

# Garbage Kids

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**Cast:**

Belly | boy to man

Scuzzy | girl to woman

Woman | middle-aged

Interviewer | can be played by a man or woman (or doubled with Woman)

**Act 1.**

*This is a memory play. The first act is composed entirely of Scuzzy and Belly's memories. It is not realistic but is real to them. Therefore, they may remember themselves speaking as they do now, as adults. They may remember things being scarier or happier than they were. The other characters are written as Belly and Scuzzy remember them. The staging and tone should reflect these heightened memories. The memories might be Scuzzy's or they might be Belly's. I won't tell you whose they are...I'm not sure myself.*

**Scene 1. The Waiting Room.**

*Two kids are sitting in a waiting room: Scuzzy and Belly. They are disheveled. Maybe one is crying. They are afraid. An announcer is heard. The announcer is always muffled...kind of like the teacher on Charlie Brown. Except when it says "next."*

Belly

*(Whispers)* Do you know what happens when you get in there? *(Scuzzy ignores him)* I just hear a lot of screaming. A ton of screaming.

Scuzzy

I haven't heard anything yet.

*Screaming is heard.*

Oh. There it is.

Belly

I think they cut off your ears. *(Pause)* So they can tell us apart. From normal people.

*More screaming is heard. Belly is getting increasingly nervous. Scuzzy remains calm. She might be flipping through a magazine.*

Belly

I saw a kid with no-hands once. He was trying to open a can of tuna. *(Pause)* You try not to laugh when you see something like that...but it's hard.

*Awkward silence. Then more screaming.*

Belly

I think I'd rather die than have my hands cut off. You can't do much with no hands.

*Awkward silence.*

Belly

What would you rather have cut off, hands or feet?

*Scuzzy does not respond.*

Belly

Me, I think feet. I saw a man who used a skateboard once instead of his legs. He looked pretty happy. It's just about being happy, you know. And I think it would be fun to have wheels instead of feet anyway. I don't know why humans don't have wheels as feet now? I know we have the technology to give ourselves feet wheels if we wanted to.

Scuzzy

That's what bikes are for.

Belly

I never had a bike.

Scuzzy

You must be poor.

Belly

Oh yes. VERY poor.

Scuzzy

Me too. Mom bought one anyway though. She always spent money she didn't have. Mine was blue. Mom bought a blue bike. I wanted purple but she bought a blue one.

Belly

I think bikes are unnatural.

Scuzzy

That's only because you've never ridden one. Bikes make you feel like you're flying. Like you could just lift off from the earth and live in the clouds. I loved my bike, even though it was blue.

Belly

If you want to go someplace real fast why would you invent something where you sit down to do it? Sitting down is an inherently restful position. Why would you relax the upper part of your body while at the same time putting a severe physical demand on the lower half of your body? It's not right.

*Pause. More screaming is heard. And more mumbled announcing.*

Belly

I don't miss them. I know I'm supposed to. But I don't. *(Pause)* I wonder if they'll give me good ones this time. I didn't get to pick when I was a baby.

Scuzzy

Good ones don't exist.

Belly

I'm Belly, by the way. My dad called me Belly because I was fat. It made me cry. But now I don't have a belly anymore so it's kind of like ironic, I guess.

Scuzzy

I'm Scuzzy. Short for Samantha. I don't think it has any other significance.

Belly

I thought Sam was short for Samantha.

Scuzzy

No, I don't think that's right.

*The announcer says something muddled and then we hear "next."*

Belly

Would you like to go before me? Ladies first.

Scuzzy

What's your number?

Belly

78.

Scuzzy

I'm 79. You first.

Belly

I wouldn't mind...

Scuzzy

No thank you. I'm enjoying this article about celebrity homes. I guess they are a lot of work to maintain. It's very troubling.

*Belly timidly goes into the office. We hear him scream...possibly a lot. Scuzzy continues to flip through her magazine. He comes back and sits down.*

Scuzzy

Did they cut your arm off?

Belly

Practically.

*Belly shows Scuzzy his wound. It is a gaping hole in his forearm with blood trickling down.*

Scuzzy

It's not that bad.

*The announcer mumbles again and eventually we hear "next." Scuzzy waltzes into the office. Scuzzy and the announcer are heard laughing. After a moment she comes out sucking on a sucker. She has a bandaid on her arm.*

Scuzzy

*(Pulling a sucker out of her pocket)* Here, I got you a sucker.

Belly

*(Belly takes the sucker, unwraps it, and sucks it)* *(Pause)* Cherry. Not my favorite.

Scuzzy

Me neither. That's why I gave it to you.

Belly

What do we do now?

Scuzzy

Wait. I guess. *(picks up magazine and begins reading)* Just keep waiting.

*More mumbling is heard. Maybe more screaming. The lights go down.*

**Scene 2. Mrs. Hoffman's Place.**

*Scuzzy and Belly are in an apartment. It is very dirty. There is garbage everywhere. Piles and piles and piles of it. And bars on the windows.*

Scuzzy

*(Screaming)* I hate it here!

Belly

No one's home. You don't need to scream.

Scuzzy

*(Screaming)* You fucking bitch! Get down here and make us some goddamn sandwiches!!!!

Belly

*(Laughing)* Scuzz, she isn't home. You know that. And, there is no way she would ever make us sandwiches anyway.

Scuzzy

She did once. I think it was a tomato sandwich. With mayonnaise. You'd think it would be boring but it was really good. Why would she make use something nice and then never feed us again? I don't understand!

Belly

*(Belly searches through the trash and pulls out a chicken carcass)* Here. There's some meat left on it.

Scuzzy

*(She smells it)* Smells okay, I guess. *(She eats)*

Belly

*(Sitting on some garbage)* You wanna try and go outside today? I have a good feeling about today.

Scuzzy

*(Eating)* Sure. But if we get outside can we just run away? I feel like living in this place is going to leave some severe emotional scars on me, you know. I'd like to minimize the impact.

Belly

Of course we'll run away. I thought that was implied.

Scuzzy

Yeah...no...I guess it was. Sometimes I think you like it here.

Belly

I've been in worse places. And I like being with you. It's cool Mrs. Hoffman took us both.

Scuzzy

Stop being so nice to her. Why are you always so nice to her? She is keeping us prisoner here. She's never home and she doesn't feed us. *(Screaming)* I hate it here!!!!!!

*Long pause.*

Belly

No one can hear you. Unless...you're just trying to hurt my feelings?

Scuzzy

I don't think I am. But I can't be sure. *(Pause)* How are we getting out of here?

Belly

We could try yelling out of the windows.

Scuzzy

Alright.

*Scuzzy and Belly go up to the barred windows and start screaming for help. They scream until exhausted.*

Scuzzy

I tied a note to the dog. But I think it died.

Belly

Do you know where? We could eat it.

Scuzzy

No. Sorry.

Belly

She'll be getting home soon. I bet she brings us some chips or something.

Scuzzy

I would rather die than stay here. Okay? I mean, I don't really want to die but you get the picture. I am not staying here. I feel claustrophobic. And that's a new phobia. I never had that one before this place. I can't accumulate new phobias. (*Screams*) I hate it here!!!!

Belly

We could call the police. We might get split up again but...you know...we could be placed somewhere better. It's a roll of the dice. Are you feeling lucky?

Scuzzy

I'm in a room full of trash wishing I could find a dead dog to eat...what do you think? We need to go away. Just leave. I don't want to go to another place. Me and you. We just gotta escape. Somewhere where they can't find us.

Belly

I know where she keeps the knives.

Scuzzy

(*Screams*) Yes! Let's kill her!!!!

(*Pause*)

Belly

We could just scare her.

Scuzzy

Sure, sure. Let's just scare her.

Belly

Seriously, I just want to scare her and then run out the door.

Scuzzy

No problem. We'll just scare her,

Belly

I'm not giving you a knife until you can convincingly tell me you are not going to kill her.

Scuzzy

*(Scuzzy piss and moans)* Yeah. Fine. I. will. Not. Kill. Her. I. will. Only. Scare. Her. Unless. She. Gets. In. My. Way. Then. I. Will. Straight. Up. Knife. Her.

Belly

Only scare her.

*Extremely loud footsteps are heard. Belly reaches into the pile of garbage and pulls out two gigantic knives.*

Belly

*(Hurriedly)* We have to get her while the door is open. I'll throw some trash at her to disorient her. Just get out the door.

Scuzzy

Where should we meet if we get split up?

Belly

I don't know. I've never been outside.

Scuzzy

Me neither. How about a tree or something.

Belly

Good idea. We can hide in it. Or climb it. Either way, she won't find us.

*An extremely loud key in the lock sound is heard. Then a door creaking open.*

Scuzzy

Hey, I love you, Belly.

Belly

I love you too, Scuzz. One, two, three, GO!

*Both of them begin screaming and waving their knives around. The below lines are quick fire. Not necessarily in order and can be spoken on top of each other. They only stop screaming to say their line.*

*Another note about this scene. Since the woman is never shown I can imagine this scene being played mostly in the dark with one source of light indicating the outside. Or, straight on to the audience and the blood coming from an inanimate object that is stabbed (because, this is a memory, so fuck it). Or, wherever your genius creative mind takes you.*

Belly  
The door is open.

