

THE FINAL LEG

A Play

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CHARACTERS

Tank Hollahan	A former real estate developer, now a triple amputee, half the man he used to be, 68
Tom Hollahan	His son, though not young, still angry, 46
Misty Brinks	Tank's daughter by a second marriage, lives to shop, 36
Dr. Adelle Klinge	A specialist at Nobilitas, 57

SETTING

A swank hotel room in Manhattan. A modest Zurich flat, outfitted with medical equipment.

TIME

Two spring days, two days apart.

ACT I
SCENE 1

(A room in a five-star hotel. Afternoon. Two beds with nightstands stage right. A desk, chair, TV hutch with drawers, and a minibar stage left. A hall door upstage right. A bathroom door upstage left. Skyscrapers loom outside the room's only window on the far wall. Above the beds is a poster-sized photo of construction workers eating lunch on an I-beam high above a young Manhattan.)

Tom Hollahan sits on one of the beds, speaking on the phone. His cool, professional tone barely masks a tectonic frustration. Tank Hollahan is trying to navigate his manual wheelchair out of the bathroom using his only remaining limb, his right arm. The wheel is stuck on the jamb. A blanket covers his stumps.)

TOM

How hard can it be? No, I'm asking: How hard can it be?

TANK

Tom?

TOM

(Ignoring his father.)

La Guardia, Kennedy, it makes no difference. It can't be that hard.

TANK

The wheel's stuck.

TOM

There's nothing? *Nothing?*

(Tank backs up the wheelchair and bangs into the jamb again.)

TANK

It's too wide, Tom.

TOM

We don't have much time. We don't have *any* time. My father is in severe pain.

TANK

A little help?

TOM

(Holds up a finger to his father, but doesn't look at him.)
American, Swiss, *El Al*, for chrissakes. It makes no difference.

TANK

How about FedEx? Box about yea big.

TOM

No, we don't want a layover. Did I fail to mention that my father is a triple amputee?
Getting in and out of planes is a big problem for us.

TANK

Overnight delivery.

TOM

Tonight, tomorrow -- as soon as possible.

TANK

When it absolutely, positively --

TOM

We'd prefer coach, but business or first class -- whatever gets us there.

TANK

(Waves his arm.)

No emergency exit rows.

TOM

No exit rows. We couldn't help there.

TANK

(Returning to his predicament.)

I can't seem to ...

TOM

I'll hold. No, I'll hold. I want to stay on the line. Thank you.

TANK

Tommy boy?

TOM

(At Tank.)

What!

What?
TANK

What do you want?
TOM

What do I want?
TANK

Tom? Tom? That's very distracting, you know. I'm trying to arrange an international flight for three people, one of whom is non-ambulatory.
TOM

Who's Tom?
TANK

I'm Tom.
TOM

Then who are *you*?
TANK

That's what I'm saying. I'm Tom. You were calling me.
TOM

Do ... do I know you?
TANK

It's your medication.
TOM

I'm not taking that medication.
TANK

Oh, yes you are. You are *taking* that medication.
TOM

Makes me ... loopy.
TANK

That's right. That is precisely what's making you loopy. Remember that. Do you like being in pain?
TOM

TANK

What kind of question is that?

TOM

Then take your medication.

TANK

I ... I can't get out.

TOM

(Into the phone.)

Yes? Yes. *No!* Boston? What can I say to convince you that getting on and off multiple planes with a dying man with no legs and only one arm is a very difficult thing to do?

TANK

Is the luggage compartment pressurized? Ask.

TOM

Take the train to Boston? Look, let me make this clear: no train and only one plane.

(Tank succeeds in freeing the wheel from the jamb. He glides into the center of the room and pushes the right wheel, guiding himself in a complete circle.)

TANK

Couldn't we afford an electric buggy?

TOM

Charter? You're suggesting a private charter?

TANK

Saw a woman once ... in Capistrano it was ... or Laguna. No arms or legs. Thalidomide, I think. *She* had an electric. Worked the control with her foot -- more of a flipper, really. She could really take off in that thing.

TOM

Yes, we could afford it. Did I fail to mention that my father is Tank Hollahan -- *the* Tank Hollahan?

TANK

(Wryly.)

Who's that?

TOM

Who's that?! Tell me you've never heard of The Hollahan Development Group.

TANK

Maybe she's not from L.A. Are you talking to a he or a she?

TOM

Okay, whatever. The point is, we can *afford* a private jet. We just don't want to blow our wad on one if we don't have to.

TANK

(Coughs into a handkerchief.)

One of our many wads.

(Tank takes another spin.)

TOM

Okay, okay, fine. You look into that. Yes, thank you. Room 2515.

(He hangs up. Tom and Tank look at each other a while.)

TANK

Where are we going?

TOM

Okay. Are you really asking me that question?

TANK

What question?

TOM

No, I'm serious. Are you really asking me: Where are we going?

TANK

That's what I'm asking.

TOM

Because if that's what you're asking ...

TANK

Yes?

TOM

You can't do this.

TANK

What?

TOM

When we get to Zurich, you can't act like this.

TANK

How should I act?

TOM

Sane.

TANK

I've been doing that my whole life.

TOM

Good. Because now is no time to stop.

TANK

So we're going to Sweden?

TOM

Okay. Okay, this isn't helping.

TANK

We're not going to Sweden?

TOM

Okay, think. Zurich is in Sweden. Is that right?

TANK

I --

TOM

You passed the eighth grade, didn't you? You attended high school for at least a couple of years.

TANK

My toe itches.

TOM

What toe?

TANK

It's not the toe, really. It's the gap between the big toe and the next one on my left foot. Is that the index toe?

A gap can't itch.

TOM

You know what I mean. Where they join.

TANK

And you don't have any toes. None.
(Tank makes another circuit.)

What are you doing? I wouldn't do that.

TOM

Did I ever tell you about the woman in Capistrano?

TANK

Spare me the details.

TOM

It's not like that.

TANK

Oh, you never cheated.

TOM

Well ... not after I left your mom.

TANK

You're such a stand-up guy.

(Tom chuckles at the unintentional pun.)

TANK

No, she had no arms or legs. She had an electric wheelchair.

TOM

We can't get you an electric wheelchair.

TANK

Why not?

TOM

It's a waste of cash.

TANK

Let's charge it.

TOM

We're going to Zurich, remember?

TANK

I wonder ... I wonder how big the market is.

TOM

For?

TANK

Electric wheelchairs. How many gimps can there be?

TOM

More and more every day.

(Tank puts his head back and grimaces.)

What.

(Tank arches his back. Tom rises and stands over him.
Tank holds out his hand and Tom takes it.)

Hold on, partner. Hang on. Hang on. That's it.

(The spasm peaks, then subsides. Tom holds Tank.)

You okay?

TANK

I need a drink. I need one bad.

TOM

Do I have to remind you?

TANK

Not to mix alcohol and drugs?

TOM

That's one thing I could remind you of. I could also remind you of why you're in the
shape you're in in the first place. God damn it, Dad.

(Crosses to the bathroom. Off.)

What's this on the floor?

TANK

Tile? You wouldn't put linoleum in a place like this. But, Jesus, the cost of that tile.

(Tom returns carrying a plastic tackle box and a glass of
water.)

TOM

It's urine. You took your catheter out?

TANK

I wanted to go on my own.

TOM

Do me a favor. Leave your colostomy bag where it is.

(Tom sits, sets the glass on the desk, and opens the box. He pulls out a piece of paper, reads, consults his watch, then collects a handful of pills from the compartments.)

We'll have to put that back in, you know.

TANK

We could afford a nurse.

TOM

We could *afford* a nurse ...

(He goes to Tank, hands him the pills and water. Tank swallows them dutifully.)

We'll wait for Misty. She'll put it back in.

TANK

Who?

TOM

Misty.

TANK

That sounds familiar.

TOM

Your daughter?

TANK

I have a daughter?

TOM

You see, this is what I mean. This won't fly in Zurich.

(Pulls a chair over from the desk and sits close to Tank.)

Now look, there are only two criteria for getting the help we need. You have to be dying -- which you are -- and you have to be of sound mind. Do you understand that?

TANK

I do have a daughter.

TOM

That's better, but you're saying it just to appease me.

TANK

I'm not doing very well, am I?

TOM

No. No, you're not. Do you even remember why we're going to Zurich?

(Tank shakes his head.)

We're going to ... rise above ... all this.

TANK

(Discouraged.)

I remember so much.

TOM

Yeah, like what?

TANK

(Thinks.)

The fucking rivet fiasco. The mall in Irvine?

(They both laugh.)

Were you with us then?

TOM

Gimme a break. I was senior project manager on that job.

TANK

Who was that expediter caught it? Dunn? Douglas?

TOM

Dunn.

TANK

Dunn. What a little wiener of a guy. He caught it. Two months into construction.

TOM

You couldn't tell those bastards were off spec with a microscope.

TANK

But that little wiener ... he caught it. His glasses were this thick!

(They laugh again, then Tom stops and thinks.)

TOM

How much did the rework cost?

TANK

The rework? Seventy-nine thousand, one hundred two dollars.

TOM

And?

TANK

(Sheepishly.)

Sixty-three cents.

TOM

And yet, he doesn't remember his own daughter, Misty. Last name Brinks? The former Mrs. Brinks?

TANK

Do I need to know this?

TOM

Yes, it will be on the test.

TANK

Really?

(The phone rings. Tom crosses to the phone by the bed.)

TOM

No, not really. But I think they'll notice if you don't recognize your own daughter.

(Into the phone.)

Tom Hollahan. Yes.

(The door beeps and opens. Misty's stockinged gam holds the door wide while she bends to pick up a bounty of packages. She stands and sees Tank, who wheels around to face her. Her smile, pretty as a tiara, is not that convincing.)

TANK

Need a hand?

MISTY

Dad, I wish you wouldn't joke like that.

(She enters the room. The door slams shut. She lugs her load to the bed.)

TANK

That's quite a haul.

TOM

How much would that cost?

MISTY

(Slipping her heels off.)

How are you feeling?

TANK

The truth?

MISTY

Of course, the truth.

TANK

Never been better.

TOM

You have got to be kidding me.

TANK

No, I'm serious.

(Realizing Tom is not speaking to him.)

Oh.

(Misty goes to Tank, plants a kiss his on his forehead, adjusts his blanket.)

MISTY

I worried about you.

TOM

That's the best you can do? What about a discount for bereavement?

TANK

Wha'd you get?

MISTY

Are you in any pain?

TANK

He gave me my meds.

TOM

We're in *pre*-bereavement.

MISTY

You want to see?

(Tank nods. Misty goes to the bed.)

TOM

Do I have to spell it out for you? Well, I can't. He's right here in the room.

TANK

It's all right, Tom. I remember. I'm on board.

MISTY

(Pulling a blouse from a bag and holding it up to her chest.)

Look at this gorgeous thing. You'd think it would go well with a million things. But I had the hardest time finding shoes to go with it.

TANK

(Wistfully.)

Shoes.

TOM

Okay, how can I put this?

MISTY

Forget Jimmy Choo. Forget Manolo Blahnik.

TANK

Forgotten.

(Tom snaps his fingers at Misty and points at Tank.)

MISTY

What.

TOM

The Swiss medical establishment is much more ... liberal, let's say, than the United States.

(Tom points at his crotch and then back at Tank.)

They can do ... *things* that we can't here.

MISTY

What does he want?

TANK

Something unsavory, looks like.

(Tom pantomimes urination, then points at Tank and the bathroom.)

TOM

Humanitarian ... things.

MISTY

Has he lost it?

TANK

When did he last have it?

TOM

Things that deal with ... human dignity?

TANK

So?

MISTY

So!

(Pulls a shoe box from a bag.)

You'll never guess where I found these.

(She opens the box to reveal a stunning pair of sandals.
Tank manages to wheel himself to the desk.)

TANK

Where?

MISTY

Stuart ... Weitzman! Can you believe it?

TANK

It's hard to believe.

(Picks up the extension and speaks into the phone.)

They're putting me down.

TOM and MISTY

Dad!

TANK

I don't have much longer to live anyway. It's the right thing to do.

(Misty rushes to Tank, grabs the phone and jams it onto the cradle. She wheels him away from the desk. A moment of stricken silence, then ...)

TOM

Uh ... yes. That was my father. I'm sorry. Yes. You see, now. Mm-hmm. Yes. Yes, I'll hold.

(More silence.)

TANK

You sounded like an idiot, Tom.

TOM

(To Misty.)

He took his catheter out. He peed all over the floor.

(Misty pokes her head into the bathroom. She goes to Tank and peeks under his blanket. Tank looks away.)

Would you put it back in, *please*?

MISTY

Why didn't you put it back in?

TOM

I'm on the phone.

MISTY

Could you do it when you get off the phone?

TOM

The man needs your assistance.

MISTY

The man is my father.

TOM

He's mine, too.

TANK

I'll aim better next time.

(Tom stares at Misty until she relents. She crosses to the tackle box on the desk, pulls out latex gloves and dons them. She takes medicated pads to Tank and kneels in front of the wheelchair, her back to the house.)

