

QUICK EXIT

By Chris Herron

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SYNOPSIS: A cancer patient. A banker. An actress. A hostess. These four unnamed strangers (and, eventually, a pizza delivery boy named Dale) spend an evening together in a tiny apartment filled with mysterious smells and eight copies of the *Twilight* books. What's brought them together? Their shared desire to end it all, of course! They'll spend the evening drinking and discussing some of life's most important topics: The nature and existence of God, whether Red Vines are better than Twizzlers (they are), the moral ramifications of their actions, and whether their little group should be considered a club or a cult. Some of them will fall in love. Some of them will die. Some of them will wonder aloud why anyone would put chicken on a pizza. It's a little bit Jean-Paul Sartre, a little bit more John Hughes. It's a pitch-black comedy with a light at the end of the tunnel. It's *Quick Exit*.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 females, 2 males)

ONE (m)	20's-30's. (238 lines)
TWO (f)	20's-30's. (208 lines)
THREE (f).....	20's-30's. Brunette. (265 lines)
FOUR (f).....	40's-50's. (230 lines)
DALE (m).....	20's-30's. (147 lines)

DURATION: 75 minutes

SETTING: A crappy apartment

TIME: Present

COSTUMES

One, Two, Three, and Four are dressed in their Sunday best. Dale is dressed in his pizza delivery uniform.

SET

There's a chair, futon and coffee table grouped around center stage. There's a bookshelf stage left.

PROPS

- 4 Zima bottles
- Bottles of gin, vodka, tequila, vermouth and bourbon (originally carried onstage in a paper bag)
- 8 *Twilight* books (4 English, 4 are meant to be in Spanish)
- 2 \$100 bills, 1 \$20, 1 \$1 bill
- 5 glasses (they can be either plastic or glass)
- Snack food (e.g., a small bag of chips or baby carrots)
- A pack of cigarettes
- A Bible
- Pills in a bottle
- Fancy watch
- 2 Pizza boxes
- A suicide note

AUTHOR NOTES

Please feel free to update any references that become embarrassingly dated (though, obviously, some of Four's references are meant to be somewhat dated). It will be important that you find out if Zima is available as they seem to keep changing their minds about whether or not they want to sell it to the public. More than anything, though, please speak this dialogue quickly. It's meant to be spoken quickly and, if you speak it too slowly, an angel loses its wings.

PREMIERE PRODUCTION

Quick Exit had its world premiere at the Panida Little Theater in Sandpoint, ID, with the following cast:

ONE	Dan Simons
TWO	Madeline Elliott
THREE.....	Liz Curry
FOUR.....	Kate McAlister
DALE.....	Andrew Sorg

DO NOT COPY

AT START: *Lights up. ONE, TWO, THREE and FOUR enter.*

THREE: So, where we're standing is the living room, bedroom, dining room and office. Around the corner is the kitchen and bathroom.

FOUR peers around the corner.

FOUR: I'm guessing that's the bathroom behind the door but I don't see the kitchen.

THREE: You don't?

FOUR: I see a tiny refrigerator and a hot plate.

THREE: I guess it's more like a kitchenette.

TWO looks around the corner.

TWO: It's more like a diorama of a kitchen made by an eight-year-old with minimal creativity and a very small shoe box.

FOUR: A very small shoe box made for very small shoes.

THREE: *(Wistful.)* Yeah. It's not great.

ONE: I like it.

THREE: Why?

ONE: It's nice.

THREE: No it isn't.

TWO: No. It isn't.

ONE: It has its charms.

THREE: No it doesn't.

TWO: No. It doesn't.

THREE: *(To TWO.)* Would you like a cracker, Polly?

FOUR sniffs the air.

TWO: No thank you. But I imagine if I'm going to spend much time here a tetanus shot might be in order.

FOUR: *(To THREE.)* D'you have a cat?

THREE: Nope.

FOUR sniffs again.

FOUR: Are you sure?

THREE: Are you asking if I own a cat and have kept it a secret from myself?

FOUR: What the hell is that smell?

ONE, TWO and FOUR all sniff the air with puzzled expressions on their faces.

THREE: Let me know if you figure it out. The source has eluded me for months.

TWO: (To ONE.) I'm having trouble finding these charms you mentioned. Can you point to the ones you've seen so far?

ONE: (To THREE.) I like your coffee table. Is it an antique?

THREE: I bought it at Goodwill for \$6. Somebody carved "Jane is a slut" on the bottom.

Everyone stares at the coffee table.

FOUR: I wonder if Jane's really a slut or if there was just some kind of misunderstanding.

THREE: Can I get anyone a drink?

Everyone answers in the affirmative. THREE exits. ONE looks around the room for something else to compliment. TWO sits in the chair.

FOUR: (To TWO.) Can I sit there?

TWO: What's wrong with the couch?

FOUR: It's not a couch, it's a futon.

TWO: OK. What's wrong with the futon?

FOUR: I don't wanna die on a futon like some 22-year-old heroin addict. I'm too old for that shit. I wanna die in the chair, with some dignity.

