

*We both believe and disbelieve a hundred times  
an hour, which keeps believers nimble.*

-Emily Dickinson

### **Act The Last, Nothing More To Write.**

*(A bare stage. Or, is it a bear stage? I really don't know. Music is heard. Upstage is a wall of stars. To stage left are two highchairs. Next to the chairs is a metal rod with several costumes. Next to the metal rod are several costume trunks. The Narrator enters and takes center stage. The Narrator is dressed however the actor playing the role cares to dress. I would like to take this moment and suggest The Narrator be any sex or race or age the company desires. However, I would also like to suggest The Narrator be a little girl, as young ladies with the kind of insight The Narrator possesses can be rather disturbing. Regardless, The Narrator holds an empty cocktail in his or her hand. The music stops.)*

NOTE 1: *The stars fall slowly and continuously during the play. By the end, the night should be black.*

NOTE 2: *The Narrator should feel free to take any stage or sound direction and read them to the audience when that actor feels it is important to clarify. It may also be a nifty idea to have a TV monitor or film screen that occasionally projects a few of the stage and sound directions for dramatic purposes.*

NOTE 3: *I find these "NOTES" to be remarkably boring, as I am certain you do as well. However, I think it is important to explain this play was written with Yevgeny Vakhtangov's ideas of Fantastic Realism in mind. This is the last "NOTE" until pg79.*

### **THE NARRATOR**

*(Addressing the audience.)* Acting. Acting is the basis of a theatrical experience, that and of course lights because without lights the audience could not see the acting take place. Thus, I correct myself. Lighting. Lighting is the basis of the theatrical experience, and acting is more or less the secondary necessity for a theatrical audience, such as yourself. But, for the sake of my argument we shall ignore this fact and imagine that acting is the basis of the theatrical experience. Acting is the art of imagining followed by the ability to proficiently pretend. Let us take one of the finest young actresses in the motion picture industry today, Ms. Parker Posey, star of groundbreaking cinema such as the splendid vampire romp *Blade: Trinity*, and the exquisite *Superman Returns*. In *Superman Returns*, which I admittedly have not seen, but I hear is rather enjoyable, Ms. Posey plays the love interest of the evil-bad-villain, Mr. Lex Luthor, who is played by the one and only Kevin Spacey. Now, Ms. Posey was not actually Kevin Spacey's lover. No. She was acting as his lover. Ms. Posey imagined what it would be like if she was in a self-destructive romantic relationship with a hairless super criminal, then, when the moment was right, she pretended to be in a self-destructive relationship with a hairless super villain. And that is what great acting is all about. Now, I know what you are thinking; that is cinema and this is the legitimate theatre. But, Ms. Posey sculpted her fastidious ability to imagine and pretend in the legitimate theatre, and that is exactly what we shall do for you tonight. We are going to imagine. And, we are going to pretend. And we are all going to take the evening to say good-bye to reality.

*(The Actor As Himself enters and addresses the audience.)*

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

Now, before we start the actual performance, we are going to take a moment to help you prepare for the kind of world this author writes about for your truest enjoyment. Just as Faulkner is best with a glass of bourbon, or Fitzgerald with neat scotch, or Tom Robbins with something illegal in 48 states, this author's work is best with a very, very cold plastic cup of water. And not bottled water, it should come from a deep ground well. We will all be playing several characters for you this evening, but we will always look the same.

THE NARRATOR

We shall also be shifting in and out of time and space, as "flat time" simply won't do for this story. However, don't be confused. This story is not science fiction. Nor, is it fantasy. Some of this story may appear humorous, but this be no comedy.

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

Take a moment to lean back in your chairs, close your eyes, and open your jaws. Your jaws are connected to your ears and you need to open your ears to make certain you hear every word and every sound that rumbles towards you. Breathe in through your nose and out through the mouth. Relax. Now, in the blackness of your eyes, as they are closed, no peeking, allow a color to come to you.

THE NARRATOR

I like blue.

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

Let the audience pick their own color.

THE NARRATOR

Sorry. But, if you have trouble pick blue.

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

Now take that color and make it wet.

THE NARRATOR

Like a glass of very, very cold water.

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

And let that color seep into your nose as you breath in. Let that color fill your body. And relax. And when you are done allowing that color to fill your body, open your eyes and look at me.

*(The Actress As Herself enters.)*

THE NARRATOR

Very good. Now, This is the story of Jacob Murakami...

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

Even though that is not his real name.

THE NARRATOR

It begins when he gets struck in the head with a large piece of wood. Jacob Murakami wants...

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

*(Interrupting.)* Don't tell them. Don't tell them what he wants. Not yet. And don't tell them how it ends.

THE NARRATOR

I thought we agreed...

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

Please. Do it for me.

THE NARRATOR

Fine. Let us move on. Now, I would like all of you to turn off your electrical do-dads, cell phones, pagers, game boys, blackberries, watches, pacemakers, and of course, vibrators. I would also like to take this moment to remind you that no one is actually paid what they are worth in the legitimate theatre, which is why Ms. Posey did Super Man Returns, and we humbly request that you donate large sums of cash money and rubies and sapphires to our humble company as you exit. Now, you will hear of many locations, but this story only takes place in two towns, St. Paul, and Austin. Austin is where we shall begin. We are on a rooftop...

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

Can we start in the Republic Park?

THE NARRATOR

Yes we "may". As I said, we are in Republic Park. We can see the state capitol building of Austin, in the distance, just over there, *(The Narrator points at nothingness.)* And the skeletons of leaf-less trees bleed into the night sky. A party is occurring, just below our shoes. We are all wearing shoes, aren't we? And the stars are falling from the sky, into a body of water we will never have a name for.

*(The Actor As Himself leaves. Jacob Murakami enters with a tape recorder. He has no shoes. He has a bloody bandage on his forehead. The Actress goes to the costume rod and changes into The Actress As The Celebrity.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

(Into his tape recorder.) When director James Jameson was casting the lead role in his new super powered gore flick, *Torture*, he was looking for a true American patriot who could capture the screen and take control of the audience with her wit and wisdom. I'm sitting here today with...

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

Can we just get to this? Please?

JACOB MURAKAMI

You shot *Torture* in the Czech Republic. How was that for you?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

The people in the Czech Republic are terrible. They are all mean and wrong and treated us very poorly. Very few of them speak American and this was maybe my hardest shoot to date because of those ungrateful bastards.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Don't sugar coat it. What was so bastardly about them?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

I was smoking at the time, I have quit now because it is a filthy habit, but smoking is allowed everywhere in the Czech Republic and I went into a t-shirt shop and the owner was all like "Hey. Get out of here with that thing." He called my Camel "that thing." I was like, "Dude, if you don't want me to smoke in here there are better ways to get me to stop smoking in your little t-shirt shop then calling my Camel "that thing." He was like "Poop on you, I don't care, you stupid American." I was like "Screw you. I'm important"

JACOB MURAKAMI

So, I guess you are still riled up over the incident.

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

Everyone working on the movie was getting really mad at me. They were all like "look these people have been oppressed by the communist and they have all had a hard life." Who cares? I just finished filming an "Indie" in Bulgaria, and those people were ruled by the Turks for 500 years and then they were under the thumb of the Russians until 1989 and they aren't bastards.

JACOB MURAKAMI

You liked Bulgaria?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

I didn't like Bulgaria, but it was better than the Czech Republic. Please play that back for me. I like to hear my own voice.

*(He plays the tape recorder back for her. It says “I didn’t like Bulgaria, but it was better than the Czech Republic.” The sound of her voice is twisted and not normal.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

Aside from the Czech people, how was shooting the movie?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

It would get a little dark. Everyone has to bring their bag of bad childhood thoughts to the party, and whenever you are dealing with movie stars you are dealing with people who are different. One time Robert Duvall told me that you have to bring yourself to a role and that gives you the excuse to mine the dark waters of your inner wells. And Robert Duvall has done some really good work. When I was little kid, my sisters Penelope and Kristin would go shoot a movie and I looked at this glamorous thing where they got to be princesses all day. I grew up to realize that acting really takes a lot out of you. And you have to confront a lot about yourself and who you really are and what you are willing to be vulnerable about. Because that is all acting really is. Being vulnerable. Yes.

JACOB MURAKAMI

So, being tortured wasn’t pleasant for you?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

It was horrible because up until the point when I get kidnapped and taped to a chair, it was all chick-flick. We had fun and talked about boys, and then it became all political and gore and stuff. Basically, the story is about American girls traveling in Europe after they graduate from college and then they get kidnapped and cut up. I had to go into this horrible mood to shoot those scenes. Everyday for a week I had to sit in a chair and cry and scream. And I kept thinking to myself, “How on earth did I get here?” And then the director would yell “Cut” for lunch or smoking or something and I would still cry for many more minutes.

JACOB MURAKAMI

How would you get back to normal?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

I pet puppies. There is a ranch in Utah where you can rent puppies and you can take those puppies out in the mountains and feed them biscuits shaped like bones and fish and watch them poop. It’s very grounding.

JACOB MURAKAMI

And petting puppies relaxes you?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

I pet puppies because I’m a little crazy and I get the biggest rush out of it.

JACOB MURAKAMI

*Torture* involves a certain amount of seduction to it. Do girls have any tricks men don't know about for seducing guys?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

There is one trick but I am not supposed to talk about. But I will tell you anyways because you are paying very close attention to me. Girls have special bras that push their breasts together and make them look bigger. Bigger then they really are. It's called the wonder-bra. So guys, don't ever get fooled again!

JACOB MURAKAMI

Are you concerned that Gloria Steinem will get up in arms over women being harmed in your movie?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

Who's that?

JACOB MURAKAMI

Are you worried feminists will protest your movie because women are tortured?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

No. Because I think it is very, very good to show that this kind of thing can happen. People need to be more aware.

JACOB MURAKAMI

So, *Torture* is a public service announcement?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

Exactly. My movie should be seen by every parent and child, above the age of eight because it is R rated, and discussed. I think every parent should take their kids to see my movie. "The more you know." Right?

JACOB MURAKAMI

Right. Now, you are voting in your first presidential election this November. Who are you voting for?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

You know who I am voting for. You work for him.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Could you just say it into the tape recorder, please?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

Oh. I am voting for "Your Candidate."

JACOB MURAKAMI

And what is it about my candidate that attracts you?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

I think honor and integrity should be restored to the White House. The president was an okay guy, but he cheated on his wife with a fat girl and that is not right. I am voting for “Your Candidate”, because he will do things right. Was that what you wanted, Mr. Man?

JACOB MURAKAMI

Nice.

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

Now play that back or me.

*(He plays the tape and it says “I am voting for George W. Bush, because he will do things right. Was that what you wanted, Mr. Man?” However, the tape is slow and her voice is twisted.)*

*(The sound of a coldwater whisper is heard.)*

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

Your head is bleeding.

*(THE ACTRESS begins to change her cloths and transforms into the Girl With The Last Kiss.)*

THE NARRATOR

*(To the audience.)* He came to Texas for a dozen reasons, but mostly he came to Texas because he had nowhere else to go and there was a job. He lies for a living, but this is not a lie.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

You are lying.

JACOB MURAKAMI

We have several newspapers in Texas, and most are controlled by the guy I work for and his buddies. But, I also like the food in Texas. I like food that can stand on the tip of your tongue and bark like an animal. Not like Midwestern or British food.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

What do you know about British food?