TOM

(Into phone.)

Yes. Okay, well that's better. Yes, we'll go with that. Say, noon tomorrow? Fine. Thank you.

(Tom hangs up. He and Tank both look away while Misty works under the blanket, sterilizing and then catheterizing. Tank winces.)

MISTY

Am I hurting you?

(Tank shakes his head. Misty stands, smooths the blanket. She crosses to the bed and sits, the gloves still on her hands. Nobody looks at anybody else.)

TOM

(Grabbing his keys and wallet off the nightstand.)

Would you please call housekeeping and get that mess cleaned up?

MISTY

Where are you going?

TOM

Out.

MISTY

Out *where*?

TOM

Don't worry about it.

MISTY

What if something happens? I can't lift him by myself.

TOM

(Crossing to the door.)

Nobilitas is faxing some forms. If the business center calls, tell them to bring them up.

MISTY

Did you check his blood sugar?

TOM

Good point.

MISTY

When was the last time you gave him insulin?

(Tom exits. Misty looks at Tank warily.)

TANK

Honey, I'm sorry.

MISTY

Oh, Tom is just being Tom.

TANK

I mean for putting you --

MISTY

Oh! I have to show you something.

(Rips off the gloves and pulls brochures out of a bag.)

While I was out, I stopped at a travel agency. This nice woman gave me all kinds of information about Switzerland. I had completely forgotten that the Alps were there. Did you know that?

TANK

I guess that's why they call them the Swiss Alps.

MISTY

(Takes the brochures to him.)

Not the brightest star in the sky, am I. Look how beautiful.

TANK

Look at how high. Let's go skiing.

MISTY

That's more of a winter activity.

TANK

What happens in May?

(Misty gets the glucose meter from the tackle box.)

MISTY

I don't know. But there's shopping all year round. Look here. The ... Bahn-ohof-strasse?
The Barn-of-stress. It's their Fifth Avenue!

TANK

Will we have time to shop?

MISTY

We should have fun while we're there. Finger.

(Tank offers his hand, palm up. She inspects his fingers,
lifts the lancet and strikes.)

TANK

Ow. I don't know.

MISTY

(Squeezes Tank's finger, dabs blood on the test strip, puts
the strip in the meter.)

Now you sound like Tom. Suck.

TANK

(Looks at his finger before licking gingerly.)

Who?

MISTY

Tom.

TANK

Was that the gentleman who was here earlier? Didn't he used to work for me?

(The meter beeps. Misty reads it.)

MISTY

Oh, boy.

TANK

What?

(Misty goes to the tackle box and pulls out the syringe and bottle of insulin.)

MISTY

You have to remember. When you got sick? Remember what the board did?

(Tank thinks while Misty fills the syringe.)

TANK

Yeah, I think I do. He's my son, you say? And you're my daughter?

MISTY

(She taps the syringe and nods.)

Right. Very good! From your second wife. Remember?

(She takes sterilizing wipes from the box and goes to Tank, who leans forward as she cleans a spot on his hip.)

TANK

How is your mother?

MISTY

(Suddenly wounded.)

Daddy.

TANK

What? Oh! Oh, yes. I'm sorry, honey. The female problems, was it?

MISTY

Pinch.

(She jabs him. He flinches. She bustles around the room, tossing the syringe and wipes.)

Okay, that's enough remembering for now. You did very well.

TANK

I'm sorry, baby. I didn't mean to upset you.

MISTY

You didn't.

TANK

I think I did.

MISTY

You didn't do a thing.

MISTY (cont'd)

(Sits on the bed.)

Hey, did you see those men in lederhosen playing those big horns. Those horns are huge!

TANK

(Flipping pages.)

Look like fun guys. I'm sorry about your mom.

(She gives him a warning glance.)

You get all my money then.

MISTY

Nobody wants your money.

TANK

Of course not. But it goes to you, is what I'm saying.

MISTY

No. *And* Tom.

TANK

What about his mom?

MISTY

You divorced her. She doesn't get any more.

TANK

She doesn't want it, though?

MISTY

Well, *she* might want it.

TANK

But you and this Tom don't.

MISTY

Well, I don't know about *him*.

TANK

But *you* don't.

MISTY

Tom is the one who had you sign all those papers. He made up all those trusts.

So he's after my money.

TANK

I'm not saying.

MISTY

No, you're not.

TANK

(Reads brochure.)
Here we go. Swiss Holidays and Festivals.

Yeah?

MISTY

Sechseläuten, Escalade, Näfelser Fahrt. The Swiss are party animals.

TANK

Sounds like it.

MISTY
(Laughing at the holiday names.)

Wait. When are we going?

TANK

Tom said soon.

MISTY

We'll be there for ... Au-ffahrt.

TANK

What?

MISTY
(Laughing heartily.)

Auffahrt. It's a religious holiday.

TANK

Is there a parade?

MISTY

I believe there is.

TANK

MISTY

We could go.

TANK

We could. Do you think the sidewalks are wheelchair accessible?

MISTY

I don't know.

TANK

Tom won't let me have an electric.

MISTY

Was he mean to you while I was gone? You know, in these last few months, since we've been traveling, I've learned a lot about him. He doesn't care about other people's feelings.

TANK

Gee, I wonder where he learned that.

MISTY

Daddy, you're not mean. You've never been mean.

TANK

What was I?

MISTY

You were a great father. You *are* a great father.

TANK

How so?

MISTY

You ... you ... you're a very successful man.

TANK

(Flipping through brochures.)

I made a lot of money.

MISTY

Forget the money!

TANK

Alphorn.

MISTY

What?

TANK

Those big horns. They're called alphorns.

(Beat.)

So what? Tom wants my money. He should have it. You should have it.

MISTY

I don't want it.

TANK

What do you want?

MISTY

(Huffs and goes to the desk to get a pad and pen.)

Look, you think we're after your money. We're not. *I'm* not. Here. You can change your will. Here. Write me out of your will. I don't want any money. You can make any changes you want.

TANK

Honey.

MISTY

No, I'm serious.

(They stare at each other. Tank takes the pad and pen and writes. He hands the pad to her and she stares at it a long while.)

MISTY (cont'd)

What do you want me to do with this?

(He shrugs. She tosses the pad and pen onto the desk, and then bends to kiss Tank on the forehead. She goes to her bed and sits. He thumbs the brochure.)

TANK

Hey, look at this. Gübelin. "High-end jeweler and watch retailer." Should I get a new watch while I've still got some place to put it?

MISTY

Please don't.

TANK

Oh, you'll like this. Sprüngli -- all the U's have dots over them -- "Just say 'Ja' to superb chocolates and pastries."

(He smiles at her. She can't resist, and smiles back.)

MISTY

Dad?

TANK

Yes, sweetie?

MISTY

(Reaching for a bag.)

Do you want to see what else?

TANK

Yes, honey. Show me what else.

(Blackout.)

SCENE 2

(An hour later. Tank sleeps in his chair. The bags are gone from Misty's bed. She sits on Tom's bed, talking quietly on the phone.)

MISTY

Forget Jimmy Choo. Nope. It's the *color*, Dakota. I couldn't find anything to match the color.

(Tank stirs and then settles.)

Hold on. Daddy? Okay. I thought he was waking up. He's fine. He's a trooper. It's Tom I worry about. He's so wound up. So, you'll never guess where I found them.

(The door beeps. Tom bursts in, his face buried in a fax.)

TOM

I can't believe this. I can't fucking believe it!

(The door slams shut. Tank jumps but doesn't wake.)

MISTY

Shhh! Dad's sleeping.

TOM

(Ignoring her and Tank.)

When I called them on the phone, I spoke to them in *English*. They spoke to me in *English*. I had them fax the forms to me in New York, America, where we speak *English*. So why is the fucking thing in *German*!

(Tom's volume rouses Tank, who looks around dazed.)

MISTY

You're waking him up.

TOM

(Crossing to Misty.)

What does this mean? "Persönlichen Verhältnissen." Am I supposed to guess?

(Finally sees Misty.)

I need the phone.

MISTY

I'm on it.

TOM

I've got to call Zurich.

MISTY

Why don't you use your own phone?

(Into phone.)

Dakota? Yeah, hold on.

TOM

This is more important.

MISTY

So use your own phone.

(Tom shakes his head and crosses to the other side of the room, putting Tank between him and Misty. He uses his cell phone to dial the number on the fax.)

MISTY

Where have you been, anyway?

(Tom ignores her.)

TANK

Have you been out drinking?

TOM

Why would I have been out drinking?

TANK

I would have.

MISTY

(Into phone.)

You there? Anyway ... I go to a million places, and you'll never guess where I found them.

TOM

(Waiting for an answer.)

Look at this. "Gewünschte Korrespondenz-Sprache." It's like Greek.

TANK

I was just having a dream.

MISTY

How did you guess!

TOM

(Into phone.)

Hold on, sister, I need to speak to someone in English.

TANK

I always have my legs and arms in dreams.

MISTY

You're kidding!

TOM

That's better. Dr. Klinge's office, please. What do you mean closed? Hospitals don't close.

TANK

And Jersey. I've been dreaming a lot about Passaic lately.

MISTY

Oh, that is *so* funny. When was that?

TANK

No specific time. It always looks like it did when I was a kid. You know, I don't think I've been back there since ...

When is that?
TOM

Since the folks moved to Florida.
TANK

Oh, you mean that flamingo-colored dress with the ... yeah. You wore it at the ... yeah.
MISTY

Can't you page them?
TOM

Oh, *that* guy. I remember him. He was a jock, wasn't he?
MISTY

That was the last time. Never wanted to go back. Couldn't stand it.
TANK

Would you, please? It's urgent.
(To Tank.)
There's nobody there. Can you believe it? I've got the answering service paging them.
TOM

Paging who?
TANK

Nobilitas.
TOM

Who's that?
TANK

(Tom shakes his head. He picks up the note pad.)

What's this?
TOM

Are you going to see him?
MISTY

What?
TANK

Is this your handwriting?

TOM

I don't know.

TANK

What's that say? It's illegible.

TOM
(Shows the pad to Tank.)

For ... give ... me.

TANK
(Squinting.)

Are you serious?

MISTY

Forgive me. What does that mean? Did you write that?

TOM

Oh, you're not serious!

MISTY

I must have.

TANK

You *are* serious. Dakota!

MISTY

Will you please keep it down? I'm on the phone here.

TOM
(To Misty.)

Hold on.

MISTY

I'm on the phone, too.

(To Tom.)

I'm conducting serious business here.

TOM

We should have gotten separate rooms.

MISTY
(Into phone.)

TOM

This place isn't cheap, you know.

MISTY

Yeah, I'll call you back. But I want to hear everything! Okay, sweetie. Bye-bye.

(She hangs up.)

TOM

(To Tank.)

What is this?

TANK

Beats me.

(Tom rips the sheet off, crumples it, and tosses it in the trash can.)

MISTY

So?

TOM

So, what?

MISTY

Where's this important business you're conducting?

(She goes to Tank. Checks his drainage bag.)

TOM

I'm on hold.

MISTY

Tom, you're not the only one occupying this room. While we're stuck here, we have to try to --

TOM

(Holds up an index finger. Into phone.)

Yes? Yes, hello. This is Tom Hollahan. Yes. The forms you faxed me are in German.

MISTY

You're full-up there, mister.

TANK

Am I? I don't feel full.

TOM

Yes, I would appreciate that. Thank you. Yes. No problem. You have the number? Fine.

(He disconnects. Misty disconnects the drainage bag, full of bright yellow fluid, and stands there with it.)

MISTY

That's it?

TOM

Is what it?

MISTY

Was it really necessary to blast in here like that and wake up Dad? You can be so rude.

TANK

He takes after me.

TOM

I'm just a little tense, okay? We need to return the application form as soon as possible. Am I the only one who grasps the urgency of the situation? Apparently, I am.

MISTY

It'll get done, Tom. Maybe not exactly the way you want it to. You can't control every little thing.

TOM

If I don't control things, who will?

TANK

(Wheels awkwardly away from them.)

Not me. I can't control this wheelchair.

MISTY

You're not in this alone. Give us some credit.

TANK

Can't control my bladder ...

TOM

I'll give credit where credit is due.

MISTY

This is your father, Tom. Give *him* a little credit.

TANK

My bowels.

TOM

Okay, you hear this? He's over here mumbling about his bowels, and you want me to give him credit?

MISTY

He's not as out of it as you think.

TOM

He's not? Okay.

(To Tank.)

Where are we going?

(Tank thinks.)

See?

MISTY

Give him a second.

(They wait.)

TANK

I don't know. Can't seem to remember. I can only remember where we've been.

TOM

Uh-huh, and where's that?

TANK

(Drifting.)

Passaic. Chicago. Los Angeles.

TOM

Very good, Dad. You got the first sixty-five years of your life right. Now how about the last two or three years? Or the last two months?

MISTY

He's not awake yet.

TANK

Hospitals?