TWO: Too bad. My chair, my dignity.

FOUR: Bitch.

TWO: Bitch with a chair.

FOUR: I didn't realize it was just gonna be a free-for-all tonight.

FOUR sits on the futon. She tries to get comfortable. She shifts and wriggles, but can't find a good spot so she stands.

ONE: If she doesn't have a cat, what d'you think that smell is?

TWO: If she doesn't have a cat, I don't want to know what that smell is.

ONE: It's probably just a neighbor's cat.

FOUR: Or a neighbor.

ONE, TWO and FOUR sniff the air again.

ONE, TWO, and FOUR: *(In unison.)* Ewww.

THREE enters carrying four bottles of Zima. ONE, TWO and FOUR don't seem happy.

FOUR: I didn't know they still made Zima.

ONE and TWO: *(In unison.)* They don't.

THREE: Actually, they do. But these are old. They were here when I moved in.

FOUR: This shit's disgusting.

THREE: You haven't even tried it yet.

Everybody takes a sip.

TWO: It tastes like diabetes.

ONE: It's really... tangy? Is tangy the right word?

FOUR: Just like I remember it. It's shit.

THREE: It's not that bad.

FOUR: It tastes like fermented Perrier mixed with Splenda.

TWO: It tastes carcinogenic.

ONE: Actually, it starts to grow on you after a few sips.

FOUR pulls out some money and holds it toward THREE.

FOUR: *(To THREE.)* Go get some real alcohol.

THREE: Why don't you go?

FOUR: You're the hostess. It's your job to provide things for your guests. Things your guests might actually enjoy.

ONE: I'm telling you, if you keep drinking, it gets better.

FOUR: You don't even have a store-bought vegetable tray for us. The least you can do is have something to drink that people with two functioning brain cells might enjoy. So, here's money. Go get us real alcohol. And make sure at least one bottle is whiskey.

THREE: Fine.

THREE takes the money from FOUR and notices how much she's been given.

THREE: (Re: money.) This is \$200.

FOUR: (Playful.) Make sure one bottle is **good** whiskey. Something from the top shelf.

THREE exits.

TWO: (To *FOUR*.) You like whiskey?

FOUR: (Cheerful.) It makes me frisky.

ONE: (Sarcastic.) Great.

FOUR: (To *ONE*.) You should be so lucky. I'm gonna go rummage through the kitchen for something to eat.

FOUR exits.

TWO: I'm surprised to see someone who so clearly has money here. What'd you have to be sad about? Is your Lexus in the shop?

ONE: How'd you know I have money?

TWO: Because you look well-rested, you smell like soap and your watch says Rolex.

Sheepishly, ONE looks down at his watch. He covers the face.

ONE: Very observant.

TWO: Just curious, how much does a watch like that cost?

ONE: More than a toaster but less than a Buick.

TWO: It astonishes me how stupid people spend their money.

FOUR enters eating a random snack.

FOUR: So, how'd you kids hear about tonight?

ONE: Craigslist.

TWO: Facebook. *(To FOUR.)* You?

FOUR: Saw the ad in *The Reader*.

ONE: I hope she hadn't been planning for a big turnout.

FOUR: All she had for us was Zima. I don't think she planned much of anything.

ONE: *(Re: Zima.)* You know, once you get used to it, the Zima's pretty good. *(Drinks.)* Never mind. It's turned again.

THREE enters carrying a paper bag.

TWO: *(To THREE.)* Perfect timing. We were just wondering what kind of crowd you expected tonight.

THREE: Didn't care so long as someone showed up. Just didn't wanna do it alone.

FOUR: Did you get my whiskey?

THREE reaches into the bag and hands FOUR her bottle. It's in a smaller paper bag.

TWO: *(To THREE, regarding the whiskey.)* Apparently, it makes her frisky. So we have that to look forward to.

FOUR: I'm going to the bathroom. No one touch my whiskey while I'm gone.

FOUR puts her bottle down and exits. TWO makes a beeline for FOUR's bottle and examines it.

TWO: This is bourbon. I wonder if she'll notice.

TWO takes a drink from FOUR's bottle. THREE briefly exits and returns with four glasses.

ONE: (*Realizing.*) Oh God. What if bourbon makes her friskier?

(*Beat.*) More frisky? No. Friskier. (*Beat.*) Right?

TWO: (*To THREE.*) What else did you get?

THREE: Gin, vodka, tequila and vermouth.

ONE: What's vermouth?

THREE: I don't know. Seemed like a good time to try something new.

TWO pours a glass of tequila.

TWO: Ah tequila: The Ike Turner of Alcohol.

TWO drinks her drink and pours another.

TWO: Hit me again, Ike.

FOUR enters and picks up her bottle. She notices.

FOUR: (*To THREE.*) This is bourbon.

THREE: I heard that rumor.

FOUR: I asked for whiskey.

THREE: I remember.

FOUR: Then why'd you get me bourbon?

THREE: I thought they were the same thing.

FOUR: Philistine.

ONE picks up a copy of the Bible from the bookshelf.

