

Second Glance

By Zachary Mark

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ACT I

1

SCENE ONE (HOBBS PUBLISHING)

1

(Curtains open to the waiting room of Hobb's Publishing Company. A secretary is working at her desk while hopeful writers sit and await their name to be called and their dreams to come true.)

SECRETARY

Your summary page on top?

SAM

(Hands over a paper that sat on the top of his manuscript)

Yes, ma'am? I'm just wondering when...

SECRETARY

(Puts one finger up for silence)

Sir, *(Monotone)* "We here at Hobbs Publishing appreciate your interest in having your book published by us. Please have a seat and we will call your name if Mr. Phelan would like to read your work based on the summary you have just provided me this morning"

SAM

Yes, but this is my first attempt here and..

SECRETARY

(Cutting him off with index finger in air again) "We here at Hobbs Publishing appreciate your interest in having your book published by us. Please have a seat and we will call your name if Mr. Phelan would like to read your work based on the summary you have provided me this morning."

(Sam is about to talk again but catches himself. Frustrated he sits down near two gentlemen. The secretary gets up and walks Sam's script to the office offstage. When she opens up the door, all heads quickly turn towards the office with anticipation. When the crowd sees that it's just the secretary, they slink back into their boredom.)

SAM

(Turning towards Ben)

Is she part robot or what?

BEN

(Slowly turning towards Sam to answer) "We here at Hobbs Publishing appreciate your interest in having your book published by us." (Begins laughing with Abe)

ABE

Oh Ben, give the newbie a break. You remember how we felt the first time we walked through those doors?

BEN

Yes, yes. I remember it like it happened just yesterday. However, it's been..(Looks at wrist that has no watch) 6 years now?

(Both gentlemen take a moment and pause looking off into space and sighing at the rejection they have endured.)

ABE

I'm Abe Bendix and that there is Ben Halligan.

SAM

So...over 6 years? Wow, how much work have you had published? Maybe I've read some of your stuff.

BEN

It's not how much you have had published that counts, it's the quality. I've dedicated many years working and reworking my novel. Someday I'll walk out of this office without seeing it thrown out of Mr. Phelan's inner sanctum. *(Points to door that leads to office that is offstage)*

SAM

Thrown out?

BEN

Thrown out.

ABE

Just don't be too hard on yourself the first time you see your manuscript fly in the air and hit the floor with a resounding thud.

SAM

Thud?

ABE

Thud.

(Mr. Phelan's door opens and everyone sitting in the chairs turn their heads quickly in anticipation. It's just the secretary coming back from dropping off Sam's papers. She heads back to her desk as the hopefuls sink back in their chairs tired and rejected.)

SAM

So what are your books about?

BEN

(Proudly) My book is about a young man who loses everything he holds so dear, in just one year. Catchy right? Anyway, he deals with illness, deaths, marriage and rejection..until one day. *(Ben stands)* One day he sees the light out of the darkness. He understands all the hardships were just tests. It's time to brush off the past and look forward to the next year. A year of hope, happiness and..

(Ben stops in his tracks as Mr. Phelan's door opens. Mr. Phelan is offstage.)

MR. PHELAN

Ben Halligan!

BEN

Yes sir.

(Ben's manuscript goes flying into the air and hits the ground. Mr. Phelan slams his door shut.)

BEN

(Dejected he walks over to his manuscript and picks it up. He nods to Sam and Abe as he is walking off the stage. He stops and turns around to yell at Mr. Phelan's door) You are passing on a great piece of work!! Again!! What is your problem? Can't even face me man to man!

(Mr. Phelan's door opens quickly. Mr. Phelan is offstage.)

MR. PHELAN

You say something Halligan?!

BEN

(Caught off guard) No sir. Just wanted to thank you for your time. I'm going to work hard and make some changes before I come back. Do you think I should change...

(Mr. Phelan slams his office door shut. Everyone is trying not to look directly at Ben as they feel his embarrassment)

BEN

(Sighs and turns to walk out. As he is walking out he turns towards Sam and Abe) Gentlemen. Back to the drawing board. No worries. None at all. I'm OK. I'm fine, just fine..*(Ben walking offstage and talking to himself as he leaves)*Just fine, everything will be all right, right Bob Marley?? Every 'ting gonna be all right..*(laughing turns to crying offstage)*

SAM

(Turning towards Abe) IS he gonna be alright you think?

ABE

He'll be fine. He keeps coming back doesn't he? He won't stop trying. That's why I respect him so much. It would be so easy for him to say "I have a great book I've written and I've tried a few times. It just didn't happen." And move on with his life. Instead, he keeps plugging away. You can hear "No" a hundred times. All you need is just one "Yes". Comes down to how much you believe in yourself and your work.

SAM

I understand. I've just started to try and get published. It definitely tests your will. But I gave up so much in order to pursue this dream to come up short.

ABE

If you don't mind me asking, what is your book about?

SAM

It's about a boy growing up in a small town in Indiana. He is surrounded by good friends and family. He is really close with his Grandfather, Grandpa Jimmy. They go to movies, baseball games and enjoy fishing. Grandpa Jimmy loves the friendship as much as he loves the bottle, however. Well, one day Grandpa Jimmy gets drunk and is kicked out of a bar late at night. The bartender calls his wife to come pick him up. Jimmy doesn't wait, but instead starts walking towards home, or at least the direction he thinks is the way home. Walking down the street alone, a police car pulls up behind him with his lights on. Jimmy puts his hands up in anticipation of being arrested for public intoxication, yet again. Instead he is told his wife was in a horrible accident near the bar he just left. Long story short, his wife dies, his son and daughter never talk to him again, and a little boy not only loses his Grandmother, but his best friend Grandpa Jimmy.

