

Jeremiah

JEREMIAH

by Tami Canaday

Time:

The present.

SCENE ONE

At Rise:

In the afternoon, Jeremiah enters carrying a small bag of bird seed. He sprinkles a little of the bird seed on the alley walkway. Several chubby pigeons land and start to eat the seed. Entranced, Jeremiah watches them. He throws more seed down and more pigeons land. Several of them coo. Suddenly, a crow lands aggressively scattering all the pigeons. Jeremiah shoos the crow off. The pigeons return. Mitchell enters from the other end of the alleyway. When he sees Jeremiah feeding the pigeons, he sprints toward him.

MITCHELL
(yelling)

Ahhhh! Ahhhh!

(The pigeons fly away. JEREMIAH watches them for moment before he turns to MITCHELL.)

JEREMIAH
What did you do that for?

MITCHELL
(laughing)
Shit, why you feeding rats with wings?

JEREMIAH
They're not.

MITCHELL
Yes. Diseased rats with wings.

(JEREMIAH puts away his seeds into a pocket.)

JEREMIAH
Why you gotta ruin everything?

MITCHELL
Oh, Jesus, go to the park and sit on a bench then. Like an old man and feed your pigeons. I can't believe how boneheaded you are.

JEREMIAH
Birds don't know me in the park.

MITCHELL

Jeremiah

Introduce yourself then, weirdo. I wanna show you something.

What? JEREMIAH
(interested)

Guess. MITCHELL

I don't know. JEREMIAH
(shrugs)

You can't tell nobody 'specially dad. MITCHELL

I never see him so how can I talk to him. JEREMIAH

He's working. MITCHELL

Yeah. Whatever. JEREMIAH

You need to pinky swear. MITCHELL
(smirks)

Shut-up. What? JEREMIAH

Whoo, whoo, whoo. Da, da, da. MITCHELL

(MITCHELL pulls out a gun with a long barrel from underneath his jacket. He points it away from JEREMIAH. JEREMIAH is stunned.)

I hate// JEREMIAH

Don't// MITCHELL

I don't like// JEREMIAH

'Cause// MITCHELL

Jeremiah

They scare me//
JEREMIAH

He, ho, big baby//
MITCHELL

Not//
JEREMIAH

Are//
MITCHELL

I don't like//
JEREMIAH

Pretend//
MITCHELL

Can't//
JEREMIAH

Try.
MITCHELL

(A beat.)

Wow, man, that's a beaut.
JEREMIAH

'Cause, I'm the best.
MITCHELL

I can't believe you have a gun.
JEREMIAH

Take a chance on the wild side.
MITCHELL

(MITCHELL starts strutting around with the gun. He points it side-to side in front of him.)

Where'd you get it?
JEREMIAH

It's our time. I'm breaking rules.
MITCHELL

(MITCHELL suddenly stops and points the gun down the alley. Points it up to the sky. He twirls in slow motion pretending to shoot the gun.)

Jeremiah

MITCHELL (cont'd)

I'm a serious man.

JEREMIAH

Dude, where'd you get it?

MITCHELL

Found it.

JEREMIAH

You didn't find it.

MITCHELL

Did.

JEREMIAH

You were walking along//

MITCHELL

There it was laying//

JEREMIAH

'Til you picked it up//

MITCHELL

Yep.

JEREMIAH
(not believing)

Caw, caw, caw!

(JEREMIAH makes to exit.)

MITCHELL

All right, chill. I'll tell you.

(JEREMIAH turns back. MITCHELL puts the gun back into his jacket.)

MITCHELL (cont'd)

You know that . . . white van parked on Dahlia next to Colfax. The one that's always there. Doesn't seem like anybody owns it. Well, the dream we all dream of. I broke into it.

JEREMIAH

You're such an idiot. Lord's convenience has outside cameras.

MITCHELL

They're broken. I, kinda, just . . . people say, I'm pretty awesome. And, I was awesome. I jiggered the lock with a nail. And when that didn't work, I broke the side window with a brick.

JEREMIAH

With a brick.

Jeremiah

MITCHELL

Nothing in the front seats. Smelled like tuna fish. But, guess, I shoulda known. The treasure was in the load space. And, it must be done, bro. Must be done. Found it in this red tool box with a half full box of ammo. But still, god-damn, I'm the king of luck.

JEREMIAH

Is it loaded?

MITCHELL

What do you think?

JEREMIAH
(cooly calm)

What are you going to do with it?

MITCHELL

Well, that's to be decided.

JEREMIAH

Are you gonna hide it?

MITCHELL

That's to be decided.

JEREMIAH

Well, I don't wanna know where it's at. 'Cause if I find it, I don't know what//

MITCHELL

You wouldn't touch it//

JEREMIAH

Don't know. Probably, not. I don't like dead things. This morning I found Mackey dead.

MITCHELL
(shakes head)

Fuck, not another pigeon story.

JEREMIAH

So, I dug a hole in Mr. Brewster's side yard. You know he never goes out there. The ground was hard — was a respectable hole I dug. I placed Mackey in it//

MITCHELL

Bare hands//

JEREMIAH

Yes//

MITCHELL

Gross//

Jeremiah

JEREMIAH

I covered the hole up with soil and stamped on it. Then, I started to walk up the yard, and there was Mr. Brewster asking me what I was doing. He hadn't seen anything. I just told him.

MITCHELL
(appalled)

Told him the truth.

JEREMIAH

Yeah.

MITCHELL

He made you dig it back up.

JEREMIAH

No. But he looked at me with pity.

(JEREMIAH stares at his brother. A beat.)

MITCHELL

What's this? You wanna fight or something?

JEREMIAH

That gun puts thoughts in my head. (more to self) I wouldn't reach for it quickly. I know that.

MITCHELL

Oh, Jesus, stop talking to yourself. It's like close to nothing. Don't you want to be a part of// With me. I want you to have some fun//

JEREMIAH
(not believing it.)

We can have some fun//

MITCHELL

Speaking to anybody we want//

JEREMIAH
(not believing it)

'Specially the ladies.

(MITCHELL laughs.)

MITCHELL

With this baby, we can go anywhere. No one will be snide about mom anymore. Total freedom. Walk up to//

JEREMIAH

The Milko brothers.

MITCHELL

Not what I was imagining. But, I'm up for flashing this baby to certain parties if necessary.

Jeremiah

JEREMIAH

You gotta think of a good place to hide it so dad never finds it. What if he's looking out the window, right now?

(JEREMIAH indicates the window.)

MITCHELL

He never looks out the window. Doesn't like to look into the alley.

JEREMIAH

'Cause if he did, there'd be//

MITCHELL

Juvie for me//

JEREMIAH

I don't want to know either//

MITCHELL

So, you're in//

JEREMIAH

No, I'm not in//

MITCHELL

You're my brother. My side-kick//

JEREMIAH

I'm nobody's sidekick//

MITCHELL

I'll let you hold it//

JEREMIAH

I've told you, I hate guns. I hate the fact that you're holding one.

MITCHELL

Baby//

JEREMIAH

No//

MITCHELL

Ha! Guns don't kill people, people do.

JEREMIAH

Then what follows//

MITCHELL

You're loosing me, bro.

Jeremiah

JEREMIAH

That gun doesn't need Mitchell Zimmer.

MITCHELL

Huh//

JEREMIAH

You seem to need the gun like your Johnny B.Gel// You're the baby here, not me//

MITCHELL

Hey//

JEREMIAH

Return it to the van. I can be the look out while you do it.

MITCHELL

I'd rather drink razor blades in my Coke than return it.

JEREMIAH

I'm not in.

End of Scene One

(Scene changes to SceneTwo)

SCENE TWO

(The brothers are hanging out in the alley several days later in the morning . MITCHELL is practicing his trumpet; he's not bad. JEREMIAH is sitting against the wall listening. A beat. TOBIAS enters from the other end of the alley. JEREMIAH and MITCHELL do not see him.)

JEREMIAH

(loud voice)

Why you closing your eyes when you play? You look like you're gonna poop.

(MITCHELL laughs through his trumpet. Pulls his trumpet away from his mouth.)

MITCHELL

To concentrate. Now go away! Let the maestro finish.

(TOBIAS saunters up to MITCHELL.)

MITCHELL (cont'd)

(surprised)

Hey, Tobias, what's up?

Jeremiah

TOBIAS

You children fighting like usual?

JEREMIAH

No.

TOBIAS

Good, 'cause I gotta favor to ask. Can you put in a good word with your dad at Sunrise? I'm going to apply there for a job as a bus boy.

MITCHELL

Why you wanna work//

JEREMIAH

Dad needs a dishwasher.

TOBIAS

Slash busboy.

MITCHELL

Sure, I will. He's always complaining about the quality of his workers. He'll add you to his long list. Ha!

TOBIAS

Well, if he hires me, he'll be yelling my praises every time he sees you both. Like, if we're all working together at the same time.

MITCHELL

Won't happen//

JEREMIAH

Too much overhead//

TOBIAS

He'll say that Tobias — why he's the finest, hardest working young man I know. Why can't you boys be more like him?

JEREMIAH

If you get the job, my dad will be saying, why can't you be more like Jeremiah?

TOBIAS

Your brother's a runt.

MITCHELL

I know. Shut-up, Jeremiah. Yeah, I'll talk to my dad. (smirks) It's my destiny.

TOBIAS

Jeremiah

Bet, 'cause my old man is gonna kick my ass out of the house if I don't get a job soon. All ready kicked out Todd.

JEREMIAH

Oh, so that was the homeless guy in the alley.

TOBIAS

Shut-up! He isn't homeless; he's a person without a home. (Laughs.) He's crushing it at Liz's// Forty-year old drunk and ugly. What a life.

(Points his two index fingers at MITCHELL.)

Okay, gonna hold you to it. Say it clear and confidentially: Tobias is a miracle employee 'bout ready to walk into your life, dad.

MITCHELL

(smirks)

Will do.

TOBIAS

Good.

(TOBIAS exits.)

JEREMIAH

Why you always putting me down?

MITCHELL

'Cause you're a smart ass, and I don't want to have to fight him 'cause of you.

JEREMIAH

For once, why can't you just be on my side.

MITCHELL

I am//