

Letting Peter In

by

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## CHARACTERS

MICKEY	Mid 20s
STEPHEN	Mid 20s, slight build, backwards baseball cap
PETER	Mid 20s

## SETTING

A cemetery, a Mexican restaurant, and Mickey's apartment: No furniture, except for one table with some piles of paper stacked on it. Boxes are stacked up. A picture on the back wall: A collage with the words "The Darci Clan. Berleley, CA" scrawled across the top, with photos of STEPHEN and others of his family.

## TIME

Fall 1991. Early morning.

<b>Scene One</b>	The present.	The Cemetery.
<b>Scene Two</b>	Two months earlier.	Mexican Restaurant.
<b>Scene Three</b>	One month later.	Mexican Restaurant.
<b>Scene Four</b>	One month later.	Mickey's apartment.
<b>Scene Five</b>	The present.	The Cemetery.

## SCENE 1

## LETTING PETER IN

(AT RISE: A cemetery. PETER and MICKEY are upstage facing upstage toward STEPHEN'S body laid out in a shroud. Their heads are bowed. The audience cannot make them out. PETER and MICKEY sing together the beginning lines of the Kaddish prayer.)

(The Kaddish drifts away. Lights fade.)

(END OF SCENE)

## SCENE 2

(AT RISE: STEPHEN sits at a table at a Mexican restaurant. PETER enters.)

PETER

Jack....

STEPHEN

Hi, Petey...

(PETER laughs. )

STEPHEN

You think that's funny.

PETER

No one's called me Petey since I was like three years old.

STEPHEN

Aww... you must have been so cute! Petey...

(STEPHEN pinches his cheek.)

PETER

Hey! Watch it!

STEPHEN

I'll try and behave myself. Wanna taco?

PETER

That's a taco. Not like any I've ever seen. It smells great, though. I'll try it.

(PETER grabs a taco and starts to eat.)

STEPHEN

Tell me something about Pete.

PETER

(Pause.) I'm thinking of going back to school.

STEPHEN

Why?

PETER

I dunno. Why not?

STEPHEN

Where?

PETER

Maybe back east.

STEPHEN

You might leave me?

PETER

I don't even know you.

STEPHEN

Not yet.

PETER

Ah... You have plans for me.

STEPHEN

I have plans for someone.

PETER

You're in the market.

STEPHEN

Someone cute.

PETER

(Pause.)

What about Jack?

STEPHEN

Who, me?

PETER

You're Jack, aren't you? Tell me something I don't know.

STEPHEN

You want to know something about me.

PETER

Not your life story... Yet.

STEPHEN

I don't really talk much about myself.

PETER

Come on.

STEPHEN

I'm a private person.

PETER

You're about the least private person I've ever met. The "queer media darling"? Isn't that what the Times called you?

STEPHEN

Okay. I'm a bit of a perfectionist.

PETER

Really?

STEPHEN

I like things to be... A certain way.

PETER

Don't we all!

(PETER takes another bite.)

STEPHEN

No. You have no idea. You should ask my mother.

PETER

Hey... this is pretty good.

STEPHEN

It's *real* Mexican food...

PETER

As opposed to...

STEPHEN

Like they might have in suburban New Jersey or something.

PETER

Hey careful... This boys from Jersey.

STEPHEN

Hot... I bet you played football.

PETER

Yeah... Hated it... Wanna hear a Jersey joke?

(PETER takes STEPHEN's hat and puts it  
on backwards like him.)

What has two thumbs and likes blowjobs?

STEPHEN

What?

(PETER points at himself with both  
thumbs.)

PETER

This guy...!

(They laugh. STEPHEN grabs his cap  
back.)

So where are you from?

STEPHEN

Mars.

PETER

Seriously.

STEPHEN

Berkeley.

PETER

Really?

STEPHEN

Why? You don't think I look like a Berkeley boy?

PETER

What's somebody from Berkeley look like?

STEPHEN

Right. You're from Jersey. No wonder you don't know real tacos.

PETER

Did your parents wear hippie clothes? Like bell bottoms and shit...

STEPHEN

Maybe... It's one of the best things about Berkeley. The tacos.

PETER

I've never been. Maybe you could take me there.

STEPHEN

I'd show you my favorite taco stand.

(PETER grabs STEPHEN's cap again, puts it on and stands up.)

Hey hey hey!

PETER

It looks better on me than you. Ya punk! Yo! I'm Stephen, the quiet perfectionist... Don't mess with me, yo!

(STEPHEN gets up and grabs him, sort of hugs him.)

