

The Infinite Faces of Man

Written by

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Final Draft

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ACT ONE

NOTE: ALL CHARACTERS in the play are performed by the ONE ACTOR.

OUR SUBJECT is standing center stage.

JOHN

What a turn out. It's good to see you all here, but...just gathering here today isn't enough. It's only a start. We have to do more because, believe it or not, this is not just about you, or me. No, it's about something more, something greater. It's about us. It's about doing what is right for us, what is right for each other. See, what we're addressing here is that the only ones that are going to support us is us. No one else. And I could stand up here and judge those who are throwing us by the wayside. I could berate those who only consider us as a means for their own personal gain, but who will that help? Who will that serve? What I will do is highlight how we have to stand together. We have to stick together, and make our voices heard, because if we don't, then who will help us? Who will help us? Thank you.

A beat.

NICK

...Wow, that was powerful, bro.

JOHN

Really?

NICK

Yeah, you really hit me in the feels.

JOHN

You don't think I over did it?

MARIA

You performed it perfectly, love.

JOHN

No...

MARIA

I mean it.

DAVID

Yes, it was splendid.

JOHN

Marvelous?

DAVID
Yes, marvelous.

JOHN
Thanks guys.

MARIA
Of course, darling. We're always here for you.

HOWARD
...Um, excuse me.

MARIA
What Howard?

HOWARD
Does anyone care about my opinion?

MARIA
No.

NICK
No.

HOWARD
Why not?

MARIA
'Cause you'll hate on John. You'll hate on him with all your...

HOWARD
...Hate?

MARIA
Yes.

HOWARD
Now that's not fair. That's not fair at all.

NICK
But it kind of is, since, like, you like to piss on everything.

DAVID
Thanks for the image.

HOWARD
I do not. I'm just pragmatic.

DAVID
There is a difference between pragmatism and just plain meanness.

MARIA

That's right.

NICK

There is a saying that there is a difference between pragmatism and meanness.

HOWARD

You guys are so unfair. This is what you always do. I pick the side of reason, and then you gang up on me.

MARIA

We do not.

HOWARD

Yes, you do.

DAVID

We don't, Howard. We're being fair.

HOWARD

Hardly.

JOHN

Guys, guys, please. Let's...take it easy. We can do that, can't we?

DAVID

I suppose so.

MARIA

Yes, we can.

NICK

Maybe.

JOHN

Maybe?

NICK

Alright, we can.

JOHN

Anyway, I'd like to hear Howard's opinion.

HOWARD

You would?

JOHN

Yeah, of course, you three got to share your opinions, it's only fair that Howard gets to share his. And besides, if there is something wrong, something that is apparent to one
(MORE)

JOHN (cont'd)
of you guys, I'd rather hear it now so I can correct it,
instead of finding out this afternoon.

MARIA
Are you sure, honey?

JOHN
I'm sure. Really. I'm sure.

MARIA
Okay, then.

NICK
I don't know about this.

DAVID
It is close to the deadline.

JOHN
I'd rather know now.

DAVID
Okay. Okay, suit yourself.

JOHN
...So, Howard, what did you think?

HOWARD
What did I think?

JOHN
Yeah.

HOWARD
Honestly?

JOHN
Yes, honestly. Don't hold back. I can take the punches.

HOWARD
Really?

JOHN
Yes, really...? What did you think?

HOWARD
What did I think...? I...thought it was...terrible.

MARIA
Oh, my goodness.

HOWARD
Utter trash.

DAVID

Howard, c'mon, there's no need to be like that.

HOWARD

I'm giving my honest opinion.

JOHN

Okay. Okay.

MARIA

No, honey, there's no need to egg him on.

JOHN

No, no, it's okay. Howard, why was I so terrible?

HOWARD

You weren't...believable. You weren't natural. You looked as if you were pretending to be the character, instead of being the character.

DAVID

Okay, mister I know everything.

HOWARD

Sorry for being more sophisticated than you all are.

MARIA

Hey!

HOWARD

Don't get upset at me for speaking the truth.

DAVID

Claiming to be more sophisticated doesn't actually make you more sophisticated.

HOWARD

But I am more sophisticated. I'm not trying to be big-headed, or cocky. I'm just telling it like it is.

NICK

...There is definitely a saying--

HOWARD

Oh, shove it!

MARIA

Woah! Woah!

DAVID

Uncalled for.

NICK

That was really mean. Like, you hurt my feelings, bro.

HOWARD

I don't care.

JOHN

Guys, please. Please. This means a lot to me.

MARIA

Okay.

JOHN

Yeah?

DAVID

Fine.

NICK

Alright.

JOHN

Okay. So, Howard, you were saying...I have to be the character more, right?

HOWARD

Yeah, you can't just pretend to play a character, you must become the character.

JOHN

Right. But, um, how do I do that?

HOWARD

I don't know. I'm not an actor.

MARIA

Nice going, Howard.

HOWARD

What?

MARIA

You push him down, and then you don't help him to get back up, right before his audition. How is that supposed to help him? How-How do you think he's going to feel, you...you unkind man?

HOWARD

He should feel appreciative for getting an honest opinion. All you guys are doing is stroking his ego. Do you think that's going to help him?

JOHN
You're right.

MARIA
What?

HOWARD
Thank you.

JOHN
I'm not going to get anywhere with just positive feedback. I need valid criticisms if I'm going to know what I have to do to be ready for this audition.

HOWARD
Exactly. Thank you, John.

MARIA
But it's so late, hun.

JOHN
There's a bit of time. It's alright.

A beat.

DAVID
...John?

JOHN
Yes?

DAVID
The thing is though, how are you to know what is valid and what isn't?

JOHN
Well, if someone can explain why they don't like my performance, then their criticisms are valid, I guess.

DAVID
Yes, but, what if you were criticized by many people, and they all happened to give different, conflicting reasons for why they didn't like your performance? Is each one of their criticisms valid?

JOHN
I don't know, but I can't take that chance. What if Howard is the only one who is right, and I end up butchering the audition?

DAVID
Maybe, you should get another opinion. Sofi always seems to know what to say.

Oh, not Sofi.
HOWARD

What's wrong with Sofi?
MARIA

She's all so...happy.
HOWARD

And what's wrong with that?
DAVID

I can't take her seriously. She gets into an accident, and she's happy. She falls ill, and she's happy. She accumulates more and more debt, and she's happy. It's unreal how happy she is.
HOWARD

Bro, you're judging someone for being happy. That's like the ultimate judgment, bro.
NICK

I know, I know, but if any reasonable person heard her talk for even a minute, they'd think she's full of it.
HOWARD

What a horrid thing to say about someone.
DAVID

I'm not being horrid, or judgmental. I'm being practical.
HOWARD

Well, no one wants your practicality.
MARIA

John wants my practicality. He keeps asking for it, doesn't he?
HOWARD

Dude has us there.
NICK

Okay, so John wants to hear your opinion. You don't have to be mean when you share it though.
MARIA

Yeah.
NICK

You could share your opinion in a kind way, like, I don't know: "Your performance didn't quite...get to me as I would have liked." And then give him suggestions as to how you
MARIA
(MORE)

MARIA (cont'd)

think he could improve his performance. Don't just tell him he was terrible and then don't give him any suggestions as to what he could do, and leave him all discouraged, especially when his audition is this afternoon. How is that going to help?

