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Product Code A0544-FC

Weston Union

A Comedy By
Rusty Harding

“This play is dedicated to my wife, Debra – as always – for her love and infinite patience; and to Leigh, Joe, Becca, Eddy, Penny, David, Fradonna, Charlie, Ben, Tim, Jaime, Becky, Rachael, and Lise; the best director, actors, stage crew – and friends – a writer could ever have!”

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Weston Union

by Rusty Harding

CHARACTERS

4W/7M

- JOHN WESTON: *60-70, Wealthy Patriarch; Old, surly, rich. The wealthiest man in America, and he didn't get that way by giving into sentiment.*
- KYLE WESTON: *30-40, John's Youngest Son; B-movie actor/director. Handsome, arrogant, and extremely desperate.*
- LIZ LENNOX: *20-30, Kyle's Girlfriend; supermodel. Super hot. Super clueless.*
- P.J. ASHTON: *50-60, John's Personal Assistant; the only member of the Weston household with a brain. Or a heart.*
- MORTON "SALT" WESTON: *40-50, John's Oldest Son; completely unimpressed by his father's wealth, but painfully aware that his wife is not.*
- SARAH WESTON: *40-50, Morton's Wife; married into money and definitely not ashamed of it.*
- EMILY WESTON: *60-70, John's Wife; scatterbrained (but sweet). The Picasso of fashion and home decorating.*
- ANDY WESTON: *14-16, Morton's Son; typical teenager. Into girls and video games (expressly in that order).*
- MR. LAUREL: *30-50, Mob Enforcer; articulate but imposing. A gangster with class.*
- MR. HARDING: *30-50, Mob Enforcer; quiet, concise, and menacing. A gorilla with shoes.*
- DR. PAUL ZUCKERMAN: *40-50, Psychiatrist; counselor to the Hollywood stars. His suit speaks louder than he does.*

SETTING

The Living Room of the Weston Home

SYNOPSIS

John Weston is dying -- finally. After going down in the Guinness book of records with "the longest death in history", America's wealthiest patriarch is actually ready to kick the bucket. Now the question arises: who gets his massive fortune? The entire Weston clan has gathered for the big event, including John's youngest son, Kyle. A B-grade movie actor/director with an interminable list of flops, Kyle is heavily in debt to the wrong type of investors, and more than his cinematic career is at stake if he doesn't pay them off. Along with the rest of his greedy siblings, Kyle is confident that John's death will ensure a long -- and healthy -- future. But it seems that the old man has other plans for his wealth, which don't necessarily include his heirs, and suddenly Kyle's future doesn't look so healthy. Can Kyle and his family change John's mind, or is it much too late for a "Weston union"..?

SCENES

- ACT I:**
- Scene I: Weston Living Room (Morning)
 - Scene II: Weston Living Room (Late Morning, Same Day)
 - Scene III: Weston Living Room (Early Afternoon, Same Day)
 - Scene IV: Weston Living Room (Late Afternoon, Same Day)
 - Scene V: Weston Living Room (Two Days Later)
- ACT II:**
- Scene I: Weston Living Room (Next Day)
 - Scene II: John's Bedroom (Same Day)
 - Scene III: Weston Living Room (Following Day)

"**Weston Union**" had its world premiere at the Richardson Theatre Centre in Richardson, TX, performed by the Lunatic Theatre Company in Oct. of 2015. The original cast & crew:

Kyle Weston Joe Barr
Liz Lennox Becca Tischer
P.J. Ashton Budd Mahan
Morton Weston Eddy Herring
Sarah Weston Penny Chinn
Andy Weston Tim Verriere
Emily Weston Fradonna Griffin
John Weston David Lambert
Mr. Laurel Rusty Harding
Mr. Harding Ben Richardson
Dr. Zuckerman Charles A. Alexander

Directed by: Leigh Wyatt Moore
Produced by: The Lunatic Theatre Company
Lighting, Set, Sound & Property Manager: Jaime Lane
Cover artwork, Marketing & Publicity: Becky Byrley
RTC Directors: Rachael Lindley & Lise Alexander

PROPERTY, SET, AND MUSIC NOTES AT END OF SCRIPT

Weston Union

by Rusty Harding

ACT I

Scene I

SETTING: *The living room of the Weston home. Clean but confusing. The entire room is a hodge-podge of styles and decorations – nothing matches. Paintings, sculptures, furnishings; everything seems thrown together without rhyme or reason.*

AT RISE: *KYLE WESTON, a film star slightly past his prime, enters the room, along with his attractive "boy toy" girlfriend, LIZ LENNOX. Both wear sunglasses and expensive clothes/jewelry. She's hot, he's not. Liz takes off her sunglasses and looks around appraisingly.*

LIZ

So, this is your family home. *(Struggles for words)* It's, um, it's, um...

KYLE

It's okay, you can say it. *(Beat)* Hideous.

LIZ

(Quickly) No! That's not what I was going to say. I think it actually looks kind of nice. Very... *(Enthusiastic, after a beat)* ...quaint!

KYLE

Quaint? Yeah, that's one word for it.

LIZ

Did you have this done professionally?

KYLE

Are you serious? No professional would do anything like this. Not unless he had Alzheimer's. No, this is my mother's creation. An Emily Weston original. *(Beat)* Or, as my brother and I like to call it, Early American junkyard.

LIZ

So your mom's a decorator?

KYLE

No, my Mom is a lunatic. But sweet.

LIZ

Well, I think it's very homey. Like something that painter would do.

KYLE

You mean Picasso?

LIZ

No. The one who used to paint the small towns and families at Christmas. You know, Norman something.

KYLE

Norman Rockwell?

LIZ

No, that's not it. Norman...Bates! Yes, Norman Bates! *(Beat)* I think he had problems with his mother, too.

KYLE

(After a long beat) You're so pretty.

LIZ

(Completely clueless) Thank you!

KYLE throws his jacket aside and flops down on the couch.

LIZ

Aren't you going to go and see your Dad?

KYLE

Liz, baby, no one sees Dad, they're summoned. Like being ushered into a throne room. Be sure you genuflect properly.

LIZ

Genu-what?

KYLE starts to answer, then quickly shakes his head. P.J. ASHTON, a well-dressed, professional-looking man, enters the room.

P.J.

Well, well, the prodigal returneth.

KYLE

P.J.! You haven't changed a bit, old boy. Including the suit. You do know it's the 21st Century, right?

P.J.

With what your father pays me, I'm lucky I can buy new socks.

KYLE

Then why have you stayed all these years?

P.J.

Because he's a good friend. *(Beat)* And he's dying.

KYLE

(Scoffs) Yeah, right. He's been dying since I was a kid, P.J. He'll probably go into the Guinness books as having the longest death on record. He's a hypochondriac and we both know it.

P.J.

He's also your father.

LIZ

What's a hypo...chonderac?

KYLE and P.J. glance briefly at each other.

KYLE

My apologies, P.J. Allow me to introduce Liz Lennox. Liz, this is P.J. Ashton, my father's personal assistant.

P.J.

(Smiling, extending his hand) A genuine pleasure, Ms. Lennox. I take it you're an actress?

LIZ

Model. Although I'd like to be an actress. Kyle says I'm very talented.

P.J.

Undoubtedly. Welcome to Weston Hall.

LIZ

Weston Hall. That sounds so cool, like something out of an old movie.

KYLE

Everything in this house is out of an old movie. Wuthering Heights.

P.J.

That would make you Heathcliff. *(Beat)* Didn't he kill himself?

KYLE smirks at him. P.J. exits. MORTON WESTON, his wife SARAH, and their teenage son ANDY enter the room. Middle class, affluent, but dressed more like they're on vacation than visiting a sick relative. Andy plays a hand-held video game and ignores everyone else.

MORTON

(Seeing KYLE, smiling cordially) Kyle. You actually made it.

KYLE

(Standing up, grinning) Hello, Salt. *(Slaps MORTON on the stomach affably)* You've put on some weight, big brother.

MORTON

(Shrugging) Maybe a little.

SARAH

A little? You've gone up two pant sizes in eight months.

MORTON

Thank you, dear. Be sure to tweet that to all of our friends, will you?

SARAH

I already have. *(Smiling admiringly at KYLE)* I saw your last movie, Skin Signs. It was great!

KYLE

You were the one! I knew we sold at least one ticket.

