

***HA!***

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by Lawrence Dial

271Sackett St. #1  
Brooklyn NY  
11231  
lawrencedial@gmail.com

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*In 1989 the Metropolitan Transit Authority retired the last graffitied subway train from service. Twenty years later, graffiti partners Hazel and Yosemite are facing their own compulsory retirement from the ante meridiem city streets. In amorous and tragic detail, HA! HA! follows one week of four diverging lives throughout the five New York City boroughs where graffiti came of age: Hazel, a graffiti loyalist who pursues her die-hard provisional artistry to near fatal levels; Yosemite, her retiring graffiti partner on the cusp of either turning legit or self-destruction; Toffee, his benefactor, an art curator, and psychedelic yuppie who fronts the money for Yosemite's break-out gallery show; and Vick, the recently graduated traffic enforcement agent who has been procured to replace Yosemite as look-out for Hazel. Gut-wrenching and empathetic, HA! HA! is an exploration of the anywhere-canvas of the human spirit. A naked glimpse of friendships and love, as beautiful, necessary, and temporary as the graffiti the characters are killing themselves to create.*

**SETTING:** All city, New York.

**CHARACTERS:**

HAZEL: about forty

YOSEMITE: just recently forty

VICK: late forties

TOFFEE: mid-to-late fifties

RATS CREW: any age, wearing only black, hoods pulled over their heads, and respiratory masks.

**Note:** HAZEL has a reoccurring cough, clearing of the throat (*Ha ha*) that should be embedded within her speaking, and should not slow down the thought or statement. There should also be at least three members of the RATS CREW, preferably more.

## ACT I

### Scene 1.

The Brick Wall, covered in graffiti. Near a subway stop. Night, late December cold.

(Three figures enter out of the shadows. All are dressed in identical dark hoodies and clothing, each wearing a respirator mask. They take a spray can from their pockets, shake them, then descend upon the brick wall, tagging *RATS CREW* over it. The three figures exit.)

### Scene 2.

The Brick Wall near the subway stop. HAZEL (late thirties) enters. She approaches the wall, sees the recent tag, "*RATS CREW*" sprayed over a previous two-color graffiti piece of her creation, "*HA! HA!*"

HAZEL

*Ha ha. ...Shit.*

(She puts her hand to the wall and touches the spot, closing her eyes in supplication.)

(She comes back, looks around to see if the coast is clear, watches a car pass, and then from under her jacket removes two cans of spray paint, and begins to spray over the *RATS CREW* tag.)

(She hears something. She stops, her cans hiding under her jacket. It sounds like a ghost "*Booing.*")

HAZEL (CONT'D)

*...The fuck?*

(She looks around. Hears nothing, then resumes spraying.)

(She hears something again, this time definitely a person nearby booing like a ghost, then giggling.)

HAZEL (CONT'D)

Hey, fuck you pervert.

(She begins to walk off, looking back, when from in front of her, with the hood of his jacket pulled over his head, YOSEMITE (early forties) jumps out and scares her.)

YOSEMITE

BOO!

(HAZEL falls on her butt and YOSEMITE cracks up. She gets up to hit him.)

YOSEMITE (CONT'D)

(Catching her.) Yo yo, chill. Chill it's me.

HAZEL

I know that's why I'm trying to hit you! *Ha ha.*

YOSEMITE

Yo you shoulda seen your face. (Laughs.)

HAZEL

I knew it was you. Sound like the most retarded ghost I ever heard.

YOSEMITE

Word, that's what I was going for. Casper with Down Syndrome.

(HAZEL hugs him. She holds on.)

YOSEMITE (CONT'D)

Okay, okay...

HAZEL

(Smiles.) You're late.

YOSEMITE

Not late enough to see you got dissed. (Looks.) Who's Rats Crew? Never heard of 'em.

HAZEL

You tell me. Never heard of 'em either. Just some toys. *Ha ha.*

YOSEMITE

(Beat. Shivers.) So what's up? Cold as hell out here, man.

HAZEL

You tell me what's up. I guess you're not in jail?

YOSEMITE

Yo yo, you shoulda seen this bitch. I thought she was out to get me for real. I wore the suit Toffee bought me last Valentine's day? Calvin Klein or some shit? Smiling at her, and she's all up on her podium thingy staring down. I'm all like, *Yes um maim. I be wearing a suit!* (Smiles, then laughs.)

HAZEL

...So what'd you get?

YOSEMITE

Three year probation. (A look.) I know right? I charm the panties off them female judges, yo.

HAZEL

Shit, you always get off easy. Last time I got picked up I got fined three thousand.

YOSEMITE

Word, it was the suit yo! That, and I told her about my gallery show coming up next week. About how I'm taking steps to become a more like *legitimate* artist or something? She bought it.

HAZEL

And see you joke, but you was worried too. All crying at me, *they gonna lock me up, Hazel. This time for sure!*

YOSEMITE

Yo yo. I didn't get off that easy. I have to piss in a cup once a month for the first year. Meet with a probationary officer, because they found Toffee's weed on me. So no more trees.

(HAZEL begins spraying over the *RATS CREW* tag again. Unconsciously, YOSEMITE moves to a look-out position. He removes a pint of liquor from his pocket.)

HAZEL

What Toffee say?

YOSEMITE

You think I call you to bail me out because I want Toffee to know? He'd freak he knew I got busted again. Nah, yo... Oh, and I get to do A.A. again, so. *Cheers.*

(He takes a swig of the liquor. He drinks throughout.)

HAZEL

I see you're taking that real serious.

YOSEMITE

Every Thursday from five to eight or nine to eleven I plan to, bet.

HAZEL

Maybe you should. Smarten you up. That last arrest was stupid. *Ha ha.*

YOSEMITE

(As if at A.A.) *Hi, my name is Yosemite. And I'm addicted... to Graffiti.* And then I gotta sit around and listen to everybody's sob stories? What a fucking bummer. No thanks.

HAZEL

Hey, there's this spot off the four train I wanna go hit tonight I heard about. Hundred sixty-seventh, Jerome Avenue? Ever been there? *Ha ha.* Like one of them street billboards? If you lift me to a fire escape, then I think I can pull up and reach over—.

(The sound of a car approaching, slowing down as it passes...)

YOSEMITE (CONT'D)

Yo yo, chill. *Chill...!*

(HAZEL stuffs both the spray cans under her shirt, and walks a few steps away until the car passes, and she can resume.)

YOSEMITE

(Nervous, watching the car drive off.) Yeah, keep going...

HAZEL

You're jumpy.

YOSEMITE

(Takes a drink. Beat.) Yo yo, what'd you do for Christmas? I thought you was gonna come over, girl?

HAZEL

...And watch you and Toffee make out under the mistletoe? *Nah.*

YOSEMITE

I'm serious. I had a present for you and everything. Even wrapped it up.

HAZEL

Aw. What was it? Spray cans?

YOSEMITE

Really *nice* spray cans. But no, for serious. What'd you do? You call up old web-toed Fitzpatrick? They finally buffed out his piece on the Citi Bank building, you seen?

HAZEL

Yeah, that sucks... Nah, WEB TOE moved to Portland last month.

YOSEMITE

No shit? I hear they got really good rain up there.

HAZEL

He got some gig doing like art design for some pharmaceutical company of something.

YOSEMITE

Exciting. (Makes a fart noise.) Fuck him.

HAZEL

Yeah. And I thought about going bombing with BONER, but—.

YOSEMITE

Wow, you really were desperate not hang out with me, huh? Haven't seen that dude since he went nuts and beat the fuck outta that other dude that one night. Remember that? *Psycho*.

HAZEL

...Did you know he has a kid?

YOSEMITE

BONER?

HAZEL

Yeah.

YOSEMITE

Twenty-four seven three sixty-five, always-got-a-boner, *BONER*? Word?

HAZEL

Yeah. Some Mexican girl works kitchen prep with him. He knocked her up.

YOSEMITE

I guess that makes sense somehow...

HAZEL

Yeah. So. (Equivocal.) I just did the thing I guess.

YOSEMITE

Huh. So you have plans for New Year's then I'm assuming, or....?

HAZEL

...Nah, not really.

YOSEMITE

Just gonna do the *thing* then you guess?

HAZEL

I assume so.

YOSEMITE

Good. Then you got no excuse not to come over to Toffee's then. We're having like a get together or whatever? You're coming. I'll give you your Christmas present.

HAZEL

Okay.

YOSEMITE

There's also this guy I want you to meet. You'll like him.

HAZEL

...A guy?

YOSEMITE

Yup. (Then.) Jesus, look at you. Already worried.

HAZEL

...Who is he? *Ha ha*.

YOSEMITE

He's old school. Got a whole buncha pictures of the trains. Classic era stuff. He used to work with Toffee back in the day. You guys should go out, talk. You'll like him. Get a coffee. Or something.

HAZEL

Yeah... (Then.) No, I can't do that. I don't like coffee. *Ha ha*.

YOSEMITE

Or something. If you like him he could go out bombing with you maybe.

HAZEL

He writes?

YOSEMITE

Don't know. You have to ask him.

HAZEL

(Suspicious.) Why you pushing him on me?

YOSEMITE

I'm not pushing. I don't care. But he could look out for you, I mean. How hard's that?



(HAZEL, done with her graffiti piece, moves to YOSEMITE and offers him the cans, his turn to paint.)

HAZEL

You look out for me. What I need with him? (Then.) What?

(YOSEMITE's hands are up, not taking the spray cans.)

HAZEL (CONT'D)

(Beat, she understands.) I thought you said you got off easy?

YOSEMITE

*You* said I got off easy.

HAZEL

You said you got the piss test, the probate officer and the A.A.?

YOSEMITE

Yeah yo. And then *she* said I get a mandatory twelve to eighteen month incarceration if I'm caught even *holding* a spray can or fail a piss test. (Drinks.) Yup, so.

HAZEL

Fuck... (Sinking in.) A year a half in jail for graff? Is she serious?

YOSEMITE

If I get caught. Like I said, she was a straight bitch, yo. (Then.) Yo yo, you know who she look like? Exactly like Mrs. Scardanzo, remember?

HAZEL

So wait. What are you gonna do then ?

YOSEMITE

Yo yo, what *can* I do? (Then.) Remember Scabby Scardanzo though? Assistant principal?

HAZEL

No...

YOSEMITE

Expelled us for selling acid to the Freshmen?

HAZEL

No, I mean like. *Ha ha*. Are you gonna like... *Quit?* Or what?

YOSEMITE

Come on, how can you not remember her? Had that crazy eighties perm? Those glasses?

HAZEL

Mothafuck...! You're stupid! You know that?

YOSEMITE

...Yo yo, what do you want me to do? Cry?

HAZEL

Something! I mean, can't you get like time off that? The probation? For like good behavior?

YOSEMITE

You're thinking *jail* time, yo. This was my third offense for just this year—thank god it's over. I'm lucky I got just the probation, yo.

HAZEL

Yeah, sounds real lucky, man.

YOSEMITE

Hey, better than jail. A year and fucking half? This shit's serious.

HAZEL

You're not acting like it.

YOSEMITE

I was all day at the court. In a suit. And believe it or not, yo? This was good news.

HAZEL

I mean, you not gonna go out anymore then... What are you gonna do? You gonna freak.

YOSEMITE

Nah, I got that gallery space coming up that Toffee and me put money down on. I'll work on my paintings, put some of 'em up. Try and sell something. Yo, bet. I could become a *paid* artist maybe. Toffee knows a lot of people that do that. The get *paid* for making art. It's fucking crazy.

HAZEL

Paying you for bombs and tags? Yeah, *crazy*.

YOSEMITE

Come on, this ain't the end of the world. And you know this is what I been going at for a while now.

HAZEL

Didn't leave yourself much choice, did you?

YOSEMITE

Right, because painting buildings with roll brushes all day is fucking choiceful. (Beat.) Listen. There's this one big wall at the gallery, and I was thinking we could throw up some murals. And you could help me, and—.

HAZEL

I already told you. I'm not into that.

YOSEMITE

I mean, I know you don't like it, but you can make a lotta money—.

HAZEL

I like it fine. When it's on a *wall*. Out here. Otherwise—*Ha ha*. I'm not into it. *Sorry*.

YOSEMITE

(Trying to sell the idea.) We can do whatever we want with this space though. Two weeks I got it rented. I might use this guy's pictures I'm telling you about. Put up this like slide show? And do like a what-do-ya-call-it? An exhibition? You know? You should meet him. He's bringing the pictures over to Toffee's place—.

HAZEL

So you just gonna quit then? That's it for you?

YOSEMITE

(Beat.) Yo yo, what do want me to do?

HAZEL

I wanted you to go bomb Jerome with me tonight, that's what I *wanted* you to do.

YOSEMITE

But I can't.

HAZEL

Because you fucked it up.

YOSEMITE

Yeah, bet.

HAZEL

Because you got fucked up. (Then.) I mean, *Ha ha*. Sometimes I think, man...

YOSEMITE

What?

HAZEL

You get like that on purpose. *Ha ha*.

YOSEMITE

Why would I do that?

HAZEL

Because you *know* you'll get caught. I mean, *three* times this year? *Really?*

YOSEMITE

Hey, you been busted plenty, yo.

HAZEL

Half as much. But maybe next time I'll just get drunk and high, and stand there like you too.

YOSEMITE

First off? I was pissing, yo. And second—.

HAZEL

Yeah, joke about it you think it's so funny, but it's not to me. I'm fucking pissed.

YOSEMITE

Hey yo if you gotta go you gotta—.

HAZEL

I'm not kidding! Who am I suppose to go out with now? We're a team. Everyone knows *HA!* *HA!* and *YO! YO!* WEB TOE's in Portland, and BONER's got a Mexican's baby...?

YOSEMITE

Yeah, that's right. And good for them. Been twenty *years* we been going out all together. I can't fucking stand those guys anymore.

HAZEL

Well sometimes I can't stand you.

YOSEMITE

That should tell you something. (Beat.) You wanna do this shit forever? Come on. This ain't P.S. one sixty-one no more, girl. You wanna be a team? Offense defense? Help me with this gallery then, partner.

HAZEL

And what? You think it's gonna set you up for life? Gonna make you feel the same way as Jerome Avenue? Fuck a gallery. It's not the same.

YOSEMITE

(Calmly.) Fuck a Jerome Avenue. There's a thousand of 'em. And always will be. Fast as we throw 'em up here is as fast as they get buff out. And I hate to say it, but they're starting to all look the same to me. ...*Shit*, Dick and me prolly already hit that spot in the *ninties*, bet. I mean, we been all city, up and down this place for years. And for what?

HAZEL

I don't know. Maybe we shoulda been *selling* stuff instead. I'm sure Dick woulda loved that.

