

**MAN'S SEARCH FOR MEANING**

A Dark Comedy

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SAMPLE

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EXT. AIRPORT - MOMENTS LATER

PAUL KURRSICK (30s), a man who left all he knew to chase his dreams, steps out of the Airport. All around people bustle busily, and the sound of their lives inflame his excitement.

The NEW SUN BREAKS OVER THE HORIZON, dawning over his life. And through the sky, another PLANE FLIES, carrying a massive BANNER BEHIND IT.

The banner says: "LOS ANGELES: WHERE DREAMS COME TRUE!"

PAUL feels his heart soar at all the possibilities that lie ahead. For once in his life, he has been given a blank page, and what a feeling that is!

EXT. SIDEWALK - NOON - LATER

PAUL walks down the sidewalk, lugging his luggage behind him. He's enamored with the city around him. The beauty and novelty of it all fills him with hope and excitement.

He bids everyone a GOOD AFTERNOON as he walks, revitalized by the new environment. Then, he comes across a PAY PHONE and SETS his BAGS DOWN to use the phone. FLIPS THROUGH THE PHONE BOOK.

After inserting his payment, PAUL calls an APARTMENT COMPLEX.

LEASING AGENT

Hi! Thank you for calling Arc Apartments. How can I help you?

PAUL

Yes, hi! I was wondering if you had any rooms available? Just for one person.

LEASING AGENT

Yes! We have a few units available. When are you looking to move in?

PAUL

Uh, right now.

LEASING AGENT

(caught off guard)  
I'm sorry?

PAUL

Today. Right now.

LEASING AGENT

(pause)

Um, sir, we pre-lease. So, unfortunately we don't have anything available for immediate move-in, sir.

As she says this, an ANNOYED MAN (50s) appears next to him, wanting to use the phone. He looks annoyed.

PAUL gives a polite smile and a courteous "just a few moments" gesture.

PAUL

How soon would I be able to move in?

LEASING AGENT

Sir, everyone here signs a full year agreement. Leases don't end until December.

ANNOYED MAN

Hey, could you hurry it up, please?

PAUL

(nodding to MAN)

Do you know of any apartment that has immediate move-in?

LEASING AGENT

Every place that I know of works on contracts, but you would really have to call their offices--

ANNOYED MAN

C'mon, fella. Buy a cell phone!

PAUL

(covers speaker to speak to man awkwardly)

I'm so sorry. My phone's dead.

LEASING AGENT

I can schedule you for a tour if you'd like?

ANNOYED MAN

Doesn't sound like my problem, fella!

PAUL  
 (to agent)  
 Um, no, that's okay. Do you know of any hotels or inns nearby? Anything for cheap? I just got into town--

ANNOYED MAN  
 You want a warm welcome? Go to your mom's house! Wrap it up!

LEASING AGENT  
 There are quite a few inns that I'm sure have vacancies--

PAUL  
 (to Man)  
 I really am sorry. I'll be just a second--

But before PAUL can finish, the MAN ENDS THE CALL for him, takes the phone from PAUL'S hand, and steps past him.

ANNOYED MAN  
 We all got people to talk to, asshole!

PAUL sheepishly steps away, doing his best to keep a welcoming demeanor. He smiles, picks up his bags, says:

PAUL  
 Sorry.

and walks away.

EXT. STREET - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

PAUL stands on the curb trying to HAIL A CAB. But each one passes him by. However, he doesn't lose enthusiasm. He keeps trying with a friendly smile.

Then, someone--a WOMAN--comes up beside him and HAILS A CAB, and ONE STOPS IMMEDIATELY.

THE WOMAN PILES IN, and PAUL asks politely:

PAUL  
 Hello, miss! Do you think we could share--?

WOMAN IN CAB  
 Fuck off!

PAUL  
 Okay.

THE CAB SPEEDS OFF, and PAUL says after it:

PAUL  
Have a good day!

And he continues to try.

INT. THE WELCOME INN - EVENING - LATER

FROM INSIDE THE FRONT OFFICE, we see PAUL get out of a CAB and awkwardly pay the DRIVER. Pulling out his luggage, he makes his way toward the RAGGEDY INN.

AS HE WALKS, CAMERA PANS OFF AND LANDS ON FRONT DESK, where the RECEPTIONIST SLEEPS FACE-DOWN on the desk.

We hear PAUL enter and he STEPS INTO FRAME, just across the desk. The RECEPTIONIST sleeps on.

THEN, hesitantly, PAUL TAPS THE BELL.

SUDDENLY, the RECEPTIONIST SNAPS AWAKE with a loud noise, SCARING BOTH OF THEM.

PAUL  
Oh God, I'm so sorry.

RECEPTIONIST  
(calming down)  
Ohh...fuck me...what time is it?

PAUL  
I don't know. Maybe 5 or 6?

RECEPTIONIST  
(checks watch)  
FUCK ME!  
(pause)  
It's fucking 7!

The RECEPTIONIST hurries out of his seat and circles around the desk. Paul tries to talk to him.

PAUL  
I was just wondering if you had any rooms avail--

RECEPTIONIST  
(interrupting)  
Sorry, kid, we're closed!!

They grab PAUL'S arm and start dragging toward the exit.

PAUL  
What?! Why?

RECEPTIONIST  
6 is closing time and 7's supper  
time.

PAUL  
I just need a room. Please! I'll  
just be two seconds.

RECEPTIONIST  
It's LA, kid. You'll find another  
place.

PAUL shrugs out of the Receptionist's hold just outside the  
exit. Stops to look at him.

PAUL  
You don't understand. I just got  
here. My plane landed an hour and a  
half ago, and I really just need a  
place to sleep.

In a moment of silence, the RECEPTIONIST looks like he's  
considering it hesitantly--but at the same time, it seems  
like he's trying to find a polite way to say no.

So, before he can say anything, PAUL says:

PAUL  
I can pay extra. An extra twenty?  
Just for you.

RECEPTIONIST  
Look, kid...

PAUL  
Fifty, then?

Another moment of thought.

PAUL  
Sir, please...I've come a long way.

After a moment...

INT. ROOM 312 WELCOME INN - EVENING - MOMENTS LATER

PAUL UNLOCKS his room and steps into the darkness. TURNS ON  
THE LIGHTS. The room is nothing to write home about. But  
Paul suspects he'll write about it anyway. He knows the  
journey starts here, but it will not end here.