

Sandy and Matty
A Play in Two Acts by John Fisher

Sandy and Matty
A Play in Two Acts

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MATTY, early forties, disheveled, a semi-recluse
SANDY, forties, a pop artist, fabulously successful
DANIEL, twenties, provocatively fit
MIKE, mid-fifties, rich
MORRIS, mid-fifties, MIKE's lover

Setting: MATTY's apartment in the Tenderloin District of San Francisco. There is a door to the rest of the building stage left, a door to kitchen right, bedroom door upright, large window with curtain up center, sofa, arm chair and tables downstage.

Time: Sometime in the last forty years. The play takes place over a couple months.

Act One

Scene One

(SANDY and MATTY stand in MATTY's cluttered apartment – somewhere in the Tenderloin District of San Francisco. There is a vague sense of organization to the mountains of stuff, the full bookshelves, the crowded surfaces, but only a vague sense. MATTY himself is a bit cluttered. He almost looks like a shut-in, which is probably what he aspires to be. SANDY, on the other hand, is very much the dapper dresser: all white suit, white shoes, floral tie and long sweeping blond hair. They are quite a contrast.)

SANDY (Looking about in wonder)
This place is incredible.

MATTY
It's my home.

SANDY
I love it. I have to say I love it.

MATTY
These are my things.

SANDY
But what are they all?

MATTY
These are my Churchill books. His complete works. Here's the *History of the Second World War* in six volumes, the *History of the English Speaking Peoples* in four volumes, the complete works of Neil Simon volumes one, two and three.

SANDY
Are any of these first editions?

MATTY
First edition paperbacks maybe. Here are videos I made of all my favorite movies: John Wayne, David Lean, Kirk Douglas, Alfred Hitchcock-

SANDY
Are these complete sets? Is this every John Wayne movie?

MATTY
No. It's only what they showed on TV.

SANDY

You recorded these?

MATTY

Yes.

SANDY

What about commercials?

MATTY

Oh, the commercials are on there. Everything's on there. These are my school pictures – high school, summer camp, college – some are missing. I don't know.

SANDY

It's incredible. What are these?

MATTY

Old musicals. Some I have on tape. I borrowed them from the library and put them on tape. I've lost some.

SANDY

These are water damaged.

MATTY

Yes, they used to be near the radiator. Then I moved them. Some were in the sun and they got warped. I tried to straighten them out by stacking things on them but they never quite sounded right.

SANDY

Don't you feel surrounded by clutter?

MATTY

That's what my brother said. He always told me to throw some of it out.

SANDY

What did you do?

MATTY

I stopped having him over.

SANDY

Can I sit?

MATTY (Moving a pile of cards from a chair)

Here, let me move some things.

SANDY
What are those?

MATTY
Letters I wrote. Or were written to me. I guess I don't have the ones I wrote, do I?
They're Christmas cards, birthday cards, that kind of thing.

SANDY (Holding one)
This one has nothing on it.

MATTY
No, it says "To Matto from Ta Mere." It went on a present. That's my mother's hand writing.

SANDY
Was she French?

MATTY
No. But she studied French for a time. So how can I help you? Do you want something to drink? Tea?

SANDY
What kind do you have?

MATTY
Lipton's.

SANDY
No, thanks.

MATTY
I can make some coffee.

SANDY
That's so much trouble.

MATTY
It isn't. I have Cava.

SANDY
What's Cava?

MATTY
Instant. It's low in acid.

SANDY

Do you have trouble with acid?

MATTY

No, my mother does. It's the coffee she used to buy.

SANDY

It's warm in here.

MATTY

I can open a window.

SANDY

That's ok.

MATTY

I can't turn down the heat because it spurts water all over the books. The radiator's not so good.

SANDY

Why don't you get it fixed?

MATTY

I'm not sure the landlord would fix it. I have rent control.

SANDY

Still the radiator should work.

MATTY

I don't want to get involved with the landlord. She scares me. It works. I'm happy.

SANDY

I want you to do some work for me, some art work.

MATTY

Ok.

SANDY

Drawing mostly. But also some coloring.

MATTY

Ok.

SANDY

You have to come to my studio. It's an atelier actually but I call it my studio. I'm changing the name to The Plant but that's not official yet.

MATTY

Can I work here?

SANDY

No. You have to work there. Officially you'll be my student but not really, that's just for tax purposes. It's complicated.

MATTY

Why are you calling it The Plant?

SANDY

It's just a marketing thing, set it apart from other studios. I grew up in Pinole, in the East Bay. There was a big refinery nearby. I think of my art as being mass-produced, like at a factory.

MATTY

So why don't you call it The Refinery?

SANDY

I thought of that but refineries refine oil into gas. Plant is a better analogy for creating a hard object.

MATTY

But you're also refining crude materials into aesthetic objects. Refinery could also work. And it's truer to your roots.

SANDY

Anyway, you'll come in five days a week and work an eight our day with a half hour off for lunch. I'll make an original piece and show you how to color it in, like paint by numbers. You'll have to trace the original, make an ink blot copy of your trace, then color in as I instruct you.

MATTY

Ok.

SANDY

And that's it. Days I can't be there I'll leave detailed instructions.

MATTY

What if I get it wrong?

SANDY

I'll tell you if it's wrong or not. Just follow my instructions as best you can.

MATTY
Ok.

SANDY
I like your work so I'm sure it will be fine. (Pause.) That's it.

MATTY
Ok. Nine to five might be a bit rough for me. I haven't worked a nine to five job.

SANDY
I'm sure you'll get back into the groove of it.

MATTY
There is no groove. I mean, I've never worked it.

SANDY
Oh, well, that's the set up. I want it to run like a plant. There's a lot of work to do.

MATTY
Ok. I'll try.

SANDY
Well, that's it. Thanks for having me over, I like your place.

MATTY
Thank you.

SANDY
How long have you lived here?

MATTY
Twenty-three years. I never intended to stay. My parents got divorced and my mom had to sell the house and I had to find a place so... this was the first place that was available.

SANDY
They just threw you out?

MATTY
Well, I was twenty-three at the time. It was reasonable.

SANDY
Why haven't you moved?

MATTY
Everything's more expensive now. I couldn't.

SANDY

This won't conflict with your other work?

MATTY

What other work?

SANDY

Don't you teach?

MATTY

No. Not right now.

SANDY

Oh, I thought you were on staff at the University. I thought you were a professor.

MATTY

No, I'm a graduate student.

SANDY

Oh.

MATTY

I'm not teaching right now.

SANDY

Ok. But I saw your work, in the university's art gallery.

MATTY

My ex works in the office there, he puts it up.

SANDY

Is he the man in the pictures?

MATTY

Yes.

SANDY

You like them young. How long's he been your ex?

MATTY

Twenty-one years. He doesn't look that way anymore.

(Pause.)

MATTY
Is there a fee?

SANDY
It's a stipend. Because you're my student, remember?

MATTY
Ok. What's the stipend?

SANDY
You're not going to get rich off it.

MATTY
Can I ask what it is?

SANDY
I still have to figure all that out. It would be hard to live off of it, whatever it is.

(Pause.)

MATTY
So what is it?

SANDY
It's in the hundreds.

MATTY
Per week?

SANDY
Per project.

MATTY
Oh, well, how long does each project take?

SANDY
I don't know yet. I've never done this before.

MATTY
How will it be your art if I do so much of the work?

SANDY
I'll put my signature on it.

MATTY
That makes it your art?

SANDY

Yes, if I pay you. It's all in the agreement.

MATTY

Is it a secret?

SANDY

No, you can tell anyone.

MATTY

Ok. How much do I get paid?

(Pause.)

SANDY

In the mid-hundreds.

MATTY

Mid like three or mid like seven?

SANDY

Mid like three. (Pause.) But that can go up.

MATTY

Based on what?

SANDY

I haven't decided.

(Pause.)

MATTY

Ok.

SANDY

Ok. Good. Are you still in school?

MATTY

No. I'm writing my dissertation.

SANDY

When will you finish?

MATTY
I don't know.

SANDY
When did you start?

MATTY
Eighteen years ago.

SANDY
I'll see you Monday morning.

(Blackout.)

Scene 2

(Same setting. A few weeks later. MATTY is dressed the same but wears an artists smock over it all. SANDY wears another flamboyant suit. MATTY is showing him two works on canvas. We hear a bad cassette recording of "Baby Elephant Walk.")

MATTY
I did the coloring, then I figured out how to do a color copy so I took it a step farther so even the coloring is a copy.

SANDY
Oh, great, why did you do that?

MATTY
Well, I was trying to figure out why you had me do an inkblot of my copy and I realized you were trying to remove my agency. In other words you couldn't call it a Sandy Sower if I had actually put my hand to it at some point, whereas if it was all copied it could be described as your concept executed by an artisan or, in my case, a student, thus the atelier set-up, right?

(SANDY is silent.)

