Life On This Couch

By

Laura Richardson

(The stage is dark. We hear heavy breathing.)

CECE
(In the dark)
Uh… Uh… Good… Good… Yea… Yea… Uh, huh… Stop it!

(Lights up to reveal CECE TAYLOR, 30’s, anal, short tempered, sarcastic, doing sit ups in her living room while she speaks on the phone.

Her home is nestled in lovely San Jose, California. It’s neat, modest, and consists of a sofa, a few chairs, end tables, coffee table, dining table, T.V.)

CECE
(Continuing/On phone)
You can’t eat a bag of licorice for lunch!… What?… For the last time, I am not having sex… Sit ups! Ever hear of those, you tub of goo?...

(Her other line beeps. Cece looks at the receiver to see who’s calling.)

CECE
(Continuing/On Phone)
Gotta go, Skeez is on the other line… Skeez! Jesus, get a hearing aid!

(Cece flips over to her other call.)

CECE
(Continuing/On phone)
Where are you?… No… No… No, I’m not masturbating!… I’m not!… Sit ups!… When are you coming home?… I don’t know. Soon I guess…

(There is a knock on her door.)

CECE
(Continuing/On phone)
Crap!… So soon! Gotta go, call me later… Will you?… Will you?… Ok, love you, bye…
(Cece hangs up and answers her front door. It’s Cece’s older sister, DESIREE MILLER, late 30’s early 40’s, troubled, secretive. She has a couple of large suitcases.)

CECE
(Continuing)

I wasn’t expecting you…

(Desiree comes in. They awkwardly stand in the entry way. Then Desiree sort of gives Cece a little pat type hug which Cece pulls away from.)

DESIREE

You weren’t?

CECE

I mean, you’re early.

DESIREE

Is that bad?

CECE

No traffic?

DESIREE

Not much.

CECE

Did you stop on the way?

DESIREE

Uh… yea…

CECE

I thought you’d be here in like an hour or more… I have a few things to do.

DESIREE

You want me to go sit at Starbucks for a while?

CECE

No… that’s ok.

DESIREE

I was kidding.
CECE
Didn’t you stop for lunch?

DESIREE
What?

CECE
I like to stop on road trips. Feels like a free food day. Like you can eat whatever and the calories don’t count.

DESIREE
If only, then I’d spend my life on the road.

(Desiree starts to walk in when Cece stops her.)

CECE
Is that your stuff?

DESIREE
No, I found these.

CECE
All that? How long are you staying?

(Desiree again starts in to the living space, but is again stopped by Cece.)

CECE
(Continuing)
Shoes? Remember?

(Desiree takes off her sandals and leaves them by the door.)

DESIREE
Oh, right. Sorry.

CECE
I think it’s gross… Shoes in the house. You bring in all this junk from outside. Pesticides… dog poop…

(Desiree walks in and looks around.)

DESIREE
I’m sure I don’t have any poop on my shoes-
You could.

I think I’d smell it, Cece.

Once it was on my carpet, Desi.

(Cece looks at Desiree’s feet.)

Man, your feet look old.

I better get ‘em botoxed.

And your face too while you’re at it.

You’re not that far behind me, little sister.

Where’d you stop?

(Desiree sits on the couch.)

When?

When do you think?

Oh, uh… just… Casa De Fruta.

What’d you get?

To eat?

No, to wear.
DESEREE

Pretzels.

CECE

Pretzels? Not fruit or chocolate? They have all those bins of chocolate covered crap there. You can get chocolate covered… whatever… skunk butt-

DESEREE

They’re expensive.

CECE

Pretzels?

DESEREE

Their food. An apple is like three dollars.

CECE

Pretzels make you bloat. All that salt. You shoulda got chocolate.

(Silence)

CECE

(Continuing)
So, what made you come for a visit? It’s not Christmas or Crazy’s birthday… What’s the special occasion?

DESEREE

I just wanted to… get out of LA for awhile.

CECE

Last minute? How long are you planning on… visiting?

DESEREE

Maybe… a week-

CECE

A week!

DESEREE

Is that ok?

CECE

Sure. (Beat) You just… never stay that long… with me…

DESEREE

I know, but…
A week is... fine...

I’d stay with mom but she doesn’t really have room.

At The Mooch Inn.

Where?

You know... Chunk... big fat retired retard.

What’d you call him?

Chunk.

Does Chuck know you call him that?

I don’t know... I don’t care.

I suppose it’s better than Fat Albert.

And Aunt Helen... Jesus, die already.

Don’t say that!

She’s been dying for what... three years.

Has it been that long?

I bet she’s not even dying.
Don’t say that!

You’d rather she die?

You know what I mean-

Relax, I’m just joshing… Besides what do you care?

I care.

Sure you do.

I do.

You don’t live here.

What’s that supposed to mean?

She’s irritating… Always some boring story…

She’s dying.

Dying people can’t be annoying?

Maybe a little tolerance is called for?

I give her fat ass plenty of tolerance.

Uh… I don’t feel like… making fun of dying people.
CECE
Oh my goodness. I’m just joking. It was a joke. Of course she’s dying. You do still have a sense of humor?

(Silence.)

CECE
(Continuing)
So, what do you want to do?

DESIREE
When?

CECE
Mom wants to know if we all want to go out to eat tonight.

That sounds good-

DESIREE
I don’t feel like it. Where would we go?

DESIREE
Uh… wherever. (Beat) Are you eating now?

CECE
(Sarcastic)
No.

DESIREE
I don’t mean anything… to be prying…You were asking about all that Casa de Fruta food… I thought… maybe…

CECE
I was making conversation.

Oh…

DESIREE
I eat fine. I’m always eating. Have I ever not eaten?

DESIREE
Well, yea, I remember a few years-
No. I always eat.

But you eat… weird.

I wish you guys would leave me alone. God, it’s such an anomaly in our family to find a person that actually wants to be healthy…

Is that what you call it?

Yes. I eat healthy.

Right… ok… starving for a week then downing a box of Sugar Bears-

I don’t do that anymore!

Let’s not get in to this-

Crazy (What she calls her mother) was wrong. It was never Sugar Bears!

Or Frosted Flakes? Whatever… some cereal.

I mean, sure, I eat bad… But when its appropriate… a road trip… Which I’m not on… now. I’m just not in the mood to go sit at some restaurant where they plop a big basket of bread in front of you or an endless bowl of chips… I don’t feel like… sitting at a table watching people stuff their faces nonstop with carbohydrates… all that slobbering and congealing of wheat going on. It’s gross to watch.

Sounds gross.

Fine, let’s go out!

No, it’s ok… I’d just like to get situated tonight-
Situated? What’s that mean? Are you moving in?

Uh-

All those bags-

I’m just… tired… long drive…

Fine, but you call Crazy.

Where should I sleep?

The floor.

…Ok.

I told you, turkey butt.

I was just… making sure.

No one uses the spare room… why wouldn’t you sleep there?

Maybe that’s where you keep your dead bodies.

Desiree, I told you its ok. I told you, you can stay here. Let’s not have this conversation every day… Or go to hotel if you’re so worried.

(Desiree is picking at her bare feet out of sheer nervousness. Cece has been watching and is getting more and more annoyed.)
CECE
(Continuing)
Do you have to pick your feet?

DESIREE
What?

CECE
What’re you doing? Picking skin or tearing at your toenails?

DESIREE
Sorry… I… was just-

CECE
Are you a monkey? Gonna hunt for fleas next?

DESIREE
FYI, mammals pick at skin…

(Cece goes back to her exercise routine.)

CECE
Then do it when you’re in your cage. I do have to work while you’re here. It’s not my vacation time. The germ factory has reopened. You should’ve come during my summer vacation… I was around then…

DESIREE
I know… sorry… I just…

CECE
Why’d you come? Just a visit?

DESIREE
A visit… It’s been a while. And… I was… feeling… a little… depressed.

(Cece smirks at this.)

CECE
You’re always depressed.

DESIREE
What?

CECE
When have you not been depressed?
DESIREE
And you’re always a… Look, Cece, I don’t have to stay here.

CECE
What’s that got to do with what I said?

DESIREE
If you’re gonna be mean-

CECE
Oh my goodness, I’m not being mean. I’m being honest. It’s true. You are. Did I say something that’s not true? Maybe you should go on drugs.

DESIREE
…I think I have a good reason to feel like I do.

CECE
…Sure… but…still?

DESIREE
Do you have a fucking brain?

CECE
I just asked if still… you know, God! Don’t get all-

DESIREE
If your husband…

CECE
I said still! Jesus, don’t get all… huffy.

(They are quiet.)

CECE
(Continuing)
It’s been awhile… that’s all I’m saying… You might want to consider… moving on.

DESIREE
Gee, thanks, I hadn’t thought of that.

CECE
It’s not like you had the best…

DESIREE
What?
Nothing.

DESIREE
The best what?

CECE
Forget it-

DESIREE
Marriage? Is that what you were gonna say?

CECE
Lets not talk about him… this… you get all freaky upset-

DESIREE
What the fuck do you know about my marriage?

CECE
Uh… correct me if I’m wrong, but… weren’t you always… depressed while you were married? And I do recall a time when you wanted to leave him-

DESIREE
Shut up! Don’t say that.

The truth?

DESIREE
I didn’t ask for your so called “truth”, Cece.

CECE
If you come here all depressed, interrupt my life… I think I have-

DESIREE
I’m sorry my staying here… visiting… is a burden.

