

Notes from the Underground Boy

By Thomas Daniel Valls

2/13/2013

Characters

THE BOY 20; fine, white, clean-shaven, light-haired. Beautiful.

ERIC 23; less than average, as if falling from handsome.

FATHER 55; a heavy-set man with a physique that suggests he's let life get the better of him, balding.

JOHN; 42, Slightly-overweight man. Stubble growing thick and gray.

STAGE MANAGER 20. Sculpted, white, clean, beautiful young man. Wears a suit.

At RISE:

The BOY enters stage left. He carries a six-pack. He sees us.

He exits. Reenters, dragging along the STAGE MANAGER and a collapsible chair to upstage right, far in the corner. He sets the chair and places the STAGE MANAGER down. The BOY exits once again stage right and reappears once again, rolling out a black cart with all the props needed throughout the show and sets it on the stage right side of the stage manager. The BOY gives the thumbs up, and exits stage left. Nothing happens. The BOY returns onstage with a script...

BOY

Shit- sorry- all over the place.

He hands it to the STAGE MANAGER and then exits, once more, stage left.

S.M.

‘At Rise: a sidewalk.

The Boy enters stage left, carrying a six-pack.’

BOY

It should read, at rise: The boy enters stage left, stumbling, tripping, and sniffing.

Come on, say it! Come on, like last time!

S.M.

You didn’t have me here last time.

BOY

Last time, I didn’t go through with any... any of it. That’s your job. To make sure things work the way they should. The way I want them to, cool?

S.M.

Yeah.

BOY

For now on, I’ll call the shots, the directions, then you repeat.

S.M.

Alright.

BOY

Then say it!

Running offstage once more...

From the top! GO!

S.M.

'The boy enters stage left, stumbling, tripping, and sniffing.'

BOY

He throws out the empty bottle of beer.

S.M.

'He does so.'

BOY

And takes out another from the plastic bag.

S.M.

'He does so.'

BOY

He takes a nice, long, sip- No. Gulp.

S.M.

'He does so.'

BOY

And he continues to drown himself away.

S.M.

'He does so.'

BOY

John enters stage right. Neither one of the characters recognize each other to be in the same place at all.

S.M.

'John enters stage right. Neither one of the characters recognize each other to be in the same place at all.'

BOY

The ghost light from a computer screen illuminates the two men, though there is none to be found.

S.M.

'The light does so.'

The man and the boy. BOY

‘Swig.’ S.M.

John writes. BOY

A-S-L? JOHN

‘Age, sex, location.’ S.M.

BOY
An instant messaging sound rings simultaneously when the Boy says the word ‘sound’.

S.M.
‘An instant messaging sound rings simultaneously when the Boy says the word ‘sound’.’

BOY
Sound. Twenty, Male, Bowery. *Sound.*

JOHN
Forty-Two, Male, Gramercy.

BOY
Sound.

JOHN
You wanna come over?

BOY
Sound. I wanna come all over. Sound.

JOHN
What’s your number?

BOY
Sound.

JOHN
Question Mark.

BOY
Sound.

Smig. S.M.
No- no, not yet... Not yet... it's not right. BOY
To JOHN.
You, off, now.
JOHN
'Question mark.'
BOY
I said get off-! I mean- sound! I mean... 'John exits stage right'...
S.M.
John exits stage right.
JOHN does so.
BOY
...Good... and... Eric enters stage left in his boxers!
S.M.
'ERIC runs on stage left in his boxers.'
'Enters', 'runs'... Eric- Eric, good.
ERIC
It's time already?
BOY
Just looking for a different tactic...
ERIC
I thought you were gonna start with John and all that *texting bullshit*...
BOY
Where ever you think it'll be good.
ERIC
I wasn't dressed yet.
BOY
It doesn't matter.
ERIC
This is your game.
BOY
Grow A Pair.

ERIC
-Okay, okay, relax, it's all fine. All dandy. Umm... Okay... yeah, sure... then... 'Babe?'

BOY
Following into it, playing along.
Yeah?

ERIC
Happy anniversary.

BOY
Entirely let down.
I'm think I'm gonna be sick.

ERIC
Not paying any attention at all.
But I'm sure that I can think of a few ways to make up for that.

Babe? ...Babe? ...Hello. Yo.

BOY
NO, Goddamn it this isn't it either!
Get off. I'm sorry, Eric, please, get off. Get off. OFF. NOW.

ERIC
Seriously?

BOY
Scrap the whole damn thing.

ERIC
We agreed you'd let me start it off this way, my way.

BOY
-I thought I would, but-

ERIC
-Well why not-?

BOY
-Because this is my show, that's why!

ERIC
You sound like your *father*.

BOY
Eric exits stage right.

S.M.
'Eric exits stage right.'

ERIC does exit offstage. FATHER has appeared instead.

FATHER

Well I'm here.

BOY

What are you doing here?

FATHER

The boy from earlier called my name so I thought I'd come see what was the matter-

BOY

Hey!

S.M.

'Beat.'

BOY

Did you bring him up here?

S.M.

'Beat.'

BOY

Hey, I'm talking to you!

S.M.

'...Ellipses...'

BOY

Yeah, yeah, fuck you very much.

Dad, I dunno how you got on here, I dunno who called you-

FATHER

I just said-

BOY

I heard you. *I* gotta be the one to call you up here. No one else, understand? This is *mine*.

FATHER

- If it all belongs to you then aren't you responsible for anything it says or does? It's like a business-

BOY

-You never had a *business*-

FATHER

-Well I know a little something about ethics-

BOY

-Look, I... I... I promise I'll call for you later, alright?

FATHER

We haven't had our Thursdays in... I dunno, ten years. I can't see in the when I'm not up front here, it's too dark...

BOY

Sorry.

FATHER

Let's do this, okay, what if we squeeze in a couple more minutes with me and you and then everything will be fine, alright? you'll *have* something good.

BOY

There's a formula.

S.M.

'Swig.'

FATHER

Put me in.

BOY

Please, don't make me make you.

FATHER

We never spend time. We never talk.

BOY

We talk.

FATHER

Asking the same questions.

BOY

Talking can be a whole lot of things.

FATHER

I want to try.

BOY

I don't.

FATHER

...This is something *new*.

BOY

Nothing's new.

FATHER

New to me- you never tell me nothing. I always gotta hear everything from your mother.

BOY

It isn't anything new!

Your mother's in this one too isn't she? FATHER

No, she isn't! BOY

'Swig.' S.M.

You're swigging it like apple juice. FATHER

Well it's not. BOY

Get rid of it. FATHER

Get off my stage. BOY

Give it. FATHER

HEY. You're not supposed to care about this! BOY

Why are you yelling at me-? FATHER

-It's all there in the script Daddy-O; find the scene, find the lines, discover the context. BOY

I wore my good pants for you today. FATHER

Read your lines. In the dark. In the corner. If you need help seeing something, ask the stage manager, he has a flashlight. BOY

The STAGE MANAGER clicks a flashlight on and off a couple times.

Give me the bottle, FATHER

The isn't about that. No. 'Father exits stage left'. BOY

'FATHER exits stage left.' S.M.

FATHER does.

Gimme a sip. BOY

‘The Boy takes a swig of beer. Aside.’ S.M.

BOY
Aside.
Let’s get it straight, alright? This isn’t meant to be a play about homos, okay? I’m just putting it out there, it’s in fact, a play about homosexuals, written by a... *homosexual*, but it’s not really about homosexuality- the whole idea of labeling a piece of work something just because of what it is really just, freaks me out because then the play would be about filling other people’s shoes and It’s not suppose to be about that, it’s just... I’m looking for the reason behind giving up everything I ever wanted and needed because I sought out to be alone, only in the end, all I ever really wanted was a pat on the back, a lock of the lips that say that ‘everything’s going to be alright because I’m here for you’.

I know how to go. How it always starts. ‘Eric enters, dressed only with a towel around his waist’.

S.M.
ERIC enters, dressed only with a towel around his waist.

BOY
The boy is in his boxers and a tee shirt.

S.M.
‘The BOY strips to his boxers and tee shirt.’

ERIC
Hey.

BOY
Hey.

ERIC
That was pretty nice.

BOY
Very nice actually.

ERIC
I was actually thinking we could go back for a little while longer and finish what we started.

BOY
Didn’t we finish?

ERIC

You could sleep over if you'd like. Maybe you could sleep in. Maybe I could wake you up.

BOY

Gotta work.

ERIC

Is it done?

BOY

When's it ever done?

ERIC

When you write 'the end'.

BOY

'Curtain'.

ERIC

You should let me read it.

BOY

I dunno what I'm getting at.

