

Second Glance

By Zachary Mark

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ACT I

1

SCENE ONE (HOBBS PUBLISHING)

1

(Curtains open to the waiting room of Hobbs Publishing Company. A room where hopeful writers sit and await their name to be called and their dream to come true. Angie and Nikki are seated next to each other.)

SAM

(Entering the room from off stage right. Looking behind as he walks, talking to the secretary offstage.)

Yes, ma'am. I'm just wondering when... *(Sam stops if being cut off by secretary)*

SAM

Yes, but this is my first attempt here and..*(Stops again, realizes it's a futile attempt at getting help. He decides to have a seat across from Angie and Nikki.)*

SAM

(Breaking the awkward silence) Is she part robot or what?

ANGIE

(Slowly turning towards Sam to answer in robot voice) "We here at Hobbs Publishing appreciate your interest in having your book published by our company." *(Begins laughing with Nikki)*

NIKKI

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

ANGIE

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

NIKKI

I'm Nikki Bendix and that there is Angie Halligan.

SAM

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

ANGIE

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. Hobbs' inner sanctum. *(Points to door that leads to office that is offstage left.)*

SAM

Thrown out?

NIKKI

Thrown out.

ANGIE

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?

NIKKI

Thud.

SAM

So what are your books about?

ANGIE

(Proudly) My book is about a young woman who loses everything she holds so dear, in just one year. Catchy right? Anyway, she deals with illness, deaths, marriage and rejection..until one day. *(Angie stands)* One day she sees the light out of the darkness. She 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..

(Angie stops in her tracks as Mr. Hobbs' door opens. Mr. Hobbs is offstage.)

MR. HOBBS

Angie Halligan!

ANGIE

Yes sir.

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

ANGIE

(Dejected she walks over to her manuscript and picks it up. She nods to Sam and Nikki as she is walking off the

(MORE)

ANGIE (cont'd)
stage. She stops and turns around to yell at Mr.Hobbs' door) You are passing on a great piece of work!!
 Again!! What is your problem? Can't even face me man to WO-man!?

(Mr. Hobbs' door opens quickly. Mr. Hobbs is offstage.)

MR. HOBBS
 You say something Halligan?!

ANGIE
(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. Hobbs slams his office door shut. Everyone is trying not to look directly at Angie as they feel her embarrassment)

ANGIE
(Sighs and turns to walk out. As she is walking out she turns towards Sam and Nikki) Folks. Back to the drawing board. No worries. None at all. I'm OK. I'm fine, just fine..*(Angie walking offstage and talking to herself as she 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 Nikki) IS she gonna be alright you think?

NIKKI
 She'll be fine. She keeps coming back doesn't she? She won't stop trying. That's why I respect her so much. It would be so easy for her 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 her life. Instead, she 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.

NIKKI
 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.

NIKKI

(Softly) Hmm.

SAM

(Feeling Nikki 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.

NIKKI

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.

NIKKI

True, very true.

SAM

(Sigh) Thank you.

NIKKI

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.

NIKKI

Sounds great Sam. I wish you much luck.

SAM

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

(Mr. Hobbs' door opens. Mr. Hobbs is offstage.)

MR. HOBBS

Nikki Bendix!

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

NIKKI

(Staring at her 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 Nikki.

NIKKI

Ah, no worries. *(Nikki goes to pick up her manuscript, picks it up and brushes it off and looks at manuscript cover, she pauses and then turns towards Sam)*

SAM

Take care Nikki.

NIKKI

(Nods at Sam) Till next time. *(Nikki 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 offstage right.)

SAM

(Shouting towards offstage right) Do you have a restroom I could...

(Mr. Hobbs' door opens and it startles Sam. He quickly turns around.)

MR. HOBBS

Sam Nolan!

(Sam cringes, waiting for the script to be thrown out. Then Mr. Hobbs comes through the door with script in hand.)

SAM

Yes sir.

MR. HOBBS

Come here.

(Sam walks to center stage to meet Mr. Hobbs)

MR. HOBBS

(Shaking Sam's hand) James Hobbs. Look, I read a lot of stories everyday. Some OK, and some downright pathetic. You know it's very hard to get an unsolicited book offer?

SAM

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

MR. HOBBS

Good. 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. HOBBS

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

SAM

I'm open to any suggestions sir.

MR. HOBBS

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.HOBBS

(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.HOBBS

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. Hobbs, 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. HOBBS

Sam, I don't have time to listen to you ponder your inner thoughts all day. I'll cut you a \$1000 check advance for the book today to help pay for your travels. Yes or no?

SAM

A thousand dollars? That's a lot of money to pass up.

MR.HOBBS

(Annoyed) Again with the inner thoughts. Perfect.

SAM

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

MR.HOBBS

Great.*(Shakes his hand)* I'll have Jenny, cut you a check. Sam, I want to see some work by the end of next week.*(He walks towards his office)*

SAM

Absolutely. Thanks again. *(After Hobbs is back in his office.) So you want to be a writer? Well here goes..*
(Walks offstage right)

(Blackout, Scene Change)

SCENE TWO (THREE OAKS ASSISTED LIVING)

(Curtains open to the common area of an assisted living facility. Unlike a nursing home, these older adults are there for a more simple life and are only in need of minor assistance.)

(In walks Grandpa Jimmy, who sits down at a table where his good friend Francis is sitting with dominoes spread out on the table.)

JIMMY

(Stopping to look around) 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. *(Sits down to play dominoes with Francis)*

FRANCIS

Jimmy, you know some of them would leave if they only knew the exterior door code.

JIMMY

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

FRANCIS

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

JIMMY

That is sad. Almost as sad as that shirt you're wearing.

