

*“From the start it has been the theatre’s business to entertain people . .
it needs no other passport than fun.”*

~ Bertolt Brecht

EUPHORIA
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EUPHORIA

A COMEDY BY MARK A. RIDGE

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Act ONE

SCENE ONE

(JOE'S studio apartment located in a Chicago North Side neighborhood. The apartment is sparsely furnished and rather unkempt. Fast food wrappers litter the floor.)

(It is early morning. JOE and TRENT are asleep under the covers. The TELEPHONE RINGS and the ANSWERING MACHINE CLICKS on.)

JOE. *(On answering machine)* Hi. This is Joe. Sorry I can't take your call. I'm either at work, in the middle of a movie, or I've died of boredom. If it's the first or second, I'll call you back. If it's the third, I probably won't.

(The MACHINE BEEPS.)

PHIL. *(Through answering machine)* Joey, pick up. Joseph, wake up. I know you're there. You better be there. OK, we're on our way over. If you don't answer the door, I'm using our spare key.

(JOE tries to wake up. He is extremely hung over, nauseous and surprised to find that he is not alone. He locates his glasses and begins to study the naked body sleeping next to him. As he peeks under the covers, TRENT begins to stir.)

TRENT. How you feelin'?

JOE. My mouth tastes like I vomited on a rice cake and then ate it.

TRENT. *(Grabbing the wastebasket)* You need this again?

JOE. No.

TRENT. You want a glass of water?

JOE. No.

TRENT. You want me to rub your shoulders?

JOE. No. Please don't talk anymore. My head is pounding.

TRENT. (*Picking a bag off the floor*) Hey, there's still a few fries in here.

JOE. Don't eat those.

TRENT. It's no different than eating cold pizza.

JOE. Please don't talk about food. Don't talk about anything.

TRENT. Don't you like me anymore? Don't you still think I'm hot? Look how flexible I am.

JOE. Don't do that.

TRENT. (*Flexing his arms*) Check this out.

JOE. Please, you're rocking the bed.

TRENT. Go on. Feel this. You've got nothing to be shy about. I've seen you hurl.

JOE. Look, this is a little awkward. And please don't take this personally-

TRENT. What? What is it?

JOE. I have no idea who you are.

TRENT. I'm Trent. I hooked up with you guys at Time Out.

JOE. I remember a DJ - and people kept buying rounds. And, I remember this sailor hanging from a pole.

TRENT. (*Saluting*) That was me! My real name is George. Trent is my stage name. I think George sounds like an accountant.

JOE. What are you, 28, 29?

TRENT. I'm 23.

JOE. God, How did you end up here . . . with me? I'm old.

TRENT. You're not old.

JOE. I'm old and fat and I ate White Castle.

TRENT. You're not fat. I'll bet if you joined a gym –

JOE. I belong to a gym.

TRENT. Oh. How often do you go?

JOE. I belong to a gym. What exactly happened last night?

TRENT. I was dancing and your friend Phil kept giving you money to tip me. Then, we started talking. We talked for over an hour. Then, you started crying.

JOE. God.

TRENT. A lot of people get depressed on their birthdays. So, we hit the drive-thru and I brought you home. Then, you got sick. I gotta take a leak.

(TRENT grabs his gym bag and walks into the bathroom. JOE forces himself out of bed. He is still fully clothed in his outfit from last night. He stumbles to the kitchen and grabs some cat food. He almost gags from the smell, but manages to put some into a bowl.)

JOE. Here Kitty. Kitty? Breakfast.

(The cat does not come out. As Joe puts away the food, he is startled by a cockroach.)

DAMMMIT! ROACH. ROACH. ROACH.

(JOE chases the roach over into the corner and traps it under a cup.)

(The cup slowly moves around the counter. He is totally disgusted. JOE walks to the center of the room, stomps his foot four distinct times, crosses to the door and unlocks it. Within seconds, the door opens and CORY enters.)

CORY. Where is it?

JOE. On the counter, under that cup. Please throw away that cup.

(Like he has done it a hundred times, CORY gets the roach and starts for the bathroom.)

Oh, wait . . .

(It is too late. TRENT comes out, dressed in only his underwear.)

CORY. Oh, I'm sorry.

TRENT. I'm Trent.

CORY. I'm the exterminator.

(CORY exits into the bathroom to flush the roach.)

TRENT. Kind of early for an exterminator.

JOE. He's my neighbor. We have an agreement. I let him park in my parking space, he takes care of the roaches. He's going to watch my cat while they fumigate the apartment today.

TRENT. He's pretty hot for an older guy.

JOE. Shhh. He's going to hear you.

(CORY returns with the litter box.)

CORY. I'm taking this now.

JOE. Thanks. *(Embarrassed)* Cory, this is Trent. I mean, George.

CORY. I guess I don't have to ask if you had a good birthday.

TRENT. It was great.

CORY. I heard it all . . . at four o'clock this morning. I'm gonna go finish my coffee and then I'll come back up for the cat. And for the record, Joe is four months older than me.

(CORY exits.)

JOE. Thanks for putting me to bed and for whatever else you did. But, you don't need to hang around here anymore. You can go. Seriously, it's OK. You should go now. I need to pack.

TRENT. I'm coming with you.

JOE. What?

TRENT. You invited me.

JOE. Look, we may or may not have had a great time last night, I don't remember. But you can't believe anything I said, especially if you were dressed as a sailor. This trip is not for you. You won't have a good time. We never have a good time.

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TRENT. Then why are you going?

JOE. It's sort of a tradition . . . just a stupid thing we always do for our birthdays. One of us picks a place and we road trip. It's never fun. Last year, Aaron booked us into this seminar called Communication for Dummies. We didn't speak to each other for three weeks.

TRENT. I told you last night. I can't get into my new apartment 'til the first. I've been sleeping in my car for the last two weeks. I got no place else to go.

JOE. Oh . . . Well . . . I tell you what. . . You can hang out 'til the guys get here. If it's OK with them, then . . .

TRENT. *(Holding up a bag of pot)* Great. I'm all packed.

JOE. Is that pot? You better keep that hidden from Aaron. He'll freak.

(JOE begins to remove his shirt, when he realizes that TRENT is watching him. Embarrassed, he heads into the bathroom.)

I'm gonna take a quick shower. Don't steal anything.

TRENT. Funny.

(From off stage, the SOUND OF THE SHOWER can be heard.)

(TRENT does a few early morning stretches. After a moment, he exits into the bathroom to join JOE.)

JOE. *(Off Stage)* I am on the toilet!! Get out of here!

(TRENT is pushed out of the bathroom.)

(The INTERCOM BUZZES.)

TRENT. You might want to light a match in there. *(Locating the intercom)*
Who is it?

PHIL. *(Through the intercom)* Who is this?

TRENT. It's me, Trent.

PHIL. *(Through the intercom)* Trent? Let us up!

(TRENT opens the front door.)

TRENT. Hello.

AARON. Oh, this is great . . . just great. Does anyone else know you're here?

TRENT. I don't know.

AARON. Where is he?

TRENT. Still in the bathroom. He's kind of slow-moving this morning.

PHIL. I'll bet. Hey, I like those shorts.

AARON. Will you quit staring at him?

PHIL. What exactly happened here last night?

AARON. Phil, that's none of our business.

PHIL. The hell it isn't. Dish.

TRENT. We just talked. He's kind of shy. It took me fifteen minutes to get him out of his shoes.

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PHIL. He won't even change clothes at the gym.

TRENT. Then, he threw up on me.

PHIL. Oh, that's hot.

TRENT. He's nice. I don't know why he doesn't have a steady boyfriend.

PHIL. He's way too uptight.

AARON. He just hasn't found the right guy yet.

PHIL. He does have a not-so-secret crush on his downstairs gaybor.

TRENT. I think I just met him. Cute guy. Nice eyes. He came in and killed a bug.

AARON. This is going to ruin everything.

PHIL. Calm down.

TRENT. It was just a bug.

AARON. It's that damn grocery store next door. That's why I hired an exterminator to do the apartment today. It's part of my birthday present to him . . . something sensible.

PHIL. The gift that keeps on killing.

AARON. I said "Part." Hopefully, he'll get the real present on Saturday. Cory is supposed to drive up and surprise Joe for his birthday. He probably won't come now. Just once, I was hoping one of these getaways would work out.

TRENT. Where exactly are we going?

AARON. We?

TRENT. Yeah, Joe invited me.

AARON. *(Yelling)* Joe, you need to get out here.

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JOE. (*Yelling from off stage*) George? What are you doing out there?

AARON. George? Who's George?

TRENT. I'm George. Trent is just my stage name.

PHIL. George sounds like an accountant.

JOE. (*Yelling from off stage*) Are you talking to someone?

AARON. (*Yelling*) It's just us.

JOE. (*Yelling from Off Stage*) I'll be out in a minute.

AARON. (*To TRENT*) You're not even his type.

PHIL. Are you kidding? He's everybody's type. What are you doing?

AARON. I'm just trying to tidy up.

PHIL. Hey, are those fries?

AARON. Don't eat those. God, you're disgusting.

PHIL. He might be saving those.

AARON. No one saves used hamburger wrappers. No wonder he has bugs.

PHIL. Aaron's a clean freak.

AARON. No, Phil's a slob.

PHIL. I am not.

AARON. His whole family is. You should see his parent's house. It's like a trip to Grey Gardens.

PHIL. It is not.

AARON. It is too.

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TRENT. *(To PHIL)* You guys are a couple, right?

AARON. *(After PHIL does not answer)* Yes, we are! Why is this wastebasket just sitting out here? OK, this is too much. Phil, come here. Even you have to admit that this is disgusting.

PHIL. It's vomit. What's the big deal?

AARON. The big deal is . . . the big deal is . . . vomit does not belong in the living room. You are pathetic. Where does he keep his Lysol?

(AARON crosses into the kitchen.)

PHIL. *(Checking out TRENT'S shorts)* Are those from Undergear?

TRENT. Oh, I don't remember.

PHIL. Turn around. Let me see the tag.

(PHIL checks out the label.)

AARON. Leave him alone.

(JOE enters.)

PHIL. Happy Birthday. Way to go. Hubba Hubba.

AARON. Joseph, I need to talk to you in private. Now.

TRENT. I'll just hop in there and rinse off. That way you guys can talk about me.

(TRENT exits into the bathroom.)

AARON. Just put something on before Phil hyperventilates. Why did you just up and leave last night?

PHIL. I think that's pretty obvious.

AARON. Did you really invite him to come with us?

JOE. Well . . .

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AARON. What are we supposed to do all weekend with a stupid, little twink? *(To PHIL)* Don't answer that.

JOE. I don't think he's stupid.

AARON. Why are you defending him?

PHIL. 'Cause he's hot.

AARON. You have socks older than he is.

JOE. I'm sorry. You know me. I can't say "No" to people.

PHIL. Our own little Ado Annie

JOE. And, he quoted An Officer and a Gentleman.

AARON. Not Richard Gere again –

JOE. He looked up at me with his big sad eyes and said "I got nowhere else to go."

AARON. But, this is going to ruin everything.

JOE. I still don't even know where we are going.

PHIL. OK, are you ready? We're going to Euphoria! I got us reservations! Can you believe it?

JOE. I don't even know what that is.

AARON. It's a health spa Phil found on the internet.

PHIL. Yeah, I was in this chat room and Glen69 recommended it. It's just outside of Memphis.

JOE. That's got to be at least an eight hour drive.

AARON. Don't look at me. He made all the arrangements.

JOE. Well, I'm not sleeping in a tent again and I'm not peeing in a bush. You know how I am about bugs.

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