

The Docile Piranha  
Another New York Tale

by  
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Time: The Present

Place: A two bedroom apartment in Chelsea (New York City).

#### Cast

Joseph: an average looking guy. Gay.

Brad Flynn: Joseph's roommate. Wall St. Very straight.

Christine: Their neighbor. Adorable in her way.

Pedro: Joseph's friend from work. Latino party boy.

#### PART I

The two bedroom apartment of Joseph, a very average looking gay white male, and his roommate Brad, who is infinitely straight. The apartment is nicely decorated, but not over done. Sofa, coffee table, a couple of chairs. There are five exits; two lead off to the bedrooms, one to the bathroom, one to the kitchen, and the last to the main entrance of the apartment. Joseph addresses the audience directly.

#### Joseph

The search for Mr. Right goes on. Day after day, week after month after year and still I'm single. You know how it is. You lust after a stranger that you see on the train every day on your way to work, then you build up the courage to talk to him until finally you have a date followed by a night of mad, uninhibited, mind altering sex, and then you discover the truth. He has flaws. That perfect, ideal, pedestal sitter isn't without impurities. OK, maybe the scenario is different from person to person, your story may have variances but something in what I described sounds familiar, admit it. I was fooling myself to think that he would fill the role, but my fears were proven to be fact; men so perfect in appearance are usually far from perfect in the mental arena. It really came down to one thing. We went to a movie, our first "real" date after our night of, admittedly unbelievable, sex. Gladiator. He loved it, and while looking at Russell Crowe's sweaty armpits was mildly stimulating, it takes more than that to make a good movie. So, I'm back on the market! I will confess that my time with him stroked my ego just a bit, and I needed that more than anything. How is it that in a city the size of New York, so many men, a veritable gay all-you-can-eat, so many options, and I still can't find someone I would want to spend a significant amount of time with? In the heart of it all, how can I feel isolated? Shouldn't living here make it that much easier to meet someone? Shouldn't it?

#### Christine

Decent?

Joseph

And if I weren't?

Christine

Please. Considering your sexual track record, I've seen you naked more times than... well, anyone. Except maybe your mother.

Joseph

You're a very close second, and closing.

Christine

Is Brad here?

Joseph

Oh, shoot. He left me a note to tell you he had a late meeting tonight. He'll be home around seven or eight.

Christine

Oh.

Joseph

Why, what were we going to do?

Christine

We? Oh, um... yeah. We. It was actually going to be more of an "us."

Joseph

An "us?"

Christine

Well...

Joseph

What were you and Brad going to do without ... Oh. Oh. Just the two of you. You and him alone. I thought that was over.

Christine

Not by a long shot.

Joseph

You two aren't... am I a complete moron here?

Christine

I don't know about "complete"...

Joseph

No, I am. I thought you two just had some lusty flirty thing going. I figured you'd get it out of your systems, it would pass and you and he would become like you and me...

Christine

Not to be crude hon, but Brad and you are very very very different. We engage in activities that you and I don't. If you get my meaning.

Joseph

I'm just going to pretend that I don't. So you two have ... um, scratch that. I don't want to know. Don't tell me.

Christine

Then don't ask.

Joseph

Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeewwww.

Christine

Excuse me? I heard all the lurid unspeakable details about your evening with Mr. Perfect. And let's not forget the never ending parade of boys, men, and other creatures that Phillip had here. I can tell you, the path from that door to his room is well worn.

Joseph

And still getting more use than the path to my room.

Christine

Don't start!

Joseph

I'm not starting! Who's starting! Certainly not me. All right, without any sort of sexual or pseudo sexual information, what was on the bill for the two of you tonight?

Christine

Without any sexual or pseudo sexual information?

Joseph

Please.

Christine

Nothing.

Joseph

I wonder if I still have some arsenic left in the

kitchen.

Christine

For me or you?

Joseph

Undecided.

Christine

I'm sorry. We didn't want to tell you right off, but please, we had chemistry from day one. Hell, getting a date with me was one of his conditions of taking the apartment. It all started as a joke, kind of, but then one day it wasn't a joke any more. It just didn't seem right to tell you right away though. You had such high hopes for Adam and when that crashed like a...

Joseph

Spare me the metaphors.

Christine

Well, he didn't want to put a strain on the new living situation since you're so sensitive about the whole relationship issue.

Joseph

Sensitive?

Christine

Well, you are!

Joseph

All right. Fine. Good. Great. My new roommate is dating my best friend. I can work with this. I'll draw from it for my novel.

Christine

You wouldn't dare.

Joseph

I will change the names to protect the innocent and guilty alike.

Christine

Joseph, I swear if you... oh, what am I worried about. You've been writing your novel since the day I met you and I've yet to see you use your computer for anything more than downloading porn.

Joseph

I will have you know I hardly ever use it to download

porn.

Christine

I would be interested in hearing your definition of "hardly ever."

Joseph

So now that your Prince has postponed your rendezvous, does that mean that you have time for your peasant friends?

Christine

I've always got time for my peasant friends, that's what makes me such a magnanimous ruler. What do the common folk do for fun these days?

Joseph

Mostly just download porn.