Scuzzy  
She's on top of me.

Belly  
Push her off. She's drunk.

Scuzzy  
I can't breathe.

Belly  
Come on! Just push her off.

Scuzzy  
Help me!

Belly  
The neighbors...(he screams) Mind your own business!

Scuzzy  
Help me! I can't breathe!

*Belly runs over and stabs. And stabs. And thrashes around until he is completely covered in blood. Feel free to adlib lines. Scuzzy gets free and runs out. Belly's screaming is replaced with laughing. The sound of birds are heard.*

**Scene 3. The Waiting Room.**

*Scuzzy and Belly are in the waiting room again. Muffled Charlie Brown voices might be heard over the loudspeaker. They are both huddled together, very very close throughout the entire scene.*

Belly  
They can't split us up.

Scuzzy

They won't split us up. We'll just tell them it's important that we stay together. We'll tell them we're siblings.

Belly

They have charts. They won't believe you.

Scuzzy

Start crying. They hate when boys cry.

Belly

I always cry. It doesn't help.

Scuzzy

You could cry really hard. Like sob.

Belly

We have to run.

Scuzzy

There's adults everywhere. They keep watching us.

Belly

We'll just walk out. Real casually. With confidence. I saw it on a movie.

Scuzzy

When did you see a movie?

Belly

A long time ago.

Scuzzy

I want to see a movie.

Belly

Can we talk about this later?

Scuzzy

Okay. But let's put seeing a movie on our to-do list.

Belly

Once we get outside, just run as far as you can straight ahead.

Scuzzy

Maybe we'll get nice parents this time.

*Muffled announcing. Then a clear "Next." Then someone screams.*

Scuzzy

It would be cool to have a mom. I've always wanted a mom.

Belly

There aren't any good ones, Scuzz. Get over it already.

Scuzzy

I just think it would be fun to have someone to take me to the movies and make me sandwiches. And give me a room I can decorate however I want.

Belly

I will take you to the goddamn movies once we get out of here.

Scuzzy

Okay.

*Muffled noises. Then a "next."*

Belly

What number do you have?

Scuzzy

79. Again.

Belly

If we're gonna do this we need to go now. I'm not getting another hole in my arm.

Scuzzy

I could use a sucker.

Belly

Straight ahead. Remember. Just run straight.

Scuzzy

What if we get split up?

Belly

We won't. I'll watch for you. Trust me.

Scuzzy

Okay. I believe you.

Belly

Ready. On the count of three. Real casual. Just stroll out the front door. *(He whispers)* One, two, three.

*They both stand up. Stretch. Look at their wrists as if a watch is there. Start to whistle. Maybe Belly grabs a hat from the coat rack. Maybe he grabs a jacket and puts it on Scuzzy. Real casual. As they leave maybe Belly nods at someone as if to say "good day." They walk out. End scene.*

#### **Scene 4. Singing.**

*Belly teaches Scuzzy how to beg for money. Belly begins to sing "Hobo Bill's Last Ride" by Jimmie Rodgers. As he sings a spotlight is placed on him. Scuzzy looks on enamored. Belly is very good and very dedicated. Maybe Scuzzy joins? Up to you. The point of the scene is to see them together, happy, and Belly doing what he loves. (Also, if you can't get the rights to sing Jimmie Rodgers please feel free to pick something else).*

#### **Scene 5. The Woman.**

*Scuzzy is in a playground with a woman.*

Woman

Do you feel like talking today?

Scuzzy

Not really. Did you bring me a sandwich?

Woman

I didn't know what you would like. I have two kinds.

Scuzzy

I'll take them both.

Woman

I can bring more next time...for your friends.

Scuzzy

You don't have to bring me anything. But if you insist, yeah, bring some for my friends too.

Woman

Sandwiches make you happy. I want you to be happy.

Scuzzy

Sandwiches make everyone happy.

Woman

My daughter hated sandwiches. She used to take off the bread and squish it into a ball. She would squeeze it and squeeze it. I never knew a piece of bread could get that small. Then she would roll it in-between her hands until she had made a perfectly round ball and then she would freeze it. I would open the freezer sometimes and there would be dozens and dozens of these small little brown balls. I would try to throw them away but she wouldn't let me. She called them her pearls.

Scuzzy

That sounds like she liked sandwiches. Just not the way you wanted.

Woman

I used to get mad at her for taking off the bread. I would try and drown the bread in mayonnaise so she couldn't take it off. So it would stick to the meat and crumble when she tried to peel it. She would spend hours trying to get off every spot of bread. I used to yell at her. I told her other little girls would kill to have sandwiches. I told her that other little girls didn't even have moms. That some little girls lived in the street. I told her I would find one of those little girls and replace her.

Scuzzy

Moms don't always say the right thing. Don't beat yourself up.

Woman

I miss being called mom.

Scuzzy

You make a good sandwich.

Woman

Do you think about them? Your parents?

Scuzzy

Not anymore. I have Belly.

Woman

Your mom probably misses you.

Scuzzy

It's different, okay? They don't want to be found. They didn't lose me. They left me. It doesn't matter anyway. I don't want parents anymore. I did for a long time but not anymore.

Woman

I'd like to help you. I have an extra room.

Scuzzy

No thanks.

Woman

Clean sheets. Comfortable pillows. New clothes. And sandwiches...if you like them. I won't force you to eat anything you don't like.

Scuzzy

I'm okay. Really.

Woman

Do you like the movies? My daughter and I would go to the movies every Saturday. We would play rock, paper, scissors to see who got to pick the movie. She always chose rock so I would always choose scissors. Then we would sneak into a second movie afterwards. We would come out of the theater and close our eyes and walk straight until we ran into a door. Whatever door we ran into we had to go in. Sometimes the second movie was really bad. Sometimes we would get into the movie and it would be half way over.

Scuzzy

I've never been to the movies.

Woman

I'll take you. I would love to take you.

Scuzzy

I don't know what's playing.

Woman

We can just pick a door. It's fun.

Scuzzy

I'm not your daughter. You're not my mom.

Woman

I could be. I'd like to be.

Scuzzy

If being your daughter is so great then why did she leave?

Woman

Your friend can come too. I can learn to love a boy.

Scuzzy

I have to go. Thanks for the sandwich.

Woman

I'll come back tomorrow. I'll bring more sandwiches.

*Scuzzy turns to leave. She hesitates.*

Scuzzy

I'm sorry you lost your daughter. I hope you find another one.

*Scuzzy leaves.*

### **Scene 6. Homeless Shanty.**

*Scuzzy and Belly are at their homeless shanty. It is really nice, or, a mix of really beautiful pieces with garbage. Or garbage made into something beautiful. Belly and Scuzzy begin the scene annoyed at each other.*

Belly

Staring at words doesn't help you read any better. Believe me, I've tried.

Scuzzy

How do people learn how to read, then? I see people in the park all day staring at words. Eventually the words will make sense. I just have to keep staring.

Belly

That's not how it works.

Scuzzy

I'm hungry.

Belly

I stole some cans of beans today.

Scuzzy

I wish we had some meat.

Belly

I was going to mix it with some of the macaroni from last night. And there is a little bit of tomatoes left over too. It could be like...a casserole.

Scuzzy

If I eat anymore beans I'm going to throw up.

Belly

It's all we have.

Scuzzy

I know it's all we have. That's why I said I'm so sick of it. You don't get sick of things you have only once in a while. You get sick of things because you have something all the time.

*Belly is quiet for a second. Then he takes the can of beans and throws it across the room.*

Scuzzy

That was dramatic. You might have anger issues.

Belly

*(Belly starts to make dinner)* I'll mush them up. I'll make them look like hamburger.

*(Pause)*

Scuzzy

Some lady tried to take me today. *(Pause)* I almost went with her.

Belly

*(Too calmly)* Where?

Scuzzy

I thought...maybe she just needs a daughter. Maybe I *am* her daughter. Maybe she is just a nice lady who wants to help.

Belly

You know that's not true.

Scuzzy

It was at the playground. It wasn't close to here.

Belly

Did you tell her where we live?

Scuzzy

No. She didn't ask.

Belly

She could have followed you.

Scuzzy

She didn't. I was careful.

Belly

If you don't want to live with me anymore just tell me.

Scuzzy

I was careful. *(Pause)* I'm just sick of beans. I want...something else.

Belly

Get a job then.

Scuzzy

Not every grown up is like your dad. Some of them are nice.

Belly

*(Very angrily)* He wasn't my dad! How many times do I have to tell you that?!

*(Pause)*

Scuzzy

We're going to be adults one day too. *(Pause)* I just like to pretend sometimes. That I'm a normal kid.

Belly

Well, we're not normal kids. So get over it.

*(Pause)*

Scuzzy

I'm only twelve. I can't work anywhere.

Belly

Sing on the street with me. I always make more money when you're with me.

Scuzzy

I hate singing on the street. It makes me sad.

Belly

I love it. Everyone is watching me. It's like I'm famous.

Scuzzy

Those people feel sorry for you.

