

The Man Who Pulled a Gun Out of His Ass
a play by Ruben Carbajal
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KYLE (26) seated at the table of a filthy kitchen. He's skinny and disheveled, his hair resembles an overused toothbrush. KYLE is pouring milk into bowl of Life cereal, which should be quite visible to the audience.

KYLE

(To offstage right, slightly above a conversational tone)

You know, this is the first bowl of cereal I've eaten in at least ten years.

Holds up the box.

It's Life. It's Life cereal I'm eating. When I was a kid, I couldn't imagine a morning without cereal. Cereal and cartoons.

Pause, waiting for an answer. None comes. He continues.

You know, I really like this stuff. I don't think I liked this stuff when I was a kid. I'd only eat that Count Chocula shit. You know, with those pellet marshmallows? It's a fucking miracle I have any teeth left with all that sugar corn puff pop shit I ate as a kid. That stuff was like amphetamines for children. (Laughs) Three bowls would keep you wired all afternoon. I'd be doin' laps up and down the stairs and my Mom would yell, ***This ain't a playground you little shit! If you wanna roughhouse, go outside!***

Slight pause again. He gulps down a few spoonfuls, intermittently searching for a reply.

KYLE (CONT'D)

It's funny how things turned out, isn't it? I mean I know this isn't an ideal situation. I mean, I wish it could've been more, uh, you know...normal. Traditional. We don't live in a perfect world. Things don't always go the way we plan them, right? It all turned out though, didn't it? I mean, I tend to think that things, in the end, if you put your mind to it that is, things will fall into place. I really do believe that.

God, this cereal is fucking terrific! I don't know why I stopped eatin' this shit!

We don't really know that much about each other, do we? I mean, we know how we feel about each other, but we don't, like, know each other, you know... **Intimately.**

After a few thoughtful bites of his cereal.

You know what we should do today? Let's you and I go to Ma Fischer's and get two piping hot coffees and tell each other our entire life stories. I mean, I don't even know where you were born!

Don't tell me know. Tell me when we get to the diner. We'll start from the beginning. From your absolute first memory up to this very second. We'll put it all on the table. No secrets, no muddling of the truths, no dramatic embellishments. Just the facts: plain, or stupid or boring as they may be as a story. That way, from that moment on, we'll have an entirely clean slate. A fresh start, you know what I mean? Cause, I'll be honest with you, there are some things, series things, you should know about me.

Pours himself another bowl.

God, I'm going to go out and get me another box of this crap. I didn't even know I had any cereal. I damn sure didn't buy it.

Stops eating, and with a sour look on his face, examines the box closely.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Shit, I wonder if this was left over from the people who lived here before me. That would suck. They were a bunch of dirtbags.

Something on the box catches his eye.

Hey! It says here that with two proofs of purchase and \$4.95, we can get our selves a Life Cereal Tumbler Set. Hey, let's get ourselves a Life Cereal Tumbler Set, whaddya say? It'll be the first thing we owned together. We can move all that crap the mantel and keep it there. Like a display or somethin'.

Pause.

When I said there was something serious you didn't know about me, I didn't mean, you know, SERIOUS. It's serious, but nothing to worry about. You probably have an inkling anyway. (Laughs) You know I'm no angel. Neither of us are. We'll discuss it over coffee, okay?

Examines ring on his finger.

I didn't think I'd ever get a chance to wear this thing, ya know? I didn't think we'd ever get together. You just seemed too far away. Unreachable. The first time I ever laid eyes on you, I said to myself, ***Out of my league.*** (Grins) I'm not bullshitting you, that's exactly what I said. Look at us now. You're in my bathroom, naked, fixin' yourself up. Taking baths, and showers. Sleeping on my bed. You're even starting to get comfortable in here. If you woulda told me three months ago you'd even set foot in my house, I would've laughed in your face. "Go to hell you lying sonofabitch!" That's what I would've said.

Beat.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Not that I thought you were stuck up. Not at all. Some of my friends get all riled up over a woman who won't take a look in their direction, but I hate that shit. You seemed like a genuine person. I guess that's why I didn't lose all hope. Something in me said if I tried real hard, gave it my all, I could have you. I guess I'm an optimist. I know: I don't seem like the Pippy Longstocking type, but deep down, that's what I am.

Stares deeply into into the ring on his finger.

I can't believe we're both wearing rings. Like I said before, I wish we coulda done something more traditional, like a ceremony, with organ music and cake and all that shit. That's what you deserve. You deserve better than what I gave you. This place is a far cry from the Taj Mahal. If I had it, it be yours. I'd build a castle for you, if I had the means. (Beat) I'll tell you one thing, from now on they'll be plenty of Life in this place! Every day, Life! Life Cereal for one and all!

Shakes the box, then inspects the insides of it.

Hey, shouldn't there be a toy in here.

Reaches into the box.

Don't they put toys and shit in these any more?

Pause.

KYLE (CONT'D)

I'll bet this is one of them cereals that don't have toy surprises in em'. And I'll bet that's why I didn't like this cereal when I was a kid. When my Mom went grocery shopping, she'd let us pick one box of cereal each. When you're a kid, grocery shopping is like the worse thing imaginable. But picking the cereal was great. That' was the one moment of elation. And of course you'd pick the cereal with the best toy in it. That was usually the one with the most sugar, too. There'd be compasses, secret code decoders, markers, all kind of shit you could get. One time I got this geranium, with seeds and everything, in some Super Sugar Crisp. My Dad said it would never work. But my Mom followed all of the instructions, and wouldn't you know it, a plant sprung from it three days later! The thing wasn't bigger than a fifty-cent piece, but it worked. My Mom put it on the window sill, over the sink. It was great. Better than most of the plastic crap they put in those boxes.

