

The Giraffe Dance
A 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.

Phillip: Joseph's Roommate. A "Chelsea boy." Muscular. Actor.

Christine: Their neighbor. Adorable in her way.

Brad Flynn: The prospective roommate.

PART I

The two bedroom apartment of Joseph, a very average looking gay white male, and his roommate, the amazingly gorgeous Phillip. 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

Have you ever seen perfection? I mean really true perfection? I have. He rides the F train with me every day at 8:30 in the morning. Third car. He usually rides toward the front, I'm usually about half way down. Oh sure, I could stand closer, but perfection like that, you just can't get too close. It's kind of like looking at Starry Night. You know, the painting? That's perfection too. If you get too close it all kind of becomes these gross blurs of color, but if you stand at a distance you see the perfection. Sometimes I like to go to MOMA and look at it. I can spend hours looking at Starry Night, just like I could spend hours looking at perfection on the F train. It's probably a good thing that he get's off at 34th Street.

The sound of a crash off stage.

Phillip (OS)

Shit!

Joseph

What was that?

Phillip (OS)

Nothing.

Joseph

Phillip, I want you to know how much I appreciate you washing the dishes. Really I do. I don't want you to think that the gesture goes unnoticed, but maybe you could find a less destructive way of helping

around the apartment.

Phillip comes around the corner and stands in the doorway.

Phillip
I'm really sorry.

Joseph
It's OK. Just a few more trips to Crate and Barrel
and I get the Customer of the year award.

Phillip
I'm just about done.

Joseph
I do still have a couple dishes left right?

Phillip
I'll be more careful.

Phillip disappears and there is a knock at the door. It opens a crack.

Christine
Everyone decent?

Joseph
Come on in.

Christine
Congratulate me!

Joseph
Congratulations. What for?

Christine
I got a job.

Joseph
Really? That's great, doing what?

Christine
I'm temping at a law firm.

Joseph
OK, you see where that's not really a "job," right?

Christine
What are you talking about, of course it's a job.

Joseph
A job implies some sort of long term position.

Christine
It could become long term.

Joseph
Uh huh. Sure.

Christine
My friend Rick got a job temping at an ad agency. He worked there for almost two months.

Joseph
Again, you see where that's not really a job?

Christine
Oh, and what you do is?

Joseph
I've been there for a year and a half! Of course it is. I have health insurance. I have vacation time. I receive a regular paycheck.

Christine
You are a cologne boy at Bloomingdales.

Joseph
Just until I sell my first novel.

Christine
And how is that coming?

Joseph
Splendidly. Thank you very much.

Sound of another crash.

Phillip (OS)
Shit! Sorry!

Joseph
Would it help if I bought an extra set for you?

Christine
Hi Phillip!

Phillip reenters.

Phillip
Hey Christine. I'm really sorry. I'm really sorry. I'll pay for them.

Joseph

With what? Headshots? Sorry, they're non negotiable currency no matter how good looking you are.

Phillip

Oh! I had an audition today, it went really well.

Joseph

Yeah?

Christine

Phillip, that's great!

Phillip

The casting director really liked me, he said I brought a kind of innocence to the role.

Joseph

What were you auditioning for?

Phillip

A serial killer on "Law and Order."

Christine

I love that show!

Joseph

A serial killer?

Phillip

Yup.

Joseph

Phil, innocence may not be exactly what they're looking for in that role.

Phillip

No, no, cause if the character seems innocent, then no one will think he's really the killer. That's what's so cool.

Joseph

OK.

Christine

So, let's go out to dinner. There's a new place that just opened on eighth avenue.

Joseph

Which one?

Christine

You know that Spanish place that opened last month?

Joseph

The one that closed?

Christine

Yeah, a new place opened there.

Joseph

I can't keep up with these restaurants. Doesn't anything stay open here?

Christine

Don't look at me, it's all you Chelsea boys. One week you're into Tapas, the next week it's Italian, the next week Sushi. If you boys would just make up your mind.

Joseph

Don't lump me in with them. I'm about as far from being a Chelsea boy as I can get. See these muscles?

Phillip

No.

Joseph

Exactly.

Phillip

Well, count me out, I've got a date.

Joseph

Who's the lucky boy this week?

Phillip

A guy from my acting studio. We're doing a scene together.

Joseph

I'm sure you are.

Phillip

Next time. I promise.

Christine

You always say that. When are you going to go out with us for a change?

Joseph

Once he's done his part for the welfare of the needy gay men of New York City. There are still a few he hasn't dated yet.

Phillip

And more moving here every day! It's a curse.

Christine

Do try to pencil us in before the next millennium?

