

BORED TO DEATH  
"The Maltese Waiter"

By

Will Strode

Will Strode  
5647 Cartwright Ave Apt D  
North Hollywood, CA 91601  
will@willstrode.com  
512-638-3065

INT SWANK HIGHRISE - DAY

JONATHAN, dressed in the most stereotypical psychic gypsy clothing you could buy for \$10, stands in front of a very aggressive looking painting of two horses locked in battle. He's getting a stern talking to and he doesn't have much of a leg to stand on.

MR. STERLING (OS)  
How could you possibly be this much  
of a fuck up?

JONATHAN  
Mr. Sterling, I-

MR. STERLING (OS)  
This is what I get for trolling  
Craigslist for somebody to solve my  
problems.

JONATHAN  
Actually, for the most part, I find  
Craigslist to be a rich tapestry of  
skilled professionals-

MR. STERLING jolts into frame, a wall street hot head that couldn't be more than about eighteen years old on a good day.

MR. STERLING  
I swear to god I will eat your dick  
off for breakfast if you say  
another word.

JONATHAN  
Mr. Sterling I'm sorry but I really  
have tried to get your briefcase  
back. Just give me a few more days,  
I haven't failed a case yet and I  
will not fail this one.

MR. STERLING  
I don't have a few days Ames, that  
prospectus is supposed to be in my  
client's hand tomorrow morning. My  
father is depending on me to get  
this client.

JONATHAN  
Oh, that must be very difficult,  
working for your father. My father  
once gave me a part time-

(CONTINUED)

MR. STERLING

That's it, you're fired Ames, I'm replacing you. I've already replaced you.

MR. STERLING walks to the door and rips it open.

MR. STERLING

Mr. Jensen, get in here.

An absolute brick of a man walks in, the kind of late 40's chiseled jaw hunk you'd expect to step out of an old noir novel and knock out a team of goons. This is HAWK JENSEN.

MR. STERLING

Mr. Jensen, Hawk, I've got a case for you and I hear you're a real shit kicker.

HAWK JENSEN

I always get the job done the first time.

Jonathan stares at him in a mixture of fear and awe.

JONATHAN

(stuttering)

Mr Sterling! You can't honestly, my rates are entirely reasonable and I always get my man. Or briefcase, once I got a book back.

MR. STERLING

I'm not paying you Ames, I want you out of here and off this case.

Jensen glides over and guides Jonathan toward the door.

HAWK JENSEN

Take a hike kid, you're in over your head.

Jonathan stops himself at the last second.

JONATHAN

I am not. Mr Sterling, listen. I'm going to get your briefcase back. If I don't, you don't have to pay me.

MR. STERLING

Ames, I don't give a shit what you do, just get out of here.

JONATHAN  
I'll get that case.

The door slams shut in his face. Jensen and Sterling are still totally audible.

HAWK JENSEN (OS)  
So it's two hundred a day plus expenses.

MR. STERLING (OS)  
Fine just get the damn briefcase back.

JONATHAN  
That is entirely unreasonable.

INT RAY'S STUDIO - DAY

Ray works at his drafting table while Jonathan sits on the corner of the bed, shifting uncomfortably against a pile of clothing and comic books. The tiny room is full of cardboard boxes in preparation for a move.

JONATHAN  
I don't understand how I could be replaced like that Ray. He wouldn't even let me explain about the receptionist.

RAY  
(mocking)  
The psychic receptionist? I wouldn't buy that bullshit either.

JONATHAN  
I'm not saying she's psychic, just that she has some kind of...I don't know. She can see through you, almost into the future.

RAY  
That's a psychic Jonathan, and she is not a psychic. She's just a hot asian girl and hot asian girls have a powerful blockade against bullshit from dumb white guys.

JONATHAN  
I don't know that Jews count as white guys.

(CONTINUED)

RAY

Oh please, asian girls don't know the difference. Why don't you just admit you can't handle this one and give up.

JONATHAN

Because I can handle it Ray, can't I? I mean I haven't failed to solve any of my other cases.

Ray turns around to face him fully, and puffs on a pipe.

RAY

Maybe you should finally get it through your head that you aren't a private dick. You've almost died at least two times.

JONATHAN

I can't have washed out already, can I Ray?

RAY

Are you listening to yourself? Why do you care about washing out as a fake private detective? That is ridiculous. Aren't you a writer?

Ray passes the pipe to Jonathan.

RAY

More importantly, I've got a signing at Forbidden Planet in two hours and I get to meet Sam Hudly. The dude's like my hero.

Ray grabs a copy of Sam's book, THUNDERFACE.

RAY

He redefined the use of gutter space.

JONATHAN

I've always been fascinated with comic page layouts. How do you decide on where to put everything?

