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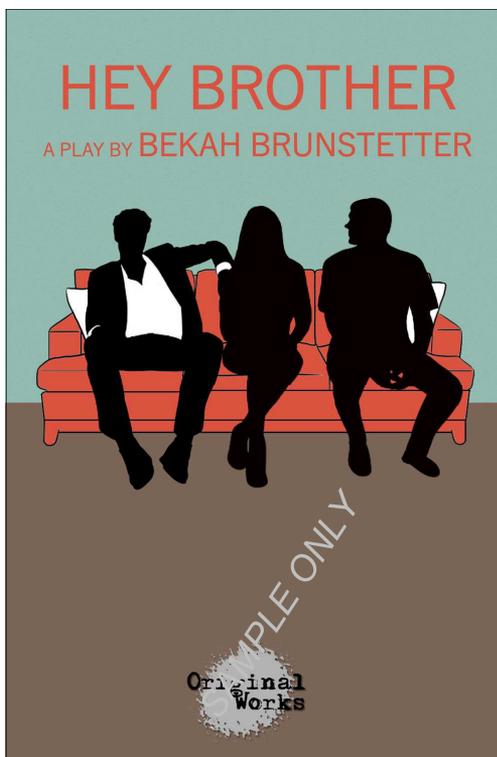
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Little Man

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*Also Available By
Bekah Brunstetter*



HEY BROTHER

Synopsis: As the saying goes, you can't pick your family. At odds brothers, hard drinking financial planner Ben and grad student Issac, are cohabitating in Ben's beachside North Carolina home and it isn't going well. Adding fuel to their fire is Kris, an Asian-American grad student, who sets her eyes on both of them, forcing a love triangle neither is prepared to handle.

Cast Size: 2 Males, 1 Female

Little Man

a play by Bekah Brunstetter

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LITTLE MAN was originally produced on October 17, 2014 by the Los Angeles New Court Theatre at the McCadden Theatre Center. The producer was Eddie Vona. It was directed by Kyle Hester.

The cast was as follows:

HOWIE	Eddie Vona
ANDY	Brandon Bales
WENDY	Jordan Mann
JED	David Silavin
STEFANIE	Marianna Caldwell
MELISSA	Jasie Adams

CHARACTERS

HOWIE, 28, short and successful

ANDY, 28, in a band, best friends with Howie, gay, a little overweight

JED, 29, a douchebag, married to Wendy

WENDY, 28, hot, a Mom

STEFANIE, 28, very tall, used to be quite large

MELISSA, 28, reunion planning committee

LITTLE MAN

(A hill top in Cafayate, Argentina. HOWIE, in cuffed pants, old shirt, slip on shoes, sits with his back to us, observing a beautiful sunset.

A pile of mail sits next to him.

He is toying with a diamond ring. It catches the sun. He gives it one last look, then tosses it impulsively into the distance.

He almost cries, almost laughs. Composes himself. Starts to sift through the pile of mail. Finds a blue and gold envelope. Opens it. Studies it.

Then: STEFANIE, in underwear, in her room, holding the same card / envelope. She reads it over and over.

She stands in front of her mirror, inspects herself.

STEFANIE tries on eleven dresses.

Then: WENDY, in her home. She looks tired but works hard to pretend that she's not. She TEARS into the envelope with glee. She inspects it, hands nearly shaking. She runs her fingers over raised glossed letters.

JED enters with spit-up cloth over his shoulder. WENDY hands it to him, overjoyed. He reads it, feigns excitement.

Then, they are Gone.

Only HOWIE remains.

HOWIE dials ANDY.

ANDY appears, in tight jeans, a flannel and a child's bday party hat. A guitar slung over his shoulder. He answers. Children scream in the background.)

ANDY: Andy Joseph's corporate office, how may I corporate you?

HOWIE: Andy! It's me!

ANDY: Andy can't come to the phone right now, he's really busy and famous but also really grounded, would you like to leave a message?

HOWIE: Awwwwww. Tell him it's his friend is calling from across the world *just* to tell him he's pretty.

ANDY: Where are you?

HOWIE: Argentina! On a ranch!

ANDY: I thought you were in Costa Rica or Guam or something? Where's Guam, is Guam a place?

HOWIE: I was in the Dominican Republic, now I'm here.

ANDY: *(with a bad accent, something like Spain:)* ARGENTINA!

HOWIE: You've gotta come visit.

It's so beautiful, man, the sun's going down right now and the world is vast and like everything's in perspective and simple and nothing else exists.

(Beat.)

Nothing else exists.

ANDY:Cool!

(A weird moment in which there is nothing to say.)

How's Rachel?

HOWIE: What?

ANDY: Is Rachel there?

HOWIE: No um - she's back in Seattle.

ANDY: Is this really happening right now, are you really calling me? Like with your voice?

HOWIE: What?

ANDY: No, I just mean it's been a while since we've --

HOWIE: Well phone calls're inefficient.

ANDY: And my voice gives you feelings.