FRANCIS

Nothing wrong with this shirt!

JIMMY

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

(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.)

FRANCIS

And in comes the sunshine.

JIMMY

Maggie always puts on a smile.

FRANCIS

Shhhh. You know the drill. Here she comes.

(Jimmy knocks over some dominoes on the ground. Acts like he can't reach the ground to get them. Maggie walks over to help out.)

MAGGIE

Hey guys!

FRANCIS

Good morning Maggie.

MAGGIE

Let me help y'all out. (She picks up the dropped dominoes and puts them on the table. She puts one hand on Jimmy's shoulder and the other on Francis') 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 Jimmy) Thank you my lady.

MAGGIE

You guys have a great day. *(Exits stage)*

JIMMY

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

(The men start arranging the dominoes again to play.)

FRANCIS

Really. And what about you Mr. Unoriginal? *(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.

JIMMY

Maggie is a sweetie. 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 are mobile.

JIMMY

You're right Franny. 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.

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...and bathing (*grins*)

JIMMY

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

FRANCIS

Man, and her callous sausage fingers too.

JIMMY

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 little Snoopy fishing pole. He had been practicing casting with a little rubber weight on the end of his line all night. I'll never forget that.

JIMMY

That's a good idea Francis.

FRANCIS

Or I can 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 kids.

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 Tim moved to Florida with his wife and daughter. And my daughter Mia got divorced and moved into an apartment on the North side of town with her son Sam. You know Sam and Maggie dated for awhile?

FRANCIS

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. Yet so much fun.

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.

FRANCIS

(*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 friends. 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.

FRANCIS

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? 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 jagbags don't get what they want!

FRANCIS

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

JESSICA

Good work today lady.

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.

ALICE

Just make sure you pace yourself at this week's Bingo night. I would like to be able to play till it ends. I had to talk "Mustache Mandy" into not suspending us for a week of play because of you!

JESSICA

I was one number away from Bingo! Helen knew it. Next number called, Helen looks dead in my eye when she says "Bah Bah Bingo". Who wouldn't get in her face?

ALICE

First, you weren't one number off. You just hadn't cleared your card in over an hour. 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 dominoes in a pile on the table and get up to leave.)

FRANCIS

Good morning ladies.

JESSICA

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

JIMMY

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. Jimmy stops after Francis gives him 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)*

ALICE

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

FRANCIS

It's a date.

JESSICA

Easy tiger...it's Bingo.

ALICE

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)

ALICE

(Over the top dramatic) Always Jimmy? 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 thousand dollar advance.

ELLIOT

A thousand 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. Hobbs 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 mom 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 (MIA'S APARTMENT)

2

(Sam and Elliot arrive at Sam's Mom's apartment. Mia 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 all those sliders.

SAM

That door to the left.

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

MIA

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

SAM
Mom. *(They embrace)* We just got in.

MIA
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.

MIA
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 Ma'am, I'm Elliot. *(Offering hand)*

MIA
(Shaking her hand) Mia. *(Catching a whiff from the bathroom)*

You feeling OK buddy?

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

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

SAM
Where's Rudy?

MIA
No pets 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 than 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.

MIA
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.

MIA
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.

MIA
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
Mrs. Nolan, thank you so much for letting us stay here.

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

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

MIA
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.

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

SAM
Where's Elliot?

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

SAM
I was going to tell you.

MIA
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.

MIA
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.

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

SAM
That man is your father.

MIA
I don't have a father.

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

MIA
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.

MIA
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.

MIA

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?

MIA

A gal at work said that she saw Jimmy at Three Oaks when she went to see her mom. I'd start there.

SAM

Thanks.

MIA

Just promise me one thing.

SAM

Anything.

MIA

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

SAM

I understand mom.

(Sam and Mia 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 and Francis sit at their usual table playing dominoes.)

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 5 minutes..when you open the trunk, who is happier to see you?

FRANCIS

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

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 turns 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.

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
(Walking over to Elliot) It's time. He's right over there.

ELLIOT
Good luck bud.

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. 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 on 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 mom come too?

SAM
No, mom's not here.

JIMMY
Does she know you're here?

SAM
She does. She's just not ready to..

JIMMY

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

FRANCIS

Nice to meet you Sam.

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.

FRANCIS

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.

FRANCIS

(Getting up to find Jimmy) 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 he leaves)*

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 mom?

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.)

SARA

What can I get you fellas?

ELLIOT

I'll have a vodka tonic.

SARA

And for you?

SAM
Just whiskey neat.

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

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

SARA
Yeah. Been awhile.

SAM
How are things going for you?

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

ELLIOT
High School?

SARA
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.

SARA
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.

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

(Sara 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 whiskey.

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?

(Sara brings their drinks)

ELLIOT

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

SAM

Amen brother.

(Sam sees people from his past in the distance and is distracted and caught off guard. The implied couple is offstage left.)

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)

SARA

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

SAM

I saw that. Thanks Sara.

ELLIOT

Who's this Jill?

SAM

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

(In walks Maggie. She glances towards offstage left while walking towards Sam's table)

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 offstage right to where the bar is to get drinks.)

ELLIOT

What is his deal with this Jill?

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

What happened?

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 Jill's fault either really. Brian was in need of counseling or medication and it didn't happen. She just didn't help the situation though.

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? Better start chugging that drink. 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. Jimmy has a 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.

JIMMY

You remember when I went to your school one morning to pick you up because of Grandma?

SAM

(Nodding) I went to the office and they said you were picking me up because something was wrong with Grandma. When I got in the car so worried and asked what was wrong, you said nothing's wrong with her, we're going fishing!