

Reduction in Force

An economic comedy

by

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A Central Works Method Play
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Act I. In the lunchroom. ANITA, in a spot, speaks to the unseen Secretaries Support Group.

ANITA

My name is Anita, and I'm an Executive Secretary. (Pause) Hi, everybody. I was hesitant about coming. But now that I have, I see Nicole is here, and Jennifer, and Jennifer . . . and Jennifer. (Pause) Look, I am a devoted 25-year employee. Devoted and loyal --- both to Icarus Financial Services, and to my career. So coming here, and listening to you suggest things like "take decisive action," or, "stand up for ourselves," or, "secretaries' phone tree" . . . I don't mind telling you. It makes me anxious. I like your courage. Your principles. And the pastries you've provided. But ever since the economy tanked, and my husband left, and my kids moved back home, and my mortgage company re-incorporated in Dubai and refuses to take my phone calls, I am risk averse. I agree the system is corrupt. I'm alarmed at the greed and the injustice. But I could never risk my job to join you in any actionable way. Let me say that I support you. You know . . . in spirit!

Lights change. GABBY, in her office, is unaware of ANITA entering. GABBY paces and speaks into her phone earpiece.

GABBY

You miserable piece of scum! After I opened up to you- After all I laid bare to you- (listens) Don't you talk to me about risk. Somebody's bid-whacking my securities into scrap paper; I can barely buy gas for my sailboat! I'm going to have to go in-and-out on that hurricane. Get me my research ASAP (ay-sap). (Listens) I don't want to hear about your "low-hanging fruit." No, I don't care if they're blue. (Listens) Make up sex? . . . I might. Where did you park? (sees ANITA) That's all I have to say.

GABBY switches off her phone, smiles.

GABBY (CONT'D)

My mother. Such a worry wart, always checking on me.
It's a busy day, Anita. Busy, Busy, Busy! Millions to be
made! How much did you hear? (beat) My call to Mom?

ANITA

Just . . . daughterly affection.

GABBY

Perfect. What have you got for me this morning?

ANITA

Food riots in China and Indonesia.

GABBY

(She begins shredding papers) Running out of rice? *

ANITA

It's wheat. A drought in Russia, and bugs in Canada.
Starvation is threatening nearly a million people.

GABBY

This is very good news. What else?

ANITA

That pipeline that exploded in the desert, killing hundreds.
It's ignited a war between / the

GABBY

A war! Whoops! Are we hedged?

ANITA

Yes, Ms. Deed.

GABBY

Templeton talked about this. The lesson is: "Buy when there's
blood in the streets!"

ANITA

I'm not sure they have streets. They have sand, and there
must be roads, but-

GABBY

Anything else?

ANITA

The regulators are here today. They're conducting interviews. I heard they're opening a criminal investigation / into-

GABBY

Nothing to worry about. The regulators can't find their own nut sacks under a bright light, with both hands and a magnifying glass. Any movement in hurricane futures?

ANITA

NOAA (Noh-uh) shows those two tropical storms are approaching the Gulf, headed straight for Cat-In-A-Box. They expect tragic devastation and loss of life.

GABBY

Goody!

ANITA

Do you want the latest?

GABBY

No need. I've made arrangements. And timing is everything. In the meantime, I have a few orders for the Christopher account. I'll be putting them into the Greek bonds.

ANITA

The Christopher account is a classic example of a buy-and-hold client with a low tolerance for risk. Are you sure-?

GABBY

Risk is an asset.

ANITA

But those Greek bonds are junk.

GABBY

Some people like junk.

ANITA

Oh my god. (Lowers her voice) Icarus has gone short on those bonds. You are putting our most risky investments into the retirement account of the Little Sisters of Saint Christopher. They never placed an order.

GABBY

Anita. The very name of their group- They are called an "order."

ANITA

Isn't that . . . illegal?

GABBY

It's not illegal in Texas.

ANITA

We are not in Texas.

GABBY

The client is. Their headquarters. Their- their coven.

ANITA

"Convent." I don't know what to say.

GABBY

You'll say nothing. Those women took a vow of poverty. They believe God will provide. What the hell are they doing with money to invest, anyway?

ANITA

They are nuns.

GABBY

That's a plus. They're under a vow of silence.

ANITA

We can't just-

GABBY

What's gotten into you? It's just a cloister full of celibates. They couldn't tell an active box from a front-end load! Listen, either I eat what I kill, or I go hungry.

(MORE)

GABBY (CONT'D)

My commission gets a goose when I get rid of the Greeks!
(Beat) It's not like the old days any more. The good times we had, when we were riding high, selling great steaming piles of toxic investments like they were spun from gold! The windfalls came hot, and heavy, like multiple rolling orgasms! It was always gimme, gimme, gimme, and I got more, More, MORE! It was so COOL! But now, my wealthiest clients are afraid to invest with me. The securities market is regrouping, rising, innovating. I won't be left behind! Friday, at the Sales Award Luau, they will call my name as the number one salesperson. And I will accept my hibiscus lei wearing a grass skirt made entirely out of shredded documents. That is my end game, Anita. Don't you see that I have got to reach my sales quota?!

ANITA

Of course. I'm concerned, too. I have an idea.

GABBY

An idea?

ANITA

There have been some layoffs this year. People leaving the company. Without intending to. I want to be valuable to you. Perhaps even / indispensable.

GABBY

Indispensable? Ronald Reagan fired eleven thousand air traffic controllers in 1981. Now, this happened before my birth, so I was unable to read about it in the Wall Street Journal. Still, historically speaking, I understand the financial lesson.

ANITA

(beat) Which is . . . ?

GABBY

Eleven thousand layoffs. Not a single airline accident - with a few notable exceptions. And twenty years later, Ronald Reagan had an airport named after him! (silence) My point is that no one is indispensable. Layoffs result in more layoffs: it's simple trickle-down economics!

(MORE)

GABBY (CONT'D)

In spite of everything, the invisible hand of the market continues to count out ready money.

ANITA

I understand that. As a lesson. But in real life- I want to be sure the invisible hand of the market isn't going to shove me out the door.

GABBY

(guffaws) You said you had an idea that might benefit me.

ANITA

Yes, I do. You mentioned your clients are nervous. (beat) Well, with a single letter, you can boost your commissions, reassure your clients, and meet the legal requirements for disclosure.

GABBY

Legal requirements?

ANITA

The federal securities laws.

GABBY

Securities laws are wide open to interpretation.

ANITA

That's . . . true. But the regulators may ask about whether the laws are, you know . . . being broken. (silence) I, took the liberty of drafting a sample letter. I've even merged and printed a few. If you like them-

ANITA pulls out a sample letter and envelopes.

GABBY

Anita, you little- You thought of this yourself?

ANITA

As I said, I've been hoping to become- (indispensable).

GABBY

Have you told anyone about this?

ANITA

No. I've brought it exclusively to you, Ms. Deed. You can say it was your idea.

GABBY

Read it to me. The sample.

ANITA

"Dear [Merge First Name]. I am hereby enclosing the prospectus of [Merge Name of Toxic Investment]."

GABBY

The prospectus? Give me that. (reads) "You may be surprised and/or delighted to learn you now own [Merge Number of Shares] of said investment. I also have a smorgasbord of less risky investment instruments, custom-selected exclusively for you, [Merge First Name]. Call me to learn more. Sincerely, Gabby Deed." This is an astonishing development.

ANITA

This could increase your overall sales! Your clients may feel more comfortable investing with you if they believe their interests /are-

GABBY

What about my interests? Maximizing my commissions. I infer you've already signed these letters, with my signature?

ANITA

I added your smiley face!

GABBY

Give me the ones you've merged and printed. I'll drop them off at the mail room.

ANITA

I can take care of that.

GABBY takes the letters from ANITA & sets them on her desk.

ANITA (CONT'D)

If some of the accounts buy additional investments, could I get a little- increase? Perhaps a small commission-

GABBY

Bonuses are reserved for vice presidents and above.

ANITA

Not a bonus! A percentage of the additional profits. I need- That is, I took my last two salary reductions in stride. And the furloughs. But if I am able to increase the company's bottom line- Your bottom line-!

GABBY

Oh, Anita. You want to help, I know. Attitude is everything!

MITCH enters. He carries a briefcase and a folder.

MITCH

Hi.

GABBY

Looking for Big Assets?

MITCH

I have a report here for a "Gabby Deed."

GABBY

That's me! You're . . . Mitch, is it?

GABBY takes the folder, examines the contents over the next lines.

MITCH

Yes. From Mister Pomeroy's office.

ANITA

I'm Anita Green. Hi. We met a couple of weeks ago, in the main lobby.

MITCH

My first day! You were standing under that giant fresco.

GABBY

(leafing through) Ferdinand . . .

ANITA

"Ulysses and the Sirens."

GABBY

Ferdinand. . .

ANITA

They're very big on Greeks around here.

GABBY

Ferdinand! (taps earpiece) Yummy Pants! (to MITCH) This isn't the report I requested.

MITCH

Mister Pomeroy has been distracted because of the regulators.

GABBY

Pomeroy is a miserable slimeball!

MITCH

He kind of is.

GABBY

(on phone) I cannot believe this-! When I ask for research, I expect complete information! (listens) Is this one of your jokes? You are lower than a pimple on the butt of Ben Bernanke.(listens, mollified) Right, the other tropical storm. All right, then.

MITCH

So this is . . .

ANITA

Wealth Management. (indicates GABBY) It's just the two of us.

GABBY

(lowers her voice) Are you scheduled to be interviewed?

ANITA

What a smart attaché case.

MITCH

Thank you! It's not mine.

GABBY

(agreeing) Of course they're inept.

MITCH

I believe- you may have forgotten, but we shared a moment in the copy room.

ANITA

You offered to let me go ahead of you!

MITCH

You only had one copy.

GABBY

Whatever goes down, you leave me out of it. And if I hear otherwise, it's your nuts in the blender! (switches off phone. To MITCH) This research is unacceptable.

MITCH

Tropical Storm Ferdinand is-

GABBY

I told Pomeroy, "The next two named storms." There's exactly zip on Tropical Storm Gabrielle.

MITCH

They've named a storm after you?

GABBY

It's just a terribly flattering coincidence.

