

1 (BERT enters RYAN's room as he prepares to head off to
2 college.)
3 BERT: What are you doing?
4 RYAN: Finishing my packing.
5 BERT: Already? You don't leave for a couple days.
6 RYAN: Yeah, I know. I'm just excited. Who would have
7 thought that I'd actually get accepted to Stanford on a
8 full ride?
9 BERT: (Under his breath) Not me...
10 RYAN: What?
11 BERT: Nothing. Whatcha taking?
12 RYAN: Pretty much everything.
13 BERT: (Looking at a picture in a frame) This, too?
14 RYAN: Hell, yes. I think this is my favorite picture of us.
15 BERT: Us with Santa Claus?
16 RYAN: Yeah. Stupid, huh?
17 BERT: A little embarrassing, I would think.
18 RYAN: Yeah? Just because we're sitting on Santa's lap?
19 BERT: Ryan, we took that picture this year for your mom. No
20 one else was ever supposed to see it.
21 RYAN: I know. But I like it. It says something to me.
22 BERT: Me, too. It says, "Look at the morons on Santa's lap.
23 They need to grow up."
24 RYAN: Hey, now. We've taken our picture together with Santa
25 every year since we were in third grade. My mom's still
26 got copies of all of them.
27 BERT: Great. Just when you think it's safe to go out in public,
28 your mom whips out those damn pictures.
29 RYAN: You know you love it.
30 BERT: Maybe. You taking your photo albums?
31 RYAN: Not all of them. Just this one I put together. (He pulls it
32 out.) Look at this. You're in almost every picture with me.
33 BERT: How many vacations did our families take together?
34 RYAN: All of them. Look at this one. Remember body skiing at
35 Lake Havasu?

1 BERT: (Laughing) Our parents thought we were idiots, just
2 hanging on to the ski rope and getting dragged behind
3 the jet ski.
4 RYAN: God, that hurt!
5 BERT: But it was fun, huh?
6 RYAN: Yeah. Hey, remember this night?
7 BERT: Vegas! Who are those girls?
8 RYAN: I have no idea. I just remember your sister bet us ten
9 dollars we couldn't get dates by midnight, so we hooked
10 up with these two.
11 BERT: Yours isn't bad. Jeez, though, look at the Alpo-
12 muncher I'm with.
13 RYAN: Didn't matter what she looked like. It mattered that we
14 got our money out of your sister for winning the bet.
15 BERT: What's this one?
16 RYAN: Our first day of school in third grade the summer after
17 we met. And this one is our first day in junior high. And
18 this is our first day of high school.
19 BERT: You save everything on film?
20 RYAN: My mom does, you know that.
21 BERT: We've been friends a long time.
22 RYAN: Forever.
23 BERT: Too bad you won't have a picture of us together on our
24 first day of college.
25 RYAN: Yeah.
26 BERT: Yeah. You excited?
27 RYAN: Oh, yeah. Nervous, excited, bunch of stuff. This is a big
28 move for me, you know.
29 BERT: Yeah, I know. Me, too.
30 RYAN: College is a serious business.
31 BERT: Yeah, it is. So is moving away.
32 RYAN: I can't believe it. Two more days and I'm shaking the
33 dust of this ratty little town off my shoes. College life,
34 here I come.
35 BERT: You're really lucky, you know. Not everyone is lucky

1 enough to get a full scholarship to Stanford.
 2 RYAN: I worked hard for that scholarship, Bert. You know
 3 that.
 4 BERT: Yeah, I know. Throwing that ball must have really
 5 taken it out of you.
 6 RYAN: It wasn't just for baseball, you know. It was for my
 7 grades, too.
 8 BERT: Yeah. That 3.5 was a tough one to get. And that 1100
 9 you scored on the SATs was pretty impressive.
 10 RYAN: It was 1150, thank you very much. You know, you need
 11 to get past this.
 12 BERT: You're right. Of course you're right. You're the big
 13 college guy and I'm just the little J.C. guy. What do I
 14 know? Never mind the fact that I had a 3.8 and scored
 15 1200 on my SAT. However, I didn't play varsity ball. I was
 16 busy doing community service and working with ASB
 17 and active in my church. I see where I screwed up. What
 18 a fool I was.
 19 RYAN: Sarcasm isn't your style, you know.
 20 BERT: Yeah, well, you let me know how they handle these
 21 things when you get back from Stanford during winter
 22 break. I'll be where I've been for the last two years when
 23 I'm not at school: working at Wal-Mart.
 24 RYAN: Jeez, Bert, move on. Get over yourself. So I'm going to
 25 Stanford on an athletic scholarship. What do you want
 26 me to do, turn it down?
 27 BERT: It's just not fair. Damn it, I worked hard, too!
 28 RYAN: You got accepted, you could have gone.
 29 BERT: No, because I can't afford it.
 30 RYAN: Well, I'm sorry. OK, I'm sorry. It's not fair. Life isn't fair.
 31 BERT: Well, the least you could do is be a little sympathetic.
 32 RYAN: I am sympathetic. But it's not the focus of my world.
 33 I'm the one going away from my friends and family...
 34 BERT: Shaking the dust of this raty little town off your shoes
 35 was the way you put it.