MATTY
But that didn't really make sense when I was doing the coloring because then my hand was involved in the creating of it. So I realized you just didn't know how to get real paint onto it without me using my hand so I figured out how to do a color blotting – I was just carrying your concept a step further. You see it still has your signature on it.

SANDY
But the color's not as vibrant as in the original.

MATTY

No, that's the only thing.

SANDY

I mean, that's the real reason I didn't have you do a copy of the color.

MATTY

Is it? So if I could get as vibrant color in a copy you would still prefer my original?

(Pause.)

MATTY

Anyway...

SANDY

What are we listening to?

MATTY

That? Oh, it's movie music from Henry Mancini.

SANDY

The quality's terrible.

MATTY

Is it? I like it.

SANDY

Do you sing along?

MATTY

Not full voiced. Maybe under my breath. So I guess we can keep the original, I mean my coloring, and toss this one if you don't like it.

SANDY

No, don't toss it, don't toss anything.

MATTY

That was kind of my philosophy. I mean, I was going to ask if I could keep it if you didn't want it.

SANDY

Were you?

MATTY

Yeah, why not?

SANDY

I mean, were you really going to ask?

MATTY

Probably not. I'd probably just have kept it.

(Pause.)

SANDY (Referring to the music)

What if I bought you a fresh cassette of this?

MATTY

Of this?

SANDY

Yes.

MATTY

I like this one.

SANDY

Why?

MATTY

It's the one I'm used to. I remember when I recorded it. It has pops on the album that wouldn't be on the cassette, you know.

SANDY

No I don't.

MATTY

I remember the turntable I used, it's gone now, doesn't work anymore. I remember the album, it was from the library, pretty scratched up.

SANDY

I see... It's acquired a history, a personal history.

MATTY

I guess. I'm not that theoretical about it but yes, it's acquired a history. I suppose if this cassette started sounding bad I'd record it to a new one. You know, it would sound worse but...

SANDY

But it would still be yours.

MATTY
Sort of, yeah.

SANDY (Taking the copy of the print)
Ok. I'll take this one. You keep your original and make copies of that, using the color blotting system

MATTY
Ok.

SANDY
Make forty copies.

MATTY
Forty?

SANDY
Yes.

MATTY
Ok. Is each one a project?

SANDY
You're talking about money?

MATTY
Well, yeah.

SANDY
No the whole thing is a project.

MATTY
When does the project end?

SANDY
When we move onto a new image.

MATTY
Then you'll pay me?

(Pause.)

SANDY
Yes.

MATTY
Ok. Can I...

SANDY
What?

MATTY
Can I work here? I think I could work faster.

SANDY
Here?

MATTY
Yeah.

SANDY
Do you have space?

MATTY
I'll make space. Your place is... there's a lot of activity.

SANDY
Distractions?

MATTY
Not so much distractions, just... people walking up and talking to me, hanging out. It doesn't feel like a place of work.

SANDY
So your home feels more like a place of work than my Plant?

MATTY
For me.

SANDY
I like that. It's ironic. Ok. Work here.

MATTY
Thanks.

(Pause.)

MATTY
And you should pay me.

SANDY

Of course. Here, I'll pay you now. (Taking out his check book) What do I owe you?

MATTY

I'm not sure. You said in the mid-hundreds.

SANDY

But you haven't quite finished the project.

MATTY

What do you think is fair?

SANDY

Oh, don't ask me that. I'll make it for four hundred. To Matthew Clarke?

MATTY

To cash.

SANDY

Of course. But don't lose it. Anyone could cash it.

MATTY

I won't. It's Matty, not Matthew. My mother named me Matty.

SANDY

OK.

MATTY

When can I have another? I have to pay rent on this place.

SANDY

I told you this is not a job you can live on.

MATTY

But you have me working forty-hour weeks.

SANDY

Art is different from regular life.

MATTY

Do you live on what you make off art?

SANDY

Don't be rude. I don't like rude.

MATTY (Looking at check)
You've made this for five hundred.

SANDY
As an inducement. You can work here but I want you to work more, as fast as possible.

MATTY
Ok. But the faster I work the more likely I am to make mistakes. It gets sloppier.

SANDY
A little sloppy goes a long way. Van Gogh splotched, Keith Herring dripped. But work fast. I'll check in on you. And I'll send a van around occasionally. Just fill it up. With art.

(Blackout.)

Scene 3

(The same. Another day. DANIEL sits lounging on the sofa. He is young, athletic and quite handsome in a rugged kind of way. He tends to fill a room, in every way. MATTY enters the front door holding a small bag of groceries.)

MATTY
Hello.

DANIEL
Hi.

MATTY
What are you doing here?

DANIEL
Sandy sent me. To help you.

MATTY
Oh.

DANIEL
Yeah, he said you wouldn't work at The Refinery so he sent me over here. I ate that half sandwich in the frig. Hope that's ok.

MATTY
Well, yes.

DANIEL
You have any iced tea?

MATTY
I have Lipton's. We could make it up and then pour it over ice.

DANIEL
Ok. How do I do that?

MATTY
I'll do it.

(MATTY exits. DANIEL picks up a photo album and leafs through it. MATTY enters.)

DANIEL
It should be ready in a minute. I mean it should be hot in a minute then we can make it cold.

MATTY
No rush. This where you work?

DANIEL
Yeah.

MATTY
Kind of cramped.

DANIEL
I usually move the sofa out of the way.

MATTY (Jumping up and shoving the sofa to the wall)
Over here?

DANIEL
Yeah.

MATTY
Oh, ok, that's better. And you get light.

DANIEL
Yeah.

MATTY
Wow. This place isn't bad. Cramped but ok. So I'll pull this over here.

(He shoves the easy chair against another wall.)

DANIEL
That's what I usually do.

MATTY
Now where do things dry?

DANIEL (Indicating a clothes line near bedroom door.)
I hang them off of this.

MATTY
They'll run.

MATTY
Well, I first set them on the floor, on newspaper for a bit. Then when the next one's done I move this one onto the line.

DANIEL
Oh, that's why it drips just a little but not a lot. I mean, you have tiny runs in them, but not big ones.

MATTY
Yes.

DANIEL
And there is some newspaper residue on the back – it comes from the drying.

MATTY
Yes.

DANIEL
I notice stuff like that.

MATTY
Does Sandy?

DANIEL
I've pointed it out to him. He doesn't seem to care.

(DANIEL starts taking his clothes off.)

MATTY
Are you changing?

DANIEL
Sort of.

MATTY

Why are you here? I mean, why did he send you?

DANIEL

I told you, to help.

MATTY

But I didn't say I need help.

DANIEL

Well, he says we have to do a hundred tonight. Since you won't come into The Refinery, he wanted me to come over here. To speed things up.

MATTY

A hundred?

DANIEL

Well around a hundred.

MATTY

Why do you keep calling it The Refinery?

DANIEL

New name for it. Sandy changed it.

MATTY

Are you taking all your clothes off?

DANIEL

Yeah.

MATTY

Can you step behind that screen please?

DANIEL

Oh, ok, sure.

(DANIEL steps behind screen upstage.)

MATTY

Thanks. I'll pour your tea.

(He leaves, they are both gone. We hear ice cracking. He comes back and starts to lay out newspaper on floor. DANIEL comes from behind screen, naked. He opens up his

backpack and takes out fresh canvas. He lays it out on floor. MATTY stares at him a bit.)

MATTY
Umm...

DANIEL
We can cut here and get them ready for the frames.

MATTY
Are you going to put some clothes on?

DANIEL
No.

MATTY
Why not?

DANIEL
I never work with clothes on.

MATTY
You don't?

DANIEL
No.

MATTY
Oh, well...

DANIEL
It's why I left art school. They wanted me to wear a smock at least and I said I might as well wear clothes.

MATTY
I'm not sure I can work with you dressed that way.

DANIEL
Why not?

MATTY
It's very distracting.

DANIEL
It's ok. It's just how I work.

MATTY
It's just...

DANIEL
You'll have to go down when the doorbell rings. It'll be the frames.

MATTY
He's sending over a hundred frames?

DANIEL
He said he'd send over twenty-five and drop off another twenty-five when the first set were finished. He knew space was limited.

MATTY
Ok.

DANIEL
He's desperate for cash. So he took a huge order. For not even that much money but he wants to show we can fill a huge order.

MATTY
All right. Why didn't he just fill it at the...

DANIEL
Refinery?

MATTY
Yeah. Is that what it's called now?

DANIEL
You haven't read about it?

MATTY
No, I haven't... I wasn't able to work there after a while.

DANIEL
Yeah, it can be rough when they're filming. I've been in a bunch of the movies. Sometimes I just walk through a shot. He says the camera loves me.

MATTY
Why doesn't he just make them there, if it's such a large order?

DANIEL
He wants you to make them. The buyer wanted the ones you made.

MATTY
Really?

DANIEL
Sure, the tiny drip, the newspaper residue.

MATTY
I see.

(Pause.)

MATTY
You have a beautiful body.

