



# Youthwrite 1999

The definitive anthology  
of student written plays

*Published by  
ABCDE  
(Association of BC Drama Educators)*



## Youthwrite 1999

Dear Readers,

It is with great pleasure that I present the 1999 Youthwrite Anthology.

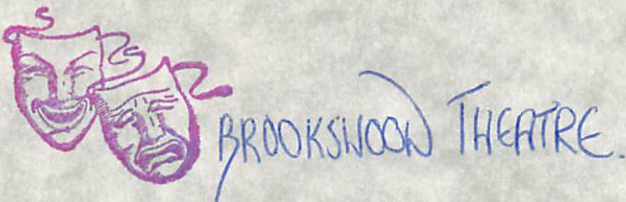
I would like to thank Linda Beaven who did such a fantastic job before me getting this program started and making it such an important part of the ABCDE's work. I was delighted to be involved in the program this year and found it to be an incredibly rewarding experience.

Please note, in John Lazarus' "Introduction To The 1999 Youthwrite Anthology", he refers to Joy Waller's play as "Not Quite Right," which was its title when we selected it for publication and production. However, the published title of Joy's play is "The Invitation."

I am also pleased to introduce Mr. Edgar Dobie. Mr. Dobie has been our 'Patron Saint' for the past two years with his generous donations, enabling us to get this very important book published. Thank you so much Edgar!

I know you will be impressed with the variety of talent these young writers possess. Happy Reading!

Lana O'Brien



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## INTRODUCTION TO THE 1999 YOUTHWRITE ANTHOLOGY

By John Lazarus

April, 1999

This is my fourth year adjudicating Youthwrite, with, this year, co-jurors Howard Barker and Lana O'Brien (replacing Linda Beaven, who's earned a break) and co-adjudicator Elizabeth Ebbels. And this is my fourth introduction to a Youthwrite Anthology. Naturally enough, each year the Festival grows. Where last year it seemed that the students were beginning to influence each other with their writings, this year they've begun to influence their teachers: the Association of B.C. Drama Educators, which, among other achievements, created and runs Youthwrite, framed this theme for their Annual Conference: "Developing students' ideas, thoughts, stories and writing into drama".

Then, the A.B.C.D.E. honoured and challenged me by asking me to give the keynote address at the Conference (held in Kelowna last January). Writing a keynote address forces you to go back to basics: to ask yourself – again – why we do what we do. In this case, one of the obvious questions was, Why should students develop their ideas, thoughts and stories into drama? (The other obvious question is why the rest of us should listen to them, but that one can wait until the end of this introduction.)

We all have a built-in need to tell our stories. Some famous deep thinkers, including Noam Chomsky and Lewis Thomas, are claiming that grammar is an innate human function, built into our DNA. It would seem that this must also apply to narrative: that the ability to structure a sentence, and the ability to structure a story, must come from the same place inside us. And it makes sense that our need to tell our stories is just as intrinsic to us as the need for food or for sex.

It is interesting that violent young people are often referred to as "acting out". This implies that it is their sense of narrative which expresses itself as violence. Kids in gangs seem to be re-enacting the great tribal myths – performing, for themselves and each other, ancient stories of heroism, loyalty, conquest, destiny fulfilled – just like students acting Shakespeare. Gang behavior suggests that that need for narrative, for mythic acting-out, is buried very deep.

A further theory of Lewis Thomas' is that the creation of language is primarily the work of the young. In our society, we see that work in the form of slang, gossip, jokes, rap, hip-hop and slam poetry, while we old folks complain, like generations before us, that these darn kids are ruining English, that the language is dying – just as music and art are always supposed to be dying. In fact, the constant change is a sign that language, music and art are constantly being reborn.

However, in this society, our instinct for food is exploited by the junk food industry and our instinct for sex by the porn industry: both multi-billion-dollar industries filling us with distorted images that make us sick. Similarly, our instinct for narrative is exploited by a mega-industry of junk movies, TV, fiction – even some live theatre. So, just as we protect

our young people from excessive junk food by teaching them to eat properly, and from pornographic stereotypes by teaching them about safe, honest sex, similarly we can protect them from the depredations of junk fiction by helping them tell their own stories. For the need for narrative, like those other needs, will express itself one way or another: if not in healthy ways, then in "acting out."

Which brings us back to the healthy expression that is Youthwrite. We could present only four of the six winning plays onstage at this year's Festival in Victoria. For those readers who enjoyed those four at Youthwrite, two more plays in this book will be an added bonus. Here is the list of this year's six winning plays, in alphabetical order:

*A Handful of Leaves*, by Lindsay Paton, is a mysterious, poetic meditation on nostalgia, magic, and the road not taken. This play features lovely dialogue – in the manner of adult ladies of the 1930's, which is an impressive feat for a '90s teenager.

*Not Quite Right*, by Joy Waller, is a look at those favourite themes of adolescent playwrights: popularity and peer-group cruelty. It intrigues us with the rhythmic, almost choral dialogue of the four kids interrogating and dissing our heroine – as well as with the strange black wooden block and its various potential meanings.

*This is Your First and Last Warning*, by Mark Fisher, is a spare, melancholic, beautifully written example of a futuristic dystopia. Comparisons with *1984* and *Brave New World* are inevitable, but this piece has a poetic, ironic, bitterly comic tone all its own. Neither Orwell nor Huxley ever came up with a government that was banishing the clouds, painting the sky red, and planning to put out the sun.

*To Say the Least*, by Marcie Larson, is an comedy – absurd and slightly sick, and I mean that nicely – about a courier and a nurse who, like many of us, have a talent for denying the obvious, at least until it threatens to stink the place out. It offers some very funny moments, and gets a bit genuinely scary towards the end, which is not an easy effect to pull off.

And the two that we were unable to present onstage:

*A Tragedy Of Youth*, by Darcy J. Knopp, is a parable of a boy who shows up in class Monday morning, just as always, not realizing that during the weekend he was killed in a drunken car crash. In an effective and touching plot device, his girl friend, being in a coma, can guide him through this twilight world, but must then decide which way to go for herself.

Finally, the accurately titled *Welcome to the Nuthouse*, by Trevor Howitt, is an outrage and a travesty, whose only excuse for existing is that it is hilarious. When I read it, on the flight from Vancouver to the ABCDE Conference in Kelowna, the wonky dialogue of its stoned dudes and sensitive Russian agents had me laughing out loud on the plane.

And thus we return to Kelowna, and that other keynote question we must ask ourselves, now that we have asked why young people should tell their stories: why should we listen to their stories? Well, frankly, Lindsay, Joy, Mark, Marcie, Darcy and Trevor can answer that one better than I can. And they do, in this book, with their originality, sensitivity, idealism, cynicism, outrageousness – well, you fill in your own nouns. It's all here, in the plays.

- John Lazarus



EDGAR DOBIE

Edgar Dobie was born in Vernon, British Columbia in 1953, graduated from the theater program at the University of British Columbia in 1977 with a Bachelor of Arts and completed a Masters Degree at the University of Leeds, Yorkshire, England in 1979. He has worked as a stage carpenter and electrician at the Frederic Wood Theatre in Vancouver, General Manager at The New Play Centre and Waterfront Theatre and as Administrator at the National Arts Centre Theatre Department for two seasons. Edgar moved to Toronto in 1985 to become General Manager of CentreStage Company. During the '87/88 season he became the founding Managing Director of The Canadian Stage Company (the company formed from a merger of Toronto Free Theatre and CentreStage Company). Edgar joined Cineplex Odeon Corporation in July 1988 as Vice President and head of the newly formed Live Entertainment Division. In December 1989, The Live Entertainment Corporation of Canada was formed from the former Cineplex division and Edgar became its Senior Vice President responsible for production. In 1992 Edgar became President of The Really Useful Company. As President he was responsible for producing the Broadway and US touring productions of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat", "Sunset Boulevard" and the world premiere production of "Whistle Down the Wind" in Washington, DC. Edgar formed Edgar Dobie Inc. (EDI) in 1997 and was proud to be involved as a producer of "The Capeman", his first production as an independent producer. In July 1998, EDI was appointed Managing Producer of the Tony Awards. In February of 1999 he formed Watt Dobie Productions L.L.C. with Michael Watt. In addition to the Tony Awards the company is currently developing *Romeo & Juliet—The Musical* for Kaleidoscope Sports and Entertainment (Terrence Mann, Jerome Korman), joining Allan Carr as co-Producer of *Tom Sawyer* (Ken Ludwig, Don Schlitz) and provides consulting services to Maurice Cassidy/*Riverdance—The Show*. Edgar is a Trustee of the Actors Fund of America. Edgar has two children: Anna Dobie and Sam Dobie.



# *A Handful of Leaves*

*by*

*Lindsey Paton*



Caution: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that "A Handful of Leaves" by Lindsey Paton is subject to royalty. It is protected under Copyright Law. Inquiries regarding performance rights and royalties should be directed to Lindsey Paton at 29104 Tamaric Ave. Abbotsford, BC V4X 2C9. The fee for a single production of this play will be \$25.00

## *A Handful of Leaves*

**The story is set in 1949. On stage there is a bridge covering a stream and there are two trees, one on either side of the bridge. The tree on the right is younger and more vibrant, the tree on the left is old and gnarled. The bridge is also separated in half by its aging condition, left side older, right side newer. It is Fall, and there are many dead leaves on the stage.**

**Young Anna - 12**

**Audrey - 12**

**Anna Foster - 28**

**Mrs. Eugene Parker William Fiddlestone (Fanny) - 55**

**Joanne Perkins - 18**

**Susanna Cuthbertson - 38**

***Two young girls (twelve) are in a park, sitting near stream. They are both wearing expressions of childish boredom.***

**AUDREY:** Where do you think it goes, Anna?

**ANNA:** What are you talking about? Where does what go?

**AUDREY:** The stream. It must go somewhere after the park. I bet it goes to a huge ocean, or to a magical spring, or...or maybe it even goes to an eternal fountain...with...with fairies and stuff!

**ANNA:** Actually Audrey, I think it ends up in that old pond over behind Mr. Murphy's barn.

**AUDREY:** *(Excitedly)* No! I read about this! There are these fountains, and if you drink out of them you live forever, and you never get tired and you never get old, so you can do whatever you want, and you never have to sleep and you never have to die. Oh gosh Anna, imagine...just imagine the things we could do. Imagine the places we could explore if we found a fountain and never had to be an adult and do what the world told us! Only fairies know where they are, but I bet that if we follow this stream we'll find a fountain, or at least a magical spring!

**ANNA:** Sorry, I can't today. I have to go help mother with supper in a little while. Besides, you know we aren't supposed to play in the stream when the water is high.

**AUDREY:** Nobody is going to find out if we don't tell.

**ANNA:** Yeah, I guess. *(Pause)* Maybe we could go look tomorrow?

**AUDREY:** *(Pause)* Yeah, maybe tomorrow.

***The girls sit on the bank of the stream. They stare at it blankly without speaking.***

**AUDREY:** I know, lets fly! Look, we can use the leaves for wings.

*Audrey scoops up handfuls of the fall leaves and begins flapping around.*

Look Anna, I'm flying. I'm really flying! Everything looks tiny, and there are clouds and birds and...try this Anna, it is simply wonderful. You know what Anna? When I grow up I am going to drive an aeroplane, with a motor, and a propeller and everything. I'll fly all over the world, to wonderful and strange places, like England, and China. We can go together...hey, you can fly too!

**ANNA:** Audrey, I'm not going to fly.

**AUDREY:** *(Very matter-of-factly)* Of course you are. If we're going to fly together you will have to know how to drive the aeroplane.

**ANNA:** You're crazy Audrey. One of these days you must stop talking of this flying aeroplanes business. Those things are dangerous! And besides, a lady can't fly an aeroplane. What will your husband and your children do while you are gallivanting all over the place?

**AUDREY:** *(Thinks about this for a second)* My mother will look after them. *(Pause)* Anna?

**ANNA:** Yes?

**AUDREY:** Isn't there something that you want to do more than anything, even something that sounds absurd and impossible, but you just know you have to try anyway?

**ANNA:** I guess I never really thought about it.

**AUDREY:** I think that everyone has something, you just need to find yours. Your impossible dream. Except maybe it's not impossible. You just think it is.

**ANNA:** Yeah, sure. Audrey...do you really want me to fly with you?

**AUDREY:** Of course silly!

**ANNA:** I guess that maybe I will come with you, as long as you are very sure that it is safe and everything. We could drink tea with the King and Queen.

**AUDREY:** At the castle in England!

**ANNA:** Wow. You and me with real wings, in Europe! We could invite the queen to come flying with us, and fly right over the city of London!

**AUDREY:** We'll be able to look down and see all the people, and the castles, and those real tall buses,...and the animals at the Piccadilly Circus!

**ANNA:** Maybe we'll both meet handsome princes who will fall in love with us and we can all run away to...oh no, it must be almost supptime. . I have to get home to help mother and I am so terribly late!

*Anna grabs her school bag*

Aren't you coming?

**AUDREY:** Actually, if you don't mind I think that I might just stay here for a little bit longer. I think I'll practice my flying skills for a little while.

**ANNA:** Okay, if you'd like. I guess I'll see you tomorrow?

**AUDREY:** Of course. We can plan where we are going to fly.

**ANNA:** Goodbye then Audrey.

**AUDREY:** Goodbye Anna...

*The girls hug, children's laughter fades out in the background. As the lights go down on stage right they come up on downstage left. Young Anna crosses the bridge and exits stage left, at the same time older Anna is entering stage left. They collide momentarily, downstage left, but older Anna is in such a rush that she doesn't really notice younger Anna at first.*

**YOUNGER**

**ANNA:** I'm so sorry ma'am.

*She helps older Anna collect the books she has dropped*

**OLDER**

**ANNA:** No really, it was my fault. I have been so clumsy lately. Things have been so hectic I don't even notice where I am going. You know?

**YOUNGER**

**ANNA:** *(Nonchalantly)* Not really. Have a nice day ma'am.

**OLDER**

**ANNA:** *(Pause)* Thank you.

*Older Anna continues to the park onstage. As she enters the park the lights come up on three women, sitting motionless, (upstage left), and enshrouded in a thin layer of mist. When Anna is in the park leaves rustle, and the three women begin to make the exact same movements as Anna, each unaware of what the others are doing. Leaves rustle again, their movements are no longer in unison, and the mist fades away..*

**ANNA:** *(Thoughtfully)* Where do you think it goes?

*All women turn in shock. No one speaks for a minute. The women are used to keeping to themselves, and are surprised when Anna speaks.*

**FANNY:** Whatever do you mean dear?

ANNA: The river. What happens to it? Where does fate lead it?

SUSANNA: Well I sure don't know anything about fate myself, but I do believe that it heads over to Old Mr. Murphy's and ends up in that swamp.

*All go back to what they were doing. All the women except Anna are tentative to join the conversation, as if they are afraid to break their routine, but at the same time are curious.*

ANNA: Well that's sort of dull. To travel all that way, and then have to spend the rest of your life in a mucky 'ol bog. Even if you are just a little stream, I'm sure glad that I am not in its place. You know?

FANNY: Really dear, it's a small body of water, not a person. I'm quite sure that it doesn't mind. *(Fanny goes back to humming and knitting)*

ANNA: But still...maybe it doesn't go to a swamp. Maybe it goes to a, a spring! Or a...

SUSANNA: *(Interested)* A what?

ANNA: Well I have...had this friend, when I was a girl, who said that perhaps it...it...no. It's nonsense.

FANNY: *(Crossing the stage to Anna)* Well then never mind dearie. I don't believe we've properly met. I'm Mrs. Eugene Parker William Fiddlestone. You may call me Fanny. My dear Eugene, may he rest in peace, passed on six years ago. Suddenly really. One minute he was eating his breakfast. The next he was dead and gone on the kitchen table. Right there, amongst the ham and bacon and eggs and all. Imagine!

ANNA: Well...I.. I am so sorry Mrs. Fiddlestone.

FANNY: Please, Fanny, and don't be sorry dearie, you didn't kill him. Besides, it's the way he would've wanted to go.

**ANNA:** Oh...I see. My name is Miss Anna Foster. I couldn't help but notice that you come here regularly.

*Anna looks around and notices that Joanne and Susanna are quite interested in the conversation.*

**ANNA:** *(As if seeing them for the first time)* Well all of you. I don't suppose we've really ever met, which is strange when you think about it, I mean considering the fact that we've all crossed paths so often and...

**SUSANNA:** Well I am Miss Susanna Cuthbertson. How do you do?

*The women nod in response to her question.*

**JOANNE:** *(Tentatively)* Excuse me. I...I don't mean to interrupt but I couldn't help but overhear what you said...about the stream...about where it goes. I agree. Oh, and I am Joanne, Joanne Perkins. *(Enthusiastically shakes everyone's hand)*

**FANNY:** Well that is lovely dearie, just lovely, But...what do you agree with?

**JOANNE:** Well, what Miss Foster said about it being sad. The stream.

**FANNY:** Ladies, have you lost your marbles? It is not sad, or happy, or bored or much of anything besides wet. It is water. It is used for boiling and cleaning and drinking. *(Fanny goes back to humming and knitting)*

**JOANNE:** But still. It does not have an opportunity to determine its own fate. The shape of the earth does...I mean...it is just that...

**ANNA:** It's okay, it is just that what?



**JOANNE:** It's just that perhaps if the world were shaped a slight bit differently this way or that the stream would be a lake, or an ocean, you know? It does not decide to wind it's way into the muck. That's just how it turned out for the stream.

**ANNA:** I suppose you're right. But perhaps nobody knows where it really ends up. We just assume that the stream goes to a bog because that's where most of it seems to be. But perhaps there are all sorts of parts that run off to who knows where. Places we don't know about.

*Fanny sighs loudly and rolls her eyes. Susanna just smiles to herself.*

**FANNY:** Dears, this is all very nice and romantic but perhaps you ladies should spend a little more time concerned with your own matters than with those of the little river. All of you visit this park often. I know. I've seen you here. Aren't there chores being neglected, families to be looked after? Hmmm? Come on now. I don't mean to be nosy, but really. It is only the simple truth dears. A fine lot of well bred young ladies daydreaming the day away in some run down park. Humph. *(Fanny goes back to humming and knitting)*

**SUSANNA:** *(Susanna's cautiousness suddenly disappears, she stands up and marches over to where Fanny is sitting)* Did it ever cross your mind that perhaps some of us don't have families to go home to? Hmm? Just so you know "dearie" I would give anything to have a warm house, full of children to go home to. Do you know what it's like to be thirty-eight and still not married. To be an old maid? Do you know what it is like to lose contact with your girlfriends one by one as they all get married and have beautiful families. I have nobody! I was orphaned as a child. At least some old maids can impose on their sister. I don't even have that simple satisfaction! I go home every evening to a cold and damp and lonely apartment, and this run down park is the only place in the world I have, thank you very much!