SARAH

I know, I heard it didn't do too well. I'm so sorry. You were so good as that paraplegic dermatologist. That part where you found the alien DNA in that old man's wart was so scary! *(Hugging ANDY)* Andy and I really enjoyed it!

ANDY

(Grimacing) No, I didn't. I thought it was lame!

SARAH

(Horrificed) Andy! I'm so sorry, Kyle.

KYLE

No, no, it's okay, I agree with him. Lame's a good description. If we weren't in mixed company I'd use a worse adjective.

SARAH

(Suddenly seeing LIZ) Hi! I've seen you before, haven't I? Were you in the movie with Kyle?

LIZ

(Shaking hands) Liz Lennox. Kyle says I'm not ready for films just yet. I've done some TV commercials, though. Maybe you've seen my latest? I'm the--

ANDY

(Glancing up from the game, suddenly elated) The Angelica's Secret girl! Oh, wow! You are so hot!

ANDY steps towards LIZ with a mesmerized grin. SARAH quickly pulls him back and shields him behind her.

SARAH

(To LIZ, suddenly not so impressed) Yes, well, so nice to meet you.

KYLE

(To MORTON) So, how you been, Salt?

MORTON

Can't complain, little brother.

SARAH

But you still do. Constantly.

MORTON

(Snidely) Gee, I wonder why? *(To KYLE)* What about you, Kyle? I heard you took a real bath with that last film.

KYLE

I broke even. It's a tough business.

MORTON

You seem to have had a lot of flops, recently. Who's paying for them? *(Chuckling)* I know it's not Dad.

KYLE

Come on, Salt, you know show business. Always a sucker willing to invest.

MORTON

With the kind of money you've spent, you must know a lot of suckers.

KYLE

(Overly flippant) Hey, consider the source, big brother. Hollywood. Nothing but fruits and nuts.

MORTON

Yeah, but I would think even the nuts don't like losing money. Or the fruits.

KYLE

(Obviously growing uncomfortable) Yeah, well, enough about my bad luck. How's the real estate business?

MORTON

(Shrugging) It's coming back.

SARAH

(Scoffs, scowling at MORTON) So's polyester. Let's see you make money with either.

KYLE

(To MORTON) Hey, the old man wanted you to take over his business.

MORTON

No, thanks. I was never that desperate.

LIZ

What was your father's business?

KYLE and MORTON reply TOGETHER.

KYLE/MORTON

Toilets.

LIZ

Toilets?

KYLE

Yep. The "Weston Whirlpool."

KYLE looks at MORTON, and they once again SPEAK TOGETHER.

KYLE/MORTON

"Where nothing gets left behind..."

KYLE

(In feigned ANNOUNCER'S VOICE) "Twice the suction of a regular toilet and only half as loud." *(Normally)* Made a real splash in the plumbing world. *(Beat)* So to speak.

MORTON

Like that's the legacy I want to leave my son.

ANDY continues to smile goofily at LIZ, who frowns back uncomfortably.

ANDY

I'd rather be an actor, like Uncle Kyle.

KYLE

Trust me, kid, it's not that great.

ANDY

(Glancing from KYLE to LIZ incredulously) Are you serious..?

P.J. re-enters. He smiles warmly at MORTON.

P.J.

Morton. So glad you could come.

MORTON eagerly shakes P.J.'s hand. It's obvious their friendship is closer.

MORTON

P.J.! So good to see you again.

P.J.

And you, Morton. You look well. (To ALL) I'm really glad all of you could come. This situation is far more serious than you realize.

MORTON

How is he, P.J.?

P.J.

Well, he's still ornery, if that's what you mean. But he's very weak. I don't think it'll be much longer.

KYLE

Where's Mom?

EMILY (OFFSTAGE)

Right here!

EMILY WESTON enters. An attractive older woman, but dressed bizarrely. Just like her house, nothing matches. A splash of colors, ruffles, you name it. She rushes to each one and hugs them lovingly.

EMILY

Morton! Oh, it's so good to see you! And lovely little Susan!

SARAH

Sarah.

EMILY

Of course. *(Turns to ANDY, pinching his cheeks)* And here's my little Andy-poo! How's grandma's precious little angel?

ANDY

(Struggling to pull away, voice distorted) My face! You're ripping off my face!

SARAH

Emily, you're hurting him!

EMILY

Nonsense! I would never hurt my angel!

EMILY lets ANDY go. He stumbles backwards, holding his face and working his jaw back and forth. EMILY turns to KYLE.

EMILY

Kyle, my baby turned movie star! *(Suddenly serious)* Sweetie, you really need to talk to your makeup people. In your last movie I could still see that rabbit-shaped birthmark under your ear.

KYLE

Thanks, Mom. You're the reason I've never done nude scenes.

EMILY

Well, I should hope so. You certainly wouldn't want everyone to see how tiny—

KYLE

(Quickly interrupting, gesturing to LIZ) Mom, this is Liz Lennox.

EMILY

Oh, yes. *(With a puzzled frown)* I'm sorry, dear, I can never remember; are you the rock singer or the swimsuit model?

ANDY

(Once again grinning) Swimsuit model!

LIZ scowls at him sharply, pulling her clothing closer modestly. SARAH tugs ANDY backwards with a warning glare.

EMILY

(To LIZ) That's nice. Just beware the sun, sweetheart. UV kills as easily as bullets.

LIZ

I'll, uh, I'll keep that in mind, thanks. *(Staring at EMILY's outfit warily)* That's a very...interesting outfit, Mrs. Weston.

EMILY

(Pleased, pirouetting) You like it? I just threw it together. That's me, you know, always experimenting. Just throw things in the blender and see what frappés.

KYLE

I think you may want to try another setting, Mom. *(To LIZ, discretely)* The blades seem to be getting dull.

EMILY

(To ALL) What a wonderful day! Your father will be so happy to see all of you!

KYLE

(Scoffing) Yeah, right.

MORTON

Do you know what it is he wants to tell us, Mom?

KYLE

The same thing he's always told us, Salt: that we're all a bunch of misfit losers and he's sorry he ever brought us into the world. You know, genuine fatherly love.

P.J.

I think you'll find your father has mellowed considerably, Kyle. Facing God has that effect on people.

KYLE

Facing God? I'm surprised he hasn't tried to buy Him off. He owns every politician in the state; why should God be any different?

EMILY

Really, Kyle, your father doesn't own people. *(Thinking intently, after a beat)* Although he's definitely rented quite a few.

P.J.

Be that as it may, the doctors tell your mother and me that there isn't a lot of time left. If there is ever to be any sort of... *(Struggles for the right word)* ...reconciliation, in your family, then this is the last chance.

MORTON

You're right, P.J. The only important thing is family.

SARAH

(Staring at MORTON curiously) Aren't you going to ask him about the inheritance?

MORTON gives her a sharp "not now" glare.

EMILY

I would imagine you'll all want to see your rooms. Morton, I've put you and Shirley—

SARAH

Sarah!

EMILY

—in the guest bungalow, next to the pool. *(Suddenly stops, frowning at LIZ)* Or would you rather have that, sweetie?

LIZ

I'm fine anywhere, Mrs. Weston.

ANDY

(Pointing at LIZ) I want the room next to hers!

SARAH gasps and drags ANDY out of the room, followed by MORTON.

EMILY

(To LIZ) I'll put you in the maid's room. She was deported last week, so it's open until we can find someone new. What exactly is a green card, anyway? *(Shrugging, turning to KYLE)* You can have your old room, Kyle. It's still as messy as you left it, unfortunately.

KYLE

(Feigning shock) You mean Dad hasn't rented it out? I would have thought he'd have a live-in NRA lobbyist by now.

P.J.

(Growing visibly annoyed) Your father had your room remodeled to show off all of your old school trophies, Kyle. He was very proud of you.

KYLE

He was very proud of the praise they garnered him, P.J. Just more coup for the Weston legacy. Let's stay honest, all right?

P.J. shakes his head and exits angrily. EMILY steps up to KYLE and kisses his cheek.

EMILY

Well, I have to go and get everything started for lunch. You know your way around the house, I'm sure.

KYLE

If not I have a GPS.

EMILY frowns at him in confusion, then shakes her head and exits. LIZ taps KYLE's arm and scowls.

LIZ

Do we have to stay here much longer?

KYLE

I have no idea. Norman Bates finally getting to you?

