BEAUTIFUL OASIS

by

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FADE IN

EXT/INT. THE MILKY WAY GALAXY/AN OFFICE.

The Galaxy, gigantic, alone, silent, in interstellar space.

We move in toward the edge of the Galaxy, past masses of stars.

In the dark spaces between stars we see a speck.

The Speck resolves itself as the Earth and then further into a long-bearded MAN, wearing sandals, in dungarees and navy shirt. He is covered with dust. He sits motionless, his hands resting lightly on his knees.

We can now see that he is in a curiously long and bare Office. A large Desk and two Chairs at the far end, a Door at the other.

An Interval of Time and Silence passes until it is shattered.

INT. FLAT. DAY.

In the dark, the terrified face of JONATHAN LANDRY, in his early-20's, who has overslept.

Flashing red from the blinking "12:00" of his clock radio lights his face.

JONATHAN

Oh my lord!

He knocks over the radio falling out of bed. He feels his way to the window and parts the dark curtains: broad daylight!

The flat is tiny, dismal, and messy. He snatches up his cellphone from a pair of pants on the floor.

He screams. It is 9:30.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

A Sound at the door brings the Man's face to life.

His eyes lock onto the direction of the sound. His head jerks toward the door.

It is the INTERVIEWER, a late 20-ish woman in smart, modest business attire, entering the Office.

The Man springs out of the chair, attacking the Interviewer, trying to strangle her.

Though surprised, she swiftly and deftly throws him aside. He is wild-eyed. He leaps to his feet, a dust cloud from
his clothes, and dashes out of the Office screaming.

INT. FLAT. BATHROOM. DAY

Jonathan hurriedly strokes the last of the shaving cream off his face. His cell rings, traditionally bell tone. He answers.

JONATHAN
No not yet! How many times---! It's three hours difference and I'm late good-bye!

He is suddenly arrested by his reflection in the mirror enough to wipe the mirror clean for a closer examination.

INT. FLAT. DAY -- CONTINUOUS

Jonathan jerks open the closet door. Like the flat, it is a mess, with clothes piled on the floor, with the exception of one fine suit hanging in the center.

INT. FLAT. DAY. -- MOMENTS LATER

Jonathan, neatly suited, furiously tries to tie his tie but always comes out uneven. A scissors as a last resort to even the tie ends? No.

He scrounges a fake-tied tie from a heap at his feet.

INT. FLAT. DAY. -- MOMENTS LATER

In stark contrast to his dismal and messy surroundings, Jonathan stands, neat and groomed ready to leave the flat when his cell rings. He checks and answers.

JONATHAN
(angrily)
WHAT!
(relenting)
Yeah, thanks, ma. I'm gonna need it.

He tosses the phone onto a pile of clothes.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
I have to get this job. I can't go back there. I can't.

He takes a deep breath before leaving. As soon as the door closes...

MOTHER'S VOICE
Jonnie, I'm not some voice on the other side of the country. I'm your (MORE)
3.

MOTHER'S VOICE (cont'd)
mother. Listen to me. You need a
bigger place. Jonnie! Are you
listening to me? Are you there?

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

Tugging her dress back into place, the Interviewer calmly
closes the door.

She opens the face of a large clock on the wall, advancing
the time from 9:45 to 10.

She sits behind a substantial wooden desk. There are several
stacks of papers neatly arranged, one thick official book,
and a large loose-leaf binder. No personal items.

She carefully returns order to the desktop that the
encounter has caused.

INT. OFFICE. -- MOMENTS LATER

There is a Knock at the door. Through the frosted glass we
see the silhouette of a man, Jonathan, lurking. He knocks
again. After a moment he opens the door a crack and sticks
his head in.

JONATHAN
Is this the place?

INTERVIEWER
No. This is. Come in.

Jonathan enters. In an effort to neutralize his lurking, he
strides confidently to the desk and sits opposite the
Interviewer, a large clasp envelope resting on his lap and a
small leather satchel at his feet.

He is determined that she break the silence, which she seems
in no hurry to do, until:

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)
May I ask you another question?

Jonathan starts to answer but stops. Then...

JONATHAN
Yes...?

INTERVIEWER
Have you completed the preliminary
forms?

JONATHAN
Oh.

(MORE)
As she goes through and sorts the papers from the envelope, Jonathan discovers that one leg of the chair he is sitting on is shorter than the others. He experiments with avoiding rocking. That done, he watches her sort the papers.

INTERVIEWER
Jonathan....

---Landry. Born in Louisiana. Grew up in North Carolina. (pause) "Grew up"? (chuckles) Not according to my mother.

No reaction from the Interviewer. It's not even clear if she heard him.

INTERVIEWER  (showing him the page) And this is your current address?

JONATHAN
Yes.

INTERVIEWER  And you can be reached at this number?

JONATHAN
Yes. Anytime. Except at this moment.

INTERVIEWER  I assume it's turned off?

JONATHAN
It's not even here.

His recollection of the incident brings a smile to his face but then he remembers something else, not so amusing.

JONATHAN'S VOICE  Did you remember to unplug the coffee pot?

Surprised, Jonathan looks for the source of the voice.

JONATHAN'S VOICE  (CONT'D) You idiot! It's you.
JONATHAN
(whispering)
Who?

JONATHAN'S VOICE
You!

JONATHAN
(whispering)
Me? Oh! Did I unplug it? Damn, I didn't. I'm going back to extreme expresso or a smouldering heap.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
You don't have to whisper. She won't hear you.

JONATHAN
Really? ... Really? ... REALLY?!
See?

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Wow. ... Can she do the same?

JONATHAN'S VOICE
How would you know?

JONATHAN
Kewl. ... 

JONATHAN'S VOICE
So whattaya think? You gonna get the job?

JONATHAN
I feel pretty good. Confident. 
(suspiciously)
Waitaminute. You're me, right?

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Who else would I be?

JONATHAN
But just now you asked, "Are you gonna get the job?" Why did you say "you" and not "I"?

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Because you am I and I am you. I suppose to be entirely accurate I should have asked, "Are we gonna get the job?" but that's a tad pompous, a bit too Papal, don't you think?
JONATHAN
(meekly)
I suppose so...

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Don't suppose, man! Be sure of it!

JONATHAN
WE ARE NOT THE POPE!

JONATHAN'S VOICE
That's better. Got that diploma ready?

JONATHAN
Yeah, it's right here.
(pats the satchel)

Proper form opened and ready with pencil poised, the Interviewer launches.

INTERVIEWER
Marital status?

JONATHAN
Single

INTERVIEWER
Were you ever previously married?

JONATHAN
No.

INTERVIEWER
Are your parents living?

JONATHAN
Yes.

INTERVIEWER
Any brothers or sisters?

JONATHAN
One brother: Leo. One sister:
Rita.

INTERVIEWER
Their ages?

JONATHAN
Leo...thirty. Rita:
thirty-two...three. Two.

The Interviewer's eyebrow lifts ever so slightly at Jonathan's hesitation.
Jonathan shifts nervously.

    JONATHAN'S VOICE
                Calm down. Big deal! So you
                couldn't remember their ages. What
                difference does it make? Whatta
                they gonna do?

INT. ANOTHER OFFICE. DAY.

The Interviewer huddles with her BOSS, showing him papers.

    INTERVIEWER
            I don't think we can hire this guy.

    BOSS
            Really? Why?

    INTERVIEWER
            He lied about his brother's age.

    BOSS
            (decreeing)
            Anybody who'd lie about his
            brother's age is certain to lie
            about his sister's age too!

    INTERVIEWER
            Then---?

    BOSS
            (Biblically gesturing)
            So it has been said. So let it be
done.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

Jonathan is not certain the Interviewer's eyebrow lifted, however ever so slightly.

    INTERVIEWER
            Name and address of nearest
            relative not a member of the
            immediate family.

    JONATHAN'S VOICE
            I guess that's in case you die
during the interview.

Jonathan laughs but quickly checks himself, not completely
certain.

    JONATHAN
            Duck Hebert. One-eleven Mercury
            Avenue. Berwick, Louisiana.
INTERVIEWER
Relationship?

JONATHAN
Uncle.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Still doubt me, eh? Go ahead. Try!