Belly

People don't give you money because they feel sorry for you. They give you money because you are talented. I see the same bum on the street every day with his pathetic sign that says "Vietnam Vet. Saved Lives. Will Work For Food." But no one gives him money. No one feels sorry for him. And they don't stop and ask him to work either. They know he's drunk. He won't do any good work. And they don't want to give him any money because they know he'll drink it. He's got no talent. No drive. See me, I put my talent out there. I give it away. And if people like it they pay me for it. And what I do with my money after that is no concern of theirs. Because I earned it. That's what people respond to. Hard work and talent. That's what people respect. Not some drunk on the street that might have done something heroic a million years ago. What did you do today to earn that dollar? That's what I say.

Scuzzy

You sound like a republican.

Belly

I have opinions.

Scuzzy

Sounds like something your dad would say.

Belly

Don't say that again.

Scuzzy

I bet you're pro-life now too.

Belly

You don't know anything about my dad or what he believed in. Don't talk about him. He wasn't my dad anyway. My dad was a famous singer. My mom and dad fell in love and he was killed in a car accident before I was born. She showed me his picture in a magazine once. He had dark brown hair and red rimmed glasses. Then she met that other guy. The mean one.

Scuzzy

You're right. I was trying to hurt you. I have anger issue too, I think. It just comes out different than yours.

*(Pause)*

Belly

I saw a good dad once. It was a dad and his son. They were walking together on their way to school or someplace. Holding hands and smiling. Then, the boy saw something and let go of his dad's hand and ran ahead. And the dad looked concerned and said "come back." Or something like that. And then the boy did and the dad acted like he was mad but really he was just worried. And then they held hands again. And the boy was safe. And then they walked by me...and pretended not to see me.

Scuzzy

Alright, what time do we start tomorrow? Singing?

Belly

Six AM.

Scuzzy

What the..?!...that is crazy early. No one is even awake then.

Belly

You don't think anyone's awake because you're never awake. That's when people are on their way to work.

Scuzzy

That's crazy. I don't believe you.

Belly

It doesn't matter whether you believe me or not. It's true. And it's what time I start.

Scuzzy

Is the sun even up then? What's the point if they can't even see you?

Belly

First of all, the sun is up. Most days. It's the professionalism that people respect. They see me, working hard, same as them, and they give me some money. I make their commute a little better. I know some guys who are pulling in a hundred bucks a day.

Scuzzy

If we make a hundred bucks I want to go out someplace to eat. Someplace nice.

Belly

We could sneak in behind some family at Chuck E. Cheese. That way they don't know we're alone.

Scuzzy

You're always so worried.

Belly

I don't want to go back. There's nothing wrong with that. Sometimes I feel like you're not worried enough.

Scuzzy

I just don't think anyone really cares to find us. Too much work probably. Do you think there are any nice moms out there? Do you think if I went back enough times I could find one?

Belly

Probably not. It wouldn't be worth it.

Scuzzy

Yeah, you're right. I guess. Maybe after work tomorrow I'll go to the library and see if they have any classes on how to read. It really is kind of boring staring at these words. I just figured it would be like talking. One day, you just talk. You know?

Belly

*(Bringing over dinner)* Six AM. I'm not kidding. Dressed and ready.

Scuzzy

*(Eating)* This is good. Definitely some meat qualities to it.

Belly

The secret is taco seasoning. It makes everything taste like taco meat.

Scuzzy

Smart.

Belly

You'll have fun tomorrow. I promise.

Scuzzy

Okay, Belly. I believe you. I always believe you.

*Lights out.*

**Scene 7. The Park.**

*Scuzzy is in the park. She hears a noise and is startled. A moment later the woman appears.*

Scuzzy

Jesus Christ. You scared me.

Woman

Language.

Scuzzy

Listen, I'm happy to sit and talk to you but please spare me the bible bullshit.

Woman

It makes me uncomfortable.

Scuzzy

Then just say that it makes you uncomfortable. Don't scold me like a child. Jesus Christ. You don't think I have any empathy? That if you said something made you feel uncomfortable I wouldn't change my behavior to make you feel *more* comfortable? You think I am some kind of street rat that you train to push a button? Give me a break. I'm respectful. I respect your feelings all the time. That's why I come here. I know you're lonely. *I* have people who care about me. So don't lecture me on how I should speak like you're some authority over the English language and don't presume for one fucking second that I am some kind of trash that you need to correct and make "better" or whatever you are trying to do. I'm fine. You're the one who needs help. Okay?

Woman

You seem angry.

Scuzzy

*(Sarcastically)* Oh my gosh. You think so? You are really good at assessing emotions. You should like do that for a living.

Woman

Are you hungry?

Scuzzy

Yes. You know that I am. I am always hungry. I live on the streets. I didn't just have a big lunch or something. You know that I am always always always hungry. And that's how you lure me into meeting you. How come you don't adopt a new kid or something? Do you like finding the desperate ones? The ones who have never had parents before? The ones with nothing to compare you to? The kids who are just so happy to stick a fucking sandwich in their mouths that you can say whatever bullshit Jesus shit you want and they'll be like...okay. Sure. Sounds good, mom. You're like trolling the streets for kids. That's some creepy shit. You should know that. You are creepy.

Woman

I'm not looking for any kid. I'm looking for you, Scuzzy.

Scuzzy

*(Pause)* Creepy.

Woman

I go to the park sometimes. My daughter, Hannah, she liked to go to the park and play with the dogs. I was allergic so we couldn't get one. So, I would take her to the dog park and sit a ways away and let her play with the dogs. I knew it wasn't good enough but it was close. You know...close enough to having a dog. There was one dog, Herman, that she fell in love with. It was a mean looking dog. I didn't want her to play with it at first. I told her to stay away from any dogs that looked mean. She told me you can't tell if a dog is mean by looking at them. She told me that there isn't such thing as a mean dog. Herman was a licker. He would come up to Hannah as soon as we got to the park and lick her legs and her arms and jump up to lick her face. And Hannah would sit down and let Herman wiggle in her arms. She would scratch his belly and then play fetch with him. Except Herman wasn't so good about bringing balls back. So she always joked that Herman was really playing fetch with her. I didn't like Herman's owner. A young girl. She didn't like Hannah playing with her dog. She always seemed really nervous about it. She used to ask me if Hannah could stay away from Herman. She said she just didn't want to worry about anything happening. I said okay but I let Hannah play with Herman anyway. I wasn't going to stop bringing Hannah to the park. Herman was her favorite. It was...close enough. You know? Herman's mom used to stare at me. I would see her whispering to other dog owners. She was nice to Hannah. She hovered. But she stared at me. I guess because I didn't listen to her. Or, because I sat in the corner by myself. She made me feel bad. Different. One day I brought my lunch to the park and Herman ran up to me. Herman's owner was yelling for him to come back. Herman licked me. So I gave him a piece of my sandwich. As he took the sandwich he nipped my hand. Herman's owner came up to me and just started yelling at me about bringing food to the park and how I didn't own a dog and that it was the last time she was going to ask me to stay away from her. Just on and on. And people were watching and I felt really bad. Different. I'm not good in those situations. People were staring and I was embarrassed. So I told her that her dog bit me. I said he bit my hand. And I called animal control. I watched as she cried as they carted off Herman. And Hannah cried too. And from then on I don't think she really loved me anymore. *(Pause)* Eventually your child figures out what kind of person you really are. *(Pause)* Anyway, I go to the park sometimes and I saw you there and you looked just like Hannah. And I wanted to meet you.

Scuzzy

I thought your daughter was dead.

Woman

No. She just grew up. *(Pause)* She doesn't like to talk to me anymore. Sometimes I'll call her over and over again until she picks up. But for the most part she just ignores my calls. Sometimes I call and say I've been in a car accident. But, that doesn't even get her to call me back anymore. I tried calling her work a couple times but she got really angry. I only do that now

if I really need to talk to her. I just get this really anxious feeling sometimes and I can't help myself. But I haven't called her once since I met you.

Scuzzy

I wonder what my mom is doing now. I don't even know if she's alive. I've looked up her name in the library but the only thing that pops up are some swimming scores. You know that anyone you look up at the library has a swimming score. It's like this weird archive of swimming scores that everyone has, even if they never went swimming. Maybe some guy one day just decided that all the swimming scores in the world were about to be lost and posted them to the internet. I don't think she was a swimmer though. But maybe...I guess I wouldn't really know.

Woman

I still have her room. Just like when she was a kid. After she left home I changed it back to how it used to be. When she looked at me like...like I was a good mom. Like she really loved me. So I took everything off her walls and put it away and pulled out all the old stuff I had packed up and arranged her room like it was when she was a kid. It's really beautiful. You would like it. And you could change things. You wouldn't have to keep it the way it is now. All I want is someone to call me mom again. And mean it.

Scuzzy

I already told you I'm not interested in that. I just want to talk. We probably shouldn't meet at all. I don't know much about adult-kid relationships but this seems like it is probably inappropriate.

Woman

Do you want children?

Scuzzy

Maybe.

Woman

You should.

Scuzzy

I don't have a lot of healthy role models.

Woman

It's nice not to be alone.