HOWARD

But being direct and upfront could be the thing that spurs him on to greater things, that gives him that push to really go for it in his audition and nail it.

MARIA

It could demoralize him.

HOWARD

It might, or it might not.

NICK

It's up to him.

HOWARD

Exactly. Exactly my point.

NICK

...I don't agree with your methods, but I see what you're doing now.

HOWARD

Thank you. Finally. Thank you.

MARIA

...Well, I don't agree with you. I don't agree with you at all. And I think we should consider another opinion. Sofi!

HOWARD

Here we go.

MARIA

Sofi! Love! Are you there?

Sofi enters.

SOFI

...Hello, my children.

HOWARD

Goodness.

SOFI

Are we all feeling amazing today?

HOWARD

Nope.

MARIA
Don't mind him, love.

SOFI
Oh, what I don't mind never matters, and what doesn't matter
I never mind.

NICK
Huh?

MARIA
Wow, how insightful.

HOWARD
Please, shoot me now.

MARIA
Oh, I'd be happy to.

HOWARD
You wouldn't dare.

MARIA
Oh, I would.

HOWARD
No, you wouldn't.

MARIA
Yes, I would.

HOWARD
No, you wouldn't.

MARIA
Yes, I would.

HOWARD
No, you wouldn't!

MARIA
Yes, I would!

DAVID
Enough!

A beat.

DAVID
...Howard, Maria, let's...be civil.

HOWARD
Good luck.

DAVID

Howard!

HOWARD

Don't get angry at me. Do you see how hypocritical she's being? She tells me how mean I've been, and continues to call me all sorts of names, and then says she'd shoot me. Does no one else see this?

DAVID

She's just a little upset is all. She wouldn't actually shoot you.

MARIA

Hell, I wouldn't.

HOWARD

See. See.

DAVID

Okay. Okay. Let's...breathe. Let's just breathe. We'll bring Sofi in, and we'll breathe together.

HOWARD

I need Sofi to breathe now?

DAVID

Howard, let's quit talking, alright?

HOWARD

...Fine.

DAVID

...Sofi, sweetheart, would you come and join us and guide us through some breathing exercises?

SOFI

It would be my pleasure. Everyone, let's gather around. Take a moment to shake out your limbs. Get flexible. Alright, is everyone ready?

MARIA

I am.

DAVID

Yes.

SOFI

How about you, Howard?

HOWARD

Sure, I'm ready.

SOFI

Okay. Everyone, inhale. Eight...Seven...Six...Five...Four...
 Three...Two...One...Now, hold for eight. Eight...Seven...
 Six...Five...Four...Three...Two...One...And now, exhale for
 eight. Eight...Seven...Six...Five...Four...Three...Two...
 One...That's round one. Let's go again for two more rounds.

HOWARD

This is boring.

MARIA

Howard!

DAVID

You were going to give this a chance.

HOWARD

I didn't say I'd do anything. I'm only here to watch you
 cats make fools of yourselves.

MARIA

You're impossible.

DAVID

Just give this a chance, Howard.

HOWARD

No. You can't make me do this. Making me do something I
 don't want to do isn't going to make me enjoy it.

DAVID

No one is making you do anything. We're just asking that you
 give this a chance.

HOWARD

...I'm getting sleepy. I think I'm going to take a nap.

DAVID

C'mon, Howard.

MARIA

Fine, good riddance.

Howard leaves. A beat. Then Howard
 snores loudly.

MARIA

...He's so infuriating.

Howard continues to snore.

SOFI

...My child, he's only infuriating if you allow him to infuriate you.

MARIA

Do you want me to shut him up then?

SOFI

No, just let him be.

Howard continues to snore. A beat.
The snoring stops.

MARIA

...Thank goodness.

SOFI

Now, let's finish our breathing, shall we?

MARIA

Yes, lets.

DAVID

Okay.

SOFI

Now, inhale for eight. Eight...Seven...Six...Five...Four...
Three...Two...One...Hold for another eight. Eight...Seven...
Six...Five...Four...Three...Two...One...Now, exhale.
Eight...Seven...Six...Five...Four...Three...Two...One...One
more round to go. Inhale, eight...Seven...Six...Five...
Four...Three...Two...One...Hold, eight...Seven...Six...
Five...Four...Three...Two...One...And one last exhale,
eight...Seven...Six...Five...Four...Three...Two...One...Keep
hydrated. Look after your bodies. Look after yourselves. And
as always, it's wonderful to see all your lovely faces.
Thank you for this incredible practice.

MARIA

Thank you.

DAVID

Thank you.

SOFI

Now, how will you being paying? I accept all forms of
payment.

MARIA

Just, here you go.

Maria hands Sofi some money. Sofi
takes it.

SOFI

Thank you, Maria. David?

DAVID

Uh...You know...I'm starting to feel a little sleepy too.

SOFI

You don't have the money on you now. That's okay.

DAVID

Sorry, I'm usually a very punctual fellow.

SOFI

Yes, I know you are.

DAVID

I'm extremely sorry about this.

SOFI

It's okay. It's okay. You'll pay later.

DAVID

...Thank you.

SOFI

You're welcome.

DAVID

...I'll be off now. Get some much needed rest.

SOFI

Of course.

DAVID

Goodbye, Maria.

MARIA

David, did you want me to spot you?

DAVID

No, no. A man should pay for his own purchases.

MARIA

Are you sure?

DAVID

Very sure. Extremely sure.

MARIA

Okay then.

DAVID

Goodbye, Maria.

MARIA

Bye.

David leaves.

MARIA

...That was wonderful, Sofi.

SOFI

It was nothing. Happy to be of service.

NICK

Do I have to pay? I didn't really do it. Like, I was just breathing like I normally do, without counting.

SOFI

I'll give you a free session this time, Nick, my dear, as a treat. But next session, please come prepared. It is not fair that I should give away my gift free of charge.

NICK

Okay. Ah, yes. I'll make sure I have...all the things.

SOFI

Great.

NICK

...Uh, I'm going to go too.

SOFI

Okay.

NICK

Bye.

MARIA

Bye, Nick.

Nick leaves.

MARIA

...Oh, I'm so happy that you're here.

SOFI

I'm happy that you're here as well.

MARIA

...Oh, would you do us a kind favor?

SOFI

What would you like me to do?

MARIA

Would you tell John how amazing of an actor he is and that he's going to be incredible in his audition?

SOFI

It would be my pleasure.

MARIA

Oh, wonderful. John! John!

JOHN

Yes?

MARIA

John, guess who's here?

JOHN

Sofi?

MARIA

It's Sofi.

JOHN

I can see her.

MARIA

Say "Hi" to Sofi, will you?

JOHN

Hi Sofi.

SOFI

Hi John.

MARIA

Sofi would love to see you perform your piece.

JOHN

Really?

SOFI

Of course I would.

JOHN

I don't know if I'm in the right state of mind to deliver it.

MARIA

Has that scrooge got into your head?

JOHN

No.

MARIA

Oh, he really gets on my nerves that...that...badger.

SOFI

It's okay. Remember, the only reason he gets to you is because you let him.

MARIA

Right. You're right. You're always right.

SOFI

John, I would love to see your piece.

JOHN

...Okay. Okay, I'll do it.

SOFI

Wonderful.

JOHN

...Here it goes: "What a turn out. It's good to see you all here, but...just gathering here today isn't enough. It's only a start. We have to do more because, believe it or not, this is not just about you, or me. No, it's about something more, something greater. It's about us. It's about doing what is right for us, what is right for each other. See, what we're addressing here is that the only ones that are going to support us is us. No one else. And I could stand up here and judge those who are throwing us by the wayside. I could berate those who only consider us as a means for their own personal gain, but who will that help? Who will that serve? What I will do is highlight how we have to stand together. We have to stick together, and make our voices heard, because if we don't, then who will help us? Who will help us? Thank you."

A beat.

MARIA

...Wooooo! Yay, John!

JOHN

Thanks.

SOFI

That was -- That was very moving. I loved it. Thank you for sharing.

JOHN

But you love everything.

SOFI

That's because everything is so easy to love.

JOHN

Some might not see it that way.

SOFI

Then they don't see it that way.

JOHN

How can I validate your opinion if you love everything?

SOFI

Maybe, you don't have to.

JOHN

What do you mean?

SOFI

...You beautiful soul. Look at you, trying to explain everything, when you can't. When you try to rationalize, decipher things, you can go on dissecting and dissecting and dissecting indefinitely, never reaching a conclusion, or until you get tired of yourself. Just...do. What will happen will happen. What will be will be.

MARIA

...Wow...You are so amazing, Sofi. I want to learn more from you. Oh please, will you teach me more?

SOFI

I'd be more than happy to. But you will have to pay me.

MARIA

Of course. Of course. Where shall we go?

SOFI

Somewhere discrete. Where there is no one else around.

MARIA

'Right.

SOFI

Sorry John, but what I have to teach Maria is exclusive.

JOHN

No, it's okay. I still don't get what you're saying though.

SOFI

Do your homework then.

JOHN

Can't you just tell me?

SOFI

I'll see you later John.

Bye John.

MARIA

Bye.

JOHN

Sofi and Maria leave. Max enters.

MAX

...Ah, John.

JOHN

Hi Max.

MAX

How are you, my friend?

JOHN

I'm okay.

MAX

Okay? Just okay?

JOHN

Yeah.

MAX

You don't look just okay. What's the matter, John?

JOHN

I'm just a little concerned.

MAX

Concerned? About what?

JOHN

About my audition.

MAX

Yeah?

JOHN

I don't know if I'm ready.

MAX

Oh, I'm sure you'll do just fine.

JOHN

I hope so, but I don't know.

MAX

Would you like to practice?

JOHN

I don't know if that'll help right now. It might be better to give myself some space, some clarity, you know?

MAX

Yes, 'right, good idea.

A beat.

MAX

...May I ask, John, why is this audition stressing you out?

JOHN

Because it's a great opportunity. And I really want to do well.

MAX

But there will be other opportunities in the future. Why is this one audition stressing you out?

JOHN

I don't know. I guess, because this is my dream. This is what I want to be doing with my life. Can you understand that? What it's like to dream? To dream big? And to work so hard for it?

MAX

I can understand. But you don't need to worry about such things. Just act. The joy should be in the act, not in the achievement.

JOHN

I guess.

MAX

There's something more to this, isn't there?

JOHN

I don't know.

MAX

Sure, you do. Everyone knows what their weaknesses are, it just a matter of if they have the courage to admit it to themselves or not.

A beat.

MAX

...Is this about something else?

JOHN

...Yes.

MAX

What is your weakness?

JOHN

...I'm scared.

MAX

Scared? Scared of what? What do you have to be scared of?

JOHN

Scared of what might happen if I don't get picked.

MAX

Why does that scare you?

JOHN

Because...Because who am I if I can't perform? What's my purpose in life if I can't act? I'd be useless, just another dead soul.

MAX

So what if you don't get this role. Big deal. Is that the end of the world?

JOHN

It might as well be.

MAX

Nonsense. Sure, you'll be upset, crying yourself to sleep for a while. But then you'll pick yourself up, and move on.

JOHN

I suppose.

MAX

Besides, not getting this role doesn't mean the end of acting. You can always go and audition for other roles.

JOHN

But I won't be playing this role.

MAX

What's so special about this role?

JOHN

It's a big opportunity. It really is. If I get the role, I'll be working with the best. It'll mean I'll be in with the stars, traveling together, working together, getting to know each other, which can lead to greater opportunities, greater things. I'll be going straight to the top. It'll be my big break.

MAX
Wow, it is a big role.

JOHN
Yeah.

MAX
But what will you be going straight to the top of?

JOHN
Everything.

MAX
Everything?

JOHN
Yeah.

MAX
That's a lot of things.

JOHN
It sure is.

MAX
And you would like that?

JOHN
Yeah, of course I would. It's my dream.

MAX
But how can you know what it's really like unless you're there?

JOHN
I...I can't know.

MAX
How do you know you want that dream then?

JOHN
I don't know, I just do. It's what I dream about. It's what I think about all the time. It's just what I want. Do you understand?

MAX
Yes, I understand perfectly well. But why can't you just enjoy acting?

JOHN
Because it's not the same. It's not the same as being out there, on the big stage, in front of all those people.

MAX
John, the world is the biggest stage there is.

A beat.

MAX
...You can just go out there and perform for the world. You can play any role you want, be whoever you want to be. No one is stopping you but yourself.

JOHN
...Thanks, Max.

MAX
No worries.

JOHN
...I'm going to go, give myself some space.

MAX
You're not just trying to get away from me, are you?

JOHN
No, I wouldn't to that.

MAX
Just making sure.

JOHN
...Goodbye, Max.

MAX
Goodbye, John.

John leaves. Amelia enters.

AMELIA
...Hi, Max.

MAX
Oh, Amelia. Fancy seeing you here.

AMELIA
You as well, Max. How are we?

MAX
You know, good, as always.

AMELIA
Everyone's good, but that doesn't describe how one feels. I want to know how you're feeling.

MAX

You're the only one.

AMELIA

Yes, well, someone has to set the example.

