

Snow Play
(A Christmas Comedy)
By C. Stephen Foster

"all these people at this party they've got a lot of style..."—Joni Mitchell

C. Stephen Foster
2087 Ivar Ave
Los Angeles, CA 90068
(323) 465-5677
divaworks@yahoo.com
© 2005, Stephen Foster

Dedication:
To Chuck for always being the muse in mortal form!

Characters:

IRMA. KOONTZ: a royal bitch. She's past her prime and she knows it. The only thing she has to hang on to is Adam. She used to be married to Ron. She is Wade's boss and a matriarch. When she smokes, she resembles a dragon.

ADAM ADAMS: A beautiful, handsome star. He is strikingly self-possessed. Irma's boyfriend although he's at least 10 years younger than her. He is newly famous, but loves his position. He's like Brad Pitt or Ben Affleck. Everything to him is a game.

WADE: Irma's loyal assistant. He hides his light beneath Irma's bushel. He functions as the commentary. The oracle, the fool in Shakespeare. Wade is hip to Irma, Adam and the whole web of events and he makes comments on it. Even while standing in the line of the drama, he can be objective enough to stand outside of it.

SHEILA RHODES: A temp at the office. She is Wade's new assistant. She's REALLY new to the scene. She still has glitter in her eyes. She just got off the bus in Tinsel Town.

CHESTER: middle age screenplay writer. Has a permanent slouch. He wears sweaters, slacks. He is constantly in a state of repose. Drinking in the atmosphere and conversations. He wears wire-framed glasses. Looks like a librarian or a teacher. A very blocked writer.

RON: Adam's predecessor in show biz and to Irma as well. He is like Robert Redford to Brad Pitt. He was once handsome, sweet faced, charismatic cinema god, but time has worn him down, gutted him, too many women, too many nights on the town, too many flights across America and too many round the world excursions and then his films dried up too. The Gold found at the Rainbow has not vanished but somewhat tarnished. He still gets by on his name and his former glory. He always has some kind of movie or deal in the works but fortune's rainbow hasn't shined on him in along while. He's now known for being tempestuous, hard to work with, controlling. Despite this the chicks love him.

Hot, white lights snap up suddenly on the living room inside a swank home in the Hollywood Hills. Lavishly furnished and decorated. There are three quadrants to the stage: The living Room, The bedroom and a kitchen. The home is decorated with elaborate Christmas things: A huge tree stands in a corner with piles of presents beneath it. As lights come up, a radio is heard:

ANNOUNCER: And it's hit L.A. like a tidal wave. This is the worst snow storm in Hollywood's history. Over 3 feet of snow fell while everyone slept last night. We advise you to stay home this Christmas Eve...Now, one of our favorites and we hope one of yours...(Christmas music plays and will play throughout the play.)

While the announcement plays, a bundle of energy waltzes into the living room from the kitchen. She carries a platter of snacks and places them down on a table. En Route, she giggles madly—tee hee. She speaks into cell phone. This is IRMA KOONTZ. There is a magical air around her. She is in her mid 40's but looks 10 years younger. She is dressed in a fashionable tailored pantsuit; her hair is strawberry blonde and is fashioned in the latest style. She talks all through the opening activities...

IRMA: I don't know who's going to show up! You know it's one of those meet and greet things... ass kiss, kiss ass... That kind of meaningless shit. I mean (she sniffles.) it's...no, I've got a cold. It's the snow, dear. Bad enough I have to spend all day working with these serpents, but my God! Oh, hold on!

She presses the flash on the phone accessing the other line.

IRMA. Hello! Oh, God! Chester! Where in the hell are you? I know it snowed. You think I'm blind? Chester, you can't leave me alone tonight! They will eat me alive. Wait, I forgot, I got someone on the other line! I'll be back. (She clicks the phone) I'm sorry Marge...Hello? Hello? I've got to change my plan!

The phone is dead. She puts the phone down on the table and moves around the room fixing things up. At one point, she looks at her face in the mirror and fusses with her hair. She smiles weakly. The phone rings, rings, rings. She runs frantically about trying to locate where the ringing is coming from. She finds it and puts the earpiece in her ear.

IRMA: Hello! Oh, shit. God, I know...I'm just going out of my head. It's the worst snow ever. I'm trapped. I can't cancel. It's too damned late. You're on your way, right?! I need your support. I can't handle these freaks on my own. Please hurry.

She hangs up her phone. She lights a cigarette and then feels guilty and smashes it out. She nervously fluffs the pillows. She tastes the dip...Yum, it's good. She eats a chip stuffed with salsa. She crosses to the bar and pours herself a cup of coffee. She crosses to the tree, grabs a present and shakes it like a child. She tries to look inside when the door opens revealing ADAM ADAMS. He is the most handsome creature God ever created. He wears the traditional leather coat, sunglasses and scarf. Carly Simon's "You're so Vain" could have been written for him, and he does know it. He has solid,

good looks and a bold swagger. He is holding at 29. He carries a brightly wrapped package in his hands. Irma replaces the package under the tree and rushes to him like a teenager!

IRMA: Adam!

ADAM holds up a finger indicating that he's on the phone. He has a cell phone with a fancy mouth piece.

ADAM: I slid and crashed my new Porsha into a pole. No, not a person, idiot. A telephone pole!

IRMA's phone begins to ring. She indicates to Adam that she needs to take the call. ADAM continues his call.

IRMA: Speak! No, I hope Ron doesn't show up. I don't want to see him...I hope he doesn't expect a warm welcome. It would be the death of me. I didn't invite him, but he emailed me. I don't know how he found out! I definitely deleted him from my E invite. He's a mouch. He comes to pig out, pick up chicks and then I won't hear from him for months unless he needs a favor.

ADAM: I plowed the god damned thing into a telephone pole. I think I totaled it. I was just worried it would deflate my botox. Shit, if it did, I'll have Ma Bell by the balls! Look, I need to sign off!

ADAM clicks his phone off. IRMA makes a motion with her hand that the person on the phone won't shut up. ADAM gets the hint, and walks to the tree and puts the present under it.

IRMA: Yeah? Yeah? Yeah! Listen, Marge...I need to go! My guests are arriving. O.K. I'll talk to you tomorrow. Bubyee.

She hangs up the phone with a dramatic sigh. She runs to ADAM and flings her arms around him.

IRMA: Adam!

ADAM: Hey, doll face.

She holds on to him for dear life.

IRMA: I'm so glad you're here. God knows what this event will turn out to be...all this fucking snow.

She squeezes closer to him.

ADAM: Easy on the Armani.

Adam backs away from her; she smiles sheepishly like a little child.

IRMA: I'm nervous. Did you wreck your car?

ADAM: No big whoop! Just petty cash. Another tax deduction.

IRMA: I'm glad you're here.

ADAM: You said. It's so cold outside; I thought I was going to freeze my nads right off.

IRMA: Thank heavens you didn't.

ADAM: So, how long do we have to keep this show up, huh?

ADAM nuzzles himself against her crotch inviting sex. She pushes him away.

IRMA: Stop.

ADAM: Don't make me beg, Irma.

IRMA: I've never made you beg, baby. I just have a lot on my mind.

ADAM: All this cold has made me hot.

IRMA: You can't possibly have sex on the mind.

ADAM: My head is always filled with visions of cherries dancing in my bed.

IRMA: I don't know what to do with you.

ADAM: Just give me a taste...

He advances to her seductively; he kisses her softly on the mouth.

IRMA: Okay, just a taste.

ADAM: This reminds me when my mom used to let me lick the frosting off the beater...

IRMA: Child.

During the above exchange, IRMA has unbuttoned the top of her blouse and pulled out her breast.

ADAM: Daddy's home.

Adam begins to lick her nipple slowly, seductively. She throws her head back moaning lightly. The phone rings. She pulls his head off her breast and buttons her shirt in a hurry.

IRMA: Play time is over. Back to the crib!

ADAM: You've got me hard as a rock.

IRMA: Save it for later.

The phone rings again.

IRMA: I hope it's a cancellation. (She picks up her cellphone.) Hello. What? I can't hear you. You're fuzzy...You're almost here...Keep driving. I'm losing you. Let me go into the kitchen.

IRMA exits to the kitchen. ADAM stands in the middle of the room shifting his weight from one foot to the other. He moves to the mirror and checks out his reflection. He adjusts his crotch and fixes his hair. Doorbell rings. After checking his sex appeal in the mirror one final time, he looks over his shoulder to the kitchen but decides to answer the call and moves to the door and opens it. Two young Hollywood types stand huddled at the door. This is WADE and SHEILA. WADE a petite, boyish man is dressed in his Hollywood attire: a leather coat and a classic scarf. SHEILA a young, sweet-looking girl of 22 is wrapped inside a heavy winter parka, gloves and scarf. Each one carries a bottle of wine and a present. ADAM ushers them into the room.

ADAM: Wade!

Wade not a stranger to the room, enters the room in a huff. comes in and begins to take off his overcoat, scarf. He places his present under the tree.

WADE: I'm so over...Everything.

ADAM: Happy Christmas Eve!

WADE. Here. (tosses wine to Adam) Trader Joes finest.

ADAM. Thanks.

Wade begins to take off his overcoat, scarf. He places his present under the tree. Sheila tries to hide her obvious admiration of a celebrity. She tries to act casual, slick but slips on her words. She finally pipes up.

SHEILA: Boy, I'm frozen stiff.

ADAM: Wade, who's your friend, Wade?

WADE: Oh, how rude of me. Adam, this is Sheila. She just started with the agency...She's a temp.

ADAM. Pleased to meet you, Sheila.

She just stares at him and tries to speak.

SHEILA: I...

SHEILA tries to speak, but words fall silently onto the ground and she stares at ADAM with slack-jaw. WADE gives her a hidden tap. ADAM notices the attention. He bristles a bit before laughing.

ADAM: Put your jaw back. Yes, I'm Adam Adams. Yes, you've seen me in movies, TV and an occasional commercial. Yes, I'm famous and yes, very rich. I can open doors for you or slam them in your face. No, I don't do autographs at parties. So, now that we've gotten the obvious out of the way, we can have a deep, superficial relationship.

WADE: Go easy, Adam. You're her first star sighting.

ADAM: Let me take your coat.

She removes her coat and hands it to ADAM who moves into the hallway and hangs them up. IRMA breezes in from the kitchen.

IRMA: You give Chester a simple map and he makes a mess out of it. Wade!

WADE. Hello, honeybuns.

Wade and Irma embrace and kiss.

SHEILA: Hello, Mrs. Koontz.

Irma wheels around to face Sheila. She eyes her up and down for a moment. Is she a threat to her turf? Deciding Sheila is harmless, she speaks.

IRMA: Irma, please, Irma.

WADE: Oh, Irma, this is Sheila—my new assistant. She started on Friday.

IRMA: Welcome aboard. (She extends her hand.) You've met my boyfriend, Adam.

She holds Adam by the bicep in a protective manner.

SHEILA: He let us in.

ADAM: Yeah. I already told her to not fawn all over me because I'm a famous star and all that nonsense.

IRMA: Adam, you're so full of hot air, I'm surprised any of us can even breathe.

SHEILA: This is for you.

Sheila hands her the wrapped present.

IRMA: You didn't have to!

WADE: You know you'd be gravely bitter if we didn't buy you something outrageously expensive.

IRMA: You're right, but, this is my office party for those I work with.

IRMA puts the gifts beneath the already stuffed tree.

ADAM: Can I make you a drink?

SHIELA: Have anything hot?

ADAM: My abs are so taut you can grill pancakes on them.

WADE: I'm sure we'll all see them before the night's over, too.

ADAM'S phone rings.

ADAM: Excuse me. Hello!

