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SF PERUSALS

Enjoy

by Toshiki Okada

English translation
by Aya Ogawa

A Samuel French Acting Edition

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This translation was originally commissioned and developed by The Play Company,
(Kate Loewald, Founding Producer) in New York City

ENJOY was first produced by The Play Company at 59E59 in New York City on March 27, 2010. The performance was directed by Dan Rothenberg, with sets by Mimi Lien, costumes by Maiko Matsushima, lighting by James Clotfelter, and sound by Daniel Kluger. The Production Stage Manager was Dave Polato. The cast was as follows:

ACTOR 1 . . . . . Kris Kling
ACTOR 2 . . . . . Frank Harts
ACTRESS 1 . . . . . Kira Sternbach
ACTOR 3 . . . . . Steven Boyer
ACTOR 4 . . . . . Joseph Midyett
ACTOR 5 . . . . . Alex Torra
ACTRESS 2 . . . . . Stacey Yen
ACTRESS 3 . . . . . Mary McCool
ACTRESS 4 . . . . . Jessica Almasy
ACTOR 6 . . . . . Joshua Koehn

CHARACTERS

ACTOR 1

ACTOR 2

ACTRESS 1

ACTOR 3

ACTOR 4

ACTRESS 2

ACTRESS 3

ACTOR 5

ACTRESS 4

ACTOR 6

"Since the beginning of 2002, the Japanese economy has entered into a period of full-fledged resurgence, and despite flagging export and production in the autumn of 2004, by mid-2005 it has stabilized and continued to recover. Employment conditions were such that by June of 2005, the unemployment rate was down to 4.2%. New job opportunities and job-to-applicant ratios continued to rise. As the economic climate continues to warm up, hiring accruals and wage increases are expected to rise as well; however the prevalent standard model heretofore of the uniform distribution of achievements among the labor force has been shifting over time. The number of part-time workers, freelancers, contracted employees, temps, short-term employees and others who fall outside of conventional economic standing have drastically increased, creating a diverse work environment but also decreasing regular employment. With the upswing of the economy, there has been an increase of graduating students heading straight for full-time employment and a decrease in young unemployed and freelancers; however, there are still an increasing number of temp workers among the younger generation, and this denormalized work climate continues to grow. For those young workers who were affected by the bursting of the bubble economy, which resulted in cutbacks on hiring and an extremely competitive job market, it is becoming increasingly difficult to move towards a regularized employment climate. While hopping from one part-time position to another, they scrambled to stay afloat in an unstable work climate, with an increasing unemployment rate, and this generation has grown older. "Long-time part-timers" were seen as unlikely to hold onto jobs for a long time, lacking in career ambition, and the generation of young people "Not in Education, Employment or Training" (aka NEET) are now growing older. Even if they are able to obtain a full-time position, depending on the field they are in, there is a big difference in their ability to improve job skills."

(from a white paper published by The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare in Heisei 15 [2006])

ACT ONE: A STAFF ROOM IN A MANGA (COMIC BOOK) CAFE

(There is a mop upstage.)

ACTOR 1. We'll begin with Act One… This guy named Kato was riding the subway the other day, he was riding the Keio line and, he had an encounter then, when he sat next to… There were these two women who were talking, but… Kato had no intention of eavesdropping at all, of course but, while he was listening, to be honest, he… in the end, from the middle of the conversation, it did turn completely into eavesdropping but… you know how for text messaging they have those screen stickers that you put on your phone to keep your screen hidden from the person standing next to you, well, there aren't such things for voices, so in a way, it's a little like too bad, you know, which may be like totally an excuse but… but with that conversation, it was a little like no matter how you look at it, their voices were, clearly above and beyond what is a standard volume, I mean, come on, was the way it seemed and that was because… on top of that the content of the conversation itself also like, would have piqued anyone's interest in this…

ACTOR 1. But, never mind about that story, I mean we'll get into it later, let's just put it aside for now, so I have to tell the story about what happened before he got on the train, when he went into the bathroom at the station, I mean it's not like I *have* to but do you mind?

ACTOR 1. So like, the thing about what was that bathroom was, of course it was the men's but, there was the thing for the number one and the thing for the number two, and at that moment I was there for the

number one to… the number one, and the area for the number one was, you know how there's like this row all along the wall for the places to do number one, at that moment it wasn't that crowded but, in fact, it was just me in there, doing my business, positioned in like the middle of this huge row along the wall and… then to my back, see, on the other side, in the bathroom at this station, of course I don't know how the women's side is but, in the men's there are all these private stalls for the number two like lined up in a row just like the number one guys but in a separate area, if the number ones guys were lined up in a row like this, then the area for the number two stalls would be kind of at like a 90 degree angle to it and, there was a man in there and, I mean it was totally fine that he was in there but… this man came out but, I mean it was fine that he came out but, he came out of there with a "swoosh"… it's not that he was saying "swoosh" with his mouth, but he came out after flushing the water "swoosh," and then really… normally, with common sense you'd think "oh, this guy's gonna just wash his hands and leave, right?" um, am I wrong? …But then really, this guy made this super-mysterious move from there… my, for some reason, he comes to the urinal right next to my urinal, and suddenly there starts with the number one, "pssssss"

ACTOR 2. Oh, right on, right on,

*(***ACTOR 2** *is holding an unopened carton of cigarettes.)*

ACTOR 2. …So then in that moment, Kato was, basically he was looking at this dude who'd come out of the booth, or like stall and was thinking "Huh? then why didn't you take care of that number one together with your other stuff inside just now," and,

ACTOR 1. This person *(indicating* **ACTOR 2***)* is named Kawakami but… on first impression you might think that particularly his reaction to the punch line part of Kato's story seemed totally slow, but,

ACTOR 2. But that's not the case, to tell you the truth, Kawakami at that moment was thinking, "But occasionally I do stuff like that, and by stuff like that I mean re-considering after I'm out of the stall, 'Oh, I want to push out a little more after all on the number one side of things,'" I mean thinking back I have a keen sense of that kind of thing, I remember physically, a lot of different times and episodes in my memory, all like spinning around, and similar to that story, and recalling them, I got distracted, so that's the reason my reaction was flat,

ACTOR 2. But honestly, huh, haven't you even once done something like that? I um have, is what Kawakami was thinking,

ACTOR 2. …Right right… I can even recall now, 1, 2, 3, 4 times, except if someone were to interrogate me like, "Come on, what was the deal there?" like, why I did that at those times, probably, now, I can't think of a convincing answer to, I mean, I can't remember every single miniscule detail of that situation so,

ACTOR 1. Uh-uh, that's like totally fine,

ACTOR 2. Even if I were perhaps asked to convince you with a clear explanation, I don't think that I could but,

ACTOR 1. It's like, OK, I understand that… Things like that happen, right… Well, it's not like things like that happen but… huh, but so Kawakami, you have done things like that, a lot of times?

ACTOR 2. Or like, if you ask me if I've done it "a lot of times," it might like be misleading but, it's not so much like I go use the bathroom in the station everyday or anything,

ACTOR 1. But, wow, right, that means that someone who's actually experienced this phenomenon is like surprisingly close-by… what kind of, uh, but when you're in that circumstance, in a situation that might turn out like that… so then, practically speaking, for that to happen… for example is it like after you've already flushed once, "Oh, actually I just recognized, and

in this very moment, that there is a part of myself that needed to go, actually," or something like that? Is what I'm asking as a general question, but…

ACTOR 2. …Right, right… or like, to use a subtle analogy, there's like in all these different power dynamics, from moment to moment… like the relationships between the particulars of a circumstance, that on one level… like time, for example, fundamentally, when you're in a train station, you're in a hurry, that's like the standard assumption, right, and that is like one possible factor that could affect circumstances, and when you bring all these different contributing factors together, that's when…. right, right… that kind of thing happens, but it's really delicate, and even though it's not like that isn't categorically THE logic, on one level,

