

PLUNGE

A full-length play

By Tom Jacobson

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

REYNOLDS, 40s, a priest, also plays:

NATRICK, an attendant
WILLIAM BOWEN, an attorney
ENERNOCIO REMEDIOS, 60s, a laborer
SANTOS, an attendant
YASUNARI, an attendant
ZENOBIO REMEDIOS, 13
FRANK MOODY, 30s, a traveling salesman, English

MAXWELL, 30s, a curator, also plays:

YOUNG MAXWELL, 12
VICTOR LAMAR, 13, Bohemian
VACLAV LAMAR, 30s, Bohemian
ZENOBIO REMEDIOS, 13

The play takes place in a courtyard garden, a prison cell, and various rooms inside Bimini Hot Springs and Sanitorium in 1915-18.

SETTING: The set should be defined primarily by lighting and words, with a sense of expansiveness at the outset and constriction by the end.

REYNOLDS, 40s, handsome, dressed as a priest, sits reading an elegant, leather-bound notebook, equally elegant fountain pen in hand. A champagne glass sits next to him. Sound of crickets.

REYNOLDS

(Oklahoma accent, reading)

To the lover of paintings there is nothing to match in interest the human face and form. Rodin once said: "The true artist loves life and action, and he is ever looking for it in his fellow man. The Greeks taught us, both in their marbles and in their drama, that even struggle can be beautiful."

(Smiles, reads)

His face was streaked with sun and shadow, his comely form caressed by a light breeze that bore the tang of the sea. Or perhaps the scent was his honest sweat, hard-earned on our hike up the trail. He saw me smile and turned modestly away, pretending to examine a western tiger swallowtail pausing on a stem of California brome. I reassured him that none could see.

(Corrects with the pen)

I reassured him with a touch that none could see; we were alone. He smiled, his face so open, his eyes so kind. I could see his soul.

(Corrects with the pen)

I could see that the struggle would be beautiful.

MAXWELL, 30s, appears wearing a tuxedo and carrying a glass of champagne. An open, innocent face. He is searching for something. REYNOLDS hides the notebook and pen.

REYNOLDS

Lost something?

MAXWELL

(Startled)

Pardon me! I didn't realize--the General's ordered everyone inside--

REYNOLDS

If he's marshalled the troops, you're violating a direct order.

MAXWELL

So are you.

REYNOLDS

Want me to fetch a light?

MAXWELL

Oh, no thank you. It's just--a trifle--

REYNOLDS

I've got sharp eyes.

MAXWELL

No matter. Truly. We should go in or we'll miss remarks.

REYNOLDS

After you.

Neither moves.

MAXWELL

Have we met, Father? I thought the General was--

REYNOLDS

Perhaps we have.

MAXWELL

--Presbyterian--or are you
Episcopalian--?

REYNOLDS

Roman Catholic.

MAXWELL

Have you any affiliation with the *Los Angeles Times*? Or
society?

REYNOLDS

Good God. You're a snob.

MAXWELL

You're a bit blasphemous for a priest.

REYNOLDS

I'm from Chandler, Oklahoma, where even the clergy are heathen.

(Offers his hand)

Edward Reynolds.

MAXWELL

(Shaking)

What brings you to the Bivouac, Father Reynolds? Friend of the Otis family?

REYNOLDS

Who?

MAXWELL

General Otis. Harrison Gray Otis.

(Gestures)

The Bivouac--is his house--this is his affair--

REYNOLDS

A bit grand for a bivouac.

MAXWELL

(Imitating the General)

The Times building is my Fortress, this house is but my Bivouac--

REYNOLDS

You've a talent for mimicry--

MAXWELL

(Imitating)

--A quaint variation on Mission Revival--with a view of Westlake Park--

REYNOLDS

I thought the LA Times was blown up by unionists--

MAXWELL

In fact, this--pavilion--

(Gestures up)

--Is constructed from the rubble of the original Fortress after the bombing--

REYNOLDS

(Gazing up)
A folly. Isn't that what
they're called? Follies.
Not pavilions.

MAXWELL

So you can imagine the
General is very concerned
about security--

MAXWELL

Architectural follies, yes.
(Starts to leave)
Excuse me--I have charge of the entertainment--

REYNOLDS

Those silly *tableaux vivantes*?

MAXWELL

They depict significant works of art! Perhaps I should
introduce myself, Father Reynolds--

REYNOLDS

You're Everett Carroll Maxwell, curator of art at the Los
Angeles County Museum of History, Science and Art.

MAXWELL hesitates.

REYNOLDS

And your letter to the editor inspired General Otis to donate
his--

(Gestures)

--Bivouac and folly to the Museum as an art school to be
named Otis Art Institute.

MAXWELL

You give me too much credit.

REYNOLDS

I'm here tonight to witness your triumph.

MAXWELL

The power of the written word--I suppose--

REYNOLDS

(Imitating MAXWELL)

Nothing exists until written, nothing remembered unless
rendered as words. What is not written, is lost.

MAXWELL

You've a talent for mimicry as well. It's flattering but unnerving to be quoted by a complete stranger. Good evening, Father.

MAXWELL starts to leave. REYNOLDS suddenly takes the pose of *The Thinker*.

REYNOLDS

Picture me nude.

MAXWELL

I've never heard a priest speak like that!

REYNOLDS

Neither has my congregation. You're not my congregation. Are you?

MAXWELL

You'll have to try harder than that. *The Poet*.

REYNOLDS

The Thinker--by Rodin!

MAXWELL

Originally called *Le Poete*. The foundry workers dubbed it *The Thinker* because it resembled Michelangelo's statue *Il Penseroso*. Too easy.

REYNOLDS

Then let's try one together.

MAXWELL

Oh, no.

REYNOLDS

Heracles wrestling Antaeus.

MAXWELL

You know your Greek.

MAXWELL

Whose version?

REYNOLDS

Antaeus could defeat his opponents--

REYNOLDS

--As long as he was touching his mother, the earth. Heracles beat him--

MAXWELL

--By lifting him in the air and crushing him--

REYNOLDS

--By hoisting him aloft before bringing him low--

MAXWELL

--Yes, of course, but which artist's rendition? Antonio del Pollaiuolo?

REYNOLDS

Vincenzo di Rossi.

MAXWELL

You know too much art history for your own good!

REYNOLDS

The dyametrical opposition of the bodies in a vertical orientation--

MAXWELL

Like the figure 69--

REYNOLDS

--With Antaeus gripping Heracles by the gonads--

MAXWELL

It's vulgar--the least artistic representation--

REYNOLDS

But the most dramatic.

REYNOLDS

(Advancing on MAXWELL)
Shall we attempt it--?

MAXWELL

No, someone might see--!

REYNOLDS

(Grabbing MAXWELL)

We're answering an artistic question--

REYNOLDS

--Determining which is superior--

MAXWELL

Who's Hercules and who's Antaeus?!

REYNOLDS

(Easily lifting MAXWELL)
That depends on who wins!

MAXWELL

(Struggling)
This a society affair!

REYNOLDS turns MAXWELL upside down.

MAXWELL

Father Reynolds! Put me down!

MAXWELL wriggles free and falls.
The notebook falls to the ground as
well. REYNOLDS moves to help him
up.

REYNOLDS

Mr. Maxwell, my apologies--let me--!

MAXWELL

No!

MAXWELL waves him away and stands
on his own, looking around to see
if they were observed. They see
the notebook on the ground.

BOTH

Oh.

REYNOLDS

(Picks it up)

Sermon notes.

MAXWELL

Ah.

REYNOLDS

(Pocketing the notebook)

I had assumed you a more athletic sort--

MAXWELL

I'm a journalist!

REYNOLDS

--With your scouting activities, tramping about with children
on field trips--

MAXWELL

I lure them to the Museum with tar pit fossils then trick
them into enjoying art.

REYNOLDS

You seduce them with old bones?

MAXWELL

Gruesomeness appeals to that age. The dramatic deaths of mastodons trapped in tar thousands of years ago, the fang of a sabertooth, the pelvis of a giant ground sloth--

REYNOLDS

Are you collecting objects or collecting people?

MAXWELL

I beg your pardon?

REYNOLDS

As General Otis has collected you. A prominent art curator and journalist, a rare species.

MAXWELL

You've overestimated my importance to society. My father was a cabinet maker. We had to take in boarders.

REYNOLDS

But art elevated you.

MAXWELL

One of the boarders, actually. Professor Frank Moody introduced me to the glories of the Renaissance.

REYNOLDS

(Imitating MAXWELL)

The purpose of art is empathy.

MAXWELL

Your accuracy borders on cruelty. But I do believe that.

REYNOLDS

And yet you are not yourself an artist.

MAXWELL

Writers are artists!

REYNOLDS

Of analysis! Criticism!

MAXWELL

What I really want to do is write screenplays.

REYNOLDS smiles.

MAXWELL

Motion pictures are the art form of the future. A *gesamtkunstwerk* of empathy!

REYNOLDS

Is that Bohemian?

MAXWELL

No, German. I'm friends with a Bohemian artist--

REYNOLDS

Max Wieczorek.

MAXWELL

(Suspiciously)

Yes...why do you ask?

REYNOLDS

Chandler is right next to Prague, Oklahoma--full of Bohunks. I'm visiting the Lamar family here in Los Angeles--

MAXWELL

Lamar?

REYNOLDS

MAXWELL

--Relatives of parishoners in Oklahoma-- I've heard that name--

REYNOLDS

(Takes out the notebook)

And I should get back. An honor to meet such a pillar of society--

(Starts to go)

MAXWELL

Father--

REYNOLDS

I must catch my streetcar--

MAXWELL

Why did you become a priest?

REYNOLDS

That's an odd and personal question. And what of your remarks?

MAXWELL

They can wait a moment, I'm sure. How often does one have a chance to speak privately with clergy?

