

UNTITLED ALEC BALDWIN & KELSEY GRAMMER PROJECT

"Pilot"

Written By

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WRITERS' DRAFT

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ACT ONE

INT. LONDON'S APARTMENT - DAY

A grand New York City brownstone. The decor reflects a deep appreciation of art and beauty as well as a deep disdain for what's fashionable.

Lizst's "La Campanella" plays.

LONDON CARTWRIGHT sits in a leather club chair, eyes closed, listening. During difficult passages his fingers dance across imaginary piano keys in front of him.

A dramatic climax, the music ends. London nods, processing.

LONDON

Technically, it's all there. The  
finger-work, the tempo. But it's  
missing something -- something that  
grabs the soul and drags you down to  
hell then up to heaven and squeezes  
until you experience new extremes of  
feeling.

(realizing)

You play like you've never been in  
love before.

REVEAL he's talking to a seven-year-old Indian Boy, SHANKAR, who sits nervous at the piano.

SHANKAR

I love my mommy.

LONDON

That performance begs to differ.

INT. LONDON'S APARTMENT - LATER

A FOURTEEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL now sits at the piano.

LONDON

From the adagio again. But this time,  
let it soar.

She plays one note. He holds up a finger.

LONDON (CONT'D)

Bup!

She stops.

LONDON (CONT'D)

What I don't feel yet is the tension.  
The carefree lilt of the treble  
against the brooding moodiness of the  
bass. Where they clash is where the  
magic happens. And...

He beckons her to play again. Her hands go to the keys, she  
plays one note, his finger goes up again.

LONDON (CONT'D)

I can see you need an example.

He picks up a framed photo of himself and his young bride,  
Meredith, years ago.

LONDON (CONT'D)

My wife Meredith and I, shortly after  
we met. Me, the son of humble school  
teachers, she the daughter of New  
England aristocracy. Meredith denies  
any actual inbreeding in her family,  
but the webbed feet tell a different  
story. Summers on the Cape there  
wasn't a swim meet they didn't win.

(MORE)

LONDON (CONT'D)

The attraction between us was  
combustible, my dark introspection  
catnip to her natural effervescence.

It was that tension that stoked our  
great love.

(re: photo)

You can see it, right?

The Girl nods.

LONDON (CONT'D)

Now make me feel it!

Her hands go to the keys, she takes a deep breath, and...  
plays. The finger goes up.

LONDON (CONT'D)

It's possible you're just bad.

INT. LONDON'S APARTMENT - LATER

Gorgeous music booms. London looks pleased. He presses STOP  
on a stereo, revealing a piano piece being butchered by  
ANOTHER STUDENT.

LONDON

Looks like our time is up.

As the student gathers his things, London takes a look at his  
watch. Something dawns on him. His face registering  
concern, he starts obsessively organizing sheet music.

INT. LONDON'S APARTMENT - LATER

London paces, pre-occupied. Another student, FIONA, 50, sits  
at the piano, working through a difficult section.

Fiona makes an error, instinctively braces herself for  
London's withering reaction. But --

-- None comes. He continues pacing, she resumes, and makes  
an even more glaring error. London energetically uses his  
shirt tail to remove a smudge from the window.

FIONA

Mr. Cartright...?

LONDON

Hmm? Yes, I was listening. That was... nightmarish.

FIONA

You haven't insulted me that weakly since the day my husband left me. Is everything okay?

LONDON

(giving in)

You always were sensitive to my state of mind. Ironic since you play with all the sensitivity of a lumberjack.

She gives him an "eh" middling grade gesture on the insult as he joins her on the piano bench and starts playing.

LONDON (CONT'D)

It's a tough day. Memorial for a dear old friend, Robert. We lived in a fifth floor walkup back in the 80s.

It was a thrilling time in New York.

His playing becomes more fun as the memories flood back.

LONDON (CONT'D)

Cops who were walking dictionaries of ethnic slurs, heroin addicts selling bootleg flu shots out of suitcases filled with ice.

(MORE)

LONDON (CONT'D)

Sorry to wax nostalgic but those days  
with Robert and two other roommates --  
a different adventure every day. We  
had no expectations of life and it  
gave us so much.  
(then)

Until the rift. When one of the  
roommates became unbearable.

His piano music suddenly gets angrier and darker.

LONDON (CONT'D)

An actor -- no, a charlatan and  
manipulator! One of those purring  
lotharios who treats every girlfriend  
like a mistress since his heart  
belongs to his one true love, himself.

FIONA

Why do women always fall for that  
type? Though he does sound confident.  
(with interest)

Will he be in town for the memorial?

LONDON

I heard a rumor he was. Normally  
there's a sign, like the sky turning  
blood red or entire flocks of birds  
diving into the pavement. Has there  
been an uptick in children pushing  
their parents off balconies?

