

AUDITION SCENES & MONOLOGUES

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AUDITION SCENE 1
(MARTIN & DOUGLAS)

DOUGLAS: Yaddo was just such a creative environment. Everything so perfectly balanced. The interiority and the exteriority you know that thing that Indigo Jones was always trying for, there there's such a perfect harmony between the interior and the exterior world that—

MARTIN: *(overlapping)* Inigo.

(Then)

Inigo. INIGO. You said Indigo. It's Inigo.

DOUGLAS: I said Inigo.

MARTIN: No. You said Indigo.

DOUGLAS: It doesn't matter.

MARTIN: Not if you don't care about accuracy in language.

DOUGLAS: Come on.

MARTIN: But if you do care about accuracy—

DOUGLAS: I said Inigo.

MARTIN: Then it might matter, a little.

DOUGLAS: Anyway it is an awesome place to write. I won't go to anyplace except Yaddo or MacDowell anymore. Pretty much everywhere else? Let me tell you, the flavor of the desperation is really not to be believed

AUDITION SCENE 2
(DOUGLAS, MARTIN, KATE & IZZY)

IZZY: What are you working on?

DOUGLAS: I did another draft of my novel. My agent had some thoughts about it that I took a look at. He thought that I should just take one last pass at it, make sure it was as tight as it could be. Hopefully there's going to be a kind of *On the Road* chaos to the sound. Not *On the Road*, hopefully what I achieved is a little more, I don't know, intellectually rigorous than what Kerouac was going for.

MARTIN: Yeah I hope that too. Because *On the Road* was such a minor achievement.

DOUGLAS: Well, it's not exactly a world masterpiece.

MARTIN: What did you say?

KATE: Could we not talk about Kerouac? He was a complete psychotic pig. Guys love talking about him and girls are bored to death.

DOUGLAS: Well, he didn't exactly have a feminist agenda.

IZZY: Thank god for that.

KATE: What? I'm sorry what did you—

IZZY: I just hate all these women who are so hung up about sex.

KATE: So women who don't like Kerouac are "hung up about sex?"

IZZY: You can't deny there's an associative correlation;'

KATE: I can absolutely deny there's an associative correlation. Kerouac was a misogynistic hack. What's that got to do with women who like sex?

MARTIN (*overlap*) No no no no no no.

IZZY: That's a little reductive.

KATE: You said anyone who doesn't like Kerouac is hung up about sex and *I'm* the one who's reductive:

MARTIN: Don't listen to her. She loves him. She reads him in the bathtub. She lights candles and swoons in the bubble bath. "Jack, Jack—Jaaaaaacck--"

(*Kate is laughing. She shoves Martin. They tussle*)

IZZY: So you guys like, knew each other before this, right?

KATE: High school.

MARTIN: (*Chiming in*). High School.

IZZY: And you still have a crush on him?

KATE: What? No!

MARTIN: No!

KATE: No!

IZZY: Just checking.

AUDITION SCENE 3
(Izzy, Martin & Kate)

IZZY: Stop Making such a big deal about language.

MARTIN: I'm a writer, we're all writers. If we don't care about language what should we care about?

IZZY: Sex.

MARTIN: Oh. Sex. Oh.

(Laughing, IZZY does a little dance and falls back on the couch, throws her arms up in a pose.)

IZZY: I'm going to write one of those drug menace books. You know all those old mass market paperbacks that have the girls with their shirts off on the covers all about smoking opium and ruining the lives of men, and then I'm going to pose for the cover and I'm going to be in *New York Magazine*.

KATE: There's a career goal. Show your tits to *New York Magazine*.

IZZY: It's ironic and witty. I'm going to be famous.

AUDITION SCENE 4
(Kate & Leonard)

LEONARD: So what were we talking about:

KATE: The first sentence.

LEONARD: (*reading*). Oh yeah, Christ, I remember now. Oh, Christ, “When truth is acknowledged universally it is also universally disdained,” I mean what the fuck, I can’t even—

KATE: That’s not the whole sentence.

LEONARD: (*abrupt*). Yeah I see that I see the semi-colon, I understand that that means there’s only a partial stop and that more is coming but I’m not sure I want to continue. Okay? I’m not even making it through your first sentence. So why don’t you tell me what you’re doing because it’s not exactly drawing me in here.

KATE: (*stumbling*). What am I—I’m it’s a referencing of Jane Austen the first sentence of *Pride and Prejudice*, it’s kind of a sardonic commentary.

LEONARD: What’s so fucking sardonic about it?

KATE: It’s the narrator she’s—

LEONARD: I don’t give a shit about the narrator. If I can’t get past the first five words how the fuck am I supposed to find out enough about the narrator to care about him.

KATE: It’s not a him, it’s a her.

LEONARD: Well, see that would be my point. If I can’t even tell what gender your narrator is, then you haven’t really done your job have you?

KATE: (*defending herself*). How if you don’t go past the first five words can you tell?

LEONARD: Listen to me. Don’t defend yourself. If you’re defending yourself you’re not listening. I do know who your narrator is. She’s an overly-educated completely inexperienced sexually inadequate girl who has rich parents who give her everything and who has nothing to say so she sits around and thinks about Jane Austen all the time. I don’t have to go past the first five words because I already know enough and I don’t give a shit.

AUDITION SCENE 5
(Martin & Kate)

KATE: I'm the one who got creamed. This sucks. That story is fantastic. I have been working on that fucking story for six years, people love that story. You love that story.

MARTIN: Well.

KATE: What? What?

MARTIN: Nothing.

KATE: You don't love that story.

MARTIN: It's okay. You've been working on it for six years.

KATE: That's right I've been working on it for six years because people like it, people—Frank Conroy read it, before he died, he was the writer in residence up at Bennington for one month and he read that story and you know what he said to me? He said it was “much better than most.” Not better than most, “Much” better than most.

MARTIN: “Much better than most,” that is so lame, Kate.

KATE: Yes, it would be lame, coming from you but it didn't come from you, it came from Frank Conroy. You know who else likes that story: Tobias Wolf. He read it when I took that summer writing class and he said it had some nice things in it.

MARTIN: Kate, do you even hear yourself? You know how long you've been working on that story? Six years—

KATE: That's right, SIX YEARS.

MARTIN: Why have you been writing the same story for six years?

KATE: Because it's a good story! It's a really good story. When I was at Bennington—

MARTIN: Jesus, was there ever a time you weren't at Bennington? You exist in an alternate universe called “Bennington.”

KATE: I learned a lot there, Martin.

MARTIN: What you learned was how to write one lousy story in six years.

AUDITION SCENE 6
(Martin & Leonard)

MARTIN: I like the story. I'm a little confused about the relevance factor, just two weeks ago you told us all we should be writing about dying beggars in the Sudan, so I'm not without confusion now, how this does that, but it's not without talent.

LEONARD: Don't be such a pussy.

MARTIN: A pussy.

LEONARD: You don't think you're being a pussy?

MARTIN: Do I think I'm being a pussy? I thought this was a writing seminar where we discussed, um, "writing" with something approaching intellectual sophistication. I'm a "pussy." We're ascending the heights here.

LEONARD: I think the word "pussy" is pretty intellectually sophisticated. It communicates pretty precisely the meaning I'm looking for.

MARTIN: My point—my point is—

LEONARD: I know your point. You don't like me calling you a pussy even *though* you're acting like a pussy, because you're here to discuss the writing, paying me a lot of money because you think I can help you understand the craft of writing better, so that you can go off and have a successful so-called career, as a writer of fiction, which is more or less my specialty. Or is something else your problem?

MARTIN: No, that's pretty much my problem. I'm here to talk about writing. I'd like to do that without the word pussy being involved unless that's a big problem for you.

LEONARD: (*a beat*). No, I think I can handle that.

MARTIN: Thank you.

AUDITION SCENE 7
(Douglas & Leonard)

LEONARD: Douglas your story is good. It's not a home run but it's a standing double.

