

From !Artistic Inspiration

(The basement apartment of AMOL and BANYON, two hack writers. They sit at opposite sides of the stage, each with their own card table on which rests a small laptop computer. Surrounding their computers are a collection of manuscript pages, mostly crumpled and scrawled upon, some half-chewed, some slightly burnt. There must be a large, vacant playing area in the center of the stage.)

(At rise, AMOL is in the mist of a writing surge. He types with abandon, laughing to himself. First he laughs just a bit, then uproariously. BANYON is staring at his computer screen, completely blocked. Just as he is about to type, AMOL bursts into a particularly loud burst of laughter. BANYON eyes him hatefully.)

AMOL

Oh man.

(He begins to type again, an utter whirlwind of activity. BANYON continues to stare at his screen—he is about to type something just as AMOL laughs again. BANYON stops and looks at AMOL.)

Man this is funny.

BANYON

You got something good?

(AMOL looks at BANYON, turns his computer screen a little away from him, and continues writing in a flurry.)

Fine.

(BANYON looks at his computer screen and is about to start typing using the hunt-and-peck method. Just as he is about to touch the keyboard, however, AMOL begins mouthing the words to his writing under his breath, but just audible enough to bother BANYON. He quickly grows louder until he is practically screaming at the computer as both characters, experiencing their full emotions.)

AMOL *(as he types, extremely quickly)*

`You never loved me, you never wanted to love me, I was just a thing to you, a thing to be used and possessed and—‘ `Why did you say that to me? You always say that to me!’ `No I don’t!’ `Liar!’ `Can’t you see that I’ve got something I need to tell you!’ `Say it then! Say it! I’m sick and tired of your mumbling and your stupidity!’ `You disgust me!’ `WHAT!?’ `There I finally SAID it! I’m FREE of YOU!’ `NEVER! I will NEVER

RELEASE YOU!' `I AM FREE! I AM A WOMAN! I AM A WOMAN! NEVER AGAIN WILL I BE CAGED!' `AAAAAHhhhhh!" He strangles her.

(AMOL suddenly stops typing and takes a deep, shaking breath. He takes a moment to gather himself, then kicks his chair back from his desk and gets up to pace. BANYON watches him with hatred.)

BANYON

How's your play coming?

AMOL *(nonchalant)*

It's coming all right. How are you doing?

(Pause.)

BANYON

I'm doing fine.

AMOL

Yeah?

BANYON

Yeah.

AMOL

Can I see what you wrote?

BANYON

No.

(BANYON turns his laptop away from AMOL.)

AMOL

That's cool.

(short pause.)

Ooh, I got another idea!

(AMOL dashes to his computer and begins to type again.)

BANYON

Amol, Amol!

AMOL *(already typing furiously)*

What?

BANYON

How do you do it?

AMOL *(still typing)*

What?

BANYON

Can you just stop typing for a second?

AMOL

Hold on.

(He produces an especially quick burst of typing, playing the keyboard like a drumset. Once again, he becomes the characters as he writes their dialogue.)

`There are moments like these, when the moon whirls above us, when the brief, chittering whirr of the crickets reverberates in our souls, when I realize what a woman you are,`
`And I know that you are a man` `Yes I am a man` `What kind of man are you?` `I`m the kind of man who`s going to lay you down in this field,` `Really?` `Yes` `Oh yes, that sounds nice` `It will be nice` `Please, please, it`s been so long` `For me too` `Then let us find ourselves in this field beneath the gorgeous pale god of the moon` `I love you` `I love you more than anyone I`ve ever seen` `Shhhh! enough talking! Your lips are designed for my kisses` `and you are the architect of my design` `and I have the blueprints right here` `Draft me! Draft me like you`ve never drafted before!` Lights down.

(AMOL leans back in his chair again, exhaling deeply. He gathers himself again. Pause. BANYON stares at him.)

What was it you wanted to know, Banyon?

BANYON

How is it that we come down here every day, and every day I can`t seem to write a word, and then I look over at you... and...

AMOL

Intimidating, aren`t I?

BANYON

Well, you`re just... you`re always writing.

AMOL

I know. It`s kind of amazing.

BANYON

I guess, but... I can`t even seem to start a play.

AMOL

Right.

BANYON

And how many plays have you written this year?

AMOL

Thirty-one.

(*he types something very quickly.*)
Thirty-two.

BANYON

Wow.

AMOL

Let me tell you something, Banyon. It's a curse to be this good. Every moment of the day, plays come to me. They just... materialize out of the streets, out of half-heard conversations, out of my simple musings as I walk the streets. And then when I come down here, I must allow them to flow from me before they tear holes through my skin.

BANYON

Huh. Yeah. That's not what's it like with me. All right, let me ask you this, though—if you're writing all these plays, how come you're still living in the same apartment with me eating Ramen Noodles every night? Shouldn't you be, like, rich?

AMOL

My plays are too good to be produced.

BANYON

Oh.

AMOL

No one wants art these days, they only want commercial garbage.

BANYON

You see, that's what I'm trying to write.

AMOL

Commercial garbage?

BANYON

Yeah. I want to be rich. I mean, I want like the Olympic swimming pools and walk in closets with flat-screen TVs, and you know, bling. I want bling, Amol. Lots and lots of Bling. Just like—just bling, man. I want to swim in cash. And then maybe my parents will love me, and then I can go back to my high school reunion and be like, 'I'm better than all of you! Kneel before me you worms! Because I am *rich!* *And that is what life is about!* You! You! Garrett Lewis! You stupid football ogre! I have more brains in my toenail clippings than you have in your entire immediate family! *And I want you to kneel before me and worship my gold car that has wheels made out of diamond and runs on hundred dollar bills stuffed into its gigantic gas tanks!* I mean, that's all I want. Is that really such a bad dream? And then afterwards I'm gonna steal Garret's wife.

AMOL

You know what your problem is? I mean, if you really want the masses to do this thing, you gotta write something really...

BANYON

Good?

AMOL

No. That's where you're wrong. Those guys who write for television, are they good--?

BANYON

Well some of them—

AMOL

No they're not. Screenwriters—

BANYON

There are some good movies—

AMOL

All garbage. You gotta write something safe and inoffensive and up-to-the-moment and yet timeless and simple with easily digested themes for the masses.

BANYON

Huh?

AMOL

And it's gotta have hot chicks in it. This should be easy for you, because you're not very smart.

BANYON

What?

AMOL

Exactly. You gotta write a bad play.