Scuzzy

I'm pretty sure I'd fuck it up.

Woman

There is this kind of feeling you get. You wake up and you just feel...warm. Complete.

Scuzzy

You can't take it back. Once you have a kid, that's it. Even if you get rid of it and they get a new family, they are broken inside.

Woman

You have a reason to try. To really try and be better than what you are.

Scuzzy

And they're expensive. That's the only thing I remember about my mom. She complained about money. A lot.

Woman

Their face looks like yours. It's like looking into a mirror and seeing all kinds of possibilities. A clean slate.

Scuzzy

I don't know how to...comfort people.

*(Pause)*

Scuzzy

I don't want to talk about this anymore. *(Pause)* Why didn't you bring any sandwiches?

Woman

You were late. I gave them to someone else.

Scuzzy

How many did you make?

Woman

Just two.

Scuzzy

Who did you give them to?

*(Pause)*

Scuzzy

Who did you give them to?

*(Pause)*

Woman

I ate them.

Scuzzy

You ate them?

Woman

I was hungry.

Scuzzy

You have plenty of food. I don't.

Woman

I know. I was mad. That you were late. I thought you weren't coming. I wanted to teach you some manners.

Scuzzy

I always come. Sometimes it is harder than others to get here. I can't just stroll down the street. I have to run sometimes and hide sometimes. And sometimes I stop and beg for money. I don't have a watch or a cell phone to keep track of the time. I have to hope a bank or someplace has a clock attached to it. I can't just ask a stranger what time it is. What if they call the police? And try and put me back. Give me to some crazy person who treats me like garbage. So, I'm so sorry I was late to our appointment. Where I'm nice to some old lady who lost her daughter for some sandwiches. What do you think that works out to hourly? Like what's my wage for entertaining you? For trying to fill that empty hole inside you? How much are those sandwiches you make? Five dollars? So I sit with you for two hours and I make about \$2.50 an hour. That's if you don't buy in bulk. Which I bet you do. So maybe \$1.50 an hour. And it's not like you put anything fancy on those sandwiches. Plain white bread. Meat. Maybe some mayonnaise. It's not like I'm getting chipotle aioli. Or rosemary focaccia. No roasted red peppers or pickled artichoke hearts. Sautéed mushrooms. Not even a few greens or a tomato. Just meat and bread. Because why would I want anything more than that? I should be grateful for anything, right? Meat and white bread. That's all I need. Just enough to keep me alive. Alive and sick. That is...if I'm here on time. Thank you so much. I know the manners you teach me will go a long way.

Woman  
You're mad.

Scuzzy  
You're a shitty mom.

*(Pause)*

Woman  
I'm sorry I ate your sandwiches.

Scuzzy  
I'm sorry your kid grew up and figured out what a freak you are.

Woman  
I have to go. Thank you for coming.

Scuzzy  
Anytime, lady.

Woman  
You're a good kid, Scuzzy. I hope you're in a better mood next time.

Scuzzy  
Yeah. And I hope next time you don't eat all my goddamn sandwiches.

*They both turn to walk away. The woman stops.*

Woman  
Come with me. Please come with me. Come with me. Come with me. Come with me! Come with me! Come with me.

*Scuzzy stops and turns toward the woman as she is pleading. The begging can go on for as long as you like. I picture it getting to the point of uncomfortable and perhaps the woman begins to cry / fall apart, etc. Then a pause.*

Scuzzy  
No.

*(Pause)*

Woman

Police.

*Lights out.*

**Scene 8. The Waiting Room.**

*Scuzzy is in the waiting room alone. She sits. A mumbled Charlie Brown announcement is heard. Then "Number 79. Next." Scuzzy begins to scream. Light out.*

**Scene 9. Singing with Swagger.**

*Lights up on Belly. He is singing. He is in a nice suit, full of swagger. At his feet is a hat with a sign that asks for money. He is singing Jimmie Rodger's "Daddy and Home." He works the stage. He is happy.*

**Scene 10. Older Now.**

*Scuzzy and the Woman meet in the park. They begin the scene the way they ended the last one. Staring at each other from across the stage. Scuzzy is older now.*

Woman

You're older.

Scuzzy

Yes. Eighteen.

Woman

An adult then.

Scuzzy

Legally.

Woman

How have you been?

Scuzzy

Good. Busy, I guess.

Woman

Doing what?

Scuzzy

Working. I got a job at a candy store. I worked my way up to supervisor. They're pretty nice there. Free candy.

Woman

Yes, I know. I walked by once and saw you.

Scuzzy

Why didn't you come in? I could have given you some Swedish fish. I give those to friends. No one buys them for some reason. But people eat them if they're free. And if management thinks they're selling they buy more.

Woman

I was scared. You stopped visiting. I thought you didn't want to see me anymore.

Scuzzy

I was away. With a family. You know that. I don't want to talk about it.

Woman

A candy shop seems like a nice place to work.

Scuzzy

I think so. I work full-time. Gives me a purpose, you know.

Woman

What about school?

Scuzzy

I wish you wouldn't be concerned about me. You can be happy for me. That's all I need.

Woman

I am. Happy for you.

Scuzzy

During my shift I'm responsible for eight other people. It's a big store. I tell them when to take breaks. I try and put them in sections they like. I decide how much candy to order. What's selling and what's not selling. I do a good job. It feels nice.

Woman

That sounds nice.

Scuzzy

I have a little apartment. With Belly.

Woman

Where is it?

Scuzzy

Sometimes I buy things for it. It seems sort of silly to buy things just to decorate your apartment. Especially when I need things like clothes and food. But, it feels nice, you know? To decorate. I come home and I look around and I feel proud of what I made. I put some Christmas lights up, around the doorframes. I saw it in a magazine once and I thought it was really nice looking. And I bought a houseplant. Well, I found it actually but I bought a nice pot for it. I'm saving up for a rug. A real rug. Not a thrift store one. Rugs are expensive. Did you know that? I never knew that. But I guess they tie the room together. That's what the magazine says at least.

Woman

Where's the apartment? I could come visit.

Scuzzy

I never thought I would be the kind of person who cares about that sort of stuff. Like, making sure the dishes are done right after I eat. Or, the bed is made in the morning. But it's nice to come home to a clean place. A place that I made for myself. All by myself. It's reliable. When I come home I know what I'm walking into. It feels safe. I am religious about paying my bills. They are always a week early. Once I missed my electric bill by a month. I don't know what happened. I just forgot I guess. But they didn't turn off my lights or anything. They just sent me a reminder notice. It said I was a valued customer. So I just paid the bill. I've always been so scared of money. It always seemed like it was the source of so much chaos. But I guess it's really the person managing the money. I didn't know that.

Woman

I came every week. I waited for you. I brought you a sandwich. I'd wait and wait. I'd eat my sandwich and leave yours on a rock over there. I thought maybe you would come later. Or maybe you were watching me. That's what I was hoping. So I'd leave it for you. I didn't want you to get mad again. Were you watching? Did you see me leave it for you?

Scuzzy

No. *(Pause)* I was away, remember?

Woman

I don't believe you.

Scuzzy

I don't care.

Woman

I'm not so bad.

Scuzzy

I know. You're just sad. I'm an adult now and all I've known are sad adults. I don't want to be sad when I grow up. I want to be happy. I don't think you're bad. I just don't want to be like you.

Woman

It's too bad all those sandwiches went to waste.

Scuzzy

I'm sure someone ate them. Even if it was just the squirrels I'm sure they didn't go to waste.

Woman

Or maybe they just rotted. Made the squirrels sick.

Scuzzy

Maybe.

Woman

I missed you. I know I'm not someone people like to talk to but you liked to talk to me and I miss that. Everyone needs someone to talk to. Even if they are angry with you. It's not fair that some people are alone all the time. There are so many people in the world. It doesn't seem fair to be alone all the time. I can't be so different from everyone else. I don't feel so different. It just doesn't seem fair.

Scuzzy

I've seen you watching me. I need you to stop now.

Woman

It doesn't hurt anyone. *(Pause)* Did you ever find someone to be your mom?

Scuzzy

No. Turns out I don't need one.

**Scene 11. Job Interview Number One.**

*Belly is being interviewed for a job. During the course of the interview he grows increasingly nervous and awkward. And sweats profusely.*

Interviewer

Well, we have to start by giving you a typing test. I really hate those things. Tell you what, just tell me your WPM and it's good enough.

Belly

I really enjoy typing. I think it is my most admirable skill.

Interviewer

Okay...that's great. I just need to write down your WPM.

Belly

Wording Perfect Man.

Interviewer

What are you talking about?

Belly

Words Plenty Mate.

Interviewer

Words per minute.

Belly

Yes, of course. I was just kidding.

Interviewer

We don't really like to joke around here.

Belly

Me neither. I'm just nervous. I hate jokes also.

Interviewer

Don't get me wrong. Jokes are fine. But not at work. At work we work.

Belly

Of course. Work is for working and home is for joking. I always say that. That's like my thing. Ask anyone.

Interviewer

So, WPM?

Belly

*(Starts to look through his briefcase)* I'm not sure. I just have to find it. I know I have it in here. I brought everything. You know, all my stats. Particulars and such. They're in here. Maybe it says on my resume? My wife helped me with that. Sometimes she just does things and doesn't ask me. But it's fine. I love her.

Interviewer

You don't have to tell me about spouses. I've had three of them. A little young for a wife though aren't you?

Belly

You can't ask about my personal life. *(Pause)* You can't ask me questions about my personal life. They have no bearing on my ability to work. *(Pause)* I don't have a wife. I just said that to seem older. More professional. I'm sorry.

Interviewer

Calm down kid. I was just making small talk.

Belly

I know I'm young.

Interviewer

Wives are terrible. I'm glad you're not married. Means you can work more.

Belly

I'm a hard worker.

Interviewer

You don't have to sell me, son. This is one of the shittiest jobs we offer. Anyone with half a brain could do this shit. So, believe me. If you can touch your finger to your nose that's all we really need to know.

Belly

Good one.

Interviewer

Well, thanks. But that wasn't really a joke. Perfunctory motor skills are really all that's required. This job used to be solely for ladies, you know? But now it's called an administrative assistant so men apply to it. If you can answer a phone and make coffee I guess you get a fancy title these days. Ridiculous.

Belly

I appreciate the clarity. You seem like a great boss. I would love to learn from you.

Interviewer

Okay, go over to that computer and just take the test and bring it to me when you're done. Don't touch anything afterwards. The last one took the damn thing and then touched something and his results were deleted. So you know what I did...deleted him! (*Laughs...too much*). The test is easy. Just a formality really. Unless you blow it. Then you're out! (*Laughs again too much*)

*Belly goes to the computer and sits down. He begins to read out loud.*

Belly

(*Reading*) The word "astronaut" derives from the Greek words meaning "star" and "sailor." (*To interviewer*) Is that true?

Interviewer

Oh my Christ. Just type whatever dumb story it says.

Belly

(*Reading*) These men and women conjure up images of bravery and adventure. They are modern heroes, helping humanity reach the stars.

*Belly slowly starts to type. Very slowly, uneasily, nervously...*

(*Reads*) When the space program began in 1959, there were only seven such people in the entire country. They all were then – or had been in the past – in the armed forces.

*Belly continues to type, very slowly.*

(*Reading*) Most of them were test pilots, used to the dangers that came from "pushing the envelope."

*A loud buzzer noise is heard.*

Interviewer

Okay, don't touch anything.

*Belly puts his hands up.*

Well, at least print out the results.

*Belly goes to the printer and starts to press buttons.*

You know what, never mind. I'll just come to you and look at the screen.

*The interviewer walks over to the screen and reads:*

“The word “astronaut” derives from the Greek word”...that's it? This is (*counts*) eight words. How in the hell did you only complete eight words? What kind of dumb hillbilly can't move his stumpy little fingers fast enough to complete this ape-ass typing test.

*The interviewer continues to berate Belly. As the berating continues the interviewer eventually sounds like the voice of the Charlie Brown mom.*

Belly

I became engrossed in the story.

Interviewer

I see. Well, son. We will definitely let you know. I think Janet has your information.

Belly

I'm a really hard worker. I want to learn. I take feedback well.

Interviewer

(*Sighs*) Son, I wish you the best of luck. I know you'll find something. We just need someone who...well, isn't a total fuck up. (*Laughs*) That's a mood lightener. So you won't kill yourself later.

Belly

May I take the test again?

Interviewer

Why don't you take a seat outside and I'll call you again when I get a break. I got these things all day.

Belly

Thank you, I will.

*Belly takes a seat. He sits. A Charlie Brown voice says "Next." Time passes. Lights down.*

**Scene 12. Celebrating.**

*Scuzzy and Belly are in their apartment. It is nicely decorated, as Scuzzy described previously.*

Belly

What's with the candles?

Scuzzy

We're celebrating.

Belly

I don't know if I got the job.

Scuzzy

You got it.

Belly

There were a lot of people there.

Scuzzy

I'm sure you got it.

Belly

And I wore this shitty suit. Thrift store garbage.

Scuzzy

I'm sure it looked like everyone else's. That suit was new once.

Belly

They gave me a computer test.

Scuzzy

You know how to use a computer.

Belly

You are not listening to me. I didn't get it.

Scuzzy

You don't know that.

Belly

I do. I do know that. If I say I didn't get it then just believe me. You used to believe me.

Scuzzy

There will be other chances. We should celebrate the chance at least.

Belly

I guess I can sing on the streets. Except, no one wants to give money to a grown up. I'm not cute anymore. I'm not a novelty. You know I used to think I had some talent? Last time I went on the street someone threw a rock at me. A fucking rock! It was small, like a pebble but still. The sentiment was there. Now it's all this gimmicky shit. Like people dressed up as statues. How much talent does it take to put a bunch of grey paint on yourself and be really still? *(Pause)* But there's always food, I guess. Celebrate with food! Because I'm not fat enough. That's why they don't give me money anymore. Because I'm fat. I used to look suave, debonair. Now I'm just some fatso singing about hard times. Like anyone is going to believe I've been through hard times! Some guy the other day put a one week free gym membership trial into my hat. Hello! Rude much. *(Goes to stove)* Oh look! Grilled cheese sandwiches. A reminder of the poverty we once and continue to still live in. Yum yum. *(He shoves a sandwich in his mouth)*

Scuzzy

It's nice cheese. And it isn't stolen. You don't celebrate the little things. We're doing better.

Belly

*(Mocks her)* "We're doing better." Jesus.

Scuzzy

I'm tired too. It's not like work is so easy for me either. I take everything so seriously but I know my manager doesn't respect me. He thinks the job is stupid and he thinks I'm stupid for taking it so seriously. But I do good work anyway because it makes me feel proud. All you need is to feel proud of yourself. And, I don't like coming home to your tantrums.

Belly

Yeah, okay. Sure. I'm sorry.

Scuzzy

That didn't sound very sincere.

Belly

Oh no. It didn't? Because I meant it. Every word. I'm so very very very very very very sorry that I am such a huge fucking disappointment.

Scuzzy

Okay, just pull it back. You'll get another interview. We're fine.

Belly

Yup. Just fine. The best I could ever hope for.

Scuzzy

I have to work tomorrow. I'm going to bed.

Belly

Yes, I know you work. I know it. You throw it in my face every chance you can get.

Scuzzy

I just said I'm going to bed. I'm tired. Jesus.

Belly

Because I'm not tired? I'm not tired from stressing out all day about not being able to pull my own weight? About feeling bad that I am relying on you? I'm not tired from hustling all day? Trying to sing on the street like a jackass while people laugh at me?

Scuzzy

I'm not trying to make you feel bad. I'm glad we're here. Together. That's all I care about. Go to sleep if you're tired.

Belly

You know I think I did better without you. When you were away. I struggled but I did okay. I made ends meet. I never felt like this at least. And if I went hungry one night it was my own problem. Now it's like I have you looking over my shoulder all the time. Judging me.

Scuzzy

You're being ridiculous. Goodnight, Belly.

Belly

Well, sweet dreams sweetheart. Enjoy going to bed. Enjoy that hard-earned rest from having a hard day's work. I'll stay up and clean the dishes. The least I can do is wash the dishes. That's what you're thinking... isn't it. I'll just add some water to the teaspoon of soap we have left and get these clean for you so you can use the same pan tomorrow for whatever delicacy you whip up and serve on one of the two plates we own. But let's celebrate the little things! Look at all the victories that surround us! These purple fucking curtains. Wait, no. These are sheets. These are dirty fucking purple sheets that I found at the dump that we cleaned in cold water that are probably crawling with fucking bugs. But you know what... we have tons of bugs that will probably eat those smaller curtain bugs. So no biggie. Ooooo and look at this. This beautiful table we own. What prince lives here I wonder? Oh, and what a beautiful tablecloth. Oh wait. That's just another piece of purple dump bug sheet used to cover the refrigerator box that poses as our dining table. Good news for us, we never serve anything substantial enough to worry about caving in the box. It seems to be holding up just fine. Let's celebrate the little things! Right?! Right?!!!! *(Belly goes to a hiding place and pulls out a beer. He sits. And drinks)*

Scuzzy

*(Coming out to kiss Belly goodnight.)* You are going to be a great man. I know it. *(Flatly)* I'll bring you home some Swedish fish tomorrow.

Belly

Thanks.

**Scene 13. Angry Singing.**

*Belly sings on the street. Angrily. "Waiting for a Train" by Jimmie Rodgers. Perhaps it devolves into crying, screaming? Or he is just upset. Perhaps people boo him. Throw rocks?*

**Scene 14. Job Interview Number Two.**

*Belly is at another job interview. He is not enthusiastic. Or really even trying. He drinks beer throughout the scene.*

Interviewer

So, why would you like to work at KFC?

Belly

I like chicken.

Interviewer

Well that's good. That's real good. We like employees who like our product. What's your favorite menu item?

Belly

The chicken.

Interviewer

I getcha. Fried? Or grilled.

Belly

What do you think? Fried.

Interviewer

*(Reading a card)* So, why should I hire you?

Belly

Because I applied.

