

OLIVES



BY DANIEL HOLZMAN

CHARACTERS

MIRIAM: Early 40's

DAVID: Late 30s

HUGO: Mid 30's

JEAN: 19ish and Mid 30s

GUY: 19ish

TIME

1999 and then 2015

PLACE

Utah and California



NOTES

Hugo is strange and plastic. He does not have to be played by a real bodybuilder but we should never be able to forget that he is one. He might have a very faint unplaceable accent at times.

Miriam has no reason to be right but she often is.

Resist the urge to make David a ball of neuroses. He's not a victim but he is hurt.

Jean, in spite of herself, should appear very normal.

“I want to be bigger than everybody else, but I wouldn’t want to be so big that people can’t accept it. For instance, if you come in with 30-inch-arms, even your own peers aren’t going to accept that. I wouldn’t want to be that way. I wouldn’t want to infinitely become unreal.”

- Mike Katz, bodybuilder

There’s no movement, there’s no movement

There’s no movement in a bad mouth

- Fugazi, “Bad Mouth

PROLOGUE

There's a little empty rec room. Maybe it's hanging from a string. Linoleum floors and no windows. It's in Utah. It's winter. GUY and JEAN are there. They're both about 19. Jean is holding drumsticks and Guy is holding a microphone. It's 1999, this should be clear. And it's snowing.

GUY

Man

Dude

Wow

Dudewow

Man oh my god

Oh my god?

We've never been that good before

We were actually good.

We were actually so good!

Oh wow.

He checks his pulse.

GUY

Can you get a heart attack from good things?

From rocking too hard?

Can you die?

Can that happen?

JEAN

Anything can happen if you get too excited.

Tears in Guy's eyes.

GUY

They were breaking stuff, Jean.

Did you see?

That girl with the green shirt fell down and someone caught her.

They didn't even know the songs and they were singing along they learned oh

Wow wow wow

Today is the greatest day I've ever known.

And you!

You were great too!

JEAN

We had fun.

It was fun.

I love the drums
and the drums love me

She notices that Guy has stopped breathing.

JEAN

Guy?

Guy?

....Guy breathe.

She hits him on the back.

GUY

(exhaling)

I think the future is going to be full of bands.

Okay?

I really believe it.

And not just that everyone is going to be in a band but everyone is gonna be able to be in a band

Professionally.

You know?

In 10 years. 5 years. Professionally. If they want that.

I think if we play our cards right

If we really work

If we really try

We can have that future

And so much exciting music is going to come out of it.

All these bands. All these bands. More bands than you can imagine.

Can you even imagine?

It's gonna happen.

Long silence.

JEAN

Yeah I don't think that at all.

GUY

You don't?

JEAN

No.

GUY

Well then what do you think is gonna happen?

JEAN

I don't know.

Just not that.

GUY

God I love you but you're so fucking negative sometimes

JEAN

I'm not being negative.

GUY

Yes you are

Just a little bit.

Just a little tiny bit

But just don't for 5 minutes

Just don't

Just look into the future and say what you see

Is that so hard?

JEAN

I think I need to quit.

Silence.

GUY

What.

JEAN

I think I don't want to play music anymore.

I think there's other things I want to do.

GUY

What.

JEAN

I've already thought about it so you don't need to say anything.
And you'll be okay

GUY

What.

JEAN

No don't you don't need to do that.
You should keep going with this and find another drummer if you want but I'm out.
I'm done.
There's no convincing needed.
I already convinced myself.
The show was fun and people liked it and you'll be okay so

She smacks the air with a drumstick and it makes a sound.

JEAN

That was the last time I'll play drums and that's it.

GUY

Why

JEAN

I just don't like it.
I just
My heart's not in it anymore

Guy ponders this.

GUY

That's probably the the the the stupidest shit I've ever heard.

Okay?

I don't know if you heard me okay?

EVERYBODY IS GOING TO BE IN A BAND

Think about the future.

JEAN

I am

I have.

You're wrong.

GUY
No I'm not.

JEAN
Yes you are.
There's no bands in the future, Guy.

GUY
Yes there are

JEAN
By the time you get there they'll all be gone

GUY
Then what's there gonna be?

JEAN
Nothing I-

GUY
NONONONONONO

He screams into the mic.

JEAN
I don't want to say

GUY
Tell me right now or I'm gonna fucking kill somebody and it's not gonna be who you expect.

JEAN
No.

GUY
Fine.
Great.

Guy pulls out a giant sword and stomps toward the door.

GUY

I'm gonna kill your dad.

JEAN

He's your dad too.

GUY

He's not my dad

JEAN

He's your stepdad

GUY

And now he's gonna die

JEAN

Did you buy that on Skymall?

GUY

It's still sharp.

JEAN

He has a gun.

GUY

I have surprise.

JEAN

Please don't kill our stepdad.

GUY

Please don't **FUCK MY DREAM**

A pause.

JEAN

You wanna know?

Okay.

There's going to be a bodybuilder.

That's what I see.

In the future there's a bodybuilder.

A big giant bulging bodybuilder named Hugo or Klaus or Saul.

And he's so fucking ripped, you wouldn't believe.

He smells like whey and sweat, and he only eats organs and olives, and he sleeps outside

Like a real man. Like a caveman.

He got a voluntary lobotomy and he wrote a book and there's no such thing as a best seller anymore because the new york times book rating people or whatever all killed themselves at the same time but somehow everyone has his book maybe they press a button at home and it's there.

And people love him. He's beloved. He's popular. Like a blonde girl in high school with money like a blonde girl in high school with money who doesn't even need to be that pretty because she's already been popular since 4th grade.

That kind of popular. People don't even think about it. It just is. It's like breathing.

And there's no bands. Nobody has a band. Nobody can *be* in a band. No one wants to be in a band.

People are just kind of over music. Nobody gives a shit. Nobody cares.

And I don't wanna be there. I don't want to waste my time.

I don't get to live that long

Sorry if that's disappointing.

I'll see you around

Blackout.

1

16 years later (this should be clear). We're outside a long, low house in a suburb in California. David and Miriam are standing on the grass looking like they just came back from an event. David's arm is in a sling and he's trying to tie his shoe. Miriam vapes furiously. There's a big pile of colorful children's books near them with a "free" sign on them.

MIRIAM

The reading was terrible

Eck

My hair tastes like grape vape

I'M GIVING UP BOOKS

God awful fucking worst horrible horrid putrid terrible reading I've ever

We never should have

Why did we go?

Why do we ever go

I'm sorry we did

I'm sorry to me too

Oh god it was torture.

And why was everyone in **tech**?????????

Is that allowed?????

At a reading???

Is that what readings are??

Is that allowed now???

What's the point of going into the city if it's just *that*?

I'm in tech too

(I know that)

but this was like mostly

Majority

People who were just not

Cool.

DAVID

You're cool.

MIRIAM

Oh David no I'm not

But it's okay

Oh look!

Recycled children's books!
They must be from the neighbors!
Let's put them in the room!

She stoops down to the pile and starts rifling through the books.

MIRIAM
Sorry, I didn't think I cared so much
Did you hate it too?

DAVID
Yeah I hated it.

MIRIAM
Oh good.

DAVID
Yeah I don't think I wanna go to another reading either
Bad recommendation

MIRIAM
Well thank god we don't have to.
And that bodybuilder
Why was there a bodybuilder?
oh WHHHYYYYY was there a bodybuilder?
What kind of opening act was that?
It was gross
It felt
Right
Wing
I don't know why but it did.
It was awful.

A pause.

DAVID
I liked the bodybuilder.

MIRIAM
No.
David!

No David No!

She holds up a copy of the children's book "No, David" from the pile

MIRIAM

No David!

No!

Not the bodybuilder!

