

MIND OVER MATT

A COMEDY IN TWO ACTS

By Scott Haan

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SYNOPSIS: Ever argue with yourself? Ever said, “I don’t know what got into me?” This is the story of Matthew Lane. Matt is a successful illustrator with a couple of deadlines and several squabbling inner personalities who do weird and wonderful things. As Matt tries to gather up enough nerve to ask out the girl of his dreams, Matt’s egos, who all have their own hang-ups, lead him in one too many directions. When Matt’s overworked boss comes to believe that Matt has a crush on her, the conflicted egos manage to make a bad situation much, much worse.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(SIX MEN, FIVE WOMEN, EXTRAS)

MATT (m)Matthew Lane is a young commercial artist who, like all of us, has different sides to his personality. In Matt’s case, those sides seem to have a life of their own. (160 lines)

They are personified in the story by comically stereotypical characters, collectively known as the EGOS:

BUTCH (m)The bad boy ego. His interests include women and beer, and not much else. He is scruffy and crass, and says exactly what’s on his mind. (112 lines)

DYLAN (m).....The charming ego. He is handsome, suave, and sophisticated, and quite the ladies’ man. However, he is also incredibly vain, and carries a mirror at all times. (99 lines)

MIND OVER MATT

FLOYD (m)The nerd ego. Comfortable with calculus but terrified of women, he is a socially awkward know-it-all hypochondriac with a nasal condition. (106 lines)

ROSE (f)The female ego. She is Matt's feminine side, and is rational, caring, and nurturing. The others respect her, even if they're not sure why she's there in the first place. (106 lines)

ZEKE (m).....The grumpy ego. He is the bitter, angry old man that becomes harder to suppress as we get older. He is also perpetually sleepy, and has no patience for young people. (43 lines)

The DEVIL (m or f)Inclined to mischief and sneakiness. [Gender flexible but preferably male.] (14 lines)

The ANGEL (m or f)The voice of goodness and charity. [Gender flexible but preferably male.] (10 lines)

PENNY (f)The young woman Matt has been admiring from afar. And it's easy to see why: she is sweet, funny, strong and independent. (90 lines)

MRS. KILLIAN (f)Matt's boss, who has gained a reputation for being a cruel and difficult taskmaster. She is all-business, no-nonsense, and more than a little frightening. (67 lines)

MRS. SNYDER (f)Matt's humorless landlady. (8 lines)

OPTIONAL: Five EGOS for PENNY (4W, 1M) who are counterparts to MATT's EGOS. (See ENDING OPTION #1 at the end of this script.)

SETTING

Our story takes place in the apartment of MATTHEW LANE, a graphic artist for an advertising firm. He lives modestly, so the only noteworthy furniture in his living room is a couch (CS), a rocking chair (USR), a desk or drafting table (DSL), and a small TV (DSR). There are three doors. The SL door (a swinging door) leads into the kitchen; the CS door (an open doorway) leads to his bedroom and bathroom; and the SR door leads outside to the hallway.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE

- SCENE 1 Tuesday morning
SCENE 2 Friday night (3 days later)
SCENE 3 Saturday morning (the next day)

ACT TWO

- SCENE 1 Saturday morning (seconds later)
SCENE 2 Saturday morning (a few minutes later)

PROPS

- A toy gun or pistol for Floyd
- A calculator watch for Floyd
- A pocket pen for Floyd
- A hand mirror for Dylan
- A cane for Zeke
- Oversized advertisement artwork for Matt (two identical copies)
- A pencil for Matt
- Three cell phones (one for Matt, one for Mrs. Killian, and a flip-front phone for Floyd to use as a Star Trek tri-corder)
- A slip of paper with a phone number written on it
- A coffee mug (with liquid inside)
- 2 glasses of “Sprite” (water will work)
- A comic book
- A big portfolio book for displaying artwork
- A big portfolio bag for carrying artwork
- A devil’s pitchfork

MIND OVER MATT

- A towel
- Duct tape to bind Floyd's hands, legs and mouth (you might consider making pre-taped cuffs attached with Velcro that can be quickly affixed to Floyd backstage, and easily removed by Rose onstage)
- A bottle of aspirin
- Two (or more) sippy cups in an "unopened" box or container, carried inside a plastic bag
- A toy rifle for Butch
- A walkie-talkie for Butch
- A bouquet of flowers for Zeke
- A serving bowl filled with popcorn
- Two empty bowls

COSTUMES

MATT

- (ACT ONE, SCENE 1) Shorts and a t-shirt with an instantly recognizable logo or graphic (maybe a band or pop culture character)
- (Middle of ACT ONE, SCENE 1) A work outfit, like Dockers and a dress shirt, which he dons onstage
- (ACT ONE, SCENE 2) A nice outfit, suitable for a date
- (ACT ONE, SCENE 3 to the end) A casual, around-the-house weekend outfit

BUTCH

- (ACT ONE, SCENE 1) A t-shirt with attitude (such as an irreverent slogan) and torn jeans
- (Middle of ACT TWO, SCENE 1 to the end) Military fatigues or army gear; the more camouflage and olive green, the better

DYLAN

- (For the entire show) A handsome, GQ-worthy suit and tie

FLOYD

- (ACT ONE, SCENE 1) A white dress shirt, formal black jacket, black dress shoes and socks, comical boxer shorts (no pants), taped glasses, and possibly a calculator watch
- (Middle of ACT ONE, SCENE 1 to the middle of ACT TWO, SCENE 1) A stereotypically geeky outfit, with a button-up shirt, pants worn too high, and a pocket protector; he dons this outfit onstage
- (Middle of ACT TWO, SCENE 1 to the end) A Star Trek costume

ROSE

- (For the entire show) A bright, perky casual outfit or dress

ZEKE

- (ACT ONE, SCENE 1 to the middle of ACT TWO, SCENE 1) Casual “old man” clothes, maybe a past-its-prime sweater or cardigan
- (Middle of ACT TWO, SCENE 1 to the end) An absurdly antique-looking “old man” suit

PENNY

- (ACT ONE, SCENE 2) A nice outfit, suitable for a date
- (ACT TWO, SCENE 1 to the end) A casual weekend outfit

MRS. KILLIAN

- (ACT TWO, SCENE 1) Professional attire, such as a business suit
- (Middle of ACT TWO, SCENE 1) Matt’s distinctive t-shirt from the first scene, accompanied by either her business skirt or men’s boxer shorts
- (ACT TWO, SCENE 2) Same outfit, but with a jacket and/or pants worn over it for the sake of modesty

MRS. SNYDER

- (For the entire show) A morning gown and slippers, with rollers in her hair

DEVIL

- (For the entire show) A red devil outfit, with horns, a tail, a cape and a pitchfork

ANGEL

- (For the entire show) A white angel outfit, with wings and a yellow halo

Optional (PENNY'S EGOS, for ENDING OPTION #1)

MYRTLE

- An ultra-conservative outfit, like a shy, pent-up librarian (she is Floyd's counterpart)

JESSICA

- Casual and scruffy clothes, like a t-shirt and ripped jeans (she is Butch's counterpart)

BUFFY

- A glamorous outfit such as a sparkling dress, or something you would wear to the prom (she is Dylan's counterpart)

GERTRUDE

- Old lady clothes, like a long plaid skirt and a button-up sweater, with her hair in a matronly bun (she is Zeke's counterpart)

ADAM

- Bright, sunshiny clothes, cheery and comfortable (he is Rose's counterpart)

DEDICATION

To Mom and Dad,

For unwavering love, support and encouragement

Every minute of every day.