Christine

Oh stop. Look, I was terminally single for several years too. I know what it's like. I know, trust me, I know. The wondering when you'll meet him. The fantasizing about what it will be like. How annoying it is when you see friends meeting people, going out on their little dates. I know just what it's like to be the third wheel, or even worse, be with a pair of couples as they compare notes and giggle and cuddle while you down Cosmo after Cosmo then go home and smoke weed until your head caves in. OK, the last one was more me than you, but still, Joseph, I feel for you. I do. Why do you think Brad and I didn't want to tell you. And trust me, it wasn't an easy secret to keep! All I can say is thank god you work Saturdays. What I'm trying to say is, I know how hard it is, hell, for all I know it's worse for you. At least I'm straight, I've got that going for me, aside from that one... OK, two... wait, no, four... I was in college, we all did it! Anyway, you know what I mean. I've been through it. The blind dates that your friends... HMMMMMM.

Joseph

Oh no. No. No, no, no, no. Stop thinking right now. Stop!

Christine

Well, there is this guy I know.

Joseph

Christine, I won't do it. No matter what you've got going on in that twisted, warped, marijuana addled

skull of yours is not going to happen. Not in this lifetime. I will find someone on my own. Is that clear?

Christine  
You won't even consider it?

Joseph  
No.

Christine  
I've got outstanding taste, just look at you. Look at Brad. I can spot a good one in a heartbeat. I'm not saying I'm sure he'd be right for you, yet. I need to think about it.

Joseph  
Christine, let me save you the time and strain on your already over-taxed brain cells. Even if you decide he's one hundred percent the right one for me, I refuse, flat out refuse to go on a blind date.

Christine  
All right.

Joseph  
I mean it.

Christine  
All right.

Joseph  
I'm serious here. It won't happen. Don't try.

Christine  
Did I say all right?

Joseph  
I don't believe you.

Christine  
I'm hurt. Your best friend and you don't believe me.

Joseph  
No, I don't. After all, you and Brad have been lying to me for over a month. Deceptions, deceptions, deceptions.

Christine  
Cross my heart hope to get a job. I will not set you up on a blind date.

Joseph

Well, since I know you'll never get a job, I almost believe you.

Christine

Good. Look, if Brad won't be here for another couple of hours, let's order some food. I'm not waiting for him.

Joseph

Pizza?

Christine

Thai.

Joseph

Ugh, no. Last time we ordered from the Thai place I spent the night suffering from cramps like you wouldn't believe. I was moaning all night long.

Christine

Really? We thought you were just on the computer.

Joseph

You, my little porn obsessed friend, have just relinquished your dinner vote. Pizza it is.

Joseph grabs the phone.

Christine

Crap. Do I still get my remote control vote?

Joseph

If you behave, but after eight it's Buffy, then Angel.

Christine

Oh, well, I wouldn't want to interfere with your bizarre vampire fetish. Brad should be home by then anyway.

Joseph

I gotta tell you, it's going to take some time for me to get used to you talking about him like he's your boyfriend or something.

Christine

Or something? Sweet one, he is my boyfriend.

Joseph

Whoa. What? I missed that part.

Christine

Hello! We aren't just dating sweetie. You think I'm such a slut that I'll just sleep with someone because they're good looking ... don't answer that if you value your life. Joseph, I really like him, and unless I've been high on some really good shit for the past month, he likes me back.

Joseph

How unlikely is the "high on really good shit" option?

Christine

Not too likely. We've been trying to decide when and how to tell you for a few days.

Joseph

I think I'll be ordering extra cheese on the pizza. Well, more power too you. I'll even open one of my reserve bottles of wine when he get's home so we can celebrate.

Christine

Ooooo, goody! Wait a minute. Oh, that son of a bitch.

Joseph

What?

Christine

He left the note for you to tell me he had a late meeting. He could have just called or left me a message or something, but instead he left a note for you to tell me so I'd have to, and you'd, and he'd... He set us up!

Joseph casually dials the phone

Joseph

Au contraire. He set you up. I was gonna get the wrecking ball upside the head either way.

Christine

I'm going to wring his scrawny little white collar neck.

Joseph

Delivery please.

PART II

Brad stands in the doorway to the bathroom with a towel around his

waist. He goes about some of his "morning business" during his speech.

Brad

It's been said, "honesty is the best policy." It has also been said, "it is always the best policy to speak the truth -- unless of course you are an exceptionally good liar." I am not an exceptionally good liar. I never have been. From a very early age, as soon as I could speak really, my parents always knew when I was telling a fib. Don't take me into your confidence with those intimate details, unless of course you want everyone to know, in that case, I'm your man. Maybe some people think that makes me virtuous. I don't know. Maybe. I sure as hell wish I could pass off a lie from time to time. I'm not saying I want to be of the pathological persuasion, I'm just saying it would be nice, every so often, to be capable of not being entirely truthful. Can you imagine what life would be like if anytime you lied, you saw a raised eyebrow and a knowing look of awareness? That subtle hint that says, "yeah, right." What if every secret you had was so easily pulled from you? I have a feeling most people would crumble if their day to day lies were so transparent. Not that it's so bad for me. I'm kind of used to it by now. No one is stupid enough to tell me anything sensitive anymore. I've been sidestepping Joseph, avoiding any situation that might end up with him lifting his eyebrow at me. Now the truth is out and, for better or worse, he knows. He says he's fine with it, but truth be told, he's not a very good liar either. I think that's why we get along. We understand each other. We're honest with each other. That's what makes friends.

He turns and closes the door to the bathroom and almost immediately the door to Joseph's room opens.

Joseph

AUGH! Brad! Brad!