LIZ

No, it's your brother's kid. He creeps me out, staring at me like that.

KYLE

Why should that bother you? He's no different than the millions of other teenage boys who stare at your pictures.

LIZ

(Thinking for a moment, obviously troubled) I hadn't thought of that. *(Beat)* Now I'm really creeped out!

KYLE

Come on, I'll show you my shrine of a room.

They start to exit.

LIZ

Tell me something; why do you call your brother Salt?

KYLE

Because his name is Morton.

LIZ

So?

KYLE

Morton. You know; Morton salt.

Completely clueless stare from LIZ.

KYLE

(After a beat) So pretty...

They exit. BLACKOUT.

ACT I

Scene II

AT RISE: *The same living room in the Weston house, a short time later. KYLE, LIZ, MORTON, SARAH, and ANDY are sitting/standing throughout the room. All appear tense, except for KYLE, who is obviously bored, and ANDY, who continues to play his video game. He sneaks a look/grin at LIZ periodically, who reacts with revulsion.*

LIZ

How long are we going to have to wait?

KYLE

Dad loves to build the tension. Always kept his business partners waiting for hours before a meeting. Said it gave him an edge in negotiations.

LIZ

But you're his family.

KYLE

What's your point?

MORTON

I heard P.J. say he had a bad night. Maybe he's too sick to come down.

KYLE

Oh, come on, Salt, when did illness ever stop Dad from going anywhere? He went to the '67 NFL championship in Green Bay with double pneumonia. The Ice Bowl, remember? Minus thirteen degrees! Coughed his lungs out through the entire game and still managed to scream at Vince Lombardi for not winning by a bigger margin. *(Beat)* They said it was the only time Lombardi ever cried.

LIZ

Who's Vince Lombardi?

MORTON looks at KYLE, who gives him a "so not worth it" shake of his head.

MORTON

Look, Kyle, I'll admit that Dad's not perfect, but everybody dies eventually. Maybe we should be taking this more seriously.

KYLE

I'll take it seriously when they close the coffin lid. And even then I want it welded shut.

ANDY

Can we go home? This place is seriously boring!

SARAH

We'll go home after we see your grandfather. (*Glancing at MORTON eagerly*) And we find out how much he's leaving us!

KYLE

Don't get your hopes up, Sarah. If anyone can figure out how to take it with him, it's Dad. No doubt he's got the entire office of Merrill Lynch devising a conversion.

MORTON

That's a very mean thing to say, Kyle.

KYLE

No, mean would be if I said it would need to be fireproofed.

SARAH

(*Glancing at her watch*) This is getting ridiculous. We haven't had supper, and Andy's hypoglycemic. He could fall in a dead faint at any moment.

MORTON

So am I, Sarah. I don't hear you crying after my health.

SARAH

(*Putting arms around ANDY*) That's different. Andy's just a baby. He's got his whole life ahead of him.

LIZ

(*To KYLE*) Really, Kyle, Sarah's right. This is very frustrating. When do you think your father will get here?

KYLE

Oh, don't worry; you'll hear the fanfare.

SFX: COUNTRY & WESTERN SONG

OTHERS turn to look as P.J. EMILY enters. P.J. pushes a wheelchair that holds the Weston patriarch, JOHN. Old. Gray. Mean. JOHN has a boom box in his lap that blares out the MUSIC.

KYLE

(*To LIZ, shouting*) I forgot to tell you, he loves country music.

LIZ

(*Holding her ears*) Is he also deaf?

KYLE

No. He just loves country music.

P.J.

(To JOHN, loudly) John, you need to turn that down.

JOHN

(Shouting) What?

P.J.

You need to turn that down!

JOHN

Wait a minute, I can't hear you. Let me turn this down. *(Shuts MUSIC OFF)* What did you say?

P.J.

Nothing.

JOHN

P.J., how many times do I have to tell you; don't talk if you don't have anything to say. It's very annoying.

P.J.

Sorry, John. *(Gesturing to OTHERS)* Your family is here.

JOHN

I can see that. I'm not blind. *(Beat)* Yet.

MORTON

(Smiling affably) Hello, Dad.

JOHN

Morton. You're getting fat.

MORTON

(With frozen smile) Good to see you, too.

JOHN

(Frowning sharply at SARAH) I see you're still married to the snake oil heiress.

SARAH

(Slightly taken aback) Mr. Weston, that's not exactly correct. My father sells herbal supplements and alternative holistic medications.

JOHN

That's what I said: he's a witch doctor.

SARAH

(Pulls ANDY in front of her, struggling to stay calm) Andy, say hello to your grandfather.

ANDY

(Frowning at JOHN) Do I have to? He's mean.

JOHN

(Suddenly grinning) Hah! I like you, boy! You speak your mind. Unlike your wuss of a father. Maybe you'll go farther in life than he has.

MORTON

(Flatly) Thank you, Dad.

JOHN

(Seeing KYLE) Well, well, if it isn't Errol Flynn.

LIZ

(To KYLE, sympathetically) Oh, poor thing, he doesn't know your name. Does he have Alzheimer's?

KYLE and JOHN glance at one another.

JOHN

Good thing she's pretty. *(Eyeing LIZ appraisingly)* You're quite the looker, young lady. You married to this loser son of mine?

KYLE

Dad, this is Liz Lennox. And no, we're not married. Nobody gets married in Hollywood.

LIZ

(Earnestly) Not unless they're gay.

JOHN

Yes, well, since you're all here, let's get down to business. No sense wasting what time I've got left with useless claptrap. You're all worried about how much you'll get when I finally check out.

MORTON

Dad, that isn't—

JOHN

(Scoffs) Please, boy, spare me the fake sentiment. My stomach's upset enough as it is. You vultures will be headed home before the dirt's even settled over my grave.

EMILY

John, really! You know your children love you.

JOHN

(Sighing) Yes, yes, of course I do, sweetheart. I believe I have their undying love and respect. I also believe that the moon landing was faked, that Oswald was really Kennedy's illegitimate son, and that Jimmy Hoffa is alive and running a Starbucks in Fiji. Anything's possible.

LIZ

Who's Jimmy Hoffa?

KYLE

So how much are we getting?

EMILY

(Aghast) Kyle!

KYLE

No, Mom, if that's what Dad truly believes we're here for, then by all means, let's find out. If I learned anything at all from him it's never to waste time; mine or anyone else's. *(To JOHN)* Right, Dad?

JOHN

Very good, boy. I'll have to throw in an extra thousand for that.

KYLE

I'd prefer your Maserati.

JOHN

Sorry, sold it. You can have that napkin Elvis autographed for me when I met him in that Vegas buffet. Still has the grease stains from his bacon sandwich.

EMILY

Oh, no, dear! I had that framed and hung in the guest bathroom. *(Beat; musing)* It seemed appropriate, somehow.

JOHN

Of course, sweetheart. What was I thinking? *(To KYLE, shrugging)* Sorry, kid. *(Beat; to ALL)* All right, here's the deal. Obviously your mother will be well provided for. Unlike some members of this family, she's been willing to put up with me all these years without constantly whining or complaining. *(Patting EMILY's hand)* Although that's probably because she's crazy, which isn't her fault.

EMILY

(Smiling lovingly) Thank you, dearest.

JOHN

P.J. will also receive a sizable endowment, mostly because for the past thirty years he's taken better care of my business than I ever could. Whatever fortune I've been able to hold onto has only been because of his efforts.

P.J.

(Genuinely embarrassed) I told you, John, I don't want your money.

JOHN

And I told you to shut up. You're going to be a rich man whether you like it or not. *(Beat)* As for the rest of you, you'll each receive a sum commensurate with your needs and current financial situation. I'll make sure your debts are settled... *(Throws a sharp look at KYLE)* ...within reason, of course, but beyond that your life is your own. It's the same as my father did for me.

SARAH

But, what about Andy? Your grandson?

JOHN

What about him?

SARAH

He needs to be prepared for the future. There's college, travel; all sorts of things.

JOHN

College? *(Scoffs)* Totally useless, unless you're a binge drinker. As for travel: buy him a backpack and a ticket to Europe. He can trek his way across France and see why we should've let the Germans keep it.

ANDY

I don't want to go to France.

JOHN

So don't. I'm not paying for it, anyway.

There is a frustrated silence for several moments, as EVERYONE looks at each other in complete confusion.

