

VICARIOUS PLAYBOYS

by  
Michael Flood

CHARACTERS:

ROBERT MONTGOMERY	40 - Financial Manager
MIRANDA DRAPER	25 - Waitress, pregnant
HAROLD STEVENS	35 - Actor, African-American
JACK MARTIN	40 - Financial Manager, Robert's friend
SIMON CASSLE	38 - Construction Contractor, Robert's friend
CATHERINE MONTGOMERY	38 - Freelance writer, Robert's wife

SETTING:

A smaller big city.

TIME:

The Present

NOTES:

In Harold's scenes he is speaking into a camera and to an unseen person behind it.  
This can be handled in a number of ways. Feel free to explore different approaches.

Concerning DVDs: I used DVDs in this script for their ubiquity and recognizability on stage, but feel free to explore other forms of media that may have become more common.

/ = A point of overlap by the following line

≠ = A pause in overlapping until the end of overlapped line or next '/' is reached

## ACT I: SCENE 1

Robert Montgomery's office, morning. He is sitting at his desk going over documents when his phone beeps. He touches the bluetooth receiver in his ear.

ROBERT

Yes, Mary. ... Who? ... I don't know anyone by that name. ... Well, tell her to leave. ... Fine. ... Oh, Mary! Get me Vince on the phone.

*(He goes back to his paperwork. His phone beeps and he answers it again with the bluetooth.)*

Vince! ... Oh... Well, did they say when he'd be back? ... Keep trying every half hour, then. ... What? ... So... Okay... well... call security. ... She what? ... A matter of life and... *(beat)* Alright. Send her in... but, Mary? Give me a minute.

*(He hangs up, waits a moment, then presses the button and dials a number on the phone.)*

Jean! ... Well, when will she be in? ... M hm... No. I'll call her back.

*(He goes back to his reading. A light knock at the door.)*

Come in.

Miranda enters.

MIRANDA

Ooooh, Boobby... Guess what...

*(She stops, surprised.)*

Uh oh.

ROBERT

Excuse me?

MIRANDA

Dammit! I should have known.

ROBERT

Can I help you?

MIRANDA

No. It...

*(She starts sniffing, stifling a cry.)*

It's not you.

ROBERT

What's not me?

MIRANDA

Never mind.

ROBERT

No. Now I'm intrigued. What's not me?

MIRANDA

This.

*(She takes off her coat. She is noticeably pregnant.)*

It's not you.

Dear God, I hope not.  
 (She starts to cry.)  
 No. I didn't mean it like that. I...  
 MIRANDA  
 No, it's alright. I know.  
 (She gathers herself by doing a series of big movements and heavy breaths.)  
 There.  
 ROBERT  
 (Concerned.)  
 Alright?  
 MIRANDA  
 Yes. I'm okay now.  
 ROBERT  
 I can only guess.  
 MIRANDA  
 (Sitting.)  
 Can I sit down?  
 ROBERT  
 Please do.  
 MIRANDA  
 So, what are we going to do?  
 ROBERT  
 About?  
 MIRANDA  
 This... whole thing.  
 ROBERT  
 I'm afraid you lost me. I really don't...  
 MIRANDA  
 You're alright with it?  
 ROBERT  
 Alright with... I don't... Okay. Look. I don't know what "it" is.  
 MIRANDA  
 Well, someone told me he was you, we... spent time together, and...  
 (Indicating her stomach.)  
 Voila!  
 ROBERT  
 Someone is pretending to be me to get a woman into bed and it's working?  
 Amazing!  
 MIRANDA  
 What?  
 ROBERT  
 It never worked for me.  
 MIRANDA  
 Oh. Yeah. Funny. Look, he told me everything. Where you work. (beat) Where you live.  
 ROBERT  
 Thank you for coming here... I guess.

MIRANDA

I'm off today / and I don't have a car.

ROBERT

I don't know what that means. Excuse me. Car?

MIRANDA

Yeah. I don't have a car. Your house is too far to walk and the buses don't go there.

ROBERT

Ah... *(beat)* Is that it, then?

*(Miranda stares at him deadpan. He relents.)*

Fine. What does this guy look like? Tall? / Athletic?

MIRANDA

No... Uh uh... He was more... uh... less... He was... good-looking, but sorta normal. Like you.

ROBERT

Thanks... I think.

MIRANDA

Hey, there's a lot to be said for normal these days.

ROBERT

Uh huh.

MIRANDA

Really. Normal's the new... cool... or whatever word guys your age use.

ROBERT

*(Deadpan.)*

Thanks... again. *(beat)* Look, I don't think I can help you.

MIRANDA

But you need to find this guy, don't you?

ROBERT

You need to find this guy.

MIRANDA

He's stolen your identity.

ROBERT

I can take care of that in other ways. The police.

MIRANDA

*(Skeptical.)*

Oh. Okay. *(beat)* Well, then, I guess I'd better go.

*(She gets up to leave.)*

ROBERT

Please. I have a lot to do today.

MIRANDA

*(Stopping before the door.)*

Why aren't you madder?

ROBERT

Excuse me?

MIRANDA

About this. Why aren't you madder about someone doing this? Taking your identity and screwing people over... literally!

ROBERT

I am. Really.



## ACT I: SCENE 2

Lights up on platform, Harold's bedroom. He is sitting on the edge of the bed.

HAROLD

It's on? ... Recording? ... The red bu... Okay. Cool.

*(He gets comfortable.)*

Hi, guys. How ya doin'? So, I have a few things I wanna talk about and this seems to be the most logical way. *(beat)* Man! I have burned up a lot of DVDs for you guys. Oh well, one more can't hurt, right?

*(He stares for a moment, motionless.)*

I was thinking about you guys the other day. You know, how this all started. Things like that. Gotta tell ya, when we started this I never thought I would get tired of it. How could I? What else is there? *(beat)* Sometimes it takes a nudge from an unexpected place to make you see the reality of your situation. *(beat)* But I'm getting ahead of myself here.

*(He stops for a moment.)*

I was thinkin' the other day about my position. Sure, I have a house and money and women... what all single guys would prob'ly kill for, y'know? It ain't enough for me anymore. Never thought I would want more but I guess I do. Just didn't know it... Until this woman... a few weeks ago... this woman I met one night... when I was "working." *(beat)* Look, I know it ain't illegal or nothin', but some people might find it different or whatnot. Weird. Probably *wrong*. But I know it ain't illegal. And, as I'm finding, it really fucks with the personal life. I haven't been able to have... *(beat)* You guys don't care about that, though, do ya? *(beat)* Now don't get me wrong...

## ACT I: SCENE 3

Robert, Jack and Simon are sitting in a restaurant booth. They have just finished lunch.

ROBERT

I have this week's discs.

*(Reading.)*

Number... 28? / Has it really been that long?

SIMON

Sweet.

JACK

*(Picking up his disc.)*

He actually did it?

ROBERT

Did what?

JACK

I just asked for something a little different this time.

ROBERT

Diff... Never mind. I don't want to know.

SIMON

You're a freak, man.

JACK

Hey, the heart wants what it wants.

SIMON

Yeah... right... the heart.

JACK

Jealous?

SIMON

Of your circus sideshow upbringing?

JACK

That you're not creative.

SIMON

This doesn't call for a whole lot of creativity. It's not some fairy tale that needs costumes and unicorns and shit.

JACK

Your loss. I would think you'd like the unicorn thing.

SIMON

Queer.

JACK

*(Sarcastically.)*

Oh! I get it! Unicorn horn... phallus!

*(Mock laughter.)*

At least mine have all been women.

SIMON

Whataya think mine have been?

JACK

I've seen your wife. You're doing well just to get closer to your own species. Right, Rob?

ROBERT

Don't pull me into this.



SIMON  
(*To Robert.*)  
Can you muzzle this asshole?

ROBERT  
I've tried. He just eats through it.

JACK  
Aren't you afraid *she'll* eat through it?

SIMON  
What is your fucking problem?!

JACK  
You!

SIMON  
(*He puts Jack in a headlock.*)  
Take it back, you little shit!

JACK  
Rob! Get him off me!

SIMON  
Daddy can't help you now.

JACK  
Rob!

ROBERT  
Can you two stop for two minutes? We need to get this done.

JACK  
(*Cutting him off.*)  
Tell him to back off!

ROBERT  
Let him go, Cass.

SIMON  
Tell *him* to quit talking shit about my wife.

ROBERT  
Both of you stop. Now. You're making a spectacle.

SIMON  
He started it.

ROBERT  
I don't care who did what, end it now.

SIMON  
Fine.

JACK  
Whatever.

(They glare at each other.)  
ROBERT  
(*Taking papers out of a manila envelope.*)  
Let's see... The lease on the place will be coming up for renewal next month. It looks like the rent is going up fifty or sixty a month.

SIMON  
That's doable.

ROBERT  
I figured. I just wanted to avoid surprises.

JACK  
No problem. Twenty or so a piece per month.

ROBERT  
Why is your math never that good around the office?

JACK  
Not my money.

ROBERT  
That's what I like to hear. After all, it's only *other* people's dreams and future security. *(beat)* Also, the car lease is ending. Do we want to trade or...

JACK  
Does he want a new one?

ROBERT  
I haven't spoken to him about it. We only have two choices, though: Buy or trade. Cassle?

SIMON  
*(Paying attention to something else.)*  
Huh? Yeah? *(beat)* Whatever...  
*(Robert and Jack turn to find the focus of his attention—a woman. They leer along with him, then:)*

ROBERT  
Alright. Back to it. Cassle, the car lease? It's on your company's account.

SIMON  
What's the pay off?

ROBERT  
Ten thousand and change.

SIMON  
Pay it off.

ROBERT  
You sure?

JACK  
That's a lot for me to take out at once. I mean, on top of the usual. Sarah could find it and start asking questions.

SIMON  
I'm saying I'll pay it off. Just take it out of expenditures. Shouldn't be a problem.

ROBERT  
Alright. Thanks.

JACK  
*(Straining to mean it.)*  
Yeah... Thanks.

SIMON  
Wow! That must have really hurt!

JACK  
Shut up.

SIMON  
Noooo... I may need to hear it again. This time, put some heart into it. Pretend I'm a leprechaun or some shit.

ROBERT  
What is it with you two?

JACK  
He's a dick.

This from the sex freak. SIMON  
 God! It's like dealing with six year-olds. ROBERT  
 What do you know from working with kids? SIMON  
 What the hell, Cassle? ROBERT  
 Sorry. Got a little trigger happy. SIMON  
 Right. ROBERT  
 I didn't mean nothin'. I mean, can't they do surgery on your dick, or... SIMON  
 (Cutting him off.) ROBERT  
 That'll do. Thanks. JACK  
 Doesn't feel very good, does it, Rob? ROBERT  
 Shut up, Jack. JACK  
 (Laughing.)  
 Man, you're a pussy! I deal with his shit constantly and you can't take a little wing shot. ROBERT  
 Wing shot? Full blown castration. SIMON  
 Said I was sorry. ROBERT  
 Sure... Anything else? SIMON  
 Nah. Don't think so. JACK  
 (Waving Simon's DVD in front of him, playing keep away.)  
 Well! If *he* says we're done, then I guess we... are... DONE! SIMON  
 Give. JACK  
 Take. ROBERT  
 Jack... SIMON  
 (Cutting him off.)  
 Ya wanna take it outside, you little shit? JACK  
 (Mocking.)  
 Oooooo... *outsiiiiide*. (MORE)

JACK (cont'd)  
*(Simon lunges for him but is stopped by Robert.)*

ROBERT  
 Go, Jack. Now! And, leave the disc.

