

## **SLICE, A one act play**

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### **Synopsis**

Kyle visits his childhood home in the suburbs to share a pizza dinner with his parents. As it turns out, his mother is away at a religious retreat, leaving Kyle alone with his father for perhaps the first time in their adult lives. Without his mother hovering around, Kyle seizes on the opportunity to ask his father, Newt, all the questions about their lives together that he always wondered about. As the evening wears on, the civil dialogue begins to fray, and startling revelations begin to surface. In the end, Kyle learns more about his father, and himself, than he bargained for, and we are left wondering what effect Newt's repressed sexuality had on Kyle, and to what extent shaped his tortured relationship with his mother, and to women in general.

### **Characters**

**Kyle, the son**

**Newt, the father**

SCENE: A living room in a suburban Long Island home, early evening, an elderly man, Newt, in his early 70s, sits in a side chair reading, glancing at his watch. Suddenly his son, Kyle, mid-40's, out of breath, bursts in the front door

Kyle: Hey, hey, hi, sorry, sorry

Newt: (sharply) You're late (gets up to face son)

Kyle: (shakes father's hand) I know, I know, I'm pretty good at telling time. Little hand is the hour, right?

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Newt: Always the wise guy.

Kyle: Hey, take it easy, I just got here, what, am I keeping you from your nightly laxative?

(Kyle sits down on the sofa opposite his father, who sits back in his chair, breathes out heavily)

Kyle: (Lets out a long sigh) Goddamned train, stuck in Jamaica for 20 minutes, you should know how messed up it is, you took it enough times, right?

Newt: Rarely.

Kyle: Oh, right, right, you did the bus - subway dance, never understood that.

Newt: Worked for me.

Kyle: Yeah, well, it didn't work for me, goddamned commuting, big reason I moved to the city, out of this prehistoric suburban landscape.

Newt: You seemed ok with it all those years.

Kyle: I hated it, trapped in a metal box four hours a day with the undead, pasty guys with shiny suits, heading to a mindless job, what, calculating widow benefits, then back home to a meal of gray meat and gluey sauce, plated by a wife with cooling curlers.

Newt: Not pretty, but, I thought you hung with a group of commuter buddies to ease the pain, pass the time?

Kyle: No way, I hated those so-called regulars, staked out their little space, pulled a poster out of the frame for a card table, gets ugly if you sit in one of their precious seats.

Newt: Well, some people have no choice, they do it cause they have to, not because they want to, they have responsibilities, families.

Kyle: I didn't have to.

Newt: And left a family behind.

Kyle: Oh, shit, are we gonna go through that again?

Newt: No, I'm just saying, you brought it up.

Kyle: Listen, how many times have I told you, the marriage wasn't working, I did what I had to do, worked out for the best in the end, right?

Newt: I guess.

Kyle: OK, OK, let's not rehash old news, I didn't schlepp out here just to open wounds, rather open wine, any in the fridge?

Newt: Yeah, look for a cardboard box, probably not the vintage you're used to.

Kyle: Hey, wine is nothing more than an alcohol delivery system, I could give a shit what it tastes like.

(Kyle goes through door into kitchen, comes back with a glass of wine, takes a big drink)

Kyle: (holding up the glass) Ah, yes, the terroir, I think the soil must have been a little chalky, the nose is flinty, but the finish, crisp with a hint of ...Lysol?

Newt: (chuckling) I found it in the household cleaning aisle.

Kyle: You crazy oenophile! (they both laugh, as he takes a big gulp)

Kyle: Ahh, that's better, so nice to see you pops.

Newt: Yeah, you too.

Kyle: (runs hand over furniture) I swear, if you blindfolded me I'd know where I was just sitting here.

Newt: Makes sense, you lived here almost twenty years.

Kyle: Nah, that's not it, it's the smell.

Newt: What smell?

Kyle: The smell, I mean, it's not a dead animal or sour socks or anything, just an aroma, a blend, unique, like perfume, really, once you smell it you lock in.

Newt: You mean the house isn't clean?

Kyle: No, no, I told you, it's not bad, you know, it's just, what, decades of living, who knows what it is, old crayons, spilled pea soup, fireplace smoke, all comes together, adds up to home.

Newt: Maybe we should get an air purifying system.

Kyle: Geez, relax, sorry I mentioned it. (takes another drink). Anyway, you're looking good, been taking your meds?

Newt: Sure.

Kyle: How do you keep track of all of them?

Newt: Not easy.

Kyle: Do you really need all of those pills?

Newt: That's what they say.

Kyle: What are they for?

Newt: Main one's for the heart, all the rest for side effects, one keeps your hair from falling out, the other from going blind, oh, and one prevents total paralysis.

Kyle: Whoo, nasty.

Newt: Oh yeah, you know, you can tell how old someone is by adding up their daily pill intake and multiply it by 10 (laughs).

Kyle: I'm good, only take a boner pill, and that is only "on demand".

Newt: Thanks, that's good to know. (gets up and turns on a light). So you're OK?

Kyle: Killer.

Newt: That's not an answer.

Kyle: No, no, perfecto, a little prostate issue, but you know all about that.

Newt: Plagued me my whole life.

Kyle: Yeah, last checkup it was a little swollen.

Newt: You have medication.

Kyle: No, doc said masturbate twice a day to relieve the pressure.

Newt: Really?

Kyle: I said, yeah, Ok, (turns to audience) I guess I'll have to cut back! (he laughs). Good news, my dick is fine.

Newt: That's comforting. So, what else is new, Mr. Excitement?

Kyle: Let's see, oh, just started acting lessons, you know, kinda getting into it, think I'm a natural.

Newt: You should take lessons on being real.

Kyle: What's that supposed to mean?

Newt: I don't know, you've sorta been an actor all your life.

Kyle: So I'm a phony?

Newt: Not exactly, I mean, to me you're always on, performing really, I often wonder, what's behind the façade?, I thought I knew, but I'm not sure, you're like a western movie set, nothing but two by fours holding up the front of the saloon.

Kyle: It's the world we live in, papa san, put on a show, keep 'em laughing, reveal your inner secrets, show weakness or emotion, you're a dead man, done, finished.

Newt: Maybe your world, not mine. Is that why you got into advertising?

Kyle: If that world hadn't existed, I would've invented it. Perfect for me, equal parts hustle, guile and charm, Bingo!

Newt: Sounds brutal.

Kyle: Not for the faint, but I do what I have to do to survive, been on my own from day one anyway.

(Kyle gets up, refreshes his drink). Can I get you anything?