*Everyone is shocked and then embarrassed at the unexpected outburst. Susanna angrily goes back to reading a book. The others turn back to what they were doing as well.*

**JOANNE:** Well I just cannot understand why.

*The ladies give Joanne frantic looks of warning, and try to shush her. Joanne goes on talking anyway, and the rest of the women pretend to be uninvolved in the conversation.*

**JOANNE:** It's just that, well I don't mean to be obtrusive, but it really is'nt how you want to spend your life, in a house that is so full of whining children, and at the same time so unfeeling and empty.

**SUSANNA:** I certainly do not believe that you are in any kind of a position to tell me what I do and do not want in life. How old are you? Fifteen, sixteen maybe? Why you are just a young thing. I love children, I want my own family, and you of all people will not persuade me otherwise. I will have strong young boys, who will grow to be handsome, successful men, and lovely little girls, to raise families of their own...polite little girls, who know when to hold their tongue.

**JOANNE:** I'm not fifteen, I'm eighteen. And I'm sorry ma'am but I already live that life.

**ANNA:** But surely you don't have a large family yet!

**JOANNE:** Well not in a matter of speaking, I suppose, but sort of. I couldn't finish my schooling because mother needed help in the house. We have a very large household. I have eight younger brothers and two younger sisters. We live in a very large and drafty house, that is never warm enough. It used to be a very grandly decorated house with beautiful furniture, and paintings from Europe, and elegant tapestries, and a nanny!... but my parents lost so much in the depression. Everything almost except the house. I was excellent in mathematics and English. I really want...wanted to...

**ANNA:** To what?

**JOANNE:** *(Pause)* I've never told anybody.

**ANNA:** Well there's no time like the present. Please tell us!

**JOANNE:** I can't. It is just silly girlhood dreams.

**FANNY:** You think nothing of having a conversation about the underprivileged lifestyle of a muddy creek and yet you worry about telling us some little tidbit of information about yourself? Hogwash! In fact I bet that you'd never guess what I...

**ANNA:** Excuse me Mrs. Fiddlest...

**FANNY:** Call me Fanny.

**ANNA:** I'm sorry Fanny, but I believe that we should let Joanne continue.

**JOANNE:** *(Bashful and unsure of herself)* I was always at the top of my class in mathematics, and I also scored very high marks in English, if I dare say so myself. When I was a girl I used to read my father's daily news paper when he was not looking. My father used to take the train to the city to work every day, and sometimes he'd tell me about the city. It sounded so wonderful, and busy!

*Joanne stands up as she begins to get excited*

My favourite part of the daily was the business section, I loved to read about all the companies, and what they were selling and stuff. Sometimes I would just read the numbers and try to understand what they meant. I loved it all, the people, and the bustling city. One time my father took me to the city. I was very young, and we went to see the Santa Claus Parade. I can still remember exactly what it was like.

The bright lights shining on everyone's faces, reflecting the hope in their eyes...they all looked as if something really important were about to happen. Something much greater than seeing a jolly old fat man in a red suit. It was almost as if they were waiting for someone to freeze them in time, to take them away from their everyday routine, and place them in that world of limitless hope and bright lights. It seemed as if anything were possible that evening...

**FANNY:** Probably a mix of frostbite and too much Christmas candy (*Fanny goes back to humming and knitting*).

**IN UNISON:** Fanny!

**JOANNE:** That was when I knew what I wanted to do.

**ANNA:** Do?

**JOANNE:** I want...wanted to go to the city, and work in a business, with numbers. I thought perhaps I could be an accountant. They work for businesses and take care of money. I earned high enough grades to get a scholarship for college...but it is hard for girls to get a scholarship, and anyway, that doesn't really matter anyway, now.

**ANNA:** Of course it doesn't matter! Who cares what anyone says. I can just picture you in a beautiful building in the...

**JOANNE:** No, it doesn't matter because I am not going to school, I am not learning about business, I am not living in the city. I spend all my time looking after children, and when I do have any free time I am here, in this run down patch of grass. I am never going to be able to leave this map dot. I'm never going to be anything but a housewife.

**SUSANNA:** That's not so bad.

**JOANNE:** No, no it's not so bad for some. But being a housewife is just not for me. It never will be, no matter what mother says. I want to live in that moment, that moment in the city, at the parade. I want to be one of those people. *(Pause)* Haven't you ever just thought "what if?". What if I was that person who knows exactly who they are, and where they should be in life. What if I...

**FANNY:** *(Interrupting)* Were known all over the world as... silver footed Fanny!

*All stop and stare at Fanny, shocked her unexpected outburst.*

**FANNY:** This may come as a bit of a surprise to you young ladies, but I was quite the dancer in my day, and have always had quite an ear for music. Eugene always recognized my talents, may he rest in peace..

*No one answers, still confused and surprised at Fanny*

**FANNY:** Well, what are you all staring at? You look like a flock of windswept hens! What do you think I am? A miserable nag who has nothing better to do than whine and knit? Hmmmm. I had quite the hidden talent you know. Still do in fact. No one ever really encouraged me to do much singing or dancing, except Eugene of course. Proper young ladies simply did not grow up to be entertainers, it was just not right back then.

**SUSANNA:** *(Stage whisper)* For some people it's still not right.

**FANNY:** Hmph, I absolutely will not dignify that remark with an answer. Eugene, unlike you people could recognize talent when he saw it. He knew my potential, he knew I could be a great.

**ANNA:** Wow Fanny, I never would've guessed. *(Trying not to laugh)* So why didn't you?

**FANNY:** I don't know really. They used to know me at all the local dance halls, I guess we spent a lot of time there. Eugene and I could really set a place hoppin'. Being an entertainer just wasn't something that nice girls did. Oh sure, the cinema stars were well thought of, and loved by everyone, but who ever made it that far?

**JOANNE:** I always wanted to be able to dance, but no one ever taught me how.

**FANNY:** Well don't be silly dear, I'll show you.

**ANNA:** Oh, could you teach me as well? I've never had the chance to dance!

**SUSANNA:** Don't be ridiculous, right here in the park? Fanny, this isn't one of your youthful dance halls you know! You simply cannot just teach dancing lessons right here.

**FANNY:** And just why not?

**SUSANNA:** Well... it's just that... you...you, what will people think?

**ANNA:** Who will see? We are the only ones that ever actually frequent this run down patch of grass. Afraid to have a little fun?

**JOANNE:** She's right, what sort of...

**FANNY:** ...harm can it possibly cause? You all would be silly to pass up the opportunity to have me teach you some steps, I was one of the best you know.

**SUSANNA:** *(Reluctantly)* I suppose that it won't cause any trouble. But I am not joining in.

**ANNA:** *(Sweeping up Anna and twirling her around a few times)* Of course you are joining us, otherwise I won't have a partner.

**JOANNE**

**AND FANNY:** Exactly.

*Susanna is shocked, all assume dancing positions.*

**FANNY:** I suppose we could skip the boring stuff, you know, the waltzes and such...hmmm....perhaps we shall try a foxtrot dears. The beat is sort of a dada da da da dada da da da.

**SUSANNA** That is that horrible, infernal tune you've been humming all afternoon!

**FANNY:** Yes well, it's a classic, and besides...it's is the only song that I can ever remember.

**ANNA:** I can't believe that I am learning a foxtrot here in the middle of the park

**SUSANNA:** You're telling me.

**FANNY:** Ok, enough chat already. Since we have no real music we'll have to follow the music in our heads.

**SUSANNA:** What are you talking about! There is no music in my head.

**ANNA:** Sure there is, you just have to listen. Dada da da da ...

**JOANNE**

**AND FANNY:** Dada da da da..

*All except Susanna hum the foxtrot beat. Suddenly as she hears the music, the expression on her face changes, and she begins to hum along.*

**JOANNE:** See, it's there, but you can't hear it if you don't listen.

**FANNY:** Enough chatter dears. Begin with feet together.

*All assume position and try to follow Fanny's instructions, Fanny with Joanne and Anna with a reluctant Susanna.*

**FANNY:** Okay, pay attention dears. Right foot forward, and left foot forward , gracefully dears, gracefully now, sweeping steps. And right, and left and together and turn, two, three, four and back and...oh gracious.

*Fanny looks over to see Anna and Susanna completely tangled up, she grabs Susanna and begins dancing with her as Joanne and Anna pair up. Susanna is completely flustered.*

**FANNY:** Okay dears, let's try this again, and remember, grace. Just because this is a modern dance doesn't mean you can flop all over. Step two three four and left two three four, and together with right, and turn, two, three, OUCH!

**SUSANNA:** Oops, sorry, guess I'm not very good, guess I'll just...

**FANNY:** Not so fast there twinkle toes.

*Susanna is frustrated, the rest are trying not to laugh.*

**FANNY:** Stay right where you are. Watch my feet carefully.

*Fanny does the foxtrot with an imaginary partner*

**FANNY:** It is easy if you know where you are going. Step two three four, turn and back left two three four, back right two three four, back left two three four and turn. All you have to do is hear the music. As long as you can hear the music in your head, and focus on it, your feet will follow. As long as you listen. That's the key.

**FANNY:** Alright, one last time.

*All assume dance positions again, Fanny with Susanna, and Anna with Joanne.*



**FANNY:** Ready and step left two three four, right two three four, and turn two three four and...

*Fanny fades out as foxtrot music fades up. Both pair glide across the stage, lost for a moment in the music. Suddenly their eyes meet and they all begin to laugh.*

**FANNY:** See, I told you that you could... Ouch! Susanna!

*Susanna looks apologetic, all begin to laugh even harder.*

**JOANNE:** I can't believe we just learned to foxtrot.

**SUSANNA:** ...in the middle of a public park...

**FANNY:** ...with you as my dance partner...

**ANNA:** ..and we've all just met this afternoon!

**SUSANNA:** Perhaps we didn't just meet. Perhaps we've all known each other, as regulars in this park for a long time, but it was just today that we took the time to be a real part of one another's lives.

**ANNA:** I guess that could be.

*There is a comfortable pause as the women return to themselves for a moment before Susanna speaks.*

**SUSANNA:** You know I've always wanted to go to one of those socials at the hall but I was always so scared that someone would ask me to dance, and I wouldn't have a clue what to do. I think that now that I know some dance steps I might have to try them out.

**FANNY:** I hope your partner has thick shoes, for his own sake..

**IN UNISON:** Fanny!

*All except Susanna start laughing again and collapse in giggles.*

**SUSANNA:** Hey, what's so funny?

**JOANNE:** You, silly! You should have seen the look on your face when Anna made you dance with her.

**ANNA:** Never mind that, did you see the look of Fanny's face when Susanna stepped on her...

**FANNY:** ...the second time?

*Fanny, Anna and Joanne burst out in laughter again.*

**SUSANNA:** Hey, I wasn't that awful. I figured it out just like the rest of you.

**JOANNE:** Yes. Yes you did. And we all have to start somewhere, even you, Susanna.

**ANNA:** Hey, never mind the bickering you two.

**JOANNE AND**

**SUSANNA:** Sorry.

**JOANNE:** I must admit Fanny, I never would've guess that you could dance.

**FANNY:** Yes, well...Sometimes I wonder if I ever could've amounted to anything. What if I hadn't listened to everyone who told me that performing wasn't proper? I wonder were I'd be today if I...

**ANNA:** Hadn't left her that day.

*All turn in surprise at Anna's unexpected comment*

**FANNY:** Whatever do you mean dearie? Hadn't left who?

**ANNA:** *(In a very bewildered state)* A friend. I had a friend who I left here one day. If it wasn't for me we would've had real wings, and if I had only stayed there, we both would've found the fountain and...

**FANNY:** Oh dear. I knew, I just knew that something was not right with you people, after your pity for the stream, and now...

**IN UNISON:** Fanny!

*Fanny casts them a suspicious glance, then once again resumes her humming and knitting*

**SUSANNA:** Anna, love, I think you are bit confused.

**ANNA:** No, no I'm not. I'm not confused. Well, perhaps I am, but if so I've been this way since I was twelve. Twelve and a half actually. Since I left Audrey. I'm sorry, but I just can't believe I could've done such a thing.

*All are focused on Anna, with looks of bewilderment and confusion on their faces.*

**FANNY:** *(Suspiciously)* What did you do to this Audrey, and who are you really?

**IN UNISON:** Fanny!

**SUSANNA:** Be quiet Fanny.

**ANNA:** We were only twelve. Audrey and I, I mean. Audrey was my best friend, we used to come here all the time...when the park was different, when it used to be a hopeful place...brighter I guess. I'm not sure when, but the park just seemed to change somewhere along the way.

**FANNY:** I remember that...when it was different. Eugene and I used to walk through here together in the evenings during the summer. Sometimes we used to stop and watch the kids playing...

**SUSANNA:** That's right! When I was about ten, my aunt Bess used to bring me here sometimes. There used to be others, families, and couples, and children.

**JOANNE:** I remember when it was just the three oldest children, Christopher and Simon and I, before Amelia was born and things began to get hectic. Mother used to bring us here on sunny afternoons. The park was so full of people, so full of life, and expectancy then.

**ANNA:** That's how it was when Audrey and I came here. It used to be so different...

*All are quite for a moment. Leaves rustle.*

**ANNA:** You know what you said Joanne? About the parade, and about being that person who knows exactly who they are, and where they should be in life? That was Audrey. The first twelve year old world explorer. She wanted to be a pilot, and she never walked anywhere. She flew, she actually flew. Literally, you could look out your kitchen window, and there would be Audrey, flapping her way down the street, with me in tow. Oh, the other mothers used to complain something awful to mother. "Mrs. Foster, really! Letting your daughter turn into a hooligan! She could've been such a nice young lady". They didn't even bother with Audrey. They figured that any little girl that was constantly covered in mud and wanted to fly airplanes was a lost cause. But she wasn't.

**JOANNE:** Imagine. To be twelve years old, and to know exactly who and what you want to be. I am eighteen, and all I've ever done is dream. What if I spend the rest of my life living in a fantasy. I'll be thirty-five, and still be drifting along in a life that is not my own.

**ANNA:** That was the difference between Audrey and the rest of the world. To her there was no such thing as a dream, fantasy did not exist. To her fantasy and reality were the same.

In her mind she could have anything she wanted. Her life was waiting for her across the bridge, and all she had to do was go to it when she got tired of being a child.

SUSANNA: Maybe that's our problem.

FANNY: Or just your problem. (*Fanny returns to her knitting and humming*)

IN UNISON: Fanny!

SUSANNA: Maybe we stay on our side of the bridge because we know the difference between dreams and reality. Maybe that knowledge is what keeps us sitting around in this run down park. Somewhere along the way someone taught us that dreams are something extraordinary. Something amazing that exists only in our hearts. And that reality is what we step in to when we outgrow our dreams.

ANNA: She never outgrew her dreams, Audrey. I guess nobody ever bothered to tell her that she had to do what was proper and right and normal.

JOANNE: Or maybe she never listened to those who tried.

ANNA: No, I suppose she didn't.

FANNY: Well dearie, you simply must tell us what became of her. Did she get to fly?

*Anna doesn't answer right away.*

FANNY: Well, did she?

ANNA: No. Well, yes, I mean I suppose she did.

**SUSANNA:** Oh, what a pity, did you lose touch? Oh, don't worry, I'm sure we can find her! There are old files at the library and...

**ANNA:** No!

**SUSANNA:** Well, we don't have to look in the library if...

**ANNA:** *(Upset)* It...it doesn't matter where you look. It is too late. I've lost her. I just walked away from her...without even glancing back...until she'd slipped away. *(Anna walks away from the group towards the bridge)*

**FANNY:** *(In a stage whisper)* Look what you have done to her, you ninny!

**SUSANNA:** Anna? Anna I'm sorry, I didn't mean to upset you. I just...

**FANNY:** Anna, honestly, what really happened to Audrey. Where is she?

**ANNA:** Fanny, honestly, I really don't know.

**SUSANNA:** We can find her, all we need is a plan. I'm sure somebody must know where....

**ANNA:** Nobody knows actually. *(Pause)* I think that she finally found the fountain.

**JOANNE:** Fountain?

**ANNA:** I first started coming to this park when I was about nine...I guess it was sort of a place to escape the world back then. Maybe it still is, I don't know. I was never the most adventuresome child. The world seemed such a sad place to me, so random and meaningless. I lived with my mother, my father died in the war. Life was something to be endured, rather than something to be enjoyed.

- FANNY:** If that is what you thought of the world at nine, I don't want to know what your opinion is now!
- ANNA:** No, see that all changed. It was after school one day, I was about seven. I had had the most awful day. Mary Ellen told me I was fat, and Robert Jensen kicked my shin so hard I had a bruise for a week and a half. I was so upset I ran straight here after school. That's when I met Audrey, (*pause, children's laughter rings softly*) It was one of those days on the edge of spring, right after winter, when it is really cold, but the air still smells like the sun. She was sitting over there beside the stream. It was so bright out, and at first I thought that I was just seeing things, but then she started to talk to me. Like a real friend, not at all condescending or bullying like the others.
- JOANNE:** So where does the fountain fit in to this?
- ANNA:** Audrey used to come up with the greatest stories and ideas, about absolutely everything under the sun. One of them was about a fountain. She imagined that at the end of this river there was a fountain, and this fountain would give whomever found it eternal childhood and eternal freedom...Audrey thought that the two went hand in hand, youth and freedom. The last day we were together she wanted me to help her find the fountain. We were twelve, and it was fall. A day sort of like today, except it was brighter...I was too busy to look for the fountain (*pause*) and I had to leave.
- SUSANNA:** So you think she found it on her own.
- ANNA:** I know she went looking for the fountain on her own. I'd like to think that she found it, and is in some wonderful place right now, flying to her hearts content. That's what I'd like to think.
- FANNY:** But?...

**ANNA:** But really , I no longer live in that fantasy world. I knew what those people were searching for. I knew why the ambulance was at the park and I knew why school was canceled the next day. I knew why I had to wear my Sunday clothes on a Thursday. I knew why mother and I brought casserole and peach pie to Audrey's house every day for a week. I knew why I wasn't allowed to go to the park by myself anymore. *(Pause)* I just didn't want to believe it. I guess I just listened to everyone around me, who said it would be okay. But it wasn't okay, Audrey was gone. A part of me was gone. Sometimes it just seems as if the world won't let someone think for themselves...

**JOANNE:** ...As if our lives are patterned by those around us. Perhaps our personalities, our thoughts, our actions, are....

**SUSANNA:** ...the personalities, thoughts and actions of the random people that float in and out of our lives, and become pieces of us.

**ANNA:** That is sort of a depressing thought, that others have more control over our lives that we do.

**JOANNE:** Of course it is an awful idea if you look it that way. But perhaps, if we take something away from every person that we meet, not something bad, but something good, it is a way of never losing anybody we meet.

**ANNA:** We are still losing something, though. There is always a goodbye waiting around the corner. People are drifters, they come and go. Some go to war, some move away, some die, and some simply leave. That's the thing about this place, this world we live in. Every joy, every happiness, every dream has an ending.