RAY

You just lay shit on a page Jonathan. Which one of those shirts should I wear?

Jonathan looks at the pile of clothes beside him on the bed.

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN

I think you should wear the brown polo, it makes you look earthy. Hey are you moving back in with Leah?

RAY

Not yet, but I went ahead and packed in case she asks me to next time I see her.

JONATHAN

It's good to be prepared.

INT. COSMO HQ - HEAD EDITOR'S OFFICE - DAY

George sits alone in a very swank modern lady's office. He thumbs at a new copy of Cosmo with a smile on his face as KATHLEEN BLACK, a blonde late-40's power hotty, comes up behind him.

KATHLEEN

(teasing)

I'd have thought you'd read a couple of those before coming in for an interview.

George peers up with a childlike smile, pleased at being caught off guard. He's noticeably pretty stoned.

GEORGE

Kathleen, I was enraptured by this article on creative new uses for whipped cream and it is astonishingly erotic.

KATHLEEN

(reminiscing)

Oh George, you always did have such an uncanny grasp of the sensual.

George is suddenly focused on Kathleen, almost intoxicated by her.

GEORGE

Kathleen it is so good to see you. I remember now why you were called Helen of West 57th.

KATHLEEN

Oh you old flirt.

George smiles in admittance.

(CONTINUED)

KATHLEEN

I was sorry to hear about Edition.  
It was truly bestial, the way they  
handled your talent. Have you seen  
the latest issue?

Kathleen rummages through her bag as George tries to blow it off.

GEORGE

Oh no I've left that all behind me  
now. It's just water under the  
bridge now, not even part of my  
thought process--

Kathleen pulls out the magazine and drops it in front of him. The cover is a picture of Glenn Beck and Nancy Grace with the title "Saviors of America". George is immediately furious.

GEORGE

My dear god! I spent half my life  
making that magazine into an  
unbiased bastion of good taste and  
these nouveau-riche hilljacks ruin  
it all in one crushing blow! I've  
got half a mind to fly to Dallas  
and cram this sycophantic nonsense  
into the nearest oversized  
tailpipe.

KATHLEEN

George, George, calm down. I'm  
sorry I brought that out.

GEORGE

I guess I'm still a little wounded.

KATHLEEN

Mm-hmm, let's talk about moving on  
with Cosmo. I think we could get a  
lot of use out of a man with your  
assets.

GEORGE

Well Kathleen I appreciate  
that. You know my writing and  
editorial eyes were oft overlooked  
at Edition, but that magazine would  
have faltered several times over--

Kathleen stands and crosses the desk, a seductive wiggle in her stride.

(CONTINUED)

KATHLEEN

I had other skills in mind for you  
George.

She runs a hand through his hair.

KATHLEEN

(commenting on his hair)  
Like fluffy whipped cream.

Kathleen gazes at him, George gazes back with wary  
curiosity.

EXT. LADY ORGANA'S PSYCHIC MASSAGE - DAY

The shop is a rundown neon-lit glass storefront advertising  
psychic readings and asian massage. The windows are blocked  
out with signage on chakra centering and mystical stone  
treatments.

Jonathan crosses the street and heads up to the door.

INT. LADY ORGANA'S PSYCHIC MASSAGE - DAY

Light pours into a barebones waiting room as Jonathan  
fumbles with the heavy door. Inside are a few chairs, some  
fountains from Target, and a reception desk in front of a  
large mirror. There's a gated security door near the desk.

Jonathan fumbles with the door, throws himself against it  
and then squeezes through on the third try.

The receptionist, a beautiful asian 20-something named LING,  
looks up as Jonathan enters and is instantly unamused. An  
OLDER GENTLEMAN watches the whole thing play out from one of  
the waiting chairs.

JONATHAN

(embarassed)  
That door is really heavy.

Ling buzzes the Older Gentleman through the security door  
and a very old Thai woman, MADAME PHU-KANG, comes out to  
meet him.

LING

(to Patron)  
Enjoy your session, sir, thank you.  
(to Jonathan)  
You, get out.

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN

Wait give me a chance, I just want to get a massage this time. I've had a very tough morning and I think it would help. You see one of my clients actually fired me today and I'm feeling very rejected.

LING

Your rejection is evident on your face, but I know that you are lying. Get out before I call 911.

JONATHAN

(insistent, obviously lying)  
No, no, no. Please, why do you think I'm lying? Because I'm not lying. I really just want a shoulder rub, please.

Suddenly the entry door opens up and Hawk Jensen is there, striding in confidently (and having no trouble with the door).

HAWK JENSEN

Hi Ling, I'd like to meet with Lady Organa regarding Mr. Sterling's briefcase.

LING

(suddenly very sweet)  
Oh hello Mr. Jensen! You know the Lady will always have time for you. Please have a seat and I'll get her.

