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RUN IN FIELDS
By Frank Moher

PLACE: A university

TIME: The present

CHARACTERS:

KEVIN, 40s
BEV, 50s
LEILA, 30s
DeMINTZ, 60s

Run in Fields was first produced by Western Edge Theatre, Nanaimo, BC on Nov. 24, 2017 with the following cast:

Kevin NEIL GALLAGHER
Bev TERRY LYNN BOYLE
Leila LARISSA COSER
DeMintz STEVE HILL

Directed and set designed by Frank Moher
Lighting design by Erik Tully
Costume Design by Lorna McLellan
Stage Manager: William Anderson
Assistant Stage Manager: Beth DeVolder

Special scenic design by Aaramë Robillard
Special prop design by Coralee Draginda
"Paper Moon" musical direction by Antonio Gradanti
choreography by Shaleena Faust

Thanks to the many other theatre artists who also contributed to the development of *Run in Fields*: William Anderson, Barb Christofferson, Antonio Gradanti, Adrian Hough, David Howe, Brian March, Gordon May, Clarice McCord, Bill Miner, Nicolle Natrass, Kimberley O'Neill, Mort Paul, Gerry Potter, and Jennifer Wynne Webber. -FM

ACT ONE

Scene 1:

(KEVIN stands in a spotlight,
holding a weighty-looking
statue.)

KEVIN

Her name was Ursula Berscheid. Professor Berscheid to me. And it was she who is responsible for me being here tonight. For better or for worse. And who was responsible, when I was a young biology student, for various trips into various bogs, where we would stand about in our waders, our feet slowly being sucked into the mud beneath us, and us with them, and she would say,

(German accent.)

"Breathe! Breathe! That smell you are smelling is the smell of life!"

Mostly it smelled like bog to me, but eventually I got the idea.

Or she would shake a freshman student's hand and say, "How are you?" And when the student said, "Fine," she would say, "Are you sure? Because I just transferred approximately one-hundred-twenty-four million bacteria to you." And she would laugh and laugh. Teaching styles were different back then.

Or she would say, "Everything I learned I learned in the tops of trees!", and then she would take the whole class to the woods on the edge of campus and make us sit in the trees for an hour. Or she would take us to the river and teach us how to catch a fish with our bare hands, and then how to give it a massage before releasing it, to "Thank it for its time." Or she would say to us, "Run in fields!", by which she meant -

(He stops, momentarily taken over
by emotion.)

. . . Well. I won't bother you with what she meant. But as you can tell . . . she meant an awful lot to me.

So uh -- thank you, Professor Berscheid for getting me started, and thankyou to all of my students back at James

KEVIN (Cont.)

Cook U. for giving me a reason to continue to stand out in a lot of smelly bogs . . . and thankyou to you for this -- very weighty statue.

Thankyou. Thankyou. Thankyou very much.

(A large audience applauds. KEVIN stands there, taking it in. He looks at the statue, hoists it to Prof. Berscheid in the sky.

Fade.)

Scene 2:

(The faculty lounge of the science department at James Cook University. KEVIN, BEV, looking at a copy of The Globe and Mail.)

BEV

Oh my god!

KEVIN

I know.

BEV

She's so old!

KEVIN

Now don't say that.

BEV

But she is!

KEVIN

I know, but I think she's also very beautiful.

BEV

Margaret Atwood. You got to sit next to Margaret fucking Atwood!

KEVIN

Well, actually, Chris Hadfield got to sit next to her. I'm two chairs over.

BEV

Whatever. Did you shake her hand?

KEVIN

Um . . . no.

BEV

Did she give you a hug?

KEVIN

Why would Margaret Atwood give me a hug?

BEV

I don't know. She's always struck me as the huggy type.

KEVIN

Oh. Well --

BEV

Except in her books. She's definitely not the huggy type there.

KEVIN

Right. Well --

BEV

C'mere. I'll show that Margaret Atwood.

(She gives him a big hug.)

I am so proud of you.

KEVIN

Thanks, Bev.

BEV

I always knew you'd be famous.

KEVIN

Well, you know, it's just kinda - Canada-famous.

(They unclasp. She takes the paper.)

BEV

Well! I shall have to put this up on the faculty bulletin board.

KEVIN

Oh. Really? Do you really have to do that?

BEV

Of course. If I leave it to you, you'll just end up shredding it. Did they give you anything, by the way? A plaque or anything?

KEVIN

A statue. Very heavy. And, of course, phallic-looking.

BEV

Do tell. Well, bring it in and we'll put it in the display case. Oh, and if this is online, I can put it on our Facebook page!

(She pulls out her phone to check. KEVIN looks stricken.)

DeMINTZ enters. Nice suit.
Carries an iPad.)

DeMINTZ

There he is.

KEVIN
(Turns.)

Oh. Dr. DeMintz.

DeMINTZ

The man of the hour.

KEVIN

Oh, well, I don't know about --

DeMINTZ
(Holding out the iPad.)

Look! You're famous!

KEVIN

Oh, it's on there too, is it?

DeMINTZ
Bev, have you seen this?

BEV
(Waving her phone.)
I sure have!

DeMINTZ
This is impressive, Kevin. Very impressive. It's not every day our little institution ends up in The Globe and Mail.
(Flips the cover on his iPad closed.)
And the money. Oh my lord, the money.

BEV
The what?

DeMINTZ
He got a pot-oh-cash. Tell her how much.

KEVIN
Oh, well, I didn't think it was . . .

DeMINTZ
Go on.
(Pause. BEV is waiting.)

KEVIN
Well, it was, um . . . seventy-five thousand dollars.
(Pause.)
So . . .

BEV
It was what?

KEVIN
Seventy . . . five thousand --

BEV
Seventy-five thousand dollars?!

KEVIN
Yes.

BEV
Seventy-five.

KEVIN

Yes.

BEV

Seven-five with three zeros?

KEVIN

Yes!

BEV

Oh my god, doll. Famous and rich!

(She hugs him again.)

Why didn't you tell me?

KEVIN

Well, I didn't think it was --

DeMINTZ

Important?

(To BEV.)

He didn't think it was important. Well, you just keep thinking that way, Kevin. But thank god I'm running the university.

(He throws an arm around him,
leads him aside.)

Speaking of which . . . I have a little proposition for you. The President's Gala is coming up. And I think that would be the perfect opportunity to honour this achievement. By making you . . . the guest of honour.

KEVIN

Oh. Oh I don't really think I can --

DeMINTZ

Now now, if you can be a star in Toronto, you can be a star here. Besides, it's too good an opportunity to pass up. I mean, usually we honour some car dealer or Chamber of Commerce type. And oh my, the speeches we have to sit through. But this year I want to honour someone who really deserves it. You. All right?

KEVIN

Oh, look . . . I'm flattered but uh --

DeMINTZ

Well I'm not doing it to flatter you. Frankly, I'm doing it to put bums in seats.

KEVIN

Right. But uh . . . I really feel that the award and the, uh . . .

BEV

Seventy-five thousand dollars.

KEVIN

-- Seventy-five thousand dollars, thankyou, is honour enough. And so what I was really hoping to do was just come back here and uh - maybe make a donation to the scholarship fund, and uh . . . teach.

(Pause.)

DeMINTZ

Teach.

KEVIN

Yeah, you know -- scribble on the whiteboard and handout handouts and whatnot.

DeMINTZ

Teach. Well that's very admirable. Very Robin Williams. Very "School of Rock." But while you're teaching, and, you know, scribbling on the whiteboard and whatnot, do you think you might have time to put on a monkey suit and have a bite to eat?

(Pause. There's something in DeMINTZ's tone.)

KEVIN

Well I . . . guess I could do that. Yes.

DeMINTZ

Good!

KEVIN

Good.

DeMINTZ

Good! That's excellent.

KEVIN

So . . . I guess that's settled then.

DeMINTZ

It certainly is. And it's going to be a splendid night. I'll go tell Media Relations. Whilst you get started on your speech.

KEVIN

Speech?

DeMINTZ

Bev, I will have my office coordinate a thing or two with you. We have a new admin assistant, I'll have her follow up. We want to make a big deal of this. Because remember, Kevin, when it comes to raising money, it's always . . .

(He does jazz hands.)

Showtime!

(He goes.)

KEVIN

Does this . . .

(He tries to do jazz hands.)

. . . actually mean something?

BEV

Yes. It means do what I tell you or face my eternal wrath.

KEVIN

Right. Well, anyway . . .

(He starts to go.)

BEV

So. Seventy-five thousand dollars, eh?

KEVIN

(Turns. Little smile.)

Tax free.

BEV

(Laughs.)

You are a prick. You are such a prick! And you are so taking all the secretaries for lunch at the Faculty Club on Friday.

KEVIN

I'd be delighted.

And now --

BEV

(She takes his picture with her phone.)

That one's for Instagram!

(She starts out.)

KEVIN

Uh, wait, no, I wasn't even --

(But she's gone.)

Smiling . . .

(He sighs. Spots the newspaper BEV has left behind. Picks it up, regards the story. Tosses it aside, heads out. Stops. Returns to get the newspaper, Exits. After a moment, we hear the sound of a shredder.)

Scene 3:

(The cafeteria. Sound of students. DeMINTZ stands talking with LEILA, 30s. KEVIN enters at a distance, sees DeMINTZ. Tries to walk by without being noticed.)

DeMINTZ

Ah! Kevin! One moment of your time, please.

(KEVIN winces, turns.)

KEVIN

Oh! Dr. DeMintz. I -- didn't see you there.

DeMINTZ

Yes, you did, but that's fine. Leila, I would like you to meet Dr. Kevin Tenner, of our biology department. He's the one you've been hearing so much about. Kevin, I would like you to meet Leila Witwicky, one of our brightest students and one you're going to be seeing quite a bit of in the next little while.

KEVIN

I am?

LEILA

It's a pleasure to meet you, Dr. Tenner.

DeMINTZ

Leila here is going to be attending to the details of the President's Gala.