REYNOLDS

Have you a particular need for a priest this evening? A moral question?

MAXWELL

Yours is a profession steeped in sacrifice.

REYNOLDS

Which you well understand. Your devotion to your invalid mother--your father--

MAXWELL

They're my parents--I'm an only child--of course--

MAXWELL

--But how do you know--?

REYNOLDS

Filial constancy.

MAXWELL

You have me at great disadvantage--I know nothing about you!

REYNOLDS

You're famous.

MAXWELL

What called you to the priesthood?

REYNOLDS

Other than God?

MAXWELL

I was inculcated in art. Had you similar tutelage?

REYNOLDS

A priestly temperament is not always the same as an artistic one.

MAXWELL

But sometimes.

REYNOLDS

I was drawn to the intelligence and serenity of the Dominicans. Nothing prissy or picayune about their faith. A way out of annihilation.

MAXWELL

Annihilation!?

REYNOLDS

The priesthood showed me how someone worthless could throw himself away without literally killing himself.

MAXWELL

That's a breath-takingly cynical way of saying the church saved you in your *noche oscura de mi alma*.

REYNOLDS

As art saved you in your dark night of the soul.

MAXWELL

Did you truly consider suicide?

REYNOLDS

(Shrugs)

Christ did that for us.

MAXWELL

Whenever I see a crucifixion--a good crucifixion--I feel his suffering so keenly I'm moved to tears.

REYNOLDS

Do you desire punishment?

MAXWELL

That's what priests offer! Judgment! Doom!

REYNOLDS

Is that what you seek?

MAXWELL

You're the one seeking annihilation.

REYNOLDS

Salvation is what I hope I offer. Confession. Absolution.
Christ's suffering not punishment but atonement.

MAXWELL takes a twisted pose, his
hands above his head, his gaze
heavenward.

REYNOLDS

Some martyr, but they all look alike to me. Are you male or
female?

MAXWELL

It's Oscar Wilde's favorite painting.

REYNOLDS

Male, then.

MAXWELL

Picture me pierced with arrows!

REYNOLDS

St. Sebastian.

MAXWELL

(Relaxing)

Guido Reni's *St. Sebastian*. Even in agony, his eyes are so
kind.

REYNOLDS

As are yours.

They smile.

MAXWELL

Please let me help you, Father.

REYNOLDS

May I ask you something?

MAXWELL

Of course, Father.

REYNOLDS

It's confidential.

MAXWELL

Does it have to do with your sermon notes?

REYNOLDS

Possibly. I may be going mad.

MAXWELL

Mad? You seem perfectly--

REYNOLDS

I won't give you details here, but I've suffered a number of symptoms--hallucinations--

MAXWELL

Hallucinations?

REYNOLDS

People who aren't really there--I'm sorry--

REYNOLDS

--Someone might hear--

MAXWELL

Let me assure you I'm truly here.

MAXWELL

A private conversation, of course! Where are you staying in Los Angeles?

REYNOLDS

On Centennial Street. But we can't go there. And you live with your parents.

MAXWELL

How long have you been visiting?

REYNOLDS

Just arrived today.

MAXWELL

So you haven't been to Bimini Baths?

REYNOLDS

What's that?

MAXWELL

A natural hot spring resort and sanitarium at the edge of town.

REYNOLDS

Nearby?

MAXWELL

On Vermont. Fifteen minutes by streetcar, the Heliotrope Line.

REYNOLDS

A public bathing facility?

MAXWELL

There are private tub baths as well.

REYNOLDS

I am rather desperate for a thorough cleansing after my journey.

MAXWELL

They are renowned for their purges.

REYNOLDS

What of your remarks?

MAXWELL

Your need sounds urgent and I wish to be of service--

REYNOLDS

My suffering should in no way diminish your social victory this evening.

MAXWELL

Of course, but immediately--

REYNOLDS

(Overlapping)

Immediately after.

Lighting shift isolates REYNOLDS as
MAXWELL begins his remarks.

MAXWELL

Ladies and gentlemen of Los Angeles. Our fair western city has grown by leaps and bounds in the seventeen years since the century turned.

As MAXWELL speaks, REYNOLDS begins
undressing.

MAXWELL

Not only in size, but also in maturity, sophistication. Only four years ago we stepped into the cultural arena with the founding of the Los Angeles County Museum of History, Science and Art.

MAXWELL can see REYNOLDS stripping down, revealing an early 20th-century bathing costume.

MAXWELL

Tonight, thanks to the foresight of our host, General Harrison Gray Otis, we embark upon a new journey with the donation of the Bivouac to the people of Los Angeles for the advancement of art in the West.

REYNOLD'S change of costume distracts MAXWELL, but he holds himself together to finish his speech.

MAXWELL

His aims for the new Otis Art Institute are broad and comprehensive, and include the fostering of the Fine, the Applied and the Industrial Arts.

(Slightly agitated)

No one person in Southern California has yet made so important a contribution to the cause of art education in the great Southwest. So I invite you to raise a glass to my friend General Otis--

(Raises glass)

--And to art!

Lighting shift puts REYNOLDS and MAXWELL in the same space.
REYNOLDS is looking at a brochure.

MAXWELL

What is it you wished to tell me, Father? You sounded so urgent--

REYNOLDS

The swimming plunges are open until 10 p.m.

MAXWELL

(Overlapping)

Ten p.m., yes, I know, but--

REYNOLDS

Do you have a bathing costume?

MAXWELL

(Begins changing)

Of course. I'm here with some frequency.

REYNOLDS

(Reading)

"Bimini Baths was named for Ponce de Leon's mythical Fountain of Youth. The famous hot spring was struck in 1900 when boring for oil. At a depth of 1750 feet the drill passed through a hard crust of soda--which at the time was mistaken for white marble--and opened a gushing fountain of mineral water with a natural and constant flow of 100 gallons per minute at 104 degrees Fahrenheit." Shall we start with the plunge?

MAXWELL

For proper cleansing, we should end with the plunge after a treatment or two.

REYNOLDS

(Looking off)

Is Bimini Baths exclusive?

MAXWELL

It's very popular with Los Angeles society. You might even spy a motion picture star. They come to Hollywood seeking the Fountain of Youth.

REYNOLDS

Isn't the undesirable element prohibited?

MAXWELL

(Looking around)

Undesirable? Where?

REYNOLDS

That man is black.

MAXWELL

What man? I don't see--

REYNOLDS

In the white jacket.

MAXWELL

Perhaps he's an employee, an attendant.

REYNOLDS

I wouldn't want to bathe in the same water--

MAXWELL

The jacket is a uniform.

REYNOLDS

We don't have such fancy resorts in Oklahoma, but we do maintain proper segregation of the races--

MAXWELL

Bimini's exclusive, I'm quite certain--

When MAXWELL turns away, REYNOLDS
dons a white jacket and becomes
NATRICK.

MAXWELL

--You needn't be anxious--

REYNOLDS AS NATRICK

(Jamaican accent)

Good evening, gentlemen. Welcome to the Hydrotherapy
Department.

MAXWELL

(Staring, confused)

What?

REYNOLDS AS NATRICK

My apologies, Mr. Maxwell. I didn't mean to startle you.

MAXWELL

I'm sorry--I--

REYNOLDS AS NATRICK

And I hope I'm not interrupting--

MAXWELL

No, not at all!

REYNOLDS AS NATRICK

I understand you've purchased a full course of treatments.

MAXWELL

Yes, we have, but--

REYNOLDS AS NATRICK

The management recommends commencing with the Hot Pelvic Pack followed by a purge such as a high enema.

MAXWELL

What--what is your name?

REYNOLDS AS NATRICK

Natrick, sir.

MAXWELL

Patrick?

REYNOLDS AS NATRICK

Begging your pardon, sir--it's Natrick.

MAXWELL

Natrick. Thank you. Could you tell us about the other treatments on our menu? My companion seeks satisfaction regarding the cleanliness of your facility and sulfur water.

REYNOLDS AS NATRICK

(Applying a pelvic pack)

Certainly, sir. The hot pelvic pack is infused with naturally heated Bimini water, not sulfur water as many mistakenly believe, but a thermal solution containing sodium carbonate, sodium chloride, potassium chloride, silica, calcium carbonate, magnesium carbonate, iron and aluminum.

While MAXWELL adjusts his pelvic pack, REYNOLDS removes the jacket.

MAXWELL

A perfect initiation of the cleansing process.

REYNOLDS

Are all those chemicals safe?

MAXWELL reacts to NATRICK turning back into REYNOLDS.

MAXWELL

Oh! My! Did you--?

MAXWELL looks around for NATRICK.

REYNOLDS

Do you think the water is safe with all those...ingredients?

MAXWELL

(Stifling his confusion)

Of course, Father, it's not only hygienic, but also nearly identical to the spa waters of Europe, known for their curative properties.

REYNOLDS

(Looking to make sure NATRICK
is gone)

They should have white attendants. We paid good money.

MAXWELL

This pelvic pack is hot!

REYNOLDS

What's it supposed to do?

MAXWELL

I imagine it's both therapeutic and relaxing.

REYNOLDS

It has a bit of an odor.

MAXWELL AND REYNOLDS

But not sulfur!

(They laugh)

MAXWELL

Father, back at the Bivouac you seemed distressed and asked for a private word. Did you wish to speak to me of...annihilation?

REYNOLDS

We are in bathing attire. You may call me Edward.

MAXWELL

And please call me Everett. Only my students call me Mr. Maxwell.

REYNOLDS

With pleasure, Everett.

MAXWELL

You mentioned feeling worthless. Is it--all right to--Edward--?

REYNOLDS

These rooms are truly private?

MAXWELL

Until Mr. Natrick returns.

REYNOLDS

As you intuited, the church did indeed save me, provide a refuge. But there are still times I feel myself a negative force in the world--

MAXWELL

You're a priest! God's representative--

REYNOLDS

Nevertheless, I wonder if it might be better for everyone else if I were...not here.

