

UNSPOKEN

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A Play in One Act

by

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Cast of Characters:

<u>Peter Baxton:</u>	Man in his early 20's, with a moderate to severe stutter.
<u>Internal Peter:</u>	Man in his early 20's, Peter Baxton's internal voice. He looks exactly like Peter Baxton.
<u>Amanda Davis:</u>	Woman in her early 20's
<u>Sarah:</u>	Woman in her early 20's
<u>Matt:</u>	Man in his early 20's
<u>Mr. Morris:</u>	Middle-aged man
<u>Gina Nichols:</u>	Middle-aged woman

Scene

A college town anywhere in the USA.

Time

May, 1999 - June, 2000

Scene 1

SETTING:

A graduation party at PETER's apartment. There is an old, ugly couch. In front of the couch sits a beat up coffee table that looks like it came from a second hand store. On the wall hangs a poster of Commander Data from *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. The entire room is littered with pizza boxes and disposable cups. There are a few balloons and a banner that reads: "Congratulations Class of 1999."

AT RISE:

MATT is standing on the coffee table and raising his cup; he is wearing a graduation cap. INTERNAL PETER, SARAH, and AMANDA are standing on the floor, raising their cups, and looking at MATT. AMANDA and INTERNAL PETER are holding hands.

**MATT**

*Woo-hoo!!* We did it!! I can't believe we're officially college graduates now. Congratulations to the class of 1999. Hey, that's us! Congratulations to *us!* Welcome to the real world, kids!

(MATT, SARAH, AMANDA, and INTERNAL PETER drink from their cups. AMANDA lets go of INTERNAL PETER's hand and walks over to SARAH.)

**INTERNAL PETER**

(Sarcastic)

Nice toast, Matt.

(MATT steps down off of the coffee table.)

**MATT**

Thanks, Peter.

(MATT and INTERNAL PETER  
continue conversing  
silently.)

**AMANDA**

How's the job search going, Sarah? Have you found anything yet?

**SARAH**

Well, sort of. My dad said I could work for him at the bakery for now while I continue applying to graduate schools.

**AMANDA**

That sounds like fun. I know you really like to bake. Those cookies you made for us during finals week were amazing!

**SARAH**

Yeah, I do like to bake, but I'm anxious to get started on my Master's degree, and start a career in psychology. I really want to help all those crazy people out there. What about you? Are you super excited to start your new teaching job?

**AMANDA**

I am! I can't believe that I actually landed a job before I even finished my student teaching. I can't wait to meet my class of adorable first graders. I just love kids so much!

**SARAH**

You and Peter seem like you're getting really serious.

**AMANDA**

Yeah, I guess so. I really love being with him. He always makes me feel so special.

**SARAH**

Do you think you guys will get married?

**AMANDA**

I don't know. I guess I haven't really thought about it that much. I've just been so focused on my student teaching and finishing my degree. Peter's a really great guy. I guess I could see myself married to him. (Beat.) Maybe. (Beat.) Someday...

(AMANDA and SARAH continue  
conversing silently.)

**MATT**

So, Peter, what are you going to do now? Have you found a job yet?

(INTERNAL PETER motions for  
MATT to follow with him further  
away from AMANDA.)

**INTERNAL PETER**

Check this out.

(INTERNAL PETER looks to  
make sure that AMANDA is  
not watching them. He  
discretely pulls a ring box  
out of his pocket and opens  
it, revealing a diamond  
ring.)

**MATT**

(Yelling)

*Holy crap!!* Is that an engagement ring?!

**INTERNAL PETER**

(Whispering)

*Shhhhhh!!* Keep your voice down!

(INTERNAL PETER quickly closes  
the ring box, and shoves it  
back into his pocket. He looks  
to see if AMANDA heard anything.)

**MATT**

(Lowering his voice)

Sorry. You're going to propose to Amanda? When?

**INTERNAL PETER**

Just as soon as I get the job at Jefferson Investments. I have an interview lined up next week.

**MATT**

Do you think you'll get the job?

**INTERNAL PETER**

Of course I'll get it. Why wouldn't I? I have a degree in business economics, I'm organized, a fast learner, great with people, good looking... They would be foolish *not* to hire me. I can't wait to marry Amanda. She's everything that I've ever wanted in a woman. Beautiful, smart, funny, creative... she's perfect. Starting salary at Jefferson is thirty thousand, but I'm sure that I will be able to negotiate it up to thirty-two or more. Along with what Amanda will be making as a teacher, we should be able to put a down payment on a house within the next year. And then we'll start a family. We both want *at least* four kids. We're going to have a beautiful life together.

**MATT**

Wow, that's great, Peter! I'm so happy for you.

(MATT, SARAH, and AMANDA freeze.

INTERNAL PETER sits down on the couch, where he continues to watch everyone. PETER enters, and takes INTERNAL PETER's place exactly where he was standing before. SARAH and AMANDA resume conversing silently.)

So, Peter, what are you going to do now? Have you found a job yet?

**PETER**

(Stuttering)

N-n-n-not yet. I have an i-i-i-interv-v-v-v... An interv-v-v-v... No, not yet.

**MATT**

You'll find something. It's going to take some time for all of us to find good jobs. Except for Amanda. Can you believe that she actually got a job offer before she even finished her degree?

**PETER**

She's am-m-m-mazing.

**MATT**

You guys are getting pretty serious, huh?

**PETER**

I'm in l-l-l-love with her. I w-w-want to m-m-m-marry her.

**MATT**

Really? Are you going to propose to her?

**PETER**

I don't know. I n-n-n-need to find a job f-f-f-first.

(MATT pats PETER on the  
shoulder.)

**MATT**

Don't worry, buddy. You will.

(INTERNAL PETER shakes his  
head in disappointment as he  
watches PETER speak.)

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 2

SETTING: Jefferson Investments.

AT RISE: MR. MORRIS is sitting at a table across from INTERNAL PETER, writing on a yellow legal pad. INTERNAL PETER is staring at him, cool and calm. PETER is sitting in the waiting area, and is noticeably nervous.

**MR. MORRIS**

Ok, Mr. Braxton, why don't you tell me a little about yourself.

**INTERNAL PETER**

It's Baxton, sir. Peter Baxton.

(INTERNAL PETER points to the resume.)

You see there's no "R" in Baxton. It's Baxton, not Braxton.

(MR. MORRIS squints and looks closer at the resume.)

**MR. MORRIS**

Oh, yes, I see that now. You are absolutely right. There is indeed no "R" in Baxton. I'm so sorry about that!

**INTERNAL PETER**

No problem. It happens all the time.

**MR. MORRIS**

I see here that you recently earned your Bachelor's degree in business economics?

**INTERNAL PETER**

That's correct. I graduated Magna Cum Laude, making the Dean's List all eight semesters while I was in college. I worked part time at the campus library, so I have excellent organizational skills, and I also volunteered as a tutor to inner city high school students, so I have excellent interpersonal skills. And in my spare time, I played intramural ultimate frisbee, because I believe that keeping oneself in excellent physical condition is essential to the well-being of one's mind and soul.