ONE: (*To THREE.*) This Bible looks pretty old. Is it also from Goodwill?

THREE: It was my grandma's.

TWO: Let me see.

ONE hands TWO the Bible. She opens the cover and pretends to read:

TWO: "Jane is a slut."

ONE grabs the Bible from TWO.

ONE: Give me that! (*Beat.*) When I was a kid, my mom used to give me a dollar every week I memorized my Bible verse for Sunday school. It made her so happy when I'd recite Scripture to her in the car on the way to church. So, one day, I decided to memorize the whole Bible for her.

THREE: How old were you?

ONE: Ten.

FOUR: How far'd you get?

ONE: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Silence.

TWO: That's it?

ONE: I was 10!

TWO: So you could only memorize one word for every year you'd been alive?

ONE: I had trouble with the language. It was like Shakespeare but worse. So I memorized the books of the Bible instead: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth—

TWO: That'll do, pig. That'll do.

ONE: My mom was so proud. I got through the Old and New Testaments without making a single mistake. (*Beat.*) Do any of you believe in God?

The others squirm at the question.

ONE: I dated this girl once who told me she **wished** she could believe in God.

TWO: I don't believe you.

ONE: She did. She said she **wished**—

TWO: I mean I don't believe you've ever been on a date.

ONE: Ha-ha.

FOUR: (*To ONE.*) She's right. You don't seem like the type of person who could get a woman to say "yes" to very much.

TWO: Unless the question is, "Would you like me to go away?"

ONE: I'm married!

THREE: *(To ONE.)* Finish the stupid story about this woman you allegedly dated.

ONE: I did date her! Her name was Jennifer!

ONE, TWO, and THREE: *(In unison.)* Finish the story!

ONE: I just thought it was strange! *(Beat.)* It was strange that she wanted to believe in God but didn't. When it comes down to it, it's just a choice. She could've chosen to believe in God if that's what she wanted to do. It's simple.

THREE: People fight wars over the existence and nature of God. The whole thing comes down to more than a choice.

TWO: Not really. You either do or you don't. I, for example, don't.

ONE: Believe in God?

TWO: Nope.

ONE: Not even a little?

TWO: How can you believe in God a little? What am I? Agnostic?

ONE: *(To THREE.)* What about you?

THREE: I don't know.

TWO: How can you not know?

THREE: I try not to speak in absolutes about things I can't possibly know.

TWO: Fence sitter.

ONE: *(To FOUR.)* D'you believe in God?

FOUR: Why are we talking about this?

ONE: Seems like a fitting topic considering why we're here. I haven't stopped thinking about it ever since I decided to come tonight. *(Beat.)* So?

FOUR: *(Sighs.)* I like the basic idea of God and maybe seventy-percent of the Ten Commandments. The rest of it I could do without.

ONE: You could do without Adam and Eve and Job and The Rapture and—

TWO: I came here tonight to kill myself not be bored to death by you naming random things from the Bible. Let's get on with this before he tries to save our souls and make us sing "Awesome God."

THREE: Good idea. No sense dragging our feet.

ONE: But this is important.

TWO: *(To THREE.)* How do we do this?

THREE: Which part? *(Regarding ONE.)* Shut him up?

TWO: How do we kill ourselves? Is someone gonna count to three? Do we each take a corner of the room and do it whenever it seems right to us...?

Everyone, in unison, turns toward THREE.

THREE: I don't know!

TWO: How can you not know? You're the one who formed this cult.

ONE: Is this a cult?!?

TWO: Of course it's a cult.

THREE: We're not a cult.

ONE: Are you sure?

FOUR: It's cult-esque.

ONE: I can't be in a cult. Cult people are crazy.

TWO: They're not called "cult people" they're called "crazy motherfuckers."

FOUR: Actually, they're called "cultists."

TWO: (*Mocking.*) "Actually, they're called cultists."

ONE: I don't care what they're called. I don't wanna be one.

TWO: Then I've got bad news for you—

THREE: We're not a cult!

FOUR: What's the big deal? Cults aren't so bad.

ONE: Yes they are! When was the last time you heard a positive story about a cult?

FOUR: They're not all bad.

ONE: How would you know?

FOUR: I was in a cult for a while in the 80s.

ONE, TWO, and THREE: (*In unison.*) You were?

FOUR: Yeah. I was actually kinda sad to leave.

THREE: What happened?

FOUR: I got tired of talking about aliens and volcanoes.

TWO: Were you a Scientologist?

FOUR: After a while, it was just like, "C'mon, Travolta, I wanna talk about *Grease!*"

TWO: You knew John Travolta?!?

ONE: (*To THREE.*) What are we if we're not a cult?

THREE: Does it matter?

TWO: Obviously some of us would feel better if we had a designation that wasn't C-U-L-T.

FOUR: Really? We're spelling now?

ONE: (To *TWO*.) D'you really think I can't spell cult?

TWO: I'm sure there's many words you can't spell. I'll just cross that one off the list of possibilities.

FOUR: (To *TWO*.) You really are a bitch.

TWO: That's your opinion.