DANIEL
Thank you. I hear that a lot.

MATTY
Are you a nudist?

DANIEL
No. I just don't like to wear clothes. I just... well, I got used to taking my clothes off years ago and, you know... Do you take your clothes off in here?

MATTY
Sometimes. When I'm alone.

DANIEL
Go ahead if you want. Don't mind me.

MATTY
I can't do it... I only do it when I'm alone.

DANIEL
Oh, yeah...

(He strips off a sheet of canvas. MATTY is watching.)

DANIEL
How you doing?

MATTY
Ok.

DANIEL
I think the tea might be ready.

MATTY
Yes.

(MATTY hands DANIEL a glass.)

MATTY
Here.

(DANIEL sips tea.)

DANIEL
Thanks.

(MATTY moves away, to the photo album which he picks up.)

DANIEL
Family pictures?

MATTY (Clutching it to him)
It's my family photo album. I like to look at it. It's like a mantra. All these happy pictures. It convinces me I grew up happy. The reality was I didn't. Someone should steal it or throw it away. It's become like a drug for me.

DANIEL
Ok, I'll steal it sometime. That's a promise.

(MATTY puts it underneath the sofa cushion. Pause.)

DANIEL
Did you want to come over here?

MATTY
Yes.

DANIEL
Then come on.

(MATTY crosses to DANIEL. He touches his chest, then his bottom.)

DANIEL
I think we should get some work done, then maybe later... Ok?

MATTY
Ok.

(Blackout.)

Scene 4

(The same. A few weeks later. The apartment is neat, straightened up considerably. A curtain has been drawn across the upstage window. There is a plate of snacks on the table. DAVID sits talking with MATTY.)

MATTY

Where did you learn that trick?

SANDY

Advertising firm. When I first worked there they gave me a pretty secretary, who I liked but I never wanted to fuck. Then she disappeared and I got this nice boy. Suddenly one day she was gone and he was there. God he was pretty, just small and pretty and very friendly. And I never wanted to leave the office. It was all work, work, work for me. He disappeared suddenly, one day, the day I said I couldn't go to Dallas, to meet with clients. I said I hated clients, especially ones from Dallas, and I didn't see the point in meeting them. They said I had to. I said I wouldn't. And the boy disappeared. Then I said I would and I went but he never came back. There was a different boy though, a new one. He wasn't as pretty but... well, I figured out I better hang onto this one because the next one would be a further step down.

MATTY

What happened to the first boy?

SANDY

Don't know. I saw him in a movie once, a few years later. A big Hollywood movie. He was just a slut. They all were. I'm sorry about Daniel. He wasn't worth... well. He has a habit. He probably stole something while he was here, that you haven't noticed yet.

MATTY

I don't have anything of value.

SANDY

Oh, I'm sure he found something.

MATTY

I'm... I'm in love with him.

SANDY

With Daniel? Oh, he'd love that. He loves people being in love with him. I told him he was his work of art. So long as he was alive he'd be making art. So guileless and yet so needy. It's almost sad really. I wish we could increase your productivity.

MATTY

I get tired. I've been more tired than I've ever been.

SANDY

Yes, the orders got huge. But people like your stuff.

MATTY

It's your stuff.

SANDY

Yes, but you're the artisan. I can pay you more. Finally. Finally I can pay you what you deserve.

MATTY

I make plenty.

SANDY

Well, I don't want to pay you more, I'm just saying I can. Money ruins some people. If you think it will ruin you, don't take it, by all means, do what's best.

MATTY

Ok. I'll take the money.

SANDY

Well, that was easy. (He stands.) Well, I must get back. And argue.

MATTY

Argue?

SANDY

Everyone's angry at me, all the time. At first they all want to come over, see the place, see my atelier. But then they're angry at me, suspicious, inquisitive. They love my Glamourpusses, love them. But then they're appalled by them, appalled by me for exploiting them. First they're reverential, then they're judgmental. I feel like a mass murderer. (He looks about.) Did you clean this place up?

MATTY

No.

SANDY

Who did?

MATTY

Daniel arranged it.

DAVID
Daniel?

MATTY
Yes. He has a girl come in.

DAVID
A girl?

(MATTY paces as he recounts the following, as if he's making a confession.)

MATTY
This girl comes in once a day, just to pick things up. It gives me incredible anxiety, I just sit here and watch her, make sure she doesn't throw anything out. We finally agreed that she could throw things in that closet instead of the trash. It's full. I'm full of anxiety.

(Pause.)

SANDY
When's the dealer coming?

MATTY
Dealer?

SANDY
Do you and Daniel have something going on the side? Your own little side operation? When's he coming?

MATTY
Who?

SANDY
The dealer, the client, whoever. When's the buyer coming?

(Pause.)

MATTY
Five. He's late.

SANDY (Indicating snacks)
Are these for him?

MATTY
Yes.

(SANDY starts to eat them.)

SANDY
I'm hungry.

(He is eating a lot of them.)

SANDY
Sorry.

MATTY
Go ahead. The girl brought them, she set all that up. I'm not a very good hostess.

(Doorbell.)

MATTY
Oh, God. Are you staying?

SANDY
Of course. I'm your guest.

MATTY
Ok. Well...

SANDY
It's all right. I'll just observe.

MATTY
Ok.

(He presses door buzzer.)

SANDY
You got a door buzzer.

MATTY
That girl had it installed.

SANDY
Your Girl Friday.

MATTY
She drives me crazy.

(DANIEL enters. He wears a very nice suit and his hair is slicked back.)

DANIEL
Hello.

MATTY
Hi.

DANIEL (Surprised to see SANDY)
Hi.

SANDY
Hello.

DANIEL
Haven't seen you in while.

SANDY
I could say the same thing.

DANIEL
How have you been?

SANDY
Good. Well, awful, but good.

DANIEL
Yeah, well. Excuse me. This place looks all right. Yeah. (He starts picking things up and straightening.) That girl come today?

MATTY
Yes.

DANIEL
You should leave things alone after she leaves.

MATTY
Yes.

DANIEL (To SANDY)
You staying?

SANDY
Of course.

DANIEL
Good. You'll help. They'll love having you here.

SANDY
You trying to drive me away?

DANIEL
No, just warning you. They gush.

SANDY
I like things that gush.

DANIEL
They gush with enthusiasm.

SANDY
Oh, that kind of gushing.

DANIEL (To MATTY)
Let me do the talking.

MATTY
You always say that.

DANIEL
Yeah, well, just a reminder.

(He crosses to the upstage window.)

DANIEL
Can I open this?

MATTY
If you want.

(He opens the curtain to reveal a busted window covered with brown stuff and yellow police tape.)

DANIEL
My God, what happened?

MATTY
Addict jumped off the roof. I had the window open so he kind of bounced off it on his way down.

DANIEL
Do the police know?

MATTY

Yes. That's why it hasn't been cleaned.

DANIEL

Jesus.

SANDY

I love the yellow tape.

DANIEL

You mean they're in the middle of an investigation?

MATTY

He might have been pushed.

SANDY

It's so Hitchcock.

DANIEL (To SANDY)

You should make a movie. You could be the guy on the street shouting, "Jump, jump!"

SANDY

If I spoke I'd have to hire a screenwriter.

DANIEL

You could probably get one of the Glamourpusses to jump for you. Maybe two or three if you didn't like the first take.

SANDY

I'm sure you'd push them for a fee. The yellow tape really responds to the breeze.

DANIEL (To MATTY)

This window's disgusting.

MATTY

Yes, the birds eat the blood. I had to close it. It was making me sick.

SANDY

Oh, leave it open. It's so dynamic. If your buyers have any taste they'll eat it up.

DANIEL

Not these two. Here. (He closes the curtain halfway.) No, you can still see it. Well we'll just seal it up. (Closing it completely) It's dark but... you're kind of an owl. It makes sense.

MATTY
So why are we doing this?

DANIEL
Usual reason. They want to meet you, see how you work.

MATTY
I hate these encounters.

DANIEL
You always do really well. People love you.

MATTY
I hate it. I feel like they pity me.

DANIEL
So what if they do? Then they give you money. Who's to be pitied?

(Doorbell.)

DANIEL
Here they are.

MATTY
Ok.

DANIEL (To SANDY)
I can't believe you're here.

SANDY
I can.

(DANIEL leaves to answer door.)

SANDY
Isn't fame delicious?

(MATTY starts to pace.)

MATTY
I need some milk.

SANDY
Milk gives you gas.

MATTY
You're right. Shit.

MORRIS (Off stage)
Yoo hoo, is this where they keep the artist?

(MORRIS enters. He is in his early-fifties, very well dressed, flamboyant and fun. Right now he is out of breath.)

MORRIS
Hi.

MATTY
Hello.

(DANIEL and MIKE enter. MIKE is much the same as MORRIS, a bit more conservative. MIKE is also winded from the stairs.)

MIKE
Let me catch my breath. Someone should put in a fucking elevator.