**MR. MORRIS**

Very good, Mr. Baxton. Why would you like to come work for us here at Jefferson Investments?

**INTERNAL PETER**

Well, Mr. Morris, I've always loved numbers and working with finances. Also, I've done some research, and I have learned that Jefferson is an excellent company to work for. Jefferson is very good to their employees, and highly involved in the community - offering generous grants to several different charities every year. Also, they are an avid supporter of the arts, and I believe very strongly that the arts are a vital component of any society. Jefferson Investments sounds like a place that I really want to be a part of.

**MR. MORRIS**

That's all very true. Jefferson Investments is a great company. What would you say is your greatest weakness?

**INTERNAL PETER**

Occasionally I stutter, but it really only happens when I get nervous.

**MR. MORRIS**

Well, you certainly seem fine now. I haven't heard you stutter once in this entire interview.

**INTERNAL PETER**

I have it pretty much under control. It's rarely ever an issue. In fact, having a stutter has made me a stronger and more confident person because of the adversity that I have had to face and overcome.

**MR. MORRIS**

Before we finish, do you have any questions for me?

**INTERNAL PETER**

Yes, I do. Are there many opportunities for advancement within the company?

**MR. MORRIS**

Absolutely! We simply ask that you stay in your current position for one year, and then after that time you are free to apply for any other position within Jefferson.

**INTERNAL PETER**

Wonderful! I really want to work to reach my full potential, and climb as high as I possibly can.

**MR. MORRIS**

That's exactly the kind of attitude that we like to see in our employees here at Jefferson Investments. Starting annual salary for this position is thirty thousand dollars, plus a generous benefit package that includes medical, dental, and vision insurance. Additionally, Jefferson will match up to six percent in a 401k. How does that sound to you, Mr. Baxton?

**INTERNAL PETER**

I was really hoping to start a little closer to thirty-three.

(MR. MORRIS writes on the legal pad.)

**MR. MORRIS**

I think we might be able to make that happen.

(INTERNAL PETER and MR. MORRIS stand up and shake hands.)

Thank you so much for coming in today, Mr. Baxton. You will definitely be hearing from me in the next few days.

**INTERNAL PETER**

Thank you, Mr. Morris. It was a pleasure to meet you.

(MR. MORRIS sits back down and freezes. INTERNAL PETER sits down in a different chair at the conference table. PETER enters the conference room, and sits down at the table where INTERNAL PETER was previously sitting.)

Don't screw this up.

**MR. MORRIS**

Ok, Mr. Braxton, why don't you tell me a little about yourself.

**PETER**

Um... it's B-B-B-B-B...

**MR. MORRIS**

What's that?

**PETER**

It's not B-B-Brrrrrrr... It's not Brrrrrrrrr...

(PETER becomes completely stuck on the "R" sound.

He points to the resume.)

There.. there's no "R".

(INTERNAL PETER is horrified as he watches PETER.)

**MR. MORRIS**

What's that? I'm sorry, I don't understand what you're trying to say. What's that about an "R"?

**PETER**

My name's P-P-P-P-Peter B-B-B-B-

**MR. MORRIS**

Well, anyway... Tell me a little about yourself, Mr. Braxton. I see here that you recently earned your Bachelor's degree in business economics?

(PETER is breathless and exhausted from his efforts to say his name. He takes a moment to catch his breath, and then wipes his forehead.)

**PETER**

Yes, I did. I graduated M-M-M-M-M... Magna Cum L-L-L-L-L... I had a 3.8 GPA all the way through s-s-s-school.

**MR. MORRIS**

What about extra-curricular activities? What experience do you have besides your classes that would qualify you for this position?

(PETER begins to sweat. He wrings his hands together nervously, and clears his throat.)

**PETER**

Well, I um... I um... I t-t-t-tutored kids, and I worked at the l-l-l-library. Also, I played uuuuulllllll...

**PETER (Cont.)**

(PETER becomes completely blocked on the "L" sound, and stops for a moment.)

F-F-F-Frisbee. I played frisbee.

**MR. MORRIS**

Um, ok. (Beat.) What would you say is your greatest weakness?

**PETER**

Well, I am a um... a um... I have a st-st-st-stutter.

**MR. MORRIS**

Ok, I see.

(MR. MORRIS writes on the legal pad)

Before we finish, do you have any questions for me?

**PETER**

Um... no.

(PETER and MR. MORRIS stand up and shake hands.)

**MR. MORRIS**

Thank you for coming in today, Mr. Braxton. We'll call you if we need any more information from you.

**PETER**

Oh... ok. (Beat.) Thanks Mr. M-M-M-M-Morris.

(INTERNAL PETER shakes his head in disbelief.)

**INTERNAL PETER**

Unbelievable. (Beat.)

(PETER and INTERNAL PETER exit to the waiting area where PETER slumps down in a chair, staring at his hands in his lap.

INTERNAL PETER stands next to him, looking down at him.

MR. MORRIS exits.)

What the hell was that?! Are you kidding me? That was terrible! Just terrible!! My God, you couldn't even say

**INTERNAL PETER (Cont.)**

your name. It's your *own name!!* How can that possibly be so difficult? Peter Baxton. Peter Baxton. Baxton. Baxton. Baxton. You see? It's not hard. You're a disgrace. You have got to get this stuttering thing under control. If you don't conquer this, you're never going to find a job, and Amanda is certainly never going to want to be your wife. What if - for some unknown reason - she actually does agree to marry you? What happens then? You won't be able to say her name, either?

(INTERNAL PETER mockingly pretends to stutter.)

"Hi, w-we're P-P-P-Peter and Amanda B-B-B-B-B-B..." It's just embarrassing.

(PETER does not look up from his lap. He does not stutter when he is speaking to INTERNAL PETER.)

**PETER**

I'm sorry. I thought I did everything right. I practiced my answers using the techniques that I learned in speech therapy, I didn't drink any caffeine today, I did some yoga this morning, I prayed... I don't understand what happened.

**INTERNAL PETER**

What happened is that *you screwed up!* You have the education, the skills, and the intellect to do this job, but you didn't let Mr. Morris see any of that. What is wrong with you? Tell me. What the hell is your problem?! (Beat.) No, wait, don't tell me. *I'll* tell you what your problem is. Your problem is your stutter. You have to overcome this. You need to be more like me. In fact, you need to be exactly like me. You failed today, and if you don't learn to speak fluently, you will always be a failure. (Beat.) I'm so disappointed in you.

(PETER continues to look down at his lap as he fights back tears.)

**PETER**

You're right. I failed. (Beat.) I'll never find a job.

(PETER covers his face, and begins to sob.) (END OF SCENE)

Scene 3

SETTING: The Daily Bean (a coffee shop.)

