

WAITING -- JUNIUS & RONNIE

1

Waiting to Film Waiting for Godot

Characters:

JUNIUS BLANCHARD	M, 50-60s, former mid-range star
RONNIE PLATT	M, 60s, long-time character actor
LES, 20s-30s	Any, 20s-30s, production assistant
ELLIE SANGER	F, 20s, student, actor
QUINCE MORN,	M, 30s, hyperbolic film director

At Rise: Lights up on JUNIUS and RONNIE, two actors. They are on stage in a theater, but also on a road in a desert. There is a lone, scrubby tree behind them. They are center stage, dressed in raggedy suits and hats. They face out.

JUNIUS

I have enormous respect for directors.

RONNIE

I know that to be true.

JUNIUS

So if you see one around here, give a holler.

RONNIE

Will do.

JUNIUS

(Shaking his head.)

This is a terrible idea.

RONNIE

Probably.

JUNIUS

For a movie, I mean. It's a terrible idea for a movie.

RONNIE

Sure.

JUNIUS

Not our being here. (Pause.) Although.

RONNIE

Sure.

JUNIUS

I once worked with Martin Scorsese.

(Sighs.)

Just for a couple of days. Just for one scene. But. I mean, you know?

RONNIE

Sure. I was there, too.

JUNIUS

You were?

RONNIE

Crowd scene.

JUNIUS

Oh, sure.

(Looking up.)

Are those vultures up there?

RONNIE

(Looking up.)

Might be.

(LES enters, wearing a headset.
He speaks as he crosses behind
the actors.)

LES

How we doing, gentlemen? Need anything? Anything at all?

JUNIUS

(Still looking up.)

Doing fine. Ready when you are.

RONNIE

He wouldn't have to kneel. He's incredibly short.

JUNIUS

The work has to mean something. On the day. We have no control over anything else.

(Turns to ELLIE.)

Miss Sanger, I've made eighty-six films. He's made more than that. I have a hundred and forty credits on the Internet Database thing. I've acted with Dennehy and James Earl Jones and Jimmy Caan. And so has HE. And today, I'm getting my day rate to stand here and drink water until they tell me they're ready to shoot this potential disaster. Last month, I got my day rate to cry over some poor dead girl in a slasher movie you'll never see because the actor just below me on the list was unavailable and the actor just above me was too expensive. Today I'm here. In September, I'm going to get my day rate to stand beside the person who makes the horrible mistake in the lab that creates the next great super hero. And I'll BE that guy on the day. Because that's the point. You'll believe he has kids and dogs and degrees on the wall. Because it's all about the work on the day. You can't say it's great today and then decide it's bad tomorrow.

RONNIE

Junie, if it helps, it might be bad today.

(JUNIUS laughs and drinks
some water and crosses far
right.)

JUNIUS

I have enormous respect for directors.

RONNIE

I've heard that about you.

JUNIUS

(In ELLIE's direction.)

You're saying this film has one?

(ELLIE turns to JUNIUS.)

ELLIE

I played a girl at a party. Her name was Party Girl. I had two lines. I was just filling in for another girl who flaked on the day. I was there anyway, and Quince knew I could act, so I got the part. The movie was about two guy friends who are throwing a surprise birthday party for their other friend at their apartment. And people keep arriving, and every time the door opens, they think it's the other friend, and everyone ducks down and yells Surprise, and each time it's not him. And my first line, when a few people have come in and they're not him, she says, "I don't think he's coming." And as the night goes on, people are drinking and getting wasted, and finally when everyone they know except the one guy has come in, there's a knock at the door, and everyone gets real quiet and ducks down, and my character, Party Girl, she can't stand it, and she says, "I can't take another disappointment," and then... she takes off her top. And she's Party Girl, so there's no bra, and the door opens, and she's standing there with her breasts out, and it's a policeman at the door saying, "I'm sorry, your friend was in an accident, and he's dead." And the film just ends with these two guys standing there, stunned, and me standing between them, tits out, crying.

(PAUSE. Finally, JUNIUS crosses to ELLIE and extends his hand.)

JUNIUS

Party Girl. How do you do. I'm Young Punk.

(They shake. RONNIE extends his hand, and ELLIE shakes with him as well.)

RONNIE

Angry Teen with Hot Dog.

(ELLIE laughs, charmed, and does a small curtsy.)

QUINCE (cont.)

with these lion tamers. Seriously? I'm overcome with jealousy.

(QUINCE turns to JUNIUS.)

QUINCE

That scene with Eric Roberts?, when you were both really fresh and going for it?, Jesus, I could watch that, I could drink it like a vampire and be immortal. What a gift.

JUNIUS

Thank you, Quince. I wonder if you have an update on today's filming? It seems we're a little behind.

QUINCE

We are, and I could not be more apologetic. This was an unforeseen bit of producorial oversight that descended like nightfall on our golden moment together, but I want to reassure you that we shall be victorious and our reward shall be art that will last forever. I think we're... maybe an hour from having everything ironed out, and I mean wrinkle-free, and then there will be nothing to stand in the way of our mutually assured glory, my friends.

ELLIE

An hour?

QUINCE

No more than 90 minutes, on my honor as a gentleman. And when we're ready, the shot that Henrik has come up with for your first scene is going to blow the top off your mind. I mean it's sincerely next level genius. I mean Gordon Willis level vision, just cutting through reality to heaven in light and dark. Have you met Henrik? Because I'm telling you, our DP is both the butcher and the chef. He does it all, and it's all delicious.

JUNIUS

(To RONNIE.)

Is it the sun? I think I might be having a stroke.

QUINCE

I can get you a better hat. A bigger hat. Ellie, can Mr. Blanchard wear your hat. I mean, are you kidding? What an honor. If I had a hat, I would beg him to wear it.

LES the PA enters, speaking
into the headset.)

LES

Copy that. Hey, folks. So we just got some news. It seems that the rights to this film were never 100% ours, I guess, and so until we've sorted things out with the Beckett estate, it looks like we have to halt production. Possibly indefinitely. Quince wanted me to express his most profound apologies. He's distraught about this. Had to lie down. So we're going to need you to go ahead and get out of costume as soon as you can, and we'll be in touch with your representatives as soon as we know more. Can I get anybody any more water? No? Everybody good? Can't thank you enough everybody. It's been a pleasure working with you.

(LES exits the way he entered.

WAITING — RONNIE

RONNIE

Doctor Crawford? I don't, uh, I don't know what to tell you. I mean, when we came in here, I was sure there was no hope. And then I saw you. I saw you with your surgical scrubs and your good, steady hands, and I began to have hope. And when my boy was in surgery, and the chaplain came around, asking if I wanted to pray for my boy or for your steady hands, I said no. I said, I have all the faith and hope in the world. I said I looked in that doctor's eyes and I saw my boy's future. Alive, in recovery, learning to walk again, leaving this hospital, finishing school, getting married, having kids, and being a man I'd be proud of. I said I didn't need to pray. And that's when God decided He was gonna show me. That's when He looked down and saw my arrogance and decided He was gonna teach me a lesson. And He did. Because your hands weren't as steady as they shoulda been. And my boy didn't grow up or grow old or even make it outta that operating room. He didn't do anything but die on that table, right where you stood. So I wanted to find you and tell you that I know all about God's plan now, and what He thinks of arrogance. And I wanted to tell you that maybe it's you who needs to pray.