JACOB MURAKAMI

I lived in London long enough to find out.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

You lived in London for one summer.

JACOB MURAKAMI

That was long enough to find out. Where was I? I like the food in Texas. Food that dances in your mouth, I like peppers and country sausage.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

You like the girls.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I like wearing a cowboy hat and cowboy boots and doing cowboy things.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

Like cowgirls.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Please stop interrupting. Stop interrupting and change your costume.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

Well. It is nice you finally noticed me. Really noticed me. Do I have to pick on you to get you to talk to me?

*(The sound of bats.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

They got bats in Austin. I like bats. They're fascinating creatures. They can hear all kinds of sounds. I also came to Austin because the weather is good. We're at the same latitude as Jacksonville, but we aren't swamped with all the crap people in Florida have to deal with.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

Crap. Like what?

JACOB MURAKAMI

Like old people. And the things they like to say to me. I don't like to deal with the things old people like to say.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

You only said that to hurt my feelings. You weren't in Florida long enough to "deal with" old people.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Not from where I am standing.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

I am very impressed with you. I am certain that we are all very impressed with you. You have come to Austin for the food and fun and whatever. You have made a choice. And don't pretend you haven't.

JACOB MURAKAMI

A "choice?"

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

A choice.

JACOB MURAKAMI

And I didn't choose you.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

At least I got to hear that come out of your mouth. You never choose me. You choose a job over me.

JACOB MURAKAMI

If I had stayed with you, what do you think would have happened?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

I don't care. You didn't stay with me. You jumped in your Toyota and drove off to the Timbuktu. Writing stories about celebrities, and movie stars, and roller derby teams, or the steaks fajitas in wherever you are. Or the pussy in every town you touch. (*She lies.*) I. Don't. Care.

*(The sound of a coldwater whisper is heard.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

Of course you don't. I travel for my job. I travel to write so I can eat. I don't travel for girls.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

You don't travel. You run.

*(The sound of a little boy fetching a mink coat.)*

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

Are you happy?

JACOB MURAKAMI

I thought "You don't care."

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

Seeing you again. It cracks my heart. What city are you in now? The last I read, you where in Minneapolis.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I thought I was in Austin.

THE NARRATOR

So did I.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Is that where we are now? Minneapolis.

THE NARRATOR

If you would like to be.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

You are disoriented. You're head is bleeding.

JACOB MURAKAMI

It feels wet.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

I'm not amused. I'm sure you disagree with me, but I am not amused with you getting hit in the head...

JACOB MURAKAMI

Then don't talk about it and finish putting your costume on. I don't want them (the audience) to know about my head.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

Well, they're gonna find out. And I finished putting my costume on. Can't you see that?

JACOB MURAKAMI

*(He lies.)* Of course I can.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

What do you want?

JACOB MURAKAMI

Respect.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

And you won't give me any.

*(Silence.)*

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

I miss you. I miss the way you used to talk with me on the phone. On the beach. In bed. I miss the way you used to kiss my neck.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I've never kissed your neck.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

You have. Yes. You have. Your head looks bad. Do you even know who I am anymore?

JACOB MURAKAMI

*(Pointing to his head.)* Ever since the incident, everyone looks the same.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LOST KISS

Who do I look like?

JACOB MURAKAMI

You. You look like you. Everyone looks like you. Everyone always looks like you.

*(The sound of a sky whale rips across the stage, shaking the foundation of the theatre and everyone one who is in it. The Actor enters and begins to dress as the Canadian Mountie of Justice.)*

THE NARRATOR

Ladies and gentlemen, don't be alarmed. That was the roar of a sky whale. A sky whale is a large mammal made of stone, approximately the size Indiana, surfing across clouds eating all hopes, and dreams, and time that sits before it. Now, I know what you are probably thinking, "How is a sky whale connected to "the incident", let alone the story of Jacob Murakami?" Allow me to explain...

*(The Actress does one thing to become herself.)*

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

Don't. Don't explain. Give the audience the opportunity to think for themselves.

THE NARRATOR

"Think for themselves?" We don't do that in legitimate theatre.

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

Just give them the chance. Please.

THE NARRATOR

Very well. But I will say this, we are all about to encounter something very unpleasant, so I suggest we all put our seatbelts on, they are located at the side of your chairs, and take a moment to get a blender drink, I would like a good naughty turtle.

*(Seatbelts are attached to each chair. Let's all allow the audience to decide if they wish to do anything about their safety.)*

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

This production doesn't have the budget for blender drinks.

THE NARRATOR

Oh. My. God. I said "Oh my God." God damn it! No banana bombers? No frisky whiskers? No chilly leprechauns? How in the hell can you have legitimate theatre with no chilly leprechauns? No wonder people don't go to the theatre anymore. How many times have I said I won't take the stage without a blender drink? Are we in grade school?

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

We told you last night. We do not have the money for blender drinks.

THE NARRATOR

Fine. Let's allow the audience to think for themselves, like THAT has ever worked, and not give them fruit flavored booze.

*(The Actor As The Canadian Mountie Of Justice goes crashing into the scene. He is clumsy and smashes into many of the paying patron, critics, and the furniture of the theatre.)*

THE ACTOR AS THE CANADIAN MOUNTIE OF JUSTICE

I'm ready for my first line as my first character. *(With a thick Canadian accent.)* I have come from Canada. Your nasty nation has elected a rude puppet to govern and I am here to take back our Celine Dion, and all the boxes of Kraft dinner I can possibly carry before your tyrant president can invade our fair country, because he has a daddy complex. He will ruin our fair economy, kill our fine citizens, and destroy the lives of millions. How was that?

THE NARRATOR

You forgot the maps.

THE ACTOR AS THE CANADIAN MOUNTIE OF JUSTICE

Oh. Yes. And I will steal all the maps leading to Canada so you fat, stupid, American bastards will never find us and our socialized health care system.

THE NARRATOR

That was the best yet.

THE ACTOR AS THE CANADIAN MOUNTIE OF JUSTICE

I stayed up late last night and worked on my lines.

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

Quick. Give him a medal. Shut up. Learn your lines, and try not to bump into the furniture.

*(The Actor does one thing to become Himself.)*

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

Don't tell me shut up.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Everybody stop talking. Tell me more about the sky whale.

THE NARRATOR

What more do you need to know, Jacob Murakami? It chews time and hopes and dreams. And the sky whale shits reality. It's the meanest creature ever seen. Nothing and no one can stop it. You've seen it before. You've seen it many times. Remember? It cuts dreams in half.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Why has no one done anything about this sky whale?

THE NARRATOR

It's un-kill-able. And that is not what this story is all about.

*(A coldwater whisper is heard.)*

*(Then.)*

*(The sound of glass crying.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

You're right. I have seen it before. I've seen it many times. The sky whale was there the day my father died.

*(The sound of the sky whale again. Everything stops.)*

THE NARRATOR

And other days as well.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I will kill it. I will kill the sky whale.

THE NARRATOR

No you won't. But you will get your chance. It's getting closer. You can hear its heart beating.

*(The sound of a heart beating.)*

THE NARRATOR

Let's go back to the beginning, shall we? Read the audience the letter in your pocket.

*(The beginning. Sort of.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

*(Reading from an old dusty letter in his pocket.)*

Dear Mother,

I am writing to you from inside a jar of mayonnaise...*(To The Narrator.)*

THE NARRATOR

Go ahead.

JACOB MURAKAMI

...but it is not a jar of mayonnaise. It has been three long years since we last spoke, and seven years since I have written you a letter and I have decided to take the initiative before it is too late. I wish I had done many things differently. I wish I hadn't called you all the dirty names I had called you. I wish I hadn't spit on your birthday cake when I was twelve, and I wish I hadn't yelled at you on the Christmas day when you bought me a train set instead of a pocketknife. I'm mad at you. I am very mad at you. I am not mad at you for the things you didn't do, but for the things you did. For all the "trying" you did. For all the lying you did. For sending me to special school when nothing was wrong with me. For sending me to fat camp when I was thin. For sending me the camp for ugly children to be beautiful. Because I was always special to you.

JACOB MURAKAMI

*(Not reading the note.)* It doesn't matter. None of this matters.

JACOB MURAKAMI

*(Back to reading the note.)* I am angry because you made me be a vegetarian, when I wanted cheeseburgers. I thought it was important to tell you that I am angry with you. This letter is not about me being angry with you, this letter is about me getting revenge and all the things you tried to do. I have dedicated my life to get you to shut the hell up on how "special" I am. Not special, but "special."

*(He stops reading.)*

*(Then.)*

*(Silence.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

Sincerely

*(The sound of the sky whale is heard.)*

THE NARRATOR

*(To the audience.)* Jacob Murakami will write one more letter to his mother. Let us move onto St. Paul. It's a good town. Its baseball team is owned by the great pretender, Bill Murray, star of such cinema as *Garfield* and *Ghostbusters II*.

*(We shall call this the end of what appears to be the first scene, but really isn't the first as we shall call the next scene the beginning of the story. Of course, all of this is rather pointless as we shall be eaten by the sky whale by the end of this script. Sort of. The Actress changes costumes in front of the audience and becomes The Actress As The Girl With The Cold Hair. She is an aging belly dancer, and moves to the sound of slow grinding trip-hop music whilst she talks with Jacob Murakami.)*

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

*(While dressing.)* That is a cute letter. You should mail it to your mother some day.

*(Then.)*

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

Welcome to St. Paul. I knew you would come to me some day.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Thank you. Thank you. But, I'm not here for you.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

Then why are you here?

JACOB MURAKAMI

I'm here on assignment. St. Paul is a nice town. I can't stand the roads here, no one with common sense or the ability to use logic would either, but it's a lovely town. I love the Chatterbox. Great beer.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

You've been to the Chatterbox?

JACOB MURAKAMI

I went for karaoke last night. It was a girl's birthday party. Great wallpaper at the Chatterbox. Nice paintings. Doggies playing cards.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR  
That Chatterbox just opened. I haven't been there yet. Who's birthday party?

JACOB MURAKAMI  
I got no idea. It looked cute. I just walked in.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR  
You just walked in?

JACOB MURAKAMI  
I was at the bookstore across the street. The Chatterbox looked groovy so I just walked in.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR  
Which one?

JACOB MURAKAMI  
Which one what?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR  
Which bookstore? There's two by the new Chatterbox.

JACOB MURAKAMI  
It had a big green...

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR  
Barnes and Noble. You where at Barnes and Noble. They are all over the damned place. Don't you know what a Barnes and Noble is?

JACOB MURAKAMI  
I like Barnes and Noble. I know what I'm getting when I go to Barnes and Noble.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR  
And then you just walked into the Chatterbox and a girl was having a birthday party. What was her name?

JACOB MURAKAMI  
I don't know.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR  
You don't know or you won't tell me?

JACOB MURAKAMI  
I don't recall.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

You don't know. Or you won't tell me?

JACOB MURAKAMI

I think her name was "Kate." Let's call her "Kate."

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

Did you buy "Kate" a present?

JACOB MURAKAMI

I purchased her a beer.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

To get her drunk.

JACOB MURAKAMI

She was already drunk.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

I bet she was. My. She sounds like your kind of women.

JACOB MURAKAMI

She wasn't a woman. She was just a girl.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

Just a girl you got drunk.

