PEOPLE OF THE CLOTH

“Poor Man’s Napkin”

Act One

FADE IN:

INT. HALLWAY WALL - NIGHT

A wall filled posters of musicians and artists. Slow pan across the wall and

CUT TO:

INT. BACKSTAGE ROOM – CONTINOUS ACTION - NIGHT

There’s a hefty security guard sitting awkwardly at a makeshift desk in a makeshift chair. He wears an ill-fitting uniform with equally ill-fitting glasses. He’s scribbling on some paper. He’s focused. He sweats profusely. His name is GEORGE. Another man slouches in his make-shift seat in the corner. His feet are propped up on a make-shift shelf. He’s holding a cold beer to the side of his face. He looks young, about 18. He wears a scuffed up Pink Floyd t-shirt with a couple of drops of blood on it. He sits and quietly glares at the ground. His name is GREGORY DANIELS.

GEORGE

(to Gregory, labored breath, heavy cockney accent)

Ay, your information still the same?

GREGORY

(mutters with cockney accent)

I’m still here aren’t I?

GEORGE

You’ll be outta here soon enough. Besides I thought you were going cross the pond in the Fall to give the Yanks hell

(laughs)

GREGORY

How am I gonna get there with no funds? I haven’t got shit, and you know that!

GEORGE

I told you we were goin through a change of …. management. Things are changing Ace, you know that better than any lad. And I told you bout the new kid but you didn’t *listen*.

GREGORY

When you said kid I didn’t know you meant the elf. Maybe if you’d hire me when I was that size, I wouldn’t be here right now.

GEORGE

Don’t give me any of that shit Ace. I did hire you, I just put your talents elsewhere.

(mutters)

It’s not my fault the elf’s got a candy cane shoved up his arse.

GREGORY

(exasperated)

I gotta get back before dawn, Lily’s got school.

GEORGE

You’ll be back soon enough. Just as son as elf gets the rest of the merchandise.

(laughs and coughs)

GREGORY

I’ll cut you in like last time Georgie, let’s say 25 percent.

GEORGE

(visibly angry)

Of what?! Don’t go around shittn’ me boy, you only sold 3 shirts.

GREGORY

It’s not like I can sell anything when your new elf is taking the piss outta everyone tryna make a living. Besides, good business for me, means good business for you, and you know I’m good for it.

(A beat)

Door slams open. A leg is holding it open barely. A small guy in stature is struggling to drag multiple boxes in. Gregory and George sit there and watch. The guy’s name is MARTIN.

MARTIN (os)

(breathing heavily regular British accent)

And you’re not getting it back!! Damn delinquents.

(He pops his head back into view and looks over to Martin)

It would be nice…

(panting, while struggling through the door)

 if I

(panting and struggling continues)

could get some help Mr. Whirley.

Martin finally gets himself and the boxes through the door. He takes a beat to catch his breath and stretch. He glares at Gregory. Martin grabs a bottle of water from off of the shelf that Gregory had his feet propped up on, all the while glaring at him with squared shoulders. He awkwardly looks around for somewhere to sit and ends up sitting on some old newspaper.

GEORGE

(chuckling)

I thought I might have to send some of the bobbies to find you.

MARTIN

No thanks to their lot!!!

(pointing at Gregory)

GREGORY

(visibly annoyed)

I’m sorry officer, next time I’ll run faster, and don’t worry I’ll take the merchandise with me.

MARTIN

(abruptly stands up in anger)

Now you listen here you little vagrant

GREGORY

(Gregory calmly stands up looking down at Martin. The height difference is glaringly obvious.)

Little?

Fury splashes across Martin’s face. Gregory smiles calmly back. George slowly stands up due to his girth and walks over to the two.

GEORGE

Now look you two, I don’t wanna have to have to report both of you. Hell, it’s already enough paperwork for you lot, and Martin, I know how hard you’ve been working. It’d be a shame if I had to report you, when you’re so close to becoming a night shift manager.