1 RYAN: OK, so I was a little more explicit than I meant to be.
 2 BERT: You seem to forget that I'm still going to be stuck in
 3 this raty little town.
 4 RYAN: Not forever.
 5 BERT: Yeah, right.
 6 RYAN: Only if you choose to be.
 7 BERT: Come on, Ryan, get real. I will never be able to afford a
 8 place like Stanford. I won't get a scholarship. I won't get
 9 the best education I am capable of. I'm stuck.
 10 RYAN: You're not stuck. You've got plenty of opportunities.
 11 You just have to take advantage of them.
 12 BERT: Oh yeah, great. I'm sure every major corporation in the
 13 country will be hunting down a graduate from the J.C.
 14 RYAN: So you go to the J.C. for two years, then you finish up at
 15 a four-year.
 16 BERT: State college is all I will ever be able to afford. And I'll
 17 be lucky if I can manage that.
 18 RYAN: You are so negative.
 19 BERT: That's so easy for you to say from your perch on top of
 20 the world. Free education, free books, room and board.
 21 RYAN: I have to work, you know.
 22 BERT: Please. No doubt some lightweight job like handing
 23 out towels for the girls' gymnastic program.
 24 RYAN: You know, you'd think, as my best friend, you'd be a
 25 little happy for me.
 26 BERT: You'd think.
 27 RYAN: What do you want me to do? Turn it down? "Oh, sorry,
 28 Stanford, but my best friend Bert can't make it here, so I
 29 am going to give up my chance of a lifetime and turn
 30 down the scholarship. Thanks anyway, maybe next year."
 31 BERT: You could at least show a little empathy for me.
 32 RYAN: Empathy? For what?
 33 BERT: For the fact that I'm stuck here, damn it. Your life is
 34 taking off and I'm locked in this crappy town for the rest
 35 of eternity.

1 RYAN: You're pathetic. Everything is such a negative with you.
 2 BERT: It is not.
 3 RYAN: Like hell it isn't.
 4 BERT: Example?
 5 RAN: OK. Like when we were going to try out for the school
 6 musical. We get there and wait around for hours. When
 7 it's finally our turn to sing, you chicken out.
 8 BERT: I can't sing.
 9 RYAN: Neither can I. That was the whole point. It was exciting
 10 to give something a try that we were pretty sure we'd
 11 fail at.
 12 BERT: I still don't see how failure is exciting.
 13 RYAN: Bert, it isn't the failure that's exciting. It's cheating
 14 failure that is the rush. Trying something you know you
 15 only have a small chance of succeeding at and then
 16 winning. That's what it's all about.
 17 BERT: Yeah, but you made the show.
 18 RYAN: You probably would have, too, if you'd stayed and
 19 given it a shot. But you left.
 20 BERT: I didn't want to be laughed at.
 21 RYAN: Don't you see? I knew I couldn't sing, so I wasn't
 22 expecting anything. I got up there and just sang really
 23 loud. That way I laughed with them, they didn't laugh at
 24 me. So it was fun. And being in the show was fun.
 25 BERT: It looked like fun.
 26 RYAN: And you could have done it, too. Every guy that tried
 27 out made the show. And all the girls were hot.
 28 BERT: I know. I'm an idiot. I was just scared.
 29 RYAN: You can't live your life in fear, my friend.
 30 BERT: It's not fear. It's caution. I play it safe.
 31 RYAN: You don't play at all. Like going to the J.C. Where are
 32 you going?
 33 BERT: You know as well as I do that I'm going to Hanlon.
 34 RYAN: Right. You and everyone else from school who's not
 35 going to a four-year. Why don't you go to Avery?

1 BERT: Because I won't know anyone there.
 2 RYAN: Exactly! It would be a whole new start. You could be a
 3 whole new person. So you can't afford to go to a four-year.
 4 Accept it and make the best of it.
 5 BERT: (Annoyed) Yeah, yeah, life give you a lemon, make
 6 lemonade.
 7 RYAN: Right! Your problem is that you spend days examining
 8 the damn lemon and by the time you get around to
 9 making the lemonade, the thing has lost its zing!
 10 BERT: Oh, I should be like you and just use the lemon
 11 without examining it?
 12 RYAN: Yeah!
 13 BERT: OK, and let's say I get a bad lemon, and don't examine
 14 it closely and someone has used a hypodermic needle
 15 and injected some poison in the lemon. So, if I were you
 16 and didn't look carefully at the peel of the lemon, I'd die.
 17 What kind of sense does that make?
 18 RYAN: (Looking at him a moment in stunned silence) Forget it,
 19 you're hopeless.
 20 BERT: Tell me I'm wrong.
 21 RYAN: Never mind.
 22 BERT: You know I'm right. I will live a long time because I'm
 23 careful.
 24 RYAN: You will live a long time because you don't take action.
 25 You can't get too hurt sitting in a rocking chair waiting
 26 for life to happen.
 27 BERT: I don't wait for life to happen. I don't sit around. I'm
 28 careful; I think things through.
 29 RYAN: Yeah, while you're sitting there, thinking things
 30 through, there's a lot of living going on.
 31 BERT: Hey, live a clean life, live a long life.
 32 RYAN: Right. Avoid fat and sugar, exercise regularly, die any-
 33 way. Listen to me. It goes back to this scholarship thing.
 34 BERT: Which isn't fair, which you know as well as I do.
 35 RYAN: Maybe, but there's more to it than that. I figured back

