

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Copyright Protection. This play (the “Play”) is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, and the Berne Convention.

Reservation of Rights. All rights to this Play are strictly reserved, including, without limitation, professional and amateur stage performance rights; motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video, and sound recording rights; rights to all other forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction now known or yet to be invented, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, photocopying, and information storage and retrieval systems; and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

Performance Licensing and Royalty Payments. Amateur and stock performance rights to this Play are controlled exclusively by Playscripts, Inc. (“Playscripts”). No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this Play without obtaining advance written permission from Playscripts. Required royalty fees for performing this Play are specified online at the Playscripts website (www.playscripts.com). Such royalty fees may be subject to change without notice. Although this book may have been obtained for a particular licensed performance, such performance rights, if any, are not transferable. Required royalties must be paid every time the Play is performed before any audience, whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. All licensing requests and inquiries concerning amateur and stock performance rights should be addressed to Playscripts (see contact information on opposite page).

Inquiries concerning all other rights should be addressed to Playscripts, as well; such inquiries will be communicated to the author and the author’s agent, as applicable.

Restriction of Alterations. There shall be no deletions, alterations, or changes of any kind made to the Play, including the changing of character gender, the cutting of dialogue, the cutting of music, or the alteration of objectionable language, unless directly authorized by Playscripts. The title of the Play shall not be altered.

Author Credit. Any individual or group receiving permission to produce this Play is required to give credit to the author as the sole and exclusive author of the Play. This obligation applies to the title page of every program distributed in connection with performances of the Play, and in any instance that the title of the Play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing, or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. The name of the author must appear on a separate line, in which no other name appears, immediately beneath the title and of a font size at least 50% as large as the largest letter used in the title of the Play. No person, firm, or entity may receive credit larger or more prominent than that accorded the author. The name of the author may not be abbreviated or otherwise altered from the form in which it appears in this Play.

Publisher Attribution. All programs, advertisements, and other printed material distributed or published in connection with the amateur or stock production of the Play shall include the following notice:

**Produced by special arrangement with Playscripts, Inc.
(www.playscripts.com)**

Prohibition of Unauthorized Copying. Any unauthorized copying of this book or excerpts from this book is strictly forbidden by law. Except as otherwise permitted by applicable law, no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including, without limitation, photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Playscripts.

Statement of Non-affiliation. This Play may include references to brand names and trademarks owned by third parties, and may include references to public figures. Playscripts is not necessarily affiliated with these public figures, or with the owners of such trademarks and brand names. Such references are included solely for parody, political comment, or other permitted purposes.

Permissions for Sound Recordings and Musical Works. This Play may contain directions calling for the performance of a portion, or all, of a musical work *not included in the Play’s score*, or performance of a sound recording of such a musical work. Playscripts has not obtained permissions to perform such works. The producer of this Play is advised to obtain such permissions, if required in the context of the production. The producer is directed to the websites of the U.S. Copyright Office (www.copyright.gov), ASCAP (www.ascap.com), BMI (www.bmi.com), and NMPA (www.nmpa.org) for further information on the need to obtain permissions, and on procedures for obtaining such permissions.

The Rules in Brief

- 1) Do NOT perform this Play without obtaining prior permission from Playscripts, and without paying the required royalty.
- 2) Do NOT photocopy, scan, or otherwise duplicate any part of this book.
- 3) Do NOT alter the text of the Play, change a character's gender, delete any dialogue, cut any music, or alter any objectionable language, unless explicitly authorized by Playscripts.
- 4) DO provide the required credit to the author(s) and the required attribution to Playscripts in all programs and promotional literature associated with any performance of this Play.

For more details on these and other rules, see the opposite page.

Copyright Basics

This Play is protected by United States and international copyright law. These laws ensure that authors are rewarded for creating new and vital dramatic work, and protect them against theft and abuse of their work.

A play is a piece of property, fully owned by the author, just like a house or car. You must obtain permission to use this property, and must pay a royalty fee for the privilege—whether or not you charge an admission fee. Playscripts collects these required payments on behalf of the author.

Anyone who violates an author's copyright is liable as a copyright infringer under United States and international law. Playscripts and the author are entitled to institute legal action for any such infringement, which can subject the infringer to actual damages, statutory damages, and attorneys' fees. A court may impose statutory damages of up to \$150,000 for willful copyright infringements. U.S. copyright law also provides for possible criminal sanctions. Visit the website of the U.S. Copyright Office (www.copyright.gov) for more information.

THE BOTTOM LINE: If you break copyright law, you are robbing a playwright and opening yourself to expensive legal action. Follow the rules, and when in doubt, ask us.

Playscripts, Inc.
450 Seventh Ave, Suite 809
New York, NY 10123

toll-free phone: 1-866-NEW-PLAY
email: info@playscripts.com
website: www.playscripts.com

Cast of Characters

TOBY LANDERS, 17 years old. Insular, unaffected, disinterested in everything...a normal 17-year-old boy—but more so. He spends most of his time in front of his video games, the internet and with his iPod plugged into his ears. Since his father's death he has become lazier and lazier.

AUDREY LANDERS, Toby's mother. Since his father's death in the line of duty (he was a police officer) nine months ago she has tried to be his friend and is constantly met with a brick wall. By trying to cushion the transition she has enabled Toby to be more self-centered and selfish.

STEPHANIE ACKLES, Toby's longtime friend. They have been neighbors and friends since childhood. While her feelings do dip into the "more than friends" range on occasion, she is far more concerned with the fact that Toby seems to be wasting away. She tries time and again to motivate him. It's become harder since his father died. She is slender and energetic and has a ravenous appetite.

REV. DAVID LANDERS, Toby's uncle, his father's minister brother. As William Lander's only brother he sees Toby as partly his responsibility. While he doesn't want to cause problems, he is not fooled by Toby and can see how he takes advantage of his mother.

CLYDE, an angel.

