

The Players

written by

Izaiah Shupe

Pilot or "How did I end up here?"

FIRST DRAFT

Izaiah Shupe: 547 Stonecrest Loop, Crossville, Tennessee 38571

Phone Number: 931-248-0114

E-Mail: [Shupe113@gmail.com](mailto:Shupe113@gmail.com)

**TEASER**

**EXT. BROADWAY-NIGHT**

It is the opening night of a Broadway show. People crowd the Stanchions, snapping photos and calling out to celebrities and Broadway legends.

We see Colleen Stone (early 50s) emerge from a limousine. Her slender yet gawky body behaves almost like a newborn giraffe. She gets her dress caught in the door after it is shut.

COLLEEN  
(upset)  
Shit!

She starts pulling on her dress and looking around in desperation.

COLLEEN (CONT'D)  
Who's the bastard that did this? This is  
a custom gown from Versace.

CUT TO:

1 **EXT. BROADWAY-NIGHT**

1

A man dressed in a tux looks slightly offscreen.

MAN  
I was the bastard.

CUT TO:

2 **EXT. BROADWAY-NIGHT**

2

A man opens the door, and her dress is released. She composes herself.

COLLEEN  
Thank you.  
(mutters)  
Dumb fuck.

The crowd starts to sound like a roar as soon as she makes her way front and center. A reporter in her mid-20s calls her out.

REPORTER  
(holding out her I-phone  
to record the  
interaction)  
Miss Stone? Miss Stone? Miss Stone?

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

Colleen is enamored with the crowd and ignores her.

REPORTER (CONT'D)  
Miss Stone?

Colleen turns to discover where this noise is coming from.

REPORTER (CONT'D)  
Yes, over here.

Colleen makes her way over to her.

The crowd parts.

REPORTER (CONT'D)  
I hear this is your first appearance on  
the Broadway stage since 2005.

COLLEEN  
It is. I decided to take a break from  
the stage to focus on more personal  
things.

CUT TO:

3 INT. COLLEEN'S BROWNSTONE-NIGHT

3

Colleen is sitting on her couch, eating a container of ice  
cream, and crying while *Love Story* is playing on the TV.

CUT TO:

4 EXT. BROADWAY-NIGHT

4

REPORTER  
I hear that this is your Magnum Opus.  
What inspired this show?

COLLEEN  
Inspiration strikes at the oddest of  
times. You see, I was at Sardi's sipping  
a perfectly crafted martini, and I was  
clutching my favorite Gucci handbag.  
That's when the idea for "*Three Martinis  
and a Handbag*," the story of my life,  
began to unfold as I thought back to the  
many ups and downs I've experienced and  
discovered that, in the end, all is  
well.

REPORTER  
Do you think it will be a smash?

(CONTINUED)

Colleen starts walking away.

COLLEEN  
(looks over her shoulder)  
ABSOLUTELY, DARLING!

Colleen walks down the carpet, posing  
for the cameras and entering the  
theatre.

**END TEASER**

**ACT ONE****INT. WALLY MALLARD'S OFFICE-DAY**

Colleen is in her agent's office. Wally Mallard (60s) is sitting at his desk reading a review of Colleen's play.

WALLY

(reading the newspaper)  
*"Three Martinis and a Handbag"* was single-handedly the worst thing Broadway theatre has ever endured. It had the emotional value of a pile of shit. I've seen dumb criminals have better performances than that of Miss Stone.

He looks at her with concern.

COLLEEN

(stunned)  
 An emotional value equal to a pile of Shit?! This has got to be some fucking joke.  
 (leans towards Wally and points at the paper)  
 Tell me this is a fucking joke.

WALLY

(confused)  
 This is a fucking joke?

Colleen looks at him in disgust.

COLLEEN

You dumb fu-  
 (she composes herself)  
 Find me another.

Wally scans through his computer for another review.

WALLY

I've got one!

COLLEEN

Read it to me.

WALLY

(upbeat)  
*"Three Martinis and a Handbag"* was (slowly deflated)  
 Broadway's equivalent to a Pauly Shore movie.

Colleen looks even more devastated.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COLLEEN  
Fuck. I love Pauly Shore movies.

CUT TO:

5 L.A. STREET- DAY

5

A camera crew tracks Pauly Shore down.

INTERVIEWER (O.C.)  
Pauly!!! Pauly!!!

Pauly Shore turns around confused.

PAULY SHORE  
(confused)  
What?

INTERVIEWER (O.C.)  
How does it feel to have your name  
marred by the disgraceful performance of  
Colleen Stone from her one-woman show?

