced will be out of character.

They say "write what you know" for good reason. Even with doing research on the 1980's I found it exceedingly difficult to write that in a style that would communicate that. Being able to write characters in the present day, is natural and easy to write. The biggest issue was avoiding making things sound over done. I wanted it to sound like just a group of college kids in the 80's, not an overdone caricature of the same scene. I don't think that those scenes came out particularly well. I would have had more and had them be more of a focus of the story, but I couldn't get my head around writing that way, so there are fewer than I originally imagined. It's a very fine line between dialogue now and dialogue then.



For my play I went through and created a document (see Appendix A) which lists each scene. Then I color coded each scene by plotline.



**Figure 1 - Color Coded Scene Breakdown**

This made it easy, at a glance to analyze the play as a whole. How does each plotline evolve, how does each character evolve? Is it balanced throughout the play, with each plotline giving and taking the focus? While this seems rigidly structured on paper, to an audience watching the play, this will ensure that it flows well and makes sense when they see the final product.

# Edge of the Map

a play  
by

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## ***CAST***

Anita – Sardonic late 30s environmental law consultant

Ethan – 13 year old graffiti artist, son of Anita

Colleen – Anita’s friend, of similar age

Ron – Anita’s ex-husband

Mortimer – Anita’s ex boyfriend/environmental activist partner

Tom – Colleen’s ex and Anita’s co-worker

Jody – overactive PTA lady

Morgenstern – school principal

Beth – Anita’s secretary

Ryan – Ethan’s friend, who’s a year or so older. Described in Act 2, Scene 6.

Description should be altered to match actor and costume.

## ***CAST divided by actor:***

3F, 3M

Anita

Ethan

Ryan/Mortimer

Tom/Ron

Colleen

Jody/Morgenstern/Beth/Cop

Much of the dialogue should be delivered rapped, quickly bounding from one line to the next, sometimes overlapping. Appropriate sound/light/costume/set changes should be made to signify flashbacks.

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## **ACT I**

### **Scene 1: Kitchen table, Anita and Ethan's apartment**

ANITA

So how was your day?

ETHAN

Fine.

ANITA

Do anything interesting?

ETHAN

Not particularly.

ANITA

I heard you and your father went for a hike yesterday.

ETHAN

Uh huh.

ANITA

That sounds like fun.

ETHAN

(cleaning up from dinner)

If you like waking up before dawn, tripping through a forest then sitting in a car for four hours to come back to the suburbs.

ANITA

I don't know why he moved up to Maine.

ETHAN

Whole lotta nothing.

ANITA

How is your father?

ETHAN

If you were here yesterday afternoon when we came in you could have asked him.

ANITA

You know I have late meetings at the firm most days.

ETHAN

Can I be excused?

ANITA

Have you done your homework?

ETHAN

Yeah. Can I be excused? (gets up and starts to leave)

ANITA

Just make sure you do your homework, Ethan.

(ETHAN exits. ANITA stays at kitchen table)

Fuck.

## **Scene 2: Flashback to Anita in the 80s in her dorm.**

MORTIMER

(entering, handing a joint to ANITA)

I just did the homework for Kessler's class. It was a doozie Anita. I hope you enjoyed your night last night because doing all that work today is going to suck.

ANITA

Oh Mortimer you're so transparent. You're just jealous I didn't take you last night.

MORTIMER

You can do whatever you want with your time.

ANITA

Uh huh.

MORTIMER

Although I made dinner last night and you weren't here.

ANITA

Aww thanks mom.

MORTIMER

And I'm the one who brought up going.

ANITA

You're right. I'm sorry. It's just I thought about it and I wanted to go alone. Less likely to get caught. I felt suspicious enough going into Spags with you to buy the paint.

MORTIMER

You could have at least told me you were leaving.

ANITA

Jeez Mort listen to you. You're acting like we're married! We're not even dating.

MORTIMER

Not anymore.

ANITA

We wanted it this way.

MORTIMER

One of us did.

ANITA

We're roommates in college Mort. Dating could end up miserable.

MORTIMER

So says you.

ANITA

Mortie.

MORTIMER

I'm going to my room. Let me know if you need help with the homework. And you might want to change your clothes. You've still got paint on you.

### **Scene 3: The bus stop and bus.**

ANITA is standing popping bubble wrap and chewing bubble gum. Enter JODY, combination Stepford Wives/soccer mom

JODY

Well, hello Anita. It's been a long time.

ANITA

Oh, hi, yes, um, hey there, hi, how are you?

JODY

I'm doing quite well. Harold is out with Cody for the afternoon at his karate class. I'm just waiting to pick up Tessa and take her to her tap class. Thanks for asking. I don't normally see you here waiting for Ethan. What a lovely change.

ANITA

Yeah no afternoon meetings with clients today. Besides Ethan just got back from spending spring break with his father, so I...

JODY

Oh I understand. Tessa and her father had a tennis doubles tournament this past weekend. They came in first, but I couldn't be there because Cody had a boy scout retreat luncheon for den mothers. What's a modern mother to do? (laughs)

ANITA

Yeah it's real tough.

(lights change)

RYAN

So. What're you listening to?

ETHAN

It's that new Bing Bong Brothers song.

RYAN

Never heard of it.

(pause)

So I heard you went out tagging last night.

ETHAN

Keep it down.

RYAN

Without me.

ETHAN

Yeah I was just trying to think by myself, you know.



RYAN

Dude, I need to get out of the house too.

ETHAN

I swear I don't even know who my parents are nowadays.

RYAN

My mom was all up on my case about cleaning my room.

ETHAN

We used to be a one happy family now we're just three fucked up people.

RYAN

And don't get me started on what my parole officer said.

(lights change)

JODY

You should come to the PTA meeting this week. There's a band field trip, so they'll be many parents missing, and it's my duty as vice president to keep the numbers up up up.

ANITA

(the bus pulls up)

No, I've got a bunch of dinner meetings with clients this evening, maybe next time...

JODY

Ah, well yes I know. The burden of the career woman. I mean, as a professional executive homemaker, I don't know directly, I'm not that presumptuous. Ah the bus is coming. Won't waste any of your time. Here's a flyer about the meeting. Hope you can come.

ANITA

Er, thanks.

(ETHAN and RYAN enter)

JODY

Hello boys.

RYAN

Hey Mrs. Bradford

ETHAN

Mrs. Bradford, Tessa had an 'emergency chess club meeting.' She was hoping you could pick her up at school at 3.

JODY

Sigh. I swear I should buy my kids cell phones some times. Hope to see you Thursday, Anita!  
(exits)

ETHAN

What are you doing here?

ANITA

Nice to see you too. Hello Ryan.

RYAN

Hey, Mrs. Darrow. I'll see you later Ethan. We'll hang out. I'll call you!  
(exits)

ANITA

Ryan should come over for dinner some night.

ETHAN

Break out the fine china.

ANITA

Ethan, your friends should feel welcome in our home.

ETHAN

We're not that close.

(lights change, now in ANITA and ETHAN's kitchen/apartment)

ANITA

Anything interesting happen at school today?

ETHAN

No. Anything interesting happen at work?

ANITA

Well, Tom misfiled the zoning permits for Shell last night so when we got into the office it took him two hours to find them. And then he finally found them in, you're never

going to guess where, the parks service and beachfront section. (forced laughter, beat)  
No, nothing interesting.

ETHAN

(starts to get up)

I'll be in my room.

ANITA

Hey wait a minute, you hardly ate, you hardly said anything. Dinner isn't over yet.

ETHAN

Dinners go a lot quicker around here when you work late.

ANITA

Which is why I'm trying to enjoy our time now.

ETHAN

It's been a blast mom, but I have work to do.

ANITA

Just make sure you do your homework.

ETHAN

Jeez I just said that. Listen to me once in awhile.

(ETHAN exits)

ANITA

Fuck.

#### **Scene 4: Anita's office.**

(She has a corner office; unfurnished and slightly bedraggled. She has a desk, chair etc as well as a separate seating area with a table. BETH is ANITA's secretary and is heard only over intercom. An inexperienced nasally 20 something voice. )

ANITA is sitting at her desk haphazardly reading mindless paperwork. TOM a co-worker walks in with files.

TOM

(entering)

You said I could get your opinion on this case.

ANITA

Yeah Tom, come in. (stands and comes to meet him at adjacent seating area)

TOM

Nice cardigan.

(sits)

ANITA

Uh, yeah, thanks.

(sits)

TOM

The situation is Stafford, the farmer in the south east corner of town, his position is that because of the town charter from over 150 years ago, there shouldn't be any industry within 50 parsecs of his property but the new zoning clearly stipulates for—

BETH

Er, Anita?

ANITA

Pardon me.

(activates intercom)

Yes, Beth?

BETH

Your husband Ron's on line 1.

ANITA

Ex. Tell him I'll call him back later, Beth.

(ANITA gestures to TOM to continue)

TOM

And Wal-Mart is really pushing for this because it's the only area suitable in the county. They pushed the resolution through the town zoning meeting and have already started construction.

ANITA

These aren't new tactics for the behemoth. They make it such a drawn out process to protest them in any meaningful way. (laughing) The easiest solution would be to torch it. But I'm sure we can deal with it. There's plenty of precedent we can work with. I

dealt with a similar case studying in Chicago when a Wal-Mart was trying to move into a suburban section of the city there.

BETH

Er, Anita?

ANITA

Beth, I said I'd call him back.

BETH

No, I know, I told him. It's Ethan's school.

ANITA

I'm sorry Tom, one moment. (goes to desk) Yes this is Anita Darrow. Really? I'll talk to him about it. Yes. No I ask him every night. Well no, I don't have time to sit down with him-- Yes, tomorrow at 1 is fine.

TOM

I can come back later.

ANITA

It's fine.

TOM

Well... you know that we've had contracts issues with the city before. And it's nothing we haven't been able to get through. So I told Stafford that if he needs anything (puts his hand on ANITA's) anything at all that I'd be here for him.

ANITA

Thanks Tom.

(stands and walks to desk)

I'll call a few people I know in Chicago and get back to you by the end of the day.

(TOM exits)

ANITA

Fuck.

### **Scene 5: Principal Morgenstern's office.**

(Neat and well furnished. Opens on all three seated. MORGENSTERN behind her desk. ETHAN and ANITA sitting in front. )

ANITA  
Ms Morgenstern—

MORGENSTERN  
Doctor Morgenstern, please.

ANITA  
I know Ethan has some issues, but he's brilliant and good natured. He has so much potential and always comes through in a crunch.

MORGENSTERN  
That's all well and good Mrs. Darrow.

ANITA  
Ms Darrow.

MORGENSTERN  
But the Davison school has certain minimums of participation by each student, not to mention certain standards of conduct.

ANITA  
Excuse me, what is the issue at hand? Ethan has never put much emphasis on homework and while I wish that were not the case his grades always end up fine. There doesn't seem grounds for a special meeting.

MORGENSTERN  
Which brings me to standards of conduct. Ethan has been caught putting vulgar graffiti on school property and, upon further examination, throughout town.

ETHAN  
It's not vulgar.

MORGENSTERN  
You don't get to decide what is vulgar.

ETHAN  
You don't get to decide either.

MORGENSTERN  
The vulgarity is not the central issue. This school has a zero tolerance policy for vandalism.

ETHAN

Tagging is an expression of—

MORGENSTERN

The discussion is closed.

ETHAN

I wish I went to Bradley Art School.

(ETHAN exits)

MORGENSTERN

How long have you condoned this behavior for?

ANITA

Well I've known that Ethan was a rebellious child for quite some time. Some part of me suspected that it would come to this someday but he still seems so young.

MORGENSTERN

Tsk. We recognize Ethan's potential and want him to do well. Your tuition for the year is paid in full, but his current state is unacceptable. (beat) It's not all Ethan's fault. We here at the Davison school pride ourselves not only in our talented students, but our supportive parents. We understand it's his first year with us and we want Ethan to do well, but in order to do that we need him to adhere to the Davison code of conduct. Good behavior begins in the home. I was talking with Jody Bradford this morning about this particular situation and we think it would do you and Ethan good to be more active. There's a PTA meeting this Thursday in the library at 8. It's the first step. Now if you'll excuse me I've got to go sit in on a class with a new teacher.

(MORGENSTERN exits)

ANITA

Fuck.

### **Scene 6: Flashback to Anita in the 80s in her dorm.**

ANITA

I thought you were doing alright in Kessler's class.

MORTIMER

Fucker. He'd had it out for me all semester.

ANITA

You could have asked for help.

MORTIMER

Whatever. It's one class. (does some coke) And I'm quickly putting it out of mind.

ANITA

You know you can talk to me Mortimer.

MORTIMER

Funny you should say that. You always seem to be out spray painting some shit whenever I need help.

ANITA

We'll do it all together next semester. (does a line) Class stuff, 'extracurriculars'...

MORTIMER

You mean it Annie?

ANITA

You're my man, Mort.

### **Scene 7: Kitchen table, Anita and Ethan's apartment; Ryan's house.**

ANITA

Were you not going to tell me?

ETHAN

What difference does it make?

ANITA

It makes all the difference Ethan. I don't understand you. Why won't you talk to me?

ETHAN

(starts to stand)

Can I be excused?

ANITA

(stands up)



No you cannot fucking be excused!

(ETHAN sits back down)

ANITA

Is there something I did wrong? Did I miss some remedial parental course on communication? Are you doing this to spite me, the law?

ETHAN

Mom, I'm not doing it because it's illegal.

ANITA

I took you to rallies, we made placards together, called senators, corporations.

ETHAN

Driving down to DC armed with buttons and banners, fighting artie drilling and the Patriot act. Has it made any difference?

ANITA

Have you made any difference? Scribbling on the walls of Price Chopper about the evils of corporations.

ETHAN

(stands)

I'm going to bed.

ANITA

(blocks stair well)

Ethan. We're in the middle of a conversation. You're not retreating to your room.

ETHAN

Fine, I'm going to Ryan's.

(exits)

ANITA

(sits down on stairs)

Fuck.

ETHAN at RYAN's house, outside his front door

ETHAN

Hey.

RYAN

Hey!

(silence)

ETHAN

Um, can I come in?

RYAN

Yeah, sure, hey you bet.

ETHAN

Thanks.

RYAN

Do you want something to drink?

ETHAN

Sure.

RYAN

So.

ETHAN

Yeah.

RYAN

Sup? I didn't think you liked me that much.

ETHAN

I had to get away from my mom.

RYAN

Hey I hear you. My mom is always giving me shit about smoking in the house and fucking swearing.

ETHAN

Uh huh.

RYAN

She's working night shift at the hospital tonight.

ETHAN  
Cool.

RYAN  
Wanna tear shit up?

**Scene 8: Flashback to Anita in the 80s in her dorm room.**

ANITA  
The world is full of problems, Mort.

MORTIMER  
Regan-omics can only obfuscate the issue for so long. He's going to have to get his eyes back on this country.

ANITA  
The world is bigger than the continental 48. Do you ever think we should help countries even worse off than ours? Like Bolivia.

MORTIMER  
Bolivia? They're not the problem, they're the solution

ANITA  
Oh Mortimer, don't be so naïve. This marching powder doesn't make itself.

MORTIMER  
Our problems, our country. That's noble Annie, but we can't do anything for some poor Bolivians. We can't even do anything for ourselves.

ANITA  
With that attitude, can you expect to make a difference?

MORTIMER  
Annie, it's just talk. No one can really make a difference, can they baby? Are you going to do that line or not?

**Scene 9: Anita's office.**

BETH

Um, Anita!

(enter RON)

RON

Were you not going to tell me?

(ANITA and TOM stop laughing)

TOM

I'm going to go.

(ANITA goes to her desk)

RON

Were you not going to tell me?

ANITA

Ron, I only just found out yesterday myself.

RON

You say you're going to call but you never do.

ANITA

Look I'm busy, Ron.

RON

We're divorced Anita, I don't have to put up with that anymore.

ANITA

What are you doing here? Go back to Maine already.

RON

What have you done to our son?