ERIC

You know.

BOY

Wanna give me a couple pointers?

ERIC

Right.

BOY

(Reciting from his laptop.)

The Boy takes a swig.

S.M.

'Swig.'

ERIC

Something to eat?

BOY

No.

P-B-J? ERIC

No. BOY

Stop for a second? Please? ERIC

What? BOY

I saw Grace yesterday. You gave her a copy. ERIC

Yeah. BOY

Same one I asked for. ERIC

Grace's opinion. It's good. BOY

What's wrong with mine? ERIC

You're complicated. BOY

I'm your boyfriend. ERIC

Exactly. BOY

Exactly. ERIC

'Aside.' S.M.

OH FUCK OFF! BOY

'In.' S.M.

ERIC

It's about me isn't it? It's fine if it is, I'm not gonna hold you back from writing it if it is, okay?

BOY

I'm not looking for permission.

ERIC

So it is about me?

BOY

It's not about *you*.

ERIC

Then it's about your father.

BOY

Shaking the bottle.

Getting low.

ERIC

Because I know what a bastard he's been to you; I know if I were to see him right now I'd kill him for the things he did to you...

S.M.

'Aside.'

BOY

The summations cut away the months of eating, fucking, and gathering that's been accumulating up until this point. He enjoys reminding me of things I've never forgotten. Ticks are friendlier.

S.M.

'In.'

BOY

...*Terrible* things. I need another-

ERIC

Really *fucking* terrible things, Babe. You've cried too many nights because of him, locked yourself away too many nights to your laptop when you could've been in bed with me or on the sofa watching Planet Earth, and I get it, I do. It's a way of letting go, or getting back, or whatever the hell it is you're trying to do.

S.M.

'Aside.'

BOY

See what I mean?

S.M.

'In'.

ERIC

You know this is what we do, okay- we exchange secrets, we exchange our feelings, the shit that keep us up at night- that's what were supposed to be here for, babe-

BOY

That's what my computer's for. If I need to talk to you about something so detrimental that I need a second opinion, *your* opinion, I will tell come to you, okay?

ERIC

You wanted Grace's.

BOY

That's right.

ERIC

She let me look at it you know.

BOY

Bullshit.

ERIC

I read up to the third scene, 'Galileo's Blue Balls', that's what you called it, right?

BOY

Without my permission?

ERIC

The point is that if you can take what I've said, secrets we've both shared with each other, that I've shared with you and only you, and put it all into your play while simultaneously making the lead character's name my middle name, how fucking obvious is that- then I don't see why you can't trust me enough to let me in-!

BOY

-I DON'T WANT YOU KNOWING EVERYTHING ABOUT ME!

Suddenly, the lights flicker, there's light rumbling, as if the entire theatre was shaking for a moment. Only the BOY takes notice.

BOY

I need to get out of here for a bit.

ERIC

I put myself on a silver platter for you every single night I can baby, the same silver platter you've never put yourself on for me. You physically *can't* unless it's you, unless you're the one touching, holding, jacking yourself over my mouth, ready to expel all your little bitty cum surfers all over me and as soon as you do... it's as if you're done for dinner.

BOY

You're talking about busting a nut-?

ERIC

YOU JUST STARE AT IT AND YOU DO NOTHING. A little assistance could be generous and caring and loving and I dunno, maybe a little bit satisfying, a little bit expected, *heaven forbid*, but instead you turned me away the way you always do, just to go pinch out the rubber and brush your teeth and gargle them with that Michelob mouthwash you love so much- all because you wanna keep to yourself a little bit.

BOY

Privacy's a joke?

ERIC

It is when you say you wanna be in a relationship with somebody! When you say you *love* somebody.

BOY

We're two people, not Siamese cunts forced to finger-fuck one another.

ERIC

And you make sure that's always the case don't you? You always make sure to blast the Tchaikovsky, change the weekly password, ensure to dose yourself away so the dizziness and the barley drowns-

BOY

- You're the one who's putting out the half-racks, I'm the one in need for some ringing in my ears-

ERIC

I do it so it looks like, feels like, I'm giving you all I've ever known and wanted up until this moment. Yeah, my kitchen's one of those things, too, cabinet space and all. I just wanna be able to give you what you try so hard to give to yourself.

BOY

So then you want me to be a log.

ERIC

No, that's not what I mean-

BOY

How about when I moan I make sure you can hardly hear it?

ERIC

You're being ridiculous.

BOY

And instead of biting your neck and nipples and chest and naval I'll just fucking nibble like a goldfish, sucking out the splinters from your every tooth and nail-

ERIC

I'm talking about reconciliation.

BOY

Oh. Oh, sure. Not a problem. Give me one second.

To the Stage Manager.

You wouldn't happen to have some peanut butter on you, would you?

S.M.

Crunchy or smooth?

BOY

Come on.

S.M.

Crunchy.

BOY

Awesome.

S.M.

'The Boy walks over to take the jar of crunchy peanut butter. The Stage Manager holds it out for him.'

BOY

Thanks.

S.M.

The Boy turns to Eric.

BOY

Eric.

ERIC

Yeah?

BOY

We're going to be taking it back about five months, understand me?

ERIC

Wait, wait, wait- five months? That's not part of this- that's not part of the script.

BOY

Is now.

ERIC

But.

BOY

I made some promises in the opening and closing monologues and I kinda realized that I missing a couple important parts- the parts where you and I were actually happy. Together, I mean. And also, you were looking to know why so I figured- let's rehash it all up and out there.

ERIC

It's gonna be entirely expository.

BOY

Two pages...

ERIC

...Of exposition.

ADAM

Trust me.

S.M.

'Suddenly realizing.'

ERIC

Oh... That's crunchy peanut butter, isn't it?

BOY

Not really the most symbolic of items... but it's what I got. Flavor's strong.

You good?

ERIC

Yeah, yeah, I think I can. I think we can. Just put the jar down and we'll be good to go.

S.M.

The Boy does so.

ERIC mentally and physically prepares himself.

BOY

Whenever you're ready.

S.M.

Ready.

BOY

Go.

S.M.

'Eric and the Boy throw themselves onto each other; nothing outlandish; just... kissing. Kissing. Still at it.'

They're doing just that. In between kissing...

BOY

Thanks for the night.

ERIC

God your mouth, moved in *perfect* synchrony with the taxi driving over the potholes- I don't know how the *hell* you did it, but-

BOY

When something's got me going it's hard for me to stop.

ERIC

Didn't know you were capable of doing so.

S.M.

'They continue kissing.'

ERIC

Happy anniversary, baby.

BOY

You have no fucking clue how adorable I find it that you insist on celebrating our four-month anniversary.

S.M.

Peck.

They kiss.

BOY

And how upset I am...

S.M.

Peck.

They kiss.

BOY

...that while you supplied the evening with roasted lamb covered in mountains of tatziki and I with a taxi ride that made you feel like you were gliding over the Hudson, I... didn't... do... like, anyth-

ERIC

That

S.M.

'Peck.'

ERIC

...Is

S.M.

'Peck.'

ERIC

...Entirely

S.M.

'Peck.'

BOY

To the STAGE MANAGER, Aside.

-Say that one more time-

ERIC

Still in the moment.

...Fine.

S.M.

ERIC goes for the touchdown. He reaches inside the BOY's pants.

He does.

BOY

Woah, easy tiger.

ERIC

I said it's fine.

I feel bad I couldn't do anything though.

BOY

That's fine.

ERIC

Unable to.

BOY

I figured, I know it's okay.

ERIC

That's not how it feels though.

BOY

That's not how I want it to feel either.

ERIC

Sorry. I'm upset.

BOY

Huh. Shame. Shameful, even. Loaded gun and everything... then, uh- just gimme one of your plays to read tonight and we'll call it even, sound good?

ERIC

That stuff's kinda sacred.

BOY

Roasted lamb over a bed of brown rice and tatziki doesn't normally go without a bit of payback. Besides, I have another surprise in the cabinet waiting for you boyfriend.

ERIC

What?

BOY

Settlement first.

ERIC

It's not ready.

BOY

Never is.

ERIC

It's all I got to me, though.

BOY

ERIC
And I want all of you.

BOY
But I...

ERIC
What?

BOY
Never mind.

ERIC
Yeah?

BOY
I'll could print out a couple pages...

ERIC
A couple acts.

BOY
A couple scenes.

ERIC
At least five.

BOY
Two.

ERIC
Three.

BOY
...Done.

ERIC
...Done.

They kiss. ERIC goes to exit.

I haven't opened it yet. It's on the top shelf. I'm gonna rinse off my stomach.

BOY
Okay.