FIONA

Explains your bad mood. And you won't even have your wife with you today.

LONDON

No. Meredith extended her spiritual journey again. Apparently she feels her soul still needs a bit of tuning. Much as this piano will after the mugging you've given it.

He looks to her hopefully. She shakes her head, "no."

LONDON (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I'm just not myself.

CUT TO:

INT. ROBERT'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Robert's memorial service. Evidence of his professional success and eclectic hobbies abound. MOURNERS mingle.

London enters and steps to a table celebrating Robert's exploits. As he looks, he can't help but arrange the photos so they are an equal distance from one another. He knows it's obsessive, but can't stop. Until...

MAN'S VOICE

London?

London stiffens. He turns, warily, to find ANDRE CHASE, his old roommate. A stylish African-American man who wears his emotions on his sleeve, Andre fights an acknowledgment of his age with a dedication to a younger man's lifestyle. But it's a losing battle.

LONDON

Andrew! My gosh, it's wonderful to see you. Well, except...

ANDRE

I know, our dear old roommate. I was in the tub when I heard and I cried and cried. Finally got up, looked across the room and thought "What is that outfit I hung up that needs so much ironing?" Then realized I was looking in the mirror and cried some more.

LONDON

Still haven't given-in to eyeglasses, I see. You always were a vain thing. By the way, did I hear...

ANDRE

Yes, I'm gay now.

LONDON

Congratulations! Not exactly a bombshell. You always had your sensitive side. Wasn't there a stray you nursed back to health on our fire escape?

ANDRE

Oh, Catty LaBelle?

LONDON

There may have been multiple signs.



ANDRE

Staring at 40 I realized, I already disappointed my minister Dad by not following in his footsteps, I might as well finally put a little flair in my own footsteps.

He does a high kick, but grabs his hamstring.

LONDON

Careful, Andrew.

ANDRE

It's actually Andre now. A Spaniard I was living with called me that and the friends all loved it. A few of them loved the Spaniard too, so he's gone but Andre and I are still together. My longest relationship! How are things with you?

LONDON

Still married, teaching at NYU, private students on the side, finally got that ragweed allergy under control. And you're caught up.

LOUD LAUGHTER from across the room. London freezes. He knows that laugh. He turns. Sure enough, there is CHANNING LANCE, entertaining a group of comely female mourners.

CHANNING

I know some find it gauche, but I think it's important to laugh at funerals. It's a lesson I learned from my father. He was a cemetery clown -- one of the only jobs an Irishman could get in those days.

The ladies are charmed.

CHANNING (CONT'D)

Please excuse me.

He moves away from them. The crowd seemingly parts, creating a path to London and Andre. London tries to escape, but finds no route. On the verge of panic he turns to see that Channing abruptly stop approaching. He stops at the front of the room and steps up onto a riser.

CHANNING (CONT'D)

Everyone, I've been asked to say a few words.

LONDON  
(to Andre)

By who? One of Robert's zoologist friends who's studying the North American preening blowhard?

ANDRE

You two are still competitive like that?

LONDON

Entirely on his side.

CHANNING

I owe this man so much. Not just because I based the character of Dr. Ian Davenport on him and thus owe him my acting Emmys.

LONDON

Supporting.

Andre rolls his eyes.

CHANNING

But because his own greatness was so infectious. Which may explain why he was present when I set my personal best in the bench press - 142 kilograms. We were in Europe at the time. It was on this same trip that I coined the phrase "no duh" while prepping for a role.

The crowd laughs delighted, to London's consternation.

CHANNING (CONT'D)

Without his belief in me, would I ever have dared send that limoncello across a cafe in Rome to a certain Cindy Crawford -- you can beg but you won't get the rest of that story out of me! Though I'm told she tells the story incessantly, using the word "generous" at key moments.

(then)

(MORE)

CHANNING (CONT'D)

Can there be a person alive who was  
more inspired by this great man than I  
was?

LONDON

Yes!!

We see that London has made his way to riser, on the other  
end.

LONDON (CONT'D)

And thank you for that kind  
introduction, Channing.

Channing reluctantly steps down, ceding the stage.

LONDON (CONT'D)

My best friend Robert, a true  
renaissance man. How to honor one who  
lived so fully, and knew so many...the  
artists he met earning his BA, the  
scientists he met earning his BS, and  
the in-betweens, like the BS artist  
we've just heard from.

No reaction.

LONDON (CONT'D)

Thank you. We all have favorite  
stories of dear Robert.

He notices a woman fighting back tears.

LONDON (CONT'D)

I can see you're remembering one right  
now. It's ok to miss him.