Phillip

I'll try, but I can't make any promises. Seriously though, I will go out with you guys soon. I swear! Don't give me that look!

Joseph

What look? I don't have looks.

Christine

You can say...

Joseph

Shut up.

Phillip

Christ, I'm supposed to meet him in a half hour, gotta get dressed.

Phillip exits to his bedroom.

Christine

So, are we celebrating?

Joseph

Christine, can I ask you a question?

Christine

Fire away hon.

Joseph

What's wrong with me?

Christine

If you're asking me why you don't have a boyfriend, much less a date tonight, and Phillip has a date every other night, and sometimes two in one day, I'll tell you the answer, but I don't know if it'll help.

Joseph

That's what I love about you, your painfully blunt honesty. Yeah, that's what I'm asking.

Christine

Joseph, you are part of a culture that thrives on looks. Now, don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that you're unattractive by any means, but you don't stand

out in a crowd. Phillip stands out in a crowd. When he walks into a crowded room, heads turn. He's got the brains God gave cabbage, but he's got looks. Your entire culture is based on who looks good. Who's got the most muscles. Who looks like they have the most T-cells. You don't. You can buy the Gucci clothes, but when you wear them they aren't going to look like they look in the catalog. You have smarts. You have wit. You have all the intangibles. Don't worry, someday you'll meet him. So what do you say? Cajun or Sushi?

Joseph

Sushi.

Phillip enters shirtless holding a shirt.

Phillip

Can I borrow your Gucci shirt?

Joseph

You can have my Gucci shirt.

Phillip

Cool.

PART II

Joseph

I spoke to him. He didn't ride near the front of the train today, he rode near me. I was pretending to read the Daily News, like I always do while I stare at him. I just happened to have the paper open to the horoscopes. He smiled this lustrous smile at me and said, "what's mine say?" I'm pretty sure I looked at him for a solid minute before he said, "the horoscope, what's mine say?" I tried to look coy and asked him, "what's your sign?" Then he laughed. He laughed at something I said. Perfection. So anyway, he's a Pisces, I'm a Virgo. Not exactly a perfect match, but it'll do. When I got home I clipped out both our horoscopes for today. The day we first spoke to each other. The day my life changed. How pathetic is that?

Phillip enters the apartment

Phillip

Joseph! Joe, are you home?

Joseph

Right here.

Phillip
I got a part.

Joseph
You what?

Phillip
I got a part! A walk on, possibly recurring role!

Joseph
Shut up!

Phillip
You shut up!

Joseph
That's un ... I mean ... Phillip! Congratulations!

Phillip
It's not a huge role, but they said if it works out I'll be a recurring character on the show. I just, I can't even believe it. I mean, can you believe it? I can't believe it.

Joseph
That's awesome. I knew you'd get your break.

Phillip
But, here's the thing.

Joseph
There's a thing?

Phillip
It shoots in Los Angeles. If it becomes a recurring role, I'll have to move out there. I mean, for the one episode I can just fly out and do it, but if I'm going to be a regular I need to live out there.

Joseph
We'll cross that bridge when we get to it. It's not like you're moving out tomorrow.

Phillip
No, no, but I just ... Wow. I just needed to let you know it's a possibility.

Joseph
I appreciate that.

Phillip

So, how was your day?

Joseph

My day? Oh, well, you know. I sprayed cologne on cards. I... this calls for a celebration. Let me get some wine.

Joseph exits to the kitchen.

Phillip

Yeah, cool. My agent said that this show has been really good about keeping people on though. She's had a couple clients get regular gigs. They like to have stability, you know, keep the continuity going and everything. I have to really nail this part.

Joseph (OS)

I'm listening.

Phillip

Hey, is there any of that pot left?

Joseph (OS)

Um, I think Christine took it.

Phillip

Damn. Oh, man, I gotta call my Mom. She's gonna freak!

Phillip exits to his bedroom. There is the sound of a crash.

Joseph (OS)

Shit!

Phillip reenters.

Phillip

You all right?

Joseph stands in the doorway to the kitchen.

Joseph

Fine. Don't worry.

Phillip

Looks like another trip to Crate and Barrel, huh?

Phillip closes the door to his bedroom.

Joseph

Yeah. I guess so.

Joseph returns to the kitchen. Christine enters the apartment.

Christine
Joseph? Phillip?

Joseph (OS)
I'm in the kitchen.

Christine sits on the sofa.

Christine
Bring me a drink.

Joseph (OS)
Not a problem.

Christine
Is Phillip here?

Joseph (OS)
In his room.

Christine
Ask me how my day was.

Joseph reenters with two glasses of wine.

Joseph
How was your day?

Christine
I was fired.

Joseph
From your temp job?

