

Big Life

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Characters

Brad - 30s
Angelina - 30s

The actors should be plain looking,
nothing like Brad Pitt or Angelina Jolie.

Time and Place

Present
A parked car

Brad and Angelina sit in the front seats of a beat-up family sedan. A laptop computer rests on the hood with a speaker running to the driver's side. They watch a DVD of Mr. and Mrs. Smith through the windshield and eat super-sized McDonald's meals.

BRAD

(Suddenly) God damn it!

He slams his Big Mac on the dash where it splays open.

ANGELINA

What? *(Nothing)* What is it? Is your burger bad?

Beat.

BRAD

How can I *not* be Brad Pitt?

ANGELINA

Baby, you are.

BRAD

No I'm not. *(Looking in the rearview)* Look at this. I'm not Brad Pitt. Look!

ANGELINA

Yes, you are.

BRAD

I'm not!

ANGELINA

You *were*.

BRAD

Was. Yes! Meaning, I'm not anymore!

ANGELINA

But you *were*.

Long silence.

ANGELINA

(Indicating the burger) You gonna eat ...

(Irritably) Yes.

BRAD

He collects and reassembles the burger. He eats. They watch the movie.

ANGELINA

I love this part. That DP was phenomenal. Made me look great. Do you remember how many takes ...

BRAD

That's not you.

ANGELINA

Look, if you don't want to admit that that's you and me, that's your business, but that's me!

BRAD

How can you say that?

ANGELINA

Just because it's not me now doesn't mean it wasn't me then. And in some way it still is me because *I'm* still me.

BRAD

No. No. Who a person is is what they look like and how they live. You have a small life, Angie. You have a small, small life now, just like me. Since that morning ... *(She laughs, chokes a little on some fries)* What's so funny?

ANGELINA

The look on your face.

BRAD

What look?

ANGELINA

That morning. You came running back from the bathroom. "Angie! Ange! What's happening? It's not me! It's not me!"

BRAD

(Perplexed) That's not funny.

ANGELINA

(Belly laughs now and coughs) And I wake up and scream. "Who are you?" And you're like, "Who the fuck are you?" And I'm all, "Get out! Get out! Brad! There's someone in the house!" And we weren't even in our own house.

He watches her until she stops laughing and coughing. They stare at each other. They watch the movie a while.

BRAD

One year ago today.

ANGELINA

(Gloomily) Yeah. Happy anniversary.

BRAD

Your whole life you're someone. And just like that you're someone else. You're you, but you're not you. You had this life ... this big life. Everybody knows who you are. All over the world. You have access. Everybody seeks you out – 24/7/365 you're Brad Pitt. In public, in private. When you're taking a pee you're Brad Pitt. It's inside you so deep ... And one day you wake up? In some strange house? In another life? What does that mean?

ANGELINA

It means that ...

BRAD

What?

ANGELINA

It means that inside every big life is a little puny one. One that sucks.

BRAD

It can't mean that.

ANGELINA

Why not?

BRAD

I never felt like there was a puny sucky life inside me when I was Brad Pitt. Did you think that when you were Angelina?

ANGELINA

No.

BRAD

There was nothing you could do that wasn't big. It all meant something.

You could puke.

ANGELINA

And it was big.

BRAD

Take a dump.

ANGELINA

And it was all part of a great big life.

BRAD

Beat.

It must mean ...

ANGELINA

What?

BRAD

It must be a test.

ANGELINA

No.

BRAD

Punishment?

ANGELINA

For what, Ange? What did we do that deserved punishment?

BRAD

I'm thinking. (*Thinks*) Having big lives?

ANGELINA

No

BRAD

For *thinking* that our lives were big.

ANGELINA

Like, what is it called, when you think you're too big, like in Greek tragedy?

BRAD

Hubris.

ANGELINA

No.

BRAD

Yeah, it's hubris.

ANGELINA

No, I mean no, it's not that.

BRAD

How do you know?

ANGELINA

George Clooney is still George Clooney. You don't think he has hubris?

BRAD

How do we know he's George Clooney? (*Beat*) You know what I think it is? I think it's like a Buddhist thing.