DAVID

I liked him

Yeah he was the best part by far I thought.

MIRIAM

You?

When he?

You liked that?

DAVID

I did..

..

..

He moved me.

I liked that he was there.

MIRIAM

He was grotesque

DAVID

He was kind of beautiful

MIRIAM

Oh get real come on

There's nothing beautiful about a bodybuilder

YOU of all people should know that

Waifs in Muscles out

Butts in Boobs out

The world is changing.

That type of guy

It's just creepy

All ROIDED up and scary like a science experiment

Give me a fucking break
He smelled like whey
I hate whey

She spits over her shoulder like a curse.

DAVID
Yeah I kind of found him to be a work of art.

MIRIAM
He was a fucking charcuterie board
He was there so everyone could distract themselves from the fact that they were at another FUCKING
reading
Ew.
No.
I did not like the bodybuilder.

She pauses. Maybe she went too hard.

MIRIAM
But I'm glad you liked something
If it wasn't a waste of time I'm happy.

David looks at the floor.

DAVID
Do you love me Miriam?

MIRIAM
(without hesitation)
More than you could ever know

DAVID
why

MIRIAM
You're smart

DAVID
You're smart too.

MIRIAM

Oh David, no I'm not

I'm just a good listener

You read more books than me and know more things

You're full of facts and your retention is awesome

And I'm basically useless and not much fun

DAVID

You're fun

MIRIAM

Oh David no I'm not.

...

Hey.

Hey you.

You know what I wanna do right now?

DAVID

What?

MIRIAM

I wanna go inside and I wanna eat you.

I wanna break my vegan streak.

I wanna eat your eyes

I wanna eat your your head

I wanna eat your hair and get it stuck in my teeth

And maybe then I'll get big and buff and gross like the bodybuilder

And you'll be obsessed with me.

ooooo-

2

Night sounds. Crickets. Moonlight. It's late.

This is the bedroom

*There's a little window
and a desk here with
a desktop computer*

*There's a door to
another room
over here*

*The Bed Is Very
Big And Takes
Up Most Of The Room*

The edge of a rug here peeking out under the bed

*A door to
the bathroom here.*

*And a door to
outside here.*

There's a very big window over on this side of the room but we can't see it

David is falling asleep. Miriam is watching something out the window.

MIRIAM

David

David

David wake up

DAVID

What is it?

MIRIAM

Guess

DAVID

uuuuuuufh I was just about to dream and now it's ruined

MIRIAM

Just guess

Guess for fun

Come on

Come on!

DAVID

Is it the neighbors?

MIRAM

Yes.

DAVID

Are they having sex?

MIRIAM

Ding ding ding ding ding

DAVID

mmmmmmmmmm

Describe it to me

Miriam leans in, transfixed.

MIRIAM

It's Missionary

DAVID

(Genuinely)

Ohh that's wonnnnderful

What does it look like?

MIRIAM

It's uh

Well

He's on top.

DAVID

I thought that might be the case.

MIRIAM

It's mostly just ass I'm seeing

His ass is Big

He's very big

Her socks are on

She's very small

She's a she

It's

They're

The missionary is heterosexual

DAVID

I thought that might be the case as well

MIRIAM

I think I saw her yesterday

She's pale and weird and her face is like plastic

She was taking out her trash

DAVID

What does?

What does..?

What does they're ddncbf

He falls asleep

MIRIAM

You fell asleep.

She whacks him. He wakes up.

MIRIAM

You fell asleep

DAVID

No I didn't

MIRIAM

Yes you did but it's okay.

DAVID

I was very clear I said

I said

I said

What does the room look like ?

MIRIAM

Spare.

Everything pushed to the side.

A poster for that penguin movie

It's very harsh in there it looks like jail

And she's patting his back.

But he's still going

I can't see their faces

Just torso and ass in the window

like a painting

Oh there's-now there's his penis there it is there it is.

and

Now it's gone

And there it is

Now it's gone.

There it is.

Now it's gone.

Now it's gone.

There it is

There it is

There it is

And it's gone.

Silence.

MIRIAM

Oh David.

I think they are in love.

3

Morning sounds. The sun is up and extremely bright. Miriam is drinking coffee in bed out of a corny custom mug. David enters in a bathrobe holding a to-go coffee.

MIRIAM

Where were you last night?

I woke up and there was just a sweat stain.

DAVID

I went outside before the sun came up.

MIRIAM

It was freezing

DAVID

I have a cold now.

He sneezes.

MIRIAM

You poor thing.

DAVID

I got you a coffee.

MIRIAM

Thanks.

She takes it. Now she has two.

MIRIAM

Now I have two.

You got a coffee in your bathrobe?

DAVID

I did hehe

I stood in line at the one fancy place next to the “We Fix iMacs” and everyone stared at me

I felt like a local freak.

MIRIAM

You're not a freak

DAVID

Why not?

:(

MIRIAM

(unintelligible as she drinks her coffee)

Miriam stops drinking the coffee. David looks weird. A pause. They look at each other. Maybe the light changes. Something is strange.

MIRIAM

What's that look?

You look like something happened.

A pause.

DAVID

I invited the bodybuilder over.

MIRIAM

What?

DAVID

This morning. I invited him over.

MIRIAM

To our house?

DAVID

He should be arriving soon.

MIRIAM

Ha.

DAVID

I'm not joking

MIRIAM

David!

WwwWwWwWhy didn't you ask?
We're supposed to ask for things.

DAVID
I'm sorry.
I did it in a fit of passion.

MIRIAM
That is very unlike you

DAVID
Thank you

MIRIAM
Okay.
You invited the bodybuilder from the reading last night?
Into our house?
How did you find him?

DAVID
I went down to the river.
Last night.
That's where I was.

MIRIAM
Oh you shouldn't go there.
Someone could beat you up again.
It's not safe by the river.
It's very
It's very
It's very
(oh I don't know if I'm allowed to say that anymore.)

David's lost in a memory. Perhaps he sways.

DAVID
I just had this feeling he'd be at the river.
I can't explain.
Old men fish down there
Did you know that?
I was down there and I was thinking

What patience it takes to fish
 I had never considered it before
 To sit on a cold dock catching only license plates and oil drums and everything but what you want.
 And then I thought
 "Teach a man to fish"
 And then I thought
 "I don't know how"
 It made me sad. Down at the river. I was sad.

There are exercise machines down there
 And rentable bikes.
 And all the rentable bikes had people on them who were not renting them.
 Just peddling
 Smoking
 Old people
 Wearing green indoor shoes under the light that looks like pee
 And next to the bikes was a pull-up bar.
 And under the pull up bar
 The bodybuilder
 It was still dark
 I went down to the river at and it was still dark and I was scared but I went
 And he was there
 There he was
 Fast asleep on a pile of clothes like a dragon on gold.
 Hugo

MIRIAM
 Hugo?

DAVID
 The bodybuilder
 His name is Hugo.

A pause.

MIRIAM
 Why did you do this?

DAVID
 I just wanted to see what would happen.

*The doorbell rings. It's very loud. They snap out of it.
It rings again.
It rings again.*

DAVID

You should probably get that.

She opens the door. There's nobody there.

MIRIAM

There's nobody there.

Must have been the wind.

She closes the door.

Hugo the bodybuilder steps through the wall like the kool aid man. Drywall everywhere like a magician's puff of smoke.. There he is and he's indeed huge. He wears a strange-fitting tight black t-shirt that says something like "Lower Beast Side" on it and carries a fake greek column.

HUGO

I think I missed the door.

Weak eyes.

I apologize.

Hugo takes out a very small pair of glasses and puts them on.

HUGO

This is a nice home.

Well done.

DAVID

Miriam furnished it all

Or her friend.

She has a friend who is good at design

Her work husband Mark

She paid him to design the whole thing.