JACOB MURAKAMI

She was already drunk. I told you that.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LOST KISS

They do have good beer at the Chatterbox. What were you doing at a bookstore? You don't read books.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I read books.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LOST KISS

No you don't. You tell people you read books. So they'll think you are a "smarty."

JACOB MURAKAMI

I'm working on a novel.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LOST KISS

Newspaper man writes a novel. My. How...ordinary.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I'm not a newspaper man. I'm journalist and a creative non-fictionist. And now I am adding fictionist to my resume. You'll like my novel it's about...

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

I don't care what it is about. Your neck.

JACOB MURAKAMI

What of it?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

Your neck smells like soap. Like a girls soap.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Not soup. Soap.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

Then you admit what you know you smell like.

JACOB MURAKAMI

You can't smell my neck from there. You have to come closer.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

I can smell your neck from across the room, Mr. Man.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Don't call me that.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR.

You used to like being called Mr. Man.

JACOB MURAKAMI

That was when we was kids.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

And you don't like me anymore.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I don't like being called Mr. Man.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

You're no fun.

JACOB MURAKAMI

How would you know? We haven't seen each other since high school.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

That's not true. I saw you across a bar in Bloomington, IN. We made eye contact. You pretended you didn't notice me but you did. I was surprised to see you.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Why?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

I heard you never go back to Bloomington.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I don't. But last summer was different. I was passing through. I thought I would stop and let loose baggage. You wrote a message on a bar napkin.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

It was a drink coaster, not a napkin.

JACOB MURAKAMI

A drink coaster.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

A Killian's Red drink coaster.

JACOB MURAKAMI

A Killian's Red drink coaster.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

Do you remember what it said?

JACOB MURAKAMI

It said Killian's Red Beer.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

The message. Do you remember what the message on the coaster said?

*(The music get louder.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

It said, "Do you wanna dance?"

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

No.

*(The music gets louder.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

It said, “Do you wanna tango?”

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

No.

*(The music gets even louder.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

It said, “Do you wanna climb the sky and scream?”

*(The music fades slowly to silence. She still dances. She dances to no music.)*

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

I didn’t write you a question. It was a statement. Mister. Man.

JACOB MURAKAMI

It said...

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

You know what it said.

*(She stops dancing all together.)*

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

I know what you said when I got pregnant. When I got preggers when I was eighteen.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Nineteen. You were older.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

...all the gossip queens came out in force and talked of what a bloody whore I am. Right after you broke up with me. I know what Becky’s mom said about me and what you said back at her. In my defense. And I know you already had a history with Becky’s mom, calling her the nastiest word you can call a woman.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I don’t have a history with Becky’s mother. She has a history with me.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

You’ve got a lot of mother history.

*(Silence.)*

*(Then.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

And the fact people think I have that kind of history with Becky's mom is proof positive that people need to get cable television to amuse themselves with something else. I told Becky's mother that if she didn't stop shootin' her mouth off about you, I would break her teeth.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

You broke her hip.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I didn't break her hip. She slipped. I was there. I got pegged with it.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

Yeah. Right. Why does your neck smell like a girl's soap?

JACOB MURAKAMI

Because smellin' like a girl makes me happy. I like girl's soap. I feel cleaner. It's better than Old Spice. Did you get the Christmas present I sent?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

I told you not to send more presents.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Did you get the Christmas present I sent?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

You don't follow instructions well.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Did you get the Christmas present I sent?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

Yes. We got the Christmas present you sent.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I just wanted to hear that you got the present I sent.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

Is that why you are here? Is that the reason you came all the way to St. Paul?

JACOB MURAKAMI

I came to St. Paul because I'm on assignment.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

It was a nice present. I wish you hadn't sent it.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Does he like it?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

He loves it. He plays with it everyday after school.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Does he need more games?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

Games are expensive and I don't want you buying them for him.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Does he need more games?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

He beat the game with the monkey.

JACOB MURAKAMI

It's called Donkey Kong.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

I know what it is called. He beat the game with the twin plumbers. He always forgets the names of the plumbers, so we call one Minnie and his brother Paul.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Their names are Mario and.,.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

I know what their names are. My son yelled at me a week ago. He yelled at me for the first time a week ago yesterday. He was playing with your present, he was playing The Legend of Zelda, and he was being chased by bees. I told him to go into a house to get away from the bees. He yelled "This isn't fucking Pac-Man." I was going to ground him, but he doesn't listen to me anymore. He's a lot like his father.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Where did he learn that word?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

I don't know and I don't want to know.

JACOB MURAKAMI

May I please have a picture of him?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

No. No you don't get to have a picture of my son. And you don't get to send him any more Christmas presents.

JACOB MURAKAMI

You don't make enough money as a dishwasher, and you don't make enough money as a belly dancer...

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

Part-time belly dancer. Thank you for reminding me. I completely and totally forgot that we are poor. YOU are an outstanding son of a bitch.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Yeah. You wrote that on the Killian's Red Coaster.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

I don't want to be mad at you. I don't want to be angry with you after all this time. But you left me. You broke a woman's hip, and then you just disappeared.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I didn't break her hip.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

I know. She slipped.

JACOB MURAKAMI

And I didn't leave you. We were already broken up. And you where with another guy to make me angry.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

Did it work?

JACOB MURAKAMI

Sure.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

I hear you are in Alabama on assignment. And I hear you are in New Mexico on assignment. And I am at home alone with a kid that should have been yours.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I like warm weather.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

I remember. I remember everything. Don't change the subject. I remember everything about you, every last detail. Out of no place I get teddy bears in the mail. Usually a week after Thanksgiving.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I wanted to make certain they got to you by Christmas.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

They always did. The polar bear. The panada bear. The kola bear. The grizzly bear. But we never got cards with the bears. Or letters. Or pictures. And I never got an explanation. A reason. I just got stuffed animals in the mail. Every winter.

JACOB MURAKAMI

The bears weren't for you.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

I know. But I like to pretend they where. Now, tell me why your neck smells like a woman's soap. Tell me why your neck smells like woman's soap when you knew you where gonna see me tonight.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Your body looks good.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

I didn't ask that.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I thought you should know. When we talked on the phone, when you invited me down here to see you, you kept stuttering and saying you gained ten pounds.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

I don't stutter.

JACOB MURAKAMI

You did on the phone. I don't see it. I don't see ten pounds. You look great.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

Here's an invitation to a party. It's an underground scene and hosted by your old "spiritual advisor," Wolfe Taco.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I heard rumors he was here.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

He knows you are in town. I told him. He wants to see you. His parties have free Jameson attached all night long. I know you like your Jameson.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Will you go?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

I can't go. It's a school night and I don't go out when my son has school the next day. I ran myself down long ago with that up late drinking stuff on weeknights. Go.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Not without you.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

Then you're not going. Why. Do you. Smell like a girls soap.

JACOB MURAKAMI

It's from work.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

You don't work.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I work, just not the way you do. Everything is work for me.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

I bet. It's from her. The smell. It is from her. "Kate." The girl you met last night. It's fine.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Of course it is fine.

*(He opens his wallet and throws a dollar bills at her feet.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

Crawl for it.

*(She crawls and takes the money.)*

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

I don't need your money. I don't want you sending presents to my son anymore. He's not your son.

JACOB MURAKAMI

But he should have been.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

You were busy. Trying to bother your mother. You're always too busy trying to bother your mother.

JACOB MURAKAMI

What does your son want to be when he grows up?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

He wants to move to Canada and be a mountie. He calls macaroni and cheese “Kraft dinner.” It’s his favorite thing to eat.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Cute. *(Looking at his toes.)* What have you done with my shoes?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

I’ve taken them. They are mine. You can’t run away without your shoes. I wore this dress for you tonight. Say something. Say something I like and I will give you back your shoes.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I’m only lonely when I am around people.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

Bravo. Classic. Classic Jacob Murakami. Classic Mr. Man.

*(While she is on the ground, she crawls to him and wraps her arms around his legs. He places his hand on her head. He strokes her hair. This entire scene has been a lie. They will now tell the truth.)*

*(Silence. Allow the audience to see how they are without words.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

I tried to call you last night.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

The phone didn’t ring.

JACOB MURAKAMI

There was a message. A girl. She said the number had been disconnected. How much money do you need?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

The phone was cut on purpose.

JACOB MURAKAMI

How much money do you need?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

I don’t need money. I just wanted to see your face one last time. Your head is bleeding.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I had an accident.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

Tell me about your novel. Tell me it's about me.

JACOB MURAKAMI

It's not about you, but you're in it. It's a science fiction novel. It starts when...

*(The sound of the sky whale rips across the audience, and smoke begins to rise from the stage up into the stars.)*

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

That was close. I don't like this. I don't like this at all. Do you smell smoke?

*(The Actor As The Smoke Jumper enters. He slams into many audience members. He is still clumsy. But he has a good heart, at the end of the day the audience should give him a break.)*

THE ACTOR AS THE SMOKE JUMPER

Stay calm, now everyone just stay calm. Me and my boys have everything under control, but I wanna evacuate this theatre just to stay on the safe side. It's like my Grand Pa always told me, "it's better to be safe, than die in a forest fire." Me and my boys are gonna take care of this here. Me and my boys. My boys. Got boys with me. Outside. With water. And a dog. Dog's name is bongo. We named after some drums my Grand Pa got me for Easter. All right, let's get the "dang" out of here! Watchin' my language. Wife asked me to. She's the boss. The pilot. I'm the co-pilot.

JACOB MURAKAMI

What's happening?

THE ACTORS AS THE SMOKE JUMPER

We got ourselves a fire on our hands. Fire burns things. Like trees. And theatres. And people. Me and my boys are gettin' you out of here. Got boys with me. Outside. With a dog. Don't you know? The forest is on fire.

JACOB MURAKAMI

We're nowhere near a forest.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

This is St. Paul. Where do you think we are?

JACOB MURAKAMI

We are in a place...*(He becomes lost)*...where people become famous.

THE ACTOR AS THE SMOKE JUMPER

No one is famous until they're a pez dispenser. Grandfather told me that yesterday. Not Grand Pa. No. He's dead. Died of rabies. Dog bit 'im. Right in the delicates. Bad stuff. Now, are we gonna evacuate this theatre or are we gonna roast and suffocate?

THE NARRATOR

Now, the theatre isn't actually on fire, so don't worry.

THE ACTOR AS THE SMOKE JUMPER

This is the legitimate theatre. We are Imagining. And pretending. The truth never happens in this story. Now, it is my job to get you off the stage before the fire kills you. Wait. Wait. (*He passes gas.*) Sorry. Sorry. I had Greek for brunch and that always makes me toot. Oh. Oh, God. This is gonna get worse before it gets better. (*He passes gas again.*)

(*Everyone laughs.*)

(*Then.*)

(*Silence.*)

(*Then.*)

(*Nice music.*)

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE COLD HAIR

I've wanted to see you for so long.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Sometimes I like to pretend I am. I like to imagine and pretend your son is my son. And we build tunnels in St. Paul snowdrifts.

(*The nice music fades away.*)

(*The sound of a coldwater whisper.*)

(*Then.*)

(*The saddest sound on earth.*)

(*The world stops once again. Jacob Murakami sits in one of the high chairs at the back of the stage as The Actress As Herself and the Actor As Himself Change cloths and talk. Jacob Murakami watches them.*)

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

You did a very good job just now.