MORRIS (To MIKE)
Oh, now. (Extending his hand to MATTY) I'm Morris. (Indicating MIKE) And this beast is Tammy Faye. No, she's Mike. You all right, honey?

MIKE
Not used to so many damn stairs.

(MORRIS has noticed SANDY.)

MORRIS
Oh, oh, hi.

SANDY
Hi.

MORRIS
Sorry, I thought you were, you look so much like... But you are, aren't you? Aren't you? Mike look.

MIKE
What?

MORRIS
Isn't that?

MIKE

Oh, yeah, at least it looks like him.

MORRIS

Are you...

SANDY

Probably.

MORRIS

My goodness. Well, it makes sense I guess.

MIKE

It might not be him. It's awfully dark.

MORRIS

We can open a window. Here.

(MORRIS crosses to upstage window and throws open the curtain, flooding room with light. He doesn't notice busted panes, blood or tape. He returns to center of the room and sits.)

MORRIS

Goodness, that's much better. My word it is you, isn't it? We love your stuff. Love it.

MIKE

We love you.

SANDY

Thank you.

MORRIS

What a treat.

MIKE

Could I have a glass of water?

DANIEL

Yes, of course. Anyone else want something?

MORRIS

Bring me a glass of wine please.

MIKE

Oh, are we drinking? I'll have wine also.

SANDY
Me too.

(DANIEL exits to kitchen.)

MORRIS
I'm Morris and this is Mike.

SANDY
Hello.

MORRIS
Goodness... oh, now let me see... Well, aren't you in some litigation with Daniel?
Those murals you did of him. On Treasure Island.

SANDY
No, no litigation.

MORRIS
But there was some big donnybrook, wasn't there?

SANDY
I had to take them down. Twice. But there was no donnybrook.

MORRIS
Oh, I just assumed there was ill feeling.

SANDY
No. He was in charge. I was just the artist.

MORRIS
But it was such a huge project.

SANDY
Yes. I like big things.

(DANIEL enters with drinks.)

DANIEL
You're talking about the Treasure Island murals?

MORRIS
Yes. We just assumed you all hated each other.

DANIEL
No, we're fine. These things happen. Right Sandy?

SANDY
Yes, they happen.

MIKE
My goodness, my favorite of your films is with Daniel here and you hurling abuse at him for an hour. It's wonderful. (Imitating SANDY) "You're just a cheap dick slut, aren't you Daniel? A cheap dick whore!" We have a copy. Oh, dear...

SANDY
What?

MIKE
Well, it's a stolen copy. We got it from an illegal source.

SANDY
I like that. I like stealing.

MORRIS (Happy)
I knew you'd be this way. I always knew it.

MIKE
Oh, Daniel is so hot in that film. We just can't get over it.

SANDY
He's still hot.

MORRIS
Yes, he is. But that film means so much to me, to us. We put it on and it revives all our dying passions.

SANDY
Porn does that.

MORRIS
No, there's more to it than porn. I mean, we love porn, love it. But that film, it's art, it's so loose, like real sex. Anything could happen – the phone could ring, someone could walk in, that's what we love about it. It's like when we made love in college.

SANDY
That's where you met?

MORRIS
Yes, college sweethearts. He was so handsome.

MIKE

I'm still so handsome.

MORRIS

Yes, you are.

SANDY

Daniel has never looked quite right in a suit.

MIKE

I think it's like Superman though, it's the potential beneath the suit that makes it so exciting.

MORRIS

Yes, yes, like he's going to burst out of it at any moment.

SANDY

Yes.

MORRIS

Oh, Daniel, you're just a tease in your Clarke Kent suit.

SANDY

No he's not.

MORRIS

What do you mean?

SANDY

He'd take it off in a minute if you asked him. Wouldn't you?

DANIEL

Well, we're here to talk business.

SANDY

Oh, Daniel, don't be so bourgeois. What's the point of a suit if you're not going to take it off, in public?

DANIEL

I thought to hate acting bourgeois is the most bourgeois thing in the world.

MIKE

Ha ha. He got you there.

MORRIS

He did, Sandy.

SANDY

Yes. But take your suit off anyway. Your guests would love it so.

MIKE

Oh, my...

MORRIS

I'm sure your body's still good.

DANIEL

You're not filming Sandy, what's the point?

SANDY

No, I only film at the Refinery. But this is special. A private screening.

(Pause.)

SANDY (To MATTY)

Put on some of your Henry Mancini.

MORRIS

Oh, do. I love those old movie themes.

(MATTY presses play. We hear the main theme from *Hatari*.)

MORRIS

Oh, *Hatari*. I love *Hatari*.

MIKE (To MATTY, as if he was the servant)

Can I have another glass of wine?

MORRIS

Me too.

(MATTY begins gathering glasses.)

SANDY (Handing him a tray)

Oh, here's a little tray. It'll make it easier.

(MATTY exits to kitchen with glasses on tray.)

MORRIS

Oh, Daniel, you're so pretty. So beautiful.

MIKE
We've spent hours looking at you. This is a treat.

MORRIS
Go ahead. Take off your top.

(DANIEL removes his suit jacket, tie and shirt.)

MIKE
Now take off your wife beater.

MORRIS
Oh, I love that.

MIKE
As if he'd ever have a wife.

MORRIS
Oh, my, he still has that beautiful tan.

MIKE
Not as fit as he has been.

MORRIS
I like it.

MIKE
Why aren't you as firm, Daniel?

DANIEL
I'm a businessman now.

SANDY
That means he's getting older. Take off your shoes.

MORRIS (Hugging SANDY)
Oh, Sandy, I love you so much. This is magic.

MIKE
He doesn't like to be touched. We read that in *Harper's*.

MORRIS
Oh, yes, of course. Sorry. I'm going to remember this day the rest of my life.

SANDY
You should focus on living it before you remember it.

MORRIS

You're right, you're always right.

(MIKE moves towards the window.)

MIKE

Oh dear, shouldn't we close this? So no one can see in.

SANDY

I like it open.

MIKE

Why there's nothing to see out there, everything's in here.

(MATTY enters with filled wine glasses.)

MIKE (Accepting wine from MATTY)

Thank you.

MORRIS (To MATTY)

Can you hand me those chips? Thanks.

(MATTY reaches for chips and stands between MIKE and DANIEL.)

MIKE

Excuse me, dear, you're kind of in the way.

(MATTY moves.)

SANDY (To DANIEL)

You like being looked at, don't you?

DANIEL

Yes.

SANDY

Take off your pants. Slowly, Daniel, you remember how to do it.

MORRIS

All those nights in the dorm room, remember?

MIKE

Yes.

MORRIS

Locked away for entire weekends. We were the talk of the dorms.

MIKE

Sometimes we didn't even do anything in there, just ate and listened to old records.

SANDY

Take off your underwear, Daniel. That's it.

MIKE

Oh, God, how I loved you.

MORRIS

Oh, oh, my.

MIKE

It's not that big.

MORRIS

Oh, oh.

MIKE

I've seen bigger.

MORRIS

The camera enhances it. Can you make it bigger?

MIKE

Oh, don't ask him that.

SANDY

That's ok. He doesn't mind. Do you, Daniel?

(Blackout.)

Scene 5

(Same. About half an hour later. MIKE and MORRIS are in the room with SANDY.)

MORRIS

Can we come to the Refinery?

SANDY

Of course, anyone can come.

MORRIS
We've heard that.

MIKE
But we didn't believe it.

SANDY
It's true. Now you're friends.

(DANIEL enters, dressed.)

MORRIS
Oh, thank you, Daniel. That was a moment to cherish.

SANDY
What moment?

MORRIS
Oh, you know, you naughty person.

MIKE
It was, Daniel. Very nice.

DANIEL
And you'll buy some of Matt's things?

MORRIS
Oh, of course, whatever you think is best, you have such wonderful taste, Daniel.

MIKE (To SANDY)
And we want some of your stuff.

SANDY
Come by and look at it. It's all for sale.

MORRIS
You've given us so much.

SANDY
Come by the Refinery. There's so much more.

MORRIS
Oh, my, maybe you'd do our portraits, as a silkscreen.

MIKE

It would bankrupt us Morris; don't ask that.

MORRIS

I'm sure we could work something out.

MIKE

Oh, no, we could never afford that.

SANDY

I can be very reasonable. Especially if I can do it my way. With the newspaper imprint and the tiny dribbles. Does that interest you?

MIKE

Yes.

MORRIS

What's he talking about?

MIKE (Indicating MATTY)

Who's that? I never got who that was.

SANDY

It's his place.

MIKE

It's such a dump.

MORRIS

It is. But looch. Is that the word?

MIKE

Let's go. They've moved on. They don't notice us anymore. I hate not being noticed.

MORRIS

Come on Cinderella. The ball's over, we're back in the hovel. Here, I'll help you down.

MIKE

I can only hope our car is still there. In this slum. Oh, those awful stairs. Where are we?

(They are gone.)