MORTON

(After a moment) Dad, don't you think this is a little—

JOHN

Cruel? Inconsiderate? Ruthless? I'm fine with any of those terms.

MORTON

I was going to say sudden.

JOHN

Sudden for you, maybe. I've had years to think about it.

KYLE

So, if you don't mind my asking, what are you going to do with the money? Flush it down your miracle toilet?

JOHN

Charity.

SARAH

(Stupefied) Charity?

JOHN

You heard me. Charity.

KYLE

Dad, that word has never been in your vocabulary. I would be surprised if you even knew how to spell it.

LIZ

I think it's c-h-a-r... *(Stops abruptly with a look from KYLE)*

JOHN

I know that. I know a lot of things now I didn't know then. Dying has a way of slapping you across the face. Hard.

KYLE

I think it may have knocked your brains loose. A little while ago, I was joking about you trying to buy your way into Heaven. But that's exactly what you're trying to do, isn't it?

JOHN

Don't be any more stupid than you already are, Kyle. I haven't been a good person, I know that. I've made a lot of mistakes; the consequences of which are fully evident in this room. But I can't keep making them. Whatever problems you have in your lives, you have to solve them. I refuse to keep enabling your stupidity. You think I don't know what you'd do, all of you, with that kind of wealth? I really would be flushing it down the toilet.

MORTON

So, exactly which... *(Beat)* ...charity are you bequeathing?

JOHN

All of them. Blind kids, diabetics, battered dogs; you name it. I had P.J. draw me up a list of everything out there. They each get a cut.

OTHERS glare at P.J.

KYLE

Was this your idea?

JOHN

(Interrupting sharply) Don't go blaming P.J.! He can't help it he's got ethics.

KYLE

(To P.J., incredulous) And you convinced him to give his money... *(Beat)* ...to God?

JOHN

There you go being stupid again, Kyle! I think those studio lights must have fried your brain! God doesn't need my money. *(Beat)* He's already got the Pope's.

P.J.

I never told your father to give his money away. I did tell him he needed to be aware of what he's facing, and that he might – might – want to alter his life accordingly.

SARAH

Which means he cuts his entire family out of his will!

KYLE

P.J., you had no business sticking your nose into family matters.

SARAH

Especially financial matters!

KYLE, SARAH, AND MORTON begin to berate P.J. angrily.

JOHN

(Shouting) That's enough!

JOHN suddenly begins to cough violently. ALL stop to stare at him anxiously. P.J. and EMILY rushes to help him. JOHN's coughing slowly subsides, and he waves EMILY and P.J. away. He glares at the others sharply.

JOHN

(Struggling to recover) Enough, you understand? There's no use in any further bickering. My mind is made up, and that's final. The papers are signed, the lawyers have blessed them, and the doctors have spoken. There's no going back. You're all free to crawl back to your condos or studios or whatever rocks you live under and live out your pathetic lives. If you want to stick around and make sure they put me in the ground, that's your business. I've said all I have to say.

JOHN motions to P.J., who quickly wheels John off stage. EMILY starts to follow, then stops to smile at the others anxiously.

EMILY

Lunch will be ready soon. (*Quickly exits*)

KYLE, LIZ, MORTON, SARAH, and ANDY stare after them silently. There is a long and awkward silence once again.

SARAH

(*Turning to the others in disbelief*) Charity!

MORTON

(*Shrugging*) Charity.

KYLE

Charity. S-H-I—

LIZ

(*Interrupting*) Really, Kyle! Even I know that's not how you spell charity.

KYLE

(*Glaring coldly*) Wanna bet..?

BLACKOUT.

ACT I

Scene III

AT RISE: *The Weston living room a few hours later. Kyle, Liz, Morton, Sarah, Emily, and Andy sit/stand throughout. The mood is silent, anxious, and with an obviously angry tension. Andy plays his video games, as usual, now and then sneaking an ogling glance at Liz. Emily enters. She wears another explosion of mismatching colors; a chameleon on steroids.*

EMILY

(*Obviously bewildered*) Goodness, everyone is so quiet. I hope you all enjoyed lunch.

There is no reply from anyone. LIZ looks around anxiously.

LIZ

It was very good, Mrs. Weston. What was it, exactly?

EMILY

Porchetta. I had Luigi prepare it especially for Kyle and Morton, since I know how much they love it.

MORTON

(Frowning in surprise) Luigi is still here?

KYLE

(Even more incredulous) Luigi is still alive? He was pushing seventy when we were kids.

LIZ

Who's Luigi?

MORTON

Our chef.

LIZ

And I take it he's... *(Hesitant, not wanting to be embarrassed again)* ...Italian?

MORTON

Pakistani.

LIZ

What?

KYLE

Luigi Patel. *(Beat; shrugging)* Long story.

MORTON

Something to do with an Italian explorer who got lost on his way to China in the fourteenth century.

KYLE

Apparently there's an entire village outside Karachi where they speak nothing but Sicilian.

SARAH

(Finally fed up) I don't get it. Isn't anybody going to talk about what just happened? Morton, can't you speak to your father?

MORTON

And say what, Sarah? You saw for yourself what he's like. No one's ever been able to talk to him about anything.

SARAH

(To EMILY) What about you, Mrs. Weston? Can't you make your husband see reason?

EMILY

About what, Sandra?

SARAH

Sarah.

EMILY

Of course. What exactly are we discussing?

KYLE

(Rolling his eyes) What colors to wear after Labor Day, Mom.

EMILY

Oh, your father would never care about that. I'm surprised that you do.

KYLE

One of my favorite topics, actually. *(Throws a "get real" scowl at SARAH)*

SARAH

Then what about P.J.? Apparently your father listens to him.

KYLE

P.J. is the reason this is happening.

MORTON

You don't know that, Kyle.

KYLE

P.J. is playing on Dad's emotions, Salt. However microscopic they may be. He's making Dad feel guilty enough to get him to cut us out of the will. And it certainly didn't hurt his situation, did it? You heard Dad: P.J.'s going to be a rich man.

MORTON

That doesn't mean he'd betray the rest of us. P.J.'s a good person, Kyle. He's stood up to Dad plenty of times. Especially for you. Remember that time you got kicked out of Dartmouth?

KYLE

I wasn't kicked out. I was... *(Beat)* ...advised to transfer.

MORTON

Yeah, by the campus police. The point is, Dad was ready to cut you off then and there, but it was P.J. who got him to relent. And that wasn't the first time, either.

KYLE

So what are you saying? That you're okay with having your inheritance go to battered dogs?

SARAH

(Interrupting) No! That's not what he's saying! *(Glaring at MORTON)* At least it better not be!

MORTON

I didn't say I was happy about the situation, Sarah. Just that there's not much we can do about it.

SARAH

But what about Andy? Don't you want your son to have a future?

MORTON

Oh, and is it just Andy you're worried about? It wouldn't have anything at all to do with that trip to Paris you've been whining for?

SARAH

(Aghast) How could you ask such a thing? I haven't thought at all about Paris. *(Putting arms around ANDY)* My only concern is for my son.

ANDY

(Frowning at SARAH) I thought you said we were going to Dubai after grandpa died. You wanted to shop at all those neat stores.

SARAH slaps ANDY's arm with a "shut your face" grimace.

ANDY

Ow!

KYLE

(Shaking his head in disgust) No, you're right, Salt, we can't talk to Dad. There's only one thing we can do.

MORTON

Which is?

KYLE

Have him declared incompetent.

SARAH

Of course! Why didn't I think of that?

MORTON

Come on, Kyle, don't you think that's a little extreme?

KYLE

You have a better idea?

EMILY

No! I will not allow you to do such a thing!

KYLE

(Sighing) Mom, please. You heard the things Dad said. He's not making any sense.

EMILY

It doesn't matter. And you should be ashamed of yourself, Kyle Weston. Your father may be a lot of things, but he's never been incompetent. *(Turns and exits angrily)* Even in a wheelchair, he doesn't wear diapers!

LIZ looks at KYLE and grins.

LIZ

I think she misunderstood you.

KYLE

(Snidely) Really..?

MORTON

(To KYLE, after a long pause) We'll need to call someone.

SARAH

(Staring after EMILY) Yeah, but for whom?

KYLE

We'll start with a doctor.

MORTON

Are you kidding? Dad's got every doctor in this county in his back pocket. And every lawyer. And every judge. You're going to need signatures from all three.

