

TALENT IS SEXY

By
Larry Phillips

TALENT IS SEXY

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TALENT IS SEXY

Talent is Sexy was originally produced at Shetler Theater in New York, NY by Randomly Specific Theatre. Directed by Jonathan Taylor, with the following cast:

Cal.....Kevin Michael Morin

Noah.....Larry Phillips

Seth.....Joshua Torgerson

Jessica.....Kasey McNulty

Keri-Anne....Jacqueline O'Kelly

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CHARACTERS:

Cal	Thirties
Noah	Early Forties
Jessica	Thirties
Seth	Thirties
Keri-Ann	Any Age

Location: New York

Time: Present

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SCENE 1

A coffee shop. Not a chain coffee shop, a unique Manhattan coffee shop. NOAH, a man in his forties, sits at a table with a cup of coffee, taking in his environment. After a moment, CAL enters. He's in his thirties. He looks around for a second and then spots Noah, he walks over.)

CAL. You must be Noah.

NOAH. I must be, hi.

CAL. Very nice to meet you. *(Noah stands up. Cal puts his hand out to shake. Noah tries to hug.)*

CAL. Oh, are we going for a hug?

NOAH. We don't have to; would you rather shake hands?

CAL. We can hug.

NOAH. I never know what to do, everyone's different.

CAL. Which do you prefer?

NOAH. No preference. Let's do both.

CAL. *(laughs)* Hug then shake, or shake then hug?

NOAH. Good question. I didn't think this through.

CAL. Business before pleasure. Shake then hug.

(They shake hands and then hug.)

NOAH. Woof, we made it. Teamwork. I'm exhausted.

CAL. I've been on many dates, but that was a first.

NOAH. Great, you'll always remember this one. Years from now you'll walk by and think "that's the coffee shop where I went on a date with that guy who shook my hand and hugged

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me, and then had the arrogance to predict I would never forget it.”

CAL. Or we’ll be reminiscing about it on our couch while our kids play in their room.

NOAH. An optimist. Nice.

CAL. Yep, I already sent out our save the date cards.

NOAH. Haha, like I’d ever let you choose the font.

CAL. That’s fair. You already got something to drink.

NOAH. I did. But get something, I’ll wait.

CAL. I don’t want to be rude.

NOAH. It’s rude if I drink coffee and you don’t.

CAL. Lines a bit long.

NOAH. I’ll wait in line with you.

CAL. We’ll lose our table.

NOAH. If that’s the worst thing that happens to me today, I’ll take it.

CAL. (*charmed by Noah’s reply*) Alright, let’s wait in line.
(*Noah grabs his coffee and they head over to the line.*)

NOAH. I’ve never been here before; I usually go to Starbucks or Dunkin Donuts.

CAL. Well it was nice meeting you, best of luck.

NOAH. Oh are we a bit of a coffee snob?

CAL. Major coffee snob; and proud of it. I don’t go anywhere near the chains. Anyone who thinks coffee is coffee no matter where you go, is not drinking the good stuff. How’s yours?

NOAH. Good. I guess. I think I might be one of those people. I’m from the Midwest, we don’t have a lot of fancy coffee places out there.

CAL. Iowa, right?

NOAH. Yes, you remembered something from our conversation on the app.

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CAL. Please don't test me. I have a much better memory for things that I hear than things that I read. How long have you been in New York now?

NOAH. Going on two and half months.

CAL. And how's New York treating you so far?

NOAH. It's wonderful. I'm enjoying myself immensely.

CAL. All of it? There's got to be something.

NOAH. The subway is a little tricky. Every time I think I figured it out, something happens. The other day I got on the D train and there was an announcement that D was running on the A line, but then when we got to Jay Street it would be running on the F line. I'm not sure if I'm missing something, but if it's never on the D line, why are they still calling it the D train? But I guess that's a very New Yorker thing to do, complain about the MTA?

CAL. It's the only thing we have really. It unites us as a culture. When I first came to New York for college, it was very poor and had very limited cellphone data.

NOAH. Gross.

CAL. Right? I didn't know the city, so before all my auditions, to save on data I would go on MapQuest and print out directions. But I couldn't figure out the subway for the life of me, so I would walk to everything. Sometimes it would take me over an hour to walk it. The summer was the worst, I would wear one thing to walk to the audition, get there and change in the bathroom because I was dripping with sweat from walking.

NOAH. That's so cute. Auditions? You didn't tell me you act?

CAL. Retired actor; gave it up. We should all be forgiven for whom we tried to be in our youth.

NOAH. How long have you lived here?

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CAL. Fourteen years. I've lived all over. Washington Heights, East Village, West Village, Astoria before it was trendy. Now I'm on the Upper West Side.