ABE

(Softly) Hmm.

SAM

(Feeling Abe wasn't impressed) Well, you know there's a lot more to the story but that is kind of what it centers around. Not really a feel good story but...it has good times too...with some life lessons...I don't know, it is what it is I guess.

ABE

No, no. I think that's a very interesting story. Not only how the kid and family deal with it, but also how Jimmy deals with all that guilt and regret. He pretty much lost everything dear in his life and everyone just leaves him. One night, everything gone.

SAM

But he chose to drink. He chose to put his wife in danger with an unnecessary trip.

ABE

True, very true.

SAM

Thank you.

ABE

For what?

SAM

Just listening. I don't really talk about my ideas and stories with others. I learned early on that when I would ask friends to read my work, they would say it was OK and then proceed to tell me everything I should change. Which was about everything. I would lose motivation and move on to another idea. I got tired of it and decided to move away and focus on just one idea and completing something. I got it done. Now it's just trying to validate that dedication with a published book on a shelf.

ABE

Sounds great Sam. I wish you much luck.

SAM

Enough about my story Abe. I'd like to hear about what you've been working on.

(Mr. Phelan's door opens. Mr. Phelan is offstage.)

MR. PHELAN
Abe Bendix!

(Abe's manuscript comes flying out of the door landing in the middle of the room. Mr. Phelan slams the door shut.)

ABE
(Staring at his hard work on the floor) Well, I tell you what. We can have that talk another time. Look's like I have to pick up another "No".

SAM
Sorry Abe.

ABE
Ah, no worries. *(Abe goes to pick up his manuscript, picks it up and brushes it off and looks at manuscript cover, he pauses and then turns towards Sam)*

SAM
Take care Abe.

ABE
(Nods at Sam) Till next time. *(Abe walks offstage)*

(Sam is fidgeting and obviously a little nervous. He starts to pace and then decides he needs to use the restroom. He approaches the secretary's desk.)

SAM
Do you have a restroom I could...

SECRETARY
(Without looking up at all) We here at Hobbs Publishing..

SAM
(Cutting her off) Oh come on!

(Mr. Phelan's door opens)

MR. PHELAN
Sam Nolan!

(Sam cringes, waiting for the script to be thrown out. Then Mr. Phelan comes through the door with script in hand. Everyone in the room is surprised)

SAM
Yes sir.

MR. PHELAN

Come here.

(Sam walks from desk to center stage to meet Mr. Phelan)

MR. PHELAN

(Shaking Sam's hand) James Phelan. Look, I read a lot of stories everyday. Some OK, and some downright pathetic. *(Looks at one waiting writer who then puts his head down)* It's very hard to get an unsolicited book offer.

SAM

I know, and I'm willing to put in the work.

MR. PHELAN

How did you come up with the premise of this book?

SAM

It's actually semi autobiographical. I'm that little boy from the small town and my Grandpa Jimmy, is well Grandpa Jimmy.

MR. PHELAN

Interesting. I like it, but I don't love it. It's missing something.

SAM

I'm open to any suggestions sir.

MR. PHELAN

I'd like to hear more about the story from the Grandfather's view. What really did happen that night? How did he feel years later? I want real emotion on that page. You think you could get that out of him? I mean if he's still alive obviously.

SAM

As far as I know he is still in my hometown. Like in the story from the book though, my family never talked to him after that night. I don't think it's a good idea for me...

MR. PHELAN

(Cutting Sam off) Listen. I believe your story can be good. I believe it will make a good book to put on shelves. I just want more from the Grandfather's side and what better way to get that raw emotion but from his own mouth?

SAM

I can work on his side of the story without having to see him though Sir.

MR. PHELAN

This could be a good fiction book, sure. But I don't look for good books. I look for great books. We either make this a non fiction book and add your Grandfather's account years later at the end....or you could come back with another idea and hope your work doesn't end up on the floor time and time again.

SAM

Mr. Phelan, I came out here in the big city, leaving a lot I loved behind, for a real chance of getting published. What you're offering me is an amazing opportunity.

MR. PHELAN

Sam, I don't have time to listen to you ponder your inner thoughts all day. I'll cut you a \$500 check advance for the book today. Yes or no?

SAM

Five hundred dollars? That's a lot of money to pass up.

MR. PHELAN

(Annoyed) Again with the inner thoughts. Perfect.

SAM

Sorry, sorry.....Let's do it.

MR. PHELAN

Great.*(Shakes his hand and looks at secretary)* Jenny, cut him a check. Sam, I want to see some work by the end of next week.*(He heads for his office. He stops and notices a guy that always comes in with horrible ideas. The guy waves and smiles. Mr. Phelan shakes his head and goes into his office slamming the door.)*

(Sam walks up to the secretary desk waiting for a congratulatory comment.)

SECRETARY

(Monotone and dreary) Congrats. So happy for your wonderful opportunity.

SAM

Thanks, Jenny.

(The secretary looks up at him, shakes her head and goes back to working on writing a check.)