**FANNY:** No, actually dear, I disagree.

*No one speaks, all are surprised at Fanny's comment*



**FANNY:** Well, think about it. If Joanne is right, and I think that she just might be, then people don't leave us. They just live within us instead of living outside of us. They are still there. *(Fanny, having said her peace, once again returns to her humming and knitting)*

**JOANNE:** Exactly. There are some people in the world that merely pass through, without effecting, without leaving anything behind them. They live life for themselves, and when they pass on they are gone. Forgotten. And then there are those who come into the world and make a difference. These people are the ones that teach the world to laugh and to smile, the ones who teach the world to dream. They survive forever through those who's lives they've touched. They shine.

*All, deep in thought, absentmindedly turn to look at the stream, and pause for a moment.*

**ANNA:** Why do you think it is that we all pass each other so often here, and just today for the first time did we stop to talk?

**JOANNE:** Perhaps it was the unanswered question that brought us together.

**ANNA:** Unanswered question?

**SUSANNA:** You asked about the stream. You said, "Where do you think it goes?". We are all here so often together, but I don't suppose anyone has ever given us anything to discuss. Until you asked about the stream.

**ANNA:** To tell you the truth it was Audrey's question originally, and I've never found an answer. I guess I've always sort of wondered.

**JOANNE:** Well it wouldn't be a question if you knew the answer now would it?

**ANNA:** I suppose you're right. Perhaps questions are the world's way of keeping us interested?

**FANNY:** God's version of the jigsaw puzzle.

**SUSANNA:** Maybe so.

*Contemplative pause.*

**SUSANNA:** Do you think she really would've flown all over the world?

*Anna sits silently for a moment before answering.*

**ANNA:** I don't know. Maybe she would've, maybe she wouldn't have. But I do know that Audrey would've tried, she would have done anything to be a pilot, if that was what she wanted to be. Audrey just would've kept on trying forever. When I was young, she taught me to never give up. (Pause) I heard this quote once, "I love you not for the things you do for me, but for how I feel when I'm with you". That was why I loved Audrey. Not just because she stuck up for me, or because she was nice to me. It was the way life felt when we were together. Like we could do anything. She made me see what was invisible. She showed me how to touch the untouchable and how to reach the unattainable. ... She taught me to fly. I feel like somewhere in the process of growing up that understanding was lost.

**SUSANNA:** Forgotten, but not lost. Audrey's youthfulness is a part of you, just as Joanne and Fanny and I are a part of you. There are many different personalities within you, you just have to listen to them, like the music.

**ANNA:** (*Anna ponders this for a moment*) Thank you...

**FANNY:** (*Assuming credit for the thanks*) You're welcome. For what?

**ANNA:** For giving me a part of what I was. For everything. All of you. I am so glad that after all this time I have finally gotten to know you all.

**JOANNE:** We've always known each other, we just never really listened to one another. Sort of like the music. It was always there inside of us, we just never really listened to it. *(Pause)* Anna, I think that perhaps we should be thanking you.

**FANNY:** For what?

**JOANNE:** *(Glaring at Fanny)* For the question.

**SUSANNA:** Without which we would not be talking at this moment.

**ANNA:** You are very welcome, but it's really Audrey you should be thanking for that one. *(Pause)* Perhaps one day we should find out where the stream really does go.

*All think about this for a moment before their eyes meet. They all shake their heads.*

**ANNA:** Some things are best left unanswered, I suppose.

**FANNY:** That they are dear. It is getting late though, I suppose that I should head home before it gets too dark.

*The others nod in agreement. Leaves rustle, and their movements once again become simultaneous. Each goes to her place and picks up her belongings and handbag, and begins to exit. They stop and turn around.*

**SUSANNA:** Perhaps we'll meet again soon?

**JOANNE:** *(Pause)* Maybe tomorrow?

**ANNA:** No, not tomorrow, I'm afraid. I leave in the morning for Toronto.

**FANNY:** My goodness! What on earth is in Toronto?

**ANNA:** *(Pause)* Flight School.

*All are surprised at this. No one speaks for a moment.*

**JOANNE:**       Wow.

**FANNY:**       Goodness dearie...you mean...

**JOANNE:**       ...that...

**SUSANNA:**    ..really? You're going to learn how to fly an aeroplane?

**ANNA:**        *(Smiles to herself and pauses for a moment)* I'm going to remember how to fly an aeroplane.

*Leaves rustle. The women smile knowingly and the lights slowly fade down as the stage is once more enshrouded in a fine layer of mist. All the women exit stage left, except for Anna who is the last to leave. She turns around at the last moment, and as she turns back a soft light comes up on stage right only. She looks around and tentatively crosses the bridge to the right side, where Audrey is sitting, playing with the leaves. Audrey watches Anna cross the bridge to the right side. Audrey then goes to stand on the bridge, still holding a handful of leaves. Watching Anna, Audrey drops one of the leaves. Anna catches it and laughs. The leaf reminds Anna of her childhood. Anna scoops up a handful of leaves and begins flapping around as she did when she was younger. Audrey smiles and Anna laughs at herself. Anna then exits stage right, Audrey stares down at the stream. The silence is broken by the rustle of leaves. The lights fade down while Audrey remains on the bridge. Children's laughter blends in to soft foxtrot music.*

***The End***

# *The Invitation*

*by*

*Joy Waller*



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# The Invitation

by joy waller

*Characters:*

JOANNE ~ a loser

CRYSTAL ~ popular

DANIELLE ~ popular

ROBBIE ~ popular

BRENT ~ popular

*[Lights up on a black block centre stage. Enter JOANNE. She circles the block slowly, caresses it with her hand, stands back to view it. Suddenly she kicks it across the stage, viciously.]*

JOANNE: How many blocks does it take to break a human ego?

*[She kicks it again.]*

JOANNE: How many does it take to make one.

*[She circles the block.]*

JOANNE: How many times do you have to make love to it before it shows you what you really are. How many times do you have to kill it before it lets you leave. How many times.

*[She gently picks up the block and places it back in the centre, the exact same spot, angle, etc. as before. She taps it nervously with her fingers. Pauses.]*

JOANNE: I'm sorry.

*[She exits. Music up -- a party tune, something modern. Enter CRYSTAL, DANIELLE, ROBBIE, and BRENT, holding cans of beer or pop. They socialize, avoiding the block. Music down.]*

BRENT: So who else is coming?

DANIELLE: Yeah, where is everyone?

CRYSTAL: Oh, they'll be here. *[counting on her fingers]* Let's see -- Jen, Eric, Jill, Carrie, Melanie-and-Chris, Brandon-and-Tessa, Sarah, Alex, Patrick-and-Kim, Amanda, Kelsey, John ...

ROBBIE: The Friesen twins are coming, I think.

CRYSTAL: Were they invited? I don't remember inviting them.

DANIELLE: They're on the football team, who cares,

CRYSTAL: Oh, yeah. *[a knock]* I'll get it! It's probably John.

BRENT: John Clarke? She's had a crush on him since grade 9!

DANIELLE: I know. She'll never have him, though. He is so out of her league.

CRYSTAL: *[Opens door. Enter JOANNE.]* Hello?

JOANNE: Hi ... Crystal?

CRYSTAL: Yes ...

JOANNE: *[trying to sound confident]* I'm here for the ... party. *[stepping tentatively in]*

You have a nice house.

CRYSTAL: Do I know you?

JOANNE: Yes ... Joanne ... You know, Joanne? Joanne Edwards? From History class?

I sit at the back ...

CRYSTAL: Ohhh. Yes. *That* Joanne. I remember your ... hair.

*[CRYSTAL leads JOANNE over to the rest, making a "what a loser" face at her friends.]*

DANIELLE: It's Joanne, isn't it.

JOANNE: *[beaming]* Yes.

ROBBIE: Were you invited?

BRENT: Excuse me, but were you invited?

DANIELLE: I don't think you were invited.

CRYSTAL: Well, were you? Were you invited. *I* certainly don't remember inviting you.

DANIELLE: Who invited you?

BRENT: *[to ROBBIE]* She wasn't invited.

JOANNE: Oh ... Well I heard you, *talking* about it in History class ... I thought ... I thought it was a grad party. I thought everyone could come.

CRYSTAL: But I didn't invite you.

BRENT: You haven't been invited.

JOANNE: I'm, I'm sorry! I thought --

DANIELLE: You *thought*. *[smirk]*

JOANNE: I'm sorry. I am truly very truly sorry. I'll leave. I'm sorry --

*[JOANNE stumbles backwards and bumps into the block.  
CRYSTAL gasps and they all step back a pace. Green pool  
of light on JOANNE as she steps, zombie-like, onto the*



*block, eyes closed. A gong is heard. Back to normal lighting.]*

BRENT: Talk about a loser. She shows up uninvited and she's not even part of our group.

DANIELLE: What a dumb name. Joanne.

CRYSTAL: Look at her nose. Have you ever seen such an ugly nose?

BRENT: *[to ROBBIE]* Look at --

BRENT and ROBBIE: Her nose.

ROBBIE: The ugliest nose I've ever seen.

JOANNE: It's my mother's nose.

CRYSTAL: Her mother's a whore.

DANIELLE: I've seen her downtown --

CRYSTAL: At night --

DANIELLE: In front of a hotel.

CRYSTAL and DANIELLE: A whore.

JOANNE: She isn't.

CRYSTAL: Dressed in red with six-inch heels.

JOANNE: She's not!

CRYSTAL: I've *seen* her!

BRENT: I've *done* her.

ROBBIE: I saw them.

BRENT: It's true!

ROBBIE: By the hotel --

CRYSTAL and DANIELLE: A whore.

BRENT: Look at her pants.

ROBBIE: What kind of a girl wears pants like that?

CRYSTAL: *[to DANIELLE]* Look at her pants.

DANIELLE: Disgusting.

BRENT: She looks kind of like a potato.

CRYSTAL: She should trim her hair Don't you think she should trim her hair? I mean, look at her hair.

ROBBIE: What did you get on the History exam, Joanne?

BRENT: What did you get, Joanne?

DANIELLE: In --

ROBBIE: History --

CRYSTAL and DANIELLE: What did you get?

JOANNE: Ninety-seven.

CRYSTAL: Liar.

DANIELLE: Cheater!

BRENT: Brain.

JOANNE: Ninety-six.

CRYSTAL: I saw her shopping in a thrift store.

ROBBIE: The pants!

DANIELLE: I should have guessed.

CRYSTAL and DANIELLE: A thrift store.

BRENT: Would you go out with her?

ROBBIE: Maybe.

BRENT: *Her?*

ROBBIE: Just once.

BRENT: Once ...

ROBBIE: That's usually all it takes ...

CRYSTAL and DANIELLE: The pants.

ROBBIE: I saw her mowing the lawn.

CRYSTAL and DANIELLE: *Real women don't cut grass!*

BRENT: Maybe she's on welfare.

ROBBIE: Maybe.

BRENT: Definitely.

CRYSTAL: That's why she shops in a thrift store!

BRENT and ROBBIE: *[hushed]* Welfare recipient.

DANIELLE: Totally.

CRYSTAL: She doesn't think gays should adopt.

DANIELLE: Homophobe?

ROBBIE: For sure.

CRYSTAL: I think she's a --

BRENT: Homophobe.

ROBBIE: She believes in capital punishment!

BRENT: Communist.

DANIELLE: Maybe she's a Communist.

CRYSTAL: Do you play football?

DANIELLE: Football.

CRYSTAL: Do you?

BRENT: Do you play?

ROBBIE: Do you play football.

JOANNE: Yes.

ALL: *DYKE!*

DANIELLE: I *can't* believe she plays football.

ROBBIE: [*to CRYSTAL*] No wonder you didn't invite her.

BRENT: I wouldn't have invited her.

CRYSTAL: Dyke.

DANIELLE: I mean, *who* would invite her?

ROBBIE: Exactly!

CRYSTAL: I mean --

BRENT: Because --

CRYSTAL and DANIELLE: Yeah.

ROBBIE: So where's your daddy Joanne?

DANIELLE: Yeah Joanne, where's your --

BRENT: Daddy.

ROBBIE: You even *have* a daddy, Joanne?

CRYSTAL: Her mom --

DANIELLE: The hotel!

BRENT: You even *have* a daddy?

JOANNE: He's a --

CRYSTAL: I know what he is.

DANIELLE: What?

BRENT: Probably an anarchist.

CRYSTAL: He's a felon.

BRENT and ROBBIE: *Lives in jail!*

DANIELLE: *That's* why she cuts the grass.

CRYSTAL: I'll bet she has his genes.

ROBBIE: Bad seed.

BRENT: No wonder she's a loser.

CRYSTAL: She'll grow up to be a --

DANIELLE: Felon?

ROBBIE: She'll grow up to be a felon.

CRYSTAL and DANIELLE: *[whispering]* Just like Daddy.

ROBBIE: Are you sure you support capital punishment?

BRENT: It might come back to haunt you.

DANIELLE: Communist.

BRENT: Would you do her?

ROBBIE: I'd do her.

CRYSTAL: For a --

ROBBIE and BRENT: Dollar.

DANIELLE: She's too fat.

CRYSTAL: She's too skinny.

DANIELLE: She's too normal.

CRYSTAL and DANIELLE: There's nothing special about her.

ROBBIE: She didn't go to the dance.

CRYSTAL: *She didn't go to the dance?!*

BRENT: She doesn't dance.

ROBBIE: She says she doesn't dance.

BRENT: She's never been to a dance.

ALL: *Ever.*

BRENT: She listens to alternative.

ROBBIE: She listens to country.

DANIELLE: Punk.

CRYSTAL: Rock!

ROBBIE and BRENT: Techno.

CRYSTAL: What a freak.

DANIELLE: In gym that one day --

CRYSTAL: In gym!

DANIELLE: In gym in the locker room --

CRYSTAL and DANIELLE: She hadn't shaved her legs!

BRENT: *[to ROBBIE]* Dyke.

ROBBIE: Fifty cents.

BRENT: A quarter.

ROBBIE: Maybe ...

CRYSTAL: Always sitting in the back. In History, the very back row! Why?

ALL: Why, Joanne?

JOANNE: I don't know.

DANIELLE: Are you stupid?

BRENT: Don't you have a brain?

ROBBIE: Do you have a disorder?

CRYSTAL: She's probably dyslexic.

ROBBIE: I think she's --

BRENT: Probably --

DANIELLE: Dyslexic.

JOANNE: I got ninety-five in History --

CRYSTAL: Know-it-all.

JOANNE: Ninety-four.

ROBBIE: I saw her go into a church.

CRYSTAL and DANIELLE: A church?

ROBBIE: It was a --

BRENT: Church.

CRYSTAL and DANIELLE: Loser.

ROBBIE: But *you* go to church.

CRYSTAL: It's different.

DANIELLE: It's *completely* different. The circumstances --

CRYSTAL: The situation --

DANIELLE: The aura.

CRYSTAL and DANIELLE: Different.

BRENT: What a loser!

ROBBIE: She's a total brain. No social life. Ninety-four in History!

JOANNE: It was ninety-three.

ROBBIE: What?

JOANNE: Ninety-two.

CRYSTAL: She doesn't look seventeen.

DANIELLE: I'll bet she's lying about her age. I'll bet her mother --

BRENT: I'll bet her mother lied about her age so that she could start school early --

ALL: To get her out of the house!

JOANNE: No!

CRYSTAL: Don't lie to us, Joanne. *We* know.

BRENT and ROBBIE: We know all about it, Joanne.

DANIELLE: She has weird feet.

CRYSTAL: She has weird shoes.

CRYSTAL and DANIELLE: [*chillingly*] A person's character can be determined by their footwear.

BRENT: On Monday.

DANIELLE: Did you see what she was wearing on Monday?

CRYSTAL: Brown pants and a black shirt.

DANIELLE: What was she thinking?!

CRYSTAL and DANIELLE: No fashion sense whatsoever.

DANIELLE: Why don't you wear make-up? [*beat*] Why doesn't she wear make-up?

ROBBIE: She's sort of pretty anyway --

BRENT: For a dyke.

DANIELLE: But still she should wear make-up.

CRYSTAL: Yeah Joanne. Surely your mother could have taught you how. From what I've seen --

ROBBIE and BRENT: What *I've* seen --

CRYSTAL: She lays it on pretty thick.

DANIELLE: No sisters?

JOANNE: No. I have a brother.

DANIELLE: Really?

CRYSTAL: [*overlapping*] You have a brother?

JOANNE: Yes --

DANIELLE: How old.

CRYSTAL: How tall.

DANIELLE: How sexy.

CRYSTAL: Built?

DANIELLE: Sensitive?

CRYSTAL: Cute?

DANIELLE: Money?

CRYSTAL and DANIELLE: Where does he work?

JOANNE: South.

BRENT: South ...

JOANNE: Of the border ...

ROBBIE: Where ..?

JOANNE: Hollywood.

CRYSTAL and DANIELLE: *Oh?*

CRYSTAL: What does he do?

DANIELLE: What does he wear?

CRYSTAL: What does he look like?

CRYSTAL and DANIELLE: Money?

JOANNE: He writes screenplays --

CRYSTAL and DANIELLE: *Oh!*

ROBBIE: He's probably --

ROBBIE and BRENT: Rich.

CRYSTAL and DANIELLE: Could he get me in a movie?

ROBBIE and BRENT: Could he introduce me to an actress.

CRYSTAL: Would --

DANIELLE: Could --

CRYSTAL: You ask him?

BRENT: Would you?

CRYSTAL: Joanne ...

*[CRYSTAL touches JOANNE's sleeve. Her eyes open. She looks around.]*

JOANNE: Ask him ...

DANIELLE: For us!

ROBBIE: Us.

CRYSTAL and DANIELLE: Ask him for us.

BRENT: Yes.

DANIELLE: Please?

JOANNE: But I thought you said ... You called me ... You said I wasn't --

CRYSTAL: Oh, come on. Temporary insanity. That's all. Consider yourself officially invited.

JOANNE: I'm invited to your party?!

CRYSTAL: Yes! *[helps her off the block]* Now, the phone's in my room ... This way ... You will call him, won't you?

JOANNE: Yes --

DANIELLE: So what's his name?

CRYSTAL: Does he have a girlfriend?

*[Exit JOANNE, CRYSTAL, and DANIELLE. JOANNE is in the middle.]*

ROBBIE: Wow.

BRENT: Phew!

ROBBIE: Whoever would have thought --

BRENT: I know! Joanne Edwards.

ROBBIE: Yeah.

BRENT: She was always so quiet. I never knew she was so cool.

ROBBIE: Very cool.

BRENT: The coolest girl in school, probably.

ROBBIE: Definitely.

BRENT: Absolutely.

ROBBIE: Whoever would have thought.

*[They wander about, avoiding the block rather obviously. Glance at watches.]*

ROBBIE: When's everyone going to get here?

BRENT: I *know* ... It's quarter after already.

ROBBIE: Some party.

BRENT: Some evening.

ROBBIE: Or something ...

BRENT: Yeah. *[beat]*

ROBBIE: Touch the block.

BRENT: What?!

ROBBIE: Touch it! It would be fun.

BRENT: Are you crazy? *I'm* not touching it.

ROBBIE: I dare you.

BRENT: To --

ROBBIE: Touch it --

BRENT: No. *You* touch it.

ROBBIE: There's something weird about it.

BRENT: Something's not quite right.