CECE
Did I say that? No.

DESIREE
Yes! Yes, you did. You just did! Do you listen to yourself?

CECE
I think I have a right to tell you, you know, to buck up. I just think you should move on. I’m not trying to be mean… I’m giving you advice.
DESIREE
God… You’re…

CECE
Blunt.

DESIREE
Not what I was gonna say.

CECE
Shoot the messenger.

DESIREE
If only I could.

(Silence.)

CECE
So… what do you want to do?

(Desiree is silent.)

CECE
(Continuing)
Now you’re mad.

DESIREE
Ya think? I’m gonna… I need to… go… lie down.

CECE
Why are you mad at me? I didn’t say anything bad? I said *still*… I mean it’s a question… I asked a fucking question. No one can ask a question?

DESIREE
You said I had a crappy marriage!

CECE
Well… you said I eat weird!

DESIREE
I did not have a crappy marriage!

CECE
Fine! Then I was misinformed! All those phone calls to Crazy… to me…
DESIREE
Stop calling mom Crazy. She’s not crazy!

CECE
Since when?

DESIREE
People aren’t perfect. Relationships go through things…. Troubles… It doesn’t mean you don’t love the person… If you ever bothered to have a long term relationship-

CECE
Skeez and I have been together for nearly a year! He’s moved in.

DESIREE
Wow, let me give you an award for commitment.

CECE
I don’t settle.

DESIREE
Neither did I.

CECE
Sure about that?

DESIREE
Tony was a wonderful man.

CECE
Now… looking back… but… while he was alive-

DESIREE
Don’t talk bad about the dead! You never knew him. The real him.

CECE
Well, you never came to visit! How would I know what he was?

DESIREE
Maybe we never felt welcome!

CECE
I’m not gonna roll out the red carpet… send you a golden invitation. If you want to come home, you’ll come home.

DESIREE
I’m home!
CECE
And by that you mean?

DESIREE
…I won’t stay a week, just tonight… if that’s ok?

(Desiree goes in to the spare room. Cece is left in the living room alone.)

CECE
(Yells after)
You don’t have to go! Stay the week! Don’t be a martyr! (Silence) So fucking sensitive. So fucking hyper sensitive.

(Lights fade to black.)

(Lights up. Cece’s home appears to be empty. MIMI MAKER, 60’s, the mother, fun loving, means no harm, and irritating to Cece, enters. She carries a large bag of clothes. She calls out in a sing song way.)

MIMI
Knock, knock. Hello?

(Mimi takes off her shoes and enters the living space. She looks around then plops on the couch with her bag of clothes. Cece enters from around the hallway. She’s frightened by her mother’s presence.)

CECE
Jesus!

Oh-

CECE
Crazy, I told you, don’t just walk in-

I knocked!

MIMI
I didn’t hear it.

CECE
Well, I did. Get a hearing aid!
(Cece notices her mother’s bare feet.)

CECE

Crazy, put on your slippers!

MIMI

Sorry, sorry.

(Mimi scurries over to the entry way and puts on a little pair of house booties.)

MIMI

(Continuing)

You make Desi wear a pair of these?

CECE

Yes. You both have icky, old, stinky, flakey, feet. I don’t want to find flakes of your rotting skin-

MIMI

Jesus! You’ll be sorry when I’m dead that you talked to me this way…

CECE

What’s that bag of crap?

MIMI

Dollar day at the Goodwill.

CECE

I told you don’t buy me that shit-

MIMI

It’s not for you! Desi will wear these… Where is she?

CECE

She walked to Starbucks.

MIMI

Oh…

CECE

Can’t she stay with you?

MIMI

Why?
CECE
She drives me nuts.

MIMI
Everyone drives you nuts.

CECE
Can she sleep on your couch?

MIMI
Thud sleeps there. I told her that.

CECE
Why does a fucking fat ass dog get your couch?

MIMI
I don’t know.

CECE
He’s not even your dog! You choose the dog over your own daughter.

MIMI
Where will Thud sleep?

CECE
How about outside in the stinking garage?

MIMI
Helen wouldn’t go for that.

CECE
Then let him share the bed with Helen.

MIMI
He’s a two hundred pound dog. They both won’t fit on a twin.

CECE
Crap… She said one night… and it’s like day three.

MIMI
I’m sorry… I felt bad saying the dog had first dibs on the couch… when she asked me…

CECE
How long’s she planning on staying?

MIMI
I don’t know. She brought bags of stuff. Something’s weird. Why is she here?
She wants to visit.  

But why?  

You’re her sister.  

So?  

So, you know one day you’ll have to take care of her.  

What?  

She’s older, no children…  

I’m not taking care of her!  

Who will?  

She’ll have to depend on the kindness of strangers.  

Don’t tell me that. Take care of her.  

No!  

Promise me you’ll take care of her!  

No! I don’t even want her here today. Let her stay with you? (Cece gets sweet like a baby) Please… Please, mommy?  

Will you promise to take care of her when she’s old?
No!

Then no.

You’re mean.

You’re mean.

Don’t tell her I asked you to take her.

I won’t.

I mean it.

I won’t!

She’d just get pissed… more pissed.

You two think I tell everything but I don’t. I can keep some things quiet.

Right.

I can! I never told you about my (whispers) open marriage...

What? Shut up!

It’s true! It was the 70’s. Your father and I were having terrible (whispers) sex and we were both in our prime and wanted a little action. I met this guy, he drove a yellow porsche-

Yellow? Don’t tell me anymore.
MIMI
He was so (whispers) sexy-

CECE
Gross! I don’t want to hear about your supposed adulterous… goings on.

MIMI
It was an open marriage!

CECE
That’s just wrong.

MIMI
Your father consented. He had his own chicks.

CECE
You’re full of bull.

MIMI
Am I? You need to lighten up. You’re a fuddy duddy.

CECE
You know who’ll listen to you? Desi… tell her while she sleeps on your couch.

MIMI
I think it’s so sad. Your only sister and you can’t be nice to each other.

CECE
We’re nice.

MIMI
No, you’re not.

CECE
I like my own space… I don’t need to be surrounded by… people… to feel needed or whatever… to have meaning.

MIMI
 Exactly what meaning does your life have?

CECE
Plenty.

MIMI
Of nothing.
At least I don’t enable losers.

And Skeez is what?

Skeez is not a leech. He works.

He’s a barista and a pot head.

That’s not a leech. And he’s in acupuncture school. What’s Chunk do?

Acupuncture school… what a joke… who’s going to go to a white acupuncturist?

That’s racist.

And a pot head to boot-

He has a prescription for marijuana.

What’s he got? Lazybutt-itus?

Funny. You’re so freakin’ funny.

I am. I’m a riot. I shoulda gone to Hollywood and been a comedian.

But Laurel already had a partner… Is he the skinny one?

(Desiree enters the house wearing sweats and carrying a Starbuck’s cup. She stops at the entry way to remove her shoes and put on her booties.)

Hi-
CECE

Cause you’d be the fat one.

MIMI

(Singing) *Oh she’s got plenty of nothing…*

(Desiree comes in and gives her mom a hug then she plops on the couch.)

DESIREE

It’s hot out there.

MIMI

I know, Indian summer, awful. Lookie here, I got you some cute things-

(DESIREE shares items as she rummages through her bag.)

CECE

Is your butt sweaty?

DESIREE

What?

MIMI

Last night was Midnight Madness at the Goodwill-

(DESIREE shares items as she rummages through her bag.)

CECE

Get your sweaty butt off-

MIMI

Everything a buck! Isn’t this cute!

CECE

Desiree! Get off the couch!

(DESIREE stands up.)

What?

MIMI

Every toothless druggie was there last night-
You’re all sweaty.

No, I’m not-

I had to hold my nose-

You just went on a walk-

-and search.

I see sweat!

Where?

Feel your butt.

What?

They come out of the woodwork on Dollar night… This is so sweet.

(Mimi holds up a blouse for Desiree to look at. Desiree feels the back of her ass.)

Sweat.

No-

I don’t want your sweaty butt on my couch!

What do you think? You think you’ll wear it?
DESIREE
Uh… sure…

(She grabs the blouse and puts it on the couch. Then she sits on the blouse.)

CECE
That’s not funny.

MIMI
Don’t sit on it. Put it on.

DESIREE
My ass is not touching your precious sofa!

CECE
No, just that filthy old top is-

MIMI
Don’t fight!

(The front door bursts open. In tumbles AUNT HELEN, 60’s, sweet, cherubic woman with a cane, and CHUCK 60’s, chubby fellow, following. They both hold cups of frozen yogurt.)

HELEN
Emergency-

(Helen hands Chuck her yogurt and makes a beeline towards Cece’s bathroom.)

CECE
What the hell?

MIMI
What’s going on?

CHUCK
Went right thru her, I guess. Here.

(He hands Helen’s yogurt to Mimi then Chuck sits on the couch and eats his yogurt.)

CECE
Chunk!
MIMI
I told her she can’t eat that fake yogurt anymore-

(Mimi goes to the kitchen with the yogurt.)

CECE
Shoes, Chunk- Chuck!

(Chuck looks at his feet.)

CHUCK
Oops…

(He kicks his shoes off right where he is.)

CHUCK
(Continuing/Yelling towards Mimi)
Well she was finally hungry for something…

(Mimi comes back in.)

MIMI
What flavor was that? Chocolate peanut butter?

