

Kill Goofy

A play

Written By: Eric Alter

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**Email: apricotskyproductions@gmail.com
201-321-0760**

CHARACTERS

FREDDY - 43 years old. Kind and childlike. He suffers from anxiety and immense trauma.

BERNARD (Barney) - 43 years old. Childhood best-friend of Freddy. Outwardly confident and put together. There is a trauma hidden underneath.

ANGELA (Ma) - 68 years old. Freddy's mother. Has an exterior toughness. Speaks her mind.

MS. VANSHACK - (younger) 35. Seductive and extremely attractive.

MS. VANSHACK - (older) 66 years old. Nothing like her younger self.

VALERIE - 40ish. A little off, but has the most beautiful heart and is very shy.

The play should move. Nothing should slow it down. Keep it moving, baby!!!

AT RISE:

ACT 1, Scene 1.

A bedroom, which is an absolute disaster. Clothes strewn over the floor and bed. Various posters on the wall of Star Wars, Disney characters, superheroes and a large poster of Walt Disney himself. Sleeping on the bed, in his underwear only is FREDDY. He is 43 years old. There are also about 15 stuffed animals on his bed, mostly Disney characters. Next to his room is a bathroom which we can't see but a doorway that leads into it. There is also a door that leads into his bedroom. There is a TV and a video game console near the bed as well. There is a computer on a desk, which faces away from the audience so that we won't be able to see what's on the screen. Food and water bottles are strewn throughout the room.

To the right and downstage are three chairs and a table in the darkness for now. After a moment, a LIGHT comes on, and in walks Freddy's mother; her name is ANGELA, but Freddy calls her "Ma". She is 68 years old.

MA

(to herself) Jesus...

She walks over to the bed and shakes it a little. Freddy is startled for a moment, sits up but then realizes who it is and lays back down.

FREDDY

Ma! I was sleepin'.

MA

Wake up, Freddy...I need to talk to you. And would it kill you to once, just once, throw your shit in a garbage can?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Freddy gets up stretches. He's a big boy, and overweight by at least 25-30 pounds. He prances around in his tighty whities underwear feigning straightening up.

FREDDY

I gotta take a piss, Ma. Sorry...Good morning, Ma.

MA

(nods) Morning. Go ahead.

Freddy crosses in front of her and walks into the bathroom, and leaves the door open. Ma walks around his room, taking it all in. She notices something on the floor, picks it up...it's a porn magazine. She thumbs through it a moment. Freddy comes out, sees her holding it. Now she turns and sees him.

MA (cont'd)

Don't you flush?

FREDDY

Sorry, Ma. Sometimes I forget. They've got a good article on astrophysics in there.

Freddy goes back to the bathroom and a moment later we HEAR a FLUSH of the toilet. Ma puts down the magazine where she found it.

MA

(re: magazine) I didn't think anyone bought these anymore. (pause) Sit down, Freddy.

FREDDY

(walks back to the bed) I know...I know...the room is a disaster zone...but I'm gonna clean it today!

MA

You said that yesterday.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FREDDY

Well I--

MA

-And the three thousand days before that. Cut the crap, I'm not in the mood today.

She takes out a cigarette, lights up.

FREDDY

Right. Sorry, Ma.

MA

Do you want to put on some pants?

FREDDY

(shrugs) I'm ok. What's up?

MA

Freddy...

FREDDY

Ma! If this about me getting a job...I've applied to a few places...

MA

Oh really?

FREDDY

(nodding) Yes! Ashley Marketplace is opening at the end of the year. I put in an application online. I didn't mention I got fired from my last job eighteen months ago. And yes, they know I can't work more than twenty hours.

MA

What are you applying for?

FREDDY

Cashier. Maintenance. You know, clean up crew or something like that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MA

(she gives him a look, then scans the room) Be sure not to show them your room on your resume.

FREDDY

(laughs) Ma!

MA

(pause, she takes a drag) I woke up tired. Like really tired. Like in my bones tired.

FREDDY

(nodding) Hey, I get it. I wake up like that most days and I--

MA

-Jack's sister died. In Florida. I need to go down there for a little while and be with him.

FREDDY

Oh. That's sad. I'm sorry.

MA

(long pause) And he also...asked me to move to Florida with him.

FREDDY

Wait...what?

MA

You heard me. He asked me to come live with him.

FREDDY

What do you mean? You're going to go?!

Freddy is noticeably starting to get upset.

MA

I didn't give him an answer yet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

FREDDY

I don't want to live in Florida, it's too damn hot. But they have Disney! I could go there all the time! Maybe even get a job there...you know that's a dream of mine. Hell, I don't care what I do, I would even clean up the shit in the safari.

Ma doesn't say anything, she just smokes, looks at him. Freddy gets up from the bed and goes over to his video game console and he turns the TV on and starts playing a game. It becomes LOUD.

MA

Turn it down, Freddy.

FREDDY

(turning it down). Why do we have to move? Huh? I like it here.

MA

Freddy...turn off the game. (pause, then loud) Now!

It startles Freddy a second, he looks at her, she doesn't blink. He turns it off. He goes to the bed, looks through his clothes and pulls out a small stuffed animal, maybe Mickey Mouse...he holds it.

FREDDY

Ok, I'm all ears! (holds up Mickey's ears)

MA

I want you to listen to me.....(pause) And I need you to stay calm. Did you take your medication this morning?

FREDDY

No, not yet.

MA

Go ahead and take it. I'll wait.

Freddy walks over to his night table, pulls out some pills, and takes one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

FREDDY

There. Happy now?

MA

(smiles) Yes.

FREDDY

Florida?

MA

Ok...now listen...you're not moving to Florida.

FREDDY

Oh thank God, I thought--

MA

--It would just be me. And Jack.

Freddy begins holding the stuffed animal a little tighter now.

FREDDY

What? What do you--

MA

-Freddy...(pause). I love you. I'm tired. I'm old. I love Jack...and he loves me. He loves you as well...you know that. But...I can't take care of you forever.

FREDDY

I thought we take care of each other.

MA

(smiles, nods) We do. Sometimes. We have to start thinking about what's going to happen when I leave this earth.

She stops talking and just looks at Freddy...she paces around a moment.

MA (cont'd)

I'm just tired is all. This house, it's too much.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

FREDDY

I'm too much.

MA

I didn't say that. Don't go thinking it's all you. It's me, not you.

FREDDY

(smiling) You breaking up with me, Ma?

MA

(laughs) Shut up, would you!

FREDDY

What would happen with me?

MA

Jack said he would help with the transition. He knows a lot of people and could possibly get you into the JESPY House.

FREDDY

JESPY is a group home! I don't need that! Everyone says it's for retards.

MA

Who's "everyone?" No one thinks you're a (stops herself) Freddy...you need some help is all.

She walks over to the bed, sits next to him.

FREDDY

Please don't leave me, Ma! I'll help out more, I'll clean up my room.

MA

Shhh...Freddy...maybe you should talk to Dr. Berkel about this.

FREDDY

Why can't I come with you...?

Ma gets up...walks over to his computer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

MA

If I turn this on...and look at your history...what am I going to see?

FREDDY

I dunno.

MA

Freddy...

FREDDY

I'm sorry, Ma.

She walks over to a window...

MA

Jack needs me now, it'll only be for a week, a few tops. I need to think about some things. The future. Can you stay here alone or do I have to call someone from that service again?

FREDDY

I don't need anyone from the service, Ma. I can go to the store myself. When are you leaving?

MA

Alright...alright. Just in case...I'll get more groceries tomorrow morning before I go. Jack got me a flight tomorrow afternoon.

FREDDY

It's fine, Ma. I'll just order pizza like I always do. Tell Jack I'm sorry about his sister. And that if I lived with you guys, I wouldn't be a problem.

MA

(smiles) I know you'd try, honey.

