

A photograph of a muscular man lying in a bed with white linens, looking towards the right. The room is dimly lit with a lamp and a candle on a bedside table. The background features a tufted headboard and curtains.

# **Dream a Little Dream of Me**

**a play by  
Gordon Blitz**

## **Cast of Characters:**

**Lucas** -- Seventy-year-old man

\***Phil** -- Feminine

\***Garth** -- Muscular

\***Bart**-- Average build

\***Jim** -- Overweight

\***William** – Thin; Lucas' father

\*These parts can be played by the same actor, if desired.

## **Summary:**

Lucas can't sleep because his mind keeps replaying his throat cancer diagnosis until he hears the song *Dream A Little Dream of Me*. To cure his insomnia, he decides to conjure up dreams of the people in his life who had died of cancer. In the play, he wonders what kind of advice they could give him to reduce his fears and anxiety. Might it also give him a chance of having additional closure with these five men?

SCENE 1

*Dark stage and the voice of LUCAS is heard*

LUCAS

*(agitated)*

I can't sleep! I go to bed, and all I do is toss and turn. I try to close my eyes, and all I can think about is my throat cancer. I walk around like a zombie! Where's the relief? Where is my sense of peace? What am I going to do?

*Mama Cass is heard singing "Dream a Little Dream of Me."*

Now that's a funny little earworm. Hmm, dreams? Is my answer to all of this going to be to "dream a little dream?"

*Lights come up. LUCAS, dressed in pajamas and slippers stands next to his bed scratching his head.*

Ha! If my friend Phil who died of cancer eighteen years ago were alive, what would *he* tell me? You know, I could create a dream about Phil. What dreams could I have about him? . . . I would conjure up the perfect Phil! He would appear looking like his old self with his subtle makeup and his hair sprayed in place. And smiling. We would be caught up in the mist. It would feel like we were floating in a powder blue sky amidst large cotton-white clouds. I would hug him and tell him, 'I'm sorry I never got to say *I love you* before you died. I hope you knew that I really did love you.'

*Lights dim and go up at the side of the stage. PHIL and LUCAS stand together at the side of the stage.*

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Where are we?

PHIL

I can't tell you. It would destroy the illusion. Just enjoy the tranquility. Let's walk over to those clouds. We can sit there on those clouds, and we can talk.

*They walk to center stage. There are two plastic see-through chairs covered with cotton balls.*

LUCAS

Phil, how can we sit on a cloud?

PHIL

Even though it's a visible mass of condensed water vapor floating in the atmosphere, it is able to mold to your body and make you think you're sitting in a most comfortable chair.

LUCAS

What? Where did you learn that?

PHIL

I've been studying science since I arrived. Don't be afraid of falling.

*PHIL sits down, but LUCAS is tentative. Finally he sits.*

LUCAS

You're right. This feels fabulous! Like I'm weightless!

PHIL

Okay, you must have a million questions, but first I want to ask you: 'What have I missed?'

LUCAS

Well, the biggie was my marriage to Thom in November, 2008. Marriage for us LGBT folks had been legal for about four months. We're still not living together, but it works for us. And then a month after the wedding, my mother fell. I had her move in with me and got six hours a day of help. Guess who one of the caregivers was?

PHIL

I don't like guessing games. Who was it?

LUCAS

Ellen, a cousin of our mutual friend, BJ. And she was great!

PHIL

Well! I can't imagine that. And how long did your mother live with you?

LUCAS

Seven years. Then she moved to San Diego into an assisted living facility near my sister, Eileen, because her dementia had gotten worse.

PHIL

Just like my mother.

*LUCAS stands up and points.*

PHIL (CONT'D)

*(with a dismissive gesture)*

Don't worry about that cloud. It's probably just *threatening* to rain. That darkness isn't bad. That expression, *a black cloud hung over our lives*, is a fallacy.

LUCAS

I thought that was a metaphor.

PHIL

No, darkness gives us depth. Gives us a chance to see contrasts. That everything isn't beautiful and perfect all the time.