FOUR: Are you always a bitch or are you just scared?

TWO: Scared of what?

FOUR: Dying.

TWO: Should I be?

FOUR: Probably. It's quite final.

TWO: Then I guess I'm just a bitch because I'm not afraid.

FOUR: Sure you're not. And I didn't have a threesome with two-thirds of *Three's Company*.

ONE: (To *THREE*.) What are we?!?

THREE: I don't know! (Beat.) We're a group of people brought together by a common interest. (Beat.) We're a club.

TWO: A club?

THREE: Yes.

ONE: A suicide club?

THREE: Would you prefer cult?

Silence.

ONE: Club it is.

TWO: Worst. Club. Ever.

FOUR: What should we call ourselves? Club Sadness? The Club That Only Meets Once? No! I got it! Club Zima.

THREE: Kill me.

FOUR: We're getting there.

TWO: (To *THREE*.) Which reminds me, you never answered my question. How are we gonna do this? Are we gonna take turns putting our heads in the oven?

ONE: Hot plate.

FOUR: No oven.

THREE pulls out a bottle of pills and shakes it.

THREE: When the time's right, whenever that is, we all take one of these.

ONE: Just one?

THREE: My guy said we'd only need one. He said any more than that would be overkill.

Silence.

TWO: Did he actually use the word "overkill"?

THREE: Yes.

FOUR: (*Skeptical.*) You've got a guy for this kinda thing?

THREE: I guess.

FOUR: Who?

THREE: It doesn't matter.

TWO: It matters if the pills don't work.

THREE: They'll work.

TWO: Maybe we should take two just to be sure.

THREE: He said we'd only need one.

FOUR: Unless this guy is Jack Kevorkian, I'm taking two.

THREE: We only need one!

ONE: But—

THREE: The pills will work! OK? They'll work. They have to work.

(*Beat.*) It has to go right this time.

Silence. ONE, TWO and FOUR have a silent interaction where they try to determine who gets to ask the obvious follow-up question. ONE loses.

ONE: What happened last time?

Silence.

THREE: My mom opened the garage.

TWO: Ha!

FOUR: Was she upset?

THREE: Yeah. But only because I was using her car.

Silence.

TWO: What kinda car was it?

Everyone looks at TWO, horrified.

TWO: What? It'd be funny if it was a Volvo, the world's safest car. Actually, the fact that you're still here should be their next marketing campaign. "Volvo: We won't let you die... even if you want to."

FOUR: You are awful.

THREE: Trust me when I say these pills will work because they have to work.

ONE: Then should we just do it now?

Everyone looks around at each other. Then, the next four lines are said simultaneously:

ONE: Not yet.

TWO: In a little while.

THREE: The moment doesn't seem right.

FOUR: What's the rush?

THREE: How about another drink?

Everyone agrees and pours drinks.

FOUR: (To TWO.) I thought you said you weren't scared.

TWO: I'm not. And I didn't hear you jump at the opportunity.

ONE: Now what?

They all look to THREE for the answer.

THREE: I don't know! (Regarding the pills.) There's just the one planned activity for the evening. The rest is gonna happen as it happens.

ONE: We could play a game.

FOUR: What game?

ONE: Pictionary?

TWO: Lame.

ONE: Gin rummy?

THREE: The only deck of cards I have is missing half the diamonds.

ONE: Truth or Dare?

FOUR: OK. Truth or Dare?

ONE: Truth. No! Dare.

FOUR: I dare you to come up with a better idea.

ONE: We could just talk.

TWO: Isn't that what we've been doing?

ONE: Yeah, but we could really try to get to know each other. Tell our stories one last time.

THREE: No names.

FOUR: What?

THREE: No names.

ONE: But –

THREE: No! Names!

ONE, TWO and FOUR look at each other, confused.

TWO: What's your aversion to names?

THREE: I don't wanna know your names for the same reason scientists don't name their lab animals.

ONE: (*Horried.*) You're gonna eat us?!?

TWO: That's farmers, dumbass.

ONE: Oh thank God

FOUR: She means she doesn't want to humanize us.

THREE: Exactly. When the time comes, I don't want any twinges or pangs. No names means you're not real and I don't have to feel bad about giving you one – just one! – of these pills.

Silence.

ONE: Can we talk about ourselves as long as we don't use our names?

THREE: Doesn't that just circumvent my rule?

ONE: (*Confused.*) Circum...?

TWO: (*To ONE.*) You must be fun to play Scrabble with.

ONE: We could play Scrabble!

THREE: No. N-O. Two points.

FOUR: He's right, though. We seem to hate games so, if we can't talk about ourselves, what else are we gonna do?

THREE: (*Exasperated.*) Fine.

ONE: Excellent.

THREE: But no names.

ONE, TWO and FOUR: (*In unison.*) We get it.

Everyone looks to ONE.

ONE: What?

THREE: What d'you wanna talk about?

ONE: I don't know. What d'you wanna talk about?

THREE: Oh my God!

FOUR puts her hand on ONE's cheek.

FOUR: (*To ONE.*) Adorable.