PAULY SHORE  
What the fuck are you talking about?

CUT TO:

6 INT. WALLY MALLARD'S OFFICE-DAY

6

WALLY  
I don't think that is the problem.

COLLEEN  
Then what's the problem, then?

WALLY  
The play bombed.

COLLEEN  
(frustrated)  
How could it have bombed? I put  
everything into this fucking play! I  
poured my fucking heart and fucking soul  
into it!

WALLY  
I know you did, Colleen. But sometimes,  
people write shitty things.

Colleen sits in silence, taking it all in.

(CONTINUED)

COLLEEN  
(enthusiastically)  
I can be in another play not written by  
me.

Wally looks at her with sadness in his eyes.

WALLY  
The entire theatre district has labeled  
you-  
(uses air quotes)  
Box-Office Poison. No one wants to hire  
you, not Broadway, not off-Broadway, and  
off-off-Broadway. Colleen, your career  
just ended in front of hundreds of  
people last night. I have your check  
right here.  
(he pulls open his desk  
drawer and gives her the  
check)  
Good luck.

Colleen viciously grabs the check out of his hand.

COLLEEN  
(sarcastically)  
Oh, thank you, Wally. This check is  
going to pay for all my fucking bills.

Wally looks at her with pity.

CUT TO:

INT. WALLY MALLARD'S OFFICE-DAY

Wally is sitting at his desk facing the camera.

WALLY  
Colleen has been my client for over 15  
years. I shouldn't have let her do that  
show.

CUT TO:

INT. WALLY MALLARD'S OFFICE-DAY

WALLY  
I'm sorry, Colleen. I really am.

COLLEEN  
Fuck you, Wally.

Colleen leaves.

INT. COLLEEN'S BROWNSTONE-DAY

A week later appears on screen.

Colleen is standing in her living room boxes are stacked everywhere. She steps over to an open box and picks up a photo. Colleen pauses, holding a faded photograph of her younger self, dressed in a glamorous gown, receiving an award on a grand stage. She traces her finger along the image, a nostalgic smile on her lips.

COLLEEN  
(whispering)  
I was a legend...a fucking legend.

She carefully places the photograph in a box, her eyes welling up with a mixture of joy and wistfulness. The sound of movers bustling in the background reminds her of the task at hand. Colleen walks over to a bookshelf, running her fingers along the spines of the well-worn scripts and playbills that line the shelves.

COLLEEN (CONT'D)  
(to herself)  
What did I do wrong? Did I-

She sighs heavily, lost in thought, as the movers continue their work in the background.

As she packs the scripts, she reminisces about the characters she brought to life, the standing ovations, and the camaraderie shared with fellow actors. Her phone rings, and she answers it. Her friend Dee is on the other end.

DEE  
Hey girl. How's it going?

COLLEEN  
It could be better. I'm packing the rest of my things.

DEE  
You have no idea how much I will miss you, girl.

COLLEEN  
I know. It's all happening so fast. One day I'm on top of the world, and the next, I'm packing up my life.

DEE  
I cannot imagine who I will sit with on a bench in Central Park and make fun of all the weirdos walking around.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

Colleen chuckles.

DEE (CONT'D)

I have done your makeup for nearly 30 years. Girl, we've been through it together. Divorce, death, public indecency.

Colleen starts to tear up. Colleen wipes away her tears with the back of her hand.

DEE (CONT'D)

But it's time for you to move on and spread your wings. This hellhole has nothing for you anymore. Remember, everything happens for a reason. Maybe your time here is done.

COLLEEN

(doubtfully)  
I don't know-

DEE

You know I am right.

Colleen chuckles.

COLLEEN

Thanks for everything.

DEE

You're welcome. Bye, girl.

COLLEEN

Bye.

She hangs up.

COLLEEN (CONT'D)

(sighs)  
Goodbye, New York.

Colleen takes her suitcase and walks out the front door.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - DAY

Colleen stands on the sidewalk, looking around at the bustling city. A moment of panic sets in as she realizes she has no plan.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COLLEEN

(to herself)

What the fucking hell am I going to do  
now?

She looks around and spots a sign that says, Joy.

COLLEEN (CONT'D)

Shit.

**ACT TWO****EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET-DAY**

Colleen gets in an Uber.

**INT. UBER-DAY**

The Uber driver, a chatty man in his late 30s, starts a conversation with Colleen.

UBER DRIVER

Where do you need to go?

COLLEEN

Home... I mean LaGuardia.

UBER DRIVER

Sure.