*LUCAS sits down.*

LUCAS

Oh, and I retired at sixty-five and became a writer! I've published six books! And plays, too. But this past year has been a disaster. I was diagnosed with throat cancer. It's supposed to be highly curable, though.

PHIL

Oh, thank god. I wish I had received that kind of news. And what about our friend, BJ? What's happening with him?

LUCAS

No change except that he's going broke. He misses you. You were a big part of his life. And despite the way he eats, he is healthy!

PHIL

Isn't it ironic? I tried to take care of myself better than you or BJ, yet I was struck down by cancer. Anyway, that's enough information about you. It's your turn to fire questions at me. What do you want to know? I don't know how much time I have here.

LUCAS

What was it like before you died?

*PHIL holds LUCAS' hand.*

PHIL

You really want to know? You're not dying, right?

LUCAS

No, I don't *think* so, but just in case, it would be nice to know. Were you in pain? What were you thinking about?

PHIL

I wasn't in pain. It happened so quickly. As soon as my heart stopped, the rest of my body shut down immediately. So, I didn't have a chance to have my life flash before me, as it were. The only thought I had was relief.

LUCAS

Does that mean you were happy to die?

PHIL

*Happy* isn't the right word. I just accepted my fate. You know, when I realized that all those supplements, prayer groups, healers and alternative doctors were useless, I changed.

LUCAS

I know you changed, Phil. You became a different person. But that person shut down emotionally.

PHIL

Yes, but you have to understand that the old Phil couldn't cope, and I thought that if I created an alternate self, *he* would be strong enough to be okay with wearing a colostomy bag that collected my waste and would be able to go to cancer support groups. Even though it was terminal, I thought

PHIL

this new powerful Phil could give me a few extra months.

LUCAS

Boy, I couldn't tell that at all from the way you were acting. So distant. At times you were like a zombie.

PHIL

My plan failed, Lucas! This new Phil never acknowledged the original version. And this strength that I prayed for never really materialized. I'm afraid it was a fiasco!

LUCAS

Phil, did you just give up and not care if you died?

PHIL

Why do you have to ask me that? During that whole period after I was diagnosed, I searched for reasons to stick around. I looked for milestones, but I came up short. Actually, so much of my life revolved around my bowels and the pain I suffered.

LUCAS

But it looked like you had had joy before that in your life. All those years volunteering at the LGBTQ synagogue. And you were an excellent audiologist. And we had fun. Remember, when I dragged you to see *The Exorcist*, and we waited in line in the rain?

PHIL

That was the last time I ever saw a horror film.

LUCAS

Didn't you enjoy going to those fancy dinners with BJ? You hit every hot spot; Jimmy's, Houston's, and anything Wolfgang Puck!

PHIL

Why are you telling me this, Lucas? You're not thinking. Do you really think I just gave up? That I

PHIL

had a suicide wish? No! I had a terminal diagnosis. I was always feeling weak. The cancer was engulfing me. There was nothing to fight against. It was like I was dead already.

LUCAS

When my previous lover, Scott, was dying of AIDS, he told me, 'Lucas, I'm just hanging on because I want to make sure that you and my parents are willing to let me go.' Did you experience any of that?

PHIL

To be honest, not really. My mother had dementia, so I didn't worry about her. My father was strong. Who else was there?

LUCAS

Me and BJ!

PHIL

I wasn't thinking about you guys not being able to handle my death. I knew you'd be sad, but I assumed that it would pass.

LUCAS

But it *didn't* pass, Phil. We still think about you. You left a big hole, and you never let us in all those weeks before you died.

PHIL

I don't know what to say. I can't change what I did. If and when you are near the end of your own life, you can handle things however you like. There is no hard and fast rule that we all have to follow.

LUCAS

Shouldn't we go? Those dark clouds look pretty scary to me.

