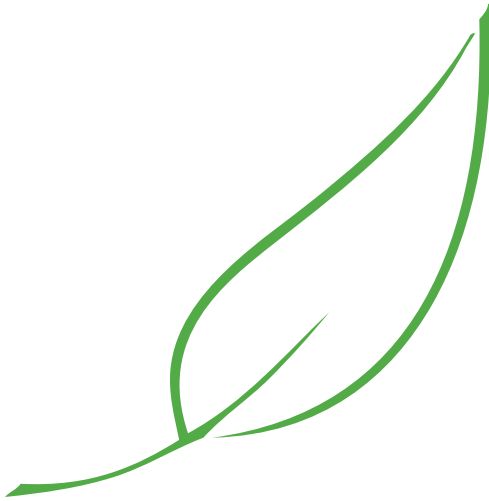


A Fortune In Eggs!

By TA Powell



GREEN ROOM PRESS

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A FORTUNE IN EGGS!

By TA Powell

SYNOPSIS: Every great story or incredible lie I ever heard began with, “Once upon a time...” until 53 years ago when it began with, “Would you like a cup of tea? I’ve been waiting a long time to meet you.” Thus begins Joey’s tale. A bright young kid with an even brighter future in journalism. Joey didn’t get the job by merit, but luck of the draw in those days was just as good in a pinch and his rent was already three weeks past due.

Rumor had it there was a four-inch hole on page three of the *Living* section two hours to deadline, when Joey the mail boy became Joey the cub reporter and got the spot by promising to fill the hole by 6:00. If he could deliver a plug by six, the office that overlooked the dumpster was his by 7:00! Joey was one of those kids that fate hung out to dry like soggy laundry one night after his mother left him and three other kids in a two-room apartment.

Folks in the neighborhood called her the Gypsy. By the time Joey was 12, his mother was burnt out on a lot of things. Mostly Joey’s father, so when she left, the family fell apart. Joey was at a loss. His father was even worse and three days after she left, he took a wrong turn down a whiskey bottle and got lost. Together they learned a very valuable lesson: love can make an orphan outta anybody! And denial? Well, denial is just a very long way of saying goodbye.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 male, 3 female)

JOSEPH (m).....	Older man/Joey.
CHARLIE (m)	Adult male/Foreman.
RILEY (m).....	Adult male/Foreman.
NEWSIE (m).....	Young male/12.
JOEY (m).....	Young adult male/20’s.
BARNEY (m)	Young adult male/20’s.
CLARK (f).....	Young adult female/20’s.
FRANCIE (f)	Young adult female/20’s.
MADAME ZEN DORA (f)	Adult female/50’s+.

SETTING

INTRODUCTORY SCENE: 1994; Spotlight downstage left.

REMAINING SCENES: 1941; Street scene in front of an old newspaper building, Art deco design. Street lights are dim and various street signs are far right, downstage. Blue plate special ads are in the window of the diner. Piles of towels and shirts hang in the Chinese laundry as steam rolls out from under the door.

INTRODUCTION

Before curtain goes up, Foreman Charlie comes on stage in front of the curtain, next to a lamp post dimly lit; carrying a stack of papers which he places at the foot of the lamp post and begins the introduction to... "A Fortune in Eggs."

CHARLIE: "Every great story or incredible lie I ever heard began with:" Once upon a time..." until 53 years ago Thursday - when it began with, "Would you like a cup of tea? I've been waiting a long time to meet you." Thus begins the tale of my pal Joey. A bright young kid with an even brighter future in journalism. Joey's first big break came at the Chicago Tribune; when one of the Dailey's nephews got in a fight with one of the Tribs' stringer reporters, over some dumb blonde in a bar, that turned out to be the kid's wife. A couple of Jack Daniels and one helluv-a Jack Dempsey later, the young buck threatened to press charges. The Mayor's office threatened back with an offer he couldn't refuse: life in Peoria with his blonde bride as a Junior Editor or a long slow death in the Obit column here in Chicago, writing his own epitaph...either way, he should pack light, mourning attire strictly optional for the bride! Okay, so Joey didn't get the job by merit, but luck of the draw was just as good in a pinch in those days and his rent was already three weeks past due. Rumor had it, there was a four-inch hole on page three of the Living section two hours to deadline, when they got the call that Pawalski was Peoria-bound, with the four-inch plug they'd been waiting on. They needed something fast. Mail drops down at 1:00, dailies called up by 2:00, Pawalski dragged off by 3:00, and by 4:00, mail boy Joey was promoted to cub reporter Joey by promising to fill the hole by 6:00.

Lights out as Charlie exits and re-enters as curtain comes up.

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

NEWSIE ON THE CORNER: Extra! Extra! Read all about it! Priceless Faberge work of art titled, *The Winter Palace*, sells at Christie's Auction House for 5.5 million! 1994 record set, making piece highest paid ever, for a single work done by House of Faberge! Extra! Extra!!! House of Faberge representative claims only one piece more valuable! *Renaissance Egg Surprise* from 1884, designed by Mikhail Evlampievich Perkhin still missing, with whereabouts unknown! Spokesperson for Christie's relays: "We have no idea what that would bring at auction if ever found...but likely this record set today would pale in comparison!" What an Easter Egg hunt that would be! Extra! Extra!!! In local news: Chicago Tribune owner and beloved CEO, J.E. Perkins, retires today after 53 years at the helm. Leaving behind a newspaper dynasty to his oldest son: Henry Clark Perkins I. Extra! Extra!!! Read all about it. Today's *Tribune* a Collector's Edition! Last run of the infamous column: "Human Interest in Interesting Humans" by T. Malone runs today! Extra! Extra!!!!

CHARLIE: (*Reading the paper.*) Shew! (*Pulls a toothpick out of his mouth.*) \$5.5 million for one teensy tiny egg. Go figure. Great Headline and great timing as usual though! The old man's still got the Midas touch! Ties in rather nicely with his final column. (*Turns over the front page and goes to the "Living" section. Folds the paper and begins to read.*) "A Fortune in Eggs" by - -

JOSEPH: (*An older gentleman with graying hair in suspenders slowly comes through double doors of paper.*) Hello Charlie. Nice touch with the Newsie on the corner. Just like the way I started. Ya don't see that any more.

CHARLIE: Yeah, Cavetti's a sentimental old cuss. He thought you might get a kick outta that. Had the boys in Classifieds set it up as a gift for ya. It being your big day and all. You know, kinda like a stroll down memory lane one last time.