Brad (OS)

One minute.

Joseph

Every morning! How do you do it?

Brad opens the door, shaving cream on his face then resumes shaving, coming into the doorway only when he speaks.

Brad

Do what?

Joseph

Now, you know I'm not one to complain. Really. I'm not, but every morning I stand here. Every morning. What, do you have some sort of innate ability, a sixth sense of when I will wake up that allows you to get in there and close the door just as I open mine?

Brad

I just get up earlier.

Joseph

No, no, I've tried that. I've set my alarm earlier so I might get up ahead of you. All the same, every day I open my door to the sound of the bathroom door closing. How do you do it? Can you tell me that?

Brad

I dunno. I made coffee. I'll just be One minute.

He closes the door again. Joseph goes to the kitchen.

Joseph

(to himself - not addressing the audience)  
AUGH! I swear. I swear by all that's holy one day I will beat you into that bathroom. I will make it my quest. If I have to barricade your door some morning, I'm going to be the first in that room.

Joseph goes into the kitchen. The bathroom door opens and Brad comes out. He makes his way to his room passing Joseph exiting the kitchen.

Brad

All yours.

Joseph

Thanks.

Brad goes into his room and Joseph stirs his coffee.

Joseph

You know, you aren't supposed to have that body. That's one of our bodies! There was a time, not so long ago, when if I saw a guy who looked like you do, the odds were that he would be on the team, but somewhere along the way you straight men decided you should look good too. What a waste.

He is about to head to the bathroom when Brad's door reopens, now with underwear and a t-shirt on he dashes back to the bathroom

before Joseph goes in.

Brad  
Sorry, forgot something.

Joseph  
Crap. Brad, I'm going to be late!

Brad (OS)  
I'll just be a second!

Joseph  
And I need to use the toilet!

Brad (OS)  
One sec!

Joseph  
You better not be using my Kiehl's, that stuff isn't cheap!

Brad (OS)  
I'll replace it.

Joseph  
Are you sure you aren't gay?

The door opens.

Brad  
I've just learned the value of skin care. I didn't know how much of a difference it made. See, I'm learning from you. Here, feel my face.

Joseph  
I don't want to feel your face. I want to use the bathroom.

Brad  
Just feel it.

Joseph  
I ... Brad, I can see. Your skin looks much healthier.

Brad  
See the pores? See how clean they are?

Joseph  
Brad, you have great pores. Can I please get in there?

Sure. Brad

Thank you. Joseph

Oh, there's something wrong with the toilet. It didn't flush. Brad

Excuse me? Joseph

It didn't flush. Brad

Can't you, you know, fix it or something? Joseph

I don't know how to fix a toilet. Brad

But you're straight. Joseph

So that means I know how to fix a toilet? Brad

My dad did. I thought it was part of the whole "straight" thing. We get the flight attendant, florist, hair stylist genes and you get the football, car fixing, plumbing genes. Joseph

Sorry. I got the stock market genes. Brad

So there's ... stuff in there? Joseph

Yeah. Brad

Joseph stands outside the bathroom looking in.

I thought you were in a hurry to get in there. Brad

I was. Joseph

Brad

It's not my fault.

Joseph  
It's not my fault either.

Brad  
I didn't say it was.

Joseph  
I know. I'm not blaming you.

Brad  
It won't kill you.

Joseph  
I know.

Brad  
It won't leap out. I promise. It's just going to  
stay in there.

Joseph  
I know.

Brad  
I gotta get dressed.

Joseph  
OK.

Brad goes to his room and stops at the door, then looks back.

Brad  
Just piss in the shower.

Joseph  
Excuse me?

Brad  
Piss in the shower.

Joseph  
You're kidding.

Brad  
No. It just gets washed down the drain.

Joseph  
You've done that, haven't you?

Brad  
How much will it freak you out if I say yes.

Joseph  
A lot.

Brad  
Yes. I have.

Brad exits into his room. Joseph looks down at his feet and squirms with a bad case of the "willies."

Joseph  
Oh, yuck! God! Yuck!

He begins rubbing his feet on an area rug, trying to scrub of the imagined urine from his feet. Christine enters with a bag of Krispy Kreme donuts.

Joseph  
Sick. Disgusting. Ugh!

Christine  
What the hell is wrong with you?

Joseph  
Your boyfriend is sick and twisted and disgusting and ... and ...

Christine  
I know. It's part of the charm.

Joseph  
Can I use your bathroom?

Christine  
Why? What's wrong with yours?

Joseph  
He has defiled it! I can't use it until I can scrub it down with bleach.

Christine  
I beg your pardon?

Joseph  
Well, first of all, the toilet is broken and there is ... it's got ...

Christine  
There's shit in there?

Joseph  
You know what, I take it back. You two are perfect

for each other.

Christine

Here, have a Krispy Kreme. Let me have a look.

Joseph

What? You mean, you know how to fix it?

Christine

I've been a single woman, living on my own for a number of years, I have managed to acquire one or two skills in that time. Eat.

She tosses the bag to Joseph and crosses into the bathroom. He pulls out a donut and begins munching on it. After a moment the toilet flushes.

Joseph

I can't believe it.

Christine

The chain just came loose. All the little monsters are gone now honey. Go have your shower. You'll be late for school.

Joseph

Thank you Mom. But still...

Christine

What else?

Joseph

He pees in the shower.

Christine

Uh huh.

Joseph

What do you mean, uh huh?