MAX

'Right.

AMELIA

So how are you feeling? Really?

MAX

I just had a conversation with John.

AMELIA

Ah, John. How is the little champion?

MAX

He's worried.

AMELIA

What about?

MAX

He has this audition this afternoon, and he's stressing out about it.

AMELIA

Is he not losing sleep over what happened anymore?

MAX

It doesn't seem like it.

AMELIA

That's good to hear. Was it really that bad, what happened to him?

MAX

I won't say, for his sake. I promised him I wouldn't tell anyone what happened.

AMELIA

But you're okay with telling people that something did happen?

MAX

You seemed to know that something had happened to him.

AMELIA

I did. I don't know how I knew. Just did.

MAX
Intuition.

AMELIA
Intuition.

MAX
What's your intuition telling you now?

AMELIA
That you're kind.

MAX
Not wrong there.

AMELIA
Especially to John.

MAX
Of course.

AMELIA
You must care about him a lot.

MAX
I do. I do. Do you have someone you care about as much, Amelia?

AMELIA
No. No, I don't.

MAX
Maybe, it doesn't have to be that way.

AMELIA
No, it doesn't have to be.

MAX
Maybe, you could find someone.

AMELIA
I could.

MAX
Or maybe, he's close by.

AMELIA
...Maybe. I...I don't know with these things.

MAX
What's there to know? You don't need to know anything to care. You just care.

AMELIA
Easy to say, hard to do.

MAX
Only if you think that.

Maria and Sofi enter.

MARIA
...So, when I am sitting, all I have to do is let my mind wander?

SOFI
Yes, don't try to interfere with your wandering mind and investigate the place where those wandering thoughts have come from.

MARIA
Oh, 'right, I see. Gotcha.

SOFI
Great.

MARIA
...Oh, Max, Amelia, didn't see you two there.

MAX
Hi guys.

AMELIA
Hi.

MARIA
How are you two?

MAX
Good.

AMELIA
Yeah, good.

MARIA
Is this a bad time?

AMELIA
Uh, no.

MAX
Kind of.

MARIA
Oh, we're sorry, we'll get out of your way.

AMELIA

No, you don't have to. I was going to go anyway.

MARIA

Oh, no, don't go. Don't leave because of us.

MAX

Yes, please, stay.

AMELIA

No, it's okay. I ought to go. Goodbye.

MAX

Wait, Amelia. Don't go.

AMELIA

No, I should. I'll see you around, Max.

MAX

Remember what I said, yeah?

AMELIA

Yeah, I will. Bye.

MAX

Bye.

Amelia leaves.

SOFI

...Do you think she overheard what we were talking about?

MARIA

About what?

SOFI

About what I was telling you to do when you're sitting.

MARIA

I don't know.

SOFI

Max, did you overhear us?

MAX

Sorry?

SOFI

Did you hear us talking as we walked in?

MAX

I heard you talking.

SOFI

Did you hear what we were talking about?

MAX

No.

MARIA

I'm sure she didn't hear what we were talking about.

SOFI

Yeah, I'm sure you're right. But one can never be too careful.

MAX

What? One can always be too careful.

SOFI

Well, yes, but...you know what I mean? Anyway, it's fine. I can let it go.

A beat.

MARIA

...How's it going with you and Amelia?

MAX

Ah, you know, I'm trying, but it's not happening.

MARIA

I'm sorry. Hang in there. I'm sure she'll come around.

MAX

Thanks, Maria.

MARIA

You two would make a great couple.

David enters.

DAVID

...Hello.

MARIA

Hello princess. Have a nice nap?

DAVID

Yeah, I-I sure did.

SOFI

Do you have my money now?

DAVID

Not even a "Hello."

David hands Sofi some money. Sofi takes it.

SOFI

...Thank you.

MAX

I think I'm going to head off.

DAVID

Oh, why leave? I've only just arrived.

MARIA

It's because Amelia isn't here anymore.

DAVID

Oh, I see.

MAX

That's not it. I have other things to do.

MARIA

Like what?

MAX

I can't say.

DAVID

Oh, a secret. I like secrets.

MARIA

What are you doing that you have to keep away from us, love?

MAX

I cannot say.

MARIA

Fine, love. Be good, yeah?

MAX

Always.

DAVID

Bye.

MAX

Bye.

Max leaves.

DAVID

...So, what are we up to now?

MARIA

I don't know. Maybe, we should sit. Sofi, would you walk us through sitting?

SOFI

It would be my pleasure.

DAVID

Oh, uh, I think I'll sit out of this one.

MARIA

You will be joining us?

DAVID

No, I mean I won't participate.

MARIA

Are you sure?

DAVID

Yes, very sure.

MARIA

Oh, okay.

SOFI

Would you mind leaving us then? Your presence will interfere with our practice if you're just standing around.

DAVID

Um...

MARIA

No, David can stay. I won't mind.

SOFI

But I mind. If there's anything around that might obstruct you from your practice then you'll never get the most out of it.

MARIA

'Right, but wouldn't he only bother you if you let him bother you?

SOFI

I'm just looking for what is best for us.

DAVID

No, Maria, it's okay.

MARIA

Are you sure? You just got here.

DAVID

No, I'm fine. I know when I'm not wanted.

MARIA

Don't say that. We'd love to have you around. It's just to get the most out of our practice we need some quiet.

DAVID

And I can't be quiet? While you two just sit?

SOFI

But I'll be instructing Maria through the practice.

DAVID

You'll be telling her how to sit as she sits?

SOFI

No, there's more to it than that. I thought of all people you'd understand.

DAVID

How am I supposed to understand when I'm getting charged for doing involuntary actions?

A beat.

MARIA

...You know what, we don't have to practice sitting.

DAVID

No, I'll leave. You two enjoy yourselves.

MARIA

No, David. David!

David leaves.

MARIA

...I feel so bad.

SOFI

Don't. You can't please everyone.

MARIA

But I can make the effort to.

SOFI

You'll fail.

MARIA

Then I'll fail.

SOFI

Trying to please everyone will only end with you wrestling with yourself. You have to follow what feels good to you.

MARIA

But what if pleasing others is what feels good to me?

SOFI

You will still be fighting with yourself, only you will be okay with the conflict inside. But at times, you'll be okay with it, and at other times, you'll hate yourself. It's not a pleasant way to live.

MARIA

So, what should I do then? Should I tell any person I don't like to beat it?

SOFI

You could do that, but just because you feel one way doesn't mean you have to act out how you feel. Just because you hate someone doesn't mean you have to hurt them. The feeling isn't wrong. Your actions might be wrong. It is wrong to harm someone, for instance. But the feeling isn't wrong. The feeling is never wrong.

MARIA

So, what should I do when I meet someone I don't like?

SOFI

Do what you feel like. Smile. Hug them. Walk away. It doesn't matter, so long as you don't do anything immoral.

MARIA

I see.