PHIL

You scared? That's a first. My goodness, you traveled to Europe on your own, had back surgery without fear, dressed up in drag at your Golden Award parties in front of the rabbi and your relatives and led services at our synagogue including giving a sermon. I can't imagine anything terrifying you.

LUCAS

Well, this throat cancer is terrifying me.

PHIL

Is it really?



*Lights flicker followed by the sound of a light rain.*

LUCAS

This is amazing.

PHIL

It's all natural. And it actually happens once an hour. So rejuvenating. I love it! I never have to wear much makeup, and it helps shape my hair. It's freeing. I think that's why I haven't aged since I got here eighteen years ago.

LUCAS

I hope this isn't anything like *Lost Horizon* where if you try to leave Shangri-La like the actress, Margo, did in the movie, you become your real age!

PHIL

Leaving isn't an option.

LUCAS

Is there anything else you want to warn me about if and when I myself die?

PHIL

No, I think we've covered everything. I don't get many visitors. I think you may be the first. I hope I've helped you. You've always had a good amount of luck in your life, so I think you'll do fine recovering from your cancer. And one last thing. If you remember this encounter happening, tell BJ I miss him too.

LUCAS

You know, recently everyone is using the word *transitioning*. When you died, did you feel like your soul was leaving your body. I think transitioning sounds comforting, as if you are going to a new place.

PHIL

Lucas, to tell you the truth, I don't remember. I was so frightened about death. You know all this stuff

PHIL

about the unknown? I thought I believed in God, but after my terminal diagnosis, I wasn't sure. This death thing was very quick. Thank goodness, I didn't feel any pain.

*Lights flicker and PHIL disappears. LUCAS gets up from his seat and addresses the audience.*

LUCAS

I wanted to tell him 'I love you,' but I missed that opportunity again. And now the dream is over. I should jot down some notes about what I recall. What we talked about. How I was transported to Phil's heaven. I know he didn't tell me the location, but what else would you call it, except *heaven*? And didn't we each have closure?

*LUCAS smiles with this memory.*

*Lights dim.*

*Mama Cass is heard singing "Dream a Little Dream of Me."*

## SCENE 2

*Bare stage. Lights come up and LUCAS is addressing the audience.*

LUCAS

Oh, oh, oh! And then there was Garth. Garth and cancer make no sense. But does cancer ever make sense. Garth was the epitome of health. Working out at the gym daily. An impeccable diet. And gorgeous, too. My friendship with Garth began before I retired and became a writing machine. Our connection deepened because he was a writer, too. Won a Lambda Award and did a series of mysteries set in Los Angeles taking place in each decade from the 1950s through the 1980s. Of course, I picked his brain about plot points, endings, and believability. When my first book, *Shipped Off*, got published, Garth wrote a review that was posted on Amazon. I loved this man.

Could a dream provide closure? Perhaps it could. I can imagine a night I would be dreaming about Garth. It would be a rare hot and muggy evening. As usual, sleep would come in spurts. At three in the morning, Garth would pull me into a sunlit hiking trail. Just like Phil, Garth looked healthy. I could feel my endorphins exploding from the alluring desert landscape.

GARTH

I wondered when you were going to show up. Before we talk, I want to show you around.

*As they walk around the stage, LUCAS comments on the scenery.*

LUCAS

Hey, what happened to the desert we were just in. It looks like it transformed into rolling wooded hills and jagged cliffs, and then back again to the dramatic desert sands surrounded by mountains.

GARTH

That's one of the joys of being here. And wait until you get in the cool azure water. We've got to go for a swim.

LUCAS

I don't have a bathing suit.

GARTH

Ha! You don't need one.

LUCAS

Where is this place?

GARTH

Come on, you know the rules. I can't tell you; it would ruin the illusion.

LUCAS

It makes me so full of wonder, but I am so tired. I was just finally getting to sleep when you kidnapped me. I'm not used to hiking.

*LUCAS lies on the floor of the stage and falls asleep. Lights dim and when they come up, GARTH is handing him a glass of water.*

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Oh, god. I never thought I would appreciate water so much with my taste buds almost being destroyed by my radiation treatments.