1 in our freshman year that I had one shot at getting into a
2 good school and that was through baseball. So I jumped
3 on it. You know how hard I worked, and it was a long
4 shot, but it came through. The funny thing is, you had
5 more talent than I ever did. I don't know why you didn't
6 stick with it.

7 BERT: Because I thought I'd be able to do it on grades and
8 SATs and that stuff. Stupid me.

9 RYAN: Yeah, but you know that more scholarships are given
10 for athletes. And you were good.

11 BERT: It was too much of a risk. I had to be sure that I was
12 doing what I thought was right.

13 RYAN: And so...?

14 BERT: So, you're going to Stanford and I'm going to Hanlon.

15 RYAN: Yeah.

16 BERT: Yeah.

17 RYAN: Bert, we're given only one chance on this earth. Don't
18 be afraid to try.

19 BERT: Try what?

20 RYAN: Everything. You're like one of the smartest people I
21 know. You just hold back too much.

22 BERT: Yeah?

23 RYAN: Yeah. So, you're going to the J.C. Go to Avery, not
24 Hanlon. If you go to Hanlon with everyone from high
25 school you'll never change.

26 BERT: Who says I want to change? Maybe I'm happy the way I
27 am. You ever think of that?

28 RYAN: Tell me, what are you going to major in?

29 BERT: Business with a minor in political science.

30 RYAN: Why?

31 BERT: Because that way I can get a good job with a good
32 corporation and make a decent living. Why else?

33 RYAN: But you hate that kind of stuff. I don't understand you.
34 You are so intelligent and so talented, but you are going
35 to be satisfied with a mediocre life.

1 BERT: Mediocre?

2 RYAN: Good job, good corporation, decent living. Come on,
3 you deserve more than average in your life.

4 BERT: What's the deal? You're majoring in exactly the same
5 thing I am. Why is it all right for you and not me?

6 RYAN: Because I have a passion for business and law. And I
7 don't plan on working for a decent corporation. My plan
8 is to own my own corporation, specializing in social
9 ecology. Set your sights high or you'll never get off the
10 ground. What do you have a passion for?

11 BERT: I don't know.

12 RYAN: I do. Kids and music. You're terrific at both.

13 BERT: I hate performing, you know that. I play the piano
14 for me.

15 RYAN: And for those kids you work with at the community
16 center.

17 BERT: It calmed them down. They liked it.

18 RYAN: So do something with it.

19 BERT: Like what? Travel from center to center playing piano
20 for hyper kids?

21 RYAN: No, moron. Music therapy.

22 BERT: Huh?

23 RYAN: Music therapy. It's a whole field of psychology where
24 they use music as a means to get through to kids who've
25 been abused or something. It's perfect for you.

26 BERT: I've never even heard of it.

27 RYAN: I heard about it on *Donahue* or *Oprah* or something.
28 There's a whole field of it opening up. Not a lot, but some
29 schools are offering it as a major.

30 BERT: Like where?

31 RYAN: I don't know! God, you want me to lay it all out for you?

32 BERT: I need details.

33 RYAN: Try finding them out for yourself, man. Investigate.

34 BERT: Music therapy, huh?

35 RYAN: Yeah.

1 BERT: I guess I could look into it.
 2 RYAN: Yeah, you could.
 3 BERT: I don't know, though. How secure is it?
 4 RYAN: Don't make me hurt you, Bert.
 5 BERT: OK, OK, I'll look into it.
 6 RYAN: Try it. Try living without the safety net for at least a
 7 while. You're an old man in an eighteen-year-old's body.
 8 BERT: All right, your point is made. I'll look into it.
 9 RYAN: And maybe, when we're both out of school, you'll have
 10 your own psychology practice and need a good business
 11 lawyer.
 12 BERT: Who, you?
 13 RYAN: Of course, me.
 14 BERT: Nah, I think I'll want someone a little more stable.
 15 RYAN: *(Laughingly)* Shut up.
 16 BERT: I'll be here to take you to the airport.
 17 RYAN: Thanks.
 18 BERT: And don't forget, December 19, noon, the mall,
 19 Santa's lap.
 20 RYAN: Thought I wouldn't?
 21 BERT: See ya.
 22 RYAN: See ya.
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Always Late

(Scene for one man and one woman)