Frank & Pablo

Scene Eight: Thursday Evening

(Nighttime. **FRANK** *is outside.* **PABLO** *enters with a beer.)*

PABLO. I know it's after midnight, but do you mind if I join you?

FRANK. Yes, I do.

*(***PABLO** *grabs a folded chair, has some difficulty unfolding it, and sits facing* **FRANK.***)*

Did you just get home from work?

PABLO. Yes. My wife is horribly upset about the...incident this morning.

FRANK. Women get so emotional when they are pregnant.

PABLO. I hear Virginia is not too happy either.

(Beat.)

I also assume she's not pregnant.

(Beat. They size each other up.)

FRANK. No one is happy.

PABLO. You tried to make my wife feel small.

FRANK. Maybe she feels small, because she called my wife names.

PABLO. Virginia threatened Tania.

FRANK. Pablo. You are creating havoc over twenty-three inches.

PABLO. It's eighty square feet, at least. If it's so valuable to you, I'll sell it to you at market price.

FRANK. Ah, so it's all about the money.

PABLO. No. But it is a way to come to terms. A rational way to make peace.

FRANK. I shouldn't have to spend that kind of cash. I've been tending this garden for years. Its value comes from my care.

PABLO. Maybe you should be grateful you've had it for free for so long.

FRANK. Ginny and I have been researching adverse possession.

PABLO. You are invoking squatter's rights?

FRANK. I'm thinking we might have a case.

PABLO. Frank, I like you. I really do. And let me tell you, you don't want to get in a legal argument with Smith, Krause, and Wilson.

FRANK. Sometimes the little man wins.

PABLO. You've never been the little man, Frank Butley. And we can't have another argument like we did this morning.

FRANK. That was no argument. It was an incident.

PABLO. I have sixty colleagues coming on Saturday. We have every right to do what we are doing.

FRANK. But what about my garden and the years of toil, sweat, and love I've poured into it? You are sacrificing all the work I have done. For what: to make it look ordinary and common? Just days after you said you loved it. Are you a liar, Pablo?

PABLO. *(Confessing in a hushed tone.)* I do like your garden. I like its grace and elegance.

(Loudly, for Tania's benefit in case she's listening from inside:)

BUT Tania's garden is BETTER, because it is... *(Sigh.)* NATURAL.

FRANK. Nature is not why people move to this neighborhood. You could have bought a house with a chicken coop in hippy-dippy Takoma Park and been as messy and native gardeny as you wanted. But you didn't want that, did you? You wanted to put down roots here...in a stately neighborhood with all the other K-Street lawyers and doctors and lobbyists. Why did you move here if you want to change everything?

PABLO. We don't want to change everything. We just want to add our touch to the landscape. Tania believes your plants are eroding the ecosystem. They are foreign to the natural environment.

FRANK. So Tania has a problem with my plants because they are from somewhere else? – Because they are... immigrant plants?

PABLO. *(Beat.)* No. Tania's problem is that your plants are... colonialists with gross disregard for the indigenous population.

FRANK. I'm surprised that you of all people, Pablo, would defend this type of...botanical xenophobia.

PABLO. Back away Frank.

FRANK. No. You tell Tania to back away from my defenseless plants. This is a border dispute. And I'm not giving up one inch of my yard without a fight.

PABLO. You don't want to fight with me, Frank.

FRANK. I would say the same, Pablo. I've been in this town a long time. I spent thirty-seven years at the Agency.

PABLO. The Agency?

FRANK. The Agency. I know P-owerful P-eople, PA-blo.

*(***FRANK** *exits.* **PABLO** *pours his beer on Frank's flowerbed and exits.)*