WRITER

Congrats. You must be excited,

SAM

Thanks. Excited? No. Terrified yes.

(Blackout, Scene Change)

SCENE TWO (THREE OAKS ASSISTED LIVING)

(Curtains open to the common area of an assisted living facility. Some residents are in wheelchairs, while others with canes. A few are playing checkers, reading the paper or sleeping. The energy is low and subdued.)

(In walks Grandpa Jimmy, Morgan and Francis)

JIMMY

(Stopping to look at everyone) Holy crap. Every time I walk in here I'm scared one of these zombies is gonna step drag their way over here and bite me.

MORGAN

Jimmy, you know they all would leave if they only knew the exterior door code.

FRANCIS

The 4 digit code is just what year it is. Everyone knows that.

JIMMY

Everyone knows the code is the year, they just don't know what year this is.

FRANCIS

That is sad.

MORGAN

No. What's sad is that damn shirt you're wearing.

FRANCIS

Nothing wrong with this shirt!

MORGAN

Nothing wrong? I can't hear myself over it.

JIMMY

Easy now gentlemen.

(In walks a worker. She is young and cute. She can make anyone smile if just for a little while. She walks around the room making sure everyone is doing well.)

MORGAN

And in comes the sunshine.

FRANCIS

Maggie always puts on a smile.

JIMMY

Shhhh. You know the drill. Here she comes.

(The guys droop their shoulders, shuffle and act needy. Maggie walks over to Jimmy and friends)

MAGGIE

Hey guys!

(The all walk slowly to a table where dominos are spread out.)

MORGAN

Good morning Maggie.

MAGGIE

Let me help y'all out. (She pulls out a chair for each one of them and assists them into their chairs. When she touches their arm or hand they melt a little.)

MAGGIE

Don't forget it's movie night tonight. The most eligible bachelors need to make an appearance.

JIMMY

As you wish, princess.

MAGGIE

I like your shirt Francis. Very lively.

FRANCIS

(Smiling at both Jimmy and Morgan) Thank you my lady.

MAGGIE

You guys have a great day. *(Leaves to check on other residents.)*

MORGAN

(Mockingly) "Thank you my lady."? Lame!

(The men start arranging the dominos to get ready to play.)

FRANCIS

Really. And what about this unoriginal guy? *(Pointing at Jimmy)*

JIMMY

What?!

FRANCIS

"As you wish"? Whatever Prince Westley. *(Laughing)*
There are no Rodents of Unusual Size around these
parts. *(Someone catches his eye)* I might have spoken
too soon.

MORGAN

She is a beauty.

JIMMY

Reminds me of better times. Times before I came here to
Geriatric Death Row.

FRANCIS

It could be worse. We could be in a nursing home. Here
in an "Assisted Living" community, we can still find
ladies that like to swing a little.

MORGAN

Only thing swinging around here is between your knees.

JIMMY

Francis is right Morgan. You never know when we are
gonna start losing it. Might as well enjoy what we
have.

FRANCIS

I'd enjoy it a lot more if any of us had a car.

MORGAN

Or a license.

JIMMY

Well, I tell ya what. Let's plan on getting a taxi
sooner than later and getting outta here for awhile.

FRANCIS

Hell, why not? This is an OK place and all. They help
with meals, dressing, grooming, medications....

MORGAN

..And bathing.

(They all nod their heads in agreement)

JIMMY

Well I only ask for assistance bathing when I know
"Mustache Mandy" isn't working.

FRANCIS

Man, and her callous sausage fingers too.

MORGAN

It's like getting a sponge bath from Doc Holliday.

FRANCIS

Hey, maybe when we're out I can stop by my son's house. He's been really busy lately and he hasn't come by in over three months now. I'd love to get some time fishing with him on the pier. The very first time we were going to go out there, when he was about 7, I told him the night before that we were leaving before the sun comes up. That morning I went into his room to wake him up and he wasn't there. Eventually found him outside with his fishing pole. He was practicing casting with a little rubber weight on the end of his line. I'll never forget that.

MORGAN

That's a good idea Francis. I think I'll ask my daughter to meet me at the hot dog stand we used to go to when she was little. They would bring the root beer to our car and before I would pass the mug to her, I'd take a big sip out of it. (Laughing) She didn't like that at all. We always went there after the last day of school each year. Just us.

JIMMY

Well, I don't wanna get shot so I won't be stopping by my kid's.

FRANCIS

I know it's been hard for you Jimmy. You've been waiting for them to come through that door since you got here. Maybe you just have to go through theirs instead.

JIMMY

Maybe. Last I heard through friends is that Nicole moved to Florida with her husband and daughter. And my son Tim got divorced and moved into an apartment on the North side of town with his son Sam. You know Sam and Maggie dated for awhile?

MORGAN

Is that right?

JIMMY

It was before she started working here. Her first day here, she told me that they dated but that it didn't end well. She didn't want to talk about it and I told her I didn't want to talk about family either. Just too emotional for both of us.

FRANCIS

Young love. So complicated.

MORGAN

Yet so much fun. (*Laughing*)

JIMMY

I met my Amelia when I was just 14. I was single at the time, which was rare, very rare. She was a Sophomore but I was one of three Freshmen put in a Sophomore typing class. I gotta tell you, the moment she walked in with that smile, I knew I just had to be with her.

FRANCIS

You knew right then?

