

DIRTY BUM
A play in one act
By Craig Houk

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Cast of Characters

Jacob: 24 years old. He is energetic, outspoken, and attractive. He is trendy and talented.

Place
Boston

Time
Present

Jacob: *(He is on his cell phone standing on a street corner.)* I'm leaving the theatre now. Yeah, sold out. It was amazing! The audience could not have been more receptive. *(He attempts to hail a cab.)* There was a review in today's Metro. Well, not as positive as the gay publications, but still a decent review. *(He attempts to hail a cab again.)* Yeah, I was mentioned. Well, I can't remember the exact words, but, well, it went something like, "Jacob Marshall Yeary was consistently distracting and insufferably coy as the worldly but innocent Michael". Yeah, you should read it. Compared to the other actors, mine was kind. He described one of the actresses as "Vampiric". *(He hails another cab which stops.)* Well, he loved the script and he mostly enjoyed the production. *(He opens the cab door.)* He did, however, have a minor problem with the nudity. The nudity. *(He gets into the cab.)* What do you mean you didn't know about the nudity? We talked about this. Yes, we did. Yes, I'm nude during the show. *(He reaches for and closes the cab door.)* Well, not for very long. Full frontal. *(He gestures to have the driver wait.)* Well, I'm sorry you're uncomfortable with that, but it's essential to the play. At first, but I've gotten used to it. It's the last thing I think about now. *(He gestures again to have the driver wait.)* Actually, I'm less concerned about my junk and more concerned about my ass. I'm more self-conscious when I have my back to the audience. Well, I worry that I might have... you know... a dirty bum. Dirty Bum. Well, I think those words speak for themselves. Please don't make me explain it to you while I'm sitting in a cab.

(To the driver.) I'm sorry. 1175 Boylston, please. Thank you. *(Back to the cell phone.)* Yeah, I just gave the driver your address. *(He falls back into the seat as the driver starts off.)* Well, I was hoping you were up for a little company tonight. I miss you. It's been a week since I've seen you. And I have some free time tonight, so I was hoping we could get together. You've had a long weekend? Well, I realize you're tired. So am I. We can just relax and watch a little TV or something. I don't have to be entertained. I'll order some food and we'll just hang out on the couch. You want to be alone tonight? It's been a week. You've been alone for a week. Haven't you? No, I don't want to get together for lunch tomorrow. I'd like to see you tonight. Look, you know, I can handle only so much rejection and then I just have to walk away. It's to the point now where I'm afraid to call you. I mean, if you're not interested, then why do you call me every day. A phone call, an occasional lunch and a movie doesn't cut it with me.

Driver... I'm sorry, what is your name. Leroy? Oh, Eli. Well, look, Eli, I've changed my mind. Could you take me to 1607 Tremont, please? Thank you. *(Back to the cell phone.)* Yeah, I'm going home. You said you

wanted to be alone tonight. So that's exactly what I'm doing. Leaving you alone. *(He falls back into the seat as the driver makes a sharp turn.)* Well, I think it's unfair to accuse me of having an attitude when I get nothing but mixed messages from you about our relationship. Yeah, relationship. When two people get together under intimate circumstance, that's a relationship. Well, I'm sorry. Apparently, you and I have different definitions for that word. You do have a relationship with the people you work with, don't you? Okay, well, I realize that it's not intimate, but, at least, it's a relationship. I promise, from now on, I will try to use less commitment-identified words. *(He looks out the window, not sure if the driver is going the right direction.)* I certainly don't want you to deal with the pressure of actually having to tell me that you're attracted to me, or that you miss me, or that you want to see me. Because, if you did, I might actually believe you. No, I'm not coming over. I'm on my way home. Okay, see, this is exactly what I'm talking about. I give you what you want and you decide that you want the opposite. It's obvious you don't know what you want. We are talking. No, I'm not coming over just because you feel guilty. No. No. I'm going home. I'm not going to tell the cab driver to turn around.

(To the driver.) 1175 Boylston, please. I'm sorry. I know you have better things to do than to haul my ass all over town. Yes, I can see that the meter is still running. Thank you, Eli. *(Back to the phone.)* Okay, I'm on my way. *(He falls back into the seat as the driver makes a sharp turn.)* What? No expectations? I gave up expecting a long time ago. I've gotten used to not seeing you. So, don't flatter yourself by thinking this is some treat for me tonight. *(Beat.)* You know, we really need to talk about where this is going. Us. You and me. What's happening with us? It's obvious that I am way more interested in you than you are in me. I think I've made that painfully clear. I think about you every day. I want to see you every day. And I realize that you don't feel the same. So, what's a girl to do? Look, I am gay. I'm allowed to use phrases like 'what's a girl to do'. I'm also allowed to wear a dress, carry a purse, and parade around in platform shoes. Okay, I don't do that, but I can if I want. You know if it weren't for drag queens, leather queens and club queens, you and I wouldn't have it so good. They've been on the front lines every day making themselves visible so that the conservative queens can have a normal life. And don't you forget it. What? Well, I've never claimed to be butch. And I'd never admit to being conservative. *(He looks out the window, not sure if the driver is going the right direction.)* I guess I fall somewhere in between nelly and just plain gay. I suppose that's sort of boring, but that's the way it's turned out. Must be the result of an overly dotting mother and five brothers brimming with

