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SF PERUSALS

Carnival Kids

Lucas Kavner

A Samuel French Acting Edition

SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830

SAMUELFRENCH.COM
SAMUELFRENCH-LONDON.CO.UK

ISBN 978-0-573-79999-0

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CARNIVAL KIDS was first produced by Lesser America in association with Claire Siebers at The Barrow Group Theatre in New York City on June 5, 2014. The performance was directed by Stephen Brackett, with sets by Meredith Ries, costumes by Tristan Raines, lights by Amith Chandrashaker, and sound by Janie Bullard. The Production Stage Manager was Kevin Clutz. The cast was as follows:

DALE . . . . . Randall Newsome
MARK . . . . . Jake Choi
ECKLAND . . . . . Max Jenkins
MARISA . . . . . Laura Ramadei
KALINA . . . . . Danelle Eliav

CHARACTERS

DALE – 50s. Texan.

MARK – 20s. Asian-American. Dale's adopted son.

ECKLAND – 20s. Mark's roommate.

MARISA – 20s.

KALINA – late 20s/early 30s. Syrian.

SETTING

Mark and Eckland's Morningside Heights apartment in New York City.
Also one scene in a bar, one in a public park,
and two scenes in Marisa's bedroom.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

A "/" indicates the point where the next character's dialogue should begin.

A note on Eckland's music:

The first production of this play incorporated original music that was specific to the needs of that production. Licensees are encouraged to create original tracks for production usage. If there are any questions, please reach out to the playwright's agent for assistance. See copyright page for contact information.

Scene 1

(Lights up on **MARK** *and* **ECKLAND***'s Morningside Heights apartment.)*

(It's small. Dorm-like. Nothing really homey about it.)

(A living room connects to a small kitchen, with a dining table.)

(There's a couch facing an unseen television.)

(Two doors connect to two unseen bedrooms.)

(This place has been IKEA-ed to the max, without much warmth or care.)

*(***ECKLAND** *sits facing the TV. He has a headset on, playing a video game with a group of others online.)*

(He's intensely focused.)

ECKLAND. I know, but there's gonna be a million Soviets either way we look, so uh Packrat and, uh, SkaRus, is that SkaRus up there?

OK you guys, you guys stay on the machine gun up top and we'll go in to the factory.

The fac – wait, who's talking?

Who's talking right now?

OK, you gotta – you gotta say your name.

FlizzMasta.

FlizzMasta, you need to take that field behind the barracks otherwise we're gonna get flanked, we're gonna be smeared on toast like a bunch of sluts.

Does everyone have ammo?

Blinker, you can get like 20 rounds in the kitchen if you head back there.

*(**DALE** opens the front door and peers into the apartment.)*

(He carries one giant suitcase and a small, battered laptop case and a couple of plastic bags filled with stuff.)

(He drops it all on the floor, sweating profusely.)

I have one grenade, does anyone else have grenades?

What about mines?

What about –

Mines.

How many?

OK, who's – who is *talk*ing? Who is talking right now?

Predator, you and Slingz sound exactly the same, does anyone else notice that?

They sound like the same guy.

Do you guys have the same Indian mother? Are you little secret Indian brothers?

*(**ECKLAND** laughs.)*

*(**DALE** just stands in the doorway. He's not quite sure what to do.)*

(He places his suitcase somewhere sort of out of the way.)

ECKLAND. Skizzles.

Fliprocks, Millcat. Slings9.

That's four, that works.

OK, gentlemen, we ready to maullllllll?

OK… Go. GO. GO. GO.

DALE.

Hey I'm sorry is Mark here –?

ECKLAND. Millcat stand behind me, stop firing in my face.

Hey, don't – no no no nononono don't stop moving.

Fliprocks are you behind that bush or in the house?

SHIT, fuck, no.

DALE. Hey man, is / Mark here?

ECKLAND. *(to* **DALE***)* One sec, one sec.

(back to game) Brazzles.

Brazzles.

BRAZZLES.

Aaaaaah, what are you doing in the *house*, you need to come out here now we're –

Aaaaah shit, someone needs to find that sniper now goddamn it, he's killing EVERYONE.

Do you see him?

Do you see the fucking SNIPER, BRAZZLES?

DALE. Hey, is it alright / if –

ECKLAND. There is nobody back there, Brazzles.

You're WASTING YOUR TIME IN THE LAUNDRY ROOM, BRAZZLES.

I'm getting shot.

I'm getting shot right now.

I'm getting –

I'm dead.

I'm out.

Goddamn it.

(beat)

DALE. Hi, sorry to bother you, are you Eckland?

ECKLAND. Yeah I'm Eckland.

You're Mark's dad?

DALE. I am.

ECKLAND. *(to headset)* Back in an hour.

(He removes his headset and stands.)

(a moment)

DALE. Is Mark here?

ECKLAND. He's still in class.

DALE. Told me he'd be back round 2:00.

ECKLAND. What time is it now?

DALE. *(checks his watch)* 2:15.

(beat)

ECKLAND. You're, uh…

You're a white guy.

DALE. That is…true.

ECKLAND. Sorry, just 'cause –

DALE. Don't worry about it.

ECKLAND. Did you pick him up from, like, *Asia* or…?

DALE. Did we pick him up?

ECKLAND. I guess they probably flew him out to you.

DALE. We picked him up from Dallas. 'Bout a twenty minute drive from our house.

ECKLAND. Oh, OK, so he's Asian but not *offic*ially.

…

Is that your luggage?

DALE. Yeah, this is the battalion for now. Might ship a few boxes up from Frisco.

ECKLAND. Cool, so…welcome to your new house!

Mi casa es…your casa.

Or whatever.

DALE. It's just a short while, I promise.

ECKLAND. Yeah, well, it is what it is.

What it is, what it izzz.

(short beat)

So do you want me to show you where things are? Like, a tour or…?

*(***DALE** *nods, stands.)*

OK so…this is the living room.

(He holds his arms out.)

Where we're standing.

DALE. Right, figured that.

ECKLAND. The couch folds out.

Actually, we can…

Here.

(He starts to try and unfold it.)

It's kind of – ahhh, crap, sorry, it's kind of hard to do right now.

(They clumsily unfold the couch into a bed together.)

(It's already got some thin looking sheets on it.)

(They look at the bed together.)

I'm sure Mark got you a pillow, bigger blanket and stuff.

DALE. This is fine right here.

ECKLAND. So the living room connects to the kitchen, which is to our right, and it basically has everything a kitchen would have.

(He opens cabinets.)

Plates are here, cups are here, forks and spoons and everything are in here, and the – oh, the toaster is broken, doesn't work, but Mark doesn't want to get a new one 'cause he says he never uses the toaster, which is *bull*shit.

DALE. Why don't you just buy a new one?

ECKLAND. Huh?

DALE. Why don't you just buy a new toaster?

ECKLAND. 'Cause it's *his* toaster.

(short beat)

Rent up on the fridge every month. Or wait, are you paying Mark or is Mark paying your share or –

DALE. Me and Mark worked that out.

ECKLAND. Oh right, he said something about – I guess you're paying like 300 for the couch and then our rents will go down a little to correspond with that?

DALE. That sounds right.

ECKLAND. OK, yeah, money's not really an object for me right now, so…

*(***DALE** *picks up a picture frame and looks at it for too long.)*

(Then he puts it down.)

Did you hear what I said or –?

*(***DALE** *shakes his head.)*

I just said money isn't really a problem for me right now, so…

DALE. Is there laundry?

ECKLAND. Like in the building or in the neighborhood or…?

DALE. Just curious where I should do my laundry.

ECKLAND. Oh, cool, so yeah, I drop mine off at this place down the street. It's called like Pat's or… Cat's. I can't remember. But you can just drop it off and wait like a day, two days, depending on how busy it is and then you pick it up, and then at that point they've already folded it and everything.

DALE. OK, but if I just want to do some here are there machines in the building?

ECKLAND. Yeah, in the basement.

…

But if you go to this other place they'll fold it all for you and make sure it fits in your bag.

It's a little more money but I hate doing laundry, so…

I don't know if you hate doing laundry.

DALE. Been doing it about 35 years now.

ECKLAND. Oh right, so you're probably…pretty good.

But this place down the street gives you Tootsie Rolls while you wait and I kinda like stuff like that, like little things like that.

DALE. Hey, can I smoke out that window there?

ECKLAND. Oh, uh –

DALE. Or I can go downstairs.

ECKLAND. No, you – uh…

Yeah, sure.

*(***ECKLAND** *opens the window a crack.)*

*(***DALE** *goes to it and lights a cigarette.)*

(a pause)

So do you have friends in the area?

What are you going to, like, do all day?

DALE. Make some money. That's the plan.

Maybe see the Empire State Building.

Take a carriage round the – whatsit, Central *Park*.

ECKLAND. Those are expensive.

DALE. *(half a joke)* Well, you got any friends who wanna pay an old guy a few thousand bucks real quick?

ECKLAND. Like, for work, or…?

(an uncomfortable moment)

(Then the key in the door turns.)

Oh, there he is.

*(***DALE** *stubs out his cigarette real fast as* **MARK** *appears in the doorway, overdressed for the hot day, like always.)*

DALE. Marky!

MARK. Hey dad.

DALE. Marky Mark!

*(***DALE** *moves in for a hug.)*

MARK. Sorry I wasn't here when you got in, I had to talk to my professor for a sec after class.

DALE. That's alright Marky, real glad to see ya.

MARK. Yeah, you too.

You met Eckland?

DALE. Yeah, he's been showin' me around.

MARK. Great, great.

DALE. He showed me your toaster –

ECKLAND. I showed him the broken toaster.

(short beat)

DALE. Hey, you're sweating all over! Take off your coat, have a seat.

MARK. It's hot out today.

DALE. Well, hotter probably 'cause you're wearing a big ol' coat.