ACTOR 1. Ah, yes, yes,

ACTOR 2. But… right, right… but if you're trying to understand something by that logic alone, like that black-and-white kind of thinking, the second you make a decision, there's always somewhere a doorway into thinking, "Oh, but that's a little bit like maybe not totally right either I wonder"…. right, right,… the lingering thought, which on some level, like, there's nothing you can do about it, but there's a, it's too bad, like kind of thing, right… but on the other hand those kinds of doing something without leaving any loose ends, like the perfect crime, that in and of itself would be on the other hand, a pretty difficult task in its own right, I think, so,

ACTOR 1. …and so right when we were getting all excited by this topic which the two of us had gradually lost track of, … I think you get it from what you're watching but, so a girl enters here, right, and so she comes in here, I mean it's not like "what the hell are you doing, coming in here" or anything like that at all, I mean it's totally fine if she comes in but,

ACTOR 1. And the reason behind that is because, the circumstances were, in other words, to explain where this

place is… in Shinjuku, Shinjuku is the urban center, I mean all of Tokyo is urban, but it's kind of like the epicenter of Tokyo, kind of like Times Square, and that's where this comic book café is, in the middle of Shinjuku, I mean, the whole first three floors of this building is a karaoke place, and the entire fourth and fifth floors are this comic cafe, and that's where Kato and Kawakami and this girl, who's called Ogawa… all work part-time but, this is the break room or changing room kind of, that can lock from the inside, I mean, the door can be locked from the inside but, this room here is what is commonly called the staff room, and that is where at that moment Ogawa just entered so…. Of course Ogawa has every right, Ogawa is still pretty new here, one of the newest, who started working here only about one week ago, but, anyway, even still it's totally fine if she comes in here all normal, but that doesn't have to do with anything but,

ACTOR 2. Except this is when, there's this thing that's a little story about Ogawa, or like it just so happens to be break time coincidentally, when Ogawa happened to come in, and it was a perfect opportunity so… Right right, there was this thing I was thinking maybe I'll just dare to ask her now,

ACTRESS 1. Huh? Is this about Mizuno?

ACTOR 2. …or rather, as far as Ogawa was concerned, honestly, we were at that point perpetually ready to get all excited at the drop of a hat, and so… or rather, with Mizuno… right, right… the reason why was, what happened was…. the thing with Mizuno… right, right…. there was this ahhh- I was just totally BANG preempted, right, the thing is, first of all Ogawa is, above all, a fresh college graduate this spring, 22 years old, an age that's, I mean to put it bluntly, very young is the thing, right, except we weren't necessarily getting all excited over just her babe-liciousness… the important point here is something else… I mean that is, well, on the other

hand, as a detail, there was a level at which we were just getting excited, and that of course is like the perpetuation of our seed, that because we are men, I think it should be admitted here, on one level, we have that which all men have, to be honest, because we're men, or like because we're men, since we've acknowledged that, ok, so we can continue the story fairly… the fact is, there is a group of us who're pretty tight, all the same age, to be honest, there's this, me and Kato and plus one other part-timer, the guy Ogawa mentioned earlier but, a guy named Mizuno, and this Mizuno… so then, it's that, right, the way that it wasn't that we were just getting excited over Ogawa because she was "just so young, you know," but practically speaking… something, not exactly like a felony but, on the other hand, it was like this huge feat had taken place, where, Ogawa, believe it or not, and Mizuno, of all people, were like, as I said,

ACTOR 2. …Uh, the fact that you, Ogawa, were kind of like, to put it bluntly, asked by Mizuno to like "go out" with him, and the fact that you OK'ed it, uh, you OK'ed it right, huh? Hey, is the fact that you OK'ed it, like a final answer, or maybe it was actually a fast break, type thing, maybe? Looking at the actual circumstances, in other words, I think you were actually asked something similar by Mizuno,

ACTRESS 1. Huh – yes,

ACTOR 2. In that moment, did you feel it was a pretty much relatively momentarily like it was a snap decision? is what I'm trying to say,

ACTRESS 1. Huh – but it wasn't really that, huh, why is it like, huh, the way you, Kawakami, put it just now, makes it sound so fakey, so is that what the story is? is what it feels like but, I wonder, huh, is that what people are saying?