HAWK JENSEN

Thank you darling, but I'll stand. I think better on my feet.

JONATHAN

Wha-wait! This man is a detective! He stole my client! He's going to cause you so much trouble!

Ling gives him a dirty look and disappears through the security door.

Hawk Jensen towers over Jonathan, smugness oozing from every pore.

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN

Mr. Hawk, Jonathan Ames. I was hoping to talk to you. You see, this was my case first. As one detective to another, I feel that as a matter of professional courtesy--

HAWK JENSEN

I'm sorry but this is my case now, and when the Hawk sets a target, he never misses.

JONATHAN

(throwing a tantrum)

But I've never failed a case before! I can get this together if he'll just give me another chance. Will you talk to him? I don't want to come off as needy, but I really need this.

HAWK JENSEN

Even failure has its place Ames, it's the scars that make the man.

Before Jonathan has a chance to respond, the buzzer rings and LADY ORGANA appears. She's a captivating bohemian woman in her early 50's, swathed in loose fabrics and baubles.

Ling comes in behind her, holding the door.

Lady Organa glides to Hawk Jensen and leans into his ear. They exchange a few nods, whispers, and giggles. Then she disappears.

Hawk heads for the exit.

HAWK JENSEN

Maybe it's time to stop playing detective, Ames. Go find yourself a nice data entry job, work your way up. Be a company man.

Hawk, for the first time breaking his smooth streak, fumbles at the heavy door trying to pull it open. A card falls out of his pocket.

Jonathan picks it up, it's for a restaurant EL LEMONGRASS.

Jonathan looks back to Ling in a sort of desperate last bid.

(CONTINUED)

LING

Get out!

INT. FORBIDDEN PLANET COMICS - DAY

Ray and a very large, very old nerd, SAM LUDLY, sit at angled tables at the back of the iconic comic shop. Banners of SUPER RAY and THUNDERFACE are plastered across the store.

Ray and Sam sign and sketch in copies of their books for waiting FANS.

Ray looks up from his sketch and glances at Sam. He looks back down and finishes the drawing, then hands it to the TEN YEAR OLD FAN.

RAY

There you go, I drew you Doctor Doom with a robot dick.

TEN YEAR OLD FAN

Wow thanks Ray!

Sam steals a disgusted glance at Ray, then quickly goes back to drawing when Ray looks.

Ray sneaks another peak at Sam as Sam hands a book to the FAN in his line. Ray finally gathers up his courage when Sam goes to drawing in the next book.

RAY

Mr. Ludly, I gotta tell you I am a huge fan of your work. Your run on Namor was like this amalgam of Wally Wood and Walt Simonson. You are such a massive inspiration for me.

Sam doesn't even look up.

SAM

Yeah that was a good book.

Ray feels a little proud of himself for a second before...

SAM

So the premise of your book is that you can fight with your penis?

(CONTINUED)

RAY

Um, yes, I mean it's not about penis fighting in particular but there is some penis fighting in it. It's actually more of a romance.

SAM

It sounds like some sort of hentai fetish comic to me.

RAY

(defensive, but embarrassed)  
Well like I said it's not really about cocks, it's about a superhero who tries to get his girlfriend back. It's a personal story.

Sam goes back to sketching.

SAM

(muttering)  
Maybe you should have kept it that way.

Ray is aghast. JIMMY, the shop owner walks up to them with a couple of bottles of water and sets one down on either table.

JIMMY

Hey fellas, thought you might like some refreshments. Everything going ok?

RAY

(discouraged)  
Hey Jimmy, it's going pretty good I guess.

SAM

Jimmy, do you have some sort of separator we could put up here? I believe my fans would be more comfortable if they weren't under a constant assault of genitalia.

RAY

What the fuck? You're drawing a bunch of guys in package hugger speedos!

Ray reaches across to Sam's table and snatches up the picture he's drawing.

(CONTINUED)

RAY

Look! There is clearly an outline on Power Girl's vaginal lips.

SAM

That is a part of her costume. At least I'm not drawing the world's most popular children's heroes with their dicks flapping in the breeze.

RAY

Everybody here knows what a dick looks like.  
(Ray gestures to a woman)  
Lady, you've seen a couple of dicks right?  
(back to Sam)  
She's seen a dick.

SAM

Nobody wants to look at your dicks.

RAY

Every one in this line showed up just to see my dicks!

JIMMY

(trying to calm things down)  
Woah, fellas, listen we can put up a sign or something.

SAM

I will not work next to this degenerate piece of shit. I don't want my work compared to some talentless hack.

Sam stands up and furiously packs up his things.

SAM

My work has legacy. It takes more than a gimmicky smut comic to make a name for yourself. At the end of the day, you're just another bearded asshole whoring a trashy little photocopy of something you hope will make you famous.