ERIC

I'll be waiting for you to catch up.

ERIC leaves.

S.M.

The Boy opens the cabinet. Peanut butter's in it. He takes it out and looks at it. He just looks at it. It's quite possibly the most terrifying thing ever. Aside.

BOY

I'm holding in my hands... the gluten-free Holy Grail that ruined everything in a single blow. Extra chunky... *chunky*... not smooth...

ERIC walks back onstage. Different of the scene.

He bought extra crunchy peanut butter, for me, specifically when he had told me a long time ago-

ERIC

Happily, child-like.

'I grew up with it creamy all my life. I can't stand how you'd ever eat it crunchy. You can take it to the grave; so *long* as I live I'll never eat that shit or have it inside my kitchen cabinets!'

BOY

Crunchy peanut butter, okay, is my favorite shit on the entire planet. My mom would give it to me on slices of Wonder after a movie at the three dollar super saver when we couldn't afford the kid's packs with gummy bears. Right then, right there. Everything became a nuisance. Everything became too much. Loving turned to hovering. Cuddling turned to unwanted shadow. And every time I gave him something it was as if I was cutting my limbs for the collection plate because it was all I figured I could give but the one thing I never wanted to give up. It was at that moment that I realized...

Suddenly, the rumbling intensified greatly and quickly until the entire theatre goes black with the noise of what sounds like a circuit breaking. ERIC, BOY, JOHN, FATHER, and STAGE MANAGER sigh in distress and annoyance, as if the theatre truly went dark.

ERIC

What happened?

S.M.

'There is no explanation.'

BOY

No explanation? There's supposed to be an explanation! HEARTBEAT! BEAT!

I don't know asshole!

S.M.

YOU MADE ME BLIND?

FATHER

I'm sorry! I'm sorry! Look please, help me fix this, I can fix this-!

BOY

You have a lot of explaining to do!

ERIC

'He has a lot of explaining to do.'

S.M.

It's dark in here.

JOHN

'He has a lot of explaining to do.'

S.M.

-Oh my GOD-

BOY

-FIX THE LIGHTS-

S.M.

-Can someone just do something-!?

ERIC

FIXTHEFUCKINGLIGHTS!

S.M.

-EVERYBODY JUST SHUT UP!

BOY

'The lights turn back on.'

S.M.

THANK YOU.

'The lights turn back on.'

They do. All four men and the STAGE MANAGER are on stage.

BOY
That's better.

ERIC
What happened?

BOY
I... I *don't* know... honestly...

FATHER
I need another script- I think I lost mine-

BOY
Ask him.

The STAGE MANAGER holds out another copy of the script.

S.M.
'The STAGE MANAGER is holding out another copy of the script.'

FATHER
Cool.

He goes to take it.

ERIC
So?

BOY
I dunno what happened... I lost breath... lost the id and the ego in a single blow- sucker punch to the stomach and frontal lobe all at the same time...

JOHN
You almost made me forget my lines.

BOY
Well I'm sorry. You know for a moment everything got all scrambled up. Words and letters all over the place, just words and letters digits, made no sense put together but on their own made complete sense which made it even more... fuck it hurts...

ERIC
Thoughts?

BOY
...Like, I dunno- *snow tipped giraffes... orange flavored linoleum... racing retrograde racists...* and then a whole bunch of codes- like, god this sounds ridiculous... like a high in reverse. 'A low'?

Sounds ecstatic.

JOHN

You do all that 'X-T-C' boy?

FATHER

Like what?

ERIC

...a code... that sounded, smelled, tasted, felt like- I was punching my keyboard harder than I've ever typed. Just trying to hit everything out at once... overload of the worst kind. My head...I don't know what's happening to me.

BOY

ERIC
Going in to massage the BOY.

Just breathe, babe.

BOY

Don't touch me.

FATHER

Maybe the stage manager has some coffee or tea of something.

S.M.

I got a lot of beer.

FATHER

Just breathe, son.

ERIC

He's fine.

FATHER

I know what's fine.

ERIC

Yeah.

He goes to exit. JOHN is in his way.

I know who you are. I know what you are.

JOHN

What?

ERIC

Holding up his script.

'Forty-two, male, Bowery.'

No response. JOHN suddenly seems ashamed.

Get the fuck out of the way.

ERIC exits.

FATHER

Who are you?

S.M.

That's John.

FATHER

Who?

S.M.

John.

BOY

Stop it.

S.M.

'42, A slightly-overweight man who once used to be beautiful. He has fallen, and looks accordingly.'

BOY

Stage Manager shuts the fuck up.

JOHN

It's just gonna be fun. I heard about you. You fucking suck. I broke my father's face in, you know.

FATHER

What did I do?

JOHN spits at the FATHER'S shoe. He exits.

FATHER

What are they talking about?

BOY

Nothing.

FATHER

What are you telling them?

BOY
Please.

FATHER
What are you saying?

BOY
You're coming up soon. Your scene, I mean.

FATHER
What's going on with you?

BOY
It's nothing.

The BOY throws the peanut butter to FATHER.
Get it out of my sight. But don't you fucking eat it.

*FATHER hands it to the STAGE MANAGER and exits, sticking the
finger at the BOY as he does so.*

Eric reenters Stage Right.

S.M.
'Eric reenters Stage Right.'

He does.

ERIC
Whuttsnuup? I can do to help out?

BOY
...Yeah, whatever you want, look, we're halfway through the past, let's pick up the pace, *a little bit*.
And you...

To the STAGE MANAGER.
You. Don't speak out of line. Got it? GOT IT?

S.M.
'The Stage Manager doesn't respond.'

BOY
Damn fucking straight you don't...

ERIC
Yeah sure... and, um, hey, yeah, babe? Is it all really buried?

S.M.

'The Boy nods. It is.'

ERIC

Just checking.

So, uh cool. Which way do you wanna direct this, then?

BOY

To them.

BOY points to the audience. ERIC speaks out to the audience.

ERIC

To us.

Hi.

BOY

To us.

Hi.

ERIC

To us.

Hiiii.

BOY

To us.

Can you just do go already?

All to us.

ERIC

Well, to put it simply; they now feed off of each other.

BOY

Right on. So, now, Eric and I will exchange dialogue with a very quick and informal analysis of the exchange, therefore, when you witness dialogue I've extracted from the conscious life, the scripted life, you'll see many parallelisms and context clues. Are you ready?

ERIC

Absolutely.

BOY

Alright, let's go.

They clear their throats, placing great emphasis and meaning behind the simplest of numbers.

One.

ERIC
Two.

BOY
Three.

ERIC
Four.

BOY
Five.

ERIC
Six.

BOY
Did we just count one through six?

ERIC
Absolutely not.

BOY
That's wonderful. As you can see, we can observe that by replacing numbers with what we really mean to say, we're only left with the assumptions of what has actually been said.

ERIC
In this case, this assumption is identified when he asks me, 'Did we just count one through six?'

BOY
Side note, keep in mind, the order in which these numbers were presented.

ERIC
In order, in sequence. You expected the outcome before it was even said, right?

BOY
That's not coincidence. It's the science and the trick of the trade. Manipulating results by saying what needs to be said just to get by and pretend anything of dire importance isn't being said at all.

ERIC
Or in your case, manipulating what I'm saying so you can have your say. So you can have some sort of pitiful satisfaction that'll leave me entirely in the dark because you're too afraid to enter it. Jesus Christ, payback's a big bowl of bitch-flakes for you, isn't it?

BOY
NO. It's not about PAYBACK.

S.M.

‘Aside.’

BOY

But you need to understand that I’m so blatantly unaware of the reasons for what I’m doing. Maybe... just maybe, because it’s the one thing I’m terrified of beyond all else. But it’s funny, you know? I do know I’m scared of something. And yes, this is an aside within an aside. It’s still my rules.

S.M.

‘In.’

BOY

It’s not, Eric. After all, what could be inferred from my question ‘did we just count one through six?’

ERIC

The question to which I answered...

BOY

‘Not at all’; even though it can be assumed that even though we’re both aware that we did count one through six, even though I now cringe at the sight of his shriveled Smurf dick and Pillsbury tummy coated in happy trail, even though now he rolls his eyes whenever I talk about writing as an actual lifestyle, even though I’ve hinted at the fact that he’ll never amount to half the talent I have, even though he’s told Grace that everything I do is a complete waste. Even then, we still come home to fuck and cuddle up on the sofa; our only exchanges coming from slurping up chicken Ramen and the sucking of my teeth that signify that once again, I am utterly and totally disgusted with the man next to me, and that I know I deserve every single ounce of it because I’m terrified of something I’ve never admitted to. It can be assumed that there’s still some ounce of dignity, some ounce of respect, that’s been entirely outweighed by a lot of...

There’s rumbling once again. The BOY and ERIC and STAGE MANAGER take notice.

‘The rumbling fades away.’

To the still slightly-alarmed STAGE MANAGER.

Say it, say it.

S.M.

‘The rumbling fades away.’

It does.

BOY

Good.

Beat. S.M.

Nice and steady. BOY

Beat. S.M.

Nice and easy. BOY

Beat. S.M.

Action. BOY

To ERIC.

I never signed up to read each other's little black book, okay? And not even just my little black book. My little black subway rides. My little black investments. My little black outings with family and friends. My little black days sleeping in and eating my little black frosted flakes.

'Aside.' S.M.

Here's my chance. BOY

'In.' S.M.

It's because I love you that I worry about you. ERIC

'Aside'. S.M.

...Fuck I can't say it. BOY

'In.' S.M.

Eric. You're salvation to me. BOY

ERIC
Do you ever think we should...

S.M.
'Aside.'

BOY
I'm holding my breath.

S.M.
'In.'

BOY
What?

ERIC
It's always the same thing.

BOY
Eric...

S.M.
'Aside.'

BOY
He's trying to let go. I know because I know the subtext of what he's saying. I'm writing it, remember? But he can't. And I can't. We dunno how to do it.

S.M.
'In.'

BOY
I still *want* you. I want you to be happy. With me.

S.M.
'One.'

ERIC
Really?

S.M.
'Two.'

BOY
You deserve everything.

	S.M.
'Three.'	
	ERIC
You really mean that?	
	S.M.
'Four.'	
	BOY
Of course I do.	
	S.M.
'Five.'	
	ERIC
Me too.	
	S.M.
'Six.'	
	ERIC
Fuck...	
	BOY
What is it?	
	S.M.
'Aside.'	
	BOY
I already know.	
	ERIC
Nothing.	
	S.M.
'In.'	
	BOY
It'll work out. We'll work out. We need to.	
	ERIC
It'd be nice to know what we're doing.	
	BOY
Yeah.	

I love you. ERIC
I know. BOY
I'll call you later tonight, when you're done with... everything. ERIC
Yeah... yeah, sure thing... sounds good. BOY

ERIC exits.

'Aside.' S.M.
I need to escape. BOY
'Beat'. S.M.

There won't be any of that. BOY
Come on. S.M.

'John enters from the opposite side of the stage.' BOY
No. S.M.

Do it. Just do it. BOY
'John enters from the opposite side of the stage.' S.M.

JOHN does so.

BOY
'John enters in a bathrobe. He carries popper with him.'

S.M.
He's already here.

Hi. JOHN

'Aside.' S.M.

BOY
When either of the characters directions says 'sniff', the characters will take a deep, long, satisfying inhale. These will not be recited by the stage manager. I'm adding that part in.

To the stage manager.
You ready to keep up?

Yes. 'In.' S.M.

You have candles. BOY

JOHN
Sniff.
I Thought I'd make it special.

BOY
That's nice of you.

Handing out a wad of cash.

JOHN
Here you go.

BOY
What's this?

JOHN
For the cab.

BOY
It's a hundred and fifty dollars.

JOHN
Sniff.
I'd feel bad if you didn't take it.

BOY
What's there to feel bad about?

You nervous? JOHN

Yes. BOY

You don't have to be. JOHN

I have a lot of work to do. BOY

You're a student? JOHN

Yeah, no, I don't know, *actually*. BOY

Just relax. JOHN

I can't. BOY

Take some. JOHN

What is it? BOY

Get's you in the mood. Real fast. Faster. JOHN

'Aside.' S.M.

BOY

The amyl nitrates inhaled relax the muscles and enhance arousal. It smells like a potpourri-scented permanent marker and makes your body convulse and release at the same time as if you were ejaculating for thirty seconds straight... or at least as long as the effects lasted. I don't take it.

'In'. S.M.

You stressed? JOHN

Yes, no, yeah, very. BOY

You sure you don't want? JOHN

Not my thing. BOY

You horny? JOHN

As balls. BOY

Sniff. JOHN
I can take care of that for you.

S.M.
'He kneels down'.

JOHN does.

BOY
Fuck.

Sniff. JOHN
How's it feel?

BOY
Good.

JOHN
How do you like it?

BOY
I like it fine.

JOHN
You gonna bust inside me?

BOY
...too early...

You wanna come inside me? JOHN

I...I... BOY

‘Aside.’ S.M.

The sniffs should come and go quicker now. Build it up to a climax and explode. BOY

‘Exactly. In.’ S.M.

Sniff. JOHN

Say it to me.

I take a while. I’m sorry. BOY

Sniff. JOHN

Oh God, that’s fine... that’s fine that’s fine... BOY

Yeah. JOHN

Kiss me. BOY

No. JOHN

Oooooo Please. You should be a model, you know that? BOY

Really? JOHN

Ooooo... yeah... you have a real body for one... you see many guys go around thinking they have what it takes... you have what it takes...

	BOY
Thanks. Really, thank you... really...	
	JOHN
<i>Sniff.</i>	
Kiss me now?	
	BOY
I'm not feeling it.	
	JOHN
How about now?	
	BOY
... Jesus that feels good...	
	JOHN
Yeah?	
	BOY
Yeah!	
	JOHN
Do I deserve it?	
	BOY
SO much	
	JOHN
Do I deserve how you <i>FEEL!</i> ?	
	BOY
I wanna come	
	JOHN
NO oooOOOOo Please.	
	BOY
Come on	
	JOHN
KISS ME.	
	BOY
NO	

I can turn you over!

JOHN

Turn me over

BOY

Please feel good for me!

JOHN

Feels good...

BOY

I beg you...

JOHN

Help yourself...

BOY

JOHN

Sniff.

Oh God, please just fucking kiss me spit in my mouth choke my throat till I come!

BOY

I SAID NO!

FATHER

Lights up suddenly on FATHER center stage reading intensely off of his script. He is wearing glasses.

'WELL WHY THE FUCK NOT? You'd kiss every other mother fucking cocksucker, right? RIGHT?'

BOY

No, wait.

FATHER

'FAGGOT.'

BOY

Dad, please, I was just-!

FATHER

'I'm not your father you embarrassing SONOFABITCH!'

JOHN smacks the BOY.

'YOU WERE JUST WHAT?'

You like that right? JOHN

Harder. BOY

'JACKING OFF TO A NAKED FAGGOT?' FATHER

You want it Harder? JOHN

Dad, stop it! BOY

'I'll show you a real man' FATHER

How's it feel-? JOHN

IT FEELS GREAT BOY

FATHER
THE BOY proceeds to unbutton himself, slowly, terrified, trembling, all the way to his underwear, where he holds his crotch for protection.

'TAKE IT OFF' JOHN

Let me help you BOY

Please FATHER

'ALL OF IT' JOHN

Come on make it go faster I wanna go faster BOY

Just hold it in

FATHER
‘I bet you feel like a *real* bottom bitch now, right Boy?’

BOY
Stop it-! STOP IT!

JOHN
Wanna go harder, Boy?

BOY
HARDER! FUCK- HARDER!

FATHER
‘EVERYTHING’

JOHN
Stick it higher, oh God, oh Higher- yeah-

BOY
Harder, COME ON HARDER-!

FATHER
‘No son of mine is gonna be a faggot!’

JOHN
You want it harder?

BOY
YES

FATHER
‘THAT TOO’

BOY
Proceeding to take off his underwear.

NO

JOHN
YES!

FATHER
‘NOW’

BOY
It’s hurting me

But it hurts so good	JOHN
IT HURTS	BOY
'FUCK YOU'	FATHER
FASTER?	JOHN
Turn me over... YES, turn me over...	BOY
'I am gonna turn you over! You're gonna change! I'M GONNA MAKE YOU CHANGE BOY.'	FATHER
Want more?	JOHN
Oh God, feels so Good...	BOY
'You're Worthless.'	FATHER
So good...	BOY
Want some more?	JOHN
'Want some?'	FATHER
Yes!	BOY
WANT THIS?	JOHN
'RIGHT FAGGOT?'	FATHER

BOY

Actually speaking the word 'sniff', all else follows.

YES! YES! I *can* change! I can change! *SNIFF!* OH GOD DAMN IT. HARDER.

JOHN

Stick it up more

BOY

Let me have it

FATHER

'How hard you want me to fuck you faggot?'

JOHN

What do you want out of me?

BOY

MORE!

FATHER

'BEAT YOU BOY!'

BOY

Harder!

JOHN

I CAN'T-!

FATHER

'Miserable!'

BOY

SNIFF! MORE!

JOHN

TIRED-!

FATHER

'Worthless!'

BOY

MORE!

FATHER

'Faggot!'

Oh GOD- JOHN
Harder! BOY
'I WANNA BREAK YOU.' FATHER
Holy SHIT- JOHN
DON'T EVER STOP DON'T EVER STOP! BOY
'WORTHLESS BOY.' FATHER
HIT ME. BOY
AH JOHN
'WORTHLESS BOY.' FATHER
BREAK ME. BOY
AHH JOHN
'WORTHLESS BOY.' FATHER
BOY
// FUCK ME! PLEASE GODDAMN IT FUCK ME TILL I BLEED TILL I DRY UP TILL
THERE'S NOTHING MORE!
JOHN
// AHHHO MY GOD. AAAAHHHHOOOOO MY GOD!
FATHER
// 'WORTHLESS WORTHLESS WORTHLESS!'

S.M.

‘Aside.’

BOY

And in that one moment... that one convulsing second right before John Doe blasted away my wall... I saw him... once more... aiming his bloodied fist at me. And that was the first time I realized, I was already done for and I would tell every man who came my way this story. His story. Our story. My father’s story, and how it would be basis of everything to come.

Lights out on the FATHER.

S.M.

‘IN’.

BOY

NOW LET ME FUCKING HAVE IT!

JOHN

YOU GONNA COME?

BOY

OH FUCK! OH FUCK! OH FUCK!

JOHN

YEAH?

BOY

YEAH- SNIFF I’m gonna come!

JOHN

YEAH- SNIFF I’m gonna come!

BOY

Coming!

JOHN

Now!

BOY

Right now!

BOY

More!

MORE! JOHN

YES! BOY

YES! JOHN

ALL YOU GOT! BOY

MORE! JOHN

YES! BOY

YESSAH FUCK! JOHN

They cum. Or Come. Or whatever.

They settle into the idea.

Christ. BOY

Wow. JOHN

More? BOY

That's all I got. JOHN

You got it all? BOY

You better get going JOHN

More BOY

Before it gets too late.

JOHN

Please, More.

BOY

You're just a kid.

JOHN

Amyl nitrates.

BOY

What do you do?

JOHN

I'm just a boy.

BOY

I'm a foot doctor.

JOHN

I'm in between stuff.

BOY

I meant what I said.

JOHN

About what?

BOY

Can't really remember.

JOHN

Sniff me up.

BOY

Why?

JOHN

More.

BOY

How do you feel?

JOHN

Worthless.

BOY

JOHN

It's getting late.

BOY

What's your name?

JOHN exits, leaving the BOY naked, exposed.

Slowly, he starts to put back on his clothing.

S.M.

'Aside.'

BOY

I should've asked him, 'What was your name?' I should've told him, 'I think you freed me.' Right now, not at John Doe's apartment but here, where I am, now. Something gave.

He called me beautiful. He meant it too. Why is it that when someone who you've known for so long calls you something, 'beautiful', 'babe', 'handsome', you roll your eyes and call them nuts? You want to believe it, but you're so dead set on the ideology that somewhere... deep, deep inside, it's biased? Why do I feel it's so wrong to trust a stranger's libido over a lover's bias? Is it so wrong to want the popper and the broken futon that reeks of cat hair over the guy who changes his fucking peanut butter for you?

ERIC enters in evening attire on his cell. Waiting. The BOY's phone rings.

BOY

(To himself; hitting, beating himself, gradually.)

Answer it. That's him. Answer the fucking phone...

S.M.

'He does.'

BOY

I can't.

S.M.

'He does.'

BOY

No.

S.M.

'He does.'

He does.

'In'.

Hello? BOY

‘Aside.’ S.M.

BOY
Take note. We’re back at the beginning. We are where we started. This is where I was before I was here now.

‘In’. S.M.

Hello? ERIC

BOY
It’s three in the morning, what’s wrong?

‘Aside.’ S.M.

BOY
This is my chance.

ERIC
I tried calling.

‘In’. S.M.

BOY
I was writing.

S.M.
‘Aside.’

BOY
The chance to break free.

ERIC
I was calling your house for forty minutes.

‘In’. S.M.

BOY
Yeah?

S.M.
‘Aside.’

It's why I did what I did. BOY

Look, I'm sorry about before. ERIC

I'm fine. BOY

'Aside.' S.M.

So that he'd be the one to do it. BOY

'In'. S.M.

ERIC BOY
Babe what's wrong? Hook.
I know you when you're not right, Nothing, I'll talk to you later.
What's the matter with you? Line.
Then why do you sound like your I said it was nothing.
crying? Sinker.
SAY SOMETHING.

I did something bad. BOY

Bad. ERIC

...You know what I think of you. BOY

Are you drunk, babe? ERIC

I wish. What do you think I'm going to say? BOY

I dunno. Babe. ERIC

Just call me by my name when you're upset with me. BOY

I'm just really confused. ERIC

BOY

You're not sugar coating anything for me when you call me by that surname that you *bestowed* upon me the moment you and I kissed by the toilet on the floor of your ex-boyfriend's bathroom-!

ERIC

Where the hell are you?

BOY

I'm on the curb, in front of my apartment, no! I'm lying. Outside someone else's apartment about seven blocks down, blowing my nose into the fallen oak leaves and it's pissing me off because they're all so *crunchy*.

ERIC

I'm coming to get you- what's the cross-street.

BOY

NO! NO. You fucking stay right where you are.

ERIC

Are you okay?

BOY

I'm safe. It's safe on the phone. Everything's safe on the phone.

ERIC

It's just you in a cage of Lions, Leopards, and she-wolves now baby.

BOY

Dante?

ERIC

Never knew I'd need a Dante Allegory.

BOY

His Heaven's a bit overrated.

ERIC

Hell's a little familiar. Do we burn for eternity in a ditch in the ground or do we chase the flag around forever while we step over maggots and blow our noses out with fallen oak leaves?

BOY

You're ridiculous.

ERIC

Tell me.

BOY

It's getting pretty late.

ERIC

I don't care.

‘Aside.’ S.M.

Wait for it. BOY

Baby, it’s me. ERIC

‘Aside.’ S.M.

Let it rise. BOY

Is it about us? ERIC

‘Aside.’ S.M.

Birdie. ERIC

‘In.’ S.M.

I slept with somebody who wasn’t you. BOY

Uhm. ‘Aside’. S.M.

BOY
FUCK YES! YES! YEEEEEEESA! *Freedom!* FREEDOM! FREEDOM! FREEDOM FROM YOU
YOU UNINSURED COCKSUCKER! PRINCE OF PEACE, JESUS CHRIST, THANK YOU!

ERIC

You slept with someone else?

‘In’. S.M.

BOY

...I wish I knew what you were thinking.

ERIC

You wouldn’t be able to comprehend it.

BOY

I was just... Eric... please, say something... I was just... just...

S.M.

‘ On my mark, Eric breaks away and charges at BOY, pinning him against the wall. The following is acted out as if they were together, in person. Phones in their hands. Or thrown away.’

BOY

Just to get it done.

S.M.

He’s gonna castrate you.

BOY

YOU DON’T GET TO SPEAK!

ERIC

Who gives a shit-!

BOY

Fine!

S.M.

FINE!

ERIC

FINE!

S.M.

‘GO’.

They go and do as the S.M. ordered.

ERIC

YOU WERE JUST WHAT? SICK? BRAINLESS? OBLIVIOUS? HORNY?

BOY

Yes!

ERIC

AND LET ME GUESS, HE WAS JUST *SOME* GUY?

BOY

Yes!

ERIC

AND I DON’T KNOW HIM.

BOY

No! I don’t know! Maybe! *Maybe!* He probably makes cowboy heroes at a deli down somewhere I don’t know, though, considering his behavior and noted fascinations, I’d imagine he was a podiatrist, but that’s beside the point!

ERIC

The point is you don’t know what he does.

I don't!

BOY

You don't even know his name.

ERIC

NO!

BOY

ERIC

YOU FOUND HIM ON THE FUCKING INTERNET, DIDN'T YOU?

BOY

How did you know?

ERIC

We all bury our heads in something, yours just happened to be your computer screen and mine happens to be your script and I know your part really fucking well.

BOY

Eric.

ERIC

DON'T YOU SAY ANOTHER WORD. I might not know how to write plays or scripts or sketches or whatever the hell it is that you've decided was suddenly going to become your life's work- but I'm a Medieval Literature major, honey, okay? I know how to use search engines and I know how to bring up every single piece of recent history from of our computers.

BOY

FUCK OFF

ERIC

And that's the thanks I get for trying to research the ways that my boyfriend gets off.

BOY

I still *want* you.

ERIC

You're really *fucking* bad at projecting personal beliefs.

BOY

I'M SLIGHTLY DRUNK OKAY?

ERIC

Well *there's* the silver lining! Don't worry about it then. *Really, it's habitual, //* you self-righteous fuck-!

BOY

// He paid me a hundred and Fifty dollars.

ERIC

FUCK!

I'm sorry... I'm sorry...

BOY

// Did you take it?

ERIC

Did I take what?

BOY

The money, did you take the money?

ERIC

'Aside.'

S.M.

BOY

He adores me. He adores me, still, and I can't stand it, I can't fathom it. My heart's pounding. I'm losing sight. My ears are buzzing. End it now.

S.M.

'In.'

BOY

YES!

ERIC

What do you even *think* of yourself?

BOY

OH MY GOD YOU FUCKING SERIOUS!?

ERIC

TELL ME WHAT GOT YOU OFF!

BOY

You're desperate.

ERIC

You bust a nut on my chest every night and smother it over like a cucumber mask, it's not desperation it's a fucking thing that I fucking gotta know.

BOY

He called me a model.

ERIC

Was this before or after he fucked you in the ass? Was this before or after he turned you over and infected you-

BOY

This isn't supposed to be about infection-!

ERIC

HE PAID YOU! HE FUCKING PAID YOU! HOW STUPID DO YOU HONESTLY TAKE YOURSELF FOR? There's probably only two fucking reasons he'd ever pay someone like you, and that is because A: he's probably too old or too fat or too lonely to ever get another man to suck on his big ol' fat sweaty dick or B: He's probably fucking infected with a disease, with HIV, with false accusations coagulating your veins just to butter you up sweetie-!

BOY

-And yours aren't? YOU'RE MY BOYFRIEND-

ERIC

And I actually took you for more than just a quick satisfying fuck!

BOY

That's right. It was a long satisfying fuck, okay, satisfying only to you!

S.M.

'Aside'.

BOY

WATCH HIM IGNORE WHAT I SAID!

S.M.

'In'.

ERIC

So you want to be a model, is that it?

S.M.

'Aside.'

ERIC

FUCK HIM NOW WATCH AS I GIVE IN.

S.M.

'In'.

BOY

I want to be good for others.

ERIC

I tell you, reassure you that you are beautiful every single fucking day. You are toned. You are tanned. You are chiseled. You have all of your hair in perfect quantities in all the right places. And your voice... god help me with that. I could get off to you reciting the alphabet. I tell you this every day, and yet you keep on worrying and keep on complaining and yet you keep on getting better and better results while the rest of us have to simply... simply have to give in. We have to give in to what we are, give in to what we can't stop eating, give in to laziness. Give into the gene pool of Cuban thighs and Caucasian kegs. Give in to the finer examples of the human anatomy that walk amongst us. I had to learn how to give into walking next to you, watching everyone look only at you, and resist the urge to butter you up, feed you philly cheese steaks loaded with chipotle and chicken fucking Pad Thai so you could be for my eyes and mine alone. We could've been in love, yeah sure. Undeniable and inexcusable love that was ours and ours alone because no one else would've cared to be in the picture. I resisted that urge because I wanted *something* perfect between us, and I knew. Thought I knew, that you had already achieved perfection for me. You were more than enough for me. I could see how you'd think otherwise, and I am sorry Baby, I really am. For everything you've been through. Your father. I... you never deserved what he did to you. No child does. When you told me all that... I mean... fucking you and beating you because you let the whole world know that you were gay- a faggot- a piece of meat- because you came out as who you were always meant to be- I can't even imagine what that's done to you, even though now I think I can see what it's done to your expectations. I can't be there for you if all you're going to do is drag me down with you. You're lost in the flesh, and the only way you'll ever be happy is if others *physically* take notice in you, and I won't have that. This is your show, not mine... you believe in it the same way you're writing me these words to speak. You've single-handedly rejected the only amenity you see in this world to be fit; the only amenity that sees you to be so much more than he could ever imagine he deserved for himself.

S.M.

'Aside'.

BOY

I wish there was a delete key in life. I wish I could take back what's been written. I wish I could rip entire scenes out of my play... but fuck it... there's no longer any such thing as a tabula rasa in the theatre... everything's written in stone and lit by the spots hanging above the space the moment you tap that specter of time on your keyboard and it sounds like a tropical downpour in your bedroom. This is so wrong.

S.M.

'In.'

BOY

I'm sorry.

ERIC
Stop saying that.

BOY
You said I was enough.

ERIC
Yeah.

BOY
Then why do you always need more of me? If I'm enough, why couldn't we just settle?

ERIC
Maybe it's not the same type of 'enough'.

BOY
I'm talking about plateauing.

ERIC
I'm talking about you making me whole.

BOY
I... want...

S.M.
'Aside.'

BOY
Say it.

S.M.
'In.'

BOY
I want

S.M.
'Aside.'

BOY
Goddamn it say it.

S.M.
'In.'

BOY
I need.

BOY

I'm about to break your fucking head in.

FATHER

He didn't know.

BOY

Like hell he didn't- he knows everything! ANSWER ME.

Get off.

FATHER

What's the matter with you?

BOY

Didn't you hear me!?

FATHER

Son.

BOY

DON'T CALL ME THAT GET OUT OF HERE I DON'T NEED YOU HERE I DON'T WANT YOU HERE!

FATHER

I CAN'T.

BOY

You want to be here, you wanna fuck with me the way you always do, the way you always have!

FATHER

I'm on to this stage because you brought me here, so suck it up.

BOY

I didn't... I didn't *call* on you, Dad... I... I don't need *this* right now, alright? ALRIGHT?

The BOY starts to walk off.

FATHER

But you were thinking about it for a while, right?

S.M.

'Aside.'

BOY

I stopped dead in my tracks.

FATHER

Having me here like this?

S.M.

'Aside.'

BOY

He always asks those kinds of questions. He can get away by remaining ambiguous and make me feel the guilt that I had no right to feel, because everything was out of my control!

FATHER

Wait.

BOY

What Dad?

FATHER

What are you talking about?

BOY

Huh?

FATHER

What guilt?

BOY

What, *what?*

FATHER

What guilt? Guilt, you were talking about guilt, about how I made you feel the *guilt*- what- *who* are you talking to?

S.M.

'Aside.'

BOY

Do you have any clue what's going on right now?

FATHER

No, I don't, that's why I'm here; I was hoping that we could talk about all of this.

BOY

You can hear what I'm saying?

FATHER

What do you mean?

BOY

I mean to them! You can hear what I'm saying to them! To them?

FATHER

To *who*? You drunk?

BOY

The play's not about that.

FATHER

Then what are you talking about?

S.M.

'Aside. Quickfire. Go.'

BOY

What's two times two-?

FATHER

-Four!

BOY

Ah SHIT!

FATHER

You got this dipshit blurting out 'aside' and all that shit, are you thinking and assuming I can't hear what you're saying in between all that?

BOY

How... what- how is this... possible?

FATHER

What are you doing?

BOY

You shouldn't to be listening to my asides, you aren't *supposed* to be hearing my asides!

FATHER

Aside of what?

BOY

Asides, *asides*! It's when... it's when... you can talk to the... it's when you can talk to... it's when... it's when you can say what's on your mind without getting caught.

FATHER

Asides?

BOY

Yes, Dad. Asides. Theatrical terminology. Not that you'd have any clue.

FATHER

That doesn't make sense.

BOY

Of course it does. Someone says something when really they mean something else, and the only way for the audience to get it is if you say it to them on an aside.

FATHER

Why can't you say what you mean in the first place?

BOY

You can't really expect everyone to say what they mean. There's always something more. It's in the *subtext*.

FATHER

The what?

BOY

The things you really mean to say but can't, so you say something else.

FATHER

Who cares about that?

S.M.

'Aside.'

BOY

There in lies the paradox.

FATHER

Exactly.

BOY

...Right.

FATHER

All that rumbling- that can happen, right? You scared it'll happen?

BOY

No.

FATHER

No.

BOY

You know about that?

FATHER

I was right there. I was sitting right there on that chair.

BOY

This is real.

FATHER

It always has been.

BOY

Okay... well, I don't feel the need to explain myself. You're on my stage whether you like it or not-so, you go first.

FATHER

Okay. Sounds fine with me.

Why did you write those things?

BOY

If you're here because of Eric, get in line. You'll be after my seven o'clock headache and my recitation with Jack, Morgan, Ben and Jerry.

FATHER

I'm talking about those things you had me say.

BOY

What things?

FATHER

I want to break you. I want to kill you. Worthless. Worthless. Worthless. Worthless. Worthless-

BOY

Okay, okay. I get the point.

FATHER

We need to establish some things.

BOY

No, look. You've come here, invited by me, to stick it out in the wings until I needed you. That's not happening anymore, obviously. I'm in the middle of writing something here, going through something, and how I decide to use you was supposed to be entirely up to me, and with you just barging all up in my creative zone-

FATHER

Since when did lying count as creativity?

BOY

Lying is saying the truth about something that never happened.

FATHER

So it doesn't matter to you that I come off as the father who beats his *only* son?

BOY

Of course it does!

S.M.

'Aside.'

BOY

That's how I make people relate to me. Pity me. Notice me.

FATHER

I heard that.

BOY

FUCK.

FATHER

Why'd you even bring me here? You shouldn't have brought me into this place if all you were going to do was treat me like shit, treat me as if I ever treated you like shit, you shouldn't of brought me here if you weren't going to even talk to me-

BOY

If it weren't for my printed text I'd be a mute, a recluse, a fucking vegetable that wouldn't know the difference between thought and the act of verbally saying something and meaning it-!

FATHER

Cut the crap, I don't care if you're a writer, a junkie, or a goddamn sex phone operator fingering your way to have your own 1-800 number, I'd still expect some integrity out of you.

BOY

I'm the *fag*, remember? I'm the faggot son you said you'd never call your own.

FATHER

But I never *hit* you! I never *fucked* you! I never asked you to strip down to your dick and anus so I could smack you around. I was only upset at the time and all I never did to you-

BOY

-All you ever were was upset! And in denial.

FATHER

It isn't every single day your son comes out to you and says 'I'm gay!'

BOY

It isn't every single day that a father yells: 'I WILL NEVER HAVE A FAGGOT FOR A SON!' and boycotts his every single passion. You have no idea how it felt.

FATHER

You were fifteen.

BOY

And more fragile than a fucking chandelier.

FATHER

I thought it was a phase.

BOY

Right, there you go, always slipping back into the denial you selfish son of a b-

FATHER

HEY! HEY YOU. I'm still your father you understand me? I brought you into this world, and If I deserve respect for anything it should've been because of that! So you watch what you say me, boy, understand me? YOU UNDERSTAND!?

BOY

Yeah, yeah... yes, sir.

FATHER

You never talked to me about shit. You never talked to me about anything. About your shows about your plays, about the boys you wanted to screw, nothing. When I'd pick you up from school or take you somewhere to drop you off and I'd ask how everything was, you'd say 'Good,' and only 'Good'. So I did the same. What did you expect, I'd read your mind? I believed what I was led to believe; I assumed it was over because... you never mentioned it again. Doesn't it get to you at all? What's worse? The father who assumes his child has passed a phase and never bothered mentioning it, or the child who never once attempted to communicate to anyone but his closest friends-!

BOY

Who were always pretty damn supportive.

FATHER

Because nothing of theirs was at stake.

BOY

And what's that Dad? Grandchildren? A smoking hot daughter-in-law? I'm sorry I couldn't be the one to provide those things for you-

FATHER

Your happiness.

BOY

My happiness?

FATHER

What is the matter with you!? You said it yourself this play wasn't about being a fruitcake, it was about you and what you're trying to find out for yourself!

BOY

What makes you think I'm not?

FATHER

You've called yourself a faggot more times in the past half hour than I have ever called you your entire life. All I want to do is help you... but even then you're pushing me away; you're pushing me away and elaborating these stories, these terrible things that apparently I've said to you that I would never even consider whispering. I just need to know what you're trying to accomplish.

BOY

Nothing.

FATHER

Nothing at all? You know, when you sent out your confessional to me... your five-page...essay to me... telling me who've you've declared yourself to be, you know what you wanted to do?

BOY

I've spent five years thinking of all the possibilities.

FATHER

I wanted to hold you.

BOY

Hold me?

FATHER

To see what happened to you. To see what made you feel that you had to go so far on your own to believe that no one was there to catch you? That I wouldn't be there to hold you? But you made me realize it. We never knew each other enough to trust that we'd catch each other, did we?

BOY

Dad...

FATHER

Don't look at me that way. That was one of your lines, not mine, remember? Still your play.

BOY

Dad, please...

FATHER

No. This is the only time we'll ever be able to do this. We're in the theatre, after all. When you see me on the streets... eye contact will do good, but that's about it. Unfortunately I don't know anything about this yet.

BOY

I'm sorry.

FATHER

No I'm sorry for you. I never wanted there to be a moment in your life that you felt I ever doubted anything that you were capable of. You've surpassed me, everything I have ever done in such ways that I can't even begin to understand. And I am sorry, that you've felt the need to prove something to me all this time. And I am sorry, that you've felt alone the entire time writing this play of yours. I've never stopped being your biggest fan, in the same sense that all the biggest fans in the world are the biggest fans in the world of whomever they adore. It's because they know that no matter what happens, they'll never get through to them. Cards and gift packages of Oreos and oatmeal seems like so much to a fan who knows exactly what the star of the show adores. But to you, it just seems like I was trying too hard and that I wasn't even worth a thank you call. Instead you create someone that I never was. And I forgive you, because deep down I realize... something's not right with us, son. I'm sorry I couldn't love you as much as you wanted me to. I didn't know that there were different ways of loving someone... different categories that had to be filled. I just gave it everything I knew, and had, and to this very sentence I honestly felt that I was being good about thinking everything would be better... But I can't anymore. I won't be someone that I'm not, not even for you. Especially for you. I deserve better for trying. But I'm not mad. I'm not mad.

You know the ending to your play yet?

BOY

It'll end how it started.

FATHER

I meant after that scene.

BOY

I'll give you a call? Let you know how things turned out? Let you know that you were in a play of mine and you should check it out?

FATHER

One more thing.

BOY
What's that?

FATHER
No more asides.

BOY
What?

FATHER
No asides. I mean it.

BOY
I can't. The moment I try, everything shuts off. The lights, the sound, me- everything. You were there, you saw!

FATHER
It doesn't matter.

BOY
Nobody's gonna like it when the theatre's dark, dad. I can't.

FATHER
Just let it all out.

BOY
But then there'd be nothing left, there's be no reason for even being here anymore- Even you know that.

FATHER
Eh, reasons come, reasons go.

BOY
Hey, Dad?

FATHER
What?

BOY
I LOVED THE OREOS AND OATMEAL. It was gone so fast... you could not even imagine. The entire time I was eating it all, I just wanted to say, 'hey, Dad! Thanks! I love you!' But I was scared that you'd call me a...

Rumbling and flickering... they both notice. It fades away.

A faggot?
FATHER

Yes.
BOY

Is that phone call gonna come soon?
FATHER

Yes.
BOY

I should get going.
FATHER

Alright, get going.
BOY

Alright, I'm going.
FATHER

Alright, *go*.
BOY

I love you.
FATHER

He goes to exit.

Dad?
BOY

FATHER stops. He goes over to the stage manager and takes the jar of chunky peanut butter. FATHER hands it off to the BOY. Then exits.

Lights back up on ERIC.

Eric?
BOY

Yep?
ERIC

Where were we? What was I saying?
BOY

ERIC
“You’re not a crutch, Eric.”

BOY
No, before that.

ERIC
Then from when, exactly.

BOY
Anniversary?

ERIC
‘I’ll be waiting for you to catch up.’

BOY
‘I’ll be waiting for you to catch up.’

S.M.
‘Aside.’

The lights in the theatre once again begin to flicker; there’s a light rumbling in the distance. It fades.

BOY
I took out the peanut butter... and I was holding it in my hand... stop it- stop it... and that was then that I realized-

The power staggers for a moment the theatre rumbles, and then shuts off again.

GODDAMN IT. FUCK! FUCK GODDAMN IT JUST FUCKING SAY IT YOU WEAK- FUCK YOU-SAY IT!!! I can’t do it like this. I can’t do it like this... // please... fix this.

S.M.
// *Breathe. Breathe!* BEAT! BEAT!

ERIC
You ready to go yet?

BOY
Don’t let me stop.

ERIC
Steady?

S.M.

Go.

BOY

I don't *know* how to say anything unless it's on a piece of paper. 'I love you'... one of those things. It's like stuffing my mouth with nine of those soda crackers, you know, impossible to swallow?

ERIC

Babe.

S.M.

Breathe.

Light rumbling. Only the BOY takes notice.

I always hate it when you call me that.

ERIC

It's a habit I've been trying to break.

S.M.