ANGELINA

How do you mean?

BRAD

Like life is just a dream anyway.

ANGELINA

Like the song.

BRAD

What song?

ANGELINA

Merrily, merrily, merrily.

BRAD

Um ... yeah, sort of like that. That at any moment the illusion of our lives, big or small, could change in an instant and we'd be someone else. (*Struck by a thought*) Hey, hey what if this is only temporary and we'll switch back when we get enlightened?

ANGELINA

Yeah, right. Make it happen?

BRAD

ANGELINA

Yeah.

BRAD

What makes you think we could make it happen? We'd have to be Buddhists. We'd have to meditate, shave our heads, wear kimonos.

ANGELINA

Robes.

BRAD

No. It's not going to happen. We're here ... in these lives. It's a death sentence, Ange. A long, boring death.

They watch the movie. Brad takes the keys out of the ignition and gets out of the car.

ANGELINA

Where are you going? It's not over.

BRAD

It's over.

He goes to the trunk and pulls out a long length of PVC vent hose. He shuts the trunk, attaches the hose to the exhaust pipe, fits the other end of the hose through the window, gets in and closes the door. They watch the movie.

ANGELINA

Couldn't we be happy? Like this?

BRAD

No.

ANGELINA

We could make movies anyway.

BRAD

What, like home movies? No.

ANGELINA

No, I mean try to break into the business.

BRAD

Looking like this? Give me a break.

ANGELINA

We still have talent.

BRAD

It's not enough. Everybody has talent. What we don't have is two things: looks and luck.

ANGELINA

We have each other.

Beat.

BRAD

A small life is worse when you have a small partner. I'm sorry, that's just the way it is. I can't go on like this. You can if you want. You can get out of the car right now. But I refuse to live life like some sorry numbnuts. The life of the ungreat. You can't *attain* greatness. It's handed to you. And if this is the way it works, if all that's good can just be taken away from you without warning and for no reason, I don't want any part of it.

ANGELINA

But we could try.

BRAD

Oh, please! Trying is small. That's the defining characteristic of a small life.

ANGELINA

We could be content.

BRAD

Small people are not and never can be content.

ANGELINA

Were *we* content?

Beat.

BRAD

I guess I'd have to say yes. I was.

ANGELINA

That's why.

BRAD

Why what?

ANGELINA
Why we became small.

BRAD
Because we were content?

ANGELINA
So smug. Go wherever you want. Have as many kids as you want. Save people. More money than you could ever spend, saving people, buying kids, flying anywhere. Your choice of movies. (*They watch the movie.*) Start the car.

BRAD
You sure?

Beat. He reaches for the ignition. The keys are not there. He searches one pocket. Another. Checks the seat, the floorboard.

God damn it!

ANGELINA
What?

BRAD
The keys!

ANGELINA
What?

BRAD
The keys are in the goddamn trunk!

ANGELINA
Well, just pop the trunk.

BRAD
Just pop the trunk.

ANGELINA
Well?

BRAD
I can't just pop the trunk because the goddamn small-life trunk popper doesn't work! It's broken. This goddamn small-life piece-of-crap car!

*He throws a tantrum, beating the dash, kicking.
She tries to corral him.*

ANGELINA

Brad! Brad, stop it! Calm down!

After an enormous struggle, she succeeds. He is spent. They slump together, catch their breath.

ANGELINA

We have to forget.

BRAD

How? How can we forget?

ANGELINA

We'll take drugs. Drink like fish. Try erotic asphyxiation.

BRAD

Um ... baby, don't say those words, okay? It doesn't sound good coming from you. (*They watch the movie.*) It hurts.

ANGELINA

(*Stroking his hair.*) I know it does, baby. I know. (*Thinks.*) Brad, that was big.

BRAD

What was?

ANGELINA

What you just did. The hose. The carbon monoxide.

BRAD

It was?

ANGELINA

Huge. See? Big things happen ... even in a small life.

BRAD

It hurts so bad.

ANGELINA

Shh. Shh. Watch the movie.

End.