TOM

Good guess. Does Rochester, Minnesota, ring a bell? Baltimore? Boston?

TANK
Sounds like a long trip.

MISTY
Dad, don't listen to him.

TOM
Are you holding that bag for a reason?

MISTY
(Taking the bag into the bathroom.)
You don't want to start with me.

TOM
Did you call housekeeping?

MISTY
(Off.)
Yes, Tom, they came. They cleaned it up.

TOM
When's the last time you tested him?

(The toilet flushes. Misty enters with the empty bag.)

MISTY
Please, don't talk to me.

TOM
No, I'm just asking. Did you test his blood sugar level, and did you give him his insulin?

MISTY
(Attaching the bag.)
I'm asking you not to talk to me.

TOM
It's a simple question.

MISTY
(Exploding.)
What the fuck do *you* care whether I gave him his insulin?

TOM
What, I don't care?

(Tank tips his head back, his face agonized. Neither of his kids notices.)

MISTY

You care, all right. You care about getting us to Switzerland just as soon as you can.

TOM

That's not fair.

(Tank arches his back, his body racked by tremors.)

MISTY

I can't believe you're this upset over a form. It's a formality, Tom. It has no effect on their decision.

TOM

But what he says and does *does* have an effect. And in case you haven't noticed, it's not looking so good on that front.

(Tank gasps. Misty and Tom hear and rush to him.)

MISTY

Daddy!

TOM

Pop, hold on. Pop?

(Tank grabs Misty's hair. Tom tries to free her.)

Okay, now let go, Dad. Let go.

(Freed, Misty goes to her bed. Tom holds Tank. The spasm subsides. Tank breathes heavily.)

TOM (cont'd)

You're okay, partner. Breathe. Take your time.

(Tank looks at Tom, puts his hand on his cheek.)

TANK

(Barely audible.)

Sorry.

TOM

Don't say anything. Just try to relax. You okay?

(Tank nods. Tom guides his hand away from his face.)

TOM (cont'd)

Try to relax.

(Tank turns his head and closes his eyes. In a moment, he is asleep. Tom puts his hand on Tank's chest. There is a heartbeat. Tom goes to the trash can and retrieves the crumpled note. Going to Misty, he opens the note and shows it to her.)

TOM (cont'd)

What's this?

MISTY

I don't know.

TOM

It wasn't here when I left. And when I got back, there it was. What is it?

MISTY

You need to ask him.

TOM

What's going on when I'm not around? "Forgive me"? What, are you making him confess his sins? Perform acts of contrition?

MISTY

What would be so wrong with that?

TOM

The man is dying. In two days he'll be dead. If you're angry with him --

(She scoffs.)

No, if *you're* angry with him, just keep it to yourself. Work it out on your own.

MISTY

Listen to you.

TOM

No, I'm angry. I admit it. I'm angry at the whole fucking deal. But we have to try to keep him focused here. Or they won't give him what he wants.

MISTY

What *you* want.

TOM

And you don't?

(The glare at each other. Tom softens.)

TOM (cont'd)

Look, it has nothing to do with what *we* want. It's what's best for him.

TANK

(Groggy.)

What *is* best for me?

TOM

(Shakes his head.)

Are you really asking?

(He goes into the bathroom and shuts the door.)

MISTY

Daddy, do you want anything? Are you thirsty? Want something to drink or to eat?

TANK

What do they have in that minibar?

MISTY

Tom would shit a cow.

TANK

(Laughs.)

You mean *have* a cow?

MISTY

I'd let you have something, but he'd have an aneurysm.

(She goes to the minibar and unlocks it. The sound of sirens drifts faintly into the room.)

TANK

You know what I keep thinking about?

MISTY

They've got juice. You want some juice? There's sparkling water. The good stuff from Italy.

TANK

By all means, let's have the good stuff.

MISTY

(Opening a bottle of water.)

What do you keep thinking about?

TANK

Passaic. Isn't that strange?

(Takes the bottle from Misty.)

I haven't thought about Passaic for years. Literally, for years.

MISTY

What do you think about it?

TANK

It's hard to put into words, really. It's just things I remember. The sirens.

MISTY

Sirens.

TANK

Call me crazy, but I think the ambulances and fire trucks sounded different there than any other place I've ever been.

MISTY

Different.

TANK

It's loony-tunes, I know. But I think ... I think they sounded like ...

(He laughs.)

MISTY

Like what?

TANK

Red brick.

MISTY

(Beat.)

Don't let Tom hear you say that.

TANK

No, when I hear the sirens of Passaic in my head, what I remember them sounding like, they have the same ... color and ... I don't know ... chemical composition of red brick. It's like a dry-blood, husky, deep, underground screaming color of sound. A wailing, you could call it, from inside a hard, dark place. It's gorgeous. Perilous.

MISTY

(Beat.)

Drink your water, Dad.

TANK

It's crazy.

MISTY

Don't think about sirens. Okay? The time for thinking about sirens is past. You have to think about ... peace. And relief. Peace and relief.

(The toilet flushes. Tom comes out of the bathroom. He crosses to his bed, picks up the phone, and dials.)

TANK

I think about other things, too.

MISTY

We really shouldn't talk about those now.

TANK

Like The Three Stooges.

MISTY

Mm-hmm. That's nice, Dad. Do you want something to eat?

(She goes to the minibar.)

TOM

Yes, this is Tom Hollahan in 2515. I'm waiting for a fax. Can you see if it's come in? Thanks.

TANK

Tom, I ever tell you about the time I saw The Three Stooges?

TOM

No, Dad.

TANK

At the Central Theater in Passaic.

TOM

That's great.

TANK

We couldn't afford the show, but it was easy enough to sneak backstage through the loading dock. You just had to do it a long time before the show started.

TOM

Uh-huh.

MISTY

You want some cocktail peanuts? Oh, here's something good. An energy bar. That would be really good for you.

TANK

So me and a buddy, Billy McGruder, snuck back there that day at around noon. We played hooky. It was a Thursday.

TOM

(Into phone.)

It is? No, I'll come and get it. Thanks.

(Hangs up.)

The fax is here. I'm going down to get it.

MISTY

Good idea.

TANK

We hid in some old scenery at the back of the stage.

(Tom goes to the door.)

TOM

Don't let him go to sleep. We have to fill out this paperwork and fax it back.

(He exits.)

MISTY

Dad, are you tired? You want to take a nap?

TANK

No. I'm remembering things.

MISTY

You see, now's not a good time to be remembering things. Not in front of Tom.

TANK

No?

MISTY

No. And not when we get to Zurich. Those people don't want to hear any stories.

TANK

Who are they?

MISTY

Those are the people who are going to ... help you.

TANK

Help me do what?

MISTY

What you should concentrate on is right now. Feeling good now. Resting. You should have something to eat.

TANK

(Chuckling.)

We couldn't see the stage from where we were hiding.

MISTY

An energy bar?

TANK

But when the show started, we could hear the Stooges and the audience laughing.

MISTY

I could call room service. You want a hamburger?

TANK

And because we heard *them* laughing, *we* laughed. We could imagine it all in our heads. Moe conking Curly over the head with a big roundhouse.

MISTY

How about a porterhouse? Wouldn't you like a nice big steak?

TANK

There were sound effects. A woodblock smacking. *Smack!* A spring springing. *Boing!*

MISTY

Okay, I'll order you something. Let's see what's on the menu.

(She goes to the desk and pulls the menu from the drawer.)

TANK

After they finished their routine and after the curtain closed and everybody was rushing around backstage, Billy and me went to the Stooges and asked them for their autographs.

MISTY

The patty melt looks good, if you want something American.

TANK

Moe and Curly were arguing about something that happened onstage. They didn't even look at us. But Larry. Larry took my autograph book -- you know, I already had Charlie Spivak in there -- signed it and handed it back to me, and the way he looked at me, he looked like the kindest, saddest man in the world.

(Misty picks up the phone and dials room service.)

And do you know what I said to him? I can't believe I said this to him.

MISTY

Yes, I'd like to order a patty melt and fries and a chocolate shake.

(To Tank.)

Daddy, you like chocolate, right?

TANK

I said, "Daddy."

MISTY

(Into phone.)

Yeah, chocolate.

TANK

I meant to say thank you, but it came out "daddy."

MISTY

That's all. No, wait. And I'll have the blackened salmon Caesar salad. Light dressing. And a bottle of chardonnay. Dad, you don't mind if I have a little wine, do you?

TANK

Moe and Curly heard that and started laughing. Billy McGruder did, too. Larry patted me on the head and said, "Not that I know of, kid."

MISTY

(Into phone.)

Yeah, that's it. Thanks. Oh! Room number --

TANK

He was the best one of the three.

MISTY

How did you know that?

TANK

He made me feel better.

MISTY

Oh. Whatever. Thanks.

(She hangs up and looks at Tank.)

TANK

I still beat up Billy McGruder when we got outside.

MISTY

It'll be here in a half hour.

TANK

I had a perfectly good dad. Merchant marine. Did you know that? Not around much, but ... decent guy.

MISTY

You shouldn't go this long without eating. How about that energy bar?

(She goes to the minibar, retrieves the snack, and unwraps it on her way to Tank.)

TANK

What's in an energy bar?

MISTY

Uh-know.

(Reading the label.)

Some solids, looks like. And some protein, chemicals.

TANK

How are they going to help me?

MISTY

By giving you lots of energy. It'll boost you up.

(She feeds the bar to him. He takes a bite, chews and swallows.)

I mean the people in Zurich.

TANK

Let's not dwell on that. 'Kay?

MISTY

They're going to kill me?

TANK

(Thinks.)

Dad.

MISTY

How much do we pay them for that?

TANK

Dad, don't talk about that.

MISTY

Just answer me. How much are we paying them?

TANK

Nothing. Okay? They're nonprofit.

MISTY

That means they want a donation.

TANK

Maybe.

MISTY

Tom'll stiff 'em.

TANK

He might.

MISTY

(They laugh. She takes a bite of the bar and feeds the rest to Tank.)

Now, how about a drink?

TANK

MISTY

I'll give you a sip when dinner comes.

(She goes to her bed, lies down, and reads a brochure.)

TANK

The Still Life.

MISTY

Huh?

TANK

That's where I drank my first beer. The Still Life over in Jersey City.

MISTY

Uh.

TANK

Me and the guys went after the game. We were all underage. Nobody knew us there. They didn't give a rat's ass anyway. I was just sixteen. The drinking life's a good life.

MISTY

(Distractedly.)

How do you figure?

TANK

It's like butter on toast. Without it, toast is like dry, tasteless cardboard. Like that energy bar. Drinks lubricate life. Elevate it. You know how my knees and ankles used to ache all the time?

MISTY

(Rolls her back to him.)

Did they?

TANK

From football. I could hardly walk. A couple of drinks cured 'em. Made a lame man whole. It was a miracle.

(With one calculated shove of his wheelchair wheel, Tank rolls to the minibar.)

MISTY

Sounds like it.

TANK

Holy water. Firewater. Manna from heaven.

(Silently struggles to lean to the minibar, open it, and extract two small bottles.)

Lourdes. The Seven Seas. Headwaters of the Nile. The Amazon. The Mississippi.

(He clamps a bottle cap in his teeth and twists.)

MISTY

Sounds pretty.

(Spits the cap into his lap.)

TANK

It is pretty. The Fountain of Youth. The font of knowledge. The River Styx.

(Inhales the bottle's aroma.)

Mother's milk. Painkiller. Good for what ails ya.

(He tips the bottle and sucks it dry.)

MISTY

Mm-hmm.

TANK

That Bill W. was a loser. Nobody who abstains from liquor can be successful in business. You don't have to be a drunk. But if you can't enjoy a cocktail with a client, you'll never close the deal.

(Bites the cap off the second bottle.)

Sobriety. What's the point? Catholics have it right. Bring it to the altar. Close the deal with a drink.

(Tank tips the bottle. The room door beeps and opens. Tom enters.)

TOM

Okay. Now we're talking.

(Seeing Tank.)

What the ... What the *fuck* is going on here!

TANK

(Smacking his lips.)

Eucharist.

(Tom snatches the bottle out of Tank's hand.)

TOM

(To Misty.)

What the hell are you doing, letting him drink!

MISTY

(Scrambling off the bed.)

I didn't let him drink!

TOM

What do you call this?

MISTY

I don't know!

TOM

You don't know what you call this? You call this a drink!

TANK

I call it lots of things.

MISTY

I didn't know he was drinking.

TOM

You're in the same goddamned room, and you don't know he's drinking?

MISTY

I wasn't looking at him. He snuck over there.

TOM

A man with no legs and one arm in a wheelchair snuck into the minibar. Is that what you're telling me?

MISTY

I was resting!

TANK

I'm going to be sick.

TOM

I was gone for ten lousy minutes. Do you know what can happen if he mixes alcohol with his medications?

MISTY

I can't close my eyes for a second? He's got to take some responsibility for himself. I can't watch him every second.

TANK

Get me to the toilet! I'm going to be sick!

