

## THE DEAL

More furniture is added. Perhaps a desk, or another table that acts as Louis' desk.

Eddie Dowling is in Louis Singer's (pronounced Lewis) office.

LOUIS

What about *The Passionate Congressman*?

EDDIE

What about it?

LOUIS

Aren't you casting already?

EDDIE

Two weeks in.

LOUIS

And . . .

EDDIE

I'm dropping it. Or, dropped it, I guess I should say.

LOUIS  
(laughing)

Yeah, okay.

EDDIE

I'm serious.

LOUIS

Nah.

EDDIE

Yeah. They guaranteed me twenty-five grand and I'm broke, Louis, and I gave it up. That's how much I believe in this play.

LOUIS

You can't just stop and drop a play mid-casting.

EDDIE

I did.

LOUIS

No.

EDDIE

I did. I swear.

Pause. Louis and Eddie stare at each other a moment while Louis seeks out the truth on Eddie's face.

LOUIS

(excitedly)

You sure are a piece of work, Eddie. I bet Frank and Jack were burned up.

EDDIE

A little sore, yes.

LOUIS

(laughing)

Oh, man.

EDDIE

You have no idea.

LOUIS

What did they say?

EDDIE

Let's just say it wasn't pretty.

LOUIS

Oh, c'mon Eddie! I want details - you know how much I can't stand those two - most grandstanding two pieces of shit producers I know - what did they say?

EDDIE

Another time, Louis. Can we talk about the play?

LOUIS  
Leave it here. I'll read it and I'll call ya.

EDDIE  
Yeah. Umm. No.

LOUIS  
What?

EDDIE  
I uhh I don't want you to read it. Not yet at least.

LOUIS  
Not read it?

EDDIE  
No.

LOUIS  
Huh.

EDDIE  
Yeah.

LOUIS  
Let me get this straight. You want me to put up fifty grand to produce a play that you don't want me to read? Am I getting that right?

EDDIE  
Yep.

LOUIS  
Are you out of your mind?

EDDIE  
No.

LOUIS  
Why don't you want me to read it?

EDDIE  
It's not finished. But he's working on it.

LOUIS  
Who?

EDDIE

The playwright.

LOUIS

And who is the playwright?

EDDIE

Tennessee Williams.

LOUIS

Tennessee Williams? *Battle of Angels* Tennessee Williams? *Battle of Angels* massive flop  
Tennessee Williams? You really have lost your mind, Eddie.

EDDIE

I haven't. I promise.

LOUIS

Then explain to me why the hell I would even consider this?

EDDIE

Okay. One - it's an incredible play.

LOUIS

Then let me read it.

EDDIE

No.

LOUIS

Eddie.

EDDIE

Let me finish.

LOUIS

Fine.

EDDIE

One - incredible play. Two - it's way better than *Battle of Angels*. Three - it's delicate -  
different than what's been on Broadway lately. Four - it's not finished. And five, and  
perhaps most importantly, I am betting everything I have, everything *I am* on this play,  
and I need you to trust me.

Pause.

EDDIE (CONT.)

Well?

LOUIS

I'm waiting on six.

EDDIE

Louis.

LOUIS

Eddie. That's not good enough. I'm not an idiot. It would be like buying a restaurant without trying the menu. It's just bad business.

EDDIE

Seventy-Five, Twenty-five.

LOUIS

What?

EDDIE

Seventy five, Twenty five. After you recoup your fifty grand, we will split the profits, you get seventy five, I get twenty-five. After running expenses of course.

LOUIS

You truly have lost your marbles, you know that.

EDDIE

I do.

LOUIS

And for that deal, the only clause is that I don't read it.

EDDIE

Yet. Not until it's finished.

LOUIS

When will that be?

EDDIE

Sometime before we open.

LOUIS

Eddie.

EDDIE

You know how new plays go. They aren't finished until opening night.

LOUIS

So never read it. You're saying I never get to read it.

EDDIE

I guess, yeah, I guess that would be about right. Or, if I decide it's ready for you.

LOUIS

Can I come to rehearsals?

EDDIE

What do you think?

LOUIS

Honestly, Eddie. I don't know. This may be the stupidest thing I have ever done. That's if I do it.

EDDIE

Take the deal.

LOUIS

Why?

EDDIE

Cause you know me. You know I know what I'm doing. You know I won't quit until I'm sure we have a hit on our hands.

LOUIS

You know there is no way to guarantee that. This is art, Eddie. It's subjective. And if more people don't like it than do, we're screwed. And I'm out fifty grand and become the laughing stock of the Broadway community.

EDDIE

No you won't.

LOUIS

Oh yes I will.

EDDIE

You won't. Because if this thing doesn't work, *I* will be the story. "Once promising Broadway producer, Eddie Dowling, at one point riding a string of hits, gives up a sure thing to burn his entire career to the ground and move back to Woonsocket."

LOUIS

Woonsocket?

Rhode Island. Where I grew up. EDDIE

Pause. LOUIS

You really believe in this thing? EDDIE

I do. It's like nothing else. LOUIS

That's what I'm afraid of. EDDIE

It'll work, Louis. LOUIS

And why is that? EDDIE

Because it has to. LOUIS

I hope you're right. EDDIE

I am. LOUIS

What's the play called? EDDIE

*The Glass Menagerie.* LOUIS

The what? EDDIE

Trust me, Louis. LOUIS

Alright.

EDDIE

Really.

LOUIS

Gotta believe in something, or someone, sometime. Don't we?

EDDIE

You won't regret this, Louis.

LOUIS

Have you thought about casting?

EDDIE

I have.

LOUIS

Who?

EDDIE

Later, Louis. Later.