KYLE

You forget the business I'm in, big brother. I know lawyers. I know judges. I even know doctors. *(To LIZ)* Who's that psychiatrist in Van Nuys; the one who treated Brittney Spears when she shaved her head?

LIZ

You mean Dr. Zuckerman? I had therapy with him for a while. He's very good.

SARAH

Did he help?

LIZ

Help what?

SARAH

(Beat) Never mind.

KYLE

(Waving dismissively) He's well-respected, and that's what counts. Trust me, we can do this. But we have to start today.

SARAH

No kidding. No telling how much time your dad has left.

KYLE

(Staring at MORTON intently) Are you with me in this, Salt?

MORTON

(Obviously troubled) I don't know, Kyle. Maybe Dad really is trying to do the right thing. And it's not like we actually need the money.

SARAH's jaw drops through the floor. If looks could kill...

SARAH

(Glaring at MORTON) Morton Weston, for the sake of our child, and our marriage, I'm going to pretend you didn't say that.

KYLE

There's a lot more at stake than you realize, Salt. A lot more. Besides, we're his family; his sons. It's our legacy. Would you do that to Andy?

MORTON frowns at ANDY, who has resumed playing his video games and is ignoring the entire scene.

MORTON

No. Kyle, look, it's just—

KYLE

(Exasperated) Oh, for the love of... *(Beat)* Morton, do yourself a favor and grow a freaking spine!

MORTON

(Sighing, after a beat) Fine.

KYLE

Then you're with me?

MORTON

(Shrugging) I guess.

KYLE

Great. *(Reaching into his pocket)* I just have to call Dr. Zuckerman.

LIZ quickly pulls out her own phone and hands it to him.

LIZ

Here you go, babe. I've got him on speed dial.

KYLE

(Smiling at OTHERS) Who'd have thought..?

BLACKOUT.

ACT I Scene IV

AT RISE: *the interior of the Weston living room later that evening. Kyle is sitting on the couch reading a script. Liz enters the room through the French doors. She is wearing a beach wrap that she holds protectively around her, and she stalks past Kyle with an indignant scowl. Andy slowly appears at the doors, staring inside with a lecherous grin.*

KYLE

I thought you were lounging by the pool?

LIZ

I was, but that creepy little nephew of yours— *(Sees ANDY and glares)*

KYLE turns to glance towards the doors, but ANDY has disappeared.

LIZ

(Fuming) —kept leering at me! I swear to God, it's almost like he has x-ray vision.

KYLE

(Chuckling) All teenage boys have x-ray vision. It comes with puberty.

LIZ

(Obviously puzzled) Huh! All I got were boobs and a period. *(Quickly exits)*

KYLE gapes after her, then starts to slap himself on the forehead with the script. P.J. enters and smirks at him.

P.J.

I don't think it's having the desired effect. Shall I go and get a brick?

KYLE

(Startled at first, then scowls) Ah, if it isn't the illustrious Saint P.J. Didn't expect to see you this soon. Thought you'd be too busy finding new charities for Dad to throw his money at.

P.J.

Actually, I'm having my halo polished this morning. Even saints need a day of rest. *(Beat)* By any chance, are you working on a remake of the Godfather?

KYLE

On my budgets? Get real. The Godmother, maybe. Why do you ask?

P.J.

There are a couple of gentlemen here who seem to be auditioning for roles.

KYLE

Gentlemen?

P.J.

Yes. And I use that term in its most basic sense. I would have said gorillas, but they're wearing shoes.

KYLE

(Suddenly wary) What do they want?

P.J.

To see you. *(Beat; smiling)* Urgently.

KYLE

(Growing more agitated) Uh, yeah, look, P.J., could you do me a big favor and tell them I'm not here?

P.J.

Sorry, I already told them you were. And they don't seem like the type who would react well to bad news. Like I already told you, your father doesn't pay me that well.

P.J. exits, then returns a moment later followed by two men, MR. LAUREL and MR. HARDING. They are exactly as P.J. described: gorillas wearing shoes. P.J. smiles amicably at both men, gesturing expansively to KYLE.

P.J.

Gentlemen, this is Mr. Weston. *(Beat)* Can I get you anything? Coffee, tea... *(Smirking at KYLE)* Cement...?

LAUREL

(Smiling amicably) No, thank you, sir. But thank you very much for your courtesy. We apologize sincerely for this unsolicited intrusion. If we could have but a brief moment of Mr. Weston's time, we'll be on our way without further inconvenience.

P.J.

No inconvenience at all. I'll leave you alone, then. Please feel free to shoot...I mean, shout, if you need anything. *(Exits with a final grin at KYLE)*

KYLE stares at both men anxiously. This is not good.

KYLE

Uh, how can I help you?

LAUREL

Mr. Weston. Good to finally meet you, sir. I am Mr. Laurel, and this is my associate, Mr. Harding. *(Swiftly raises a finger)* Before you say anything, let me assure you it was an entirely coincidental pairing, yet one which, as I'm sure you can surmise, has suffered us to endure interminable humorous jibes.

HARDING's glare could cut through granite.

HARDING

But not for long.

LAUREL

Indeed. Mr. Harding has a knack for bringing any unwanted levity to an extremely abrupt halt.

HARDING

I'm also good with an ice pick.

LAUREL

A man of many talents, to be certain.

KYLE

(Swiftly shaking head) I wasn't going to say anything.

LAUREL

We appreciate that, Mr. Weston. Your estimation has been elevated in our eyes. Isn't that right, Mr. Harding?

HARDING

(Spreads fingers minutely – the glare doesn't waver) Just a little.

LAUREL

Mr. Weston, my employers have asked me to speak to you regarding the somewhat... extravagant debenture you have accrued, and how soon you plan to make full restitution.

HARDING

We want our money back.

LAUREL

What he said.

KYLE

(Quickly) I know, I know, and I'm planning to pay you back, honest. It's just that my last picture didn't make all that much money. Sometimes you make a profit, sometimes you don't. That's the movie business.

LAUREL

Mr. Weston, my employers fully understand the motion picture industry is an inherent risk. However, while we have, of course, the greatest admiration for your talent, we have come to the dismal realization that investing in your films is somewhat akin to feeding Ex-Lax to a monkey. *(Beat)* While the results may be mildly entertaining, they ultimately stink.

KYLE

Look, I know I owe you a lot of money—

LAUREL

(Suddenly interrupting) A 'lot' of money? *(Laughing)* Did you hear that, Mr. Harding? Mr. Weston, the national debt is a 'lot' of money. The amount you owe surpasses that term – and very nearly that amount – by a substantial margin. I believe a better word would be 'astronomical'. And even then it's merely approaching the proper appellation.

KYLE

I understand. I just need a little more time—

LAUREL

(Interrupting again) Mr. Weston, please; time is a relative concept. While we have never been adverse to using an installment program, there comes a point at which the repayment period exceeds the life of the lenders. My employers would like to see the debt repaid before they're too old to enjoy the money. *(Slips an arm around KYLE's shoulder and draws him aside with a smile)* You are no doubt familiar with the old saying, 'you can't get blood from a turnip'? Mr. Harding and I have a paraphrase of that metaphor: 'you can't get cash from a dead man'.

HARDING

But you can sure have fun trying.

LAUREL

Once again, Mr. Harding scores with concision. A testament to his ninety-nine percent collection rate.

HARDING

But it's the one percent I live for.

KYLE

(Sighing – there's no way out) What are my options?

LAUREL

Limited, sir. Extremely limited. My employers have authorized me to extend you a final two-week grace period. If your debt is not paid – in full – by that time, I'm afraid we will have no choice but to... *(Beat; shrugging)* Well, I will leave the outcome to your imagination, Mr. Weston. However, I can assure you it will include a modicum of pain.

HARDING

(Spreads fingers again) Just a little.

LAUREL glances around the room appraisingly.

LAUREL

I would think such an endeavor shouldn't be difficult for you, Mr. Weston, given your family's assets. After all, the amount you owe would hardly make a dent in your father's financial holdings.

KYLE

(Sardonically) You can't get blood from a turnip.

LAUREL

Ouch! I sense domestic turmoil. Tragic. *(Shrugs)* However, far be it from me to intrude on familial discord. *(Beat; turning to exit)* Two weeks, Mr. Weston. Mr. Harding and I will show ourselves out. Again, please forgive the intrusion. And have a very nice day, sir.