SOFI

Just don't let others' thoughts of you run your life.

MARIA

Okay.

SOFI

...Shall we have a session then?

MARIA

Sure.

SOFI

Okay, let's take a seat.

Maria and Sofi sit down.

SOFI

...Just take a moment to take in what's around you. Take it all in. What thoughts are coming to your mind's eye?

MARIA

There's a field. A clear blue sky. A slight breeze.

SOFI

Are you in the vision?

MARIA

I'm drifting through the air.

SOFI

What else is there?

MARIA

There's--

Howard enters.

HOWARD

...Guess who's back?!

MARIA

There's how much I hate Howard.

HOWARD

How are we children?

MARIA

We're in the middle of a session, Howard. Do you mind?

HOWARD

Oh. Sorry. Did I interrupt you? Oh, I'm so sorry. Please. Please. Continue. Don't let me get in your way.

MARIA

Too late for that, Howard.

HOWARD

Oh, is it? Oh, I'm so terribly sorry.

MARIA

Howard, what's your problem? Do you just love being a pain in the bum, or what?

HOWARD

What's my problem? I'll tell you what my problem is. My problem is her.

MARIA

What? Sofi?

SOFI

Me? What did I do?

HOWARD

I heard what happened with David.

MARIA

Did he tell you?

HOWARD

I don't have to say.

MARIA

So, he did, did he?

HOWARD

...You charged him for breathing?

SOFI

I charged him for my services.

HOWARD

For your scam?

SOFI

What I do is not a scam. It's a legitimate service.

HOWARD

How is it legitimate? You just went ahead, not telling him you were going to charge him, not giving any indication that he had to pay you, and then you charged him afterwards. That sounds like a scam if I ever heard one.

SOFI

He should have known that I was going to charge him. Would you perform a service and then not expect payment?

HOWARD

Your service is breathing.

SOFI

It's not just breathing. It's a way to help my clients relax.

HOWARD

Yeah, through breathing, which everyone does.

SOFI

But not in the way that I guide them through it, which is why what I do is a service.

HOWARD

It's still breathing though. Right down at the core of it, it is still inhaling and exhaling air. And that doesn't take away from the fact that David didn't expect to be charged, and felt forced to have to cough up some dough for "a service" he didn't expect to be charged for.

SOFI

That's his fault.

HOWARD

Really? That's how you treat your quote-unquote clients? You blame them for being misled.

SOFI

No, I blame David for having the wrong expectations.

HOWARD

The wrong expectations. Who expects to be charged for breathing?

SOFI

He should have. I am a guide, a teacher. I provide these practices as a service. Why wouldn't he expect me to charge him?

HOWARD

Because no one expects to be charged for breathing. Can you not see that? Can you not get that through your thick skull?

SOFI

That's his mistake. He should have expected me to charge him for my time--

HOWARD

Your precious time?

SOFI

And my guidance.

HOWARD

Far out, you're a piece of work.

SOFI

...And, anyway, really, no one should expect anything.

HOWARD

What? No one should expected anything?

SOFI

Yep.

HOWARD

Ever?

SOFI

Expectations don't help us in any way, yet they can lead us to disappointment. What good is that?

HOWARD

Are you kidding me? You can't expect no one to have expectations. Saying that no one should expect anything is like saying that no one should have a brain. It's just... unreasonable.

SOFI

Maybe, you shouldn't be reasonable.

HOWARD

Did I just hear that? Did anyone else just hear that?

SOFI

Being reasonable is impractical.

HOWARD

What are you on?

SOFI

All reason does is keep you locked in to the same way of thinking. In other words, reason imprisons you. Are you telling me that is practical? You have to feel your way through. You can't keep yourself boxed in. Feeling is the way.

HOWARD

My goodness, that is the dumbest thing I've ever heard. Reason is what prevents us from being stupid. Is being an idiot practical?

SOFI

Being unreasonable doesn't make you an idiot.

HOWARD

That's exactly what it means.

SOFI

No, it's not.

HOWARD

Yes, it is. You're an idiot for even thinking that. In fact, this is just proof that you are an idiot.

SOFI

You can call me an idiot all you want.

HOWARD
Good, I will. You're an idiot.

SOFI
But that doesn't mean I'm wrong.

HOWARD
Only that you are wrong.

SOFI
But I'm not.

HOWARD
But you are.

SOFI
David shouldn't have expected me to give away my services for free.

HOWARD
...This is the dumbest argument I've ever had. You make no sense. Do you know that? You make no sense.

SOFI
Maybe, you shouldn't try to make sense of everything.

HOWARD
I'm not going to start arguing again.

SOFI
Why? Because you're wrong?

HOWARD
No, because it's exhausting talking to an idiot.

SOFI
It seems like you're not willing to have a discussion anymore because you've come to realize that you are wrong, but you're also not willing to admit it.

HOWARD
You are really something. You know what I think?

SOFI
Other than I'm an idiot?

HOWARD
Other than that?

SOFI
No idea.

HOWARD

I think you tell people to not be reasonable and to use their feelings and emotions because there's no way for them to tell if they're feeling in the right or wrong way and you can get away with manipulating them into buying your crap.

SOFI

I'm sorry you think that way.

HOWARD

No, you're not.

SOFI

No, I am. See, your way of thinking just highlights what I've been saying, that you are locked into a way of thinking that you think is right, reasonable, rational, but has also entrapped you, because you simultaneously think it can't be proven wrong, even though what you think can be refuted.

HOWARD

And what you just said highlights what I just said, that you manipulate people into not being reasonable, to use their feelings, so they will buy into your scam.

SOFI

And just like that, we are at a stalemate.

HOWARD

I guess, we are.

SOFI

Very much like how reason entraps you.

HOWARD

You won't let it go, will you?

SOFI

No, I won't.

HOWARD

Because if you don't, then you will be out of work.

SOFI

No, because if I don't, then you might stay imprisoned in your mind for the rest of your life.

HOWARD

You're arguing for me, are you?

SOFI

I am.

HOWARD

Is that what you tell yourself, that you lie to other people for their own good? Is that how you come to terms with your deceitfulness?

SOFI

I'm not a liar. I am not deceitful. I never have been.

HOWARD

Is that so?

SOFI

Yes.

HOWARD

Then you didn't intend to not tell David before your session that you were going to charge him?

A beat.

HOWARD

...Or did you intend to not tell him and then, after your session, guilt trip him into paying up?

SOFI

He should have known that I was going to charge him.

HOWARD

And you're going to stick with that?

A beat.

HOWARD

...I see how it is.

SOFI

You see nothing.

HOWARD

No, it's written on your face.

Nick enters.

NICK

...Hey.

HOWARD

Hey, Nick.

NICK

I heard what sounded like an argument. Is everything okay?

HOWARD
Everything is just perfect.

NICK
Doesn't sound like it.

MARIA
Sofi and Howard have been fighting.

