

DONT TOUCH ME WITH YOUR RIGHT HAND

By Sean G. Slater

Characters

A MAN, casually dressed

THE SECOND MAN, formally dressed

BOSS, an older, rich man

GERARD, a very large man

Setting

The present. A simple American waiting room.

Lights up. A MAN sits in a waiting room. He has his right hand down his pants. He reads a copy of *Time* magazine. After a moment THE SECOND MAN enters. He looks around for another seat and sees there are none. He sits next to The MAN. Pause.

THE SECOND MAN

Are you going to be long with that?

MAN

Hmmm?

THE SECOND MAN

That magazine. It's the only good magazine there is.

Beat.

MAN

Well, have you tried The Christian Science Monitor? Or Highlights?

THE SECOND MAN

No, thank you. I'd rather read what you have.

MAN

You like Time magazine?

THE SECOND MAN

A close friend has recommended it to me.

MAN

You have friends who read Time magazine? Who?

THE SECOND MAN

Is that really pertinent?

Beat.

MAN

I don't really like Time Magazine. Rather trashy.

THE SECOND MAN

You don't even like it? Then why are you reading it?

MAN

I just finished Highlights. The gnome's maze was wonderful.

THE SECOND MAN

Well why don't you pass it onto someone who will enjoy it?

The MAN hands him the magazine.

MAN

Happy?

THE SECOND MAN mumbles his thank you. Pause. The MAN pulls out his right hand and looks at it. Pause. He puts out his hand to shake.

MAN

We didn't really meet. Hi, I'm Dan.

THE SECOND MAN shakes the hand. The MAN does an elaborate handshake.

THE SECOND MAN

Steven Dudlift.

MAN

It's nice to know you Steve.

THE SECOND MAN

I'll try not to be long.

Beat.

But I probably will, so...

MAN

Take your time. It's not that bad an issue actually. I have to say I'm normally not a big fan of lowbrow infotainment. But there is something special about that issue. They've done something different and original. Well, at least something they haven't done before.

THE SECOND MAN

Hmmm...

MAN

Nope. It's quality reporting. Positively spellbinding. No real room for criticism with what you're holding there.

Pause.

Can I show you something? In there?

THE SECOND MAN

It's quite all right, really...

The MAN takes the magazine.

MAN

Oh no it's fine. I wouldn't want to take the chance of you missing out on this. You would hate yourself later if you missed out on this. You're bound to hear about it sooner or later, on the street or from a family friend. And I'm sure you're the kind of man who likes to be the first to know.

THE SECOND MAN

I'm really not in the mood...

MAN

Oh it won't affect your mood the slightest bit, trust me.

THE SECOND MAN

Where is it?

The MAN fumbles through the magazine.

MAN

It's somewhere around here, towards the back. Some of these pages don't have numbers on them because advertisers don't want anything obstructing their layout. God bless capitalism.

THE SECOND MAN

Right.

MAN

There must be twelve ads her for perfume alone. How many people do you know who would buy a sport utility vehicle based on an ad they saw in a magazine? Huh? None. Not unless anyone you know is an idiot.

THE SECOND MAN

I'd really like to get back to the magazine, if you don't mind...

MAN

Oh I don't mind at all. Almost there. Jeez, all these damn advertisements. It's like a bag of potato chips, looks like a full bag but what you're really paying for is air.

THE SECOND MAN

Right.

MAN

Here it is! This barbeque joint in Montana that still serves Buffalo. Can you believe that? What is this 1937 or something? There can't be more than five or six of the buggers left and these people are cooking them up for tourists. Plus they hired this Native American to cook up their special sauce. Complete exploitation. But you know I guess that's the common underlying characteristic of all human beings. Our waste. We are so incredibly wasteful. You'd think we'd have invented a way of materializing things from nothing by now, like on Star Trek? Did you ever watch Star Trek? Do you remember, they had those little ports in the snack room and all you had to do was walk up to it and tell it what you wanted and then it would appear right in front of you. You could say, "Brussels sprouts" or "Chili Con Carne" and it would magically appear there for you, hot or cold, ready to eat. Nah, I don't imagine I'd last to long in Starfleet Academy. I spend all my time ordering food from nowhere.