testosterone. Look, is that what this is all about? I'm not masculine enough for you. I'm too gay!?! What do you mean you can't put your finger on it? Something's not clicking. Well, it's a little difficult to get things clicking when you never see one another. No, no, no! Don't give me that 'absence makes the heart grow fonder' bullshit! We live in the same city. You're a quick cab ride away. So, why shouldn't we see each other more often? Oh, you need space. Well, tonight's as good a night as any to give you your space.

(To the driver.) 1607 Tremont, please. Yes, I'm sure this time. *(He falls back forcefully to the left as the driver makes a sharp turn.)* Do you find this amusing, Eli? *(Back to the phone.)* I know you didn't ask me to go home, but I'm not going to force you to see me tonight. How do you think I'll feel being with you and knowing you'd... rather be... taking a dump with the bathroom door open while you read the sports page? What do you mean, what am I talking about? I'm talking about being comfortable in your own home without some neurotic boyfriend complicating your life. I'm sorry I used the word 'boyfriend'. It slipped out. I promise it'll never happen again. You don't mind the word 'boyfriend'? You never cease to amaze me, you know that? Of course, I don't think you're a complete asshole. Not a complete one. Truth is you're the kindest man I've ever met. You're honest. You're very giving. You're beautiful. And you're a great lover. *(Beat.)* If only you could set a little time aside for me. Because I love being with you. I don't think you realize that you're breaking my heart. That's what makes all of this so difficult for me. If I knew you were intentionally leading me on, I could just walk away. But I know you're trying the best you know how. *(Beat.)* I want to be angry with you. but I can't. Mostly I'm angry with me for allowing myself to feel as strongly as I do about you. Actually, I have two feelings that I'm dealing with right now. The first is 'fuck you' and the second is 'fuck me'. Guess which one I'm leaning towards. *(Beat.)* You know what? I'm coming over. I mean, this is ridiculous! Why shouldn't I see you? I can deal with this. I need to see you. If I don't... well, I won't be able to sleep tonight. Not without you next to me in bed. I promise I won't have any expectations. Okay, I'm hanging up now. I'll see you in a few minutes. Goodbye. *(He disconnects the call.)*

(To the driver.) 1175 Boylston, please. *(He falls back forcefully in to the seat as the driver steps on the gas and makes a sharp turn. After a beat, he continues to speak, addressing some of the following to the driver and some to no one.)* You know, I am tired of running away every time I'm afraid something won't work out. I mean, there are no real guarantees, right? If I don't pursue this, I'll... well I'll

never know what may have been. Because I do believe that people are brought together for a reason. And when two people come together, a bond is formed. Some stronger than others. Some so strong that the bond can never be broken, no matter what. And some, not so strong. And when a weak bond is broken, sometimes your flesh is torn away in the separation. And that's when your heart bleeds. The blood rushes to the wounds and leaves your heart empty until you heal. And when you heal, scars are left behind as a reminder. But your heart fills up again and makes itself ready for the next loss.

(After a moment.) You know, all of this just reminded me of someone that I hurt badly once. I'd forgotten his name until just now. Peter. What an amazing guy. So handsome and so full of energy. Good energy. I was in love with him, but I couldn't see it at the time. I think he was the only man who was ever willing to love me unconditionally. But all I did was push him away. I pushed him so far away that he never came back. And who could blame him? *(Beat.)* I remember. I was living in the South End. I had a one-bedroom apartment with a patio and a garden out back. Actually, it was less of a garden and more of a jungle. And I came stumbling home one morning after a night out drinking and doing God knows what drugs. And having sex with God knows who. And as I passed through my living room, a million different colors flashed before my eyes. I thought I was still high. But, as I looked out on to the patio, I saw Peter standing there in the middle of a sea of flowers that he had spent hours planting. With all the weeds and debris gone, there was so much sunlight. He looked like an angel standing there. Beckoning me. Trying to save me. But I turned away. Because I was frightened and ashamed of who what I had become. *(After a long moment.)* 1607 Tremont, please. *(Lights out. End of play.)*