SANDY

The art of the deal. What does Donald trump say? "I never plan my day. I just head out and respond. There's always money to be made."

DANIEL
He doesn't say that.

SANDY
He does. In his book.

DANIEL
If he says that in his book he says it on page one. You never read more than the first page.

SANDY
Still I can say I've read Donald Trump. Nothing is sexier than business.

DANIEL
He doesn't say that.

SANDY
No, I did. In *my* book.

DANIEL (To MATTY)
Good. That went well. I'll have the girl come down and clean up. I have some more coming by tomorrow. Around five. Ok? (Pause. Indicating the window) If the police come by ask them to please let you clean that up. It's disgusting.

SANDY
No one even noticed except us.

DANIEL
These people tomorrow will notice.

SANDY
They won't.

DANIEL (To MATTY)
Just clean it up. Ask the girl to do it. Fuck the investigation. I'll see you, Sandy.

SANDY
Thank you, Daniel. I really enjoyed myself.

DANIEL
Sure. Always happy to oblige.

(DANIEL leaves. SANDY just stares and MATTY.)

SANDY

Well, even Jesus has his apostates.

MATTY

I'm so tired.

SANDY

You personalize too much. You should learn to enjoy things or ignore them.

MATTY

God, I'm exhausted. It was Daniel's idea.

SANDY

And it's not a bad one, for Daniel. He's kind of a retard. A retard with a big cock. He's operating at full speed, all cylinders firing. Do cylinders fire? I have no head for practical things like cars.

MATTY

I'm sorry.

SANDY

Be sorry for yourself. Look at you. Did you really see yourself as me?

MATTY

Daniel said we could launch a whole career, our own clients, our own fans.

SANDY

Daniel would say that. He's a showman, he's like Barnum and Bailey. He just needed some freaks to show.

MATTY

I'm so tired.

SANDY

I am NASA. I'm the real thing. Daniel can provide fireworks, I can provide trips to the moon. You're not even a launch pad. You're a tadpole, swimming around a water lily hoping to be a toad. But most tadpoles die. They get eaten. I could have protected you from that.

MATTY

I'm sorry.

SANDY

No damage done. Except to yourself. I provided you with a way to make money and never leave your house. And you were getting famous in your own right, under my wing. A small fame, but manageable. Look at this place. It's not even yours anymore.

MATTY
Can I come back?

SANDY
To the Refinery? You were never a part of it. You were separate. I'm not even sure you could create my art here. It's sullied somehow. Tarted up, compromised. The only thing I like is what happened to your window.

MATTY
Oh, God.

SANDY
Don't despair. You were miserable and barely hanging on before you met me, I suppose you'll find that equilibrium again.

MATTY
I wish I was back in school.

SANDY
Don't we all. School was so safe, so sure. I had teachers yelling at me and telling me what to do. And if I got too agitated I'd just throw up and everyone would leave me alone.

MATTY
Maybe they'll take me back.

SANDY
In a minute. You could write about me, lecture on me, invite me to colloquia.

MATTY
Oh, God.

SANDY
Yes. My sprite. I liked those two. So sentimental, so carefree. Money does that. It allows you to enjoy yourself, to see things clearly.

MATTY
Maybe they'll buy my art.

SANDY
Oh, I'm sure. For a time. So long as Daniel can keep them entertained. But eventually they'll drift away. To me. That's the thing about people with money, they do exactly what they want to do when they want to do it. It's a lovely thing, money. It's why there are so many Republicans. It allows everyone to act like they have money. To act like bullies.

MATTY

Do you like my art?

SANDY

Your art? I haven't thought about it.

MATTY

You hired me to do yours, you must have liked it.

SANDY

Oh, I liked your ability, your technical skill. But you were just cheap. You were that brilliant combination of highly skilled and utterly destitute, spiritually as well as financially. You were on your last legs: holed up here, banished by the university as yet another graduate student who wouldn't finish his degree, not equipped to enter the work force. I knew I could get you to do difficult things cheaply. That's all. You were bargain basement. The world knows how much I love bargain basements, remainder bookstores, 99 cent stores. In the future everything will be created to be remaindered because everyone wants a deal. Your art? I wouldn't even call it art. It had no delivery system, it had no way of getting out into the world. It's like calling plutonium a bomb. It just isn't. This city's full of them – shut-ins who call themselves actors, inebriates who fancy they're composers, closet artists. I love them, all of them. But would I give them a dime? No, never.

MATTY

Now Daniel will get it out there.

SANDY

For a few weeks maybe. Your performance today was pathetic. Daniel had to tart it up, turn it on. He's the delivery system delivering your degenerated plutonium. He could find some radioactive matter that is much more lethal. Anyone at the Refinery now would turn it up more than you. You are a recluse, a shut-in. Any one of my Glamourpusses, my little harem, any one of them would certainly have dropped their pants today so Daniel wouldn't have to. I actually like Daniel heading out on his own. It only increases my fame. He'll never get beyond his own small level. He'll serve as a farm team, a minor league, feeding my big league. And eventually he'll come crawling back. When he doesn't even have enough left to seed his farm. And I'll take him back, He can answer phones, type up my novels. He'd be good at that. When he's old.

MATTY

What about me?

SANDY

No, you're too smart for that. You know better. You have that PhD grooming, just enough contempt to stay morose and not a team player. I grew up with sullen,

negative people; they depress me terribly. I'm certainly not going to cultivate them, pay them to be negative. I'm glad I came by today; for the first time ever I was feeling bad about the way I treated someone. So bad in fact I felt I should give you a call, come round, -God help me - apologize. How refreshing to find that I was right, you deserved to be treated bad, that you in fact needed to be treated worse.

(Pause.)

SANDY

Your silence is refreshing. I too am usually stunned into silence; interviews, colloquia, panels, parties, they all terrify me. That's why I carry my camera when I go out. I can turn it all around, make the party about them, not me. Here, let's get a picture of you, might relieve your sadness.

(He removes an old-style Polaroid camera from his bag and snaps a shot of MATTY. The camera dispenses the shot. SANDY holds it.)

SANDY

I can silkscreen this: An Artist Defeated. Or perhaps: An Artist Stillborn. (He starts to pack up things, getting ready to leave. He pauses at the door.) Of course you can come back to work for me, at the Refinery. I would never cut you off. But you do have to come down. There're so many pretty people down there, my Glamourpusses. You should get out more. Let's make that our project; let's make you a project. Let's socialize you. Yes, that's what you can give to my business. Your enthusiasm. (He leaves.)

(Blackout.)

End of Act One

Act Two

(Some weeks later. SANDY and DANIEL are standing in the apartment. SANDY is removing his Polaroid from his large Portfolio. The apartment now looks not just cluttered but worn down, abandoned to mess. Obviously things are just thrown here and there, all order has been destroyed. It is place of a person who has given up caring.)

SANDY

It's so picturesque. I can't even imagine coming up with an environment like this. I want to live here.

DANIEL

It's depressing as hell.

SANDY

Yes, but that's what's so lovely about it. It's depressing but it's not my depression. I can just enjoy it for what it is: not mine. It's someone else's mess. I love it.

DANIEL

So these guys are serious.

SANDY

I know they are. I take my portraits very seriously.

DANIEL

Then why here?

SANDY

It's part of my "Save Matthew" routine.

DANEIL

He's past saving.

SANDY

You watch. I'd no idea it had gotten this far. It's glorious. The gay man decimated by the world. Makes me so proud to not have sunk to these depths; he's kind of a savior in a way, a martyr. He's crucified himself so the rest of us can live.

DANIEL

Why do you talk that way about being gay? Everyone accepts it. It's no longer a bad thing.

SANDY

It will always be a bad thing. If it weren't no one would be attracted to it.

(Doorbell.)

SANDY

They're so cute always ringing the door. Don't they realize it's open?

DANIEL

They're very bourgeois.

SANDY

Bourgeois is the new sheik. Which one am I shooting?

DANIEL

Morris.

SANDY

The fat one?

DANIEL

They're both fat.

SANDY

The fatter one?

DANIEL

Yes.

(Pause.)

SANDY

They don't exactly bound up those stairs do they?

DANIEL

I don't think there are a lot of stairs in their life.

(MORRIS and MIKE enter, exhausted by the stairs, MORRIS almost collapsing in the doorway.)

MORRIS

Oh, oh, dear, my goodness.

DANIEL

You're all right.

MORRIS

I'm not. You're trying to get me to lose weight before I have my picture taken.

MIKE
Just take it easy. Howsies!

SANDY
Hello.

MIKE
Morris is plum defeated by those stairs.

MORRIS
They sag in places.

DANIEL
It's an old building.

MORRIS
It's sinking.

SANDY
Like Venice.

MIKE
Death in Venice, that's what we'll call today.

MORRIS
He keeps a diary.

SANDY
I love diaries.

MORRIS
It's full of lies.

SANDY
How post modern.

MIKE
What's the point of telling your diary the truth?