MITCH

I can get it for you.

GABBY

It's not your fault you worked for that dimwit. But if you're going to be working for me, you need to understand-

ANITA

He's going to be working/ for-

GABBY

-you must anticipate my unmet needs, and be super conscientious.

MITCH

I'm going to be working for you?

GABBY

Yes. You are to be my mentee. This is my secretary, Anita Green. Anita, Mitch. Mitch, Anita.

MITCH

That's great! What's a mentee?

GABBY

I am the mentor. You are the mentee.

ANITA

(to MITCH) She means her protégé.

MITCH

Mister Pomeroy never said a word about this.

ANITA

(to GABBY) This is quite a- (to MITCH) This is- I wasn't expecting to be working / with you.

MITCH

I'm not trying to horn in. / I'm sure it will be a win-win for both of us.

GABBY

My source said that you were ideal. And I think you'll be happy with the size of your package!

ANITA

His what?

MITCH

What was that?

*
*

GABBY (CONT'D)

Your benefits and salary bump. I'm sure you'll like it.

MITCH

I'm sure I will.

ANITA

He's getting a bump? What kind of a bump?

GABBY

Sharing people's packages is against company policy.

ANITA

I understand that. And I didn't mean- I'm happy to have . . . help around the office. (beat) He's really getting a bump?

MITCH

I'm a huge help. Huge.

ANITA

What do you do, anyway?

MITCH

I'm a mentee! But before, with Mr. Pomeroy, I was an executive runner.

ANITA

Oh. An errand boy. (to GABBY) You have kept this- I'm sorry. (sotto voce) I'd like to speak with you privately --- not in front of this stranger.

GABBY

(to ANITA) No one is usurping your position.

MITCH

(to GABBY) I've had my eye on you. I've longed to work here in Wealth Management for- forever!

GABBY

Many here at Icarus are envious of my little empire.

ANITA

You've only been here two weeks.

MITCH

(to GABBY) I hear you're quite the Spice Trader.

GABBY

I tend to push the envelope.

MITCH

Lucky envelope.

ANITA

(to MITCH) Excuse me. Her last mentee nearly destroyed my filing system with his reckless approach to the alphabet.

MITCH

Organization is my specialty. Also research. That, and running.

GABBY

Anita, he is not up for debate.

ANITA

Where will he sit?

MITCH

I never sit! Sitting would mean I'm not giving my all. I'm constantly on the move, for the team --- and for Gabby!

ANITA

What an ass-kisser. (brief awkward pause) Nothing personal.

MITCH

She's right. (to GABBY) I'm a terrific ass-kisser! It's one of my most vibrant attributes! When performance reviews come around, my ass-kissing technique usually gets a five rating!

GABBY

Five? (pause) That's really high. I've never given a five.

MITCH

Open yourself up to a new experience.

The desk phone rings. ANITA talks on the phone, her attention split, while GABBY and MITCH get chummy.

ANITA

What? I mean, Ms. Deed's empire- office.

GABBY

Where did you come from?

MITCH

I was with Reamin Brothers 'til they went tits up.

GABBY

(admiring) Reamin Brothers!

MITCH

"Top service! All ways!"

GABBY

I adored that tagline. Something about it / resonates!

MITCH

Resonates! Too bad Icarus got on the federal gravy train, while we got thrown under the bus.

ANITA

But Ms. Deed requires shade-grown Arabica beans.

MITCH

Icarus survived, but that tagline. It doesn't exactly sing.

GABBY

"Your money is with us!" No, it doesn't hold much promise.

MITCH

Shouldn't it be, "Your money is safe with us?"

GABBY guffaws. MITCH waits a moment, then joins her.

ANITA

"Cost-cutting measures?" That's not possible. We just got a new employee!

GABBY

Who is it?

ANITA

It's Lucky from Ops. He says we're "economizing." He says, come Monday, it's Robusta for you!

MITCH

That's outrageous! (silence) There's insufficient caffeine in Robusta endosperm!

ANITA

Do you mind? What are you, a coffee expert now? (listens)

MITCH

I shorted Colombian Fedecafe (Fed-uh-kaf-ay) last summer.

ANITA

(on phone, concerned) Are you sure?

GABBY hangs up ANITA's phone.

ANITA (CONT'D)

He just said he's come from a meeting, and they're announcing a company-wide reduction in force!

MITCH

(pause) Whoa.

GABBY

(Flustered) Okay. The lesson. "Increased productivity means fewer jobs." No! "Massive, permanent unemployment is the new normal."

ANITA

That's whose lesson?

GABBY

My point is that we're experiencing the law of supply and demand. There's less demand for labor, so . . . I REFUSE to be DEFEATED! I- I needed a hedge. So I stole Mitch. (to MITCH) I stole you.

MITCH

I'm flattered.

GABBY

I heard the scuttlebutt, and I had to make a deal. They're eliminating divisions. It's a bloodbath, okay? Who cares what the hell they do, as long as it only affects the administrative staff? But I can't be left high and dry, swilling freeze-dried Robusta with no one to do my grunt work!

ANITA

What will happen to me?

GABBY

The purpose of a reduction in force is to flush the waste. Cut the dead wood. There are too many positions, not enough profits.

ANITA

Last year, Icarus cleared forty-seven percent in profits!

GABBY

But we have huge "fraud" settlements to pay. Lobbyists. Enormous sales bonuses. Extravagant luaus!

MITCH

It adds up.

GABBY

When a congressman gets caught with a cash bribe in his freezer, where do you think that comes from?

ANITA

I don't know! My annual salary?

GABBY

I can't tell you a happy story! Every surviving division has been called on to tighten its belt. I suspected something was up. So I- I met with J.J. in H.R. One-on-one, after hours, in the hot tub pavilion.

MITCH

J.J.?

ANITA

You slept with him!

GABBY

I uncovered the exact terms of the riff. He said I'm required to reduce my staff. (pause) By one. By one employee. (pause.) I only get to keep one of you. I would have been forced to lay you off, Anita. If not for Mitch. (To MITCH) You see why I stole you.

ANITA

When are you getting rid of him?

MITCH

Where should I put my things?

GABBY

This seems a critical turn. I face a huge decision.

ANITA

This is not a huge decision. This is no decision at all. He showed up here this morning. (checks her watch) Fifteen minutes. Against my seven years.

GABBY

No, no, no. (she reviews the data) A decision about whether or not to invest in a tropical storm.

ANITA

The storm is your "huge / decision?"

GABBY

Ferdinand has not really captured my imagination. But if Gabrielle turns out to be even half as destructive as Katrina- The name alone seems like an omen.

MITCH

I was thinking the same thing.

ANITA

Gabrielle is . . . What about the reduction in / force?

MITCH

You can invest in a rainstorm? With no liquidity risk?

ANITA

May I ask which one of us are you planning to let go?

GABBY

(looks them over) I don't know yet. I must decide by ten a.m.

ANITA

That's / only-

MITCH

And after you choose?

GABBY

The ex-employee will be escorted to the front gate. Hopefully by that husky, bald-headed security guy. Paul? He will confiscate the ex-employee's keys, badge, and human dignity, and then lock the gate in their face.

SOUND CUE: Distant person screaming, "No, no, no, noooooo!" All three listen for a moment. MITCH and ANITA register that the screamer sounds like Jennifer.

ANITA

Jennifer. (pause) That's inhumane. I am a person. Also a person: Mitch, here.

GABBY

At home, at your leisure, you are persons. When you are at work, you are human capital. Human resources. What do we do with capital? We spend it! And resources? We use them up!

ANITA

I don't believe this.

GABBY

Of course you don't. That's "denial." H.R. gave me this "Wheel of Change." It illustrates the psychological phases you'll go through during the reduction in force. First, "shock." You know, numbness, wandering around. Oh, here!

(MORE)

GABBY (CONT'D)

Weight loss. Then, "Denial." That's you, Anita. Then comes "Anger." Resulting in unwarranted hostility. "Bargaining." Finally, "Acceptance."

ANITA

Those are the stages of death and dying.

GABBY

No, no, it's clearly labeled "layoffs." Wait. There's a peel-and-stick label. (puts it down)

MITCH

How will you decide? What about that game, the one where you draw a picture?

GABBY

I know that one!

MITCH

We could draw pictures and then you could guess what / they are.

ANITA

I don't think a game is an appropriate / way-

GABBY

I'm super-good at Monopoly.

MITCH

Dice? Do you have any dice?

ANITA

You actually have to make the decision!! (silence. defensive)
What about a democratic vote?

GABBY

I don't approve of voting.

MITCH

Amazing! Neither do I.

GABBY

Unless the outcome has been, you know, rigged.

ANITA

I feel that I have a right-

GABBY

Of course, at times, sometimes, employees feel they are entitled to some pride. Some self-respect. (pause) This is not one of those times. Now. Tell me the reasons you should work for me. Mitch goes first. Wait, wait! Mitch gets the talking stick.

MITCH

Awesome.

ANITA

What is that? The "talking stick?"

GABBY

It's an ancient Indian custom. It's like a tomahawk, or wampum, or a loincloth or something. (Hands MITCH her pencil.) It means you get to talk without interruption, (pointedly, to ANITA) Anita.

MITCH

I'm honored. The last time I held a talking stick I was at the "Just Risk" Subprime Conference in Bermuda. I felt so opened. Of course, we were all naked. (brief awkward pause.) Anyhoo. It's quite obvious why you should keep me as your employee.

ANITA

(to GABBY) He's done nothing but manipulate you since he got here. And-

MITCH

Talking stick! Gabby, you don't know anything about me. I'm an utterly unknown quantity. Therefore, I represent the greater risk.

GABBY

That's true.

MITCH

And you know that, the greater the risk, the greater the potential reward. It's a sound investment principle, and I urge you to apply it in choosing me.

GABBY

Compelling.

MITCH

In addition. . . I need this job. I carry eighty-five thousand dollars in student loans. Finally, I invite you to ask yourself, Gabby, do I really want to settle for this washed-up relic?

ANITA

Give me that!

ANITA and MITCH struggle over the stick.
ANITA wins.

ANITA (CONT'D)

My two sons carry at least that much in student loans! This very moment, they are around the corner at Box Mart. Applying to bag groceries. It's a wasteland out there for young men with political science degrees.