Christine
Yes.

Joseph
Hang on.

Joseph exits to the kitchen and returns carrying the bottle of wine.

Joseph
One glass won't cut this, I can tell right now. OK, just tell me, how does one get fired from a temp job? I mean, no offense, but temps aren't exactly renowned for competence.

Christine

I didn't go in for a couple days.

Joseph
For a couple days?

Christine
Three.

Joseph
Consecutively?

Christine
Kind of.

Joseph
Elaborate, please.

Christine
Fuck. Look, I didn't like it anyway. It was just a hobby more than anything. It's not like I have to work.

Joseph
Apparently. More wine?

Christine
Please.

Phillip reenters.

Phillip
Christine! Guess what?

Joseph
Phillip, perhaps now isn't...

Christine
What?

Phillip
I got a part! On a TV show! Prime time!

Christine
Do you have another bottle?

Joseph
I'll check.

Phillip
Can you believe it?

Christine

Quite frankly...

Joseph
Christine.

Joseph exits to the kitchen.

Christine
That's great Phillip. That's great.

Phillip
Isn't it?

The phone rings and Joseph reenters with a second bottle of wine and a cork screw, he sits with the bottle between his legs and begins to work on the bottle. Phillip goes to the phone.

Phillip
Hello. Oh, hey!
(to Christine and Joseph)
Sorry, it's my agent.

(back to phone)
Yeah? No way. No way. That's... yeah. Yeah, I can! Thanks Laurie. No really, I don't think I could have done it without you. You can? Awesome! Oh man. Yeah. All right. I'll talk to you tomorrow to work out the details. Should I call you or... OK. Yeah. Thanks again. Thanks. Later. Oh wow.

Joseph gets the bottle open.

Joseph
Good news I guess?

Phillip
I'm moving to LA.

Joseph
I'm sorry?

Phillip
The producers met with the writers this afternoon. They liked my screen test. They want to make me a permanent character on the show instead of just a one shot. They're going to expand the role and need me to move out there.

Joseph
I see.

Phillip
I'm sorry man. I just... I... This is all so fast!

I mean, I've always heard about this happening to people but I never once thought it would happen to me, did you?

Christine grabs Joseph's arm tightly.

Joseph

No, I mean, that's great. *(to Christine)* Let go. *(back to Phillip)* Look, I'll miss you, but you gotta take this, right? It's not even a question. Besides, maybe now I'll get some of that money you owe me.

Phillip

Thanks Joseph. Thanks.

Christine

Congratulations Phillip. Couldn't have happened to a nicer guy.

Phillip

Thanks gorgeous.

Christine

You're welcome.

Phillip

I gotta call my mom again!

Phillip exits into his bedroom.

Joseph

Do you have any pot left?

Christine

Let's go.

They rise to exit.

PART III

Joseph

I don't know why I do it. I don't choose to do it. I don't want to do it, but every night when I go to bed I start running through all the stupid things I did that day. All my errors. Everything I said that I shouldn't have said. You know, those things that make it past the filters in your brain that are supposed to stop you from making a complete ass of yourself. I lay there in my bed surrounded by a thick down comforter in absolute safety, away from

all of these horrible events of my life and wonder why the hell my brain didn't say, "Stop, you moron! Don't say that!" But I said it and I certainly can't take it back. Sometimes, on those rare occasions when I didn't do or say something completely inappropriate that day, I'll think back to some of the more impressive social errors I've committed and every time I relive one, I cringe. My last boyfriend left me because of one of those errors. That's one of my favorite moments to relive when I've had a good day. It never fails to elicit a cringe. It was five years ago and yet to this day it still evokes the same reaction every time. I'm not complaining. No, I thrive on my neuroses. I'm far beyond what modern psychiatry can cure. It makes me who I am. I think if more people embraced their mental illness instead of rushing into therapy to "cure" themselves, we'd all be much happier.

Phillip comes out of the bathroom.

Phillip
What time is Christine coming down?

Joseph
Any minute. Flush?

Phillip
Sorry.

Phillip goes back into the bathroom.

Joseph
I swear. You did have indoor plumbing where you grew up, right? You didn't just go out into the back yard or something?

Phillip
Look at it this way, you won't have to deal with it much longer.

Joseph
Goody. Do me a favor, open the wine for me? It needs to breathe.

Phillip
I'm glad you guys talked me into this.

Phillip exits into the kitchen

Joseph
So am I. For roommates, we don't really see that

much of each other, I wanted us to spend at least one more night just hanging out. Oh, I forgot to tell you, a package came for you today.

Crash from the kitchen and Phillip reappears.

Phillip
What's that?

Joseph
Now what was that?

Phillip
Where?