Christine

Who doesn't?

Joseph

I am surrounded by deviants.

Christine

What's wrong with peeing in the shower? It all just goes down the drain.

Joseph

I don't want to hear another word. I don't want to

know. I will have you know I have never, and never will, pee in the shower.

Christine  
You should try it. It's kind of liberating.

Joseph  
Will you stop!

Christine  
It's just urine.

Joseph runs screaming into the bathroom and slams the door. Brad enters, dressed, but tie undone.

Brad  
What on earth was that?

Christine  
Nelly of the jungle.

Brad  
Where did he go?

Christine  
He's in the bathroom. I fixed the toilet, but he's still freaking about the shower. He'll get over it. I brought you a donut.

Brad  
You're too kind.

Christine  
I know. Do I smell coffee?

Brad  
Fresh brewed.

He exits to the kitchen.

Brad (OS)  
So, you, ah, you fixed the toilet?

Christine  
Yeah.

Brad (OS)  
How?

Christine  
The chain just came loose.

Brad (OS)  
Oh, yeah. The, ah, chain thing.

Christine  
Why didn't you just fix it yourself?

Brad enters with two cups of coffee.

Brad  
I didn't ... um ... I don't ...

Christine  
You didn't even look inside to see what was wrong?  
You didn't even take the lid off?

Brad  
What do I know about plumbing? Here, pass the donuts  
please?

Christine  
It's not like you have to put in new pipes, it's a  
flush-o-matic.

Brad  
Hey, I'm no Bob Villa. I work on Wall Street. I can  
do math in my head and put together a portfolio for  
you, but if you're looking for someone who'll fix  
stuff, you're in big trouble.

Christine moves onto Brad's lap and they get increasingly more  
intimate.

Christine  
Oo, do some math for me. That turns me on.

Brad  
Yeah?

Christine  
Big time.

Brad  
I need to get to work, I don't want to get you all  
hot and bothered and then leave you.

Christine  
Can't have that.

Brad  
No, we can't.

Christine

And you wouldn't be able to concentrate at work.

Brad  
Buying instead of selling.

Christine  
My handsome bull.

Brad  
Do I get a kiss before I go?

Christine leans in and they kiss.

Christine  
Mmm, Krispy Kreme Kiss.

They kiss again.

Brad  
I really do need to go.

Christine  
Can I meet you for lunch?

Brad  
A nooner?

Christine  
That's so nasty.

Brad  
I can't. The CEO has a luncheon today, but I'll come up as soon as I get home.

Christine  
Call first, in case I have to get rid of one of my other boyfriends.

Brad  
Just send him down here to Joe, he could use one.

Christine  
Hey now!

Brad  
What?

Christine  
That's mean.

Brad  
It's true! Come on, admit it. He needs a boyfriend.

(beat) Did I just say that?

Christine

You did.

Brad

Let me up. I really do need to go. I'll have to take a cab now.

Christine

All right. I'll see you tonight.

Brad grabs his suitcoat and kisses her.

Brad

Be good.

Christine

Aren't I always?

Brad

No.

Brad exits. The bathroom door opens and Joseph comes out and looks at Christine.

Joseph

OK, you're right, it is kind of liberating.

He exits into his room and Christine smiles and sits on the sofa.

PART III

Joseph enters from his bedroom dressed in "club clothes."

Joseph

There is a term, a phrase, that describes the bulk of the people who live in my neighborhood. Chelsea Boys. Chelsea is the neighborhood I live in. Boys, well, "boys" are gay men - hence, "Chelsea Boys." It's a term that conjures up an image of a well muscled, extremely attractive gay man between twenty-five and thirty-nine years old who lives an exciting lifestyle which consists of a responsible, well paying job and working out at the gym by day and a nightlife full of parties, casual sex, drugs, going out to clubs, and your basic wild debauchery. Weekends may include shopping, brunch, or dinner parties and more debauchery. It's a stereotype of course. Not every guy in Chelsea fits the description, they don't all live the life I described, but for better or worse, that's the image.

Let's be honest, stereotypes are stereotypes for a reason. I live in Chelsea and so I feel compelled to live up to the image to a degree. My old roommate Phillip embodied the Chelsea Boy image to a Tee, but since he's now off in Hollywood finding his fame, I suppose feel compelled to pick up some slack. OK, clearly the muscles aren't there. I wouldn't classify myself as "extremely" attractive. I don't get invited to the exclusive parties. I don't have casual sex... much. I don't do drugs. That leaves going out to the clubs from time to time. Guess what I'm doing tonight. Frankly, I hate it, but like I said, I have a responsibility to maintain the image a little bit.

Brad enters from his room.

Brad

Have you seen my ... my ... my God. What are you wearing?

Joseph

I beg your pardon?

Brad

Joe, no offense, but you look like a slut.

Joseph

I'm so glad you prefaced that with "no offense." That makes it oh so much better!

Brad

I'm sorry! I've just never seen you dressed ... I mean... My God!

Joseph

You came out here looking for something?

Brad

I've forgotten.

Joseph

Overwhelmed by my beauty?

Brad

Overcome with nausea is more like it.

Joseph

You really know how to help a guy feel good about himself, you know that?

Brad

I'm just gonna go back into my room and see if I didn't just open my door and step into the Twilight Zone by accident.

The buzzer rings.

Joseph  
You do that. That'll be Pedro.

Brad  
Who?