MITCH

I'm not to blame for their poor choices.

ANITA

I have the damn talking stick! (to GABBY) I can't believe you would seriously consider hiring this -this interloper. After all we've been through, year in and year out. The times I've come in at dawn and worked late into the night. The times I covered for you when you were- (sotto voce) you know, with Mr. Pomeroy? After all we've meant to / each other-

GABBY

I wonder. Did I actually get as much out of our relationship as you did? Did you make "relationship currency deposits" on a regular basis? Or did you, mostly, like you're doing now --- stand there with your hand out?

ANITA, stung, puts down the pencil.

ANITA

I type 150 words a minute.

MITCH

So do I.

ANITA

I generate ideas!

MITCH

I have impulses.

GABBY

All right, all right. Let's summarize. (to ANITA) You bring brand recognition, a certain amount of customer loyalty, and a traditional interface.

ANITA

Ideas. Reliability. (pause) Secrecy.

GABBY

(to MITCH) And you offer entrepreneurial zing, undeniable product edginess, and the thrill of an unknown risk.

MITCH

Great risk. Bringing great reward!

ANITA

Doesn't he . . . remind you of someone?

MITCH

(presenting his profile) Maybe, Ronald Reagan.

ANITA

All the protégés you've trained over the years? Opportunists -- who talked a good game, then left their shoeprints all over you, as they scrambled up the ladder?

MITCH

Oh, come on-

ANITA

She trained Mister Pomeroy!

GABBY

(Beat. To MITCH) She's right. I don't know anything about you. I wonder. A test involving, on the one hand, "High Task," and on the other hand, "Low Task," would make feel me more comfy.

MITCH

"Low task?" What does that mean, low / task?

GABBY

Let's start with the high task. A common secretary-slash-assistant activity here in Wealth Management. A client . . . played by Anita, is waiting to take lunch with me. I am late, as is my preference: I find it produces an imbalance of power. Chat.

ANITA

She's, uh, late?

MITCH

I wouldn't say she's "late." She just got back from talks with a hedge fund in Thailand. She probably forgot to reset her Rolex.

GABBY

Nice cover.

ANITA

There was a piece in the Times last week about Thailand. It said there's a huge black market there, trafficking in human body parts.

MITCH

That's right! Reamin Brothers lobbied to introduce organ trading to the commodity markets. We hoped to make a killing, shorting kidneys.

GABBY

Exactly! Lovely! Bravo! Flying colors on the high task!

ANITA

But, he didn't-

GABBY

Now, to the low task. Anita? Fetch the secretary's scepter.

ANITA

I called Facilities last night before I went home, and I'm sure / they've-

GABBY

You heard me. The secretary's scepter.

ANITA exits.

GABBY (CONT'D)

Kidney futures. Trading in hearts and spleens. I've often contemplated such a financial innovation, myself.

MITCH

Not your spleen.

GABBY

(guffaws) Not my spleen! Foreigners. People from Thailand.

MITCH and GABBY laugh together. ANITA enters with a plunger, hands it to MITCH.

GABBY (CONT'D)

It's in the executive washroom, turn left past Anita's space. Second stall from the washbasin.

MITCH exits.

ANITA

While he is busy, failing at his task . . .

GABBY

You wish to undermine his chances?

ANITA

May I just say, quickly, . . . I live with my two sons, as you know.

GABBY

Danny, and Turk.

ANITA

Donald. And Mark. In a house that we rescued from demolition; that I gutted, and restored, personally. After my husband . . . at the top of the market.

GABBY

Yes, after your ex-husband-

ANITA

And now my mortgage is about to adjust to twice the monthly payment, and I can't get the bank to give me a workout.

GABBY

This seems off topic. You are trying to break a perfectly legal contract with your bank?

ANITA

I'm talking about a workout to a lower price. A price they'd accept from any stranger. This job is my only chance to help my family, perhaps, stay in our home.

GABBY

But I can't make a decision based on - on - (looks for the word) "empathy!" Anita, the lesson is, "Altruism is a basic evil."

ANITA

It is?

GABBY

Of course it is; Ayn Rand said so.

MITCH enters with the plunger.

GABBY (CONT'D)

No, no, no! Don't bring that-! For god's sake. Set it on Anita's chair, or something, and get back in here.

MITCH exits.

GABBY (CONT'D)

If you are going to continue to plead your case, you'd better stick to the advantages for me.

MITCH enters. He is somewhat traumatized.

GABBY (CONT'D)

Excellent. Did you . . . ?

MITCH nods, speechless.

GABBY (CONT'D)

You understand, one of the keys to testing a potential employee is to always acquaint him with "Low Task." There must be no wavering, no questioning, no "sensitivity." You, Mitch . . . you seem unwavering and unquestioning, both. And your ass-kissing is dazzling.

ANITA

You think he-? He cleared a toilet. You don't even know how thoroughly. You cannot base your decision . . . I can be insensitive! I don't waver. I've wielded the scepter; you know I have! (beat) Damn it! I can kiss your ass!

Pause.

GABBY

Well?

ANITA

Please don't make /me.

GABBY

Are you saying you're not willing?

ANITA

You are, you are- brilliant, and . . . I cherish the hours I spend working with you. You . . . those shoes!

GABBY

Do you want the job or not? Kiss it like you mean it!

ANITA

(blinking) You, um. Okay. Just give me a moment.

MITCH

(sotto voce, to ANITA) Paint a picture.

ANITA

I walk through that door, every morning. Tired, and depressed. And then, I feel a sharp stab in my stomach, of joy, as I catch sight of you, sitting in your luxurious chair, like a great, big . . . smiley face-

GABBY

Let's go, step it up, Anita. Kiss it so it stays kissed!

ANITA

That is such insightful feedback. I love the criticisms you give me on my performance, and- I swear, if I were to be robbed of the opportunity . . . the privilege, of working for you, I might just lose my will to live.

GABBY

I don't know. It leaves me feeling . . . empty.

ANITA

I can practice! You know how efficient / I am!

GABBY

You are efficient. You are dependable. But the honesty.

ANITA

I am honest!

GABBY

That's my point. (pause. It's decision time. I believe I will choose . . . (suspenseful pause) I choose to take a stroll outside, past the tennis courts. To think it over. (to herself) Oh! I might run into Paul. Manhandling someone. (to them) You've made it difficult for me, you two. I'll return with my answer, before ten o'clock.

GABBY exits.

ANITA

That- that- that-

MITCH

Forgive me for interrupting-

ANITA takes out a Leatherman Surge.

ANITA

Go ahead, interrupt! Everybody else does! (Unfolds the Surge.) Do you see this? (silence) Do you see this?

MITCH

(scared) Yes.

ANITA

I should just take it, this minute, and- It's got a little screwdriver, here. I could remove two tiny bolts at the base of her executive chair. And then the next time she sits in it, it would hold her for just a half-second . . . and then she'd be thrust into her default position: flat on her back with her legs in the air! And her skull would go "crack!" and it would split open like a watermelon dropped from a high cliff, and her brains would come spattering out all over the carpet. And I would be oh, so, so-

MITCH

Subject to arrest?

ANITA

Satisfied.

MITCH

(trying to exit) I'll be in Mr. Pomeroy's office.

ANITA blocks his exit, brandishing the Surge.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Calm down. Please. No, really. / I don't-

ANITA

Sit down this minute!

MITCH

Don't hurt me.

ANITA

She's going to choose you.

MITCH

Not necessarily. It's very close.

ANITA

You trounced me.

MITCH

You should feel proud that your ass-kissing was clumsy and self-conscious, with no depth or color. You . . . honestly, you should have refused. (continuous)

ANITA

Refused?

MITCH

You lowered yourself. If you had said, "no," you might have earned Gabby's respect. Or, at the very least, kept your own self-respect. You're better than that.

ANITA

(pause) You're right.

MITCH

Leave the ass-kissing to the seasoned expert.

ANITA

She should never have asked me to!

MITCH

I totally agree.

ANITA

She's never valued me.

MITCH

She should. Because, clearly, you excel at what you excel at. Your innate talents-

ANITA

Yes.

MITCH

-such as screwing, (ANITA advances) and, of course, unscrewing. With that thingie. Repair. Sabotage. Would you put it down, please? Please. You know you don't want to use it on me.

ANITA lowers the Surge. MITCH takes it.

MITCH (CONT'D)

May I?

He tries to fold it up, can't. MITCH says "hmm, oh, ow!" ANITA takes back the surge.

ANITA

Seven years. Did you ever just wake up one morning and wonder, "How in the hell did I manage to end up here?"

MITCH

Sure. (beat) Couple of weekends a month.

ANITA

You work hard. You think you're doing the right thing for your family. But you're really just aiding and abetting . . .

MITCH

(pause) What?

ANITA

Do you really want this job?

MITCH

Yes.

ANITA

Then you haven't the slightest idea how bad it will get.

MITCH

You're trying to rattle me. It won't work. Gabby likes me.

ANITA

It will be worse if she likes you.

MITCH

She was flirty. I can capitalize on that.

ANITA

You'll be the next Mister Pomeroy. One minute she'll be laid out on the conference table, asking you to snorf a Jell-O shot off her belly button. The next minute, she'll be handcuffing you to some sturdy piece of furniture and- you know.

MITCH

The handcuffs in Mr. Pomeroy's office. . . those are Gabby's?

ANITA

She's "Bad Cop" and he's-

MITCH

/ Yummy Pants.

ANITA

Yummy Pants. She said she needs someone to do her "grunt work." What do you think that means?

MITCH

Filing. Typing.

ANITA

Do you grunt when you file?

MITCH

No.

ANITA

Do you grunt when you type?

MITCH

No. (beat) Oh.

ANITA

She'll want you to clean her fish tank. Fill up her Hummer.

MITCH

Are those euphemisms?

ANITA

I'm trying to help you. (beat) Mitch. May I call you Mitch?

MITCH

Sure. Anita.

ANITA

I'd like you to consider something. I want you to imagine that you- that we . . . could take decisive action, to earn back our self-respect.

MITCH

I haven't lost my self-respect. (pause) But supposing I had. Hypothetically. What would you propose?

