ACT 1, Scene 2

(Dan and Beatrice sit in bed together, Dan is reading a well worn book, Beatrice is on her phone. They sit in silence for a brief time before Dan breaks the silence.)

DAN
Oh man, listen to this line!

(Beatrice does not look up from her phone.)

DAN
(With Passion)
“He no longer dreamed of storms, nor of women, nor of great occurrences, nor of great fish, nor fights, nor contests of strength, nor of his wife” — uh, ignore that bit — “He only dreamed of places now and of the lions on the beach. They played like young cats in the dusk and he loved them as he loved the boy. He never dreamed about the boy.” — God, isn’t that sad but beautiful? … Bea?

(Beatrice only now looks up from her phone.)

BEATRICE
Oh sweetie, I’m sorry! I didn’t even realize you were talking to me! What were you saying?

DAN
Oh, it’s ok, it was just a line I hadn’t noticed before. It’s so strange how you can read a book over and over but just not notice a line. Was I just skipping over it? Do I only now truly understand it? Is it—

BEATRICE
(Teasing)
Is it the fact that you always fall asleep after ten pages and then never remember where you were?

DAN
Oh come on, it’s not that bad! I at least get through twenty!

BEATRICE
Twelve.

DAN
Eighteen.

BEATRICE
Fifteen, final offer!
DAN
Well Mrs. Grimshaw, you drive a hard bargain, I accept.

(Dan gingerly scoots closer to Beatrice. He lays his head on her shoulder and glances at her phone.)

DAN
Oooo, what’s Shelly pissed about?

BEATRICE
Ugh ok, get ready for a story.

(Dan scoots away and leans his head on his left hand.)

DAN
Gimme that hot gossip!

BEATRICE
Ok, So I’m only just getting a handle of the situation, but from what I can understand it’s all because of last night, remember how I was thinking about going out because Gina was in town?

DAN
(Teasingly)
Why, I remember like it was just yesterday!

BEATRICE
Ha. Ha. But anyway so I decided not to go because I was tried-

DAN
And because going out with Gina is kinda the worst-

BEATRICE
But you don’t know the half of it yet! I was the only one who didn’t go so it was Shelly, Gina, Maxine, Nell, and Audrey, and they all decided to go to Micro because they have the best snacks — have you tried their mozzarella sticks?

DAN
No, but-

BEATRICE
Oh we are going to change that as soon as-

DAN
Bea just get on with the story for God’s sake!
BEATRICE
Ok, ok! So they went to Micro, and who did they see there but Shelly’s ex — before you ask, yes, the one with the glasses — but he was way down on the other side of the bar so they decide to just play it cool, have their drinks, and no matter what, not acknowledge his existence!

DAN
Sounds like a flawless plan.

BEATRICE
Oh shut up, anyway, so they have a few drinks, and then Shelly has to go to the bathroom, so she takes Maxine and Nell with her. That leaves Gina and Audrey alone. So, and this is just what I’ve heard from Shelly who heard it from Audrey, Gina starts looking over at Shelly Ex.

DAN
No!

BEATRICE
Yes! Audrey says she stared at him for like half a minute then coughed really loud, cause he wasn’t noticing, then when he turned to look at the noise she locked eyes with him and gave a flirtatious wave.

DAN
A flirtatious wave? What does a flirtatious wave look like? Is it something like this?

(Dan puckers his lips and flutters his fingers)

BEATRICE
I am going to make the active choice to ignore you and just finish the story ok?

(Dan nods with a dumb grin on his face)

Ok so Audrey says after that he waved back to her she stood up to go over to him! Apparently she tried to stop her, but I mean, come on, Audrey weighs like what, ten pounds? So obviously she was barely a speed bump. And so when Shelly came out of the bathroom she saw her Ex talking to Gina who was being WAY flirty. Needless to say Shelly called Gina a bitch, which lead to Maxine calling Gina a bitch, you know how she is, which then lead to a huuuuge argument that got them all kicked out of the bar! — Damn, I wish I was there to see it!

DAN
Really? That sounds kinda stressful to be honest.

BEATRICE
Yeah it probably would’ve been, but how often does something like that happen? I missed out on a potential bar brawl!

DAN
Well hey, it’s not like it was a waste of an evening, we had a nice dinner!
BEATRICE
Yeah, after I stepped in to avert disaster!

DAN
Ok well how was I supposed to know that meatloaf could burn?

BEATRICE
How does it make more sense for meatloaf to not burn?

DAN
I don’t know, I thought because of the breadcrumbs- whatever it doesn’t matter. The point is I tried, and that's worth something.

BEATRICE
Don’t get me wrong, I really appreciate the effort, I do, but I’d also appreciate it if you could, you know, stay within your bounds a little bit more?

DAN
What do you mean?

BEATRICE
I just mean that, ya know, I would’ve appreciated it a little more if I didn’t have to not only help put out a meatloaf fire as soon as I got home, but also then help with making a new meal after. If you just stuck to a salad or-

DAN
Just because I don’t cook most of the time doesn’t mean that I’m completely incompetent.

BEATRICE
I don’t know Dan, almost burning down the kitchen strikes me as pretty incompetent.