Oh yeah, and for giving me life. That was nice, too.

Scott

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

AT RISE:

Tuesday morning. The modest apartment of MATTHEW LANE. Young MATT is sound asleep at his desk, wearing shorts and a t-shirt. After a few moments, FLOYD pops up from behind the couch. We only see him from the torso up. He is wearing a black suit or tux jacket in a futile attempt to look debonair, but his mannerisms and nasally voice, not to mention the tape on his glasses, instantly betray his utter nerdiness. He is crouching low, brandishing a toy gun, and scanning the room for prying eyes.

FLOYD: *(Melodramatically, speaking into his watch.)* Deep within the enemy's fortress. Danger lurks around every corner . . . and death is only one mistake away. The fate of the entire world rests in my hands. Some would call this mission foolish . . . impossible . . . even suicidal. *(Dramatic pause.)* I call it Tuesday.

Unbeknownst to FLOYD, BUTCH enters from the CS door (the bedroom) behind him and silently watches, shaking his head. He is scruffy, with wild hair, dressed in a t-shirt and torn jeans.

FLOYD: *(Puffing out his chest.)* For I am the world's greatest super-spy. And I don't know the meaning of the word "fear"!

BUTCH: *(Mock clapping.)* Wow.

FLOYD: *(Jumping a mile while yelping in a high-pitched, girlish voice.)* Aaah!

BUTCH: Do you know the meaning of the word "loser"?

FLOYD: Don't DO that!

Hand on his heart, FLOYD walks around from behind the couch, and we can now see his lower half. He is wearing boxer shorts, black dress shoes and black socks, but no pants.

BUTCH: *(With barely concealed pity.)* Floyd, what are you doin'?

FLOYD: *(Proudly.)* Giving Matt a secret agent dream. Just because he's asleep doesn't mean he should be bored.

BUTCH: Enough with the nerd dreams. Last night, it was flying in a spaceship with some old dude.

FLOYD: That "spaceship" is the U.S.S. Enterprise, and that "old dude" is sci-fi legend James T. Kirk . . . William Shatner!!!

BUTCH: Man. With YOU in his head, it's no wonder Matt's single. Tomorrow night, I'll handle the dream. I'm thinkin' somethin' with a cheerleading squad.

DYLAN enters from the same CS door, looking suave in a nice suit. He is admiring himself in a portable mirror.

DYLAN: Morning, Butch. Hey, Floyd.

FLOYD: *(With a hula dance move.)* Aloha, Dylan.

DYLAN: *(Finally getting a good look at FLOYD.)* Another James Bond dream, I see. *(Conspiratorially taking him aside.)* So, Floyd. Got everything you need for this mission?

FLOYD: Of course!

DYLAN: Synchronized communicator watch?

FLOYD: Check!

DYLAN: Secret decoder pen?

FLOYD: *(Pulling one from his pocket.)* Check!

DYLAN: Pants?

FLOYD: Ch - *(Looking down, he finally realizes he is only half-dressed and gasps, covering himself.)* Oh, no! Another “no pants” dream? Sorry about that.

BUTCH: Don’t apologize. Makes it easier for me to give you your morning wedgie.

DYLAN: *(Stopping BUTCH’S movement.)* Boys. We do need to get moving here.

FLOYD: *(Looking at his calculator watch, he instantly panics.)* Great Gandalf the Wizard! It’s almost ten?!?

DYLAN: It’s all right, Floyd. Don’t panic.

FLOYD: But Matt was supposed to be in the office an hour ago!

ROSE enters from the same CS door, wearing a bright, preppy casual dress and displaying far too much early-morning cheer.

ROSE: Good morning, testoster-roomies! It’s a beautiful day!

FLOYD: Rose! Code red! It’s ten o’clock and Matt’s not awake yet!

ROSE: Uh-oh. Dylan, what happened? You’re the internal alarm clock!

DYLAN: It’s not MY fault. We were up drawing half the night.

BUTCH: And Zeke’s still snoozin’. Guy could sleep through a firing squad.

FLOYD: I’ll get him. *(He exits through the CS door.)*

BUTCH: *(Calling after him.)* While you’re in there, grab some PANTS, would-ja?

DYLAN: *(To ROSE.)* So which “when I was your age” speech are we gonna hear today?

ROSE: *(A gruff imitation.)* My money’s on “I held down eight jobs at the same time.”

FLOYD returns, carrying a change of clothes and pushing ZEKE into the room. Zeke is wearing old man clothes, and waving a cane.

ZEKE: *(Gruff.)* Hey! Don't push, ya little weiner! Where's the fire?

DYLAN: We're running a little late here, Zeke.

ZEKE: All right, all right.

All five characters congregate by the desk, right behind MATT.

ROSE: On the count of three, okay? One . . . two . . . three!

ROSE / DYLAN / BUTCH / FLOYD / ZEKE: *(In unison.)* WAKE UP!

ZEKE: Ya panty-waist!

MATT'S eyes open, and he lifts his head from the desk.

MATT: *(Groggy, to himself.)* I'm up. I'm up.

BUTCH: 'Bout time.

Blinking hard, MATT tries to get his bearings. However, he never so much as glances at the others. That's because FLOYD, BUTCH, DYLAN, ROSE and ZEKE are not real.

They are merely aspects of his personality, the components of his mind, hereafter known as the EGOS. Although their actions sometimes directly influence him, MATT will never acknowledge their presence in any way. They are invisible to everybody but each other. Also, MATT should never physically touch any EGOS, or any EGO props (such as DYLAN'S mirror or ZEKE'S rocking chair) because they don't exist, either.

ZEKE: *(Shaking his head with disdain.)* Hmph. Sleepin' until ten o'clock. When I was that age, I held down eight jobs at the same time! *(ROSE proudly beams and does a victory gesture, her prediction having come true. Smiling, DYLAN bows to her admiringly.)* I got an hour a week to sleep, but instead, I spent it looking for job number nine!

MATT: *(Cracking his neck.)* Oooowwww. *(He rubs the back of his neck and grimaces. When he does so, the EGOS rub their own necks, as well.)*

FLOYD: We shouldn't be sleeping at our desk, you know. We need a mattress that provides sufficient lumbar support. *(Indicating MATT'S back.)* We could develop a spinal disc herniation!

ROSE: (*Putting her arms around FLOYD and ZEKE.*) Guys! Stop being so negative! Do you realize how lucky we are? We are at the controls of a wonderful guy. I mean, just look at him!

They do. At that moment, both MATT and BUTCH simultaneously scratch their right armpits, then take a sniff and recoil. The EGOS all watch MATT do this, then knowingly turn to glare at BUTCH, who still has his arm raised.

BUTCH: (*Defensive when he realizes they're all staring.*) What?

ROSE: Matt's the best. He just needs a little push from time to time. Speaking of which . . .

ROSE makes a grand gesture of looking at her bare arm as if checking the time. This causes MATT to actually look at his watch. His face registers alarm and he jumps to his feet.

MATT: WHAT? Oh, man! Not cool!

MATT kicks into high gear, a man with a mission. He disappears through the CS door and returns with dress pants and a shirt, which he lays out on the couch. Then he puts his wallet in the pants pocket, gets his shoes by the door, brings in a fresh cup of coffee from the kitchen, etc. As MATT charges around the room, the EGOS continue their conversation.

ROSE: Okay. We all need to concentrate now so we can make up some lost time, all right?

FLOYD: Right. Teamwork.

DYLAN picks up the mirror and smiles, checking himself out again. FLOYD starts to change into the clothes he brought with him, a stereotypically nerdy outfit.

ROSE: Right. That means Zeke, no snoozing. (*ZEKE tries to shake off his sleepiness.*) Dylan, no primping. (*Ashamed, DYLAN puts the mirror away.*) Floyd, no -

Both FLOYD and MATT are putting on their pants. As if on cue, FLOYD suddenly trips and sprawls forward. Immediately, MATT falls, too, in the same direction.

ROSE: - doing that.

FLOYD: Sorry.

There is a knock on the SR door. MATT and the EGOS all look to the door.

MRS. SNYDER: *(Offstage.)* Mr. Lane!

BUTCH: *(Groan!)* It's Mrs. Snyder!

MATT: Uh, I'll be right there. *(MATT makes a desperate attempt to make the apartment a little more presentable.)*

ROSE: Okay, Dylan, you're up.

DYLAN: Again? Why do I always have to handle Mrs. Snyder?

ROSE: You know the rules. Matt has to behave a certain way around different people, so each of us has our role. When Matt's hanging out with the guys, Butch takes over. When he's talking about movies or comics, Floyd takes over. When he needs to be respectful and courteous, I take over. And when he needs to turn on the charm . . .

DYLAN: *(Stepping to the front.)* Okay, okay. I AM good with the ladies. But why doesn't Zeke ever have to drive?

ROSE: Are you kidding? In what situation would we want HIM to be the dominant personality? No offense, Zeke.

ZEKE: Aw, ya booger-eaters!

MRS. SNYDER: *(Another knock, getting impatient.)* Today!

MATT: Sorry.

MATT opens the door and MRS. SNYDER enters. She is a humorless woman in her 40's or 50's, wearing a morning gown, with rollers in her hair.

MATT: Good morning, Mrs. Snyder. You look very nice today. LOVE what you've done with your h - *(Realizing that her hair is in rollers.)* - uh, complexion.

ROSE: *(To DYLAN.)* This, to you, is charming?

DYLAN: I'm warming up.

MRS. SNYDER: Save it. You're four days late with your rent again.

MATT: Is that all? Well, I only get paid every other week, but I'm due for another check in a few days.

MRS. SNYDER: Not my problem. You need to be more responsible.

MATT: Ah, but see, "Responsibility" is my middle name!

MRS. SNYDER: Oh yeah? Is that why you're here at 10 a.m. on a weekday, instead of working?

BUTCH: *(Charging forward.)* Hey! We were up ALL NIGHT working, you big -

DYLAN: *(Stopping his movement.)* Let it go.

MATT: Touché. Tell you what. I get paid Friday. How about I get you the rent then, and I'll throw in personalized drawings for your

grandson? What does he like these days? Pokémon? Transformers?

MRS. SNYDER: He likes when grandma has food in the cupboard.

MATT: That's good, too. Say. Can I trust you with a secret? (*No reaction.*) Want to know the REAL reason I'm late with my rent sometimes? (*No reaction.*) It's just so that you'll visit me more!

MRS. SNYDER: (*Her expression unchanging.*) Can it, Romeo. Just have the rent under my door by five on Friday.

MATT: Will do. Thanks. (*MRS. SNYDER opens the SR door to exit.*)

Oh, Mrs. Snyder? One more thing. I'm single at the moment, and I was wondering . . . Do you have a sister?

MRS. SNYDER: (*Deadpan.*) Yeah, but I'm not speaking to her. She owes me rent.

MRS. SNYDER exits.

BUTCH: Wow. Tough crowd.

DYLAN: She loves me.

ROSE: We would have been better off with Zekel!

DYLAN: Hey, it worked, didn't it? We got an extension.

FLOYD: Come on, guys. We need to get back to the drawing board.

ROSE: Literally.

MATT hurries to the desk, looks down at the artwork there, picks up a pencil, and starts doing touch-ups. FLOYD walks over and looks over MATT'S shoulder.

ROSE: How does it look?

FLOYD: Nice. We're pretty good at this.

BUTCH: When's it due?

FLOYD: Today, Butch! Mrs. Killian wanted us to turn it in first thing this morning!

DYLAN: Yeah, and I don't want her mad at us again.

BUTCH: Aw, you wussies. You're afraid of a chick?

DYLAN: (*Firmly, and dead serious.*) YES. Yes I am.

ROSE: She's frightening.

DYLAN: Killian makes Snyder look like a giggling schoolgirl.

FLOYD, DYLAN and ROSE all murmur in agreement.

BUTCH: Oh, come on. You don't believe those stories, do you?

FLOYD: I believe in quantifiable statistics. Fact: Every husband Mrs. Killian has ever had has died under mysterious circumstances.

Fact: Her last assistant disappeared without a warning, and was never seen again. Coincidence? I don't think so!

DYLAN: I heard she's killed five husbands so far.

ROSE: I heard eleven.

ZEKE: Well I heard that you're all a bunch of lily-livered pansies.

DYLAN: Maybe, but there's a reason people call Mrs. Killian "Mrs. Kill-Her-Men" behind her back.

ROSE: I've heard that one.

DYLAN: Other people call her "The Black Widow"!

BUTCH: What does THAT mean?

DYLAN: It's because of the spider. After they mate, the female black widow always kills and eats the male.

ROSE: Ick.

FLOYD: *(Condescendingly, as if this is common knowledge.)* False. Only the species "Lactrodectus mactans", indigenous to the southeastern United States, routinely engages in sexual cannibalism.

BUTCH: You're a living argument FOR "sexual cannibalism."

DYLAN: Let's just get this job done as fast as possible.

ZEKE: Aw, ya little ankle-biters. You have no idea what "discipline" is. When I was in the Corps . . .

DYLAN: *(Rolling his eyes.)* Here we go.

ZEKE: . . . We had a commanding officer who was so mean, he'd shoot one of us in the leg every morning, just to wake us up! And if you complained, he'd shove you out of an airplane with no parachute! And YOU guys are scared of a broad!

BUTCH: Zeke's right. He's nuts, but he's right. She ain't so bad. She just needs someone to stand up to her. Boss or no boss, she gives us any crap, you put ME up front. I'll give her a piece of his mind!

The phone rings. MATT looks at the caller ID and gulps.

MATT: Uh-oh.

FLOYD: It's HER.

BUTCH: *(Suddenly changing his tune.)* Uh . . . On second thought, the rest of you will never change until you learn to stand up for yourselves. Here, Dylan. Now's your chance.

BUTCH forces DYLAN to the front, and stands/hides behind him.

DYLAN looks petrified, but instantly puts on his game face smile the moment MATT answers the phone.

MATT: *(Into the phone, he tries to sound confident, but the more she interrupts, the more flustered he becomes.)* Matthew Lane. Oh, hi,

Mrs. Killian. How are – *(After a beat, he cringes and looks at his watch.)* Yes. I know, I'm sorry. I've got the Nolans campaign right here, and I'm almost – *(Pause.)* No. I know it doesn't grow on trees. *(Both MATT and DYLAN smile, seeing a chance to lighten the mood with wit. They both make a simultaneous arm gesture that indicates a wide field.)* I wish it did! I'd plant a whole – *(Both MATT and DYLAN grimace as their humor bombs.)* No, ma'am. You're right, tardiness is NOT a laughing matter.

ROSE: *(Slapping DYLAN on the arm.)* No humor! She's immune!

DYLAN: Sorry.

ZEKE falls asleep again and lets out a loud snore. As a result, MATT audibly yawns into the phone, which elicits an angry reaction from the other end.

MATT: No! No, you're NOT "boring me." It's just that I was up all night working on -

ROSE, BUTCH and FLOYD realize that ZEKE is asleep and rush over to wake him up.

ZEKE: *(Startled awake.)* Don't touch my oatmeal!

ROSE: Zeke! Stay focused!

MATT: Well, just a few more hours. I could have it to you by noon? . . . Great. I'll see you then. Thank - *(Clearly, his party hung up in mid-sentence.)* - you.

MATT hangs up the phone, and to emphasize how spectacularly poorly that phone call went, he slams his forehead twice on the desk. Each time, the EGOS all grunt in pain and rub their aching foreheads.

BUTCH: Ow! That's the kind'a stuff that leads to brain damage!

ROSE: Well. That was pleasant. Who's in favor of buckling down and working?

DYLAN, ROSE and FLOYD all raise their hands, rattled by the phone call. MATT concentrates intently on his artwork, feverishly drawing all over it.

ZEKE: Bah. Ya hairy-backed Marys.

DYLAN: That woman has issues.

ZEKE: I like her. She's got fire.

ROSE: Just think, guys. We're only a few hours away from finishing the Nolans campaign. The biggest client we've had since we joined the firm.

FLOYD: It's been three months, but it's almost done.

BUTCH: Time to par-tay!

DYLAN: You know, I DO think a celebration is in order. What can we do to mark the occasion?

ZEKE: Take a nap.

FLOYD: *(Raising his hand vigorously.)* Oh, oh, I know! There's a marathon of all six "Star Wars" movies on the Sci-Fi Channel this Saturday. Huh? Huh?

ROSE: Nooooooo. Veto.

BUTCH: I got it. I know how we can celebrate. *(Dramatic pause.)* We finally grow a spine and ask out that CHICK from the cafeteria.

ROSE: *(Offended.)* Oh, THAT'S charming. We love it when you call us "chicks." Her name's Penny Ramsey.

DYLAN: *(About to protest automatically, but then has second thoughts.)* This must be a record. I agree with Butch AGAIN.

BUTCH: All right! Dylan's on board! Who else is with me?

ROSE: *(Grudgingly admitting.)* Not a bad idea, Butch. She seems nice.

ZEKE: Yeah! Maybe we can get us some smoochies, for a change!

FLOYD: Did I mention it's the theatrical version of the original trilogy? Before George Lucas used CGI to butcher his own masterpiece?

BUTCH: Oh, no. You're not ruining this for me, Poindexter.

FLOYD: But . . . we don't know anything about her!

BUTCH: We know she's hot! What else is there?

FLOYD: For one thing, we don't even know where she works in the office plaza!

DYLAN: Exactly! That's why we need to ask her out, so we can learn!

FLOYD: But we don't see her in the lunch room every day. She probably won't even show up today.

BUTCH: No problem. I didn't Google her phone number for nothing.

MATT, whose facial expressions have been registering this internal debate, pulls a slip of paper from his pocket and looks at it intently, making a decision.

FLOYD: But –

BUTCH: Forget it. You're outnumbered. I'm done spying on her from –

DYLAN: *(Quickly interrupting.)* ADMIRING her.

BUTCH: Yeah, right. ADMIRING her from behind the yogurt dispenser because YOU'RE afraid of girls. We're asking her out, and that's final.

ROSE: Floyd, I know you're scared, but it's okay. We'll all do this together.

FLOYD looks around at the others, who have clearly made up their minds, and starts to get nervous. Involuntarily, he makes the strangest sound.

FLOYD: HONK!

FLOYD'S "HONK" is a hideous, ridiculous noise; it sounds like he's trying to clear his sinuses and imitate a bus horn at the same time. Every time FLOYD makes this noise, MATT involuntarily crinkles his nose, as if suppressing a sneeze.

ZEKE: What the Honus Wagner was THAT?

BUTCH: *(Sigh.)* We explain this to you every time, you senile old coot.

FLOYD: *(For the millionth time.)* I have a perforated septum. HONK!
When I get agitated, I have trouble breathing, and it sounds -

DYLAN: It sounds like the mating call of a deranged goose.

FLOYD: HONK!

ROSE: *(With a comforting hand on FLOYD'S shoulder.)* Just calm down, Floyd. Relax.

ZEKE: How can you have a perforated septum, ya mama's boy?
You're not even real!

DYLAN: How can YOU have narcolepsy?

BUTCH: Let's just do this before the wimp blows it for us.

FLOYD: HONK!

BUTCH steps forward. MATT picks up the phone and dials the number on the paper, then takes a deep breath. He picks up the coffee mug from the desk and begins to pace.

FLOYD: I can't watch.

FLOYD rushes to the other side of the room to get some distance from the phone, but in his haste, he trips and falls. When he does, MATT stumbles and spills the mug, splashing coffee onto his artwork. MATT and the EGOS all gasp.

MATT: *(Picking up his now-soggy artwork.)* Oh no! CRAP!!! *(Pause as he hears a voice on the other end.)* Uh, no, I wasn't talking to you! I mean, hi, Matt, this is Penny! I mean . . .

DYLAN: Oh, THIS is going well.

Lights fade out. End of ACT ONE, SCENE 1.

ACT ONE, SCENE 2

AT RISE:

Friday night. The apartment is empty and dark. MATT opens the SR door.

MATT: Here we are. *(MATT turns on the lights and takes a few steps inside. PENNY tentatively walks in behind him.)* Hey, thanks a lot for driving me – *(While stepping inside, MATT, who has had a few beers, accidentally hits the couch with his leg.)* Ow! Man! Did you see that? Couch jumped right out in front of me! *(He limps forward, sits on the far end of the couch, and rubs his aching shin.)*

PENNY: I know. And you CLEARLY had the right-of-way.

BUTCH, ROSE, DYLAN, ZEKE and FLOYD enter from the open SR door, dancing behind PENNY in a conga line. They're all a little tipsy. DYLAN'S suit is unkempt - his shirt untucked, his tie loosened. Singing and laughing, they stop US, behind the couch. They're not half-bad, except FLOYD, who always kicks in the opposite direction from everybody else.

DYLAN: Hey, look at us! We're a "train of thought"! *(Pulls an imaginary train whistle.)* Woo-woo!

FLOYD: All aboard!

ROSE: And we're a "one-track mind"! Ha! *(The EGOS all laugh, amused with themselves.)*

MATT: Thanks again for driving me home.

PENNY: Sure. You're in no condition to get behind the wheel.

MATT: Yeah. *(Sincerely.)* You know, that's really not like me. I'm usually not much of a drinker.

DYLAN, ROSE, FLOYD and ZEKE all cross their arms and glare at BUTCH.

BUTCH: *(Indicating FLOYD.)* Hey, I had to do SOMETHING to drown out that god awful NOSE thing HE'S been doing all night. "Honk! Honk!"

FLOYD: I can't help it if I have inadequate sinus drainage!

MATT: I hope you don't have a long drive home.

PENNY: Oh, about 20 minutes. Um . . . Is it all right if I powder my nose before I go?

BUTCH: "Powder my nose"?

MATT: (*Pointing to the CS door.*) Sure. Straight through there, on your right.

BUTCH: What is this, 1957?

ROSE: Oh, hush. It's lady-like.

PENNY: Be right back.

PENNY exits through the CS door. MATT shuts the main SR door, sits on the couch and rubs his temples. In the back, DYLAN looks at his mirror and blinks hard.

DYLAN: Whoa. I see two mirrors, but I'm only holding one!

ZEKE lowers himself into the rocking chair.

FLOYD: You okay, Zeke? You were really "getting jiggy with it" back there.

ZEKE: Aw, I was shaking my groove thing when your grandpappy was still in cloth diapers.

FLOYD: That's what concerns me.

ZEKE: Don't worry about me. I got the energy of a 20-year-old.

FLOYD: A 20-year-old in Depends!

ZEKE waves him off and shuts his eyes to sleep. ROSE leans over the couch and looks down at MATT.

ROSE: Look at our little Matt. He's growing up. (*Pause; then, over-enunciating as if she's just learning to speak.*) Matt. Mmmmaaaattttttt. That's a weird name. I wonder why Bob and Ellie named us that.

MATT realizes the place is a bit of a mess, stands and tidies up a bit. He didn't expect to bring PENNY here, so he throws stuff under the couch to superficially "clean."

BUTCH: Prob'ly 'cause YOU'RE so "melodra-MAT-ic" all the time.

ROSE: Or because you're so "problem-MAT-ic."

FLOYD: Dylan is "charis-MAT-ic." (*Snort.*)

DYLAN: (*Plugging his own nose.*) Floyd is "sympto-MAT-ic."

FLOYD: *(Putting an arm around ZEKE, who is still sleeping.)* What about Zeke?

DYLAN: Well, he's always sleeping, so . . . "Matt" is for "MATT-ress!"

ROSE: *(Giggles, then stops abruptly.)* Hey! We're witty when we're drunk!

DYLAN: Guys, is it just me, or does Zeke hang out here a lot more than he used to?

FLOYD: No, it's true. When Matt was a kid, we'd only see Zeke once or twice a week. Now he's here every day.

ROSE: Might as well get used to him. He's the C.O.D.

BUTCH: The what?

ROSE: Cranky Old Dude. Every guy has one inside, and the older he gets, the more his C.O.D. shows up. In time, he'll probably take over completely.

FLOYD: Is that why Matt gets sleepy earlier now than he did in college?

ROSE: Yep. Thanks to Zeke, he'll only get more tired and bitter as the years roll on.

DYLAN: Oh, goody.

PENNY returns through the CS door.

PENNY: This is a nice place, Matt. Ha. Get it? "Place mat"?

MATT: Ha. Yeah, I get it.

PENNY: Well, thanks again for dinner. I had a nice time.

BUTCH: *(Rushing to block the SR door.)* She's leavin'! We gotta stop her!

MATT: My pleasure. You know, you don't have to run. I mean, can I offer you something to eat or drink, or . . .

PENNY: *(Looking at the door, then back at MATT.)* Well . . .

MATT: I promise, I'll be the perfect gentleman. Scout's Honor.

FLOYD: We were never in the Boy Scouts!

BUTCH: Shut up! SHE doesn't know that!

PENNY: I guess I could stay for a minute. Do you have any soda?

MATT: I've got Sprite.

PENNY: Great.

MATT: Be right back.

MATT exits into the kitchen. PENNY sits down on the couch. BUTCH and DYLAN high-five each other from across the room. ROSE goes behind the couch, looking down at PENNY.

ROSE: *(Jokingly, like an overprotective mother.)* So. What are your intentions with our Matt?

BUTCH: (*Smirking and leering at PENNY.*) Hmm. Better ask what OUR intentions are with HER.

ROSE: (*Slapping his arm.*) Oh, you're such a pig.

BUTCH: Man, why are you even here? Matt's a guy. Shouldn't all parts of his personality be guys?

ROSE: I'm his feminine side. Every male has one. Some more dominant than others.

BUTCH: (*He gathers DYLAN and FLOYD, and the male EGOS stand together behind ZEKE'S chair.*) Whatever. We could run Matt ourselves, just us four guys. (*Holding up four fingers.*) As in "FOR-mat."

ROSE: (*Standing right up to him.*) Right. I'm the only one of you knuckleheads with any people skills. As in "diplo-MAT."

BUTCH: Oh yeah? Then howzabout using them "people skills" to get us some chicks, for once?

ROSE: I am so full of self-loathing right now.

MATT returns from the kitchen with two Sprites, and hands one to PENNY.

MATT: Here you go.

PENNY: Thanks. Are you sure it's not a problem, leaving your car at the restaurant?

MATT: (*Sitting down next to her.*) Nah. The manager said it's fine. I'll take the bus tomorrow to pick it up.

PENNY: Okay.

ROSE: Let's learn more about our guest, shall we?

DYLAN: Uh-oh. Here comes the Spanish Inquisition.

MATT: So, you work at Hillside Flowers?

PENNY: Yep. Two years now.

MATT: You like it there?

PENNY: (*With a shrug.*) It pays the bills.

MATT: Wait. That's, like, three miles away from the office park. You drive all that way for lunch?

PENNY: What can I say? They have the best corn dogs.

MATT: Ah.

PENNY: (*Looking around.*) You live alone here, I take it?

MATT: Yep. You?

ZEKE begins snoring loudly.

PENNY: (*Nodding.*) Finally got my own place a few months ago. Living alone has pros and cons, but I miss having - (*Against his*

will, MATT yawns, and PENNY stops and raises her eyebrows.)

I'm sorry, am I boring you here?

ROSE: *(Looking over at ZEKE.)* Oh, Zeke!

MATT: *(Sincerely apologetic.)* No! No, I'm sorry. Just been working crazy hours this week.

PENNY: *(Smiling.)* I understand.

ROSE: *(Helping ZEKE to his feet.)* Come on. Let's get you tucked in.

ZEKE: *(Half-asleep.)* Darn kids, stay off the lawn!

*ROSE puts her arm around ZEKE, and they exit through the CS door.
Pause.*

FLOYD: *(Stepping to the front.)* Awkward silence! HONK! Say something! ANYthing!

MATT: Uh . . . A few days ago, I had a dream about William Shatner.

BUTCH: What?!? *(BUTCH slaps his own forehead.)*

DYLAN: Not that!

PENNY: *(Simultaneously amused and disturbed.)* Huh. Can't say that I ever have.

BUTCH: *(To PENNY, but aimed at FLOYD.)* Of course not, because you're NORMAL.

PENNY: Big "Star Trek" fan, are you?

MATT: Oh, yeah. Star Trek and James Bond, my two faves. *(Beat.)* Wait. Who do YOU think is the best Bond?

PENNY: I . . . really don't have an opinion.

MATT: Really? 'Cause how you answer that question says a lot about you. For my money, Sean Connery. No contest.

PENNY: Yeah, I know. At dinner, you took a survey, of all the complete strangers sitting around us. And if they answered anything other than Connery, you said, "Wrong!"

FLOYD: Well, they ARE wrong.

MATT: *(Starting to remember.)* Oh, yeah . . .

PENNY: Yeah. And when that one guy said "Timothy Dalton," you said, "Well you are clearly a moron, so if you need any help calculating the tip, just holler."

MATT: *(Aghast, starting to remember this, too.)* No.

FLOYD: I can at least understand why the unenlightened might say "Pierce Brosnan" or "Daniel Craig," or maybe even "Roger Moore," but "Dalton"? They should put that question on the S.A.T., to weed out the hopelessly stupid.

MATT: Seriously. I am never drinking anything harder than a Sprite, ever again.

BUTCH, horrified at this statement, charges forward as if to protest. But DYLAN gets there first, pushing FLOYD to the back and taking charge.

DYLAN: *(To FLOYD.)* That's enough out of you. I'll handle this.

ROSE returns from CS.

MATT: *(Jokingly expressing his shame aloud.)* Horribly mortified at himself, he desperately changes the subject. Um . . . Would you like to look at my portfolio?

PENNY: That's not like "Want to come up and see my etchings," is it?

MATT: *(With a smile.)* No. No etchings. Just pen and ink. And PhotoShop.

PENNY: Sure.

With drinks in hand, MATT leads PENNY to his desk, sits her down, and hands her his portfolio. As she begins leafing through it, MATT grabs a second chair for himself.

DYLAN: Okay. This will buy us a moment to figure out what to say next.

ROSE: Good. Okay. Everybody, think.

Pause as ROSE, DYLAN and FLOYD all concentrate. BUTCH just looks on with pity.

BUTCH: Enough thinkin'. Let's kiss her already!

ROSE: What? She's practically a stranger!

FLOYD: Yeah! For all we know, she could be, like, a serial killer!

DYLAN: Floyd. She doesn't look like a serial killer.

FLOYD: Exactly! If you could TELL who the serial killers are just by looking at them, everybody would avoid them, and nobody would die.

DYLAN: The scary thing is, that kind of made sense . . .

BUTCH: *(Sarcastic.)* And, it would explain the machete in her purse. Listen. Don't worry. I know how to handle this.

MATT: So . . . uh . . . You're not a serial killer, are you?

PENNY: *(Taken aback by this odd non-sequitur.)* Uh . . . Well, convicted, or . . .

MATT: Yes. Convicted.

PENNY: Well, then, no. No, I'm not.

MATT: *(Nodding.)* Good to hear.

BUTCH: *(Wiping his hands in a gesture of finality.)* Case dismissed. I'm going in.

BUTCH lifts his arm as if wrapping it around an invisible person's shoulder. Unseen by PENNY, who has resumed flipping through the portfolio, MATT lifts his arm in the same way to try putting it around her.

ROSE: Cut that out! *(ROSE yanks her arm backwards, causing MATT to suddenly pull his arm away again.)*

BUTCH: Stop interfering, Rose. This is our chance! *(BUTCH nods, and MATT begins to lean in a bit closer.)*

ROSE: Our chance to get slapped in the face, maybe! *(ROSE waves her hand, and MATT leans back out again. The frustration of this inner conflict plays on MATT'S face. PENNY doesn't notice any of this.)*

BUTCH: That's it. Time to break out the big guns. Yo, D!

ROSE: *(Sarcastic.)* Wonderful.

In the CS doorway, the DEVIL (gender flexible, but preferably male) appears, pitchfork in hand.

DEVIL: You rang?

BUTCH: Little help.

DEVIL: *(Walking, suddenly realizing he's a little wobbly.)* Whoa! Are we DRUNK?

DYLAN: Just a bit.

DEVIL: *(Ecstatic, grinning from ear-to-ear.)* Awesome! Were we driving?

FLOYD: No, she drove us home.

DEVIL: *(Disappointed.)* Aw, too bad.

ROSE: Guess it's time for the cavalry. *(Calling off sweetly.)* Excuse me!

In the CS doorway, the ANGEL appears (again, gender flexible but preferably male). The ANGEL greets them with a wave.

ANGEL: "Halo," everybody! Get it? Halo?

BUTCH: *(Not his biggest fan.)* That has never been funny.

DEVIL: So what's the pitch?

BUTCH: Check it out. Our boy has a real live girl in his apartment, for the first time since you were peddling an apple cart in Eden.

DEVIL: *(Fondly reminiscing.)* Ah, good times. Good times.

BUTCH: But all Mary McMoral's here wants to do is shake her hand and send her home.

DEVIL: Got it. *(To the ANGEL.)* So how do we settle this?

ANGEL: *(Looking back and forth between PENNY and MATT.)* You know what? I'm with Big Red on this one.

ROSE: What?!?

BUTCH: *(Pleasantly surprised.)* You're not even gonna put up a fight?

ANGEL: It's lonely back there. Hanging around with THIS guy all day, waiting to help make a judgment call? All we do is play board games all day, and he cheats.

DEVIL: *(Matter-of-fact, with obvious pride.)* It's true. Any chance I get.

ROSE: *(To the ANGEL.)* Some help YOU are.

ANGEL: Sorry. But even I get tired of wearing white all the time. *(To MATT.)* Go get 'em, tiger.

ROSE: *(To the ANGEL.)* I don't know who you are anymore.

DEVIL: *(To the ANGEL.)* Well I'm impressed. *(He holds out his pitchfork.)* Here. You've earned it.

ANGEL: Ooh, I've always wanted to! *(Excitedly, he takes the pitchfork.)* Wow. Heavier than it looks.

The DEVIL and ANGEL start to exit towards the CS door, exchanging the following dialogue as they go:

ANGEL: So what are you in the mood for? Yahtzee, maybe?

DEVIL: Nah. I was thinking Taboo . . . *(And they're gone.)*

PENNY: *(Finishing the portfolio.)* These are excellent. You're very talented.

MATT: *(Modestly.)* Nah, but thank you. Want to see my newest project? *(MATT grabs both copies of the artwork and lays them on the desk.)*

PENNY: Very nice.

MATT: Thanks. It's an ad campaign for the Nolans franchise.

PENNY: Why are there two?

MATT: Oh, some clumsy idiot, who shall remain nameless because he is me, spilled coffee on the first one. My boss gave me a few days to redo it, but she's not very happy with me. I'm pretty sure if I don't turn it in by tomorrow, I am totally fired. And possibly murdered.

PENNY: You have a strict boss?

MATT: Attila the Hun would wet himself in fear.

PENNY: *(Laughing.)* I didn't realize Attila was in advertising.

MATT laughs, smitten. He and PENNY share a look, and a moment.

FLOYD: Ha! (*Snort.*) Funny. She's funny!

BUTCH: Shut up! This is it!

MATT starts to lean in for a kiss. BUTCH pushes FLOYD aside to get closer to the action. But instead of moving, FLOYD falls, taking DYLAN down with him. MATT'S arm bumps into his cup, spilling his drink on PENNY. They both gasp.

MATT: Oh, no. I can't BELIEVE I -

PENNY: You didn't ruin your drawing again, did you?

MATT: (*Furious with himself.*) No . . . Luckily, it all went on you.

PENNY: (*With a sense of humor about it.*) Brr! Kinda cold!

MATT: (*Stammering.*) I am SO . . . SORRY. Can I . . . a towel, or . . .

PENNY: No, it's not that bad. Really. I'm just gonna head home and change.

A sly smile creeps across BUTCH'S face. DYLAN is dusting himself off, his attention elsewhere, giving BUTCH the chance to "drive."

MATT: (*Innocently.*) You sure? If you want to take those off here, I don't mind.

ROSE, DYLAN, FLOYD, and even MATT himself freeze, wide-eyed, realizing what they just said. PENNY looks at Matt with alarm. BUTCH continues to grin and nod, pleased with himself. ROSE clasps her hand over Butch's mouth to silence him.

ROSE: You creep!

DYLAN stands back up.

DYLAN: (*Livid, to BUTCH.*) What did you do, you beer-swilling ape?

PENNY: No, I'm just gonna go. Thanks, though.

MATT: Wait. I didn't mean it like . . . wait. Stay there.

MATT rushes out through the CS door.

ROSE: (*Attacking BUTCH.*) You know how most people have a filter in their head to stop them from saying rude, idiotic garbage? Well, I am Matt's filter, and YOU . . . are the reason he needs one!!!

DYLAN: Guess I'm in charge of damage control, as usual.

MATT returns from CS with a towel and hands it to PENNY.

MATT: Here.

PENNY: *(Using the towel to dry off.)* Thanks.

MATT: *(Sincerely.)* Penny, I'm sorry. This date didn't turn out very well. I'm not usually like this, and I . . . should . . . probably just let you go before there's grounds for a lawsuit. I'm gonna go hit myself in the skull with a hammer.

PENNY: Don't be so hard on yourself. Relax. Maybe watch one of your Bond movies. I assume you have them on DVD?

MATT: *(Busted.)* The two-disc Special Editions.

FLOYD: *(Boastful.)* WITH audio commentary and never-before-seen - -

BUTCH: Shut up.

MATT: *(Opening the door for her.)* Again, I'm sorry, I . . . *(Sadly, quitting while he's behind.)* Good night.

PENNY: *(A little sad herself, she hands the towel back.)* 'Night. Thanks for dinner. *(PENNY exits, and MATT watches her go. BUTCH rushes up to MATT, who then calls out into the hallway after her.)*

MATT: Tell all your friends about me!

He shuts the door, leans against it, and squeezes his eyes shut tight, in an attempt to wish away the last few minutes.

MATT: *(In disbelief over his own words.)* "If you want to take them off here, I don't mind"? STUPID!!! *(MATT smacks himself hard on the right side of his head, which tilts toward SL. As a result, the EGOS all stumble/fall in the same direction (toward SL) as if they've been physically shoved.)*

BUTCH: Ow! What did WE do?

ROSE: You mean BESIDES making him look like a drunken jerk in front of the girl he's had a crush on for weeks?

BUTCH: Yeah! BESIDES that! *(MATT collapses on the couch.)*

DYLAN: Mental note. Two things we are never allowed to do again: carry liquids, and talk to people.

BUTCH: That second one might be a problem, what with us practically joining the priesthood.

ROSE: Oh, good. Maybe we could dump beer on the Pope. *(Eagerly, the DEVIL runs back in through the CS door with a huge smile on his face.)*

DEVIL: Ooh, yeah! Count me in! *(Exuberantly, he jabs his pitchfork in the air. The EGOS roll their eyes and shake their heads.)*

Lights fade out. END OF ACT ONE, SCENE 2.

ACT ONE, SCENE 3

AT RISE:

The next morning, Saturday. MATT is working at his desk. DYLAN, BUTCH and ROSE are all slumped together on the couch, eyes closed and miserable. ZEKE is in his usual chair. FLOYD is pacing in front, lecturing them.

FLOYD: I hope you all learned a valuable lesson last night. That was a bigger disaster than Jar Jar Binks in "The Phantom Menace." Maybe from now on, you'll listen to me!

BUTCH: (To the other EGOS.) You guys hear somethin'? Like an annoying little squeak?

DYLAN: All I hear is the painful throbbing of my own brain. We're never gonna drink again, right? I mean it.

ROSE: I feel awful. We really embarrassed that poor girl.

ZEKE: Bah. You want embarrassed? Try having an enemy grenade explode in the latrine ten feet away, covering you in a week's worth of filth from the entire platoon. Happened to me back in aught nine.

DYLAN: "Aught nine"? What war would that be, exactly?

BUTCH: (To ZEKE, indicating MATT.) Where do you even get these ridiculous stories? You're only as old as HE is.

ZEKE: Yeah, but I have wisdom and experience beyond my years, ya little rattle-chewer.

DYLAN: Beyond your years, but not between your ears.

ROSE: I think we should call and apologize.

FLOYD: You mean talk to her again? After last night?

BUTCH: Yeah! YEAH! We apologize, and maybe she'll find that so classy, she'll be all over us!

ZEKE: Heh-heh. Smoochies.

ROSE: Butch, that's not what this is about.

DYLAN: No, but you BOTH might be right. We do owe her an apology, but if we handle it well, maybe we COULD see her again.

FLOYD: I don't believe this! Did we learn NOTHING?

DYLAN: Floyd, we have to do something about our sad excuse for a social life.

FLOYD: But we don't NEED a social life. There is an entire season of "Battlestar Galactica" on DVD that we haven't even seen yet.

BUTCH: I just realized. The REAL reason he's named "Matt" . . . is because you're a "DOOR-mat."

DYLAN: AND because you're toxic to girls . . . as in "HAZ-mat."

ZEKE: Bah. Don't listen to them, Floyd. You're right to be cautious. I'm with YOU, buddy.

FLOYD: *(Suspiciously.)* You are?

ZEKE: *(Putting his arm around FLOYD.)* Sure. Let's go talk strategy, and I'm sure we can convince THEM, too.

FLOYD: *(Excited.)* Okay! I propose a two-stage plan of attack. *(As they are exiting.)* First, we draw up a flow chart showing the direct correlation between Matt's dates and the rise of UFO sightings in the area . . .

ZEKE leads FLOYD out through the CS door. Unseen by FLOYD, ZEKE signals BUTCH by inclining his head toward the phone, miming a phone receiver, and lip-synching the words "Call her" as he exits.

BUTCH: *(Bursting with excitement.)* Way to go, old man! He just got rid of our inhibitions!

ROSE: *(Grudgingly admitting.)* Smooth.

BUTCH: *(Jumping to the front.)* We're callin' her!

DYLAN: Good. But we do it MY way. Rose and I will handle this. YOU just keep your mouth shut.

BUTCH does a "zipping-my-lips-and-throwing-away-the-key" gesture and stands right next to MATT. MATT picks up the phone and presses a single button, which BUTCH grandly and simultaneously pantomimes. MATT takes a deep breath.

BUTCH: It's ringing.

DYLAN and ROSE step up behind MATT, and BUTCH crosses away. They all lean in and listen intently for a beat before their faces register disappointment.

MATT / DYLAN / ROSE: *(All together, in perfect harmony but with dismay.)* Aw, man! Voicemail.

MATT: *(Into the phone.)* Hey. It's Matt. Sorry I missed you. And, I'm sorry if things were awkward yesterday. I was a little nervous, but it's only because . . . um . . . *(He stands and paces.)* Listen. We're both adults, right? I don't want to play games. I like you. Okay? I like you a lot. I think you're sweet, and funny, and beautiful, and I'd really like to get to know you better. I just thought you should know. *(Sigh.)* There, I said it. So, I guess the ball's in your court. If you feel the same way, then call me back. If not, hey . . . bummer, you know, but I understand. Okay. Bye.

MATT hangs up the phone, sits back down at his desk, and exhales deeply. BUTCH stands between DYLAN and ROSE, with an arm around each of them.

BUTCH: Nice goin'. We might turn this thing around yet.

ROSE: And if not, at least we apologized.

ZEKE returns from the bedroom.

BUTCH: Hey, there's Zeke! Where's the geek?

ZEKE: Oh, he's right behind me.

FLOYD hops back into the room. His legs, hands and mouth have been bound with duct tape.

ROSE: *(Accusatory.)* Zeke! *(ROSE rushes to FLOYD, pulling the tape from his mouth as gingerly as possible.)*

FLOYD: Ow! That hurts! I have atopic dermatitis, you know!

ZEKE: Haw haw haw!

ROSE: *(To ZEKE, while removing the rest of FLOYD'S tape.)* Was this really necessary?

ZEKE: Naw, but it was fun!

FLOYD: I suppose you already called her.

BUTCH: Yep. Done deal. Left a message on her machine.

FLOYD: I'm surprised you troglodytes could even use a phone without me.

BUTCH: Oooh, yeah, 'cause it's SO hard to push "Redial" and talk!

FLOYD: Well, with the limited mental capacity YOUR pathetic cranium is - *(He stops cold.)* Hold on. "RE-dial"? You DO remember that we called Mrs. Killian last night to tell her about the Nolans artwork, right?

MATT suddenly sits bolt upright, eyes wide.

MATT: Wait a minute . . .

FLOYD: RIGHT?!?

MATT: *(With slowly dawning panic.)* Oh no . . .

BUTCH: I do NOW.

MATT frantically pushes buttons on his phone to check the last number dialed. The answer chills him to the bone, and he jumps to his feet.

MATT: NO.

DYLAN: You mean, we just said all that . . . to our BOSS?

BUTCH: *(Nervous chuckling.)* You guys really blew it this time.

ROSE stands motionless, dumbfounded. DYLAN and FLOYD exchange a glance, then attack BUTCH from either side and drag him to the ground, out of sight behind the couch. DYLAN and FLOYD stand back up and begin kicking him. ROSE snaps out of her shock, grabs ZEKE'S cane, goes behind the couch, and helps with beating up BUTCH. MATT staggers backwards a few steps and drops onto the couch.

MATT: *(Bellowing his anguish to the sky.)* Noooooooooooo!

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