ANITA

I find it shocking that a person of your talents is willing to settle for just any job. (beat) "Messenger boy."

MITCH

Hey! I don't only run research, you know. I run reports, to, uh, the copy room. This briefcase, from Government Relations to Mister Pomeroy. I'm essential to the business.

ANITA

There's no future in running errands. Or in / working for-

MITCH

Okay, okay. On the outside, my career looks kind of . . . random. I thought this morning might be my big break. "Mitch," I said to myself, "Gabby can help you get ahead." I certainly couldn't show her my . . .

ANITA

You couldn't show her your what?

MITCH

My vulnerability.

ANITA

We're both vulnerable. I appreciate your situation. I am the sole breadwinner for a household of three. But you deserve better. You can have better. You have an MBA.

MITCH

No, I don't.

ANITA

Eighty-five thousand dollars in student loans?

MITCH

I don't have an MBA. I have an MFA. Before investment banking, I was an actor.

ANITA

(pause) Would I have seen you in anything?

MITCH

I had quite- quite a well-rounded career. Leading roles. I appeared in, uh, films.

ANITA

What kinds of films? (silence) Oh, my god.

MITCH

No! Corporate training films. "The Magic of Manager Integrity?" (pause.) The series won an award. "Ethics Can Be Fun." "Let's All Prevent Sexual Harassment." Perhaps they showed them here?

ANITA looks at him in disbelief.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Probably not. I also did legitimate stage work.

ANITA

Broadway?

MITCH

Off. Off. Off- The Hill Street Players in Newark. I was Big Daddy.

ANITA

I love "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof!" I liked the ending.

MITCH

Big Daddy has cancer.

ANITA

I know, but- I liked the very end.

MITCH

"There ain't nothin' more powerful than the odor of mendacity!"

ANITA

That's very good. What are you even doing here?

MITCH

I've been trying to gain a foothold on a second career. Who knew financial services would turn out to be as shaky as regional theatre? (pause) You know what? You're right. I do deserve better! We both deserve better.

ANITA

You called me a "washed-up relic!"

MITCH

Poor choice of words. I take it back! It was a mean thing to say.

ANITA

I'm sorry I called you an "interloper."

MITCH

I kind of liked it when you called me "interloper."

ANITA

You're not, technically, an interloper. You're really more of a pawn.

MITCH

It was kind of a setback: to go from assistant risk manager to . . . runner. Even mentee- (beat) You said you had an alternative.

ANITA

I know I did. (pause) Forget it.

MITCH

What do you mean?

ANITA

I need someone who can put himself on the line.

MITCH

That's me!

ANITA

I didn't realize- You were a risk manager? They're the most timid, conservative types in investment banking.

MITCH

Timid! I'm one of the main reasons Reamin Brothers went under. I managed risk the way a drunk manages a bottle of scotch!

ANITA

I just . . . detect a pattern. You dropped out of acting --- a profession for which you trained, and went into debt. For what? Security. Safety. A steady paycheck.

MITCH

You're a career secretary!

ANITA

I'm not worried about me.

MITCH

This is so unfair! I'm famous for my recklessness. Ask anyone who knows me. My inclination to risky behavior has never been questioned!

ANITA

Professionally?

MITCH

I was in "Rockabye Hamlet: the Musical!"

ANITA

Hunh. Personally?

MITCH

I scaled a three-story fire escape to rescue my cat. And I didn't give up acting for a paycheck. I was trying to make someone happy. (continuous)

ANITA

Oh.

MITCH

That salary wasn't enough, either. She- It didn't work out.

ANITA

(taken aback, sincere) I'm sorry.

MITCH

In hindsight, maybe, it was a lousy choice. But the fact is, I risked! Here I am, pleading with you to take me on, and I don't have even the slightest idea what you're asking me to do! Doesn't that count for something?

MITCH (CONT'D)

Do know that game, "Trust?" (silence) Actors play it all the time. And in corporations, too; sometimes trainers use it for team-building. Maybe here at Icarus . . .? Probably not. I can demonstrate. Stand here, okay?

ANITA

A game? That seems awfully silly-

MITCH

Just try it. Now. I'll turn around, like this. And then, when I shout "Game!" I close my eyes, and I let myself fall, just free-fall, backwards. And you catch me.

ANITA

Shout "Game?" And then catch you.

MITCH

Right. Honestly, it is a gamble. You could just let me fall to the ground. But you won't. (beat) You'll catch me, right?

ANITA

GAME! (beat) Come on! GAME! GAME!

MITCH is flummoxed for a moment, then closes his eyes and falls back. ANITA catches him, eases him to the floor.

ANITA (CONT'D)

(laughing) Oh my god!

MITCH

I'm the one who's supposed to yell "Game!" Not you.

ANITA

I thought you were hesitating. But then, you fell right back.

MITCH

Whoa. I haven't played that since the Hedge Fund Hoe-down in Vegas. 100 strong, and wrecked on Mojitos. I felt so tumble-y! Of course, we were all naked.

MITCH scrambles up.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Boy, talk about rug burns. (extends his hand) Your turn!

ANITA

No, that's okay. (continuous)

MITCH

Aw, come on.

ANITA

Maybe later.

MITCH

I took a chance, right? (MITCH pulls ANITA to her feet) Now tell me what you have in mind.

ANITA is interrupted by her cel phone playing "Ecstasy" by Barry White. She is mortified.

ANITA

Oh! I, uh- Excuse me. (picking up) Donald? One second, honey. (To MITCH, apologetically)) My son Mark programmed my ring tone. I've asked him to-(change it)

MITCH's phone rings. His ring tone is "Qualified to Satisfy You" by Barry White. ANITA gives him a look.

ANITA (CONT'D)

(on phone) Say that again. Where's your brother?

MITCH

Mr. Pomeroy!

ANITA

Are you still at the Box Mart?

MITCH

I understand you're nervous, but there's no need to worry, if you've done nothing wrong.

ANITA

"Overqualified:" that's an advantage!

MITCH crosses to the briefcase.

MITCH

I've got it right here. Locked up tight.

ANITA

At work. Unless I'm fired. Don't say that, honey; we'll be okay.

MITCH

Yes, of course I can, if it's awkward for you. Are you all right? You're sputtering.

ANITA

Get out of there. What? Tell Mark to cool his jets. This isn't Spain.

MITCH

Tap dance, Mr. Pomeroy! Not literally, sir; that might look suspicious.

MITCH and ANITA hang up.

ANITA

My boy.

MITCH

Mister Pomeroy.

SOUND CUE: A person is dragged by outside, begging, "Please, I have a family!" MITCH and ANITA listen.

ANITA

Can you tell who that is?

MITCH

No. Maybe. This guy from Strats and Modeling? I never knew his name. (pause) She said she'd be back by ten. Shouldn't / we-?

ANITA

Donnie says the line to fill out applications goes on for blocks and blocks.

MITCH

At Box Mart? I read they're hiring 200 people.

ANITA

Well, a few thousand showed up. (beat) His interviewer told him he was "overqualified."

MITCH

That's what J.J. tried to tell me.

ANITA

It's starting to look like neither of them will get hired.

MITCH

Before Gabby walks in on us, I'd like to retrieve my self-respect.

ANITA

I don't know, Mitch.

MITCH

You "don't know."

ANITA

Who am I fooling? You're an admin, just like me.

MITCH

But together . . .

ANITA

I can't.

MITCH

Don't short yourself! (beat) Last week, in the copy room, when I let you go first? When the paper got jammed in the machine? I was going to call Facilities, right? To send a repairman. But I didn't call, did I? Did I?

MITCH (CONT'D)

And why not? (silence) Because you pulled out that, that utensil!

ANITA

My Leatherman "Surge."

MITCH

And you went to work, with this incredible skill! Stripping away the machine's defenses, utterly. Leaving it laid out, coverless, helpless to resist you. You blew my mind. "Whoa, Mitch," I said to myself. "This woman is not to be messed with."

ANITA

You said that to yourself?

MITCH

Absolutely! "That woman is amazing," I said. "She's-
formidable." And deserving of respect.

ANITA looks at her watch, moves toward
the window. Turns, positions herself, and
raises her arms.

ANITA

(as if to GABBY) GAME!

ANITA falls back into MITCH's arms.
Scrambles to face him. They shake hands.
Blackout.

INTERMISSION.

ACT II. Lights up on MITCH, examining the locked briefcase. ANITA enters, on the phone, looks out the window. MITCH, nervous, sets the case aside.

ANITA (CONT'D)

Yes, honey, I'm sure Che Guevara would have had plenty to say about Box Mart. I know he believed that "the revolution is not an apple that falls when it is ripe," and that "you have to make it fall." But Che is not hiring. And when you're applying to be a bagger, "making apples fall" is not a desirable skill! Hello? (hangs up)

MITCH

Did you get it?

ANITA produces a small, rolled-up tortilla.

ANITA (CONTINUED)

From Jennifer. In IT. Hell hath no fury. They cut her back to thirty one and a half hours, so they don't have to pay her any benefits.

MITCH

Why would she give you a corn tortilla?

Over the next lines, ANITA and logs onto GABBY's computer. MITCH examines the tortilla.

ANITA

With all the reckless cross-hedging in grain speculation? The price of wheat is straight through the roof! Flour tortillas are so expensive. (pause while MITCH is puzzled.) Corn, on the other hand, is subsidized. (silence) You worked for Mister Pomeroy for two weeks?

MITCH

I wasn't aware that Mexican food-

ANITA

For secrecy. (turns over the tortilla) When you need to keep something top secret here at Icarus- The feds subpoenaed phone tapes from Enron. Text messages from Moody's. They've even subpoenaed Post-it Notes.

MITCH

Reamin Brothers.

ANITA

But they've never subpoenaed a corn tortilla. It's bulletproof. If I'm caught walking around with the universal network password, I could just eat it.

ANITA shows MITCH the screen; they consider.

MITCH

"Mendacity."

ANITA

(typing) "Mendacity."

*
*

ANITA (CONT'D)

(to MITCH) "Underscore Three." And we're in.

ANITA pockets the tortilla. MITCH takes over.

ANITA (CONT'D)

NOAA. The / Hurricane Center-.