(MORE)

LONDON (CONT'D)

After all, we "send not for whom the  
bell tolls, it tolls for us". Donne.

Channing jumps back up on the riser.

CHANNING

Well done, more like it. Thank you  
London.

The crowd offers light applause as London reluctantly steps  
down from the riser.

CHANNING (CONT'D)

Such moving remarks. If Robert were  
here I daresay he might shed a tear.  
He was one of those rare men unafraid  
to appear unmanly by --

His throat "catches" and he dabs at his own eyes. This sends  
the emotional woman over the edge herself and Channing leans  
down to comfort her.

CHANNING (CONT'D)

There, there.

He then sees London approaching the stage again.

CHANNING (CONT'D)

Well, maybe that's enough  
speechifying. Please enjoy the warm  
hors d'oeuvres.

But London has again stepped up on the riser. He carries  
with him a vitrine with a moth in it.

LONDON

But not before one last salute to our  
multi-talented friend.

(MORE)

LONDON (CONT'D) Few knew  
that, as an amateur entomologist,  
Robert spent years breeding a one-of-  
a-kind Rainbow moth. How well that  
moth stands for Robert today --  
colorful... regal... and surely as  
unique as any creature that ever  
graced this Earth.

The crowd, moved, voices their approval. London bows in  
humble appreciation, sure he's "won" the eulogy contest. But  
in bowing, he bumps the top off the terrarium and the moth  
flies out -- directly into a candle. The crowd winces and  
averts their eyes.

LONDON (CONT'D)  
Well, they should be able to harvest  
some moth gonads off that thing and  
get the breed up and running in no  
time.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. THE KINGSMEN - NIGHT

The guys' old haunt, once a place with history and grit and character, now more of a cookie-cutter millennials' bar. London and Andre make their way in.

LONDON

Is this really our old bar? Where's the sawdust and stench of dockworkers fresh off their shift? And wasn't there a barstool that Jackson Pollock's wife gave him a bloody nose with?

ANDRE

The napkin he looked down at changed modern art forever.

LONDON

Like so much of New York nowadays -- character out, crassness in. I'm just paranoid enough to think it's my doing. The minute I pronounce something charming, vulgarity appears.

A voice rises above the din.

CHANNING

Funny story about that...

LONDON

Hellfire, I've summoned him.

Channing is talking to a young, Indian-American waitress, RENUKA.

RENUKA

You turned down Schindler's List?

CHANNING

I thought -- a black-and-white movie about the holocaust? Who wants to see that? I envy you -- too young to have regrets.

RENUKA

Two years ago I left medical school to chase love. He slept with our housekeeper, stole my bike and my tuition money. Now I degrade myself slinging drinks to finance bros who think my name is Yo.

CHANNING

My sister in loss. There was mention of some bar snacks.

She crosses off. Angle on London and Andre.

LONDON

You arranged this, didn't you?

ANDRE

Of course I did. Robert did so much for all of us and he would have wanted this. One simple toast.

Channing notices them and waves them over. They approach.



LONDON

Haven't I suffered enough? Painful  
memorial, moth execution, now sitting  
down with this irredeemable --

CHANNING

I owe you an apology. I have for some  
time.

London is brought up short.

LONDON

You couldn't even let me get a full  
lather up? It's all I do for exercise  
most days. Well, go on.

CHANNING

With what?

LONDON

Your apology.

CHANNING

I just gave it to you.

LONDON

No, you said you owed me an apology.

I agree. And I'd like to collect.

CHANNING

Dear God, are you still like this?

You couldn't be needier if you were

begging with a wooden bowl.

(to Renuka)

I can say stuff like that -- I played  
an Indian Guy in "Gandhi."

RENUKA

Let me know if you need anything else.  
Besides an update to your old white  
guy software.

ANDRE

(trying to keep things civil)

Beautiful ceremony today, right? Sad,  
but happy sad. Liza.

LONDON

Suppose you at least tell me what you  
were apologizing for.

CHANNING

Fine. At times, perhaps owing to my  
flash of early success, my ego  
inflated. But those were heady times.  
I was Female Prisoner Magazine's "TV  
Doctor We Most Want to Bathe."

LONDON

So success made you overbearing? Did  
I change when my early compositions  
had my fans calling me a young  
Wolfgang Rihm?

CHANNING

Was that before or after you made the  
"30 Classical Composers Under 300"  
list?

ANDRE

Enough! We're here to honor our old  
friend!

Andre flags down Renuka and removes four dusty glasses from  
his jacket pocket.

ANDRE (CONT'D)

His old shot glasses. Robert was  
always there with these to lighten our  
disappointments, and celebrate our  
successes.

