

RETREAT: Writing for stage.

Kate AKS



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Characters:

Charles Junior Johnny Balm – Star.

David Eagle - star's agent.

Paula Baptista – director.

Gertie Neville – actress, who wants to become a playwright.

Terry Roderick – playwright in depression.

Scene 1.



Big house on the ocean's beach. Few parasols are on the sand.



In shorts, topless, with not lighten up cigar, enters Charles Balm.

After him, in costume, wrapped trousers, and big hat, pale, and barefoot enters David

Eagle.



DAVID EAGLE: Two hours, we sold everything.

CHARLES BALM: Two hours? I told you, name of Charles Junior Johnny Balm not sounds now, like it sounded before.

DAVID EAGLE: They broke selling site in first five minutes, all people who wanted to enter. Half an hour and we solved this technical problem.

CHARLES BALM: David, about it know you and me. What they will write – two hours.

DAVID EAGLE: We will think what to do with it.

CHARLES BALM: And nobody thought that's inadequate idea.

DAVID EAGLE: No, there was only one question from everyone.

CHARLES BALM: Which question, David?

DAVID EAGLE: Will be lucky chance to have a selfie with Star before final day of retreat?

CHARLES BALM: David, the more I live, the more accomplish, there are more people who wants golden stardust.

DAVID EAGLE: And you thought about selling this house.

CHARLES BALM: It was my financial adviser's idea, Ally said that have three houses one near each other it's not strategically right.

DAVID EAGLE: If you didn't plan to open here retreat for playwrights.

CHARLES BALM: Support fresh generation. You are sure, that story about theatre building never will be in news.

DAVID EAGLE: No, it will be only charitable action, buy building from friend in need.

CHARLES BALM: So any stories connected that I won it during poker game.

DAVID EAGLE: Benjamin never will tell the truth, be sure. You left his foto on wall and he will have hands prints in foyer.

CHARLES BALM: Hands prints, I left them everywhere, footprints. Not counting print of ... but it was for private collection, she insisted.

DAVID EAGLE: What about directing?

CHARLES BALM: I don't know. I don't want to be with them daily, you know.

DAVID EAGLE: We discussed that, you only read final texts and that's all.

CHARLES BALM: Could I read one finalist's text from the page?

DAVID EAGLE: Competition?

CHARLES BALM: Almost. It will be enough prize for them, I don't plan to act in their drafts, which they call plays. Any from page to stage.

DAVID EAGLE: It's clear in their contracts, only writing for stage.

CHARLES BALM: What about actors?

DAVID EAGLE: Students of theatre school, by the way, they also want selfie.

CHARLES BALM: Sure. And as for director?

DAVID EAGLE: First idea was Benjamin, but I am not sure. Probably you want to work with someone in future or liked to work in the past? Someone with whom you have special memories.

CHARLES BALM: Special memories?



DAVID EAGLE: Exceptional show.

CHARLES BALM: Paula Baptista. It was in Paris. Unforgettable three days and I heard she is not bad director also. Never had a chance to see performance.

DAVID EAGLE: Is she available?

CHARLES BALM: I can't say with whom she is now.

DAVID EAGLE: I mean, for our retreat.

CHARLES BALM: I have no idea. But we imagined that should try also on the beach, so I will phone to her.

DAVID EAGLE: Should I find her recent contacts?

CHARLES BALM: Yes, it will be convenient. She could come here week before all of them.

DAVID EAGLE: To read drafts which send playwrights.

CHARLES BALM: Yes, it sounds much better. To read drafts, write it on the note near her phone and left on my table, David.

DAVID EAGLE: Sure, Charlie. And when you have time, check list of playwrights. Just in case, you know, to exclude prejudice.

CHARLES BALM: Did they sent fotos?

DAVID EAGLE: We will make this clear and principal part.

CHARLES BALM: Better in different age and haircut.

DAVID EAGLE: To see searching of image in creative life.

CHARLES BALM: Yes, and plastic surgery changes them a lot.

DAVID EAGLE: We will make full preparation.

CHARLES BALM: You know your job.

Blackout.

Scene 2.



Under parasol sits Paula. At one side of are drafts with different colour film index flags inside them, at other on top are markers and stationery.



CHARLES BALM: Still reading, Paula?

PAULA BAPTISTA: Morning, I thought you still are sleeping.

CHARLES BALM: I woke up and you weren't near.

