

The Other Day

by
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The Other Day

A play by Mark Jason Williams

1. Hello. My Name is...

A Narcotics Anonymous Meeting.

A row of folding chairs, placed a few feet apart. Mark is seated and alone on stage.

MARK

(softly and to himself) God grant me the serenity to accept...

Santo enters. They make eye contact. Santo smiles and sits. Mark keeps his distance.

MARK

To accept the things I cannot change. (stumbling) To...

SANTO

Don't worry. I don't believe it, either.

MARK

Sssh, I'm trying to concentrate.

SANTO

Doesn't seem like you have much faith in the words.

MARK

Just because you don't say something at the top of your lungs doesn't mean you don't believe--

SANTO

You're a very negative person, aren't you?

MARK

Excuse me?

SANTO

I'm just saying: there were a whole lot of negatives in that sentence. Two don'ts. (then playfully) And a doesn't.

MARK

Congratulations, you can count.

SANTO

You do realize the meeting's over, right?

MARK

Yes. I was just--

SANTO

First time here?

MARK

No.

SANTO

I've haven't seen you before.

MARK

It's a big meeting.

SANTO

Trust me, I would have noticed you. (beat) I'm Santo. And you?

MARK

I'd prefer to remain anonymous, thank you.

SANTO

(laughs) So, what's your story?

MARK

What?

SANTO

I was party and play myself.

MARK

Meth?

SANTO

Bingo. Ever done it?

MARK

No.

SANTO

Oh. (teasing, but Mark doesn't catch on) I was hoping you'd know where to score some.

Mark stands, as if to leave.

MARK

I have to go.

SANTO

Relax, I was kidding. (beat) So, you gonna tell me why you're here?

MARK

I don't think so.

SANTO

Come on, I shared.

MARK

I didn't ask you to.

SANTO

Now it's your turn.

MARK

Oh, is that how this works?

SANTO

What's with the attitude? I'm just trying to get to know you.

MARK

Why?

SANTO

Because you're hot.

MARK

That's pretty shallow.

SANTO

Maybe. But I think the reason you're still talking to me is because you're just as attracted--

MARK

Yes, you're attractive, but--

SANTO

But what?

MARK

I thought we weren't supposed to--you know...

SANTO

Chill, we're just talking. Well, I'm talking. You're judging.

MARK

I'm not--

SANTO

Come on, give me something. Anything. I'm sure whatever you tell me, I'm sure I've done way worse.

MARK

I almost killed someone! (beat) Now who's judging?

SANTO

Have I moved?

MARK

Well, no.

SANTO

Waved goodbye? Blew you off?

MARK

No.

SANTO

So, what happened?

MARK

I don't know...

SANTO

Come on, we always know. (beat) Maybe let's start with an easier question. How long have you been using?

MARK

A year. More or less.

SANTO

I'd vote more.

MARK

Okay, two years.

SANTO

Where were you? The first time?

MARK

At a party.

SANTO

(laughs) It's always at a party.

MARK

You, too?

SANTO

Yeah. Back in high school.

MARK

That's pretty young.

SANTO

There you go judging again.

MARK

I wasn't--

SANTO

Kind of sounded like you were.

MARK

Sorry, but--I mean, has it always been meth for you?

SANTO

Yes.

MARK

So that's like a really long time to be addicted to something like meth, right? How are you alive? How do you still have teeth?

SANTO

I flossed after every hit.

MARK

(laughs, then a beat) So, what made you do it?

SANTO

My friend Mike had some. And My girlfriend really wanted to try it. so she, Mike and I smoked a bunch of meth, and then had the most mind-blowing sex.

MARK

That's, um...

SANTO

It gets better. (beat) The next morning, my girlfriend took off, and it was just me and Mike, and...

MARK

More mind-blowing sex?

SANTO

I told him I loved him.

MARK

Oh.

SANTO

I don't know, man--I'd fooled around with other guys before Mike and I thought it had to be the meth making me feel like this, but when we're sober and alone...I had, you know, the butterflies.

MARK

Must have been some guy.

SANTO

How do you mean?

MARK

To make you feel that way. I mean, I have yet to give someone butterflies...

SANTO

(flirting) Give it time.

MARK

(deflecting) So, what happened when you told him?

SANTO

He sucker punched me and called me a fag.

MARK

Sorry.

SANTO

I've been through worse. (beat)Okay, enough about me. Your turn.

MARK

I don't know what I'm supposed to tell you.

SANTO

Take me back to that party.

MARK

Well--

SANTO

Don't think. Just go.

MARK

I guess I took my first hit because--

SANTO

Hit of what?

MARK

Coke.

SANTO

Ooo, fancy...

MARK

Because, I was talking to this guy, and he was really good-looking

SANTO

So, kind of like now?

MARK

Except I was really into him.

SANTO

Ouch. (beat) And?

MARK

And...he took me into the bathroom, and pulled out the coke. I wasn't really into it, but I didn't want to kill the mood. So, I took a few hits. And it burned like fucking hell. And I felt like my heart was going to implode. But then we started making out, and it was amazing--until I slipped and hit my head on the toilet.

SANTO

Damn, that's not cool.

MARK

No, not at all. But we just laughed it off, and he fed me more coke, and then he took me home, and we had some of the most...disastrous sex ever.

SANTO

(laughs) That's too bad.

MARK

I couldn't even look at him the next morning. But I liked the feeling.

SANTO

The high?

MARK

Yes. So, I went to a few more parties, and where there was coke, I did it. I never bought it or anything--

SANTO

I'm not buying this, either.

MARK

Excuse me?

SANTO

Seems a little convenient, that's all. So, you did coke a few times? Big deal. That doesn't really make you a--

MARK

Are you always this much of a jerk?

SANTO

Only when people aren't being honest.

MARK

I just told you--

SANTO

Tell me why you're really here.

MARK

Why do you even care?

SANTO

Because I know what it means to be the last person in this room, and if I can help--

MARK

OxyContin, okay? (beat) And I wasn't lying about the coke. But that was something I could control.

SANTO

Okay, now tell me about the thing you couldn't.

MARK

I started taking it a few months ago--after my mother died. I was cleaning out her apartment, and I bent the wrong way or something, so I went looking for Advil and found her oxy. I didn't even know she was taking it. I mean, I should have because she was in so much pain--she had ovarian cancer--and, you know, it wasn't easy for her. And it was hard losing her. And I just wanted my pain to go away. And then I needed the pills when my boyfriend dumped me after seven just not being able to deal with everyday shit like my stupid job and the fucking long lines at Trader Joe's. I mean, who's inside their head enough to know this kind of stuff? I didn't think I had a problem...until one night I took two pills instead of one, and then I got in the car...because I was out of milk...and I hit a kid on a bike. He was okay. I mean got up, so...

SANTO

You kept going?

MARK

Yes, and I told myself I'd stop but--

SANTO

It's okay, I know the rest of the story.

MARK

Yeah...Hi, I'm Mark, and I'm an addict.

SANTO

Hi, Mark. (beat) Thank you for sharing.

MARK

I'm sorry. I'm still kind of getting used to this. And these meetings don't seem to be helping me very much.

SANTO

Well, how'd you feel if I said let's get out of here?

MARK

And go where?

SANTO

Coffee, a movie, my place.

MARK

No, thank you.

SANTO

Why not?

MARK

I have to get home.

SANTO

Then I'll go with you. Where do you live?

MARK

New Jersey.

SANTO

Or maybe not.

MARK

It's not that far.

SANTO

I'll keep that in mind for next time.

MARK

That wasn't an invitation.