MITCH

The Hurricane Center tab. (typing into search) GABRIELLE. How do you invest in a natural disaster? It's not worth anything.

ANITA

It works like commodities. But it's cash, or bust.

MITCH

So if it goes to a Category Five, Gabby cleans up. And if it doesn't make landfall,-?

ANITA

Nothing. You can't short a storm, Mitch.

MITCH

That would be ridiculous. (Turns to the computer.) Whoa.

ANITA

Do you think-

MITCH

It's going to be fine. We'll be fine.

SOUND CUE: A small crowd shuffles by outside, weeping. Gruff voice says, "Move it." MITCH and ANITA look at each other.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Mortgage Banking?

ANITA

(hears GABBY) Log off!

MITCH logs off. GABBY enters, on the phone.

GABBY

I'm sure he's harmless. But if you say anything at all to that regulator, you keep my name out of it! (to ANITA and MITCH) I've almost decided. (on phone) Okay. Good. So are you going to send over my handcuff- (looks at ANITA and MITCH) equipment? (listens, smiles.) Really? Then hang onto them. For later. (listens) I've got on that suit you liked. Uh-huh. I had the dry cleaners mend the rip. Oh really? "Commando?" (realizes MITCH and ANITA are listening.) I have to go. If you stab me in the back-! (Hangs up. Regroups.) It was a tough choice, you know, but. Valiantly fought, you two! I've made my decision.

ANITA

It's him, isn't it? It was my ass-kissing. It was substandard. He's "new," and I-

GABBY

Anita, I'm keeping you. (silence) To accept Mitch so easily, with such a lightweight test, it would set a bad precedent.

(MORE)

GABBY (CONT'D)

And, as you pointed out, mentees have burned me in the past. Then, there's you. Tried and true.

MITCH

You're keeping Anita? (to ANITA) She's keeping you.

GABBY

Sorry, Mitch.

ANITA

That's fine, Ms. Deed. That's your decision. But . . . No. I say, "No."

GABBY

No?

ANITA

Mitch and I-

GABBY

Just a moment. Mitch? And you?

MITCH shrugs: *no idea.*

ANITA

Yes. Mitch and I came to a conclusion. While you were out. The two of us together. We decided. (sotto voce) Mitch!

GABBY

The two of you. Regarding what, exactly?

ANITA

We . . . I . . . He and I decided to unite. In light of the terrible treatment at the hands- Right, Mitch? We agreed to present a united front.

GABBY

You mean, against me?

ANITA

We decided to stand up for ourselves.

GABBY

Standing up for yourself is expressly prohibited / by the-!

ANITA

We agreed to quit! Both of us. We made a pact. No matter what you decided, we weren't going to go along. So you're left with no one. With no help at all!

ANITA crosses to MITCH.

ANITA (CONT'D)

Mitch and I stand united against you, in solidarity. Taking decisive action against a corrupt system. Together!

ANITA puts her arm around MITCH and stands tall. MITCH looks at her arm.

GABBY

Is this true?

MITCH

(steps away) Get your hands off me. (to GABBY) She's lost her mind!

ANITA

Mitch? (beat) What's going on?

MITCH

This is an invasion of my- my personal space and my personal . . . waist! It's outrageous! To take hold of me against my will, and without my consent-

ANITA

I only-

MITCH

To lay your hands on me- I charge sexual harassment!

ANITA

What? / but you-!

GABBY

Anita. Don't you know that blatant shows of physical affection are forbidden by company policy? That includes kissing, pinching, ass-grabbing, lap-sitting-

ANITA

(sotto voce to Mitch) We agreed / that you-

GABBY

Butt-patting, mooning, hand holding, and / waist grabbing.

MITCH

Waist grabbing! We agreed to nothing. I will sue Icarus Financial Services to within an inch of its last asset!

GABBY

(to MITCH) Let's not be rash.

ANITA

(to MITCH) You said you'd stand with me.

MITCH

I know what I said. (to GABBY) There's this very high-powered lawyer- my brother, Rich, and he'll sue your ass-

ANITA

Your brother is a lawyer?

GABBY

This is very serious. What happened while I was out of the room?

ANITA

We talked. On a personal-. He said that he was vulnerable.

MITCH

(to GABBY) You believe that? "Vulnerable?" Me? Nothing happened while you were out of the room. (beat) She became violent. She threatened to sabotage your chair. I managed to calm her down, but, obviously, she's unstable. So when you informed her she's retaining her position: she must have just lost it! Realizing she may spend the rest of her days here, with you, in this outhouse!

GABBY

Outbuilding. It's a stone / outbuilding-

MITCH

I realize I'm very attractive, and a lot of fun, but I refuse to be harassed, demeaned, or treated as a sex toy by anyone . . . who isn't in upper management.

ANITA

(to MITCH) You thought this was a game?

GABBY

Anita, this is just very sad to watch.

MITCH

If you don't give me the job, I will file a lawsuit this very afternoon.

ANITA

It's the job, Ms. Deed- He's an actor.

MITCH

Ronald Reagan was an actor.

GABBY

(to MITCH) Would I have seen you in anything?

MITCH

Corporate training films. "Let's all Prevent Sexual Harassment." (to ANITA) I'm kind of an expert.

ANITA

This is- Yes, he's an expert. This is a set-up, a complete set-up. (to MITCH) There's a strong odor of mendacity-

GABBY

Even if it is just a harmless sideways reach-around, and he somehow agreed to it, and now he is threatening a lawsuit, for his own personal gain-

ANITA

Yes?

GABBY

-I have to say it's an absolutely brilliant ploy! It shows the kind of "go-for-it" attitude we prize here in Icarus Wealth Management!

MITCH

Thank you, Gabby. But it's very real. I've never felt so violated.

ANITA

You are a liar! Of all the / unbelievably-

MITCH

You're calling me a liar, now? Gabby-

GABBY

I heard. That is very much against what the employee manual calls "treating each other with human dignity."

ANITA

You've been pulling that employee manual out of your ass an awful lot since you started sleeping with J.J.!

MITCH

Isn't she also sleeping with / Mr.-

GABBY

My social life is my private business! At least I don't go around manhandling male employees after knowing them for less than an hour! (beat) Usually.

ANITA

We agreed! He said that / we would-

MITCH

Come on, Gabby, does this seem likely? On a day like today, that I'm going to suddenly give up all my self-interest? To become friendly with someone who is nothing more than a washed-up relic? (awkward pause) Nothing personal.

GABBY

Get your things together, Anita. You are terminated. Wait wait wait wait! Your Wheel of Change.

GABBY hands ANITA the change wheel. ANITA takes it, exits.

GABBY (CONT'D)

Mitch. Please summon security. You were my second choice. Super-high on my list. I trust you will outdo yourself to demonstrate my original decision was somehow, completely unfounded. But in no way my fault. Oh! Ask for "Paul."

MITCH

(now on phone) Yes, Security? Paul? I see. (to GABBY) He's busy. (on phone) We have a secretary here in Wealth Management. We need to schedule her removal.

GABBY

ASAP. (Ay-sap)

MITCH

Okay. I understand you're hard at it, escorting ex-employees to the gate. But this really needs to be handled immediate- (to GABBY) They hung up.

GABBY

Why don't you run over there and expedite matters?

MITCH

May I also recommend that I swing by Mister Pomeroy's office and ensure you are getting the very latest up-to-the-minute data on- (continuous)

GABBY

Tropical Storm Gabrielle?

MITCH

Mister Pomeroy has access to a special weather derivatives forum, with direct and more immediate information. He asked me to omit it from the research I prepared for you.

GABBY

That miserable-! He never mentioned this. What type of information?

MITCH

Exclusive info from the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron.
And advanced tropical storm models. "Insider information--"

GABBY

Oh! Never say "insider." That word. Not out loud. The ImClone scandal taught us that. The lesson is--

MITCH/GABBY

"Remember Martha Stewart!"

GABBY (CONTINUED)

Excellent idea. Grab Paul, from Security, and some, oh, shall we call it --- "extra" information --- on Gabrielle. I have to time this perfectly. You'll hurry back?

MITCH

Back in a jiffy!

MITCH exits. GABBY taps her earpiece,
wanders over to the window.

GABBY

Yummy Pants! You back-stabbing little twit, call me when you get this! (Taps earpiece) J.J.! It's Bad Cop. (listens) What? Well, where is he? Never mind what I said. It's Gabby Deed, and I need to reach J.J. right away. My employee selection is made. (beat) Can you tell me . . . who is there, out beyond the west gate? My view is partially obscured by the swimming complex. (listens) I own several hundred shares of Box Mart, myself. Three thousand? Of course, they all say they want jobs. But "The people who are sleeping on the grates, the homeless, are homeless by choice. That's right, Ronald Reagan. What's your name?"

ANITA enters.

GABBY (CONT'D)

I'll cc you on my email. (Hangs up.) What?

ANITA

I have something I'd like to say.

GABBY

I told you to get your things together! (silence) Anita, you are no longer employed here. What on earth do you want from me?

ANITA

I want someone to be held accountable.

GABBY

This is the United States of America. No one is ever held accountable.

ANITA

This new sideline of yours: betting / on hurricanes-

GABBY

Not betting. Investing. (pause) I wish you would wait outside. Security is . . . (silence) Listen. If someone has a farm, or something, that might be destroyed in a storm, investing in hurricane futures is a hedge. It's the invisible hand of the free market. It's a perfectly respectable-

ANITA

You don't have a farm!

GABBY

No, I don't have a farm. I have an Italianate mansion. I never claimed to have a farm-

ANITA

You are making lots of money from the suffering, from the pain- from the misfortunes of other people!

GABBY

That's what other people's misfortunes are for! (beat. taps earpiece) Switchboard! (to ANITA) Fine. (on phone) Hello. This is Gabby Deed in Wealth Management. Yes. We have an employee who is becoming abusive. Please ring security. (taps earpiece. Takes ANITA's letters.) Your "idea"? (She shreds them.) You will be removed momentarily.

ANITA

Icarus made hundreds of millions on the financial crisis.

GABBY

Look around. It's a bloodbath. Everybody is screwed.

ANITA

"Everybody" is not screwed. Individual people are screwed; companies got a safety net! But individuals can eat dirt.

GABBY

That's because individuals—Because you caused the crisis!

