

SIDE: Male 20s

CHARACTERS

PAUL, a college student. Male. Any age, any background.

CON, a college student. Male. Any age, any background.

SETTING

A college library one evening late the spring semester.

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTES

Actors in "That Moment When ..." are asked not only to physically perform the stage directions, but also narrate them with emotion. Even if stage directions have no observable physical action, there should still be emotion in the narration.

Paul and Con can be any age, but the play works best if they are close in age.

A double slash symbol in the script (//) indicates where the next line of dialogue should begin. The goal is to create overlapping dialogue.

AT RISE: There are two empty desks on either side of the stage. A chair sits behind both desks.

(LIGHTS UP.)

(PAUL enters, carrying two thick books and wearing a backpack.)

PAUL

Paul enters, carrying two thick books and wearing a backpack over his right shoulder. He walks slowly and steadily to the desk farthest from where he entered. He moves with purpose, but he does not rush.

He places his books on the desk with the covers facing up. He takes his backpack off his shoulder and places it next to the books. He pulls the chair away from the desk, sits, and moves back toward the desk.

He unzips the backpack and removes a pen, a notebook, and a highlighter. He opens his notebook to an empty page and carefully writes the date at the top, using his pen. He reaches for the book nearest to him and opens it more than three-quarters to the end. Unconsciously he puts the end of the pen in his mouth.

Paul places his index finger on the page and moves it as he reads. He does this with purpose, but he does not rush. He nods, unconsciously, as his eyes scan the text. He removes the cap from the highlighter and moves it across the page while simultaneously writing with the pen in the notebook. This takes more than a few moments. He turns the page.

(CON enters, harried. He carries a laptop computer, pen and paper, and a drink.)

CON

Con enters, harried. He carries a laptop computer, pen and paper, and a drink. He moves quickly, jarringly. He walks to the desk nearest to where he entered. Before he puts down the computer, pen and paper, he looks back to see if any of his belongings dropped to the floor. He confirms nothing fell and nods.

He carefully places his drink on the desk. He tosses everything else onto the desk. It makes a loud noise.

PAUL

Paul, startled, looks up, but quickly returns to the book.

CON

Con turns the chair at the desk around so it faces backward, and he sits. He opens the laptop and presses the power button. While it powers up, he picks up the drink and sips from it. He covers his mouth with his hand and burps softly. He unconsciously taps his fingers against the desk, waiting for the laptop to power up.

PAUL

Paul looks up again, annoyed.

CON

Con continues to tap, slightly bored.

PAUL

Paul looks around the room.

CON

Con looks around the room.

PAUL

Paul sees Con. He stares, transfixed. His heartbeat speeds up. He takes a quick, deep breath.

CON

Con sees Paul. He smiles. It is a radiant smile. It is a heroic smile. His heartbeat speeds up.

PAUL

Paul looks away, resting his forehead against his upraised hand. He does not breathe.

CON

Con still smiles. He looks back to his laptop and types his username and password.

PAUL

Paul stares at the book. He does not read. He does not breathe.

CON

Con turns on a web browser and types an address into a search engine. He turns his head to look at Paul. He watches him. He smiles.

PAUL

Paul stares at the book. He does not read. He does not breathe.

CON

Con watches Paul. He smiles.

PAUL

Paul moves his pen against the notebook. He scribbles across the length a couple of times.

CON

Con looks back at his laptop. He types quickly, but makes an error. He uses the mouse to highlight the error and then deletes it with a keystroke on the keyboard. He retypes the information and presses the enter button. He uses the mouse to scroll through the webpage.

He looks at Paul briefly. He returns his gaze to the webpage.

PAUL

Paul stops moving his pen. He exhales. He looks at Con.

CON

Con writes briefly on his notebook while staring at the computer screen. His eyebrows furrow, he shakes his head, and continues to use the mouse to scroll through the page.

PAUL

Paul watches Con. He tries to breathe normally.

CON

Con runs his hand over his head as he reads the webpage. He reaches for his drink and sips from it. He scrolls farther down the page, peering in closer to the screen, eyes squinting.

PAUL

Paul averts his eyes and looks at the pages in the book. He sighs. He does not read.

CON

Con puts down his drink, but instead it falls onto its side. Liquid pours out over the desk. Con exclaims.

PAUL

Paul looks over to Con and sees the spill. He pushes back his chair, stands, and quickly exits the same direction he entered.

CON

Con stands, and quickly moves his laptop away from the growing puddle of liquid. He puts his papers, pen and computer on the chair.

(PAUL exits the same direction he entered.)

CON

Con reaches for the drink and stands it up. He moves the chair away from the desk. He uses the side of his hand to attempt to keep the spill from the edge of the desk. He pulls at the hem of his shirt and considers whether or not to use it to mop up the spill. He grimaces and –

(PAUL enters with a stack of paper towels.)

PAUL

Paul enters with a stack of paper towels and walks quickly to Con's desk. He places the stack on the desk, opens one of them, and places it on the spilt liquid.

CON

Con watches Paul, then opens two more paper towels and places them on the spill. He wipes the paper towels across the surface of the desk

PAUL

Paul unfolds more towels and pats them on smaller puddles of liquid.