THE SECOND MAN

Look. I'm not really interested in talking to you about Star Trek. I'm not really interested in listening to you talk about Star Trek, either. In fact I'm not interested in hearing you talk at all, about anything. What I am interested in is quietly enjoying a magazine before I get called in to my interview.

MAN

Oh, you're right. That is important.

THE SECOND MAN

Yes.

MAN

Have you been preparing?

THE SECOND MAN

What do you mean?

MAN

I'm meant have you been getting ready for what he might ask you?

THE SECOND MAN

I'm not very worried about that.

MAN

You're not? Then maybe I shouldn't be either.

THE SECOND MAN

It's not something I need to worry about. You should take care of yourself. If you want some advice I'd say you should worry about what he is going to ask you. You don't seem like a person who's well acquainted with common sense.

MAN

It depends on how common the sense.

THE SECOND MAN

May I have the magazine?

MAN

Will you read the article I told you about?

THE SECOND MAN

No, I haven't got time. I haven't even made it through the editorials.

MAN

Then what are you planning to read?

THE SECOND MAN

I don't know...World news.

MAN

You don't think you could skim over the article I mentioned.

THE SECOND MAN

I'm sorry but it just doesn't sound pertinent. I'm trying to stay abreast on important news.

MAN

It could be important. In the long run.

THE SECOND MAN

Well I'm not someone who worries about the long run. May I have it back please?

MAN

I really think it would be in your best interest to check out the article.

THE SECOND MAN

Well I can't read anything as long as you've got the magazine.

The MAN gives him the magazine. The SECOND MAN takes it without a word.
Pause.

MAN

Have you had a chance to look -

THE SECOND MAN

No.

Pause.

MAN

You know what's a good section in that magazine? Medicine. Medicine is a good section. I like medicine. All the rebuilding and.... Very exiting.

Pause.

Have you ever heard of a groin strain?

THE SECOND MAN

Excuse me?

MAN

A groin strain. It's a condition. You've never heard of it? I'm not surprised. It is a condition common among men with extremely large testicles. When these men are forced into wearing constricting clothing, e.g. suits, biker shorts, tighty-whiteys, they have trouble keeping their massive balls from twisting around. When they twist, to the side of the

thigh or down towards the buttocks fluid is cut off to the testicle. If the testicles remain in this position for too long, one may be in danger of losing the testicle.

Pause.

Or maybe it's just an excuse for one to constantly keep checking and stroking one ball sack..

THE SECOND MAN
Is that article in here?

MAN
No. I saw that on the Web.

THE SECOND MAN
Oh yes. "The Internet".

MAN
You don't like the Internet?

THE SECOND MAN
I like it fine.

MAN
You don't use the Internet?

THE SECOND MAN
Well. I tend to avoid it.

MAN
But it's so useful. There are billions of things to search through.

THE SECOND MAN
I do e-mail occasionally, while traveling. But I have no use for the 'world wide web'.

Pause.

MAN.
You may be right. But you wouldn't have known about groin strains if I hadn't told you. And I wouldn't have been able to tell you if I hadn't seen it on the Internet.

THE SECOND MAN
I could have done without knowing that.

MAN

Maybe you just don't have very large balls.

THE SECOND MAN

Well, we'll never know who's right, will we? Unless of course, they do a follow up.

Pause.

MAN

How can you tell whether or not you have the advantage?

Beat.

THE SECOND MAN

Excuse me?

MAN

Do you have it now? Did you have it five minutes ago when you walked in the door? Will you have it by the time you go to sleep tonight?

THE SECOND MAN

I don't follow.

MAN

Maybe you'll have it when you die. But I suppose it won't be much use then.

THE SECOND MAN

What are you getting at?

MAN

What am I getting at?

THE SECOND MAN

What are you trying to say to me?

Beat.

MAN

Smell your right hand.

THE SECOND MAN smells it. He wretches.

THE SECOND MAN

Oh my god! What's that smell?

MAN

Could it be the stench of the disadvantaged?

THE SECOND MAN

What has happened to my hand?