MAXWELL

Dead? Surely not!

REYNOLDS

Priests are not perfect.

MAXWELL

You are human.

REYNOLDS

Have you heard of sexual inversion?

MAXWELL

Possibly...if you mean--

REYNOLDS

Alienists regard it either a perversion, a moral failing, or incurable degeneration.

MAXWELL

Have you consulted an psychiatrist, Father? That is, if you feel you might suffer from such a condition?

REYNOLDS

It's why I came to Los Angeles. Alienists are few and far between in Oklahoma, and not in the least progressive.

MAXWELL

You've seen one already? And what has he told you?

REYNOLDS

He subjected me to certain physical examinations and electrode testing.

MAXWELL

Electrodes!

REYNOLDS

Shocks to the anus.

MAXWELL

Was there a...noticeable result?

REYNOLDS

Intense puckering of the sphincter is evidence of the vice.

MAXWELL

The mere description has given me a bit of a pucker.

REYNOLDS

He suggested an exercise. For a measure of relief.

MAXWELL

Sit-ups?

REYNOLDS

For the rectum. Butt-ups, if you will. I'm doing it.

MAXWELL

At this moment?

REYNOLDS

Alternating tension and relaxation.

MAXWELL

I see.

REYNOLDS

Try it.

They sit quietly doing butt-ups.

MAXWELL

(After a moment)

And this relieves degenerate urges?

REYNOLDS

(After a moment)

I've just begun treatment, so I've yet to see much result.

MAXWELL

(After a moment)

In conjunction with the hot pelvic pack, the effect is profound.

REYNOLDS

Yes, it's encouraging.

MAXWELL

Did he tell you anything else?

REYNOLDS

Penile deformities are also indicative. Apparently.

MAXWELL

Deformities? Of what nature, may I ask?

REYNOLDS

It is, as you might imagine, quite embarrassing.

MAXWELL

Yes, of course, and very personal. I apologize!

REYNOLDS

Excessive size.

MAXWELL

That makes sense.

REYNOLDS

It's a burden.

MAXWELL

Did your alienist recommend treatment for that?

REYNOLDS

Strangely, no. His views are evolving as progress is made in the medical and psychiatric fields. By the end of his life Krafft-Ebing regarded inversion as a mental illness but not utter insanity.

MAXWELL

I am happy to know it.

REYNOLDS

Happy? That I'm mentally ill?

MAXWELL

Not insane.

REYNOLDS

Havelock Ellis called it a sport of nature.

MAXWELL

In other words, a variant, not a degeneration.

REYNOLDS

Exactly! At one end of a spectrum, but within the realm of normal.

MAXWELL

Father--

BOTH

Edward--!

MAXWELL

I understand your distress, but surely your psychiatrist has told you there exist many men like yourself.

REYNOLDS

Many?

MAXWELL

I, myself, have encountered more than a few.

REYNOLDS

I thought you might have, being in the arts.

MAXWELL

So I presume he has persuaded you from self-annihilation.

REYNOLDS

That isn't really what I wanted to tell you.

MAXWELL

Oh. I'm sorry. I thought--

REYNOLDS

I've made peace with it, as you've suggested.

MAXWELL

There's some other reason you feel worthless to society?

REYNOLDS

I'm afraid so.

MAXWELL

Worse than inversion?

REYNOLDS

I don't wish to disturb you--

MAXWELL

No, no, I'm flattered to be trusted upon so short an acquaintance.

REYNOLDS

I had hoped you'd understand.

MAXWELL

Indeed! I am...a very understanding person.

REYNOLDS

Empathic. As when you view a crucifixion.

MAXWELL

I like to think so.

REYNOLDS

Critical to your art training.

MAXWELL

Your training as a priest must have been similarly beneficial. The church is founded on compassion. Surely you feel welcome there.

REYNOLDS

That's part of the problem.

MAXWELL

Too much compassion?

REYNOLDS

It's a sanctuary. For men like myself.

MAXWELL

So you are...not alone. Are you concerned about...overstimulation?

REYNOLDS

Not in Chandler, Oklahoma.

MAXWELL

Of course.

REYNOLDS

But the church provides a certain structure, situations--I will even go so far as to say the word "protections--"

MAXWELL

Which I imagine is helpful to you.

REYNOLDS

In an unhelpful way.

MAXWELL

I'm afraid you're exceeding my capacity to comprehend.

REYNOLDS

Your volunteer work in the community includes activities with the Boy Scouts.

MAXWELL

Yes, the South Pasadena troupe. Why?

REYNOLDS

There are no men like myself in Chandler. But among my duties as priest is religious instruction of youth.

MAXWELL

Ah.

REYNOLDS

At that age, there are many questions, only a few related to the Old and New Testaments.

MAXWELL

I'm sure you provide proper guidance.

REYNOLDS

Some youths seek understanding, are psychologically vulnerable--

MAXWELL

It's your calling to listen--

REYNOLDS

To remind them they're God's children--

MAXWELL

And special--

REYNOLDS

Yes, to make them feel--

MAXWELL

You give them something no one else can.

REYNOLDS

Who better to teach them than I?

MAXWELL

God's representative--compassionate--

REYNOLDS

Gentle.

MAXWELL

Kind.

REYNOLDS

I'm helping them.

MAXWELL

Yes, only helping.

REYNOLDS

You understand.

MAXWELL

I--I--

REYNOLDS

This is not always understood.

MAXWELL is quiet.

REYNOLDS

I apologize. I never should have--

MAXWELL

No, no. Ordinarily I would find it impossible to sympathize with such a person, someone suffering from this form of illness--if I may use that word as it's another thing entirely from--inversion--much more to my mind a question of sanity--

REYNOLDS

Do you consider what I've done with those boys a capital crime?

MAXWELL

Deserving death? No, if that's why you--

REYNOLDS

I'm sorry I told you--

MAXWELL

But even though I could never understand, never enter the mind of such a one, you seem to me utterly--normal--in every respect, not dissimilar from myself--

REYNOLDS

We'll say no more about it.

MAXWELL

You had to leave Oklahoma?

REYNOLDS

The Bishop suggested I...explore the West while he assigns me another parish.

MAXWELL

How very thoughtful of him.

REYNOLDS

Is it?

MAXWELL

He understands.

REYNOLDS

He takes my confession.

MAXWELL

As I am now.

REYNOLDS

You see this as confession?

MAXWELL

Isn't that how it's offered? Even with the bishop's understanding, it preys on you.

REYNOLDS

It isn't right, is it? My only punishment reassignment.

MAXWELL

Do you desire punishment?

REYNOLDS

I'm Catholic.

MAXWELL

Did you hurt anyone?

REYNOLDS

No! Not physically, I mean.

MAXWELL

And you're repentant.

REYNOLDS

The parents don't feel two Hail Marys and an Our Father are quite enough.

MAXWELL

Your entire life is uprooted! Everything you built at your parish in Oklahoma gone! That is certainly atonement. And you'll not do it again.

(Silence)

Will you?

REYNOLDS

Perhaps only sin can erase sin.

MAXWELL

Suicide is mortal sin.

REYNOLDS

As mortal as it gets.

MAXWELL

Which is why you seek my counsel?

REYNOLDS

It's not often someone understands.
(Proffers the notebook)

MAXWELL

I've just told you I do *not* understand.

REYNOLDS

But you've listened.

MAXWELL

You wish to share your sermon notes?

(REYNOLDS only smiles)

This kind of writing is highly personal. I'd be embarrassed to read it.

(REYNOLDS doesn't move)

Very well, I will take it if you insist.

(Takes the notebook)

But I won't look at it in front of you--

(Starts to pocket it)

REYNOLDS

Don't you want to help me?

MAXWELL

I'd prefer to know your intimate thoughts in private, at home, if you really wish me to. We can talk about them another day.

REYNOLDS

I can't let that notebook out of my sight.

MAXWELL

Why not?

REYNOLDS

It contains my soul.

(Reaches for it)

Never mind--I won't burden you--

MAXWELL

(Snatching the notebook back)

You've made it my moral duty. If this is your immortal soul.

REYNOLDS

Thank you.

MAXWELL

(Flipping through the notebook)

Shall I--from the beginning--?

REYNOLDS

Only this last section--

(Points)

--Starting with "December 6, 1915--"

MAXWELL

(After a moment)

On December 6, 1915, I led a group of lads on a hike through the tall grass of the Arroyo Seco: Ben Covert (age 17)--

REYNOLDS

Huh.

MAXWELL

Clifford Stanley (age 16), his brother Frederick Stanley (age 18), and Zenobio Remedios (age 16)--

REYNOLDS

Fifteen.

MAXWELL

What?

REYNOLDS

It's fifteen, not sixteen.

MAXWELL

It says sixteen.

REYNOLDS

It should say fifteen.

(Hands him the pen)

Could you correct it, please?

MAXWELL

It's *your* notes.

REYNOLDS

Nothing exists until written.

MAXWELL

(Makes the change)

And Zenobio Remedios (age 15). At the end of our walk, the boys grew boisterous while waiting for their parents. There was much ribaldry over a pair of turtles we surprised during mating. The male fell on his back while still attached to the female, and she proceeded to run away--as fast as a tortoise can run--dragging him behind her, his stubby limbs flailing. I persuaded the boys to leave the amorous pair to their privacy. One by one, the youngsters departed with their parents, until only Zeno remained. A bright boy, fluent in both English and Spanish--

(To REYNOLDS)

You speak Spanish?

REYNOLDS

No hablo.

MAXWELL

Then how do you know he's fluent?

REYNOLDS

Overheard him with his *abuelo*.

MAXWELL

Fluent in both English and Spanish, Zeno is fascinated--

REYNOLDS

(After a moment)

What fascinates him?