FREDDY

When you going to give him an answer?

MA

When I'm ready, I'll give him one. I'm goin' to work in a few minutes. I have a few haircuts I need to give today. Mrs. Wallingford wants me to color her hair.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

FREDDY

Isn't she the one who wears a wig?

MA

Yeah, I don't judge, I just color and cut. (pause) I just need you to promise me if I go to Florida you're goin' to be ok.

She shoots him a look.

FREDDY

I promise. Ma! Nothing like that has happened in years. (pause)

MA

Alright...I'll let the Zarins know I'll be gone just in case there's an emergency. Oh (pulls a piece of paper from her pocket and hands it to him) This came in the mail last week...I was crazy running around and I forgot to give it to you.

FREDDY

(reading it) My high school reunion? Wow. 25 years. I never went to any of them.

MA

Yeah...it's the night after Thanksgiving.

Freddy sits on the bed. He looks like he's been kicked in the gut.

FREDDY

Wow. I'm surprised I got an invite.

MA

Don't say that. Why would you say that?

FREDDY

I dunno...'cause of what happened...the money and all. The town, you know...

MA

You don't have to go. (pause) Holy shit! Guess who I ran into...(pause) I can't believe I forgot to tell you! I went to the Target in Maplewood last night...and I ran into Mrs. Davenport!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

Freddy isn't really paying attention, he's just looking at the paper.

MA (cont'd)

And guess who was with her?! Bernard!

Freddy now looks up. Something has changed in his face.

FREDDY

Barney?

MA

(smiling) Yes!

FREDDY

(disbelief) What? Here? In New Jersey? I thought they moved.

MA

They did. To Maplewood.

FREDDY

You mean all this time, they never left the state?

MA

Barney did, his parents didn't. (nodding) He said he's staying at his parents place for a little while.

FREDDY

Where's he been? What's he been doing? Is he...I mean...how is he? Oh my God! Barney!

MA

Well...he lives in Ohio...right outside of Columbus. He's a psychologist! Imagine that! He's married and has a daughter...he said he's doing great...

Ma has become very emotional.

FREDDY

What's the matter, Ma?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (10)

MA

(smiling, trying to hide some emotion) Nothing...I'm fine.

FREDDY

Wow! Barney! I haven't seen him since...everything happened. (to himself) I can't believe he's here.

MA

(smiling) Yeah... (quickly) Anyway, we got to talking, and he asked about you and--

FREDDY

-He did?!

MA

He did, and I told him a little...and he said he wanted to come and see you!

FREDDY

He does? No way!

MA

Would you...I mean...do you think you could handle seeing him?

FREDDY

Of course!

MA

(relieved) Really?

FREDDY

Of course, Ma!

MA

Ok...he gave me his number. I will text him...maybe he can stop by tomorrow or when I'm gone...keep you company.

FREDDY

That'd be great!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (11)

MA

(smiling) It might be good...for the two of you...to you know...talk. Reconnect. You know?

FREDDY

Yeah, I think so too.

Ma turns to walk towards the door. She stops.

MA

You know who else I saw the other day at the grocery store? (pause) Valerie was there. She asks about you every single time I see her!

FREDDY

Ma! Stop. She's weird.

MA

So are you! So am I! Everyone's weird, Freddy! I think you should take her out. It'd be good for you to...

FREDDY

I dunno, Ma.

MA

Freddy...she's a nice girl. Nobody said you hafta marry her. Go out and have a burger. I was talking to her...she likes movies and art.

FREDDY

(shrugs) I dunno.

MA

Yeah...I think...maybe there's somethin' there.

Ma goes to leave again...

FREDDY

Ma...if you do move (pause)...do you think I can come and visit you a lot? I could go to Disney...I wouldn't even need to stay with you...do you think I could come down a lot?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (12)

MA

(emotional) I didn't say I was goin'. I said he asked. I said I was thinking.
(pause) Of and course, Freddy...of course you could come down a lot.

FREDDY

Do I still have money, Ma? Do I still have lawsuit money?

MA

Yes, Freddy. Why?

FREDDY

One day, I want a place of my own. Maybe next door to you. Who knows?
Maybe I could even get married and have a kid, like Barney.

Lights FADE.

Scene 2. Through the DARKNESS we can HEAR the following:

FEMALE VOICE

Yes...now...you haven't been a good student, have you?

MALE VOICE

No, I haven't.

FEMALE VOICE

You know what we do with bad boys in my classroom?

MALE VOICE

Um...no.

FEMALE VOICE

It's "no Ma'am."

MALE VOICE

Um sorry, I meant, no Ma'am.

FREDDY

(over their voices) No Ma'am!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (13)

FEMALE VOICE

Now...take down your pants...

MALE VOICE

Excuse me?

FEMALE VOICE

I'm going to show you how we do things in my classroom!

MALE VOICE

You are?

FEMALE VOICE

Yes! Now, take down those pants...and come over to me...

MALE VOICE

Oh God...

FEMALE VOICE

That's a good boy...such a good boy...

FREDDY

Oh MY GOD! YES! YES!

After a BEAT (no pun intended) he lets out a loud SIGH and the PHONE RINGS, LIGHTS COME UP.

Freddy at his desk, behind his monitor. He pulls up his underwear, then grabs some tissues. Hits taps his phone and puts it on speaker. Two pizza boxes are scattered around his place.

FREDDY (cont'd)

(on speaker) Hi, Ma!

MA (PHONE)

What are you doing?

FREDDY

(slightly out of breath) Oh...just looking for a job online.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (14)

MA

Why do you sound out of breath?

FREDDY

Um...believe it or not, I decided to do some pushups.

MA

Freddy...don't bullshit me. Stop watching porn.

FREDDY

How's Florida?

MA

It's beautiful. Today is eighty two and sunny. Something about the sun...just makes you feel alive. Jack says hello.

FREDDY

Tell him I said hi.

MA

So listen...I texted Barney...and he said he's going to come by in a little bit...I gave him the garage code...because I told him sometimes you don't like to leave your room.

FREDDY

Did you talk with Jack...have you guys made up your minds?

MA

His mind is made up, Freddy. It's me who has to decide. But it's 46 degrees at home and it's 82 here.

FREDDY

Did you think about what I said...about maybe buying something--

MA

--All your doctors are in New Jersey. Your group. Everything...I would never want you to give that up.

FREDDY

Yeah but...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (15)

MA

We can talk about it later. Oh, I also gave Valerie from the supermarket, the garage code...I paid her so she will be dropping off groceries for you.

FREDDY

What?! Why? I can get groceries, Ma! Valerie?!

MA

Freddy, relax...she's a nice girl. She's just going to drop off the groceries and then go. I know you can get your own...but I'm just trying to make it a little easier while I am gone.

FREDDY

But I don't want--

VOICE (OFF STAGE)

-Hello...? Freddy?

FREDDY

Hello?

And now there is a KNOCK at Freddy's door.

FREDDY (cont'd)

Hello?

MA

That must be Barney...

And the door opens and in walks BERNARD, who is "Barney" to Freddy, he is 43, slimmer than Freddy and outwardly more polished. He wears jeans and a sweatshirt.

BARNEY

Hi, Freddy!

Freddy is frozen for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (16)

MA

Well...is it him?

BARNEY

(calling out) It's me!

MA

Hi, Barney...Ok...I'm goin' to go. You guys enjoy. Freddy, call me if you need me.

And she hangs up.

BARNEY

Hey!

FREDDY

I...I don't believe it.

BARNEY

(smiles widely) It's me. In the flesh.

Freddy gets up...walks over to him and gives him a huge hug. Barney hugs him back. Barney is the first to want to let go, but Freddy continues to hug him. The hug should last longer than a normal hug would.

BARNEY (cont'd)

Apparently...you're in the flesh too.