MAN

You have just shaken my hand, which I've I have had in my pants for nearly seven hours.

THE SECOND MAN

What are you talking about?

MAN

You've got the smell of my testicles all over your hands.

THE SECOND MAN

What?

MAN

Yes?

THE SECOND MAN

No, what?

MAN

Do you not understand?

THE SECOND MAN

I'm trying to comprehend.

MAN

I'm being as clear as possible.

THE SECOND MAN

But what are you trying to say?

MAN

Haven't I already said it?

THE SECOND MAN

Not by your words, by what you've done?

MAN

Oh. I think that may put you at a disadvantage.

THE SECOND MAN

That's disgusting.

MAN

Not as disgusting rubbing a page of that magazine all over my ass, which I also did.

THE SECOND MAN

Bastard!

MAN

I don't know if it's pertinent but I haven't bathed in a week.

THE SECOND MAN

Why? Why would you do this?

Pause.

MAN

Hello Steve Dudlift. You were born in Middleton, Virginia. February 1978 on a riverboat. I have the pictures to prove it. You graduated from Middleton College Preparatory School in 1992 where you were nothing more than a C student. You then wanted to go into the military but your pops, Steven Dudlift Senior said no way and shipped you off to Stanford, where you had to start mingling with the, what you considered lowlife, liberal scum that seeped across the campus. You hated California. You hated the friends you didn't have. You hated Stanford. So you transferred to Yale and ended up doing a lot of coke. While in the meat locker of the student café you had your first and last homosexual experience. Then after months of a mental, tug-of-war you decided that the thing for you was indeed politics. And you got dressed up in a fancy silk three-piece and took your folks out to dinner, all paid from your monthly allowance. And after telling the waiter to prep the champagne and you popped the declaration, "Mummy, Daddy, I want to be a congressman." Your father calls you an idiot, tells you he won't allow it and that your going to be a shareholder like every other reasonable person. So he sets you up to see a close personal friend who owes him a favor. But the friend has already promised his current opening. So he gives both applicants a chance to be interviewed. Sort of a neck and neck situation. Except one of them hasn't got the advantage of friends in high places.

Beat.

And that leaves you and me silk dick. You would've liked to inbreed your way into this newly available management position, wouldn't you? But I'm a decent guy who's worked all his life trying to get an equal shot at the

prize, in place of all you Ivy league cock-suckers. And before you step into that office I want you to remember one thing, Stevie. I have a picture of you at home over my toilet. I could shit right here in front of you and it wouldn't bother me the slightest bit.

Beat.

THE SECOND MAN

I need to wash my hands.

MAN

You haven't got any time. The bathroom is on the first floor.

The MAN pulls out a handy wipe.

This what you need?

THE SECOND MAN

Listen. Don't do this to me. Please. I mean...I smell like your ass!

MAN

I can't believe you didn't smell it before.

THE SECOND MAN

I...I have this vapor rub on my nose. VAPOR RUB!

He opens his briefcase and pulls out the jar of Vick's Vapor Rub.

MAN

Oh no you don't...!

The MAN snatches the jar and stuffs it down his pants.

THE SECOND MAN

Noooooo!!!!!!

MAN

Ha, Ha!

THE SECOND MAN

Must you destroy everything?

The MAN grabs the wet-nap and throws it to the floor. He stubs it with his foot and grinds it into the floor.

You sick, sick, sick...!

The MAN does a very pelvic oriented dance. He takes out the vapor rub and hands it to THE SECOND MAN who holds it at a distance. The MAN rests his hand down his pants. THE SECOND MAN stares at the jar. The door opens. BOSS enters. He shakes hands with THE SECOND MAN.

BOSS

Well if it isn't little Stevie Dudlift. Nice suit. I like that color, on you. Lose the tie.

THE SECOND MAN

Th - Thank you sir. I-

BOSS

What's this? Vapor rub? Get rid of that store bought shit. You need to get yourself a humidifier.

THE SECOND MAN throws away the jar in a trash bin.

Gosh o' Golly. My clearest memories of you are pissing down your mother's back when we were in Africa in Eighty-one. Who knew that nauseating little boy would one day want to be an executive?