YOSEMITE

You said it yourself. Web Toe's in Portland, Boner's got a Mexican baby, and if Dick's out there? He ain't coming back. (Then.) We gotta face it. Everything we do. Everything we done? Everything we'll *ever* do. It's all gonna be either dissed. Buffed out. Or faded.

HAZEL

Then quit, and forget it then. Fuck it.

YOSEMITE

That's right. *Forgotten*.

HAZEL

Good!

YOSEMITE

(Beat.) Alright, listen. If I'dda known you was strapped for cash I never woulda asked you to bail me out, okay? (A look.) Harvey called me yesterday. Said you ain't paid rent in months?

HAZEL

...Work's been slow.

YOSEMITE

What? Is there a shortage of buildings to paint or something? Or you too tired in the mornings to make it into work?

HAZEL

'Least I got a job. And if you so concerned, any time you wanna pay me back, go right ahead.

(YOSEMITE hands her a few bills.)

YOSEMITE

Here. Come over New Years, I'll give you the rest.

HAZEL

Eight dollars?

YOSEMITE

*Or* help me out with this gallery wall? And I'll give you a percentage off the top whatever I *sell*. As a team.

HAZEL

It's already on a wall, right here. Why would anyone wanna *pay* you for this? *Ha ha*.

YOSEMITE

Yo yo, you don't wanna do it? *Bet*. But I want you to at least *meet* this guy on New Years. See what he's like.

HAZEL

You don't gotta pawn me off on somebody. I'll fly solo if I gotta.

YOSEMITE

I think he's just someone you might dig on. What's the problem with that? You gotta come by for the money anyways. I mean, what else you got, HA?

(HAZEL begins to get ready to leave in one direction. It's clear YOSEMITE lives in the opposite direction.)

HAZEL

I got... Two cans? Six more I racked earlier stashed up near Jerome? I'm going bombing tonight. What you got?

YOSEMITE

Come on, just meet the guy. I promise you'll dig him.

HAZEL

You coming? Or what?

YOSEMITE

Yeah, and get arrested and spend a year in jail. Word, that's sounds dope.

(HAZEL shrugs.)

HAZEL

(Offers.) We could be careful.

YOSEMITE

...It's not like I don't want to, yo.

HAZEL

And I'm not twisting your arm.

YOSEMITE

(Pause. He thinks. Looks around.) Can't believe this the last place anyone ever saw him... I look around here like there some secret...

HAZEL

Trust me, there ain't.

YOSEMITE

(Equivocal.) Nah... (Smiles.) Alright, tell me what this Jerome spot's like again?

(They both exit in HAZEL's direction, uptown towards Jerome Avenue. Ceremoniously, before they leave, they each kiss their fingers, and bless the Brick Wall.)

### Scene 3.

New Year's. A few hours before 12:00. YOSEMITE and TOFFEE's apartment in Manhattan. Early night. Most of HAZEL's attention is on a black book she sketches in. YOSEMITE and VICK are mid-conversation. YOSEMITE is looking at VICK's picture slides over a light box.

YOSEMITE

Wait, yo. When was this?

(VICK looks at the slide.)

VICK

Um. Like seventy-four? (Thinks.) Yeah, seventy-four. Because what happened was, there was a huge raid at the number four train yard that day, which was basically *under* Tracy Towers. And cops just come out of nowhere, blocking all the exits. So everyone scatters.

YOSEMITE

So yo, *what* happen to him?

VICK

Um. Yeah, it like *twisted* him? Front half one way, bottom half the other?

YOSEMITE

Damn . . .

VICK

Looked down. He could see his heels.

YOSEMITE

Shit. (Shivers.) That's messed up. Yo yo, Hazel? You hearing this?

HAZEL

(Without looking up.) ...Urban legend.

VICK

No legend. He was my brother. That's why cops don't chase 'em no more, I mean. After that. 'Lest down into the tunnels. We were kids then, you know? Kids run. But um. No one goes down into the train tunnels really no more, so. But that train there. That was that.

YOSEMITE

(The slide.) This was... The train that hit your brother?

VICK

Um. That's the MIKE 211, right? B.M.T line? In the Osha Safety Green? (Looks.) Yeah. I knew that kid Mike too. He wasn't actually a kid, I mean. He was like twenty-something then.

YOSEMITE

How old were you?

VICK

Like twelve, I think? Mike lived at two hundred and eleventh. Near Gun Hill. Near us sorta. Um. He died too. Hitching the side of an I.R.T. train. Lotta kids died doing that back then.

YOSEMITE

Uh huh. Shit... (Beat.) I'm gonna see where Toffee's at with that pizza. Vick, you want something to drink? A whiskey? I'm kinda getting loaded, yo.

HAZEL

That's a shocker.

VICK

That's sure. I mean *great*. Would be great. I mean.

(YOSEMITE exits to the kitchen. VICK looks at HAZEL. She catches his eye, then he looks away, at another slide.)

VICK

Um. This one. This is a Franklin Avenue Shuttle. It was hard to hit because it was constantly moving, but. Every now and then you could get it. I think that's a MICO 1 piece in this picture. Different Mike than the two-eleven Mike. But he got hit by a train too, I think. Got drunk and fell asleep in a bad place. If it's the same guy I'm thinking of. Maybe not.

(VICK picks up another one.)

VICK (CONT'D)

Um. This is an old double E Broadway local train. That's one of my brother's pieces there. A good one. The two guys in the picture are, I think... MORBID? And HAP 152, yeah. (Pause.) Both these guys, shortly after this picture fell in one of the tunnels. You know, where like um. How like the tracks can drop down a story or two? To another track below? One of them musta slipped, and. *Grabbed* the other? So they both fell. Together. Like a forty foot drop. One of them lived. He *bounced*, no kidding. (Pause.) The other guy didn't um. *Bounce*.



(YOSEMITE comes back.)

YOSEMITE

What was this?

VICK

Um, nothing. Guys I knew.

YOSEMITE

When?

VICK

Nah, this was a long time ago. In um seventy-three. *MORBID*. That was his tag. He'd do the M and the O, then the R would be all big and sweep out under the B. I. End on a capital D. Nice letter combination. Nice guy. His real name was Leonard. I think.

YOSEMITE

Cool...

VICK

Or maybe it was another Mike? I can't remember. It's been a long time. Most them guys in the pictures aren't around anymore.

HAZEL

We noticed.

(YOSEMITE glares at HAZEL.)

VICK

No, I just mean. Yeah, *sorry*. It's um. Yeah.

HAZEL

You ever write? Or just. Click *pictures*.

VICK

Nah... After my brother. Um. Just pictures from then on.

YOSEMITE

Yo yo, it's cool though. That you did that. These shots of the trains are like important, you know? Like a part of history or something, yo?

VICK

Thanks. You still go out?

HAZEL

He's retired.

YOSEMITE

Sometimes, yeah.... But by the time we started bombing in the nineties? M.T.A. had already stopped running the trains in like eighty-eight?

VICK

Yeah. Um, eight-nine actually though. But yeah. The good trains were gone by eighty-seven. Now, seventy-four? Seventy-five? That was really when graffiti peaked, I think.

HAZEL

You think so?

VICK

I mean um, train graffiti yeah. Not um, you know. What you guys are doing.

YOSEMITE

Yo yo, remembering these now as a kid with *my* brother? It's why we got into writing I think. That, and our dad pawned our T.V. So I blame all my art on him. And my drinking. (Laughs.) Oh shit, I forgot your whiskey!

(YOSEMITE exits again, catching eyes with HAZEL as he goes. She burrows into her sketch book.)

VICK

What are you...? In your book? Working on something?

(HAZEL doesn't respond, but shuts the sketch book.)

VICK (CONT'D)

Sorry. Um. I didn't mean to...

HAZEL

No, that's.

VICK

(Pause.) What?

HAZEL

I didn't say anything.

VICK

(Beat.) You write *HA HA*? Right?

HAZEL

What?

VICK

*HA HA?* That's what you write? With exclamation marks? That's your tag?

(Before HAZEL can respond YOSEMITE reenters with VICK's *huge* drink.)

YOSEMITE

(Continuing the thought.) It's actually though, probation's not so bad. Toffee's helping me with some of the, you know, *finer* sides of the art world. Industry. *Thing*. But it's going okay. Gives me time to work on my paintings.

(HAZEL looks at YOSEMITE.)

VICK

Probation?

YOSEMITE

Oh. I meant just like. (Smiles.) I been chilling out lately. With them night adventures. Like a *Self*-probation, I'm saying. On myself.

VICK

Oh. Yeah, I knew guys who tried to do the art gallery stuff, but um. Yeah. That's good then.

YOSEMITE

But what?

VICK

Huh?

YOSEMITE

You said *but*?

VICK

What?

YOSEMITE

What's the but? They tried to do it...*but*?

HAZEL

It's obvious Yosemite. They tried to do it. But they all *died*.

VICK

(Chuckles awkwardly.) Um no, I meant. You know, they tried to do the fine art gallery show thing. Graffiti on canvas. But it didn't work out really. People didn't. As much as we thought

of um, the graffiti as art? What we were doing? People had a hard time looking at it as *fine* art. Out of the um, context of... You know, *off* the trains.

YOSEMITE

Yeah...

VICK

I didn't mean. No. I was talking. That was the *eighties*. It's like, different now.

YOSEMITE

Yeah...

(YOSEMITE downs his drink.)

YOSEMITE (CONT'D)

...I'm gonna get another. One of these.

(YOSEMITE exits for another drink. HAZEL busies herself with a milk crate filled with spray cans.)

VICK

(Beat.) So um. Yosemite, he said. Maybe later if um. If you want to—.

TOFFEE

Pizza's here!

(TOFFEE enters with a large pizza. He's mid-fifties, dressed in business attire, with flairs of a past hippie life. He sets the pizza down, grabs a slice, eats and talks.)

TOFFEE (CONT'D)

(To VICK and HAZEL.) Hey, dudes. Sorry. I got caught up at the office on the phone with my art handlers in Tokyo. Apparently, long story short. A crack suddenly just like *appeared*? Out of nowhere on one of our wood paneled Vermeer's? And. Anyway, mass hysteria fifteen hours away, because it's like this *undocumented* crack, and. So no one knows who to blame, and. *Sorry*—. Forget it. *Vick*. How are you, man? Good to see you. You start that new job with my cousin?

(TOFFEE hugs VICK, enthusiasm trumping the awkwardness.)

VICK

Um Yeah, no. Graduation's tomorrow. And then it's our first day out unsupervised.

TOFFEE

Exciting. Exciting, man.

VICK

I guess, yeah.

TOFFEE

Hazel. We missed you on Christmas. Why didn't you come over?

(TOFFEE hugs HAZEL, she simply shrugs. TOFFEE then retrieves a large bong.)

TOFFEE (CONT'D)

We had Eggnog and really good weed. All that stuff. You missed it, man.

HAZEL

Bummer. Next year.

(YOSEMITE enters with a new drink.)

YOSEMITE

Thirty minutes or less my ass, yo.

TOFFEE

(Crossing to him.) I'm sorry, baby. I wanted to be here so much earlier, man. I got caught up. Our appraiser screwed the pooch I think. Man, what a head ache.

(They kiss, greet etc.)

TOFFEE (CONT'D)

I see you got a head start.

YOSEMITE

It is New Years.

TOFFEE

And I think you're lapping me.

YOSEMITE

You want something? A drink? (Offers his.)

TOFFEE

I think I'm okay right here for the moment... (To HAZEL and VICK.) But guys, there's Veuve Chicquot in the fridge too, if anyone wants to pop that a little early. How much time do we have?

YOSEMITE

We got little over an hour.

(VICK's cell phone rings. And rings. It takes him a moment to realize it's his.)

VICK

Oh. (Finds it.) Um, it's Joe my FTO—I gotta. (To HAZEL.) 'Scuse me while I um? *Sorry.*

(VICK exits into the other room. TOFFEE packs the bong.)

TOFFEE

So Hazel, where you guys going out tonight?

HAZEL

Going?

TOFFEE

You and Vick. Are you guys—.

YOSEMITE

(Interjecting.) *Writing.* He means.

TOFFEE

(To YOSEMITE.) I thought Vick was taking her—(To HAZEL.) *You* out tonight, right?

HAZEL

(To TOFFEE.) Who said that?

YOSEMITE

No one said that.

HAZEL

(To YOSEMITE.) Did you say that?

YOSEMITE

I did not say that.

TOFFEE

(Then.) I meant graffiti.

(HAZEL looks at them, then understands.)

HAZEL

Man, fuck you guys.

TOFFEE

Hey, no.

YOSEMITE  
He meant.

TOFFEE  
I meant for graffiti, really. Right Yosemite? Like later tonight, man.

YOSEMITE  
Yo yo, he did. Relax.

HAZEL  
(To YOSEMITE.) I thought this was suppose to be a get together thing? I'd just meet him.

TOFFEE  
It is. That's what—.

YOSEMITE  
You are.

HAZEL  
Then if I *liked* him. We'd go bomb together.

TOFFEE  
And...?

HAZEL  
*No way.* Motherfucker's a jinx. Does he know *anyone* who hasn't died?

TOFFEE  
He knows me.

HAZEL  
And he's weird. And I think slightly retarded, for serious.

TOFFEE  
No he's not.

YOSEMITE  
(To TOFFEE.) A little, yo. *Weird*, not. You know.

TOFFEE  
But he's nice. He worked security for me, would always bring me these Danishes—.

YOSEMITE  
I'm just saying, you don't like him. Forget it, yo.

HAZEL

I'm not saying that... I mean.

TOFFEE

What's not to like? He's adorable.

YOSEMITE

Adorable's not the word I'm thinking.

TOFFEE

Hazel, knows what I'm talking about. Vick's got some charm, right?

HAZEL

...Yeah, no but. He's still in school or something? Graduating? Dude's like *fifty*?

YOSEMITE

(To TOFFEE.) Graduating?

TOFFEE

Hate to break it to you, Hazel. But you're no spring bud either. I mean, look at Yosemite and me, man? Love blooms in impossible gardens.

(VICK reenters. The conversation stops.)

TOFFEE (CONT'D)

Vick, come on man. Perfect timing.

YOSEMITE

Yeah, we was just talking about Hazel's impossible garden.

HAZEL

Shut up.

VICK

What was this?

TOFFEE

(To YOSEMITE.) Yeah, shut up. (To HAZEL.) Here Hazel, you have first green.

(HAZEL takes the bong, hesitates. She looks at VICK, then takes a tremendous hit, and coughs severely.)

TOFFEE

Whoa, right on. There you go. Happy New Year!



(HAZEL wipes her mouth, looks at VICK, and then hands the bong back to TOFFEE.)

HAZEL

...Thanks.