(Cece fumes and bends over and picks up Chuck’s shoes and sets them by the front door.)

CHUCK
I think so…

HELEN
(Off stage)
Uh… Mimi… can you come here a minute…

MIMI
Uh, oh.

(Mimi heads to the bathroom.)

CHUCK
Hey, Desi… How you doing?

DESIREE
Ok.
CECE
Why are you guys here?

CHUCK
We dropped your mom off. We were waiting in the car but Helen needed-

CECE
Why?

CHUCK
Why what?

CECE
Drop her off?

CHUCK
I don’t know… She said to drop her off… stay in the car… What’s new?

DESIREE
Nothing.

CECE
Where’s her car?

CHUCK
Who’s?

CECE
Mom’s!

CHUCK
Outside. Just a visit, Desi?

CECE
Where’s your car?

CHUCK
Why? Home.

DESIREE
Yea… What’s new with you?

CHUCK
Nothing much… Doing a little entrepreneurship on ebay. Heard of it?
CECE
You think she’s been living under a rock?

DESIREE
What are you selling?

CHUCK
All my Depression Glass-

CECE
Why’d you all come together?

CHUCK
I don’t know. Run errands… Go for a drive… Get yogurt…

DESIREE
Saves gas.

CHUCK
There’s plenty of gas in the world…

CECE
How are they saving gas by going for a drive?

(Mimi comes out of the bathroom.)

MIMI
Do you have any… spare pants?

CECE
What?

MIMI
Something Helen can put on.

CECE
Why?

MIMI
She had an accident.

CECE
What?

MIMI
Yep… all over…
(Cece storms out of the room.)

DESIREE
She’s not too happy-

MIMI
Too bad. People get sick…

DESIREE
Not in Cece’s house.

MIMI
She needs to get over it!

CHUCK
Plenty of oil in Alaska… If they would just drill. Or natural gas… all under the Midwest. The ocean too but BP messed that up for everyone.

(Cece enters with a bed sheet.)

CECE
(Under her breath)
Why are they here?

MIMI
They dropped me off. What’s this?

CECE
It’s a sheet. I don’t have pants that’ll fit her…

MIMI
Oh… Ok.

(Mimi heads back to the bathroom.)

CECE
Chuck, your yogurt’s dripping.

(Chuck licks the side of his container.)

CHUCK
The Chinese’ll drill.

CECE
What are they doing in there?
DESIREE
Where?

CHUCK

In Alaska… When they rule us.

CECE

The bathroom!

DESIREE
You think that'll happen?

(Cece leaves the room.)

CECE
(Off stage)
Everything ok?

CHUCK
Get ready… They’ll rule the world one day. Smart bastards. It’s all in the numbers. They are everywhere and there’s billions of ‘em and they got all the money. They’re the leaders in solar energy, you now that? They know something we don’t know.

DESIREE
That there’s a shortage of fossil fuels?

CHUCK
Money. It makes money. The sun.

HELEN
(Off stage)
I’m sorry, Honey. I made a mess in your bathroom-

(Cece wanders back in. She sits on the couch.)

MIMI
(Off stage)
Fine! It’s fine! I’m cleaning it up. Everything is fine!

CHUCK
You can never have too many guns.

CECE
Or too few.

(They all sit silently for a minute.)

DESIREE
So, you’re selling your Depression Glass?
That’s what you should be selling, Desi… Wait, you don’t have the glass, just the depression.

Yep.

Ha ha. You should sell crabs cause that’s what you are.

Whatever.

(Finally Mimi and Helen enter the room. Helen has the sheet wrapped around her like a big skirt. She hobbles over to the couch and sits down.)

Thanks for the sheet, honey. I’ll wash it-

Burn it.

I’m so sorry…

It’s fine.

That stuff went right through me… Where’s my yogurt? You didn’t toss it did you?

I put it in the freezer.

You’re not going to keep eating it, are you?

I haven’t had an appetite in weeks. You bet I am. If that’s ok?

No-

Sure it is. I’ll get it.
(Mimi gets up to go get it.)

DESIREE

Who buys your glass?

CECE

Don’t have another accident… I don’t have that many sheets…

HELEN

Ok, honey, I’ll be careful.

CHUCK

Collectors. I guess. Like I was. I liked it. Reminded me of my mama. But then I got sick of looking at it and thought I might as well try to make my money back.

(Mimi enters with the yogurt. She gives it to Helen.)

HELEN

It feels so good to want to eat.

MIMI

I think you should buy the real stuff. Not that diet yogurt. God knows what they put in diet yogurt. Probably just chemicals.

HELEN

I did buy the real stuff. Why do I need to diet? I’m dying.

MIMI

Don’t say that.

HELEN

Why not? It’s true.

CECE

Is it?

HELEN

Huh?

MIMI

I don’t want to talk about death. Let’s all talk about life. We are all so lucky to be sitting here alive.

(They’re all quiet. They don’t look like they feel lucky to be alive.)
DESIREE

How’s Thud?

HELEN

He’s just a big bad boy.

MIMI

That’s my fault. I feed him outta guilt.

HELEN

No, he got fat after they fixed him. That’s what happens…

CHUCK

Yep… You get fat and lazy.

CECE

Speaking from experience?

MIMI

Cece!

CHUCK

Huh?

MIMI

So crass-

CHUCK

Oh… ya… hahaaaa… good one…

HELEN

He got his testicles removed years ago.

CECE

Chuck?

HELEN

Thud.

MIMI

So crass. I don’t like crass women-

CECE

Just a joke, relax hamster brain.
HELEN
My poor baby is no longer a baby.

DESIREE
How old is he now?

MIMI
I guess I feel guilty that I can eat whatever and he can’t, so I give him nibbles-

HELEN
Nine.

CECE
You can’t eat whatever. You’re turning in to a tub of goo.

MIMI
Be quiet.

DESIREE
That’s-

HELEN
Old… For a big dog. Maybe he’s waiting for me to go. You know they say people wait for things before they go. Lots of people wait for their birthday. Then they die. Lots of deaths on birthdays.

CECE
When’s your birthday Aunt Helen?

MIMI
December 24th. Don’t die on your birthday, you’ll make for a sad Christmas.

CECE
(Under her breath)
Or a merry one.

HELEN
Huh? I wonder if dogs are like people… waiting… for something…

CECE
What are you waiting for? I mean are you waiting… to die?
HELEN

I suppose… I don’t really feel like going yet. But I could go at any time… Its not like there are things I need to do… or can still do… the dreams are gone… so now, I guess I’m finally just… living and its sort of fun just being here with my sister… and Chuck and seeing you girls and being able to cuddle with Thud… On days when I feel sick… well on those days… I’m ready to go… but then I feel better… I guess when I no longer feel better then… Boy, a pickle sounds good. Cece, do you have any-

CECE

No.

CHUCK

You won’t be around to see the chinks take over.

CECE

She may be…

MIMI

Chuck!

CHUCK

The greatest generation is dead and we have the worst generation to protect our country.

CECE

Are you saying my generation sucks? Cause I take offense-

CHUCK

The children of the Depression. The best.

CECE

That’s not you, mastermind.

CHUCK

My parents. Rubbed off on me, master… bator.

CECE

That’s gross-

MIMI

Stop that! Be nice both of you.

HELEN

I don’t know why being cheap is considered such a noble attribute.

DESIRE

Better than going broke-
CHUCK
They were scrappy, survivors… beat the Japs.

CECE
But you didn’t beat the Vietnamese.

CHUCK
We could’ve… should’ve dropped the bomb… all those liberals. Now environmentalists-

HELEN
Remember how cheap ol’ grandpa Henry was? Rationing underwear… elastic is very important to the panty.

CECE
Let’s not regale each other with the fine cheap days of grandpa-

HELEN
Wouldn’t let me have a new prom dress.

MIMI
So what’s the plan?

CHUCK
To have your own personal arsenal.

HELEN
I had to wear mother’s altered wedding dress. Looked like a fool. Who wears a wedding dress to a prom?

CECE
Helen, your yogurt’s dripping.

(Helen licks her carton.)

MIMI
Maybe we should all do something.

DESIREE
To stop the Chinese?

CHUCK
Impossible. It’s in the numbers.

CECE
Maybe you all should… go… go out… take that drive…
What’re your plans, Desi?

DESIREE

With what?

CECE

She’s leaving in a few days. Don’t you need to get back to LA?

HELEN

Oh no! Oopsie-

CECE

(Continuing)

Oh no… Is she going to kill me?

MIMI

She’ll get over it… People spill.

DESIREE

Not in Cece’s house.

HELEN

(Continuing)

Sorry, honey-

CECE

Just… my new couch… just… be careful.

HELEN

Is it coming up?

MIMI

When are you going back, Desi?

DESIREE

Oh… I guess…
(The front door opens and in walks SKEEZ, Cece’s boyfriend. 30’s, pot head, goof ball, wearing his Starbucks attire. He sees the crowd in the living room.)

SKEEZ
Well… what have we here? The meeting of the mindless?

MIMI
Sure… We were waiting for you… our fearless leader.

SKEEZ
I’ve arrived… let the games begin.

HELEN
She’s upset… I spilled-

CECE
No, I’m not!

MIMI
It’s fine.

SKEEZ
 Seriously, is this like some intervention?

MIMI
For who?

SKEEZ
True, each of us is messed up in our own special way.

CECE
Not me.

(He leaves the room with the messy rags and cleaner.)