We see multiple shots of fields until we see a sign that says "Welcome to Joy, home of two-time Tony® award winner Colleen Stone".

**EXT. MAUDE STONE'S HOUSE- EVENING**

The exterior of Maude Stone's house is a quaint cottage-style home, with a white picket fence surrounding the front yard. There are colorful flower beds lining the walkway leading up to the front porch. The house itself is a light yellow color.

An Uber pulls up to the sidewalk.

Colleen gets out and gathers her belongings.

The Uber leaves.

Colleen walks towards the front door.

She knocks.

MAUDE

(walking towards the door)

Who in the hell?

COLLEEN

Hi, Mom.

MAUDE

(opens arms to hug her)

How are you?!?!

COLLEEN

Shitty. How long has it been 6 months?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAUDE  
Too long.

COLLEEN  
(cringes)  
Damn.

MAUDE  
Come in, come in. Let's chat.

INT. LIVING ROOM-EVENING

Colleen follows Maude into the living room and sits down.

MAUDE  
Honey, what brings you here?

COLLEEN  
I bombed, my one-woman show failed.

Maude gently touches her hand.

COLLEEN (CONT'D)  
It was the last of my savings. I  
destroyed everything. I had to sell the  
brownstone, so I'm here. I'm moving in.

MAUDE  
(caught off guard)  
Oh.  
(beat)  
I'll show you your room then.

INT. COLLEEN'S ROOM-EVENING

Maude leads Colleen into her guest room. It hasn't been  
inhabited in a while, and dust is covering everything.

MAUDE  
It's been a while since I've had guests  
over.

Colleen brings her things into the room.

COLLEEN  
(coughs)  
Thanks for letting me stay.

MAUDE  
It's not a problem. I've got to get  
ready.

COLLEEN  
Ready for what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAUDE

You don't visit me for 10 years and I say I'm going out and you're all interested all of a sudden. I have a show at *Knope's* tonight.

COLLEEN

A show? What kind of show?

MAUDE

Stand-up comedy.

COLLEEN

Stand-up comedy? You're telling jokes now?

MAUDE

Can two Stone women not be in the business of entertaining?

COLLEEN

(taken aback)

Of course, it's just surprising. I didn't know you did stand-up.

MAUDE

Oh, I've been doing it for years. It's how I stay young and sharp. Plus, I love to make fun of the drunks.

INT. KNOPE'S-NIGHT

Colleen pushes through the crowd making her way to the bar.

COLLEEN

I want a martini.

The bartender Charlie, a middle-aged man with a friendly demeanor, nods and starts mixing her drink.

CHARLIE

Coming right up.

As the bartender pours the gin and vermouth into the shaker, Colleen watches anxiously, adding a few olives to a martini glass.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

I'm glad to see you.

COLLEEN

Charlie?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE

Yeah, it's been a while since you came to visit. How have you been?

COLLEEN

Extremely shitty. You?

CHARLIE

Pretty well. Joy has changed since you left.

COLLEEN

(scoffs)

I'd like to see that.

Maude makes her way to the stage for her stand-up show.

MAUDE

(grabs the mic)

Well...look at all the people here tonight.

The crowd cheers.

Colleen sits and leans back, intrigued.

MAUDE (CONT'D)

I recently took up pole dancing during the pandemic.

The crowd laughs.

MAUDE (CONT'D)

No, really, I did. I probably scared my neighbors to death. They call it "Maude's Midlife Crisis Spectacle". I call it "The Time I Lost My Grip and became the spokesperson for Life Alert".

Colleen smirks.

MAUDE (CONT'D)

I hate my smartphone...they have a mind of their own. Siri is deaf, I sneezed the other day, and Siri said, "Searching for David Hasselhoff Nude."

The crowd roars.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MAUDE (CONT'D)

David Hasselhoff nude...The last time I wanted to see him nude was in *Baywatch*...I take it back, he can still get it.

COLLEEN

(to Charlie)

She's surprisingly funny.

CHARLIE

Yeah, she's been tearing it up in here for 5 solid years.

COLLEEN

(amazed)

Incredible.

MAUDE

My doctor told me recently that I have cancer.

The crowd gasps, and Colleen's face drops in shock.

COLLEEN

What the actual fuck?

MAUDE

But don't worry. It's not the kind that'll kill me. It's the kind that'll annoy me for the rest of my life.

The crowd goes silent.

MAUDE (CONT'D)

It's sad though...I really wanted to have Magic Mike strippers to come while I'm in hospice care.

The crowd erupts in laughter.

Colleen still sits in shock.