Newt: I'm good.

Kyle: So hey, know what tonight is?

Newt: Tuesday?

Kyle: True, but that's not it.

Newt: I give up.

Kyle: It's a first!

Newt: First what, you're gonna eat one of my pepperoni slices? That's a huge leap from the mushroom, are you sure you're ready?

Kyle: No, no, something big, something major, something never before done, not ever.

Newt: Look, whatever, I'm getting hungry.

Kyle: OK, OK, it's the FIRST time we've ever been alone together for dinner, as adults I mean, first time ever man to man, without Mom, you know what I mean, that's huge, don't you think?

Newt: Not really, no big deal.

Kyle: Yeah, well it's a big deal to me, very big, see, I never got a chance to air things out with you, talk things through, so to speak, get at the heart of stuff, and now that Mom's out of town, and my asshole brothers are missing in action, now is my chance.

Newt: A little late in the game, no?



Kyle: Fuck no, not too late, it's never too late, we're still breathing, still around each other, oh, don't worry, I'm not gonna jump all over you, nothing like that, just a little chit chat about life, my life, your life, our lives together, maybe help put things in perspective, clear the air, you know what I mean?

Newt: Yeah, I guess, how about some pizza first?

Kyle: Great idea, don't want to attack epic subjects on an empty stomach, need carbo fuel for the big event.

Newt: Whatever you say.

(Kyle leaves, soon returns with tray of plates with pizza slice on it)

Kyle: Here we go, and just to commemorate the evening, see you got some deep fried zucchini, dee-lish, I firmly believe you could put breadcrumbs on a tire patch and it would taste good.

(They divide up the food, put the tray away)

Kyle: Yeah, Mom loves to fry shit with breadcrumbs, covered up a lot of sins... remember the Liver Rebellion?

Newt: (eating) No.

Kyle: Right, you really were never around for dinner, anyway, so all us boys hated liver, gray slabs of flesh, dry, mealy, disgusting, so I, being spokesman for the group, asked Mom for

a little chat, I said, “hey, no disrespect, I know you’re on a budget, but the liver is really causing problems for us in ways you might not be aware of, might even be affecting our grades”, ok, I went a little overboard there, but, anyway I say, is there something we can do?

Newt: You were always the charming bullshitter, so what’d she say?

Kyle: Nothing, just stares at me like I wasn’t there, didn’t exist, vapor.

Newt: I think I know the look.

Kyle: I bet you do, man, she had that death stare DOWN.

Newt: So, what happened?

Kyle: Ok, so, in a week or so I see the dreaded liver in the fridge, wrapped in that ugly yellow brown paper, bloodstained and ominous, and I say to the boys, “put your fucking helmets on, the liver assault is on its way, if you have a sick excuse you haven’t used up, now’s the time to put it into play”, I swear, the fear, the pure fear , you could feel it.

Newt: Can’t ever change her mind.

Kyle: (Excited and animated) Wait, wait, so we’re ready for the hemlock, but suddenly we smell something good, real good coming from the kitchen, not smelly feet odor, check this out, she took a pair of scissors, no fucking lie, cut the liver into small strips, and fried them in egg and breadcrumbs, genius, we couldn’t believe it, it was like a death row pardon, we

gobbled it up, man, all crispy and full of deliciousness, jeez, we went crazy, I swear, it became our go to dinner, can you imagine, four reasonably normal boys screaming for, no, demanding, liver for dinner?

Newt: Never heard that story.

Kyle: Oh shit, lots of stories you've never heard.

(The two men eat pizza in silence)

Kyle: So, uh, where's Mom again?

Newt: Not sure, some evangelical conference upstate, back on Tuesday.

Kyle: Whoa, evangelical conference, I'm sure there's some badass shit going on there.

Newt: I guess.

Kyle: Maybe some hot bible drills, or a sexy cloth talk on Sodom and Gomorrah, complete with anatomically correct biblical figures.

Newt: Yeah, I'm sure, something like that.

Kyle: Haven't spoken to her in a while, she's mad at me, I suppose you know.

Newt: (stares at son for a few seconds). No.

Kyle: Yeah, she was getting on me about my life, my choices, you know, same old story, come back to Jesus, I sort of lost it on her.

Newt: (Nods, says nothing)

Kyle: When's she come back, what, Tuesday, probably should call and apologize, I mean, we've been hitting it off lately, hate to ruin it, you know, lose ground in the Great Mother Love Chase.

Newt: ( hesitates) Sure.

Kyle: Maybe I'll surprise her with flowers.

Newt: Ah, I wouldn't do that.

Kyle: Yeah, too obvious, you're right, better to play it cool.

(Newt moves around the room, has his back to Kyle)

Kyle: I don't know, it's always fucking religion that gets me into trouble with her, (punches hand) what a bunch of bullshit!

Newt: I wish you wouldn't use that word.

Kyle: What word, religion?

Newt: The "f"word.

Kyle: What "f"word?

Newt: You know.

Kyle: You mean fucking? What's wrong with it?

Newt: It's coarse.

Kyle: Damn right it is, that's what's good about it.

Newt: It's not necessary.

Kyle: Look, suppose I say something, like, I have a sore throat, your thinking, oh, that's too bad, but, now, if I say I have a (emphasize) "fucking" sore throat, you take notice, right, I mean it's more acute, more important, gravitas, you know what I mean?

Newt: You can use another word to get the same effect.

Kyle: I don't think so, get used to it, things are changing, language is getting tougher since back in your day, you used to call gays what, fairies, like they're sensitive little winged things that flit around in the summer dusk.

Newt: You didn't always talk like that.

Kyle: Sure I did, just not around you.

Newt: OK, I insisted on proper behavior, I had rules, good rules to live by.

Kyle: Oh yeah, I know all about your (air quotes)rules.

Newt: OK, so what's that mean!

Kyle: They were, I don't know, kind of random, and cruel.

Newt: What are you talking about?

Kyle: OK, want an example?

Newt: If you insist.

Kyle: Of course you don't remember, I'm ten or so and I left my bike on the front lawn, I just came out of the bath, had a towel on, you said go get the bike now. I said just a minute, I'll put something on, you said no and shoved me out the front door.

Newt: You always left stuff out, I asked you a million times to put things away.

Kyle: Great, in a minute there's a ring of boys around me, the girls laughing, I didn't stand a fucking chance, one of them grabbed the towel, and there I was, stark fucking naked in front of everyone, by now all hysterical laughing as I streaked up to the house like a little white rabbit.

Newt: I don't remember that.