Joseph
On the table there, what broke?

Phillip rushes to the package (a FedEx envelope, fairly thick) as Joseph goes to the kitchen.

Phillip
So sweet!

Joseph (OS)
Dammit!

Phillip begins opening the package as the sound of glass being swept up comes from the kitchen.

Phillip
Why didn't you tell me this was here! It's my script for my first appearance!

Joseph (OS)
Phillip they've discontinued these glasses. I can't replace it. Now I have to buy a whole new set. And you didn't even open the wine, I told you it has to breathe.

Phillip
Look, it's my script! Here, here's my first line, "Mr., let's see, Casares? I'll be representing you." Oh man!

Joseph (OS)
The wine needs to breathe, otherwise the flavor is totally lost.

Phillip
Damn, they really beefed this up for me.

Joseph reenters

Joseph

Is it so hard for you to do one thing for me?

Phillip

Look, I'm sorry, I'll buy you a new set of glasses.

Joseph

That's not even the point. OK, it is the point, but...

Phillip

So what's the problem?

Joseph

You didn't open the wine!

Phillip

Big deal.

Joseph

Big...? Big deal? Why the hell do I even bother trying! I should have known!

Phillip

Why the hell does wine have to breathe anyway? How the hell does fermented grape juice breathe?

Christine enters.

Christine

Hey boys!

Joseph

Fermented grape juice?

Christine

Oh dear.

Joseph

I will have you know that that "fermented grape juice" comes from one of the most fertile wine growing valleys in France. It happens to be from my private collection of wines that I save for extremely special occasions. I was apparently operating under the false impression that you might give a damn and appreciate a final gesture of kindness, but clearly you haven't the brain capacity to do so!

Christine

I brought some board games.

Phillip

Wait, what was that? Are you calling me dumb?

Joseph

No Phillip, I'm not calling you dumb, I'm calling you unobservant and rude. Dumb goes without saying!

Christine

Scrabble?

Phillip

Well this rude, unobservant dumb guy just got a role on a major prime time series. This rude, unobservant dumb guy just signed a four year contract during which time I'll be making more money in a month than you do in a year as a cologne boy. At least I'm doing what I set out to do. Unless spraying cologne is all you aspire to?

Christine

Clue?

Joseph

You know what. I'm glad you didn't open that bottle of wine, because now I can save it for a really special occasion. The day you move your sorry ass out of here. Or maybe I could save it for the day they discover that they've just hired someone who looks pretty but really has no talent whatsoever. I figure that'll take about a week.

Phillip

How bout you save it for the day you actually get laid again? You can use it to get someone drunk enough to actually do it.

Christine

All right, that's it! Ding! Ding! Ding! To your corners!

Joseph

Stay out of this Christine.

Christine grabs Joseph firmly.

Christine

I said "to - your - corners." Now SIT!

Joseph

Ow.

Christine
Phillip, say you're sorry.

Phillip
But he...

Christine
Now Phillip. Phillip, Phillip, Phillip. How long is it going to take you to realize not to cross me? I told you to say you're sorry.

Phillip
I'm... Listen, he...

Christine
I will hurt you. I've done it before, I'll do it again and I won't regret it. Say it.

Phillip
I'm sorry.

Christine
Was that so bad?

Phillip
Joseph, really. I'm sorry.

Christine
Now you.

Joseph
I'm not going to say anything.

Christine
Let me explain something to you. He may be moving out, but I am not. I will be here for a long long time. I will still be in your life and I can make you suffer. Stop, let me finish. I know exactly what you're doing even if you don't. You want to burn this friendship just so you can avoid having to say goodbye. You are trying to sever all ties so you don't get hurt. It won't work. You are his friend. You will say you are sorry, or you will feel such pain as you have never known.

Joseph
God I hate when you cut through everything. I'm sorry.

Christine
I have such good boys. So what'll it be? Risk, Life, Clue, or Scrabble?

PART IV

Joseph

For those of you who aren't aware, Virgos, such as I am, like, desire, crave, need order in their lives. Disorder? It drives us crazy. Change our schedule, and we start to question the very existence of God. So you can imagine my shock when Perfection wasn't on the train. To be honest, I didn't know what to do. I couldn't read the paper. I couldn't drink my coffee. In fact my coffee got cold, and by the time I got to Bloomingdales it was too late for me to get another one, so I didn't have my coffee, yet another change in my daily structure. I sprayed one woman in the face with Obsession for Men and I was sent home early, yet another change in my routine. Oh, and did I mention my roommate is moving out? Yeah, that's the stability I'm looking for. I hope he's not ill. Perfection that is. I wish I knew where he lived.