(to Channing)

Your first soap opera,  
(to London)

your first opera opera, my first time  
meeting Oprah. Tonight we say thank  
you.

Renuka arrives.

ANDRE (CONT'D)

May we have a bottle of Pappy O'Shea  
bourbon, please? We don't need  
glasses.

RENUKA

You do if you think you saw something  
called Pappy O'Shea on that drinks  
menu.

ANDRE

They always used to stock it, smarty.  
Look in the back.

She crosses off.

CHANNING  
(to London)

For what it's worth, I often wish I was more anonymous. Growing up in Rhode Island, my biggest dream was to take over my dad's oyster shell driveway company, coach baseball on the weekends, take the team out afterwards for a bowl of clear clam chowder -- the only clam chowder!

A young woman from a nearby table approaches.

YOUNG WOMAN

Excuse me. Would you mind...? Channing gives London a "case in point" look.

CHANNING

Of course not. Never a bother.

He leans in preparing for her to take a selfie with him. Instead she grabs their fourth chair and drags it over to her table of young people.

CHANNING (CONT'D)

She didn't need that chair, she just got cold feet. Good cover though.

ANDRE

Not really.

London has begun obsessively cleaning the shot glasses.

ANDRE (CONT'D)

I cleaned those at home.

LONDON

There were spots.

CHANNING

They're about to have a bourbon in them that Ulysses Grant used to kill the lice in his beard. We don't need perfection. Can we just get this toast over with?

ANDRE

(to London)

I saw you fussing with those pictures at the memorial too. What is making you so nervous?

LONDON

Fine. I know you guys fell out of touch with Robert. But he and I stayed close and he put it in his will that I take care of his Celia in the unlikely event that...

(then)

Of course, this was agreed to years ago, when Meredith and I seemed like good candidates. I feel just awful, but I'm not sure we're up to it anymore. The housekeeper has Celia now.

ANDRE

Celia... who's that, his dog?

CHANNING

I met a Celia once, on a night train  
to Istanbul. She had a widow's peak  
and sand in her ear.

LONDON

I'm glad my problem commanded your  
full attention. Is there any female  
name that doesn't trigger some lewd  
memory for you?

CHANNING

Yew Fong -- a backpacker in Mongolia.  
We went for days stopping only to  
drink fermented mare's milk.

Renuka returns with a very millennial looking bottle of  
Whiskey.

RENUKA

This is the only bourbon we carry.  
People don't love how it tastes, but  
Greta Gerwig makes it.

CHANNING

I was briefly her muse.

ANDRE

No. We are together to honor Robert  
and it must be with that teeth-  
staining, throat burning--  
(realizing)

You know I do have a bottle at my  
apartment.

LONDON

I really don't feel like traipsing all  
over the city.

ANDRE

No, it's right down the block.  
Remember?

CHANNING

Wait. THE apartment? Our old  
apartment? You still live there?  
On Channing and London, realizing he does.

LONDON

Good --

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. SOHO APARTMENT - LATER

The Guys enter, out of breath.

CHANNING

-- God.

LONDON

Those... five... flights...were a  
lot... easier... in the... old days.

ANDRE

I keep meaning... to buy a lawn-chair  
for the second floor landing.

London and Channing look around the outdated, cramped unit.

LONDON

You still have our old couch?!

CHANNING

The place hasn't changed at all. Does that squeaky floorboard still sound like a chipmunk saying the F-word?

He presses a spot with his foot. Yes it does.

ANDRE

The landlord has tried everything to get me out -- cutting off the heat, sliding envelopes filled with bedbugs under the door. But, Rasputin-like, I have survived. Rasputin was a boyfriend I couldn't break up with because he had HBO.

LONDON

Okay. Let's have this toast.

Andre pulls out a bottle of Pappy O'Shea and pours out four shots.

CHANNING

I cannot believe you still live in this hole. I saw a rat in the hall that could have pulled a carriage through Central Park.

ANDRE

I love this place. I have the best bedroom now, I know which parts of the refrigerator stay cold.

(MORE)



ANDRE (CONT'D)

And the low rent allows me to partake  
in the newest and hottest this city  
has to offer. Last week I went to a  
restaurant in a former pre-school that  
only serves French prison food.

London and Channing share a skeptical look as Andre brings  
over the drinks. They raise their glasses.

LONDON

To Robert.

He spills some.

LONDON (CONT'D)

Dammit.  
(tries to ignore the spill,  
then)

We all know that's just going to drive  
me crazy.

He crosses to the kitchen for a towel. He goes to a cabinet  
but there's no handle. Remembering the trick, London bumps  
the side, opening it. He takes a dish cloth and returns to  
wipe up.

ANDRE

You guys have good memories of this  
place, right? Remember Channing's  
opening night on Broadway? The Times  
called him incomparable.

CHANNING

"Incandescent" I think. It hardly  
matters.

(MORE)

CHANNING (CONT'D) Though  
it was one of just four times they  
used that word that year when not  
referring to a light bulb.

ANDRE

We went for a drink after, found  
ourselves outside Carnegie Hall.  
(to London)

Channing found an open window and  
challenged you to go in.

LONDON

Which I did.

CHANNING

You squirmed like a child and I pulled  
you through by your feet.

ANDRE

(to London)

He dared you to play the piano on the  
main stage.

LONDON

(lost in the memory)

Satie's Gymnopédie Number One.

ANDRE

I can still see the look on your face.  
A man lit from within. But not like a  
guy under a blacklight at a rave.

CHANNING

I just remember the alarm going off.

LONDON

I threatened the security guard with  
Leonard Bernstein's conducting baton  
and we booked it out of there!

ANDRE

Ninety blocks back here. Then we cut  
our hair with kitchen shears so the  
police couldn't ID us.

LONDON

Worst haircuts of our lives.

Andre reaches past London's head and grabs those very shears  
off a hook on the kitchen wall.

ANDRE

But also maybe the best.

This comment hangs in the air for a moment. Then:

LONDON

To all things there is a season.

CHANNING

Ugh. You really are a human penny-  
loafer.  
(re: shots)

Can we do this?

Just as they raise their glasses, BRYCE (25), a young  
hipster, enters.

BRYCE

Hey.

ANDRE

(dripping with disdain)

Hello, Bryce.

(MORE)

ANDRE (CONT'D)  
(then, to London and  
Channing)

My gay roommate.

BRYCE

Just "roommate" is fine. Wanted to  
remind you that tomorrow is my day to  
shower first.

ANDRE

But you got the hot one today!

Irritated, he puts down his drink.

BYRCE

You owe me because I let you go twice  
in a row for your birthday!

ANDRE

You said that was a gift!

Bryce exits to his bedroom.

ANDRE (CONT'D)

Go write another listicle for Buzzfeed  
while waiting for the government to  
cancel your student debt, you greedy  
twink!

He dismissively spins away from Bryce then suddenly WINCES  
and grabs his hip.

CHANNING

Are you alright?

ANDRE

Tweaked a muscle on the turn. Bitchy  
sarcasm is a young man's game.

He eases himself down to the floor.

LONDON

Andre, this is no way to live.

ANDRE

You sound like Rasputin right before  
he shot at me.

London and Channing get down on the floor -- something that isn't particularly quick -- and start working the knot in Andre's hip muscle.

ANDRE (CONT'D)

Lower... a little to th-- AUGHHHHH!

As they continue working the knot:

CHANNING

London's right. Living with a twenty-five-year old roommate, being stuck in the 1980s -- this is not winning at life.

LONDON

Don't you crave the comforts of an actual relationship?

ANDRE

I've been trying to get you two to get along all day and this is what you finally come together for?  
(re: Channing's hand)

OW OW OW! That hurts.

LONDON

Not as much as looking back on a life with regret might hurt.

CHANNING

Don't you deserve more? Maybe in an apartment you don't need a yak to get up to?

ANDRE

I'm making up for lost time, don't you see? I was twenty years too late getting to the club and by the time I did I was already the oldest one there.

LONDON

Andre, you're writhing on the ground. Do you really need more clubbing? You look like you've just gotten a good clubbing.

London clamps down on Andre's shoulders as Channing presses his thumb extra hard into a spot on Andre's hip.

ANDRE

--AUGHHHHHHHH!  
(then, testing his leg)

Good as new. Where were we?

He starts back up to his feet. London and Channing follow. It's a slow struggle for all of them.

LONDON

Is this what cross-fit is?  
(then, finally upright)

I think we've earned that drink.

London passes out the shots. They all raise their glasses.

CHANNING  
(pointedly, to Andre)

To Robert. A man without fear who  
never wasted a moment.

They drink, wincing at the bite.

LONDON  
(to Andre)

We don't mean to harass you.

CHANNING  
Yes. Who am I to give life advice?  
I've had three marriages, let  
friendships wither. I'm actually  
thinking of just pressing reset,  
moving back to the city and giving the  
theater another run.

LONDON  
Always easier to fix each others'  
lives than our own.  
(then)

Well, glad we did that shot but I  
should be getting home.

ANDRE  
My door's always open. So is my  
window ever since the landlord stole  
our air conditioner.

London and Channing head to the door.

LONDON  
Share a cab? Where are you staying?

CHANNING

I didn't think I'd be in town this late so I didn't book a room. I'll have the taxi take me to The Plaza.

LONDON

Ahh.