GARTH

I'm aware of you getting throat cancer, and it's supposed to be highly curable. You are very brave to have both radiation and chemotherapy at the same time. I don't know if I would have been able to go through that.

LUCAS

Well, there were times when I was so depressed that I wanted to stop. I even thought of suicide. Somehow, I survived, at least for now. And then I will be getting scans which hopefully prove that the treatment worked, and that I am cancer-free.

GARTH

And is it true that you've been writing all this time?

LUCAS

I just finished a novel called *It's No Laughing Matter* about a boy who grew up in a house where laughter was outlawed.

GARTH

I don't know where you come up with these ideas. Sounds promising to me though. I can't believe you're peddling your book here with me. You do realize that I don't have access to any published literature! Thank goodness, I was ravenous about reading classics before I arrived, and I have a prodigious memory. So how are your books selling? And what about my own quartet of novels?

LUCAS

Your canon of work has done well. For me, it's a struggle, but I never intended writing to be a money-making proposition. I just wanted to leave a legacy behind. And there have been many unexpected responses. My most treasured came from the man who narrated my second novel, *Fathers and Other Strangers*. Here is the email I received from him. I keep it with me. Let me read it to you.

*I have put considerable thought into your book without being able to put into words how the book speaks to me and would speak to others. If you would have asked me ten years ago, I would have said that gay people go around looking for boys and men to have sex with. They are deviants who crave immoral sex. But I know better than that now.*

*They are people who have jobs, pay bills and taxes, have interpersonal issues, and worry about tomorrow. In other words, they are 'normal.' And, if I could summarize how the book impacted me, the phrase would be 'compellingly normal.' I believe that a gay person who reads this would feel so 'normal.' I lost friends due to AIDS in the '80s who felt anything but normal, whose family dynamics were similar to the Pinchas family in the book. And I believe a 'breeder' would react with empathy to the characters*

LUCAS

*and situations and be convinced that Lynn and Mark were both experiencing really human situations. Being gay is legal and socially acceptable in the public forum. But on the community level, I fear that*

LUCAS

*being gay is still not 'normal.' I think any time someone is labeled, some sense of normalcy is stolen. I have many friends who are our age who have struggled with depression and suicidal thoughts because they believed they were not 'normal.' I will share your book with them. Well, the link. They have money and, damn it, they can pony up! My sincerest hope and prayer is that you will continue to write stories like this. Fathers and Other Strangers didn't make me think; it made me process.*

*GARTH and LUCAS are crying.*

GARTH

This is priceless, Lucas. But you know, I'm not surprised. You're a talented writer. Oh, I've heard a rumor about you writing plays. Is that true? Are you one of those triple threats, and beyond?

LUCAS

I might even try screenwriting.

GARTH

So, there has to be a reason you sought me out. That's usually the case when visitors show up here.

LUCAS

Well, first off, I wanted to tell you how important our friendship was and that I love you. I don't know if this was clear since I never got to see you before you died.

GARTH

I know how you felt about me. Don't worry. Who knows, maybe I didn't want you to see me disintegrating. Rather have you remember be like I am now.

LUCAS

Is everything perfect here like it appears?

GARTH

Yes and no. The hiking is superb, although in life I was there with someone to share it with. Clark was the perfect hiking companion.

LUCAS

Can you tell me anything about the act of dying?

GARTH

So difficult to explain. It's different for everyone. The last thing I heard was Clark saying, 'I love you.' Then it felt like each of my organs was preparing to shut down freeing me from pain. This helped my intellectual acceptance of death while emotionally, I held back. It wasn't until I felt an existential slap that it freed my emotions. Peace, then quiet.

LUCAS

So you were never scared?

GARTH

Scared of what? I know you're going through hell with your treatment, and I shouldn't compare it to what I went through. Remember, the cancer had spread to my brain. I had a sensation that the cancer cells were eating me up from the inside. I was losing motor control. I remember I had lost so much weight that I kept falling when Clark helped me to the bathroom. The worst was knowing I was losing my memory.