HOWIE: We've emailed and stuff --

ANDY: My phone barely rings anymore. It makes me sad. Last week my Mom TEXTED ME that Milo died. She literally texted me RIP MILO CAT GONE TO HEAVEN PLEASE COME BURY LOVE MOM.

HOWIE: Milo DIED?

ANDY: Milo dead. RIP Milo.

HOWIE: What the fuck?

ANDY: The fuck is that Milo was like 27 years old and the dude passed on.

HOWIE: Geez. I'm sorry.

ANDY: I forgive you.

(A kid SCREAMS in rage or perhaps delight.)

HOWIE: Where're you?
Are those – children?

ANDY: No! I'm not playing a kids birthday party, not at all.

HOWIE: Are you sure? Cause it sounds like kids.

ANDY: It's my nephew, it's a family thing.
Hey did you know the wheels on the bus go round and round?

HOWIE: Naturally!

ANDY: Like all through the town.

HOWIE: How old is he now?

ANDY: He's turning five, Isn't that insane?

HOWIE: He was born like yesterday!

ANDY: I know he calls me Uncle Andy and I can actually like *feel* my lack of health insurance.

HOWIE: Meh. Who needs it?

ANDY: Apparently everyone.

(Beat.)

You still there?

HOWIE: Yeah I'm here!

ANDY: So what's up?

HOWIE: Just saying hi.

ANDY: Yeah?

HOWIE: Yeah!

ANDY:Hi!

HOWIE: Hi!

(Beat.)

Hey, did you get the invitation? To the reunion?

ANDY: Uh – yes – yes I did – and then I think I lit it on fire a lot.

HOWIE: You don't wanna go?

ANDY: Wait, you *want* to?

HOWIE: I mean – yeah, why not?

ANDY: Because it's going to be horrible? Also I don't see the point in revisiting trauma.

HOWIE: We weren't *traumatized*.

ANDY: Oh, okay.

HOWIE: (*laughing*) We weren't!

ANDY: Are you being serious right now?

HOWIE: How were we traumatized?

ANDY: You're fucking with me, right?

HOWIE: It was a weird time, but it's a weird time for everybody.

ANDY: Yeah – 'weird time' –

HOWIE: And either way, things're different now. *We* are different now.

ANDY: Are we?

(*Beat.*)

HOWIE: C'mon it'll be hilarious. And it's a good excuse to come home. I miss home.

HOWIE: You're all over the world and you want to come *here*?

HOWIE: We can get really high and go to Sears and try on pants -

ANDY: Why do you want to do these things?

HOWIE: Cause it'll be fun!

ANDY: For you. I can get high and go to Sears and try on pants whenever I want. I just chose not to.

(Beat.)

Wait that actually sounds like fun.

HOWIE: Right? And I want the food court. I want the food court to give me dysentery.

ANDY: Where's it at, where's the thing?

HOWIE: Back at school, there's a new gym or something—

ANDY: I'm absolutely not going there.

HOWIE: Pleeeeeaseeeee

ANDY: NO.

HOWIE: I'll buy you a doughnut.

(Beat.)

ANDY: Damn it.

HOWIE: C'mon, I don't wanna go alone.

ANDY: So don't go.

HOWIE: But I don't know, I want to.

ANDY: FINE. I'll go if you go. For like an hour. Tops.

And you're buying my ticket. AND we're getting drunk after.

HOWIE: Done and done.

Or maybe drunk before and also during.

ANDY: Yeah, all of the drunks.

HOWIE: Cool, so, I'll start looking at flights! Is there still an airport?

ANDY: Uh, yes, we have an airport, and it has a *Cinnabon*, so fuck you.

HOWIE: Wasn't the airport not getting enough traffic and was going to be a Target or a Bed Bath and Pottery Barn?

ANDY: It's still an airport.

Geez, it's been forever since you've been back.

(Beat.)

But I totally get why you've stayed away, I get that. I'm not trying to Crimes of the Heart you or anything.

HOWIE: I haven't stayed away.

(Beat.)

I haven't done that, I haven't 'stayed away.'

(Someone screams for ANDY.)

ANDY: I'M ON A PHONE CALL HERE.

HOWIE: Do you really think that I've / stayed –

ANDY: Sorry – gotta go. Send me your flight stuff.

(ANDY begrudgingly goes back to the party.)

HOWIE stands, wiping dirt from his pants.

*JED appears, towering a foot over him.
He just stands there, looking down at HOWIE.*

Lights.

Then:

In the dark, a woman's voice through a microphone. She is not used to speaking through one. She is nervous, unaccustomed to public speaking, and is taking this super seriously.)

VOICE: Hello? Hi! It's on. Wow, it's on. Okay.

Welcome, welcome! Welcome, Spartans! Class of 2004!

WOOOO!!!!!!!!!!

(Lackluster claps and cheers.)

That's right. Spartans ignite. I'm Melissa Strong, and on behalf of the Class of 2004 reunion planning committee, I would like to welcome you to your Reunion!

(Lackluster claps.)

So - welcome! I already said that, but welcome.