(TOFFEE offers the bong to VICK.)

VICK

Ah, no um. I'll pass. I can't. They test us. But um, you guys go ahead.

YOSEMITE

(To VICK.) Testing...?

TOFFEE

(To YOSEMITE.) It's all yours then baby.

VICK

What? Yeah, we get um. Or we're suppose to get. Um periodic drug tests, you know, so. I haven't yet, but they made it pretty clear that they do. Give 'em.

YOSEMITE

(To VICK.) For school?

(TOFFEE hits the bong.)

VICK

School?

YOSEMITE

They give you drug tests for...?

TOFFEE

(Exhales.) No, Vick's in training to become a blueberry, man. That's what Joe calls them. He's Vick's field training officer. I set it up. Here, hit this. There's one left.

(YOSEMITE takes the bong, but doesn't smoke. TOFFEE moves to a radio/stereo and turns on some music, slow and romantic like Johnny Hartman's Don't You Know I Care. Or All I Think About Is You by Harry Nilsson.)

YOSEMITE

Wait, your cousin Joe the *cop* cousin Joe?

TOFFEE

Yeah, traffic cop cousin Joe.

VICK

Technically um. Traffic enforcement *agent*. Is what we. Cops are um. *Different*.

YOSEMITE

Oh yeah...? (Uneasily.) Cool...

(YOSEMITE looks at HAZEL, and is about to hit the bong, then remembers.)

YOSEMITE (CONT'D)

Ah, you know what, yo? I'm okay.

TOFFEE

Come on, it's New Years.

YOSEMITE

I mean, yo. I'm *already* pretty stoned here so, I mean.

TOFFEE

(Playful.) You are?

YOSEMITE

Yeah, I'm good. Thanks. (Off of TOFFEE's look, playfully.) You told me to shut up. I think you need shut up.

(Stoned, and caught up in the music, TOFFEE pulls YOSEMITE into a big kiss. They giggle, and dance slowly. Both VICK and HAZEL turn away. )

(Bravely awkward, VICK approaches her. She's stoned now, paranoid.)

VICK

(Beat.) Um. I was thinking. If you want. Maybe later—.

HAZEL

Forget it.

(Awkward beat, the kiss/dance goes on... Until HAZEL can't take it anymore. She takes a few cans from YOSEMITE's milk crate. YOSEMITE sees this, and breaks out of the kiss, and goes to her. )

(TOFFEE changes the music abruptly to something more upbeat and New Years appropriate, possibly John Lennon's Whatever Gets You Through The Night.)

TOFFEE

Happy New Year!

YOSEMITE

What are you doing?

HAZEL

Nothing. Going out to write. You got that money?

YOSEMITE

It's not even New Year's yet. (Pause.) Take him with you then.

HAZEL

(Shakes her head.) I'm cool. You got it?

YOSEMITE

Come on, take him, yo. I didn't know.

HAZEL

No thanks.

YOSEMITE

(Then.) Why'd you smoke? You know you get paranoid. It's just traffic. So what?

(HAZEL stares at him, waits for her money.)

YOSEMITE

I don't have it. In a couple days I will, but. Come on, please stay.

(HAZEL gives YOSEMITE a look, then VICK, and begins to exit.)

YOSEMITE

Wait—HA!

HAZEL

You know what? Next time you get arrested? Don't fucking call me.

(She exits taking some spray cans with her. TOFFEE looks at YOSEMITE.)

**Scene 4.**

The Brick Wall near the subway stop. Forty-five minutes later. HAZEL's previous throw-up is now dissed again with *RATS CREW* tagged over it. HAZEL enters, sees it.

HAZEL

...*Fuck.*

(She approaches disheartened, and again she puts her hand to the wall and feels it. For a moment she comes close to breaking down. She urges herself out it, and begins to spray paint. )

HAZEL (CONT'D)

...Fucking *toys.*

(Then she hears something, and goes into her *spray-cans-under-the-shirt-walk-away* routine. She stops.)

HAZEL (CONT'D)

...YO? That you? *Yosemite?* (Pause.) I'm not playing around here.

VICK (OFF.)

It's me.

HAZEL

*Me* the fuck who?

(VICK enters, carrying the pizza box.)

VICK

Um, me?

(HAZEL starts to walk away.)

VICK (CONT'D)

Wait!

HAZEL

You a *cop.*

VICK

In training. It's traffic. It's um. Different.

HAZEL

Sounds same to me. What, you follow me here?

VICK

Yosemite told me. You um. Come here every night? I never seen this spot.

HAZEL

...What do you want?

VICK

Just walking home.

HAZEL

Walk somewhere else.

VICK

Okay. It's almost New Years. Any minute. The city's sorta nuts right now, huh?

(HAZEL spray cans under her shirt, waits for VICK to leave. He stands there.)

VICK (CONT'D)

Um. You want some pizza?

HAZEL

Motherfuck...

(HAZEL starts to leave.)

VICK

Wait. I just. You don't have to stop. I understand how you—.

HAZEL

Stop what? I ain't doing shit. Walking home too.

VICK

Okay. Do you want company? I mean, which way you going, I'll—.

HAZEL

Which way *you* going?

VICK

Um. *That* way?

HAZEL

I'm going the other. Peace. (Starts to walk.)

VICK

But it could be like any second now. I'll walk with you.

HAZEL

(Turning.) Hey, what's your problem, man?

VICK

Nothing I'm—.

HAZEL

You follow me here, man?

VICK

No I. Um. I mean I know some of your work, but—.

(The ten second countdown has started, muffled but audible in the packed city.)

HAZEL

(Frightened.) You are following. Stay away from me, mothafucker.

VICK

(Smiling.) Hey, you can hear it! It's almost—!

(VICK steps to HAZEL. She sprays him in the face with the spray can. He drops. She circles at a distance.)

HAZEL

I catch you at his spot again—*Ha ha*. At *this* spot? I'm fucking you up. —*Pig!*

(HAZEL exits. The countdown ends. Everyone cheers.)

(VICK clears out his eyes and stands. He looks at one of his hands. He then takes out his camera, and takes a picture of the brick wall.)

## Scene 5.

TOFFEE and YOSEMITE's apartment. Later that night. YOSEMITE on the couch, head in his hands. TOFFEE is on his feet.

TOFFEE

I can't believe you waited this long to tell me. Were you even going to tell me? Or...?

YOSEMITE

...It was New Years. I didn't want to ruin it, okay?

TOFFEE

Good job. And it wasn't New Years when you got arrested, was it?

YOSEMITE

It was just bad luck, yo. I didn't lie to you, Toffee.

TOFFEE

You didn't tell me. And that's actually worse. Because you found a way not to lie to me, by not telling me what's going on with you. You went out last night, you could have gotten arrested—.

YOSEMITE

It was just one spot, yo.

TOFFEE

You're gambling a year and a half in jail for what? To go out and write your name? Try for a second. Try to be in my shoes. And what if I got arrested and—.

YOSEMITE

I get what you're saying.

TOFFEE

No, I'm asking how you'd feel about it?

YOSEMITE

Depends on what you done. If it was graff, I would understand.

TOFFEE

Would you? You would understand that graffiti was more important than this. Our relationship?

YOSEMITE

I understand that. I get it. (A look.) I do.

TOFFEE

Do you?

YOSEMITE

Yeah. ...I mean, that's why I'm quitting, you know?

TOFFEE

(Heard it before.) This isn't my fault, man.

(TOFFEE starts to move off.)

YOSEMITE

I'm not gonna go out anymore. If you spent a year in jail without me... It'd kill me, yo.

TOFFEE

It would end our relationship. Every time you've been arrested we've been through this. You *try* to quit, it doesn't happen. You *think* you can be safe... You *can't*. And you end up resenting me for it when it's not my fault. As if I'm the one who arrested you. Put you on probation—.

YOSEMITE

Then what do you want me to do, yo? You think I wanna tell you I'm quitting? You think I wanna quit?

TOFFEE

I know you don't. Don't you understand? You don't have a choice anymore. It has nothing to do with me. Take me out of the picture it's still the same situation.

YOSEMITE

Yo, I'm a graffiti writer. I live to bomb fucking *hard*. I did it before I met you. I'm doing it now. And I'm still gonna be doing it—.

(YOSEMITE stops himself.)

TOFFEE

Go ahead. You'll still be doing it *after me*? Is that what you were going to say?

YOSEMITE

Until I die. Is what I was gonna say.

(YOSEMITE rises, moves to the kitchen...)

TOFFEE

Well, that's great. (Calling after him.) Is jail just inevitability for you? Is that how you look at it? And I never had a problem with you being a graffiti *writer*, Yosemite. I have a problem with you going to *jail* for it!

(YOSEMITE comes back with a bottle of Champagne.)

YOSEMITE

You know, I don't get all up in your shit when you travel, yo.

TOFFEE

Because there's a big difference between these two things. What? Are you celebrating this...?

(YOSEMITE pops the champagne. He drinks from the bottle.)

YOSEMITE



When you gone a week outta every month... Sometimes eight, nine, ten days in a row, yo? You think I like that? Is that *fair*?

TOFFEE

I'm not getting arrested for it. I'm not about to spend a year in jail because of it. And I took off New Years instead of being in Tokyo to be here with you tonight.

YOSEMITE

And you leave again tomorrow.

TOFFEE

It's my *job*, Yosemite. It pays for this apartment, it pays for your gallery space—.

YOSEMITE

I understand that you *haveta* do it. Because that's *your* thing. This is *my* thing. My fucking job. I *haveta* do it. Understand?

TOFFEE

You're an artist. You don't need to be out there risking all this every night to be one. What difference does it make? And on either side of this argument, you're still faced with the fact that if you break your probation, if you get caught again? You'll—.

YOSEMITE

I know, alright.

TOFFEE

Then *wake up*. This is exactly why I rented you the gallery space in the first place.

YOSEMITE

(Flippant.) Yeah, well that's fucked up....

TOFFEE

(Thrown.) What is? Because I. I care about you is fucked up?

YOSEMITE

I mean, who buys something like *that* for somebody?

TOFFEE

It was your Christmas present. I was happy to do it. You asked for it.

YOSEMITE

I mentioned it *once* to you. That it might be *cool* to do something like that...? And then you just went out and did it?

TOFFEE

I'm confused. You've been creating these painting, these pieces—that are very good. Ever since I've known you. Now you don't want to do it? You don't want to show them?

YOSEMITE

They were just for fun. Fucking around. I don't even know if my stuff belongs in a gallery, Toffee. For real.

TOFFEE

Of course it does. It's a rental space. You can put whatever you want in it.

YOSEMITE

Or if that's even the type of... (Struggles for the word.) *Writer*, that I wanna be, yo.

TOFFEE

As opposed to...? Is this an issue you're having with artistic integrity?

YOSEMITE

I don't know what you mean.

TOFFEE

Because let me tell you, man. If you can't even *call* yourself an artist? If you're simply and only a *writer*? Of *graffiti*. Then you're not creating art.

YOSEMITE

Maybe I'm not.

TOFFEE

If you're not an artist, I'll tell you what you are then, Yosemite. You're a vandal. And then you've got no artistic integrity to have an issue with betraying. (Then.) It's true. If you can't consider yourself an artist—.

YOSEMITE

(Petulant.) I never did. I'm just a guy that. I write my *name*. Like you said, yo.

TOFFEE

Then what you create cannot be considered art.

YOSEMITE

Hey, you'd be the one who knows...

TOFFEE

Then there's no justification for its method of creation.

YOSEMITE

And you think I give a fuck what people, this society justifies as art?

TOFFEE

Yes, actually I do.

YOSEMITE

Right, because that's why I go out, risk jail, a beat down, my life? To do what other people consider is art.

TOFFEE

And you display it *publicly* for everyone to see. (Beat.) I know you think of yourself an artist, Yosemite. Because otherwise then you're just vandalizing for what? Demolition and ruin...? Tear it all down because it's fun to see things burn?

YOSEMITE

You know what? It is *fun*. If you ever came out with me you'd know it. How can I explain to you what this is to me, yo? There's no way you'll ever know. There's no way you ever can.

TOFFEE

(Definitively.) Well. That's not the type of artist I want to be involved with.

YOSEMITE

(Cold and smug.) ...Is that why you rented me the gallery space then? So you could *make me* the type of artist you wanna be involved with?

TOFFEE

(Beat.) You're drunk. And I think you should sleep out here tonight.

(TOFFEE rises, and exits to the bedroom. YOSEMITE drinks from the bottle.)

YOSEMITE

(Miserably.) Happy New Year.

## Scene 6.

One Police Plaza. Morning. VICK sits in his T.E.A. blue formal attire, white hat, white gloves. He listens, nodding occasionally to the microphoned voice presiding over the graduation ceremony.

VOICE

*. . . enormous contributions to the city and deserve the highest level of protection and the respect of all New Yorkers. Eight point four million . . . could not walk. Could not drive. Could not bicycle through this city; commercial trucks could not reach their destinations, and businesses could not function without the rules. The rules you enforce. This is a period of historic progress. And you are all a part of it. You have every reason to feel proud to now be... New York City Traffic Enforcement Agents.*

(Applause. VICK stands, rubs his eyes. He looks to his left. Smiles. Looks to his right. Smiles.)

### Scene 7.

Noon. The Brick Wall near the subway stop. HAZEL in a paint-speckled jumpsuit, wearing a ball cap. She has a bucket of paint, a tray, and a roll brush. She calls out to someone.

HAZEL

I'm just saying there's a difference! 'Tween eggshell and cream!

(She lines the floor with newspaper, screws her brush onto a roll stick.)

HAZEL (CONT'D)

(To herself.) Gimmie cream *Ha ha* tell me paint with eggshell. A difference...  
(Calling out.) Maybe you the one lucky to have a job!

(Without hesitation, she paints over her previous graffiti. She puts headphones on.)

(Meanwhile, VICK enters, talking on his cellphone. He has a Danish in the other hand.)

VICK

(On phone.) Um. No Joe, I'm. Where I was dispatched. No, I'm—. (Pause.) I know, I know I'm on duty. (Pause.) Because it's gone. (Pause.) I mean, *gone*. (He looks at the Danish.) No. I was here. Writing a ticket, Joe. *Sir*. Ticket for a double parked um eighty-eighty maroon Astro Van? (Pause.) No, for sure, *burgundy*. (Pause.) What's the difference? Um. Which is darker? Fine. *Burgundy*. Just for a second had my back turned. Writing the. Now it's gone. (Pause.) Okay. Sorry for calling you at home.

(VICK pockets the cell phone. He speaks to HAZEL, whose back is turned and can't hear him.)

VICK (CONT'D)

Hey sir. 'Scuse me, sir. Did you um hear anything? I mean *see*? Anything?

