

OUT AMONG THE DRAGONS

By

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Character Description.

Patrick:	Twenty-something, HIV Positive Hemophiliac.
Joe:	Twenty-something, HIV Positive gay teacher.
Marie:	Twenty-something, HIV Positive waitress.
Helen:	Fifty-something, mother of Patrick
Therapist 1	Joe's therapist, male, played by the same actor that plays Coach Riley, the Waiter and Fallon.
Therapist 2	Patrick's therapist, female, played by the same actress that plays Trudi and Arlene.
Trudi:	Forty-something, best friend of Helen.
Coach Riley:	Forty-something, high school coach.
Arlene:	Fifty-something, infectious disease nurse.
Fallon:	Fifty-something, Joe's father.
Waiter:	Forty-something.

Act IScene 1

SETTING: *Three areas are suggested: two separate therapists' offices and the diner/restaurant of the Sheraton Hotel, July 1995.*

AT RISE: *JOE'S therapist is a man, THERAPIST #1, PATRICK'S is a woman, THERAPIST #2. Much of the therapists' dialogue is to both of them. PATRICK wears sweats, JOE wears a suede jacket. They've been sitting in silence for a while. MARIE, an extremely unhappy waitress, waits on a HELEN, PATRICK'S mom, who already has a glass of white wine for lunch.*

HELEN(*Putting out a cigarette. Talking to MARIE*)

I'm a bad person, I wasn't sure if this was a smoking section. Sneaking a quick one before Trudi gets here. Isn't President Clinton staying at this hotel during the convention next year? When he runs for re-election? (*MARIE doesn't respond*) Let's not talk politics. Could I have a glass of water with a straw? Thank you so much.

(*MARIE exits. HELEN sips her wine and stares off.*)

PATRICK

Fitzie called. Every time he gets lucky with a girl, he calls it "having a snack," he HAS to tell me about it. Apparently, a receptionist at work pushed him into a supply closet and gave him a blow job.

THERAPIST 2

You know, there's a chance he might not be telling/

PATRICK

/I know, I know...

JOE

Cold for July, typical.

(*Referring to his jacket.*)

Suede, pretty nice don't you think?

(*THERAPIST #1 swipes at his nose. This makes Joe swipe at his nose.*)

Is something hanging out of my nose?

(*THERAPIST #1 shakes his head no.*)

My last therapy session. Last chance to fix my brain. Speak now or forever hold your peace.

THERAPIST 1 & 2

Tell me something random about your life.

PATRICK

My counselor from Hemophilia camp died.

THERAPIST 1

Anything...

JOE

I'm going to be a guest on Oprah.

THERAPIST 1

You are? When?

JOE

I don't know.

PATRICK

His nickname was Captain Hemo. He was fearless, lived life to the fullest.

JOE

I just know I'll be on Oprah.

PATRICK

Even though he got sick, he still got married, went to law school.

THERAPIST 1 & 2

Any dreams lately?

THERAPIST 2

Anything kinky?

PATRICK

Actually...

PATRICK

Yeah.

JOE

Yeah.

JOE

I dreamt it was now, 1995, and I was elected the 7th gay president.

PATRICK

I dreamt I was having sex with the couch in our living room.

JOE

I've been killing myself trying to figure out who the other six were.

PATRICK

Not on it, with it.

JOE

Reagan, Bush...

PATRICK

It is a comfortable couch. But shouldn't someone else be there?

JOE

But who are the other four?

(MARIE enters carrying ice water with a straw.)

HELEN

I am such a pain. Would it be possible to have it without the ice? *(MARIE turns around and exits. HELEN continues to drink wine.)* Thank you!

THERAPIST 1

With the time we have left, let's review...

THERAPIST 2

Let's talk about...

THERAPIST 1 & 2

what brought you to therapy?

PATRICK

Are you kidding?

JOE

Are you kidding?

PATRICK

I'm not feeling very therapeutic.

JOE

This is my last session.

THERAPIST 1

Humor me.

THERAPIST 2

You're paying me a lot of money to sit here in silence.

PATRICK

My mother is paying you.

THERAPIST 1& 2

Make it a short list.

THERAPIST 2

Pretty please...

PATRICK (*Like a teenager*)
Oh god...being HIV positive.

JOE (*Like a teenager*)
Oh god...being HIV positive.

JOE (*Flippantly*)

Being a homo.

PATRICK (*Flippantly*)

Being a hemo.

THERAPIST 1& 2

The loss of a parent?

PATRICK (*Happily*)

My favorite excuse.

JOE (*Jokingly with a light Irish accent*)

Me poor Irish mother who worked at the shelter.

THERAPIST 1& 2

Other things, feelings....

THERAPIST 2 (*Playfully*)

I know you have feelings.

PATRICK
You know me, I get so...

JOE
You know me, I get so...

JOE

Angry!

PATRICK

Self-conscious.

THERAPIST 1& 2

Like?

PATRICK
Like, sometimes when I walk...

JOE
Like, sometimes when I walk...

JOE

my pill box rattles.

PATRICK

my ankle braces squeak.

JOE

This woman kept asking me for a Tic Tac!

PATRICK (*Lifts pant leg to show his ankle braces*)

All through my last job interview.

JOE (*Impersonating Woman*)

Do you have a Tic Tac? I totally need a Tic Tac!

PATRICK

Walk over to shake hands. (*PATRICK makes high-pitched squeak sounds.*)

Walk back to my chair. (*PATRICK makes high-pitched squeak sounds.*)

JOE (*Holding up his pill box*)

I said: No! It's AZT! Want some?!

PATRICK

It sounded like a mouse...farting.

(*MARIE enters with water, no ice.*)

HELEN

Thank you. I have another crazy request. I'm on this diet where I'm supposed to drink twelve glasses of water a day at room temperature. I know. Could I get just a slice of lemon? (*MARIE exits with the water.*) Sorry! We're big tippers!

THERAPIST 1& 2 (*Taking notes*)

Ok...Are you sleeping?

JOE

Never heard of it.

PATRICK

Twelve hours a night.

THERAPIST 1& 2

Eating?

PATRICK

I've been eating too much.

JOE

Martinis.

PATRICK

Now I just nap when I'm hungry. Works beautifully.

THERAPIST 1& 2

Terrific.

THERAPIST 1

Thanks for working with me.

THERAPIST 2

C'mon, what else brought you to therapy?

PATRICK

Don't like hanging out with my friends.

JOE

Drove my friends away.

PATRICK

I need to do something constructive with my brain! I do have a degree. (*Mock happy*)
And let's not forget Pain!

JOE (*Mock Delighted*)

Sickness!!

PATRICK (*Mock Thrilled*)

Suffering!!!

PATRICK (*Mock Euphoric*)

Death!!!!

JOE (*Mock Euphoric*)

Death!!!!

PATRICK

This is fun.

JOE

I'm going to miss therapy.

THERAPIST 1& 2

You need to remember what you deal with.

(JOE and PATRICK nod. MARIE enters with water with lemon but no straw.)

HELEN

You're a life-saver. Didn't there used to be a straw?

(MARIE grabs the water and exits.)

THERAPIST 1 & 2

You were going to try to meet people.

THERAPIST 1

Any progress?

JOE

I met someone who works at an AIDS organization. We talked.

PATRICK

I keep going to clinic on Tuesdays to see that girl.

THERAPIST 1 & 2

Great! How was the conversation?

PATRICK

I didn't talk to her!

JOE

She liked my ideas but said funding them would be tough.

THERAPIST 1 & 2

What is your gut telling you?

JOE

I can do it. I was raised to be successful.

PATRICK

I wonder how she got it?

JOE

And I was taught true success only comes through helping others.

PATRICK

Maybe from an operation?

JOE

"Be a Man for Others." My dad's motto. I don't care, I can still use it.

PATRICK

Maybe from a boyfriend?

JOE

And if I get down, I have that cognitive interruption thing you taught me.

PATRICK

I saw her when I went to clinic on Tuesday once.

JOE

Me and Mom at the beach; get to a better place.

PATRICK

Hemos go on Thursday, they separate us from everybody else.

JOE

People like my ideas, I just need to find a way to fund them.

PATRICK

On Tuesday, the guys look, you know, gay.

JOE

There's a ton of money at the high school I teach at.

PATRICK

I don't want her to think I'm gay, or a heroin addict.

JOE

Lots of fundraising.

PATRICK

Who wants to date a heroin addict?... I need a job.

JOE

I need to ingratiate myself, tap those resources for my project. Speaking of which, it's time to write your last check.

(While PATRICK talks, JOE searches for his checkbook. Finds it, writes out a check.)

PATRICK

All I do is lie around, think about sex and eat Fritos. Any commercial with an attractive woman totally turns me on. Dishwasher detergent, Glade, paper towels.. It's kind of weird when I see my mom clean now. Am I becoming a pervert?

THERAPIST 2

Wanting to have sex is a good thing; it's healthy.

PATRICK

It can't be healthy to masturbate three times a day.

JOE (Shaking his pen vigorously)

My pen ran out.

THERAPIST 2

Why not?

PATRICK

Wow, you're good at your job. Because it hurts my elbows.

THERAPIST 1

Here, use this one.

(Hands JOE a pen.)

THERAPIST 2

Buy something from a sex store or catalog.

PATRICK

Wow, you are really good at your job.

JOE

Wow, nice pen.

THERAPIST 2

Is Trudi still leaving Playboys behind the furnace like your dad used to?

PATRICK

Yeah.

THERAPIST 2

I love Trudi.

PATRICK

She's nuts...A regular girl wouldn't have sex with me. It has to be a girl who's got HIV. The girl at the clinic needs to know I have Hemophilia...and that I'm normal. *(Pause)* Well, you know, sort of normal.

THERAPIST 2

You can find a way to tell her that.

PATRICK

Excuse me, I'm a bleeder, do you have a Band-aid?

JOE(Offers it back)

Here.

THERAPIST 1

Keep it.

JOE

Thanks. It's not because you feel sorry for me?

(THERAPIST 2 shakes his head no. PATRICK looks at his watch)

THERAPIST 2

Almost time for your show?

PATRICK

Yeah, I gotta go. Today might be a big ALL MY CHILDREN. Natalie might get out of the well. Her evil twin, Janet, put her there so she could steal Natalie's husband. Let me get you your check. If I can find it...

(PATRICK starts to look for the check. Searches everywhere in his back pack.)

THERAPIST 1

You're welcome back any time. Check in next year. I always keep a light schedule in March, you know, so I can enjoy Lent.

JOE

Don't worry. I won't go into "Superbowl party mode" like when Mom died. I don't want to be just another angry gay man. I want to contribute. Because let's face it, I have no excuse for getting HIV.

THERAPIST 1

Except that you're human.

JOE

I'm smarter than that and I was raised better. I need to leave a legacy Mom would be proud of.

(MARIE enters with ice water with lemon and a straw.)

HELEN

You're brave to come back. I'll order for Trudi and me so we'll be out of your hair. She sometimes runs over at her plastic surgeons. Shh. Just let me check a couple weight watcher points.

(HELEN continues to read the menu. MARIE just stands there.)

PATRICK (Pulling out the check)

Ha! Found it.

(PATRICK and JOE hand over their checks.)

JOE

Can you not cash this until the 15th? Then cash it as soon as the bank opens.

(Pause)

PATRICK

Sometimes I'm surprised...

JOE

Sometimes I'm surprised...

PATRICK

that I'm still around.

JOE

that I'm not dead.

PATRICK

I wonder how many months I have left.

JOE

I wonder how many months I have left.

THERAPIST 1 & 2

Think positively.

JOE

I'm going to change the lives of people with AIDS.

PATRICK

I'm going to get laid.

PATRICK

It's going to happen.

JOE

It's not going to happen.

HELEN

Is there a "heart healthy" section? *(MARIE points to a different page in the menu.)* Thank you, almost ready.

JOE

I have to ask...Are you gay?

THERAPIST 1

Do you want me to be gay?

PATRICK

I'm going to cruise the clinic Tuesday ...Pray to St. Jude

JOE

I pay you \$90.00 an hour, so as far as I'm concerned, you're gay.

(They get up to leave.)

THERAPIST 2

St. Jude?

THERAPIST 1

I'm proud of you, Joe.

PATRICK

Patron Saint of hopeless causes. I gave you an extra five bucks for letting me flirt.

JOE

Keep your eye on Oprah.

PATRICK

See you next week.

(PATRICK and JOE exit.)

HELEN

Ok. Quickly, I would love another glass of wine. And can we have two...*(Looking at her water.)* Oh, what's that?

(MARIE sticks her hand in the glass of water. Takes something out. Examines it.)

MARIE

It's part of the lemon. *(Realizing what she's done)* Crap! *(MARIE exits with the glass of water. End of Scene.)*

Act IScene 2

SETTING: *Waiting Room of an Infectious Disease Clinic, July 1995.*

AT RISE: *JOE sits, corrects papers. HELEN enters carrying PATRICK'S backpack.*

PATRICK *(Off stage)*

Mom! Give me my back pack!

(JOE recognizes HELEN. He turns away, at first, not wanting her to see him).

PATRICK

(Entering)

Mom, I can carry it.

(In a lower voice)

Give me my back pack.

HELEN

I just transfused you for an elbow bleed. It's too sore... Where do you want to sit?

(JOE relaxes; turns toward them. PATRICK sits. HELEN sits next to him. JOE keenly observes them.)

PATRICK

I need forty bucks... for the co-pay, today and last time. I didn't have any money last time either.

HELEN

I'll have to write a check. *(Getting her checkbook).* You don't have any money?

PATRICK

My money is your money. *(PATRICK pulls a pack of cigarettes out of HELEN'S purse.)* What's this? *(PATRICK keeps the cigarettes.)*

HELEN

I'm a terribly weak pathetic person. Oh fudge, my pen won't work.

JOE

(JOE takes a deep breath and decides to answer.) I have a pen. Here.

(JOE offers HELEN a pen. Overlapping JOE and HELEN, PATRICK unpacks his back pack. MARIE enters, picks up PATRICK'S magazine and sits. MARIE doesn't acknowledge PATRICK. PATRICK eventually takes out a book.)

HELEN

(Taking the pen). Oh, thank you. This is a very nice pen. *(HELEN writes the check).*

JOE

Don't I know you from somewhere?

HELEN

I don't know. I don't think so.

JOE

I do. St. Benedicts, in Winnetka. You're there a lot.

HELEN

Yes, I'm on the Women's Board.

JOE

You raise a lot of money for charities with the spring fundraiser. It's impressive.

HELEN

We try.

JOE

I teach History there. Last year was my first year. Do you have kids who go there?

HELEN

No. I did. Three. He's my baby. When did you graduate from St. Benedicts?

PATRICK

87.

JOE

Hey we're almost the same age. I'm 24, graduated high school in 89.

HELEN

You only graduated high school six years ago? I graduated six hundred years ago.
(HELEN offers JOE the pen back) Thanks.

JOE

Keep it.

HELEN

I'm not going to keep it. It's a nice pen. *(HELEN holds it out until JOE takes the pen).*
I have to tell you, I love your jacket.

