

BREAKFAST WITH GANDHI

BY

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BREAKFAST WITH GANDHI

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BREAKFAST WITH GANDHI

*For Keeko...
My precious son and the very light of my life.*

BREAKFAST WITH GANDHI

CAST:

BROOKE	50s, Caucasian, wife of Val
VAL	50s, African American, wife of Brooke
TEDDY	13-year-old, adopted Guatemalan son of BROOKE and VAL
KYLE	15-year-old, adopted Guatemalan son of BROOKE and VAL
RAYMOND	50s, patient of BROOKE's, RUSSELL's twin brother
RUSSELL	50s, Chief Agent of CBP, RAYMOND's twin brother

Note: The roles of RAYMOND and RUSSELL are to be played by the same actor

TIME:	The dawn of our collective awareness of the Global Pandemic in the year 2020
PLACE:	Brooke and Val's Home and Brooke's Office

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ACT 1

SCENE 1

BROOKE'S OFFICE – AFTERNOON

BROOKE sits behind a small desk. After a moment, she opens the desk drawer pulling out a single cigarette and lighter. She stands, begins walking to the door, then stops in her tracks.

BROOKE. *(Under her breath, repeating a mantra.)* Ashtray. Breath. Hypocrite. *(Taking a breath.)* Ashtray breath. Hypocrite. *(Returning to her desk, she replaces the cigarette and lighter into the drawer. She then picks up a hand-held voice recorder and begins speaking into it.)* March 4th. 2020. Four O'clock hour with Raymond "P". Walked in tied in knots more than usual. Is now petrified of raisins for no known reason, and will only eat off of paper plates, but deathly afraid of plastic utensils and vintage Troll Dolls. His wife is still at her sister's place with no return date in sight, but she made sure to discontinue the cable service and took a hammer to his X-Box before leaving. Told me that he plans a hunger strike over the weekend thinking that'll bring her back. *(Under her breath.)* Carb depletion wouldn't hurt. *(Back into recorder.)* Suggested increasing sessions to twice a week, but he says he's too heavily involved with his "Make America Great Again" meetings, and his insurance won't cover it. *(She sighs, opens her desk drawer, and begins reaching for the cigarette when VAL abruptly enters.)*

VAL. Do you have time for me now? I could really use it.

BROOKE. *(Closing the drawer.)* My last session is in twenty minutes, I—

VAL. *(Plopping into a chair, determined to stay.)* That's okay. I'll only need fifteen.

BROOKE. Val, I like to take a break between—

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VAL. You said to drop by. Did you not say to “drop by”? So. So, here I am dropping by.

BROOKE. I did say that didn't I. Okay. Let's talk.

VAL. Who said anything about “talking”? I am here to vent, Brooke. Vent, vent, VENT! But I want you to treat this like a regular session. Okay? Just like we planned. So, this would just be a typical session.

BROOKE. Shorter. A “mini session”.

VAL. Sure. Let's call it that. (*Looking around the room.*) Where's your pad? Don't you need your notepad?

BROOKE. I've stopped taking notes. (*Pointing to her head.*) Keep it all up here.

VAL. Good idea. Safer. God knows we don't want *that* hanging around for all to read!

BROOKE. Probably not. (*Checking watch.*) Val, I only have—

VAL. So, the latest, as of an hour ago... (*Looking around.*) Where's the Kleenex box? Didn't you have a box of tissues last time? I'm gonna need them.

BROOKE. Oh, I—

VAL. You call yourself a “shrink”? What kind of shrink doesn't have tissues?

BROOKE. My last patient took the box. (*Pause.*) Took the entire box with him. His wife left him so he...took the box.

VAL. Geeze. What a loser. (*Regroups herself.*) So. So, Kyle says he needs to delve into his psyche. “Delve” is what he said! Tell me, just how much psyche does a fifteen-year-old boy have with which to delve! I swear, I'm ready to dunk myself into the airline mini bottles of Hennessy I hid somewhere in a Whole Foods bag in the garage. *Bathe* in them, is what I'd like to do. (*Pause, thinking.*) If I could find the fucking bag.

BROOKE. You've been hoarding mini bottles?

VAL. Oh! And, he says it's his prerogative – his “prerogative” – as a teenager to lock himself in the attic and refuse to eat!

BROOKE. Seems the theme of the day. My last client, the one who took the Kleenex is thinking of—

VAL. And, where the hell did he come up with the word “prerogative”, huh? I wasn't using that word until well into my twenties. Pompous little twit. (*Pause, thinking.*) Ready for this? Huh?

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Grab your seatbelt, lady. You're gonna need it. According to Kyle, according to this fifteen-year-old genius, neither of his parents have any depth. Okay? Put that into your pipe and smoke it. Okay?! Own that one from a kid who believes he's the reincarnation of Mahatma Gandhi!

BROOKE. I thought it was Einstein. I thought he was the reincarnation of Albert Einstein.

VAL. That was *last* week. This week it's Gandhi. For god's sake, he's not eating! Do you pay attention to anything I say?

BROOKE. Let's not go down that path, Val. Of course, I am attentive.

VAL. 'Cause I could swear sometimes you're not listening.

BROOKE. Believe me, I've heard every consonant and vowel you've uttered.

VAL. I think it's PTSD. I think we're all suffering from PTSD. Every single person I've spoken to – granted it's a limited, highly intelligent pool of peeps – is suffering from this!

BROOKE. "Peeps"? Val, when did you start saying peeps?

VAL. (*Incredulous.*) Two teenage boys!! It's in the lexicon. You should know that. Where the hell have you been? And make no mistake, none whatsoever that we – us – OUR peeps are suffering. All of us. It's PTSD, I tell you. (*Pause, thinking.*) Wrapped in foil. No toothbrushes.

BROOKE. What are you talking about?

VAL. Kids in cages! Separation at the border! They may as well be wearing striped pajamas! Unconscionable is what it is.

BROOKE. It's...it's tragic.

VAL. And those who have suffered *any* form of abuse are being re-bullied.

BROOKE. Bullied?

VAL. It's like it's happening all over again, and it's "okay". It's all the fashion because a sociopath, the leader of the Free World is making "sport" of it.

BROOKE. Maybe your watching cable news twenty-four-seven isn't such a great idea.

VAL. Oh, I should close my eyes and box my ears hoping someone else takes care of this disaster?!

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BROOKE. Do you think *you* can fix the problem? The scars of the world?

VAL. Someone has to! Or we'll all be *dead*. Seriously. The codes to the nuclear football are in his puny hands! He is the embodiment – the *embodiment* of abuse! (*Looking around the room.*) No Kleenexes, huh. Do you have a paper towel? I swear I'm going to explode all over the room here. (*Silence.*)

BROOKE. (*Carefully.*) Let's talk some more about your own abuse. Your early teenage years. Maybe we should explore that some more. It might give you some power over your fears. Help you to sleep—

VAL. And just how the fuck is that supposed to help?! Seriously, Brooke. (*Pointing to the frames on the office walls.*) Sometimes I wonder if those are fakes.