SIMON  
 And you better run, asshole!

ROBERT  
 Simon...

*(Jack meanders taunting Simon.)*  
 GO!

*(Jack Rushes out.)*  
 SIMON  
 Why are you even friends with that guy?

ROBERT  
 Why are you?

SIMON  
 I'm not. *(beat)* Look, I think we need to cut him out. On top of being an asshole, he's getting weird.

ROBERT  
 Weird is relative, don't you think? Besides, we agreed—no limits.

SIMON  
 Maybe we need to rethink that.

ROBERT  
 You don't think you might be overreacting?

SIMON  
 We can't get sloppy here.  
*(Checking his watch, then getting up.)*

Shit. I gotta get back. We'll talk about this later.  
 ROBERT

I think we'll be fine.  
*(Holding up his disc.)*

Don't forget this.  
 SIMON

Yeah... Thanks... *(beat)* Keep an eye on him, Rob. I don't trust the little pissant.  
 ROBERT

I am well aware. I'll give you a call later.  
 SIMON

Yeah. Fine.  
*(Simon exits. Robert turns his disc over a couple of times, puts it in his jacket pocket, finishes his coffee, and exits.)*

## ACT I: SCENE 4

Robert's office the next morning. He enters, turns on the light to reveal Miranda sitting in his chair.

ROBERT

*(Startled.)*

Jeez! What are you doing here?

MIRANDA

I don't think you were totally honest with me yesterday.

ROBERT

How do you know that?

MIRANDA

I said "think" not "know" but that little Freudian slip makes me think I am more right than I originally... thought.

ROBERT

Freudian slip?

MIRANDA

Psych one. First things you learn: Freud, penises, and the slip.

ROBERT

This has been fun and all but you need to leave now.

MIRANDA

I don't think so.

ROBERT

I can't help you and I have a lot to do today.

MIRANDA

Is that your mantra?

*(Robert is looking for something on the desk.)*

Looking for this?

ROBERT

*(Sighs.)*

Do we *have* to do this?

*(She smiles at him, waving the bluetooth.)*

Alright. Fine. What can I do to get you out of here quickly?

MIRANDA

For starters, you can tell me who your little friend is.

ROBERT

Friend?

MIRANDA

*Robert...* He knows so much about you.

ROBERT

That doesn't mean I know him.

MIRANDA

M hm. I think he is. And, if he is, you might want to rethink your relationship.

ROBERT

I would say we both should.

*(He moves to the door and opens it. When she doesn't budge he caves and closes the door.)*

Alright... Where did you meet him?

MIRANDA

The restaurant where I work. He came in once a week, at first. Then twice for a couple weeks. Then, almost every weekday for breakfast.

ROBERT

Where do you work?

MIRANDA

Reggie's Diner. On Elm.

ROBERT

That's not too far from here, is it?

MIRANDA

You've been there!

ROBERT

I know where Elm is. *(beat)* Did he ever take you home?

MIRANDA

Mine. We always met somewhere and he would drop me at home after.

ROBERT

*(beat)*

What kind of car did he have?

MIRANDA

What kind of car? How would I know...

*(He looks at her, deadpan. She sighs.)*

I don't know. One of those boring family-type cars.

ROBERT

Was it clean? Did it have any family stuff in it? Toys or...?

MIRANDA

Y'know, yeah... That was kinda weird. It didn't have that, you know, "lived in" feel to it. It was always spotless. Empty. *(beat)* Look at you, you little detective!

ROBERT

I'm just trying to get you out of here.

MIRANDA

That's a little harsh.

ROBERT

This is getting us nowhere.

MIRANDA

Nah ah! We're getting *somewhere*! Those car questions were great!

ROBERT

*(Pointed.)*

Please.

MIRANDA

You really want me to go?

ROBERT

Yes!

MIRANDA

*(Eyeballing him.)*

What are you hiding?

ROBERT

What?

MIRANDA

If you want me out of here so bad you must be hiding something.

I'm not hiding anything.

ROBERT

M hm.

MIRANDA

ROBERT

*(They are at a standoff. After a moment.)*

Look I... Fine. How did you get a hold of him?

MIRANDA

Cell number.

ROBERT

You still have it?

MIRANDA

Yeah, but the last few times I called it went to voicemail.

ROBERT

Give it to me. Let me call it.

*(She finds the number, dials it on his phone and hands him the receiver. He listens.)*

MIRANDA

Voicemail?

ROBERT

Generic greeting. He really does *not* want to be found.

MIRANDA

What are we gonna do now?

ROBERT

We?

MIRANDA

Yeah.

ROBERT

You're going to leave. I'll get back to work. And, in time, we'll forget we ever met.

MIRANDA

Ooooh, Robbie. How could I ever forget you?

*(She starts for the door, then stops. Getting emotional. Starting to cry.)*

I need help here. Damn! I hate being pregnant! Stupid crying shit!

*(She regains her composure with big breathing and physical movement.)*

There. *(beat)* Look, I really need to find this guy.

ROBERT

*(He stays firm, then, relents. Getting a notepad and pen.)*

Leave me your number. I'll call you if I think of anything.

MIRANDA

Uh huh... And should I wad it up and throw it away for you, too?

ROBERT

I mean it.

*(She stares at him for a moment, writes her number on a piece of paper, rips it off the pad, hands it to him, and heads for the door.)*

MIRANDA

*(Playfully.)*

Hope to hear from you soon.

ROBERT

If I learn anything, I'll call.

MIRANDA

M hm.

*(She exits. He puts the paper in his pocket,  
picks up his ear piece and dials the phone.)*

ROBERT

Simon? ... Yes... Alright. ... Can you meet me for lunch? ... Okay. Tomorrow.

Usual place. ... Alright, I'll see you then.

*(He hangs up and arranges the stuff on his  
desk. There is a knock on his door as Jack  
enters simultaneously.)*

JACK

Well. What have we got going on today?

ROBERT

*(Suspiciously.)*

How long have you been here?

JACK

In your office? / I just came in.

ROBERT

No. ≠ In *the* office.

JACK

I don't know... maybe five minutes.

ROBERT

Why didn't you stop by?

JACK

You had someone in here. I didn't want to interrupt. New client?

ROBERT

Something like that.

JACK

*(Looking back at the door.)*

Good. It's getting a bit thin lately...

ROBERT

Are you alright?

JACK

Huh? Yeah. Sure. Why do you ask?

ROBERT

Just checking. *(beat)* How's Sarah?

JACK

Fine. I guess. *(beat)* Are you alright?

ROBERT

I'm fine.

JACK

You sure.

ROBERT

Yes.



JACK  
*(beat)*  
 Well, I guess I'd better get started.  
*(Exiting.)*

ROBERT  
 Lunch tomorrow?

JACK  
*(He stops.)*  
 I guess so. Where?

ROBERT  
 Usual. Simon's meeting us at one.

JACK  
 That should work. I might be a few minutes late, though. I have an appointment across town at twelve.

ROBERT  
*(Robert watches Jack as he exits.)*  
 Has to be Cassle.

JACK (OFF STAGE)  
 Oh... Excuse me... Oh! Hi! / He's in there.

CATHERINE (OFF STAGE)  
*(Sternly.)*  
 Jack. ≠ You don't say.  
*(Catherine enters grandly.)*

Good morning, *dahling!*

ROBERT  
 Hey! What are you doing here?

CATHERINE  
 Lovely to see you, too!

ROBERT  
*(Coming around the desk to kiss her.)*  
 Sorry.

CATHERINE  
 Just playin'.

ROBERT  
*(She sits, Robert sits on the edge of his desk.)*  
 What's going on?

CATHERINE  
 I was in the neighborhood, so I thought I'd bring you...  
*(She pulls a bakery bag out of her purse.)*  
 ... This!

ROBERT  
 My God! Is that...?  
*(She nods.)*  
 You're a mind reader!  
*(He buries his face in the bag, takes a whiff.)*  
 I was *just* thinking about these this morning! Didn't have time to get over there.  
*(He pulls out a pastry and takes a bite.)*  
 They're still warm!

CATHERINE

Like a fried, doughy hug.

*(He moves to kiss her but she turns.)*

You've got... stuff on your...

*(He digs in the bag for a napkin and wipes.)*

Better.

ROBERT

*(Gives her a kiss.)*

That made my morning!

CATHERINE

You mean Jack didn't perk you up?

ROBERT

Uh... no. In fact, he has...

*(He catches himself.)*

Never mind. *(beat)* So... what's on the agenda today?

CATHERINE

*(Checks her notebook.)*

Interview for the piece I'm writing. Some running around. Oh! Don't forget, dinner tonight.

ROBERT

Dinner?

CATHERINE

Jack and Sarah.

*(Robert gives her a nasty look.)*

Yeah. I know.

*(Checks her watch.)*

Well... gotta run. I'll be back by later. Be ready.

ROBERT

Yeah yeah.

*(She exits as Robert returns to his chair, pastries in hand.)*

## ACT I: SCENE 5

Lights up on platform.

HAROLD

Now don't get me wrong, this has been an education and as my pop used to say, "If you don't learn something from everything, you've failed." Know what I've learned working with you guys: A life without love is pretty empty. Maybe you guys know this... or, maybe not, who knows... but love is a funny thing. Makes you do all kinds of stupidity. The way I see it, though, lack of love can do the same thing. I guess there's some... uh... delicate balance with this stuff. Just never had to face it, y'know? Don't get me wrong, plenty of women have loved me. That's what they said anyway, but I've never been bit until... *(beat)* She hit me sideways, right off the bat. I didn't have a chance.

*(beat)*

The weird thing is that I was raised to believe that I was gonna be married with a load of kids by this age. Slipped that noose! For a lot of years. *(beat)* The game has changed, though. I've changed. Now... now I only wanna be with her and we're makin' plans. *(beat)* Real life begins soon... Real soon.

*(beat)*

Okay. Look. Can I be honest here? My life ain't what I want it to be. Well, it hasn't been but it's gettin' there. The way I see it, part of this is on you guys. Part of this is your fault. I know, I know... I agreed to it, but I can't help but think that you guys took advantage of me and my shitty situation before. I think I know what has really been going on here... Y'all enslaved me. Give me a house. Food. All that shit in return for me doing what I do with these women. *(beat)* Either I'm a slave... or a prostitute... or... or a... a...

*(He looks to the person behind the camera, unsure of the word.)*

Conc... concu... bine? Concubine. Yeah, concubine. *(beat)* Guess they're all the same thing anyway, right? This must seem like it's coming out of nowhere...

## ACT I: SCENE 6

Jack enters Robert's office later that morning.

JACK

You have the Granger file?

ROBERT

Mary has it.

JACK

*(Starting to leave.)*

Cool. Thanks.