(Lights warm to include JED, STEFANIE, ANDY, WENDY and HOWIE, facing downstage, standing apart from each other, desperately clinging to drinks, listening to the announcer. They are all wearing humiliating name-tags with their high school senior portraits in the corner. HOWIE's rocking a blazer, nice jeans, and moccasins. He looks nice. For a Little Man.)

There is a large framed picture of a HANDSOME, ALL AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR stands center. He wears the tux of a high school senior portrait picture. This is KEN STRONG. He smiles.)

Okay so! First off I'd like to thank my co-planning committee: Missy Lefeavers, Jessica McClure, Julien Patton, and um, I'm forgetting somebody, um –

(WENDY dies. Smiles, self consciously.)

...Wendy Love! Thanks so much you guys.

(Weirdly, Wendy starts to clap for herself, because she thinks she's supposed to, but then she stops and beams awkwardly full of pride instead.)

When you see any of these ladies tonight, give 'em some love because these ladies have worked really hard to give you guys a great night. Okay so, important information to relay to you right now. The coat check's the girl's locker room, and the boy's locker room is actually the unisex bathroom. And most IMPORTANTLY: Drinks. Woooo drinks! You should have received your two drink tickets with your nametag and welcome package. After that it's a cash bar. We *wanted* to do an open bar all night but unfortunately, as we all know too well, times are currently tough, financially speaking, amiright? Who's got buckets of student loans? Who's got three maxed out Amex's?! Raise those hands! Raise em up! What *What!*

(All hands are raised with sheepish grins, except HOWIE.)

Okay so also – yeah so the bar is towards the back, I think you've all already found it, so it's in the back. I

said that. And the food is right next to the bar, catered by – (*shuffling*) by TJ’s Deli! We all remember TJ’s sandwiches and yummy chicken tenders and bangin’ banana pudding from high school, and now here they are again, for us to enjoy! Great. Okay so, that’s the food.

And so – okay so, activities! Wooo! Don’t forget to sign the guestbook. And we’ll be playing a slide show with tons of pictures of us during our golden years – I gotta say, I saw some pretty interesting outfits and haircuts when I was putting it together! Emily Perkins, I’m looking at YOU girl! Ha! So! And then we’ve got Karaoke set up by the door to the pool, and we’ll be playing some really fun getting to know you games. And getting our DRANK on! So. And don’t neglect the dance floor! I know some of you got some slick moves up your sleeves, even those Mom’s and Dad’s that never get out of the house! So.

(More shuffling, and a pause.)

Now before we uh – get this party started - we’d like to take a quick moment, I’d personally just – I wanted to have a moment of silence for our friend Ken Strong.
It’s um –

(MELISSA takes a breath. Tries not to cry.)

Sorry. I told myself I wouldn’t cry. It’s okay. I’m okay.
Sorry.

(Beat.)

I can’t believe it but it’s been 7 years since he – passed away and I – I know he would’ve wanted to be here.

He probably woulda been up here WITH me totally dominating this speech right now and doing way better. And I know he's watching us right now. So I just – I thought we could take a moment and remember him. Okay, so.

(A moment of remembrance that lasts a hair too long. Inside of this moment, everyone peeks at each other.)

Okay so, thank you. There were other – oh sh -- we've lost a few other people too I – was supposed to say before – that silence was for them too. Now if you'll all join me in singing the school song, that'd be awesome.

(MUSIC starts. Nobody really knows the words.)

*Come ye Spartans! Sing together,
Heart to heart and hand in hand.
Love and laughter long shall linger,
Echoing down these halls again.
Though the years may come between us,
Still our Spartan Spirit shines.
In our hearts you'll live forever Blue and Gold,
Mount Tabor High.*

MELISSA: Okay great. So now, um. Time to mingle!

(Everyone disperses. HOWIE and ANDY remain, standing by KEN's portrait. They survey the crowd, uncomfortable.)

ANDY: Bitch.

HOWIE: Who?

ANDY: Girl on the microphone. Melissa Sawyer. Ken's girlfriend. Was such a bitch.

HOWIE: Really?

ANDY: She told the lacrosse team that we had ovaries and that's why we spent all our time together.

HOWIE: I don't really remember her.
Did she used to have longer hair?

(Someone passes by. HOWIE raises a glass.)

HOWIE: Hey - how's it goin -

ANDY: Whaddup!

(The person passes by. ANDY, mortified.)

Ahhhhhhhh AWKWARD! This is so AWKWARD! I have no idea what to do with my limbs!

HOWIE: Just relax!

(ANDY stands weirdly trying to look natural but just looks weird.)

ANDY: Why're we *here*?

HOWIE: Because these are things that you do. This is a life thing that one does.

ANDY: But nobody *makes* you do stuff like this. It's not mandatory.

(Beat.)

There's like nobody here. Everybody and nobody and we're the chodes who showed up.

(Beat.)

I was reading because of fuckbook nobody comes to these anymore.

HOWIE: All the more reason to be here.
I'm having fun.

ANDY: No you're not. You're insane.

HOWIE: I guess I'm nostalgic. I like old things.

ANDY: Oh, he likes old things. Then let's go to Goodwill and see how many copies of *Kindergarden Cop* we can find on VHS. C'mon.