(Tom and Misty finally hear and rush to Tank. Banging against each other, they manage to push him into the john. The sound of Tank retching, off.)

TOM

Aim for the toilet!

MISTY

Daddy, here!

TOM

Oh, jeez. Look at this. Will you look at this?

(The retching stops. Tom emerges from the bathroom wiping off his shirt with a towel. He bends to wipe his pants and shoes, then retrieves the pages of the fax, which have fallen in the shuffle. He goes to the desk and sits, dazed. Misty pushes Tank out of the bathroom.)

TOM (cont'd)

Did you clean him off?

MISTY

He's fine.

TANK

Got most of it on you, I think. Solids.

TOM

Yeah, thanks. I appreciate that.

TANK

Used to be able to hold my liquor. Less volume now.

MISTY

It's the medications. You can still hold it.

Don't encourage him.

TOM

I'm not all that encouraged.

TANK

Okay, forget it. We've got to fill out this form. Do you think you can hold it together long enough to do that?

TOM

We'll see.

TANK

Name.

(Spreads the fax and pulls a pen from his pocket.)

TOM

Tank ... Tank ...

TANK

Thanks, Dad. Got it. Address.

TOM

Hmm. That's a tough one. Somewhere.

TANK

That's okay, Tom knows.

MISTY

Name of physician.

(Writing.)

Take your pick.

TOM

They'll want Dr. Benton. He's the one --

MISTY

Got it. Religious affiliation?

TOM

Dodgers.

TANK

Why do they need to know this?
TOM

In case he wants somebody there.
MISTY

We'll be there.
TOM

A priest.
MISTY

We can't say Catholic.
TOM

My mother was Catholic. Dad, too. Everybody was.
TANK

But we can't say Catholic.
TOM

Why not?
MISTY

Think about it. It implies certain ... things about doing certain ... things.
TOM

Oh. If he's that, then he'd have beliefs against ... something else.
MISTY

Why are you talking like that? Are you talking about something specific?
TANK

Yes.
TOM

Then why don't you say it?
TANK

Sometimes it's better not to talk directly about certain things. It's easier.
MISTY

Is it better? or easier?
TANK

Both. MISTY

I'll put agnostic. TOM

What's that mean? TANK

(Writing.) TOM

Waiting for better evidence. TANK

But we're Catholic, aren't we? TOM

When's the last time you went to Mass? TANK

(Thinks.) TOM

How old are you? TOM

Forty-six. TANK

Forty-six years ago. (Tom looks puzzled.) TANK

Your baptism? TOM

We're going with agnostic. I don't know why they need to know anyway. It's no business of theirs.

(Struck by an idea.) TANK

Confession. TOM

(Ignoring him. Reading.) TOM

Desired correspondence language. Ha!

TANK

I should go to confession.

MISTY

You don't need to, Daddy. You're a businessman.

TANK

(To Tom.)

You, there. Would you take me to confession?

TOM

You gonna get that rig into a confessional?

TANK

We could bring the priest here.

TOM

No way.

TANK

I'm dying.

TOM

It's too late.

TANK

I need to tell someone.

MISTY

Tell them what?

TANK

Things.

TOM

Something specific? Did you murder someone?

TANK

No. I just think that if you're dying, you should confess things. Coveting, false witness, gluttony ...

(Flips the bird.)

road rage.

(No one hears him.)

Don't you confess to set things right?

(A knock at the door. No one responds.)

TANK (cont'd)

Coming.

(A door bell rings, the first few notes of “Edelweiss.”)

Be right there.

(Alphorns blow.)

(Blackout.)

SCENE 3

(The room is dark except for the city lights glowing through the window. A service cart, its top strewn with leftovers, sits in the middle of the room next to Tank’s wheelchair. Tank lies asleep in the upstage bed. The other bed is empty.)

A sports whistle blows shrilly. Tank’s head tilts up and he looks around. He settles back into the pillow. A beat, and then another whistle. This time Tank jerks so violently, he rolls off the far side of the bed.)

TANK

A little help? Tom? Hey, I ... Misty? Where are you guys?

(His head appears from behind the bed.)

I fell off the bed. Did you guys hear a whistle?

(He pulls himself onto the edge of the bed and notices that his left arm has been restored.)

TANK (cont'd)

Hey, Tom? Tom? Do you remember when I got this back?

(He falls behind the bed and drags himself toward center stage. As his trunk clears the bed, we see his legs dragging behind him. Tank notices too. He rolls onto his back, extends both legs above him.)

TANK (cont'd)

That’s weird.

(He lies flat. Then he rolls over and rises to his knees. Using the cart, he pulls himself up. He starts picking at leftovers ... French fries, lettuce leaves. He examines both arms from fingers to shoulder.)

TANK (cont'd)

You guys see this?

(He jumps in place. Suddenly, he is manic. He runs around the cart, performs several jumping jacks, hops on and off beds, twirls, then stops.

He goes to his wheelchair, nudges it with his toe. A few notes of music. He nudges it again. Bells? He steps behind the chair and pushes. The music is louder -- a garbly, ice cream truck rendition of "My Way." Tank pushes the chair around the room and stops. The music stops.

He looks glumly at the chair. Sounds of the gridiron rise: pads clashing, signals being called, whistles blowing. He sees the crowd, leans forward to take the snap, tosses the ball and runs to catch it. He scores! The crowd goes wild. He strikes the Heisman pose and holds it. The sounds stop abruptly.)

TANK (cont'd)

(Agonized.)

Peewee!

(Blackout.)

SCENE 4

(The room as at the beginning of Scene 3: dim glow of city lights, service cart, empty wheelchair. Tank and Tom are in one bed. Misty in the other.

Both Tom and Misty scramble to turn on their bedside lamps. Misty, dressed in pink satin PJs, sits up on the edge of her bed.)

MISTY

Dad, are you okay? What's wrong?

TOM

Did you just yell ... Peewee? Who's Peewee?

TANK

Peewee? I don't know anybody by that name.

MISTY

It was just a dream.

TOM

Oh, you think? Okay, it's over now. We've got to get some sleep. There's a jet to catch in the morning.

MISTY

It's a charter, Tom. It'll leave when we tell it to.

TANK

I had my arms and legs.

TOM

(Considers Tank.)

And now you don't.

MISTY

In his dream.

TOM

Oh.

(Tom rises and goes to the bathroom. He shuts the door.
Misty gets back under the covers.)

TANK

I get it now.

MISTY

Get what?

TANK

What you two were talking about. About "things."

MISTY

You've lost me.

TANK

A Catholic doesn't believe in doing certain "things." It's a mortal sin.

(Misty sits up again.)

Dad, it's late.

MISTY

It's too late. Why didn't I see it coming?

TANK

You can't see everything.

MISTY

Some things you can, but not till it's too late. Like slipping off the edge of a cliff. You see what's coming, but you can't do anything about it. Only ...

TANK

(The toilet flushes.)

Only nothing.

MISTY

Only, I jumped.

TANK

(Tom comes out of the bathroom and stands at the foot of Tank's bed.)

You didn't jump.

MISTY

Who jumped?

TOM

I did.

TANK

Tell him he didn't jump off a cliff.

MISTY

(She goes to the john and shuts the door.)

What cliff?

TOM

I have to try and turn things around. I need a priest.

TANK

TOM

Not gonna happen.

TANK

I don't care what he says about "things." I need to tell him what I've done.

TOM

Tell *me* what you've done.

TANK

I'd rather tell a priest.

TOM

Okay. There are at least three things wrong with that. One, it's late. No priest is going to come here now, and we won't have time in the morning. Two, you're not a Catholic. You haven't been in a church for forty-six years. Three, a priest is not going to just tell you you're committing a mortal sin and let it go at that. Who's the best salesman you ever had?

TANK

Bix.

TOM

Ed Bixel? He was better than --

TANK

Frank Neufeld?

TOM

Yeah.

TANK

I'd take Bix over Frank any day of the week. Frank was no slouch, but Bix could sell Sno-cones to an Eskimo.

TOM

Couldn't Frank?

TANK

Yeah, but Bix would truly believe that the Eskimo needed the refreshment.

TOM

Okay, whatever. Now, just imagine Ed Bixel is a priest who wants to sell you a bill of goods. He wants you to believe that doing certain things is against the will of God. What are you going to do?

TANK

Tell him I'm not buying today.

TOM

And what's he going to do?

TANK

Sell me a bill of goods.

(The toilet flushes.)

TOM

Exactly. He'll have you saying Hail Marys in ten minutes flat.

(Misty comes out of the bathroom and goes to her bed.)

Four --

TANK

You said there were three reasons.

TOM

I said *at least* three. I thought of another. Four, a priest doesn't work pro bono. They want to be compensated. It's a waste of money. And five, you can just tell me. What is it you need to say?

TANK

I need to confess. I feel like I'm falling.

MISTY

Would you tell me?

TANK

(Thinks.)

Both of you.

TOM

Okay. I'll need a drink for this.

(Tom goes to the minibar.)

TANK

Scotch me up, would you, honey?

(Misty obliges and sits back on her bed. Tom pulls out a can of beer, pops it open, and swigs.)

Shoot.

TOM

I've been a businessman my whole life.

TANK

That's not a sin.

(Swigs.)

TOM

Give me a chance.

(Tom raises his beer to him, swigs.)

I've run my own company for ... how many years? A lot of years. Decades. Since I can remember. I had a wife and a kid. And I didn't spend a lot of time at home with either of them. A little. I took them places occasionally. The Grand Canyon, Hawaii. But mostly I didn't take them places. And when I didn't, I usually fooled around.

TOM

(Finishes the can and reaches for another.)

Pay dirt.

TANK

But those aren't really sins.

MISTY

They aren't?

TANK

Well, they are, I guess. They are and everybody knows it. And everybody does it anyway. It just happens.

TOM

That sounds repentant.

TANK

I know. I should feel worse about that than I do. I ignored my wife and my kid and I found a new wife and had a new kid. And all that time I was a businessman and drank like a son of a bitch. I hired guys and fired them. I built things and screwed vendors and customers to make a buck.

MISTY

And you're sorry about that?

TANK

No, not really. It's just business.

TOM

Okay. So you're not sorry you fooled around. You're not sorry you screwed your customers. What are you sorry for?

TANK

It's hard to say. I ... I'm stumped.

MISTY

But you are sorry for something.

TANK

I feel like there's something. It's ... hard to describe. It's kind of like a fire.

TOM

You're an arsonist? You set fires?

MISTY

That's not what he's saying.

TANK

It starts here in my chest.

TOM

That's acid reflux.

MISTY

Tom.

TANK

In the middle, it's about the size of a walnut and it's red. And then it spreads out in the shape of a ... a peacock's tail.

TOM

I don't think I like where this is going.

TANK

It's like a fire that's blue and green and shivering. It fans up into my face and out where my legs and arm used to be. And in my eyes it's cold -- it burns like when you eat too much ice cream.

TOM

Okay, you can stop anytime you want. This isn't a confession.

TANK

It's not an actual fire.

MISTY

What is it?

TANK

It's ... if I had to say what it is, I'd say it's ... enjoyment.

(Beat.)

TOM

Enjoyment.

(Misty rises and feels Tank's forehead.)

MISTY

How do you feel, Dad? Do you feel a little warm? He may be a little warm.

TOM

Fever?

MISTY

Maybe.

TANK

When I was screwing people and ignoring you and you and your mothers ... I think I ... enjoyed it. I really, really did.

(Misty and Tom exchange a look. Misty stomps to her bed and sits.)

TOM

Okay. Okay, now that's something to repent.

TANK

(Confused.)

It's not doing those things that I enjoyed. It wasn't that, exactly. It was the colors.

TOM

Would you stop with the fucking colors!

TANK

(Growing agitated.)

I didn't want them to take my legs off. Who would want that? Who would want to drink themselves to death ... turn their internal organs to shit? Nobody wants that. But there's this thing ... this fan or flame, the shimmering blue, the heat in here --

TOM

Would you shut the fuck up! I swear to God, if you say another word, I'll put a pillow over your face.

(Beat.)

TANK

I'm done.

(Tom stomps to the bathroom. He enters with the tackle box and takes it to the desk.)

TOM

You feel better now?

TANK

No.

TOM

No.

(He opens the box and collects pills. Misty goes to Tank and settles him back.)

MISTY

Daddy, try to go back to sleep.

(Misty goes to Tom. They whisper conspiratorially).

TOM

He is seriously under-medicated. He's going totally off his nut. I need to knock him out right now. But if I give these to him, he'll be in the ozone tomorrow.

MISTY

What's the point of even going? They won't agree to help if he's acting like this.

TANK

(To Misty.)

I'm sorry, baby. I really am.

MISTY

Don't, Dad. Just don't say any more.

TOM

And if we don't go? What then?

(Misty thinks. There is no choice. Tom brings the pills and a half drunk glass of water from the cart to Tank. Misty gets back in bed. Tank swallows the pills.)

TANK

(Handing the glass to Tom.)

I'm a shit.

TOM

(Returns the glass to the cart.)

No argument here.