Looks around the place.

Hey, after we tell each other our entire life stories, we should pick up a plant. You'd be surprised at how much a plant can do for a room. A fern here and there can do wonders, you know? Then we'll have plant life AND cereal life. That's a lot of life.

Looks over, but once again, there is no response.

It will feel real good to tell you everything. I mean, it's not like I've been keeping stuff from you deliberately. Some things you just can't blurt out, you know? Don't worry, it's not like I'm kind of sex pervert, or something. It's nothing like that. We'll talk about it soon enough. It's just that I want to know everything about you, and I want you to know everything about me. If we submit it all, then nothing will ever be able to split us in two. And after we tell each other everything, I think we should make a vow to keep it that way.

Eats up his final spoonful, then drinks the milk down. Some of it runs down the sides of his face. He wipes his mouth and sighs.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Did I ever tell you the story about the Man Who Pulled a Gun Out of His Ass? (Laughs) You know my friend Parker? The one who works out at the emergency room? Well, I told you how every once and a while he gets a weirdo patient on his hands. You remember some of the stuff he was talking about when he was over here. The farmers who come in bleeding with their fingers in cigar boxes. Those gay guys with the cock rings ten sizes too small, stuck like sausages. You know, eyeballs hanging by a vein, all that crazy shit. Well, remember all the stories about people coming in with stuff stuck up their asses? You remember: M&M's, Hot Dogs, Gerbils, Wrench Sets, Barbie Dolls, Pearl Necklaces, I thought I had heard it all...I mean just when you thought Parker had removed every object imaginable from our community's more sexually adventurous, this Cop comes in with a terrible limp, and—

ENTER from stage left, on all fours, RICHARD. He is badly beaten. A mixture of blood and spittle runs from his blackened nose and split lip. His middle finger is missing. His gut has a terrible knife wound. He is a pathetic sight. His voice should be hoarse, yet speaks with a strength that comes from a mixture of anger and humiliation.

RICHARD

Kyle...Kyle you son of a bitch.

KYLE

Richard, what do you think you're doing?

RICHARD

Look at me. Look at me you piece of shit.

KYLE

Richard, can't you see I'm in the middle of a story here?

RICHARD

You were supposed to be my friend. Call me an ambulance.

KYLE

God, this is really uncomfortable. I mean, I'm just in the middle of a story, and you bust right in like you own the place.

RICHARD

You cut me. I'm bleeding. Look, why don't we call Parker. He'll come over, and then we don't have to get the police involved.

KYLE

I was just talking about Parker! That is, right before you interrupted.

RICHARD

Please, call him. He'll help us out.

KYLE

Richard, did I ever tell you the story of the Man Who Pulled a Gun Out of His Ass?

RICHARD

Look at me. Jesus, Kyle, will you look at me?

KYLE

Why don't you sit tight, and I'll finish my story.

RICHARD doesn't respond, he is gasping for air.

KYLE

You wanna hear the story, or not? Richard? Earth to Richard, you still there?

RICHARD

Why did you do this?

KYLE

Do you want to here the story or not?

RICHARD

Where is my finger?

KYLE
What?

RICHARD
Where...is...it?

KYLE
Guess.

RICHARD
I want to know what you did with it.

KYLE
Well, if you hadn't been so possessive over your damned ring, we wouldn't have these problems now, would we?

RICHARD
Where's Sheila?

KYLE
You sure have a lot of questions today. I'm not telling.

RICHARD
Did you hurt her? What did you do to her? Please leave her out of this.

KYLE
Well, Rick, I have to tell you—

ENTER from stage right, SHEILA. She is in her early twenties, attractive, but in a worn-out way. She wears her underwear and a robe. Her hair is still wet. Absent-mindedly, she saunters into the scene. As soon as she sees RICHARD, she begins to scream. KYLE cringes, he doesn't know how to handle this. Still screaming, SHEILA reaches into a drawer, pulls out a gun, and shoots RICHARD several times. Silence. KYLE is frozen, in shock. SHEILA, with as much reserve as she can muster, places the gun back into the drawer, and pull out a pack of cigarettes. She lights it, a little shaky, and takes a long drag.

KYLE

(After a long beat) Jesus. Where the hell did you get that?

SHEILA

What? (Holds out the pack of cigarettes) You want one?

KYLE

No. I meant the gun.

SHEILA

Had it for a while.

KYLE

(Beat) You realize you're in this as deep as I am now.

SHEILA

Good. It's only fair. That's how I wanted it.

KYLE

You okay?

SHEILA

I'll manage. Sorry I lost it there for a second.

KYLE

No. (Beat) Don't worry about it.

She moves behind KYLE and puts her arms around him.

SHEILA

Oh! You bought Life Cereal! I love that stuff!

KYLE

Dry your hair, I'll fix you a bowl.

SHEILA

Okay.

They kiss. SHEILA exits stage right. KYLE looks down at RICHARD, then to his ring. He pours another bowl.

KYLE

So, where was I? Oh yes, Parker! So this Cop walks into the emergency room with this limp...

Sound of hair dryer, drowning out KYLE's voice.

END OF PLAY

**FOR PRODUCTION INQUIRIES OR MORE INFORMATION
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