NOAH. Like it?

CAL. It's perfect. Not too touristy, and close enough to my job, so when the MTA is not cooperating, I can walk.

NOAH. Cool. And you work in Marketing and PR, right?

CAL. Yes, clothing, menswear. Not exactly where I thought I'd end up but I'm content. But you, you're an inspiration to never give up.

NOAH. Haha, well that's one way to look at it.

CAL. Seriously, to still be pursuing an acting career at your age (*catching himself*) I don't mean that in a rude way...

NOAH. Didn't take it that way.

CAL. I think it's inspiring.

NOAH. Everyone in Iowa thinks I'm nuts.

CAL. You shouldn't worry about what other people think. (*It's Cal's turn in line. He orders.*) Hi, can I get a medium non-fat caramel latte with soy milk.

NOAH. Fancy.

CAL. You think? What did you get?

NOAH. Coffee with cream and half a Splenda.

CAL. Now I feel pretentious.

NOAH. Oh no, no, no, no. I didn't mean to...

CAL. I'm playing with you. I know I'm pretentious. I own it.

NOAH. And witty, but I bet you knew that as well.

CAL. I've heard talk about the town of my wit.

NOAH. Oh you can hear other people above your own chatter.

CAL. I'm afraid so. (*beat.*) It's been a while since I met a guy who can keep up with the banter.

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NOAH. Awwww, you think you're keeping up.

CAL. Touché.

NOAH. Good news, we didn't lose our table.

CAL. Perfect. (*making their way back to the table.*) Tell me, what led you to make the move to the city?

NOAH. I always dreamed of living in New York and being a Theatre actor. People usually want to be in movies or on TV, but I love Theatre. Don't get me wrong, I wouldn't mind dabbling in film and television too. But live Theatre is all I've ever wanted to do, but my parents wouldn't let me major in it in college...

CAL. What did you major in?

NOAH. Communications.

CAL. Which is short for "I want to be in showbusiness, but my parents disapprove".

NOAH. Bingo. While I was in school, I did community theatre. When I graduated, I was ready to come to the city, but my dad got sick with lung cancer. They gave him about two years. I'm an only child and it didn't feel right to run off and leave him and my mom alone. I stuck around, and he hung on for almost three years. When he was gone it still didn't feel right to leave mom yet, so that was another three years. And just as I was thinking about making the move, I met a guy. His name was Brian and we were happy together. He had no interest in leaving Iowa, so I stayed for him. I did my little community theatre. I did a lot of it, I did nine shows in one year. But I still had this thing inside me "ughh I want to do this in New York". I would make Brain come here once a year and we'd see a bunch of Broadway shows, and I was in heaven. I looked forward to those trips all year long. I would go berserk at the merchandise counter at every show we saw. If you ever went to a show and wondered

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who buys all that shit; you're looking at him. T shirts, magnets, posters, mugs; I'd bring an extra carry-on bag. When the trip was over I would bawl my eyes out on the way to the airport. Anytime I tried to convince Brian to move here, he'd remind me that we'd have to live in a tiny shit-hole apartment, and he'd have to get a new job, and we'd be away from our friends and family. So, I chose relationship over career and learned to be content with my little community theatre shows and a yearly NYC trip.

CAL. What changed?

NOAH. After nine years together, I caught Brian cheating on me.

CAL. Rough.

NOAH. No, relief. I was only staying there for him. Now there was nothing holding me back from moving out here. I wish he cheated earlier. It took me a little over a year to save up the money. So, I know I'm not the fresh-faced guy who gets off the bus, but I'm here and I've got to give it a try.

CAL. Congratulations...and welcome. Have you had any auditions yet?

NOAH. A few. Haven't landed anything, but I've got time. Now that you've heard my life story, tell me yours. I'm very intrigued by this early retirement from acting.

CAL. I grew up wanting to be an actor, my parent's even let me get my BFA in it.

NOAH. Lucky.

CAL. Ehh. In retrospect, it might have been a better idea to have something to fall back on. But I did give it a try, to very, very little success. I did a few shows in the off-off-off-, make a left, go up four flights of stairs, Broadway scene, but nothing where I could quit my day job. And a few years ago, I decided I was

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tired of auditioning all the time. I was tired of having two food service jobs to pay the rent on my two-bedroom apartment I shared with five other people. I wanted things, I wanted to grow up, so I started temping for this PR firm, and spent less and less time auditioning to the point where I removed it completely from my life.

NOAH. And you're OK with that?

CAL. I am. I miss it, but I don't miss all the shitty things I had to deal with because of it.