MAXWELL

Zeno is fascinated with the remains of dire wolves from the La Brea Tar Pits. He wants to study paleontology at Yale and was delighted some weeks ago when I gave him a wolf baculum from the Museum's excavations--

REYNOLDS

You know what a baculum is?

MAXWELL

A penis bone.

(To REYNOLDS)

How much more--?

REYNOLDS

A bit.

MAXWELL

We waited together for Zeno's *abuelo*. His face was streaked with sun and shadow, his comely form caressed by a light breeze that bore the tang of the sea. Or perhaps the scent was his honest sweat, hard-earned on our hike up the trail. He saw me smile and turned modestly away, pretending to examine a western tiger swallowtail pausing on a stem of California brome. I reassured him with a touch that none could see--

REYNOLDS

Keep going.

MAXWELL

This--this isn't--

REYNOLDS

Isn't what?

MAXWELL

Nothing.

(Resumes reading)

We were alone. He smiled, his face so open, his eyes so kind. I could see--

REYNOLDS

What?

MAXWELL
 It's not--correct--

REYNOLDS
 How would you know?

MAXWELL
 Don't mock me.

REYNOLDS
 Read it.

MAXWELL
 It's false!

REYNOLDS
 Why would a lie in my sermon notes matter to you? Keep reading.

MAXWELL
 (With great effort)
 I could see that--I can't--

REYNOLDS
 I could see that the struggle-

MAXWELL
 I won't!

-

REYNOLDS
 I could see that the struggle would be beautiful.

MAXWELL
 It's been altered.

REYNOLDS
 Check the handwriting.

MAXWELL
 That's not what I wrote!

REYNOLDS
 Your name is on it.

MAXWELL
 Pickpocket!

REYNOLDS

You should keep better track of your words. In the wrong hands, that notebook will destroy you.

MAXWELL

Your hands!

REYNOLDS

Your hands. I've given it back as proof you can trust me. You needn't fear me. I'm you.

MAXWELL

Everyone who knows me agrees the charges are fabricated--

REYNOLDS

The Museum's taking your side--

MAXWELL

Of course! President Bowen said--

REYNOLDS

(Becoming BOWEN, pompous)

The charge against Mr. Maxwell is absurd. I have known him for than five years and he is a man of the highest character.

MAXWELL

Yes!

REYNOLDS AS BOWEN

If this case ever comes to trial--

REYNOLDS AS BOWEN

--He has thousands of friends in art and literary circles of Southern California--

MAXWELL

That's true! Thousands!

REYNOLDS AS BOWEN

--Who will testify to his high qualities.

REYNOLDS AS BOWEN

In my mind this difficulty is a case of mistaken identity.

MAXWELL

That's very possible. But how did you--?

REYNOLDS

(Becoming himself)

Mistaken identity, truly?

MAXWELL

Or it's a conspiracy--the parents--

REYNOLDS

The parents know each other?

MAXWELL

From the YMCA, the South Pasadena Scout troupe--Mr. and Mrs. Stanley, Ben and Edna Covert, Enernocion and Candelario Remedios--

REYNOLDS

Why would they conspire? Why lie?

MAXWELL

I am not that person!

REYNOLDS

You give their boys a gift, teaching them about science, swimming, taking them on nature walks, to the Museum--

MAXWELL

They're jealous!

REYNOLDS

Jealous?

MAXWELL

Envious of the opportunities--

MAXWELL

I get on with the boys better than their parents--they're poor, desperately poor--I know what that's like. You want the best for your children, but when they learn new things, enter a world you can't--my own father resented my art studies--

REYNOLDS

The parents brought charges against you to spite their children?

MAXWELL

The vitriol is shocking. I was completely unprepared.

REYNOLDS

They confronted you directly?

MAXWELL

Marshall Johnston brought Enernocion Remedios to my home!

REYNOLDS

The night you were arrested?

MAXWELL

Intimidation, an invasion, an assault--!

REYNOLDS

(Becomes ENERNOCIO)

¿Qué ha hecho con mi nieto? ¡Monstruo! Lo ha ensuciado! Ha manchado su alma! [What have you done to my grandson? You monster! You have soiled him! Tainted his very soul!]

MAXWELL

No, Señor Remedio--! *Me preocupo por su niño!* [I care for your boy!]

REYNOLDS AS ENERNOCIO

Lo atrajo con viajes y placeres, y luego aprovechado su inocencia! [Lured him with trips and pleasures, then taken advantage of his innocence!]

MAXWELL

No sé de que habla! [I don't know what you're talking about!]

REYNOLDS AS ENERNOCIO

Lo engaño y lo robo de sus queridos padres! ¡Maldito! Diablo blanco! [Stolen him away from his loving parents with sinful trickery! You are evil! A white devil!]

REYNOLDS AS ENERNOCIO

Confesarse! Limpieze el alma! [Confess! Cleanse yourself!]

MAXWELL

I thought you didn't speak Spanish. Mimicry is the opposite of empathy.

REYNOLDS

You've been abused. I see that. By the police, the parents, *un abuelo mojado--*

MAXWELL

I can't fathom his rage. It is beyond me.

REYNOLDS

You didn't hurt anyone.

MAXWELL

And Zeno is a wonderful boy! Smart and curious. As much as I try to steer him to art, he dreams of being a scientist.

REYNOLDS puts on a white jacket.

MAXWELL

Perhaps his grandfather's afraid of that, the expense of college--

REYNOLDS becomes SANTOS, an attendant.

REYNOLDS AS SANTOS

(Mexican accent)

Gentlemen, apologies for interrupting your conversation--

MAXWELL

Oh! Is it--? Who are you?

REYNOLDS AS SANTOS

Mi nombre es Santos. I'm on staff.

MAXWELL

Mucho gusto, Señor Santos.

REYNOLDS AS SANTOS

(Slyly)

Usted entiende. Oí decir que habla español. [You understand. I heard you speak Spanish.]

(Smiles)

Si, entiendo. Entiende usted? [I understand. Do you understand?]

MAXWELL

(Shaken)

I understand.

REYNOLDS AS SANTOS

Bueno. Are you ready to proceed to the Department of Mechano Therapy?

MAXWELL

I hadn't realized it was time--
-

REYNOLDS AS SANTOS

Your treatment course
provides a number of choices--

REYNOLDS AS SANTOS

Including camphor, hamamelis and methol rubs with salt glow, saline friction with salt rub, and alcohol rub with manipulations. *Pase por aqui, por favor.* [This way, please.]

MAXWELL goes with REYNOLDS AS SANTOS.

MAXWELL

Have you Swedish massage?

REYNOLDS AS SANTOS

Si, Señor. Are you experiencing tension?

MAXWELL

Yes! A great deal!

REYNOLDS AS SANTOS

Then we recommend Schotts Movements.

MAXWELL

What are those?

REYNOLDS AS SANTOS

Schotts gymnastics consist of passive and active, excentric and concentric movements.

(Manipulates MAXWELL'S body)

At first the patient goes through passive manipulation of the phalangeal joints, later the larger joints.

MAXWELL

Have you tried it yourself?

REYNOLDS AS SANTOS

Oh, no, *Señor*, I'm not allowed. Please remove the top portion of your bathing costume.

MAXWELL does.

MAXWELL

And this provides relief?

REYNOLDS AS SANTOS

Sin duda, Señor. These movements are performed by the operator synchronously with the patient's respiratory movements. Very slowly.

MAXWELL performs the movements while REYNOLDS removes the white

jacket and the top portion of his
bathing costume.

MAXWELL

I see. Coordinated with the breathing.

REYNOLDS moves in parallel with
MAXWELL.

REYNOLDS

Young Zeno is a scientist?

MAXWELL

Budding. More curious than skilled, of course.

REYNOLDS

Trusting?

MAXWELL

With every reason to be so!

REYNOLDS

Victor's trusting like that.

MAXWELL

Who?

REYNOLDS

Victor Lamar.

MAXWELL

That name is familiar.

REYNOLDS

The young son of the Bohunk
family I'm staying with.

MAXWELL

How old is he?

REYNOLDS

Fifteen.

MAXWELL

Ah.

REYNOLDS

But trusting does not mean trustworthy. I know these boys.

MAXWELL

Zeno is entirely trustworthy!

REYNOLDS

He didn't complain about you to his *abuelo*?

MAXWELL

He's devoted to me!

REYNOLDS becomes ZENO.

MAXWELL

Working class but extraordinarily polite.

REYNOLDS AS ZENO

(Spanish accent)

Mr. Maxwell, who's the best artist in the world?

MAXWELL

Zeno, what a marvelous question!

REYNOLDS AS ZENO

Is it Picasso?

MAXWELL

Many people think so, but art is more than ideas.

REYNOLDS AS ZENO

It's feelings.

MAXWELL

And whose paintings make you feel?

REYNOLDS AS ZENO

Lots!

MAXWELL

Maybe there's more than one right answer. What artist makes you feel the most?

REYNOLDS AS ZENO

Albert Bierstadt.

MAXWELL

Bierstadt? Why?

REYNOLDS AS ZENO

When I see the beautiful places he paints, I want to go there.

MAXWELL

What about portrait painters?

REYNOLDS AS ZENO

You mean your friend with the funny name?

MAXWELL

It's not funny, it's Bohemian! Max Wieczorek.

REYNOLDS AS ZENO

His name is hard to say, but I like his people. They make me feel...nice.

MAXWELL

Nice? Do you mean passion?

REYNOLDS AS ZENO

What's passion?

MAXWELL

A very strong feeling, overwhelming, out of control.

REYNOLDS AS ZENO

Happy or sad?

MAXWELL

Both.

REYNOLDS AS ZENO

Strange?

MAXWELL

Yes.

REYNOLDS AS ZENO

Can it hurt?

MAXWELL

That, too. Everything all at once.

REYNOLDS AS ZENO

Oh, then I know one!

MAXWELL

Who?

REYNOLDS AS ZENO
I'll show you.

