

Chapter 2: A site-Specific Play With Nothing To Lose

By

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(554 W. 113th St., Apartment 2F. New York, NY 10025. Former residence of Joyce Johnson. The hallway. The door opens. JACK throws a plate of food against the wall. The plate shatters. The food flies. JOYCE enters the playing space via the door to the apartment to pick up the pieces of plate. JACK slams the door.)

(Silence.)

(JACK opens the door.)

JACK

Chapter two is not finished. You may read chapter two when it is finished. Chapter two is not finished. You may read chapter two when it is finished. Chapter two is not finished. You may read chapter two when it is finished. Chapter two is not finished. You may read chapter two when it is finished.

JOYCE

STOP IT!

(Softly.)

I'm sorry.

(JACK stands, walks into the apartment, and slams the door.)

(Silence.)

(JACK slowly opens the door. He sits down sideways in the doorway. JOYCE does not move from her ball.)

(Silence.)

JACK

Joyce. Joyce? Joyce. Joyce, the lady, the lovely lady the sweet and beautiful lady. Come on sweet Joyce. Come on, talk to me. Joyce. I don't know why you won't talk to me.

(Silence.)

(She slowly gathers pieces of the broken plate once again.)

JACK

I'm sorry. I know you liked that plate. We could put her back together with some Elmers. Make it is a good as new.

(Softly.)

I heard...I heard a joke today. Old toothless fella, war vet in a wheelchair, told it to me.

(Silence.)

Descartes walks into a bar. The bar keep says, "Hey, there. What's your pleasure? Beer? Wine? Whiskey?" And Descartes says "Hm. I don't think so", and POOF, he's gone.

(Silence.)

JOYCE

(Softly.) I want you to leave. I want you to grab your things and leave.

JACK

Joyce.

JOYCE

I want you to get your things and leave. Tonight.

JACK

Joyce.

JOYCE

NO! NOOOOOOOO! *(She takes the pieces of broken plate and slams them against the floor.)*

(Silence.)

I'm tired. I'm tired, Jack. I think you should leave.

JACK

I'm just trying to make you happy. I really am. If I can get chapter two done, I'll sell it to Harper's. Harper's will want it. We'll go out and have fun. We can go to Coney Island, and play the games, and walk on the beach and eat cotton candy and drink root beer and ride the roller coasters. I just need to finish chapter two.

JOYCE

When? When? When? When? When? When? When. Pillow talk. Stories. Novocain. We never go out anymore. We never go out together. You spend all afternoon getting slammed on a bar stool at the West End and throw up on the bathroom tile every night while I'm making dinner for one. You won't eat breakfast. I know you don't eat lunch. It's not healthy. And you pound on your typewriter like a bully, and I'm tired, Jack. I'm sick and tired. Say something, Jack. Say something clever and romantic. Something about you hitch hiking in Belfast, or eating spinach tacos in New Mexico, or the way sunlight drips

off windows like gold house paint in San Diego or the smell of a brass parakeet cages or those little Mexican fishing villages you know like the back of a whiskey bottle. Your little stories make it all worth it. I'm tired, Jack. I'm tired.

(Silence.)

(JOYCE walks into the apartment, and softly closes the door, leaving him. JACK puts his head in his hands. He begins to grown in pain. He pulls his hair. He beats his fists against the floor. He curls into a ball on the floor.)

(Silence.)

(JOYCE slowly opens the door. She walks into the playing space and gets down on her knees.)

Jack. JOYCE

I'll go to Ginsberg's. JACK

I don't want you to go to Allen's. JOYCE

No. I 've done enough to you. I'll get my things...and go to Ginsberg's. JACK

Would you tell me a story? Please. Would you tell me about Mexico? The Palm trees. The Mountain. The ocean. JOYCE

(A shift.)

JACK
I was locked up in this small-little mountain town in the Sierra Madras, called Creel, an old horse-packing town from the gold rush days that was beginning to have whispers of a ghost town. A giant limestone statue of the Holy Ghost looked over the village from a bump in the mountain on the west side the railroad tracks that was the only sure fire bet of transportation for the next two hundred miles. The town was surrounded by evergreens that would bow in the wind and say hello. Irwin had just met Simon, and was fighting with him over who was more engaging, Whitman or Blake. We ate fresh fish tacos for lunch from the church cafeteria to aid in the erasing of a thoroughly installed tequila hangover we had developed two days earlier in La Junta with an elderly Irish ex-patriot called Seamus...who looked...he looked...like a small Santa Claus...um...

JOYCE

It's okay.

(She kisses him on the face.)

JACK

...I don't know how to tell that story yet.

(Silence.)

I'm sorry.

JOYCE

It's fine.

JACK

I'll get my stuff. Go to Ginsberg's.

JOYCE

Stay. Please. You can tell me stories all night. And paint my toenails. We'll get some more food. Maybe some wine?

JACK

No. I think you deserve better than this. I'll go to Ginsberg's.

JOYCE

But, chapter two isn't finished yet.

(JOYCE stands. She quickly moves into the apartment, leaving the door open, and goes to a record player located just a few feet within the doorway. She puts on the song "Take Five", by Dave Brubeck. She then returns to the playing space. She slowly moves to Jack, closes her eyes and begins to slowly rub her nose up and down his neck, cheeks, lips, and nose. She slowly runs one of her fingers from his ear, down his neck, across his shoulder, down his arm and finds his hand. She takes him by this hand, and she leads him into the apartment. The door closes.)

(The soft sound of music is heard.)

(Then it all fades to nothingness.)

(Silence.)

THE END