After the show, Maude joins Colleen and the bartender, Charlie, at the bar.

CHARLIE

That was another great set. You get better each time.

MAUDE

(points to Charlie)

This man is full of it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

COLLEEN

Mom, I need to talk to you.

Colleen pulls Maude over to a more secluded area of the bar.

MAUDE

Sure, honey. What's on your mind?

COLLEEN

Cancer? When the fuck were you going to tell me? This is serious. How long ago were you diagnosed?

MAUDE

Three months ago.

(sighs)

I didn't want to worry you, Colleen. It's just some small cancer cells, but the doctor said it's manageable. I will do some radiation therapy, and I'll be fine.

COLLEEN

(very upset) )

Why didn't you call me? Who else knows?

MAUDE

No one, until now.

COLLEEN

Now half of the fucking town knows.

MAUDE

(smiling)

Well, that's not necessarily a bad thing. Maybe it's time for me to start being a little more open with my life and not keeping everything to myself.

COLLEEN

Mom!? I can't deal with this upon everything else I've gone through this week.

Colleen leaves the bar.

MAUDE

(calls out to Colleen)

Colleen. Shit.

INT. LIVING ROOM-MORNING

Maude is sitting in her armchair with a cup of coffee.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

Colleen walks into the living room.

MAUDE  
Colleen.

COLLEEN  
Mom, please.

MAUDE  
I'm sorry.

COLLEEN  
I don't want to talk about it.

MAUDE  
After breakfast, I'm going to take you somewhere.

COLLEEN  
If it's a fucking cemetery, I will kill you before the cancer does.

MAUDE  
It's not a cemetery.

EXT. THE COLLEEN STONE MEMORIAL THEATRE-DAY

Maude pulls her vehicle into the parking lot. She and Colleen get out, Colleen is amazed at the theatre.

COLLEEN  
When did they build this?

MAUDE  
In 2003, four years after your 2 Tony@ award wins.

COLLEEN  
I want to see the inside.

INT. THE COLLEEN STONE MEMORIAL THEATRE-LOBBY-DAY

COLLEEN  
Holy Shit.

MAUDE  
It's beautiful, right?

COLLEEN  
Yes, yes, it is.

A voice is heard from the theater.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAUL  
(frustrated)  
Frida, have you ever drank a cup of  
coffee?

FRIDA  
Yes.

SAUL  
Then act like you are drinking a damn  
cup of coffee because you currently look  
like you are sipping a cup of fucking  
air!

Maude and Colleen peek into the theatre through the open door  
at the back of the lobby, seeing Saul (40s), the director,  
barking commands at Frida (late 20s), one of the actors.

SAUL (CONT'D)  
Now I want some Katharine Hepburn, not  
Audrey. Katharine. Please give me some  
Katharine.

FRIDA  
(imitating Katharine Hepburn blandly) I  
can't believe you would say that to me.

SAUL  
Fuck it! You are done with this  
production! I didn't mean to "be  
Katharine Hepburn", but at least give me  
some brash wittiness. Damn, these  
actors.

Maude and Colleen enter the theatre, and Saul turns around to  
face them.

SAUL (CONT'D)  
(Startled)  
Oh, uh...Hello, ladies. Can I help you  
with something?

MAUDE  
No thanks, we were just admiring the  
beautiful seats.

COLLEEN  
(smiling)  
It's truly a stunning theatre. My name  
is Colleen Stone. I used to perform on  
Broadway, and this theatre has my name  
on it.

Saul's eyes widen as he looks at Colleen in amazement.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAUL

Are you Colleen Stone? I am unworthy even to grace your presence. Let me kiss your hand.

(He kisses her hand)

COLLEEN

Thank you. Now first order of business, I hear you have an opening.

SAUL

(smiling)

Yes, we do. In fact, we are in desperate need of a lead actress for our upcoming production of "In the Dead of Night. Would you be interested in the role? Seeing that poor Frida had to be let go.

FRIDA

(Walks past the group)

Fuck you.

SAUL

(to Frida)

Ditto.

(Looks back at Colleen and Maude)

Anyway, let's talk.

COLLEEN

I would love to discuss the opportunity further, but I have to be honest with you. My last play failed miserably, and my agent called me box-office poison. I don't want to risk damaging your production.

SAUL

Nonsense having a real star will catapult me, I mean the theatre, to pristine glory. Please let me have the honor of directing you in what could be your comeback, your phoenix rising from the ashes, your...

COLLEEN

I get it. I'll do it. When do I start?

SAUL

Tomorrow we start rehearsals tomorrow morning!