London hesitates for a moment, makes a decision.

LONDON (CONT'D)

There is a free room at my place.

CHANNING

Oh. You wouldn't mind?

LONDON

Meredith is out of town and I'm just over on 2nd and Hester.

ANDRE

You know where that's going, right?

CHANNING

I knew a Hester Lanois once. Sporty Cajun girl who smelled faintly of okra and enjoyed hunting me in her family's marsh.

LONDON

It's right off Chester A. Arthur Square. Do something with that, you pervert.

END OF ACT TWO



ACT THREE

INT. LONDON'S APARTMENT - NEXT MORNING

Channing sits at the breakfast table, in pajamas. London enters, rubbing his eyes.

CHANNING

Good morning.

LONDON

(just remembering last night)

Oh, right...

CHANNING

By the way, I went to grab the paper this morning and noticed you'd left the door unlocked. Not very cautious considering your nellie ways.

LONDON

Meredith forgot her key when she left. No surprise, really. She comes from a long line of scatterbrains. As the old family joke goes, her great-great-great grandmother would have forgotten her head if it wasn't cut off and put on a spike by her vassals.

CHANNING

Funny Meredith. I couldn't help noticing the guest room had lots of her clothing in it. Has she been sleeping in there?

London begins nervously arranging cereal boxes.

LONDON

Yes, but it's nothing dramatic.  
Perhaps it's your lack of success in  
the relationship department, but  
distance can be good for a marriage.

CHANNING

Is wearing ski pants in the summer  
also good, 'cause there's nothing but  
winter clothes in there. I've never  
heard of that kink outside of Canada.  
How long has she been gone?

LONDON

If you're probing for trouble, I  
assure you Meredith and I are the same  
delirious couple we were when her  
reverend pronounced us man and wife.

CHANNING

A wonderful day for you and 5,000  
other couples at Yankee Stadium.

Channing's phone DINGS.

CHANNING (CONT'D)

Excuse me. I still have fans from my  
Ian Davenport days. I give them a  
little FaceTime for a contribution to  
my foundation.

LONDON

You're a webcam girl then.

CHANNING

Just because my art has living fans  
doesn't make it crass.  
(searching)

Do you have any candelabras or  
tapestries I could position behind me?

London points to a China cabinet. Channing crosses off as  
the doorbell RINGS.

London opens the door, revealing a downcast Andre who enters.

ANDRE

I had to talk. I've been through a  
breakup.

LONDON

I'm so sorry. With who?

ANDRE  
(instantly exuberant)

Andre! I'm Andrew again. You and  
Channing were right -- time to grow  
up. I told the landlord to screw off,  
I'm getting a new place. I may be  
fifty-something --

LONDON

If that something is twelve.

ANDRE

-- but it's not too late to finally be  
an adult.  
(pulls cocktail napkin out of  
pocket)

Look at this, some rando's number  
(reads)

(MORE)

ANDRE (CONT'D)

"Donald -- hip guy"  
(tears up napkin and scatter  
pieces)

Who needs it?

LONDON

Well, you may. Are you sure that  
wasn't for "Donald's hip guy?"

Channing crosses through, speaking to his iPad.

CHANNING

...the sexiest voice ever on  
television?  
(purring)

Ever is a long, long time Dolores.

ANDRE

I do want a relationship before it's  
too late. But I can't expect someone  
else to accept me for who I really am  
until I'm ready to do it myself.

Demonstrating his new acceptance of himself, he pulls out  
some glasses, puts them on and looks in a mirror.

ANDRE (CONT'D)

Gargoyle!

Channing turns off his iPad.

CHANNING

(shaken)

She opened her blouse and made me call  
her The Greatest Generation.  
(then, re: Andre)

What's with the screaming?

LONDON

He just saw what he actually looks like.

ANDRE

I came to thank you two. You gave this butt the kick it's needed for 30 years.

CHANNING

In fairness it's a lot easier to reach than it was 30 years ago. But I'm proud of you.

LONDON

And since I did encourage this, while you search for a new apartment you're welcome to stay here a few days, "few" being WASP for "three."

ANDRE

Thank you so much. I see life now as a peach I want to bite and let the juices run down my chin.

LONDON

This might be a good time to point out that carpet is an antique. Meredith's grandfather used to take it on camping trips.

CHANNING

Maybe Andre could take the fold-out in  
Meredith's office where, I noticed,  
the calendar is still on February.  
London, a little unnerved, begins tidying again.

LONDON

Yes, my wife has been gone a while.  
But only because her spiritual journey  
through Asia has been so fruitful.  
Last week she sent me a photo of  
herself at a leper colony teaching  
everyone to play Simon Says.

CHANNING

I also noticed the dining table here  
set for two.