ANITA

What have *I* done to our son? I was the one who understood his anger, who sought to channel it into proactive outlets. I don't know what the hell you do with him up on those mountain vacations, but I certainly didn't set him on whatever path he's on now.

RON

You think we light bonfires, burn the constitution, shoot Bambi? You have always assumed the worse in me Anita.

ANITA

No Ron, you assume the worst in yourself, and then force that into your brain as if it were my opinion. You set your own low expectations and then fulfill them. Listen, I don't want to have another **us** conversation when there is no us.

RON

Oh the noble Anita. Fighting oppression in the world in such a diligent fashion. Putting everything into neat little boxes you can tick off. You ticked off me years ago and your just itching to tick off Ethan.

ANITA

Stomping around my place of work, insulting me and being angry around my co-workers isn't going to solve any problems. It will only create them. Now what do you want Ron?

RON

Forget it Anita. Once you're sitting on your icy throne you're impossible to talk to. I'll see you around.

(RON exits)

ANITA

Fuck.

(TOM enters)

TOM

Anita?

ANITA

I'm sorry about that.

TOM

He knocked over the water cooler on the way out.

ANITA

Jesus, are you kidding?

BETH VO

Anita?

ANTIA  
Yeah, Beth?

BETH VO  
Bartholomew would like to see you as soon as possible.

ANITA  
Jesus Christ.  
(presses intercom button)  
Thank you.

TOM  
You know how he feels about office conduct.

ANITA  
Do I look like I asked Ron to come?

TOM  
Do you want me to talk to Bartholomew?

ANITA  
(sighs)  
Tom, you don't have to do that.

TOM  
Hey I know you're stressed.

ANITA  
Thanks for looking out for me.

TOM  
I do what I can.

**Scene 10: Flashback to the 80s in Anita's room.**

ANITA  
(to self)  
I can't believe it's so close to being over...

MORTIMER

(entering)  
Happy graduation.

ANITA  
Oh, Mort. I'm sorry.

MORTIMER  
I'll graduate fall of next year, Annie, no big deal.

ANITA  
Still.

MORTIMER  
Yeah.

(RON enters, wearing a tie or otherwise looking preppy)

RON  
Hey. Oh. This isn't Jim's room.

MORTIMER  
No it is. We just killed him for his sweet dorm room and are squatting. Care to join us?

RON  
(laughing)  
Hi, I'm Ron.

MORTIMER  
Mortimer.

ANITA  
Annie.

RON  
I'm a senior at Cornell, business major, friend of Jim's.

MORTIMER  
We're English majors, concentrating in environmental impact.

ANITA  
I'm going to grad school for Law.

RON  
Really?

MORTIMER  
Thinking about it.

ANITA  
I got accepted a few places.

MORTIMER  
You did?

RON  
Congratulations.

ANITA  
I didn't want to tell you...

RON  
We'll I better find Jim.

ANITA  
Thompson? Room 208.

RON  
Thanks.

ANITA  
No problem.

RON  
(exiting)  
Hey. We're probably going to go out celebrating tonight at Houlihan's, wanna come?

ANITA  
Sure!

MORTIMER  
No thanks.

RON  
I'll see you then.



## **Scene 11: PTA meeting.**

(In another part of the stage, ETHAN can be seen tagging)

JODY

I call this PTA meeting to order. Linda Ferguson, the president, is away on a band field trip, so I'll be running the meeting today in her stead. I'm glad to see so many new faces and on behalf of everyone at the PTA we hope that we'll be seeing you every week.

COLLEEN

(to ANITA)

Sounds like someone's taking their kid's Ritalin

(ANITA laughs)

JODY

I know it's a little unorthodox but we'll be starting off today's session with a little get to know you ice breaker because there are so many new people. I play it with my daughter's girl scout troupe all the time and the girls think it's bunches of fun!

(they get in some formation and the game starts)

JODY

My name is Jody Bradford, I'm a Professional Executive Homemaker, my daughter Tessa is a junior here and my favorite ice cream flavor is Breyer's vanilla with natural bean specs.

COLLEEN

My name is Colleen Rodriguez, I own a salon in the city, my son Jack is a sophomore, and my favorite ice cream flavor is strawberry.

ANITA

Uh my name is Anita Darrow, I work as a law consultant at an environmental firm, my son Ethan is a freshman and my favorite ice cream flavor is vanilla.

(game progresses to others)

COLLEEN

You and Super Mom sound like you've got something in common, better watch out.

ANITA

Yeah actually we're neighbors.

COLLEEN

Ahh, so that's how you got roped into this thing.

ANITA

Something like that.

COLLEEN

This is like indentured servitude. They need to "pride themselves in their supportive parents."

(ANITA laughs)

JODY

So the first order of business is the soda machine in the dining hall. We asked Mr. Carlson from the health department to give us an analysis of the numbers.

COLLEEN

So you work at an environmental firm? That must be fun.

ANITA

Hey it's better than the normal sharks you work with, besides that was my passion growing up. Environmental reform. It's good to be able to make a difference. Plus the pay is great. Nice 401k too.

COLLEEN

Yeah it was tough for Jack and I when I first opened up the salon, but it's booming now. You should come in sometime  
(hands ANITA her card, looks over ANITA)

ANITA

Oh hey, you own The Scarlet Letter? I used to go there a few years back. (laughs) Then it got too expensive for me and I stopped caring about the way I looked.

COLLEEN

Well you'll just have to come back.

ANITA

Yeah it is right near where I work now (hands COLLEEN her card) We can go out to lunch sometime.

COLLEEN

Fabulous.

JODY

We'll take a 6 minute coffee/bathroom break and then jump right back into the action.

(JODY exits, others stand and mill around)

COLLEEN

I'm going to sneak out, give me a call sometime.

(JODY walks over to COLLEEN and ANITA)

JODY

So ladies, what's your opinion on the soda issue?

COLLEEN

(with a flourish)

Let them drink Coke.

(exits)

JODY

Sigh. Ms Rodriguez is not one of our model parents. I hope you don't let her negative attitude affect you from jumping right into the fray. There's a lot of interesting discussions on the table tonight like the book drive to raise money for leukemia.

ANITA

Diseases don't usually need funding to be successful.

JODY

I'm not sure what you—

ANITA

I actually have to get back home. Ethan doesn't have a sitter—

JODY

(shocked)

Really, now.

ANITA

--And I promised I'd be back by nine.

JODY

Well I guess you do what you have to do.

**Scene 12: Flashback, Ron and Anita, newlyweds living in New York.**

RON

I can do whatever I want.

ANITA

There are bills to pay.

RON

You think I don't know.

ANITA

I thought you liked your job.

RON

People don't talking about how **fun** being a broker is.

ANITA

All your friends seem to be enjoying themselves well enough.

RON

What the hell do you want from me? My blood pressure is through the room.

ANITA

What are we going to do about money?

RON

You're one to talk. You went to grad school for law yet you insist on giving away your help for free.

ANITA

It's the politically correct thing to do. It's about favors.

RON

Well call on a favor and get a job, rent's coming due.

ANITA

Jesus Christ.

RON

You can't expect me to do this alone.

ANITA

The only think I can think of off hand is in Boston.

RON

Fine.

ANITA

What?

RON

So we move to Boston.

ANITA

You can't be serious.

RON

We need money.

ANITA

All my friends are here in New York!

RON

We'll make new friends.

ANITA

I thought you liked it here.

RON

Not anymore.

ANITA

Since when did you become so cynical.

RON

Since when did you become so flirty?

ANITA

Excuse me?

RON

Do you think I didn't see you at the party at the brokerage firm last week?

ANITA

Jesus Christ. Are you talking about Gary?

RON

Unless you were all over more guys at the party.

ANITA

He was blasted out his mind groping every pair of legs around.

RON

But you seemed to like it.

ANITA

You are out of your mind.

RON

You're not denying it.

ANITA

I can't believe you even have the nerve to bring this up.

RON

I don't want to be here.

ANITA

You didn't even defend me, pull him off me. You just went up to the fucking bar. I tried, I did what I could, I was a guest, I knew no one, what was I supposed to do?

RON

Why didn't you call Mort to save you like you always do?

ANITA

Is that what this is about? It's not about some asshole at a party at all.

RON

Call your contact in Boston, I'm tired of New York.

ANTIA

Because you know Mort won't leave New York.

RON

Don't ever mention his name again!

(blackout)

### **Scene 13: Anita's house, living room.**

(Taking place a few days or a week since the last scene in present day)

ANITA

(on phone)

I dunno I thought the chicken was really dry. Seasoning can't makeup for bad meat.

(ETHAN enters)

I guess they're vegetarian dishes probably would be better, yeah. There's some pizza on the counter, Ethan. Yeah, but Colleen, I'm not a vegetarian. Well, no I like vegetarian dishes sure, but I should have reasonable expectations about the quality of a meal. If it's on the menu, they should do it and do it well. Ethan, do you want to go up to your room to eat, I'm on the phone. No it's fine. Yeah that'd be great, I love Thai. Do you want to meet there for lunch tomorrow? Oh yeah, it's a Saturday, we can go to that hat shop afterwards.

(starts to dial another number)

Did you want something Ethan?

(ETHAN exits to his room, ANITA completes dialing)

(lights change)

(ETHAN on his cell phone)

ETHAN

I dunno man, maybe? It's a quiet night for once. I might play Diablo 3 or do some homework. I think last night is enough fun for a little while, don't you flamer?

(ANITA's phone rings)

I'll talk to you later.

(ETHAN hangs up)

(lights change to ANITA, flushed)

ANITA

Tom? Hi. A town hall meeting about Wal-Mart? Yeah of course I'll go, I'll even ask Ethan to come. Wait, Thursday? The 9<sup>th</sup>? Nothing I just have a PTA meeting for Ethan's school. I know there was one last night, but they have them every month. No I'm sorry I can't meet you tomorrow either, I have a lunch date with a friend.

(ETHAN's cell phone rings)  
What? Of course I value my job!

(lights change)  
ETHAN

Ryan? Dude, what's so hard to understand. I'm staying in. My mom's not on my case and considering last night, I'd like to keep it that way. I'm not going to say anything dude, chill the fuck out. I'll see you tomorrow.

(ETHAN switches off phone)

(beat)

ANITA

(phone rings)

I'll get it!

(answers)

Hey, about the meeting— (beat, sigh) Phones are busy when people are talking on them, Ron. Well I haven't gotten any calls from the school. Have a little faith in me. Well then have a little faith in our son. I ask him every night. Well no not tonight, it's a Friday. What do you mean you're still in Boston? No, you cannot come over here! You know the terms of the divorce. You have no right--

(loud yelling through phone is heard)

I cannot talk to you when you're like this. Chill the fuck out.

(ANITA hangs up, shouts up to ETHAN)

Ethan, I'm going out driving for awhile. I need to clear my head. I'll lock the door behind me.

(ANITA exits)

(phone rings, answering machine picks up)

ANITA VO

Hello, you've reached Anita Darrow and (beat)

ETHAN VO

Ethan Darrow.

ANITA VO

Leave us a message at the beep!

(beep)

COLLEEN VO

Hey Anita, it's Colleen. My 1 o'clock just cancelled on me tomorrow, so would you want to move our lunch up to noon? It means more hat shopping for us in the afternoon!



I'll swing by Thai Gardens at noon and see if your there otherwise I'll do a little pre-game hat shopping on my own before 1. Ta!  
(dial tone, click)

(phone rings. Machine picks up)

ANITA VO

Hello, you've reached Anita Darrow and (beat)

ETHAN VO

Ethan Darrow.

ANITA VO

Leave us a message at the beep!

(beep)

TOM VO

Anita? It's Tom. (clears throat) I'm sorry for coming down on you like I did. I'm just really out of my depth on this Wal-Mart case and it's hard when my trusty expert consultant can never seem to advise me. I'm sorry. Call me? I'll see you around.

(phone rings, answering machine picks up)

ANITA VO

Hello, you've reached Anita Darrow and (beat)

ETHAN VO

Ethan Darrow.

ANITA VO

Leave us a message at the beep!

(beep)

RON VO

Anita, pick up! This isn't going to work. You can't turn me on and off like a light. We need to talk. Listen I know you're there. You're phone's been busy for the last 10 minutes since you hung up on me. Why the hell you don't have a cell phone or even call waiting I do not know. Anita, pick up.

(beat)

(ETHAN goes to pick up phone)

Fine. Ethan is a wreck.

(ETHAN stops, listens)

I made an appointment with Dr Morgenstern this morning. You know, the principal. She said she wants to have a talk with you the "primary caregiver" because she wants to

recommend Ethan to a juvenile delinquency facility. Something happened last night but I couldn't get anything else out of her so I need you to talk to her. I'm serious Anita. I'll get an injunction and do what needs to be done for our son if you won't. Listen Anita, this is bullshit, pick up the fucking phone. Oh fuck it.  
(RON hangs up, dial tone)

(ETHAN pushes button)  
ANSWERING MACHINE VO  
All messages deleted.

ETHAN  
Fuck.

(lights change, signifying time passing)

(ANITA enters, looks at empty answering machine)  
ANITA  
Ethan, you here? I drove around a little ways but got scared thinking of you alone. Are you okay? No one came by or called, did they?

(ETHAN goes to ANITA)  
ETHAN  
Look mom, I'm all done with my homework. Every class. And I did the recommended reading for my humanities seminar.

ANITA  
(suspicious)  
Is everything okay? Did you light the cat on fire again? Peppers!

ETHAN  
Peppers is fine mom, jeez. I told you that was an accident. Ryan's fault mostly anyways. I just wanted to get my homework done early is all.

ANITA  
Today is Friday, right? I figured you'd be at Ryan's house by the time I got home.

ETHAN  
I told him we'd hang out tomorrow. It was quiet and I wanted to get it done, Sundays always end up so stressful around here.  
(takes back papers)  
Jeez I figured you'd be happy or something.

ANITA

Oh no Ethan, Ethan... I am. I'm very happy. It's wonderful.

ETHAN

Whatever.

ANITA

Well hey there, remember I bought *Pirates of the Caribbean* a few weeks ago but we haven't had a chance to watch it yet. Would you like to watch it now?

ETHAN

No. Yeah... No. Yes. Yeah I'd like to mom. I'll go put up my away message. (exits to room)

(ANITA gets DVD, starts playing. ETHAN returns. Both snuggle together on couch as movie starts)

ANITA

Ethan, is there anything you want to tell me?

ETHAN

I love you, mom.

(ANITA kisses ETHAN)

## **Scene 14: Thai Gardens, 1 pm**

(TOM is onstage at a table set for two with cheap bouquet of flowers)

TOM

I'm sorry for sending you mixed signals. I like seeing you. You're really pretty.

(ANITA enters)

ANITA

(to offstage WAITER)

Have you seen a woman in here looking for me? My name is Anita Darrow.

(looks around)

ANITA

Tom?

TOM

Anita. Hey. Hi. I left you a message on your answering machine. Asked you to call. Didn't hear from you. Are you mad at me? I'm sorry.

ANITA

Message?

TOM

(gives flowers)

Well I'm sorry. It's just hard having an expert consultant when you're not around to consult. I'm sorry that came off harsh. You're really pretty.

(COLLEEN enters)

COLLEEN

Tom?

TOM

Col?

COLLEEN

What the hell...

TOM

(to ANITA)

Colleen is the friend you were meeting?

COLLEEN

I can leave if you two are on a date or something.

ANITA

What? No. Colleen stay.

TOM

I was just leaving.

(exits)

ANITA

Color me confused.

COLLEEN

(picks up flowers)

Cheap bastard.

ANITA

I'm missing something here.

COLLEEN

Tom's my ex. He left Jack and I a couple years ago when I found out about him and some floozy at his office.

ANITA

(thinking COLLEEN is referring to her)

It wasn't—

COLLEEN

No I know.

ANITA

This is new.

COLLEEN

(handling the flowers)

And shoddily executed.

ANITA

And completely unwanted.

COLLEEN

I'm not very hungry all of a sudden.

ANITA

Me either.

(both exit to hat shop)

### **Scene 15: Ryan's house; the hat shop**

ETHAN

Dude we are in huge fucking trouble. Morgenstern knows.

RYAN

What the shit, how can she know?

ETHAN

I don't have a clue but she knows and my dad knows.

RYAN

Dude, dude, dude, dude, dude we're fucked.

(lights change)

ANITA

You know last night was the first time I felt comfortable in my own house I think.

COLLEEN

Good for you! Jack normally gets the run of the house with his constant guitar practice. Julliard auditions coming up and all.

ANITA

I finally figured out. Kids are the masters of reverse psychology.

COLLEEN

Buy them a cello they want a guitar.

ANITA

Lavish attention on them they lock themselves in their room.

COLLEEN

Tell them it's okay to stay out late and they stay in the one night you want to be alone!

(lights change)

RYAN

(takes a hit off a bong)

We're going to have to kill Morgenstern.

ETHAN

Dude.

RYAN

Well I mean come on what the hell else are we going to do?

ETHAN

Chill out, have some Domino's. We'll figure this out.

(lights change)

ANITA

Oh I like that one on you.

COLLEEN

I don't want to hurt your feelings. Tom's a good guy.

ANITA

Colleen...

COLLEEN

No no. I married him after all. He does have some redeeming qualities. If you like him you should go for it.

ANITA

We work together. Besides I don't even like him like that, he's not my type. I don't want to hurt your feelings. But he's kind of spineless. No real passion. Just a ladder climber.

COLLEEN

And a secretary climber.

(lights change)

RYAN

(deadpan)

We are going to have to go to Mexico.

ETHAN

Dude!

RYAN

Well I don't see you coming up with a plan, man!

ETHAN

How about the plan of you sitting down and eating some god damn pizza while I think.

(lights change)

(COLLEEN and ANITA laughing)

ANITA

It just got to be so that Ron and I were fighting every day. I didn't think it was good for Ethan.

COLLEEN

I can understand that.

ANITA

I met Ron when I graduated. He seemed kind and stable. I'm ashamed to admit it actually. It's pretty pathetic.

COLLEEN

Understandable though. Tom and I were a passionate college tryst. The first few years were fun. Then I wanted to follow my passion and open up the salon. He wouldn't support me. Then came the fighting. Then came the floozy. Then came the divorce.

ANITA

It all makes me so sad for Ethan.

(lights change)

RYAN

Dude, you're a fucking genius. I could kiss you.

ETHAN

I'll accept that compliment in the spirit in which it was intended.

RYAN

I'll grab the paint.

(RON enters)

RON

I knew I'd find you here.

ETHAN

Fuck.

(blackout)



## Scene 16: Flashback to Ron and Anita moving out of NYC

RON

Did you already box my tapes?

ANITA

They're with your books in the box by the door.

RON

I was going to box them.

ANITA

You said you were going to box them yesterday.

RON

I wanted to put them in with the stuff for my car.

ANITA

We need to get all this packed if we're leaving for Boston early tomorrow morning.

RON

Why did that Tom guy want to meet you so early anyways?

ANITA

What's the difference where it is in the box, we'll be unpacking in a few hours anyways.

RON

I don't know where any of my stuff is.

ANITA

It'll all get there.

RON

Fine, pack the rest of this stuff. I'm going out.

ANITA

There's still a ton left to pack, where are you going?

RON

A bunch of the guys from the firm invited me out for drinks on my last night.

ANITA

Why didn't you tell me?

RON

I'll be back later.

(exits)

ANITA

Fuck.

(knock on door)

ANITA

Did you forget your wallet or something?

MORTIMER

(entering)

Were you going to say goodbye?

ANITA

Mortimer.

MORTIMER

I didn't know when I'd see you again.

ANITA

We'd see each other again.

MORTIMER

I'm going to miss you Anita.

ANITA

I'll miss you too.

(he goes to embrace her)

ANITA

Mort, I'm married now.

MORTIMER

To that ball of joy that just left.

ANITA

Oh, Jesus, he didn't see you did he?

MORTIMER

I've been waiting outside till he left.

ANITA

How long—

MORTIMER

A few hours, it doesn't matter. I've missed you.

ANITA

I've missed you too.

(MORTIMER kisses ANITA)

(blackout)

### **Scene 17: Principal's office.**

ETHAN

He had nothing to do with it.

RON

I heard him say "I'll grab the paint."

ETHAN

He was going to help me cover it up but he didn't do anything.

MORGENSTERN

The police found no evidence to indicate that the fire at the construction site or any of the tags left specifically tie to Ryan.

(RYAN gets up to leave)

MORGENSTERN

But be certain, young man. Behavior such as this will not be tolerated. If It comes to my attention that you were involved in this or similar acts, there will be a reckoning.

(RYAN exits)

MORGENSTERN

Now as for your actions Ethan. We here at the Davison school have helped you to the extent of our resources. There are certain institutions which are more suited to dealing with children with rebellious natures.

(to ANITA)

Now considering his crimes, the judge might sentence him to one of these institutions. But it would look far better for all of us if Ethan recognized his wrongs and committed himself there of his own recognizance before it came to that. After he's paid his debt to society and is sufficiently rehabilitated, we'll gladly welcome him back to the Davison school.

RON

Where do we sign?

ANITA

Wait a minute.

MORGENSTERN

I'm afraid if this is for some reason unacceptable and one of our student has to go to trial. Well I'm sorry. No student at the Davison school has ever been a criminal.

RON

Anita, he needs this. What waits for him otherwise? Jail, eventual public school after being 4 years behind. He's getting off easy. Think about it.

ANITA

Where do I sign?

### **Scene 18: Colleen's hair salon in the 80s.**

(Anita has just moved to Boston, and is meeting with Tom to go over initial business)

TOM

Sorry you had to meet me here.

ANITA

Not a problem.

TOM

The wifey likes me to hang out with her on my days off.

ANITA

I needed a hair cut anyways.

TOM

I'll be frank. We're a struggling firm, we're just getting off the ground. We won't be able to pay you much, but we really need you.

ANITA

Why are you giving me so much leverage?

TOM

Because I know you want to work here. We have a lot of environmental issues coming up with clients contracting in this Central Artery demolition.

ANITA

I heard about that.

TOM

Plus I know you need to work here. You don't have anything else.

COLLEEN

(to ANITA)

Cut and color?

TOM

Colleen, we're talking. Jesus.

COLLEEN

Asshole.

ANITA

I don't want to disclose any other prospects I may have, if you could just make me an offer, I'll get back to you.

TOM

Fine. Be that way.

(slides offer on piece of paper across table)

ANITA

(dejected at low offer, stands, crosses to pay phone)

Ron? I've got a job.

**Scene 19: Anita's office.**

(Scene opens on ANITA working alone in the present day)

BETH  
Anita?

ANITA  
(presses button)  
Yes, Beth?

BETH  
Tom's here to see you.

ANITA  
Um, yeah sure, send him in.

(TOM enters)

ANITA  
I thought our appointment was for 2. It's not even lunch time. I don't have the files assembled. Just give me a minute. You sure know how to catch a girl off guard, Tom.

TOM  
Sit down, Anita.

ANITA  
Oh no, Tom I—

TOM  
I just got out of a meeting with Bartholomew who just got out of a meeting with Wal-Mart and Stafford.

ANITA  
No. Tom you don't have to do this.

TOM  
And they feel that it would be best for you to go on leave for awhile.

ANITA  
Fuck.

TOM

We'll gladly welcome you back after this has all blown over. While I'm sure that you haven't used your son's delinquencies to your advantage –

ANITA

Are you kidding me?

TOM

--We have to be seen as taking the responsible steps to avoid the appearance of impropriety. If you could please give me all the files relating to the Wal-Mart case and any additional personal notes you might have taken regarding the case.

ANITA

You mean the Post-It saying “note to self: tell delinquent son to light Wal-Mart on fire”?

TOM

Anita, keep your voice down, for both our sakes. Please. This isn't easy for me.

ANITA

You said if there was anything you could do for me... Stand up for me! You know I would never do this.

TOM

It's out of my hands. Besides I've heard stories.

ANITA

Excuse me?

TOM

Of you back in college, the crowds you used to run in. I'm sorry I can't stay any longer, they're expecting the files. You can leave your keycard with Beth on your way out. I'm sorry, Anita.

ANITA

Fuck.

BETH VO

Anita?

ANITA

What the hell do you want?

BETH VO

Tommy told me to hold your calls when he came in. Ron was on the line, he told me to tell you he's moved back to Boston and has leased an apartment next to yours. Your son's principal also called. She said Ethan is waiting at the school for you to take him to Meadow Acres. Is there anything I can do for you?

ANITA

No. No...

**Scene 20: At registration desk at Meadow Acres.**

(ALL are in attendance. Actress who plays JODY also plays reception lady. ANITA, ETHAN, RON, COLLEEN)

RECEPTIONIST

And you fill out his emergency contact information in the canary form.

COLLEEN

Anita, there are always other options.

RON

Hey, new bosom buddy? Maybe you should stay out of it.

COLLEEN

Su puta madre! There are more important things in life, Anita.

RECEPTIONIST

And the teal form is for dietary preferences and restrictions.

COLLEEN

Ethan, say something.

RECEPTIONIST

The pink form is a waiver in case he gets injured or expires while in treatment.

ETHAN and RON

Expires?

RECEPTIONIST

Standard I assure you.

ETHAN

Mom?



ANITA  
Yes?

ETHAN  
I'm sorry mom.

ANITA  
(hands back forms)  
I know Ethan.

RECEPTIONIST  
Now that everything's in order if you could come with me Ethan.

(RECEPTIONIST starts escorting ETHAN out)

COLLEEN  
Anita, please.

RON  
I love you Ethan.

ETHAN  
Mom, please...

ANITA  
Oh my god.

RECEPTIONIST  
Dinner will be at 6.

COLLEEN  
Ron, you heartless bastard.

ANITA  
What have I done?

RON  
You hussie!

COLLEEN  
Who says hussie?!

ETHAN  
MOM!

(blackout)

## **ACT II**

### **Scene 1: Anita's living room.**

(she's drinking, watching Pirates of the Caribbean)

ANITA

(speaking along with the movie)

We are cursed men, Miss Turner .

(knock on door)

ANITA

We don't want any, thank you.

RON

Anita it's me open up.

ANITA

We don't want any, thank you.

RON

Anita, I'm sorry but it had to be done. We both know that. Besides you can't blame me. When it came down to it you signed the papers.

(ANITA opens door)

ANITA

Don't you pin this on me, Ron. I tried to do right by our son, to let him live his own life. You always tried you use him as a pawn in some game between us. Well fuck that and fuck you. He's not here anymore. So what the fuck do you want to say to me, Ron?

RON

I love you, Anita.

(ANITA collapses into his arms)

### **Scene 2: Meadow Acres.**

(ETHAN sits across from ANITA and RON. ANITA is hung over and agitated)

RON

So?

ETHAN

So.

ANITA

Are they treating you alright?

ETHAN

Whatever.

RON

Look we did this for your own good. Why the hell you lit a Wal-Mart on fire is beyond me. Your mother has always provided for you. You've had whatever clothes and games you wanted. Who the hell are you rebelling against, you're a preppy white boy!

ETHAN

Fuck off.

RON

I'm going to get some air.

ANITA

This is hard for your father.

ETHAN

Whatever

ANITA

This is hard for me.

ETHAN

Whatever.

ANITA

I'm sure it's hard for you.

ETHAN

Fuck off.

ANITA

I'll come back tomorrow Ethan.

(ANITA exits, RON enters)

RON

What the hell did you say to your mother? (beat) Oh I'm sorry. Did you use up your quota of whatever's and fuck off's for the day? (beat) Well fine. I can sit here. I'm not doing anything all day. You feel like talking, I'm right here. (pulls out magazine)

(lights change)

ANITA at home.

ANITA

(speaking along with the movie)

You're off the edge of the map, mate. Here there be monsters.

(knock on door)

ANITA

We don't want any, thank you.

COLLEEN

(through door)

It's me, Colleen. I'm so sorry Anita.

(ANITA opens door)

COLLEEN

(pouring herself a drink)

The kids are right, Morgenstern is a bitch. Even peppermint swirl thinks she's a bitch. That's saying something.

ANITA

She's right though. If Wal-Mart pressed charges, which through some miracle they didn't, he'd be there or worse. But I can't just sit here and do nothing while he's there.

COLLEEN

What can you do? What can any of us do?

ANITA

I have to do something.

(lights change)

ETHAN  
I'm sorry.

RON  
What?

ETHAN  
I'm sorry for putting you and mom through this.

RON  
Oh Ethan, I'm sorry. I--- Now I don't have anything to say.

(they embrace, RON exits)

### **Scene 3: Anita in her office**

ANITA  
(flipping through rolodex)  
Harolds, Hawkins, Hembrook, Hillcrest... God damn it this is one of those times I wish I had a cell phone.

(noises heard outside her office)

(ANITA hides, TOM enters)

TOM  
(sitting, looking through her papers)  
Man she really had a nice office. Good view. Nice desk. (picks up picture frame) Bad kid. Wonder how hard it'd be to get this office.

BETH  
Tom?

TOM  
I like hearing her voice calling my name through this speaker.  
(presses button)  
Yes, Beth my dear?

BETH

(giggles)

Bartholomew is looking for you. He's in the conference room.

TOM

Tell him I'm on my way, my darling.

BETH

(giggles)

(TOM picks up papers from ANITA's desk, exits)

ANITA

Prick.

(dials phone, holds picture frame)

Hello? Mortimer? It's Anita Darrow. You remember me? Of course, yeah. Well... splendid. I'm in a bit of a pickle. You're kidding me. Well no, how would I know I made the cover of Environmental Justice, I stopped reading that when I joined the firm.

(lights change)

MORTIMER

You and your son have sparked a lot of anti-Wal-Mart sentiment around the North East. Your heroes in our little anarchist circle.

ANITA

Well it's all Ethan. I never said word one to him about anything like that.

MORTIMER

Oh I bet. Good little Annie.

ANITA

Hey I'm a very respectable lady now. Either that or I get confused for one every day.

MORTIMER

Well then I'll have to meet this son of yours.

ANITA

I'm not sure what the article said, but he's in a juvenile delinquency center now and I'm pretty much fired.

(lights change, they are in ANITA's house together)

MORTIMER

I'm really sorry to hear about that, Annie.

ANITA

(making MORTIMER a drink)

I can't help but feel like it's all my fault.

MORTIMER

(looking at picture frame)

No he's old enough to account for himself. And if he's anything like his mother, he did the right thing and he's very proud of it.

ANITA

I suppose so.

MORTIMER

Well I know I'm proud of him. And eager to meet him.

ANITA

Visiting hours start in a couple hours. Now I know it's been awhile since we've seen each other.

MORTIMER

Fifteen years.

ANITA

And I have a son now.

MORTIMER

Annie. What do you think of me?

ANITA

Mort I'm just saying. He's trying to recover right now. He needs fewer anarchistic tendencies, not more.

MORTIMER

Annie, Annie let the boy be.

ANITA

Mortie, I tried. Don't you see. I tried to do what was right for him and for me and it ruined our lives. He ruined my life.



MORTIMER

Anita, don't go exaggerating. This isn't even what your life used to be. Or have you forgotten?

(lights change, it's now the 80's)

ANITA

No of course I haven't forgotten. I already have my placard set for tonight

MORTIMER

Doll, you can't keep reusing your "Fuck the Pigs" placard. It's getting old.

ANITA

But it works in every situation. Fuck the pigs in congress, fuck the pigs at Exxon, fuck the pigs on Wall Street. (starts smoking)

MORTIMER

Annie D, You're a dynamite babe. (they embrace) Speaking of which.

ANITA

No no no, you said this time it'd be just protesting.

MORTIMER

Exxon needs to know people mean business. They need to take responsibility. And if they don't they need to know we mean action.

ANITA

One of these days Mortie, you're going to get me into some serious shit.

(lights change, present time)

MORTIMER

Shit happens Annie. It's what we do about the shit that defines who we are.

ANITA

Well then I guess I'm defined as "drinking while movie watching."  
(sits on sofa)

MORTIMER

What happened to dynamite Annie D?

ANITA

She's on a ship with black sails that's crewed by the damned, and captained by a man so evil that Hell itself spat him back out.

MORTIMER

Before we go see Ethan, let's get a bite to eat--

(ANITA goes to get food from kitchen)

MORTIMER

--Away from Johnny Depp and the bottle of rum.

(both exit)

#### **Scene 4: At Meadow Acres.**

(ETHAN can be seen to be tagging his surroundings with makeshift tools)

ETHAN

I should have overdosed. They'd be discussing me on radio talk shows right now. "His unique social minded style influenced a generation of introspective gang centric graffiti." Stupid shit head psychiatrist trying to connect with me. He called me "the Basquiat of the new millennium." Fucker. People say Basquiat was a graffiti artist but he never considered himself one. He hated the term. And most artists just thought he did bad overdone art. He was a middle class sell out trying to rebel as a painter. So what the hell does that say about me.

VO

Two visiting Darrow.

(lights change)

(ANITA and MORTIMER are in waiting area)

ANITA

They told me when I came in that you were putting up graffiti all over your walls.

ETHAN

They figure they can't force me to stop. I have to learn to stop.

MORTIMER

Pretty sweet deal. Get to practice all your tags.

ETHAN

That's what I figured.

ANITA

This is my friend Mortimer. And I don't think your doctors would like hearing you call it a "pretty sweet deal."

ETHAN

Whatever. So they don't recommend me to leave. I can't leave for the first two months anyways, so says Morgenstern. Might as well enjoy it.

MORTIMER

Good point. You need any supplies?

ANITA

Mort! Please, this is what I was talking about.

ETHAN

Who is this guy mom?

ANITA

He's someone I knew awhile ago. Back in college.

MORTIMER

(offers hand)

Mortimer Dickerson.

ETHAN

Nice to meet you. So mom. Anything else I can help you with, or has this round of Ethan bashing come to a quick close today?

ANITA

You little.

MORTIMER

Understand what he's going through Annie. You can't expect you to be best buds.

ETHAN

Thanks Mort.

ANITA

But you two sure are becoming fast friends.  
(to ETHAN)

I can't take this. Call me when you want to talk to me and are going to respect me. I'm not coming back before that.  
(exits)

MORTIMER

I just said that so she wouldn't tear into you. You really should be nicer to her.

ETHAN

And I just said that to spite her. So thanks for the set up.

MORTIMER

Have it your way. Two months of this self-indulgent bullshit. Alone.  
(exits)

ETHAN

99 cans of spray paint on the wall, 99 cans of spray paint. Take one down, spray it around, 98 cans of spray paint on the wall...  
(continues sotto voce)

(lights change)

### **Scene 5: Anita in her living room**

(Anita's watching Pirates of the Caribbean)

ANITA

Yo ho, yo ho, a pirate's life for me.  
(swig of alcohol)  
(doorbell rings)  
I'll get it.

JODY

(enters walking around the apt, glancing around apartment throughout, making sure Ethan's not here)  
Hello Anita. Just came to check up on you, the neighborly thing to do, make sure you're okay. I know how hard it can be to have a loved one taken away from you. Having never experienced such an awful thing myself. God has truly blessed me with happy, healthy, obedient children and a tender, loving husband. But being not only the PTA Vice President I'm also a part time school counselor. So I see many grief stricken kids that have lost parents or other family members. So I know just where you're coming from so I have to tell you that drugs and sex are not the answer.

ANITA

Hello Jody. Won't you come in. Oh I see you already have.

(closes door)

I'm 39 years old. Last I checked the drinking age was somewhere substantially below that. And I'm not quite sure what you were saying about sex, but I'm pretty sure I can do that too.

JODY

Oh Anita. If you use humor as a defense mechanism I can never get in and see the real you to help you with your pain.

ANITA

So a priest and a duck walk into a bar and the bartender says...

JODY

Alright then, Anita. I can see we were not going to be making any progress today. I'll leave. Please call me if you want to talk. I'll just leave this then. It's from Principal Morgenstern as a way of saying thanks for doing the right thing with Ethan. Again please call me or this substance abuse hotline I sponsor if you feel you're getting too wayward.

(exits)

ANITA

(hold's Fabergé egg pendant necklace in one hand, open palm in other; weighing them)  
Fabergé egg, Ethan, Fabergé egg, Ethan. Wow this is a really nice Fabergé egg pendant.  
Fabergé egg, my soul, Fabergé egg, my soul.  
(puts down Fabergé egg, disgusted)

(lights change)

ETHAN

(tagging his walls)

32 cans of spray paint on the wall, 32 cans of spray paint. Take one down, spray it around, 31 cans of spray paint on the wall. 31 cans of spray paint-- Man is that an addictive song.

(admires tagging work)

Wow. That looks good. Pig doctors have to see that every time they come and get me. Fuck them, fuck mom. Fuck this whole thing.

VO

Ethan Darrow, you have a visitor.

ETHAN

Jesus Christ, I'm more popular as a certified fuck-up than I was before.

RON

(enters)

Hi Ethan.

ETHAN

Here for more silent talks, dad?

RON

Someone's in a chipper mood today.

ETHAN

Did it ever occur to anyone that I might want to be alone.

RON

You put on a tough face, but this is a hard place. Walking through I saw some pretty screwed up kids with a lot of screwed up stuff in their past. Assault, arson, rape, murder...

ETHAN

I'm not some sheltered suburbanite.

RON

That's exactly what you are.

ETHAN

You don't know me. Don't pretend you do. You see me once a month.

RON

Of course I want to see you more. That's court ordered because of the divorce.

ETHAN

And why do you think you're divorced anyhow? Because you're a pussy, mom walks all over you.

RON

You have a hell talent of alienating people, Ethan. But I'm not going to let you alienate me.

(sits down)

ETHAN

Whatever. Where was I? 31 cans of spray paint on the wall, 31 cans of spray paint.  
Take one down spray it around...

(lights change, ETHAN and ANITA overlapping. RON exits. COLLEEN in apt with ANITA. ANITA's wearing the Fabergé egg necklace)

ANITA

Take one down, pass it around 72 bottles of rum on the wall.

COLLEEN

Okie dokie, that's about as much of that song as I can take.

ANITA

72 bottles of rum on the wall.

COLLEEN

We're going out.

ANITA

No.

COLLEEN

Yes.

ANITA

Where?

COLLEEN

Wherever.

ANITA

No.

COLLEEN

Yes.

ANITA

Why?

COLLEEN

Because I'm tired of coming over here everyday after I'm done with work, watching the *Pirates of the Caribbean* for the 50<sup>th</sup> time, and drinking shitty rum.

ANITA

Hey, don't mess with the Captain.

COLLEEN

You need to see other people.

ANITA

Fuck people.

COLLEEN

You need to start looking for another job.

ANITA

Fuck work.

COLLEEN

Or you need to go back to the firm and get your old job back.

ANITA

Fuck Tom.

COLLEEN

While I agree wholeheartedly with that sentiment you have to do something. You're just standing still.

ANITA

Like Captain Jack Sparrow on Rum Runner's island.

COLLEEN

Drinking yourself into a stupor.

ANITA

Yo, ho, yo ho.

COLLEEN

ANITA!

(beat)



ANITA  
I need to get out.

(blackout)

### **Scene 6: Ethan at Meadow Acres; Anita out with friends**

ETHAN  
I can't believe them. They call themselves my parents. Haven't visited me in a month. A fucking month I've been here alone. Well fuck them. Can't tell me to stop swearing now can they. Fuck. Fuck fuck fuck fuck.

VO  
(different than below voice)  
Shut the fuck up!

ETHAN  
Fuck you!

(off stage screaming in 2 voices is heard)

ETHAN  
Oh. Guess you weren't talking to me. Damn. I'm out of wall space. Not enough paint to re-tag. Man. Amazing how fast something gets boring and meaningless when you stare at it 24/7/365.

(lights change)

ANITA and COLLEEN out dancing at a club looking all swankified.

ANITA  
I love this song!

COLLEEN  
You're new top looks great.

ANITA  
Thanks for coming out with me, Col.

COLLEEN  
It's a lot of fun. These past couple weeks going out have certainly cheered you up.

ANITA

Can you spot me for another drink?

COLLEEN

Haven't you had enough tonight?

ANITA

Psht, whatever, Mom.

COLLEEN

And shouldn't you start finding a job? It's been weeks and you're clearly running out of money.

ANITA

I can't remember I'm still technically employed.

COLLEEN

You need money. You can quit, find another job.

ANITA

Yeah I'm sure I'll get a great recommendation. Reason for leaving last employer? Fired under dishonorable and dubious circumstances.

COLLEEN

Anita.

ANITA

Besides, this little vacation is fun.

COLLEEN

Honey...

(lights change)

ETHAN

24/7/365. 365. God to think of being in here for a year. Sitting in a room all by yourself. No one to talk to. Nothing to do. I don't think I could last in jail. Maybe mom's right. Maybe this isn't the way. I'm just digging myself deeper and deeper.

RYAN VO

Digging deeper and deeper until you hit the other side of the Earth.

ETHAN  
What?

RYAN VO  
And pop out in China.

ETHAN  
Ryan? Is that you?

RYAN VO  
Or the ocean I guess.  
(head seen through a window)  
I never was very good at geography.

ETHAN  
What the hell are you doing here?

RYAN  
I'm here to break you out. Duh.

ETHAN  
I can't leave.

RYAN  
Well no that's why I have to break you out. Duh.

ETHAN  
Dude, you better get out of here before they catch you.

RYAN  
No way man. It's my fault that you're in here.

ETHAN  
No.

RYAN  
We both know it. I started that fire.

ETHAN  
Keep it down.

RYAN

I appreciated you taking the hit, but I can't take it anymore.

ETHAN

With your juvie record you would have gotten a lot worse than two months here.

RYAN

Which is why I owe it to you to get you out of here.

ETHAN

I can't—

RYAN

Shit there's someone coming. I'll be back.

ETHAN

No Ryan please don't.

(RYAN exits)

Fuck.

(lights change, ANITA's apartment with MORTIMER. They're doing cocaine and snuggling)

ANITA

You know I've thought about you.

MORTIMER

Yeah?

ANITA

I never knew what happened to you after—

MORTIMER

After you left me?

ANITA

Yeah.

MORTIMER

Well what do you want to hear? That I cried myself to sleep in jail, got out and went running off after you, couldn't find you and pined for you for years.

ANITA

No. I suppose that'd be a little creepy.

MORTIMER

I did miss you, Annie.

ANITA

I missed you too, Mort.

MORTIMER

You know there's still time. There's always time.

ANITA

There's never time. Not enough time with you. Not enough time with Ethan. Not enough time with Ron. Never enough time.

MORTIMER

Hey. We're together now. Shh. Just relax. Relax.

ANITA

Why do I always run away, Mort?

(lights/music change, 80s)

ANITA

I'm leaving

MORTIMER

Annie, I'm sorry.

ANITA

It doesn't matter.

MORTIMER

Sometimes extreme measures have to be taken.

ANITA

Not like that.

MORTIMER

You're the one who always encouraged me.

ANITA

They were innocent people, Mortimer!

(MORTIMER clutches her)

Let me go!

(lights/music change, back to present day. Clutching softens to a cuddle)

MORTIMER

I'm just glad were together now, again.

ANITA

After so many years.

MORTIMER

I've missed you Annie.

(blackout)

### **Scene 7: Anita at Ron's house in southern Maine.**

(ANITA may be hung-over or something)

(knock at door)

RON

One minute!

(opens doors, ANITA enters)

RON

Anita what are you doing here?

ANITA

I don't know.

(sits down)

RON

Is something wrong?

ANITA

I don't know.

RON  
Is Ethan okay?

ANITA  
I dunno. I guess.

RON  
Do you want some tea?

ANITA  
Yeah.

(RON crosses to make tea)

ANITA  
I like your house.

RON  
Yes, that's right, you've never been here before.

ANITA  
Quaint.

RON  
I'll try not to take that as a slight.

ANITA  
No, it's nice. Small, rustic.

RON  
A lot like me, I suppose.

ANITA  
I suppose. Not, falling apart though.

RON  
That I will take as a slight.

ANITA  
Sorry, slipped out.

RON

You didn't drive 4 hours to insult me and my house.

ANITA

You underestimate my desire to belittle you.

RON

Fine you want to play games? I'll be over here for when you want to tell me why you're here.

(crosses, sits in different part of stage, reads newspaper)

ANITA

(pauses a lot throughout paragraph)

Good tea. Is it chamomile? I think it's chamomile. Soothing. No caffeine. Does it have sage in it? I think I can taste sage. It's got kind of a smoky bite to it. Assuming that's not an oxymoron. What really is an oxymoron? Can two words really have completely opposite meanings? Why would there exist one unique word that is the complete opposite of another word. Seems wasteful. I should just be able to say like 'don't' or 'not' to make something the opposite. It encourages subtlety of language. The art of speech and writing died with Shakespeare. Which leads into a whole other string of—

RON

Anita.

ANITA

(quickly)

I need money.

RON

How much?

ANITA

Enough for the mortgage, car payment and credit card for next month.

RON

Jesus, Anita.

ANITA

I've spent all my savings.

RON

What about severance pay from the firm?



ANITA

No severance pay. They never technically fired me.

RON

Jesus.

ANITA

I'm in a fiscal Guantanamo.

RON

You need another job.

ANITA

The firm will take me back eventually. Besides they're still paying me.

RON

So then—

ANITA

I get paid by-weekly, but bills are due by the end of the week.

RON

What the hell happened to you, Annie?

ANITA

Don't call me that.

RON

Fine. Have it your way. Here's your money.

(sits down with newspaper again)

(ANITA crosses to exit)

RON

Anita. Unless it's about Ethan, don't come back.

(ANITA exits)

### **Scene 8: Ethan at Meadow Acres.**

ETHAN

This tag is really starting to piss me off. What the hell was I thinking? Even Basquiat could have done better. It's so pretentious and angsty. What am I trying to prove? It's all pomp and circumstance. What do I believe? You know. I don't think I believe a fucking thing. 'Counter culture for sale.' Maybe I should be a writer. Plenty of time to think in here. Just sit and think.

(explosions are heard)

What the fuck?

RYAN

(entering)

Let's go, Ethan!

ETHAN

Ryan, shit, what are you doing here?!

RYAN

I'm breaking you out. Duh.

ETHAN

But I told you—

RYAN

Security is going to be here any second.

ETHAN

Ryan—

RYAN

We need to go. Now.

ETHAN

Fuck!

(RYAN and ETHAN exit. RYAN pulling ETHAN)

(lights change. ANITA's apartment. She's sitting alone)

ANITA

(at her wit's end)

Where did I go? I used to live here. I used to sit on this couch. I used to leaf through this phone book. I remember. I remember me turning on this lamp. I remember me walking around this kitchen. Making dinner for Ethan. Where did Ethan go? I

remember a boy playing video games on this TV. He used to put his feet up on this table.  
He used to talk on this phone.

(phone rings)

Ah!

(picks up phone)

H—Hello, Anita Darrow speaking. What? No... Ethan! Is he alright? He wouldn't do that. Another boy? Short, black hair, glasses [description should be altered to fit actor and costume].

(sotto voce)

Ryan.

(normal)

Nothing. I'll let you know if I hear anything from Ethan.

(blackout)

### **Scene 9: Ethan and Ryan hiding out; Anita in her apartment.**

ETHAN

Ryan...

RYAN

A thank you might be in order.

ETHAN

What have you done?

RYAN

We're even now.

ETHAN

How the hell do you figure that?

RYAN

You wouldn't let me go to jail, I couldn't let you stay.

ETHAN

I wanted to stay.

RYAN

That's just the man brainwashing—

ETHAN

I had to stay.

RYAN

Ethan, listen to me—

ETHAN

No Ryan, listen to me. You never do—

RYAN

I always—

ETHAN

Stop. I had to stay.

RYAN

You already said—

ETHAN

For chrissakes, shut your mouth and open your ears for once you self centered sonofabitch.

(beat)

I made a deal with Morgenstern. Well my parents sold me out to her.

RYAN

See—

ETHAN

All I had to do was two months in that place and we'd both get off scott free and I could come back to school.

RYAN

(pause)

Two months.

ETHAN

Yeah.

RYAN

But it was already.

ETHAN

Over a month.

RYAN  
Oh shit.

ETHAN  
Yeah.

RYAN  
I thought they committed you for good man.

ETHAN  
No way.

RYAN  
You were doing that 24/7/365 talk.

ETHAN  
Supposition. Thinking how bad it would be.

RYAN  
(pause)  
Well, fuck. Why didn't you tell me?

(beat)

(lights change sharply)

At ANITA's apartment

COLLEEN  
Why didn't you tell me?

ANITA  
I just found out myself.

COLLEEN  
What are you going to do?

ANITA  
I don't know!

COLLEEN

Do you think he's going to come back?

ANITA

I don't know! Jesus Christ, Colleen.

COLLEEN

Sorry.

ANITA

I didn't invite you over to worsen my panic attack.

COLLEEN

Well we'll just calm down.

ANITA

You look pretty friggin' calm to me.

COLLEEN

Let me get you some water.

ANITA

I need to think, I need to think...

(lights shift)

ETHAN

I need to think, I need to think...

RYAN

Dude we need to fucking get out of here.

ETHAN

And where are we going to go?

RYAN

I don't know.

ETHAN

Uh huh.

RYAN

Away from here.

ETHAN

We can't just blindly run.

RYAN

We need to find somewhere safe.

(lights shift)

COLLEEN

Wouldn't he think home here is safe?

ANITA

I haven't spoken to him in a month.

COLLEEN

But still, you're his mother.

ANITA

Am I?

COLLEEN

'Course.

ANITA

I don't feel like it.

COLLEEN

Anita, don't talk like that.

ANITA

I didn't even want him.

COLLEEN

Anita...

ANITA

Ron wanted some sort of stable life.

COLLEEN

That doesn't matter now; we need to find them before something happens.

(flashback)

ANITA

(shocked and angry)

I'm pregnant!

RON

(calm and happy)

Do you know if it's a boy or a girl yet?

ANITA

I shouldn't be pregnant!

RON

Either way we'll love it just the same.

ANITA

I'm on fucking birth control!

RON

Do you have any names you like? I like John. Or Phil.

ANITA

Ron, please tell me you didn't—

RON

After we were married, had jobs, had a house for a couple years.

ANITA

Please.

RON

We agreed to start a family.

ANITA

I told you it wasn't the right time.

RON

I never is for you, but it's the right time for us. One thing I wondered, did the sugar pills actually taste sweet?

ANITA



You bastard! I could have an abortion!

RON

(grabbing her wrist, enraged)

You would never. This is my baby.

ANITA

Let me go.

RON

(hard)

We're keeping this baby. Together. I love you, Anita.

(exits)

(lights change, back to present day with ETHAN and RYAN)

ETHAN

We can go to my dad's.

RYAN

Up in Maine?

ETHAN

We can hitch to get there.

RYAN

They won't go looking for us in Maine.

ETHAN

I know my dad will protect us.

(both exit)

(lights shift)

ANITA

He always runs away to his father.

COLLEEN

But Ron was the one who wanted him committed.

ANITA

That doesn't matter. Ron and I are yin and yang. He's always out to make me look like the bad parent. Now that I want Ethan in there, Ron with fight me to keep him out.

COLLEEN

You can't go fight him. You should tell the cops.

ANITA

I tell the cops and Ethan hates me and Ron will intensify the fury between us.

COLLEEN

Think sensibly Anita.

(blackout)

### **Scene 10: Ron's house in Maine.**

Scene opens on RON widdling a curved sharp edge similar to a scythe.  
Later in the scene, we see Anita driving in her car to Maine.

RYAN

(bursting in)

Mr. Darrow?

RON

(grabbing RYAN)

Who the hell are you?

RYAN

Aahh!

ETHAN

(enters)

Dad!

RON

Ethan! What the hell are you doing here?

(puts down widdling, goes to get something to drink)

Did your mother Lady Darrow break you out to spite me?

ETHAN

(to RYAN)

Darrow is my mom's maiden name. Bellows is my dad's name. He... hates being called Darrow.

RYAN

No, Mr.... Bellows. I broke him out.

RON

Why? Are you some sort of idiot?

ETHAN

Dad.

RON

Sorry.

RYAN

No, I thought he got committed for good.

RON

Well. It was stupid to break him out. And it was stupid to run. Your mother's certainly going to come looking for you now.

(lights also slowly come up on a different part of stage where Colleen sees off Anita through to end of scene)

RYAN

She won't be able to find us.

RON

You are some kind of idiot.

ETHAN

Dad, please. He's right, Ryan. She'll come. She knows me too well. The question is whether she'll bring the cops.

RON

I almost hope she does. Don't worry. I'll protect you. Settle in boys. Looks like we're going to have a little family reunion.

## Scene 11: Ron's house in Maine

RON  
She's here.

RYAN  
Should we hide?!

ETHAN  
Don't make my dad call you an idiot again.

RYAN  
Dude she's not going to be happy to see me.

RON  
(sotto voce, looking out the window)  
She's so beautiful.

RYAN  
I'm hiding.  
(exits to offstage, through 'back door')

(ANITA enters)

ANITA  
Hello.

RON  
Hello.

ANITA  
It's about Ethan.

RON  
I figured.

ANITA  
How are you, Ethan?

ETHAN  
Fine.

ANITA

How are you, Ron?

RON

Fine.

ANITA

Are we going to make this hard?

RON

Depends on what you plan on doing.

ANITA

You know what should be done.

RON

And you know that would destroy Ethan.

ANITA

He'd survive.

ETHAN

Please mom—

RON

Quiet.

ANITA

I want the best for Ethan.

RON

I want the best for him also.

ANITA

If you say so.

RON

I do.

ANITA

He should go back to the institute, then back to school so he can be a productive member of society.

ETHAN  
Mom, please—

RON  
No. He's not going back to that rehab facility and he's not going back to that school. He doesn't belong there.

ANITA  
Good. I agree.

RON  
He— What?  
(sits)

ANITA  
It may be what's best for a kid in his position, but it's not what's best for Ethan.

ETHAN  
Mom...?

ANITA  
You have to own up for what you did. And so does your friend, (seeing RYAN) wherever he is.

ETHAN  
Mom, he'll go to jail.

ANITA  
He lit a building on fire, and destroyed another one getting you out. Sometimes people have to get what they deserve. And I'm not letting my baby go down for him. Now where is that punk friend of yours?  
(pulls out RYAN)

RYAN  
Hey there Mrs. Bellows!

ANITA  
The name is Ms. Anita Darrow.

(COP walks in)

RYAN

I'm sorry, Ms. Darrow, Ethan. I'm sorry for everything. I was just trying to be cool like you Ethan. Tagging and shit. And I knew you hated Wal-Mart. Seemed like a way to make a statement.

COP

You're both under arrest.

(COP, ETHAN, RYAN exit)

RON

You played me.

ANITA

I know.

RON

I think it's time for you to leave.

ANITA

I know.

(ANITA goes to exit)

RON

Anita. Don't come back.

(ANITA exits)

(blackout)

## **Scene 12: ANITA's office.**

COLLEEN

So this was your office.

ANITA

Yeah, pretty nice.

COLLEEN

So how nice is your new office?

ANITA

Well less nice, more important.

COLLEEN

Junior partner, huh?

ANITA

Less money than a consultant, and more responsibility. But there's a lot more stability and room for advancement.

COLLEEN

Unless of course you're embezzling money.

ANITA

Tom was such an idiot.

COLLEEN

That's what he gets.

BETH VO

Um. Anita?

COLLEEN

Are you going to answer her?

BETH VO

A-Anita?

ANITA

Make her sweat a little. She sold me upstream to Tom.

BETH VO

Ms. Darrow?

ANITA

Hello, Beth. How are you on this beautiful day?

BETH

Mr—I'm fine. Thanks for, um. Mr. Bartholomew said to come see him when you're all settled into Tom's old office.

ANITA



You mean my new office?

BETH

Yes. I—I'm sorry for what I did, Anita.  
(intercom clicks off)

ANITA

You know, I'm kinda glad to be back.

### **Scene 13: Principal Morgenstern's office**

(beat)

ETHAN

Hi.

MORGENSTERN

Yes, hello.

ETHAN

The office said you had my ID card and schedule.

MORGENSTERN

I didn't think you'd do it.

ETHAN

What?

MORGENSTERN

You look different.

ETHAN

Class starts in 3 minutes, Dr. Morgenstern.

MORGENSTERN

Funny, I always thought something would happen. Tragic.  
(hands over documents)

ETHAN

Maybe something did.

Scene 14: Mortimer in rehab

MORTIMER

Annie?

ANITA

(entering)

It's me, Mortie.

MORTIMER

I knew you'd come.

ANITA

How do you feel?

MORTIMER

You know detox. I'm all puppies and rainbows.

ANITA

Can I bring you anything?

MORTIMER

Drugs. Just kidding. I'd love some tic tacs.

(ANITA hands him tic tacs)

Mmm orange.

ANTIA

Why did you come to Boston?

MORTIMER

The orange just taste like candy.

ANITA

Why?

MORTIMER

I don't know why, probably because they have a lot of sugar.

ANITA

Mort.

MORTIMER

I missed you. You were all I had. When you left New York--

ANITA

I never should have left.

MORTIMER

When you left, I didn't have anyone else.

ANITA

Mort.

MORTIMER

I was running in a bad crowd. I can't even tell you. The shit we pulled in college, only more so. At least that's what I thought when we started. I was in a bad place.

ANITA

I'm sorry.

MORTIMER

But I saw you. I was buying some tic tacs at a news stand and there you were on the cover of that magazine. It's like you were there next to me, pulling me up. I had to come see you.

(coughing/sneezing)

ANITA

Here let me get you—

(goes to exit)

MORTIMER

Annie, don't leave me again.

#### **Scene 14: Anita and Ethan's apartment**

ETHAN

So how was work today?

ANITA

Fine. Lot of board meetings.

ETHAN

With power comes great responsibility.

ANITA  
And school?

ETHAN  
I had a calc mid-term today. I think I did okay. There were a couple hard questions, but I think I got the bonus. There's going to be an art show next month at the gallery on church street. My teacher thinks I should enter.

ANITA  
Absolutely. I saw those pieces you were working on in your room, they look great.

ETHAN  
Hmm, mom it's getting late. Did you want to go see Mortimer tonight, it is Thursday?

ANITA  
Thanks for reminding me, I lost track of time.

EHTAN  
I'll grab my jacket.  
(ANTIA hugs ETHAN)

ANITA  
I'll grab my jacket.  
(ETHAN hugs ANITA)

(both exit together)

(blackout)  
(end of show)

## **Playwriting Conclusions**

There is a moment in every project where you suddenly get that feeling of completion. With everything, you can always work more. Always critique it, add details, perfect it. That doesn't always make it better or more complete.

The same is true in playwriting. Looking at it from an objective plot standpoint is often the easiest way to figure out if you're done. Look at your characters and their corresponding plot arcs and figure out whether they have a beginning, middle and an end. With a full length play this is especially important, because you must make sure you resolve all your subplots or the audience will be left feeling inexplicably confused. This is true whether it's a short one act play, or full length play.

If you've done your work with the scenes to make sure that everything makes sense then you can use that same document to make sure everything is concluding. Does each plotline get tied up, have I forgotten about any characters? If you feel both intellectually (in terms of the scene break down sheet) and emotionally (in terms of how you feel you've creatively told this story from your heart) complete, then you can reasonably say that you are.

### **Let it Steep**

From here you should put the play down for a few months or a year to work on other projects. Then, as you did before when you were trying to have the play make sense, you should have people read it. You'll be in a different more objective place now and you'll be able to look at the piece differently. You may decide there are minor characters/plotlines that may just need a little tweaking to become stronger. Or you may want to take aspects of the piece and create a new play from that. Once you've created a

complete work that you feel can stand on it's own you'll be able to use that as a tool to write different plays or rewrite it into a different wonderful piece. Each play you write becomes another tool in your arsenal that you can look at for inspiration and direction.

As I read plays by others to help me write, I can now look back and pieces I've created to help me think "I was feeling this when I wrote that, now I know how to write what I'm feeling now."

So it all comes back to the beginning. Write. Read. Write.

# Appendices

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183 minutes. Criterion Collection. DVD.



## **Appendix B: Color Coded Scene Breakdown**

Anita, Ethan – apt dinner

Anita/Ethan

Anita, mort – flashback, Anita tagging

Anita/Past

Bus stop

Anita/Ethan

Anita, tom – office

Anita/Job

Principal's office

Anita/Ethan

Flashback – mort fails classes

Anita/Past

Anita/Ethan

Anita, Ethan – dinner confrontation -> Ethan, Ryan – new friends

Anita/Ethan

Ethan character development

Anita, mort – getting political

Anita/Past

Anita's office – Ron confrontation

Anita/Job

Anita/Past

Flashback – Anita meets Ron

Anita/Past

PTA mtg – meeting colleen

Anita character development

Anita/Ethan

Flashback – Ron, Anita engaged living in NYC

Anita/Past

Anita's apt – phone scene

Anita character development

Anita/Ethan

Anita/Job

Thai gardens – romantic awkwardness

Anita/Job

Character development: Anita, Colleen, Tom

Ethan/Ryan Colleen/Anita – Morgenstern knows

Anita/Ethan

Character development: Ryan, Ethan, Colleen

Ron and Anita are moving, mort stops by, Anita has an affair

Anita/Past

Mortimer character development

Principal's office

Anita/Ethan

Anita's office – suspended!

Anita/Job

Meadow acres – send Ethan away

Anita/Ethan

Act 2:

Anita drinking – PotC

Anita character development, related to all 3 plotlines

Meadow acres – 1 week in

Anita/Ethan

Ethan character development

Anita's office – rolodex

Anita/Job

Meadow acres – Phil tagging

Ethan character development

Anita – PotC descent, Fabergé egg bribery, Meadow acres – Ethan wants to be alone

Anita/Ethan

Meadow acres – Ethan alone, Anita out and about

Anita/Ethan

Anita/Job

Ron's place in Maine – Anita wants money (GAVE IT TO MORTIMER)

Anita/Past

Anita/Job

Ethan – thinking aloud, repenting. Breakout. Anita is informed

Anita/Ethan

Ethan and Ryan hide out. Anita w/ colleen, where is he?

Anita/Ethan

Ron in Maine – Ethan coming to hideout

Character development: Anita, Ethan, Ryan, Ron

Anita is a junior partner

Anita/Job

Warily welcoming back Ethan

Ethan character resolution

A new normalcy for Ethan and Anita

Anita/Ethan

Anita/Past

## **Appendix C: One Act Plays**

The following 5 one act plays are an informal part of my project. They were written during the time of my project and were done so as a writing outlet. I feel that they should be looked at along with my project play, *Edge of the Map*, because they show a complete portrait of my playwriting experience.

## Appendix C1: Perspective

*Produced and performed at WPI's New Voices 24 festival.*

MATILDA

The happiest day of my life was when I got my braces off. It was senior year of high school in March. I'd had them on ever since fifth grade. Never changed the colors once. Blue and green rubber bands for 9 years. I swear the night before I got them off was better than Christmas Eve. I stayed up and stared at myself in the mirror for what must have been at least two hours. Just looking at myself. I couldn't picture what I looked like without braces. I really tried to. Almost all pictures I had of myself were smiling with my lips closed. A completely ingrained habit. I was scared of how I would look with them off. Would my teeth be stained? Would my teeth feel all loose inside my head? Would it hurt?

All the time before I'd take a shower, I'd take my glasses off, take off my necklace, take off my earrings and I'd stand there, look in the mirror and think to myself, "I can never be fully naked. I can never be fully me." I have this metal in my mouth.

I got them off and could not stop smiling. Honest and truly, I couldn't physically stop myself. Especially when I passed a mirror and saw that flash of white. I've never been narcissistic, but I had to go back and look. And smile. And then I would laugh from smiling. My parents would ask what I was laughing about then I'd just laugh more because it was so silly. I was laughing at my teeth. My pure blank teeth. I felt so open, so free. Like I finally looked like who I thought I always was.

The second happiest day of my life was the day I got contacts. It was sophomore year of college. It was weird at first. You put them in and it instantly alters your perception. Things are clearer but from a different perspective. Like a perversely wide angle lens. Everything felt more immediate. Too immediate. I'd been wearing glasses every day for seven years by this point. My eyes felt so safe and protected behind my glasses. Now they were out in the open. I felt like I'd grown up all of a sudden. Became a woman. I looked in the mirror and looked

Sure I've gone around once in awhile without my glasses. And I mean I never went to bed with them on. Well... But it's not the same. With my contacts in I could

look in the mirror and actually see myself. Perfectly in focus. I felt a new level of clarity. I looked in the mirror and saw me. All my layers of obfuscation removed.

Last month I got engaged. Everyone says how happy I must be for my special day. I look down at my hand and all I see is this rock. I can't even remember what my hand looked like without it. I don't even see my hand anymore. I just see the manifestation of this ring. The ring, this commitment willed me into being.

I'm not sure what the engagement rules are. I know it's the perfect size because we went to the jeweler's on main street and got it custom fitted, but I can always feel it throbbing on my finger. Like how my teeth would ache right after I got my braces. Or how my glasses would pinch behind my ears.

(takes off ring)

This is the first time I've taken it off. You know I don't even recognize my hand. Like it's calling for the ring. Like I'm Frodo or something. I have this paranoia that some marriage Gestapo is going to swoop in and say "YOU MATILDA MERRIWETHER ARE NOT READY FOR MARRIAGE!" I'm not sure what makes me the most paranoid about that thought. That they'll come find me with it off, that my finance will be disappointed in me, or that they're right. I'm not ready to get married.

I think about having a job, a house, a family. It's everything I want. Sometimes. I hate thinking it to myself, but will I be happiest when I take off my ring? It's nice to know someone wants to marry you. Of course. Thinking that someone sees the you that you always see in the mirror. But how can they?

I think back to high school. Back to braces and glasses days. There's some perverse part of me that feels that was the truest me. I could look in the mirror and see through the glasses and braces. See the me that no one else can see. People would just see a girl with braces and glasses. Now it's like people can pretend to see you because they can see your blank slate of a face. Now all people will see is this ring. An engaged girl. But that's not me. Well. It is. But I don't want to be that girl. The girl this ring is telling me to be.

(puts ring back on)

I wonder when I'll be me again?

(blackout)

## Appendix C2: Garden of Eden

Almost the entirety of the play (except where marked) should be delivered in a rapid banter, film noir-esque aside style. Essentially a two person monologue (ie duologue). It's metered roughly like a song and should run less than 2 minutes.

Characters:

ADAM, 21

EVE, 23

Scene opens on ADAM and EVE eating in a restaurant called the "Garden of Eden"

ADAM

I like her.

EVE

He likes me.

ADAM

I'm sure she knows.

EVE

At least I think he does.

ADAM

I tell her how pretty she looks.

EVE

He seems to like my clothing too much.

ADAM

I don't know what to say.

EVE

It's not about what he says.

ADAM

I don't know what to do.

EVE

It's about what he does.

ADAM

(to EVE)

Would you like some breadsticks?

EVE  
(to ADAM)  
I'm fine, thanks.

EVE  
I like him.

ADAM  
She hates me.

EVE  
I'm sure he knows.

ADAM  
At least I think she does.

EVE  
I joke around with him on things.

ADAM  
She made fun of my three legged dog.

EVE  
I know what I should say.

ADAM  
I try starting conversations.

EVE  
I know what I should do.

ADAM  
I try to initiate things.

ADAM  
(to EVE)  
Would you like some breadsticks?

EVE  
(to ADAM)  
You asked me that already.

EVE  
He seems nervous.

ADAM  
I'm fucking nervous.

EVE  
It's actually kinda cute.

ADAM  
I'm sweating like a pig.

EVE  
He puts me at ease.

ADAM  
I must be freaking her out.

EVE  
I hope I can see him again.

ADAM  
I should get out of here.

ADAM and EVE  
(to offstage waiter)  
Check please!

ADAM and EVE  
(to each other)  
You're great—

ADAM and EVE  
(to each other)  
I'm sorry.

ADAM  
She likes me?

EVE  
He likes me.

ADAM  
I'm confused.

EVE  
He understands.

ADAM



She's so complicated.

EVE  
He's so simple.

ADAM  
I'm scared to move.

EVE  
I feel relaxed.

ADAM  
Oh god, I hope she does something.

EVE  
Time for me to initiate.

EVE  
(to ADAM)  
Want to come over for coffee?

ADAM  
(to EVE)  
Okay.

ADAM  
I really hope we have sex.

EVE  
I really hope we have sex.

## **Appendix C3: Nanonesia**

### Characters:

TAKEO (tah-KAY-oh) – 40, a ½ Japanese man whose father was stationed in Micronesia during and just previous to WW2

MARIA – 37, her family has been native to Micronesia for generations, back from when the Spanish settled the area

JANE – 15, an all around Micronesian girl

STEVO – 29, their neighbor one island over on Lamotrek. Currently going by Stevsey

NEWSCASTER – ageless, genderless, international

Takes place in 2006 (present day) in the Federates States of Micronesia.

The following factual data is as historically accurate as possible. However all characters and situations are fictional.

Scene starts with family set down to dinner in one section of the stage with a newscaster on a separate part of the stage. Newscaster lit.

NEWSCASTER

In other news, a new car alarm was developed with a proximity sensor which will actually start your engine and move your car away from a thief trying to steal it. The inventor believes this will be a breakthrough in car technology, but other private corporations and military installations have other ideas for the new invention.

(lights change)

TAKEO

Turn that down.

MARIA

How are your peas?

JANE

Mmm mm.

TAKEO

Round and green.

MARIA

Tsk.

JANE

The school boat was really slow getting home today.

MARIA

I've talked to the school board about getting a new boat. Last thing we need is them stranded and a tropical storm comes through.

TAKEO

('baka' translates to stupid in Japanese)

Baka bureaucrats. Can't depend on anyone but yourself. I'll pick you up from school Janey.

MARIA

We should just work through the system. The Micronesian public transportation system here in Yap used to be the envy of the other states.

TAKEO

We have a reliable long distance Yamaha. It's no bother to swing by and get Jane.

JANE

I can just carpool with our neighbors.

MARIA

(‘baboso’ translates to slug from Spanish)

I’d rather you not ride with that baboso.

JANE

Mom...

TAKEO

She’s right, we’ve got everything we need right here. You, your mother, these peas.

MARIA

Speaking of which you got a call yesterday from your friendly neighborhood Steve.

TAKEO

(‘henjin’ = freak in Japanese)

Or whatever our henjin neighbor calls himself these days.

MARIA

I wonder whether he has his own life sometimes.

TAKEO

Just living vicariously through us and our island.

MARIA

Our island exactly.

JANE

(overly mockingly tender)

Gosh, I love our island. I can’t wait to live here with my own family after you two get old and wither and die.

MARIA

You’re so endearing young lady.

TAKEO

Much as I love this little island I wish we had more space.

JANE

Micronesia is only so large and pretty much all the islands are inhabited.

MARIA

Takeo, please don’t start.

TAKEO

A little room to breathe, is that so bad?

MARIA

My family has been on Elato here ever since the UN made the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

JANE

Back in 1947. We were going over the history of the Caroline Islands here last week.

TAKEO

I think we should be making some new history.

MARIA

Dear please not again.

TAKEO

We can be so much more.

JANE

Dad's right. It's manifest destiny mom.

MARIA

Janey, we're the only people on this particular tiny island, so that manifest destiny bit is already taken care of.

TAKEO

July 12, 1978.

MARIA

Takeo...

TAKEO

I was twelve years old.

JANE

Daddy.

TAKEO

Four states coming together, pretending they're one big happy country.

JANE

America was essentially two countries for a long time.

MARIA

President Urusemal is focused on what we need as a nation.

TAKEO

You know, Kosrae is just one island. The state of Kosrae. The island of Kosrae.

JANE

The capital city of Kosrae.

MARIA

So move to Kosrae then. Both of you.

(MARIA exits.)

JANE

She really likes it here dad.

TAKEO

I know Janey.

JANE

More peas?

TAKEO

They are tasty.

JANE

It's the kosher salt.

TAKEO

I have a good plan this time.

JANE

One mom will like?

TAKEO

Remember that talk we had last week?

(doorbell rings)

TAKEO

In Nakayama's name...

MARIA

(entering)

I'll get it.

STEVO

(entering)  
Hey buddy!

TAKEO  
We're having dinner. How many times must I ask? Call before you come over, Steve.

STEVO  
(pronouncing TAKEO's name like "taco" the Mexican food)  
Taco my man! Buddy! Pal! Call me Stevsey!

TAKEO  
It's Takeo, not 'taco.'

MARIA  
We are in the middle of supper... Stevsey.

STEVO  
Besides every time I do call, you don't want me over.

TAKEO  
(sotto voce)  
I wonder.

STEVO  
So I just figured I'd motor on by and see how my main man is hangin'.

TAKEO  
Fine. Thanks. Bye.

STEVO  
You should come check out my new ride man. Seadoo Islandia SE. 310 horse power, 22 foot, seats twelve, HDTV.

JANE  
That sounds like fun.

STEVO  
Yeah, lemme take the little sweet thang for a spin.  
(eyes JANE lecherously)

TAKEO  
Out Steve!

STEVO  
Stevsey knows when he's not wanted. Catch you on the flip side my man.  
(winks and air gun at TAKEO)

(exits)

TAKEO

(swears in Japanese under his breath)

MARIA

Takeo!

TAKEO

You can take the man out of Chuuk, but you can't take the Chuuk out of the man. They should have left that state out of the union before he could get a chance to move into ours.

MARIA

Wanting to close your borders to your annoying neighbor is not grounds to become your own nation.

JANE

Dad has a point about wanting to move mom. He's creepy. And I don't just mean Stevsey's penchant for talking in the third person. But become our own nation? (giggles)

MARIA

(to TAKEO, mockingly)

But oh how you tried.

JANE

Are you kidding?

MARIA

(to all)

I don't really like to bring it up.

TAKEO

I embarrass Lady Maria.

MARIA

Well, about 10 years ago your beloved father petitioned to have our island of Elato break off from the Federated States of Micronesia and become it's own country. Needless to say his petition to become a one island sovereign nation didn't get approved by our government in Palikir. But your father decided to forward it on to the UN anyways. The people at the United Nations sure had a laugh readying that over. Oh Takeo what did you call our new little country, again? MicroMicronesia?

TAKEO

...Nanonesia.



JANE and MARIA  
(laugh)

JANE  
Nanonesia?!

TAKEO  
A man is entitled to his independence.

MARIA  
If that we're true there would be 3 billion countries populated by two people each.  
Loving wives and pig headed husbands.  
(kisses TAKEO)  
Eat your peas.

(MARIA moves to another part of the stage to do bills)

TAKEO  
They're great peas, Maria.

JANE  
Really round and really green, mom.

TAKEO  
Every man is an island, Maria. I need my own island.

MARIA  
We have it.

TAKEO  
We will.

MARIA  
Takeo, we live 8 degrees above the equator. Why is our heating bill so high?

TAKEO  
Last month there was that big fog.

JANE  
Man that was frigid. Must have been like 50 degrees.

MARIA  
Mmm yeah.

JANE

What's up dad. You've been Mister Secretive all night.

MARIA

Honey, I asked you not to write a check for the new compression coil for the boat. Put stuff like that on the credit card.

TAKEO

We didn't have enough in our account. There were more expenditures this month than normal.

JANE

Daddy...?

MARIA

ACME Explosives? What's this?

JANE

Ohmigosh dad. So you weren't kidding earlier?!  
(exits)

(music, sound and lights start humming and building slowly)

TAKEO

I wasn't sure how to tell you honey.

MARIA

Papie, I don't like the sounds of this.

TAKEO

It actually came to me in a dream.

MARIA

Ay yey yay.

TAKEO

Or an episode of Gilligan's Island I can't remember now.

JANE

(re-entering)

Dad totally put explosives all over the island!

TAKEO

(while MARIA's screaming)

I was building up to that sweetie.

MARIA

You put explosives on our island?!

TAKEO

I researched it all. It'll take us about 40 miles out. No harm will come to the island. I figured I should tell you before I started them.

JANE

This is awesome.

TAKEO

Because there's going to be some shaking and, you know, exploding.

MARIA

(swears in Spanish)

TAKEO

It'll be fine Maria. Just hold on.

(lights, sound etc; signifying explosions)

TAKEO

We'll be drifting for about two days.

MARIA

('stupid head')

You crazy, cabeza de güevo.

TAKEO

Next best thing to being our own country.

JANE

I suppose we're going to be in a new zip code now.

TAKEO

You have to admit Maria, you always did want a little more room.

JANE

Like how some people up and move their houses.

MARIA

I suppose it will be nice. A little more space, a little more privacy.

JANE

Besides mom, you know how much you love riding around the island on a bright Sunday when the waters are empty.

MARIA

I guess as long as Stevesy doesn't get our forwarding address.

(lights change)

NEWSCASTER

('Chikishou' = gentler version of fuck)

In surprising news today. The small country of the Federated States of Micronesia, which consists of hundreds of small islands east of the Philippines, got a little bit bigger today. Not by adding land mass but by the shifting on one of the small islands, Elato in the state of Yap, further south by about 30 miles. This bold move was executed by Takeo Kenshin, who some may remember from over a decade ago when he tried to form his own nation, Nanonesia. When interviewed, he was quoted as saying, "Every man is an island, so get the chikishou off of mine." That's the news at 11, stay tuned for a CNN special, dogs and the women that love them.

## Appendix C4: Real Boy

Characters:

MAGGIE, 24 – ventriloquist living in NYC

KAREN, 25 – Maggie's roommate

BRAD, 23 – Maggie's dummy

Anytime BRAD speaks unless it's explicitly noted, MAGGIE has her hand on the back of his neck because she's the ventriloquist and he's the dummy. Once this small physical bond is established the audience can suspend their disbelief such that his face (and torso perhaps) can move. BRAD should not act like a puppet (necessarily), he's just the manifestation of their conscience, the unspoken. A practical physical limitation of playing a ventriloquist's dummy the actor who plays BRAD probably should respect is to stay seated.

Scene opens on MAGGIE making breakfast with BRAD curled up on couch not moving.

MAGGIE

I'm thinking eggs. Eggs and tea for breakfast. I suppose we can have cereal if you like but we eat Cap'n Crunch every day. Don't mess with a good thing.

(enter KAREN)

Hey Karen. You're up early. I'm making some breakfast. Cap'n Crunch or eggs?

KAREN

Just some coffee thanks, Maggie.

MAGGIE

Why you up so early? Care to watch the Price is Right?

KAREN

Bob Barker's not really my type.

MAGGIE

You'll miss out on the wondrous prize showcase that awaits. So, why are you up?

KAREN

Greg wanted to go to breakfast.

MAGGIE

That's weird. Breakfast date...

KAREN

He's got a busy day of work ahead and won't be able to do lunch or dinner.

MAGGIE

(suspicious)

Uhhh, okay.

BRAD

Whatever you say.

KAREN

Not everyone has her man at her beck and call.

MAGGIE

I'm just lucky I guess.

KAREN

Maggie I'm worried about you. Come with me to breakfast.

MAGGIE

I thought you said it was a date.

KAREN

You should get out of the house more.

MAGGIE

I have to practice, I told you that. I'm going to be on Comedy Central's special next week. Besides I have to go do a meet and greet with the other people from the special around lunch time today anyways.

KAREN

Didn't you say ventriloquism was a talent not a skill? Fine, whatever, we'll go out together tonight then, just you and me. Go to some clubs and drink and dance and—

MAGGIE

Okay.

KAREN

Really?

MAGGIE

It's hard to turn down an order to have fun.

KAREN

Good.

(phone rings)

Hey Gregg, honey. Yeah I'll be there in a lick.

(sotto voce to MAGGIE: )

I've gotta go, I'll see you tonight.

(back in the phone)

I'm here, I'm listening. Sure you can order for me, I'd love some eggs.

(KAREN exits)

MAGGIE

Maybe she's right. I've been spending a little too much time with you, Brad. But it's fun. You understand me. You don't complain. You're always there for me.

BRAD

Plus I'm really hot.

MAGGIE

You betcha.

BRAD

Karen's right though, you should get out more.

MAGGIE

I suppose I'm just never really in the mood.

BRAD

Dancing tonight will be good for you.

MAGGIE

I guess it's so embarrassing though.

BRAD

Good way to meet people.

MAGGIE

Sweaty hairless euro-trash raving blonde guys maybe.

BRAD

We'll as your mother would say, tick tock.

MAGGIE

(stands)

Oh Jesus, that's it, I'm channeling my mother. Going a little cuckoo, Maggie. Ooh, cuckoo. Cuckoo for Cocoa Puffs. Nice change from Cap'n Crunch. Tasty. Maybe I should read. I watch the Price is Right every day. God, I'm such a loser.

BRAD

(settling and exhaling. Speaking independently of MAGGIE)

Loser.

MAGGIE

What? Jeez I do need to get out more. Sorry Brad. I have been meaning to read more.

(sits down next to BRAD with a book)

Karen recommended this cool book, 'Kiln People' by David Brin. She said I'd find it ironic. It talks about cloning as aspect of yourself or something. Looks good.

(reads curled up with hand on BRAD's neck)

(phone rings)

BRAD

I'll get it.

(MAGGIE puts phone to BRAD's ear)

BRAD

Hello? Hi there! Actually I'm a dummy so I can't hear you. I'm not sure why I have the phone now that I think about it. Hold on.



MAGGIE

Heh, Sorry about that. Oh, mom. Hello. What no?

(stands)

No mom, I don't have a boyfriend, I'm just playing with my dummy Brad. Just fooling around at home. This IS my job. Gosh mom. Did you call to piss and moan? I can hand you back to Brad for all the difference it'll make. Yes Karen is fine. Yes we have food in the house. Well I'm sorry you do all the shopping. Ask dad to do some. Oh, so you two are fighting again. Uh huh. Oh. Yeah. Uh huh.

(puts phone up against BRAD's ear, at some point the phone falls into his lap, MAGGIE starts reading again)

(enter KAREN)

KAREN

God damn stupid ass!

MAGGIE

Karen's home.

KAREN

I cannot believe him. Where's the liquor, Maggie?

(drinks a lot throughout scene)

BRAD

Well hello sunshine.

KAREN

Can it Maggie. Greg dumped me.

MAGGIE

Ha, I knew something was wrong with a breakfast date. Good time for a dump date. Still have the whole rest of the day ahead of you.

KAREN

Are you, like, 6 years old? Show a little sympathy.

MAGGIE

Do I look 6?

BRAD

No way, you look 22.

MAGGIE

Close, 24.

BRAD

You look so young for your age.

MAGGIE

Oh you know how to flatter a girl, you sly devil you.

KAREN

Hello?!

BRAD

Hello.

MAGGIE

Hello. Er. Yeah. Sorry Karen.

KAREN

He just creeps me out is all. I know you need to practice and whatnot but I'm pretty fucked up. I just ask for a little sympathy since I don't think I'm going to get any empathy.

MAGGIE

What is the difference between sympathy and empathy anyhow? I've always wondered.

KAREN

Sympathy is thinly veiled pity. Empathy is pretentious, self absorbed sympathy.

MAGGIE

So why would you want empathy?

KAREN

I don't really want either.

MAGGIE

I meant sorry about Greg. From before. I'm sorry.

KAREN

Uh huh.

MAGGIE

Though now I'm wondering. Do I want to be sorry? Will it look like pity, or pretension?

KAREN

Don't worry about it.

MAGGIE

Well I am worried now. I apologize so rarely I'm wondering if I am pretentious about it.

KAREN

Just chill out. I'm trying to drink and your talking is making my brain hurt.

MAGGIE

Should you be drinking so much? It's 11 am.

KAREN

Should you be watching TV so little? It's 11 am.

MAGGIE

Wait. Crap. 11 am. I have to be downtown in a half an hour.

KAREN

Aww you're leaving me? Who am I going to drink myself into an oblivious stupor with?

MAGGIE

Well I'm not bringing Brad. He'll keep you company, won't you?

BRAD

You got it, doll.

KAREN

He called me 'doll.'

MAGGIE

Because you are.

KAREN

He's cute.

MAGGIE

Can't have an ugly wooden puppet at my side.

KAREN

(to BRAD)

You're cute.

MAGGIE

Hands off my man while I'm out.

KAREN

No promises.

MAGGIE

(puts her hand on BRAD's neck)

Don't let her drink too much.

BRAD  
I won't.

MAGGIE  
See you in a little while.

KAREN  
Bye.

MAGGIE  
And Karen...

KAREN  
Mmm?

MAGGIE  
I am sorry about Greg.  
(exits)

KAREN  
Men are jerks. Men are scum. Men are assholes. I feel like that could be a little ditty.  
(sings to herself)  
I hate you when you stay at work. I hate you when you lie. I hate you when you shut me  
up and when you say goodbye.  
PS. I hate you. Bottoms up.  
(takes huge swig)  
Uh oh. That might have been the shot that broke the camels back. Wonder if I'll regret  
that...  
(slings arms around BRAD's neck)

BRAD  
Probably.

KAREN  
What? Did you... Guess that was too much.

BRAD  
Probably.

KAREN  
Jesus Christ. I'm not drinking Maggie's Absinth am I?

BRAD  
Nope.

KAREN

This isn't happening.

BRAD  
Denial.

KAREN  
Shut up!

BRAD  
Anger.

KAREN  
What does it take to make you be quiet?

BRAD  
Bargaining.

KAREN  
Oh god, please please get out of my head, I can't take this.

BRAD  
Depression.

KAREN  
Fine. Fuck it. I'm crazy. I'm talking to a puppet.

BRAD  
Acceptance.

KAREN  
What do you think Brad?

BRAD  
He's a loser.

KAREN  
I know but he had such a cute butt. And getting dumped sucks.

BRAD  
Loser.

KAREN  
I'm not! I was going to break up with him anyways.

BRAD  
Liar.

KAREN  
I probably was.

BRAD  
Liar.

KAREN  
Maybe I was.

BRAD  
Liar.

KAREN  
Okay fine I wasn't going to break up with him. But how could I, he had the cutest butt.

BRAD  
He thought you were shallow.

KAREN  
Maybe.

BRAD  
You thought he was egomaniacal.

KAREN  
Probably.

BRAD  
It's better this way.

KAREN  
I guess.

BRAD  
You wanna watch the Price is Right and eat some Cap'n Crunch?

KAREN  
Mmm hmm.  
(KAREN curls up with BRAD)

(MAGGIE enters)

KAREN  
Hey Magarella. How was your thing with the stuff?

MAGGIE

Fine. Some of those comics sure are blowhards.

KAREN

(snickering)

Blowhards.

MAGGIE

How've you been? Has Brad here been good company?

KAREN

Great company. We had a big talk and I'm so over Greg.

MAGGIE

He's good for talks.

KAREN

Brad was telling me about what a jerk Greg is.

MAGGIE

He was now, was he?

KAREN

Mmm hmm. I feel a lot better now. Ima go take a nap. G'night Maggie.

(KAREN exits)

MAGGIE

Talking to my friend were you?

(leans in to BRAD, notices phone, picks up)

Mom? You're still there. What? Yes, of course I've been listening. Could you just repeat that last part?

(blackout)

## **Appendix C5: Shot in the Heart**

### **Setting:**

Takes place in LA, present day. Typical LA snappy talking, practically overlapping at times.

### **Characters:**

CANDICE, 31 brunette. Deadpan and sarcastic. Guarded and biting.

BETH, 28 blonde. Buoyant and self absorbed. Wear's it all on her sleeve.

Not necessarily stupid, just less perceptive and offended.

CRAIG, 36. A cocky, asshole manager whose internally sensitive and guarded.

TIMMY, 24. Young and daft, but easy on the eyes.

CHUCK (voice over), 29. Stupid and malleable, but has a good heart.

### **Notes:**

Chuck's voice over at the end should be done by the same actor who plays Timmy just using a different voice.

Scene changes don't need to be blackouts, they can be light changes utilizing different parts of the stage. The last scene in particular because the audience could view the end of scene 5 as the end (due to sappy end line), and not wait for the epilogue scene 6.



**Scene 1: CANDICE and BETH's apartment. CANDICE is reading the newspaper, BETH is bounding around the apartment.**

BETH

I shot a man in the heart today.

CANDICE

You don't say.

BETH

He was asking for it.

CANDICE

I'm sure he was.

BETH

You don't believe me.

CANDICE

Of course I do.

BETH

You think it's a metaphor.

CANDICE

You do have a way with men.

BETH

Is that an insult?

CANDICE

And with similes.

BETH

Similes use like or as.

CANDICE

I believe you in the sense that you hurt a man today.

BETH

I shot him with a gun.

CANDICE

Where'd you get a gun?

BETH

(proudly)

A 52 meter pistol.

CANDICE

You mean millimeter. And they don't make guns that size. And if they do there's no way you could have even fired it. It'd be the size of a cannon.

(beat)

BETH

Well I could have shot him.

CANDICE

I'm sure you could have.

BETH

Right in his beady little heart.

CANDICE

And he would have been asking for it.

BETH

Darn tootin'.

CANDICE

So you don't have a date for our party on Friday then.

BETH

Well no, I shot him.

CANDICE

Metaphorically.

BETH

More or less.

CANDICE

More less than more.

BETH

Well you don't have a date either.

CANDICE

Yes I do.

BETH

Pshaw. You didn't yesterday.

CANDICE

We're star crossed lovers.

BETH

For someone in love, you sure don't look it.

CANDICE

I'm not.

BETH

But you just said—

CANDICE

I wasn't being metaphorical.

BETH

That's more my forte.

CANDICE

I know.

BETH

It seemed a change for you. Speaking so poetically.

CANDICE

I wasn't being poetic. I was being succinct.

BETH

So how'd you meet?

CANDICE

On the set of that Kevin Spacey film I'm producing.

BETH

The one that's going to bomb.

CANDICE

Yes, that one.

BETH

Gotcha.

CANDICE

Kevin was getting into a hissy fit because we were out of melon.

BETH

Honeydew?

CANDICE

Cantaloupe.

BETH

Ah. Good melon.

CANDICE

Not very important to the story.

BETH

Well I'd hope not. It's just melon.

CANDICE

So his manager, Craig, came over to calm him down. And we started talking.

BETH

Ooh, is the manager the guy?

CANDICE

Do you want me to tell the story?

BETH

I'm just trying to really visualize it.

CANDICE

You're ruining what little flow I have.

BETH

I'm sorry; the story just doesn't seem very detailed. Continue.

CANDICE

Then we fucked.

BETH

And?

CANDICE

Then I asked him to come to the party.

BETH

And he said yes?

CANDICE

That was the whole point of me starting this story.

BETH

I'm sorry; the lack of an emotional hook made the plotline hard to follow.

CANDICE

Are you reviewing my story or the movie I'm producing?

BETH

Self depreciation and bland story telling is not going to hide the truth.

CANDICE

I don't want to know what your interpretation of the truth is.

BETH

(proudly)

You have a boyfriend.

CANDICE

No I don't.

BETH

Yes you do.

CANDICE  
No, I do not.

BETH  
Yes, you do too.

CANDICE  
Can we change the subject back to how you wanted to host this dinner party at our apartment—

BETH  
Chuck wanted to host it.

CANDICE  
Well you shot Chuck in the heart.

BETH  
Metaphorically.

CANDICE  
More or less.

BETH  
Someone's pissy this morning.

CANDICE  
What'd your boyfriend do to deserve getting shot?

BETH  
Oh I see.

CANDICE  
Not more truth telling.

BETH  
You're pissed because you never wanted a date.

CANDICE  
As you well know.

BETH  
And you were going pawn this guy off on Chuck.

CANDICE

You told me I needed to bring someone.

BETH

Otherwise it would be an odd number.

CANDICE

You also told me that Chuck was going to be here today.

BETH

Well he's not now.

CANDICE

Not since you went and shot him.

BETH

You're making me wish I had.

CANDICE

Well I wish I had now.

BETH

Being on a date alone won't be so bad.

CANDICE

Excuse me?

BETH

Well we can't have the dinner party now that it's an odd number.

CANDICE

Are you kidding me?

BETH

A three person dinner party? Come now. He'd just be coming to our apartment and eating with us.

CANDICE

Well I can't just go on a date alone with him.

BETH

So break it off.

CANDICE

I can't, I see him on the set.

BETH

Well you know the phrase. That's what you get for fucking where you work.

CANDICE

The phrase is, "Don't shit where you eat."

BETH

Exactly.

CANDICE

He's flying back out tomorrow to New York to get his favorite suit.

BETH

Can you say 'needy'?

CANDICE

Beth, can't you just get a date?

BETH

(flips through a magazine)

Out of the question, I'm an emotional wreck. Ooh, Manolo Blahnik is reissuing .

CANDICE

I love that Carmine slipper.

BETH

They'd look good with that long red skirt you have.

CANDICE

Beth, please.

BETH

Oops, gotta go I'll be late for work.

CANDICE

It's not work.



BETH

I get paid.

CANDICE

For standing in Macy's and telling people they look pretty in whatever crap they're wearing.

BETH

Those shoes really would look nice with your skirt. Lunch at 1 at Alto Polato's?

CANDICE

I'll be there.

(BETH exits)

Unless I shoot a man in the heart first.

(beat)

(doorbell)

CANDICE

Fuck.

(CANDICE opens door. CRAIG enters and kisses CANDICE passionately and somewhat brutishly.)

CRAIG

(looks around)

So is your roommate's boyfriend here for me to meet?

CANDICE

No, they—

CRAIG

Sweet. So we have the apartment alone then?

CANDICE

You could couch your intent a little more, Craig.

CRAIG

Kevin's the actor. Besides you were the one all over me yesterday.

CANDICE

I remember.

CRAIG

Sneaking off to the trailer for the extras.

CANDICE

I remember.

CRAIG

Telling me how much you wanted me.

CANDICE

I remember.

CRAIG

(leans in to CANDICE)

Whispering to me—

(CANDICE kicks him in the shin)

CRAIG

Ow!

CANDICE

I'm sorry.

CRAIG

You kicked me in the shin.

CANDICE

I'm sorry, Craig.

CRAIG

It didn't actually hurt that much.

CANDICE

I'm sorry?

CRAIG

I'm just wondering why you didn't kick me in the balls.

CANDICE

Interesting reaction.

CRAIG

Just the natural place for women to go when they're in a kicking mood.

CANDICE

Are you a masochist?

CRAIG

(attempting humor)

I do work with Kevin Spacey.

CANDICE

I was trying to kick you out.

CRAIG

I got that.

CANDICE

I'll call you.

CRAIG

Didn't you just kick me in the shin?

CANDICE

Goodbye, Craig.

(CRAIG exits)

(beat)

(blackout)

**Scene 2: At the restaurant. Scene opens up to CANDICE and BETH seated in the middle of their meal.**

CANDICE

I think I love him.

BETH

(choking on a piece of food)

What?