ANITA

I caused / the crisis?

GABBY

Not just you. All of you people, who took out loans you knew you couldn't afford. Did you think you could keep using your homes as ATMs, forever?

ANITA

Who pocketed the fees? Who gutted the standards? Who stole the money? (silence) I think this whole cluster—. I think it's about theft.

GABBY

It's not about theft, so let's not call it that, / shall we?

ANITA

That "invisible hand of the market" you're always talking about? The invisible hand belongs to a thief.

GABBY

Senator Phil Gramm was right. "We have become a nation of whiners." I will transfer your file to H.R. to complete your termination.

GABBY tries to log on. It bleeps.

GABBY (CONT'D)

Anita.

ANITA

Yes, Ms. Deed?

GABBY

What is the password, here? (silence.) When I type in- It isn't working.

ANITA crosses to the door.

GABBY (CONT'D)

Until you are relieved of your position, you will stay here, in this office. You changed my password.

ANITA

Yes, I did.

GABBY

I didn't dream up the reduction in force. I didn't destroy your job and your future. I am inside the same economy as you. When the economy "adjusts"- Sometimes there just isn't enough to go around.

ANITA

So you people get a bailout, and continue to make money hand over fist. Even though you're responsible for reckless endangerment of the entire world economy! Why is that?

GABBY

What is the damn password?

ANITA

Answer my question.

GABBY

Because if companies like Icarus weren't bailed out, the entire world economy would implode!

ANITA

But you're the reason it would implode. It's your fault!

GABBY

Rome wasn't burnt in a day, Anita. Somebody needs to make money. (pause) What matters is that the institutions, the companies- that the economic structure remains sound.

ANITA

It's not sound. What kind of a "sound economic structure" rewards fraud?

GABBY

For your information, Icarus paid several million dollars in fines, to earn the right to put fraud in quotation marks. (quotation marks) "Fraud." Worth every penny.

ANITA

I don't want to be part of it. So it's a very good thing I'm about to be forcibly removed.

GABBY

For god's sake. (Taps earpiece.) Switchboard! Cancel my call to security. Yes! The situation has changed. (Hangs up. To ANITA.) I realize today has been a difficult day. I am an employee too.

ANITA

You haven't been screwed over like I have-

GABBY

You believe that?

ANITA

If you're asking me if you've been screwed-

GABBY

I have worked my ass off to succeed in this business.

ANITA

You've worked your ass, all right.

GABBY

Get out. I mean- Wait a minute. Don't go. Come back, dammit!

ANITA stays.

GABBY (CONT'D)

You're saying I'm a slut, is that it? (No response.) "Oh, that Gabby.

(MORE)

GABBY (CONT'D)

"She is such a slut!" (silence) I know what you think of me. I know what people say behind my back. You have no room to talk. You attacked my mentee- (continuous)

ANITA

I did not.

GABBY

(continuous) -right here in front of me. At least with me, it's business. It's deals. I didn't invent the world of financial services, and I didn't write the rules. (beat) Listen. You know my daddy worked at a bank / downtown.

ANITA

Please don't feed me any crap about your father, and when you / were-

GABBY

This is important! So. His branch got in trouble. There was embezzling, or something, and they were thinking of closing it down. So my daddy was afraid, you know? That he would lose his job. Like you.

ANITA

And?

GABBY

Five years old. Daddy got me all dressed up in my white frilly dress, with a pink velvet barrette in my hair. So we marched into that bank. And my daddy pointed to his boss, and said, "Precious, why don't you run over and sit on the nice man's lap?" So I did. I just toddled over and I climbed up onto that man's knee -- and he smelled like smoke and his teeth were yellow, and his skin was kind of gray, like the skin of the bank.

ANITA

I didn't / know . . .

GABBY

And my daddy said, "Kiss him, Gabby! Kiss the nice man." And then and there, five years old, and scared like my daddy was.
(MORE)

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GABBY (CONT'D)

I kissed the boss, and I smiled a friendly, pretty, little girl's smile. I pretended I wanted to kiss him and that he was sweet-smelling and kind, and that it was practically my idea! Because I loved my daddy. And here was something I could do to help my daddy keep his job. So that's how I- I learned about deals. You do what it takes.

ANITA

(pause) To be exploited like that, by your own father. I'm so sorry.

GABBY

(pause) So, now will you give me the password?

ANITA

No!

GABBY

You don't even get it. My father kept his job. And your fanny is out on the street. You stand there in judgment of me? You chose to be a secretary. (continuous)

ANITA

I did.

GABBY

I chose to deal. To trade in commodities. And it never is too upsetting, or too humiliating, or too demeaning, if I just keep that in mind. The end game. My end game.

ANITA

Well. Best of luck.

ANITA begins to exit.

GABBY

I am in charge of you. I am what makes this place run. I REFUSE TO BE DEFEATED! You are still my employee until the final paperwork is signed.

ANITA

Admit you are responsible!

MITCH enters with a corn tortilla.

MITCH

I stopped by- Oh! Anita.

GABBY

Don't pay any attention to her.

MITCH

I'd hoped she'd be gone.

GABBY

I haven't been able to get hold of security!

MITCH

That's because- (beat) They're having to monitor the West Gate. A massive crowd of the unemployed seems to be filtering over from Box Mart. There's, um, irritation, or. Fury. Rage. Against the financial sector. "Outside agitators," I heard.

GABBY

It's only three thousand.

MITCH

I'm sure there's no need to worry.

GABBY

Why would they be mad at us?

ANITA

Apparently there's been an interruption in the flow of wealth that's supposed to "trickle down."

GABBY

There's no way they can get past the moat!

MITCH

Of course, the moat is unassailable. Security said we should just hunker down and stay put.

GABBY

(To MITCH) But - is the reduction in force proceeding?

MITCH

Oh, yes. Human Resources has set up a holding pen in the lunchroom. Some secretaries and admins are holed up in there, clutching their wheels of change. (beat) A few employees have refused to be rounded up.

GABBY

This is- this is somewhat . . . This is none of my business. Do you have the "extra" information?

MITCH hands GABBY the tortilla. GABBY and MITCH review it.

GABBY (CONT'D)

Gabrielle is -

MITCH

Hurricane Gabrielle / is-

GABBY

-heading for Category Five. She's going to go Cat Five. This modeling- I've never seen anything like it.

MITCH

Me, neither! Hold on. That's a naturally occurring corn blemish. But it's going to be big!

GABBY

(beat) Anita has my password.

MITCH

In ordinary circumstances, we would call IT. (continuous)

GABBY

Yes!

MITCH

Unfortunately, most of them have been right-sized and confined to the lunchroom.

GABBY

DAMN! (to MITCH) At some point they'll cut off trading. I have a very short window to place this trade!

ANITA pulls out her tortilla.

GABBY (CONT'D)

Anita. Is that the password? You need your job, isn't that true? You were an ideal executive secretary. Seven years, so valuable to me. If you tell me the password . . . You need the money.

ANITA

I do, actually, need the money.

MITCH

I need the money, / too!

GABBY

I can reconsider. You and I are so close. Remember the card I sent, when your husband dumped you?

ANITA

You sent me a birthday card.

GABBY

It showed that I care! (silence) Come back to work for me. Mitch has already given me the research I need / and-

MITCH

Gabby-?

ANITA

What if he sues Icarus for sexual harassment?

GABBY

Then it's "he said, she said," isn't it? I'm the only witness, after all. Give it to me, Anita. (beat) Please?

Pause.

ANITA

I quit. And you can kiss my ass! (ANITA eats the tortilla.)

GABBY

Stop it! Nooo! You little socialist! Quit! Chewing! You are so goddamn fired!

MITCH

If it's just to place a hurricane trade- What about your phone? / Can't you-?

GABBY

I'll still need my password!

ANITA checks her watch. MITCH gets on the computer.

MITCH

I'll bet I can remember the password. If I can keep my employment. I watched Anita as she changed it.

GABBY

That's my mentee.

MITCH

(logs on successfully) We're in.

ANITA

(to MITCH) I should never have trusted you.

GABBY executes her trade.

GABBY

(gives tortilla to MITCH) Get rid of this. Twenty thousand contracts, net long, square on Hurricane Gabrielle. That's what I'm talking about! (to ANITA) Honestly, Anita, you have such a chip on your shoulder. You need to get together with all your comrades-

ANITA

That's right. We'll band together and weave ourselves a safety net. I know: We'll use our bootstraps!

MITCH

(fumbling with his phone. Lying.) I'm vibrating!

GABBY

Pardon me?

MITCH

I'm getting a call. Look, it's Mister Pomeroy! (answers) Yes, Mister Pomeroy? The regulator?

GABBY

I'll take that!

MITCH keeps his phone from GABBY.

MITCH

Is it about-? The Greek bonds, I see. And when is the interview? Oh, my. I'm not sure there's / anything-

GABBY

When is the interview?

MITCH

Yes. I am! By Gabby. (listens) I know, isn't she?

GABBY

What did he say?

MITCH

Extremely. Totally.

GABBY

Tell him to keep me out of it!

MITCH

I don't think she wants to see you, / Mister Pomeroy.

GABBY

I'll see him! Of course I'll see him.

MITCH

Not in your office.

GABBY

Not in my office!

MITCH

(on phone) In Fixed Income, under the mural of Priapus? No, inside the Grotto of Larry Summers. She'll / be-

GABBY

I'll be there!

GABBY exits out the garden door. MITCH crosses to the window. Turns and regards ANITA. They run to each other, give each other a high five.

MITCH

Formidable. You rocked her world!

ANITA

I was mostly trying not to laugh. You've "never been so violated?"

MITCH

Thank you for casting me. Of course, with improv, anything can go wrong. But you didn't sidestep or waffle, even once.

ANITA

The morning isn't over yet.

MITCH

When you ate that tortilla? That was kind of hot. You were like Joan of Arc! On fire! (beat) Poor choice of words. Here we go. This feels pretty great! When she gets back . . . (beat) Hey. Hey, Anita. What do we do for an encore?

ANITA

I don't know. I just know we can't stop now. Not while Icarus still stands.

MITCH

We're just a couple of admins. What more can we do?

ANITA

I'm thinking.