MAXWELL
If you wish.

REYNOLDS AS ZENO takes the Guido
Reni St. Sebastian pose.

REYNOLDS AS ZENO
Do you get it?

MAXWELL
I'm not sure.

REYNOLDS AS ZENO
Tie my hands!

MAXWELL
With what?

REYNOLDS AS ZENO
(Motions)
There's a piece of rope.

MAXWELL
I can guess without--

REYNOLDS AS ZENO
Tie me! Then stick me full of arrows!

MAXWELL
St. Sebastian!

REYNOLDS AS ZENO
By Guido Reni!

MAXWELL
Why do you like that one the best?

REYNOLDS AS ZENO
It makes me feel like St. Sebastian--sad, happy and strange
and hurting all at once. Passion!

MAXWELL
Zeno, you're a very smart lad.

REYNOLDS AS ZENO

Guido Reni is the best artist ever.

MAXWELL

Best for you, my intelligent young friend. You're absolutely right.

REYNOLDS changes back to himself,
resuming the Schotts movements.

REYNOLDS

He asked you to tie him up?

MAXWELL

I didn't! And I knew which painting all along, of course.

REYNOLDS

Of course. Pedophilia is sexual attraction to prepubescent children.

MAXWELL

I'm not a pedophile!

REYNOLDS

That's my point. Neither Zeno nor Victor was under 11.

MAXWELL

Zeno was 14.

REYNOLDS

Fourteen, yes. Hebephilia is what they call it when the young person is in puberty, ages 11 through 14. Still a legal issue at that age, in any case.

MAXWELL

You're acting as if I've confessed to the crime. I have not!

REYNOLDS

Almost all adults, and certainly all adult males, are attracted to young people ages 16 to 19.

MAXWELL

That's only normal. They're physiological adults.

REYNOLDS

Ephedophilia, it's called. Magnus Hirschfeld regards it as normal and nonpathological.

MAXWELL

You know rather a lot about it for a priest.

REYNOLDS

What better study than oneself?

REYNOLDS dons the white jacket,
becoming YASUNARI.

MAXWELL

Have you discovered why you are the way you are? Why you have this...preference? Something that happened to you as a child?

REYNOLDS AS YASUNARI

(Japanese accent)

Mr. Maxwell, my name is Yasunari. May I take you to Department of Electro Therapy?

MAXWELL

Actually, Mr. Yasunari, we're still--

REYNOLDS AS YASUNARI

Your course of treatments must progress without delay if you're to finish before closing.

MAXWELL

What are our choices in Electro Therapy?

REYNOLDS AS YASUNARI

The electric tub bath, high frequency treatment, thermo therapeutic oven for joints, vibratory treatment--

MAXWELL

(Going with REYNOLDS AS
YASUNARI)

Any radio-active treatments?

REYNOLDS AS YASUNARI

Bimini water itself is radio-active, which produces greater elimination at a given temperature for a given time than other waters, leaving the skin soft and velvety as a babe's.

That's why it's called the Velvet Bath. We also have red rays and blue rays.

MAXWELL

What are those?

REYNOLDS AS YASUNARI

Leucodescent lamp manipulations.

MAXWELL

Is it safe?

REYNOLDS AS YASUNARI

(Seating MAXWELL)

Its rays are anodyne, antiseptic, antiphlogistic, and absolutely safe.

MAXWELL

Have you tried it yourself?

REYNOLDS AS YASUNARI

I'm not permitted, sir. Please sit perfectly still for greatest effect.

A blue light beams on MAXWELL.
REYNOLDS removes the jacket and
sits next to MAXWELL.

MAXWELL

After this treatment we will enter the plunge. You'll find it quite refreshing.

(After a moment)

I believe Mr. Yasunari has gone.

REYNOLDS looks around for YASUNARI.

REYNOLDS

My self-study has indeed been revealing.

MAXWELL

About your childhood? What have you discovered?

REYNOLDS

Every young boy desires a mentor, an adult male who initiates him into manhood. Surely you had someone to instruct you.

MAXWELL

As I mentioned, one of our boarders, Professor Frank Moody, was inspirational to me.

REYNOLDS

What was he professor of?

MAXWELL

Professor was mostly a nickname. A British typewriter supply salesman who dreamed of higher things.

REYNOLDS

For himself and for you.

MAXWELL

Although I possessed an innate aesthetic sense, there was no art education available to the son of a cabinetmaker in Santa Ana in those days.

REYNOLDS

Professor Moody did you a great service.

REYNOLDS turns into MOODY.

MAXWELL

I was most grateful for the attention. My father's long hours in the shop left little time for his only child.

Lighting turns red.

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

(English accent)

One must experience art in all dimensions, Everett. A successful painting explodes beyond width and height to invite us into its depth. The most evocative sculpture has sensual movement, transcending three-dimensionality to embrace--

MAXWELL becomes a pubescent version of himself, YOUNG MAXWELL.

YOUNG MAXWELL

Time, the fourth dimension!

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

That's exactly right, Everett! Brilliant! What tableaux have you to show me?

(YOUNG MAXWELL poses)

David! By...?

YOUNG MAXWELL

Michelangelo!

(Poses)

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

Discobolus! Artist?

YOUNG MAXWELL

Myron of Eleutherae!

(Poses)

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

Shiva as Lord of the Dance! Sculptor?

YOUNG MAXWELL

Unknown!

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

You can do better than that.

YOUNG MAXWELL

Anonymous Indian! Chola period! Tamil Nadu!

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

You haven't got it quite.

(Adjusts YOUNG MAXWELL'S
pose)

A little more...yes...hold still. I know it's difficult to strike a balance, but you're destroying and creating the universe simultaneously--one can't expect that to be easy.

YOUNG MAXWELL

Let's do paintings, Professor!

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

Very well.

YOUNG MAXWELL

Give me a title. Anything!

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

The Scream.

(YOUNG MAXWELL poses)

Botticelli's Birth of Venus.

(YOUNG MAXWELL poses)

Da Vinci's Last Supper.

YOUNG MAXWELL does a quick sequence of all 13 figures from left to right.

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

Manet's Odalisque!

YOUNG MAXWELL reclines in the sexy pose of the painting. REYNOLDS AS MOODY studies him a moment.

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

Impressive. You've earned your next art lesson.

YOUNG MAXWELL

What is it?

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

Some very special images.

YOUNG MAXWELL

Which artist?

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

As we've discussed, some artists wish to remain anonymous.

REYNOLDS AS MOODY produces the notebook. YOUNG MAXWELL registers some concern about how REYNOLDS got it back.

YOUNG MAXWELL

What's that?

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

A rare portfolio.

YOUNG MAXWELL

Are they prints?

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

Photographs.

YOUNG MAXWELL

Photography isn't art!

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

These photographs are.

REYNOLDS AS MOODY shows YOUNG MAXWELL a page of the notebook. YOUNG MAXWELL reacts, REYNOLDS AS MOODY noting the reaction. REYNOLDS AS MOODY turns the pages. YOUNG MAXWELL reacts slightly differently. Several pages, with increasing reactions from YOUNG MAXWELL. For one he may turn his head sideways for a better look, for another, he may try take the notebook to reorient it. But REYNOLDS AS MOODY won't let go.

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

What do you think?

YOUNG MAXWELL

I've never seen *those* poses before.

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

But you find them interesting?

YOUNG MAXWELL

That one hurts. Look at his face.

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

That's passion.

YOUNG MAXWELL

Like a crucifixion?

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

It hurts in a nice way. When you're older, you'll understand.

YOUNG MAXWELL

I think I understand now.

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

How old are you, Everett?

YOUNG MAXWELL

Old! Almost thirteen!

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

Only adults understand.

YOUNG MAXWELL

I'm precocious. You said so.

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

That's true. But it's not good to grow up too fast. Once you do, you can never go back.

YOUNG MAXWELL

In the Jewish religion you become an adult at thirteen.

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

But you're not even the smallest part Jewish, Everett.

(Pause)

Are you?

YOUNG MAXWELL looks very uncomfortable then turns suddenly back into MAXWELL.

MAXWELL

Art! We only talked about art!

REYNOLDS turns back into himself. The red light goes off and normal lighting returns.

MAXWELL

I was being educated!

REYNOLDS

I thought I recognized the Socratic method.

MAXWELL

I'm not like you. I have no...destructive urge!

REYNOLDS

Oh, no. You're full of life. In fact, you remind me very much of Victor.

MAXWELL

Victor Lamar? That Bohemian lad?

REYNOLDS

So anxious to grow up. It got him into trouble, too.

MAXWELL

Trouble? What kind of trouble?

REYNOLDS

He brought it on himself.

REYNOLDS dons the white jacket and becomes YASUNARI.

MAXWELL

Fourteen year-olds are just...exploring. They want to see how far they can go, what they can get away with--they're boys--!

REYNOLDS AS YASUNARI

Mr. Maxwell, are you ready for the plunge?

MAXWELL

(Going with YASUNARI)

Oh! Mr. Yasunari! Yes, I believe we've had quite enough treatments for one evening.

REYNOLDS AS YASUNARI

A refreshing Velvet Bath would be just the thing. I am told it's soothing and relaxing.

MAXWELL enters the pool.

MAXWELL

Edward, join me! This plunge is the essence of the famous Bimini Baths, the reason the resort was built.

REYNOLDS takes off the jacket and becomes himself.

MAXWELL

The mineral water six degrees above body temperature, the continual flow of freshness—think of it as a baptism—

REYNOLDS

And clean?

MAXWELL

What do you mean?

REYNOLDS

Exclusive?

MAXWELL

Mr. Yasunari has never been in the water, so I assume.

REYNOLDS enters the pool.

REYNOLDS

Ahhh!

MAXWELL

Nothing like this in Oklahoma, I'll wager! What luxury!

REYNOLDS

I feel thirty years younger already.