BROOKE. My credentials? My—

VAL. I've always wondered. (*Silence.*)

BROOKE. Did you skip your meds again today? You know how you get when you don't adhere to your schedule.

VAL. How do I “get”? Huh? I'll tell you how I get. I get *clear*. I get *focused*. I get smacked right in the conscience about just what's happening all around us! And we're all just sitting here stuffing Twinkies in our mouths, watching, glassy eyed as the world turns into a heap of shit dung!

BROOKE. “Shit dung”. Well now that's some...powerful stuff.

VAL. I just can't... (*Tears welling up.*) Tissue, please? I'm...these lash extensions cost a fortune and they fall out when I cry. Two of them were sitting like whiskers on my chin during a meeting the other day, and nobody in the office bothered to tell me. (*Pause, thinking.*) By the way, have your client call me. I can handle his divorce.

BROOKE. (*Searching her desk drawer, handing Val a crumbled tissue.*) Why were you crying at your office?

VAL. (*Crying into tissue.*) It's just all too much. All consuming. How are we humming around in our SUV's wondering why the cleaning lady didn't show, sending back our filet mignon because it wasn't cooked just right when...when there are...*children* sitting on bare concrete floors locked in cages without their parents? How?!

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BROOKE. (*Carefully.*) It's...it's extremely difficult for those of us...those with any semblance of humanity, any...shred of empathy to comprehend. It's—

VAL. Oh, don't give me that "therapy" B.S.. Don't get all clinical on me, Brooke. You're allowed to be human in this room. Remember? We had a deal. We had a fucking *deal!* (*Silence.*)

BROOKE. Listen, Val. We're both parents of adopted children. Boys from these very areas. And, though we most certainly have that in common, there are others out there who are also feeling deep despair over this nightmare. This...this...unconscionable act.

VAL. I'm not sleeping.

BROOKE. I know.

VAL. And, I'm having these...these *sick* fantasies. *Vile* thoughts. Thoughts I can't even give "voice" to.

BROOKE. (*Quietly.*) Me too.

VAL. (*Surprised.*) Really? Wanna share?

BROOKE. I work in a McDonalds. Behind the food line. Slapping plastic cheese-like slices onto what passes for "meat" patties. (*Pause.*) Oh, and I'm also in charge of the fryer. Pouring the oil from these gargantuan-sized bottles. Waiting for it to reach three-hundred and fifty degrees. (*Pause.*) It's the perfect frying temperature. (*Silence.*)

VAL. *That's* your fantasy? *That's* it? You need a hobby.

BROOKE. I'm not finished. (*Relishing the moment.*) The Secret Service comes in. You can tell because they're all wearing the same tired suits with earpieces hanging just below their short-cropped hair.

VAL. (*Intrigued.*) Where the hell are you going with this?

BROOKE. And one of them orders for *him*. His evening snack. Two Big Macs, everything on it, onion rings, and three large fries.

VAL. You mean *HIM*-him?

BROOKE. (*Nodding.*) It's a "To-Go" order.

VAL. Did you ever notice he doesn't have a dog? (*Brooke, interrupted, stares.*) I mean, you want "loyalty"? Get a friggin' dog, right? Instead of the boot-licking sycophants, get yourself a—

BROOKE. May I continue? (*Val silently nods.*) It's my turn to stack the burgers. They scope the place out and my manager tells me to make sure everything's just right. "Make this the best damned order

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you've ever bagged, or you'll be on the streets, you hear me?", he says.

VAL. (*Oblivious.*) A dachshund, even. Hell, pick a canine! (*Brooke glares.*) Go on.

BROOKE. I go to the back counter. It's cleaner there because it's not near the fryer and barely ever used. Nobody is looking at me. All eyes are on the Secret Service guys who are pacing in front of the registers, listening, and responding to their almost invisible earpieces.

VAL. God, it's like an episode of *West Wing*...

BROOKE. I take out a lipstick that I keep in my bra.

VAL. Wait. Do you actually hide lipstick in your bra? Or is this—

BROOKE. *It's my fantasy, Val.* Allow me my fantasy. (*Regrouping.*) I put the sizzling patties on the partially toasted buns. But, before I carefully place the rubber cheese on the meat, I remove the cap from the lipstick tube.

VAL. I'm not sure I want to hear this.

BROOKE. But, instead of the usual "Neutral Nude" that I sometimes wear...

VAL. This is sounding...do I want to *hear* this? (*Pause, intrigued.*) Go on.

BROOKE. It's filled with Zyklon B. Hydrogen cyanide. The preferred killing tool the Nazis used in the extermination camps during the Holocaust. In most cases, it kills within minutes. As the cells die rapidly after ingesting, the body spasms in response to the acute muscle pain and sudden shortness of breath. Leaving the victim gasping for air with none left to even cry for help. Fast. Lonely. Painful.

VAL. (*Now hanging on every word.*) Holy shit. Remind me to stay on your good side.

BROOKE. The entire tube is filled with the greyish-white powder. Close to two grams of it. According to my research, it would take about a half a gram to kill a one-hundred-sixty-pound man. I figured that spreading a gram under the cheese of each Big Mac with all the toppings should do the trick. And, from what I've heard about his abominable table manners, he should have *both* gobbled down before he knows what's hit him. (*Pause.*) I spread it slowly, evenly onto "burger one" with a plastic knife, making sure it disappears into the

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grease on the meat. As I do the same with “burger two”, I think of the very real possibility of being caught. Killed even. But the reward of ridding the world of this monster is far more important. Far more satisfying than waiting to see what disaster awaits humankind if he is to remain at the helm of a vessel he has no interest in learning to captain. *(Val listens, mouth agape.)* I put the Big Macs on the paper sheets, fold each of them just right, and put them with the rings and fries into the larger bag with the handles. Not everyone gets the special bag with the handles. *(Making sure Val understands this fact.)* Only our V.I.P. customers get the bags with the handles. I watch the plastic knife and the empty tube of lipstick melt into little benign puddles of goo as I toss them into the fryer. Then I go home and turn on the news. *(Quietly, with glee.)* According to every single cable network, the footage of his death was too gruesome to air. *(Silence.)*
VAL. Jesus. Your vile thoughts make *my* vile thoughts look like *Disney On Ice*. You’re dark. Darker than I ever thought. *(Pause.)* Feel better?

BROOKE. Not particularly, no.

VAL. Problem is, you’d have to do away with *all* of the soulless horrors.

BROOKE. The trout rots from the head.

VAL. *(Correcting Brooke.)* It’s the “fish” rots from the head.

BROOKE. I like to be alphabetically specific.

VAL. I see...with the “t”.

BROOKE. Did you know that one of the facilities is called the *Homestead Florida Detention Center*? “Homestead”. Ironic as hell, huh? You can’t make this shit up.

VAL. I hope your office isn’t being bugged. We don’t need the FBI buzzing at your door.

BROOKE. *(Nodding.)* Prison is time consuming. *(Door buzzer is heard, startling Val who scrambles for her bag and looks for a place to hide. Brooke catches her, grabbing her around the waist.)* Relax. It’s not the Feds, Val. Just my next victim.