(No response from HAZEL's back. VICK calls it in using the radio attached to his lapel.)

VICK (CONT'D)

Um. This is agent Vick Massari. I'd like to call in. *Report* a stolen Interceptor?

(The radio crackles.)

VICK (CONT'D)

Vick. Vick Massari. (Crackle.) *Massari*. Traffic Enforcement. (Crackle.) An Interceptor. (Crackle.) Inter—. The damn traffic golf cart thing! (Crackle.) *Stolen*. Yes. (Crackle.)

(VICK looks down, reads the number off his badge.)

VICK (CONT'D)

Number um. Number twenty-four sixteen. I'm new. (Crackle.) Traffic Enforcement. *Massari*.

(Overwhelmed, he sits on the curb, his back to HAZEL. He looks at his hand as if it's disappearing. Quickly, he shoves it in his pocket.)

(HAZEL turns over her shoulder and sees him, but does not recognize him. She almost says something, but looks down at her crotch instead. She has pissed herself. A small puddle gathers at her feet. She exits one direction, VICK the other.)

### Scene 8.

TOFFEE and YOSEMITE's apartment. Afternoon. YOSEMITE stands in front of a *large* canvas holding a spray can. He looks hung-over, and currently artistically blocked. He approaches the canvas, readies his can... But can't paint. He stands frozen before it. TOFFEE keys into the apartment wearing a suit and holding a metal briefcase in one hand.

YOSEMITE

...Hey. (Then.) I thought you mighta left already.

TOFFEE

I'm about to. My driver's outside with security. I fly into Amsterdam for Dordrecht. So it's an afternoon flight.

YOSEMITE

...When do you come back?

TOFFEE

We talked about this. I'm escorting one of the Rembrandts?

(TOFFEE holds up the briefcase. He sets it down gently on the coffee table.)

YOSEMITE

(Gently.) So what's that mean?

TOFFEE

...The standard four days. Netherlands has a different climate, the humidity. The painting has to *acclimate* before we can unseal it. It takes a day or two.

(TOFFEE, unable to keep up the charade, starts to move off.)

YOSEMITE

Hey listen, um...

TOFFEE

I'll be back for your opening if that's what you're. (Pause.) You don't have to. It's entirely up to you. It wasn't my intention to force it on you.

YOSEMITE

No, you were right. I was drunk and. You were right about everything you said. I don't have a choice. I'm sorry I was taking that out on you.

TOFFEE

Yosemite... I believe you. But I don't trust you. To *not* go out. I almost didn't go on this trip, because I mean... But what can I do? You're clearly gonna do whatever you want here, so...

YOSEMITE

That's not it. (Beat.) Okay, first? I'm gonna do the show. I wanna do the show—I need to do the show. If I'm ever gonna be able to take my—. My *art*? To any other place than outside on a wall? I have to do it. Second? I'm not going out anymore. I understand. I know, a year and a half. I get it. (Beat.) But how do I explain to you then why it's hard for me? How it's not like personal against you? Me doing it.

TOFFEE

I know why it's hard for you.

YOSEMITE

(Struggles.) It's my life. It's what I know. It's everything I know. Growing up with guys Hazel and I knew? Dick, my brother? I mean, they're *gone* now. Because they didn't have something like this. And I know you can't understand it yo, but—.

TOFFEE

(Finishing his sentence.) Graffiti saved your life. I know, you've told me. Every time we get into a fight after you've come home beat up or arrested? You've told me. Your dad used to drink, would beat you and your brother, and that forced you out onto the streets. I'm not disregarding that. What you've been through? But it doesn't matter if you swear to me a thousand times you're not going out. You're either are? Or you're not. It's not about guys you knew or your brother. Or Hazel. They're gone. I'm here. And in three years I'm going to be

sixty. That scares me to death. The idea of looking for another relationship, man... Starting over, someone to spend the rest of my life with? But I'll do it. If I have to. Because I can't spend our entire relationship worrying about you.

YOSEMITE

(Quietly.) I'm sorry.

TOFFEE

I believe in you, Yosemite. It's why I moved you in here. Because I believe you're that person. That you're better than what you think you are.

YOSEMITE

I know, and I promise—.

TOFFEE

Promise me all you want, but it's your life. So promise yourself.

YOSEMITE

...Yeah, but you're the greatest thing that's ever happened to my life, Toffee. And I don't know why, but. I forget that. Sometimes I can't believe it. And I feel stuck in some other life, before.

TOFFEE

Maybe you are. Maybe graffiti isn't saving your life anymore. Maybe it's killing you.

(They look at each other. TOFFEE checks his watch.)

TOFFEE

(Gently.) Ride to the airport with me? We'll talk more about it, okay? Get dressed.

(YOSEMITE nods, and exits into the bedroom.)

(TOFFEE sighs, and lights a joint. He ashes into a small ashtray he sets on top of the briefcase.)

TOFFEE (CONT'D)

(Beat.) I talked with the gallery manager, Marty. I told him you'd bring your paintings over today. The ones I picked out, with the prices I suggested. He'll have someone there to hang and light them. You can handle that right?

YOSEMITE (OFF.)

What? Yeah...

TOFFEE

Call up a car service. Ask for a van or SUV. You have some money?

YOSEMITE (OFF.)

I have the card you gave me.

(TOFFEE takes out his wallet, puts some bills on the table.)

(His cell phone rings. He answers it, and goes into the kitchen for some privacy, leaving the briefcase and ashtray with the smoking joint on the coffee table.)

(YOSEMITE steps out of the bedroom wearing a suit.)

YOSEMITE

(Insecure.) Yo yo... I thought I'd wear...

(TOFFEE peeks through the doorway, and points to the phone, mouthing *I have to take this.*)

TOFFEE

(Into phone.)...No, because I'm not riding freight. One of the smaller ones. *A Man Trimming His Quill.*

(Beat. YOSEMITE is drawn to the briefcase.)

YOSEMITE

Can I see it?

(TOFFEE shakes his head. YOSEMITE protests and TOFFEE moves to the briefcase and pops it open, mouthing *Don't touch.*)

TOFFEE

(Into phone.) ...Uh huh. Yeah, it's a carry on. I'll be first class with Chester on security...

(TOFFEE moves back into the kitchen. YOSEMITE looks at the painting.)

YOSEMITE

It's so small. (Looks closer.) Jesus... (Closer, vastly impressed.) That is so...

(The sound of a subway train approaching a stop... It grows louder and ominous. Absently, YOSEMITE reaches for the joint and smokes. He watches at the painting, his face changing from impressed to self-doubt. He looks to TOFFEE who isn't watching. Just as the sound of the train is about to pass, YOSEMITE realizes he's smoking the joint.)



YOSEMITE (CONT'D)

(Jumping back.) Oh shit...!

(The sound of the train does not pass. TOFFEE reenters. YOSEMITE's frozen.)

TOFFEE

(Into phone.) Yeah, see you there in a minute. (Hanging up.) Well, we should go. (Looks at YOSEMITE.) What's wrong? You look like you've seen a ghost.

YOSEMITE

(Trying to process what's happened.) Yeah... No, it's just... Really good.

(TOFFEE takes a few more hits of the joint and then snubs it out.)

TOFFEE

It's one of his lessers. There's a debate. Some people don't think it's one of his... Maybe one of his students. Of course, *we* believe it's one of his. Why else would we vacuum seal it and ship it three thousand miles to a Rembrandt exhibition? Come on. Get your coat.

(TOFFEE shuts the briefcase.)

YOSEMITE

I think... I gotta stay here. I don't feel so good. All the sudden.

TOFFEE

Really?

(TOFFEE feels YOSEMITE's head.)

TOFFEE (CONT'D)

You don't feel warm. (Realizes.) Shit man, you're just hung over. Serves you right.

YOSEMITE

Nah yo, think I'm coming down with something. Think I'll stay here. Is that okay?

TOFFEE

Yeah. Okay. But I still want to talk to you some more. About this. I'll call you when my flight lands and I get to the hotel. You'll be here, right?

(YOSEMITE nods, and TOFFEE kisses him gently. He looks at him.)

TOFFEE

Maybe you are coming down with something.

(TOFFEE turns to exit, when there's a knock at the front door. TOFFEE opens and HAZEL enters looking as disturbed as YOSEMITE.)

TOFFEE (CONT'D)

Hazel.

HAZEL

(Eyes on YOSEMITE.) Hi.

(TOFFEE takes a moment, considers this situation. Looks at HAZEL, then at YOSEMITE.)

TOFFEE

(Beat. To YOSEMITE.) It's your life.

YOSEMITE

I love you.

TOFFEE

I know.

(TOFFEE exits. YOSEMITE watches him go.)

YOSEMITE

*Fuck...* I'm so stupid...!

HAZEL

(Undressing.) I need you to check my tits.

YOSEMITE

HA, listen. I can't right now—. Whatever that means, so—.

(HAZEL lifts her shirt exposing her breasts.)

YOSEMITE (CONT'D)

Ah *Jesus*... Now's not the fucking time, okay?

HAZEL

(Inspecting.) I think I felt something. I mean, I'm not sure but. What's wrong with you?

YOSEMITE

Nothing. I'm hung-over, yo. I mean, what do I know about *boobs* anyway? Go to a hospital.

HAZEL

Fuck you. Just see if you feel anything first?

YOSEMITE

(Beat.) Are you serious, yo? Right fucking now?

HAZEL

Yeah. Right now. What else you doing?

YOSEMITE

(Beat.) Alright. But then you gotta go. I got... *Paintings*. To work on. (Then.) Which one? I'm not touching both.

HAZEL

This one. Underneath.

YOSEMITE

What'd you feel?

HAZEL

A set of care keys. I mean, you tell me, man. *Ha ha*.

(YOSEMITE begins to check. After a moment.)

HAZEL

Right there. That's where.

YOSEMITE

(Feeling.) ...When's the last time you gone to a doctor for this?

HAZEL

You think it's—could be?

YOSEMITE

I don't know. I'm not a doctor. When's the last time?

HAZEL

I mean, you feel anything? Or what?

YOSEMITE

*No*. I don't. But. I don't exactly have a lot of experience with this, you know?

(HAZEL drops her shirt.)

YOSEMITE (CONT'D)

But *you* felt something, right?

HAZEL

Nah, forget it.

YOSEMITE

What do you mean forget it? You come all the way over here—.

HAZEL

I just pissed myself and it's the first thing I thought of. *Ha ha*. That I was dying maybe. So just forget it.

YOSEMITE

You *pissed* yourself?

HAZEL

Yeah. At work. *Ha ha*. All the sudden. Like it just happened, and. I couldn't stop it.

YOSEMITE

(On to something.) ...Like you had to go really bad? Or what...?

HAZEL

No, like it just happened. And I couldn't stop. *Ha ha*. All down my legs. *Ha ha*. *Ha ha*. (A look.) What?

YOSEMITE

...It's not your fucking tits, okay? At least I don't think so. It's the spray paint? Something in it?

HAZEL

Paint?

YOSEMITE

I heard guys that this happen to. They wake up in the middle of the night and they pissed they beds.

HAZEL

I'm not a guy.

YOSEMITE

It's something in the chemicals. (Off her look of disbelief.) Think about it. Twenty years of breathing the shit in? I mean, you think it's good for us? Shit puts a hole in the ozone, what do you think it's does to your *organs*, yo.

HAZEL

Fuck my organs, you're not pissing yourself. *Ha ha*.

YOSEMITE

Toffee started me wearing a mask years ago for all the big murals we do. Thought coughing up rainbow colored *loogies* was a bad sign, you know?

HAZEL

...How long's it last?

YOSEMITE

I don't know yo. But HA, go to a hospital. Like *now*.

HAZEL

(Pause.) Will you come with me? *Ha ha*.

YOSEMITE

...Nah, I can't.

HAZEL

Why not?

YOSEMITE

Because I got shit to do! Now I told I'd check your tits, and I did. I still got paintings I gotta take to the gallery. I got my P.O. I gotta meet tonight—fuck! *I got shit I gotta do*.

(YOSEMITE picks up the cash TOFFEE left for him, puts it in HAZEL's hand.)

YOSEMITE (CONT'D)

Here. For my bail. Part of it. Take a cab. I'll meet you there later, maybe. (Beat.) What?

HAZEL

What's up?

YOSEMITE

Nothing. I'm fine. *Go*.

(YOSEMITE starts to walk her to the door.)

HAZEL

Are you stoned—?

YOSEMITE

What? *No*, will you get outta here, please?

HAZEL

You're fucking stoned right now. Are you crazy?

YOSEMITE

No, I'm not! I got the gallery—.

HAZEL

Yes you are! You're gonna blow your probation!

YOSEMITE

It was on accident, alright! I didn't fucking mean it! Now will you get the fuck outta here, please?

HAZEL

What are you gonna do?

YOSEMITE

Nothing, just go!

HAZEL

Yosemite, what are you gonna do?

YOSEMITE

Nothing, will you—! (Shakes a fist at her.) I will fucking *clock* you if you don't get outta here right now. Go. (Pause.) GO!

(HAZEL starts to exit. She stops in the doorway.)

HAZEL

(Beat.) I still dream about him, you know? Like I see him? He's at the wall, and about to leave. And I say his name. Try to get him to see me. ...And he just laughs at me.

YOSEMITE

...I see him too. (A look.) Every time I look in the mirror. (Pause.) But he's gone, HA—.

(HAZEL exits before YOSEMITE can finish.)

## Scene 9.

The Brick Wall near the subway stop. Later that night. HAZEL is in mid-composition of a giant *HA! HA!* piece. It takes up the entire wall. VICK enters, deliberately making noise to make his arrival known. HAZEL doesn't look. He keeps his distance.

VICK

That's nice.

HAZEL

Fuck you cop. I got a permit for this. You wanna see it, come closer. *Ha ha.*

VICK

That's okay. (Pause.) Um dangerous out like this, you think?

HAZEL

For you. They don't like cops around here.

VICK

(Beat.) Getting cold out. Supposed to snow.

HAZEL

Fuck off. Go write a parking ticket or tow somebody will ya?

VICK

I should live so long. Um. They got me directing traffic up on thirty-fourth. Never thought I could be so tired from blowing a whistle. (Pause.) T & I—Towing and Impoundment—s'like an Assignment three position. Means they get paid a lot more. I just started, so I'm an assignment one.

HAZEL

What do they pay you? In Boston creams or glazed with sprinkles?

VICK

I like Danishes. Shop around the corner from here. Some the best. (Beat.) Twenty-nine thousand. That's what I get paid.

HAZEL

You get paid dick.

VICK

Yeah, not so good I guess. But there's overtime, night shift differential. Holiday pay? S'not too bad. Pension too. You stay with it long enough. But by then you move up in assignment. Level three and four? They get upper forties. Um. And insurance, it's important. Guy like me, I may not look it, but. I'm getting up there—.