JONATHAN
(as in "Uncle!")
Uncle!
(pause)
Uncle Duck! Duck, uncle! I think
I'm going to like this---

A pause of anticipation for her reaction. Nothing. Jonathan springs out of the chair, grabbing some of the papers.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
"Preliminary forms"! Ha! Names and numbers! Numbers and names. Half the night racking my brain for ---trivia. For -- insignificancies! I mean look at this: Elementary school what year to what year junior high school what year to what year I went to 3 elementary schools 2 junior highs and at least a couple of high schools. I bet that if she added up all these years she'd find that it took me 18 years to get to the ninth grade! What does it matter?

INTERVIEWER
Have you ever attended a college or university?

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Ah-ha! There you go.

Jonathan eagerly retrieves a paper from the satchel, holding it out to a motionless Interviewer.

JONATHAN
Yes I have. And here's my... Here it is. Here. It is. Here.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Oops. My bad. Anybody with a laser printer can now have a college diploma. Well, put it back. Don't stand there with diploma on your face.
Jonathan slowly withdraws the diploma and sits. An idea comes to him and he starts folding the diploma in halves.

    JONATHAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)
You know, I suspected that that diploma was not going to help. But it was worth a try. Good thing you never framed it. Let's face it. The thing's useless.

Jonathan uses the neatly folded diploma to even the short leg of the chair. He is pleased at the accomplishment. He takes a deep breath.

    JONATHAN
Useless? Oh yeah?

She flips through papers, only the slightest bit seeming to have lost her momentum, until:

    INTERVIEWER
Have you ever attended any other schools such as vocational-technical or had service-related training?

    JONATHAN'S VOICE
Don't you see where this is going? Don't let her be the iceberg to your Titanic.

    JONATHAN
What should I do?

    JONATHAN'S VOICE
Try humor.

    JONATHAN
Humor?

    JONATHAN'S VOICE
Humor. Follow me: Question: "Have you ever attended any other schools such as vocational-technical or had service-related training?" Answer: "Yes. In the Air Force. Radar School".

    JONATHAN
But...

    JONATHAN'S VOICE
---trust me!
JONATHAN
Yes. "In the Air Force. Radar School."

INTERVIEWER
Did you graduate?

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Yes. But I didn't get the part.

JONATHAN
"Yes. But I didn't get the part."

She dutifully, and unsmilingly notes this.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Strike two! Sorry.

She makes an additional note.

JONATHAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)
Wait a minute. Okay, so we didn't break through but com'on let's try to have a bit of fun---

INTERVIEWER
So --- you have served in a branch of the Armed Forces?

A little hesitant to take the advice but upon quickly calculating, he takes the plunge.

JONATHAN

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Very good but I don't think it got through but who cares?

INTERVIEWER
Type of discharge received?

JONATHAN
Honorable.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Are you thinking what I'm thinking?

JONATHAN
But of course! How could I not?

JONATHAN'S VOICE
That's the boy! Go for it.
"Type of discharge received?" eh? Suppose I was a WAC or a WAF or a WAVE --- and I got pregnant --- what kind of a discharge would I receive?

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Oh that's wonderfully naughty---!

JONATHAN
An honorable but spotty discharge??!

INTERVIEWER
What security clearance did you have?

JONATHAN
(heard by her and softly)
---- secret ----

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Good boy. I am proud of you. Me. Us.

She has indeed detected his soto voce "secret" and calculates, taking an entirely new set of pages from the bottom of the stack.

INTERVIEWER
Have you ever bought anything on time?

JONATHAN
Yes. All the time.

INTERVIEWER
Borrowed money?

JONATHAN
Sure.

INTERVIEWER
Declared bankruptcy?

JONATHAN
No.

INTERVIEWER
Do you own credit cards?

JONATHAN
Yes.
INTERVIEWER
How many?

JONATHAN
Two. May I have some water?

INTERVIEWER
No.

Anticipating a "yes", this has caught Jonathan with his ass in the air halfway out of the chair.

This She notices. Is poised with pen. Writes but the pen is out of ink.

Should he or shouldn't he? He sits.

She shakes the pen and decides against noting this.

Jonathan notices that the clock on the wall still reads 10. He consults his watch. There is a discrepancy.

She pulls the long drawer of the desk slightly open to exchange the spent pen for a new one. We see, resting on a pack of tissues, a Rosary. She closes the drawer. She seems to subtly gird herself for...

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)
Names and places of employment beginning with the least recent. Account for all periods of unemployment.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
"Least recent"? "Least recent"? Who says "least recent"? Why not, "What was the first job you can remember"?

JONATHAN
(somewhat fondly)
Nifty-Thrifty Department Store.

INTERVIEWER
Exact title of position.

JONATHAN
Stock clerk.

INTERVIEWER
Description of duties, responsibilities, and accomplishments.

For at least this first couple of jobs, Jonathan tries to duplicate the Interviewer's clinical, almost surgical
directness and emotionless mode.

JONATHAN
I...stocked.

INTERVIEWER
Name of immediate supervisor.

JONATHAN
Uh...
(surprised he remembers)
Lyra Martin.

INTERVIEWER
How long did you work there?

JONATHAN
(clinical again)
About a year. No. Exactly a year.

INTERVIEWER
Reason for leaving.

JONATHAN
Personal reasons.

INTERVIEWER
Would you care to elaborate?

JONATHAN
(spinning it beautifully)
I got tired of the job.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
You mean you can't remember, can you?

JONATHAN
Yeah.

INTERVIEWER
Starting and ending salary.

JONATHAN
(seemingly mocking)
Minimum. Minimum.

The Interviewer looks up for a moment. Over Jonathan's shoulder, she sees, in a far corner of the Office, a YOUNG GIRL of 14. The Interviewer immediately returns her attention to the Form.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
If it's not important enough for you to remember why do they have to know?
JONATHAN
Then there was a year and a half of unemployment.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
That was your magazine phase, wasn't it?

INTERVIEWER
Then?

Jonathan dissolves into a certain fuzziness as we move in to the Interviewer's eyes and hand as she transcribes his answers in a shorthand.

JONATHAN (O.S.)
The Beef Palace.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
Exact title of position.

JONATHAN (O.S.)
Cook.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
Description of duties responsibilities, and accomplishments.

JONATHAN (O.S.)
I --- cooked.

The interviewer carefully peeks again over his shoulder at the corner. The Interviewer has to shift her position to see that the Girl curls up in the corner and falls asleep.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
I think I was evil as a child... I had dreams about The Pope. Good Catholic girls don't dream about The Pope. They should think about The Pope. Pray for The Pope. But once it's just you and The Pope, alone together in a dream --- well...

(speaking)
Name of immediate supervisor at --
The Beef Palace.

JONATHAN
Don't remember.

The Interviewer looks into the corner. The Girl sleeps and is joined by The Pope, also asleep, but in the Papal Bed.
INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
I had an uncle who was a Protestant and a skeptic and whenever The Pope came up in family discussion he'd always say, "After all, he puts on his pants one leg at a time just like everybody else". And that was the nature of my dream. The Pope putting on a pair of pants. Is that evil? But that's not all the dream.

The Girl continues to sleep but The Pope has arisen as TWO CARDINALS wheel in an Apparatus worthy of Leonardo DaVinci and proceed to enact what the Interviewer describes.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
It was when The Pope awakened. There was this great, wonderful machine with ropes and straps and pulleys and a crane-like device that was designed to hoist The Pope up and then lower him down into the Papal Pants, both legs at a time!
(speaking)
Is that evil? To dream that? Well, when I told my parents of my dream, they thought so. So, like the good Catholic parents they were, and maybe to atone for the fact that I was an only child, they decided they'd give me to The Church...
Like a sweaty, crumpled-up five dollar bill in the basket.

EXT. CONVENT. DAY. -- MORNING

A suspiciously-looking Corporate Building that could possibly be a Convent. A B-movie sign announcing "Convent" rests uneasily over what may very well say something like "East Chatham Bank & Trust". The Interviewer comes into view.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
I was fourteen and I was to become an Ursuline Nun.

She carries a duplicate of Maria's bag in The Sound of Music as she walks toward the building.

INT. OFFICE. DAY -- CONTINUOUS

INTERVIEWER
Name of immediate supervisor.

JONATHAN
Don't remember.
INTERVIEWER
How long did you work there.

JONATHAN
About a year.

INTERVIEWER
Reason for leaving.

JONATHAN
I quit.

INTERVIEWER
Starting and ending salary.

JONATHAN
Minimum.

INT. CONVENT. HALL. DAY

Full of wonder and foreboding, she walks down the long, bare Hall.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
I knew they were going to cut my hair. My beautifully long locks. So I had cut them off myself. (speaking)
Next employment.