He's very good.

HUGO

You have two husbands?

MIRIAM

No it's um

It's like

He's my friend

From work I work in tech the hours are long the work is dull the bonds are strong

So we marry at work

but it's boring

HUGO

In ancient times it was common to be married twice.

I approve.

Silence.

MIRIAM

David, can I speak with you?

DAVID

Not now please.

MIRIAM

I-

DAVID

Not now

Please.

Hugo presents the column.

HUGO

This is a gift.

MIRIAM

Thank you but we're-

HUGO

You're welcome.

A beat.

Miriam starts laughing

MIRIAM

HahahahAHHAHAHAHAhHA

HAhAHhahAhAHAhAheheheheheohmywow
this is funny wow okay

An alarm goes off. Miriam checks her phone.

MIRIAM

Oh my god hahahahahAHHAhAH

Oh my god

I HAVE A MEETING

I have to go.

To the office.

Hehehe

Wow okay

This is how you wanted to spend your afternoon okay.

Okay.

I think something-I will leave you guys to-doalittledanceor- alright

Okay.

Well it was nice to um

“Make your acquaintance”

Hugo

Nice to meet you

Enjoy

It.

She leaves. David and Hugo are alone.

DAVID

Do you want a snack?

HUGO

No.

DAVID

Okay

HUGO

I brought sustenance.

He produces a jar of olives and starts to eat them.

DAVID

Olives

HUGO

Yes.

I eat only olives.

Nothing else.

DAVID

Oh!

Silence.

DAVID

Well when I was young

When I was younger

When I was in college right outside of college right after college I ate only
ramen

so

HUGO

Why would you do that

DAVID

I-

HUGO

Eating plastic packets daily is suicide

The Olive diet is ancient wisdom

Only sensible diet for a modern male

Fuel

Life

Like Greeks.

Their blood was thick with olive.

People know this.

He farts. David coughs.

HUGO

You're disgusted

DAVID

It's okay

Please sit.

Hugo sits on the floor.

DAVID

We have chairs.

HUGO

The floor is good for the back.

DAVID

I've heard that.

He sits on the floor. A long silence.

DAVID

You're maybe wondering why I invited you over last night

HUGO

I'm not.

DAVID

Oh.

Just me then haha.

HUGO

I assumed you invited me for training.

Or sexual reason.

Or-

DAVID

No.

No

I don't like sex very much.

It's all the same.

And I

I couldn't do training.

I mean I could try but..
I think it's genetically just not happening.
I'm stuck with this.
Which isn't
I'm not complaining.
Waifs in muscles out
No offense
Miriam always says that
She says the times have caught up to me
She loves the times

HUGO

I don't read newspapers.

DAVID

Oh I meant

HUGO

If I wanted a piece of paper covered in lies I would read the back of a cereal box.
Complete fabrication.
Fiber rots stomach lining.
People know this.

DAVID

You're the expert.

...

How are you?

HUGO

I am comfortable on the floor like I said

DAVID

No sorry

I mean

How are you

Like this?

Big

I mean.

How did you get to be big.

I've always looked the same

That's a lie actually

I was an ugly child.
But I have been getting more and more beautiful with every year
I imagine that by the time I die I'll be gorgeous

HUGO

These are not things that concern me.
Why was your arm in a sling?

DAVID

What?

HUGO

Why was your arm in sling at the reading event

DAVID

You remember me

HUGO

I remember your arm was in a sling
Nobody else's arm was in a sling
When you're in a room you should look for things

DAVID

Yeah so.
A man attacked me
last week
that's why
a teenager i guess
A kid
13 maybe
But a big 13.
It's hard to tell
He didn't really have a face or anything
I think.

HUGO

What did you do to provoke this child?
Did you insult his family?

DAVID

No.

No, it was random.
Or as random as something like that can be.
It happens quite a lot actually
I kind of expect it now
Something about my
I don't know face or look or voice or
I think people don't believe I don't want trouble

Sometimes I'm in the mirror and I have whole conversations with that kid
Or the last guy
Or the person before
And at the end of the conversation
I um
I kill him
It's terrible

HUGO
Why is this terrible

DAVID
Because I can't
...
...
And I don't want to hurt anyone
Obviously
That too.

HUGO
Well the next time it happens you should be more proactive
And kill him
It's possible to kill a man with your arms.
I could show you this.

DAVID
I don't have arms.

HUGO
You have arms.

DAVID
I don't have arms.

HUGO

You have arms.

You are not an amputee.

A lot of guys are

Lot of women are too

Vets, junkies, car crash

One arm, two arms gone.

Lotta amputees

Lotta one armed men

Lotta no armed men

You're not one of them

You have arms

DAVID

No I mean

I have these arms.

HUGO

You are a block of marble

You are a block of marble and a great Italian sculptor

All at once

Lock the door.

David does.

HUGO

Close the curtain

David does.

HUGO

Turn off the light.

David does.

We're plunged into darkness.

DAVID

Where are you?

A light comes on. It's a video of a fire on the TV but it feels like a real fire. The room just got hotter.. Hugo is holding the olive jar. He puts out his hand.

HUGO

Eat.

David approaches him. He takes the olive. He puts it in his mouth. He chews it painfully. He swallows hard. Hugo hands him the jar of olive juice.

HUGO

Drink

David takes a sip. He recoils. Hugo holds the glass and feeds it to him. David is gulping and gasping for air. Hugo holds him in place. Is David about to drown? Hugo lets go. David falls to the ground.

Hugo drags the Greek Column over to David and drops it at his feet. THUD

HUGO

Pick it up

Blackout.

4

Evening sounds. Outside the house. Miriam vapes furiously in the front yard. A woman walks by. It's Jean from before but about 15 years older. The two of them do the little smile thing at each other.

A beat.

JEAN

Can I hit that?

Miriam hesitates.

JEAN

I'm not sick.

MIRIAM

Of course.

Sure.

Yes.

She hands her the vape. Jean blows an insanely fat cloud. She shudders

JEAN

Oh

Ohhh

Oh...

Yeah...

Thanks lady.

You made my day.

She hands her the vape back and Miriam puts her hand out to shake it.

The handoff doesn't quite work.

They're stuck holding hands with the vape in their palms.

MIRIAM

You live across from us don't you?

JEAN

I live *there*.

She points.

MIRIAM

oh!

We live *there*

She points.

JEAN

I guess we do then.

She lets go. Miriam has the vape.

MIRIAM

I can see into your bedroom

Not that I do

We do

But we can

I just realized that.

That's you.

JEAN

Who's we

MIRIAM

My partner

David

I have a partner

JEAN

I have a boyfriend

Maybe you've seen him in the window

MIRIAM

Is he um

JEAN

He's fat

MIRIAM

Yes

JEAN

It's okay

He is.

That's what he looks like.

MIRIAM

Yeah

Yes um

Yes um yeah um

I haven't seen him

JEAN

He's a comedian

He's very funny

MIRIAM

I love to laugh.

JEAN

Me too.

It's very convenient.

MIRIAM

He's a professional?

Comedian?

JEAN

Yes.

He's famous actually

And disgraced

He's a famous disgraced comedian

Uh huh.

Exactly.

You know.

That one.

MIRIAM

No...

JEAN

Yes.

MIRIAM

Wow

..

..

Is that hard?

Jean smiles.

JEAN

Nobody has ever asked me that before.

MIRIAM

Where are you coming from?

JEAN

Karaoke

MIRIAM

Oh

Are you on a team?

JEAN

I'm in a group for people that were once in bands

We meet up at Las Palmas

You know the bar in the mini mall off Mollison Ave?

MIRIAM

I don't know it (!)

JEAN

Well we meet there once a week and we sing

It's a kind of therapeuticy thing I guess

MIRIAM

Oh!