*[They pace around the block, wanting to touch it but not*



*allowing themselves.]*

ROBBIE: We need someone else. Someone who hasn't seen --

BRENT: What it can do.

ROBBIE: What it's capable of.

BRENT: What *we're* ...

BRENT and ROBBIE: Capable of.

ROBBIE: Or something.

BRENT: Exactly! Someone who doesn't know.

ROBBIE: Yes.

*[A knock. They look at each other frighteningly.]*

BRENT and ROBBIE: I'll get it.

*[Beat. They race to the door. Blackout.]*

END OF PLAY

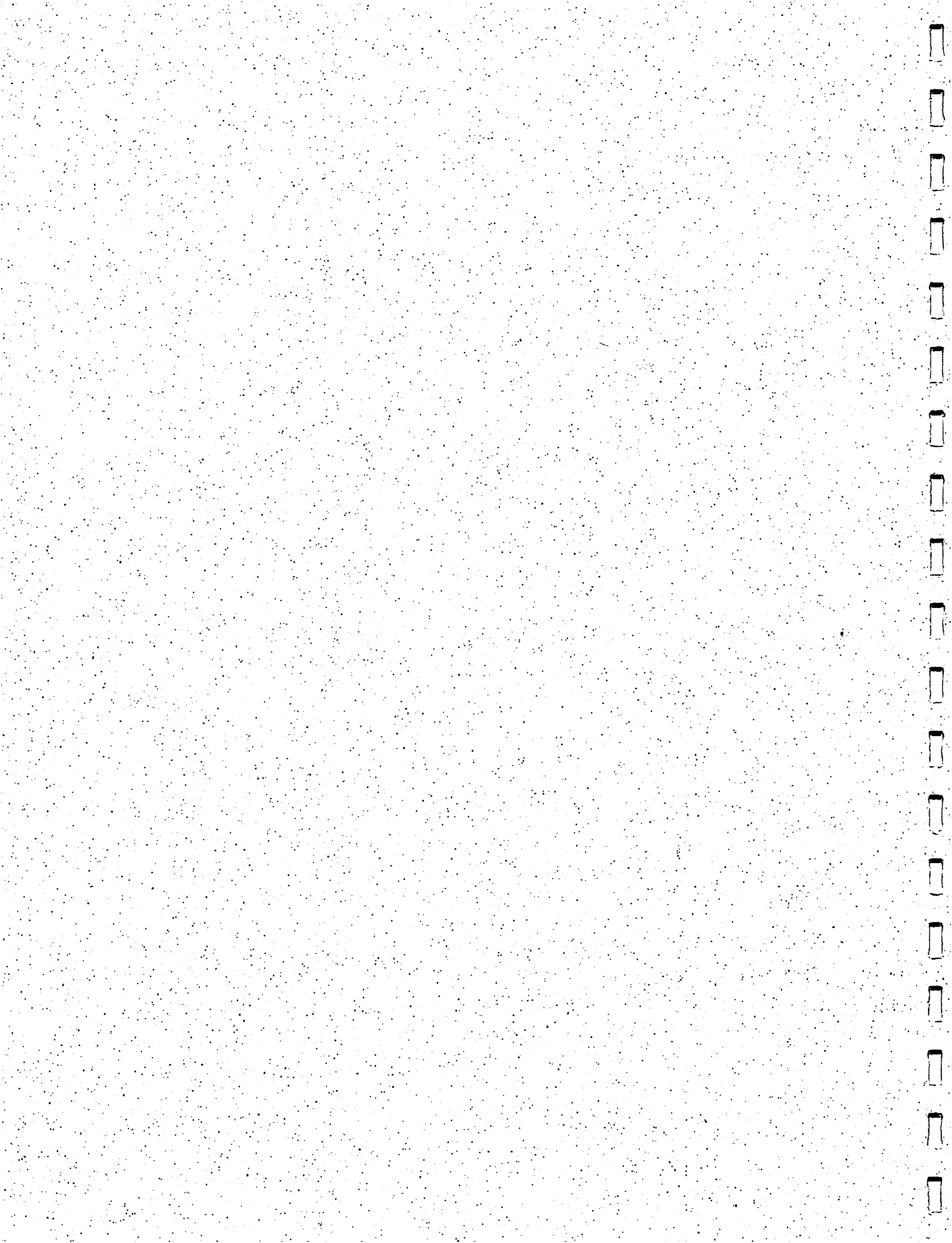
# TO SAY THE LEAST

BY

MARCIE LARSON



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To Say The Least

**Bob:** Delivery man

**Doris:** Nurse/Receptionist

**Body:** Selfish man

**Pager:** A voice on the hospital P.A. system

Opens On:

*There are two chairs in a hospital waiting room  
Doris is behind her desk taking off surgical gloves  
Delivery man enters, eerily happy music playing softly*

**Bob** Hey there Doris, another day another package huh?

**Doris** I guess so Bob!

**Bob** Can you sign here please?

**Doris** Sure thing, right here Bob?

**Bob** That's right, right there.

**Doris** There you go, all done Bob.

**Bob** Thanks Doris, see you tomorrow.

**Doris** See you tomorrow Bob.

*Lights brown out, lights come back up  
Doris is behind her desk taking goggles off  
Delivery man enters, eerily happy music playing softly*

**Bob** Hey there Doris another day another package huh?

**Doris** I guess so Bob.

**Bob** Can you sign here please?

**Doris** Sure thing, right here Bob?

**Bob** That's right, right there.

**Doris** There you go, all done Bob.

**Bob** Thanks Doris, see you tomorrow.

**Doris** See you tomorrow Bob.

*Lights brown out, lights come back up  
Doris is behind her desk taking off heavy duty apron.  
Delivery man enters, eerily happy music playing softly*

**Bob** Hey there Doris, another day another package huh?

**Doris** I guess so Bob!

**Bob** Can you sign here please?

**Doris** Sure thing, right here Bob?

**Bob** That's right, right there.

**Doris** There you go, all done Bob!

**Bob** Thanks Doris, see you tomorrow.

**Doris** See you tomorrow Bob.

*Lights brown out, lights come back up  
Doris is behind her desk putting tools back into toolbox.  
Delivery man enters, eerily happy music playing softly*

**Bob** Hey there Doris, another day another package huh?

**Doris** I guess so Bob.

**Bob** Can you sign here please?

**Doris** Sure thing, right here Bob?

**Bob** That's right, right there.

**Doris** There you go, all done Bob!

**Bob** Thanks Doris, see you tomorrow.

**Doris** See you tomorrow Bob.

*Lights brown out, lights come back up  
There's a man lying in front of the hospital door  
Doris is behind her desk tightening the lid on a jerry-can  
Delivery man enters, eerily happy music playing softly*

**Bob** Hey there Doris another day another package huh?

**Doris** I guess so Bob!

**Bob** Can you sign here please?

**Doris** I sure can, right here Bob?

**Bob** That's right, right there.

*Doris takes awhile this time  
Bob looks around room and notices man's body*

**Bob** Say Doris, I couldn't help but notice there's a man's body lying on the floor over there. *(Speaks very non-chalantly)*

*Doris stands up and looks at body, still behind desk.*

**Doris** Why you're right! There is a man's body lying on the floor Bob. (*Just as non-chalantly*)

*Both look at body for awhile.*

**Bob** Well, thanks Doris, see you tomorrow.

**Doris** See you tomorrow Bob!

*Bob starts to leave, just as he's about to exit he turns around*

**Bob** Wait a minute, I just thought of something Doris. I don't think that man's body was there the day before today.

**Doris** I don't know, are you sure Bob?

**Bob** Well not completely, but on the other hand I'm almost positive.

*Doris moves out from behind the desk and beside Bob  
After awhile of looking....*

**Doris** You know what, I think you're right! I don't think that body was here the day before today Bob.

**Bob** I wonder what it's doing here? Kind of an odd place for a body to be.....right in the middle of the floor and all. You'd think they could have at least had the courtesy to move themselves off to one side.

**Doris** You're right! I mean it looks as though this particular person went out of their way just to get in the way of others, huh Bob?

**Bob** Yes, yes it does look that way Doris.

**Doris** It also seems to me, that this particular person did not consider the needs of others when he collapsed right in front of the door like that. After all, this is a hospital and we do have emergencies, don't we Bob?

**Bob** Yes you do Doris. I should think there would be a lot of emergencies, this being a hospital and all and I should think most of those emergencies would come through that door!

**Doris** Well then why would a man just walk into the door of a hospital and lay himself down Bob?

**Bob** I don't know Doris, I just don't know. Perhaps the man felt that he had a problem that just couldn't be solved at home so he decided to bring himself down to the hospital where he thought everyone would just jump up and serve him. Where he would become the center of attention and be waited on hand and foot. You know Doris, I bet that's it, I bet that's why this very selfish man decided to come down to the hospital and camp out on the floor, right in front of the door.

**Doris** Why, of course. It makes so much sense now that you've explained it to me. This horribly selfish man **had** to lie in front of the door so that he'd be noticed and have attention lavished upon him, right Bob?

**Bob** Right Doris.

**Doris** Well isn't he in for a big surprise huh? Because he is not going to get any attention out of me Bob.

*They both stand looking at him for a while....*

**Doris** You know, there's just one thing that still confuses me Bob.

**Bob** What's that Doris?

**Doris** Well Bob, I don't understand how the selfish man got into the hospital so he could lie in front of the door.

**Bob** Why don't you understand it?

**Doris** Well, the thing of the matter is Bob, that I lock up all the doors at night so I don't get bothered while I'm trying to read.

**Bob** That would cause some, as you said before "confusion", however I don't feel we should consider this man's arrival a major thinking priority. Our main concern right now is the fact that this man is exceptionally selfish and rude. The mere thought of myself putting other people out like he has really makes me mad. How dare he?



**Doris** I fully agree with you! I don't think we should give his arrival a second thought either. I fully agree with you Bob.

**Bob** Fully agree with what Doris? I'm so mad and full of rage right now that I completely forgot what it was I just said. (*No change in emotion, showing nothing.*) Can you refresh my memory?

**Doris** Well, you said that we should try and figure out how this total jerk got into the hospital Bob.

**Bob** I did, did I ? That doesn't sound like me, but I guess it must be true coming from an acquaintance like yourself. After all, I am so enraged that I'm probably saying things that wouldn't be said otherwise.

**Doris** Probably, and if you ask me, the thought of finding out how this man got into the hospital seems to be becoming somewhat of an obsession with you! Why are you suddenly so obsessed with this man's arrival Bob?

**Bob** I don't know Doris, I guess it's because I believe in justice Doris. Justice for all those this very selfish man has put out, but where to start?

**Pager** "Nurse Doris to room 112. Nurse Doris to room 112."

*Doris listens intently then ignores it and goes on.*

**Doris** We can start by unlocking the doors. After all this commotion I forgot to do so earlier Bob.

**Bob** That sounds like a good plan Doris. You know, there might even be someone in the lineup outside that saw this arrogant man break in the night before today.

**Doris** You say there's a lineup outside Bob?

**Bob** Yes I believe that's what I said Doris.

**Doris** A lineup to get in the hospital Bob?

**Bob** Well, I assume that's why they're here. Lucky for me I take the back entrance and I wasn't confronted with all their annoying complaints.

**Doris** Well then, if there's a long lineup maybe I won't unlock the doors! After all, we don't want to be bothered while **you're** trying to figure out how the man came to be in the hospital huh Bob?

**Bob** Another good plan Doris.

*They both stand and look at the body.*

**Doris** ...So what are you going to do Bob?

**Bob** Well Doris, I was just thinking, you know when I was standing looking at the selfish man, and I came to one conclusion. I don't have any ideas.

**Doris** I bet you do have an idea if you just think about it a little longer Bob.

*They both stand for a minute while Bob contemplates.*

**Bob** Nope. I don't think I do have any ideas.

**Doris** Sure you do! I bet you have an idea about how we could find some information out about this character Bob!

**Bob** Are you sure Doris?

**Doris** Yes. I'm sure. How could we find out some things about this selfish man we hate so very much? What would be a useful tool that this man probably has on him this very moment that will answer our questions Bob?

*They stand while Bob contemplates.*

**Bob** I think I have an idea Doris!

**Doris** Oh do tell Bob.

**Bob** Why don't we check to see if the man we hate so much has a wallet on him?

**Doris** What a good plan Bob.

**Bob** Should I check for the wallet or do you want to?

**Doris** Why don't you check Bob.

**Bob** Well I guess I should, seeing as it was my idea and I am the man.

*They both stand. Bob doesn't make any attempt at moving.*

**Doris** Just exactly what are you waiting for Bob?

**Bob** Did you mean I should check right now?

**Doris** That would seem to be the ideal plan Bob.

**Bob** All right then.

**Doris** Wait, wait! (*Rushes over to counter and grabs a tag.*) Put this on.

**Bob** What is it Doris?

**Doris** It's a visitors tag, all visitors must wear a tag. Just in case you don't leave...(*weird pause*)...right away.

**Bob** Why have I never worn one before?

**Doris** I should think that's obvious Bob, you've always left before...(*weird pause*)..right away.

**Bob** But I've stayed a couple times before and I didn't wear a tag...

**Doris** Well I never needed you before! I never had a use for you before, there were always others before, but now it's your turn. Now you must wear the tag.

**Bob** But...

**Doris** ...Just shut up and check the body Bob!

*Bob walks over to the body and kicks it around a bit. He then bends down and pats up and down the chest and legs, being very rough and not at all conscious of the fact that he's playing with a body*

**Doris** Just what are you doing Bob?

**Bob** Isn't it obvious Doris? I'm checking the selfish man for a wallet, that was the plan wasn't it?

**Doris** Yes Bob, that was the plan, but I hardly think violating a body the way you just have is considered "checking for a wallet."

**Bob** Why whatever are you talking about Doris, how did I just violate this man?

**Doris** Listen, I can't provide you with all the answers. All I know is that this man deserves a little bit more respect than what you have just shown him.

**Bob** But Doris, I thought we hated this selfish man for sneaking into the hospital and thinking solely of himself when he laid down in front of the hospital door. I thought our plan was to get some identification out of his wallet, so that we would have a name to put to the selfish face. I thought that was our plan Doris.

**Doris** Exactly where is it that you get your information Bob? I don't recall once saying that this man was selfish or that he was solely thinking of himself. In fact the only thing I do recall saying is that we should get his wallet so we can check for identification in hopes to help the poor man.

**Bob** But Doris...

**Doris** No buts, I want you to continue checking for the wallet, only this time use a little compassion Bob.

**Bob** All right Doris. I'm sorry about getting things all mixed up.

**Doris** Less talking, more checking Bob.

*Bob bends down and checks the body once again, starting with the man's coat pockets then moving on to his pants.*

**Bob** I don't mean to be a huge burden Doris, but I don't think this man has a wallet on him.

**Doris** Of course he does, why wouldn't he carry a wallet? Every man carries a wallet, they have to, it's one of those unwritten rules that states that every man must carry a wallet. So why would this man decide not to, why would he feel the need to go against the grain and not carry a wallet? Check him again.

*Bob carefully checks the man again.*

**Bob** I really don't think this man has a wallet Doris.

**Doris** Don't be absurd, of course he does.

*Doris bends down to the body and starts pushing it around.*

**Bob** What are you doing Doris and why are you being so rough?

**Doris** I need the man's wallet!

*Doris starts pulling at his clothes trying to find a wallet*

**Doris** I could have sworn it was here! I saw him put it...

*Doris suddenly stops and says nothing.*

**Bob** Excuse me, but did you just imply that you have something to do with this man?

**Doris** Of course not Bob, why would you think that?

**Bob** Probably because you just said, and I quote, "I could have sworn it was here, I saw him put it...."

**Doris** Just because I muttered a few words it doesn't mean I was necessarily talking about this man Bob. After all, I do have a lot on my mind, what with my job and all so sometimes I say things I don't mean. Sometimes I say words or even sentences that may seem like they fit into the situation that is going on around us, but in fact they are completely off topic.

**Bob** So what specifically were you talking about then?

*Doris stands and starts getting red in the face and flustered.*

**Doris** Listen Bob, what makes you think I have to answer all your stupid questions anyhow? Since when did you become an authority that makes a life out of interrogating everyone?

**Bob** Forget I said anything Doris, I'm sorry.

**Doris** Well you should be, especially after all I've done for you. (*Pauses to figure out what it is she's saying.*) But since I am such a forgiving and wonderful person I'll forget your little outburst ever happened.

**Bob** Thanks Doris, now that I think about it I was...

**Doris** ..Quite rude, yes I know, but that's all in the past now so let's just get on with our lives.

**Pager** "Nurse Doris to the O.R. immediately. Nurse Doris to the O.R. immediately."

*Doris listens intently then goes back to what she was doing.*

**Doris** (*She is still checking the body. Pulls out the wallet.*) Aha! I knew it was here!  
(*Stands up with a pleased look on her face and throws the wallet to Bob.*)

**Doris** Here, open it.

**Bob** What am I looking for again?

**Doris** Just open the wallet and see what you find.

*Bob opens the wallet as Doris watches him, smile on her face.*

**Bob** This is a pretty pathetic wallet. Oh man.

**Doris** What are you talking about?

**Bob** This wallet, it's pathetic. The guy has no cards, no secret notes, nothing...

**Doris** Bob what are you doing? You're an idiot!

**Bob** He doesn't even have any money!

*He turns the wallet upside down and shakes it.*

**Bob** Why would a man carry around an empty wallet?

**Doris** *(Looks very confused.)* It has nothing in it?

**Bob** Nope, nothing.

**Doris** Are you sure?

**Bob** Sure I'm sure, look for yourself. *(Throws wallet to Doris.)*

**Doris** *(Doris looks through wallet.)* Well if it's not here then...*(Trails off, Bob doesn't hear.)* Wait a second, of course! Why would he...

**Bob** What was that Doris?

**Doris** Nevermind Bob, I just got a little mixed up. Maybe to get the info we need it's not the wallet we should be checking.

**Bob** Interesting, explain.

**Doris** Well, why don't you check the rest of the body instead.

**Bob** What?

**Doris** Yeah. Check his jacket, his shirt, his pants, his shoes, his socks. Check every and any pocket on him. Leave nothing untouched! Maybe then you'll find the proper information.

**Bob** But Doris, wouldn't that be violating him?

**Doris** Who cares? Just do it.

*Bob starts to check the body again. He rolls it over checking everything. He pulls off the shoes, socks, jacket, ect. Finally he finds a visitors tag attached to his shirt. He sits up and looks at it.*

**Bob** I may have found something Doris.

**Doris** Really? (*Looks very happy.*) What is it?

**Bob** It looks like a visitors tag. Just like mine.

**Doris** I wonder if it gives any info?

**Bob** Not really. It just says visitor number 364. But why would he have a tag? Oh well.

**Pager** "Nurse Doris **code blue!** Nurse Doris **code blue!**"

*Doris listens intently then goes back to what she was doing.*

**Doris** That's enough of that Bob, we have to keep moving. Put the tag on the chair and let's keep going.

*Bob stands still, like he's deep in thought, then...*

**Bob** I really hate being a nuisance to you, but I have two problems all of a sudden.

**Doris** What now Bob?

**Bob** Well Doris, I thought we wanted to find out who the man was.

**Doris** Stop dwelling on the past Bob! What I may have said then is obviously completely different than what I'm saying now, so just forget it and move on. Now what's your second so called problem?