MAXWELL

I'm delighted you're feeling better. No more talk of annihilation.

REYNOLDS

Are you enjoying the plunge, Victor?

MAXWELL

What?

REYNOLDS

I'm so glad you brought me here. But you shouldn't have lied about your age to get in.

MAXWELL

What are you talking about? Bimini Baths admits all ages.

REYNOLDS

I would have been happy to pay adult admission for you. It's only ten cents more.

MAXWELL resists, but slowly turns
into VICTOR LAMAR, age 13. He

develops a more youthful voice and
a Bohemian accent.

MAXWELL

I was full price!

REYNOLDS

Victor, you're far too concerned with economics.

MAXWELL

Quit calling me Victor!

REYNOLDS

I'll call you what I wish. I paid good money.

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

You can't treat me like some little kid.

MAXWELL AS VICTOR doesn't appear to
be an especially expert swimmer.

REYNOLDS

That's true, Victor. You're a young man who understands.
You know how the world works. You know the value of your
time. You know the value of fun.

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

Nothing wrong with getting three or four dollars to have a
good time.

REYNOLDS

Please don't talk about money.

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

You brung it up.

REYNOLDS

There are people all around.

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

They're swimming--ain't paying us no mind.

REYNOLDS

That's true. But it doesn't hurt to be careful.

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

I look after myself.

REYNOLDS

And it doesn't pay to be reckless.

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

I ain't reckless! I know what I can do.

REYNOLDS

Can you actually swim, Victor?

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

You bet!

REYNOLDS

You're dog-paddling. Let me teach you real skills.

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

I can swim!

REYNOLDS

(Demonstrating)

This is freestyle.

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

Yeah, I know.

REYNOLDS

(Stroking)

This is the backstroke.

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

(Awkwardly imitating)

I know! I'm not a kid!

REYNOLDS

(Stroking)

The breaststroke.

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

(Awkwardly imitating)

I know that one, too!

REYNOLDS

(Stroking)

Butterfly.

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

This ain't the first time I been here!

REYNOLDS

(Stroking)

Crawl.

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

I know `em all!

REYNOLDS

Someone's got to watch you like a hawk or you'll sink!

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

I can breaststroke! I can crawl!

REYNOLDS

Maybe we should start you out in one of the swimming harnesses till you learn some technique.

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

Harnesses are for girls! I got technique!

MAXWELL AS VICTOR hauls himself out
of the pool.

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

I can freestyle! I can backstroke! Frontstroke!
Sidestroke!

REYNOLDS

Victor, be careful!

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

Butterfly, dragonfly, shoo-
fly!

REYNOLDS

The edge is slick!

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

I can dive, too! You think I can't?

MAXWELL AS VICTOR starts climbing
high above REYNOLDS.

REYNOLDS

You've never dived before in your life!

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

I been practicing! You think I only come here with you?

REYNOLDS

Lifeguard, watch him!

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

I got lots of friends like
you! Grown up chums who
treat me right, better than
you!

REYNOLDS
He has no idea what he's
doing!

MAXWELL AS VICTOR
I know what I'm doing! I can
swan dive, cannonball--

REYNOLDS
Lifeguard! Attendant! Do
you hear me?

MAXWELL AS VICTOR
I can do a plain dive, a
fancy dive--

MAXWELL AS VICTOR
--A running dive--
(Pauses at the top of the
dive platform)
--A high dive--

REYNOLDS
Victor, come down! That's way too high for your first time.

MAXWELL AS VICTOR
(Scared)
Ain't too high for me!

REYNOLDS
Someone get him down!

MAXWELL AS VICTOR
(Bravado)
Ain't my first time!

REYNOLDS
Where's the manager? Who has charge of safety?

MAXWELL AS VICTOR
I can dive!

MAXWELL AS VICTOR jumps from the
high dive. It's sad, happy,
strange and hurts. He falls slowly
as REYNOLDS speaks.

REYNOLDS
I tried to stop him, but he threw himself off the high
platform as if casting himself into hell. He lost his
balance before he left the board, twisted, gasped, crushed
his forehead on the corner of the platform and careered
sideways instead of straight into the plunge.

His trajectory seemed physically impossible, the angle so--
 torturous--almost as if he was swept aside by the vengeful
 hand of God. At the first crack, everyone in the water
 snapped their heads toward the dive, staring, frozen, as
 Victor slowly, slowly plummeted, like a humorously awkward
 diving bird, a cormorant, a water turkey, the crimson slice
 above his eye visible to all. No one screamed, no one took a
 breath. Even the gush of the hot spring water seemed to
 pause as Victor plunged like Icarus. Only when his head
 cracked a second time--against the travertine coping on the
 edge of the pool--was there a collective groan, as if every
 one of us suffered his hurt. Only then did a lifeguard
 appear. Only then did a cadre of colored attendants fish
 him from the tank and apply the usual restoratives, to no
 avail. They refused to abandon the effort long after all
 hope was gone, and their severe methods left the body almost
 unrecognizable as the beautiful lad so passionate and full of
 life only minutes before.

Upon landing, MAXWELL AS VICTOR
 turns back into MAXWELL.

MAXWELL

I remember! Now I remember!

REYNOLDS

What?

MAXWELL

This really happened!

REYNOLDS

Of course it did, I just told you. Terrible.

MAXWELL

Five years ago, ten years ago--

REYNOLDS

It was 1908.

MAXWELL

Almost a decade ago! But you made it sound like it just
 occurred.

REYNOLDS

For me it will always be a fresh tragedy.

MAXWELL

But that's not how it happened.

REYNOLDS

How would you know?

MAXWELL

It made the papers!

(Reads from a clipping)

"The death of young Victor Lamar who was drowned at Bimini Baths on October 28, is recalled by an action--"

REYNOLDS

You saved clippings?

MAXWELL

--"Filed in the Superior Court yesterday--"

REYNOLDS

And you carry them around with you? Why?

MAXWELL

--"By Vaclav Lamar of number 402 Centennial Street, who asks from the Bimini Water Company \$20,000."

REYNOLDS

Even I didn't keep the clippings and I was there!

MAXWELL

"The petition recites that the defendant was derelict in its duty in the conduct of the bathing place--"

REYNOLDS

What do you expect from the Los Angeles Times? Made it sensational when it was intimately tragic.

MAXWELL

--"In not employing suitable guards and proper appliances to keep persons from death by drowning."

MAXWELL suddenly turns into VICTOR.

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

Father, I been meaning to ask you--

REYNOLDS

What are you doing?

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

This ain't the first time you done this.

REYNOLDS

Who are you now?

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

Don't act like you forgot your precious little Victor already.

REYNOLDS

You can't just--become--!

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

I do what I want! I'm old enough!

REYNOLDS

You're a grown man.

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

Not everybody agrees with that. Some might say I'm unlawful.

REYNOLDS

Don't say that, Victor. Let's not talk--let's swim!

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

I wanna talk before any swimming. Four dollars ain't much.

REYNOLDS

More than you've ever seen!

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

My company's worth more than that. *Ja Vam stojim za dobry penize!*

[I'm worth good money!]

REYNOLDS

I've been most generous!

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

And keeping my mouth shut's worth more still.

REYNOLDS

Victor. What do you know of such things?

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

Like I said, I been here before. I ain't leaving this changing room till you give me sufficient.

REYNOLDS

Sufficient? Do you even know what that means? You barely know English!

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

Sufficient to shut my mouth.

REYNOLDS

(Going to him)

Victor, who put these ideas in your head? Your chums? Who've you told about me?

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

Nobody yet! Nor will I if I get sufficient!

REYNOLDS

Absolutely, Victor. I understand your position. I've taken advantage of your youth, your naiveté, your recent arrival in this country. I'll most certainly give you--

REYNOLDS quickly overpowers MAXWELL AS VICTOR and slams his head against a wall with an audible crack.

REYNOLDS

Sufficient.

REYNOLDS throws MAXWELL AS VICTOR into the pool. Sound of a splash. MAXWELL floats as if unconscious.

MAXWELL

(Quoting as if somnambulant)

"An application for a criminal complaint has been made, and it is the belief of the Lamar family and others that the boy met with foul play."

REYNOLDS

That's not what happened.

MAXWELL

"It is also alleged that E.V. Reynolds, a moral degenerate, was allowed to attack Lamar in one of the bathrooms--"

REYNOLDS

He struck his head on the diving board, the coping--

MAXWELL

--And that when the two were in the water Reynolds again attacked his companion, striking him on the head and stunning him.

REYNOLDS

I was the only witness, it wasn't a busy day--the baths deserted--

MAXWELL

"Several surgeons examined the body and agreed that the boy had been the victim of horrible mistreatment."

REYNOLDS

I couldn't find staff--no competent attendants--just slow dark men--

MAXWELL

"A secret autopsy was held under direction of the District Attorney's office, and an early arrest is anticipated as a result of the finding."

REYNOLDS

I thought you understood.

MAXWELL comes out of the water.

MAXWELL

I understand. I was there.

REYNOLDS

Where?

MAXWELL starts putting on clothes, not the tuxedo he wore previously, but plain cotton in black-and-white stripes.

MAXWELL

The changing room of Bimini Baths on the morning of October 28, 1908. The next cubicle.

REYNOLDS

Why would you listen to a private conversation?

MAXWELL

I recognized one of the voices.

REYNOLDS

You've only just met me.

MAXWELL

Victor. I knew Victor.

REYNOLDS

You knew him. You've been far from candid with me.

MAXWELL

His father Vaclav was friends with Max Wieczorek. The Bohemian community of Los Angeles sticks together.

REYNOLDS

You knew a boy like that in 1908.

MAXWELL

Really, I knew his father--

REYNOLDS

You knew boys like that ten years ago. You have history, a pattern of behavior!

MAXWELL

My behavior is nothing next to your--capital crime! You got away with murder. No arrest was ever made. Where did you go?