Author's Note

I would like to thank Steve Lord, Kris Keef, Ester Espino, Bryan Renaud and Will Burdin for letting me hear the thing out loud. I would also like to thank my wife Millie for years of love, pride and support.

This play is dedicated to my son Danny (the greatest thing I have ever helped create) and Susan Collins, who left us during the writing of this play. I hope you're having fun, wherever you are.

Set Pieces

Couch
Coffee table
Computer table
Computer
Desk chair
Table behind couch

Prop List

(At lights up.)

(On coffee table:)

Video game controllers
Video game boxed
Video game CDs
Empty chip bags
Half-full bottle of soda
Magazines

(On table behind couch:)

Telephone
Envelopes/bills

(On floor near front door:)

Box filled with father's police stuff (must include a pair of
metal hand-cuffs)
Personal props
2 cell phones
iPod and headphones
Backpack
3+ bags of groceries
Chunk of ceiling
Handcuff keys

AN EASY HEAVEN

by Eric Peter Schwartz

(A summer afternoon.)

(The scene is the living room of the Landers' house. Center there is a couch and coffee table. The coffee table is littered with empty pop cans and chip bags. A video game system also rests on the table with several video game boxes stacked next to it. A coat tree stands near the door. A large cardboard box sits near the bottom of the coat tree. The box is haphazardly closed, but not sealed. Stage right there is a computer. Up stage there is a table with some bills and a phone on it. There is also a door leading to the hallway and the rest of the house. TOBY LANDERS sits on the couch, his hands moving furiously on the video game controller. The TV is unseen—he is looking out at the audience as though it is a TV. The sounds of the video game blare in the room. TOBY finishes a level and drops the controller into his lap. He checks his watch, uses a remote to mute the TV and pulls out his cell phone.)

TOBY. Hey Natalie, it's Toby. Is Ron there? Thanks.

(Affects "sick" voice.)

Hey Ron. It's Toby. Man, I have come down with something. I am running a temp and my mom doesn't want me doing anything, including work.

(Pause.)

Yeah? Sorry, man. You know how moms are.

(Fakes chuckle.)

Heh. Yeah. Am I on the schedule for tomorrow? Okay. Well, I'll let you know whether I'll be able to make it. Okay. Sorry. Bye.

(He hangs up, straightens up and moves back to the couch. He slouches down, puts in his iPod headphones and starts to play again. After a moment AUDREY LANDERS comes through the front door. TOBY doesn't notice. She carries a grocery bag in her arms. She sees TOBY on the couch but doesn't say anything. She stops at the table and drops off her purse and her keys. She moves off to the kitchen. TOBY continues to play the game. A moment later AUDREY returns, glances at TOBY, picks up the bills and

starts to thumb through them. Finally she moves to the couch and leans over with a smirk. She tugs on the headphone chords and the ear buds pop out of TOBY's ears.)

TOBY. Hey!

(AUDREY notices the empty chip bag.)

AUDREY. *(Rolls her eyes.)* Did you see the leftovers I left for your lunch?

TOBY. *(Still focusing on the game.)* I didn't really like it the first time around.

AUDREY. Can't live on chips, kiddo.

TOBY. I don't know, ma. Has there been a definitive study on that? I'd like to see that paperwork before we start jumping to conclusions.

(AUDREY turns and starts looking at bills.)

AUDREY. I'll give you paperwork, smart guy. Speaking of which, no work today?

TOBY. It looks like Ron screwed up the schedule again and gave me less hours this week. He said he'd try to make it up to me next week.

AUDREY. This "Ron" sounds like a piece of work.

TOBY. He's an idiot. If I didn't like the people, I'd totally quit.

(Toby's cell phone beeps, indicating an incoming text message. He flips it open and reads, then he quickly responds. AUDREY leaves and heads for the kitchen.)

TOBY. *(Yelling over his shoulder.)* Steph's coming over!

AUDREY. *(Off.)* Oh! Good. David's coming over too to get that box of Dad's stuff for storage. Oh! And he's going to make dinner. Do you think she'll want to stay for dinner?

TOBY. You've seen the girl eat.

AUDREY. *(Off.)* Well, it's a good thing you saved the chips from her.

TOBY. I took one for the team.

AUDREY. *(Off:)* You're a hero.

TOBY. That's me.

(AUDREY reenters. She leans over the couch again.)

AUDREY. Seriously though, Toby, try to eat something decent tomorrow, please? Okay?

TOBY. *(Putting his earbuds back in:)* Gotcha.

(AUDREY gently turns his face toward her.)

AUDREY. I worry about you, honey.

(The regular phone rings. AUDREY pulls the phone up off the stand and checks the caller ID. She doesn't like who it is, turns off the ringer, the ringing stops. She takes a breath and puts the ringer back on the stand.)

TOBY. Who was that?

AUDREY. *(Lying:)* Didn't say, probably a telemarketer.

TOBY. They've called like 16 times today.

AUDREY. Yeah, well, they're persistent.

(The door opens and STEPHANIE ACKLES quickly steps in. She is a slender girl the same age as TOBY. She has a backpack hanging from one shoulder and is texting someone with one hand. In her other hand she holds a coffee.)

STEPHANIE. *(Without looking up:)* Hey Mrs. L.

AUDREY. Hello Steph.

(Heads toward kitchen.)

Toby, let me know when David gets here.

(TOBY only lifts his hand to acknowledge that his mother has spoken to him. His cell phone bleeps. Another text message. Annoyed he drops the controller into his lap, fishes his phone out of his pocket and looks at it. He rolls his eyes and rolls his head back to look at STEPHANIE who grins annoyingly.)

STEPHANIE. Thought you might like to know that I'm here.

TOBY. Cute.

(STEPHANIE drops her bag by the door and hops over the arm-rest onto the couch next to TOBY, who has returned to his game.)

STEPHANIE. Still at it?

TOBY. I have no idea how to beat this boss. I've been fighting him all day and I can't do it unless I have, like, six resurrection leaves.

STEPHANIE. I think I saw an Oprah about that.

(TOBY is not amused. He apparently loses again and tosses the controller. He looks over at STEPHANIE, almost like he's just noticed she's there.)

TOBY. Hey! Where were you all day? I kept texting you.

(STEPHANIE picks up a magazine from the coffee table and starts thumbing through it.)

STEPHANIE. I was at work. Not all of us call in every chance we get.

TOBY. *(Matter-of-factly:)* It's a stupid job.

STEPHANIE. All summer jobs are stupid. That's why they're summer jobs. If they were fulfilling, kids would drop out and work full time.

TOBY. I don't think Western Civilization will grind to a halt if I'm not there to clean out the video return bin.

STEPHANIE. You're probably right. But then again your car WILL grind to a halt when you can't afford to put gas in it.

(Thinks sarcastically for a moment.)

Oh! Wait! That's right. You don't have a car.

TOBY. I have *your* car.

STEPHANIE. That well may run dry, my un-carred friend.

TOBY. You're in a mood tonight.

STEPHANIE. This is true.

(Beat—still reading.)

Have you looked at those applications I gave you yet?

TOBY. I will.

STEPHANIE. When?

TOBY. Soon.

(TOBY is starting to have a hard time with the game he's playing and STEPHANIE is making it worse.)

STEPHANIE. When soon?

TOBY. Steph!

STEPHANIE. When soon?

(TOBY loses whatever he is playing. He drops the controller in his lap. STEPHANIE continues to read, grinning smugly.)

TOBY. Dammit!

STEPHANIE. When are you going to fill them out?!

TOBY. Later! Okay? What is with you tonight?! Look, we haven't even started senior year.

STEPHANIE. So now is the time to apply. Your grades aren't that bad. You could get into a state school easy enough.

TOBY. Oh! Thanks. A state school. I might as well enroll in truck driving school.

STEPHANIE. *(Stops reading and glares at him.)* Excuse me?

TOBY. I'm just saying.

STEPHANIE. State school not good enough for you?

TOBY. Just forget I said anything.

STEPHANIE. Are Princeton and Harvard recruiters getting into knife fights over you on the lawn and I'm missing it?

TOBY. Forget it, okay?

STEPHANIE. Just fill out the applications. Okay? Sit down with your mom and at least *pretend* like you care about your future. I'll even mail the things for you. Just do it, knucklehead.

TOBY. Fine.

STEPHANIE. Fine.

TOBY. Whatever.

STEPHANIE. Whatever.

(There is a silence. STEPHANIE goes back to reading, TOBY continues playing. STEPHANIE smirks.)

STEPHANIE. I am SO not inviting you to my aunt's birthday party. I was totally going to...but you blew it, buddy.

TOBY. There's a loss.

STEPHANIE. See if I bring you any leftover Million Dollar Hotdish.

TOBY. *(Sarcastic:)* Oh please...don't...kick me when I'm down.

STEPHANIE. Jerk.

TOBY. Spaz.

STEPHANIE. *(Cutesy:)* I love you.

TOBY. I love your mom.

(STEPHANIE glances at TOBY for a moment. He's taken that last part as just part of the banter. She watches a little longer. It wasn't, it was fast, but it wasn't. Then she closes the magazine and stands up.)

STEPHANIE. So...speaking of Moms, what's for dinner?

TOBY. Dave is on his way over to cook.

STEPHANIE. Chef Padre Dave? Cool. I'm staying.

(TOBY finally puts down the controller and turns off the system.)

STEPHANIE. Wait! Are you really turning that off on your own—without coercion or the promise of food or money?

TOBY. *(Moving to computer:)* I'm waiting for some guy to send some cheat codes to my Facebook.

STEPHANIE. Cheat codes.

(Rolls her eyes.)

That should be chiseled into your headstone. "Here lies Toby Landers: Triangle—Up—L1—L2—Down—Down—Circle."

(There is a knock at the door. TOBY doesn't move, he continues to log into his profile. STEPHANIE opens the door. REV. DAVID LANDERS walks in with a sack of groceries.)

DAVID. Hey Stephanie!

STEPHANIE. Hi David.

TOBY. Mom, David's here!

(DAVID chuckles as he puts the bag down on the back table.)

DAVID. Ah. Toby. It's a good thing you bellowed like that I wouldn't have known you were there otherwise.

AUDREY. *(Entering:)* Hi David.

(She kisses him on the cheek.)

How are you?

DAVID. Oh, not bad. We finally broke ground on that community center extension.

AUDREY. Fantastic.

DAVID. You'd think so. I thought I'd be there doing something more, you know, ceremonial. I didn't realize that I would actually be "breaking the ground," with a shovel.

AUDREY. Oh no.

DAVID. Oh yes. My back has been killing me since. So, needless to say I'm on an unhealthy regiment of ibuprofen at the moment.

STEPHANIE. So...you've got a buzz on right now?

DAVID. (*Chuckles.*) Hardly.

STEPHANIE. Good. I was worried you wouldn't be able to cook straight.

(Everyone but TOBY laughs. He's too busy online to be paying any attention.)

DAVID. Oh, Toby? Stephanie? There's a couple more bags of groceries out in my truck, could you grab them for me?

STEPHANIE. Sure.

(TOBY sighs but STEPHANIE grabs him by the arm and pulls him out the door. DAVID looks at AUDREY, then down at the box on the floor.)

DAVID. This stuff right here?

AUDREY. Yeah. It's a few things that the Force let me keep, his badge and some other things. I want Toby to have them when he's old enough—I just can't keep, you know...

DAVID. I know. How is everything else going? How's Toby?

AUDREY. Who knows? He barely talks to me anymore. You know, except to ask me for money.

DAVID. I thought he was working.

AUDREY. He is, but they never seem to give him any hours.

DAVID. (*Not buying it:*) Mmhhhhmm.

(Changing subject, nods toward box:)

How's Toby feel about putting this stuff in storage? Does he want to keep anything now?

AUDREY. If he does, he hasn't said anything to me about it.

DAVID. You want me to talk to him?

AUDREY. If you can get anything but sarcasm out of him, more power to you.

(TOBY and STEPHANIE come back in, their arms loaded with full grocery bags. They cross toward the kitchen door.)

DAVID. Thanks, guys.

STEPHANIE. Are there more people coming?

AUDREY. Oh, David, that's way too much.

DAVID & TOBY. Have you seen the girl eat?!

STEPHANIE. I hate you both.

(STEPHANIE and TOBY exit to the kitchen.)

DAVID. I'll talk to him.

AUDREY. Thanks, David.

DAVID. (A little hesitant:) By the way, how's...everything else?

AUDREY. What do you mean?

DAVID. Well, I'm thinking of...bills.

AUDREY. (Takes a breath.) I've been getting a lot of help from the city, Widows and Orphans...it's...okay, I guess. We'll be all right.

DAVID. Do you...need money?

AUDREY. (Immediately:) No. No no. We're okay.

DAVID. Because I've got some stashed away. The church pays for most everything, so my salary...

AUDREY. David! It's fine. I promise. When, and if, I need help. I will ask for it.

DAVID. Promise?

AUDREY. Promise.

(STEPHANIE and TOBY reenter. TOBY goes straight back to the computer.)

STEPHANIE. I give up on the boy.

TOBY. (Rolls his eyes.) Just let it go.

AUDREY. What did he do now?

TOBY. Nothing. Just ignore her.

STEPHANIE. (*Sarcastically, to DAVID:*) He doesn't even know what Balsamic vinegar is.

DAVID. For shame.

TOBY. You misunderstood. I didn't say I didn't know, I said I didn't care.

STEPHANIE. You pulled the bottle from the bag and said "cool wine."

TOBY. I don't care what it is.

DAVID. (*Lecture tone:*) Actually, Stephanie, he's not far off. The process for making Balsamic Vinegar is like making wine.

TOBY. Here we go.

DAVID. (*In full knowledge that it's bugging TOBY:*) Balsamic Vinegar is traditionally made from the cooked and spiced juice of white grapes. It is then aged for many years in barrels—different woods for different flavors and parts of the process.

TOBY. What, did you take "Comparative Vinegars" at Minister school?

DAVID. (*Ignoring the comment:*) AND here's the nifty religious part. During the aging process, some of the water evaporates from the barrel. With both Balsamic Vinegar and Irish Whiskey—the lost liquid is called the "Angels' Share." Isn't that interesting?

TOBY. (*Shaking his head and typing:*) Reverend Wikipedia.

(DAVID glances at AUDREY. She nods and puts her arm around STEPHANIE.)

AUDREY. Well that's enough vinegar history for me. Can you give me a hand in the kitchen a second, Steph?

STEPHANIE. Sure.

(*The two exit for the kitchen. DAVID folds his arms for a second and stares at TOBY.*)

DAVID. Toby.

(TOBY *doesn't* respond.)

Toby!

(Again nothing. He moves forward and turns off the computer.)

Toby, I need to talk to you.

TOBY. Hey! You dumped the email I was writing.

DAVID. (Not sorry:) Your Mom wants me to talk to you about that box of your Dad's stuff.

TOBY. What about it?

DAVID. Actually, nothing. I have no intention of talking to you about that box.

TOBY. Okay—then what?

DAVID. I'm on to you, Tob.

TOBY. You're on to me?

DAVID. Your mother may be completely blind to fact that you're walking all over her, but I'm not.

TOBY. What?

DAVID. You know what? Neither of us is as stupid as you tend to think *everybody* is. Your Mother, bless her, has turned a blind eye to how you're behaving because she doesn't want your life to be any harder right now. She's hoping that it will bring the two of you together. But it's not. It's just making you treat her even worse.

TOBY. Give me a break.

DAVID. Really? How about calling in sick at work all the time and then lying to her and saying you aren't getting good hours. *Then* you have the audacity to turn around and ask for money when you need it. She's scraping by with the bills and she still gives you money to have a good time.

TOBY. I wouldn't...

DAVID. Please. Please, Toby. Don't insult us both by pretending to be shocked at my accusation.

TOBY. What, is it "harass Toby" night?!

DAVID. Yeah, poor Toby. That's a tune I'm sick of. If your Father was alive you KNOW you wouldn't get away with any of this.

(TOBY goes quiet.)

I'm tired of watching this, Toby.

TOBY. Then stop watching.

(TOBY turns the computer back on. DAVID grabs TOBY's arm and turns him around.)

DAVID. I'm not through!

TOBY. Let go! I don't need another dad.

(DAVID lets go as AUDREY and STEPHANIE come in from the kitchen.)

AUDREY. What's going on in here, guys?

DAVID. Nothing. We're fine.

TOBY. Nothing. I'm going out to get something to eat.

AUDREY. *(Taking a stand:)* Like hell you are.

TOBY. Mom!

AUDREY. You're not going to get something to eat when your uncle is going to cook.

TOBY. I can't believe this. Why can't you people just LEAVE ME ALONE?!

(Off stage, in the kitchen there is an enormous crash and a commotion. All four turn toward the door and begin to back away. They quietly look at each other for a moment.)

DAVID. What was that?

AUDREY. I don't know. Maybe a can fell over in the pantry?

(They all look at her.)

STEPHANIE. Maybe a BOMB fell over in the pantry.

TOBY. Think it might be a dog or something?

(The sound of a man's cough comes from the kitchen.)

DAVID. I don't think so.

STEPHANIE. There's somebody in there.

AUDREY. *(Grabs a magazine and begins to roll it up like a weapon.)* We need to get out of here.

DAVID. *(Looking at the magazine AUDREY is holding:)* They've broken into your home...they didn't pee on the rug.