**Bob** Well, I was wondering why you're so concerned with the pace at which we're moving all of a sudden?

**Doris** Perhaps if you weren't so slow and questioning everything you wouldn't have this second problem because I would already be done. I would be right on schedule. just like every other day and I wouldn't have to rush myself. (*pause*) However, I guess it isn't only your fault, after all, the tag was well hidden.

*Stops and realizes what she just said.*

**Bob** Doris....



**Doris** What? What's your problem?

**Bob** I was just going to say you must really have a lot on your mind because it just sounded like you were talking about the selfish man's tag. As though you had something to do with it.

**Doris** Well obviously I wasn't Bob, I mean I don't, so why keep bringing it up? Anyhow, I don't have time for your little mind games anymore. There is work to be done and either you're going to help or you're going to help, so what's it going to be?

**Bob** Doris, I don't think that's the way it goes when you're giving someone a choice as to what they want to do. You're supposed to give more than one option.

**Doris** Oh really? Am I really? Well Bob, in case you didn't notice I wasn't giving you a choice. That's where the humour is in this whole situation. You no longer have a choice.

**Bob** Don't get nasty on me Doris, I was just stating a fact.

**Doris** If I wanted to hear your side of the story I would have asked Bob, but I didn't, so don't ever tell me such useless information again. Now, don't say another word until I'm done thinking.

*Doris thinks for a moment then comes up with an idea.*

**Doris** I want you to go over to my desk and get the last package you brought me, the one from today. I then want you to sit down and open it up.

*Bob goes over to the desk and takes the small brown package off of it. He then sits down in one of the chairs in the middle of the room.*

**Bob** You want me to open it Doris?

**Doris** That's right Bob. I want you to open it.

*Bob is about to open it when Doris stops him.*

**Doris** No Bob, wait a minute! I just remembered something very important. There's one more thing I have to do before you open it. I'm afraid I was a little ahead of myself and I almost made a huge mistake, my entire routine would have been ruined. Not that this one hasn't been horrible anyhow, but that mistake would have been absolutely inexcusable!

*Doris walks over to her desk and starts pulling objects out.*

**Bob** I don't think I follow where it is you're going with this Doris. What routine are you talking about and what is it that's so horrible? You know Doris, I think you owe me an explanation, and quick because I don't like what's going on.

*Doris starts to put on a pair of surgical gloves as she is speaking, Bob pays no attention.*

**Doris** Bob would you stop being so skeptical and just give me a chance? All you ever do is ask stupid questions and wait for me to give you a stupid answer. Well, I have more important things to think about and I can't keep worrying whether or not you feel comfortable in my presence. I hope you can just accept this fact and get on with your task.

**Bob** Doris, I don't believe you understand what it is I was saying to you. I want an explanation and I want it now!

*Doris puts a pair of goggles on her head, Bob pays no attention.*

**Doris** Fine Bob. Let's see, uh, the routine I have is that I always get my entire days work done before my supper break, and the horrible thing is....uh...oh... I guess it can be the way everyone in the lineup outside has no clue that they are never going to get help.

**Pager** "Nurse Doris to the morgue. Nurse Doris to the morgue."

*Doris listens intently then goes back to what she was doing.*

**Bob** But Doris that makes no sense. Your explanation for the horrible thing has absolutely no relevance to what we've been talking about. Why would you just bring it up out of the blue?

*Doris puts on a heavy duty apron, Bob pays no attention.*

**Doris** Fine, if you don't like that story I'll give you another one. The horrible thing I was referring to is the way, *(pause to think)* the hospital keeps paging me.

**Bob** Doris that story is even worse than the first one! Why do you keep telling....

*Doris pulls out a jerry-can and checks the contents, Bob pays no attention.*

**Doris** ....Telling you what Bob? What you want to hear? What you're practically begging me to say? I'm not the one making up the lies Bob, you are. You and your perfect world scenario that you want to try and keep going. Well guess what Bob this isn't a perfect world and your plan has just blown up in your face!

**Bob** That explanation is even more absurd than the rest! Listen Doris, if you can't just give me a straight answer then forget I even asked. Besides, I don't remember what the original question was anyhow.

*Both just stand there glaring at each other for a moment.*

**Doris** Well fine then! Let's get back to work.

**Bob** What is it that you have to do?

*Both have already forgotten what just happened.*

**Doris** Nevermind, it's been done.

**Bob** What's been done?

**Doris** What I had to do.

*Walking back to where Bob is, Doris is now wearing all her gear and carrying the toolbox and jerry-can.*

**Bob** Why do you have all that stuff?

**Doris** Ignore this stuff. Now open up that package I gave you.

**Bob** Is something going on that I'm supposed to be aware of?

**Doris** Again with the questions, can't you just leave things to me for once Bob? Can't you just back off? You're starting to really ruin my plans, I can't keep stopping if I ever want to get this done. So that means no more dumb comments on your behalf. Just do as I say for once.

**Bob** All right Doris I'm sorry. I'm just confused because again you're talking about plans and I....

**Doris** ...am going to stop talking, right Bob?

**Bob** Right.

**Doris** You have one thing left to do Bob, then you'll be leaving. I want you to sit down and open up the package.

*Bob picks up the package again. Doris is watching his every move. He slowly unwraps it and opens up the box.*

**Doris** Well, what is it?

**Bob** I'm not so sure.

**Doris** Take it out of the box and look.

*Bob pulls it out and just looks at it. He stays seated.*

**Doris** Well....

**Bob** It's an urn.

*He gazes awkwardly as Doris watches him.*

**Bob** Why is it an urn? Why did I deliver you an urn?

**Doris** "An," urn...

**Bob** What do mean "an urn?" You mean there's more than one?

**Doris** Well not anymore, there was more than one. There were many more than one.

**Bob** How many more?

**Doris** How long have you been working for me?

**Bob** Working for....you mean I...

**Doris** Now do you understand?

Bob sits in silence starring at the urn. He is suddenly aware of something.

**Bob** *(Stage whisper)* This number....

**Doris** What number?

**Bob** 364...

*Bob stops short.*

**Doris** What's the matter, you seem to have grown pale.

**Bob** I've seen that number somewhere else before.

**Doris** What are you talking about?

*Bob picks up the tag from the body and looks at it.*

**Bob** 364. All this time, and I've been...

**Doris** ....Helping me? The plans have been made, the routine has been followed and tomorrow is a whole new day. Oh I hope you don't mind, I've decided to switch couriers. So you won't be delivering me my packages anymore, someone else will. Tomorrow morning bright and early, another package for me Bob.

**Bob** Where will I be...

*Bob looks up at Doris and sees her smiling. She looks down at his tag. He pulls it off and reads it aloud.*

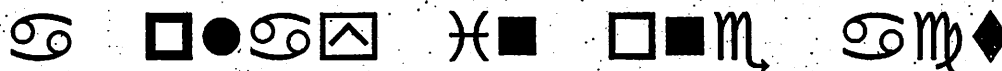
**Bob** 365....

**Lights Go To Black**

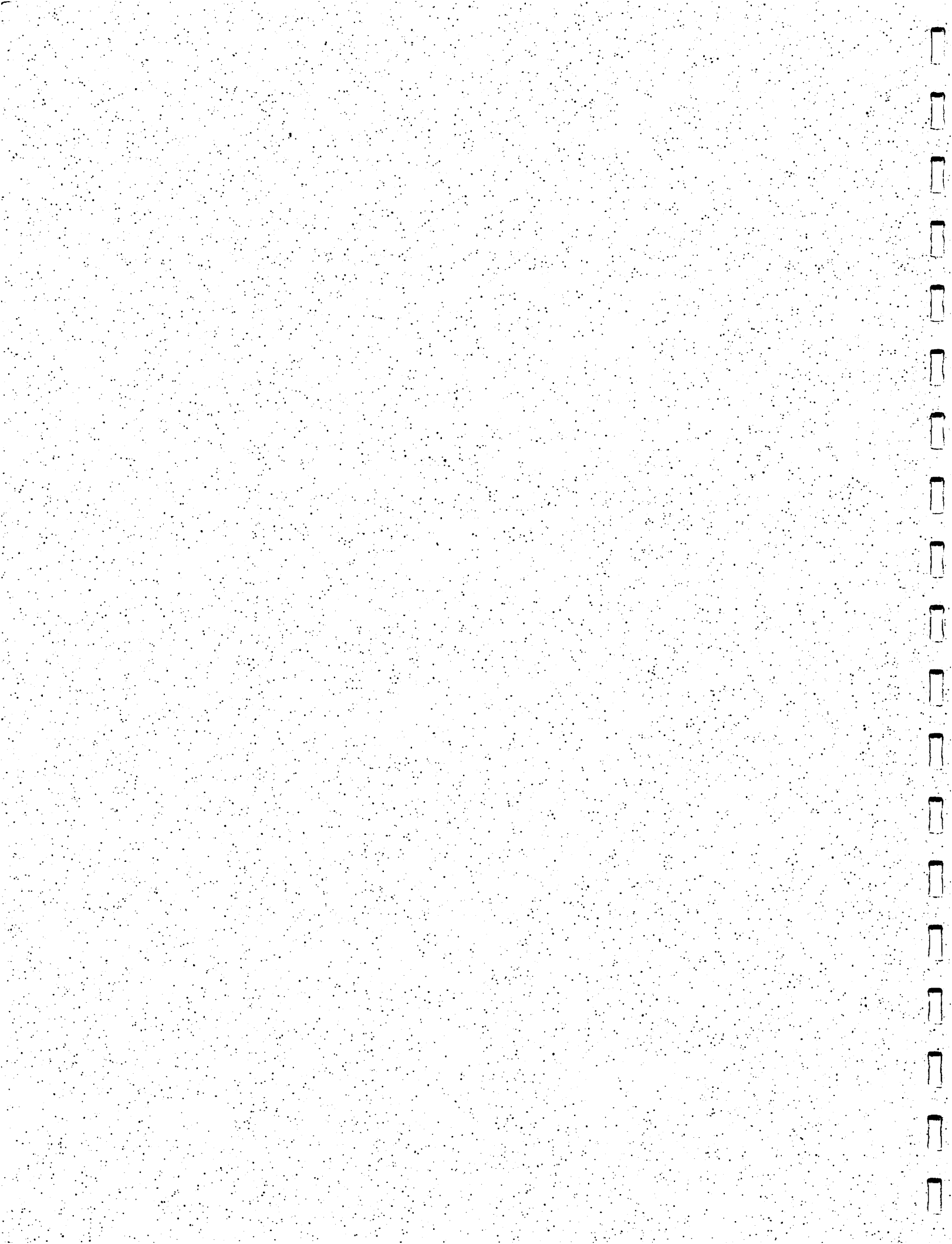
# **This Is Your First And Last Warning**

**by**

**Mark Fisher**



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(Lights up. There is a bench center stage, several green boxes around the stage, red cyc up. AMANDA is sitting at the bench, typing on her laptop computer. She has a seven on her right shoulder. MAN walks in from SL, wearing a police-type uniform. He has a four on his right shoulder. Amanda looks up and sees him.)

MAN: Hello.

AMANDA: Hello, officer.

MAN: (Sits on bench.) How are you?

AMANDA: I'm doing okay. How are you?

MAN: Nice weather today, huh?

AMANDA: I guess.

MAN: Not a cloud in the sky.

AMANDA: There's one. (Pointing at it.)

MAN: Hold on a sec. (Takes out gun. Shoots cloud. MAN watches it fall to the ground. He blows over gun nozzle.)

AMANDA: Gee, thanks.

MAN: Just doin' my job.

AMANDA: Do you work here?

MAN: Yep.

AMANDA: I haven't seen you here before.

MAN: That's because I'm new. I just started this week.

AMANDA: Oh. Where were you assigned to before you came here?

MAN: Actually, it's my first week on the force. They put me here to start so that I can learn what to do before they give me a job without so much supervision.

AMANDA: Oh. So you just finished the academy?

MAN: There is no academy anymore. They just put you on the force and have you learn stuff as you go.

AMANDA: How's it working out?

MAN: Not that good. I'm not really all that sure what I'm supposed to do. All I know is that I have to arrest ten people a month or else I'm fired.

AMANDA: How many have you arrested so far?

MAN: Five.

AMANDA: Well, that's pretty good for your first week.

MAN: Yeah, I guess it is. Arresting people makes me really nervous.

It's not as much fun as I thought it would be.

(GIRL enters SL. She has a two on her right shoulder.)

AMANDA: Hello.

GIRL: Hello. Would you mind if I sat on the bench?

MAN: No, go ahead. (MAN gets off the bench.)

GIRL: Thank you. (GIRL sits down on bench. Man moves SR.)

GIRL: (To AMANDA.) Hello.

AMANDA: Hello. How are you?

GIRL: I'm fine.

AMANDA: Nice weather today, huh? Not a cloud in the sky.

GIRL: I don't like the sky. It's too red.

AMANDA: Red's a nice color.

GIRL: I don't like it. I liked it better when the sky was blue.

MAN: When was that?

AMANDA: It was a long time ago. It might have been before you were around.

GIRL: Blue was a good color. They never should of changed it.

AMANDA: It got boring after a while. It was time for a change. I'm glad they made it red.

GIRL: When they changed the sky, they should've gotten rid of that big

annoying shiny thing over there. (Points to the sun.)  
AMANDA: You mean the sun?  
GIRL: Yeah.  
AMANDA: What's wrong with it?  
GIRL: It hurts my eyes.  
MAN: Then don't look at it.  
GIRL: If they'd have gotten rid of it, then I wouldn't have to look at it!  
AMANDA: We can't get rid of the sun. Without the sun it would be night all the time and all the plants on the Earth would die. The world be a totally different place.  
GIRL: Oh yeah, good point. (Pause. AMANDA types on the keyboard.)  
GIRL: What are you working on?  
AMANDA: I'm typing out this month's financial report.  
GIRL: Can I see?  
AMANDA: (Turns computer so it faces GIRL.) I guess. It's not really interesting stuff.  
GIRL: (Looking at screen.) Wow. What does all that stuff mean?  
AMANDA: Well, there's our profits, our wages, our stock prices,...  
It's hard to read at first. (Turns computer away and goes back to typing.)  
GIRL: That's okay. I can't read at all.  
MAN: Did you just say you can't read?  
GIRL: Yes.  
MAN: What's your job?  
GIRL: I make clothes.  
MAN: What are you doing here?  
(JENNIFER enters as GIRL says her next line. She is wearing a uniform similar to the one MAN wears. She has a five on her right shoulder.)  
GIRL: I'm waiting for- (MAN sees JENNIFER.)  
MAN: (Interrupting.) Never mind. Just sit still and don't say anything.  
JENNIFER: Hello Amanda.  
AMANDA: Hi Jennifer.  
JENNIFER: How's your work coming along?  
AMANDA: Pretty good. I think I'll make my deadline.  
MAN: Good afternoon Sergeant.  
JENNIFER: You're that new patrolman, right?  
MAN: Yes, that's me.  
JENNIFER: (Pointing to GIRL.) Who's she?  
MAN: I don't really know.  
JENNIFER: Is she here with you, Amanda?  
AMANDA: No.  
JENNIFER: (To GIRL.) Can I see your pass, ma'am?  
GIRL: What pass?  
JENNIFER: This is the restricted zone. You're not allowed to be here unless you have a pass.  
GIRL: No one told me this was the restricted zone.  
JENNIFER: What is your business here?  
GIRL: I'm supposed to be meeting a friend of mine here.  
JENNIFER: (Starts to write GIRL a ticket.) There's a three hundred dollar fine for being in the restricted zone without a pass.  
GIRL: I didn't know it was the restricted zone.  
JENNIFER: Do you have three hundred dollars on you?  
GIRL: No sir.  
JENNIFER: Then how much do you have?  
GIRL: I don't have any money. Sorry.  
JENNIFER: What's your personal identification number?

GIRL: Two seven three zero eight zero.

JENNIFER: (Gives GIRL ticket.) You have thirty days to pay this ticket. If you don't, you'll be sentenced to three months imprisonment. Now get out of here.

GIRL: I can't leave now. I have to wait until my friend shows up.

JENNIFER: You can't stay here if you don't have a pass.

GIRL: But I haven't seen him in a real long time. Can't I just wait here until he shows up?

JENNIFER: That depends. If he has a pass, you'll be permitted to stay as long as he's here.

GIRL: I don't know whether he has a pass or not. I haven't seen him in a long time.

JENNIFER: (Impatiently.) I'll give you five minutes. Then you have to leave immediately if your friend hasn't arrived. If your friend shows up with a pass, then you can stay here until ten. After that the restricted zone is closed to non-essential personnel.

GIRL: Thanks so much. You don't know how much this means to me.

JENNIFER: You are not permitted to interfere with the operation of the restricted zone's facilities. That means you can't come within six feet of this bench.

(GIRL gets off the bench and walks to DSR. Sits on ground.)

JENNIFER: You are to remain in that location until you are authorized to move. You're not allowed to talk to anyone or otherwise affect someone else's thought process. (Pause.) And try not to breathe too much.

(MAN sits on bench.)

MAN: They need to make the sign bigger. I'm going to tell them that next time I get a chance. On my first day, I almost missed the sign completely. What good is the restricted zone if no one can tell where it is?

JENNIFER: (To MAN.) It's your first week on the job and you've let someone enter the restricted zone without a pass. That's not a good way to start your new job. Care to explain how this happened?

MAN: She probably blinked and missed the sign.

JENNIFER: Don't joke around. If you don't want to take this job seriously, we can find someone else who does.

MAN: It's not a big deal. It's not like she's a threat to the restricted zone's security.

JENNIFER: She was interfering with the operation of the restricted zone's facilities.

MAN: She was sitting on a bench.

JENNIFER: This bench is only to be sat on by authorized members of the population. What if someone wanted to use the bench but couldn't because she was sitting on it unlawfully?

MAN: She was only on it for a couple of minutes.

JENNIFER: But she shouldn't even be here in the first place. Her being here compromises the restricted zone's integrity.

MAN: The only violation she committed is unlawful entry due to negligence.

JENNIFER: She sat on the bench. This bench is for authorized occupants. That's interfering with the restricted zone's operations.

MAN: She didn't know it was the restricted zone at the time.

JENNIFER: Ignorance is no defence. If I hadn't already arrested ten people this month, I'd nail her for interfering with the restricted zone's operations in the first degree.

MAN: The judge would never convict her of that.

AMANDA: Look, I'm trying to get some work done here. Can the two of you just drop it? The integrity has been restored and she's not interfering with the operations where she is. So just let her stay there and stop arguing about how much she should be punished.

JENNIFER: I'm just worried that she'll be a distraction to you.

AMANDA: She's not a distraction at all. I was working fine with her here. You two are the distraction.

JENNIFER: I apologize, Amanda. I didn't mean to impede your work. I just want to make sure that you're safe here from things that will stop you from getting your work done.