SKEEZ
Especially her.

MIMI
She’s your girlfriend. What’s wrong with her?

DESIREE
She’s nuts.
SKEEZ
Only around people. So, Chuck you here for a rematch?

CHUCK
I just had some yogurt.

SKEEZ
What the heck’s that mean?

CHUCK
Let my stomach settle.

SKEEZ
Little lactose intolerance?

MIMI
I don’t think today’s the day for a rematch.

DESIREE
Of what?

SKEEZ
I kicked his ass last week.

MIMI
Can you believe his scrawny legs tossed Chuck aside?

CHUCK
My legs are like tree stumps… It was a freak occurrence.

SKEEZ
The bigger they are the harder they fall. Me do recall a fellow named Goliath.

(CECE reenters.)

CECE
You guys still here?

MIMI
We’re spending the night.

HELEN
I thought we were moving in.

CHUCK
So, tell me Skeez, are you for gun control?
No stupid politics-                  CECE

I’m for controlling your guns-       SKEEZ

Don’t get him started on guns-      MIMI

Or the Chinese or the Vietnamese or the Hispanics-  HELEN

Who keeps a loaded shot gun next to the bed?  MIMI

Let me guess, Chuck?  DESIREE

Chuck doesn’t realize the world is coming to an end with or without the Chinese.  CECE

Do you have to be so pessimistic?  MIMI

The tails too long.  DESIREE

You people live in fairy land.  CECE

I don’t live in no fairy land-        CHUCK

Don’t mention fairies-               HELEN

Let’s talk about happy things.       MIMI

He doesn’t like the “happy people”.  HELEN

You believe marijuana should be legal?  CHUCK
Uh… isn’t it?

MIMI

How is that a happy topic?

DESIREE

Remember the stuffed mouse?

CECE

We don’t need to hear that stupid story again-

MIMI

A cute little stuffed mouse-

DESIREE

And the first words out of her mouth-

CECE

The tail was too long!

MIMI

Says it all.

CECE

Well it was! What mouse has a two foot tail?

DESIREE

The tail is always wrong for Cece.

CECE

Not after I chopped that fucker’s tail off.

MIMI

Poor mouse-

CHUCK

The end is near.

CECE

Talk about a long tail.

MIMI

Chuck’s very pessimistic.
I’m a realist. There’s a difference. And don’t talk about me like-

Well, if it’s ending-

I’m here.

What does anything matter? Why care?

Exactly.

Chuck this… Chuck that… I’m right here-

Not for long-

You care!

I don’t care about shit!

Lie! Cleanliness! You care about that. We can’t even wear our shoes in your house.

That’s like some Chinese thing. You get that from the Chinese?

I don’t want germs and crap in the house!

If we’re all gonna die… what power do germs have?

Got to eat a pound of dirt before you die-

I don’t want to have this existentialist discussion with you boneheads.
SKEEZ
The only way to settle this is a leg off.

CECE
Settle what?

SKEEZ
Why, if life is pointless. Shall we, my large legged opponent?

CHUCK
I do believe my stomach is settled…

(The men stand and face each other.)

CECE
Don’t do that in here!

(Too late! They are on the ground leg wrestling! The crowd hollers! Cece screams for them to stop!)

CECE
(Continuing)
Stop it!!! This is my house! You idiots! Stop!

(Suddenly the guys bash into a coffee table and set it flying. Cece screams! Everyone freezes.)

(Black out.)

(Lights up. The apartment is cleaned up. Desiree sits trying to repair the leg on the coffee table. The phone rings. Desiree answers it.)

DESIREE
(On phone)
Hello… I’m sorry she’s not in yet… May I take a message?

(She writes on a pad.)

DESIREE
(Continuing/on phone)
I’ll tell her. Bye…

(Desiree hangs up and wonders to herself for a moment. Then the front door opens and a cautious Mimi enters.)
Is it safe?  

MIMI  

She’s at work. Or on her way home I guess…  

DESIREE  

Is she still mad?  

MIMI  

What do you think?  

DESIREE  

She’ll get over it.  

MIMI  

I doubt it.  

DESIREE  

She’s wound so tight… Her nature? Or lack of nurture?  

MIMI  

I don’t know…  

DESIREE  

My fault?  

MIMI  

I don’t know…  

DESIREE  

I don’t know how to help her…  

MIMI  

Me either.  

DESIREE  

So… when are you heading back?  

MIMI  

Uh… well-  

DESIREE  

I wish you didn’t have to go.  

MIMI
Really?

Sure.

Maybe I won’t.

What do you mean?

Maybe… I’ll stay.

Really?

Actually… I don’t have anything to go back to.

What do you mean?

Well… I… I lost everything.

What?

I lost everything.

What do you mean?

The house… my job… I lost it all.

What do you mean?

The bank took the house.
MIMI
What? How did that happen?

DESIREE
You know, it’s been a year… a year since… Tony… A year… a long year…

MIMI
But… wasn’t there insurance?

DESIREE
Not for suicide.

MIMI
So… what happened? With the house?

DESIREE
I just… I don’t make enough money myself… I was going to get a roommate… then I just… I couldn’t get outta bed-

MIMI
Why didn’t you tell me?

DESIREE
I think I did.

MIMI
You didn’t tell me!

DESIREE
Not in so many words.

MIMI
What’d you tell me?

DESIREE
Remember… I would call… and cry?

MIMI
Sure, but… You didn’t say you were… incapacitated… losing your home-

DESIREE
I guess I didn’t. I kept thinking I’d get better but I just seemed to get worse. It seemed like everyone was sick of me crying and being sad. I felt like no one understood… I just had to stop sharing… I’m not really sure how I got here. All I know is they moved me out… I threw stuff in my car… and drove here.
MIMI
Is it too late? The house? Can I help?

DESIREE
Too late.

MIMI
Oh, God… I feel awful… my baby… my poor baby… my really poor baby.

(Mimi comforts Desiree.)

DESIREE
I don’t know what to do now. I don’t know where to go.

MIMI
You go no where. You stay here.

DESIREE
I keep thinking it was my fault.

MIMI
What?

DESIREE
Tony.

MIMI
No!

DESIREE
After the accident… car accident… I just… I was so disappointed… I was angry. I was mad that it happened to us. I knew he would never be the same. I knew I couldn’t help him. And I didn’t. I didn’t know what to do. He’d drink himself to sleep. He’d drink all day. He was consumed with guilt and I didn’t help him.

MIMI
There was nothing you could do.

DESIREE
I could have done more.

MIMI
What could you have done?
DESIREE
I should have helped him more. I should have done more. I should have made him get help.

MIMI
You did the best you could.

DESIREE
No, I didn’t. I didn’t.

MIMI
Remember when Jim killed himself?

Who?

DESIREE
Jim? Snaggle tooth?

Oh… yea…

MIMI
You girls didn’t know this but I’d been (whispers) sleeping with him.

DESIREE
What? Oooh, he had no teeth!

MIMI
He had two. Right here on each side. Boy, he had a rough life. Drug addiction, beaten as a child, Vietnam… seems like the boys either came back like Chuck or Jim. Did anyone come back normal?

DESIREE
Why were you sleeping with him?

MIMI
I don’t know. I liked him. He was nice. I felt sorry for him… Anyway, after he, you know, suffocated… or is it affixiation? When you hook a hose from the exhaust pipe of a car to the interior?

DESIREE
I don’t… know-
MIMI
Well, I was sad, that’s all I want to say. I was real sad. And I felt bad. Like maybe I could have… but there was nothing I could have done.

(Silence.)

MIMI
(Continuing)
You have to stay here and get some help.

DESIREE
I don’t think Cece will let me.

MIMI
Did you ask her?

DESIREE
No, I’m afraid to ask her.

MIMI
I’ll talk to her.

DESIREE
She won’t like it.

MIMI
Too bad. She’ll get over it. You’re her sister. She has to help you. I’m helping Helen. There’s comfort in doing something kind for another. I mean, I do feel like killing her sometimes. And I don’t really like changing her when she has an accident… or changing her bandage… it really stinks… and I feel awful when she’s having a bad day and in so much pain… But I think taking care of her is a gift… to me. When people are dying they’re just real. She’s real now. No pretenses with her. We live each day like a mini adventure. I think helping her in her final days… or years as its turning out to be, is perhaps the best thing I’ve ever done…

DESIREE
Everything feels pointless.

MIMI
Maybe there is no meaning. Maybe our human mind tries to make meaning where it doesn’t exist. I don’t know… I don’t think about the meaning of life. Why wonder a question when there is no answer? I’m simple. I love you guys, and Chuck… sometimes… he’s a little crazy… I sell junk… eat… laugh… what else is there?

DESIREE
A clean couch.
(Mimi notices the couch.)

MIMI
Oh no, that yogurt left a stain! She’s going to kill Helen!

(Cece comes in. She slams the door. She is upset.)

MIMI
(Continuing)
Hi, honey…

(Cece walks past them and goes to her room.)

MIMI
(Continuing)
I’ll talk to her when she’s in a better mood. But it’ll all be ok. Ok?

(Desiree nods. Mimi gets up and switches to her shoes.)

Where you going?

MIMI
I’m gettin’ outta… what’s a clever word for hell?

…Cece’s home.

(Desiree remembers the phone message. She softly calls to Cece.)

CECE
What?

(Desiree continues)

Your principal called.

CECE
When?
I don’t know… a few minutes ago-

What’d he say?

For you to call him.

Crap.

Did something happen?

Nothing.

Well, you seem really upset. You want to talk?

No.

Sure?

I’m fine!

I just think… maybe I can help you?

How? By leaving? You want to help? Go back to LA! You’re stressing me out! Can’t you see you are my problem! Breathing down my neck! Sitting all day on my fucking couch! I’m gonna need to restuff… recover the thing.

(Cece grabs the phone and storms out of the room. Desiree is stunned.)

(Black out.)

END ACT I
ACT II

(A few weeks later. Cece is getting ready for work. Skeez comes from the bedroom in his PJ’s.)

SKEEZ
(Singing)

_I woke up with wood._

(He tries to catch her from behind.)

CECE
Throw it on the fire.

(She walks away.)

CECE
(Continuing)

Did you see about getting Desi a job?

SKEEZ
Baby, you’re giving me a boner. (Singing) _I woke up-

CECE
I asked you like two weeks ago to help me.

I am so horny-

SKEEZ
CECE
I told you not until she goes.

You’re a pilgrim.

SKEEZ
CECE
Get her a job.

Or get blue balls?

SKEEZ
CECE
They’ll go with your green teeth. What are you doing today?

SKEEZ
Whacking off.
Don’t you have class?

No.

Why not?

I have the day off.

(Cece picks up a book on the floor and places it on the coffee table.)

Since when? Must be nice… All she does is lay around here and read.

Give her a break.

What? I let her live here for free! I think that’s a break-

She’s been through a lot-

Do you know what I’m going through?

Sorry, baby everything’s gonna be fine. You’re a great fuckin’ teacher.

I’m stressed.

I know how to relieve that stress.

(He tries to move in. She pushes him off.)

Would you please just find out if there are any openings at Starbucks? I got to go.

(Cece puts on her shoes and grabs her work bags and leaves. Skeez gets a cup of coffee from the kitchen and sits
on the sofa. He picks up Desiree’s book. Desiree enters in her pajamas.)

DESIREE

Morning.

SKEEZ

Good morning, sunshine.

DESIREE

Can’t sleep… ran out of my sleeping pills.

(She pours herself a cup of coffee. Then sits in the living space.)

SKEEZ

That stuff’s bad for you.

DESIREE

Yea, well so is not sleeping. Are you reading that book?

SKEEZ

Huh? Uh, no, I just… looking at it… Any good?

DESIREE

His first book was better.

SKEEZ

Yea?

DESIREE

She’s Come Undone… sounds like my life…

SKEEZ

Sounds like Cece.

DESIREE

Huh?

SKEEZ

What was that book about?

DESIREE

I don’t really remember… Some fucked up girl. I remember this one part…the girl had eaten a whole bag of cashews and she got really bad gas…
SKEEZ
Chicks sitting around farting… Nice.

DESIREE
Maybe I should read it again. I’ve never read a book twice. Tony, he used to read books like five, ten times. His favorite books over and over. He loved Sherlock Holmes. Who likes Sherlock Holmes? I tried to read one once… but it was boring… not my thing… He never read the last Sherlock story… He said if he read it then it would be over and he would be sad that it was all over. He loved to read… He said it would take his mind off his problems… You like to read?

SKEEZ
Sure… nah… I mean… Comic books… Had a great collection… Cece said I couldn’t move in here with them. Had to sell ‘em.

DESIREE
And you did?

SKEEZ
Nah, I took them to my parent’s house. Don’t tell Cece.

DESIREE
God, if Cece knew all the stuff we keep from her.

SKEEZ
Her head would explode.

DESIREE
Maybe I should try Sherlock again.

(He opens an Altoid case.)

SKEEZ
Wanna Altoid?

(He holds it out to her. She looks in it.)

DESIREE
Oh, so that’s where you keep your weed.

(He takes out a reefer.)

SKEEZ
Yep.
DESIREE
How’d you get Cece to let you smoke that?

SKEEZ
A doctor’s note. Have a hit.

DESIREE
Na…

SKEEZ
Come on… I think you got post-traumatic stress… you can get a doctor’s note for that.

DESIREE
Yea?

SKEEZ
Death is not easy…

DESIREE
Especially… suicide…

SKEEZ
You still got the note?

DESIREE
Somewhere…

(Skeez lights one up and takes a toke. He passes it to Desiree. She hesitates then takes a drag. She coughs after the fact.)

SKEEZ
Been awhile?

DESIREE
A thousand years.

SKEEZ
There were these two birds… parrots. They were friends. But then one day one was captured and taken away from the other. He was stuck in a cage. He was in this cage for life. Then one day he got a letter from the other parrot. The free one. And then after he read the letter he fell off his perch and died. Right there in his cage dead. Then his master opened up the cage… cause you know he was dead… and he was going to bury him… I guess… but then you know what, that parrot, he became alive and flew out of the cage and flew out of the house. He was free. Then the master read the letter… from the other parrot… and it said you have to die while alive in order to know freedom.
DESIREE

I heard that story recently…

(They are a little high now so everything is sort of funny.)

SKEEZ

It’s one of those fuckin’ Indian stories… like a parable or fable.

Who told you it?

DESIREE

Uh… One of my teachers… one of my acupuncture dudes…. They’re all like from the Middle East.

DESIREE

I heard that story somewhere… on TV… on PBS?

Huh?

DESIREE

I heard that story like last week on PBS. The bald dude, who steals every monk’s story, he was pushing some new old shit.

Oh?

DESIREE

It’s still a good story… I guess…. What exactly does it mean?

Fuck… I don’t know…

SKEEZ

Then why’d you tell me it?

SKEEZ

Fuck… I forget… Something about freedom…

DESIREE

You’re only alive if you can free yourself from your cage.

SKEEZ

But what is your cage? I got to watch that PBS show again… maybe I missed something.
DESIREE
You got it off PBS?

SKEEZ
Huh?

DESIREE
PBS?

SKEEZ
Uh… yeah… I guess that’s where I got it.

DESIREE
That other parrot just taught him a trick on how to escape his cage.

SKEEZ
Maybe the note really said pretend you’re dead?

DESIREE
We better watch it again.

SKEEZ
Bet he’s on today. He’s on like 24 hours.

DESIREE
Isn’t it a school day?

SKEEZ
Well… I’m sort of… on a break.

DESIREE
What do you mean?

SKEEZ
Well… I… it was suggested that I leave.

DESIREE
Your acupuncture school?

SKEEZ
Yea.

DESIREE
What happened?
I guess the needles don’t like me.

Oh… when did this happen?

A week ago.

Does Cece know?

No… I gotta break things to her gently.

Wow… Are you… disappointed?

Sure… I mean I would rather choose to leave then be kicked out. But hey, it’s just not for me I guess. You know… something else will come along… Maybe I’ll be a mortician.

Sure about that?

The dead don’t talk.

Don’t they?

Does Tony talk to you?

Like in “Ghost”?

Never saw it.

Really? Everyone’s seen that movie… Let me ask you… you and Cece are like oil and water. How does it work? Does it work?
SKEEZ
I’d say we’re more like oil and vinegar and together we make salad dressing.

DESIREE
I know who’s vinegar.

MIMI
(Off stage)
Knock, knock.

(The front door opens and in walks Mimi. She stands at the door and slips on her slippers. She carries a laptop and a bag of black licorice.)

SKEEZ
Who’s there?

MIMI
Is it safe from Cece?

(She moves towards them while munching on her licorice.)

SKEEZ
You eating that shit for breakfast?

MIMI
Don’t tell Cece. Lookie here…

(She flips open her computer and begins to log on.)

DESIREE
Why are you over so early?

MIMI
I got some good news.

SKEEZ
Does it involve labor?

MIMI
Lookie here.

(She shows them the page on the computer.)

DESIREE
What’s… What’s this? Oh, no! Oh, no!
Looks like you’ve been shit faced.

What’s wrong?

Is that me?

Of course.

But it’s an old picture.

All I could find. Look, you’ve got ten friends in one week!

Who are they?

Friends!

But what friends? I don’t have friends.

Apparently, you’ve got ten.

On Face Book! Those aren’t friends.

Look, Katy O’Shea! I found Katy O’Shea.

Let me see… She got fat. Good. Bitch!

Don’t say that!

She was a bitch! She threw dog shit at me.
Oh, would you get over that-

Dude, that's disgusting-

I don’t know any of these people. Who are these other people?

Sure you do. Look, Bob Sharp.

Who?

Him.

Ichobob!

Yea, Ichobob. But he’s not too icky any more. Look, he’s filled out.

Let me see. (Beat) He’s ok.

Oh, good, I am glad you said that cause you have a date with him.

What?

I’ve been communicating with him, as you, and we’ve really hit it off. And he wants to have coffee with me… I mean you.

I’m not having coffee with Ichobob!

Oh, please, you’ll break his heart. He is so excited to reconnect with me… you… He’s recently divorced… two adorable children, Jacob and Katy-

When did you do all this-
(Mimi’s phone goes off.)

MIMI
(On Cell)
What?... What?... How’d that happen?... Call 911!... You did… Ok… I’ll meet you at Kaiser!

(She hangs up.)

What?

DESIREE

Helen!

MIMI

What?

DESIREE

She was shot!

MIMI

Shot?

DESIREE/SKEEZ

Thud.

MIMI

What?

DESIREE/SKEEZ

Thud!

MIMI

Thud? What?

DESIREE/SKEEZ

(Lights fade to black as they all run out.)

(Lights up a few days later. Desiree is lying on the couch reading her book. Cece walks in. She sees Desiree and becomes grumpy, tossing her shoes off and throwing things around.)

DESIREE

Hi…
Can’t you lie in your room, my guest room, and read?

Hello to you too.

Is Skeez here?

Uh… no…

Where is he?

School?

No.

No?

No.

Oh… why?

Because…

Why?

Jesus, you have to know everything. He got kicked out.

Oh, good, he told you.

You knew?
What?

He fucking told you!

Well, I mean, I am here all the time… sorta hard to hide.

No shit. Did you go into his Starbucks yet?

I don’t want to be a barista.

I don’t think you should be so picky.

Maybe I’ll go back to school.

What? How long will that take?

I don’t know-

To be what?

A brain surgeon.

You could operate on yourself.

I was gonna operate on you first. Give you the brain of someone normal.

Funny.

Why are you so grumpy? Is something going on at work?
No. Why? Did Skeez say something?

Well…

What’d he say?

Not much…

There’s nothing to tell.

(Skeez opens the front door. He carries a bag.)

There’s my girls.

What’s that mean? Your girls?

It’s your lucky day.

(He approaches Desiree.)

You got her an apartment and a job?

Here.

(He hands Desiree a book that was in his bag.)

Why does she get a gift?

Oh my god, how awesome!

(Desiree gives Skeez a hug.)

What the fuck? Like she needs another book!
I saw it and thought of you.

What? Are you two dating now?

Amazing.

It popped out at me. I wasn’t looking for it and wham… there it was… like a sign.

Sherlock fucking Holmes?

Little respect, Cece.

The man is dead.

Like for a hundred years.

Tony.

What?

As long as we’re surprising each other…

No way!

“Ghost”, what’s going on?
DESIREE
I walked to Starbucks… and passed the video store and I saw it in the window. I just… my eyes went to it! Weird, huh?

CECE
Are you two spinning the pottery wheel together?

DESIREE
What?

(The door flies open and in walks Helen and Mimi. Helen is limping from her gun shot wound.)

MIMI
Knock, knock. Hello…

(They stop at the door and Mimi helps Helen remove her shoes.)

CECE
Knock on the door and wait! You don’t open and say knock, knock!

MIMI
Lift honey. Come on… little more… I can’t seem to get this foot out-

HELEN
Pull now.

(Finally, success. They come in and Helen plops on the couch.)

DESIREE
How’re you doing?

MIMI
Thought you’d all want to see Helen. She was just released.

CECE
(Under her breath)

From the nut house?

DESIREE
How’re you feeling?

HELEN
Ok… my side is a little sore.
MIMI
That stupid dog.

HELEN
No, it could’ve been worse… He could’ve killed me.

Too bad. Too bad it happened.

CECE
It’s what you’d call a freak accident.

MIMI
He needs to stop licking the floor in my bedroom.

Chunk?

MIMI
Chunk spills his late night snacks all over the floor. He has a Cheetos fetish. He likes to eat them late at night. He places a bowl on his tummy… but the bowl always falls off…

CECE
Wonder why that is?

MIMI
Cheetos on the floor… every night-

HELEN
He could sniff out a crumb in a crack.

CECE
Chunk?

MIMI
So, he was in there licking the floor, for cheese crumbs, Thud not Chunk… I mean Chuck… Don’t call him that… you got me doing it-

HELEN
Then I went looking for him, Thud not Chunk… Chuck, got me doing it too…

MIMI
And she scared the dickens out of poor Thud and he bumped into the rifle and it fell and fired-
HELEN
Hitting me on the side of my buttocks.

DESIREE
It’s too freaky to believe.

MIMI
I know, at first I thought Chunk shot her… like a flash back from Vietnam.

CECE
He was a cook! He never held a gun.

MIMI
He held a pairing knife.

CECE
Who keeps a loaded shot gun by the side of the bed? A freak!

MIMI
He says what good is a gun locked away?

CECE
I warned you. I told you- 

DESIREE
Did it hurt?

HELEN
It felt like someone was pulling off my butt cheek.

SKEEZ
That’s some story. I don’t think I’ll ever tire hearing it.

CECE
I will. I’ve head it now three times.

(Helen feels where her booboo is.)

HELEN
Oh no… Is it leaking?

(Mimi looks at her wound.)

MIMI
Yep, come on, lets get you to the bathroom.
(Mimi helps Helen to the bathroom. Cece looks at her couch. There is a big spot of blood.)

CECE
No fucking way!

(Skeez and Desiree can’t help but giggle.)

CECE
(Continuing)
You think this is funny? God! I’ll have to get a new couch… between Desiree’s ass on it all day, and Helen’s stains… No respect! This sucks! No fucking respect!

(Cece leaves to get cleaning solution.)

SKEEZ
You think watching “Ghost” will cheer her up?

DESIREE
She loves this couch. It’s like its human… and it can’t help but get old, beat up, tired, stained… and eventually…

SKEEZ
Die.

DESIREE
What’s going on at her work?

SKEEZ
I’m not supposed to tell.

DESIREE
Is it bad?

SKEEZ
Maybe.

DESIREE
What is it?

SKEEZ
She’s in some sort of trouble-

(Helen and Mimi come back out. Skeez clams up.)
MIMI
Well, that hole got patched up.

(Cece comes out with cleaning solution.)

HELEN
Sorry I sprung a leak, honey. Bandages aren’t what they used to be.

CECE
Fine… just… sit over there…

HELEN
I heard about your problem.

(Cece is shocked and turns.)

CECE
What?

HELEN
Sorry honey. You know, I’ve lost everything too. Sometimes you got to lose it all to know what you have.

DESIREE
Yea…

CECE
To know you have absofuckin’ nothing.

HELEN
I tried to buy happiness with a bunch of crap.

DESIREE
Yea…

HELEN
Had a house full of crap and just me sitting there looking at it. Then your mom… With out your mom I’d be on the street.

CECE
She’s a regular saint.

HELEN
She is.
CECE
I know what you guys are doing.

MIMI
What are we doing?

CECE
I told Desiree she can stay here! Would you get off my back!

(Cece storms out.)

HELEN
She needs therapy…

(Lights fade out.)

(Lights up, new day. There is a knock on the door. No one answers. Finally another knock. Desiree comes out and opens the door. She is dressed better than usual.

On the other side of the door is BOB SHARP, 40’s handsome.)

DESIREE
Hi… Ich- Bob.

BOB
Desi! Wow… you look… different from your picture-

DESIREE
That was an old picture.

BOB
Yea… you look… good.

DESIREE
No, I don’t. I look twenty years older and… fatter. But you look good. Time is friendlier to men.

(She starts to lead him in then remembers the shoe rule.)

BOB
Yea… it is…

DESIREE
Oh, sorry, my nut job sister makes everyone take off their shoes.
BOB
Oh… ok…

(He takes his shoes off. He has on two different pairs of socks and one is missing the entire heel.)

DESIREE
What happened to your heel?

(He looks at his sock.)

BOB
Oh…uh… He ran off to start the fire at the shoe factory.

DESIREE
Oh yea, I heard a hundred souls were lost.

BOB
I see you read the story in the paper.

(She leads him into the living area.)

DESIREE
About a thousand years ago.

BOB
So, this is your sisters place?

DESIREE
Cece, remember her?

BOB
Oh yes, the girl with the permanent scowl.

DESIREE
You remember!

BOB
So what have you been doing the last twenty some odd years?

DESIREE
Not much.

BOB
I wouldn’t say supplying a village in Africa with fresh running water not much.
DESIREE
Uh… no I guess that’s… Who did that? Oprah?

BOB
Oprah? Still got your sense of humor.

DESIREE
Do I? So what have you been up to?

BOB
Well, I just got back from… you know…

DESIREE
Uh…

BOB
My face book page…

DESIREE
I don’t…

BOB
You forgot? Well, it’s ok. I forgive you. My white water rafting trip down the Sacramento River… ring a bell now? I took my daughter… the one who is… you know…

DESIREE
Do I?

BOB
Afraid of water!

DESIREE
Why would you do that?

BOB
You said it was a good idea! You were the one that encouraged me to take her. Remember the story of the bird? How in order for you to get over your fear of birds your mother put you in a room with birds.

DESIREE
What the fuck? I mean what?

BOB
The bird story! It touched me.
DESIREE
Bob, I got some news for you. You were not writing to me.

BOB
What?

DESIREE
You’ve been carrying on your whatever writings with my mother.

BOB
What? What kind of a trick-

DESIREE
She didn’t mean to trick you…

BOB
She was pretending to be you? I’m confused-

Yes.

BOB
And everything I wrote to you… was really to her?

Yes.

BOB
But… I started to have feelings…

For her?

DESIREE
You. You had… She had feelings… she said she… I nearly had cyber sex with your mother!

BOB
Jesus! I hadn’t realized how far she went.

DESIREE
Here, I thought you were…easy… and I would finally get lucky.

Sorry… I’m not… easy.
BOB
And you probably haven’t been in Africa the last ten years?

DESIREE
No…

BOB
Well… I feel sort of silly…

DESIREE
She was trying to hook me up… It’s not about you. She really thinks you’re a wonderful catch.

BOB
Really? She said that?

DESIREE
Yes.

BOB
Did she tell you about my divorce?

DESIREE
She mentioned something.