FREDDY

(laughing) Oh...sorry...let me put something on.

Freddy ends the embrace and walks over to his dresser and grabs a pair of shorts and a T-shirt. Freddy is dressed now...he sits on the bed.

BARNEY

(re: Freddy's computer chair) You mind?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (17)

FREDDY

Um, let me sit there, you take the bed.

BARNEY

You sure?

FREDDY

Yeah.

They don't say anything from a moment. Barney notices the collection of stuffed animals. He picks one up, Minnie Mouse...he holds it and looks at it.

BARNEY

Minnie?

FREDDY

Yeah.

BARNEY

(looking around the room) Wow...not much has changed...I mean Star Wars...a lot more Disney stuff than I remember...I mean the pizza boxes weren't here.

FREDDY

(laughs) Yeah.

BARNEY

You look good.

FREDDY

(shrugs) I'm fat.

BARNEY

How are you, Freddy?

FREDDY

I'm...ok.

They stare at one another in silence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (18)

FREDDY (cont'd)

I can't believe you're here! Like...it's been what...twenty eight or twenty nine--

BARNEY

Thirty---It's been a long time.

FREDDY

Yeah.

BERNARD

So what have you--

FREDDY (cont'd)

--What have you

The both laugh.

BARNEY

What do you um...do all day?

FREDDY

(shrugs) I'm on the computer a lot. Play some video games. I was working a while ago at the grocery store...but...they let me go. But I'm looking for the right job. I can't work a lot of hours because I'm on disability.

BARNEY

Oh. Sorry to hear that.

FREDDY

It's ok. (pause) I tried to find you.

BARNEY

What do you mean?

FREDDY

I dunno...you just left. Your family moved.

BARNEY

After the trial...(pause) yeah...they thought it would be best if--

FREDDY

-We never really got the chance to...you know...discuss everything.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (19)

BARNEY

I know. But hey, when you're a fourteen year old kid...your parents steer the ship, you know? (quickly) I um...was sorry to hear about your father. I have fond memories of him being the quarterback on your front lawn or over at the park where we'd play football.

FREDDY

(smiling) Yeah.

BARNEY

It must have been hard losing him back then. Well, at any age.

FREDDY

Yeah. I miss my dad. How are your parents? Your mom still make those cookies?

BARNEY

(smiling) Not too much. They are ok. My dad was diagnosed with prostate cancer last year, went through treatments...doing ok.

FREDDY

How long have you lived in Ohio?

BARNEY

Well...after everything happened...we moved to Maplewood. Which at the time, seemed like moving across the country, but as you know it's fifteen minutes and three towns over. (laughs) When you're fourteen, fifteen minutes seemed like another state. I went to a private school for high school, and then went to Ohio State University in Columbus...and to be honest, I rarely came home.

FREDDY

Wow, Ohio? What's it like?

BARNEY

I thought it was cows and farmland...but Columbus is a beautiful city.

FREDDY

How come you didn't come home too much?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (20)

BARNEY

(smiling) I wanted to escape the circus. Didn't like being recognized. Even three towns away.

Freddy gets up...walks around the room a bit.

FREDDY

Are you saying we were the clowns?

BARNEY

(laughs) No. Probably just me.

FREDDY

So a psychologist! That's amazing! I don't know about you, but I feel like I've seen enough of them...that I could be one!

BARNEY

(laughs) You probably could!

FREDDY

It's so cool. I can't believe it...look at you!

BARNEY

Look at you!

FREDDY

Fred and Barney remember that's what everyone called us? When we'd walk the halls, remember Jimmy Broder would yell out: "Yabba Dabba Do!"

BARNEY

(laughs) Yes! We were pretty much together all the time!

FREDDY

Yeah...we were kinda inseparable...(softly) until we weren't.

Barney is noticing all the stuffed animals.

BARNEY

This is quite the collection.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (21)

FREDDY

Yeah. (quickly) So you're married?! And you have a daughter! Like how?!

BARNEY

(laughs) I know, right?! I got lucky man. Sherry is a godsend. We met in graduate school.

FREDDY

She's a psychologist too?

BARNEY

No, she's a Vice-Principal of a high school.

FREDDY

And what about your daughter? What's her name?

Barney opens his phone...

BARNEY

(re: picture on his phone) This is Sherry...and this is...Melissa.

FREDDY

Wow...look at you! Both are so pretty. Good thing she gets her looks from her mom.

BARNEY

(smiling) Yeah...like I said, I got lucky. (quickly) And what about you?!

FREDDY

I don't have any kids.

BARNEY

(laughs) I know. I just meant...any ladies in your life?

FREDDY

(shrugs) Nah. After high school, I tried to date a few girls...and then when I was thirty, I dated someone for about three months...but it just didn't work out. I just couldn't...(pause) It wasn't for me, it wasn't working. I don't really love to leave the house. I mean I do go to the grocery store with my mom and stuff. Occasionally, I go to the park...but I like being home.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (22)

BARNEY

(nodding) I understand.

FREDDY

Does your wife know?

BARNEY

Sorry?

FREDDY

Your wife. Does she know...? You know...about everything that happened?

BARNEY

Oh. Um...she doesn't know it all...bits and pieces. (pause) Mostly bits.

FREDDY

(nods) Ok.

BARNEY

And you?

Freddy now picks up one of his stuffed animals. Holds it.

FREDDY

I don't really have many friends. I go to this support group from time to time. I would like to say it helps, but I don't think it does very much.

BARNEY

Wow. Still?

FREDDY

What do you mean?

BARNEY

Nothing...I'm just surprised is all.

FREDDY

About what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (23)

BARNEY

Nothing. That was insensitive of me. I didn't mean it. I just thought so much time had passed...nothing, forget it. It was stupid thing to say.

FREDDY

It's ok, Barney! You don't have to apologize to me. I'm glad you're doing so well! I still struggle with things.

BARNEY

You still talk about it? How about that girl you dated? You tell her?

FREDDY

Well, like I said, it was the one girl for a short time...(nodding) But yeah, (shrugs) I'm an open book, Barney.

BARNEY

I'm um--

FREDDY

--Did you know Walt Disney created Mickey Mouse, but a lot of the other characters he didn't create? I mean he had his hand in a lot of the characters, but he didn't create them all.

BARNEY

No, I didn't know that.

FREDDY

And did you know that a lot of people mistake Pluto and Goofy?

BARNEY

(smiling) No...tell me about that...

FREDDY

Well...they are both dogs. See...?

Freddy grabs the Pluto stuffed animal from his bed, shows it to Barney.

FREDDY (cont'd)

This is Pluto...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (24)

He hands him Pluto, then he grabs another stuffed animal from his bed, this one being Goofy.

FREDDY (cont'd)

(handing it to him) And this is Goofy...

BARNEY

I'm sure my daughter has these somewhere.

FREDDY

Anyway, they are both very different. Pluto is a pet dog, and Goofy is more, well...goofy...he walks around and talks and stuff. Did you know when Walt Disney died there was a note on his desk that read: "Kill Goofy"?!

BARNEY

Really? I didn't know that. (nodding)

FREDDY

I always think about that. Why do you think he'd want to kill off one of his most loved characters?

BARNEY

(laughs) I'm not sure, Freddy.

FREDDY

I just figured you might know...you're a psychologist.

BARNEY

(laughs) Psychologist...not a psychic, Freddy!

Freddy sits on the other end of the bed, they sit in an awkward silence for a moment.

FREDDY

How long you home for?

BARNEY

Um...not sure. I have some work to do in New York City, so I will be going in every day at least for the next two weeks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (25)

FREDDY

Wow! Something important? Psychological stuff?

BARNEY

(smiles) Something like that.

FREDDY

You going to go to the reunion?

BARNEY

I don't think so. Unless you wanted to go.

FREDDY

Really? I'm not going.