Joseph sits on the sofa with a book. There are some boxes sitting outside Phillip's bedroom. The sounds of sex come from Phillip's bedroom. Joseph rises, walks to the kitchen pausing for a moment at Phillip's door then exits into the kitchen. The sex sounds culminate in an apparent orgasm. Joseph reenters with a cup of coffee and crosses back to the sofa. He sits and opens his book. Phillip's door opens and there stands Phillip dripping sweat with a sheet around his waist.

Phillip

Oh, hey. I'm sorry, are we keeping you up?

Joseph

No.

Phillip

Oh. OK.

Phillip turns back into the room gesturing for his partner to stay in there. He crosses to the bathroom where he pauses for a moment to look back at Joseph.

Phillip

You all right?

Joseph

Yup. Just reading.

Phillip

OK.

Phillip exits into the bathroom. Joseph continues to read taking

the occasional sip of his coffee. Phillip reenters after a few moments.

Phillip

Look, I'm really sorry if we're making too much noise.

Joseph

No, I just can't sleep. Really.

Phillip

All right.

Phillip moves to his bedroom.

Joseph

So, tomorrow is the big day, huh?

Phillip

What?

Joseph

The move. Tomorrow is the big day.

Phillip

Yeah. Um... yeah it is.

Joseph

Excited?

Phillip

I guess so.

Joseph

You guess so? You're moving to Los Angeles to be in a series. You aren't excited? I would be. I'd be bouncing off the walls.

Phillip

Are you mad at me about something?

Joseph

No.

Phillip

You're sure?

Joseph

I'm sure.

Phillip

Good. Cause you've been a really great roommate. I

mean that. You've been more than a roommate, you've been a friend.

Joseph
Thanks. I appreciate that.

Phillip
I mean it.

Joseph
So who is he?

Phillip
Who?

Joseph
In there.

Phillip
Oh, I...

Joseph
You don't know his name, do you?

Phillip
Not really.

Joseph
OK. No, I'm not judging. I'm actually jealous.

Phillip
Joe...

Joseph
No, not like that. I... well, I mean yeah I find you attractive, I mean please, who wouldn't, just look at you, but what I mean to say is I'm jealous that you can do that. I couldn't do that. Even if someone wanted to I couldn't.

Phillip
Sure you could.

Joseph
No, I don't think I could. Don't get me wrong, I certainly don't begrudge you one last New York fling. I just wish I could do that. Just once. And just once it would be nice for them to want to do that. Wild and passionate with no repercussions. No strings attached. Sex for the sake of sex. Two bodies together in the night.

Phillip

You know it freaks me out when you start getting poetic and stuff.

Joseph

Sorry. Well, I'm off to bed. You guys have fun.

Phillip

You going to be around at all tomorrow?

Joseph

No. I have to work. I'll be on the train at 8:30.

Phillip

Oh. I probably won't be up yet. So, I guess, good bye.

Joseph

Yeah. Keep in touch, will you?

Phillip

I will.

Joseph

You know the number, right?

Phillip

Yeah. Yeah, I know it.

Joseph

Right.

They stand for a moment then both turn to their rooms as lights dim.

Part V

Joseph

You know, living alone isn't so bad. Sure, the bills immediately double while your income stays the same. Sure, there's the empty apartment. Sure, the Psychic Network is a lousy substitute for conversation, but it's not as bad as all that. There's also the fact that I'm able to walk around my apartment bare ass naked. I don't actually do that, but at least the option is there. And I haven't had to go to Crate and Barrel to replace a broken dish even once this week. I'm sure they're all wondering what happened to me. I may stop by this weekend on my way home, just to say hi. Oh, and speaking of missing persons, he was back on the train this morning. He looked more perfect than ever with a tan. Apparently he had

been on vacation. He smiled that emergency brake smile of his at me as he got on and came right up to me. He said, "hey Virgo, how are you?" He's got a pet name for me. I wonder if he told anyone that he met someone on the train? What does he do when he's not there? I wish I weren't a coward. What are his friends like? Does he have a Christine in his life? Does he have a roommate? Does he need a roommate? This is why I haven't slept in a week.

The phone rings.

Joseph

Hello. OK, hang on a second, let me grab my notepad. I've got a few questions to ask. Name? Peter Kingsley. Is that L-Y or L-E-Y? All right. Age? Twenty three. What do you do for a living? Really, where? I know that restaurant. Sure. And are you an actor? Yeah, I guess everyone is, you're right. Do you smoke? Pets? No pets. OK, well, I've got four cats. Is that all right? Oh. Oh. Well, sorry.

Joseph hangs up and picks up the remote control for the TV.

Joseph

No more actors.

Christine

Decent?