JOSEPH: Cavetti can't remember where to find his own lane these days, let alone how to find memory lane. (*He smiles to himself.*) I owe him big, though. You tell him thanks when you see him later. Make certain you have him picked up on time, ya hear? Couldn't have done it without him. (*Pauses remembering.*) Yes sir...couldn't have done it without...humph! Come to think of it, this is all HIS fault. Remind me *not* to thank him! (*Chuckles to himself.*) Charlie? Read the story yet?

CHARLIE: Not yet, J.P.! It's just hot off the presses though. Thought I'd check it out while waiting on the trucks to load. Ready for your retirement party later today?

JOSEPH: I'm not sure. But Barney sure is. Says he's tired of running things himself down there. Nora's chomping at the bit to get out of the city and head back down to the farm permanently. *(Throws his hands in the air.)* Heaven save me from the two of them! Got the grandkids all worked up about our annual Easter Egg hunt this weekend. They been dying and decorating them all week long. Barney says his hands and arms are a purplish sort of green all the way up to his elbows. Looks like an eggplant in overalls! Says the chickens keep following around wanting to peck at him! Ha! Let me know what ya think about the article. Okay? *(Stops to look in the double doors of the Trib to check his tie and his watch.)*

CHARLIE: Hey! Nice tie. Got a hot date?

JOSEPH: Yep! Meeting the Mrs. for breakfast! She's got a thing for hot men and cold eggs! Besides, our train leaves shortly after the ceremony. Don't like traveling on a full stomach myself. Gives me gas, but it's a long ride so we're gonna say goodbye to Francie over breakfast. She'll be closing up the diner at the end of the month and be down after. Barney's tired of waiting on her, too! I gotta hurry! You read and tell me if I left anything out. I'll catch ya before I leave!

CHARLIE: You got it sir! Now, where was I? Oh yeah, "A Fortune in Eggs" By T. Malone. *(Begins to read the paper again.)* "Every great story or incredible lie I ever heard began with: "Once upon a time..." until 53 years ago Thursday, when it began with, "Would you like a cup of tea? I've been waiting a long time to meet you."

Younger version of Joey lights up a cigarette and stalls looking at his watch. Nods to the second Foreman Riley. Foreman nods back as he picks up a paper and they alternate reading.

RILEY: ...And thus begins the tale of our pal Joey. A bright young kid with an even brighter future in journalism. He had a gift, and apparently he spent it well. We never knew where he got the dough to buy the paper. Rumor had it; he won big at the races, when he was younger. Another rumor said it was an inheritance from a long lost relative. Personally; I think he got it the good old fashioned way - He earned it! Joey was convinced he was a born writer. The only problem he ever had was convincing everyone

else of that too. There was a sign that hung in his office that read: Pullet Prize Winner 1941. We never knew if it was a type-o; or just a running gag between him and Barney Bigelow, until today when we finally got the rest of the story...

Lights out.

ACT ONE, SCENE 2

AT RISE: *Still in front of the Chicago Tribune building.*

Foreman starts to load papers on the dolly; getting ready for the trucks to pull up. Riley and Charlie take turns stacking up papers.

CHARLIE: It was October, 1937. Joey's foster mother was an old woman who took in anything, like a spinster waiting on another cat to show up, to lick out the bottom of her tuna cans. Told Joey, the gypsies had brought him to her as a present one night; but that there wasn't enough tuna left in her pantry for another stray. *(Looking over his shoulder as the newsie enters. Watches as Young newsie enters scene as though thrown to the ground. Crawls over to the stack the foreman is about to start stacking on the dolly and curls up to take a nap. Gets up after Charlie cues him to move on and he exits the stage, bedraggled looking.)*

RILEY: So she dropped him off at the double doors of the Tribune. That's where Classifieds Cavetti found him curled up next to a stack of papers, trying to keep warm. For a little guy, Cavetti had a big Italian heart. Brought him in and gave him a job as a newsie, for room and board in the basement.

CHARLIE: I'm Charlie; loading dock foreman and first draw on the press line. I don't wear a visor, but I like to consider myself the final editor! No news hits the street before it passes through my hands. *(Puts one more paper on the dolly and exits to load.)*

RILEY: I'm Riley. Night Shift manager. Joey learned the paper business from the ground floor up; literally. And he wanted right up there with the best of them. But big departments were for big-leaguers and Human interest wasn't real big in a city like Chicago in 1937. *(Smirks.)* Nobody gave a shit. Articles in that section were few and far between. There wasn't a lot of human interest in human interest. But then...there wasn't a lot of competition either.

CHARLIE: *(Returns with the dolly empty for Riley to load up.)* Joey'd heard one of the Advertising guys once refer to getting revenue from an ad, "Tits". It was like saying it was the, "berries." Only newspaperman style. Because for a salesman; revenue was life itself. Sure it was crude locker room humor...But seven years later..."Tits Malone" was the tag name Joey wanted to see on the big deadlines chalk board, outside Bigelow's office. *(Honking in the background.)* All right guys. Finish loading 'em up! *(Folds the paper in half.)* It's a good story. *(Folds the half together. Then reconsiders and opens it up back to half. Looks at the audience and tosses the paper on top of two small stacks left to load later in next scene.)* Here, read it for yourself. Alright guys. Let's get on the road - we're burning daylight.

As he exits, the lights come up a little more. The now young man Joey enters the scene. Joey comes out of the building again. Sees the top paper on the closest stack, picks it up; looks at it; sees his article. Slaps the paper with one hand and then folds it closed continuing the story.

JOEY: Ain't that something! New column: "Human Interest in Interesting Humans", by T. Malone coming to Chicagoan readers next week! T. Malone... I like the way it sounded. *(Addressing the audience.)* Unfortunately, my last name was Perkins. And Tits Perkins made me sound like a cabana boy in Ocala - not a reporter in the back alleys of Chicago. But, that wasn't a problem. I could change that when I finally got my permanent byline. After all... *(Looks at the audience and cocks his head.)* what's in a name? *(Folds the paper and looks back into the audience.)* The Tits part was just a gag anyway. But I liked the *(Pounds a fist into his other hand.)* solid weight of Malone behind it. After all, Irish carried big in this town, like no other. MALONE sounds tough, gritty - news-papery. Tits isn't good for cover, that's why they only went with the initial. But it'd be good enough for the deadline board. Everyone would be able to see it. *(Puts his hand to his mouth as if to tell a secret.)* Made the secretaries squirm a little, I liked that about them. Prudes at the desk, tarts at the waterin holes. So an ad it was. I had only 45 minutes to produce something for layout and secure a spot on page 17. Soooo... *(Joey finishes his cigarette and puts it out. Looks at his watch again. Then took out his small pad of paper and a pencil from*