MARTIN

(becomes flustered)

Well, it’s been hours. Where are the police? I thought you called them

Gregory sits back down with an annoyed expression. Martin marches over to George’s makeshift desk.

GEORGE

(starts off calmly but grows angrier and angrier)

Well I haven’t had a chance to because someone insisted that I report all of the criminals and vagrants. Then, as I’m on my last reports, one of my coworkers starts to berate someone placed in my care. Now, where in all this do I got time to phone the damn bobbies, Martin???!!!

MARTIN

(begins to stutter)

I – I… I

GEORGE

(Calms back down and places a hand on Martin’s shoulder.)

I know, I know. You’ve been working so hard and you’re tired.

MARTIN

Nnn-nn… no…. I.. I

GEORGE

(leading Martin to the door)

Look it’s been a long shift. Why don’t I let you off early and I’ll close up everything around here.

MARTIN

B-b-b …but I

GEORGE

(ushers Martin out of the door and closes it in his face.)

Good day, Martin.

(turns to Gregory)

Now you. I’m tired of looking at your ugly mug. Wait a few minutes for officer elf to leave and I’ll let you out. That’s enough *justice* for one day.

GREGORY

(releases a sigh of relief)

Yes!!! You’re a good lad George.

GEORGE

So I’ve been told. And here take your merchandise.

George kicks a medium size box filled with pink Pink Floyd t-shirts with a picture of their first album *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn.* Gregory hops up and firmly plants his hands on the box.

CUT TO:

FADE IN:

MUSIC: *ALL ALONG THE WATCHTOWER* BY JIMI HENDRIX AND THE EXPERIENCE FADES IN AND FADES OUT RIGHT BEFORE DIALOGUE STARTS.

EXT. EVERETT HIGH SCHOOL – DAY

Slow pan over the top of Everett High School as multiple kids and teens come off of buses and go to school on a sub-par sunny day.

CUT TO:

FADE IN:

INT. HALLWAY – EVERETT HIGH SCHOOL – MORNING - DAY

In the busy morning hallway of Everett High School an average and skinny dirty blonde teen named ZACHARY FITZ begrudgingly walks down the hallway 8 minutes before class starts. His head tucked low as he slowly walks in the middle of the hall to his chipped green locker. He goes to unlock his locker when an even smaller boy with thick dark curls around his head andwearing a white shirt that’s too big for him, tucked in to pants that are also too big for him all tied together with a belt around his waist, pounces into frame surprising ZACHARY. This boy’s name is EZEKIAL TILLER, best friend to ZACHARY and crazy Jewish kid to everyone else.

EZEKIEL

Zack Attack!!!

Zeke leaps onto Zac, hugs him, and holds on trying to drag him down to his level. Zac is obviously struggling under his weight.

EZEKIEL

Oh Zacky!! Buddy I’ve missed you so much!!! How are Leah and David!?!? Oh God how is Buddy and the family camping trip? Man I missed you over Summer Break.

ZACHARY

(Struggling to not fall down)

Jesus Zeke, we saw each other two days ago relax!!

EZEKIEL

(Dramatically)

And it already feels like a lifetime.

Zeke lets go of Zac. Zac regains his balance and stands up to finish unlocking his locker. Zeke leans against the locker.

EZEKIEL

So, how’s it feel? Being back to the ole’ grind? Kick’n the ole’ bucket. Dragging the ole’ ball n’ chain.

ZACHARY

Stop talking like that. I feel just as miserable as last year.

EZEKIEL

Well, I know just the thing that will cheer you right back up ole buddy, ole pal o’ mine.

ZACHARY

(Unenthusiastically)

Yeah, and what’s that?

EZEKIEL

(Nonchalantly)

One, by the name Madeline Foreman, broke-up with her

(Sarcastically)

“Knight in Shining Armor” Kurt Meyers last night at the town Bowling Alley.