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

Thanks.

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

You locked your door last night.

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

I wanted some privacy.

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

I wanted to thank you for paying the electric bill. I can pay you back by Christmas.

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

Don't worry about it.

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

I'm going to worry about it. I'm going to pay you back by Christmas.

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

You were out late last night.

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

T.G.I. Friday's had half-off Long Island Ice Tea night.

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

You've been coming home late a lot recently.

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

I will pay you back by Christmas.

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

I am not worried about the money.

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

I am.

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

You know what this play reminds me of? Sisters Rosensweig.

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

This play is absolutely nothing like The Sisters Rosensweig.

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

It was the first play you and I were in together.

*(The Actor As Himself takes a Polaroid camera out of a hatbox by the costume trunks.)*

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

You were the only one in the entire school that knew how to sing that dumb camp song.

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

*(Softly singing to himself.)*

Well, the Cannibal King  
With the big nose ring  
Fell in love with the dusty maid.

*(He takes a picture of an audience member. Shakes the picture then hands the picture to the patron. He does this to many audience members.)*

And every night  
In the pale money light  
This is what he'd say.

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

What are you doing?

*(The sound of a coldwater whisper.)*

*(Then.)*

*(The sound of children laughing on a playground.)*

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

I am taking pictures of the audience. I want to make certain they know what they look like to us.

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

You had your door locked last night.

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

Of course I had my door locked last night. I've had the door locked for every night the past three nights, but you wouldn't know because you only come to my room when you want to come to my room.

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

I was drunk.

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

You're always drunk.

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

I just wanted to thank you for paying the electric bill.

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

And?

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

There is no “and.”

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

There is always an “and” with you. Do you remember how you got to bed last Saturday?

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

I feel asleep in the shower. Are you going to adopt those legless chihuahuas? The ones the Russian woman is selling on the street.

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

You passed out in the shower. You were masturbating with a bottle of Jameson. You jammed a Jameson bottle into your vagina. Do you remember that?

*(Silence.)*

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

I would like to take this moment and thank you for helping me out of the shower. And putting me in my bed. You are a good friend.

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

You were lucky it didn't break. No. I am not going to adopt the legless chihuahuas. Our apartment is too small for chihuahuas.

*(Softly singing to himself.)*

Well, the Cannibal King  
With the big nose ring  
Fell in love with the dusty maid.

*(He takes a picture of an audience member. Shakes the picture then hands the picture to the patron. He does this to many patrons, as I have already told you.)*

And every night  
In the pale money light  
This is what he'd say.

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

It's been hard.

*(The sound of a coldwater whisper.)*

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

I know. *(He takes a bag of jellybeans out of his pocket.)* I got these for you. They have cinnamon crystals in them.

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

My favorite. Thank you.

*(The sound of the sky whale.)*

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

The sky whale will be here soon.

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

Do you think he's gonna kill the whale tonight?

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

What's he gonna kill it with? A harpoon? The whale is made of stone. It's unstoppable. It makes me sad. I don't want to be sad anymore.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I'm going to get a cement mixer. I'm gonna shake its bones until he cries.

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

I'd like to see that.

JACOB MURAKAMI

*(Getting out of the chair.)* You will. The last time I saw the sky whale was November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1983. Bloomington, IN. The whale ripped the city from the ground, and turned it on its ear. And I will kill it. You will see.

THE NARRATOR

It's time for the next scene, isn't it?

*(The Actor runs off stage. The Actress becomes The Celebrity once again. Jacob Murakami produces a tape recorder again. He records what she says.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

It's nice to see you again.

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

Have we met?

JACOB MURAKAMI

Many times.

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

You look average.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Thanks. Your new show on FOX, *Electric*, is intense. Explain to me as if I was a child, what this show is all about.

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

I've heard it described as *Magnolia* in cars. *Magnolia* is a Tom Cruise movie. All of these people, from all kinds of walks of life, are mysteriously brought together to chase down 42 million dollars. They don't know why they have been asked, but we do know that the 42 million dollar is very important to each person and will help them fulfill all their hopes, dreams, and desires. All the characters do are things to slow the others down. It's all about greed, and politics, and the American way.

JACOB MURAKAMI

What shady things do they do?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

Each week somebody could be killed by another character and there are dozens of high adrenaline car chases. We have a new hot car in every episode.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Who do you play?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

I play Montana Ferguson. I'm the spicy, sexy one of the group and she really wants to win. She's super-smart, extremely scandalous, and does whatever it takes to win. You know, she'll thin the herd by cutting brake cables or putting bananas in tail pipes or whatever. I'm really putting my acting skills to the test.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Do you have a spicy personality in real life?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

I'm not scandalous, but I do consider myself spicy and feisty. People always tell me I am strong. I know what I want and I always get it.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Would you do something illegal for 42 million dollars?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

Of course. That's a lot of money. Money is everything.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Would you put a banana in my tail pipe?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

You're a little flirty boy, aren't you?

JACOB MURAKAMI

Yeah. Have you ever gotten a speeding ticket?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

Of course. Who hasn't?

JACOB MURAKAMI

I haven't.

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

Aren't you "special?"

*(A coldwater whisper is heard.)*

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

Play that back to me. I want to hear my voice.

*(He plays the tape back. It says "Aren't you "special?" Her voice is twisted.)*

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

I like the sound of my voice.

JACOB MURAKAMI

You were in the smash movie, *Slut*. How was that?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

It was an incredible experience acting-wise. I really got to pretend I was a slut. The problem was that I pretend so well, everyone thinks I'm a real slut now.

JACOB MURAKAMI

That's the price you pay for your craft.

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

The one thing that really sucks about *Slut* is that I did it for scale, because I believe in the indie moviemaker. Then the movie was a killer at Sundance, was this big box office success, and I got nothing for it. The producers are like "She has a career now." Screw the career, I want money. What's really nifty about *Electric* is that I'm getting paid a million dollars an episode, the way I should be, and I play a character that is totally different than the character I played in *Slut*. People will see my versatility.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Speaking of versatility, you are a musician.

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

I am so glad you brought that up. I'm actually about to release my record. I don't have a major label deal right now, but that is fine because I don't want one. My album is being released on my new label. I'm an entrepreneur. I've got my acting career. My clothing line I started with my best friend who does all the designing and work, and I'm putting this record out on my own.

JACOB MURAKAMI

What is the record like?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

It's a hit record and that is all I have to say. It's a mix of everything. It's fun because people tell me all the time that I need to stop with the acting and focus on music because that is where my true talents are. And I tell them that I try to live my life with no regrets because some day, and it will be here sooner than we want, reality will set in and eat us all alive.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I can't argue with that.

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

I didn't catch your name.

JACOB MURAKAMI

My name is Jacob. Jacob Murakami.

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

I know you.

JACOB MURAKAMI

We've met before.

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

No. We haven't. But I have heard of you.

JACOB MURAKAMI

What have you heard?

*(The sound of the sky whale is heard. Everything stops.)*

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

What kind of name is Murakami?

JACOB MURAKAMI

It's Japanese.

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

You don't look Japanese. At least, not that much like a Japanese.

JACOB MURAKAMI

This interview is about you. Not me.

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

Every interview is about me, Mr. Murakami.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Who are you voting for in this year's election?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

You know who I am voting for. You work for him.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Just. Say it.

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

I am voting for "Your Candidate."

JACOB MURAKAMI

Why?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

Because, he will restore honor and integrity to the White House. Play that back for me, Mr. Man.

*(He plays the tape back. It says..."I am voting for Your Candidate..." "Why?"..."*  
Because he will restore honor and integrity to the White House. Play that back for me, Mr. Man.")

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

Is that what you wanted.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Yeah. That's nice.

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

Do you know that your forehead is bleeding?

JACOB MURAKAMI

Yes. I know.

*(The sound of a father writing his son's obituary is heard.)*

*(Silence.)*

*(The Actress As The Celebrity makes only one move or adjustment to become The Actress As Herself.)*

THE ACTRESS AS THE HERSELF

You're gonna kill the whale with a cement mixer? Wish I had thought of that.

*(The Actor As Himself enters, softly singing to himself.)*

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

Well, the Cannibal King  
With the big nose ring  
Fell in love with a dusty maid...

*(The Narrator enters with a boom box. The Narrator takes one of the chairs and places this chair at center stage, puts the boom box on said chair, and press the "play" button on this boom box. A child's song begins to play. Oh, I forgot to write that The Narrator also has an acoustic guitar. The Actor As Himself takes The Actress As Herself, by the hand upstage and they dance a simple box step sort of thingy. As the boom box plays, The Narrator will occasionally strum a chord for the purposes of emphasis.)*

THE NARRATOR

Now that we have learned your name...

JACOB MURAKAMI

It's a lovely name.

THE NARRATOR

That it is. Tell us a little about yourself.

JACOB MURAKAMI

What do you want to know?

THE NARRATOR

Well, I don't want to know anything about you. But, I am certain the audience does.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Well, I am certain you are curious as to why my head is bleeding.

THE NARRATOR

Oh, let's wait for that. This crowd might need blender drinks for that and I am holding out for blender beverages before the night is done. I sure could go for a slippery squid. Tell them about your childhood.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I was born in Muncie, IN.

THE NARRATOR

Stop. Let's make this an interview.

*(The Narrator pulls out a small tape recorder and presses play.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

I was born in Muncie, IN. Muncie is a small town, about 30,000 people where they make glass jars.

THE NARRATOR

Glass jars?

JACOB MURAKAMI

“Ball” glass jars.

THE NARRATOR

The kind you put mayonnaise in? Isn't that what your father did for a living? Make mayonnaise?

JACOB MURAKAMI

How did you know that?

THE NARRATOR

I'm “The Narrator.” I know everything.

JACON MURAKAMI

Then why are we doing this?

THE NARRATOR

Because it's legitimate theater and legitimate theater is fun.

JACOB MURAKAMI

The interview. Why are we doing the interview?

THE NARRATOR

Because. It's legitimate theater. And. Legitimate theater is fun.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Then I can just pretend. I can imagine and pretend.

THE NARRATOR

Let's not. Let's try to be real, shall we? Your father was a mayonnaise maker.

JACOB MURAKAMI

My father was a drunk.

THE NARRATOR

That is not a profession.

JACOB MURAKAMI

It was to him.

THE NARRATOR

Until he died.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Until he killed himself.

THE NARRATOR

Oh. Yes. He killed himself after the 1980 presidential election.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I want to stop this.

THE NARRATOR

Tell us how he did himself in.

JACOB MURAKAMI

No.

THE NARRATOR

I'll buy you a blender drink. A Bunny Slipper. I bet you would like an ice cold Bunny Slipper. Imagine and pretend. Imagine and pretend the audience isn't here. How did your father die?

JACOB MURAKAMI

He took off his shoes and crawled into an old bomb shelter and drank bleach.

THE NARRATOR

Lovely.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I never understood why he took his shoes off. My father would drink Jameson and draw pictures of red bats for me. After my father died, by the way he left no suicide note, we've just speculated that he didn't want to live in a world where an out of work actor was Commander 'n Chief.

THE NARRATOR

All politicians are out of work actors. Nobody cares. Tell us about Bloomington. I mean me. Tell me about Bloomington.