HARDING follows LAUREL offstage, casting a final 'you're a dead man' smirk at KYLE. He opens his fingers slightly once again, then suddenly spreads both hands wide apart. The pain scale is off the charts. KYLE grimaces after him, then throws the script aside with a look of despair.

KYLE

Crap!

BLACKOUT.

ACT I
Scene V

AT RISE: *The Weston living room two days later. KYLE enters accompanied by DR. PAUL ZUCKERMAN, "Psychiatrist to the stars". Zuckerman looks the part – expensively garish suit and all.*

KYLE

I'm really glad you could get here on such short notice, Dr. Zuckerman.

ZMAN

Please, call me Paul. And I'm always glad to help out wherever there's a need. Mental health knows no boundaries or distances. *(Beat)* Your accountant did get the schedule of my fees, correct?

KYLE

Of course.

LIZ enters the room.

LIZ

(Happily) Dr. Zuckerman!

ZMAN

(Embracing her) My lovely little Liz! How are you, my dear?

LIZ

I'm feeling so much better, doctor. Thanks to you, of course!

ZMAN

Nonsense. You're perfectly normal. Like I tell all of my patients: people are sane...

LIZ completes the phrase with him.

ZMAN/LIZ, *Together*

It's the world that's crazy!

KYLE

(Snidely) Welcome to my world.

ZMAN

Kyle, I think you may be overreacting just a bit. Based on what you told me, I'm still not sure there's any need for my services. It's not unusual for wealthy people to leave their money to philanthropic agencies. It may very well be that your father is genuinely trying to mitigate a troubled conscience. Or maybe he just wants the world to remember him as a generous man.

KYLE

Or maybe he's out of his freaking mind.

ZMAN

Let's not rush to judgment, all right? By the way, how much money are we talking about, anyway?

KYLE whispers in ZUCKERMAN's ear.

ZMAN

(Eyes wide; after a beat) He's out of his freaking mind!

*EMILY, MORTON, SARAH, and ANDY enter.
ANDY continues to leer at LIZ, who quickly
moves behind KYLE.*

SARAH

(Eagerly, to both KYLE and ZUCKERMAN) So, is the old coot crazy?

KYLE

Dr. Zuckerman hasn't had a chance to examine him yet, Sarah.

SARAH

(To ZUCKERMAN) But you will find him crazy, right?

MORTON

(Shaking his head) I still don't like this, Kyle. It just doesn't seem right.

KYLE

Duly noted, big brother.

*P.J. suddenly enters. He is obviously angry and
upset.*

P.J.

(To KYLE, glancing at ZUCKERMAN) Have you lost your mind, Kyle Weston?

KYLE

(Shrugging) Possibly. But I'm not the one the doctor is here to see.

P.J.

How could you do this? I mean, what kind of a person are you? What kind of a son?

KYLE

P.J., this is our family, not yours. I'll thank you to stay out of it. You've had enough influence as it is, and for far too long. *(Beat)* Now go and get Dad.

P.J. stares at him coldly for several moments, then quickly exits. The OTHERS share an awkward silence.

LIZ

(To ZUCKERMAN, after a moment) Did you know they have a Pakistani cook whose name is Luigi?

ZMAN

You're so pretty.

SFX: COUNTRY & WESTERN SONG

P.J. enters pushing JOHN in his wheelchair. JOHN holds the boom box which blares loudly. ZUCKERMAN looks at KYLE curiously.

KYLE

(Shouting) What did I tell you? *(To JOHN)* Dad, you need to turn that off, please.

*JOHN only stares back flatly.
MUSIC CONTINUES TO BLARE.*

KYLE

(To P.J.) P.J., a little help, here?

P.J. glares back in response. KYLE sighs in disgust and turns the BOOM BOX OFF.

KYLE

Dad, I'd like you to meet Dr. Zuckerman.

JOHN

Why?

KYLE

Because he would like to ask you a few questions.

JOHN

Why?

KYLE

Because I asked him to.

JOHN

Why?

KYLE

(Snidely, exasperated) Because I'm a cold, heartless, greedy little jerk who only wants to get his hands on your money. *(Beat)* Happy, now?

JOHN

Actually, yes. That's the first time I've ever heard you say anything that even resembled the truth. *(To ZUCKERMAN)* So, you want to know if I'm loony because I plan to leave my money to charity?

ZMAN

No one thinks you're 'loony', Mr. Weston. I'm simply here in a consulting capacity at your son's request.

JOHN

(Scoffs) You're a worse liar than he is. But then, you are a shrink, so I guess that's redundant.

ZMAN

Yes, well, be that as it may, I just have a few short questions. I'd like to start with a word association test. I'll say a word, and you say the first thing that comes to mind—

JOHN

Idiot.

ZMAN

I beg your pardon?

JOHN

You said to say the first thing that came to mind. Idiot.

ZMAN

(Glancing at KYLE – what have you gotten me into?) Actually, I hadn't started, yet.

JOHN

Oh, sorry. My bad. Let me know when you do start. Wouldn't want to fail the test.

ZMAN

Of course. All right, here we go—

JOHN

Stop.

ZMAN

No—

JOHN

Yes.

Mr. Weston— ZMAN

Dr. Zuckerman. JOHN

(*Growing more irritated*) Sir— ZMAN

Ma'am. JOHN

Please— ZMAN

Thank you. JOHN

(*Finally losing composure*) Will you stop! ZMAN

ZUCKERMAN struggles for composure as P.J. fights to hold back laughter. KYLE and the OTHERS share looks of frustration and confusion.

ZMAN
(*Finally calming*) Mr. Weston, I can see you don't want to take this seriously, but it would really be to your advantage to cooperate.

JOHN
(*Innocently*) I'm sorry, I thought I was. Were my answers wrong?

ZMAN
Let's continue, shall we? Now, I will say one word -- and only one word -- and then you may answer. Ready?

JOHN only stares back silently.

ZMAN
Ready?

More silence.

ZMAN
(*Frustrated*) Mr. Weston, are you ready?

JOHN

Oh, you're asking if I'm ready? I thought that was the word. I was trying to think of something to go with it, like 'set'. Would that work?

ZUCKERMAN's face begins to twitch anxiously.

ZMAN

(Pulls KYLE aside, struggling for composure) I cannot work under these conditions! The man isn't crazy, he's simply obtuse!

KYLE

I don't know what that even means, but I really need you to work with me here.

ZMAN

Absolutely not! It simply isn't possible.

KYLE

I'll double your fee.

ZMAN

(After a beat) Then again, I did take an oath.

KYLE

(Winking) Good man.

ZUCKERMAN regains his composure and turns back to JOHN.

ZMAN

(Forcing a smile) Mr. Weston, let's try this again, shall we? Believe it or not, I truly have your well-being at heart.

JOHN

I don't believe that for a moment.

ZMAN

That I care about your mental health?

JOHN

That you have a heart.

ZUCKERMAN glares at KYLE, who shrugs and gestures pleadingly for him to continue.

ZMAN

(To JOHN) Now then, here's the word. Family.

Ingrates. JOHN

(Nodding) Good. Now we're getting somewhere. Son. ZMAN

Leech. (*Beat; glancing at KYLE and MORTON*) Sorry, leeches. JOHN

Wife. ZMAN

Dingbat. (*Beat; smiling at EMILY*) But sweet. JOHN

(*Earnestly*) I love you, too, sweetheart! EMILY

Money. ZMAN

Headache. JOHN

World. ZMAN

Cesspool. JOHN

Life. ZMAN

Sucks. Are we done? JOHN

Almost. Friendship. ZMAN

Elusive. JOHN

Trust. ZMAN

Fallacy. JOHN

ZMAN
Love.

JOHN
(*After a long beat*) Nonexistent.

ZMAN
(*Turning to KYLE*) Your father isn't crazy.

SARAH
What? You can't mean that! (*Beat; glancing furtively at JOHN*) I mean, shouldn't you examine him more...thoroughly?

ZMAN
(*Shaking his head*) There's no need. I just hope I'm that cognizant at his age.

KYLE
Doc, I don't think you understand the situation here.

ZMAN
Kyle, I can't declare someone incompetent simply for being philanthropic.

SARAH
(*Flabbergasted*) I thought you took an oath to help people!

P.J. has been bending over JOHN, frowning at him anxiously. JOHN is sitting completely still, staring straight ahead without expression.

