

# BEASTS

*By Price Payne*

# BEASTS

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## BEASTS

*for Kathlyn, Jake, Jess, Colton, Gracie and Dani*

*Without each of you this play would not be what it is.*

*Thank you, my friends.*

## BEASTS

*Beasts* was first staged in short form at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, TX for Price Payne's Senior Showcase, featuring the following cast:

The Writer.....Price Payne  
Lenora.....(UNSEEN)  
Oliver.....Colton Bosang  
Cherry.....Dani Broyles  
Mother/Random Person.....(UNSEEN)

*Beasts* received its 2nd production (*also in short form*) at The Secret Theatre in Queens, NY apart of the Act One One Act Festival, featuring the following cast:

The Writer.....Jess Westman  
Lenora.....(UNSEEN)  
Oliver.....Makay Johnson  
Cherry.....Emi Sullivan  
Mother/Random Person.....(UNSEEN)

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## PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTES

Hey! Thank you so much for picking up this play. You truly don't know how much it means to me. *Beasts* as well as myself have been through so much that to make it to your hands for reading (*and hopefully performing*) is beyond my wildest dreams.

This is a play about love, art and what happens when we let our circumstances affect the stories we wish to tell. Now don't let that fool you, this is still a comedy and should be played and staged at a fast pace. Just don't forget to take a moment for the heart to shine through. In my opinion the best comedies aren't just filled with sardonic jokes and bombastic physicality. They are also rich with characters we see ourselves in. Ones who (*because they are in a comedy*) can actually do the things we never would.

**IMPORTANT:** This play is meant to fit the needs of any actor. The roles do not need to be played by anyone of a specific race, body type, or gender identity. In fact, diversity is highly encouraged. Age is also flexible—just note that the characters of **THE WRITER** and **LENORA** should always be older than that of **CHERRY** and **OLIVER**.

At the end of the day, have fun. Enjoy the world you find yourself in and above all don't forget the heart. Once again, thank you so much for picking up my play.

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### CHARACTERS

#### **THE WRITER**

A man who is dealing with a heart break, The Writer decides his best way to help is to write a story warning people of the dangers of relationships.

#### **LENORA**

The Writer's ex-wife, and the reason for which the story is being told. She is a large inspiration for Cherry.

#### **OLIVER**

The fictional man created by The Writer, Oliver is an every man who longs for life's simple pleasures. Finding love and inspiration in Cherry, he wants the best for her, and his daughter. He has many of the writer's qualities.

#### **CHERRY**

The fictional woman created by The Writer. Cherry is an aspiring artist. Finding love in Oliver she longs for the best in her relationship as a wife and mother, but also wants to continue to pursue her career. Worrying that it has become something she's given up on. She has many of Lenora's qualities.

#### **MOTHER/RANDOM MAN**

Played by the same actor or actress. The mother is created by the writer, with the sole purpose of moving along the plot. She's a very eccentric Mrs. Doubtfire type, but nevertheless cares for her family. The humor of this character comes from the actor chosen being a purposely "poor" choice made by the director.

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ACT I  
SCENE 1

*The setting—a small park by the pond. At rise we see LENORA sitting alone on a blanket. Soft music playing in the distance, something romantic. THE WRITER approaches her with a box of pizza in hand.*

**THE WRITER.** Excuse me, miss? But did you happen to order a large extra sausage?

**LENORA.** No.

**THE WRITER.** Well thank goodness, this is mushroom spinach.

**LENORA.** Mushrooms? We talked about this.

**THE WRITER.** Only half...Only on half. I would never do you like that.

**LENORA.** You better not.

**THE WRITER.** I think I know you a little better than that. *(He sits next to her and begins opening the box, handing her a slice.)*

**LENORA.** It's beautiful out here, this time of night.

**THE WRITER.** I know, it's my favorite place to come when I get lonely.

**LENORA.** Lonely?

**THE WRITER.** Yeah, you see it right? I can stare out at the pond, look up at the stars. It unclogs my brain and reminds me how connected everything is. *(Lenora pretends to snore.)*

**THE WRITER.** *(Playful)* Oh, that's cute.

**LENORA.** *(Pretending to wake up)* I'm sorry, were you saying something?

**THE WRITER.** *(Flirty)* You're the worst.

**LENORA.** *(Flirty)* Utterly terrible.

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**THE WRITER.** Mm-hm. On all accounts. *(They share a small kiss, and she snuggles up next to him.)*