That's the culprit there.

Let me –

*(***DALE** *reaches to take it off,* **MARK** *backs away slightly.)*

MARK. Oh, I'm about to head back out, so I'll just – I'm OK, actually.

DALE. You sure?

ECKLAND. *(loudly)* Hey, I'm gonna go.

MARK. What?

ECKLAND. Oh, I'm gonna go.

Into…my bedroom.

So.

DALE. Well, nice meetin' ya.

(He shakes **DALE***'s hand.)*

(Then stands there a second.)

(Another moment and he goes.)

MARK. He's…

Sorry about that.

DALE. Nah, don't worry about it –

MARK. He was a friend of a friend, I didn't know he'd be so… *(gesture to suggest "a lot")*

DALE. Is Eckland his first name?

MARK. It's actually his middle name, he says it sounds more *professional.*

DALE. Huh. OK.

MARK. He's exceedingly rich, Eckland. He probably mentioned that a few times.

DALE. Oh, hey, well, maybe he can throw me a bone, then!

MARK. *(laughs)* Yeah –

DALE. Two bones!

*(***DALE** *laughs. Then a silence.)*

(gesturing to the boring apartment) So hey, look at *this*, huh? Marky's New York bachelor pad!

You ought to put some shit on the walls.

MARK. I kind of like it clean.

DALE. Hey, you know what I was thinkin' about? That place we went with your mom last time I was here. That Middle Eastern place with the hummus and that big fat cat runnin' around.

MARK. Oh, God, yeah, that place was terrible.

DALE. I thought it was pretty good!

MARK. There's way better Middle Eastern in the area, round here.

DALE. Well we should eat that, too! Let's go grab a bite, ya know, I want the full *palette* of the city, the full, uh – Big Apple *taste* courtesy of Marky Mark!

MARK. Tonight's actually pretty rough for me? I've got a bunch of work and I'm teaching an undergrad class on top of the paralegal stuff, so –

DALE. Wait.

You're teaching?

*(***MARK** *smiles, nods.* **DALE** *loves this.)*

Holy shit! So does that make you a pro*fesso*r?

MARK. Yeah, sort of.

DALE. Oh, man! How 'bout that.

MARK. Yeah, it's been lots of work, lots of grading, you know.

DALE. Well, that's just amazing.

MARK. Thanks.

DALE. Real proud of you, Professor Ennis.

(short beat)

MARK. Did you talk to Mom?

DALE. Uh…haven't for a lil while, no –

MARK. OK, yeah, I talked to her yesterday just to fill her in –

DALE. Uh oh!

MARK. No, no, not a bad thing, not bad. *(laughs)* She just wants you to call her at some point.

DALE. I thought she was in *New*foundland or some fuckin' place…

MARK. That was last month. This month she's in Senegal.

DALE. Senegal?

MARK. Yeah, in Africa. She said Carl's doing some work with a bank up there.

DALE. *Sen*egal, holy shit –

MARK. They're staying with a local family and eating goat, apparently.

DALE. Eating *goats*. OK!

Shit.

Well good for them, right?

MARK. Totally, um, *(checks his phone)* so I gotta run pretty soon? But I got this chest of drawers for you, so you can stick clothes in there.

*(***MARK** *taps a small, clear plastic chest of drawers in the corner, like something from the Container Store, set up next to the couch.)*

DALE. Chest o' drawers, great. Love these things.

MARK. Towels in the bathroom cabinet. And I've got some granola bars in the pantry, but you're welcome to grab a few groceries and stock up with whatever.

DALE. Perfect. That's perfect.

MARK. Do you have a suit? Something you need to hang up?

DALE. Uh, not at the moment, no. It's back in storage. I'm gonna have Mike ship it out along with a few other things, once I get another place.

MARK. OK, 'cause you have some interviews coming up, right? Like job interviews?

DALE. Definitely! Definitely. You remember Pat Hauser? He owned ABC Copies on Coit, you met him a couple times? Well, he's got a friend who works in corporate for Kinko's, and he's gonna get me in there very, very soon.

MARK. Awesome! That's great. So we'll have to get you some…

I mean, you're going to need to dress up for those interviews, right?

DALE. Yeah, I'm planning on making a big purchase like that soon as I can, but maybe in the meantime I can go ahead and borrow something nice from you, like some *slacks* or something?

MARK.
Oh, uh, yeah, that's –

DALE.
We're about the same size, yeah?

MARK. What?

DALE. *(a joke)* We're about the same size, you and me?

MARK. Yeah, I mean…

You really didn't bring anything like that with you?

DALE. Nah, but I'll be fine.

I'll be alright.

*(***MARK** *nods, meekly.)*

*(***DALE** *goes to him.)*

Hey.

Marky.

(He takes **MARK***'s head in his hands.)*

It's real good to see your face.

Alright?

That's all.

It's good to see your face.

I'll go to that department store I saw on the way over here.

Fuh-leens or wherever. I'll go there, pick something up. Don't worry about me.

*(***MARK** *breaks away.)*

MARK. Cool! OK, um, I might be back a little late tonight 'cause I'm meeting an old friend from high school for a drink? But –

DALE. OK, so if I have questions or I need to reach you should I, / uh…

MARK. Just call if you need anything, I'll have my phone.

DALE. Cool, great news, so is there a landline here or…? Maybe there's a payphone nearby?

(short beat)

MARK. You don't have your cell phone?

DALE. Oh no I got it, I just – I gotta get a new charger for it? 'Cause right now you plug it in and the, uh, the battery doesn't…

But I'm gonna run and get a new one soon as I can.

MARK. Alright! Cool. We'll talk tonight, OK?

DALE. Alright, see ya then, Marky. See ya then.

MARK. Yup, see ya.

*(***MARK** *nods again, grabs his bag and starts to quickly head out.)*

DALE. Thank you.

…

For doing this.

*(***MARK** *nods quickly and exits.)*

*(***DALE** *just sort of stands there a moment.)*

(We hear **ECKLAND** *in his bedroom, faintly, watching a British sitcom.)*

*(***DALE** *goes to the pantry and grabs a granola bar.)*

(He takes a bite, wanders the apartment.)

(He picks up that picture frame again, and then he puts it down.)

(He walks to the couch, his new bed, his new room, and he sits for a long moment.)

(Music. Light change.)

Scene 2

(Later that night.)

*(***DALE** *is curled up on the couch and asleep, with a trade paperback on his chest.)*

*(***ECKLAND** *enters the kitchen with sandwich ingredients he has brought from his bedroom. He flicks on the light, forgetting that* **DALE** *is sleeping on the couch.)*

(He starts to prepare a sandwich and **DALE** *stirs, startling* **ECKLAND**.*)*

ECKLAND. Ah – shit.

DALE. *(groggy sounds)*

ECKLAND. Sorry, I totally forgot you were there.

DALE. S'ok.

*(***DALE** *rubs his eyes. Beat.)*

ECKLAND. *(whispering)* Do you want some kale chips?

DALE. Some what?

ECKLAND. *(still whispering)* Kale chips.
It's just kale –

DALE. Nah, I'll just – I'm OK, thanks.

ECKLAND. I gotta put a reminder in my head that you're sleeping here, that's my oops.

DALE. Your what?

ECKLAND. Oops. It's my oops.

*(***DALE** *shuts his eyes and lays back down again.)*

(After a moment, **ECKLAND** *drops a giant jar of mayonnaise on the ground.)*

*(***ECKLAND** *quietly reaches down to pick it up.)*

(Realizing he's not going to fall asleep, **DALE** *stands and heads to the kitchen for a glass of water.)*

ECKLAND. I Googled you.

DALE. Hm?

ECKLAND. Oh, sorry, I Googled you? Like an hour ago.

DALE. Oh, alright.

ECKLAND. I can't believe Mark never said anything about your whole…

I mean, you had a real band! You were like really real, in *magazines* and stuff.

DALE. Yeah, for a few years there we were…really real.

ECKLAND. Your music's on fucking Spotify!

DALE. Oh yeah?

ECKLAND. Yeah you guys have, like, four of your albums on there, and that one song on the, uh, the Fleetwood Mac tribute thing? You're on there with Elvis Costello and John Prine, and what was that picture of you on the vinyl from your second album?

DALE. I don't know –

ECKLAND. The one where you're like, mounting the neon trees? *(He goes to his laptop.)* Here, I'll look it up.

DALE. Maybe later.

ECKLAND. I'll just search it real fast.

DALE. Not right now, OK?

Maybe later.

*(***ECKLAND** *grabs his laptop, opens it.)*

ECKLAND. Carnival Kids. Did you guys, like, hang out at a fair or something?

DALE. It's a long story.

ECKLAND. You have a Wikipedia page with personal info.

DALE. Personal *info*.

ECKLAND. Yeah, come on, you never Google yourself?

DALE. Not recently, no.

ECKLAND. That's lies. Everybody Googles themselves, and plus you were in a real band, so you definitely have to Google yourself like all the time.

DALE. Guess I haven't gotten around to it.

ECKLAND. I'd Google myself all day if I was in a real band like that.

But hey, you know, c'est la vie right?

DALE. C'est la vie to what?

ECKLAND. You know, just to…

(He trails off.)

Hey, but while you're living here we should definitely play.

I mean, I do mostly beats? But I have like three Roland 620s in my room, which you'll love, 'cause you played keys, you'll love them, and I collect synths and OH! You have to see some of these Moogs I found on eBay last year. They're all in this studio space I'm building, we can head / over there –

DALE. *(amused now)* You're building a studio?

ECKLAND. Hell yeah, I'm building a studio in Harlem so we definitely have to jam out while you're here.

DALE. I dunno if I'll have time to do that.

ECKLAND. You don't know if you'll have *time*? What else are you doing?

(short beat)

DALE. How are you affording all this, huh? Your Moogs, the studio space –

ECKLAND. Oh it's from the app.

It's all app money.

*(***DALE** *shakes his head, confused.)*

Oh, I figured Mark…

I made a bunch of money on this app I created and I've kind of been riding that for a while.

DALE. What do you mean *app* money?

ECKLAND. Like money from the app I made.

*(***DALE***'s still confused.)*

OK.

So apps, right? You know how iPhones have apps?

DALE. Sure, well I know what the…

I've seen an iPhone work.

ECKLAND. Right, so the little… I guess, the – *(laughs)* this is so funny! To explain this. Um, the little *boxes*? Those are the apps. It's an abbreviation.

DALE. Oh, right, right.

ECKLAND. For applications?

DALE. I see.

ECKLAND. That's so funny I've never had to explain apps.

DALE. Well, I'm a little older than you, Eckland.

(short beat)

So what does your app do?

ECKLAND. It's called GambleUp.

DALE. OK, and what does it *do*, what's its *func*tion?

ECKLAND. You download it and you can bet on stuff with people all over the world. Anything from sports to what the weather will be tomorrow to, like, how many times a politician says "America" in a speech, you know? Anything. And it's not in the app store, you have to find it illegally, but it's been downloaded a whole lot.

DALE. How much?

ECKLAND. Over four million downloads so far.

DALE. Four *million*.

ECKLAND. Yeah, it's craaaaaazy, I can't even deal with how crazy it's gotten. And this is just the first version, we'll have another one out later this year.

DALE. And how much do people pay for it?

ECKLAND. Per download? A dollar.

DALE. And how much of that goes to you?

ECKLAND. Well I split a percentage with other designers, but…

A lot.

DALE. Just say.

ECKLAND. Just a lot.

DALE. Say the number.

ECKLAND. I made six hundred and thirty thousand dollars last year.

(beat)

*(***ECKLAND** *takes a proud bite of his sandwich.)*

DALE. Wooo.

ECKLAND. Yeah.

DALE. Jesus Christ. What the hell are you still doin' here?

ECKLAND. I'm probably moving out soon. Just getting my ducks in a row. Um, but if you have any app ideas, like any at all just shoot 'em my way, definitely.

DALE. Sure, I'll do that.

ECKLAND. Yeah 'cause hey, you need money right?

(short beat)

You need money. That's why you're here, yeah? 'Cause you're out of money.

*(***DALE** *says nothing.)*

Right?

DALE. I don't want to gamble on your app, man.

ECKLAND. I don't want you gambling on my app either, but there's this other one that I think could be really good for you, it's really easy.

DALE. Well, I'll take a job if you got one. You need any employees for a new app thing, or other companies you got goin' –

ECKLAND. No, not at all. But you could make like ten grand doing basically nothing with GreenWay.

DALE. From what?

ECKLAND. GreenWay. It's easy, I know someone who just did it.

DALE. Oh yeah, yeah, and can I work from home, too?

ECKLAND. I'm serious.

DALE. I don't need your internet pyramid bullshit.

ECKLAND. No, listen, it's not that, OK? You just meet a nice person, you be charming for a few weeks, you make ten grand. It's like Tinder, except instead of looking for someone to date, you're looking for someone to get married to…so you can get them a green card. GreenWay. You wanna see?

*(***DALE** *shakes his head.)*

Come on, can I just show you?

DALE. Just leave it alone, man.

ECKLAND. Come on, I'll do this for you, I'll help you with this, if you just play some music with me for like…five minutes.

Howbout that, huh? That's all I want.

Five minutes. Ten grand.

*(***DALE** *hesitates, then slowly moves to sit back down at the table.)*

(He looks at the laptop.)

Perfect!

Great.

OK.

So…first question:

How old are you?

(Lights.)

Scene 3

(A wine bar off right or left. Low music plays.)

*(***MARK** *sits with* **MARISA***, who is like that smart, intense girl from your high school English class who discovered alcohol and sex in college.)*

(She is dressed for a desk job.)

(They drink beers.)

MARISA. That's a lot of hours.

MARK. Fingers crossed it leads to a full-time job, that's the only reason I'm doing the paralegal thing, 'cause the firm is perfect.

MARISA. I'm sure it'll work out, you're super smart.

MARK. Thanks.

MARISA. Super smart and so driven and blabblablablah. Fuckin' valedictorian up in here, right? Let's not forget.

MARK. No, no. Not quite –

MARISA. Oh *shit*, I forgot. The *controversy*.

MARK. Chris Cobb…

MARISA. Chris *Cobb*, oh God, I haven't thought about him in fucking *years*, Chris Cobb and his striped shirts, you guys and your little thing, your little rivalry. What were you, like two decimals behind him?

(very quick beat)

MARK. Point oh three.

MARISA. Point oh *three*, of course.
But come on, you didn't want valedictorian anyway. You would have hated giving that speech.

MARK. Would I?

MARISA. Yeah, you would have obsessed over it, driven yourself totally insane. Plus we'd already had like three Asian valedictorians in three years, so, you know, it was nice to give that awkward white gentleman a shot.
A little affirmative valedictorian action, right?

*(***MARK** *smiles.)*

You're gonna be fine. You'll be valedictorian of the law in a couple years and Chris Cobb is probably…he's probably dead, right? Let's be honest.

MARK. I actually think he's a lawyer in Baltimore.

MARISA. Oh, shit, that's perfect.

*(***MARK** *checks his watch, surreptitiously.)*

You about done here?

MARK. Hm?

MARISA. That's like the third time, / you – *(indicates watch)*

MARK. Oh no, sorry, it's just, uh, I got someone staying with me for a bit –

MARISA. Who?

MARK. My dad.

MARISA. Oh, like for the weekend?

MARK. Uh, it's sort of indefinite right now.

MARISA. Woah.

MARK. Yeah, he kind of lost his job.

MARISA. Oh, that's rough. Like recently, or –?

MARK. Two years ago.

MARISA. Oh.

Shit.

MARK. Yeah, it's pretty complicated, we don't have / to –

MARISA. He came all the way from Texas?

MARK. He said he needed to get out of there and he rented out our house, the house I grew up in, and now he's here.

Um, but we don't really…

We're not very close, I guess, so… it kind of feels like I'm housing a middle-aged man for a recession *aid* program.

MARISA. Except it's your dad –

MARK. I know, / but –

MARISA. You're not just going to let him die.

(short beat)

You gonna help him find a job?

MARK. Yeah, for sure. That's the plan.

But he didn't even…

I mean, he didn't even bring a pair of *khakis*.

Like to meet people, to meet potential employers, he didn't bring anything to wear.

(short beat)

MARISA. Oh God.

MARK. But you know what / I mean?

MARISA. Not. A *one* pair.

Of khakis.

MARK. OK –

MARISA. I'm going to throw up on this table.

MARK. That's not what I meant –

MARISA. Get that man out of your house. For the good of America, get him out.

MARK. The point is more –

MARISA. This is America right?

MARISA. A man with no khakis! In *America*!

MARK. I get it.

Thank you.

MARISA. Aw, I'm just fucking with you, Mark.

I gotta say, it's nice to see you *affected*. By something.

MARK. What do you – how do you mean "affected"?

MARISA. Just, you know…

MARK. What?

MARISA. It's nice to see some sort of emotional…

I mean, we e-mail once a year and you only talk about school and *internships* and things like that, I never really hear anything else from you.

MARK. OK but what do you mean it's nice to see / I'm *affected* or –

MARISA. I mean you never talk about who you're dating, who you're hanging out with, what you *feel* about…
In your emails you write these short pointed sentences. You've always been like that, everything so suc*cinct* and agg*ressive*.
You're like Hemingway.
You're Hemingwang.

MARK. *(mildly offended)* Huh.

MARISA. That's actually pretty funny.

MARK. Yeah, that's a good one.

MARISA. So, like, who are you sleeping with?

(short beat)

You don't sleep with people in law school? There's no sex with people?

MARK. No I mean there's…
Obviously.

MARISA. Obviously what?

MARK. I haven't seen you in three *years*.

MARISA. So?

(They look at each other.)

*(***MARK** *sips from his drink, anxiously.)*

God, you're still so *funny*.

MARK. Yeah, well you're –

MARISA. I'm still funny, too?

MARK. No, you just…you have the same *spark*.

MARISA. I was kind of sad then and I didn't really like myself.
I feel pretty different now.

MARK. Good, that's… Good.

(short beat)

MARISA. So hey.
What is this?

MARK. What's what?

MARISA. This.

Are we on a date?

MARK. Um.

MARISA. Are we on a romantic date?

MARK. I didn't think about it.

MARISA. I was G-chatting with Sam Crawley this afternoon –

MARK. Oh, wow. / Is he still…?

MARISA. And I was like, "I'm hanging out with Mark Ennis tonight, he asked me to hang out and we're going to have a *drink,*" and it suddenly seemed so fucking *weird.*

MARK. Why do you think that's weird?

MARISA. Why do I think it's weird…

Hm, why do *I*

think it's weird…

Because the moose, Mark.

MARK. The…

What?

MARISA. The moose.

On your windshield.

*(***MARK** *stares at her, blankly.)*

Fuck. Really?

MARK. Oh, yeah, yeah, I remember that –

MARISA. You don't, you don't remember –

MARK. Yes, I do.

MARISA. What did it say? In the antlers?

MARK. I know what it said.

MARISA. I bet you do.

(laughs)

Wow!

That shit was my heart!

My heart, Mark Ennis.

*(***MARK** *doesn't know what to do, so he just smiles.)*

*(***MARISA** *stretches, shakes it off.)*

Wow, Fridays just bonk me out, you know, *one* drink and I'm… *(gesture to indicate passing out)*

(beat)

MARK. Hey, look I'm sorry about the moose thing. Is that what this is…?

MARISA. Is that what what is?

MARK. I just thought this would just be, like, a catch-up session or whatever, so / I'm sorry I didn't…

MARISA. This is a catch-up session.

MARK. Yeah, it's really fun, I just –

MARISA. It is fun, it's a *fun* catch-up session.

MARK. Maybe this is a date.
Howbout that?

(short beat)

MARISA. When was the last date you went on?

MARK. *(thinking)* Um…

MARISA. Oh, come on.

MARK. I don't know, maybe a year ago?

MARISA. What was her name?

MARK. It was this girl Al? Or Andie. Something short for Andrea.

MARISA. *Al* or *Andie?*

*(***MARK** *nods.)*

A year ago, you went on a date with a girl named *Al* or *Andie* but you're not sure.

MARK. Yeah…

(beat)

MARISA. Mark.

MARK. What?

MARISA. *Mark.*

MARK. *(unsure how to respond)* What?

MARISA. You wear *nice* ties.
You're going to be rich.

It's not un*reason*able to think…

MARK. *What?* What are you even…?

MARISA. You just seem to me, and I don't know this for sure, so fuck it, but you seem like you're so stuck in this sort of…

(She makes a container motion with her hands, trying to find the word.)

It seems hard to operate. Inside of there.

MARK. I operate *fine.*

MARISA. K, nevermind.

MARK. You know, this was supposed to be a nice thing I was doing.

MARISA. It is nice, it is *very* nice of you to spend time with me, I'm sorry –

MARK. I just wanted to talk about what was going on in our lives, you know? I was happy to see you.

MARISA. You're not happy to see me anymore?

MARK. It's not that –

MARISA. Why, 'cause I'm asking you questions?

MARK. No, it's just –

MARISA. Because I'm *chall*enging you?

MARK. You're *brut*alizing me.

MARISA. Asking you questions about your life, about your personal life, is brutalizing you?

*(***MARK** *eats a large handful of party mix on the bar. He chews.)*

We go through life, and we…

You were im*portant* to me.

MARK. You were – yeah, you were important to me, too.

MARISA. Yeah.

Was I?

Never mind. Don't answer that.

So hey my mom died, right?

Six months ago.

MARK. Oh.

I'm –

I didn't know –

MARISA. Of course you didn't know, why would you?

(short beat)

Sorry.

I just keep thinking that even if I'd found out all these things I wanted to know about her before she died, which I didn't, I never even came close, I don't think I ever really cared about her…nature?

Like who she really was to everyone else.

I mean. I *did*, but not really.

(short beat)

Do you know what I mean, though?

That feeling?

MARK. That we don't care about each other's natures?

MARISA. That we *think* we do, but really we're just tossing all these rings out, you know, like we're tossing them out everywhere, trying to snag a bottle, but you can never really catch it all the way, you know? I mean, maybe one time if you're really lucky, but…

Not usually.

Usually you miss.

*(***MARK** *nods, not quite sure what she means.)*

I want to see a real side of you.

MARK. Yeah. Me too.

MARISA. Because I'm interested in you, Mark.

I always have been.

MARK. Yeah.

Me too.

…

I want to see you, too.

(a moment)

*(***MARK** *takes a sip of his beer.)*

*(***MARISA** *looks at him as he struggles to hold eye contact.)*

(Lights.)

Scene 4

(The park.)

*(***KALINA** *sits on a bench, playing with her cell phone.)*

(She wears a mix of traditional Syrian clothing and modern, hipster clothing.)

(She is immediately striking, and speaks with a slight accent.)

*(***DALE** *wanders on.)*

(He's out of breath, having been running to get here.)

(He wears a cowboy hat, or something like it.)

*(***DALE** *looks at a printed piece of paper, still breathing heavily. Then he turns around and makes eye contact with* **KALINA***.)*

(He stares for a moment, trying to make sure it's her. She doesn't really help him, she just kind of stares back. Finally, he goes to her.)

DALE. Hey, uh…

Kah-linna?

Or…

KALINA. Kaleena.

DALE. Kaleena, hi.

(They shake hands.)

Sorry I'm a little late. My train did a crazy, uh…how come the trains run on different lines like that?

KALINA. How do you mean?

DALE. Like I'll be riding on the A train and all of a sudden it'll turn into the F out of nowhere.

KALINA. Oh, yes, it does that.

DALE. But why don't they warn you about it? On the, uh, on the speaker –

KALINA. There was no notice on the platform?

DALE. No! None. They just… *(gesture of a subway zipping by)* I mean, I asked the guy next to me how they can just switch it up like that and he says I should use *Hopstop* to find out when the, uh, the trains are on, when they're running on different lines.

KALINA. That's a good idea.

DALE. Is that a book or what?

KALINA. Is what a book?

DALE. Is Hopstop a *book* or a place I'm supposed to go or –?

KALINA. Oh, it's a website. And an app.

DALE. Ah, an app. 'Course it's an app…

(a moment)

KALINA. How old are you?

DALE. I'm 50.

Two.

I'm 52.

KALINA. For some reason on GreenWay the dates –

It didn't / seem…

DALE. Yeah, sorry –

KALINA. I'm 28.