KEVIN

Oh. Right.

DeMINTZ

You haven't forgotten about that, have you?

KEVIN

No, I certainly haven't.

DeMINTZ

Professor Tenner was hoping to fly under the radar, as it were. But we'll have none of that -- not when there are matrons to impress and bequests to be had.

LEILA

I'm told my job is to make sure you show up.

KEVIN

Oh you are.

LEILA

I'm told that's not going to be easy.

DeMINTZ

Well, Kevin here does like to play the shy and retiring academic type. "Just here to teach," and all that. Oh by the way, I never did find out what your award is for.

KEVIN

Oh, well it's not -

DeMINTZ

I should know if I'm going to be introducing you.

KEVIN

Well, it's not really that --

LEILA

It's for his research into biological control of anthropoid pests in sub-Saharan Africa, which reduced reliance on pesticides throughout the third world, while also increasing SDG success rates by over three-hundred percent.

DeMINTZ

Really?

LEILA

Uh-huh.

DeMINTZ

Well there, you see? I understood that. Except perhaps for the "anthropoid" part. In any event, I'll leave you two to make your arrangements. I have a rehearsal to get to.
(He starts out.)

KEVIN

Are you - "treading the boards" again, Dr. Demintz?

DeMINTZ

As a matter of fact, I am. It's a fundraiser for the new performance centre. A few old friends are flying in from New York to help out, I need to raise my game. It won't be quite the same as when we were all touring "Evita" together, but it'll be fun.

(To LEILA.)

I'll see you tomorrow. And remember: treat Dr. Tenner here -
-

(He does jazz hands.)

-- like a star!

(He goes. KEVIN watches him, nonplussed.)

KEVIN

Who, or what, is "Evita"?

LEILA

It's a musical. Apparently he played the President of Argentina in it.

KEVIN

Oh. Of course. That makes sense.

(He turns to her.)

KEVIN (Cont.)

That was very good by the way.

LEILA

What?

KEVIN

Your description of my -- thing. I'll have to write it down and use it myself.

LEILA

It's all yours.

KEVIN

Thanks.

LEILA

(Hand out.)

That'll be seventy-five thousand dollars, please.

KEVIN

Oh god.

LEILA

What?

KEVIN

The money. It's all anyone ever wants to talk about. First they congratulate me on the award -

LEILA

Congratulations.

KEVIN

Thanks. And then they bring up the seventy-five thousand.
(Beat.)

LEILA

What's it like winning seventy-five thousand dollars anyway?
(Her little joke. She smiles. He smiles.)

KEVIN

It's horrible.

LEILA

Oh noes.

KEVIN

I don't know how I'll survive.

LEILA

I can imagine.

KEVIN

And you're right. I am feeling sorry for myself.

(Pause.)

Well, it was nice meeting you, Leila, and --

LEILA

It's fascinating.

KEVIN

What -- is?

LEILA

A man of your accomplishment. A university professor. Winner of seventy-five thousand dollars. And - how old?

KEVIN

Is what? Oh, *me*. Uh, forty-two. Three! Two.

LEILA

And yet I don't think you've looked me in the eye for five seconds straight since we met.

KEVIN

Is that so?

LEILA

Mm-hm.

KEVIN

I'm not looking at you now, am I?

LEILA

Nope.

KEVIN

I didn't think so. Well it's because behind this award-winning exterior lie -- secrets I don't want you to know.

LEILA

Such as?

KEVIN

Oh, you know -- apoptosis rates in fruit flies or -- incidents of mitotic breakdown in dog embryos --

LEILA

Sounds messy.

KEVIN

Most things in biology are. And, I suppose, I'm just your basic -- borderline -- autistic academic. Socially inept. Prone to buttoning up my shirt incorrectly. Able to walk into walls from fifty feet away. That's why I'm a professor, really. It's the only occupation in which you can be paid ninety-thousand a year and still be basically dysfunctional.

LEILA

I see.

KEVIN

And, um, you. How did you get dragooned into this whole -- President's Dinner thing?

LEILA

I'm not sure.

KEVIN

Right.

LEILA

I thought I was here to get a degree.

KEVIN

In?

LEILA

Chemistry.

KEVIN

Oh! Nice.

LEILA

Not as messy.

KEVIN

No.

LEILA

But then I lost my scholarship, because, you know, there's no money left for scholarships. And I couldn't afford a full course load anymore, or, well, much of any course load. And so now I find myself working in the President's Office and taking one course in Organic Chemistry at night.

KEVIN

I don't understand.

LEILA

Organic chemistry. The --

KEVIN

Yeah, no, I know what organic chemistry is. What do you mean there's no money left for scholarships?

LEILA

There isn't. I had a President's Scholarship, now I don't.

KEVIN

You came here on a President's Scholarship?

LEILA

Yeah.

KEVIN

And now you're working in his office instead?

LEILA

Yeah.

KEVIN

But what happened to your scholarship?

LEILA

Oh, I don't know. You know. Cutbacks. Or something.

(Pause.)

But, maybe if I work real hard, they'll give me a bus ticket back to Edmonton. So --

(She starts to go.)

KEVIN

No no, wait a minute, wait a minute, let me get this straight. You came here on the understanding that your tuition would be paid for --

LEILA

-- And books.

KEVIN

-- And books --

LEILA

-- And lab fees --

KEVIN

-- And lab fees would be paid for, and now instead you're working in the President's Office for -- how much?

LEILA

Eleven-thirty-five an hour.

KEVIN

Eleven-thirty-five an hour, five days a week --

LEILA

Half days. And given that I'm thirty-thousand dollars in debt --

KEVIN

Why are you thirty thousand dollars in debt?

LEILA

From going to university.

KEVIN

Oh. Right.

LEILA

From paying the salaries of people who earn ninety-thousand dollars a --

KEVIN

Yes, I get it.

LEILA

And given that my daughter has this pesky habit of eating, I figured I'd better take the job.

KEVIN

Oh my god, you have a child?

LEILA

You make that sound like a bad thing.

KEVIN

Well, no, but --

LEILA

I kind of like her, actually.

KEVIN

Well yes, but --

LEILA

Though I see what you mean about the whole "socially inept" thing.

KEVIN

Sorry, I -- sorry.

(Pause.)

What's her name? Your daughter.

LEILA

Anne. Though she'd rather be Hermione.

KEVIN

Really?

LEILA

Harry Potter.

KEVIN

Oh. Right. Is that still a thing?

LEILA

It is to Anne.

KEVIN

Don't you mean "Hermione"?

LEILA
Yes. Thanks.
(Pause.)

KEVIN
So what are you going to do?

LEILA
About?

KEVIN
About -- everything.

LEILA
I don't know. I can't give up. I have to get into graduate school, or I'll just be basically unemployable and thirty-thousand dollars in debt. So I guess I'll continue to work in the President's Office. Take Organic Chemistry at night. Get overly excited when noodles are on for ten cents at Dollarama. Wish I had an apartment where Anne could have her own bedroom. And then take out a loan for next semester and go forty-thousand dollars into debt. I guess.
(Pause.)

Amazing.
KEVIN
What?

LEILA
You were looking at your shoelaces again.

KEVIN
Oh. Sorry!

LEILA
No prob.
(Pause.)
Oh, and - Professor Tenner?

KEVIN
Yes?

LEILA
Your shirt's not buttoned up correctly.

KEVIN
(Doesn't look.)

Yes it is.

LEILA

No, it's not, actually.

KEVIN

Yes it is. You're just saying that so I'll look and then you'll say, "Made you look."

LEILA

Oh. Okay. If you say so.

(She goes. KEVIN stands there.)

KEVIN

(To himself.)

I'm not going to look. I'm not going to look.

(He looks. His shirt is fine.)

Damn!

(A peal of laughter from off.
Leila's. He watches her go.)

Scene 4:

(DeMINTZ on a stage.)

DeMINTZ

(To someone in the booth.)

I'll be here? I'll be here, will I? I just need to know which light I should play.

(Listens, laughs.)

Oh, believe you me - I can always find my light.

(Laughs.)

Oh by the way, I'll probably be wearing a hat, so ... No, a bowler. From the bus and truck company of "Cabaret".

(Listens, laughs.)

No, I didn't play Sally. Though I did steal her hat!

(Listens.)

All right. All right.

(A light rises on him.)

Good.

Scene 5:

(BEV's office. She works on her computer. Sips from her mug.)

KEVIN appears. Leather shoulder bag.)

KEVIN

You wanted to see me?

BEV

I always want to see you, dear. But, yes, um . . .
(Rifles through a stack of paper.)

The Alumnae Office wonders if you could sign this photo of yourself, they want to auction it off, please and thankyou, this is a card from the secretaries thanking you for the lunch we forced you to buy us, and uh -- your statue please?

KEVIN

Oh! Hold on.

(He rummages in his shoulder bag, gives it to her. She weighs it thoughtfully.)

BEV

You're right. It is heavy. A person could do some serious damage with this thing.

KEVIN

Well, I'll leave you to figure out to whom.
(He starts out.)

BEV

Oh, and uh -- one more thing.

KEVIN

Uh-huh?

BEV

Who is --

(She checks on her computer screen.)

-- Leila Witwicky, please?

KEVIN

Who?

BEV

(Puts on her leopard-print glasses, reads.)

"Leila . . . Witwicky. Special Assistant to the President."

KEVIN

Oh, uh, Leila! She's the person arranging the Gala.

BEV

Yes, and?

KEVIN

Well, she's the -- Special Assistant to the President.

BEV

Yes, I got that part. And?

KEVIN

And what?

BEV

Oh, I don't know. But Ms. Witwicky's e-mails to and about you have a certain *frisson*, a certain quality to them, I don't know what to call it, oh wait, I do: "Flirtatious."

KEVIN

Wait, what? Why is she sending you e-mails about me?

BEV

Because you don't answer your own.

(She reads.)

"Please tell Dr. Tenner we need his CV by Friday or we shall have to make something up. And please tell him to quit looking at his shoelaces."