**LENORA.** I could stay here forever. *(The Writer, almost breaking out of a trance, looks towards the audience, then back to her.)*

**THE WRITER.** What was that?

**LENORA.** I could stay here forever.

**THE WRITER.** No you couldn't...No! No! This is all wrong. *(Flustered, The Writer leaves the picnic, and as the lights fade Lenora disappears.)*

## SCENE 2

*The setting—The Writer's room. At rise, The Writer moves toward a chair. A small desk sits next to him with a variety of papers sprawled about, practically begging for more space. A desk lamp sits atop the papers, next to it a laptop and a small picture, though unseen by some it's clear the picture is of a Lenora and a young girl. The Writer begins tearing up multiple pages on the desk and tossing them into a small waste paper basket. The tearing of the papers grows more sporadically with each movement until eventually he kicks the basket over and SCREAMS. After a moment, the writer slowly cocks his head toward the audience.*

**THE WRITER.** Hi... *(He begins to tidy up his mess.)* You've all...You've all had a relationship right? *(He sporadically looks around before finding a random face and pointing toward them.)* I mean...maybe not you, but you've all had a relationship right? They are something. A magnificent orchestral blossom of romance, that if well taken care of will begin to bud and grow into a beautiful flower. I like flowers, my favorites are daisies...Before you know it you've got a garden, but the thing about relationships, at least "human" ones is that they are all built on this animalistic urge. That major instinct that daisies and all plants seem to be

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exempt from. This beastly act of fornication... That's all relationships are right? A physical conquest, a sexual triumph. That's the truth, and anyone who doesn't believe so is simply lying to themselves... That's what I should be writing about. (*He stops cleaning and makes his way toward his desk chair.*) A comment—no! A complete deconstruction on man and woman. Because, no matter how great an emotional connection is, we are always scanning for just how far we can take it in the bedroom... Now, don't think I can't hear you all groaning in your seats. This isn't smut or fan fiction or that worn copy of *Fifty Shades of Grey* your Mom keeps next to her bathtub. No. This is a simple fact. It doesn't matter what anyone tells you about feelings, or obligations, or love. We are, at our core, animals. All of that is built entirely on sex. Especially this day in age. When was the last time someone met the love of their lives on a dating app? We're most of us lucky if we meet the love of our next ten minutes. These are the conversations that need to be had, people! What? Still don't believe me? Okay, just do me a favor, all right? For just one second picture... picture a young man. (*OLIVER suddenly appears.*) There we go. Look at him! I'm sure you all want to relate to him in some way, so we should probably give him a name huh? How about... Oliver. I like that. Good name for a good guy. Now, we have to prescribe Oliver certain qualities. Who is Oliver? Hm. Well gentlemen, put simply he's just like you or me. He can be kind, he could be sweet, maybe a little rambunctious. For these purposes we'll just say horny. A classic staple for any young male... Now, let's add a woman to the mix. I don't know about you all, but I can't stand it when people; or more accurately male writers don't give their female characters further identity aside from being a man's object. We don't need that. Although, I suppose you could make the argument that I am a man. What do I know about writing for women? I guess I can make this about two men? (*A RANDOM MAN suddenly appears.*) However, as a straight man. I definitely don't know how to write for a gay couple. (*The*

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*random man disappears.*) If I'm writing a woman, she's gotta be ideal. Not for me—just in general. Personable, but she's not gonna give herself up for Oliver just like that. She has her own life, and what she does means so much to her, that her care for it makes others care for it. Beautiful inside and out. Admired by all she comes in contact with. A genius, a creative, an artist. Now we have a person. A real human being. (*CHERRY appears.*) There you are...I'm gonna call her Cherry...Well there you have it. Look at the two of them! Oliver and Cherry, two young, attractive, horny people. Let's see how this plays out?

### SCENE 3

*The setting—An art gallery. At rise, various experimental and traditional paintings and sculptures line the walls of a found space. Cherry stares at a painting, while Oliver stares at her. He's awestruck, meanwhile The Writer has entered the space dressed in a vest and carrying a tray of cocktails—particularly a martini and a cosmopolitan. Oliver approaches him.*

**OLIVER.** I'll take one please, and another for the lady.

**THE WRITER.** Look at you go, stud. (*Oliver walks toward Cherry while The Writer retreats to his desk.*) Notice the way he just walks over, not a care in the world. He's delusional.