(Tom gets into bed and turns off the lamp. Misty's lamp is still on. Tank lies awake, and then closes his eyes. The ice cream truck music starts up faintly. Fade)

END OF ACT I

ACT II
SCENE 1

(A bedraggled flat with a bed and galley kitchen upstage, several chairs and a bed right, a desk and chairs left. Like any other flat in Zurich, except for the medical equipment: an unadorned chrome IV pole, wall-mounted monitors and x-ray illuminators, containers of tongue depressors, swabs, and other supplies on the counter. There is one door stage right and windows along the back wall.)

At rise, the door opens and Tom walks in, followed by Tank in his wheelchair, pushed by Misty. A long silence as they take it all in, then ...)

TANK

Nice place.

TOM

Nice? You call this nice?

MISTY

Seems nice.

TANK

Comfortable.

TOM

It's a dump. This is supposed to be a clinic.

MISTY

They want it to be homey.

TANK

It's homey.

TOM

No. You don't want homey.

MISTY

What do you want?

TOM

You want ... clinical.

TANK

You're not having second thoughts, are you?

TOM

They could just be more professional, is all.

TANK

This is where they do it?

MISTY

Dad.

TOM

(Consulting his watch.)

Where is she? We're forty-five minutes late, and she's not here yet?

MISTY

They said she'd be right in.

TOM

Okay. This is our time slot. She should be here. Why do doctors always think they can make you wait? Like your time is less important than theirs.

TANK

Our time is very important.

TOM

Damn right.

TANK

Our time doesn't last forever.

TOM

Okay, don't start.

TANK

Start what?

TOM

Whatever it is you're thinking of starting. I told you it's not going to fly here. You have to hold it together.

TANK

I just started thinking about time.

TOM

Well, don't.

TANK

It seems more relevant to me now. More real. Is the word ... palpable?

MISTY

That's not a word you use with time, Dad.

TANK

It should be a word you use with time. I feel it around me like water. Like I'm drowning in it, only ... I can breathe underwater. Under time.

(Tom puts his hands on the arms of Tank's chair.)

TOM

Listen to me. You have to be serious.

(Tank leans closer to Tom.)

TANK

Time is on your face. I can see it.

(A curt knock on the door. Dr. Adelle Klinge enters wearing a white lab coat. Her demeanor is professional yet warm.)

KLINGE

(Faint Swiss accent.)

Hello. I am Doctor Klinge.

(She moves toward Tank, but is intercepted by Tom, who holds out his hand.)

TOM

Tom Hollahan. Pleased to meet you.

(She gives his hand a single pump.)

This is my sister, Misty Brinks.

KLINGE

Hello.

MISTY

Hi. Uhm ...

KLINGE

(Peeking around Tom at Tank.)

And this is? --

TOM

(Pure salesman.)

Sorry we're late. We had a real tough time getting here. Apparently, it's a holiday of some sort. Just our luck. They closed off some streets for a parade --

KLINGE

Procession.

TOM

I'm sorry?

KLINGE

This is Auffahrt. The Ascension. There is no parade.

TOM

Oh. Whatever. It was chaos --

(Klinge moves past him to Tank.)

KLINGE

Mr. Hollahan.

TANK

Tank.

(She shakes his hand warmly.)

KLINGE

How are you feeling today?

(He looks at Tom and Misty, and leans closer to Klinge.)

TANK

I feel like I'm swimming in time.

(Tom and Misty cringe.)

KLINGE

That is an interesting comment. When we are alone, perhaps you could say more about that.

MISTY

It took us such a long time to get here. That's what he means. We were stuck in traffic.

KLINGE

Is that what you mean, Mr. Hollahan? That you were stuck in traffic?

TANK

Time was there, too, in the car.

KLINGE

Yes, well ... we will talk.

(She goes to the desk.)

Please, be seated.

(Misty rolls Tank toward the desk and sits. Klinge sits, takes a file folder from the clipboard, and spreads out some papers. Tom sits warily.)

TOM

How long will this take?

KLINGE

(Shoots him a glance and continues perusing the file. Finally, to Tank.)

Let me begin, Mr. Hollahan --

TANK

You can call me Tank. Everybody does.

KLINGE

If you wish. Let me begin by saying that we have carefully read your application and the supporting material you sent us, and we sympathize with your situation a great deal. If all goes well, we will do everything in our power to assist you. But first, I must tell you about what to expect here today at Nobilitas. And I would also like to say something about our philosophy. You may have had time to read the information on our website --

TOM

It's in German.

KLINGE

Ah, yes. So it will be good for me to cover that. After I discuss our philosophy, I will ask one of you to accompany your father to his medical examination.

MISTY

You're not going to examine him?

KLINGE

No. One of the doctors on staff will.

MISTY

I thought you were our doctor. We've been to so many doctors already. Why do we have to see another?

KLINGE

Because I do not perform physical examinations.

TOM

You're a doctor, aren't you?

KLINGE

I have a medical degree, yes, but I do not practice medicine per se.

TOM

You don't?

KLINGE

Mr. Hollahan, I am a psychiatrist.

(Tom and Misty are stricken.)

TOM

A ... a ... you--

KLINGE

While one of you accompanies your father, I would like to interview the other.

(Tom and Misty respond together.)

MISTY

I'll take Daddy.

TOM

You take Dad.

KLINGE

Fine, and I would also like the opportunity to speak with you, Ms. Brinks.

MISTY

Oh, I don't know what I could say that would ... could ... be of any use at all. I'm not the sharpest tool in the shed.

(Klinge stares at her.)

Well ... okay. If it will help.

KLINGE

Yes, it will help. And finally, Mr. Hollahan, Tank, I will have some time alone with you.

TANK

I'd love to.

KLINGE

Fine.

TANK

Are you married?

TOM and MISTY

Dad!

TANK

What?

KLINGE

(Gamely.)

Tank, that isn't really important. Is it?

TANK

Never has been to me.

(This said, Tank heaves backward in the chair and writhes in pain. The others rise to attend. Klinge rounds the desk.)

MISTY

Daddy!

TOM

He's okay. He'll be all right.

KLINGE

Mr. Hollahan.

(Tom braces Tank's shoulders. The spasm subsides.)

KLINGE

Is he not under medication for this?

TOM

Goddamned doctors. Quacks, every one of them.

TANK

(Gasping.)

Sorry. Sorry.

TOM

(To Klinge.)

You see this? This is what we have to put up with. What *he* has to put up with.

(Tank exhales and begins to breathe more easily.)

KLINGE

Tank? Are you all right?

TANK

Yeah.

KLINGE

You are in great pain.

TANK

It's a ride.

KLINGE

Are you well enough to continue? You may rest for a while.

TANK

No, no. Let's go.

(Klinge sits on the front of the desk.)

KLINGE

After my interview with you, I will decide whether or not we may assist you in terminating your physical life.

TOM

You're the only one who has a say?

KLINGE

No.

TOM

Okay, who else decides?

KLINGE

Why, your father, of course. Then, if we agree to assist you in terminating your physical life, we will proceed to do so in this room. Tank, you may have your children with you.

MISTY

I ... I don't know.

KLINGE

Or not. As you wish.

TANK

(Thinks.)

Why do you say physical? *Physical* life? Aren't we going for the whole shooting match?

KLINGE

(Goes behind the desk.)

An excellent question. Let us talk about life -- about what defines it. First, let me say that we at Nobilitas believe in the sanctity and nobility of human life. And that no life should be ended prematurely.

MISTY

What do you mean? Isn't that what you do here?

KLINGE

No, it is not.

MISTY

I don't understand.

KLINGE

You see, Tank, we believe that life is more than physiology. We believe that a human life is defined by history, biography, the projects and passions of a lifetime. When those projects and passions are terminated, life effectively ends. Breathing, eating, eliminating -- cringing in pain -- do not constitute a life. What we do is help patients complete the task that circumstances have so cruelly left undone.

TOM

Okay, good. We agree with that. So why all this examination and interviewing? By your own definition, it's over.

KLINGE

I can see you believe that to be the case, but it is our obligation to make our own assessment. It is no light matter we are considering.

TOM

Didn't say it was.

KLINGE

(To Tank.)

We must be absolutely sure of the hopelessness of your condition. And absolutely sure that you are capable of making the rational decision to end what remains of your life. Do you have any questions about our procedures or policies?

TANK

Will there be a quiz?

KLINGE

(Amused.)

No.

TANK

Clear as a bell.

KLINGE

Good.

(To the others.)

Any questions?

(Tom and Misty look helplessly at each other.)

KLINGE

(Standing, leads Misty and Tank to the door.)

All right, then. Ms. Brinks, please bring your father to the examination room, which is just across the hall. Tank, this will be as unobtrusive as possible. The doctor has reviewed your file and will perform a brief examination.

TANK

Not much left to examine.

KLINGE

You have a sense of humor. Good.

(She opens the door. To Misty.)

I will send your brother for you momentarily.

MISTY

It's okay. Take your time. I'm really all right looking after Dad.

(They exit. Klinge leaves the door ajar and returns to her seat. She and Tom, his arms crossed, stare at each other for an extraordinary length of time)

(Fade to black.)

SCENE 2

(One minute later. The lights rise on Klinge and Tom in exactly the same place, staring, neither of them backing down, until ...)

TOM

(Smirking.)

This is your technique?

KLINGE

You seem angry.

TOM

Brilliant.

KLINGE

At what?

TOM

Okay. Are you really asking me that question? What are you really asking? Because if you're really asking me: What am I angry at? ...

KLINGE

I am asking about your emotional state.

TOM

My what? My ... What does my emotional state have to do with anything?

KLINGE

You seem anxious.

TOM

Do you get paid for this? Is it surprising that this whole thing would cause some anxiety?

KLINGE

What I mean is that you seem anxious for your father to end his life.

TOM

(Bolting to his feet.)

What?! *What?!*

KLINGE

(Evenly.)

Please, Mr. Hollahan, take your seat.

TOM

No, what are you implying? Wait, wait, you think I'm here to cash in, right?

KLINGE

Your father is wealthy?

TOM

(Aghast.)

Wealthy? Is my father ... I can't believe this. You're asking me if ... Do you know who that is in there? Tank Hollahan -- *my father* -- is the man who almost single-handedly defined the modern shopping mall as we know it today.

KLINGE

That is an accomplishment.

TOM

(Turning away, talking more to himself than to her.)

Before Tank Hollahan came on the scene, what did you see? Sure, you had huge sprawling malls, but you had to walk from here to kingdom come under the elements to get from one store to the next. There was no convenience, no aesthetics, no sense of grandeur, or of the greater retail community. Synergy! There was none of that until Tank Hollahan pioneered a better way. He was a visionary, a great businessman and salesman. And yes, he's very, very rich.

KLINGE

Mr. Hollahan, may I be direct?

TOM

You can be whatever you want to be.

KLINGE

Was coming here your father's idea or yours?

TOM

Mine. But he's on board.

KLINGE

If he has been coerced in any way, he will tell me.

TOM

He won't tell you that.

KLINGE

To the best of your knowledge, does your father want to end his life?

TOM

Yes. Yes, definitely.

KLINGE

You see, Mr. Hollahan, it is clear that you are the motivating force behind this ... embassy. And this poses a problem for me. I have to ask myself why you are so eager. You have all but admitted that you will profit from this.

TOM

(Bitterly.)

Yeah, I'll profit. You're not too bright, are you?

KLINGE

(Evenly.)

No?

TOM

Why don't you give child psychology a try? Kids aren't as sophisticated.

(The lights fade from Tom, leaving him in shadow. This is the first of several lighting shifts during the scene. Tom and Misty are being interviewed separately, but are onstage at the same time.)

KLINGE

(Stands, looks toward the door.)

Ms. Brinks? Ms. Brinks, please.

(Misty appears timidly in the doorway, takes two steps in and stops.)

KLINGE (cont'd)

Come in. Please, Ms. Brinks. If you will.

(Misty goes to the chair and sits. Klinge sits and waits a long while, as with Tom.)

MISTY

What do you want to know?

KLINGE

What do you want to tell me?

MISTY

(Thinks.)

This wasn't my idea.

KLINGE

What idea?

MISTY

This. Coming here. It was Tom's idea.

KLINGE

And how do you feel about it?

MISTY

Dad's in a lot of pain. He's dying.

KLINGE

You think it is the right thing for him to do?

MISTY

I don't ... think about it ... much.

KLINGE

Ms. Brinks, we are at a point in time when we must think about such things. You must have feelings about the situation.

MISTY

I'm not like Tom.

KLINGE

How is that?

Gung-ho.

MISTY

I'm sorry, *gung-ho*?

KLINGE

I guess he'd call it proactive. You know, get the job done.

MISTY

You are reluctant to get the job done.

KLINGE

I'm not all gung-ho.

MISTY

How would you describe yourself?

KLINGE

Not gung-ho. It's not that I don't think it's the right thing. I just wish Tom wasn't so ... eager.

MISTY

You think it is wrong for him to be eager.

KLINGE

I would never act that way.