SANTO

Mine still stands.

MARK

And where do you live?

SANTO

Queens.

MARK

No, thank you. (beat) I really should go...don't want to miss
my train...

SANTO

Other trains will come along.

MARK

Other men will come along, too.

SANTO

But none as cute as you. (beat) So, what do you say?

MARK

I thought I already said it: no.

SANTO

Come on, you don't want to risk going home alone so late.

MARK

It's 7:30.

SANTO

And what if there's like this massive train delay and you're standing on the platform for like hours and hours?

MARK

I really don't think that'll--

SANTO

And the whole time, you'll be thinking, "shit, I could have been in bed already.

MARK

Your bed?

SANTO

We can discuss it in the cab.

Santo smiles, coyly, as lights fade to almost dark.

2. Afterglow

It's the next morning, and Mark and Santo are in bed.

SANTO

This is nice.

MARK

Really nice.

SANTO

I like having you here.

MARK

I like being here.

An awkward silence.

MARK

So, I should go.

SANTO

Right.

MARK

It's just that...I have a lot of stuff to do, and--

SANTO

It's cool.

MARK

But this was fun, and we should--

SANTO

Yeah. (beat) Or, we can cut through the bullshit, and you can come back to bed.

MARK

Maybe another time. (beat) Have you seen my phone?

SANTO

I think it's hiding under the covers.

MARK

I really have to go!

SANTO

Okay, already. Way to kill all the fun.

MARK

Do you have this kind of "fun" often?

SANTO

Often enough.

MARK

Well, good for you. But I don't, so--

SANTO

Yeah, I could tell.

MARK

What?

SANTO

I'm just sayin: the pipes seemed a little rusty.

MARK

You're an asshole.

SANTO

I know.

MARK

Look, this act of yours might work with other guys, but--

SANTO

You're not like other guys, right?

MARK

Yes. I mean, no.

SANTO

Well, which is it?

MARK

I don't fucking know. I just want to get out of here.

SANTO

I was just screwing with you about the sex. You were fine.

MARK

Only fine?

SANTO

You know something: you're the first person in a long time that let stay over after a date.

MARK

Let's not kid ourselves, Santo. That wasn't a date.

SANTO

Then, let's go to the movies, or see a show--

MARK

No.

SANTO

Why not?

MARK

I'm not really looking for anything right now.

SANTO

And yet another bullshit answer. (beat) Do you have a boyfriend or something?

MARK

No!

SANTO

Then what? Married, in the closet, poz? Shit, I suppose I should have asked before we--

MARK

I'm not. Any of those things.

SANTO

So, then what is it?

MARK

I've been burned way too many times, so--

SANTO

Who hasn't at our age? My last boyfriend stole my credit card and ran off to Morocco.

MARK

My last boyfriend cheated on me...twice. And then there was the guy who was emotionally abusive, the Republican, and--

SANTO

And the recovering meth-addict?

MARK

Him, too.

SANTO

I won't hurt you like those other guys.

MARK

You don't know that.

SANTO

I promise not to abuse you or cheat on you twice.

MARK

Would you cheat on me once?

SANTO

Nope.

MARK

What makes you so sure?

SANTO

Because...you give me the butterflies.

MARK

Stop--

SANTO

And I think you're fucking adorable, even though you're trying real hard not to be, and all I want to do is kiss you all over, and hold you hostage in my arms, and make you breakfast and get to know you more...

MARK

You're fucking insane, aren't you?

SANTO

I make a wicked french toast.

MARK

Can we have pancakes, instead?

SANTO

I'll make you the whole fucking Betty Crocker cookbook if it'll get you to stay.

Mark smiles, walks back toward the bed as the lights fade.

3. RU There?

An abstract space. Mark, Dina and Santo communicate via text messages.

DINA

Where r u?

MARK

Queens.

DINA

U were supposed 2B here 20 min ago. Angry Face. Foot Tapping(beat) Wait, Queens?

MARK

Yep. LOL?

DINA

What ru doin in Queens?

SANTO

(writing in a journal)Last night, I...

MARK

Met a guy.

DINA

U spent the night? He he.

MARK

Stop.

DINA

Eggplant emoji.

MARK

Gross.

SANTO

I really liked him, but I...

MARK

Don't know what I was thinking. Sorry, should we reschedule?

DINA

Um, no. What's going on? I'm...

SANTO

Worried because I'm finally in a good place and I...

MARK

Don't want to talk about it.

SANTO

Don't want to screw it up. Or,

MARK

This subway is taking forever.

DINA

Sad face. Train. Horse.

MARK

Horse?

DINA

Sorry, finger

SANTO

Slip up again.

DINA

ETA?

MARK

Hold on.

SANTO

Sometimes, I feel like I keep

MARK

Going through a tunnel.

SANTO

And meth is the only way I can find my way out.

DINA

Do you want me to wait?

SANTO

But I can't stop thinking about...(he closes the book and reaches for his phone)

DINA

Mark? U there?

MARK

Sorry, here. Yes, still want to see you.

DINA

Ok. So, what's his name?

SANTO

Hey, Mark. Find the train ok??

MARK

Santo.

SANTO

Yeah?

MARK

(to the audience) Shit. (back to his phone) Santo.

DINA

Ooo...sexy Santo.

SANTO

What's up?

DINA

You gonna see him again?

MARK

Dot dot dot

SANTO

Mark?

MARK

Sorry, hi. Yes, on train.

SANTO

Cool. Do you want to get dinner later?

DINA

Maybe time to start dating again?

MARK

I can't. Sorry.

SANTO

No problem.

MARK

Maybe we better reschedule? Train not moving.

DINA

I'll wait. Have to talk to you about Dad.

SANTO

Big plans for the rest of the day?

MARK

No.

DINA

Mark?

MARK

Dead to me.

SANTO

I'll probably hang here for a bit. If you feel like coming back. Winkey face.

DINA

Don't be like that. He's not doing well.

MARK

Good.

SANTO

You there?

DINA

He keeps asking about you.

MARK

Nothing to say to him.

DINA

Sad face. If you don't want to talk to him, at least talk to me about him...

MARK

What's there to discuss?

DINA

I still feel bad.

MARK

Not your fault he left my mother for yours. At least you got a dad out of it. Wanted to get to know you, not to get to know him through you.

DINA

Yay for long lost siblings. Heart heart heart.

MARK

Enough with the fucking emojis!

DINA

Train moving yet?

MARK

Nope. How's Doug?

DINA

Ok.

MARK

Things getting any better?

DINA

Yeah, we're good.

MARK

You sure about that? Arched eyebrow.

DINA

Dot dot dot.

SANTO

Okay, guess you're busy.

DINA

I should probably go.

MARK

Sorry. Sorry.

DINA AND SANTO

Just call me when you can.

SANTO

Xx...

DINA

Oo...

A beat. Mark types into his phone, then deletes it. He puts his phone in his pocket as the lights fade.

4. Hello Again

The N.A. Meeting. Mark is seated as Santo enters with a box of cookies.

SANTO

(surprised) Hey.

MARK

Hi, how's it--

SANTO

(motions to sit) Can I?

MARK

Sure.

SANTO

So, did you get my texts?

MARK

Yeah...sorry, I--

SANTO

Because I was kind of hoping--

MARK

I meant to--

SANTO

To hear from you.

SANTO

You meant to? What the hell does that mean?

MARK

I don't know.

SANTO

Because either you wanted to or not, and you obviously you didn't want to--

MARK

Look, my life has been really...complicated--

SANTO

Oh, here we go with that fucking complicated shit again.