**OLIVER.** Hi...This is a nice place, huh?

**CHERRY.** Mm.

**OLIVER.** What do you uh...What do you think about this piece?

**CHERRY.** It's crooked.

**OLIVER.** (*Laughing.*) Yeah, I don't really notice all that pretentious stuff either. My friend Amy dragged me along, and I can safely say I've never

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been more bored in my entire life. No offense to the artist. (*Cherry looks back at him with disdain.*) Please tell me you don't know the artist?

**CHERRY.** I'd say we know each other pretty well...Sorry my work is boring you.

**OLIVER.** Your work? You. You painted that—I just insulted you?

**THE WRITER.** See that? Within a fraction of a minute Ollie boy had decreased his chances of fornication by 75 percent. Can he recover?

**OLIVER.** I'm so sorry.

**CHERRY.** No, keep going. Clearly you're the expert. Why don't you go into detail?

**OLIVER.** Well, there's nothing wrong with it.

**CHERRY.** Oh, I get it. You just make fun of things you don't understand.

**OLIVER.** No! No. No. I don't—I mean, yes I don't understand it. I just, I don't really get the technical stuff you know? Like the artistic merits and stuff.

**CHERRY.** Okay, fumbles.

**OLIVER.** Fumbles?

**CHERRY.** Yeah, you're fumbling your words...Why don't you just forget about the artistic merit blah blah blah, and just focus on how you feel.

**OLIVER.** What do you mean?

**CHERRY.** Just focus on what you feel.

**OLIVER.** Well, I like that one back there.

**CHERRY.** That one?

**OLIVER.** Yeah.

**CHERRY.** That's one of my favorites. What do you like about it?

**OLIVER.** It's beautiful.

**THE WRITER.** Look who's got the reins now.

**CHERRY.** What else?

**OLIVER.** The colors?

**CHERRY.** Was that a question?

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**OLIVER.** I'm just trying to put it into words.

**CHERRY.** It's okay if you can't. Just focus on what it makes you feel.

**OLIVER.** What does the painting make me feel?

**CHERRY.** Yes. What does the painting make you feel?

**OLIVER.** Um. I don't—I don't know. It's like a kind feeling. Sweet? Sensitive?

**CHERRY.** Your aim is off, but you're hitting the target.

**OLIVER.** I don't know. It just...It makes me feel good, I guess.

**CHERRY.** Guess what?

**OLIVER.** What?

**CHERRY.** Art is subjective. So technically...You're right.

**OLIVER.** Gotcha.

**CHERRY.** I really love this piece. It's one of my favorites I ever painted.

**OLIVER.** Well it's nice to confirm one thing.

**CHERRY.** What's that?

**OLIVER.** That your art is as beautiful as you.

**THE WRITER/CHERRY.** *(In unison.)* That's not gonna land.

**CHERRY.** Big miss.

**OLIVER.** *(Chuckling.)* I guess that's what I get for talking to the pretty girl. I'm sorry about the first bit, but you do have some really good work here. *(Oliver turns to leave.)*

**CHERRY.** You're very bad at this.

**OLIVER.** You don't say.

**CHERRY.** Aside from hating art and being terrible at flirting, what is it you do for a living?

**OLIVER.** Um...how do I say this? *(To himself.)* What do I do?

**THE WRITER.** Damn. What does he do? Ah. *(Typing.)* I do. I do. I do...

**OLIVER.** I do...numbers.

**THE WRITER/CHERRY.** *(Unison.)* Numbers?

**OLIVER.** Yeah, numbers! I'm an accountant for a tech conglomerate.

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**THE WRITER.** That sounds okay.

**CHERRY.** That sounds fun!

**OLIVER.** That sounds sarcastic.

**CHERRY.** What? No. I mean that sincer—*(She starts snoring, pretending to fall asleep.)*

**OLIVER.** Alright. Alright. Very funny. *(They both laugh.)* Again. I'm sorry about insulting your other painting.

**CHERRY.** Just not a fan of it, huh?

**OLIVER.** I don't know. It's a bit too dark, doesn't feel like you.

**CHERRY.** You barely know me.

**THE WRITER/OLIVER.** *(Unison.)* I'd love to see more of you.

**CHERRY.** What?

**OLIVER.** More of your art stuff, I mean. More like that one. That feels like the woman I'm talking to. *(Oliver starts to walk off.)*