ACTOR 2. Oh, but that was just, it's probably totally fine so…

ACTRESS 1. I mean that it was from Mizuno's side? Only? It wasn't just a one-way thing, or like, uh, did that come out really lame? I wondered for a moment but, uh, what should I say, I mean, whatever is fine, but

ACTOR 2. I mean, that's totally… right, right… You probably don't need to worry about it at all right now, because, to be honest, Kato and I are getting pretty excited about it, regarding you and Mizuno but, when you look at it another way, we're probably the only people getting all worked up about it, is the feeling I get so…

ACTRESS 1. Huh – the way Kawakami said that like that was like, it made me think, at this part-time job, stuff like this rumor about how apparently Mizuno's approach was totally one-sided or, huh, but why is that? The story? I totally don't understand it but, are rumors and things just like that? is what I thought, or like, that lies are, uh, so out of control, huh, how excited are you getting, over other peoples' business? is what I totally, in reality – you have to look to understand but, uh, is this perhaps some bizarre story that is getting all the staff at the store, all excited, because it feels like that would be really weird, or huh, I dunno, I mean, it's fine, but,

ACTRESS 1. That's what Ogawa was thinking but, it seemed like, in reality, nobody was getting all excited about it actually, so, well if it was not like everyone was getting all worked up about it, then everything that just went through my head is all irrelevant, right,

ACTOR 2. In other words, it's not so… right, right… don't worry because I'm, we're not making a like party out of it or anything, and I say don't worry, I mean, for Ogawa's part, I could tell that it wasn't as if she didn't want things to get weirdly excited, or, that she was like phew! that people weren't all excited, in fact, it was obvious that the exact opposite was true but… right, right… as a bystander the only thing I could really say was "Don't worry" so, it just had to come out like that but…

ACTRESS 1. It's not completely accurate to say, that I don't want people to get excited over something pertaining to me, uh, but see, the key point maybe is that there's a feeling that if I could choose what got people excited, then I would want to choose, is, I mean of course it's normal that you can't do that… But, huh am I weird? Like I feel like the age difference factor was way overblown more than was necessary… Well, uh, do people really make that the focal point when they get all excited? Isn't that a little, hmmm, or like first of all, it isn't like there even is an age difference worth mentioning, in my opinion but, am I the only person who thinks that? Or like is it just us? I mean whatever but,

ACTOR 1. Totally, if we're talking about that particular point, the three of us, including Mizuno, we're treated like a trio, and honestly, easily half of all the other staff, including the full-timers and the part-timers, are totally in their twenties so, hmmmmm, even though there is something pathetic about this kind of assertion, still… After all, when you look at the part-time work situation in its entirety, and then at the three of us…we're pretty even though nobody says it to our faces, there is this subtle feeling like we are made out to be the three musketeers in their 30's, and labeled the old fogey trio, and despite that, we still have to work here part-time, from day to day so, awwwww… you understand that feeling, right? I mean since Ogawa and Mizuno are already like you know, so… or like, isn't it safe for us to assume that if you spent one week working here, you'd understand that there's that kind of atmosphere in our store, right?

ACTOR 1. Right, so it's pretty, at times, this person might in reality have absolutely no idea what the other person's side is feeling but, have you not heard this story from Mizuno? Or like even if you haven't, haven't you actually thought that? on some level, you actually have, right?

ACTRESS 1. Uh…but this is, I'm not trying to sound cool or anything, but truthfully, I'm not at all like doing that kind of thing *(fighting the world)* but… uh- is age difference such a big deal?