IRMA: Wassail?

SHEILA: Oh, what's that?

WADE. The first step to A.A.

IRMA: It's a hot, Christmas drink. You'll love it!

They exit into the kitchen. ADAM continues to talk on the phone strutting about the room very obvious that WADE is watching him.

ADAM. You tell them it's my face that's up there. My ass is on the line not theirs. I have final script approval or the deal it off.

He snaps the phone shut and spins around and looks WADE in the eye.

ADAM. You looking at my ass?

WADE. Guilty!

ADAM. You fags are always staring at my ass.

WADE. Adam, if I didn't stare at your finest feature, you'd pout all night.

The girls come from the kitchen. Sheila drinks from a mug of hot wassail.

SHEILA. I'm starting to thaw out. I feel like I have polio.

IRMA. You better sit down, dear. I don't pay worker's comp.

ADAM. Irma, keep you sexually stunted assistant away from me.

IRMA. What's wrong?

ADAM. He was stalking my ass.

IRMA. Oh, God, Adam, not everyone is looking at your ass.

ADAM. Yes, they are.

WADE. It's your own fault.

ADAM. What?

WADE. You package it so well inside those tailored pants.

ADAM. I do not.

WADE. If you don't like the looks, then don't mass market your assets, honey.

ADAM covers his ass by untucking his shirt.

IRMA. We know what goes into the making of Adam Adams...Remember we are the powers that promote that pretty tush of yours day and night to the hungry, clawing public.

ADAM. My tricks are useless around here.

A phone rings. The all reach for their phones.

SHEILA. That's mine.

She picks up her phone and silently talks to the party. Her conversation is animated and she's obviously telling the other party that she's in the room with a real star.

IRMA. Adam, be a good boy and tell Wade you're sorry.

WADE. Yeah, I'm so sensitive.

ADAM. I'm sorry.

WADE. I guess my overwhelming masculinity threatens him.

The doorbell rings.

IRMA. Adam, be a lamb and fix him a drink while I answer the door.

IRMA heads to the door.

ADAM. Come on, champ.

They go to the bar. As IRMA reveals CHESTER LANSING at the door. CHESTER is in his early 40's and is a very maudlin geek. He wears crumpled clothing, including a baggy sweater, chourdory pants and horn-rimmed glasses. He carries an old, battered umbrella.

IRMA. Chester!

CHESTER (Folding umbrella.) It's so cold out there, my prick's an icicle.

IRMA. Snow will do that to a man.

CHESTER. I thought I was in New York when I looked out my window, but it's only L.A.

IRMA. What's with the umbrella? It's snow not rain.

CHESTER. I'm like the wicked witch of the west. Water touches me and I melt.

CHESTER hands her a present.

IRMA. Thank you. I'll slip this under the tree. Make yourself comfortable. I'm glad you made it.

IRMA places the gift under the tree.

ADAM. Chester Lansing. The hot screenplay writer.

CHESTER. Yes, I crawled out of my cave for the only Christmas Party I'll privilege with my presence.

WADE. It's so good to see you again.

CHESTER. Is that why you never called me back.

WADE. I lost your number.

CHESTER. Uh-huh.

ADAM. Where have you been hiding?

CHESTER. Under my lap top in some foreboding coffee house. Why Adam, you look as fetching as ever. Last time I saw you, you were just a little eager pup climbing the ladder of success.

WADE. But now he's a huge star.

ADAM. One day I'm nothing—Just a doormat and the next I'm a star. The Hollywood dream come true. All thanks to Irma. (He draws her near.)

IRMA. We're in mixed company.

ADAM. It's not a secret that we're together, Baby.

WADE. Isn't that cute? He's acting like a horny teenager on his first mall date.

SHEILA hangs up her phone.

SHEILA. I'm back. Did I miss anything?

IRMA. Yes, my darling, my most favorite movie writer Chester Lansing just showed his face and he shaved it for once.

CHESTER. And you are?

SHEILA. Sheila. Wade's assistant.

CHESTER. Nice to meet you.

SHEILA. So, you write films?

WADE. He's the best in the biz.

ADAM. He just wrote the masterpiece of fluff I'm in.

CHESTER. Dear Boy, that fluff made you a star.

ADAM. I know. I'm very thankful, but what have you done lately? Huh?

IRMA. Chester, it's true you haven't turned in anything to me in months.

CHESTER. I'd rather not discuss it...(Suddenly looking around the room.) Oh, what lovely decorations.

WADE. That's a way to switch gears.

IRMA. He must be having a major writer's block.

CHESTER. Perhaps tonight's festive occasion will start the carbon paper flying.

WADE. Want a drink?

CHESTER. More than the world.

Chester and Wade head to the bar. Ring Ring. All phones ring at once. They all scramble to answer their phones.

ALL. Hello.

They each move to separate points in the room and talk. A prolonged moment where everyone is absorbed in their own personal dramas. A knock comes on the door. No body hears it. The knock grows louder and more insistent. Finally the door flies open to reveal RON. Ron is an exact carbon copy of ADAM 20 years ago. His face shows the sharp narrow lines of time, women and worry. He has tried to spruce up his image for the occasion, but it's clear he's had a few cocktails. IRMA wheels around and stares at him surprised to see him.

IRMA. I'll call you back. Ronald!

RON. Trying to lock me out, Irma?

IRMA. No.

RON. Merry Christmas, dear.

IRMA. Same to you.

Ron extends a gift obviously expensive and wrapped elegantly.

IRMA. How did you find out I was having a party?

RON. It's not exactly like your life is private. I got an email. You want me to leave?

IRMA. No, but no trouble, okay?

RON. Shit, what kind of trouble?

IRMA. You seem to be a magnet for disaster.

RON. Come on! Don't ice me out! It's Christmas time. Where's your Christmas spirit?

IRMA. I gave at the office.

RON. How about a drink...

CHESTER flips his phone shut and notices RON.

CHESTER. Ron!

RON. Chester! My, my...you're aging like a bottle of wine.

CHESTER. You're aging like a wheel of cheddar cheese.

IRMA. No sparing, you two.

RON. I'm amazed with your poison pen you're invited anywhere.

CHESTER. My dear, my words are the keys to this kingdom.

RON. I'm not staying for long. I just decided to stop in after skidding by.

IRMA. What's your poison?

RON. You remember...

IRMA. I thought you were in rehab.

RON. Nah, that was all publicity. A way to get my name in the papers.

WADE. Yes, we all know that A.A. really stands for Alcoholic Always.

CHESTER. Truer words were never spoken.

RON's phone rings. He answers it and leaves the conversation. ADAM hangs up his phone and strolls back to the scene. He sees RON and folds his arms across his chest. He moves to Irma.

ADAM. Hey, who invited your ex?

IRMA. Not me.

ADAM. He better not start any shit with you Irma or I'll beat the fuck out of him.

CHESTER. Goodie, Goodie, we get to play "Who's cock is bigger!"

ADAM. If that S.O.B. tries anything...

IRMA. Adam, he's harmless. He's only staying for a few minutes. And if we don't give him a whole lot of attention he might leave.

CHESTER. I doubt it. He's like toxic waste that lingers on and on and on.

SHEILA hangs up her phone.

SHEILA. Irma, you are so awesome. I mean, to invite someone like me to this party.

IRMA. It's nothing...

SHEILA. I mean, I just started temping in the office Friday, and here I am high up in the Hollywood Hills. I was just looking out the window and I can see all of L.A. It's completely white.

WADE hangs up his phone to overhear the last part of the conversation. He has already noticed Ron in the room.

IRMA. Ah, she said the word!

SHEILA. What?

WADE (whispers in Sheila's ear). Work.

SHEILA. Oh, I'm sorry.

IRMA. Please! No movies tonight. No studio. No scripts. No deals!

IRMA moves to the bar to refresh her drink. RON flips up his phone and spies SHEILA.

RON. Hi.

SHEILA. Hello.

RON. I don't think I've had the pleasure.

WADE. Ron, this is Sheila. She just started working for me.

SHEILA. I'm Wade's personal assistant.

RON. A gatekeeper for the gatekeeper?

SHEILA. What?

RON. His dragon slayer...His house keep, appointment book. His shield from the world.

She giggles.

SHEILA. Oh, yeah...I guess so.

RON. I'm so happy to meet you. Sheila, you want to go out?

WADE. Down, Dog! She's still wet behind the ears.

RON. She look old enough to speak for herself, Wade.

WADE. I refuse to stand by and watch her throw herself into the mouth of the volcano.

RON. Looks like you're her gatekeeper. Anyway, it's nice to meet you, Sheila.

RON shakes her hand and holds it a bit too long. He releases it and then addresses the room.

RON. What a lovely tree, Irma. Wow. I don't suppose there is a gift under there for me.

IRMA. I'll have to email Santa.

RON. Ah, listen, can I talk to you alone?

IRMA. I have guests, Ron.

RON. It will only take a second, I promise.

IRMA. I'll be right back. Make yourselves at home.

RON pulls a reluctant IRMA into the bedroom.

CHESTER. Who in the hell dug that troll cock up?

WADE. I thought all the mummies were in Egypt.

ADAM. You two cats! Stop it!

WADE. We're only playing. Lighten up!

SHEILA. He seems nice to me.

WADE. Don't be fooled. He tossed you a flirt, but don't let your guard down.

SHEILA. I'm a big girl.

ADAM. It's funny to see the older competition up close.

CHESTER. He's dangerous. He hurt Irma. Put her through the first doorway to hell.

WADE. I had to use scotch tape and channel Florence Nightengale to put her pieces back together. Sheila, lets go and refill the bean dip.

SHEILA. But...

WADE. Now!

He pulls her into the kitchen.

CHESTER. So, big boy, we're alone at last.

Adam rolls his eyes and dials his cell phone.

(Lights fade in the living room and come up in the bedroom.)

Irma slams the door and turns to Ron.

IRMA. You just think you can show up and act like it's all hunky dorie?

RON. I want to make up, Irma.

IRMA. You off your Zoloff drip?

RON. Don't you miss me at all?

IRMA. Yeah. When I'm in the throws of a nightmare.

Ron doesn't say anything, but sits on the bed and gives it a bounce or two. He lies back on the pillows.

RON. This bed is exactly the same as it ever was.

IRMA. The only thing missing is the devil.

RON. You had your part to play, Miss Victim.

IRMA. The part of the damned fool. Our relationship ended faster than a failed sitcom.

RON. Give me one more chance. I miss you, Irma. My life hasn't been complete since we split up. You're like the other half of me.

IRMA. Oh, it takes more than compliments to make me want to tap dance on that hot plate again. I'm not getting my tacos burned twice.

RON. Why don't you give me a chance to make it up to you?

IRMA. Why would you want me to give you a chance when you walked out on me and left me with an empty heart and bed.

RON. The snow makes me say things. Makes me see things in you. Makes me want you again. It gives me hope, but maybe that is just a mirage dancing in mid air. I see the parts of you that I love and loved and have spent too many years running from.

IRMA. It was you who wanted that open relationship thing and then you left me for the first blonde with lipgloss who you thought would make you look young.

RON. I'm older now.

IRMA. And I'm not. I'm not growing gray under this Miss Clarol?

RON. You know she was just a fad, a trend...

IRMA. True. I've had diets that lasted longer than that fling.

RON. If you would have stayed and held my hand through my mid-life crisis.

IRMA. Shit, you were only 27 at the time. You just got antsy in the pantys and you wanted me to stay? Come on! You're a good lover. You a great body, but that's not where it counts for me anymore. There is more to a relationship than a beautiful body and a handsome face.

RON. You can't tell me your happy with Mr. Cardboard out there strutting around like a peacock on steroids?

IRMA. More than I've been in years...