ROBERT

Jack. Wait.

JACK

Yeah.

ROBERT

Sit down. *(beat)* What did you ask him to do?

JACK

Who?

ROBERT

Harold, who. What's on the disc?

JACK

Nothing you want to know about. Definitely nothing you *need* to know about.

ROBERT

*(beat)*

What are you doing?

JACK

Do you ask your precious Cassle what's on his discs?

ROBERT

He pretty much shares that information unsolicited.

JACK

Do I pry into what's on your discs?

ROBERT

Simon's a little worried, what with your...

JACK

*(Cutting him off.)*

This is none of his fucking business!

ROBERT

If it could expose us to...

JACK

*(Cutting him off again.)*

What is this really about?

ROBERT

What?

JACK

This has to be about something else. Why didn't it come up earlier? Are you saying you have never worried about being found out before?

ROBERT

Jack...

JACK

No! What is this really about? Are you two conspiring against me now?

ROBERT

Don't be paranoid. / There are no ulterior motives here.

JACK

You know I'm not paranoid! And you know I'm right about that wife of his! /  
(*more to himself*) Anita! Castrating bitch!

ROBERT

Jack... ≠ You don't have to be so vicious.

JACK

Come on, Rob, you've met her. If she doesn't keep his balls in a jar it's only because she ate them!

ROBERT

Look, *we* just need to make sure we are all still on the same page here. Sticking to the original agreement.

JACK

Yeah... Yeah...

ROBERT

You have anything you want to tell me?

JACK

Like what?

ROBERT

Well, you've been acting strangely and... now, defensive...

JACK

Is this from him? Fuck him! (*beat*) You know, I expect this shit from him but, coming from you, it really pisses me off! How long have we known each other?

ROBERT

Long enough.

JACK

Nice. Noncommittal. Long enough for what?

ROBERT

For me to know when you're acting out of character.

JACK

Out of... What about you? / You're so fucking quick to accuse me... What about last week when you were fifteen minutes late coming back from lunch? Very out of character, *Rob*.

ROBERT

Now you're flailing. ≠ Jeez.

JACK

No! Really! What do *you* have to hide, huh?

ROBERT

What?

JACK

What. Do you. Have to hide. Mother *fuckin'* Theresa?

ROBERT

I don't have any...

JACK

(*More to himself.*)

Accuse me, motherfucker. Shit! I mean... What the hell, Rob?!

ROBERT

Calm down. I didn't...

Bullshit!

JACK

ROBERT

Alright. Go. Calm down.

JACK

Oh?! That's how you do this?! A fuckin' verbal drive-by and just run me out of here / like a fucking coward?!

ROBERT

That's enough! ≠ SHUT. UP!

*(Jack stops, still seething.)*

You need to go for the day. Go home, calm down. We'll talk later.

JACK

*(He, kicks a chair over.)*

Fine! Whatever!

ROBERT

Nice. Very mature.

*(Jack flips him off over his shoulder.)*

Cool off. We'll talk tonight.

JACK

*(Stopping.)*

Tonight?

ROBERT

Dinner. Sarah's promotion.

JACK

*(More to himself.)*

Fuckin' incredible!

*(Turns to face Robert.)*

Don't fucking bother.

*(He exits slamming the door.)*

## ACT I: SCENE 7

Later that afternoon. Robert is at his desk.  
Catherine enters. He continues working only half  
paying attention. He does not look up.

CATHERINE

Hey, you! Ready?

ROBERT

For?

CATHERINE

Dinner. With Jack and Sarah... Her promotion.

ROBERT

Oh, right... the *promotion*. Promotion to what, by the way?

CATHERINE

I don't know. Some middle-not-a-manager thing.

ROBERT

That makes sense.

CATHERINE

Not really.

ROBERT

Right. She does deserve it.

CATHERINE

*(She checks that he is paying attention at all.)*

We're going to start robbing banks together.

ROBERT

Sounds good.

CATHERINE

I already have my ski mask all picked out. I'm thinking pink.

ROBERT

Fun.

*(He stops working, looks at her.)*

Of course, if you do start down this new career path, make sure you split the  
money in the car. If you let her take it you'll never see your cut.

CATHERINE

Nice.

ROBERT

I call 'em like I see 'em.

CATHERINE

*(Smiling.)*

You're right, I'm sure.

ROBERT

It's easy when they're obvious. *(beat)* Oh. Wait... Tonight's canceled.

CATHERINE

She didn't call me.

ROBERT

She probably doesn't know yet.

CATHERINE

What are you talking about?

ROBERT

Jack and I got into it earlier.

Yeah? CATHERINE

ROBERT  
The last thing he said was “don’t fucking bother.”

CATHERINE  
Lovely. *(beat)* So, what now?

ROBERT  
Oh, he’ll get over it.

CATHERINE  
Not him. Us? You should have called.

ROBERT  
Sorry.

CATHERINE  
*Right.*

ROBERT  
*(Sincerely.)*

Really. CATHERINE

Well, since I’m here, let’s discuss our vacation.  
ROBERT

What about it? CATHERINE

Do we have to go to the cabin?  
ROBERT

We always go to the cabin. CATHERINE

Exactly. It’s not a vacation. We have to slave away and do everything ourselves and you, m’dear... you turn me into your... concubine. What that mountain air does to you!

ROBERT  
That’s a bit much, don’t you think?

CATHERINE  
Can we please try something different? Something new?

ROBERT  
The cabin *is* different. Different from everyday.

CATHERINE  
You know what I mean. An *actual* vacation away from *any* kind of work.

ROBERT  
*(beat)*

Since you said “please”... I’ll play. Where? CATHERINE

I was thinking maybe a big city. Some place with a lot to do.  
ROBERT

But a vacation is to unwind. Relax. Recharge.  
CATHERINE

Turns out it’s a whole lot of work to escape the modern world. And... I haven’t had the heart to tell you, but... it’s really just a whole lot of boring.  
ROBERT

Cat!



CATHERINE

*(Mimicking him.)*

Rob! *(beat)* I was just thinking we might do something different for once.

ROBERT

*(beat)*

Alright... Where did you have in mind?

CATHERINE

Um... New York?

ROBERT

New York?!

CATHERINE

*(She pulls a stack of papers, brochures, and such out of her bag.)*

Think about it! Museums. Theatre. All sorts of stuff to do!

ROBERT

I have a feeling this has gone past the "thought" stage.

CATHERINE

A little.

ROBERT

*(Mock confrontational.)*

Is this all you got?

CATHERINE

One more thing. Close your eyes!

*(He does and she places two pieces of paper in his hands—plane tickets.)*

Okay. Open them.

ROBERT

A little past "thought?"

CATHERINE

Just a tad.

*(He rolls his eyes.)*

It was too good a deal to pass up. Good thing I got them when I did, too, the price went way up the next day. And... they're non-refundable and I know you wouldn't want to waste the tickets.

ROBERT

I could give them to someone as a gift.

CATHERINE

*(Smiling wryly.)*

Non-transferrable.

ROBERT

*(beat)*

Well, I guess we're going to New York.

CATHERINE

Thank you! I promise it will be fun!

ROBERT

*(Sarcastically.)*

You don't have to sell me.

CATHERINE

Thank you, Rob.

ROBERT  
 Sure. *(beat)* Well, what now?

CATHERINE  
 I canceled a meeting for this non-dinner.

ROBERT  
 Sorry. Again.

CATHERINE  
*(Checking her watch.)*  
 Well, maybe I can still catch him if I leave now.  
*(Consulting her notebook.)*  
 Since I'll be over there, I should hit some of the businesses involved. Maybe I can get this done early. Knock it out by tomorrow night.

ROBERT  
 So you'll be late.

CATHERINE  
 Since we don't have to go to dinner with *them*. You know, it's bad enough having to deal with her at all when something good happens. An entire evening with the two of them would be insufferable.

ROBERT  
 And she's your best friend?

CATHERINE  
 Sadly.

ROBERT  
 Be home for dinner?

CATHERINE  
 I really want to get this op-ed in for Sunday. The sooner I get it done...

ROBERT  
 Alright. I guess I'll just pick something up on the way home.  
*(He watches for a minute as she pages through her notebook.)*

Everything alright?

CATHERINE  
 Sure... What? ... Yeah, sure.

ROBERT  
 You seem to be running around a lot more lately.

CATHERINE  
 Life of a freelance.

ROBERT  
 I guess I'll see you later.

CATHERINE  
*(She gathers herself and stands.)*  
 Okay. See ya later.  
*(He stands to kiss her but she turns quickly and exits. He watches her go.)*

## ACT I: SCENE 8

Rob's office early the next morning. Jack pokes his head in.

JACK

Rob.

*(He doesn't answer, doesn't look.)*

Got a minute?

*(Still no answer. Jack enters and sits across from Robert. A moment of silence.)*

I'm sorry, man. I don't know what came over me.

ROBERT

*(Robert looks up, stares at Jack for a moment.)*

Do you need some time off?

JACK

No... I'm working it out.

ROBERT

You sure?

JACK

Yeah. *(beat)* We good?

ROBERT

We probably will be. But you've got to get your shit together.

JACK

Yeah. I know.

ROBERT

Do you need professional help? / If you do, we can take care of it, just ask.

JACK

No. ≠ Yeah. I will. *(beat)* Still on for lunch?

ROBERT

Can you refrain from pushing Simon's buttons?

JACK

He starts it!

ROBERT

Not always. And, even when he does, you don't have to continue it.

JACK

I should just let him win?

ROBERT

It's not a competition.

JACK

With him *everything* is a competition!

ROBERT

Just let it go.

JACK

Uh... No.

ROBERT

You need to learn how to better pick your battles. Here, too. You've been getting sloppy lately. You lost two clients last month. One of which I don't think we will ever get back.

JACK  
That jerk Simpkins? He's an ass!

ROBERT  
I'm beginning to see why he left.

JACK  
Nothing was ever good enough!

ROBERT  
Regardless, he's gone now and you need to make up that business.

JACK  
I'll get it back.

ROBERT  
M hm.

JACK  
*(Jack gets up to leave.)*

I will!

ROBERT  
I can't cover it this time, Jack.

JACK  
I know! I'll do it. Shit! / I'll get it back!  
*(Jack exits.)*

Fuck!

ROBERT  
Uh... Alright.  
*(Robert watches with concern. His phone rings.)*

Yes? *(sighs)* Send her in. *(beat)* And Mary... Dig out my copy of the partner agreement.  
*(He tidies up his desk until a light knock at the door.)*

Come in.  
*(Miranda enters in a top coat, sunglasses and fedora. She moves to the center of the room, whips off her sunglasses and strikes a pose. He drops his head.)*

MIRANDA  
Whataya think? I figured I should look the part if I'm gonna start investigating.

ROBERT  
Why are you here? And why so early?

MIRANDA  
Right to it, eh?

ROBERT  
Right to it. I have a lot to do today.

MIRANDA  
You always have a lot to do.

ROBERT  
Other people's money.

MIRANDA  
What? Like investments and stuff?

Basically. ROBERT

MIRANDA  
It seems you've been busy elsewhere.

ROBERT  
I'm not sure what you mean.

MIRANDA  
Come on, Bobby. / I think you know more... Sorry... Mr. Montgomery.

ROBERT  
Don't call me that. ≠ And, I think we're past formality, don't you?

MIRANDA  
Maybe.

(*Thinks for a moment. Smiles big.*)  
Okay... yes we are! (*beat*) You know, I think in a different world... in a different circumstance... we could be friends!

ROBERT  
That's not... Please, I have a lot...

MIRANDA  
(*Sing-songy.*)  
... to do.

(*Becoming gravely serious.*)  
Are you sure you want me to get right down to it? Can you handle that?

ROBERT  
What are you doing?

MIRANDA  
You wanted me to get right down to business.

ROBERT  
Split the difference, please.

MIRANDA  
You don't like that?

ROBERT  
Alright. Playtime's over. Please go.

MIRANDA  
You sure you want me to leave? Just like that?

ROBERT  
Yes. Now.

MIRANDA  
Alright. Honeymoon's over. You might wanna change that tone.  
(*She studies him for a smile, a crack in the armor.*)

Well. Let me bring you up to speed.

ROBERT  
I can't wait for this.

MIRANDA  
I know! Exciting, huh?

ROBERT  
Our definitions may conflict.

MIRANDA

Okay... so... I started out just trying to find out who my baby-daddy is. *(beat)* I don't think I can pull that off—"baby-daddy"—can I?

ROBERT

Not really.

MIRANDA

Gave it a shot. *(beat)* Well, like I said, I wanted to find out about the guy who put the bun in my oven...

ROBERT

Oh, God.

MIRANDA

No? Last one. I swear.

*(She pulls a notebook out of her bag.)*

I'm all official, see?

*(She flips it open, thumbs through it.)*

Okay... so, all I could start with was your name. You know, since it's all I have. I looked on the internet and... Hey, did you know that your name is the same as some actor from way back?

ROBERT

Yes.

MIRANDA

He was a good lookin' guy.

ROBERT

Alright.

MIRANDA

Oh, he was.

ROBERT

*(Steering her away.)*

You know, his daughter played Samantha on *Bewitched*.

MIRANDA

On what?

ROBERT

It was an old TV show.

MIRANDA

Oh. I don't think I... Hey! You're trying to get me "off task," aren't you.

ROBERT

Would it make you leave sooner?

MIRANDA

Probably not. *(beat)* Anyway, I started with the usual internet things—Social sites and stuff. There are a *lot* of guys named Robert Montgomery around.

ROBERT

Both names are fairly common.

MIRANDA

I'll say. There are only two in the immediate area, though. You and a rather good looking black guy.

ROBERT

African-American.

MIRANDA

Really?

ROBERT

It is the socially acceptable term.

MIRANDA

But, I don't know if he is. He could be from somewhere else.

ROBERT

I wouldn't know.

MIRANDA

You instantly assume he is African-American, though.

ROBERT

Err on the side of caution.

MIRANDA

Uh huh. *(beat)* Anyway, this guy... this other Robert Montgomery... I look at what I can on his bio page, you know? It's real interesting. He is a... *(Reading)* personal financial planner and manager.

*(Sarcastically.)*

Hey! That's the same thing *you* do!

ROBERT

*(Somewhat mocking.)*

That *is* interesting. I'll have to look him up.

MIRANDA

You can stow the attitude, mister.

*(He straightens up.)*

I don't think you will have to. Look him up, that is.

ROBERT

Why is that?

MIRANDA

I figure that in a city this size, that's too much of a coincidence.

ROBERT

I'll grant you, it's a bit of a stretch. *(beat)* I'm guessing he's not the guy who... You know.

MIRANDA

Did I say that guy was black?

ROBERT

No.

MIRANDA

Doncha think I would have said that?

ROBERT

I don't know.

MIRANDA

I would have. He's not.

ROBERT

Alright.

MIRANDA

What is really interesting, to me, at least, is the fact that you don't seem at all surprised by any of this.

ROBERT

What?

MIRANDA

Your identity has been stolen or whatever and you don't seem to care a whole helluva lot.

ROBERT

I already told you, I will take care of it.

MIRANDA

Yeah. You did. *(beat)* So... Did you?

ROBERT

Did I what?

MIRANDA

Call the police? I mean, I didn't hear from you, so I figured you didn't call them.

ROBERT

*(beat)*

Can I ask you something?

MIRANDA

Sure.

ROBERT

Did I do this to you?

MIRANDA

No.

ROBERT

Then, why are you here?

MIRANDA

*(Lightly accusatory.)*

You have *something* to do with it...

ROBERT

I don't.

MIRANDA

... *or*, you know someone who does. Anyway, let me finish, 'cause this is where it will get interesting for you, I think.

ROBERT

Oh?

MIRANDA

I look at this guy's bio page and I see some interesting things. Like, he does the same thing you do. He went to the same school. Same year. / Same program and... I know how big it is, I looked it up. I also know how it works, you know, being in the same program, graduating the same year. You have to know each other... or he is a criminal.

ROBERT

It was a big school. ≠ We don't know each other.

MIRANDA

Oh?

*(She examines him for a moment.)*

There is *something* going on here.

ROBERT

You're jumping to conclusions.

MIRANDA

Nope.



ROBERT

*(Sarcastically.)*

Well, how can I argue with that.

MIRANDA

Can you please just tell me what is going on here?

ROBERT

Nothing.

MIRANDA

Alright, how about this... how about we call Mr. Robert Montgomery... the *second*... and see? His phone number was right there on his bio. He didn't check that box or whatever that hides it from the public.

ROBERT

*(He does not react but picks up the phone.)*

Let me see the number.

MIRANDA

*(They stare at each other for what feels an eternity. Then:)*

Ya got me! Yeah, I don't have his number. I was kidding. You are good!

ROBERT

You lied.

MIRANDA

Potato, puh-tawto.

ROBERT

Not really.

MIRANDA

You're getting mad.

ROBERT

I'm getting bored.

MIRANDA

That's rude!

ROBERT

Be that as it may, I have work to do, so if you have nothing else...

MIRANDA

*(Looking about the office.)*

One more thing...

ROBERT

*(pause)*

Well... ?

MIRANDA

Why are there no pictures?

ROBERT

What?

MIRANDA

Most people have pictures around their office. Family. Friends.

ROBERT

I don't.

MIRANDA

Nope. You don't. *(beat)* Do you have any friends?

ROBERT  
 Yes, I have friends. *(pause)* Anything else?

MIRANDA  
 You trying to get rid of me?

ROBERT  
 Yes.

MIRANDA  
 Well! I know when I'm not wanted!

ROBERT  
 If only that were true.  
*(She shoves the notebook back into her bag, sunglasses back on, cinches her coat and adjusts her hat, all with dramatic flair.)*

Miranda... Sorry.

MIRANDA  
 Are you?

ROBERT  
 I was rude and, for that, I apologize.

MIRANDA  
*(beat)*

Thank you.

ROBERT  
 I do hope you find him.

MIRANDA  
 So do I. *(beat)* I think.

ROBERT  
 You think?

MIRANDA  
 When this whole thing started—trying to find him—I thought, “He needs to know about this.” Now I’m not so sure.

ROBERT  
 When did you start looking for him?

MIRANDA  
 When did I first come in here?

ROBERT  
 Two days ago.

MIRANDA  
*(Getting emotional.)*  
 It has been a long couple of days!

ROBERT  
 I bet.

MIRANDA  
 Dammit! Now the waterworks!

ROBERT  
*(He brings her tissue.)*

Here, sit down.

MIRANDA  
 No. I’ll be alright. *(beat)* This is not how I usually am, by the way.

ROBERT  
I know. Pregnancy can do weird things.

MIRANDA  
I hate this! Crying is stupid!  
*(She works to compose herself with new, big physical movements and breathing. She blows her nose comically loud.)*

You have kids?

ROBERT  
Can I get you a cab?

MIRANDA  
Too personal. Got it.

ROBERT  
Isn't that in your little notebook?

MIRANDA  
Weird, huh?  
*(He doesn't answer.)*

No. Thanks. I'll take the bus. I'm used to the bus.

ROBERT  
At least let me pay for it.

MIRANDA  
That's okay.

ROBERT  
Alright. Well...  
*(He returns to his seat.)*

Good luck.

MIRANDA  
*(beat)*

Robert?

ROBERT  
Hm?

MIRANDA  
Thank you for making time for me. But, I have to tell you—if you are involved in this mess, you need to know that I will come down on you like the hammer of God.

ROBERT  
I don't doubt that.

MIRANDA  
*(She rises, turns to leave, but stops.)*

I won't be happy about it, though.

ROBERT  
Thank... you?

MIRANDA  
Anytime.  
*(She exits.)*

## ACT I: SCENE 9

Lights up on platform. Harold is seated in the chair.

HAROLD

This must seem like it's coming out of nowhere. But, I been feeling like this for a while, really. I just didn't know how to change it. We all gotta work, right? *(beat)* Now that I have someone who supports me, though... *(He smiles at the woman behind the camera)* It's amazing what you can do with the right woman behind you. Something else I'm learning. Never had that before.

*(beat)*

Anyway, let's get down to what's really happenin'. *(beat)* Now, I don't know if there is anything you guys can learn without having something bad happen. And, I struggled for a while, you know, whether I should be the one to do anything... you know, *bad*. *(Looking at the woman)* In the end, I decided that if I thought about doing something at all, then I should just do it. I mean, how you guys gonna learn you're doin' anything wrong if it doesn't fall around your ears and who better to bring the shit down, y'know? Even after decidin' it ate at me for a couple days, but then I saw the weird chick outside my apartment lookin' like a reject from some black-and-white detective flick. Sittin' out there takin' pictures and who knows what else. I don't know if one or even all a you guys sent her to spy on me but, I gotta tell ya, if you did, ya need to get your money back 'cause she sucks! *(beat)* I can't figure out why you would hire someone in the first place. I mean I never... *(beat)* Ya know what? Never mind. Doesn't matter. It's done. *I'm done*. No more one-nighters. No more hidden video for you guys to... Y'know what? Never mind. I don't wanna know. *(beat)* Anyway... you're a smart guy...

## ACT I: SCENE 10

That afternoon. Simon is sitting in a restaurant booth. Robert enters and sits across from him.

ROBERT

Simon.

SIMON

How ya doin'?

ROBERT

This is not exactly a social call.

SIMON

Whatta ya mean? We're having lunch, right?

ROBERT

Of course. / Simon, a young woman visited me...

SIMON

Oh. Good. I ordered you the usual.

ROBERT

Fine. *(beat)* So this woman came by the office. A *pregnant* woman.

SIMON

*(Laughing.)*

Found a little lead in the pencil after all, eh?

ROBERT

I'm not impotent, / just can't...

SIMON

Isn't that what that means? If you're sterile, no lead in the pencil?

ROBERT

That refers to not being able to get... Never mind. Not why we're here.

SIMON

Yeah. K.

ROBERT

So, she says that this guy said he was me.

SIMON

"This guy?" What guy?

ROBERT

I presume the man who... uh...

SIMON

Knocked her up?

ROBERT

Quaint.

SIMON

Holy shit!

ROBERT

I know.

SIMON

We never talked about this happening.

ROBERT

It was always, sort of, in the back of my mind.

SIMON

Did you call him?

Who? ROBERT

Harold. SIMON

It's not him. ROBERT

How can you be sure? SIMON

This is totally separate. Nothing to do with that. ROBERT

Then, I don't get it. SIMON

Don't you? ROBERT

How would I? SIMON

Well... if pressed about who would do something like this, yours is the only name that comes to mind. ROBERT

(*Laughing.*) SIMON

Yeah! Right! (Robert does not react.)

Are you fuckin' kidding me?! ROBERT

Of the three of us, who would be most likely to do this? SIMON

Me?! Come on, Rob! ROBERT

Who else? SIMON

You tell me, Sherlock. ROBERT

There's no need to get angry. SIMON

No need?! You just accused me of knocking up some broad and... ROBERT

Alright. Sorry. Calm down. SIMON

Let me ask you this, *friend*: Whose idea was this little enterprise? ROBERT

Impregnating a waitress? SIMON

You know what I mean. ROBERT

Yours... SIMON

Okay. Yeah. Fine! You ran with it, though, and now...

ROBERT

All I know is that I have stuck to the deal—Nothing outside. / And with no “lead in the pencil” as you so adequately and incorrectly noted...

SIMON

Me, too. ≠ What did she say about... you? This guy who said he is you.

ROBERT

Not much.

SIMON

Did you talk to Jack about this?

ROBERT

No.

SIMON

Do you think...

*(He trails off, then laughs.)*

Never mind.

ROBERT

I don't know.

SIMON

Huh?

ROBERT

Is it so unbelievable?

SIMON

Do you *know* Jack?

ROBERT

Yes. Still...

SIMON

Always the quiet ones?

ROBERT

Could be.

*(They fall into momentary silence.)*

SIMON

Did she say anything about this guy, you know, physically?

ROBERT

Just that he was normal. Like me. So I assumed... *(beat)* I'm beginning to wonder now.

SIMON

That little shit!

ROBERT

We don't know anything for sure.

SIMON

It's not you. *Definitely* not me.

*(He thinks for a moment.)*

That little bastard. He did this! He did this and he's gonna fuck it all up for us!

ROBERT

*(Trying to keep from drawing attention.)*

Calm down. We don't know this for sure.

SIMON

Who else could it be? Where is he?!

ROBERT  
 We need to stay calm when he gets here.  
 SIMON  
 Whatever!  
 JACK  
*(Walks up to the table.)*  
 Hey, guys! What are we...  
 SIMON  
*(Jumps out of the booth and grabs Jack by the lapels throwing down on the table.)*  
 What the FUCK were you thinking?!  
 JACK  
 Whoa! What the...  
 SIMON  
 Shut up!  
 ROBERT  
 Simon! Stop it!  
 SIMON  
 No!  
*(To Jack.)*  
 What did you do?!  
 JACK  
 I don't know... Rob! I...  
 ROBERT  
*(Working to separate them.)*  
 Come on!  
*(To the restaurant.)*  
 Sorry. Everything's alright. Sorry.  
 SIMON  
 You little shit!  
 ROBERT  
*(Holding Simon back.)*  
 Step out and get some air.  
 SIMON  
 No!  
 ROBERT  
 Now!  
 SIMON  
 Fine! But he has some answering to do.  
 ROBERT  
 Maybe. Maybe not. We'll see. Go outside.  
*(Robert watches Simon exit then sits.)*  
 Sit down.  
 JACK  
 Geez! What the hell is his problem.  
 ROBERT  
 Sit down, Jack.  
 JACK  
 I mean, really...



Sit down! Jack. ROBERT

(Sitting.) JACK

What's the problem? ROBERT

You tell me. JACK

Don't riddle me, Rob. ROBERT

This is not a riddle. Something's happened and i think you may know about it. JACK

Why would I know anything about... anything? ROBERT

Jack. JACK

What? ROBERT

(They stare at each other. Finally:)  
You knew that woman, the one in my office, didn't you?  
(Jack doesn't answer.)

Jack. JACK

(Exhales.)

Miranda Draper. ROBERT

Dammit, Jack... What were you thinking? JACK

I wasn't... (pause) No. You know what I was thinking? I was thinking, "Hey, here's a beautiful young woman who is nice and talks to me like I'm a human being." I guess that's what I was thinking. ROBERT

What are you telling me? JACK

I think it's obvious. ROBERT

Pretend it's not. JACK

(beat)

Have you ever *really* paid attention to how Sarah treats me? ROBERT

Sure. JACK

No. I mean, *really* pay attention. To *what* she says and *how* she says it.  
(Robert shrugs.)

Does she ever say anything nice? *Truly* nice? Everything she says is painted with this... this... blackness... this nastiness. ROBERT

Well...

JACK  
 Don't even get me started on the sex.

ROBERT  
 Consider it done.

JACK  
 Let me ask you this, Rob. *(beat)* Catherine. Does she still touch you?

ROBERT  
 Of course.

JACK  
*Affectionately?*

ROBERT  
 Jack.

JACK  
 I'm serious.

ROBERT  
 So am I.

JACK  
 Okay, so, Catherine is still affectionate and kisses you and touches you nicely and maybe even still does all those other things used to do before careers and bills and shit like that took over.

ROBERT  
 It's not easy, Jack.

JACK  
 Harder for some. For me.

ROBERT  
 Come on, Jack.

JACK  
 You don't get it. / Because you still love your wife.

ROBERT  
 Jack... ≠ You don't?

JACK  
 I try to but she doesn't let me want to.

ROBERT  
 That makes little to no sense.

JACK  
 I loved her once... I guess. I like to think I wouldn't have married her if I didn't. But now... I can't love someone who thinks so little of me.

ROBERT  
*(Simon returns to the table.)*

Are you calm now?

SIMON  
 Yeah.

ROBERT  
 Here. Sit on this side.

SIMON  
*(Sliding into the booth, Robert next to him.)*

Fine with me. I can still reach him.

JACK  
 Is that supposed to scare me?

ROBERT  
Both of you stop it.

SIMON  
So, why'd ya do it?

ROBERT  
(*To Simon.*)  
Maybe you should get yours to go.

JACK  
You wouldn't understand.

ROBERT  
(*To the "server."*)  
Can you box his to go.

SIMON  
Boo-fuckin' hoo!

ROBERT  
Simon, shut up.

SIMON  
Why me? He's the one fuckin' everything up!

ROBERT  
This could just be a blip on the radar.

SIMON  
A blip?! She's pregnant! / He... (*beat*) You know... Fine. Fine! Fuck it! Give me my shit and let me outta here!

(*He shoves Robert off the bench and head fakes Jack.*)  
You'd better straighten this shit out, Jack.

ROBERT  
(*To the server.*)  
Can he get his to go, please? ≠

(*To Simon.*)  
Go. I'll call you tonight.

SIMON  
Whatever.

(*To Jack.*)  
You fuck this up for us and I'm coming after you.

(*Jack mocks fear as Simon walks away.*)  
ROBERT  
I would be a *little* worried, at least. He could pretty much crush you to dust.

JACK  
Sure.

ROBERT  
Regardless, the issue remains. What are you going to do?

JACK  
(*beat*)  
Do you have any idea what Sarah will do to me?

ROBERT  
I assume it will be bad.

JACK  
It certainly won't be pretty.

ROBERT

Still, you have to do something.

JACK

*(Jack stares out the window, Robert stares at him.)*

You know, when it all started I knew it was wrong, socially, but it felt so good to have someone *genuinely* care about me... *(beat)* After the first date I took her home and she invited me in. I said, "no," but not for the reason you would think. It wasn't fear or the morality of cheating. It was the fact that I wanted there to be something more than just a one night stand.

ROBERT

Why are you avoiding this, then?

JACK

I didn't want *this*! Not yet, at least.

ROBERT

*(beat)*

Did you / give...

JACK

... give any thought to what would happen? Of course not. All I could see at the time was a... horizon. A second chance.

ROBERT

Why didn't you just / get...

JACK

... get a divorce?

ROBERT

Stop that!

JACK

Do you honestly think I haven't asked myself these questions? Sarah would eviscerate me!

ROBERT

Regardless, we all need to suck it up every now and then.

JACK

She would get everything! She would take my stake in the business. This is not a guess, Rob, she has threatened as much.

ROBERT

It's in your name. You're protected.

JACK

*Puh-lease*... You know her father.

ROBERT

*(beat)*

Is she happy?

JACK

How the hell would I know?

ROBERT

Do you two *ever* talk?

JACK

Sure... but not about that. *(beat)* It seems like we have slid into this life that is ruled by the idea that what we have is what we have is what we will ever have.

(MORE)

JACK (cont'd)

I need more.

*(They fall into silence again.)*

ROBERT

Well, I can't help you here, Jack. This is all you. You need to figure out what you really want. Beyond that, though, you need to take care of this Miranda thing.

*(beat)* You never know, one could help fix the other.

JACK

Or they could each pick a side and pull me apart. Feast on the entrails.

ROBERT

Always a possibility, but you can't let that stop you from doing what's right... or, at least, what's right for you. *(beat)* Alright?

JACK

I'll do what I have to. *(beat)* Where the hell is our food?

*(They both look toward the "server," then settle, each looking out the "window.")*

End of act.

Intermission.

## ACT II: SCENE 1

Two weeks later. Lights up on Robert who is sitting on a park bench, reading. It is morning. Miranda enters.

MIRANDA

Hi, Bobby.

ROBERT

What are you doing here? / And I've asked you not to call me that.

MIRANDA

Just out for a walk ≠ Oh, yeah. Sorry, *Robert*. Anyway, I saw you sitting here and thought I'd stop by and have a little chat.

ROBERT

Isn't this a little out of your way?

MIRANDA

Actually, I was just at your office but you weren't there.

ROBERT

I know. I'm here.

MIRANDA

Right! Well... I have some more info about the case.

ROBERT

*(Smiling.)*

The case?

MIRANDA

You like? I'm really getting the hang of this!

ROBERT

Alright.

MIRANDA

Oh, how was vacation?

ROBERT

It was fine.

MIRANDA

Where didja go?

ROBERT

Away.

*(They are locked in stare until he realizes she is not going to let it go.)*

New York.

MIRANDA

I've always wanted to go there!

ROBERT

It was... interesting. Not sure how restful it was, though.

MIRANDA

Didja see a lot of shows?

ROBERT

A few.

MIRANDA

*(They stare at each other in silence for a moment.)*

You're not very relaxed. Especially since you just got back from vacation.

ROBERT  
 What have you found out?

MIRANDA  
 Well, I found out that the guy with the pages, the... uh... *African-American* gentleman... Well, it's not his real name.

ROBERT  
 Ya don't say.

MIRANDA  
 There seem to be a lot of people running around using your name.

ROBERT  
 I'm not sure "a lot" is necessarily accurate...

MIRANDA  
 More than one in a case like this, is a lot.

ROBERT  
 "A case like this?" Your experience level jumped while I was away.

MIRANDA  
 I've been working hard.

ROBERT  
 I don't doubt that.

MIRANDA  
 Do you wanna hear what I've found?  
*(Realizing she's not going away he gives up.)*

Okay. So, here's what I found. He also has pages under the names of Simon Cassle and Jonathan Martin but he says on that one to call him "Jack."

ROBERT  
 I see.

MIRANDA  
*(She eyeballs him.)*

You're good.

ROBERT  
 Excuse me?

MIRANDA  
 I just gave you some pretty earth-shattering news and you just take it in stride. I'm not sure whether I should admire you or be incredibly pissed off.

ROBERT  
 I'm amazed I can evoke that kind of reaction in you.

MIRANDA  
 You know both of these men!

ROBERT  
 I do?

MIRANDA  
 That's it! *(beat)* Shit!  
*(She looks him in the eye.)*

These guys are your best friends. I know it. You know it. Stop the shit!

ROBERT  
 Fine. *(beat)* I know them.

MIRANDA  
 Okay. Now we're getting somewhere!  
*(Pulling out a large manila envelope.)*  
 (MORE)

MIRANDA (cont'd)

Look!

*(She rips it open and starts shuffling through the contents. They are photos.)*

I staked out Mister X's apartment and...

ROBERT

What?

MIRANDA

Huh?

ROBERT

You what?

MIRANDA

Staked out his apartment.

ROBERT

Nonono... Who?

MIRANDA

Oh! I'm calling him Mister X for now since I don't know his real name.

ROBERT

*(He stares at her blankly, then sighs.)*

You staked out his apartment...

MIRANDA

Yeah! It's a dirty job, but someone had to do it.

*(He doesn't react. She starts handing him pictures one by one.)*

I started right after the last time I saw you. Sorry they're outta order. I dropped them and they got all mixed around. So, a a week or two I was outside his place. You can see that about three times during the time I was there—there's a date at the bottom of the pictures there... see? Anyway, about three times every, I don't know, every week to two weeks, Mister X has a completely different woman at his place.

ROBERT

*(Looking at the pictures.)*

Wish I'd had his social life when I was single.

MIRANDA

Really?

ROBERT

Who wouldn't?

MIRANDA

Didn't think you were that kind of guy.

ROBERT

Never really got the chance.

MIRANDA

Yeah. Well. *(beat)* So, all these different women... except this one.

*(She hands him a photo.)*

Now, she's good. All I ever saw of her was her car and her back. She'd always pull up and stop in front of his door, sit there for a minute, then the porch light would go off. That's when she'd get outta the car and go in.

*(She hands him another photo.)*

This is her car.

*(She watches him as he examines the photo.)*

(MORE)



MIRANDA (cont'd)

*He sees something, his jaw drops.)*

What? Did you find something?!

ROBERT

Huh? *(beat)* No. Nothing.

MIRANDA

Yes... yes, you did! What?!

*(She snatches the photo back.)*

What is it?!

*(He continues to stare straight ahead.)*

The car? You know the car?

*(Looking at it more closely.)*

The license plate? "9LIVES" ...

*(She looks at him.)*

ROBERT

Stop.

MIRANDA

*(She starts flipping through her notebook.)*

You know I'll figure it out.

ROBERT

No.

MIRANDA

Here we go...

ROBERT

STOP!

MIRANDA

*(She looks at him, shocked.)*

Oh, my God.

ROBERT

Please...

MIRANDA

I...

ROBERT

PLEASE... Just go.

*(She gathers her stuff and stands. She turns and looks at him for a moment, wants to say something, but thinks better of it. She exits. He stares out.)*

## ACT II: SCENE 2

A restaurant that afternoon. Jack is seated in a booth when Simon enters, Jack winces. Simon slides into the opposite side of the booth across from Jack. They are silent for a moment, then:

SIMON  
So, the wife found out, huh?

JACK  
Of course she did.

SIMON  
She kick you out?

JACK  
I wish.

SIMON  
Of course, you deserve it.

JACK  
Whatever.

SIMON  
Thanks, by the way.

JACK  
What?

SIMON  
We're all gonna get fucked by this.

JACK  
No, you won't. / Rob doesn't seem... Whatever. You only care about yourself.

SIMON  
I said "we" ≠ I really don't give a shit about you, that's for sure.

JACK  
How is that different?

SIMON  
God, you're a prick.

JACK  
Regardless, Rob hasn't done anything about this.

SIMON  
That you know of. / Why should he keep bailing your ass out anyway?

JACK  
I think we'd know if... ≠ Bail my ass... Well, probably for the same reason he bails yours out.

SIMON  
I take care of my own shit. Of course, I don't create any, so...

JACK  
Uh huh.

SIMON  
Where is Rob, anyway?

JACK  
I don't know. He took today off also, so I haven't seen him.

SIMON  
Well, I gotta get back. (*beat*) You heard from her?

Who? JACK

Her. The chick. Mirabelle or whatever. SIMON

Miranda. JACK

Whatever. Have you? SIMON

No. JACK

What are you gonna do? SIMON

I don't see as how I have to do anything. JACK

She's pregnant and, news flash, you're the asshole father! SIMON

I don't think she wants to see me or she would have by now. JACK

Does she even know your real name? SIMON

(Smiling.) JACK

Not that I know of. SIMON

Fuckin' incredible! You knock this poor girl up and you're just gonna, what, walk away? JACK

I don't think you have any right to judge me. SIMON

I have no right? *Really?!* JACK

Yes. Really. SIMON

Where do you get off? JACK

We don't need to talk about this anymore. It's pissing you off for whatever reason... I don't know, jealousy, maybe... and I'm tired of listening to you, quite frankly. SIMON

You little shit! (Simon flies across, grabs him by the shirt.)

(Robert enters, haggard, and stops at the table as Simon is trying to drag Jack out of the booth. They both see him, Simon stops.)

Let go, you animal! JACK

(Trying to pull away from Simon.)

Let him go, Simon. ROBERT

SIMON

No, man, you've been protecting him since this shit started and I'm done with it!

*(Robert quietly forces his way into the booth, tosses a disc onto the table, as Jack and Simon stare at him. After a moment Simon releases Jack and sits back down. Jack works at composing himself, re-tuck shirt, etc.)*

SIMON

What's that?

ROBERT

Disc 29.

SIMON

What?

JACK

Where's mine?

SIMON

More smurfs and wizards and shit?

JACK

You're a dick.

SIMON

Big talk from you.

ROBERT

How are you still alive?

JACK

I've been avoiding him.

ROBERT

Mature.

JACK

It worked.

SIMON

Wait a second. *(beat)* You said you haven't seen her.

JACK

So.

SIMON

So... how did your wife find out?

JACK

She got some anonymous letter or something.

SIMON

From who?

JACK

I. Don't. Know. / *I just* said it was anonymous.

SIMON

Fuck! ≠ Nothing's totally anonymous anymore.

*[Robert's ellipses in the following denote his being cut off.]*

ROBERT

I need to...

JACK

This *was* anonymous.

SIMON  
 (to Robert)  
 He's not telling us something.

JACK  
 Like what? / What *could* there be?

ROBERT  
 Can I... ≠ Guys, I need...

SIMON  
 I don't know, but I've got this feeling that...

JACK  
 (Laughing mockingly.)  
 Feeling? / You have none.

ROBERT  
 Shut up, Jack. Listen...

SIMON  
 Yeah. My gut says you're holding out.

JACK  
 I have little or nothing to hold.

SIMON  
 Ya got that right!

JACK  
 Why are you such an ass?

SIMON  
 Why are you?

ROBERT  
 Alright! Stop it! Both of you!  
 (They fall into a silence, Simon glaring at Jack. After a moment:)

JACK  
 (to Robert)  
 Tell him to stop looking at me.

SIMON  
 Run to mommy.

JACK  
 Go to hell.

ROBERT  
 (To himself.)  
 Good God.

SIMON  
 I say we sacrifice the little fucker.  
 (Robert has lost his will to fight anymore.)  
 We're all hanging out here because he can't keep what little he has in his pants.

ROBERT  
 Stop...

JACK  
 And I suppose you've never fished off the company pier.

SIMON  
 What the hell does that mean?

JACK  
 You know damn well what it means.

SIMON  
 I work in construction. You callin' me a fag?!

ROBERT  
 That's it, / I...

JACK  
 If the rainbow fits.

SIMON  
 You're a dead man!

ROBERT  
*(Standing up.)*  
 You two really need to shut up. NOW!  
*(There is a tense moment of silence.)*

SIMON  
 Sorry.

JACK  
*(beat)*  
 Yeah, *Simon*. We have bigger things to deal with.

SIMON  
*(to Robert)*  
 You see what I'm talking about with this guy?

ROBERT  
 Can I talk for...

SIMON  
*(to Jack)*  
 Asshole!

ROBERT  
 I need to...

JACK  
 Rob, can you get him off my back, please?

ROBERT  
 Jack...

SIMON  
*(to Robert)*  
 Can you get him to grow up?

ROBERT  
 Can you two stop sniping for two fucking minutes?!  
*(Exhales, closes his eyes.)*

I have been trying to say / something since I / got here.

SIMON  
 Sure...

JACK  
 Yeah... fine...

*(Silence. Jack and Simon stare at Robert.)*

ROBERT  
*(Looking out the window. Then, to no one:)*  
 I'll think of something.

You alright? JACK  
 Yeah. You okay? SIMON  
 I'm fine. ROBERT  
 You look tired. Thought you just got back from vacation. SIMON  
 I did. I... ROBERT  
 (He trails off.)  
 I will take care of this.  
 Somethin' ain't right. SIMON  
 Everything will be fine. I'll figure something out. ROBERT  
 What are you gonna do? SIMON  
 I don't know. / I said... ROBERT  
 What are you gonna do about... SIMON  
 I SAID... I will figure it out. ROBERT  
 (He falls silent, then rises from his seat.)  
 Rob? SIMON  
 Why don't you go and let me talk to him. JACK  
 Why you? I'm his best friend. SIMON  
 I've known him longer... JACK  
 Longer doesn't mean a whole helluva lot at the moment! SIMON  
 Fuck you! JACK  
 (In Jack's face.) SIMON  
 You little shit!  
 (Jack pushes him.)  
 That. Is. IT!  
 (Simon attacks, Jack defends as best he can.  
 Robert slams his fist on the table. They stop,  
 stare at him, he stares back.)  
 ROBERT  
 You two are incredible. Fucking incredible! All I do is try to be a good friend.  
 Help when I can. I have been there for both of you always. ALWAYS! Everybody  
 has a problem, go to Rob. Simon's business hits a rough patch? Go to Rob.  
 (MORE)

ROBERT (cont'd)

Jack loses a client? Rob'll make up the difference. Need a car? Need a house? Need a second opinion on your low fucking sperm count?! Call Dr. Rob! ROB! GO TO ROB! ANYTHING YOU NEED, GO TO ROB!! *(beat)* Let me ask you two geniuses this: When I need someone, who the fuck do I turn to, huh? WHO?! Jack, can I come to you when I need advice? Can I?! How about you, Cassle?! If I need someone to tell me things'll be alright, can I come to you? CAN I?! Who do I go to? HUH?! WHO THE FUCK DO I GO TO WHEN MY LIFE HITS FUCKING BOTTOM?! TELL ME THAT! *(pause)* I come in here, the one time... The one fucking time I need something from you two and you can't stop acting like bitchy little children long enough for me to get a word in! You all have somewhere... *someone* to bury your shit. Tell me, where do I go? Huh?! Where do I go when my world, everything I've built, implodes, huh?! WHERE?!

*(Silence as they stare at each other.)*

That's what I thought.

*(He exits. Simon and Jack watch him.)*



## ACT II: SCENE 3

Lights up on platform.

HAROLD

Anyway... you're a smart guy, Rob, so, by now I'm sure you've figured out that I'm quitting. Moving on. I need to pursue my acting career. *(beat)* Okay. So, that's about it, I guess. Well, one more thing.

What can you learn? What's the lesson you get to take from all of this? My guess is that your lesson will be the hardest of all. I mean, Cassle's last disc is in the mail with copies of the emails setting the whole thing up so he gets to explain all that. He should have fun when it gets there. And Jack, that little pervert... I sent the disc with the weird shit on it. What the fuck is his problem, anyway?

*(Chuckling.)* Wish I could be a fly on the wall there, huh?

*(beat)*

So, like I said before, I met someone. You know how they say you can never really meet someone in a bar? Turns out a bar is an amazing place to meet... well, in my case, *that* person. I was waitin' for some chick who was obviously not gonna show. I mean, she was already an hour late, so I didn't care if she did or not at that point. Decided to have a couple and see if there was a replacement. *(beat)* Then, I look up and "BOOM" there she was just standing there. Staring at me. I walked over to her and that was that, as they say.

*(Motioning to the person behind the camera to join him.)*

Cat... Sorry... Catherine.

*(Catherine enters and sits on his lap.)*

It's ironic, y'know? When I met her I was there for you. *(beat)* Well, you are a smart guy, Rob, so I'm sure you got this. We're heading out together. We're moving to New York so I can get into what I really wanna do with my life and Catherine, here, is gonna work for a publisher until her writing takes off. She starts Monday, so... *(beat)* Hope you can move on, man. I am... *We are.*

*(They kiss. She waves.)*

## ACT II: SCENE 4

The next morning. Robert is in his office... not working. His door opens a crack, then further until Miranda can fit her head through.

MIRANDA

Hi.

*(He doesn't respond.)*

You okay?

*(No response.)*

Can I come in?

*(Silence.)*

I'll take that as a "yes."

*(She enters, walks slowly across his office, trying to figure out what he is staring at, and sits down across from him.)*

ROBERT

*(beat)*

Did you know who she was?

MIRANDA

What? I... I don't know what you're talking about.

ROBERT

Yes, you do.

MIRANDA

*(beat)*

Not 'til I saw the license plate.

ROBERT

*(beat)*

How long?

MIRANDA

Until...

ROBERT

Has it been going on.

MIRANDA

Oh. I don't know.

ROBERT

Come on.

MIRANDA

I was only outside of his place for a week or so but if I had to guess, I would say it's been a while.

ROBERT

*Great.*

MIRANDA

*(beat)*

Can I help?

ROBERT

Can you turn back time?

MIRANDA

Yeah... I can't. Otherwise...

*(Indicating her stomach and the 'outta there' sign.)*

Y'know?

*(beat)*

You had no idea?

ROBERT

No.

MIRANDA

I find that hard to believe. You're a pretty smart guy.

ROBERT

Please. I'm tired of everyone telling me how smart I am.

*(pause)*

You know, when something like this happens it makes you look at things differently. Not that I have a lot of experience in this department, but I'm sure it's the natural response. You start to look back over every little thing that happened during that time, you know? Scrutinize every word, every late arrival, every phone call she left the room to take.

MIRANDA

Yep. Been there.

ROBERT

I'm sure.

MIRANDA

Hey!

ROBERT

Sorry.

MIRANDA

*(beat)*

What's gonna happen now?

ROBERT

I guess she's moving to New York.

MIRANDA

With that guy?

ROBERT

Yes.

MIRANDA

*(Thinking for a moment.)*

Ooooooo...

ROBERT

What?

MIRANDA

Do you think she was setting things up while you were there on vacation?

ROBERT

*(Realizing.)*

I do now!

MIRANDA

That's gotta hurt!

Thanks for pointing that out. ROBERT  
 Sorry. MIRANDA  
*(They fall into silence.)*  
 Are you here for any particular reason? ROBERT  
 Making sure you're okay. See if I can help. MIRANDA  
 I think you've helped enough. ROBERT  
 Okay. MIRANDA  
*(pause)*  
 What are *you* going to do now? ROBERT  
 I'm gonna go to school. Not giving up on that. MIRANDA  
 I meant about Jack. ROBERT  
 Oh. Yeah. I don't think I care anymore, to tell you the truth. MIRANDA  
 He really should do something about this. ROBERT  
 What I've seen, he doesn't do a whole lot about anything and, considering how  
 he's acted, he didn't want anything to do with me or *(Indicating her stomach.)*  
 this... *him*, actually. I found out last week. MIRANDA  
 Congratulations? ROBERT  
 Yeah. Thanks. MIRANDA  
*(Robert's phone rings. He ignores it.)*  
 You gonna answer that? ROBERT  
*(Staring at her blankly.)*  
 I guess so. MIRANDA  
 Should I go? ROBERT  
 Please.  
*(She exits as he picks up the receiver and covers it until she is gone.)*  
 Hello... *(pause)* I'm here. ... I thought you left. I got your little love note. ...  
 What?! ... *(beat)* Fine. When? ... I'll try to be here.  
*(He hangs up the phone shaking his head.)*

## ACT II: SCENE 5

Robert's office later that afternoon. He is sitting still, staring at the door. It opens and Catherine enters.

CATHERINE

Rob. *(beat)* How... *(beat)* Never mind. I know the answer to that.

ROBERT

*(Silence. Finally:)*

Why?

CATHERINE

Tiny question, big answer.

ROBERT

The time to be cute is past.

CATHERINE

Yes. It is.

ROBERT

*(beat)*

What happened?

CATHERINE

The fact that you have to ask should pretty much tell you what happened. *(beat)* Did you ever give any thought to me?

ROBERT

Of course.

CATHERINE

I mean beyond just, "if I do this I won't get caught." Did you, at least once, think that you were being disrespectful to me? To what we have spent so many years making together.

ROBERT

Look, I didn't want...

CATHERINE

*(Cutting him off.)*

I know. That's what makes this whole thing so... so... tawdry and juvenile and... sick.

ROBERT

You did something equally wrong.

CATHERINE

Out of pain, Robert... out of pain. You hurt me. You hurt me and I wanted you to hurt. To feel what I felt when I learned that you, my darling, *loving* husband thought so little of me... of *us*... *(beat)* It was not because I hate you. I love you... well, *loved* you.

ROBERT

Now?

CATHERINE

Hmmm... Not so much.

ROBERT

No need to be flippant.

CATHERINE

Flippant? Need? *Need*? Did you need to... You know what? Forget it.

ROBERT

(*He regroups.*)

So, you're saying we can't be together anymore.

CATHERINE

*Anymore?* When was the last time we were truly together? Huh? You left this... left *us*... / You pulled away... or slithered.

ROBERT

I did not... I... ≠ Okay. Fine. Whatever. Just... tell me this: When did this happen? Huh? When did I *pull* away?

CATHERINE

Maybe around the time you started paying a man to have sex with the women you weren't man enough to pursue yourself.

ROBERT

How did you find out?

CATHERINE

*That's* what you take from this? *That's* what's important here?! How did I discover my husband was a pimp? / A... a... Pornographer... whatever you want to call yourself?

ROBERT

It's not like that. ≠ *It's not* like that.

CATHERINE

No? Do tell... *please*... tell me what it's like. It was so easy for you to... to... piss all over this. All over me. Tell me... I'd be interested to know!

ROBERT

Let me see if I have this straight. You cheated on me and you think *you* have a right to feel hurt?!

CATHERINE

That door swung both ways, m'dear.

ROBERT

Come on!

CATHERINE

What do you call it? Huh? When you're with your little buddies watching one of those videos. What do you call it?

ROBERT

We didn't watch it together. / That would be...

CATHERINE

Beg pardon! ≠ Oooh, yes... that would be... what... creepy? Déclassé?

ROBERT

Whatever it was, I sure as hell wasn't committing adultery!

CATHERINE

Don't be so sure.

ROBERT

I *cannot* believe this!

CATHERINE

Your indignation is kind of amusing, actually.

ROBERT

I didn't do anything. Besides, it wasn't even my idea.

CATHERINE

So?! Just because you didn't concoct this abomination doesn't mean you are any less culpable.

*(More to herself.)*

I wish I could have a recording of this conversation.

ROBERT

I was just watching movies.

CATHERINE

It's not like you hit the latest *Die Hard* flick at the cinema!

ROBERT

I didn't actually *do* anything... physically.

CATHERINE

You picked them out. You paid him to do it. To record it so *you* could watch it and... what... live vicariously through him?

ROBERT

That's a gross over... uh... romanticization.

CATHERINE

Romant...? Wow!

ROBERT

He's an employee. This is... *was* his job.

CATHERINE

Good God, Rob! He was your proxy.

ROBERT

No... He was just some guy working for a living.

CATHERINE

He did it in your name. That's the very definition of a proxy!

ROBERT

Be that as it may...

CATHERINE

*(Cutting him off.)*

Don't play semantics with me, Robert.

*(He is silent. She stares at him.)*

Did you actually think you could carry this on indefinitely?

ROBERT

We didn't plan that far ahead.

CATHERINE

*(Sarcastically.)*

You didn't assess the risks first? Isn't that what you do?

*(beat)*

This is reprehensible, to say the least. No. More base. Disgusting.

ROBERT

That's a reason to go behind my back? Wallow in the depths?

CATHERINE

You did set the bar pretty low.

ROBERT

*(pause)*

Did you know before or after you met him?

CATHERINE

Oh. Before. It was no accident I was in the bar that night. You need to hide things a little better, my love. And your passwords are not exactly unbreakable code. I'm no expert, but, I think it should take someone like me more than two minutes to break into your email.

ROBERT

I've never had a problem before.

CATHERINE

Gee! Well, you do now.

ROBERT

*(beat)*

What, exactly, was your reason for coming here?

CATHERINE

I just wanted to extend you the courtesy of saying good-bye face-to-face.

ROBERT

My... that's big of you.

CATHERINE

It's the least I can do.

*(She checks the time.)*

Well, my dear, I need to go.

*(A knock at the door while Simon simultaneously enters.)*

And I see your next appointment is here.

SIMON

Hey, Catherine.

CATHERINE

*(She exits.)*

B-bye, Simon.

SIMON

Uh... Bye?

*(Beat as he watches her leave.)*

What was that all about?

ROBERT

She's leaving me.

SIMON

Holy shit!

ROBERT

Yes. Indeed.

SIMON

Where?

ROBERT

New York. With Harold.

SIMON

*Excuse me!*

ROBERT

Fun, huh?

SIMON

How did *that* happen?



She found out. ROBERT  
 Shit! SIMON  
 It gets worse. ROBERT  
 For who? SIMON  
 All of us. He sent stuff out to your wife. And Jack's. ROBERT  
 Is that how she found out? SIMON  
 I guess. Has anything come to your house yet? ROBERT  
 I don't know. When did he send it? SIMON  
 What does that matter? ROBERT  
 Maybe it got lost in the mail. SIMON  
 (Trying to read him.) ROBERT  
 You're awfully calm about this. SIMON  
 Why not? ROBERT  
 Well, it's just not like you. SIMON  
 Eh. No biggie. ROBERT  
 That's *really* not like you! This is a joke? You already intercepted it, right? SIMON  
 Nope. Haven't seen anything yet. ROBERT  
 What's going on here? SIMON  
 What do you mean? ROBERT  
 You've been bouncing off the walls... Hell, you've been bouncing Jack off the walls since this started and now... SIMON  
 (beat)  
 To tell the truth, I was more worried about it going public. You never know what could hurt you in a city this small. As for that little shithead Jack... any reason to smack him around, really. ROBERT  
 Your calm about the mail is scaring me a little.

SIMON

(*beat*)  
 Okay. Look. (*beat*) Anita... She's in on it.

ROBERT

I'm sorry. I'm apparently having a stroke. I didn't hear you correctly. / Did you just say...

SIMON

You heard fine. Anita knows.

ROBERT

I'm going to be sick.

SIMON

She's been part of it from the beginning. Her idea, actually.

ROBERT

Holy shit!

SIMON

Calm down.

ROBERT

Why didn't you tell me?!

SIMON

Well, to avoid this, actually.

ROBERT

My God, Simon! She's friends with Catherine!

SIMON

So.

ROBERT

So? SO?! How can you be so cavalier?!

SIMON

She *wouldn't* tell anyone about it. I mean, she didn't, did she?

ROBERT

How the hell would I know?!

SIMON

Did Catherine say Anita told her?

ROBERT

No.

SIMON

There ya go. She didn't say anything.

ROBERT

She didn't say Anita *didn't* tell her, either.

(*Robert drops his head to the desk.*)

SIMON

Well, that would be a ridiculous thing to say. (*beat*) What does it matter now? It's done.

ROBERT

Yes, it is. (*beat*) It. Is. Done.

SIMON

So... what are ya gonna do now?

ROBERT

What am I...

*(Sighs, then slowly raises his head, looks around.)*

Stay where I am, I guess. Where am I going to go? I'm anchored here. The business. The house. She's the one leaving.

SIMON

She's just walking away?

ROBERT

It looks that way. We didn't get too deeply into it.

SIMON

She didn't ask for anything?

ROBERT

She just wanted to give me one last kick in the crotch, I guess.

SIMON

Classy.

ROBERT

Very.

*(Jack enters, sees Simon and turns around to leave.)*

SIMON

No, you don't, you little shit.

JACK

Why is he here?

SIMON

Why are you?

JACK

What do you mean?

SIMON

Well, you like to run away from important shit.

JACK

Rob, can you yank his chain back?

SIMON

You really wanna poke the bear?

ROBERT

Simon, why don't you take off. I need to talk to Jack. Alone.

SIMON

*(In Jack's face.)*

You better keep your distance.

JACK

No worries there... unicorn.

*(As Simon exits he bumps Jack's shoulder, nearly spinning him around. Jack, rubbing his shoulder)*

Why are you even friends with that guy?

ROBERT

Sit down, Jack.

JACK  
*(Sitting.)*  
 So, what's up? / What have we got / going on today?  
 ROBERT  
 Shut up. ≠ Shut UP. ≠ SHUT UP, JACK!  
 JACK  
 Shit, Rob... what...  
 ROBERT  
 Dammit, Jack, shut up before I start smacking you around.  
 JACK  
 Okay... alright... jeez.  
 ROBERT  
 I'm going to be blunt. *(beat)* You're out.  
 JACK  
 What?  
 ROBERT  
 I can't have you around here anymore. I don't trust you...  
 JACK  
 Come on, Rob.  
 ROBERT  
 Come on what? HUH? Look at the shitpile you've created around you! Around ME!  
 JACK  
 Look, I...  
 ROBERT  
 No. *You* look... I'm done with you and you're done here. I will buy you out.  
 JACK  
 Buy me out?  
 ROBERT  
 As per the agreement.  
 JACK  
 Come on...  
 ROBERT  
 Should I just make the check out to Sarah?  
 JACK  
 That's low.  
 ROBERT  
 I just wanted to see what it felt like.  
 JACK  
 Look. Can we...  
 ROBERT  
 Out.  
 JACK  
 Rob...  
 ROBERT  
 Today.

*(Jack gets up slowly and starts to walk out. He stops, looks back at Robert who has turned his chair around, then exits.)*

## ACT II: SCENE 6

Two weeks later. Robert is sitting in the park, reading. Miranda enters and sits next to him. He glances at her, then goes back to reading. She looks at him for a long moment, then turns straight ahead.

MIRANDA

Okay. I'll go first.

*(He sighs and puts his book down.)*

You were a part of this whole mess. A *big* part.

ROBERT

So, you're here as the "Hammer of God?"

MIRANDA

Maybe.

ROBERT

Alright. *(beat)* You have to know that what happened here... you... the whole Jack thing, really had nothing to do with me.

MIRANDA

Oh, I don't really agree with that conclusion.

ROBERT

It was all him. I had absolutely no part in what he did to you.

MIRANDA

Yeah... I see it different. See, I don't think he would have done this without a little push.

*(beat)*

Let me ask you this: Did he ever cheat before?

ROBERT

I don't know.

MIRANDA

You're his best friend.

ROBERT

Was... I *was* his best friend.

MIRANDA

Uh oh... trouble in paradise?

ROBERT

Paradise isn't all it's cracked up to be.

MIRANDA

Did he leave?

ROBERT

Not on his own.

MIRANDA

You fired him?

ROBERT

Not in so many words, but yes.

MIRANDA

I guess he left town?

ROBERT

I would imagine. I haven't seen him since.

Hmmm... MIRANDA

What? ROBERT

Nothing. MIRANDA

You said you didn't want him around. ROBERT

I don't. Just weird that you can cut someone you've known so long out of your life. MIRANDA

I weighed the options and they didn't come out in his favor. ROBERT

Is everything a business decision for you? MIRANDA

Not everything, but this was, literally, business. ROBERT

Yeah... but... MIRANDA

It was purely a business decision. As far as that was concerned, I felt I couldn't trust anymore. *(beat)* Personally? Well, I don't trust him there anymore, either. And with what he is going to be going through with his wife... ROBERT

She found out about your little sex video biz? MIRANDA

*(He reacts to the fact that she knows.)*

Yep. I found out. I have gotten pretty good. ROBERT

Apparently. MIRANDA

*(beat)*

It wasn't me. I didn't tell her. ROBERT

I know. MIRANDA

Or your wife. ROBERT

I know. MIRANDA

Who did tell her... your wife? ROBERT

That's not important. MIRANDA

The *African-American* guy? ROBERT

She found out on her own. MIRANDA

Eeee...

Yep. ROBERT  
*(They fall into silence. Then:)*  
 I don't understand. MIRANDA  
 What? ROBERT  
 I don't understand it. Why you would do that, you know, to your wife. MIRANDA  
 I didn't do anything *to* her. ROBERT  
 You cheated. MIRANDA  
 Why are all the women I know so intent on making that a truth? ROBERT  
 If you have sinned in your heart... MIRANDA  
 You're a reverend now, too? ROBERT  
 That's all I remember, really. / Don't you love her? MIRANDA  
 I have no idea why we're even discussing this. ROBERT  
 Because it tells me a lot about your character. MIRANDA  
 Well, it's over. What does that say about my character? ROBERT  
 I'm not sure. Is it only over because you all got caught? MIRANDA  
 I don't know... I really don't know how much longer it could have lasted. Jack and Simon were at each other's throats and I just... I had come to not really care much about it. ROBERT  
 Hmm. MIRANDA  
 Yes... well... ROBERT  
*(pause)*  
 How are you doing? MIRANDA  
 Fine. ROBERT  
 She's totally gone? MIRANDA  
 Yes. ROBERT  
 Sorry. MIRANDA

ROBERT  
 Don't be. Apparently it was a long time coming.

MIRANDA  
 Is there anything I can do for you?

ROBERT  
 I don't think so. *(beat)* You're in a worse position than I am.

MIRANDA  
 Yeah... well... I...  
*(Getting emotional.)*  
 You know... All this has been very trying, but...  
*(Losing control.)*  
 Dammit! Here they come again!

ROBERT  
*(Reaching into his pocket.)*  
 Here. I have a Kleenex in...

MIRANDA  
*(Pulling a tissue out of her bag.)*  
 It's alright. Never leave home without 'em now.  
*(He watches as she blows her nose loudly, then calms herself with big breathing and physical action.)*

Whoo! There!

ROBERT  
*(He stares at her for a moment.)*  
 How are you... Really?

MIRANDA  
 Things have gone to shit. Fast. I won't have a job after this.

ROBERT  
 What?

MIRANDA  
 He filled my job... permanently.

ROBERT  
 Can he do that?

MIRANDA  
 He did. It's not like it's the kind of place that gives maternity leave.

ROBERT  
 It's more of a legal issue than a personal business thing.

MIRANDA  
 Yeah... well... I need to get into school anyway. With the baby, I can't do both.

ROBERT  
 So, you're going to keep it.

MIRANDA  
 It may have been an accident but things happen for a reason, right?

ROBERT  
 I guess so. *(beat)* What are you going to do for money? A home?

MIRANDA  
 Still working on that.



ROBERT  
*(He stares out silently for a moment.)*  
 Maybe I can help.

MIRANDA  
 Huh?

ROBERT  
 I can help.

MIRANDA  
 You don't need to do that.

ROBERT  
 No, I don't need to. I *want* to.

MIRANDA  
 I couldn't do that.

ROBERT  
 Why not?

MIRANDA  
 I just couldn't. / Not with what I know about you.

ROBERT  
 I have that big house. Just me knocking around in there. / It would be nice to have someone around.

MIRANDA  
 Whoa! I definitely can't do that!

ROBERT  
 Really... I...  
*(He trails off.)*

MIRANDA  
*(beat)*  
 What's going on here?

ROBERT  
 What do you mean?

MIRANDA  
 You want me to live with you?

ROBERT  
 Well, you need somewhere to live.

MIRANDA  
 Not that badly! I'm not some sloppy seconds for you / to pass the time with!

ROBERT  
 What? Oh! Hey! No! A place to live. Nothing else. / I'm just trying to help.

MIRANDA  
 M hm. ≠ Just trying to *help*.

ROBERT  
 Yes.

MIRANDA  
*(Pause as she considers.)*  
 How do I know I can trust *you*?

*(He shrugs.)*  
 What do you want from me?

ROBERT

Want?

*(He thinks for a moment then, indicating the baby:)*

Just make something good come out of all this ridiculousness.

MIRANDA

I think I can do that.

*(He returns to his book and she blows her nose... loudly.)*

End of play.