RAY

You used to be a bearded asshole too!

Sam starts to walk out with all of his stuff in his arms. He looks back to Ray.

(CONTINUED)

SAM

You might as well stop making  
comics right now, you're a blight  
on this industry.

Sam storms out. Ray looks like somebody just killed his  
dog.

INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

George and Jonathan sit indian-style around the Volcano,  
both of them pretty well stoned. There's a glass of white  
wine near Jonathan's foot. The lights are turned low.

JONATHAN

I can't believe she just jumped  
your bones like that George. She  
must be obsessed with whipped  
cream.

GEORGE

She really loved my hair. She  
caressed it so tenderly. I think  
she might have taken a lock of it  
while I wasn't looking.  
(turning around and pointing to his  
head)  
Is there a spot missing?

JONATHAN

(inspecting in earnest)  
No, I don't see any. Your hair is  
quite beautiful though George.  
Gossamer like spun silk.

GEORGE

It truly is my most prized feature.

JONATHAN

My most prized feature is probably  
my nose. Though people do seem to  
comment on its size, I feel that it  
gives me a very regal stature, like  
Oscar Wilde's lips.

GEORGE

Or Kurt Vonnegut's wrinkly old  
curmudgeon face.

JONATHAN

So did she give you the position?

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE

No, we made passionate love on her desk and then she told me all she had open was guest editor spot on Good Housekeeping. I'm going to Elle and Marie Claire tomorrow. I've even got a meeting with chief editor of Jet, if that doesn't tell you the state of things. Jonathan, do you think it's possible that I've outlived my usefulness? I think that maybe I should just retire to some far-off corner of Morocco where I can be the local scoundrel playing off the wealthy vacationing women.

JONATHAN

I've been suffering a similar crisis of faith lately. I can't seem to crack this latest case and now this Hawk Jensen guy comes in like something straight out of a Dashiell Hammett novel. It made me feel like such a phony.

GEORGE

Oh Jonathan, don't take this the wrong way, but you are a phony.

JONATHAN

I know, but I was a good phony. Now I feel like, what am I supposed to do? I've failed as a writer, I'm failing as a private detective, where do I go from here?

GEORGE

Take it from me my dear boy, your life will provide you hundreds opportunities for you to become a nothing. But every failure is just a temporary stop, you're never truly finished until you're lying in a hole, feeding the local cemetery's Kentucky Bluegrass crop. Come, let's escape from these thoughts.

JONATHAN

You're right George.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE

Come my boy, the fastest road to a lighter heart comes with a heavy belly.

Jonathan fishes in his pocket for the card.

JONATHAN

Well I have been wanting to try this new restaurant. It's a Thai/Colombian fusion restaurant on the upper East Side.

GEORGE

Splendid! Let's get Ray and go eat. This pot is incredibly hungry, it's got me practically salivating for a grass-fed skirt steak and Ray is always such a rejuvenating breeze in my darkest hours.

EXT. EL LEMONGRASS - NIGHT

The restaurant is a particularly schmoozy looking affair, very modern and elegant and pretentious.

RAY (V.O.)

(grumpy)

Why are we here?

INT. EL LEMONGRASS - MOMENTS LATER

Jonathan, Ray, and George sit at a table with a few waters and nothing more. They've obviously just been seated. The tables are lit by overhead lamps.

Ray looks around because he's totally out of place. The restaurant is teeming with socialites and fancy folks.

RAY

Everyone is looking at me. I can tell that everyone here thinks that I don't belong here.

GEORGE

Ray that is nonsense, you're just paranoid from all the pot you've been smoking.

(CONTINUED)

RAY

I haven't smoked any pot. Pot relaxes me. Wait did you guys smoke without me?

JONATHAN

Well, earlier I think we...

GEORGE

I've been smoking since my meetings this morning. I'm positively soaring in the clouds right now.

JONATHAN

Ray, let's just get some food and you'll feel better. You're a successful comic book artist, you totally belong here.

RAY

I'm not successful, Sam Hudly told me I was a degenerate piece of shit and I'd never work again.

JONATHAN

He didn't use those words.

RAY

Oh yes he did. He used exactly those words. That man was my hero and he took a dump on me! He took a big steaming cleveland right on my chest like I was some sort of thai prostitute.

Jonathan glances around to make sure none of the people at the Thai restaurant are offended.

GEORGE

I could never understand fecal fetishes in the first place. Ray I'm sure this Hudly fellow was just threatened by your success. Besides, it can't possibly have been as bad as being rejected after the 45 minute lesson on oral gratification I gave to Kathleen today. I feel entirely used by the whole situation.

RAY

I don't want to listen to you bitch about tongue-banging some hot old

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RAY (cont'd)  
broad. I've masturbated to that  
fantasy multiple times.