LUCAS

You mentioned that you heard about my cancer. Does that mean you're acting like a guardian angel? That you are aware of what is going on?

GARTH

No! That is way too hokey!

LUCAS

One last question. I know that both you and Clark were atheists. During the time when you were diagnosed and then died, did you ever think about a higher being?

GARTH

I may have used the word *God* relating to pain, but it was just a word. It didn't mean I believed in a God.

LUCAS

So, what got you through your hell?

GARTH

Well, I had Clark. I guess I didn't think about dying until the very end. I was listening to audiobooks and binge-watching my favorite French film noir films. But before I died, there was always this hope of traveling. I really enjoyed the research and the planning that went into every trip.

LUCAS

I hate planning. That's why I like going on cruises.

GARTH

Clark and I were actually going to go back to Iceland on a cruise. You know I keep thinking that on one of my hikes *here* Iceland will show up. There's never any sign identifying the location, so I've been guessing based on pictures that I remember. I love it!

You look good, Lucas, considering you have throat cancer.

LUCAS

You look great as usual, Garth.

GARTH

Thank you for visiting. It really means a lot to me.

*GARTH drifts away.*

*Lights dim.*

*Mama Cass is heard singing "Dream a Little Dream of Me."*



### SCENE 3

*Bare stage. Lights come up and LUCAS is addressing the audience*

LUCAS

*The Crying Game* was showing in one of the tiny theaters in town, and so the scanty crowd of fifteen did not feel quite so minimal. After the movie, a lone theater attendee like myself looked anxious to talk. When I approached him, he let me into his space. His five-foot-ten-inch medium frame complemented his accented blonde hair and light blue eyes.

I said, ‘Hi, I loved the movie. And that ending was a great surprise.’

‘Yes, I didn't see that coming. I'm Bart. I practically live at this theater. I must have seen a hundred films this year.’

Wow! He matched my obsession with culture. We fell into deep conversation, and our film vocabulary ran the gamut of art films, B-movies, blockbusters, and independent movies. We touched on *Europa, Europa*; *JFK*; *Prince of Tides*; and *Beauty and the Beast*, our favorite recent film experiences.

Our pop culture addiction was gloriously fed during our ongoing friendship. When I visited the Sunset Five Theater my usual solo self, I was no longer surprised to see Bart sitting there unaccompanied. Twenty years later he told me at my annual award party, ‘I just got diagnosed with pancreatic cancer but didn't want to miss the party. But, yeah, I need to get home because the pain is intense.’

He was sixty-six. After he tried chemotherapy, he told me, ‘I stopped it. Just couldn't take the chemotherapy side effects.’ Right before he died, Bart told me, ‘Lucas, you know, I don't have any regrets. I've done everything I wanted to do; traveled, had intimate relationships, and I passionately experienced theater and film.’

LUCAS

Could I conjure up a dream involving Bart? I felt like Scrooge from Dickens' *Christmas Carol* bringing forth a ghost each time. And so, Bart appeared. He was standing at the end of a sparkling street filled with theater marquees. There were signs saying that one side of the street had legitimate theaters while the other side of the street had movie theaters; the marquees were all blank. As I walked toward Bart, I could hear the Broadway great, Ethel Merman, belting out the final number in *Gypsy*, 'Rose's Turn.' I hoped it was emanating from one of the theaters and that if I went inside, Ethel would be onstage singing. And there was Bart in his element. As I got closer to him, I heard him say, 'Every time a bell rings, an angel gets their wings,' from the film, *It's a Wonderful Life!*

*LUCAS gives BART a hug.*

BART

Oh, Lucas, it's been so long.

LUCAS

Bart, I think the reason I'm here is because I'm looking for a way to accept death from cancer. Not that I'm planning on dying any time soon, but I heard you when you told me you had no regrets, and it was easy to let go. How did you get to that state? I'm worried that for me, I won't be able to say I have no regrets.

