

write to read

THE GAME

The Game

CONRAD

Hey there, Nickie.

— START

NICHOLAS

Conrad, what a surprise.

CONRAD

Happy Birthday, man.

NICHOLAS

I never get tired
of that one.

CONRAD

That's why it's a classic. Come on,
man... how 'bout a hug... ?

Nicholas is wiping his neck with a napkin as Conrad forces a hug on him. Conrad takes a seat, good-looking unkempt, tan, wearing a too-big suit jacket.

CONRAD

They gave me a free jacket at the
door.

NICHOLAS

They'll be wanting it back.

CONRAD

Not after I'm done with it.

(laughs)

Actually, I've been here. In
grad-school I bought crystal-meth
from the maitre d'.

NICHOLAS

Which grad-school?

Conrad smiles. The brothers take each other in for a moment. Long moment. They're a bit stunned to be reunited.

NICHOLAS (cont)

You look good.

CONRAD

So do you. And to think I was worried...

NICHOLAS

About me?

CONRAD

How long's it been? Since mom died... four years? How are you?

NICHOLAS

Never better.

CONRAD

Elizabeth?

NICHOLAS

Divorced. Remarried to some pediatrician or gynecologist, in Sausalito.

CONRAD

Too bad, I liked her. So, you're all alone in the House of Pain?

NICHOLAS

I redecorated. What about you?

CONRAD

Nowhere in particular. Don't you keep track of my whereabouts anymore?

NICHOLAS

Connie... what brings you here? Is everything alright?

CONRAD

Yeah.

NICHOLAS

You need anything?

CONRAD

No.

NICHOLAS

Really?

CONRAD

I don't need anything from you. I was laying on a beach somewhere in Spain, naked, and, it hit me -- Nickie's birthday. So, here I am, four layovers, twenty-seven hours flying and one donkey ride later. Not necessarily in that order.

Conrad drops an envelope on the table.

CONRAD

For you.

NICHOLAS

You shouldn't have.

Nicholas opens it, takes out a sappy, Hallmark B-day card. A BUSINESS CARD falls out. Nicholas picks it up...

CONRAD

What do you get for the man who has just slightly more than everything?

The card: "Consumer Recreation Services." With a PHONE NUMBER and ADDRESS below.

CONRAD (cont)

Call that number.

NICHOLAS

"Consumer Recreation Services."
What, do they make golf clubs?

CONRAD

Trust me. Call that number.

NICHOLAS

Why?

CONRAD

They make your life fun. Their only

guarantee is you will not be bored.

NICHOLAS

Fun?

CONRAD

You've heard of it. You've seen other people having it. They're an entertainment service, but more than that.

NICHOLAS

This isn't an escort service?

CONRAD

It's a profound life experience.

NICHOLAS

Like a stroke?

CONRAD

Call them. Trust me.

NICHOLAS

I'll be fine... if we could just...

CONRAD

Tell me you'll call.

NICHOLAS

Okay.

CONRAD

Will you?

NICHOLAS

I said I would...

CONRAD

But, will you?

NICHOLAS

Are you still on medication?

CONRAD

Why would you say that?

NICHOLAS

I didn't mean it like it sounded...

CONRAD

I'm not on anything anymore. I'm not even seeing a shrink. I'm happy... I thought you'd like this. Best thing I ever did. If you don't want to do it, DON'T...

NICHOLAS

I'll call them, okay?

CONRAD

It doesn't matter...

NICHOLAS

I'm going to call.

CONRAD

Do it for YOU.

NICHOLAS

Okay, ... okay?

(pause, studies card)

I just... you know I hate surprises.

CONRAD

I know...

Conrad CLINKS his fork against a glass, motioning... Behind Nicholas, WAITERS, WAITRESSES and BUS-BOYS, lying in wait, now come to SING "HAPPY BIRTHDAY."

Conrad stands, loving it. Nicholas forces a fake smile.