PAULA BAPTISTA: I thought that day before they all finally came here is proper time to start read what they send two months before.

CHARLES BALM: And what you think?

PAULA BAPTISTA: I didn't finish all of them.

CHARLES BALM: I was talking about return to the house.

PAULA BAPTISTA: Look at me, I already prepared for productive day. I have hat on my head.

CHARLES BALM: "You can leave your hat on".

PAULA BAPTISTA: I will join you in yours bedroom swimming pool after three final scenes. Two scenes before was normal ending and I am curious why she put climax in the end, after story finished.

CHARLES BALM: If you stayed longer in bed, you haven't to wonder about such questions.

PAULA BAPTISTA: You think you are naughty. I also can be naughty, you will read whole pile of drafts which left. That's the deal.

CHARLES BALM: No, dear. Paula Baptista is director, who works with playwrights.

PAULA BAPTISTA: To test, hone their craft.

CHARLES BALM: Their craft?

PAULA BAPTISTA: It was written on the site.

CHARLES BALM: There was also written that retreat will help them to became better playwrights from Monday till Saturday.

PAULA BAPTISTA: Do you think it will be difference if we add Sunday?

CHARLES BALM: How many texts do you adapted to stage?

PAULA BAPTISTA: I can't remember. Counting is for people who has one project in ten years. You know, I open to all prospects.

CHARLES BALM: Romeo and Juliet at the farm?

PAULA BAPTISTA: Vineyard, we had ovations for 20 minutes each evening.

CHARLES BALM: Because no one was poisoned in the end, I read review.

PAULA BAPTISTA: Charlie, it was special request from winery's owner.

CHARLES BALM: Food poisoning is bad advertisement, pure Shakespeare didn't know such marketing details.

PAULA BAPTISTA: After so many years with cinema you still miss theatre?

CHARLES BALM: We talk about lake and ocean, they are different.

PAULA BAPTISTA: And that's it, just amount of salt in water?

CHARLES BALM: In metaphorical sense, yes.

PAULA BAPTISTA: Eight writers, don't you think it's too much.

CHARLES BALM: No. If were fifteen, should be two tutors and not three actors.

PAULA BAPTISTA: David counted everything.



CHARLES BALM: Yes.

PAULA BAPTISTA: Why not Benjamin? I believe in newspaper's story with your philanthropic help, but I also played with you billiard.

CHARLES BALM: It was poker, without memories of red playing field and balls falling on the floor.

PAULA BAPTISTA: You are still the best.

CHARLES BALM: Fine. You will read it later.

PAULA BAPTISTA: If you read at least first scenes of each draft.

CHARLES BALM: I read first scenes of each playwright. Who told them that could be submitted few texts?

PAULA BAPTISTA: It wasn't explained. Don't bother, I work on it.

CHARLES BALM: You have time for everything and everyone...

PAULA BAPTISTA: Fine!

CHARLES BALM: David will join us only at dinner. It will be enough time for you to finish reading.

PAULA BAPTISTA: Mr Balm, as you say, you hired me.

CHARLES BALM: Mr Balm I will be from tomorrow for you and now you could call me Charlie.

PAULA BAPTISTA: Fine, Charlie.

Blackout.

Scene 3.



Gertie is young woman, who uses too much make-up, too much colours in her clothes.

Paula is tired of her.

GERTIE NEVILLE: I didn't want any special treatment.

PAULA BAPTISTA: Everyone receive the same 20 minutes to discuss text. I don't think that you need one more meeting, if you haven't any draft for now.

GERTIE NEVILLE: I am thinking week is not enough time to create whole story.

PAULA BAPTISTA: Why you decided to participate in this retreat, Gertie?

GERTIE NEVILLE: Live theatre, or theatre with alive Star is unique experience.

PAULA BAPTISTA: You want that Charles, Mr Balm, will read your text.

GERTIE NEVILLE: You know, I need his viewpoint as actor.

PAULA BAPTISTA: About text?

GERTIE NEVILLE: Not literally...

PAULA BAPTISTA: What are you doing at playwright's course if don't want his opinion about your text?

GERTIE NEVILLE: I want his judgement about my reading.

PAULA BAPTISTA: Reading of what?

GERTIE NEVILLE: I am an actress.

PAULA BAPTISTA: Yes. And because you are not very or at all successful actress are you thinking about changing profession.

GERTIE NEVILLE: No. I think that for me is difficult to find proper role in theatre.