RON. That male inflate-a-mate can't please you.

IRMA. Stop, Ron.

RON gets off the bed and glides to her like a gypsy dancer. He nuzzles up against her.

RON. Let me have you again. I never stopped thinking of you. You're like sweet perfume that drifts in the air that I can't get enough of.

IRMA squirts him with the perfume bottle.

IRMA. No! Now, be nice and leave.

RON. Fine. Alright. Shit, you've become an iceberg. I'll leave in a few minutes.

IRMA. Good.

RON. But I have a proposal...

Lights cross fade to the kitchen. WADE and SHEILA are eating snacks.

WADE. Sheila, I hate how this is looking. Let's go!

SHEILA. Wade! Come on! This is my first real "industry" party and I'm not going anywhere.

WADE. Sheila, it's going to turn ugly before we know it. Let's go watch T.V. or something.

SHEILA. It's snowing outside.

WADE. I've seen this a thousand times. You don't know this whole nasty web.

SHEILA. Wade, please. I have to learn how to handle these things. I have to know how my boss acts. How can I learn anything about this industry if I run away?

WADE. You're right, but I warn you! And Ron! God, he's such an ass! He wants something and I know it's going to hurt Irma and I don't want to see it.

SHEILA. He's a nice guy.

WADE. No he's a villain. He a viper. You better watch out for him. He's dangerous.

SHEILA. I won't let him hurt me.

WADE. We'll stay, but I swear you'll regret it.

Lights cross fade to living room.

ADAM. So, Chester...

CHESTER. Adam?

ADAM. You're looking good and ruffled. Did you sleep in your clothes again?

CHESTER. Adam, I'm not going to play verbal footies with you.

ADAM. I'm just saying you need a better wardrobe.

CHESTER. I don't have someone to do my shopping and dressing for me. I'm much too busy.

ADAM. I work hard on my image.

CHESTER. I'm not tossing the doggie a bone.

ADAM. What?

CHESTER. I'm not going to feed your ego all night. I'm too old for superficial compliments.

ADAM. So when are you going to write another part for me?

CHESTER. When you learn to act.

ADAM. We could benefit each other.

CHESTER. You claw my back and I'll claw yours...

ADAM. Yeah!

CHESTER. Forget it, prince charming.

He turns his back on ADAM. ADAM checks out his reflection in the mirror.

Lights go back to bedroom.

RON. I'm a metro sexual.

IRMA. A what?

RON. I'm a cosmopolitan, straight male who cares about his appearance and the feminine side of women.

IRMA. Since when?

RON. Since Tolla left me.

IRMA. Tolla?

RON. My fiancé.

IRMA. I didn't know you were going to be married.

RON. It didn't last very long.

IRMA. So, that's why you're running back to me. I offer you the safety of the womb.

RON. I just want you to entertain an open mind.

IRMA. I was foolish and young once, but twice and three times I'm a lady.

RON. I've got a deal...

IRMA. Now, we're getting to it. Pay dirt.

RON. Monumount is interested in my script.

IRMA. Hip, Hip, Hooray.

RON. I need you to help me close the deal.

IRMA. You're dangling that old work carrot in front of me?

RON. I don't have an agent, and I want this deal. This movie could change my whole fate.

IRMA. No.

RON. Irma! Here me out!

Lights fade up on living room.

ADAM and CHESTER talk on their cell phones standing at opposite ends of the living room. After a few seconds, SHEILA and WADE enter. CHESTER hangs up his phone.

CHESTER. Hello, kids.

ADAM. Come and join the fun.

WADE. We were going to hit the road.

SHEILA. No, we're not!

SHEILA plops herself down on the couch.

CHESTER. Shouldn't you fire her for insubordination?

WADE. You know how I am with strong women.

ADAM clicks off his phone. Silence. He looks at the stairway.

ADAM. What are they doing in there?

CHESTER. You know, talking over the good old days.

ADAM. This is strange. I'm going to go in there.

WADE. Adam, don't get your toupee flustered.

ADAM. This is my real hair, fruit loop.

Adam moves to the bar and makes a drink.

ADAM. I swear I'll kick his pompous ass!

Lights go back on bedroom.

IRMA. I can't trust you! What makes you think I'll represent your script? You're a flake.

RON. I was a flake. I've changed.

IRMA. Please, Ron! I could set my watch around you. I would never put my stock on you.

RON. Why not?

IRMA. You're unpredictable like the moon. You forget I was married to you, Ron.

RON. I'm here.

IRMA. Tonight. Yes. But then the sun's up and you're out the god-damned door. (She turns and stares at him.) Don't you realize how many years it took me to get over you?

RON. No.

IRMA. I had a nervous break down. I fell into a 10,000 piece puzzle.

RON. I'm sorry.

IRMA. Sorry doesn't fix anything, idiot. Sorry isn't some kind of mending medicine that cures all. Sorry is everyone's lame ass excuse...everyone's bottle of snake oil.

RON. Irma, listen to me. This deal could save my life. I need you, sweetheart. It could be like the old days.

IRMA. Oh, now you need me. Now, that you have a sweet deal. What about when I needed you? What about the times when I laid in that bed waiting for you to come home? I was wet and hungry for you, but you never noticed, Ron.

RON. Well, you didn't take the time to tell me.

IRMA. God-damned it. A woman doesn't have to tell a man. He's supposed to know. I thought men were just horny dogs...

RON. Don't stand there and blame me. You were half the blame. You froze me out, Irma.

IRMA. Liar!

RON. You know it's true! I'd try to hold you, to touch you, stroke your hair, take you, eat you, but you were remote, removed like on another planet.

IRMA. I admit I have frost around my heart, but it's not like you weren't warned beforehand. Before we even started I told you I was crazy. I told you I had intimacy issues.

RON. You want to fuck now? I can make you thaw out...just say the word and I'll throw you across that bed and you'll melt.

RON begins to stroke her gently, smoothly. She begins to have second thoughts...He kisses her on the mouth. It soon grows more intense, more hot...IRMA breaks it off.

IRMA. Back off. Stop. No! I can't.

RON. Come on, let me please you.

IRMA. It's a little late in your career to try sleeping your way to the top. I'm not entertaining this dance anymore. I have people to entertain.

RON. I'm cold. I'm ice.

IRMA. Well, let me pour some wild turkey over you and we can serve you to the guests.

RON. You always use your wit to cut me down. You baffle me.

IRMA. You can't have me. I'm Adam's now.

RON. Give me one night. One night to show you I've gotten better with age.

IRMA. No. Adam gives me everything you couldn't. He scratches my itch.

RON. He can't give you the years we had, Irma.

He grabs her hand and holds it on his penis. IRMA pulls away quickly. She suddenly slaps him.

IRMA. Sick! You still believe love is only about sex. Grow up!

RON. Don't you remember how I pleased you? That bed was on fire. The sheets were in flames after we lay smoldering on them.

IRMA. Yes. I remember how you left me in the cold. Ron, you only want me now because I'm not available. I'm something you can't have. You like the chase, but once you've captured, you lose interest.

RON. Okay. You win. I won't say another word.

IRMA. I don't understand you! You had the world by the balls! You were a star Ron. Were. What can you do now but play dinner theater or waiver and then what? Nothing. It was good for the first season, but by season 3 you were washed up. Everyone knew it except you. You were unable to appear before 10 am. Had to have a stand in for body work as your belly hung over your belt. You knocked furniture over with it. And you couldn't get along with anyone on the set. You insisted on rewrites and by the time the show aired, you're stand in got more work than you did.

RON. I'm fine now! Look at me, trim and sexy.

A knock comes on the door.

WADE (off stage) YooHoo. What are you two kids doing in there? There's a party attempting to go on the other side of this door.

IRMA flips on the lights and opens the door. WADE enters the room with tinsel around his neck.

WADE. Now, Ronnie, you know it's not fair to monopolize the hostess.

IRMA. We were discussing business.

WADE. That might be so...but that restless beast Adam is getting heated up!

IRMA. Oh, God.

IRMA runs out the door. Lights fade from the bedroom into the living room where ADAM is in the middle of a speech. All the other actors are falling asleep, but trying to pay attention.

ADAM. And the director started to tell me what to do. I had to show him who was boss and so I spit on him and headed for my trailer. He tried to sweet talk me and do his Forum bullshit on me but I could smell his funk from a mile off. I told him I wanted a public apology in front of the cast and crew. He was humiliated like a dog..

He takes a drink. Sheila and Wade nod their heads bored out of their minds. IRMA rushes into the room followed closely by WADE and RON.

IRMA. I'm so sorry. I got detained.

CHESTER. Let's do something. I'm about to pass out from boredom.

ADAM. I wasn't finished.

CHESTER. Don't worry, we can watch it on E! TV.

They all hurry to the bar.

SHEILA. So, Chester, what are you going to thrill us with next?

CHESTER. Shit if I know.

ADAM. You don't mean you don't have anything in the crock pot.

CHESTER. No. I sit at the lap top and I write, but it feels like a circle jerk with myself.

SHEILA. A what?

WADE. I'll draw you a diagram later.

CHESTER. It feels like I'm waiting for some kind of spirit or muse to talk to me...I pour another cup of coffee for inspiration. I read a book. I try to beg and plead for ideas, but they don't come. They are hiding from me. They are on the outside the window and they taunt me, they haunt me, hell they dick tease me and I feel like I'm a foolish old man. It's like the beautiful man in the bar that flirts with you and walks away when you approach. I just sit in my room replaying past glories...(He makes a masturbation movement.)

IRMA. But you have such a prodigious outpouring.

CHESTER. All rehashed, has been junk. Thank Jove, I've got a name for myself otherwise, they'd reject it all.

WADE. But your junk is inspired. What you consider junk most writer's would kill for.

IRMA. Chester, you shouldn't be so hard on yourself. You're your own worst critic. Hell, you write your own poisoned reviews.

ADAM. I know what he means! The public only sees the outside shell, they don't understand the difficult passage that it takes.

WADE. Thank you Harriet Tubman.

SHEILA. Adam, you are not going to complain about your fame are you?

ADAM. You don't understand. Ron tell them.

Ron suddenly grabs Sheila's hand and puts it inside the front of his pants.

RON. A little to the left, honey.

Sheila recoils.

RON. See, she didn't slap me. She didn't call me a son of a bitch. A womanizer. If I were a real mortal, I would have gotten my cock kicked off, but because I'm an over-achiever, because I had fame, because of my own legend, I can do things like that. Sheila even liked it a bit and she wants more.

SHEILA. No, I don't, Ron.

RON. We'll check in with her later.

IRMA. Sheila, don't get pulled into his mind fuck.

RON. Mind fuck. I'm just being honest, she's been staring at my crotch all evening. She's burning a hole in my god-damned Levi's. Hell, if she had her way, my dick would be swinging in the wind for all to see.

WADE. Why not? We've all seen it before.

RON. I know she wants me, but I'm keeping her at a distance. I'm warding her off. I have to appear aloof so she'll crack under all the pressure.

SHEILA. I'm a person, Ron. I'm not an object.

RON. You think you are a person. Not here, dear. Not in Hollywood. The magical land of face smiles, mirrors that reflect beauty, but once cracked will bring you 7 years of bad luck.

SHEILA. I might not like you Ron. I'm not attracted to you.

RON. Give me sometime and I'll wear you down. Before the night wears on, you be in my arms and begging me to take you home, getting on your knees crying and weeping.

IRMA. Don't tell her the truth, Ron. Truth will ruin her. Let her have her dreams they'll soon be broken and worn like all of us.

WADE. I want to hear more of Adam's theory. He might have a brain rattling around in that pretty skull.