NICK
What's wrong with you two?

HOWARD
We're trying to establish the authenticity of Sofi's so-called services.

NICK
After what happened with David?

MARIA
Did David tell you what happened?

NICK
What do you mean? I was there. I saw Sofi charging him. Remember?

MARIA
I remember you being there.

HOWARD
Then why did you just ask if David told Nick what happened?

MARIA
...Uh...

HOWARD
Did something else happen?

A beat.

HOWARD
...What happened?

SOFI
You can tell them Maria. I don't care what they think of me.

MARIA
No.

HOWARD
Yes. Tell us what happened.

MARIA
...I can't say.

SOFI
No, you can say it.

HOWARD
Just, one of you, tell us what happened.

MARIA
...We were all together, David, Sofi and I, and I recommended that Sofi take us through another session, but David didn't want to do it--

HOWARD
Because he didn't want to get ripped off again.

MARIA
...So Sofi asked David if he would leave us in peace, but David wasn't happy with that.

NICK
Why was David unhappy with that?

MARIA
I guess, because he thought it was a little silly that he should have to leave.

HOWARD
Yeah, it is.

MARIA
Sofi asked politely.

NICK
But he still didn't take it well?

HOWARD
Why is that?

SOFI
Don't know.

HOWARD
Really?

SOFI
No idea.

HOWARD
What was the session on?

I cannot tell you. SOFI

Why is that? HOWARD

Classified information. SOFI

How do you advertise your scam if your sessions are classified? HOWARD

The session was for priority members only. Initiates come into my beginner classes and I tell them about my priority classes, and I leave it up to them as to whether or not they would like to take the leap. SOFI

Priority classes? Initiates? Sounds incredibly pretentious. HOWARD

Yeah, that does sound a little fishy. NICK

Hey, who's side are you on? MARIA

I'm on no one's side. I don't pick sides. NICK

It seems like you are picking a side here. MARIA

You can't not pick a side, my sweet. When you don't pick a side you are essentially picking the side of not picking sides. SOFI

Well, like, that sounds like you are propagating conflict, which I am not for. NICK

She's just highlighting how you can't not pick a side, hun. MARIA

Can someone tell me what the class was on? HOWARD

So, are you on Howard's side now? MARIA

NICK

I'm not on anyone's side.

HOWARD

What was the class on?

SOFI

It seems like you're favoring Howard now?

MARIA

You betraying us?

NICK

I'm not betraying anyone.

MARIA

It seems like you are.

HOWARD

Stop talking about who's on who's side and just tell me what the class was on!

MARIA

Jeez, cool your pants boyo.

SOFI

You're carrying a lot of negative energy, Howard.

HOWARD

Yeah, I'll show you negative energy if you don't tell me what the class was on.

SOFI

I recommend that you take a deep breath.

HOWARD

Will you charge me for it?

SOFI

No, if it means we can annihilate the negative energy that is flowing here, then I won't charge you.

HOWARD

So only if someone is pissed off will you give them a free class?

MARIA

Howard, please.

HOWARD

Just tell me what the class was on. Tell me right now.

MARIA
We can't.

HOWARD
Tell me right now!

MARIA
It was on sitting.

HOWARD
...What?

MARIA
It was on sitting, and reflecting on what thoughts come to mind.

HOWARD
You've got to be joking. You kicked him out because you didn't want him around you while you sat?

SOFI
Sat in reflection.

MARIA
Having anyone else around us, no matter who it was, while we were sitting would have disturbed our reflection.

HOWARD
So it wasn't personal?

MARIA
No, of course not.

SOFI
David would not have taken it personally.

HOWARD
He might have considering the previous time you saw him you charged him for breathing.

SOFI
David wouldn't do that. He's not self-centered.

HOWARD
We can only find out now. I'm going to go look for him.

SOFI
I didn't intend to hurt him. Understand that.

HOWARD
Tell that to David.

Howard leaves.

MARIA
...Oh, I feel so bad.

SOFI
How could you just tell him?

MARIA
What?

SOFI
How could you just tell Howard what we do in our priority classes?

MARIA
Are you mad at me?

SOFI
Those are exclusive classes for a reason.

MARIA
He was clearly upset.

NICK
Maria wasn't, like, trying to disclose your teaching methods. She was just trying to help Howard out.

SOFI
Picking sides again.

NICK
I'm not picking sides, bro. I'm, like, trying to keep the peace here.

SOFI
...How can I trust you if you're willing to just open up about my classes like that?

MARIA
I'm sorry you're upset.

SOFI
I'm not asking for an apology.

MARIA
What are you asking then?

SOFI
I'm telling you that I can't teach you anymore.

MARIA
What? Just for helping Howard?

SOFI

Now he knows. And he can tell other people. The information can spread.

MARIA

He barely knows anything. He has no clue how you teach, what we do in a class. He knows none of that.

SOFI

But you still opened up. And if you did it once, you might do it again. And I can't have that.

MARIA

...Why is it such a big deal that no one knows what happens in your exclusive classes? Are you afraid others might think of you as a scammer? As Howard thinks of you?

SOFI

No, don't be silly.

MARIA

Then...are you afraid that others might steal your methods?

A beat.

MARIA

...My...you are, aren't you? You're afraid? You're afraid others might steal your methods and earn money with your teachings? You're paranoid?

SOFI

This field isn't exactly the most lucrative field there is. I can't have competition if I am to continue doing what I do best.

A beat.

SOFI

...I am afraid.

MARIA

Love, no one will steal your teachings.

SOFI

You don't know that. People can be greedy.

MARIA

They can, but no one would do that. I promise.

NICK

Yeah, no one would, like, take your thing. You said, you don't earn much. Why would someone, like, steal something that didn't earn them much? That's, like, ridiculous.

MARIA

Besides, no one can steal your way of teaching. It's your way of teaching. It's you. No one can take that.

SOFI

Thanks, my darlings.

MARIA

Of course, love. Happy to help.

SOFI

...It's funny how easy it is to help others, but how difficult it is to help ourselves.

MARIA

It is funny that.

Amelia and Fran enter.

MARIA

...Hello, Amelia.

AMELIA

Hey, Maria. Sofi. Nick.

MARIA

Who is this?

AMELIA

This is Fran.

FRAN

Hi.

MARIA

Nice to meet you, Fran. How do you two know each other?

AMELIA

We're...

FRAN

...We're going out.

MARIA

Going out?

AMELIA

Yeah, basically.

MARIA

You two are an item?

Well...uh...

AMELIA

FRAN
...It's our first date. She only just asked me out. About time if you ask me.

MARIA
Oh, boy.

Max and Kevin enter.

MAX
Hiya, everyone.

MARIA
Oh, boy.

NICK
Who is this?

MAX
This is Kevin.

KEVIN
Hello.

NICK
What are you two up to?

MAX
We're doing things.

NICK
Things?

MAX
Important things.

NICK
Super-secret-important-things?