BARNEY

(shrugs) Yeah. Me either.

FREDDY

I can't believe they sent us invites.

BARNEY

(laughs) Why?

FREDDY

All the money the town paid us.

BARNEY

Oh. (laughs) Right. Well it was insurance, not the town. But good point.

Barney checks his watch. He stands up.

BARNEY (cont'd)

Um...I have to run a few errands for my mom. But I know your mom said she'd be gone for a while...she said...maybe you might like some company?

FREDDY

Sure! We can play some video games and stuff!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (26)

BARNEY

(laughs) Sure, Freddy. Sure.

FREDDY

Maybe you could help me?

BARNEY

You were always a better player than I was at those games.

FREDDY

No, I meant...with what happened. (long pause) To us.

BARNEY

What do you mean?

FREDDY

I dunno. You're probably this great psychologist. And you're doing so great. You're married, own your own house, have a daughter! (pause) One day, I want those things! And I just figured who better than...well...

BARNEY

Freddy...hold on a minute...

FREDDY

(angry, loud) Will you just let me finish!

It startles Barney a moment.

BARNEY

Sure...Freddy...I'm sorry...

FREDDY

No, I'm sorry. I don't like to yell. It's just that...I know it was thirty years ago. But for me...I still think about it a lot...almost every day. I can't shake it loose. Everyone around me...everyone's gotten older and moved on...but I got younger...I'm forty-three going on thirteen. I sometimes want to know why, and how it all happened, you know? Look at you, you moved away, married, beautiful daughter...job.... Everyone moved on. I can't be in a relationship, I've tried. And I just want to know how you did it, Barney. How you came out on the other side and are ok?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (27)

FREDDY (CONT'D)

And who better to maybe help me understand than you...someone who went through it with me. (pause) Maybe I can get married one day...have a family. Maybe not. My mom can't take care of me forever. I know deep down she probably hates having to live here with me. So I just figured...you and me, Fred and Barney...together again...

Freddy sits on the floor starts getting ready to play a video game. Barney looks at him long...

BARNEY

I don't think I'm going to be home for a long time, Freddy.

FREDDY

You said you'd be here for a few weeks...no? (shrugs) Whatever, it was just an idea...

Barney's cell phone RINGS. He stares down at his phone.

BARNEY

It's um...my daughter calling.

FREDDY

Go ahead...don't let me stop you.

BARNEY

(answers the phone) Hello... Hi, honey. No...Daddy is still in New Jersey with Grammy and Pop Pop. Of course I miss you! Daddy will be home real soon...he's got to do some stuff here. Mommy wants to talk with me? Tell Mommy I will call her later, ok? Love you too. (he hangs up)

FREDDY

It's ok, Barney...We don't hafta talk about it.

Barney just stares at his phone.

BARNEY

I have to go to the city tomorrow, late afternoon, but how about I come by the day after tomorrow maybe in the morning?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (28)

Freddy starts playing his video game.

FREDDY

Sure, Barney. I'd like that!

Barney is just about to leave.

FREDDY (cont'd)

You ever wonder where she is now?

BARNEY

It was a long time ago, Freddy. I try not to--

FREDDY

(quickly)--It's ok. I will see you later.

The LIGHTS FADE on Freddy. They remain UP on Barney a moment, as his phone continues to RING. He just stares at it, after a beat, the LIGHTS FADE.

Scene 3. Ma sits on a chair in a POOL Of LIGHT

MA

Hello. Thanks for seeing me on such short notice. Jack told me his friend said you're the best therapist in Jacksonville. I um...well...I haven't seen someone in a long time...(pause) I mean I used to see someone all the time...when Freddy, that's my son, was younger. You ever feel like the walls are just closing in on you? (pause) I just needed someone to listen, you know? Someone that doesn't know me, someone not from my town, or my state. Someone I can be a complete unknown with. Jack...I mean, don't get me wrong, he's been a godsend. Met him at a terrible time in our lives. Michael, that was my husband...Freddy's dad. He died when Freddy was just twelve. (pause) Before...everything happened. (pause) "Before"...that's a word, huh? (pause) I live in Jersey with my forty-three year old son, Freddy. I'm a hairdresser, don't make a ton of money, but my husband had a life insurance policy that has helped us get by. Freddy came into some money when he was eighteen. (sighs deeply) You mind if I smoke? Oh...ok, I can wait. Probably just saved a few minutes of my life, ya know? I know I'm all over the place...it's probably similar to my life...but a few days ago I woke up and I was just tired. Not like I'm tired I have to do the laundry tired...just tired. Jack wants me to move down here and live with him. Just the two of us.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (29)

MA (CONT'D)

I mean on the surface that sounds normal, right? I mean my forty-three year kid shouldn't be living with us...but...I'm not so sure I can leave Freddy alone. A few years back he tried to kill himself..It was a while ago, but it happened. See...Freddy wasn't always the way he was now. He was such a bright kid, full of life, he wasn't afraid of anything...he'd leave for school, then go play at someone's house, usually his best-friend, Barney's...(thinks) Maybe that was it, you know? Maybe cause they were best friends...(pause) Anyway...as a mother you wonder...how did it happen? What could you have done differently...why didn't I see it or know it? (thinks) I worked through a lot of that...(deep breath) no amount of work really ever frees you, ya know? I can't take care of Freddy forever...he gets money from the government, he's on disability. Severe anxiety, debilitating actually, and a slew of other issues. His psychiatrist says he never grew up... his adolescence was stolen from him...(pause) he feels safe with me. How am I supposed to leave him? (quickly) But aren't I entitled to a life too, right? I love Jack. Jack loves me. Jack loves Freddy, but Jack can't live with Freddy. Sounds like a song...(laughs). His best-friend, Barney...his family handled it differently. They moved away from the town, I guess they thought leaving would make it so the ghosts don't haunt you...I don't know if they did. I could only worry about Freddy. But I think he felt abandoned, you know? They reconnected. (begins crying) And to see how good Barney is doing...he's married, with a child...he's got a job. I'm not goin' to lie...it was a like a kick in the ass. It makes you question your role in all of it. How good or bad of a mother was I? (pause, thinks) All because...because...Kerry Vanshack....she knew exactly what she was doing. (pause) I'm sorry, but I need to cut out for a smoke, ok?

Ma gets up, and takes out some cigarettes, and lights up a smoke. The LIGHTS FADE on her.

Scene 4. *LIGHTS COME UP on Freddy, he's now dressed in shorts, wears a red baseball cap, he holds a backpack. He stands by the table and two chairs, just looking around. After a beat, in walks MS. KERRY VANSHACK, she is in her early 30's and very pretty, she wears a short skirt and a revealing blouse. She holds a folder in her hands.*

MS. VANSHACK

Oh, Hi Freddy!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (30)

FREDDY

You wanted to see me, Ms. Vanshack?

MS. VANSHACK

Yes...

Ms. Vanshack smiles at him warmly. Freddy sits down. She walks across the room for a moment, indicating she is looking around to see if anyone is outside the door.

MS. VANSHACK (cont'd)

Does your mom pick you up from school, or do you walk?

FREDDY

I walk home usually.

MS. VANSHACK

(smiling) Ok.

FREDDY

Um, did I do something wrong?

MS. VANSHACK

Wrong? Oh no, why would you say that?

FREDDY

(shrugs) I dunno. I got your note on my paper that said you wanted to see me after school.

MS. VANSHACK

Yes...

She now goes and sits right down next to him, smiles again warmly.

FREDDY

(shrugs) I wasn't sure why.

MS. VANSHACK

Well, Freddy...it's ok that I call you Freddy, right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (31)

FREDDY

(nods) Yes.

MS. VANSHACK

Good. Well, Freddy...see I am new to this school, to this town. Been here for only two months...and I wanted to get to know my students. We're going to be together for the entire year of sixth grade and I just thought this would be a good way for us to get to know one another.