Joseph

I'm dressed. Does that count?

Christine

Tell me things get better.

Joseph

Things get better. Why, what happened?

Christine

I just spent three days in my apartment smoking pot and watching QVC. Do you mind if I stay here for a few weeks, just in case they try to make deliveries I don't want to be home to accept them.

Joseph

Why, what did you order?

Christine

I don't know.

Joseph

Why don't you get the deliveries. Maybe you ordered some really cool stuff. You usually have great taste when you're stoned.

Christine

Perhaps you didn't hear me. I was watching Q-V-C.

Joseph

And...

Christine

You've never watched it have you?

Joseph

I don't think so.

Christine

There you go. Well, trust me, I didn't order anything cool. Chances are I'll receive a bamboo steamer, a complete collection of faux ruby jewelry set in fourteen karat tin complete with tiara, and seven sets of never needs sharpening knives that can cut steel.

Joseph

A tiara, huh?

Christine

Tell you what, you can have the tiara.

Joseph

So now that you're out of your drug induced shopping spree, what do you want to do tonight?

Christine

I don't know. Isn't that sad? We live in New York City, the greatest, largest, most happening place in the world and I just spent three days in front of the TV and now can't think of a thing to do, other than to go back and watch it for three more days.

Joseph

Or, you could go out and get a job.

Christine

Jobs and me don't get along all that well, remember? Besides, my parents died so that I could be independently wealthy and do nothing for years and years, I don't want to let them down.

Joseph

You could go to a museum. You could volunteer your time with some organization.

Christine

I could do that.

The phone rings.

Christine

Hello. Oh, hang on a second. Someone about the apartment. Sounds cute.

Joseph

Gee, maybe I should just offer it to him right now.

Christine

Sarcasm won't win you friends.

Joseph

Hi. Yeah, just a second, I need to ask you some questions. Name? Brad Flynn. Irish? Just a lucky guess. Age? Twenty five. What do you do for a living? Oh, I've heard that's a great company. Sure. And are you an Actor? No? Really? Do you smoke? Pets? OK, well, sounds great. You pass the phone interview, let's see when you can come look at the apartment. I'm around Monday and Tuesday and most evenings after eight or nine. Sunday? Sunday works for me. Let me give you the address. Yes, sure, I can wait. You're right, he sounds hot.

Christine

It's a rare gift. I try to use it sparingly.

Joseph

OK, it's 256 west 16th street between eighth and ninth, buzzer 2R. So what time? 6:30. Great. Oh, my name is Joseph. Yeah, me too. (*hangs up*) Brad Flynn. I hope he works out. He's the first non actor to apply.

Christine

What does he do?

Joseph

He works on Wall Street.

Christine

Boring.

Joseph

Hey, at least he'll pay the rent on time.

Christine
Until the inevitable crash.

Joseph
We'll just have to hope he's good enough to see it coming before the rest of them do.

Christine
Yeah. So, let's do something fun tonight.

Joseph
We could go to that new restaurant on eighth avenue.

Christine
The Thai one or the one with all the neon.

Joseph
You pick.

Christine
Neon. I need more neon in my life.

Joseph
Maybe you can order some on QVC.

Part VI

Joseph
It's strange, the things we take for granted in our lives. I mean, you never think about it do you? Then again, I suppose that's the very definition of taking something for granted. Phillip, for all his faults was really the first somewhat stable roommate I've ever had. At least he was somewhat sane. OK, clearly I've had some really messed up roommates, but the point remains, Phillip was all right. I took him for granted. He's gone. Every day I try to take note of something I take for granted. The fact that I have change in my pocket when I walk by and try not to see the homeless people. Having a place to call home. The telephone is a good one too. I remember once I didn't pay the bill for a few weeks ... ok, months - come on, like some of you haven't been there! I don't think I've ever felt so isolated. You just assume that you'll always have that communication available. It was horrible. Anyway, I think it's a good habit to get into. You should try it. Right now, think of something you take for granted. Like, right now, I'm thinking of my parents. I just kind of accept that they'll always be there and then every so often I think how

Christine doesn't have that privilege. And then of course there are my friends. That's one thing I try to never take for granted.

Christine enters.

Christine
I brought popcorn! That's not too corny is it? Pun not intended.

Joseph
I just popped some in the microwave.

Christine
Good, I'm not the only geek.

Joseph
This is too weird isn't it?

Christine
I just hope he's good. Remember that play he did with the hoods?

Joseph
"In the dark of night I come"

Christine
"We are the seekers. We seek out the truth!"

Joseph
OK, but it wasn't that he was bad, the play was bad.

Christine
Joseph, he was bad. I don't just mean bad, he was BAD.