DOUGLAS: But I'd really like to hear some criticism.

LEONARD: Oh you'd like that?

DOUGLAS: I would.

LEONARD: All right. I'm going to level with you. I'm going to give you some advice here that I think is going to be totally like on the money useful to you.

DOUGLAS: Great.

LEONARD: I mean you're not going to turn into a big baby about the truth.

DOUGLAS: No. Of course not.

LEONARD: Because there's something in your writing—it's hard to, it's around the tonal perfection, there's a kind of—it's a little like a whore."

DOUGLAS: The character of Stephanie?

LEONARD: No no not the character. You. The way you talk about writing is kind of stupid. Plus the way you write is so unimaginative in the way it attacks the problem you set yourself. I mean it's skillful but whorish. It's like the way you play your name off, your connections, you're a name dropper, you're a whore. And that's in the writing. It's perfect in a kind of whorish way. I don't know why you're wasting your time on fiction. I mean, you're good at it, I'm not saying you're not.

DOUGLAS: No. Oh! No.

LEONARD: It's just—if you can do this? Why not make a ton of money doing this. You're capable, you've got a few publications under your belt, a famous last name, they love that shit in Hollywood. But your writing is hollow. I'd think about Hollywood.

DOUGLAS: But I'm a fiction writer.

LEONARD: You asked for the truth. That's the truth I have.

AUDITION SCENE 8

(Martin & Izzy)

MARTIN: Leonard is an asshole. Everybody was like “Oh, he’s amazing, he only takes a few students anymore, you’ll learn so much.” This is what I’m learning. GIVE ME MY MONEY BACK. I can’t BELIEVE I scraped together five thousand dollars for this. I can’t even pay my rent.

IZZY: Maybe the reason you’re not learning anything, Martin, is that you haven’t shown him any of your work, has that occurred to you?

MARTIN: Well, maybe I don’t want to show him my work because all I’ve seen him do is stomp on their hearts or call them whores or turn them into whores. *(A beat)*. Sorry.

IZZY: You mistake me, Martin, for someone who gives a shit what you think.

MARTIN: Yes. I see your point there. You clearly should go ahead and do whatever you think you need to do.

IZZY: Just for the record, however, I did not sleep with Leonard.

MARTIN: It’s none of my business, you’re right.

IZZY: Are you calling me a liar, now? Now I’m not just a whore, I’m a liar and a whore?

MARTIN: I didn’t say that.

IZZY: Douglas is right. At least Leonard tells the truth. *(She starts to leave.)*

MARTIN: Look, why are you mad at me? You’re right! I’m pathetic, I’m a pathetic—chicken—but I just, I think that you could do a lot better than that, that—You’re so beautiful, Izzy, you’re exquisite, really, just—funny and smart and so full of life—

IZZY: Am I?

MARTIN: Well . . . yeah.

IZZY: You’re right. Since I’m not sleeping with him, I could surely do a lot better.

MARTIN: Well . . . yeah

(She starts to move toward him)

IZZY: How much better?

MARTIN: Well . . . a lot. Really a whole lot. A lot.

AUDITION SCENE 9
(KATE & LEONARD)

(Kate hands Leonard a manuscript)

KATE: That's from a friend of mine. He's interested in joining the group.

LEONARD: I'm not taking extra students right now. I only take a few at a time, tell him he can submit through a teacher like everyone else. *(He holds it out. She doesn't take it.)*

KATE: He, I'm leaving the group. He's really good. We thought, he has a really fucked up story, he used to be in a Cubano gang, in high school, and he's actually a cross dresser. This is true. It's completely the kind of thing that you're looking for and I'm not—I'm not interested so much as I thought I was in being a writer.

LEONARD: Boo hoo, someone has decided not to be a writer. No one cares. No one in New York no one in America, no one in Somalia—trust me. No one cares.

KATE: I'm well aware. That's why I'm quitting. I'm trying to slink off like a dying fucking animal and I can't even—

LEONARD: Slink off then! Why are you still here?

KATE: BECAUSE IT'S MY APARTMENT.

LEONARD: Fuck you, we'll find someplace else to meet.

KATE: I just want to leave.

LEONARD: So GO. You're a weenie, you're a whiner. You can't take the merest shred of criticism.

KATE: That was not, what you said about my story was not

LEONARD: The fucking critics will say worse. If it gets in. If it gets in at all.

(There is a sad moment, Leonard starts to read the manuscript . After a moment, Leonard laughs lightly. He laughs again and nods.)

LEONARD: *(pleased)*. Shit. Shit! What's this guy's name?

KATE: Luis.

LEONARD: Get him in here.

AUDITION SCENE 10
(KATE & MARTIN)

MARTIN: What are you doing here?

KATE: You know what? That is a stupid question.

MARTIN: You slept with him?

KATE? Wow. We went so far beyond that it's not really worth answering that one either.

MARTIN: You hate him!

KATE: I wouldn't say that, no.

MARTIN: You think he's disgusting! He IS disgusting. And now you're here—doing—things—with that, that, FUCK ME I cannot think of words BAD ENOUGH to describe that TOXIC PIECE OF SHIT ASSHOLE. It was bad enough that Izzy was sleeping with him. That was bad enough.

KATE: But it's worse if I do? Why?

MARTIN: Because you—have a brain.

KATE: There are other parts of my body as well, Martin, a fact you never quite noticed. But guess who did.

MARTIN: Is that why you're doing this? To get back at me?

KATE: Wow. That is classic.

MARTIN: Well, is it? Is that why you kicked me out?

KATE: I kicked you out because I finally grew a spine! I kicked you out because you were completely using me! I was the one. I TOLD you about the whole seminar because I knew you would let yourself just disappear if someone didn't—and then you, you you had no respect. I took care of you. I was taking care of you and you took advantage—

MARTIN: (*overlap*). I know. I know. I know! Because you care about me.

KATE: Well—I did.

MARTIN: You still do.

KATE: Oh no I don't.

MARTIN: I may not deserve it.

KATE: You don't.

MARTIN: But it's there nonetheless. You can't tell me it isn't. Come on, Kate. I'm an idiot. I'm an idiot but the truth remains that you—you—you're—

KATE: Oh. Oh no. Oh no no no no—

MARTIN: You're—night and day

KATE: Okay, Martin.

MARTIN: You're stars and moon and wind.

(He moves closer)

KATE: I said okay!

AUDITION SCENE 11
(Martin & Leonard)

(Martin is clutching Leonard's manuscript and edges toward the door)

LEONARD: Why'd you come over here anyway?

MARTIN: I came over to—get my money.

LEONARD: Then why are you leaving without it. I offered it to you twice, you never even looked at it, you just told me endlessly yet again that I'm full of shit. I mean, I am well aware I'm full of shit, why do you need to go over and over it? What more do you want from me? You want my balls?

MARTIN: No, I don't want your balls. God, I don't even know what you're talking about half the time.

(Leonard reaches onto the desk and finds a folded sheaf of papers. Holds it up.)

LEONARD: Here.

MARTIN: What's that?

LEONARD: I finally read those pages that idiot Bob Gladeau sent me. The first twenty pages of your masterpiece. I did a line edit for you, show you what you got.

(He holds out the pages, then indicates that Martin had better give him his own pages back. They exchange pages. Leonard puts his novel in a desk drawer. Martin sits and reads.)

MARTIN: *(after a beat)*. So you think I . . .

LEONARD: You're just hearing too many words.

MARTIN: *(continues to read.)*. This is—fantastic.

LEONARD: It really is the only way to learn anything about writing, to have a decent editor go through it word by word for you. Help you see what it is, what you meant. What you didn't even know you meant.

MARTIN: No, it does it really . . .

LEONARD: Yeah, you hear it different, you hear the ding.

MARTIN: Thank you.

LEONARD: Don't mention it. *(a beat)*. So you want to try this?