FREDDY

Ok.

MS. VANSHACK

Is that ok?

FREDDY

(nodding) Um...yeah.

MS. VANSHACK

Good...I like your writing.

FREDDY

You do?

MS. VANSHACK

I do. Very creative. You really like dragons and stuff, huh? And your drawings are amazing! Dragons and cartoon characters. Very impressive. Best artist in the classroom.

FREDDY

(smiling) Really? Oh yeah! I mean...they're cool. I want to draw cartoon characters when I'm older, maybe make up some of my own.

MS. VANSHACK

Really? Tell me...who's your inspiration?

FREDDY

(shrugs) Well, I like Tom and Jerry and those kinda cartoons. Oh! and Walt Disney; he's probably my favorite!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (32)

MS. VANSHACK

(smiling) You don't say! I love Disney! Been there a bunch of times! You ever go?

FREDDY

Once when I was six. I loved it! My mom said we can go back maybe this summer.

MS. VANSHACK

Oh you must! It's amazing!

FREDDY

I hope I can!

MS. VANSHACK

And your paper you wrote on football...that was really good too! You really understood the assignment.

FREDDY

Yeah?

MS. VANSHACK

(smiling) Yeah.

FREDDY

Thanks.

MS. VANSHACK

I can tell you play, huh?

FREDDY

(nodding his head) Yeah...usually after school and stuff.

MS. VANSHACK

Oh, well then I won't keep you long. My apologies.

FREDDY

(quickly) It's...it's ok.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (33)

MS. VANSHACK

Are you sure?

FREDDY

I'm sure.

MS. VANSHACK

Great. (pause) I um...and please forgive me here if this bothers you...but I understand you lost your father recently. I'm so sorry to hear this. You know, when I was your age, I lost my mother...it was very hard.

FREDDY

(slightly emotional) Yeah, this past summer. He was sick.

MS. VANSHACK

I'm so incredibly sorry to hear that. I want you to know...that if there is anything I can ever do for you...I'm here.

She places her hand on his thigh. He doesn't look at her.

MS. VANSHACK (cont'd)

I think you have some real great ideas...in your writing...in fact I'm going to start a writing group...it will meet after school, maybe like once or twice a month. Is that something you would be ok with?

Her hand is still on his thigh...

MS. VANSHACK (cont'd)

I know what it can be like to lose a parent, Freddy. Sometimes it's so lonely. And I think writing could be a really creative outlet for you.

Freddy is sweating a little...

MS. VANSHACK (cont'd)

What do you think? I mean...only if that works for you.

Freddy nods his head up and down. She moves her hand up and down just one time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (34)

FREDDY

It works.

MS. VANSHACK

But I have a rule...now you know I don't have that many rules in class, but "after school" those rules are different, ok?

She removes her hand a moment...He turns to her, almost hypnotized.

FREDDY

Ok...(pause, quickly) What is it?

MS. VANSHACK

Well...writing is a very personal thing. And I won't ever share yours with anyone else, no matter who I am working with. (pause) Also, whatever we discuss in here well... that's personal. What I ask in return is that you don't share with anyone anything that we discuss. Oh, I know it all sounds "secretive" and stuff...but I just think what people write about and discuss should be private. I mean, I don't think the class would appreciate it if I told them everyone's little secrets in front of others, you know? So...that's the deal, ok?

FREDDY

(nodding) Ok.

She smiles at him.

MS. VANSHACK

Good...now I'm going to write a note home to your mom and let her know the idea. She has to approve for you to be able stay after once a week...how does all this sound?

She puts her hand back on his thigh.

FREDDY

Really good. Fine.

MS. VANSHACK

I can tell you play sports...you have strong thigh muscles!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (35)

FREDDY

I do?

MS. VANSHACK

(smiling) Oh yeah you do. (she rubs his knee one more time) I'm going to work on this letter...and you can take it home tomorrow...how does that sound?

FREDDY

(nods, eager) Um...when do we start?

MS. VANSHACK

Just as soon as I get the approval back from your mom.

FREDDY

Ok. I could wait...while you write the letter now.

MS. VANSHACK

(smiles) Ok...I'm going to the Main Office for a second...

She gets up, Freddy remains seated.

MS. VANSHACK (cont'd)

I have an idea...why don't you take out your notebook for a second...

Freddy does, and he puts it in front of him.

MS. VANSHACK (cont'd)

Ok good...

She then gets up stands right behind him...and then leans over, so her entire chest in his face...

MS. VANSHACK (cont'd)

Why don't you start writing a story...maybe about your dad? Then I'll take a look at it next week...but while you have some time...(she stops before she leaves). Um...your friend...the one from Ms. Hannah's class...I always see you guys sitting together at lunch. What's his name?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (36)

FREDDY

Bernard Davenport. But everyone calls him Barney. 'Cause I'm Fred. It's from The Flintstones.

MS. VANSACK

(laughs) Fred and Barney...Oh, isn't that so cute?!

She lingers another minute...and then she walks out...Freddy looks around...his breathing is heavy...

We now hear a loud KNOCKING...The LIGHTS FADE on FREDDY...through the darkness we HEAR:

BARNEY

Freddy! Yo, Freddy! Wake up, man..it's almost noon. Freddy!!!

And the LIGHTS NOW COME UP and we are back in Freddy's room, he's under the covers, he awakens to the KNOCKING. He gets out of bed and opens the door.

BARNEY (cont'd)

Whoa, man! You ok?

Barney is holding a brown paper bag.

FREDDY

What? Yeah. Was just deep in a dream.

BARNEY

I hope it was a good one! Since when do you lock your door?

FREDDY

(shrugs) Sometimes, I do. Especially when mom isn't home. You want to hear about my dream? Isn't that what psychologists do?

BARNEY

(laughs) Some.

FREDDY

What's being one like? Like who do you see? You see a lot of kids?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (37)

BARNEY

Actually, I recently stopped seeing kids.

FREDDY

Really? How come?

BARNEY

Um, it was just too tough with their schedules and stuff. Now its mainly adults over eighteen. A lot of middle-aged people.

FREDDY

I see my psychiatrist once a month. Usually my mom takes me, but sometimes I go out alone.

BARNEY

You said he doesn't help you?

FREDDY

I dunno.

BARNEY

Well...I got us some lunch...from Town Hall Deli. I assume you still like it there? Figured we could eat a little lunch and catch up.

FREDDY

Yes!

BARNEY

Ok...so I'll bite. Tell me about your dream.

FREDDY

(looks at him long) I had a dream about Ms. Vanshack.

BARNEY

What? Seriously?

FREDDY

(nodding) Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (38)

BARNEY

What was it about?

FREDDY

Just our time together. You know...(pause) Don't you ever think about her?

BARNEY

Do I ever? (pause) I've closed that chapter in my life.

Barney's phone RINGS.

FREDDY

Your phone rings a lot. What about your patients? What do they do while you're away?

BARNEY

(silencing his phone) What? Oh...I see most of them via telehelath when I'm away, you know on Zoom and stuff. I told a few of them that I'd be away for a few weeks.

FREDDY

How was New York?

BARNEY

What?

FREDDY

You said you had to go to New York 'cause you were doing work. What kind of work?

BARNEY

Oh, right...sorry. Yes, it was ok. I was there this morning. Oh, just boring business.

FREDDY

Ok. Do you want to eat?

BARNEY

I'm not that hungry, but you go ahead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (39)

Freddy takes the bag and opens it up, he then sits at his computer and starts eating. Barney goes to the bed.

FREDDY

Sorry...I'm hungry. Mmm...this is so good.

BARNEY

I saw some groceries in the garage when I came in.

FREDDY

Yeah...my mom has them delivered. I'll put them away later on.

BARNEY

So about this dream...(pause) Sorry, it's the doctor in me...what was happening?

FREDDY

It's ok, I don't mind talking about it. You know, I'm glad you were able to close that chapter, Barney. I gotta be honest with you...since you're my best-friend...I was never able to do that. Like I said I still think about things all the time.

BARNEY

(deep breath, shifts on the bed) What kinds of things?

FREDDY

You know...just when we were together, her and me. How she made me feel and stuff.

BARNEY

Freddy, that wasn't real. I know you think it was...but it wasn't.

FREDDY

(slightly angry) It was!

BARNEY

(nodding) What I mean is...it wasn't supposed to be that way. I'm not trying to be a dick here...but...it's been thirty years...please tell me...you know this. I mean all the doctors we saw when we were kids--when everything was going on. You know this, right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (40)

FREDDY

(quickly) Of course I know it. Everyone knows it! When I go outside to this day, people still look at me. (shurgs) I dunno. I remember when it happened, do you remember that?

BARNEY

I remember it, Freddy. Just because I said I closed that chapter, doesn't mean I don't remember it.

FREDDY

(smiles) You remember how all the older kids thought we were so fucking cool because we fucked a teacher?

BARNEY

You fucked her. I never did. But...(semi-smile) yeah.

FREDDY

I mean Rebecca Zarin wanted to hook up with me, and she was a senior!

BARNEY

(nods) For a while we were the talk of the town, huh?

FREDDY

Until you moved.

BARNEY

It was a stressful time. It was horrible.

FREDDY

Not for me.

BARNEY

What do you mean?

Freddy gets up...paces around.

FREDDY

Well...(cautious pause) I never told anyone this...but...it was the best time of my life.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (41)

BARNEY

What? What do you me--

Freddy starts rubbing his hands together...anxiously.

FREDDY

--I'm sorry, Barney...but it was. I was thirteen, I was popular...all the attention was on me. People thought I was cool. And I know it was wrong what happened but...

BARNEY

(calmly) But what?

FREDDY

It felt good...the attention she gave me. The way she touched me. The way she made me feel. And I haven't been able to get past that since. Other women, they don't compare. I jerk off all the time to porn about teachers and students, I can't shake it. I can't shake her.

BARNEY

(very calm) She raped us, Freddy. She stole from us.

FREDDY

(struggling) I know...but that doesn't mean...

BARNEY

It changed us.

FREDDY

What do you mean?

BARNEY

Nothing.

FREDDY

How did it change you?

BARNEY

(sighs) I don't know...when trauma happens to people it changes them. And this was a trauma.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (42)

FREDDY

You went to school for that stuff...so you got a better handle on than me.

BARNEY

What does your psychiatrist say? What about when you go to the group?

FREDDY

I tell the doctor I'm doing "ok"...which some days I am. I lie in the group. I kinda stopped going. I dunno...

BARNEY

I um...(pause) I mean I don't--

FREDDY

--I'm sorry, Barney. Sorry to be unloading all this stuff on you. It's just that you're the only one who can really relate, you know? All the other people in the group, they were in different situations and stuff...but me and you...we were in it together. Does that make sense? I feel embarrassed and guilty--

Barney's phone RINGS, startling him.

BARNEY

--You don't have anything to be guilty for! (re: phone) It's my daughter. Do you mind---

FREDDY

--It's ok, buddy. I'm going to lay down for a little while.

BARNEY

Do you mind if I come back tomorrow?

Freddy walks right up to him, stares at him a moment and hugs him. It takes Barney by surprise. Barney somewhat returns the hug.

FREDDY

I never mind, Barney. You're always welcome. I'm sorry man...I just missed you is all.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (43)

BARNEY

I uh...missed you too, Freddy.

He proceeds to answer the phone.

BARNEY (cont'd)

Hello? Hi, Sweetie!

Barney opens the door to leave. Freddy gets on the bed...

FREDDY

Don't hate me for saying this...but I wish...I could see her.

Barney just looks at him. He wants to say something.

BARNEY

(into phone) No, I'm still here, Sweetie.

The LIGHTS FADE on the boys but come up on:

Scene 5. Ms. Vanshack, in a different outfit, sitting at the table. She looks around, and then takes some perfume of out her purse and sprays a little on. After a BEAT, in walks Barney, he wears a blue baseball cap, holds his backpack.

MS. VANSHACK

Hi! You must be Barney? Is it ok that I call you that? Freddy said you wouldn't mind.

BARNEY

Um...sure.

MS. VANSHACK

Thanks for coming in. Did Freddy tell you about the creative writing stuff I'm working on with him?

BARNEY

Yeah. Well kinda.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (44)

MS. VANSHACK

Come and sit.

BARNEY

Ok. (he sits).

MS. VANSHACK

Do you like to write?

BARNEY

I...guess.

MS. VANSHACK

(smiling at him) Well...this is a completely optional thing. Freddy likes writing a lot of creative stories...and his mom approved it, so...

She sits next to him.

MS. VANSHACK (cont'd)

...if you were interested...I could write a note home for your mom, asking her permission.

BARNEY

Oh-ok.

She smiles at him.

MS. VANSHACK

So, do you want to show me any of your writing now?

BARNEY

I um...don't really have much.

MS. VANSHACK

(smiling) Ok...we can do it another time--

She moves to get up...

BARNEY

--I mean...I have some stuff.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (45)

Barney opens his backpack. She sits back down.

MS. VANSHACK

(smiling) Ok, great. Do you want me to read it?

BARNEY

If you want.

He hands her his notebook. She begins reading it. Barney is checking her out, and she knows he's checking her out.

MS. VANSHACK

This is really good!

BARNEY

Really?

She puts it down and places her hand on top of his.

MS. VANSHACK

You have talent! I want you to think about joining...but again...only if you want, ok? I don't ever want you to do anything you don't want to do, ok?

She rubs his hand.

BARNEY

Um...s-sure.

She now stands behind him and she leans over and points her finger at his paper. Barney can't help but look down her shirt.

MS. VANSHACK

(pointing to the paper) You see...right here. This should be capitalized. It should be a big "B."

BARNEY

(not really paying attention) Oh-ok. Right, big...I mean...capital b.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (46)

MS. VANSHACK

(smiling) I'm going to go the Main Office for a few minutes and then I will come back and write the letter home to your mom. Explain it to her, have her sign it and bring it back tomorrow, ok?

Barney nods "yes" quickly. She stands up to leave, smiles at him again, and then she exits. Barney takes off his hat, and places his backpack down. He sits in the chair, the LIGHTS DIM and turn IN A POOL OF LIGHT.

Scene 6.

BARNEY

I go back there often. To that exact moment. I try to remember every detail. Some are fuzzy. Some are not. I knew deep in my gut it didn't feel right. Every fiber in my being told me to get out of there. But Freddy, he told me she was the "best" teacher. (smiling) I wonder why? (pause) He told me that I should do the creative writing thing...and so I did. (pause) But if I am being totally honest, she was gorgeous. Let's face it, I was thirteen and she was touching my hand. No woman had ever touched me before except my mom. And the attention? Jesus fucking Christ...the attention! Every time she saw me in the lunch room or after school, it was like I was the most important person in the world. There was this closet, it was long, in the back of the class...and that's where we did most of it. I swore on my life I'd never say a word. Hell, what did I know? I was thirteen years old, and once a week she was...well...you know...she was giving me a blowjob. It got to the point, where I'd just think about it all the time. (pause) Funny...Freddy and I never discussed it. (slight laugh) That's the most fucked up thing...he and I were best friends...yet...we had kept a secret from each other because we were sworn this allegiance to her. I later learned she did more with Freddy than me...(pause) That's how he got caught. It was a huge thing in this town...the biggest scandal...I think it may have made the national news at the time. Freddy and I got a lot of money when we turned eighteen. Helped pay for my PhD. This was before Twitter and Memes and all the instant news there is today. But it was big. I remember that. I had buried it, or so I thought...until a few months ago it resurfaced...(pause) I guess deep down I knew it would always one day come back...but I wasn't ready. I did my research, talked to some people from my grad school days...and everyone came up with the same name...yours.