He sees the magazine.

And a reader of Time magazine, no less. I got to say I love Time magazine, not so much for the stuff they report on, but for the stuff they don't report on if you catch my drift? Heh-heh.

THE SECOND MAN

Yes. Sir. Heh.

BOSS

Did you see that article about that barbeque joint off the Montana highway? Best buffalo ribs anywhere in the country, so I'm told. And they got their own sauce too. They got this Navajo fellow in a teepee out back who makes all their sauce himself. Amazing story. I was think n' about hopping a flight up maybe this Friday night. Get some high-class company and go on a little mid-western excursion. You're not afraid of hookers are you Stevie?

THE SECOND MAN

Hookers?

BOSS

Shit, maybe I spoke too soon. Ah don't worry, your pops will teach you everything you need to know about hookers. But the first thing you've got to remember is hooker love isn't love.

THE SECOND MAN

Uh...I understand.

BOSS

Now what are you planning to do your first week out here?

THE SECOND MAN

Well, I was looking forward to attending one of the weekly seminars on synergy...

BOSS

Are you kidding me? You really dig into to all that crap? Listen son, you're on the fast track to junior management, you don't need to worry about workshops and seminars, you don't need to aquatint yourself with a goddamn thing, remember that. That's marketing's job. We are here to settle disputes amongst the people who really matter, the shareholders. Think of yourself from now on as a referee. Don't worry, you'll get the hang of it soon enough. So anyway, you won't be busy this weekend.

THE SECOND MAN

Well it has been a long trip from Cairo...

BOSS

Cairo? What's in Cairo?

THE SECOND MAN

There's a new series of lectures by British archeologist at the university of Cairo this month.

BOSS

Stevie, Stevie, Stevie. If you're thinking of going out of the country there's only one stop you got to make. Uzbekistan. Now there's a quality vacation. Cheap, good food and plenty of Russian pussy.

THE SECOND MAN

Uh, I don't speak Russian.

BOSS

Neither do I. You can hire a translator for two dollars a day. Stay a month and you're only out sixty bucks.

THE SECOND MAN

I do like Islands though sir.

BOSS

Islands. Just like you mother. Look, you'll have plenty of time to sleep when we get back I promise. This weekend we're in Montana eating barbeque. Mmmhmmhmm...I can smell those baby-backs now!

He smells the magazine. Pause.

BOSS

What in god's name is wrong with this magazine's ink?

He smells his hands.

Holy shit!

The next two lines overlap.

THE SECOND MAN

It was him! That man sitting right there! He did it! Not me! I'm innocent! I wouldn't do a thing like that. Please you've got to believe me. That's the man you want. He's the disgusting, psychotic, perverted testicle twister. I'm innocent. He's been plotting this all his life or something. He wants to deny me because of who I am and what I'm privileged to. I am innocent.

BOSS

I pay six bucks a piece for these publications. For six bucks a piece I don't want to see corners cut on rancid ink. They should care more for their reputation. I bet their shareholders wouldn't want Time magazine to be synonymous with a smell like a Lebanese bathhouse. Children would be afraid of it on news stands. They'd lose out on a generation of readers because of a simple printing error. What were you talking about?

THE SECOND MAN

It wasn't Time sir, it was that man sitting there.

The BOSS looks at the MAN sitting on the couch reading the *Christian Science Monitor*.

BOSS

Is he the other applicant?

THE SECOND MAN

Yes sir.

BOSS

What did he do to it?

THE SECOND MAN

Well I'm pretty sure he sodomized it sir. If you look at the paper creases and the smear stains... Well...you don't have to look at the paper creases and the smear stains, but I know he did it sir. He confessed.

BOSS

To who?

THE SECOND MAN

To me.

BOSS

But will he confess to me?

THE SECOND MAN

Probably sir. I think he's insane.

The BOSS walks over to the MAN.

BOSS

Excuse me. Where did you get that newspaper?

MAN

I found it on the table.

BOSS

What do you think of it?

MAN

I'm confused about some of their politics. I guess I understand most of the logic they use.