Super!
Does it help?

JEAN
Yeah
But only when I'm singing.
That's the thing
It wears off quick

Jean looks at Miriam sideways.

JEAN
What's your name?

MIRIAM
Nobody has ever asked me that before.

JEAN
Really?

MIRIAM
It just doesn't come up.
I'm Miriam.

JEAN
Jean
You have very important looking eyes Miriam
Has anyone ever told you that?

MIRIAM
Yes actually
Just once

JEAN
Were you ever in a band?

MIRIAM
No
I'm talentless
But David *loves* bands
He was never in one

But he
Has guitars
He's actually taking time off work for the year to (maybe) work on music
It's exciting

A beat.

JEAN
Well you should come by some time anyways
It'd be nice to have a buddy

MIRIAM
Yeah let's hang out right now
I'm free
Are you free?

JEAN
I'm not
Another time though
...
One more?

Miriam hands her the vape.

JEAN
(Inhaling)
You can watch us anytime you want.

*She blows a huge cloud.
All we see is the vapor hanging in the dark.*

5

Later. The bedroom. David sits in the dark struggling to eat olives out of a ceramic bowl. He does not like them. Miriam enters.

A beat.

MIRIAM

How was your date?

DAVID

It wasn't a date.

MIRIAM

How was your playdate

DAVID

It was more Socratic than that.

MIRIAM

How was your Socratic playdate?

DAVID

It was good.

MIRIAM

Good.

My day was horrible

A dog barked at me for 10 straight minutes on the way to work and I did nothing

I just froze up and took it and the owner just looked at me like it was *my* problem

And she was hideous, just hideous, just you know when someone is just UGLY in the face and she was fucking laughing

Sorry I don't want to be negative.

And then it rained

And I hate the rain you know this, and then for the whole afternoon I just got sad and I didn't even know why

DAVID

Are you mad at me?

MIRIAM

No.

But I'm not sure why.

She sits down on the bed next to him and winces.

MIRIAM

Ow shit.

Can you do the thing?

DAVID

Yeah.

She puts her arms out and he scoots up behind her. He presses on part of her back. She screams like she's being tortured. Then suddenly she relaxes.

MIRIAM

Thank you, that's better.

A pause. It's nice.

MIRIAM

David.

I need to ask you something and I need you not to lie.

Are you....?

You know

With Hugo

DAVID

No.

MIRIAM

Oh okay

Because if you were that'd be okay

I've always wondered a little

not a lot a but a little

DAVID

Oh

MIRIAM
Not that I-

DAVID
No it's okay
I would too.
If I was you.

MIRIAM
Oh.
I didn't know you felt that way about yourself.
But good
Good to know
Heard
..
What did you guys do all afternoon?

DAVID
Yeah we wrestled mostly.

MIRIAM
That's it?

DAVID
Yeah.
Pretty much.

MIRIAM
Was it nice?

DAVID
It was.

She falls back into him.

MIRIAM
I ran into our neighbor.
Her name is Jean.
Her partner is a very famous disgraced comedian

DAVID

Wow

Is that hard for her?

MIRIAM

She didn't say.

She was nice to me.

DAVID

That's good.

MIRIAM

She knows we watched her.

She likes it.

She said we could do it any time.

They notice something out the window.

MIRIAM

Speaking of....

They watch.

MIRIAM

..

Do you like watching them?

DAVID

Yeah.

MIRIAM

Sometimes I feel like I don't know what you like.

They kiss.

She reaches in his pants.

MIRIAM

Do you like this?

DAVID

Yes.

She puts her hand around his throat.

MIRIAM

Do you like this?

DAVID

Yeah

She takes his hand and puts it between her legs.

MIRIAM

Do you like this?

DAVID

Yes.

MIRIAM

Are you sure?

DAVID

Yes.

MIRIAM

Good.

Do you like me?

DAVID

Yes.

MIRIAM

Do you love me?

DAVID

Yeah

MIRIAM

I love you more

What do you want to do to me?

DAVID

I want

MIRIAM

Yeah.

DAVID

I want to

MIRIAM

Just one thing

One thing.

DAVID

I want to

MIRIAM

Anything just say anything you like

DAVID

I-

MIRIAM

Let's fuck in the second bedroom

I want you to put a baby in me in the room our child is going to grow up in

DAVID

We can't

Hugo is sleeping there.

She stops.

MIRIAM

What?

DAVID

I've invited Hugo to come stay with us

in the second bedroom

for a while.

MIRIAM

The bodybuilder?

Hugo?

You've invited Hugo the bodybuilder to stay in the second bedroom?

DAVID

For a while.

MIRIAM

No

No

Nononononono

The second bedroom is for if we have a child David

It's painted the type of green that makes you happy

With pink and blue trim to accommodate anyone.

My work husband Mark worked very hard on this.

She holds up a swatch.

DAVID

I fear it may no longer be ethical to have a child, Miriam.

Look at the world

MIRIAM

THIS IS NOT ABOUT THE WORLD

OR YOUR LATENT ANTIBABYISM

THIS IS A RIPPED MAN IN OUR HOME

IS HE HERE RIGHT NOW?

DAVID

I said, he's sleeping.

MIRIAM

WELL MAKE HIM GO

DAVID

God

You're so heartless sometimes

MIRIAM

Am not

DAVID

Am to.

When we are on the train and a man sits next to you who smells like shit and sadness

You always move

MIRIAM

Do not

DAVID

Do too

You always move

To your ivory tower in the next car

It's sickening

MIRIAM

This has

Nothing to

do with

uh

fudjdnbasb

GAH

DAVID

We have all this shit

We are so lucky to be overflowing with all this shit.

All this room

We have an EXTRA ROOM IN OUR HOUSE WHICH WE HAVE

We have real estate that you claim is for our made-up-someday-baby and it's empty
empty is empty Miriam

We need to be radicals

Like someone from a documentary

We need to use the room we have for the people who are really in need

Like bodybuilders and stuff

Please

Have you never met a man who is down on his luck?

MIRIAM

No

No.

This is not part of the plan

This is not okay

Okay and I did not want to say this before but I think Hugo is a Nazi

DAVID

Hugo is not a Nazi

It's not Nazi to pursue the body

MIRIAM

IT KIND OF IS

I overheard him at the reading when your back was turned and he pointed to you and said something about you having mischling features and I looked it up and that's a Nazi thing

DAVID

Yeah what does that mean

MIRIAM

It means mixed like Jew and not Jew

Like a halfbreed or something

DAVID

Well I only qualify for half of that so I guess I'm not mischling am I Miriam I guess I'm

Reinrassig (*German word for purebred*)

MIRIAM

Since when do you know German

DAVID

I'm learning it.

Hugo is teaching me romance languages

MIRIAM

German is not a romance language

DAVID

Still, it is romantic to know German

MIRIAM

I thought you only wrestled

DAVID

One must engage the mind and the body at the same time to achieve true hygenia

MIRIAM

What the fuck does that mean?

DAVID

It's Greek.

I'm learning Greek too.

MIRIAM

The Greeks are bad role models David!

They touched little boys in the acropolis and called it TEACHING

I thought you knew that

I thought we were on the same page about that

Am I on TV?

DAVID

AND ANOTHER THING

I don't want you to call me your partner anymore

when you introduce me

MIRIAM

But you asked me to do that

You said it makes you sound like a pet

like a little dog chained up to a little fence

like a thing someone loves and you like that

I've gotten used to meeting people and saying

"This is my partner David"

And they're surprised

They think something is there that they don't know but there's not

It's just you.

It's just David.

You're my partner.

DAVID

I changed my mind

MIRIAM

But that is very unlike you.

DAVID
Well I did

MIRIAM
Then what should I say?

DAVID
Say I'm a bodybuilder

MIRIAM
You're 150 pounds

DAVID
Even Rome fell

MIRIAM
I don't know what that means.

DAVID
It means anything is possible

Blackout.

INTERLUDE

Jean sings "Bigmouth Strikes Again" at Las Palmas Karaoke Bar.

JEAN

Sweetness, sweetness I was only joking
When I said I'd like to smash every tooth on your head

Sweetness, sweetness I was only joking
When I said by rights you should be bludgeoned in your bed

And now I know how Joan of Arc felt
Now I know how Joan of Arc felt
As the flames rose to her Roman nose
And her walkman started to melt

Bigmouth
Bigmouth
Bigmouth strikes again
And I've got no right to take my place
With the Human race

Bigmouth
Bigmouth
Bigmouth strikes again
And I've got no right to take my place
With the Human race

Bigmouth
Bigmouth
Bigmouth strikes again
And I've got no right to take my place
With the Human race

6

Some time has passed. It's summer now. This should be clear. Hot and sticky and gross.

This is the second bedroom for if they have a child.

The walls are painted green but they do not make us happy.

The trim is blue and pink

and does not feel accommodating.

*There's a tiny framed picture
of Morrissey on the wall
over a mini fridge and blender*

Purple Curtains Here

*The door to the other
bedroom here*

all around

are cardboard

boxes and barbells

boxes and barbells

barbells

and boxes

with pictures of

OLIVES

on them

and labels written in some

cyrillic alphabet

There's no bed. The ground is good for the back.

*Miriam appears in the door with a bottle of Windex. She does not like cleaning.
She starts to go around the room and spray things.*

*She opens the curtains. There is no window behind them, only a crack in the wall.
She Windexes the crack.*

Squishhh

She stepped on something. She windexes it and reaches down to see what it is.

It's an olive.

She drops it on the ground in horror.

She approaches a pile of clothes and lifts them up.

Under it are hundreds of olives like ants under a log.

MIRIAM

A A A A A A A A A A

A A A A A A A A A A

A A A A A A A A A A

A A A A A A A A A A

A A A A A A A G H

Jean walks in holding a knife. Miriam sees her and immediately stops screaming.

MIRIAM

Oh hai!

hi jean!

...

You scared me!

What are you doing here?

in my house?

with a knife?

which is fine!

JEAN

It sounded like murder.

Is there an intruder?

MIRIAM

No!

No!

Just cleaning up.

I'm fine.

Just hurt my back

I have a back problem

How did you get in?

JEAN

You have a key in a rock

It's very obvious

Doesn't really blend in

A killer could break in if he wanted to

Jean sniffs the air. It smells bad.

JEAN

What kind of room is this?

MIRIAM

Oh this is just where the bodybuilder sleeps.

She goes back to cleaning.

JEAN

The bodybuilder?

MIRIAM

yeah :/

my partner David

I mean my bodybuilder (I keep forgetting that)

My bodybuilder David

Has a bodybuilder

Who lives with us

In the room that's meant for our child

JEAN

You have a child?

MIRIAM

No

But we might someday and it'll live here

In this room

Just not now

Now there's a bodybuilder and he trains and eats olives

He's on the olive diet

You know how it is

JEAN

I don't

MIRIAM

Does your famous disgraced boyfriend have a bodybuilder?

She windexes.

JEAN

No he doesn't actually have a bodybuilder

MIRIAM

He doesn't have any strange friends?

JEAN

He's been very private since the disgracing.

He mostly just spends time with me

And I'm easy

Most days we just

Sit

MIRIAM

WOW

Wow

Wow yeah that's very different from my life

She scowls.

JEAN

What's wrong?

You scowl.

MIRIAM

I don't scowl

JEAN

You do.

MIRIAM

It's nothing

It's stupid.

JEAN

do you need permission.
 are you one of those people that needs permission.
 this is it.
 this is permission.
 complain.

MIRIAM

It's a first world problem
 I don't know

JEAN

Are you calling me third world?

MIRIAM

No!
 Of course not!
 I would-

JEAN

Joking

MIRIAM

Oh!
 hah.

...

Well yeah every morning I'm woken up at 4:00am by the sound of training men
 And clanking weights and big jaws and that blender over there catching on olive pits
 (You've never heard something so loud)
 And so I turn over and can't go back to sleep
 And then I keep canting going back to sleep for the next few hours and I go to work and see my work
 husband Mark and Mark says
 (I'm gonna do a voice but this is what he actually sounds like I'm not being funny)
 He says "Girl look at your under eye bags. They look like water balloons"
 And then when I'm home the house smells like whey and I hate whey and I put on a documentary
 next to David and he falls asleep he's so tired I didn't know a person could be so tired or if he doesn't
 he doesn't do the thing where he looks over at me and tries to see how I feel about what's going on
 But sitting sounds nice
 I would love that

A pause.

JEAN

This is very disturbing Miriam

I don't envy you

MIRIAM

Yeah I wouldn't either.

She windexes. A pause.

MIRIAM

Well since you're here you wanna hang?

Are you free?

I'm free?

I told my boss I have lice

So I'm free.

..

I don't have lice

A pause.

JEAN

why not

MIRIAM

Oh great!

I'm gonna be bad and have a beer.

She produces two Coors Banquets out of nowhere.

MIRIAM

You wanna have a beer?

here

have a beer

She throws Jean the beer.

MIRIAM

You know I used to be an alcoholic

JEAN

I believe you

MIRIAM

I did.

A bad one

I got over it though.

Cheers.

They cheers. Miriam doesn't drink.

Jean shakes her can.

JEAN

Oh wow I'm done already.

..

Can I have another one?

MIRIAM

Here have mine

I probably shouldn't actually

JEAN

What's wrong? Are you on antibiotics? Are you sick?

MIRIAM

I just don't feel like being happy tonight, that's all.

Jean takes the beer. Now she has two.

JEAN

Thanks.

Now I have two.

She shakes the can.

JEAN

Oh wow I'm done already.

...

What do you wanna do?

Miriam thinks.

MIRIAM

Sit!

I guess!

JEAN

I don't really wanna sit with you.

A pause. What does that mean?

JEAN

We should work out

MIRIAM

What?

JEAN

Lets film ourselves working out with the bodybuilder's stuff

MIRIAM

You want to make a workout video?

Like a Jane Fonda Workout video?

JEAN

Fuck Jane Fonda

She spits on the ground

JEAN

I wanna make a Workout Film

She produces a gopro.

JEAN

Put this on

MIRIAM

I-

JEAN

Put it on

Miriam puts on the gopro and turns it on.

JEAN

That's good.

This is good.

Now pick up that box.

Miriam lifts up one of the olive boxes...ambivalently.

JEAN

Count.

Miriam starts doing reps with the box and counting. Jean takes out her phone and starts filming her.

JEAN

Faster

She goes faster.

JEAN

Faster.

She goes faster.

JEAN

Wow you really don't sweat much do you

MIRIAM

I think it's a gland thing

My dad doesn't sweat either

Can we stop?

JEAN

No

We're getting somewhere

MIRIAM

I think I don't wanna do this actually?

JEAN

Good

Sometimes you need to be forced to do things.

Keep counting.

Miriam keeps counting.

MIRIAM

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

*She drops the box. Olives spill out all over the floor. Jean puts her phone down and stops recording.
A pause.*

MIRIAM

that was fun.

you should come over more often

Jean's phone rings. She picks it up.

JEAN

hi honey

oh no.

that's not good.

lawyer up

i'll be right home

She hangs up.

JEAN

I have to go.

She leaves.

Miriam is alone.

A spotlight on her.

She leans down and picks up an olive.

She puts it in her mouth.

She bites down.