ACTOR 2. Or like, the age difference thing is, yeah, more like OUR problem, kind of, and by OUR problem that includes Mizuno, and so before you realize it, there are these issues about what kind of position one takes, and where you stand now, I mean aren't these the kinds of issues that ought to be discussed with Ogawa? Or like… right, right…. so Ogawa from the beginning or like even today but, or like more so now than ever but, when we are in the staff room, Ogawa is the only person who normally comes in here on a regular basis, and everyone else, when we're inside here, probably goes out of their way to go to the convenience store, you know…

ACTOR 2. Despite the fact that we're right smack in the middle of Shinjuku here, you actually have to walk pretty far to get to a convenience store, and I think that's extremely annoying but… but they go there anyway, which means that they must really you know, so because of that, from our point of view, Ogawa is practically, I mean not to get all religious but, the Virgin Mary or like, actually, I don't know but she's on that level, you know, and I have a feeling that's not such a wild exaggeration, how can I put it… Right, right, also, who was that, that woman from India, but she's not really Indian, what's her name, she's already dead but…

ACTOR 1. The other people here don't come in here casually when we're in here, because they're already naturally fixed in that culture… that's why we… But Ogawa, she comes in here right, and in the beginning, because it was before we knew anything about her and Mizuno, or rather, there was of course a time before anything was actually happening between them so, during that time, we were like, Ah- It's because Ogawa

is still a newbie who hasn't completely absorbed all the cultural nuances of our work place, isn't that nice? It's comforting, isn't it, we were saying, we said, the three of us including of course Mizuno,

ACTOR 2. Ogawa is like… right, right… For us, like I said, beyond first impressions, in other words, she was actually a healing presence? Like a nurse type? That was the kind of talk we were getting all into… Well in the end, more than anyone else, it was Mizuno for whom that Nightingale image… right, right… landed, your special nurse-like-energy, to sum it up but… or like, I think you probably thought that was a very old-man-joke kind of thing to say but, or more like, that wasn't even really a joke but,

ACTOR 2. But hey, well that's because just now, there was a part of me that said that to be daring, no, really, I mean, because in reality, I am an old man, I'm aware of that, and furthermore, I have to work at being more aware, on many different levels, so that adds to the reason I felt I had to say that to her myself… right, right… uh- then from Ogawa's reaction it was not altogether untrue either, and we were like, Oh, that's how it is, our perception isn't totally off the mark, that's how it was, and that was like for us anyway a shock to be perceived that way…uh- I mean Mizuno is easily an old man… in other words well we were too but… Right, right… But Ogawa says she's like eight years younger, that's, uh, eight years is like, when we hit drinking age, you just got out of elementary school right, is what that means, right? Wow, if you think about it like that, what is the right reaction to have right now, what is the optimum thought to have of all thoughts, so now, nothing from our prior experiences comes to mind that really captures the quandary but, that's the, but, I've got it, Ogawa, right now, putting aside the fact that we're discussing a specific girl named Ogawa, about whom one could say this or that,

the idea of a girl who's more than a little younger, in other words, oh, common sense would say oh about two to three years, that's a pretty significant age difference but, uh, the fact that with the girl going out with Mizuno there's even more of a difference, oh, really, she's even younger that that, kind of is the story which generally, inspires or embraces a special, what is it, not envy but, honestly something like that, or not like that but it's a fact, yes,

ACTRESS 1. Ah, yes… I said, "Ah yes" even though there is this feeling that like I shouldn't say "Ah yes" myself but… But it's no, as a way of being told that, ah, yes, yes, this is all stuff I know, obviously, I mean even if I pretended not to know I know, that's the truth, so by saying "ah, yes" it was just that, I thought it would be more honest, and I'm not just being defensive… Of course I could have innocuously NOT said, "Ah yes" but that's just, I don't know, the opposite of knowing or like saying, "Oh I didn't know," kind of, I mean I don't know but, that's all that is, or like, this is just sounding super defensive in the end, but…