JOE

Thanks. It's an antique from the 60s.

HELEN

I know. I'm an antique from the 60s. *(Looking at her watch. Talking to PATRICK).*
I have to go. I'm meeting Trudi. Here are the keys. You're ok to drive?

PATRICK

Yes!

HELEN

There's a sale at Talbot's; no telling when I'll be home... Why don't I take the back pack with me?

PATRICK

No, now go.

HELEN

OK. I'll see you at home. *(To JOE)* Nice to meet you. I'm Helen. He's Patrick.
(PATRICK nods at JOE).

JOE

(Shaking HELEN's hand) I'm Joe Fallon.

HELEN

Oh, I have heard your name. I've heard good things about you... Too bad we're meeting here. Are you ok?

JOE

I'm doing fine.

HELEN

Good... I'm sure I'll be seeing you around St. Benedicts.

JOE

I look forward to it.

HELEN

And don't worry; I'll keep this little encounter between us.

(HELEN exits. Finished with PATRICK'S magazine, MARIE tosses it down. JOE observes PATRICK. PATRICK watches TV; steals glances at MARIE).

PATRICK

(To MARIE) Uhm, excu... Excuse me, do you know what time it is?

(MARIE chooses not to respond. JOE looks at his watch.)

JOE

It's 12:10.

PATRICK

Oh, ah, I was asking her. I mean, I didn't mean to bother you, not that I wanted to bother her either. Thanks for the time. (*PATRICK notices MARIE watching TV*). Can you believe Natalie is still in the well? I thought for sure Demetri was going to find her yesterday. I watched ALL MY CHILDREN in college, you know... I have a secret. I like Janet, her evil twin, more than Natalie.

JOE

Doesn't everybody?

(*MARIE smiles at JOE. Frustrated, PATRICK rifles through his backpack. He pulls out a bag of sour balls and struggles to open it. Pulling it with all his might, PATRICK rips the bag open. Sour balls go all over the floor. MARIE laughs. PATRICK panics. He gets on the floor to pick them up. JOE helps him.*)

JOE

Don't worry, I got it. Bad leg? What happened?

PATRICK

Genetics.

JOE

What do you mean?

PATRICK

It's a long boring story.

(*PATRICK notices MARIE looking at them.*)

JOE

I hope you don't mind my asking, but are you a hemophiliac?

PATRICK

(*Looks at MARIE*) Hemophiliac? Ah yes, yes I am. I am a hemophiliac.

JOE

That's awesome. I'm working on something; I wanted to talk to one of you guys.

PATRICK

(*Notices MARIE is listening*) Really? You probably don't know what hemophilia is.

JOE

I know a little.

PATRICK

Let me explain. If you have hemophilia, really, you're just like any normal guy.

JOE

I'm sure.

PATRICK

(Turning toward MARIE, who is making the most of the attention) Except that your blood is missing a factor that makes it clot. Everybody thinks if a hemophiliac gets a paper cut he'll bleed to death, that's not true. Small cuts are no big deal. The main problem is joint bleeds, especially those you use a lot, like your knee.

JOE

That's interesting, I didn't know that....Why do you keep looking over there?

(At this point, MARIE is staring at PATRICK. PATRICK sees this.)

PATRICK

Oh...ah...hemophilia is nothing to be afraid of.

JOE

Sounds like it.

PATRICK

(Hopes MARIE is still listening.) Let me give you more detail. In order to stop bleeds, I give myself a blood transfusion of clotting factor at home. Takes about fifteen minutes, no big deal.

JOE

Wow, that's cool.

PATRICK

I got HIV through a blood transfusion. That's why I'm here at the clinic.

JOE

I'm here because I sleep with men.

(MARIE laughs loudly)

PATRICK

What? I don't know about that...so the message is hemophilia is manageable, no big deal. I'm just like any normal guy, you know. I like sports, girls.

JOE

Hey, can we have lunch?

PATRICK

Uhm...what?

JOE

Can we have lunch?

PATRICK

(In a loud whisper) Um...you know, I'm not gay.

JOE

I figured that out...the sweat pants...Here are your balls. Catch.

(JOE tosses PATRICK his bag of sour balls. They all can't help but laugh).

PATRICK

(To MARIE) You think he's funny, huh?

(MARIE nods. ARLENE enters. She wears spike heels, fishnet stockings, black mini skirt, leopard skin spandex top, heavy makeup, pointy glasses and a beehive hairdo. She also wears a small white nurse's coat.)

ARLENE

Hey kids, Dr. Stengle called. He'll be at least another two hours. He had an emergency. Apologies all around.

MARIE

Crap!

JOE

But Arlene, sweet buns, I have a Cubs game.

ARLENE *(Reading a chart, doesn't look up)*

So sorry, lover. I know baseball's your thing.

(ARLENE exits.)

JOE

(MARIE starts to exit.) You're leaving?

MARIE

Yeah. Bye. *(MARIE licks her finger and makes a ringlet in JOE's hair before she exits.)*

PATRICK

Bye.

(PATRICK sits dejected.)

JOE

Sorry, I wasn't very helpful when you were trying to pick her up.

PATRICK

I wasn't trying to...was it obvious?

JOE

Yeah.

PATRICK

Do you think she knew?

JOE

Yeah.

PATRICK

Oh god, I am so embarrassed.

JOE

Don't be. Trying to pick up a girl that's positive, now that's thinking ahead. Very cool.

PATRICK

Oh yeah, real cool. Girls love it when I talk about my genetic bleeding disorder.

JOE

Must be hard being straight and positive...my love life is probably easier.

PATRICK

I, ah, you know. I have one chapter left in my book, and I would really like to finish it. So, if you don't mind, maybe I'll just...

JOE

Oh sure. What are you reading?

(PATRICK holds up his book).

Ah...Teddy Roosevelt. Interesting. He had lots of health problems when he was a kid.

(PATRICK nods his head, starts to read. JOE tries to go back to his work but can't).

I'm sorry, I don't mean to bother you, but I'd really like to talk to you about this project I'm working on for people with HIV.

PATRICK

...What kind of project?

JOE

Actually, that's a good question. I have, what I think, are two incredible ideas. I have to choose one but it's hard because I'm passionate about both. I keep vacillating.

PATRICK

...What are your ideas?

JOE

Ok, ready? (*PATRICK nods*) One is to create a magazine for people with HIV. It will cover everything: drugs, public policy, inspiration, everything. Help people advocate for themselves. Sound cool?

PATRICK

Yeah.

JOE

Great. Now the other idea, and this one kind of tugs at my heart a little more, is for people who can't receive the magazine because they don't have a home. I want to create housing for homeless people with AIDS. If you don't have housing then the rest doesn't matter, right? That's what I should probably do, but I won't reach as many people...One thing I do know is that I'll be more effective if I have people like you involved. I'd like to give you more details, and maybe your mom too at some point....Do you have plans for today?

PATRICK

Uhm...

JOE

I've got a great idea, come with me to the Cubs game.

PATRICK

Ah...

JOE

You look like you have the day off work.

PATRICK

Ah, yeah. Today I'm off work.

JOE

Great, come with me.

PATRICK

I can't. I'm sorry.

JOE

Must be strange having this gay guy ask you to a Cubs game. I teach at your old school; how bad could I be? And don't worry; I don't date guys who wear sweat pants...I'm kidding.

PATRICK

Right. You like to kid. I'd go, but I have to keep my regular appointment. They're checking my T-cells.

JOE

You can skip one appointment. They'll check your T-cells next time.

PATRICK

That will be weeks from now. You can't walk around not knowing your T-cells. That would be....

PATRICK

Risky.

JOE

Liberating?

PATRICK

I'd feel too uncertain.

JOE

Everything in our lives is uncertain, except the ending. Were your T-cells low last time?

PATRICK

They dropped last time. I'm a little concerned.

JOE

My T-cells were good last time, 317. What were yours?

PATRICK

They go up and down.

JOE

I know guys who have been running on T-cell fumes for years. How bad were they?

PATRICK

I don't know. I really don't remember.

JOE

Bull, I told you mine. I know you know. You probably have a big T-cell chart hanging on your wall.

PATRICK

It's not hanging on my wall.

JOE

Tell me.

PATRICK

(Pause) 548.

JOE

548? 548?! You have more T-cells than I do! I can't believe we're even talking about this!

PATRICK

But I had more the time before.

JOE

I'm going to ask you something, and I want you to be honest. Are you not going because of your T-cells or because I'm this pushy gay guy?

PATRICK

T-cells.

JOE

Really?

PATRICK

Really.

JOE

Ok then, that settles it, you have to go to the game. You have a responsibility to live life. *(Starts to pack up)*. T-cells over 500 are great, which means we have 48 T-cells to play with. We'll be drinking some beers.

PATRICK

I can't drink, I...

JOE

Hey Arlene, can we schedule other appointments?

ARLENE

(Enters with Calendar) You Stud Muffins leaving? I'll put you down for appointments in five weeks.

PATRICK

Five weeks!

JOE

Thanks, hot stuff.

ARLENE *(Writing in a Calendar)*

Sweet talker.

(ARLENE exits.)

PATRICK

I know you're trying to help, but if I leave I'll be in a panic for five weeks.

JOE

"He had been out among the dragons and they were not so hideous as he had imagined them."

PATRICK

What?

JOE

I'm a history teacher. My freshmen are reading the "Red Badge of Courage." The kid in the book gets thrown into battle. At first, he's scared but he becomes a fighter. Be a fighter.

PATRICK

(PATRICK sits down.) I'm a fighter.

JOE

Fighters aren't afraid to go to Cubs games... Would your mom not want you to go?

PATRICK

That wouldn't matter.

JOE

It's a beautiful day... Morgan is starting, which means Meyers will probably get in. He might hit another fan. You don't want to miss that!... Don't you want to do one cool important thing before you die? *(Pause)*... I know several positive women who will be helping me with this project. Several very attractive positive women... I'd love to introduce you.

PATRICK

... Game starts at 1:20?

JOE

Yup.

PATRICK

I'm in.

JOE

Great.

PATRICK

(Packing up) So, you have two tickets to the game?

JOE

No, but we can scalp them outside Murphy's.

PATRICK

Scalp them? Isn't that illegal?

JOE

Who's the pansy here? *(JOE notices PATRICK has difficulty with his leg.)* Ouch. Is it your knee?

PATRICK

And ankles...

JOE

Are you going to be able to go?

PATRICK

A little walking is ok. Lots of standing isn't so great. But sitting, now that's my specialty.

JOE

You can sit while I scalp the tickets.

PATRICK

(As they walk out). Cool. I don't know if I can stay for the whole game. I have an appointment later.

JOE

With who?

PATRICK

Jeopardy.

JOE

Geez.

PATRICK

(As they exit.) Tournament of Champions!

(End of scene)

Act 1Scene 3

SETTING: *Sheraton Hotel bar, downtown Chicago. August 1995, Midnight.*

AT RISE: *JOE, dressed as Mary Ann from Gilligan's Island, sits at a table. PATRICK, dressed as Gilligan, enters. He sings the last line of the song.*

PATRICK

The professor and Mary Ann, here on Gilligan's Isle! (*PATRICK sits.*)

JOE

Where is she? We need shots.

PATRICK

Shots?! I can't, I'm still drunk from last night. I was so drunk I fell asleep with honey roasted peanuts in my mouth. (*JOE laughs*) When I woke up I thought my teeth were falling out.

JOE

I'm glad to see that you've finally gotten your drinking out of control.

PATRICK

I was afraid my liver was getting soft.

JOE

You WANT your liver soft, moron. You're really cutting loose; you haven't mentioned your T-cells all week.

PATRICK (raising his beer)

Life is to be lived...It's cool being undercover, like the CIA. (*Looking at waitress*) Do you think she recognized us?

JOE

No, she's too busy.

PATRICK

How did you find out she works here?

JOE

Wasn't easy, patient confidentiality. Lucky for you Arlene loves my ass. Thanks for taking me to Trudi's party tonight.

PATRICK

It's the least I could do. You organize all the games we go to.

JOE

I've never been to a costume party on a yacht before.

PATRICK

It wasn't a yacht, just a big sailboat. How did you get a costume so fast?

JOE

The top is from a thrift store, then I put ponytails in one of my Cher wigs.

PATRICK

One of your Cher wigs? What do you mean one of your Cher wigs?

JOE

You don't have a Cher wig?

PATRICK

No. Why, do you?

JOE

I'm Cher every Halloween.

PATRICK

The more I know you, the more I am afraid of you.

JOE

I'll let you in on a little secret. There are two types of gay men in the world: those who want to be Madonna and those who want to be Cher.

PATRICK

What's the difference?

JOE

An academy award.

(MARIE, their waitress, comes to the table. She is pleasant, energized. She wears a flower in her hair.)

MARIE

Mary Ann, Gilligan, you look like you need another round!

JOE

Lovey, you read my mind. Two more beers and we'd like to order some shots.

MARIE

You made it off the island, celebrate, right?

JOE

Precisely. We would like three Buttery Nipples. Do you like Buttery Nipples?

MARIE

Oh yeah, smooth.

JOE

One for me, one for Bob Denver, and Bob would like to buy you one.

MARIE

How thoughtful, but I can't drink on the job. I'll bring the third shot anyway, you manly men can arm wrestle for it. Be back in a flash.

JOE (calling after her)

What's your name?

MARIE

Ginger.

(MARIE exits.)

PATRICK

Buttery Nipple? Buttery Nipple?! I can't believe you said that! Right in front of her!

JOE

When she comes back I'm telling her you need a Screaming Orgasm.

PATRICK

No! Oh god! This is so much fun!

JOE

This whole night has been fun! Your mom and Trudi are a riot! Have you asked them if the Women's Board will do my project?

PATRICK

Have you even decided which one you want to do?

JOE

I'll do whatever one the Board wants. Their support would be so balls out.

PATRICK

They're both great ideas. But they're both kind of big, NASA like projects. Don't you think?

JOE

“Make no small plans”; especially with our prospects.

PATRICK

Yeah, but a magazine? You’ll have to hire a whole staff, get it written, put in perfume samples, that could take forever. And housing, you’re probably talking years before people move in. Since we don’t know how long we’ll be around...Shouldn’t we do something simpler that we can do sooner rather than later?

JOE

You said “we”, I like it. What’s been going on in that overly idle mind of yours?

PATRICK

Let’s just tell it like it is! Having a strong sex drive is healthy!

JOE (*Mock Surprised*)

It is?

PATRICK

Yes, my therapist says so. And you know who’s having the most sex? Teenagers! I’m lying there watching TV and they’re all getting laid, all of them! 90210, Party of Five, even the girls on Full House have boyfriends! What we should do is create like a safe sex thing for high school kids. Don’t you think?

JOE

Would your mom and Trudi support that?

PATRICK

Honestly? They feel so sorry for me they’d support anything I was into.

JOE

Really...I bet I could create a program that would educate kids and not freak out adults. I know I could...Homos start blossoming in high school, they need to be educated. All kids do. We can hire a PR firm and get the media involved, they’ll eat it up.

PATRICK

The media?! You want to get the media involved?!