REYNOLDS

Las Vegas.

MAXWELL

Not back to Oklahoma?

REYNOLDS

I couldn't.

MAXWELL

So you hid out in Las Vegas.

REYNOLDS

I founded St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church and stayed in Las Vegas until now.

MAXWELL

So you got away with it.

REYNOLDS

You failed to come forward. That makes you an accessory.

MAXWELL

Why do you think I've kept the clippings? Memorized them? Obsessed, suffered, sought atonement--I knew the boy! And I was afraid to step in, afraid my own--sins--would be known.

REYNOLDS

You admit to sins.

MAXWELL

All men sin!

REYNOLDS

But yours is the worst sin. The unforgiveable sin. It merits the death penalty. No one can sympathize with you. Even murderers hate your type. In prison, they have to separate you from the rest for your own protection, otherwise you don't live long--

MAXWELL

I never murdered anyone! I never feared a boy so much I smashed his brains out, drowned him--!

REYNOLDS

You damaged their minds, their souls, brutally, forever. I smashed his brains--how is that so very different?

MAXWELL suddenly turns into an
enraged and sorrowful VACLAV LAMAR,
the father of VICTOR.

MAXWELL AS VACLAV

(Bohemian accent)

My boy! My Victor!

REYNOLDS

No, no--don't--

MAXWELL AS VACLAV

He was good boy!

REYNOLDS

Mr. Lamar, it was an accident--

MAXWELL AS VACLAV

Good Catholic boy and you corrupt him!

REYNOLDS

Your boy was not so innocent!

MAXWELL AS VACLAV

You are man of God, but what
is God if you are this?

REYNOLDS

He was corrupt when I met
him!

MAXWELL AS VACLAV

We give our children to
church to be safe, to be
holy, and you betray like
Judas!

REYNOLDS

He was a degenerate old man
in the body of a boy!

MAXWELL AS VACLAV

You kill--you crucify--like
Jews!

REYNOLDS

I did none of that!

MAXWELL AS VACLAV

You baptize him in filth!
Give him piss for wine and
shit for holy body of Christ!

REYNOLDS

I loved him! As any pastor
loves his flock!

MAXWELL AS VACLAV

That is your sacred communion
of death!

MAXWELL AS VACLAV

You no love him. His family love him! *Byl to muj kluk a ted je
pryc! Ukradeny!*[He was my boy and now gone! Stolen!] Violated!
You no love--you destroy!

MAXWELL is now fully dressed in
prison garb. Lighting changes to
reveal they are in a cramped prison
cell with a small prison bed.

REYNOLDS

That conversation never happened.

MAXWELL

Because you fled to the desert.

REYNOLDS

How arrogant to imagine you know how he felt.

MAXWELL

I didn't. Until now.

REYNOLDS

The art of empathy.

MAXWELL

In conversation with a monster.

REYNOLDS

Your empathy extends to me. To a monster.

(MAXWELL is silent)

Confess. I'll never rest until you do.

MAXWELL

I may or may not have done wrong. But you committed murder.
And you escaped.

REYNOLDS

I have not. It's always with me.

MAXWELL

You deserve prison.

REYNOLDS

But you're the one got caught.

MAXWELL

Haven't you been caught? We're both in San Quentin.

REYNOLDS

I'm your spiritual counselor.

MAXWELL

The prison chaplain? Dressed like that?

REYNOLDS

You're seeing what you wish to see. Perhaps you're the one going mad. Didn't your attorney attempt to have you declared insane to reduce your sentence?

MAXWELL

He was...not successful.

REYNOLDS

But now you're imagining the prison chaplain shirtless.

REYNOLDS retrieves his shirt and
Roman collar, puts it on.

REYNOLDS

Seeing people who aren't there.

MAXWELL

You're not the chaplain. You're a prisoner. You've finally been caught!

REYNOLDS

But aren't you supposed to be in solitary confinement--?

MAXWELL

Yes--

REYNOLDS

For your own safety, according to regulations for all men convicted of statutory crimes?

MAXWELL

I haven't been convicted! I haven't confessed!

REYNOLDS

Which is why your sentence--at the moment--is indefinite. If you'd actually confess, your attorney could get you paroled.

MAXWELL

I'll file a complaint. Your presence here is a violation.

REYNOLDS

There's only one bed.

MAXWELL

The warden is responsible for prisoner safety.

REYNOLDS

And I've a history of violence.

MAXWELL

I'm not intimidated.

REYNOLDS

You're on suicide watch.

(MAXWELL is silent)

You're not like the other boys. You're special. Isn't that what you told Zenobio Remedios?

MAXWELL

He is special! Not a boy whose like your Victor! Zeno has aptitude!

REYNOLDS

A bright thirteen year-old.

MAXWELL

He's sixteen!

REYNOLDS

Now. In 1918. But on December 6, 1915 when you took him for a hike in the tall grass of the Arroyo Seco, he was only thirteen. The same age you were when Professor Frank Moody inculcated you in art.

REYNOLDS puts on a white jacket.

MAXWELL

I was twelve, actually.

REYNOLDS

Sorry, I forgot. Twelve!

MAXWELL

You're making him sound nefarious! Frank did me no harm!

REYNOLDS

He opened up the world for you.

MAXWELL

He cared for me.

REYNOLDS

He brought you into adulthood. A rite of passage.

MAXWELL

As I care for Zeno.

REYNOLDS

Would Zeno say that?

MAXWELL

Yes! He cares for me, too!

REYNOLDS

You can't even see him. You're imagining the boy you want. Did he want what happened in the tunnel of weeds?

REYNOLDS takes out the notebook and pen.

MAXWELL

Nothing happened! But if it had, he would have welcomed it, yes.

REYNOLDS

I see.

(Makes a note)

MAXWELL

How'd you get that back?

REYNOLDS

My sermon notes?

MAXWELL

My notebook. You gave it to me but now you have it again.

REYNOLDS

You're remembering incorrectly. Interesting.

(Makes a note)

MAXWELL

You're not a priest at all, are you?

REYNOLDS

No.

MAXWELL

Nor a prisoner.

REYNOLDS

Metaphorically, I suppose.

MAXWELL

You're an alienist.

REYNOLDS

Hmmm.

(Makes a note)

MAXWELL

That's why you know so much about pedophilia, hebephilia, ephebophilia--anal puckering--criminal penises--!

REYNOLDS

Go on.

MAXWELL

You're writing down everything I say!

REYNOLDS

I'm much more interested in what you write down.

MAXWELL

Evidence!

REYNOLDS

I'm trying to help you.

MAXWELL

To trap me!

REYNOLDS

You've trapped yourself. I can get you out. You're right. I am a psychiatrist, hired by the Museum to observe you.

MAXWELL

Why?

REYNOLDS

According to your doctor you've been in a delicate psychological state for quite some time.

MAXWELL

Since these false accusations!

REYNOLDS

Since you were thirteen. Perhaps all your life.

MAXWELL

Why would the Museum hire an alienist?

REYNOLDS

They care for you. And they want me to convince you to sign this.

(Proffers the notebook)

MAXWELL

A confession?

REYNOLDS

It's your own words.

MAXWELL

You've put them in my mouth!

REYNOLDS

I've elicited them. There's a legal difference. If you sign a confession, your sentence will become probation and you'll be released. You've already served a year in San Quentin. Isn't that enough atonement for you?

MAXWELL

I've nothing to atone for!

REYNOLDS

Not according to this letter from the Museum's President to the Clerk of the State Board of Prisons.

REYNOLDS hands a letter to MAXWELL
then becomes BOWEN.

REYNOLDS AS BOWEN

I am very glad indeed to see that some effort is being made to help Mr. Everett C. Maxwell. He was employed in the Los Angeles County Museum of History, Science and Art from November 25th, 1913 to April 1st, 1916, as Curator of Art, the most important branch in our institution. He came to us highly recommended by leading citizens who stood for the higher things in this community and during the period of his employment, although brought in contact with thousands of people weekly, there was not a word against his character as a useful citizen and a gentleman. As has often occurred before among highly temperamental people, we sometimes get our greatest shocks. He was a young man holding one of the highest positions in the community, with a splendid future and practically his whole life before him.

MAXWELL

Bowen supports me!

REYNOLDS AS BOWEN

By one act all this was destroyed, and the lives of his father and mother practically wrecked. Personally, I believe that he has been severely punished already, and if his conduct has been worthy during the time he has spent at San Quentin I sincerely trust that the State Board of Prison Directors or the Board of Parole will do all they can to give this boy a chance to commence over. Yours very truly,
William Bowen, President.

MAXWELL

(Devastated)

He wrote that?

REYNOLDS

Mistaken identity, my ass.

MAXWELL

Even Bowen thinks I did it?

REYNOLDS

Nothing exists until written.

(Proffers notebook)

Write it, sign it, and you shall go free.

This is why I'm here.

MAXWELL

I've told this story a thousand times! To the marshal, to Zeno's *abuelo*--

REYNOLDS

This time, tell the truth.

MAXWELL

--To the attorneys, to the judge--

REYNOLDS

In Zeno's words.

MAXWELL

To the parole board--

REYNOLDS becomes MAXWELL. It's cruelly accurate.

REYNOLDS AS MAXWELL

He saw me smile and turned modestly away, pretending to examine a western tiger swallowtail pausing on a stem of California brome.

MAXWELL

Those are my words, but--

REYNOLDS AS MAXWELL

I reassured him with a touch that none could see--

MAXWELL

How could I know Zeno's words?

REYNOLDS AS MAXWELL

We were alone. He smiled, his face so open, his eyes so kind.

MAXWELL

How Zeno felt? Arrogant to imagine I would know.

REYNOLDS AS MAXWELL

I could see--

MAXWELL

I can't be--!

REYNOLDS AS MAXWELL

I could see--

MAXWELL starts turning into ZENO.