MISTY

I see. You would not *act* that way. Even if you *felt* that way?

KLINGE

Well, I don't.

MISTY

Ms. Brinks, tell me about your father ...

KLINGE

(Lights shift to Tom, Misty now in shadow.)

KLINGE (cont'd)

... Mr. Hollahan. What kind of parent was he?

TOM

He was Tank Hollahan.

KLINGE

Did that make him a good parent?

TOM

That made him Tank Hollahan.

KLINGE

So ... what was it like to have "Tank Hollahan" as a father?

(Lights shift to Misty.)

MISTY

Didn't Tom tell you?

KLINGE

He told me much. But I am interested in your views now.

MISTY

Well, Dad is a very important man.

KLINGE

Yes, a businessman. But what kind of father is he?

MISTY

Like any other, I guess.

KLINGE

How is that?

MISTY

My mother was his second wife. Did Tom tell you? Well, he might not have, because, well, you know, Dad left his mother for mine. For love.

KLINGE

So you were raised in an atmosphere of love?

MISTY

Yes, I'd say so. Definitely. Yes.

KLINGE

How did your father express love?

MISTY

Oh, you know men.

KLINGE

Please tell me.

MISTY

Well, you know, Mom mostly took care of the love. Daddy was the provider.

KLINGE

Are you implying that your father did not express love?

MISTY

No. I mean, yes, he did. Well, not the gooey, cuddly kind. He wasn't that way. He loved my mother and he loved me. That's for sure. He gave us both lots of things that *showed* how much he loved us. He'd send us stuff from everywhere he went. Like one time when he was in New Orleans, or was it Detroit?, someplace like that, he sent us this very beautiful pottery ... or, no, I think that's when he sent us these matching sweaters ... or, well, he sent us so much stuff. Or, I guess Betsy, his admin, sent it to us.

(Considers Klinge.)

You don't need to know this, do you?

(Lights shift to Tom.)

TOM

It's irrelevant.

KLINGE

You are saying he was simply a businessman. No more, no less.

TOM

Okay, in the interest of circumventing this elliptical technique of yours, I'll spell it out for you.

(Paces.)

You wouldn't know it to look at him now, but Tank Hollahan built an empire. That's not a hyperbole. An honest-to-God American empire. And he ruled that empire with ... untouchable superbness. He was a business genius.

(Lights shift to Misty.)

KLINGE

May I ask where your mother is?

MISTY

Oh, she's ... not with us anymore.

KLINGE

She is dead?

MISTY

Believe me, she'd be here for this if ... well ...

KLINGE

How did she die?

MISTY

(A petrified smile, then ...)

She would have loved the Barn-of-stress, or however you say it. You know, your Fifth Avenue? She couldn't get enough of shopping. So right there you could see it was a match made in heaven. Dad built shopping malls and Mom loved to shop. She called it "retail therapy." If she were along on this trip ... Oh, as we were driving over here? I think we came close to that Fifth Avenue street? Because from the cab I could see all these great stores and I pointed them out to Dad. There was a leather store that was to die for. And Dad was totally into it, looking at the shops and sightseeing. See, my suggestion before we got here was to take a couple extra days. I mean, it's not like we're on a schedule or anything.

KLINGE

It must have been hard for you.

MISTY

Huh?

(Lights shift to Tom.)

TOM

He never let anyone or anything stand in his way -- not other companies, not municipalities, not friendships, *not his families*. Nothing but ...

(Lights shift to Misty.)

KLINGE

Your mother's death. It must have been hard for you. How did she die?

MISTY

(Flutters her fingers in front of her private parts.)

You know.

KLINGE

What.

MISTY

(Writes in the air.)

The Big C.

KLINGE

A long illness?

MISTY

No, it happened pretty fast. A couple of months.

KLINGE

I am sorry. Was your father there during this time?

(Lights shift to Tom.)

TOM

Alcohol. Stupid, fucking booze.

(Laughs.)

It's lunatic, isn't it? I mean, it's hilarious. There's no end to what he could have done. You must have heard that we were in the running to buy a major league baseball team. Well, maybe not you. It was in all the papers.

(Klinge shakes her head.)

Yeah. We were. Oh, man, what a beautiful plan. New stadium on the riverfront. Skywalks to a state-of-the-art mall across the street. Conference center. A campground with barbecue pits. Five hundred RV capacity. Oh, and -- this was brilliant -- an urgent care facility, right there in the complex. You never had to leave. Drive in the night before the game; cook out or go to any one of a dozen restaurants; take the wife and kids to a movie at the twenty-one screen Cineplex; get up the next morning; fire up the barbecue; little Tommy gets a burn on his finger, you take him to urgent care; see the game; have the time of your life! Tank fucking Hollahan. *Synergy*.

KLINGE

But ... this did not happen?

TOM

No. No, it didn't. Before we could close the deal -- oh, and we were just so close, city council in our pocket, bond measures -- his diabetes went wacko on him. He wouldn't stop drinking. Wouldn't change his diet.

(Cackles.)

Yeah, right. Tank Hollahan eating salads!

KLINGE

The amputations?

TOM

Yeah. The left leg first. The right two months later. He held on to his left arm for almost a year after that.

(Sits.)

His guts are like goo. The doctors say he should be dead. But he doesn't let go. *That's* Tank Hollahan.

KLINGE

This has been hard for you.

TOM

And those assholes at Hollahan. Those vultures. While I'm here taking care of him -- watching piece after piece sawed off -- they're doing the very same thing to the company.

KLINGE

(Beat.)

Yes. Yes, I see now.

(Lights shift to Misty.)

MISTY

Daddy was there when he could be. He couldn't just stop running the business for two months.

KLINGE

He couldn't?

MISTY

No.

KLINGE

But your mother, his wife, was dying.

MISTY

(Smiling.)

You know what you're trying to do?

KLINGE

What?

MISTY

You're trying to get me to say things.

KLINGE

What things?

MISTY

(Sardonic.)

Oh, I don't know ... maybe how much Dad hurt me, and how much I hated him for it, and maybe even how much I want him dead now.

KLINGE

Is that how you feel?

MISTY

No, that's what you want me to say.

KLINGE

Ms. Brinks, I do not want you to say any particular thing. I have no other agenda than to discover the truth of your father's circumstances and desires. Because he has arrived here with you and your brother, you have become "circumstances," and I must make inquiries. Does that make sense to you?

MISTY

I'm a circumstance?

(Lights shift to Tom.)

TOM

I really don't think you do see. You could interview my father, what's left of him, for a week, and you'd never even glimpse the real Tank Hollahan.

KLINGE

I might.

TOM

No. No, this ... partial-death abortion over here in the next room is not my father. And the longer I have to look at *it*, the more it diminishes who he was. You know what? I take it back. I won't be profiting from his death. I'll just be cutting my losses.

KLINGE

As much as I sympathize with your personal crisis, Mr. Hollahan -- and I do -- it is your father who must decide when too much has been lost.

TOM

If there was anything left of the man he used to be, I'd advise him against this. I would. But there isn't. He's told me, and he's told Misty, that he wants to die.

KLINGE

And now he must tell me.

TOM

Whatever he says now, you have to help us.

KLINGE

That is not the way the process works.

TOM

Okay, I understand you have to do the right thing. You have ethics. But we have ethics too. In business, all decisions lead to the bottom line. There's no ambiguity. And the bottom line here is that his life is over. He's in pain. He needs to die. End of analysis. It's the best thing for everybody involved.

(Beat.)

And it could be a very good thing for Nobilitas.

(Lights shift to Misty.)

MISTY

You're calling *me* a circumstance? Well, let me tell you something. I may be the only thing that's pulled my father through to this point. He needs me. He loves me. I am the most important thing in his life right now.

KLINGE

Your mother was the most important thing in his life at one time, was she not?

(Misty freezes, the wheels spinning.)

You demonstrate a remarkable degree of loyalty to your father, given your history. I wonder, have thought about how it would be if you were dying and he were healthy? Would he be so attendant to you if ...

(Lights shift to Tom.)

TOM

If you were to make the right decision, it would demonstrate to me that your little enterprise here is a very worthwhile endeavor -- worth every bit of discretionary support I could offer. Nobilitas is doing a great service to humanity and deserves to be funded.

KLINGE

(Offended but controlled.)

Mr. Hollahan.

TOM

Now don't get bent out of shape.

(Lights up on both Tom and Misty.)

MISTY

If the tables were turned ...

TOM

If the tables were turned ...

MISTY

If I were sick and he was well.

TOM

If he were here and I was across the hall, deformed and in pain, a shit bag hanging from my gut.

MISTY

He'd be nowhere in sight.

TOM

He'd be trying to close this very same deal.

(Lights down on Tom.)

KLINGE

(Waits. Then ...)

Ms. Brinks, what are you feeling now?

MISTY

Nothing.

KLINGE

In my experience, when a person says she is feeling nothing, it may mean that her emotions are too powerful to admit. Do you think that this may apply to you?

MISTY

You're the expert.

KLINGE

What was it like for you when your father was absent during your mother's illness and then came to the funeral?

MISTY

You really want to know?

(Lights shift to Tom.)

KLINGE

(Standing.)

This is not a “deal,” Mr. Hollahan. And you have not helped your father’s cause.

TOM

(Panicking.)

You don’t understand. You see, our ethics -- yours and mine -- are not out of alignment. They’re compatible. There’s a --

KLINGE

Synergy?

(Their eyes lock.)

I will speak with your sister now.

(Tom exits. Klinge sits. Lights shift to Misty.)

MISTY

April 15th. Tax day. Noon. Folding chairs on the lawn. So many people. Dad sat on my left, big and silent in the shade of the oak trees, and everybody’s eyes were on him. He was always the center of attention. Everybody always got sucked into him -- like those things in space that light can’t escape from. What are they called? Aunt Phyllis was on my right, and while we were waiting for the priest to begin, she leaned over to me and said, “You’ll have to take care of your father now.” I remember thinking what a strange idea that was. I was only seventeen years old, but smart enough to know that a child doesn’t take care of her parent -- can’t be a substitute for a lost spouse. And yet, there was a part of me that wanted to take my mother’s place. So I could get the kind of attention from him that she got.

KLINGE

And did you do this -- take her place?

MISTY

I guess better than I realized.

KLINGE

And how does this make you feel, Ms. Brinks?

MISTY

I ... have had to change bags full of my father’s ... waste. I’ve had to hold his penis to catheterize him. And you want me to say how I feel? Well, I’m not going there. And when this is all over, I’ll never have to think about it again.

KLINGE

Ms. Brinks, if you will not say, then I must draw my own conclusions. Is that what you want? What would happen if you did “go there”?

MISTY

You're the expert. You figure it out. And when you do, you can write it down on your little pad and put it away in your file. But leave me out of it.

(The door swings open. Tom enters pushing Tank in the wheelchair. Tank is slumped awkwardly to one side, his eyes closed. The two women stand, dreading the worst.)

TOM

(Seeing their fear.)

What.

(Following their eyes to Tank.)

Dad?

MISTY

(Rushing to Tank's side.)

Daddy!

SCENE 3

(Nobilitas after hours. A spot rises on a gurney in the middle of the room. The patient, a dummy, lies beneath a white sheet. Only its head, crowned in a football helmet, is exposed. An ice cream truck version of "Three Blind Mice" plays. Klinge enters stealthily and goes to the table. She pulls a stainless flask from her coat pocket and drinks deeply. Wiping her mouth on her sleeve, she offers the flask to the dummy. She shrugs, takes another swig, climbs aboard the gurney and straddles the dummy. Bending, she plants a long slow kiss on the dummy's faceguard. Hearing a noise, she dismounts and exits furtively.

The lights rise and the door flies open. Tom, Misty and a fully-limbed Tank ride outsized tricycles into the room. They are Moe, Curly and Larry, respectively, dressed in scrubs. The trikes collide, spilling the riders. Sound effects accompany the crash and all subsequent action in the scene. The Stooges rise and brush themselves off.)

TOM

(To Misty.)

Say, what's the big idea, runnin' into me like that?

MISTY

I couldn't help it. My brakes went out.

TOM

I'll give ya a break.

(He pounds Misty's forehead.)

MISTY

Oh!

TANK

C'mon, leave him alone. We didn't see your turn signal.

TOM

Maybe ya got somethin' in your eyes.

(He pokes Tank in the eyes.)

TANK

Oh, oh, oh!

(Misty rubs her face with both hands and gallops threateningly in place.)

TOM

What are you steamed about?

(Misty flutters her hand in front of Tom's face. Mesmerized, Tom follows the hand as Misty lowers it, raises it, and finally drops it, causing Tom's head to jerk violently down.)

TOM

Why you!

(Tom chases Misty around the room and Tank follows.)

MISTY

Woob, woob, woob, woob, woob!

(Klinge enters and blocks their way. Misty stops abruptly and the other Stooges pile up behind her.)

KLINGE

Gentlemen.

(All three Stooges look the other way.)

TOM

Did someone else come in?

KLINGE

Are you the interns?

TOM

The interns? Yes, yes, we're the interns.