JACOB MURAKAMI

After my father died, my mother moved us to Bloomington.

THE NARRATOR

Indiana. Why?

JACOB MURAKAMI

Because she felt it was a more cultured town than Muncie and she thought I should be cultured. We lived in a small apartment under a pizza joint called Mother Bear's.

THE NARRATOR

Which is famous for being voted the fourth best pie in all of America by People Magazine! I'm sorry, I interrupted.

JACOB MURAKAMI

At the age of eight I took karate lessons at the YMCA.

THE NARRATOR

After seeing the Ralph Machio motion picture "The Karate Kid." What year did "The Karate Kid" come out?

JACOB MURAKAMI

It was...um...

THE NARRATOR

Wasn't it the same year as November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1983?

*(Everything stops. The dancing stops. The music stops. All is still.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

It was about that time.

THE NARRATOR

Actually, I think The Karate Kid was released just a few months after that date. Funny how we remember things. Why did you study karate?

JACOB MURAKAMI

All the kids in Bloomington took karate lessons.

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

Yes, we all did.

*(The Narrator goes to the boom box and presses “play.” The world starts again.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

On November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1983 I was sent to “special” school. A small yellow bus would pick me up everyday at the pizza parlor and take me out to the country where all the young kids in Bloomington who were special or retarded or slow or dumb or emotionally disturbed could all be together and out of the way of the real children.

THE NARRATOR

Why did you go?

JACOB MURAKAMI

I was sent because my teachers said I was dumb. At least that is what I thought until I learned I was sent to dumb school because my mother wanted me to go.

THE NARRATOR

When did we learn this?

JACOB MURAKAMI

My mother told me on my sixteenth birthday. It was my only present.

THE NARRATOR

And your mother wanted you to go because...

JACOB MURAKAMI

Because she found drawings I made in class with bright blue bombs dropping from the sky with the words “Goodbye Blue Mondays” written across them.

THE NARRATOR

And.

JACOB MURAKAMI

And a picture I drew of my father drinking bleach in a bomb shelter.

THE NARRATOR

You can’t blame your mother for what she did.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Yes I can. At special school I was ignored, and all my friends in my neighborhood stopped playing with me because they didn’t want to be with the “special” kid.

THE NARRATOR

Children can be cruel.

JACOB MURAKAMI

There was a boy at special school who would hold me down. He would press my face into the grass. He was five years older than me and beat me for my lunch. My mother would pack a cold slice of pizza in my Garfield lunch box everyday.

THE NARRATOR

Garfield. Everyone likes Garfield. What else did your mother pack?

JACOB MURAKAMI

An apple. And a bag of pretzels. Long thin pretzels I would pretend were cigarettes. Chris Johnson would hold me down and beat me for my pretzels.

THE NARRATOR

So you learned karate.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Yes.

THE NARRATOR

And Chris Johnson never took you pretzels again.

JACOB MURAKAMI

The pretzels were my smokes. My father smoked. Camels. He would smoke his cigarettes and I would suck on the end of my pretzels. When we watched movies together.

THE NARRATOR

God, I need a blender drink. But you went to high school with normal people.

JACOB MURAKAMI

That is right. I lobbied to get out of special school and go to high school with normal kids. To do so, I had to take an I.Q. test and score above average. My I.Q.142.

THE NARRATOR

Wow. That is genius level.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Yes. Yes it is. I went to Bloomington High School North. Now, that's important because Bloomington only has two high schools, North and Bloomington South. I lived closer to Bloomington South, but I was bussed across town to North high school because South is where the rich kids went and administration didn't want a "special" student mingling with the rich kids.

THE NARRATOR

That would be bad. And you are a womanizer.

*(Everything stops once again.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

I am not a womanizer.

THE NARRATOR

But you have had so many relationships.

JACOB MURAKAMI

A few.

THE NARRATOR

And you are a writer.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I'm a journalist.

THE NARRATOR

Like Robert Redford in that movie.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Sure. I mostly work for free weekly newspapers.

THE NARRATOR

Like the Village Voice.

JACOB MURAKAMI

The Village Voice, the Austin Chronicle. The Stranger in Seattle. If you read The Onion, those interviews in the back, the serious ones called the A.V. Club, I write a lot of those. I'm a free-lance journalist. A gun for hire. Sort of like "Shane" or "Han Solo." I write stories for anyone that will pay.

THE NARRATOR

So you have loose ethics? That explains the womanizing.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I told you. I am no womanizer.

THE NARRATOR

Of course not. I say the darn-est things without blender drinks. How did you become a journalist?

JACOB MURAKAMI

I studied writing in college.

THE NARRATOR

Yeah! And that was where? Go on. Tell us.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I went to Ball State. My mother wanted me to go to a liberal arts college like Oberlin, or Earlham, or Wooster. Just the name “liberal” made my mother happy.

THE NARRATOR

Liberal means forward thinking.

JACOB MURAKAMI

But I knew there was no better way to bother my mother than to go to a state supported university. I don’t like to hurt my mother...play that back to me. I want to hear my voice.

(THE NARRATOR *plays the tape back. It says. “I don’t like to hurt my mother...”*)

THE NARRATOR

But, you do like to bother her. Tell us, where is Ball State?

JACOB MURAKAMI

Muncie. Muncie, IN. Where Ball glass jars are made.

THE NARRATOR

Back to where you where born.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Back to where my father committed suicide.

THE NARRATOR

Back to where your father committed suicide. I like your voice. I wanna hear that one more time.

*(The sound of a coldwater whisper is heard.)*

*(Then.)*

*(The sound of rain drying.)*

THE NARRATOR

How did you get the name “Murakami?”

JACOB MURAKAMI

My mother picked it off a book cover. My mother used to take me to a bookstore with green trim.

THE NARRATOR

What was the name of the bookstore?

JACOB MURAKAMI

I don't recall.

THE NARRATOR

Tell us what the name of the book was.

JACOB MURAKAMI

It was one book, but two stories. "Hard-Boiled Wonderland and The End Of The World." My mother changed our last name after my father passed away so we wouldn't think of him or the way he died. The day we changed our name, the day my mother changed it for me, a fire ripped through Hoosier National Forrest. We could smell the smoke for miles.

THE NARRATOR

This is becoming a very good interview.

*(Jacob Murakami touches the blood-covered bandage on his head.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

I've stopped bleeding.

THE NARRATOR

No you haven't. You just think you have. And now you write puff pieces for George Bush.

JACOB MURAKAMI

It's a job.

THE NARRATOR

And it bothers your mother.

JACON MURAKAMI

Damn straight. It doesn't matter. Politicians are all the same.

THE NARRATOR

Charming. And, you are writing a novel.

JACOB MURAKAMI

It's a sci-fi story. Something you can buy at a drugstore. I hope. It's about a guy shifting in time and space from place to place and realizing he wasted a good chunk of his life on the wrong things and regrets...well...that is what I imagine it is about.

THE NARRATOR

Your novel sounds charming. I look forward to its publication. I wrote a novel once, about a boy that goes to wizard school and fights a great evil that murdered his wizard parents. I got several rejection letters from publishers, using word like “derivative” and “plagiarism.” I called it “Billy Bob’s Great Adventure.”

JACOB MURAKMAI

People can be cruel. Just like children.

THE NARRATOR

Yes. People can be cruel. I’m fine. God, I could use a blender drink. I’m going to imagine. I’m going to imagine and pretend I have a frosty beaver in my hand. (*The Narrator takes a drink of an imaginary “frosty beaver”.*) Oh. That is nice beaver. I just love the taste of an ice-cold frosty beaver. Would you care for some? Would you care to taste my frosty beaver?

JACOB MURAKAMI

I would love to share a drink with you. (*He sips the imaginary drink to humor The Narrator.*) Say, you do have a tasty beaver.

THE NARRATOR

I would like to conclude this interview by giving you a list of demands. I want you to do these by the time the play is over.

(*The Narrator writes one thing on the inside of her palm and shows it to Jacob Murakami.*)

JACOB MURAKAMI

That’s only one thing...

(*The sound of a cell phone ringing can be heard from the first row of the audience.*)

THE NARRATOR

We told you to turn these things off.

JACOB MURAKAMI

(*Answering the phone.*) Hello. Who is this? No, I am not interested in buying car insurance right now. Why don’t you give me your cell phone number and I will call you when you’re trying to relax. Yes, that would be rude. (*He hangs up the phone. Then, he dials a number.*) Since you interrupted the performance you’re gonna further the plot. Hello, information? Give me the number of the nearest construction company to (*He gives the address of the theatre the play is performed.*)

THE NARRATOR

Now that is not nice. 411 will cost the audience member 75 cents.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Don't worry. I'm being connected at no additional cost. Yes. Hello. What is the size of the largest cement mixer you have? No that is too big, what else do you have? No, that is too big as well. I don't know if that will work either. I'm gonna use it on a whale. A whale. You know what a dolphin is? It's sort of like that but much larger. No, it doesn't do cute tricks. And this one is made of stone. I don't know, do you know what kind of stone he's made of?

THE NARRATOR

It's grey stone.

JACOB MURAKAMI

It's grey stone. Yeah, I know most stones are grey. Well, I am hoping limestone, it's pretty soft. I don't need a jack hammer, I just...you know, is the jack hammer on discount with the cement mixer. 20 bucks? Hm. That is a good deal. I'll take the package. I can pay you when you get here. When? About thirty minutes. Yeah, I'm at the theatre down the street from you. No, the other street. You can do that? Well, I would just like to say I am very impressed with the service I am getting from you. I will tell my friends about you. I will. What do I look like...average height, average build. No, I don't moisturize. Well, thank you. You too. You have a sexy voice too. No. No one has ever told me I sound like Clive Owen. I am taking it as a compliment.

THE NARRATOR

Ask if he can bring blender drinks.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I'm not gonna ask him that. What? The narrator wants you to bring booze. Blender drinks. You can do that? Something fruity? How do you feel about a fuzzy farmer?

THE NARRATOR

I love fuzzy farmers.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Fuzzy farmers sound great. Okay, I'll, we'll see you soon. Um....thank you. He just said he loved me....

THE NARRATOR

Tell him you love him too.

JACOB MURAKAMI

No.

THE NARRATOR

Tell him you love him. I need a blender drink.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I love you too. (*He hangs up the phone and gives it back to the audience member.*) Now I feel weird. Thank you very much. Now turn it off.

THE NARRATOR

I am very excited (*this actor applauds with glee!*)

JACOB MURAKAMI

So am I. I need to say something to you. I miss home. I miss Bloomington.

THE NARRATOR

You don't have to say anything else. We are going to move on. Let's go back to Minnesota until the drinks get here. Jacob Murakami climbed into his Toyota and drove to Minneapolis that evening for the underground party, hosted by his old friend and spiritual advisor, Wolfe Taco.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Wolfe Taco got his divinity degree from the back of a Rolling Stone Magazine.

THE NARRATOR

Wolfe Taco is not his real name, but it is much better than the God awful mess of a birth name he was given, thus we shall refer to him only as Wolfe Taco and no other title in the name of public decency.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Like us, Wolfe Taco likes to pretend.

THE NARRATOR

He likes to imagine and pretend that he is motion picture celebrity and all-around sexy beast Matthew McConaughey.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Of course, most of us like to imagine and pretend we are Matthew McConaughey.