Interviewer

*(Writing Belly's answers down)* Okay, Okay. And what would you say is your best quality?

Belly

What do you mean?

Interviewer

What makes you better than some other guy?

Belly

Isn't that the same as the first question?

Interviewer

No. They're different.

Belly

Okay. Well, if I applied and some other guy didn't then I would probably be a better hiring choice than the guy who didn't even apply.

Interviewer

Do you have any special skills?

Belly

I can drink a lot without anyone knowing. Like right now. I am totally drunk and you probably have no idea. My dad had the same skill. Pretty cool, huh?

Interviewer

*(Reading)* When were you most satisfied in your job?

Belly

I've only had one job and it was begging for money on the street. So...I guess I felt good when people were giving me money and not throwing rocks at me instead.

Interviewer

What are your weaknesses?

Belly

Pass.

Interviewer

I just need to write something. Lots of people say that they work too hard.

Belly

It's a trick question. I'd rather just pass.

Interviewer

I'll just write down that you care too much. Ever been convicted of a felony?

Belly

Is stealing a felony?

Interviewer

I don't know. But I'll just put no.

Belly

Can I ask you a question?

Interviewer

The salary is \$6.50 an hour. I know. It's basically minimum wage but you get 50% off your meals and a .25 cent raise every 6 months.

Belly

Why do you lock your dumpsters? Is it just to keep kids from eating out of your garbage?

Interviewer

It's more so no one puts trash in there. Trash that doesn't belong. People just go around looking for places to dump their trash. We used to rummage through it and find something with their names on it and call the cops. But then you have to rummage through trash. Gross, right? So we put a lock on it. I don't think anyone would want to eat the stuff we throw away. Grocery stores throw out some good stuff sometimes but the stuff we throw away is actually garbage. *(Pause)* So, here's the deal. We are short staffed and I'll take anyone at this point. I know it ain't much money but we try and cultivate a real family environment here. So, if you want the job, you got it.

Belly

*(Pause)* Okay.

Interviewer

*(Shakes his hand)* I'll be putting you on the schedule immediately. Night shift is what we need now but you can work your way up to day time stuff. Also, leftover chicken is supposed to be thrown away at the end of the night. But we sort of turn a blind eye if people want to take some home. Like I said, we're a family here.

Belly

*(Raising his beer)* Great. I've always wanted a family.

**Scene 15. *Breaking Up.***

*Belly and Scuzzy. Breaking up. This scene is eerily civilized and devoid of emotion.*

Belly

I want to break up.

Scuzzy

Why? I love you.

Belly

I'm not happy. I think I can do better.

Scuzzy

You can't. You won't.

Belly

I want to try.

Try with me. Scuzzy

I drink too much. Belly

Stop. Scuzzy

It's a symptom. I'm trying to be something I'm not with you. You put too many expectations on me. Belly

You have potential. Scuzzy

Just because we started in the same place doesn't mean we belong together. Let me go. Belly

I don't want to. I don't want to be alone. You make me laugh. Scuzzy

I'm not happy. Please. I'm drowning. Belly

I don't need you. Scuzzy

I know. That's why I want to leave. Belly

I'll do better without you. You were holding me back. Scuzzy

You have potential. Belly

We started in the same place. We belong together. Scuzzy

Belly

When I'm with you, I feel alone.

Scuzzy

I can do better. I can do better than you.

Belly

I don't need you anymore.

Scuzzy

Just because we started in the same place doesn't mean we belong together. Let me go.

Belly

Don't leave me. I need you.

Scuzzy

Don't leave me. I need you.

Belly

I need to try to be on my own. I need to at least try.

Scuzzy

I want to see more. You are holding me back. I can do better.

Belly

I know you love me. But I need you to stop. Now.

**End of Act 1.**

**Act 2.**

*Unlike Act 1, the staging is realistic. Natural. Belly and Scuzzy are both older now. Middle aged probably. This scene may read slower. Scuzzy and Belly haven't seen each other in a long time. So, they talk about the weather. They do not have a banter anymore but are still comfortable being together, even in silence.*

**Scene 1. The Bridge.**

*Scuzzy and Belly are standing or sitting on the railing of a bridge. The sound of birds are heard in the background.*

Belly

I hate how it gets so dark so early now.

Scuzzy

Yeah. Me too.

Belly

I feel like I get up and only have a couple hours until it feels like bed time again.

Scuzzy

Yeah. It sucks. I don't understand the point.

Belly

I try to get up earlier. So I can enjoy more of the day. But I never do. Why do they change the time anyway?

Scuzzy

I don't know. Farmers or something.

Belly

I get depressed when it's dark all the time.

Scuzzy

I think it's an electric company scam. To make us use more energy.

Belly

You look nice.

Scuzzy

We had a thing at work.

Belly

Party?

Scuzzy

Sort of. A mucky muck for the board members. But they had wine. I brought a bottle. I thought we might need it.

Belly

I don't drink anymore.

Scuzzy

That's good. I mean...isn't it?

Belly

Yeah. I think so.

Scuzzy

I took some of those little sandwiches also.

Belly

What kind?

Scuzzy

Roast beef with some horseradish spread and purple onions. A couple turkey with Applewood smoked bacon and spicy mayonnaise and then some veggie. But the veggie are really good. It has some kind of olive tapenade on it. One of each?

Belly

A threesome. My favorite.

*Scuzzy gives Belly a weird look and a plate of sandwiches. They eat.*

Belly

The veggie is good.

Scuzzy

Right? I'm always surprised when the veggie is good. But it usually is. I guess they have to put on extra stuff to compensate for the lack of meat.

*They continue to eat.*

Scuzzy

It's pretty tonight. I feel like I never notice when it's nice out. Other people tell me its nice out and I'm like...who cares. I just want to get in my pajamas and watch tv. But it's nice out. I want to start caring about that.

Belly

It's not too cold. It's been cold lately.

Scuzzy

I hate wearing a jacket. If I don't need it I have to take it off and carry it. Or put it around my waist. I don't think women my age are supposed to do that anymore. I won't even entertain putting a jacket around my shoulders. I'd rather throw it away than look like a bully from some kind of John Hughes movie. (*groans*) I think even saying that sounded boujie. Like, what kind of boujie jerk knows who John Hughes it.

Belly

I got the joke.

(*Pause*)

Scuzzy

Same thing with umbrellas. I hate being weighed down by something I don't need.

Belly

I always carry a full set of clothes with me. Is that weird?

Scuzzy

Ummm. Definitely.

Belly

I'm always worried when I get home there will have been a fire or something. Or that I'll come home and find out I've been robbed. You know, something like that. I used to try and buy nice stuff. I was working a lot. I didn't have anything else to do after you left and I was kind of sad so I figured I should work. So I worked and I tried to treat myself to nice things. You know, make my place feel homey. Kind of the way you used to do it. So I bought myself a nice TV. And eventually a comfy sofa and some appliances and even a dog. Oh man. I loved that dog. I called him Belly. After me. And every day after work I would walk him for hours. No exaggeration. We would just walk around the city and people got to know me. I became the guy with the nice dog. And people would stop and pet him and maybe chit chat with me for a little bit. And me and Belly would buy a couple hot dogs and eat them in the park. I'd say "ever see a dog eatin' a dog?" And people would laugh. And then we would walk home. It was really nice. I thought I could be pretty happy like that. And then I started to get worried. Worried that someone was going to take my stuff and my dog. That I would come home and it would all be gone. And I would be at work and I'd have to run home at lunch just to make sure everything was still there. I just liked my little life so much. I didn't want it to go away. But stuff always goes away, you know? I knew it was going to go away eventually. Something bad would happen as it always does and I kept thinking about that over and over again and I decided to get rid of everything before someone could take it from me. So now I carry around all my stuff with me.

*Silence.*

Belly

I found Belly a home though. I made sure to do that at least.

Scuzzy

You left me. In your story you said I left you but you left me. I think you're remembering it wrong.

Belly

I remember things the way they felt to me at the time. I think everyone does.

Scuzzy

Whatever. Facts are facts and you left me. I remember that part pretty clearly.

Belly

I'm sorry. I didn't want to make you angry.

*Silence.*

Scuzzy

I stole these sandwiches. *(Pause)* Not really stole but I took them and didn't tell anyone. Part of my job is to clean up messes from parties and meetings so whenever I do I take all the leftovers. I don't know if they know. Sometimes I leave a few sandwiches in the fridge so people can have them for lunch the next day. But a lot of times people never eat them. They just sit in the fridge going bad. Sometimes people ask me what's leftover in the fridge and I tell them and they say naw, I'm going to order from the place down the street, you want anything? Like, I always wonder what that must be like. To just be okay with buying other food because the free food is a little old or because you're a little sick of it. To not constantly be thinking about meals and money and trying to put yourself together so you fool them just enough to make them think you are the same as them. So they don't know that the whole time you're just pretending. To be normal, I guess. So I take them. And I eat them. Sometimes even the ones I don't like that much. I hate wasting food. So I eat it all.

Belly

I wouldn't call that stealing.

Scuzzy

I feel guilty about it.

Belly

You shouldn't.

*(Pause)*

Scuzzy

I've read some books and I guess that's a side effect of being poor. Even though I know better I do it anyway. I guess poor people who win the lottery usually spend it real fast and then they're poor again pretty quick. They just know that that money will be gone eventually so they spend it before it can trickle through their fingers. I guess I do that with sandwiches.

*Silence.*

Belly

When I used to buy myself stuff I bought curtains once.

Scuzzy

Purple?

Belly

Purple?

Scuzzy

Like the curtains we had.

Belly

I thought they were orange. Orange with pink flowers.

Scuzzy

Oh. Maybe. I can't remember.

Belly

I remember because I hated them so much. They weren't even girly. They were just really really ugly. Old lady sheets, that's what I used to call them.

Scuzzy

I don't remember that.

Belly

You're better at forgetting.

Scuzzy

I'm sorry you lost your dog. That must have been hard.

Belly

I left him. It's different.

Scuzzy

You were trying to be responsible.

Belly

You don't leave the people you love because you're being responsible. You leave them because you're a coward.

*Silence.*

Belly

You got a beau?

Scuzzy

A beau?

Belly

You know... a boyfriend?

Scuzzy

Now that's boujie.

Belly

Are you seeing anyone?

Scuzzy

Yes.

Belly

What's his name?

Scuzzy

Tom.

Belly

That's boring.

Scuzzy

Yes, he is very much a Tom. Sort of nondescript. But you also know nothing bad has ever happened to a Tom. You know? You just know that a Tom has probably had a pretty okay life.

Belly

Where did you meet him?

Scuzzy

Our story isn't very romantic.

Belly

Good. I don't think I could take it if it was.

Scuzzy

I met him in line in the post office. I was mailing some stuff for work and he was mailing some stuff to his kids and we started talking about how annoying it is that the post office doesn't keep any tape around and how they force you to buy it instead. Like, when you just need one piece of tape you have to buy a whole roll. I mean, I guess you can't just be giving away free tape all the time but its like, roll it into the price of the stamp or something. Anyway, Tom bought a roll of tape and we split it. And when I went to give him money he said I could buy him a drink instead. Which, to be fair, the price of a drink is way more than half a roll of tape but I guess that was his big move so I accepted.

Belly

He has kids?

Scuzzy

Yeah, they live with their mom. But they visit.

Belly

I can picture you with kids.

Scuzzy

I never wanted any. I still don't. But Tom's kids are nice so I guess that's close enough.

Belly

*(Pause)* Do you love him?

Scuzzy

I think so.

Belly

More than me?

Scuzzy

When we broke up I couldn't sleep for two months. For two months I would just lie awake in bed. My body was tired. I was tired all day. But when I went to bed I just felt this profound sense of loneliness. Like, I was going to die. Just a big gaping hole in my chest. And I would curl up in my covers and cry and cry and sometimes I would eventually get some sleep. After I had cried myself out. But you know how sometimes when you cry you feel better afterwards? Like, you had some cathartic experience or something. Like, there is a little bit of warmth in your chest where that gaping hole was? That never happened with me. The loneliness never went away. I pulled my bed into the living room thinking that might help but it just made me sad and also sort of disoriented. I started taking sleeping pills. I started to go a little crazy from not sleeping. I would feel like I was floating all the time and I would repeat myself a bunch. I was like, oh no. This is it. This is when the schizophrenia that I can only imagine runs in my family is kicking in. That's the one thing about not knowing your family. I feel like I'm a ticking time bomb for some sort of horrible illness I don't know anything about. But I guess maybe that's better than worrying about it. I don't know. So, I started taking pills and I got some sleep. And, you know, eventually I didn't need them anymore. *(Pause)* But no, I don't love him more than you. I don't think I could take loving someone that much again.

Belly

That's good. I hate to think of you out there loving someone more than me.

Scuzzy

He's really nice. *(Pause)* I don't know how to be with him though. You know? I'm not good at opening up. He knows that I was a foster kid. He says it is a character builder. I think he has some sort of romantic idea of what it is like to grow up without a family. Like Annie or something. But she had Daddy Warbucks soooooo. Every time he tells me how much I have overcome or how strong I am I kind of love him a little less. It's like he is always reminding me that I don't fit in. The people at my work do that too. Every time I order food for meetings and clean up they make a big to-do of thanking me in front of the whole office. Like, hey, thanks for doing that crappy work that no one wants to do. But also reaffirming that that crappy work is part of my job. I hate being thanked so much. It's like they feel guilty. Like they are apologizing for the class difference in the office but also making it clear in a very public way that it exists. Anyway, Tom means well he just doesn't get it.

I'll take some wine.

Belly

I thought you quit.

Scuzzy

I lied. I never quit.

Belly

*Pause. They drink.*

Remember Mrs. Hoffman?

Belly

The hoarder. Yes. She was awful.

Scuzzy

Belly

I just remember she had tons of spaghetti o cans. It felt like thousands of them lined up in the kitchen. And I always used to wonder why the ants would never go near the cans. Do you remember? There were trails and trails of ants everywhere else. Peanut butter, green beans, even moldy bread, but never the spaghetti o's.

Scuzzy

Yeah, I don't think I ever ate spaghetti o's after that place. Which really sucks because spaghetti o's are delicious.

Belly

She never let us go outside. I used to think that was weird but I guess she knew we would run away.

Scuzzy

I'm a total neat freak because of her.

Belly

We lived together. I remember.

Scuzzy

I wasn't that bad. I just liked things a certain way. It made me feel like I had some control over things.

Belly

I looked her up a few years ago and called her. Some old woman picked up. I think she said she was her sister. I guess she died a while back. It kind of made me sad.

Scuzzy

Fuck her. Who cares.

Belly

When we ran away I hit her with a can of spaghetti o's. Not hard. I don't think. But it still had some sauce in it and it went everywhere. It was pretty gross. As I got older I started to remember it differently. Like, instead of spaghetti o's it was a rock, or a hammer, or knives. I was scared I had killed her. It got so bad the guilt was just eating me up all the time. I had never thought about her before and then one day I thought...what if I killed Mrs. Hoffman? So I had to call her.

Scuzzy

I don't remember you hitting her. I remember me screaming a lot. Which was pretty silly because I don't even think she was ever home. I think she always left the door unlocked too. Which is pretty unsafe. I hate thinking that we could have left anytime, you know? That we just didn't because she told us not to.

Belly

I remember the smell. Every Chef Boyardee product has that same smell. I wonder if they ever change their formula. I guess that stuff never goes bad. That's probably why the ants stayed away. All the preservatives. But yeah. I felt bad about it. I was on my ninth step. After I couldn't reach her I kind of gave up the whole AA thing. Weird huh? I never really thought Mrs. Hoffman mattered to me. I guess she did.

Scuzzy

She's in hell now. Or wherever those awful foster parents go. I hope they're all in one big waiting room fighting over the last can of spaghetti o's. Doomed to hunger for eternity. But somehow fat at the same time.

Belly

She took us both. That was nice. She didn't have to.

Scuzzy

She probably just wanted the extra money.

Belly

It was still nice.

Scuzzy

Who else did you apologize to?

Belly

It's called making amends.

Scuzzy

Same thing.

Belly

I stole from a few people. Well, shitty jobs I worked. So I went back and paid for the stuff I stole. I went to two places and they both had all new employees. I guess the turnover is pretty high in fast food. So they were really confused by me trying to give them money without wanting food in return. The first place I left the money on the counter and ran out. The second place I ended up just buying a hamburger.

Scuzzy

Sounds like you made an effort at least. *(Pause)* Is that why you called me? To make amends.

Belly

Amends for what?

Scuzzy

You know, being a dick.

Belly

I was never a dick. If anything, you were the dick.

Scuzzy

You were the one who left.

Belly

You would have eventually. I just made it easier for you.

Scuzzy

I thought we were going to be together forever. I never wanted you to leave.

Belly

Okay.

It's true. Scuzzy

I don't believe you. Belly

I just wanted you to be happy. Scuzzy

I was happy. Belly

That's not true. Scuzzy

As happy as I can be, I guess. Belly

I remember being super stressed out all the time. Scuzzy

Yes, I remember. You complained about it a lot. Belly

I wanted other things, I guess. I wanted something easier. Scuzzy

See. It was you who wanted to leave. It must be nice to have such a selective memory. (*Scuzzy is hurt*) (*Pause*) I know it was hard for you. I'm glad you're doing well. Belly

Thanks. Scuzzy

So, you're an executive assistant? That sounds like a good job. Belly

How did you know that? Scuzzy

Belly

I can google.

Scuzzy

Oh geez. Yes. It's fine. I do the work no one else wants to do and in return I get to watch You Tube videos while the rest of the office goes out into the world and does important stuff. The nice thing is that since no one has ever had to be someone's assistant they don't know how much time things are supposed to take. They are always saying how fast I work. They have no idea how fast I could work but I don't want to change their expectations. I do enough to be valued but not so much that they completely take advantage. I don't really have any big aspirations. I always just wanted to have enough. And now I do.

Belly

I always thought you wanted to be a big success or something. A star.

Scuzzy

No, that was definitely you. I was a head down and work sort of girl. You were the entertainer.