JONATHAN (O.S.)
Harry's Fill-Um-Up.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
Is that "f-i double-l dash u-m dash u-p"?

INT. OFFICE. DAY. -- CONTINUOUS

JONATHAN
"...dash u-p". Yes.

INTERVIEWER
Exact title of position.

JONATHAN
Assistant manager.

EXT. CONVENT. COURTYARD. DAY.

The Interviewer is led across the hard-surfaced Courtyard by a SISTER. In the course of their crossing several groups of Nuns in Black close-fitting Habits march through.

Though muffled by their long Habits, it sounds as though they may be wearing boots, jack-boots.
INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
Description of duties, responsibilities, and accomplishments.

JONATHAN (O.S.)
I --- was night manager of the gas station. I had to supervise another worker. He would fix flats and run the super pumps. I kept up the stock in the food part. We had stuff like beer and eggs and jerky and milk and bread and oil and anti-freeze. I worked the diesel and regular pumps.

INT. CONVENT. CELL. DAY.

In what looks suspiciously like an office cubicle without anything which would identify it as so, Interviewer is putting away the few things from her Maria-Bag into a simple dresser.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
It was the custom that the novitiates be segregated for the first week. My only contact with anyone was with one of the Sisters who brought me food. At the end of the week I was to see the Mother Superior.

MONTAGE OF 2 VISITS OF THE SISTER BRINGING FOOD TO INTERVIEWER

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)
Every day I was brought food I tried to get the Sister to speak: "What day is this? Is it raining? What's your name? Do you ever dream about The Pope?" She'd never answer. Until the second-to-last day...

INT. CONVENT. CELL. DAY -- LATER

The Sister has entered, deposited the food in silence, and turned to leave as usual but this time she hesitates and turns back into the Cell. Instead of wearing a Crucifix, two pairs of silver Crossed Crosses are pinned on each side of the throat.
SISTER
I never dream about His Holiness.
But one time a Monseigneur had a
minor role in a dream. He didn't
have any lines.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
It was only years later that I
realized that a Nun, this Nun, an
Ursuline Nun, was making a joke.

SISTER
Now listen to me closely: I am
telling you this in the strictest
confidence. In two days you are to
see the Mother Superior. When you
are before her she is going to ask
you two questions: "What thing do
you love most?" And "What thing do
you hate most?" And after you
answer she will say that "from this
day on you are to forsake for the
rest of your life that which you
love most and to embrace that which
you hate most."

(whispering)
Beware! The Mother Superior is a
very shrewd woman.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

INTERVIEWER
How long did you work there?

JONATHAN

INTERVIEWER
Reason for leaving.

JONATHAN
For another...

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Wait! Why dontja try this: the
reason you left Harry's Fill-Um-Up
was that one night, in a fit of
madness, you bludgeoned your fellow
employee to death with a tire tool.

JONATHAN
(snickers)
Probably wouldn't bat an eyelash.
She'd take out an additional piece
of paper, attach it with a paper
(MORE)
JONATHAN (cont'd)
clip and ask, "Was the tire tool of
the two-lug or four-lug variety?"

INTERVIEWER
Reason---?

JONATHAN
---for another job.

INT. CONVENT. CORRIDOR/OFFICE. DAY.

Down what looks suspiciously like the corridor of a major
corporation walk Interviewer followed by the Sister.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
On my way to meet the Mother
Superior I could think of nothing
but food. I had not seen the Sister
who had brought me food and told me
to "Beware!" for two days. I
should be thinking about my answers
to the questions.

We see her full-face:

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)
(speaking)
If I hadn't been warned, I would
have answered that what I love most
is chocolate and that which I hate
most are vegetables, cold
vegetables. I was fourteen years
old. I was alone. I was confused.
I was hungry.

They have stopped at the end of the corridor at a pair of
large doors. The Sister opens them.

The room on the other side is dark but in the distance is a
desk behind which sits the Mother Superior. A thin, erect,
hard-boned Nun wearing very thick oval-framed glasses.

The desk is bare except for a single sheet of paper on which
she is busily writing. On the wall behind the desk are huge
Crossed Crosses.

The Sister leads the Interviewer to a spot before the desk
and then takes a place to the right-hand of the Mother
Superior, who continues to write.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Ten billion bits of thoughts
flooded into my brain. None
complete. None sensible except the
(MORE)
one fear that this... this Nun was somehow going to trick me into spending the rest of my life without chocolate and having to eat vegetables, cold vegetables!

The Mother Superior sets her pen down and starts to raise her head.

At the last second I decided that if this Mother Superior was, as the Sister told me, shrewd, I could be just as shrewd, and at the same time assuring myself a lifetime of chocolate because...

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

We see the Interviewer full-face:

---somehow I knew that she was going to try to trick me.

INT. CONVENT. OFFICE. DAY.

The Mother Superior looks the Interviewer straight in the eyes.

What thing do you hate most?

Chocolate, Mother Superior. It makes me break out.

What thing do you love most?

Vegetables, Mother Superior. I love them cold, especially cold.

The Mother Superior turns the page over on which she has been writing.

(to the Sister)

Did you inform the novitiate beforehand of the questions as I asked you to?

Yes, Mother Superior.
INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
She knew that I knew and wanted me to know!

MOTHER SUPERIOR
From this day on you will forsake vegetables and to eat chocolate every day. Every day you will come before me in this room and eat a chocolate bar.

INT. CONVENT. CELL. DAY.

Interviewer is praying before candlelit Crossed Crosses.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
And even though I went on for another four years I knew that I would never become a Nun. Every day, as I made the long trek to her office I was reminded. Every day as I stood before her and ate that chocolate I was reminded...

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

Jonathan and Interviewer seated facing each other.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
...that I had taken what should have been a delight and turned it into a torture.
(speaking)
Next employment.

JONATHAN
Triangle Manufacturing Company.

INTERVIEWER
Exact title of position.

JONATHAN
Machine operator.

INTERVIEWER
Description of duties, responsibilities, and accomplishments.

JONATHAN
I operated --- a machine --- that bent small pieces of steel pipe.

INTERVIEWER
Name of immediate supervisor.
JONATHAN
Hercules Broussard.

INTERVIEWER
How long did you work there

JONATHAN
About eight months

INTERVIEWER
Reason for leaving

JONATHAN
I hated the job

INTERVIEWER
Starting and ending salary

JONATHAN
Four twenty-five an hour for both...

Pause as Jonathan watches her make notations on the Form. He smiles.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
(fondly recalling)
Harry's Fill-Um-Up....

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Whatever became of Harry?

JONATHAN
Whatever happened to Ethyl? By the time I worked at Harry's, Ethyl stood alone, oh so tall but rusting and dry as an old French whore, supplanted by "Diesel", "Regular", and "Super". I wonder how it happened. I suppose it was "Super" that done her in. I can understand standing up to "Regular", even "Premium", but "Super"? How can you hold out against "Super? What's the use of this anyhow? It's not how it works. It's not how it ever works.

INT. ANOTHER OFFICE. DAY.

The Boss sits behind his desk. After a moment he experiences a hemmoroidal-like discomfiture.

BOSS
(into intercom)
Sarah. I have an opening to be filled.
Interviewer instantly appears with a stack of papers.

INTERVIEWER
Here are all the current applications.

BOSS
Well then, why don't I go through these and find the person most qualified to get a job with this company. And hire him.

A moment of silence. The Interviewer tosses the applications into the air.

Then both burst into laughter.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

Jonathan and Interviewer sit facing each other.

INTERVIEWER
Have you ever participated in an organized sports program?

JONATHAN
In high school football and track.

INTERVIEWER
Have you ever applied for a job with this company before and if so, when.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Are you kidding?

JONATHAN
No.

INTERVIEWER
Have you ever been involved in an automobile accident in which the damage to the vehicle or vehicles or to other property involved totaled five-hundred dollars or more or involved the death of a passenger or passengers?

JONATHAN
No

INTERVIEWER
Have you ever been convicted of murder?
INTERVIEWER
Have you ever been accused of murder?

JONATHAN
No

INTERVIEWER
Have you ever screamed bloody murder?

JONATHAN
Not that I can recall

INTERVIEWER
Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party USA or any Communist Organization anywhere?

JONATHAN
No

INTERVIEWER
Are you now or have you ever been a member of a Fascist or Neo-Fascist organization?

JONATHAN
No

INTERVIEWER
Do you now or have you ever held tenure at a college or university?

JONATHAN
No

INTERVIEWER
Have you ever reported a UFO sighting to an agency of the Federal Government?