ONE: (*Flattered.*) Thank you.

ONE notices something. He stares at FOUR.

ONE: Do I know you?

FOUR: I get that a lot.

ONE: From me?

FOUR: From people.

ONE: Do we work together?

FOUR: No.

ONE: Did you pop out of the cake at my friend Steve's bachelor party?

THREE: I've gotta get out of here.

TWO: You're leaving?

THREE: I'm gonna go smoke a cigarette. I need a break from you people.

ONE: Can I come?

THREE: But I'm trying to get away from you. If I don't get away from you, there's a very good chance I'm going to grind up the pills, put the powder in pudding cups, tie you all down, and force feed them to you so I can finally get some peace and quiet.

Silence.

FOUR: She doesn't have any pudding cups. I checked the fridge. If there was pudding, I'd've eaten some.

TWO: And why would you need to try to mask the pills in pudding if you're gonna tie us down and force feed them to us?

THREE lets out a short, exasperated scream.

ONE: *(To THREE.)* Can I please come with you?

THREE: D'you even smoke?

ONE: No. But this seems like a good time to find out if I've been missing anything.

THREE: Fine. You can come. But no talking.

ONE: You mean no names.

THREE: I mean no talking. I mean you will sit silently without making a single sound. No names. No speaking. Just silence.

ONE and THREE exit.

ONE: *(Offstage.)* Does the no talking thing start now or when we get outside?

Offstage, THREE screams.

TWO: *(Regarding THREE.)* She seems tense.

FOUR: We're all tense.

TWO: Not me.

FOUR: Oh that's right. You sit in judgment of us mere mortals because you're too cool to be afraid.

TWO: You said it, I just agreed.

FOUR: Why's it so important for you to pretend like you're not afraid?

TWO: Who's pretending? And why're you giving me shit when you seem just as calm as me?

FOUR: I'm a duck on a pond.

TWO: What's there to be afraid of?

FOUR: Everything. Best case scenario, after we do what we're here to do, you sleep in a box forever while worms eat your face. That's the one we'll keep our fingers crossed and hope for. Worst case scenario, the Devil spends eternity shoving a pitchfork up your ass while you're forced to watch an endless loop of Kardashian-related programming. When you're hoping for life to have no meaning and for nothing to be waiting for you on the other side... that's some scary shit.

TWO: It doesn't sound any worse than what's happening in the real world. I'll take the worms or the Devil over actual Kardashians any day, thank you very much.

FOUR: (*Skeptical.*) You're terrified.

TWO: I'm as calm and at peace as that monk who set himself on fire.

ONE and THREE enter. ONE coughs sporadically.

TWO: (*To ONE.*) So, how was it?

ONE: I almost threw up.

FOUR: God I miss smoking!

TWO: (*To ONE.*) Were you able to keep your mouth shut?

ONE: I think I did pretty well.

THREE: Ha!

ONE: What?

THREE: "What's your favorite color? Who did you vote for? If you could be an ice cream flavor, what flavor would you be?"

ONE: I just wanna get to know you.

FOUR: I'd be lavender ice cream.

TWO: Gross. Ice cream shouldn't taste like flowers. I'd be chocolate.

FOUR: Chocolate's a great flavor... if you're boring and have no imagination.

TWO: I'm not boring.

FOUR: Is that why you're not afraid to die? Because you can't live with how boring you are?

TWO: I'm not boring!

FOUR: If you could be an ice cream flavor you'd be chocolate. The only thing more boring than chocolate is frozen yogurt.

ONE: I'd be frozen yogurt.

FOUR: I rest my case. Why didn't you just say you're weren't afraid to kill yourself because you were already in the process of boring yourself to death?

TWO: I'm not afraid to kill myself because I have cancer!

Silence.

TWO: Why would I be afraid to kill myself when my other option is to become a walking, talking tumor?

THREE: What kind of cancer d'you have?

TWO: The bad kind.

ONE: Is there a good kind?

TWO: As it turns out, there is. And it's not the kind I have.

FOUR: When were you diagnosed?

TWO: A few months ago. But I always knew it was coming. My great-grandma, my grandpa and both my parents had cancer. The universe basically stuck its middle finger in my face and said, "Guess how you're gonna die?" Before I got diagnosed, I decided I'd never go through treatment. I've seen what chemo and radiation can do. All that poison mixed with toxic false hope? Pass.

ONE: But what if your doctor was wrong?

TWO: He wasn't.

FOUR: What if they cure cancer? People all around the world are working on a cure as we speak. What if one of those nerds actually does it? What if they do it tomorrow? You don't wanna give them more time?

TWO: I've made my choice. You know, what kind of people join a suicide club—

THREE: Can we actually not call it that? It totally undermines what we're doing here.

TWO: I just don't think we should try to change each other's minds. We're all here and, whatever the reasons, we need to respect them. Agreed?

Everyone agrees. Suddenly:

ONE: (*Regarding FOUR.*) Oh my God!

TWO: What?

ONE: (*To FOUR.*) Oh my God, I know who you are! Are you—?