**CHERRY.** Bullseye. *(Cherry darts toward Oliver, she kisses his cheek and pushes past him. Oliver is stunned by this, frozen in his tracks.)* You coming? *(He follows after her.)*

**THE WRITER.** And so it goes. One lucky night...Leads to the inevitable.

## SCENE 4

*The setting—A living room. A coffee table sits center stage, behind it a couch. A set of stairs reside upstage. This is clearly the living room of a middle-class suburban family. The floors are clean, despite their being a respite of children's toys which (if possible) should fall from the ceiling. Toward the left we see an open kitchen, which has all the basic kitchen essentials—a fridge, oven, microwave, etc. The room should feel both new and worn at the same time. Like there is still a foundation beneath the mess. At rise, a child can be heard crying. We see Cherry walk down the*

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*stairs with a baby, swaddled in a blanket. The Writer is still at his desk, typing away.*

**THE WRITER.** So...I may have skipped a few steps, but shame on all of you for expecting to see sex on display. This isn't *Hair*, and I don't write smut. This is a comment, not a sex play. You devious beasts...That's not a bad title. In case you can't tell, it's been a few years since our lovebirds met. *(A knock is heard at the door. The baby begins crying as Cherry makes her way there. The Writer hops up from his desk and begins wandering around the space.)*

**CHERRY.** Coming! *(Cherry opens the door and a pair of hands extend their arms toward her.)* Mom! I can't thank you enough for this! *(Cherry hands the baby to her.)*

**THE WRITER.** I don't think I need this character. *(Cherry takes back her baby and slams the door. The baby begins crying again.)*

**CHERRY.** Please be quiet.

**THE WRITER.** Ah, but I need the baby out of the house. *(Cherry opens the door again.)*

**CHERRY.** Mom! Thank you.

**THE WRITER.** But she really won't have a purpose in the overall show. *(Cherry takes the baby and the door slams.)*

**CHERRY.** Oh, shh! Hush.

**THE WRITER.** Screw it. I'll just make the director worry about it. *(The doorbell rings yet again. Cherry opens it.)*

**CHERRY.** Ah! Mom, thank you so much. Don't say anything, I know your throat's been sore because of that vague accident. I love you so much, have fun with Lyla! Be safe. *(A pair of hands reach through the doorway and take the baby away. Cherry closes the door and lets out a large breath.)* Finally. *(Cherry walks up the stairs.)*

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**THE WRITER.** Wait, that's it! We're going to see how her life has become when she sets everything aside for sex! All her personal goals and achievements, down the drain. All because of this false promise. Boom! I figured out the show, I'm a genius. *(Cherry returns from upstairs, with a laundry basket in hand. She makes her way to the couch and begins folding—as she continues her head falls into her hands. She's overwhelmed. Oliver, still in his pajamas, enters the room eating an apple. He stares at her for a moment before taking another bite. There's a gleam in his eye.)*

**OLIVER.** Good morning.

**CHERRY.** Hi...

**OLIVER.** Did you forget I had the day off?

**CHERRY.** No, I just—

**OLIVER.** You're processing. *(He sits next to her.)*

**THE WRITER.** Notice that playful tone in their voices.

**CHERRY.** Last night was the first night I slept in a long time. Thank you for dealing with her.

**OLIVER.** Anytime, also kinda like her Dad, so...

**CHERRY.** You're a dork. *(They snag a small kiss.)*

**THE WRITER.** Hold your breath kids.

**OLIVER.** What're you thinking?

**CHERRY.** I don't know.

**OLIVER.** That's a compelling thought.

**CHERRY.** Ollie I just feel stagnant. I haven't painted in so long. I just need a release.

**OLIVER.** Well maybe I can be of some assistance. *(Oliver slowly moves in and kisses Cherry's neck softly. It's romantic.)*

**THE WRITER.** Let's show some feeling. *(To the audience.)* Is this what you all wanted?

**CHERRY.** Hey. Slow down there.

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**OLIVER.** What? Lyla's out of the house. Thanks to your *lovely* mother.