(Proffers a hand.)

Dr. Howard.

KLINGE

(Shaking hands with each in turn.)

Dr. Howard.

TANK

Dr. Fine.

KLINGE

Dr. Fine.

MISTY

Dr. Howard.

KLINGE

Dr. Howard.

TOM

(Looping back to Klinge.)

Dr. Howard.

TANK

Dr. Fine.

(The Stooges repeatedly introduce themselves to each other and shake hands.)

KLINGE

Gentlemen!

(The Stooges look the other way.)

Gentlemen. Your patient is in a coma.

MISTY

No he ain't. He's in a bed. Nyuk-nyuk-nyuk!

TOM

(Slaps her.)

Quiet, you.

MISTY

Oh!

KLINGE

You must operate and discover what is causing his malaise.

TANK

Malaise? I prefer mustard.

TOM

(Slaps the back of his head.)

Ya do, huh?

TANK

Ouch!

KLINGE

Remember, you took an oath.

MISTY

No, ma'am, we don't use that kind of language.

TOM

(Holding his hands out to silence them.)

She means for Duty and Humanity.

TOM, MISTY and TANK

(Each raising a fist high.)

For Duty and Humanity!

(The Stooges stoop to their knees and huddle briefly, then scramble into high gear with whoops and shouts. They move their trikes upstage. Klinge goes to her desk while the Stooges rummage through drawers and cupboards, and bring surgical equipment, oversized mallets, and a chainsaw to the operating table. Misty places the earphones of a stethoscope on the dummy's head and holds the bell to her chest. The other Stooges crowd around.)

MISTY

Doctor, this man has no heartbeat!

TOM

Whattaya mean? Hold your ear.

(Misty does as told and Tom yanks the crook of her arm to pull her out of his way.)

Spread out.

MISTY

Ng-ng-ng-ng!

(Tom dons the stethoscope correctly and listens to the dummy's chest. He hears a wild drum tattoo and jumps back.)

KLINGE

Doctors, you must begin. You must apply the anesthesia.

TOM

Anesthesia!

MISTY and TANK

Anesthesia!

(Misty and Tank wallop the dummy's head with mallets while Tom rips the dummy's trunk with the chainsaw. He stops and all three Stooges look inside the body.)

MISTY

Mmm! There's nuttin' inside!

TANK

Whattaya mean? He's just a quart low. Try again.

TOM

Hold him down!

(Misty grabs the patient. Tom cuts again with the chainsaw. The patient's arm comes loose and Misty holds it up.)

TOM, MISTY and TANK

(Horried.)

Aaaaaahhhh!

KLINGE

What? What is it? What's wrong?

TOM

(Taking the arm.)

Nothin's wrong. Nothin' at all.

KLINGE

Do you need a hand?

(Tom and Tank flinch and yelp.)

MISTY

Nyuk-nyuk-nyuk-nyuk!

TOM

(Slaps Misty with the dismembered arm.)

What's wrong with you?

MISTY

Oh!

TANK

(Indignant.)

Dr. Howard!

TOM

(Turns to Tank and offers the arm to shake.)

Dr. Fine.

(Tank shakes the hand and Tom lets go. Tank registers horror. Tom slaps Tank's forehead and grabs the arm.)

TOM (cont'd)

Gimme that.

(He tries to stuff the arm under the blanket, but a leg falls off. The Stooges scream and woob-woob.)

KLINGE

(Going to them.)

What's going on here?

TANK

Doctor, the patient's falling to pieces!

KLINGE

This is an outrage! You must put this man back together.

MISTY

(Lifting the patient's head off the table.)

Here, I'll give you a head start.

(The Stooges all scream.)

KLINGE

Remember your oath!

TOM

(Holding his arms out.)

She's right.

TOM, MISTY and TANK

(Raising their fists.)

For Duty and Humanity!

(They kneel and huddle, then run wildly around the table, collecting body parts and trying to fit them together. "Three Blind Mice" starts up again. Tom hikes the head to Misty. The Stooges exit, leaving the body parts strewn.)

Klinge makes sure they are gone, then slinks to the operating table. She caresses the headless patient and pulls its trunk from under the sheet. It is dressed in a football jersey with the name "O'LEARY" sewn across the shoulders. "Edelweiss" begins to play. Klinge and the dummy waltz a while. Then she returns him to the gurney, gathers his head and limbs, and arranges them properly in place.)

(Fade to black.)

SCENE 4

(As at the end of Scene 2, Tank slumped in the wheelchair, Tom and Misty over him.)

TOM
(Shaking Tank's shoulder.)
Dad? Dad!

TANK
(Rousing.)
Ya knucklehead!

(All are relieved.)

TOM
Dad, wake up. You're dreaming again.

TANK
Huh? What? Where are we?

TOM
Zurich. You know, Sweden?

TANK
Is it lunch time?

TOM
No.

TANK
Happy hour?

TOM
Not even close.

TANK
Who are they?

KLINGE
I am Doctor Klinge, Mr. Hollahan. Do you not remember me?

TANK
Sure, sure. Call me Tank. This your sister?

MISTY
(Fakes laughter.)
Oh, Dad. You're such a kidder!

TANK

Am I kidding?

TOM

Dad, wake up. You have to talk to the doctor now.

TANK

More doctors?

TOM

This is the last one.

(To Klinge.)

You're the last one, *right*?

(Klinge goes to Tank and takes the wheelchair handles from Tom.)

KLINGE

Tank, we will talk now ... just you and I, alone?

TANK

Nothing else I'd rather do. I think I dreamed about you.

(She wheels him closer to the desk.)

TOM

I think I should stay. Seriously, he needs an interpreter.

KLINGE

(Turning to Tom.)

Interpretation is a large part of what I do, Mr. Hollahan. Now, please. You and Ms. Brinks may wait in the waiting room. I will call you when we are done.

(She guides Tom and Misty to the door and closes it behind them. She goes to Tank.)

May I get you something, Tank? Water? Tea?

TANK

Gin?

(Klinge pats his shoulder and goes to her seat behind the desk. Again, she waits. He lifts an ear to the window.)

TANK (cont'd)

The parade.

Pardon me? KLINGE

Hear it? TANK

You mean, Auffahrt? (Confused.) KLINGE

Do you hear the band? TANK

The procession is many blocks away. Perhaps kilometers. KLINGE
 (Tank holds his finger to his lips. Klinge listens. A whisper
 of brass floats through the window.)

You are right.

I'm *all* right now. What's it for, that parade? TANK
 (Raises his right hand.)

Auffahrt. The Ascension. KLINGE

Religious holiday. TANK

Yes. KLINGE

Who ascended? I should know this. I'm Catholic. *Was* ... Catholic. TANK

Christ ascended to Heaven. KLINGE

I thought that was Easter. TANK

That was when they say he rose from the dead. The story goes that he remained on earth
 for forty days before he took his place by the side of the Father. KLINGE

TANK

Didn't want to leave.

KLINGE

He had work to accomplish.

TANK

Unfinished business. The parade goes on.

KLINGE

Tank, what business do you have to finish?

TANK

Not much.

KLINGE

No?

TANK

It's all out of my control. It's up to what's his name now. He'll take over.

KLINGE

I'm not asking about your business, but about your life.

TANK

Oh, that? Well, that seems to be out of my control too.

KLINGE

You *are* in control of certain things.

(Tank makes a circuit in his chair.)

TANK

That man who was here. He said Sweden. Are we really in Sweden? I've never been there before.

KLINGE

We are in Switzerland.

TANK

Wow, Sweden and Switzerland in one day. I've been to most states, but not many countries. Spent the most time in California, I guess. Started out in New Jersey. What does Passaic mean anyway?

(Klinge shakes her head.)

TANK (cont'd)

It reminds me of geology. You know, you dig down deep enough and you get to the Passaic layer. Where it all started.

KLINGE

That is where you were born?

TANK

Somewhere around there. That's where I grew up. Went to church. Played football. Drank like a son of a bitch. Good times. Where I got my get up and go. Go, go, go. It's all go. Or was. Why have I been thinking about that place so much? I've been dreaming about it! Good times.

KLINGE

It does not seem surprising to me, remembering the good times of your life.

TANK

Hadn't thought about Passaic for years and years. Too busy.

KLINGE

What do you remember?

TANK

Something new all the time. The air in summer smelled like ... burnt bees.

KLINGE

Burnt bees?

TANK

What?

KLINGE

You said the air smelled like burnt bees.

TANK

Did I?

KLINGE

Passaic in summer.

TANK

(Tremors starting.)

Ice ... cream. I've been hearing. Ice ... cream ... truck ... mu --

(Another attack. Klinge goes to him but doesn't intervene.)

Tank. KLINGE

Ice ... cream ... TANK

Yes? KLINGE

... truck ... music! TANK

Ice cream truck music. Yes? KLINGE

Peewee! TANK
(Shaking more violently than ever.)

Peewee. Yes, Peewee. KLINGE
(Taking his hand.)

Tank? TANK
(Tank slumps.)

Huh? TANK

You want to tell me about Peewee. KLINGE

I do? TANK

I think so. KLINGE

I don't know. TANK

(Klinge releases his hand and steps behind his chair. She massages his shoulders.)

KLINGE

It might be good for you to do so.

TANK

I'm not supposed to talk to you. I might screw things up.

KLINGE

Talking will only improve the situation.

TANK

(Relaxing.)

I don't get it.

KLINGE

Don't get what?

TANK

I go a whole life and never give it a thought. And then I can't stop thinking about it. I can't stop dreaming about it.

(Melting now.)

I think you missed your calling.

KLINGE

Perhaps. What must we know about Peewee?

TANK

(Laughs fondly.)

Peewee. I can't even remember his real first name. He was always Peewee to us. Peewee O'Leary. Did you ever notice how the biggest guys are sometimes called Peewee?

KLINGE

He was big?

TANK

He wasn't just big. He was tall, yeah, but you coulda smashed beer bottles against his abs. His shoulders were as big as football pads. He was a giant. We all said he'd win the Heisman when he made it to college. He'd be all-pro, too. He carried us. The year we were both on varsity, his last year, he took us to the state championship. We were the best that year. All on his shoulders.

KLINGE

But you were a team. Could one man make all the difference?

TANK

Peewee did. Linebacker on defense. Running back on offense. He could play quarterback if we needed him to. Flanker. Lineman. He did it all.

KLINGE

He carried you.

TANK

Game after game. If we were ahead, he kept us focused. If we were behind, he reached inside us and pulled out every ounce of willpower we had. And if we let him down -- which we did more times than I'd like to remember -- he took things into his own hands.

(Sounds of the gridiron start up.)

What's that?

KLINGE

The procession?

TANK

Yeah. The procession. It was ... it was ...

(The whistle blows.)

There!

KLINGE

There?

TANK

What game was it?

KLINGE

A big game?

TANK

That's right, big.

KLINGE

Against a rival?

TANK

Yeah, a rival. Same division. Identical records. There!

(Klinge wheels him to the spot. She continues to push him as he describes the action.)

It was the fourth quarter. Their field. Oh, those guys were good. They'd been champions the year before. Had us down by a field goal. Time running out. They had the ball. Nothing we could do.

KLINGE

What *did* you do?

TANK

What did *I* do? Nothing. I'm on the sideline. We're helpless. Jesus, all we worked for.

KLINGE

Then?

TANK

They come to the line. Quarterback's under center. It's going to be a running play. We all know that. The center snaps. Quarterback takes the ball, but before he can hand it off ...

(Tank laughs riotously.)

KLINGE

What?

TANK

Boom! God damn! None of us saw it coming. Christ, what a hit. It was like, like Nagasaki! The quarterback's helmet flies one way, the ball the other. Everybody's confused -- the offense, the defense, all of us on the sideline, the announcer.

(Rapturous.)

Oh, Peewee!

KLINGE

Peewee!

TANK

The guy was a bull, a tank, a whole armored division. He blasted through the line and creamed the guy. Exploded everything.

KLINGE

Annihilation. This is good?

TANK

Only if you recover the fumble.

KLINGE

Did you?

TANK

I didn't.

KLINGE

Who did?

TANK

Half the guys go in the direction of the helmet. Half to the ball. Chaos! Madness!

KLINGE

And where is Peewee?

TANK

Peewee. God love Peewee! See, they train you over and over -- they drill it into your skull in practice -- don't pick up the ball. Just fall on it! But Peewee knew better. If you fall on it you're dead. Time runs out. You're history. None of us saw the recovery. All we knew is two seconds after the fumble, Peewee's flying down the sideline, nobody within ten yards of him.

KLINGE

He is alone.

TANK

Unparalleled. An angel. A god.

KLINGE

Your hero.

TANK

(Suddenly agonized.)

Peewee. Oh, Peewee!

(Klinge waits, then ...)

KLINGE

But something happened. You did not win the game?

TANK

Oh, we won. We went on to win the championship. I told you.

KLINGE

Yet there is more to the story. Is there more?

TANK

Yes. No. Nothing ... I want to think about.

KLINGE

It brings pain?