DAN
Listen, I admit that I screwed up, but please explain to me how I’m supposed to get better at cooking without practice?

BEATRICE
Well if you want to practice, do it some other night please. Don’t do it on a Friday night where all I want is to sit down and have a nice meal.

DAN
When did it become my job to make sure you have meals waiting for you?

BEATRICE
It became your job when I picked up the extra half shift in the morning-
DAN
Well that-

BEATRICE
Which may I remind you I only need to do because you aren’t working-

DAN
Come on Bea, that's-

BEATRICE
Shut up Dan. So I think the least I could ask for is that when you “help” around the house, you could at least do something actually constructive. Oh, and if you really can’t do something because it hurts too much, lets hear about that way ahead of time rather than halfway through the fucking foreplay.

DAN
Bea, I was trying to let you that I wasn’t feeling up to it, but you wouldn’t listen to me. I shouldn’t have to literally start crying for you notice that I’m in pain.

BEATRICE
I don’t remember you saying a word.

DAN
You know what? That really doesn't surprise me. Sometimes it’s like you're not even in the same room as me. And I’m not saying this to try and start anything, but it just really is hard sometimes. Like just five minutes ago.

BEATRICE
You mean when you were quoting your book?

DAN
Exactly. Do you remember even a single word that I said?

(Dan moves his book out of Beatrice’s line of sight)

Hell, do you even remember what book I’m reading?

(An uncomfortable silence as Bea clearly does not remember.)

Oh come on, I’ve talked to you about it so many times before.

BEATRICE
Well Dan, not knowing what book you’re reading is hardly equal to ignoring you all the time. But I’m sorry that you feel like I am.

(They sit in silence for a moment, both looking dissatisfied and no longer meeting the others eyes.)
BEATRICE
I’m tired. We can talk about this in the morning.

(Bea rolls onto her side facing away from Dan)

BEATRICE
Goodnight Dan.

(Dan puts his book on the nightstand then looks at Bea. He reaches over to touch her shoulder, but at the last minute pulls away. He turns off lamp on the table next to him and the scene goes dark.)

ACT 1, Scene 3

(The lights come up on Dan and Beatrice facing away from each other in bed. Dan rolls over onto his back.)

DAN
Hey Bea, you awake?

(Beatrice rolls onto her back and looks at Dan)

BEATRICE
Yeah, I’ve been up for a little while now.

DAN
Ah. Well, I just wanted to say-

BEATRICE
Yeah. Me too.

DAN
I should've mentioned that I was feeling a little ignored when I first started to feel ignored and-

BEATRICE
And I should give you more time.

DAN
But I should remember that your days really are much busier than mine now and— and god Bea I really am sorry about that.

BEATRICE
Oh hush up, we’ve been over that a million times, recovering is a job in its own way. Plus it’s not like you’re actually doing nothing, you’re the one who figured out the insurance with whats-his-face.
DAN  
(As if in an infomercial)
John, from Insuricare!

BEATRICE
Yes exactly! But anyway, going back to the “fight” from last night, I’m sorry that I was so snappy, I just really had a long day and I really wasn’t feeling like myself.

DAN
Last night really wasn’t like either of us Bea. When I woke up this morning, I just felt so annoyed with myself for making a problem where there didn’t have to be one.

BEATRICE
Well the weather has just been so gloomy lately, how could either of us be feeling chipper when it feels like the whole state is covered in a grey fog?

DAN
Well yesterday the weather channel said that we’ll finally be getting some sun today!

BEATRICE
Oh good, It’s been a long time coming.

(The two sit together quietly until Dan scoots himself towards Beatrice. She notices his movement and also moves closer until they are snuggly cuddled in the middle of the bed. They cuddle for a few seconds, then Dan plants a kiss on Beatrice’s cheek.)

DAN
Well Mrs. Grimshaw, now that we are on good terms again, why don’t you help this feeble old man get some coffee?

BEATRICE
As long as this feeble old man is willing to make a double batch that works for me!

DAN
(With an old man voice)
Dang gonnit, fine! You young whippersnappers can’t do anything on your own!

(Bea laughs and they kiss briefly. She gets out of bed, stretches, and walks to Dan’s side where he has already moved to be sitting on the edge of the bed. Beatrice extends a hand which Dan uses to pull himself up as he stands slowly. After a moment of checking his balance they walk out of the bedroom and into the kitchen. Dan goes to the coffee machine while Bea heads towards the back door.)
BEATRICE
I’m going to check the mail, I don’t think either of us remembered to get it yesterday.

(Dan gives a thumbs up while preparing the coffee maker and Beatrice exits stage left. The coffee machine whirs into action and Dan sits at the kitchen table facing the door that Bea walked out of. He picks up an old newspaper from the middle of the table and reads the front page. He puts it down as Beatrice enters with a handful of letters and sits down across from him)

DAN
Anything good today?

BEATRICE
Not sure yet, let’s find out! Up first we have… oh! A letter from your cousin Tom!

DAN
(Sarcastically)
Two weeks late as usual, I can’t believe it!

BEATRICE
At this point I honestly think he does it on purpose, how could someone actually be that behind the news? It’s not like he lives in the sticks or anything.

DAN
With how much you complained about it last summer I honestly can’t believe you don’t think Maryland is the sticks.

BEATRICE
Well I’m sure that not all of the state is as crummy as Tom’s “campground”, but anyway, what did he say?

DAN
(Doing an extremely exaggerated southern accent when in quotation marks.)
“Dear cousin Daniel, I hope that your surgery will go well. Know that” - oh here we go - “The lord is with you always and especially now in this time of need. I, as well as Barbara-Jean and the kids, are praying every night for your safety. You should go to church more. Also you should visit more, we just got blah blah blah blah GOD. Blah blah blah Jesus! Blah blah blah” — new swimming pool? Maybe we should visit them Bea!

BEATRICE
Dan did you hear that?
DAN
What?

BEATRICE
I swear on my soul that I just now heard Cousin Tom in this very room!

DAN
Darn, I must’ve just missed him! I guess I’ll just have to be content with this letter in place of his electrifying personality. Speaking of, any other good mail?

BEATRICE
Let’s see, spam… spam… bill past due?

DAN
No way, from who?

BEATRICE
The gas company, did you-

DAN
No, there’s no way it isn’t paid, I did it at the same time as the water and electricity.

BEATRICE
Are you sure?

DAN
Well…

BEATRICE
Dan this is why I always do the bills.

DAN
I know, I know, I-

BEATRICE
And what did I say when you offered? I said, “Daniel, are you sure you know how to pay the bills?”, to which you responded-

DAN
Bea I know I said I could do it, I’m sorry! I just wanted to be helpful while I was stuck here doing nothing.

BEATRICE
Come on, recovering isn’t doing nothing.
DAN
It might as well be. I really don’t think that stretching for 10 minutes in the morning and 10 more at night has been speeding anything up.

BEATRICE
Well, you’ll keep doing them regardless. (Beat) Dan, so if you thought that you paid the bill last week, that means since then we’ve been budgeting as if we had paid it.

DAN
Yeah?

BEATRICE
So we— So I should still be able to pay it now without any problems right?

DAN
Yeah. Yeah! That makes sense to me!

BEATRICE
(Sighs)
Well that’s a relief. I’ll go back to doing the bills from now on ok?

DAN
Fiire. They took forever anyway.

BEATRICE
(Teasing)
Now imagine actually doing all of them, that would really take forever.

DAN
Come on Bea, I said I was sorry!

BEATRICE
Okay, I’ll let you off the hook for now, but only because this is a lot more understandable than the meatloaf!

DAN
Uuggghhh.

BEATRICE
Now, what else do we got here? Spam… A letter reminding us to resubscribe to National Geographic… Ah! This could be good, check for some deals.

(Tosses coupon insert to Dan and eyes last letter suspiciously reading it as he talks.)
DAN
Ahh Big Y, how I love your silver card savings. Let’s see here… no no we don’t need any baby formula, don’t need these diapers either! You almost needed ‘em a minute ago huh Bea? Hmmm, Cheez-its are always good… and we haven’t had spaghetti in a while. OH! Ribs half off! I can’t even remember the last time I had ribs! It would’ve been at the Jenkins cookout probably. Remember that Bea? … Bea?

BEATRICE
Oh, I’m sorry it’s just… can you take a look at this? I can’t possibly be reading it right.

DAN
Yeah sure… Dear Mr. and Mrs. Grimshaw, we regret to inform you that your-

BEATRICE
The little shit.

DAN
Insurance will not cover the surgery expenses as-

BEATRICE
That lying fuck.

DAN
It does not fall under your homeowners coverage. Your bill is as follows. (Beat) No, no that's not possible.

BEATRICE
He told us that it would be covered, he told us everything would be covered.

DAN
Twenty-six thousand, nine-hundred and twelve dollars … just, how?

BEATRICE
*(Standing)*
I’m gunna go to the Insuricare office right now. This is unacceptable, we are getting our money.

DAN
Bea, if we didn’t get the money, we didn’t get the money, we can’t just-

BEATRICE
Excuse me? Are you asking me not to fight this?

DAN
I just think you’re a little worked up right-
BEATRICE
Yeah I’m worked up Dan. John fucked us, that little weasel told us we’d be covered. He lied to us. He lied to your face.

DAN
Well maybe he just made a mistake.

BEATRICE
As if that makes a goddamn difference.

DAN
Bea just sit down and-

BEATRICE
Are you going to come with me?

DAN
Bea I-

BEATRICE
Yes or no.

(They hold eye contact for a few seconds, then Dan breaks and looks down.)

BEATRICE
That’s what I thought.

(She begins to leave, but stops at the door and turns around)
Dan, you let people screw you over all the time because you aren’t willing to fight for even one goddamn second. I hate to see it happen, but I stand aside because I know you don’t want me to step in. But this Dan, this could screw me over too, and I’m not about to let that happen because I’m not you. (She exits)

(Dan tries to stand to go after her, but winces in pain and falls back into his chair)

DAN
Bea… I’m sorry.

(Dan stares at the door Beatrice left out of, lights out as Beatrice does not return)