

Somewhere More Promising

by

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Cast of Characters

CRAM:

30's

WARBY:

30's

Place

Cram's apartment

Time

Day

Setting: Cram's apartment - living room. Old décor as if copy and pasted from the 1970's.

At Rise: Cram fusses with the TV antenna trying to get a clear picture. Warby looks on while drinking from a beer bottle and eating chips.

WARBY: Look at this shit.

CRAM: What?

Shows Cram the inside of a potato chip bag.

WARBY: See that?

Cram frowns.

Spend five bucks on a bag of chips, open it up and it's practically empty.

CRAM: It's good for you.

WARBY: How so?

CRAM: Less chips, less weight.

WARBY: It's a sin.

CRAM: Worse things in life, Warby.

WARBY: Like when I was a kid and all I wanted was the prize in the Cracker Jack box and this one time there was no prize.

CRAM: Cry me a river.

WARBY: Yeah, well, I felt betrayed.

CRAM: You'll live.

WARBY: I don't know what's wrong with me.

CRAM: What?

WARBY: I keep feeling like there's a fly landing on my ear. My left ear. The lobe, you know, this flappy part. (pointing) Right there.

CRAM: I don't see no fly buzzing around.

WARBY: That's cause you don't move your eyes fast enough.

CRAM: That's cause, I don't care to.

WARBY: Hope I'm not dropping dead now.

CRAM: You ain't dropping dead. If you were gonna die, you would've done it already.

WARBY: Die when I'm ready and right now, I'm ain't ready.

(pause.)

How's it coming along?

CRAM: I just about have the right frequency if you would stop talking...wait! Got it...we got it, we're on!

Cram steps back and views the TV set standing beside Warby.

WARBY: No sound?

CRAM: Told you, there's no sound. We're lucky we got a picture.

WARBY: And it's black and white.

CRAM: You're so spoiled.

WARBY: You live in a time capsule. Everything in this apartment of yours is from the dinosaur age.

CRAM: You don't like how I live?

WARBY: Not when it comes to watching the game. I told you we could have gone over to Fritzzy's place. He has a large flat screen TV with color and large surround sound speakers.

CRAM: I'm not going to Fritzzy's, not until he pays me back what he owes me, the prick.

WARBY: So, I gotta suffer for it?

CRAM: Go to Frtizy's, I'm not holding you hostage.

WARBY: I feel bad.

CRAM: For who?

WARBY: For you, I feel bad.

CRAM: That shit pisses me off.

WARBY: Wanna go to the bar?

CRAM: I'm not going to the freakin' bar.

WARBY: You are such a miserable bastard, you know that?

CRAM: Ronda pissed me off.

WARBY: What she piss you off about this time?

CRAM: She's insulting. Never has nothin' nice to say.

WARBY: She's like that with everybody.

CRAM: She always gives me the extra dig.

WARBY: You're being sensitive. Is it that time of the month?

CRAM: Stick it.

WARBY: So moody.

CRAM: Everybody bothers me. Fritzzy, Ronda, you.

WARBY: Don't match me up with them.

CRAM: Stop annoying me then.

WARBY: You know something? Nobody can talk to you anymore without you having a negative reaction.

CRAM: Here we go.

WARBY: It's true.

CRAM: Stop, stop.

WARBY: No, it's true. Say one thing to you and it's like walking on eggshells. Never know how you're gonna react. Always touchy. Why you so touchy for?

CRAM: That's the way I am. What do you want from me?

WARBY: It's wrong.

CRAM: It's how God made me.

WARBY: Well, he must have been in the other room during your design, cause you're a nasty bastard. He forgot to put in kindness and friendliness.

CRAM: You've know me since forever, right?

WARBY: So?

CRAM: So, have you ever known me to be kind or friendly?

WARBY: Never.

CRAM: Why should I start now?

WARBY: Because you wouldn't alienate yourself.

CRAM: What do you mean, alienate?

WARBY: Alienate. You know! Surround yourself with nobody.

CRAM: Good.

WARBY: Don't you want to have friends?

CRAM: I once heard that the less friends you have, the smarter it proves you are.

WARBY: You feel smart?

CRAM: Extremely smart.

WARBY: Yeah?

CRAM: Absolutely.

WARBY: I call red bullshit.

CRAM: Call it what you want, I'm happy.

WARBY: Always got your stomach in a knot. How is that happy?

CRAM: Just let me be. I gotta explain myself to you now?

WARBY: If I'm staying in this time capsule apartment with you to watch one of the biggest games of the year, YEAH, you have some explaining to do.

CRAM: What do you want me to explain?

WARBY: Why you such an asshole?

CRAM: Why am I an asshole?

WARBY: Why are you an asshole?!

CRAM: I'm an asshole because it feels good to be an asshole. I tell people the way it is and it's because they don't like hearing the truth about life, society, themselves, whatever, they get angry at me and do what you're doing right now...calling me an asshole.

WARBY: So, it's everybody else's fault?

CRAM: Yep.

WARBY: It's a conspiracy?

CRAM: Yep.

WARBY: ...Give me an example.

CRAM: You want an example? I'll give you an example. The other day, I was at the bar sitting in my usual spot, by myself and Ronda asks me what she should do about the guy she's seeing. She asks me what my opinion was of her having some affair. The guy she's seeing is married with three kids. I told her to stop being a skank and she went nuts at me.

WARBY: You called her a skank?

CRAM: But it's the truth!

WARBY: You could have used better terminology.

CRAM: But it's the truth, I'm sorry. That's why people don't like me.

WARBY: But had you said something like, "Well, Ronda, it's probably best not to get mixed up with a married man." Something to that effect, she would have responded favorably, right?

CRAM: She's a skank. She's been sleeping around with all kinds of men for all kinds of years. I don't even know why she bothered asking me my opinion. She already knows what I think of her.

WARBY: It's your ex-wife.

CRAM: So?

WARBY: You were married to her!

CRAM: Don't remind me.

WARBY: Was she a skank when you were married to her?

CRAM: That's a good question...I think she was a skank in hiding. Like an incognito skank. I think she married me to cover up for who she truly wanted to be.

WARBY: And she used you for cover?

CRAM: Exactly.

WARBY: There you go with your conspiracy theories again.

CRAM: Whatever.

WARBY: Your far-fetched bullshit.

CRAM: Look, I'll tell ya...I have no problem with her being what she truly is, I don't hold it against her, I'm not judging her, she just doesn't want to hear the truth. Look at me, I'm a gambler and a low life. I admit it freely, cause that's my reality. I don't go around trying to sugar-coat it. It is what it is and I am what I am, okay?

People get so hell-bent on accurate descriptions of what the truth actually is, especially if it pertains to who they really are, because they can't face the reality of it for themselves.

Everybody's trying to show a face, instead of being their real selves.

To turn to your fellow neighbor and call them out on something is presumed preposterous today. Am I right? The arrows and daggers that get flung at you by all these different groups is frightening. Everybody becomes a Frankenstein when they open their mouth for stating the facts.

That's why I don't talk to no one. I want no part of the drama. I keep to myself and stay low-key in my low-life world. I don't bother nobody and nobody bothers me. Amen.

If I'm asked my opinion about an issue, I go dumb. That's it. Easy. I don't play sides and I don't play games. I could care less. Honestly. Waste my time...

Ronda was the rare exception. I took an *extra* minute to tell her the truth because, as you said, I was married to her and there's an understanding. At least, I thought there was an understanding, but she threw me out of the bar, threatening to call the police, so I had no choice but to leave.

Now she hates me, but she respects me, cause she knows I play it straight. And that's why I don't want to go to the bar, cause I don't need the aggravation, especially when watching the game.

But I'll tell you something, I actually take back what I said about calling her what I called her. I take it back because I don't want her to be that way...it's not for me to tell her what to do with her life, but inside myself, if you want to know the truth, I'm bitter about her ongoings because she's better than that. She is a beautiful woman who chooses to sell herself short of what she's worth. She married me, for instance. She never should have married me. She's way too good for me. I'm a bum and she's, well, she's a rare gem that happens to work in this crummy town, bartending to all of us losers.

Had she been born somewhere more promising, maybe with a better upbringing, like if she was given a fair shot at her full potential, man oh man, she'd be the greatest woman that ever lived on this Earth. That's the truth about it.

So, in short, if I seem hostile and choose my words bluntly, it's on account that I really care for her, and wish to God I was a better man capable of giving her the life she deserves...but don't ever repeat any of this to her, cause I'll kill you.

WARBY: Holy shit.

CRAM: What now?

WARBY: You still love her, don't you?

CRAM: Shut up, what do you know about it?

WARBY: You do. My heart bleeds for you, buddy.

CRAM: It's the way it is, what can you do? But keep your mouth shut, please. It's no big deal.

WARBY: Why don't you rise up?

CRAM: Rise up where?

WARBY: Why don't you do more in your life and win her back?

CRAM: What is this a fairytale now? Come on, stop with the bullshit talk.

WARBY: You don't think you can win her back?

CRAM: There is no way in a million years that Ronda and me can ever get back together. I wouldn't do that to her.

WARBY: What if you stepped up your game?

CRAM: I'm not going anywhere. I'm content.

WARBY: You don't love her enough to change your life?

CRAM: And go where? Do what? This is it, pal.

WARBY: ...Yeah, I guess you make sense.

CRAM: This is what we got.

WARBY: That's so fucking depressing.

CRAM: You see? Don't want to hear the truth.

WARBY: It's not the truth that bothers me, it's the unwillingness to make the effort that upsets me most.

CRAM: I already tried. Don't give me that shit.

WARBY: But you gave up. You stopped trying. Why not keep fighting for it?

CRAM: Cause I got too old and blew my shot. My arm ain't what it used to be and you know the fucking story, so don't even make me angry now.

WARBY: You're still young to switch gears, get involved in a different way, make a good living and talk to---

CRAM: Get the fuck out.

WARBY: What?

CRAM: Get outta here. I want to be alone. That's it. Just let me be alone.

WARBY: Come on, man.

CRAM: Go! Go to the bar or Fritzy's. I want to be alone!

WARBY: I'm sorry. Didn't mean to bring up your pitching career---

CRAM: I blew out my fucking arm! Alright?! What more do you want me to do? I can't change that! It wasn't in the cards for me. That's not in my control. Shit!

WARBY: I was just saying that maybe you could have found a job in the business of it---

CRAM: Doing what?! Selling hot dogs and beer?! There ain't no job for a guy like me in that place. I don't fit in there wearing nice suits and you know it. It's wishful thinking is all.

WARBY: Alright, I'm sorry I brought it up. Sorry.

(pause.)

CRAM: ...Listen, uh, I don't even wanna watch the game, I don't, I'm not mad at you, but I rather you just go and let me be. You'll have a better time watching the game elsewhere, alright?

WARBY: I really want to stay.

CRAM: And I really want you to leave, alright?

WARBY: ...Alright, it doesn't have to be like that.

CRAM: I'm not mad. Come by tomorrow, we'll go to the bar and I'll put on a good face. I don't want Ronda being mad at me and all.

WARBY: You sure?

CRAM: Yeah, just be quiet about what I said earlier.

WARBY: I won't say shit.

CRAM: Yeah. Come by tomorrow.

WARBY: Alright, alright. You change your mind, I'll be at Fritzy's. He's got a great set up and we'll all have a good time.

CRAM: Alright. We'll see.

WARBY: Alright. See you later, buddy.

CRAM: Okay...

Warby leaves.

Cram sits down on his recliner and watches the game.

END OF PLAY