VAL. Of course. Of course, it is. *(Gathering herself.)* I’ll go. *(They kiss.)* Have you been smoking?

BROOKE. *(Incredulous.)* You’re kidding, right? See you at home. Shouldn’t be more than an hour, hour and a half tops.

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VAL. Do you think this is working? Our...sessions? ‘Cause I need it. I’m a hot mess.

BROOKE. *(Nodding.)* Gives us “alone” time. To talk. With...with all that’s happening. *(They kiss again.)*

VAL. I think so, too. *(Begins heading out the office door.)* I’m going to be late picking up Teddy from robotics class. Oh! *(Stops, turns to Brooke.)* Can you pick up a white twin-sized bed sheet on your way home? Kyle needs something to drape himself with. *(Val exits as Brooke presses a button in an intercom by the door.)*

BROOKE. *(Into intercom.)* I’ll be with you in two minutes, Sara. You’re a tad early. *(Releasing the intercom button, she heads to her desk, picks up the voice recorder, and begins recording herself.)*

March 4th. 2020. Mini session with my wife. She is visibly shaken by the events of the world. Like the rest of us, she came by it honestly. *(Pause, thinking.)* I shared with her one of my tamer fantasies regarding an Infamous World Leader. She seemed frightened by it. *(Pause.)* Truth be told...sometimes I’m scared by my own thoughts. *(She clicks off the voice recorder, sprays mouth with breath freshener, and presses the intercom button by the door.)* You can come on up for your session, Sara. *(Remembering something, she quickly speaks again into voice recorder.)* Remember to stop off for a white bed sheet...and a large bottle of Hennessy.

SCENE 2

KITCHEN/LIVING AREA – FOLLOWING MORNING

KYLE stands in front of a table staring at a large bowl of fruit. He is draped, like Gandhi, in a white bed sheet. After a moment, he looks around the room and then slowly picks up an apple. He gently rolls the apple in his hands, brings it to his face, and smells it. TEDDY, enters, unseen by Kyle, with cell phone in hand and earbuds on. Teddy watches as Kyle “takes in” the apple.

TEDDY. Bite it.

KYLE. *(Startled.)* What did you say?

TEDDY. Go ahead and bite it. I know you want to.

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KYLE. (*Placing apple back into bowl.*) Simply checking for freshness.

TEDDY. (*Pouring a generous bowl of Frosted Flakes.*) Attic's getting too hot, huh?

KYLE. (*Sits Indian style on the bare floor.*) You're not allowed to eat that junk. Moms said—

TEDDY. (*Looking around the room.*) Moms aren't *here*, are they? I don't see them.

KYLE. That's not the point, Teddy.

TEDDY. (*Pouring milk on cereal, plopping into chair.*) To what do I owe this...kitchen visit?

KYLE. I crave human connection. (*Pause.*) However banal that might be in this house.

TEDDY. I liked you better as Einstein.

KYLE. Einstein was a phase. Gandhi is a life choice.

TEDDY. (*Munching on cereal.*) You were a real know-it-all, but at least you ate.

KYLE. My I.Q. may have been higher, but I'm now more evolved.

TEDDY. And the moustache looked good on you! You actually *rocked* the fake moustache.

KYLE. It wasn't fake. I'm shaving now.

TEDDY. Really? 'Cause I found a grey furry thing stuck to the toaster the other day. (*Pause.*) With sticky stuff on the back.

KYLE. (*Closing his eyes.*) Quiet, please. I'm meditating.

TEDDY. (*Riveted to cell phone screen, he spits out a mouthful of cereal and laughs hysterically at what is happening on the screen.*)

Hilarious, dude! That's *hilarious!* (*Scooping more cereal into his mouth as he continues to watch cell phone screen.*) That's like a throwback to tie-dye! Holy shit! That's what my Moms wear!

KYLE. (*Opening his eyes, staring at Teddy.*) Who might you be talking to?

TEDDY. I "might be talking to" a *gamer*. Freak. And stop watching me eat!

KYLE. I am not observing your consumption of sugary cereal. I am simply a witness to your gross ignorance of the *true* needs of the human body.

TEDDY. (*Exasperated.*) Freak.

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BROOKE. (*Enters, dressed for work. Stops in her tracks and stares at Kyle.*) Look, I know you're Gandhi, but you have to eat.

KYLE. Only water. Room temp.

BROOKE. What's all this about, anyway?

KYLE. Peaceful protest.

BROOKE. Of *what*, may I ask?

KYLE. Este mundo está en crisis.

TEDDY. *Tú* estás en crisis. Estás loco.

BROOKE. English, please! And, what's with the Frosted Flakes?

KYLE. You're supposed to be learning Spanish.

BROOKE. It's on my "list". Now, what are you protesting?

KYLE. The world is in turmoil.

TEDDY. Tu cerebro está como huevos revueltos.

KYLE. My brain is *not* scrambled eggs! (*To Brooke.*) Momma B, tell him my brain is not scrambled eggs!

BROOKE. (*To Teddy.*) Teddy, your brother's brain is not scrambled eggs. (*To Kyle.*) And just how is your self-imposed "fast" going to get this world out of its turmoil?

KYLE. One soul at a time.

TEDDY. Kyle thinks he can save the planet.

BROOKE. Well, you are certainly your *other* mother's son. (*Turning to Teddy, pulling his earbuds from his ears.*) And you—

TEDDY. (*Protesting.*) Hey!

BROOKE. I got an idea from a client of mine yesterday.

TEDDY. One of your whack-a-doodles?

BROOKE. I'm disconnecting both television sets. The one in your bedroom and the one in the game room.

TEDDY. *My X-Box is connected to that one!*

KYLE. You would fare well with some serene contemplation.

TEDDY. Why has your entire vocabulary changed since becoming Gandhi?! Mind your own space, bro.

BROOKE. (*Taking cell phone and earbuds from Teddy, putting them away in a drawer.*) It'll give us more "family time". Time to "talk".

TEDDY. *Talk?! Who needs to talk? I don't need to talk!*

BROOKE. Or time for reading! You could read *Moby Dick* again! (*Pointing to Kyle.*) He can be Gandhi, and you can start calling yourself "Ishmael".

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KYLE. (*Quoting Melville.*) “For all men tragically great are made so through a certain morbidness. All mortal greatness is but disease.”

BROOKE. (*Impressed.*) Well! I see *someone’s* been reading Melville!

KYLE. Greatest line in the book. (*Pause.*) Pretty much sums up our leaders of today.

TEDDY. Shut up and eat.

VAL. (*Enters, earbuds on and riveted to the screen on her cell phone.*) Oh my god!!

TEDDY. Better watch out, Mom V! Momma B’s in “confiscation mode”!

BROOKE. (*To Val.*) New house rules. I’m disconnecting the—

VAL. (*Deeply unsettled, pulling earbuds from her ears.*) Do you have time for me today? At your office, I mean?

BROOKE. I’m pretty booked. (*Studying Val.*) Jesus, babe. You look like you’ve seen a ghost. Are you okay?

VAL. No. No, I’m not. May I come by today.

BROOKE. Need a “mini session”?