BOB
What did she say?

DESIREE
Oh, I don’t know… Your wife left you…

BOB
Yea…

DESIREE
Sorry…

BOB
What do you do?

DESIREE
Now nothing… I was an accountant but I went broke. How’s that for irony? Oh well, I hated that stupid job.

BOB
No, I mean, what do you do if your wife runs off?
Oh, uh… move on?

DESIREE

Yea…

BOB

Hard, right?

DESIREE

She didn’t want to be intimate with me.

BOB

Uh… sorry…

DESIREE

But she does with this other guy… have intimacy that is.

BOB

Bob… I don’t really-

DESIREE

You would have known all this if you had been the one reading the E’s I sent. Instead your mother knows all about my tragedy…

BOB

Sorry.

DESIREE

(The front door opens. It is Mimi.)

MIMI

Knock, knock.

(Mimi quickly slips off her shoes but neglects her booties and then walks in.)

MIMI

(Continuing)

Oh, I didn’t know you had company.

DESIREE

Sure about that? You are the one that set up the date.

MIMI

Sssh!
Bob, this is your pen pal.

Nice to meet you.

Face to face you mean.

Huh?

He knows.

What?

I feel violated.

What?

I was falling in love with you… her… who I thought was her…

There is no her! She made her up!

Not everything was made up! You were falling in love?

You were a flirt… saying how handsome I was… how any woman would be lucky to have me…

Jeez, I was just trying to make you feel good…

I’m tender now. My wife left me.

I know, I know, you E’d me that like a thousand times…
(The front door opens and in walks Cece. She stops and stares.)

Ichobob?

CECE

Cece!

DESIREE

What?

BOB

It is you!

CECE

It’s Bob.

DESIREE

I was falling for you.

BOB

Well… I’m sorry-

MIMI

What’s going on?

CECE

Nothing.

DESIREE

My heart is broken once again… but that’s nothing… once again.

BOB

Bob-

DESIREE

Who broke your heart, Ich?

CECE

BOB

Only every woman in this stupid town, Sourpuss.

(He goes to the door and puts on his shoes. The ladies watch.)
MIMI
I feel just awful, Bob-

DESIREE
I didn’t do anything Bob. I had nothing to do with-

CECE
What's going on?

BOB
I’ll be fine. Maybe…

(He leaves.)

CECE
What was that about?

MIMI
I had no idea he was so… fragile…

DESIREE
People are…

CECE
He’s nuts!

DESIREE
He’s lonely…

MIMI
I think I just really messed stuff up.

CECE
So, what’s new? Why aren’t you wearing your booties? Jesus, my home is no longer my home! It’s like a freakin’ half way house!

DESIREE
I feel bad…

MIMI
Me too.

CECE
You two are nut jobs.
DESIREE
Why? Because we actually care about someone’s feelings?

CECE
You don’t even know him.

DESIREE
Don’t you have any compassion? How can your students stand you?

CECE
What’s that mean?

DESIREE
It means I bet you’re a bitch.

MIMI
Girls, don’t start-

CECE
Kids need firm guidance and boundaries so they don’t run amuck and become selfish adults.

DESIREE
Thank god we have you then saving the human race.

CECE
Shut the fuck up, Desiree! You don’t know anything about me and my job or my life!

(DEece is upset and storms away. Desiree follows with her voice.)

DESIREE
(Shouting)
Maybe if you’d open up once in a while I’d actually know something about you!

MIMI
Oh boy…

(Fade out.)

(Lights come up. It is evening. Skeez, in pj’s, walks to the kitchen.

Desiree enters wearing pj’s. She carries a book, letter, and her sleeping pills. She goes to the couch and turns on a light.)
Skeez enters from the kitchen carrying a bag of chips. He is startled by Desiree.

SKEEZ

Shit!

DESIREE

Sorry.

SKEEZ

We’re watching *Ghost*. You scared me…

DESIREE

She still pissed?

SKEEZ

Of course.

DESIREE

What’s going on at her work?

SKEEZ

She… got in trouble… with one of her students…

DESIREE

What’s that mean?

SKEEZ

I don’t know… there is like some investigation…

DESIREE

Why didn’t she say anything?

SKEEZ

She doesn’t share. Don’t tell her I told you.

DESIREE

How else would I have found out?

SKEEZ

Right… Well, don’t say anything.

DESIREE

Why? I’m tired of not saying things and walking around on eggshells-
CECE
(Off stage)
Hurry up, Skeeze! I don’t want to be up all night watching this stupid movie.

SKEEZ
Coming! Do me a favor, do it when I’m not here.

DESIREE
Good luck.

SKEEZ
Thanks.

(He heads off to bed. Desiree looks at the Sherlock Holmes book. She looks at the closed letter she is holding. She then decides to take a sleeping pill. She takes one then considers and takes a couple more. Just to see what will happen. Lights slowly fade as she lays back opening up the book.)

(In the darkness the front door opens.)

BOB
That was rather easy. Have you a match, Watson?

SKEEZ
But of course.

(Skeez strikes a large match.)

BOB
Where are the lamps?

(Skeez flips a switch and the lights come up. They are now dressed as Sherlock Holmes and Watson.)

BOB
(Continuing)
How did you do that? Incredible. We are strangers in a strange world.

(Bob plays with the light switch turning it on and off.)

SKEEZ
What is this strange contraption?

(Skeez is at the TV.)
BOB
Hmmm… it looks to be some sort of black box of oblivion…

(Bob fumbles around and hits the on button. The TV pops on. It is on VHI and Journey is singing, Wheel in the Sky.)

SKEEZ
What in heaven is that?

BOB
From first glance they appear to be of human descent… Who are you little men?

(Journey continues with their song.)

SKEEZ
How vulgar! They insist upon hollering and not answering. Here, here, do you know who you are talking to?

BOB
Rather not talking to-

SKEEZ
Such hideous sounds they make!

BOB
They seem to be little men from a foreign planet.

SKEEZ
Impossible!

BOB
Perhaps when a man has special knowledge like my own, it rather encourages him to seek a complex explanation when a simpler one is at hand.

(Bob turns and sees Desiree knocked out on the couch.)

BOB
(Continuing)
Ah, ha. Here is the intended victim.

(Skeez goes to her and checks her vitals.)
SKEEZ
She appears to not have a heart beat.

BOB
One can not live without the beating of the heart. When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.

SKEEZ
You’re amazing.

BOB
My name is Sherlock Holmes and it is my business to know what other people don’t know.

SKEEZ
How? How did this happen?

BOB
Something smells fishy…

(He sniffs around. His nose leads him to the trash.)

BOB
(Continuing)
Cod it be?

(He pulls out an old fish bone from the trash.)

SKEEZ
That’s a halibut way to go.

BOB
Fish and relatives stink after three days.

SKEEZ
A large conclusion from a small observation.

(He pulls out an old fish bone from the trash.)

BOB
(Continuing)

My Dearest Desiree,
I can no longer live with the guilt of killing that poor child and the pain and suffering I have caused the family. I know it was a car accident and things happen, but for me I believe if I had just done something different it wouldn’t have happened. I can’t stop
BOB  
(Continuing/Reading)  
believing I am a terrible person and I have destroyed our lives. I can’t put you through more years of torture with me. I need to set you free. I need to set me free. My brain needs a rest. We were in love and had many wonderful years together but I don’t believe we could ever return to that happiness. How could I go on and be happy when I have caused so much pain? You have done nothing wrong and I will always love you. I want you to go on and live a full and happy life without me. Believe me this is what I have to do as penance.  
Eternally, your loving husband,  
Tony  

SKEEZ  
He sounds tortured.  

BOB  
Judging from his penmanship… See here, his P, for example, it’s all over the page. His letters are angry and careless. See this water mark? It is from a tear. This man was inconsolable. There was nothing anyone could have done.  

SKEEZ  
And her?  

BOB  
Elementary, my dear Watson! Her husband was full of desperation and killed himself and she has been left with a guilty heart.  

SKEEZ  
Journeys end in lovers meetings.  

(Bob comforts Desiree.)  

BOB  
You are free dear lady. You are free.  

(Lights fade out. Journey song fades.)  

(As the lights come up Desiree is still knocked out on the couch. Cece enters the room in her pajamas. When she sees Desiree on the couch she flips out.)  

CECE  
Desiree! What the fuck! Did you sleep there?  

(Desiree doesn’t stir.)
CECE
(Continuing)
You got to move out! I can’t take this! My fucking couch…

(Cece has wandered off into the kitchen. Desiree doesn’t wake. Cece reenters the room and looks at Desiree still asleep.)

CECE
(Continuing)
Did you hear me?

(Nothing. Cece goes to her and shakes her. Desiree finally stirs awake.)

DESIREE
What?

(Cece spots the bottle of sleeping pills. She picks it up.)

CECE
How many of these did you take?

DESIREE
What?

CECE
You spent the night on my couch!

DESIREE
Oh?

CECE
It’s not a bed!

DESIREE
I had the weirdest dream.

CECE
Did you hear me?

DESIREE
I’m so groggy

CECE
No more of these.
(Cece takes the sleeping pills. Desiree sits up and looks around.)

What day is it?

Friday.

Are you working?

School is on Fridays.

Are you allowed to work?

What’s that mean?

I know… you’re in trouble.

Fucking Skeez.

I don’t want secrets. I want… want to talk?

If I wanted to talk I would have told you.

(She storms out. Desiree tries to stop her.)

How are we ever going to…

(Cece leaves.)

(Silence)
DESIREE
(Continuing)

Why do you hate me?

(Silence)

(Lights fade out on Desiree.)

(Lights up later that day. Mimi is scrubbing a stain on the couch.)

MIMI

Out, out you bad spots.

(Cece enters from the hallway.)

CECE

Do you ever listen to anything I say?

Lookie, its coming clean.

It will never be like it was.

No… but close…

I’m gonna get rid of it.

Why?

Uh, because it has, poop, blood, and drool on it.

It has life on it.

It has death on it.

Don’t say that.
CECE
Thanks for coming home Desiree and killing my couch.

MIMI
Maybe if you were nice to her.

CECE
I let her stay here! Destroy my couch-

MIMI
You’re more attached to things than people.

CECE
A couch doesn’t let you down.

MIMI
But it did.

CECE
How?

MIMI
It got dirty.

CECE
No, people made it dirty.

MIMI
With or without people present it would still get old, fall apart, and eventually-

CECE
What’s your point?

MIMI
The meaning to life doesn’t lie in your couch… but lies in what is lying on top of it.

(Desiree enters with a Starbuck’s coffee.)

DESIREE
Hi.

CECE
I hope you filled out an application while you were there.

DESIREE
As a matter of fact I did. I will soon be out of your hair.
MIMI
A shame… You can get rid of this couch when it doesn’t suit you and get a new one but you can’t get rid of your sister and get a new one. Unless you want to just be alone with your couch for the rest of your life.

CECE
Sounds good to me.

CECE
(Continuing/On phone)
Hello?... Yes… When?... Uh, huh… uh, huh…

DESIREE
Have you seen my book?

DESIREE
(Continuing)
What?

DESIREE
(Continuing)
Who was that?

DESIREE
(Continuing)
What is it?

DESIREE
(Continuing)
(Desiree goes to her.)
DESIREE
(Continuing)
Tell me!

CECE

No!

DESIREE
What are you afraid of? I won’t laugh… I want to help!

CECE
You can’t help!

DESIREE
Maybe I can.

CECE
Did you help Tony?

DESIREE
That’s so cruel.

(DEsiere starts to leave and Cece shouts at her.)

CECE
I got fired!

(DEsiere stops.)

DESIREE
What?

(CECE gets up and starts to walk to her room.)

DESIREE
(Continuing)
Cece, don’t go! Don’t leave. Stay here!

(CECE stops.)

I’m gonna be sick!

(She bends over and retches.)

(Black out.)
(Lights up. Next day. Desiree is scrubbing the couch, lost in thought, when Cece comes in looking like hell in her pj’s.)

DESIREE

I’ll… I’ll buy you a new one…

CECE

With what?

DESIREE

I’m gonna be a barista.

CECE

Looks like I am too.

DESIREE

Sit down.

CECE

Where?

DESIREE

On the floor. Where do you think, turkey butt?

(Desiree forces Cece on to the clean part of the couch. Then she tosses a throw blanket on her.)

DESIREE

Put this on you… its chilly in here.

(Cece is a bit confused but does it.)

CECE

You’re a regular Florence Nightingale.

DESIREE

I’m not. (Beat) You’re right… I didn’t help Tony.

CECE

I didn’t mean it. I was upset.

DESIREE

If I could do it over…
I’m sorry I said that… It was cruel.

Why do you hate me?

Shut up.

Why?

I don’t…

What is it then? Why don’t you like me?

I like you…

No. Is it… Do you… I mean… I guess maybe… some… little sisters… hold some kind of anger towards their older… bossier sisters?

Do they?

I heard of that… And when an older sister leaves… and the little one is left… alone… with…

A crazy mother?

A crazy mother… well… maybe that causes some sort of anger too?

You think?

Maybe too cause the sister moves far away and you don’t really get to grow up together or see her or anything anymore. And you just… protect yourself?
The walls come up.

DESIREE
From getting hurt… If you’re not close… you don’t care.

CECE
It’s safe.

DESIREE
Not getting hurt?

CECE
I thought I’d be a teacher forever.

DESIREE
Can you go to another school?

CECE
No… well… maybe later… one day… They didn’t take my credential, just my job… Said it was unclear what happened but I should move on… It was an accident… I didn’t mean to… He just wore out my patience and I grabbed the pencil too hard. I didn’t hurt him… Maybe I scared him… That’s pretty awful… Scaring a child. What’s wrong with me?

(She starts to cry. Desiree comforts her while she cries.)

DESIREE
It’s ok. It’s gonna be ok…

CECE
I was just raging mad at him… he wasn’t following directions…

DESIREE
He’s a kid.

CECE
I know… I just… I like everything…

DESIREE
Perfect.

CECE
Yeah.
DESIREE
You know, maybe a perfectionist shouldn’t be working with children… cause you’re destined to be driven nuts every day.

CECE
Maybe so…

DESIREE
Die while alive.

CECE
What?

DESIREE
This story… about a parrot that was dead… but then when his master opened the cage he became alive and flew out.

CECE
No weird shit, please?

DESIREE
Your cage is killing you.

SKEEZ
There’s my girls.

CECE
Watch out! You’re in my vomit spot!

SKEEZ
It’s ok, baby… I love your vomit.

DESIREE
What is it?

(Mimi can’t speak she just cries.)
What happened? Aunt Helen?

Thud. He died.

Oh no!

On the couch.

Oh no…

I need help… He’s too fat for me to carry to the car and Chuck’s gone for the day selling his Depression Glass at some fair and Helen is too sick…

(Cece starts to cry.)

Why are you crying?

It’s a bad fucking day…

It’s good news for you. Desiree can sleep on my couch.

She doesn’t want to sleep where a dog died.

I’m going to clean it-

She’s staying here.

(Silence.)

Poor Thud… I knew he’d go… but it’s still hard… I didn’t know I’d come to love the big ol’ boy. I thought he’d be here after Helen went… and could comfort me… but now…
DESIREE
How’s Aunt Helen?

MIMI
She’s sad… She says she’ll die soon…

CECE
Don’t say that!

MIMI
Ok…

(Mimi looks at Desiree confused by Cece’s behavior.)

DESIREE
Her cage door is opening.

MIMI
Huh?

CECE
Maybe we should have like… some sort of service for him?

MIMI
Don’t joke!

CECE
I’m not! Here… We could… let’s have a little funeral party here.

MIMI
People over here? Strangers in your house?

CECE
Well… some…

MIMI
He was loved…

CECE
I… I was always… mean to him… (She cries)

DESIREE
He forgives you…

CECE
Does he?
DESIREE
Yes.

MIMI
He had a big heart… a big everything…

CECE
I want a party for him.

MIMI
Fine… but first someone has to help me get him to the cremation place.

CECE
I will.

SKEEZ
I will.

DESIREE
Me too.

(Cece looks down and sees Mimi is still wearing her shoes in the house.)

CECE
Crazy, your shoes are on!

MIMI
Sorry… I was crying when I came in-

CECE
No shoes in the house!

SKEEZ
And her cage door just slammed shut.

CECE
I like a clean cage!

(They all stare at her for a second then Mimi starts to get up. Cece pulls her back down.)

CECE
(Continuing)

Sit down.
MIMI
No… I’ll go put on my booties…

CECE
It’s ok…

MIMI
No… I want to respect you…

CECE
It’s ok! Sit down!

MIMI
It’s your… cage-

CECE
I said leave ‘em on!

(Cece looks at Skeez.)

SKEEZ
Well… maybe… it’s opening back up… like a crack, baby.

(Fade to black as they all sit together on the couch planning
the party.)

MIMI
Let’s serve pizza for the party… cheap and easy-

CECE
That’s greasy and messy!

(Big sigh from others.)

CECE
(Continuing)
What? People don’t just change over night… it’s a process… it happens slowly… ok,
fine, serve pizza!

(Black out.)

The end

Laura Richardson
vobby@roadrunner.com
copyright 2010
The Life Coach School has the most amazing tools and cutting edge training to help you create incredible results in your life. All you have to do is follow the steps we give you. The process is simple to learn and will create massive changes in your life faster than anything you’ve ever tried before. Are you ready to go all in on yourself? Self Coaching Scholars. Scholars will help you change your life completely. No matter how great your life already is, we’ll give you the tools to make it even better. In this program, you’re the client. Life coaches can help you clarify your goals, identify the obstacles holding you back, and then come up with strategies for overcoming each obstacle. In creating these strategies, life coaches target your unique skills and gifts. By helping you to make the most of your strengths, life coaches provide the support you need to achieve long-lasting change. Who Should Consider Working With a Life Coach? Many people seek out life coaches for guidance in navigating a significant life change, such as taking on a new career. My The Complete Guide 2021 answers all your questions. I’ll even show you how to get free life coaching online with a professional and how to become a life coach. Let’s dive right into it: What is an Online Life Coach? What Does an Online Life Coach Do? What Life Coaching Doesn’t Do. Do I Need Life Coaching? How to Find the Right Coach. Are You Resonating With the Person? Qualification and Experience. The life coach definition is someone professionally trained to help you maximize your full potential and reach your desired results. They are like a supportive friend and a trusted adviser rolled into one. The ICF defines life coaching as partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential. To sum up, life coaching can range from relationship and health coaching to life skills and career coaching. A rapidly increasing number of people credit their new-found motivation and productivity to life coaching.