MITCH

There's nothing. (pause) Well. Maybe one thing. We can continue to work together, as a team; and if we do that, I have a strong feeling we're going to be all right.

(MORE)

MITCH (CONT'D)

(MITCH gets the briefcase.) Can you bust this case open with your Surge?

ANITA

Your case. Bust it / open?

MITCH

I was supposed to run it to Mr. Pomeroy. But then, when he called me . . .

ANITA

He didn't call. We made / that up-

MITCH

No, before? (ringtone reference) He told me not to deliver it.

ANITA offers MITCH the Surge.

MITCH (CONT'D)

You do it. It's paperwork, probably. Audit reports or something. Maybe there's some kind of- you know, evidence, in here.

ANITA pries the case open. It is filled with money.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Okay! Look at that. Whoa. This is just like one of those hypothetical situations, you know those? Where you have to choose between X and Y? And you think there must be some kind of weird catch, because Y is the best thing that ever happened to you, and you would have to be out of your mind to pick X in a million / billion years?

ANITA

It's all hundred-dollar bills in here!

ANITA counts a bundle.

ANITA (CONT'D)

(counting) Why is Mr. Pomeroy meeting with the regulator?

MITCH

Who knows? It could be failing to report transactions, insider trading, money laundering, fleecing clients. Or maybe . . . bribing somebody. (beat) This is our one-way ticket out of here.

ANITA

What do you mean, our ticket?

MITCH

We'll split it, Anita. Fifty, fifty.

ANITA

(stops counting) I think it's three quarters of a million dollars. (beat) You knew about this? And you kept it / from me?

MITCH

I didn't know! Not for sure. It could have been paperwork. Normally, Mr. Pomeroy only sputters like that when large sums of money are involved. It made me wonder.

ANITA

Taking this money is not an option.

MITCH

You're kidding!

ANITA

No. This wasn't part of my idea. The fake research, the fake harassment. The fake phone call. Not this.

MITCH

Because this is real. You could keep your house. I could pay off my student loans.

ANITA

We can't just take it.

*

MITCH

But- Anita, please. If we take it now, before Gabby gets back, we're in the clear. Who's going to report it? A case full of bribe money? It's practically risk-free.

*

ANITA

It's theirs. It's Icarus' money.

MITCH

Not after we take it! (beat) How is it ethical to leave the money here? It'll be used as a bribe! If we take it, we're actually . . . we're fighting crime.

GABBY enters suddenly.

GABBY

Pomeroy was not where he said he would be! And the place is practically- (pause, as GABBY takes in the scene, including the money.) What's going on?

MITCH

I'm running it. The attaché case. It's, uh- (long pause) money.

GABBY

I figured that out.

ANITA

It's bribe money.

GABBY

Bribe money, what, to corrupt the regulators? Too late! (GABBY guffaws.) What are you doing in my office? With him? / This looks-

MITCH

Gabby, she walked in on me; just barged in! She refuses to go to the lunchroom, although I have ordered her to, several times.

GABBY

We'll see about that. You were going to steal this money.

ANITA

No, I wasn't.

GABBY

I'm talking to him. (silence) I see. Let's examine the situation. You, Mitch, are my employee. You are in possession of a delicious sum of cash, earmarked for Pomeroy. He can't take delivery because he's under investigation. (speculating) It's those insider weather reports. His ass is theirs.

ANITA

You said the regulators can't find their own nut sacks-

GABBY

That doesn't mean they can't find Pomeroy's. At any rate, he's out of the picture.

MITCH

If the regulators are corrupted-

GABBY

(to MITCH) Don't worry about the regulators! We'll keep the money. Me and you. We'll split it. (pause) Seventy, thirty. (taps earpiece) Switchboard!

MITCH

What about Anita?

GABBY

(on phone) Jennifer? Get me Security. (to MITCH) Shut that.

ANITA

(to GABBY) Don't you have enough money?

GABBY

There is no such thing as "enough money." (on phone) I'm aware they're busy! This is extremely tiresome. Have them ring Gabby Deed in Wealth Management. (Taps. To MITCH) Anita can be controlled. Contained. Muzzled.

ANITA

How are you going to explain that briefcase to Security?

GABBY

Don't you understand how things work around here? Security answers to management, not to staff. To Icarus, the money doesn't exist. To Icarus, you are the problem.

ANITA

(to GABBY) Then I'll report you. To-(the SEC or)

GABBY

Now you listen to me, you little communist. You blow the whistle on me, and you are instantly and permanently unemployable. (beat) Or worse. Remember what happened to Jennifer, from Junk Bonds?

ANITA

No. No one knows what happened to Jennifer, from . . .

ANITA and GABBY look at each other.

GABBY

(beat) No one will believe you, anyway. Icarus is never going to admit they packed a briefcase full of cash.

ANITA

Don't do it, Mitch!

GABBY

(To ANITA) Keep out of this.

ANITA

(to MITCH) It's an impulse. And it's wrong. Think it all the way through.

MITCH

So, if the regulators-

GABBY

Will you forget about the regulators? Don't be a chump.

ANITA

(to MITCH) If you keep the money, you're just like her!

GABBY

Happy. Resourceful. Rich.

ANITA

No. Not like her. Like me. And you'll wake up one day and find that you "went along to get along," and you've given away every last shred of your self-respect.

GABBY

(to ANITA) "Self-respect?" Him? (to MITCH) Listen to me. She's an office drudge with a crush. I am your employer. You owe me a debt of loyalty. And I'm a very generous woman-

MITCH

(to ANITA) It's so much money.

ANITA

But it's only money, when you could do the right thing.

GABBY

Jesus Christ in a stretch limo! She attacked you! Why are you even giving her the time of day?

ANITA

Don't listen to her. You have to think long-term. This is important, Mitch: Are you willing to trade cash for your self-respect?? If you take the money, you'll regret it forever!

GABBY

Don't you listen to her. This is a piece of cake, a cinch. You deserve so much more than she can ever deliver. If you don't take the money, now, you'll live to regret it!

MITCH

(pause) My fortune cookie said I would discover a treasure.

ANITA

That depends on what you value.

GABBY

It's a treasure, all right, and it's tax free! Yes! Stash the money in the trunk of your car. Then, when this whole reduction in force is behind us, and the regulator is gone
(MORE)

GABBY (CONT'D)

. . . we'll savor it. Fondle it. Snort it! Fan it out on my bed, and roll around in it, together!

GABBY grabs and kisses MITCH.

GABBY (CONT'D)

Now. MOVE! (She ass-slaps MITCH.)

MITCH exits with the case. ANITA is crushed. GABBY goes to her.

GABBY (CONT'D)

Poor thing. You believed you had a hedge, and he zoomed you out of your job, didn't he? You're left with nothing. No career, no money, and you're about to lose your home.

ANITA

I thought . . .

GABBY

You didn't "think" at all. Get the hell out of my office.

ANITA

Bullies always win / in the end.

GABBY

Awww, we steal your lunch money and leave you crying on the sidewalk. No, wait. I'm thinking of your ex!

GABBY guffaws. Her phone rings. Her ringtone is a "cha-ching."

GABBY (CONT'D)

(taps earpiece) What? (listens) I'm on my way. I'll handle him. Just don't say anything. (taps. To ANITA) Security will escort you to the lunchroom. Or you can crawl over there on your own. I don't want to see your sad, pitiful, honest face again.

GABBY exits. ANITA gets on the phone.

ANITA

(on phone) Donnie. Is Mark with you? Good. Get over here. I know I said that, but- Wasn't there something about an apple? And revolution? I'm fired. The West Gate is practically begging for someone to bash it in! If you got something from the Box Mart- something like a picnic table . . . made by Chinese slave laborers, or a concrete- Yes! Something you can use as a battering ram. Oh! And some rubber rafts. You'll find out. I love you both! Stay peaceful!

ANITA hangs up. MITCH enters with the case.

MITCH

I had to get rid of her, somehow. That was me on the phone. I told her security had taken me into custody, outside the bird sanctuary. You know where they have that island? With the flamingos? I said she needed to come "handle it," with Paul. Because . . . You were right.

ANITA

About what?

MITCH

Standing up to just Gabby, alone, is not enough. I want us to bring Icarus down.

ANITA

(doubtful) What about the money?

MITCH

Hide it.

MITCH gives ANITA the case. ANITA looks around for a hiding place.

MITCH (CONT'D)

On my way to the car, I said to myself, "Mitch? Do you really want to make another lousy choice? What if you used your thinking skills, instead of just reacting on impulse? What if you came up with an honest, genuine, / serious-?"

ANITA

Are you saying you had an idea?

MITCH

Yes!

ANITA

(beat) What is it?

MITCH

Okay; Gabby said the regulators are useless. And you said, it's a corrupt system. So I reasoned there's just one way for us to bring Icarus Financial Services to its knees.

ANITA

And that way is . . .

GABBY storms in. ANITA hides the case in the swivel chair. MITCH puts his arms out and shuts his eyes.

MITCH

GAME!

MITCH falls. ANITA catches and eases him to the floor.

ANITA

Oh my god. He's . . . uh, fainted! Passed out.

GABBY

Wake up! (slapping MITCH) That bird sanctuary is very dangerous. I was chased by a nasty little penguin. Wake up immediately! What does that mean: "Game?" Dammit, where is my money?

ANITA

Ms. Deed. "Game." "Game." He was trying to tell you- uh-

MITCH

(groaning) Paul . . .

GABBY

"Paul?" (she slaps MITCH several times.) What do you mean,
"Game?"

ANITA

He means the video game arcade. Paul has gone there with the
money. Mitch ran all the way back here, to tell you. I guess
he ran so fast, and so hard, he just / collapsed-

GABBY

Wait a minute. He told you this?

ANITA

He barely had a chance to blurt it out before-

MITCH

(groaning) Money . . . Paul . . . Hurry- (refaints)

GABBY

(to ANITA) Why should I believe you?

ANITA

(pause) Don't believe me! Just hang around here, slapping
Mitch, over and over and over. Then see how you feel when
Paul gets away with all your cash!

GABBY

But that's my money. Why, that conniving, scheming little
thief!

GABBY runs out. MITCH gets up.