NOAH. I'm sorry you had to give up on your dream.

CAL. My love for it now is as an audience member.

NOAH. As long as you're at peace with it. And if you don't mind me asking, are you recently single?

CAL. Not really. My last long-term relationship was about two and a half years ago. I've had a few short term dalliances since, but nothing to write home about. The city and these apps can be frustrating. Have you been on many dates since you got here?

NOAH. A handful. No one who's warranted a second date.

CAL. Picky?

NOAH. I don't think so. I'm not looking for anything specific. *(beat)* That's not true, they do have to have an interest in theatre. I went on a date last week with this guy, very cute, very dull. He knew nothing about theatre. He lived in New York his entire life and never saw a Broadway show. I couldn't believe it.

CAL. Are you sure he was gay?

NOAH. Don't get me wrong, your whole life doesn't have to be about the Theatre, but it would be nice to be with a guy who appreciates it and understands. It took my ex years to understand how often we'd have to rehearse a play. He would say "What do you mean you have rehearsal tonight, you just had rehearsal last night."

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CAL. An appreciation for the arts is important. He doesn't have to do it professionally, maybe a guy who plays guitar or paints in his spare time. Talent is sexy.

NOAH. Absolutely.

CAL. I agree: he doesn't need to be obsessed with theatre, but like it enough to know who Kristin Chenoweth is.

NOAH. There are people who don't? (*Blackout.*)

SCENE 2

Cal's apartment. JESSICA and SETH are drinking wine. Seth takes a sip.

SETH. Ughhh, where did you get this wine?

JESSICA. Why is that important?

SETH. It tastes like raisins and smells like my grandmother's basement.

JESSICA. (*smells and sips*) It's fine.

SETH. Where did you get it?

JESSICA. Trader Joe's.

SETH. Oh my God Jessica, why are you so cheap?

JESSICA. I'm not cheap.

SETH. Yes you are. What did this swill cost, five dollars?

JESSICA. No.

SETH. Six?

JESSICA. Five seventy-five.

SETH. That's all your friends are worth to you, five dollars and change?

JESSICA. I didn't see you show up with anything in your hands.

SETH. I'll go get something now, because I can't drink this.

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JESSICA. You don't have to drink at all.

SETH. It's like you don't know me. I'm going to get something digestible. And I'll spend at least twenty dollars.

JESSICA. Fine, go.

SETH. I will.

JESSICA. Who's stopping you?

SETH. It's raining.

JESSICA. Umm-hmmm.

SETH. I already took off my shoes.

JESSICA. Umm-hmmm.

SETH. I don't want to go outside, but I don't want to drink that shit.

JESSICA. It's all we have.

SETH. I need better friends. *(Cal enters)*

CAL. Sorry, that was a work call. What did I miss?

JESSICA. Seth is complaining about us.

CAL. That's what he was doing before I went into the bedroom.

SETH. At least I'm consistent.

JESSICA. If you don't behave, Cal's going to get new friends.

SETH. I'm going to continue to be cranky, because we are about to get replaced anyway.

JESSICA. What are you talking about? *(to Cal)* What is he talking about?

SETH. Cal is getting pretty serious with some guy from the Midwest.

JESSICA. Like between 30th-50th?

SETH. Not midtown west. The Midwest of the country.

JESSICA. You didn't tell me that. Why do you tell him things you don't tell me?

SETH. Because I'm gay.

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JESSICA. I'm a heterosexual woman. It's the same thing as a gay man.

CAL. No, it's not. Gay men are so much meaner to each other.

SETH. Sooooo much.

JESSICA. I don't like feeling left out.

CAL. Don't get upset, it's not as serious as the drama queen is making it sound.

JESSICA. Is this the guy who came from Iowa to become an actor?

CAL. Yeah. Noah, his name is Noah.

JESSICA. How many dates?

CAL. Three.

SETH. How big is his dick?

JESSICA. Ugh, he just told you three dates, why do you assume they've slept together?

CAL. Yeah, how dare you. *(While Jessica isn't looking, Cal makes a gesture to Seth that it was a good size.)*

JESSICA. So three dates. That's a lot for you, what's so special about this guy?

CAL. There's something refreshing about his personality. Very optimistic, doesn't play games. Very open. Shares about himself, but also asks me questions and listens to the answers.

JESSICA. Sounds oddly exotic. When are we going to meet him?

CAL. In a few minutes. I invited him over. He's running a bit late, he had an audition.

JESSICA. How exciting.

SETH. *(to Jessica)* We have a very important decision to make, which one of us is going to be "good friend" and which one is going to be "bad friend"?

JESSICA. What are you talking about?