Zachary grabs Ezekiel with great force, pinning him up against the lockers.

ZACHARY

You’re shitting me!! You better not be shittn’ me Zeke.

EZEKIEL

(very seriously)

I’m not shittin’ you Zac. In fact, I’m McCullen serious.

Zachary lets go of Ezekiel with a display of emotions crossing his face (disbelief, shock, joy, etc.)

EZEKIEL

So, you know how my cousin Leo works down at the Alley?

ZACHARY

Yeah

EZEKIEL

Well, he said Maddi and the Lollipop Guild got there to roll a few down the lane. All’s goin well and all of a sudden he hears arguing coming down from the far left lane. Kurt’s furious, Maddi’s crying –

ZACHARY

(worried)

She was crying?

EZEKIEL

Yeah, serious crying.

ZACHARY

(Even more worried)

Serious Crying!?!?

EZEKIEL

(Deadly serious)

McCullen serious.

ZACHARY

(In disbelief)

Shit

EZEKIEL

Shit’s right. Anyway, Kurt’s yelling and Maddi’s crying. Then Maddi runs out and calls for her dad to come pick her up.

ZACHARY

Oh Shit. Is she ok?

Ezekiel slaps Zac hard across the face.

EZEKIEL

You’re missing the point man!!!

ZACHARY

(hitting Zeke back)

Then what?! What’s the point?

EZEKIEL

Zac!!! Maddi’s single!!!

The look of slight annoyance on Zachary’s face is replaced with one of a sudden epiphany. Recognizing this look, Ezekiel gives a look of mischief and impish glee. Ezekiel grabs Zachary by his shoulders and ushers him down the hall nonchalantly.

EZEKIEL

I’m telling you, Sophomore year is going to be our year. It’s set on stone man -

ZACHARY

In stone

EZEKIEL

What?

ZACHARY

In stone. It’s set *in* stone.

EZEKIEL

Whatever man, it’s all the same thing.

ZACHARY

No, it’s definitely not, which is why I’m stuck in remedial studies looking like a jackass with you.

EZEKIEL

(Blowing it off)

Hey, nobody told you to slum it with the dumb kids. I appreciate the company and the extra help, but we both know you don’t need any extra help when it comes to your studies Zac.

ZACHARY

I definitely need to slum it with you, cuz without me all the information goes in one ear and out the other.

EZEKIEL

Ugghhh! I shouldn’t have to do this anyway. Haven’t my people been through enough. Give me a break.

ZACHARY

You can’t keep throwing the…

(whispers)

Holocaust

(Resumes normal voice)

 in people’s faces, it’s not gonna work all the time.

EZEKIEL

Ahhhhhh, but it works enough. I would say 75% of the time. When it stops working, I’ll stop using it. Anyway, you gentiles say it like it’s a dirty word, loosen up. Besides,

(gives Zac a knowing look)

*We* both know the reason you’re slumming it with us anyway.

ZACHARY

(dismissively)

I have no clue what you’re talking about.

EKEKIEL

Oh, you know exactly what I’m talking about.

ZACHARY

The fact that Madeline Foreman happens to be Everett High School’s inhouse tutor, has nothing to do with it.

EZEKIEL

You’re right. It has everything to do with it.

ZACHARY

(embarrassed and annoyed, walks faster ahead of Ezekiel)

Grow up!

EZEKIEL

(amused; yells after him)

You first!!!

CUT TO:

FADE TO:

INT. ECLECTIC ENGLISH CLASSROOM IN EVERETT HIGHSCHOOL COVERED IN POSTERS OF BOOK COVERS OF MULTIPLE CLASSIC NOVELS, PLAYS, AND POETS. MORNING – DAY

Ezekiel and Zachary are now seated in the back of the classroom, looking around nervously at the seats around them, and the people coming in and out. They sit side by side, huddled together, talking and looking over their shoulder. Their teacher, MR. O’TOOLE, is at the front with a thick stack of books sitting on his desk. He sits reading out of his daily planner with thick coke bottle glasses that periodically slide down his long nose slightly.

EZEKIEL

(nervously)

You think he’ll be in. He’s a Senior, Senior’s skip a lot. Please laziness, be on our side.

ZACHARY

(equally as nervous)

On the first day? I don’t think so.

EZEKIEL

Shit

ZACHARY

Don’t worry. We got Mr. O’Toole. With his glasses he’s gotta be able to see like a hawk. Nothing’s gonna happen to us.

They both look over at Mr. O’Toole who is squinting and adjusting his glasses in order to read his planner. Zachary and Ezekiel both groan in unison. As if on cue, varsity linebacker for Everett High School and best friend to KURT DANIELS, Maddi’s ex-boyfriend, FREDERICK “FREDDY” JACKSON walks in. He instantly lays his eyes on Zachary and Ezekiel. He makes a beeline towards them stands over Ezekiel with a devilish grin on his face.

FRED

Well, well, well, if it isn’t the fairy and the Jew. You know, I missed you over break Jew. I haven’t had anyone to practice my left hook on, and my right’s been missing your princess over there.

ZACHARY

Look, Freddy –

Fred shoots him a dirty look for using his nickname.

ZACHARY

I… I mean Fred. This is your Senior year, don’t you wanna start the year off new. And by new, I mean with new *freshman’s* to torture?

FRED

But you guys do just fine. I mean, you were so good at it last year, why would I quit on you this year?

EZEKIEL

(through nerve clenched teeth; sarcastically)

Well when you put it like that

FRED

(slaps Ezekiel hard on the back)

Exactly!

MADELINE FOREMAN, a former cheerleader for Everett High School and new Senior writer for their school newspaper as of an hour ago, walks in to class. She looks over to Fred Jackson towering over Ezekiel with a disdainful look. She’s a tall photogenic blonde with dark blue intelligent eyes and a slender figure. She gracefully walks over to the boys. As she does, she catches Zachary’s eyes and his face turns into one of awe.

MADELINE

How nice of you to welcome Zeke and Zac back to school, Fred.

FRED

(his entire demeanor changed to that of a pleasant one)

Oh of course!! I mean .. we’re such close friends me and .. these guys.

Zachary and Ezekiel are visibly uncomfortable.

FRED

(In a more hushed tone)

Well actually Maddi I’ve been meaning to speak to you. Kurt –

Madeline quickly averts her gaze and turns to go to another seat across the classroom crowded by other students.

MADELINE

Actually, I would like to get a good seat, you know class is about to start

Fred follows after Madeline.

EZEKIEL

(visibly shaken)

Thank God for her. She’s an angel.

ZACHARY

(still looking at her in a daze)

Yeah, thank God….

MR. O’TOOLE

(in the distance)

o.k. class ….

CUT TO:

FADE IN:

MUSIC: *FOR WHAT IT’S WORTH* BY BUFFALO SPRINGFIELD FADES IN AND THEN FADES OUT WHEN THE DIALOGUE STARTS.

INT. FESHMAN DORM ROOM 318 – NEW YORK CITY - COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY – NOON

Gregory sits on a bed in a cramped dorm room. There is another bed across from him with nothing on it. The room has posters of various rock musicians from the 1960’s. He is lazily reclined on a disheveled bed reading a textbook on accounting 101. Light streams on him from an open window. The atmosphere is generally peaceful except for the noise that comes in from the open window and outside the door. It’s from multiple freshman’s moving in to their dorms. All of a sudden HAROLD MARSHALL, VIVENNE MARSHALL, and JONAH MARSHALL enter creating an uproar. Harold is a middle-aged man with a beer gut and thick wide framed glasses. Vivienne is a heavy-set middle-aged woman carrying as little as possible. Jonah is a 19-year-old guy with short black hair. Jonah is carrying more than both Harold and Vivienne combined and visibly annoyed. They’re from the mid-west. They all have a hint of a southern accent.