behind his ear. Takes off his fedora and wipes his brow. Scratching his forehead looking up and down the block.) Where to pull an ad from? Everyone in the area got tapped pretty regular, by more than just the newspaper, if ya know what I mean! So they saw me coming a mile away. Suddenly folks were, "OUT TO LUNCH" or "BACK IN AN HOUR" or at least until they saw my scrawny little ass slither down another block. There! That was the ticket - the Diner. *(Diner puts up an OUT TO LUNCH sign and pulls shade down.)* The Diner I owed \$6.43 to. Francie had slapped both me and it on a tab last week. Naw. No good. Couldn't show my face in there. I'd skipped on paying both bill and tips, waiting for payroll to catch up with my most expensive habit to date... staying alive. How about the Chinese laundry? Ah...eh. *(Chinese Laundry flips a sign that read, BACK IN AN HOUR and pulls the shade down.)* Bad idea...I still had three shirts there and a pair of pants I tore the cuff out of, climbing up the drain pipe to get past the super's door and into my apartment. *(Joey looks down at his pants and then as the shade goes down on the laundry, he turns to see the sign for the fortune teller flicker on and off and looks down at his watch.)* Hmmmm...5:13 and the only joint, I knew of that hadn't been pinched in a while was the last door in the alley beside the Diner. The Amazing Madam Zen Dora! Palm Reader and Fortune Teller Extraordinaire! Everyone thought it was just another front for one of those gypsy cat houses. But the only cat I ever saw near that door, was a raggedy old blue Russian with a torn ear I nick named, Grimace. Naw...Nobody went there for ads. Hell, nobody went there period. I figured the old lady must have owned part of the building or she'd have been kicked out by now. I never saw anybody go in and...consequently I never saw anybody go back out either...

Turns and starts to head upstage left to exit towards the Fortune Tellers door. Riley and Charlie now re-enter to pick up last two stacks of papers.

CHARLIE: *(Picks up the first stack of papers and puts it on the dolly.)*

Until that day, when he caught his own reflection in the glass pane as he walked by holding a 2 inch ad and Madam Zen Dora holding a smile on her lips as she watched him walk away.

RILEY: *(Picks up the last stack of papers and puts it on his dolly. Both exit.)* Yea, Joey got his first big break alright! An ad for

Bigelow, revenue for the Trib and a little something for himself; when the fortune teller found more in the palm of his hand, than just the sweat of a cub reporter under the gun of his first deadline!

Lights fade to black.

ACT ONE, SCENE 3

AT RISE: *Lights up on the interior of the Fortune tellers lair. The room is dimly lit with a light of an old lamp, under a scarf of riotous colors. The room is floating in a haze of burning incense and the walls are decorated with various paintings of; angels, the Blessed Virgin, wizards, other religious paraphernalia. There are stones and crystals in a bowl. There is a shrine in the corner that has a center piece; a crystal ball on a pedestal in the center, surrounded by votive candles glowing in the dark. Crystal rocks of every color spread around another crystal ball on the center of a small table. Along another wall there is a parchment, hanging with the fortune tellers palm reading chart. Very large. Joey stands in front of this chart and tries to compare his palm with what he sees. He is trying to decipher his own future from the wall and is rather confused as to how to do it, when the gypsy enters the room and watches him for a moment.*

MADAM: Would you like a cup of tea? I've been waiting to meet you for a long time.

Joey had been trying to get a closer look at the egg statue and turns with a start and panics as though he has been caught stealing.

JOEY: Oh hey...No. No thanks. Sorry. I was just looking at ah...that. It reminded me of some old stuff of my mother's, that's all. I'm a coffee drinker myself. But that's not what I came for...and I'm not here for...ah...whatever it is you do here either.

MADAM: Then quite frankly, I may not be here for...whatever it is you do either. *(Tilts her head and raises one eyebrow.)*

JOEY: Touché. *(Shakes his head)* Fair enough. I'll take a tea or...whatever. I don't want to be any trouble. *(Hesitates, then changes his mind.)* No! On second thought; I'd really prefer that cup of coffee...if it's no trouble.

MADAM: No trouble. Sit. (*Motions to the table.*) I will make it. I like a man who can make a decision and asks for what he wants. (*Joey smiles and sits down on the small chair that is opposite the door. Then realizes this is her chair and moves to the other side.*) It will be a minute for the water to boil. (*Sits*) May I ask what brings you this far down the alley...Mr....ah?

JOEY: Ohhhh... you're good! I thought you might already know. You know...since you read minds and stuff. (*Laughingly he shrugs his shoulders at the ball in front of them.*)

MADAM: Yes...I am good. I noticed you seemed quite fascinated...with my..."stuff"!? But my sign reads fortune teller...NOT psychic, Mr....? You do have a name, don't you?

JOEY: (*Laughs at himself. She does not smile back.*) You can call me, Malone. Ti... Joseph. Joseph Malone. (*Clears his throat.*) Joe will be fine for now, I guess. Should I call you Madam? Or Madam Zen? Or Madam Zen Dor -

MADAM: (*Cuts him off.*) Are you a cop, Mr. Malone?

JOEY: No ma'am.

MADAM: Then... you needn't call me at all. If I have need of exchanging information with you... I know where to find you. (*Starts to turn and leave the room; but is suddenly struck by his likeness to someone she knew long ago. Puts her hands on the table and While Joey notices all the rings she wears, she studies his face. Puts one finger under his chin to lift his face.*) ...Joseph Malone, did you say? (*Joey nods halfheartedly. She reaches for a small set of dishes, behind a pulled curtain and sets them on the table in front of him.*) ...You're of Irish decent? Hmmm.

JOEY: What? Ohhh...I don't look Irish enough for you? (*She casually shrugs her shoulders in disbelief.*) Ya know, you don't look... gypsy enough to me either. You've no...turban, no velvet cloak. There's no creepy violin music playing...no third eye on your forehead!

MADAM: And you've... no idea what I'm suppose to look like other than your silly comic book version; am I right, Mr. Malone?

JOEY: Well...

MADAM: You seem disappointed that I could look as though I could be...somebody's grandmother?

JOEY: I... just thought you'd be more like...a gypsy...gypsy.

MADAM: Uhmhhh. And just how many gypsy-gypsies in your vast experience have you met?

JOEY: I don't have to tell you that.

MADAM: Of course you don't. *(He smiles smugly.)* I already know! *(He frowns.)* May I read your palm for you? Your hand is as interesting as your face.