JIMMY

I did. She didn't. She sat in front of me next to a guy named Shawn. Shawn was a real prick jagbag.

MORGAN

(*Sarcastically*) Tell me how you really felt.

JIMMY

Well I started talking with my Amelia and getting to know her more and more. I thought we were well on our way to start dating. Then I was approached by one of Shawn's friends saying to stay away and that Amelia was Shawn's girl.

FRANCIS

Did SHE know that she was Shawn's girl?

JIMMY

They had been good friend's. She knew he was interested but she wasn't sure whether to make it more than friends. First dance of the year was a Sadie Hawkins dance.

MORGAN

Girl asks the guy out right?

JIMMY

Yep. I held out hope that she was gonna ask me. She had said she was thinking who to ask. All her friends were friends with Shawn and she had just met me. I was trying to find her one day at school in between classes and instead ran into her friend Cathy. Cathy said Amelia had gone home sick. I said that maybe I would stop by after school to check on her. That's when Cathy informed me that maybe I shouldn't. Amelia had made her decision and asked Shawn to the dance.

FRANCIS

So she asked him and went home "sick" so she didn't have to face you after her decision?

MORGAN

That's not right to do to a young man. You must have been furious.

JIMMY

Not at all.

FRANCIS

Not at all?

JIMMY

No. I knew if she couldn't handle facing me and my disappointment, she really DID care for me and my feelings. She may have went to that dance with him, but she ended up asking me to dance with her that night. Age 14 and I found my wife. Found my everything. *(Noticing he's getting too emotional)* And found that sometimes prick jagsbags don't get what they want!

MORGAN

And what ever became of Mr. Shawn?

JIMMY

Don't think he ever got over it.

FRANCIS

Well, who would? Sounds like Amelia was quite a catch.

JIMMY

Yes she was, yes she was.

(In walk three ladies. One has a newspaper (Alice), the other two with bottles of water. They are returning from getting their exercise in of a long walk. They sit down at a table next to the fellas. The fellas continue their dominos)

CAROLYN

Good work today ladies.

ALICE

Always welcome getting in a long walk when it's so beautiful out. *(Looking around)* Did I not grab my water?

JESSICA

You can have some of mine.

ALICE

Thanks Jess. *(Takes a sip and starts coughing)*

JESSICA

Oh, sorry...little polish vodka in there too. Gotta work out the ol' liver from time to time.

CAROLYN

Just make sure you pace yourself at this week's Bingo night. Alice and I would like to be able to play till it ends.

ALICE

Carolyn had to talk "Mustache Mandy" into not suspending us for a week of play because of you.

JESSICA

I was one number off. Helen knew. Next number called, she looks dead in my eye when she says Bingo. Who wouldn't get in her face?

CAROLYN

First, you weren't one number off. You just hadn't cleared your card in over an hour.

ALICE

And second, Helen has a horrible lazy eye. Hell, half of us in the room thought she was looking at us.

(The guys put the dominos in a pile on the table and get up to leave.)

MORGAN

Good morning ladies.

CAROLYN

Good morning Morgan. See you boys are up early playing games.

FRANCIS

Yeah, we just finished up. Now it's off to go get our work on in.

ALICE

Is that right? *(Laughing)*

JESSICA

Don't laugh Alice, Francis has to pump some iron... So he can beat up the guy who made his shirt.

(Everybody laughs except Francis. Morgan and Jimmy stop after Francis gives them a stern look)

JIMMY

OK. Easy easy. We all have been pumping iron lately. It's rough in here. Things have changed. I heard that somebody almost got beat up at Bingo. (*Leans over Jessica's shoulder and crosses his eyes*)

CAROLYN

Well, I think we can protect you if you want to sit at our table this week.

FRANCIS

It's a date.

ALICE

Easy tiger...it's Bingo.

MORGAN

Sounds good. We shall see you then.

JIMMY

Save me a seat, and a drink, by you Jess?

JESSICA

(*Smiling*) Always Jimmy.

(*The gentlemen leave the room*)

CAROLYN

(*Over the top dramatic*) "Always Jimmy"

ALICE

No kidding! What's your deal?

JESSICA

I think he's cute and funny. He may not know it yet, but I knew from the first time I saw him and his smile...we were going to be great friends...maybe more.

(FADE BLACK OUT)

SCENE THREE (SAM'S APARTMENT)

(Inside of Sam's apartment. He shares it with a friend he met in New York. Elliot is a struggling out of work actor that is contemplating giving up on his dream. Elliot is on the couch with a blanket covering his entire body. Sam walks in the door. He is coming back from his successful meeting with Hobbs Publishing)

SAM

(Opens door and puts his keys down.)
Elliot! *(No answer so he walks towards the kitchen)*
Elliot! *(No answer again. He walks center stage near the couch and sees the lumpy blanket on his couch. He grabs the blanket and rips it off Elliot with one move)*
Elliot!

ELLIOT

What the hell Sam! You ruined my power nap.

SAM

You'll have time for another one later. Listen, I got the deal with Hobbs Publishing.

ELLIOT

(Not believing) Yeah, OK.

SAM

I'm serious!

ELLIOT

(Get's up to pour himself some cereal.) Serious huh? So it's a done deal? No chance of them pulling the rug out from under you like every director I auditioned in front of? *(Mocking voice)* "We think you're great!, it's just that you look too much like the producer's brother...and he hates his brother."