Kyle: Of course not, why would you.

Newt: So I was a monster, is that it?

Kyle: No, not a monster, fucked up, but not a monster.

Newt: I did my best.

Kyle: Yeah, that's everyone's excuse.

Newt: We had standards.

Kyle: Yeah, flexible standards, one for my brothers, one for me. I think you thought I had the brightest future, so you kicked my ass extra hard to make sure I didn't stray.

Newt: What?

Kyle: Look, everyone knew I was your favorite, especially Mom, we competed for your attention, she lost a lot, not good, especially for me.

Newt: I'm not following.

Kyle: C'mon, she set me up for punishment, to even up things, so to speak.

Newt: You're reading too many self help books.

(stage goes dark, Kyle turns to audience)

Kyle: So I walk in from school, Mom's sitting on chair.

Where've you been? she says.

Playing ball at the high school.

Mrs. Pulaski came to the door.

So.

Said you cursed at her.

No I didn't.

Said she yelled at you for riding your bike on her lawn, and you said "bulldinks".

I didn't ride my bike on her lawn, and bulldinks isn't a curse word.

Of course it is, Mr. wise guy.

No, see, it's sort of a nice curse word, like cripes instead of Christ, or geez instead of Jesus, it's not really cursing.

You think you can sweet talk everyone, she says, but not this time, I'm not going to sit here and have the neighbors complain about your trash mouth, go to your room, your father will deal with this when he comes home. (walks around the room, thinking)

So I trudged upstairs to wait, knowing I was going get the shit kicked out of me, lying in bed as the clock ticked away, until the front door opened, I could hear her barely, raminah raminah raminah, and he'd say, raminah?, and she'd say, rmainah raminah, and then the slow heavy steps up the stairs, the door would open, and there he stood, belt in hand stripped from his waist, the avenging angel and it was game on, (covers his face with his hands for a few moments).....



It didn't hurt all that much, you know, I'd gotten worse on the playground, but, hey, I yelled a lot and loudly so everyone got some satisfaction from the event, good family fun, don't you think?

(Back to main stage)

Kyle: You know, in a weird sort of way, those beatings were kind of cool, allowed us to spend some quality time together.

(Kurt gets up, pours a glass of wine, looks at his father)

Newt: (Quietly) So, are you saying the only time you felt connected to me was when I was punishing you, really,, that's the only time, not all the times we did things together?

Kyle: Oh,, when was that, Pop?

Newt: Lord, I don't know exactly.

Kyle: Hey, OK, all year you worked weekends, and in the summer, when we were off, the club was in full throttle and you disappeared, hey, I get it, it was your job, put food on the table, that's life, (pauses), but there was a price to pay, and here we are.

Newt: Come on, during the winter, we threw the ball around, stuff like that.

Kyle: That's winter, for fuck sake, it's the northeast, cold, windy, shitty, who's running around outside playing ball?

Newt: Jesus, you make me out to be a monster, never home and dishing out beatings.

Kyle: Hey, the beating part, pretty normal in the hood, (laughing) ,we could always count on old man Cunningham to mash up Tommy, and the Becks had a pretty free hand with Rudy, (sighs), back then nobody thought much about it, now, you'd be facing some serious time in the slammer for child abuse.

Newt: It was the way I was raised, the way we were ALL raised, guess what, I still think a little whack up side the head has some value.

Kyle: Ahh, I don't think much about it, now I tell the stories and my friends are all wide eyed with horror, it makes me laugh, like I grew up in a penal colony.

Newt: I wasn't trying to abuse you, just pound a little sense into you.

Kyle: Yeah, you pounded alright, but, you know, you looked out for me too, not often, but I noticed

Newt: Oh, I wasn't always the executioner.

Kyle: Nah, you remember my high school French teacher?

Newt: Kind of, Jerry something, right?

Kyle: Yeah, Jerry, something, I forget.

Newt: Yeah, he was kind of keen on you.

Kyle: I was so dumb, remember, he wanted to teach me an instrument?

Newt: Sort of.

Kyle: It was perfect, it was the flute for fucks sake, how appropriate, is that what tipped you off?

Newt: Should have, but no, when he came over to give you a lesson, I knew right away what (air quotes) “instrument” he was interested in.

Kyle: Damn, you saved my ass, literally, not sure how you got him off my case, but he backed away after that.

Newt: He knew I knew, simple as that.

Kyle: See, you saved me for a career chasing women, could've gone down another path, who knows.

Newt: Best you found a path on your own, you didn't need a mentor.

Kyle: Right on, I'm a natural born womanizer, no mentoring needed baby.

Newt: The world is now a better place.

Kyle: Let me tell you, you want to talk about abuse, I mean real abuse, let's talk about the Baptist church we went to, the beatings were nothing compared to the horror we endured there.

Newt: What?

Kyle: Oh, shit, what a nightmare, that miserable pastor threatening us with hell for eternity if we had one impure thought, if we didn't believe in Jesus as our savior, utter drivel, cruel and inhuman, that's the guy who should go to jail, or the stupid hell he was peddling.

Newt: C'mon, he was a little energetic in his teaching, but he was a good man, tried his best to provide a path through a menacing world.

Kyle: He was a con artist, pure and simple.

Newt: OK, OK, you can dump on it all you want, but your mother and I believe in it, we always have, and what do you have to fall back on, to make sense of everything!

Kyle: What I feel, what I see, what I know, geez, I knew it was all empty air when I was 7.

Newt: Come on, that's not possible

Kyle: You know what pushed me over the edge.

Newt: What

Kyle: Predestination.

Newt: what are you talking about

Kyle: Some church nerd taught us that our lives are predetermined, it's all done, the big guy in the sky has it all down.

Newt: Please, don't disrespect the lord and savior.

Kyle: OK, how about, his holiness the big guy?

Newt: OK, that's enough

Kyle: Anyway, I figured, if it's all worked out, I might as well do whatever I want, right, I mean, it's in the big book and it isn't going to change, so go for it, and I did.

Newt: So that explains your lifelong rebellious behavior.

Kyle: Yeah, sort of.

(Newt gets up, closes a blind, turns to Kyle)

Newt: Since you brought it up, I'm just going to say, your mother has ALWAYS loved you.

Kyle: I was supposed to know that how, what external evidence, a hug?, no, verbal?, no, so what?

Newt: She's shown it in different ways.

Kyle: Listen, I always tried to win her over, I really tried, but I couldn't do it, she was always out of reach, just beyond my grasp, always receding, a float you try to swim to that keeps drifting away, but I kept going, never gave up.