**CHERRY.** I can detect your sarcasm. You know my Mom likes you.

**OLIVER.** She likes you. The only thing she likes about me is that I assisted in providing her a grandchild.

**THE WRITER.** I need to stop writing about this mother.

**CHERRY.** Enough about my mother.

**OLIVER.** Yeah, forget her.

**THE WRITER.** Although, I can use this to spur playful conversation and develop character.

**CHERRY.** Funny story about my Mom though. Remember last year's Thanksgiving?

**OLIVER.** How could I forget?

**CHERRY.** You did drop the turkey she spent all night prepping.

**OLIVER.** I'm well aware.

**CHERRY.** Poor baby. I'm sorry, let me make it better. *(She leans in and kisses Oliver. What starts as a small peck on the cheek quickly develops in passion, building and building in a comedic way until it abruptly stops.)*

**OLIVER.** When's your Mom coming back?

**CHERRY.** Two or three?

**OLIVER.** Well which is it? Two or three?

**CHERRY.** I mean it all depends on traffic, whether or not she takes the highway or—

**OLIVER.** Do you wanna have sex or not?

**CHERRY.** Yes.

**THE WRITER.** Comedy! *(Oliver and Cherry immediately throw themselves back into their overly passionate kiss. It builds and builds until Cherry's face turns a stark white. She's puzzled, and stops for a moment.)*

**CHERRY.** Huh?

**THE WRITER.** Here we go.

**OLIVER.** What?

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**CHERRY.** Nothing.

**OLIVER.** Nice try. What's up?

**CHERRY.** The sky. Dummy.

**OLIVER.** Cherry. Come on, what're you thinking?

**CHERRY.** Don't hate me.

**OLIVER.** Cherry?

**CHERRY.** Okay, fine...I was just thinking...You know, about the last time we did this?

**OLIVER.** He-he. Yeah?

**THE WRITER.** I wouldn't be laughing bud.

**CHERRY.** No, it's just. I mean. When. Was. The last time?

**OLIVER.** What?

**CHERRY.** Don't make me say it?

**THE WRITER.** No. That's my job.

**CHERRY.** You know, when was the last time you...and I...actually?

**OLIVER.** Actually?

**CHERRY.** Actually.

**OLIVER.** Baby...come on. (*Hesitating.*) Valentine's Day!

**CHERRY.** Valentine's Day? I thought I said actually?

**OLIVER.** That wasn't actually?

**CHERRY.** We must have very different definitions of actually. (*Oliver ponders.*)

**OLIVER.** Oh my lord!

**CHERRY.** See!

**OLIVER.** When was the last time?

**CHERRY.** I don't know! (*The Writer chuckles.*) Is it bad that I don't know?

**OLIVER.** Well it's bad we both don't!

**THE WRITER.** Just a little bit.

**CHERRY.** It is. It is bad!

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**OLIVER.** I know!

**THE WRITER.** I know.

**CHERRY.** I mean, it's not like we've had a lot of free time.

**OLIVER.** True.

**CHERRY.** Your hours have you coming home so late.

**OLIVER.** You take care of the house, food, Lyla.

**CHERRY.** It's exhausting.

**OLIVER.** Exactly.

**CHERRY.** So you can't really blame us.

**OLIVER.** You shouldn't blame us. No. Not at all. *(Silence.)* But we should, right?

**CHERRY.** Mm-hm. *(Cherry leaps onto Oliver like a jungle cat in heat. They begin to make out profusely. This goes on for a moment, until Cherry ceases for a moment.)* Wait.

**OLIVER.** I'm good. *(Oliver leans back in for a kiss, but Cherry pushes him back.)*

**CHERRY.** I'm serious. Since this is our first time in a while, we should make it special.

**OLIVER.** What's more special than this?

**CHERRY.** You're kidding.

**OLIVER.** I think we're past special at this point, baby. It's not like we won't be sleeping with each other until Lyla starts school.

**CHERRY.** What if we don't?

**OLIVER.** We've found the time before, we'll find it again. Besides, I know for a fact someone's birthday is coming up.

**CHERRY.** That would be your daughters.

**OLIVER.** At least I'm a good Dad.

**CHERRY.** Come on! Let's try something we don't normally do. Let's have some fun! What's something you've always wanted?

**OLIVER.** Oh! Remember our honeymoon?

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**CHERRY.** I'm not doing that.

**THE WRITER.** Yeah, I skipped ahead for a reason.

**CHERRY.** We don't need anything elaborate or edible. Just something memorable.

**OLIVER.** If I was good at coming up with something memorable, we'd remember last time.

**CHERRY.** Fair point.

**OLIVER.** Okay. I think I've got something. Why don't I go down to the store, get some candles, and we just see where the wind takes us.