STEPHEN

Oh no.... oh god...

PETER

What?

STEPHEN

I'm having a moment of pre-regret...

PETER

What's that?

STEPHEN

It's like... post-deja-vu?

(STEPHEN kisses PETER on the lips.)

PETER

I think people are watching.

(STEPHEN kisses him again and stops.)

Don't stop.

STEPHEN

Go like this.

(STEPHEN projects his lips.)

PETER

Like what?

STEPHEN

Put your lips out.

PETER

Like this?

STEPHEN

Yeah...

(STEPHEN caresses PETER'S lips with his  
own.)

Yeah... like that... You have beautiful lips. You  
should use them.

PETER

Okay...

(They kiss. STEPHEN stops.)

PETER

What?! Jack?

STEPHEN

I'm just warning you... We just have to... take this  
slow... I'm... A mess.

(Lights fade.)

(END OF SCENE)

## SCENE 3

(At Rise: One month later. Same Mexican restaurant. PETER sits alone at a table. He's clearly distraught. MICKEY enters.)

PETER

Hey!

MICKEY

Sorry I couldn't see you in my apartment. It's a huge embarrassing mess. Jack's Mr' Clean must have rubbed off on me.

PETER

Any word?

MICKEY

No.

PETER

I had to talk to someone. I'm worried.

MICKEY

I'm sure he's fine.

PETER

How do you know that? Did he go back to California?

MICKEY

I doubt it.

PETER

We were together. Everything was great. I was gone for three days and when I come back, his apartment's empty. His landlord doesn't know where he is. He didn't say anything to you?

MICKEY

No.

PETER

I hang out here all the time. Thinking he'll walk in any minute. This was like his kitchen. He would never cook anything in his own kitchen. He ate all his meals here.

MICKEY

I know.

PETER

So shouldn't we call the police?

MICKEY

You know he wouldn't want that.

PETER

But if he was kidnapped or something...

MICKEY

That didn't happen.

PETER

I don't understand how you can be so calm, Mickey. Was he mad? That you and I... You know...?

MICKEY

Mr. Polyamory? I wouldn't worry about that.

PETER

Because... He went out and left us alone that night... To find somebody else to screw. What did he expect?

MICKEY

Peter. It's not that.

PETER

Weren't we enough? Wasn't I enough? Is his heart so big he needed more?

MICKEY

Look. He left you. He left both of us. We should just forget about him.

PETER

I can't do that.

MICKEY

Try to.

PETER

So he might never come back.

MICKEY

I didn't say that.

PETER

I miss you. I miss both of you.

MICKEY

He'll turn up.

PETER

Promise me you'll call the minute he does.

MICKEY

I promise. Go home.

PETER

What is home?

(BLACKOUT.)

END OF SCENE

SCENE 4

(AT RISE: MICKEY's apartment. One month later. MICKEY stands behind the table, staring at the stacks of paper. He contemplates picking them up to put them in a box, but stops. He looks around for STEPHEN, then back at the piles of paper.)

MICKEY

Jack?! What do you want to do with these papers?!  
(STEPHEN enters from bedroom.)

STEPHEN

Please don't call me that.

MICKEY

Sorry...

(STEPHEN kisses his head.)

I was just wondering about these papers.

STEPHEN

You're wondering if you should put them in the box.

MICKEY

Mmhmm...

STEPHEN

And?

MICKEY

Well...

STEPHEN

You think I can't handle it?

(MICKEY starts to grab the stack of papers.)

WAIT! Okay... just be careful with them.

(MICKEY starts again toward the papers.)

I'm letting go of years and years of precision, allowing into my stream of consciousness a greater depth and wider expanse of what could be called perfection.

MICKEY

Stephen...

STEPHEN

Why do I despise that name so much?!

MICKEY

I have to call you something. (Pause.) Did you take your pills?

STEPHEN

I missed this morning.

MICKEY

Please take them now.

STEPHEN

I want you there... When nothing matters. When days disappear. When everything becomes nameless.

MICKEY

Hey... I'm here. And I'll be there. But for now, honey? Please take your pills. Please?

(STEPHEN disappears into the bedroom. MICKEY contemplates his absence, then determinedly puts his hands on the

papers. He is interrupted by PETER's  
cry offstage.)

PETER (Offstage)

Jack!!

(STEPHEN returns. Glares at MICKEY.)

STEPHEN

You didn't!

MICKEY

No!

PETER (Offstage)

I know you're up there, Jack!

(MICKEY goes to the window.)

Jack!

STEPHEN

Oh... My ears!

PETER (Offstage)

You can at least come out here and tell me to fuck  
off!

STEPHEN

You know what to do. Tell him.

(MICKEY pokes his head out the window.)

PETER (Offstage)

Mickey! Where's Jack?

MICKEY

He's not here, Peter.

PETER(Offstage)

I need to talk to him!

MICKEY

He can't talk...

(Looks at STEPHEN)

STEPHEN

I'm NOT here!

MICKEY

He knows you're here. He's been everywhere in the  
city.

PETER(Offstage)

Jack. Please...

(STEPHEN reluctantly goes to the window and pokes his head out.)

STEPHEN

Hi.

PETER(Offstage)

Jack!

STEPHEN

Hi... Petey... you came... You shouldn't have...

PETER(Offstage)

I'm coming up.

STEPHEN

You'd better not. Everything's a mess... I'm leaving.

PETER(Offstage)

Leaving where?

(STEPHEN comes back in and looks at MICKEY.)

MICKEY

Let him in. You have to.

STEPHEN

In two hours... You and I are out of here.

(MICKEY nods. Back out the window.)

Okay...

(Poises to press the door button)

And don't tell him anything. Got it?

(STEPHEN buzzes the door. MICKEY goes into the bedroom. PETER can be heard coming up the steps. He arrives at the door.)

PETER

Thank god, you're okay.

STEPHEN

Hi honey...

(MICKEY comes back in carrying a box.)

PETER

You're leaving?

STEPHEN

In the morning.

(PETER looks at MICKEY, realizing the situation.)

PETER

I've missed both of you so much. I looked all over for you, Jack. All your favorite places. No one knew where you were. At least that's what everyone was saying.

MICKEY

I'm sorry I lied.

STEPHEN

It's better this way.

PETER

You weren't going to say anything to me?

STEPHEN

I'm a mess, Peter.

PETER

But everything was fine. One day we're spending every minute of every day together and suddenly you disappear? I thought something terrible had happened.

(MICKEY picks up the papers and puts them in the box. PETER watches worriedly.)

STEPHEN

It's okay. Mickey's been helping me. Did you see? He picked up the papers and put them in the box.

PETER

You and Mickey...

STEPHEN

I'm on medication now.

PETER

Medication?

STEPHEN

I told you something like this would happen. I warned

you. Now I need to see my family.

PETER

Back to Berkeley?

STEPHEN

No.

PETER

Where then?

STEPHEN

They never lived in Berkeley.

PETER

The Darci Clan? Never lived in Berkeley?

(Silence.)

MICKEY (To STEPHEN)

Maybe you should tell him.

PETER

Tell me what?

(Silence.)

MICKEY

He deserves to know. Jack.

STEPHEN

Oh! I told you this would happen. (Pause.) Okay, okay.  
Let's sit down.

(STEPHEN sits on the floor and pats the  
space next to him. PETER sits down.  
They hug.)

STEPHEN

Don't hate me, Pete. Petey. Okay? Remember all the  
good things.

PETER

Oh no...

STEPHEN

Hey... Hey... Stay with me... Listen... What has two  
thumbs and likes blow jobs?

MICKEY

This guy!!

PETER

Oh God...!

(PETER breaks away)

You...

(Pause.)

STEPHEN

I think they call me a "long term survivor" now. I was a teenager. A horny teenager. I loved older guys. And they loved me.

PETER

You should have told me. I could have helped. It's something I should have known. I was...

STEPHEN

The one fucking me? You were fucking ME. We were safe.

PETER

It was more than fucking, for fuck's-sake! (Pause.) And what's "safe"? They don't know anything.

MICKEY

The rest, Jack. Tell him the rest.

PETER

The rest? What else is there?

STEPHEN

Sit back down.

PETER

YOU... lied to me!

STEPHEN

I thought I could be someone else!

(PETER goes to the collage on the wall.)

That it would all go away. Peter?

PETER

So the "Darci Clan"...

STEPHEN

There was never any Darci clan. There is no Darci. There is no Jonathan. There is no Jack.

PETER

What are you talking about?

STEPHEN

I'm trying to tell you.

PETER

Jack! I talked to your mother on the phone. She was your mother?

STEPHEN

Jack doesn't have a mother.

PETER

What are you talking about?

STEPHEN

I almost died when I was eighteen. I thought I had died. Somewhere between life and death and back to life, I created another person... in order to survive. So, Stephen Greenfield, a dying Jew in upscale suburbia, far from Berkeley in the 70s, became Jonathan Darci, the vibrant person you knew as Jack. And I was determined to live. So I moved here... and I met you...