AMANDA: Yeah, I know you're just doing your job, but you get carried away too easily. You don't have to tell people to stop breathing just so I can get my work done faster.

JENNIFER: If your work doesn't get finished, I'll be the one that gets blamed for it because I'm the head of operations in this sector. I can't take the chance of you being infected by any viruses she may have. If you miss your deadline, I'm fired. (To MAN.) And you are too.

AMANDA: What exactly is your job?

MAN: I'm just here to keep everything running smoothly.

JENNIFER: He's an operations maintenance rules enforcer.

MAN: That's what I said.

AMANDA: Why do you have a gun?

MAN: Part of the job. They want us to be able to handle any dangerous situations.

AMANDA: Do you have a gun, Jennifer?

JENNIFER: Yes, I do. The new protocols state that all officers must carry a class three firearm.

AMANDA: What new protocols?

MAN: You haven't heard the new protocols yet?

AMANDA: I've been so busy working I haven't had a chance to read them. What's so important about them?

JENNIFER: They made some big changes. Most of them don't affect you because you're citizen class seven. The lower classes got affected the most.

AMANDA: But why are you carrying guns now?

MAN: Guns are a necessity. They make it easier to handle problems and enforce our authority. They make things a lot safer.

AMANDA: I don't feel very much safer.

JENNIFER: Only police personnel have guns. They didn't go back to the old way of letting anyone carry them.

MAN: We probably will never have to use our guns while in the restricted zone. There's not nearly as much crime as in the other parts of the city.

AMANDA: That's true. The restricted zone is probably the least violent place someone can be. (Pause.)

MAN: Look, Jennifer, we both don't have to stay here to watch one person. She's not going to do anything, and if she does I can handle her on my own.

JENNIFER: (Looks at watch.) Okay, it's five twenty five now. I want you to have her out of here by five thirty at the latest. If she's still here when I get back, I'm going to hold you personally responsible.

MAN: No problem. If her friend doesn't show up I'll get rid of her.

JENNIFER: Good luck on your work, Amanda. Remember, it's due in five days.

AMANDA: I know. (JENNIFER exits SR.)

MAN: She sure is strict.

AMANDA: She's always been that way. You either get used to it or really, really sick of it.

MAN: I'm already sick of it. (To Girl.) Hey, why didn't you just tell her that you forgot to bring your pass? (Pause.)

GIRL: Am I allowed to talk now?

MAN: Sure, go ahead. (To AMANDA) You don't mind if she talks, do you?

AMANDA: No, no problem.

MAN: If you had just said to Jennifer your pass was at home, she wouldn't have been able to fine you.

GIRL: But my pass isn't at home. I don't have a pass.

MAN: Yes, I know. But if you say you have a pass and you just forgot it, then all you get is a warning.

GIRL: But that would be lying. And if you get caught lying to the police, you get a huge fine that you'll never be able to pay.

MAN: Are you going to be able to pay the fine?

GIRL: I don't know. My job doesn't pay a lot.

(Pause.)

MAN: Maybe that friend of yours isn't going to come.

GIRL: He said he'd be here.

MAN: Why did he tell you to meet him here?

GIRL: I didn't ask. He just told me to come to this bench and wait until he came. (Pause.)

MAN: Well, if he doesn't show up soon I'm going to have to escort you out.

GIRL: But what if he comes after I leave?

MAN: Is there a number that he can call you at?

GIRL: No. I don't have a phone.

AMANDA: Why don't you have a phone?

GIRL: They told me I wasn't allowed to have a phone anymore.

MAN: Oh yeah, that's right. All citizens of class one and two aren't allowed access to phones anymore.

AMANDA: Why not?

MAN: It's part of the new protocols. There was way too many people trying to use the phones at the same time. The lines were getting jammed. This way classes three and up won't have to wait for the lines to not be so busy when they want to use the phone.

AMANDA: But that's not fair.

MAN: Sure it is. It's just like with the bench.

AMANDA: What do you mean?

MAN: Well, she's not allowed to sit on this bench because if she sat on it, she'd be impeding someone of a higher class who wanted to sit on it. If she was allowed to use the phone, she might impede someone of a higher class who wanted to use the phone.

AMANDA: Why can't they just build more phone lines?

MAN: That's too expensive. The money it would cost to do that can be used on more important things.

AMANDA: I guess that makes sense. But how do people in classes one and two stay in touch with each other?

MAN: I'm sure they manage somehow.

AMANDA: (To GIRL.) What's it like?

GIRL: Not having phones?

AMANDA: Yeah.

GIRL: It's hard to keep in touch with people unless you see them regularly. I used to use my phone a lot before they took it away. Can you use the phone whenever you want to?

AMANDA: Sure.

GIRL: Wow. What class are you?

AMANDA: Seven.

GIRL: Whoa, you're lucky. Class seven people are allowed to do a whole bunch of stuff that I'll never get to do. You can stay out late and go wherever you want. I can hardly do anything if I don't have permission. (Bitterly.) I'm not even allowed to stand up right now.

MAN: I think your time's up. You should leave now. If Jennifer comes back and sees that you're still here, we're both going to be in big trouble.

GIRL: But he told me to wait for him. I can't leave now.

MAN: (Stands up.) If you don't leave now, you're going to get thrown in jail once Jennifer or another patroller comes by. If your friend hasn't come yet, he probably won't come at all.

GIRL: Can't I just wait a bit longer?

MAN: No. Your time's up. But I'll tell you what I can do. If I happen to run into this guy who's looking for you, I'll give him your identification number and then he can use that to get into contact with you.

GIRL: Okay.

MAN: (Takes out notebook.) So what's your number again?

GIRL: Two seven three zero eight zero. (MAN writes it down.)

MAN: Okay. Let's go now. You are authorized to stand up. (She does so. Man starts to walk out SL.)

GIRL: It was nice to meet you, Amanda.

AMANDA: Yeah, you too.

(MAN and GIRL exit SR. AMANDA continues to type on computer.)

(Lights fade down. AMANDA changes sides of the bench. Lights come up.)

(AMANDA types silently for a while. GIRL enters SR. AMANDA is surprised to see her.)

AMANDA: Hello.

GIRL: Hello.

AMANDA: How are you?

GIRL: I'm okay.

AMANDA: Nice weather today, huh?

GIRL: (Looking at the sky.) It's the same as yesterday.

AMANDA: There's more clouds today.

GIRL: That sun is too bright.

AMANDA: Don't look at the sun. Just look at the clouds.

GIRL: Hey, did my friend ever show up yesterday?

AMANDA: Not before I left.

GIRL: What time was that?

AMANDA: Around six.

GIRL: Maybe he'll come today then.

AMANDA: You're taking an awful big risk coming back here. If you get caught again you'll be put in jail. You only get one warning.

GIRL: I'll leave once my friend comes.

AMANDA: Maybe he forgot.

GIRL: He wouldn't forget. He'll show up.

AMANDA: Look, Jennifer usually comes around ten minutes from now. You should probably leave before she gets here.

GIRL: I'll just tell her I left my pass at home.

AMANDA: (Frustrated.) But she already knows that you don't have a pass.

GIRL: (Pause.) Maybe she'll forget.

AMANDA: She won't forget. (GIRL gets up.)

GIRL: Well, if my friend comes, tell him that I was waiting for him.

AMANDA: Wait a minute. How will I know who this guy is?

GIRL: Huh?

AMANDA: I have no idea what this guy is like. If I don't know anything about him, how am I supposed to know he's the guy you're waiting for?

GIRL: What do you want to know about him?

AMANDA: His name, for starters.

GIRL: His name is David.

AMANDA: What is he like?

GIRL: Well, he's nice, he's funny, he's really a great guy. I'm sure you'd like him if you got to know him.

AMANDA: What does he look like?

GIRL: Look like? He looks like any other guy, I guess.

AMANDA: What color is his hair?

GIRL: [GIRL responds with the hair color of MAN2.]

AMANDA: How tall is he?

GIRL: I'm not sure. I know he's taller than me.

AMANDA: Does he have any distinguishing features that would help me recognize him?

GIRL: One thing about the way he looks that I always think about are his eyes. They're as blue as the sky.

AMANDA: The sky's not blue. It's red.

GIRL: Oh yeah. I forgot. (GIRL sits back down on bench. AMANDA types in the silence.)

GIRL: Are you still working on that financial thing?

AMANDA: It takes a lot of time to finish. Maenand incorporated owns forty seven percent of the world's finances

GIRL: You work for Maenand Incorporated?

AMANDA: Yes.

GIRL: So do I! How about that?

(MAN enters SL.)

MAN: Why did you come back here?

GIRL: To see my friend.

MAN: It's the restricted area. You aren't allowed to be in here.

GIRL: I'll leave once David gets here. He should be here soon.

MAN: Look, he didn't show up yesterday and he's not going to show up today. Get out of here before you're arrested.

GIRL: Just let me stay a little while longer.

MAN: Are you kidding? I should be giving you a three hundred dollar fine for trespassing right now! You're crazy to be back here. I told you yesterday not to come back!

GIRL: Go ahead and fine me. I don't care.

MAN: (Starts to write a ticket.) This is crazy. (Pause.) What's your personal identification number?

GIRL: Two seven three zero eight zero.

MAN: Here's your ticket. (Hands her the ticket.) Are you happy now? Will you get out of here so I don't have to arrest you?

GIRL: No. I have to wait for my friend.

MAN: Is he worth going to jail over?

GIRL: I'm not going to go to jail.

MAN: If another patroller sees you, you will be. Now get out of here before another patroller sees you. And don't come back again.

(GIRL gets off bench.)

GIRL: (To AMANDA.) If David comes, tell him to come find me.

AMANDA: I will.

(GIRL exits SR. MAN sits on bench.)

MAN: I can't believe she was stupid enough to enter the restricted zone again. What's wrong with her?

AMANDA: She must really like that David guy. I wonder what's so special about him. (AMANDA notices how nervous MAN is.) Are you okay? What's wrong?

MAN: I can't take this police force work. I wasn't cut out for it. I should've been a lot harder on her back there but I just couldn't. I hope she doesn't come back here again. I don't want to have to arrest her. (Pause.) I hate this job! I wish I was never put on the police force!

AMANDA: Why don't you ask to be put into some other line of work?

MAN: I can't. Only people who have a citizen class of five or higher can ask to have their job changed.

AMANDA: Is that from those new protocols?

MAN: Yep.

AMANDA: These new protocols don't seem to help all that much. What are they actually accomplishing?

MAN: They're making it so that having access to services is easier for people to get.

AMANDA: Yeah, for the people with high citizenship classes! How do the protocols help the people in the lower classes?

MAN: You're class seven. Why are you worrying about that?

AMANDA: Because! I,... just think that.. lower class people should be looked after too.

MAN: They are. They just don't get the same benefits as the higher class people.

AMANDA: Yeah, okay, but that girl won't be able to find her friend because her class is so low that she can't get a pass. That's not fair to her.

MAN: Well we can't let class two citizens have passes. Then they'd all be coming into the restricted zone whenever they felt like it.

AMANDA: True. I wonder what her name is. Can you tell me?

MAN: I'm afraid that I can't.

AMANDA: If you know her identification number, you can find her name on the computer that stores everyone's names on it.

MAN: She doesn't have a name.

AMANDA: What do you mean she doesn't have a name?

MAN: It's part of the new protocols. People of citizenship classes four or lower no longer have names. They just have identification numbers.

AMANDA: How can they just take away people's names?

MAN: There were too many names to keep track of. All those different names were taking up too much room in the computer. It's easier to just use identification numbers.

AMANDA: But you can't just stop giving people names!

MAN: It's actually working out pretty well. Violence is down six percent.

AMANDA: (Disbelievngly.) Because people don't have names?

MAN: We figure it's the main reason for the drop. People don't seem to really mind not having names.

AMANDA: So then what am I supposed to call people?

MAN: You call them their identification number.

AMANDA: So people don't have names anymore, just numbers?

MAN: Yeah. My number is four four two one zero five.

AMANDA: (Shakes MAN's hand.) It's nice to meet you number four four two one zero five. Tell me, what was your name before it got taken away?

MAN: Peter.

AMANDA: Which do you prefer to be called by?



MAN: I'm not allowed to use the name Peter anymore. I always go by the number. (Pause. MAN lets go of AMANDA's hand.) Anyway, I should be going. I have to patrol the rest of the zone.  
(MAN gets up and walks SL, almost leaving the stage, then stops and turns around.)

MAN: I'll see you later, Amanda.

AMANDA: Bye Peter. (AMANDA goes back to typing. MAN stands silently.)

MAN: Calling me by my old name is a violation of the new protocols.

AMANDA: Do I have to pay a fine for it?

MAN: Huh? Um, no. Just, don't let it happen again. (MAN exits SL.)

(AMANDA types silently. The lights go out. AMANDA changes position on the bench and lights come up.)

(GIRL enters SR and sees AMANDA typing. Comes and sits next to her on the bench.)

AMANDA: Hello.

GIRL: Hello.

AMANDA: How are you?

GIRL: I'm okay. How are you?

AMANDA: I'm fine. Nice weather today, huh?

GIRL: Hey, the sun's gone! They got rid of it!

AMANDA: It's behind a cloud.

GIRL: Oh. Do you think it will stay that way?

AMANDA: I doubt it.

GIRL: Did David come by yesterday?

AMANDA: No, sorry.

GIRL: He'll probably come today.

AMANDA: I wouldn't count on it. He hasn't come for two days in a row.  
What makes you think he's going to come now?

GIRL: I just have a good feeling today.

AMANDA: If you say so. Oh, I've been meaning to ask you, what's your name?

GIRL: I don't have a name.

AMANDA: What was your name when you used to have a name?

GIRL: When I had a name? (Trying to remember.) When was that?

AMANDA: Not too long ago; before the new protocols were made.

GIRL: I forget.

AMANDA: You forget? How can you forget your own name?

GIRL: It's not my name anymore.

(MAN enters SL.)

MAN: Hello Amanda. (Sees GIRL.) Not you again.

GIRL: Just give me one more day.

MAN: No. You've had your last warning. You have to go to jail this time.

GIRL: (Stands up.) Here, I'll stay off the bench. I won't get in anyone's way. You won't even know I'm here.

MAN: Look, I can't let you off the hook again. You've had your chance. You have to go to jail this time. That's the law.

AMANDA: The law is stupid. She hasn't done anything wrong.

MAN: I didn't make the laws. I just enforce them. I don't want to arrest her but what I want doesn't matter. I have no choice in these things. They didn't even give me a choice about being a police officer.

AMANDA: Can't you just let her go?

MAN: If I do that, I'll lose my job.

AMANDA: But you hate your job anyway.

MAN: If I lose this job, they're not going to give me another one. I don't have a choice. I have to take you in.

(MAN walks over to GIRL and grabs her by the arm. Starts to pull her out.)  
GIRL: (To AMANDA.) Tell David to come visit me in jail, okay?  
(MAN pulls GIRL out SR. AMANDA sits silently for a while. JENNIFER enters SL.)  
JENNIFER: Amanda.  
AMANDA: Oh hi, Jennifer.  
JENNIFER: Your work is due in three days. Why aren't you working on it?  
AMANDA: (Ejects disk from computer.) Here. I finished it early.  
JENNIFER: You got everything done?  
AMANDA: Yes I did.  
JENNIFER: Okay. I'll take this to your department head. You'll get your new assignment in four days.  
AMANDA: What should I do in the meantime?  
JENNIFER: I don't know. I guess you have the next few days off.  
AMANDA: Off? What am I supposed to do on my days off?  
JENNIFER: I don't know. I guess you can do whatever you want. I'll try to make sure you get more work assigned to you next time so you don't finish ahead of schedule again.  
AMANDA: Thank you.  
JENNIFER: See you in four days. (JENNIFER exits SL.)  
(Light fade out. AMANDA is typing on her computer as the lights come up.)  
(GIRL enters SR.)  
AMANDA: Hello.  
GIRL: Hi.  
AMANDA: I haven't seen you for months. Were you in jail this whole time?  
GIRL: Yeah. I couldn't pay those fines I they gave me so I had to stay longer.  
AMANDA: Did you just get out today?  
GIRL: Yeah.  
AMANDA: How was it? (GIRL sits down on bench.)  
GIRL: There wasn't a whole lot to do, but I managed. It wasn't as bad as I thought it would be. And they're letting me have my job back.  
AMANDA: That's nice of them.  
GIRL: Yeah. How's your job going?  
AMANDA: They gave me all this other work to do so that I won't finish it early. They called it a "promotion", or something.  
GIRL: Did David come while I was gone?  
AMANDA: No, he didn't.  
GIRL: Maybe he'll come today.  
AMANDA: (Looks at watch.) The patroller is going to be coming soon. You shouldn't stay here much longer.  
GIRL: Will it be the same guy who arrested me?  
AMANDA: No, he doesn't work here anymore. He was fired for not arresting enough people two months ago. They hired a new guy to replace him.  
GIRL: I hope he's not as mean as the old one.  
AMANDA: (Pause.) Why did you come back here?  
GIRL: David told me to wait for him here.  
AMANDA: But you're not allowed to be here.  
GIRL: Me and David used to come here all the time before he got sent away.  
AMANDA: Where did he go?  
GIRL: I forget. It was a long time ago.  
AMANDA: You've forgotten a lot of things.  
GIRL: Yeah, but I remember David.  
AMANDA: What if he doesn't remember you?

GIRL: Why wouldn't he?

(MAN2 enters SL. He has a four on his right shoulder. He matches GIRL's description of David.)

MAN2: Hello, Amanda.

AMANDA: Hi four six six one zero nine.

MAN2: Who's she?

GIRL: I'm two seven three zero eight zero.

MAN2: Can I see your pass?

GIRL: My pass?

MAN2: You aren't allowed to be here if you don't have a pass.

GIRL: (Happily.) I left it at home!

MAN2: You don't sound too upset about that.

GIRL: You look kind of familiar. Do I know you?

MAN2: If you're from class two then how would you have a pass?

GIRL: Is your name David?

MAN2: I'm afraid I'm going to have to give you a three hundred dollar fine for entering the restricted zone without a pass. And a thousand dollar fine for lying to a police officer.

GIRL: (Standing up.) Do you know who I am?

MAN2: Here's your ticket. You have thirty days to pay it.

(MAN2 holds out the ticket but GIRL doesn't take it.)

GIRL: Are you David?

MAN2: No. I'm four six six one zero nine.

GIRL: What was your name when you used to have one?

MAN2: I don't remember. That was a lifetime ago. (Pause.) You're going to have to pay these tickets whether you take them or not.

(GIRL takes tickets.) You have to leave the restricted zone immediately. If you come back again you'll have to be incarcerated. This is the only warning I'll give you.

GIRL: I... I'm sorry officer. I won't come back again. (GIRL exits SR.) (MAN2 sits down on bench.)

MAN2: Maybe I should of arrested her for comprimiseing the restricted zone's integrity. (Pause.) Naw, I've already got ten people this month. No point in bothering with anyone else.

AMANDA: Did she look at all familiar to you?