SAM

Look. *(Pulls out his check)* They even gave me a five hundred dollar advance.

ELLIOT

Five hundred dollars? You just walked in there, gave them your first real draft, and they offered you a deal?

SAM

Yep!

ELLIOT
What's the catch?

SAM
No catch.

ELLIOT
What's the catch?

SAM
Nothing.

ELLIOT
What's.....thee.....catch?

SAM
Alright, there is one minor stipulation.

ELLIOT
That you throw it away and start again?

SAM
No. That I do a little rewrite with emphasis on my grandfather's point of view and how he has since dealt with it all.

ELLIOT
That's it? You could probably bang that out in a couple weeks.

SAM
That's what I thought. Unfortunately that's not how Mr. Phelan felt. He thinks I need to make it a straight up non fiction book.

ELLIOT
That shouldn't be hard at all since most of it's true right?

SAM
Right. But in order to go the non fiction route, he wants me to go talk with my grandfather.

ELLIOT
Grandpa Jimmy?

SAM
The one and only. Can't believe I'm actually going through with this.

ELLIOT
How do you think he's going to react to seeing you? How will your dad feel about this? What if he refuses to talk about it? (*Intrigued*).....I'm going with you!

SAM

I don't think so.

ELLIOT

Oh come on!

SAM

Trust me, there is nothing to do there.

ELLIOT

I just need a break from here to clear my head. I don't know how much more I can take of all the rejection lately. Plus maybe I could meet some new honeys to take my mind off things.

SAM

What happened with Alecia?

ELLIOT

Just didn't work out.

SAM

Come out with it. What huge flaw did you find out this time that you couldn't get past?

ELLIOT

Fine. She came over and we were watching TV. She said she was hungry. I told her she could check the fridge but I didn't think we had anything and maybe we should just go out. She returned from the kitchen with a sandwich.

SAM

We finished the lunch meat last week.

ELLIOT

I know.

SAM

What was between the bread?

ELLIOT

(Trying not to gag) It was...*(sigh)* just ketchup. She was eating a ketchup sandwich. I about lost it.

SAM

I've heard of people doing that. Even with just mustard.

ELLIOT

Oh dear God stop. After she was done eating, she tried to make out with me. I just couldn't, I just couldn't get that sandwich out of my head. It's a condiment Sam. A condiment, not a meal.

SAM

Another one bites the dust. That's too bad.

ELLIOT

So come on. I don't have any auditions, I don't have a girlfriend now, I just want to get out. We can take turns driving. You can show me your old stomping grounds. I'd like to go see the town that is the setting of the next bestseller.

SAM

OK. You won me over with that last one.

ELLIOT

Excellent. I'll get packing. When do you want to leave?

SAM

As soon as possible.

ELLIOT

How long do you think we will be out there?

SAM

Not long at all. I just want to get the story and leave. Stay too long and that place will grab you until you submit into a life of mediocrity.

(FADE BLACK OUT)

2

SCENE FOUR (TIM'S APARTMENT)

2

(Sam and Elliot arrive at Sam's Dad's apartment. Tim is not home when they arrive at the front door)

SAM

(Opening the door and walking in) And here we are.

ELLIOT

Finally. First things first, where's the bathroom. I knew I shouldn't have had those ten sliders.

SAM

That door to the left.

(Elliot goes offstage. Sam is walking around looking at old pictures on wall.)

TIM

(Walks through the front door with a grocery bag) Sam!

SAM
Dad. *(They shake hands and embrace)* We just got in.

TIM
I'm sorry I wasn't here. Had to run and get a few things. Got some snacks and pop for you guys.

SAM
You didn't have to do that.

TIM
I did. Living alone, I've been going out to eat a lot. I had nothing here. Where's your buddy?

(Elliot comes out of restroom)

ELLIOT
Hello sir, I'm Elliot. *(Offering hand)*

TIM
(Shaking his hand) Tim. *(Catching a whiff from the bathroom)*

You feeling OK buddy?

ELLIOT
(A little embarrassed) Oh yeah, yeah. Sorry bout that.

TIM
No problem. It's good to have some company around here. Get's too quiet sometimes. *(Unpacking groceries)*

SAM
Where's Rudy?

TIM
No pet's allowed. He's staying at Nance and Earl's until I find a small house to move into. I'd rather him have some space to run then to be bottled up in an apartment.

SAM
How's Nance and Earl doing? *(Looking at Elliot)* They were our neighbors at the house I grew up in.

TIM
Doing well. About ready to move down to Florida soon. They're done with the harsh winters. Getting too old for that crap.

SAM
They deserve it.

TIM
They ask about you all the time. Earl always brings up that time he was pitching to you in the backyard and you wrapped one up the middle breaking his glasses.

SAM
I remember that. Felt so bad. Maybe I'll stop by and see them sometime.

TIM
They would love that Sam.

SAM
I have to go grab another bag. You have anything you want me to bring up Elliot?

ELLIOT
No. I'm good, thanks.

(Sam exits)

ELLIOT
Mr. Nolan, thank you so much for letting us stay here.

TIM
Anytime. Glad Sam decided to put writing on the backburner and come back home for a visit.

ELLIOT
The backburner? Sounds like the offer he just got is a lock once he reworks it.

TIM
Offer he got?

