

The Following is Based on True Events
(From a Video Game)

A play in one act

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

MORTIMER GOTH, a lavishly-dressed man with mustache

JEFF PLEASANT, a brightly-colored older man

SCENE 1

Music from Build and Buy mode from the Maxis game, 'The Sims' plays. As the lights go up, we start to hear a typical Simspeak conversation. As the lights go to complete rise, we see two men, MORTIMER and JEFF talking at a booth as Simspeak transitions into English. Above them, ++ and -- symbols reflect their changing relationship status. Periodically throughout this, MORTIMER sways as though tired, while JEFF smells his armpit and goes 'uggggh!' Neither ever reacts to the other.

MORTIMER

--no no the musician thing wasn't working out. It was a chore, y'know? No weekends or vacation, work everyday. I told the universe to send me a sign. Next thing I know, I've missed work two days in a row, and I get a call saying I've been fired.

JEFF

After eight promotions?

MORTIMER

In a month!

JEFF

A phone call?

MORTIMER

From subway to studio musician in a month. And that's how they treat me.

JEFF

Idiots.

MORTIMER

I tell myself: "I've got skills!" Creativity, charisma, even some body. I should get another job- I'll advance through the ranks like crazy. But I check the paper every day for a week, and what're the openings? Policeman, Slacker, Politician? Do you know how many friends you need to maintain to be a Politician? So I decide to make my way to Studio Town. You always thought I could be famous, right Jeff?

JEFF

Absolutely.

MORTIMER

So I go through the motions. I do a publicity stunt. Some paparazzi catches me, great! I'm there. I'm getting autographs from Marilyn Monroe and Bon Jovi and I'm telling them: "I will be joining you soon." But then I notice that there's nothing music related around. No karaoke bars, no music video studios, not even a place that records jingles. But hey, there's an open mic night thing, so I figure, "what the hell, actor, comedian, musician-- it's all creativity! How hard could this be?" I get up there, tell a few jokes, and I kill-- I think I'm on my way. I do a couple more shows, a couple more publicity stunts, but nothing's happening! My star level won't go above two. Then I find out that it is impossible-literally impossible-to get famous unless you have a bunch of famous friends. Seriously-- your worth is calculated based on the worth of all the people you are friends with. What the hell, right?

JEFF

Might as well have been a Politician.

Pause. JEFF takes out some balls and juggles them. After a moment, MORTIMER laughs, claps, then continues.

MORTIMER

Long story short, I go back home, and I say fuck it, I am fucking talented! I deserve better! But I'm not playing by their rules. I'm doing things my way now... so I check the paper the next day, and guess what's there?

Career track for a criminal. Where's the dotted line, right? The next day my carpool arrives, I get there on time. I'm a pickpocket for one day then get this- promoted. Bagman: one day- promoted. Bookie, con artist, getaway driver, bank robber, cat burglar! Up the ranks like a boss, and sure enough, in less than two weeks, my new title is, ready for this? Criminal Mastermind.

JEFF

(patting him on the shoulder)

Mortimer, you're a really wonderful person.

MORTIMER

Awww...

JEFF

(takes out a puppet)

Oh hello there! I am a puppet and I am very funny to hop around are I not cute? Skippdiy skippidy--

MORTIMER

No.

Pause.

JEFF

How's the wife feel about all this?

MORTIMER

She's been doing her own thing. Did the cooking career track, she's a candy bar magnate now. We have a kid, you know, came after 'playing in bed' or 'making woo hoo' or whatever the kids are calling it these days, but it hasn't been a problem. We got a robot taking care of him.

JEFF

Wow, how do I get one of those?

MORTIMER

You can't. It's fifteen thousand dollars.

JEFF

Well... y'know, 'rosebud'...

MORTIMER

Well, rosebud, yeah, but let's try to make an honest living here. Anyway, plenty of money coming in from being a criminal mastermind. This is great, cause the wife just loves buying the most ridiculous shit. Sensory deprivation chamber, VR goggles, skydiving simulator, mechanical bull--

JEFF

Don't tell me what she uses that for!