LONDON

Yes for you and me.

CHANNING

But it was like that when I came in  
last night, like you're sitting vigil  
for your missing wife.

LONDON

For someone with a relationship  
success rate on par with a black  
widow, you're awfully critical.

Channing picks up the extra place setting and crosses to the  
cabinet to set it back on the shelf. London follows.

CHANNING

There's no shame in admitting to  
friends if you're struggling. Unless  
you're afraid of seeming imperfect and  
aren't we a little old for that kind  
of vanity?

As he reaches to put the plate away his shirt rides up and  
London notices he's wearing something below his pants.

LONDON

Is the man accusing me of vanity  
wearing Spanx?

CHANNING

No.

LONDON

I can see them.

Andre joins them in the kitchen.

LONDON (CONT'D)

Guess who's a Spanx man?

ANDRE

Not into that anymore, that's Andre  
stuff.

Channing defensively yanks up his pants, exposing something  
at his ankle.

LONDON

And what is that?!

CHANNING

Nothing.

LONDON

Some kind of device?

Channing messes up the neat cereal boxes to draw London away.

CHANNING

It helps with my equilibrium. I've had vertigo and sometimes it makes me clumsy.

His hand "accidentally" jerks, spilling cereal.

CHANNING (CONT'D)

Oh, shoot!

LONDON

That is an ankle monitor! Have you been incarcerated?

CHANNING

I spent one week in jail, okay?

London and Andre react, stunned.

CHANNING (CONT'D) Acting

jobs had been scarce so I agreed to play Lori Loughlin's daughter's debate coach in a college application video. I think the judge added time because he considered it a despicable waste of my talent.  
(then)

What is that wheezing sound? Is that the pipes?

They turn to find Andre, head between his knees, hyperventilating in a wheeze.



ANDRE

I blew up my life... because of you  
two "big successes?" A con-man with a  
prison record... and a delusional who  
has dinner with the ghost of his wife  
every night? I need to get my  
apartment back! I want Andre back!  
And hip Donald!

He dives on the floor and starts trying to fit the pieces of  
the napkin back together.

CHANNING

Stop it.

Channing slaps Andre.

CHANNING (CONT'D)

Look into my beautiful blue eyes. You  
didn't throw your life away. You  
threw away your FEAR of life. Don't  
turn back now. And not just for  
yourself, but for the example you'd be  
setting for him.

He points to London.

LONDON

This again.

Dispirited, London goes to the Piano and begins playing the  
dark, slow sonata he played earlier.

CHANNING

You are stagnating, London.

Personally and professionally. What's the last thing you composed?

LONDON

Fine, yes, I seldom compose anymore. Between lecturing at NYU and teaching an army of the most staggeringly tone-deaf citizens of New York, I barely have the time.

CHANNING

The time, or the nerve? Every career has setbacks, it's all about how we weather them. In your case you gave up, shut out the world, and grew more insular and calcified until you finally drove your wife away.

ANDRE

Drove her away?

CHANNING

Could you blame her? She was living with a man who had a stick so far up him a tree-trimmer performed his last colonoscopy.

ANDRE

I thought Meredith was at a retreat.

CHANNING

Retreat? She's in the middle of a  
full, hands-in-the-air surrender!  
(to London)

And what's this business of keeping  
the door unlocked for her?

LONDON

Did it ever occur to you that I might  
love Meredith?

CHANNING

What occurs to me is that a person who  
leaves without a key might not have  
big plans to come back. I'm just  
saying you may be clinging to that  
hope because you're afraid to move on  
in your life. But remember: rule our  
fears and we rule the world.

ANDRE

Deep.

LONDON

Wait a goddamn second.

He pulls out his phone, scrolls.

LONDON (CONT'D)

The last email I got from Meredith  
mentioned a letter she'd received from  
a friend who was encouraging her to be  
brave and leave me. The friend wrote  
(reads)

(MORE)

LONDON (CONT'D)

"Rule our fears, Meredith, and we rule the world."

CHANNING

It's a common enough phrase.

LONDON

You actually urged her to leave me?  
All in the hope that a room would open up from which you could relaunch your career!

CHANNING

I advised Meredith as I would any friend. If a room happened to open up, that was a win-win.

LONDON

Thanks to you, there's a frail middle-aged woman utterly adrift in a dangerous world.

ANDRE

(breathing into a paper bag)

What about a frail, middle-aged man!

LONDON

Oh, will you shut up, Andre!

He pops the bag.

CHANNING

I can't blame you for thinking my advice to Meredith might have been selfish.

(MORE)

CHANNING (CONT'D)

I do have a history of that, with a swath of busted marriages to prove it. Just know, I meant well. Behind this facade of sunscreen and sex appeal is a callow fool who wants, but never quite knows how, to be a better man.