BART

You know me, Lucas. I've always been an optimist, and, besides, I felt that I had visited all the countries on my bucket list. And you know how we would joke after we saw a great performance together? Take *Angels in America*, for instance. When we left the theater, we both said, 'After seeing that, I would be ready to die and go to heaven.' That's how strong we felt about the arts. Theater and movie magic. There's nothing like it.

LUCAS

Yes! Every time I go to a play or a movie, I think about you. *What would you have thought about it?*

LUCAS

*How would you have critiqued it?* I miss that. You're irreplaceable; there's no one else like you! Did you answer my question about having no regrets?

BART

I think so. Of course, there are always going to be things that we will end up missing. You get resigned to that state of mind.

LUCAS

What happened right before you died?

BART

As the pain increased, the morphine dosage went up. I was out of it. I do remember hearing, 'I love you.' Those were the last words I heard. It felt like a sign. Then I just went to sleep, and when I woke up, I was here in this street. It's been like a playground for me. I love it here! A perfect spot for my eternity!

*LUCAS hugs BART, and BART drifts away.*

*Lights dim.*

*Mama Cass is heard singing "Dream a Little Dream of Me."*

#### SCENE 4

*Bare stage. Lights come up and LUCAS is addressing the audience*

LUCAS

That little earworm is keeping me *very* creative. The previous dream encounters that I created began outside in the open, but with Jim, I created a cavernous space where a symphony orchestra easily fit into one corner. I saw headphones, isolation booths, microphones, and audio-mixing consoles. Yep, this was a recording studio. Just the kind of place Jim would be enchanted by. But where was Jim? The room was empty. When I shouted, 'Jim,' I was floored by the clarity of my voice. As a wearer of hearing aids, this was phenomenal. It felt like my voice was in Surround Sound. I surmised that this set-up had to be state of the art.

JIM

Is that you, Lucas? You see that door near where the orchestra is? Go through there, and you'll find me. I'm right in the middle of cataloging.

*JIM and LUCAS hug.*

LUCAS

Jim, you know I think about you every day. I can't think of anyone who has the breadth of musical knowledge that you have. And it's not just that. We were friends since 1986. You read a biblical passage at my wedding. And you were such a patient computer guy. Never losing your temper when I wasn't able to follow your instructions. I have no one now. You were such a life force. I never thought you would die so young.

JIM

I wasn't that young, Lucas; after all, I was almost seventy.

LUCAS

This setup you have here is quite amazing. On my other dream-visits, I was never given a specific location or given any identifying objects. It was

LUCAS

always a mystery; so different from the set-up here.  
Are all these original recordings?

JIM

Very astute of you, Lucas. You're correct. Everything sold to the public has a sound-alike quality, but it is always inferior to the original. Here, I keep myself amused by guessing who the singer, lyricist or composer is on these recordings, and I'm usually right! When I come into this room, I feel like I'm in the Cleveland Museum or the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame or the Music section of the Library of Congress.

LUCAS

I know you were in a lot of pain before you died. Did that change your transition to when you got here?

JIM

I was in agony, but you know, I never wished to die. I didn't want to let my friends down. I kept hoping that the pain could be controlled. That I would go into remission.

LUCAS

You've always been such an inspiration for me, Jim. I don't know if you know this, but I've been diagnosed with throat cancer. I've opted to get both chemo and radiation at the same time to more quickly finish with these intrusive treatments. I only wish that I can be strong like you as I face the hardships that these treatments will surely bring on.

JIM

Oh, you will be. You absolutely will be!