MORTIMER

I know, right!

JEFF

Right?

MORTIMER

Right! Yeah, actually it was stolen.

JEFF

You stole it?

MORTIMER

No it was stolen from us. I saw the whole thing happen. This guy comes to our house in the dead of night dressed up--no shit--in black and white stripes, with a black hat and bandana around his eyes.

JEFF

No shit.

MORTIMER

Now we've got all the expensive shit in our backyard cause, y'know, who wants to add walls to the house just to fit all that in? So he goes back there and, shit you not, he picks up the mechanical bull and puts it in his money bag.

JEFF

Mortimer, I like your hair. No...no what? How's it fit?

MORTIMER

Who the fuck knows? Goddamn Mary Poppins. I was ready to go out there and just kick the guy's ass, but something stopped me. You might say I was compelled to do nothing. So there you have it. The criminal mastermind gets his ass stolen from.

JEFF

Mortimer, you have really pretty eyes.

MORTIMER

Cool it with the compliments.

JEFF

Sorry.

MORTIMER

That's 'nuff about me, what're you up to these days Jeff?

JEFF

Me? Gee... you know I've been keeping to myself a lot. I've never had much of an interest in a job so I've just been living off that money everyone starts out with. It's been fine-- my needs are limited. That being said, a couple of months back I started to get real sick of seeing strangers walk down my sidewalk, you know, I mean, come on! That's my sidewalk, idiots. You were my first friend--

MORTIMER

But we haven't talked for a while so we're technically not friends anymore.

JEFF

Right, but you remember my house-- there's no walls, just those assorted kitchen counters. So yeah, that's an invasion of privacy. One day, I decide enough is enough. Next time a guy passes me on the street, instead of steaming and staring at him, I invite him in, or, y'know, over. Affable enough guy-- big smile, bald, fluffy beard. This guy's name, no joke-- Bob Newbie. We make small talk, I entertain him with my puppet, tell him a joke. (pause) Knock, knock.

MORTIMER

Who's there?

JEFF

Shotgun sound!

MORTIMER

Shotgun sound wh--

JEFF

You're dead! You're dead and I killed you! Hahaha. (pause). That wasn't the joke. So the guy's stomach starts rumbling and I let him know that in my living room-- which is all wooden countertops instead of ceramic ones-- I've got a grill going. He goes in, grabs a cheeseburger. I set the mood a little-- I light the four fireplaces in there. (pause) You look real nice today.

MORTIMER

Awww...

JEFF

The fireplaces are lit, he finishes his cheeseburger, but he's still hungry, so he has another, but there's no place to sit down, so he stands there like an idiot.

MORTIMER

Couldn't he sit on the counter?

JEFF

No, he-- what? Don't ask stupid questions. Ahem. I move another counter over to block the entrance, so he's trapped in there, eating cheeseburgers by the fireplace. I go play chess by myself for a while, and after three hours ol' Bob Newbie in there is whining about how he's not having enough fun, waving and shouting at the sky like an idiot. (pause) You look really nice today.

MORTIMER

Awww.

JEFF

Another hour goes by and he wets himself, like an idiot, but then finally, he catches fire--

MORTIMER

Because of the fireplaces?

JEFF

Because of the fireplaces. And he's waving his arms around and screaming like an idiot and bumping up against the counters but soon enough, he's just a pile of ashes and an urn. I clean up the ashes, put the urn in my trophy room, and do this thing twenty-three more times.

MORTIMER

Until there's no one left walking down the street?

JEFF

Exactly. So now I have peace.

MORTIMER

That's fantastic Jeff. Well thank god neither of us have to worry about being caught.

JEFF

Now if only the ghosts of my victims would leave me alone.

(Beat.)

MORTIMER

We're awesome.

JEFF

Awwww.

They both stand up and hug. Music plays, a smiley face appears above them, and a message box saying 'You have made a new family friend!' As they part, JEFF holds his crotch, then creates a giant puddle on the floor, while 'rock a by baby plays' and MORTIMER wavers, then collapses to the floor in the puddle. Blackout.