

DRIVE
(or Omens, Oranges and the Pursuit of Happiness)

by
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DRAFT
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ACT I-1 (ON STAGE)

Street lights through the front window illuminate a south Florida motel room. A tropical rain falling in sheets can be heard and seen through the window.

There is a single bed, end table with a telephone upstage left near the window adorned with citric design curtains matching the bed linens. A small basket of oranges sits on a writing desk with chair stage right. There is a bathroom immediately offstage left. Simply put - a cheap motel room.

After a moment a figure appears at the window -- we HEAR a key fumbling for the lock and MARK CHESLER, 38, a corporate raider with clothes and haircut to match, enters completely soaked from the torrential rain.

He is a beaten man. He sighs deeply, looks around the room, takes off his wet dress shirt and hangs it on the back of the desk chair. He sits on the bed, running his fingers through his hair. He takes off his shoes.

He exits off stage to the bathroom - he returns with a towel drying his hair and face. He sits back on the bed and bounces to check the firmness. He sees the oranges, goes and takes one and bounces it off his arm. He lies back on the bed and tosses the orange up in the air - making a game of it.

MARK

What are you doing in sunny, sunny Florida, Mark? Well, what can I tell you, the Gulf of Mexico got in my way? When are you coming home, Mark? I'm not at liberty to say. Why is that exactly, Mark? Well - let's see - maybe because I don't know? Well, what exactly seems to be the problem, Mark? Well, for one thing, I'm talking to a fucking orange.

Without sitting up he tosses the orange across the room.

MARK

Poor Marky Chesler, the idiot boy, runs away to Florida to find himself.

He breaks down completely. He regains his composure and gets up to find the orange. He takes off the label and sticks it to various parts of his anatomy. The label ends up on his forehead.

He goes to the desk and sits. He opens the drawer and finds the bible. He opens it randomly and reads a passage.

MARK

"Repent, repent and you shall be seeded by the word."

He flips through the pages.

MARK

"And the harvest brought forth the bounty and gifts of providence."

He flips through the pages.

MARK

"And they did go into Bethlehem and did feast on various citrus products including Florida's very own sweet orchard oranges."

He looks to the front of the bible.

MARK

"Church of Later Day Orange Growers of America." Very nice.

He drops the bible back in the desk. He picks up another orange and begins peeling.

The orange squirts a bit of citric acid into his eye. He drops the orange and jumps out of the chair in agony.

MARK

Son-of-a-bitch!! God damn it!

He points defiantly at the orange.

MARK

I cast ye out! You piece of -- fruit.

The phone rings once. He stops. Waits for the second ring - none comes. He answers the phone anyway.

MARK

Hello?

He hangs up. He goes to the desk and grabs the bible. He takes the bible and picks up a couple of oranges. He attempts to juggle, the two oranges and the bible -- without any real success. As one orange falls he quickly drops the fruit in the basket.

He picks up the orange from the floor. He eyes it deliberately then sets about peeling.

He stuffs most of the orange into his mouth, gets up and begins walking around the room -- finally lying on the bed.

MARK

The thing is, Kit, I mean, I know it doesn't explain anything about - but . . . well, there are issues, you see . . . I couldn't discuss it with you because, you see, I needed to discover it myself. See? Right?

He gets up once again and begins to exit to the bathroom just as the phone rings. He watches it. He waits until the fourth ring and tentatively decides to answer.

MARK

Hello? Como who? No. It's not. No, there's no Eduardo here. No. Right.

He hangs up. Takes a few steps, the phone rings again. He answers.

MARK

Hello?

Nothing. He hangs up. He goes back to the desk and sits just as the phone rings. He answers.

MARK

Como esta? Si. Si, this is Eduardo. What? I'm sorry, que? No, really, this is Eduardo. Who's this? I mean, comment allez vous? Sprechen sie deutsch? Was ist das, Herr Goober? Hello? Hello?

He hangs up.

MARK

Funny.

He goes back to his desk and sits as the phone rings. He talks to the ringing phone.

MARK

Are you kidding me?

He lets the phone ring. He goes to the bed with an orange and sits, watching the phone. He begins to count the phone rings in unison with tosses of the orange. The phone rings 3, 4, 5 -- He answers the phone.

Is this Mrs. Fuller?

MARK

He hangs up and follows the cord to the wall attempting to unplug the phone at the wall. With great difficulty he manages just as there is a knock on the door.

Mark, in a shock, stumbles and cascades over the bed, smacking his head on the floor. He groans audibly. Another knock is heard. He gets off the floor rubbing his head and peers through the window just as a figure appears. He jumps back behind the door. A third knock is heard. He makes a decision. He swings open the door to reveal a soaking wet GLORIA, early twenties, dressed in blue jeans, combat boots, and windbreaker over a tank top. She has a quiet, innocent gypsy-like face. She speaks as though she forgets to breathe.

Hi -- Hi, hello?

GLORIA

Hi --

MARK

Hi! Can I use your phone?

GLORIA

What?

MARK

Uh can I -- do you mind if use your phone? My car, I lost my car and -- Do you mind? I'll only take a second and it's a local call. I'd happily leave you some money and I'll be quick, fast like as quick as in a hurry. Do you mind?

GLORIA

Did you lock yourself out?

MARK

No - it's just my car - it's right over there - and I just need to call somebody, you know. It's right over there -- I know it's a local one - it'll just take a second. Really fast. Please?

GLORIA

Uh, yeah, no. Sure. Go ahead.

MARK

Oh god, thank you. Thank you so much. I really appreciate it I can't even tell you.

GLORIA

She quickly shuts the door behind her and takes a deep breath.

GLORIA

My god, you have no idea how much I appreciate this! Thank you.

MARK

It's right over there.

GLORIA

I've been knocking on doors -- you'd think I was an axe murderer the way people treat you. Two words and slam the door in my face. I mean, I understand people need to be careful and all but jeez, come on. I mean, do I look like an axe murderer?

MARK

I wouldn't know.

She goes to the phone, picks up the receiver which Mark disconnected.

GLORIA

It's dead.

MARK

Oh yeah, no wait a second here.

He plugs in the phone and she listens for a connection then dials as she continues. . .

GLORIA

What happened to the good old days, you know? I mean, wasn't there a time when people would like, you know extend a hand or something, change a tire for you, give you a cup of soup - not soup but you know what I mean, right? It's like now a days people are ready to kick you in the teeth rather than smile back at you, you know? You wouldn't believe some of the reactions I got - it's busy, figures - some of the reactions from these people - not that I blame them, I guess. I mean, who am I, right? Some crazy person knocks on my door at 3:00 in the morning - is that what time it is?

MARK

No. Yeah - I don't know. It's late.

GLORIA

Jeez, right? It must be. It feels like it's the middle of the night - like I've been sleeping for the past three days or something -- years probably. Do you know that feeling? Somewhere between yesterday and today, or tonight my brain just sorta went out to lunch or something - went to sleep without telling me. I could probably say that about my entire life up to this point. I won't though - don't worry. I could but I won't - there are some things I guess, you should just keep to yourself.

MARK

It's a hard world.

GLORIA

Do you mind if I wait for a second - try again? I don't think I can go out and deal with another door slamming in my face.

MARK

Well, I'm not sure - you know, the front desk might be able to -

GLORIA

Exactly - the people at the front desk, I mean, what was that about? I rang the bell on the, you know, on the desk counter thing because I didn't see anybody around. Ding, ding, ding! I mean, they have a bell on the counter like you're suppose to ring it for exactly that reason - do you mind if I just kill this light over here? It's so bright.

She turns out the standing light immediately by the door.

MARK

Let's keep it -

GLORIA

Just for a second - I have this stigmatism thing going on - I usually wear sunglasses all day and at night too sometimes because some of these lights in these cheap motels, you know, with the florescent and all - no offense, I mean. This room is - I mean, well, it's - it's nice. But other ones with the lights like this one just burn my brain or something. Like illuminate the dark reaches of my soul or something, right? You know? I mean, who wants to see that, right?

MARK

You want to try that number -

She goes to the phone.

GLORIA

Oh right, right. I really do appreciate this, I mean, I'll leave you a dollar or something, whatever you think is appropriate - still busy - shit. Damn. Wouldn't you know it?

MARK

Are you okay?

GLORIA

Me, sure I'm fine. I'm good. I'm probably talking kinda fast, sorry about that. I have this tendency to talk really fast when I'm nervous. You know my heart beats --

MARK

Why are you nervous?

GLORIA

Oh, well I mean I practically barged in your room and you know, who am I and you let me in and I didn't want you to think I was some kinda freak or anything and now I try the call and it's busy. And I know I'm asking a lot of you to let me stay and try again and you've been very cool about this whole thing unlike the other people who practically crushed my face in their door just because I knocked asking for a little help, you know? We all need help sometimes, right?

MARK

Yeah, people are funny that way?

GLORIA

Funny? Yeah, that's a good way of looking at it. They are funny. It's funny. No. It's sad really. I mean, really I think I would have to say it's a sad thing. I probably did say it was sad or something when I first walked in but I like your approach better. Maybe it's funny. It could be funny if you looked at it a certain way, otherwise I think it's actually pretty fucking sad. Sorry about the language.

MARK

It's okay.

GLORIA

It's been a long day, you know?

MARK

I know what you mean.

GLORIA

Do you?

MARK

Oh, yeah.

GLORIA

A really shitty day.

MARK

Completely shitty.

GLORIA

Yeah? For you too?

MARK

Definitely one of my shittier days probably of all time. You want to try again?

She looks at him for a moment and drops her head to the side like she's found an understanding soul.

GLORIA

Yeah. Yeah, sure.

She goes to the phone and dials.

GLORIA

Still busy. Jeez. That figures, right?

MARK

Did you say your car broke down?

GLORIA

Well my car - it's not my car, I was getting a ride actually and I sorta took the opportunity to get out when I could, you know?

MARK

I don't know if I do.

GLORIA

Well, it's kind of a long story - I mean I just had to get out of this car because the people in it - jeez. I'm not sure. It was probably stupid because I left all my shit. I mean everything. I mean, I'm not sure, tell you the truth, I'm not sure what the hell I'm doing. I don't even have anybody to call.

MARK

What?

GLORIA

Don't listen to me. Maybe I'm an alien or something. Maybe that's it. Maybe I'm from another planet and I've been transported here to observe and record the stupid actions of stupid people until I became one of those stupid people myself. That's about the only thing that makes sense actually.

He takes a long hard look at her.

MARK

You're not going to hurt me, are you?

GLORIA

I might. You can never tell about people, you know? Have you ever noticed that? You meet someone and you expect or assume that they'll treat you a certain way - you know, because of how they conduct themselves when you're first introduced - but then - holy shit, right? Within five minutes they change into something else. Some kind of freak, idiot dangerous person - okay maybe not five minutes - maybe a day or two. A week maybe or a month, but they do change. They present themselves as one thing and then change into what they really are - some sort of freaked out, drugged up, dangerous asshole. Then look out! Before you know it, you're sucked into their world of shit and garbage and before you can even think about how you got there or what you're doing, you're thrown out of a moving car, lying unconscious on the side of some god forsaken road in the middle of the fucking night without so much as a dollar to find your way home. Except it isn't really a home. It's more like a burned out, roach infested stereotype that you call a home because that's where you left your bag with all your shit. Jesus Christ, I think I'm gonna be sick.

She sits down on the bed cries, sobbing. Mark brings over a waste can and places it cautiously at her feet.

GLORIA

I'm really sorry. I'm not usually such a complete idiot.

MARK

Is that what happened?

GLORIA

Which part? I don't really know what I said.

MARK

Oh. Okay, look you can still make that phone call.

GLORIA

Who should I call?

MARK

Well, who did you try to call before?

GLORIA

I didn't. I just pretended to call so I - so you'd let me in.

Mark is frozen for a moment.

MARK

Oh. I don't have any money.

GLORIA

Yeah, right. I rob motel rooms. I'm a bandit. Are you serious?

MARK

What do you mean?

GLORIA

You think I want to - I don't want any money.

MARK

You don't.

GLORIA

No. I mean, sure I want some money, who doesn't. But I'm not going to steal or rob you, whatever.

MARK

You're not?

GLORIA

Do I really look like that? I look like a criminal? Do you have a bathroom?

She quickly exits to the bathroom.

MARK

Yeah. No. I mean, no. Sure, it's in there. You could. I don't think I've ever been robbed before.

GLORIA(O.S.)

You don't think you'd remember being robbed? I'll bet you would. Oh my god, I do look like a - I don't know - like something. What do you think I look like?

MARK

Well --

GLORIA(O.S.)

I mean, I do look like something. Like a criminal. God, I look like a runaway, actually. Can I use a towel, do you mind?

MARK

Go ahead.

GLORIA(O.S.)

I look like that girl that was kidnapped in the 70's and they had that picture of her with a machine gun in a bank, remember her?

MARK

Patty Hearst?

She enters drying her hair.

GLORIA

No. Yeah? Is that her? I didn't know her name but I remember I saw that picture once.

MARK

With the beret.

GLORIA

Right, she had that cool beret and the machine gun. That was amazingly intense, right?

MARK

Definitely.

GLORIA

God, I hate Florida. No offense.

MARK

I've never been actually.

GLORIA

You're not - you just got here? What are you here for -- business or something? I don't mean to be nosey -

MARK

Yeah, on business.

GLORIA

What are you like a salesman or something? I've met a lot of salesmen on the road - which is stupid. I mean, of course I met them on the road. Where else would you meet salesmen? On the road, right? I mean that's what they do - they travel around selling their crap on the road, right? Is that what you do?

MARK

No.

GLORIA

I always thought I'd make a good salesman because I like to be on the road - you meet people you'd never meet sitting around some boring-ass hick town like Paducah, Kentucky, or Columbus, New Jersey, Pensacola, Florida, you know? Except you know what? I've been through all those little crap-hole towns and the people are all the same, same complaints, same TV shows, same attitudes towards people who come through trying to make sense of the world, you know? It's like they resent people for trying to understand their lives. Why would you resent people for making an attempt to find their way? I mean, granted you end up fucking up a lot, you know, making a lot of really, really bad decisions, but shit - that's life, right? Move on to the next one, let's see what's happening over here, you know? Can I have an orange?

MARK

Yeah - sure. Take two.

GLORIA

They always have oranges at these places. Like you need to be reminded you're in Florida or something. Actually it's probably just to get rid of them to keep the prices up so the grove owners can make their millions. I had a friend - well, an acquaintance -- actually he ended up being a real creep, a nut job, if you know what I'm saying. Anyway, he worked in some office at one of these groves and he told me they dump millions of oranges - perfectly good ones into the gulf so they can keep up the demand. You believe that? That's sick. Actually, what's really sick is that it's probably not even true. Now that I think about it, I think he thought I would be impressed by it, like he had some insider information - like it would turn me on, you know? Intrigue in corporate America. Behind the scenes of the great orange caper. Why would that turn me on? Would it turn you on?

MARK

No.

GLORIA

Right? It wouldn't turn anybody on. Guys are so stupid. Did you say you were a salesman?

MARK

I did. I'm actually on the mergers and aqua --

GLORIA

Woah - the bible. Are you reading this? Is that why it's out? You don't sell bibles do you?

MARK

No. I was -- I was juggling.

GLORIA

What?

MARK

I was juggling - you know, the oranges, the bible.

GLORIA

Juggling with the Bible. Boy that's a - what do you call that?

MARK

I don't know.

GLORIA

That's something. That's like 90% of religions, right? Juggling their bibles. Looking for the answer without a question, right?

She heaves a big sigh.

GLORIA

Wow. I need to lie down or something. Do you mind?

She lies down on the floor.

GLORIA

Let me just breathe here for a second and I'll be okay.

MARK

No, sure - okay.

GLORIA

I just need to calm down - I'm sorry about talking so much. It one of my little charms that absolutely ends up sickening people.

MARK

I have a few of those myself.

She looks up at him.

GLORIA

Oh, shit!

She jumps up.

MARK

What?

GLORIA

Do you have a pen somewhere? A pen or a pencil or something to write with? A pen? A pen!?

MARK

Ah, yeah -- I don't know. Over on the desk maybe or in it somewhere.

She pulls a notebook out of her wind breaker and runs to the desk. She looks in the drawer but finds nothing.

GLORIA

No pen. No pen!

MARK

Are you sure?

GLORIA

Yes, yes - no pen, no pencil. I need to write this down. I need a pen! Do you have one?

MARK

I don't know.

GLORIA

Can you look? Please!

He goes to his shirt on the back of the chair and finds a pen. She grabs it from his hand, sits back on the floor and begins writing.

MARK

You don't have to sit on the floor.

GLORIA

Shhh! Sorry - I have to get some of this down otherwise the whole thing is, like a blur.

He watches as she writes furiously.

MARK

You know --

GLORIA

Shhhh!!!

He stands frozen -- his eyes looking for a place to move. She goes on writing for a period of time, then finally asks...

GLORIA

What did you say your name was?

MARK

I - um, Mark.

GLORIA

(as she's writing) "In Florida with Mark -- with Mark" I'm going to call you Marcus. "Florida motel with Marcus Moon" I'm adding the "Moon" bit to add a little celestial symbolism to the experience, right? Where did you say you were from?

MARK

I didn't.

GLORIA

Oh. You didn't? Really? God I thought you said you were from somewhere but I haven't shut up since I got here so I probably wouldn't have heard you even if you told me you were from Mars.

MARK

I'm not from Mars.

GLORIA

That's good. "Not from Mars after all." That would have been something though, huh? I mean, if you said you were. Then I'd think you were nuts as much as you think I'm nuts. You do, don't you? I don't blame you. It's just been a really, really shitty day. I'm gonna put that down -- at least the possibility of you being from Mars.

She finishes, closes the notebook, tosses it toward her jacket. She lies back down on the floor.

MARK

I'm from New York.

GLORIA

Really? New York City? Maybe you're nuts after all. Just give me a second here, okay?

MARK

You don't have to lie on the floor, you know.

GLORIA

No, no - it's good. I have to be as close to the earth as possible. Let my heart calm down a little. I wrote it down so I'll be able to shut up now, watch.

He waits for a moment then slowly moves to sits in a chair. She's watching him from the corner of her eye.

GLORIA

I just need to release some of this shitty day, okay?

MARK

Sure - go ahead.

GLORIA

Cool. Thanks. Thanks a lot, Marcus Moon from Mars.

He lets her lie on the floor and makes his way over to the desk. He picks up an orange peeling it and eating it while watching Gloria fall asleep.

ACT I-2 (ON SCREEN)

A parked car on a Manhattan Side street.

Close-up of Mark sitting behind the wheel. He has a far away look, both sad and pathetic. From Off-camera we first HEAR JEFF CHESLER, 32, Mark's younger brother. We then SEE Jeff sitting in the passenger seat.

JEFF (O.C.)

Do you want a cigarette or not?

MARK

No. What kind are they?

JEFF

Non-filtered Lucky Strikes. What do you think? They're Marlboro Lights.

MARK

Don't smoke in the car.

JEFF

What are you talking about? Here - I'll crack a window.

MARK

Don't crack a window - it's easy to see us sitting here when the window is down.

JEFF

Who's looking? Nobody gives a shit. This isn't a stakeout, you know?

MARK

Then don't smoke, all right?

Why not?

JEFF

MARK

Because I don't want to smoke. If you smoke, I'll want to smoke.

JEFF

So what, I'm suppose to refrain from what I find enjoyable because you don't have any willpower?

MARK

I thought you were quitting anyway.

JEFF

I don't have time for all that.

MARK

How much are you paying for cigarettes?

JEFF

Don't worry about it.

MARK

You don't even have a job -

JEFF

Unemployment -

MARK

You don't even have a job but -

JEFF

What do you know about it?

MARK

I'll bet you spend \$300 a month on cigarettes.

JEFF

They're a business expense.

MARK

A business expense -

JEFF

A medical expense. Read the new tax laws, man.

MARK

She wasn't teaching today?

JEFF

That's what she said.

MARK
She said she was or she wasn't?

JEFF
She said she was not teaching today.

MARK
When did you talk to her?

JEFF
You really need to ask me all this again?

MARK
Yes, jackass. I do.

JEFF
Now that's not very nice.

MARK
Just tell me when you talked to her.

JEFF
I talked to her this morning - she said she wasn't teaching.

MARK
That's it?

JEFF
I asked her if she wanted to get some lunch. She said, no. She didn't feel like going out. I asked her if she wanted me to stop by. She said no. She wanted to be alone. Should I continue?

MARK
She's not there.

JEFF
She's not answering the door.

MARK
She's not answering the phone.

JEFF
She changed the locks.

MARK
I know that.

JEFF
Do you blame her?

MARK

You didn't help matters, genius.

JEFF

I didn't know though, did I?

MARK

You didn't believe me though, did you?

JEFF

Would you have believed you?

MARK

I would have believed you.

JEFF

I'm not you though, am I?

MARK

Only one of us got the brains in the family.

JEFF

Exactly.

MARK

Are you going to help me with this or not?

JEFF

I'm here aren't I? What do you want me to do?

MARK

What can we do? We'll wait.

JEFF

Fine. I'll go get some coffee. You want some coffee?

MARK

No - yeah. Wait, no. I'll have to pee.

JEFF

Jesus Christ -

MARK

Okay. Yeah - small, light -

JEFF

Light with two sugars. Meow, meow. I'll be right back.

MARK

Don't slam --

Jeff exits the car slamming the door -

ACT I-3 (ON STAGE)

Lights up on the bedroom of Mark and KIT CHESLER, his wife, early thirties and effortlessly attractive. It is a New York City bedroom in that there is just enough room for a queen bed and two night stands. The window is imagined as the forth wall audience. It is the middle of the night.

They are both asleep. Mark sits up quickly with a deep intake of breath. He swings his legs around and sits up on the side of the bed, his head in his hands. After a moment - (Kit is half asleep throughout the scene)

You okay? KIT

Yeah, yeah, go to sleep. MARK

You sure? KIT

No. Yeah - no. Go to sleep. MARK

Okay. KIT

He stands for a moment, rubs his face and head, goes to the window and breathes heavily.

What is it? KIT

I don't know. Nothing. It's stupid. Go back to sleep. MARK

Like what? KIT

Nothing. Mrs. Fuller, or something. MARK

Who? KIT

MARK

Mrs. Fuller -- nothing, it's just weird. Go to sleep. What time do you have to get up?

KIT

I have to teach.

MARK

Then go back to sleep.

KIT

Okay. You okay?

MARK

Yeah, yeah I'm fine.

KIT

Old Mrs. Fuller?

MARK

I don't know. I don't know what I'm talking about.

KIT

Is she mad at you?

MARK

What? No.

KIT

In the dream? Did you make her mad?

MARK

What are you talking about? Go back to sleep.

KIT

You should apologize.

MARK

Yeah, that's great. That's helpful.

KIT

Why don't you write it down?

MARK

For what?

KIT

Sometimes that helps, doesn't it? You used to write them down. You used to write everything down.

It's nothing. MARK

Fine - then it's nothing. Let it be nothing. KIT

A long pause. Mark sits on the side of the bed. A moment later he stands and goes back to the window. Almost to himself, he asks...

Are we having a baby? MARK

Kit sits up like a shot.

What? KIT

Are we -- are we having a baby? MARK

Do you not want a baby? KIT

What? No -- yes! Yes, I think. MARK

You think. KIT

We should talk about this later. MARK

Wait -- you think? You think? KIT

Don't listen to me. MARK

What do you mean, you think? Don't you think we're beyond the "you think" part? KIT

I'm sorry -- I'm sorry. Don't listen to me. MARK

Mark -- KIT

MARK

No, listen. Don't listen to me. I just had a -- stupid thing and I don't know what I'm saying.

KIT

Mark --

MARK

Please, Kit. It's okay.

He kisses her gently.

MARK

Just go back to sleep.

KIT

If we're going to -- we need to be on the same page --

MARK

It's not that.

KIT

It's not something you can take back --

MARK

Would you stop.

KIT

Not something I can take back --

MARK

I know that --

KIT

"You think"?

MARK

I'm half asleep -- so are you. Go to sleep.

KIT

A dream you had?

MARK

It's nothing.

KIT

What time is it?

MARK

I don't know - four something. I'm getting up.

Okay. Write it down. KIT

What? MARK

You used to write them down. You used to write everything down. KIT

That was a different dream. MARK

It might help. It might help you figure it out. Daddy. KIT

Funny. What do I know anyway? MARK

What? KIT

What do I know? I don't know. MARK

You know everything. KIT

I'll call you from the office. MARK

Are you getting up? KIT

What? Yeah - yeah. MARK

Okay. Are you going to be bored today? KIT

Go back to sleep. MARK

Okay. Hey, your review is today. KIT

What? Yeah. MARK

Good luck on your review. KIT

Are you being funny? MARK

What? KIT

Go back to sleep. MARK

Okay. KIT

ACT 1-4 (ON SCREEN)

Mark and Jeff in the car, in the same location on a Manhattan side street.

So what -- we're going to jump out and tackle her? JEFF

If that's what it takes. What the hell else can I do? She won't talk to me. MARK

And my role in this caper is to -- JEFF

You're here to convince her to hear me out. MARK

And how am I going to do that exactly? JEFF

First, you're going to tell her I was alone. MARK

Were you alone? JEFF

Yes, damn it! MARK

I don't know that. JEFF

Did you see anybody else with me? MARK

Maybe they were hiding. JEFF

MARK
Stop screwing around.

JEFF
Were they hiding?

MARK
Are you done?

JEFF
I don't know what you were doing in Florida.

MARK
That's not what she's upset about.

JEFF
Oh really?

MARK
She thinks I was down there with somebody.

JEFF
But you weren't.

MARK
No.

JEFF
Hmmm. Curious.

MARK
Damn it, Jeff --

JEFF
That's not really why she's pissed anyway.

MARK
Then why is she pissed, Sherlock.

JEFF
Because you took off, Dolt. She's pissed because you didn't talk to her about what was bothering you or what was going on in your head or whatever, Dumbass.

MARK
I didn't know what was going on in my head -- that's what I was figuring out -- what I was doing, I just - I was just driving, you know. Shit.

JEFF
Shut up.

MARK
What?

JEFF
What the hell were you doing in Florida?

MARK
I was writing everything down. I was figuring it out. I was --I was -- look, I think that given a moment -- a moment where, for whatever reason, you're forced to reflect, I mean, that when you're given an opportunity -- no, a responsibility -- no, even better actually -- the necessity of reflection, it defines what and who you are.

JEFF
What?

MARK
You ask a question. You ask a question and you're changed by simply asking. The question itself -- when asked -- is what changes you.

JEFF
Okay, let me try that again. What?

MARK
I was just looking for an answer, man.

JEFF
Okay.

MARK
But the answer doesn't even matter. It's asking the question that matters.

JEFF
The answer doesn't matter.

MARK
No. The answer -- look, the question leads the person, not the answer. The answer might move you to the left or the right but the question itself is the driver of change.

JEFF
The question itself. Okay, that sounds like Kit.

MARK
It does, right?

JEFF
Yeah, except when Kit says stuff like that there's a certain logic to it that people can comprehend.

MARK
That's why I was in Florida. I asked the question.

JEFF
You asked the question.

MARK
Yes.

JEFF
And the answer doesn't matter.

MARK
No. Not really.

JEFF
Yeah, okay. Look, I'm going to let you in on a little secret here. The answer may not matter to you but it sure as hell is going to matter to Kit.

MARK
She knows the answer.

JEFF
Oh, she does, does she?

MARK
She's always known the answer.

JEFF
Okay. Here's another little secret. No, she doesn't.

MARK
Yes, she does.

JEFF
No, she doesn't.

MARK
Yes, she does.

JEFF
Dude, I'm telling you flat out. She doesn't know what the hell you where doing in Florida so unless you have an answer -- like, a coherent answer -- like, a legitimate, coherent, STRAIGHT and direct answer, you are dead.

MARK
I'll pay your rent for the month.

JEFF
Okay, I'll help you. You take her high, I'll take her low.

ACT I-5 (ON STAGE)

Jeff waits on a park bench turning the pages of a large artist's portfolio. After a moment, Kit enters. Jeff quickly closes the portfolio.

KIT

Hey, I thought you were starting that job today.

JEFF

I called in sick.

KIT

You're joking.

JEFF

Somebody will cover for me.

KIT

Are you kidding?

JEFF

It fell through.

KIT

Seriously?

JEFF

Somebody's nephew or something came in for the summer.

KIT

I'm sorry, Jeff.

JEFF

Ah, what are you gonna do, right?

KIT

Well, let me give you this.

She opens her handbag.

JEFF

You're not giving me money, okay? You're loaning me money.

KIT

Do you have any idea how much money we've "loaned" you.

JEFF

Don't say we, number one - this is between you and me, okay?

KIT

I know, I know. Fine. Do you have any idea how much this loan adds up -

JEFF

I have a pretty good idea.

KIT

Oh yeah?

JEFF

Yeah, I do. How much do you think it is?

KIT

I know exactly how much it is.

JEFF

How much then?

KIT

No, I'm much more interested in how much you think it is.

JEFF

I'm keeping track, don't worry about it.

KIT

Well, how much then?

JEFF

I don't want to get into this crap - don't you have to teach or something?

KIT

It's not that - but you have to know that --

JEFF

If you don't want to loan me the money, don't.

KIT

I don't mind the money, Jeff --

JEFF

Because you know Mark wouldn't understand - I mean he'd lose his shit without even asking why.

KIT

This isn't about Mark -

JEFF

I'm just saying - I appreciate the support, Kit. But he's so goddamn tight these days -

KIT

Let me tell you something -- if Mark remembered the kind of love you have when it comes to your - forget that -- if everything works out it won't matter.

JEFF

If everything works out?

KIT

When it does, he'll be thrilled for you. He'll be jealous as hell but he'll be thrilled too.

JEFF

That'd be something. I'd love to see that.

KIT

Don't underestimate him, you know --

JEFF

He underestimates me.

KIT

He underestimates himself.

JEFF

Where is he today anyway?

KIT

Where do you think?

JEFF

No, I called over at work - they said he took off.

KIT

What?

JEFF

They said he took off.

KIT

What time is it?

JEFF

Like I have a watch?

She finds her watch in her handbag.

KIT

He's probably at lunch. He had his review this morning.

JEFF
Why wouldn't they just say that? "He's at lunch." That's even fewer words - "He took off" Actually, it's the same amount of words but it's sure a lot clearer, isn't it?

KIT
Here's two hundred.

JEFF
How much?

KIT
How much did you say?

JEFF
I said four but it's no big deal.

KIT
Really - I thought you said --

JEFF
I'll take three if that's all you have.

KIT
I was hoping to eat lunch today.

JEFF
I'll take whatever you want to give me - you're doing me a favor so --

KIT
Here's three -

JEFF
Thanks.

KIT
That's twelve hundred.

JEFF
What?

KIT
Twelve hundred.

JEFF
Are you serious?

KIT
How much do you think it is?

JEFF
What did you just give me, two?

You tell me.

KIT

Including this - I'd say six hundred maybe.

JEFF

Are you serious?

KIT

It's a loan. You say twelve hundred, I say six hundred. So we'll meet somewhere in the middle. I'm joking. It's a loan, okay? A loan. It's all in here, baby.

JEFF

Jeff pats his portfolio.

I'm counting on it.

KIT

So am I.

JEFF

So, can I have a look?

KIT

Not yet -

JEFF

Okay, okay -

KIT

Hey, you know -

JEFF

I know, I know --

KIT

I'm just saying, I appreciate your support in all this, Kit.

JEFF

It's easy to get behind somebody when they have vision.

KIT

You think I have vision?

JEFF

You have vision.

KIT

This is why you're a great teacher.

JEFF

KIT

Because I give you money.

JEFF

Because I asked you for help and you gave it to me.

KIT

When you're famous you can pay me back.

JEFF

The first check I write will be "pay to the order of Kit Chesler".

KIT

After you get a checking account.

JEFF

For six hundred dollars.

KIT

You're an ass. You know that, right?

JEFF

Oh yeah. Definitely.

ACT 1-6 (ON STAGE)

The Florida motel room, the next morning. The rain continues though not with the same intensity.

Gloria is asleep in the bed. Mark stands at the window watching the rain. He sees the pen on the floor and picks it up. A loud clap of thunder is heard.

Gloria stirs.

Gloria

Oh my god. Oh.

Gloria sees Mark. She screams.

GLORIA

What -- what do you want! How did you get in here!

MARK

What?

GLORIA

What do you want! What do you want! What do you want!

MARK
I'm the one - I, I let you in!

GLORIA
What!?

MARK
I let you in last night.

GLORIA
Wait! Who? Wait - wait a second. Who are you?

MARK
I let you in -- remember? This is my room. Mark? Marcus Moon from Mars, you know?

GLORIA
Just hold on a second, okay? Florida?

MARK
That's right.

GLORIA
Mark. Mark from New York.

MARK
That's right.

GLORIA
Not from Mars after all. Oh jeez. Wow. I passed out, didn't I.

MARK
Are you okay?

GLORIA
I think so.

MARK
Do you have a name?

GLORIA
Gloria. How did I get in the bed?

MARK
I put you there. Do you have a last name?

GLORIA
Not really. I need - I need to pee.

She gets up and exits to the bathroom.

Are you sure you're okay? MARK

I'll let you know in a minute. GLORIA (O.S.)

She reenters.

Did you ever wake up from a dream but you didn't know you were awake or you didn't know you were still dreaming because in your dream you were aware that you were asleep? GLORIA

Say that again? MARK

Am I still dreaming? GLORIA

What? MARK

Gloria comes over to him and kisses him full and passionately on the mouth. Mark breaks the embrace.

You're not -- I don't think you're dreaming. MARK

Maybe I'm asleep and I'm dreaming of you. GLORIA

You're not asleep. MARK

Are you asleep? GLORIA

No. MARK

How do you know? GLORIA

I'm not asleep. MARK

Maybe you're dreaming of me. GLORIA

MARK

Look - I'm not asleep. You're not asleep. You and I are both awake. We are both up and about, see?

He does a little dance around.

GLORIA

Good. That's a good thing. Thank you. Where did you sleep?

MARK

Here -

GLORIA

On the floor?

MARK

Yeah. I need to be as close to the earth as possible, you know - let go of some anxiety.

GLORIA

Hey - that's what I - oh. You're just messing with me aren't you?

MARK

Somebody's messing with somebody.

GLORIA

You really put me in bed?

MARK

I did.

GLORIA

I still have my clothes on and everything.

MARK

Yeah - so do I.

GLORIA

That's interesting.

MARK

What?

GLORIA

I could have been naked.

MARK

Yeah well, molesting strange women who pass out on the floor of my motel room - I mean, you know, it's not something I make a habit of doing. Tempting though -

-

GLORIA

I've met a lot of gay guys so it's not a big deal.

MARK

What? No, I'm not - whatever.

GLORIA

Is that why you're here?

MARK

What? What do you mean?

GLORIA

Is that why you're here in Florida?

MARK

What are you - what does that mean? Why would I be in Florida?

GLORIA

Because you're gay?

MARK

Why would I be in Florida because I'm gay?

GLORIA

Are you really confused?

He pauses for a moment trying to see where she's coming from and decides he can't. He starts laughing -

MARK

You're great. Seriously. You're great, you know that?

GLORIA

What's so funny?

MARK

Gloria, you're a very funny young lady. Yes, I am confused. I am amazingly confused. I am so confused that I drove through the fucking night and ended up in Florida because I am so confused.

GLORIA

Because you're gay?

MARK

No - not because I'm gay.

GLORIA

Now I'm confused.

MARK

I'm not gay. Okay? I'm not - but I'm still confused. It has nothing to do with being gay, okay? I'm not - that's not why I'm confused. I'm confused about a whole series of other things that have nothing to do with whether or not I'm gay. Okay. I'm not gay. I'm just confused.

GLORIA

You're married.

MARK

What? Yes. I'm married.

GLORIA

She threw you out, didn't she?

MARK

What? No.

GLORIA

Caught you sleeping around, typical guy stuff, right? Getting a little wet and wild on the side. Do you love this woman?

MARK

What woman?

GLORIA

Your wife?

MARK

Yes. Yes, I love her.

GLORIA

Then how could you do that to her?

MARK

I didn't do anything.

GLORIA

Where's your suitcase?

MARK

I didn't - I don't have --

GLORIA

It's none of my business, I know.

MARK

I didn't - look -- why am I defending myself?

GLORIA

Guilt.

MARK
I'm not guilty of anything.

GLORIA
Everybody's guilty of something.

MARK
Yeah, well not me.

Gloria freezes for a moment, making an internal check. She places her hands over her heart then very quickly takes off her shirt, revealing a simple bra.

GLORIA
Here, check this out. Let me have your hand.

MARK
What?

GLORIA
Here. Hurry! Just come here. Let me see your hand.

He walks over to her. She takes his hand and puts it on her heart.

GLORIA
Can you feel that?

MARK
What am I feeling?

GLORIA
Shhh! You have to be really quiet and just listen with your hand, okay?

MARK
Okay.

GLORIA
Shhh! Just listen with your hand.

After a moment, he grows more uncomfortable.

MARK
I'm not sure what I'm listening for.

GLORIA
My heart. Just listen to my heart.

MARK
With my hand.

Yes! Shhh.

GLORIA

He slowly does - more and more paying particular attention to the heart beat.

Do you hear it?

GLORIA

Yeah. Yeah, I do. I can feel it.

MARK

Pretty cool, right?

GLORIA

What is it?

MARK

It's my heart.

GLORIA

I know it's your heart but what is it doing?

MARK

She kisses him as she places his hands on her breasts. He jumps back startled.

Okay --

MARK

You have to kiss me.

GLORIA

Why?

MARK

So I know I'm okay.

GLORIA

But --

MARK

Just kiss me, damn it!

GLORIA

She kisses him again. He tries to but offers little resistance as she pulls him in. Finally, she breaks the kiss.

GLORIA

Wow. My heart -- my heart has this beat -- I have this thing -- this syndrome. It's like an extra beat in my heart and sometimes it makes my heart feel like it's going to bounce out of my chest.

MARK

Does it hurt?

GLORIA

Not really. It scares me a little. Actually it freaks me out totally but I think it's a sign, you know?

MARK

What do you mean?

GLORIA

Well, like my heart freaks out to reminds me that all this crap around me -- not that it's always crap, I mean, I guess it can be beautiful and magical too - but it's just fleeting, isn't it? It's all just here and gone and here and gone and where are you and why are you where you are and are you learning anything? That kinda stuff. So now, it's like, when my heart gets into that rhythm, I try to pay attention to where I am which is why I kissed you, I guess. Because you felt it too and it made me feel good to not be alone for a second.

Gloria sinks back on to the bed and begins crying.

MARK

Hey - hey, are you okay?

GLORIA

Do I look okay? Look, I'm sorry. I barged in here and I don't know what I'm doing. It's just here and gone and where and how and why and -- it's just seems that no matter what I do I'm left with the exact same feeling as when I started.

MARK

Gloria.

GLORIA

What?

MARK

Look - you and I - you know, we actually have a lot in common.

GLORIA

Right. We're twins.

MARK

I'm just saying - look at me. I'm sitting in this crap hole wondering the same thing -

GLORIA

What do you mean?

MARK

I left - I just started driving. I wasn't even aware of it really. I figured I'd just keep driving until an answer came to me about what the hell I was doing with my life. Now I'm sitting here in Florida and I have absolutely no idea what the hell I'm doing.

GLORIA

You're scared too?

MARK

Maybe. I have no idea. I really don't.

GLORIA

It's like, fear happens when you feel yourself becoming something that you don't want to be. Like when you can see yourself going there but you don't know how to stop. Like when I met this guy Herman. Herman Brooks - a stupid name which happens to absolutely describe him perfectly, you know? I thought he was smart - I mean, I think he had taken some college classes. He spent some time in the army too I think -- I'd have to look through my notebook. Anyway, Herman had this way of talking that made you want to listen -- like he was about to impart some serious wisdom on you. I mean, when you're lost, you're hoping a person like that can help you sort through the crap and provide a little guidance. Yeah well, we were driving around one night and Herman pulls into this supermarket, this Winn Dixie supermarket and tells me to wait, says his friend is the manager and he wants to say hello. So I'm sitting outside and I'm writing in my notebook, you know observations of who and what and where, you know -- trying to come to terms with why I am where I am when I hear this woman screaming. I look up and I see Herman running outta Winn Dixie waving this gun and yelling for me to drive, you know, just drive the car. So I jump over to the driver's seat and I start the car and he dives in, like dives through the window -- the passenger window - which wasn't even open and screams at me to floor it. Drive! Just drive! Then, you know, my heart - we sped away and I looked over at Herman and he's bleeding from the glass and the window and he's laughing like a hyena. Let me tell you something, in that moment I knew exactly what I wanted. I'm mean that was it. All the confusion emptied out of me like I was a clogged drain and Herman was Drains. The next traffic light we came to I jumped out and I ran. I ran and I ran and I kept running and it started raining. It's funny. I was running and I felt all my fear and confusion wash right off me. Sometimes life provides you a snapshot of clarity, you know? Like, hey! Here's a defining moment. It's your move. Run!

ACT 1-7 (ON SCREEN)

Mark and Jeff in the car, in the same location on a Manhattan side street.

JEFF

Why can't you be?

MARK

She wasn't -- You can't be a runaway at twenty-three.

JEFF

What the hell are you talking about? You were one and how old are you?

MARK

I didn't run away.

JEFF

Oh, I think you did.

MARK

No, I didn't.

JEFF

Now is not the time for denial.

MARK

Fine, okay, I ran away. But doesn't mean - would your cop buddy - do the cops call a missing adult a runaway?

JEFF

No, they do not.

MARK

Thank you.

JEFF

A thirty eight year old man who runs away? They call him a pussy.

MARK

You're a seriously excellent understanding son of a bitch.

JEFF

Come on, you gotta be able to make light of it at some point.

MARK

Could I see Kit first before you completely destroy me?

JEFF

What would you do differently?

MARK

What?

JEFF

Let's assume you've learned something. Just for fun. You did learn something, right? All right, forget that. Maybe if you had a tape - like if there was a video tape you could go to. An instant replay -

MARK

What are you talking about?

JEFF

Wait, this is good! What if you could replay the highlights of your life - not the highlights - just the parts, the decisions that brought you to the highlights. The real decisions, the hard turning points, the epiphanies, you know?

MARK

There was only one epiphany.

JEFF

You know what we should do?

MARK

What?

JEFF

We tape it. I'll set up a camera, Kit walks in and everything you discuss is recorded.

MARK

Video tape it.

JEFF

Yeah, yeah - but we keep in real, right. Don't even mention it to her - it's like a fly on the wall.

MARK

So we secretly tape the discussion. You'd record the conversation from a hidden camera.

JEFF

I didn't say I'd hide it. I said I'd tape it.

MARK

For what? Why the hell would I tape it?

JEFF

To record it. To make record of it.

MARK

You're whacked.

JEFF

Did you guys tape your wedding?

MARK

So what?

JEFF

Did you ever watch the tape of the wedding?

MARK

So?

JEFF

Of course you did. You go to the tape because it's the need to pull the past into the present. Like a reminder -- a lesson retaught. Happy, happy day, day. That's why you record it.

MARK

This is your idea of helping me?

JEFF

It's the same thing. This is like - the real human life shit. The divorce showdown! Think about it, you tape the conversation --this confrontation with Kit, you have this little memory stored away - something you can pull back into the present to learn from -- wait! No, how about this! You cut in shots from the wedding, I mean everything is there - beginning, middle and end of a relationship. Man, that's pretty good. You have a classic American story there - from wedding to divorce. Well, you'd have to shoot a little filler for the middle but still. You edit it all together, throw a clever little title with a double meaning or something ironic, like "Complacency" and boom! Send it around to film festivals -- man, they eat this kinda shit up.

MARK

This is why you're single.

ACT 1-8 (ON STAGE)

The living room of Kit and Mark.

Kit is hurried and nervous, on the phone.

KIT

That's what you said ten minutes ago. Now it's ten minutes later and you're still answering your phone? I know it's a cell. I'm just wondering where the hell you are? I mean, how long does it take to -

There's a knock on the door. She crosses to answer it as she continues speaking.

KIT

How long does it take to get from there to here? It doesn't take -

She opens the door to Jeff. He is talking on a cell phone.

JEFF

Ten minutes. Give or take a few because my phone keeps ringing every five seconds. These minutes aren't free, you know.

KIT

You're real funny, Jeff. A laugh riot.

JEFF

So where is he?

KIT

I don't know. If I knew I wouldn't have called you.

JEFF

You hungry?

KIT

No, I'm not hungry, damn it.

JEFF

He's not at work?

KIT

No. This is beautiful. They called here looking for him.

JEFF

He didn't go to work?

KIT

Yes, he went to work. He had his review this morning. He got a promotion - a big promotion.

JEFF

For what?

She looks at him.

JEFF

So, you talked to him?

KIT

No - they told me that - his assistant or whoever. They said he had his review and no one has seen him since.

JEFF

I don't get it.

KIT

I guess - I mean, I just assumed the review - but then he got this promotion and I - I don't get it either.

He called you though? JEFF

He left a message from the car. He said he was going for a drive. KIT

That's it? JEFF

Yeah. Yeah, "I'm going for a drive." Whatever the hell that means. KIT

I think it's obvious. JEFF

What's obvious? KIT

He found out about us, Kit. JEFF

He goes to kiss her. KIT

God damn it, Jeff. Knock it off. JEFF

As you wish. KIT

Where the hell is he? JEFF

He went for a drive. So what? KIT

He takes the subway. He doesn't drive to work which means he came home, got the car and took off? He hasn't been back to the office. What kind of drive - who takes a drive around New York City? There's no "drive". You go somewhere, you go somewhere else, you go home, you go to work, you -

Go nuts. Call the cell phone. JEFF

It's not on. KIT

Call the hospitals. JEFF

She looks at him long.

I did. KIT

JEFF
Kit - it's only, what? It's nine o'clock. I wouldn't worry about it.

KIT
Can you find him?

JEFF
Just relax, okay? He'll come back, he'll apologize for whatever he did, you'll cry - good as new.

KIT
Could you stop screwing around for a second, please?

JEFF
What did he do anyway?

KIT
He didn't do anything - I just need - I'm just worried about him.

JEFF
What happened?

KIT
Nothing happened.

JEFF
Okay. You got anything to eat?

KIT
Look, don't you have a friend - what's your friend's name -- the cop?

JEFF
Danny.

KIT
Right, Danny. I mean, if he needed - if they needed to, they could find somebody, right. If they needed to?

JEFF
He's a cop, Kit. It's not like the CIA. Jesus, what did he do?

KIT
He didn't do anything! I'm just worried about - I just want to know where he is.

JEFF
You haven't talked to him directly.

No. KIT

He sounded okay on the message. JEFF

Yeah - No. I mean yes, I guess. KIT

Well which is it? JEFF

Fine. He sounded fine. KIT

What did he say exactly? JEFF

He said - "I'm going for a drive." KIT

Oh shit - JEFF

What? KIT

Forget that. JEFF

What is it? KIT

Nothing. Go ahead. JEFF

What, goddamn it - what? KIT

Well, it's just - I mean, I don't want to alarm you. JEFF

What is it! KIT

Maybe he went for a drive? JEFF

Okay, fine - you can leave now. KIT

JEFF
You always freak out about this shit, Kit.

KIT
Thanks, Jeff. You're a big help.

JEFF
All I'm saying is he's a strange man. Brother or not - and I know every family has one, but he's the nut.

KIT
I'm pregnant.

JEFF
What?

KIT
I said I'm pregnant.

JEFF
Don't look at me.

Her look says everything that's wrong with that statement.

JEFF
Sorry. You're serious?

KIT
Don't you have a friend - that cop, what's his name -

JEFF
Jesus Christ, Kit. Really?

KIT
Really.

JEFF
How long? I mean weeks, months -- how many months?

KIT
I don't know - two?

JEFF
God damn. Does Mark - does he know?

KIT
How would he know? He went for a fucking drive.

JEFF

Holy shit - how did you - I mean, I didn't realize you guys were even considering -

KIT

Who is that cop friend of yours?

JEFF

Damn, Kit - congratulations.

KIT

Please, Jeff.

JEFF

Danny. Danny the cop. I'll call Danny. Should I call Danny?

KIT

They can find him - if they needed to, right?

JEFF

I don't know. I might have to say he killed somebody - but let me ask.

KIT

Could you try to make this easier?

JEFF

Let me just ask him - I'll see what I can do. Holy shit - they're pregnant.

END ACT I

ACT II-1 (ON STAGE)

Lights up on Mark and Kit sitting on a single park bench stage right. Kit carries a bag of oranges.

KIT

You don't think that's incredible? Come on, Mark - that's - see, how can you think that was anything but incredible.

MARK

It's pretty strange, no doubt.

KIT

It's amazing when things like that happen. It's like the world goes from random and chaotic to clear and focused in that moment.

MARK

I can't believe she recognized me.

KIT

Don't you think it's a sign? It's too weird to be a coincidence. It's a sign.

MARK

I think it's strange - that's all I think it is.

KIT

An elevator in the middle of New York City.

MARK

Yeah, yeah - it's wild, okay? No doubt.

KIT

Some little old school teacher recognized little Marky Chesler from Appleton, Wisconsin.

MARK

I was never little and nobody called me Marky.

KIT

She called you Marky.

MARK

Yeah, well she drank a lot.

KIT

I call you Marky.

MARK

And you smoke a lot of dope.

KIT

Come on - she was really happy to see you.

MARK

Would you knock it off with that crap?

KIT

Crap? It's crap? See, I don't understand that at all.

MARK

It's New York City, Kit. People run into people all day every day.

KIT

I'm not talking about people. I'm talking about Mrs. Fuller, your 85 year old fourth grade teacher.

MARK

Let's get some lunch.

KIT

I don't want to eat yet. Are you working early tomorrow?

MARK

I have my review tomorrow.

KIT

Eat an orange and I'll make dinner later.

MARK

I don't want an orange.

KIT

Here, these are the good ones.

MARK

I don't want an orange.

KIT

I just picked these up.

He takes one from her and starts to peel it.

MARK

Look at this thing. Why do you buy these? It's all seeds.

KIT

Then just wait - I'll make dinner.

MARK

What kind of sign is that, huh? That has to mean something, right? I just want to go home and take a shower.

KIT

Fine. Go take a shower with this omen hanging over your head.

MARK

Oh, it's an omen?

KIT

It could be. You run into your teacher, from twenty five years ago, on her only day in New York.

MARK

That's an omen? What about the orange?

KIT

Why not? In an elevator in New York City - I'll bet this was her first time too.

MARK

Her first time in an elevator? I doubt it.

KIT

And little Marky Chesler made her trip complete.

MARK

Yeah - there you go. See -- everybody's happy.

KIT

Except it's not an omen until you act on it. But people don't act on them. You know why?

MARK

No, why?

KIT

Because they're afraid. Fear gets the best of them, which is funny. Because omens are shown to us for our good - but fear makes you blind to them -- makes you run in the other direction -- makes bad things happen where good things are meant to be.

MARK

What am I afraid of?

KIT

Mrs. Fuller, in an elevator, in New York City you come full circle. If that's not the universe reminding you of something --

MARK

Oh boy.

KIT

You need to pay attention to these things.

MARK

There comes a point when you have to give up childish things, Kit, you know?

KIT

So I'm childish?

MARK

I didn't say that.

KIT

Yes, you did.

MARK

You know what I'm saying.

KIT

I don't think they're childish -

MARK

I'm just saying - I'm a grown man. What can I do, pull out a crystal ball at a meeting? "I see a 3rd quarter profit, a 20% profit for the Pacific rim." Yeah, they'd love that. That'd go over real well.

Why not?
KIT

MARK
I got enough problems walking into that office every goddamn day of my life - I don't need to give them any reasons to show me the door.

KIT
You'd love for them to show you the door.

MARK
Why do you say that?

KIT
Because the decision would be made for you.

MARK
That's nice. Thank you.

KIT
Am I right? If you don't like the job, move on to something else. All you do is complain about -

MARK
I complain?

KIT
Yeah, you do. This job - I mean, if you love what you do I could see taking the bad with the --

MARK
Hey - I live in America. This is what Americans do. They complain. It's my duty to complain about my job.

KIT
You can do anything you want to do.

MARK
Not if I want to eat.

KIT
That's not true.

MARK
Not if I want to live in New York.

KIT
So don't live in New York.

MARK
Are you trying to tell me something?

KIT

Yeah, I'm trying to tell you to do whatever you want to do. Nobody's forcing you to work at a job you don't want to work at - or live somewhere you don't want to live or anything.

MARK

I like living in New York.

KIT

You know what I mean.

MARK

I don't mind working there either. I'd just like to be thrown a bone or something.

KIT

You don't mean that.

MARK

What are you talking about I don't mean that? I'd be nice to be acknowledged every once in a while.

KIT

They acknowledge you - you just want to feel like you deserve the acknowledgement.

MARK

Is that right?

KIT

All I'm saying is that you want to be challenged . You want the reward to equal the effort - who doesn't? You want to feel like you're working toward something significant.

MARK

Meanwhile, I might as well get paid well while I'm waiting.

KIT

But what are you waiting for? If it's not this, what is it?

MARK

Maybe it's a secret.

KIT

Why can't you be serious about this? If it's not this job, what is it?

MARK

Maybe it's nothing, you know? Maybe it's just the simple job with the simple life. Little walks in the park with my lovely wife.

KIT

Fine.

MARK

I'm just saying, why not a simple life? Why not a life of just reflecting on the way the future unfolds. Why not just watch the wind blow, or the flowers bloom or kids playing on the jungle gym.

KIT

See, now I don't know if you're serious or not.

MARK

I'm kind of serious. I don't know why everything - why I feel like I need to be engaged in something profound when the profound is happening all around me in every moment I decide to notice it - why can't that be enough?

KIT

It can be enough.

MARK

Thank you.

KIT

When you decide to notice it.

He takes a long look at her as she smiles.

KIT

Mrs. Fuller was so happy to see you. Her eyes - did you notice how happy her eyes were?

MARK

Glaucoma will do that.

KIT

She was thrilled to see you. And I know she wanted to ask you something but she was waiting -- did you notice that?

MARK

She was a great teacher, for sure. She was the first real teacher I ever had, you know? You posed the question, she lead you to find an answer. I know that now - back then I was just another prepubescent who ate too much paste.

KIT

She didn't seem to think so.

MARK

She was being nostalgic. Come on, she's like one hundred and twelve years old.

KIT

She wasn't that old -

MARK

Look! Another sign. It says, "walk". What do you think? I have a good feeling about this one.

ACT II-2 (ON SCREEN)

Mark and Jeff in the car, in the same location on a Manhattan side street.

Mark takes a sips of his coffee. Jeff is reading from Mark's notebook.

MARK

Jesus, where did you get this coffee?

JEFF

I don't know. Shut up for a second. Around the corner.

MARK

This sucks.

JEFF

You think?

After a moment he finishes and smiles, shaking his head. He looks at Mark.

MARK

What?

JEFF

This is pretty good.

MARK

Oh yeah?

JEFF

Seriously, man.

MARK

Fuck off.

JEFF

Really! I like it. It's funny. It has something like - it reminds me -

MARK

What?

JEFF

Nothing.

MARK
What?

JEFF
Remember when we went to the mountains - that camping trip with dad?

MARK
No.

JEFF
You blew his mind. That camp fire story. That was brilliant. "The Lonely Lizard."

MARK
How the hell do you remember that?

JEFF
Please - that was a defining moment, man.

MARK
He was a lonely lizard.

JEFF
But that story, man - you made that up off the cuff, right?

MARK
Yeah. The story was there, you know. You and me and him sitting around a god damn campfire, like a picture from Boy's Life or something. It was all there - everything. I just extrapolated into fiction. Straight from the non-fiction around us.

JEFF
What was he thinking anyway?

MARK
What are you talking about? He was getting to know his boys - all in one weekend. I think it's called concentrated parenting. He had his moments.

JEFF
He never knew what to make of you - it was brilliant.

MARK
That was a sign, you know?

JEFF
What do you mean?

MARK
It was like the whole story spilled out for me because of that one moment. As soon as he called us over to learn how to light the fire --

JEFF

The scoutmaster -- with the flint.

MARK

Yeah with the flint and that knife. Where the hell did the knife come from? It was bigger than his head. Something you use to hack through the bush --

JEFF

I was waiting for him to hack off his finger.

MARK

Right?

JEFF

Then you pulled out that lighter.

MARK

Yeah. The beginning and the end. You know who gave me that lighter?

JEFF

Mom.

MARK

Mom, yeah. Be prepared, right? How's that, huh?

JEFF

She gave me one too.

They both share a laugh.

JEFF

Man, he was pissed.

MARK

It felt good though, didn't it?

JEFF

Best kick in the ass we didn't deserve.

MARK

Did she say she was teaching today?

JEFF

I love that story.

MARK

The last one that was ever published.

JEFF

Then it's about fucking time, huh?

MARK
You'd think so, right?

JEFF
It's like this one too. This story -- I mean this guy, what's his name?

Jeff looks through the notebook again.

MARK
Herman.

JEFF
Yeah, right - Herman is all -- he's completely void of anything significant. At least he can't see, or he doesn't have an understanding of any direction in his life -- then this "empty vessel" of a human begin meets -

MARK
Gloria.

JEFF
Right. Gloria, who is totally whacked, right?

MARK
What, you think she's crazy?

JEFF
Not crazy but she's something - she's living on the edge, let's say that. I mean, in her own way but she makes sense, right? She has the perception that it's all in front of her, right?

MARK
Sort of.

JEFF
Yeah, yeah - I mean, that's what's great. You have to find your own way. I understand that. It's simple enough but I don't know - It's cool. You're writing again and -- it's a great story, dude. Seriously. It's cool.

MARK
Thanks.

Jeff shakes his head with a wry smile.

JEFF
Damn.

MARK
What?

JEFF
Nothing. Punk.

ACT II-3 (ON STAGE)

An outdoor coffee shop.

Kit sits, staring out towards the street. Jeff enters with his portfolio.

JEFF

Hey, good news -- I think my buddy Danny was able to -

KIT

He called.

JEFF

What? Mark called? When? What did he say?

KIT

This morning. Like 5:30.

JEFF

And?

KIT

I don't know what to do.

JEFF

What did he say? Did you talk to him?

KIT

No - I must of fallen asleep. He left a message. What is he doing, Jeff? Why is he doing this? Why wouldn't he just talk to me?

JEFF

What did he say?

KIT

He said he's a fool.

JEFF

Okay.

KIT

He said he's knows he's an idiot.

JEFF

So far so good.

KIT

He didn't say anything. He kept going on with this crap about nothing. He said he was fine, that he was trying to figure some things out, that he loved me - just, just crap. Nothing. Just a message that he was alive but nothing - you know, nothing that made sense or anything.

JEFF

He's okay, though?

KIT

I guess. I don't know. I don't know what that means, "I'm trying to figure things out." I mean, what the hell does that mean?

JEFF

Maybe just that?

KIT

Why wouldn't - I'm here, you know? I'm always open to hear him out - why would he just take off - It doesn't make any sense.

JEFF

How are you doing?

KIT

How does it look like I'm doing?

JEFF

Well - it looks --

KIT

I'm going to kill him, Jeff. I just want to see him so I can punch him in the face for making me feel so -

JEFF

So, I did talk to Danny.

KIT

Yeah?

JEFF

Did Mark say where he was?

KIT

No.

JEFF

I think he's in Florida.

KIT

What?

JEFF

Well, Danny - I gave Danny Mark's credit card - you know, some credit card information -

KIT

Wait -- what?

JEFF

Danny traced the number to see if there was any recent info, activity - whatever - anyway, unless his card was stolen, he's at some roadside motel in Florida.

KIT

In Florida?

JEFF

Yeah. Unless his card was stolen.

KIT

Wait. Why would he be in Florida?

JEFF

I don't know.

KIT

He drove to Florida? What the hell is in Florida? Why would he drive to Florida?

JEFF

Maybe the Gulf of Mexico got in his way. Who knows.

KIT

Florida? That's great. That explains everything. He went to Florida. How stupid of me for sitting here wondering where the hell he is, why he wouldn't want to talk to me, you know? I mean, who am I anyway? Why would I care? Why would I be worried that the big, idiot, piece of shit drove down to Florida because he needed to figure something out? That's where people go, right? I mean, that's where people go to figure things out. They go to Florida. Florida has all the answers. Isn't that where you would go to figure things out? Wouldn't you go to Florida?

JEFF

Personally, I'd go to Amsterdam. But that's just me.

KIT

Goddamn it.

She takes a moment - then comes to a realization.

KIT

Is he alone?

JEFF

What - where?

KIT

Is he alone? That's a stupid question, right? I mean, tell me that's a stupid question.

JEFF

Is he - I didn't think - I wouldn't have even thought about that. What do you mean, is he alone?

KIT

What do you think I mean? He's your brother. Does he have some little bitch he took down to Florida to help him figure things out? Is that where he is?

JEFF

No way. No way, Kit.

KIT

That would explain a lot though, right? That would explain a little of all this, wouldn't it?

JEFF

Why would he - no way. No way, Kit.

KIT

Then why would he be in Florida? Why else would he be in Florida?

JEFF

It is the sunshine state.