JONATHAN
No

INTERVIEWER
Religious affiliation

JONATHAN
Methodist

(MORE)
JONATHAN (cont’d)
(jumping up, circling her, in her face)
What could I possibly have been thinking of when I walked into this room? You sit there with your forms and pencils asking me questions. Reducing a lifetime of experience to a...an answer on a page of paper. Yes, I'm a METHODIST. I was born a METHODIST and have lived METHODIST. But does that tell you the real METHODICAL me??? I HAVEN'T BEEN TO CHURCH IN YEARS!!!!!!

Their noses are almost touching.

She is completely aware of their personal proximity. She swallows hard and imperceptibly pulls away, at the same time opening the long drawer of her desk, still holding his eyes, she thrusts a hand into the drawer, rummaging.

In addition to the tissue and Rosary, the drawer is a clutter of loose pages, office implements, a candy bar or two, a purse, and some personal items including a PISTOL, which she momentarily grips, assuring herself of its presence.

The moment passes and she extracts a single sticky-note from the drawer, quickly closing it. She uses the note to mark the current page. She looks him directly in the face.

INTERVIEWER
Are you a regular church-goer?

His argument completely refuted, his emotion spent, Jonathan sinks back into his seat.

JONATHAN
....I haven't been to church in years....

INTERVIEWER
Are you now, have you ever been, or do you have friends, relatives or acquaintances who are now, have been, or possibly will be a member of any organizations, associations, movement, group, or combination of person or persons which advocates the overthrow of our constitutional form of government or which has adopted the policies of advocating or approving the commission of acts (MORE)
INTERVIEWER (cont'd)
of violence and/or force to deny
other persons their rights under
the Constitution of the United
States, or which seeks to alter the
form of the government of the
United States by unconstitutional
means?

JONATHAN
No...?

INTERVIEWER
Do you have close friends who are
African-American?

JONATHAN
No.

INTERVIEWER
Mexican-American?

JONATHAN
No.

INTERVIEWER
Native-American?

JONATHAN
No.

INTERVIEWER
Would you describe your circle of
friends as exclusively white?

JONATHAN
Well....

INTERVIEWER
Do you have close friends who are
Eskimo-American?

JONATHAN
No

INTERVIEWER
Palestinian-American?

JONATHAN
No

INTERVIEWER
Oceanic-American?

JONATHAN
No.
INTERVIEWER
Asian-American?

JONATHAN
No.

INTERVIEWER
Then your circle of friends is exclusively white.

JONATHAN
(almost sharply)
Yes....
(then lightly)
I guess the family tradition that we are descended from a troupe of mimes is true.... I bet I could take a carrot out of my pocket, stick it in my ear, and she would never notice it.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
What is that in your pocket?

Fearful, Jonathan tries to unobtrusively check. He manages to do so, leaving his hand in his pocket.

JONATHAN
(whispering)
A melted candy bar. Or....

INTERVIEWER
Do you have or have you ever had any hobbies?

JONATHAN
Yes, I collected stamps.

INTERVIEWER
Have you ever defaced a unit of United States currency?

JONATHAN
No. Um, well...
(chuckling)
Once I put a half-dollar on a railroad track to be flattened by a train.

The Interviewer opens another drawer. One of the fat ones, to the left. It is a rat's nest of loose papers of every sort, color, and variety; colored markers, pens, pencils, staplers, some photographs, several more candy bars, and a box of BULLETS.
In her rummaging, we see she she palms several of the Bullets. She finds a blank page and quickly shuts the drawer.

During this, Jonathan extracts his hand and quickly licks the chocolate off, after smelling it first, leaving a hint of a Hitler moustache.

She drops her pen, which Jonathan retrieves, during which she transfers the Bullets into the top drawer.

She writes on the page a lengthy elaboration transcription of all his words regarding this defacement.

INTERVIEWER
Please continue.

JONATHAN
I mean...that was...some time ago.

INTERVIEWER
Can you recall the year?

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Stop. Stop now.

JONATHAN
I was a boy. Fourteen. So that would be----

JONATHAN'S VOICE
I mean it. Stop. You're not helping yourself. Stop! And, Adolph, you've got chocolate under your nose.

Jonathan wipes it off.

JONATHAN
Well, maybe twelve. It got...real flat. Come to think of it, it wasn't a half-dollar, it was a quarter...

JONATHAN'S VOICE
STOP!

Jonathan consults his watch. Checks the wall clock. Continued puzzlement.

JONATHAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)
Before this is over they're going to know everything there is to know about you. Me.... Us----

JONATHAN
Yeah right. Except who I am.
JONATHAN'S VOICE
I'm really starting to get some vibes here and they're not good. Look, just get up and walk right out of that door. Go on! Get up!

JONATHAN
I can't just get up and walk out, I mean, I could just get up and walk out but that would be too complicated.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Complicated or not, do it. Don't take the easy way out which would be to just go along.

JONATHAN
(jumps up)
A moving train! That's it! I am on a moving train. I've missed my stop and the simplest thing, the easiest thing, would be to grab my papers and jump off. People in the movies do it all the time. Just gotta remember to roll. But that wouldn't be the smartest thing. That would be to stay on, until the train slows or stops. Then get off. And in the meantime maybe have a little fun along the way.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
I thought so once but not now. This won't be fun! You've talked yourself into something dangerous I tell you. Besides, it's me you should be listening to! Don't try to rationalize it on the fly like you're doing.

JONATHAN
Don't you think we can have a bit of fun? Just watch. And listen....

There is a pause as Interviewer puts the finishing touches on the railroad track currency defacing incident. She has had to consult a rather thick tome for some cross-referenced notation.

The pause subtly becomes a frozen moment in which we are uncertain who is frozen and who is not until:

INTERVIEWER'S VOICE (V.O.)
You know what you're doing, don't you?
INTERVIEWER
What?

INTERVIEWER'S VOICE (V.O.)
Raking leaves.

INTERVIEWER
So what? Don't they need to be raked?

INTERVIEWER'S VOICE (V.O.)
In the middle of the forest?

INTERVIEWER
This is a forest?

INTERVIEWER'S VOICE (V.O.)
Look around you.

She does, slowly getting up.

INTERVIEWER
It could be. It is. Indeed it is. Dark, impenetrable. I know what you're talking about now. I remember reading that someone once wrote a book exposing the fact that they... burned the leaves. But wasn't that back during the Great Depression? People were starving. People needed work. And there were all those leaves lying around on the ground everywhere.

INTERVIEWER'S VOICE (V.O.)
(secretly)
And what did they do with all those leaves?

INTERVIEWER
(discovering the answer as she answers)
Well, the leaves were raked into "piles". These piles were gathered into one large pile and were put into "sacks" which were "transported" to a central "depot" where they were put into metal containers with "screen tops"...and BURNED! MY GOD! How could they have gotten away with it? Oh yes, they tried to justify themselves by saying that it had to be done. That organic gardening was still in its infancy. And that it was, (MORE)
INTERVIEWER (cont'd)
after all, for the good of the
nation. That if they didn't do it
the entire country would be up to
its third floor in humus in less
than a generation but still... how
did they get away with it?

INTERVIEWER'S VOICE (V.O.)
But they did. They did get away
with it. As will you. Won't you?

INTERVIEWER
Of course I will. But this is
different, oh so different. There's
no Depression. No harbingers of war
on the Continent from the
ever-growing Nazi War Machine. No
rumblings from the Fanatical
Japanese Hordes. No Roosevelt being
re-elected to his eighth term...

INT. OFFICE. DAY. -- MOMENTS LATER

The Interviewer carefully, ceremoniously, stacks completed
forms, clearing an ample space for an entirely new set of
forms.

INTERVIEWER
Now --- What do you feel is your
most outstanding characteristic?

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Where's the fun? I'm watching. I'm
listening---

JONATHAN
Well, that I'm a good worker and I
get along well with people.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Ha-ha! That's a good one!
Hilarious.

INTERVIEWER
Do you play a musical instrument?

JONATHAN
Um --- I used to play the clarinet.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Why not the bongos?
INTERVIEWER
Do you have any unusual mannerisms in action or speech; any peculiarities in appearance or clothing preference, that distinguishes you from other people?

JONATHAN'S VOICE
You're only sinking deeper.

JONATHAN
Dammit! Let me think! And don't mix the metaphor.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
What metaphor?

JONATHAN
The train! The train! A speeding train. You've got me in quicksand.

INTERVIEWER
Do you have any unusual mannerisms in action or speech; any peculiarities in appearance or clothing preference, that distinguishes you from other people?

JONATHAN
(a beat)
No. Not really.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
You choose the metaphor, you stupid, trapped man.

INTERVIEWER
Have you ever worn a mask in public for reasons other than as a part of a costume?

JONATHAN
On Mardi Gras one year I dressed up like a ghost. But that's a costume, isn't it?

INTERVIEWER
Have you ever done anything for which, later, you could find no reason for having done in the first place?

Pause.
JONATHAN
I'm not sure I understand.

INTERVIEWER
(exactly as before)
Have you ever done anything for which, later, you could find no reason for having done in the first place?

JONATHAN
Um...in public or private?

INTERVIEWER
(pointedly looking at him)
Either.

JONATHAN
(smiling)
Of course not.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
What kind of a question is that?

JONATHAN
I guess they're trying to screen out the nuts. But what kind of a nut would answer a question so as to give it away that he was a nut?

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Or maybe it's a trick question.

JONATHAN
But what's the trick?

INTERVIEWER
Are you positive?

JONATHAN
(not positively)
Yes.... No. A real nut would answer something stupid, something inane but not insane, to cover up the fact that he was a nut. On the other hand, by my not answering it could be taken to mean that I was hiding something because, well, I guess everyone at some time or other...

INTERVIEWER
Take your time. We like to be as thorough as possible.
JONATHAN'S VOICE
No kidding.

JONATHAN
(pacing)
Was it a trick question? Should I have made something up? I mean, I've been making up names and places and dates. What's one more? Wait. I know. That was THE QUESTION. There's always one question tucked away that decides whether or not you're suitable. One little question tucked away in the padding and I let it pass without...!

JONATHAN'S VOICE
But you answered it.

JONATHAN
Yes. I did answer it. I've never done anything for which, later, I could find no reason for having done in the first place. There would have been no reason for jumping off the train! It would have been a...senseless... spontaneous --- act. And I didn't. I haven't.... I...couldn't.

Jonathan returns to his chair, unusually calm.

INTERVIEWER
Do you smoke?

His unusual calm resolves itself into a transference of both himself and the Interviewer into:

INT. A BAR. NIGHT.

A rather antiseptic and empty Bar. The kind one finds in a downtown hotel.

The Interviewer is already seated as Jonathan sits next to her. He seemingly not noticing her. She immediately sizing him up.

INTERVIEWER
Do you smoke?

JONATHAN
No ----

INTERVIEWER
Do you drink alcoholic beverages?
Anticipating this might be something, he turns fully to her.

INTERVIEWER
(sexily)
(sultry)
----Infrequent----

JONATHAN
I'd say I fall somewhere between Heavy-Social. And Light.

INTERVIEWER
(intrigued)
Hmmm. That would be. Moderate?

JONATHAN
Yeah, but Moderate implies that I drink Often. But in Moderate. Amounts.

INTERVIEWER
(leaning in to him)
Are you an Infrequently-Moderate. Or Frequently-Moderate.
(supporting her chin)
Drinker.

JONATHAN
I...I don't know.

INTERVIEWER
So --- How often. Do you become. (drawing it out) Intoxicated. To the point of...
(moistening her lips) Drunkenness.

JONATHAN
....Rarely.

INTERVIEWER
Really?

JONATHAN
Seldom?
INTERVIEWER
When you become, intoxicated, to
the point of, drunkenness, is it
Social. Or...
(whispering in his ear)
Private.

JONATHAN
About Equal.

INTERVIEWER
Type of alcoholic beverage most
often consumed.

JONATHAN
Beer. Please.

He turns to get his beer. When he turns back, she is gone.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

The Interviewer seems to be taking a momentary mental break
as she shifts papers. Jonathan studies her.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Now! Now's the time to get out.
To get off the train. Get out.
Jump off!

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
Things would be much simpler if he
just left.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
If you can just get through to her.

JONATHAN
(trying)
Um...I'd like to...uh, I...

INTERVIEWER
Is there something the matter with
you?

JONATHAN
Uh...no. No, not at all.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Maybe it's not quite time. Maybe
one more question.

INTERVIEWER
We have to go through a complete
medical history now
Jonathan clenches his eyes shut:

INT. OFFICE. NIGHT.

Jonathan's eyes snap open.

The Office is dim. He hears "clickity-clack clickety-clack". Notices lights streaming by through the frosted glass door.

He goes to the Door. Tries to open it but it seems locked. He remembers and tries to slide the door. It slides open. A windy rush.

JONATHAN
And you said it was a pit of quicksand.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
(railroady)
Next station: Redemption! The train doesn't stop so be quick about it! Helmets recommended! Insurance required! GUTS!: useful but optional. So go ahead. Ya wanta push? Remember to roll!

The Interviewer clicks on the desk lamp.

INTERVIEWER
Of course the job here is completely irrelevant I don't know if there even is a job. That's not my job

She snaps off the light.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

The Interviewer turns a page.

INTERVIEWER
Do you have any identifying features such as scars or tattoos

JONATHAN
On my right thigh, a birthmark maybe I did answer that ONE QUESTION correctly the first time

INTERVIEWER
Have you ever had Nephritis
JONATHAN
No... I have never done anything for which I can find no reason for having done

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
Here, unlike life, there will soon come a time when he will have to come forward, stand on the SPOT and make his BIG SPEECH saying, "this is who I am"
(speaking)
Have you ever had Nephrosis, Bursitis, or Chlorosis

JONATHAN
No no no... It doesn't mean that I'm a nut it just means that I'm normal totally completely hopelessly normal

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
And they all come in here pretending
(speaking)
Lumbago

JONATHAN
No

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
Pretending to wear a tie
(speaking)
Colitis

JONATHAN
No

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
Pretending to not sweat
(speaking)
Pellagra

JONATHAN
No

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
Pretending to know each and every one of the little details, the tiny bits of their lives
(speaking)
Phlebitis

JONATHAN
No
INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
He didn't even tie that tie FAKE
little metal clips I bet he's
scared to death it'll fall off if
he had to jerk his neck around in a
hurry

(speaking)
Lethargy

JONATHAN
No

INTERVIEWER
Distemper

JONATHAN
No

INTERVIEWER
Trachoma

JONATHAN
No

INTERVIEWER
Polio

JONATHAN
No... OH a great big NOthing
twenty-six years and what have I
got to show for it not a single
unmotivated spontaneous act

INTERVIEWER
Have you ever been hospitalized for
Lockjaw Anthrax or Cowpox

JONATHAN
Numbers dates recitation of names
and places that's what my life has
been one long dissertation no peaks
no valleys just plateau

JONATHAN'S VOICE
No no no

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
Why do they keep coming some even
pretending to be pretending

(speaking)
Jaundice Measles Rickets Palsy

JONATHAN
No
INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
And they're all the same
(speaking)
Asthma
No

JONATHAN

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
Of course each one is different but they're all different in the same exact way
(speaking)
Dropsy
No

JONATHAN

INTERVIEWER
Hemorrhoids
No

JONATHAN

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
AND THEY KEEP COMING and I keep working
(speaking)
Bulimia
No

JONATHAN

INTERVIEWER
Acne

JONATHAN
I couldn't bring myself to just get up and walk out that would have been THE ACT a spontaneous act but I couldn't what a mess... Yes

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
I do want to eat don't I
(speaking)
Cancer
No... Yet there must be something there has to have been some act sometime somewhere for no reason or otherwise what is the use of continuing...living
INTERVIEWER
Have you ever been stricken with rabbit fever

JONATHAN
Wait I've never wanted to work have I... No

INTERVIEWER
Scarlet Fever

JONATHAN
And I don't want to work here do I... No

INTERVIEWER
Typhoid Fever

JONATHAN
Did I have to come here... No

INTERVIEWER
Spotted Fever

JONATHAN
Do I or did I really want to work here... No

INTERVIEWER
Rheumatic Fever

JONATHAN
Do I have any reason whatever for being here... No

INTERVIEWER
Parrot Fever

JONATHAN
No

INTERVIEWER
Parrot Fever

JONATHAN'S VOICE
No

INTERVIEWER
Parrot Fever

JONATHAN
No! Then have I ever done anything for which, later, I could find no reason for having done in the first place?
INTERVIEWER
Fever?
JONATHAN AND JONATHAN'S VOICE
NO!
INTERVIEWER
No?
JONATHAN
I mean, yes
INTERVIEWER
Would you care to elaborate?
JONATHAN
No
INTERVIEWER
But do
JONATHAN
What?
INTERVIEWER
Elaborate
JONATHAN
Yes when I have a cold or the flu I get a Fever Sometimes

INTERVIEWER
(coincident with Jonathan's following speech)
Do you have or have you ever had: moles warts piles corns abscesses scabs boils blobs ... tetter

JONATHAN
I have done something I am doing something and to know it makes it possible to continue to sit it through because I don't have to be here I'm here for no reason and it feels good I am acting spontaneously and it feels so good I think I might explode!

INT. BAR. NIGHT.
This is the exact scene as before.

INTERVIEWER
Do you smoke?
JONATHAN
You've asked that already.

INTERVIEWER
And did you answer?

JONATHAN
Yes.

INTERVIEWER
Did you know?

JONATHAN
Yes.

INTERVIEWER
What?

JONATHAN
"No".

Satisfied with this bit of wit, Jonathan takes a long pull on his Beer. Their noses are almost touching.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

Jonathan leans forward over the desk with his arm preparing to stretch out toward her.

INTERVIEWER
He's trying to get over my desk. This desk. Is a wall. A wall over which I may not climb if I wish to...eat. But because it is a wall doesn't mean it can't be scaled.

She pushes back her chair just a bit. She opens the long drawer. She glances in: her choices are a Pistol, a Machete, and a Meat Cleaver. Puts her hand into the Drawer.

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)
Someone could jump up and down on the other side waving their hands. But they don't. And I'd not see. Someone could stand up on a chair and peer over. But they wouldn't. And I'd look the other way. Someone could even climb the wall, pull themselves up and squat atop the desk and stay and talk a while.

Jonathan's hand and arm have been slowly approaching her across the Desk.

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)
Or they could even reach over...
She jumps up with the Machete and deftly hacks off Jonathan's encroached Hand with a single stroke.

It turns out bloodless and rather comical, Jonathan merely staring at the completed deed.

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)
Of course they'd have to answer the questions. They all have to answer the questions. That is the delight and that is the torture of it all.

She turns a page.

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)
Left-handed or right-handed?

INT. OFFICE. DAY. -- MOMENTS LATER

She resumes her usual position.

Jonathan has relaxed into his.

Several of the hanging incandescent lights flicker and die. Both notice this. The lights remaining cast neat pools of brightness in the now darkish open space of the Office surrounding the Desk.

INTERVIEWER
Has anyone in your family ever been obese?

JONATHAN
Yes.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
You've got some power now.

Jonathan wanders from light pool to light pool.

JONATHAN
Yes! How different it is to be doing something for no reason at all.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
What are you going to do with it?

JONATHAN
Well, if it comes to it, my Uncle Dudley can be fat -- or not fat --or the Bishop of Cologne if I choose.
JONATHAN'S VOICE

JONATHAN
(bowing)
Thank you. Thank you. To continue: I can have a PhD.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Wow!

JONATHAN
Or have been a Captain in the Navy.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
The United States Navy----

---or a Marine Colonel. With cancer---

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Nice touch.

Jonathan squints up into the light above him.

JONATHAN
Thank you. Thank you.

He takes a bow.

INTERVIEWER
(strongly)
Blood type.

INT. THEATER STAGE. DAY.

Both Jonathan and the Interviewer stand on a bare stage in a spotlight as applause dies down. They are taking short bows.

JONATHAN
Thank you.

She whips out a steno pad and pen, poising professionally.

The Routine begins quite straightforwardly with Jonathan as only slightly serious about facts of the situation but as each gains comfort by the end each is trying to upstage and outdo the other in an effort to put the bit over.

INTERVIEWER
Now, sir, there's only one more thing we need to know.
And what's that?

Your blood type.

My blood type?

Yes --- Blood type.

Really?

Blood type.

Don't know.

Are you "A"?

What?

Are you "A"?

Am I a what?

Are you an "A"?

"Am I an A"? Hmmm....

Are you?

What?

An "A"!

Not certain.

Are you a "B"?

Do I look like a bee?
A lone snicker from the blackness of the audience.

INTERVIEWER
"B"?

JONATHAN
No!

INTERVIEWER
Then you're "O"?

JONATHAN
....Must be.

Another lone snicker.

INTERVIEWER
(starting)
Blood type...

JONATHAN
(finishing)
...O.

INTERVIEWER
Positive?

JONATHAN
No.

INTERVIEWER
Then you'll have to take a blood test.

JONATHAN
What for?

INTERVIEWER
To find out your blood type.

JONATHAN
My blood type? I just told you it was...

...O...

BOTH

Right.

JONATHAN
Positive?

INTERVIEWER

JONATHAN
No.
INTERVIEWER
Then you'll have to test it. Have you ever had it typed before?

JONATHAN
Sure. In the Navy. All Naval Officers gotta know their blood type.

INTERVIEWER
And what type is it?

JONATHAN
O.

INTERVIEWER
Positive?

JONATHAN
No! I'm not positive, I'm...

INTERVIEWER
...if you're not sure...

JONATHAN
...I am sure. I'm positive...

INTERVIEWER
...but you've been telling me you're not positive. Now make up your mind! If you're not positive then we've got to find out so that our records can be correct...

JONATHAN
...look. My blood type is...

BOTH
O

JONATHAN
Right

INTERVIEWER
Positive?

JONATHAN
No

INTERVIEWER
NOW WAIT A MINUTE!

Lone laughter from another voice. Female. We see that the audience consists of Jonathan and Interviewer sitting across the aisle from each other.
All other seats empty. Each oblivious of the other though enjoying the show.

JONATHAN (O.S.)
Don't say anything. My blood type is "O". You got that?

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
You said that before.

JONATHAN (O.S.)
I know but do you have it?

INTERVIEWER
Got it

JONATHAN
Good. Write it down. Next to where it says, "Blood type": O

INTERVIEWER
O

JONATHAN
So far so good. I am O...negative.

INTERVIEWER
Ooooo-kay. "O...negative". Ohhh, I see...

JONATHAN
Now she sees....

Outright laughter from both in the audience.

INTERVIEWER
Let me see if I got this right.

JONATHAN
I'm not holding my breath.

INTERVIEWER
Your blood type is...

BOTH
Ooooooo

JONATHAN
Yes-yes

INTERVIEWER
Oooooooo negative

JONATHAN
You gottit!
INTERVIEWER
No mistakes? Perfectly correct?

JONATHAN
Right

INTERVIEWER
As it is here

JONATHAN
Correct-a-roony

INTERVIEWER
Without error

JONATHAN
On the dot

INTERVIEWER
Take a look

JONATHAN
That's it

INTERVIEWER
No doubt?

JONATHAN
None what-ev-er.

INTERVIEWER
Are you positive?

JONATHAN
Yes... (oops!)

INTERVIEWER
BUT IT SAYS HERE THAT YOU ARE NEGATIVE!!!

A rim shot from the pit.

Jonathan now stands alone center stage in a light pool.

JONATHAN
I'm positive I'm negative!!!
(dead stop. then softly)
I completely cancel myself out.
(accidently making a sign of the cross)
INT. OFFICE. DAY.

Jonathan drags his chair around to the Interviewer's side of the Desk.

JONATHAN
O positive! O negative! O! O! "Oh, you beautiful doll...!"

She is stunned. Then she reaches for the top page of a stack of papers.

He slaps a hand on top. She grabs the pull of the long drawer but his other hand stops her from pulling it open. He looks directly at her. She turns her head away. Keeping a hand on the drawer, he sits on the desk, on the papers she had reached for.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
(conversationally)
That really helped. I mean, that's twice in a day! Who would believe it? I'm actually sitting on this desk. Her desk.

During this speech she pushes away from the Desk, gets up and moves the hands of the clock back to 9:45.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Until this moment it was like, I don't know, a kind of game. But now that I've made real human contact... Now I feel I want to be here. I want the job.

She returns.

Jonathan has slipped off the Desk and pushed his chair back to his side, leaning against the back. Upon her return she contemplates opening the drawer but instead takes great care and thought to find a new set of Papers.

INTERVIEWER
Do you drink coffee?

JONATHAN
Yeah, as a matter of fact I do.
(he settles back into his chair)
Just half a cup -- no sugar.

INTERVIEWER
Are you a heavy drinker?
JONATHAN
Naw, not really. To be truthful, I'd prefer a soft drink or maybe some fruit juice. How about you?

INTERVIEWER
Is this because of a stomach disorder?