She takes his hand and runs her fingers underneath it as she turns it over in her own.

JOEY: I didn't come for that. I just needed an ad. I've got a slot and a deadline... *(Looks around.)* and I thought maybe you could use a little advertising. That's all. Customers seem to be a little thin around this place.

MADAM: A good fortune teller need not advertise at all, Mr. Malone. A good fortune teller gets her business by word of mouth. When you are good at what you do...others will seek you out. And...since I did not go looking in the alley for you...

JOEY: Ouch... *(He reaches for his heart.)* ...that hurts.

MADAM: Do you not find this true in your line of work?

JOEY: My line of work?

Looks up at the parchment chart of palm reading. Tries to trace the area for career on his hand.

MADAM: *(Reaches for his hand and points it out on the chart, so he can find the line in his palm.)* Yes, here it is. Ooooh... That...a... seems to be a very short line. A very short line in deed. In fact - *(Chuckles to herself.)* I believe... that would be called...a hyphen! And not a line at all! *(Smiles sarcastically and starts to show him the door.)*

JOEY: *(Scratches his cheek. Looks down at his palm and then at the chart on the wall. Less cocky now, he tries humility.)* Okay. I confess. I haven't been doing it all that long. *(Pulls his hand back rather abruptly, rubbing it as though she hurt him.)* Twenty three minutes to be exact. But I imagine one day, stooges will come to me with the scoops. I'll be big around here. But...for right now; IF I get a chance to write anything at all... I'll have to dig up a story myself. *(Catches himself rambling and realizes time is running out.)* Ya sure you don't advertise? At all?

MADAM: I told you...It's not necessary. May I finish reading your palm for you? Your lines are very interesting. Let me show you something. *(Joey extends his left hand.)* Your right hand please. You take energy in with your left and you return... *(Looks at his hand and sees something of interest, then into his eyes.)* Well...you return... *(Long pause for effect of recognition.)* if your right. *(Shakes her head to clear her thoughts.)* I mean; with your right.

JOEY: *(Pulls back from her touch.)* Well... Right now; the only line you really should be interested in... is my credit line. And... *(He pulls out his other hand out of his pants pocket, with the pocket lining and shows her it's empty. Then he adds the other pocket lining and hand and turns it over to show that they are both empty.)* as you can see...I don't have one!

MADAM: Then I will read for myself out of curiosity. For free.

JOEY: *(Looks down at his watch as he pulls his hand back from the gypsy.)* Thanks, but, I gotta go. I need an ad in 16 minutes or...Well, that doesn't require a reading from you. If I don't cough up with an ad by then; I can predict my own future!

MADAM: And what would that be, Mr. Malone?

JOEY: Back to the basement! *(Gets up from the chair, straightens his sport coat and turns to leave.)* Thanks anyway. I always wondered what the inside of this place would look like. It's not as creepy as I thought...interesting though...Real interesting.

MADAM: *(She hands him a wad of bills, she pulls from her cleavage.)* Here. Take this and return when you can. Wait! *(Leans forward trying to hold onto his hand.)* I still owe you that cup of coffee. *(The tea kettle starts to whistle. She lets go of his hand just long enough to get to the sideboard pours a cup of coffee and sets it in front of Joey as he begins to fan out the money and count it. Shocked he jumps up and spills the cup.)*

JOEY: Hey! *(Looks at the money and counts it out.)* This is more than an ad would cost, three times the size you're gonna get.

MADAM: *(Grabs a scarf and dabs at the mess on the table.)* I told you, Mr. Malone...I don't need an ad. Give the paper an ad for The Diner, with this money. It will bring you much in the way of good karma. Free ad for them, revenue for your boss...For you? Free coffee in the morning and a smile *(She winks.)* ...from your Francie.

JOEY: Hey... Wait a minute. She's not my Francie...I mean ...she's Francie, but she's not mine. *(Stops suddenly.)* How did you know about her?

MADAM: You're flustered. Good. That means you're honest. The rest...is for your bill there and to get yourself a new shirt and tie. Pay your bills at the laundry as well, of course. But leave the garbage you left with them to repair in the dumpster outside your new office. It makes you look like a common thug. Go buy yerself something new... and Mr. Malone? Lose the byline. Your future wife will find it offensive. When you bring me back the cup of coffee, which you now owe me... bring Mr. Perkins with you. It is HE that I am in need of speaking with.

JOEY: A common what? Hey! How did you know about my office? And who is this...Mr. Perkins? *(She turns her back on the dumbfounded reporter and exits the room with the dirty dishes. Chuckles to himself in amazement, wagging his finger at her.)* I thought you told me the sign never said a thing about you being psychic?

MADAM: *(Returns to the table where he is still standing.)* It doesn't Mr. Malone. A sign is but a piece of wood and cannot speak. If you had wanted information like that...you should have asked my cat. *(Raises one eyebrow.)* Good day Mr. Malone.

She exits

JOEY: Well I'll be damned... *(Turns slowly to leave and mutters on his way out.)* I knew there was something weird about that cat. It...is...Perkins, by the way. Joey Perkins. *(He crosses to open the door. She has left the room. Candles flicker off.)* But then...what's in a name? *(He exits. She re-enters drinking her demitasse of coffee; sees his hand pulling the door closed... He hesitates and re-opens the door to ask her another question, when he hears her speak.)*

MADAM: Clues... *(She turns to exit. With her back to the door she does not see he has heard her say her last line. She exits; he closes the door quietly.)* ...Mr. Perkins. Clues!

Lights out.

ACT ONE, SCENE 4

AT RISE: *Lapse of time is short, but Joey is in his new shirt and tie and looking rather dapper. He knocks on the door as he enters. The scene is very much the same; though the room is empty again of the Madam... he now looks around in the better light of day. Things look less mysterious to him than in the din of dusk and he wants to shake off the eerie feelings that have haunted him since their last meeting.*

JOEY: Madam Zen Dora? Are you in? Hallo? I brought you the cup of coffee I owe you. I wasn't sure how you took it...

MADAM: In the sink!

JOEY: What? Hallo? I thought we might talk.

MADAM: Throw it out in the sink, there behind the curtain. I don't drink what they try to pass off as coffee. *(Enters in her full regalia. Hair wild and flowing in a bright shirt, a long flowing skirt and jewelry galore.)* I prefer my own mud. Will you join me then Mr....ah? *(Enters from behind the curtain.)* Are we Malone today or Perkins?

JOEY: I've learned my lesson! *(Throws his hands up as if to surrender.)* Perkins. I didn't mean to insult your intelligence. I was just trying to...