P.J.
(*Looking up at Kyle*) Kyle?

KYLE
(*Ignoring him; to ZUCKERMAN*) But his attitude—

ZMAN
His attitude is completely normal, given the family dynamics.

P.J.
(*More urgently*) Kyle.

KYLE
(*Continues to ignore P.J.*) Dr. Zuckerman, I'm not paying you a ton of money just to tell me my family is screwed up. I already knew that.

ZMAN
Kyle, I can't—

(*Shouting*) Kyle!

P.J.

(*Also shouting*) What?!

KYLE

ALL turn. P.J. looks at KYLE intently.

I think your father just had a stroke.

P.J.

(*Screaming, rushing to JOHN's side*) John!

EMILY

BLACKOUT.

End of Act I

ACT II

Scene I

SETTING: *The Weston Living room; a day later.*

AT RISE: *KYLE is talking on his cell phone with an anxious demeanor. LIZ enters during the course of the conversation.*

KYLE

(Into phone) No, no, he's still in a coma. No, he's here at home. Mom doesn't want him dying in a hospital. She wants him to be surrounded by his 'loved ones.' I told her if that was the case she needed to move his bed to the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. *(Pause)* I don't know, Jerry. Not till after he's dead. But I can guarantee it won't be anywhere near as much as I need. *(Pause)* No, there's nothing more I can do. *(Pause)* Yes, I fully understand the situation. Laurel and Harding made it vividly clear, believe me. *(Pause; exasperated)* No, Jerry, those were their names! And trust me, there was nothing funny about it. Look, just do what you can to buy me a little more time. And maybe a ticket to Belize. *(Hangs up, sighing)*

LIZ

Was that your lawyer?

KYLE

Jerry's not a lawyer; he's a cross between a shark and a viper.

LIZ

(Laughs) That would make him a 'shiper'. Or maybe a 'vark'. *(Beat)* Seriously, though, I don't think they can mate.

KYLE

(Flatly) Wow. You learn something new every day.

LIZ

I guess you still owe all that money?

KYLE

(Rolling his eyes, Scoffing) No, Liz, my creditors have all taken pity on me and forgiven the entire debt. They're even going to send flowers to the funeral.

LIZ

But your father's not dead, yet.

KYLE

I'm talking about mine! They're gangsters, Liz. You know what that means? They don't put you on an installment plan; they put you on a slab.

LIZ

(Thinking) Like in a morgue?

KYLE

Yes, sweetheart, like in a morgue. *(Takes her face in his hands)* You see, there's hope for you yet.

LIZ

(Shrugging) You're the one who borrowed money from crooks.

KYLE

(Sarcastic) Of course, you're absolutely right. Why didn't I think of that? This is all my fault; I should have known better. In fact, now that I think about it, please have that inscribed on my headstone. 'Here lies Kyle Weston - he should have known better'.

LIZ

Now you're just being sardonic. *(Beat)* That's a word, right?

KYLE

Liz, sweetheart, I owe these guys big time. And I mean big time. They don't like it when they don't get paid.

LIZ

But when your dad dies—

KYLE

(Interrupting) When dad dies – if he dies – whatever he leaves me won't cover the entire debt.

LIZ

What about your mom? Maybe she'd give you the money. She likes your movies.

KYLE

She also likes to dress porcelain pigs in tutus. Besides, dad's only going to leave her enough to stay comfortable. *(Beat; reflective)* You know, maybe I could become a charity. I'd definitely get a chunk of the old man's change, then. The Kyle Weston Foundation for the Financially and Physically Doomed.

LIZ

(Shrugging; after a beat) I think you'd have to file for nonprofit status, first.

MORTON, SARAH, and ANDY enter. ANDY still plays with his video game, but pauses to once again leer at LIZ.

KYLE

(To MORTON) Any news?

MORTON

No change. Mom and P.J. are with him, now. The doctor just left.

KYLE

He say anything about...when?

SARAH

(Disgusted) No. Just that it could be 'any time'. Which could mean days.

LIZ

Or even longer. My grandmother lived for three years after her stroke. *(Frowning at SARAH's cold glare)* What?

MORTON

(Visibly distraught) I wish I could have said something beforehand.

KYLE

Like what?

MORTON

I don't know, Kyle. Maybe 'goodbye'? *(Beat)* Or even 'I love you'?

KYLE

(Scoffs) He'd have just told you to go to hell.

MORTON

(Glaring) No, he'd have told you to go to hell. You were the one who hated him.

KYLE

Oh, really? I don't recall you ever nominating him for father of the year.

MORTON

I never said he was perfect. I just never saw him through your filter. All you ever saw was someone who wouldn't come to your school plays or football games. I saw a man who worked his butt off trying to build a life and a business.

KYLE

What about a family, Salt? Were we ever a family? All he did was work. Did you ever once see him at the dinner table? It was just you, me, and mom, every single night. Even at Christmas, remember? We'd get the famous Weston Christmas morning conference call. There we'd be, gathered around a fifteen-foot tree that rivaled Rockefeller Square: you, me, mom, and a speaker phone. Five minutes of heartwarming holiday cheer, brought to you in glorious AT&T clarity. *(Beat)* God bless us, everyone.

MORTON

I also remember that tree would be piled high with every single toy we ever wanted.

KYLE

(Cynically) Oh, please stop, big brother; you're making me cry.

MORTON

(To himself) Maybe somebody should.

KYLE

How's that?

MORTON

Nothing.

KYLE begins to laugh.

MORTON

What's so funny?

KYLE

It just dawned on me; if there really is a God, He obviously hates me.

LIZ

Why would you say that?

KYLE

Just look at my life! It's like I'm under some sort of perverse judgment. I have everything, but I have nothing. It's like the guy who finds a genie in a bottle. Genie tells him he can have one wish, right? Just one. 'Great,' the guy says, 'I want to be irresistible to women.' Poof! *(Snaps fingers)* Genie turns him into a chocolate bar.

LIZ

I like chocolate.

KYLE winces. EMILY suddenly enters. She is obviously upset.

EMILY

I think you boys should go to your father.

MORTON

I'll go, mom.

EMILY

No, Kyle should go first.

KYLE takes a deep breath and starts to exit. He takes LIZ's hand and gestures for her to follow. LIZ shakes her heads quickly.

I think you should go alone.

LIZ

KYLE nods and exits, followed by EMILY. LIZ looks at the others anxiously.

I think I'll go and get some air.

LIZ

She exits towards the patio. ANDY watches her leave, then suddenly and stealthily follows her out. SARAH shakes her head with a look of anguish.

This is so terrible!

SARAH

(Sadly) I know.

MORTON

If he dies without resolving this, we may end up with nothing!

SARAH

(Incredulous) My God, Sarah, is that the way you really feel?

MORTON

What do you mean?

SARAH

My father is dying and you're still whining about the stupid money?

MORTON

Morton, I'm only thinking—

SARAH

I know what you're only thinking. It's what you're always only thinking. Paris, Dubai, cars, vacations; did you ever once think about people?

MORTON

People? What people?

SARAH

Exactly. How about me, for example? Your husband? Or am I just fodder for your social tweets? *(Mimics SARAH)* 'Morton put on eight pounds this month'. 'Morton wants to sell stupid real estate.' 'Morton nearly died of hypoglycemic shock. Oh, and by the way, we're going to go shopping in Dubai after his old man croaks!' *(Normal voice)* Well, you know

MORTON

MORTON, *Continued*

something, you can go to Dubai for all I care. Or Paris, or wherever the hell you'd like to go. But guess what; you're going without me.

SARAH

What are you saying?

MORTON

I'm saying I would rather walk out of here without a single dime, if it meant finally bringing peace to this family.

SARAH

(Horried) Morton! You can't mean that! What about Andy? What about me?

MORTON

Andy will be fine. And as for you? I'll tell you about you, Sarah. From the moment we first met, I tried to convince myself you really weren't who you were. I kept saying to myself: deep down inside, she's really a nice person. Deep down inside she's kind, and sweet, and loving. But you're not, are you? Deep down inside you're exactly the same as you are on the surface: a selfish, self-centered, egotistical, narcissistic... *(Beat; growing more flustered)* ...snake oil heiress!

SARAH stares at him for several moments, obviously flabbergasted, then suddenly turns and exits in a huff. MORTON slowly grins.