THREE: No names!

ONE: Grrr. Fine. (*To FOUR.*) Are you who I think you are?

FOUR: Who d'you think I am?

ONE whispers in FOUR's ear.

FOUR: That's me.

ONE: Oh my God!

TWO: What's happening?

THREE: (*To FOUR.*) Who are you?

FOUR: Sorry. No names.

ONE: (*To FOUR.*) I can't believe it's you.

FOUR: Believe it, baby.

ONE: I've seen those movies so many times.

TWO: What movies?

THREE: (*To FOUR.*) Who are you?

ONE: I have to know, in the second movie, was that your ass or a stand-in?

FOUR: That was **my** ass!

ONE: Awesome!

TWO: What ass?

THREE: (*To FOUR.*) Who are you?!?

FOUR: I'm a nameless someone who's been in over 30 movies, who's been on Broadway a dozen times and who once had sex with Steve Guttenberg on an airplane.

TWO: Commercial or private?

FOUR: Commercial.

TWO: I don't understand how people have sex in those airplane bathrooms. They're so small.

FOUR: We weren't in the bathroom.

TWO: Then where did you—

FOUR: Let's just say that I'm no longer welcome on United Airlines.

ONE: Why on earth would you wanna kill yourself?

FOUR: I wrote a book.

ONE: Was it that bad?

FOUR: No! It was great - it was a tell-all about all the weird shit that happened when I was an actor. It was juicy. It was hot. I named names. Names like Swayze, Sutherland—

TWO: Donald or Keefer?

FOUR: Yes. Names like Broderick, Kevin Pollack—

TWO: And Steve Guttenberg?

FOUR: And Steve Guttenberg. But, when I sent it to my publisher, they said it'd never see the light of day.

ONE: Why not?

FOUR: We'd get sued.

ONE: By who?

TWO: Whom.

ONE: (To TWO.) Whom?

TWO: Whom.

ONE: (To FOUR.) Whom by?

TWO: By whom.

ONE: (To FOUR.) By whom?!?

FOUR: Everyone! But I don't care. You know what I was gonna call the book? *I'll See You in Court: A Memoir.*

TWO: I'll buy two right now.

FOUR: So that's why I'm here tonight.

THREE: Because your book got rejected?

FOUR: Because this isn't fun anymore. Nothing's fun. No one has a sense of adventure. No one's willing to put their balls out there for anything. What's the point of living if fun's been taken off the menu? The way the world's evolving, there's no place for people like me. I'm analog in a digital world. It's not fun feeling like you've become extinct.

Silence.

TWO: Can you tell us the names of any of the movies you were in?

FOUR: I can't.

THREE: Sure you can.

FOUR: I wouldn't want to risk you knowing who I am. (To THREE.) It might humanize me.

TWO: OK. Boo.

ONE: (To *THREE*, regarding bookshelf.) Why d'you have eight *Twilight* books?

THREE: Some of them are in Spanish.

ONE: Why?

THREE: I'd read a passage in English then read the same one in Spanish. I thought it might be a fun way to learn another language.

FOUR: Did it work?

THREE: *Hola. Me llamo Edward. Yo es un... vampire. Vampiro?*

TWO: Even in broken Spanish you can tell those books are shit. (Realizing, to *THREE*.) Is that why you wanna kill yourself? Because you've been living with eight copies of the *Twilight* books and the shame finally got to be too much for you?

THREE: No.

TWO: Then what's your reason for hosting this little shindig?

THREE: I don't wanna talk about it.

TWO: Does it have something to do with that peach of a woman who—

ONE: Whom?

TWO: That peach of a woman **who** opened the garage and got mad at you?

THREE: You think my mom is the reason I wanna kill myself?

TWO: Plenty of people have killed themselves because their mommy didn't love them.

THREE: That's not why I'm doing this.

TWO: Sure it is.

THREE: No it isn't.

TWO: Sure it is.

THREE: No it isn't.

TWO: Sure it is. Safe space.

ONE: Doesn't anyone wanna know why I'm here?

TWO and THREE: (In unison, to audience.) Ten bucks says his wife left him.

ONE: My wife left me.

TWO and THREE discreetly high-five.

ONE: Every day I wake up alone, working for a man who hates me.

FOUR: Why does your boss hate you?

TWO: Is it because he's met you?

ONE: I still work for my father-in-law.

FOUR: What the hell for?

ONE: Because I need the money.

TWO: Why doesn't he fire you?

ONE: He loves to torment me. He says I "ruined" his daughter's life.

What he doesn't realize is her life was ruined way before I met her.

No one with her big ears, bigger feet and ugly personality is going to live a happy life.

FOUR: I still don't see why you won't quit.

ONE: I'm leveraged up to my eyeballs and I have no other prospects.

The only reason I got this job is because I married the boss's daughter. The only jobs I'm qualified for are crappy retail jobs making minimum wage. I can't live on that **and** support my wife—

TWO: Ex-wife.

ONE: Nope. Wife. She left me but won't divorce me. And part of the condition of keeping my job is that I have to keep providing for her as if we were still together.