**CHERRY.** Like our first?

**OLIVER.** Yeah, like our first.

**CHERRY.** God, I love you. *(Oliver and Cherry share a small kiss before he darts toward the front door.)* and Ollie?

**OLIVER.** Yeah?

**CHERRY.** Hurry back.

**OLIVER.** If I don't get a speeding ticket, I'm doing something wrong. *(Oliver exits.)*

**THE WRITER.** Ya know, this isn't half bad. *(Suddenly, The Writer's phone begins to ring. The lights on Cherry and the house fade. He answers quickly.)* Hey! I wasn't expecting to hear from you. No, no. I'm just at the apartment. Writing, yeah what else? You know me well. I mean, yeah. I'll be here most—all of the day. Hm, um 8:15 okay? Okay. Good, yeah. I'll see you then. I lov—sorry. Force of habit. I'll see you then. Okay. Bye. *(He hangs up. The Writer looks toward the audience, he doesn't make a remark. He just breathes.)* Damn, I lost my place, right when I was in the groove. Alright, where was I? Where do we go? Where do we go? Ahh, screw it. Only one way to get yourself out of a brain fart and that's just to keep writing. The doorbell rings. *(The doorbell rings.)*

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**CHERRY.** Oh my goodness! That was fast! *(Cherry runs to open the door only to reveal her Mother. This time she's fully seen and clearly miscast.)*  
Mom?

**MOTHER.** I'm sorry sweetie, but I don't want to get into the details.

**THE WRITER.** And we're back to Mom.

**THE WRITER/CHERRY.** Mom, what about the vague accident?

**MOTHER.** Oh that old thing. Nothing to worry about. I'm in tippity top shape now.

**THE WRITER.** What the hell am I writing? Oh wait!

**THE WRITER/CHERRY.** Where's the baby?

**MOTHER.** She's at the house with Dad. That's your Dad of course.

**THE WRITER.** Yeah...this makes sense. She can drive that fast there and back. I'll just say their house is down the street. I can't write dialogue like "tippity top". What is this Mary Poppins? I don't need this character! It's my first draft. It's my first draft. Worst comes to worst I'll just let the director worry about it.

**MOTHER.** Any who...What's the plan for the day? Gonna start up your painting again?

**CHERRY.** I'll make an attempt.

**MOTHER.** What's the idea? Or inspiration rather?

**CHERRY.** I'm not sure yet.

**MOTHER.** It'll come. It always does.

**CHERRY.** Yep...Mm-hm...Hey Mom. Can I ask you a personal question?

**MOTHER.** Of course sweetie.

**CHERRY.** Have you and Dad? Did you ever? Have you ever? You've slept with Dad.

**MOTHER.** I should hope so.

**THE WRITER.** This is funny right? Lord, I hope this is funny.

**CHERRY.** Have you ever forgotten a moment you slept with Dad?

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**MOTHER.** Forget? What do you mean?

**CHERRY.** Like. Can you remember the last time you slept with him?

**MOTHER.** Oh sweetie, I don't remember the last time I slept with your father.

**CHERRY.** Okay.

**MOTHER.** I remember every single time. That man is insatiable.

**CHERRY.** I don't really need details—

**MOTHER.** Oh I know better than to kiss and tell...Let's just say I was the lion tamer and he was the lion.

**CHERRY.** Mom!

**MOTHER.** Like hot fudge over ice cream.

**THE WRITER/CHERRY.** Stop!

**MOTHER.** You asked. Why? Are you and Oliver having relational troubles? *(Just then Oliver bursts through the front door.)*

**OLIVER.** Baby! I got the three C's. Candles, coffee, and condoms. I figured we'd need the coffee for round two. Also I know we were running low on diapers so I went ahead and—*(Oliver looks over and notices Cherry's Mother in the room.)* Hey! Your Mom is here. Now...

**THE WRITER.** No! No! No! I don't want the Mom. *(The Writer starts deleting and both Oliver and the Mother exit the scene as if the entire moment was being rewound. After everyone is reset Oliver bursts through the door again.)*

**OLIVER.** Baby, I'm back!

**CHERRY.** Wow, that was really fast.

**THE WRITER/OLIVER.** Yeah, we'll find a reason for that later.

**THE WRITER.** Agh! Damnit. Bring back the Mom. *(The Writer begins typing and deleting frantically. The scene is rewound yet again.)*

**OLIVER.** Baby, I'm back...Hey! Look, your Mom. She's here.

**CHERRY.** She came to get an extra pacifier.

**MOTHER.** I did?

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**THE WRITER.** I don't know and I don't care.