HAROLD

(sweaty and carrying a lot of bags)

Is this your room?

JONAH

I got the key dad, who else is it going to be?

HAROLD

Don’t get smart now that you’re a

(sarcastically)

college boy

JONAH

(exasperated)

I wasn’t dad.

HAROLD

Well let’s keep it like that, college boy

VIVIENNE

It’s not very big is it?

HAROLD

No kidding. What is this a hallway?

VIVIENNE

Yeah, and I swear I saw a roach and two mice on our way up.

HAROLD

Where are you gonna put all of your stuff, I mean we can barely fit as it is.

VIVIENNE

This might as well be a closet.

JONAH

(drops his bags and turns around)

It’s college.

(notices Gregory sitting up in his bed awkwardly)

Hi! Sorry about the mess and…

(looks at parents)

Everything.

(ruffles through pockets and pulls out a piece of paper; looks at it and squints eyes)

Gregory?

GREGORY

(gets up and goes to shake hand)

That’s me, and you must be Jonah.

JONAH

(awkwardly laughs and shakes his hand)

Yeah, that’s me.

VIVIENNE

(pushes past Harold to enthusiastically get to Gregory)

Oh, it is so wonderful to meet you, I’m Vivienne and this is Harold.

HAROLD

(unenthusiastically)

Hi.

(continues setting bags down)

VIVIENNE

(endearingly)

This is our son Jonah

JONAH

(looking on with worry)

I think he knows that mom.

VIVIENNE

Honey don’t interrupt that’s rude.

JONAH

I wasn’t –

VIVIENNE

(her attention is now on Jonah)

Don’t forget all your manners now that you’re off at college in such a big city

JONAH

(embarrassed)

I won’t mom –

VIVIENNE

(now her attention is back on Gregory)

And you, oh my God! You’re so skinny!

JONAH

(embarrassed even more so)

Mom!!!

VIVIENNE

Well it’s true. Don’t worry, I can send over food for both of you.

JONAH

Mom!!!

VIVIENNE

Now, you look out for my little Jonah.

JONAH

(desperately yells)

DAD!!!

HAROLD

(not even looking up from what he was doing)

Vivienne stop smothering the boy.

VIVIENNE

Which one?

HAROLD and JONAH

(unanimously)

BOTH!!!

VIVIENNE

(offended)

Ugh!

CUT TO:

INT. DORM ROOM 318 – NIGHT

Gregory continues to read his accounting 101 textbook while laying on his bed. Jonah has finished unpacking his side of the room. Now the entire room is covered in Rock posters. After Jonah is done, he throws himself onto his bed and lets out a loud sigh of relief.

JONAH

Finally!!!

(looks over at Gregory for a beat)

So, when did you get here?

GREGORY

(Not looking up from his book)

About two weeks ago.

JONAH

(cheerily)

I like your accent. Where are you from?

GREGORY

London. London, England.

JONAH

Damn. This place just keeps on getting greater and greater

There’s a tiny moment of silence.

JONAH

Well, aren’t you gonna ask me where I’m from?

(nervous laughter)

GREGORY

Sorry, I’m not used to this thing yet.

(closes up his book)

JONAH

(apologetically)

It’s fine. I was just kidding. I didn’t mean to interrupt –

GREGORY

No, I’m sorry. Like I said, I’ve never been used to this kind of thing, and it’s kind of a culture shock

JONAH

I get it –

GREGORY

(awkwardly)

But… yeah. So, where ... are you from?

JONAH

No, no, no. That’s no good.

GREGORY

(confused)

What?

JONAH

We gotta start over.

GREGORY

With what?

JONAH

(energized)

Everything!!!

GREGORY

(still confused)

Ok.

Jonah stands up and sits on the edge of Gregory’s bed. Gregory sits up. Jonah then takes a minute to compose himself.

JONAH

Alright, I’m ready.

GREGORY

(still very confused)

Ok?

JONAH

(laughs)

Look, this is my first time outside of the state of Missouri and I am not gonna screw up first impressions. So. Hello, my name is Jonah Marshall and I’m from St. Louis, Missouri. I am a Freshman here at Columbia where I major in English Literature. I broke my arm when I was six, riding a very large pony. I threw up on the first girl I kissed. My favorite author is Oscar Wilde and my favorite color is blue… stop me at any time –

GREGORY

(catching along)

Oh... um

JONAH

(jokingly)

You need help?

GREGORY

(laughing)

No, uh. My name is Gregory Daniels from…. uh.. London England.

JONAH

(victoriously)

There you go!

GREGORY

(chuckling)

Ummm…. I am a freshman… here... at Columbia University... where I study business.

JONAH

Ohhhhhh. A business major. No wonder you have an entire tree in here.

(motioning to a stack of books beside Gregory’s bed)

GREGORY

Oh, that’s my fault, I’ll move it

JONAH

Your fine, stop apologizing. I’m the one that should be apologizing. I mean, you were fine sitting here, reading your books. And then some crazy person, with even crazier parents comes in like a tornado and just ruins your day -

GREGORY

You’re my roommate, you’re supposed to be here.

JONAH

(with a smirk)

So, you’re not negating the fact that I’m crazy.

GREGORY

Now you said that

JONAH

(laughing)

So…

GREGORY

So…

JONAH

(motions awkwardly to pile of books)

So, you uh… getting a head start or something?

GREGORY

(embarrassed)

No… just… didn’t have anything else to do really.

JONAH

Well that was until you met me. I was actually gonna head out to the dining hall and get something to eat. And, I gotta be honest with you, this place is like a fucking maze. You wanna go with me, and show me around? If it’s not too much to ask.

GREGORY

No, I’d love to.

There’s a beat of silence.

JONAH

(a little nervously at first)

Well let me change. I’ve pretty much gotten dirt all over these clothes.

Jonah goes over to his closet and strips off his shirt. Gregory averts his gaze.

JONAH

I’ve actually been meaning to ask you, is that a Pink Floyd shirt?

Gregory loos over at his illegally obtained Pink Floyd t-shirt draped in the corner over a chair.

GREGORY

Oh, yeah. It’s from their album –

JONAH

The Piper at the Gates of Dawn right? Yeah, I loved it. Not a lot of people have heard of them, but what they do with sound? Amazing!!!

Jonah walks over to his shirt and picks it up. He has only changed into the pants he’s wearing. He takes the shirt over to Gregory.

JONAH

Now, you do know one of us has to wear this shirt right?

GREGORY

Why not you?

JONAH

(a slow smile creeps up on his face)

My thoughts exactly.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY – EVERETT HIGH SCHOOL – LANSING, MICHIGAN – 3:08 PM

MUSIC: *WOULDN’T IT BE NICE* BY THE BEACH BOYS FADES IN AND FADES OUT AT THE END OF THE SCENE.

There’s a pair of raggedy, ill-fitting tennis shoes running down the hallways as fast as humanly possible.

EZEKIEL

Oops. Sorry. Pardon me.

Ezekiel almost runs into MRS. SPENCER, a very strict history teacher.

MRS. SPENCER

No running in the halls young man!!!

The feet start to slow down and walk, but as soon as they turn the corner, they’re back to running as fast as humanly possible. They finally stop at a door.

CUT TO:

INT. TUTORING CLASSROOM – EVERETT HIGH SCHOOL – LANSING, MICHIGAN – 3:09 PM

Ezekiel enters an already filled classroom breathing heavily, with his head down low. He makes a beeline right to wear Zachary is sitting and saving one last seat.

ZACHARY

(annoyed)

You’re late.