MARK

It's been a hard week!

SANTO

What happened?

MARK

I don't want to talk about it.

SANTO

So, you came to a meeting not to talk?

MARK

Not everyone has to give away their whole life. Sometimes it helps just to listen.

SANTO

Sounds really fucking passive aggressive if you ask me.

MARK

Well, I didn't, so--(beat, he looks at his phone, reads it, and starts texting)

SANTO

That text he responds to. Some other guy?

MARK

My sister. (beat) Sorry, I hate when people do this here, but...our father is sick, and--

SANTO

Sorry.

MARK

Don't be. I hate the guy.

SANTO

I didn't get along with my father, either. (beat) Want to trade war stories?

MARK

There is no story. He left my mom and me when I was nineteen and I hardly ever saw or talked to the guy.

SANTO

Did he leave because you were gay?

MARK

No, because he was fucking his secretary. I didn't tell him I was gay until I was 24.

SANTO

I still haven't told mine. I mean, he probably knows, but you know how pigheaded Latino men can be.

MARK

Yeah, I'm starting to see that first hand.

Mark reaches for a cookie.

SANTO

I wouldn't. These are leftover from yesterday. But I know a place nearby with some great cannoli...

MARK

There's something else. (beat) I...used. (he pauses, waits for a reaction, but Santo doesn't flinch) Did you hear what I said?

SANTO

Were hoping that's going to scare me away?

MARK

I'm sorry I didn't text you back.

SANTO

Apology accepted. Can we move on now?

MARK

Move on to what?

SANTO

I don't fucking know. How about we stay for the meeting to start and then get that cannoli?

Mark puts down the cookie and smiles.

Lights fade.

5. Moving Day

The stage remains dark for the next three lines. Mark and Santo groan, grunt and breathe heavy.

SANTO

What the hell? Did you...stop?

MARK

I can't get it in if you don't turn around!

SANTO

Okay, but just fucking push. And don't stop this time.

Lights up on Mark and Santo moving a table on stage.

MARK

Finally! (beat) I can't believe you insisted on bringing this thing.

SANTO

You're the one who told me to bring my stuff.

MARK

I meant like a toothbrush or some clothes, not the Titanic. Seriously, you should have left this on the curb.

SANTO

This is a perfectly good table.

MARK

We can buy a much nicer one.

SANTO

Sure. But then we'd have less money for our vacation.

MARK

What vacation?

SANTO

I was thinking we should start traveling.

MARK

You just moved in and you already want to run away?

SANTO

Marky, come on...

MARK

Okay, where are we going?

SANTO

Amsterdam?

MARK

How about London?

SANTO

What's wrong with Amsterdam?

MARK

Nothing. Except for all the drugs everywhere.

SANTO

It's just pot.

MARK

Which leads to other things.

SANTO

It does not. (beat) And besides, we can just as easily get the hard shit here.

MARK

But you haven't, right?

SANTO

Do you trust me or not?

MARK

I'm sorry. Tell me why Amsterdam is so important to you.

SANTO

Never mind, you're clearly judging again...

MARK

Please?

SANTO

I've wanted to go there since I read the Diary of Anne Frank when I was 16. (beat) Why are you looking at me like that?

MARK

I didn't expect that kind of answer.

SANTO

Sometimes people surprise you. (beat) If you let them.

MARK

So, what was it about--

SANTO

I don't know, I felt like we were both in hiding. I mean, that family had it way worse than me with all of the horrific shit they went through. But she still had hope. I felt awful for her, but helped me get through hiding who I was and not hating myself for it. (beat) Plus, there's the wooden shoes and tulips...

MARK

I do love tulips. Fuck it, Amsterdam or bust, baby.

SANTO

I hate it when you call me baby.

MARK

Sorry, angel.

SANTO

That's even worse.

MARK

What if I called you angel baby?

SANTO

I'd rip your face off.

MARK

My boyfriend, the hopeless romantic. (beat) Are you planning on helping me unpack these boxes or what?

SANTO

What.

MARK

Huh?

SANTO

I choose the what.

MARK

There is no what!

SANTO

What about a when? Or a who? Are those options?

MARK

Stop! We have a lot of work to do around here.

SANTO

Place looks fine to me. And I'd rather do something else.

Santo gives Mark a soft kiss on the cheek. Mark pulls away.

MARK

You've been here a week already and this place still looks like shit.

SANTO

Not from this position.

MARK

Are we really ready for this? It's only been six months...

SANTO

Mark, I love you. So much that I want your face to be the first one I see in the morning and the last thing I see at night.

MARK

What greeting card's ass did you pull that from?

SANTO

I was being sincere.

MARK

You still have the butterflies, right?

SANTO

Here we go...

MARK

I'm just worried that one day the butterflies will turn.

SANTO

Turn into what?

MARK

I don't know. Something like moths.

SANTO

What does that mean? Instead of tickling my stomach, you'll eat my clothes?

MARK

No, no, no. I just don't want to be someone who eats away at you. Or makes you--

SANTO

Okay, okay. I still have the god damn butterflies. Now, shut up and kiss me already.

Mark and Santo start kissing and fall to the couch as the lights fade.

6. In or Out

Lights back up on Mark and Santo's home. Santo is lounging in his underwear.

MARK

Sorry, the store was ridiculously crowded. (beat) Why aren't you dressed?

SANTO

I thought could stay in.

MARK

No fucking way. I've been looking forward to going to this restaurant for months.

SANTO

I really don't feel like it.

MARK

Well, get over it. Dina and Doug will be here any minute.

SANTO

Come on, let's just stay here. I'll make dinner, we can light a few candles...

MARK

I knew you were going to do this!

SANTO

Why are you getting so mad?

MARK

Because you're always changing our plans, and it's incredibly frustrating.

Dina enters, carrying a gift bag filled with treats. They don't notice her.

SANTO

Not as frustrating as always having plans.

MARK

What is your problem tonight?

DINA

Hey! Nice outfit.(beat) The door was open.

MARK

Well, change of plan: someone doesn't feel like putting pants on, so I guess we're having dinner here tonight. (beat)
Where's Doug?

DINA

Oh. He had to work, sorry. And actually, he asked if I would go to this thing with him tonight.

MARK

Another one? I thought you hated that shit.

DINA

I do, but--

MARK

Then why don't you say no for once?

DINA

Because...you know how Doug is when he doesn't get his way, and I'd rather not have a huge blow up over nothing.

MARK

It's not nothing, Dina. It's like you have to give up everything--

DINA

It's a few hours. Stop being so melodramatic.

MARK

Don't insult me.

SANTO

Yeah, at least call him a drama queen.

DINA

So, I put on a cute dress, make some small talk with his co-workers, and if I have to fake a smile, or two--what's the big deal?

MARK

You shouldn't be forced into doing anything you don't want to. Right, Santo?

SANTO

He's never happy with anything I do.

DINA

Doug's the same way.

MARK

That's because he's a control freak.

SANTO

Takes one to know one.

MARK

I am not a control freak!

DINA

Yeah, you kind of are.

SANTO

God forbid we don't plan every minute of our day...I can't even remember the last time I heard the words I love you.

DINA

Me either. (beat) You know what: I could stay for a drink.

SANTO

I think we have some wine.

DINA

Anything stronger?

MARK

We have wine?

SANTO

Mark doesn't like to keep that stuff in the house.

MARK

Because some urges lead to other urges.

SANTO

Because he doesn't trust me.

MARK

Santo! There's no reason Dina needs to hear about this.

DINA

It's okay.