AUDREY. *(Rolls her eyes and drops the magazine.)* Fine.

(There is another loud crash.)

STEPHANIE. They're coming this way.

DAVID. Okay—out the door.

(They all rush toward the door. CLYDE stumbles from the kitchen. He is dressed in a floor-length white gown and has two huge wings attached to his back. He is covered in dust and part of a ceiling tile is wedged between his wing and his shoulder. He coughs and tries to catch his breath. The others, in a panic, fumble at the door. TOBY turns around as CLYDE collapses to the floor.)

TOBY. Dave!

DAVID. *(Turning around to see CLYDE:)* Who is he?

(They all move toward the motionless CLYDE. They peer at him while keeping their distance.)

AUDREY. Is he hurt?

DAVID. *(Moves toward CLYDE, crouches down.)* He looks a little beat up.

(Pulls the ceiling tile out.)

And it looks like he came through the ceiling.

STEPHANIE. Um...I don't mean to take this thing in a whole new direction...but...are those...wings?

TOBY. *(Incredulous:)* What?

STEPHANIE. Seriously! Look.

TOBY. *(Peering around to get a better look:)* Um...wow.

DAVID. She's right. They are wings. And *(Inches closer:)* they might be real.

AUDREY. What?

(DAVID edges closer, peering at the place where the wings meet the back.)

DAVID. *(Stands.)* I don't see any...it doesn't look like there's... I think they're real.

TOBY. *(Laughing:)* So what does that mean? He's one of the X-Men?

DAVID. I think he might be an angel.

STEPHANIE. *(Long pause.)* Do you...think he wants more Balsamic Vinegar?

(They all look at her.)

What?

TOBY. *(Laughs again.)* This is so stupid.

AUDREY. It's...impossible.

DAVID. It's a miracle.

CLYDE. It's a sprain.

(Everyone screams and jumps back as he gets to his feet.)

I'm pretty sure it's a sprain.

(Reaches back and touches his right wing, winces in pain.)

Oh yeah. That's tender. Do you have an ice pack or maybe, like a bag of frozen peas?

DAVID. (*Overcome, drops to his knees.*) Oh Heavenly Father! Thank you for sending your messenger to us in this time of...

CLYDE. Woah! Woah! Woah! Don't...uh...just...stop that. Let's not open up that particular can of worms.

DAVID. Sorry.

CLYDE. I'd rather nobody know I'm here—just yet.

TOBY. Why not?

CLYDE. This wasn't...actually...on purpose. I fell.

AUDREY. You fell?

CLYDE. Well, yeah. You know those Airbus A380s, the big double-decker planes? I wanted to check one out. And, well, I guess I got too close and (*Mimes a nosedive:*) SHOOMP—down I go. The wake was too strong. Those things are huge.

STEPHANIE. Bummer.

CLYDE. Sorry about your roof.

(*He starts to get to his feet and wobbles. DAVID and STEPHANIE catch him and move him to the couch.*)

Thanks.

AUDREY. Can I get you something? A glass of water?

CLYDE. That would be great, thanks.

AUDREY. I'll get you some ice for your wing too.

(*AUDREY heads off to the kitchen.*)

CLYDE. (*Calling after her:*) Actually, that's probably not a good...

(*AUDREY screams and runs back into the room.*)

...idea.

AUDREY. The fridge is in pieces.

CLYDE. I'm so sorry about that. I can get it fixed. I'm (*Searches:*) insured.

STEPHANIE. Insured? This sort of thing happen a lot?

CLYDE. More than the "higher ups" want to admit. You know, some doofus angel... (*Motions to himself.*) feels like taking a day trip to buzz the fleshies and they wind up whangin' their heads on stop lights. It happens.

DAVID. You're insured?

CLYDE. Well—no. Not really, I was kidding. But we can get stuff fixed up in a jiff.

STEPHANIE. Fleshies?

CLYDE. Ooop. Did I say that? That was indelicate of me.

DAVID. This is amazing.

TOBY. (*Looks at all of them.*) You guys are putting me on right?

STEPHANIE. What?

TOBY. (*To his mom:*) Do you expect me to buy this?

AUDREY. Buy what?

TOBY. Oh, right...you expect me to believe that an "ANGEL" crashed through our roof—into our kitchen—the same night David decides to attack me for my behavior and Steph starts riding me about college applications?!

AUDREY. Toby.

TOBY. This is some kind of messed up intervention, isn't it?

STEPHANIE. I think this is one of those things that goes in the "not about Toby" box.

TOBY. Of course you would. I get it, okay?! I'm lazy. I don't live up to my potential! I'm sorry I'm not the perfect little mindless student worker bee like Steph.

AUDREY. Toby!

STEPHANIE. Dude.

TOBY. I really do get it. I know what you all want me to do. But did you have to drag a poor community theater shmoe into this? That's low.

CLYDE. Me?

TOBY. It's over, dude. You can take off the wings.

CLYDE. I wish. They itch like heck.

AUDREY. Toby, this isn't a put on. I swear.

DAVID. It's not, Toby. We had nothing to do with this.

TOBY. (*Skeptical:*) Right. So, you're an angel?

CLYDE. Yep.

TOBY. You fly around in heaven.

CLYDE. Yep.

TOBY. You play the harp.

CLYDE. Well, the harp is one job. Let's see, there's the harpists, the choirs...oh the Arc Angels, let's not forget them. There's the close precision flying team—the Blue Angels.

(*CLYDE winks at DAVID, who chuckles.*)

TOBY. What's your job?

CLYDE. See, that's hard to explain. I don't think you'd understand.

TOBY. I'm not stupid. Try me.

CLYDE. No, I mean really. There is nothing in my day to day life that your mind has any frame of reference for. If I attempted to explain it, your brain would simply freeze up like Windows Vista, you'd pass out and wake up in two days with a killer headache.

TOBY. Do you have a name?

CLYDE. Clyde.

TOBY. Clyde?

