

– dialogue sample 2 from –

ICE CREAM AND DISBELIEF

by

Scott Glander

Contact:
Scott Glander
scott[at]scottglander[dot]com

Copyright © 2021 Scott Glander

SOUND-BITE IDIOTS

Cast

OLDER Person, 50s or 60s or ... , gender neutral

YOUNGER Person, mid-30s, gender neutral

Setting

A park, in late spring

ACT I

A park.

YOUNGER is waiting. ENTER OLDER. Older stops, takes a moment

OLDER

I thought that might have been you last week.

YOUNGER

I knew you in an instant.

OLDER

Some things don't --

YOUNGER

I'm sorry I never got back in touch.

OLDER

It was a long time ago. You were young. You were angry and upset. I knew that.

YOUNGER

You were kinda rough, as I remember it.

OLDER

You were at that age where anyone who doesn't agree with you is wrong.

YOUNGER

You could have --

OLDER

You were angry and upset with your friends, your parents and with yourself -- not me.

YOUNGER

I suppose you're right.

OLDER

You had much family pressure on you, as I remember it. Family expectations are difficult to manage in some families. Still, I thought you might have been different.

YOUNGER

So did I.

OLDER

I thought you could see and understand what I was saying. I thought you wanted something different from your life.

YOUNGER

I did. That's what I didn't like about what you said.

OLDER

It isn't what you didn't like, it's what you didn't want to understand. And it certainly is what your family didn't want you to understand.

YOUNGER

How do you know me as well as you do?

OLDER

I've made many of the same mistakes myself.

YOUNGER

"Mistakes are great teachers" -- one of your favorite sayings.

OLDER

You always enjoyed hearing it.

YOUNGER

My parents didn't.

OLDER

They always wanted you to be 'perfect', not 'flawed' as I am.

YOUNGER

Do you remember what you said that last day?

OLDER

That made you so angry?

YOUNGER

Yeah.

OLDER

I asked you 'what the universe wanted' from you.

YOUNGER

You got it.

OLDER

So?

YOUNGER

So, what?

OLDER

Have you figured out what the universe wants from you?

YOUNGER

(Beat)

Have you noticed no one talks about 'the meaning of life' anymore?

OLDER

We're too busy these days to worry about that. We'd rather be catered to as consumers.

YOUNGER

No, I'm serious.

OLDER

So am I. We love our TVs, we love our internet, we love our sound-bites.

YOUNGER

You still don't have a TV, do you?

OLDER

No, I don't. They're more worthless than ever. All they offer is a quick and easy answer for everything, so we think.

YOUNGER

Not everything.

OLDER

They give quick and easy answers to quick and easy questions, so we never have to or bother to think for ourselves.

YOUNGER

When I asked you about the meaning of life years ago you said you didn't know what it was, but I never believed you. I thought you wanted me to figure it out for myself.

OLDER

You're right, I did.

YOUNGER

Well, I thought you might be right and I'd eventually get it, but I haven't.

OLDER

You haven't figured it out or you haven't spent the time to figure it out?

YOUNGER

I haven't done either.

(Waits for a response)

OLDER

Most people don't want to know, so they never find it. Many people never even look for it.

YOUNGER

I think I may be one of those.

OLDER

That's your parents talking, not you. Most people don't really want to know, so they get the question wrong. If you ask the --

YOUNGER

"Wrong question you get the wrong answer." Another of your favorites.

OLDER

Most people think it's a philosophical question, but it isn't.

YOUNGER

What do you mean?

OLDER

The philosophical part of the question is a general question. Does life in general have meaning?

YOUNGER

What's the answer.

OLDER

No, it doesn't.

YOUNGER

Then why are we here?

OLDER

Because our parents begot us.

YOUNGER

That's too simple.

OLDER

No it isn't. It's perfectly accurate, but there's also another part to the question. Those few who do ask, ask the general question -- not the particular question.

YOUNGER

What's the particular question?

OLDER

What is the meaning of 'my life'? This is the question you're asking me, right?

YOUNGER

Yes, yes it is.

OLDER

I'm sorry, but I still can't answer that.

YOUNGER

Can't or won't?

OLDER

I can't. I can only answer for myself. What is the meaning of 'my particular life' is 'my responsibility'. The meaning of 'your particular life' is 'your responsibility'.

YOUNGER

It can't be --

OLDER

If you want 'your life' to have any meaning, you have to give it meaning -- because you're the only one who can give any meaning 'whatsoever' to your life.

YOUNGER

I'm dying.

OLDER

I thought so.

YOUNGER

I'm married and have two small children and I'm not going to be around for them.

OLDER

There are different ways of 'being around' for them.

YOUNGER

I don't know how to do that.

OLDER

That's your parents talking. Don't leave that legacy for your children to carry with them for the rest of their lives. You can do this and you can do this better than you can imagine.

YOUNGER

I don't think so.

OLDER

I've known you since you were young. I knew what you were capable of then and what you're capable of now. But you have to be willing to do it.

YOUNGER

I can't do this.

OLDER

You have to do this -- for your children -- or they'll wind up as lost and floundering as you are now. Is that what you want for them?

YOUNGER

I'm scared.

OLDER

We all are. It's just that some of us stand up and look straight into it. A rare few can even embrace it, but it isn't easy.

YOUNGER

How do I do that?

OLDER

Most people feel sorry for themselves so they collapse and conform.

YOUNGER

That sounds like me.

OLDER

Trust me, human beings know how to do this -- you know how to do this -- but we're taught otherwise. We're afraid of it. We're afraid of ourselves. We're afraid of being who we are. We're afraid of looking deep inside of ourselves, so most of us squander our best years until it's too late. You may actually be more fortunate than most.

YOUNGER

How can you say that?

OLDER

Do you have some time left?

YOUNGER

Not as much as I'd --

OLDER

That's not what I asked. Slow down. Realistically, do you have some time left?

YOUNGER

(Takes breath)

Yes, I do.

OLDER

This may be what the universe wants from you.

END OF PLAY