TANK

We all said he'd win the Heisman. He'd be all-pro. Right after he came back from Korea.

KLINGE

Ah. Did he come back?

TANK

Most of him.

KLINGE

What was missing?

TANK

Not much. His left arm. From the elbow down. And ...

KLINGE

What else?

TANK

Something. I don't know what. Something else. Inside him, maybe. Yeah, like I was telling my kids. Colors. Blue and iridescent green, like neon. Peewee didn't have Passaic anymore.

KLINGE

I don't understand.

TANK

Passaic ... had always been inside us. Our pride, and our joy.

KLINGE

What happened to Peewee's pride and joy?

TANK

I don't know. It was gone. Went underground. He didn't want to see us. When we ran into him, he wouldn't talk much. Wouldn't go have a beer with us. "Peewee's not the same," we said to each other.

KLINGE

How did that make you feel?

TANK

The other guys said, "Let him alone. He'll snap out of it. And, anyway, if he doesn't, he lost an arm. Give a fella a break."

KLINGE

The other guys were understanding. And you?

TANK

No. No, no, no, no, *no!*

KLINGE

But the boy had lost his arm.

TANK

Boy?!

KLINGE

What was he? Eighteen? Nineteen?

TANK

He was not just a boy! He was a ...

KLINGE

A god? An angel?

TANK

Our *hero!*

KLINGE

Your fallen hero.

(Another whisper of brass and drums through the window.)

And the music?

TANK

He bought an ice cream truck with his VA benefits. All summer long he drove around the neighborhoods playing that music. The chimes that sound like ... drowning birds. And he would stop the truck, get out, go to the back, open the door, vapor coming out, his shirt sleeve pinned over his stub, or sometimes he'd wear a short-sleeved shirt and the red nubbin stuck out like a piece of liver, and the little boys and girls would point and ask, and he'd give them their ice cream, get back in the truck, and turn on the music.

KLINGE

You watched him.

TANK

It made me sick.

KLINGE

Tank, how do you feel about it now?

TANK

I don't know. Mad. I'm still mad. How can I not think about it for forty years and still be mad?

KLINGE

Did you talk to him?

TANK

No, you never talked. In those days we didn't. Now everybody wants to talk. No, I quit school early. Couldn't stand to stay another minute in Jersey. Had bigger fish to fry. I remember thinking to myself, never give up. Even if it's the fourth quarter and you're down and the other team has the ball and the clock is running out, never give up. That's the lesson I thought he'd taught us. There's always a way to win. And I did. Started by selling dried soup in a box. Then 7-Up. Then distributing. Manufacturing. Competing. Buying, selling, profiting. Building. Building an empire ... inside and out! Sure, people get hurt. *You* get hurt. It's in the nature of things. People die, your son and daughter hate you. You burn bridges before or after you get across. It doesn't matter which, as long as it helps you win. Keep going. Build your empire. Never give up!

KLINGE

Like Peewee did.

TANK

The fucker gave up!

(Shaking violently in his chair.)

All he lost was fucking half an arm! You don't give up! *You don't give up over half an arm!*

KLINGE

Or a whole arm.

TANK

That's right!

KLINGE

Or an arm and two legs?

TANK

That's ...

(Blindsided.)

right.

(Their eyes lock for a long moment.)

KLINGE

Tank, it is against your nature to surrender, isn't it?

TANK

Damn right, it is.

KLINGE

And yet you have come here with your son and daughter seeking our assistance. Why?

TANK

(Gravely.)

Doctor, there's something wrong with me. There's something wrong with ... who I am. I don't know what. It may be genetic. It may be mental. It could be deeper. I wanted to tell a priest. I tried to tell my kids, but it came out wrong. They didn't understand. *I* don't understand.

KLINGE

Maybe I can help.

TANK

I think my soul is in danger.

KLINGE

From what?

TANK

Enjoyment.

KLINGE

(Beat.)

Tank, that does not sound like a problem.

TANK

Unrestrained, indomitable -- is that a word? -- abominable enjoyment, of everything I've ever seen or heard or done or had done to me. It comes from inside and radiates out, until it covers everything in sight and out of sight. It's always there. It doesn't replace the pain. I still feel the pain. I hate it. And at the same time -- God help me -- I enjoy it. Does that make any sense?

(Klinge waits.)

It's sick, isn't it? Isn't it like one of those demons they were always casting out in the Bible? I'm possessed.

KLINGE

I would not call it a demon.

TANK

What would you call it?

KLINGE

This enjoyment is simultaneous with the pain?

TANK

I'm not always aware of it at the time. But yes.

KLINGE

And with pleasure?

TANK

Yeah. If I'm enjoying something, there's another layer of enjoyment on top of that. A different kind.

KLINGE

Rapture?

TANK

(Excited.)

Rapture! You could call it that. That's a good word for it. It's sick.

KLINGE

Tank, when your wife, Misty's mother, was dying of cancer, did you feel this rapture then?

TANK

That was a horrible time. And if I think back on it, it crushes me. It's like an elephant standing on my heart with two legs. One leg is grief, and the other ...

(Hangs his head.)

KLINGE

You can tell me.

TANK

Unbearable joy. Doctor, it has to stop. I've caused too much damage. You have to help me. I feel like I'm tied down here to this chair, in this fucked up body and this lousy brain. But if you cut the string, I'll just ... float away.

KLINGE

(Takes his hand.)

Tank, do you want to die?

TANK

I do.

KLINGE

And yet, you are not gung-ho? I need to know before I can make my decision.

TANK

(Thinks. Removes his hand from hers.)

Sometimes, in business, you make a strategic decision ... to dissolve, to declare bankruptcy and move on. You weigh the options and make the best decision you can. It's not the same as giving up. I'm not giving up!

KLINGE

Of course, you are not.

(Beat.)

TANK

Doctor, I'm ready to end my physical life.

(Blackout.)

SCENE 4

(A half hour later. Tank eats a banana. Misty sits flipping through a brochure. Tom paces.)

TANK

(His mouth full.)

Banana.

TOM

What?

TANK

Ba-na-na.

TOM

Did you wow the shrink with this kind of brilliance?

TANK

I'm just saying ...

MISTY

What are you saying?

Banana. TANK

Christ. TOM

It's a great word. Do you know what it tastes like? TANK

Yes. TOM

I bet you don't. Not really. TANK

What does it taste like? MISTY

You know in the movie *The Sound of Music*? The scene where that woman is singing on the hillside and there are all these white flowers in bloom? TANK

What? TOM

It tastes like those flowers. TANK

Gotcha. TOM

And her voice. TANK

Which, the flowers or her voice? MISTY

The flowers and her voice combined. TANK

Good, Dad. TOM

(Klinge enters and goes to her desk.)

KLINGE

Please, sit.

(Tom obeys. All three wait anxiously while she reviews her notes. Then ...)

Mr. Hollahan. Ms. Brinks. Tank. I know that this predicament has been challenging for all of you. In our conversations, it has become acutely evident how much each of you yearns for the right and proper outcome. It was not easy -- in fact, very wrenching -- for you to make your sojourn here to the clinic. That is why it is with deep regret that I say Nobilitas cannot assist you in taking your life.

TOM

(Bolting from his seat.)

What? What do you mean? My father's in agony!

KLINGE

I am sorry, I cannot reconsider. My decision is final.

TOM

(To Tank.)

Aw, what did you say to her?

TANK

I don't know.

TOM

You don't know? You don't know?

MISTY

Tom, leave him alone!

TOM

What, did you start *confessing* again? Did you barf all over yourself? Talk about the burning parrots inside you trying to get out?

TANK

I told her I wanted to die.

TOM

(To Klinge.)

I told you, it's the medication. He'd be perfectly normal without it.

(To Tank.)

You did?

TANK

Mm-hmm.

KLINGE

Mr. Hollahan, I am well aware of the effects that certain drugs can have on the mental state of a patient. Your father's forgetfulness and his occasional delusional fantasy were not at the basis of my denial. I looked beyond those factors.

TOM

You did?

KLINGE

In fact, I found his perceptions to be quite poignant. As an American, perhaps you are a bit too squeamish when it comes to those with alternative senses of reality. In Europe, we tend not to marginalize these people so readily.

TOM

Oh, great. You fit right in here, Dad.

(To Klinge.)

Okay. Okay, so you say he's not off his rocker when he starts muttering about bananas. Fine. And you say it's okay that he can't remember the names of his own children. He says he wants to die, for Christ's sake. What's the problem?

(Klinge stands and goes to Tank. She takes his hand.)

KLINGE

Tank.

TANK

Yeah?

KLINGE

You are in great pain, yes?

TANK

You wouldn't believe.

KLINGE

You are missing three of your limbs. You are catheterized. You have a colostomy bag. Your internal organs are failing.

TANK

(Looking at himself.)

Can't deny it.

KLINGE

Look at your children. Your son is a very frustrated and manipulative man. Your daughter cannot face reality and uses shopping as some would use morphine.

TOM

Could you get to the point?

KLINGE

(Still to Tank.)

Your life has been tumultuous, has it not? You divorced one wife, another died of cancer. You have been estranged from your children. You have won at business, but at a severe toll to your health and spirit.

TANK

You must have read the book.

KLINGE

Tell me, Tank. Can you honestly say it was all worth it?

TANK

You bet.

KLINGE

And the agony that is sure to accompany you for the rest of your life, will that be of infinite interest and awe to you?

TANK

Absolutely.

KLINGE

And the thought of dying makes you melancholy for the experiences that will be lost?

TANK

Tears my heart right out.

KLINGE

(To Tom.)

As the French say, *voila*.

(Klinge returns to the desk. She collects her notes, holds Tank's file to her chest.)

TOM

So? What does that mean? That's bullshit. What, he likes his crappy life, and so you're not going to help us?

KLINGE

Tank, may I openly discuss in front of your children my reasons for making this decision?

TANK

Enlighten us.

KLINGE

(Opens Tank's file and peruses it before speaking.)

I am sometimes surprised, but not often startled, by what I find in the hearts and minds of the patients who petition Nobilitas for assistance. Tank, you have surprised and startled me.

TANK

Great. What do I win?

TOM

He's not that startling.

KLINGE

Much has been written in the literature about this type of malady--a form of hypomania, I would say. But a simple diagnosis--a mere label, if you will--fails in this case to capture the breadth of the disorder. The symptoms are all present at once, which I have never seen: heightened sensory awareness, thought diversity, the rapid association of divergent ideas, reduced inhibition, *grandiosity*.

TANK

That about says it.

KLINGE

And most disturbing of all: the persistent, abnormal, irrational enjoyment of all experience--an Elysian lens, if you will, through which you view the entirety of your life.

(She snaps the file shut. To Tom.)

No, Mr. Hollahan. Your father does not just like his "crappy life," as you put it. He loves life. He is ... insane, for want of a better word. He does not meet our criteria.

TOM

I want to talk to someone else! Who's your superior? I want to talk to him. Right now.

KLINGE

I am the Director. I have no superior.

TOM

Oh, so you're God Almighty! You have the final say.

KLINGE

Yes, I do.

TOM

(Struggling for a rebuttal.)

You ... but he ... I ...

KLINGE

Please, take as much time as you need.

(Klinge exits. A tense moment, then Tom rushes to the cabinets upstage. He searches frantically, pulls out gloves, blankets, medical hardware. Misty goes to him.)

MISTY

Stop it! Tom, don't be an idiot!

(She grabs him by the shoulders. He stops searching and leans against the counter.)

TANK

They wouldn't keep the stuff in here, son. It's under lock and key.

(Tom glowers at him.)

Look, I take the blame on this. I know you two wanted a different outcome.

TOM

(Going to Tank, Misty following.)

Is this what *you* wanted? Living from hospital to hospital? Crisis to crisis? With a little group therapy in between? Why?

TANK

For duty and humanity?

TOM

I don't think so.

TANK

For Pee wee?

MISTY

Daddy, who is Pee wee?

TANK

An angel.

TOM

You *love* life? Is that what you said?

TANK

I don't remember using that exact word.

TOM

I don't remember you *ever* using that word.

TANK

There's time yet.

(Silence. Then Misty goes to Tank and reaches under his blanket.)

MISTY

We should check your blood sugar. And we should ... oh.

TANK

What is it, honey?

(Misty lifts the drainage bag. The urine is murky with blood.)

Will you look at that. That can't be good.

TOM

Christ, that's it.

TANK

(Takes the bag from her. To Tom.)

We're not giving up, Mike.

TOM

What, you think you're still some kind of world beater?

TANK

We're not stopping here.

MISTY

I've had enough.

TANK

We'll find another clinic!

TOM

(Walks slowly behind Tank's chair and takes the handles.)

It's Tom.

TANK

Who's Tom?

MISTY

He is. You said Mike.

TANK

Well, where's he?

TOM

There is no Mike. There's no George. No John. It's just you and me and Misty.

TANK

Misty?

TOM

Your daughter? The former Mrs. Brinks?

TANK

Oh, her. See, now we're getting somewhere.

(Fade.)

END OF PLAY