HAZEL

Look. I mean, what's wrong with you? Mothafuckin stalking my ass here, and...

(HAZEL starts to get emotional and turns her back to VICK, facing the wall.)

VICK

Nothing. Just um. Nothing wrong with me. I mean, what's wrong with the world? *Lotsa* stuff. But nothing's wrong with me, I think. I'm okay. (Then.) How are you?

HAZEL

Just leave me alone.

VICK

(Beat.) Hey, I saw your piece on Grand few weeks back. It was amazing. How you get up there? (No Response.) You um. Go in the parking garage in the building next door? Street level. Walk that up, then climb the scaffolding, right? That's what I'dda done.

HAZEL

Well you ain't me. (Beat.) I took the elevator.

VICK

You took the . . .! I mean, like *how*?

HAZEL

Look on the directory. The building. Some them floors are residential and commercial. Rack a name off that. Told 'em I was the new nanny for the Petersons.

VICK

You think you get away with more because um...?

HAZEL

What?

VICK

You know.

HAZEL

No, what?

VICK

A lady?

HAZEL

A *lady*?

VICK

I mean because you're a *woman*, I mean.

HAZEL

You mean like half off tampons, Vagasil or some shit? The fuck you talking about?

VICK

Nothing. Um lotsa female traffic agents. I don't mind, of course. Some guys do, I don't. They do their job well, they do what they suppose to. Then I got no problem. You make a good traffic agent. I mean, on account that you talk um. Straight forward. And you say what you mean. There's no mistaking it. You gotta have force behind your voice. You got that.



(She turns and faces him.)

HAZEL

Hey Dick—*ha ha*. That's your name right? That you?

VICK

Yeah?

HAZEL

*Ha ha*. I'm gonna say this straight up—.

VICK

It's *Vick*. With a V.

HAZEL

I'm gonna say this straight up so there's no mistaking it, Dick. I don't want you here. I don't want your help going out. And I don't wanna go out with you neither. That clear?

VICK

Go out?

HAZEL

Can be no more straight up than that. So go back to blowing your whistle or street cleaning or whatever fuck meter maid bullshit it is that you do.

(She goes back to spraying. VICK starts to leave. Stops.)

VICK

I wasn't um. Asking you out? Like that, I mean. So you know.

HAZEL

Nah, I'm talking the thing? What Yosemite say? Earlier? Toffee too. You wanna go out on a date with me, and I'm all like—. Shit's hectic in my life right now, understand?

VICK

You like to be called *HA*? Or *Hazel*?

HAZEL

Man, call me whatever you want when you alone with your hand—*just leave me alone*.

VICK

Hey, look. *Hazel*. I don't know who told you—I guess Toffee or Yosemite. But um. I wasn't asking you out. Like that. They told me *you* wanted that. To go out on a date. For coffee or something?

HAZEL

Wait. You sayin *ha ha*, they told *you* that? That I *ha ha*. I wanted to go *out*? With *you*? For coffee or something?

VICK

Yeah.

HAZEL

Aw man, hell no!

VICK

I know! So.

HAZEL

Ah nah! I don't even drink coffee!

VICK

I know, right? Toffee told me he knew you and—.

HAZEL

I'm a solo chick, Dick. Solo for dolo.

VICK

*Vick*. And Yosemite was doing his gallery show and might—.

HAZEL

I do my thing, that's how I do.

VICK

Sure. And. I just came tonight um. To tell you that. That it was wrong.

HAZEL

I'm gonna kill him.

VICK

Because when I ask someone out. For coffee or something? I do it myself, Hazel. You know?

HAZEL

Yeah, cool.

VICK

Okay then...

HAZEL

Alright.

(Beat. VICK spots something in the distance.)

VICK

Someone. Car. They're coming.

(VICK starts to walk away. HAZEL continues painting.)

VICK (CONT'D)

Hey. There's a *car* coming.

HAZEL

So.

VICK

But someone's—.

(Torn, VICK ducks behind a postal service box. Headlights of the car flash, then move off. VICK stands.)

VICK

That coulda been a cop.

HAZEL

Shit, you a cop.

VICK

I mean, a *real* cop. Out like this in the open? It's no way.

HAZEL

I seen. They ain't got no lights.

VICK

They got a lot of unmarked out now. You know that.

HAZEL

Don't matter, I'm finishing this one way the other. *Ha ha*.

VICK

(Beat.) You really wanna finish? Don't get caught mid-piece and have to run. Lemme spot for you. Someone comes and. We'll ditch and circle back.

HAZEL

Ditch? Mothafucker, you look like you ain't ditched a *donut* in years. Excuse me, *Danish*.

VICK

I'm just sayin—.

HAZEL

And I go out with *writers*. I don't go out with spotters.

(HAZEL tosses the spray can to VICK.)

VICK

Um. I don't do that.

HAZEL

Then you don't spot me. And fuck off then, I think I hear a double-parked car somewhere.

(HAZEL resumes with another can.)

VICK

I don't even. Um. I don't have a name even. ...How'd you pick yours?

HAZEL

*Pick* it? You don't pick a name, man. You find that shit and you *take* it. Or it takes you. One way or the other. But either way? When I'm done? You gonna spray your name—whatever you come up with—at the bottom corner of this A. Because I go out with writers. Not spotters.

(She takes the can from him. Goes back to working. VICK thinks this over as HAZEL continues. Pause. *A noise*. He looks down the street, checks.)

VICK

Clear. (He looks down the other way.) Clear. That way too. It's all—.

HAZEL

Don't. *Do that*. Just tell me someone comes, alright?

VICK

Sorry. I heard— . Myself. I'll, yeah.

(HAZEL shakes her head and goes back to spraying.)

VICK (CONT'D)

This kinda reminds me of this one spot. Over near the two thirty-eight street bridge? I was spotting this guy NUTBALLS, and—.

HAZEL

I ask you something?

VICK

Okay.

HAZEL

This story involve anyone dying?

VICK

I mean. We don't *see* it happen, but—.

HAZEL

Just. You know what? Don't tell me. (Beat.) I mean, you ever think you bad luck? For real.

VICK

Like what?

HAZEL

I mean, you got any funny stories? Ones where like, I don't know, no one gets hurt? Or severely fucking *maimed*?

VICK

Funny like. *Ha ha*? Or funny like—.

HAZEL

Ah yeah, you a real joker, huh?

VICK

Nah, I got some funny stuff. Um. One time I saw two pregnant chicks *boxing*.

HAZEL

Oh yeah?

VICK

Yeah, I couldn't really watch. It was near the old writer's bench, one forty-ninth—.

HAZEL

I know where the bench be at.

VICK

Yeah, okay. But. I didn't know what it was about, but they were totally laying into each other. Um. Stretch marks showing? That was funny. I mean, not *funny* ha ha. Weird, I guess.

HAZEL

S' alright.

VICK

(Beat.) Once um. Me and this writer CASH were bombing out near the Baychester lay-ups. And the cops liked roll-up outta nowhere, and. They didn't see him write, but they found all of CASH's cans? And they told him to put his hands on his face, right? Like this? And the cop

took the can? And wrote *COP* all over this Bengal Tiger's Starter jacket CASH was wearing. This was the eighties.

HAZEL

Hey, man. You a *cop*.

VICK

Yeah, but I could never be that kinda cop. Violence? It's not for me.

HAZEL

No?

VICK

Nah, I get queasy. I can't even watch Rocky all the way. Without getting. Um.

HAZEL

You get? Wait, what happens?

VICK

What? Nothing.

HAZEL

What'd you say? *Queasy*?

VICK

No, I mean. I throw up. But, nothing really.

HAZEL

*Damn*. So if I start talking about like—.

VICK

Yup—that's. If I think about it. (Beat.) Hey, can I ask you something?

HAZEL

Can I fucking stop you?

VICK

Um. I don't know. But. Anyway, in like, around two thousand, two thousand one? You um. In like December? You bombed this spot, if you remember it—.

HAZEL

I don't. Bomb lotsa spots. *Ha ha*.

VICK

Yeah, but this one was—.

HAZEL

A decade ago? For real?

VICK

Kinda hidden away? It was underground. Off the four line in the subway tunnel. In one of the lay-ups?

HAZEL

Never been in the tunnels.

VICK

No, but this was—.

HAZEL

Look, stuff don't really stick with me. Like the way it should? I got a bad memory. But maybe that's a good thing, you know?

(HAZEL resumes spraying. VICK takes out a camera, points it at HAZEL's piece. He snaps a picture.)

HAZEL

What are you doing?

VICK

Get a work in progress.

(VICK snaps another photo.)

VICK (CONT'D)

What?

(HAZEL takes VICK's camera, and before he has time to react, she throws it to the ground smashing it.)

VICK (CONT'D)

...Why did you do that?

HAZEL

I don't want pictures.

VICK

Jesus Christ, it's just a picture!

HAZEL

I didn't ask for a picture. I don't want a fucking picture.

VICK

It wasn't for you. I had other stuff on there, *ah!*

(VICK picks up the remains of the camera, trying to get to the film.)

HAZEL

Listen, don't follow me and take pictures of my pieces, got it?

VICK

I had stuff on there that's now been buffed out. They're gone.

HAZEL

Good.

VICK

But then. No. You don't understand. Stuff on that camera is now *gone*. It doesn't exist anymore.

HAZEL

Good. This shit is not for fucking *ever*, you hear me? This shit is for right now.

VICK

I get that, I do. But if you've seen it all disappear like I have—all the trains—!

HAZEL

You gotta *feel* it, Dick. Not just see it. You're not feeling it is your problem. You gotta put your face to wall and feel this shit. Because I'll tell you what. It ain't fucking in that camera.

VICK

What do you expect me to do? I can't just let them disappear—.

HAZEL

Write your shit, Dick. Put away the pictures and be here now. Not tomorrow, not yesterday. Not in a couple *decades*. Right the fuck. Right here. *Now*.

(HAZEL thrust the spray can into VICK's hand. He looks at it.)

(Sudden flashing lights to the right! The sound of the double police call-out *WHOO WHOO*.)

VICK

Cops. Let's go! (She doesn't move.) We'll come back!

(VICK is off to the side, HAZEL doesn't move.)



HAZEL

This is his spot. *Ha ha*. I ain't leaving.

VICK

Dammit!

(VICK exits. HAZEL puts her hands in her pockets. The flashing lights are now upon her. The sounds of a car stopping. A search light brightens her up. She squints.)

HAZEL

What you got that shit on me for? You just seen him run off? Guy vandalizing my building. Go get him!

(The sounds of the cop car pulling off in a hurry. HAZEL retrieves her spray can, continues to work.)

### Scene 10.

The Gallery. All white everything. YOSEMITE, dressed in the suit, drinks from his ubiquitous pint bottle of liquor. He speaks to MARTY, who silently hangs one of YOSEMITE's paintings, adjusts the lights etc.

YOSEMITE

...The best spots are the unknowns. Places too dark, turn around and can't remember where you come from. Unknown writers. People you never heard of in places you'll never go. And you can get lost. You can disappear. Shit'll eat you up. Swallow you down whole like you nothing.

(Meanwhile, during this, HAZEL is still at the Brick Wall, finishing up her piece.)

YOSEMITE (CONT'D)

Lemme tell you something. Everything you love in life. You gonna have to quit. One day. *Everything* you love. Until the day you gonna have to quit love itself. Whatever that is. To you.

(The three figures dressed in black from earlier step out of the shadows. She works unaware, her cough and wheeze increasing. They pull out cans of spray paint, and shake them continuously.)

YOSEMITE (CONT'D)

So someone explain it to me. Quit everything you love? Explain that. ...And when you know that...? What the hell happens next?

(HAZEL's cough brings her to her to her knees.)

(Simultaneously, the sound of a subway train approaching. It grows louder and louder... It does not pass.)

(Outside, the three figures surround HAZEL. It begins to snow.)

## END OF ACT I

## ACT II

### Scene 1.

The Hospital room. Dressed in a turquoise gown, HAZEL stands weakly in front of a large horizontal viewing window, the hospital bed nearby. She has a cast on one arm. She shivers, watching the snow fall outside. She opens the window and reaches out, catching a snowflake in her hand. VICK enters with a grocery bag, dressed in the same clothes he wore earlier.

VICK

Hey. (Pause.) You should. Shut that. You'll catch cold.

(HAZEL turns to him, her face black and blue. VICK looks away.)

HAZEL

(The grocery bag.) Those my clothes?

VICK

Um. No. They were. Had to throw those away. It's a gift basket.

HAZEL

(Looks.) It's a grocery bag.

VICK

I mean bag. A gift *bag*.

HAZEL

What, with like sausages and cheeses and herbal bath salts or some shit?

VICK

No. It's a graffiti get-well-soon bag.

HAZEL

I didn't know Hallmark made those.

VICK

Yeah. I mean, *no*. I made it. For you.

HAZEL

...Got any smokes in there?

(HAZEL limps to the bed and dumps out the bag's contents. It has markers, caps, and a spray can.)

VICK

That's um. An original El Marko used by TAKI 183. That's a Buffalo magic marker. That's a Ni-G. Kinda rare, used by—

(HAZEL tests each one on her cast; they're all dry.)

HAZEL

What are these? Caps?

VICK

That's a Mazzola—the other one's Jiffoam. Before they made special caps for spray cans you had to steal 'em off things like oven cleaner.

HAZEL

What's this?

VICK

That's an Icy Grape. Paper label Krylon.

HAZEL

Does it work?

VICK

It's like super super rare.

HAZEL

*Super.* Does it work?

VICK

It's thirty-five years old...?

HAZEL

So are my ovaries. I mean, do you have any cigarettes? Or are they gonna be like eighty *bazillion* years old too?

VICK

In my jacket's a pack of Merits.

(HAZEL pulls out a set of car keys from VICK's jacket that he has laid on the bed previously.)

VICK

Those are the keys to the Regal. Other pocket.

HAZEL

The fuck's the *Regal*?

VICK

Buick. Eighty-six. Grand National Edition.

HAZEL

You make that shit sound like it got a British accent. *Ha ha.* You drive here?

VICK

Yeah.

HAZEL

You got the *Regal* outside?

VICK

Yeah?

(HAZEL finds the cigarette pack.)

HAZEL

...Who the fuck smokes *Merits*?

VICK

I don't think you should um... I mean, you know?

(HAZEL lights the cigarette.)

HAZEL

...Winter Fucking Wonder Land out there, huh? (Probing.) Yosemite here? Earlier I mean?

VICK

(Shakes his head.) You have someone you want me to call?

HAZEL

What's wrong with you?

VICK

I don't know. I mean nothing. I mean. I thought maybe you want someone here other than me that um. I could call them.

(HAZEL coughs, deeply, harder than usual. She doubles over. VICK extinguishes the cigarette, and helps her to the bed.)

HAZEL

Fucking hospital air... This place makes Port Authority feel like the Cracker Barrel.

(As VICK retrieves a glass of water, HAZEL pulls her hand away from her mouth and sees blood. She wipes it underneath the sheets away from VICK's view. VICK feeds her the water.)

HAZEL

...Icy Grape? Cool name. What are the other ones like? Breezy Blueberry? Overcast Orange. Sunny Strawberry?

VICK

There was um. Popsicle Orange? Marigold Yellow, Harvester Red. Stuff like that on the Krylon brand. Icy Grape was the hardest to find.

(HAZEL shakes the spray can.)

VICK (CONT'D)

*Don't.* Contents under pressure. It could blow up.

HAZEL

For real? Like a bomb? (VICK shrugs.) Bombing with a bomb. *Cool...*

(HAZEL takes one of the caps and puts it on the spray can. She swings her feet off the bed.)

VICK

What are you doing? (She looks at him.) Here?

HAZEL

Perfect place. Take them weeks to buff out this Dixie cup wallpaper.

VICK

Don't.

(HAZEL steps out of bed. She wobbles, and VICK steadies her. They walk to the wall. She raises her hand to spray—then drops the can—unable to hold it with the cast. VICK picks it up.)

HAZEL

You do it.

VICK

I can't.

(HAZEL slides to the ground. VICK, unsure what to do, stands by her side. After a moment, she looks up at him.)

HAZEL

You take me somewhere?

VICK

Where do you wanna go?

## Scene 2.

VICK's very small apartment in the Bronx. HAZEL shivers on an orphaned futon mattress, still wearing VICK's jacket. A bathtub and a space heater nearby. Snow falls outside a small window.

HAZEL

I think it might actually. Be warmer outside, Dick. *Ha ha.*

(VICK drapes a sleeping bag over her, and then checks a boiling pot set on top a portable hotplate. He dumps a package of Ramen into the pot.)

VICK

Give it a few minutes. Warm up. There's a share bathroom down the hall if you need it.

HAZEL

...This is a small-ass apartment. Don't even know if this counts. As a *room* even.

VICK

It's *part* of a room.

HAZEL

That's what I'm saying.

(VICK gives some clothes to HAZEL.)

VICK

I used to live here with my mother and brother. It was the whole floor then. After she passed I put up this wall and the rest got rented out to the Mastropietros on the other side.

HAZEL

What is that *French*?

VICK

He's Italian, she's from Singapore.

HAZEL

...Bet the cooking's amazing.

VICK

Smells good through the wall.

HAZEL

Bet they got like. Two point five kids or some shit too? *Suzy and Todd*?

VICK

Ghengis and Santino. And Esme. Esme's the little girl.

HAZEL

Sounds serene. Butterball turkey on Thanksgiving. Brown sugar glazed ham for Christmas, huh?

VICK

They're very nice people.

(HAZEL stands to put on the clothes. VICK turns his back, and readies the Ramen. Sorely, HAZEL slides out of the hospital gown. Her skin is freckled with bruises. For a moment, she is completely naked, only a few feet behind VICK.)

HAZEL

Hey. You wanna like talk or something?

VICK

About what?

HAZEL

Anything? Just so I know you're not like all imagining me *naked*, two feet away with a three-inch boner?

VICK

(Flushed.) Um ... What'd you do for Christmas?

HAZEL

...Went out writing.

VICK

On *Christmas*?

HAZEL

Best night of the year. You can bomb anything. No one cares. It's like Christmas.

VICK

Where'd you go?

HAZEL

Same place I go every year.

VICK

What is that? That wall spot by the subway?

HAZEL

(Ignoring this.) What'd you do? Roast chestnuts or some shit?

VICK

Um. The Mastropietros invited me over. It was nice. They had a tree and fruit cake. I bought Esme this little toy piano. You know with like the colored keys? With the book with the same colors to notes in a song? Sometimes I hear it through the wall.

(Dressed now, HAZEL covers up again.)

HAZEL

Okay. *Ha ha*.

(VICK turns and gives HAZEL the bowl of noodles.)



VICK

Careful. It's hot.

(VICK moves to the empty bathtub, the only large furniture piece other than the futon in the apartment. He sits down inside it, exhausted. HAZEL blows on the noodles.)

HAZEL

Where's yours?

VICK

I'm too tired to eat I think.

HAZEL

(Beat.) So what? You own this? The floor?

VICK

Lived here my whole life. The Mastropietros, they put their tree in the dining room, across the wall from the radiator. My mother, she'd put ours in the living room, in front of the fire escape. So when my brother and me, we'd come home we'd see it from up the street. She'd leave it plugged in all night...

HAZEL

You should kick out the Masterbaters, and sell this place. Move to like Guam or somewhere.

VICK

What's in Guam?

HAZEL

I don't know. Warm beaches and tan-ass Guam people with apartments bigger than part of a room?

VICK

...I like the Bronx.

HAZEL

Yeah, right. No one likes the fucking Bronx... *Ha ha.* (Beat.) I'll leave in the morning. When the snow stops. After YO moved out I couldn't really afford the rent all the time, so. I'm not on like totally awesome terms and shit with my landlord. But I got a spare key hidden I can get to in the morning. If that's okay?

VICK

(Beat.) You know Yosemite a long time?

HAZEL

We grew up together in Brooklyn. We try, but can't get rid of each other.

VICK

How come?

HAZEL

...He had a brother. That's gone now. I guess we're the only two that remember him. I can't really explain it.

VICK

Older or younger?

HAZEL

They were twins. But Yosemite's like fifteen minutes earlier or something. I don't know.

VICK

...You have something with him? His brother?

HAZEL

What do you mean?

VICK

You know? Something?

(HAZEL shrugs, and it's enough for VICK.)

VICK (CONT'D)

...I'll drop you off on my way to work tomorrow.

HAZEL

Blowing a whistle and parking tickets? You really like that shit, huh?

VICK

(Finding the energy.) *Yeah.* But I'm not very good at it. On my first day they stole my Interceptor. You know, like the golf cart thing? You ride around in and write tickets? Yeah, buncha kids. Drove it into the Hudson while I was getting a coffee.

HAZEL

That's fucking funny.

VICK

Yeah, I guess it is actually. But now I'm on probation. I go before um. Procedures Committee tomorrow? And then they decide.

HAZEL

Decide what?

VICK

If I was in policy or not. If I get to keep the job.

HAZEL

Why do you want it? It don't pay for shit.

VICK

I don't know. I felt. (Starts again.) I didn't work for a long time after my mother passed. I was working security for Toffee, but then I lost that. And later I almost lost this place too. I guess I started to feel like, one day. Like I was disappearing? Like I'd look at my hand? Or um something? And I could like *see* myself fading away.

HAZEL

Like for real?

VICK

Um yeah. Kinda. (Then.) And then I snapped out of it.

HAZEL

Just like that?

VICK

Sorta. It took a while. It was luck I ran into Toffee again. I hadn't seen him in like five years. He told me about his cousin Joe, and. (Shrugs.) Why not? I get to wear a uniform. It feels good. People look at me.

HAZEL

Dick the Traffic Cop...

VICK

Yup. That's me. 'Least until tomorrow.

(HAZEL looks to a collection of vintage spray cans on shelves on the wall.)

HAZEL

All those cans? They like that Icy Grape you gave me? They have paint in them too?

VICK

Some of them, yeah. They were my brother—. (VICK stops himself.) I mean, I don't know. Maybe they're worth something? Like the Icy Grape is, it's a paper label, instead of the usual aluminum. It's hard to find. Maybe worth something. (Then.) Is that okay? You're not...?

(HAZEL nods and remembers to eat. Her eyes drift to a collection of photo albums stacked at the foot of the futon. VICK picks up on this, keeps the conversation going.)

VICK

Those are um photo albums. Writers used to rack these from Woolworths. Kodak had a camera called the Instamatic one twenty-six. Film canisters looked like small binoculars?

HAZEL

(Mouth full.) Yah, remember them I think.

VICK

Yeah. They would print the pictures for free so long as you bought the camera and film? So you could steal the cameras at one place, steal the film another, then go to Woolworths and steal the books.

HAZEL

Those are all filled with. (Swallows.) Filled with pictures then? Of graffiti?

VICK

Yeah... I know you totally don't like that, but. *Pictures* I mean. And I definitely don't wanna get into it with you again. I'm sorta short on camera's these days.

HAZEL

Sorry.

VICK

No, it's a valid um. *Perspective*, you have. Um. But every writer used to have one of those though. And each one of those albums is a different writer. Their work, I mean. Most of them were friends of mine that are—. You know. But some of these guys it's like they fell off the face of the planet. When these pictures were taken, it was like there was something happening in this city. It was real. And no one could stop it for a while. Not the police. Not the mayor. Not the parents... And these guys? They were up. At the top of it all. And now they're gone. Like they never existed. Except for those books...

(Faintly, the sound of a toy piano has begun to play through the wall. It lulls VICK to sleep while HAZEL eats. He jerks awake.)

VICK

... Sorry! I. Um. I'm falling asleep.

HAZEL

(Lying.) You were snoring.

VICK

I was?

HAZEL

Like a garbage disposal. (Snores horribly.)

VICK

(Amused.) I don't believe you... You're still awake, huh?

HAZEL

You were in this super fucked up dream. In the hospital, when I was on them painkillers they give me. You wanna hear it?

VICK

I'm gonna close my eyes. But I'll listen...

HAZEL

You were Dracula in the dream. And we were in your castle... In *Dicksylvania*.

VICK

(Eyes closed.) ...Funny.

HAZEL

And I was like this firefly, but like *me* size? With a big butt. And you wanted me to get you a flashlight because you was scared of the dark... *Like a bitch. Ha ha.*

VICK

(Eyes closed.) ...Still listening.

HAZEL

So I went exploring your castle, and everything was dark. So I made like my *butt* light up? Because I was a big firefly you know? But I didn't need a flashlight then because my butt was one. And I went back to find you. But then only your teeth was there. Stuck in like one of them red caramel apples. And there was this like a big T-Rexosaurus Rex. *Ha ha.*

VICK

(Falling asleep.) Mmm hum...

HAZEL

Then the T-Rex he like. Ate my butt. That's it. (Beat.) They tagged me, huh? When you found me?

(VICK has fallen asleep again.)

HAZEL (CONT'D)

I know they did. ...I could feel the paint. On my face. Like the way a dog's nose breathes on you. My eyes I couldn't open. Because the paint was sticking 'em shut. And it felt like I was melting into the sidewalk. Like a snowflake. I kinda liked that feeling... And then you were there.

(VICK wakes again.)

VICK

...Huh? What'd you...? I keep...

HAZEL

I'm sorry. (No response.) Hey. I said I'm sorry.

VICK

What? (Rising.) For what? You need something?

HAZEL

Spraying you in the face. I just remembered.

VICK

Oh. (Waves it off.) 'S fine.

(VICK closes his eyes again. HAZEL sets the bowl of noodles aside, and climbs under the covers...)

HAZEL

(Hesitant.) Hey, Dick?

VICK

(Half asleep, almost grumpy.) ...Yeah?

HAZEL

Why'd you bring me here?

VICK

...'Cause you asked me too.

HAZEL

No, I know, but. I mean like. *Why?*

(VICK shrugs. Mumbles *I don't know.*)

HAZEL (CONT'D)

...Hey Dick?

VICK

...Yeah?

HAZEL

I bet I know why.

VICK  
You do?

HAZEL  
Yeah. You wanna like. *Do* me. Or something.

VICK  
*Do you?*

HAZEL  
Yeah.

VICK  
You think I wanna. Um...?

HAZEL  
Yup. You do. But you gotta take me out first. For coffee or something, okay?

VICK  
Coffee or something.

HAZEL  
(Amused.) Yeah. You have to take me out to do something before you get to do me.

VICK  
...Okay.

(The toy piano has begun to play again. VICK sleeps.  
HAZEL grows frightened.)

HAZEL  
Hey Dick? (No response.) Are you still there? I can't hardly hear you no more...

### Scene 3.

HAZEL's dream. Or is it? The Brick Wall near the subway. YOSEMITE in the suit—Or is it Dick? Stands with a can of spray paint in one hand. The sound of a train approaching, underground, loud and ominous.

(YOSEMITE looks out as if he's heard something. The train gets closer...)

YOSEMITE  
...Hazel?

(The three figures dressed in black step out of the shadows behind YOSEMITE. They approach him, menacingly shaking their spray cans...)

(The train grows closer still...)

YOSEMITE (CONT'D)

Hazel? That you...?

(The train sounds close enough to be on top of him. The three figures dressed in black are almost within reach of YOSEMITE.)

YOSEMITE (CONT'D)

(Smiling earnestly.) I'll see you later. *Ha ha!*

(YOSEMITE laughs eerily. The train does not pass.)

#### Scene 4.

VICK's apartment. Hours later. VICK is still curled up in the bathtub. HAZEL wakes suddenly with a shriek...!

HAZEL

Ah...! Fuck. ...*Ha ha. Ha ha.*

(She notices something.)

HAZEL (CONT'D)

Oh no...

(VICK rouses awake, rubs his eyes.)

VICK

Hazel? You okay?

HAZEL

Yeah, um. ...*Shit.*

VICK

What's wrong?

HAZEL

Nothing. I'm. Okay.



(VICK, sensing her distress gets out of the tub and goes to the space heater.)

VICK

Are you okay? You warm enough?

(VICK starts to move the space heater closer to HAZEL.)

HAZEL

(Still.) Stay there.

VICK

What?

HAZEL

Don't come here.

VICK

...What's wrong?

HAZEL

Can you, can you leave?

VICK

What?

HAZEL

Can you go outside for a second?

VICK

Are you okay?

HAZEL

Just, just go outside for a second, please.

VICK

...You want me to? Out in the cold?

HAZEL

The hallway. Go out there.

VICK

...Do you need to use the bathroom?

HAZEL

No. I want you to go out in the hallway for a second. Please, Dick.

VICK

...Okay.

(VICK goes out in the hallway. HAZEL pulls back the sheets. She's wet the bed.)

HAZEL

Shit. *Fuck.*

(She stands, her lower half saturated. Quickly, she removes her pants. She drops them in the center of the bed, pulls off the sheets, rolls the whole thing into a ball, looks around, then shoves it awkwardly under the frameless futon. She pulls on a pair of pants she finds, VICK's pressed slacks from his formal attire.)

VICK

(Off.) Hazel?

HAZEL

Just a sec—.

(HAZEL knocks one of the burgundy photo books off the pile. She goes to pick it up. Looks inside at the pictures...)