AUDITION MONOLOGUE 1
MARTIN

Situation: Martin and Douglas are both taking a writing seminar with a renowned writer. Douglas is full of self-importance, always boasting of his successes as a writer. Martin is having less success and has very little regard for Douglas' talent.

Douglas has just left the room. Martin is talking to his friend, Kate. Also, in the room is Izzy, a writer, who Martin has a crush on, and who seems to have sexual chemistry with Douglas.

Douglas talks like an idiot; his language is subhuman. It would be more interesting if it *were* subhuman then we could try and interpret what all the grunts and hand gestures mean, we could pretend he was a very clever chimpanzee who was teaching us how language actually worked but he doesn't do anything as interesting as that. He just says things-- idiotic, meaningless, self-important observations about nothing, his words have nothing behind them. There's no music, there's no joy, there's no curiosity, there's nothing. And I'm not talking about flat terrifying banality of evil nihilistic nothing. I'm talking about nothing.

SEMINAR
AUDITION MONOLOGUE 2
KATE

Situation: Kate is an aspiring writer. She is talking to her friend and fellow aspiring writer. They have just concluded their first session of a seminar with a renowned writer, Leonard. After reading just a few sentences of Kate's story, Leonard was brutally critical of both the story and the writer. Kate is now self-medicating with ice cream and chips. Martin asks her what's wrong.

I'm depressed and I'm trying to make myself feel better is that alright with you? I'm a depressed feral cat. My story got creamed by Leonard.

That story is fantastic. I have been working on that frigging story for six years, people love that story. You love that story.

(Martin is silent.)

What? What? You don't love that story? I've been working on it for six years, because people like it, people—Frank Conroy read it, before he died, he was the writer in residence up at Bennington for one month and he read that story and you know what he said to me? He said it was “much better than most.” Not better than most. “Much” better than most. You know who else likes that story? Tobias Wolf. He read it when I took that summer writing class and he said it had “some nice things in it.” It's a good story. It's a really good story.

SEMINAR
AUDITION MONOLOGUE. 3
DOUGLAS

Situation: Douglas is speaking to other aspiring writers who are also attending a writing seminar. Douglas is having more success than the others and he knows it. He loves to flaunt his success and his self-perceived superiority. He's always out to impress.

I was pleased with how my novel came out. My agent's really optimistic. I mean you want to be cautious. But I mean I was so worried about it because it was risky, you know, to go that experimental with the language, people aren't trained anymore to be able to hear it, postmodernism has really fallen on hard times although it's not so much postmodern, really as magical realism. That's more tonally where I finally ended up and I think that, at least, people are still open to. But god! The novel has fallen on hard times, and I'm not talking about eBooks. eBooks, don't get me started. And on top of it, all anyone wants anymore are memoirs. And I'm not saying.... I think it's an interesting form, I'm as curious about the inside of my own brain as anyone but please!

Where's the bathroom, Kate? I need to take a piss

SEMINAR
AUDITION MONOLOGUE 4
MARTIN

SITUATION: Martin has a huge crush on Izzy. She has just left with Douglas who offered to give her a ride home, clearly with the hope of seducing her. Both Martin and Douglas are aspiring novelists in the same seminar. Martin is very jealous of Douglas, and considers him to be a far inferior writer. Earlier, Douglas had been boasting about his time at Yaddo, a prestigious writers commune,

Izzy is not the love of my life, are you kidding? She's a twit! I mean she's attractive, no one is going to say she's not attractive. But I am not in love with her. She's clearly got something going with Douglas. How she can even stand to talk to him for more than fifteen seconds at a go, is a mystery. The guy is an unmitigated embarrassment to the human race. Seriously. "Can I give you a ride?" Give her a ride! Maybe he could 'give her a ride' to Yaddo, (*mocking Douglas*)" where the interiority and the exteriority of the landscape is so stunningly in sync with the diasporic essentiality of the mimetic dialogue between self and culture." Maybe that's what he should do. Fuck me. Fuck her. Fuck him.