LIGHTS FADE on Barney.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (47)

Scene 7. LIGHTS UP on Freddy in his room, he's on the phone with Ma. She is on speaker.

MA

I'm coming home in a few days.

FREDDY

You are?

MA

Yes. And no, I haven't made a decision...I told him I needed until the end of the year, which is only a few weeks away.

Freddy in his underwear and a tank top looks around his room, it's still a disaster. Seven or eight pizza boxes are piled up. He goes over and sees a soda can...he picks it up, and actually puts it in the trash.

FREDDY

Ok, Ma!

MA

How's Barney? And did you make an appointment with Dr. Berkel?

FREDDY

Barney's great! We've been hanging out. He didn't come today, but he will be back. It's so great to have him back home. I made an appointment for next week, I think Friday. We're going to do it by Zoom.

MA

That's good. I don't think he's staying long, Freddy. Have you been getting the groceries?

FREDDY

(realizing he has forgotten) Yes. Thanks.

MA

You haven't seen Valerie once?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (48)

FREDDY

Nope...I guess I'm sleeping when she drops if off.

MA

Ok...let me know how you make out with the doctor and if he thinks you should increase your medication.

FREDDY

Ok,

MA

I love you, and I will check in later.

FREDDY

Love you, Ma!

There is a soft KNOCK at the door.

VOICE (FEMALE, OFF STAGE)

Hello?

Freddy looks around.

FREDDY

Hello?!

VOICE (OFF STAGE)

Um...I'm sorry to bother you--

FREDDY

(nervous) --Who's there! How'd you get in here?!

VOICE (OFF STAGE)

It's Valerie, Freddy. From the supermarket.

FREDDY

Valerie?

VALERIE (OFF STAGE)

Yes. I'm sorry to bother you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (49)

FREDDY

What are you...I mean...what are you doing here?

VALERIE (OFF STAGE)

I'm sorry...it's just that...well...you haven't taken in the groceries from last week and some stuff in there went bad...and I just wanted to make sure you were ok.

FREDDY

I'm fine.

VALERIE (OFF STAGE)

Oh, ok...sorry...I will just leave the groceries in the garage and take away what's bad.

Freddy begins pacing back and forth a little.

FREDDY

Um...wait.

VALERIE (OFF STAGE)

Ok.

Freddy goes over to the door...he opens it a little bit. And there is Valerie. She very plain looking, maybe slightly overweight and while nice enough, there is something a little off with her. She is also very shy.

FREDDY

I'm sorry...I didn't mean to say "I was fine" in a mean way.

VALERIE

It's ok, I didn't think it sounded mean!

FREDDY

I would let you in, but my room is really messy.

VALERIE

(nodding) It's ok. I have a messy room too.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (50)

FREDDY

Ok.

VALERIE

Ok.

There is an awkward pause.

FREDDY

Ok, well thanks for checking in on me.

VALERIE

(nodding, smiling) Ok. I could come back and check on you another time if you wanted me to.

FREDDY

My mom is coming back next week.

VALERIE

Ok. I'll just leave the groceries then.

FREDDY

Don't you live at the JESPY House?

VALERIE

(nodding) Yeah. But I want to get my own place one day.

FREDDY

(nods) Ok.

She turns to go.

FREDDY (cont'd)

Hey, Valerie...

She spins around.

VALERIE

Yeah, Freddy?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (51)

FREDDY

Um...Thank you. Like um...thanks for bringing the groceries, even though I know my mom paid you to do it...but...thanks for checking in on me.

VALERIE

(smiling ear to ear) You're welcome, Freddy.

FREDDY

Maybe...some other time...I can show you my room. You know, when it's not so messy.

VALERIE

Ok! I could always help you clean it if you want. I'm a pretty good cleaner. They always make me clean up all the spills people make at the supermarket.

FREDDY

Ok.

VALERIE

I like your stuffed animals. Especially the Disney ones.

FREDDY

Yeah? Oh...

VALERIE

Sorry, I wasn't trying to look...I can just see your bed.

FREDDY

(looks behind him for a minute) Yeah. It's ok. Sorry, I can't let you in.

VALERIE

It's ok.

FREDDY

I'm gonna take a nap. I take this medication sometimes and it makes me sleepy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (52)

VALERIE

That's ok. I take medication too! Doesn't make me sleepy. Keeps me awake a lot of the time. So, I stay up late and watch movies. Sometimes I wish I could take a nap at the grocery store.

FREDDY

What kinda movies?

VALERIE

Oh, all kinds! You like movies?

FREDDY

(nodding) Yeah. All kinds too!

VALERIE

Cool.

FREDDY

Um. Bye, Valerie. Thanks again. When I wake up, I'll bring in the groceries.

VALERIE

Oh...um...I put away the cold stuff in the refrigerator. I hope that was ok.

FREDDY

You did?

VALERIE

(nodding) Sorry...I can take it out if you want.

FREDDY

(smiling) No...it's ok. Thanks again.

VALERIE

Bye, Freddy.

She exits. Freddy watches her go. LIGHTS FADE.

Scene 8. DARKNESS. Freddy's room. THERE IS A BANGING at his door. Freddy sits up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (53)

FREDDY

Ma? Is that you? Are you back home? What's wrong! (pause)

BARNEY (OFF STAGE)

FREDDY! YOooooooooo! Let me in, Freddy! Or I will huff and puff...

Freddy gets up, turns on his LIGHT. He still is in his underwear and tank top. He walks to his door unlocks it and Barney stumbles inside with a beer in his hand.

BARNEY (cont'd)

Freddy! Freddy Flintstone!!! It's your buddy! Barney Rubble!

FREDDY

Whoa. You ok, Barney?

BARNEY

(shrugs) Ahhh...I'm alright!

FREDDY

(re: the beer) Here, let me take that from you.

BARNEY

Why, you want some?

FREDDY

No...come on in and sit down.

BARNEY

You know what I love about you, Freddy?

FREDDY

No.

BARNEY

You're good.

FREDDY

Good?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (54)

BARNEY

(nodding) You got a good heart, you know?

FREDDY

(shrugs) I dunno.

Freddy sits on the bed.

BARNEY

Remember when we were in third grade...and what's his name farted? That kid, Andrew (pause) Andrew Glickman. Remember that? Kid farted in front of an entire class...don't you know that's like social suicide? Everyone laughed at him. God, I think back to that moment right now...and it makes me feel awful. But it was funny. But you stood up for him...you remember that?

FREDDY

Kinda.

BARNEY

Kinda?! You said "Leave him alone! Everyone farts!" (laughs) You should have gotten the Nobel Peace Prize for that! (laughing) But you were right, Freddy! Everyone does!

FREDDY

How did you get here?

BARNEY

I drove, of course...(pause) Ah, don't worry about it. I drove to Farrell Field before I came here and just sat in my car and drank...so in reality, I drove about two blocks. Yeah yeah yeah...I don't need a lecture. You remember we used to play football in the park? And sometimes your dad would play with us?

FREDDY

Yeah, I remember. What time is it?

BARNEY

I think it's one thirty in the morning. Sorry, I hope I didn't disturb your dream. It wasn't another dream with Ms. Vanshack, was it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (55)

FREDDY

No.

BARNEY

Good. 'Cause the real thing is always better than a dream, isn't it?

FREDDY

I dunno. Come on Barney, you can sleep in Ma's room.

BARNEY

(shakes his head no) No, Freddy...I need you to listen to me...

FREDDY

Ok.

