THE LIBRARIAN

by Hansol Jung

for the Public Theater

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# CHARACTERS

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Character</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIBRARIAN</td>
<td>As you will</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLIENT</td>
<td>All Genders, mid 30s.</td>
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<tr>
<td>TEACHER</td>
<td>As you will</td>
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<tr>
<td>DAD</td>
<td>Male, 30-40s.</td>
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<td>CLOWN</td>
<td>As you will</td>
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# SETTING

The Library of Life.
There are shelves.

Lots of shelves, reaching up to the highest point of visibility, rising up from below the ancient floorboards, surrounding all visible sides of the huge vast space. The Shelves are Utterly Empty.

Except for a banner hanging across the space: “Rewrite Your Life! Starting at $199!”

The Librarian sings a little song, potentially to the music of Can’t Buy Me Love by the Beatles or a magnificent freestyle tune made up on the spot.

LIBRARIAN

REWRITE YOUR LIFE! (LIFE)
REWRITE YOUR LIFE …

YOU’RE TIRED, YOU’RE BROKE, YOUR LIFE’S A JOKE
AND YOU’RE BORED OUT OF YOUR MIND
YOU LOOK BACK AT THE ROAD YOU TOOK
YOU’RE LIKE GOD CAN’T I REWIND?
WELL, GUESS WHAT, YOU’RE IN LUCK, HEY HONEY
WE CAN REWRITE THAT LIFE

WRONG SCHOOL WRONG MARRIAGE WRONG CAREER
WHAT YOU’D DO TO TAKE THAT BACK
THEY SAY SPILLED MILK WILL SPILL MORE TEARS
BUT WE’VE MORE TO SAY TO THAT
COZ THAT’S RIGHT, YOU’RE IN LUCK MY HONEY
LET US REWRITE THAT LIFE

REWRITE YOUR LIFE
STARTING AT ONE NINETY NINE
REWRITE YOUR LIFE (LIFE)
OH OH OH OH

Ding dong!

There is a client at the librarian’s lending counter.

CLIENT

Hello?

LIBRARIAN

Hello.

CLIENT

I’m here to rewrite my life?

LIBRARIAN

Wonderful.

CLIENT

They wait, for something.

Great.

CLIENT

Mm hmm.
They wait, for something.

CLIENT
Um. Are you okay?

LIBRARIAN
Brilliant.

They wait, for something.

CLIENT
Okay. Because I feel like, maybe you are like, judging me or something, coz like, I'm maybe too young looking, you know, to be wanting to change my life around.

LIBRARIAN
You are not too young looking.

CLIENT
Oh.

LIBRARIAN
Yes.

CLIENT
Then why are we, like, staring at each other.

LIBRARIAN
You tell me. You're the client. I'm just the librarian.

CLIENT
Um. Right. You are saying I should be the one driving this.

LIBRARIAN
I am saying you're the client, I'm just the librarian.

CLIENT
That's what they call you? Librarian?

LIBRARIAN
That's what I call me.

CLIENT
Right. Sorry. So, um. I have the coupon,

LIBRARIAN
Ah. You are a coupon person. That's okay. Please, present.

CLIENT
Client brings out a little coupon from his wallet. Both wallet and coupon are worse for wear – like they have been fidgeted with inside some very sweaty indecisive hands.

LIBRARIAN
So it says, the first five minutes are on the house –

CLIENT
Thank you. I can read. I am, after all, the Librarian.

CLIENT
Librarian runs the gross sweaty coupon through the machine. BLOOPBLIP.

LIBRARIAN
Excellent.
The previously Empty Shelves roar and vibrate like a cruise ship revving up, or a very loud very big woman giving birth to a million babies at the same time.

And suddenly, the Shelves are Full: there are stacks and stacks of books, manuscripts, legal pads with scribbles and sketches, binders, folders, boxes and loose leaf papers.

CLIENT
What. Is. This.

LIBRARIAN
Your life.

CLIENT
Wow. I didn't know it was so, full.

LIBRARIAN
There are probably many more things you didn’t and don’t know.

A giant Timer starts a countdown from 5 minutes.

CLIENT
What is that?

LIBRARIAN
In five minutes this library will explode.

WHAT?

LIBRARIAN
JK. In five minutes your fee will start accruing, $199 a minute.

CLIENT
Wow. Better get cracking then. Where do I start?

LIBRARIAN
Do you know what part of your life you would like to rewrite?

CLIENT
I don't want to be a clown any more.

LIBRARIAN
So you would like to rewrite your personality?

CLIENT
My job. I am a clown. It is my job. I love my personality, please don’t touch my personality.

LIBRARIAN
A Job. Interesting. And you would like to rewrite this job out and

CLIENT
I’d like to be doing Something else. Something more serious? Like maybe a, teacher? Or investment banker? Or a person who works at Google? They get a lot of money, don’t they?

LIBRARIAN
The thing about our service is that we are not simply an erase and replace kind of format. A life is a complicated thing. For example. Look at this shelf. It is full of stuff. Papers stacked on record players leaning on boxes of ancient jigsaw puzzles. If you want to be a person who does not like jigsaw puzzles,
Librarian throws away the jigsaw puzzles and then …
the record player falls and breaks
and vast volumes of photo albums, papers, CDs, other rubbish people store in the attics
fail in a large broken mess on the floor.

LIBRARIAN (cont)
There goes your 9th grade puzzle master award, your friendship with Marcus, your love of collecting
LP albums that which was instilled in you by Marcus, etc.

CLIENT
Wow. So it’s like a domino effect.

LIBRARIAN
Ish. More zenga, but the same idea. Mine is the more accurate metaphor.

CLIENT
So, you are saying, what are you saying?

LIBRARIAN
Tell me as specifically as you can, what you would like to rewrite, and I shall guide you to the most
perfect zenga piece in this your life, that we can futz with, to get what you want.

CLIENT
That sounds great. Okay, so specifically, I don’t want to clown anymore. I would like to have a more,
stable income, and have people like, really respect me.

LIBRARIAN
Roger that. Let’s find the first moment you got that idea, to be a clown.

CLIENT
Oh that’s easy, I took a class in grad school

A large box with a bunch of crap, papers etc floats down on the counter,
a red nose emerges from the box, flies through the space and becomes a Teacher

TEACHER
Alright class! That is all.

CLIENT
Yo, that’s Bill! That’s my clown guru! Well, was. He passed.

TEACHER
You are all clowns. Congratulations!

LIBRARIAN
I see. So. If we change this interaction, you will not be attracted to clowning?

CLIENT
No, that’s not true. I only took that class, because I was already into it, I guess.

The red nose pops back into box.

LIBRARIAN
Oh, I think let’s try this one.

A dollar bill and MetroCard float up and becomes a Dad

CLIENT
Dad??
DAD
You wanna give him a dollar? We can give him a dollar if you like?

CLIENT
What is this?

LIBRARIAN
We can rewind a little to jog your memory …

_Dad does a rewind_

DAD
We’re gonna take the subway.

LIBRARIAN
To which you said, “I've never taken the subway.”

DAD
First time for everything. Don’t tell your mom.

LIBRARIAN
To which you said,

_LIBRARIAN & CLIENT_

“I won’t tell mom.”

CLIENT
I said that a lot while they were getting divorced.

DAD
Okay, birthday child. Sneak on under. Come on, no one’s gonna care. I’m not gonna get you a whole metrocard for one ride, now get on under.

CLIENT
Oh my god. I remember now. How did you find this?

LIBRARIAN
I am a very good librarian.

DAD
Don't touch anything, You might die.

CLIENT
The 4 train. We were going to the Bronx for some reason.

_subway doors open, a clown enters._

DAD
Hey, look at that! Free birthday Clown!

CLIENT
He looked kinda sad. But I thought he was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen.

DAD
You like that, huh? Don’t say I didn’t do nothing for you.

_Clown seemingly trips, and his bag falls to the floor._
He tries to pick it up but can’t. It is too heavy.

CLIENT
Oh.
Client goes towards Clown

DAD
Hey! Where you going, come back here! Sit down!

Client picks up the bag, very easily because it is not heavy at all, and hands it to the clown.
Clown is very moved, so moved that a flower grows out of their heart.

CLIENT
Ha, look at that!

DAD
It’s a dumb trick. I can do that with a trick flower. Come sit down now.

Client starts to move away from clown but every step Client takes is marked by a little honk

CLOWN

This makes Client giggle, and do a dance.
Clown does a perfect job of honking to Client’s dance steps.

CLOWN

Client and Clown laugh and high five.

Clown pulls out a balloon from his red nose, and blows it, untied,

Offers it to Client,

CLIENT
You want me to tie it?

Client reaches out to take it, but at the very last moment
Clown lets go and the balloon flies away, letting out all the air.

Client giggles.

Clown expertly blows another balloon and in a blink of an eye, produces a little poof.

CLIENT
Thank you.

DAD
You wanna give him a dollar? We can give him a dollar if you like?

Yes please.

Client gets a dollar from Dad and presents it to Clown.
Clown bows gratefully and pulls a flower out of Client’s butt.

Client giggles.

He giggles long after Dad, the Clown, the balloon disappears from view.
So in order to rewrite that moment, 

CLIENT

What?

LIBRARIAN

It is highly likely this interaction is the first zenga block of your clowning ambition. So, this will be the most efficient scene to rewrite.

CLIENT

Oh. Okay. I get it now.

*Client is still holding on to the flower pulled from his butt hole.*

Let’s see … let’s take it back to here;

DAD

Don’t touch anything. You might die.

*subway doors open, a clown enters.*

DAD

Hey, look at that! Free birthday Clown! You like that, huh? Don’t say I didn’t do nothing for you.

*Clown seemingly trips, and his bag falls to the floor. He tries to pick it up but can’t. It is too heavy.*

CLIENT

Oh.

*Client goes towards Clown*

No.

CLIENT

Huh?

Stay.

CLIENT

Oh. Right. I see. Okay.

DAD

He looks kinda sad, for a guy who’s supposed to make people laugh, huh?

*Clown does the bit for a while, with the bag, but it’s sad. Clown eventually takes his cap off, going around for money in the subway car. When the clown comes to them, Client looks to Dad, Dad looks away.*

*Clown leaves the car, empty-handed.*

LIBRARIAN

That should do it.

REW 写 YOUR LIFE! (LIFE)
REWRITE YOUR LIFE …

YOU’RE TIRED, YOU’RE BROKE, YOUR LIFE’S A JOKE
AND YOU’RE BORED OUT OF YOUR MIND
YOU LOOK BACK AT THE ROAD YOU TOOK
YOU’RE LIKE GOD CAN’T I REWIND?
WELL, GUESS WHAT, YOU’RE IN LUCK, HEY HONEY
WE CAN REWRITE THAT LIFE

CLIENT
I feel, really, not great.

LIBRARIAN
You’ve just changed a whole chunk of your life, side affects include nausea, migraine, nostalgia …

WRONG SCHOOL WRONG MARRIAGE WRONG CAREER
NOW YOU GET TO TAKE THAT BACK

CLIENT
Hey, wait, what’s happening?

LIBRARIAN
THEY SAY SPILLED MILK WILL SPILL MORE TEARS
BUT WE’VE MORE TO SAY TO THAT

What’s going on?

CLIENT
COZ THAT’S RIGHT, YOU’RE IN LUCK MY HONEY
LET US REWRITE THAT LIFE

The box on the counter evaporates to grey sand.

And one by one some other things evaporate to grey sand:
boxes, piles of papers, calendars, files, various props and knick knacks

CLIENT
What’s that? What’s all that?

LIBRARIAN
The Zenga blocks to do with your Clowning is leaving your life.
That’s the tablecloth you got your mom with your first party paycheck,

CLIENT
Wait –

LIBRARIAN
that’s your acting MFA,

CLIENT
Hold on –

LIBRARIAN
that’s the life of the women you stopped from jumping off the subway deck with the flower out your ass act -

REWRITE YOUR LIFE
STARTING AT ONE NINETY NINE
REWRITE YOUR LIFE (LIFE)
LIFE (LIFE)
REWRITE YOUR -
Stop it! I don't want this!

You don't?

No! I don't want to change my life. I love my life. Please stop it!

You sure?

Yes! Please!

That's completely doable.

Oh. Really?

All the sand, all the messed up chaos rise magically like stuff from a Star Wars movie and return to their rightful place.

Oh my god. Oh thank you. Oh thank you Jesus God.

You are very welcome. I hope you enjoy the life you have decided upon.

Librarian rings up the things.

That will be 1245.19 with tax. Tips are encouraged.

Excuse me?

Tips are encouraged. Obviously not mandated. But encouraged.

No wait tho, I didn’t change anything? Also, the coupon for five minutes.

I guess the coupon was expired.

But.

Yes?

So with the, not changing of anything, I don’t get a refund? I’m gonna walk out exactly to the same life I have walked in with.

You will have 1245.19 less. If you decide to skimp on the tip, of course.
CLIENT
Well, I guess I have also learned the value of the life I have. Like, I like it the way it is.

LIBRARIAN
Sure.

Client hands Librarian a credit card.

CLIENT
This is gonna hurt my credit score.

LIBRARIAN
Another thing that will have changed as you walk back out into your life! Sign here please, tips are appreciated.

Client signs, sighs, takes back Credit Card.

CLIENT
Well. Have a good one I guess.

LIBRARIAN
Same to you.

Client leaves the space.

DAD
Did he tip?

LIBRARIAN
Nope.

CLOWN
Oh well. That was an easy grand, so.

LIBRARIAN
Yep.

TEACHER
Think he'll be back?

LIBRARIAN
For sure.
They always come back.

Librarian closes the register with ding!
And the Shelves all magically empty again.

End of Play