THE NARRATOR

Some of us like to imagine and pretend we are being held by Matthew McConaughey. Softly. Under an orange harvest moon. Like a tiny dancer. Oh. Now, in the name of jumping through time and space I will have you know we are in the basement of an old house on East Hennipen Street just north of downtown Minneapolis. Wolfe Taco hands out free glasses of Jameson Irish whiskey, and other jubilations. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome to the stage, Wolfe Taco.

*(Applause.)*

*(The Actor As Wolfe Taco Enters. The Actress as the Girl With The Last Kiss enter and stands in the corner with a glass of Irish Whiskey in her hand.)*

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

Yeah! Jacob Murakami. Long time no see, baby. As your spiritual advisor I highly suggest you smoke this corncob pipe of finely grown weed with yours truly to make this visit monumental.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I don't smoke much anymore.

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

Foul ball, baby. As your spiritual advisor I suggest...what are you afraid of? No one is looking. It's okay to rock 'n roll.

*(The two light the pipe and pass it back and forth.)*

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

Did you bring me a gift?

JACOB MURAKAMI

That I did. Have you heard of the Suicide Girls?

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

Tattooed porn stars.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I interviewed a few.

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

Nice.

JACOB MURAKAMI

They gave me this deck of cards with pictures of themselves.

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

Nice.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I want you to have it.

*(He gives him a deck of cards.)*

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

Nice, baby.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I interviewed the four of clubs and the two of hearts.

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

That is fantastic. Not to change the subject, but did you see me on the television? I was a contestant on Wheel of Fortune. I lost badly. A guy from Nigeria killed me. He snagged \$72,000.00 and a boat. And not just any boat. The kind of boat rich people buy. That kind of boat. I never had a chance. The man was all verb, baby. He was in motion.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I know. I saw you.

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

Vanna White winked at me.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I interviewed her once.

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

She is a doll. She wears a size four dress. I like girls who wear size four. Four on the floor, baby.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I heard you were in New York. How did you end up in Minnesota?

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

Funny story. I left Indiana right after you did.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I heard.

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

...and went to New York City. It was good times. New York was ready for me. I think you would like New York. Many people would be ready for a guy like you in New York.

JACOB MURAKAMI

What did you do there?

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

I washed dishes at one of Mario Batali's restaurants, do you know who Mario is?

JACOB MURAKAMI

I interviewed him.

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

You interview everyone.

JACOB MURAKAMI

You washed dishes for Mario...

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

...and worked my way up to fry cook.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Nice.

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

I was meeting lots of girls and I went to Coney Island every day and I was having good times. I was gonna start my restaurant, all based around cheese burgers. I was gonna call it Sacred Cow just to bother people.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Why didn't you?

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

One day out of the cold blue sky your ex-girlfriend called me. She said her fake husband had dragged her and her son up her from Indiana. Things went from good times to bad times and she needed reinforcements.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Reinforcements?

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

She was belly dancing for peanuts, and when I mean peanuts, she actually got paid in a bag of peanuts she took home to her kid. And her fake husband left for a girl that sells shoes at the Mall Of America. By the way, don't go there.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Mall of America? I wrote an article on the food court.

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

Lots of chicken at the Mall of America.

JACOB MURAKAMI

What do you mean by reinforcements?

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

Your ex-girlfriend asked me to come so she wouldn't be alone. So, I just did.

JACOB MURAKAMI

You gave up your life in New York and came her so my ex-girlfriend wouldn't be alone.

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

That is the kind of spiritual advisor I am.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Are you two dating?

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

No. She gives me a blow-job every now and then. But, no. We ain't dating. I take her son out to the park. And he and I watch cartoons. We watch The Simpson's. But we aren't dating. I'm just her spiritual advisor. Guidance. That is what Wolfe Taco is all about.

*(It's rather quiet.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

It's good to see you again. Do you have children?

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

No. Not that I know of and that is big fat emphasis on "know of." You?

JACOB MURAKAMI

Not that I "know of." And that is a big fat emphasis on "know of." You been married?

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

Once. A girl from New York. She was my real estate agent. Never date a New York real estate agent, let alone get married to one. Very ambitious women.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I was engaged. To a girl from Battle Creek, Michigan. She wasn't ambitious, she was just abusive.

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

Nice.

JACOB MURAKAMI

She tried to kill me one New Years Eve.

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

Bad times.

JACOB MURAKAMI

We watched Dick Clark and the ball drop, and she got drunk and came at me with a butcher knife. I went one way, she went the other and cut the futon in half.

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

What did you do?

JACOB MURAKAMI

I didn't do anything.

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

What did she think you did?

JACOB MURAKAMI

She thought I was leaving her.

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

And what made her think that?

JACOB MURAKAMI

Because I had to hit the road for some writing gigs. She was jealous. The next day she broke up with me and started dating a high school guidance counselor named Ted.

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

I have always hated the name Ted.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Isn't your real name...

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

My name is Wolfe Taco. Why did you date a chick that tried to kill you?

JACOB MURAKAMI

Dating an abusive chick is easy. You always look right. You always feel right. And she always looks like the bad guy in the relationship. Why is that girl just standing there?

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

You'll found out. I read your stuff on the internet. Your writing hasn't been very good recently.

JACOB MURAKAMI

No. It really hasn't.

*(Everything stops.)*

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

Your writing has become sad and I think it is because of the company you keep. You are gonna committee suicide the way your father did.

*(The sound of bats is heard.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

Why would you say that to me?

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

Because, you are the kind of guy that won't let death win. You're the kind of guy who's got to be right, even when he is wrong. You're gonna go pop, like your pop.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Fuck you.

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

Don't you ever pretend you are anything but a lonely man, Jacob Murakami. Funny. I have never found out what *your* real last name is.

JACOB MURAKAMI

And you never will. I don't remember my real last name. I think it might have been color. Like "Brown." But all of that is in the past.

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

You don't even know who you are anymore.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Sure I do. I'm Jacob. Jacob Murakami.

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

Thank you for the cards. I've had a thing for the Suicide Girls. I got you a present too.

*(He gives him a large round gumball.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

What do I do with a gumball this size?

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

You'll know when the time is proper. Baby. You should move to the Twin Cities. We could have a lot of fun, you and I. Good Times. I know a place that has strippers and great soup.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I won't move here. It's too close to Indiana. Why is that girl just standing there?

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

Why don't you ask her...

*(The sound of the sky whale is heard.)*

*(Then.)*

*(The sound of a cold water whisper.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

Tell me about her?

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

She used to date your ex-girlfriend's fake husband. She used to sell shoes.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Why is she just standing there?

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

You know who she looks like?

JACOB MURAKAMI

Everybody looks the same to me.

THE ACTOR AS WOLFE TACO

Give her the gumball. This is where I exit stage left.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Don't go anywhere. Just sit in that chair

*(He goes to sit in the chair.)*

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

Your drink is empty.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I'm glad you noticed.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

You've been keeping it empty just so I could notice. Would you like me to refill your beverage? It's free Jameson all night long.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I'm fine. Thank you.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

Hi. Hello. My name is...

JACOB MURAKAMI

I know your name. We've met before.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

Have we?

JACOB MURAKAMI

It was your birthday party two nights ago. At the Chatterbox on Cleveland Ave. In St. Paul.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

I'm afraid I don't remember you.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Sure you do. I was standing next to the Ms. Pac-Man machine. You asked me for quarters and if I wanted to buy you a drink.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

That was you?

JACOB MURAKAMI

That was me.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

Thank you for buying me that drink.

JACOB MURAKAMI

It was nothing but pleasure. What kind of soap do you use?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

Hollyoaks. Why?

JACOB MURAKAMI

Just curious.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

If I can't pour you a drink, will you at least light my cigarette for me?

JACOB MURAKAMI

You can't light your own cigarette?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

I've been standing here, waiting for you to ask if you can, and I am about to give up all hope.

*(He lights her cigarette.)*

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

I like your essays.

JACOB MURAKAMI

You have me at a disadvantage.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

I like the article you wrote on feminism.

JACOB MURAKAMI

The one about the racecar driver?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

You have great attention to detail.

JACOB MURAKAMI

How did you know what I did for a living?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

Wolfe Taco told me.

JACOB MURAKAMI

You know that's not his real name.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

Yes. I know that is not his real name. Why don't you interview me? Mr. Man.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I don't interview people I like.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

You like me? But you just met me.

*(He takes out his tape recorder and presses play.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

What do you do for a living?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

I'm in geriatrics.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I thought you sold shoes.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

I used to sell shoes.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Now, you are into old people?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

Elder people.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Oh. You're one of those kinds.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

What is "one of those kinds?"

JACOB MURAKAMI

Politically correct. You went to a liberal arts college, didn't you?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

What if I did?

JACOB MURAKAMI

Let me guess. Carlton.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

Wrong.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Macalester.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

Maybe.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Born and raised in the Midwest.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

Born in Iowa. Raised in Austin.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Texas.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

No. Austin, MN.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Home of the Spam museum.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

Very good.

JACOB MURAKAMI

You ever been to the Spam Museum?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

My father was the Executive Director of the Spam museum.

JACOB MURAKAMI

You are fantastic. You like Spam?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

I'm a vegetarian.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Of course you are, you went to Macalester.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

And what do you know about Macalester?

JACOB MURAKAMI

My mother wanted me to go to a liberal arts school. She dragged me to visit colleges all over the world when we had any vacation time.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

Where did you go to school?

JACOB MURAKAMI

Not at liberal arts college. Do you mind if I ask you an odd question? Is my head still bleeding?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

I was going to say something but I thought I would let you bring it up.

*(She touches his bandage.)*

*(A coldwater whisper is heard.)*

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

You were about to ask me why I work in geriatrics.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Why do you...

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

Because I like old people!

*(She kisses his bandage.)*

*(Then.)*

*(Jacob Murakami lights a cigarette and hands it to her. The two look into the audience for an extended period of time.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

That was a very aggressive move you just made.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

I was beginning to think you didn't notice.

JACOB MURAKAMI

What else do you do, outside of liking old people?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

I make kimonos. Out of tea bags.

JACOB MURAKAMI

My mother makes kimonos.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

Let's talk about anything but your mother. Tell me what I was wearing at my birthday party. At the Chatterbox. Oh, play that back for me. Please.

*(He plays the tape back. "Tell me what I was wearing at my birthday party" is heard. Her voice is not augmented.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

You wore red lipstick. And I don't recall what else you wore.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

That's all I wanted you to remember anyways.

JACOB MURAKAMI

*(Into his tape recorder.)* Tell me, the readers want to know, what is your greatest dream?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

I want to move to some place warm, like Florida, and open my own retirement home.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Florida would be great place to open a retirement home.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

Maybe Jacksonville. And give people just a little more time to enjoy life. You could come visit. You could write a story about all the people growing old together. You could interview them, and ask them about their lives, and who they are voting for. Old people love to vote.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I would like that. That would be fun.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

What's your greatest dream?