DALE. Aw, that's a fun age. That's a good year, 28.

(beat)

KALINA. I like your hat.

DALE. Oh yeah? Thanks, I really like…all you got on there.

KALINA. Thanks.

DALE. You do fashion right?

KALINA. Costume design.

DALE. And that's for any kind of…? Various costumes or…

KALINA. For film or TV or theatre.

DALE. Right, so you gotta be pretty quick with a machine. With one of those, uh…with a sewing machine.

KALINA. Yes.

DALE. Or I don't know, maybe you don't use sewing machines anymore. What do y'all use now?

KALINA. Sewing machines.

DALE. OK, so those are still…operational.

(short beat)

KALINA. What do you do?

DALE. I… What do I do. That's an interesting…

Well.

I was a musician. For a long time.

Toured around the world, that whole thing.

And then I met a woman, this lovely woman, a *teacher*, and I fell in love and we got married and we adopted a boy, a son, and I had to quit playing music, you know, so I could actually make money, or make more than just breaking even. So I opened a repair shop and then a print shop and then I tried music again for a hot second and it didn't feel the same so I went back to the print shop. And then the print shop went out of business, so then I tried to sell some things I thought were worth a lot of money, but none of that clicked.

And, so uh…

Now I'm here. In the city.

Talking to you.

(short beat)

KALINA. You just provided a lot of information.

DALE. *(laughs)* I guess so, yeah.

KALINA. That was like your whole life right there.

DALE. You're from, uh…

(He takes out his piece of paper.)

Damascus?

What's that like? How's Damascus?

KALINA. Well.
It's pretty fucked up right now actually.

DALE. Oh right, that's right, / I'm sorry –

KALINA. It *was* very nice. Before… / everything –

DALE. Right, before the war and such, yeah.
But your family is…?

KALINA. My family is fine, my immediate family. We all left.
I'm the only one who came here, though. To New York.

DALE. Wow, that's impressive.

KALINA. I like it here.

DALE. Yeah, this place makes you feel young, you know?
Except I'm already kind of sick of the walking, honestly.

(He laughs at that.)

Why don't we all just use scooters? It'd be so much faster.

KALINA. I have a friend with a scooter but everybody makes fun of him.

DALE. Well, they shouldn't 'cause he's got the right fuckin' idea.
Or, sorry – that's not –

KALINA. What?

DALE. The swearing. Shouldn't waste that on a beautiful woman.

KALINA. That's OK, I did it earlier.

DALE. No, you didn't.

KALINA. Yes, I did. I said 'Syria's pretty fucked up right now.'

DALE. Get outta here.

KALINA. I say shit and fuck all day.

DALE. Jesus! Don't do that.

KALINA. It's OK.

DALE. With your pretty accent, it feels weird.

KALINA. Fine.
I won't swear anymore.

DALE. Good. That's good.

KALINA. No more fucking swearing.

*(***DALE** *laughs.)*

*(***KALINA** *smiles, wryly.)*

(a moment)

DALE. So what do you got, like ten people coming to meet you today? You're gonna cycle through us?

KALINA. You are the only one I'm meeting today.

DALE. What about yesterday?

KALINA. Yesterday…

Yes. I met some others.

This is marriage.

My life, all my future.

Can I ask you a question?

DALE. Sure.

KALINA. Are you a Republican?

DALE. What?

KALINA. Are you a Republican?

DALE. I'm – what? Why do you think that?

KALINA. Your accent sounds like you could maybe be a Republican.

DALE. Well, that's very xenophobic of you, Kalina.

KALINA. You're right, I'm sorry –

DALE. I didn't ask if you were a terrorist.

KALINA. …And I'm very happy you did not.

(The tone changes, just a bit.)

(an awkward beat)

But I must ask a couple other things, just because they'll ask us these as part of the application process.

First. Have you been convicted of a crime?

DALE. I was in jail for one night.

In Cleveland, Ohio. In 1982.

KALINA. Why?

DALE. I stole a massage chair from a hotel lobby.

KALINA. A massage chair?

DALE. Yeah, you know, one of those chairs that vibrates and pounds your back.

KALINA. You are funny. I'm laughing inside.

And you have a son, you said?

DALE. One son. Adopted.

KALINA. Adopted. Why?

DALE. 'Cause I'm infertile.

(short beat)

KALINA. I see.

DALE. But that's OK for us, right?

KALINA. Yes, I think so –

DALE. 'Cause we're not having kids.

(beat)

Let me ask you something, though?

Why are you doing it this way? Don't you have like a friend or someone who can go through this whole thing with you?

KALINA. I haven't been in the city long enough, all my friends are in my position.

DALE. Alright, / but –

KALINA. Look, this is not an easy process. We will need to learn everything about each other, our families, histories, our first dates. They are going to ask for photographs and scrapbooks and proof that we've spent time together.

DALE. So how do we do all that?

KALINA. Photoshop.

(short beat)

The computer program.

I have a friend, he will help make our history with Photoshop.

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