

SOMETHING TO BE PROUD OF

A Play in Two Acts and a Coda

by

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Cast

James: A memory

Sam: An ass

Laura: A friend

Olive: A troublemaker

Clark: A drinker

Mary: A mother

Scene Breakdown

Act 1: *Remembrance* A Friday

Act 2: *Idle Hands* The next morning

Coda: *Consequences* The morning after, and also a long time ago

## Something to Be Proud of

## Act I

*Remembrance*

*Lights come up on a bar. It is old but clearly loved, with seats on their second or third upholstery. The wood is dark and scratched in places. A baseball bat signed by some memory of the past hangs proudly above the bar. Music plays from the other room, an old jazz piece with a woman warbling. A man stands alone wiping glasses, leaning on the bar. This is JAMES, who seems faded in some way. He had a spark but now he has like a sweater collection and he's convinced himself that's good enough for him. After some time, he looks directly at the audience and speaks.*

JAMES: This is all a true story. I know that seems like an oxymoron "true story" but I promise I mean it. It hasn't come to pass yet in your time but I have a relative amount of faith that it will and I have found that it is better to never have more than a relative amount of faith in anything or else disappointment rears her head far too frequently. I can't believe it is the beginning of the story and I've already started monologuing. It is a trend people around me tend to have. I like to think mine are well thought out, some people's can be really fucking annoying, but I am getting far too ahead of myself. My name is James. Two weeks ago my best... My last friend died. This is what happened when friends came to town.

*The door opens and a bundled up pair enters through. This is Laura and Sam, both dazzlingly beautiful and reeking of success, both on top of the world.)*

SAM:

Jesus Christ, it's cold out there.

LAURA:

You know it gets cold up here in the winter

SAM:

Why do you think I never visit?

JAMES:

Hello you two.

SAM:

James, how the fuck are you!

*(Sam crosses to James and puts him in a headlock. James is clearly displeased.)*

JAMES:

Hello Sam. It's good to see you too

SAM:

Well it's only been what, three years? That's pocket change at our age.

JAMES:

You say our age as if we're ancient

SAM:

That's James, always looking for a reason to correct me

LAURA:

Lay off of him Sam, he's in mourning

James:

I'm fine Laura. Thank you. Uh I can take your coats.

*(James exits into the kitchen, carrying their coats with him)*

Sam:

He looks awful.

Laura:

He can't be happy, think of his life. He never left town, never got married, he lost Andrew. He's probably depressed.

Sam:

Honey please, leave the diagnosing to the psychiatrists.

Laura:

You're full of shit.

Sam:

And you love me for it.

LAURA:

Do you think it'll all be like this? Even when everyone gets here? Just awkward hugs and rehashing old stories? I don't know. I guess I just... I just don't want to live in the past.

SAM:

Then don't. Talk about what everyone's doing. For example, I'm pretty excited about the prospect of doing you...

LAURA:

*(Laughing at him)*

Shut up!

SAM:

Kiss me.

*(Sam pulls Laura near him and holds her tight. Unseen, James enters from the kitchen holding a pack of beers and a bowl of fruit.)*

James:

*(regretting it as he says it)*

I brought... fruit.

Sam:

And beer! The more important of the two. Don't get me wrong though, fruit's great, now I won't get scurvy!

Laura:

Don't be an ass. Thank you James, that was very kind of you.

*(Laura touches James on the arm and he gently pulls away)*

James:

I run a bed and breakfast, I better be a good host.

Sam:

When is everyone else arriving?

James:

Should be soon. I don't know.

LAURA:

Can you believe it's been ten years since we graduated?

JAMES:

/It feels like 30

SAM:

/It feels like a month

LAURA:

*(trying to ease the awkward moment)*

I think both of you are right. Time flies but some things stay the same. Like us!

SAM:

The core three!

JAMES:

And we're only missing four. Or. Well three I suppose.

LAURA:

But everyone's coming right? Olive, Clark, Mary?

JAMES:

Yes, everyone said they would make it. I hope they come soon.

SAM:

We wanted to be early to beat the crowds.

*(The joke does not land)*

JAMES:

Soooo Laura, how is work?

