

ALMOST, NOT QUITE, JUST ABOUT

by
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Draft August 2006

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

A lobby. Casey (late 20s or older) is waiting inside, casually but nicely dressed. No one is there. He looks around, and when nobody appears he takes a warrior's stance, and for a moment pretends to hold an invisible sword. He completes that and goes into Tai Chi movements - slow and graceful. He gets to "Wave Hands Like Clouds" - his palm in front of his face. Megan (early 20s) appears. She startles him as she speaks.

MEGAN

How're your hands?

CASEY

Oh - scared me. Hands are fine. I was doing -

MEGAN

Tai Chi.

CASEY

I'm one of your ushers.

MEGAN

My hands are peeling something fierce. Look. Could I have Leprosy? Do people get that anymore or is it just in the Bible?

CASEY

No I think -

MEGAN

Cause it's not like there isn't enough to worry about with the destruction of the environment and handgun control and wars happening and then having to work on top of that - not to mention pursuing a career. I mean - you know - there's only so much I can take.

Beat.

CASEY

I'm Casey.

MEGAN

My mother would like burn herself - her hands - she couldn't feel stuff sometimes and - well I was always grateful for totally intact hands - and now this -

CASEY

Maybe you're using the wrong moisturizer.

MEGAN

Maybe. I loved her, but I never wanted her hands. Or the drinking. She was always doing this Mrs. Vershinin thing. You know?

CASEY

No. (beat) Oh yeah.

MEGAN

Yay! Show me. (Beat. Casey holds up his hands.) They look smooth. Safe.

CASEY

They are I guess.

MEGAN

I could tell. (Beat) Megan. House manager.

CASEY

There's another guy coming -

MEGAN

Yeah - story of my life - And you are...

CASEY

Casey. (Beat.) Hey what's that painting?

He points to the fourth wall.

MEGAN

It was part of some set. I don't know what from. Kinda cute though.

CASEY

I like it.

MEGAN

I'm off to pee.

She's gone. Benjamin enters. He's Casey's age and black.

BENJAMIN

Hey Casey.

CASEY

Ben!

They hug.

BENJAMIN
Just get here?

CASEY
Five minutes.

BENJAMIN
Had to run by Reproductions. There was a line. Kelly was there -

CASEY
Oh yeah?

BENJAMIN
She said hi.

CASEY
How's she doing?

BENJAMIN
Fine. She says she's great - but it's Kelly, so - you know -

CASEY
Grain of salt.

BENJAMIN
Yeah. But she looks good.

CASEY
Yeah?

BENJAMIN
She's doing this thing with her hair - like that singer - Pink?

CASEY
She's got Pink hair.

BENJAMIN
Exactly. She's with Paradigm now. Apparently they send her out all the time. Bitch.

CASEY
You never know -

BENJAMIN
Yeah. I got to do a mailing. I gotta do something. I gotta get something. It's been so slow. Crickets -

CASEY
Me too.

BENJAMIN
I'm glad it's not just me. Black man. Black hole.

CASEY

No - it's going around.

BENJAMIN

Anybody here?

CASEY

Head usher's in the bathroom. Megan.

BENJAMIN

My agent wants headshots - I guess that's good - but it's a desert, Case -

CASEY

Nothing's going on.

BENJAMIN

And it's pilot season.

CASEY

Yeah. (beat) I've been doing vocal exercises every day. It's good. Trying to release the tension. The whole world carries around unbelievable jaw tension. Like the spin of the planet depends on it. (beat.) I was a reader for Eggroll!

BENJAMIN

What is that?

CASEY

Musical. Harry's casting.

BENJAMIN

Huh. Well - it's good to see people audition.

CASEY

I always get something out of it.

BENJAMIN

There a part for you?

CASEY

All Asian cast.

BENJAMIN

Oh. That's good - for them.

Beat. Each man absently wriggles his jaw.

BENJAMIN

Yeah. The waiting sucks - the vortex.

CASEY

Yeah.

BENJAMIN

I'm thinking I might get out. Of the business.

CASEY

Again?

BENJAMIN

Yeah.

CASEY

Yeah.

BENJAMIN

You too?

CASEY

Not at all. But I know what you mean.

Benjamin pulls out a cell phone. Dials.

CASEY

New?

BENJAMIN

Yeah. Julia hates it. (Listens.) Voice mail. My brother. Blah, blah, blah. He wants his copy of The Nutty Professor back. Like that's all I have to do with my time.

CASEY

How's Julia?

BENJAMIN

Fine. Swamped. I'd kill to be half as busy. She claims I'd hate it because I'd have to stop complaining and work.

Casey laughs. Benjamin stares at him until he stops.

BENJAMIN

She also wants a baby.

CASEY

Whoa.

BENJAMIN

I want a career first.

CASEY

I'd settle for a relationship.

BENJAMIN

What happened to -

CASEY

We're done. She's done -

BENJAMIN

Sorry.

CASEY

I was thinking maybe she was it. But after breaking up with me - she was ecstatic. But my horoscope says it's a new day. Clean slate. I say bring it on!

BENJAMIN

Bring it on now!!

CASEY

She really seemed happy to let me go - I had no idea -

BENJAMIN

I'm sorry. (beat) What's the deal with this weather? Its warm one day, then snow - I never know what to wear - What's the deal?

CASEY

Yeah, it's weird that way. But it's a new day - for me at least -

BENJAMIN

Not for me?

CASEY

Wanna read yours?

BENJAMIN

It's always sucky -

CASEY

Don't say that -

Beat. Casey goes for his bag.

BENJAMIN

Ah - Don't - Alright. (Beat.) Can't wait to see Seth in this show.

CASEY

What about when he sees you?

BENJAMIN

That too. You see the Times piece?

CASEY

No. Was it good?

BENJAMIN

Had to read it in three sittings. I want it to be me.

CASEY

It just means that you're next.

BENJAMIN

You keep saying that -

CASEY

It's true.

BENJAMIN

You didn't call him, did you?

CASEY

No. (beat) Gemini, right?

BENJAMIN

Yeah. (beat)

CASEY

All right. It's not the greatest - but -

BENJAMIN

(Takes the paper - reads.)

"It's a precarious time, Gemini. Your sense of balance could disappear - and you may really need it now, because you're close to the abyss. Stay on track and keep looking straight ahead. It couldn't hurt to get a bungee cord." Yeah.

Megan enters.

MEGAN

Gotta stop with drinking so much water. But I'm trying to cleanse! Hi hi. Let me start you on - Oh my god - You taught me SAT - um - don't tell me -

BENJAMIN

Megan?

CASEY

Benjamin.

MEGAN

Oh my god. Cool. How ya doin'?

BENJAMIN

All right. (beat.) How did you do?

MEGAN

College was swell! Vassar. English major. Keg parties. Air guitar. AA. You know -

BENJAMIN

On the test. How'd you do?

MEGAN

Oh. Too much information, huh? The test was good - ok. Didn't do as well as Monty wanted. But I got into Vassar. Graduated! Yay! Let me get you programs.

BENJAMIN

Monty?

MEGAN

Dad.

CASEY

Vassar's a good school.

BENJAMIN

It's ok -

MEGAN

Still teaching?

BENJAMIN

Occasionally. Not now.

MEGAN

Acting?

BENJAMIN

Yeah.

MEGAN

In anything now?

BENJAMIN

Limbo.

MEGAN

Who's doing that? (beat) Oh. Isn't it pilot season?

CASEY

Yeah. I'm an actor too -

MEGAN

Things should be busy.

BENJAMIN

Should be -

CASEY

Sometimes its busy.