KIT

Oh god, Jeff! What if he's in Florida with some little nasty, whore, slut bitch!? God damn it, god damn it, god damn it -

JEFF

Kit, don't get all worked up -

KIT

I'm not worked up! I'm freaking out! I'm freaking out because your idiot, jackass brother is killing me and he's with some woman, and I'm pregnant, and I've never even been to Florida. I don't want to go to Florida. He's in Florida with some sleazy bitch and I'm sitting here wondering how I could have missed all the signs and now listen to me! Like I'm in the middle of some Spanish soap opera!

She breaks down completely. Jeff pulls his chair over to hers and puts his arm around her.

JEFF

Kit.

KIT

I hate soap operas.

JEFF

I know. Me too. Me too. Who doesn't right? It's all those big white Chicklet teeth, you know? Makes you want to kick a hole through the wall --

KIT

Oh, Jeff - damn it. What should I do?

JEFF

Well - if it was me -

KIT

Oh, god. Don't make it worse.

JEFF

I understand that on some level, I think.

KIT

I'm sorry -

JEFF

Look - you can't assume anything, right? I mean, it makes no sense whatsoever to freak yourself out. He said he was fine. He said he loves you. He said he's in Florida -

KIT

You said he's in Florida.

JEFF

I mean, we know where he is.

KIT

So -

JEFF

So, maybe you just give him time to work out whatever it is he thinks he needs to work out.

KIT

I want to kill him.

JEFF

Yeah, yeah, I know. I will help you with that, if the need arises.

KIT

I'm freaking myself out, you think?

JEFF

I do - I mean, why would you assume anything, right? Isn't that right?

KIT

Yeah - I guess it's right.

JEFF

You just don't know enough, so - just be cool and see what happens.

KIT

Oh, god - I really can't do that - I don't know if I can do that.

He opens his portfolio and spreads it across the table.

JEFF

Just to change the subject for a second - take your mind somewhere else, okay?

KIT

Jeff - are these yours? You did these?

JEFF

Yeah - yeah.

KIT

My god - Jeff -

JEFF

You can be honest. I got a little "gig" for this children's book series so even if you think they suck it doesn't matter.

KIT

They're awesome! My god, Jeff. They're so good. God, I can't believe it.

JEFF

What?

KIT

You shit! Why didn't you - oh, I'm so glad - you got a series? What does that mean exactly?

JEFF

Well - basically it means I can write you a check for six hundred dollars.

KIT

Really? Seriously, you got a job?

JEFF

Yeah, yeah - well, initially anyway. It's sort like a trial run, but yeah. They gave me three books but the possibility is there. Pretty adult of me, right?

KIT

Oh man. Mark - oh, Jeff. Mark would - what is that asshole doing in Florida? He'd be so proud of you. I'm so proud of you. That shit! I'm going to kill him.

JEFF

Easy, easy. Just give it a day or two before you hire the hitman.

KIT

Go down there.

JEFF

What?

KIT

Please. You go down there and see him - see if he's okay. I can't go - if he's alone, I mean - I couldn't handle it if he was with - just go down and see if he's okay, can you? As a brother or something?

JEFF

You want me to go to Florida -

KIT

Just to make sure he's okay.

JEFF

I don't want to go to Florida, Kit.

KIT

Please - you don't have to pay me back the loan, okay? How's that? Please - just go down and make sure he's okay. If he's okay, then fine - and if he's not - I mean, if he's just --

JEFF

Kit -

KIT

Please, Jeff.

JEFF

I won't have to pay back the loan?

KIT

Use what you owe me to buy the ticket.

JEFF

What about expenses? Okay. Okay. Fine, shit.

KIT

He is your brother, you know.

JEFF

I hate oranges.

ACT II-4 (ON SCREEN)

Mark and Jeff in the car, in the same location on a Manhattan side street.

JEFF

That's bullshit. You don't know what I'm going to say.

MARK

Bullshit I don't.

JEFF

What was I going to say then?

MARK

Don't even, Jeff --

JEFF

Don't even what? You don't know what I was going to say.

MARK

Number one, I don't care what you were going to say but I know what you're going to say and number two, I don't want to talk about it right now.

JEFF

Number one, there's no fucking way you know what I was going to say and number two, I wasn't going to say a damn thing.

MARK

Yeah right.

JEFF

I wasn't going to say anything - I was going to ask you a question, smart ass.

MARK

Like I said -

JEFF

There's a difference, isn't there?

MARK

You're not goading me into this, Jeff - so knock it off.

JEFF

Goading? What - goading? What am I goading you into?

MARK

The baby -

JEFF

Ah! Oh, right - the baby. Right. Yeah. Geez I had forgotten all about that. You must be very happy. I for one am very proud of you - very proud. Frankly, I didn't think you had it in you - of course, you're not the one who really had it in them at all.

MARK

Get out.

JEFF

What?

MARK

Get out.

JEFF

What, why?

MARK

Get out, Jeff. I'm serious.

JEFF

Don't be so sensitive, for Christ's sake.

MARK

Get out!

JEFF

All right, all right. Jesus Christ, man. I'm only trying to help, you know?

He gets out of the car.

MARK

How is this helping me!?

JEFF

Not you, you selfish bastard. Kit, remember her?

Mark says nothing.

JEFF

Yeah. Exactly. Think about that one, huh?

They have a bit of a standoff with Jeff looking in the car while holding open the door.

MARK

Get in.

JEFF

I'm not sure I want to now.

Then don't.

MARK

Jeff gets in the car. There is a long silence.

I'm sorry.

JEFF

For what?

MARK

For goading.

JEFF

Jeff's cell phone rings. He fumbles for it.

Kit? Is it her?

MARK

Jeff casually answers the phone.

JEFF

Yellow. Yes. Okay - okay, no that's great. (he shakes his head "no") That's great to hear, thank you. You did. Yes. Yes, I can. No that makes perfect sense. I feel more comfortable as well. So about the - yeah? Excellent. No, I'm right around the corner. About 15 minutes? Right. Great. Yeah, see ya. That was for me. I gotta go.

Who was it?

MARK

JEFF

You know, do you really need me to complicate your life any more than it all ready is?

MARK

So, what I'm I supposed to do?

JEFF

I want you to think about what you've done. You'll be quizzed later.

He gets out of the car, closes the door and leans down to talk through the window.

JEFF

You asked the question. You put this in motion, right? Regardless of how it comes down, it'll play out, in motion, and take you where you need to be. Just pay attention to where you are, right?

MARK

Meanwhile a baby is born and I'm just another turd who has visitation rights.

JEFF

Don't assume anything. You don't know that anymore than you know anything else.

MARK

Yeah. Fine.

JEFF

Uncle Jeffrey? That sucks. Uncle Godfrey. Uncle God. That's good. He can call me Uncle God. Uncle God. Or Jeff. Or she can call me Jeff. Either way it's cool with me. See ya in a sec.

ACT II-5 (ON STAGE)

We hear the thunder gently rolling outside the Florida motel room. The rain continues to fall. Mark's sits on the floor reading Gloria's notebook.

Gloria sits on the desk tossing an orange.

MARK

This reminds me of --

GLORIA

Are you ready for this?

MARK

I had a teacher named Mrs. Fuller.

GLORIA

My grandmother - she died when I was thirteen - she showed me this when I was a kid but I forgot about it. Let me see if I can remember. Come up here and sit. You have a question in mind?

MARK

I have many questions in mind.

GLORIA

Just pick one but you have to concentrate. Do you have one?

MARK

You mean other than what's right in front of me?

GLORIA

Whatever! Concentrate! Just one.

MARK

Okay, I have one.

GLORIA

Good. See, this orange is you, okay?

MARK

I'm an orange.

GLORIA

Yeah, your life is the orange. Take the orange and start peeling slowly. This is old stuff - like gypsy stuff so it might freak you out. Just so you know.

MARK

Thanks for the warning.

Mark begins peeling the orange.

GLORIA

You know how sometimes you can peel an orange in one whole piece? See, that's good. I mean, it can be good depending on how you look at it. See, these signs, or omens or whatever - all this stuff is revealed to us for our good. But when you're afraid - when you have fear in your life you read them wrong and make bad things where good things are meant to be.

MARK

This is your grandmother talking -

GLORIA

It's the orange talking actually. Okay - you sit here.

She sits him on the desk.

GLORIA

You are now sitting in the center of the universe, okay?

MARK

Earth or universe? See, if I'm in the center of the universe -- I mean, you know, it's a big universe.

She smacks him across the face.

GLORIA

Are you paying attention?

MARK

Yes!

GLORIA

Are you sure?

MARK

I'm the center of the universe.

GLORIA

Very good. You now represent you're life as it is - like yourself as pure experience and reality now represented by the directions of the world.

MARK

North, east, west -

GLORIA

Right, right. I'm in the South. See, South is where you are presently. East is where you're going. North is where you've come from and West - West is what you need to get there. But start with me. I am where you are presently.

MARK

So -

GLORIA

So you take the orange -

MARK

What do you do with a banana?

She smacks him across the face again.

MARK

So, I take the orange.

GLORIA

This is a powerful thing. I told you it was an old gypsy thing. You don't mess with things that are old and you don't mess with things that are gypsy and you certainly don't mess with signs when they are laid out in front of you demanding you to notice especially when you're the one who asked the question in the first place! You sit before a doorway and you're about to swing it open and you're asking for guidance from beyond the door. Now bite the orange!

Mark bites the orange. Gloria grabs his head and kisses him on the mouth, deeply and passionately. After a moment . . .

MARK

Your grandmother taught you this?

GLORIA

Again! Bite the orange.

He does. She kisses him again. Again, after a moment . . .

GLORIA

Can you feel it?

MARK

I can feel something.

GLORIA

Look at me. Can you see me?

Yes? MARK

Bite the orange! GLORIA

It's kind of a messy, isn't it? MARK

Bite the orange! GLORIA

I ah -- MARK

Give me that. GLORIA

In one fluid motion, she takes the orange and bites it, throwing the rest over her shoulder. She climbs onto his lap and straddles him, looks him in the eye and kisses him. After a moment she breaks the kiss and smiles. Mark has a strained look as he fishes an orange seed from his mouth.

It's a seed. MARK

It's your seed. You see me now, don't you. GLORIA

Mark freezes. His eyes open wide. Gloria smiles. Mark kisses, her lifting her off her feet and carries her over to the bed.

It's a seed. MARK

Mark drops her on the bed.

I know. GLORIA

A seed. MARK

Yes. GLORIA

I need to -- I really need to -- MARK

What? What do you need? GLORIA

I need - I need so badly to - to - MARK

Say it! GLORIA

You taste just like that orange. MARK

I do. GLORIA

Yes? MARK

Here. GLORIA

She jumps off the bed and gets the notebook and pen from desk.

East is where you're going. Take this. GLORIA

She hands him the notebook.

What's this? MARK

West is what you need to get there. GLORIA

She hands him the pen.

The seed -- MARK

Write it down. GLORIA

Write what down? MARK

She smacks him across the face.

That really hurts, by the way. MARK

I gave you the seed. GLORIA

I used to write. I used to write everything down. MARK

North is where you've come from. GLORIA

You know what you said about your grandmother - MARK

My grandmother - GLORIA

Yes - yes see, I had this teacher -- MARK

Write it down. GLORIA

Mark starts to write in the notebook, continuing to write as he speaks.

You know what's funny? MARK

What are you? GLORIA

He stops writing and looks at her.

Gloria. MARK

Write. GLORIA

He quickly goes to the desk, sits down and writes. The rain outside has stopped. Sunlight slowly begin streaming through the window. He continues writing as Gloria gathers her things and exits through the front door

As she exits she is bathed in light. The door silently closes.

Mark, fully engaged, writes as he speaks.

MARK

Run. Run! Get out of the chair, out of the room, get out of the building, the streets, the city, the state - just run! Anywhere. Anywhere until there is nothing but the wind screaming across your ears, put your body in motion, escape until there is emptiness, the void, the vacuum -- run into and pass through all the chaos of the world -- and be. And just be.

He turns around and looks for Gloria. He continues talking as though she's in the room.

MARK

Gloria. Gloria? You know all about this, right? I've been so stupid and idiotic and asinine and unbelievable. I whitewashed everything -- especially Kit. Kit. And now here's what's really funny. This is what's so brilliant -- Kit saw it. And she put up with it and she loved me in spite of it and I've got to get the hell out of here.

Mark gets up and exits to the bathroom.

MARK (O.S.)

Gloria? Gloria.

He enters from the bathroom looking bewildered.

MARK

Gloria.

There is a knock on the door. He runs to it and opens the door -- revealing Jeff.

JEFF

Holy shit. He's alive.

ACT II-6 (ON SCREEN)

Mark and Jeff in the car on the same sidestreet.

Mark flips through the pages of Jeff's portfolio.

MARK

Who's is this?

JEFF

I found it in the back of a cab.

MARK

Seriously.

JEFF

Seriously what? It's mine.

MARK
All these are yours?

JEFF
No, Mark - some of them are yours -

MARK
This is why Kit was giving you money?

JEFF
What are you talking about?

MARK
Give me a break -

JEFF
She was lending me money - how did you --

MARK
I was sure you'd be pissing it away --

JEFF
Kit told you about the money?

MARK
You think she has that kind of money?

JEFF
It was a loan.

MARK
Like I said.

JEFF
It was a loan and I can pay her -

MARK
Shut up about the money for a second, all right?

JEFF
What?

MARK
Are these really yours?

JEFF
Are you seriously asking me such a stupid question?

MARK
Is this for a book? What's this for?

JEFF

A series of children's books, yeah. All the illustrations are - there are a few others too -

MARK

A series?

JEFF

A job.

MARK

You're doing all the illustrations?

JEFF

Yes. What?

MARK

Wow.

JEFF

Yeah. Can I have this back please?

MARK

Wow.

JEFF

Whatever, man.

MARK

I want to hug you.

JEFF

I'm having a cigarette so fuck off.

MARK

You want to hear something funny?

JEFF

You want to kiss my ass?

MARK

This stuff is great - your, I mean, goddamn, Jeff. You manage to do what I could never do - or that I was too much of a coward to do. You never seem to be taking anything seriously -

JEFF

I take it seriously -

MARK

I know that! I guess that's what I'm saying. No, that's exactly what I'm saying. I've been such a - I don't know -

JEFF

An egomaniacal turd? No, that's not accurate enough. You're the writer -- come up with something.

MARK

You know what you want. You've always known what you wanted. You're good, man. These are - your stuff, this stuff is great. It's really, really great.

JEFF

You think so, huh?

MARK

Yeah. I knew you had it in you. I just didn't think you knew you had it in you.

JEFF

Oh, it's in me. It's in both of us.

MARK

Give me a cigarette.

Jeff reaches for the cigarette pack and searches for a lighter.

Kit appears at the driver side window, unbeknownst to Mark.

JEFF

Hey Kit, you gotta light?

Mark turns to see Kit just as she slaps him across the face and walks away.

MARK

Kit! Damn it. Kit, wait!

ACT II-7 (ON STAGE)

Mark follows Kit into the park.

MARK

It was the question that matters -- that's all I'm saying!

She stops immediately and turns to face him.

KIT

I'm having a baby.

MARK

I know, I know, I know --

KIT

I -- am -- having -- a baby. Our baby. But now it's my baby. Do you get that?

MARK

Just listen - Look, maybe I am nuts. Or maybe I'm completely sane. Maybe for the first time in my life I'm completely coherent - I'm seeing things clearly for the first time.

KIT

Did you hear what I just said?

MARK

Just listen to me for a second, okay?

KIT

Listen to you? Listen to you? Now you want me to listen to you?

MARK

Yes.

KIT

Why should I?

MARK

Because I love you.

KIT

That doesn't mean anything anymore.

MARK

How can you say that? How can you say it doesn't mean anything? It's a sign, Kit.

KIT

Don't try to manipulate me with that --

MARK

Something happened, Kit. Something happened and it started here with you, with us -- with all three of us maybe.

KIT

Really, you think?!

MARK

Look, sometimes you have to pay attention to what the universe is telling you, right? Am I right? And if the universe didn't hit me over the head with this one - I'm saying you're right, Kit! I was ignoring what I could do - or what I couldn't do - or what I should do but I didn't do because I was too busy thinking about what I should do without listening to what I could do.

Try again. KIT

I'm an idiot. MARK

Yes, you are. KIT

But I'm not afraid anymore. MARK

You're not afraid? You're not afraid? Well, you know what? I'm having a baby and guess what? I'm freaking out! KIT

Kit - MARK

I didn't want to see you and you knew I didn't want to see you, didn't you? KIT

Well, you made it pretty clear - MARK

Did you notice those signs? Huh? Did you notice all those signs I put up? Did any of those signs smack you over the head? KIT

I can't just let you walk away. MARK

You know what I realized while you were riding your little magic mountain ride down there in Florida, Mark? I realized that I can live alone. I can do a lot of things alone. I'm a healthy, intelligent, self reliant woman. I can handle a lot of things. I can deal with what life throws my way because I take life at face value and when I had a question to ask I was thankful that I had someone there to help me figure out an answer. I didn't ignore that person when I was confused or scared. I didn't run away to find the answer outside the very source that made me strong. KIT

I was wrong, I know - MARK

So, what I am suppose to do? Am I supposed to ignore that fact that I wasn't someone you thought enough of to turn to for help? Am I suppose to ignore the fact that I obviously meant so little to you that you could run away and leave me to wonder if you were even alive? KIT

I mean, did you honestly think that a few lousy little phone calls would be enough to keep your little wifey at bay while you were down in Florida - Florida, what the hell was that about? What the hell was in Florida that you drove down there in the first place? Did you get a nice tan? Did you see Mickey Mouse? Did you wrestle crocodiles? Is that what you are now, Mark? Are you a crocodile wrestler?

MARK

I think they're alligators.

KIT

Whatever!

MARK

I was wrong, Kit. I was absolutely wrong.

KIT

Alligators. You're the lizard. That's you! Poor little Marky Chesler has to run away from the world to find it. That's what you are. You're the lonely lizard! That's you!

Mark sits on a park bench.

KIT

Is that it? Can I go now?

MARK

You're right.

KIT

I know I'm right. What am I right about?

MARK

I thought - shit, I wasn't thinking at all. I got into the car and I - I didn't, I mean, I wasn't expecting - I should have picked you up and taken you with me. That's what I should have done but if I had done that I wouldn't have come to realize - I don't know what I'm saying.

KIT

Obviously not.

MARK

I was in Social Studies - Mrs. Fuller's class and I doodled out this little story. She caught me. I look up and Mrs. Fuller is standing at my desk. I didn't even notice her I was just writing away. She took the paper, asked the class if she should read it out loud. The class all giggled shouting out stupid comments, you know. But she started reading it to herself. She read the first couple of lines to herself and she just stopped. She looked at me, then turned and walked back to her desk. She didn't say anything. She just sat down at her desk and finished reading. I felt like an idiot, of course. The class was "oohing" and laughing, whatnot.

She made some comment to the class like, "back to work" but she was looking right at me now. She said, "Mark, I'd like to see you after class." So after class, the room was empty - just me and Mrs. Fuller. She didn't say anything. She just sat there like she was waiting for me to speak. I got up and went - stood in front of her desk. I couldn't think of anything to say so I just stood there. Then - then she smiled at me. Smiled. I mean, she smiled at me like no one had ever smiled at me - ever. She came around the desk and hugged me. She hugged me. It just killed me. I started crying. She started cry. It was ridiculous. It was like she saw who I really was and because of that she allowed me to see who I really was. She asked me if she could keep the story. And I said yes. And she made me promise I would keep writing more stories - just not in her class. And I said yes. And she sent me off. That was that. I'm not sure why I forgot about Mrs. Fuller - not forgot, but why I didn't remember. Why wouldn't I make a point of remembering something like that - remind myself of it. What did you say? - Omens are signs for our good - unless you're afraid - I was a coward.

KIT

You could have made this a lot easier.

MARK

You think?

KIT

You didn't have to kick sand in my face.

MARK

I know.

KIT

You certainly didn't have to go to Florida to kick sand. Look around, there's plenty of stuff to kick all over the place, you know?

MARK

I love you, Kit. You know that, right?

KIT

Shut up, sand kicker.

MARK

You can hear me, right?

KIT

Hey, I hear you. All you have to do is speak. Can you do that?

MARK

I think so.

KIT

What? Are you talking to me? I need to know that you're at least talking in my direction.

MARK

I'm talking to you. I'm looking at you and I'm talking to you.

KIT

You think you can handle that? I don't want you to think you have to disappear or something, vanish into space, maybe dematerialize --

MARK

I can handle it. Let me see your hand.

KIT

What?

MARK

Here, let me have your hand.

He places her hand on his heart.

MARK

Do you hear that?

KIT

What am I hearing?

MARK

Shhh. You have to listen with your hand.

END PLAY