ELLIOT
Ah, well I'm just saying if he got one he shouldI gotta hit the can again...*(Sprints towards bathroom)*

(Sam walks in with a bag)

SAM
I think I'll take Elliot out to Albanos for some pizza and then hit Ryan's later on if you wanna join us. My treat.

TIM
Sure. We can go out and celebrate your book offer you failed to mention to me.

SAM
Where's Elliot?

TIM
Peeling the rest of my wallpaper off I'm assuming.

SAM
I was going to tell you.

TIM
It was hard to see you move to chase after your dream. But I was proud of you...I am proud of you. Congratulations on your big break son.

SAM
Well, it's not official just yet. They want me to do a little rewrite. That's why I have some work to get done here.

TIM
You needed to drive all this way just to work on your story? What's your story about?

SAM
It's about growing up here. What our life was like in a small town. What happened with Grandpa Jimmy.

TIM
What happened with Grandpa Jimmy? You mean what happened to my mom because of that man?

SAM
That man is your father.

TIM
I don't have a father.

SAM
I know how you feel dad. I know how hard it was, and is, for all of us.

TIM
Well, I know you have to write about what you know and have gone through. But again, why do you have to do it here?

SAM
I'm going to talk with Grandpa. They want me to write more about the story from his side.

TIM
His side huh? Doubt he would remember anything, being drunk and all.

SAM

I'm sorry to bring this all up again. Maybe I should just pass on the offer and try my luck with another company that will take it as is.

TIM

No. Absolutely not. This is what you've wanted for so long. You're a great writer Sam. When an opportunity presents itself, you have to take it.

SAM

Do you know where he is?

TIM

My buddy at work said that he saw Jimmy at Three Oaks when he went to see him mom. I'd start there.

SAM

Thanks.

TIM

Just promise me one thing.

SAM

Anything.

TIM

I still don't want to see or hear from him. I just can't.

SAM

I understand dad.

(Sam and Tim embrace each other. In walks Elliot)

ELLIOT

(Seeing them hug) Oh thank God. I really didn't want to have to drive back home tonight.

(FADE BLACK OUT)

3

SCENE FIVE (THREE OAKS ASSISTED

LIVING)

3

(Jimmy, Morgan and Francis sit at their usual table playing dominos. There are other residents that are reading and talking with each other in the background)

JIMMY

He says if you want to find out who loves you more..stick your wife and your dog in the trunk of your car for an hour..when you open the trunk, who is happy to see you?

MORGAN

(Laughing) I had some great dogs over the years.

FRANCIS

Me too. Wife always complained that I liked the dog more than her. Wife number two had a valid point though.

(The men keep playing at the table as Sam and Elliot walk into the room looking for Jimmy. One woman resident passes by the guys.)

WOMAN RESIDENT

(Flirting) Well hello gentlemen. Stay as long as you would like. *(She giggles with her friend and they sit down)*

ELLIOT

(Talking to Sam) I like it here.

SAM

Are you serious?

ELLIOT

Women outlive men. I take care of myself and I'll be one of the few men left for women to choose from. I'll be a hot commodity.

SAM

Well, until then, at least try to make an effort with your own generation. Focus. We have to find Grandpa Jimmy. Maybe she can help.

(Sam sees the back of a worker with a resident and decides to ask her for help)

SAM

Excuse me ma'am?

(She turn around and Sam realizes it's Maggie)

MAGGIE

Sam?

SAM

Maggie....I didn't know you worked here.

MAGGIE

I haven't been here very long. Just a part time job for some extra money.

SAM
Sure. That's great. (*Awkward silence*)

ELLIOT
Hi Maggie, I'm Elliot.

MAGGIE
Nice to meet you Elliot.

ELLIOT
I'm Sam's roommate in New York.

MAGGIE
Well, I'm glad at least HE'S not alone.

ELLIOT
(*Sensing the tension*) OK. I'll just be over here...doing something. (*Sits down and talks with the two women that had passed earlier*)

SAM
Maggie, I'm sorry.

MAGGIE
Just stop. I don't want to get into this at my work. And by the way, why are you even here? Nothing in this little town for you, right?

SAM
I'm here to talk with my grandfather.

MAGGIE
Jimmy? I don't think he'll want to talk with you.

SAM
Why do you think that?

MAGGIE
Because we've talked about it before. We agreed not to bring up your name to each other since we both feel the same way.

SAM
How's that?

MAGGIE
Discarded. Angry. Disappointed.

SAM
(*Cutting her list off*) Ok, Ok. I understand.

MAGGIE

I don't think you do Sam. But if you want to try and reconnect with him, I think that's great. Family should never be apart as long as you have with him. He's a real sweet guy.

SAM

Wonder how he will react.

MAGGIE

Only one way to find out. He's right over there.

SAM

Thanks. Oh and Maggie, I.....it was good to see you.

(Maggie gives a quick smile and goes back to working. Sam walks over to the table where Elliot is.)

SAM

Sorry to break up your chat Rico Suave, but it's time. He's right over there.

ELLIOT

Sure thing. *(Get's up and kisses each ladies hand)*
Ladies.

SAM

Here we go. *(Walks over to the men's table. He is standing right behind Grandpa Jimmy)*

FRANCIS

(Looking up at Sam and Elliot) Oh brother.

MORGAN

Boys before you start, we are not interested in learning about your god, a magazine subscription or an amazing opportunity.

