

PEOPLE LIKE US

by

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## ***CHARACTERS***

**BRENDAN**, twenties, white, fund manager, wound-up, second fiddle to his roommate, best friend and co-worker Neil and

**LILLY**, twenties, Asian-American, model-actress-singer, Neil's live-in girlfriend. Cynical, fashionable.

**LEN**, twenties but seems older, white, filthy, strange.

**BEAN**, twenties, African-American or Latina, Len's "friend," filthy but festive.

## ***SETTING & TIME***

A renovated loft, in an industrial gentrifying neighborhood.

The main living space. Red brick and pristine white walls. Sparse furniture, cool furniture, most importantly a sofa and a stereo unit. A front door, a door to Neil's bedroom, and a hallway to the rest of the loft.

Also, the street, across from the building. (This doesn't need a complete set, unless you're a fabulously wealthy production company. If you are, instead of spending your fabulous wealth on a street set, give the money to me, or a deserving porcupine.)

The time is today.

## ***NOTE ON INTERMISSION***

There is none.

**Scene 1**

*In the black: knocking, loud.*

*Isolated light up on BRENDAN, in his suit. He knocks on the bedroom door.*

*He stops.*

BRENDAN (to audience:)

Do you see? I *knocked*. Six thousand years of human progress right there, social contract - property rights - liberty of conscience, all in that one exchange. Neil put a lock on his bedroom door. I knocked. Neil locked, I knocked. I didn't break down his door. I respect his space. Knock-knock. That's my contribution to our civilization.

*He knocks. Stops.*

BRENDAN

Do you see? What's missing? He locks, I knock, he? Opens the door. That's *his* contribution. He locks, I knock, he? Opens the door. I respect his space, but if I need to enter his space: I have some purpose - some reason - some dire situation, it's expected that he? opens the goddamn door!

*He knocks.*

*A thrown magazine hits him. He stops.*

*Lights up on the rest of the loft. Morning. LILLY is on the couch, which is set up for sleeping. Her coat, bag clothes lie on the floor nearby. She picks up another magazine, adjusts the earpiece on her iPod and reads.*

BRENDAN

Do you see?

LILLY

Like an eagle.

BRENDAN

Don't you want the door open too?

LILLY

I think it's funny.

BRENDAN

This was funny until right about now.

LILLY

Ten hours in there, that's funny.

BRENDAN

Fourteen now actually, and not actually funny.

LILLY

This is Neil.

BRENDAN

This is a joke, a joke on us.

LILLY

I'm not the little bitch banging on the door.

*BRENDAN knocks.*

*LILLY throws a magazine at him. He stops.*

*She picks up another and reads.*

BRENDAN

You should be banging on the door.

LILLY

I'm busy practicing my craft.

BRENDAN

He's put a lock on *your* bedroom door.

LILLY

That lock makes it *his* bedroom door.

BRENDAN

Actually it's his and mine, a jointly-mortgaged door.

LILLY

I wouldn't know about your doors. I'm just the idiot that made the neighborhood cool enough for condescending pricks.

BRENDAN

You should be freaking out. Hasn't it been fourteen hours since you came home to this lock? Fourteen hours camped out on the couch? Fourteen hours without your property rights? It's not civilized! Let's freak out!

(MORE)

*He knocks. She winds up with another magazine. He stops immediately.*

BRENDAN (cont'd)

Lilly? I need the Belarusian GDP analysis.

LILLY

He'll get you the Belarusian GDP Analysis.

BRENDAN

You don't know that.

LILLY

I know Neil.

BRENDAN

And I don't know Neil?

LILLY

I've seen him naked.

BRENDAN

Was he holding the Belarusian GDP Analysis?

LILLY

The more you freak out, the more you help his joke.

*BRENDAN calmly turns to the door.*

BRENDAN (calling in:)

Neil? I'm not freaking out. All I'm doing is covering for you at the office, while Richard is screaming at me that he wants the Belarusian GDP Analysis today, nine a.m., or he will have one major managerial freak out!

*BRENDAN starts to knock but LILLY pegs him with another magazine.*

LILLY

You're helping his joke.

BRENDAN

This is personal.

LILLY

This isn't about you.

BRENDAN

It feels like it's about me.

LILLY

But it's really about me. He wants me to cry him out with some big fat tears. He wants me to baby him with Tollhouse cookies. Fuck him. I'm focusing on my career goals.

BRENDAN  
So you are freaking out.

LILLY  
Ohmygod shut your hole.

BRENDAN  
If you're freaking out -

LILLY  
I won't freak out.

BRENDAN  
He's taken your property!

LILLY  
He's daring me to freak out.

BRENDAN  
He's put a lock on *your* door!

LILLY  
Yeah but I have the key.

*She returns to the magazine.*

BRENDAN  
You have the key?

LILLY (re: magazine:)  
God, Stacey Rider.

BRENDAN  
You have the key.

LILLY  
How'd she get in here? She's a pig.

BRENDAN  
I can't believe you have the key!

LILLY  
No not a pig, pigs aren't evil.

BRENDAN  
How can you have the key, and not use the key?

LILLY  
I'm gonna speak slowly, because the obvious isn't your first language. Every role in a relationship has a costume.

(MORE)

LILLY (cont'd)

The little black dress. The power suit. The designer sweats. Now, Neil left that key for me in a greeting card: "To My Little Girl On the Night of Her First Dance Recital." So if I use that key, then he has made me put on the pink tutu. Do I look like I'd wear the pink tutu?

BRENDAN

Please, for me, put on the pink tutu.

LILLY

Can you suck my sphincter?

BRENDAN

I have a dire situation.

LILLY

It's not my dire situation.

BRENDAN

Neil could have a dire situation.

LILLY

Then Neil should open the door.

BRENDAN

Tied the bedsheet to the light fixture, hung himself.

LILLY

He wouldn't hang himself with the bedsheet. It's from Neiman Marcus. He's sitting on the end of the bed, with a stone frown. He's got these coyotes in his soul. They make him test my strength. That's Neil. It's what I love.

What animal embodies all that is evil? Because Stacey Rider's that animal.

BRENDAN

Amazing.

*He pulls out his Blackberry.*

LILLY

Step away from the Blackberry.

BRENDAN

You have broken your contract with civilization, with your costumes and love tests. Locksmith locksmith, L-O-C-K -

LILLY

Motherfucker, don't you open my goddamn bedroom door!

*LILLY throws magazines at BRENDAN --  
SMACK SMACK SMACK -- as he types:*

BRENDAN

It's not your bedroom door, it's my jointly-mortgaged --  
whoa wait WAIT WAIT THERE'S A MESSAGE FROM NEIL IN MY INBOX!

*Combat stops.*

*BRENDAN reads.*

LILLY

What is it?

BRENDAN

"Brendan: Tell Lilly to use her goddamn key. Neil."

LILLY

You're not funny.

BRENDAN

There's an attachment. Flight itinerary. For Neil. One  
way. Departed yesterday. Destination: La, la, "Len."  
Wherever that is. Amazing.

*He shows it to LILLY. She reads.*

LILLY

I yeah I.

It was our joke. We were playing a joke on you. You fell  
for it, haha stupid.

*He takes back the Blackberry.*

BRENDAN

So, do you see?

LILLY

Like a goddamned eagle with binoculars.

BRENDAN

Then may I have the key, please?

(MORE)

*During this, LILLY searches for her key-  
ring in her coat, her pants, her bag...*

*as BRENDAN prepares two martinis at the  
liquor cabinet.*

BRENDAN (cont'd to audience:)

Neil always gets involved with impossible women. Lilly's the most impossible of them all. For instance, she should be involved with *me*. I? met her at the roof party. I? walked her home. She? ends up with Neil. Because Neil has coyotes in his soul. This for instance? So Neil. He surprises you again and again, like herpes. Once in school he jumped out the window of the lecture hall, in the middle of the lecture. He saw the ice-cream truck.

*LILLY finds her keys and unrings one.*

But, what can I say, we're a hell of a team. When Tony and Olivier bought their place out here, I said no way. The numbers were good, but the neighborhood looked like nothing, welfare cases, Lilly and the fake bohemians. Neil? didn't even look at the data. He came out here, and he smelled. Big breath. Smelled the change on its way. So? if two gay guys can do it, why not us? We picked up this old factory. Did the renovations. Gonna turn it around for seven digits when the neighborhood catches on. We're pioneers. All we have to do is keep it together. I wish Neil would remember to keep it together. That's how civilization advances: we all keep it together, together. Maybe he saw that ice cream truck again. Why'd he jump? He has *all* the ice cream.

*BRENDAN offers LILLY a martini. She takes it. She holds up the key.*

*As BRENDAN reaches for it, she drops it in the glass and drinks it. Then she shows the key in her teeth.*

LILLY (through her teeth:)

Even if he fell off the edge of the Earth, you'll still only be his roommate.

*She mimes binoculars, at BRENDAN.*

LILLY (cont'd)

[screech like an eagle]

BRENDAN

Yeah I still need to look for Neil's Belarusian research.

(MORE)

*LILLY spits the key out. He picks it up. BRENDAN unlocks the door and opens it. In the doorway: an empty pair of dress shoes, facing forward.*

*BRENDAN picks up the shoes*

*LEN steps in the bedroom doorway:  
filthy, face is covered with a bandage-  
mask with eye-holes and a mouth-hole.*

BRENDAN  
AH! Jesus God! Who are you?

LEN  
You got my shoes.

BRENDAN  
No, who are you?

LEN  
Can I get my shoes?

LILLY  
Calling the cops.

LEN  
Neil's friend.

BRENDAN  
What?

LEN  
Friend of Neil's.

LILLY  
Nice try, next.

LEN (to LILLY:)  
The fruit.

LILLY  
Cops, calling cops.

LEN  
The fruit, the fruit, the fruit!

BRENDAN  
What, what, what?

LEN  
Your electrical fruit.

*Points at the Blackberry.*

BRENDAN  
This?

LEN  
Says "Destination: Len."

BRENDAN  
Wait.

LEN  
Here I am.

BRENDAN  
You're Len?

LEN  
Neil said he'd send you a note.

LILLY  
No.

LEN  
Gimmie my shoes.

BRENDAN  
Hold on.

LEN  
Those are my shoes.

BRENDAN  
Here, here are the shoes, okay?

*BRENDAN hands over the shoes.*

LEN  
Neil said he'd send you a note. Len, that's me. Gave me his room. His shoes, and his room.

BRENDAN  
Neil gave you his room?

LILLY  
Again nice try.

LEN  
Got all my gear loaded up in there.

BRENDAN  
What's that smell?

LILLY

Get your gear outta my room.

BRENDAN

What'd you do in there?

*BRENDAN goes in the bedroom.*

LEN (to LILLY:)

Nice room.

BRENDAN (off:)

Oh my God!

LEN

Nice photos of you.

*BRENDAN returns.*

BRENDAN

What'd you do in there?!

LILLY

What?

LEN

Nice room, but no toilet.

LILLY

What?!

*LILLY runs in the bedroom.*

BRENDAN

How long have you been in there?!

LEN

Fourteen hours?

LILLY (off:)

OH MY GOD!

BRENDAN

There's a toilet right down the hall!

*LILLY reenters.*

LILLY

Those sheets are from Neiman Marcus!