Newt: OK, she doesn't show love like other people do, hugging, kissing, touching, all that lovey dovey stuff, didn't go in for that, and you know, neither did I.

Kyle: I know, you'd see a couple kissing on the street and turn away like you'd witnessed dogs humping.

Newt: Affection is private.

Kyle: No, it's human, normal, natural, except in this house it was treated like early stage leprosy.

Newt: Hey, it's the way we were raised, what did you expect, we didn't run to a shrink to help figure things out, couldn't afford it, didn't think we needed it.

Kyle: Excuse, excuse.

Newt: You know, your mother has always done her best by you boys, whatever money we had she made sure you were taken care of, she even made her own clothes, the dress dummy is still in the basement.

Kyle: Oh, I remember the dress dummy, Esther.

Newt: You gave the dummy a name?

Kyle: Yeah, well, we had sort of a relationship.

Newt: You had a relationship with a dress dummy?

Kyle: Not exactly a relationship, a connection, kinda.

Newt: A connection, like how?

Kyle: Well, you know, when I started messing with girls and all, I decided to figure out how to get their bras off with one hand, so when no one was around, I took one of mom's bras from her drawer, put it on the dummy, I mean, Esther, and practiced removing it.

Newt: (looks down, slowly shaking his head)

Kyle: I sort of duplicated social situations, so, like, I'd hold the dummy like we were dancing, see, and then work it off from there. Some times, I'd put my arm around Esther like we were at the movies, and see if I could unhook it.

Newt: Did you ever tell anyone about this?

Kyle: No, no, of course not, it only lasted a while, I got pretty good at it, could sense the different kinds of clasps, some you squeezed together, others were trickier, I probably would have been a good surgeon, you know, tying little knots in small spaces.

Newt: Jesus

Kyle: Well, I'll tell you, it came in handy, no pun intended. It worked for a while, then of course, the word got out, if you hang out with him, sooner or later , old Speedy Gonzalez will make his move.

Newt: You're clever, I'll say that.

Kyle: Clever?

Newt: Yeah.

Kyle: So, how do you think I got that way?

Newt: Well, I don't know, you're smart, for one.

Kyle: Smart doesn't mean shit, lots of smart people around, clever's different, it's instinct, figuring things out, and something else.

Newt: What's that?

Kyle: Survival, make the best of things, work with what you have, do whatever it takes, .....survive

Newt: Make it sound like you grew up with wolves.

Kyle: Close.

Newt: C'mon.

Kyle: Hey, from the time we walked and talked we were on our own, just the way it was, no blame, that was your style, make it



on your own, if you fall, pick yourself up, hurt yourself, walk it off, sick, deal!

(Newt looks down, obviously disturbed)

(lights down, Kyle turns to audience)

Look, I don't want to dump all over my mother, but she was hard, I mean hard, in fact, I had a nickname for her, "Nails", didn't let her know that of course. Like, I'm what, 10 years old, come home from school, say Hi to her, she stares at me,, says nothing. Like I'm fucking not there. Put down my books, say boy I'm starved. Nothing. Ask about dinner. Nothing. I'm not there, I do not exist. I get the silent treatment for days, every day the same. (Walks around a bit)

Finally, OK, I say guess you're mad at me, but why? She turns around, dries hands on towel, comes up to me, close, and says those fatal words, (pauses) "you know what you did". (starts laughing)

See, that was the problem, I had easily done six things that she could be mad at me for, some big, some small, everything from setting an empty lot on fire to not making my bed, but hey, I didn't want to cop to one if she didn't know anything about it, right, I'm not a dumb ass. (shakes fists)

So finally I apologized, in general, you know, said I was so sorry, never happen again, I'll be better, I promise, you know, the standard boy stuff, scuffling around, looking down, finally, she mentioned something about not taking out the garbage,

and wow, inside I was high fiving myself, thinking about all the shit I got away with.

(back to main stage)

Newt: So I guess you really hated me growing up.

Kyle: Sort of.

Newt: So, no good memories of me?

Kyle: Man, of course, plenty.

Newt: I wasn't always the absentee ogre?

Kyle: I'll tell you, one of my earliest memories, geez, (looks off) I must have been 4 or 5, I remember sitting in your lap, and you had your hands around me, and I looked down, these big hands, laced with raised veins, they were like shields, powerful, strong, nothing could penetrate them and get at me, hurt me, I remember running my hand over the bumpy skin, feeling safe, you know?

Newt: I did my best.

Kyle: Yeah, I guess you did, funny though.

Newt; What?

Kyle: Funny that years later those powerful hands would rain down on my dead ass.

Newt: I'm sorry.

Kurt: Nah, no need, I survived. But I did want to kill you, I mean, a lot, really thought about it, like boiling you in oil.

Newt: Ooh, not good, really painful.

Kyle: That was the point. Maybe stab you.

Newt: Messy.

Kyle: Or shoot you.

Newt: Really messy.

Kyle: Strangling?

Newt: Too personal.

Kyle: Mostly poisoning.

Newt: Now, that I like, if it just put me gently to sleep, that's a good one, use that when it comes time, OK?

Kyle: I'll do some research, get back to you.

(Kyle gets up, walks over to the pizza, grabs another slice)

Kyle: C'mon, let's change the subject, enough of this heavy duty stuff.

Newt: Hey, this is your big night, here's your opportunity, fire away.

Kyle: Ok, alright, let's see, ok, how about sex, that's a good one. You know, they say you can't picture your parents having sex, but , I always could, I could see it going down, the whole thing.

Newt: You should have been thinking about other things.

Kyle: What, math homework, household chores, man, are you kidding, thinking about you two was way more fun.

Newt: That's warped.

Kyle: C'mon, I saw your package a few times when I was a kid, scared the shit out of me, looked like you were carrying around a twin.

Newt: That's sick.

Kyle: Stop, what's the big deal, it's human, right, figured you were bringing out the heavy equipment as needed, am I right? What pissed me off is I didn't get the dick gift, oh, it's fine, does the job, no complaints, but I had to work a lot harder, you guys just laid the pipe and rode it out, no? You know, as they say, it's not the meat it's the motion, so I figured out the nuances of dick manipulation, when to tease, when to plunge, sort of a magic act, to give the appearance of size.

Newt: I thought we were going to talk about serious issues?

Kyle: This is deadly serious (laughs), OK, what would you like to get off your chest?

Newt: You won't like it.

Kyle: Try me.

New: After all these years, I still don't know why you left Linda.