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SETH. One of us needs to be the warm, welcoming friend and one of us needs to be the cold and judging friend. One of us should be accepting and one of us he should have to work to win over.

JESSICA/CAL. (*pointing to Seth*) Bad friend.

SETH. You think you're shaming me, but that's part I wanted.

JESSICA. Young love is so much fun.

CAL. Love? Slow it down. I like him.

JESSICA. All I'm saying is move in with him, get married, adopt a kid, and then worry if you love him.

SETH. (*to Jessica*) Looks like you and I are going to be the only single one's left.

JESSICA. I've been dating Jake for three years.

SETH. Jake? Have I met him?

JESSICA. A lot. Who did you think I'm talking about when I talk about Jake?

SETH. I don't listen.

JESSICA. I've been in a happy relationship for three years.

SETH. Then why are you always hanging out with us?

JESSICA. It's football season.

CAL. It's May.

JESSICA. It's some round ball season. (*Buzzer. Cal answers.*)

CAL. Hello.

NOAH. (*off stage.*) Hi, it's Noah.

CAL. I'm buzzing.

SETH. Fresh meat.

CAL. Be nice. Don't make me sorry I let you meet him this soon.

SETH. You love us, we're like an episode of "Will and Grace".

CAL. And like "Will and Grace", I thought I missed you but when it came back, I was like "what else is on?"

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JESSICA. This is the first time we've ever met one of your boyfriends...

CAL. Not a boyfriend...yet.

JESSICA. You love him.

CAL. Stop.

JESSICA. Seth, I think we'll be going to a wedding very soon.

SETH. *(to Cal)* Pick the fall. You look so much better in dark clothes. *(Knock.)*

CAL. *(to Seth and Jessica)* Behave. *(to the door)* Come on in. *(Noah enters.)*

NOAH. Hi, everybody. You must be Jessica and Seth.

SETH. You know our names?

NOAH. Sure, Cal's told me all about you guys.

SETH. My mystique has been ruined.

NOAH. He talks about you guys all the time.

SETH. Then you should know, I am slutty...but I'm the right kind of slutty.

JESSICA. Don't mind him. I'm so happy to meet you.

NOAH. Me too.

CAL. *(going over to Noah and giving him a kiss on the cheek.)*
How was your audition?

NOAH. I don't want to jinx it, but I think it went well.

CAL. Great.

NOAH. It was a callback. The director kept me around until the very end. Me and two other guys, so fingers crossed.

JESSICA. I hope you get it.

NOAH. Aren't you sweet.

SETH. I am yet to be invested.

CAL. Would you like some wine?

NOAH. I would love some.

SETH. It's not very good.

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NOAH. That's too bad. (*opening his bag.*) I brought a bottle if you want to try this one.

SETH. How much was it?

JESSICA. Seth!

NOAH. Thirty-five dollars.

SETH. Start pouring friend.

NOAH. (*taking out a second bottle*) Red or white?

SETH. A man named Noah came in from the rain with two bottles of wine. How biblical.

NOAH. I get the biblical thing a lot. I didn't really grow up with much religion. Which is unusual since I'm half Irish and half Italian. (*to Seth*) What are you?

SETH. I'm half Jewish and half Jewish.

CAL. Why are you spending over sixty dollars on wine?

NOAH. It's a special occasion, you only get to show me off to your friends for the first time once.

CAL. I'm not showing you off.

NOAH. You're not?

CAL. Pour the damn wine. But I'm reimbursing you for it.

NOAH. Oh stop. I have some money tucked away. Cal is embarrassed that I'm a struggling actor.

CAL. I'm not embarrassed, I just remember what it's like working a shitty food service job, living paycheck to paycheck, and I want you to hold on to every cent you can.

JESSICA. Where are you serving?

NOAH. A place down in Union Square called Sprint.

JESSICA. I don't know it.

CAL. You don't need to, it's so-so.

NOAH. I do alright tip wise, but it's nothing to write home about. What do you guys do?

JESSICA. I'm a nanny.

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SETH. And I recently got my real estate licenses.

CAL. You did not.

SETH. I signed up for a newsletter about how to get my real estate licenses.

NOAH. *(to Cal)* They are exactly like you said they would be.

SETH. *(to Cal)* Keep my name out of your mouth.

JESSICA. Noah, have you been exploring the city, finding cool places?

NOAH. Not nearly as much as I would like too. I need to find a day soon where I leave my apartment and just get lost. I'd love to join a kickball or dodgeball league. What's your favorite thing to do in New York?

SETH. MDMA I guess.

NOAH. Would you guys mind if I changed out of these audition clothes and into a t-shirt and jeans?

JESSICA. Go for it.