JOE

Yeah. Our stories will make it more powerful.

(MARIE brings their drinks.)

MARIE

Here you go, beers for the “guys”, and three very rich, slippery, Buttery Nipples.

JOE

You sure you can't do a quick shot?

MARIE

Positive. And besides, I want Gilligan to have my nipple.

PATRICK

Thanks.

JOE

It's almost quitting time, got any plans?

MARIE

Sorry, I'm all booked up.

JOE

Boyfriend?

MARIE

It's policy that we not fraternize with customers. My manager doesn't like it. Thanks for the offer but I got a good book at home.

PATRICK

So, you're all booked up by a good book?

MARIE

...Right. Almost last call, why don't I put in another round for you boys, up for it?

PATRICK

We're always up for it.

(A WAITER comes up to MARIE.)

WAITER

Hey foul mouth, this table's in my section. I have expensive dental work!

MARIE

You were swamped.

WAITER

That's because I do my side work. If you did yours you wouldn't have time to be a table hog. The napkin holders are empty.

MARIE

I heard you took a call for me. My real estate guy?

WAITER

Brian told you to stop getting personal calls at work.

MARIE

What did he say?

WAITER

He can get ya in to see another studio tomorrow.

MARIE (Takes note)

Awesome. What'll it be castaways, two more beers?

WAITER

And your sister Linda called. *(Holds up a note)*

MARIE

Shut up! My sister Linda?! *(Reaching for the note she knocks JOE's beer into his lap. JOE hops up.)*

WAITER

Look what you did! You ruined his outfit!

MARIE (Noticing)

Damn it! I am so sorry! *(Tries to dry JOE off)*

WAITER

It's cause you're a table hog. Table hog!

JOE

Calm down mad dog, I'm fine. *(WAITER exits)* Don't worry about it.

MARIE

Thanks, you're nice.

JOE

...Your sister Linda, huh? Don't you hate it when your family tracks you down?

MARIE

This last round's on me. I should settle up your tab before it gets too crazy.

PATRICK

Sure. *(PATRICK gives her a big bill)* Here, this ought to cover it. Keep the change.

MARIE (Takes the money)

Wow, thanks little buddy. I'll be back with your beers.

(MARIE exits.)

JOE

Big tipper. Your mom gave you that money, didn't she?

PATRICK

Yeah...She seems nice...sorta like us. Maybe she did get it from an operation.

JOE

Or maybe she used to be a hooker.

PATRICK

A hooker?! No! Why do you say that? She doesn't seem like a hooker.

JOE

Which means she was probably a good hooker. Everyone didn't grow up like us...

PATRICK

All I want is one beautiful buxom HIV positive babe. Is that asking so much?

JOE

I've been working my contacts. One positive woman moved away, another. . .

PATRICK

What about Holly? Wasn't there a Holly?

JOE

Yeah, sweet girl, infected by her boyfriend.

PATRICK

Perfect. What about her?

JOE

She died.

PATRICK

Oh, well, that got rid of my erection...My life is futile and pathetic

JOE

No, it's not. You came up with a brilliant idea tonight! You're turning into Captain Hemo...I'm starting to be able to see this...We'll start at St. Benedicts, a catholic school, which will REALLY give the media an angle.

PATRICK

The media? You'd go public at school?

JOE

Hell yeah! We're starting a movement!

PATRICK

You didn't seem so comfortable at the party when Coach Riley saw you in that get up.

JOE

I didn't know he'd be there. He doesn't like me. He walked into the Teacher's Lounge when the theater teacher was flirting with me.

PATRICK

The theater teacher is gay?

JOE

I found it shocking too. But I've handled his type before. Just because I'm wearing a soiled skirt does not mean I am not a tough guy... One time, I beat up two guys at once.

PATRICK

You did? When?

JOE

I was coaching baseball at my old high school. Two punks I went to school with showed up at practice and started to heckle me. I went after them with a baseball bat. Bam! Missed bashing one guy's head in by this much. Broke his collar bone.

PATRICK

Really? Wow, I've never been in a fight... Why were they heckling you?

JOE

I was a big deal in high school. They were probably psyched when they found out.

PATRICK

Found out?

JOE

They were calling me sissy, homo, faggot, that sort of thing...

PATRICK

Really?...

JOE

The glamour of being gay.

PATRICK

Right there in front of the kids? (*JOE nods*) What jerks. (*JOE nods. A pause.*) Joe, I'll talk to my mom and Trudi about the fundraiser.

JOE

Really? Oh man, that would be awesome! Do you think they'll do it?

PATRICK

Sure, they're the Mother Teresa types. They help everyone: lepers, baby seals, Cher impersonators...I want to help too but I can't...there's no way I can be public, about, you know.

JOE

I know. I get it.

PATRICK

I could never speak in front of a big group of people anyway, and certainly not about this.

JOE

Don't worry about it.

PATRICK

I definitely want to do behind the scenes stuff though.

JOE

Great. We are going to do this! Nights like tonight make you forget how things are going to end. Tonight, I feel like I can change the world.

(MARIE comes to the table with their drinks.)

PATRICK

I just want to get laid. *(PATRICK just notices her.)* Hi.

MARIE

Hi. Here you go gentlemen. Thank you for the VERY generous tip...But ah, I really need this job so I would appreciate it if my "clinic buddies" went somewhere else to party. I don't want to see you in here again. Have a nice evening.

(MARIE exits. End of Scene)

Act IScene 4

SETTING: *Hallway outside St. Benedict's gym. The "Sports Hall of Fame" hangs on the wall. August, 1995.*

AT RISE: *PATRICK sits, reading his Theodore Roosevelt book. He has a back pack and a beach towel. HELEN stands behind him, her hand gently rubbing his shoulder. HELEN wears her swimsuit, shorts and carries a big bag. COACH RILEY enters with his playbook*

HELEN

Hello Coach Riley.

COACH RILEY

Hello there. The Women's Board doing water aerobics again?

HELEN

Our annual attempt to get in shape. Thanks for letting us use the school's pool.

COACH RILEY

Our pool is your pool.

HELEN

And Coach, I just heard about your niece, I am so sorry.

COACH RILEY

Thanks. *(Pause)* I can't really talk about it. When stuff happens to kids I get...*(Trails off)*

PATRICK

...Hey, uhm, can I have keys for two lockers? A friend and I are going in the pool too.

COACH RILEY

Sure, no problem. Be right back.

(COACH RILEY exits. PATRICK stands, paces.)

HELEN

How do you feel?

PATRICK

Same as I did five minutes ago. Where are they? Their meeting was this morning. Why haven't we heard from them?

HELEN

(Shrugs. HELEN takes out carrot sticks and holds them like cigarettes.)

Are you still nauseous?

(PATRICK nods yes)

Is it from the medicine or the beer?

(PATRICK Shrugs)

Let's say it's from the beer; that's more fun... You and Joe were out late again.

PATRICK

I told him it was for sure. Trudi has to do this.

HELEN

Sit. It's not good for you to be standing so much. You should eat something. How about...

(HELEN pulls pound cake from her bag, PATRICK doesn't see.)

some pound cake?

PATRICK

Pound cake? Gross.

(HELEN puts the pound cake back.)

HELEN

What do you have a taste for?

PATRICK

What do you have a taste for?

HELEN

A cigarette.

PATRICK

Don't even think about it.

HELEN

It's nice Joe is showing you water exercises for your joints. Where did he find them?

(PATRICK shrugs. HELEN pulls applesauce from her bag.) Want some applesauce?

PATRICK

Where would we get applesauce?

HELEN

That's not the question. If we had applesauce, would you like some?

PATRICK

No, crazy lady. I don't know why they had to talk about it. Why didn't she just say yes?

HELEN

It might not be up to just Trudi.

PATRICK

I thought the Grand Pooh Bah got to choose the charity.

HELEN

Trudi told me Joe is gay, she has this thing called gaybuzzer...gay detector?

PATRICK

Gaydar?

HELEN

(HELEN touches her nose) I couldn't tell...What do your friends think of Joe?

PATRICK

I don't see the guys as much anymore...I know you've noticed.

HELEN

I'm sorry...Has there been a falling out or something?

PATRICK

They're busy. Work, girls.

HELEN

You could still go out with them. I'm sure they'd like you to tag along.

PATRICK

I don't want to tag along.

HELEN

...Have you met Joe's friends?

PATRICK

Doesn't seem to have many.

HELEN

What about his parents, what do they do?

PATRICK

Circus clowns.

HELEN

That's nice...C'mon, throw me a bone. Give me one interesting detail about his family.

PATRICK

His mom got crushed to death in a car accident right by their house.

HELEN

What?! Good lord, how awful...What a thing to tell me.

PATRICK

You asked. On Wednesday nights, she played cards with friends at a pub. One night it was really icy...

HELEN

How old was she?

PATRICK

I don't know.

HELEN

Oh...that's so sad...Had she been drinking?

PATRICK

I don't know. I didn't ask....Does it matter?

HELEN

No, no, you said pub and...It's just very sad...What about his father?

PATRICK

Joe just said his dad doesn't get it. And that he sounds like the *Lucky Charms* guy, guess he was born in Ireland. (*Looks at his watch*) Damn it! Sorry, Mom.

HELEN

(*Waves indicating she doesn't care that he swore.*) What? What?

PATRICK

I have to eat an hour before I take my medication. I forgot!

HELEN

Wait! If you could have anything in the world to eat right now what would it be?

PATRICK

I don't know... peanut butter.

HELEN

(*Pulls a peanut butter sandwich out of her bag.*) Voila!

PATRICK

A peanut butter sandwich? (*HELEN nods. PATRICK takes the sandwich and eats.*)
I know I can be a pain in the ass sometimes.

HELEN

Sometimes?

PATRICK

You carry around a peanut butter sandwich just in case I want one? It's like I'm three. Do you have my sipee cup in there too?...How about a Playboy?

HELEN

I knew it. I knew you would bring it up. It's not me, it's Trudi, it's all Trudi. She said the thought of you limping down to 7-11 was too much for her to bear.

(*COACH RILEY enters.*)

Trudi says you're her hero.

COACH RILEY

He's my hero too. Your mug should be on a box of Wheaties.

PATRICK

I won the gold medal in the sleeping and drooling competition.

COACH RILEY

Here are your keys. Football team is in there, summer practice. (*Boys rough housing noise from locker room.*) They're a little squirrely. Ignore them. (*A louder rough housing noise with a crash.*) I'll be right back. (*COACH RILEY exits.*)

PATRICK

Joe's never late. Is Trudi usually late?

HELEN

Trudi is always late.

TRUDI (Offstage)

You mean I'm always fashionably late! Helen, I'm in love! Hiya Hon (*Air kisses HELEN*) Hiya Hon (*Air kisses PATRICK.*) I have fallen in love with the most charming, noble, compassionate young man I have ever met, present company excluded.

HELEN

You're already married Trudi.

TRUDI

I'll be a bigamist. You know I love my Howard Bear, but this adorable boy has simply swept me off my feet! What's a girl to do? Maybe he could just live with us...

PATRICK

Are you talking about Joe?

TRUDI

Yes, I could eat him up with two scoops of ice cream.

PATRICK

Are you going to do the Prevention Project?

TRUDI

Well, we talked about it over lunch at the Four Seasons.

HELEN

You had lunch at the Four Seasons? Why were you at the Four Seasons?

TRUDI

I get so tired of the Drake. I just love being able to say that. I get so tired of the Drake. I had “a life moment.” Simply had to take him to the Four Seasons.

HELEN

“A life moment”, give me details.

TRUDI

We had a connection. Immediately. When I think of what he’s going through, and all he wants to do is help other people. I mean...*(Gets choked up)* Here’s my Prince Charming. He was parking my carriage.

JOE (Entering)

Hey everybody.

PATRICK

You two spent the whole day together?

TRUDI

We had the most balls out day, from the moment I opened my front door. What’s the first thing he says to me? *(TRUDI looks at JOE)*.

JOE

I love your...

JOE

Petúnias..

TRUDI

Petúnias!

TRUDI

Could I receive a better compliment?

HELEN

That would be tops.

TRUDI

Liz Winthrop has been bad-mouthing my petunias. She doesn't like me because I'm not a "pure bred". Then, Joe changed all the light bulbs in my house.

JOE

The ladder was in the foyer. I could see what she was doing.

TRUDI

I want you to move in! I do! You could have the room overlooking the pool! He has a reflex for kindness. He screwed in eleven light bulbs, I had to do something for him!

JOE

At first, she wanted to pay for my drugs!

TRUDI

We both had to go to Walgreens, Howard's traveling, I had to pick up his Beano.

JOE

They wouldn't take my credit card. It was so embarrassing.

TRUDI

I insisted on paying for them because, you know (*whispering*) I knew what they were probably for.

JOE

She knows about the hiv (*says it like a word. PATRICK and HELEN look to see if anybody heard*). Sorry, right. But I get paid Friday. I'm fine.

TRUDI

See, noble. So, I took him to the Four Seasons.

PATRICK

What about the Prevention Project?!

TRUDI

Joe told me about it at lunch. You are so articulate. He talked about the first person he ever saw with AIDS, this boy living with one of his friends. Joe could you...(*trails off emotionally*)

JOE

He was living with my friend, Lewis. I walked into this cramped old apartment and there was this old guy staring at the TV, glazed look on his face. Thin, hair falling out, sores on his face. He looked ninety...he was nineteen. Alfred Goodwin, from Lancaster Missouri.

This quaint little river town that sold antiques. “Had the perfect breeze, great place to grow old.” He loved talking about it. He had to leave home when he was fourteen.

TRUDI

Alfred’s family had kicked him out because he was different! So, when he got sick, this other teenager, Lewis, had to take care of him. Makes me so sad...

JOE

Felt like I had to cheer her up. So, I...

TRUDI

Took me on a tour of my old South side neighborhood! We’re both south side Irish! Isn’t that fun! (*TRUDI claps*) He still lives on the south side, I’m so jealous.

JOE

We grew up in the same type of bungalow, three blocks away. Drove all over the old neighborhood.

TRUDI

His old ball field; my old playing field – The Pepper Mill Lounge. We topped it off with a strawberry shake from Top Notch, on 95th. One shake, two straws. What a day....

PATRICK

Did you two make out at some point? Good grief... What about the fundraiser?!

(COACH RILEY enters.)

TRUDI

Hi, Coach Riley.

COACH RILEY

Hey there pretty little lady.

TRUDI

I played bridge with your mother Joan at the club last weekend. She cheats.

COACH RILEY

Oh, well...

TRUDI

It was wonderful; we won every hand.

PATRICK

Trudi, the fundraiser?

TRUDI

Well, if the girls go for it, I think we should go all out and do – gay bingo! Have you heard of it? Gay Bingo! It's so much fun! Gay bingo!

PATRICK

(Concerned) Gay Bingo?

HELEN

(Changing the subject.) Joe, thanks for showing Patrick these exercises. Trudi, we gotta go. See you boys on the other side.

TRUDI

Joe's going to see me in my bathing suit? The end of another beautiful relationship. Joe, you DO need to stay with Howard and me when the weather gets bad. I'm serious; you live too far away. We're right next to school, have a huge guest bed room. I'll even get you satin sheets.