Kyle: (Throws his arms up) Oh geez, here we go.

Newt: I'm just asking, it's been years, what happened, it all seemed so good between you.

Kyle: It always looks good from the outside.

Newt: You can't fake that, I could see, there was affection, nice communication, you both looked, how can I say it, locked in, together, unified.

Kyle: Easy, we worked out a system, played to the crowd, it wasn't hard, I didn't hate her, we didn't fight, there was no deep, smoldering animus, no long silent moments, resentment, anger, none of that, you wouldn't have known anything, from a distance.

Newt: What was it then, a beautiful daughter, enough money, good friends, you had the life, the whole deal, the future stretching out into a glorious, perfect world.

Kyle: Something was missing.

Newt: What, what was missing, tell me.

Kyle: Passion.

Newt: Passion?

Kyle: Yeah, passion, excitement, energy.

Newt: Look, every marriage flames out after a while, you replace it, you move on, you deepen the relationship, connect on different levels, find out new things about each other, grow together, it's adult, it's mature, it's about seeing the bigger picture, you don't get that?, is it all about hot sex and lubrication?

Kyle: Didn't know you were into lubricants, although I know you support Big Oil.

Newt: You gave it all up for a continuous raging hardon?

Kyle: More or less.

Newt: Makes no sense to me.

Kyle: Of course not, it doesn't make sense, it's ridiculous, childish, immature, I know that, think I'm a moron.

Newt: Couldn't you work it out somehow, work through it?

Kyle: No,.

Newt: Why?

Kyle: I tried, for a few years, tried to be responsible, but suddenly, I couldn't do it anymore.

Newt: Another woman?

Kyle: Sort of.

Newt: Sort of?

Kyle: (exhales) It'll sound crazy.

Newt: Try me.

Kyle: It was a dream, a crazy dream, I don't even know how it started, it was a normal night, I think I took a bit of a pot cookie to help me sleep, no big deal, I dream a lot, always, never just sleep through the night clean, usually forget all about them in the morning, not this one, there was a woman, we were walking along the street, she had her arm round me, I was looking sideways at her, couldn't see her whole face, she was beautiful, her hair swayed as we walked, I saw her lips and cheeks, her eyes, we were laughing, and I was achingly happy, she loved me, I loved her, I couldn't get enough of her, it hurt just to be next to her, I wanted her so bad, it was almost painful, I didn't want to be anywhere else in the world but next to her, laughing, loving, inhaling the smell of her, I felt like I would explode.

Newt: Everyone has fantasies, they fade away eventually.

Kyle: No, no, this was different. Suddenly I awoke, I was torn away, and I lay there, the dream still spooling in my mind, I was in love, I felt love, that terrible, overwhelming neediness, it washed over me, I held on to it, couldn't let it go, it stayed with me that day, and the next, and the next, lingering, a stark reminder, I was missing that, that power, that passion, and I decided, I want to find it,, I want to have that feeling again, I need it, I'll do anything to get it, that's when I decided to leave.

Newt: So, chasing a dream?

Kyle: Yes.

Newt: Still chasing?

Kyle: Yes

Newt: You always had a Hollywood view of the world, everything perfect, rosy, Technicolor, happy ever after, even your room growing up, neat, tidy.

Kyle: Tidy, not tidy, not even close, I was insane, obsessive, borderline crazy, it consumed me, I was what, six, seven, and I had my toys lined up by color, size and utility, tell me that's not abnormal.

Newt: That's a little harsh.



Kyle: Not really, you ever see another kid act like that, ever, of course not, they don't exist, I couldn't leave my room in the morning until everything was perfect, lined up, symmetrical, nothing out of place.

Newt: Why?

Kyle: I don't know, maybe it was the only thing I could count on, it was my world, my special world, in tune, in sync, no matter what happened around me, no matter how my world collapsed, I could always find comfort in the order and discipline of my room, my refuge, my cave, my survival capsule, it never let me down, it was always there for me.

(lights down, Newt speaks to audience)

He thinks I didn't know what was going on in the family. Ok, sure, I guess I wasn't there for him, in the summer the club was busiest and my hours were long, and that's when they were off. So, yeah, I was an absentee father, but it's like a teacher at the head of the class, you see more than they think you do.

He was always my favorite, yes, I loved the other boys, but I connected with him, he loved the things I loved, music, reading, conversation, they all had their skills, sure, but his resonated with me. Is that bad?

Can you love one child more than the others? Why not? Aren't there gradations of love everywhere, is it possible to love equally, everyone gets a full gas tank, or are some only partially full?

(Paces a bit)

I did my best with all of them, but it was easiest with him. He probably knew it, fed on it, played me, he was always a clever devil, smart enough, sure, but really, really clever, always, worked the angles, now we'd call it manipulative, even as a small child, he hustled, you know what I mean?

I guess everyone knew he was my favorite, his mother sure did, if affected our relationship, I think she felt in competition with him, and she definitely favored the other boys as compensation, I think that's why all his life he worked hard to get her love, and it never really worked, didn't stop him though, he's relentless, never gave up, sad really, am I the cause, did I create that, geez, I don't know, I hope to God not.

(lights up, return to main action)

Kyle: Hey, hey pop, things moving too fast for you?

Newt: I may have slowed down physically, but I can certainly handle anything you throw at me.

Kyle: You sure, it's a big load, dude.

Newt: I've heard most of it before.

Kyle: No, no, this is new stuff my man, fresh off the press, just minted.

Newt: Really, as I think you might say, bring it on, don't forget I'm your father.

Kyle: Don't mean shit, the whole father thing.

Newt: Really, that right?

Kyle: (Turns to father, looking straight at him) Forget it, that ended the day I walked out of this house, OK, you're now another guy who happens to be my father, sure, you get special privileges, an emotional link, yes, yes, for sure, but now, right now, you have to exist as a person, a real person in my life, and if it doesn't work out, if it falls apart, it's over, finished.

Newt: I guess that pretty much sums things up.

Kyle: Hey, I know you're disappointed in me, how I turned out, here's the thing, you had me for what, 16 years, all to yourself, but no, you took a pass, too late to lecture on life skills bro, way too fucking late. I came away from childhood with one very important lesson.

Newt: And that is?

Kyle: Have a green vegetable every day, still haunts me, every night I toss and turn, stringbeans?, broccoli?, salad?, it's a fucking nightmare.

Newt: You know something, I don't give a shit how you view me, put any spin on it you like, I operate on one level, you're my son, period, not going to get unglued over your mental gyrations or twisted logic, why don't we just leave it at that, OK, save the shrink shit for your therapist.