MAN2: No. I haven't seen her before today. Is she a repeat offender? I could still arrest her.

(Pause.)

AMANDA: No, forget about. It's nothing.

(Amanda goes back to typing.)

MAN2: So how are you doing today?

AMANDA: I'm okay.

MAN2: Nice weather today, huh? Not a cloud in the sky.

AMANDA: There's one. (Pointing at it.)

MAN2: Hold on a sec.

(MAN2 pulls out gun and aims to shoot the cloud. AMANDA puts her hand on the gun and pulls it down.)

AMANDA: Leave it.

MAN2: The sky sure looks beautiful. (MAN2 looks at sky for remainder of dialogue.)

AMANDA: I'm starting to miss the way it used to look.

MAN2: How did it used to look?

AMANDA: It used to be blue. As blue as your eyes.

MAN2: When was that?

AMANDA: It was a long time ago. You probably wouldn't remember.

MAN2: I can't remember very much from long ago.

AMANDA: Do you remember why you took this job?

MAN2: I know there was a reason. Something to do with this location.  
But I forget what it was now. (Pause.) That big shiny thing really  
annoys me.

AMANDA: The sun?

MAN: Yeah, that's what it's called. I'm glad they decided to get rid  
of it.

AMANDA: Get rid of it?

MAN2: You still haven't read the new protocols. They've been out for a  
long time.

AMANDA: They're going to get rid of the sun? (MAN2 stands up.)

MAN2: They already have.

AMANDA: But I can still see it.

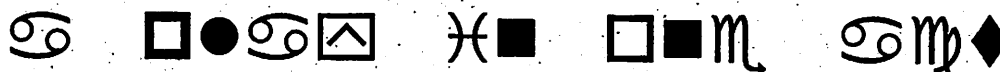
MAN2: That's just the afterglow. It won't last much longer. Pretty  
soon you'll forget it was ever there.

(MAN2 exits SL. Lights and cyc fade out.)

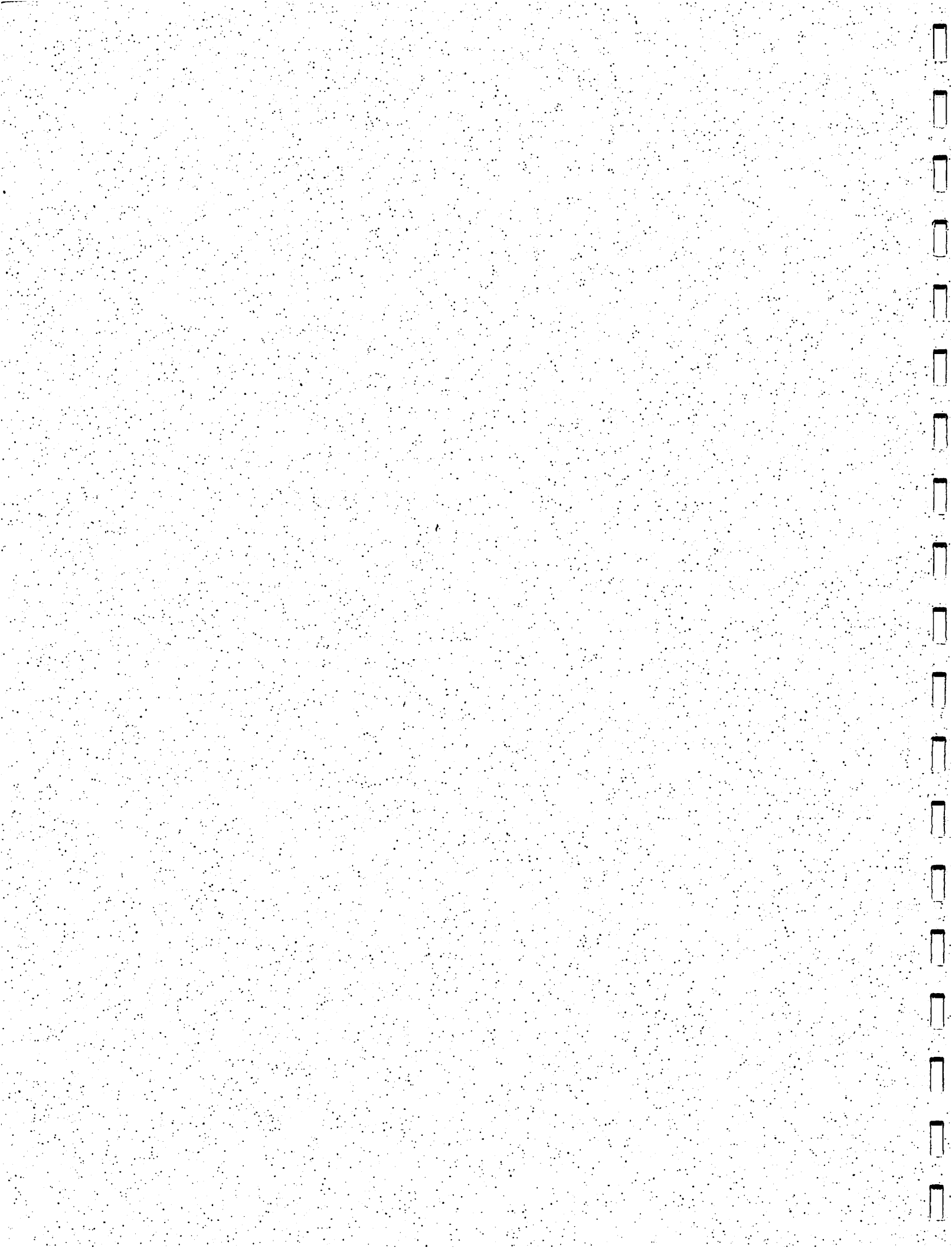
# Welcome To The Nuthouse

by

Trevor Howitt



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(Lights up. Walt and Phil are sitting on opposite sides of a couch. Walt is not wearing a shirt. Ben is sitting in a love seat, snoring.)

Walt: (sniffs the air) Whoa! Do you smell that?

Phil: What?

Walt: That... smell.

Phil: (sniffs) Yeah. It smells man.

Walt: Smells like garbage.

Phil: Yeah, garbage...(sniffs) and yogurt.

Walt: Yeah, yogurt.

(They look around.)

Walt: (smells himself) Not me man. I had a shower last night.

Phil: So did I dude.

Walt: Really?

Phil: Yeah man, I'm serious.

Walt: Dude, that's like, freakamundo.

Phil: Yeah man, it's like something off of goosebumps.

Walt: Right, right. I was just gonna say that.

Phil: Oh, man, this is freaking me out. (pause) Wait, wait. Now I remember. I didn't take a shower, I just took a walk in the rain.

Walt: (wipes his brow) Phew. That was a close call.

Phil: What was?

Walt: (stares at him blankly) Huh?

Phil: Did you say something dude?

Walt: (pause) I don't know.

Phil: (pause) I'm thirsty.

Walt: I gotta go to the bathroom.

Phil: Lets do it.

(They both stand up. Phil goes to the counter and pours himself a drink. Walt goes to a door, throws it open, and we hear the sound of liquid hitting wood.)

Phil: Uhh, dude.

Walt: Huh?

Phil: Dude?

Walt: Huh?

Phil: Dude!

Walt: What!?

Phil: That's the hallway dude.

Walt: I don't really care.

Phil: Do you want a drink dude?

Walt: No. I'm kind of getting rid of one as we speak. (looks around) Where the hell is my shirt dude?

Phil: It's hanging from the lamp.

Walt: Okay.

Phil: How much longer are you gonna take?

Walt: Huh?

Phil: How long does it take you to drain the weasel?

Walt: What weasel?

Phil: Pee dude.

Walt: I already am. When did we get a weasel?

Phil: (very slowly and clearly) How long does it take you to urinate?

Walt: Almost done.

Phil: Cool.

Walt: Almost done.

Phil: Good for you.

Walt: Almost done.

Phil: Dude, shut up.

Walt: (steps back with his hands in the air.) Done! (turns and slams the door with his foot.)

Phil: A perfect dismount.



Walt: I should join the Olympics or something.

Phil: Dude, your fly.

Walt: I know.

Phil: No dude, your fly.

Walt: I'm a good dancer too.

Phil: No, I mean your fly is open.

Walt: I'm fly is open?

Phil: Your zipper.

Walt: I'm zipper.

Phil: Do up your zipper!

Walt: Okay. (does so. Feels his chest.) Is this peanut butter man?

Phil: Put on your shirt dude.

Walt: Good idea. (starts toward lamp)

(A knock on the door is heard. Phil opens it. The Super is standing there..)

Phil: Dude, it's the Super.

Super: What's all this water in the hallway.

Walt: That's not water, that's...

Phil: Melted ice. I put a block of ice out there last night, and it melted. Bummer huh?

Super: (sniffs) Something stinks in here.

Phil: Maybe it's the dog.

Super: You don't have a dog you idiot. (sniffs) It smells like... reefer.

Phil: Well, we wouldn't know anything about that.

Walt: (walks into the wall) I missed again dude.

Super: Tell him to put some clothes on. I can't have my tenants walking around half naked.

Phil: This is like a private residence.

Super: Yeah, yeah. whatever. Look, the reason I came up is that there's a girl down in the lobby who wants to be let up. She looks kind of... normal, so I told her she must have the wrong apartment. But she insists on coming up here.

Walt: A girl? Sweet!

Phil: Let her up man. (looks at the super) I mean... uh... Woman.

(Super leaves shaking her head.)

Walt: Dude! There's a chick on her way up. Let's clean this place up.

(They run around picking up clothes and throwing them on top of Ben, who is still sleeping.)

Walt: (runs over and grabs his shirt.) You know what dude, something smells in here.

Phil: Yeah.

Walt: It kind of smells like cheese. (puts on his shirt.)

Phil: Yeah, cheese... and yogurt.

(Sheila enters.)

Walt: Oh man. It's my sister!

Phil: I don't mind. Hey Sheila...

Sheila: Can it, loser. Walt, why did I come home last night to find a monkey sleeping in my bed?

Walt: I don't know, to have a change from the everyday monotony of your life?

Phil: Dude, you slept with a monkey?

Sheila: No I did not sleep with a monkey! I'd think it should be quite obvious that I took the monkey out of my bed. The question is, how did the monkey get there in the first place?

Walt: Maybe he climbed in the window.

Sheila: Walt. How stupid do you think I am?

Walt: What, you mean like in centimeters?

Sheila: I know that there are no wild monkeys in Vancouver. I know that monkeys don't escape from the zoo and climb into 4th story windows. I know that someone would have to bring the monkey into my home. And I know that it is probably the same person who brought the 7 foot tall Indian over for a game of strip poker last weekend. So, Walt, where did you get the monkey from?

Walt: To tell you the truth, Last night is kind of a blur.

Phil: Wait, wait, wait. You played strip poker with Cheif Running Bear and you didn't invite me?

Sheila: Walt, listen to me. I can't use my bathroom because I have a monkey locked in there. By now he's probably defecated on everything in sight. I want you to come over, take the monkey, and return it to wherever it came from.

Phil: Well, it probably came from like Africa or something, so he can't really...

Sheila: I mean return it to wherever the hell he got it from. Walt, think hard. Where did you go last night?

Walt: It was someplace with a statue of cupid... or maybe it was a bathroom. I don't remember.

Phil: Wasn't Gord Erikson's party last night?

Walt: Dude, that was like a month ago.

Phil: Oops. Maybe I was thinking of someone else.

Sheila: Walt, find out who's monkey it is, and return it. Meanwhile, I have to use your shower. Where's the bathroom?

Walt: It's right out there.

Phil: It's in the bedroom. (to Walt) You gotta stop peeing in the hallway dude.

(Sheila goes through bedroom door.)

Walt: Something kinda smells in here.

Phil: Yeah, I noticed that too.

(Scream from bedroom.)

Phil: Something sounds in here too.

(Scream again.)

Walt: Dude, I totally heard that.

(Sheila runs out)

Sheila: There's a girl passed out in your shower, and a fish in your toilet.

Phil: We got a fish?

Walt: We got a girl?

(Phil and Walt go into the bedroom and come out carrying Sally. They lay her on the couch.)

Walt: She look familiar to you?

Phil: I think she might be my girlfriend dude.

Walt: That's kind of creepy, cause I think she might be my mother.

Sheila: She's not our mother.

Walt: Good. Hey dude?

Phil: Yeah?

Walt: Stay away from my mom, alright?

Phil: Yeah dude, no problem.

Sheila: Well?

Phil: Well?

Walt: I'm gonna go get that fish. (goes into bedroom)

Sheila: (to Phil) wake her up!

(He splashes his drink on her face. Sally slowly wakes up.)

Sally: Huh? Who?

Phil: That's exactly what I was thinking.

Sheila: Hi, welcome to the nut house. My name is Sheila, I'll be the only sane person here today.

Sally: Do you got any fruit loops?

Sheila: (to Phil) Oh yeah, she's your girlfriend alright.

Phil: (extends hand) I'm Phil.

(long pause as she stares at him blankly)

Sheila: He's Phil.

Sally: Oh Phil. I'm Sally. Were you guys at Mikes party last night?

Sheila: Mikes party?

Sally: Yeah. That's the last place I remember being.

Sheila: (to Phil) Were you guys at Mikes party?

Phil: Dude, I don't think I even know anybody named Mike. (thinks) Oh wait, I know like 4 or 5 people named Mike. What the hell am I talking about?

(Walt enters carrying a glass with a fish in it.)

Walt: Sorry, I kinda got lost.

Sheila: Walt, were you at some guy named Mikes house last night?

Walt: Sure. Mike Randall.

Sally: No.

Walt: Mike Andros.

(Sally shakes her head.)

Walt: Mike Underwood?

(Sally shakes her head)

Walt: Mike Rogers?

Sally: Yeah.

Walt: Man, I haven't been to that guys house in... (long pause) So we got a fish, huh?

Sally: I remember you. You were the guy with the monkey.

Sheila: Ahah!

Phil: So we own a monkey?

Sally: I don't know. You had one at the party.

Sheila: Well, I'm going for my shower now. I don't want any interruptions.

Walt: What if my pants catch on fire?

Sheila: Stop drop and roll. (goes into bedroom.)

(knock at door. Phil opens it. It's the super.)

Phil: Dude, it's the super.

Super: (to Walt) I see you found your shirt. Good thing.

Sally: (looks at his shirt.) Is that peanut butter?

Super: (sniffs) Did you figure out what that smell is yet?

Phil: No, but we got a fish.

Sally: And a monkey.

Walt: And a weasel.

Phil: No we don't.

Super: There are three gentlemen downstairs that want to see the two of you.

Walt: We don't know any gentlemen. Are you sure they're not big fat party animals?

Super: Positive.

Phil: Well, send them up.

(Super leaves)

Sally: Maybe I should leave.

Phil: Don't be silly. The more the merrier.

Sally: Well, to be truthful, this place kind of smells.

Phil: Yeah, that's what I was noticing. Did you notice that dude?

Walt: Notice what?

Phil: This place reeks.

Walt: Yeah man.

Sally: It kind of smells like wet dog.

Phil: Yeah, wet dog... and yogurt.

(Warren, Rudolph, and Sampson enter. They all wear suits.)

Warren: You. (points at Walt.)

Walt: I got a fish dude.

Warren: Where is it?

Walt: It's right over there in the cup dude.

Warren: I'm not talking about the fish.

Walt: Oh. (pause) Right on.

Warren: (to Rudolph and Sampson.) Have a look around.

(The two of them start knocking things over.)

Phil: Hey man, careful with the merchandise.

(Rudolph knocks over a vase)

Phil: Hey man, I made that!

Rudolph: Shut up. Or I will feed you to my mother in law.

Phil: Don't get so testy dude.

Sampson: Rudolph is very dangerous. I suggest you not aggravate him.

Phil: Well rooty toot snoot. Aren't we all high and mighty.

Warren: Shut up. You rented him last night. You were to return him by 8:00 this morning. It is now 12:24. Where is he?

Walt: Where is who?

Warren: Where is bubbles?

Walt: Dude, I don't know anyone named Bubbles.

Warren: Bubbles is a chimpanzee!

Phil: Look, we don't care what kind of religion this Bubbles guy adheres to. We've never heard of him. I mean, Christ, we're Protestant.

Walt: Hey man! Speak for yourself. I'm not a Protestant. I work in a gum factory. I make gum, man.

Phil: What the hell are you talking about man?

Walt: I ain't no Protestant.

Phil: Yes you are. You and your sister are.

Walt: Do you wanna go man?!

Warren: Rudolph!

(Rudolph throws them both onto the couch.)

Warren: You rented a chimpanzee named Bubbles last night. We want him back. He has a show at 1:00 this afternoon.

Sally: That's that monkey you had last night.

Walt: I own a monkey?

Sampson: You do not own the monkey! You rented him from us! And now, we really miss him. (starts to sob.)

Rudolph: There, are you happy? If your goal was to make Sampson the great cry, well then mission accomplished!

(Sheila enters with a bathrobe on.)

Sheila: What is going on here?

Rudolph: He made Sampson the Great cry! He is a very bad man!

Sheila: Sampson the great?

Warren: Madame, we are from the Russian circus. This man rented a chimpanzee from us last night, and now he has hidden it away where we will never find it.

Phil: And he made that big Russian dude cry.

Sheila: Wait, wait, wait. You guys own the monkey?

Sampson: It is not a Monkey! It is a chimpanzee! Show some respect!

Sheila: Whatever it is, you guys are the owners?

Warren: Yes.

Sheila: Great, it's at my house.

Warren: Your house?

Sheila: Yeah, it's probably urinating on my shower curtain as we speak.

Warren: Well then what are we waiting for. To the woman's house!

(Warren grabs her by the arm and pulls her out the door. Sampson and Rudolph follow.)

Sheila: Wait, my clothes!

Warren: There is no time. (they leave.)

(silence)

Walt: So do I own a monkey or not?

Sally: I don't think so.

Phil: We'll always have this fish dude.

Sally: What's his name?

Walt: How about Bubbles?

Phil: Good name dude.

Walt: Thanks.

(Ben suddenly stands up from under the mound of dirty clothes.)

Phil: Whoa! Who the hell are you man?

Walt: (walks over. Sniffs.) You smell dude.

(lights down.)