**OLIVER.** Well, we really appreciate you looking after Lyla today.

**MOTHER.** Anytime. *(The Writer throws a pacifier from his desk into the scene.)* Oh look! There's one. I'll just get out of your hair, if you need us to keep Lyla any longer just shoot a text. You...You two have fun. *(Cherry's Mother giggles as she exits through the door.)*

**OLIVER.** Bye. *(The door slams.)* If she didn't hate me then, she does now.

**CHERRY.** That was the most awkward experience I've ever shared with my mother.

**OLIVER.** Look on the bright side, she has a new story to tell on Thanksgiving. *(Cherry buries her head in her hands.)* Bad time for jokes. I'm sorry...Hey, baby? What's up?

**CHERRY.** The sky.

**OLIVER.** Don't do that. *(Cherry sits up.)*

**CHERRY.** I just don't know what I'm doing wrong here.

**OLIVER.** Um...Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

**CHERRY.** You know what my Mom just said? She told me she remembers every single time her and Dad slept with each other. What does that mean?

**OLIVER.** Your Mom's a liar and a sex addict? *(Cherry shakes her head no, while The Writer nods yes.)*

**CHERRY.** I mean, what does that say about us? Baby I'm scared.

**OLIVER.** It says we're normal human beings. Human beings who are still new parents and we're doing our best.

**CHERRY.** Are we?

**OLIVER.** Right now? Yes. Look your Mom she's pretty great for remembering all that stuff but—

## BEASTS

**THE WRITER/OLIVER.** –You are you, and you’re the best you that I know. *(The Writer stops typing for a moment. He looks toward the audience, something about that line. It’s comforting.)*

**THE WRITER.** Yeah. *(He continues typing.)*

**CHERRY.** What’s that supposed to mean?

**OLIVER.** It means you are the most beautiful, kind hearted, generous woman I know. You are a great mother, a phenomenal artist, and I don’t know how you do it, but every time I look at you you’re just sexier and sexier. *(They chuckle.)* You continue to impress me every single day, baby. There’s only one you. Only one...Now, I understand if the moment has passed—*(Cherry jumps up and kisses him.)* What did I do to deserve that?

**CHERRY.** You were just being you...Now why don’t you go upstairs and light those candles.

**OLIVER.** Yes ma’am. *(Oliver kisses her cheek. He bolts up the stairs and Cherry follows behind him. The lights in their house fade and we see The Writer alone. His mood has shifted.)*

**THE WRITER.** You know...I like this. Hate the Mom...but this could be something. It needs something else though. Something new? Or? Something old...Hm, something from the first night. Scene 4, art gallery.

## SCENE 5

*The setting—An art gallery, back room. At rise, various experimental and traditional paintings and sculptures are stacked up and placed sporadically around. We’re back at the first night, just later. Oliver walks in.*

**OLIVER.** *(Whispering.)* Cherry? Cherry! Are you gonna make me navigate this place all by myself? *(The backroom lights suddenly flash on. Oliver jumps. Cherry walks out of the corner.)*

## BEASTS

**CHERRY.** You don't need to whisper. We're the only ones here.

**OLIVER.** Well now I'm aware. Why are we here?

**CHERRY.** This is just all the stuff I didn't want to show. *(Oliver walks around and thumbs through the various art pieces. As this happens Lenora appears to the side, a dim light shines on her.)*

**OLIVER.** *(Jokingly.)* Well I can definitely see why. Derivative, abstract, far too reminiscent of Tchaikovsky's early work.

**CHERRY.** Tchaikovsky was a composer.

**OLIVER.** Exactly. Terrible painter.

**LENORA/CHERRY.** You're a dork. *(The Writer looks up, Lenora's light fades. He takes a small breath. Then returns to his writing.)*

**OLIVER.** Yep. Big time dork.

**CHERRY.** What do you really think though? About all of these? One of these? One at least. Tell me what you think.

**OLIVER.** What does it matter what I think?

**CHERRY.** I don't know. I don't. I guess it'd be nice to see what an average person thinks of it.

**OLIVER.** Ah, see I'm an above average man so...I can't give you that. *(They both chuckle.)* I think your work speaks for itself. *(He approaches a charcoal self portrait.)* Well that's a beautiful piece.