Joseph moves to his bedroom.

Joseph
What time is it?

Christine
Five or ten more minutes.

Joseph
Good, we've got time. There's a bottle of that wine you recommended in the fridge, want to go get it?

Christine
Wine and popcorn? Is that a good combination?

Joseph

Guess we'll find out.

Christine exits as Joseph reenters from his bedroom with three wrapped presents and places them on the coffee table.

Christine (OS)

Joseph, this stuff is expensive, are you sure you want to waste it? I mean, sure it's Phillip's prime time debut and all but, c'mon!

Joseph

Just bring the wine!

Christine reenters with the bottle and two glasses

Christine

Aren't you a Bossy Bess tonight. Bring the wine, I swear you're lucky I like you or I'd... What are those?

Joseph

Happy Birthday.

Christine

Joseph.

Joseph

You thought I forgot?

Christine

You... well. Yes. I mean, I didn't even know you knew. I didn't tell you.

Joseph

I have my methods.

Christine

You went through my bag.

Joseph

I didn't touch anything but your drivers license, I swear.

Christine

Bitch.

Joseph

Come on, open them up before the show starts.

Christine picks up the first package and opens it. It is a tiara.

Joseph

And I swear I didn't get it from QVC. Hey, I may only be a cologne boy, but I still get the thirty percent discount.

Christine
You are too much. Thank you.

Joseph
Next! Hurry up!

Christine
Bossy bossy bossy! You know I'm going to get revenge. I don't know how. I don't know when. But I will.

Christine opens the next package.

Christine
What are these?

Joseph
Memberships to MOMA, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Guggenheim and the Museum of Natural History. If you aren't going to work, I figure you can at least get a little cultured. Now you won't have any excuse not to go with me next time.

Christine
I promise to go with you.

Joseph
Plus, I can borrow your cards when I want to take some cute guy to the museum with me.

Christine
So I'll just hold on to these will I?

Joseph
Basically, yes. OK, hurry up, the show is gonna start any second. Open the other one.

Christine does so and holds up a sweater.

Christine
How did you afford all of this? A sweater? It's nice but... I mean...

Joseph
My mom knitted it for you. She says you have to wear it when you come home with me for Thanksgiving.

Christine

What?

Joseph

You didn't think I was going to just leave you here when I go home for the holidays? You're going to be part of my family. Besides, having a girl along with me will stop some of the rumors.

Christine

Thank you.

Joseph

You are welcome.

Christine

I think I'm going to cry.

Joseph

I'll fix that, It's time for Phillip's debut. That ought to do the trick.

Christine hugs Joseph tightly.

PART VII

Joseph

I have a date. I'll just let that sink in for a little bit. I. Have. A. Date. I know. You're stunned. Just wait, you'll be more stunned. It's a date with Perfection. His name is Adam and he works at Macy's. There's something sort of viciously taboo about dating the competition and I like it, but he doesn't work in fragrances, he works in the jewelry department. And what a great name! Adam. The first man created in God's image. I mean, could it be more appropriate! We were on the subway and he said, "you know, we see each other almost every morning. We should get together some night, maybe go out for drinks after work." I mumbled something along the lines of, "that'd be nice" or something equally inane. That's going right into the cringe file, believe me. But the point remains that we have a date for Monday. I know it isn't normally a big "date" night, but it just so happens that we both have Tuesday off, so we don't have to worry about, ahem, getting in too early. I just hope he lives up to my expectations. Let's face facts, I've built him up just a bit and so far our conversations have consisted of reading our horoscopes and the weather. More than ten minutes with him, fifteen if the train has delays, is venturing into uncharted waters. I may be able to lust after him physically, but guys

like him aren't exactly known for their sparkling conversation or witty repartee. What have I gotten myself into? I'm doomed.

The buzzer rings

Joseph
Hello?

Speaker (VO)
[garble]

Joseph
Come on up.

Joseph looks around the apartment. It all appears in order. He fluffs a pillow then looks in a mirror to see if he's presentable. Finally there is a knock at the door. Joseph crosses and opens the door to reveal Brad Flynn. Brad is very attractive but very proper, he wears a suit, and not a hair is out of place.

Joseph
Brad, right?

Brad
Yes. Joe?

Joseph
Joseph. Yeah. Come on in. I'll show you around a little.

Brad
All right. Nice area. I like the building.

Joseph
You didn't have any trouble finding it?

Brad
No, no, not at all. This is nice.

Joseph
Thanks. Decorated it myself.

Brad
Nice.

Joseph
Um. So, this is the living room. As you can see. That's the door to my room. Here's the bathroom.

Brad steps into the bathroom.

Brad

Good sized bathroom.