*(Sam crosses behind the bar and finds a bottle opener, opening three bottles of beer)*

LAURA:

Oh you know. Same old lawsuits and misogynistic businessmen

JAMES:

And I see you're dating one of them

SAM:

That's a misogynistic junior partner thank you very much. Besides, you two broke up, what was I supposed to do, not make her mine.

JAMES:

/Well

LAURA:

/Sam, please

SAM:

It's a joke!

LAURA:

Well I don't think either of us enjoyed it

SAM:

I'm joking. I'm joking. Fine I'm sorry.

JAMES:

I'm going to go check on the rooms.

*(James exits)*

LAURA:

You prick

SAM:

I was making a joke

LAURA:

He clearly didn't think it was funny

SAM:

It's been years, you think he still has a hard-on for you?

LAURA:

Jesus Sam, don't be disgusting.

*(From offstage)*

JAMES:

How many towels did you guys want

Laura:

Two is fine thank you James!

Sam:

I can't believe he's stuck here.

Laura:

He did always seem...

Sam:

What

Laura:

I don't know! Just like. Destined for something more I suppose.

Sam:

You know that there's statistical proof that success in high school doesn't correlate with success later in life.

Laura:

He was smarter than any of us, you'd think he would be doing something better than running an inn that's clearly seen better days.

SAM:

I wouldn't say smarter than any of us, we all had our different strengths and weaknesses.

LAURA:

I cannot believe that that is what you chose to focus on just now.

SAM:

Sorry sorry you're right. I will be a perfect gentleman.

*(James enters)*

SAM:

James, please just relax and have a beer.

*(Sam passes beers to all of them)*

Sam:

To Andrew.

Laura:

To Andrew

James:

To Andrew

Sam:

And to the everlasting quest of finding our purpose. And finding what that purpose is. I know I'm not one for speeches

James:

You are. You spoke at graduation.

Sam:

But, I feel as if the moment is appropriate. I have been thinking of the words of the great scholars as of late. And I think that humanity is entering a critical time in our lifespan.

James:

It seems too early for this.

SAM:

A time where we must decide what we hold dear and what we must let go of so that we can blossom in the dew of the new morning---

JAMES:

I'm too sober for a speech.

SAM:

---when the dawn will show us the future for posterity and how we may carry forth.

LAURA:

SAM, stop.

SAM:

What?

LAURA:



Why are you/

SAM:

I'm just talking and/

LAURA:

It's just the three of us-

SAM:

Yeah, three old friends

JAMES:

Why don't you just give the speech later? When everyone is here.

SAM:

Fine. But you guys are missing out. I felt the spirit of creativity within me in the moment.

LAURA:

I'm sure you'll feel it later too.

JAMES:

I guess we'll see.

*(An awkward silence ensues, during which JAMES and LAURA sip their beers, while SAM chugs his, opening a second. The silence is broken only by a knock at the door)*

JAMES:

*(under his breath)*

Thank god

*(James goes to open the door. Enter Olive, who exudes carefree power and a darker energy, probably into witchy shit. Lots of eyeliner and kickass boots. Does coke but like in a classy way. The girl you want to love but are just a little bit scared of)*

OLIVE:

Well if it isn't the executive board of the class of 2017.

SAM:

Hello Olive, it's nice to see you too.

OLIVE:

I would say the same, but Honest Abe never lied and I try to follow his example.

Sam:

Didn't realize you were a student of history now.

Olive:

Just not an idiot.

Sam:

Still living at home?

Olive:

Still pretending you're better than me because you make more money?

Laura:

*(getting between them)*

Olive! Great to see you! Love those boots!

Olive:

Laura! You can do better and we both know it.

*(The air in the room hangs heavy.)*

Olive:

Jesus. I'm kidding everyone. Remember, it is fun, bitchy Olive. I'm just fulfilling my archetype in the friend group. Hello everyone, it's lovely to see you all, it's been too long.

*(Olive moves around the group hugging everyone, leaving her coat on a chair. The hug with Sam is awkward, as both of them reach for the same side.)*

Laura:

James, can you show me my room? I want to put my bags away.

James:

Yes! Of course, sorry.

Laura:

You don't have to apologize, I hadn't asked yet.

James:

Right. Sorry for that. SORRY. Um. Follow me.

*(The two leave through the side door, going upstairs, leaving Sam and Olive alone. Olive immediately hops behind the bar and fixes herself a drink.)*

Sam:

Soooo.

