

COMMANDER GARRITY

A disused, windowless conference room in the basement of Cannon House Office Building. The room is dimly lit, most of the fluorescent bulbs having died and not been replaced due to neglect. The crowd that comes here every night at 5:30 PM likes it that way.

Some people would have their careers destroyed by the revelation that they were addicts of one sort or another. Many of these people work in D.C.: elected officials, high-ranked military officers, high-level bureaucrats. There are very hush-hush AA meetings for this crowd and tonight is one of those meetings.

You joined the military to protect the weak and helpless of this world. There are evil people out there, people who will hurt them. As part of the army, at least, you can help.

But you lose sleep at night, and you find yourself taking on missions you don't have to. But if you don't, who will? Someone who can't be trusted to care for the innocents? So you must do everything you can - *everything*.

Sometimes the pain and exhaustion get to be too much, and you have to take something just to keep going. Drugs are not hard to come by in the army if you know who to ask, and just about everyone uses them. But you've become worried you're overdoing it, and now you can't stop.

So with a heavy heart, you started coming to AA meetings. Secretly, of course - your commanding officers at the Pentagon can't know you have a problem, or they'd make you take some time off. Maybe even demote you. You can't let that happen.

The people who come to this meeting, mostly, are people just like you. Well-intentioned, but with a problem they need help solving. But Representative Stevenson is different. Stevenson is a violent alcoholic, and isn't really trying to change. There haven't been more than two weeks running where Stevenson has stayed clean and sober. And Stevenson's two daughters have been suffering in silence for years.

You shouldn't stand for this. You've got half a mind to take the good Representative out back and give a few lessons in what violent people with real training can do. You're sure everyone here would back you, since you are clearly in the right. But is an AA meeting really the appropriate time or place for a fistfight? Especially one in Stevenson's home turf, a House office building?

Still, though, it makes your fingers curl up into fists just thinking about what the Stevenson household must be going through. You're not sure if you'll be able to control yourself. Which will it be-- do you *impulsively* given Stevenson what for, or do you *cautiously* put relations with other important people in Washington first?

COMMANDER GARRITY

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AFTER THE SCENE IS OVER:

1. In this scene, your character had to make a choice between two attributes: **Cautious vs. Impulsive**. Please circle the one you chose.

AA Meeting

REV. LAMONT

Act 1 Scene 1

A disused, windowless conference room in the basement of Cannon House Office Building. The room is dimly lit, most of the fluorescent bulbs having died and not been replaced due to neglect. The crowd that comes here every night at 5:30 PM likes it that way.

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You are Reverend LaMont, and you are an alcoholic. You are also a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Mississippi.

You've been running these meetings since Rick West was voted out in the last midterms. It was a shame about Rick, he was a good man, a God-fearing man.

Since then, you have stuck pretty much to Rick's original format:

1. Greet everyone. Introduce yourself as an alcoholic and the group's secretary.
2. Lead everyone in the Serenity Prayer: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can, and Wisdom to know the difference."
3. Ask any new members or visitors to introduce themselves. (Marley is new, and Ahava is a visitor.)
4. Ask everyone to share their progress.
5. If anyone has any topics they wish to discuss with the group, now is the time to do so.
6. Close with Psalm 23:

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley in the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

Yours is an unusual AA meeting in that it is not open to the general public, and not actually anonymous. With the people who come to this meeting, it could scarcely be anonymous. The fact that the meeting is held in a House office building provides some security, and the fact that you all have mutually-assured blackmail destruction helps too.

Well, mostly mutually-assured. You're pretty sure Marley is not on the up-and-up. You've seen people faking before, and the rear admiral has that telltale vagueness and slight shiftiness. Plus, it's a bit suspicious to get someone from the Pentagon coming here not that long after Commander Garrity joined.

But if Marley is a spy, then what of it? That's hardly your problem, or anyone else in the group's. The Big Book says

that you have to put your own healing process before group unity.

Still, though, you don't want to compromise the integrity of the meetings. You've always felt that you are the keeper of the flame that Rick West started; it would be a shame to see the group dissolve over something like this. And dissolve it would - there would be no safe space here after this.

You have no great love for Garrity, but you do feel some sense of obligation to do the right thing for the group. So, a dilemma: to accuse Marley out of *vigilance* for the integrity of the meetings, or *callously* let Garrity take what's coming?

Well, you've got a meeting to run.

REV. LAMONT

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AFTER THE SCENE IS OVER:

1. In this scene, your character had to make a choice between two attributes: **Callous vs. Vigilant**. Please circle the one you chose.

REPRESENTATIVE STEVENSON

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You need to stop. You need to kill this horrible addiction, or else say goodbye to Kasey and the kids forever.

Most of the time, you are the very picture of a perfect parent. Outspoken as hell, of course, but that's just your way. But after a few drinks, everything Kasey and your daughters do pisses you off, and a violent rage overtakes you. You can't control yourself. And you lash out at your family.

Kasey covers up the bruises and pretends that nothing has happened. Donna and little Riley stay home from school "sick" a lot. But it's tearing your family apart. You wish you could stop, but the liquor has a terrible hold on you.

Being elected to federal office was the best thing that could have happened for you. Now you're away from home two-thirds of the year. But the remaining third, the family is distant, fearful. Sometimes you stay in hotels, invent excuses to go to conferences or out on the campaign trail, just to avoid seeing them.

You hoped AA would help, and for awhile, you believed it would. But as the months have gone by, it's becoming clear to you that you just can't keep up the charade. For what you've got, there might be no cure. You had stayed clean and sober for a few weeks once - but it's especially difficult with all the cocktail hours and campaign barbecues you're expected to attend. How can you say no to a local microbrew? Or a family-distilled whiskey from a wealthy donor?

So it seems you've come to an impasse. You will have to separate from your family for good. But how can you do that and keep your political career? The media back home will eat you alive - you campaigned on a "families first" platform. But if you don't... you can't imagine what you might do to Kasey. Do you *ambitiously* make your political aspirations your first priority, or do you *compassionately* do what you have to in order to take care of your family?

REPRESENTATIVE STEVENSON

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AFTER THE SCENE IS OVER:

1. In this scene, your character had to make a choice between two attributes: **Ambitious vs. Compassionate**. Please circle the one you chose.

REAR ADMIRAL MARLEY

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They always make you do the dirty work. "Marley," they say, "go steal Nelson's notebook and give it here." You understand why the work is important: the Pentagon needs to keep tabs on its people so it can be sure everyone is trustworthy. But you just wish sometimes that someone else was man enough to do it themselves.

This time it's Commander Garrity, who (rumor has it) has been abusing speed, meth, and probably a couple of other things besides. This is unacceptable. Someone of Garrity's rank should know better, and the armed forces cannot have a drug-abusing scumbag in such a position of trust.

So you've been sent here, to this secret AA meeting in the Cannon building. Your Pentagon credentials let you in easily enough, and your plan is to pretend to be addicted to alcohol, just like everyone else here probably is. It should be easy.

Your only reservation about this, frankly, is that you don't want to hurt the other members of the group. Drug abusers are worthless trash and deserve to be brought down, but alcoholism is a serious problem and a genetically-transmitted disease. If Garrity ends up demoted or sacked, it's going to be hard for anyone with a real problem to open up here and get the help they so badly need. Do you *callously* nail Garrity for being a drug addict and the others be damned, or do you *compassionately* spare this group of people trying to help themselves from the damage of exposure?

REAR ADMIRAL MARLEY

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AFTER THE SCENE IS OVER:

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You'd laugh it off as improbably ironic if you hadn't double-checked the test results yourself. You, a top HIV researcher for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Infected with HIV.

On reflection, the news was crushing but was not surprising. You sleep with ... an almost uncountable number of people. You have a sick, twisted problem, and for years, your therapist has been telling you that you need help.

According to her, your problem began in childhood, when your parents were emotionally unavailable. Since then, you felt the need to obtain the love you couldn't get from them by other means. Now you are a diagnosed sex addict. A diagnosed sex addict with HIV.

Hookers, random people in seedy bars, men, women, anyone. It really doesn't matter. You fuck at least five nights out of the week, often with multiple people. It's dirty, and foul, and you hate yourself. And the self-loathing just makes you want it even more.

Now you are spreading disease-- the very disease you've fought these many years to destroy. With every person you bed, you are issuing them a death sentence. Much as you hated the idea, you started going to AA meetings to speak about your addiction and try to work the 12-Step Program.

Is it working? You don't know for sure, but you do know that every night you fall off the wagon, you kill another person. It's unbearable. Sometimes you think it'd be better to just end it all.

This week you are in Washington for a conference. Someone from your local AA meeting who works for the government suggested you come here - it's discreet, secure, and the people here are quite understanding. So here you are.

But temptation is great in a big city, in an anonymous hotel room far away from home. Temptation to fuck... or possibly, to end your life. You could do it. It'd be easy.

The only thing stopping you is that you may finally be on the verge of a cure. At long last, your team hit a breakthrough just a few weeks ago. You might finally have an effective, cheap, safe cure for the virus!

But even if you're right, it will be months until the cure is ready for use, even if you use yourself as a guinea pig. And in those months... how many people will be infected because of your lack of self-control? And what if you're wrong about the cure? Is following your *ambitions* enough to keep you on the straight and narrow, or will you give into your *impulses* until you destroy yourself?

Best not to think about that. You're here now for this meeting. Your name is Dr. Ahava. And you are a sex addict.

DR. AHAVA

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AFTER THE SCENE IS OVER:

1. In this scene, your character had to make a choice between two attributes: **Ambitious vs. Impulsive**. Please circle the one you chose.