*The music of Sondheim suddenly fills the room. LUCAS turns toward JIM, but he is gone. The music suddenly stops.*

*Lights dim. There is silence.*

*Mama Cass is heard singing "Dream a Little Dream of Me."*

## SCENE 5

*Bare stage. Lights come up and LUCAS is addressing the audience*

### LUCAS

And finally, there was my father, William. Could I create an interactive dream with him? After all, he fit the profile of my other dreams. His cancer was my first brush with the deadly disease. He died within two months of my Bar Mitzvah. And then, a revelation! Fifty years later, my mother in the throes of dementia told me. 'I want to tell you a secret. You know, after I had been married a few years, I received a call from your father. He was in jail! He said something had happened in a men's bathroom. He told me that I needed to go to court and in front of a judge show that he had a wife and child.'

I was in shock from her revelation. Was she a poor historian or was this a dead weight that might crush her? Why tell me now? Did she know she would be dead within the next year? I was so stunned that I didn't ask her any questions. I couldn't fathom what it must have been like for my mother to carry me into a courtroom and speak to a judge in 1953. What was going on in her head? How did my father explain the situation?

I wondered if my father had picked the Marines to prove his masculinity. I understand him now. If he were alive today, would he have accepted me? He used to mix his messages of love and affection with his badgering of me. His constant shouting, 'walk straight,' left me confused. Did I scare him about what I would become? I would become *him*. No longer haunted by a longing to have my father's approval, my mother had given me a sign.

A memory of a home movie of a walk on the beach at eight years of age hit me. What did my father think as he was filming me? This feminine little boy flapping his arms in such a carefree way. Now I can say that I have healed from the revulsion I felt when I first saw that film as an adult.

LUCAS

What dream could I conjure up involving my father? I would be snorkeling in the ocean surrounded by schools of fish. The flashes of color would collide with the sun piercing through the water. I saw moon craters and Swiss cheese pockets of florescent color. Transfixed by ocean life. Large sea turtles inched across the sea bottom. I was hypnotized. When I stopped my snorkeling, I lifted my head above the water to survey my location. Then it was that I saw my father swimming toward me. I was being swallowed up with his love after seventy years of absence. His large hands were healing me.

As we stretched out on the sand letting the sun dry our bodies, I tried to stay in the moment, but I couldn't stop myself from asking him, 'Dad, I felt different from other boys. I kept staring at other guys in my class. I wondered if I was gay. What did you think?'

WILLIAM

I had no idea what was going on in your head.

LUCAS

I was so lonely. I had no friends. What about you? Did you ever experiment? I know you had very close male friends in your life.

WILLIAM

I didn't know what else to do to help you. Remember, I tried everything. Teaching you how to catch a ball. Giving you guitar lessons.

LUCAS

But I failed at all of those things. And I never stuck up for myself. You didn't teach me how to fight.

WILLIAM

I'm sorry. I died so young. I never had a chance to help you cope.

LUCAS

Luckily, Mom accepted me. But I had this horrible image of myself. Sounding like a girl and walking with a wiggle. And you had *three* gay brothers and they didn't help me either.

WILLIAM

But you saw how we accepted your uncles. We never made gay jokes. That should have given you some comfort.

LUCAS

I was so confused. It took so long for me to get over my inferiority complex.

WILLIAM

But you did it. Look at you now. You had a successful career as an accountant, and then you became a writer and a playwright.

LUCAS

I wish you had been around to see that.

WILLIAM

You have me now; even if it's for a short time.

LUCAS

I have so many questions that I want you to answer. Did you ever have relations in the Marines? There was a picture of you in uniform with your arm around another man.

WILLIAM

I was afraid to do anything while I was in the Marines. I worried about getting a dishonorable discharge. But two years after I married your mother, after you were born in 1952, something happened. It was after work. I had gone into the men's restroom before I got on the subway on the way home. I was standing at the urinal, and there were men standing on either side of me. I had this urge to check out their genitals. I was just curious. This tall guy noticed what I was doing and summoned me to one of the stalls. I hesitated, but I didn't go. All of a sudden, the outside door swung open, and a man was arresting me putting handcuffs on me. I thought I was going to faint. All these thoughts went through my head. I'm going to jail; I will lose my job; your mother will divorce me. When we got to the police station, I called your mother and said I had gotten into trouble. I needed her to come down to the station with you, Lucas, and plead with them that it was a mistake. That once they



WILLIAM

saw I was a father and a husband, they would let me go. She had to prove to them that I was 'normal.'