ADAM. I was just noting that it's hard to turn on the electricity. I sit in my limo before one of those big events with the flashing lights and the red carpets and that old deal call the media and I wan to have them drive me off into the sunset and back to the city where no one knows me.

CHESTER. And where is that? Everyone knows you.

ADAM. Some place normal. Someplace where it isn't all this posturing, muscle-bound display. Meet some nice people who don't have sharp teeth and knives.

IRMA. That's a never, never land. Just like our land is a fabrication, so is theirs. They want to get in and we want to get out.

WADE. So, you can't face your fame?

ADAM. No, I can't. To know that your aren't liked for anything called talent; I have no humour. I'm just a pretty mug, a prop and I make good P.R. and I make a lot of people money including all of you.

IRMA. I got the Ira Account to prove it.

CHESTER. So, there is gold in those peccs?

ADAM. Yes. I show up and smile, wave and the floodgates of cash overflow. The cash register rings. And everyone is happy.

SHEILA. What did you expect Adam?

ADAM. I don't know. More or less. I don't know. Some kind of fulfillment. But it's a grind, just like when I worked at my father's factory on the drill press...the same is true of what we do, but it's just more glossy.

WADE. But you won't give it up.

ADAM. I can't!

IRMA. Damned right you can't. Your hot tush is hocked for about 4 more years with options to buy.

ADAM. See, there is no getting out. I'm under lock and key.

IRMA. You made your bed and I'm here to make sure you keep your promises. You can't just shrug and let the world fall off your shoulders because you feel tired and over it.

WADE. But don't we all want to give up?

CHESTER. I do. There's nothing wrong with giving up. Walking away from the war before you end up missing a limb.

ADAM. I'm afraid I won't come out intact.

RON. Just stay with it, Son. Stay in the barrel until it stops spinning then you'll be more closer to what you think you are. You'll become honest.

ADAM. But it hurts.

IRMA. That's why you have me, honey. To make sure you have everything your heart desires...All that money can name, but I'm here to make you fulfill your contracts. You want snow, you want grass, girls, boys...I don't care. I'll gladly supply, but you must give too.

ADAM. I feel like I'm giving my soul.

CHESTER. You have no soul. You can meditate till the fat lady sings but you sold that sucker the moment you stood on Hollywood and Vine staring at those Arch lights criss-crossing in the sky.

WADE. Haven't we all. It's just a lousy machine that grinds your bones to ashes.

SHEILA. Why don't you all quit?

IRMA. You do have a lot to learn. You can't stop the game. They'll throw your token off the board and you'll never get back on. It's king of the mountain here.

SHEILA. You all hate it so much.

WADE. We don't hate it! We despise it, but we can't live outside of it. Once you're in, there is no getting out unless forever. Look at those freaks from Different Strokes.

IRMA. All a freak show and they are all crazy.

ADAM. I don't want to become that.

RON. You won't. I tell you, Adam. Just ride this fame wave for as long as you can stomach it. Pocket all the attention and the cash that you can and then you can go and give panel discussions and they will line up around the block for a look or you can write a book.

IRMA. Or you can go into rehab.

WADE. That's always a good career move.

ADAM. I'm just fed up with it all. I'm forced to show up and do the work. Made to suit up, show up and shut up and then the next week you send a runner out to pick up the magazines of all your articles. You read your quotes and you see how stupid you sound. How empty, vapid and devoid of anything important.

SHEILA. Why are you revealing your skins to us?

ADAM. I want you to know I'm human, too. I have a heart.

IRMA. Oh, yeah, your weakest muscle.

CHESTER. Show us your heart.

ADAM. How?

RON. If you are more than a pretty face you should be able to prove it.

IRMA. I think he sold it. Pawned it for headshots early on.

ADAM. I pledge my love for Irma.

IRMA. It's easy. That's not a test of love. I live with you. What do you do for people in other countries?

ADAM. I write a check.

CHESTER. No, you don't. Your assistant writes your checks.

ADAM. Ok. I don't.

SHEILA. Maybe he contributes to the world beauty and something wonderful to gaze at.

ADAM. But I'm not a statue in the park.

WADE. He certainly gives my eyes pleasure.

CHESTER. Adam, I wouldn't worry too much about all those things. You are just what you are. A star.

ADAM. But I want to be a man. A person. Connected to the world.

IRMA. Let's play some kind of game or something.

WADE. We were thinking about hitting the road.

IRMA. Wade! Noooo. You can't desert me...not yet. Nothing's happened.

WADE. I have to wake up early tomorrow. You know what Ben Frank said...

CHESTER. Early to bed makes a man horny?

WADE. It's been a long day.

IRMA. You work for me. Both of you. You're staying. Got it. I want some fun. It's fucking Christmas. You can sleep in tomorrow after you've partied all night, and I'll know you're really sick. Besides, I haven't opened your gifts yet.

WADE. Alright. We'll stay.

RON. Good. (to Sheila) Can I get you a drink?

SHEILA. Sure.

RON and SHEILA head for the bar. IRMA looks around for a moment helpless. What to do?!

IRMA. Let's play "celebrity."

CHESTER. Not that old chestnut.

RON. The hostess's choice.

SHEILA. I don't think I've ever played that game before. Is it hard?

RON. Keep at it and it will be.

IRMA. Not at all! You're going to love it.

ADAM. I'm not really good at this game.

WADE. Unless his own name is picked.

ADAM. Shut up!

IRMA takes one of the party bowls on the coffee table and dumps the chips into another bowl and grabs some paper from the table by the phone.

IRMA. You're going to adore this game. All you have to do is write a name on these papers put them in the bowl, we mix them up and then you get a minute to guess from the clues you get from the person next to you...you try to guess as many as you can and the one who guesses the most wins.

During the above, they write names on pieces and put them in the bowl.

ADAM. And don't put anyone before this century, please.

WADE. Yeah. And no ballplayers.

IRMA. Everyone done? Put you slips of paper in the bowl. Now, I need a watch with a second hand.

ADAM. Here you can use my Rolex.

WADE. Isn't that cute.

IRMA. Wade, you start since you've played before. I'll time you.

WADE. Okay, Ron, I'll give you the clues and you answer. Ready?

RON. Yes.

IRMA. Go!

Wade quick as lightening pulls a slip of paper from the bowl.

WADE. My hussband wass David Guest.

RON. Liza Minnelli.

WADE. (pulls another) I was the leader of India I went on a hunger strike.

RON. Gahndi.

WADE. (yet another.) I was the Hollywood madam.

RON. Heidi Fleisk.

WADE. (yet another) I drew the peanuts...

RON. Did you say penis?

WADE. Charlie Brown

RON. Charles Szultz.

WADE. (he pulls another one...) I was a female poet. I killed myself.

RON. That narrows it down.

WADE. "The Hours."

RON. Virginia Wolfe.

WADE. (pulls another one.) I went to jail for being a homosexual.

RON. Oscar Wilde.

WADE. (pulls another one). I wrote Atlas Shrugged...

IRMA. Time.

RON. Damn that was easy. How many did I get.

WADE. 6!

CHESTER. You two should go on that pyramid show.

IRMA. Let's keep the game going.

Ron turns to Sheila.

RON. Ready, sweetheart?

SHEILA. Yes.

IRMA. Go!

Ron pulls a slip from the bowl.

RON. Oh. God. Shit. This is hard.

WADE. Start giving clues.

RON. Okay. I was an actress. I made movies in black and white. I had big hair and big shoulders.

SHEILA. Katherine Hepburn.

RON. "Mommie Dearest"

SHEILA. Oh, Oh, God. What's her name. "No wire hangers!" Oh, god I can see her. Those eyebrows!

RON. "Mildred Pierce"

SHEILA. Joan Crawford!

RON. Good. (pulls another one out.) I'm a folk singer. From the 60's

SHEILA. Joan Biaz?

RON. No. I have long blonde hair.

SHEILA. Mary?

RON. No. "They paved paradise..."

SHEILA. Oh, god! What's her name? Oh, shit. She plays the guitar.

RON. "I've look at life from both sides now!"

SHEILA. Judy Collins.

RON. She wrote the album blue...

IRMA. Time.

SHEILA. Who was it?

CHESTER. Don't tell, put it back in the pot.

Ron puts the piece of paper back.

RON. I'll play you her music later. You'll die.

Sheila takes the bowl and turns to Adam.

SHEILA. Oh, god, I'm so nervous.

ADAM. Just pretend I'm a normal person.

SHEILA. O.K. I'm ready.

IRMA. Go

SHEILA pulls a name out of the bowl.

SHEILA. Okay...Um...He was a president. They shot him.

ADAM. Abraham Lincoln.

SHEILA. In Dallas.

ADAM. JFK.

SHEILA. Good. (she pulls out the next one and by the expression on her face we see it stumps her.) This is hard. He is an actor...blonde, handsome.

ADAM. Brad Pitt.

SHEILA. Eve and blank.

ADAM. Adam.

SHEILA. This is too hard.

EVERYONE. Shhh. No talking.

SHEILA. (she points to her crotch) Down there.

ADAM. Cock?!

SHEILA. Another word for it.

ADAM. Dick.

SHEILA. Yes. (she points to her head)

ADAM. Dickhead. (he suddenly figures it out.) Adam dickhead Adams.

SHEILA. Right.

ADAM grabs the piece of paper.

ADAM. I don't think this is very funny.

IRMA. It was only a joke, Adam.

RON. Don't be a soiled sport.

ADAM. Who put my name in the pot? Who? It's not funny to make fun of me because of who I am.

CHESTER. Why don't you put your ego away.

ADAM. Because I don't think it's fun to be made fun of. I don't hurt people. I'll bet it was that little fruit, Wade.

WADE. Oh, for heaven's sake.

ADAM. You want to get back at me. You want to punish me. Humiliate me? You already did it enough don't you think? You lousy fucking, fag. I should kick your ass.

IRMA. Calm down. Let's not go there.

RON. There were good times between us. The only reason you're here is because I made the mistake of leaving.

ADAM. Too bad for you, Ron.

RON. Don't make me kick you punk ass.

ADAM. I'm so scared.

IRMA. No, guys stop it.

WADE. There sure a lot of huge cock swinging going on!

ADAM. Fuck you, Wade.

RON. Leave him alone.

ADAM. You defending the fruit?

RON. I don't like your swollen attitude, dude.

ADAM. Hit me first.

They pair off.

IRMA. Stop it. Chester stop them.

CHESTER. Step between a rock and a hard place? Don't be silly girl.

ADAM. Come on!

Ron takes a swing, it throws Adam's head back. Everyone gasps. Adam's mouth bleeds. Adams not to be out done, puts up his fists. He lunges forward and takes a swing at Ron. Ron grabs him and in one swoop puts him into a head lock. Adam attempts to fight him, but to no avail.

RON. You're not so tough now are you, big boy.

IRMA. Ron, let him go now! This has gotten outta hand.

RON. I'll let him go after he apologizes. To Wade and then to everyone.

ADAM. Fuck you, asshole. I'll fucking sue you.

RON. Ah, listen to the baby talk now.

Ron gives Adam's neck a strong squeeze.

RON. Say you're fucking sorry and we can have a beer and laugh at this whole night.

ADAM. Fuck off.

Ron gives his neck a squeeze: this time with much more force. Everyone in the room winces. Adam's face turns red and he coughs.

RON. Say it, fuck face.

ADAM. Go to hell!

IRMA. Enough. Ron, let him go. You're going to hurt him.

RON. I'll disfigure him, if he doesn't start eating some crow. Say it!

Squeeze. This time longer, more force. Adam almost passes out. Irma begins to weep.

IRMA. Please, Ron.

ADAM. Wade, I'm sorry.

Ron releases him and he scurries to the side of the room. Embarrassed like a man child.

IRMA. Did he hurt you, baby?

ADAM. I'm suing you. I'm calling my lawyer.

He flips open his phone and realizes it is out of service. He clicks it shut.

ADAM. First thing in the morning you'll be behind bars.

RON. You're willing to admit a man twice your age licked you.

ADAM. You got a lucky break. I could kick your ass all over the place.

RON. You want to have a second round?

ADAM. No.

RON. Then shut up.

WADE (as southern belle). Well, now that we've cleared all the ego out of the room, what shall we do?

RON. I'll bet that's how you made it to your peak...by scratching and tearing other's down.

ADAM. Partly. Just like you. Like all of us! We're all disgusting.

IRMA. This is all too dramatic. God I want to have fun. I want to laugh.

She runs to the Christmas tree and begins to hand out the gifts randomly.

IRMA. Here! (She hands a package to Chester)

CHESTER. What are you doing?

IRMA. I'm playing god-damned Santa Clause. Here. (She hands a package to Adam.)

ADAM looks at is and attempts to give it back.

ADAM. I gave you this. It's from me.

IRMA. I don't care.

She snatches the present away from him and hands it to Sheila.

SHEILA. I couldn't.

IRMA. Take. Accept.

She hands a gift to Wade. She finally hands out all the presents. Everyone stands unsure of what to do.

IRMA. Open them.

RON. Why are you doing this?

IRMA. Because I'm God! All of you believe I'm God. God and Santa Clause. Aren't we trained from the minute we step out of the womb to think of Santa as the great provider and isn't God the same thing?

CHESTER. Forgive her she's channeling Ayn Rand.

IRMA. Stop it, Chester. Why should you be the only one to stand on a soap box and spout philosophy like a god-damned faucet?

RON. You don't need to be this way, Irma.

IRMA. Don't I? You don't mean you don't want me to be crazy.

WADE. We all love you, Irma.

IRMA. No. No. If only you did love me...Any of you. That would make it easy, huh? You all love what I can or might do for you.

SHEILA. Don't say that.

IRMA. It's true. You haven't seen the half of it, sweetheart Turn around! Go home. Get in your little beatle and head for the hills! You'd be safe there. There is something tangible back home. Here it's all a show, you'll see it soon. Sometimes, when the wind

is just right, you can smell the shit that fertilizes this industry. You can see the desperation on the street corners.

WADE. Aren't you happy with everything. You've got it all.

IRMA. True. You're right. I have it all. Now, I want to give it away. Isn't that my privilege?

She begins to remove her bracelet, her earrings and necklace.

IRMA. Take them. Take them.

She goes around the room and places the wrapped gifts into their arms.

IRMA. Take it all! All the pieces they aren't my soul. Where can I buy my god-damned soul back? Huh? Who do I write the check out to or swipe the platinum card?

Suddenly, she stops in front of Adam and slaps him once, he takes it.

ADAM. Why do you want to hurt me?

IRMA. Because... Oh, I don't know. It's my nature. I know you want to trade me in for a fresh model, but you can't just put me on the junk heap, dear. I'm flesh and blood. I'm mounds of ideas. You're just as afraid as I am, sweet.

(She wipes her nose which has begun to bleed.)

SHEILA. Your nose.

IRMA. I don't care. Let the God-damned thing bleed back to nothing. I don't care.

ADAM. Why do you insist on showing your ass in front of your guests?

IRMA. Why should I hide? There is no reason to hide. You all know me. Ron and Adam have both slept with me. They know my body, my thoughts, my tits, my ass. So why should I not bare it all anyway? I could show you my soul...If only I could find it.

WADE. Come on, Irma.

IRMA. I want to cry. I don't know how. Those tears are frozen somewhere inside of me. They won't flow.

ADAM. Nothing is that bad.

SHEILA. You don't need to be melancholy.

IRMA. But I don't need to be happy either. I know that behind my back they call me I'm a cunt.

WADE. Ouch.

IRMA. It doesn't mean anything to me.

ADAM. Don't do this honey.

IRMA. Adam, you are too cute. You've reached the zenith, the absolute top, but what about when it fades?

ADAM. It won't.

CHESTER. Don't you know it, child.

IRMA. What happens when you start to fall, when your little cel phone stops jingling and you're scrambling desperately to get in top shape. You press yourself at the gym, but it still fades? You look into the mirror and you notice each line on the weary face used to hold up the pretence. You want it all: your cake and you want to eat it, too and you can and you'd better gobble now whitt the buffet is open since one day the store will close.

ADAM. You don't have to tell me. I have all the money, the clout.

IRMA. You can have it all. You can bed any woman or man you come in contact with just the look of your eyes or the snap of your fingers. Perhaps you want Sheila or Wade? Sprinkle a little of you magic dust around and you can do it.

ADAM. Why do you think these things? Why do you speak?

IRMA. Because, I can see you glaring at her all night. Perhaps you want to go into the bedroom right now? Maybe you want to give it to her on our bed Adam?

ADAM. No.

IRMA. She'll let you. She'll open to you like a flower to a drop of rain because she wants to use you, too. See, it's a double edged sword. Perhaps, you'll slip her your card before she slips out the door and meet her in a cheap hotel room where you sign in under assumed names. Have her. I'll hold her for you. You have my permission.

WADE. Stop! Stop! Irma.

IRMA. You want boys, too, Adam. Shit, you can even swing both ways, hit on both sides of the team. Who cares? No one sees, no one cares. You can cover your treads in the snow and not leave footprints... You can even do both at the same time. Who cares? Open your god-damned gifts everyone.

(They all just stare at her with stony silence. There is a chill inside the room.)

IRMA. (she wheels around to Wade.) And you! You parade around trying to be me.

WADE. I do not.

IRMA. You believe if you study me, if you try to impersonate me perhaps the magic and glitter will shine down on you. You have no life of your own. You borrow, beg and steal from everyone.

WADE. You think? You think you're all that, lady? You sure do put yourself on a pedestal. Well, I imitate you because I find you a riot, a screaming funny thing, an object. You're a mask, a puppet. Let's talk about this marriage of convenience you have.

ADAM. Shut up, Wade.

WADE. Why should I have my asshole burned on the hot seat?

CHESTER. What do you know?

Wade turns from Sheila who is writing this down.

WADE. You don't have to fear me taking your man, Irma, as I've had him.

All gasp.

IRMA. What?

ADAM lurches forward to grab Wade.

ADAM. You shit.

IRMA steps between them.

CHESTER. Don't you touch him.

ADAM. He's a liar. A fucking revengeful liar.

IRMA. Then why are you acting like a violent animal?

WADE. See, I was the door way to Irma. I was his first step. He was my lover until I handed him the golden keys...He fucked me over just like you Irma. But I've kept my mouth shut...sealed like a clam.

ADAM. You can't prove that!

WADE. Oh, no?

Wade pulls out his wallet and digs out a check.

WADE. Then what is this?!

CHESTER. Let me see that.

WADE. It's a check from Adam.

IRMA. What's it for?

ADAM. Hush money.

WADE. For?

ADAM: To keep you quiet. Why are you telling now?

WADE: Because I have nothing to lose. Because I'm tired of lying to Irma about you. I'm dead tired of you and your straight boy game. She's scared shitless that you'll leave her and you hand it over her head like some kind of mistletoe. So before you talk about my glittering abilities and my desires to glitter and be gay you'd better clear out your own closet, sister. Let's face it I've been busting my piñata to try and keep mute about you, but you're just so god-damned above it all, Adam.

CHESTER. Looks like someone finally has the God by the short hairs.

ADAM. I didn't ask for comments from the penis gallery. I'm not gay just because I let that little thing give me head to get to Irma.

IRMA. So it was a scam?

ADAM. I thought it was. To start with, but I really fell for you.

IRMA. You used me?!

CHESTER. Come on, Irm, this is Hollywood. We use each other.

SHEILA. You fucked Irma to get ahead in your career.

ADAM. I had to get to her. Wade was just the rung on the ladder.

WADE. I still have a boot print between my shoulder blades.

CHESTER. Well, now that his dirty jockey shorts are cleaned. Can we get some egg nog?

SHEILA. (she raises her hand.) I have a question:

IRMA. You're not in school.

SHEILA. Did you like it?

ADAM. No.

WADE. I beg to differ my partner in crime.

ADAM. Enough.

IRMA. Oh, I want to see him wiggle his cute ass out of this one.

WADE. He seemed to love it. After the first time when he cried on my shoulders about how terrible and wrong he was and I held him and kisses his tears...He call me 2 or 3 times a week—for comfort of course, and one thing would lead to the next and we'd end up naked and repeating the crime over and over. That was until he hooked Irma and then I saw him less and less.

SHEILA: So, how long did this last?

WADE: How long Adam?

ADAM: I don't remember...

WADE: It lasted about 3 months.

IRMA. That's a lot of experimenting.

ADAM. It didn't mean anything. Can't you all see that? I didn't care about him. I was the one who was on top. He was my servant.

CHESTER. Oh, that clears your image alright.

ADAM. Yes, it clears my name. I'm not gay. I did it for advancement only. I did what I had to do. I had to get to Irma and Wade was the way in.

IRMA. Why didn't you just ask me?

ADAM. I tried. You didn't notice me. Wouldn't give me the time of day. You wouldn't look twice in my direction no matter how many smoke signals I sent you. You

were wrapped up in Ron's arms. There was no need for a young guy who was pushing boxes around the mailroom.

RON. I was the main guy in your life, Irma.

IRMA. I like having known this about you Adam. I feel somewhat closer to you. I think we've really bonded over this Christmas Eve.

ADAM. You mean you aren't ashamed of me?

IRMA. No, it levels you...Makes you more human to me, makes you more real and less marble...less like a statue to me.

ADAM. I wish you didn't know, baby.

SHEILA. I'm glad I didn't sleep with him. That's just wrong.

WADE. You don't know what you're missing, honey. I'm talking a banana split that is to die for: Whipped cream, strawberries, vanilla ice cream, marshmallows, carmel, hot fudge with a cherry on top.

SHEILA. Can I reorder?

ADAM. Irma, do you still love me?

IRMA. (thinks) Yes.

CHESTER. I wish I had known that we was gettable.

ADAM. Don't get any ideas, Chester.

CHESTER. Funny, that's the only idea I've got. I have dried up like a fart in the wind. I can't write a single line anymore. My laptop is like a divining rod that only scratches the parched, dry, cracked Earth.

IRMA. O.K. enough of this selfish foolish indulgent talking. It's like too much chocolate in the room. I'm getting sugar dizzy. I want to have fondue. I want to have a merry little Christmas. I want to sing songs. I don't want all this serious stuff.

ADAM. What do you want to do?

IRMA. I don't know. I want to do everything. I want to dance. I want to sing. I want to get wildly drunk. I want to stop feeling grim. Let's dance! Let's move this energy around.

Irma flips on the radio. She begins to wildly throw herself around the living room. Adam more reserved, subcums and begins to dance with Irma. Sheila dances with Wade until Ron enters and watches her and cuts in.

RON. Can I cut in?

Ron and Sheila dance. Wade continues to dance alone by himself. Music plays for about 30 seconds. Chester sits on the sidelines and watches the scene. None of the actors are expert dancers. They all move wildly about the carpet. Finally, Ron and Sheila begin to dance really seductively together. A spotlight picks them up and they are like a prize couple at a dance contest. Ron kisses her violently on the mouth and she rubs here ass seductively in his palms. She moans. She raises her leg up against his leg. They are beginning the mating. Lights come back to normal and the couples are still dancing really quietly. But all eyes are on Ron and Sheila. Ron suddenly picks her up and carries her into the bedroom. A door slams.

Irma crosses to the radio and snaps it off.