SAM

I'm not here for any of that. I'm just here to see my Grandpa Jimmy.

(Jimmy stops frozen with emotion before he speaks)

JIMMY

Sam? *(Turning slowing around to see him.)*

SAM

Grandpa Jimmy.

(Jimmy slowing stands up face to face with Sam. A moment passes whether how he is going to react. And then Jimmy smiles and gives Sam a big hug)

JIMMY

Good to see you Sam. I can't believe you're actually here. Did your dad come too?

SAM

No, dad's not here.

JIMMY

Does he know you're here?

SAM

He does. He's just not ready to..

JIMMY

I know. It's OK. (*Proudly*) Hey fellas, this is my grandson Sam.

MORGAN

Nice to meet you Sam. I'm Morgan and that is Francis.

FRANCIS

Good to meet you.

SAM

This is my roommate Elliot. He wanted to come out for a little road trip.

ELLIOT

(*Speaking slowly and loud.*) It's nice to meet you all. Lovely town you have here.

MORGAN

We're old not deaf son.

JIMMY

So, what's going on? Why now?

SAM

I just think it's been long enough. I'm ready to forgive you and I want...

JIMMY

Forgive me? Forgive me for what?

SAM

Don't do this. You know if you hadn't gotten drunk that night and

JIMMY

(*Cutting Sam off*) MY Amelia was in an accident. An ACCIDENT. I lost the love of my life that night. I shouldn't have lost my entire family that night too. That's on them, not me.

SAM

Grandpa. Let's start over.

JIMMY

How can we start over if we never finished with what happened? Goodbye Sam. *(Leaves the room)*

ELLIOT

I'm sorry Sam. I know that's not how you pictured that going.

SAM

Maybe this whole trip was a mistake. I don't know if we will ever be able to sit down and just talk.

MORGAN

(Getting up to leave with Francis) Take care Sam. Can't blame Jimmy for everything. You have to accept what you have done to him too. *(Pats Sam on the shoulder as they leave)*

MAGGIE

(Walking over to Sam) Just give him some time.

SAM

Time? It's been years Mags.

MAGGIE

Well you came out of nowhere. He wasn't expecting you. I'm sure he was thrown off guard.

SAM

I guess.

MAGGIE

I'll try to talk to him later and let you know if he'd like to see you. You staying with your dad?

SAM

Yep. I'll be around.

ELLIOT

I'm thinking it's probably a good time to show me this Ryan's Pub place you've talked about.

SAM

Sounds good. Thanks Mag. *(Hugs Maggie. Pulls back and stares in her eyes and then leaves with Elliot .Maggie watches Sam as he leaves)*

(Fade to black out)

4

SCENE SIX (RYAN'S PUB)

4

(Interior of Irish bar. Sam and Elliot walk in and pick a table in the middle of the room. The bar has a few patrons, none very lively.)

WAITRESS

What can I get you fellas?

ELLIOT

I'll have a whiskey and coke.

WAITRESS

And for you?

SAM

Just the whiskey.

WAITRESS

That kinda day huh? Wait a sec...Sam?

SAM

(Trying to figure out where he knows her from) Ummm Sara?

WAITRESS

Yeah. Been awhile.

SAM

How are things going for you?

WAITRESS

Not too bad. Figured I came here so much in high school I'd get a job here.

ELLIOT

High School?

WAITRESS

They never checked IDs then. Probably kept this place in business so they left us alone. Heard you took off for the big city. How does Maggie like it?

SAM

Uh, city life is good. Maggie didn't go out there with me. We split before I left.

WAITRESS

That's too bad. Figured you guys would get married ever since Freshmen year in high school.

SAM

Me too. Just wasn't going to work out.

WAITRESS

I'll go put this in. Good to see you.

(Waitress goes to bar to fill order)

ELLIOT

What if Grandpa Jimmy won't talk with you again?

SAM

Guess that's it. I'll just have to take what I have to a different publisher and hope for the best.

ELLIOT

Besides the book, you doing OK? How did you feel seeing him again?

SAM

I was excited, sad and mad. Then throw Maggie being there....hence the no Coke.

ELLIOT

The whole reason for leaving Maggie behind was to be a writer? Why didn't she just go with you?

SAM

She was going to. She wasn't completely sold on leaving, but said she would have for me.

ELLIOT

And?

SAM

With her around, I couldn't focus on what I needed to. I needed to focus on my writing with no distractions. Every time I would write around here, I would start believing that I'd never make it and that would be OK. I was content with just failing and saying I at least tried. I could marry, have kids, buy a house and live happily ever after doing some local 9-5 job.

ELLIOT

Doesn't sound so bad.

SAM

That's the problem. It would have been fine. But not great for my writing. I'd always wonder about "what ifs". What if I would have gone to a bigger city? What if I would have put absolutely everything into it? Would I make it if I did?

(Waitress brings their drinks)

ELLIOT

(Raises glass for a toast) Well here's to your writing dreams coming true.

SAM

Amen brother.

(In walk a couple. A younger woman with an older man. They sit down and are greeted by Sara. She takes their order)

SAM

No audition this week huh?

ELLIOT

Not from a lack of trying. It's really competitive out there. I may have to start looking into a back up plan.

SAM

Just keep at it. As long as you can help with the rent that is *(Laughing)*.