CRRRRACK. It had a pit.

She spits tooth and pit and blood into her hand.

7

David, at the river. He eats an olive. A barbell sits in front of him. He has a strange coldness in his eyes

DAVID

before Hugo
 i had no arms
 before Hugo
 my scalp was always snowing
 before Hugo
 my nails were fungal jungles
 before Hugo
 my neck was ass backwards

He cracks his neck

DAVID

no more

today at the river i was on earth
 the earth which is so old and every day older and every day new again
 where all the ruins used to be things
 and all the people were Real

Caesar

DaVinci

Abraham, in the time of ancient Jews
 all Real here on earth
 where everything that happened
 happened so far

and i never really thought i was a history guy
 i thought i was a music guy
 then i thought i was a boyfriend guy
 then i thought (very briefly) that i might be a renaissance man but i didn't have it in me
 and that was disappointing
 so much is disappointing
 wake up it's disappointing
 dream it's disappointing
 arrive at the restaurant it's disappointing

but if you live long enough
you will be amazed

Something passes over his face. A glimmer of the old David.

DAVID

Something happened

And I don't want to tell anybody about it but I guess I will

I found a dog

A dead dog

A dead pitbull

On the banks of the river on that little sandy patch that's there for no reason

And it smelled

So real

He reaches down and grasps the barbell.

He picks it up.

He raises it.

8

Miriam in the same place fanning herself. The night has somehow gotten hotter. There are a lot of empty Coors Banquets around her. Hugo enters with a cardboard box with an old computer in it.

HUGO

You're in my room.

MIRIAM

I am.

I am?

I am

I got lost.

In my own house.

I thought this was *my* room.

How silly of me.

Whoopsie doo

I made a mess.

Were you down at the river with David?

He's been gone all day.

HUGO

I was not

MIRIAM

Where were you?

HUGO

At home.

I had things to bring over

Tools

MIRIAM

But this is your home

HUGO

This is *your* home

and the small man

I'm a guest

MIRIAM

You have things by the River?
 I thought you lived by the River
 That's why you're here.
 I thought you were a hobo
 Homeless
 Houseless
 H Slur
 Sorry.
 what did you say?

HUGO

My home is by the river.
 In the apartments by the river
 Full of rats and dripping faucets.
 There is a roach who taunts me every time I turn on the light
 And the water in my shower is black.
 It's the way the ancients lived
 But your house is more comfortable.
 Less suited to me but comfortable.
 It will do for now.
 While I finish my book.

Hugo sniffs the air.

HUGO

I smell chemicals

He picks an olive off the ground and eats it. He spits it out.

HUGO

I taste chemicals

He rubs his finger in the crack in the wall.

HUGO

I feel chemicals between my fingers
 I have a sensitivity to chemicals.
 I'd prefer if they weren't here

MIRIAM

Okay

HUGO

I'd prefer if they weren't here

I'd prefer if they weren't here

MIRIAM

I'd prefer if you weren't here.

HUGO

This is your right

I do not care

He walks to the fridge and takes out olives and whey powder and pours them into a blender. He makes a smoothie. Miriam winces at the sound of the blades. He pours it into a cup, sits down, puts on his tiny glasses, and starts to read a tiny book.

MIRIAM

What a midnight snack you make, Hugo.

HUGO

This is breakfast.

I never snack.

MIRIAM

It's too late for breakfast.

Unless you're doing Breakfast for Dinner

You can't just say it's breakfast

It's too late

There are rules

Even here there are rules.

HUGO

My body is a railyard

The train is never late

MIRIAM

Is that some Ancient Greek smoothie recipe?

Did you learn it from a Dead Sea Scroll?

HUGO

There were no smoothies in Greece, woman
Even you must know that.

He slurps. A pause.

MIRIAM

We don't really talk you and I
We don't have a lot of facetime
That's what we call it at work
Facetime is important.
You could be a serial killer for all I know
They're everywhere.
I could be one too
I could be anything.
If I wanted to.
Let's have a facetime
I'll go first

Once a month my mother calls me
And the first thing she says is she says
"Someone died" and I say "nice to hear from you mumma"
And she says "guess who it is"
And then I guess.
Last time I was right
It was a famous actor.
I have a sense for these things.
They're never a surprise.
Now you go.
What's your mom like?

HUGO

Don't have one.

MIRIAM

Everybody has a mother.

HUGO

I have no mother

MIRIAM

Oh, she's dead.
 I see.
 Well we can talk about that
 I'm sorry Hugo.
 I wish mine was dead too sometimes.
 It's normal
 Everyone thinks that!

HUGO
 No.
 Not dead.
 No mother.
 My father is called Klaus
 He gave birth to me himself
 I swelled in his belly and exited through his anus
 He bled for days
 He could not walk
 I cooked like an egg on the hot concrete
 I wasn't much bigger than one.
 But I survived.
 And so did he.
 He nursed me to health and I became a man.
 And then one day he left me at a long low house
 and that's where I lived
 It can happen.
 It's rare but it does happen.

MIRIAM
 Klaus is a German name right
 Was he a Nazi?

HUGO
 I don't appreciate this.

Hugo goes back to reading.

MIRIAM
 Do you find David hot, Hugo?

HUGO
 I do not see that way

MIRIAM

Do you find me hot?

HUGO

I do not see that way either

MIRIAM

Why don't you find me hot?

HUGO

You have no warmth

You have no purpose

You are barren and unlikeable as a craggy stone.

MIRIAM

Wow you see right through me don't you

HUGO

Motherhood would suit you

MIRIAM

I agree.

..

But David does not believe in babies

They remind him of the death of nature.

The Anthropologie or whatever

HUGO

He is a fool.

Motherhood would suit you

In ancient times you would have been worshiped.

MIRIAM

Well ancient times are

very

long

ago.

HUGO

Do you know the first line of the Epic of Gilgamesh?

He holds up his book. It's the Epic of Gilgamesh

MIRIAM

I am not in a History Channel mood, Hugo
If you have something to tell me just say it
Or take your olives elsewhere
I am in distress

She shakes her beer.

MIRIAM

(oh wow I'm already done)

Hugo flips to the front of the book. He reads.

HUGO

"In those distant days
In those old and distant days"

...

Even in ancient times there was such a thing as ancient times.
And they would have worshiped you

A pause.

MIRIAM

Do you know what my name is?

HUGO

No.

MIRIAM

Thanks for being honest.
Goodnight.

Thunder! Lightning!

She goes in her room.

She leaves the light on

Hugo gets up and goes in after her.

9

Later, deep in the night. David, with a huge bruise on his face. He's holding a water bottle full of olive oil. He takes a swig.

DAVID

The workout was like war today
 I can feel myself sculpting into something new
 At the height of it all
 When I was feeling the pump
 When I was INSIDE the pump
 I cold plunged in the stinking river to do battle with what I believed was a

Great
 Gray
 Whale

It was a buoy
 But a worthy adversary nonetheless

I'm home

He's home. Miriam is there eating olives. Her gums are bleeding. She sees his face.

MIRIAM
 You're hurt

DAVID
 I'm fine.
 It was a kid
 Threw a punch at me
 Same as usual

MIRIAM
 Are you alright?

DAVID
 This is how things are down at the river.

MIRIAM

We should call someone
The police or a doctor or a blogger

DAVID

There's no need
Are you eating my olives?

MIRIAM

No

An olive pit falls out of her mouth.

MIRIAM

OKAY

I ADMIT IT

They're good

They're great!

I get it now!

I was hungry!

I was sososososo hungry and there's NOTHINGELSEHERE

OhDavidYou'reBleedingFromYourBeuatifulFace!

Oh god

Oh man

We need to find this kid!

We need to find him now

DAVID

There's no need

MIRIAM

What do you mean?