IRMA. God-Damn it! Shit! Fuck!

She drowns the last drop of her drink and flies into the kitchen. There is a silence around the room.

End of ACT ONE

ACT TWO

The setting is the same as the end of act one. Adam, Chester, and Wade stand in silence. From the bedroom the sounds of Ron and Sheila begin to filter in. There is an awkward knowing...

WADE. What are they jungle cats?

ADAM. This is not what Irma had in mind of a Christmas party. Should I go and tend the lion?

CHESTER. I wouldn't advise that—she's prone to bite.

WADE. I'm going to go pamper her. Lick and nurse her wounds...her pride.

Wade exits.

CHESTER. How about a game of strip poker?

ADAM. You'd do anything to see my naked.

CHESTER. I've seen it on the net. The fantasy's better anyway.

ADAM. Shouldn't we stop them? Go knock on the door?

CHESTER. Nah. You know the old saying, "when this bed's a rockin', don't come knocking!" That's their idea of discretion.

Lights snap up in the bedroom and we catch a glimpse of Ron and Sheila twisting in the bed. Their bodies wrapped in sheets and they move like wild animals. Moans and sighs are heard. Overblown. Not normal.

SHEILA. God, Ron!

RON. Oh, Baby!

Lights flash back to the kitchen where Irma is in the middle of throwing pots and pans and anything she can get her hands around onto the floor.

IRMA. Why? God-damn it! Shit! Piss! Hell! Asshole! GRRR. I'm going to grind his ball in the mix master.

Wade enters and is NOT shocked by Irma's rampage.

WADE. Irma.

IRMA. Go away, Wade.

WADE. Talk to me.

IRMA. That God-damned son of a bitch screws the first little slut who flings her cunt in front of him.

Wade crosses to her and gently grabs her hands.

WADE. Come on, let's not throw anymore things. You might exert yourself.

IRMA. I don't understand.

Wade sits her down at the breakfast nook. He moves to the sink and pours her a glass of water.

WADE. I thought you were over Ron.

IRMA. I was. I am. I just don't know. He got me all mixed up.

WADE. Take these.

He holds out to little pills in his hand.

IRMA. What are they?

WADE. I don't know. Something my doctor gave me when I pulled my back out.

IRMA. I told you to stay off it.

WADE. Old habits die hard.

IRMA. Shit, just give me them.

She downs the two pills and chases them with water.

IRMA. That will never do.

WADE. What?

IRMA. Water? Shit, I have had water since Regan was in the White House.

Wade catches the drift and pours her a stronger drink.

WADE. Here. Now, spill it.

IRMA. I don't know what it is: It must be the past life I lived, but I've always had draw to gay me. Even before I knew what gay was, they flocked around me like moths to a candle.

WADE. It must be your pantsuit.

IRMA. What would I do without my Nellie boy? You don't remember what we were like together. You don't know how tied to each other we were. There was magic between us. And I feel it like thunder when he's near. You were just a kid when Ron and I were hot. When we climbed the stairs to fame together. We were like Batman and Robin. Or like Siamese Twins.

WADE. But that was so long ago.

IRMA. Ron was my world. He meant everything to me. We were business partners, lovers, friends...He helped me become Irma Koontz.

WADE. I see.

Wade begins to put the room back in order.

IRMA. He damaged me. I was nothing when he found me. Just a little child roaming these streets of Hollywood and then he found me that day outside of the Wax Museum and he took me inside those gates of Warner. He had some more contacts, no many. But he taught me how to play the game. I was his wife, is slave, his helper and I feel like he's ripped me in half...Again. There is an invisible thread that links us together. I wish it were different.

WADE. But you have Adam. He loves you, Irma. Despite that he's the most vain thing that ever roamed the planet earth since Cleopatra, but he does love you.

IRMA. Only for what I give him.

WADE. Do you pay him?

IRMA. No, but he would leave me if I didn't have handcuffs on him.

WADE. You kinky broad.

IRMA. Not those kind, but legally with the work we do.

WADE. Oh, that.

IRMA. He's not warm like Ron. He's like sleeping with an Oscar. Gold but cold.

WADE. I'll fire Sheila tomorrow. I didn't know was such a back biter.

IRMA. I can't confront her. I mean listen to them. Listen.

Sounds of loud love making.

WADE. Too bad he didn't come on to me.

IRMA. Do you think I'm old, Wade?

WADE. I think the world of you, Irma. You know that.

IRMA. But you're the only one. Everyone else has left me high and dry.

WADE. They don't understand you like I do. They weren't worthy of your love.

Cut to living room where Chester and Adam are asking each other questions from the Trivial Pursuit game. By now the knocking on the floor above them has really gotten obnoxious. The overhead chandelier shakes.

CHESTER. Who writes these questions? A pack of morons with nothing better to do with their time.

ADAM. I don't even understand the questions.

CHESTER. Your roll, prince charming.

Adam throws the dice.

CHESTER. AH. Literature. And this one's for a drink.

ADAM. I'm not good at books.

Above, the last throws of passion. We hear the bed pound and then the last moments of sexual release. Adam and Chester give a knowing glance. Chester looks at his watch.

CHESTER. And now we know why they call him the King.

Lights return to bedroom where Ron and Sheila have stopped making love and sit smoking cigarettes.

RON. Amazing.

SHEILA. God.

Ron leans over and kisses her. She responds.

SHEILA. You are so great.

RON. You turned my lamp back on, Babe.

SHEILA. I don't smoke...

RON. I gave it up, years ago, but...

SHEILA. Yes. I know. Man, I haven't been laid like that in my whole life. What a Christmas present.

RON. It's been awhile since I had a kitten like you to toss my balls.

Sheila kisses him.

SHEILA. I want you.

RON. I'm not 20 anymore. I'm not Adam. I don't know if I can get it up 2 times in a row.

Sheila snubs out her cigarette and puts her head under the covers.

RON. I can be proven wrong.

Lights come back up in the kitchen.

WADE. It's stopped.

IRMA. Huh?

WADE. The bed.

IRMA. Oh, it's just a rest.

WADE. Who is he Superman?

IRMA. Just ask him. Who invited him anyway?

WADE. Don't look at me.

IRMA. Out of all the people on my email list, why him?

WADE. You know how those emails go. People send your information on. You're lucky it snowed and no one but us showed up.

IRMA. I'd rather have a room full of people than Ron. He's like the devil proving he's alive and kicking.

The sounds of making love have started again.

IRMA. There, see. They are doing it again.

WADE. You might rethink getting back together with him. I would.

IRMA. Hell, no! He tore me up. He dropped me on my head. I still get dizzy when I think of how he nailed me.

Lights snap back up in the living room. Adam gets up and stretches.

ADAM. I'm going to check on Irma.

CHESTER. I'm sure she's nursing off her hurts on Wade's ample sugar tit.

ADAM. Don't be cruel Chester.

CHESTER. Cruel. It's the truth. They suck off each other like vampires. I've earned the right. I've seen every trick that Irma imagines he has up her sleeve.

ADAM. It's not good to talk about the hostess behind her back. It's rude.

CHESTER. Save your polite gentle ways for when you go back to the farm.

ADAM. I'm not from a farm.

CHESTER. Well, you should be. Don't dish me out a sermon about morality, Adam.

ADAM. I'm just asking you to not insult Irma. She happens to be flesh and blood.

CHESTER. She's not human. She has no heart. She tore it out and she sewed back up the wound. I've seen the scar. Remember, pretty, I've known her years before you came strutting onto the scene.

ADAM. Okay. Fine. I don't want to fight with you, Chester.

CHESTER. Would you like to wrestle?

ADAM. Creep.

Wade enters.

WADE. Tag, you're it.

Adam gets off the couch and moves to the kitchen.

ADAM. Wade, thanks for soothing the beast.

WADE. It's my job.

ADAM exits.

WADE. I need a drink.

CHESTER. Looks like you could use a stiff one.

WADE. In more ways than one.

Lights cross fade to Adam and Irma in the kitchen.

IRMA. Shit Adam, I know I wear my dysfunction, my nerosis on my sleeve. I know I'm a hopeless case. I know I'm 5'7" of broken dreams, of shattered hopes. It's my great fortune to be in power, to have control. So no one can blow the whistle. No one has the nerve to tell me no. they don't dare to save their hide.

And then that God-damned Hollywood sign sitting up on that hill like jagged teeth beckoning people to come here to play. I wish to god they would stay home. Most of them run back before too long anyway frustrated with sand in their hands.

All that glamour, all that fame, all that slick as glass glossy fame—it's just smoke and mirrors. It's just a façade. It has only a face value. They will pay you mountains of cash for being product but your soul they don't care about a stitch.

You don't think I haven't been hip to each trick you've played. Oh, Baby, you're just a babe in the woods. And amiture. A novice. I worked at it and succeeded before you had breath in that sensuous body of yours. See, Adam, I know you played me or trumped me but you haven't won yet. Remember, Baby, in your slick style, in your mojo in your sex, you're slick and in your prime, but I have miles ahead of you. I have a fierce desire to survive and I will, my love. Make no mistake about it.

I understand you completely, I too scrambled up this ladder by hooking and crooking, but I clawed and scratched and itched but you see here I am. A figure head. A monument to my own power. A triumph. A queen on a throne and no I won't be robbed by you no difference how your jewels shine. So, you go and eat your sweets. Go have your cake and icing and I'll stand right here.

ADAM. You don't care if I go with another woman?

IRMA. No. I really couldn't care less, but you'll stay mine—on paper. I have contracts you look at that fine print and you'll see me tangled in there in those pages written in indelible ink, but I'll be reaping the rewards for years to come. I have a good head on these drooping shoulders. So, if you think you have something to prove and I'll tell you I'll be here when you come back smelling of her sweet perfume and sweat. I'll still be here when you come back with that tail between your legs.

I learned a long time ago to not place much stock in people in emotions they are just uppers that distort and mislead. I can't let you get to me.

IRMA. Every man wants to be you Adam. Every straight man that is.

ADAM. They do?

IRMA. Come off, you pedistal! Of course they do. You represent epic proportions. You offer style, grace yet with an undercurrent of rage, raw and brutal dangerous sex. Males want to be you.

ADAM. That's false.

IRMA. It's true. I think you might want to cram those words back in your trap.

ADAM goes to her and kisses her to prevent her from speaking further.
She wipes her mouth and takes a swig from a glass—any glass.

IRMA. Your lips are false. You're false. You don't know truth. You've used everyone you've ever breezed through.

ADAM. And you haven't, Irma.

IRMA. I have. That's why I know your sick and twisted and fucked up games you play. I saw you coming like a god-damned train down the tracks. I could smell your shit a mile away. You think I don't know.

ADAM. Know what?

IRMA. That you used me. You sleep with me to help yourself. You put your young flesh next to mine to promote your own hide. You press into my wrinkles to evolve your career.

ADAM. No, Irma, I love you.

IRMA. Your words! Your god-damned words! You. I taught you what you know. I know I laid down on my back like a god-damned stair case for you and I loved it. I didn't love you. You think I can't see through you. I know you want that 5 feet of shattered dreams over there. Did you slip her your number so you can hook up when the snow falls?

ADAM. No. Do you still love me, Irm?

Irma wheels around.

IRMA. No! I don't love you, anymore. I can't love you. Inside, I'm a cave. There is no heart! No soul. It's been leached out of me.

Back to Wade and Chester.

WADE. Just imagine at this very moment people all over this town are getting ready to go out—to run, to meet up, to find something they think they need. They'll be drinking and snorting their little hearts away, but then the sun will creep up and there they will be laying in the arms of a lover or they reach for those hot mugs of coffee and what does it all mean? They don't know who they are but they keep searching. They keep trying. They keep calling. They keep forging onward but to go within in not a given to trace inside is to go to a maze that is foreign that is lost.