HOWIE: We're staying.

(HOWIE drinks.)

No one would even notice if we weren't here.
No one's talking to us.
I bet no one recognizes me.
I look really different.

(Beat.)

Do I look different?
I look different right?
Oh God please tell me I look different.

HOWIE: You look different.

ANDY: Great! Let's go!

HOWIE: We've gotta stay for at least a little bit.

ANDY: Why?

HOWIE: Because we're here? Because we / flew down here and drove here and now we're here?

ANDY: YOU flew down.

I have nothing to say to these people.

We don't know these people, who are they?

(pointing) Who is that? That person did NOT go to school here.

HOWIE: Yeah they did, she was uh – in uh --

ANDY: Nobody's talking to us.

HOWIE: Well then let's talk to *them!*

(But they don't move. ANDY exhales. Drinks.)

ANDY: *(of unrecognizable girl)* Oh wait she did go here? I think had sex with her.

HOWIE: No you didn't.

ANDY: Yes I did! On my drum set. Tenth grade.

HOWIE: How do you have sex on a drumset?

ANDY: It was like on and around and involving the drum set.

(Beat.)

I think it was having sex with *her* that made me realize
I was definitely into dudes.
I should thank her.

HOWIE: I'm sure you'd make her night!

ANDY: I'm not really gonna do that.
I'm an asshole but only in my mind, not in real life.

HOWIE: I know.

ANDY: To being assholes but only in our minds.

(They cheers.)

I'm glad it's just you and me though. I feel more safe.
Safer-er.

HOWIE: Yeah. Me too.

ANDY: I mean it woulda been cool if Rachel was here
but I don't mind that she couldn't make it, I'm glad it's
just you and me.

HOWIE: Me too.

*(HOWIE nods and checks his phone.
Beat. ANDY drinks.
HOWIE nods, ANDY drinks.
ANDY is uncomfortable, getting pissed.)*

I am a musician, I am a professional musician.
What the fuck is this, high school?!

HOWIE: Yep!

ANDY: Why do I suddenly feel like I'm not wearing pants?

HOWIE: You're wearing pants.

ANDY: Sometimes I think I *feel* the nudity of Adam and Eve.

I don't even know if I believe that the Garden of Eden is a thing that actually happened and not just a brand of veggie burgers but sometimes just for a second I think I can feel their nudity. You know?

HOWIE: (*no*) Yeah!

ANDY: Great Conversation starter!

Going to pocket that – for later.

(*Beat.*)

Everything's exactly the same.

Everybody's like standing in the same groups.

HOWIE: There's the new gym. The gym is new.

It's not – it's not *exactly* the same.

Everybody's changed in some way.

(*ANDY regards the picture of KEN.*)

ANDY: Also are we in agreeance that this is weird? This giant Ken face?

HOWIE: It's a memorial.

(*HOWIE drinks.*)

ANDY: You can see it on the tree still too. The dent.

It's right off Hathaway.

HOWIE: I haven't seen it.

(Beat.)

ANDY: Is it weird for you?

HOWIE: What?

ANDY: That Ken's dead.

HOWIE: It's not weird, it's sad.

ANDY: How so?

HOWIE: Because it's sad? When a person dies?

ANDY: Yeah but you're probably not THAT sad.

HOWIE: Of course I'm sad.

(Beat.)

It was a long time ago.

(Beat.)

How's your mom?

ANDY: Good!

(Beat.)

She's ah. She's fine.

(Beat.)

I've been feeling kinda bad. For moving away.

HOWIE: Just a half an hour away.

ANDY: (*weirdly defensive*) Yeah, but I moved --

MELISSA (O.S.): 2 minutes til the game starts!!!!!!!

ANDY: OH MY GOD JED JENNINGS.

HOWIE: Who? What?

ANDY: Over. There.

Stop looking!

Look with like your eyes but not with your whole self!

HOWIE: Okay – yeah – Jed –

ANDY: Delicious asshole of my weird wet dreams. What the fuck is he doing here, he was a year older than us!

HOWIE: I don't know.

ANDY: Oh right, he married Wendy Love. Right there. Remember her? Also a bitch.

They have a baby, there's something wrong with her, I can't remember –

HOWIE: How do you know this?

ANDY: *Facebook* man. You gotta get on it.

HOWIE: Yeah, no thanks.

(*HOWIE checks his phone again.*)

ANDY: What is that, why do you keep checking your phone?

HOWIE: I'm not.

(Beat.)

ANDY: Is it Rachel, or --?

HOWIE: No.

(Beat.)

I put on offer on that ranch I was on. In Argentina.

ANDY: Whoa –

HOWIE: Just checking to see if I got it.

ANDY: So you bought a ranch.

HOWIE: *(weirdly proud)* Yeah, that's the plan.

ANDY: So what, you're gonna like live there?

HOWIE: That is also the plan.

ANDY: How many plane tickets are you buying me to come visit?

HOWIE: All of the plane tickets.

ANDY: So how's it going to work, can you work from there?

HOWIE: Yeah, maybe.