THREE: Why can't her family just support her?

ONE: Because it's more fun to keep me under their thumb. They know I'm bad with money and that she has expensive tastes. They pay me an almost sinful amount of money because they know I'll jump through their hoops to keep myself afloat. Once you have money, there's no going back. I wouldn't know how to live on a budget.

FOUR: You could try.

ONE: That's the worst part. I don't wanna try. I like owning a dog that cost more than a Kia and being able to spend \$8000 in an afternoon on Amazon.

TWO: What the fuck are you buying on Amazon that costs \$8000?

ONE: Mostly self-help books.

THREE: Are they helping?

ONE: What d'you think?

TWO: (To *ONE*.) You really are a dumbass.

ONE: Why am I a dumbass?

TWO: For starters, you bought a dog that costs more than a reasonably price car.

ONE: I also donate to charities!

TWO: One of the good charities or the kind that give Bibles to starving children instead of giving them food?

ONE: Both. And I also give to the Susan G. Komen Foundation.
(*Beat.*) You're welcome.

TWO: Oh my God.

ONE: What?

TWO: How the hell much money do you make that you can afford to waste so much.

ONE: I'd rather not say.

THREE: Oh c'mon. Pretty soon it won't matter that we know. Don't be shy.

ONE: (*Sighs.*) Just north of a million.

THREE: Shut up!

THREE throws her drink in *ONE*'s face. *TWO* does the same.

FOUR: (*To ONE.*) If it makes you feel better, I wouldn't quit that job either.

THREE: (*To ONE.*) What could you possibly do to make that much money?

TWO: Are you famous?

FOUR: I'm famous.

TWO: You can't be that famous.

FOUR: You might be surprised.

THREE: (*To ONE.*) What d'you do?

ONE: I work in finance.

TWO: Ugh. Gross.

THREE: What does that even mean?

ONE: It means I work with money.

TWO: Don't get cute.

THREE: (*To ONE.*) How can you justify making that much money when there are people starving in the world?

FOUR: And in this apartment. (*To THREE.*) If I give you more money, will you go to Taco Bell?

THREE: No.

ONE: I don't try to justify anything. I just cash my checks—

TWO: And then roll in it, *Indecent Proposal* style.

FOUR: I've done that.

TWO: (*Excited.*) How was it?

FOUR: Not that great. Money's pretty gross.

TWO: That's what showers are for. I wanna roll in money so bad I'd be willing to do it in a kiddie pool full of nickels.

ONE: (To *THREE*.) Why d'you hate the fact that I work in finance?

THREE: Because I have a functioning brain and have watched the news for more than 30 seconds over the last decade.

ONE: I'm not a bad person.

TWO: (To *ONE*.) Actually, based on your own standards, you kind of are. Greed is one of the seven deadly sins and you're here tonight to commit the mortalest of Mortal Sins. How d'you square all that with the big boss in the sky?

ONE: I think God understands—

TWO: Don't do that. Don't be one of those people who takes something in the Bible and twists it to fit their needs. Be better than the politicians and shitheads with Scripture tattooed on their backs. If you're really a Christian and subscribe to those beliefs, don't try to rationalize thumbing your nose at the Word of God. If you wanna kill yourself and be condemned to Hell with murderers and rapists and people who put ice in single malt scotch, fine. Do it. But don't tell me God's OK with it. Read the Old Testament again and try to tell me God cares about our justifications and, while you formulate your response, try to think of an answer that doesn't insult my intelligence. Don't talk to me about loving the sinner but hating the sin and if you even say the words "Tim Tebow" – (To *FOUR*.) Oh my God I know who you are!

ONE: Right?!? Right?!?

THREE: No names!

TWO: Oh my God!

FOUR: I know, right?

TWO: It's been forever since I've seen you in anything. (To *ONE*.) Have you seen her in anything lately?

ONE: It's been a while.

FOUR: A long while.

ONE: The last thing I saw you in was an episode of –

ONE and TWO: (In unison.) *Nash Bridges*.

FOUR: (Fondly.) I do love me some Don Johnson.

THREE: Ewww.

FOUR: Don't you speak ill of Don Johnson in my presence! The man is a saint. A sexy, sexy saint.

TWO: Is there anything about him in your book?

FOUR: Are you kidding? There's a whole chapter about him in my book. I did a few episodes of *Miami Vice* and was originally cast to play Virginia Madsen's part in *The Hot Spot* – don't ask.

ONE: What happened?

TWO: She said don't ask!

FOUR: I have a fair few stories involving Mr. Don Johnson.

THREE: This is the same Don Johnson who looked like Colonel Sanders in *Django Unchained*?

TWO: (To **FOUR**.) Was he your favorite co-star?

FOUR: No. Ian McKellen was my favorite. The man's as gay as the day is long but, for a minute, I thought I had him.

ONE: What'd you do?

FOUR: Please. All I had to do was show up.

TWO: Why don't you work anymore?