Joseph  
Pedro. You know I DO have friends in the outside world. I'm not a complete ... you know what, I'm not going to finish that sentence.

Brad  
Sounds like a plan. I'll just ... be in my room.

Joseph presses the speaker on the buzzer.

Joseph  
Hello!

Static.

Joseph  
Come on up Pedro.

The door opens and Christine enters.

Christine  
Perfection has arrived! Dear Lord have mercy. What are you wearing?

Joseph  
What?

Christine  
Did you have help painting those pants on or did you manage it all by yourself?

Joseph  
You were with me when I bought these pants!

Christine  
Was that in the Eighties or something? I think you may have gained a pound or fifty since then.

Joseph  
I'm going out to some clubs with Pedro.

Christine  
Oh God. Tell me you're joking.

Joseph  
No. He's on his way up.

Christine  
You know I hate you hanging out with Pedro. He's trouble. He's a bad influence on you. He does drugs...

Joseph  
So do you.

Christine  
And you'll recall he slept with Phillip.

Joseph  
Sleeping with my roommate, um, also you.

Christine  
He... he...

Joseph  
Having problems coming up with something that doesn't apply to you as well? Come to think of it, maybe I need to examine my choice in friends.

Christine  
I don't like you hanging out with him! Look, I don't want to see him. Call me when the two of you are leaving.

She turns to leave and opens the door to reveal Pedro. Pedro fits the Chelsea Boy stereotype. He's Latino, attractive and muscular. Christine puts on a false front immediately.

Christine  
Pedro! Luv!

Pedro  
Christine! Dame un beso!

Christine  
Kiss! Kiss!

Pedro takes Christine by the hips and begins grinding and dancing her into the apartment.

Christine  
Oh! Oh! Stop... stop now. I said STOP!

Pedro

I think you got some Latin in you sweetie, you know how to move. Jose, baby, you look fierce!

Joseph

Thank you!

Pedro comes up and kisses Joseph - a friendly kiss.

Pedro

I told Ramon and Terry that we meet them at Limelight around midnight, so we have time, we can cruise a couple other bars and get some drinks before we meet. Sound OK to you?

Joseph

Ah, sure. Whatever you think. It's more your scene than mine.

Pedro

I brought some X if you want, get us going and have some fun. You need to loosen up papi.

Christine

La la lala - lala.

Brad re-enters

Brad

I remembered what I was looking for... Hey Christine, hey... Oh Lord. I... I mean... Hi there.

Pedro

Hello there yourself. Jose, honey, you didn't tell me your new roommate was as hot as Phillip was.

Joseph

Brad, this is my friend Pedro. We work together at Bloomingdales. Pedro, my roommate Brad.

Brad

It's ah... ah... pleasure to meet you.

Pedro

And he's shy, that's so cute.

Brad

Oh, I'm not...

Pedro

You know, I work in skin care, you could come by some

time and I'll give you a facial.

Brad

Oh! You're the one that told Joseph about the Khiels stuff!

Pedro

That would be me, but it's so much better when applied by a professional like myself, I could...

Christine

He is mine! Hands off!

Pedro

So sorry miss tina!

Joseph

OK! Ah, Pedro, let's go into the kitchen, I'll get you something to drink before we go.

Pedro

Oh, yeah. I love those pants! I never knew you had an ass like that!

Joseph and Pedro make their way to the kitchen. Christine grabs Joseph just before he follows Pedro in.

Christine

Don't do anything stupid.

Joseph

Excuse me?

Christine

You don't know where he got that Extacy from. You don't know anything about the ...

Joseph

Give me some credit will you?

He exits into the kitchen. Christine is fuming.

Brad

Is he for real? I mean, what was that?

Christine (whispering)

That... that... I can't believe he... and they'll be out all night doing God only knows what. I don't like it. I don't like it one bit. I am telling you, he should know better than to hang out with people like that. Are you going to just stand here and let them go out together? Are you? Aren't you going to

do something?

Brad

You are aware that I'm just his roommate, aren't you? Besides, between you and him, I think he's the more responsible of the two.

Christine

You always take his side!

Brad

I'm not taking anyone's side!

Christine

Oh, fine. But I'm telling you right now, I don't like him hanging out with that Pedro.

Brad

No kidding, I hadn't noticed. Oh! There it is.

Christine

There what is?

Brad

My briefcase. That's what I was looking for before.

Joseph and Pedro re-enter.

Joseph

Well, we're off.

Brad

Have fun.

Pedro

Don't wait up.

Christine

You call me the minute you ...

Brad grabs Christine.

Brad

We won't.

Joseph

Night!

They exit. Brad begins going through his briefcase while Christine fumes for a moment.

Christine

That does it. We're finding him a real boyfriend.

Brad

Lucy, is this another one of your crazy schemes?

Christine

I'm serious.

Brad

Look, Joseph can find his own boyfriend, he doesn't need our help.

Christine

Well, obviously he does! Look, there has to be someone in your office who's gay, or has a brother who's gay? Come on, you can do this for me. Do this for him. Between the two of us we can find him his Mr. Right. Since the whole Adam thing, he hasn't gone on a date or even flirted with anyone as far as I know.

Brad

I don't even know what his type is. What kind of guy does Joe like? Is he a top, a bottom. Sure, he needs a boyfriend, but how the hell am I going to pick out a guy for him? I can't even believe I'm having this conversation! I'm talking about finding my male roommate a boyfriend!