KEVIN

She wrote that?

BEV

Mm-hm. And immediately underneath it is her original e-mail to you. "If you don't start replying, I will tell Hermione. And she will cast a spell on you." Who is Hermione?

KEVIN

Her -- daughter. Though her real name is -- never mind.

BEV

Oh, so we've met her daughter, have we? Interesting.

KEVIN

No, I haven't met her daughter. And don't be ridiculous. It's nothing but a -- simple e-mail.

BEV

Oh please, Kevin, I haven't been observing the finer points of campus mating rituals for the last twenty years for nothing. I know a simple e-mail when I see one, and this, my dear -- is not a simple e-mail.

KEVIN

Fine. Whatever you say.

BEV

Now now, I'm not criticizing. It's been five years since you and Grace split up. It's about time you studied biology in the wild again.

KEVIN

It's -- she's just somebody doing a job in the President's Office! Because they - stole her money. Do you know anything about that, by the way?

BEV

About what?

KEVIN

About her scholarship, her President's scholarship. It was taken from her, that's why she's working in his office.

BEV

Wait. Leila Witwicky is a student?

KEVIN

Yes!

BEV

Oh. That's different.

KEVIN

What is?

BEV

(Points to the screen.)

This. How old is she?

KEVIN

I don't know. Thirty -- something?

BEV

Hm. Well it's not exactly cradle-robbing. Still. I trust you know you cannot have a relationship with this woman.

KEVIN

What?!

BEV

The Ethics and Behaviour Guidelines are very clear about that.

KEVIN

I have no intention of having a relationship with her! Except maybe to answer her e-mails, since it's obviously a mistake to let you do it.

BEV

Just keep them business-like.

KEVIN

Oh my god. I am going back to my office now. Thank you for being insane.

BEV

Just watching out for your best interests.

(She bats her eyes at him.
Exasperated, KEVIN goes.

BEV looks off after him for a moment. Reaches for her mug. Reaches for a potted plant sitting on her desk, lifts the plant out, removes a miniature of Southern Comfort from it. Pours some in the mug, returns the bottle, plant. Leans back in

her chair, sipping, regarding
the e-mail on her screen.)

Scene 6:

(The President's Office.
DeMINTZ is rehearsing some
dance steps.)

DeMINTZ

Annnd step kick kick slide kick touch
again step kick kick slide kick touch
and viiine two three four viiine two three four . . .

(KEVIN enters, tentatively,
unnoticed. Watches as DeMINTZ
continues. Wonders if he should
leave. After a moment:)

KEVIN

. . . Dr. Demintz?

DeMINTZ

Ah! Kevin!

(No embarrassment. A little
winded, though.)

Come in! I was just -- woo! -- rehearsing a little dance
number.

KEVIN

I . . . see that.

DeMINTZ

Not quite as limber as I used to be, but -- I soon will be!
(He does a spin. Laughs.)

KEVIN

I hear you once played the President of Argentina.

DeMINTZ

I did, I did! That was a marvellous show. Fascists doing box
steps, what fun. But here, please, sit down. Can I offer you
some water? Juice?

KEVIN

No, thankyou, I'm --

DeMINTZ

I'd offer you something a little stronger, but apparently drinking in the office is frowned upon these days.

(He gets himself some water.)

By the way, I looked into that work you did in Africa. Very impressive, especially the work with the farmers.

KEVIN

Well, thankyou.

DeMINTZ

And I even learned something from it. I now officially know what an "anthropoid" is.

(He smiles.)

In any event, how can I help you? Everything coming along all right for the President's dinner?

KEVIN

Yes, well that's -- sort of what I wanted to talk with you about --

DeMINTZ

People are very excited about it. About you. I'm told we're almost sold out.

KEVIN

Yes, well -- I'm excited too.

DeMINTZ

Are you? You didn't seem all that excited the other day.

KEVIN

Right, well, I feel that perhaps I didn't -- convey -- sufficiently, my -- excitedness to you.

DeMINTZ

Good, good.

KEVIN

But I was wondering, you know, if we might discuss how to use the money.

DeMINTZ

The money? What money? You mean your money?

KEVIN

No no. Your money. The money you raise from the President's Gala.

DeMINTZ

Oh yes. I see.

KEVIN

I was thinking that maybe -- since the theme of the evening is all about awards, and getting awards, and, you know, achievement, that maybe we could use some of what we raise to -- give Leila Witwicky her money back.

(Pause.)

DeMINTZ

Do what?

KEVIN

Her money. Her scholarship money, give it back to her.

(Pause.)

You see, I heard that she came here on a President's Scholarship, but -

DeMINTZ

How did you hear about that?

KEVIN

I'm sorry?

DeMINTZ

Well, we hadn't announced them yet, we usually do so at the dinner. How'd you hear about that?

KEVIN

From -- Leila.

DeMINTZ

I see.

KEVIN

I mean I thought it was --

DeMINTZ

No no, that's fine, of course she has every right to tell you. And that was a very difficult decision, believe you me.

KEVIN

I can imagine.

DeMINTZ

But, these are difficult financial times, and I am paid to make difficult decisions.

KEVIN

Yes, I understand, but --

DeMINTZ

Which I did in this instance.

KEVIN

Yeah, but but but, here's the thing. Imagine this. Imagine -- I mean if tickets are selling as well as you say -- imagine if I stood up there and said that, not only have I been fortunate enough to receive my award but, thanks to all the people who bought tickets for the President's Gala, this young woman right here --

(Indicating an invisible figure.)

-- this would be Leila, standing next to me -- will be able to resume her education full-time because we are going to use some of the money from this evening to give her back her President's Scholarship!

(Pause.)

That would be --

(Pause.)

That would be --

(Pause.)

Really --

(He tries to do jazz hands.)

"Showtime! -- ee" -- . . . Don't you think?

(Pause.)

DeMINTZ

That's your idea?

KEVIN

That's pretty much it.

I see.
DeMINTZ
(Pause.)

Dr. Tenner --

I mean I just --
KEVIN

DeMINTZ
First of all -- it seems rather odd, your coming in here to
advocate for her in this way.

KEVIN
It does?

DeMINTZ
Yes. For one thing, in my experience she's perfectly capable
of advocating for herself. And second of all -- If we
haven't yet announced the scholarships, we can hardly
announce that we had to take them away but now we're giving
them back, can we?

KEVIN
Well just announce them, then.

DeMINTZ
Yes, well that would be very nice, but --

KEVIN
Wait, did you say *scholarships*?

DeMINTZ
Yes. There were five students who lost them.

KEVIN
Five?

DeMINTZ
Yes.

KEVIN
Five students who are -- what? -- all working in the
President's Office now?

DeMINTZ
No, of course not.

KEVIN

Well, good.

DeMINTZ

Some are working in the cafeteria. One is on the landscaping crew.

KEVIN

And they're all working for eleven-thirty-five an hour?

DeMINTZ

I don't know what they're earning.

KEVIN

Eleven-thirty-five an hour, that's what Leila's making!

DeMINTZ

Well then good, I'm glad we could do something for her!

KEVIN

Well yeah, but --

DeMINTZ

At least it will allow her to remain engaged with the university community, until we can do something more.

KEVIN

Well yeah, but -- we invite these kids here and --

DeMINTZ

They are hardly "kids."

KEVIN

Yes I know but --

DeMINTZ

One, I believe, is an ex-Buddhist nun.

KEVIN

Fine then, "students." And we turn around and we say "Oops, sorry, money's all gone," and then we stick them in some shit job for minimum wage and you call that "doing something for them?"

DeMINTZ

I call it doing the best we can!

KEVIN

But what -- what -- what could be more important than keeping our promises to our students?

(Pause.)

Oh wait. I know.

DeMINTZ

You know what?

KEVIN

The performance centre. The new performance centre. That's where the money's going . . . isn't it?

DeMINTZ

Do you think there's something wrong with that?

KEVIN

No. I mean after all. Where else are we going to put on "Cats"?

(Pause.)

DeMINTZ

Kevin . . . First of all, No. That's not where the money is going, that's not how it works. They are two completely separate envelopes of money.

KEVIN

Well yes but, as the envelope holder, you could take the money out of one envelope and put it in the other, right?

DeMINTZ

No. And second of all . . . I am not a fucktard.

KEVIN

I'm sorry?

DeMINTZ

I. Am not. A fucktard. Now, I know that you think it's very amusing that your President is a former musical theatre performer -- I find it highly entertaining myself. As you may have noticed, I try to get as much mileage out of it as I can. But the fact is that I, like you, earned my position through merit. In fact, when I quit theatre to go back to university, I promised myself that I would never again get myself into a position of earning less than thirty-thousand

a year, and so I worked my ass off, and here I am. Earning quite a bit more than thirty-thousand, and every penny of it too. And while I am certain you are very impressed with yourself and your seventy-five-thousand dollar award, the fact is I was once awarded a fifty-five thousand dollar grant to research American musical theatre influences on the Christian evangelical movement, and that was in 1998 dollars, which would make it, I expect, rather more than the equivalent of yours. And I realize that you think you may now have the clout to run the university yourself, or at least to come in here and tell me how to run it, but let me advise you that, having survived the national bus-and-truck tour of "Evita" -- that would be the show in which I played the Argentine president, and for which I won an Ovation Award, thank you very much -- there is very little I do not know, very little I did not learn about how to survive palace coups both onstage and off, involving everyone from the chorus boys to the leading lady. And so, while I appreciate your efforts to tell me what to do --

(He picks up his iPad, pokes at its screen.)

-- I would be even more impressed if you would win this game of Candy Crush Saga for me -

(He thrusts it at KEVIN.)

-- which I have been unable to get back to lately because I have been busy running a 327 million dollar per annum institution, a job which I also believe I do rather well, if only because I have been doing it for eight years and the university has not yet fallen to rack and ruin. All of which is to say that I . . . am not . . . a fucktard.

(Pause.)

Is there anything else?

KEVIN

No, I think that about covers it.