CLYDE. Again, my full name wouldn't make any sense to you.

TOBY. You might as well try.

CLYDE. My full name is Clyde of the Infinite Sun Time Aspersion Circles.

TOBY. Ah...

CLYDE. Told you. It's a Heaven thing.

TOBY. (*Sceptical:*) Okay—Clyde the angel—if you know everything...

CLYDE. I don't.

TOBY. Sorry, if you see everything...

CLYDE. I don't.

DAVID. Toby!

CLYDE. (*Smiles.*) You're confusing me with somebody else.

STEPHANIE. Santa Claus, apparently.

TOBY. I thought angels could see and know everything.

CLYDE. Oh, we can see a lot and we know a lot more...

TOBY. (*Interrupting:*) Like what?!

CLYDE. I know that your Myspace password is "Stephanie".

(*Turns to STEPHANIE.*)

Which is funny because...

STEPHANIE. (*Keeping him quiet:*) THAT'S...awesome!!!

CLYDE. (*Back to TOBY:*) You are also wearing the same socks you wore yesterday. You used your mom's toothbrush this morning. And the last word you said to your father was "whatever."

(*The air seems to leave the room. AUDREY covers her mouth for a moment. TOBY seems to stare right through CLYDE.*)

AUDREY. Bill?

CLYDE. Sorry, I shouldn't have said that.

AUDREY. (*The word catches in her throat.*) Do you know Bill? Is he...?

CLYDE. I don't, I'm sorry. There are legions of us, it's impossible to know everybody. I shouldn't have said that. It just came into my head. That's how we know things. When we're near humans or things...it's like getting a radio signal. It just appears there. I'm sorry.

TOBY. (*Distant:*) It's okay.

STEPHANIE. Tob.

TOBY. No. It's cool. He made his point. He's telling the truth.

(*TOBY wanders back to his computer. STEPHANIE watches him go. There is quiet in the room for a moment. CLYDE searches for something to say.*)

CLYDE. If it's any consolation, when I leave, you will all forget that I was ever here and everything will be fixed.

DAVID. What? No.

CLYDE. Sorry. That's how it works. When I head home, it'll be like it never happened. It's part of that insurance that I was talking about.

DAVID. Can you shut that feature off? I don't want to forget this. It's the whole point of what I do.

CLYDE. I know. Sorry, man. That's just how it is. You won't remember that I was here. You know how sometimes you walk into a room and forget why—it'll feel like that. You'll know SOMETHING happened, but you won't know what. So I guess there's a little aftertaste. We can't erase everything.

DAVID. But!... Can I get... I don't know...a...uh...

STEPHANIE. (*Rolls her eyes.*) A diploma? A voucher? You want him to validate your parking?

DAVID. No... I was going to say proof...

CLYDE. Sorry, I take everything with me when I go.

AUDREY. When will that be?

CLYDE. It shouldn't be too long. The wing's already feeling better. I should be out of your hair before too long.

AUDREY. What about my kitchen?

CLYDE. It'll be like it never happened. You won't need to report anything. I promise, when I go, everything will be back to normal.

TOBY. (*Sarcastic:*) Oh great.

(*DAVID glares at TOBY disgusted.*)

DAVID. (*To CLYDE:*) I apologize for my nephew, he's...

CLYDE. Nah. Don't worry about it. I was human once. I remember being that age, awkward and uncomfortable. You never forget that, no matter how long you live...or after-live.

STEPHANIE. You were human? So...you died?

CLYDE. Yep. It seems like a long time ago now.

DAVID. It must have been horrible.

CLYDE. It wasn't pretty.

STEPHANIE. What's it like up there? When you get there, do you forget all the rotten stuff that happened to you?

CLYDE. (*Gets a little lost in his thoughts:*) Nah. In fact, it's just the opposite. You remember everything that ever happened to you in crystal clear detail. Everything. Good or bad or otherwise. It just...puts it into perspective. Once you look into infinity and see everything that ever was or ever can be...well, even the big bads of your life seem to, I don't know, fit somehow. It's...kind of like watching a TV show DVD boxset.

TOBY. I'm sorry, what?

STEPHANIE. Wasn't expecting that.

CLYDE. No, really. It's like being able to look back on a complete work—like a TV show or book—from beginning to end and seeing how everything fit together and really works as a whole piece—whether good or bad—it's really amazing.

TOBY. So going to Heaven is like getting your life as a DVD boxset?

CLYDE. In a manner of speaking.

TOBY. This is unbelievable.

DAVID. When you go, can I at least keep that? That's sermon GOLD!

CLYDE. Sorry. This is going to be a short visit that you'll forget in just a little bit. If this was a planned miracle or an official visitation... you'd remember everything. Plus there'd be more glowing or mist... music sometimes...visitations have all the bells and whistles. The amnesia is just to cover our butts if we make a mistake and get seen. Too much fact negates faith...and without faith, what's the point?

AUDREY. So you just... (*Mimes flying away:*) whoosh?

CLYDE. Yep. I take off out of the hole in the roof, a moment later, any mess that I made will vanish and you will return to the conversation you were having when I arrived.

(The four look at each other sheepishly.)

Ah, I take it that it wasn't a pleasant conversation.

STEPHANIE. That's putting it nicely.

CLYDE. That whole "living up to my potential" thing?

TOBY. Yeah. They ganged up on me.

AUDREY. Don't be so dramatic. No one was ganging up on you.

DAVID. We're just worried about you.

TOBY. It's not your job to be worried about me. It's my job. Worry about yourselves.

AUDREY. It doesn't work like that, Tob. You're my son and that gives me the right to worry about you. David and Stephanie worry because they love you.

TOBY. (*Sarcastic:*) Right.

(STEPHANIE chuckles ironically to herself.)

AUDREY. You know, sometimes, you can be such a little...

(Searches and finally in frustration...)

...ass!

(She looks at CLYDE, ashamed.)

CLYDE. It's okay. We have asses in heaven.