(HELEN and TRUDI exit into the girls' locker room.)

PATRICK

You were really working it today.

JOE

Didn't have to, she's so nice.

(PATRICK and JOE head towards the Boy's Locker Room.)

COACH RILEY

Hey, guys, ah...Hold up a minute. Let the football team clear out.

PATRICK

Why?

COACH RILEY

...They're all rowdy in there. It should only take a couple minutes.

PATRICK

It's a big locker room, Coach.

(PATRICK and JOE move towards the locker room. COACH moves in front of them.)

COACH RILEY

Just wait a few...They're rough housing. It's all wet and slippery, Patrick. Come on, just wait.

PATRICK (Sitting.)

Okay.

JOE

Cool. I'll meet you in there.

COACH RILEY

Aren't you going to wait for Patrick?

PATRICK

No, you go ahead.

COACH RILEY

Just wait.

JOE

You don't want me to go in there. Why? *(No response)* Why don't you want me to go in there?

COACH RILEY

That's not what I said.

JOE

No, but that's the truth...I'm going in there.

COACH RILEY

Just wait. Wait until they clear out.

JOE

This is bull. This is such bull!

(JOE moves to go into the locker room. COACH RILEY moves in front of him.)

PATRICK

What are you doing, Coach?

COACH RILEY (To JOE)

You have to wait.

PATRICK

Why?

COACH RILEY

Because there are kids in there.

JOE

Get out of my way.

COACH RILEY (*Not moving*)

You're not going in.

JOE

Get the hell out of my way!

COACH RILEY

You're not going in until they're dressed and out.

(JOE tries to go around COACH RILEY. COACH RILEY physically stops him. JOE and COACH RILEY start to shove each other. As it escalates TRUDI enters.)

TRUDI

(Sees the fight; intervenes.) Hey, hey, hey, hey...stop it! What's going on?

PATRICK

Coach won't let Joe into the locker room.

JOE

Because I'm a faggot.

TRUDI

Coach?

COACH RILEY

There are kids in there. I don't want him in there.

TRUDI

Joe would never hurt anybody.

JOE

I can't believe I'm even hearing this.

TRUDI

You cannot treat him like this. This man is my friend.

COACH RILEY

Why am I the only one who gets this? *(After a few beats.)* Fine. Fine. But I'm going to be in there the whole time.

(COACH RILEY exits into the boys' locker room. JOE storms into the locker room. PATRICK follows. TRUDI is alone. End of Scene)

Act IScene 5

SETTING: *Office of Therapist #1, August 1995*

AT RISE: *MARIE is at his office.*

THERAPIST 1

This is a nice restaurant.

MARIE

Oh god, here we go. *(Sigh)* Ok.

THERAPIST 1

Chinese?

MARIE

Chinese...

THERAPIST 1

It's great to be home for a visit.

MARIE

So, what are you going to get?

THERAPIST 1

Ah...Egg Fu Yung.

MARIE

My sister hates Egg Fu Yung. Thinks it's crap.

THERAPIST 1

Kung Pow Chicken?

MARIE

I get chicken. Sweet and Sour Pork.

THERAPIST 1

Got it.

(THERAPIST 1 takes out a note pad and writes in it.)

MARIE

Hey, hey, hey!...What are you doing?

THERAPIST 1

I keep notes on all my patients.

MARIE

I am not one of your patients. I just came to your crappy office to practice. Put it away!

THERAPIST 1

(THERAPIST 1 puts the note pad away.) Sorry. Ready to try again?

MARIE

(Sigh) Ok...It's great you're home for a visit. So, what are you going to get?

THERAPIST 1

Sweet and Sour Pork. What about you?

MARIE

Cashew Chicken, I'm HIV positive...I was thinking rip it off like a band-aid...I haven't seen her in six years, when she finds out what an idiot I am the evening will be over...I don't want to slit my wrists on an empty stomach.

THERAPIST 1

What about at the end of the meal?

MARIE

(Sigh) Ok. Linda, I'm picking up the check. It's my treat because I'm HIV positive... This sucks! I can't tell her! There's no way I can go out with Linda tonight.

THERAPIST 1

What about warming her up a little? Start with something like, "Linda, I have something I want to talk to you about."

MARIE

I tried that when I practiced alone. But if there's an intro I...I start crying...I don't want to cry! Linda's going back to California tomorrow! Tonight's my last chance! I can't. I can't! This is crap! Coming to a shrink was a stupid idea. Taking that HIV test was an even stupider idea!

THERAPIST 1

...You're close to your sister Linda?

MARIE

You're nosey....Was; six years ago.

THERAPIST 1

And Linda's in town? Staying at your Mother's? (*MARIE nods begrudgingly*) What's your mother like?

MARIE

I didn't come here to talk about that psycho. I came here to practice saying it with someone. That's all. That's what I'm paying you for. Crap!....Other people who come here, they let you just ask them questions?

THERAPIST 1

Sometimes...Mostly they talk to me.

MARIE

About how crazy they are?

THERAPIST 1

More or less.

MARIE

Well I'm not crazy. I just came here to practice telling my sister.

THERAPIST 1

Makes sense. Not an easy thing to tell someone...How did you get my name and number? (*No response*) A friend? (*No response*) Phone book? (*No response*) Just walking by?

MARIE

...Arlene...at the clinic.

THERAPIST 1

So, you asked Arlene for a therapist?

MARIE

Isn't that what I just said? Crap!

THERAPIST 1

I'll have to remember to thank Arlene.

MARIE

People pay you to be a smart ass?

THERAPIST 1

No. People pay me to help them. But in order for me to do that they usually have to talk to me.

MARIE

This is weird. I'm leaving.

THERAPIST 1

Don't leave.

MARIE

I'll still pay you. I can afford this!

THERAPIST 1

I'm sure. I'm not worried about that. You still have forty minutes. Please.

MARIE

...I don't want to sit here and talk about the crap in my life.

THERAPIST 1

We don't have to do that... We can talk about what's good in your life. You seem like a sharp person...like you have a lot on the ball.

MARIE

I make good money, pretty good anyway.

THERAPIST 1

You must, to afford me.

MARIE

Yeah right...I like to swear. Got a problem with that?

THERAPIST 1

Hell no.

MARIE

(Long pause) I'm looking to buy a condo.

THERAPIST 1

Oh yeah?

MARIE

In six months, I should be able to scrape together a small down payment. I got my eye on this studio in Edgewater Tower. 37th Floor. When I buy it, I'm going to keep it spotlessly clean.

THERAPIST 1

Tired of renting?

MARIE

That's where I want them to find my body.

THERAPIST 1

Your body?

MARIE

I want my mother to find my body in a spotlessly clean condo with an incredible view.

THERAPIST 1

...Is that something you think about often?

MARIE

(Pause) Cool your jets Mr. Shrink. I'm yanking your chain.

THERAPIST 1

Oh. Ok. *(Pause. Puts his hand in his pocket.)*

MARIE

Don't reach for the pen.

THERAPIST 1

No, no...Ah...Anything else going on?

MARIE

...I went to the 95th, the restaurant on top of the Hancock a couple weeks ago.

THERAPIST 1

Oh, very nice. I've never been.

MARIE

You should go. The food is good but the view, the view is incredible. When it's clear you can see all the way across to Michigan. I went there at night though. Looking at all the lights was cool. Even the steel mills in Gary sparkled, which is something cause they stink...like crap.

THERAPIST 1

...Who did you go with?

MARIE

Nobody, myself. I used to go with the Trader all the time.

THERAPIST 1

The Trader?

MARIE

Jesse. He works at the Board of Trade. When he'd have a good day we'd go there to celebrate...

THERAPIST 1

Jesse is your boyfriend?

MARIE

No. He's a jack ass. He was my boyfriend. Big man from the Board of Trade.

THERAPIST 1

Why isn't he your boyfriend anymore?

MARIE

He's the only person I've told that I'm positive. You do the math.

THERAPIST 1

...Does your sister Linda know Jesse?

MARIE

She hated him. We had a big fight about it. Then she moved to California. Jesse dumped me when I told him I had HIV. Now I hate sex! Sex sucks!...I told Jesse cause I wanted to make sure he didn't get it, cause he treated me so well...I really loved him. Turns out Linda was right about him.

THERAPIST 1

Wow. That must've been rough. How long were you together? (*Long pause. No response*) Are you yankin my chain again?

MARIE

No, I'm not yankin your chain! Crap! I tell you about my life and you get all sarcastic!

THERAPIST 1

I'm sorry I...

MARIE

Cool it. I'm yankin your chain...Bet you're dying to touch your pen now.

THERAPIST 1

...Ok...How did you meet Jesse?

MARIE

You ask a lot of questions.

THERAPIST 1

Occupational hazard.

MARIE

I gotta go. Ninety bucks, right? (*She takes out ninety dollars*).

THERAPIST 1

What about talking to Linda? I feel like you should tell her you're positive. You need someone in your corner.

MARIE

Linda's perfect, you know the type, goes to church regular. Telling her would be stupid. I'm not going to do it.

THERAPIST 1

I think it would be good for you to have somebody to talk to.

MARIE

Really, trying to drum up some business for yourself? I gotta save my money for my condo.

THERAPIST 1

I wasn't trying to...

MARIE

Right, right...I haven't told anybody else for five years. Why start now?

THERAPIST 1

You haven't told anybody you're positive?

MARIE

People pay you to repeat things?

THERAPIST 1

...Linda coming back to town again?

MARIE

...Maybe for Easter, that's what my Mom said on my machine...If they haven't found my body by then.

THERAPIST 1

I think you should work towards telling her. You don't have to see me. Just sounds like she'd be a good person to tell.

MARIE

Maybe...Maybe I'll come back before her visit and we can play pretend again.

THERAPIST 1

If that's what you want...I keep a light schedule in March so I can enjoy Lent.

MARIE

I said maybe...You want to know how I got HIV?

THERAPIST 1

Ok.

MARIE

I bet you do. (*MARIE starts to exit*) You can touch your pen now.

(*MARIE exits. End of Scene*)

Act 1Scene 6

SETTING: Sun Room at HELEN and PATRICK'S house. The Friday before Labor Day. Noon.

AT RISE: JOE listens to music as he paints. HELEN enters with a lunch tray. She sets the tray on a table and turns down the music.

HELEN

Break time, lunch is ready.

JOE

Oh, wow, you didn't have to do that. No crusts, I love it.

HELEN

You're painting my sun room, it's the least I can do. The color you picked is so vibrant... it's so not me. I am going to pay you for this.

JOE

No, I refuse to take...

HELEN

Joe, I insist.

JOE

Ok. I'm going to finish it today. I want to finish it before school starts Tuesday.

HELEN

I only mentioned I needed this room painted once, and here you are...

JOE

Why didn't you go to the Board Meeting this morning?

HELEN

I didn't like the sweet rolls Trudi was bringing. *(Pause)* I'm watching my grandkids.
(HELEN gestures to the other room.)

JOE

Trudi is pitching my project today. Have you heard from her?

HELEN

No.

JOE

Probably not a good sign.

(Looks at his watch.)

It's been over for a while. I had a feeling they wouldn't go for it.

HELEN

Why not?

JOE

My run in with Coach Riley got around....The fundraiser doesn't have to be affiliated with the school.

HELEN

What about an AIDS organization in the city?

JOE

They're over extended. All I need is the support of people with money. I'd do all the work, throw it at a VFW Hall or . . .

HELEN

(Interrupting him.)

Joe, you need to eat. Sit. Eat. Please. *(He does.)* I don't know what my problem is. I can't believe I haven't thanked you for getting Patrick that job at Blockbuster. Working in that office was a disaster, the typing gave him elbow bleeds...He took a break when his Dad got cancer...Anyway, thank you.

JOE

No problem. Lewis, my most endearing old boyfriend, was glad to help. I explained Patrick's situation, Lewis said Patrick can just sit behind the counter and ring people up. It's perfect, Patrick's seen every movie ever made.

HELEN

Three times...Also, thank you for respecting Patrick's privacy in regards to your project. He doesn't need more challenges. With HIV, people, you know, make associations, assumptions...

JOE

Oh, I know.

HELEN

I don't mean to offend you.

JOE

You didn't. You're being honest.

HELEN

Patrick was so grumpy this morning... You've been good for him. You understand things I can't.

JOE

You take great care of him.

HELEN

Who takes care of you?

JOE

I do.

HELEN

Can't be easy.

JOE

It's good when you know you can take care of yourself.

HELEN

Patrick said you lost your mom... What was she like?

JOE

Sweet. You know, typical mom. Funny, self-deprecating. She would take us to the beach a lot; let me and my brother run around like wild men. You have beautiful beaches up here. Do you go much?

HELEN

I haven't been to the beach since Patrick was little.

JOE

You have grandkids; you should go.

HELEN

I should . . . What about your dad, Joe? Do you see him?

JOE

No.

HELEN

Not at all?

JOE

No.

HELEN

That just seems like such a shame. Isn't there anyway you two can...mend fences?

JOE

No...It's the gay thing.

HELEN

I'm sure it's difficult...I'm no expert but other parents and children, they find a common ground.

JOE

Yeah, I don't think that's going to happen.

HELEN

Why not?

JOE

My dad won't acknowledge who I am. He pities me.

HELEN

Why do you say that?

JOE

If you saw his face when I told him I was gay you'd understand. Afterwards, he treated me like I was sick, like one of his corporal works of mercy.

HELEN

Corporal works of mercy?

JOE

Doing something physical to help people; feeding the poor, visiting the sick.

HELEN

...It's none of my business, but I think you should give your dad another chance. There I said it...How old were you when your mom died?

JOE

Seventeen.

HELEN

So young. You must miss her.

JOE

I do . . .But I got people like you making me sandwiches with no crust so . . .

HELEN

That's what I do. Now about this Blockbuster. It's terrific, but I'm concerned full time will be too much. Who decides his hours?

PATRICK

(Enters wearing beach attire and sweat pants.)

Not Patrick's mom. That's for sure.

HELEN

We'll see. I made some lunch.

PATRICK

Leave us alone. Joe and I need to talk.

HELEN *(exiting)*

I'm thinking about going to get ice cream!

JOE

You were kind of short.

PATRICK

She walked in on me in the bathroom this morning. "Would you like blueberries or strawberries on your pancakes?" I was like, get the hell out of here! Arlene's going home to New York for a month...I should get my T-cells before she goes.

JOE

Call her. We have time before we meet Frank and his HIV positive lady friend at the beach.

PATRICK

Why are we meeting them at the beach?

JOE

I love the beach.

PATRICK

Did you find out anything about her?

JOE

No. Frank and I have been trading messages. Her name's Meryl.

PATRICK

Meryl? Meryl? It is a woman? *(JOE nods.)* We should leave. I want to get there early.

JOE

We don't need to get there two hours early.

PATRICK

I want to get there early to get a spot on the grass under a tree.

JOE

Why?

PATRICK

You know why. With the medicine, I can't be in the sun too long.

JOE

Wear sunblock.