Dina pours her own drink.

DINA

(mostly joking) So, things are going well?

SANTO

Be careful of all the egg shells. (beat) So, what's new?

DINA

Oh, not much. Just moved my dad into a nursing home and that's been...(she drinks more) kind of stressful.

SANTO

Sorry.

DINA

I wish Mark would go see him. He's all my father ever wants to talk about, anyway. I hate to ask you, but

SANTO

I'll tell him not to go. Then he will.

DINA

Look, I know Mark can be difficult, but I think you're really good together. His inflection changes when he talks about you, and he smiles more. And I hear you're making travel plans. That's kind of a big deal. He's never even been to Canada.

SANTO

Really? Yeah, I wanted to book it as a surprise, but I'm a little low on money.

DINA

How much do you need?

SANTO

That's okay...

DINA

Seriously, I would love to help.

Mark returns with a bottle of wine and a glass for Dina.

MARK

I said I love you the other day.

SANTO

When?

MARK

When we were at Target.

DINA

(sarcastic) How romantic.

MARK

Don't you have someplace to be?

DINA

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to belittle you. It's way more than I get from Doug.

SANTO

Are you kidding me? What about that giant house, and your Mercedes?

MARK

Not to mention the fact that you don't have to work anymore.

DINA

Believe it or not, I kind of miss my job. I mean book-keeping wasn't anything super exciting, but at least I had a purpose. And when I quit I thought I'd least catch up on my reading or see the world, but I've done nothing...NOTHING! except...go to work events, and charity-balls and try to be a God damn perfect Trophy Wife! (beat) Fuck!

MARK

Well, you're not missing anything in corporate hell. You should see this little chicken my boss just hired. She's like 18, and they're totally having sex.

DINA

Talk about an entry level position.

MARK

(beat) You know, it really pisses me off! I've been working my ass off in that company for years, and yet again, some MBA in training is going to, literally, blow her way right past me on the corporate ladder, and it's all because I refuse to stay in the closet...

DINA

Oh, quit Harvey Milking it, would you? I'm sure the powers that be haven't promoted you because it's clear you don't want to be there.

MARK

Well, yeah, there's that. I wish I could quit, too. But Santo's had trouble finding a job, and we're trying to save for--

DINA

Well, maybe you'll get there sooner than you think. (beat) I better go. Don't want to be late...

MARK

Or, you can no for once and stay...

DINA

Thanks for the wine.

She kisses them and exits. A beat.

SANTO

I'm sorry I was in a mood before. We can still go out.

MARK

It's okay. We don't need a fancy restaurant?

SANTO

So, what do you want to do instead?

MARK

I don't know. Coffee, a movie (he unbuttons Santo's shirt or something seductive) our place?

Mark smiles devilishly as the lights fade.

7. Happy Anniversary

Mark and Santo's apartment, a few weeks later.

Mark is setting, and re-setting the table. There is a knock on the door.

MARK

Coming.

The knocks get louder, more rapid.

MARK

Hold on, I'm coming!

Mark exits to answer the door. Dina enters.

DINA

Sorry, I hate to just barge in like this, but I can't take it anymore.

MARK

(robotic) What happened this time?

DINA

Gee, Mark, your concern is overwhelming. (beat) So, what's all this?

MARK

It's our anniversary (beat) Okay, once more with feeling. What happened with you and Doug?

DINA

It's stupid. (beat) I told him I was bored. You know, with the trophy wife routine. My whole life can't be a big fucking charity ball. If I have to put on another stupid puffy dress or force a big, fat smile, I'm gonna...

MARK

Hey, easy with my glassware. (beat) I'm glad you stood up for yourself.

DINA

I mean, I know he works really hard, but--

MARK

That's no reason to treat you like that.

DINA

I know!

MARK

So, how did he take it?

DINA

He "forbid" me to go back to work. And all of a sudden, the bathroom wasn't clean enough, and the miles in the Mercedes were getting too high, and I just had to get out of there.

MARK

I'm glad you did. And I really don't think you should go back this time.

DINA

Is something burning?

MARK

Shit! The cake. Fuck! Fuck, fuck, fuck!

DINA

Hey! It's just a cake.

MARK

It's more than just a cake!

DINA

What is going on with you?

MARK

I don't know. I'm having some issues.

DINA

Clearly. Care to be more specific?

MARK

Things have been really weird lately. Santo's hardly ever home, and he tells me it's because he has to work, but--

DINA

You think he's lying?

MARK

I think he's using again.

DINA

That's a pretty big accusation, Mark.

MARK

I went by the restaurant before, because I wanted to surprise him...

DINA

No, you wanted to check up on him.

MARK

You're missing the point. He wasn't there.

DINA

Maybe he was out buying flowers for your anniversary.

MARK

That's your problem, you know. You always assume the best in people.

Santo enters.

SANTO

Hey.

DINA

Hey, Santo. Happy Anniversary!

SANTO

What? Oh, is it?

MARK

I can't believe it's been two years already, either.

Mark tosses the cake in the garbage.

MARK

How was work?

DINA

Mark tells me you're in the restaurant biz now, that's exciting.

SANTO

(to Mark) Why didn't you just say I was a waiter?

MARK

Did you get my messages?

SANTO

Sorry, no.

MARK

I texted you three times!

Santo moves to exit.

MARK

Where are you going?

SANTO

I just said...work was busy, I'm exhausted.

MARK

Fine, Dina and I will eat without you.

DINA

I really shouldn't stay. Tonight should be about you two...

MARK

You know what, screw the both of you, maybe I'll just go out--

Mark clears a plate with disgust.

SANTO

Mark...

MARK

I texted you three times! And called, and stopped by...

SANTO

What the hell, Mark?

MARK

Where were you?

SANTO

I'm not talking to you if you're going to make me feel like I'm on trial.

MARK

You wouldn't feel like you were on trial if you didn't have something to feel guilty for. (beat) Are you using again?

SANTO

No!

MARK

Then?

Dina's phone rings.

DINA

Sorry, It's Doug.

MARK

Don't answer it.

SANTO

Don't tell her what to do.

DINA

Hello. (beat) I'm at Mark's, what do you--(beat) I'm gonna take this in the kitchen.

SANTO

Mark. I made a mistake.

MARK

What kind of mistake, Santo?

SANTO

I...had sex with someone else.

MARK

Do you really have to leave open mail on the table like this?

SANTO

Just leave it.

MARK

I mean, if you've already read it, why can't you put it someplace else?

SANTO

Mark, can we talk about what I just told you please?

MARK

That's what you call a mistake?

SANTO

It just happened, okay?

MARK

How?

SANTO

It doesn't matter.

MARK

Humor me. You know I'm a stickler for details. So...

SANTO

I met him at work.

MARK

When?

SANTO

A few weeks ago.

MARK

I see. And you waited until now to tell me because--

SANTO

Because nothing happened then. It was just some flirting...a little ass grabbing...

MARK

Then what happened?

SANTO

Mark, let's not do this...

MARK

Then what happened, Santo?

SANTO

He texted me. I was on break. I went to his place, and--

MARK

What's his name?

SANTO

That's not important.

MARK

And why's that, Santo? Because if he doesn't have a name, you didn't cheat, right? But you did. So he deserves a name. Is it Matt? Ricky? Maybe Ted? How about Rob? Rob's a good name for a slut.

SANTO

Mark!

MARK

What?

SANTO

His name was Mark. (beat)

MARK

Of all the men in New York, you hook up with someone with my name? I feel like I just cheated on myself!

SANTO

I'm sorry.

Dina enters.