Kyle: Fair enough big daddy, moving on. (walks around room, looks at books on shelves)

Kyle: (Lets out a long sigh) Ok, let's take a break, hey, want to thumb wrestle?

Newt: No.

Kyle: C'mon, we used to do it all the time when I was a kid, I never won once, not one fucking time.

Newt: I was teaching you how to be tough, hard, overcome things and succeed.

Kyle: You were teaching me how to fail.

Newt: Should I have deliberately lost?

Kyle: Yeah, once in a while, let me taste it, the thrill of victory, especially beating your old man.

Newt: You would have known.

Kyle: So what, who cares, sure I would have known, big deal, I'd convince myself it was legit, a small victory to light up the day.

Newt: So, you want to play now, really?

Kyle: Yeah, yeah, c'mon fucker, let's get it on, let me see what you got.

(choreograph a few minutes of grunting and moving around each other to gain advantage, one trying to pin the other to the ground, back and forth, until the son pins the fathers thumb)

Kyle: Ah, ah, oh, oh, oh, done, victory!!!!

Newt: (breathing heavy) Big deal, I'm an old man.

Kyle: Oh, oh, the excuses, here come the excuses, you lost, man up dude, you fucking lost!

(They catch their breath, sit back down)

Newt: Phew, that was a workout. I'll get you next time.

Kyle: Dream on brother, dream on.

(Both men grab some wine, some water, sit down catching their breath)

Newt: Well, on the subject of workouts, how's the dating scene, that's what you call it, right, a scene?

Kyle: Yeah, it's scenic all right. Lot of work to figure out someone new, but I have a system.

Newt: Sounds clinical.

Kyle: In a way.

Newt: In what way?

Kyle: Well, for me, it starts with the voice. It's important. I contacted a woman a few months ago, loved her voice, soft, luxuriant, confident. But you can be fooled. You need to hear it live, unfiltered, undigitized, to get a true read. Voice, it's the music you emanate, the sounds you project, the inner organ of your soul. It needs to match how you are, a triumphant, soaring sound that is yours, pure, elegant, unyielding. For another to hear its unique notes, its resonant chords, and be moved, inspired, is pure joy.

Newt: Sounds like an opera singer.

Kyle: It's not all about voice, it's all part of the overall picture.

Newt: OK.

Kyle: So, we meet for dinner, I knew what she looked like. We swapped photos, and hers was spot on, not always the case, I can tell you.. She had a lovely, balanced face, perfectly imperfect, slight aberrations, a face, that begged to be understood, studied.

See, that's what I do. Study. The face. It's the map, and to know it, really know it, is the key to everything underneath. So I memorize it. Everything. Every wrinkle, line, muscle, hair, every plane, every nuance of shape.

As we speak, I watch how the face reacts. What are the patterns? How do they relate to her words, her thoughts, her emotions? The slightest twitch, an almost imperceptible muscle movement, the changing shape of the brow, the corner of the lips, they all tell a story, they all reveal a truth, a silent symphony of clues.

Newt: Are you on a date or in a lab?

Kyle: OK , I know it sounds clinical, it's not. I just pay close attention. I study it all. You must. It's critical. They will not tell you about themselves. Not really. So you find out for yourself. Follow the clues. See the truth others overlook. It's the only way. Rely on your own information, your own diligence, your own research. Do not rely on others, or on the person themselves.

So I watch. And listen. And learn. Not obvious, not staring, that would be dumb. Casual, easy, not telegraphed. The conversation is animated, flowing, vibrant. And I'm charting. Mapping. Noting. And most important, learning.

Newt: Good lord.

Kyle: I know, sounds obsessive. No, not really. Smart. Don't listen to what they tell you. Listen to what the clues say. The hands, the way they move, how they synchronize with words, punctuate or diminish a thought. It's all there, right in front of you, ready to be harvested for data, for insight, for knowledge.

Newt: Sounds exhausting, what about having some laughs, a good time?

Kyle: Yeah, sure, there's that, but so much more and so little time, but it all follows a pattern.

Newt: What pattern?

Kyle: Oh, first meeting is kind of exciting, follow up dates all good, you finally fall into the sack, followed by a period of happiness, and then the slow downward spiral as you discover the little annoying flaws, you know, how she orders dinner, handles the airport, deals with setbacks, the same old. Six months later, more or less, it's adios, some bent egos, everyone moves on, end of story.

Newt: That's pretty depressing, does it really happen like that, over and over?

Kyle: Pretty much. I see that as six months wasted. And let's face it, time is not on my side. So I decide, next woman I meet, I'm going to compress the six months into one evening.

Newt: How?

Kyle: By pressuring her, submitting her to stress, see how she handles it, either she caves or survives, deals or squeals, I need to know, not half a year from now, but now, tonite, right away.

Newt: Excuse me Kyle, but, this is getting weird.



Kyle: Not weird, I have to break the cycle, try something new, right, out of the box, so to speak.

Newt: (skeptical) Ok.

Kyle: Anyway, I meet this woman, couple of dates, nice energy, invite her up to my place for a drink before going out for dinner.

Newt: Sounds normal.

Kyle: Yeah, so, anyway, we start talking, current events, stuff in our lives, the usual, I ask questions, women like when you ask questions, it's rare for men to actually be interested in a woman's answers, but I listen, don't always retain, you know, but at least I appear to be interested. She then offers a strong position on a hot topic, and I say, I completely disagree with that. She says, I like a man who doesn't just accept things that people say, is willing to voice his opinion. Whoa, what have we here, I'm thinking, she's killing it. Let's keep this going, right?

Newt: So that's it, I don't get it, where's the trap?

Kyle: Take it easy, slow down, I'm getting there, here it comes, the last hurdle, this, this will really cut to the chase, fuck the six month seminar followed by a failing grade.

Newt: Go on.

Kyle: OK, I suggest she use the bathroom before we leave, she agrees, and when she goes in, I lock the door from the outside. No way to get out. She rattles the door. I ignore it. She bangs on it. No response. She calls my name, hey, let me out, there's a problem with the door. I don't answer. I can feel the tension mount. Hey, for God's sake, she says, open the door, I know you can hear me. C'mon, what is this? Silence for a bit. Ok, she says, for the last time, open the door. No response.

Newt: Hold it, you LOCKED A DATE into the bathroom? Are you serious? No, you didn't.

Kyle: Yeah, yeah,, yes, I did.

Newt: Oh God, Kyle, Jesus.