DAVID

There's no need.

A pause.

MIRIAM

Oh.

...

...

DAVID

I followed him home.

MIRIAM

Oh..

DAVID

I went up to his house

I'd been there before I could tell.

I rang his doorbell.

His mother answered.

She saw my face and screamed.

..

I explained to her what had happened.

She made her son apologize.

Then I came home.

There's no need.

MIRIAM

I don't believe you.

DAVID

Hugo taught me reason

So I reasoned

Like a Greek

MIRIAM

I don't believe you

Oh god

You killed him with your bare hands like an animal

Where is that kid, David?

Where is that little dead kid?

DAVID

Nowhere

There's no need.

She spits out another tooth.

MIRIAM

Hugo is not an H Slur
Did you know that?
He has an apartment

DAVID

He has to finish his book.
Whatever it takes I'm willing to give

MIRIAM

He can write at the library

DAVID

The libraries are all closed

MIRIAM

I'm unhappy

DAVID

That pains me to hear.
I'm going to sleep
My face is tired.

He turns to go.

MIRIAM

I'm pregnant David

I am with child
The time has come
To clear the room
We have to clear the room.
He needs to go.

David is silent.

DAVID

..

..

No.

MIRIAM

But what about our recycled books?

DAVID

NOOOOOOOOO

MIRIAM

Okay you're excited

You're upset but excited

Okay!

She eats an olive. David is despondent.

MIRIAM

You can still be a bodybuilder

If you want

(I mean it's a phase)

But come on it's not that bad

You'll be such a great father.

DAVID

You don't understand.

MIRIAM

Understand what?

DAVID

I'm a Radical Antibabyist Miriam

Don't you know what radical means?

MIRIAM

I know what it means

But life is not a documentary!

Be serious!

This is real!

DAVID

I've added life to this earth.
Now I must take away my own.

A beat.

MIRIAM
That is the dumbest thing I have ever heard

DAVID
Still.

He rummages around under his bed and sadly pulls out a hammer.

DAVID
It is important to stick to one's values
No matter how dumb.

He takes a nail out of his pocket.

DAVID
Tell Hugo I say goodbye

He raises the hammer to his head.

MIRIAM

IT'S NOT YOURS
SORRY YEAH

I forgot to say
It's not yours

He puts the hammer down.

MIRIAM
It's not yours David
It was someone else's

It is an adultery baby

DAVID

that's impossible

MIRIAM

Why?

DAVID

You don't know anybody

You have no friends

You have no friends at all except maybe Mark your work husband

Who is a kind of friend

A daytime friend

And your work husband Mark is a homosexual

I know this because you love saying this

You just don't have it in you to adulturize

She throws a barbell at his head. He ducks.

MIRIAM

OH I HAVE IT IN ME DAVID

I HAVE IT IN ME DEEP

SO FUCKING DEEP YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE

You know **NOTHING**

You know **NOTHING** at all.

The baby is Mark's

My work husband

HE PUT IT IN ME TWO WEEKS AGO

He was drunk

And I was furious

He was curious he said

"Miriam, you are the most beautiful woman I know.

I want to know what it's like just once."

And I said yes

yes

I said yes

And I LAID HIM DOWN ON A BEANBAG CHAIR

AND CLIMBED ON TOP OF HIM

I took his vaginal virginity and he **regretted** it immediately.

I could see it in his ugly little blue eyes
 The second he was in me he knew it was a mistake
 But I wouldn't get off him until he finished

And now I am with child

And I feel it.
 And I want it

With you David

You are not interesting
 You are not beautiful
 You are not strong
 Or funny
 You do not make me happy
 Or angry
 Or wet
 Or dry
 Or anything much at all
 But when you are here
 i'm not alone

I am unlikeable
 It's the greatest curse a person can endure
 But god has made you like me
 And for that I am grateful forever

You're not a bodybuilder
 You're not a radical
 You never will be
 Neither will I
 We just aren't those kinds of people who care
 So what is it?
 Tell me now.

David stares at her. He takes a long pause. He shuts his eyes.

DAVID

...
 ..

.
 ..
 i'm afraid it's going to beat me up.
 ...
 if we have a child i'm afraid it's going to beat me up
 ...
 maybe not when it's a baby
 but one day
 ...
 .
 i can't have that happen
 ...
 i'm sorry
 ..

MIRIAM

Well it's not that complicated actually
 It's not a big mystery is it
 You know why people beat you up?
 Why kids beat you up?
 Why old ladies smack you with their purses and their shopping carts?
 Why everyone wants you dead?
 It's because you deserve it.
 You didn't do anything.
 You're not evil.
 But you just deserve it and that's tough it's hard it's so hard but it's true
 And you know it's true.
 You're just not that good
 And people don't like that
 You don't have to make it so hard.

A beat. A look of strain crosses David, like he's doing a difficult pullup or something. Then it's gone.

DAVID

I'm going to the river.

10

Jean and Miriam outside the house. Rain sounds.

JEAN

It's late Miriam
What's this about

MIRIAM

What do you know about deprogramming?

JEAN

Don't you work in tech?
Isn't that what you do?

MIRIAM

No not the tech kind
The government kind
What do you know about changing people's minds
without them wanting it?

JEAN

It's impossible I think
Someone tried to once
There was a man who trapped people in a hotel that used to be a house and tried to make them forget
things
If I remember right, it did not go very well
I tried once too
I used to work for a company that made dog treats that people could eat
We tried everything
Nobody believed it was possible

MIRIAM

But dog treats are for dogs.

JEAN

These ones people could eat.

...

The company went under
It was a tragedy

People are so stubborn and stupid and deserve to die.

MIRIAM

I thought that might be the case.

A beat.

MIRIAM

How's your boyfriend?

JEAN

We broke up.
He moved to France

MIRIAM

Oh that makes sense

JEAN

We didn't stay friends.

MIRIAM

That's nice.

Miriam starts to cry. It's very weird to watch.

JEAN

What is this?

MIRIAM

Oh Jean
I live in a world of tragedy
I wish I had never been born.

Jean slaps her.

JEAN

Don't ever say that.

MIRIAM

Ow.

She slaps her again.

MIRIAM

Ow!

Miriam slaps Jean. Jean does not say ow.

JEAN

You're simple

You're dumb

It's not your fault but you are

You think you know me

You think we're friends because I let you watch me get fucked

You don't even know who I am

I didn't always live here

I lived in Utah

I was in a band

I tore it apart with my hands and then I moved to a different town

I used to come home from work at about 8:00 on Fridays and there was nothing in my fridge but olives

By 9:00 I'd be asleep with the stove on and the TV on

I'd wake up some time in the middle of the night, to the sound of hot stinking water droplets running off my roof into my air conditioning unit and going BANG BANG BANG BANG all rattling around and I'd think

I'm so hungry

But it'd be too late to go anywhere to eat so the next morning I'd put a handful of olives in a plastic bag.

And go to work

I sold used glasses. I was a used glasses salesman. It was fucking torture.

One day a man with a German Shepard tried to steal something and I didn't chase him out

My boss yelled at me. I made up a story to shut her up. Something about an old volleyball injury that didn't allow me to run and she apologized for not accommodating my disability and she cried.

She pulled her hair out. In clumps.

I didn't correct her

I quit my job

I went to a civic-minded community theater nearby and saw the worst play I'd ever seen

And I suddenly wanted revenge.

I started to go every week on the third show when they had a talkback

And every time I tried to ask the worst question possible

Like

“How do you focus when you’re pretending to be dead onstage?”
or “how do you memorize all those lines”
Or something long and roundabout and everyone was tense
Pretty soon I had a rep in town and they called me the Talkback Terrorist
Pretty soon I got banned from the theater
Internationally
So I left that place

I start going to a dive bar out in the redwoods called the Belt
I meet a woman named Suzanna there who lives above a pet store
She owns lizards.
She tells me she’s a serial killer
I don’t believe her
But she opens her fridge and there’s a head inside.
She is not kind to me.
We fall in love.
Suzanna introduces me to the Joy of Killing and I become her accomplice.