MADAM: Be someone other than who you are meant to be? We all tend to try to be someone other than who we really are from time to time, Mr. Perkins. People have a bad habit of assuming, their real self, has no significance at all. For most though; that is true. But rare is it, that we find our true identity to be more important to the world than to ourselves.

JOEY: Yeah. Right...That's what I wanted to talk to you about.

MADAM: *(Ignoring him.)* You know Mr. Perkins; very often the weight of such knowledge is so immense that, it can crush some; distort others and flat out kills the rest of us. Some people try to hide from it. Some out of ignorance. Some out of choice. Which do you prefer?

JOEY: Are we talking about your coffee here?

MADAM: *(Exits behind curtain of small sink and returns with two demitasse cups of coffee.)* Do you think we are? *(Sits slowly in her chair opposite him and stirs her coffee slowly and deliberately while she looks him in the eye.)* Sometimes we are forced into another identity for the sake of something greater than our own worth...wouldn't you agree, Mr. Perkins?

JOEY: Boy! "I'll take it black" and 'It's nice to see you again", seems rather shallow to say at this point.

MADAM: Do you know my name, Mr. Perkins?

JOEY: This is a trick question...isn't it?! Okay, I'll play! The sign said, Aha! *(Catches himself.)* Excuse me, the sign reads! *(Chuckles to himself for not falling into the trap again.)* Madam Zen Dora. That's it, right?

MADAM: According to whom?

JOEY: Oh riiiiight! I'm supposed to ask the cat! *(Playfully looks around the room and under the table.)* Where is he?

MADAM: Forget the cat for right now! The truth is... Nothing is ever what it seems, Mr. Perkins. *(She lights a candle at the shrine and slowly blows out the match. They both watch the smoke curl in the air above them.)*

JOEY: Riiiiight.

MADAM: For instance: There was once a girl named after her grandmother. Her Romani name was Zorah Niccollai Markovitch...but her papers said Dora Nicole Marks.

JOEY: Okay...I'll bite. Why?

MADAM: When her family came to this country; not only their fortunes were changed, but their names as well.

JOEY: Riiiiight! To protect the cat?

MADAM: Mr. Perkins! Please! Pay attention! *(He squirms in his chair as she begins.)* Many Russian Romani escaped through Europe to the Americas to evade the Holocaust, Mr. Perkins. Before even that; some had greater fears from the Provisional Government after the Bolshevik Revolution. Our people were great performers...some greatly favored by the Imperial Family. We had more than possessions, my dear boy...we had contacts, information...secrets!

JOEY: Riiiiight! Like the cat!

MADAM: *(She gives him an annoyed look and then continues on.)* Oh for God's sake! Enough about the cat. We are all performers in life; are we not, Mr. Malone? *(He opens his mouth to speak; but she cuts him off.)* Remember what I said about being born to one thing and being forced into another? You should be taking notes!

JOEY: Soooo... *(He reaches into his coat pocket for a pen.)* The cat was once... really a dog?

MADAM: Joseph! This is a matter of great importance. I'll thank you to stop treating me like some 10 cent dime store detective novel!

JOEY: Oh. So this is about you then? You find yourself forced to be a fortune teller, Madam? *(Takes out his note pad and begins to take notes.)*

MADAM: In the beginning, perhaps. All Romani women are taught the art; but the gift chose me, not I the gift.

JOEY: And you find that to be an asset or a burden?

MADAM: Both. We Roma must keep separate of the rest of the world. Well insulated in order to survive; but knowledgeable of our surroundings enough to blend.

JOEY: To pass through history, without becoming part of history? So to speak? *(Writes on pad.)*

MADAM: Exactly! This girl's grandparents couldn't speak English, only Russian.

JOEY: *(Having a hard time being serious about all this information.)* And what about her cat? What did he speak?

MADAM: Mr. Perkins!

JOEY: I'm just kidding, go on. What about her parents? Did they speak English?

MADAM: Only a little. But they had been shown their names and occupations in English and practiced writing them on the boat over. So that when it was their turn at the window...they could hand the clerks all the correct information.

JOEY: That seems prudent. Where's the rub?

MADAM: The rub, my dear boy, was that her father had been an accomplished musician. A violinist. And yet when they transcribed Markovitch, slash, musician. It became Mark of Witch, slash, magician. Always the Romani are misinterpreted.

JOEY: So he was called a magician? Big deal. That's a simple mistake. Why didn't he just correct it? *(Goes back to writing in pad.)*

MADAM: *(Laughs)* You are truly a product of your freedom. He however was a product of his persecution. The artisan was now registered as a simple Russian circus performer, and as such was shipped to California to perform with the Russian Circus already wintering there.

JOEY: Well. At least they had a job and a roof over their heads, decent weather.

MADAM: Yes... All warm and toasty cuddled up with a ghost from their past as well. You're missing the point! The family was forced not only to begin again at the bottom; but right back in the same place as they had left. Under the watchful eye of the Mad Monk.

JOEY: The Mad Monk? Who was he? Some kind of freak attraction?

MADAM: Again you are missing the point! One single misinterpretation can alter the course of history. What they found a half a world away from home, was why they had left in the first place. The Mad Monk was an evil man with Mysterious powers. It was thought that perhaps he had passed some of them down to one of his offspring. Even the circus has its own form of irony. The legitimate became the oddity and the oddity itself... made her legitimate.

JOEY: What?

MADAM: Many people, not all good found safety in the circus and its ambiguity. Thieves, transients, artists - relatives of murderers and villainous - immigrants also walked the tight ropes!

JOEY: I see. So was that; Your people or just; people, people you were talking about walking the tight rope?

MADAM: You're trying my patience! About the circus. It was that life that suited their purpose and our promise. It gave us safe passage. As such and we are grateful to repay our debt.

JOEY: And...What debt is that?

MADAM: Ours. A promise made by one of our own. So you see, Mr. Perkins, we are all not born to our current circumstances. Sometimes we are drug there by the fates. Understand?

JOEY: (*Drawing this out like it is a clue.*) Am I supposed to?

MADAM: Do you know what the fates hold for you, Mr. Perkins?

JOEY: (*He starts fiddling with his note pad, feeling a little awkward.*) These are awfully loaded questions for a casual conversation between two people barely acquainted, don't you think? Can't we get back to discussing the cat? I'd feel more comfortable.

Madam Dora lets out a heavy sigh of frustration.

MADAM: Hang the cat! (*Joey makes a face.*) This is not about your comfort! It's about your future!!

JOEY: Okay. I get it, I'll pay for your time. You feel obligated to give me a reading in exchange for my...attention. Really. Truth is; I merely came back to thank you for...saving my...Well, we both know which part of me you saved! I got the ad in, just under the wire by the way. And even though it's not much; they gave me a shot at writing a human interest piece. I wanted to thank you in person. And (*He works his way up to it.*) ...since I needed something of human interest to write about...I couldn't think of

anyone more interesting than you. (*Turns to face her head on.*) And, your cat of course. He's, ah...still alive and well...I hope.

MADAM: Ugh! (*Exasperated.*) Mr. Perkins...I'm flattered. But there is nothing more here than what you can see. I am a gypsy! I am merely the mirror others look into hoping to find their own reflection. If you find me interesting at all...then perhaps it is YOU that is truly the interesting one.

JOEY: You make me sound so... mysterious and important, when you speak that way. It reminds me of my mother. Always talking in riddles. Kept my head spinning all the time trying to figure out what the devil she meant. (*Tries to make an eerie impersonation of her, wiggling his fingers like a ghoul.*) She was quite a character herself. "Oooooo...remember the music my little Perkin krasnoya ...Ooooooo?"

MADAM: (*Catching her attention.*) Remember the music? Tell me about her.

JOEY: Nothing much to tell.

MADAM: Good. Then it won't take long.

JOEY: Fine. Nobody could pronounce her Romani name when I was younger, so we called her Ruth. But she was anything but biblical! Unless of course...you count the plagues! I believe she was one of them. Number 11, I think! (*He chuckles, and then becomes rather solemn.*) She left when I was 12.

MADAM: What do you remember?

JOEY: Things I'd like to forget. The color of her eyes. The way she used to bury my younger brothers into her long hair when they cried at night. Her smell and the constant clanging of jewelry; like those (*Pointing to the bangles on her wrist.*) when she swayed to some hushed tune on a distant radio trying to put the baby to sleep. The way she used to lean out the window to call me in for supper. (*Pauses*) Humph. And...the way she teased my father and the neighborhood men who couldn't keep their eyes off her. (*Sighs*) Useless memories, that's all. As useless as the tears that dampened my pillow every night after she left.

MADAM: She was enchanting?

JOEY: Humph. Aren't all whores? Isn't that what makes them so attractive?

MADAM: You speak with the betrayal of a man in your voice and yet with the broken heart of a boy.

JOEY: I saw my father's face at night. The pain was the same.

MADAM: She meant everything to you?

JOEY: She was my mother. Why should she have meant anything less? The real question should have been; why did I mean so little?

MADAM: You shouldn't have.

JOEY: Well... *(Trying to be casual about his heartache.)* That was always the rub! She apparently thought nothing of me at all; and so; useless nothings' are all my mind can recall of her. Why do you suppose that is?

MADAM: It is the obligation of the heart to remember, but the obligation of the soul to survive. You must find a way to bridge that gap.

JOEY: Bridge that gap? How am I supposed to build on that? It's like having no real knowledge of something...just the impressions of knowing.

MADAM: Take your strongest impression. Not a memory. Memories tend to lie to protect us. Close your eyes and tell me what it is.

JOEY: Strongest impression, eh? *(Leans back in his chair. Closes his eyes.)* Hmmmm. She was like the faint scent of a musky perfume you try to recapture in the wake of a breeze that has stolen it away. *(His eyes still closed.)*

MADAM: You say you remember nothing and yet you have but captured her soul. Most men live a lifetime and perceive even less.

JOEY: *(He opens his eyes. Shrugs it off.)* I never knew her really...only the wake of destruction she left in her passing.

MADAM: Then I shall remember for us both, until such time as you may be able to remember for yourself. Time is short and there are too many secrets that must be shared when you are ready.

Lights fade out slowly.

ACT ONE, SCENE 5

AT RISE: *Lights come up slowly as Joey is now standing in front of the shrine reaching out to touch the crystal ball that glows in the candle light.*

JOEY: I appreciate you seeing me again.

MADAM: Think nothing of it, Mr. Perkins. Your visits are always a source of great distraction for me.

JOEY: Well. I've been called a lot of things, by a lot of women. But, that's the first time a woman ever called me... a DISTRACTION! I'm not even sure if that was a compliment. *(Turns round to look at her.)*

MADAM: If you're going fishing, Mr. Perkins, you must learn not only to use the right kind of bait; but it generally helps to know who's pond your fishing in!

JOEY: More Romani riddles? Who said I was fishing for anything?

MADAM: Aren't you?

JOEY: *(Coughs and changes the subject.)* Okay. Maybe I was a little... but not like that. You're a very attractive woman, Dora.

MADAM: Yes I know...For somebody's Grandma. *(She gets up from her chair and goes to reach for her crystal ball.)*

JOEY: I didn't say that.

MADAM: *(She picks it up. Turns, replies and brings it with her to the table. Placing it in the center.)* You didn't have to.

JOEY: Okay. You got me. *(Changing the subject and taking out his notepad.)* Can you explain to me Roma fascination with trinkets like this? *(Points to her crystal ball.)* My mother found gazing at that preferable than gazing at her own children, as I recall. Why is that?

He gets up from the chair and walks over to the small shrine in the corner of the room and watches the flames flicker.

MADAM: Perhaps it reminded her of other things, a different time, a different way of life.

JOEY: One that was more important than the life she had?

MADAM: *(Madam makes a face at him with disapproval.)* You cannot expect me to judge what was in your mother's heart. I can only imagine it was very difficult for a caged bird to sit on that windowsill, feel the breeze and yet not yearn to fly away. She was Romani after all.

JOEY: You shouldn't flatter her so. She never stayed in her cage long enough for frustration.

MADAM: It would be better for you to come to understand and not condemn her.

JOEY: *(Throws his hands in the air.)* I meant no disrespect. At least not to you. Look. I only came here to ask if...to ask if you might allow me to finish that piece on you. We keep talking about her and that's not getting me anywhere. The story needs to be about you.

MADAM: About me, Mr. Perkins? Don't you think that would be an awful waste of your talent and your paper's ink, as well? No one is interested in the life of a Romani...It is our advantage and our curse.

JOEY: I'm interested. I know so little of your people.

MADAM: My people are your people, Mr. Perkins. Your mother was a gypsy and so whether you come to terms with it or not, so are you. Your interest is not really in me.

JOEY: What? So, you think I'm searching for my mother in you?

MADAM: No, Mr. Perkins. I think you are searching for yourself in me.

He tilts his head and listens intently to her insight.

JOEY: That's absurd. I don't need to know anything more about my past. I've seen what gypsies are capable of. My father was just a poor sap with a big heart and a small spare parts shop and she took him for everything he had. And keeping true to the family tradition, I have nothing either! So the jokes on you, if you think otherwise.

MADAM: NO! The joke is on you, Joseph Evlam Perkins! For a fortune isn't always what we end up with. *(Pause for effect.)* Sometimes it's what we start out with. *(Getting very insistent.)* If you will but allow me to finish reading your palm; I can show you what else there is to know. A name can be a sort of treasure map... if you know how to read it.

JOEY: Okay you win. If there is a family fortune...where do I begin to look?

MADAM: *(Takes his hand and turns it over.)* Here!

JOEY: Oh riiiight. In the palm of my hand! Why didn't I think of that?

MADAM: Because you're not thinking at all. Thus far, you have wasted all your energy on self pity, Mr. Perkins! *(She takes his right hand and gently strokes the inside of his palm. Turns it over once; closes her eyes and then re-opens them staring intently into his palm. He leans forward; unsure of what she has in mind.)* Life has dealt you an interesting hand. No pun intended!

She looks to him for his approval and he nods in an annoyed response.

JOEY: Why the hell not! In for a penny...in for a pound I always say! Go ahead Madam... tell me something I don't already know!

MADAM: Hmmmm...First. You must understand, I can only read what is there. I cannot change things in the past; just as I cannot tell you what to do about the future. I can only read what is shown to me.

JOEY: Okay. Enough of the disclaimer's. Let's get to it. I got a deadline!

MADAM: You are a very strong minded soul. Independent; but vulnerable and a true giver. You have always put others before you and saved nothing for yourself. You will have two great loves in your lifetime. You must understand that the first one will lead you to your true destiny. The second one is written on your heart...your soul mate. You will be successful in your own business. You will live a long life and enjoy your children's children, have a fortune in eggs and -

JOEY: *(Joey was so caught up in his fortune that the absurdity of being an egg farmer blows him away.)* A fortune in... what?

MADAM: Eggs.

JOEY: Eggs? *(Laughs. He has been sucked in up till now.)* What kind of chicken-shit fortune is that? Just how crazy do you think I am?

MADAM: Now who's being offensive, Mr. Perkins? I can give you no further information if you do not avail yourself of my services. *(Seeing he is now doubting her abilities.)* Another time, perhaps? *(She hands him a note along with the set of bangles from her wrist.)*

JOEY: What are these?

MADAM: A guarantee of your return. They are a reminder of the debt that must be paid.

JOEY: I can pay my own bills, sister. You keep your jewelry.

MADAM: The debt is mine, Mr. Perkins and it must be paid. I must ask you to leave now. I have matters elsewhere that require my attention.

JOEY: Matters elsewhere's? You tell me my family fortune is in poultry and just like that - you got someplace more important to go to?

MADAM: *(Cuts him off.)* I did not say I was leaving, Mr. Perkins. I said I had others matters to attend to. You are the one who is to be leaving. Take the bangles. They were your mother's. Good day Mr. Perkins. I trust you can show yourself to the door.

She gets up from her chair and blows out the candle on the table before him.

JOEY: My mother's? How the hell did you get these? Is this some kind of a joke?

MADAM: No joke, Mr. Perkins. They were left to me, in the event of her death. I'm sorry for your loss. I had no idea you did not know.

JOEY: *(He takes a moment aside to take in the news.)* You can tell me what color underwear I got on; but a tiny thing like knowing about my mother's death somehow escapes you?

MADAM: I'm sorry. I thought you knew. It was never for me to be the bearer of such news.

JOEY: Well, who the hell's job was it, then? No! Never mind, just forget it! It fits perfectly. That'd be just like her. Leaving everything to strangers. Damn her gypsy soul.

MADAM: I am sorry. I thought Mr. Cavetti would have...

JOEY: Classifieds Cavetti? What was he supposed to do? Run an ad for me? Position available for the job of motherhood to needy orphan? For further information; contact the Chicago Tribune? Oh! And by the way, Gypsy women need not apply! *(Turns his back to hide his hurt and sighs heavily.)* When?

MADAM: Is that important now?

JOEY: No...of course not. Again...without so much as a goodbye. *(He brushes away a tear.)* Just forget it. She might as well have died the night she left. *(Turns on the fortune teller; literally and figuratively.)* So what's this really about?

MADAM: I told you. Your fortune.

JOEY: Oh yes; the fortune in eggs! So what is it she left me, besides these? A delinquent mortgage on some run down poultry farm in Podunk, Missouri?

MADAM: Do not mock her in death.

JOEY: Well, She didn't stick around long enough in life for me to do it so, that's it, right? She left me a stupid goddam poultry farm?

MADAM: *It was not I that used the word poultry, Mr. Perkins. It was you.*

JOEY: *(Frustrated.)* Fine. Eggs, then? Madam... Dora! Give me a break here. I know nothing about you... You know everything about me; including that my mother is dead and I'm not suppose to have a reaction? You give me some cock- a- mamy story about a fortune in eggs...but you can't tell me from where and how you know? Just who the hell are you?

MADAM: Someone who can help you know your mother. You said you needed a story. I'm giving you one. It's yours.

JOEY: There is no story any longer! Not for me!

MADAM: Oh; there's a story here Mr. Perkins. If you're brave enough to write it. Now get to work! You're the reporter! Do your homework!

She gets up and exits the room; leaving him alone. He walks out the door and turns back to it and yells. She returns to hear him from the other side of the door.

JOEY: Great! That's just great. More Romani riddles! You wanna know why your people are always so misinterpreted... MADAM? I'll tell you! It's ... it's because you never say what the hell you mean. Everything's gotta be dressed up in cloaks and daggers for you people. You're not happy with just the plain truth! Noooo! It's gotta come with smoke and mirrors; costume jewelry and cheesy brick-a-brack. Like that stupid crystal ball of yours. *(He reaches for the crystal ball and picks it up to throw it at the wall. She gasps. Then he notices something else inside. Still angry he slowly places the crystal ball back in it's holder and finishes his lines.)* You're just like my mother! *(Turns and begins to leave. Gets to the door. Reaches for the knob, when she delivers her blow.)*

MADAM: And she was just like me! *(Joey freezes with his hand on the door.)* Everything in it's place and proper order, Mr. Perkins! Time is of the essence. Everything is perception, my dear boy!

JOEY: *(Turns back to her with his hand on the knob still.)* It doesn't have to be real...it just has to appear real for fools to believe, is that it?!