JONATHAN
(realizing)
No. You mean--? Oh. I just don't care for coffee that much.

He resumes his seat.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Okay focus now. The job. This is the hoop you've got to jump through to get the job that lies just ahead in the distance. You can almost see it now.

INTERVIEWER
Do you daydream?

JONATHAN
What?

INTERVIEWER
Do you daydream?

JONATHAN
Yeah. Sometimes.

INTERVIEWER
Have you ever been under the care of a psychiatrist or book psychologist?

JONATHAN
No.

INTERVIEWER
Do you pick your nose?

JONATHAN
What? ... No. Oh, I see.

His informality has completely worn off.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Watch it -- watch it. Play the game to win!
JONATHAN
No. I have never picked my nose.

INTERVIEWER
Do you like classical music?

JONATHAN
Not really.

INTERVIEWER
Should you like classical music?

JONATHAN
Probably.

INTERVIEWER
Could you like classical music?

JONATHAN
No.

Is there the slightest signal of satisfaction from the Interviewer that she is back on course? Yes.

INTERVIEWER
Have you ever stolen anything?

JONATHAN
No.

INTERVIEWER
How would you define stealing?

JONATHAN
Oh, I see what you are getting at...

INTERVIEWER
Have you ever stolen anything?

JONATHAN
Yes.

She makes a small show of noting this.

INTERVIEWER
Do you have any phobias?

JONATHAN
"Phobias"?

INTERVIEWER
Fears
JONATHAN
(irritated)
----- No.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Reconsider! Reconsider!

JONATHAN
But I don't!

JONATHAN'S VOICE
You're not afraid of anything?

JONATHAN
Sure but I'm sure they mean some sort of syndrome and I'm not going in that direction.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Tell 'er you've got... kleptophobia: fear of steel.

INTERVIEWER
You have no fears no fears whatever---

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Or how about Phobiaphobia: fear of fear - itself- or, fear of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Look, buddy, they want something. Why not give it to them?

JONATHAN
Well, I...

INTERVIEWER
...I have before me a list of one-hundred and fifty-seven clinically verified varieties of phobias. Shall I go through them or shall I repeat the question?

JONATHAN'S VOICE
What did I tell you? Give it to them. And maybe you'll get something in return.

JONATHAN
Yeah. A straight jacket. Repeat the question. Please.

INTERVIEWER
Do you have any phobias?
JONATHAN
.....Fear of dying. I'm afraid to
die.

A rather long pause as she scans through the list, several
pages long.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
That's good! That's safe. I mean,
who isn't afraid to die?

INTERVIEWER
There is no such category here as
"fear of dying". Perhaps you mean
fear of death or dead bodies? or
the grave? or of darkness? Is that
what you mean?

JONATHAN
I suppose that's what I mean

JONATHAN'S VOICE
But that's not what you mean, is
it?

INTERVIEWER
Is that what you mean?

JONATHAN
Yes. No! That's not what I mean.
I'm not afraid of death. Because
you can never know death. But
dying you experience. You feel the
pain. It is real. You can never
know death. It does not exist. But
dying...All phobias are fears but
are all fears phobias? I'm afraid
I'll be stabbed. I'm afraid this
tie will fall off. I'm afraid I
won't get this job. I'm afraid I
will get this job. If there is a
job. In that case I'm afraid I'm
making quite an ass of myself. I
wonder what kind of a phobia that
is?

For the first time he ventures to examine the papers on the
desk.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
She's down to the last few pages.
And look at my answers:
"no-no-no-no-no." I've got to
start being more positive.
The Interviewer opens the long drawer and pulls a single, long page out and a new, unsharpened pencil, which she proceeds to sharpen with a small hand-held sharpener like a butcher stroping his knife for a slaughter.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
That's you she's grinding up. How does it feel? Gnawing off the last little bit of self-worth and confidence you've managed to cling to.

INTERVIEWER
Have you ever engaged in sexual activity with another person who is the same sex as yourself?

JONATHAN
....no

INTERVIEWER
Have you ever thought about having sex with a person who is of the same sex as yourself?

JONATHAN
Thought about?

INTERVIEWER
Just "yes" or "no". No elaboration is necessary. These questions are completely scientific. "Have you ever contemplated...?"

JONATHAN
....Yes

INTERVIEWER
Have you ever engaged in sexual activity with an animal such as a sheep a deer or a dog.

JONATHAN
No.

INTERVIEWER
Have you ever contemplated...

JONATHAN
No!

Interviewer makes a final short note on the page and thence to another set of Pages.
INTERVIEWER
Have you ever engaged in a medical self-diagnosis for the purpose of determining the nature of an illness?

JONATHAN
What?

INTERVIEWER
Have you ever...

JONATHAN
"Self-diagnosis"? Sure. If you mean...

INTERVIEWER
---your answer is "yes"?

JONATHAN
It is....

INTERVIEWER
Have you ever self-prescribed DRUGS for the purpose of treating a self-diagnosed illness?

JONATHAN
That's the same thing. Yes. Yes, I have...

INTERVIEWER
The nature of these self-prescribed DRUGS---

JONATHAN
...there's nothing wrong -- I mean aspirin, cold tablets, cough syrup, laxatives, all over the counter...

INTERVIEWER
Please describe the method and/or methods used to acquire these self-prescribed DRUGS with particular emphasis on the location and nature of this acquisition.

JONATHAN
(mimicking her style)
I went to the DRUG STORE on the CORNER, handed over a quantity of MONEY and received DRUGS in return.

There is a pause. She keeps her head down but does not write on the paper.
JONATHAN'S VOICE
Did she hear you?

JONATHAN
I'm not sure.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
You know, you shouldn't have said that.

JONATHAN
Possibly. But it's the truth.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
(laughs)
"Truth"?

INTERVIEWER
Have you ever been involved in the use, possession, or sale of marijuana, heroin, L.S.D., cocaine, or any other hallucinogens, hypnotics, or other known or unknown, harmful, non-harmful, or habit-forming DRUGS and/or CHEMICALS... or sniffed glue?

JONATHAN
(emphatically)
No.

INTERVIEWER
Then if I asked you what glue smelled like you could not in all honesty answer?

JONATHAN
Well, I...

INTERVIEWER
Have you ever sniffed glue?

JONATHAN
....yes.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Bye now. I'm leaving.

JONATHAN
No!

JONATHAN'S VOICE
You're on your own.
JONATHAN

Haven't I always been?
(pause)
Haven't I?
(pause)
I have.

INT. OFFICE. DAY. -- CONTINUOUS

Jonathan and the Interviewer sit opposite each other at the desk.

She gathers together all her previous work into a neat stack and folders it. Remaining are two long pages of paper which she precisely aligns before her.

Jonathan gets up.

JONATHAN

Okay. I know what this is. And I know... That spot over there. Crackling in the corner. That's for me. That's the Place and this is the Moment everything has been building towards.

(he steps into the spotlight.theatrically:)

To be or not. To be, that is. The question? It's not a question. Or an answer. It's supposed to be some kind of self-revelation. Some story, some incident that suddenly makes everything make sense. I think it's the dying thing that got me. It's not that I'm afraid to die. It's that I will die as I have lived. As nothing. There's no story to tell. No ---- nothing. Nothing that says it all. Or even says anything.

INT. THEATER. DAY.

Jonathan stands center stage in a similarly crackling spot of light. He has said all his lines but cannot leave the stage. An uncomfortable pause. We see that the audience consists only of the Interviewer.

JONATHAN

(now more to himself than theatrically)
The Interviewer reaches down to retrieve her purse from the floor, setting it on her lap.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Trapped in a cell? No. You can always escape from a cell. You can... you can put your hands to the wall. You can push. Claw. Break!

She reaches into her purse.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
I am trapped in a room so large I can never break out.

She takes the Pistol from the purse. She takes a nervous aim using both hands.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
A room so large, that no matter how far and how fast I run, I can never reach the walls of...this... room ---But wait! Maybe literal escape isn't the way out of this. Maybe if I were to somehow make simple, human contact. Maybe that's how this whole thing is supposed to be...

INT. BAR. NIGHT.

Yes, it is the same Bar.

Jonathan ambles in, surveying the place. He spots the Interviewer at the Bar.

He approaches her.

INT. OFFICE. DAY. -- CONTINUOUS

The Interviewer looks up at Jonathan, lost in his Bar scene contemplation.

INTERVIEWER
(smiling)
What if----?

INT. BAR. NIGHT. -- CONTINUOUS

Jonathan slips onto the stool next to the Interviewer.

JONATHAN
So, how did you come to be here?
INTERVIEWER
I'd say we are both here by...
mutual imagination.

JONATHAN
(a little taken aback)
Ah --- so, what's your name?

INTERVIEWER
Tell me, if you could be any part of a cathedral, what part would you be?

We notice sitting to the Interviewer's immediate right, is The Boss, who interjects immediately:

BOSS
(Irishly)
I'd be the Precious Blood of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

He lifts a glass of Red Wine.

BOSS (CONT'D)
For obvious reasons.

Sitting to the right of the Boss is the Sister.

SISTER
I'd be the Squint ---

She lifts a shot glass of Whiskey.

SISTER (CONT'D)
---huddled together with the lepers and other dregs.

Sitting to the right of the Sister is the Mother Superior.

MOTHER SUPERIOR
I'd be the Stoup---

She lifts a large bottle of Fancy Water.

MOTHER SUPERIOR (CONT'D)
--so I could withhold or grant access to the Holy Water as I saw fit.

And to the right of the Mother Superior is... wait for it!...The Pope.

THE POPE
I am the Pinnacle below which almost all else exists.
He lifts a huge martini glass which, in place of the expected umbrella, is an ornate 4-legged Canopy.

Glasses lifted, the Quartet rises and turns to Jonathan expectantly.

Jonathan stands and lifts his beer ---

JONATHAN
Mazelto---!

INT. OFFICE. DAY

Both the Interviewer and Jonathan are smiling, facing each other. The Interviewer returns first to the task.

INTERVIEWER
Tell me one thing about yourself you wouldn't want me to know.

A rather strained pause, as Jonathan comes down.

JONATHAN
I just daydreamed of you.

Another pause as the Interviewer decides, reluctantly, then enjoyingly to say...

INTERVIEWER
.... I know

The Interviewer makes a notation on the Form. Then looks up. We see her face fully and directly.

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)
Have you ever stood in an unfamiliar shower stall, directly under the nozzle, ready for your shower, with complete confidence that the faucets with the "H" and the "C" on them really were what they proclaimed to be?

She again looks off into the far corner and sees herself, this time in a towel and shower cap standing beneath a large showerhead, hand poised to turn on one of two faucets facing her.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I wanted hot water. Instinctively, my hand went to the faucet with the "H" on it. But wait! Other people than myself use this shower. In public showers the faucets are always reversed so if I wanted

(MORE)
"hot" I would have to turn the "cold" on.

The Interviewer is seen full face and directly.

You see, I had to know before turning on the water what I was going to get and I had to know by figuring it out myself. Not simply by standing out of the way and turning on a faucet.

Interviewer stands still beneath the nozzle but her concentration is upon the two faucets, so prominently "H" and "C" before her.

She gently pulls on one of the faucets. It easily would come off.

Okay. This is a public shower. So hot is not hot and cold is not cold. Therefore, hot must be cold and cold must be hot. Simple!

The Interviewer exchanges the pencil on the desktop for a pen from the long drawer.

Too simple. I mean if it was as simple to figure out as a mere reversal who would be fooled except fools? No me. No. Not me. This was...Deep. Suppose someone knowing that hot was cold and cold was hot and that this was fooling no one decided to return them to their original positions so that hot was hot and cold was cold. Now this would certainly confuse any number of people after all who would expect hot to be hot and cold to be cold? Not me. Certainly not me.

The Interviewer's anxiety makes her push at the seemingly close walls of her tiny "shower stall".

Okay! In the beginning hot was hot and cold was cold then hot was cold and cold was hot but became hot again and cold became... but suppose?
Her hand trembling reaches towards the "C" faucet.

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)

NO!

At her Desk, the Interviewer's hand is stretched out as though to turn on the faucet.

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)

NO! No matter what I chose nothing would be more than a guess. It cannot be known! And I will not guess!

In the corner, her hand outstretched, she grips a faucet. But pulls back, covers her face.

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)

I AM NOT GOING TO BE TRICKED AGAIN!!!!

INT. THEATER. DAY.

The Interviewer cannot pull the trigger. Though she lowers her aim from Jonathan on the stage, her finger remains poised on the trigger.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

The Interviewer's hands are resting palms down on the desktop.

INTERVIEWER

I didn't shower. I couldn't shower. I dressed. And simply left. Which is what he should have done. But now----

INT. OFFICE. DAY. -- CONTINUOUS

The lights suddenly and sequentially right themselves. The Interviewer switches off her desk lamp.

There are only the two long pages remaining on the desk. The folder of previous pages is full and fat, the pen is resting nicely and precisely, and the lighting is as it was in the beginning.

INTERVIEWER

Is there any thing, person, or idea without which you feel you could not continue as a viable and functioning member of the human race?
JONATHAN
....toilet paper.

INTERVIEWER
I am going to say a word. After the word you will name it's opposite. For instance, if I say "black" the correct response would be "white". If I say "left" the correct response would be "right". If I say "up" the correct response would be "down". Is this clear?

JONATHAN
Yes.

INTERVIEWER
No.

JONATHAN
Um ---- Yes?

INTERVIEWER
White.

JONATHAN
Black.

INTERVIEWER
Right.

JONATHAN
Left.

INTERVIEWER
Down.

JONATHAN
Up.

INTERVIEWER
Clean.

JONATHAN
Dirty.

INTERVIEWER
False.

JONATHAN
True

INTERVIEWER
Mountain.
...Valley.
INTERVIEWER

Table.
JONATHAN

...Chair?
JONATHAN

Good.
INTERVIEWER

Bad.
JONATHAN

Day.
INTERVIEWER

Night.
JONATHAN

Knight.
INTERVIEWER

--um, day.
JONATHAN

Knight.
INTERVIEWER

Oh, ah -- peasant?
JONATHAN

Poor.
INTERVIEWER

Rich.
JONATHAN

Sickness.
INTERVIEWER

Health.
JONATHAN

Handkerchief.
INTERVIEWER

Ah...
JONATHAN

Handkerchief.
INTERVIEWER

Ah, I...don't know.
INTERVIEWER
Mailbox.

JONATHAN
...eh, sorry. I don't...

INTERVIEWER
Sawhorse.

Jonathan shakes his head "no".

The Interviewer curtly rises.

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)
Thank you.

JONATHAN
You're welcome?

She sharply goes to the door.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Oh, I mean, that's all?

INTERVIEWER
Would you mind waiting in here please?

JONATHAN
Sure, I....

She has left.

Pause. Pause. Pause. . . .

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
No spotlight now but I've got. I've got my story now. It's not personal or anything. It's, um, sort of made-up. Sort of.

(laughs)
But it's a short one. Two travelers were lost in a great, vast desert.

He looks around to confirm its desert-like quality.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Their supplies were gone. They had no water. They had no food. They were totally and completely lost. But they did know where they were.

He looks around again. Goes to the Desk, placing the palms of both hands on top.
JONATHAN (CONT'D)
They were on the Edge of Desperation. At length they came to a Door.

Keeping his hands on the Desk, he looks at the Door, longingly.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
On the other side of the Door -- on the other side of the Door... was a Beautiful Oasis.

(pause)

While not going to the Door, he mimes poised to open a door.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
A sign on the Door said, "Beautiful Oasis. No Trespassing."

(he pulls back. laughs)
One of the Travelers opened the Door and... Trespassed. The other Traveler bypassing the Door, continued on. And on. And....on. Until...Until

He returns to his chair at the other side of the Desk. He sits.

INT. FLAT. DAY.

The coffee maker, of the "mister" variety, has boiled down the liquid to a thick layer of black goo and is starting to smoulder dangerously.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

Jonathan is still trying to get a comfortable position and posture in the chair, still anticipating the Interviewer's return.

JONATHAN
Until. Continued on until. . . .

INT. FLAT. DAY. -- MOMENTS LATER

The pot smokes and bursts into flames.

MOTHER'S VOICE
...and from what you said it sounds like a good company that'll offer a real long-term job security. Oh! And be sure to bring your diploma. And don't forget posture! Sit straight. Don't slouch. And...
INT. OFFICE. DAY. -- CONTINUOUS

Jonathan lightly rests his hands on his knees.

A great relief and satisfaction comes over him.

As we move away we see that He is seated not in a small Office, or, if indeed that he is even inside. He is in a room whose walls are infinitely in the Distance.

We continue to pull away from him until he is the merest speck in

EXT. THE MILKY WAY GALAXY.

Gigantic, alone, silent, hanging in the blackness of interstellar space