

BOB AND PAUL

by
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Adapted from the one-act play

by
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FADE IN:

INT. PAUL AND JANEY'S HOME/KITCHEN - EVENING

The kitchen is empty. A woman sings in some other part of the house.

PAUL walks into the room, glancing nervously over his shoulder. He creeps toward the phone, picks it up, and carefully dials.

INT. BOB'S HOME/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A ringing cell phone sits on a small stack of school assignments. A male hand reaches for the phone and switches it on.

Bob, holding an assignment, pen in mouth, speaks into the phone.

BOB

Yeah?

INTERCUT PAUL'S KITCHEN WITH BOB'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

PAUL

(under his breath)
Bob, it's me.

BOB

Hello, you. Who are you?

PAUL

It's me--Paul.

BOB

Hey. Listen, you gotta speak up. I think we got a bum line.

PAUL

Okay.

BOB

What?

PAUL

(louder)
I said okay. I'll speak up.

Paul takes a quick glance over his shoulder.

PAUL

Listen, we still on for tomorrow?

BOB

Hang on. Let me check. We are. Two o'clock. But I'm not going there, right?

PAUL

No, no. You don't need to come here. I'll go there.

BOB

Fine by me. Saves me a trip. You got the stuff?

PAUL

Yeah. Well, some of it.

BOB

Some of it? Some of it is not good, Paul. We've discussed this. I need all of it.

PAUL

I know--

BOB

I mean, you've had a week.

JANEY (O.S.)

Paul, who are you talking to?

PAUL

Ah, nobody.

Paul's girlfriend, JANEY, walks in the room..

JANEY

Nobody?

PAUL

(flustered)
Just a...telemarketer.

JANEY

Funny. I never heard the phone
ring. (wryly)
What'd you do--call them?

PAUL

No, no. The phone rang. I guess it
just rang...softly.

Janey looks at Paul as if he had ten heads.

JANEY

Okay. As long as you're not keeping
any secrets from me.

She takes the phone from Paul and speaks into it.

JANEY

Whatever it is, we don't want any.

She smiles as she hands the phone back to him. Paul smiles back, watching as she walks
out of the room. He whispers into the phone.

PAUL

You still there?

BOB

What was that all about?

PAUL

Oh, just Janey kidding around.
She's a real little...kidder
around. So tomorrow at two?

BOB

Tomorrow at two. See you then.

PAUL

See you then.

Paul quietly hangs up the phone.

INT./EXT. PAUL'S CAR-DAY

Paul sits behind the wheel of his second-hand car, reading various signs and billboards as he drives along the busy city street.

PAUL

Mike's Auto Shop. Repairs while you
wait...Wendy Rogers' School
of...Ballet...Big World Health Food
Store...Or...Organic and lo...local
Pro...Products. No wait. Produce!

Paul smiles to himself as he continues driving down the street.

INT. PAUL AND JANEY'S HOME/KITCHEN - DAY

Janey walks into the kitchen holding a wastepaper basket. She moves to a large plastic garbage container, lifts its lid, and dumps the contents of the wastepaper basket into the container.

She lowers the lid and leaves the room, only to return a few seconds later, a quizzical look on her face.

She moves to the garbage container, lifts the lid, and begins to sift through the garbage.

INT. BOB'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Paul stands alone in the room. He picks up some papers from Bob's desk. A frown gradually appears on his face as he flips through the papers. He sighs and throws the papers down.

Bob walks into the room.

BOB

So you made it.

PAUL

I did.

BOB

Great. Let's have a look.

Paul opens his briefcase and takes out an exercise book. He hands it to Bob who begins marking it.

BOB

Uh-huh. Not too bad.

Paul points to the papers on the desk.

PAUL

It isn't as good as those.

BOB

Would have been better if you'd done the whole thing like I asked you. And the comprehension...? Uh-huh. That's the idea.

Bob hands the exercise book back to Paul.

PAUL

I can feel I'm getting better.

BOB

You are.
(pause)
You could be getting a lot better, though.

PAUL

Well, I don't have a whole lot of time, right.

BOB

Why is that?

PAUL

Oh, there's always stuff I got to do. Stuff around the house. Groceries. Little jobs. It's no trouble to fill out the day. But I hits the books whenever I gets a chance.

BOB

Whenever you get a chance?

PAUL

Yeah.