Christine

You're becoming such an enlightened heterosexual.

Brad

Christine, if you want to do this, you do it on your own. I can't help you.

Christine

I'll make it worth your while.

Brad

Christine... don't do this.

Christine

I know what you like.

Brad

Christine, please.

Christine

All you have to do is ask around at your office. That's all. See who's available.

Brad

Oh, sure. I'll just start asking around the office to see what guys are available and gay. I'll make partner in no time.

Christine

I'll go out with you if you do.

Brad

You already go out with me.

Christine

We'll go to that bar you like...

Brad

You're evil.

Christine

Have some Guinness...

Brad

Ohhhhhhh.

Christine

Rich, dark, foamy. Just the way you like it.

Brad

ALL RIGHT! I'm a weak weak man.

Christine

No, you're not weak, I'm just stronger.

#### PART IV

The following morning. On the sofa a body covered by blankets wakes up - it is Pedro.

Pedro

Oh shit. It's bright. Sunglasses, sunglasses.

He moves about looking for his sunglasses. Finds a pile of his clothes and digs them out from there then returns to the sofa.

Pedro

Ohhh, much better. Never again. Never again. But I know and you know ... hell, half of Manhattan knows next week I'll be out on the dance floor. I'll be making out with someone I don't know. I'll be somewhere partying. I'll do it because it's fun. We all do it because it's fun. I do it because it takes me away. Hey, I spend all day giving facials to women at Bloomingdales and telling them they're

beautiful and I can make them more beautiful. It's the magic of skin care. Those wrinkles will fade if you just use this. Yeah, and I'm a born again heterosexual. I swear, some of those broads get off on having a sexy latino queerboy as their personal skin care psychic friend. Jose watches and laughs and ... I'll be honest, when I first saw him I didn't think he'd amount to anything... but he's got purity. That's high praise coming from me. Going out with him keeps me out of trouble, and gets him into some. The boy needs a friend like me. He needs to get out and party and be free and if there's anything I know, it's how to party and be free. He gets himself tied up in knots. It's a perfect combination. We're opposites, but we fill a gap in the other. Don't get me wrong, we'd never date. He's not my kind of man and I'm too wild to settle down anyway. No. We don't see each other like that, even though he needs it, it's not with me. Gracias a Dios. If he even once looked at me like that I'd smack him across the nose like a bad puppy. I'm not ready to be a one man boy. I need to love the world the way the world loves me.

Joseph comes out from his bedroom.

Joseph

I remember now why I hate going out to the clubs.  
But thank you all the same.

Pedro

Honey, you don' look too good.

Joseph

Honey, I don't feel too good.

Pedro

Can I borrow a T-shirt? Mine's all nasty.

Joseph

Top drawer on the left.

Joseph proceeds to the bathroom as Pedro goes into Joseph's room. Christine comes out of Brad's room wearing a sheet and moves toward the bathroom and just before arriving there sees Pedro coming out of Joseph's bedroom pulling on a T-shirt.

Christine

Pedro?

Pedro

Morning Christine.

Joseph comes out of the bathroom.

Joseph  
Morning Christine.

Christine  
NO!

Christine runs back into Brad's room.

Joseph  
I think that went swimmingly.

Pedro  
Done in there?

Joseph  
Yeah, for now.

Pedro  
Do you think she thinks you and I...

Joseph  
I hope so. I could milk that for days.

Pedro goes into the bathroom and Joseph starts toward the kitchen.  
Brad comes out rubbing his eyes.

Brad  
Hey.

Joseph  
Hey. She sent you out here, huh?

Brad  
Um... no?

Joseph  
Yeah.

Brad  
I'm not really sure what she expects me to say to you  
though.

Joseph  
I think you're supposed to say that this is your  
apartment too and that you don't want me to have  
guests stay the night without checking with you  
first. You know, that whole speech.

Brad

Is that what I'm supposed to say?

I think so. Joseph

Oh. Brad

Yup. Joseph

But I... Brad

I know. Just say it loudly enough for her to hear you. She'll be listening at the door. Joseph

You know I don't... Brad

The sooner you get it over with the sooner you can go back to sleep. Joseph

No. I'm awake now. Brad

I'll make some coffee. Joseph

Good. Ahem. Ready? Brad

Yeah. Joseph

Joseph goes into the kitchen and Brad begins speaking louder than necessary.

Joseph, Christine said that there was someone else here. Brad

Yeah, Pedro spent the night. Joseph (OS)

Pedro? You mean that guy that you went out with last night? Brad

Joseph (OS)

Yes. That's him.

Brad

Joseph, I don't want to be an asshole about this but I pay rent here too. I really think you need to let me know if you're going to have someone stay the night.

Joseph (OS)

We got in late, I didn't want to wake you and besides, you have Christine here all the time without asking me. You've never given any thought to how I feel about you having her stay over.

Brad

Excuse me? Listen, if you have a problem with Christine spending the night with me then let me know. You've never said anything before.

Joseph comes out from the Kitchen

Joseph

Maybe it's time I did! I've been letting it go, but ... yeah. I have a problem. You and she seem to think that just because she's my friend there's some sort of free pass...

Brad

You said yourself that she comes in whenever she wants. You told me that was the way you two were!

Joseph

Did you ever think that maybe it's a little different when she's coming to see you and not me?

Brad

Does who she's coming to visit make that big of a difference? Whether it's you or me...