(Sara walks over to Sam's table)

WAITRESS

Sam, I just wanted to give you a heads up. Catherine and her "boyfriend" just sat down.

SAM

OK. Thanks Sara.

ELLIOT

Who's this Catherine?

SAM

(Looking worn and depressed. Looks down at his glass and takes a drink) Nobody. She's a nobody.

(In walks Maggie. She sees Catherine but walks by her to get to Sam)

MAGGIE

Sam, you see who's here?

SAM

Yep. It is what it is.

MAGGIE

I talked with Jimmy and he said he would meet with you. He said he just wants to talk about you and not the past though.

SAM

Well, that's a start I guess. Thanks for talking to him Maggie. What can I get you to drink? I mean, Amaretto Sour right?

MAGGIE

You got it.

(Sam walks over to the bar and orders the drink with the bartender and waits)

ELLIOT

What is his deal with this Catherine?

MAGGIE

She used to date his best friend, Brian, when they were in high school. Then she started fooling around with the dad of some kid she was babysitting on the side.

ELLIOT

Wow. I've seen a couple movies that started out that way.

MAGGIE

Well she just kept stringing Brian along. She really played with his mind. He was a sweet and sensitive kid. Sam had friends but he only ever had one good one. That was Brian.

ELLIOT

Was Brian?

MAGGIE

They found him in his car on a country road. He couldn't handle it all. It crushed Sam. He's always carried the guilt of not knowing Brian was that bad. He thinks he should have known and done something. It's not Catherine's fault either really. Brian was in need of counseling or medication and it didn't happen. She just didn't help the situation either.

ELLIOT

That's horrible. Sam's never brought that up with me.

MAGGIE

I was the one that had to tell him. I'll never forget that day. I knew what I was about to say would change his life forever. I think that may have been another reason he wanted to leave this place behind. There are some good memories here, but a lot of tough ones too.

(Sam returns with a drink for Maggie)

SAM
Alright. Here's yours Maggie.

MAGGIE
Thanks Sam.

ELLIOT
So did you come here in high school too?

MAGGIE
Negative. I was a good Catholic school girl.

ELLIOT
Catholic school girl? You still got the uniform?

SAM
Really Elliot?

MAGGIE
I did well in school and didn't drink or smoke. Spent most of my time with the school jock.

ELLIOT
(*Looking at Sam*) School jock eh?

SAM
I played a little.

MAGGIE
A little? He was great in every sport he played.

ELLIOT
And how did the "jock" turn into a writer?

SAM
Had to deal with some things. I realized that life was short and didn't feel sports was everything anymore. Found out that I loved to write. Got to create my own world when I put pen to paper.

ELLIOT
I understand. When I'm in front of the camera, all my troubles melt away. I feel like I'm at home and there's an apple pie in the oven.

SAM
That's why you have to stick with it. Don't stop and regret not going after your dreams. No matter what.

MAGGIE
What good are dreams coming true if you have no one to share them with?

ELLIOT

She's got a point. What was it that you wanted to be back in the day?

MAGGIE

I always wanted to be a teacher. And that's what I'm doing now. I didn't get a job right out of college, but I did the following year after graduation.

ELLIOT

That's great. My mom was a teacher. Every single child has different needs. You have to find a way to reach each one. On top of that you have to deal with parents that think their kid is amazing. Reality check, your kid sucks and you are in denial.

MAGGIE

I've wanted to say that a few times. But for the most part it's a great job. Summers offs. I mean you have to find a part time job during that time off to make ends meet, but yeah, summers off.

SAM

I'm happy to hear you've got it all worked out.

MAGGIE

It's a job. Comes down to it's just a job...What time is it?

SAM

5:30

MAGGIE

Dang it, I gotta go.

ELLIOT

So soon? You have a hot date tonight or something?

MAGGIE

We'll see about hot. It's a blind date.

SAM

Blind date Maggie? Are you serious?

MAGGIE

I became a teacher. That's out of the way. Now I have to find someone to share my life with. That's how it works right? Career then life? (*Maggie leaves*)

ELLIOT

Sam...

SAM

I know. The whole point of getting this book done was so I could validate everything I worked for. I need to show Maggie that the break up was essential to me finishing a project. I had to choose between the two...

ELLIOT

Now that you have a book done and on the verge of being published, was it all worth it? Is a book in your hand worth more than your hand in hers?

SAM

(Thinking and staring at Elliot) You suck you know that? Sara! Another round please.

FADE TO BLACKOUT

5

SCENE SEVEN (THREE OAKS ASSISTED

LIVING)

5

(Jimmy is alone at a table. A few residents are in the room as well. Jimmy has bag with a folder in it. Sam walks slowly to Jimmy. Jimmy grabs a folder out of this bag and places it in front of him.)

JIMMY

(Seeing Sam out of the corner of his eye, he stands up)
Sam.

SAM

Thanks for meeting with me. I'm sorry about yesterday.

JIMMY

I'm sorry as well. Have a seat.

SAM

You like it here?

JIMMY

I do. I probably could manage on my own but I'd rather be around people. I used to just sit at home and stare at the TV all day. Now everyday I get to sit around a table and talk with friends. Talk about everything from current events to what aches and hurts that day.
(Notices Sam just staring at him) What? Why the blank stare?

SAM

Just can't believe I'm actually sitting down and talking with you. I'm reminded of all the times we had when I was growing up. It's like an overload of memories right now.