Belly

Now I'm just a fuck up.

Scuzzy

Pity Party.

Belly

Anal retentive.

Scuzzy

Hey, I've made a career out of being organized.

*Silence.*

Scuzzy

I know I pushed you away. I'm sorry.

*(Pause)*

Belly

I never thought I was attractive, you know? I was just some throw away kid. A piece of garbage. Worthless, waste of space, money-suck. All the things my dad used to call me. So when I was on

my own I was always shocked when girls looked at me. Like they were interested in me. I just didn't understand why they would even be bothering with me. You. I got why you liked me. We were the same. But these girls, women, they came from nice families. They had parents. They had safety nets. You know sometimes when I'm walking around I look to see where I could live if I were ever homeless again. Like, I'll walk by a park and see a bridge and think...I could sleep there if I had to. Or there's this creek by my place and I think...this would be a good place to set up a tent. No one would bother me here. And then I wonder how cold it gets in the winter and what kind of sleeping bag I would need and whether I would have to steal one. These are real thoughts that go through my mind all the time. And these girls, they don't know anything about that. They're just happy. And ignorant. And I think how nice that must be. And I think they could have someone else. They could have someone who isn't made of garbage. Who isn't all fucked up inside. And I think I must be doing a good job faking it. Passing for some Pinocchio version of a real boy. So, I started seeing how many women I could get to sleep with me. At first I was really trying to date. But then I figured out that I couldn't really hide who I was all the time. Eventually there was an intimacy wall that they just couldn't get past and they would leave me. So I stopped trying to date and I just tried to fuck them. I thought...I'll show them. I don't know why. They were nice girls. Some weren't. But some were. But I just wanted to make them sad. Make them think I was some kind of prince charming and then just fuck them and never call them again. Sometimes I would even string them along. Like take them out a couple times and then call like a month later and fuck them again. Get their hopes up. I liked the way they looked at me I guess. When they thought I was someone else. Someone who maybe had a nice job. Someone who liked to hold hands and tell them they were special. And it was so easy and then I thought, they must not be happy either. They must be really sad inside also. So, it kind of lost its appeal. But one girl. I actually liked her. She was pretty cool. I always lied to her so I knew that we had an expiration date. As soon as she caught me in my first lie I left. It seemed easier that way. *(Pause)* While we were together she got pregnant. I told her to get rid of it. She asked me why and I told her I didn't love her. I mean, I guess I didn't if I could say something like that to someone? I must not have. I think only a monster could have done that. She really wanted a baby which I thought was so weird. How could I be a father? I'm too messed up for that and I don't want to pass that down to some poor kid. That's really why I stopped making amends. I mean...how do you face something like that? Sometimes I wonder if she kept it anyway but I'm too scared to look her up. If I can't look her up I can never get through my steps. I'll always be in this fucking limbo.

Scuzzy

*(Nervously)* Why did you bring me here, Belly?

Belly

Jesus Christ. I'm not jumping. You're so dramatic. I just wanted to see you. I think about you, sometimes. And I wanted to see how you were. How you turned out. I wanted to talk to my friend.

Scuzzy

You could have called me anytime. I had hoped you would.

Belly

I'm not like you. I can't just forget all the bad shit. I don't need a reminder of how miserable I've been. It's inside me all the time. I carry it around all the time. You're just a physical manifestation of that reminder. Of someone I thought I could be. I used to sing in the car. As loud as I could. I loved to sing. I can't even do that anymore. It just makes me think about all the people who laughed at me and how ridiculous I must have looked to them. I thought I could really do something with my life. I look back and all of my memories are like this retrospective of what the hell was I thinking. How delusional was I? I realized that the good memories are too entangled with the bad. So they all have to go. At this point, I'm just striving for numb.

Scuzzy

I'm sorry, Belly.

*Silence.*

Belly

I'm glad you're happy, Scuzz.

Scuzzy

Will you call me sometime? We don't have to talk about the bad stuff. We could just sit...and eat sandwiches.

Belly

You're ridiculous with those sandwiches.

Scuzzy

I have a lot of good memories of sandwiches.

Belly

It was good to see you. Goodbye, Scuzzy.

Scuzzy

Goodbye, Belly.

*Belly leaves. Scuzzy sits alone for a while, eating.*

Scuzzy

I know you're watching me.

*Pause*

It's fine. Please come out.

*The woman emerges from onstage or the bushes or what have you.*

Woman

Sorry, I thought I was being quiet.

*Scuzzy hands her a sandwich.*

Scuzzy

You're never quiet.

Woman

I thought I was.

Scuzzy

Sometimes it's comforting. To know you're there.

Woman

I thought you'd be mad.

Scuzzy

It's alright. Once in a while.

Woman

These are good sandwiches, Scuzzy.

Scuzzy

Can you call me Samantha? I don't go by Scuzzy anymore.

Woman

I thought you liked Scuzzy.

Scuzzy

Not anymore.

*(Pause)*

Woman

It's a nice night.

Scuzzy

Yeah. It is. *(Pause)* I'm scared I'm not going to see my friend again.

Woman

I'm sorry. *(Pause)* I don't know how to make you feel better. I don't know how to comfort you.

*(Pause)* Do you want me to go?

Scuzzy

No. Stay. It helps. You just being here. Talking. It helps.

Woman

*(Awkwardly)* Should I put my arm around you?

Scuzzy

No. I just want to sit here and be quiet for a while. Be quiet. And listen to the birds.

Woman

You can call me mom if you like. I always wished you would call me mom.

*Silence.*

Scuzzy

I don't think Belly will ever come back. He says I'm good at forgetting but I think I remember everything. I just remember that he was always the only person that ever made me feel like I was special. Not even special but just normal. We just fit so well and I never had to worry about what I said around him or water down my pain so it made it more palatable for him. He didn't try to make me feel better either. He just knew the way things were and that is all I needed.

Woman

He'll probably come back.

Scuzzy

I'm glad I didn't end up like him. But I'm sad about it too. It's like we don't share that thing anymore. Or maybe I just got really good at pretending. I think you can pretend so much that it stops being pretending anymore.

Woman

When I first saw you on the playground I thought you looked exactly like my daughter. I was a little shocked. I thought you could be her and I hid. I knew if my real daughter saw me she would have run away. But then I remembered that my real daughter was older so I came out to talk to you. I never wanted to scare you. I know I don't know how to navigate social situations. I know I am bad at that. Something about me. I'm always saying the wrong thing. I observe how other people talk to each other and I think I'm doing that but then people get mad at me or quiet or just never talk to me again. Usually they don't tell me why. I like the people who tell me why at least. When I saw you that day I thought I could be your mom. I could be a good mom to you. Little kids don't know if you're weird. They just love you. That's what they're supposed to do. I wanted to take care of you. I watched you for a while and realized you didn't have any parents around. I thought maybe I could take you. I thought it would be better for you. It would be safer than the streets. I would do anything for you. I knew I could do better than the first time. I wouldn't take you to the dog park, even if you begged. Or at least I wouldn't bring food to it. I wouldn't let people make me feel small. I wouldn't react badly. Or, maybe I would check with you first about how to react. Or not react at all. I would try harder than any mom in the world has ever tried to make a nice life for their daughter. I didn't want you to come with me against your will so I thought I could wait until you liked me. Until you would come willingly. It got so I didn't know how to be around you. It's so hard to try and be someone else. Someone you don't even understand how to be. I knew you wouldn't like me if I tried to be myself so I tried to mimic other moms I've seen. I always felt like I was doing the wrong thing. It always felt wrong.

Scuzzy

Some people aren't meant to be moms.

Woman

What happens if you're meant to be a mom and you're just really bad at it? What if you have this thing inside and that's all you want to do and your kid leaves you? How is that fair? How is that okay?

Scuzzy

That's what it means to grow up, I guess. Accepting that things don't always work out. I don't want to be sad about everything. I don't like carrying that around with me.

Woman

When I called the police I thought it was for the best. I thought you would be safer.

Scuzzy

I know. It's okay.

Woman

I was mad. But I wasn't trying to get you in trouble. I really did think it was for the best.

Scuzzy

It's okay. I don't care anymore.

Woman

I never forgave myself for that.

Scuzzy

You should.

*(Pause)*

Woman

Will you call me mom? Just once?

Scuzzy

What's your real name? I never knew.

Woman

Janet.

Scuzzy

I don't know what I thought it would be but it sort of makes you smaller now. To have a name. Like, oh, that's just Janet. You have always been this very complicated figure in my life and the whole time you were just Janet.

Woman

I like to think that I helped you in some way. Do you feel like I helped you in some way?

Scuzzy

I need to go now. Do you want the rest of these sandwiches?

Woman

Will you come back again? I'd like to talk to you again.

Scuzzy

I'm going to leave these here if you want them. Or maybe some other kid will find them and take them. I think I'm actually kind of sick of them.

Woman

Please, call me mom. I just want to see what it feels like.

Scuzzy

I don't feel like pretending anymore. *(pause)* Goodbye...*(Scuzzy looks at woman and decides)*  
Janet.

*Scuzzy leaves. The woman starts eating one of the sandwiches. Lights out. End of play.*