SANDY
I should write that down.

DANIEL
Why don't you?

SANDY
I don't have a pencil.

DANIEL (Handing him a pen)
Here.

SANDY
I've forgotten what he said.

MIKE
So how does this work?

MORRIS
Could I have a glass of that lovely wine you served last time?

DANIEL (Exiting to kitchen)
I'll see...

MIKE
How does this work?

SANDY
I take fifty shots of Mike here, that's all.

MIKE
His name's Morris.

SANDY
I call him Mike.

DANIEL (Entering with wine bottle and glasses)
It means he's forgotten his name.

SANDY
I remember his name. It's Morris. I call him Mike.

MORRIS
And then what?

SANDY
Then I choose the best one and turn it into your portrait.

MORRIS
Oh, that's so simple.

SANDY
Yes.

MIKE
Is that what you did with Stalin?

SANDY
Yes.

MIKE
You took fifty Polaroids of him?

SANDY
Oh, no. I just did it from a stock picture.

MIKE
Is that legal?

SANDY
Of course, he's a communist.

MORRIS
So I'll look just like Ava Garnder and Jayne Mansfield?

SANDY
Just like them.

MIKE
Less hair.

MORRIS
That's your camera?

SANDY
Yes.

MIKE
It's so cheap.

SANDY
I've always shot with this camera. It's my friend.

MORRIS
Ok.

SANDY (Aiming his camera at MORRIS)
So here we go.

MORRIS
Wait, wait, I'm not ready.

SANDY
I am.

MIKE
But here. You need better light. Let's open this.

(He throws open the curtain revealing the still busted window with some blood still on it.)

MIKE
Oh, what happened out there? This window's busted.

MORRIS
That's blood.

MIKE
Really?

DANIEL
Yes.

MIKE
That's disgusting.

SANDY
Here we go.

(DANIEL hands MORRIS a glass of wine, which he swigs.)

MORRIS
Oh, thank God. Here. Catch my breath.

MIKE
This place is disgusting.

SANDY
I love it.

MIKE

It smells. And I hate bed bugs. I better not get bitten.

SANDY

Are you all set?

MORRIS

Yes. What should I do?

SANDY

Nothing, The camera does all the work.

(He snaps and will snap throughout the following.)

MIKE

It's such a let down. I thought there'd be klieg lights and reflectors.

SANDY

That's professional photography. I'm a professional amateur.

MORRIS

Oh, I just love that. The way you talk.

SANDY

Chin up dear, focus on posing.

MORRIS

Give me that wine please.

(DANIEL hands him another glass and he knocks it back.)

MORRIS

This is so exciting. Our very own. All those famous people you do.

SANDY

Most of them aren't famous. They're just rich nobodies.

MORRIS

That's us. Actually, I am famous.

MIKE

When you're laying on your back in a trough you're famous.

MORRIS (Giggling)

Don't tell them about that.

MIKE

That's your claim to fame.

MORRIS

Call it a weakness.

SANDY

That's a Bugs Bunny reference.

MORRIS

I love Bugs Bunny.

MIKE

Is this how you shot Dody Rosekrans?

SANDY

Yes.

MORRIS

And Ann Getty?

SANDY

Yes.

MORRIS

What fun.

(MATTY has entered, unseen by the others, from the bedroom. He looks awful. His clothes are wrinkled and filthy, his skin sweaty. He has obviously given in to complete depression. MORRIS has finally noticed him.)

MORRIS

Hello.

MIKE

Oh, hi.

DANIEL

Hi.

SANDY

Hi, Matty.

(MATTY exits to kitchen, shuffling.)

MIKE
Who was that?

DANIEL
He lives here.

SANDY
This is his place.

MORRIS
Oooo... He should take a bath.

MIKE
Hand me those newspapers.

(DANIEL hands him some newspapers. MIKE places them on sofa and sits.)

MORRIS
Oh, stop being so finicky.

MIKE
This place is disgusting.

MORRIS
How do you decide which shot is the best?

SANDY
It just jumps out at me.

DANIEL
Tell us about that trough.

MORRIS
Oh, you know, I'm into humiliation.

DANIEL
What happens in it?

MORRIS
Oh, you know.

DANIEL
No, I don't.

MORRIS
The usual.

DANIEL
The usual what?

MIKE
Don't be coy.

DANIEL
Who are you talking to?

MIKE
Miss Thing here. Tell them what happens in the trough.

MORRIS
Men pee on me.

SANDY
You should come by and do a piss painting for me.

MIKE
No they piss on him. He doesn't piss.

SANDY
That's why it would be so radical.

MIKE
All this talk... where's the bathroom?

DANIEL
Through the bedroom.

MIKE
In there?

DANIEL
Yes.

MIKE
Is it safe?

DANIEL
No.

MIKE
Is he serious?

MORRIS

Just go. He's joking.

(MIKE exits to bedroom.)

MORRIS

He's so naughty. You'd think he was a neatnik himself. If we didn't have maids we'd live in a pigsty. Oik, oik.

(MATTY enters with breakfast cereal and sits on sofa in MIKE's spot.)

SANDY

How are you?

MATTY

Ok. Tired.

DANIEL

Mike and Morris really enjoy your painting. It's over their mantel.

MORRIS

What are you talking about?

DANIEL

This is the artist. Of the triptych.

MORRIS

You're the artist?

DANIEL

Yes.

MORRIS (To SANDY, indicating the picture taking)

Stop. (To MATTY) You are?

MATTY

Yes.

(MIKE enters.)

MIKE

That place was foul. I've seen cleaner toilets... well, everywhere.

MORRIS

Honey. This is the artist who did our painting, our triptych.

MIKE
You're Manto?

SANDY
Manto?

DANIEL
It's the name I gave him.

SANDY
Manto?

DANIEL
He doesn't know. I sign the paintings. It's the only part of them he doesn't do.

MIKE
So who's Manto? You're him?

DANIEL
Manto is the artist. He's the painter.

SANDY
I love it.

MIKE (To MATTY)
You painted it?

DANIEL
Yes.

MIKE
I thought it was a New York artist.

SANDY
Why did you think that?

MIKE (Indicating DANIEL)
He told me.

DANIEL (To MATTY)
You're from New York, aren't you?

MATTY
No.

DANIEL
I made a mistake.

MIKE (To MATTY)
You're the artist?

MORRIS
Stop saying that.

MIKE
I'm just so... disappointed.

SANDY
Disappointment is an authentic emotion. Much more than enthusiasm or love.

DANIEL
It's like humiliation.

SANDY
Yes. It's paramount. It can't be faked.

MIKE
Well, authentic or not, I'm pissed.

SANDY
Why?

MIKE (Indicating MATTY)
He's a derelict. I thought we had a real work of art. He's just a bum living in a squat.

SANDY
Some of the greatest artists have been bums living in squats. Van Gogh.

MIKE
But Van Gogh's dead. He's alive.

SANDY
Good point.

MIKE
I mean, Van Gogh was dead a long time before he became famous. Why is this guy famous?

SANDY
There's logic here somewhere but I'm not quite following it.

MIKE

Who determined this guy was famous, huh? He obviously has no money.

SANDY

The more you talk the more I love it. Philosophically you're at the cutting edge.

MIKE

I'm serious. Who said he was famous? (To DANIEL) You? You're nothing but a stripper.

MORRIS

Come on, Mike.

MIKE

No, I'm serious. I mean, I've been had. I've been ripped off.

DANIEL

No, you haven't.

MIKE

Bullshit. Bull fucking shit. You can take a kid's finger painting and say it's worth a million dollars but that doesn't make it worth a million. That's a scam.

SANDY

It would be worth a million if you paid a million.

MIKE (To DANIEL)

So you say something's art and it is?

(Pause.)

MORRIS

Mike, you like that triptych. You said it goes with our rug.

MIKE

That doesn't make it worth... what did we pay, fifty thousand dollars? Isn't that what we paid?

SANDY

Fifty? My goodness, Daniel. Good for you.

MIKE (To DANIEL)

You're just a hustler. You're a criminal.

DANIEL

I'm not.

MIKE

This pig (Indicating MATTY) throws some paint on a canvas and you say it's a masterpiece and we fall for it. That doesn't make him an artist, it makes you a con artist. (Pause.) I'm leaving. I'm getting out of this dump. You're an asshole. I'm telling everyone, everyone, you're a thief. Come on, Morris.

(MIKE starts to leave.)

SANDY

Michael, come back here.

(Pause.)

MIKE

Don't call me Michael.

SANDY

That's you're name, isn't it?

MIKE

My name's Mike.

SANDY

I'm sure you were called Michael when you misbehaved.

MIKE

Fuck you.

SANDY

Sit down, Mike. I said, "Sit down!"

(MIKE sits.)

SANDY

How dare you talk to Daniel and Matty that way, in my presence. How dare you?
(Pause.) Answer my question. How dare you?

MIKE

They ripped me off.

SANDY

They did nothing of the kind. They sold you something of value.