STEPHANIE. That should be on a t-shirt.

(She and CLYDE chuckle.)

TOBY. I'm glad my life is so damn funny.

AUDREY. Toby. What is with you tonight?

TOBY. What do you think is with me? So far tonight I've been called lazy, irresponsible, a mooch and an ass. To top it off—there's an angel in the living room telling everyone the contents of my mind. We can't even stop harping on Toby for ten minutes when a supernatural being crashes through the roof.

(CLYDE snickers—TOBY shoots him a look.)

CLYDE. Sorry. Harping. It just struck me as funny.

TOBY. Un-freakin-believable. Why is it so wrong for me to just take my time? This is supposed to be my summer "VACATION", right? But *NO* it's "Toby fill out applications," "Toby you're the man of the house now," "Toby if your dad was alive." I'm tired of this. I'm 17 years old. What ever happened to the privilege of youth, hmmm? The best years of my life? I have to lose those now, just because I lost my dad? Maybe you should all spend more time worrying about your lives and less about mine.

DAVID. *(Finally fed up:)* All right. Would you shut up?! Apparently having an angel in the room isn't enough—we need a martyr too.

CLYDE. Ouch. Snap.

DAVID. Not a single one of us in this room wants you to not enjoy yourself. In fact, your mother bends over backward to make sure your life doesn't suck too badly. So, asking you to hold down a job to earn some pocket money or—heaven forbid—help pay for college is some kind of punishment? Trying to help you get into college is a big pain in the backside to you? What a child.

TOBY. Excuse me?

DAVID. You are a child! A selfish, spoiled child. Over and over you have taken the love and care of these people and spit it back in their face. Then you yell at them and make them wonder why they bothered. I'm ashamed of you. And YES, if your father was here right now, he'd never let you get away with this.

TOBY. Are you done?

DAVID. Oh yeah. I'm done.

AUDREY. Stop it. Both of you. All right? Toby, all we want is the best for you. We just want to help you make the right choices.

TOBY. What if the choices I make aren't the one you'd make? It just all seems to be coming at me too fast. I'm sick of having to choose and I'm sick of everything changing all the time. Life shouldn't be so much...

(Stops and searches for the right word.)

DAVID. Work?

TOBY. *(Looks for a moment like he might "go off" but then shrugs.)* Yeah. It shouldn't be so much work. *(He stops for a second.)* Dad worked his butt off. He didn't even get a chance to enjoy his life. Look where it got him.

(TOBY crosses to the box and stands there for a moment. He crouches down and runs his hand through the items inside. Unseen he stashes something in his pocket.)

AUDREY. It got him a place to live and food on the table—and a son, who was everything to him.

TOBY. And it got him killed.

AUDREY. He was a cop because he thought it was important. He did it for us.

(TOBY doesn't respond and AUDREY goes quiet.)

DAVID. *(Softening:)* Toby, life is work. It can be great sometimes but sometimes it can be real crummy. There's always a trade off.

(During this, STEPHANIE has stepped back and has gone quiet.)

TOBY. Well then where's my big—golden THING?! I lost my dad! If there's a trade off I should be up for a great big something GOOD, right?

DAVID. I can't answer that. I don't know.

TOBY. Then please stop telling me how life is supposed to be. There's got to be a better way. Okay? A better way to live. I don't want a life like dad had.

DAVID. Then you want something that doesn't exist.

(Turns to CLYDE.)

Tell him...

CLYDE. *(Sheepish:)* I don't know that I'm the best one to ask about this.

TOBY. Go ahead. Tell me how tough things are in Heaven.

CLYDE. *(Shrugs.)* They're not.

TOBY. Tell me how you have to work hard in Heaven.

CLYDE. I can't—because you don't.

AUDREY. That's Heaven, Toby. That's not real life.

DAVID. Heaven is something you have to earn. You have to get through life to get there.

(TOBY looks at CLYDE who shrugs and nods in agreement.)

TOBY. That's all I needed to know.

(TOBY reaches into his back pocket, pulls out a pair of handcuffs and slaps them down on himself and CLYDE.)

CLYDE. Hey!

(TOBY stands for a moment—looking at his arm which is linked to CLYDE's.)

TOBY. When you go, you're taking me with you.

AUDREY & STEPHANIE. Toby!

TOBY. No! If life is so hard and Heaven is the reward, then I'm cutting to the chase. You're taking me back with you.

DAVID. Don't be ridiculous.

(He rushes to the box and starts fishing around.)

Where's the key?

AUDREY. There isn't one. There hasn't been for years and Toby knew it.

DAVID. Regardless, you can't force him to take you.

CLYDE. *(Looks at them.)* Um...actually, he can.

AUDREY. What?

CLYDE. If someone truly wants to leave the Earth and go to Heaven...an Angel is obligated. It's how we can take the sick and dying... I'll admit, the handcuffs are a new one on me.

STEPHANIE. So...catch the leprechaun, he has to take you to the pot of gold.

AUDREY. But he doesn't really. He doesn't know what he's talking about.

(CLYDE looks at TOBY for a long time, like he's reading his mind. TOBY remains firm. CLYDE's eyes grow sad as he looks at AUDREY and nods.)

AUDREY. *(Disbelieving:)* Toby!

TOBY. *(Matter of fact:)* I'm sorry, Mom. I want out.

DAVID. Toby, this is insane.

TOBY. Why is this insane?

DAVID. You are 17 years old...you want to die?

TOBY. I don't want to die. I just want to leave.

DAVID. Effectively...you are dying.

TOBY. It's not like I'm killing myself.

STEPHANIE. Of course not. That would take too much work.

TOBY. (*Shoots her a look.*) It's an opportunity.

STEPHANIE. It's a cheat code. Someone has sent you another friggin' cheat code so you can win without trying.

TOBY. You don't understand.

STEPHANIE. You don't deserve it! You haven't worked for it.

TOBY. Steph...it's a "Get out of jail FREE" card!

STEPHANIE. For you! What about the rest of us?

TOBY. Oh my God! If I handcuffed myself to a college recruiter you'd be blogging to the world!

STEPHANIE. (*Stares at him for a moment.*) Are you really that dumb that you don't see the difference?!

TOBY. I'm saying that I...kind of...don't care. This is my out. Tell me something to stay for. Give me one good reason to hang around. So far all I've heard is how I shouldn't do this because it's...I don't know...NOT what you're supposed to do. Come on Steph! You're the smartest person I know! Give me a good, sound reason to stay.

STEPHANIE. (*Begins to say something and then stops. She shakes her head.*) I'm done.

(STEPHANIE *exits to the kitchen.*)

AUDREY. I can't believe you're doing this to me.

TOBY. I'm not doing it to you—I'm doing it for *me*. I'm just tired of everything and it doesn't look like it's getting any better.

DAVID. Ask any seventeen year old out there and they'll say the same thing, but they don't go out and manacle themselves to an angel.

CLYDE. 'Tis true.

AUDREY. Right! You're seventeen! I forbid it. There I said it! I forbid it. Mother's word should trump everything, right? Ten Commandments. Honor thy father and mother. There. I forbid it. You're not going anywhere with him.

TOBY. You're grounding me?

AUDREY. It's got to count for something, right?

CLYDE. *(Smiles.)* Sorry.

AUDREY. What can I do, Toby? What can I do to convince you that you are making a huge mistake?

TOBY. Nothing. I don't think I am.

DAVID. How would you know? You're 17. You're not even old enough to have any really big mistakes under your belt. You wouldn't know a really big mistake if it kicked you in the head.

TOBY. Exactly! I haven't made any really big mistakes! I can avoid them.

AUDREY. It's not like you're skipping a grade, you're skipping everything.

TOBY. Yeah. All that wonderful HARD stuff that David is saying is so great and builds character. All the pain and work and frustration—forget it. Non-stop express please.

DAVID. You're not listening to me Toby. Yeah, life is full of pain and frustration. But it's the trade off that makes it worth it. If you give up now you, you'll skip all the bad...but you'll miss the good too. That's what we don't want you to miss. Your mother lost the love of her life and she STILL wouldn't trade in her life. Why? Because of you. Because she gets to watch you grow up and become a man. Because the time she had with Bill was wonderful.

CLYDE. *(Interrupting:)* Folks. Sorry, but my time is getting short. Can I have a minute with Toby...alone?

(DAVID and AUDREY slowly shuffle into the kitchen. CLYDE sits on the couch, and TOBY with him. Both throw their feet up on the coffee table at the same time, in the same way.)

TOBY. You're not going to try to talk me out of it, are you?

CLYDE. Nope. That's not my job.

TOBY. Then...what?

CLYDE. Oh, I just couldn't take David's going on and on about LIFE anymore. He's such a preacher. He'd go on forever if we let him. It's part of his job description.

TOBY. Tell me about it.

CLYDE. *(Nods toward the video game system.)* You a gamer?

TOBY. Live for them.

(CLYDE glances at him.)

You know what I mean.

CLYDE. I've played a few, just never got into it.

TOBY. Wait...you've got...up there?

CLYDE. Oh no no no. I mean I've snuck into stores at night and played. I just never really got into them.

TOBY. This isn't the "there's no video games" in Heaven ploy, is it?

CLYDE. *(Chuckles.)* No. Believe me, you won't need them. When you can look out into eternity...video games seem...kind of lame.

TOBY. Is it nice?

CLYDE. *(Stares at TOBY for a moment.)* Um...it's Heaven. You ever hear anybody say...eh 'Heaven. It was okay but I think we're going back to Orlando next year.'

TOBY. I suppose not.

CLYDE. *(Chuckles.)* Yeah. It's nice.

TOBY. Will I be an angel?

CLYDE. No. You will be...something else.

TOBY. *(Thinks for a moment.)* You think I'm making a mistake. Don't you?

CLYDE. I can't answer that, Toby. Only you know if there's anything worth staying for. You know, unfortunately, the only way some people can ever take control of their lives is when they end them. Sometimes they're in chronic pain. Sometimes they've lost everything.

Sometimes they just don't see any hope. I can't judge anymore. I've seen both sides.

TOBY. (*Looks at his cell phone.*) When are we leaving?

CLYDE. Anytime. My wing is all healed up.

TOBY. (*Not sure he liked that answer—getting a little nervous:*) Oh... Well, good.

CLYDE. (*Smiles knowingly.*) It's big, isn't it?

TOBY. Yeah.

CLYDE. It's okay to be nervous. It's a big decision. Doesn't mean it's bad. Just big. You know what you want.

TOBY. (*A little distant:*) Yep.

CLYDE. I'm curious. Why aren't you telling them that you're having doubts?

TOBY. I can't. They think that having doubts means I'm making a bad decision. And I'm not. You've seen my life.

CLYDE. I have. Looks pretty crummy from where I stand. Lost your dad—high school's almost over. Everything's uncertain. At this point it could go either way. It's a 50/50 shot. You're just switching up the odds a little. I get it.

TOBY. So, am I going to miss them? Am I going to get the "box set"?

CLYDE. Honestly, I don't know. You won't be an angel, so I don't know what's going to happen. This doesn't happen a lot. I will say it wouldn't be much of a Heaven if you missed anything.

TOBY. What about them? Will they...

(*CLYDE just shrugs. Finally he stands, forcing TOBY to as well. CLYDE stretches.*)

CLYDE. Man, I gotta get some air and stretch out. I'm starting to get a cramp.

TOBY. It's time?

CLYDE. (*Nods.*) It's time.

**THIS PLAY IS
NOT OVER!**

In order to protect our associated authors against copyright infringement, we cannot currently present full electronic scripts.

To purchase books with the full text, and to apply for performance rights, click ORDER or go back to:

www.playscripts.com