PATRICK

I will, but if I'm too hot I'll sweat. Then the sun block runs into my eyes and I start tearing up. I don't want to be crying when I meet...Meryl. We need to leave now.

JOE

Sit. We're not leaving now...This is about calling Arlene.

PATRICK

If I call Arlene and my T-cells are bad I'll be too freaked out to meet Meryl. On the other hand, if I don't get them today, I'll be freaked out for a month. God, I hate my choices.

JOE

Have another nurse give them to you.

PATRICK

Arlene's the only one I feel comfortable freaking out with. Let's go. If we go now the decision will be out of my hands.

JOE

Sit. We're not going now. I have to finish painting.

PATRICK

You can do that later. If we don't leave, I'll obsess.

JOE

You're already obsessing.

PATRICK

I'll obsess more.

HELEN

(Entering.)

Boys, I have great news. I called Trudi to find out about the board meeting. She gave a great pitch on your behalf Joe. And guess what? They are going to do the AIDS Prevention Project.

JOE

What? That's unbelievable! Are you sure?

HELEN

Positive. Trudi told them she would personally bring in seventy-five percent of the bingo prizes. That got their attention. Nobody likes groveling for prizes.

JOE

I can help her grovel.

PATRICK

Me too. It's about time we got this thing going.

HELEN

I'm really happy for you, Joe. It looks like you're on your way. I'm going to drop the girls off and then I'm going get us some ice cream!

(HELEN exits.)

JOE

This is so incredible! It's fate! It's totally fate, all because I met you.

PATRICK

No big deal. Let's go to the beach.

JOE

No, it's two hours from now. We've got good karma. Call Arlene.

PATRICK

You're right, I should...But I can't. I can't. Come on, let's go, please?

(JOE picks up the phone and starts dialing.)

What are you doing? What are you doing?

JOE

Don't let lab stats run your life....Hello, is Arlene there?

PATRICK

No, you're not. Stop it Joe! I don't have my good luck charm!

JOE

Better get it. Fast.

(Lights up on ARLENE answering the phone at the clinic.)

ARLENE

This is Arlene.

(Looking at a chart, talking to someone off stage.)

Why did he check qualitative? He wants quantitative.

JOE

Hi Arlene! It's Joe Fallon.

PATRICK

Oh my god.

(PATRICK exits the room quickly.)

ARLENE

Hiya, Hot Stuff, what's going on?

(Talking to someone off stage.)

He rushes; he needs to pay more attention to what he is doing.

JOE

I'm calling for Patrick O'Donnell's T-cells.

ARLENE

Silly question, why isn't he calling?

JOE

He went to get his dad's hunting cap.

ARLENE

Well that clears that up.

(Talking to someone off stage.)

Like I have time to double check all his work. Do you want your results, Joe?

JOE

Are they back already?...I was just in there.

ARLENE *(looking)*

I saw your file here. I should give them to you. It will save time.

JOE

...Sure.

ARLENE (*looking at file*)

Huh...they're down, Joe, a lot....Last time they were 317, now they're 47....Joe?

JOE

47? That's only two numbers... There have always been three numbers.

ARLENE

This may be a fluke. I'm going to show these to Dr. Stengle. How are you feeling?

JOE

Fine. Great... What am I supposed to do?

ARLENE

Try not to worry. Some people have a low count then shoot right back up again. And a new drug cocktail is coming out soon, looks very promising.

(ARLENE speaks to someone new off stage.)

No, do not lower your jeans. I do not want to see your lesion. This is not an examining room. Joe, can you hold on for a moment?

JOE

Sure.

(ARLENE exits. JOE sets the phone down. He starts painting. PATRICK enters wearing his dad's hunting cap.)

PATRICK

Is Arlene still on the phone?

JOE

(Not turning around.)

Yeah.

PATRICK

(Picks up the phone.)

Hello, Arlene?

ARLENE (*Back on the phone.*)

Patrick, you wanted your T-cells?

PATRICK

Right.

ARLENE

I have them right here. Your T-cells are 557.

PATRICK

557? That's just 9 more than last time.

ARLENE

So it is. Patrick, I have to run. We're a little heavy on dementia here today. Tell Joe I'll have someone call him on Tuesday, I'll be out of town.

PATRICK

Good luck with your Grandmother's hip replacement.

ARLENE

Should be divine. See you when I get back, Bubbula. Bye.

(Lights down on ARLENE. PATRICK hangs up).

PATRICK

Arlene says someone will call you on Tuesday. What about?

JOE*(still painting)*

Panel discussion with the kids, I'm going to ask one of the doctors to be on it.

PATRICK

Nine more T-cells than last time. I got so anxious, now I'll have diarrhea for nothing. Life is good for another two months. Can we go? I'd still like to get a spot in the shade.

JOE

I'm painting.

PATRICK

You don't have to do that now. It can wait...C'mon, let's go...

JOE *(Painting.)*

Look, I can't go today. I have a lot more painting to do. The trim, and the whole thing needs another coat.

PATRICK

What? You have to go. I don't know these people. You have to! Forget about painting.

JOE

I promised your mom I'd finish today.

PATRICK

Forget the painting...They're doing the Prevention Project. You don't have to do everything for everybody.

JOE

What does that mean?

PATRICK

You don't have to be "Mr. Nice Guy", doing everything for everybody. You got it so you can relax...I know it's one of the reasons you've been hanging out with me...It's ok.

JOE

I've been trying to help. Do you really think the only reason I've...Forget it; forget it.

(JOE paints.)

PATRICK

...I'm sorry...Let's forget it and go to the beach.

JOE

I'm not going.

PATRICK

You have to go Joe. You have to!

JOE

Stop whining! I'm not your mother...be a man and go by yourself.

PATRICK

I can't go by myself. I don't know these people. I'll be too nervous. I need your help. Why won't you help me?

JOE

Don't you ever get tired of being so pathetic? You always need so much help. Just because your mom wipes your ass doesn't mean I'm going to. Get out of here. I have work to do...Did you hear me? Get the hell out!

(Angry, JOE knocks over the lunch tray. PATRICK backs away. After a beat, JOE starts to clean up. PATRICK watches.)

PATRICK

Arlene gave you your T-cells.

JOE

(Starts to paint again.)

Yeah.

PATRICK

What were they?

JOE

47.

PATRICK

Oh my god. I'm sorry. What can I do?

JOE

Nothing... Things are going to start happening to me now.

PATRICK

They could go up. People's do.

JOE

I'm going to try and pull it together so we can go to the beach.

PATRICK

We're not going to the beach.

JOE

...I have to work harder now, faster and harder.

PATRICK

Maybe if you change medications...

JOE

Shut up. Just shut up.

(JOE turns up the music and paints. PATRICK sits awkwardly in silence.)

(End of Scene. End of Act I.)

Act IIScene 7

SETTING: *Over two months later. Two separate therapist's offices, November 1995.*

AT RISE: *MARIE'S therapist is THERAPIST #1, PATRICK'S is THERAPIST #2. MARIE taps her foot.*

THERAPIST 2

You seem a little down. (*PATRICK shrugs. Looks at his watch.*) We still have a few minutes.

THERAPIST 1

Didn't expect to hear from you until Spring.

MARIE

Thanks for agreeing to see me last minute. Sorry I got here so late. So...

THERAPISTS 1 & 2

How was Thanksgiving?

PATRICK

Thanksgiving sucked.

MARIE

Thanksgiving sucked.

MARIE

Linda called, I didn't pick up. She left two nice messages; I still can't talk to her.

PATRICK

My niece threw up all over my new orthopedic shoes

MARIE

And I refused to go to my mother's! I was alone, wasn't with anybody.

THERAPIST 2

Sorry.

THERAPIST 1

That would be tough.

PATRICK

Miss my dad. He would've made a joke, made it funny.

MARIE

Linda knows something's wrong. In her messages, she kept asking how I was doing.

PATRICK

"Now you don't have to worry about getting your new shoes dirty."

MARIE

I should just call her up. Tell her I'm positive tonight.

PATRICK

Let's talk about something else.

MARIE

But the thought of it makes me sick!...Distract me!

THERAPIST 1 & 2

What would you like to talk about?

PATRICK

Sex.

MARIE

Pills! I need pills! We don't have to start with that.

PATRICK (Trailing)

We don't have to talk about that.

THERAPIST 1 & 2

Tell me about your job.

PATRICK

I am now an Assistant Manager at Blockbuster.

MARIE

I waitress at the Sheraton Hotel. Work brings me back to pills though.

THERAPIST 2

That's Great! Women love management.

THERAPIST 1

How so?

PATRICK

So, I hear.

MARIE

I make SO much money there. I'm getting closer to that down payment. Just gotta work faster! Bought all this expensive furniture on my visa. But I'm afraid the Sheraton might fire me.

PATRICK

I have to get my act together.

MARIE

I have to get my act together.

THERAPIST 1

Sounds like (*picks up with Therapist 2*)

THERAPIST 1 & 2

You have your act together.

PATRICK

Hardly.

MARIE

Hardly.

MARIE

Threw a brick through my manager's windshield, he didn't know it was me.

PATRICK

My dad understood the sex thing.

MARIE

He keeps making these gross passes at me.

PATRICK

Ergo the playboys behind the furnace.

THERAPIST 1

Did you file a complaint?

THERAPIST 2

Your dad sounded cool.

MARIE

No, I can't risk losing that job.

PATRICK

Who wants to date someone who's dying?

MARIE

I just told my manager that I hate sex.

PATRICK

I finally met Meryl. Didn't know if I wanted to talk about it.

MARIE

But I don't want to talk about that!

PATRICK

My dad would've gotten a kick out of the story.

MARIE

My problem is I call into work sick even though I'm fine!

PATRICK

Over the past three months I was supposed to meet Meryl, what, like three times?

MARIE

I lie around my crappy apartment counting the leaves left on a tree outside my window.

PATRICK

And then when I do finally meet her...

MARIE

I got up to forty.

PATRICK

I find out she's sixty.

PATRICK
Sixty!

MARIE
Forty!

THERAPIST 1 & 2

That's getting up there.

MARIE

Counting leaves?! I mean, come on!

PATRICK

Joe didn't know her...

MARIE

I can tell you're thinking about the windshield.

PATRICK

But you would think it might've come up.

MARIE

I called in sick twice this week! Twice! I was fine!

PATRICK

Dad would've said, "Might have things in common, HIV, arthritis, Wheel of Fortune."

MARIE

But hell, last week I worked five double shifts!

PATRICK

But there just wasn't a spark.

MARIE

Till two a.m.! Barely slept but I loved it!

PATRICK

You can't be too picky when you're looking for positive women.

MARIE

What the hell's going on? DON'T FIXATE ON THE WINDSHIELD!

PATRICK

So now fifty-five is my age limit.

MARIE

My manager deserved it!

PATRICK

Joe thinks the girl at the clinic is a hooker.

MARIE

I used to break windshields all the time, you know.

PATRICK

He calls her my "sex worker."

MARIE

My nickname was "the brick".

PATRICK

Joe's just giving me a hard time.

MARIE

And let me tell ya something.

PATRICK

She's cute; seemed sorta normal.

MARIE

Breaking windshields feels better than counting leaves.

THERAPIST 1 & 2

I'm sure.

PATRICK

I'm not motivated.

MARIE

I'm not motivated.

THERAPIST 1 & 2

Why do you think that is?

PATRICK

My new t-cells suck. Lowest ever.

MARIE

My new t-cells suck. Lowest ever.

PATRICK

213.

MARIE

231.

PATRICK

Not as low as Joe but low.

THERAPIST 1 & 2

Sorry.

PATRICK

They're starting me on a cocktail
in January.

MARIE

They're starting me on a cocktail
in January.

PATRICK

Could have really bad side-effects.

MARIE

It's gonna make me sick. Nobody's going to know why.

PATRICK

Joe and I will throw up together.

MARIE

It's going to be harder to go to work.

PATRICK

You need hope to pursue girls.

MARIE

I need to buy that condo!

PATRICK

I don't know if I have any.

MARIE

Show Linda I'm not a loser.

PATRICK

God, I sound pathetic. Let me get your check.

(PATRICK looks through his back pack for the check. First thing he takes out is his dad's hunting cap.)

MARIE

But I won't be able to buy it if I don't get off my ass and go to work! The only person calling me is my psycho mother. Her last message: "If you don't get your crap out of my house I'm going to sell it!" And she's always singing about Linda. "Linda bought a car, Linda's going back to school, Linda's got a boyfriend!" ...If I ever tell Linda the truth it'll ruin things between us! I'd have to tell her what an idiot I am!

(PATRICK hands the THERAPIST the check. He holds his dad's hunting cap.)

THERAPIST 2

That was your dad's, right?

(PATRICK puts the hat on.)

MARIE (pours out rapidly)

This counselor in school said I just needed to let people know me better. But it's the opposite with me. The less people know, the more they like me. Linda's a prude, telling her would be stupid! My life's crap! And I miss the "f" word! Everything was "f" bomb this and "f" bomb that! It felt so good! But it was hurting my tips! Now all I can say is crap! Which sucks! And it's still hurting my tips! Every time I say crap my tip gets flushed down the toilet! I hate my life, I hate it!

THERAPIST 1

We could work on things...Find an alternative to the "f" bomb.

MARIE

I got here late but I need more time, can I go over?!!

THERAPIST 1

Sure.

PATRICK

My dad would tell me to keep going after girls.

MARIE

Could I start coming at this time, regular?!

THERAPIST 1

That would be great.

PATRICK

That it will probably be easier on my elbows, if you know what I mean.

MARIE

Are there pills that can get me to work?

PATRICK

Should I try the girl at the clinic again?

THERAPIST 1 & 2

I think so.

(End of Scene.)

Act IIScene 8

SETTING: *Infectious Disease clinic decorated for the holidays, December, 1995.*

AT RISE: *PATRICK is dressed in khakis and a dress shirt, looks at his watch anxiously. JOE rushes in with a bag, he has a major fungal infection on his jaw.*

PATRICK

Thank God you're finally here.

JOE

Did she already leave? Did I miss her?

PATRICK

She hasn't been here yet. Where have you been? You're an hour late.

JOE

Sorry. I got hijacked.

PATRICK

Hijacked?

JOE

My dad was waiting for me outside my apartment.

PATRICK

You're kidding.

JOE

I'm not. This is the second time he's found me. I'll have to move again.

PATRICK

What? Why?....What did your dad say?

JOE

Nothing real. He refuses to acknowledge who I am! Your dad accepted you even though you're a bleeding sex starved gimp, right?!

PATRICK

Right, right.

JOE

God my dad pisses me off!! The Trib HAS to do a story on us! That's how I want him to finally understand that I'm gay, nice and public!...Why am I doing this? Why? This isn't new information. Every time I do this I'm letting him win!...Looks like I'll be staying with Trudi and Howard Bear after all, at least for a few weeks.

PATRICK

Why? Because your dad found out where you live?

JOE

And Trudi's been begging to take care of me when I start the cocktail. She lives right next to school, easier to work on the fundraiser. Just makes sense...I finally convinced Trudi to drop Gay Bingo.