CAL. Bathroom is through there.

NOAH. I remember. *(Noah exits.)*

JESSICA. He remembers because he's been here before.

CAL. Is that all you want to know about, the sex?

JESSICA. Duh. He's different, but in a good way.

CAL. I know, right? We gel really well. He has a great sense of humor; we like a lot of the same things.

JESSICA. You can tell he hasn't been living here long. He asked us questions and actually paused and waited for us to answer.

CAL. I don't remember the last time I dated someone with manners. I don't think I've ever dated anyone with manners.

JESSICA. Snatch him up before someone else does.

CAL. *(to Seth)* What do you think? You're being awfully quiet...for well, for you.

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SETH. He's polite, charming, has a firm handshake, brought wine that was eight times the price of what cheapy brought.

There's got to be something I can pettily hate.

CAL. I'm sure over time you'll find something.

SETH. You're right, I will. Thanks for the pep talk.

(Noah reenters in more comfortable clothing.)

NOAH. Much better. So Seth, Jessica are you theatre people?

JESSICA. Reformed. I'm afraid show business has chewed us up and spit us out. I stopped auditioning two years ago. And Seth, you've been out of it for about three?

SETH. I gave my final performance in Carnival Cruise Lines production of "Angels in America".

JESSICA. We all met doing a terrible show down in the East Village.

CAL. Oh my God, I've not thought about that in years.

SETH. We agreed to never speak about that show ever again for the rest of our lives.

NOAH. Oh, but I want to hear.

SETH. Since you begged. We all auditioned for this show we knew nothing about.

CAL. That was our first mistake.

JESSICA. The audition notice was super vague and sketchy. It was something like; four men, four women to play multiple characters in a new comedy.

CAL. There were no sides at the audition, they had us do prepared monologues.

NOAH. And the three of you got cast?

CAL. But we didn't know each other yet. We go to the first read through and the director slash writer slash producer slash costume designer hands us the scripts. It was called "Cave Dwellers".

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SETH. It took place during the ice age in a karaoke bar.

NOAH. Wait, what?

SETH. You heard me. We played cave men and women, multiple cave men and women in a karaoke bar during the ice age.

NOAH. Sounds fun.

JESSICA. No, not even a little. The play was all these little vignettes and stories...

NOAH. Like “Godpsell”?

JESSICA. Sure, except X-rated. This play was about dating, and marriage, and sex, and sex, and sex, and sex.

CAL. It was the dirtiest thing I’ve ever read.

SETH. The play had five simulated masturbation scenes...and one was six minutes long.

JESSICA. And the worst part was we were playing cave people, so we were half naked in these musty old fur strips and loincloths. It was so gross.

NOAH. *(to Cal)* And you did this play? Why didn’t you quit?

CAL. I’ve never quit a play in my life. Plus, we were young and dumb and even though we knew it was terrible, maybe something good would come of it.

JESSICA. The only good thing that came of it was our friendship.

SETH. *(to Jessica)* Remember the scene where I had to dry hump you on that barstool, while Cal did a monologue as Mark Zuckerberg.

NOAH. Hold up; the Facebook guy? Why was Mark Zuckerberg in a karaoke bar during the ice age?

CAL. Who knows. A better question would be why were Angela Lansbury, Neil Armstrong, the woman from NPR and

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three puppets from “The Little Mermaid” also characters in the play?

JESSICA. I can top that; why was the play set in a karaoke bar and no one ever sang?

NOAH. No way.

JESSICA. No one ever sang. And I sing beautifully. It was a huge waste of my talents.

SETH. It was hands down the worst piece of shit I’ve ever been associated with.

JESSICA. But it holds a special place in my heart because without it I would have never met these two. I wouldn’t trade it for a second.

SETH. I would. I like these two, but I would trade getting my time and dignity back over them.

CAL. Lies, you love us.

NOAH. I hope I have that. Don’t get me wrong, I don’t want to do trainwreck productions, but I love the idea of making lifelong friends with people on shows.

JESSICA. Aren’t you the sweetest thing. Do you know anyone here?

NOAH. No. I’m starting to make friends in my acting class. Basically, I’ve been going on some app dates, and waiting on this one guy to tell me I don’t need to go on anymore and I can delete the app.

JESSICA. Hint, hint. *(Noah’s phone rings, a showtune ringtone.)*

SETH. What the hell is that?

NOAH. It’s my phone, I’ll be just a minute. *(Noah exits down the hall.)*

SETH. I didn’t know people still called people...gross.

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JESSICA. What the hell are you waiting for? Make him your boyfriend.

CAL. I like him...