JONATHAN  
He's right George, though I do  
understand your feelings of  
exploitation. She could have at  
least offered you a contract  
position.

A waiter approaches their table.

GEORGE  
She had three very explosive  
orgasms.

JONATHAN  
Women never seem to care how many  
orgasms you give them.

The waiter appears, but we don't see his face as he is  
cloaked in a noirish shadow.

MYSTERY WAITER  
May I get you some drinks  
gentlemen? We have a refreshing  
Thai Basil Mojito that goes  
perfectly with our curry-braised  
pork shoulder.

GEORGE  
Oh I want that! All of that,  
everything you just said.

JONATHAN  
White wine please.

RAY  
I don't care, beer. Whisky. Beer  
and whisky.

GEORGE  
I'll take a whisky too, can you  
just bring me one that goes with  
the, the other things?

WAITER  
Don't worry, Johnny Aims never  
misses.

Jonathan looks up swiftly, recognition all over his face.

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN

Wait, what did you say? That's my name. Who are you?!

The Waiter goes to move away but Jonathan grabs his arm and yanks. Ray gets really nervous but George is delighted to have the entertainment.

RAY

Jonathan! Other people have your name, that happens.

GEORGE

(stoned laughing)

Jonathan, relax. You have the most generic men's name there is.

Jonathan continues to struggle with the waiter.

JONATHAN

That's not what I'm talking about. Look!

WAITER

Let me go man, I've got a six top of very drunk Korean businessmen!

Jonathan grabs the light and aims it at the waiter's face. It's Hawk Jensen! Only he looks way more hip and disheveled.

JONATHAN

A-ha!

Jonathan looks back to Ray and George, smug, with a "see I told you" look on his face.

RAY

(feigning excitement)

It's a waiter!

GEORGE

Well he is a handsome waiter.

JONATHAN

No! This is Hawk Jensen! This is the other private eye! He's tailed me here and he's going to...

(beat)

Wait what are you doing here? Why are you using my name?

Hawk shrugs him off and straightens his shirt.

(CONTINUED)

HAWK JENSEN

I'm on a case-

JONATHAN

No you're not, you just offered us drinks.

Hawk looks around.

HAWK JENSEN

Fine, whatever I work here man.

JONATHAN

Oh I was wondering how you were doing financially. I know the private detective thing isn't the best pay, but I thought a licensed professional like yourself would be a little more stable.

HAWK JENSEN

Well I'm not exactly licensed.

JONATHAN

What? I'm not licensed either! I put that in my ad so it makes it more legal. I'm really a writer.

HAWK JENSEN

(suddenly interested)

Oh really? What sort of projects are you working on now? I don't like to toot my horn too much, but I'm actually an actor. That's how I got into the detective business in the first place, practicing for a role in an upcoming stage production of The Maltese Falcon.

JONATHAN

I love that book! Wow I had no idea you were just acting that whole time. You're very good. George, isn't he straight out of a novel?

GEORGE

He's got the most amazing chin structure. Ray, you could probably use him as a model for your superheroes.

(CONTINUED)

HAWK JENSEN

I've done some modelling.

RAY

I hate pretty superheroes.

JONATHAN

Why were you using my name?

HAWK JENSEN

I wasn't, it was Johnny Aims.  
A-I-M-S, like a gun. It's a new  
character I'm testing out.

JONTAHAN

Oh I like that! Well unfortunately,  
I don't have any projects going on.  
You see my last book was rejected.  
Though I am supposed to work with  
Jim Jarmusch in four or five years.

HAWK JENSEN

(politely faking enthusiasm)

Oh wow, I love his work, let me  
know when that happens. I have to  
go back to my tables.

JONATHAN

Wait wait wait, what about the  
briefcase? Do you think I could  
maybe help you get it back or buy  
it from you? It's very important  
that I give it back to our client.  
I've never failed a case and I just  
feel like this would get me back on  
track.

HAWK JENSEN

(suddenly serious)

I can't believe you'd try to buy  
out Hawk Jensen, the Hawk's not for  
sale.

RAY

All private detectives are for  
sale.

GEORGE

Ray's right. Look Hawk, Johnny,  
whatever, can you just give  
Jonathan here a chance to get the  
briefcase back? I'll leave you a  
very large tip.

(CONTINUED)

HAWK JENSEN

No way old timer, I've got a meeting with Lady Organa in two hours and after that this case is closed.

Hawk struts away.

JONATHAN

Two hours. We've got to beat him over there.

GEORGE

Well the shop is only about 30 minutes away from here. We could eat first.

JONATHAN

I am pretty hungry.

RAY

Did he even take our order?

All three of them look around, trying to get the attention of any waiters in the vicinity.