PATRICK

That's good.

JOE

We're doing Wizard of Oz Bingo instead, which basically is Gay Bingo only the straight people don't know it. Liz Winthrop is going to be Dorothy; all the women are really getting into it.

PATRICK

That's great...Joe, what does your dad say that gets you so...

JOE

Let's not talk about my dad...You wearing a costume to Trudi's Christmas party Saturday? (*PATRICK shrugs*) Trudi said you should invite this sex worker.

PATRICK

She's not a sex worker! Saturday is too soon. Let's stick with the original plan, invite her to the fundraiser. That'll give me time to get to know her before she meets people, like my mom. Maybe this is a bad idea...

JOE

Relax. We have good karma. I just found out I have three more T-cells. I've named them, Hughie, Dewey and Lewis. And you look great! What happened, somebody steal your sweatpants? But you need mousse. (*Takes mousse out of his bag and puts it in PATRICK'S hair*) I'll start the conversation but extend yourself. If you see an opportunity, go for it.

PATRICK

Like...?

JOE

Just say something nice about her shoes.

PATRICK

Ok... Your chin doesn't look so bad today.

JOE

Yeah right... I hate to say this but I have to pluck a few hairs between your eyebrows.

PATRICK

What? NO.

JOE

It's hard for guys with one eyebrow to get laid, trust me on this. I have tweezers in my bag. (*MARIE enters.*) And make sure your nose hairs aren't sticking out. Yours do that sometimes.

PATRICK

Joe.

MARIE

Well, look who's here, Mary Ann and Lovey.

PATRICK

I was Gilligan.

(MARIE laughs. She sits. MARIE wears a lot of inexpensive jewelry. She plays with her bracelets and rings throughout the scene. JOE and PATRICK sit.)

JOE

I want you to know, last summer, we didn't mean to cause problems for you at work... We did however, come here today looking for you.

MARIE

Really, you two looking for a psycho killer?

PATRICK

... I like your shoes.

MARIE

Really?

PATRICK

Yeah, they're cool.

(MARIE smiles at PATRICK.)

JOE

Yeah, ah, we're working on a project we thought might interest you. We're developing an HIV prevention program for high school kids.

MARIE

...Are you insinuating I have HIV? (*JOE and Patrick freeze. Smile.*) You're right, I do.

PATRICK

Oh, thank god. Uhm, I mean us too...

JOE

We thought you might want to get involved.

MARIE

Really?

JOE

Yeah, when we go to high schools we want positive people telling their stories. Our long-term goal is to change the world.

MARIE

Really.

PATRICK

I like your bag too.

MARIE

Really?

PATRICK

Yeah, matches your shoes. Very cool.

JOE

We should introduce ourselves. I'm Joe, what's your name?

MARIE

Marie.

JOE

Really?

MARIE

Really.

JOE

Pretty name. My Mother's name...His name is Patrick.

PATRICK

Really. I just wanted to say it once too.

MARIE (*Flirty to PATRICK*)

Hi.

PATRICK

Hi.

JOE

We don't have a young woman on the panel. Interested?

MARIE

You want me to talk to young innocent minds about AIDS?

JOE

I don't know how innocent they are, they need to be educated.

MARIE

Tell them sex is just for married straight people.

PATRICK

...Is that what you think?

MARIE

...Yeah...don't you?! Actually, just tell'em not to lift their skirt for every sailor walking by, and more importantly not to screw other people over!

JOE

She'll be great in front of the kids.

MARIE

Oh yeah, that's just what I want to do, sit in front of a bunch of jamokes who all want to know how I got it. That's the only fu - frickin thing anybody cares about.

PATRICK

...We should get a cup of coffee after our appointments. Hang out, talk.

MARIE (*Loudly*)

Talk? About what?

PATRICK

Ah...

JOE

We're having a fundraiser in a couple months, for the project. It'll be a great party. You should come.

PATRICK

Yeah. I'm not going to be on the panel but I'll be at the fundraiser. It will be fun. Come.

MARIE (Flirty)

...Are you asking me out to this fundraiser?

JOE

Yes, he is.

MARIE

I'm flattered...but wait, let me get something straight. You're a, a hemo...something...

PATRICK

Hemophiliac, right.

MARIE

Right. I saw you limp. Does it hurt?

(PATRICK is about to speak but JOE speaks up).

JOE

A ton.

MARIE

God, I frickin hate pain.

JOE

Patrick never complains. He's a stud, a real John Wayne about it.

PATRICK

He's exaggerating.

MARIE

And that's how you got AIDS, cause you're a hemo right?

JOE

HIV.

MARIE

Whatever. So, your family, do they know you have it?

PATRICK

Yeah.

MARIE

And they're cool about it?

PATRICK

Yeah.

MARIE

When did you get it?

PATRICK

A long time ago; when I was a kid, eleven.

MARIE

Eleven? You were eleven?! You've had AIDS since you were ELEVEN!?

(PATRICK nods his head.)

God, that is so awful...so frickin awful!

(Becoming emotional.)

...Life sucks so bad...I mean, I can't even imagine...That had to be so crappy!

PATRICK

I'm ok.

JOE

He's ok, doing well. Why don't you come to the fundraiser?

MARIE

I don't know, I don't know...Let me get something straight...

(To PATRICK)

You don't want to be on the panel in front of everybody even though you're not a frick up, I mean, screw up, right? Why? Why won't you do it if this thing is so frickin important?

(No answer.)

Because you're frickin smart, that's why. You don't want people knowing. And you shouldn't. *(To JOE)* Have you told your family you have AIDS? Do they know?

JOE

Ah...no and no.

MARIE

Gee, what a frickin surprise...Shouldn't be smug. I can't tell my sister, can't even pick up the phone to say hi. *(To PATRICK)* Why does my life always have to suck!

Ah...Cause you have HIV?
PATRICK

That's probably it.
MARIE

So, ah...this is a really good cause, you should come to the fundraiser.
PATRICK

I got a lot on my plate. It's nice you want to help. Especially since you're not a frick, screw up.
MARIE

Hey, I am not a frick up....All I did was have anal sex.
JOE

Joe!
PATRICK

What?
JOE
(to MARIE)
Sorry. Does it bother you if I talk about having anal sex?

MARIE
(Laughing)
Doesn't bother me.

Joe!
PATRICK

See, she said it doesn't bother her if I talk about having anal sex.
JOE

Stop saying that!...That's not why we're here.
PATRICK

You two are cute together....I guess I'm the only real frick up.
MARIE

I'm no saint; I have my stories. I got totally loaded at a Superbowl Party and the rest is history.
JOE

The Superbowl? A Superbowl Party?...Is that when you got it?
PATRICK

MARIE

See! Even HE wants to know exactly how and when you “got it.” How? How?! How?!!

PATRICK

No, I don't. I don't care, really!...I mean, I...I wish I had stories like his – I mean, not anal sex stories, stories about sex with women, I mean...I'm sounding like an idiot, which I am...Marie, I'm just trying to say that you are not a screw up. I mean, it's not like you're a heroin addict or something.

ARLENE (Offstage)

Marie, Dr. Stengle will see you now.

JOE

Marie, call us, we should all hang out. Arlene's got my number.

ARLENE (Offstage)

Oh delightful, now I'm your answering service.

MARIE

Thanks, but I'm all booked up. And for the record, I shot heroin for a year. So, don't tell me I'm not a screw up. (*MARIE exits. End of Scene*)

Act IIScene 9

SETTING: *TRUDI's kitchen, December, 1995.*

AT RISE: *TRUDI is throwing her annual lavish Christmas party. HELEN a little tipsy and dressed as Santa has pulled her beard down so she can eat Christmas cookies continuously. TRUDI, also tipsy, enters with a drink, she is dressed as a very sexy Mrs. Claus, a la Marilyn Monroe. Fun party noise comes from offstage.*

TRUDI

(Talking to someone offstage)

Who do you think I am? I'm Mrs. Claus! Oprah gave me a makeover.

HELEN

We love Oprah.

TRUDI

Liz Winthrop, YOU are an adorable reindeer!

(TRUDI is now fully in the kitchen talking to HELEN).

No reindeer with an ass that big would ever get off the ground.

HELEN

Trudi, finish telling me about this morning's Board meeting!

TRUDI

I'm sorry. Joan Riley has obviously been lobbying Liz because Liz did a hundred and eighty degree turn around. Liz stood up and addressing the whole room said, "Well, we simply have to make the switch. We have someone in our own back yard suffering terribly. A completely INNOCENT victim." Then like a dare she said, "Can anyone disagree?" No one said a word, the room was silent. I felt so guilty, especially about Patrick. I almost wish I could tell everyone about him.

HELEN

Oh don't, I thought this would happen. It's why I've been staying away from Board meetings. I was afraid everyone would figure out Patrick has HIV...*(She sees JOE.)*

(JOE, enters carrying a tray of glasses. He's perspiring.)

TRUDI

There's my Prince Charming. Joe, you are the most fabulous bartender. Everyone is wasted!

JOE

Oh good, I'm glad.

TRUDI

But you're a guest, not hired help. Stop Working! (*Going to him, caresses his head.*)

JOE

You're petting me. Look at you in that dress. You would make the most fabulous gay man.

TRUDI

Wouldn't I? And I would be so smitten with you... Your chin's looking better.

JOE

Nice try. I think some of the ladies on the Board are starting to figure out what's up with me.

TRUDI

I'm so glad you FINALLY agreed to stay with us. It only makes sense, starting that awful drug cocktail. I am going to take such good care of you... We need to talk about other things too... But first, let me give you your Christmas present. (*TRUDI pulls out a present.*)

HELEN

I should go.

TRUDI

Don't leave.

JOE

You didn't have to get me a Christmas present.

HELEN(*Exiting*)

I have to find Patrick; the Burns offered us a ride home.

TRUDI

Don't leave!

HELEN

I have to. I'm tired... fat... hairy. Menopause is around the corner, might as well get used to it. You've heard of gaining the "freshman fifteen"? I'm working on the "funeral fifty". Joe, that cocktail you made me was delicious.

JOE

Want a quick one for the road?

HELEN

Oh, no I...ok. Father Ryan's been over-served again. And he offered me another ride home.

TRUDI

Oh no! Remember last year?! (*HELEN and TRUDI laugh like school girls. HELEN stuffs cookies in her face as she laughs.*) Helen. Helen! You have not stopped eating since you got here.

HELEN

If I don't eat, I smoke. I'm stuck in the oral phase.

TRUDI (taking out a cigarette)

Here, one cigarette is not going to kill you.

HELEN

You carry them around too! Oh no! (*They laugh*)...No, I promised Patrick.

TRUDI

Helen, they're menthol. That means CANCER FREE.

(HELEN takes a cigarette from TRUDI. PATRICK enters as HELEN is about to light up.)

PATRICK

Freeze!

(Grabs the cigarette.)

I don't need both of my parents dying from lung cancer.

TRUDI

It's my fault. I corrupted her. How's your elbow, is it still sore?

PATRICK (Dressed as a Toy Soldier)

Not bad. I've made it part of my costume. I'm from the island of misfit toys.

TRUDI

Cute. Is that an MTV thing?

PATRICK

No. Mom, Father Ryan said he would give us a ride home.

(TRUDI and HELEN laugh hard.)

JOE

Ok, ok, what happened with Father Ryan last year?

TRUDI

Well, last year, he took a real shining to my Wassail, if you know what I mean. And when he was pulling out of my driveway, he lost his way and ran right over my Nativity Scene. Splat!

HELEN

He jumped out of the car, tried to fix it.

TRUDI

I can still see him trying to screw on the baby Jesus's head with the Virgin Mary stuck between his legs.

(TRUDI and HELEN laugh again hard.)

PATRICK

C'mon on Lucy and Ethel, break it up, time to go.

TRUDI

I'll distract Father Ryan so you two can slip out.

HELEN *(Kissing JOE good bye)*

Good night, Joe. Thanks for the yummy cocktails!

PATRICK

I'll call you tomorrow.

(PATRICK, HELEN and TRUDI exit. JOE starts to create a champagne toast but he is tired. COACH RILEY enters, he's wearing a long winter coat.)

JOE

Hi.

COACH RILEY

Hi.

JOE

Didn't know you were here.

COACH RILEY

Just got here. Heard you were serving up the Christmas cheer.

JOE

Allow me to make you a water-under-the-bridge drink. What would you like?

COACH RILEY

Scotch and soda. Thanks.

JOE

Scotch and soda, it is.

(JOE turns to make a drink. COACH RILEY takes off his coat. He's wearing a white sweatshirt and white pants with big red stripes around them.)

I thought about wearing a costume but then I figured costumes were for sissies.

(JOE turns and sees COACH RILEY's costume.)

COACH RILEY

I'm a candy cane. My wife's idea.

JOE

Your wife is a lucky woman ... (Pause) I'm glad you're here. I've wanted to talk to you... I know you're terrific with the kids. If you ask around, I think you'll find people will say the same about me. I hope when we run into each other at work we can be professional.

COACH RILEY

I'm a professional... You can count on it... I have seen that you're good with the kids... I may have gone overboard a little last summer. My wife helped me see that.

JOE

(Handing coach his drink)

Water under the Bridge. Cheers.

COACH RILEY

Cheers.

(They both drink. Long pause.)

Seems like you and Patrick have become good buddies.

JOE

We hang out.

COACH RILEY

I was good friends with his dad. His Dad confided in me. I was the only pallbearer who knew Patrick's positive. Patrick's a good kid. Unbelievable what he has to deal with... Nobody wants to see him get hurt.

JOE

I'm not going to hurt Patrick.

COACH RILEY

Glad to hear it. But this prevention thing you've got going, I don't know if it's in Patrick's best interest to be so public about his . . . stuff. His dad thought it was better to keep a low profile.

JOE

Patrick's not going to be public. I'm the front man.

COACH RILEY

...You and Patrick must have something in common. I know what Patrick has to deal with...I'm assuming, do you have it too?

JOE

What?...Do I have AIDS?... Is that what you're asking?... Is it?....Yeah. I have AIDS.

COACH RILEY

Wow...I'm sorry. I'm really very sorry for you.

JOE

Don't be. It's not your problem.

COACH RILEY

Still, I...I... feel bad for you.

JOE

Well don't. I'm fine. I feel fine...Let's drop it.

COACH RILEY

In Health class I don't spend a lot of time on it. Nobody around here has it except for Patrick. I don't really count... I'll drop it.

(Long pause.)

Thanks for the drink...And don't worry, I won't tell anyone.

(COACH RILEY exits. TRUDI enters.)

TRUDI

What did he want? *(JOE shrugs off the question.)* What are you doing?

JOE

Getting the Winthrop's drinks. I really want to thank them.

TRUDI

(Stops JOE from pouring.) I don't want you serving those people.

JOE

What are you doing? *(Goes back to pouring)*

TRUDI

Open your present! Don't make me throw a tantrum!

JOE

I want to thank people before they leave.

TRUDI

Open it!...It's a check for ten thousand dollars!

JOE (*stops pouring for a second*)

Ten thousand dollars?! Trudi, I don't know what to say.