BOSS

I suppose that's good enough.

He picks up the copy of Highlights.

Now if you want to talk about therapy through reading look no further than Highlights magazine. Why I must spend at least three to four hours a Day (gasp) – Who did the crossword puzzle?

MAN

Uh, that would be me sir.

BOSS

You don't ever do the crossword puzzle in a waiting room magazine. What's the matter with you?

MAN

I was bored. And I had a pen.

BOSS

You're supposed to do it in your head son. Use you mind to navigate through the ivy walls and koala tipped corridors. It's about concentration.

MAN

I see. I'll remember that.

THE SECOND MAN

No he won't.

BOSS

And you made so many miss turns and errors. You bumped right onto a gnome's door for Christ's sake.

MAN

I'm sorry.

THE SECOND MAN

This sounds like vandalism. I don't even think he deserves an interview.

BOSS

You're lucky I have another one in my desk. I was planning on doing the crossword puzzle myself since it is my copy. But I'll leave it out here so that others who find themselves in this waiting room may also enjoy the ray of Highlights. That's called charity my boy. What did you say your name was?

MAN

My name is Charles Warner.

THE SECOND MAN

He told me his name was Dan.

BOSS

It's okay Stevie, I remember a Charlie from my appointment book. Now Chazz, I'm going to ask you a perfectly reasonable question and I want you to give me a perfectly reasonable answer. Did you stick this copy of Time magazine up your ass?

Beat.

MAN

Is this some sort of joke?

THE SECOND MAN

This is no joke you psycho! This guy has been playing mind games with me all afternoon sir.

MAN

I haven't said more than three words to you.

BOSS

What three words were those?

MAN

I just asked him if I could read that copy Time magazine. He said that he wasn't finished yet and that he wouldn't be finished anytime soon. I said take you time.

BOSS

That's more than three words, but is it true Stevie?

THE SECOND MAN

Utter lies.

MAN

When I got here he was sitting on this couch reading the magazine with his hands in his pants. Look at the surveillance footage.

BOSS

We don't tape on weekends.

MAN

I have not touched that magazine.

Silence the BOSS thinks.

THE SECOND MAN

Come on Uncle Harold. Your not going to believe this stranger over me, are you?

Pause. The BOSS thinks.

MAN

Think about this Harold. If I stuck it up my ass then why was he holding it?

Pause. The BOSS looks at The SECOND MAN.

THE SECOND MAN

I...I....I but I,...No. It wasn't...

BOSS

Are you planning on fitting an explanation in between all this jargon?

THE SECOND MAN

He tricked me! You've got to believe me Harold. He told me it had been up his ass when you walked in?

BOSS

Why didn't you smell it as soon as you picked it up? I would have dropped it immediately.

MAN

So would I. I mean, that's been in someone else's ass.

BOSS

Exactly. Someone else's dirty, sloppy, damp, asshole has been all over that magazine...Which I just deeply inhaled...It makes me sick. Why not you?

THE SECOND MAN

I...I...

MAN

Unless it's his own ass.

THE SECOND MAN

No!!!!

BOSS

This is very disappointing Dudlift. This fine news tabloid has been violated. It's scent reminds me of an Iranian Locker room I visited once back during the Algerian war before they installed urinal cakes. Why did you do this? I was in here this morning. I read that magazine myself and put it down for the next person to read. I didn't make love to it or whatever the hell you were doing! I didn't subject it to desecration by sticking it into my lower anatomy like a common drug smuggler. I don't even want to think about why you did it Dudlift. You can explain it to your father and one day he'll explain it to me. Gerard!

GERARD, a large man, enters.

You can escort this gentleman out of here.

He grabs THE SECOND MAN and drags him out.

THE SECOND MAN

No! No! You're making a big mistake! You can't do this to me...!

They exit. BOSS looks at The MAN.

BOSS

If you can work Monday through Friday for twenty bucks an hour, you got yourself a job.

MAN

Glad to have me aboard.

BOSS

See you Monday.

He exits. The MAN stares at the magazine on the coffee table. He puts it inside another magazine. He sticks his hand down his pants and exits. Lights down.

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