EXT. EL LEMONGRASS - LATER

Jonathan, Ray, and George emerge from the restaurant, drunk and happy.

GEORGE

That pork shoulder was absolutely incredible, a fragrant clash of cultures!

RAY

I think I ate too many noodles.

JONATHAN

I'm really glad I found that card on the sidewalk. It must have been-

Sudden panicked memory dawns on Jonathan's face.

JONATHAN

Oh shit! Shit! I forgot about the briefcase

RAY

Aww, can we just go back to George's place and vaporize some

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RAY (cont'd)  
weed? I'm carrying a little brown  
exotic-faced love child over here.

JONATHAN  
No, I've got to do this Ray. It's  
important to me!

GEORGE  
You two have been on edge all  
night. Vikram will be here in just  
a moment. He can drive us over  
there and Jonathan can get his  
briefcase while Ray and I...

George produces the mini-vaporizer from his coat pocket.

GEORGE  
Can vaporize on the go.

The car pulls up, Vikram honks twice.

RAY  
Goddammit, fine.

EXT. LADY ORGANA - NIGHT

George's car rolls up across the street from the psychic  
shop. As they arrive, they see Hawk Jensen walking up to  
the shop, they've made it just in time.

JONATHAN  
There he is! He must have taken the  
subway and walked the three blocks  
over. I bet he doesn't make much as  
a waiter.

RAY  
(very stoned)  
He shouldn't, we waited half an  
hour for our drinks.

Ling opens the door and welcomes Hawk into the parlor. She  
looks around suspiciously before closing the door to the  
shop.

JONATHAN  
I have to figure out how to get  
past that damn psychic.

(CONTINUED)

VIKRAM

There is no such thing as a  
psychic.

RAY

Listen to Vikram, you're just  
terrible with asian girls.

GEORGE

I remember the first asian girl I  
went to bed with. Her name was Hao  
and she had the most beautiful  
toes. Dainty and delicate. She  
required a fatherly sort of  
attention that I found very  
arousing in my younger days.

Ray and Jonathan look at each other. Vikram looks a little  
disgusted.

VIKRAM

Is there any story that does not  
remind you of an erection you once  
had Mr. George?

CUT TO:

INT. LADY ORGANA'S PSYCHIC MASSAGE - DAY

The door creaks open and George peeks his head through.

GEORGE

Uh, hello? I was interested in a  
massage.

LING

Good evening sir, I welcome you. Do  
you require relief of the mind or  
body?

George enters.

GEORGE

Both my mind and body feel a little  
burdened.

Ling comes around the counter, almost entranced.

GEORGE

Though I feel it abating with your  
aroma, like warm cinnamon.

(CONTINUED)

LING

Perhaps you will have a seat. I am not an expert, but I may be able to ease your trouble.

GEORGE

I'd like that very much.

EXT. LADY ORGANA - NIGHT

Ray and Jonathan wait outside the door, sort of hiding but not doing a good job of it.

JONATHAN

I hope George can pull this off.

Ray looks at Jonathan lovingly.

RAY

You are so worried about this case, aren't you?

JONATHAN

I feel like this is the only thing I'm still good at Ray. My writing career has been steadily rocketing downhill since the day my novel came out.

RAY

Jonathan, you can't do this for the rest of your life. This isn't a backup career. You lose a hundred dollars every time you take one of these gigs.

JONATHAN

I know, but what else am I supposed to do?

RAY

You're supposed to write!

Ray takes Jonathan's hand.

RAY

You are the most talented and beautiful novelist I know. But you are always looking for a way to beat yourself before you have a chance to succeed. Why won't you let yourself succeed?

(CONTINUED)

Jonathan looks pensive, but before he can respond we hear the sounds of George's lovemaking coming out the door.

RAY

I think that old stoner is boning  
the psychic.

INT. LADY ORGANA'S PSYCHIC MASSAGE - DAY

Ray and Jonathan take a peek inside the shop.

George's clothes are all over the waiting room, but he and Ling are behind the counter.

LING

Your energies are flowing into me,  
I will open your sacral chakra.

GEORGE (O.S.)

(out of breath)  
Open me, my lotus blossom.

Ray and Jonathan sneak by, Ray stops to sneak a look at the dirty goings on behind the counter. Jonathan gives him a quick dirty look, but the sight of raucous sex-fest captures his attention.

After a moment, Jonathan manages to break gaze and go for the security door. But it's locked. Ray throws his hands up in frustration.

LING

Oh my white stallion! I can feel  
your aura engorging itself!

GEORGE

Yes, yes it's very swollen!

That mental image is too much for Ray.

Jonathan motions behind the counter, a security button. But it's treacherously close to Ling's gyrations.

Jonathan tries for it but Ling whips her hair and he has to snap back at the last second.