MAX
That's right.

AMELIA
Hi, Max.

MAX
Hi, Amelia. How are you? Again?

AMELIA
Happy. Feeling really happy. And you? How are you? Again?

MAX
Happy. Happy to see you.

AMELIA
Is that right?

MAX
It is. Who is this with you?

AMELIA
This is Fran.

MAX
Hiya, Fran.

FRAN
Hi.

MAX
Say, Amelia, what are you doing later?

AMELIA
Fran and I are going to hang out.

MAX
'Right, cool, cool. Doing what?

MARIA
Girl things. They'll be doing girl things.

MAX
What kind of girl things?

AMELIA
I don't know. We haven't decided yet.

MAX
Can I join you?

MARIA
No. No. It wouldn't be a girl's thing if there were boys around.

MAX
I know, but could you make an exception?

MARIA
No, they can't.

AMELIA
Not this time. Sorry.

MAX

No biggies. We'll just have to hang out next time.

AMELIA

Yes, of course.

MAX

Wonderful. Wonderful.

AMELIA

...Well, 'til next time.

MAX

See you later. Not meaning later, when you two are together doing girl things. I mean later-later, later than that.

AMELIA

Got it. Bye, everyone.

MARIA

Bye.

NICK

Bye.

AMELIA

Bye, Max.

MAX

Bye.

Amelia and Fran start walking away,
but Amelia stops Fran and they turn
back around.

AMELIA

...Oh, and Max.

MAX

Yeah?

AMELIA

Thanks for the words of encouragement.

MAX

What words of encouragement?

AMELIA

The words of encouragement you gave me earlier? You remember?

MAX

What do you mean?

AMELIA

What you told me earlier? That, maybe, there can be someone for me to care about? Don't you remember?

MARIA

Oh, that's enough. You two be best on your way.

MAX

I remember, but what are you talking about?

MARIA

C'mon, shoo. Shoo.

AMELIA

I have my someone.

MARIA

Oh, jeez.

MAX

You've come around?

AMELIA

Yeah, I finally asked her out.

MARIA

Oh, no.

MAX

Her?

AMELIA

Yeah. Fran. Who else would I be talking about?

MAX

Uh...I don't know.

AMELIA

Thanks for the encouragement. I really appreciate it.

MAX

No...No worries. Great. I'm happy for you.

AMELIA

See ya, Max.

MAX

Bye.

Amelia and Fran leave.

NICK

...That was, like, brutal, bro.

Oh, Max, are you okay? MARIA

Yeah, I'm okay. MAX

Are you sure? MARIA

No, not really. MAX

I'm sorry. MARIA

You two would make a great couple. Remember that? MAX

I didn't know she liked women. MARIA

I didn't know that either. MAX

I'm sorry. MARIA

Did you like her, Max? KEVIN

No kidding, bro. NICK

Who are you again? MARIA

I'm Kevin. KEVIN

How do you know Max? MARIA

We're working together. KEVIN

On super-secret-important-things. NICK

What are you doing that you have to keep secret from us? MARIA

None of your business. MAX

MARIA

Hey, that's not nice.

MAX

Much like someone telling you that you and the woman you're interested in would make a great couple, and getting your hopes up, only to find out that the woman you're interested in is interested in women.

MARIA

I'm sorry, alright.

KEVIN

We don't want to divulge anything.

NICK

Why is that, bro?

KEVIN

'Cause it doesn't concern you.

NICK

Who does it concern?

KEVIN

Can't say.

NICK

Nothing is getting past him.

MARIA

Max, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I don't know how many times I have to say it. Please forgive me.

John enters.

NICK

...Hey, bro.

JOHN

Hey.

MAX

What's wrong, John? Why the long face?

JOHN

My audition.

MARIA

It didn't go so well?

JOHN

No.

MAX
What happened?

JOHN
They just...didn't like my performance.

MARIA
Did they tell you why?

JOHN
No, they just said "Thank you" and I was shuffled away.

MARIA
That could mean anything. Maybe, they just had to get through a lot of auditions and didn't have the time to give you feedback.

JOHN
No, "Thank you" is the universal phrase for rejection.

MAX
I'm sorry to hear that.

JOHN
...Who is this?

KEVIN
I'm Kevin.

JOHN
Hi Kevin. I'm John.

KEVIN
Oh.

JOHN
Oh?

KEVIN
...Sorry to hear about your audition. Tough break. Tough break.

JOHN
How do you know my friends?

KEVIN
I know Max.

MAX
Yeah, we know each other.

JOHN
How?

MAX
Kevin is helping me with something.

JOHN
With what?

NICK
Super-secret-important-things.

MAX
Yes.

JOHN
What's so secretive that you have to keep from us?

MAX
No, it's just that we're keeping it away from them.

JOHN
But not me?

MAX
Yes.

JOHN
What's so secretive that you have to tell me, but have to keep away from them?

KEVIN
Mex, I don't think this is the best place to tell him. There are friends around.

MAX
He suspects something though.

KEVIN
Even so, we should tell him elsewhere.

JOHN
What do you have to tell me elsewhere? Just tell me now.

KEVIN
It wouldn't be best to tell you in front of your friends.

JOHN
They can know. They're my friends.

KEVIN
Trust me, it's not the best way to tell you this.

JOHN
I don't even know you. How can you expect me to trust you?

KEVIN

Just trust me on this one.

JOHN

Max, tell me what is going on.

MAX

I...

JOHN

...Please, just tell me. I'm having a hard day as it is. Please, tell me what you have to tell me.

MAX

...We found him.

JOHN

Found who?

MAX

You know who.

A beat.

MAX

...Kevin and I have been working together to track him down, you know who.

MARIA

Wait, who are you talking about? Track who down?

JOHN

I told you that in confidence.

MAX

And I couldn't let him get away with it. I-I just couldn't.

MARIA

Who got away with what? Who are you talking about? Tell me!

JOHN

It's nobody.

MARIA

No, clearly it is somebody. Somebody significant. You wouldn't conceal his identity from us if he was nobody.

NICK

Bro, please, just, like, tell us who he is.

JOHN

No. No. I had put that all away. I had moved on. Now, you're bringing it back. You're not my friend.

MAX

John, please.

Howard and David enter.

HOWARD

...Hello, my sweets, look who I've got with me.

MARIA

Howard, not now. This is not the time.

HOWARD

It's never the time.

MARIA

But this is seriously not the time.

DAVID

Too bad, because I have something to say. Sofi, I feel that you cheated me.

SOFI

David, my lovely, I'm so sorry that you feel that way.

DAVID

I'm not finished. I feel that you cheated me because you're a hypocrite.

HOWARD

Yeah, buddy!

DAVID

You always tell your clients to be kind, to love others, to be compassionate, but you don't live up to those standards. You put yourself before others, and I find that to be very dishonest.

SOFI

I'm sorry you feel that way.

DAVID

No, you're not.

SOFI

No, I truly am sorry. And just to show you how sorry I am, I'd like to give you your money back.

DAVID

No, don't try and worm your way out of this.

SOFI

David, take it back.

NICK
Bro, please, tell us who he is.

MAX
I'm sorry John.

MARIA
Max, who is he?

KEVIN
He's none of your concern.

DAVID
I don't want your money.

SOFI
Is that because if you take it back you won't have anything over me?

HOWARD
You're really something, trying to trick David again into not taking the money back.

MAX
Please believe me, John.

MARIA
She's not trying to trick anybody, Howard.

HOWARD
And you're something too, always defending her. You don't realize she's tricked you into believing her lies.

MARIA
Max, who is he?

SOFI
I'm not tricking anybody. And I don't need Maria to defend me.

MAX
No one.

MARIA
Max.

MAX
No, I'm not talking to you after what you did.

DAVID
This is what you do, deceive people with kindness. It's despicable.

MARIA
After what I did?

SOFI
I do really care about you, David. I'm sorry you can't see that.

MAX
I really liked Amelia.

NICK
I'm here for you, bro.

DAVID
I don't believe you.

MARIA
Are you blaming me for you not knowing that she was interested in women?

HOWARD
Wait, Amelia is interested in women?

SOFI
Please, take back the money.

HOWARD
This is gold.

NICK
You can tell me who he is.

HOWARD
This is royal gold.

DAVID
I don't want your money.

MARIA
It's not my fault she's interested in women.

SOFI
Please, take the money.

MAX
I don't want to hear it.

NICK
It's okay, bro.

DAVID
I said, I don't want the money.

MARIA
You're impossible.

SOFI
Please, take it.

MAX
I'm impossible? I'm impossible?

HOWARD
He's angry. Boy, he's angry.

DAVID
I said, I don't want your money.

MAX
Do you know how much I'm hurting right now?

SOFI
Please.

MARIA
I said, I was sorry.

DAVID
No, back off.

MARIA
How many times do I have to say it?

HOWARD
Now, she's angry.

SOFI
Please.

MARIA
Howard, I have seriously had enough of you.

MAX
Do you know how painful this feels?

NICK
It's okay.

SOFI
Please.

MARIA
You just antagonize people and make things worse. And I'm sick of it.

DAVID

No.

MAX

Do you know how I'm feeling right now?

HOWARD

Don't pin this mess on me.

DAVID

No means no.

HOWARD

This is all your doing.

SOFI

Just take the money.

HOWARD

I'm just bringing to light the lies that are being spread.

DAVID

No!

HOWARD

Don't you dare blame this on me!

MAX

It's utter agony!

MARIA

Oh, screw you!

John screams!

JOHN

...Stop fighting. Please. I beg you. It's too much. It's all too much: All this fighting. What good has it done us? What good has come of it? Nothing. Not a single thing. It hasn't helped in any way. It hasn't made life better, and yet, we continue to fight. We continue to fight with ourselves. It's so pointless, so futile, how we fight over these differences. Why don't we look to our similarities? Why fight over our differences when we can unite over what makes us similar? And aren't we all similar? Aren't we all the same? Underneath all our differences, aren't we the same? Don't we all feel? Don't we all have hearts? Please, look to your hearts. All of you.

A beat.

JOHN

...The man you have been asking about, he was someone who hurt me, when I was young, before I met you all. What he did, I didn't think I could forgive him for it. Sofi, you told me before how I couldn't really explain anything. How could I accept that? How could I accept that when this man hurt me? But now I see that I have to accept that. I have to accept that nothing is in my hands, that I have no control, that things might happen to me, terrible things, unspeakable, horrific things that I have no power over, because...that's the only way I can move forward.

SOFI

...Beautifully said, my child.

DAVID

I'm sorry about all this, Sofi.

SOFI

I'm sorry about all this too, David.

DAVID

Please, let me take the money back.

SOFI

Okay.

Sofi hands David the money. David takes it.

DAVID

...Thanks.

HOWARD

I'm sorry too, Sofi. And you too, Maria. I can be troublesome, to say the least.

MARIA

I'm sorry too, Howard. I shouldn't have said those things. It was really...hypocritical of me.

HOWARD

I was a hypocrite too, for criticizing you two. I've never had a class with Sofi. Who am I to judge?

SOFI

Maybe, you can try out a class one day.

HOWARD

Maybe.

MARIA

I'm sorry too, Max. I didn't mean to give you that idea.

MAX

It wasn't your fault, Maria. I was in pain.

MARIA

I know.

MAX

I was just lashing out. I'm sorry.

MARIA

I forgive you.

MAX

John, I'm sorry for looking for him behind your back. I just couldn't let him get away with what he did to you.

JOHN

Max, don't you see, that's it?

MAX

What's it?

JOHN

He didn't get away with anything. If he gets away with something, then that would make me a victim. And that's not me. That's not who I'm deciding to be. I'm deciding to be someone who...who forgives.

MAX

Good on you, John.

JOHN

I forgive you, Max.

MAX

Thank you, John.

KEVIN

...I'm assuming you don't want to know where he is then.

MAX

Of course, he doesn't want to know where he is. Didn't you just hear him?

KEVIN

I'm just saying.

JOHN

I don't want to know where he is. I forgive him. I forgive him for everything he did to me, all the pain and suffering he caused. If anything, it is the ones who inflict the most pain who need forgiveness the most. He needs my forgiveness.

KEVIN

Okay. Just asking.

NICK

...Well, that was, like, very emotional.

MARIA

Yes, that was a lot to take in.

DAVID

All these feelings are making me a bit peckish.

HOWARD

Same here.

MAX

Shall we all go and get something to eat?

SOFI

That sounds, lovely.

MARIA

You too, Kevin?

KEVIN

Yeah, that sounds great.

MARIA

Great. That settles it. Let's go and get some food.

Maria, Sofi, Nick, Howard, David,
Max and Kevin leave, but John stays
behind. A beat. Max comes back.

MAX

...John, you don't want to come with us?

JOHN

I'll be there in a moment.

MAX

You're not just trying to get away from me, are you?

JOHN

No, I wouldn't do that.

MAX

Just making sure.

JOHN

See you in a moment, Max.

MAX

See you in a moment, John.

Max leaves.

JOHN

...What a turn out. It's good to see you all here, but... just gathering here today isn't enough. It's only a start. We have to do more because, believe it or not, this is not just about you, or me. No, it's about something more, something greater. It's about us. It's about doing what is right for us, what is right for each other. See, what we're addressing here is that the only ones that are going to support us is us. No one else. And I could stand up here and judge those who are throwing us by the wayside. I could berate those who only consider us as a means for their own personal gain, but who will that help? Who will that serve? What I will do is highlight how we have to stand together. We have to stick together, and make our voices heard, because if we don't, then who will help us? Who will help us? Thank you.

The End

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