JESSICA. Do it. He's sweet, he's smart, he just dropped a major hint that he wants you to.

CAL. No he didn't, you're drunk.

JESSICA. I am not.

CAL. You shouldn't drink on an empty stomach.

JESSICA. I had plenty to eat today. For lunch, I had a lemon water and a panic attack.

CAL. You think that was really a hint?

JESSICA. Yes. Come on, even Seth can't find anything wrong with him.

SETH. I'm not crazy about the jeans he changed into, but other than that, I like him. And that is so not on brand for me.

(Noah renters.)

NOAH. The show I auditioned for, I got the part.

CAL. Oh that's amazing.

JESSICA. Congratulations.

SETH. *(monotone)* That's cool.

NOAH. I'm going to be in a play in New York *(hugs Cal)*.

JESSICA. Awww, remember when we used to feel that way?

SETH. No.

JESSICA. It's a little much, right?

SETH. It's a lot much.

NOAH. I'm sorry I'm making such a spectacle of myself, but I have this feeling this is the only beginning, step one.

CAL. I'm so happy for you. *(kisses him.)*

NOAH. Thanks.

JESSICA. Tell us all about it, what's the show, where, when?

NOAH. It goes up in the middle of July, in Yonkers.

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JESSICA/SETH/CAL. Ewww.

NOAH. What?

CAL. It's nothing.

NOAH. No, what?

CAL. Yonkers isn't exactly thought of as a hot-bed of theatrical activity.

SETH. Yonkers isn't exactly thought of.

JESSICA. Not to burst your bubble, but do you think the show is worth you traveling all the way out there?

NOAH. It's worth it because it's an amazing part. I'm Stanley in "Streetcar Named Desire". *(Cal, Jessica, and Seth all tilt their heads in unison.)*

JESSICA. The Marlon Brando role?

NOAH. Yep.

SETH. And who says non-traditional casting can't help white men.

CAL. I think it's wonderful, and I'm very excited for you.

NOAH. I'm so excited and a bit nervous.

(Cal hugs Noah. Jessica nudges Seth.)

JESSICA. That's wonderful news, Seth and I are going to head out. Congratulations again.

SETH. What's your hurry, there's still wine.

JESSICA. Oh my God, let's go.

SETH. Alright, I have to put my shoes on.

JESSICA. You can do that in the hallway.

SETH. You are so bossy. Tie my shoes.

(Seth and Jessica exit.)

CAL. I'm so proud of you.

NOAH. Thank you.

CAL. And I'm going to be there on opening night.

NOAH. Oh you don't have to do that.

TALENT IS SEXY

CAL. I want to. I want to do something else too. (*Cal takes Noah's phone and starts to use it.*)

NOAH. What are you doing?

CAL. One second. (*hands him back his phone.*) I deleted your dating apps.

NOAH. You did?

CAL. I did. (*They kiss. Blackout.*)

SCENE 3

Several weeks later. The rooftop of Cal's building. A blanket is laid out along with some food items and wine. Cal walks Noah out covering his eyes.

CAL. Almost, just a few more steps. (*uncovers Noah's eyes.*) Surprise.

NOAH. A nighttime rooftop picnic. I've always wanted this.

CAL. You've mentioned that... a few hundred times.

NOAH. You listen. What's the occasion?

CAL. You start tech for your show tomorrow, and then it runs for 3 weeks. I know I'm not going to see a lot of you, so I thought we'd have a special evening.

NOAH. So sweet, thank you.

CAL. We have wine, frozen grapes, cheese and crackers.

NOAH. It's perfect. Thank You. (*beat*) My goodness, look at the city. It's so beautiful this time of night.

CAL. (*handing him wine*) Cheers.

NOAH. Cheers.

CAL. So tell me about rehearsals, how's the show going?

NOAH. Good.

CAL. Just good?

TALENT IS SEXY

NOAH. Yeah.

CAL. You're so quiet about it. Are you having a good time?

NOAH. I'm having a wonderful time.

CAL. Making friends?

NOAH. The woman playing Stella is very nice, very talented.

CAL. I'm looking forward to seeing it.

NOAH. You know you don't have to come.

CAL. Are you out of your mind, I'm coming.

NOAH. I'm just saying you don't have to.

CAL. But I am. *(beat)* Unless you don't want me too.

NOAH. I want you to.

CAL. Good. *(toasting)* To Noah and his first New York Show.

CAL/NOAH. Cheers.

CAL. You have been a machine these last few weeks.

Rehearsals, classes, working at the restaurant. You must be exhausted.

NOAH. It's all worth it. But I do look forward to the day when I can support myself fully on acting. How awesome will that be; You'd have me completely to yourself all day Monday, and I'd only be gone a few hours every night. Of course, weekends would be a wash, but it's a small price to pay. Doesn't that sound great?

CAL. Sure, until the show gets mixed reviews and closes after three months and it's back to the food service world.

NOAH. You should write children's stories. Wow, so bleak.

CAL. Bleak, but realistic.

NOAH. Let's not live in reality tonight. I could stare at this city for hours. I never want to leave this place.

CAL. Never say never.

NOAH. Oh come on, you love it.

CAL. It gets old sometimes.

TALENT IS SEXY

NOAH. You want to leave Manhattan?

CAL. Not yet...but eventually, I'd like to move somewhere a bit suburban.

NOAH. I didn't know that.

CAL. Don't look so glum.

NOAH. This is silly; we've only been dating for a little over a month, but you know I have to be here if I want to make it as an actor.

CAL. I know. And I'm not talking about leaving yet, just eventually.

NOAH. Where would you want to go?

CAL. I haven't given it too much thought, but maybe Connecticut.

NOAH. That's far from the city.

CAL. By then you'll be an established star. Producers will want you in their shows so badly, they'll send a car service to take you to and from the theatre...like Patti LuPone.

NOAH. Patti lives in Connecticut?

CAL. She sure does. Think about it, we can find an urban area and domesticate it.

NOAH. Domesticating? That sounds sexy, say more.

CAL. We can offer yoga classes on our front lawn in several languages.

NOAH. After classes we can offer everyone homemade ice tea or lemonade from mason jars.

CAL. Mason jars we bought at a silent auction for the local elementary school's fundraiser.

NOAH. That we support regardless of whether or not we have kids. And vote yes on all education issues even though it will raise our taxes.

CAL. That's sexy.

TALENT IS SEXY

NOAH. You know what's really hot?

CAL. What?

NOAH. Single-handedly raising everyone's property value.
(*Blackout.*)

SCENE 4

A few days later. Opening Night "Streetcar Named Desire" in Yonkers. Cal and Jessica make their way into the audience. If possible, have them sit in the actual audience. Cal has flowers.

OVERHEAD ANNOUNCEMENT. Hello and welcome to The Yonker's Players and this production of Tennessee Williams' "A Streetcar Named Desire". Please take this opportunity to silence all cellphones and unwrap any candies now (*audience laughter*).

JESSICA. Why does that always get a laugh? Unwrap the candy, what is funny about that? (*a "Shhh" is heard.*) Don't shhh me, it's a community theatre in Yonkers.

OVERHEAD ANNOUNCEMENT. Enjoy the show. (*Noah, as Stanley and KERI-ANNE as Stella take the stage. Noah and Keri-Anne's acting should not be good. The joke isn't that Noah is too effeminate, though a bit of that is fine, he's just a bad actor.*)

NOAH: Hey there! Stella Baby!

KERI-ANNE. Don't holler at me like that.

NOAH. Catch!

KERI-ANNE. What?

NOAH. Meat! (*throws a package, poorly.*)

KERI-ANNE. Stanley, where are you going?

NOAH. Bowling.

TALENT IS SEXY

KERI-ANNE. Can I come watch?

NOAH. Come on. *(Through music and movement, we fast forward to further into the play.)*

NOAH. Let me go you sons of bitches! Stella! My baby doll's left me. I want my baby. I'll keep on ringin' until I talk with my baby. Stella! Stella sweetheart. Stellllllah! I want my baby down here. Stella! *(Blackout.)*

SCENE 5

Same night, a Bar. Seth stands at a tabletop waiting with a drink. After a moment Cal and Jessica enter, still shell-shocked. Cal still has the flowers.

SETH. Hi kids.

JESSICA. You could have told us you were skipping the show.

SETH. I did. When you texted "coming to Noah's play?", and I answered with fourteen laughing emojis, that was my answer.

What's wrong, you two look terrible. Where's Noah?

CAL. He'll meet us here for a drink, the director wants to give the cast notes.

JESSICA. They could be there for days.

SETH. Oh was it... bad?

JESSICA. Well it was, ummmm, it was.

CAL. Dreadful.

JESSICA. It was.

SETH. Shit, now I wish I hauled my cookies to Yonkers, you know how much I love trainwrecks.

CAL. It wasn't a trainwreck.

SETH. Then what's wrong?

CAL. The play was fine, but

TALENT IS SEXY

JESSICA. Just say it.

CAL. My boyfriend is a bad actor.

SETH. Are you guys pulling my leg?

JESSICA. He was an abomination.

CAL. Hey.

JESSICA. A disaster?

CAL. That's fair.

SETH. *(laughing)* Your boyfriend is talentless.

CAL. It never dawned on me when we started dating that he might be a bad actor. He is so full of passion and drive I just assumed he'd be talented, or at least decent.

SETH. Are you going to break up with him?

CAL. Of course not, don't be ridiculous. Why would you even say that?

SETH. Because I know you.

JESSICA. Maybe he was just miscast. I didn't dare say it when he told us he was playing Stanley, but my first thought was, "oh is Neil Patrick Harris unavailable?"

CAL. That's definitely it. If he was in a different part, he'd be better.

SETH. Maybe not.

CAL. You didn't see it; you don't get to comment.

SETH. I am a Goldstar gay, I've never been to a straight play.

JESSICA. What are we going to say to him?

CAL. We should be supportive, but at the same time we shouldn't lie; we should let him know he wasn't good but in a gentle way.

SETH. Here he comes.

CAL. Lie, fucking lie through your teeth. *(Noah and Keri-Anne enter.)*

JESSICA. Bravo!

TALENT IS SEXY

CAL. Outstanding.

SETH. I didn't see it, but these two can't stop raving about you.

NOAH. Oh so sweet. (*gesturing to the flowers.*) Are those for me?

CAL. Yes, yes, happy opening night.

NOAH. Thank you. Guys this Keri-Anne or as you may know her as (*acting*) Stella!

KERI-ANNE. (*kissing all three of them on the lips.*) I am so happy to meet all of you. Oh my God, is this Cal? Noah you said he was good looking, but he is fucking gorgeous. (*to Cal*) Look at you, you are so hot. Why are all the hot ones gay? Why are you gay?

CAL. Just am.

KERI-ANNE. God love ya. I bet the two of you can't stop screwing. Sun up to sun down, hot passionate sex, sex, sex.

NOAH. Wasn't Keri-Anne amazing?

KERI-ANNE. Oh stop it.

NOAH. Would you believe this is her first play?

CAL. Yes. (*beat*) I mean YASSSSSS, you go girl.

KERI-ANNE. I have decided to dedicate my life to the Theatre. Who knew getting divorced...again, would lead to me finding passion in my life.

JESSICA. The divorce led to you learning about yourself?

KERI-ANNE. No, it led to court mandated improv classes.

JESSICA. Court Mandated?

KERI-ANNE. The judge thought I had a lot of listening issues to work through. Sentenced to six months of improv.

SETH. I'm gagged. Let me ask you, Kari-Anne...

KERI-ANNE. Keri-Anne.

SETH. That's what I said.

TALENT IS SEXY

KERI-ANNE. Keri like berry but with an i. Keri. When people have a hard time remembering I tell them to think of strawberry. From now on when you see me, I want you to think strawberry...and then eat me *(laughs at her own joke.)*

SETH. *(to Jessica)* It's like early 2000's Mariah Carey crazy, I'm obsessed.

NOAH. It felt so good to be on stage in front of an audience again. I don't know if you guys could tell but the show was a little rocky at times.

CAL. No.

JESSICA. Absolutely not.

CAL. I couldn't tell.

JESSICA. It was phenomenal.

KERI-ANNE. *(to Noah.)* No negative talk. You are one of the finest actors I have ever seen in my life. He is so present and in the moment, unlike any other actor I've ever worked with.

SETH. You said this was your first play.

KERI-ANNE. It's the first one that I've done in front of real people. *(to Cal, starting to cry.)* The strength your boyfriend gives me out there on that stage. I wouldn't be able to do the play without him. In fact, I never want to do any play ever again without him. *(getting on her knees.)* I bow to you, the greatest actor of our generation.

CAL. Looks like you have a fan.

KERI-ANNE. *(to Noah.)* Did you ask him?

NOAH. Of course not.

KERI-ANNE. *(to Cal.)* I know you two are in love, and we just met but I would like Noah to impregnate me.

NOAH. *(laughing)* Oh Stop.

TALENT IS SEXY

KERI-ANNE. Please, please, please Cal. Will you allow him to knock me up? This sort of genius should be passed on to future generations, I want to give birth to a talented baby.

CAL. I don't know what to say.

JESSICA. You don't say anything, you hit her and run.

NOAH. Oh she's just kidding.

KERI-ANNE. I'm not, I want a talented little bastard.

NOAH. I was a little nervous tonight. My New York debut.

SETH. New York State.

NOAH. And my boyfriend had never seen me act before. I was petrified.

CAL. Couldn't tell. You were...something.

NOAH. Opening night down, I'm sure I'll calm down, and when you come back next week I'm sure I'll be even better.

CAL. Let's have a drink, or twelve. (*Blackout.*)

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