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ARTHUR
DAVE
NED
PAIGE

ARTHUR. And here I am at last. In the room, with the man. The man who called to me this morning like a siren, who spoke to me through the screen of my laptop and said, Arthur Vance, whatever plans you had for this week, for this *year*, forget them. They can wait, the whole world can wait. There is only one thing for you now, one purpose. And its name... is Ned Newley.

NED. *(Beat.)* Um...

ARTHUR. *(Holding up his hand:)* Don't say a word. I don't need you to speak; I just need you to be real. All morning I've been traveling just to shake your hand, and... it's thrilling; it's intoxicating.

NED. *(Beat. Having no words, and finding the situation both frightening and absurd, he lets out a little high-pitched laugh:)* Haha!

ARTHUR. *(Matching NED's laugh with his own:)* Hahahaha! And this must be Dave, yes?

DAVE. Yes, sir.

ARTHUR. I already like you, Dave, 'cause you're the guy who believes in *that* guy. And then there's Ms. Caldwell—do you even realize what a talent she is? And she's the first person you hired?

PAIGE. I'm the only person he hired.

ARTHUR. I'm gonna say that counts. You gentlemen aren't gonna believe the work she's done for us already—the numbers she was just showing me. Ned Newley—honestly—you have no idea what a fortunate man you are.

(NED makes an "Oh?" noise.)

ARTHUR. You have no idea how "of the moment" this moment is. *Your moment, Governor.* *(NED makes an "Oh!" noise.)* Until today, you were a common man. A nobody—content to *be* a nobody. And then because some clown named Clarke couldn't keep his Johnson in his trousers, suddenly you're the Governor. And you say to yourself: "I'm not sure I'm up for this." That sound about right?

(Throughout the play, where NED's dialogue is in parentheses, NED is mumbling—in a way that can sometimes be understood by the audience, but not by the other characters.)

NED. Well, I *(was a bit trepidatious, I guess—)*

ARTHUR. *(Taking that as an apt demonstration:)* Exactly. And then, you stand up in front of those cameras—with the whole world watching—and you say: "World? I'm not sure I'm up for this."

DAVE. *(Finding this insulting to NED:)* Wait—I'm sorry, are you—?

ARTHUR. Oh, I'm not being *critical*, Dave; I'm just telling you what America saw. Paige?

PAIGE. *(Reading from her tablet computer:)* Among those who viewed the swearing-in, 26 percent said Ned "looked a little unprepared to be Governor,"

DAVE. Okay—

PAIGE. 37 percent said he looked “extremely unprepared to be Governor.” And another 14 percent said he looked “absolutely, totally unprepared to be Governor.”

DAVE. “Absolutely totally”?

PAIGE. Altogether, that’s 77 percent—

DAVE. (*Skeptical of the whole premise.*) Wait, but 77 percent of what number? How many people in the state watched that video?

ARTHUR. Oh this isn’t just this *state*, Dave; this is national. (*To PAIGE.*) What’s the current tally on YouTube?

DAVE. *YouTube?*

PAIGE. Nine hundred thousand views.

DAVE. Nine hundred thousand?!

ARTHUR. Hoo-boy!

DAVE. How’d it get on *YouTube*?

ARTHUR. I posted it, back in Boston. Then I made a few calls, got folks at CNN talking about it, and Fox News.

PAIGE. MSNBC.

ARTHUR. Al Jazeera.

DAVE. Al Jazeera?

PAIGE. Plus, for the last forty minutes... (*Showing DAVE the image on her tablet.*) “Ned Newley” has been trending on Twitter.

NED. (I don’t even know what that *means.*)

ARTHUR. You’re a popular man, Governor.

DAVE. Popular?! You just said 77 percent of people think he’s unqualified to be Governor!

PAIGE. “*Unprepared* to be Governor.” “Unqualified” got 81 percent.

ARTHUR. Those are impressive numbers.

DAVE. Impressive, yes; in how *horrible* they are. (*To PAIGE.*) Why are you telling him this? (*To ARTHUR.*) Why are you happy about bad news?

ARTHUR. Bad news? This is *great* news.