MIKE
Says who?

SANDY
Says me. You bought it because you were dazzled by my fame. That's authority enough for you. Daniel and Matty are my protégés, my colleagues, my associates. You are a rich nobody. You want access to our world, you have to pay, because that's the only commodity you bring to the table, to any table. Money. Morris here at least lets himself be peed on, that's an exchangeable non-monetary commodity. You have nothing. Nothing at all.

MIKE
How dare you?

SANDY
I'll tell you how I dare. I had to listen to you belittle my friends, now you can listen to me belittle you. The money is yours, isn't it? Mike? Isn't it?

MORRIS
Yes, it's his.

SANDY
How small money is. How inevitably small. Well, I have money. Probably more than you two at this point. I too can be small. You want my Polaroids. You want the silkscreen I'll make from them? It's a real question.

MIKE
Yes.

SANDY
Then beg Matty's forgiveness. Beg him to forgive you.

MORRIS
What about Daniel?

SANDY
Daniel's a dealer, it's his job to eat shit.

MORRIS
Well go ahead, Mike.

MIKE
Forget it. No way.

(SANDY tears a Polaroid in half.)

MORRIS

Oh, my God he's tearing up the Polaroids!

DANIEL

Don't panic. They'll be worth more torn than whole.

SANDY

Yes, but Mike doesn't see it that way. He can never see things that way.

(SANDY tears another.)

MIKE

Stop! (Pause. To MATTY) I'm sorry about what I said.

MORRIS

He doesn't mean it.

SANDY

He means it in the most fundamental way. The only reason he can do anything is as a function of money. That is his sincerity. Isn't it, Mike?

MORRIS

You better answer the question, Mikey.

MIKE

Yes.

SANDY

My whole adult life I've spent with rich people. And the one thing they all have in common is they hate being loved for their money; that's why they're so cheap, they refuse to be surrounded by people who just want money so they never dispense it. Until they have to. But why else would anyone like them? They're nobodies. Rich nobodies. Like you, Mike, right?

MIKE

Yes.

SANDY

There, you see, he likes being pissed on also.

MORRIS

Poor Mikey.

SANDY

Yes, poor little rich boy. I have three more shots.

MIKE

What about the ones that you tore?

SANDY

Those count. You can have them; they are worth something, Mike. Not as much as the triptych painted by the bum but they are unique. Unlike you.

MIKE

Thank you.

MORRIS

Oh, my God, such drama. Whenever we come up here. We can dine out on this for a year.

SANDY

Whereas I couldn't tell this story once without boring everyone.

MORRIS

Thank you so much, this is a magical place. Mikey doesn't appreciate anything. But I love this place. (To MATTY) I love your work. And you.

MATTY

I 've peed on you.

MORRIS

You have?

MATTY

At the Vulture. You were in the trough.

MORRIS

Well, I'm not in it all the time. I mean, are you sure it was me?

MATTY

Yes. I recognized you the first time you came. You were in the trough the night Jodie Foster won her first Oscar.

MORRIS

For *The Accused*! Yes. Oh, my God. You did pee on me then. I was in there all night. Except when I had to go to the bathroom.

SANDY

This is surreal.

MORRIS

I'm sorry about what Mikey said to you.

MATTY

It's all right. It's just what I think.

MORRIS

Really?

SANDY

I think you should go.

MORRIS

I feel bad.

SANDY

You're way out of your depth. I'll do up the silkscreen and have it delivered to your place. Goodbye, Michael.

(MIKE just leaves.)

MORRIS

He'll be ok. He just had a shock.

SANDY

I couldn't care less.

MORRIS

That's just cruel.

SANDY

But true. You have to work it out with him, we do not.

(MORRIS leaves.)

SANDY

Did you really pee on him?

MATTY

Yes.

DANIEL

What a coincidence.

SANDY

I wish I peed on him.

DANIEL

It doesn't seem like you.

MATTY

No? I went there to get out, see if I could find friends in a bar. It was one of the few times I tried that. It was like all the other times. No one talked to me. They weren't interested. So I got angry. I hated everyone in that bar. So when I saw someone was in the trough I went right over and peed on him. To get revenge.

DANIEL

And that's why everyone else peed on him. Cause they were angry.

MATTY

Yes.

DANIEL

Wow, it sounds empowering. To be the receptacle for all that power.

SANDY

It's why people become whores I suppose.

DANIEL (To SANDY)

Thanks.

SANDY

I'm impressed with you, Daniel. You're an opportunist. You're not shy. I've enjoyed being used by you. I respect people who use me.

DANIEL

Can I come back?

SANDY

Of course. You need to ask?

DANIEL

I was afraid.

SANDY

Of me?

DANIEL

No, of being weak.

SANDY

Oh, yes, the ultimate fear. I'm afraid of being strong.

DANIEL

I have to go. It'd be nice to savor the drama but-

SANDY

You have work. Good. Stay busy. It keeps you from thinking too much.

DANIEL

It's actually the opposite for me. It makes me feel smart. Like I can survive things.

SANDY

Good way to think about it.

DANIEL

Good work, Matty. We'll see how this plays out.

(He exits.)

SANDY

Well, you've certainly seen better days.

MATTY

Excuse me.

(MATTY gets up and heads towards bedroom.)

SANDY

What do you do in there?

MATTY

Sleep.

SANDY

Twenty-four hours a day?

MATTY

That would be nice.

SANDY

Why are you so blue?

MATTY

I'm not. I'm just tired all the time.

SANDY

We were making such progress. Then you just stopped coming.

MATTY
I never liked it.

SANDY
But most people don't like life. They just fill it with occurrences. That's what we were doing with yours.

MATTY
I didn't like the reality. The reality of your fame. I want to live in fantasy. The fantasy of my own fame.

SANDY
But you're not famous. You're a bum in a squat.

MATTY (Pointing to his head)
Up here I am. I can live up here.

SANDY
You should have been a drug addict.

MATTY
I'm not that organized.

SANDY
Hmm... So you'd rather dream of great fame than live in brutal obscurity.

MATTY
I guess.

SANDY
Is it the potential of fame that entrances you?

MATTY
The potential?

SANDY
Like you think one day you'll be discovered, that someone will come a knocking.

MATTY
I guess it is.

SANDY
Say it.

MATTY
Yes, I want to be loved for the miracle of me and not have to work at it.

SANDY

Ah, as I always suspected. Every bum on the street dreams of rehabilitation, discovery, ennoblement.

MATTY

Yes.

SANDY

It doesn't happen. My Refinery is the best proof. It refines fame, daily. It constructs it. All those people slaving away to make me, to keep me famous. Henry Ford is my model. Andrew Carnegie. It's not about cars or oil or art. It's about me.

MATTY

Yes, well, I didn't like my proximity. You got to be the sun and I just got burnt.

SANDY

A world full of lazy people who'd rather dream and be sad then work and accomplish something.

MATTY

And be happy?

SANDY

On, no, never happiness. That's a cheap philosophical idea that Thomas Jefferson threw out there in a lazy moment. Actually he said "the pursuit of happiness," to be absolutely fair. "Pursuit" is not "happiness."

MATTY

I'd rather stay in bed.

SANDY

You'll die in there.

MATTY

Maybe I already have.

SANDY

No, it's far too cold in here for this to be death.

MATTY

You were raised Catholic.

SANDY

Good point. I still believe in all that. I still go to church.

MATTY

I was raised milky Episcopalian. My parents were too shy to hammer religion into me. I wish they had.

SANDY

Yes, shy parents should just abort. You need skin of steel to make it in this world. Well, you are getting kind of famous. At least Manto is.

MATTY

How so?

SANDY

We just made your first sale stick - \$50,000.00. Daniel charged them far too much. But we made it stick. That's the road to fame: arrogance followed by persuasion. Now if he could only sell another one you'd be on your way.

MATTY

Will he?

SANDY

Probably not. He's no more made of steel than you are. He blanched under their attack. He should have walked out or fought back, but he was tongue-tied. He might have even taken his clothes off again, done something truly disgusting to win them back. I'm sure it occurred to him. But he cowered. He just doesn't like himself that way. He'd rather like himself as a nobody than love himself as a whore. Pity, he was so good at being a whore. But he's like you: a dreamer who got lucky once. He doesn't know how to turn luck into technique. He'd rather come crawling back to my nest than have the courage to make his own. His dealer days are over so you're washed up. He doesn't have the guts. Some guts, but not enough.

MATTY

How have you become so icy?

SANDY

I've always been icy. Well, mostly. When I was ten I was only frosty. Before that... When I was little I thought possibilities were possibilities. I thought, well, my father could love me. He could come home from work on Saturday and take me to the zoo. He could do that. But he wouldn't. In other words, just because something can happen doesn't mean it can, because will is involved and though he can do something he will not. So it is an impossibility, just as your fame is an impossibility. No one would find you here and even if they did they'd be disgusted by the smell. Of course you might impress the people who don't matter, like Morris. But they don't matter, even to themselves, so the world takes no notice of them. The alchemy of fame, it's desperately complicated. And not.