CANDICE

I fucked up.

BETH

I'm beyond confused.

CANDICE

Manager guy.

BETH

Who?

CANDICE

Beth, I told you about him this morning.

BETH

Oh yeah, the story with cantaloupe.

CANDICE

Could you have remembered a less important part of the story?

BETH

He's your boyfriend, right?

CANDICE

No he's not.

BETH

Yes he is.

CANDICE

No he is not.

BETH

Okay, I remember this now.

CANDICE

Must have been a mentally draining morning at Macy's.

BETH

(starts to take a sip of water)

So what were you saying before that.

CANDICE  
I love him.

BETH  
(chokes)  
What?

CANDICE  
Déjà vu.

BETH  
Do you know even know what love is, sweetie?

CANDICE  
You're one to talk. You said you loved Chuck madly and wanted to have his babies—

BETH  
He is dead to me.

CANDICE  
This conversation isn't looking to be as helpful as I was hoping it would be.

BETH  
God damn cuckold. Fucking cheating on me.

CANDICE  
Ironic word choice but I applaud the effort.

BETH  
I should have shot him with that 52 meter pistol.

CANDICE  
Millimeter. You didn't tell me he cheated on you.

BETH  
With his short, supple, Spanish secretary.

CANDICE  
I get an oddly good visual off of that alliterative description.

BETH

See? Don't details help a story?

CANDICE

You're the Walt Whitman of the raging ex-girlfriend world.

BETH

Aww, how metaphorical, Candice.

CANDICE

It slips out once in awhile.

BETH

So, you were telling me about your boyfriend?

CANDICE

He's not my boyfriend.

BETH

But you want him to be.

CANDICE

Well...

BETH

Well you must. You love him.

CANDICE

I don't know what I want.

BETH

Don't go making it so complicated, Candice.

CANDICE

No, it's just sex makes everything too simple.

BETH

One of only three things man knows how to do.

CANDICE

Eat, breathe and screw.

BETH

Everything else is a convoluted mess.

CANDICE  
Including love.

BETH  
So let me see if I've got this right. You felt like you needed to get a guy for Friday.

CANDICE  
Yeah.

BETH  
Which I'm sorry about.

CANDICE  
It's not really your fault.

BETH  
I know I just felt like I should say that.

CANDICE  
Your sympathy is moving.

BETH  
So you see this guy. Kinda cute. You fuck him. Get to talking.

CANDICE  
Then I slip up.

BETH  
You invite him to this dinner party mess.

CANDICE  
Yeah.

BETH  
When at this point you know you already like him and have already screwed everything up, because you've already had sex.

CANDICE  
I should have just cut my losses.

BETH

You must really like him.

CANDICE

More and more each time I see him, unfortunately.

BETH

And he just sees you as a big hole to stick—

CANDICE

Beth.

BETH

I'm sorry.

CANDICE

Me too.

(beat)

BETH

So now he's never going to see you as a person.

CANDICE

I don't know what to do.

(beat)

BETH

(energetic)

We'll have the dinner party. The three of us. Tell him you're a lesbian. You were just experimenting. And that way he won't be interested in you sexually anymore. So he can get to know you as a person. Then he'll fall in love with you. And then you can come out as straight and you'll be madly in love and get married move out to Santa Fe and have triplets.

(beat)

CANDICE

You need to watch less HBO.

BETH



Aww come on, Candice.

CANDICE

I wouldn't produce that screenplay none the less act it out.

BETH

You just don't want to have to make out with me.

CANDICE

Besides he wouldn't hang out with me and my lesbian girlfriend.

BETH

Guys think lesbians are hot.

CANDICE

He'd just go start banging some VP in marketing at Warner Brothers.

BETH

Do you want a guy who would leave you for some blonde floozy in marketing?

CANDICE

He wouldn't be leaving the real me, he'd be moving on after I turned lesbo on him.

BETH

Well, that's not very nice either.

CANDICE

And why would he have to leave me for some blonde girl?

BETH

I just think he would.

CANDICE

What were we even talking about?

BETH

You being a lesbian.

CANDICE

Before that.

BETH

You screwing him, then falling for him, and now you're up shit creek without a paddle.  
Do you want dessert? They have a great tiramisu here.

CANDICE

I'm not that hungry.

BETH

Your loss.

(beat)

CANDICE

(energetic)

We're doing the dinner party.

BETH

Hmm?

CANDICE

We'll sit, we'll talk, it'll be civilized, he'll get to know me, I'll get to know him, we'll laugh, we'll drink wine and you'll have a date.

BETH

Aww Candice, I'm so emotionally unstable.

CANDICE

Remember that hot intern, Timmy, from my office who always hits on you when you come to see me.

BETH

I love a man who can appreciate the finer things in life.

CANDICE

And you lovely lady are the finest thing in life.

BETH

I'll be there with bells on.

CANDICE

Thank you, my dear.

(pecks BETH on the cheek)

BETH

Either you really like this guy, or this is a deliciously elaborate plan to get into my pants.

CANDICE

My passionate lesbian love for you knows no bounds.

(CANDICE exits)

(blackout)

**Scene 3: Dinner party. Scene comes up in the middle of an awkward dinner party after large silence. CANDICE is wearing her red skirt and Manolo Blahnik Carmine slippers.**

BETH

Gee, this is fun.

CANDICE

Um, Can I get anyone more wine?

TIMMY

I'd love some.

CRAIG

It's great Candice.

CANDICE

I'll get another bottle.

CRAIG

'96 you said?

CANDICE

'92.

(exits)

TIMMY

(Trying to act knowledgeable about wine)

Mmm, you sure can taste it.

CRAIG

Uh, Tim you were saying—

TIMMY

Timmy. My dad is Tim. Every time I hear Tim, I just think Crotchety Old Man. “Get out of my yard you little hooligans!” Ha ha. Mom never should have bought those lawn gnomes.

CRAIG

How long have you two been going out?

BETH

(checks watch)

‘Bout a half hour now.

CRAIG

Candy told me you’d been going out for a few weeks now.

BETH

That’s my ex. I shot him in the heart.

CRAIG

Oh my god.

TIMMY

We’re mostly using each other for sex.

CANDICE

(entering)

Sorry that took so long, someone moved my wine.

CRAIG

We didn’t have to do this tonight. You should have told me that your roommate and her boyfriend broke up.

BETH

He’s dead.

CRAIG

It could have been just you and me and some wine.

CANDICE

No this is fine. This is fun. All of us getting to know each other.

BETH  
More or less.

CRAIG  
(smiling at CANDICE)  
I'd like to get to know more about some parts of some people.

BETH  
So, uh, Craig. What do you do for a living again?

CRAIG  
I manage Kevin Spacey. Tough job but somebody's gotta do it.

TIMMY  
Whoa. That's cool. Must be really hard.

CRAIG  
A lot harder than pouring coffee and popping pimples as Candice's intern I can assure you.

BETH  
Nice.

CRAIG  
What?

BETH  
So what do you do for fun?

CRAIG  
What's with the interrogation? Well. My hobbies include playing golf, watching football, fucking hot movie producers, smoking cigars, going to clubs and knitting.

CANDICE  
You like to knit?

CRAIG  
Shit no, I was just trying to fag it up so you'd quit asking me questions.

BETH  
Someone's a ray of sunshine.

CRAIG

Are we about done here? I have an early meeting so I'd like to get to the sex portion of the evening as quickly as possible.

BETH

We're lesbians!

CANDICE

Beth!

BETH

No seriously, see?

(BETH kisses CANDICE)

TIMMY and CRAIG

Hot...

CANDICE

Beth!

CRAIG

No it's cool. Lesbians are hot. Keep going.

(beat)

BETH

Was that the reaction we were hoping for? I'm not sure, now.

CANDICE

Okay, Craig maybe you should get going.

CRAIG

(slyly)

Are you going to kick me in the shin?

CANDICE

I shouldn't.

CRAIG

I'll call you.

CANDICE

You shouldn't.

(CRAIG exits)

CANDICE

I'm going to watch some HBO.

BETH

He wasn't right for you Candice.

CANDICE

Yeah...

TIMMY

Plus he was really ugly.

CANDICE

Your support is noted Timmy.

BETH

You still love him don't you?

CANDICE

(nodding)

I'm so stupid about men.

BETH

I don't see what you love about him.

CANDICE

Me either.

TIMMY

Me either.

CANDICE

That's the screwed up part. Well. It's better this way. I shouldn't be lowering the glass ceiling on my own head anyways.

BETH

Aww honey are you going to be okay.

CANDICE

I'll be fine.

(BETH and TIMMY start to exit)

BETH

Maybe I should stay.

TIMMY

I thought you said you wanted to go to my place for rebound sex.

CANDICE

I'm fine, Beth.

BETH

(while exiting with TIMMY. Preaching to him as someone older and wiser)

Oh Timmy, LA's a tough place to live and be in love. Dealing with constant ladder climbing, keeping up appearances, and the assholism that goes with it all. Plus if things go sour the other person owns half your stuff.

(blackout)

**Scene 4: 3 days have passed. BETH is just coming back from spending the last 3 days at TIMMY's place.**

BETH

(entering)

You're still watching TV?

CANDICE

You're finally home?

BETH

Don't tell me you've been waiting here.

CANDICE

Tivo has kept me company.

BETH

Substituting a man for a remote.



CANDICE

Ergonomical and brightly colored.

BETH

Cute.

CANDICE

And the all powerful mute button.

BETH

Why don't men have those.

CANDICE

Especially foul mouth managers.

BETH

Have you called him?

CANDICE

Too busy.

BETH

For 3 days?

CANDICE

Tivo is very demanding.

BETH

You and Craig should try to work something out.

CANDICE

We're not The Beatles.

BETH

He's not **extremely** awful and you do love him.

CANDICE and BETH

For some reason.

BETH

Listen. Go with your heart.

CANDICE

And get it riddled with holes?

BETH

You don't know that. Don't jump to poetic extremes. It's uncharacteristically emo of you.

CANDICE

Well aren't you high handed after a weekend of sex.

BETH

Rebound sex. I'm still an emotional wreck.

CANDICE

A sexually fulfilled emotional wreck.

BETH

We should start a club.

(phone rings)

CANDICE

Don't get it. It's Craig.

BETH

Are you like, 7? Pretending your not home.

CANDICE

What am I going to say? I love you but you're an asshole so I don't want to be around you or have amazing sex with you because it's too painful and you only see me as a sexual object.

CANDICE VO

Hi there, you've reached Candice Bellows and

BETH VO

Beth Alberts. Our cell phones must be off and you've reached our home answering machine.

CANDICE VO

So unless it's the apocalypse, which it must be if we didn't pick up our cells.

BETH VO

Leave us a message after the beep.

BETH VO and CANDICE VO

Beeeeep.

(followed by mechanical beeping sound)

BETH

I like that message.

CRAIG VO

Hey there Candy. I called last night but you weren't around I guess. I hope it's not the apocalypse. (weak laughter) Well anyways, just calling to invite you out tonight. I got two tickets to the Bethune Ballet.

BETH

That sounds nice.

CRAIG VO

(clears throat)

I heard girls like that flouncy shit. Makes 'em wanna have sex.

BETH

Nevermind.

CRAIG

Gimme a call.

BETH

Are we going to have to change our phone number?

CANDICE

The Bethune Ballet...

BETH

Because I don't even know how to do that. Are we even with the same company as our cell phones?

CANDICE

Why wouldn't he want to go to the Los Angeles Ballet?

BETH

Come to think of it I'm not even sure why we have this answering machine, I don't check the messages. You're the one with your phone off all the time.

CANDICE

The LA Ballet is the Broadway of ballet. He wants to go a small indie ballet company.

BETH

I wonder if Chuck ever left any messages on here.

CANDICE

(epiphany)

He actually likes ballet.

BETH

Are you kidding? Chuck hated ballet. We tried going to the LA Ballet once and he snored so loudly an usher had to wake him up and escort him out in the first movement. The dancers actually stopped and started staring at him. Heh. Oh, I miss Chuck.

CANDICE

I knew something didn't add up. I'm going out Beth, don't wait up.

BETH

Out? Where could you possibly be going?

(CANDICE exits)

I wonder what she has on her Tivo.

(blackout)

**Scene 5: CRAIG's house. CRAIG is relaxing in his living room, CANDICE bursts in.**

CANDICE

You're not an asshole.

CRAIG

What the hell?

CANDICE

You don't need to be an asshole with me.

CRAIG

How did you find my house?!

CANDICE

Star map.

CRAIG

I'm on a star map?!

CANDICE

Kevin Spacey is.

CRAIG

Oh.

CANDICE

He was surprisingly nice. Even made me some tea. We had a little chat. He said to remind you to come over tomorrow night to play Trivial Pursuit.

CRAIG

He must mean poker night.

CANDICE

He said he and his daughter just bought the new pop culture edition to try out.

CRAIG

Yeah, well. I should lock my doors.

(goes to door)

CANDICE

I know in this business you have to be a hard ass.

CRAIG

Yeah.

CANDICE

Even when you're not.

(beat)

Kevin said the thing with the cantaloupe was a set up.

CRAIG

He really does like cantaloupe.

CANDICE

He said you wanted a way to meet me.

CRAIG

It is his favorite melon.

CANDICE

I knew I liked you but I didn't know why.

CRAIG

You like me?

CANDICE

More or less.

CRAIG

More less than more?

CANDICE

More more than less.

CRAIG

You just seemed so hard assed and sex oriented I figured that's what you wanted.

CANDICE

Yeah well this city can convince you that's all you're ever going to get.

CRAIG

How'd you know?

CANDICE

Bethune Ballet. They only sell their tickets as season subscriptions.

CRAIG

I really do like ballet.

CANDICE

Me too.

CRAIG

You took quite a leap of faith putting this all together.

CANDICE

A little research, a little intuition and a little luck can sometimes bring you just the happiness you were looking for.

**Scene 6: Epilogue, two months later. CANDICE and BETH's apartment. All are playing Trivial Pursuit together in teams; BETH and CHUCK, CANDICE and CRAIG. BETH is back with CHUCK, who is offstage in kitchen. CANDICE and CRAIG are snuggling on couch.**

BETH

Sports or movies?

CANDICE

Duh.

CRAIG

Movies.

BETH

What was the title of a movie which premiered in 1991 in which the supposed hero was shot in the heart and died 20 minutes into the movie?

CRAIG

Easy.

CANDICE

Men of Respect.

BETH

You know Chuck and I are never going to win if you guys keep winning.

CANDICE

Truer words were never spoken.

CRAIG

He should come out here and help you then.

BETH

(yelling offstage)

Honey, get out of the kitchen. It's our turn. They're beating us, we need to get those little pie pieces faster.

CHUCK VO

You didn't tell me you had pie! What shelf of the fridge is it on?

CRAIG

It's the game Chuck.

CHUCK VO

There's pie in the game?

CRAIG

I'll help him find something to eat.

(exits to kitchen)

CANDICE

So, why did you get back with him?

BETH

I missed him too much.

CANDICE

I see why.

BETH

Besides it turns out that secretary bitch was an illegal immigrant looking to get knocked up to stay in the country.

CANDICE

Ah, the American dream.

BETH

Poor, simple Chucky got seduced by her.

CANDICE

So what happened?

BETH

Her green card got revoked and she got her whore ass deported.

CANDICE

Jingoism strikes a blow for good.



BETH

And how's everything been working out with mister Hollywood these past two months?

CANDICE

Swimmingly. We just got back from a weekend trip to Lake Tahoe.

BETH

Really?

CANDICE

Didn't notice I was gone?

BETH

Well what with Chuck over and all—

CANDICE

Sexually fulfilled and emotionally stable.

BETH

We should start a club.

CANDICE

Sometimes I wonder if it's too good to be true.

BETH

You really lucked out getting such a funny, smart, sensitive man.

CRAIG

(entering, munching down on pie slurring his words)

Mmm, turns out you guys do have pie.

CANDICE

(crosses to CRAIG)

Yes I did.

(kisses CRAIG on cheek)

(blackout)