I stab a round hippie in a tie dye shirt while he’s smoking a pipe on his stoop.
I murder an elderly shop keeper with gray eyes and a soul patch
and a woman named Hannah who did nothing wrong
I kill so many people
Time goes by.
Pretty soon there’s so many things to call the past.
We’re never caught.

I arrive at Suzanna’s apartment one day to find her being carried out by the police. She does not
identify me and gets sentenced to lethal injection. The day before she dies she marries one of her prison
guards and the story makes the local news.

I fall into a deep despair.
I lash out at strangers.
Almost every night someone beats me up for looking at them wrong.
They don’t believe that I don’t want trouble.
And maybe they’re right.
They know better than me
I’m nobody
I’m the water in my AC

And it’s around this time that I come down with something.
Some kind of virus and my nose gets so stuffed I almost pass out.

Dry uvula and achy arms
 I try to eat but I can't keep anything down.
 I start doing push ups but it doesn't help.
 Food tastes like sand to me.
 Everything but olives.

Only olives. Only olives. I can only eat olives. The only thing I can stomach is olives
 I lose the taste for all other things.
 I had a love in my life that made me whole and then it went away
 I do not think I will be that lucky again.

This was last September and oh wow it's already almost September again.
 Time flies when you're having fun.
 What a ride

Life is a gift

Live every day like it's your last

Veni Vidi Vici

The devil is real Miriam.
 He lived in me for an entire year.
 The butcher in hell
 Can you imagine?

MIRIAM
 Yes.

JEAN
 You look like you want to ask me something.
 You look like you have bad ideas.
 And we're out in the rain
 If you know what I mean.
(Singing the Smiths)

ask me ask me ask me
 ask me ask me ask me

A long beat.

MIRIAM

Do you long for the Joy of Killing, Jean?

JEAN
Every day.

MIRIAM
I want you to kill the bodybuilder

JEAN
There we go.

MIRIAM
I want you to make it look like an accident.
Poison his food or something

JEAN
very good.

MIRIAM
Or even better just make it look like he left in the night

JEAN
Even better

MIRIAM
Do you want money?

JEAN
No.

MIRIAM
Are you sure?
I have money

JEAN
Yes.

MIRIAM
I have a lot of money.
I don't think I ever expected I would have this much money

JEAN
I'm sure

MIRIAM
Okay.
Whatever you say.

Miriam smiles. Sort of.

MIRIAM
Oh man
I've really gone and done it this time

JEAN
Probably

MIRIAM
Can we still be friends after this?

JEAN
That is gonna be so up to you.

1 1

Hugo, alone in his room, posing.

He looks amazing.

He poses.

He poses.

He's a work of art.

The house creaks. A picture frame falls in the hallway.

A beat.

Jean enters.

HUGO

Who goes there?

JEAN

Just the neighbor

HUGO

I don't wish to be disturbed.

JEAN

I won't be long.

Jean steps into the light.

Hugo puts on his tiny glasses.

He looks at Jean. She looks at him.

HUGO

Jean?

JEAN

Guy?

Is that you?

HUGO

..

..

It's Hugo now

JEAN

You're huge

HUGO

I know.

..

You look the same.

JEAN

I haven't seen you since the band.

HUGO

I know

JEAN

Where did you go?

HUGO

I left Utah.

I went to the river.

I trained.

I haven't done a single other thing since the day I saw you last.

He eats an olive.

A beat.

JEAN

Aren't you gonna ask me what I've been up to?

HUGO

What have you been up to?

JEAN

So much.

I killed people

I sold glasses

I ruined plays

I fell in love

Ain't life grand

Hugo eats an olive.

HUGO

That's nice.

That's good.

I approve.

Sounds like you.

Full of stuff.

JEAN

It's a life.

A beat.

HUGO

I did one thing.

When I left Utah I did one thing

I got lost in the desert. I read a sign wrong. Weak eyes.

Stopped in a Mexican restaurant that was ocean-themed. Seafood.

I drank beer and ate Seafood.

In the bathroom of the restaurant I saw a poster. Morrissey was in town.

Three sold out nights.

It was strange.

We weren't *near* anything.

At night you could hear sounds from miles away.

But he was there.

For three sold out nights.

I went to the show with a boy named Hector and we snuck backstage and he was there old and angry and sad he was yelling at a roadie and I walked up to him and I kissed him.

I guess I thought he always just wanted to be kissed but would never ask

Security beat me until my skin split open.

Oh god

It was torture.

Then I got back in my car

And I started over again.

A pause.

JEAN

You didn't do all this for me did you?

HUGO

No.

I just always wanted to know what being big felt like
And now I know

JEAN

And now you know

...

Are you ready to die, Hugo?

HUGO

I'm always ready.

It's the way of the ancients.

Death is nothing

Dying is worse than death.

Why do you ask?

JEAN

Nothing.

Eat this.

She hands him an olive.

He eats it.

Everything disappears

12

Some time has passed. We're in Utah now. It doesn't have to be clear. There's a window with nothing but pitch black outside of it. Miriam is on a new phone.

MIRIAM

Mom?

I can't talk right now I'm in a meeting

I'm in Utah

I'm in a conference

I'm still in Utah I'm winning an award

I'm on a panel

I'm on a committee

Nice to hear from you

Who died?

David is great.

I can't hear you I'm in the snow

I can't hear you I'm at an afterparty

Who died?

I'm okay

No I want to talk

It's just I've been on my phone so much

I have to go. I'm at a meeting.

David's good

He's into bodybuilding

No it's not embarrassing!

People have passions even you know that

Okay it's funny I know

Little David!

I'll send a picture.

I'm still in Utah

I'm in the snow!

There's snow all around!

I've been here for months

In a long hotel.

I get scared in the hallways. I always run.

No I don't think we're coming back

I said coming back anytime soon.
David's competing
In a competition!
I said he's a bodybuilder
Now I know you don't mean that
Who died?

You died?

How are you?
How are you?
I can't hear you?
I'm in Utah
I can't

This fucking thing.

hello?

hello????

This fucking thing

UUUUUGH

She screams. The window breaks. Snow spills into the room

David walks in. He's played by the actor who plays Hugo but he's clearly David. He's a real bodybuilder now. He's holding a trophy.

MIRIAM
Oh David
How are you?

DAVID
I won

MIRIAM
That's great!

She does a sad little dance.

DAVID

What's wrong?

Miriam looks at her phone.

She hates her phone.

MIRIAM

Nothing Nothing.

I just hate my phone

I hate it.

I hate it

I hate my phone.

It never fucking works.

I remember

when I got my first one i said

wow

what a beautiful shiny tohyyyy

thank you

MOM

i can go boop b00p boop

i can cut ~~piecesoffruit~~ with my fingers like a sword

how much fun is that?

i don't know how much

a lot i guess - i can't believe i stood in line for this

i've never stood in line since

i hate my phone

i should have never got one

I should have done something I should have stopped it

But how was I supposed to know what would happen?

How was I supposed to know that things would get worse?

How was I supposed to know that they would appear to get better?

That things have never been better and we've never been so doomed

How was I to supposed to know that everything I was afraid would happen would happen

And it would happen so fast

How was I-

In one motion, David gently takes Miriam's phone out of her hand. Then he eats it. Miriam's eyes go wide. Love. Friendship. Some secret third thing. David swallows hard.

DAVID

That's enough.

He picks her up. He carries her outside. They disappear into the snow.

THE END