AT RISE: PETER is sitting at a table across from GINA. GINA is looking at a resume, and taking notes on a small notepad. INTERNAL PETER is also sitting at the table, watching them.

**GINA**

Ok, Peter, why would you like to work here at The Daily Bean?

**PETER**

Well, um... I just earned my Bachelor's d-d-d-degree in business, so I guess that I would like to see the inner workings of a coffee shop in action?

(GINA gives PETER a questioning look. PETER pauses for a moment.)

Ok, the truth is that I was really hoping to find a job a little more in my field, but that didn't really work out the way I had p-p-p-p-planned. So I need this job in order to get some real world job exp-p-p-p... exp-p-p-p... experience on my resume.

**GINA**

I completely understand. We've all been there. When I first graduated from college, I had to work all kinds of odd jobs: at the dry cleaner, doing landscaping, I even worked for a company that made refrigerator magnets for a while! We all do what we have to in order to survive in this world. I just have one final question for you. Let's see...

(GINA reads from the notepad.)

What would you say is your greatest weakness?

(GINA looks back up at PETER.)

I know it's silly, but these are standard interview questions. I have to ask everyone the same thing. You know, so it's fair.

**PETER**

I am a st-st-stutterer. To be honest, s-s-s-s-sometimes it's really hard for me to talk. But I do the b-b-best that I can, and I hope that someday I will be able to overc-c-c-come it.

**GINA**

It's been a pleasure talking with you, Peter. I think that I would like to offer you a job as a barista. Do you think that you can learn to make a dozen different coffee drinks in the next few days?

**PETER**

Yes! Absolutely! Th-th-thank you.

**GINA**

Very good! I will be having a training session this Saturday for all of the new baristas who will be starting this month. By the time we're done, you will know more about coffee than you ever wanted to. I do need to let you know, however, that the most I can offer for this job right now is five dollars and fifty cents an hour.

**PETER**

(Disappointed)

Oh...

**GINA**

I know it's not a lot, but if you are friendly and get to know the regular customers, you can make some extra money in tips. Also, in six months we'll do a performance review, and you will be eligible for a fifty cent raise up to six dollars an hour. How does that sound?

**PETER**

(Hesitantly)

Um, sure. That sounds good.

(PETER and GINA stand up and shake hands.)

**GINA**

Great! I'm looking forward to working with you.

**PETER**

Thank you, Ms. N-N-Nichols.

**GINA**

Please, call me Gina.

**INTERNAL PETER**

Five fifty an hour. Way to go.

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 4

SETTING: PETER's apartment.

AT RISE: AMANDA is sitting on the couch. Papers are spread all over the coffee table, and AMANDA is feverishly writing. PETER enters carrying two drinks, which he sets on the coffee table. INTERNAL PETER enters, sits down on the couch, and watches PETER and AMANDA.

**PETER**

I got a j-job today.

**AMANDA**

You did? That's great! At Jefferson Investments?

(AMANDA looks up briefly from her papers, but quickly begins writing again.)

**PETER**

No, it's actually at a place called The Daily Bean. (Beat.) How are your lesson plans coming?

**AMANDA**

They're coming along. I can't believe how much that there is to do before school starts. The first day of class is only a week away, and I still have to get my classroom set up and finish all of these lesson plans. I don't know how I'm possibly going to get it all done in time.

**PETER**

It will all be worth it when you get to meet your cute little first graders, right?

(AMANDA looks up and smiles.)

**AMANDA**

Yeah, you're right. I just love kids so much. I can't wait to spend six hours every single day with a room full of six-year-olds.

(AMANDA resumes her writing, then looks up abruptly.)

**AMANDA (Cont.)**

Wait... you're going to work at a coffee shop? Does that mean that the interview at Jefferson didn't go well?

**INTERNAL PETER**

Well, that's quite an understatement.

**PETER**

N-n-no... it didn't.

(PETER sits down on the couch next to AMANDA, and sighs.)

Amanda... I'm just so f-f-f-f-frustrated.

(AMANDA puts down her pen, and turns to face PETER.)

**AMANDA**

Honey, what's wrong?

**PETER**

My damn stutter always g-g-gets in the way! I didn't get the job at J-J-J-Jefferson because I bombed the interview. I do all my breathing exercises from speech therapy, rehearse what I'm g-going to s-s-s-s-say, and do everything I can think of to relax and not get so nervous, but no matter how hard I try I just can't shake this thing! I even pray, and ask God every day to p-p-p-please just take my stutter away from me.

(PETER pauses for a moment and starts to choke up a little.)

I don't know what to do. What if I can't ever stop stuttering?

(AMANDA rubs PETER's arm.)

**AMANDA**

I'm so sorry that you're hurting, Peter... I can see that you really want to talk about this. (Beat.) I just don't know if I have the emotional capacity right now to deal with this issue. (Beat.) Maybe we can talk more about it after I've started school, and I'm not so stressed out.

**PETER**

Oh... Ok...

**AMANDA**

The truth is...

**AMANDA (Cont.)**

(AMANDA slows her rubbing of PETER's arm.)

Nevermind.

**PETER**

What? Tell me.

(AMANDA completely removes her hand from PETER's arm. She pauses for a moment, trying to decide whether or not she should continue.)

**AMANDA**

It's just that... (Beat.) Sometimes it's really hard to communicate with you.

**PETER**

W-w-w-what's that supposed to mean?

**AMANDA**

Nothing. (Beat.) I don't know. (Beat.) I'm just tired.

(AMANDA gathers up her papers and puts them in her bag.)

I think I'm going to go home and finish these there. I really need to get them done.

(AMANDA begins to exit, but then turns back toward PETER.)

Do you want to go out in a few weeks - after school has started - and do something fun? That will make you feel better, right?

**PETER**

Um, yeah. (Beat.) I guess. (Beat.) I kind of have a special surprise planned for your b-b-b-birthday.

**AMANDA**

That sounds fun! I can't wait to see what it is. I'll call you.

(AMANDA kisses PETER on the mouth, and then exits.)

**INTERNAL PETER**

Well, that was awkward. Why the hell did you tell her all that crap about your stutter?

**PETER**

If Amanda is going to be with me, she needs to understand all of who I am. She can't be in love with me and just ignore the fact that I stutter. It is a part of my very fiber. It's something that I live with, and struggle with, every time that I open my mouth, every single day of my life.

**INTERNAL PETER**

What makes you think that she's in love with you? Has she ever actually said that she loves you? For a second there, I thought she was going to break up with you.

**PETER**

Of course she's in love with me. We've been together for two years now.

**INTERNAL PETER**

But has she ever said "I love you"?

**PETER**

Of course she has! (Beat.) Well, no. (Beat.) I guess that maybe she hasn't.

**INTERNAL PETER**

And she won't - until you *stop stuttering*. You don't need to show her how weak you are, you need to show her your strength. Women want a man who is confident, not a stuttering, bumbling idiot. If you want Amanda to stay with you, you're going to have to work harder to become me.