CHESTER. Don't you believe in man kind?

WADE. Nah, they've let me down too many times. I like my work. I'm tied to that. That I know and that I trust. I'm better in the world of fiction than in the real world. Sometimes, I want to get of this god-damned roller coaster. I want to jump ship. I want to leave the playground.

CHESTER. Then jump, boy.

WADE. And what? Do what? She pays me through the nose. She needs me.

CHESTER. Don't you think you might be served. What do you need?

WADE. I don't need much. I've learned to adapt with little nuggets of change tossed at me. Little handfuls of pocket money clinking into my hands.

CHESTER. What about those things on the inside? What about your heart? Your mind? It's a terrible thing to waste.

WADE. We're all orphans here.

CHESTER. Speak for yourself.

WADE. I mean it. We're all the island of misfit toys. We're all dented and dameaded goods. We don't belong. We all came here because we don't belong. Our homes left us and we felt miscast in roles that weren't us and so we came to these golden hills with all the dramas and heartaches... We came just like the pioneers from all over the country we came in droves.

CHESTER. But we create families of our own—people we love and who love us.

WADE. I guess in a naïve way that's true. In a very naïve way. We build little nucluses of people when we aren't ostercized. But are they healthy?

CHESTER. It sure as hell beats the dull drums of Nowhereville.

WADE. I wonder if it does. This deadly wheeling and dealing playground. When one minute you're a nothing, zilch and then the next day your firecracker goes off and you are all the 7 wonders of the world. And then you are on the fast merry-go-round. Your picture everywhere and you get dizzy...look at Adam.

CHESTER. That's one of my past times, yes.

WADE. You leech. He's perfect. He's the ideal man. But wait until he fades. Wait till a new, hotter, fresher more well-built model is cranked off the assembly line.

CHESTER. I'm holding my breath.

WADE. It will deflate the poor lad. He has no legs to stand on. He'll turn to drugs and women and booze just like our friend Ron banging my friend upstairs. He'll have dents, scars and wounds.

CHESTER. Ah, the war wounds of superficial beauty. Too good to last.

WADE. If only the magic lasted. If only the pixie dust would just stay for a minute more. If we could only bottle it.

CHESTER. It goes too damned fast.

WADE. You know.

CHESTER. Yes. My pen used to be a golden stream of inspiration...now, it's a rock quarry. I chip away at it, chisling trying to pick up that golden stream, but it's been dry for so long.

WADE. I understand completely. I do. My problem is that I clutch onto people for dear life as if they are life preservers or if they will somehow save me from drowning. I know that it's wrong—a false idea, but that's why I hang around you, Irma. I love her in a way that nobody understands or sees. It's decidedly not physical, but it's sensual. Although, I'm sure she would allow it if it would be possible for me.

CHESTER. You could sleep with a woman.

WADE. At the point of a gun, I'm certain, with the cold barrel to my temple. There have been nights solemn secret nights when I'm alone in my room at night. My tiny hole in the wall. When I'm doing it by myself and she crosses my mind and...

CHESTER. You think about her sexually?

WADE. Sometimes I do. Sometimes I think I could make it work.

CHESTER. But you're gay.

WADE. I know it. She knows it. Hell, the whole world knows it, but sometimes, there is this longing. Or we'll be at the office inside those cloistered walls and it will be burning the midnight oil, we'll be holding court and blurred eyes and we'll have containers of order food and she'll reach for something and our hands will touch. And we'll stare into each other's eyes and then we think about it and the moment passes, but for a flash it was there.

CHESTER. And you think that's love?

WADE. I don't know. It's probably just idol worship. My sense of powerlessness in the face of power. I've probably never moved from the larva state of life, but I don't know anything close to that spark, that flame,. Am I wasting myself, Chester?

CHESTER. Who am I to judge? What do I know?

WADE. You're older and wiser.

CHESTER. Older definitely, wiser..well, the jury is still out on that subject.

WADE. What's wrong with me. I must be hopelessly doomed.

CHESTER. Don't be so tragic, dear child. I think you fancy the claws that Irma has.

WADE. You think I want to be her?

CHESTER. I think no. I think you want her flair. We are her closest friends. She needs us in some unspoken way.

WADE. We've lasted through all her other needy, leeching friends.

CHESTER. She knows she's about to lose Adam and it scares her to death.

WADE. What?

CHESTER. You have to know. She doesn't watch like she used to. She used to have all corners covered, but she's losing her eyesight. Not in going blind, but on an emotional level.

WADE. She needs new glasses.

CHESTER. In a sense, yes. She's blind that he has one foot on her back and the other out the door.

WADE. Shouldn't we tell her?

CHESTER. Are you crazy? She'd castrate both of us. No. We must just sit and watch her passion play out.

WADE. But you keep at it. What will wonder boy do when they suddenly don't want him in the movies anymore.

CHESTER. He can try to buy back his soul. He'll find something to do. Why do you care Wade?

WADE. I don't. I pretend to. I guess I have an unhealthy interest in the morbid side of life.

CHESTER. WE have a lot in common.

WADE. I know. Why do you think I play avoidance every time I see you somewhere?

CHESTER. You like me?

WADE. Maybe.

CHESTER. Playing coy?

WADE. No, chess. Your move.

CHESTER. I like you, too, Wade.

WADE. No.

CHESTER. I do. I don't like to admit that I have feelings, but I do have them. They are in here someplace and they start to show when I get around you. I have longed for you. Longed with hunger since I saw you that day all those years ago in Irma's office when I was the fresh catch of the day.

WADE. I don't think you noticed.

CHESTER. I did.

WADE. You always treated me like dog shit.

CHESTER. Because I liked you. Or lusted after you. I would write speeches I would give to you and win you.

WADE. Why didn't you try using them?

CHESTER? I was foolish.

WADE. I wouldn't think so...

CHESTER. What if I kissed you.

WADE. I wouldn't struggle.

Chester leans across the couch and kisses Wade.

WADE. I'm feeling light headed.

He feigns a fainting motion with his hand above his brow. Staggers to a chair and sits down.

CHESTER. You got my old dinosaur up, wade. I thought it was extinct.

WADE. Oh. For someone who's blocked that was a knock out.

CHESTER. My tools are a bit rusty.

WADE. I'll bet with some polishing we can get them shining like new.

Sheila enters. She looks like a child who has been punished: sheepish, girlish...Her hair is matted up in the back.

SHEILA. Hi, wade.

WADE. Well, little Saint Sheila's done banging the old stud star.

SHEILA. Sorry, I disappointed you.

WADE. No sweat off my balls.

SHEILA. You're not mad at me?

WADE. Well, if you're going to sleep your way to the top, I'm sure Ron was good target practice.

SHEILA. I think I'm in love.

CHESTER. That's not love...it's dog lust.

SHEILA. You guys don't know Ron. Don't judge him. Or me.

WADE. I don't see a court house here.

SHEILA. I can see it written on your faces.

CHESTER. I guess being on her back has given her a spine.

SHEILA. Stop it. You don't know me. You don't know anything, Chester.

CHESTER. You're right. I don't know that you just ruined a perfectly great party with fucking a washed up has been.

Ron enters from the staircase.

RON. Are they mentally gang raping you, honey.

SHEILA. Yes. Protect me.

RON. They are just bitter queens and green because they can't get any action.

WADE. You're showing your lack of intelligence, Ron. Gays can get it. It's easy. You look down any dark, damp alley or any restroom or any other place that's hidden and secret and you'll see gays getting it. Sorry, honey, I worked off my daddy complex in therapy.

Irma enters followed by Adam.

IRMA. Well, if it's not the solid gold dancers.

RON. Irma, don't be mad at me. I wanted to make up with you. That's why I came here.

ADAM. I'll say you burned your bridge with a single match.

SHEILA. It's all my fault. I should have shown some restraint.

WADE. This is Hollywood. We live in extremes.

CHESTER. We don't know the middle of the road.

IRMA. I'm just speechless. In my home. On my bed. You have no class. Never did and never will. I should have slammed the door in your face, but I have this god-damned soft spot for low life forms.

SHEILA. Ron, take me home.

RON. I'll take you around the world.

IRMA. Ron, can't you leave it here?

RON. What?

IRMA. You always do this. You dangle your wealth and status above young women. I need her in my office.

RON. She can still work.

IRMA. For a week or two until you weave her into your spider's web.

SHEILA. I can think for myself.

IRMA. You think so, but he has a powerful mojo. He'll change your mind to think he's the god of the world.

ADAM. You can't manage everything, darling.

IRMA. I don't want to see her get her dreams smashed just because he wants to get his rocks off.

RON. She's a big girl, Irma.

IRMA. I can't believe you came into my house and screwed the first piece of meat that gives you the Big Eye.

RON. Why are you all ganging up on me? Don't you remember that you and I screwed the first time at the Grammys in that closet?

IRMA. That was different.

SHEILA. Why?

IRMA. No one knew about it. I mean we could hear you going at it like two rabbits in heat.

SHEILA. I'll say.

IRMA. No one will hire you. They have memories like elephants.

RON. All you think the same thing won't happen to pretty, perfect Adam? Success goes to your head. Hell it goes to your feet, your hair, your cock, your elbows. All that glory is fool's gold, but that power gives you all the leverage in the world.

ADAM. You leave me out of your game. I'm aware of your mistakes and I won't follow in your muddy footsteps.

RON. You shit. You're just putty in their hands, a puppet, a pawn, just a piece of hot ass. They will move you around this game board and you'll have little or nothing to say about it.

ADAM. I do have a say.

RON. Look at those contracts they draw up for you. Read the red letters. You'll see they will take bites out of you like sharks. They are leeches and they will bleed you dry.

ADAM. Well, until they do, I'll hang on to this merry-go-round until I'm sick.

IRMA. And everyone wants to get in. I hear it crawling in these jumbled streets, I can feel it in the pit of my stomach. We're all on the make or the hunt for something. We are not satisfied until we've trackled it and killed it, but why? Even when you arrive it feels like the inside of a jackolantern. It's hollow. It's like people are constantly prowling for something they can't put their fingers on—like a shimmering mirage fleeting, like a neon sign on the distant hill. It constantly moves and changes shape, but you follow it, you sense it's vapor like a magical potion, but it's a bottle of poison. It will kill you. The thrills you seek will shatter you, will crush you.

ADAM. Why are you saying this?

IRMA. To warn her. People want in and have to make it like their fists are bloody from banging on the door. The arch has pushed off the dock and you can't in in no matter how hard you band on that door and get into what? The booby hatch? That's what it is. Just mirrors and reflections and vapid evasive answers, a list of contracting facts. A set of limitations. I've been around this road. I've started as a slave and climbed up this ladder. I've been singled out. I know what it feels like to be queen on a throne. And to maintain that position. There are no rules in Hollywood except: Be everything but who you are. Don't compromise, but give up everything.

SHEILA. So, it's not worth it?

WADE. Would you really give up some of your share of success?

IRMA. And it's strange how once you get the taste in your mouth, you can't get it out. It won't leave you. It leave an after taste and you want more and more. Like the snow outside. You can't settle for a cup full. Or a flake on your tongue. Now you have to grab it all. And the odd thing is, I have it all and it's not enough. It's nothing to me. There is no sense of pride. No sense of enjoyment. It's all an act. We all act how we think we are but not how we really feel or think. It's all processed bullshit.

WADE. You're a novelty item. A roadside attraction off interstate 5. You're a freak show in a sensational package.

ADAM. So. I have god like qualities.

RON. You're the flavor this week, but there will be another handsome stud to follow as soon as you can blink. (to Sheila) Let go somewhere where we are welcomed.

