

surgeon, sweetheart. What did he have to say, hon?

BUTCH

He said my boy's got fight in him.

ARLENE

He certainly does. We were just talking about that, weren't we, Brandon? Pluck. That's what we called it growing up.

BUTCH

Pluck?

ARLENE

Yes, pluck, Butch. That's what we called it. Luke's got a ton of it. What else did he say?

A beat.

BUTCH

He's gonna need it.

ADAM goes pale as the room spins all around him.

SCENE TWO

Lights up on a rooftop. Five years earlier. ADAM, pale and sweaty, is trying to catch his breath.

LUKE, 25, wearing a white shirt and black pants, steps out onto the roof and hands over a glass of water.

LUKE

Here you go.

ADAM takes a huge gulp.

ADAM

Thanks.

LUKE

Sorry about the Heimlich.

ADAM

Don't worry about it.

LUKE

I thought you were choking.

ADAM

I think it was more of an arrythmia thing.

He downs the rest of the water and hands the glass back.

ADAM

Is the roof spinning or is it just me?

LUKE  
Maybe you should try sticking your arms in the air?

ADAM  
You think?

LUKE  
I saw it on TV once. Some doctor show.

ADAM sticks his arms in the air.

LUKE  
How's that feel?

ADAM  
Like I'm under arrest.

LUKE  
Might have been a cop show.

He lowers his arms and sinks to the floor.

ADAM  
I think maybe if I just sit here for a minute.

LUKE  
Some party, huh?

ADAM  
Fabulous.

LUKE  
Who's anniversary is it anyway?

ADAM  
My friend Holly's.

LUKE  
The large woman?

ADAM  
She's fat. You can say it... No, not her. That's a friend of hers.

LUKE  
Oh, sorry. Didn't mean to...

ADAM  
That's okay. She wasn't always like that, apparently.

LUKE  
You can tell. Some people just seem like they've been fat their whole lives, you know? Like they're used to it. But she looks like it kinda snuck up on her out of nowhere. And suddenly, there she was. This fat fatty.

ADAM  
What happened to large?

LUKE  
Like she woke up one morning in someone else's skin.

ADAM  
Yeah, well, she's on the road to recovery now, so...

LUKE  
What do you mean?

ADAM  
It's not a real anniversary down there. It's a twelve step thing.

LUKE  
Twelve step? You mean, like, AA?

ADAM  
Yeah, only it's OA.

LUKE  
OA?

ADAM  
Overeaters Anonymous.

LUKE  
Okay...I get it.

ADAM  
Listen, thanks for the water. I think I can take it from here.

LUKE reaches out his hand.

LUKE  
We haven't officially met yet.

ADAM  
You gotta be kidding, I practically threw up on you.

LUKE  
I'm Luke.

ADAM shakes it, tentatively.

ADAM  
Adam.

LUKE  
Nice to meet you, Adam. So what do you do?

ADAM  
(off guard)

What do I do?

LUKE

Yeah.

ADAM

Like in life?

LUKE

Is that a trick question?

ADAM

You wouldn't think so.

LUKE

Like, me? I'm an actor.

ADAM

No kidding?

LUKE

Is it that obvious?

ADAM

The white shirt. The black pants... The serving tray.

LUKE

Okay, I'm an aspiring actor. I'm not really making any money at it yet, so I guess, technically, I'm a cater waiter.

ADAM

I see.

LUKE

Not for long though.

LUKE digs a postcard out of his pocket and hands it over.

ADAM

What's this?

LUKE

A show I'm working on. We open next week.

ADAM

Oh... Well, break a leg.

LUKE

I wanted the part of George, but I'm the stage manager.

ADAM

Well, we all have to start somewhere.

ADAM sticks it in his pocket.

LUKE

What about you?

ADAM  
Me? We're back to me again?

LUKE  
Are you like a wall street guy? An accountant, maybe?

ADAM  
An accountant? I look like an accountant?

LUKE  
An ad exec? I don't know. A Sous chef?

ADAM  
No, none of those.

LUKE  
Come on help me out here.

ADAM  
(hitting a nerve)  
I'm not so sure anymore.

LUKE joins him on the floor.

LUKE  
Well, what would you like to do?

ADAM  
What would I like to do?

LUKE  
You're a vumper.

ADAM  
A what?

LUKE  
You keep repeating the question. That's what I always do  
when I'm not sure how to answer.

ADAM  
(considering)  
What would I like to do?

LUKE  
See? You did it again.

ADAM  
I'm thinking. Give me a sec.

ADAM leans his head back and gazes up  
at the skyline.

ADAM  
I read about this experiment once, they took a newborn, and  
stuck it in a room with no light, no love, no stimuli, and  
just left it. They'd come in, every so often, and feed it

through some kind of tube, you know, but it basically had no human contact whatsoever.

LUKE

That's criminal.

ADAM

Maybe I'm getting it wrong. Maybe it wasn't a newborn. Maybe it was a mouse. Yeah, I think that's what it was. A baby mouse.

LUKE

Still.

ADAM

Anyway, that's how they raised the little rodent. And sure enough, he grew up to be, like, a complete vegetable. When they finally threw him into a tank with some other mice, he couldn't even move.

LUKE

Sad.

ADAM

Just sat in the corner and shook.

LUKE

And your point is...

ADAM

You tell someone "no" long enough, they start believing it. Does that answer your question?

LUKE

Not really. But we can move on to the next topic.

ADAM

I guess I'm a candle salesman.

LUKE

There you go.

ADAM

That's what I do.

LUKE

That wasn't so hard.

ADAM

Jesus, how did I wind up being that?

LUKE

You can change your mind if you like.

ADAM

No, I'm a candle salesman.

LUKE

Good for you.

ADAM

Yup, I sell candles.

LUKE

Okay, easy now.

ADAM

It's just the first time I've ever really admitted it out loud.

LUKE

And how does it feel?

ADAM

Terrible. I don't care if I ever sell another pumpkin scented anything for as long as I live.

LUKE

I hate pumpkin.

HOLLY (O.S.)

Adam!

HOLLY appears from the party below.

ADAM

Sorry.

HOLLY

It was quirky for like ten minutes, now it's just rude.

ADAM

I said, I was sorry.

HOLLY

Well, get back down there. It's my anniversary.

ADAM

I can't, Holly.

HOLLY

What do you mean you can't?

ADAM

The air. There's like a pall down there.

HOLLY

A pall?

ADAM

A heaviness, yeah. I don't know. Everyone just seems so... hungry.

HOLLY

You done, Shecky?