Kyle: Check this out, she goes quiet. Perfect, she seems to be handling it. Then I notice some water seeping under the door. She says, OK asshole, I plugged the toilet and I'm flushing it, I will flood your goddamned apartment. Oh, shit, genius, this woman is brilliant, this is what I've been waiting for, at last someone I can appreciate, be with, love even.

So I fling open the door. She's got her designer shoes in hand, slops through the watery floor and pushes past me. Wait, wait, I say, you don't understand, it was a test, just a test, I wanted to see how you handle things, you were amazing, I think you're great, no, better than that, it's been so long since I've met someone who can handle pressure, more than that, turn it around and beat it.

She's by the door, slipping on her shoes, ready to leave. Don't go, I say, this was great. She looks at me, I don't know, in my mind searchingly, but I could be wrong, maybe it was contempt, maybe disillusion, maybe confusion, but it was a long stare, really long, then she opened the door, without a word, shut it quietly, there I was, staring at the wet footprints on the floor.

Newt: Kyle, for God's sake, you could have been arrested.

Kyle: Nothing happened, I let her out, no harm.

Newt: Suppose she contacts the website?

Kyle: If they dump me, I'll try another. Already registered with Farmers Only. Com, thought I'd get me a real country gal. They asked me did I ever lose a finger in a farm machine, how much of my property is government subsidized, and the last time I won a poultry medal at the state fair. I fuckin aced it.

Newt: Always thinking of an angle, my son.

Kyle: Whatever, here I am, listen, enough about me, how about you.

Newt: What do ya wanna know?

Kyle: Ok, so here's the big one.

Newt: The big one?

Kyle: Yeah, the big question, been nagging at me my whole life.

Newt: Let's hear it.

Kyle: OK, Mr. Big Dick, did you ever stick it in other than mom's pudding?

Newt: Jesus, what are you talking about, what kind of thing is that to ask me?

Kyle: Ahhh, that's a big tell, instead of saying no, you attack the question, I think you did?

Newt: There are things people don't discuss.

Kyle: Christ, stop the shit, Mom's not here, it doesn't matter, not gonna make judgments, just curious.

(Newt gets up, walks over to the pizza, stares at it, turns away)

Newt: (Big breath) Once.

Kyle: Awesome, dude, I knew it, you were a cool looking guy, dashing even, oh yeah, and managing a country club with lots of ladies around, I mean, yeah, for sure.

Newt: Not something I'm proud of.

Kyle: C'mon, no big deal, nobody got hurt, right, I mean Mom never found out?

Newt: No.

Kyle: Shit, I bet it was the blond divorcee always running around, what was her name, something cutish, Frosty, yeah, that's it, Frosty, always showing her rack, was it her?

Newt: No, someone else from the club, a Board member, so we spent a lot of time together reviewing plans and applications.

Kyle: Oh yeah, that's hot, plans and applications, whoo baby, who could resist a good application, right. Was it fun?

Newt: Briefly.

Kyle: You get caught?

Newt: No, no one knew, we were very careful, still, shit happens, we could have been spotted, it only lasted a month or so but I was scared to death the whole time.

Kyle: You mean Mom finding out?

Newt: That, yeah, of course, but if any club member saw us, even though we met at obscure places far away from the club, it's the city, right, people move around, you never know, I would have lost my job, and then what, where would I go, who would hire me with that in my file, how would I explain it to your mother, you kids, it was temporarily exciting, and continually horrifying.

Kyle: What happened?

Newt: Broke it off, it was wearing me down, I hated myself, both knew it had nowhere to go, and that was it, after that we'd see each other around for a while, and then, rarely, a wave and a passing hello.

Kyle: Jesus Pop, it happened, I see you in a whole new light, you stud muffin.

Newt: Don't please, don't make fun, it was a dark time.

Kyle: Come on, I knew you had an eye for the ladies, you're my idol, dude!

Newt: (Kurt turns to get more pizza, his back to Newt). It was a man.

Kyle: (Stops in his tracks, slowly turns to face Newt) I'm sorry, what did you say?

Newt: I said it was a man.

Kyle: You're playing with me right, tell me your kidding, please.

Newt: Not kidding.

Kyle: (Puts hands to head) Holy shit. Jesus, Jesus. (walks around, agitated) That can't be right, it doesn't fit, makes no sense.

Newt: (Angry) Hey, you wanted to hear it right, this was the big night, have a big heart to heart with Dad, get down, well, now you have it, the big reveal, so deal, if you can't handle it, that's your problem.

Kyle: No, no, it's just, I don't know, just hard, fuck, (moves around), you have an image of a person you've been with your whole life, it's etched in your brain, immutable, and suddenly it's upside down, sideways, I'm trying to process it, OK?

Newt: Look, it was an affair, you have a problem with it being a man, Mr. Evolved, get over it, I thought your generation was all open, accepting, more hypocrisy? Hey, it happened, no one knew, it was brief, I didn't run off and leave your mother, never occurred to me, I did it and it was done, bye bye!

Kyle: Have you been, like, that way your whole life?

Newt: (Sighs) Not really, oh, I always wondered about it, maybe a dream here or there that made me think about it, but no, I didn't suffer, I didn't long for it, I don't think I was repressed, just something out there, I wasn't big on sex with your mother, it was OK, I just never obsessed about it, had other things to think about

Newt: Did it open up things, make you think about doing it again?

Newt: No, not really, it was so horrifying in a way, but I'll tell you one thing, .....it was one of the most exciting moments of my life, maybe the danger, maybe the possible scandal, whatever, oh, yes, on one level I hated myself, that's probably why I ended it, but for that one period of time, it was glorious.

(They both stare at each other, then start cleaning up, moving around, change the music, fuss with things, then Kyle flops on the couch, looks through his briefcase, then looks up at Newt)

Kyle: Hey, OK, OK, give me a hug. (Kyle gets up and walks over to his father, tries to hug him, but he resists awkwardly) Right, OK, here, let me show you how to hug.

Newt: I know how to hug.

Kyle: I'm not seeing it, really, just go with it.

Newt: This is ridiculous.

Kyle: Here, here, just relax, ok, so, to start, let's face each other, ok, just a few feet apart, like this (demonstrates)

(father remains rigid, sighs)

Kyle: Ok, now, hold your arms like this (arms apart), not together high,, like this, or too low, like this (demonstrates), got it?

(father continues staring)



Kyle: Now approach slowly,, ok, no too fast, not too slow, just easy, relaxed, move in with confidence but not aggressive, you know what I mean? You don't want to scare anyone, this is a good thing, you want it to feel right.