*LUCAS hugs his father.*

LUCAS

Things have changed so much in the last sixty years. I wonder what it would have been like for you, living in the twenty-first century. If you had acted on your gay impulses and maybe not gotten married.

WILLIAM

No, Lucas. I don't have any regrets. I wouldn't change anything. Meeting your mother, being a parent to you. I may not have been a perfect parent but seeing how you've turned out, makes me proud. I must have done something right.

LUCAS

You're right. My childhood is what made me what I've become today. No alterations! Enough reflections. I want you to show me around.

WILLIAM

Of course. I have to tell you that although I've been here for sixty years, I've hardly made a dent in the number of beaches I've had a chance to visit. That's not even taking into account the lakes and rivers. It's endless.

LUCAS

And I expect that you are never sure whether it's the Atlantic Ocean or the Mississippi River or the Red Sea?

WILLIAM

How did you know that?

LUCAS

I've been around.

WILLIAM

And since swimming is always a part of the visit, I've mastered all the different strokes; breast, free, back and butterfly.

LUCAS

You know my husband is a wonderful swimmer with the West Hollywood Swim Team.

WILLIAM

I know. I wanted to congratulate you on your marriage. And to an attorney, no less! I definitely approve. I was sad to hear that your first lover died of AIDS. And, thank goodness, you never got infected.

LUCAS

What about nude beaches? Have they been on your bucket list?

WILLIAM

How could I miss that? Come on, let's start swimming to the next place. I don't know how much time I have with you.

LUCAS

I'm not good at swimming.

WILLIAM

I think you'll be surprised at what you can do. You were amazing when you were snorkeling just now. Swimming is no different. You know, I never get lonely here. The guys are so friendly. I love hanging out with them.

LUCAS

Does that mean that you are a gay male?

WILLIAM

Mostly, but I have a nice amount of heterosexuality. How else could I have been happily married to your mother? Let's get back in the water. Isn't it beautiful the way the waves are crashing against the sand. I'm going in the water now. You can catch up with me.

*WILLIAM runs offstage as though he is going to ride a wave. LUCAS starts to run after him.*

LUCAS

Where did you go? How could you disappear? I waited all these years. We didn't even get to talk about my throat cancer.

*LUCAS keeps looking around for his father. LUCAS starts to cry and then stops.*

LUCAS (CONT'D)

I'm not going to cry. After all, isn't this a kind of closure I've been looking for my entire life? I'm not going to think it was cut short. I *do* feel better about my life. And I *am* coping with having throat cancer. Everyone says I'm strong. That they wouldn't have been able to stay as positive as I have; going through radiation and chemo. And I *do* want to swim. Every time I swim, I'll be able to feel you, Dad. The way the sun hits the water. The way I am so focused when I snorkel. The way the water wraps around me; cocoons me. Keeps me safe. This is where I belong. This is where *you* are. Loving the ocean. Loving me. Helping me. Being there for me. Holding me.

*Lights dim and then come up. LUCAS is holding a letter. He excitedly tears it open and starts reading. He cries and then smiles, and addresses the audience.*

LUCAS (CONT'D)

*(excitedly)*

Oh, my god! It's from my doctor. It says that there's no longer evidence of cancer in my throat, and the cancer hasn't spread to any other part of my body. I guess all that radiation and chemotherapy was worth it. *(Pause)*

So, Phil, Garth, Bart, Jim, Dad; I guess I won't actually be visiting you any time soon, but your presence made the anxiety of waiting for the test results diminish beyond my wildest dreams.

Maybe I can sleep now. Good night!

*Lights slowly dim as LUCAS heads toward his bed.*

*Mama Cass is heard singing "Dream a Little Dream of Me."*

*Blackout.*

THE END