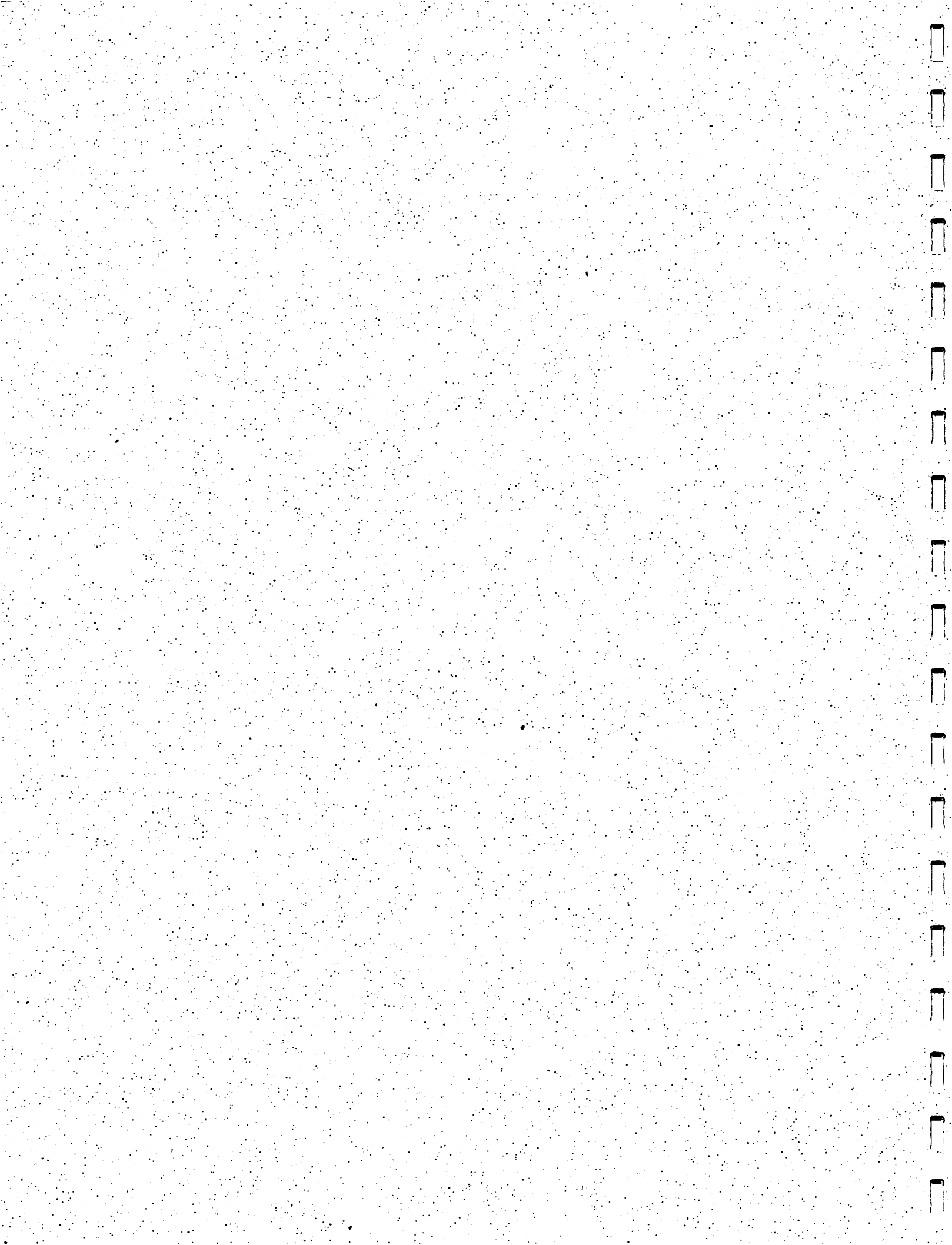
# **A Tragedy of Youth**

**by**

**Darcy J. Knopp**



Caution: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that "A Tragedy of Youth" by Darcy J. Knopp is subject to royalty. It is protected under Copyright Law. Inquiries regarding performance rights and royalties should be directed to Darcy J. Knopp at 20261 49th Ave. Langley, BC V3A 6W9. Name of author must appear on the front of the programme or on any advertisements regarding the production of the play. The fee for a single production of this play will be \$10.00



## A Tragedy of Youth

### Scene I

(Tableau party scene. Flash six area lights in sequence for 2.5 seconds. Actors are in position frozen while a loud party song blasts in the background)

Area 1: Two guys holding bottles  
Area 2: One guy passed out on the couch  
Area 3: Three girl's arms around each other  
Area 4: Guy and a girl in an embrace each holding a bottle  
Area 5: A person waving at the door.  
Area 6: Guy with his arm around a girl holding out car keys  
(BLACKOUT and Violently Cut the Music)  
Sound Effect: Car Crash

### Scene II:

(Blank stage, spot light front and center on Aurora)

AURORA: A star that burns is twice as bright  
But burns just half as long  
A youth consumed in reckless plight  
An angel dead and gone

He had a heart as good as gold  
It vanished in a glance  
Another tragic story told  
There is no second chance

The road leads to a path of death  
For angels who do drink  
The innocence of youth is myth  
Life is lost in a blink.

(Exit Aurora)

### Scene III

(Cross Fade spotlight with area lights. Scene set in a classroom about eight chairs and a blackboard. A solemn class files in followed by a teacher. All are obviously distraught with the exception of a carefree Brendan. The students are in clusters of two or three discussing the events of the evening.)

MR. AVERY: Please class, come in sit down.

SHANNON: I can't believe it. I'm in shock.

MONICA: He's just...gone.

ALEX: I heard he was drag racing Ben.

ROMAN: Ben was out on the couch all night and didn't get up until Sunday afternoon.

ALEX: Well who was he racing?

ROMAN: I don't know, but I bet he buried the needle on the speedo. He couldn't stop bragging about all his horsepower.

MONICA: When it blew-up she escaped, but he was still stuck in his seat belt.

SHANNON: You mean she just left him there?

ROMAN: No, she wouldn't do that. The blast must have thrown her from the car.

MONICA: It's so horrible! He just turned seventeen.

SHANNON: It's his own stupid fault, if you ask me. He was drunk what did he expect.

ALEX: Isn't that the point. If he had expected it to happen he wouldn't have done it.

SHANNON: I just can't believe there are still people in this world that are that stupid.

ALEX: He's no different than any of us. All of us at one time have had too much and driven home. We were all just lucky. He wasn't.

SHANNON: All I'm saying is that it's hard to feel sorry for someone who can't put two and two together.

MONICA: It doesn't matter. He's dead and she's in a coma!

(All slowly turn away a little ashamed of there conversation.)

BRENDAN: Hell of a night on Saturday, eh! I was so gooned. I've never been so hung over.

(Girls do not notice Brendan and stare at the space that he occupies as if it is empty)

BRENDAN: Hey, have you guys seen Cerra?

SHANNON: It's so weird to see his desk empty.

MONICA: I know it's so ...hollow.

MR. AVERY: Uh... class ...this... is a difficult day for all of us. This is... such a terrible tragedy. The councilors will be visiting your classes to speak with you on how to cope. The work will be light today. Please try to do as much as possible.

BRENDAN: Hey Roman, what's wrong? What's he talking about?

(Roman doesn't notice)

BRENDAN: Hey Roman! Hello! Hey, what the hell is your problem? (Long pause as he looks to get the attention of someone else.) Hey, Alex! ...What is going on here?

MR. AVERY: Due to the events this weekend, the Grad Rally on Thursday has been postponed until a later date.

BRENDAN: What is the matter with everyone?

(Gets up starts flapping his arms trying to get anyone's attention. He seemingly gives up and returns to his desk. He opens his book and flips through the pages.)

BRENDAN: Hey! What pages are we supposed to read? Hey!... Hey! Is this some sort of prank? (Lets out a frustrated sigh. He puts up his hand. Mr. Avery walks right passed him. He stands increasingly perturbed.) Am I invisible or something?

(Enter Cerra. The class is now frozen in time. )

CERRA: (bitterly and coldly.) Or something. Actually dead would be the correct answer.

BRENDAN: Cerra, what did you say?

CERRA: Dead! Ceasing to exist. No longer of the living.

BRENDAN: No no, what do you mean dead? WHAT DO YOU MEAN DEAD?

CERRA: You can yell all you want. They can't hear you!

BRENDAN: I must be dreaming, this can't be real.

(Cerra walks up and pinches him.)

BRENDAN: Ow!

CERRA: I guess that cancels that idea. Sad but true blue eyes. This is real life, or in your case real death.

BRENDAN: Wait, where did all this come from.

CERRA: Do you remember Saturday?

BRENDAN: (laughs quietly) Parts of it. Aw, man that was some party. I've never been so shellacked!

CERRA: Too bad it's the last one you'll ever go to. Anyhow, you left the party with me. We got into your car.

BRENDAN: That's right! My dad and I just finished putting the new 350 in it. I was going to show you the extra horsepower.

CERRA: You were driving and then you passed out at the wheel. You swerved off the road and hit a tree.

BRENDAN: I smashed-up my CAR!

CERRA: Yes.

BRENDAN: I can't believe it.

CERRA: Oh, don't worry the car can be fixed, not that it matters much. You won't be driving it anymore.

BRENDAN: There must be some mistake. I can't be dead. I'm only seventeen.

CERRA: You can believe that, or you can believe the person who was drenched in your blood. The same person who was trying to hold the two parts of your head together. The same person who was sitting next to you. (She is visibly flustered and upset at this point) That's right Brendan, I was there. I watched you bleed and burn and die. And I will never forgive you for that.

BRENDAN: (pause) What do you mean burn?

CERRA: The car exploded Brendan.

BRENDAN: No! You're wrong. I'm not dead. I'm only Seventeen. I've got my whole entire life ahead of me. Look, I don't know what the hell you a trying to pull here. You must be insane, but you can cut it out. The joke isn't funny! All right lets just end this charade.

CERRA: If this is just a charade then why can't anyone hear you?

BRENDAN: I don't know. Maybe they.... Hey if I'm so dead what about you? If you can talk to me you must be dead too, right.

CERRA: (looks away) No, not quite. I'm in the hospital in a coma fighting for my life, but it doesn't look good.

BRENDAN: (weakening) You're not serious.

CERRA: I wish I wasn't.

BRENDAN: (weakening as he comes to the realization of his situation.) (Long pause) My god, Cerra I am so sorry.

CERRA: There's no time for that now. We have a funeral to go to.

(Exit Cerra and class)

Scene IV

(Single spot light front and center. Blank stage otherwise.)

BRENDAN: It was then the images of the weekend flooded into my head like the Hoover Dam busting loose.

(Starts out very lighthearted and almost jovial as he recalls the events.) I woke up early on Saturday to finish putting in the new engine in with my dad. It took us two months to get everything together. Anyway, I went with Cerra to the party. The whole crew was there. Ben Owen was being his usual jackass self, said he could drink a pansy like me under the table.

(Dim light up on Ben in front of the couch)

BEN: What's the matter man? Need your mommy to hold your alcohol.

(Light down)

BRENDAN: I don't usually drink, but I decided to keep Ben's mouth shut. It didn't take much. He was asleep on the couch after two or three.

(Light up. Ben is seen lying face down on the couch)

BRENDAN: I had a few more just incase Ben woke up. The party was awesome; we were having so much fun singing and dancing. I don't know what happened. I guess I just took it in my head to leave, I could have stayed, but...(Takes out his key ring and spins it on his finger.)

BRENDAN: I don't recall clearly how the accident happened. There was an old lady in a Honda driving terribly slow. I floored it and I pulled out to pass her. Man, I was aging faster than she was driving. I remember everything went blurry and then black. I remember Cerra yelling at me, but all I could do was listen. Then the crash.

(Sound of car crash is heard)

BRENDAN: My car seemed to rip apart from the middle. A mass of glass and steel pinned me to the dashboard. My skull split in two. I remember Cerra trying to hold my head together. I screamed and then... the car exploded.

The next thing I knew I was in a room. There was a body on a table saturated in blood. His face was twisted and mangled, yet still and lifeless. He was in tough shape. Three people then walked into the room.

DOCTOR: Is this your son?

BRENDAN: The woman burst into hysterics. The man nodded quickly and ushered the woman out of the room. The last person pulled the blanket over the head and muttered something like...

DOCTOR: Stupid kid.

BRENDAN: But those were my parents. I realized who I had been looking at all this time. I glanced at the door of the room. It said Mourgetorey.

CERRA: (walks into spotlight) Are you ready?

(Brendan nods and follows her off stage. Quick Blackout.)

Scene V

(Funeral scene several clusters of people astray in the rows of chairs.)

CERRA: So how does it feel to attend your own funeral.

BRENDAN: I can't believe all the people here.

CERRA: Well we're what they call a tragedy of the youth. We get huge amounts of publicity. The media splashes our story on TV, on the radio and in the newspaper. Parents will be going to these emergency seminars on "How to Stop Your Kids from Drinking and Driving." But in a week, you and I will be forgotten and cast off as if this never happened.

BRENDAN: Look! There's Grandma and Grandpa.  
(He waves smiling and then remembers they can't see him.)

BRENDAN: They look so weak. Why do they have to look so sad?

CERRA: They loved you Brendan.

BRENDAN: I know but.... Hey the guys are here too. Roman! Alex! Up... here. Why are they crying? Why are you guys so upset?

CERRA: Maybe it's because they have to find a new catcher to win the championship this year. Jeez, Bren, they were your best friends.

BRENDAN: It's Mom and Dad. Dad I'm sorry about the car. Mom I promise I won't do it again. Hey don't cry I'm right here. I'm not dead! I can see you; why can't you see me? I'm not in the casket. I'm right over here! I...I... I... ugh.... I.... I can't see them like this. I got to get out of here.

CERRA: There is someone else I think you should see. Look in the front there.

BRENDAN: Where?

CERRA: Your sister, Aurora.

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BRENDAN: Oh, Rory. Her make-up looks terrible. She looks like a zombie.

CERRA: That's not make-up. She's been crying for days and hasn't said a word to anyone.

BRENDAN: (softly) Hey don't cry kiddo.

CERRA: You can't blame her. Someone knocked her star out of the sky. She looked up to you. How would you feel if your hero was dead?

BRENDAN: It's not fair! I...

CERRA: No it's not. But you should have thought of that before.

BRENDAN: Hey, back off Cerra this is difficult for me. It isn't easy being here. It isn't easy seeing them like this.

CERRA: IT ISN'T EASY FOR THEM EITHER! They have to watch you get buried. (She begins to sob)

BRENDAN: I'M SORRY OKAY! (Pause) GOD DAMMIT I WOULD CHANGE THINGS IF I COULD! It makes me sick to know how bad I hurt everyone. (Pause) Come on... Come here. (Gives her a hug)

CERRA: Brendan, look at this through my eyes. If I survive I'll miss out on our future together. If I don't I die, and miss out on any future.

BRENDAN: Stay with me! Please, if you go I'll be all alone! You... you can't leave me. I love you.

CERRA: I love you too. (Pause) Why did it have to be like this? We were supposed to have a life together.

BRENDAN: We can still be together.

CERRA: It won't be the same. We were going to go to college and get married. Do you remember how much time we spent planning our wedding? What about your writing, and what about my career? What about graduation, the cruise we were going on, and growing old together. What about...our family? They can't happen. Not anymore.

BRENDAN: Cerra you can't leave me. I know it's a lot to ask, but I need you. You have to stay here. I couldn't handle it with out you. Please say you'll stay.

CERRA: I suppose it wouldn't be much of a life. I'd probably be paralyzed or have brain damage or something. I would miss you so much!

BRENDAN: Yes, and we could just stay together. We would find a way to be happy. It would work.

CERRA: (pause) I guess so.

BRENDAN: Please think about staying with me. Say you'll stay. I'm begging you to stay with me. Don't leave me here all alone.

CERRA: (stutters) Uh.... Okay I'll (swallows back tears) stay.

BRENDAN: (hugs her) We'll be happy sweetheart I promise.

(Long pause. Cerra is just starrng into space)

BRENDAN: What's the matter?



CERRA: I think I should see my parents.

BRENDAN: Where are they?

CERRA: At the hospital.

BRENDAN: Let's go sweetheart.

(BLACKOUT)

Scene VI

(Hospital scene. Lights up on a bed with Cerra's parents over looking the bed.)  
(Enter Brendan and Cerra)

BRENDAN: Good lord you look terrible!

CERRA: Thanks.

BRENDAN: No, but you're all beat up and such a mess. I'm surprised you still breathing.

CERRA: I'm not. At least not on my own. See that. It's a respirator. It's keeping me alive. With out it the coma would kill me.

BRENDAN: I wish I could apologize to your parents and tell them how horribly guilty I feel. I took their little angel.

CERRA: Why would you apologize for me. It's not your fault I'm here.

BRENDAN: How do you figure? I was drunk. I was driving. I passed out at the wheel. How is it not my fault?

CERRA: I knew you were drunk. I got in the car with you. I took a chance and lost just like you did.

BRENDAN: But...

CERRA: No Brendan. You are only to blame on your tragic death, not mine. We all pay for our own mistakes.

BRENDAN: (in thought) Not always.

CERRA: What did you say?

(Enter Doctor)

BRENDAN: Hey what's going on here!

DOCTOR: (to parents) Are you folks ready? The switch is over here.

(Parents nod and solemnly walk to the wall)

CERRA: (Unfeeling) They're going to turn off my respirator.

DOCTOR: As soon as we flip the switch, the machine will stop breathing for Cerra.

BRENDAN: They are just going to cut you off?

CERRA: Yes.

BRENDAN: They can't! (Becomes animated) They can't just kill you. You have a life to live.

DOCTOR: The machine is now off. We will wait five minutes to monitor for any brain activity.

CERRA: Brendan it's over, relax.

BRENDAN: No! You can't die. You have to sing for everyone. You have to dance. You have to go to the beach. You have to win a Grammy!

CERRA: Brendan it's okay. I'm going to stay here with you.

BRENDAN: NO! You have to go back! I can't watch you die. You have to go. I need you to live. I need you to tell everyone how sorry I am. (Pause) I need you to remember me. (Grows quiet)

CERRA: What about us?

BRENDAN: I'll be there. I'll always be there. I'll try and drop by as often as I can. (Pause) Cerra, please go. Don't make me pay for my mistake with your life too.

CERRA: Bren, I... I...

BRENDAN: I love you too. Here take this.

CERRA: Your grad ring?

BRENDAN: Please don't forget about me.

CERRA: I uh.

BRENDAN: Go sweetheart!

DOCTOR: Nurse get in here. We have a live one.

NURSE: We have a pulse. BP is at 117 over 82. She's breathing.

DOCTOR: Atta girl Cerra! You gonna pull through.

BRENDAN: Atta girl sweetheart.

(Fadeout hospital. Spotlight on Brendan as he slowly walks away from the bed. Light slow music in background used. Spot light slowly dim on Brendan.

(Quick Blackout)

Scene VII

(Scene is set in Cerra's room. Room consists of a bed and a window.)

CERRA: I woke up three days later. I noticed the ring and asked my mother where it came from. She said the first time she noticed it was the night I came out of my coma. She didn't recall seeing it before.

It's been five months since the accident. Everything is somewhat back to normal. The nightmares are less frequent. The media finally stopped hounding us. Brendan was charged with impaired driving causing death and damaging civic property. Charges were dropped of course after his death. (Pause) I miss him.

I used to think people were nuts when they supposedly talked to ghosts and stuff. Not anymore. Sometimes there is an unusual warm breeze that blows in from this window. I can't help but wonder if it's him. (Opens the window) Good night Brendan.

(She crawls into bed. Turns out the lights, leaving a blue wash on stage. Brendan climbs through the window, sits on her bed. He then kisses her forehead and strokes her hair. Optional song softly in the background)

FINAL BLACKOUT.