DINA

You should be. (beat) Sorry, I couldn't help overhearing, and, wow Santo, what the hell were you thinking?

MARK

Dina, stop.

DINA

He deserves better.

SANTO

(to Mark) I'm sorry, I know I messed up. But I'll make it up to you. It was a one-time thing. I want us to get past this.

MARK

And I want--(beat, then calmer) I want you to leave.

SANTO

(getting angrier) I told you I made a mistake--

MARK

You broke a promise!

SANTO

We both know my promises will never live up to your expectations.

MARK

So, this is my fault?

SANTO

It's nobody's fault.

DINA

Still think it's his fault.

MARK

Why did you do it? I mean, really?

SANTO

I just wanted some space.

MARK

And how exactly do you get this "space" by jumping into bed with other men?

SANTO

Would you please calm down?

MARK

You want space? Go! Get out.

SANTO

What?

DINA

I think he made it pretty clear.

SANTO

Fuck you.

MARK

Santo!

SANTO

I don't need her here judging every little thing I do.

DINA

Cheating seems like a pretty big thing to me.

SANTO

You don't know the whole story!

MARK

She doesn't need to hear this!

SANTO

Right. Because you don't even want to hear it. We're just supposed to be this perfect little couple--

MARK

I never once said that! I'm the one who wants to talk about our problems...

SANTO

No, you only want to talk about what you think our problems are. But of the three of us, I'm the only one being honest here--

DINA

By running around behind his back? Yeah, that's mature.

SANTO

You are such a leech.

DINA

What?

SANTO

Can't you just go home?

DINA

I'm here because he needs me. Because you keep hurting him.

SANTO

You're here because you don't have a life of your own.

MARK

STOP IT!

SANTO

Mark, tell her you don't want me to go. Tell her that no matter how hard you push me away, I always come back...

Mark looks away from him, and turns to Dina for support. A beat. Santo exits.

DINA

Are we good?

MARK

No.

DINA

Do you need anything?

MARK

How about some oxy?

DINA

That's not funny.

MARK

Who cares? We all have our addictions, right? Drugs, sex, failing relationships.

DINA

Doug said he was sorry.

MARK

And of course you believe him. I'm not sure which of us is the bigger fool.

DINA

Mark, look I know tonight really had to suck for you, but-- Fuck, that's Doug again. I gotta--I'll call you tomorrow, okay?

MARK

Fine. You, go, too.

Mark alone, as the lights fade.

9. N.A. Again

Mark is seated.

MARK

God grant me the serenity...

Santo enters. It's been a week since they've seen one another.

SANTO

Don't worry, I still don't believe it ever. (beat) Hi. Can I... (Mark doesn't respond) Still not talking to me?

FELLOW NA MEMBER

Sssh!

SANTO

Okay, I get it. We don't have to talk. But, Marky, I know you still love me.

MARK

And isn't it amazing how you can love someone so much and yet hate them at the same time?

SANTO

I could never hate you.

MARK

Bull-shit.

SANTO

Don't you see what being away from you is doing to me? I'm not eating or sleeping, and...I used.

MARK

Shit.

SANTO

I've missed you so much.

Santo goes to him. Mark gives in for a moment, then retreats.

MARK

I can't do this. I'm sorry. I'm still really mad.

FELLOW NA MEMBER

Sssh.

MARK

Oh, ssssh yourself!

SANTO

I know.

MARK

No, you don't. You don't fucking know anything. Because of you, I had the worst experience of my life last night.

SANTO

Did you--

MARK

No, I didn't use. But I wanted to. After--

SANTO

After what?

MARK

I met a guy.

SANTO

Oh.

MARK

And he was good looking. And seemed nice. And I thought, okay if Santo could screw someone else--but I couldn't. (beat) I got as far as taking my shoes off, and then I started crying on some stranger's futon...

SANTO

How old was this guy?

MARK

What?

SANTO

I mean, he couldn't afford a couch?

Mark laughs, Santo takes advantage of the opening.

SANTO)

I miss you, too. And I'm sorry. And I'm glad you didn't use, because, I...well, I kind of went on a bender. I lost my job. My friend kicked me out, and I was hoping I'd see you here because I really want to come home.

MARK

No.

A beat. There's a silent stand off between Mark and Santo, as Santo moves toward center stage.

Mark watches from a distance.

SANTO

Hi, I'm Santo, and I'm an addict. It's been..I don't know, 24 hours since I last used. I feel like such a shit for using again, to be honest. To be honest? What a fucking stupid expression. Like what, we're lying the rest of the time? I guess I have been lying. I've been trying to be this guy, you know, who can live this...perfect little life...with this great man...and tell myself that nothing else matters except for me and him. Or him and me. However the fuck you want to say it. (beat) He's good to me, really. And there are so many things about him that I love...the way he always puts me first, and dumbs himself down when with his friends so that I feel more comfortable or how he cuts out the recipes from the countries he knows I want to visit. But I couldn't do it...I couldn't let someone take care of me.

I couldn't live...the perfect little life...so I went and fucked it up. And so, he threw me out, and I went and stayed with these people I used to know, and they had some meth...and, well, you know how it is, the temptation was just too much. (beat) But anyway, here I am. And maybe, being taken care of isn't the worst thing in the world. And if he told me to come back home, I would. Because I want to be there...because drugs...they might kill the pain, and the loneliness, and the regret...but they can't kill the butterflies.

Lights fade.

10. Game Time

Mark and Santo's apartment. Three months later.

It's the morning. Santo is in the middle of getting dressed, having a few issues with fixing a necktie.

Mark enters.

MARK

Morning.

SANTO

Hey.

MARK

You look nice.

SANTO

Thanks. Can you--

Mark helps Santo with his tie.

MARK

You okay?

SANTO

I'm nervous as hell.

MARK

You're a great chef, Santo. What chef wouldn't want to hire you?

SANTO

But what if--

MARK

Then you'll get another interview.

SANTO

I've been trying to get this one forever and I really want it to work out.

MARK

Me too.

SANTO

Thank you.

MARK

But if it doesn't work out--that's okay. Our rent is paid. We have food.

SANTO

You can't keep paying for everything, Mark. (beat) I'm sorry. I appreciate everything you do for me--

MARK

(not convinced) Sure.

SANTO

You know I do. But, it's incredibly frustrating that I can't, like...(beat) Can we talk about this later? I have to go.

MARK

Don't.

SANTO

What?

MARK

The hell with the interview, my job and everything else. Let's spend the day in bed, and then tomorrow we'll run away.

SANTO

ense. We can be married and in Amsterdam by the weekend.

SANTO

Really?

MARK

What better reason to go?

SANTO

But is that what you want? I mean, thank you, but--

MARK

Is something wrong? Because--

SANTO

No, it's fine. Sorry, better than--

MARK

I thought you'd be happy, but--

SANTO

I am.

MARK

It doesn't seem like it.

SANTO

Can I please just fucking focus on one thing at a time?
(beat) I'm sorry, I love you and I want to get married and
have a great fucking trip...but right now I just want to get
this job and--

MARK

Okay, okay. I'm sorry.

SANTO

Mark...

MARK

No, you're right. You should focus on this interview.

SANTO

Cool. Wish me luck?

Mark kisses Santo softly.

SANTO

I shouldn't be gone that long. Maybe an hour or two. I mean,
you can come if you want...

MARK

No, that's okay. You can tell me all about it later.

Santo smiles, gives Mark a quick kiss,
then exits.

11. Where the Hell Have You Been?

The evening. It's been hours since
Santo left.