VAL. I think we *both* do.

BROOKE. I can try to move my schedule, but—

VAL. MAKE IT WORK! (*She heads out the door, slamming it behind her as Teddy tries to grab his cell phone from the drawer.*)

BROOKE. Leave it alone, Theodore!

KYLE. Using the *formal* name. (*Snickering to Teddy.*) Someone’s in trouble. (*Teddy lunges at Kyle. Brooke separates the boys.*)

TEDDY. He started it! (*Heading toward the door.*) Esta casa está loca! (*He exits.*)

KYLE. (*Translating for Brooke.*) He says “This house is—

BROOKE. “Crazy”. (*Pause.*) Yep. *That*, I understood.

SCENE 3

BROOKE’S OFFICE – MORNING

Brooke sits at her desk listening to RAYMOND mid-session who sits on the sofa across from her.

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RAYMOND. Mouse turds.

BROOKE. Pardon?

RAYMOND. They look like friggin' mouse turds. Or shrunken frog brains. That's what they look like to me. And she put them on everything. Even mashed potatoes on Thanksgiving. Who the fuck puts raisins in friggin' mashed potatoes? Huh? *Who? (Pause.)* She was out to get me, I tell ya'. She was out to get me. As if growin' up in Queens in the seventies wasn't torture enough.

BROOKE. *(Taking this in.)* Raymond, I doubt your mother was into "sabotage by raisins". *(Pause.)* Did she serve them to your brother? You said you had a—

RAYMOND. *Hell no!* He was *(Making air quotes with his hands.)* "allergic"! Allergic, my ass. He hated 'em too! So, she always made a batch *without* the friggin' mouse turds for him. *(Pause.)* Lyin' sack of shit. And I was stuck eating 'em. *(Bursting into tears.)* My wife, Dolly...she...she *never* served raisins. Not a raisin in the house! Until right before she left. The night before she dodged me, she made a batch of brownies. Brownies with frog's brains. Put 'em on the kitchen counter. Covered with foil. Like some kinda' parting gift.

BROOKE. I'd...I'd give you a tissue, but you took the box.

RAYMOND. I'm good. *(Sobbing again.)* I'm good. Look, I seriously thank you for seeing me today. I know I said—

BROOKE. Happy to make time for you, Ray.

RAYMOND. She has the bluest eyes. The softest, bluest eyes I've ever seen. *(Pause.)* When you look at 'em, you look into the ocean. The purest of water. Made me wanna swim. Every time. *(Wiping nose and tears on his sleeve.)* Hell, I know I wasn't the best husband. I'm an overweight Longshoreman. I look at containers all day. Make sure they have in them...what they *have in them.* *(Pause.)* Some nights I'd go home without a word to say to her. Hell, I'd give my left testicle to talk with her now. *(Pause.)* Pardon the "vision".

VAL. *(Bursting into the room, holding cell phone in the air, startling Brooke and Raymond.)* You *have* to see this!

BROOKE. Val, I'm in the middle of a—

VAL. *(To Raymond.)* Can you give us a minute? This can't wait.

RAYMOND. Sure. *(Rising from his chair.)* This was an unscheduled session. *(Pause.)* An *emergency* session. But I'm okay. Too chicken

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for suicide. *(Pause.)* Although, I did once hang a rope from a light fixture. Just to see what I would do. *(Pause.)* Clearly, I'm *here*. But the rope's still hanging over the dining room table. *(Val and Brooke stare, not knowing what to say.)* I'll just wait outside the door. *(Raymond exits, leaving his cell phone on the sofa. With the door slightly ajar, he stands just outside within earshot of Brooke and Val's conversation.)*

BROOKE. *What The Hell—??*

VAL. Have you watched any news this morning? Any at all??

BROOKE. No! I've been—

VAL. She's *all over* the news. She's *everywhere!*

BROOKE. Who?

VAL. *(Hoisting her cell phone in front of Brooke's face.)* Her name is Carmen Sanchez. She's looking for asylum. She fled Guatemala and is making a big scene where she's being held in El Paso, Texas.

BROOKE. There are...there are *thousands* of people being held in—
What are you talking about?

VAL. Guatemala City, Brooke. She fled from Guatemala, and her *name* is Carmen—

BROOKE. Oh. Oh, I see where this is going. We've been through this before, Val. We've—

VAL. This is different! She's—

BROOKE. Val, there have to be *thousands* of "Carmen Sanchez's" from Guatemala.

VAL. It's *her*, Brooke. She's got the exact same birthmark on her forehead. It's her.

BROOKE. *(Taking the cell phone from Val, studying the image on the screen.)* Oh, my god.

VAL. She's claiming she has two sons in the States who were adopted. *(Pause.)* She uses their birth names, Brooke. *(Letting this sink in.)* The names on their Guatemalan birth certificates before we changed them. *(Brooke slowly sits in her chair, holding the cell phone. She is visibly shaken.)* She says the oldest boy would be fifteen now, and the youngest will be fourteen on October 3rd.

BROOKE. *(Quietly.)* Teddy's birthday.

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VAL. She's in a border camp, Brooke. Being held in some center in El Paso. She hasn't showered in over twenty days and needs medical care. She's diabetic.

BROOKE. Jesus.

VAL. We have to *do* something. We need to—

BROOKE. We can't do anything about this Val! We're not even sure it's—

VAL. You and I *both* know it's her, Brooke. She's the spitting image of Kyle. *(Silence.)*

BROOKE. *(Covering her face with her hands.)* This is...this is too much, Val. In fact, this entire year...the last *three* years have been a virtual roller coaster.

VAL. Exactly! The Electoral College is as antiquated as the horse and buggy!

BROOKE. *What the hell are you talking about??*

VAL. *(Incredulous.)* The popular vote! That's why these last three years—

BROOKE. *That's not the roller coaster I'm talking about, Val!!*

VAL. It's a *buggy*. The horse and buggy. It's a metaphor for—

BROOKE. Do you *hear* yourself? *Ever?*

VAL. It's just...it's not a "roller-coaster".

BROOKE. *That's how it feels, Val!* With you. *(Pause.)* That's how it feels. First, you wanted a "break". A break from *us*. Then, you go politically rogue on me—

VAL. I'm not "rogue"! I'm "conscious"! There's a difference.

BROOKE. And now...*this*.

VAL. *This* is not rogue. This is not me being "scatter brained" as you like to say. My passion for things is something I'm very proud of. It's also something you used to find attractive. *(Pause.)* Now it's just one more annoyance. Another annoyance to add to your ever-growing list when it comes to me.

BROOKE. That's not true, Val. That's—

VAL. Oh, stop with the crap. I see it all the time with you. The perfunctory sigh when you think something I've said is stupid or...or repetitive. When I begin telling you something I've told you before at some point, you stop me in my tracks. "You've told me this!", you say. "I know! You've *told* me this already." *(Pause.)* Well, you know

BREAKFAST WITH GANDHI

what? Some things are *worth* repeating. Some things need to be repeated with you! Jesus. How many times have I sat, close-mouthed, listening to you retell some story about how your father was tight with the Mafia, or how great you are at your job?! Hell, I could recite those stories verbatim. But I don't *ever* interrupt you. I don't. I listen to you, Brooke. *(Pause.)* I listen to you because *I love you*. And I figure *you* need to hear your stories again for some reason. For yourself. To build yourself up, or something.

BROOKE. *Wow.*

VAL. And, the “break” was because you can't express yourself! You never—

BROOKE. I can't *express* myself? I'm not *allowed* to express myself! Hell, I have to be the adult in the room twenty-four-seven! Everyone, *everyone* in the house is allowed a breakdown but me! Kyle forgot his laptop! Meltdown! Teddy loses his earbuds! Freak-Out! You binge on the news of the day! Crying-Jag! *(Pause.)* And then there's me. Cleaning up the mess. Making sure we all go to bed feeling better than the utter chaos of the day. *(Pause.)* I don't have *time* to “express” my feelings, Val. You haven't given me that luxury.

VAL. There you go. The “ever-hero”! *(Cell phone rings are heard from Raymond's cell phone on the sofa. Brooke hastily picks it up.)*

BROOKE. *(Speaking into cell phone, unnerved by the conversation with Val.)* This is Brooke Di Primio. *(Realizing it's Raymond's phone.)* Oh, shit. I'm sorry. This isn't my— *(Listening.)* Uh huh. *(Listening.)* No, I'm his therapist. *(Listening.)* I'm pretty sure the raisins were a bad idea. *(Listening.)* Um, I don't think I can relay that *specific phrase* to him. You'd have to do that yourself, Dolly. *(Raymond bursts through the partially closed office door.)*

RAYMOND. *(Grabbing his cell phone from Brooke, speaking into phone.)* Dolly-Bear? *(Listens intently.)*

VAL. *(Whispering to Brooke.)* How do you do that? How do you throw me off topic like that?

BROOKE. *(Whispering to Val.)* Which topic? You're juggling several!

RAYMOND. *(Into cell phone.)* I sold them. I sold the Troll Dolls on eBay. *(Listening.)* Yes. Even the creepy one with the purple hair.

BREAKFAST WITH GANDHI

VAL. *(To Brooke.)* There's a woman at the border who's making a stink. She could be the boys' birth mother, for god's sake.

BROOKE. *(To Val.)* We don't know that for certain, Val. We don't.

RAYMOND. *(Into cell phone.)* Can we just *talk*, Dolly-Bear? Can we— *(Listening.)*

VAL. *(To Brooke.)* And we don't know for sure that she's *not!* We have a responsibility here!

BROOKE. *(To Val.)* To do *what*, exactly?

RAYMOND. *(Into cell phone.)* Just give me thirty minutes, Dolly. A half an hour is all I need. *(Listening.)* I love you, Dolly-Bear. I love you. *(He clicks his cell phone off and turns to speak to Brooke.)*

Twenty-three years of marriage, and she'll only give me thirty minutes. I have to meet her at her sister's place tomorrow morning. Woman's a real witch. Never liked me even though I did a ton of work on her house. Hell, I gutted her kitchen and rebuilt it from scratch. *(Pause.)* Bitch never did like me. *(To Val.)* Hi there. We didn't properly meet.

BROOKE. Val, this is Raymond. Raymond, this is...my wife.

RAYMOND. I kinda figured. Though, you don't look gay to me.

VAL. What does "gay" look like? *(Silence.)*

RAYMOND. *(Breaking the silence, turning to Brooke.)* So. Your dad was tight with the Mafia, huh? John Gotti lived in my neighborhood when I was a kid. Ozone Park. I didn't know him personally, but he farted real loud once in a barber shop. I was there with my Mom. *(Pause.)* Nobody laughed.

BROOKE. *Were you eavesdropping on us just now??*

RAYMOND. It's a bad habit of mine. Kinda like my own personal reality TV. Probably should devote an entire session on *that* one. Can't seem to stop. *(Pause.)* Some good may have come of it though. I think I can help you ladies out.

VAL. Help us? How can you *help* us?

RAYMOND. My identical twin brother. He's with the CBP under the USBP of the DHS.

BROOKE. There are *two* of you?

VAL. *(To Brooke.)* Does he always speak in acronyms?

RAYMOND. He's gay, too! Maybe you know him!

BROOKE. We don't all know each other, Ray.

BREAKFAST WITH GANDHI

RAYMOND. Oh, right. And he's still in the closet. 'Cause of his job.

VAL. I'm confused.

RAYMOND. My gay brother is with the Border Patrol. In El Paso. "Chief Agent", or something.

BROOKE. *You heard our entire conversation?!*

RAYMOND. *(Nodding.)* He might be able to get her a case for asylum. *(Pause.)* She *does* have two blood-relatives who are US citizens.

BROOKE. Wait a minute! Wait one minute! Stop this bullshit right now—

VAL. I don't know if the boys are ready for this.

BROOKE. *We're not ready for this!!*

RAYMOND. Could you live with yourselves if you did nothing?

BROOKE. Who's the shrink here?!

RAYMOND. Just a question. *(Pause.)* *Could you? (Silence.)*

VAL. How can a Border Patrol agent get her a case?

RAYMOND. He has connections. And the S.O.B. owes me.

SCENE 4

KITCHEN/LIVING AREA – LATE AFTERNOON

Teddy sits silently with his school backpack. After a moment, he reaches into the backpack and pulls out a notebook and pencil. He thumbs through the notebook for a moment, closes it, and tosses it aside. Kyle enters, backpack in hand. Opening the backpack, he pulls from it the Gandhi-like bedsheet and begins draping it over his school clothing.

KYLE. "Our greatest ability as humans is not to change the world; but to change ourselves." *(Pause.)* Mahatma Gandhi. Circa 1944. And, that is pretty profound, brother. *(Teddy sits, unmoved. Kyle, now fully "robed", pulls from his backpack a book about Mahatma Gandhi. He thumbs through the book and begins reading aloud.)* "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." *(Closing the book.)* Simple rule. Tough to implement. *(Pause.)* Thoughts? *(He*

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watches as Teddy folds his hands over his face. He then opens a kitchen cupboard and pulls out a large bag of potato chips.) Think I'm gonna eat 'em all. I'm starving! Gonna eat 'em all, bro! *(He rips open the bag of chips and pretends to grab a handful.)* Swear to God, I'm gonna scarf down this entire bag! The entire—

TEDDY. Knock yourself out, Kyle! Just shut up while you're doing it.

KYLE. Are you okay? Are you—

TEDDY. Leave me alone.

KYLE. Do you want to see me eat the whole—

TEDDY. *I SAID, LEAVE ME THE HELL ALONE!*

KYLE. *(Closing the potato chip bag, he replaces it into the cupboard before slowly turning to Teddy.)* Is this...is this about the “lockdown” today? *(Teddy stands and begins to walk away.)* ‘Cause, it was pretty scary. It was. *(Teddy stops.)* My Language Arts teacher was shaking. Thought it was real. Had us all huddled in a group, away from the windows. *(Pause.)* So, we're all gathered in this little “ball” of students...away from the windows. Where we can't be seen. Seen by the shooter. *(Pause.)* Matt Jordan wet his pants. *(Pause.)* Kristen Rosen held his hand. Held his hand after he'd wet his jeans. *(Pause.)* I've always liked her. Kristen. *(Pause.)* Turns out, it was just a drill. Only a drill. *(Pause.)* Nothing to fear. Just a drill.

TEDDY. *(Quietly.)* We have no windows. There aren't any windows in the Science Lab. Only darkness. It was...pitch black. *(Pause.)* And you're doing that “thing” again. *(Sits on sofa.)*

KYLE. What thing? What “thing” am I doing?

TEDDY. The thing with your speech. Where you repeat phrases. It's almost like you're trying to convince *yourself*. *(Silence.)*

KYLE. Did anyone pee? Anyone pee themselves?

TEDDY. When the alarm bell rang...we were in science. We were dissecting a brain. A little dead frog's brain. *(Pause.)* Nobody peed. We were supposed to be learning about the evolution of the frog's brain, and how it's like ours. Human. *(Pause.)* We have no windows in my science class. Sat in the dark for nearly an hour.

KYLE. *(Wearily walking to the sofa.)* That's a long time, little bro. To be in the dark.

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TEDDY. We had to be quiet, too. Not one word. Couldn't even whisper. *(Pause.)* Nick Peluso started to cry. Mr. Gomez moved over and covered Nicky's mouth with his hand. We sat like that for almost an hour. *(Pause.)* My legs fell asleep.

KYLE. It was a *drill*, Teddy. It was just a—

TEDDY. *(Angrily, near tears.)* *We Didn't Know That!* We could barely see anything, couldn't say a thing, and for all we knew someone was gonna burst into the door and start shooting.

KYLE. But they didn't.

TEDDY. Not *this* time. *(Pause.)* Sometimes, I hate this world. *(Kyle moves to sit on the sofa but falls to the floor.)* *What The Hell??* *(Teddy moves toward Kyle, who appears to have fainted.)* Kyle! KYLE! *(He gently slaps Kyle's face.)* WHAT THE HELL??

KYLE. *(Opening his eyes.)* Chips. Bring me the chips.

TEDDY. *(Rushing to the cupboard for the chips.)* This “starvation” bullshit needs to stop. *(Kyle grabs the bag from Teddy.)* How long's it been since you've eaten?

KYLE. *(Stuffing chips into his mouth.)* I don't know. Two days, maybe.

TEDDY. You're gonna *kill* yourself.

KYLE. *(Mouth full of chips.)* Gandhi lasted twenty-one days.

TEDDY. *(Grabbing a bottle of water, handing it to Kyle.)* Yeah? Well, from what I've read, Gandhi had some practice. There were no McDonald's in Delhi.

KYLE. *(Gulping water.)* Don't tell Moms! Whatever you do, do *not* tell Moms! *(Grabbing more chips, looking at bag.)* Who bought these? We never have these in the house.

TEDDY. They hide the junk food on the third shelf. Behind the booze. You never noticed that? *That* bag landed on the first shelf. Right there in plain sight. Go figure.

KYLE. *(Between sips and munching.)* They tell *us* not to eat it, and they—

TEDDY. Eat it themselves. Yep. Parental hypocrisy.

KYLE. They're mortal. *(Finishing chewing, handing bag to Teddy.)*

TEDDY. Why are you doing this?

KYLE. Whatever you do, do *not* tell Moms that I almost fainted.

TEDDY. You can stop at any time, you know.

BREAKFAST WITH GANDHI

KYLE. And the chips...don't tell them that I've eaten. *Potato Chips*, especially. It's not a good "look" breaking a fast with fast food.

TEDDY. I won't tell Moms. But you gotta stop this, Kyle. Are you trying to punish them, or something?

KYLE. I fight to "change". Not to punish. *(Pause.)* Anything left in the bag?

TEDDY. *(Peering into the bag.)* There's still some—

KYLE. *(Grabbing the bag, shoving a handful of chips into his mouth as Teddy watches him. Kyle, now satiated, plops onto his back.)* You win, Mahatma. You win.

TEDDY. You're in a competition with Gandhi? *(Pause.)* First it was...Ali. Muhammad Ali. You ran around the kitchen saying "Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee" pumping your fists in the air like you're fighting someone. Some...invisible "someone". Then it was...who was it? Oh, last summer! Martin Luther King Junior—

KYLE. I had a dream... *(Footsteps are heard from outside. Teddy grabs the bag of chips and heads toward the cupboard.)*

TEDDY. I'll sneak a sandwich to you later.

VAL. *(Enters, spotting Teddy with the bag.)* When did you start eating junk? You don't eat chips, Teddy! Where'd you even *find* them? *(She grabs the almost empty bag.)*

TEDDY. They were in the cupboard. In plain sight. And I wasn't—

VAL. Oh! Those must be the guest chips. The bag we keep for guests.

TEDDY. "Guest chips"? Since when do we have guest chips?

KYLE. Since when do we have *guests*?

VAL. You know...for the less fancy. The low-key hors d'oeuvres.

TEDDY. What?

VAL. Well, Momma B and I certainly don't eat them! *(Looking into bag.)* And, neither should you! Shame on you, Teddy! You've eaten the entire bag!

TEDDY. But I—

KYLE. He had a bad day, Mom V. We had a lockdown today. He was just stress eating.

TEDDY. *(Under his breath, to Kyle.)* Scratch the sandwich, bro!

VAL. I heard about that. I got an email from the school about that.

BROOKE. *(Enters with a handful of mail and a cell phone.)* Val, you left your cell phone in the mailbox!

BREAKFAST WITH GANDHI

KYLE. (*Whispering to Teddy.*) Why are you “scratching” the sandwich?

VAL. Oh...yeah. You should have left it there.

TEDDY. (*Whispering to Kyle.*) You threw me under the bus, Kyle!

BROOKE. Left it there? Why on earth would I have left it there?

VAL. (*Grabs cell phone from Brooke.*) Never mind.

BROOKE. (*Tossing mail onto kitchen table, noticing Val with bag of chips in hand.*) And what the hell are you doing eating chips?

(*Winking to Val.*) We don’t eat potato chips! And we certainly don’t advocate that for the boys!

VAL. These are the “guest chips”, remember? The ones we save for guests!

BROOKE. Oh. Oh, *right*. The “guest chips”.

VAL. Seems Teddy helped himself to the entire bag.

TEDDY. Me las vas a pagar, hermano.

KYLE. Perdón. I owe you one.

BROOKE. Listen, I’m thrilled that you’re both taking Spanish in school, but can we keep it in English for the time being? Until Mom V and I can catch up?

TEDDY. Claro, no hay problema.

BROOKE. Gracias. (*Pause.*) I think.

VAL. They had a lockdown today. Teddy was “stress eating”.

BROOKE. Oh, Jesus. (*To the boys.*) Did they *tell* you about it? Did they warn you?

VAL. (*To Brooke.*) Did you not get the email? Why don’t you get the school emails?

BROOKE. No, I didn’t.

KYLE. It was a surprise drill for us! For all we knew, it was real.

VAL. Can they *do* that? (*Pause. Thinking.*) Now that I think about it, I got the email *after* they’d had the drill.

BROOKE. I’m calling the school in the morning.

KYLE. Matt Jordan wet his pants.

TEDDY. It was no big deal.

KYLE. Yes, it was! You were scared to death!

BROOKE. (*Moving to hug Teddy.*) Oh, baby. I’m so sorry.

TEDDY. (*Pulling away from Brooke, to Kyle.*) *I wasn’t scared to death, Kyle! Tienes una bocota!* (*He runs out of the room.*)

BREAKFAST WITH GANDHI

VAL. What??

KYLE. Apparently, I have a big mouth. *(Pause.)* But he was scared. We *all* were. *(Begins heading out of the room.)*

VAL. Where are you going?

KYLE. To talk to my brother.

BROOKE. Well, I think we should *all* sit down and discuss this.

KYLE. What do *you* know about school shooter drills? *(He exits the room. Silence.)*

VAL. He's got a point. *(Pause.)* Hell, you and I weren't even born when they had the "duck and cover" drills—

BROOKE. Oh, *that* pointless exercise in futility—

VAL. World War Two. Under the desks—

BROOKE. Yep. We managed to fall through the cracks.

VAL. I *did* get the email this afternoon. The one telling us that they'd had a drill. At least I *knew* that they'd had a—

BROOKE. *I don't get the school emails!* Remember? The school wanted only *one* email address from parents, and yours was the *corporate* one. One of the most inane policies of this school district, by the way. I hate it. When there are *two* "moms", they get confused.

VAL. That's not why they do that. They wanted a corporate email address. At the time, they didn't want a bunch of personal addresses floating around, so they—

BROOKE. *I don't live in the Corporate World, Val!* Never have. There's not a name plate above my door. Hell, I hung a shingle outside of a rental and called it a "business". A business of, hopefully, helping people. Because...because, as a broke but well-respected writer...I could not *help myself*. *(Pause.)* Let's face it, my degree is worthless. And I'm not doing what I want to be doing. I fall asleep with that thought every single night. And I wake up with it every morning. *(Pause.)* I get it. We're not special. As "special" as we once thought we were going to be. And...I just don't want that for the boys. I don't want them waking up one day and realize that they're just...normal. Not that special. Not likely going to create the next Broadway hit. Not going to cure cancer. *(Pause.)* I want them to know that they *can* cure fucking cancer! Or write the next *Moby Dick!*

VAL. Well, that's a tall order. Though, at the time *Moby Dick* wasn't even considered a very good—

BREAKFAST WITH GANDHI

BROOKE. I just...I want them to know that things can be different, Val. *(Pause.)* I don't want lockdowns to be part of their childhood memories. *(Pause.)* To a certain degree, I guess we're lucky. Caught between the Greatest Generation and the Millennials. What are we? "Boomers"? What's the fucking age-range for that? Is that what we are? Are we that old? I don't *feel* it. *(Pause.)* I see it. I see it in the mirror. I used to have guys catcall me on the street. And, as horrible as that was, now I'm called "ma'am" at the fucking deli! "Ma'am"!! *(Pause.)* Look, I know I've marched and been a huge advocate, but...screw the "Me Too" movement! I want to be *seen!*

VAL. Let's pretend you never said that.

BROOKE. Yep. Scratch that.

VAL. Apologize.

BROOKE. I apologize for succumbing to the male-dominated—

VAL. The "backlash"—

BROOKE. The backlash idea that *whatever her name was* wrote about that we as women would somehow screw ourselves with this movement. *(Pause.)* Jesus. We *are* that old. I can't even remember the book title.

VAL. "Backlash". The book's title was "Backlash".

BROOKE. Appropriate. *(Silence.)*

VAL. I love you. You know that. Right?

BROOKE. Sometimes debatable, but...yes. Yes, I do.

VAL. *Never...ever.* There is no "debate" on my love for you. And, I say it all the time. *(Pause.)* Something you rarely do.

BROOKE. Oh, boy—

VAL. Look, I know we're different. We don't express ourselves the same way. But it would sure be nice if you could say "I love you" without being prompted. *(Pause.)* Makes me feel like I'm begging. Like...some kind of beggar.

BROOKE. How the hell did we land on *this* subject? Jesus. We've got two boys in the other room talking about AR-15s!

VAL. They can handle that, Brooke. We'll talk school shootings with them later. Stop trying to drive our conversation. It's insulting to me.

BROOKE. *(Plops onto sofa, exhausted.)* You know how I feel about burnt bacon.

VAL. I do.

BREAKFAST WITH GANDHI

BROOKE. I like it as much as you do.

VAL. You do.

BROOKE. Maybe more.

VAL. I'd say it's a tie.

BROOKE. And, you have to take it off at just the right time. Some of the pieces get taken off too early and they stay floppy. Not crisp.

VAL. The burnt, the better.

BROOKE. Ever notice I give you the best pieces? The *really* burnt ones?

VAL. I always assumed that our bacon was evenly burnt.

BROOKE. Well, it isn't. It isn't. *(Pause.)* Sometimes, I'll be interrupted by one of the boys...some emergency while cooking. And, I have to take some of the pieces off early and turn off the stove. *(Pause.)* So, those pieces just lay there. Floppy on the plate with the paper towel, while the burnt ones...the ones already done get nice and crisp as they cool.

VAL. I've always liked how you do that. How you put the strips in perfect alignment in the skillet. Some people just shove it all together. *(Pause.)* My Mother did that. She'd just throw it all in the pan and fork it around. So, we'd end up with little "groups" of bacon. And it was always floppy. You don't do that. *(Pause.)* You don't.

BROOKE. Wanna know why?

VAL. Is it important to you? For me to know why—

BROOKE. It's the same reason I fold your work clothing into "threes". The reason I trifold your black turtlenecks and bath towels. It's why I make sure that your suits are hung on wooden hangers. With aligned creases in your pants. And do the same for the boys when they drop their clothing on the floor, and it piles into heaps that look like an abstract sculpture.

VAL. I don't...I don't follow...

BROOKE. I burn your bacon because I love you. *(There is a loud knock at the door.)*

VAL. *(Urgently.)* I'll get it—

BROOKE. Who the hell is that? Who the hell *knocks* on our door?

VAL. *(Rushing to the door.)* I'll get it. It's probably—

BROOKE. *(Beating Val to the door, opening it and finding Raymond on the front step.)* Raymond What are you—?

BREAKFAST WITH GANDHI

VAL. Wow! Raymond, right? What brings you to our humble abode?

BROOKE. How did you know where to *find* our humble abode?

RAYMOND. I was...I was jogging by and—

BROOKE. *You?* Jogging?

RAYMOND. And I...I stumbled on a cell phone. In the street.

VAL. Oh! My cell phone! You must have—

BROOKE. Your phone was in the mailbox—

RAYMOND. *(Correcting himself.)* I found it on the street but then I—

VAL. *(Encouraging him on.)* Put it into the mailbox—?