VICK

You okay? I'm gonna come in now, okay? I'm coming in...

(VICK enters back into the apartment. He stops cold when he sees HAZEL, her eyes on the pictures in the book.)

VICK (CONT'D)

I was gonna um. Tell you about that.

HAZEL

Why do you have pictures... Of all my pieces?

VICK

You gotta believe me. I never thought I'd ever meet you.

HAZEL

What does that mean?

VICK

I've been following your work for. I mean, it's been like ten years now I think, and—.

HAZEL

What has?

VICK

I tried um. (Starting again.) Do you remember, I tried to tell you? About that spot? Off the four line?

HAZEL

The tunnel one?

VICK

Yeah, it's actually a layup. At the hundred and eighty-sixth street stop.

HAZEL

What's a layup?

VICK

Like um. Like where they park a train? For a while. Underground. There was this old piece down there. This um. A Fred 229 mural? And someone... I mean, it got tagged over. Like dissed. Someone dissed it. Like ten years ago.

HAZEL

So?

VICK

With your tag. HA HA . With um. Exclamation marks. (Beat.) And I guess—. I mean um. I thought it was you.

HAZEL

It wasn't.

VICK

...But it was your tag. Like um. Almost exactly.

HAZEL

I don't bomb in the tunnels, I told you—.

VICK

I know, but maybe you forgot and—.

HAZEL

What's it matter anyways to you?

VICK

FRED 229 was my brother. Remember I told you he got hit by the train, right?

HAZEL

You told Yosemite.

VICK

Um, yeah... But before that, Freddy hit everything. He was all city. Every borough. Every train yard. Until the train hit him. After, I'd to still see his pieces everywhere, you know? Like these ghosts of him? And I'd take pictures of them because they were disappearing, like they do. All of them except for that one off the four line, in the hundred and eighty-sixth street layup.

HAZEL

I told you it wasn't me, so... I mean what do you want from me?

VICK

Um nothing. I don't. No, it's just. Listen, after my mother died... I went a little crazy I think. I mean, I'm okay now, but. When it happened? I started to go down there a lot to see it. Into the tunnel. And um. I started even staying the nights down there. I had this yellow tent, and this Mets cooler with Miller Nips and—.

HAZEL

What the fuck, you angry or something? You got some beef or some shit with me?

VICK

What? No. No, I'm not. I'm thankful. I got *no* beef. At all. Um. That's what I'm trying to tell you.

HAZEL

I mean, it wasn't me so—.

VICK

It got me out of that tunnel, don't you understand? Whoever dissed Freddy, I wanted to know who they were. I was—.

HAZEL

You said you weren't trying to find me.

VICK

No, your *pieces*. I was like obsessed with finding every HA HA piece I could. And every time I did, every picture I took, I'd feel like, like a little better. Like there was someone who knew me out there, and that I wasn't just disappearing.

HAZEL

Look, man. It wasn't me okay, and I think I'm just gonna go here and—.

VICK

No wait. Please wait okay? Um. Just. (Then.) I almost lost everything, okay. My job, this apartment—I mean this isn't even my room even, if you wanna know. It's Freddy's. All of this is his stuff mostly—. And I know it's no way to live. A small part of a room like this? With his old stuff? And I know I'm kinda weird and a total bad luck jinx and I should sell this place. And move to Guam. And open up a swim with the dolphins shack on the beach... Or whatever. Um. Maybe not that, but. You being here right now? It's like the best thing that's happen to me in like... a long time. And I feel like maybe I could do something like all that. Now since I met you. And Hazel? If, you know... After the snow stops. And you get home. And I go to my policy hearing tomorrow. Maybe after that? If you want, me and you could—.

HAZEL

I pissed your bed.

VICK

(Looking.) That's. It's fine. I don't care.

HAZEL

I'm gonna go now I think.

VICK

Right now?

HAZEL

Yeah, I gotta find Yosemite...

VICK

But it's still snowing outside.

HAZEL

I'm not who you think I am. *Sorry. Ha ha.*

(HAZEL starts to make her way to the door. VICK picks up the photo book and blocks her way.)

VICK

But these are you. This one. On Grand? We talked about. You took the elevator. And this one? It's amazing, I found it last month in Harlem—.

(HAZEL suddenly takes the photo book from VICK.)

VICK (CONT'D)

It's okay. You can have 'em.

(HAZEL starts taking pictures out of the photo album and tearing them apart.)

HAZEL

I'm not dead, alright? You can't put me in one of your fucking books!

VICK

No, I'm not—.

HAZEL

And I'm not who you think I am. I didn't paint over your brother. That's not me! *Ha ha.*

(HAZEL starts coughing repeatedly.)

VICK

It doesn't matter. I don't care. But it's really cold out. And. And I think you're *sick*. Okay? Your cough and—.

HAZEL

Lemme go. *Ha ha.*

VICK

Okay that's. Let me take you.

HAZEL

Lemme *Ha ha.*

VICK

I'll drive you—.

HAZEL

Let me go or. ...I'll *hit* you.

VICK

What?

HAZEL

I'll hit you. (Then.) I will rip your face off. And I'll eat it. *Ha ha.* I will eat your face. (Looking at him.) Do you hear me?

(VICK takes a step back, nauseous, but still blocking her.)

VICK

I can't just let you leave. I'll take you back to hospital. Or I'll leave—.

HAZEL

I don't wanna hurt you, Dick. Just let me go.

VICK

(Desperately.) My name is *VICK*. Okay? With a V. And I'm not gonna just let you leave here in the middle of the night in the middle of the Bronx in the middle of a snow storm.

HAZEL

I'LL EAT IT! I WILL EAT YOUR FUCKING FACE! LET ME GO!

(*VICK* is overcome with nausea, and *HAZEL* storms out the door. He calls out to her.)

VICK

Please...! (Then.) I'll call you. A cab! ...Out front! I'll... Wait for it!

(*VICK* searches for his phone.)

## Scene 5

*TOFFEE*'s apartment. His suitcase is nearby, open but still packed. *TOFFEE* looks like hell. Dishuffled, distant, and tense. *VICK* has just entered. He wears his formal attire, with sweatpants. And gloves, which he does not take off.

TOFFEE

Hey, man. Thanks for coming over. How are you?

(They hug briefly.)

VICK

I'm um fine—.

TOFFEE

If he's in jail I'm not bailing him out, man. I'm not. That's. I can't. You know?

VICK

*Jail?*

TOFFEE

Where else would he be?

VICK

So you still haven't heard from him? What about Hazel?

TOFFEE

(Beat.) It doesn't even look like he's been here for days. I called the gallery? But Marty said he hadn't seen him since he dropped off his paintings. He could be locked up in two hundred different places and I wouldn't even know... I'm sorry. I'm like such a wreck, right now...

VICK

Um. That's okay. I just came for Hazel's phone number.

TOFFEE

Oh yeah, I got it right here—.

(TOFFEE gets his cell phone. Then checks it oddly.)

TOFFEE (CONT'D)

Did you hear that? (Listens.) My phone, man... Keeps ringing then nothing's there?

VICK

I didn't hear anything.

(TOFFEE stares at his phone.)

VICK (CONT'D)

Toffee?

TOFFEE

(Beat. Defeated.) ...Will you *explain* it to me?

VICK

What?

TOFFEE

Like the whole thing. Because I don't get it. You go out, Vick. You watch like guys *backs* or whatever. Your brother died doing it? Explain it to me, man.

VICK

I mean, um, what can I tell you? I just came um. For the number.

TOFFEE

Why someone would give up so much for it?

VICK

I don't know. Um. I don't know. (Pause.) You remember the *trains*, right?

TOFFEE

Ah screw the trains, man. They looked *terrible*. (Looks at VICK.) I know the trains are like sacred holy testament or whatever to graffiti *theology*, but. I mean, I think my balls are beautiful and handsome man, but. I'm not going to go around showing them to everyone who doesn't want to see them, right? Screw the trains, man...

VICK



Well to some people.

TOFFEE

Do you want to see my balls?

VICK

What?

TOFFEE

Do you want to see my balls?

VICK

No. Not at all.

TOFFEE

Alright then. To some people. *Not.*

VICK

Can I get that number? If I get a hold of her? Or hear anything, I'll—.

TOFFEE

I'm sorry, man. I know the trains are your thing. I'm just really jet-lagged right now is all.

VICK

That's cool.

TOFFEE

... And I think I'm still tripping.

VICK

Tripping?

TOFFEE

I went to a—. You know he didn't call me. Or answer his phone when I landed. So I went on a real bender, you know. I went to a *coffee* shop? Got this tea? Been drinking it the last couple days. I was in the Anne Frank museum when you called. I caught an early flight here. Forgot about this tea...

VICK

(Putting it together.) You were. On the plane when...?

TOFFEE

When I drank it, yeah. That got real. *Interesting.* Thank god I was in first class.

VICK

(Taking a better look at him.) Are you—?

TOFFEE

Yeah, let's change the subject. Actually.

VICK

Um. Can I? Get Hazel's...?

TOFFEE

Ah man... I'm just trying to understand it.

(TOFFEE makes no attempt to look up HAZEL's number, and stares out abstracted, depressed. VICK settles in, taking eye on one of YOSEMITE's paintings.)

VICK

(Beat.) Well. Where I grew up? In Mosholu Parkway? The trains were. Something more than what you said. I used to sit in the stations all day. Waiting for my brother's pieces to roll through. Then I'd wait for them to come back. A lotta kids, that's all we had you know? You ever go up there then? See what it was like?

TOFFEE

Yeah... I had a squat in Soho in my twenties. I installed my own bars over the windows. The city was decrepit. *Everywhere*, man.

VICK

*Right*. And I was nine, ten years old? From my window I could see the trains roll through everyday on the third avenue el. Burners soaring by, top-to-bottoms, wholecars... It was an amazing time to be a ten year old living in the Bronx. Um. I guess it's not something you can really explain.

TOFFEE

That's when you're ten though. You find yourself wearing a ski mask scaling some building to write your name—and you're *forty*? That's what I was trying to do for him. Give him something to be proud of so that when people see him they don't know *exactly* what he is, man.

VICK

Um. What's that?

TOFFEE

(Dark.) Somebody who's gonna die young and poor for something cheap and stupid.

(It hurts TOFFEE deeply to say this.)

VICK

...Do you like his um. Yosemite's. His paintings?

TOFFEE

(Looking up.) ...Yeah, I do. I especially liked seeing his graffiti. You know? *Out.* I'll be driving up the West Side, and. I'll see one of his pieces I hadn't seen before. And I always think he did it just for me. Like he knew I'd see it right then, that day. ...But that also frightened me terribly too. Because I know that's not true. (Beat.) I told him not to call me.

VICK

What?

TOFFEE

I just remembered. If he got arrested.

VICK

I'm sure he's fine.

TOFFEE

*Don't call me* I told him...

VICK

He'll call. *Don't*, you know.

(VICK makes movement to conclude the visit.)

VICK (CONT'D)

*Well.*

TOFFEE

...God, that poor girl.

VICK

Hazel'll be fine too. Don't worry.

TOFFEE

I mean Anne Frank. I kept thinking about her and that bookshelf hiding the staircase the entire flight.

VICK

(Nicely.) Hey. Can I get that number?

TOFFEE

...Ah god. I think I need to smoke a joint, clear my head. I'm wrecked.

(TOFFEE looks for HAZEL's number in his cell phone. It doesn't seem he can find it.)

VICK (CONT'D)

You want me to. Take a look?

TOFFEE

No... You know what, man? I don't think Hazel has a phone? In fact, I don't think I've ever called her before. Sorry, I thought I had it.

VICK

Do you know where she lives?

TOFFEE

I've never been there. Some place in Brooklyn. Yosemite was too embarrassed to take me.

(VICK's crestfallen. He rises wearily.)

VICK

Well, um. Thanks.

TOFFEE

How's work going with Joe?

VICK

(On his way out.) Good. I just got fired.

### Scene 6.

HAZEL's apartment in Brooklyn. There's not much in the way of furniture. A mattress on the ground. Empty spray cans, graffiti on the walls. HAZEL and YOSEMITE are wrapped in blankets, huddled together on the floor.

HAZEL

Then that's it...

YOSEMITE

Bet.

HAZEL

And there's no way you can...?

YOSEMITE

No way.

HAZEL

...Go to your P.O. and tell him?

YOSEMITE

What? Sorry I missed last week's pissar? But I *accidentally* got stoned...? Nah. No way, yo.

HAZEL

...Then what?

YOSEMITE

I don't know. That's what I been trying to figure out...

(YOSEMITE gets to his feet and tries to warm up.)

YOSEMITE (CONT'D)

Fuck, it's cold.

HAZEL

Harvey turned off the heat last week.

(YOSEMITE stomps on the floor with his foot.)

YOSEMITE

HARVEY! TURN ON THE FUCKING HEAT! (Beat.) Yeah, I don't even know... What I'm gonna tell Toffee? He's suppose to come back tomorrow. Then I got the gallery suppose to open after that.

HAZEL

...What if we do it? Put up your gallery show? Then afterwards you go to Mrs. Scardanza—*Ha ha*. The judge? Tell her you messed up.

YOSEMITE

What would that do?

HAZEL

Maybe if she sees you done your show? And that you're trying to do better? I don't know, she'll give you a break or something?

YOSEMITE

A break? *Gimmie* a fucking break, yo. This ain't like Make A Deal. She ain't like Wayne fucking Brady.

HAZEL

Well, I don't know! *Ha ha*. At least I'm thinking...

(YOSEMITE lights a joint.)

YOSEMITE

...Nah, I'm fucked yo. That's it...

HAZEL

What are you doing?

YOSEMITE

What difference does it make? I stay in New York, I stay at Toffee's—eventually I'm gonna get picked up. She'll give me a year and half, I'll probably do a year of it. Might as well enjoy myself now. (Smokes.) Shit. I can do a year.

HAZEL

Now you give *me* a fucking break. *Ha ha*.

YOSEMITE

Well you tell me what then. Because unless I'm gonna move? Get outta state? Eventually, I'm gonna get a fucking year. And then when I come outta that? I'll *still* be on probation, yo. New York's dead for me.

(YOSEMITE smokes, offers the joint to HAZEL. She takes it, smokes. Coughs severely.)

YOSEMITE (CONT'D)

Yo yo, don't get all tuberculosis on me...

HAZEL

*Ha ha. Ha ha.* (Beat.) Then that's what we gotta do then...

YOSEMITE

What? Leave New York? Yo yo, you serious?

(She looks at him. They both consider this. Then:)

HAZEL

Ain't like I got much here...

(YOSEMITE looks around.)

YOSEMITE

Yeah, no shit. I mean what happened to this place?

HAZEL

What do you mean? This how it's always looked. *Ha ha*.