Mark is on the phone. He is slightly
panicked.

MARK

Hey, it's me. Again. Just wondering where you are. (a beat,
he sighs) Hi. Thanks for calling me back. Are you sure? He
didn't come by at all?

After a few moments...keys jiggle in the doorway.

Santo enters.

MARK

No, it's okay, he's home now. Thanks, I'll call you later.

Mark hangs up the phone and throws his arms around Santo, relieved.

SANTO

It's okay. I came back.

Santo breaks the embrace.

MARK

I was convinced you wouldn't.

SANTO

Silly boy.

He pinches Mark's cheek, mockingly, then paces about the apartment.

MARK

Where were you?

SANTO

Nowhere. (snickers) Everywhere.

MARK

What happened? Did something happen out there?

SANTO

Nothing. (beat) Nothing!

MARK

What happened with the interview?

SANTO

What interview?

MARK

Fuck. (beat) Did you even go?

SANTO

Couldn't do it. Got all the way there. But then I had an accident.

MARK

Accident? You didn't crash the car? Did you?

SANTO

No, no, no. Spilled some mustard on my shirt. Couldn't show up to an interview like that.

MARK

And then what happened?

SANTO

There was pressure. All this pressure. I couldn't do it.

MARK

Santo!

SANTO

I said nothing happened. Don't you listen?

MARK

I want to know where you were!

Santo stumbles toward the other side of the stage, mimes looking in a refrigerator.

SANTO

Did you eat all the ham? I wanted to cook you breakfast...

Mark follows him.

MARK

Santo! Tell me! Where were you? What happened out there?

SANTO

I went places.

MARK

What places?

SANTO

Had myself a little party.

MARK

Fuck!

SANTO

And then I got lost.

MARK

Lost?

SANTO

I was driving. And then suddenly, I couldn't drive anymore.

MARK

You did crash the car? Christ.

SANTO

No, no, no. It wasn't the damn car. It was me. Me! I was the one driving, understand? Zip, zip, zipping up the parkway...

MARK

Fuck.

SANTO

And before I know it, I can hardly see a thing. Just crisscrossed lights and a little bit of fog. And then, it's all one big blur. On the road. In my head. I can't remember where I'm going. I don't know how I made it this far. One...big...blur. And then I can't remember my last thought, the last five minutes, the last five years. I could hardly remember my name. But I kept going, going, going, going. Got as far as Connecticut.

MARK

You drove...to Connecticut...like this?

SANTO

Yeah, isn't it great?

MARK

No, it was really stupid.

SANTO

God, can't you be happy for once. You're such a mope. Mopey Marky, ha! It was so beautiful up there. Lots of trees and plenty of places to sit on the grass. And the air. It was so soft, I could hardly feel it against my cheek. I just wanted to sit on the grass and breathe...

MARK

You're lucky you didn't kill someone!

SANTO

You have the worst thoughts, Mark. Look, I'm fine. Look! No bruises. No bumps. Not even a scratch.

Santo grabs Mark and pulls him close. He leans in to kiss him, but Mark pushes him away.

MARK

We need to go to a meeting. Now.

SANTO

Sorry, not in the mood.

MARK

I mean it, or I'm leaving.

SANTO

Good. Get some ham while you're out. (beat) Marky, I came back. I'll always...you know what, fuck you. It was just a drive.

SANTO

I just wanted to breathe. But I fucking came back!

MARK

For what? More drugs?

SANTO

For you...the trip doesn't matter Marky. I will always come back for you. For us.

MARK

We haven't been an us for a long time, Santo. (beat) I don't know what I was thinking with getting married. I don't know how to fix us, Sanyo, but the butterflies...

SANTO

Sometimes butterflies are meant to fly away?

MARK

Do you want to break up? Is that what you're telling me?

Santo moves to exit.

SANTO

We just keep circling, Mark, and I'm getting really fucking dizzy.

MARK

Santo get back in here!

SANTO

Can't...breathe....

Santo clutches his chest, then crashes to the floor.

MARK

Santo?

Mark runs to Santo. He shakes him.
Nothing.

MARK

Santo! Fuck! Santo? Santo, open your eyes. Santo, come on!
Come back.

Mark cradles Santo in his arms. He begins to hyperventilate.

MARK

You..said...you'll always...come...back...

Mark breaks down in tears. They both lay still. Lights down, blackout.

12. What Now?

Dina hands Mark a stack of sympathy cards.

DINA

Should we go through these cards?

MARK

Throw them out.

DINA

Mark, people went to a lot of trouble.

MARK

And all this sympathy makes me want to vomit.

DINA

You'll be okay.

MARK

Look at all this shit (Mark picks up a stack of cards) Sorry for your loss. Our thoughts are with you. Oh, look, it's part of God's plan. Fuck, every word is a reminder that he's gone.

DINA

Do you want to go out, or something? I don't think being here is doing us much good.

MARK

I'm glad you feel that way. Because I booked us a trip.

DINA

Excuse me?

MARK

Santo and I are going to Amsterdam...and you're coming with us.

DINA

No. Mark, no. I can't just pick up and go to Europe. Doug will go ballistic.

MARK

All the more reason to leave.

DINA

Things have been kind of unbearable lately.

MARK

What happened now?

DINA

Nothing! (beat, then calmer) Nothing's happening. And it's driving me nuts.

MARK

You lost me.

DINA

Actually, I can handle when he gets on my case. I'm fine when we have shouting matches over things so fucking stupid they don't even bear repeating. But now, it's like we go through these robotic gestures. He says good morning. But I know he doesn't mean it. I ask him how his day was. And I can care less. We don't eat together, and he's been staying out late, sleeping at the office. He's probably having an affair. And the thing is: I don't even care if he is. So, what does that tell you?

MARK

That it's time to get away. (beat) Please come.

MARK

I can't do this alone, Dina.

DINA

Are you going to stand there and pout until I say yes?

Mark pouts, and in the distance, there's the sound of a plane taking off.

13. Welcome to Holland

Schipol Airport in Amsterdam. Dina is sitting on her suitcase. Mark enters, on the verge of a panic attack. An airline employee, STEVEN (early 30s), is standing behind a podium.

DINA

Did they find it?

MARK

No. I think I'm having a heart attack.

DINA

Mark, calm down. We'll find it. Take a deep breath.

MARK

I don't want to.

DINA

Come on, Mark. It'll be good for you. Breathe with me...

MARK

I don't want to breathe! I just want my suitcase.

DINA

Would you stop? It's just a suitcase.

MARK

We need to find it.. Now. Don't just sit there. Help me.

DINA

Hey! You're not the boss of me, Gay-stapo. (beat) Now, lower your voice. People are staring.

MARK

I don't give a shit.

DINA

Ooo, how about that guy? He's cute.

STEVEN

Hello. May I help you?

Mark practically attacks him.

MARK

My bag is lost. I need it. Now!

DINA

You'll have to forgive him. He's a little cranky right now.

STEVEN

May I see your baggage check and passport please?

MARK

Here you go...Steven.

STEVEN

Steven. (Pronounced Stayfun)Thank you.

DINA

You have really nice arms.

MARK

What are you doing?

DINA

I'm a sucker for nice arms.

MARK

Stop it. You're married.

DINA

You're the one always telling me to leave him.

MARK

Not for this guy.

DINA

Yeah, he looks more like your team anyway.

MARK

Everyone looks gay here.

STEVEN

Excuse me?

MARK

Nothing. (to Steven) Can we just get on with this?

STEVEN

Sir, I regret to tell you that your bag has not yet arrived in this airport.

MARK

Fuck. If it's not here, then where?

STEVEN

We are tracking your luggage and will let you know--

MARK

This is beyond ridiculous!

DINA

Mark, calm down and let the guy do his job. (beat) So, just in case you were wondering, he likes men.

STEVEN

I think you'll find Amsterdam very welcoming.

MARK

Can we please get back to my suitcase?

DINA

They'll find the bag, Mark.

MARK

And if they don't?

STEVEN

In the unlikely case that your bag doesn't turn up, you will be compensated for your loss.

MARK

There are some things you can't replace!

DINA

Do you have any idea when you might know something?

STEVEN

We will call with an update later this evening. (beat) What is the name of your hotel, please?

MARK

I'm not going anywhere without my suitcase.

DINA

Mark, I'm hungry. And we're in Amsterdam! Let's...

MARK

Go if you want to, I'm staying.

STEVEN

Sir, when the bag comes in, we will deliver it to you.

MARK

I said I'm staying.

DINA

(to Steven) So, do you like working in the airport?

STEVEN

Very much. I started working here many years, because I thought I might encounter my father (quick beat) We've never meet, you see. But that's a long story.

DINA

Well, some of us aren't going anywhere for a while, right Mark?

STEVEN

I see. Well, he and my mother had, what do you call it, a one-night stand? And she never told him about me. And all I know about him is that he is from Sweden and that his job requires him to travel a lot, so sometimes, when I am here at work, I wonder if our paths will cross.

DINA

Have you ever tried finding him?

STEVEN

If it's meant to be, we will find one another.

MARK

It's no wonder my suitcase is still missing.

STEVEN

Excuse me please.

Steven exits. A beat.

MARK

Where the hell did this guy go?

DINA

Awww, do you miss him?

MARK

No!

DINA

I think you like him.

Steven enters.

STEVEN

Ah, you did not change your mind about leaving? Your baggage must be very important to you.

MARK

Yes.

STEVEN

I understand your frustration. But trust me, I am sure we will find it.

DINA

We'd really appreciate that. (nudging him) Right, Mark?

MARK

Yes, we would.

DINA

And?

MARK

Sorry for being rude.

STEVEN

It's okay. Bridge over the water, as you say.

MARK

Actually, no. The phrase is water under the bridge.

STEVEN

I don't think so.

MARK

I'm telling you it is.

STEVEN

Explain how this is possible.

MARK

Well...okay, so the water...that's like a disagreement you have with someone. And then you get over it, so it's, like, swept under the bridge...

STEVEN

I see. But in this particular situation, I think the bridge should be the argument. Why try and forget something when you can show the world you're over it?

Mark laughs.

STEVEN

It's nice to see you laugh. I think you have a very attractive smile.

DINA

Yep, I knew it.

MARK

Thanks.

STEVEN

Do you have a boyfriend?

DINA

No, he doesn't.

MARK

It's complicated.

STEVEN

It is a simple question, no? Either you have a boyfriend, or-

MARK

Well, he's--

DINA

Let's just say they're separated right now.

STEVEN

(smiling) That's too bad. (beat) Would you like to have a drink with me?

MARK

Um...

DINA

He'd love to.

MARK

Yes, of course we would.

DINA

What are you doing? This guy is totally hitting on you.

MARK

I didn't come here for that. Maybe you're right. You and I should--

DINA

I'm going for a walk. (beat) And a Heineken. Don't follow me.

MARK

Dina, stop! (beat) Dina!

DINA

Mark, we already took the trip. Now, let's go on the journey.

Dina exits.

STEVEN

Is she okay?

MARK

Who knows?

STEVEN

Are you okay?

MARK

Don't you have to get back to work?

STEVEN

My shift ended fifteen minutes ago.

MARK

Oh.

STEVEN

Would you like to have that drink?

MARK

Why?

STEVEN

Because, you are cute. A little bit of an attitude but cute, and--

MARK

Look, whatever you think is happening--

STEVEN

What is happening is that I am asking you to have a drink with me.

MARK

I don't drink.

STEVEN

Then we will go someplace else. To a cafe. Or shopping--

MARK

In case you don't find my bag, right?

STEVEN

We will find your bag.

MARK

But what if it doesn't...I mean, I don't know what I would do if you don't --

STEVEN

You are a very negative person?

MARK

What?

Santo enters.

SANTO

Still, you gotta admit...there were a whole lot of negatives in that sentence...

STEVEN

Are you okay?

SANTO

Two don'ts, and a doesn't.

MARK

I'm fine. Just tired. And I really want my suitcase.

STEVEN

I can see that I am not doing a very good job at distracting you from that, so maybe it's best that I leave you?

MARK

Yeah. Okay.

STEVEN

It was nice meeting you, Mark.

Steven moves to exit. Santo enters again.

SANTO

You see, that's your problem. You never realize what you have...

MARK

Steven! Wait.

Mark follows Steven.

SANTO

Until it's gone.

14. You and Me in The Red Light

Dina is paused on a sidewalk in Amsterdam's red light district, staring at her phone.

Dina lifts her head, and stares out toward the audience, presumably looking at a prostitute in one of the windows.

DINA

I give you a lot of credit. I don't think I could stand there and display my whole life in such a tiny little window. Not that I have any issue with what you're doing. I think it's kind of amazing, actually, to meet so many men...and get paid for it! (beat) But do you ever get lonely in that window? Or do ever get rejected and take it personally? Can I tell you a secret? I've had more than my share of rejections, and the first time it happened, I cried for weeks. His name was Alan. Dr. Alan Greenberg. And I was ten. He was my pediatrician, and he had the nicest smile...and the warmest hands...and every time I went to his office, I pictured Dr. Alan wrapping me in his big white lab coat and carrying me off into the sunset. So, one day, when he was checking my tonsils, I just burst and laid everything on the exam table. "I wuf eww!" But Dr. Alan..he pretended not to hear it, and then gave me a shot on top of it. What a jerk, right? But I've never stopped aiming big. I've been on dates with lawyers, politicians, and even a certain member of English royalty, but the guy who really stole my heart...his name is Doug..and he's an architect, which I thought would be great, because if anyone knew how to build something special, it would be an architect...but Doug...he was much better at tearing things down. I don't mean to sound like a victim. He's smart and creative and charming, at times, and we had our good moments, to be honest. Valentines Day at the Four seasons and ski vacations in Aspen, but nothing, it seemed was good enough for him. My hair isn't cut the right way...my lasagna's bland...I was gaining too much weight...(beat) Because I was pregnant, by the way. (beat) But I lost it...and that was my fault, too because everything...from his acid reflux to his balding head...is my fault.

I've put up with this for seven years, and I know I deserve better and all that, but I know he won't leave me because people like Doug are weak...and I'm weak, because I wanted a sure thing. (beat) I bet people sleep with you because you remind them of someone they know. Or is it because you're the furthest thing from the person they love? I would pick you. You're fucking gorgeous, and I bet you even read. I should leave him. (beat) I've said that before, but this time, I don't know, I can't explain it, but I look at you, and in even in that tiny little window, you seem so free. And that's the person I want...I need to be again.

Shaking, Dina picks up her phone and dials.

DINA

Hey. It's me. We need to talk...

Lights fade on Dina, as we move to the other side of the stage, where Steven leads Mark around the Van Gogh Museum.

STEVEN

So, what do you think? Better to stare at some great art than airport walls, no?

MARK

Yes. It's good to be out.

STEVEN

Come, let me show you my favorite. This was Van Gogh's last. (beat) Many think it's a premonition.

Santo enters.

