

Adventure Cabaret

Selfie Intervention

A young man is sitting alone in his room. He is holding his cell phone, and moving his hand left and right on the phone, looking at pictures. Periodically he holds the phone up, smiles a strange, empty smile, and takes a picture of himself. His parents enter. He stops looking at the phone, but is still holding it where he can see the screen.

Father: Hi Luke.

Luke: Hi Dad. Hi mom. What's up?

Mother: Luke, we'd like to talk with you for a minute.

Luke: Uh...ok. What about?

The parents seat themselves, facing Luke. He barely looks at them, because he is still looking at his phone.

Mother: Honey, would you mind putting your phone down for a little while?

Luke: Why?

Father: Because this is important, and we need your full attention.

Luke: Sheesh. So heavy. Well, ok.

Reluctantly, he puts the phone down, but barely away from his hand. While his parents are talking, he can't help glancing at the phone repeatedly.

Mother: Luke, we're worried about something.

Luke: Worried? What about?

Father: Luke, we're worried about you.

Luke: Me? I'm fine.

Luke emits a nervous laugh.

Mother: Luke, I'm so sorry to say this, but we are beginning to think that you have an unhealthy relationship with your phone.

Luke: What? That's ridiculous.

Father: No. No, it's not. Luke, you can't even put your phone down for a minute.

Luke: Oh, come on. I just put my phone down.

Mother: Yes, but you can't help glancing at it every few seconds, as though you'll die without it.

Luke: Jesus...this is getting crazy.

Father: We agree, but I don't mean this conversation. I mean your behavior. It's getting crazy, because you also take pictures of yourself nearly every minute of the day.

Luke: I do not!

Mother: Yes, Luke. Yes, you do.

Luke: Man, what is this, the Inquisition?

Mother: Luke, we love you, and we're worried about you.

Father: You don't seem to have a life outside your phone.

Luke: I do have a life! I spend time with my friends!

Mother: Yes, but they are all on their phones too.

Luke: So what? That's what we do!

Father: Luke, I want to ask you a question.

Luke: Oh, the Inquisition has another question?

Father: Yes, as your father I need to inquire about something.

Luke: Jesus...ok.

Father: Do you actually have any interests, other than what is on your phone?

Mother: It's as though your phone has taken you over, and you don't exist without your phone.

Father: Even now, you keep glancing at your phone as though you are depending on it for your next breath.

Luke: Bullshit! I'm interested in lots of other stuff.

Mother: Like what, Luke?

Father: Yes, like what?

Luke: Like stuff on...WhatsApp...and TikTok...and YouTube...and...other stuff.

Painful silence.

Father: Ok, this is exactly what we mean.

Luke: Leave me alone! You're crazy! You're both crazy!

Father: Luke, we want to send you to a psychiatrist.

Mother: Yes, we do.

Luke: Fuck you! I'm not the one who's crazy. You are!

Father: Luke, we are sending you to a psychiatrist we have already selected.

Mother: Sorry, honey, but you are grounded until you see Dr. Belsen.

Luke: Oh my god. I can't believe you guys.

Father: Sorry, kid. That's the deal. Tomorrow you're staying home from school, and then your appointment with Dr. Belsen is at 2pm.

The parents get up and leave, the mother looking back with a worried look of love and concern. Luke looks around, distraught. This only lasts a few seconds. He suddenly grabs his phone, holds it at arm's length, puts on the empty smile, takes a selfie, and then looks at the selfie on his phone.