ANDRE

Now that's deep.

LONDON

No, that's Dr. Ian Davenport! From the mawkish episode where he couldn't save the quadruplets.

CHANNING

Aw, you watched?

LONDON

Meredith was a fan. And it speaks volumes that your first sincere moment in two days was a speech you dusted off from a soap opera where you once played your own grandmother.

CHANNING

I do resent the constant implication that I'm insincere.

His iPad DINGS. He answers it.

CHANNING (CONT'D)

Mona, the haircut is divine. You look twenty years younger. Call you back.

He quickly hangs up, turns back to London.

CHANNING (CONT'D)

I do know what you're going through. I have my own Meredith. As a young actor, I was on a path to being... well, really good. But I put that aside to chase fame, glory -- soon there were ex-wives and mortgages, and more jobs I hated, just to pay for all that. But the whole time I was dumb enough to think one day I could just go back to that fork in the road where Respectability would still be waiting for me, like a high-school sweetheart. But she's gone. I made my choice and she's gone. Facing the truth is never an easy thing, but it's always the right thing.

A beat while that sinks in.

ANDRE

Can I say just one thing?

LONDON

Historically, no.

ANDRE

For thirty years you two have claimed not to like each other. But I think it was mostly jealousy.

(to Channing, re: London)

(MORE)

ANDRE (CONT'D)

You wished you could have had his  
artistic purity.

(to London, re: Channing)

And you wished you had his  
recognition. But get over all that  
and you could be good for each other  
again.

(to Channing, re: London)

He did keep you from your worst  
impulses.

(to London, re: Channing)

And he did help you come out of your  
shell. I think you miss the old days  
more than you let on.

He reaches over to the mantle, and picks up a conductor's  
baton. He holds it up with import.

ANDRE (CONT'D)

My whole speech is riding on this  
being Leonard Bernstein's.

LONDON

It is.

ANDRE

It's a tough stretch of life we're  
heading into.

CHANNING

And having people around to keep you  
honest isn't a bad thing. True words,  
Andrew. Or is it Andre again? Did  
you flip back?

London crosses to the window and pulls open the drapes.

LONDON

Do you know what's across that courtyard? An old age home. The announcements ricochet through this apartment. Monday at four, Pottery Party. Wednesday at six, movie madness! And the dreadful scuff of tennis ball-bearing walkers every Friday and Dance Delirium. So no, I don't exactly need reminding that time is short. Most mornings I wake up expecting to see a zip line installed in that window ready to deliver me right into that maw.

ANDRE

We did have some fun together.

Channing closes the drapes.

CHANNING

(re: retirement home)

And we're not where they are. We have all the time we need. Just no time to waste.

The phone RINGS. London goes toward it.

LONDON

If you're proposing some quaint reconfiguring of our old roomie set-up, that is not going to happen.

(MORE)



LONDON (CONT'D)  
(into phone)

Hello. Yes, send her up.

He hangs up.

LONDON (CONT'D)

I can be generous enough to open my home for a few days while you both get situated. But only because that could benefit me too. See, between Channing's god-awful charm, my intellect, and Andre's spirit we might, together, constitute one functioning adult and that might give me the confidence to actually take care of Robert's Celia.

He starts toward the door.

ANDRE

Well, sure, we can help with the dog.

CHANNING

Sure dogs love me. Dogs and people.

LONDON

Good. Just one more thing... Celia's not a dog.

He opens the door to reveal a TEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL.

CUT TO:

INT. LONDON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The lights are all out. Celia sleeps on the couch.

Andre emerges from Meredith's study in a gorgeous pair of silken pajamas. He pours himself a glass of milk.

Seeing Celia, he crosses over and takes a look at her, half-mystified, half-intrigued. He places the milk on the coffee table next to her, pulls the covers up to Celia's chin so she stays warm, then returns to his bedroom.

A moment later, Channing emerges from the guest bedroom, mid-FaceTime conversation with another older fan. He uses a match to light some candles on a wall hanging and carries the whole thing toward his room. He stops, noticing Celia. He looks at her, scrunches his face, confused, "What is this thing?" Celia's feet are now sticking out from under the blanket. Channing adjusts the cover back down so she's comfortable then retires to his bedroom.

Then London comes down. He looks at Celia, smiles. The smile goes from happy to nervous as he wonders, "Am I up to this task?" He pulls the blanket up to Celia's chin. Noticing her exposed feet he grabs a nearby pair of Meredith's slippers and puts them on Celia's feet. There, perfect. Satisfied, London heads back toward his bedroom. Just before he ascends the stairs, he pauses, reaches over, and unlocks the front door.

END OF EPISODE