DeMINTZ

Good. Now if you don't mind, I have a rehearsal to get to.

(KEVIN starts to go.)

Oh, and Kevin.

(KEVIN stops, turns.)

I really do think it's best not to get overly invested in the personal lives of your students. I know it's tempting. But I've seen it lead to trouble. All right?

Of course.

KEVIN
(He goes. Pause.)

Annnnnnd - scene.

DeMINTZ
(Fade.)

Scene 7:

(A banquet room. KEVIN sits on the edge of the stage. LEILA stands above him, regarding a clipboard, exhausted.)

LEILA
Okay. So. First, the Executive Director of the Alumni Association will say a few words. And then he'll introduce the Academic Provost, who will also say a few words. And then we'll have dinner. And then the VP Academic will --

KEVIN
-- Say a few words . . .

LEILA
Say a few words, right. And he'll introduce the Dean of Sciences, who will introduce the President, who will introduce -- finally -- you. All right?
(KEVIN doesn't respond.)

All right?
(Nothing.)
Oh for fuck's sake, Kevin, all right?

KEVIN
What? Sorry. Yes.

LEILA
Thank you!
(She sits beside him, spent. Pause.)

KEVIN
Sorry. I wasn't listening.

LEILA

No, I know.

(Pause.)

I just -- Anne got up this morning, and she was just -- a bear. And I'm going to have to find some time today to cram for my exam tonight -- I have one exam and I can't find time to study for it! -- but I also have a meeting with the food people at two. And usually my neighbour can pick Anne up at after school but today she can't of course, so I have to

LEILA (Cont.)

figure out a way to get there by three-thirty but my bus pass is expired and -- !

(She breaks off. Pause.)

And I don't know. Anyway. Sorry. Rough day.

KEVIN

I'd offer you a ride, but I bike to work.

LEILA

Yeah, I know, I saw you coming up the hill once. Speaking of rough days.

(She rises, starts to go.)

KEVIN

Leila.

(She stops.)

How much was your scholarship worth?

LEILA

The whole world?

KEVIN

No no, how much money was it worth?

LEILA

Fifteen-thousand seven-hundred and thirty-five dollars.

KEVIN

You seem very certain.

LEILA

Oh believe me, when I got the letter, I read that figure about, well, fifteen-thousand seven-hundred and thirty-five times.

KEVIN

And if you got it back, what would you do?

LEILA

What do you mean?

KEVIN

I mean, you'd be able to go back to school full-time, right?

LEILA

I guess so. Why?

KEVIN

Nothing. No, nothing. I'm just, uh -- thinking. It's what I'm paid to do.

(BEV enters, sees KEVIN.
Makes a beeline for him.)

BEV

Kevin.

KEVIN

Hey.

BEV

I can't believe that you are such a moron.

(She notices LEILA.)

Oh. Hello.

LEILA

Hi.

BEV

And you would be?

LEILA

Leila Witwicky.

BEV

(Regarding the two of them.)

Yes, I thought so.

KEVIN

Bev.

Yes? BEV

Don't go there. KEVIN

Don't go where? BEV
(Innocently.)

You know where. KEVIN

I have no idea what you mean. In any event. Did you call the President a fucktard? BEV

Did I what? KEVIN

What? LEILA

Did you call the president a fucktard? BEV

No! KEVIN

That's what I heard. BEV

Well it isn't -- KEVIN

You called the President a fucktard? LEILA

No of course I didn't call the President a fucktard! KEVIN

Good! LEILA

He called himself a fucktard. KEVIN

LEILA
(Sceptical.)

The President called himself a fucktard.

KEVIN
Well, no, actually he said he wasn't a fucktard. Though I never said he was! Though I guess I did - kind of imply it strongly . . .

BEV
Well that's just great, Kevin. Way to ensure your job security.

LEILA
Why were you talking to the President?

KEVIN
I told him, as apparently Bev has heard, by, I don't know, hiding in the air ducts above his office or something, that I was concerned with -- certain -- aspects of the University's -- operations. He responded with a story having something to do with the touring production of "Evita", if I remember correctly, and then he invited me to play Candy Crush Saga. You see? A perfectly professional conversation.

LEILA
I can't believe you called him a fucktard!

KEVIN
I did not call him a -- !

BEV
Look, Kevin, it doesn't matter what you called him, the fact is he is apparently very, very pissed. So. Here is what you are going to do. First, you are going to give him a few days to calm down. And then you are going to ask to see him and say, you know, you've had some time to think things over and in the clear light of day you realize what a complete jerk you are, and then you apologize. And then you make a very large donation to his, whatever it is, his thingamabobby --

LEILA
The performance centre.

BEV

The performance centre, that's it. And then you lay very low until the dinner, when you make a big fuss about what a wonderful and glorious Grand Poohbah he really is. And then we all go home and hope he forgets about it.

KEVIN

I see. And you are concerned about this why?

BEV

Because I'm your friend, asshole.

KEVIN

Ah. Right.

BEV

And besides, trouble for one of us is trouble for us all. Do you remember what happened after Frank Crane got fired?

KEVIN

We no longer had to put up with Frank Crane?

BEV

His whole decanal area got cut!

KEVIN

Oo, that sounds painful. Well, you know what? I don't think I'm going to apologize for sticking up for a student. And I would rather jump off the roof of the library than donate to his fucking performance centre.

BEV

Yeah well that's just fine, Kevin, that might be your best career choice. Because while I know you think you're invincible because you won an award and your picture is plastered all over Instagram -

KEVIN

Only because you put it there!

BEV

-- the fact is you cannot go around insulting the President and expect to stay out of trouble. So apologize, and hope it works.

(To LEILA.)

And as for you, Little Miss E-mail. You'd better watch your

BEV (Cont.)
step too. The Send button . . . can be a very dangerous
thing.

LEILA
What does that mean?

BEV
I think you know.

LEILA
No, I don't.

BEV
Oh I think you do.
(She goes.)

LEILA
That was weird.

KEVIN
Yep.

LEILA
Was she drunk?

KEVIN
Probably.

LEILA
Really?

KEVIN
She tipples.

LEILA
What?

KEVIN
She tipples. She sits in her office and tipples. Then gets
blotto after four. The whole faculty knows about it, and
nobody does anything because we all love her too much.

LEILA
Including you?

Yes.

KEVIN

LEILA

She called you a moron.

KEVIN

I trust her judgment.

(Pause.)

So . . .

LEILA

Who were you sticking up for?

KEVIN

What?

LEILA

With the President. You said you were sticking up for a student. Who?

KEVIN

Does it matter?

LEILA

Who, please?

(Pause.)

KEVIN

You.

LEILA

Oh. Oh fuck.

KEVIN

Look, I have an idea -

LEILA

Why did you do that?

KEVIN

Because I don't like the way we're screwing you around!

LEILA

Is that what you were talking to him about? The scholarship?

KEVIN
What else?

LEILA
Oh fuck. Oh really fuck.

KEVIN
What are you -- ?

LEILA
He'll probably think I put you up to it!

KEVIN
No he won't.

LEILA
Don't you think you should have talked to me first?

KEVIN
Maybe.

LEILA
I do need my job you know!

KEVIN
No, but you see that's the thing. You don't! You don't need your job! Because I'm going to give you the money!
(Pause.)

LEILA
You're what?

KEVIN
I'm going to give the money. The fifteen thousand, I'll give it to you. And then you can go back to being a student.

LEILA
It's fifteen-thousand seven-hundred and thirty-five dollars.

KEVIN
Right. I'll give you it all. As you may have heard, I'm good for it.
(Pause.)

LEILA
You're going to give me your prize money.

KEVIN

Well not all of it.

LEILA

Why?

KEVIN

I thought I'd buy myself a tie?

LEILA

No, I mean why would you give me any of it?

KEVIN

Well what else am I going to do with it?

LEILA

I don't know, buy yourself a hundred ties or something!

KEVIN

I don't wear ties! Look, I want to do this. Let me do this. I want to help you out.

LEILA

I don't need help.

KEVIN

Yes you do. Of course you do.

LEILA

I need a bus pass! I need a ride to Anne's school! I don't need fifteen-thousand seven-hundred and --

KEVIN

Then how are you going to finish your degree?

LEILA

I'll get a loan.

KEVIN

You're already thirty-thousand dollars in debt!

LEILA

Thankyou for reminding me! Thankyou very much! You think I don't know I'm thirty-thousand dollars in debt? I think about it every fucking day!

(Pause.)

But I don't need to be bailed out. I'm fine. I'll be fine.
Please don't go talking to the President about me again.

(She goes.)

KEVIN stands there, watching her go. Starts to leave. Notices she's left her clipboard behind. Picks it up, calls to her.)

KEVIN

Leila, you forgot your --

(But she's gone. KEVIN regards the clipboard. Looks out at the hall.)

The sound of a festive crowd begins to fade in.)

Scene 8:

(The sound of the festive crowd grows. It's the evening of the President's Gala. A string quartet plays somewhere.)

DeMINTZ, LEILA, and BEV stand at the back of the room. DeMINTZ in a tux, BEV in nice evening wear, and LEILA in the best dress she can afford. BEV, wine glass in hand, is a little unsteady on her feet, and not just because she's wearing heels.)

DeMINTZ

(Looking out over the crowd.)

Well, you have done a marvellous job, Ms. Witwicky. Look at this crowd.

LEILA

I know. I can't believe it.

DeMINTZ

There's the Mayor, chatting up our MP, pretending he doesn't call her "Red Shirley" when she's not around. And there's the CEO of El Nino Digital, making nice with his ex-wife, who just married a billionaire from Hong Kong who will probably buy the company and fire him sometime next week.

LEILA

You're like the Eye of Sauron or something.

DeMINTZ

Why, thankyou! Yes. Yes I am. Perhaps I will smite them all once I get up there. But not our guest of honour, whom, amazingly, you have managed to get to show up.

LEILA

Reluctantly, but yes.

DeMINTZ

Reluctantly, in chains, he's here.