Olive:

Don't "so" me.

Sam:

*(crossing to her, pulling her into himself)*

I know we're a secret but you can still tolerate me in public.

Olive:

*(putting a hand on his chest and pushing away)*

I distinctly remember you saying that you and Laura were done. I feel like that happened.

Sam:

It... It'll happen soon.

Olive:

Soon?

Sam:

Yes! I meant what I said I want to be with you... its just

Olive:

You better have a real good fucking answer as to why I've been sleeping with a man in a relationship.

Sam:

... Optics.

Olive:

Optics? What the fuck does optics mean?

SAM:

Optics are the way that people seem or look/

OLIVE:

/I will rip your fucking dick off I know what optics means just what do YOU mean

Sam:

I have been exploring a potential run for senator down the line, way down the line. And Laura is very good for optics. She's sweet, and classically good looking, and she donates to animal shelters and we're high school sweethearts...

Olive:

And I am none of those things.

Sam:

It isn't that... it's...

Olive:

You aren't even high school sweethearts, you just went to highschool together. She dated James before you and all of us know that.

Sam:

Believe it or not, turns out that part doesn't matter as much.

Olive:

You're 28. What are you doing running for senator?

Sam:

It won't be for a while. I just happen to be a fan of a 10 year plan.

Olive:

Congrats, you get an A in personal finance

SAM:

I will not apologize for looking for success. None of you can make me apologize.

Olive:

Is it because you know you won't find success with us? Say what you want, but you know that back in the day you weren't shit compared to us.

Sam:

But I will be. And the rest of them can burn out.

Olive:

I think it would be pretty bad for optics if people found out their senate candidate was cheating on his sweet, "classically good looking" girlfriend. Wouldn't it?

Sam:

Yes. It would. But you're not going to do that.

Olive:

And why not?

Sam:

Because we both know you like me too much. And because I'd be good for this state.

Olive:

Fuck you.

SAM:

Tell me I'm wrong and I'll apologize.

OLIVE:

You're a bastard.

SAM:

I know. But I mean it. I love you. I just...

OLIVE:

Love yourself more.

SAM:

Olive you can't say anything. Please. I can't do that to Laura.

Olive:

But you can do it to me?

Sam:

Look I'm sorry that I haven't broken up with my perfect girlfriend for my fuckbuddy yet

Olive:

Fuckbuddy?!

Sam:

Jesus that came out wrong. I'm sorry. Please just... Look I don't know what I'm doing.

Olive:

No, I know.

Sam:

But this is important to me. And if you like me, even a little bit, if you could just not say anything.

Olive:

I do like you. GOD I wish I didn't. But I do. You know, I was thinking. Why is it that fucked up people attract each other? My entire life I have been drawn like an alcoholic moth to a flame to these MEN who do nothing but hurt me. To be honest Sam, you aren't special. I don't know if anyone has ever told you that. But you are not special. I have regretted men before you and I will regret men longgggg after you. I should just get myself to a nunnery I guess! Even then, I'm still on my knees for a man, it's just to God instead! I wish I didn't like to fall asleep in your arms. I love to hate you nearly as much as I hate to love you. I think you might just be the worst thing that's ever happened to

me. But you still happened to me. I won't tell. Not for you. For Laura. She doesn't deserve to know she's dating a pile of garbage. I'm sure she'll come to realize that in her own time.

*(A knock at the door, Sam and Olive both look and there is a BLACKOUT on this set. Lights come up upstairs on James and Laura entering a bedroom.)*

JAMES:

You guys have a queen bed and an attached bath. It isn't much but...

LAURA:

It's sweet! I love it. And there aren't any creepy dolls so that's a win.

JAMES:

Yeah I was definitely on the no creepy doll side when I took over

LAURA:

What's it been? Like five years now?

JAMES:

Six.

LAURA:

I was so sorry I didn't make it back for his funer/

JAMES:

*(cutting her off)*

/Don't worry about it. It was small anyways, that's what Dad wanted. He always liked you though.

Laura:

Really? When you and I were together, he tended to seem... standoffish I guess. I always thought he wasn't a fan.

James:

Believe it or not, that's how he showed affection. He was the least empathetic inn owner I've ever known.

Laura: