

\*\*\*\*\* SCRIPT PREVIEW \*\*\*\*\*

**\*\*PURCHASE REQUIRED FOR PERFORMANCE AND DUPLICATION\*\***

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## **BRAIN SURGERY VS. ACTING**

DAD: [*He is a pompous actor with a good heart, working on a script*] See here, Lennie. This is the thing. This is THE thing. [*change in tone—checks his script*] Hmmmm.....cross left...follow your blocking... [*tries again*] This is the THING. [*there is a knock on the door*] Come! [*his son enters*]

SON: Sorry to interrupt.

DAD: Nonsense, son. Come in come in. Your mother didn't tell me you were coming home from school this weekend.

SON: Well, I didn't tell her either. Working on a show?

DAD: Yes, we open tomorrow night. American Buffalo. David Mamet. He's a bit of a potty mouth. But it's a powerful show. Maybe I can get you some seats!

SON: That's not really why I'm here...

DAD: How are the studies going? You know I was talking to Walter Johnson the other day--you remember Walt—

SON: The Big Train, yeah.

DAD: It felt so good to tell him my son was going to be an actor. Following in his father's footsteps...picking up the greasepaint torch. It's wonderful to know that, one day when the lights fade on me--you'll be there to take your mark. I couldn't be more proud.

SON: Dad, that's what I need to talk about...

DAD: Oh, I know....it's midterm. By now you're feeling the crunch. Getting down to the nitty-gritty! Characterization, motivation, Stanislavski's magic "If" But, son, you knew this was one of the best schools in the country. You can't just waltz in on your natural ability. De Niro didn't, Pacino didn't. I didn't.

SON: I know Dad, I know all of that.

DAD: Is there a problem? 'Finding the character'? Sometimes it is a light bulb you know. You struggle and struggle, but you keep working, maybe it's an article of clothing, a hat, and suddenly boom, there he is- Richard the Third--'bad as I wanta be.'

SON: No dad, it isn't the character.

DAD: Without ever losing sight of what ... we.... want . Always. In every scene. The throne--always the throne.

SON: Yes, Dad, the throne...Richard the Third, the best role ever written...I know. It's not that. [*pause*] Boy...I don't know how to say this...

DAD: [*pause*]This is truly the winter of your discontent--what is it son?

SON: Dad, I've been up all night trying to decide just how to put his to you.

DAD: Hoyday a riddle! Neither good nor bad!

What need'st thou run so many miles about,

When thou can tell thy tale the nearest way?

Once more, what news?

SON: I'm trying Dad, if you just back off Richard the Third for a bit.

DAD: [*motions him on with a flourish*]

SON: I've decided to change my major.

DAD: What?!

SON: I don't want to be an actor anymore-I don't think I ever did.

DAD: No!

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SON: I'm afraid so Dad. I think I did it for you.

DAD: This is ....well it's ...it's a shock son. I don't know what to say.

SON: I'm sorry Dad.

DAD: Do you know what you want to go into?

SON: I do. It's medicine Dad. I want to be a brain surgeon.

DAD: Brain surgery.

SON: I know it's not acting Dad, but my professors...they say I'm a natural, that I have real ability... that I could go as far as I want to.

DAD: Brain surgery?

SON: Yes, Dad, brain surgery! [*He is getting excited*] I really believe it's who I am. There's something inside of me that just wants to cut heads open.

DAD: Think son, what will you have to fall back on when this little whim of yours, this 'brain surgery' doesn't work?

SON: Dad, I've been going to operations every chance I get. ....to see the cerebellum come into view, the scalpel shining in the light-Dad-it's magic, it touches the core of my soul.

DAD: Magic?

SON: Yes.

DAD: But how is that making the world a better place?

SON: Welllll....I can save lives Dad.

DAD: But I mean really make a difference.

SON: Dad, surgery is my PASSION.

DAD: Son, I'm not saying you should give it up entirely. Of course not. Sure you can dabble in brain surgery here and there. It could be a hobby-you know, an avocation-there's nothing wrong with that.

SON: No Dad, I don't think so.

DAD: In fact, I hear in Boston there's this amateur surgery troupe--I hear they do some good stuff. Now you could do that on the weekends. Or better yet, you could volunteer, be a...a brain stripper, that sort of thing.

SON: Dad, I don't want to do this halfway. If I keep something like acting to fall back on, I'll always fall back. That's what Dr. Christian Barnard said. He said, if you want to be a surgeon, don't let anything stand in the way of your dream.

DAD: Now, son, listen. Dreaming is all well and good. When you were young your mother and I encouraged you to dream. To pretend to be whatever you wanted. Now every boy thinks he'll grow up to be something heroic: an astronaut, a football player, a member of the clergy...

SON: Dad--

DAD: But son, there comes a time when we must put aside these childish fancies and face the facts. Now think about it son, do you want to build your life around "brain surgery"? Of course not. You want something stable. Like theatre. Now right after food and shelter, what does everyone need? Theatre. Darn right, theatre.

SON: But Dad, those are your values. The more I study, the more I'm convinced that humans need more than just food, shelter, and staged readings of Harold Pinter. Somewhere in all of us, there's a deep need for...for medical attention.

DAD: Oh of all the mamby pamby pie-in-the-sky claptrap...

SON: Dad, medicine is my LIFE....not acting.

DAD: Boy, acting is what made you! Now hundreds of years ago, when your great great great grandfather Beckler sailed to America from the Old Country

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that ship was just fuuuuuulllllll "of... of brain surgeons, and lawyers and other "dreamers", but your grandfather Beckler, he put his nose to the grindstone and took a job as a prompter. And year after year he struggled and slaved until finally one day...one day! He was cast as the bicyclist in "Waiting for Godot."

SON: Great Dad. He had one line.

DAD: That's not the point!

SON: What is the point?

DAD: [*caught up short, new tactic*] Son, don't you want to get MARRIED someday? What woman wants to marry a surgeon?

SON: Dad...I want to be a surgeon...and I always have! [*pause*] Dad--I'd like your blessing.

DAD: Blessing? A blessing on watching my son throw his life away? I hope you don't expect me to pay for this.

SON: No, Dad, I can wait tables or something.

DAD: Oh god.

SON: Dad, give me a chance and I'll make you proud. One day you'll look up and see my name, MY NAME, in big letters...on a hospital invoice.

DAD: My son.... a surgeon.

SON: Yes, Dad. A good one. Maybe one of the greats.

DAD: Ohhhhhh....

The sun will not be seen today

The sky doth frown and lour upon us [*motions*]....

SON: Oh heavens above, Richard the Third...

DAD: ....I shall despair. There is no creature loves me,  
And if I die, no soul will pity me.

And wherefore should they, since that I myself  
Find in myself no pity to myself?

SON: Dad...this has nothing to DO with thyself...

DAD: Oh coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me.....

SON: Dad... you're over reacting. You're also overacting. ....

DAD: ....The lights burn blue. It is now dead midnight.

SON: I'm going!

DAD: Inspire us with the spleen of fiery dragons!

Upon them! Victory sits on our helms.

SON: Goodbye, see you, adieu! [*exits*]

DAD: A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse! [*Realizes that he is alone*] Son?  
Son? Gone...he's gone.

[*Realizes there's an audience, does a splashy flourish bow and exeunts.*]

END

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