MEGAN

Oh. (beat) These are your programs. You stuff these and these in each one. Any place but the middle. They fall out if you put them in the middle. We open the house at 7:30 and you boys'll - you and - Casey - will seat people. Um - oh - there are no refreshments - which I think is stupid - I'm fighting with Monty about that - but it makes it easy for us - Yay! Bathrooms - there and upstairs. And we'll cover the seating inside. But that's easy.

BENJAMIN

How long you been doing this?

MEGAN

June, July, August - (she continues counting silently) Eight months. Since graduation. Monty insisted.

BENJAMIN

Does he - run this?

MEGAN

Owens it.

BENJAMIN

Yeah?

CASEY

What sign are you?

MEGAN

Pisces.

CASEY

Ah! (Of himself.) Virgo.

MEGAN

Cool - you're due for a fresh start -

CASEY

Clean slate -

MEGAN

You read "Urban Astrology"?

CASEY

I swear by it.

MEGAN

Get out.

Benjamin's cell phone rings. He doesn't answer it. Casey and Megan stare at him.

BENJAMIN

It'll go to voice mail.

MEGAN

Brain cancer, those things -

BENJAMIN

You don't have one?

MEGAN

Blackberry. And I only I.M. it's safer. (beat) What sign are you?

CASEY

Gemini.

MEGAN

Of course.

Beat. Benjamin grabs the phone and checks his voice mail.

CASEY

I do charts.

MEGAN

I'm so overdue for a reading.

CASEY

Good -

BENJAMIN

Message! (beat) It's Julia.

CASEY

I could do it -

MEGAN

Um - that'd be -

CASEY

If you want.

MEGAN

Cool. Maybe. We have a family person - but -

CASEY

Oh, well -

MEGAN

Actually she drives me nuts - and all that perfume - She's good though. But maybe. I mean - I'm sure you're good. Good hands -

CASEY
Yeah.

Benjamin gets off the phone.

MEGAN
Maybe -

CASEY
Whatever -

MEGAN
You're planning to turn your phone off, during the show,
right? I'd have to kick you out if you don't.

BENJAMIN
You think I don't know how annoying that can be in the middle
of a show?

MEGAN
I gotta say it. You gotta turn it off.

BENJAMIN
I'm planning to.

MEGAN
I need to check the house.

CASEY
Make sure it's still there -

MEGAN
You boys start stuffing.

She goes. Casey starts stuffing in a
jaunty rhythm.

BENJAMIN
That was so uncalled for.

CASEY
It's her job. (beat)

BENJAMIN
That was Julia - on the voice mail -

CASEY
Yeah? Something wrong?

BENJAMIN
Something about big news.

CASEY
Good!

BENJAMIN

We thought she might be getting a raise. But I have a feeling.

CASEY

What? It's good news, right?

BENJAMIN

I guess.

CASEY

I think - if it's something that's going to bother you - call her back.

BENJAMIN

Tonight we'll talk.

CASEY

Don't worry about it.

BENJAMIN

Why did I get this? (the phone)

CASEY

Hope.

BENJAMIN

I have no hope.

CASEY

Brain cancer then.

BENJAMIN

Yeah, maybe now.

He lays the phone on the "refreshment counter".

BENJAMIN

You think I should get an ear-thing? For the phone?

CASEY

Well maybe -

BENJAMIN

Brain cancer would be - not good -

CASEY

Yeah.

BENJAMIN

But if I was famous - dying would solidify my legend.

Ben? CASEY

What? BENJAMIN

I'd rather be a healthy nobody. CASEY

You've got that covered. BENJAMIN

That was really - CASEY

Sorry. BENJAMIN

You always - CASEY

I'm sorry. (beat. Looking at program.) Can you imagine if that was your face? He is the show and the show is him. BENJAMIN

It's amazing. CASEY

You think if I was gay I'd be famous by now? BENJAMIN

Seth is very talented. CASEY

If I was still gay - BENJAMIN

You were never gay. CASEY

There were rumors. BENJAMIN

You hated all that - CASEY

At least someone was talking about me. BENJAMIN

Gossipy stuff - CASEY

Seth hated it. BENJAMIN