MITCH

Nice grab. (Gets on phone) Mr. Pomeroy? I'm calling from
. . . No, Gabby's not available. No, she hasn't asked about
you. Are you at a place in your interview where I- (gathers
himself) May I please speak to the regulator?

ANITA

Why are you-?

MITCH

(to ANITA) You'll see. He put me on hold. Now, check this out. This guy probably uses a fake name. They adopt these scary pseudonyms, like "Mr. Hammer" or "Mr. Pummel." To intimidate people.

ANITA

I didn't know that.

MITCH

(on phone) Oh, hello! Yes. Mr. Hyde, is it?

GABBY enters.

MITCH (CONT'D)

I'll call you back. (hangs up.)

GABBY

(to ANITA) Damn Security. I thought I told you to get out!

MITCH

(On phone) Anita, how many times must I tell you to report to the lunchroom!

GABBY

For god's sake, would you please just . . . handle her?

MITCH and ANITA exchange a look. ANITA exits. MITCH blocks the money from GABBY.

MITCH

I'm so sorry. She is just like a bad, shiny penny.

GABBY

What is going on? No one was at the video game arcade but some slackers from Municipals, playing "Grand Theft Auto."

MITCH

You went to the video game / arcade?

GABBY

Anita sent me there. She said / Paul-

MITCH

Paul took the money. But not to the arcade.

GABBY

She lied to me? But . . . you yelled "Game."

MITCH

I meant, Paul is playing a game with you. Trying to game the system! (beat) I was having a fainting attack; I couldn't very well paint a picture! The bottom line is that I'm afraid Paul's . . . gone rogue.

GABBY gives a small gasp.

MITCH (CONT'D)

He insists on seeing you, alone. He wants to arrange some kind of meeting. A liaison. In a secluded, hidden, bushy area. Those were not his exact words.

GABBY

I see. (thinks) Where did he say we should meet?

MITCH

By that big statue in the main courtyard. Across from the tanning and nail salon.

GABBY

And he'll have my money? (beat) I don't know what to believe. It's very distressing, the amount of deceit and dishonesty I've suffered today.

MITCH

Gabby. Please. I haven't been dishonest. You know I'm aching to get my hands on that thirty percent.

GABBY

You leave Paul to me! He'll be begging to turn over the money.

GABBY exits. MITCH opens the door and ANITA falls in. MITCH gets on the phone.

ANITA

If you would just tell / me what-

MITCH

Pomeroy, put Hyde on the line. (beat) Quit sputtering and put him on! (talking) Hello, Hyde? This is Mitch Brinkman. I used to be the bagman for Mr. Pomeroy, and I'm here with Anita Green, from . . . our Accountability Department.

*
*

ANITA

What are you doing?

MITCH

(on phone) I don't know you. You're probably just an average guy, saddled with a mortgage, maybe, or even- (listens) Student loans, right. To earn your law enforcement degree. (listens) You're kidding. (beat) What kinds of films?

ANITA

Let me talk to him.

MITCH

(on phone, but to ANITA) Maybe you never stood up for anything in your life. I'm offering you a chance to earn back your self-respect. (beat) Don't hang up!

*
*

ANITA

Mitch, may I please speak to him?

MITCH

(on phone) Hell, no! (to ANITA) Not you, Anita. (on phone) We have three quarters of a million dollars here. In a briefcase. Yes, they're unmarked. (pause) Mr. Hyde, I would like to bribe you to do your job. I will give you this money, all of it --- if you will agree to prosecute Icarus Financial Services to the fullest extent of the law!

ANITA

Oh my god.

MITCH

I am coming over there to deliver this briefcase. And if you don't agree to my idea, I will- I will turn you over to Ms. Green. You don't want me to do that. (beat) Ms. Green will whip out her Leatherman Surge, and you'll be very, very sorry . . . You know what? Hang on a minute. Anita?

ANITA takes the phone. Listens.

ANITA

Hi. Ms. Green here. (listens.) That's right. I will personally hunt you down and wring your neck with your own power tie until you are dead. (Hangs up, gets the briefcase.) He seemed really cooperative! (beat) We don't have much time.

SOUND CUE: Crowd noise, chanting.

MITCH

(looks out garden door) I don't see how Icarus will be able to maintain lockdown on the west gate. (Looks at ANITA.) Aren't your sons-? (sees GABBY) Here she comes!

GABBY enters, in shock. ANITA puts the briefcase in GABBY's swivel chair and hides behind it. Over the next few lines, there is a threat GABBY will see it.

GABBY

I went to the courtyard, as you suggested. I expected Paul would be there. Instead, there was a crazed mob of former employees. Foreigners! Janitors and gardeners, in a very ugly mood! Before my very eyes, they toppled our lovely statue of Alan Greenspan. His glasses fell off, and then his head, and then he just shattered into tiny, little pieces!

MITCH

I'm afraid that Paul- He called. He seems to have chosen the briefcase full of cash . . . over you.

GABBY

How am I supposed to get my money!?

MITCH

I'm laying odds he would try to hide it in his car.

GABBY

Just as I had recommended to you!

MITCH

He parks in Employee Lot C, east of the Massage Cabanas.

GABBY

He thinks he can just take my money, and get away with it?
That knuckle-dragging bandit!

GABBY storms out.

ANITA

If Hyde gives you any trouble, call me.

ANITA gives the case to MITCH, who exits.

ANITA places a call.

ANITA (CONT'D)

Jennifer, it's Anita. (listens) Good. Jennifer in IT gave me the universal network password. I want you to text it out on the phone tree to every single staff person who was at the meeting this morning. I'll send it in just a minute. Now: my idea is to log on and investigate the managers' accounts. I want every admin's nose all up in Icarus' business. Flag anything suspicious. (beat) And Jennifer? Will you personally look into Wealth Management's trades? Gabby Deed. Flag the Greeks. (listens) I know I said I couldn't do it. But that was this morning. And I've changed my mind.

ANITA hangs up and texts briefly. SOUND
CUE: chanting, crowd noise in the
distance.

GABBY

(looks around) What the-?(taps earpiece) Switchboard! Get me security, immediately. (listens) What do you mean, reduced?
(beat) But without any security at all, we're- we're somewhat trapped in here. (worried) I'm not worried. That's why we pay city police. The National Guard. NATO! (taps earpiece)

MITCH enters, sans briefcase.

MITCH

Mr. Pomeroy is in handcuffs!

GABBY

What? (beat) What kind of handcuffs?

MITCH

Gabby. He's been taken into custody.

GABBY

I understand that, but what kind of handcuffs?

MITCH

The regulator seemed unprepared to arrest anyone. He began kind of . . . improvising. And there was this pair of cuffs sitting right on top of / Mr. Pomeroy's minibar.

GABBY

Were they Smith & Wesson, push-pin, double-lock, satin finish handcuffs, with the initials-? (silence) That double-crossing little turd!

GABBY storms out.

ANITA

With the government so underfunded, it's a good thing the thieves can bring their own handcuffs.

MITCH

Last time I saw Smith and Wessons, I was at the "Anything Goes" Bond Trader Summit in Aruba. I felt so restrained. Of course, we were all- (he stops himself.)

ANITA

Naked?

MITCH gives her a look. SOUND CUE:
rhythmic banging on the gate. GABBY
storms in.

GABBY

Why didn't you stop me? I can't go running over there and associate myself with a known criminal! (to ANITA) WHAT in the HOLY HELL are you still doing here?

MITCH

Get out!

MITCH rushes ANITA out the door.

GABBY

I want some happy news, immediately. Where is my hurricane! How do I get onto the NOAA site?

MITCH pulls up the site, GABBY looks.
Starts tapping keys.

GABBY (CONT'D)

But the data said- It was going to Category Five. It was predicted to flood Galveston, and cause devastation as far away as Kansas City! Where is Hurricane Gabrielle?

MITCH

It seems to have- Yes. Here: it's been downgraded to a light mist. It's not even a named storm, anymore.

GABBY shrieks.

ANITA enters with two leis, and the wheel of change.

ANITA

Jennifer in Special Events is distributing these, outside the ice skating rink.

GABBY

You can't have those! Those are specifically reserved for the top producers at the Sales Award Luau! (to MITCH) This is impossible. That special information said the hurricane was a sure thing; that I would triple my money. Yummy Pants wouldn't do this to me!

MITCH

Yummy Pants didn't.

GABBY

If he didn't-

ANITA

It's so hard to determine risk when you're working with falsified research. Awww. Your hurricane appears to have experienced a reduction in force. (silence) The lesson is-

GABBY

(realizing she's been punked) I REFUSE TO BE DEFEATED!

Outside, gates crash. There is an increase in the crowd noise.

ANITA

They're in. (gets on the phone)

GABBY

Who's in? In where? On the grounds? (silence) Who is in?

ANITA

(on phone) Honey? Don't forget to station people at the gates; there are three. And tell your friends: If they see any secretary, any assistant on the computer, wearing a hibiscus lei . . . Leave them alone. They're helping.

GABBY

Every account where I traded the Greeks- Why are my accounts being flagged? Who is flagging them? Someone has hacked into my system!

ANITA gives GABBY the wheel of change.

ANITA

You're going to need this: your Wheel of Change.

GABBY

What do you expect is going to happen? I'm not going to jail. No one goes to jail! Even the Reamin Brothers CEO. That Countrybank person. The regulators are bought and paid for!

MITCH

(to ANITA) I realize that if you apply logic, and reason, that I present some slight counterparty risk. But if I were to appeal to your sense of adventure-?

GABBY

What? What?

ANITA

Don't short yourself. I heard somewhere that with great risk, comes great reward.

As GABBY rants, ANITA and MITCH exchange leis. ANITA clips a stray strand from MITCH's lei, tucks the Surge into his pocket.

GABBY

Do you think you're going to make a difference? You and an unwashed horde of the unemployed? You have no money! No jobs! You are deep in debt, and about to be arrested. You are administrative staff! How could you triumph over me? I demand to know! What is your end game?

ANITA

That's a good question. What is our end game?

MITCH

I have an idea.

*

ANITA

I'm having an impulse!

MITCH and ANITA kiss. GABBY looks out the garden door at the hordes rushing toward her. Sounds of crowd, helicopter. Music up. Blackout.

END OF PLAY.

*