

M/M Drama

## ❖ Other People's Money

.....JERRY STERNER

CHARACTERS: COLES (40's), GARFINKLE (40's)

SETTING: *The New York office of GARFINKLE.*

WILLIAM COLES is the President of New England Wire And Cable. The chairman of his company, Jorgenson, is sixty-eight and plans to retire at seventy. In this scene, COLES is talking to GARFINKLE, an elegant and cunning New York "take-over artist." COLES is asking for time before GARFINKLE takes over the company; COLES wants the needed time for Jorgenson to retire so that he can run the company.

COLES: That's an impressive office you have out there.

GARFINKLE: No big deal. Only lawyers. What can I do for you?

COLES: Thanks for seeing me on such short notice. I'm not really here on business. My wife and I came down to spend the evening with Bill, Jr. He's attending Columbia. Got two more after him. Both girls. Claire's out shopping now. It's always a treat to come to this city.

GARFINKLE: Great.

COLES: We're from small towns in Florida. Met at Florida State.

GARFINKLE: What'd you come here for — to give me your biography?

COLES: I didn't know I was boring you.

GARFINKLE: Now you know.

COLES (*Trying to control himself*): . . . I'll get to the point. I see by the latest 13-D you hold just over four hundred thousand shares. That's ten per cent.

GARFINKLE: Four hundred and twenty-five thousand. Bought some this morning.

COLES: The filing says they were purchased for "investment purposes only".

GARFINKLE: I never read filings.

COLES: What does "investment purposes only" mean?

GARFINKLE: Means I bought them to make money.

COLES: How much more do you intend on buying?

GARFINKLE: That's none of your business.

COLES: Can we speak frankly?

GARFINKLE: No. Lie to me. Tell me how thrilled you are to know me. Tell me how gorgeous I am.

COLES: You don't want to speak frankly?

GARFINKLE: I always speak frankly. I don't like people who say "Can we speak frankly?" Means they're bullshitting me the rest of the time.

COLES: I'm sorry. I won't use that phrase anymore.

GARFINKLE: What do you want?

COLES: Two years. I want two years.

GARFINKLE: For what?

COLES: Jorgenson is sixty-eight. In two years he'll be seventy. He steps down at seventy.

GARFINKLE: Says who?

COLES: It's an agreement he has with the Board. His employment contract expires at seventy.

GARFINKLE: The Board are his cronies. He is the Board. What he wants done gets done.

COLES: He gave me his word. He's a man of his word.

GARFINKLE: Stop playing with yourself.

COLES: Twelve years ago he told me if I did the job it'd be my company to run when he steps down. That's why I came to that God-forsaken place. It's the same reason I'm here. I don't want the rug pulled out from under me so close to the finish line.

GARFINKLE: You're wasting your time. I don't have two years.

COLES: Listen, Mr. Garfinkle. I said we could grow our other businesses by fifteen per cent. I was being conservative. We'll grow them in excess of twenty. I can manage. I can manage the hell out of a company. In two years we'll be worth considerably more.

GARFINKLE: Billy boy, look at me. I weigh a ton. I smoke three packs a day. I walk from here to there I'm out of breath. I can't even steal life insurance. Two years for me is forever. Do what you have to do now. I'm not a long term player.

COLES: I can't do it now. I can't do it till he leaves. If I try I'm out on my ear.

GARFINKLE (*Handing COLES his briefcase*): That's the problem with working for a living.

COLES: Two years is not a long time. I have waited a lifetime for the opportunity.

GARFINKLE (*Puts his arm around COLES's shoulder*): You got stock, don't you?

COLES: Yes.

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GARFINKLE: Fifty, seventy-five thousand, right?

COLES: Sixty.

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GARFINKLE: Well, shit, look — want to feel better? (GARFINKLE *taps out stock on his quote machine*) Before you heard my name your stock was ten. Now it's fourteen and a half. In two months I made you a quarter of a million dollars. Billy boy, the least you can do is smile. Ossie at the bank sends me flowers. All I'm asking from you is a smile.

Source: Applause Theatre Books

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