JACOB MURAKAMI

To stop being lonely. We should go back to your place. You can show me your kimonos.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

We are at my place. Wolfe always has his Jameson parties in my basement. Turn your tape recorder off.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I am not done interviewing you. What attracted you to the retirement scene?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

My father.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Is he old?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

He was. He got old fast. His health was bad. My mother and I had to put him in a home. My mother and father had me at a late age.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have asked that question.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

I visited him one day, and he was dead. The home didn't take proper care of my father. I was the one who found his body. It's very hard finding your fathers body. It's my dream to start my own retirement home, and help people die well. At least, better than my father did. And hear old people stories. Stories about their lives. My father wasn't always the Executive Director of the Spam Museum. He was a circus clown before I was born. He

must have loved to make people laugh. He stopped being a clown because he got knocked around and fell so much his health got bad. Please turn the tape recorder off.

*(He does so.)*

*(The Narrator points at The Actor as Wolfe Taco who exits stage left.)*

#### THE NARRATOR

At that moment, Jacob Murakami understood that killing the sky whale that eats dreams would be the most important thing he could ever do.

#### THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

Wolfe tells me you are a very determined man. Does that give you pleasure? Being determined?

#### JACOB MURAKAMI

Wolfe Taco seems to talk an awful lot about Jacob Murakami. He gave me this gumball, and I have no clue what makes him think that was good idea.

*(She takes the gumball and puts it in her mouth. She takes her fingers and runs them over Jacob Murakami's lips in order to open his jaw. She then launches the gumball into his mouth.)*

#### THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

That is what you are supposed to do when a man who calls himself Wolfe Taco gives you a gumball this size.

*(He launches the gumball at her. She catches it in her mouth.)*

#### JACOB MURAKAMI

This is gonna get sticky.

*(She launches back. He catches the gumball.)*

#### THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

Don't talk. Just do.

*(The two launch the gumball back and forth, getting further away, then closer to one another. This is a game, and a great deal of fun. Perhaps they break the forth wall and go into the audience. Perhaps this moment should be between the two alone. With the launching game, the two get closer and closer until the gumball is traveling from lip to lip. She takes the gumball with her finger to stop the game.)*

*(Then.)*

*(Silence.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

Am I supposed to kiss you now?

*(The two move to kiss one another on the lips. Just as this act is about to happen, The Actor As The Canadian Mountie of Justice comes rumbling in.)*

THE ACTOR AS THE CANADIAN MOUNTAINIE OF JUSTICE

I say! I am from Canada. I have taken our Celien Dion back to the home country and will now steal back all of hockey teams. And Kraft Dinner. I demand Kraft Dinner!

*(The roar of the sky whale is heard.)*

THE NARRATOR

My God that was close.

THE ACTOR AS THE CANADIAN MOUNTAINIE OF JUSTICE

Isn't it a cliché for the narrator to loose control of the story?

THE NARRATOR

What makes you think I have lost control? Jacob Murakami's head began to bleed again.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Am I supposed to kiss you?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

You don't remember?

JACOB MURAKAMI

I don't even know who you are. The only thing I remember is that I am working on a novel.

THE NARRATOR

Tell us now. What is your novel about?

JACOB MURAKMI

It begins with a man getting hit in the head. He slips in and out of time.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

Jacob. How does your novel end?

JACOB MURAKAMI

I don't know how it ends.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

Is that true? Do you really not know?

JACOB MURAKAMI

Why would I? I haven't written the novel yet.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

Jacob. Please tell me you remember how it all ends. And who you end it with.

*(The lights become very dim, don't they?)*

THE NARRATOR

Jacob. Where are you now?

JACOB MURAKAMI

I'm at the end of the world. I'm in hard-boiled wonderland. I'm at the end of time. I'm at the end of thought and reason and everything. I'm at the end of everything I know and understand.

*(Jacob Murakami takes out a very clean looking letter.)*

THE NARRATOR

Read the audience your second letter.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Dear Mother,

*(He takes out a pen and corrects the letter.)*

Dear Mom,

I'm writing to you because I am very angry and I have been very angry for a long time. I know we haven't spoken in seven years, but I have something to say and I don't think I can continue with my life unless I write this letter. My life has been hard, and I blame you. And I was wrong for that. And I have blamed you for the death of my father. Your husband. If you had paid more attention to him then you did to me, he still would be alive. And we never would have moved. And I would have grown up normal and not "special", even though I am not "special" to begin with. I have done a great deal of drinking trying to forget the special class you sent me to because, and the fat camp you sent me to when Dr. Isreal said I could loose five pounds, and when you asked me if I was gay. I started eating cheeseburgers, just because you wouldn't let me. And I have become a womanizer. Not Because I like girls, but because I can't trust them. I am not happy to write that, but I think it is the truth. I have left and run away from every relationship every time a woman tries to get closer to me. And I am very sad because of it. I blame you, but I know it is not your fault. All I have ever wanted was to have a simple farmhouse in Indiana with a wife and kid and dog and for all the noise to just stop.

But I will never have that, because I have dedicated my life to getting revenge on you or treating me “special.” I interview celebrities and get them to say they are voting for a man I don’t respect, just because I know it will bother you. I went to St. Paul for that man, and found Jennifer, my first girlfriend and first love. The girlfriend you didn’t like. I stroked her hair. It was cold. She is the girl with the cold hair to me. She has a son with no father. I have heard that you no longer live in Bloomington. I went back to Bloomington last summer and saw how small the town is. How small the roads and houses are. And I ate pizza at Mother Bears. I ate the entire pizza and thought of you. I went back to Bloomington because I felt if though I owed you something. I won’t speak to you. I won’t see you. But I do feel if though I owed you something. As of this sentence, I owe you nothing.

Thank you for reading my letter, mother.

*(He corrects the letter with his pen.)*

Thank you for reading my letter, mom.

Love

Your son,  
Jacob.

*(The sound of wind in pine trees.)*

*(The Actress As The Girl With Cold Hair.)*

#### THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH COLD HAIR

I didn’t realize your mother didn’t like me.

JACOB MURAKAMI

She was quiet about it. It was the only thing she was quiet about.

#### THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH COLD HAIR

Our last night together, our last night of high school, we got a bottle of strawberry Boone’s Farm from the 7-11 and drove out to Lake Lemon. I knew that night was coming. I knew that night was coming for years. I saved every penny and dime I could and went to Victoria’s Secret in Indianapolis and tried on everything in the store. Bras. Panties. Teddies. I tried on a black spider-web. I tried on every color I could find of everything. Do you remember what I picked?

JACOB MURAKAMI

I don’t remember anything.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH COLD HAIR

I got the black bra and black panties. Simple. Nothing special. And we drank the wine. And we crawled into the back seat of your old car. The one you bought at a garage sale. And I took off my shirt. And I took off my jeans. And I pulled my Victoria's Secret black panties down to my knees and you said "I don't have a condom."

JACOB MURAKAMI

I didn't.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH COLD HAIR

What did I say to you?

JACOB MURAKAMI

You said, "I don't care." But I didn't do anything. I just drove you home. And you cried.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH COLD HAIR

So you do remember some things. On our way home, you hit a porcupine crossing the road. You stopped and got the tire iron and put it out of its misery. You hit that porcupine six times in the head with the tire iron. I remember every single blow like it was yesterday. Laying almost naked in the backseat, hoping you would pay attention to me.

JACOB MURAKAMI

The porcupine was already dead.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH COLD HAIR

Then why did you hit it?

JACOB MURAKAMI

I wanted to feel like I was in control.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH COLD HAIR

That is all I want to hear. He could have been your son. He could have been your son, and we could have gotten the farmhouse and dog. But you were too afraid to commit, to go all the way. I brought your shoes back. You can run away as far as they will take you. Jacob, you may not send my son anymore Christmas presents. But his birthday is coming. In know he would like a new video game. He's beaten all the ones you have sent him so far. He curses at me when I try to help him.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I will send him something appropriate. Nothing violent.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH COLD HAIR

Jacob, your head is bleeding again.

*(She kisses the bandage.)*

*(The sound of the sky whale is heard. It is on top of the audience.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

Damn it! Where did he come from? He's right on top of us. The cement mixer's not here yet.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH COLD HAIR

Run!

JACOB MURAKAMI

This is my chance.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH COLD HAIR

It will kill you.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Good! Now Get out of here!

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH COLD HAIR

I am not leaving you.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I'll electrocute it.

*(Jacob Murakami rips the theatres power cables from the stage, sparks fly, smokes engulf the stage, the lighting system begins to flash.)*

THE NARRATOR

You idiot! You'll burn the theatre down! Where is the Smoke Jumper?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH COLD HAIR

Jacob, electricity will do nothing!

*(The sky whale roars. The sound of hope and dreams being eaten can be heard, along with the sounds of war, a television, a radio, children laughing, people cry, men dying, a boy kissing a mirror, and everything else the world has ever heard. The theatre begins to shake and the lights begin to flash.)*

THE NARRATOR

If you didn't put your seatbelts on, do it now!

*(A great vortex of wind hits Jacob Murakami and the audience directly in the face for several seconds, as Jacob Murakami strikes a karate stance.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

I'm not afraid of you! I will kill you with my bare hand! Get ready for some death!

*(The Actor As The Construction Worker enters with a cement mixer.)*

THE ACTOR AS THE CONSTRUCTION WORKER

Cement mixer, here. And I brought them rude...holy crap!

JACOB MURAKAMI

It's too late.

*(The explosion of sound and wind and flashings lights comes to an abrupt stop.)*

*(Silence.)*

*(A coldwater whisper can be heard.)*

*(Then, kind music.)*

*(Jacob Murakami slowly releases the karate pose. He touches the bandage on his head. His head is fine. There is no blood.)*

*(The Actress becomes The Girl With The Last Kiss.)*

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

When you came to Jacksonville, when I saw your face at my door, I never wanted you to leave. Why did you leave me? Why did you go to Austin?

JACOB MURAKAMI

Because. Staying with you would have made mother happy. And I can't have that.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

You can never see me again.

JACOB MURAKAMI

May I call you? When I am traveling.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

I didn't say that. I said, you can never see me again.

*(She exits.)*

*(The Actor As The Next President of the United States enters. He is cold, calm, detached and smokes. He has a brief case in one hand that drips white powder.)*

THE NARRATOR

And now we are in Austin, TX one last time.

THE ACTOR AS THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Can you light my cigarette for me?

*(Jacob Murakami lights his smoke.)*

THE ACTOR AS THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

I know you, don't I?

JACOB MURAKAMI

I work for you.

THE ACTOR AS THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

What's your name?

JACOB MURAKAMI

Jacob.

THE ACTOR AS THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

What is your last name?

JACOB MURAKAMI

I don't remember my last name, Mr. President.

THE ACTOR AS THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Please don't call me that. That name makes me uncomfortable.

JACOB MURAKAMI

What would you like me to call you, sir?

THE ACTOR AS THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Anything, but Mr. President. I am leaving Texas. I came to Texas for many reasons. I like the food here. I like wearing cowboy boots. But now I have to leave and go to Washington. My father got me a job there.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I know, sir.

THE ACTOR AS THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

I don't want to go.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I know you don't, sir.

THE ACTOR AS THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES  
My father and his friends tell me I'm special. I don't like their company. They talk down to me. They treat me like I am stupid.

JACOB MURAKAMI

You are not stupid, sir.

THE ACTOR AS THE 43<sup>RD</sup> PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES  
I showed them. I showed them I am not stupid. People said I couldn't win this thing, but I showed them. I did it. I put them in their place. And now I just want to go home.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I wish you could, sir. But you have to go to Washington now and be called Mr. President.