YOSEMITE

Ain't how I remember it.

HAZEL

How you remember it?

YOSEMITE

...Well. There *was* furniture. For one.

HAZEL

The shit you and Dick pulled off the streets? Half that shit got bed bugs. Finally had to throw it all out to get rid of 'em all. *Ha ha*. This place always looked like shit.

(YOSEMITE smiles, remembering something.)

YOSEMITE

...Remember Dick had that Bow Flex he found? Over in the corner? And it was busted? Only had the two bow flex thingys? You had to do like two thousand reps to get a work out. And he caught BONER exercising buck naked on it once?

HAZEL

I wasn't there for that. I just remember coming back from bombing, and Dick chasing naked BONER up the street with the five iron.

YOSEMITE

That's right. Those were pop's clubs, used to take 'em down to Dyker Beach...

HAZEL

And then WEB TOE was so junked that night he slept through the whole thing?

YOSEMITE

Leaving his eggs boiling? You remember how he be doing that all the time, yo?

HAZEL

Yeah, we'd wake up—.

YOSEMITE

Yeah, and there'd be this black egg! No water left! Boiled off all the water! Just *cooking*. On the stove. All night.

HAZEL

I was sure he was gonna burn us down...

YOSEMITE

(Beat.) We could leave. Go to see him in Portland?

HAZEL

...Good graff in Chicago too.

YOSEMITE

Nah, too cold. Fuck that windy shit. Let's go someplace warm. Let's go to Cali.

HAZEL

Fuck Cali. Too many them blonde bitches. Let's go to Mexico.

YOSEMITE

Fuck Mexico. I say let's go bomb the shit outta *Brazil*. Some the stuff I seen on the internet? It's for real down in Brazil, yo.

HAZEL

(Mostly to herself.) ...Could go to Guam.

YOSEMITE

Guam? Where is that? Near Costa Rica? Ah man, I always wanted to be a surfer. Lay out on the beach and surf all day? Bomb all night? Get myself a cute little Costa Rican surfer man? Chopping coconuts with machetes? ...Hell, yeah.

HAZEL

(Distant, in thought.) Yeah...

YOSEMITE

(Beat.) Nah, seriously though. We go and do my gallery show? Toffee priced out all my paintings. Bet, I sell even one of them? I'm sitting on at least couple G's. We take that money? And we could go. Outta the state.

HAZEL

(Equivocal.) ...Yeah.

YOSEMITE

*Yeah?* I mean, what do you think, girl? This is a straight up for real proposition.

HAZEL

(Shrugs.) Sure. Okay.

YOSEMITE

*Okay* she says... Damn, you all stoned now. Getting paranoid like you do.

HAZEL

No, I was just. Thinking about him. Dick.

YOSEMITE

(He means it.) Sorry I brought him up.

HAZEL

Nah, I'm the one who brought him up. Just thinking if he ever sees them.



YOSEMITE

What? Your graff? (Then.) Listen. It's your business—.

HAZEL

I know.

YOSEMITE

Keeping his name up. You wanna like pay homage, respect—.

HAZEL

I *know*.

YOSEMITE

That's cool. You can do it forever if you want, yo.

HAZEL

You don't have to...

YOSEMITE

But he's not coming back. Wherever he went.

HAZEL

...I know that. I do. (Then.) I just wonder if he ever sees them is all.

YOSEMITE

Then you *don't* know that. Because you ain't listening to me. Eight, nine years—.

HAZEL

Alright, forget it forget it.

YOSEMITE

It don't matter how many times you throw his tag up. He ain't coming back.

HAZEL

I know that. I do.

YOSEMITE

(With enmity.) You *should*. Because you're last person whoever saw him.

HAZEL

...I just *feel* him some times. Don't you?

(HAZEL looks at YOSEMITE.)

YOSEMITE

I'm not him.

HAZEL

I know.

YOSEMITE

Then why you looking at me like you wanna *kiss* me sometimes?

(HAZEL looks at YOSEMITE. He stands, moves away. Stops. Thinks.)

YOSEMITE (CONT'D)

Then do it. The fuck's it mean to me? It'll help you? *Do it.*

(Beat. HAZEL moves to him. She kisses him. There's no chemistry on YOSEMITE's end, but HAZEL feels it intensely. YOSEMITE breaks away.)

YOSEMITE (CONT'D)

(Beat.) He ain't coming back. Because he ain't even here anymore, man. He ain't anywhere. He's *gone*. (More tender.) ...And we should get outta here too, yo.

HAZEL

...Okay.

YOSEMITE

We could start new tags in a new city. Start new names. You could be any name you want. Who do you wanna be?

## Scene 7.

The Brick Wall. Night, snow on the ground. HAZEL's unfinished piece remains untouched.

(VICK enters wearing a large parka over his dress uniform, and still the gloves. He looks around tentatively.)

VICK

...Hazel?

(VICK takes the Icy Grape Krylon spray can from his pocket.)

(He steps up to the wall... )

(The sound of a subway train approaching...)

(VICK struggles. He can't raise his hand to paint.)

(The train grows closer... He drops the spray can, and takes off the glove. He looks at his hand as if it's disappearing.)

(VICK closes his eyes, and puts his hand directly on the wall.)

(The train is right on top of him...)

VICK (CONT'D)

Come on... help me here, Freddy.

(VICK picks up the spray can, and finds the strength to raise it.)

(The train does not stop or pass.)

### Scene 8.

The Gallery. SoHo. Late night. YOSEMITE and HAZEL. They are covered in paint. Large masterpiece murals behind them. One is *TOFFEE* in large block letters resembling melting caramels. The other is a classic old-school throwback, *GUAM*, painted as if lounging on a beach with palm trees etc. YOSEMITE's paintings line the rest of the walls. VICK's pictures of subway cars flash over top of them. YOSEMITE, silent and dark, drinking aggressively, a respirator around his neck. HAZEL's arm is in a sling, the cast she wore previously is in a corner, near a hacksaw.

(A subway car flashes.)

HAZEL

I like this one. The colors. That Cascade Green with the Fire Hydrant?

(Another subway car flashes.)

HAZEL (CONT'D)

This one too. Smoke Gray and School Bus Yellow?

(Another subway car.)

HAZEL (CONT'D)

(Excited.) Oh shit. This one's the best in the loop though. Cherry Red. Regal Blue. And that Icy Grape 3D? What about that Icy Grape 3D? You like that?

(YOSEMITE drinks, stares at his paintings.)

HAZEL (CONT'D)

Come on. What's up? You left five minutes ago, you come back, you're not talking to me anymore. (Beat.) It looks good. Your paintings are... It'll be a good show tomorrow.

(YOSEMITE shakes his head. Drinks. Looks at his paintings.)

HAZEL (CONT'D)

So you just gonna drink yourself into a coma then? Or what? (Pause.) Come on, *talk* to me. You worried? You'll sell something, I'm sure.

YOSEMITE

I'm not selling anything.

HAZEL

Why you thinking like that? You don't know that.

YOSEMITE

They're not the same are they? (Looks at her.) They're different. I mean, they don't feel the same to me now.

HAZEL

(Understanding.) ...In two weeks they're gonna paint right over this wall, so that's kinda the same. (Then.) Come on. Let's go get some pizza or something.

(HAZEL takes him by the arm and starts leading him to the exit. YOSEMITE breaks away, and picks up a spray can. He moves to one of the canvases.)

YOSEMITE

I ran into Marty on the way to the bathroom. Told me Toffee already bought 'em. All of 'em. Before we even open. Twelve thousand dollars. ...And he probably won't even come.

HAZEL

(Cautiously.) Yosemite.

YOSEMITE

(Beat.) I mean, I look these paintings, and. ... All I wanna do is diss my own shit right now.

HAZEL

What are you talking about?

YOSEMITE

Yo yo, if you saw this canvas hanging on a wall. On the street? You telling me you wouldn't want diss it?

HAZEL

(Unsure how to answer.) I don't know.

YOSEMITE

No, I'm asking you a question. Would you diss this?

HAZEL

...I don't know. When it's on a wall out there, we put it there. Someone walks by *has* to look at it. They come in here? To see to your paintings? You're right. They are different. They won't be buffed out. Or ever fade. Or dissed by some fucking toy trying to get his name up. They chose to look at them.

YOSEMITE

So how the fuck is that graffiti?

HAZEL

(Unsure, but agreeing.) ...*Yeah*.

YOSEMITE

...Would you diss it?

HAZEL

Does it matter? It's your art, Yosemite.

(HAZEL moves up behind him and puts a hand on him, sensing the danger.)

HAZEL (CONT'D)

(Gently.) ...You should take the money. Get outta state. Like you planned.

YOSEMITE

What about you?

HAZEL

I don't think I can. I got something here I can't leave yet.

YOSEMITE

...What?

HAZEL

Something.

(YOSEMITE nods, understanding. And for a moment, it looks like he might leave. He smiles at HAZEL, turns then suddenly, and tags a crude *YO* over one of his canvases. HAZEL's speechless.)

YOSEMITE

Oh shit... Oh shit. (Then.) That felt really fucking good. (Looks closer.) Six hundred and eighty dollar bills, yo. (Smiles at her.) I gotta do another one.

(YOSEMITE tags over another of his paintings. HAZEL stands shocked.)

YOSEMITE (CONT'D)

Seven-fifty. Oh fuck... Can you believe that? (He tags another.) Eight-ninety! The boy's on fire, yo! (Another.) He's bombing the Bronx! (Another.) He's burning up Queens! (Another.) Staten Island! (Another.) Money-making Manhattan, yo! (Another.) Brooklyn! Laid to waste! He's all fucking city! Every neighborhood! Every Borough—!

(YOSEMITE dances in front of HAZEL, then turns to diss another painting. HAZEL pushes him.)

YOSEMITE (CONT'D)

(Slight warning.) Hey. Don't push me. I'm having fun here.

HAZEL

(Stunned.) What are you doing?

YOSEMITE

I can't let him have these? This fucking toy bullshit. He doesn't even like 'em.

HAZEL

Mothafuck... You're stupid! You know that?

YOSEMITE

He only bought 'em because he thinks it's what I want. He deserves better than this!

HAZEL

What are you gonna do then? Go to jail! Do a year and a half? Is that what you want?

YOSEMITE

What else is there? *Run?* And go where? (In reference to her destination beach mural.) *Guam?* You and I both know that's never gonna happen. I ain't even got a passport. Do you? I never been farther out than Jersey, yo!

(YOSEMITE stops in front of his TOFFEE mural.)

## YOSEMITE (CONT'D)

Nah. I mean, that's it. I'm gonna go talk to Toffee. I'm gonna *beg* him to forgive me... Then I'm gonna go do a year in fucking jail. Bet.

(YOSEMITE hesitates. Then tags over his TOFFEE mural. He steps back and looks at it. Then pulls the hood of his sweater over his head and hides his face. Crumbling, he sobs.)

## HAZEL

(Approaching him.) You can still go. You don't need the money. I got some cash. I'll get you an Amtrak to Philly. Start a new tag, a new name—.

## YOSEMITE

Is that what you told Dick? (HAZEL's speechless.) What'd he say to you? The last time you saw him—anyone saw him. He said something. Tell me now.

(YOSEMITE rises and moves in front of HAZEL's *GUAM* beach mural.)

## HAZEL

What? You think I...? That I know something? (A look.) Nothing...! He didn't say. I mean, what do you think I know? I *know* something? And I never told you? *Ha ha*.

(YOSEMITE raises his spray can.)

## HAZEL

Wait, that's! That's for somebody! *Ha ha*.

## YOSEMITE

He said something, yo. No one just disappears. Eight nine years...? Nothing?

## HAZEL

He said... *I'll see you later*. That's all he said. And he finished his piece on the wall. Kissed me. Laughed. *Ha! Ha!* Like he always done about everything. And then went down into the subway. You know what I know. Ain't nothing else there. You wanna go to jail? Go to jail. Or get outta state. But if you ain't believe me than fuck you! Because that's my piece you're about to diss!

## YOSEMITE

Don't matter where I go. Because he won't be there.

(YOSEMITE raises his spray can, and tags over the *GUAM* beach mural.)

## HAZEL

No...

(HAZEL moves to the mural. YOSEMITE steps back, drops the can, wanders, dazed.)

(HAZEL touches her hand to the wall, running it over the lines YOSEMITE sprayed. She begins to cough.)

YOSEMITE

(Begins to exit.) Hey, yo... I'm gonna go. *Hey.* (Without irony.) I'll see you later, okay?

(YOSEMITE exits.)

(HAZEL's coughing brings her to her knees.)

HAZEL

(Struggling, fighting through it.) ...*No!*

(She grabs a spray can near her, gains control of her cough, stands, and tries to paint over the lines. She shakes the can, empty. Tosses it.)

(She tries another. And another.)

HAZEL (CONT'D)

No... No...

VICK (OFF.)

You guys still open?

(HAZEL freezes, her eyes to the wall. VICK enters the space. One of his hands is completely covered, almost dripping with paint.)

VICK (CONT'D)

Hey. (Pause.) Still open?

HAZEL

(Beat.) What's it look like? ...*Ha ha.*

(HAZEL goes back to working on the piece, her back to VICK. VICK takes a moment, looks around, and assesses the situation.)

VICK

What happened?



HAZEL

I'm not done, so. If you could just. You know, come back later. *Ha ha.*

(HAZEL tries more cans, still empty.)

VICK

That's um. I like your piece.

HAZEL

I'm not done with it. And we're closed. So if you could please just fuck off ...

(VICK nods, and begins to back away.)

(A subway car flashes on the wall, beginning the slideshow. Maybe it's the train the killed Freddy? It stops VICK.)

VICK

(Beat.) Nah, it's really good though. I like the beach stuff. Um. It's a good throwback. I like the letter combination too. The A and the U work good together. I wouldn't have thought that. Nice colors... Very classic. Ties the whole thing together.

HAZEL

...I can't fix it.

VICK

It doesn't need it.

HAZEL

It's not... How it suppose to look. For you.

VICK

I like it this way.

(VICK puts hand on HAZEL's shoulder, and turns her towards him. She looks up at him. The subway cars flash over them.)

(From behind VICK, HAZEL sees the three figures dressed in black step out of the shadows, near the exit. They shake their cans.)

VICK (CONT'D)

I finished something. I was gonna ask you if um. If you wanted to go out? (Pause.) I mean, I *am* asking. Come out with me. And see it. Maybe we can get a coffee later.

I don't like coffee, Vick.

HAZEL

(Shrugging.) Or something.

VICK

(The sounds of a subway train, the express. It approaches, and the sound grows louder. Another subway slide flashes over VICK and HAZEL looking at one another.)

(The train *ROARS* by.)

**END OF PLAY**