MORTON

Damn, that felt good!

LIZ re-enters. She is followed by ANDY, who continues to grin at her. MORTON turns to see LIZ and scowls in embarrassment. He hurriedly starts to exit, then suddenly stops and looks back at her.

MORTON

(With a slow smile) You know, I think I just grew a spine. *(Winks and exits with a swagger)*

ANDY

(Frowning after MORTON) Yeah, right.

LIZ turns and suddenly notices ANDY behind her.

LIZ

(Finally losing it) Will you stop leering at me! I'm a person, okay? You act like a dog slobbering over a slab of meat. I don't like it!

ANDY

(Genuinely puzzled) Why? I thought that's what you wanted.

LIZ

What? Why would I want that?

ANDY

Well, you pose for all those pictures in swimsuits and underwear.

LIZ

That's different; that's my job.

ANDY

Oh. So it's okay for guys to look at you without your clothes on, as long as you get paid for it?

LIZ

Don't be ridiculous. That would make me... *(Horrified; after a long pause)* Oh, my God.

(Beat) Oh, my God!

LIZ swiftly runs out of the room. ANDY stares after her with a look of bewilderment.

ANDY

(Shaking his head) Freaky.

ANDY returns to his game and exits.

BLACKOUT.

ACT II

Scene II

SETTING: *JOHN's bedroom in the Weston house.*

AT RISE: *JOHN lies deathly still in his bed, while P.J. sits next to him with a pained expression. KYLE and EMILY enter.*

EMILY

(Frowning at JOHN, struggling with her emotions) He looks so peaceful.

KYLE

Mom, he's not dead.

EMILY

I know. *(Beat)* It's just that he's rarely this quiet.

EMILY sobs and swiftly exits. P.J. looks up and scowls as KYLE approaches the bed.

P.J.

Come to gloat?

KYLE

What's that supposed to mean?

P.J.

Exactly what it sounds like.

KYLE

P.J., I already told you that you can't speak for this family.

P.J.

And I think I can.

KYLE

What?

P.J.

(Standing up) You heard me. After thirty years of serving your dad, taking his grief, cleaning up his messes – or, more accurately, your messes – I think I have every right to speak my mind.

KYLE

(Shrugging, with a scoff) So speak.

P.J.

You're a jerk.

KYLE

Oh, please, P.J., don't hold back.

P.J.

I was just getting started. You're a spoiled, selfish little idiot who thinks the world owes him everything just because he's a Weston.

KYLE

(After a beat) Maybe you could hold back just a little.

P.J.

You're a carbon copy of your dad.

KYLE

(Infuriated) How can you say that?

P.J.

Because it's true. Why do you think the two of you stay at odds? (*Banging fists together*) You're like the same end of a magnet; never able to connect. You're even in love with a woman who's exactly like your mother.

KYLE

Liz is nothing like Mo— (*Beat*) Okay, I'll give you that. (*Pointing at JOHN*) But I am nothing like him.

P.J.

Oh, no? He's stubborn, you're stubborn. He's selfish, you're selfish. He craves the world's admiration, you crave—

KYLE

You mean because I'm an actor?

P.J.

I mean because you're an arrogant jackass!

KYLE

(*Glaring*) If you hate him so much, why do you bother to work for him?

P.J.

(*Genuinely puzzled*) I never said I hated him. I've never admired anyone in the world as much as I do your dad.

KYLE

That's admiration? I'd hate to see your version of disdain.

P.J.

I can see past his faults, Kyle. Deep down, I know the man has a heart. I only wish I could say the same for you.

KYLE

Do you know what he did when I was a kid?

P.J.

No, the question is: do you know what he did when you were a kid? All those times he missed your baseball games or your school plays, guess who was there with a camcorder? I would tape the entire thing and take it back to him. And he watched them, Kyle. He would take time out of his schedule and watch every single minute. He even interrupted a meeting with a US senator to watch your debut in that stupid college production of Cabaret. Made us all watch it, too, including the senator.

KYLE

(*Wincing*) That was pretty bad, wasn't it?

P.J.

No kidding. But you know what your dad said when it was over? He smiled at the senator and said; 'My son was damned good, wasn't he?'

KYLE

(Genuinely surprised) Why didn't he ever say that to me, P.J.?

P.J.

Because it wasn't his way, Kyle. Some people can express their feelings, others can't. But don't think for a moment he didn't love you. *(Beat)* Or that he still doesn't.

P.J. exits. KYLE glares after him, then slowly turns back to JOHN.

KYLE

How do you do it, old man? You're a paradox, you know that? You make it impossible for people to care about you, but you make it just as impossible not to. Stupid genie and the chocolate bar.

KYLE sits down in P.J.'s chair and sighs wearily.

KYLE

You know, P.J.'s wrong; I'm not entirely like you. I never had your head for business. Oh, I threw my name around, just like you did, but I never really watched where it landed. *(Beat)* Or who picked it up.

KYLE struggles for words, obviously distraught.

KYLE

I owe some people a lot of money, dad. Bad people. People who may try to kill me if I don't pay them back. I guess I was hoping that I could run home – run home to you – and maybe be safe. I was hoping you'd just chew me out and then have P.J. write me a check, just like always. Never saw this coming, that's for sure.

He stares at JOHN for a moment, then shrugs.

KYLE

Doesn't matter. Liz was right. *(Beat; startled)* My God, did I just say that? *(Shaking his head)* It is my fault. I should have known better.

KYLE wipes at his face, finally beginning to lose his composure.

KYLE

I don't know what to do, dad. I'm scared as hell. I wish I could talk to you. I wish I could ask you how to get through this. I wish I could tell you I'm sorry. *(Beat; voice breaking)* I wish I could tell you I love you.

JOHN

(With eyes still closed) Shut up, you moron.

KYLE

(Jumping up, obviously terrified) Dad! You...you're awake? *(Beat)* You're alive..?

JOHN

(Opens his eyes, glaring at KYLE) I damn well better be. Otherwise I'm in hell. Do you have any idea how pathetic you sound?

KYLE

I don't understand. Five minutes ago you were knocking at death's door!

JOHN

Obviously no one was home. How much do you owe?

KYLE

What?

JOHN

(Exasperated) Do I have to kill you myself? The gangsters, you idiot! How much do you owe them?

This is Not the End of the Play
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes

** Author's Note -- Alternate Ending **

This play is a comedy, and is presented solely for entertainment purposes. While it does include a physically challenged character, there is no disrespect or insensitivity intended. For those who may feel uncomfortable in this regard, it is left to the discretion of the director to use this following alternate ending to be inserted at the bottom of page 62.

Alternative Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes

CONTINUE TO NEXT PAGE FOR PROPERTY, SET, AND MUSIC NOTES

SET NOTES

The stage for "Weston" is confined primarily to a living room set, with a single short bedroom scene. The set should convey a sense of wealth/opulence, but with an emphasis on eccentricity. Nothing should match – furnishings, artwork, etc. – it should all be a hodgepodge of styles, and the more outrageous the better. A set of French-style (i.e., see-through) doors should be placed in the middle of the upstage wall. A patio setting should be visible through the doors, ostensibly with some sort of swimming pool backdrop, or at the very least some sort of poolside furnishings – lounge chairs, umbrella table, etc. For the bedroom scene, a roll-around hospital-style bed can be placed in center stage, along with a folding hospital screen (as backdrop), a single chair, and with lighting adjusted so as to emphasize only this setting.

PROPS

CELL/SMART PHONES
HAND-HELD VIDEO GAME
SUNGLASSES
MOVIE SCRIPT
BOOM BOX
WHEELCHAIR
SUITCASES
JEWELRY
PURSES
LIPSTICK/MAKEUP

SPECIAL MUSIC

The script requires Country & Western music should be played during certain scenes. While the director is free to choose whatever songs he/she prefers, "old" or "classic" artists (Johnny Cash, George Jones, Hank Williams, and/or any related "honky-tonk" performer) are preferred. (As an example, Johnny Cash's "Ring of Fire" works extremely well for the scene in which John Weston first appears.) In addition, it is recommended that transition music should be added between scenes, preferably any popular tune(s) that make mention of wealth and/or money. Examples include "Money For Nothing" (Dire Straits), "Money, Money, Money" (ABBA), "Money" (Pink Floyd), etc. As always, care should be taken to observe any and all copyright laws/licensing.