

At rise: CHARACTER is discovered sitting at a table, head nestled in arms atop the table. On the other side of the table are a pen and a pad of paper. The chair opposite is empty. Presently, AUTHOR enters and sits down in the empty chair.

CHARACTER

(head raised from repose)  
You're back.

AUTHOR

So it would seem.

CHARACTER

I'd all but given up on you.

AUTHOR

I told you I'd be back as soon as I could.

CHARACTER

I thought you said you were going to the bathroom.

AUTHOR

I did.

CHARACTER

Oh.  
(beat)  
Problems?

AUTHOR

I don't think that's any of your concern or a particularly appropriate question to ask. But since you have – no.

CHARACTER

I didn't mean intestinal ones; I was referring to the creative variety.

AUTHOR

Oh.  
(beat)

AUTHOR (Cont'd)

Well, the answer's still no. I simply became sidetracked by...by some other matters that...required my attention.

CHARACTER

I see.

(beat)

Of course, in my day we called it procrastinating.

AUTHOR

What do you mean, "In my day"? You don't have a day. I just made you up. You're a character I created for my play, that's all.

CHARACTER

All right, all right, scratch that. Forget I said it.

AUTHOR

You *didn't* say it. Until I write it, you haven't said it.

CHARACTER

Oh, excuse me. I stand – sit – chastened and corrected.

AUTHOR

Good.

CHARACTER

After all, you're the one with the pen.

AUTHOR

Yes I am, and don't you forget it.

(brandishing the pen)

This is mightier than the sword, remember?

CHARACTER

Yes, well, whilst I appreciate the metaphor, personally I know what I'd rather be holding if challenged to a duel.

AUTHOR

Well, since I have no intention of including any duels, you don't have anything to worry about, do you?

CHARACTER

No, I suppose not. But if I were wielding a sword against some poor gimp holding a ballpoint pen, I don't think I'd have been particularly worried to begin with.

AUTHOR

Look, can we just forget about duels? There aren't going to be any. In fact, there'll be no violence of any kind in this work.

CHARACTER

No...nor much of anything, really.

AUTHOR

Excuse me?

CHARACTER

Well, what have you got so far?

AUTHOR

(hesitates)

You.

CHARACTER

Yes, of whom we know nothing.

AUTHOR

Not yet, because it's...I've...it's just the beginning.

CHARACTER

And where's it going?

AUTHOR

What?

CHARACTER

The story. I mean, presumably there is one?

AUTHOR

Of course there is. It's a...it's a...a journey. A journey of which you will be a part of to some degree. Though to what degree I haven't yet decided...but it's getting smaller by the minute.

CHARACTER

So's your play.

AUTHOR

Look, I told you, it's just the beginning. It...it hasn't found its rhythm yet.

CHARACTER

Mmm...well, the play may not have, but you certainly seem to have hit your stride.

AUTHOR

Meaning what?

CHARACTER

Meaning the constant up and down from this table every five minutes. You're like a damn yo-yo. First it's the dog that needs walking, then it's the laundry that needs folding, then it's the sound of some God awful soap opera I can hear blaring from the next room, then it's some uncontrollable urge to dust the mini blinds – it's never ending. Meanwhile, I'm just sitting here not knowing who I am or where the hell I'm going.

AUTHOR

Join the club.

CHARACTER

It's all so static, don't you see? It's completely static. This play is going nowhere fast.

AUTHOR

You can't rush the creative process.

CHARACTER

But give me something, can't you? I need something to work with here. I need to *be* someone. For the love of God, flesh me out a bit!

(beat)

AUTHOR

The problem is...I'm not sure that I like you anymore. I've a feeling that may be the problem.

CHARACTER

Oh, give me a break, this isn't a popularity contest! *It's a play!* You don't have to like everyone in it. In fact, you shouldn't – it would be boring – which frankly, right now, this is!

AUTHOR

You see, when I first wrote you down, I thought we'd go somewhere together. I didn't know where, but I thought we would. But it doesn't seem to be happening.