



Sample Pages

ALAN SAFIER
900 WEST END AVE. #15D
NEW YORK, NY 10025-3581
323 229 3363 • alansafe5@aol.com



Contact:
SUSAN SCHULMAN LITERARY AGENCY LLC
454 WEST 44TH ST., NEW YORK, NY 10036-5205
T 212 713 1633 • C 917 488 0906 • susan@schulmanagency.com

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Jonny, Teddy and Roy grew up together in the '50's and '60's. They meet at Jonny's apartment before their 50th high school reunion. But they've grown apart over the decades. Can their love for each other survive? Can they forget the slights they've inflicted upon each other? And can they forgive one another for their failures — and their successes?

WHERE: Jonny's apartment on New York City's upper west side
WHEN: September, 2016

Dramatis Personae

JONNY, 67, an acting teacher and former actor, intelligent, a bit saturnine, average looks, gay, Jewish, can be childish and vindictive.

TIM, 45, good-looking, fit and nicely dressed, gay, tall and blond, a former model, positive-thinker, sharp sense of humor but always with a smile, a counterbalance to Jonny's edge.

ADRIANA, a stunning woman from Czechia with a thick dialect. She's 45–50 and still a knockout, with a voluptuous body, wearing a spectacular dress. She's highly opinionated, and often speaks the truth without realizing the effect it can have on people.

TEDDY, the same age as Jonny, dark hair, attractive, sparse on top, not skinny like he was in high school, but still in decent shape. He is a sensitive guy, easily upset and good-hearted. He's not the brightest person in the world, but he has his own brand of wisdom.

ROY, the same age as Jonny and Teddy, a bit bigger than they are. Dark hair, dark eyes, tan and expensively dressed. Intelligent with a biting sense of humor. He's more than a little pleased with himself.

(Sample Pages start with p. 19 of the script.)

TEDDY appears at the door. He's the same age as Jonny, dark hair, attractive, sparse on top, not skinny like he was in high school, but still in decent shape. He is a sensitive guy, easily upset and good-hearted. He's not the brightest person in the world, but he has his own brand of wisdom.

ADRIANA [cont'd]

[Checks HER texts.] Oh! Theo is in lobby getting into elevator just as we speak!

JONNY

I bet Samesh let him in. I'll just go open the front door. He might get lost in that long, long hallway of ours. [HE goes to the front door, opens it and stands there silently, waiting for TEDDY. A few uncomfortable beats.] Ah! I can hear the elevator getting closer and closer! [A beat.] He's coming ... he's coming ... he's almost here ... aaand ... here he is! Here's the man: Teddy ... uh, Theo!

TEDDY appears at the door. He's the same age as Jonny, dark hair, attractive, sparse on top, not skinny like he was in high school, but still in decent shape. He is a sensitive guy, easily upset and good-hearted. He's not the brightest person in the world, but he has his own brand of wisdom. He is wearing an ugly hat and very hip sunglasses.

TEDDY

Hey, Jonny, you handsome devil! How the hell ya doin' man?

JONNY

I'm great. How are you?

TEDDY

I am unbelievable, man. Couldn't be better. Just paradiddlin' my way through life, y'know what I'm sayin'? Hey, how 'bout a great big brohug, my old Caballero?

THEY hug.

JONNY

Welcome to New York. You look great.

TEDDY

Yeah, I know. And it's all due to my lady here. That's Adriana¹, Jonny. Is she beauty-ful ... or what?

JONNY

Definitely beautiful. You're a lucky guy.

TEDDY

Jonny, I am. I am lucky in so many ways. God looked down on me the day I was born and He said, "Theo, you are going to have a blessed life."

JONNY

He called you "Theo," did he?

¹ TEDDY pronounces her name AY-dree-ANN-uh.

TEDDY

"You are going to do what you love doing. You are going to live in a city that surrounds you with music, and you are going to have a beauty-ful lady to do it with."

JONNY

Several ... "beauty-ful" ladies to do it with.

TEDDY

"Several"! Yeah! Good sense of humor there, Jonny. And each in her own way adding to what has become Theodore Roosevelt Nowicki. Even Veronica. You remember her, doncha?

JONNY

Oh, yes.

ADRIANA

She was stewardess.