ANDY: 'maybe?'

HOWIE: I uh, sold the company actually.

ANDY: Really?

HOWIE: Yeah.

(A small smile grows across his face that HOWIE can't control.)

ANDY: ...What? What's the smile?

HOWIE: Nothing.

(Beat.)

Sold it for five.

ANDY: Thousand?

HOWIE: Million.

ANDY: WHAT?

HOWIE: Shhhhh!

(WENDY approaches. She's hot, wears a black dress and carries her second glass of wine, and a plate of chicken tenders with BBQ sauce.)

WENDY: Howie?!

HOWIE: Hi - ?

WENDY: Oh my God HOWIE!!!!!! How're you???

(She hugs him, almost knocking his drink out of his hand.)

You look so cute, look at you!
Your nametag's wrong! It says Max!

HOWIE: No I've been going by my / middle name actually

WENDY: I totally remember you! (*Pointing to her nametag*) Wendy!

HOWIE: Wendy!

ANDY: (*so uncomfortable*) Heyyyyyyyyyyyyy Wendy....

WENDY: Hi, how're you?
(*to HOWIE*) We had um, we had biology together sophomore year?

HOWIE: Wow, great memory!

ANDY: (*to Wendy*) We had freshman lit and one time I gave you a ride home and we went to Wendy's because your name is Wendy and also for the fries.

WENDY: (*I don't remember*) Right!

HOWIE: What's up, how are you?

WENDY: I was on the planning committee –

HOWIE: Oh yeah, I heard that! Thanks / for –

WENDY: Babies, I have a baby –

ANDY: *Nice!* What kind?

WENDY: What?

ANDY: Oh I mean boy or girl?

WENDY: Oh I have an amazing little girl, Sophia. With a ph.

HOWIE: Congrats!

WENDY: This is my first night out in *forever*, I said to her, *Mommy's night out!* This kind of shitty glass of wine is *heaven* right now.

ANDY: Cheers!

(They cheers.)

WENDY: Isn't this so crazy?

We walked in and I was like Jed. Jed! Do you remember everybody?! All of the wine coolers we drank with these people? Some of these people? I mean not everybody, I didn't hang out with like EVERYBODY.

Oh and I'm married, I married Jed –He's over – *(pointing)* there –

HOWIE: Totally! I remember Jed, that's great!

WENDY: Yeah so, we're married!

ANDY: That's so great for you guys. When did you / guys

WENDY: Five years, right after college!

ANDY: Perfect!

WENDY: What about you guys?

HOWIE: Oh! I uh –

(A LOUD ANNOUNCEMENT over microphone.)

VOICE: Hey guys it's me again! Okay so now we're gonna do a little fun getting to know you game thing and it's called (*shuffling*) Getting to Know You.

HOWIE: Ha –

(WENDY doesn't laugh.)

VOICE: Wait no that's the other – wooo! Chardonnay you guys, try the Chardonnay!

(WENDY raises her glass.)

WENDY: WE LOVE YOU MELISSA!!! WOOO!!!!

VOICE: This one is called: Two Truths and One Lie.

WENDY: I thought of this game, this game was my idea–

VOICE: Okay so everybody you'll see a little color dot on the corner of your nametag. You have TWENTY SECONDS okay to find your group with the same color dot, and then find a corner, when I say go. And then once you're with your group you're going to go around the circle and everybody has to say two truths and one lie, and everybody gets to figure out what the lie is! Okay so – okay – GO!

(WENDY shrieks, looks at her nametag, starts to spin around in circles a little bit. Mad scrambling. HOWIE looks at his nametag, sees a purple dot. Sees a purple dot on WENDY's as well.)

WENDY: Well, here we are!

ANDY: *(of all the scrambling)* What is happening?

HOWIE: It's a game –

ANDY: Am I supposed to be running?

WENDY: What color dot do you have?!

ANDY: I have a dot?

WENDY: *(looking at his nametag)* You have a gold dot –
okay go find people with gold dots.

ANDY: I think I'll just stay here.

WENDY: But you're supposed to –

(STEFANIE, very tall but not large, approaches timidly.)

STEFANIE: Hi purple dots –

WENDY: *(chanting)* Purple DOTS! Purple DOTS!

STEFANIE: Hey... Howie!

HOWIE: Stefanie?

STEFANIE: *(blushing)* Yeah! That's me!

HOWIE: I barely recognized you, wow –

STEFANIE: Ha, thanks.....

(They hug.)

STEFANIE: I thought it'd be like funny to like show up in a fake beard but totally pretend like I'm not wearing a fake beard, like it wasn't even on my face. But fortunately I slept on it.

HOWIE: The fake beard?

STEFANIE: The thought of the fake beard. I decided on this dress instead.

HOWIE: You look great. Great to see you! I'm going to stop saying Great.

STEFANIE: You too! You look great too.

ANDY: Andy.

STEFANIE: I remember, yeah. Hey!

(She hugs him.)

Hey Wendy –

WENDY: *(reading nametag)* Stefanie!
Wow you look / so

STEFANIE: Yeah, yeah –

(Beat. The two can't figure out whether to hug or not.)