THE ACTOR AS THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES  
My mother called me on my telephone and told me how proud she was of me. She told me she loved me and that I make her proud and I am special. It's hard to hear a woman say "I love you." Has your mother ever told you she loves you?

JACOB MURAKAMI

My mother used to whisper "I love you" in my ear each night as I went to bed. Her whisper was very cold. Like coldwater.

THE ACTOR AS THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES  
I'm sorry to hear that.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Sir, you need to pack your things. You need to go Washington now.

THE ACTOR AS THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES  
My father's friends want me to hire a black woman who rollerskates and speaks Russian.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Ice skates. The black woman who speaks Russian is an ice skater.

THE ACTOR AS THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES  
I'm not stupid. No one gets to call me stupid. My father's friends told me if I hire this woman it will make me look smart. And she could be my new best friend

JACOB MURAKAMI

It will make you look smart.

THE ACTOR AS THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES  
I don't have any friends in Washington. Would you please come with me? I don't want to be alone.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I'm sorry, Mr. President. I have decided not to go with you.

THE ACTOR AS THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

What is the date? My watch is broken.

JACOB MURAKAMI

It's the day your opponent gave you the presidency.

THE ACTOR AS THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

He did. He just gave up. I hit you in the head with a baseball bat, didn't I?

JACOB MURAKAMI

It was a cricket bat, sir. When your opponent gave up, you had a party and did drugs and "that guy" who writes all the things you say...said I called you special.

THE ACTOR AS THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

He lied.

JACOB MURAKAMI

That man is very good at lying, sir.

THE ACTOR AS THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

I'm sorry. Is there anything I can do for you? To make things right?

JACOB MURAKAMI

Yes. I want you to mail this letter to my mother for me on your way to Washington.

THE ACTOR AS THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

That's all?

JACOB MURAKAMI

That's all. I have one more interview to do for you tonight. Then I am gone. Sir, please, remember what I am about to say to you. No man behaves well when has something to prove.

THE NARRATOR

And with that moment, Jacob Murakami stopped shifting in time and space. Even though, he never real did to begin with.

*(The two men wave goodbye to one another as The Actor As The Next President Of The United States fades away into the now black night. The stars are all gone. The Actress As The Celebrity roles onto stage wearing roller-skates. Jacob Murakami takes out his tape recorder.)*

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

Is it on?

JACOB MURAKAMI

Yeah. It's on.

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

Well? Aren't you going to ask me questions?

*(Silence.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

What are you all about? Now.

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

Roller-derby. It's a new reality television drama. Every episode is filmed in a different city around the world and we highlight the trendy places to go in the city, clubs, bars, stores, and we face each cities' roller-girl team. It's kind of like a televised magazine.

JACOB MURAKAMI

You and the other actresses?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

I'm the only real actress. The rest of the girls are cut jobs meant to look like me.

JACOB MURAKAMI

What is your favorite moment in the season so far?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

We got to cruise around on a big boat and eat seafood and drink champagne, I was like "Are we really getting paid to do this?" Being an actress is the best.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Have you done anything really crazy on the show yet?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

We were in New York on a hotel rooftop and it was freezing cold and raining and the director was like "Everybody jump into the pool." And I was like "Are you kidding me? There where people up there partying and looking at us like we were all nuts or something. So I striped down to my Victoria's Secret panties and jumped in. It was the coldest water I have ever touched, and the coolest thing I have ever done.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Cooler then smoking in a t-shirt shop in the Czech Republic?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

You remember that story, Mr. Man?

JACOB MURAKAMI

I remember everything now. How can a guy approach a girl like you and not look stupid?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

Once, I got asked out in the produce section of the supermarket. The guy wasn't good looking at all, but the guy was so super confident. He was just shopping for tomatoes or whatever. So I gave him my number. He asked me what my favorite thing to do is. I told him I like to smoke cigars and have fun.

JACOB MURAKAMI

What is the one thing you want everyone to know about you?

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

I'm a party girl. I'm that fun girl who is very ambitious, but doesn't get drunk and black out every night. And I am single if you wanna push that. And I voted for "Your Candidate" because he will restore honor and integrity to the White House after all the bad things that guy before him did. Play that back for me.

*(Jacob Murakami hits "play" on his tape recorder. It says "And I voted for Your Candidate because he will restore honor and integrity to the White House after all the bad things that guy before him did.")*

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

Are you done with me?

JACOB MURAKAMI

Yes. Yes I am.

THE ACTRESS AS THE CELEBRITY

Now be a special guy and light my cigar for me. Mr. Man.

*(The Actress As The Celebrity takes out a cigar and puts it in her mouth. Jacob Murakami takes a book of matches, removes one match, lights it, holds it close to her cigar, then throws the match over his head and behind him before the cigar can be lit. He does this nasty act a total of 42 times using 42 matches.)*

*(The Actress As the Celebrity does only one thing to become The Actress As The Girl With The Last Kiss.)*

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

You are supposed to light the celebrity's cigar.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I'm not going to do that. Not tonight

*(Silence.)*

JACOB MURAKAMI

Ever since I left you, every girl I see looks like you. If I had stayed in Jacksonville, if I had listened to you four years ago, would things be different?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

I don't know.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Would we be married?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

I don't know. You killed the sky whale.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I didn't kill him. He just floated away.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

What did it look like?

JACOB MURAKAMI

It looked like my mother. But, I can't remember what my mother looks like.

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

She is beautiful.

JACOB MURAKAMI

I wonder if she remembers me. Am I supposed to kiss you now?

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

*(She lies.)* No.

THE NARRATOR

And with that, everybody left the stage.

*(And they do. Sort of.)*

THE NARRATOR

Jacob Murakami put on his shoes, and went walking. He walked to New York City, where he signed a two-year lease on a studio apartment with lovely wooden floors on 106<sup>th</sup> Street smack dab between Columbus Ave and Manhattan Ave. Two years was the

longest Jacob ever spent in one place since leaving Bloomington, IN. He liked it so much, he renewed his lease for two more years. Jacob wrote his book, he called it “How I Learned To Stop Worrying And Realized Sacred Cows Make The Finest Cheeseburgers”. Entertainment Weekly gave it an A-, which confused him greatly as to how you can give a novel a minus, but he was fine with that and went along with his life. He walked in Central Park everyday, saw concerts at CBGB’s and poetry readings at the KGB. He went on several dates with many lovely ladies.

JACOB MURAKAMI

But all of them looked exactly the same.

THE NARRATOR

He would go to Shakespeare and Co. bookstores, instead of Barnes and Noble, at least the Shakespeare and Co. that were left. He would go to Mario Batali eateries and wonder if his “spiritual advisor” had washed dishes there. He sent birthday presents to a young boy in St. Paul, whose mother had cold hair. He sent video games, a skateboard shaped like the Statue of Liberty, and on occasion, he would send money so the boy and the girl with the cold hair could eat something nice as opposed to the Kraft dinner and the peanuts she made belly dancing. And every two months, he would telephone the girl in Jacksonville, usually drunk on a cheap white wine he liked with a whale on the label, and ask her...

JACOB MURAKAMI

Was I supposed to kiss you the night the sky whale floated away into the night sky?

THE NARRATOR

And being the good girl that she was, and knowing if she said anything else he would drop everything and come to Jacksonville and hurt her again, she would lie to him. And say

THE ACTRESS AS THE GIRL WITH THE LAST KISS

No.

THE NARRATOR

Sometimes she would cry after lying to him, which made Jacob Murakami only want to call her more. And reality set in for people with hope, and dreams, and desires. It is fun to imagine and pretend. Because reality is cold and hard and grey and eats everything in it’s path.

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

Which is why it is so nice to have theatre. So we can get away from reality.

THE NARRATOR

As I said, four years went by, and another election came, this time “His Candidate” faced a lesser one, and Jacob Murakami thought about voting for this lesser candidate, the liberal candidate. He imagined what the world would be like with another man in charge, and pretended it would all be different. That November, Jacob Murakami went to his

voting station in the lobby of a small building between 107<sup>th</sup> and 108<sup>th</sup> Street on Central Park West, slipped into a voting machine and glared at the names. His candidate. And. The liberal candidate.

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

And a few other people that really had no chance, and probably wouldn't be better anyways.

THE NARRATOR

And in the distance Jacob Murakami could hear the growl of the sky whale. So Jacob Murakami voted for his old boss, just so he could bother his mother one last time. He was the only person in the building who voted for his candidate. Jacob then went to the post office on 104<sup>th</sup> Street between Amsterdam and Broadway and mailed a letter to the boy in St. Paul who was not his son. The letter had a picture of a grey whale on it and read...

JACOB MURAKAMI

Don't ever let it find you. Bitterness rots a boy from within.

THE NARRATOR

He was even kind enough to write a postscript.

JACOB MURAKAMI

PS. When playing video games don't yell at your mother. She is only trying to help.

THE NARRATOR

Jacob ran home from the post office, took off his shoes, and crawled under his kitchen sink, and drank turpentine. And as he laid under the pipes of the sink dying, he called the girl in Jacksonville one last time. He asked...

JACOB MURAKAMI

Was I supposed to kiss you the night the sky whale floated away into the night sky?

THE NARRATOR

The girl was silent at first. And then she stopped pretending. She stopped imagining. And then decided to stop lying. And all Jacob Murakami could hear was a coldwater whisper as he died.

*(A coldwater whisper is heard.)*

*(Silence.)*

THE NARRATOR

Imagining and pretending. That's what we have done for you tonight. We all spent several days and hours and minutes preparing our lines, learning how to say all the words just right, and then we imagined and we pretended what it would be like if we lived in a world with Jacob Murakami as everything he knew slipped around his head, and through

his fingers. And we got to see how sad it is when a man has something to prove. I think the story went just the way it should have. A little funny, a little sad, but we all did our parts.

JACOB MURAKAMI

Sure. But, I wish I had gone home at the end. I wish I had gone to Bloomington. I wish I hadn't died.

THE NARRATOR

So do I, (*The Actor playing Jacob.*) But that would have been a fairy tale, not legitimate theater. A bittersweet ending is what the legitimate theater is all about. You did a good job tonight.

JACOB MURAKAMI

We all did a good job tonight. But I still think he should go home in the end. Maybe we could do it differently tomorrow? I'm doing it differently tomorrow night.

THE NARRATOR

Maybe.

THE ACTOR AS HIMSELF

(*Interrupting.*) And that, ladies and gentlemen, is the story of Jacob Murakami.

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF

At least, that is how we are going to tell it. I liked the sky whale. And the names of all the fun drinks.

THE NARRATOR

Thank you for coming tonight. You have been a delightful audience. I'm sorry we didn't have blender drinks. Maybe next that will be different too. Some of this story is true. But most of it isn't. Most of this is legitimate theatre. Most of this story is just us, imaging and pretending.

(*Nice music is heard. The actors all attempt curtain call. This is odd and clumsy.*)

THE NARRATOR

Oh, my. Off of me, people.

(*The actors do an organized curtain call lead by The Narrator.*)

(*The nice music stops.*)

(*Silence. The actors all look at the audience, motionless.*)

NOTE 4: *Told you.*

*(Lights dim.)*

*(The actors begin to smile.)*

*(Lights fade.)*

END OF PLAY