JONNY

Whatever happened to her anyway? We met her that one time before our 10th reunion and then — *poof!*

TEDDY

Oh, she wound up sleeping with some guy she met on one of her flights, got pregnant, had twins, got married and dumped me.

JONNY

Not in that order, I hope.

TEDDY

Yeah, she was awesome. I mean, not the sleeping around part. That pretty much sucked eggs, ya know what I'm sayin'? But she was a great lady. I still carry part of her with me wherever I go.

JONNY

[Flat hand outstretched.] That's O.K.! I don't need to know which part!

TEDDY

Dig this: they live in Kauai now. He's got this big, fancy helicopter business, and she answers the phones and paints turtles.

JONNY

Sounds idyllic.

TEDDY

No, it's not bad. I think maybe she also writes poems.

JONNY

Oh, trust me. She writes poems. *[A beat.]* Close call, mister!

TEDDY

Yeah, no shit! *[THEY laugh.]* And what about Mr. Birnbaum? How's your love life, stud? You seein' anyone these days?

JONNY

Teddy! You know all about that, remember? We both came to Nashville? Saw your band play?

TEDDY

Oh, shit, right! That theatre with all the whatchamahickeys hanging from the ceiling. Yeah. You upchucked all over that nice usher. Damn. How long ago was that?

JONNY

I don't know. Three, four years maybe. You were still with Eleni.

TEDDY

Yeah. Now, *she* was beauty-ful. I mean *really* beauty-ful. Hey — what's your lady's name again?

JONNY

Teddy, I came with a guy. I was there with a man, remember?

TEDDY

Oh, fuck, yeah. You told me — you're one of the gays now. Yeah, I remember. You said you'd rather switch than fight. That was funny. I met him, right? Tall, good-lookin' dude? He's a model or something?

JONNY

Was a model, now an agent. We all went out for barbeque after the concert.

TEDDY

Right. I remember it now. Very clearly. What's the dude's name again?

JONNY

Tim.

TEDDY

Yeah. Tom ... something.

JONNY

Tim. Timothy Keegan.

TEDDY

Keegan, right. Nice guy. So where *is* this boo of yours?

JONNY

He had to run a few errands.

TEDDY

Oh, he did, did he? What kind of errands?

JONNY

I don't know, Teddy. I'm his boyfriend, not his social secretary.

TEDDY

Jonny, Jonny, everything is cool, man. I'm a live-and-let-live kinda guy. That's my motto: "Live and Let Live." Not that I always felt that way. Well, who knows that better than you, am I right? And Veronica. And Eleni. And a few others. But, ya live a few years, ya learn a few things. Like never cook bacon with your shirt off. Everybody has to live their lives the way Jesus planned it. Like, who the hell am I to tell you or anyone else who to love? As long as you don't crash into my truck or bust up my furniture with a pick axe, I'm cool with it.

JONNY

I would never do either of those things.

TEDDY

Of course you wouldn't. *C'mere*, you handsome devil. Gimme another big brohug. [*THEY hug. TEDDY hangs on for a few beats.*] See how broad-minded I am? It don't even bother me touchin' you for a few extra seconds.

ADRIANA

It's so nice to see you two boys together after all this time. Hugging and making love.

TEDDY

Well, this is a hell of a guy here, our Jonny! *[HE hugs JONNY again.]*

JONNY

Again? *[HE endures a long hug.]*

ADRIANA

Theo, darling, don't you think it's time you took off sunglasses? We're not in Cabo anymore.

TEDDY

Wow! Look at me! *[Removes sunglasses.]* I totally forgot I even had them on. Hey, is that a senior moment?

JONNY

You've been to Cabo?

TEDDY

A couple of times. Last month with Adriana, and before that with Crystal ...

JONNY

Right. Which one was she?

TEDDY

You remember. She looked like Darlene from *Mickey Mouse Club*.

JONNY

Right. Wife number four. *[A pause.]* So. Adriana. What do *you* do?

ADRIANA.

Right now, I'm associate in dental office. I answer emails, make appointments, greet patients, and sometimes I assist dentist by holding his suction hose. It's very rewarding work. I meet so many interesting people.

JONNY

You definitely have a type, don't you, Teddy?

TEDDY

Yeah! And she's it!

ADRIANA

Jonny, my brand-new friend, would it be possible to get something to drink while we're waiting for next thing to happen?

JONNY

Absolutely. What's your desire? We don't have an enormous selection, but what we do have is *cherce*.²

ADRIANA

Well, I don't know what is this "cherce," but how about nice glass of scotch?

JONNY

I think that can be arranged. How do you take it?

ADRIANA

Straight up.

JONNY

Easy enough.

² Brooklyn version of "choice," à la Spencer Tracy in *Pat & Mike*.

ADRIANA

With few drops of water.

JONNY

“Straight up, with a few drops of water.” A paradox, but I think I can handle it.

ADRIANA

Water helps bring out flavors that would otherwise be overshadowed by taste of undiluted alcohol.

TEDDY

Is she smart ... or what?

JONNY

Oh, she’s definitely a quiz kid. Hey, maybe she should go on one of Roy’s shows.

TEDDY

Definitely, definitely! She would so clean up it’s not even funny! Unless it’s sports. She doesn’t know dick about sports.

JONNY

Don’t worry, Adriana. Neither do I. So, what can I get you, Teddy? Uh, Theo.

TEDDY

Hmm. Lemme think. What do I want? How about ... a nice glass of scotch ... straight up ... with maybe a few drops of water.

JONNY

Comin’ right up. And guess what? I’m gonna join you!

TEDDY

Awright, Jonny! Let your hair down for a change.

JONNY

I would if I had any.

TEDDY

What are you talking about? You have great hair. For a man your age? Please! [*Takes off HIS hat.*] Look at me!

JONNY

I happen to think it’s very distinguished looking.

TEDDY

Yeah? Well, I happen to think it’s very bald looking.

ADRIANA

This is why he wears that ugly hat everywhere. [*Pointedly.*] And I mean *everywhere*.

TEDDY

I happen to like hats. I even wore one when I had tons of hair.

JONNY

Teddy and his Gentile jewfro — I remember it well.

ADRIANA

Theo was doing perfectly well in hair department until he had to start injecting himself with testosterone injections.

TEDDY

I didn't tell anyone. What, you think I want it blabbed all over the internets that I had a tumor in my nut sack?

JONNY

When was this?

TEDDY

I don't know. Seven, 12 years ago. It was *nothing*, believe me. I had a little pain down there, went to the doctor, they took an x-ray — snip, cut, no more cancer.

JONNY

Yeah, and no more *ball!* That isn't "nothing," Teddy.

TEDDY

Ehh! It's not like I was gonna have a kid or anything. What would I be, like 106 when he graduated from pre-K?

ADRIANA

I have told him many times he could have had kids if he wanted to. One absent testicle does not form roadblock to this.

TEDDY

Anyway, I'm too selfish to be a father. My music is more important to me than anything.

ADRIANA

Oh, really.

TEDDY

And I need my freedom. I don't like being tied down. Not by kids ... or pets ...

JONNY

... or too many testicles ...

ADRIANA

This explains many things.

TEDDY

Yeah? Like what?

ADRIANA

[A few beats while SHE finishes her drink.] Jonny. Would you mind pouring me another one of these delicious brain-numbing drinks? Thank you.

JONNY

I'd be happy to. In fact, I think I'll have another one myself. Theo? *[TEDDY is lost in thought.]* Tayyy-ohhh! *Teddy!*

TEDDY

What?

ADRIANA

Jonny wants to know if you want another drink.

TEDDY

Right now, I would give my only remaining ball for another drink.

JONNY

Not necessary, my old Caballero. It's on the house. Scotch straight up and all the way around.

TEDDY
With a few drops of water.

ADRIANA
Few drops of water, please.

You got it.

JONNY

TEDDY
Boy, am I gonna use up all my drink coupons tonight! And you guys's, too!

ADRIANA
No you are not. You are going to get pleasant buzz here, and then we are going to go to your reunion and enjoy ourselves. Six drinks is your limit.

Yes, A.

TEDDY

ADRIANA
And you're going to take your hat off.

No, A.

TEDDY

JONNY
Theodore Roosevelt Nowicki: the bottomless well. [*HE finishes making the drinks and hands them out.*]

TEDDY
You bet your ass, buddy! Remember Memorial Day? The Spanish Club picnic?

JONNY
Only a few select highlights.

TEDDY
That's because you, my young friend, are a rank amateur.

JONNY
Jews don't drink when the going gets rough. We eat pastrami instead.

ADRIANA
You seem very skilled at pouring, Jonny. Have you ever bartended?

JONNY
Among other things.

ADRIANA
Oh, so you've had many different professions.

JONNY
I wouldn't call them professions, exactly. More like survival jobs. See, when you're an actor, as I *was* — past, *imperfect* tense — you need to earn money between gigs. So you bartend or you wait tables or [*to TEDDY*] you sell ladies shoes in an outlet mall in Paramus.

TEDDY
Thanks for reminding me.

JONNY
And then you get cast in something — say you go on the road with *Cats*, God forbid.

TEDDY
Oh, *Cats* is outstanding! You know, it's been to Nashville three times already?

JONNY

Then, when the tour is over, you come back to New York and have to find a survival job all over again. Until you get another acting job. And thus, the cycle continues.

ADRIANA

It sounds like very challenging life.

JONNY

Well, you know what they say: "Heigh-diddlee-dee" ...

ADRIANA

Who says this?

TEDDY

Jonny here is amazing. I could never be an actor. Not in a million zillion years. I couldn't take it: rejection after rejection after rejection after rejection after rejection ...

JONNY

O.K., Teddy. We get it. Thanks.

TEDDY

Aw, you bet, man.

ADRIANA

I never realized.

JONNY

To be honest, it was one of the main reasons why I quit.

ADRIANA

So acting must not have been that important to you.

TEDDY

A!

ADRIANA

What? I'm just trying to get down to brass tracks, here.

TEDDY

Well, don't.

ADRIANA

Is that correct, "brass tracks"?

TEDDY

How the fuck should I know?

JONNY

It's O.K., Adriana. You're right, I did get sick of it. I asked myself, why did I want to be an actor in the first place? Was it just the work, pure and simple? Or was it because I craved other people's approbation? Casting directors. Critics. My friends. *[A beat.]* Total strangers. It was becoming unhealthy. So I decided — two days after my 50th birthday, in fact — that *that* ... was *that*.

ADRIANA

And you became teacher. Noblest profession of them all.

TEDDY

Next to drummer.

JONNY

It really is. I can be in the worst mood, just want to stay home all night and scarf down Häagen-Dazs ...

TEDDY

Oh man! Triple Fudge Cookie Dough! With cherries! I could eat a whole gallon of that right now. Just lean back, put my feet up, flip on the idiot box ...

ADRIANA

Theo, darling.

TEDDY

Yeah?

ADRIANA

This is Jonny's story.

TEDDY

Oh. Right.

ADRIANA

When Jonny is finished, then you can tell us your story.

TEDDY

O.K. Sorry, man.

JONNY

It's all right, Theodore. But, once I get there and start teaching, my whole mood changes. You ever run?

ADRIANA

You mean like for a bus?

JONNY

No, like on a track, or in a 5K.

ADRIANA

No, and I hope I never have to.

TEDDY

Jonny here ran cross-country in junior high. He was in amazing shape way back when.

JONNY

So, there's this natural high that kicks in at around 25 minutes. Better than any drug. That's what teaching's like for me. After class, I walk home six inches above the sidewalk.

ADRIANA

And you've never had desire to return to acting?

JONNY

Nope. Never.

ADRIANA

No regrets?

JONNY

None at all.

ADRIANA

And you're a great success as a teacher.

JONNY

[*Sarcastically.*] Oh, yes! I'm a *fabulous* success! [*Indicates the apartment.*] Can't you tell?

TEDDY

You are! Jonny here tends to get very down on himself, don't you, Jonny? Jonny here tends to get very critical when it comes to his life, and his career ...

JONNY

Careerzzz. And thank you for your frank analysis, Theodore.

TEDDY

Hey, *no problemo*, man. This is your oldest friend here, am I right? A., we were in the same kindergarten class, can you believe that? We were in Little League together. Cub Scouts. If it wasn't for me, this doofus would still be working to get his Whittling Chip merit badge.

ADRIANA

Very impressive!

JONNY

Anyway, what do *you* know about rejection? You made up your mind to be a drummer while you were still potty training and you've been doing it your whole life.

ADRIANA

Yes, Theo is one of fortunate ones.

JONNY

I remember sitting on the swings one day during lunch, must have been back in, I don't know, second or third grade, and we were all talking about what we wanted to be when we grew up. Lots of firemen, lots of policemen, lots of airline pilots. This one kid even said he wanted to be a stand-up comic, like on "Ed Sullivan."

TEDDY

Jerry Pomeranz! Funny kid. Hey, did I tell ya — I saw him just a few months ago? He's still playing accordion in that polka band in Cleveland, can you believe that?

JONNY

But my friend T. R. Nowicki here, he said he was going to be a drummer.

TEDDY

I hadn't taken a single lesson yet, I just knew what I wanted.

ADRIANA

How old are you in second grade in America?

JONNY

I don't know — seven or eight?

ADRIANA

And you were already so positive about this?

TEDDY

Didn't I ever tell you? Oh, man, this is the best story ever! So — I always knew I wanted to make music. All those old variety shows we had to watch with our parents: Perry Como, Dinah Shore, Tennessee Ernie Ford. Well, we had no choice — one TV, three channels — it was either that or read a book. But the thing is, I would have watched those shows on my own. I was probably listening to music way back when I was still in the womb. And somehow, *somehow* I knew I had a talent for it. Even back in kindergarten, my teacher said she could tell I was musical from the way I bounced the ball to the music.

JONNY

Yeah, Nowicki was a bouncin' fool!

TEDDY

She told my ma maybe I should take piano someday.

ADRIANA

So how did you end up with drums?

TEDDY

I'm comin' to that. So, I'm in my parents car one day, and there's this interview on the radio — some big, famous musician I'd never heard of — and he said that the drummer, *he's* the dude who drives the band.

JONNY

Teddy loves to drive things.

TEDDY

Well, come on — drums are way cooler than the piano any day of the week. I mean, Buddy Rich played drums — Liberace played the piano.

JONNY

Yeah, well, so did Oscar Peterson.

TEDDY

This is true, man. This is very true.

ADRIANA

So, what would have happened if you'd taken all those drum lessons and then found out you weren't very good?

TEDDY

Who cares? Whatever talent you've been given, that's what God wants you to do. If I was good at selling frankfurters from a little grill on the sidewalk, I'd sell frankfurters from a little grill on the sidewalk. If I was good at operatin' on people's brains, then I'd be happy doin' that 'cause that's what I was meant to do, that's what Jesus planned for me.

JONNY

I wish I could think like that.

TEDDY

Why not? I mean, if I can, you can. Just without the Jesus part.

JONNY

My dear old friend, I'd let you operate on my brain any day of the week.

TEDDY

I know you would, man.

JONNY

Here's to a charmed life. *[THEY clink glasses.]*

ADRIANA

Na Zdravi!

TEDDY

Na Zdravi!

THEY drink.

TEDDY [cont'd]

Yeah, I guess I have been charmed. Mostly, anyway. I mean, I still only have one ball.

SFX: JONNY's land line phone rings.

JONNY

Speaking of charmed — could that possibly be him? The illegitimate son of Monty Hall? [Phone rings again.] The love child of Vanna and Betty White? [Phone rings two more times.] Whoever it is, he's got my landline number.

TEDDY

Answer it!

JONNY

O.K.! Let's find out who's behind door number two, shall we? [HE answers the phone.] Hello. Well, well, well. Look who's finally awake! Yeah, we're all waiting for you. Me and Teddy and [sotto voce] his current flavor of the month. All that's missing is you, mister. What the fuck are you talking about? Oh, bullshit, Roy! You told me months ago you cleared your schedule for the whole weekend. You said you wouldn't miss it for the world. Just get your skinny Italian ass in an Uber and What do you mean, twenty-five hundred miles? Jesus, Roy! I don't know what to say. I'm just so fuckin' disappointed in you. Yes, again. Sure, we can try to hook up next time I'm in L.A. If you don't wind up having to fly to Dubai for the week. Yeah, we'll talk soon. Later.

TEDDY

[Getting upset.] I don't like the sound of this, Jonny.

JONNY

I don't fucking believe this guy.

TEDDY

What? What's goin' on?

JONNY

He's not coming.

TEDDY

Huh?

JONNY

Something came up in L.A., some business something or other, so he's not coming. He never even made it to New York.

TEDDY

So you mean he's not coming?

JONNY

No, Teddy.

TEDDY

He's not coming at all?

JONNY

Teddy, listen to me. Roy is not coming to the reunion.

TEDDY

I don't believe it. Every time we try to do this something happens.

END OF SAMPLE PAGES