Joseph

That's just it, it isn't ever me. So yes, it makes a difference.

Brad

(softer)

Is this still for her benefit?

Joseph

I don't know!

Brad

You really have a problem with me seeing her?

Pedro comes out from the bathroom unnoticed.

Joseph

No, I don't! I love it!

Brad

Look, we're getting off the point. All I'm asking for is some common courtesy and I'll do the same if it really bothers you. So she comes down to see me more than you these days, did you even ask her to go out last night. Besides, the situations are a little different. Christine and I are involved, this Pedro guy is clearly just a fling and futhermore you know Christine doesn't like him. In fact I think you're getting a thrill out of rubbing that in her face. She hated that you were going out with him last night, and I can't say that I'm all that thrilled about you keeping company with his kind either.

Pedro

Excuse me?

Brad

Pedro?

Joseph

Pedro!

Pedro

What did you say Mr. Wall-Street?

Brad

I just...

Pedro

Never mind, I heard what you said. You may be a hottie, but in my neighborhood that don't mean shit if you're talkin' dirt about this boy. Where is that bitch, hiding out in your room? She got a problem with me, let her tell me face to face.

Joseph

Christine! Come out here.

Christine (OS)

No!

Joseph

Christine!

Pedro

You listen to me chica! If you have any self respect you will get your Titanic sized hips out of that room and face the disco music. I will turn on the ABBA if I have to.

Christine comes out.

Pedro  
Oh, look. Hello Chiquitita.

Christine  
OK. I'm facing you.

Pedro  
You got a problem with me? You don't like me spending time with your Jose?

Christine  
No. I don't. I don't like Joseph spending time with you. You are a bad influence.

Joseph  
I'm that impressionable?

Christine  
I don't like you Pedro. I don't like you.

Pedro  
OH! Oh no. No, no, no. Nobody says that to me. Everybody likes me. I am loved by all. You tell her Jose. You tell her how much I am loved.

Joseph  
You really are the only person I know who doesn't like him.

Christine  
Fine. I'm an individual. Brad doesn't like you either.

Brad  
I actually don't really know him. I don't really know you, so I'm in no position to...

Christine  
You - don't - like - him.

Brad  
Hey now, I can make my own judgments.

Joseph  
All right, stop Christine, he's my friend. You sent

Brad out to establish your territory right? Isn't that what this was all about? Maybe you're right. I think what we need to do is start to establish some territory right now. You coming and going whenever you want, that's over. From now on, you call first.

Christine

What?

Joseph

And you've got an apartment too, why doesn't Brad stay with you sometimes instead of you always staying down here?

Christine

Joseph, you aren't serious.

Joseph

I'm serious. I'm as serious as CNN.

Christine

I see. I'll just get dressed and leave then.

Pedro

You see what happens when you mess with Miss Pedro Xavier Alejandro Chavez.

Joseph

OK, Pedro!

Christine exits into Brad's room and Pedro gathers up his clothes and heads for Joseph's room leaving Joseph and Brad onstage.

Joseph

Coffee should be ready.

Brad

Oh. Good.

## PART V

The apartment is quiet. Joseph enters through the front door.

Joseph

I hate my job. I doubt there are many who can honestly say they love what they do for a living, but I can't imagine anyone could honestly say they love being a cologne boy at Bloomingdale's. Nor does it help that my colleagues are all drop dead gorgeous. This is my world. There are two other guys, both of whom are aspiring models and will no doubt someday be

featured in an Abercrombie and Fitch catalog much like the one by my bed. Then we have the girls, sorry, women. Three of them look like they stepped off the runway and one is an older woman who's been doing this for nearly thirty years and knows at least half of the customers who walk in the door. Can you imagine? Thirty years of spraying cards with perfume? Her sense of smell must have died a vicious and painful death years ago, hastened by her smoke breaks every half hour. I can't say which is worse, when it's slow or when it's busy. When it's slow we try to talk to one another, but these are not people who carry on great philosophical conversations. Right now we're in a busy season. Mother's day. Children and Husbands who don't know Calvin from Chanel. I may hate my job, but I know the scents. I can describe any cologne or perfume from the sandalwood top note to the spicy bottom note. It is hell. That's the bottom line. I work in perfume hell.

The phone rings and he answers.

Joseph

Hello. Oh, hi. Yeah. I don't know, I just came in myself, but I don't think so.

Joseph goes to the kitchen and returns with a bottle of wine and two glasses. There is a knock at the door.

Joseph

Come in.

Christine enters holding a few envelopes and catalogs - mail.

Christine

Hi. Hope I'm not disturbing you.

Joseph

No. Just got home.

Christine

Oh, are you expecting company?

Joseph

Noooooooo? Why?

Christine

Well, I see you have two glasses.

Joseph

Well, you did call thirty seconds ago and and let me

know you were on your way down.

Christine

I don't want to intrude on you too long on your territory, I just...

Joseph

Oh for Pete's sake! Christine!

Christine

See, you're upset.

Joseph

I'm sorry. It was a heated moment. I'd been out all night. I was hung over. I shouldn't have said what I said in that way.

Christine

So you didn't mean what you said? I'm still welcome?

Joseph

Yes and no. Here. It's a very good Merlót.

Christine

Plying me with wine?

Joseph

Friends should never argue unless they are sharing a good glass of wine. It's much more civilized.

Christine

That means we're going to argue.

