

Binge

Ten page sample

By Thomas Ward

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Synopsis

Doug Barnes wants to have gastric bypass surgery. But before he can, he has to endure a barrage of personal questions from his surgeon, the match-making efforts of his best friend, and an infatuation with the new pizza delivery girl. With two weeks to eat like there's no tomorrow, Doug is forced to confront his insecurities, his vanity, and the true motive behind so-called "self-improvement."

*Characters

Doug Barnes - early 30s, overweight.

Dr. Wilson - 40s. A surgeon.

Chris - late 20s, good looking, in shape.

Beth - late 20s, cute, seemingly unassuming.

*All can be any ethnicity

Setting

The play moves quickly between five locations: Dr. Wilson's office, Doug's and Chris's cubicle, their break room, a coffee shop in a bookstore, and Doug's apartment/kitchen. There should be no scene changes so scenery should be just enough to suggest these locations.

Production History / Awards

July/August 2010 - New York Premiere, SLANT Theatre Project, Directed by Adam Knight at The Drilling Company.

May 2010 - Winner, Texas playwriting competition, Stage West Theatre, Fort Worth. Staged reading directed by Justin Flowers.

March 2010 - Produced by Rites of Passage Theatre Company for Out of the Loop Festival, Dallas TX. Directed by Clay Wheeler.

March 2009 - Staged Reading, Cherry Lane Theatre NY, directed by Thomas Ward.

SCENE 1

Dr. Wilson's office.

DOUG, an overweight man, is dressed in a coat and tie. He's seated in front of a desk. After a moment DR. WILSON enters, carrying a file folder.

DR. WILSON

Hi there.

DOUG

(starts to rise)

Hi.

DR. WILSON

Don't get up. Sorry I'm late. Got behind the slowest buncha assholes this morning. Lining up their putts like they're holding on to a lead at Augusta, you know?

DOUG

Golf?

DR. WILSON

Yeah.

DOUG

Never played.

DR. WILSON

Don't blame ya.

(He looks through the file)

Let's see, your... name... is...

DOUG

Doug.

DR. WILSON

Doug. Barnes. Doug Baarrnes.

DOUG

Right.

That's a funny name. DR. WILSON

Is it? DOUG

Yeah, I think so. DR. WILSON

Okay. DOUG

Let's see, your primary care physician is Dr. Richards? DR. WILSON

Yes. DOUG

How's he doing? DR. WILSON

Good. DOUG

He's a hoot, isn't he? DR. WILSON

Yeah. DOUG

Prick still owes me 300 for the super bowl. DR. WILSON

Really. DOUG

Yep. I will never see that money. So, what can I do for you? DR. WILSON

I'm interested in getting the procedure. DOUG

Were you at the presentation yesterday? DR. WILSON

Yes, I was. DOUG

You look familiar. DR. WILSON

I was the fat one. DOUG

Hah. DR. WILSON

Just kidding. DOUG

I know. I hear that joke a lot. DR. WILSON

Really? DOUG

Yeah. It's okay. A sense of humor is very important. DR. WILSON

Good. Well, I got that. DOUG

Why are you so dressed up? DR. WILSON

I'm on my way somewhere after this. To work. DOUG

What do you do? DR. WILSON

I work in a call center. DOUG

Like, phones? DR. WILSON

Yes. DOUG

You gotta dress up for that?
DR. WILSON

Um... Well. I'm also... later today I'm going to a funeral.
DOUG

Oh. Who's?
DR. WILSON

My father's.
DOUG

Wow. Really?
DR. WILSON

Yeah.
DOUG

Sorry to hear that.
DR. WILSON

It's okay. Thanks.
DOUG

What was I saying?
DR. WILSON

You were saying that a sense of humor is very important.
DOUG

Right. So which one do you want?
DR. WILSON

Which...?
DOUG

Lap band?
DR. WILSON

Uh...
DOUG

Most people want that instead of the gastric bypass, but I generally think the bypass is the way to go.
DR. WILSON

Okay. DOUG

Hey, do you smoke? DR. WILSON

No. DOUG

Really? DR. WILSON

Yeah. DOUG

DR. WILSON
(leaning in closer)
I'm not asking cuz of the... I'm actually... you can tell me if you smoke.

I don't. DOUG

Seriously. DR. WILSON

I'm serious. I do not smoke. DOUG

Beat.