ACTOR 1. …um, about what Kawakami said to Ogawa just now, I am generally in agreement with what he said now, but there is one point on which our opinions subtly differ, which is like, my feeling towards Ogawa right now, or rather, not towards Ogawa, but maybe really towards Mizuno, and that is, if I may, well for instance, if she is, say, hanging around, it seems at first glance, there are all these different issues that come up, as you get to reach a certain age it can't be helped, so anyway, for example… well there's a part of me that feels timid about giving a for example, like it might be bad luck to speak about it because it might come true kind of… in other words, if I were to really go for the jugular, if a woman is more or less around that spoiling age, you might make all sorts of assumptions, not assumptions but…

ACTOR 1. …There are like so-called transition periods, you might say, but for women in particular, is what I had been feeling these days, and I, men have… or like "for women in particular" is, I just now said "in particular" but that delves into the realm of, then do men in particular NOT have such transition periods? but, it's not that they don't, in particular, I mean men are from the get-go, what do you think Kawakami, don't they not have it, would you say? or like they don't need it really, because there's no physiological limitation, that's what I believe,

ACTOR 1. So Kawakami might seem a little bit deflated just now, I thought, and I don't think there's any reason to be deflated, I'd brought this *(indicating the carton of cigarettes)* as a present for Kawakami, actually, and I gave it to him for his birthday but… kinda like why not smoke like a chimney, go ahead, as if you're going to finish off this whole carton today, in one day,

ACTOR 1. …there might not even be a line you cross at 30 per se, that's totally, the fact that it looks like there is for a guy is an illusion? On one hand, like the equator or like, I, when I was a kid I believed that the equator was an actual red line, and in the ocean there was a kind of rope like in a swimming pool, pretty much all the way until I was in middle school… Right, but the line at 30 is, no way, there IS no line, it doesn't exist… but women have it? I mean I don't know, man, but, like a physical… so that makes perfect sense right, women have it so men think they do too, the men match the women, or they're dragged into it, or made to match them, that's all there is to it, I mean on a judgment call, women are 100 percent in the wrong about this, am I wrong?

ACTOR 1. So my one phrase reaction to those kinds of women, I mean I say this in front of you because Ogawa, you'll forgive me because you're still 22 years old, but, …well, shut the hell up! Right?

ACTOR 1. … But really there's this kind of the standard at 30, and for Ogawa to have 8 years til then was like, a reprieve for Mizuno, and that, for Kato, was the most niggling point,

ACTOR 1. How can I put it, once they cross that age boundary, they focus their laser beams on us, which is total pressure, the laser beam emitted from a girl who's at that stage is like, wow, I mean totally get off of me! You know, but Ogawa, you don't even give off that beam, right? How wonderful is that, that you can't even emit, really you should treasure that, because that's it, I mean the point that makes me envious of Mizuno is,… essentially, Ogawa is YOUNG! 22 years old! Which is eight years younger, eight years till 30, like, you can enjoy the World Cup two more times before she starts emitting that beam, Mizuno's situation is like a dream come true,

ACTOR 1. …and having said that much, Kato got swept up by his own excitement and after this accidentally… he almost blurted out that Mizuno himself was, up until very recently, face-to-face with that line like me,

ACTOR 1. …Mizuno, up until really very recently, had been dating a girl for 5 years and they'd just split up, she was just a normal, well her personality wasn't bad, kind of girl named Maeno, which means "former," who on one level, had a very fateful name… but despite the break up, he had this huge extreme rebound, and to talk about how much of a rebound it was, well, not to be like it's this much of a rebound but, really, it was such an amazing refreshing rebound wave that Mizuno caught… is what I almost let myself accidentally say in front of Ogawa, which might have been on Ogawa's end, like What? kind of possibility… but I now think, though this might be overly optimistic, but, that I was just borderline safe but

ACTRESS 1. …but Ogawa had picked up on this because, the atmosphere was like, well, full of it…. well, but even for Ogawa, if she had been asked, if she could

possibly have thought that Mizuno had never had a girlfriend before her, she'd have to admit, uh, well, that she may have thought that, that's what she'd probably have to answer but,

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