MADAM: *(Turning her back to him and resting there says)* Some things are real and still the foolish do not believe. Perception is everything. *(Turns back to face him.)* Go! I believe you've got a deadline to make. *(Facing back towards the door. Joey, starts to exit without pulling the door tight. Slumps to the footstep in front of it.)* And so do I... "Joseph Evlam Perkins." So do I.

Lights out.

OPTIONAL INTERMISSION.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO, SCENE 1

AT RISE: *Joey is back at his office at the Tribune. He is trying to do some research for his article. He has enlisted the help of the nerdy nephew of Grant Bigelow to help him go through stacks of books on two chairs opposite of his desk. Some books piled on the floor. The hour is late and the rest of the building is quiet.*

Barney comes in with his nose in a book and pushes his glasses up on his face as he enters. He is dressed in kakis and a white shirt with a thin black tie and a slicked back hair style, wearing thick rimmed glasses. Joey is at his desk, finishing on the phone, while thumbing through some encyclopedias when Barney enters.

JOEY: I don't know what they mean! They were on the bracelets. You're a bookie! Just place my bets according to those numbers...and don't use them out of order! She said something about the proper order of things. How the hell should I know what that means? Yeah...okay. Let me know how they come in...
(Hangs up phone while Barney is turning the bangles over and over in his hands.)

BARNEY: They make kind of a pretty sound when they clang like that, don't you think? Remind you of anything?

JOEY: Yeah Dora! She jangled them at me, like a dinner bell for piranhas! That woman damn near ate me alive!

BARNEY: But I thought these were your...

JOEY: My mother's? Yeah. Don't ask me how she got them. I never bothered to ask.

BARNEY: They're nice. *(Swings them and they make sounds.)* She had her own kind of music, didn't she?

JOEY: Uh-Hmmmm? *(Rifling through his notes and then suddenly looks up.)* What did you say?

BARNEY: Music? *(He tries them on and dangles them on his wrist.)* This was like her music.

JOEY: I wonder if...they might be a clue. Hmmmm. *(Grabs another book and flips through the pages. Stops as though he has found what he was looking for and reads while he poses the next question.)* It can't be right. None of this makes any sense.

BARNEY: You don't make any sense.

JOEY: So I've been told!

BARNEY: *(Looks down at the papers.)* Who taught you to interview like this? *(Looks down at his sheets and tries to organize them.)*

JOEY: Nobody!

BARNEY: Good! Then at least you have an excuse!

JOEY: Barney! It was like being inside a puzzle. Everything made sense till I stepped outside and then nothing fit anymore.

BARNEY: Well. You got yourself some puzzle here. I never had to do research on chickens before either. It's quite interesting, really. Did you know there are hundreds of varieties? And that each has distinct characteristics, colors. Feather types! Fascinating! Just fascinating. They even have their own lingo; with a glossary. It's like having their own language. It's really quite -

JOEY: Yes. I know. Fascinating! Just Fascinating!

BARNEY: Fine! Make jokes; but I'm not the idiot facing a deadline with a few "poultry" ideas as to where to go with this story! *(Laughs loudly in a snorting kind of way.)* A few "Poultry" ideas! Poultry; get it?

JOEY: Yeah...I got it! I didn't ask for your commentary; just research! Who's writing this thing anyway?

BARNEY: Oh! You can take all the credit for this one! I can just see the cover page now... A Fortune in Eggs...by the "pullet" prize winning reporter; Tits Malone! *(Laughs)* The girls in the typing pool ought to have a real, "HEN" party with this one! *(Laughs at his own joke.)*

JOEY: Right now, it's only potential audience are die hard readers of The Farmer's Almanac.

BARNEY: Why don't you go with the original angle; the plight of the gypsies through out history? I think readers would find it rather interesting and it might impress my Uncle. I know I don't know anything about them; so I called in back up from the research department.

JOEY: "It is our blessing and our curse..."

BARNEY: What?

JOEY: Oh, just something Dora said. I don't remember the rest of it. I lost it with her after... *(Holds up the bangles.)* these.

BARNEY: Yes...the dinner bells. *(Fidgeting.)* Joeeeeyyy... It's 10:00 and we haven't eaten since lunch. And though, this little foray into fortune hunting has proven to be...quite EGGs-illering... I'm starved!

JOEY: Please. No more, fowl jokes...This isn't getting us anywhere.

BARNEY: I know...but they're fun. And they are distracting me from thinking about my stomach.

JOEY: Is that all you can think about?

BARNEY: Noooo! (*Pauses. Picks up a book.*) How would one attempt to use the word, "poached" in a sentence? (*Pause*) Ugh! It's no use! I'm famished, Joey. Let's order up some egg salad sandwiches. (*Joey growls.*) Pleeeeze!

JOEY: Never mind your stomach! Eating won't help get that woman out of my head! She's become a gypsy curse. (*Grunts.*)

BARNEY: What's the matter? She put a hex on you?

JOEY: (*Annoyed.*) Let's get back to work.

BARNEY: (*Barney looks disappointed that the joking has ended and turned his back to file through another book.*) It's no use! I can't get anything accomplished like this! I can't think on an empty stomach!

JOEY: You really want to stop?

Barney: What I really want is some fresh coffee, fresh air and a stale Danish at the very least. (*Slyly.*) Of course... Irish coffee would be even better.... Don't you think? (*Looks at Joey and shrugs his shoulders.*) How bout I poach the bottle hidden in my Uncle's bottom drawer? (*Wide-eyed.*) Oh my gosh! Did you hear that? I used Poached! How eggs-citing! I'm speaking...chicken!!! Hah!

JOEY: You really do need a break. (*Giving up.*) How bout we cut out for awhile? Give our brains a rest and walk over to the Diner?

BARNEY: Great! I'll grab the Whiskey. Mind if I tell Clark in records to join us?

JOEY: Who's Clark?

BARNEY: Our back up, remember? A real PIP!

JOEY: So Clark's a broad?

BARNEY: Seems unlikely with all those degrees. A real Pip; I know now; thanks to you, is the tiny hole in the outer lining of the shell when a chic first tries to break out!

JOEY: So Clark's a chic trying to break out of a guys' shell?

BARNEY: I told you chickens were Fascinating!

JOEY: You need help Barney! Professional help!

BARNEY: That's why I had my Uncle tag Clark to help us out! Rumor has it, Clark's a Research guru. Masters in Library Science; Russian History and an Art History fiend...a real walking encyclopedia!

JOEY: Good! We're gonna need one!



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