In a lucky break, Jonathan catches George's eye. Jonathan motions to the button and George gives him the ok.

GEORGE

My, um, my energy channels are a  
little blocked, maybe if I  
straighten up my leg here.

(CONTINUED)

George's black-socked, pasty white leg clumsily fumbles at the button. He can't quite get it.

GEORGE

Maybe if you pressed on my left hip  
a little-

Ling grinds with new enthusiasm and George's leg jolts out, pressing firmly at the button.

GEORGE

Ho-oh my god.

Jonathan and Ray slip into the door.

INT. LADY ORGANA'S PSYCHIC MASSAGE - HALL

Jonathan quietly closes the door behind them. They take a moment to collect themselves.

RAY

I'm suddenly feeling very  
inexperienced.

JONATHAN

The orient holds a mysterious and  
powerful sexual energy Ray. Maybe  
one day you and I will get to  
experience it.

They start to sneak down the hallway, a seedy little  
whorehouse hallway with a half dozen unmarked doors, dirty  
mood lighting, and some cheap shitty gypsy decorations.  
Weird sex noises echo through the hallways.

RAY

I don't like this place, I feel  
like the ghosts of a million sperm  
are burrowing into my skin.

They creep forward another step or two. Jonathan's really  
playing up the detective walk.

RAY

It's very moist in here. How do you  
get chlamydia? Is it airborne?

JONATHAN

No, I think you have to actually  
stick your penis into something  
with chlamydia.

They reach a cracked door and Jonathan throws himself against the wall to creep an eye in. Ray shoves his face in to see...

INT. SEX ROOM - NIGHT

Inside is an Mistress Phu-Kang going to town on some fat guy's rear end with a raquetball racket.

Jonathan and Ray remain at the cracked door.

JONATHAN

What is going on in this place?  
It's like a William S Burroughs  
pleasure den.

RAY

I feel like the internet should  
have desensitized me to things like  
this.

Suddenly Mistress Phu-Kang hammers the racket down with a loud THWACK and a familiar voice calls out.

SAM

Bandana Mistress Phu-Kang! Bandana!

RAY

I know that voice...

JONATHAN

That must be his safeword, my  
safeword was eunuch.

Ray suddenly bursts into the room. The Mistress Phu-Kang barely reacts at all.

RAY

Hudly!

Sam Hudly whips around, large white ass still flailing in the air.

SAM

Cock artist! I should have known  
you'd be lurking around a  
whorehouse.

RAY

(exasperated)

Wh-you're getting your ass paddled  
by the world's oldest Thai  
prostitute!

(CONTINUED)

Sam shuffles to stand up.

SAM  
Mistress Phu-Kang, he didn't mean that. You should apologize to this wonderful woman.

Jonathan pokes his head in.

JONATHAN  
Oh, hey Ray is this your friend?

RAY  
Jonathan, this is Sam Hudly, one of the greatest comic creators of the twentieth century who is also a total sociopath dickhead. Sam, this is Jonathan, he's writes beautiful novels.

SAM  
Hey.

JONATHAN  
Hey. Uh, so I'm gonna go find Hawk, Ray. Is that ok, are you going to be alright?

SAM  
Yeah, I'm fine.

RAY  
He was talking to me. Yeah, go, I'm fine.

JONATHAN  
Oh-k.

Jonathan exits.

SAM  
Did you really mean it? About me being...

RAY  
A total dickhead? Yes I meant that.

SAM  
No, the artist thing.

RAY  
Yes dammit, you're great, you're the best, you're the reason I

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RAY (cont'd)  
started drawing. And you really  
shat on my feelings today.

The two of them stand there, soaking up the awkwardness.

SAM  
Sorry I got all pissy about your  
book. Your X-Men run was actually  
really good.

RAY  
Thanks Sam, that means a lot to me.

A beat

SAM  
Would you want to catch a beer in  
about 40 minutes? I paid up an hour  
here.

Mistress Phu-Kang slaps the racket against her hand.

INT. LADY ORGANA'S PSYCHIC MASSAGE - HALLWAY

Jonathan continues to the final doorway, pushing his hair  
back as he moves along.

He pushes up against the door and looks inside.

INT. LADY ORGANA'S PSYCHIC MASSAGE - CHAMBERS

Inside, Hawk obscures the doorway, Madame Organa moves  
around behind.

HAWK JENSEN  
There's got to be something you  
want.

LADY ORGANA  
I have something I want, I have  
everything I want. Now stay there  
and I'll be back to give you  
pleasures of all kinds.

Lady Organa exits, revealing the briefcase on a coffee  
table. Jonathan bursts in as quietly as possible.

JONATHAN  
(whisper yelling)  
Jensen!

(CONTINUED)

HAWK JENSEN  
(trying to be quiet)  
Ames!