BEV

I'm surprised you didn't just cut his balls off.

(Pause. DeMINTZ and LEILA look to her, to each other, back to her.)

LEILA

I'm sorry?

BEV

Not you.

(To DeMINTZ.)

You. You would have had every right to. After he called you a fucktard and everything.

DeMINTZ

Yes, well I don't think we need to --

BEV

And as for you, try to resist the temptation to drape yourself all over him this evening, all right?

LEILA

I have no idea what --

BEV

Oh no, I'm sure.

LEILA

Dr. DeMintz, I have no idea what --

DeMINTZ

No no, that's fine. Bev, how about if I escort you back to your table?

BEV

Why?

DeMINTZ

Because it's not in the direction of the bar?
(He starts to escort her away.)

BEV

I need more of those little baked sausage things.

DeMINTZ

No, you don't. Besides, the speeches are about to start.

BEV

So? I'm not giving one.

(She hobbles off the other way,
presumably in the direction of
the bar.)

DeMINTZ

Well. Let's hope she keeps that promise.

LEILA

Dr. DeMintz, I really do have no idea what she's --

DeMINTZ

No no, that's fine. Though . . . I did hear something about some e-mails he sent you?

LEILA

Oh, no no, those were e-mails I sent him. And it was just - they were just -- about the gala.

DeMINTZ

Oh. Well, if there's anything I can do to help you with any of that . . . you'll let me know, will you?

LEILA

There really is nothing.

DeMINTZ

No. Good then.

(He looks off.)

Oh dear. The Dean has started to ramble . . .

(He goes.

LEILA stands there, befuddled.
She takes out her phone, starts
poking at it.

KEVIN approaches.)

KEVIN

Hey.

LEILA

(Startled.)

Oh, hey.

KEVIN

If you're making a call, I can --

LEILA

Oh, no, no, I was just uh -- checking e-mail.

(She quickly puts the phone
away.)

KEVIN

Look, I owe you an apology. You're right, I shouldn't have
gone to see the President without asking you first. So I
apologize.

LEILA

Oh, well . . . I still have the job!

KEVIN

So I see. And I understand why you can't take the money. I
mean, I wish you could, but -- I get it.

LEILA

Right. I'm not sure I do, but . . . thanks.

(Pause.)

Oh, um, here. I'm supposed to give you something.

(She fishes in her purse. Takes out a small, plumpish figurine.)

This is from Anne.

(He regards it.)

KEVIN

Is it -- a cookie?

LEILA

Well, it started out being a cookie. But then it turned into Dumbledore. From Harry Potter. See, you can tell by the beard.

KEVIN

Of course. How could I have missed that?

LEILA

See, we were making cookies, and I told her how you tried to give me some money, but that I had said No, and then she said, "That is the dumbest thing you have ever done, Mom." Which is possibly true. And then she made this for you out of the dough. Because, and I quote, "You're nice."

KEVIN

Wow.

LEILA

I did the glaze!

KEVIN

Right.

(Pause.)

LEILA

Well, I better get up there.

(She starts to go, stops.)

See, the thing is: If I took the money, I'd still have to explain to all the other people why I get to go back to classes and they don't. And, I don't want to have to do that. So it's the best idea. I think.

(She goes.)

KEVIN stands there for a moment, rolling Dumbledore around in his hand.)

KEVIN

Right.

(He puts the figurine in his pocket. Goes.

Light shift. DeMINTZ enters and moves to a podium in a spot of light.)

DeMINTZ

Well thankyou, Dean Haggerty. And thankyou for telling us that story about your time in the army, because uh -- frankly it means I don't have to speak for nearly as long!

(Laughter.)

Before I introduce our guest of honour this evening, I just want to say that we appreciate very much your support this evening. And if I may -- and I may -- I'd just like to put in a little plug for another appearance I'll be making soon, and that will be the fundraiser for our new performance centre. I'll be putting on my tophat and tails for the evening -

(Applause.)

-- and uh . . . the tickets will cost a helluva lot less than the ones for tonight did, I promise you that.

(Laughter.)

And now, without further ado, and because Dean Haggerty has done such a -- comprehensive job of introducing him already -- I give you a faculty member we are very, very proud of -- Dr. Kevin Tenner.

(Applause. He steps aside, gesturing to KEVIN as he approaches the podium. KEVIN takes his speech from his jacket pocket. The applause subsides.)

KEVIN

Thankyou Dr. Jindhal, Dr. Reid, Dr. Baverstock, Dean Haggerty and Dr. DeMintz.

When I was first told I was to receive the Aspiration Award, I . . .

When I was first told I was to receive the Aspiration Award, I . . .

I don't think I want to read this.

(He puts his speech away. Looks off to the side, where LEILA stands. Back to the audience.)

Look, uh . . . when I received the Aspiration Award, I thought, well that's nice and everything, and it was great to meet Margaret Atwood and everything, but uh -- mostly I just wanted to get back here and -- teach. And I really had no idea what I was going to do with the seventy-five-thousand dollars, though I must say that many of you did. But then I found out that five students at the university had recently lost their President's Scholarships, that is to say, they came here under the presumption that their education would be paid for and that turned out to be --

KEVIN (Cont.)

well, a lie, really. And I don't know why they lost their scholarships, and neither do they -- could be -- cutbacks, could be -- the movement of the stars, could be -- the pressing need to build a new performance centre --

(Some consternation from the audience. To the side, DeMINTZ watches intently.)

-- but at any rate, the money was gone. Poof. So, I am going to give them their money back. I will use my prize money to give those students fifteen-thousand dollars each. No, make that sixteen-thousand, because actually, they lost fifteen-thousand seven-hundred and thirty-five dollars each.

(There's the start of scattered applause, he puts up a hand to stop it.)

Because while you may be under the delusion that the money you paid to be here tonight will somehow end up benefitting our students, let me assure you they are the last ones we give a shit about around here. And so I will pay them back. And while, yes, this means that I will have to dig into my own pocket to top up the amount, the fact is that I, like you, am ridiculously overcompensated, although, unlike you, I don't store most of it offshore.

And now -- please enjoy the baked Alaska, don't forget to get your tickets to the President's next big fundraiser, and - tip your fucking server!

(Wild consternation from the audience. Some misguided applause. DeMINTZ exits. KEVIN steps back, a little stunned at what he's done.)

LEILA enters. He looks to her,
realizes he's in big trouble.
Does jazz hands.

Fade.)

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

Scene 1:

(In the dark, we hear DeMINTZ doing voice exercises.)

DeMINTZ

Baby-buggy-baby-buggy-baby-buggy-baby-buggy.

(Lights rise. DeMINTZ puts his hand on his stomach, does some exhalation-from-the diaphragm grunts.)

HUH! HUH! HUH! HUH!

(Pause.)

Okay. I'm good. Can we do this? I have a meeting with the Board tomorrow, I need my rest.

(Pause.)

Thankyou.

(To someone offstage.)

Let's do the cane-catch. The cane-catch. The cane-catch, you throw the cane, I catch it. All right? Go.

(He holds his hand out. From the wings, a cane sails on and forcefully flies by him.)

Okay. Well. That's how we won't do it on Friday.

(He moves to it.)

How about the hat?

(As he's bending for the cane, a bowler hat is limply tossed on from the other side of the stage, falling well short of him. He looks to it.)

Right. Perfect.

(He picks up the cane, moves to retrieve the hat.)

Okay then. I think we're good to go.

(He puts the hat on, poses with cane in hand.)

TA-DA!

(Pause. He sags.)

Okay. We're done.

(Exiting.)

See you on Friday. Fuck my life.

(He goes. Fade.)

Scene 2:

(The cafeteria. KEVIN, LEILA,
sitting side-by-side.)

KEVIN

So here's what I'm thinking. We all go to the pub for drinks. Me, you, and the other four lucky winners. To celebrate. And I get rip-roaring drunk, even though I don't drink, and dance on the pool table. And then we go downtown and run around in the streets like we're in some crazy movie. About a crazy guy who gives away eighty thousand dollars, and in the process alienates everyone around him. It's a comedy. And then you all drive me out to the airport, the ex-Buddhist nun at the wheel because she's obviously the only responsible one, and then you pour me on a plane and I travel to live in some remote village in Thailand and am never heard from again. What do you think?

LEILA

Sounds wise.

KEVIN

Yeah, I thought so too.

(Pause.)

But, no, seriously, I was thinking we might all go to the pub to celebrate. And I'll give you the cheques. Maybe on Friday?

(Pause.)

I mean you are going to take the money, right?

(Pause.)

I mean, I was hoping you'd change your mind, now that I gave it to all five of you.

(Pause.)

I mean --

LEILA

All right, yes. I'll take the money.

KEVIN

Oh, Leila, that's terrific!

(He goes to hug her. She avoids it, rises.)

LEILA

Don't. There are people watching.

(Pause.)

LEILA (Cont.)

I mean, how can I not, right? I have a kid to raise, I have a degree to complete. And at this rate I won't get done until I'm ninety. Or she is. And don't get me wrong, it's really very nice of you. Unbelievably nice, really. And I suppose I gave you the idea, when I . . . said that thing about . . .

KEVIN

Right.

LEILA

Right.

(Pause.)

So, thankyou. Thankyou. Really. But uh . . . I don't think I can join you at the pub. I have a ton of paperwork to do, and I don't think I should take any more time away from Anne, so . . .

KEVIN

Well we could do it in the afternoon.

LEILA

I don't think so. But thankyou. I'm sure it will be fun.

KEVIN

Fine.

LEILA

Good, I'm glad you --

KEVIN

I'm being blown off, aren't I?

LEILA

What? No!

KEVIN

Yes I am. You're blowing me off. Because I'm dangerous. Radioactive. I embarrassed the President, and so now you can't be seen with me. From now on it will be hurried hellos in the hallways and averted eyes from afar.

LEILA

That's not it at all.

KEVIN

Yes, it is. But that's okay. I get it. I wouldn't want to be seen with me either. So go. Go.

(He shakes her hand.)

I'm glad you decided to take the money. Now go. There are people watching.

LEILA

That is so unfair.

KEVIN

Oh for fuck's sake, Leila, just go.

(After a moment, she does. KEVIN stands there, watching. Then starts the other way.

BEV approaches from behind.)

BEV

Well hey.

(KEVIN slumps a bit, puts on his game face. Turns to her.)

KEVIN

Hey!

BEV

How's that Toastmasters course going? Not well, apparently.

(Takes out her phone.)

Although you are very popular on tuh Internetz.

KEVIN

On Instathingy?

BEV

Instathingy, Twitterthingy, Facebook. Oh you are definitely big on Facebook.

(She reads from her phone.)

"Wow. Professor Tenner really blew the President out of the water on Saturday. Sweet!" And here your fan has helpfully posted a link to the article in today's paper.

KEVIN

Oh no . . .

BEV

"Award-winning professor blasts university." But don't worry, it's just the local paper. It's not in The Globe and Mail. Yet.

KEVIN

Thanks for the heads-up.

(He starts away.)

BEV

Y'know most of us, when we're mad at our employer, take a phony sick day and go "Ah-ha, I sure showed them!" It's not really necessary to bring it to the attention of the whole city.

KEVIN

I'm sorry you didn't like my speech.

BEV

Speech? Is that what it was? Seemed more like some kind of psychotic outburst. And what's this bullshit about all of us being overpaid? Because last time I looked, I'm still living in a rancher in the wrong part of town.

KEVIN

What I said wasn't aimed at you.

BEV

Yes it was, Kevin. Yes it was! Because you know what? I'm loyal to this place. Loyalty, a concept you might try! I've worked here for 23 years and when I've worked someplace for 23 years, I feel like I'm a part of it. And so when you attack this university, yes, you're attacking me!

KEVIN

Then I apologize.

BEV

Oh no, no no, you're not getting away with that "butter wouldn't melt" thing this time. It's not me you need to apologize to. It's that audience, who cleared out that room like you'd dropped trou. Do you know how much baked Alaska was left over after? And apologize to your colleagues, who, like me, are proud of the work we do here and do for our students and don't need you telling us it's garbage!

(Pause.)

And while you're at it . . . apologize to that girl, too.
Or at least leave her alone.

(She starts to go.)

KEVIN

Excuse me?

BEV

You heard me.

KEVIN

What "girl"?

BEV

I think you know.

KEVIN

Leila?

BEV

See?

KEVIN

First of all, Leila is 34-years old. She's not exactly a
"girl."

BEV

Fine. Whatever you say.

KEVIN

And second of all -- what do you mean "leave her alone"?
I'm not doing anything to her.

BEV

That's not what people are saying.

KEVIN

What are people saying?

BEV

That you gave her the sixteen-thousand dollars because
you're interested in her. And any woman who would take
the sixteen-thousand is a -

KEVIN

That is ridiculous.

BEV

Is it?

KEVIN

That is obscene!

BEV

Well, haters gonna hate, I guess.

KEVIN

First of all, the only reason anyone would think that is because you told them to.

BEV

You just keep telling yourself that, Kevin.

KEVIN

And second of all, these "people," these "people" who are saying that -- do they think I'm in love with the ex-lumberjack too?

BEV

Who?

KEVIN

Or the ex-Buddhist nun? Or the kid with the 175 IQ? Because I gave the money to all of them, I didn't just give it to Leila!

BEV

Yes, well that is what is known as a "beard," I believe.

KEVIN

A what?

BEV

Beard. Cover. A distraction from your real purpose. Liberace used to show up with Betty White on his arm, while Scott Thorson carried their bags. She was his beard. The kid with the 175 IQ? - is yours.

KEVIN

Jesus Christ.

BEV

You asked.

KEVIN

Maybe I should talk with you when you're not drunk.

(He starts to go.
Before he can:)

BEV

Maybe you should own up to what you're doing.

(He stops.)

It's obvious how you feel about her, Kevin. It was obvious from the way you looked at her on stage at the dinner. The whole audience could see it, I could see it from the back of the hall! But you're gonna get yourself in trouble. All I'm saying is . . . be careful.

(Pause.)

Oh, and fuck you, by the way. I don't drink during the day.

(She goes. KEVIN stands there.
Looks out. People still
watching. Waves.)

Scene 3:

(The President's office. Night.
LEILA sits at a desk, working
intently.)

KEVIN enters. She doesn't notice
him.)

KEVIN

Is this where I get my gym pass?

LEILA

(Startled.)

Oh! Jesus. Sorry, I - Hi.

KEVIN

I was surprised to see the light on.

LEILA

Yeah, well, Anne's at her friend's house making S'mores, so I'm just clearing up some stuff from the dinner.

KEVIN

Right.

LEILA

Mostly complaints about you, actually.

KEVIN

You don't have to tell me. I've been getting them too.

LEILA

Ooo. Really?

KEVIN

Yeah. Now I know why I don't read my e-mails.

(Pause.)

Look, um . . . Bev has this idea that I have a thing for you.

LEILA

Oh, well, Bev.

KEVIN

And I just wanted to say that that's true.

(Pause.)

LEILA

It's what?

KEVIN

True.

LEILA

Oh.

(Beat.)

Ohhh . . .

KEVIN

Yeah.

(Pause.)

And I figure that if she can see it, you probably can too. So I thought maybe I should just . . . fess up. And she says people are saying that's why I gave you the money.

(Pause.)

But I would never, ever do something like that. Because obviously if I did, you'd hand me my head on that clipboard of yours, but also because . . . my students mean all the world to me. And I would never do anything to jeopardize that. All I want is for you to graduate and go out into the world and become the most amazing freaking scientist ever.

Greater than Einstein, greater than Madame Curie! And to take Anne by the hand and to march out there and to --

(Pause.)

"Run in fields."

LEILA

What?

KEVIN

That's how my first biology prof used to put it.

(German accent:)

"Run in fields." She was German. And a brilliant teacher. And that's how she thought we should learn. "Don't just sit about here," she'd say. "Go out and scan the horizon for flashes of gold, or lavender, or crimson. That's how you know where they are. And then run to them, and run to every corner of them, every edge. If there are flowers, try not to step on them, but if you do, that's all right. Flowers are hardy! And so are you. Become hardier. Stand in the centre of the field and breathe in the world around you. And then run to the next field. Run in as many fields as you can!

"And then when you are my age, and maybe you can no longer run quite so fast . . . Lead others to the field. Open the gate. Show them where to run." So run in fields, Leila. That's all I want.

(Pause.)

LEILA

That was amazing.

KEVIN

What?

LEILA

You looked at me the whole time you said that.

KEVIN

Oh. Right.

(Pause.)

LEILA

So you, uh . . .

(She indicates him and her.)

KEVIN

Yeah.

(Pause.)

I mean, you probably knew that, right? I mean, I figured if Bev can see it, you probably can too, so . . .

LEILA

No.

KEVIN

What?

LEILA

No. I didn't know.

KEVIN

Oh.

LEILA

But uh . . .

(She moves to him, takes his hand.)

Thanks.

(Pause.)

Only . . . I better get back to what I was doing. Hey, maybe you can help me answer some of these e-mails. That would be utterly inappropriate too.

KEVIN

Oh! Glad to.

LEILA

And yet somehow oddly amusing.

(She sits at her desk again.)

KEVIN

Did you get as many as me?

(She scrolls through them.

KEVIN observes.)

Ooo. More. Way more. Okay, well let's get at them. "Dear Mrs. . . .

(He squints at the screen.)

"mnorberty55 at hotmail.com . . . Thank you for your message. However, fuck you. And while I'm at it - what was that you were wearing on Saturday night?"

(LEILA laughs. KEVIN leans in as she types.)

DeMINTZ enters. He watches them,
unseen.)

KEVIN

C'mon, type!

LEILA

I'm not going to type that!

KEVIN

Okay, you can take out the "thank you" part.
(They laugh.)

DeMINTZ

What's so funny?

LEILA

Oh! Dr. DeMintz. I didn't see you there.

DeMINTZ

No. I know.

(He heads for his office, off.)

Can I get you something to drink? Orange juice? Whiskey?

LEILA

Oh, no, thankyou. I should really get going.

DEMINTZ (Off)

Kevin?

KEVIN

No. Thankyou.

DeMINTZ (Off)

I have just come from a most tumultuous meeting of the
Board of Governors. I am in need of replenishment. Your
name came up. Several times actually. It was almost like
some sort of incantation.

(He returns, glass of whiskey
in hand.)

No? Nothing?

LEILA

No, thanks. I'd better go pick up Anne.

DeMINTZ

Oh well then go, go, you have much better things to do than hang about here with us.

KEVIN

I'd better get going too.

DeMINTZ

Actually, Kevin, I wonder if I could ask you to stay for a moment.

(Pause.)

Can I call Safe Walk for you, Leila?

LEILA

No, thankyou, I'll be fine.

(To KEVIN.)

So uh . . . thank you for those receipts.

KEVIN

(Takes him a moment.)

Oh! Right! The receipts! Thank you.

(LEILA looks between the two men for a moment more.)

LEILA

Well I'll be off then. Good night.

(She picks up her bag, goes.)

DeMINTZ

` night!

(She's gone.)

Lovely woman. Have you met her daughter?

KEVIN

No, I haven't.

DeMINTZ

Little charmer.

(He sips his whiskey.)

Anyway, yes, quite the meeting. I got the distinct impression some of the Board members want to fire me.

KEVIN

Fire you?

DeMINTZ

Well you don't suppose you can be fired, do you? Your union would have my head. But yes, when disaster strikes, and oh did it strike, I think we can both agree that the evening was something of a debacle, no? -- the effluvia naturally accrues to me. Plus there was considerable sympathy for your position. A surprising amount, actually. Though perhaps not so surprising, given that you're defending babes in the woods.

(He sips his drink.)

KEVIN

Look, Dr. DeMintz, if you want me to apologize, I will.

DeMINTZ

You will?

KEVIN

Yes. I flew off the handle, I embarrassed the university. I'll issue a public apology.

DeMINTZ

Well. I don't think that's going to fix much.

KEVIN

Well, maybe not, but -

DeMINTZ

For you or for me.

KEVIN

Well, no, but -

DeMINTZ

Dr. Tenner, commit to the bit.

KEVIN

Excuse me?

DeMINTZ

"Commit to the bit." It's an old saying, from vaudeville, I believe, though god knows I've used it myself. Meaning don't back down. Once you start something, go for it. Don't just do one pratfall - do three. If you throw a pie in the President's face, don't wipe it off after. Throw another.

KEVIN

Yes, but I didn't mean to get you fired.

DeMINTZ

Oh ho, no no, don't you worry about that. You have your union, I have my lawyers. That's one reason I can act as I do, you see. Put on my fool's hat, play the court jester. At a certain point, one becomes much too expensive to get rid of. No, don't cry for me, Kevin Tenner. I am about as removable . . . as a burl in a very old tree.

(He sips.)

KEVIN

Well, if that's all, I think I'll --

(He starts to go. Before he can:)

DeMINTZ

I will, though, have to look into the situation between you and Ms. Witwicky.

(KEVIN stops.)

KEVIN

What situation?

DeMINTZ

It has been suggested to me that your relationship with her may have contravened our code of conduct.

KEVIN

Who told you that?

DeMINTZ

I can't say.

KEVIN

Bev?

DeMINTZ

I have heard it from a number of people. They say - well, some say - that may be why you are giving her the money.

KEVIN

It is.

DeMINTZ

Oh yes?

KEVIN

My relationship with her is that I am a professor, she is a student, and I am giving her the money because I would like to see her finish her degree!

DeMINTZ

Very admirable.

KEVIN

And that I won't apologize for!

DeMINTZ

Why do you keep talking about apologizing? No one is asking you to apologize!

KEVIN

No, you just want me to confess to -- some sort of -- lurid --

DeMINTZ

I'm not asking you to confess to anything.

KEVIN

Well good then -

DeMINTZ

Though I do expect you to cooperate with our investigation.

KEVIN

An investigation?

DeMINTZ

What did you think I was talking about?

KEVIN

An investigation? Like on a cop show?

DeMINTZ

I don't watch TV.

KEVIN

Dr. DeMintz, I am trying to help Leila out, just like I am trying to help our other students out, and that is as far as it goes!

DeMINTZ

Fine then, you have nothing to worry about!

KEVIN

But if you --

DEMINTZ

Though it seemed to go further than that when I walked in here a moment ago.

(Pause.)

KEVIN

(A realization.)

You want me to quit.

DeMINTZ

What?

KEVIN

You want me to quit. You can't fire me . . . So you'll get rid of me this way.

DeMINTZ

No.

KEVIN

Yes. And then once I'm gone . . . you're golden. But you know what? I'm not going to. I'm not going to quit.

DeMINTZ

No. I know.

(Pause.)

There's a very straightforward process to be followed. Some preliminary inquiries will be made, we will gather information from all parties. Maybe nothing will come of it, in which case we will all move on.

(He sits, a bit weary.)

Though if I were you, Kevin . . . I'd go for it. No, seriously. You seem like a man who could use some companionship. So if Leila is similarly inclined . . . and from what I saw when I walked in here, she may be . . . go for it. I've had a few opportunities myself, with various people. Bungled them all.

(He sips his drink.)

After a moment, KEVIN leaves, walks a safe distance away, stands, shaken.)

Fucktard.

KEVIN

(He starts to go.

LEILA appears.)

LEILA

I wanted to make sure you were okay.

(They regard each other.

Fade.)

Scene 4:

(Outside. BEV sits on a bench, checking her phone. LEILA approaches, sees her, hesitates a moment. Continues past her.)

BEV

Wanna see a picture?

LEILA

(Stops, turns.)

I don't know. Do I?

BEV

(Looking for it on the phone.)

It's you. At the dinner. There.

(She shows it to her.)

In that dress you were wearing. Pretty. Looking out at all the people. Looking so proud.

(Pause.)

You should be proud. It was a great dinner. Well. Except for the whole disaster part. But that wasn't your fault. You did a great job.

(Pause. It's obvious BEV is a little drunk.)

LEILA

Bev . . . don't you think you should go home?

BEV

No. Why?

(Pause.)

No, this is pretty much my home now. I used to take care of my mom, so I'd have to rush home. But, she died, so . . . Besides, I like it here. Especially this little spot. On nice days like this, I just like to come out here, get some sun, maybe do a little reading. Well, I used to read. Now I mostly just sit and get mad at people on Facebook.

(LEILA sits with her.)

Look, I was kinda hard on you at the dinner. That wasn't fair. It's none of my business what's going on between you and Kevin.

LEILA

There's --

BEV

And yes, I know, there's nothing going on. I know that's what you're going to tell me. And that's fine. I just . . . kinda don't believe it. Even if you do.

(Pause.)

But taking that money from him. That's a bad idea. Really. Really. I would like to see a person like you succeed. God, what I wouldn't give to be in your shoes. I tried going to university when I was young. It just . . . wasn't for me. So I came and worked at one instead. But you. You can do it. You have everything you need to do it. And I just don't want to see you lose that.

(Pause.)

You want to go to graduate school, right?

LEILA

Yes.

BEV

Good. That's what I thought. I'm glad to hear that. But there's some things you need to know.

(Pause.)

Got time for a coffee?

LEILA

Just a coffee?

BEV

Yes.

(Fade.)

Scene 5:

(KEVIN's office. KEVIN at work.

A knock, off.)

KEVIN

Come on in.

(LEILA enters.)

KEVIN (Cont.)

Hi!

LEILA

Hey.

KEVIN

Well this is an excellent surprise!

LEILA

Yeah, well I --

KEVIN

Have a seat.

LEILA

No, I -- can't stay.

(Pause.)

Look I, uh --

(She rummages in her bag.)

-- I got the cheque, thanks.

KEVIN

Oh, good.

(LEILA finds the cheque, holds it out to him.)

LEILA

Yeah, thanks. But I have to give it back to you.

KEVIN

What?

LEILA

I'm giving it back.

(Pause.)

Please. Take it.

No. KEVIN

Please. LEILA

What are you doing? KEVIN

LEILA
I have been told that if I take your money no one will write me a letter of reference. For graduate school. Well, except for you. And yours will be regarded as "tainted." That I'll just be regarded as your pet project --

Goddammit. KEVIN

-- and no one else on faculty will take me seriously. LEILA

Leila. KEVIN

And that basically, I'll just be regarded as your whore. LEILA
(Pause.)

And that there's going to be an investigation into your behaviour and if I've taken the money you will almost certainly be fired. And I'd rather not be responsible for destroying your academic career as well as mine, so please, just take the cheque!

(After a moment, she rips it up, throws the pieces on his desk. Starts out.)

Why are you listening to these people? KEVIN

BECAUSE I DON'T HAVE ANY CHOICE! I'm not like you, I don't have seventy-five thousand dollars to give away, I don't have a career I can throw away, I'm thirty thousand dollars in debt and the only way I have to ever, possibly, maybe get out of it is to pile on more and hope someone like you retires so I can have a fucking job! LEILA
(Pause.)

All I want . . . is what you have. Is that so bad? An office, and . . . bookcases that aren't made out of bricks and boards, and . . .

(She indicates.)

. . . diplomas on my wall with a lot of letters on them. And a place to live where Anne can have her own bedroom. To be comfortable. That's all. Comfortable . . .

(Pause.)

KEVIN

Fine. Fine.

(He sweeps the cheque pieces into the trash. Starts out.)

Excuse me.

LEILA

Where are you going?

KEVIN

To see the President again.

LEILA

Wait.

KEVIN

Close my door when you leave, please.

LEILA

It wasn't DeMintz.

(KEVIN regards her. Goes.)

LEILA stands there for a moment. Notices something on Kevin's desk. Dumbledore. She picks him up, turns him over in her hand. Exits.)

Scene 6:

(BEV's office. BEV on the phone.)

BEV

Yeah.

(Beat.)

Yeah. BEV (Cont.)
(Beat.)
Yeah, I know, but -- (Beat.)
Right.
KEVIN
(Off.)
BEV!
BEV
(Into the phone.)
Wait a minute, it's him. (KEVIN appears.)
BEV (Cont.)
It's after four, I'm closed.
KEVIN
Yeah, I don't think so.
BEV
I have the President on the phone!
KEVIN
Oh, really? What a surprise. (He takes the phone.)
Hello? Yeah, I need a few minutes with your pipeline here.
Your spy, your watchdog. But don't worry, once I'm done, you
probably will be able to fire me. (He hangs up. LEILA appears.)
LEILA
Kevin, can I talk to you?
KEVIN
You already did. (To BEV.)
Did you tell Leila not to take my cheque?
BEV
Of course.
KEVIN
Did you call her a whore?
BEV
What?

LEILA

That's not what I said.

KEVIN

That's pretty much what you said.

BEV

Of course I didn't call her a whore.

KEVIN

Well, that's very kind of --

BEV

I did, however, suggest many people might mistake her for one if she took your money. There's a big difference.

LEILA

Nice.

BEV

I'm sorry, but it's true.

KEVIN

The only way anyone would think that --

BEV

Oh please.

KEVIN

-- is if you planted the idea in their head. And to call Leila my "pet project" and to suggest that I want anything from her other than to watch her graduate next year is a lie, and you know it. Have you ever, ever seen me treat a student that way?

BEV

Not before now.

KEVIN

No, you haven't, and you know it!

BEV

Fine then, pure as the driven snow, that's you.

(To LEILA.)

Did you give him back the cheque?

LEILA
Yes.

BEV
Good girl.
(To KEVIN.)
Now, get out of my office.

KEVIN
Why, are you late for your afternoon tippie?

LEILA
Kevin, don't.

BEV
Get out.

KEVIN
Where is it? Is it here?
(He lifts up the plant.)
No? You have a new hiding place? Here?
(He opens the bottom drawer of her desk.)
No? Oh but look, it's my statue.
(He pulls it out, sets it on the desk.)

BEV
You can take it with you.

KEVIN
No, I'm going to leave it here for you to admire, while you enjoy your Pimm's.
(He reaches for her bag.)
Is it here?
(She lunges for it. He snatches it away. Draws out a mickey.)
Ooo, Wild Turkey. Classy. Let's have a drink.

LEILA
Kevin --

KEVIN
(Unscrewing the lid.)
Why not? Let's all have a drink. She's a drunk, you're a whore, and I'm just an old perv. Here's to us! Can I pour you some?
(He pours it on her desk.)

DRINK UP.

KEVIN (Cont.)

(And around her office.)

IT'S HAPPY HOUR EVERYONE. HAPPY HOUR IN BEV'S OFFICE!
EVERYBODY! DRINK UP!

(LEILA snatches the bottle away
from him.)

LEILA

Stop.

KEVIN

Why, don't you want a -- ?

LEILA

Just. Stop.

(Pause. He regards her.)

KEVIN

Right. I'm done. I'm done.

BEV

I'll say.

KEVIN

(To LEILA.)

Sorry. I'll go.

(He starts to leave.)

BEV

Don't forget your statue.

KEVIN

(He goes for it.)

That fucking statue. Just throw the FUCKING THING OUT!
(He grabs it, lobs it out the
door. From off:)

DeMINTZ

Oh fuck! Oh fuck shit. Oh -- What the hell?
(DeMINTZ enters, holding one
hand to his forehead, and the
statue in the other.

He holds it out to KEVIN.)

I believe . . . this is yours.

LEILA

(Moving to him.)

Oh my god. Are you all right?

DeMINTZ

I'm fine.

BEV

(Grabs a tissue from a box.)

Let me just --

DeMINTZ

I'm fine. Thank you.

(He takes the tissue, dabs at his forehead.)

Kevin. Could I see you out here for a moment?

KEVIN

That's okay. You don't have to. I quit.

(Pause.)

I quit!

(He regards the trashed office.)

As you can see.

(Pause. LEILA sinks into a chair.

KEVIN kneels to her.)

Leila -

BEV

Go please.

KEVIN

Let me just talk to her first.

(Pause.)

Look . . .

(He notices her hand.)

What are you holding?

(He uncurls it. He laughs.)

Of course. Dumbledore. He's a wizard, right?

(LEILA nods.)

Good. Just what I need right now.

(Pause.)

Look, I . . .

(He regards Dumbledore again.)

I want you to keep that. I want you to give it back to Anne.

And I want you to tell her . . . that it's the best gift I've

ever had. But I want her to keep it. Because wizards are very special. They know that nobody needs to let them become a wizard. They just are. They just go out into the world and do wizardy things. That's their real power. They know they have the magic in them already.

(Pause.)

DeMINTZ

I take it someone in here has been drinking.

KEVIN

Yes. Me.

(He goes to the bottle,
drains it.)

I shouldn't drink during the day. I'm a mean drunk.

(He looks to LEILA for a long
moment. Wants to say something
to her. Instead, he waves the
bottle.)

I guess I'd better keep this. I might need the deposit.

(He goes.)

DeMINTZ

I had no idea he had a drinking problem.

BEV

Neither did I.

(Fade.)

Scene 7:

(DeMINTZ moves forward, into his
light, putting on a flashy
jacket. As he speaks, LEILA
unrolls a canvas sea-and-sky
behind him.)

DeMINTZ

Well, thankyou, thankyou very much for coming out this
evening, folks, and I just thought I'd let you know
that we've raised . . .

(He checks a card.)

-- One hundred and sixty-five thousand, four-hundred and seventy-eight dollars and eighty-six cents towards the new performance centre. Who gave the eighty-six cents?

(Laughter, applause.

Music under.)

Y'know folks . . . sometimes people ask me why I love theatre so much. Not so much that I didn't quit it for a real job --

(Laughter.)

. . . But an awful lot. And you know what I tell them? I tell them it's because -

(LEILA throws him his cane.
Perfect catch.)

DeMINTZ (Cont.)

-- I just love make-believe --

(She throws him his hat. He puts it on.)

-- So darn much.

(Sings.)

Say, it's only a paper moon
Sailing over a cardboard sea
But it wouldn't be make-believe
If you believed in me

(LEILA brings on a painted,
standing palm tree.)

Yes, it's only a canvas sky
Hanging over a muslin tree
But it wouldn't be make-believe
If you believed in me

(LEILA brings on a painted,
standing arcade machine.)

Without your love
It's a honky-tonk parade
Without your love
It's a melody played in a penny arcade

It's a Barnum and Bailey world
Just as phony as it can be
But it's never been make-believe
'Cuz you believe in me

(Dance break. As DeMINTZ dances,
LEILA attempts to lower a
painted crescent moon from above
the sea-and-skyscape. It gets
stuck. She exits, reappears with
a ladder, disappears behind the

sea-and-sky. Reappears at the top of the ladder, dislodges the moon, lowers it.

DeMINTZ resumes singing.)

It's a Barnum and Bailey world
Just as phony as it can be
But it's never been make-believe
'Cuz you -

(Few dance steps.)

-- believe -

(Few more.)

-- in me!

(And a few more for the big finish. Applause, which DeMINTZ gratefully acknowledges. To the side, in dim light, we see LEILA sink into a chair, exhausted.)

Scene 8:

(The sound of applause resolves into birdsong, and the sound of young people nearby. Outdoors.)

KEVIN sits on a bench, watching the young people in the distance.

LEILA enters, carrying the statue. She holds it out to him.)

LEILA

I believe this is yours.

KEVIN
(Smiles.)

Thanks.

(He takes it. She sits with him. They sit for a moment.)

LEILA

Did you get your stuff?

KEVIN

Yes, conveniently they put it in boxes and moved it all out of my office for me. Which I thought was very, you know, thoughtful.

LEILA

Well, you are the winner of the Aspiration Award.

KEVIN

(He regards the statue dolorously.)

Yes. I am.

(Pause.)

LEILA

What are you going to do?

KEVIN

With my stuff?

LEILA

Now.

KEVIN

Oh. Now. Well, I thought I might . . . take up paragliding.

LEILA

(Amused.)

Really?

KEVIN

Yeah, or, you know . . . become a mercenary in the Middle East, or . . . something like that.

LEILA

Sounds good.

KEVIN

Yeah. Though actually . . . you remember that trip to Thailand I mentioned?

LEILA

Yeah.

KEVIN

I booked it.

LEILA
What?

KEVIN
I booked it.

LEILA
Oh.

KEVIN
Yeah!

LEILA
I thought you were kidding.

KEVIN
So did I! But I was thinking about what I should do, and that maybe I should get out of Dodge for a while. So I called up some friends I have there from when I did my thing, asked them if I could come visit. I'll do that for a while and then . . . we'll see how it goes.

LEILA
Sounds great.

KEVIN
I think it will be, yeah.
(Pause.)

LEILA
I got a loan.

KEVIN
Oh. Yeah?

LEILA
Yeah. Puts me about another twenty-thousand in the hole. I'm really excited!

KEVIN
Fabulous.

LEILA
Yeah, thanks.
(Pause.)

KEVIN
You know, I could still give you the --

LEILA

No! What? The cheque? Are you fucking kidding me? No!

KEVIN

I could send you the money by PayPal.

LEILA

NO!

KEVIN

Right.

(Pause.)

LEILA

But, um, I just want to say that . . . I really appreciated what you had to say to me . . . you know, in Bev's office . . . about what to tell Anne, and . . . about being a wizard and everything. And while I'm not going to do that, because um . . . I have to live in the real world and everything . . . I'd really like it if you would come and tell Anne those things yourself.

KEVIN

Really?

LEILA

Yeah. Come have dinner with us, or something.

(Pause.)

KEVIN

I'd really like that.

LEILA

Yeah, well, we would too.

(Pause.)

But I tell you what . . . first, you go to Thailand. Go to Thailand, don't be a professor, go wild, meet some crazy Thai woman. Hang out on the beach with her, eat papayas at dawn. Think about coming back, think about not coming back. "Run in fields." You know?

(Pause.)

And then . . . if you do decide to come back . . . we usually eat around six.

(Pause. She kisses him on the cheek.)

Bye.

(She goes.)

KEVIN stands there for a moment, watching her leave. Goes to pick up the statue, resting on the bench. Considers it, puts it back. Regards the young people playing in the distance, then turns to go. Not the way LEILA left. He looks out, a little apprehensive.

Goes.

Fade.)

The End

May 30, 2018

Performance rights must be secured before production. For contact information, please visit the [Run in Fields information page](#)

A Note on the "Paper Moon" number:

For the original production of *Run in Fields*, we did not have the ability to rig a moon to fly in as indicated in the script, and faced challenges in getting the sea and sky backdrop on and off the stage. If you're in the same situation, here's the fix we used, which might work for you too, and which turned out to be a pretty powerful little scene in itself:

During DeMintz's dance break, Leila enters holding a large paper moon attached to a pole and string, climbs the ladder, and lowers the moon in front of the backdrop (see photo below). When the number is over, DeMintz exits to applause. The applause dies out, and lights transition to a general work light. It's after the show. Leila descends the ladder, and hands the moon off to a stage hand. She removes her heels. She gathers up the tree and the penny arcade machine and hands them to the stage hand also. She stands there for a moment, exhausted, then starts to maneuver the backdrop offstage. The stage hand returns. They regard the backdrop, roll their eyes, and the stage hand maneuvers it the rest of the way off. Leila gathers up her heels, looks out at the empty hall, sighs, and goes. -FM



Steve Hill & Larissa Coser. Backdrop, moon and tree: Aaramë Robillard. Photo: Zachary Tannar