PETER

Huh?

STEPHEN

So... The woman you talked to... Is Stephen's mother. Is my mother.

PETER

Wait a minute! Your name is Stephen?! Greenfield?

STEPHEN

I got sick while you were gone. Really sick. I couldn't tell you.

PETER

You could have told me anything!

STEPHEN

That would have been way too messy, Peter. You know how clean I needed everything to be. You were part of my crumbling character. And now it's over. Mickey and

I are leaving.

PETER

What about me?

STEPHEN

Mickey was there...

PETER

I was gone for three days!

STEPHEN

I was near death again. He saw who I really was.

PETER

I know who you are. I'm part of who you are--

STEPHEN

Why would you want to be?

PETER

Because I'm in love with YOU!

STEPHEN

But who am I? You don't even know. I lied to you. I could have infected you. You can't love me.

PETER

That story was a lie.

STEPHEN

But it was a beautiful story. Wasn't it? (Silence.) I'm dying now, Peter.

PETER

No.

MICKEY

You're not dying, honey.

STEPHEN

And I want... a Jewish burial.

PETER

No... You're struggling. But you're still living. And this story isn't just about you. So stop being so goddam selfish for once!

(STEPHEN works himself into heavy

weeping.)

STEPHEN

Mickey? This is not the story. It's not the story!

PETER

You said you loved me. And I know you meant it.

STEPHEN

I can't go back!

PETER

We don't have to go back.

(PETER goes to the collage and pulls it off the wall... breaks it apart.)

I don't care about any of this.

STEPHEN

Why are you even still here?

PETER

Because I know you. I love you. Whatever you want to call yourself. Jack. Jonathan. Stephen. I know you still love me. And I'm not a stack of papers you can just rearrange! These papers mean nothing. NOTHING!

(PETER empties out the box of papers and throws them around the room.)

They're just papers!

(He starts tearing them up.)

STEPHEN

You're hurting me!

PETER

These are not you! You can destroy them. You can burn them. But you can't do that to me. What we have can't be neatly packed away in a fucking box and placed in the ground like a casket.

(Silence. STEPHEN looks at MICKEY, who is sitting on the floor with his head in his hands.)

MICKEY

We can burn it all.

STEPHEN

(Pause.) What? Mickey?

(MICKEY groans... )

MICKEY

He's right. I think we should burn it.

STEPHEN

Burn what?!

MICKEY

Out back. In the parking lot. All of this stuff. The collage. The boxes of papers.

STEPHEN

I knew I shouldn't have let him in!

MICKEY

He was already here... Stephen. That's who you are.

STEPHEN

You know what? Why don't the two of you... just run off together? That would be sweet.

MICKEY

And you think I could forget you?

STEPHEN

You'd be a lot better off.

MICKEY

How you and Peter were together? I so wanted what you had. When you got sick and told me your secret I thought maybe I finally had it. But it's like you were only seeing half of me. The other half was Peter. I realized that today.

STEPHEN

But what about our plans?

MICKEY

I'm learning that when it comes to love, very few things ever really go according to plan.

STEPHEN

But I have to have plans! Otherwise I feel... Unglued!

MICKEY

I know. So here's the plan. We need to burn all of this stuff that isn't real. All the papers you wrote

as someone else. All the pictures of fictional relatives.

STEPHEN

And then what?

PETER

Then we get in Mickey's car...

STEPHEN

The three of us...?

PETER

Peter, Mickey... and Stephen. We drive away from this place. With nothing more than what we all share together. That's it.

STEPHEN

What about school?

PETER

Fuck school.

STEPHEN

But --

MICKEY

Listen to me... Stephen. It's the only way.

(As STEPHEN listens to MICKEY talk, he resignedly begins to gather up the papers and collage remnants, placing them in a pile.)

This is what's in front of us. We need to start living with what's here. Not some image of how things could have been... or what we want it to become. This is the real story. Just let it be. It's perfect this way.

(MICKEY and PETER begin helping to pile up the debris. The lights fade to the sparks and cracks of a fire. Early morning has arrived to the parking lot out back.)

STEPHEN

You were right. It's perfect.

(He puts his arms around PETER and MICKEY.)

Perfect.

(They all kiss. Lights fade.)

(END OF SCENE)

SCENE 5

(AT RISE: A cemetery, as at the beginning. STEPHEN's body is laid out downstage, PETER and MICKEY are upstage of it. They complete the final lines of the Kaddish prayer together.)

(END OF SCENE)

END OF PLAY