**PETER**

You're right. I have to work harder.

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 5

SETTING: The Daily Bean. A tip jar sits on the table.

AT RISE: PETER is wiping off the table.  
INTERNAL PETER is sitting in a chair and watching him.

**GINA**

Hey, Peter. Can I talk to you for a sec?

**PETER**

Uh... sure, Gina. (Beat.)  
(PETER comes out from behind the counter.)

What's up?

(GINA is serious, and seems concerned.)

**GINA**

Some of my regular customers have been coming to talk to me about you.

**PETER**

Oh... Oh no. (Beat.) W-w-w-w-what are they s-s-s-saying? D-d-did I do something wrong?

(PETER looks down at his feet.)

**GINA**

Well... (Beat.) They're saying that you know all of their names, and you know what they want to drink before they even order. They tell me that you are fast and courteous, and they wish that every barista was like you. A couple of people even asked me when you're going to be working so that they can be sure to stop in when you're here and have you make their drink for them.

(PETER looks up.)

**PETER**

Wait... What?

**GINA**

(Smiling)

Peter, you're doing a great job. I'm very happy with the work that you're doing. I would like to start training you to become an assistant manager.

**PETER**

Really? (Beat.) Th-thank you!

**GINA**

Are you free after your shift tomorrow? Why don't you stay a little while after close, and I'll show you how to close out the register and make the schedule.

**PETER**

Sure, absolutely! I would love to d-d-d-do that!

**GINA**

Great! I'll see you tomorrow, then.

(GINA exits. PETER sits down across from INTERNAL PETER. He dumps out the tip jar onto the table. Dozens of coins fall out, along with a one dollar bill. PETER picks up the dollar bill and shows it to INTERNAL PETER.)

**PETER**

Hey, look at that!

**INTERNAL PETER**

(Sarcastic)

Wow. A whole dollar. Good for you.

**PETER**

What a great day!

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 6

SETTING: A nice restaurant. There is a table with a cloth tablecloth, a candle, and three chairs.

AT RISE: PETER and INTERNAL PETER are sitting at the table. A bouquet of roses sits on the table. INTERNAL PETER is holding a ring box open in front of him.

**INTERNAL PETER**

Amanda Joy Davis. Ever since I first met you at freshman orientation, you have captivated me. Just knowing your beauty, your intellect, and your nurturing soul has made my life worth living. Your radiant smile is the very air that I breathe. If I had never come to know you, I would not be half the man that I am today. Without you next to me, my life would have no purpose. Will you please stay right here by my side for the rest of my life, and do me the honor of becoming my wife?

(INTERNAL PETER stands up, and then sits down in a different chair at the table. PETER enters and sits down where INTERNAL PETER was previously sitting. INTERNAL PETER hands PETER the ring box, and PETER puts it in his jacket pocket.)

Don't let me down.

(AMANDA enters. She is frazzled.)

**PETER**

H-H-H-H-Happy birthday! How was s-school today?

**AMANDA**

Terrible! Six-year-olds are evil! The devil's spawn.

**PETER**

Oh, wow. That's not good.

**AMANDA**

Johnny was making faces at Ashley, and then Ashley started crying. And then Lucas kicked Johnny. If Mr. Perry hadn't

**AMANDA (Cont.)**

come in to help me, I probably would have just run out of there screaming.

(AMANDA notices the bouquet of roses, and softens.)

Aww... these are beautiful. I love them! You're so sweet, Peter. You always know how to make me feel good.

**PETER**

I'm s-s-s-sorry that you had a bad day.

(AMANDA smells the roses.)

**AMANDA**

It's better now. How was your day?

**PETER**

It was great! Gina offered me a p-p-promotion. She wants me to be a manager. Oh yeah, and someone put a dollar bill in my tip jar! Like actual paper money - not just c-c-coins. Do you know how rare that is? I'm starting to think that maybe I'd like to open up my own coffee shop in a few years - I do have a business degree after all.

**AMANDA**

Congratulations! That's great! I'm so proud of you.

(PETER pats his jacket pocket where the ring is. He reaches across the table and takes AMANDA's hand. He takes a deep breath.)

**PETER**

Amanda J-J-Joy D-D-D-Davis. Ever s-s-since we m-m-m-et... You're so b-b-b-beautiful. Your smile... I love y-y-y-y-

**AMANDA**

Peter. (Beat.) Don't.

(AMANDA pulls her hand away from PETER's.)

Please stop.

(A look of horror washes across PETER's face. He is paralyzed.)

Peter. (Beat.) I don't think we're in the same place. (Beat.) I just don't know what I want right now. I can't say for sure where I'll be in a few years. I don't even

**AMANDA (Cont.)**

know if I want kids anymore. (Beat.) I don't know if you and I are...

(AMANDA looks down at the table, and begins to cry.)

I care about you so much. You're such a great guy, and I love being with you. (Beat.) I just don't know if I can see myself ever falling in love with you.

(AMANDA stops and wipes her eyes.)

**PETER**

But I th-th-thought... (Beat.) We've been together-

**AMANDA**

I don't know how to say this without hurting you, so I'm just going to say it. The other night at your place... (Beat.) It's just that... It's really fun to hang out with you, and you make me feel so special... (Beat.)

(AMANDA pauses, trying to decide if she should continue. She is unable to make eye contact with PETER.)

When we started dating, you were studying business, and you said you wanted to work in finance. I thought that was great because financial security is something that's really important to me. And then when you didn't get the job at Jefferson, well... (Beat.) I was really disappointed. I know you say that it was because of your stutter. The truth is that I'm really uncomfortable talking about your stuttering. (Beat.) I think it's kind of embarrassing. Oh, God. I can't believe I finally said it out loud. I'm sorry, I probably sound like a big jerk right now. (Beat.) I'm just not sure that I can live with it for the rest of my life. I know I sound really shallow, but I know what I want and need in a husband, and you deserve someone who can love you just the way you are. I'm sorry, but that person is not me. (Beat.) I'm so sorry...

(AMANDA hastily exits, leaving the roses sitting on the table. PETER remains stunned for a few moments. He slowly pulls the ring box out of his pocket and sets it on the table. He opens it and looks at the ring.)

**INTERNAL PETER**

What just happened?

(PETER slams his fist loudly  
on the table.)

**PETER**

Damn it!

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 7

SETTING: The Daily Bean.

AT RISE: PETER is scowling as he wipes off the table. INTERNAL PETER is sitting at the table, watching him. SARAH enters.

**SARAH**

Peter? Oh my gosh! How are you? I haven't seen you since graduation!

**PETER**

Sarah! Hi! (Beat.) Oh, I'm d-doing ok.

**SARAH**

What have you been up to?

**PETER**

Working here. M-m-making coffee.

**SARAH**

I didn't know you worked here.

**PETER**

Yep. For about six months now.

**SARAH**

I love this place! It reminds me of that place we used to go to after jazz band in high school. What was it called? "All Hours" or something like that?

**PETER**

Oh, yeah. I remember that. It was called R-R-R-R-R-R...

(PETER becomes completely stuck on the "R" sound. With much effort, he continues forcefully trying push the word out. SARAH watches him patiently, and does not break eye contact.)

R-R-R-Round the Clock. It was called "Round the Clock."

**SARAH**

Oh, yeah, that's right. "The 'Round the Clock Cafe."

(SARAH smiles.)

Those were some good times.

**PETER**

They sure were.

**SARAH**

How is Amanda? Is her new teaching job going well?

**PETER**

I wouldn't know.

**SARAH**

What?

**PETER**

I haven't seen her in about three months.

**SARAH**

What?! What happened?

**PETER**

We sort of broke up.

**SARAH**

Oh my gosh! Why?

**PETER**

I, uh... (Beat.)

(PETER looks down at the table  
and fights back tears.)

I'm n-n-n-n-not really sure.....

**SARAH**

Oh, Peter. I'm so sorry. Are you ok?

**PETER**

I don't know. (Beat.) I will be. (Beat.) I guess.

**SARAH**

You should come over Sunday night. I got a new apartment. Matt's going to be there, and Jim and Shelby said they might stop by, and maybe Heidi, too. I think we're just going to get some pizza and watch X-Files or something. Here, let me give you my new address.

(SARAH takes a pen out of her  
purse, and writes on a napkin.)

(She hands the napkin to PETER.)

I wrote my new phone number on here, too. You can call me anytime.

(PETER looks at the napkin.)

**PETER**

Oh. (Beat.) um, ok. I-I-I... (Beat.) I don't really like to t-t-t-t-talk on the phone...

**SARAH**

Oh, that's ok. I understand. Why don't you just come over Sunday night?

**PETER**

Sure. Yeah, I can p-p-p-probably do that.

**SARAH**

Great! Now can you make me a grande half-caff zebra skinny mocha with two shots of sugar free vanilla, a shot of peppermint, extra hot with double whip?

**PETER**

Of course I can! Piece of cake!

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 8

SETTING: SARAH's apartment. There is a nice, new couch and two matching arm chairs. In front of the couch sits a very nice coffee table. On the table is a plate with several cookies that are shaped and decorated like alien heads. On the wall hangs a framed portrait of SARAH and her parents. Next to it hangs an identically framed portrait of Agents Mulder and Scully from *The X-Files*. A clock on the wall reads 10:13. A large TV is facing the couch.

AT RISE: The theme music from *The X-Files* can be heard. INTERNAL PETER is sitting on one of the arm chairs, and MATT is sitting on the other. PETER and SARAH are sitting on opposite ends of the couch. They are all leaning in toward the TV and watching attentively. SARAH is tightly hugging a large alien doll.

**PETER**

Wow. Th-th-th-that was a weird one.

**MATT**

A *weird* one?

**PETER**

Did you see that thing with the teeth? What the hell was that thing?

**MATT**

You can't say that an X-Files episode is weird. It's redundant. Of course it's weird - it's X-Files. It's like watching the Super Bowl and saying, "They're playing football." Or going to a concert and saying, "They're playing music." You need to think of a better adjective.

(SARAH continues to stare at the TV and hug her alien doll, oblivious to their conversation.)

**SARAH**

It's amazing that they could be partners on the X-Files for so many years, investigating so many cases together, and yet somehow Scully never manages to actually see an alien. How is that even possible? You know it wouldn't even matter, though. If she ever did see one, she would probably just find some way to logically explain it way. (Beat.) I think it's so beautiful how two people can be so different from one another, and yet have so much love and respect for one another.

(PETER stares at her for a moment, and then turns to MATT.)

**PETER**

(Whispering)

She's really emotionally invested in X-Files.

**MATT**

Yes, she is.

**PETER**

So, Sarah, I can't believe that you actually made cookies that look like aliens.

(MATT holds up a cookie and looks at it.)

**MATT**

(Imitating Homer Simpson)

Mmmmm..... alien cookies...

(MATT takes a bite of his cookie. SARAH finally looks away from the TV, and then sets her alien doll on the couch in between her and PETER.)

**SARAH**

We got some new cookie cutters at the bakery, and I just thought I'd do something fun.

(PETER looks warily at the alien doll sitting next to him.)

**PETER**

You're kind of a nerd.

**SARAH**

What?! I am not!

(SARAH slaps PETER playfully on the arm. MATT takes notice of her flirtatious gesture.)

It's not really that I'm that into aliens or anything, I just think that X-Files is such a high quality show. The writing, acting, directing... everything is so well done. Even the soundtrack. By the way, did you know that Mark Snow, the composer, writes a new original score for every episode? Also, he studied oboe at Julliard. I love the oboe, it's such a beautiful instrument. Also, Chris Carter - the creator of X-Files - his birthday is October thirteenth. That's why you'll notice that in many scenes there is a clock that reads 10:13, and Scully often wakes up and looks at her alarm clock at exactly 10:13. Also, the last four digits of Scully's cell phone number are 0113, which is really just 1013 mixed up.

(MATT and PETER stare at her open-mouthed in disbelief as she rambles on. MATT slowly lowers his cookie, and they begin to snicker.)

And Mulder's computer password is "trust no one" because his life's motto is "The truth is out there, trust no one, deny everything." And the reason that Mulder always eats sunflower seeds is because the sound of his father crunching on sunflower seeds used to calm him after he had nightmares when he was a child? Also, did you know that the character of Special Agent Dana Scully is actually named after Vin Scully - the announcer for the Dodgers? And the character of Deep Throat is actually based on-

(SARAH notices that they are laughing and stops talking.)

What? What's so funny?

**PETER**

I thought you were trying to convince me that you're *n-n-not* a nerd.

**MATT**

Didn't you say that you want to be a psychologist, Sarah?

**SARAH**

Yeah, I just want to help people. There are some serious wackos out there who really need help with their obsessions.

**PETER**

You have a p-p-p-picture of Mulder and Scully hanging on your wall.

**SARAH**

So? What's your point? I seem to recall that you have a picture of an android on your wall.

**PETER**

First of all, it's a poster, not a framed p-p-portrait hanging next to a picture of my *parents!* You do know that Mulder and Sc-sc-sc-scully are not actually members of your family, right?

(SARAH tries to glare at PETER, but can't stop herself from smiling a little. PETER becomes passionate, and begins speaking fluently. INTERNAL PETER continues watching PETER, SARAH, and MATT. )

Second of all, Data is not just an android. He is a highly complex, multi-layered character with infinite potential for development. The very idea of an artificially intelligent machine functioning as a Starship Commander opens up a myriad of moral and philosophical questions for our society that are worth pondering.

**MATT**

Wow.