SHEILA. O.K.

WADE. Don't bother coming to work Monday, Sheila.

RON. She's beyond all you freaks.

IRMA. And count me out of the deal, Ron.

RON. I expected as much.

Ron and Sheila have grabbed their coats and head out the door.

SHEILA. Merry Christmas everyone.

IRMA. Goodbye.

They leave. Silence.

WADE. We all have such clever little ways don't we. We all know exactly how to wreck our own cars. Isn't it crazy? God, I hate this. I hate us! Irma, it always ends like this.

IRMA. What are you trying to say?

WADE. I don't know. I'm fucked up, too. I should be in a rubber room. You were the sun and I flew into and I got burned. It took me way too long to ascent from the ashes of that death and now here we are staring face to face.

IRMA. But I didn't ask you to hold so much space in me. It was an expectation unspoken like telepathy.

WADE. I wanted to make you into something.

IRMA. You didn't love me as is?

WADE. I never love as is. I want to fix up, I want to piece together broken parts.

WADE. Why don't you put your ass under the mistletoe so I can kiss it, Irma?

ADAM. Hey!

CHESTER. I think we better hit the kitchen, my boy!

They leave the room.

IRMA. Why are you angry with me Wade? Are you turning on me, as well? Tonight of all nights!

WADE. You know, Irma, I am on your side. You know I always will be, but you see, you make it so hard! You make me cry. You play all those games like an expert. I've learned to play, too. I've learned to dodge the truth. I've learned to tell great lies. I've learned to follow you like a little lost sheep. But God-damned, you make it so hard. I

bleed too. The blood on my white coat gets hard to wash out. There is only so many scars a heart and soul can endure.

IRMA. Well, go then. You can be replaced. You're just a pawn.

WADE. You like to think that.

IRMA. I know. I just have to pick up the phone.

WADE. You think you're so smart. You think you know everything, don't you?

IRMA. I don't know why you're so mad at me. I'm the victim here.

WADE. Like always. You're always on the other side of the gun. You never have your finger on the trigger. I'm tired of all the lights being turned out on me. Giving you all the credit. All the praise heaped on your like a god-damned mound of rocky road ice cream.

IRMA. We take care of each other, Wade.

WADE. You lead yourself to believe that! You lead it on that way. You say it and you think it's the truth.

IRMA. I'm good to you.

WADE. You give me just enough credit just enough pecos to make it worthwhile but they aren't anymore. You don't take care of me. You would push me out in the cold if you thought it might serve you and your agenda.

IRMA. Please don't turn on me.

Her tears begin to flow like waterworks.

WADE. See, for the longest time, I thought Ron was the villain. I thought Adam was the villain and fill all the blanks of men you've fucked. But is he? Are they? Aren't you the one who ruins everything?

IRMA. You can't talk to me like that. Not in my own home.

WADE. I can't say anything except what you like? You self-involved bitch. I can't tell you of your faults at the office—I can't tell you at your house. Where would it be more convenient? On the moon? Shall I tell you with an email so you can hide behind our big desk, shut your door and rage and weep? How would it be more comfortable for you because the last thing in the world I want is to make you feel uncomfortable.

IRMA. If you would have given me some hint. Some clue. Some warning. This is like a bomb shell.

WADE. Why? I saw it tonight so clearly as if someone flipped the light on the the darkened room.

IRMA. How can I make it up to you, Wade?

WADE. You can't. There is no pleasing Irma Koontz. There is no happy final solution. So, I'm going to go out into the snow with Chester. You can't hold me back. I'm putting a blow torch to the chains at my ankles.

IRMA. When Chester leaves you. When he grows sick of you like he does everything, don't run back to me. You've burned your bridge.

WADE. I don't care where he takes me. He can drive me into a snow bank or lead me into the first step of hell, but I want to go there. I go willingly. I need to find my own independence. My own freedom. My own self. I don't have to have your permission to have a cock and to know that I can use it.

IRMA. So, this is all about Chester?

WADE. He helped me see myself.

IRMA. God-damn him.

WADE. Don't blame him for pointing out why I must evolve. I don't have the courage I had when I was 22. I'm not that little creature. I don't have enough scotch tape anymore. I don't have blood enough anymore. I don't have the fire to start you or the power to keep you going any longer.

IRMA. You make me out to be a heartless monster.

WADE. You think so? You don't see whose been your henchman these past 9 years. I don't want to spend another 10 years being your little fairy. Your little magic helper—the one who stitches your heart together when you tear the stitches out yourself.

IRMA. I'll change.

WADE. No you won't. You don't have enough examination. You're not deep enough. You're like a water bug on the surface of the water.

IRMA. I'm capable. I can be your friend if you let me.

WADE. How can we be friends when I follow you around like a walking ashtray? Change isn't about dying your hair another color. Change isn't about a new lipstick or a

shade of eye shadow. Change is the tide that turns inside you. Change is where I am at. Change is when the pain wrings you and the lightening of anger flashes and you finally see the truth. You see the reality, baby.

IRMA. You can help me.

WADE. I can always help you. Don't you see that. That's what I'm talking about. I could help you until eternity comes. There is so many areas to fix, so many places but you can stay broken. I leave you with your dramas and your heart alone. I leave you. I love you, Irma. I love you, but that love will never be good enough. I can love you until I'm blue in the face, but your complications are entrenched in your soul. You have the never-ending sorrow encoded in you.

IRMA. I can't take this. What will I do? What will happen when Adam finds someone younger, prettier...as you know he will. I can't do this without you, Wade.

WADE. You can't fall in love with an image. I fell in love with the image of you. The ideal of you...not the reality. I can't keep attempting to catch you. It's like grains of sand through my fingers. Irma, you do the same thing, too. You thought I was some hero to worship, but I'm not. I'm human with flesh and blood. I'm not the shoulder of the world. You're like a rainbow. Such astounding beauty, so colorful, but where is the gold at the end? It deeps dancing in front of me. Keeps shining on the road in front of me just out of reach just out of grasp...close enough to see but just dancing out beyond me. I was attracted by your light. Your vibrancy, your spectacle, your display but it was the color that loved the chase, the hunt. And I watched you do it with Ron and now with Adam.

IRMA. I never told you I was normal and you knew that going into it. I never twisted your arm.

WADE. And I never said no! Well, it's over. It's over. I'm leaving. (to kitchen) Come out, kids, the battle is over.

Chester and Adam come out of the kitchen.

CHESTER. We are dense creatures.

IRMA. You're wrong. I love Adam.

WADE. You think you love Adam. You love the idea of loving Adam, but the real man...you can't stomach.

IRMA. That's not true.

WADE. You've told me so much. Careful who you spill the beans to.

ADAM. You don't love me, Irma.

IRMA. Wade's just speaking out of line again. Adam, I thin the world of you.

WADE. You're in love with his image, his façade. The man on the outside.

ADAM. Wade, stop this, okay. Stop defacing Irma with lies.

WADE. She's needed a push from her lofty pedistal forever.

IRMA. This is hardly the setting for such a display.

WADE. When would be a more convenient time? Shall I call your assistant? Oh, that's me! It just dawned on me tonight watching this little show and tell.

CHESTER. I'm sorry If I brought this on.

WADE. Sorry, you helped me see the truth. You broke the surface of the lake that I was trapped under.

ADAM. I hate when you two girls fight.

IRMA. I'm never going to speak to him again. Find another Fag mamma.

WADE. I will. Chester let's get out of here.

Chester has been looking out the window.

CHESTER. The snow has started to thaw.

They grab their coats and head for the door.

WADE. Happy Holidays! Goodbye.

IRMA and ADAM stare at the room. The ruins, the aftermath they must face—the rubbish and the rubble. IRMA begins to clean like a bat out of hell. ADAM shell shocked and fearful moves to help her. ADAM goes to her and kisses her to prevent her from speaking.

She wipes her mouth and takes a swig from a glass—any glass.

IRMA. Your lips are false. You're false. You don't know truth. You've used everyone you've ever breezed through.

ADAM. And you haven't, Irma.

IRMA. I have. That's why I know your sick and twisted and fucked up games you play. I saw you coming like a god-damned train down the tracks. I could smell your shit a mile away. You think I don't know.

ADAM. Know what?

IRMA. That you used me. You sleep with me to help yourself. You put your young flesh next to mine to promote your own hide. You press into my wrinkles to evolve your career.

ADAM. No, Irma, I love you.

IRMA. Your words! Your god-damned words! You. I taught you what you know. I know I laid down on my back like a god-damned stair case for you and I loved it. I didn't love you. You think I can't see through you. Did you slip Sheila your number so you can hook up when the snow stops?

ADAM. No.

Irma wheels around.

IRMA. Too bad. She could resurrect your deflated talents. Adam, I don't love you, anymore. I can't love you. Inside, I'm a cave. There is no heart! No soul. It's been leeched out of me.

ADAM. I'm fucked up, Irma. I'm sorry. (He begins to weep). I should have told you about Wade, but I was embarrassed. I was ashamed. I'm sorry. Forgive me.

IRMA. Look at the mess we've made.

ADAM. Let me help you.

IRMA. It's my debris, my mess, my insane world.

ADAM. Let me help...

IRMA. You've done enough, angel. Tomorrow, Monday, I face everyone and everything I've ruined and put bandages on the clawed places, but today, this moment, I face you Adam.

ADAM. I'm in it with you.

IRMA. Till the end.

ADAM. Look, Irma, it's stopped snowing.

IRMA. Take me to bed.

Adam moves to her, kisses her, picks her up and heads up the stairs and the lights fade and Christmas music plays.

Lights fade.

Xxxxxx

A rough outline:

Irma and Adam scene.

Getting ready for party.
He's horny. Show age difference. He's a star.
Sheila and Wade Arrive.
Chester Arrives.
Ron arrives uninvited and drunk.
Triggers Irma's self doubt.
He wants Irma to help him get script across.

They play celebrity
Adam gets pissed because someone put his name in the bucket as a lark.
Irma not to be out done throws a fit. Passes out the presents
They all dance. Ron and Sheila go into the bedroom.

End of act one.

Act 2 opens with the sound of Sheila and Ron making love like animals.
Wade talks to Irma
Wade talks to Chester
Irma and Adam have to have a show down
Plot point end
Ron and Sheila finish and Irma kicks them out.
Wade confronts Irma
Wade and Chester leave together
Irma and Adam face wreckage

One of the themes of the play is when everything feels like nothing. How people deal with their emptiness, their sense of accomplishment. When the mountain they've reached the top of feels as hollow as a chocolate bunny.

"I've waded through shit to attain this lofty position. No one—I repeat—no one can capsize me. Throw me off. When I was a child we played king of the mountain and I never won. I was pushed down in the dirt over and over again, but I've pushed and shoved and now I'm the princess of the mountain."

SHEILA rushes to the window upstage and throws back the curtains.

SHEILA: Boy, look at that! Will it ever stop snowing?

The others rush to the curtain and watch the snow flakes fall in pieces, particles...Silence.

CHESTER. God, this is the worst winter ever.

IRMA. I hate it. I wish it would quit already.

ADAM. It's romantic. If all you weren't here, Irma and I would be holding each other by the fireplace in the bedroom.

IRMA. Or arguing and throwing dishes at each other.

ADAM. She's kidding.

CHESTER. I don't think she strays off the truth.

RON. Irma and I didn't argue.

IRMA. Ha. All the time.

WADE. I can take it as much as I can dish it out, but you're heaping it on awful thick. You've been jabbing me all night. You need some ego pumping?

ADAM. I had a bitch of a day on the set.

CHESTER. We all hate our jobs, but we don't take it out on everyone.

After game squabble:

WADE. There is a whole in the ozone.
He's poetic and has the inside scoop.