RAYMOND. *(Trying to follow Val's "story".)* Tripped over the curb and it went flying out of my hands—

VAL. And it must have landed in the mailbox!

RAYMOND. I was going to say it flew into the street drain. But, sure! It flew into the mailbox.

BROOKE. *What the hell are you both talking about? And, how did you know where we live? (Silence as Brooke awaits an answer.)*

RAYMOND. Google map?

BROOKE. *(Eyeing them both up and down, her eyes land squarely on Val. In her best Ricky Ricardo accent.)* LUCY! You got some 'splaining to do!

RAYMOND. *(To Val.)* Hell, yeah! You were supposed to leave the phone in the mailbox.

BROOKE. *What—?*

RAYMOND. ...So I could say I found it on the street. While I was...jogging.

BROOKE. *What The Hell??*

VAL. I did leave it in the mailbox. Brooke found it.

RAYMOND. So much for that plan. You were supposed to have—

BROOKE. *Both of you! Stop it! (Pause, catching her breath.)* What "plan" was that, may I ask?

VAL. *(Sheepishly.)* The plan to get him over here to talk about how we can—

BROOKE. What? How we can...*what?*

RAYMOND. Get my asshole brother to help. With the lady at the border.

VAL. I figured you wouldn't have agreed to talk, so we—

BREAKFAST WITH GANDHI

BROOKE. You'd be right about *that*—

RAYMOND. We...we sorta thought of a plan to get me over here. Ya' know. To talk about how to help the lady. Though, I haven't talked to my jerk brother in twenty-three years. *(Pause.)* You'd think he oughta know how to throw a party, bein' gay and all, right? *(Pause.)* Bad blood. Nothin' but bad blood.

BROOKE. Please speak in a straight line! *What the hell are you talking about?!*

RAYMOND. Mind if I sit? Jogging's not my thing.

BROOKE. Knock yourself out.

RAYMOND. *(Sits in a chair, putting his face into his hands.)* I mean...you'd think these "rainbow flags" woulda known what kind of utensils to use. A once-in-a-lifetime party, and my fairy brother, my *identical twin fairy brother* chose plastic! I'd a thought he'd picked sterling. You know, silver. But, no! He decided to throw my bachelor party with plastic utensils. Plastic, no less! *(Pause.)* So...we're eatin', right? After the girl pops outa the cake, we're eatin'. And my best friend, Dougie, he starts...he's cuttin' his filet mignon with these friggin' plastic pieces of shit. And...his fork...a little prong of his fork...as he's cuttin'...it breaks off and goes flyin' like a friggin' javelin...across the table! Across the table to my *future Father In-Law!* *(Pause.)* And it...it *sticks* him. Right in the eyeball. Swear to God, at just the right angle! Blinds him in his left eye! *BLINDS him!* Taken to the E/R all that! *(Pause.)* Man's blind as a bat ever since. *(Pause.)* Hate plastic utensils! Can't stand 'em! And Dolly never truly forgave me. Hell, she's been holdin' a grudge for me ever since. *(Pause, thoughtfully.)* Probably what the mouse turd brownies were about. *(He suddenly has a coughing fit.)*

BROOKE. *(Handing a kitchen napkin to Raymond.)* That's the...the "beef" you have with your brother? *(Pause.)* You know, after this, I can't treat you anymore. You've...broken the "wall".

RAYMOND. *(Coughing.)* I figured that. I knew that. But I do believe...I think this "cake has been baked", as they say. Not much more you coulda done for me anyways.

VAL. Brooke, if you'd just hear me out. If you'd just— *(Kyle enters, unseen by the others, draped like Gandhi.)*

BREAKFAST WITH GANDHI

BROOKE. (*Furious, to Val.*) Do you know what you've done? You've invited a *client*—someone I'm *treating* into our home—

RAYMOND. Hell, I ain't no *stranger*. You know more about me than my proctologist!

BROOKE. On some “whim of a scam”—

VAL. *Saving the life of the boys' birth mother is not a whim!*

BROOKE. *We don't know that it's her, Val!*

VAL. *AND, WE DON'T KNOW THAT IT'S NOT!*

KYLE. What's going on here?

BROOKE. (*Startled, turning toward Kyle.*) Oh, baby! I didn't...we didn't know you were—

KYLE. (*Turning to Raymond.*) Who's this?

VAL. Kyle, this is Raymond. Ray...meet Gandhi.

RAYMOND. (*Reaching to shake Kyle's hand while suppressing a cough.*) Pleasure's mine. (*Coughing.*) Love the threads.

KYLE. (*Bowing.*) I'll refrain from shaking your hand. You seem to have a bit of a cold.

RAYMOND. Nah. I had a fever early this morning, but it's gone down. (*Eyeing Kyle.*) Ya like Gandhi, huh?

KYLE. I aspire to his ideals.

RAYMOND. Read about him in high school. Funny lookin' little dude. He was Indian, right? I mean, *from* India. Not the *real* Indians like America has.

KYLE. No. Not like the Native American Indians. The ones that the *true* immigrants scalped, stole their land, and proceeded to have a big dinner. (*Pause.*) With the Indian's hard-earned crops.

VAL. (*Admonishing Kyle.*) Kyle! He's company!

BROOKE. He's *right*. (*Silence.*)

KYLE. So. So, what's this about “saving the life of the boys' birth mother” that I heard—

BROOKE. Oh, we were just—

KYLE. That I *distinctly* heard you say. (*Silence.*)

BROOKE. (*Quietly.*) Kyle, go back to your room with your brother. Mom V and I need to talk.

KYLE. I came in to tell you that he's threatening to flush your pills.

VAL. Pills? What *pills*?

BREAKFAST WITH GANDHI

KYLE. The lockdown hit him pretty hard. He's crying. I offered him a tissue, but—

BROOKE. *What pills are you talking about?*

KYLE. The little blue ones you keep in your nightstand.

VAL. *My Xanax???* *(Val rushes from the room.)*

KYLE. He feels the need to punish someone. "Transference." Isn't that what you therapists call it.

BROOKE. Yep, that's what we call it. *(Brooke follows Val out of the room. Kyle and Raymond are silent.)*

KYLE. What do you know about my birth mother?

RAYMOND. I don't know much of anything. Your mom says she's all over the news. Makin' a stink at a border camp. *(Pause.)* Val thinks it's her.

KYLE. *My birth mom is in a border camp??* *(Pause.)* Where do you fit in?

RAYMOND. I got a brother, a twin brother, who's pretty high up in the Border Patrol. He can probably help us find out if it's her. *(Pause.)* After that, I don't know. But he can probably locate her. *(Pause.)* Haven't talked with him in years. We had a...we had an "incident."

KYLE. Your brother.

RAYMOND. Yeah. My twin. He's pretty powerful. I mean, he's *queer* and all, but he ain't stupid! *(Silence.)*

KYLE. Why do I have the feeling that you may have, inadvertently, voted for the guy who put my mother in a cage? *(Raymond doubles over with a coughing fit.)*

END OF ACT ONE

***THE PLAY IS NOT OVER!! TO FIND OUT HOW IT ENDS—
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