PAULA BAPTISTA: Proper role?

GERTIE NEVILLE: Yes, I think for me wasn't written role yet.

PAULA BAPTISTA: Greek theatre, Shakespeare, to name a few.

GERTIE NEVILLE: It's old stories. What I feel or think, it wasn't before.

PAULA BAPTISTA: In whole humans history.

GERTIE NEVILLE: You see, why I choose just soliloquies.

PAULA BAPTISTA: To explain yourself.

GERTIE NEVILLE: Exactly. Could you help me?

PAULA BAPTISTA: In polishing your texts?

GERTIE NEVILLE: No. I want Mr Balm's opinion about how I read.

PAULA BAPTISTA: As actress?

GERTIE NEVILLE: As performer of own texts.

PAULA BAPTISTA: I see. Here is David Eagle, in big hat, he is agent of Mr Balm, maybe he could help you in something.

GERTIE NEVILLE: David?

PAULA BAPTISTA: David Eagle.



GERTIE NEVILLE: He will be helpful.

Gertie quickly exits.



PAULA BAPTISTA: Apologies, David, I have own priorities.

Blackout.

Scene 4.



DAVID EAGLE: I don't ask you to give her special treatment.

CHARLES BALM: I see, Ms Neville is good in special treatments.

DAVID EAGLE: You can't believe that I was interested in her texts.

CHARLES BALM: If I remember that Paula told me that your protégé hasn't drafts, only soliloquies from different points of view.

DAVID EAGLE: As result, she searching for herself.

CHARLES BALM: She found you as perfect listener.

DAVID EAGLE: What you will say?

CHARLES BALM: I won't speak with her during playwright's class. I need Paula at least to the end of this week.

DAVID EAGLE: And after? When you have time?

CHARLES BALM: We will discuss this with Paula.



DAVID EAGLE: I never asked you anything.

CHARLES BALM: We will listen to her. Promise.

Blackout.

Scene 5.

Sunset on the beach.



CHARLES BALM: I didn't do it on purpose.

PAULA BAPTISTA: Don't try, you can't stop laughing.

CHARLES BALM: I had no idea it will work.

PAULA BAPTISTA: Sit in the living room, which pass every day, two times,
participants.

CHARLES BALM: David said that my presence could be encouraging for them.

PAULA BAPTISTA: Encouraging.

CHARLES BALM: Yes.

PAULA BAPTISTA: Why you didn't read newspaper?

CHARLES BALM: Paula, what happened?

PAULA BAPTISTA: Before lunch you read Seagull, after lunch all ideas during
brainstorming were with birds.

CHARLES BALM: What do you have against birds?

PAULA BAPTISTA: Outline as retelling Seagull in modern time, but this is was about peacock. Do you want to listen soliloquy which begins “I am Peacock and my colours describe my fate”?

CHARLES BALM:perchance next time.

PAULA BAPTISTA: And I heard it and actors read it. They cried when listened to it.

CHARLES BALM: Kids like art.

PAULA BAPTISTA: Students can’t stop laughing.

CHARLES BALM: Could be such explanation also. What’s next?

PAULA BAPTISTA: Point of entrance to the stage of each characters.

CHARLES BALM: Dear Paula, I am afraid I should warn you.

PAULA BAPTISTA: What did you make this time?

CHARLES BALM: Watched documentary about diving.

PAULA BAPTISTA: They just lost their minds in attempt to be liked by you.

CHARLES BALM: I couldn’t approve each scene.



PAULA BAPTISTA: That's what they need. When they are alone in their rooms, in their corners they are free and here they have Charles Junior Johnny Balm on daily basic.

CHARLES BALM: And what is my fault?

PAULA BAPTISTA: You know, my assumption, you work as something big...

CHARLES BALM: Continue...

PAULA BAPTISTA: You work as magnet which adds interference to all their views. They forget about themselves, they need you permission to each sentence. You create gravity and they are afraid that not good enough to be near you. Idea that you will read finished draft inspires them and paralyze simultaneously. They search for themes which will be interesting to you. Like with plays which you read. They need your support, because your opinion is crucial for them and they go mad as result.

CHARLES BALM: It will be better or worse, if I will be present at the evening meetings. Later we could have questions and answers time.

PAULA BAPTISTA: After two days I don't believe that will be worse. You could attend at evening reading of today snippets.

CHARLES BALM: Fine, I will leave you and return unintentionally at beginning of the reading. Paula, try to manage their voices, not their attempts to sell their stories to me.

PAULA BAPTISTA: I will try.

CHARLES BALM: They should understand that I won't play in every text.

PAULA BAPTISTA: I know that and don't propose collaboration. We are not ready for this. I believe that you should make your own choice, using free will.

CHARLES BALM: Fine, my will, go with me and have some fun. Forget about them.

PAULA BAPTISTA: Idea is captivating, but I really try to help them.

CHARLES BALM: I knew that you will be serious about that work.

PAULA BAPTISTA: You could be convincing on the beach under moonlight.

CHARLES BALM: I knew that sonnets served.

Blackout.

Scene 6.

Early morning.



On the beach sits Terry Roderick, she just looks at the ocean's waves in front of her.

Enters Charles.



CHARLES BALM: Morning.

TERRY RODERICK: Morning, Mr Balm.

CHARLES BALM: Just Charles, Terry.

TERRY RODERICK: Thank you, Charles.

CHARLES BALM: Tired from nigh writing and need fresh air.

TERRY RODERICK: Wasn't night writing. Inspiration is for amateurs, I just write scene after scene.

CHARLES BALM: If everything fine at work, why came here? By the way, you are only person, who didn't try to put in my hands own draft.

TERRY RODERICK: Disappointed?

CHARLES BALM: No. It's unusual.

TERRY RODERICK: To be honest, you wasn't main reason, why I choose this workshop.

CHARLES BALM: Now I am dispirited.

TERRY RODERICK: Your name was inclusion, just it sounded more jaw-dropping than courses from others, who wrote less texts in whole life than I during year.

CHARLES BALM: Courses with Charles Balm could be framed and put on the wall.

TERRY RODERICK: Exactly Charles. Not illusory possibility to be staged in theatre.

CHARLES BALM: What you have against my theatre?

TERRY RODERICK: I don't like gossips, but could open to you my little secret instead.

CHARLES BALM: Secrets are not gossips. Listen.

TERRY RODERICK: Your story with saving Benjamin's theatre is heartwarming, but...

CHARLES BALM: But?

TERRY RODERICK: Benjamin staged my first play after lose to me in darts. Evening of my one-acts plays was subsequently poker's night. What about you?

CHARLES BALM: Never played with Benjamin in darts.

TERRY RODERICK: I see.

CHARLES BALM: Why you came here?



TERRY RODERICK: Reenergize after burnout. Or to find magic above craft. Didn't decide what is more.

CHARLES BALM: You also work as dramatist?

TERRY RODERICK: No. It just they all saw me and I want to write more and more to show it wasn't happenstance. And when I didn't write I am terrified that they will walk away. And I am afraid that what I will write will be only craft, profession, not fresh ideas. Each idea which I have I write. I just need to put something new over and over. To show that what they saw at first is still exists and I could write it.

CHARLES BALM: It's overthinking.

TERRY RODERICK: Probably.

CHARLES BALM: And what do you achieve here?

TERRY RODERICK: Knowledge that I am still Terry Roderick, who writes faster than everyone in the room.

CHARLES BALM: But you already know that.

TERRY RODERICK: I feel guilt because of it.

CHARLES BALM: Why and how?

TERRY RODERICK: You know, after first contests, people around me said – again you received something, it couldn't be because of your skilfulness in writing craft, it's something else. I became ashamed of winning. I stop partake in contests.

CHARLES BALM: Contests aren't aim.

TERRY RODERICK: I am worst promoter of my creativity.

CHARLES BALM: I think you hyperbolize.

TERRY RODERICK: At the beginning was everything terrible. When students asked for my permission to stage my text, we communicate till their Professor changed his mind. And I never asked them how it ended. I never insisted.

CHARLES BALM: It could be panic.

TERRY RODERICK: Panic was when I didn't go to the reading of my play in other town. I just couldn't breathe out of fear. I found million and two thousands reasons why my intent was right.

CHARLES BALM: Now you are regretting?

TERRY RODERICK: Not for a moment. I found varying road. I can't say better or worse, but what I could do in craft now I never could attain if choose "right" previous road. Writing for stage was still attractive to me.

CHARLES BALM: You continued to write.

TERRY RODERICK: I just couldn't stop to write. It's such easy and simple for me.

CHARLES BALM: And listen to all around...

TERRY RODERICK: Yes, I feel irrelevance or as something wrong with me, that I could receive idea of whole story just from newspaper headline.