BOB

How long have you been studying
with me now?

PAUL

A couple of months.

BOB

Sounds about right.

(pause)

Listen, this is none of my
business, so you can tell me to,
you know, give it a rest if you
want...but...

PAUL

What?

BOB

Your...wife.

PAUL

We're not married--not yet. Maybe
next year if we can find a few
bucks. Her name's Janey.

BOB

Janey. She ever help you with your
assignments?

PAUL

Oh yeah. The scattered time. I
mean, she's busy, too, right? She
works at the Co-op.

Bob nods. The negative implication finally strikes Paul.

PAUL

Hey, hang on now. That's my work.
She never done it for me, if that's
what you thinks.

BOB

No, no. I don't think that. I mean,
what'd be the point of that?

PAUL

No point. I'm doing this because I want to. Because I want to get ahead.

BOB

I know.

(pause)

Is that what Janey wants?

PAUL

(flustered)

Of course she do. Why wouldn't she?

BOB

I don't know. I really don't know that.

(pause)

Is there any particular reason why we never have class at your house?

I mean, that's how the service is set up. Most of my other students- I go to their places.

PAUL

No. No reason. It's just that our place is always so cluttered--you'd never find a place to sit down. And I like to get out--get some fresh air.

BOB

Well, I'm all for fresh air.

But...you know, your upgrading, your ABE--sometimes I get the impression it's just our little secret.

PAUL

What? Don't be so fool--

BOB

I've been at this racket a long time, Paul. Seen it lots of times before. Often it's someone who's got a job--but they're keeping their upgrading from their employer. Worried they're going to get fired if they're found out. Sometimes it's someone keeping it from a family member. Maybe they're embarrassed.

Paul looks away, embarrassed.

BOB

But sometimes...sometimes it's because they know the family member wouldn't like it. Wouldn't approve. I could never understand that--why someone would be like that. You got any theories?

PAUL

No.

BOB

Maybe they're worried their partner will show them up. Get too grand. Or maybe they think their partner won't be interested in them--you know, once their prospects are looking a little brighter. I don't know.

PAUL

Me either. Look, that's got nothing to do with me. Are we doing any work today?

BOB

In a minute. I just want you to know something.

If you're really serious about improving your education--and I think you are--you can't do it by yourself. In secret. You're going to need some support.

PAUL

I've got plenty of support.

BOB

You're going to need to convince anyone who might need convincing that this is a good thing--for everyone.

PAUL

I don't know why you're talking to me about this.

BOB

All right. If you say so. Okay, let's have a look at this essay.

INT. PAUL AND JANEY'S HOME/KITCHEN - DAY

Pages from an exercise book, torn and crumpled, lie scattered on the table. Janey flattens the pieces, then moves them around, piecing them together like a puzzle.

Two handwritten pages, an assignment Paul has been working on, stare up at her from the table. The writing is child like, and there are any number of mistakes.

Janey stares at the pages, puzzled.

JANEY

How could I not have known?

She jumps at the sound of Paul's car in the driveway. She quickly gathers up the pieces of paper.

EXT. OUTSIDE PAUL AND JANEY'S HOME--NIGHT

The side door swings open, and Janey emerges holding a garbage bag. She has been crying.

She pulls the bag along the driveway, dumps it on the sidewalk, then kicks the bag in a moment of sudden anger.

She turns to look at the house.

INT. PAUL AND JANEY'S HOME/BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Paul, dressed in pajamas, takes a book from his briefcase. He opens the book and tries reading a sentence to himself but finds many of the words difficult to pronounce. Frustration sets in, and he slams the book shut.

He is about to put the book back in his briefcase but pauses when he hears Janey closing the side door. He places the book on his pillow, then sits on the bed and takes off his socks.

The bedroom door opens, and Janey walks in, doing her best to not look upset. She gives Paul a weak smile, then opens the dresser and takes out a nightgown.

PAUL
Tired?

JANEY
A little.

Janey spots the book and picks it up.

JANEY
Where'd this come from? You reading it?

PAUL
Yeah...no.

JANEY
Oh.

Paul sits on the edge of the bed.

PAUL
Listen, Janey...there's something I've got to tell you. I should have told you before, but I...

Relief washes over Janey's face.

JANEY

That's okay.

Janey sits next to Paul on the bed. She hands him the book.

FADE OUT.