We were in Drama club together.

WENDY: I was in drama club?

STEFANIE: For a minute.
Howie, wow, it's so good / to

(JED approaches with a High Life. ANDY goes stiff.)

ANDY: YO.

JED: What's up?

ANDY: Andrew.

WENDY: We can't be in the same group!! I messed up the tags, we're married!
(To everyone else) I see him all the time anyways, he knows everything, we're married --

(JED spots HOWIE.)

JED: *(ignoring WENDY)* LITTLE MAN!!!!!!!!!!

(HOWIE goes stiff at this name.)

JED: How are you buddy?!

HOWIE: I'm awesome man, how are you?

JED: LITTLE MAN!!!!

(JED re-enacts something really horrible and traumatic, place his elbow on HOWIE's head like an arm rest.)

LITTLE MAN!!! Remember?

HOWIE: Yeah! That was great!

JED: We used to, me and Ken! We used to call you that!

ANDY: And it was hilarious!

HOWIE: Yeah, I remember!

(JED goes to the portrait of Ken.)

JED: Buddy – you wouldn't believe who's here, LITTLE MAN!

(He raises his beer to KEN, drinks.

WENDY laughs nervously, eats a chicken finger.)

VOICE: Okay so it looks like everyone's found their groups! Okay great. Good work. Okay so, now let's start with our truths and our lies! The object of the game is reveal information about your personal life, and introduce yourself to your old but also new friends. Okay so – Go!

(ANDY, HOWIE, STEFANIE, WENDY and JED stare blankly at each other.)

WENDY: I'll go I'll go! *(She thinks.)* Okay so –I guess my first thing is that my little girl Sophia is my whole world..... Okay that's one. Two, um – I'm a part-time auditor for Novant Health but I'd rather just be home with Sophia all the time.

JED: Wouldn't we all! Who wouldn't love that, to not go to work?

HOWIE: I have a / home office

WENDY: And three! Three! *(She thinks. Holds up her nearly gone glass of wine. Then, in a robot voice)* I. DO. NOT. LIKE. WHITE. WINE.

(She laughs.)

LIES!

JED: Honey, they were supposed to guess.

WENDY: Well I'm really bad at lying. So.

JED: That's not the game.

WENDY: I *KNOW*.

(Beat.)

HOWIE: What about you Jed?

JED: Uh, not much to know, I'm a salesman over at the Ford dealership –

ANDY: I thought you had that football scholarship, I recall a small parade?

JED: I got injured.

ANDY: Aww, tragedy. --

JED: And then I had a business, I had a small business too, we were uh – we were selling sports bras with pockets, bra-ckets, but it didn't – (he trails off.) Tough time now to get a product of the ground.

ANDY: Tough luck, man.

JED: Let's see I uh – HUGE Giants fan – and uh --

WENDY: You love beer!

JED: Yep –

WENDY: You work too much!

JED: Ha! You're funny –

WENDY: You love your wife! You love Sophia!

(Uncomfortable silence.)

HOWIE: You hate the Giants, I gather?

(JED nods.)

HOWIE: Yeah! So! Andy I think you're next?

ANDY: Yes! Right. Tough act to follow. Two truths. One lie. I head a classic bluegrass band *Hang Low House*, www.hanglowhouse.com, we've got shows this winter in Boston, Chicago, New York, pretty much up and down the east coast, you can check out our tour dates online.

JED: You work at Starbucks, right?

ANDY: YEAH! Thank you. I almost forgot. Yes. I work at Starbucks. Yes I do.

HOWIE: He was gonna go to grad school in Chicago but he had to hang back and take care of his Mom, actually—

ANDY: *(self conscious)* Yeah, I did, so but that's just another -

Okay so that was one thing.

And let's see – I've recently been asked by *Disney* to submit some original music for an upcoming animated feature about Appalachia - In tenth grade Jed slammed me against a locker and called me a faggot, and I love mayonnaise.

WENDY: That was four things –

ANDY: Oops sorry, then I'll omit the thing I said about 'Jed and 'faggot.' Hate mayonnaise. It's like mayonnaise: why? Why spread savory cool whip all over a perfectly good sandwich?

(Beat. All laugh awkwardly.)

JED: I was probably just kidding around.

ANDY: It's cool no bigs it's, it's all good now it's whatever.
Howie's turn!

HOWIE: Nah –

WENDY: *(chanting)* How-ee! How-ee!

JED: LITTLE MAN!!!!

HOWIE: Okay – I'll go – so – three things. Let's see, uh – three things. I – my favorite country to visit is Argentina, for the waterfalls. *(Murmurs of "wow" and "nice")* and um I live in Seattle now and *(Murmurs of "wow, wow that's far")* and uh, I'm really happy to be here. *(Beat.)* So.

STEFANIE: So you're not happy to be here?

HOWIE: What?

WENDY: You don't live in Seattle?

HOWIE: Oh – those're all true – I forgot the game, I forgot what we were doing –

STEFANIE: I'm in Seattle too!

HOWIE: No way! / That's

STEFANIE: Yeah just for like a year now.

JED: I couldn't handle that mess, all that rain.

WENDY: Awwwwww rain I hate rain –

HOWIE: That's just something we let everyone else believe so we can keep the city to ourselves. It's actually / pretty

JED: I could never live there.

(Beat.)

HOWIE: And you guy's're still here? I mean – you live --

JED: Yeah! We're here. Still.

ANDY: My buddy here is being modest. He's a millionaire.

(HOWIE is instantly embarrassed.)

HOWIE: Andy –

ANDY: What, isn't this what we're doing here?

HOWIE No –

ANDY: *(to group)* Just sold his company for ten million bucks.

STEFANIE: Seriously? That's --

HOWIE: (*so embarrassed*) Five. Yeah...pretty much,
um—

JED: How're you a millionaire?

HOWIE: I own a small business? I started an / online -

JED: Are you not sure?

HOWIE: What?

JED: You said it like a question.

HOWIE: Oh, um. 'I own a small business.'

JED: So what kind of 'business' is it?

HOWIE: It's shoes actually—

JED: Shoes.

ANDY: It's so brilliant. Every time a person buys a pair
of these shoes, a pair of them goes to a kid with no
shoes in a third world country.

HOWIE: Yeah! So – that's what I do!

STEFANIE: I have a pair! That's you?

JED: How'd you get into that line of work?

HOWIE: Yeah I uh, after college I did some travelling
with the Peace Corps, went to Argentina –

WENDY: For the waterfalls!!!

HOWIE: Yes! And I wanted to get a full feel of the country, so I visited some of the poorer communities and – most of the kids didn't have shoes.

WENDY: Oh My God. No *shoes*?!

HOWIE: I know.

ANDY: He is being modest STILL. He single handedly built this company from the ground UP, he's got like tons of awards for charitable business acts but like with more important names, he like INVENTED shoes-

HOWIE: I didn't invent shoes.
Yeah so – that's going really well!

JED: What kind of shoes are they?

(*HOWIE sticks out his foot.*)

WENDY: *Cutteeeee!!!!*

JED: Huh – not really my style / but --

WENDY: Do you make them for babies? Jed we should get Sophia a pair.

STEFANIE: I have a pair! I totally have a pair of those, they're my whatever shoes!

HOWIE: That's exactly what I wanted them to be!

(*HOWIE laughs awkwardly as ANDY drinks. A weird moment.*)

STEFANIE: Okay so I'll go. Hiiiiiiiiiii....I'm Stefanie....
I think I was 'Stef' in high school. I, um.

I manage a bakery in Seattle, it's called 'babycups,' we specialize in bite sized desserts –

HOWIE: Babycups! I *love* babycups!!

STEFANIE: No way, really?

HOWIE: Yeah, my ex girlf – I LOVE that place.

ANDY: Wait, ex?

HOWIE: Yeah, we uh ...yeah.

WENDY: Okay so now, lie.

(Beat.)

STEFANIE: I'm feeling really comfortable right now.

(Beat.)

WENDY: Cheers you guys!!!

(They cheers. They look around.)

ANDY: *(to Howie)* When did you / guys –

HOWIE: It's okay, we don't need to --

JED: Looks like – everybody's else is still playing, I guess uh -

WENDY: Favorite memory from high school!

ANDY: Is this another game?

WENDY: Yes! I just invented it. New game. Favorite memory. Off the top of your head. Howie, go!

(Everyone looks at HOWIE.)

HOWIE: I – Uh.

ANDY: Come on How.

WENDY: Example: Spartan pride parade float 2002 or 2003 Jed was it 2002 or 2003 with the paper mache football player with the arm that actually moved? We built it out of lawnmower parts! IT WAS SO AWESOME!

JED: I don't know.

WENDY: That's mine.

HOWIE: Uh.

(They all look at him blankly.)

I had a – really great parking spot. Under a tree. We got assigned parking spots, I remember that, and – it was really fair. There was no – they just drew names from a hat. And I got the best spot. It had nothing to do with who you were. You were just a name in a hat.

JED: Oh yeah, Ken was so mad you got that spot, that drove him crazy! Ah man.

ANDY: Yep, that's probably why he pissed in How's car / among other things!

HOWIE: It's Max now. It's no big deal -

WENDY: Did he really? He didn't – really -

HOWIE: It was really close to the main building, underneath this Dogwood tree, tons of shade, and when I'd come out of class, in the Spring, the whole car'd be covered with white flowers. It was like a wedding but on my car.

(Beat.)

I just really liked that. How fair it was.

(He drinks while everyone just looks at him.

MELISSA, over the intercom.)

VOICE: Alright you guys! I hate to tear you away from your new BFF's but I gotta! Let's change groups! Everybody – no wait on the count of three everybody go find a buddy, but it has to be a person you weren't friends with in high school okay? Yeah let's bust up on this segregation that's happening – I don't mean segregation like *race* I just mean like –Okay so find a person, make some eye contact, you remember the buddy system, okay so – GO! MINGLE!