(He packs up his things.)

SANDY

You should go back to graduate school. You're desperately old but they might take pity on you, let you crawl back in.

MATTY

No, I asked.

SANDY

Ask again.

MATTY

I've asked so many times they've stopped returning my calls.

SANDY

Ah, then I guess all that's left for you is death. Pity there aren't more canvases. You could tell yourself, even as you swallow the hemlock, that fame will come in eternity. But there just isn't enough product. Another obscure death... how cluttered the world is with bodies.

(SANDY leaves. Pause. He returns.)

SANDY

Now I feel bad. Ugh, I hate that.

MATTY

You shouldn't feel bad.

SANDY

But I do. All those waifs I've destroyed. That society girl and the one I ignored until she shot me, the little bitch. I feel responsible.

MATTY

We're responsible for our own actions.

SANDY

No you're not. How can you be? Your actions are ridiculous. It's the person in charge who gets the blame. There always has to be a parent when the kids screw up. Ok, so Manto. Are you happy with that name?

MATTY

No, I think it's stupid.

SANDY

Of course it's stupid. So you'll go by Matthew Clarke. I hate it. It has no energy. But it does sound hopelessly suburban, and that's always good. Matt Clarke would be even better. Yes, I'm beginning to love it. Matt Clarke sounds young, boyish, and then they'd see the real you and be astonished. It's growing on me. M. Clarke? No, that sounds like a transvestite. People will assume you're a woman fleeing the stigma of your vagina.

MATTY

What are you talking about?

SANDY

Well, I have played Svengali before. I mean, the evidence is I can do it. My graffiti artists, all of them dead now but no thanks to me. And none of them shot me. It's just that even though I sometimes escape blame with my protégés I suffer in other ways. I have to see them eclipse me like vicious little moons. So you might die but you'll make me look frivolous for a while first, and in death – my word, they'll make movies about you!

MATTY

It's all right.

SANDY

"Don't do me any favors?" Please, I know favors are nasty tidbits of abuse. Please indulge me, let me do some. So...

MATTY

So what?

SANDY

I bet you'd love to be asked out to a movie of your choice.

MATTY

What are you doing?

SANDY

Making one wish come true. I've discovered you, Matt Clarke. We're going to be friends. As I've not been friends with someone in a long time. You'll be seen with me and your work revered. We'll start by going to a movie. Friends do that. Then I can do most of talking, as I like to do, and you can listen. But we'll talk about me.

MATTY

No.

SANDY

No?

MATTY

I don't want to go out.

SANDY

Of course you do, this is your fantasy. Someone you admire being your friend.

(Pause.)

SANDY

You want me to beg.

MATTY

I don't want you to do anything. I don't care.

SANDY

I know you don't. (Kneels to him.) Look at me. So many have died or drifted off into drugs or prison. I hear the crunch of their bones beneath my feet wherever I go. Well, that's a little too poetic even for me, but they do flash in my brain, like Polaroids. And I know they weren't my fault. They were waifs, loners, on the road to whatever self-destruction long before I discovered them, my Glamourpusses. But I buried them, I shoveled more dirt in their graves, I was yet another adult to exploit them. I might not have been the first or the last but I was the biggest. My children.

MATTY

I'm not one of your children.

SANDY

No. And I'm no Satan. But I like you. You're an adult. You were a completed human entity from the moment I met you: this place, your life, you were realized, on your way to finishing life, successfully, in your own little way. I feel... looking at you now, that I derailed you. Cut you off from your goal.

MATTY

I was headed here anyway. It might just have taken longer.

SANDY

It might have taken your whole natural life. If you die this way at seventy it's no tragedy.

MATTY

I don't trust you.

SANDY

Good. You shouldn't.

MATTY

Everyone I've trusted in love has betrayed me.

SANDY

Yes, well, don't trust. Just enjoy. I can provide enjoyment.

MATTY

And when you abandon me? As you've already done.

SANDY

I won't. I can commit to things. My mother, my religion, I do know devotion. I'm not famous for it but it is there.

MATTY

Why me?

SANDY

Guilt. You symbolize my guilt. That girl, with her gun, so angry because I hadn't read her damn play. God. She was right. Even as she did it I could have said any number of things to stop her. But I refused. I hated myself. I deserved to die. And the other one. The society girl. I used to walk in the Studio and see her passed out on the floor, high. I giggled at that. The power I had over another body. She thought I was cool, she thought I was hip. She was beautiful. And I killed her.

MATTY

You didn't.

SANDY

Oh, yes, I did. As surely as I was shot, I shot her. But my bullets worked.

MATTY

She was eighteen. I'm forty-five.

SANDY

Watching you today, smelling you, you smell like her.

MATTY

I've been on this course my whole life.

SANDY

That's what the little graffiti artist said.

MATTY

What did you say to him?

SANDY

Nothing. I was afraid if he stepped off the course he'd lose his talent. I was silent. That's the best I've done.

MATTY

I want to lay down.

SANDY

Please don't.

MATTY

Why?

SANDY

I need you to stay awake. I need you.

MATTY

No.

SANDY

Please.

(MATTY touches SANDY's face.)

MATTY

Ok.

SANDY

Really?

MATTY

Yes.

SANDY (Brightening)

Lovely. I need a friend. Since Mama died, or since I killed her I can't decide which, but since she left I've been alone. Except for those men I call husbands who live in my house. All of them leeches. It's why I can't go home now. The Present Mr. Leech is there to berate me. So I'll go to a movie instead.

MATTY

But we'll talk about me. All about me.

SANDY

Sounds insufferable.

MATTY
No it doesn't.

SANDY
Is this some spine you're showing?

MATTY
I've always had spine. Remember, I went to the Vulture one night. I just needed to hit rock bottom first.

SANDY
Rock bottom. Is that how you describe yourself, a rock bottom?

MATTY
Let me get my coat.

SANDY
Wait. No, take a shower. You pong horribly.

MATTY
Pong?

SANDY
It's English for "you smell like shit."

MATTY
Shower doesn't work.

SANDY
I'm not going to the movies with a man who stinks.

MATTY
I can go to the girls' downstairs. They have a shower that works.

SANDY
You're serious. I've revived you that quickly?

MATTY
It's weird. Yes. I just wanted someone to come by and ask me to a movie. I feel reborn.

SANDY
How sad.

MATTY
No, don't ruin it by talking. Just wait here. I'll be right back. I'll even shave.

(MATTY grabs a towel and exits. SANDY stands up and looks about the apartment. He picks some stuff up and sets it neatly aside. At first it looks like he is cleaning the apartment, which he is doing inadvertently, but he is actually looking for something. He finds a stack of MATTY's work: pencil drawings and even some oils. He quickly puts them in his portfolio. He then continues to look about the apartment, tidying as he goes. MATTY re-enters wrapped Romanlike in large towel. SANDY sits guiltily on sofa.)

SANDY
Hail Caesar! That was fast.

MATTY
They only had cold water.

SANDY
Your landlord deserves a prize.

MATTY
Yeah, she's sort of the you of slumlords.

(MATTY disappears into the bedroom. SANDY feels something under him and looks under the cushion. He digs out the photo album. He sits, opens it up and leafs through it. He shuts it and puts it in his portfolio just as MATTY enters dressed. MATTY wears boat shoes, white socks, black suit pants, a cream colored sports coat, wrinkled blue shirt and an old down blue puff jacket.)

MATTY
How's this? It's all clean, well relatively.

SANDY
It's terrible. Here.

(SANDY takes the puff jacket off him. Looks at him.)

SANDY
Take off the pants and the socks.

(SANDY finds some jeans on the floor, sniffs them and recoils.)

SANDY
Oh, God. Anyway, put these on.

MATTY
They're too small. I've grown too fat for them.

SANDY

Good, you won't need to wear a belt. Belts are very bourgeois.

MATTY

What about socks?

SANDY

Those are boating shoes; you don't wear socks on a boat. Let's get a look at you. All right, passable.

MATTY

But I need socks and a coat, it's winter.

SANDY

I'll bring them, you can put them on when the movie starts and take them off when it's finished.

MATTY

Are we really going to a movie?

SANDY

Yes. There's a Cineplex on the corner, isn't there?

MATTY

Yes. They won't recognize me.

SANDY

Well, they better recognize me. Carry my portfolio.

(MATTY picks up portfolio.)

MATTY

It's heavy.

SANDY

Yes, I've acquired quite a load today. All set?

MATTY

I'm already cold.

SANDY

There's sunshine outside. It has a way of warming you up. Even in the winter.

MATTY

I'm excited.

SANDY
I'm not. I'm afraid.

MATTY
Of what?

SANDY
Being bored.

MATTY
Oh, that. You get used to it.

SANDY
I know. That's what frightens me. Ok, here we go.

(They exit. The lights fade.)

End of Act Two

End of Play