BARNEY

(he stands up) Now you listen to me...and you listen good...(pause) Sit down.
(realizing he's already sitting down) Ok, good...(pause) I want to tell you something...I know you think I'm drunk...but...I'm not that drunk.

FREDDY

Ok.

BARNEY

Tell me Freddy...what would you do if you saw Ms. Vanshack again? Like what if I could wave my magic wand...and POOF, she could appear right in this room? What would you do?

FREDDY

(looks at him long) I...I--I um...dunno.

BARNEY

Come on! You can say anything to her...what are you gonna say?

FREDDY

(shrugs) Hello?

Barney starts laughing loudly...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (56)

BARNEY

(through his laughter) Oh...God...Freddy dontcha see? That's why I fucking love you. That's why you're my best friend on this earth. Because you went through it with me...we went through it together...and it changed us...this fucking woman, she destroyed us...robbed us of our innocence. Prevented us from playing Spin The Bottle" with the normal seventh grade girls. We became legends for all the wrong reasons. Dontcha see? When it happens to young girls...it's a tragedy. When it's a man who does it to young boys...it's horrible. When it's a woman who does it to young boys...it's not really a tragedy, right? I mean we were "studs", right? All the older boys wanted to know what it was like. How were her tits? How was that ass? Fucking legends. Reporters, news crews...all the cops and detectives treating us like royalty. Like we were some victims...but c'mon...(leans in close to him) but c'mon...think about it...deep down we fucking loved it. That feeling she gave us. Those fucking butterflies in our stomachs, all the attention she gave to us. No one gave us attention like that. Changed our world forever. And if you saw her, you would just say, "Hello"? (laughs) Like she was someone you bumped into at the grocery store after thirty years. "Oh, hey, Ms. Vanshack...how you been?" (laughing) But that's why I love you so much, Freddy....because you're good. Your heart is good, it's always been good.

Freddy sort of laughs to himself...he's unsure what to say.

FREDDY

(shrugs) But you're doing ok, Barney! Way better than me. Look at me. I never grew up. I could never get better. I tried. (shrugs) But not you. You moved away, got married, had a family...a job. Now you help people. And I am so proud of you for that.

BARNEY

(softly) I'm not good, Freddy.

FREDDY

What do you mean? I wish I was able to do--

Barney pulls the computer chair over and he sits across from Freddy, facing him straight on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (57)

BARNEY

--No! Listen to me, Freddy...(pause) I've told no one this...not even this specialist I am seeing in New York City...(pause)

FREDDY

I thought you were here on business.

BARNEY

(nodding slowly) I am...personal business. I'm seeing a specialist in New York.

FREDDY

A specialist? Are you sick? Do you have cancer?

BARNEY

No...(pause) I'm here because...(pause) My wife and I are kind of separated. I needed it. I didn't give her a reason.

FREDDY

Oh...man...I'm sorry, Barney...(quickly) but maybe you guys will get back together!

BARNEY

(nodding his head, smiling) I know you're mad at me, Freddy.(pause) For leaving you when everything happened...but that was my parent's idea. I never dealt with it. The abuse, the attention, the guilt, the shame, the hyperactive sexual drive...(pause) I thought moving, learning about psychology, getting married, having a child, would make all that go away. (pause) If you saw me around town, I'm revered. I'm loved. I have a waiting list for people to see me. (pause) People think I've got all the answers.

FREDDY

Everyone always loved you, Barney.

BARNEY

(gets up from his chair) She groomed us, Freddy. It was calculated. She groomed us. Ms. Vanshack. (shakes his head). The power. I've stepped out, Freddy...on Sherry. Hookers. Mostly older women. Don't ask me how many, because there are too many to count. (pause, looks at him) But (long pause) that's not the worst of it...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (58)

Freddy begins to slowly rock back and forth on the bed.

BARNEY (cont'd)

(looks at him long) About six weeks ago...(pause) My daughter was having a sleep over. Her friend, Amber. And she and my daughter are both adorable. And I can't sleep. So, I check on them. And I go into their room...both are sound asleep. (pause) And I...see her friend...and I am looking at this cute little seven year old....and I start thinking...(highly emotional) I start thinking...

FREDDY

Thinking what, Barney?

BARNEY

(long pause) That I could...do something to her. Have this incredible power over her. This enormous sexual energy came rushing over me...like something I've never felt before. I became paralyzed with fear.

He looks at Freddy...

FREDDY

(cautiously) And what happened...?

BARNEY

(looks at him long, then begins crying) Nothing! Nothing happened. I left the room and I went to throw up. (pause, slightly recovers) And for the very first time in my life...I was scared. (pause) Really fucking scared. I was never that scared before. Not of the trial, not of getting in trouble...not of getting caught with a hooker...(shakes his head) none of those things. But this scared me. I'm scared, Freddy...really fucking scared. It was like something that was buried inside of me...was wanting to come out.

FREDDY

Like in the movie *Alien*?

BARNEY

(slight laugh) Yeah, Freddy...like that. (serious) I'm fucking scared.

FREDDY

It's ok, Barney...it's ok to be scared.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (59)

BARNEY

So, I sought out the best specialist in the country. Someone who deals in sexual abuse and trauma. I told my wife I need to leave for a while...take a break. She thinks I'm having an affair, but I told her I wasn't. She doesn't understand. I can't blame her. I just left. Like a coward who slipped out the back door. I told her I needed to go back home to take care of things...But the truth is, I'm scared of being around my own child now. Scared of what I might do. What I could do. I've already seen this specialist...I'm not even a hundred percent honest with him. I'm too scared to discuss that part yet. I stopped treating all the kids in my practice. I couldn't do it.

FREDDY

It's ok, Barney. You're honest with me, right?

BARNEY

(nodding, grabs him real close) Freddy...you're the only one I can be honest about with all this. (long pause) I found her, Freddy.

FREDDY

Found who?

BARNEY

Ms. Vanshack.

FREDDY

What do you mean?

BARNEY

(nodding) I found "her!"

He reaches into his pocket, takes out a small 4 x 6 picture. Shows it to Freddy. Freddy looks at it very closely. Looks at Barney, then back at the photo.

FREDDY

That's Ms. Vanshack?!

BARNEY

Yes. Only her name is changed now. She's sixty-six years old. A far cry from how she looked when we were thirteen, right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (60)

FREDDY

Oh my God. (pause) What is she wearing?

BARNEY

Prison clothes.

FREDDY

Really?

Freddy takes the photo from him, he's staring at it, almost hypnotized by it.

BARNEY

I have a friend who works for the FBI. A client, actually. I helped him overcome his fear of flying, so he told me he would do any favor I wanted. So, this was the favor. She did it to us, then did it to others. Apparently, we weren't so "special".

FREDDY

Where is she?

BARNEY

About two hours from here. Pennsylvania.

FREDDY

Jesus.

BARNEY

I'm going to see her, Freddy. Going to talk to her.

FREDDY

Really? Why?

BARNEY

Yes. Confront her. I need...(pause) Answers. (softly) Maybe closure.

Freddy gets up, his eyes are fixated on the picture. He sits on his bed still holding the picture, he grabs one of his stuffed animals from the bed and holds it with his other hand, he slowly rocks back and forth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (61)

BARNEY (cont'd)

Didn't you hear what I just said?! I'm going to see her! Demand information!
What the hell do you think of that?!

*Freddy looks at the picture, then back at Barney.
Something has changed in Freddy's eyes...*

BARNEY (cont'd)

Didn't you hear me?

FREDDY

I did. (pause) And...

BARNEY

And? It's ok...spit it out!

FREDDY

I want...(pause)...I need...to come with you.

Barney looks at him long.

BARNEY

Freddy...I don't want to put any demands on you. I'm going because--

FREDDY

--I don't care about all the other stuff. I need this for me. I want to, I need to
see her. (quickly) I'm coming with you!

And the LIGHTS FADE. END OF ACT I.