(Again, a mad scrambling. WENDY squeals, points at someone, and runs off.

JED downs his beer.)

JED: Millionaire.

Way to go, Little Man.

(He goes.

STEFANIE, pained, goes as well.)

ANDY: Why didn't you tell me?

HOWIE: What?

ANDY: Uh, about Rachel?

HOWIE: It's not exactly my favorite thing to say.

ANDY: But you could've told me.

HOWIE: I know.

ANDY: What happened?

HOWIE: Just, ah. She wasn't happy. I'm fine. It's just.
It's fine.

(They just stand there.)

ANDY: You coulda called me.

HOWIE: I know.

ANDY: No, you don't know, because you never –

(Again, they just stand there.)

HOWIE: It's – it's fine, we just, it didn't – we didn't –
you know.

ANDY: No. I don't. When –

HOWIE: Like three months ago?
I didn't wanna make a big deal about it.

(They look out into the crowd.)

ANDY: Are you sure you're / okay

HOWIE: Yes.

ANDY: What did / she say

HOWIE: I don't know, I kind of don't want to talk /
about it right now?

ANDY: Okay sorry –

HOWIE: It's okay. It's fine.

(Beat.

*A long moment in which the music seems to get louder,
worse.)*

ANDY: She doesn't know what she's missing.

(HOWIE smiles, drinks.)

HOWIE: Yeah.

ANDY: *(pointing to HOWIE)* this guy.

HOWIE: Yeah, *this* guy.

*(They stand there together, disconnected.
ANDY points at someone we can't see.)*

HOWIE: What're you doing?

ANDY: I've just made eye contact.

HOWIE: With who?

(ANDY downs his drink.)

ANDY: That person. Over there. I'm goin in. I am JUST drunk enough to do this.

(He looks at Howie.)

ANDY: You *sure* you're okay?

HOWIE: I'm fine, could you just not –

ANDY: Fine. Sorry.

(Then, to someone we can't see:)

Hey buddy!

(ANDY goes. HOWIE stands by himself, dying inside. Gets out his phone to text, or receive. Has nothing. Sends nothing. Sits in a folding chair.

Slowly, STEFANIE re-approaches him.)

STEFANIE: Can I sit next to you for a minute? You look like a safe place. To sit.

HOWIE: Sure!

(They sit next to each other, looking out.)

STEFANIE: It's so satisfying. The ones who got fat.

HOWIE: To the fat ones!

(They cheers.)

STEFANIE: Nobody's playing the game right, nobody's really mingling.
We're like separated into groups.

HOWIE: How so?

STEFANIE: (*pointing*) People with babies and people with not babies.

HOWIE: Huh.

STEFANIE: (*pointing*) See over there are the people with babies being all *babies!!!*
And here we are.
Being barren.

HOWIE: I'm not barren. Impotent. The man version.

STEFANIE: Me neither, I'm fertile, very.

HOWIE: I want kids, I think.

STEFANIE: Like when?

HOWIE: I don't know, soon?

STEFANIE: Oh, but we just met.

HOWIE: Um, you were the tuba to my trombone, I think we're pretty much life partners.

(*STEFANIE smiles.*)

STEFANIE: Well I want to wait like just a little while.
For kids. I want to really want them.

HOWIE: Yeah let's wait. At least a few days.

STEFANIE: Til I'm ovulating.

HOWIE: I was / kidding

STEFANIE: No me too I was kidding too I was so kidding.

(Beat.)

STEFANIE: Sorry about your – ex – thing –

(HOWIE shrugs. Drinks. Drinks more.)

Is it a – pretty recent - ?

HOWIE: Hey, you win some you lose some, it's all, you know, it's just part of life, people come and go, in and out of your life, and yeah.

(Beat.)

STEFANIE: Favorite coffee in Seattle.

HOWIE: Was that a question?

STEFANIE: Yes! One two three GO / BEDLAM

HOWIE: BEDLAM.

STEFANIE: AHHHHHH BEDLAM!!!!

HOWIE: Americano with just like a / *touch* of soy

STEFANIE: TOUCH OF SOY and like the / TINIEST sprinkling of turbinado

HOWIE: Turbinado!

(Beat. They look at each other.)

STEFANIE: I want one. Right now. But I'll drink this vodka soda instead.

HOWIE: Cheers.

STEFANIE: Cheers.

(She drinks, a lot. Still nervous, but a bit more relaxed. Again, they look out into the crowd.)

HOWIE: Can I ask / you

STEFANIE: Yep!

HOWIE: How'd you lose all the weight?

STEFANIE: Oh.

HOWIE: Sorry –

STEFANIE: No, it's okay, I kinda like to talk about it. It's like the one thing I've ever really done.

HOWIE: Uh, you have a bakery –

STEFANIE: Right! I did that.

(Beat.)

I was just tired. Of being – it's crazy how much mental energy you can waste like – resenting who you are. Your body. And I wanted to make room in my other brain for things other than 'I am fat.' And then I realized I didn't need food. I got really into those very small wheels of cheese. I was like: all the food I used to eat? I don't need that food. I'll just eat this almond instead.