Joseph

Would you just shut up and drink the fucking wine? Let me talk.

Christine

Shutting up and drinking.

Joseph

Thank you. There was some truth to what I said. You're my best friend, and it sucks that you don't come down to see just me anymore.

Christine

I do too.

Joseph

I feel like I'm an afterthought. Do you have any idea how awful it is to be an afterthought? It blows. It blows big vomitous chunks.

Christine  
Damn, you're right, this is good wine.

Joseph  
And then there was the whole Pedro thing...

Christine  
I can't believe you slept with that trash!

Joseph  
Yeah, right! Yeah, Pedro's hot and sexy and all that. But he's just a friend, and he's a good person. He puts up this front cause that's what he's expected to be like, but if you knew him, you'd see he's really not that bad. He's a friend. He's also way out of my league. Hell, I'm more likely to sleep with you, and you know that ain't gonna happen!

Christine  
Beg pardon. You didn't... but I thought... and you let me think that you... You fucker! Pour me another glass.

Joseph  
What's with the mail?

Christine  
Oh, yeah. That brain deficient mail-carrier put your mail in my box again. I guess Three "C" and Four "C" are still interchangeable.

Joseph  
I wondered. I hate opening the box and finding it empty. Ever notice how getting mail sort of makes you feel like you're alive? An empty mailbox makes me question my existence. I get mail, therefore I am.

Christine  
You're a freak. You know that?

Joseph  
Crate and Barrel catalog. Ooo, Best buy's for spring. I'm off Wednesday, you want to go?

Christine  
Sure.

Joseph  
Hey. This is from Phillip.

Christine  
Really? Roommate Phillip?

Joseph  
Roommate Phillip. Oh, please. Don't tell me you  
didn't look at my mail. You always look at my mail.

Christine  
I was still mad at you.

Joseph  
Oh yeah.

Joseph opens the envelope and pulls out a letter. Another piece  
of paper falls from it as he takes it out.

Joseph  
"Dear ex-roomie, I hope you've been watching the  
show..." Yeah. "Sorry I haven't been in touch,"  
blah blah blah, "things are going great... new  
contract for the show... agent got me a sweet deal...  
also shot a movie and another one coming up..."  
Jesus!

Christine  
You've got to be joking. Phillip?

Joseph  
You don't think he actually had some talent that we  
didn't see, do you? Wait... he says he sent a check  
for the back rent that he owed me and for the broken  
dishes and being a great friend. Awww. That's so  
nice. Where's the check?

Christine  
Oh, here. It fell out.

She picks it up and looks at it.

Christine  
Oh. Oh lord.

Joseph  
What?

Christine  
How... how much back rent did he owe you?

Joseph  
I don't know, a few months I guess.

Christine

Your rent isn't much more than mine is it?

Joseph  
Well it is a two bedroom and... why, what...

Joseph moves next to Christine and looks at the check.

Joseph  
Eeep.

Christine  
That's a lot of broken plates.

Joseph  
He says his agent negotiated him a great contract.

Christine  
I guess.

Brad enters and see's the two of them sitting side by side.

Brad  
You two made up? Hello? Hello! Is this some sort of bonding thing that you two do after an argument?

Christine  
Oh, hi.

Joseph  
Hey.

Brad  
Uh huh. Mind if I get a glass and join you?

Joseph  
Uh huh.

Brad  
Hey, what's that?

Brad comes over and stands behind them to view the check.

Brad  
Hey, that almost looks real.

He reaches over and pulls the check out of Christine's hand to examine it breaking their trance.

Joseph  
Hey! Careful!

Christine

Brad!

Brad

Wait. Phillip. Isn't that your old roommate. The one on TV? Is this... this is real?

Joseph

I ... I think so, yeah. He owed me some back rent from when he lived here, and he broke some dishes and glasses and ...

Brad

Fifty Thousand dollars worth?

Joseph

Maybe it's accrued interest or something.

Christine

I always did like Phillip.

Joseph

Good ol' Phillip.

Brad

Hell, I never even met him and I think I'm in love. You know, I can help you pick some killer stocks to invest this in.

Christine

Hey, I gave him some pot free of charge a few times. You think he'll send me a check?

## PART VI

Christine sits alone on stage.

Christine

There are creatures in the wild that look fierce in order to protect themselves. They mimic other animals more dangerous than themselves in order to give the appearance that they themselves are a threat, but in fact they are as harmless as a cool breeze on a warm summers day. Take for instance the docile piranha. It looks and moves exactly like a real piranha with the strong underbite and sharp teeth but in reality it's a very sedate and calm fish that only feeds on smaller prey and vegetation. It's all about impressions. It's what we see that shapes our view of the world. It's what shapes our view of the people we interact with. I have always thought of myself as a good judge of character. I consider myself someone who judges people on their merits and

not on just on what I see. I'm not. I don't think any of us can say without exception that we give everyone a fair chance without taking into account that initial visual impression. I did not like Phillip. I thought he was a leech, sucking what he could from my good dear friend, but then he turns around and repays every cent he drained from Joseph's bank account and then some. I saw Pedro, and saw a predator who wanted to pull my friend into a world that I don't like. Pedro is Joseph's friend. He's nothing more than a docile piranha. Harmless. And who knows, maybe he's what Joseph needs... for now.

Joseph and Pedro enter carrying bags. Lots and lots of bags.

Joseph  
Are you gonna help us or what?

END.