

# Dealing Dreams

A Play by

Jeffrey Lo

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For the Generation of Unemployed College Graduates

My Generation

The Millennials

Underrated and Overrated All at the Same Damn Time.

*“Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eludes us then, but that’s no matter – tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther... And one fine morning ---*

*So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.”*

- The Great Gatsby

*“Sorry! The life you ordered is currently out of stock.”*

- Banksy

**SETTING:**

2011: San Jose, CA

**CAST OF CHARACTERS:**

Zoe, 24, Unemployed but knows that she shouldn't be, any race

Trey, 24, Bartender, Zoe's best friend, sort of in love with her but not really, any race

Steve Grier, 45, Angel Investor, handsome and rich and wants to stay that way, any race

Norah, 21, 3<sup>rd</sup> year Stanford student and intern, sweet demeanor, ready to learn, any race

**A FEW NOTES:**

There is a section that requires characters to overlap. I've designated when they start the next line with a “ / ”.

If you need to re-type the script in any way for production purposes, please keep to the format in terms of punctuation, spacing between stage directions and lines, or placement of ellipses. I want the director, actors and designers to interpret the script as it is presented on the pages here.

**DEALING DREAMS** was workshopped at the Foothill Theater Conservatory in Los Altos, CA under Tom Gough, at West Virginia University in Morgantown, WV under Jim Knipple, at Custom Made Theatre in San Francisco, CA under Artistic Director Brian Katz, with the Orange County Playwright's Alliance in Anaheim, CA directed by Andy Lowe and City Lights Theatre Company in San Jose, CA under Artistic Director Lisa Malette.

**RUNNING TIME:**

Approx. 85 minutes, no intermission

## DEALING DREAMS

### **Intro.**

*ZOE.*

ZOE

So picture this. I'm sitting in this conference room. Lightly cushioned rolling chair. White but not quite white – is that called off-white? Off-white painted walls. Shiny, wooden table.

I look around, take a deep breath and take it all in. WLJ Marketing. I think to myself - *I can see myself here. This could be nice.* As I wait for... whomever it is I'm waiting for, I look out the clear glass wall and watch. The execs bounce from meeting to meeting. The ads sell. The paper pushes. The money moves. This is the office's life. This is the life I want. The life of an intelligent working woman. Directly across from the conference room, as if a fated premonition, is a beautifully vacant cubicle. I close my eyes and picture myself in it. Me in my favorite dress. The nameplate on my desk. The business cards in my pocket. All ready to go. I've wanted this for as long as I can remember and I cannot wait for it all to begin. Today is the day.

The door opens, snapping me out from my blissful daydream. Standing there is this woman. She's wearing a pantsuit. Of course she's wearing a pantsuit.

I jump up. "Hello," I say, a bit overeagerly, "My name is Zoe." Pantsuit woman looks at me, "Hi Zooey," she says. "Hello," I say in reply even though I introduced myself as **Zoe** and not **Zooey** less than half a second before. I ignore this fact because, hey, I need a job, right?

She leans forward and looks at the paper in front of her. It's at this moment I realize – Pantsuit woman has amazing breasts. I'm not talking "above average" or "quite nice" breasts. Pantsuit woman's breasts are remarkable.

I'm not a lesbian, not that there's anything wrong with that, but I appreciate a set when I see them. And I saw them. Boy did I see these breasts.

"Zooey" pantsuit remarkable breast woman says. I have no doubt in my mind that I've been caught comparing her impressive chest area to my mere mortal breasts.

"Thank you so much for coming in and interviewing with WLJ. Unfortunately, we've decided to go a different direction with the position. We really like you and appreciated

your enthusiasm, which is why we wanted to tell you this face to face as opposed to over the telephone. Please do keep us updated on your future endeavors. We wish you luck.”

*(Clearing her throat:)*

*“We wish you luck...”*

...

She stood up. Extended her hand to shake mine. Then it hit me.

Pantsuit remarkable breast woman called me into this disgusting off-white conference room to give me a FAKE glorified NO.

...

I picked myself up. Shook her hand. And darted to the door.

But just before I leave, I turn around.

“Hey,” I say to pantsuit remarkable breast woman -

“It’s Zoe. Ok? Not Zooey.

The name is Zoe.”

“And don’t you forget it.”

*Lights Out.*

**One.**

*ZOE and TREY'S small apartment.  
A couch that doubles as TREY'S bed.  
A coffee table.  
A small table beside the couch.  
Not much. But enough.*

*ZOE is sprawled on the couch. She  
was wearing professional attire  
earlier. Now the clothes sort of just  
lay on her.*

*TREY is on his laptop.  
He laughs.*

*ZOE Looks at TREY.  
TREY laughs again.  
ZOE's cell phone rings.  
She looks at it and silences it.*

Who was that? TREY

My mom. I'll talk to her later. ZOE

*TREY nods.*

What are you doing? ZOE (cont'd)

Look. TREY

*TREY shows ZOE a funny picture on  
his laptop.*

Funny right? TREY (cont'd)  
(Laughing:)

Yeah. ZOE  
(Not laughing:)

*Beat.*

TREY  
What are you doing today?

ZOE  
*(Getting up:)*  
Oh, you know.

*ZOE shows TREY a stack of papers  
on the coffee table.*

TREY  
What are these?

ZOE  
Applications.

TREY  
For?

ZOE  
Grocery store bagger. Movie theater box office. Coffee shop barista. You know, the types  
of jobs Econ majors who graduate with honors aspire towards.

TREY  
What are you doing with these applications?

ZOE  
You're not dumb Trey. I'm applying for jobs.

TREY  
But what about the –

ZOE  
I didn't get it.

TREY  
Oh.

ZOE  
Yeah.

TREY  
When did you find out?



Two days ago.

ZOE

You didn't tell me?

TREY

I didn't want to talk about it.

ZOE

So... applications.

TREY

Yeah.

ZOE

Well hey. These places could be fun.

TREY

...

Right?

You can find the worst movie out in theatres and see who among you and your coworkers can watch it the most times in a row before running out screaming of boredom.

*No Response from ZOE.*

TREY (*cont'd*)

You can make a game out of these things. You can time how fast you pack groceries and keep training until you beat the world record for grocery bagging.

ZOE

Shut up Trey.

TREY

At the coffee shop, you and your co-workers can play flip cup.

*(With growing intensity:)*

*Es-pre-sso shots!*

*Es-pre-sso shots!*

*Es-pre-sso -*

ZOE

*(Amused but not in the mood:)*

Please stop.

*Beat.*

ZOE (*cont'd*)

What is happening to us?

TREY

What?

ZOE

Our lives. What happened? What are we doing? It's been two years since we graduated from college and neither of us have jobs.

TREY

I have a job.

ZOE

Yeah, you're a bartender. That isn't what you went to school to be.

TREY

It's a job.

ZOE

I was smart wasn't I?

I was at the top of my class. I remember very clearly. Professor Fowler, with his long white Santa Clause beard and small spectacle glasses look at me and say, "You, Zoe, you are going to take over the world someday."

TREY

"Someday."

ZOE

That's what he said to me, "you are going to take over the world someday." Now. Two years later and what do I have to show for it?

*ZOE breathes.*

*Pause.*

*Beat.*

*ZOE stops breathing.*

ZOE (*cont'd*)

Oh my god.

I worked hard at everything all my life AND SUCCEEDED and now I have...

Nothing. Nothing. Absolutelnothing. Notadamnthing.

Oh my god. I think I'm going to hyper/ventilate.

TREY

Zoe.

ZOE

And you! You were very smart. You -

TREY

*Were?*

ZOE

- didn't try very hard but you did above average in your classes so one would have to assume that if you put a little more effort into your classes you would've done quite/well.

TREY

Why are we talking about me/again?

ZOE

You should be working.

TREY

I AM WORKING!

ZOE

YOU'RE A BARTENDER!

TREY

IT'S WORK!

ZOE

You didn't go to school to learn to be a bart/ender.

TREY

Look, we just went through this. And I had to take classes to be certified as/a bartender.

ZOE

You took *classes*. That's not school. There's a difference.  
All I'm saying is you shouldn't be bartending. You're a programmer You should be programming.  
For Google or... or... Facebook... at least Yahoo or something.

TREY

I told you Zoe. There will probably be a time when I unfortunately have to go and work for... them but right now I just want to work on my own thing. Enjoy my creative freedom while I can before being bogged down by some big time company.

ZOE

But what about me? Why can't I work for some big time company. A big time marketing firm can bog me down all they want. I am happy to be bogged down. I am looking to be bogged down. Bog. Me. Down.

TREY

... they aren't in the market for a recent college grad. Not many people are...

*ZOE sits in this.*

ZOE

...  
Oh my god...  
OhmygodOhmygodOhmygod...

TREY

Zoe...

ZOE

My life...  
MylifeOhmygod...

TREY

Zoe!

ZOE

What!?

TREY

Breathe...  
Please breath.

ZOE

I am breathing.

TREY

Relax.

ZOE

I AM.

TREY

No you're not.

ZOE

IAMRELAXNG!

...  
Trying...

TREY

Try harder.

*ZOE breathes.*

ZOE

I have 2 months.

TREY

What are you talking about?

ZOE

I only have enough money saved up to last me two months of food and rent. After that...

TREY

Hey, I can always cover for –

ZOE

No... I couldn't let you... I need to find something. I cannot move back home...

TREY

This is just for now. The economy's going to fix itself and there will be jobs for all of us.

ZOE

How do you know?

TREY

I don't... But...

What else can we say?

**Two.**

*A beep.*

ZOE'S MOM (*V.O.*)

Hi Zoe, it's mom. Hope you're doing well dear. Is the job search going well? I'm sure you'll land something eventually. You are a star and whoever sees that first will be lucky to have you. I just hope it happens soon because you can only stay on mine and your fathers' health insurance for a few more years and not having health insurance is scary, Zoe.

*(Beat)*

Anyway, I was just calling because you haven't called in a while and your dad and I miss you. He would call you too but you know how he is. He would just call you, say, "Hi, how are you?" then hang up.

*(Laughs at herself then sighs:)*

Ok, call me back when you get the chance. I want to have a family dinner so let me know when you're available. Ok? Love you dear. Bye.

*The next morning.*

*The apartment.*

*TREY is on his laptop programming.*

*A song plays from his laptop.*

*A Motown-esque song<sup>1</sup>.*

*He really loves the song.*

*TREY puts away the blanket and pillow he slept on.*

*ZOE enters from her room.*

ZOE

Yes! This song!

TREY

You like it?

ZOE

I love it! I haven't heard this song in forever. When was it? It was...

Ugh, this is going to bother me. It's on the tip of my tongue. I heard it...

...

...

Ahhhh!

TREY

---

<sup>1</sup> Listen to The Temptations' Just My Imagination ... are you listening yet? It's nice right? That's the vibe

Was it Jaysson and Tricia's wedding?

ZOE

Jaysson and Tricia's wedding! Yes! That's right. Gosh that seems like so long ago. It was right after the money dance. You were dancing with Tricia and I was dancing with Jaysson –

TREY

You made that lei of dollar bills.

ZOE

- right and the money dance song ended and they played -

TREY

This.

ZOE

This.  
You and I danced to this song didn't we?

TREY

Yeah. I think you're right.

ZOE

Yeah. We did.  
We let the two of them dance and we went to each other.

TREY

Right, right! That was fun.

ZOE

It was.

*They listen.*

ZOE (*cont'd*)

Who did you go with again?

TREY

Hm?

ZOE

To the wedding. Didn't you bring a date to the wedding?

TREY

Oh. Yeah.

What was her name?  
ZOE

Angel.  
TREY

Angel. Whatever happened to her?  
ZOE

*TREY shrugs.*

She was nice. I liked her.  
ZOE (*cont'd*)

She was.  
TREY

*ZOE laughs.*

Good song...  
ZOE

*The song changes to another  
Motown-esque tune<sup>2</sup>.*

And this! I love this song.  
Who's this by again?  
ZOE (*cont'd*)

*(Checking TREY's laptop:)*

What is this?  
TREY

Well it's actually a cover. The orig –

No, no your laptop. Is that an iTunes skin?  
ZOE

Oh. No.  
TREY

What is it?  
ZOE

TREY

---

<sup>2</sup> *Something less recognizable here but with the same vibe... Think "Someday" from the musical Memphis.*



It's just something I've been working on.

ZOE

A media player?

TREY

Sort of. Well. Music player.

I mean, it doesn't just play music but... it's a sort of music player. Hard to explain.

*TREY brushes this off and turns off the music. He continues work on his program.*

TREY (*cont'd*)

How'd the application party go last night?

ZOE

Brilliantly. I have them right here. I'm going to drop them off right now.

*TREY looks at ZOE.  
Pause.*

ZOE (*cont'd*)

What?

TREY

Dressed like that?

ZOE

Yes. What? Why? Why do you ask?

TREY

Nothing –

ZOE

Is there something wrong with the way I'm dressed?

What's wrong with the way I'm dressed?

TREY

Well –

ZOE

I'm dressed professional. Cute but professional.

Someone looks at me and my clothes and they think – *hey she's cute but she must mean business.*

Right?

Whatswrongwithmyclothes!?

TREY

NOTHING! Nothing is wrong with your clothes. You look.  
Fine.

...

It's ju/st.

ZOE

What?

TREY

Ok, think about it. Look at the places you're applying to. You walk into a Wal Mart –

ZOE

I'm not applying to Wal Mart

TREY

- hypothetically, you walk into a Wal Mart wearing what you're wearing: blazer, professional leather folder, all of that. Again, there's nothing wrong with your outfit, it's very cute, but you go to their manager – who is probably wearing khakis and a blue vest or whatever their uniform is at Wal Mart - and you hand him your resume and application.

What do you think the Wal Mart manager will think?

ZOE

*Wow, she's really prepared.*

TREY

*Wow, she's over qualified.*

ZOE

*I am overqualified.*

TREY

Exactly, Zoe. They don't want to put in the effort to train someone who's likely to leave as soon as they find a better job.

ZOE

So what am I supposed to do?

TREY

Dress down a bit. "Un-professionalize" yourself. You can't underdress but don't overdress either.

ZOE

I didn't even know overdressing was a thing.

TREY

It is. And you're doing it.

You can't let them know you're overqualified for the job you're applying for.

ZOE

So I have to pretend I'm not overqualified so I can get the job I don't want but need because I'm under qualified for the jobs I should have.

TREY

Exactly.

ZOE

I won't get the jobs I want until I get more experience but there are no other positions for me to gain experience...

TREY

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Catch-22.

ZOE

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is bullshit.

TREY

Well you have two months to find a job.  
What can you do?

ZOE

Change out of my cute but professional outfit.

*(Making her way to her room:)*

Can you put that song back on?

TREY

Sure.

ZOE

I love this song.

TREY

Me too.

*TREY continues working.*

ZOE

*(From her room:)*

Explain your music program to me.

TREY

Um, it's kind of –

ZOE

- hard to explain. You said that. You've been saying that for years. Try.

TREY

Ok. Well, you know the genius button on Apple's music devices? When you're playing a song and you click on it, it makes a playlist of songs that you'd probably be into if you're enjoying the song that's playing.

Wait.

Actually. I guess it's more like Pandora. Do you know Pandora?

ZOE

Yeah.

TREY

Do you know eHarmony? okCupid?

ZOE

The dating site.

TREY

Well, my program is sort of a hybrid of Pandora and eHarmony.

*ZOE emerges in a new outfit.*

ZOE

There.

*TREY turns around and sees ZOE.  
She looks more calm in this outfit.  
Less uptight. He prefers her like this.*

*Beat.*

ZOE

Better?

TREY

Much. It screams Wal Mart.

ZOE

I'm not applying to Wal Mart!

TREY

It screams Target.

ZOE

Ugh.

*ZOE throws clothes at TREY.*

ZOE (*cont'd*)

So a cross between Pandora and eHarmony.

TREY

I guess so, yeah.

ZOE

Huh.

TREY

It's a dating service that matches people through their taste in music.

ZOE

So you listen to music and rate it.

TREY

Right and in time, the program will develop a better understanding of what kind of music you like and will then be able to match you with other users who have a similar taste in music.

ZOE

So like a dating service that matches people through their taste in music?

TREY

That's what I said. Yes.

*Pause.*

ZOE

Wow... That's a really good idea.

TREY

You think so?

ZOE

Yeah.

TREY

Really?

ZOE

Yeah!

I mean, there are a ton of music fanatics out there that would eat this up.

I can totally see it. Some crazy Chris Martin stalker in her glow in the dark Viva La Vida t-shirt saying, "Coldplay totally changed my life. I could never love someone who didn't love Coldplay too!"

Your program would introduce her to no one but Coldplay fans.

Yeah... What do you call it?

TREY

*(Proud:)*

TuneUp. One word. No space.

...

*(Not proud:)*

It's a working title. You really think it's a good idea?

ZOE

I think it's a great idea.

TREY

I mean it's not done yet. It's just something I've been working on for a bit.

ZOE

But when it's done it could really be something Trey.

We could sell this.

**END OF EXCERPT**