**CHERRY.** Why is that?

**OLIVER.** Where do I begin? When do you want me to begin? Because, if I don't start soon, I'm just gonna ramble—*(Cherry laughs.)* I think it's pretty clear why I think it's a beautiful piece. Why don't you tell me what you think of it? Why is it not good enough for the main room? *(Cherry stares at Oliver, before moving her eyes toward the painting. Lenora's light returns.)*

**CHERRY.** Well, everyone does one of these. It's pretty basic, charcoal...you see a lot of these. I guess the only thing that makes it special is that it's—

## BEASTS

**LENORA/CHERRY.** Of me. *(The Writer looks back. Lenora is in clear view, despite the dim lighting. He cracks a soft smile.)*

**THE WRITER/OLIVER.** What makes that different? *(The longer Cherry speaks, the brighter Lenora's light glows.)*

**CHERRY.** Nothing really. It was a freshman year assignment, at that point I was consumed. I was convinced this was all I needed. Drawing, painting, sculpting. As long as I had a paint brush I was content...but I think I let other things consume me too much. I was tired, I didn't have any financial aid, my parents weren't well off by any means, and I was getting a degree in art, which doesn't exactly pay well. I was working two jobs on the side, teaching drawing classes online. So a charcoal self portrait, one of the most basic boring pieces of art any one can make, was the last thing I wanted to do. I guess I didn't really like who I was drawing either. One day I just, I don't know. I just had to get it done you know. So, my hands went to work, after a while the worries, the anxiety. It all went away, and fell onto the page. This is what came of that, and I got a B. My professor thought it didn't capture my true essence, that the lines looked too frantic and strung all over the place. I knew I could do better, but...this was most definitely how I saw myself at the time. So to hear you call it beautiful...that's a bit much. That girl was fighting for something.

**OLIVER.** So what then? This represents growth.

**LENORA/CHERRY.** No. It represents struggle, and peace at the end of the line.

**CHERRY.** It's how I felt when I was drawing it. Nothing but struggle, but after I was done. Peace. Let my pain out through the pen...well charcoal.

**OLIVER.** So...wait, I'm confused. This isn't the most beautiful piece here?

**CHERRY.** I mean it's fine. Not the best.

**OLIVER.** I said it was beautiful. *(Cherry smiles at him.)*

**CHERRY.** Maybe so...but not the best.

## BEASTS

**OLIVER.** Okay, so which one is that?

**CHERRY.** Take a look at this one. *(As Cherry thumbs through some other pieces, the back room lights suddenly go out.)*

**OLIVER.** What the hell?

**CHERRY.** I think a fuse blew.

**OLIVER.** Well, I can fix that. *(Oliver pulls out a lighter and ignites the flame.)*

**CHERRY.** Oh! Someone came prepared. You know, I think there's actually some candles in that little bin. *(Cherry reaches down and grabs a small wax candle.)* Will this help?

**OLIVER.** Immensely. *(Oliver lights the candle in Cherry's hand.)*

**LENORA/CHERRY.** Sometimes I wonder if this is all worth it?

**THE WRITER/OLIVER.** What?

**LENORA/CHERRY.** My art. Why do I even do this?

**THE WRITER/OLIVER.** Because you're good at it. You love it. Sooner or later someone's going to see that.

**LENORA/CHERRY.** Just gotta keep going.

**THE WRITER/OLIVER.** That's all you can do. *(The Writer leaves his seat and approaches Lenora.)* Do you? Would you like to?

**LENORA/CHERRY.** Yes.

**THE WRITER/OLIVER.** You don't mind—

**LENORA/CHERRY.** No. *(They kiss. Oliver and Cherry. The Writer and Lenora, passionate and romantic. After a moment, The Writer pushes away.)*

**THE WRITER.** No! *(Lenora's light fades. The Writer walks back to his desk.)* This is not real! Not real! Nothing. Nothing ends like that. This is too sappy, not enough pain. Not enough...we'll fix that in the second act. We'll fix that. *(The Writer looks back, Cherry and Oliver are still mid kiss.)* Ah, shit. *(He starts typing. Oliver and Cherry's kiss ends.)*

**OLIVER.** Wow. Um.

## BEASTS

**CHERRY.** Would you wanna come back to my place? Please?

**OLIVER.** I'd like that a lot.

**CHERRY.** Okay then. *(Their light fades as they leave.)*

**THE WRITER.** *(To the audience.)* I don't like leaving things unfinished.  
*(He slams his laptop shut and the lights cut to black.)*

## **END OF ACT I**

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