TRUDI

All for you, whatever you want.

JOE

What a great start to the fundraising! You're so generous.

TRUDI

Not really...Remember last Summer, when Coach Riley was such a jerk to you? Do you know why he was such a jerk?

JOE (*Back to pouring*)

Because he's a jerk?

TRUDI

No, it was something else...His seven-year-old niece, Maggie, had just been diagnosed with leukemia. Isn't that awful?

JOE

Yeah, it is...I heard about that.

TRUDI

Maggie has gotten worse, it's so sad. Coach Riley's mother, Joan, is a very dear friend of mine. She's devastated, of course, as anyone would be. She's done so much for me; for everyone...She can be very influential. This morning the ladies...they decided the fundraiser has to be for leukemia this year.

JOE

What?!

TRUDI

Just this morning. I was out voted...

JOE

But we're all set! I've done all the work, collected all the prizes. You can't change now!

TRUDI

We have to, you can see...someone in their own backyard has this problem, so...

JOE

I'm in your house!...This is because of Coach Riley, isn't it?

TRUDI

No, Coach doesn't even know yet. It was the women, they decided, it was their decision.

JOE

I have to do this now! Do you understand me? Right now!...Do leukemia next year!

TRUDI

I can't...Maybe this happened for a reason. You're exhausting yourself! You're sick but you won't admit it.

JOE

I admit it. I'm sick! I'm deathly ill! Why the hell do you think I'm doing this!

TRUDI

What's the point if you won't even be ...The most important thing is to keep you safe!

JOE

No! Safety is what's most important to you... Let's throw our own fundraiser! I'll do all the work; you bring in the people. Ok? C'mon, help me!?

(JOE gets no response.)

You're not going to do it, are you? Ever?

TRUDI

These people have never really accepted me. They'll never get behind it.

JOE

But if we try, if we at least take a stand!

TRUDI

If it's not going to happen then what's the point?

JOE

Bullshit! That's bullshit! Don't tell me you don't see the point. I'm asking you to stand by me!...You just want to protect your cozy little life. *(Loudly, so others hear.)*

Afraid your friends will find out you're sympathetic to fags and drug addicts!

TRUDI

I am not going to turn my life upside down because you feel guilty about something you did six years ago. . . You shouldn't feel guilty...We need to concentrate on your health. When you move in here we can . . .

JOE

I'm not moving in here, not now.

TRUDI *(Crying.)*

Don't be like this, please; please don't be like this...

JOE

(Going at her) You think I deserve this! *(Pointing to the sores on his chin.)* Don't you? You think I deserve this!

TRUDI

(Not wanting other people to hear) No!...No, I...*(JOE looks for his coat. TRUDI apologizes over and over again. JOE ignores her.)* I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, etc... *(She does this until JOE gets his coat, she grabs his arm for one last "I'm sorry". JOE rips away.)* I cannot change the way people feel!... *(JOE leaves the check. Exits.)* Wait. Take the check. At least take the check...*(End of Scene.)*

Act IIScene 10

SETTING: *JOE's apartment. 1:00 a.m., the evening of the Christmas party, December 1995.*

AT RISE: *JOE, out of breath stands in his dark apartment with a baseball bat. PATRICK and HELEN are heard off stage. PATRICK knocks, calls for JOE. JOE goes into the bedroom. PATRICK and HELEN enter, they are still in costume.*

PATRICK (*Looking around*)

Joe, are you here?

HELEN

We shouldn't go into Joe's apartment. He's not here.

PATRICK

Call the Women's Board tomorrow. Tell them I have HIV and they have to do it for me.

HELEN

I'm not calling anyone. Let's go home.

PATRICK

You drove me because of my arm. You've done your job. You can go home.

HELEN

I am not leaving you here at one o'clock in the morning. Why am I even having a conversation at one o'clock in the morning?

PATRICK

Because you didn't tell me Joe was getting screwed over until midnight.

HELEN

This is not my fault. The women made their decision.

PATRICK

Did you try and change their minds? I'm starting to get angry...Aren't you angry?

HELEN

Who do you want me to be angry at?

PATRICK

I don't know...The Women's Board! Everybody!

HELEN

You want me to be angry at everybody?

PATRICK

Yes! Yes! Why aren't you angry?! I'm sick and tired of keeping the family secret! You've got to tell them I have HIV. It might change their minds.

HELEN

It won't. We're not telling anyone. You don't need the problems; I don't need the problems. You know that family in Florida had their house burned down.

PATRICK

Nobody's going to burn down our house.

HELEN

You don't know what people will do or say. You want a job? You want to meet a girl someday? We're keeping it quiet. *(Takes a cigarette and matches out of her pocket)* And I am having a cigarette and I don't want to hear about it.

PATRICK

I ruined his dream.

HELEN *(Tries to light cigarette)*

You are not responsible for Joe's crazy dreams. And as much as I like him, Joe's battles are not your battles. He got himself into trouble because of his own... poor behavior.

PATRICK

I wish I'd gotten it from poor behavior. At least then I would've had a life.

HELEN

But you didn't, did you? You got it because someone with lewd or reckless behavior donated blood, probably for money.

PATRICK

If you care about me you'll try and think of a way to help me!

HELEN *(Still trying to light the match)*

If I care about you?! Please! Stop pushing, just stop pushing! All I do is try and think of ways to help you! But your father is dead and I have other things to deal with too! I am not going to alienate everyone we know, even for you. I try, I do the best I can, but I cannot be expected to save the entire world! I'm going to have to let that one go! I have to take care of you, the family...and me! And believe me, that's enough!...Shit!

(Incredibly frustrated she's been unable to light a match, HELEN throws the matches to the floor. PATRICK picks up the matches and lights his mother's cigarette.)

I'm sorry... Let's stop this nonsense and go home.

PATRICK

I have to wait for Joe... We have stuff to do.

HELEN

It's one o'clock in the morning, what do you have to do?

PATRICK

We usually go get hookers and heroin at one o'clock.

HELEN

Let's go home.

(HELEN and PATRICK exit.)

PATRICK(Offstage)

I'm going to leave him a note. You can wait in the car.

(PATRICK enters alone. JOE steps from the shadows, holding a bag and a baseball bat.)

JOE

Patrick.

PATRICK

Oh my god! You scared me.

JOE

No reason to be scared of me.

PATRICK

Are you ok?

JOE

I feel great.

PATRICK

Really? I just found out about the fundraiser. I'm sorry. You must be pissed.

JOE

Forget it.

Where have you been?
PATRICK

School.
JOE

Why do you have that bat?
PATRICK

I have done the most satisfying thing.
JOE

What did you do?
PATRICK

I took this bat and went nuts.
JOE

What does that mean?
PATRICK

JOE
The trophy case in the hallway? I totaled it. It was so awesome. It made so much noise. Glass, trophies, mirrors, everywhere. I was there for an hour. Nobody came, nobody tried to stop my “lewd and reckless behavior”. They’re such stupid morons. It was so easy. Then I got out my adolescent spray paint and wrote: “Your kids are going to get AIDS too.” Most satisfying sentence I’ve ever written.

PATRICK
What were you thinking? They’ll arrest you.

JOE(Shows bag)
Why do you think this bag is packed?

PATRICK
Where are you going?

JOE
New York. I feel like I could fly there. I am so pumped!

PATRICK
Pumped? Why are you pumped?

JOE
I’m pumped because I finally took action! You wouldn’t understand that. You wait for other people to make it ok for you.

PATRICK

What are you talking about?

JOE

My battles are not your battles, Patrick. I wasn't going to wait for permission. I wanted to help people. I took action! What I did is going to help at least one kid. And that's enough. Patrick I'm sorry but I gotta get out of here.

PATRICK

You can't go; you're sick.

JOE

I was yesterday and will be tomorrow. It's all going to come crashing down one day. But now I've done something. So, it's ok.

PATRICK

But we're starting the cocktail! You can't go, this could be it.

JOE

The latest miracle cure; like interferon, interleukin...

PATRICK

The cocktail could be different. It could give us another ten years!

JOE

Ten more years of being treated like shit? A pill isn't going to make me feel better. What I did tonight made me feel better... Take care of yourself. I hope you get laid. *(A car horn is heard off stage.)* And give my love to your mother. *(JOE exits. PATRICK is alone. End of Scene.)*

Act IIScene 11

SETTING: *Patio outside hospital cafeteria. April, 1996. Noon.*

AT RISE: *Patio table, two chairs. MARIE enters, she has a cast on her wrist and is taking snapshots. She also carries a cappuccino.*

MARIE(Off to PATRICK)

First nice day of spring! I love it! *(She howls, twirls. Yells, like she might be high.)*

Hey Mr. Construction Worker! Smile!

(MARIE takes his picture. MARIE takes a couple pictures of audience members and talks to them boisterously like they're on the patio too. She sits on a chair falls off, laughs loudly. Sits in chair.)

MARIE

Over here!

PATRICK

(Enters, sits.)

Thanks for getting coffee with me.

MARIE

Sure...you're drinking Hawaiian Punch.

PATRICK

Yeah. I don't drink coffee. But it seems like that's what you say when you want to talk to somebody.

MARIE

I got a "Red Eye", two shots of espresso. What did you want to talk about?

PATRICK

Just checking in, see how you're doing.

MARIE

Now that I'm on lotsa happy pills life ain't so bad.

PATRICK

Oh. Good...What's with the camera?

MARIE

I'm going to heaven. I want to remember what hell looks like.

PATRICK

What does that mean? Are you ok?

MARIE

I'm feeling great!

PATRICK

Good. Then what happened to your wrist?

MARIE

You really want to know?

PATRICK

Uh. I think so.

MARIE

Convention of engineers at the Sheraton. This bozo asked me out. At the end of the night he wouldn't take no for an answer. I ripped away, got a hairline fracture.

PATRICK

That's awful.

MARIE

My own fault. I could tell he was bad news. But I wanted to hang out with someone. Celebrate the drug cocktail. Beggars can't be choosers...Are you on the drug cocktail?

PATRICK

Yeah.

MARIE

Isn't it awesome?!

PATRICK

Incredible.

MARIE

My T-cells have gone up five hundred; my viral load is gone! They're miracle drugs!

PATRICK

To protease inhibitors. Any idea what they do?

MARIE

Not a clue...Look, let me tell ya something. You don't want me. In case you couldn't tell, I'm a total screw up...Are you a virgin?

PATRICK

Uh...am I...what?

MARIE

You heard me... You don't have to answer.

PATRICK

...Yeah. I am.

MARIE

Wow, that was ballsy. I don't know you very well Patrick but you appear to have balls, great big balls.

PATRICK

...Thanks.

MARIE

Just asking me for coffee was brave... Oh god, but that puts all this pressure on me. I like you but...but I can't; I can't just, you know.

PATRICK

Oh! God no, I mean, I didn't really expect that you would want to...ah, you know... This is embarrassing... So what else is going on, ever call your sister?

MARIE

(Surprised) I can't believe you just asked that.

PATRICK

Changing the subject. A few months ago, you seemed like you wanted to.

MARIE

I didn't call her... Didn't have to; she came to me. Two days ago, just showed up at work, out of the blue, waiting for me to get off work.

PATRICK

Wow... How was it?

MARIE

...Hard.

PATRICK

I bet. What happened? Do you mind me asking?

MARIE

No... Basically she cornered me, told me I had to tell her what was wrong... She wore me down. So, I told her. Told her everything. How I got it. Everything.

PATRICK

Wow...And?

MARIE

And...*(Becomes emotional)* She ah...she was...incredible, frickin incredible. Gave me this big hug. Said it would be ok. That she wanted to help. I couldn't believe it...Life doesn't always suck, who knew?

PATRICK

...That's great.

MARIE

Yeah, she wants me to move out to San Fran with her. It's so frickin beautiful. Nobody knows me there; it's going to be awesome!

PATRICK

That's great...When are you going?

MARIE

Soon. I can't believe it; my new big dream. We need big dreams. What's yours?

PATRICK

Ah-

MARIE

I mean, what's your other big dream?

PATRICK

I'm thinking about going to grad school.

MARIE

Grad school, wow. Isn't that expensive?

PATRICK

Yeah but I live with my mom, so...

MARIE

You still live with your mom?!...That's so cool. My mom's a frickin sociopath.

PATRICK

...So, you want to go to a movie this weekend?

MARIE

Patrick, I told you . . .

PATRICK

Just friends, no pressure.

MARIE

You want to be friends? Just friends? With me?

PATRICK

If that's all you're offering.

MARIE

Why?

PATRICK

You're the only positive person I know.

MARIE

What about your friend, your right-hand man, Joe?

PATRICK

We haven't talked in months. I let him down. That Prevention Project fell apart. He left town...

MARIE

What happened?

PATRICK

Joe did all this work, then the women decided to do something less controversial, leukemia.

MARIE

The cocktail helped some things but not everything... Still, you two should make up.

PATRICK

I drive by his place sometimes, see if he's back. Last week, a light was on...

MARIE

You gotta see him! Call him!

PATRICK

You think I should?

MARIE

You were best friends!

PATRICK

I don't think he wants to see me.

MARIE

Before my sister moved to San Fran we got in this frickin big fight. Best friends, then boom! Totally over. She'd call. I wouldn't pick up. Now I'm moving to San Francisco! Call him! You only have one life to live.

PATRICK

Do you watch *One Life to Live* too?

MARIE

Call him!

PATRICK

On one condition. Go with me to the movies this weekend. Just friends.

MARIE

Oh god...Fine...Patrick, I gotta tell you, sex really isn't that big a deal. All it does is ruin things. There are so many other things. Why are you so fixated?

PATRICK

(Pause) I may never have a wife or kids or a career or much of a life. But I will have that one experience....It's my line in the sand.

MARIE

With the cocktail, those other things might happen. Especially for you cause you don't have to hide how you got it...My doc thinks we should get at least another ten years.

PATRICK

That's what I told Joe... Maybe. The cocktail doesn't work for everyone.

MARIE

Frickin pessimist. You gotta dream bigger. Looks like I gotta start paying my Visa bill.

PATRICK

Can I ask you a personal question?

MARIE

Let me get a shot of you. *(Gets out her camera)* Put you on my wall in San Fran; one of the hotter things in hell. *(Looking through the lens)* You want to know why I shoot heroin?

PATRICK

No. Why do you say frickin so much?

MARIE

(Comes out from behind the camera) You got a frickin problem with it?

PATRICK

No. Just curious.

MARIE

I'm a steam engine, I need to release pressure on a steady basis, at least that's what my therapist says. Surprise! I have a therapist!

PATRICK

Me too.

MARIE

(Looking through the lens again, like the camera is a mask)...I shot heroin for my boyfriend, Jesse. Then I liked it. Helped with my manic-depression; didn't feel so high or low anymore...just nice. (PATRICK nods.) Do you watch One Life to Live? (PATRICK nods.) Frickin dork. (Snaps a shot of him, a flash goes off.)

(End of Scene.)

ACT IIScene 12

SETTING: *JOE's apartment. Noon. April, 1996.*

AT RISE: *JOE sits with his baseball glove. PATRICK enters.*

PATRICK

The door was open so I came in. Did you get the message I was coming over?