SANTO

He's got nice eyes. Nice full lips.

STEVEN

Just days after painting it, Van Gogh went into a wheat field and shot himself in the chest.

SANTO

I can see you watching them, and you're not at all interested in the words.

STEVEN

I, personally, believe his death was because he was using absinthe or drugs.

SANTO

Hey, just like me.

STEVEN

Or, perhaps something even greater than drugs: passion! Van Gogh was an artist, of course. There was nothing he loved more than painting.

SANTO

You want to kiss him don't you. Go ahead, Mark. Pull those lips close to yours. Breathe in. Open your mouth. Breathe out.

STEVEN

Van Gogh's own words: I have put my heart and my soul into my work and have lost half my mind in the process.

SANTO

Close your eyes and pretend it's me.

STEVEN

And though his paintings were brilliant--some of the best the world has seen, he never felt good enough. It's tragic, I would say. The one thing he loved most of all, was the one thing that drove him to death.

SANTO

Just like us, Marky. Come on, Mark. What are you waiting for? Look at those eyes. Those beautiful eyes. They're calling for you. Just like mine used to. Kiss him. Feel him. Fuck him. Maybe he can fulfill you like I never could.

MARK

That's enough!

STEVEN

Was my story so terrible?

SANTO

Tell him, Mark. (beat) Tell him you were thinking about me. Tell him you'd rather be here with me!

A beat, Mark looks toward both, trying to make a decision.

Mark takes Steven's hand, and they exit as Santo watches on. Dina exits.

SANTO

Shit, I never could get you to hold my hand in public.

Santo exits.

15. Beneath the Tulips

Mark and Steven reach the HomoMonument. Steven is very excited.

MARK

Slow down!

STEVEN

But we are almost there, hurry up...

MARK

I'm trying, verdomme!

STEVEN

Ah, you are learning some Dutch. Very good (beat) So, of all the places in Amsterdam, this is my favorite.

MARK

The HomoMonument. (beat) Right, of course. Santo told me about it when we...(beat) so why is this your favorite place?

STEVEN

It reminds me of someone very special.

MARK

An old boyfriend?

STEVEN

My husband.

MARK

Fuck. You're married? (beat) I can't...I have to go.

STEVEN

Mark, please let me explain.

MARK

I don't know what kind of marriage you have, but I'm not going to be the one you cheat with--

STEVEN

Being with you is not cheating--

MARK

Then you have an open relationship or something? That's even worse. I never understand how people can--

STEVEN

It is not cheating because he is dead.

MARK

Oh. (beat) I'm so sorry.

STEVEN

My husband, Marcelo, loved to come here. We used to have picnics, down on the last triangle, and stare out at the city, and each time, he would ask me when I was going to ask him to marry him. But, I didn't think marriage was important--

MARK

Maybe we should talk about something else?

STEVEN

I miss talking about him, Mark.

A beat.

MARK

How long were you together?

STEVEN

Sixteen years.

MARK

That's a long time.

STEVEN

It never felt so.

MARK

So, how did you meet?

STEVEN

We were in a Russian literature class in my last year at university. He was here from Rome, and I was instantly smitten with his dark eyes and olive skin. It took me six months to work up the courage to ask him out and even then I couldn't get the words out, so I just...fell on him and then offered to buy him a drink to make up for it.

MARK

Did it work?

STEVEN

Yes. But then I was so nervous on our first date I spilled my drink all over him. And then I knocked the glass off the table and onto his foot. He grabbed me by the shirt and I thought he was going to kill me...you know those Italians and their temper! But instead, he leaned in and kissed me. And I was in love for sure. We went out for a year, and then we moved in together. We were so happy, too. But last year, my Marcelo...he got cancer. And it spread so fast. He died just a couple of months ago, just before his 36th birthday. It was so sudden. One moment we were holding hands as we strolled through Vondelpark and then I was holding his hand as he laid in the hospice. Those days were the hardest. Some days, Marcelo would beg me not to come. He would say, "Steven, for as bad as I look, you are looking even worse!" But Marcelo always looked good. He made sure of that. He was so vain! In his final hours, even, he asked for a manicure and a haircut. I would have done anything to save him. I finally asked him to marry me and, thankfully, he said yes.

And Marcelo could hardly lift his hand from the bed high enough for me to put the ring on his finger, but he was so happy that day. And I was, too (beat) And, when he got very bad, Marcelo asked me to pray for him. And even though I am atheist I did it. But, he died two days later. And I kept thinking, maybe I didn't ask hard enough. Maybe I should have done more. And do you have any idea what it's like to lose the one person you care about the most--and blame yourself for it?

MARK

More than you know.

STEVEN

I'm sorry, Mark. I did not mean to go on and on. I miss him very much, you see. And no matter how much time goes by, I still feel as though Marcelo and I were together just--

MARK

The other day?

STEVEN

Yes. (beat) So, should we continue on?

MARK

I can't. (beat) Steven...as long as we're on the subject, I have to tell you something...about my boyfriend, Santo.

STEVEN

The one you are separated from?

MARK

Yes. The reason we're separated, you see, is because, he's...dead, too. (laughs, awkwardly) What a thing to have in common, right?

STEVEN

I am very sorry to hear that, Mark. What happened?

MARK

I don't want to talk about it. (beat) I came to Amsterdam to to say goodbye..but I'm having a little trouble...

STEVEN

It takes time, Mark.

MARK

No, I mean I really can't say goodbye because...his ashes...are missing

STEVEN

You lost his ashes?

MARK

No, you did. Well, the airline. They were in my suitcase.

STEVEN

Ah, That is why you want your luggage back so badly!

MARK

I just wanted to give him the trip I promised him.

STEVEN

You are very sweet, Mark.

MARK

I'm pathetic. I mean, who loses their dead boyfriend's ashes? This whole trip has been a fucking nightmare. (beat) Except for you. (beat) You're really charming, not to mention good looking, and if things were different, I just might--

Steven plants a kiss on Mark, and thought caught off guard, he doesn't fight it. They continue the kiss as the lights fade.

16. Afterglow

Lights up. Mark enters on the phone.

MARK

Hello? Yes...this is Mark..(beat) Yes, I'll be there. Thank you.

Steven enters.

MARK

They found my suitcase.

STEVEN

That's terrific.

MARK

They're bringing it by my hotel in an hour.

STEVEN

I can drive you.

MARK

It's okay. (beat) So, should we...

STEVEN

When is your flight back home?

MARK

Tomorrow.

STEVEN

And will you ever come back to Holland?

MARK

I don't know. (beat) But you could always come visit the states...

STEVEN

Or, maybe, rather than plan future moments, we should simply enjoy this one.

Steven kisses Mark softly. Mark exits.

16. So long, Santo

Mark enters, carrying a backpack.

MARK

I guess its befitting that we ended everything here. I mean, this city is beautiful. And its canals. You can get lost in them. I've spent half this morning alone just staring at the ripples. Which is strange. Because I feel like I've spent my entire life, or at least my life with you, trying to find the calm. But here we are...

(beat)

I really don't know what to say now. I love you. I'm sorry. You've heard them all before. I guess the only other word to say is goodbye. I hope this is what you wanted.

Mark takes out the ashes, prepares to pour them in the canal. Santo enters.

SANTO

Wait. Don't leave me.

MARK

Who are we kidding? I'll never you, my angel baby.

SANTO

I hate it when you call me angel baby.

MARK

But butterflies...are definitely meant to fly away.

Mark kisses Santo on the lips, then opens a can of ashes, as the lights fade on.

End of play.