CHARLES BALM: You never believed in imagination?

TERRY RODERICK: Sometimes I explained that such way.

CHARLES BALM: You came here for permission.

TERRY RODERICK: Permission?

CHARLES BALM: To have everything and in a way that you think is right.

TERRY RODERICK: You talk about yourself.

CHARLES BALM: Not everyone applaud to your success.

TERRY RODERICK: And not all applauds are sincere.

CHARLES BALM: Yes, but it doesn't mean that they deserve what I accomplished with my hard work and regular demonstrating that I can do it better than anyone else.

TERRY RODERICK: Anyone of them?

CHARLES BALM: Yes.

TERRY RODERICK: Maybe you are right, it's their borders, they had nothing to do with my mastery.

CHARLES BALM: It sounds better.

TERRY RODERICK: Everyone told you this Charles, but I love your work.

CHARLES BALM: Thanks.

TERRY RODERICK: Not only your work as roles, but also how you work. It's like sparring partner. With weak you win a lot.

CHARLES BALM: With strong you learn to win.



TERRY RODERICK: Exactly. But it sounds as motivation quote and still sounds right.

CHARLES BALM: Sometimes it happened.

TERRY RODERICK: I am glad that I came here.

CHARLES BALM: You came where you need and it's best decision in your life.

TERRY RODERICK: Too much quotes.

Both laugh.

Blackout.

Scene 7.



CHARLES BALM: I can't believe that they all left.

DAVID EAGLE: Last taxi.

PAULA BAPTISTA: You will miss them, David?

DAVID EAGLE: Not for a moment.

CHARLES BALM: It was bizarre experience.

PAULA BAPTISTA: I am glad that you directed final evening of reading, Charlie. And your reading for two with Terry, it was staggering.

CHARLES BALM: Sometimes it's just work. She was the only one who finished whole draft during week.

PAULA BAPTISTA: I agree and her winning was anticipated.

DAVID EAGLE: Idea that playwrights will perform in texts of others with actors...

CHARLES BALM: It's experience which should prevent them from writing not knowingly how actor will say it.

PAULA BAPTISTA: You was outstanding in everything and I just waited for performance as spectator, not tried to fix all in last moment. Thank you for such opportunity.

CHARLES BALM: You insisted that they understood what wants director.

DAVID EAGLE: And Charles explained how it's demanding for actor.

CHARLES BALM: Yes, because if show failed it's always actors to blame...

PAULA BAPTISTA: It also guilt of directors.

CHARLES BALM: I didn't say it aloud.

PAULA BAPTISTA: Almost.

DAVID EAGLE: He didn't. What you think about next retreat?

CHARLES BALM: Next retreat?

PAULA BAPTISTA: Who you plan to invite this time?

DAVID EAGLE: What about actors for your theatre?

CHARLES BALM: Paula, are you interested?

PAULA BAPTISTA: In new actors, sure. Young, talented, ambitious.

CHARLES BALM: Calm down, equality. There also will be actresses.

PAULA BAPTISTA: For sure, I know you.

DAVID EAGLE: About that?

CHARLES BALM: What?

DAVID EAGLE: I think I know one talented girl and if you two could just talk with her, before everyone else, it will be exceptional.

CHARLES BALM: Is she in your car?

PAULA BAPTISTA: Extremely hot for that.

DAVID EAGLE: Gertie is still in my room.



CHARLES BALM: Actress who wants to be playwright, now became playwright who wants to be actress. Probably she received invitation for today's dinner from you.

DAVID EAGLE: Dinner? Now it's morning.

CHARLES BALM: Yes. And I think I will have long rehearsal day with director.

PAULA BAPTISTA: We will check every act and scene.

DAVID EAGLE: We will have lunch in town, don't worry.

CHARLES BALM: I appreciate your understanding. I told everyone that David Eagle is best agent.

DAVID EAGLE: Almost convincing.

CHARLES BALM: You just can't get whole complication of acting.

PAULA BAPTISTA: Boys, stop it.

DAVID EAGLE: At dinner – black tie?

CHARLES BALM: I am with girl, so don't insist on swimsuit. Paula, this is also for you. Swimsuit is not mandatory.



Paula puts her hat on the Charles' head, both exit.

David takes from table Charles' car keys.



DAVID EAGLE: Just for few hours, Mr Balm.

Blackout.



CURTAIN.

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