So, now you approach, like this, put this arm around the back, the other around the waist, and gently tap with the upper hand, not hard, ok, just firm, meanwhile you can say words at this point, like how are you, or good to see you, or its been awhile, you know, stuff like that, got it.

(father stares at son)

Now, part of the hug is the head position, just nestle into the side, like this (shows), I know it's kind of close, but that's ok, it's supposed to be close, in a way, but yet not, it's more friendly than intimate, that's the trick, after a while you'll get the hang of it, want to try again, with you starting?

Newt: (sarcastically) I think I got it.

Kyle: Ok, sure, practice on your own, that's good, and then branch out, go crazy, like, do it with someone you trust, like at church, but don't overdo it, like in a supermarket or something, use it sparingly.

Newt: Excuse me, gotta take a leak.

Kyle: Tough night, huh, got you pissing in your pants.

Newt: Hardly, just the old frequent pee thing.

Kyle: No big thing, you're what, 76, you seem pretty healthy, even though you're a walking pharmacy.

Newt: Pretty much, apart from losing my memory, can't pull stuff up like I used to, scares me frankly.

Kyle: Ah, everyone's afraid of the big A. I don't worry about it.

Newt: Why not?

Kyle: Who wants to remember the past?

Newt: I do, it's part of who we are.

Kyle: Bullshit, it's where the pain lies, the aching loss, the mistakes, the lost opportunities, the moments of possibility unrecognized or ignored.

Newt: Pretty grim

Kyle: Fuck, no such thing as a rosy past, no, let me swoon in a cozy haze of forgetfulness, bathe in a sea of lost moments, beautifully unaware of everything but the very exact moment I occupy space, gentle, sweet, perfect.

Newt: You mean stoned?

Kyle: Close to it, can't wait. Anyway, you doing OK, we did some heavy hitting tonight. When Mom comes home, take her out to dinner, nice happy reunion, talk about easy stuff, furniture, errands to do, shit like that.

(Newt looks at his son, says nothing, turns slowly, moves offstage, Kyle moves around the room, looking at books on a shelf, Newt returns)

Newt: (Draws a breath) Listen, I don't know how to say this, (pauses) .....we have to stop doing this, it's, well, it's gone on too long.

Kyle: (agitated) No, no, don't say anything, please, don't say anything, just, just don't.

Newt: (breathes out) I don't know how long I can keep it up, I think it's time to stop.

Kyle: (get's up, leans on table) No, no, you promised, remember, you promised, you have to keep up your promise, so, no more, no, don't.

Newt: Kyle, I know I agreed at the time, it's, just, I can't do it anymore.

Kyle: Let's talk another time, ok, not now, please, not now, not tonite.

Newt: We can't pretend any more, it will always be another nite.

(Kyle puts hands over ears)

Newt: Mom's dead, Kyle.

Kyle: (yelling) Stop, stop.

Newt: Your mother is DEAD, Kyle, it's been a year for God's sake, a year, we have to stop this charade, these dinners, talking like she's still alive, like she'll be home in a few days, she's gone, Kyle, gone forever, and you need to accept that and deal with it, I'll help you anyway I can, but, this fantasy can't go on.

Kyle: You promised.

Newt: Yes, yes, I promised Kyle, at the time you were so distressed, I thought, ok, maybe this little playacting will help you cope, help you grieve, just give it time, no harm, where's the harm.

Kyle: Yes, yes, where's the harm?

Newt: It's harming me, Kyle, you think you're the only one grieving, look, I know you loved your mother, God knows, certainly more than the other boys, I can't even guess at the reasons, I'm not a shrink, it's deep, Kyle, complicated, I'm suffering too Kyle, and this isn't helping me, it's not helping me get on with my life, whatever years are left, I need to move on, for Chrissakes, and so do you.

Kyle: I can't, I can't.

Newt: You must.

(Kyle covers his head with his hands)

Newt: These dinners aren't helping, you think it's easy for me, I sit around an empty house with echoes of her voice in the air, here, there, snippets of her laugh, lingering, hovering, there's still the smell of her, slowly fading, do you remember it? It's like it saturates the walls, the furniture, it won't go away, I miss the shit she left lying around for me to pick up, I miss her maddening logic that made absolutely no sense, except to her, I miss being pissed off at her, I miss bumping up against her presence, now there's nothing pushing back, just thin air, nothing, emptiness, fleeting memories jumbled and disjointed, fragments and faded fotos, an empty fridge that used to be full of curling leftovers, yes, Kyle, you think it's not tough, think again my son.

(Kyle remains mute with head in his arms on the table)

Kyle: (slowly, dully, a whisper) No, no, no, no, no.

Newt: This is the only way, you know it, I know it, this day had to come, please, face up to it son, move on with your life, let's work together, we'll be ok, please, I know it, we'll be ok, I'm getting better, you can do it too, (pauses) c'mon, stay here, stay over, go back to the city in the morning.

(Kyle faces his father)

Kyle: (emotionless) I need to be alone right now.

Newt: C'mon, look, we can talk more if you want.

Kyle: I'll be ok, really, just need to sit here for awhile, finish my pizza, think a little bit, you know?, digest things, no pun intended.

Newt: I can't just leave you alone, please, I'm tired, exhausted, let's go to bed, talk in the morning.

Kyle: No, I'll be fine, you sack out, I'll just sit here for a while.

Newt: I'm worried about you.

Kyle: No, no, I'm good, g'night.

Newt: You sure, I can stay, talk some more.

Kyle: Totally fine, I'll head back to the city in a bit, I'll call you this week, we'll be ok, really, I'm good.

Newt: Ok, you sure?

Kyle: Sure, just need to catch my breath .

(Newt get's up, tries to embrace son awkwardly)

Kyle: Ah, good hug, you're a fast learner.

Newt: Call me in the morning, ok?

Kyle: Will do.

(Newt gets up, looks back at Kyle, then leaves the room)

(Kyle sits for a while, takes a sip of wine, stares off into space, phone rings)

(Kyle answers)

Tony: Yo, it's Tony , what's up?

Kyle: Yeah, Tony, uh, just visiting the folks, where are you, are you here?

Tony: In the city for a conference, back to Chicago in a few, just checking in, how's your family, Mom, Dad?

Kyle: Good, good, everything's good, dad's retired, as you know.

Tony: Can't wait for it myself.

Kyle: And of course, you know my Mom, still out there winning souls for Jesus, I tell you, the woman never quits!

(Stage goes to black)