Joseph

I like it. And over here... over here is the room that would be your room. In here.

Brad crosses over after lingering a moment in the bathroom.

Brad

This door?

Joseph

Yeah. You can, you know, go in and look at it if you want. There's a cable hook up in there, and my last roommate had a separate phone line so if you wanted that, it's all set up for it.

Brad enters the room. Christine enters the apartment.

Christine

Hello? Everybody decent?

Brad pokes his head out.

Joseph

Yes.

Christine

Just making sure.

Brad

Who's that?

Christine

Hello neighbor, just stopping by, hope I'm not interrupting anything. Oh, hello.

Joseph

Christine, this is Brad. Brad, Christine, one of my neighbors.

Christine

Hi. Hope I'm not intruding on the two of you, I was just wondering if you had any milk. I'm fresh out.

Joseph

I thought you were lacto... oh, oh. Help yourself.

Christine smiles broadly then crosses to the kitchen.

Brad

She's awfully friendly.

Joseph
Isn't she though.

Brad
Just comes in like that, huh?

Joseph
Well, yeah. Like you said, she's friendly.

Brad
She seems attractive enough. You've never been with her?

Joseph
God no.

Brad
Interesting. Mind if I have a look at the kitchen.

Joseph
Feel free.

Brad moves toward the kitchen and goes in just as Christine is coming out.

Christine
Oops. Excuse me.

Brad
Not at all.

Brad goes into the kitchen.

Christine
He's cute.

Joseph
Who are you?

Christine
Oh shush.

Joseph
What do you think you're doing?

Christine
What does it look like I'm doing? I'm checking him out to see if you and he should ...

Brad reenters.

Brad
Great kitchen. Nice big refrigerator.

Joseph
Yeah.

Brad
So Christine, you live here in the building?

Christine
Yup. Just upstairs, so I hear everything. Just be warned.

Brad
I appreciate the warning. But I guess it depends on whether Joseph and I hit it off.

Christine
That it does. Well, I'm off. I hope we'll be seeing more of you.

Brad
Likewise.

Christine
Toodles.

Christine exits.

Joseph
Toodles?

Brad
She's very attractive.

Joseph
I guess. I'm sorry, can I offer you anything to drink? We can sit down, talk a little and see if we're "compatible." I've got wine, Diet Pepsi, water...

Brad
A beer would be great.

Joseph
Ah, Beer? Sure. I think I've got some, let me just check. Have a seat, make yourself comfortable.

Brad
Thanks.

Brad goes over to the sofa and sits down and Joseph goes into the kitchen. He picks up a magazine. Flips through it. Puts it down. Joseph returns

Joseph
Here we go.

Brad
Oh, ah, thanks. So. You're gay?

Joseph
I beg your pardon?

Brad
I just couldn't help noticing the magazines.

Joseph
Yeah. Chelsea. Male. Single. Gay.

Brad
I see.

Joseph
You're not?

Brad
No.

Joseph
You're kidding.

Brad
No. I'm straight. What makes you think I'm gay?

Joseph
I'm sorry. I just thought ... I guess I thought anyone who would apply for the apartment would be gay. I'm sorry.

Brad
OK. Is it still available?

Joseph
Are you still interested?

Brad
I guess so. I didn't really give much thought to having a gay roommate.

Joseph
I can't say that I gave much thought to having a straight one.

Brad

Tell you what, you get me a date with that girl, and I'll give you the deposit right now.

Joseph

Christine!

The door opens immediately.

Christine

Hi Brad.

Joseph

Welcome to the building.

PART VIII

Joseph

I saw a special on Discovery the other night. It showed this dance that giraffes do when they're mating. These awkward, long necked, lanky, gawky creatures dancing about. You would think they would be positively clumsy, with those long legs and necks wobbling about, but there was a kind of elegant grace to it. A leg would rise, the neck stretches out, then they would bow down. I sat in front of the television entranced by their movements. I swear, I couldn't take my eyes off it. They made twists and turns that just don't seem possible for their bodies to make. It's this wonderful giraffe dance. And it's beautiful. That's what sex between two men is like. Men are not graceful by nature, you know that, right? When two clumsy men get together in a bed though, something happens. You move this way and that. You try to do things that you don't think your body will ever be able to do but it does it anyway. You lift a leg, your neck stretches out, you bow down. And it's beautiful. On this show, they also showed dolphins, who are by nature extremely graceful, until they start to have sex. Then it's wet and sloppy and things flapping against each other. This is what I imagine sex between two women must be like. But then, perhaps I'm a little biased.

Joseph crosses to his bedroom.

Joseph

Adam? Are you asleep?

Joseph exits into his room.

Lights out.