// *Breathe.*

BOY

// Then try harder. Do it. GO ON TRY HARDER.

ERIC

ADAM! There are you happy? ADAM! ADAM ADAM ADAM!

ADAM

Wow.

ERIC

Yeah what about it?

There's some more rumbling and shaking; lights flicker, but not much more; ADAM is trying hard to control it.

ADAM

So Good. So, so good. Refreshing. It felt refreshing. Like I could breathe, no- as if I was able to take a breath and fill my lungs with oxygen for the first time. Replenished.

ERIC

Then I'm going to do you one final favor.

ADAM

You don't owe me anything.

ERIC

I know I don't. But I'd like to pretend for a few more minutes that I still love you.

Rambling fades.

ADAM

What are you going to do?

ERIC

I want you to let everything out. Take a step back, and let it all out. I'll listen. I need to listen to you because it'll probably be the first time I've actually listened to what you really had to say.

ADAM

Everything?

ERIC

Everything. To your audience at once. I'm not going to stop you. Explode from the *oxygen*.

ADAM

I don't have an audience.

ERIC

I am your audience. Goddamn it, do this for me. I've invested as much time into us as you have to yourself, and I'd like to know what you're really like for a change. I'm demanding it, Adam. I'm looking for a single moment of reconciliation, a moment where I can forgive myself for ever letting you sprinkle me into a pit of bayonets. I'm looking for some pride in myself, pride you owe me.

ADAM

Alright. I'm going.

ERIC

Alright, get going.

ADAM

Alright, I'm going.

ERIC

Alright, *go*.

ADAM takes a very deep breath. Then explodes with as little breath as possible, slow at first then faster and faster unable to think, breathe, hesitate. Throughout the monologue, rumbling and shaking intensifies as ADAM tries his hardest to remain stable. During the 'INFECT. INJECT' sequence, the house and stage lights turn off one by one until we are immersed in complete darkness.

ADAM

Lumps lumps lumps I wake up in the morning and all I see are these giant fucking lumps that cascade over me like a walloping hippo and it's then that I realize I'm sagging and horny and lumps lumps lumps lumps 2 4 PURGE I try to do some push up biceps in the morning look nice stomach in the morning looks even nicer skinny skinny skinny bloat bloat bloated like a big fucking whale with legs of jello and boobs of custard milk I look like terrible I look awful I look out of shape I look out of 8 9 K M PURGE style I look out of synch and I get up and I see you You is who I see and no matter how hard I try to avoid it I always see you because you always wave and smile and accept and never negate and accept and hug and accept and kiss and accept and fuck and accept and give and accept and give and accept and smile with a big smile a big smile with big white teeth and you say I look skinny you say I look smart you say I look happy you say I look accomplished you say things that make me want to vomit look away turn away be alone be free be free of you oh God me me me me 2 4 3 9 PURGE crazy little me and you crazy little crazy little you always there always holding always supporting always hugging I want to punch you I want to hit you I want to slice you I want to break your vocal chords in half so you can never say one good thing to me ever again I want to be seen I want to be alone I want to be heard delete delete delete hope they feel bad about me not answering them oh God oh God oh God oh God PURGE HIM PURGE Every breath you take every move you make I'll be watching you I'll be watching you that's you that's you that's you I want to be free I want to be free I want ice cream giraffes in a warm summer milkshake blue velvet road rocky rabbits calculator Sally's green salad fingers remind me of orange skies Ambiguous androgynous Aphrodite reminds me of killer bees hunting with knees ants with pants snails with pails restore compute re compute re evaluate re solidify mix not stir bake not heat run not get away get away get away get away A E I O U A E X slash slash semi-colon compute compute compute G H I J E H 4 5 2 9 dash 4 dash rabbits dash 0 red R 3 infect G 2 infect H 8 Infect K 1 2 3 4 5 6 1 2 3 4 5 6 INFECT INFECT INJECT INFECT INJECT PURGE PURGE PURGE PURGE-!

FATHER re-enters as the lights are about to blackout--- the NOISE is insane, ADAM rushes and grabs his FATHER by the collar and beats the shit out of him.

I CAN'T DO WHAT YOU'VE ASKED OF ME! I CAN'T SAY WHAT I MEAN TO SAY! I CAN'T! I CAN'T! I CAN'T! I DON'T KNOW HOW! I Don't Know How. I don't know how... I... don't... know... fuck you... fuck you... // FUCK YOU. FUCK YOU. FUCK YOU.

S.M. gets out of his seat and tumbles over ADAM, holding him by the throat, on the ground.

S.M.

//STOOOOOOOP. STOP IT! STOP IT!

ADAM

//GET OFF OF ME, GET OFF OF ME!

S.M. lets him off. Without another word. He storms off.

ERIC

I see. I see. You terrify me. Never try to contact me again. If you see me on the streets... don't look in my direction. I never knew you. You only know yourself. And I'm not sorry.

ADAM

Wait.

ERIC

No.

ADAM

No.

ERIC

No.

ADAM

Clinging onto ERIC.

-Baby please I need you I want you listen to me please I swear we can figure it out!

He grabs onto ERIC's face and kisses him. ERIC pushes away and punches him in the gut, he retracts.

ERIC lifts him up by the collar.

ERIC

I said NO! NO! NO MORE! NO MORE GODDAMN YOU!

ADAM

I LOVE YOU // NOW!

//ERIC beats the shit out of ADAM. It's relentless. Relentless.

ERIC spits, then leaves.

ERIC
You don't know what that means.
He exits.
FATHER
On his back.
You okay?
ADAM
On his.
Let me empty out...
FATHER
What?
ADAM
Let me empty out.
FATHER
Okay. Okay.
ADAM
That was terrible advice.
FATHER
Figured there'd be something more in there.
ADAM
That's all?
FATHER
That's all.
ADAM
Guess you don't know me that much.
FATHER
Figured that. So I guess I actually *did*.
So what now?
ADAM
Now? Now- the play's over. That's it, it's done. We finished. Gotta find a way. Find a way to get him back. Start again.

FATHER

You still love him?

ADAM

Never stopped. Just not as much as I could. Not as much as he did. Loved me, I mean. Next time around, though. You watch. I just gotta find a way to get into it.

FATHER

Again?

ADAM

Yeah. Yeah, again.

FATHER

What if you can't?

ADAM

I mean I'm gonna try.

FATHER

What if you simply cannot?

ADAM

Love him?

FATHER

As much.

ADAM

I'll have to think about that.

ADAM stumbles to his feet.

You gonna get up?

FATHER

No.

The S.M. reenters. He is guilty.

ADAM

From the top.

S.M.

Yeah. Yeah. No problem.

S.M. takes his place again.

ADAM

The boy enters stage left, stumbling, tripping, and sniffing.

S.M.

Adam enters stage left, stumbling, tripping, and sniffing.

ADAM

No.

S.M.

No?

ADAM

I don't want a name.

S.M.

You already gave it to us.

ADAM

I take it back. I don't wanna know it.

The boy enters stage left, stumbling, tripping, and sniffing.

S.M.

'The boy enters stage left, stumbling, tripping, and sniffing.'

BOY

He throws out the empty bottle of beer.

S.M.

He does so.

BOY

And takes out another from the plastic bag...

S.M.

He does so.

BOY

And decides it's best to throw it away.

S.M.

You sure?

BOY

Maybe it should be about that.

Okay. S.M.

'And decides it's best to throw it away.' BOY

He does so. S.M.

Good start. BOY

JOHN enters stage right in a bathrobe.

Aren't you forgetting something? JOHN

Where's Eric? BOY

Not coming. S.M.

'Eric enters.' BOY

'Eric enters.' S.M.

Nothing.

What happened? BOY

I didn't do anything. S.M.

You there? ...Hey. Are you? BOY

ERIC enters, reluctantly.

Yeah. ERIC

Hi. BOY

ERIC
'Happy Anniversary'.
BOY
Yeah.
S.M.
Yeah. John enters stage right in a bathrobe. The ghost light from the computer screen illuminates the two men. The man and the boy.
JOHN
A-S-L?
BOY
Wanna try this again?
ERIC
You can try it again.
BOY
can you try with me?
ERIC
Dunno if I can. Would. Am.
S.M.
'The instant messaging sound rings simultaneously with Adam's 'sound'.
JOHN
Forty-Two, Male, Gramercy. Sound. You wanna come back Boy? Sound. Question mark, Boy. Sound. Question mark, Boy. Sound.
ADAM
Sound. I wanna go back. Sound.
JOHN
Where are you Boy? Sound.
ADAM
Sound.
JOHN
Question Mark Boy. Sound.
End of play.