(excitedly)

I can't wait to dive in and see what magic we can make together.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

COLLEEN  
Great, I'll be there.

EXT. THE COLLEEN STONE MEMORIAL THEATRE-DAY

As Maude and Colleen head to the vehicle, a black SUV pulls into the parking lot and abruptly stops.

The SUV door opens and out steps a petite, slim-figured woman dressed in a navy blue pantsuit.

SANDY  
(mockingly)  
Wow, failure looks good on a woman like you.

Colleen turns around, surprised to see an old acquaintance.

COLLEEN  
Oh, Sandy. How lovely to see you too.

SANDY  
(chuckles)  
I heard about your show. Sorry, it didn't go well.

COLLEEN  
(through gritted teeth)  
Thanks, I appreciate it.

SANDY  
So, what brings you back to town? Did you finally give up on trying to be a star?

COLLEEN  
No, actually. I just landed a lead role in a production here at my theatre. And what are you on your fifth husband now?

SANDY  
Only the third, but who's counting? So, what's this play about anyway? Another big one-woman flop?

COLLEEN  
It's a drama.

SANDY  
(Sarcastically)  
Oh, how exciting. A lead role in a community theater production. I'm sure you'll knock 'em dead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COLLEEN

(smiling)

Well, Sandy, at least I'm not running after men all of the time like a bitch in heat.

.

Sandy's face turns red with anger, but before she can retort, Colleen climbs into Maude's car and leaves. Sandy stands there fuming momentarily before getting into her SUV and driving away.

INT. MAUDE'S CAR-DAY

MAUDE

What was that?

COLLEEN

Nothing.

MAUDE

Nothing? That was not nothing, that looked like 30 years of built-up tension.

COLLEEN

Sandy and I had a huge fight before I left for New York.

MAUDE

You each held a grudge for 30 years?

COLLEEN

We did. And what was with the fucking pantsuit?

MAUDE

She's the Mayor now.

COLLEEN

Mayor?

MAUDE

Yes, Sandy ran for Mayor a few years ago and won. She's been the talk of the town ever since.

COLLEEN

(sarcastically)

Wow, I must have missed that headline while writing my show in New York.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAUDE  
(sympathetically)  
I'm sorry, Colleen.

COLLEEN  
That figures. Well, I guess I better be  
on my best behavior then. She may have  
the entire town of Joy chase me out with  
pitchforks and torches.

**ACT THREE****INT. LIVING ROOM-NIGHT**

Maude and Colleen are sitting in the dimly lit living room, each doing their own thing, Colleen is reading People® and Maude is doing a word search.

A Knock is heard at the door.

COLLEEN  
I'll get it.

She puts the magazine down and walks to the front door.

She opens the door, and Saul is standing there with a script and his secretary Maggie (30s), and assistant Emily (20s).

SAUL  
May we come in?

COLLEEN  
Absolutely.

The group comes inside.

MAUDE  
Welcome, please take a seat.

The group sits down.

SAUL  
I thought that my team, or OUR team should start discussing where we want to take this production.

COLLEEN  
Sounds delightful.

SAUL  
Your character is Constance Strathaway, a struggling 50's housewife dealing with your husband's infidelity.

COLLEEN  
Oh, like Julianne Moore in "Far from Heaven" or Michelle Williams in "Brokeback Mountain"?

SAUL  
Well, your husband's not gay. He's straight.

Maggie interrupts him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGGIE

More like Rosamund Pike in "Gone Girl."

COLLEEN

Brutal, I like that.

SAUL

(laughing)

Oh, so we're comparing Constance to a psychopath now?

MAGGIE

(rolling her eyes)

No, we're comparing Colleen's situation to the intense and twisted plot of "Gone Girl."

Emily starts to cough.

EMILY

I'm so sorry.

(cough)

Can I have a glass of water?

(cough)

MAUDE

Sure, honey. I'll get you some.

Maude goes into the kitchen.

INT. MAUDE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Maude opens one of her cabinets, grabs a glass, and fills it up with water.

She leaves the kitchen and enters the living room, giving Emily her glass of water.

EMILY

Thank you.

SAUL

Anyway, I think we should-

An explosion is heard.

The group jumps up and enters the front yard.

EXT. MAUDE'S FRONT YARD-NIGHT

Saul's car burns in the driveway while a black SUV drives away.

The words "Burn in Hell" are written in the driveway.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

SAUL  
(hands clutching his face)  
My car someone torched my FUCKING CAR!!!

Colleen has a terrified but knowing look on her face.

COLLEEN  
Pitchforks and torches.

**END ACT**