**INTERNAL PETER**

Wow.

**SARAH**

I'm sorry, which one of us is a nerd?

**MATT**

It's a tie. You're both nerds. Sarah's in love with a fictional FBI agent who chases aliens, and Peter's in love with a robot.

(PETER and SARAH glare at MATT. PETER suddenly notices the clock on the wall.)

**PETER**

Oh, wow, it's getting so late. I really need to get home and get some sleep if I'm g-g-going to be r-r-r-r-ready for the six o'clock coffee rush tomorrow morning. Thanks so m-m-much for having us over, Sarah. This was fun. (Beat.) Your new apartment is really n-n-nice.

**SARAH**

Thank you! Working for my dad at the bakery isn't exactly the most glamorous career, but it's nice to be making some good money.

**PETER**

Yeah. (Beat.) That m-m-m-ust be n-n-n-nice...

(PETER looks down at his feet.  
SARAH touches PETER's arm.)

**SARAH**

It was really good to see you, Peter. We should get together more often.

(PETER looks back up at SARAH.)

**PETER**

Sure, that would be great.

**MATT**

I really should get going, too. I'll walk out with you, Peter.

(MATT stuffs the remaining  
cookies into his pockets.)

Thanks, Sarah! I'll see you later.

**SARAH**

See you later! (Beat.)

(MATT, PETER, and INTERNAL PETER  
exit. SARAH picks up the dirty  
plate, and begins to exit.  
She turns back and puts the  
dirty plate back on the coffee  
table. She goes over to the  
picture of Mulder and Scully,  
and takes it off the wall.)

Maybe I should take this down. (Beat.)

**SARAH (Cont.)**

(SARAH looks at the picture for a moment, and cocks her head as if she is listening.

Then she says to the picture:)

What's that, Mulder? I know, you're absolutely right.

(Beat.)

(SARAH stops and listens for another moment.)

Awww.....thanks! You're so sweet. I love you, too, Fox.

(SARAH kisses the picture, and then hangs it back on the wall. She picks up the dirty plate, and exits. PETER, MATT, and INTERNAL PETER enter. They stand outside SARAH's apartment building.)

**PETER**

That was really fun. Thanks for inviting me.

**MATT**

I didn't invite you. Sarah invited you.

**PETER**

Oh, yeah. I guess you're right. It was really good to hang out with you guys again.

**MATT**

Yeah, it was. Maybe you could pick up the phone and give me a call once in a while. I mean, really. What have you been doing for the past *seven months* that you couldn't even once get together to hang out with your old college roommate?

**PETER**

I know, I'm sorry. I've just been really b-b-b-busy.

**MATT**

Busy doing what? Making lattes? (Beat.)

(MATT realizes the hurtfulness of what he just said.)

Oh, man. I'm sorry. I didn't mean it to come out like that.

(PETER looks down at his feet.)

**PETER**

It's ok. I know you didn't mean it that w-w-w-way. I guess I wasted a lot of t-t-t-time with Amanda.

**MATT**

You know that Sarah was flirting with you tonight, right?

(PETER looks back up at MATT,  
surprised.)

**PETER**

What!? No she wasn't! (Beat.) Really? She was?

**MATT**

Yes, she was. Did you see the way she slapped your arm? She's liked you since forever. She's always asking me about you.

**PETER**

Are you serious? She likes me? I had no idea. Why didn't I ever see it before?

**MATT**

Because you met Amanda freshman year, and became completely obsessed with her. Sarah's always been right here, but you were too wrapped up in Amanda to notice.

**PETER**

I can't believe I wasted four years of my life on Amanda. I th-th-th-thought I knew...

(PETER looks down at his feet  
again.)

I really th-th-th-thought she was the one.

**MATT**

You lost a lot of time. But Sarah's always been right here, and she's *still* here... just waiting for you to notice her. Do you even know how much I wish that Sarah would look at me the way that she looks at you?

(PETER looks up at MATT again.)

**PETER**

Oh! I didn't realize-

**MATT**

Sarah's a really cool girl. I'll admit she's a little bit insane. But she's also funny, and smart, and patient, and caring, and creative... (Beat.)

(MATT trails off as he looks up to the sky for a few moments, thinking about SARAH. Then he looks back at PETER.)

I really like Sarah, but I'm man enough to be able to admit when I've been beaten. I want you to be happy, Peter. You deserve that. You should call her and ask her out on a real date.

**PETER**

I know S-S-S-Sarah's a cool girl. We've been friends for a long time. Since middle sc-sc-sc-school. I just never realized how interesting she is before. We actually have a l-l-l-lot in common. I had no idea that she was so into sci-fi. Like *disturbingly* into sci-fi. I've just never thought of her as, you know, anything more than one of my good f-f-f-friends. (Beat.) I don't know if I can call her...

**MATT**

You *need* to call her. Here, let me give you her new phone number. I think I have a pen in my car...

**PETER**

I already have it. She wrote it on a napkin for me at the c-c-c-coffee shop, and told me I could c-c-c-call her anytime.

**MATT**

I'm sorry, she gave you her phone number *last week*, and *told* you to call her, and now you're wondering *if* you can call her? I don't get it. What's the problem, here? She baked cookies for you tonight. This isn't rocket science. Oh wait, I forgot, you *love* rocket science. You and Sarah both have that whole sci-fi geek thing going on. You really need to ask her out. I don't understand why you're even questioning this. Why don't you want to call her?

**PETER**

It's just that... (Beat.) I'm not very g-g-good... (Beat.) you know... (Beat.) on the phone. (Beat.) Maybe she baked the cookies for you. Are you sure that she l-l-likes me?

**MATT**

I'm over at her place all the time. She's never baked cookies before. Until you came over.

**PETER**

Well, if she made the c-c-cookies for me, then maybe you should give me some of those ones that you have stuffed in your p-p-p-pockets there.

**MATT**

Not a chance! If you get Sarah, then I think I should at least get some cookies.

**PETER**

Fine. I'll call her tomorrow. (Beat.)

(PETER looks down at the ground.)

I g-guess I can c-c-c-call her. (Beat.) Maybe...

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 9

SETTING: PETER's apartment. The napkin with SARAH's phone number written on it is sitting on the coffee table.

AT RISE: INTERNAL PETER is sitting on the couch watching PETER, who is holding a telephone receiver, and pacing around the room nervously. PETER is mumbling quietly to himself, rehearsing what he is going to say. Several times PETER starts to dial the phone, but then abruptly hangs up.

**PETER**

I can't do this.

(PETER throws the phone violently.  
INTERNAL PETER ducks and covers his head.)

**INTERNAL PETER**

Woah!! Look out!

(INTERNAL PETER scrambles behind the couch, where he cautiously peeks out to watch PETER. PETER paces around a little more. After awhile, he picks up the phone, and begins to dial again. He hangs up, and throws the phone again.)

**PETER**

Damn it!

(PETER picks up the phone once more, and then sits down on the couch. After checking to see that it is safe, INTERNAL PETER comes out from behind the couch, and sits down next to PETER.)

**INTERNAL PETER**

What are you waiting for? Someone to invent a telephone like in your nerdy sci-fi shows where all you have to do is type what you want you want to say, and you don't have to actually speak? Sorry buddy, it ain't gonna happen. You're just going to have to suck it up and learn how to talk. Let me show you how it's done. Give me that!

(INTERNAL PETER snatches the phone out of PETER's hand.)

INTERNAL PETER forcefully punches seven digits into the phone, and then speaks into the receiver:)

Sarah? Peter Baxton. I had a great time with you last night. I want to spend more time with you, and get to know you better. How about I take you out Friday night to a nice dinner and a movie? And then afterward, you and I could come back to my place, and... well, you know... see where things go.

(INTERNAL PETER hangs up the phone.)

See? Was that so hard? Women want a man who goes after what he wants, and doesn't take "no" for an answer.

(INTERNAL PETER hands the phone to PETER.)

Your turn.

(PETER reluctantly takes the phone. He tentatively pushes in six digits, and then stops. His hand begins to violently shake. After a moment, he pushes the last digit. The phone rings.)

**SARAH (offstage)**

Hello?

(PETER speaks into the phone:)

**PETER**

S-S-S-Sarah? This is P-P-P-P... P-P-P-P-P...

(PETER becomes completely stuck on the "P" sound and then stops. There is a moment of awkward silence.)

**SARAH (offstage)**

Peter? Is that you? I'm so glad you called! I really enjoyed talking with you last night.

**PETER**

Yeah, m-m-m-m-me too.

**SARAH (offstage)**

How are you?

**PETER**

I'm g-g-g-good.

(There is more awkward silence.)

Do you um... um... w-w-w-w-want to um... um... um... go out F-F-F-F-F... F-F-F-F-F... F-F-F-F-F-Friday?

**SARAH (offstage)**

Sure! I'd love to! I heard there's a new sci-fi movie showing at the Holiday Theater. I think it's called Galaxy Quest, maybe? Or something like that. Do you want to meet me at Bandido's at around seven?

**PETER**

Yes. That s-s-s-s-sounds g-g-g-g-good.

**SARAH (offstage)**

Great! I'll see you on Friday.

**PETER**

Ok.

**SARAH (offstage)**

Bye!

**PETER**

B-Bye.

(PETER is shaking a breathless from the effort that it has taken him to speak. looks at the phone, and then turns and looks at INTERNAL PETER. INTERNAL PETER shrugs, confused.)

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 10

SETTING: PETER's apartment.

AT RISE: PETER and SARAH enter. INTERNAL PETER enters behind them and then sits down on the couch, where he continues to watch them.

**SARAH**

What do you think about this whole Y2K thing that everybody is talking about? Do you think anything is actually going to happen?

**PETER**

No. I bet n-n-n-nothing happens at all. It'll just be a b-b-bunch of hype for nothing.

**SARAH**

I don't know, it could be something. They're saying that the internet could completely shut down.

**PETER**

Even if that did happen, I d-d-d-don't think it would even affect me. It's not like I really use the internet that much.

**SARAH**

Yeah, me neither. (Beat.) Do you have any pop or anything?

**PETER**

There's some coke in the fridge.

**SARAH**

Do you want one?

**PETER**

Sure, I'll take one.

(SARAH exits. PETER sits down on the couch.)

**INTERNAL PETER**

Ok, this is it. Somehow you got her to go out with you after that horribly embarrassing phone call, and God knows how you got her to come back to your apartment with you after the movie. Now don't go and screw everything up like



**PETER**

(Still looking at his hands.)  
I've had people tell me that it's embarrassing.

**SARAH**

*What?! Who told you that? That's horrible!*

**PETER**

It doesn't matter...

(SARAH reaches over and takes  
PETER's hand.)

**SARAH**

Well, I think your stutter just makes you even more interesting and unique than you already are. It gives you more personality than everyone else.

(INTERNAL PETER rolls his eyes.  
PETER looks at his hand that  
SARAH is holding, and then up  
at her.)

**PETER**

No one's ever said that to me b-b-before. Is that really what you th-th-think?

**SARAH**

Of course it is. Why would I say it if I didn't mean it? You are an amazing guy, Peter. When you are speaking fluently, and when you are stuttering. I have always thought so, and I still do.

(PETER pauses for a moment  
looking at SARAH, as he processes  
what she has just said. Then he  
leans in to kiss her as the  
lights fade.)

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 11

SETTING: PETER's apartment. SARAH's alien doll sits on the couch. An X-Files poster now hangs next to the poster of Commander Data.

AT RISE: PETER is sitting on the couch; INTERNAL PETER is sitting next to him. PETER is looking carefully at a newspaper that is spread all over the coffee table.

**INTERNAL PETER**

What are you doing?

**PETER**

Looking at the help wanted ads.

**INTERNAL PETER**

I thought you loved your minimum wage job at the coffee shop now.

**PETER**

I do like my job at the coffee shop. And it's not minimum wage anymore. I'm a manager now.

**INTERNAL PETER**

You mean *assistant* manager.

**PETER**

I'm looking for a second job to supplement my income a little bit.

**INTERNAL PETER**

Good luck with that.

(PETER continues flipping through the newspaper, stopping occasionally to circle an ad.)

**PETER**

Maybe I should go to grad school and get my MBA. Or maybe I could look into doing some substitute teaching. I love kids.

**INTERNAL PETER**

Graduate school? You know that you would have to do a lot of public speaking if you did that, right? And interviewing. We both know how good you are at that. And teaching? Really? *Teaching?! Are you nuts?* Those kids would eat you alive. You would be laughed at and humiliated every day.

**PETER**

You're right. I should probably just look for a data entry job somewhere. Or maybe I could get more serious about practicing my drums, and start looking for gigs. Musicians don't have to talk, right?

**INTERNAL PETER**

(Sarcastic)

Great idea. Because working as a musician will bring in so much extra money.

(SARAH enters. She has a little bit of flour and icing on her face and in her hair.)

Oh, good. Sarah's here.

**PETER**

Sarah!

(PETER jumps up and rushes to SARAH. PETER and SARAH embrace and share a long passionate kiss. INTERNAL PETER watches them kiss for a few moments, and then starts to gag.)

**INTERNAL PETER**

That's disgusting.

**PETER**

I'm so glad you're here. I've missed you so m-m-much this week!

**SARAH**

I've missed you, too! Things have just been so crazy at the bakery. I've been working more than fourteen hours every day. Everybody wants to get married in June. And it's even worse than usual this year because it's the year 2000. I don't know why everyone thinks it's such a big deal to have their wedding at the turn of the new millennium.

**PETER**

You know you love d-d-decorating all of those wedding c-c-cakes.