MAXWELL

You can't force me to--!

REYNOLDS

I could see that the struggle would be beautiful.

REYNOLDS puts MAXWELL in the St.
Sebastian pose.

MAXWELL AS ZENO

St. Sebastian!

REYNOLDS AS MAXWELL

By Guido Reni! Zeno, you're a very smart lad. But the
tableau isn't quite complete.

MAXWELL AS ZENO

What's missing, Mr. Maxwell?

REYNOLDS AS MAXWELL tears a strip
from the prison bedsheet, turns it
into binding.

REYNOLDS AS MAXWELL

St. Sebastian was tied to a tree by the Roman soldiers.

MAXWELL AS ZENO

Oh.

REYNOLDS AS MAXWELL

Shall we bind you for authenticity?

MAXWELL AS ZENO

I guess so.

REYNOLDS AS MAXWELL

(Tying MAXWELL'S hands)

It adds tension to the composition.

MAXWELL AS ZENO

Ow.

REYNOLDS AS MAXWELL

Does it hurt?

MAXWELL AS ZENO

A little.

REYNOLDS AS MAXWELL

That's passion. Happy, sad--

MAXWELL AS ZENO

Strange--

REYNOLDS AS MAXWELL

And it hurts a little.

REYNOLDS starts unbuttoning
MAXWELL'S prison garb, pulling it
down so MAXWELL is naked from the
waist up. At the same time,
REYNOLDS becomes FRANK MOODY.

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

One must experience art in all dimensions, Everett. A
successful painting explodes beyond width and height to
invite us into its depth.

(Adjusts MAXWELL'S pose)

A little more...yes...hold still. I know it's difficult to
strike a balance, but you're destroying and creating the
universe simultaneously--one can't expect that to be easy.

Without moving, MAXWELL becomes
YOUNG MAXWELL. REYNOLDS AS MOODY
produces a camera.

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

Impressive. You've earned your next art lesson.

YOUNG MAXWELL

What is it, Frank?

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

You'll let me take your photograph in your birthday suit,
won't you, Everett?

YOUNG MAXWELL

Like those you showed me?

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

Yes, like those artists who wish to remain anonymous.

REYNOLDS takes some photographs.

YOUNG MAXWELL

Then can we visit the Ostrich Farm?

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

Yes. Hold still and I'll give you a cigarette. And pay you five cents.

MAXWELL turns into VICTOR.

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

Father, I been meaning to ask you--this ain't the first time you been to Bimini with a boy.

REYNOLDS turns back into himself.

REYNOLDS

Don't say that, Victor. Let's not talk--let's swim!

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

I wanna talk before any swimming. Four dollars ain't much.

REYNOLDS

More than you've ever seen!

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

My company's worth more than that. *Ja Vam stojim za dobry penize!* [I'm worth good money!]

REYNOLDS

I've been most generous!

REYNOLDS puts down the camera and stands close behind MAXWELL.

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

And keeping my mouth shut's worth more still.

REYNOLDS

Victor. What do you know of such things? Who put these ideas in your head? Your chums? Who've you told about me?

MAXWELL AS VICTOR

Nobody yet! Nor will I if I get sufficient!

REYNOLDS

Absolutely, Victor. I understand your position. I've taken advantage of your youth, your naivete, your recent arrival in this country. I'll most certainly give you--

REYNOLDS thrusts into MAXWELL.
There is the sounds of a crack like
the cracking of VICTOR'S skull.
MAXWELL gasps.

REYNOLDS

Sufficient.

MAXWELL turns back into YOUNG
MAXWELL.

YOUNG MAXWELL

(In pain)

Professor Moody, I think--!

REYNOLDS turns back into FRANK
MOODY, continues thrusting.

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

Shhh! Be quiet, Everett.

YOUNG MAXWELL

But, Professor--!

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

Shhh!

YOUNG MAXWELL

I don't understand!

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

You understand, Everett.

YOUNG MAXWELL

I do?

REYNOLDS AS MOODY

You understand perfectly. You don't need to say a word.

YOUNG MAXWELL
 Not a word?

REYNOLDS AS MOODY
 Be silent.

YOUNG MAXWELL
 Silent?

REYNOLDS AS MOODY
 Silent as a work of art. Silent as stone!

REYNOLDS turns into MAXWELL,
 continues thrusting.

REYNOLDS AS MAXWELL
 What artist makes you feel the most, Zeno?

MAXWELL turns back into ZENO.

MAXWELL AS ZENO
 (In pain)
 What...artist?

REYNOLDS AS MAXWELL
 You just told me.

MAXWELL AS ZENO
 Guido Reni?

REYNOLDS AS MAXWELL
 Yes! You are so smart, Zeno. Smarter than the other boys.

MAXWELL AS ZENO
 I am?

REYNOLDS AS MAXWELL
 Smarter and special. You know what art is about.

MAXWELL AS ZENO
 Feeling?

REYNOLDS AS MAXWELL
 Yes! The purpose of art is empathy! We want to feel!

MAXWELL AS ZENO
 I feel--

REYNOLDS AS MAXWELL
 You feel nice.

MAXWELL AS ZENO
 No, I feel--

REYNOLDS AS MAXWELL is approaching
 orgasm.

REYNOLDS AS MAXWELL
 Special.

MAXWELL AS ZENO
 No, Mr. Maxwell--*por favor*--

REYNOLDS AS MAXWELL
 What do you feel, Zeno?

MAXWELL AS ZENO
Me duele! Siento dolor! [It hurts! I feel pain!]

REYNOLDS AS MAXWELL
 It's what you want, Zeno! To feel! *Sentir!*

MAXWELL AS ZENO
No lo quiero! [I don't want it!]

REYNOLDS AS MAXWELL
 Art is feeling! Art is pain!

MAXWELL AS ZENO
Por favor, Señor Maxwell!

REYNOLDS turns back into himself.

REYNOLDS
Esto es lo que significa--[This is what it means--]

MAXWELL AS ZENO
¡Pare! ¡Por favor pare! [Stop! Please stop!]

REYNOLDS climaxes.

REYNOLDS

--*Ser un hombre!* [To be a man!]

Once again the sound of the
cracking of a skull. MAXWELL AS
ZENO falls down crying.

MAXWELL AS ZENO

*Eso no es lo que quería! No
entiendia! Es lo que usted
quería! No lo que yo quiera!*
[That's not what I wanted! I
didn't understand! It's what
you wanted! I didn't want
it!]

REYNOLDS

(Reads a criminal
complaint)
Everett C. Maxwell did
feloniously commit a lewd and
lascivious act upon and with
the body of Zenobio Remedios,
a child under the age of
fourteen years with the
intent of arousing, appealing
and gratifying the lust and
passion--

As they speak, REYNOLDS unties
MAXWELL'S hands, and MAXWELL
reaches back and touches himself.
He looks at his hand, which is
bloody.

MAXWELL AS ZENO

Señor Maxwell, does this mean you love me?

MAXWELL turns back into himself,
his voice becoming more adult the
longer he speaks. He desperately
cleans the blood from his hand.
The lighting becomes more focused.

MAXWELL

Pensé que sabía, pero aun no!
Perdon! Me dije-- [I thought
I knew, but I didn't!
I'm sorry! I told
myself]--it was all right! I
didn't understand! Love!?

REYNOLDS

--And sexual desires of said
Everett C. Maxwell.

REYNOLDS ties the fabric into a
noose.

MAXWELL

I'm sorry, Zeno. I'm so sorry. *Lo siento*. I thought you were me at that age. You were my youth. I saw...myself in your smile. When I looked in your eyes. So kind.

REYNOLDS helps MAXWELL to his feet and up onto the bed. The lighting narrows into a shaft illuminating only MAXWELL standing on the bed.

MAXWELL

I didn't expect...a struggle. I hope I didn't hurt you...too much.

REYNOLDS

You invaded him like we did Mexico in 1916. Better if you'd drowned him in the Baths.

MAXWELL

I might as well have.

REYNOLDS

Then he couldn't have talked. You wouldn't be here.

MAXWELL

I'm not like you.

REYNOLDS

You're worse. You couldn't even see what you'd done.

MAXWELL

I see. *Ya veo*. I see very well.

REYNOLDS puts the noose around MAXWELL'S neck.

REYNOLDS

Then you're ready to atone. To be washed clean.

MAXWELL

You were never caught, were you, Reynolds? You fled Bimini and disappeared: Las Vegas, Oklahoma. Never imprisoned. Never in San Quentin. You're neither priest nor alienist nor any of the others you pretended to be. I'm alone in this room.

REYNOLDS

This cell.

MAXWELL

Solitary!

REYNOLDS

No way out. Except:

(Holds up the notebook)

I'm as real as this. Once you sign it. That's all I want.

MAXWELL reaches for the notebook, but REYNOLDS snatches it away and disappears in the surrounding darkness.

MAXWELL

Father?

(Pause)

Push me off! Knock over the bed! I can't do this by myself, Father! I don't want to be here! Help me! Only you can grant me absolution! This is my *noche oscura de mi alma*. I'm confessing! I want to atone, be clean! Please! I'll sign! Only knock it over!

(After a moment)

You're not here.

(Pause)

You were never here.

MAXWELL struggles with the idea of kicking away from the bed, but can't bring himself to do it. After a moment, a pinspot comes up on a corner of the bed, illuminating the notebook and pen. MAXWELL notices. He stares at it a little while, then takes the noose from his neck and steps down from the bed. He picks up the notebook and pen.

MAXWELL

(Reading)

I could see that the struggle would be beautiful.

REYNOLDS AS ZENO appears isolated in light. MAXWELL stares at him a moment.

MAXWELL

(Makes a correction)

I could see that the struggle would be...brutal.

REYNOLDS AS ZENO

Señor Maxwell, does this mean you love me?

MAXWELL stares at him again, then
begins to write as the lights
slowly fade.

THE END