JOE

Is it still raining?

PATRICK

It hasn't been raining.

JOE

Bad driving when it rains and freezes.

PATRICK

...Have you been...Are you ok?

JOE

What time is it?

PATRICK

Twelve.

JOE

Twelve?...Where's mom?

PATRICK

My mom? Lunch with Trudi.

JOE

Lunch? Tim, is it twelve midnight or twelve noon?

PATRICK

Why won't you look at me?

JOE

(Pause) I can't see.

PATRICK

...What do you mean you can't see?

JOE

I can't see....It's all dark.

PATRICK

I knew this would happen....How long have you been this way?

JOE

I don't know...

PATRICK

I'm calling an ambulance.

JOE

Don't, I don't want to go to the hospital!

PATRICK

Why?

JOE

They'll tell dad.

PATRICK

I have to call an ambulance.

JOE

Don't, Tim! I don't want dad to know.

PATRICK

Joe, I'm not your brother Tim, I'm Patrick. I'll make sure no one tells your dad.
(PATRICK dials 911.) Yeah, my friend has AIDS and he's lost his vision. I need an ambulance... 946 South Michigan, Apt D...Hurry! *(Slams the phone down.)*

JOE

Did you just break the phone?

PATRICK

No. *(PATRICK goes to him.)*

JOE (Very tired)

...You said it stopped raining?

PATRICK

Yes.

JOE

It's twelve?

PATRICK

Yes.

JOE

Then why isn't mom home? She's not at the pub...She's not coming home...Is she Tim?

PATRICK

No...And I'm Patrick...from the clinic, remember me?...Virgin with a limp?

JOE

...Patrick...It's good to hear your voice....How are you?

PATRICK

Forget about me.

JOE

No...Talk. Please. *(JOE reaches out to hold PATRICK's hand)*

PATRICK

I don't know what to say.

JOE

What's new?

PATRICK

New?...I'm applying to grad school.

JOE

...Grad School...you're turning into Captain Hemo.

PATRICK

Thanks to you Dr. Frankenstein. *(JOE winces)* Let me get you something for your head.

JOE

It's ok. I have my own thing...Me and mom at the beach. When I was a kid I was always bugging her to take me to the beach to watch the sunrise. When I was eleven, I didn't make the All-Star team...I was devastated. Mom woke me up at five and we drove to the lake...We sat in the lifeguard chair. She held my hand and we watched ...brilliant colors, everywhere...After that when I got depressed we'd always go...When it was windy she'd try to protect me from the ashes of her cigarette...She didn't want them blowing into my eyes . . . *(Sirens are heard in the distance.) (End of Scene)*

Act IIScene 13

SETTING: *JOE's apartment. April 1996, 4 p.m.*

AT RISE: *PATRICK sits at the table. He stares at a book. MARIE enters still wearing her cast. She carries boxes and her "Red Eye" coffee. JOE's stuff has been put into boxes with several items on display.*

MARIE

He'll be here soon...Thought you were leaving. (*PATRICK shakes his head no.*) Got you a Hawaiian Punch just in case. (*Gives it to him.*) Want to see another movie tonight? (*PATRICK shrugs.*) I got another post card from Linda today.

PATRICK

I can't believe you got Joe's dad boxes! He shouldn't get any of his stuff!

MARIE

Ok, you know what? You can't frickin stay!

PATRICK

I don't want you being nice to this guy.

MARIE

This man has had a hard time.

PATRICK

He's had a hard time? Joe had a horrific fungal infection in his brain. His dad has dealt with nothing!

MARIE

He's his family! It's like me and my sister! But you wouldn't understand because you live in frickin Brady Bunch land!...(Pause) I really think I'm helping.

PATRICK

Joe's dad is the reason this happened. He's the reason Joe blew off the cocktail, blew off his life!

MARIE

Joe's a pretty big part of it too. We're all responsible for ourselves. And let's face it; this isn't the first time Joe hasn't taken perfect care of himself.

PATRICK

Perfect care; pretty high standards.

MARIE

Pretty tough world... Maybe Joe and his dad can have a second chance.

PATRICK

Joe cut him off. How can you set up a reunion without Joe's consent?

MARIE

To have that connection can mean more than frickin anything!

PATRICK

We're not telling him where Joe is!

MARIE

It's his father! He almost frickin died!

PATRICK

Joe doesn't want to see him. He's permanently disabled!

MARIE

You don't know he's permanently disabled.

PATRICK

He shakes; his motor skills suck!

MARIE

His frickin sight came back! That proves anything's possible. He's on the cocktail now; he'll get better.

PATRICK

Then why does he have to live with Lewis? Why are you breaking down his apartment?

MARIE

Joe's glass is half full, got it? Half full! That's what we have to tell him, that's what we have to tell ourselves. *(A buzzer goes off letting them know someone is downstairs.)* That's him.

PATRICK

I'm telling this guy to go to hell.

MARIE

Give him a chance!

PATRICK

Did you tell him Joe has AIDS?

(MARIE presses the buzzer for the downstairs door.)

MARIE

I told him he has a weak immune system like ten times.

PATRICK

I might hit him. I might have to hit him.

MARIE

You can't hit him, you're a hemo!

PATRICK

If he asks to see Joe, I'm telling him to go to hell!

MARIE

Don't! I want you to be nice. Do you hear me? Frickin nice!

(There is a knock at the door. MARIE physically puts him in a chair.)

MARIE

Coming! *(MARIE opens the door to the apartment.)* Hi. Come on in.

FALLON

(Entering.)

Hi. I'm Mike Fallon.

(Extending his hand.)

MARIE

(Shaking his hand) I'm Marie.

FALLON

Hi. *(Goes to shake PATRICK'S hand.)* Nice to meet you. *(PATRICK does not shake FALLON's hand. FALLON turns to MARIE)* Thank you for letting me look at all this...It's very kind.

MARIE

No problem. I got you some boxes. Put in anything you want. There's no room where Joe's staying. I can tell some of its sentimental. We don't want to sell that.

FALLON

Thank you...I had to come meet you. I'm so grateful you told me about Joe being sick. Thank God, he's out of the hospital, that's gotta be a good sign.

MARIE

It is. It's a great sign. You're his family. Family needs to know these things.

FALLON

You're a nice girl. It was good of you to call...Joe probably didn't want you to.

PATRICK

Joe doesn't know she called.

FALLON

Figured as much. Then it's extra nice you called...I hope you don't mind me asking, but...are you...are you and Joe...are you...dating?

PATRICK

What?

MARIE

No. We're not.

PATRICK

You can't be serious. This is exactly why Joe doesn't want...

MARIE

PATRICK'S A HEMOPHILIAC! Yeah, big old hemo, bleeds all over the place, bleeds on the chair, the couch, the rug. Bleeds everywhere...

PATRICK

I do not.

FALLON

Must be rough.

PATRICK

Marie doesn't know Joe. I know Joe, and I know that he...

MARIE

(Cutting him off)
I'm a heroin addict!

PATRICK

Recovering IV drug user.

MARIE

Once a heroin addict always a heroin addict...I still put heroin addict on my taxes...just kidding...that's part of my recovery, honesty and bad jokes...This is really the majority of stuff over here.

(FALLON picks up the suede jacket JOE was wearing in the first scene of the play.)

FALLON

This is my jacket. Bought it with my first American pay check. Can't believe he kept it. Offered him anything he wanted once, this is what he wanted. You know he played baseball?

(MARIE and PATRICK nod yes.)

Pitcher, MVP, sophomore, junior, senior year. In pee wee league, I joked with him that if he ever pitched a no hitter I'd give him anything he wanted. Be careful what you say to your kids, they remember. Should've known if we supported him he'd do it. He was that kind of kid. His junior year he'd been pitching well. His team was already in the playoffs and it was the last regular season game; if they won they'd clinch home field advantage. Do you want to hear this?

(PATRICK and MARIE nod yes.)

I don't usually get to tell this story to people who actually know Joe. I think Joe used my promise to motivate himself. One warm May night he was one out away from his no hitter. I couldn't breathe but Joe had real concentration. All we had left was the fat catcher. Everybody was clapping; we could feel it. The poor catcher knew it too. His red-faced father was screaming that if he didn't get a piece of that ball he was going to kick his lard ass all the way home. Something what some parents will say. Joe heard, looked at me. Knew he'd do something. His first pitch, he brought his arm back, tossed the ball casually like he was playing catch in our back yard, a lovely gentle arc. The fat kid smacked it into left field, got to first. We were stunned. Then Joe struck out their best hitter. It was something. Everybody rushed the mound, carried him off. Got ice cream on the way home. Whole family sat under the Chinese lanterns on the patio eating it. Joe said, "Well dad, I didn't get that no hitter." I said, "No, you did something more important. You deserve a reward." Jokingly I said, a car? No. I'll mow the lawn I said. No. Then he said, "How about that suede jacket?" What could I say? He ran upstairs, put it on. I can still see Marie fixing the collar. Her hand on the back of his head, both of them looking at me, smiling. That night we were perfect...*(He becomes emotional.)* Did you ever see him wear this? *(FALLON looks to MARIE, who shakes her head no. Then to PATRICK who is looking down. PATRICK won't look at FALLON.)* You know, I should get going...I'll leave the jacket...I would've gone to the hospital if I'd known. You know that right?

MARIE

Yes.

FALLON

(Edging toward the door.) I would like to see him...Would he call me?

PATRICK

...You could call him.

MARIE

Yes, you could...He's staying at his old boyfriend's place. I'll give you the phone number. *(MARIE writes down the number.)*

PATRICK

Lewis is a great guy, the best.

FALLON

...(Pause) Who am I kidding...Joe hates it when I look him up. He moves; he hides. I better let him call me.

PATRICK

You should have his number. (*Extending his hand*) It was nice to meet you, my name is Patrick O'Donnell (*As he and FALLON shake hands*) I'm HIV positive.

MARIE

Me too.

PATRICK

Joe has AIDS. He's going to need all the help he can get.

MARIE

Here's the number. (*MARIE gives FALLON the number*) We all do the best we can, right? (*MARIE gives him a gentle hug.*)

FALLON

Take care of yourselves.

(*FALLON exits.*)

MARIE

How frickin sad....Thank you.

PATRICK

What does it matter? (*PATRICK sits.*)

MARIE

It matters a ton, a frickin ton...What can I do for you?

PATRICK

Not move to California.

MARIE

I have to move to California.

PATRICK

I know...Are you going to date in California?

MARIE

Not till they come up with a pill that takes the shame away ...What's the book?

PATRICK

“And The Band Played On.” It’s a history book. I’m going to be a teacher, a very public HIV positive history teacher.

MARIE

(Rubs PATRICK’S shoulders.) You’ll be a great teacher...I always sorta wanted to be a teacher but I never frickin finished high school, so I can’t be like a regular teacher. I could teach something else though maybe, something more hands on...*(MARIE starts to kiss PATRICK’s neck.)*

PATRICK

Marie...Marie... You don’t have to do this.

MARIE

I want to.

PATRICK

Don’t do this out of pity.

MARIE

I don’t do things out of pity. I’m doing this for me. You’re brave. I’m lucky you’re interested. *(Playfully.)* What, are you not attracted to me anymore?

PATRICK

No....It’s just... *(They kiss..)*

PATRICK

Uhm...I...

MARIE

Shut up. Not a word, not one word. C’mon, take your pants off. You have to be faster!

PATRICK

I...I have to take my ankle braces off.

MARIE

C’mon! *(MARIE shuffles him to a chair and sits him down.)*

PATRICK

Ow! Ignore me. Ignore me.

(MARIE kisses him then stops.)

MARIE

You wouldn’t have a condom, would you?

PATRICK
In my wallet...for 10 years.

MARIE
Joe has some in the bedroom. Think he'd mind?

PATRICK
He'd be thrilled.

MARIE
I'll go get one.
(MARIE starts to exit to bedroom.)

PATRICK
I thought this was just for married straight people?

MARIE
(As she exits.) Two out of frickin three ain't bad.

(Scene ends.)

Act IIEpilogue

SETTING: *PATRICK'S THERAPIST. November, 2004. 6:00 pm.*

AT RISE: *PATRICK stands at the end of Scene 13. THERAPIST #2 wheels in a wheelchair. PATRICK sits in the wheelchair, THERAPIST #2 sits.*

PATRICK

Well, I did it...It took a long time, but I finally did it.

THERAPIST 2

Whew, what a relief. Bet you're glad that's off your chest.

PATRICK

Oh yeah...yeah... I just rolled right up to her and I popped the question.

THERAPIST 2

I'm proud of you.

PATRICK

Figured I had to...World AIDS Day *is* right around the corner.

THERAPIST 2

Don't make me wait, what did she say?

PATRICK

She said...yes.

THERAPIST 2

She did?! That's wonderful!

PATRICK

I know. I kinda can't believe it. Now I have to go through with it.

THERAPIST 2

You will. You've been waiting ten years.

PATRICK

Has it been that long? Must be, Sister Sheila hired me five years ago. Saint Benedict's is finally going to get a safe sex seminar.

THERAPIST 2

Phenomenal. It's great she's such a progressive principal.

PATRICK

We'll see if it's great for her...Has to be at night, in the cafeteria.

THERAPIST 2

Still. What's the title?

PATRICK

"Abstinence Plus; How to Keep Your Bodily Fluids to Yourself." Me at my most charming. Every teenager needs to be accompanied by a parent. The parents will love the condoms, dental dams and saran wrap.

THERAPIST 2

A little something for everyone. Was it a tough sell?

PATRICK

Not after I explained how I had a doctorate in sexual frustration. She laughed.

THERAPIST 2

Have you written your presentation?

PATRICK

Not a word. Gulp.

THERAPIST 2

You'll find the words.

PATRICK

I wanna say something like, it's great if you abstain from sex until you're old enough to get married. When you've finished grad school, have your own car, condo, TiVo. But if for some reason you have sex before that, then you gotta have diet sex. It's good for you, and there's no after taste. (*PATRICK takes out his pill box.*)

THERAPIST 2

Are you going to personalize it in any way?

PATRICK

Probably should. (*Takes out a bottle of water from his back pack.*)

THERAPIST 2

What would you say?

PATRICK

I'll tell them that I'm dying...That they're dying...Every breath in is one less than we'll

eventually take. We're human. *(Starts to take the pills one by one.)* If you're not malicious you deserve a kind word and whatever support's available... Would you like a cocktail? I have Crixivan, Ziagen and Sustiva.

THERAPIST 2

I'm trying to cut back. How are the new meds?

PATRICK

Better this week. Not so nauseous. My liver enzymes are a little better.

THERAPIST 2

Good. Hopefully these new drugs won't make you bleed so much.

PATRICK

That's the plan. *(Takes the last pill.)* I should remind them the war's not over. No reason for couples to be kissing in Times Square.

THERAPIST 2

No.

PATRICK

Supposedly it's better if I stay hydrated. Cheers. *(With effort, PATRICK downs the rest of the water in the bottle.)*

THERAPIST 2

Cheers.

(Fade out. End of play)

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