We get a good look at Jensen, he's handcuffed to a radiator and he's looking like a trapped dog. He and Jonathan both whisper as they converse.

JONATHAN  
Is this how you're solving the case? Using sexual favors?

HAWK JENSEN  
Dammit Ames, she's got me trapped here. Help me get out.

Jensen tugs at the handcuffs.

JONATHAN  
I can help you with this, but you have to give me the briefcase.

HAWK JENSEN  
The briefcase is right over there. Just get me out of here and it's yours.

Jonathan looks past Hawk, the briefcase sits on a side table. Jonathan lunges across the room and grabs it. He rushes back and holds it up in front of Jensen.

JONATHAN  
Ha! I tricked you Hawk Jensen! I'm the superior detective.

LADY ORGANA (OS)  
I hope you are ready to be drained Mr. Jensen.

HAWK JENSEN  
(breaking character)  
Come on man! She's going to do things to my ass.

Jonathan looks at the briefcase, then back at Hawk.

JONATHAN  
I'll be your hero.

Jonathan whips out his multi-key lockpick and goes to work on the handcuff. Suddenly Lady Organa comes back in the room with a massive floppy dildo.

She freezes when she sees the two of them.

LADY ORGANA  
What is the meaning of this?

Hawk panics, but Jonathan gets the lock undone with a loud CLICK.

LADY ORGANA  
I'm calling 911!

JONATHAN  
No no why would you even think  
about that?

Lady Organa comes lunging across the room at them, but they escape in a flurry of matching trenchcoats.

INT. LADY ORGANA'S PSYCHIC MASSAGE - HALLWAY

Jonathan and Hawk blast out into the hallway, Lady Organa chasing them with the sex toy.

Ray stands out in the hallway, smoking from the mini-vaporizer.

Jonathan grabs him and pushes him down the hallway.

INT. LADY ORGANA'S PSYCHIC MASSAGE - LOUNGE

George and Ling are putting their clothes on.

GEORGE  
I have to say, that was a wonderful  
experience, yet I feel very sad.

LING  
Your heart is clouded with doubt.

GEORGE  
Yes, yes it is. I feel-

LING  
As if your only worth in society is  
measured by the suppleness of your  
penis.

GEORGE  
Jonathan told me you were a  
psychic.

Ling crosses to him and lays a gentle hand on his cheek.

(CONTINUED)

LING

You are worth more than the ejaculations you create Mr. George.

GEORGE

That is precisely what I needed to hear Ling.

LING

I know.

Suddenly Jonathan, Hawk, and Ray burst from the security door. Ray snatches George by the arm and they rush toward the door. Lady Organa comes rushing behind.

George calls back.

GEORGE

Don't worry about STD's, I'm very clean!

EXT. LADY ORGANA - NIGHT

The gang rushes out the front door and piles into the car. Vikram peels out and the drive off into the night.

EXT. DINER - NIGHT

A lonely diner shines bright in the wet light of the pitch black city. We sweep in from high to the two figures standing out front.

Jonathan stands outside with Hawk, the briefcase between them, newfound respect in both men's eyes. George, Ray, Sam, and Vikram sit inside the diner window behind them, eating.

HAWK JENSEN

You showed a lot of heart in there kid.

JONATHAN

Thank you Mr. Jensen. I really felt like I was channeling John Laidlaw for second.

HAWK JENSEN

I don't know who that is.

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN

Well he's a fictional detective Mr. Jensen, this really great Irish novelist--

HAWK JENSEN

It's Thom Chase actually. Hawk Jensen's just my character.

JONATHAN

You really are an amazing actor Thom Chase. If you don't mind me asking, why aren't you acting anymore?

HAWK JENSEN

I'm always acting Ames. I haven't had a decent role in over a decade, but that doesn't mean I can just give up. If you have a skill and you love your craft, you have to keep at it.

JONATHAN

But don't you feel like maybe you've hit your peak?

HAWK JENSEN

Maybe I have, but the only way you ever really lose is by giving up.

Jonathan looks truly touched.

He glances down at the briefcase, picks it up, and hands it to Hawk.

JONATHAN

You should take this back.

HAWK JENSEN

Are you sure?

JONATHAN

Yeah, I think it's an even trade.  
 JONATHAN SHOULD BE SELFISH?  
 JONATHAN COMPLIMENTS HAWK

Hawk takes it from Jonathan and they share a respectful look. Hawk nods to him, straightens his trenchcoat, and walks off into the dark night.

Jonathan watches him go, a satisfied smirk on his face.

Suddenly George pounds on the window behind him.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE  
(through the glass)  
Jonathan! They have got the most  
incredible pancakes!

Ray holds up a fork full of pancake.

Jonathan smiles and walks inside as we zoom out and cut to  
black.