**SARAH**

You're right. You know me so well. But I'd rather be here with you.

(PETER and SARAH kiss again.  
INTERNAL PETER rolls his eyes  
and looks away from them.)

**INTERNAL PETER**

Oh, brother.

**SARAH**

Hey, I saw a job today that I thought you might be interested in. It's at a place called, um...

(SARAH pulls a paper out of  
her pocket and reads it.)

Jefferson Investments.

**PETER**

Oh... (Beat.) Th-th-th-th-that's... not good-

**INTERNAL PETER**

*Jefferson Investments?! Is she insane? There is no way in hell that I am going to endure that kind of humiliation again.*

**SARAH**

What? Why is it not good? It's like a financial manager kind of thing. It looks like it would be right up your alley.

**PETER**

Y-Y-You... you don't understand...

**SARAH**

What don't I understand? Why don't you want to apply for this job? It looks like it pays really well. And I've heard that Jefferson is a great company to work for. You have a degree in business economics, plus you now have over six months of experience as a manager at the coffee shop.

**PETER**

*Assistant manager. (Beat.)*

**PETER (Cont.)**

(PETER looks at the paper with the job information on it. He begins to stutter more severely.)

I've ap-p-p-plied for this job before. I interviewed at J-J-J-J-J... J-J-J-J...

(PETER becomes completely stuck on the "J" sound, but keeps trying, and finally forcefully spits out the word:)

*Jefferson!* (Beat.)

(PETER takes a moment to catch his breath.)

Last year, right after we graduated. Let's just say it didn't go very well.

**SARAH**

Well, you should try for it again.

**PETER**

Oh, no. I can't do that. It was t-t-t-terrible. Just awful. (Beat.) It was one of the worst days of my life.

**SARAH**

I think you should go for it one more time. What do you have to lose?

(PETER looks down at his feet.)

**INTERNAL PETER**

Please don't tell me that you're actually considering this.

**PETER**

No, Sarah. I c-c-c-can't. (Beat.) I just... (Beat.) I can't.

**SARAH**

If you don't even apply, then you definitely won't get the job. And this time, you have me. I'll help you practice for the interview.

**PETER**

But what if I st-st-st-st-stutter?

(SARAH frowns, and then scolds him:)

**SARAH**

*Peter!* This again?! I thought we were past this! (Beat.)  
 (SARAH softens, and then touches  
 PETER 's arm.)

It doesn't matter if you stutter or not. People will hear what you have say - if you can stop doubting yourself, and just say what you want to say without worrying so much about your stutter. You are an intelligent, capable, responsible, generous, wonderful man. Everyone around you can see that. No one else cares about your stutter nearly as much as you do. You really need to stop beating yourself up over this. You are the one who gets in your own way.

(INTERNAL PETER gets up off  
 the couch, and walks over to  
 PETER. SARAH freezes.)

**INTERNAL PETER**

Don't listen to her. She's full of it. Nothing that she's saying even makes any sense! People don't care about your stutter? Of course they do! It's all anyone can see when they look at you.

(PETER turns and takes a step  
 toward INTERNAL PETER. He looks  
 him squarely in the eye, and  
 does not look away.)

**PETER**

You're wrong. I believe everything she says.

(PETER takes another step  
 toward INTERNAL PETER.  
 INTERNAL PETER steps backward,  
 stumbles, and nearly trips over  
 his own feet.)

**INTERNAL PETER**

She's lying to you. Can't you see that? If you are ever going to make any real money, or get a woman to fall in love with you, you absolutely need to stop stuttering.

(PETER takes another step  
 toward INTERNAL PETER, never  
 breaking eye contact.  
 INTERNAL PETER takes another  
 step backward.)

**PETER**

I think it's time for you to leave.

**INTERNAL PETER**

I'm not going anywhere. You need me.

(PETER begins to lose confidence  
and looks down at his feet again.)

**SARAH**

Peter? You know that I love you, right?

(PETER suddenly turns and looks  
at SARAH, surprised.)

**PETER**

You what?

(SARAH becomes emotional, and  
begins to choke up.)

**SARAH**

I've fallen in love with you. I don't mean to push you into doing something that you don't want to do with this job at Jefferson, I just wish that you could see yourself the way that I see you. I so desperately want you to realize all of the amazing things that you could do, if you can just learn to stop holding yourself back.

(SARAH freezes.)

**INTERNAL PETER**

You need me. You will never succeed in life until you become me.

(PETER turns and looks at  
INTERNAL PETER.)

**PETER**

Do you see this beautiful woman?

(PETER gestures toward SARAH.)

She has never seen you. She has only ever seen me. And she has chosen to love me.

(PETER looks away, and says to  
himself:)

Oh, my God. She's in love with me!

(PETER turns back to INTERNAL PETER)

**PETER (Cont.)**

She has only ever seen me, and she has chosen to accept me. Amanda rejected me, that's true. But that was not my fault, that was *her choice*. Sarah, Gina, and Matt have seen me for who I really am. They accept me when I don't stutter, *and when I do*. The fact is that no one has ever seen you - except for me. You are only a voice in my head telling me lies. You are the one who has been lying to me my whole life. For as long as I can remember I've believed that in order to be successful, I need to speak fluently and not stutter. I thought that I needed to become you. What I finally just now realize is that I don't *need* to be you, and I don't *want* to be you. I would rather stutter, and never make any real money, than be an arrogant jerk. You need to leave. Now.

**INTERNAL PETER**

I'm not leaving.

(PETER and INTERNAL PETER stand with their eyes locked for a few tense moments.)

**PETER**

You're an ass.

(PETER punches INTERNAL PETER in the face. INTERNAL PETER falls backward to the ground. He quickly stands back up, brushes himself off, straightens his shirt, and regains his arrogant air. PETER walks over to SARAH, and takes both of her hands in his.)

S-S-S-S-Sarah. I l-l-l-l-love you, t-t-t-too.

(PETER is suddenly stuttering very badly. As he painfully attempts to speak, SARAH continues patiently looking at him, never looking away from his face.)

You have ch-ch-ch-changed the w-w-w-way I see m-m-m-myself. Thank you. I can't imagine my l-l-l-l-l.... My l-l-l-l-l....

(PETER becomes completely stuck on the "L" sound and stops. He continues to look at SARAH, not breaking eye contact. PETER is breathless from the effort that he has had to expend to spit out the words. SARAH's eyes fill with tears.)

**SARAH**

Peter. (Beat.)

(PETER stiffens, and braces himself for her response.)

I see who you are, and I love all of you. Exactly the way that you are. I can't imagine ever not being right here next to you. Please... (Beat.) will you make me your wife?

(PETER and SARAH continue holding hands and looking at one another. INTERNAL PETER stares at them in disbelief. He sighs, and then slowly bows his head. His spotlight blacks out, and he reluctantly exits. PETER and SARAH kiss as the lights fade.)

(END OF PLAY)