FOUR: When you hit a certain age, the phone quits ringing. Except for the estrogen channels: WE, Lifetime, Hallmark. I get a call or two a month from them to be in their latest made-for-TV piece of shit.

ONE: Why didn't you take any of their offers?

FOUR: Have you ever seen any of their made-for-TV pieces of shit? They're either sappy melodrama or degrading nonsense. I got offered a part in one of them and, I swear to God, it was called *Rape Mountain*. It was about a woman who gets assaulted while she's out hiking, overcomes the tragedy and opens a quaint bed-and-breakfast. Yuck. The plot's bad enough but to call it *Rape Mountain*?

THREE: Do any of you ever stop talking?!?

THREE exits in a huff.

TWO: What the hell is her problem?

FOUR: She hoped that having people around would make this easier. I think it's starting to sink in that, no matter what, no matter who's here or how many of us there are, this isn't going to be easy.

ONE: I hear it's just like falling asleep.

TWO: You're thinking of drowning.

FOUR: With pills, there's no telling what could happen. If they're as good as she says, maybe we do just fall asleep. But maybe our survival instinct kicks in and, instead of slipping away peacefully, we retch and convulse and puke. We'll be an apartment full of twitching piles of crap that live to fight another day.

ONE: I don't wanna be twitching crap. I just want it to be quick.

FOUR: That's all anyone wants. No one wants a death plagued with false starts. You just wanna close your eyes and have it end.

ONE: That's exactly what I want!

TWO: But it might not happen.

ONE: Really?

TWO: The pills might not even work.

ONE: Oh God! You're right.

TWO: Of course I'm right.

ONE: What am I doing here?!?

FOUR: You're miserable.

ONE: Of course I'm miserable. Everybody's miserable!

FOUR: So d'you wanna live?

ONE: I don't know.

TWO: D'you wanna kill yourself?

ONE: The pills might not even work.

FOUR: But they could.

ONE: That's true.

TWO: But they might not.

ONE: Ahhh!

THREE enters.

THREE: (To *TWO* and *FOUR*.) Shouldn't one of you pretend to be the angel in this routine?

TWO: Where's the fun in that?

ONE: (To *THREE*.) I don't think I can do this.

THREE: Sure you can.

ONE: What if the pills don't work?

THREE: They'll work.

ONE: And if they do work—

THREE: They'll work!

ONE: What if I go to Hell?

Silence.

THREE: Well, I could kill you.

ONE, TWO, and FOUR: (*In unison.*) What?!?

THREE: I've always wondered what it'd be like to kill someone. What a rush it'd be. To feel your blood on my hands, to see the light leave your eyes. The only thing that's stopped me is the same thing that stops everyone else. But it's not like I can be tried for murder if I kill myself after I'm done with you.

Silence.

FOUR: What's wrong with you?

THREE: Calm down, I'm kidding.

ONE moves behind TWO and FOUR, using them as human shields.

ONE: Are you?

THREE: Yes. (*To TWO and FOUR.*) Why are you two the only ones who get to mess with his head?

ONE: I'd rather no one messed with my head.

THREE: I am curious what it would feel like to kill someone but, even without the repercussions hanging over my head, I don't think I could do it.

Silence.

ONE: You actually want to kill another person?

THREE: No. I'm curious about it. If I wanted to kill someone, I'd've killed you halfway through your cigarette when you asked me which I liked better, Twizzlers or Red Vines.

TWO: And your answer was...?

THREE: I didn't answer. He started coughing and wheezing.

FOUR: Then your answer would've been...?

THREE: Red Vines.

TWO and FOUR both sigh with relief.

ONE: Guys, please. She wants to kill me.

THREE: Again, I don't **want** to kill you. I've just thought about it.
You've never thought about it?

ONE, TWO, and FOUR: (*In unison.*) No.

THREE: Liars. There's nothing wrong with curiosity.

ONE: It killed the cat.

TWO: It all starts with a thought. Before he ever takes his first bite, a
would-be-cannibal has to wonder if people really taste like chicken.

THREE: You think you're so funny—

TWO: I know I'm funny. I have references.

THREE: Curiosity doesn't make someone a monster. Acting on it
does.

ONE: (*To THREE.*) So you're not gonna kill me?

THREE: I'm not gonna kill you. Are you really gonna back out?

ONE: This is just so... big.

THREE: Nah. C'mon. It'll be great.

THREE begins to distribute the pills.

FOUR: Are we doing this? Now?

THREE: It's now or never.

ONE: But I'm still not sure—

THREE: Yes you are. You wouldn't have come if you weren't sure. If
you don't do it tonight, you'll still do it. Soon, I imagine. Sometime
in the next few weeks. Just do it now, with us, and get it over with.

*THREE stands in front of ONE, holding out a pill. Finally, ONE takes
it.*

ONE: Fine.

The group stands in a semi-circle – drinks in one hand, pills in the other.

THREE: Everybody ready?

TWO: As we'll ever be.

They all take a deep breath and, just as their hands begin to move toward their mouths:

DALE: *(Offstage.)* Hello?

Everyone onstage screams. Pills and booze fly everywhere. Lights out.

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