DR. WILSON
Good for you. Well, listen, you heard my spiel at the seminar so today we'll just chat, get the ball rolling, talk about the procedure, kinda get to know each other.

Okay. DOUG

Why do you want to do it? DR. WILSON

The surgery? DOUG

Yeah. DR. WILSON

DOUG
(as in "isn't it obvious?")

Well.

DR. WILSON

Uh-huh.

DOUG

Look at me.

DR. WILSON

Mm-hmm. Well, sure. But... why don't you, you know... elaborate.

DOUG

Okay, uh...

(essentially a prepared speech)

I just think this is my only option at this point.

DR. WILSON

Uh-huh.

DOUG

And I understand that it isn't a quick fix or anything like that. This isn't about vanity, it's about my, you know, quality of life.

DR. WILSON

Mm-hmm.

DOUG

Because I have a great life. I mean, otherwise. There's nothing really that I'd change about it except for this one thing. I mean, I think I'm an adjusted person. Feel good about who I am. *Inside*, I guess. People seem to, you know, like me. And I like people. I'm nice. I'm a nice person. That's what people say, anyway. And that's a good thing. I don't mean to sound braggy or anything like that, but I think I'm pretty funny. And I understand that this procedure means big changes for me, the way I live I mean, and it's something I'm prepared to do.

(an attempt at a joke)

I realize I might not know the pizza delivery guy by name anymore...

(a beat as DR. WILSON does not respond
at all)

But, I mean, I've put a lot of thought into this, and I've read about it, and I understand the risks and what it means in the future. And, yeah, it's *partly* about vanity. But there's nothing wrong with that, right? I mean, if I can someday have my shirt off in front of people and not be solely conscious of that fact, that would be nice.

(beat)

Steve. The pizza guy's name is Steve. It's like he's one of my friends or something, we see each other so much. He's a nice kid, but, I don't know. So... yeah...

(beat, waiting for DR. WILSON to say something)

Is that... what you were asking?

DR. WILSON

Hmm? I was a million miles away, I'm sorry.

DOUG

That's okay.

DR. WILSON

Can you sit tight for a second?

DOUG

Sure.

DR. WILSON leaves the room. DOUG sits in silence for a moment. A long moment. He looks around, perhaps picks something up from the desk and replaces it as DR. WILSON returns with a bag of chips.

DR. WILSON

You mind if I munch?

DOUG

No.

DR. WILSON

I'm trying to quit smoking. Again. Wife's orders.

DOUG

Yeah.

DR. WILSON

(offering him the bag)

Chip?

DOUG

No, thanks.

DR. WILSON

It's not a test. You can have some chips.

DOUG eats a chip. They both chew for a moment, DR. WILSON making small talk.

DR. WILSON (CONT'D)

You married?

DOUG

No.

DR. WILSON

Let me tell ya... I love my wife. But I love sucking on those cancer sticks too, you know?

DOUG

Yeah.

DR. WILSON

We all got our kinks, right?

DOUG

Sure.

DR. WILSON

So what were you saying?

DOUG squirms uncomfortably in his chair.

DOUG

You asked me to elaborate.

DR. WILSON

Right. About...?

DOUG

Why I want the procedure.

DR. WILSON

Yes. Yes. And what you were saying was...?

DOUG

Um.

(beat, perhaps a touch of frustration)

I wanna be thin.

DR. WILSON

Who doesn't?

DOUG
Right. Well, but there are people, aren't there?

DR. WILSON
People...

DOUG
Who are okay with being big.

DR. WILSON
Are there?

DOUG
Aren't there?

DR. WILSON
No.

DOUG
Okay.

DR. WILSON
Least I hope not. Bad for business, you know?

DOUG
Sure. Well. Here I am.

Beat. DR. WILSON crunches a chip.

DR. WILSON
You know what, I've got a... a thing... here...
(finds a piece of paper on his desk)
A questionnaire thing that we can use to get us started and keep me on track. How would that be?

DOUG
Fine.

DR. WILSON
Okay, great... let's see...
(He gets a pen and goes to the questions)
Marital status?

DOUG
You just asked me...

DR. WILSON

Oh, right.

(makes a mark on the folder)

Do you have a girlfriend?

DOUG

No.

DR. WILSON

Boyfriend?

DOUG

No.

DR. WILSON

And what is your occupation?

LIGHTS SHIFT TO: