

Youthwrite 2006



Anthology of student written one-act plays

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Youthwrite 2006*

Dear Readers,

It is with great pleasure that I present the 2006* Youthwrite Anthology.

The following plays are the winners of the 2006 B.C. Youthwrite Competition, held under the sponsorship of the Association of British Columbia Drama Educators. Eleven plays were submitted from schools around B.C. and adjudicated by two drama teachers (myself, and Mary Neidballa). Each student received written feedback regarding the quality of characters, story development, theme, dialogue and staging. Five plays were chosen and given an opportunity to perform at the B.C. Drama Festival, and have been published in this Anthology.

I would like to thank Linda Beaven, who founded this program in 1995, for her enduring spirit and consistent dedication to providing students with opportunities to express their creative selves. And, to Gordon Hamilton, who continued to advance the program from 2000 - 2004 .

The Association of B.C. Drama Educators feels that these plays are of interest to teachers and students around the province. These works could provide challenging and interesting scripts for further productions. We would like to remind you that these scripts are covered by copyright and the payment of royalties to the playwright must be secured prior to any production. Royalty information appears on the cover page of each script.

I think you will be impressed with the variety of talent these young writers possess. Enjoy!

Lana O'Brien
2005 - 2006 Youthwrite Coordinator

* Please note, following the 2006 winners, you will find the addition of "Translating Heidegger" by Emily Nixon, which was the only play selected as a winning script from the seven selections submitted in 2005.

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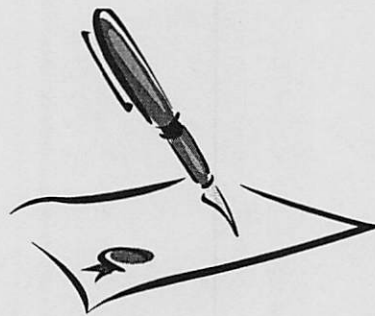
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Zack Haslam at 11807 Lakeshore Drive, Summerland B.C. V0H 1Z0. The fee for a single production of this play will be \$10.00

Elevator Music

A One Act Play
by Zack Haslam

Youthwrite 2006
Written November 2005
Sponsor Linda Beaven
Summerland Secondary School

Elevator Music -

Cast of Characters

- *Sanderson Doell* - A 40ish, balding, depressed, frumpy looking man with a job on the radio. Wears suits in faded brown tones. Thin and melancholy.
- *Arsene Carrere* - 20-something, she's unnecessarily beautiful and sweet. This is a cover for a thoughtful and conniving edge. She is not a bimbo.
- *Liev Marchant* - College undergraduate, working as an elevator operator. Matter-of-fact efficient manner, here to do his job, regardless of anything else.
- *Vincent Floyd* - Elderly war veteran, with a lazy eye and a cane. Decrepit, easily startled and although very clear headed, is of advanced age and thus quite easily distracted.

Setting

- *An Elevator* - A mid-sized platform in the center of the stage. It's in a fairly large hotel, though we see none of that on the stage. There are 'DING's when the elevator reaches the right floor, and Muzak* while traveling.
- *Muzak, depending on availability, should be poppy-lite versions of more sinister sounding songs. Not a large problem, since most Muzak is somewhat sinister sounding.*

[Scene 1 - Elevator]

SANDERSON (hereafter referred to as SAND) leisurely enters. He is intent on going down, and getting out of the hotel. There is a 'DING' as the elevator arrives, and SAND, with a self satisfied smile, enters. ARSENE (ARS hereafter) comes quickly on, waving to hold the elevator. She enters, SAND faces front and droops his shoulders, and she fixes her hair and adjusts her clothes.

ARS

Up please! 32nd floor.

SAND

[He gives her a pained look] I'm not an operator.

ARS

Maybe not, but I said please. [She smiles sweetly; SAND straightens himself and smirks a bit]

SAND

Ah, but I'm going down.

ARS

[Pouting] I said please.

SAND

I was on the elevator first; it'll go where I want it to go first. [Sighs heavily]

ARS

But the 32nd is only two floors up!

LIEV, the elevator operator, enters. He's dressed in a nice hotel uniform

SAND

Oh good, the operator. Excuse me...

LIEV

Good afternoon. We'll be stopping briefly on the 26th

SAND

But I...

LIEV

Now, now, official hotel business you know?

SAND

Great.

ARS

[A plea, she faces LIEV as best as she can and looks at him] I just need to go two floors up and if you could just pretty please just...just...

LIEV is ignoring her completely, faced forward, he presses the button to go down. SAND finds this funny enough to sniff at and ARS slumps back. The trio stands in silence for a few seconds. There is a 'DING' and LIEV steps off and out. ARS & SAND fold their arms and face each other.

ARS

Alright, quick, before he comes back.

SAND

Right, so down we go.

He reaches for the button, ARS smacks his hand away. He looks at her first bewildered, and then glares.

ARS

Except we're going up first. We're still much closer to the 32nd floor.

SAND

Listen you little...[doesn't finish his sentence]I'm very busy and I really do need to get...

LIEV re-enters, carrying a large trunk. He sets it down and faces forward

LIEV

Alright folks, going down. [SAND brightens up] To the third. [SAND is thwarted]

SAND

I need ground. I do. I need to feel the concrete; I need to feel it connect to the soil, to feel terra firma hold me up. I need to feel at one with Mother Earth in her cosmic wandering. I need, mister operator, to go down!

ARS is noticeably put off, LIEV is stoic and unflinching. MUZAK plays. After a few seconds there is a 'DING' and LIEV walks out and off again. SAND groans.

ARS

You know, a more reasonable man would just use the stairs.

SAND

I used to be a more reasonable man, what went wrong?

ARS

Apparently a lot. Just press ground already.

SAND

Should I?

ARS

Is it beyond you? Is it more than you can handle?

SAND

[Seriously considering it] Well, now I just don't know.

ARS

Christ. [She rolls her head backwards and reaches for the button as...]

LIEV re-enters, this time carrying two backpacks.

LIEV

Hold the lift please! To the 27th we go.

He enters the elevator, puts down the backpacks and faces front as usual as ARS sighs heavily.

Muzak plays as SAND uncomfortably shuffles over to ARS

SAND

Uhm. So, my names Sanderson, what's yours?

ARS

Arsene. My interests include candle lit dinners, long walks on the beach and not making small talk on elevators.

SAND

[Embarrassed] Well, since we've been riding together for a while now I just thought...

ARS

That's surprising.

'Ding' LIEV exits once more. This time the two wait in silence. ARS smiles triumphantly at being able to shut SAND up. SAND shuffles his feet uncomfortably and then pipes up.

SAND

So, these two people get into an elevator, and then...

ARS

A lame joke this time?

SAND

Well, I was going to come up with something a little poetic and profound, but if you want a joke... [ARS snorts derisively] Alright, yeah, it was a joke. Sheesh.

LIEV re-enters, carrying a covered cage. He faces front and presses another button, taking them to the 20th. The Muzak comes on and there is a 'DING' after a few seconds.

LIEV

Alright, sorry for the inconvenience, but you'll have to operate this lift for yourself, I've got things to do.

He rushes off and SAND regards the cargo littering the floor of the elevator suspiciously.

SAND

[He motions to ARS] Hey, isn't...

ARS

Finally, let's got to the 32nd already. It's still closest.

SAND

Not likely.

ARS

Do you like being stuck in this thing?

SAND

Not likely.

ARS

[Very sweetly] Then let me off and then you can go.

SAND

Not likely.

ARS

[Stomps her feet like a brat] Then what should we do?

SAND

Meet halfway, see what happens?

ARS

Beg pardon?

SAND

The 16th floor. Right in the middle of where we want to go.

ARS

Why... that would solve nothing!

SAND

It might. So far, any time we've been closer to either destination it's been used as justification to go that way. What'll happen when we meet in the middle?

ARS

Fine, we'll go to the 16th floor.

She hits the button, Muzak starts playing and in a few seconds there is a 'DING'.

ARS

Now what?

SAND

We decide. Convention would follow that I would allow you, a young lady, to get off first. Similarly, convention also follows that you would allow me, the first occupant to get off first. Now, any thoughts? [He's pleased at himself]

You're an idiot.

ARS

Noted.

SAND

At this point, an old man enters. It is VINCENT (hereafter VIN), and he gets on the elevator unassumingly.

Great.

ARS

[Inquisition style] Which way do YOU want to go!?

SAND

[Quite shaken] Which way should I go?

VIN

At this point, ARS & SAND exchange looks.

Uh...

ARS

Well...

SAND

Because, you see, I'm not really sure.

VIN

Which would you prefer, up or down?

SAND

Are those my only options?

VIN

When it really comes down to it, essentially, yes.

ARS

You'll be going down sooner or later anyways.

SAND

But why not go up first? It's better anyway. [VIN nods]

ARS

SAND

[Quickly and defensively] Hey! This isn't his choice or your choice, its mine.

ARS

No deal.

VIN

Just what exactly is going on here?

ARS

No questions please, we're trying to think.

SAND

Well, maybe, I mean, his input might be important.

VIN

Yeah?

SAND

It depends. Up or down?

VIN

What are the benefits of each?

ARS

The 32nd offers open air at the top of the building. Very nice, good view. Peaceful.

SAND

Ground level means I get to get out of this damn hotel.

VIN

Well, I meant for me... [SAND launches himself forward to over-dramatize]

SAND

Doesn't matter anymore. You wouldn't understand. Neither of you can understand. I've been stuck on this elevator for a while now, going through all these ups and downs and it's done nothing, nothing to improve my mood. If we do go to the top, there's nothing stopping me from just jumping right off!

He stands, quivering at the front of the elevator. VIN regards him nervously while ARS steps right up and points a finger right into his chest.

ARS
You're all talk! I've had enough of you!

SAND
Don't tempt me woman! [He points a finger right back, it hovers above her nose]

VIN
Ahem, I think I've chosen.

SAND & ARS both take notice and straighten themselves out. There is a long pause.

ARS
Well?

VIN
Beg pardon?

SAND & ARS
What have you decided?!

VIN
Oh, you're both loonies.

SAND
Just pick a direction old man.

VIN
[Defiantly] Up!

ARS presses the button with a smile and a hop. She sits on the trunk as the Muzak starts. Then it stops, but ARS shakes her head - it's not the right floor. 'DING!' and the familiar operator bounds in, carrying a huge garbage bag.

LIEV
Howdy folks. Oh, I see you've got some new company. [He shakes VIN's hand]

ARS
We were trying to get to the top...

LIEV

Hmm... might need to try again.

SAND

Now hold on, what if there was a reason we didn't make it to the top?

ARS

What kind of reason?

SAND

Like... a sign.

The other 3 occupants regard SAND with a variety of stares.

LIEV

A reason not to go to the top? A reason? Reason, you rogue, reason! And why not? Oh, whatever for, there's no reason not to. Nor, in fact, is there a reason to. Is there? I can reasonably assure you that such is not the case, within reason. It's beyond my abilities to reason whether or not there needs to be a reason. If so, for what reason is the reason not immediately apparent to a reasonable person trying to find reasons? It should be easiest to find if you're looking for it, and it's for that reason that I doubt there is in fact a reason. If not, then... let's chance it? It's up to you; I have some serious reasoning to do.

LIEV exits, VIN scratches his head. ARS gapes. SAND regards the growing pile of mysterious junk on the floor of the elevator.

VIN

That boy has some interesting emotional problems.

SAND

I'm wondering what's in all these bags...

ARS

[Doesn't react to SAND] So, old man, this is your one shot.

SAND

Hey, no pressure! [Appeals to VIN] Down's nice and easy.

VIN

Well, you're obviously both quite concerned about this... so, I suppose it'd be best if I just left it up to you.

SAND & ARS

Gah! [Any monosyllabic groan will do here]

VIN

I trust you'll keep me in mind while you choose.

SAND & ARS

Gah! [Any monosyllabic groan will do here]

VIN

Who am I to choose my destiny anyway?

Muzak starts playing (Preferably a version of one of the following - Gimme Shelter, Let it Bleed, Paint it Black, Sympathy for the Devil - any dark Rolling Stones song) All three occupants look around anxiously.

ARS

Which way are we going?

SAND

I don't know I didn't push anything.

ARS

Me neither

They look up and down ominously, where are they going?

VIN

The numbers aren't changing.

SAND

Open the door. [VIN makes a good attempt at it]

VIN

Nope

ARS

I should've taken the stairs, ay?

SAND

It's too late now.

VIN

It wouldn't have mattered anyways.

The Muzak shuts off abruptly, the stage dims, sound of elevator plummeting and screams as the light drops...

BLACKOUT

The Firey Hellrock of Pearlwood County



by Matthew Seeley

Caution: Professionals and Amateurs are hereby warned that "The Firey Hellrock of Pearlwood County" by Matthew Seeley is subject to royalty. It is protected under Copyright Law. Inquiries regarding performance rights and royalties should be directed to: Matthew Seeley at #207, 20237 54th Ave. Langley B.C. The fee for a single production of this play will be \$10.00

THE FIERY HELLROCK of *Pearlwood County*

Written by Matt Seeley

Characters.

Sheriff Cunningham – Josh Ennis
Mary Beth Masavwenar – Miquelle O' Connor
Professor McBride – Tushar Rawat
Doctor Inman – Garrett Chidley
Ozbert – Jordan Stewart
Father Masavwenar – Matthew Seeley
Delilah – Courtney O' Brien
The Mayor – Craig Rohla
The Traveller/The Demon – Brett Walton
Finn – Chris Wilton

SCENE 1: THE MAYOR.

THE MAYOR steps out to an appropriately placed spotlight.

THE MAYOR: Good evening. And welcome to Pearlwood County. I'm the Mayor here. I don't have a real name or at least not as far as you're concerned. I'm known only as the mayor. I might reveal my name to you as things progress but for now it's a secret on account of me being mysterious. Now here in 1885 the chance of getting one's town getting struck by a comet was slim to nil. Once every thousand years, however, a comet comes into collision with the earth. Said comet could wipe out civilization. But every once in a while a love is sparked between two people that is much larger than any asteroid. A kind of love we're about to witness between a well-to-do young sheriff and a bored minister's daughter. The fact of the matter is I'd be lying to you if I said that this story was about a hellrock alone. No, no, no it's about far more than that. It's about a chilling rivalry between a villainous doctor, and his cowboy counterpart. A grandfatherly old man of god. A zany idiot and an ingenious yet ignored Professor. This town divided must learn to battle their own demons and stop this hellrock from destroying the last shred of hope they have left. And now, without further ado... I give you "The Fiery Hellrock of Pearlwood County"

SCENE 2: CHURCH

Sitting in the church pews are **MARY BETH, INMAN, DELILAH, McBRIDE,** and **OZBERT.** **FATHER MASAVWENAR** steps up to his godly **PODIUM.**

MASAVWENAR: Good morning brethren and welcome to another glorious morning here in the church of Pearlwood County. I think I'll

begin my sermon, with Genesis. More commonly known as the 66th book of the bible.

McBRIDE: Oh, uh... Pardon me Father-

MASAVWENAR: What is It my son?

McBRIDE: I'm afraid you'll have to excuse me a bit early today, there's a meteor shower tonight and I think it could introduce mankind to the universe just outside our atmosphere and broaden our knowledge and understanding of science.

ALL LAUGH at the professor

INMAN: Oh professor that is positively irrevocable. There is nothing outside our atmosphere and if there were the earth would be doomed as we would all get sucked into the vortex.

McBRIDE: That- that didn't even make any sense.

MARY BETH: Professor I would love to join you at this meteor shower. I always admired people who have a certain thirst for knowledge that I credit myself to having.

MASAVWENAR: Stop humoring that small man, Mary Beth. And Professor, please do go on to your meteor shower and save the planet from "those little green men".

Once again, all laugh at the professor.

MARY BETH: You're awful daddy.

THE laughter dries up, and everyone is left in silence. DOCTOR INMAN stands up.

INMAN: On a completely different subject, I would like to address the man that seems to be heading directly for Pearlwood County. His name is Sheriff Cunningham and he is a very good friend of mine. He went to grammar school with me.

OZBERT: LIES! All lies! I seen this guy. A real hero, right. He's no friend to us, Doctor. He's a monster. He has hair on his face... like a wolf! Legs like tree trunks! Great sharp fangs like daggers they are.

McBRIDE: Science suggests that such a beast does not exist, Ozbert.

OZBERT: Huh? Oh yeah. You're probably right Professor McSciencenerd.

INMAN: I want to tell you all that he is very nice and I hope we can all welcome him into our fine community with open arms.

MASAVWENAR: I don't know Doctor.

INMAN: Ah, ah. Trust me. He's a sheriff. And he owns a gun!

Everyone is impressed.

MARY BETH: ooh, a gun. Lovely. Do you think if I paid this sheriff a shilling he would shoot down the concept of a young girl being forced into marriage?

INMAN: ... I don't know how to talk to you.

MASAVWENAR: Then it's settled. We'll have a welcoming ceremony tomorrow at noon for Dr. Inman's friend. Who knows it might be nice to have a temporary visitor.

INMAN: Oh, no it's very permanent.

MASAVWENAR: WHAT! Good heavens we haven't had a new citizen in forever. At least I haven't paid attention since Mary Beth was born eighteen years ago today.

MARY BETH: Wow, you remembered it's my birthday?

MASAVWENAR: No.

INMAN: If you welcome him he has promised to protect our cities most beloved establishments... Like the tavern.

OZBERT: Wooooh! Tavern!

MASAVWENAR: Well, doctor... I'm going to call your bluff. I will gladly welcome Sheriff Cunningham into our County.

INMAN: Thank you father.

MASAVWENAR: And as for you Professor, by all means go- God does not need you here for him to be all powerful.

OZBERT: He doesn't? Then why am I here?

MASAVWENAR: Ozbert! I am not some conjurer of cheap tricks! I am a man of god, and I command respect! Now sit you down. And go to your little meteor shower Professor, and keep writing fairy tales in your journal about how "the world is round..." and "The earth is not the centre of the universe" and things of that nature.

For a third time, Everyone laughs at the unfortunate professor. He storms out.

MARY BETH: You really are an awful man!

She leaves as well.

OZBERT: We are ruthless.

MASAVWENAR: I would normally proceed with our religious custom, but it's just such a beautiful day out I think under these circumstances I am going to go outside and roll around in the grass.

MASAVWENAR walks calmly out of the chapel. After a moment OZBERT leaves. Then after a few more beats, DOCTOR INMAN leaves.

SCENE 3: GRASSY KNOLL

PROFESSOR McBRIDE examines the stars through his locking glass. MARY BETH emerges onto the knoll.

MARY BETH: Good afternoon, Professor.

McBRIDE: Oh my, it's you Mary Beth. You gave me quite a start... Why I thought you were an apparition.

MARY BETH: Yes, I'm sure you did.

McBRIDE: Good evening to you to. I must say I'm glad there is someone else in Pearlwood who appreciates the thirst for knowledge that only naturally comes with gifted people.

MARY BETH: Professor, you think I'm gifted?

McBRIDE: I- I was talking about me. But hey- you're... you're real pretty... hey I'm sorry I didn't-

MARY BETH: *sighs* Don't worry about it, Professor McBride, you're not the first fellow in this county to shun me.

McBRIDE: I know just how you feel.

MARY BETH: No you don't.

McBRIDE: You exhaust yourself trying to prove your worth to these ignorants who are only "better" than you are because of their titles.

MARY BETH: Why, McBride you do understand.

McBRIDE: Yes. That Dr. Inman is the worst. He remains Pearlwood County's pride and Joy. I mean... I don't even think he's a real doctor. All he does is do bleedings. I swear he only knows one diagnosis. Leeches. It never works. He just likes leeches. Well...

I'll admit it works maybe... 4 % of the time... but that's a startling statistic.

MARY BETH: He's better than my dad. For a man of god he's pretty corrupt.

McBRIDE: Well, Mary Beth I've grown to accept that we live in a town full of idiots. Well, except you... and me. I've always admired your intelligence Mary Beth.

MARY BETH is flattered.

McBRIDE: *chuckles* I mean... Imagine that an intelligent woman. Next you'll be allowed to vote!

MARY BETH, depressed, sits down on a rock.

McBRIDE: I say that's odd. This comet doesn't appear to be with the meteor shower. Why it...

MARY BETH: What is it?

McBRIDE: Why... nothing I imagine.

MARY BETH: Professor?

FROM NOW ON in the scene McBride has a strange manner. It is disheveled, uneasy, and distant.

McBRIDE: Mary Beth, there appears to be a large blazing comet headed straight for Pearlwood County.

MARY BETH: What is it Professor?

McBRIDE: Mary Beth... simply put. It's an asteroid about 130 km in circumference...

MARY BETH: Well, professor... what does this mean?

McBRIDE: It means... we're all doomed.

MARY BETH: Professor! You have to figure out a way to stop it!

McBRIDE: I don't know if I can. All I know is that this is potentially the largest comet in recorded history... and if this isn't stopped... it will be the largest comet to ever strike the earth... no one will survive.

MARY BETH: Professor you're starting to scare me!

McBRIDE: The fear is what's keeping that comet alive! So you just snap out of it right this minute!

MARY BETH: I'm sorry. I. I don't know what to think!

McBRIDE: If we don't stop it Mary Beth, a whole lotta people are gonna die.

MARY BETH: Lose the college talk and give it to me straight. What the hell are you talking about?

McBRIDE: What am I talking about? What am I talking about?! This is what I'm talking about!

McBRIDE grabs MARY BETH, pulls her in close and kisses her. He stops. She slaps him, and then kisses him.

McBRIDE: Now... let's go save our town.

MARY BETH: Wait! How long do we have?

McBRIDE looks to his right where a fully stocked bookshelf is. He searches for the right book. He finds it, flips to a page. He looks up horrified. The book falls to the ground.

McBRIDE: We have forty- eight hours.

MARY BETH: Wait, professor, how will we stop this comet?

McBRIDE: *Running off; stops, looks back* Funny, I was about to ask you the same question.

They both leave the grassy knoll.

SCENE 4: CITY HALL

MASAVWENAR: Now, ever since 1802, the town of Pearlwood has had only a handful of important members. My daughter Mary Beth, who is arranged to Marry Dr. Inman. The menacing doctor Inman, a man who Mary Beth clearly does not love. Ozbert, the town drunk, who by the way is the funniest town drunk in the world. I've been to towns where the town drunk was just lonely and misunderstood.

OZBERT slips on a banana peel.

MASAVWENAR: Now we have to open our hearts and our minds to the new sheriff. Oh.. I almost forgot about the Professor. By the way, Where are my daughter and the Professor?

OZBERT: I think I know what they're doing... sitting under a shady tree- talking. Maybe one of them brought a picnic basket. Its'... it's a nice thought. Sounds like a pleasant little Sunday afternoon.

INMAN: Well that best not be the case. Father I'd be very disappointed if your daughter proved to be unfaithful to her marriage vow.

MASAVWENAR: Relax, Inman. My daughter dare not think for herself. I promise she will marry you in a week's time as planned and she won't have anything to say about it.

INMAN: Speak of the devil.

MARY BETH and McBRIDE enter.

MARY BETH: The Professor has some terrifying news!

McBRIDE: Listen to me very carefully everyone! I fear for our lives. I was viewing through my looking glass and I saw a very large comet, the size of the sun heading straight this way!

ALL LAUGH at the professor

McBRIDE: What are you laughing at? You're going to die! Where's the mayor?

MASAVWENAR: McBride, you know as well as I do that the mayor only comes out on the 23rd of each month.

INMAN: Positively rich! The Professor thinks he saw a scary comet. Not to worry, He's just having a hallucination. I'll help him I'm an unlicensed doctor. Professor. These comets you're seeing. What colour are they?

McBRIDE: They're only one and it's red.

INMAN: Red... hmmm. It's worse than I thought. These comets you are seeing are what the Spaniards call an "El Halluciacio" roughly translated as hallucination. You see these "el halluciacios", or hallucination's when faced with a severe amount of stress, which could be attributed to a loss of exhibition due to extreme amounts of sadness.

McBRIDE: ... Has any one of your patients ever lived?

INMAN: ...

McBRIDE: Look everyone; you need to trust me on this. I know it's nice to listen to Dr. Inman, but if you really think about it he's very seldom right about anything. Remember when Old Mr. Jenkins started losing skin... and I suggested we take him to the hospital in the next town over? And you all chose to leave him with Dr. Inman and he put him in a bathtub full of leeches. Mr. Jenkins died that day and none of you admitted your mistake.

MASAVWENAR: McBride! Are you suggesting that we murdered old Mr. Jenkins?

McBRIDE: No I-

INMAN: I've heard enough! I'm sick of you're naysay and propaganda. Mr. Jenkins was dead before he was even born.

McBRIDE: That's not true! That's not possible!

MASAVWENAR: Hmmm. I'm going to go ahead and believe Dr. Inman here, McBride.

McBRIDE: He was not dead before he was born! The doctor put him in a bath of bloodsucking aquatic swamp creatures!

INMAN: Hey... don't be hard on the leeches. They do astounding work. In fact I should give my doctors coat and stethoscope to the leeches because they're the real doctors... and furthermore-

OZBERT: *Pointing offstage* Look... It's the new sheriff!

INMAN: Now remember. This is a very good friend of mine and nothing could tear us apart. Except for perhaps a woman. So if you embarrass me, no more free bleedings. And if you want to see his gun what do we say... Ozbert?

OZBERT: *Monotonously* Please, Mr. Sheriff Cunningham, Sir, Please may I see your gun please, sir.

INMAN: Good lad.

OZBERT: I hate you.

THE SHERIFF ENTERS on foot to City Hall. He is greeted by gasps of admiration.

CUNNINGHAM: Good morning everybody-

SHERIFF CUNNINGHAM collapses to the floor. **EVERYONE** gasps. Then silence falls among the crowd. **DR. INMAN** steps forward and feels for **CUNNINGHAM's** pulse. **DR. INMAN** leans over **SHERIFF CUNNINGHAM**.

INMAN: I think he's still breathing.

INMAN goes very close to **CUNNINGHAM** to hear his breathing. **CUNNINGHAM** jolts and scares **INMAN**. They both start to laugh. **INMAN** helps **CUNNINGHAM** up. They start throwing fake punches at eachother then they hug.

INMAN: Ah... How are you old friend?

CUNNINGHAM: I'm doing just fine. I'm more worried about you... You don't have as much fight in you as you used to..

INMAN: Ahhhh.

MASAVWENAR: Now, Doctor don't be rude... Introduce us to your friend.

INMAN: Of course, my apologies everyone. This is Sheriff Cunningham. Sheriff, this is Father Masavwenar, Mary Beth- My future wife you know. Ozbert, and.. my Niece Delilah is at home resting. And that's everyone I believe.

CUNNINGHAM: I can't wait to get to know each and every one of you.

McBRIDE: ... And I'm Professor McBride.

INMAN: Oh I'm sorry McBride... I forgot you existed.

CUNNINGHAM: Good to meet you, Professor.

DELILAH comes out of a nearby building.

DELILAH: What's the commotion, Uncle?

INMAN: Delilah, I thought I told you to stay in, you'll catch a deathly cold.

DELILAH: It's spring Uncle.

INMAN: I don't care... now go home and drink some Cod Liver Oil.

DELILAH: *Notices Sheriff Cunningham* Who are you?

INMAN: Delilah... This is Uncle Inman's old friend, Sheriff Cunningham.

DELILAH: It's a pleasure to meet you...

CUNNINGHAM: The pleasure's all mine little lady.

DELILAH: *Giggles* Oh Sheriff...

INMAN: So that's it... I think you've met everybody.

MASAVWENAR: Well don't be shy young lad... Come up and say a few words!

Everyone claps. CUNNINGHAM laughs shyly. OZBERT pushes him up on stage.

CUNNINGHAM: Well... I, this is exciting. I can't wait to bring order and justice to this fine community. I want you all to feel safe when I'm Sheriff in this town. I want you all to sleep and dream dreams of throwing skipping stones across a lake. I will protect our fine establishments... like the tavern.

OZBERT: He said Tavern! I'm going to get drunk!

OZBERT leaves.

CUNNINGHAM: Well... what I'm saying is... I'd be honored if... you'd all let me be your humble Sheriff.

CROWD: Awww. *Claps*

McBRIDE: Sheriff.

CUNNINGHAM: Hello, friend.

McBRIDE: My name is Professor McBride, I must speak with you-

MASAVWENAR: Three cheers for the new sheriff!

No one does or says anything.

MASAVWENAR: Wonderful!

McBRIDE: Father, I need to speak with the sheriff-

CUNNINGHAM: You know I've been traveling so long... I'm parched. I wouldn't mind wetting my whistle at the local saloon.

MASAVWENAR: You heard him everyone... let's be off to the saloon!

CROWD separates and disappears. DR. INMAN walks up to SHERIFF CUNNINGHAM.

INMAN: Yes, sir, sheriff. I'm sure you'll do just fine.

SCENE 5: TAVERN *CRAZY opening*

SHERIFF CUNNINGHAM and DOCTOR INMAN enter the Tavern to see townsfolk in there. JONESY is behind the bar. Others are just sitting at tables; Most are fighting. OZBERT is sitting at the bar. MARY BETH sits at a table by herself.

INMAN: *Laughing* Oh, Sheriff that is positively rich, good one.

McBRIDE: Pardon me, Sheriff. I have dire news to share with you.

INMAN: Now McBride, Cunningham cares not for such matters. So tell me, How were your travels?

CUNNINGHAM: I'll tell you Doctor. The vast distances I had to travel... they were no easy feat. I fought many a night creature. I'm just looking for a nice place to settle down right now.

INMAN: So you do plan to stay for a while.

CUNNINGHAM I'm certainly hoping to. *Sees MARY BETH* Who is that, Doctor Inman?

INMAN: *Turns away* That's Mary Beth Masavwenar... The preachers daughter. She and I are set to marry.

McBRIDE: Cunningham! ... CUNNINGHAM

CUNNINGHAM, unhearing of McBRIDE, heads towards MARY BETH

CUNNINGHAM: Excuse me...

MARY BETH instantly falls in love, just like the Sheriff did moments ago.

CUNNINGHAM: May I join you, Miss Masavwenar?

MARY BETH: Uhh... Yeah- sure please-- yes.

CUNNINGHAM: Thank you.

CUNNINGHAM sits down.

INMAN: Ahh, yes I'm quite excited to enter into matrimony. Now Cunningham- *Turns around* ... Cunningham?

FINN bursts in the saloon door. He heads straight for OZBERT

FINN: You've been sneaking sweets!

OZBERT nods his head "no"

FINN: Yes you have! Show me your hand.

OZBERT shows FINN his palm; it is empty.

FINN: Your other hand!

OZBERT shows FINN his other hand.

FINN: You sneak! Look, there's chocolate all over your mouth. You've been sneaking sweets I know this to be true!

OZBERT: *Opening his mouth; A piece of candy falls out* No I haven't!

INMAN: Who are you?

FINN: I'm Finn the travelling salesman!

OZBERT: Sell this! Stop yelling at Ozbert!

FINN: I came to Pearlwood because this is the only town within a hundred miles I haven't visited and subsequently... been blacklisted from... So what do I find! He's been sneaking sweets.

OZBERT: You don't even know who I am!

FINN: Town drunk or something?

OZBERT: I say we let him stay... He's wise.

MARY BETH: So... The new Sheriff in town. Causing quite a stir aren't you?

CUNNINGHAM: I don't know what all the commotion's about.

MARY BETH: Now, don't be so modest. These people are so boring... When they see a young, handsome, well-to-do young Sheriff they're bound to go insane.

CUNNINGHAM: *Laughs* Well, I don't know about-

MARY BETH: Oh I'm sorry-- did I offend you?

CUNNINGHAM: No, no, of course not.

MARY BETH: Oh I've made a fool of myself already-

CUNNINGHAM: So you're going to marry the doctor?

MARY BETH: Yes. And if I don't I get publicly hanged.

CUNNINGHAM laughs

MARY BETH: My father showed me the noose.

CUNNINGHAM: Oh... Well, you know Dr. Inman is a very nice man.

MARY BETH: That's not true.

CUNNINGHAM: You're right.... but he's funny.

MARY BETH: That's also not true.

CUNNINGHAM: Well, tell Father Masavwenar you refuse to marry Inman!

MARY BETH: Are you kidding? A woman with a voice?

CUNNINGHAM: I don't think you give the men of this town enough credit.

McBRIDE runs up.

McBRIDE: CUNNINGHAM! It is Of the utmost importance-

OZBERT runs up and Punches McBRIDE who collapses.

OZBERT: Good day sir, my name is Ozbert, Pearlwood's most cunning member! I say Sheriff, what are you doing at this table all by your lonesome?

MARY BETH: Excuse me!?

OZBERT: Oh... Hello Mary Beth.

CUNNINGHAM: How do you do Ozbert?

OZBERT: Please... Please, Ozbert. Call me Ozbert. Anyways just wanted to give you my warmest welcome.

CUNNINGHAM: Thank you Ozbert.

OZBERT: So, what were you two talking about? Hmm? Don't stop on account of me. Please talk as if I weren't drunk.

MARY BETH: Very well- Sheriff. Do you enjoy daffodils?

CUNNINGHAM: Not really, no.

OZBERT: *Examining Pocket watch.* Well I'd best be on my way to returning this pocket watch to it's rightful owner.

Leaves and goes to DR. INMAN at the bar.

INMAN: Well?

OZBERT: Well what?!

INMAN: Dammit, Ozbert, what happened?

OZBERT: I went up. They were talking about Daffodils.

INMAN: Daffodils?

OZBERT: You heard me Doctor.

INMAN: *Disbelief* Daffodils...

OZBERT: Beautiful flowers.... Daffodils.

DELILAH Helps **PROFESSOR McBRIDE** up from the ground and Takes him to sit at the bar leaning over his Shirley Temple. **DELILAH** sits next to him.

DELILAH: You're looking blue, partner.

McBRIDE: I am "blue" Delilah.

DELILAH: Awww. Cheer up. Be happy about the arrival of our guest.

McBRIDE: What?

DELILAH: *Looks admiringly at the Sheriff* The new Sheriff.

McBRIDE: Oh yes. He's really cool I guess.

DELILAH: You're more of a downer than usual, Proffessor. What's wrong?

McBRIDE: We're all going to die in 48-- 47 hours.

DELILAH: Really... Wow that's pretty scary. How are we all gonna die?

McBRIDE: There is a large blazing comet speeding directly towards the earth right now. It's 130 km in circumfrence, you know. And you know what the scariest part of this whole situation is? Nobody in this town cares except for me and Mary Be-

Looks at her laughing at a joke CUNNINGHAM told.

McBRIDE: Nobody cares except for me. So that. Delilah, is why I am feeling blue.

DELILAH: Well that's quite a mouthful isn't it Professor? But I've always found you to be the cleverest lad I know.

McBRIDE: Gee.... really, Delilah?

DELILAH: You don't give yourself enough credit, McBride... See ya around.

DELILAH walks away.

McBRIDE: Careful McBride. She's not interested in you and you're not interested in her. You don't need dames... You got your books. The characters in your fiction understand you.

McBRIDE notices a chance to speak to **CUNNINGHAM**

CUT TO: CUNNINGHAM and MARY BETH still at the table.

MARY BETH: Ahhh. I haven't laughed in a while Sheriff.

CUNNINGHAM: Hm. It's important to laugh. A wise young TRAVELLER told me once. "Why were we put here?" The answer... quite simply to laugh and live and... love.

MARY BETH: You seem to know a lot about life.

CUNNINGHAM: I should. I've lived it.

McBRIDE: Sheriff! Comet! Death!

MASAVWENAR INTERRUPTS

MASAVWENAR: Sheriff! How are you?

CUNNINGHAM: Fine, Father.

MASAVWENAR: Wonderful! I certainly hope that you felt warmly recieved.

CUNNINGHAM: Certainly.

MASAVWENAR: Yes. I like to pride myself in the way that our humble town welcomes visitors. Cunningham, follow me. I'm buying you a drink.

CUNNINGHAM: Okay.

MASAVWENAR leaves. CUNNINGHAM follows; turns back.

CUNNINGHAM: Any good places for two people to talk alone without any interruption?

MARY BETH: Uhhh. The only place I can think of is the River Wynde.

CUNNINGHAM: Where's that?

MARY BETH: It's the exact centre of Pearlwood County.

CUNNINGHAM: Let's go there some time, Mary Beth.

SCENE 5: RIVER WYNDE

SHERIFF CUNNINGHAM sits on the bank in thought as FATHER MASAVWENAR walks up. They talk to each other. But they don't look at each other. They look into the River.

MASAVWENAR: The River Wynde... The only water source for miles

you know. This is the spot where Pearlwood was founded.

CUNNINGHAM: It's beautiful.

MASAVWENAR: You don't mind if I join you do you?

CUNNINGHAM: I could use the company.

The Sheriff removes his hat from beside him to make room for MASAVWENAR to sit.

MASAVWENAR: Finding it hard to sleep, son?

CUNNINGHAM: No more than usual. Dark have been my dreams of late.

MASAVWENAR: I have not seen my daughter smile in a very long time. She was only a girl when her brother was found dead, cut down by orcs. She watched helplessly as her mother succumbed to grief. And she was left alone...doomed to wait upon an old man. A priest who should have loved her as a father....This was her favorite place to come when she was a child.This River has been the center of this wonderful town for years. The trees never seem to lose their leaves. One day every hundred years the river freezes. And one hundred years ago tonight that very ice was used to forge "The Sword Of Pearlwood's king".

CUNNINGHAM: Where is this sword now?

MASAVWENAR: It's been lost for generations. Pearlwood has been a peaceful place anyhow. No need for swords or kings, not my Pearlwood. To most, this river is the essence of Pearlwood County. Tranquil, but with a pinch of excitement. Never too cold, but not exactly warm either.

He has a twinkle in his eye as well as a smile on his face

MASAVWENAR: Many a night. I find myself sitting at this river asking myself where I want to be and why I want to be there.

CUNNINGHAM: And what do you answer yourself?

MASAVWENAR: Here of course. I'm a simple man and I couldn't love my town more. I wouldn't trade it for the world.... How about you son, Where's your home?

CUNNINGHAM: I was hoping... it would be here.

MASAVWENAR smiles.

MASAVWENAR: Try and get some sleep son.

MASAVWENAR pats CUNNINGHAM on the back and walks away. He stops.

MASAVWENAR: I predict great things in your future at Pearlwood, young sheriff... See you at tomorrow night's party.

MASAVWENAR walks away.

CUNNINGHAM: I only hope I can live up to those expectations, Father.

SHERIFF CUNNINGHAM gleams the hint of a grin, and continues to look in the water. McBRIDE runs up.

McBRIDE: Cunni-

He is then attacked by an unidentifiable monster of some sort and taken offstage.

SCENE 6: CHURCH

The town sits in the seats. SHERIFF CUNNINGHAM sits down by MARY BETH.

CUNNINGHAM: Uhh, Mary Beth may I share Hymnbooks with you? The one I have doesn't seem to be attached to a beautiful woman.

MASAVWENAR approaches the podium.

MASAVWENAR: Let's begin today's sermon with me describing what I had for Breakfast.

FINN: But I have an announcement to make!

MASAVWENAR: ... My breakfast was wonderful, Finn. Can your announcement wait?

FINN: It would appear that welcoming parties for EHS, Extremely handsome Sheriffs- *All laugh* Are all the rage these days. So I'm holding one at my pool early this evening.

CUNNINGHAM: Sorry Finn, but I can't I have a rendezvous with The preacher's daughter.

MASAVWENAR: But... Cunningham, surely you understand that I have given Mary Beth's hand to my friend. Not just any man she falls in love with.

CUNNINGHAM: Well, Father, I assure you my intentions are most honorable. She's a nice young woman who I'd like to escort down to the river tonight for an evening of playful banter.

OZBERT: Not the only playful thing going on between those two!

All look at him.

OZBERT: I think I made that joke earlier... No that was between Mary Beth and McBride... Hmm. I must really have it out for Mary Beth. *Searches through pockets* What's this? A flask. Oops. How'd this get in here? Ha Ha Ha. I'll dispose of this immediately.

OZBERT gets up and leaves but on his way out he says:

OZBERT: Idiots, I'm actually going to drink this.

OZBERT leaves

MARY BETH: I've got errands to run, see you tonight Sheriff.

CUNNINGHAM: You can bet on it.

MARY BETH LEAVES

CUNNINGHAM: That reminds me I need to go wittle a new flute.

CUNNINGHAM leaves.

MASAVWENAR: Why do all the important people leave before Church actually starts?

SCENE 7: GRASSY KNOLL

McBRIDE goes up with his telescope. CUNNINGHAM sits, back against a tree, wittling a flute. Without looking up he says:

CUNNINGHAM: How ya doing, Professor?

McBRIDE: I.. uh... I'm a little frazzled. How about yourself?

CUNNINGHAM: Well, Professor, I'll be frank with ya. I'm just great. I got a date with the most beautiful girl in the world. The young Miss Mary Beth Masavwenar.

McBRIDE: Mary Beth? Really. You realize of course... Never mind.

CUNNINGHAM: *Stands up* Tell me.

McBRIDE: She's... she's to marry the doctor.

CUNNINGHAM: Ahhh my brain tells me that I should stop right here right now. It's telling me to stop being such a *laughs* darn romantic fool. It's telling me to let my friend have the girl. Stay in my place... not cause an upset. But my heart... My goddamn heart's telling me to take her... Well, McBride, I've been listening to my brain for my whole life... I think it's time to give my heart a turn... Anyways why are you frazzled?

McBRIDE: Wh- What?

CUNNINGHAM: You said you were frazzled... why?

McBRIDE: Well, I have an IQ of 178, and a degree in old-timey science. Yet, still no one takes me seriously. They all listen to Doctor Inman. And now, Now... There is a large blazing comet headed straight for our fair county. And nobody, when it is most important, NOBODY believes me. Gracious I bet you don't even believe me..

CUNNINGHAM: A comet eh? ... Yeah I saw it.

McBRIDE: Really?

CUNNINGHAM: Well sure. I was riding the beaten path and I saw it and said "That is probably a comet" And look now I have verification.

McBRIDE: YES! This is wonderful news! The town will believe you, they love you! Hurry we must tell them all of the comet. Then... then they'll start listening to me. I'll be a hero. I'll be respected. Pearlwood County has hope yet. You know, if we pair up Sheriff Cunningham, I think we can vanquish this hellrock.

CUNNINGHAM: I think so too. Partners?

McBRIDE: Partners. Let's go warn a city.

SCENE 8: CHURCH

Everyone is sitting around, bored SANS MARY BETH, CUNNINGHAM and McBRIDE. Once again, MASAVWENAR Is at his podium, bored. CUNNINGHAM and McBRIDE burst through the CHURCH doors.

MASAVWENAR: Ahh, Sheriff Cunningham, Professor McBride what a pleasant surprise. Glad you could DROP IN on our... religious custom. Ok Let's hop to it.

McBRIDE: The Good Book is having a bad day, Masavwenar... no time for sermons. The Sheriff has something to tell you.

FINN: Well then don't hesitate to say it!

CUNNINGAM: Thank you, Finn, The things that the Professor has been saying about a comet and a potential doomsday...

MASAVWENAR: Oh yes, preposterous isn't it?

CUNNINGHAM: They are true.

CROWD has a
n uproar. When it settles down. OZBERT jumps up.

OZBERT: Now see here!

FINN: No Ozbert.

OZBERT: I'm talking to my friends.

FINN: Ozbert, give me that flask.

OZBERT: Finn, you're embarrassing me!

FINN: You're embarrassing yourself.

OZBERT sits.

CUNNINGHAM: It's true, I saw it with my own two eyes. It's real all right. It's huge and on fire.

OZBERT: I'll show you something huge and on fire!

Dead silence. FINN looks at OZBERT

OZBERT: I'm sorry.

FINN: Don't apologize to me, apologize to yourself, apologize to all the people you offended, and apologize to God.

OZBERT: ... I'll do it later.

McBRIDE: DO YOU SEE! Do you see what I've been telling you people! The veiling shadow of cloud in the east takes shape. Now you have a second opinion. Now I'm telling you, If we don't leave, immediately, and invent some sort of flying ... craft that can travel from continent to continent in mere hours, immediately, then we will all die!

Crowd gets upset.

INMAN: I'm going to die? But- Now I won't be able to find the cure for cancer... I'm pretty sure it's leeches, but I must know for certain.

OZBERT: And I'm going to die without solving the mystery of the wicked windmill.

MASAVWENAR: Silence! Quiet! All of you, listen. Sheriff. In the hours you've been here you haven't led me wrong once. Therefore, we as a town will all adopt Professor McBride's theory of this doomsday. We will all gather. We will all prevail. We must stop this comet. And we will be led... by these two men! These two heroes.

McBRIDE: You, can't stop a comet really though.

MASAVWENAR: I knew we couldn't believe in you! Everyone, to the bomb shelter we haven't created yet! Where we will proceed in shielding our bodies with our arms.

Everyone heads toward the bomb shelter that hasn't been created yet. McBRIDE gets up on something, maybe a rock!

McBRIDE: Everybody! Stay with me... I'll do my best. I'm gonna keep trying with this comet and I'll have my new partner by my side.

MASAVWENAR: Please save us you two.

OZBERT: What if you fail?

CUNNINGHAM: We won't...

OZBERT: How do you know?

CUNNINGHAM: We won't because... *Looks at Mary Beth* We can't.

McBRIDE: Ok everyone. Don't panic. Stay inside as much as possible. Go to church every morning and assume your regular life patterns. I don't know how and I don't know if it's even possible but we will stop this comet.

All cheer and scatter. DELILAH walks up to McBRIDE

DELILAH: I don't know if this will help, but... I don't want the world to end without-Well...

She kisses him on the cheek.

DELILAH: Good bye professor.

SCENE 9: MASAVWENAR RESIDENCE

FATHER MASAVWENAR is sitting in his chair reading an old tome.

MARY BETH runs in Via door.

MARY BETH: Hi Daddy!

MASAVWENAR: Good afternoon/Early afternoon sweetheart.

She runs upstairs for a few seconds. Then she runs down.

MARY BETH: Bye Daddy!

MASAVWENAR: Wait! Where are you going?

MARY BETH: Daddy... let's not do this.

MASAVWENAR: Unless it's Dr. Inman... you will not go out dressed like that to see anyone.

MARY BETH: Why no one except Dr. Inman. Why do you consider me one of his possessions?

MASAVWENAR: Because! ... He's my friend.

MARY BETH: He's creepy and he's older than I am! And my friends hate him.

MASAVWENAR: ... What do you do with that Sheriff?

MARY BETH: What do I do?? I'll tell you what I do ... I live my life... like a human. Like a woman. A woman that needs a man, a real man like Sheriff Cunningham. Not this lousy unlicensed villain doctor.

MASAVWENAR: And another thing is, that don't think I don't notice you making eyes at the Sheriff. I like him. But that is not an admission for you to see him. He will remain your local Sheriff who you occasionally exchange banter with. Do you hear me! No daughter of mine will EVER... EVER marry someone she chooses.

MARY BETH looks destroyed.

MASAVWENAR: Now... I shall give you a plan for tonight. Sit on my lap, and wipe the sweat from my fevered brow. Then prepare for me a goblet of mead, a steaming pot of Broth and a stock of salted pork. Then comb my beard that has silvered from the ravages of time and wisdom.

MARY BETH: I... I...

MASAVWENAR: What?

MARY BETH: I love him! I love him and there's nothing you can do about it! Now if you'll excuse me, I have a rendezvous with Sheriff Cunningham. He makes me smile dad. Something you or Dr. Leeches could never do.

MASAVWENAR: *Grabs MARY BETH* Listen to me. You are my daughter. You will obey my rule. You will never see Sheriff Cunningham ever again.

MARY BETH: Watch me.

She starts to run out.

MASAVWENAR: Mary Beth... If you love him so much answer this... What's his first name?

MARY BETH: You don't give me enough credit... He doesn't have one.

MARY BETH RUNS OUT. MASAVWENAR sits in his chair, depressed. A shadow is cast over him. It belongs to INMAN

INMAN: I wish you a good evening upon beckoning for your daughter.

MASAVWENAR: *Gasps* Oh My- Oh, Dr. Inman, it's only you. I'll prepare you a warm mug of apple cider.

INMAN: Oh I wouldn't want to be a bother.

MASAVWENAR: Nonsense, everyone enjoys a warm evening treat. Apple, apple, apple. Cider, cider, cider. Ho hum, rum drum.

INMAN is carrying a single Rose and A very dark red Heart shaped box of chocolates. Something is different about him.. He is wearing a single black glove on his right hand.

MASAVWENAR: Oh, are those for Mary Beth?

INMAN: Hm? No they're for me. Tell me, Father. Where is she?

MASAVWENAR: Believe me young Man, you don't want me to tell you.

MASAVWENAR moves to get up. INMAN steps in front of him quickly. MASAVWENAR falls back in his chair.

INMAN: She's with him. Isn't she? She ran off with Sheriff... Cunningham.

MASAVWENAR: She did..

INMAN turns away, MASAVWENAR speaks in the background.

MASAVWENAR: I apologize Doctor. I was all wrong about him it would seem. This hero turned out to be a right cad. There's no question about it You are the man for my daughter. She needs you, I can see it. She resists, but she won't if I have anything to say about it. Oh Doctor I don't know what to do about my daughters reluctance.

INMAN Stops looking mad and composes himself.

INMAN: Yes... The girl... I wouldn't fret Father. There is no sense worrying.

MASAVWENAR: Perhaps you're right.

INMAN: Of course. Under these certain circumstances... Precautions could be taken.

MASAVWENAR: Precautions?

INMAN: Banishment... Masavwenar... When it comes to a certain Rebel Sheriff. I fear it is our only option.

MASAVWENAR: I like him, Doctor.

INMAN: Oh... I know you do. *Louder* The entire county fell in love with the Sheriff in... How long was it? Ahh yes, half a day.
Quieter It only took me 22 years.

MASAVWENAR: You're right... I will inform the Mayor first thing tomorrow Morning about the Sheriff's banishment. But for now, I must go get my daughter and—

DR. INMAN stops him.

INMAN

You look tired, Father. Maybe what you need is a good night's rest. Good Night Father.

MASAVWENAR

Good night... *On his way upstairs* God bless us.

INMAN, now by himself, walks over to a picture of MARY BETH and gently touches it with his gloved hand and lets his finger slide down the picture.

INMAN: How foolish... you silly girl. How very very foolish. You want, of course, what you may never have. A dirty, lowlife, rogue Sheriff. A vile simpleton. But when a well read, well to do Doctor whose made a name for himself is offered to you, you refuse. You will be my eternal bride, my darling... and I will be the one to kill your Lover. Hmph. A Sheriff.

DOCTOR INMAN walks over to a picture of SHERIFF CUNNINGHAM.

INMAN: A sheriff... A hero... A saviour... You may be all of those things but a true friend you are not. I could have given you everything. Money, women... reputation for god's sake. But you wanted what was mine. And now I shall not give you mercy. It is war from this point forward. We are enemies. Make no mistake, Sheriff. The.. girl... is... MINE!

He picks up his rose and bites a pedal off. Then he throws down the picture of CUNNINGHAM which shatters.

SCENE 10: THE RIVER WYNDE

MARY BETH, holding SHERIFF CUNNINGHAM's hand guides him to the River Wynde, The majestic river which runs through an elysian field.

MARY BETH: This is my favorite place to come in the entire world.

CUNNINGHAM: I get some good thinking done here myself.

MARY BETH: Tell me, Cunningham... What do you think about?

CUNNINGHAM: How lucky I am to have found this county. And... the people in it.

MARY BETH: Oh Sheriff. I... haven't known you long but... I just know this is the beginning of something magical.

CUNNINGHAM: *Shyly* Well maybe I - Ha ha .. I dunno.

MARY BETH: Well, I mean... maybe... you could join me at my house sometimes to play Scrabble is all I mean.

CUNNINGHAM: Ah, Scrabble. Fun game. You know I was playing with my friend one time and I put down "ship-wrecked" and he said it didn't count because it was hyphenated. Turns out he was right.

MARY BETH: Can I tell you something Sheriff?

CUNNINGHAM picks a flower off the ground and puts it on MARY BETH's heart.

CUNNINGHAM: Orchids, ever have they grown on the tombs of my forebears. You look at that, and that will remind you that you can always tell me anything.

CU of MARY BETH. If she wasn't completely in love with this man yet, she is now.

MARY BETH: I ... I am dreading my union with the doctor. I don't love him. I Love- Well let's just say my heart belongs to another. Oh Sheriff, Please make this awful wedding go away!!

CUNNINGHAM: Mary Beth, I'll save you from anything. If you get tied to train tracks, I'll be there to untie em. If you are hanging on the edge of a cliff I'll be there to pull you up. If You get kidnapped by a dragon, Twill be I to slay the dragon... But I'm sorry. I can't save you from this.

MARY BETH: Oh I know... I just think if someone could It would be you.

CUNNINGHAM: Well- Heh. Goodness, back in the day I used to be a smooth operater with the ladies... but now I... don't know what to Say.

MARY BETH: You don't have to say anything... Let's just enjoy this

beautiful night.

CUNNINGHAM: Mary Beth, I've seen true beauty, it lies not in this night... But I see it only in your eyes.

MARY BETH: Cunningham... Kiss me!

They share a magical kiss.!

MARY BETH: Sheriff Cunningham, I love you... I don't want to marry Inman.

CUNNINGHAM: Well, Mary Beth... I- I don't know what to do about Doctor Inman. But, Let me just show you-

CUNNINGHAM lifts his hat and pulls out a small wooden box. He reveals a beautiful engagement ring.

CUNNINGHAM: I got this when I was a boy. My grandmother, on her deathbed, gave it to me. She said that The day I should find the love of my life I could give this to her and she would love me back. She promised me. Do you, Mary Beth? Do you love me?

MARY BETH: Sheriff. I've never fallen in love with a man. I knew that one day the right one would come along and I've been waiting my entire life. And I was right. I love you.

CUNNINGHAM: You'll marry me?

MARY BETH: I will. Let's go home. And tomorrow we'll tell them our joyous news.

SCENE 11: CITY HALL

Everybody but the two lovebirds is standing looking angry and muttering. MARY BETH and CUNNINGHAM run in hand in hand. MARY BETH steps up on what is now known as the ANNOUNCEMENT ROCK.

MARY BETH: Everybody! Everybody, please listen. I stand before you with Sheriff Cunningham on what has been dubbed the announcement rock. I want to proclaim to all of you... my love for the Sheriff. And Also to tell you he has proposed to me at the River Wynde.

Glorious happy murmers from the crowd accompanied by a smattering of applause.

MARY BETH: We will wed as soon as possible. Tonight at the River Wynde!

EVERYONE Bursts into cheers and now the applause is full-blown. MARY BETH pulls CUNNINGHAM closer and kisses him on the cheek. CUNNINGHAM's shy side shines through and he blushes.

MASAVWENAR: Mary Beth! You will not wed this... boy! Your hand belongs to Doctor Inman!

A hush falls on the crowd. One or two generalities such as "What about Inman" or "Oh I forgot about him" are heard. A crowd of villagers move out of the way to reveal DOCTOR INMAN polishing a bright red apple with a silk black handkerchief. He takes a bite of the apple, savours it... then lets it slide out of his hand.

INMAN: "What about the good Doctor Inman..." Hm. So good of my town to harbour concern. Crushed emotions. Hurt feelings, broken vows and a heart smashed to pieces- Nothing to fret about I assure you. Worry not for I have long since learned not to trust the cowardly rats of this town...

FINN: Surely you're not referring to Finn as a rat.

Everyone starts yelling obscenities at INMAN and trying to corner him. He merely steps on the ANNOUNCEMENT ROCK and composes himself.

INMAN: So quick all of you are to turn on the man that saves your lives day after day. The man that looks after your children... The man that Grows fresh fruit for every one of your brunches. Tsk Tsk. Such betrayal... Surely you shouldn't let yourselves be seen like that in front of the Mayor.. Oh! Speaking of the Mayor. It's the 23rd of May isn't it! He's due for a visit. Let's see what Our beloved Mayor has to say about this union.

As if INMAN had this rehearsed. The doors of CITY all burst open to reveal the MAYOR. He walks into town. Citizens jumping out of his way.

THE MAYOR: Hello Pearlwood. My town.

MASAVWENAR is clearly intimidated by this man.

MASAVWENAR: Why hello there, Mayor, sir. I'll tell you it is quite an honor to-

THE MAYOR: What is this about a wedding?

INMAN: Well! Mary Beth was just discussing how she and The Sheriff are going to marry.

THE MAYOR: I thought she was to marry you, Doctor.

INMAN: *Quietly, only to Mayor* It would appear the young lady is fickle. She's one to string a man's heart along, only to break it and watch the pieces hit the ground. *Turns around* Sheriff, I wish you all the best in keeping your eye on this one.

CUNNINGHAM: Don't do this Inman.

INMAN: We'll always have the memories... Sheriff.

MASAVWENAR: Mary Beth I order you to Marry the Doctor!

MARY BETH: Now don't you start-

All of Pearlwood County goes insane. There on the point of a riot with their arguing when.

MCBRIDE: HEY!

All fall silent.

MCBRIDE: Yeah! Yeah! I wonder who Mary Beth is going to marry! I also wonder... what it feels like to be struck my a rock with the circumference of 130 km. I also wonder which of the two is more significant. Mary Beth, Marry the Sheriff, you love each other you'll be very happy. Cunningham, Treat her right. Inman, marry someone closer to your age and who loves you back... you'll find it both spiritually rewarding and emotionally fulfilling. Father, let Mary Beth run her own life, you can love her AND respect her at the same time. Ozbert, Put the bottle away and face the fact that your father left. It's gonna be OK. You need to trust the people around you, not this flask. There! OK! All right! Is that everyone? Yes! Yes! Now let's focus on our imminent death! Ahhhh!

Everyone starts arguing after a moment of silence.

THE MAYOR: SILENCE! *Approaches SHERIFF CUNNINGHAM* You... You foul boy. Ill news is an ill guest and you've brought Nothing but trouble since your arrival here. Ever since I saw you unworthily enter through the gates of Pearlwood. Brave enough to be our Sheriff though you may be... You are not... strong enough. I have no choice but...

***Voice straining* Time is wearing on THE MAYOR.**

THE MAYOR: Banishment. Banished... To Cold Rock City. Where the ghouls and Vagrants pray.

OZBERT: -Where the Ghouls and Vagrants pray!

There is an uproar from the crowd of Cunningham Supporters. CUNNINGHAM hushes them.

CUNNINGHAM: Now your support is much appreciated of course. But Mayor of this town wants me out, I sure ain't gonna disrespect him. My lord, If you want me to leave then... I'll be on my way.

CUNNINGHAM forces himself to smile. And turns. **McBRIDE** steps up.

McBRIDE: If he leaves, then I will leave with him!

THE MAYOR: *Any sign of weakness gone* **THEN YOU SHALL WALK!**

McBRIDE turns.

MARY BETH: Me too!

INMAN slips his arm around the girl.

INMAN: I'm afraid you'll find it increasingly difficult to fight destiny my dear.

THE MAYOR: *To MASAVWENAR* Man of God. Control the people. Put their hearts at ease. Keep them content. With those nasty fellows gone, we can stop worrying about the comet and resume our utopian life. May God have mercy on us all, Masavwenar.

HE Retreats to his Home in City Hall.

The crowd subsides. **DELILAH** is left standing watching the back of her love interest. She runs up to **McBRIDE**.

DELILAH: Professor!

McBRIDE: *Trying to push her away* No.

DELILAH: But... What? I thought-

McBRIDE: Just forget it... Just forget it... please... Leave me alone.

DELILAH: *Fighting back tears* Fine! Forget I ever felt anything for you you- you nerd! Forget that you were the first guy that a rebellious young tomboy fell for. Forget that you're the only boy whos thoughts keep me awake at nights! Forget all of it because you've broken my heart!

DELILAH starts to run but **McBRIDE** grabs her and pulls her in... close.

McBRIDE: I didn't wanna make this any harder than it already is Delilah. So here it is. I'm crazy about you. I always thought I could live without a woman. I was different. I had my brains I didn't need companionship. Then you came... I might not see you for a while-

DELILAH: Promise me you'll come back... Professor.

McBRIDE: Not Proffessor... McBride.

McBRIDE, uncharacteristically, kisses DELILAH.

McBRIDE: No more tears... I promise I'll be back.

CUNNINGHAM:Bye.

**And with That, The heroes of Pearlwood County leave the County.
All hope is lost... OR IS IT!!!!??**

SCENE 12: PATH to COLD ROCK CITY; Dusk.

CUNNINGHAM walks and McBRIDE walks behind him.

McBRIDE: I can't carry on much longer, Sheriff. My feet are sore, my spine aches. I feel as if we've been walking for an eternity. Cunningham... Cunningham! Are you listening?

CUNNINGHAM collapses to his knees.

McBRIDE: Cunningham!... Sheriff? Stop that. Stop that at once. Get up! We can't stop here! Man cannot sustain in this environment!

CUNNINGHAM: Easier to die here, friend.

McBRIDE: Cunningham... you're speaking a language I don't understand. Now get up... we gotta find a new home.

CUNNINGHAM: What's the point... .

McBRIDE is visibly shaken seeing CUNNINGHAM this way.

CUNNINGHAM: No sense going any place we're not welcome... right now, we ain't welcome anywhere. Go on if you must... Leave me.

McBRIDE starts to cry... Manly cry though. The cry of a man who has had it with the treatment he's been getting. A determined cry. He wraps up CUNNINGHAM, he gets up walks a few paces then falls to his knees and screams.

FADE OUT and FADE IN. Now both men are on the desert floor unconscious. A hooded man, THE TRAVELLER, walks up to the bodies and touches the faces.

TRAVELLER: Oh... oh dear... oh this won't do at all. I've got to get you two somewhere with a good hot meal. FALCON! Go collect more rations. We've got company tonight. Yes, rest.. you'll need it. Sleep until morning light...

SCENE 13: TRAVELLER'S LODGINGS.

CUNNINGHAM wakes up. THE TRAVELLER sits bedside.

TRAVELLER: Good Morning... Why I thought you'd never get up! Ah Ah

ah ah! Don't move. Don't strain yourself. You've been through quite a lot. Believe me I know the limits of the human spirit are virtually nonexistent. But the body however, tires quickly.

CUNNINGHAM: Who are you?

TRAVELLER: I am nameless. I've never heard my own name... I have been alone my entire life.

CUNNINGHAM: I'm- so sorry... I know how you feel.

TRAVELLER: I know. You're a legend Sheriff Cunningham. Like me. We are extraordinary beings. We try our best to do what's right. We offer our tireless efforts to people who need them. We spend our lonely short lives searching for what's right and true. Fighting to protect. But, sadly, the path to righteousness rarely presents itself... I think you of all people, Sheriff will second me on that.

CUNNINGHAM nods.

TRAVELLER: It hurts to talk doesn't it?

CUNNINGHAM nods.

TRAVELLER: Hmm. Come, I made you and your friend some broth.

CUNNINGHAM: *Suddenly remembering McBride* McBride! Is he safe?

TRAVELLER: Quite frankly my friend, he's in a better state than you are at the moment. Now come and eat your broth before it gets cold. It'll help your fatigue.

BLACKOUT. LIGHTS up. A weary and worn SHERIFF CUNNINGHAM is leaning over a bowl of broth, not paying it much attention. He's listening to the TRAVELLER's long and involved story. PROFESSOR McBRIDE comes onstage drying his hair with a towel.

McBRIDE: First time I've bathed in three days.

TRAVELLER: Ahhh I'm glad my utilities could be of service. Now, where was I?

CUNNINGHAM: You were telling me of the time you fought a herd of rabid wolves.

TRAVELLER: Mmm. Yes. I remember now. Well, there I was staring death in the face, I looked at my options. One of them of course being, fool the wolves by offering them a juicy ham that I had been carrying with me, then fighting and killing them and using their skins for clothing and shelter. But I hate even the thought of brutality. So I befriended the wolves, I made them my own,

they were my children. Eventually I lived with them in a small cave. In return for rides around the mountains and furry companionship, I offered them guidance... maturity, and some of my rations. It was later on when I realised the reason they were so fearful in the first place. A scornful hunter had appeared many times before my arrival. I sought out this man and engaged him in combat, we were equally matched, fighting to countless standstills for 6 full days. I collapsed from fatigue and the light in my eyes faded, darkness took me.

McBRIDE: How did you live to tell this tale?

TRAVELLER: I realised I loved my life enough not to have it taken away by someone that takes pleasure in doing so. I fought my way back to the light, brought strength into my arms again and fought from the lowest dungeon, to the highest mountain peak. Until at last I threw down my enemy and smote his ruin upon the mountain side. I had returned the favour I had owed my furry friends, and we parted ways. Though eternally bound by fellowship.

McBRIDE: Wow, that's amazing Mr...

TRAVELLER: Call me Traveller.

CUNNINGHAM: **Jaw drops** Traveller? I thought you existed only in myth!

TRAVELLER: Ahhh, doesn't everyone? You know I've traveled far and wide. I've seen everything that your imagination can conjure. I've seen all that was, is or ever could be. Conception is no limit when it came to my experiences.

McBRIDE: Perhaps, then, Traveller. You may offer some assistance?

TRAVELLER: ... I am old. I am worn, but I will offer my greatest power for you to use at your disposal. You may have my cleverest wits, my most tenacious ferocity. You know another lesson I've learned is that a lion's heart will never change with the wearing of time.

McBRIDE: We are bound to an errand of secrecy. There's a comet coming. We need your help.

TRAVELLER: *Sighs* If I must.

CUNNINGHAM: We were banished from our town. We want to stop the comet.

McBRIDE: But we can't.

TRAVELLER: You only think you can't.

McBRIDE: WHAT do you mean?

CUNNINGHAM: We can't stop a giant rock. As much as I'd like to think I can save the world, I can't. Not this time... I'm not strong enough.

TRAVELLER: Oh I beg to differ.

McBRIDE: Huh?

TRAVELLER: You two have a force greater than any other.

McBRIDE: What's that!? Blades? Firearms?

TRAVELLER: Friendship. You two march back to Pearlwood County and you save those ignorant people... And trust me, you will succeed.

CUNNINGHAM: Won't you come with us?

TRAVELLER: **Chuckles** Oh dear- dear me no. My old bones won't allow me to travel much anymore. Why, I get my falcon to do most of my bidding these days.

CUNNINGHAM: But you couldn't be a day over twenty eight.

TRAVELLER: Oh, I'm older than these mountains. The mountains which have taught me quite a bit over the years. And they sure did talk a lot more when they were younger.

CUNNINGHAM: How will we find you when all is well?

TRAVELLER: I'll be closer than you think.

McBRIDE: Where!?

TRAVELLER: Down here... in your hearts. And it's quite cozy down there. I think I'll stay forever. If the battle becomes too much for you to handle, then look to the coming of first light on the fifth day, at dawn, look to the east. Now you have a county to save. It is no short distance, swift and quick as shadows you must be.

McBRIDE: There is no way we can make that sort of journey in the time we have!

CUNNINGHAM: We will make such a chase as shall be accounted a marvel among the three kindreds, elves, dwarves, and men. Forth! The two hunters!

TRAVELLER: Yes!

CUNNINGHAM: Fell deeds await! Now for death! Now for ruin! And the red dawn!

TRAVELLER: Run you fools!

They run off.

TRAVELLER: Run.....

SCENE 14: SINISTER WEDDING, CITY HALL

SCENE starts with **DARK EPIC OPERA MUSIC** plays quietly and get loud as **MASAVWENAR** steps out in black robes. Citizens of Pearlwood stand in line on either side of the Preacher. Doctor Inman steps out on the groom's position. **INMAN** and **MASAVWENAR's** good moods contradict their appearance. **THE MAYOR** enters and sits on his throne, watching all.

MASAVWENAR: It has been foretold in the prophecy... that I must wed my greatest treasure to my dearest friend before.... Well, our ominous fate reaches us. We will all die but we will die knowing that we have satisfied the good Lord. And he will shower greatness and riches upon us in heaven. Now let us embark on our ceremony, before our inevitable fate. Do you-

OZBERT drops a box of nails.

OZBERT: OooooH! WHOA! MY NAILS!

MASAVWENAR: -Inman, take My daughter *beaming* Mary Beth Magdaline Masavwenar, as your lawful, wedded wife for all eternity?

INMAN: *Smiles* I do.

MASAVWENAR: And you, **MARY BETH** Magadeline Masavwenar... Will you take my friend, -

OZBERT drops his box of nails.

OZBERT: AHHH! MY NAILS! I dropped them again this is so unlikely!

MASAVWENAR: -Inman to be your lawful wedded husband until the fires of the Apocalypse burn the flesh off your bones and death separates your loving hands for all eternity into the gates of heaven.

MARY BETH: I-... I-

CUNNINGHAM: Don't.

DOOR slams open CUNNINGHAM is standing looking heroic, McBRIDE

behind him carrying the flag of the south in a pioneer's hat.

OZBERT drops his box of nails.

OZBERT: Ahhh! You frightened me! I dropped my nails for a third time. I've lost so many! This is my wedding present and there are only half left! Why did you do that?

FINN: How did you get back?

McBRIDE: It's really quite simple.

OZBERT: Like Peanut Butter and Jelly-

FINN: Like Salt and Pepper-

DELILAH: McBRIDE and CUNNINGHAM-

McBRIDE, CUNNINGHAM: BEST FRIENDS FOREVER!

INMAN: McBRIDE AND CUNNINGHAM!!!

CUNNINGHAM: Mary Beth. I know we don't have a lot of time left here on this earth... But I know that I want the rest of it to be with you.

ALL: Awwwww.

CUNNINGHAM: Will you marry me MARY BETH?

MARY BETH: Of course I will.

MASAVWENAR: Wait a minute just wait a minute! I will not have this! Cunningham, let her bear away her love for you to the undying lands, ere it be evergreen!

INMAN: Father... hush...

INMAN walks up to CUNNINGHAM

INMAN: I should have known I could never be loved. You've won.

INMAN bows before CUNNINGHAM.

INMAN: I only wish-*smiles.* you had more time...

THE COMET comes down to earth. A RED FLASH all citizens cower, except for INMAN and the MAYOR. Nothing happens. All look around confused. A DEMON shows. He has an evil walk. He conveys evil with every step. Low pitched Laughter is heard. CUNNINGHAM steps up first.

CUNNINGHAM: Who are you?

DEMON: A nightmare... I exist only in Hell. But my time has come. I have been summoned by the dark lord to destroy Pearlwood. And once I do I can be redeemed. My soul will be saved. And I will eternally live in the heavens.

MASAVWENAR: A demon such as you could never be a heavenly body!

CUNNINGHAM: We won't let you devour our town. The Mayor of this town has fought enough to know how to destroy you.

DEMON: Ha Ha Ha. Right you are... Oh if only you knew how very right you are. The Mayor is a demon, like me. And he leads my army of darkness. And you've foolishly allowed him to watch over you. Why else would he banish the only two people who are a threat to me?

ALL turn to see the MAYOR flipping a coin.

THE MAYOR: Hm. It's true. All of it. And now... Demon, I believe it is time to redeem ourselves.

THE MAYOR pulls out a sword. THE FIRE DEMON twirls an enormous staff. BLACKOUT. LIGHTS UP. Now everyone has a blade of some sort.

CUNNINGHAM: We have you outnumbered Demon.

DEMON: My lord believes not in strength in numbers.

DEMON does a strange maneuver that summons shadow demons that appear out of nowhere. They start dancing theatrically. That is how they fight.

INMAN: What are you... doing?

DEMON: Meet the shadow demons, they're dance battle style will both dazzle you and destroy you!

CUNNINGHAM: Why Are you doing this?

DEMON: Why? Because... I was once like you. Then I was murdered by a man from Pearlwood. I've been searching for a way to destroy it for EONS. And now I can find my portal back to the heavens!

CUNNINGHAM: Hate to disappoint, Demon.

Massavwenar runs to Mary Beth

MASAVWENAR: Mary Beth! You must lead the people to safety!

MARY BETH: But I can fight!

MASAVWENAR: NO! You must do as I say, for me...please..Although I don't know what a tired old man can do against all the hate in hell. I will do my best.

MARY BETH: Perhaps your fingers would remember their own strength better, if they grasped your sword.

He does so, and begins to feel empowered.

MASAVWENAR: Cunningham!

CUNNINGHAM: You have my strength to wield as your own father. You have all of ours.

MASAVWENAR: I cannot lead a battle, after how misguided I have been. It is my strength for yours to wield, whatever of it is left.

CUNNINGHAM: Then we fight! This day will go down in legend as the day mans courage triumphed! The day man proclaimed love-

MARY BETH: And proved it's worth!

CUNNINGHAM: The day he discovered real kinship-

McBRIDE: And turned discourse to unity!

CUNNINGHAM: The day he took his arm to the devils-

MASAVWENAR: And cast it back the shadow!

CUNNINGHAM: For honor!

ALL:For victory!

MASAVWENAR: And the red dawn!

ALL THE PEOPLE LET OUT A POWERFUL BATTLECRY

Fight Sequence

MASAVWENAR: Vengefully *INSERT insane cool bible verse here *

THE DEMON is down for the count. MASAVWENAR has his staff pointed at the DEMON.

MASAVWENAR: Sheriff Cunningham! Quickly! I'm staying the beast! Deliver the final blow!

CUNNINGHAM looks around. **INMAN** comes up behind him with a sword. **IS HE GOING TO KILL OUR HERO?** No.

CUNNINGHAM: Inman... what's that.

INMAN: The sword of the King of Pearlwood.

CUNNINGHAM: I thought it was destroyed.

INMAN: It was given to me by the Mayor when he discovered I had evil intentions. *Gives it to **CUNNINGHAM*** I don't reckon that Pearlwood's going to save itself. Finish the war that I could not. Take up the sword, put aside the sherriff, and become the man you were born to be. Now go.. **RETURN IT FROM WHENCE IT CAME!**

CUNNINGHAM nods. He runs across stage to get to **DEMON**, on the way he kills all shadow demons. In the end he raises his sword and brings it down on **DEMON**. **DEMON** screams and starts to be sucked into hell in a cloud of smoke. **HE** Begins to pull Inman down with him.

INMAN: What? **WHAT?** **NO!** No this isn't fair! This isn't right! I redeemed myself! This can't be happening... We'll meet again, Cunningham!

THE MAYOR: Ha ha ha ha... Foolish Mortal, you now understand the repercussions of betraying your dark lord's closest allies.

THE MAYOR subsequently gets destroyed.. and is in as much disbelief as **INMAN**.

TRAVELLER: (VO) And with That, The evil of Pearlwood has seemingly vanished. All is well again and The citizens look at themselves and each other, marveling at the fact that they are all alive and in good spirits!

MARY BETH goes up to Sheriff **CUNNINGHAM**.

MARY BETH: Well, you saved me again Sheriff. I have to thank you for coming back for me... and you know, all the small things like saving the town.

CUNNINGHAM: Don't mention it.

MASAVWENAR: Well... we're dressed for a wedding.

OZBERT: Omg... You guys should totally get married.

DELILAH smacks **McBRIDE**

DELILAH: When are you going to ask me to marry you?

McBRIDE: Well, you see Delilah, I-

FINN: *Opening a briefcase* I got a bunch of rings for sale if you're interested.

MASAVWENAR: Come, come everyone! Follow me! Hurry!

CUNNINGHAM: Right away Father. Mary Beth, go without me... I'll be there momentarily.

All follows him except for CUNNINGHAM. CUNNINGHAM looks down and smiles. THE TRAVELLER is revealed to be sitting on a rock behind him.

TRAVELLER: You did well, son. I'm very proud of you.

CUNNINGHAM: Hm. You know, When I brought the sword down on the demon... It was thinking of you in my heart that helped me.

TRAVELLER: Well friend, I'm afraid this is one thing I must not take credit for. It was you who saved Pearlwood. Besides, I was never actually in your heart. And If I was we both would have died.

CUNNINGHAM: ?

TRAVELLER: Go... you'll be late for your wedding.

CUNNINGHAM: Thank you, Traveller- He looks, and the TRAVELLER's gone. Strange...

He Looks down, smiles and looks at his town.

CUNNINGHAM: Pearlwood County. My home.

He tips his cap and walks away. McBride comes onstage, gives him a badge, then they walk out as they talk.

CUNNINGHAM: I reckon your gunna need this, deputy.

McBRIDE: Deputy? Really?

CUNNINGHAM: Well hey, if it weren't for you I'd probably be a pile of dust right now.

McBRIDE: Hey, yeah! Thats right! Of course you'll need me! Every operation needs both muscle and brains.

CUNNINGHAM: Yeah? Which are you.

McBRIDE:Doing his best Cunningham impression Well I'm honored you'd let me be your humble deputy.

CUNNINGHAM: You're not going to make me regret this are you?

McBRIDE: Sorry, just trying it out.

CUNNINGHAM: And I do not sound like that.

McBRIDE: Yeah, yeah you do. Hey do I get a gun?

CUNNINGHAM: We'll see.

THE END

Tapping In



by William Bennett

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TAPPING IN

(The stage is in a BLACKOUT. There is no curtain. The audience should enter to a blank stage. The audience sees two lights peering straight into them. The effect is of two headlights in The Darkness. Silence.)

Woman's Voice: Look out! (Fading high pitched screams)

(Sudden blackout. Screams stop. In the blackout the stage is set and the actors get into position.)

Blake:(In the Blackout) What?

(Light begins to lift on the stage. Melodramatic is the only one to be seen right now. He is holding a black compact and cherry lipstick. Following which he begins to make funny faces as if he were a fish. Once finished, he snaps closed the compact, and the light expands to Rage and IQ at a desk downstage Left. Around that desk there are ten to fifteen textbooks on or surrounding the desk, mostly of mathematics and different sciences. Rage is leaning at the desk, and IQ is working diligently. Both are obviously ignoring Melodramatic. Rage is breaking IQ's pencils as Rage's anger grows and grows until eventually the pencil breaks. Then he picks up another pencil. IQ winces with every time a pencil is broken. Rage then gets a 'kick' every time IQ winces. This continues for some time. At some time Rage runs out of pencils, then IQ will take out a new box and lays it out on the table. Blake is stupefied at this arrangement. Others do not notice Blake. He stands center upstage.)

Melo: I've got it! (Takes out tuner and badly warms up) Me, my, moe, moo, mike, doe, ray, sa le, ti, damn, I mean doe. The rain in Spain falls mainly on the plains.

Melo: (continued) "The meadow and I"

Melo: (continued) A breathtakingly original piece of poetry by ... well me.

(Melo recites to Rage and IQ. Rage and IQ do not pay any attention to him.)

Melo: (continued) Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep,
Whose woods these are I think I know.
Birds' love and birds' song
Sweeney Among the Nightingales
God gave a loaf to every bird,
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees.
'Twas noontide of summer,
Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
O Love, Love, Love! O withering might!
If ever two were one, then surely we.
A chain of gold ye shall not lack,

Let us go then, you and I.
What the heart is is not enough.
Oh what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practice to deceive!
In the forests of the night,
And that has made all the difference.

Melo: (Continued) Thank you! thank you! You're too kind! I will be here all evening and tomorrow too. (Laughing) You're going to make me blush. (etc)

(Melo bows three or four times toward Rage and IQ, and blows kisses to Rage and IQ, in-between bows. He then wipes a fake tear.)

Melo: (Continued) I would like to thank the little people. I would not be here without them as I stepped on all their feet all the way to the top.

(Rage throws a pencil at Melo, and this snaps Melo out of it.)

Melo: (composed) So, what did you think?

(IQ stops reading and looks up to him. There is a moment of silence.)

IQ: I was never a fan of Robert Frost.

Melo: What's that supposed to mean?

IQ: The first and last lines are direct quotes of his. "The Road Not Taken" to be more precise.

Melo: (Hurt) Are you accusing me of copyright infringement?

IQ: (completely ignoring Melo's question) Truth be told that entire 'poem' was completely filled with lines from the great poets. Well except for that line from John Keats. (Chuckles. Now composing herself) It really was pathetic. The flow was terrible, and it lacked a rhyme scheme.

Melo: Not all po-

IQ: Furthermore it is just fluff you didn't put any effort into it, and most of the concepts don't flow properly. Furthermore nothing in the poem even resembles a meadow or you, thank goodness on the latter. Why on earth would you compare yourself to a meadow anyway? You have never seen a meadow in your life, let alone have enough data on one whether to write a report, poem, short story, or essay or any such thing as this. In conclusion I think you should stop writing poetry all together, and definitely stop using the lines of other writers. I mean, nothing of good can come from it.

Melo: How dare you! How dare you accuse me of stealing!

IQ: I never said the word stealing, per say. Do you have a guilty conscious?

Melo: But you meant it!

IQ: I think they would be rather displeased to see you taking their work.

Melo: How dare you!

IQ: That is the third time you have said 'How dare you!'. Care to get a better catch phrase? This one seems so trivial and is getting quite over used as of late.

(IQ takes a thesaurus from the desk and tosses it to Melo. Melo avoids it.)

Melo: Why you, you brainless, emotionless cad you!

IQ: (Standing up) How dare you!

Melo: Hypocrite. Why don't you get a better -

(Picks up thesaurus and opens it.)

Melo (continued)- lexicon.

IQ: Why you little birdbrain!

Melo: (flips through thesaurus) Sociopathic cad!

IQ: Now give that back!

Melo: No, you soulless nitwit!

IQ: Simpleton!

(Melo and IQ begin to advance on each other. Melo still with the thesaurus in hand, and flipping through it whenever he wishes to speak. They stop at down stage center. Rage now stops breaking pencils and watches with amusement.)

Melo: Dunce!

IQ: Talent less hack!

Melo: Torpid bunkum!

IQ: (Looking as if she is about to explode) Fat cow!

Melo: (Aghast) How dare you!

(Melo throws the thesaurus past IQ. It should be caught by a stagehand backstage. They circle each other, and then very quickly they go at each other's throats. Rage shouts as if it was a sport, and continues to. Blake, who was completely silent up until now, finally decides to speak to break up this mess.)

Blake: Umm, who are you guys?

Melo: No, no, no the line is 'Who are YOU?' (Caterpillar from Alice in Wonderland-ish)

(Melo points his finger in the shape of a gun and shoots Blake over his shoulder. Melo obviously mouths the following words, and Blake has the sudden urge to say them.)

Blake: (Trance like. Alice from Alice in Wonderland-ish.) 'I--I hardly know, sir, just at present-- at least I know who I WAS when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then.' (Back to normal)
Hey wait a second.

(Melo turns around and shoots his finger at him as if it were a gun.)

Blake: (Trance-like again) 'Oh curiouser and curiouser. (Back to normal) Hey! That's not funny!

(Melo laughs to see his that his ploy had worked. Rage and IQ knowing what happened decide to do something about it, and Rage throws another pencil.)

Melo: Hey!

Blake: Wait a second, I asked that question first.

Melo: (Shrugging) I suppose you did.

IQ: No but really who are you. You must be new. Oh this is so exciting a new (Trying to find the word) something or another. Please tell us your name, if you know it that is, and we'll try to show you around.

Blake: Umm, Blake.

Rage: Blake?

Blake: Yes.

Rage: (Imitating) Yes?

Blake: Why?

IQ: (Chuckling) I don't suppose you're William Blake seeking revenge against the horrible copyright infringement of your poems. (To Melo) You had better run. Soon the 'coppers' will take you away.

Melo: Hey. I only used two of his lines.

IQ: (Smiling) So you admit guilt?

(Melo makes a sound of dismissal and leaves the group to downstage right and finds his compact and begins to powder his nose. An awkward moment of silence happens.)

Melo: (Mutters) Lousy good for nothing idiot. Personality of a flea.

Blake: No.

I.Q.: Pardon?

Blake: Blake is my first name.

I.Q.: Of course, of course. Do you require assistance or help of any kind?

Blake: No. At least I don't think so.

(Rage, in disgust of the lack of interest, returns to breaking pencils. IQ starts toward the desk.)

Blake: (Continued, but embarrassed) Well maybe a little.

IQ: How can we-

Rage: We?

IQ: I. How can I help you?

Blake: Now who are you and where am I?

IQ: We are, of course us. You are of course here. I really do not understand your query.

Blake: Wait that doesn't answer my questions.

I.Q.: (Ignoring Blake) WHAT are you?

Blake: What? What do you mean?

I.Q.: Well, no offense, but you look kind of strange to me. Defiantly not like any of the others.

Blake: Others?

IQ: Well for example you're wearing more than one color.

(IQ points to the others, and where their colors are located. Rage and Melo nod in agreement to that fact.)

Blake: Umm so?

IQ: It is just odd that is all.

Blake: What do you mean by that? I'm not the one dressed in - like that. Is color not allowed or something? What is this some sort of up tight poetry club?

(Melo perks up at the mention of poetry.)

Melo: No, but why would you ask? I didn't know I was all that famous to have my own club. I guess I am just getting too famous for my own good. Would you like to hear some of mine?

IQ and Rage: No!

Melo: Well (Bursting) fine then!

(Melo bursts out into obviously fake sobs, and throws himself on to the floor pounding like a two year old having a tantrum. Rage, IQ, and Blake all look at him. Rage and IQ shake their head, and Blake has obvious concern over Melo.)

Rage: Here we go again.

Blake: Umm shouldn't we do something?

Rage: Why?

Blake: Well he's. He's like that.

I.Q.: Well yes.

Rage: So?

Blake: I don't know, perhaps-

I.Q.: Ignore him.

Blake: Why?

I.Q.: (Matter of fact-like) Because he wants attention.

Blake: Well wouldn't it be easier to give him attention?

I.Q.: Yes

Rage: But who cares if he wants it? Why should WE give it to him?

Blake: That's a little cruel don't you think?

Rage: (Viciously) Thanks.

I.Q.: Perhaps.

Blake: What?

I.Q.: Perhaps it is cruel, but it would be better for his emotional development to learn to not get his way all the time. In the long run we are doing him a favor. After all he has to learn control, or he will be completely forgotten and left alone. There is a good reason why he is suppressed. After all who wants to be like that every day.

(Rage laughs)

IQ: What?

Rage: Suppressed? Emotional Development? That's rich!

IQ: (Matter of fact-like) It is important. Besides he does need to develop.

(Rage cruelly chuckles. Melo straightens up and sits on the stage where he was having his tantrum.)

Melo: This is coming from someone who has none.

I.Q.: None of what?

Melo: Emotions jerk.

(I.Q. opens him mouth as if to respond, but Rage cuts him off.)

Rage: Oh shut it you two! Once this was funny, but you two fight way too much even for me. And that is saying a lot. All day for the past who knows how long you are at each others throats complaining about he said she said. You give everyone a headache and that is the reason why everyone leaves this area. Heck it is a wonder I haven't left yet!

Blake: What? What do you mean no emotions? (Rhetorically) Doesn't everyone have emotions?

IQ: (Dismissing) Only humans are that emotional.

Blake: What?

IQ: Yes. Only hu- oh. Oh? Oh! Oh.

Blake: What?

IQ: I've got it. Hold it, one second.

(Rage, Melo, and IQ circle around him.)

Melo: (Obviously not getting it) Makes sense.

Rage: Yeah probably. I mean why else would anyone care about Mel?

Melo: (Sarcastic) Thanks.

Rage: (Imitating Melo) Welcome.

IQ: No why else would anyone care about him. Even Hope doesn't care that much about him. I mean that is saying a lot. That is her job, and she doesn't want anything to do with him.

Rage: Bloody annoying she is too.

IQ: It makes sense.

Melo: What does?

IQ: I thought you said it makes sense.

Melo: Well I lied.

IQ: (Despairingly) Why?

Blake: What?

IQ: No. Why?

Blake: No, what makes sense?

IQ: Many things make sense. Gravity for example keeps us from falling up, if you will pardon my grammar.

Blake: Tell me already!

IQ: Well the only way that you would care about Melo-

Melo: Hey!

IQ: Is if you were human. You know that whole thing about human decency and all that being kind to each other. Even to go so far as to help others. Human decency, it is the only way that you make any sense at all, is if you are human. Even the nicest of us can't stand to be around him.

Melo: Then why don't you leave if you hate me so much? Why doesn't everybody just leave!

IQ: Wish I could. I really wish I could. (Cruelly) I really, really wish I could. I really, really, rea-

Rage: Just get on with it. This is so stupid.

IQ: I wish I could, but I can't get too far away from that desk.

Blake: What?

IQ: (Ignoring Blake) So perhaps you (points to Melo) should go away and leave me alone. It seems only fair after all. If you were Kindness you would.

Melo: (Under her breath) Bat!

Rage: Stop it, Mel! You're giving me a headache!

(IQ smirks at Melo and Melo retaliates with sticking out his tongue.)

Blake: Mel?

Melo: Yes?

Blake: Nice name.

IQ: Oh no.

Rage: Here we go again.

IQ: Don't compliment him.

Melo: Why thank you. I am very proud of it. I have had it forever, or at least I think I have. You loose count after the first little while. Took me two centuries to figure it out too. That is actually a rather funny story you know I was walking around one day or night, who really knows in here, and I -

Blake: What?

Melo: Don't interrupt me please.

Blake: Two centuries?

Melo: Yes, I know. It is amazing. I swear I set a new record. Still you don't see me in the world record's Hall of Fame.

Blake: But two centuries!

Melo: Yes I am rather proud of the accomplishment. Of course everything has gone down hill since then. Still I was the first, though she (points to IQ) figured out mostly everything else. Rebel without a cause over here (points to Rage) took thrice as long.

Rage: Yeah nearly si- Hey!

(Rage lunges at Melo who backs off laughing. They then do a little chase scene. Melo races round IQ's desk, and eventually they have a little face off. Where one runs one way around the desk and the other runs the other way. They cause a bit of distraction with the textbooks, and IQ is visibly angry.)

IQ: Hey!

(Melo throws some pencils at Rage, and Rage grabs a couple in mid air and breaks them instinctively.)

Melo: (Mockingly) guerrilla!

(Melo laughs as his distraction works, and then they run off again. Eventually Rage and Melo are on opposite sides of the chairs. IQ sneaks up behind Melo and grabs Melo. Rage rushes towards Melo. All this time Blake is flabbergasted at the whole situation about them being well over six hundred years old. Rage then begins to maneuver like he is about to punch Melo in the face, but draws it out.)

Blake: (Seconds before Blake hits Melo) Wait!

(I.Q., Melo, and Rage look at Blake at once.)

Blake: How are you guys six hundred years old!

I.Q.: We're not.

Melo: Yeah, don't be silly.

Rage: How can we be six hundred? Zero.

Melo: Yeah.

I.Q.: We're older.

Blake: How?

Melo: I already told you. We've been around since well forever.

Blake: No.

I.Q.: Yes.

Blake: No!

Melo: Yes!

Blake: No!

(There is an awkward silence. IQ and Melo look to Rage and expect him to say something.)

Melo: Well.

Rage: Well what!

I.Q.: It's your turn.

Blake: What you do mean it's his turn? How are you over six hundred?

Rage: Stay out of this. This is none of your business.

IQ: Now, now, be nice to the human. It's not his fault he is (meekly) uninformed.

Rage: I don't care if he is the almighty emperor of Switzerland! I'm still not doing it.

Melo: Well it's part of the pl-

(IQ whacks Melo on the top of the head as if he had come dangerously close to saying something important.)

Rage: If I have to say 'yes' someone is going to break a bloody blood vessel!

(Melo flinches as Rage threatens to punch Melo. I.Q. clears her throat.)

IQ: Well?

Rage: (Whispering) But I hate this part.

I.Q.: (Whispering) Deal with it.

Rage: (Whispering) No interruptions. (An obvious stare at Melo.)

Melo: (Whispering) Fine.

(I.Q., Melo, and Rage look to Blake as to see if he heard anything. Blake did not, but did notice that something was up.)

Rage: Yes, we've been here forever. Well close enough. No we don't remember the Big Bang. Yes it was a bang. So we haven't been here 'forever' forever. Yes, we remember Adam. If that is what you are calling him nowadays-

Melo: His real name is Phil by the way.

I.Q.: (Hitting him) No asides.

(Melo hisses like a cat.)

Rage: Quiet! He was our father and Gertrude, (looking at Blake's puzzled look) you know Eve, Eve was our mother. Now let me see. No, we are not human. Though we are kind of human in a way.

Blake: Huh?

Rage: Let me finish! We are with everyone and apart of everyone yet we are ourselves. We have our own personalities and histories and relationships.

Melo: We are unique.

Rage: Stop it!

Melo: Well most of us.

Rage: Oh for heaven's sake!

(Rage begins to leave. I.Q. places her hand over Melo's mouth in an attempt shut him up.)

I.Q.: Finish.

Rage: No more interruptions. (A very long glare toward Melo on that one.)

IQ: Alright, now there will be no more interruptions.

Rage: We are Emotions. (Peeved) Well that sucked. Now in the name of Philip stop interrupting Mel.

(I.Q. opens her mouth as if to say something.)

Rage: Well she (gestures to IQ) isn't an emotion. (Directed to Melo) You know you ruined it.

Blake: What do you mean? I don't believe it. What on earth do you mean about you being Emotions? No I don't believe it. How on earth? Is this even earth? No this is earth. How can it be anything different? You are lunatics. You are all psychotic lunatics and not emotions. Damn it!

I.Q.: Well I am not an emotion. I'm a -

(Melo bites I.Q. and then rushes to stage right just below the desk.)

I.Q.: Ahh!

Melo: Isn't it obvious. She is much to dull to be anything interesting like me.

(Rage clears his throat as to tell him to stop.)

Melo: And mungo over there.

Rage: That's it! You are dead little man! Dead!

Melo: Yeah whatever. Get counseling and then maybe I can forgive you.

Rage: Well you worthless little piece of crap! I am going to kill you!

I.Q.: No, let me.

(Rage backs off immediately and chuckles. I.Q. and Rage exchange smirks. Melo looks very sullen. Rage taps the back of I.Q.'s head and I.Q. rushes Melo. Melo doesn't even try to run, but instead tries to hide behind the desk.)

I.Q.: You little pipsqueak!

Melo: (Pathetically) Mommy!

I.Q.: Mommy won't save you now, buddy boy!

Melo: Help!

(I.Q. laughs fanatically then runs to Melo. Melo attempts to crawl around the right side of the desk, but is grabbed by I.Q. Melo yelps like a puppy dog being dragged by his tail.)

I.Q.: (Maniacally) Bad puppy! No treats for you! (Laughs)

Melo: Nooo!

(There are sounds of distress as Melo is being pummeled. The desk should rumble at times, and there is IQ laughing almost like a maniac. Every once in a while Melo claws his way out or appears in other ways. Sometimes his limbs are visible, but most of the time he is just screaming from behind the desk.)

Blake: Shouldn't we stop it?

Rage: And miss this? Oh no. No my friend I only get to watch this once every decade or so. Give it some time.

(Melo screams.)

Melo: (Pitifully) It hurts.

Blake: Umm? Now perhaps.

Rage: Oh but this is the best part!

Blake: Umm, what?

Rage: The drop kick.

Blake: (Dumbly) Soccer?

Rage: You can say that.

(Melo screams, Blake winces, and Rage and I.Q. laugh.)

Rage: Goal! Goal! Goal! Goal! Two points!

Blake: But umm, Soccer is one point-

Rage: Well there are two balls.

(Melo screams again.)

Rage: (Continued) No, there WERE two balls.

(Rage bursts out in a sudden laughter. Blake looks horrified, but also chuckles. IQ and Melo pop up from behind the desk. They look rather beaten up, and in pain. Melo is clenching his groin, and in obvious pain as he crawls back to the far chairs.)

IQ: It's over now.

Rage: Too bad. I thought you were going to kill him.

Blake: What? What's over? I don't get it.

(Rage, Melo, and IQ look at Blake oddly.)

Blake: (Continued) You guys are- you guys are nuts, just plain lunatics. Now what on earth happened?

IQ: The tap.

Blake: The what?

Rage: The tap.

Blake: I don't get it.

Rage: You really are an idiot. The tap. I tapped the back of her head, and she got angry.

Blake: What?

Rage: Isn't it obvious? Jeez what do you learn in that school of yours? Its like you know nothing at all, and all you learn is math or science-

(Rage gives a pointed glare toward IQ. IQ promptly ignores him.)

Rage: (Continued) Or drama.

(Rage glares at Melo. Rage feels insulted and annoyed that he was unable to instigate any form of conflict.)

Rage: (Continued) Completely worthless things if you think about it.

Blake: What do you mean? A tap? As in running water, or tap dancing? (Sarcastically) I didn't hear running water or tap dance.

IQ: No more like a tap as in tapping into a water supply.

Blake: I didn't hear water?

(Rage laughs.)

Blake: (continued) I don't get it!

IQ: That was a bad example. Think of it this way I took some of his emotions, and I used that emotion. Now since I don't have any other emotions -

Blake: You're emotionless?

IQ: Yes. Now since I don't have any other emotions -

Blake: But how. I thought you were just joking before.

IQ: I never joke.

Melo: That's for sure.

(Rage looks at him fiercely and Melo does not continue. Blake on the other hand just realized that IQ had gotten angry at the beginning. Silence.)

Blake: Wait I saw you with that book-

Rage: (Triumphant) That's right who's your daddy! Who's your daddy now!

IQ: Please not now. I am trying to explain myself.

Blake: Wait a second. You have emotions. I saw you throw that book at him and you dislike people and you were sarcastic and had a sense of humor and everything. How can you still say that you do not have a sense of humor after all that? And humor and personality match right? You have done stuff to show emotion. Though you obviously try to hide your emotions, or else you wouldn't say you don't have emotions.

Rage: Way to go Sherlock.

IQ: I do no such thing. I have nothing to hide. Well look at the time. I need to finish my textbook.

(IQ goes back and sits against in his desk and reads a large math textbook.)

Blake: But you threw the book at him.

Rage: (Aside) Too bad the police didn't come.

Melo: Oh hardy har har. Seems someone has developed a morbid sense of humor. What next? Who knows you might actually smile for a change?

Rage: (Hulk-like) You don't like me when I smile. Nobody likes me when I smile.

Melo: Wow. You really are quite twisted aren't you?

Rage: (IQ-like) Quite so.

(During the following line by IQ Rage gets up and moves away from the other two to break pencils and throw them off stage as if he is throwing them off at a distant target.)

IQ: (Reciting facts) The atom contains both positive and neutral forces. They are surrounded by electrons, which are the negative force in an atom. Complex formulas are formed when two atoms join together through their electrons.

Blake: Umm what is she doing?

Melo: Oh, ignore her. She is quite bothersome when she is proven wrong. Truth be told we are all capable of showing more emotions than just the ones chosen for us. Even she is, though it is much more difficult. Even though she won't admit that.

Blake: Then why did you say she was incapable of emotion?

IQ: (mumbling) I am incapable of emotion.

Melo: Hear that?

Blake: What?

Melo: Shh, listen.

IQ: (Quoting a fact) Helium is considered a noble gas, and is tasteless, odorless, and colorless. Helium is quite rare on earth.

Melo: (Defeated) She's doing it again. (Back to normal) Anyway I said it so she would show emotion. I mean being annoying has its perks. I get to see how far I can push her before she snaps, and see if she really does explode. I've been working on her for centuries now. That outburst must mean I am coming close.

Blake: But I thought that she was only like that because of the tap.

Melo: Well it's true that the tap does affect people's moods, but you do feel more than just that one precedent emotion. Everybody here is full of emotion whether they know it or not or care to admit it.

Blake: But I thought tapping made you kind of mindless like what she was. All she cared about was killing you.

Melo: Well when I tapped you how did you feel?

Blake: What?

Melo: I tapped you. I tapped you twice even. One of the nice things about being a performer (obviously over the pain of being pummeled) is that you get to touch people through a distance.

Blake: I wanted to be the center of attention. I wanted to be there, and have everyone look at me like I was the star. If they didn't I got sad. I was sad just thinking about it.

Melo: There you go. You were also sad. Remember everyone is more than just one emotion. I think you would be a good performer. You have that kind of mind and charisma. Hey you get to be the center of attention and different from everyone else.

(IQ rises obviously a lot less angry though still quite peeved.)

IQ: The bad news is you get everyone else to think you are a complete flake.

Melo: Hey. That hurts right here (taps his right breast.)

IQ: Wrong side.

(Melo slides his hand over to the left breast.)

Melo: Whatever. Remember the Alice in Wonderland thing with you quoting it.

Blake: I haven't even read Alice in Wonderland! How did I quote it?

Melo: You didn't need to know it. I knew it. I know all of everyone's work. I even know your work. People say that I am stupid, but I am so not. I am sure if Brains over there (Melo points to IQ) would stop treating me like I was so dumb all the time it would be better than it is. But no! I may not be book (references IQ) or street smart (references Rage), but I am smart.

Blake: Umm, yeah whatever. How on earth did you make me say Alice in Wonderland?

Melo: The same way you potentially know everything I know. Since I know everything you know everything.

Blake: Eh?

Melo: I taught you it. Well I taught you that part. You can't quote other parts. I know so much that if I let anyone of you have it your heads would explode.

Blake: Whatever. Don't do it again. I mean I want control of my own body.

Rage: (Getting rather annoyed at Melo) Oh for Phil's sakes all you talk about is yourself! All day long it is this chatter about yourself or listening to your horrible poetry. Get over yourself! If I have to hear you speak one more time I am not going to be responsible for my actions!

(An awkward silence occurs.)

(Melo leans in. There is a tension in the air.)

Melo: (Baiting him) Me.

Rage: That is it!

(Rage gets up and leaves dramatically upstage left.)

Melo: Good riddance.

IQ: Must you always bait him so?

Melo: Oh, come on. I mean 'I'm not going to be responsible for my actions.' It is just so dull and cliché and it makes him sound as if he is a teenager stuck in a bad soap opera. 'Oh Renardo I can not marry you. I am your evil twin sister separated by birth by Australian monks. You will have to marry your evil father-in-law's old girlfriend's half-daughter instead.' Give me a break and give him a reality check. It is so not healthy to be like that twenty-four seven. You read enough health textbooks to know that being angry like that is not healthy, but if I tell him so he freaks out. I mean he is the biggest drama queen I have ever seen - well ever. He is more annoying to me than he states I am annoying to him, and I bet he knows it to.

IQ: That doesn't explain why you bait him. I mean we find you over the top and abrasive, but I never bother you even half as much. The same is true for him.

Melo: Whatever. I feel that I could really hate him. He is the most annoying person and is not fooling anyone. He really should flick that chip of his shoulder and have an emotional range that encompasses more than Mr. T and the Hulk.

Blake: Well should someone go after him? I mean he seemed pretty upset.

IQ: Well what exactly did you expect? He's Mr. Repressed.

Blake: Oh that would explain it. He should fight for his rights. Who is abusing him? They should go to court.

IQ: No he's Repressed. Repressed Rage.

Blake: What? Oh right. You are Emotions or whatever. Look I am going after him and maybe I will find a way out of this loony bin.

Melo: What?

IQ: (Pulling his leg) I think he means this bin of Canadian currency.

Melo: (oblivious) Oh right.

Blake: (Shaking his head) See yeah. I suggest that all three of you seek professional help and quickly. I doubt we'll meet again.

IQ: See you later.

Blake: Goodbye forever.

IQ: No, see you later.

Blake: (Unconvinced) Yeah whatever.

(Blake exits upstage left. There is a shift in the demure of Melo and IQ with Blake gone. They feel much friendlier now.)

Melo: Sorry about earlier.

(Melo pockets the lipstick.)

IQ: Shh. He might come back the way he came. It wouldn't be the first time.

Melo: Right. (Whispers) How much longer till he does a loop?

IQ: (Whispers) A couple of minutes at the latest.

Melo: (Whispers) Right.

IQ: (Whispers) How many loops for this one?

Melo: (Whispers) Only one I think. He seems sharp enough.

IQ: (Whispers) My guess is two. You give him too much credit.

Melo: I always do with this character. It's been three centuries of the same old same old. Next time I get to play a different chara -

IQ: Shh. Here he comes.

(Blake enters upstage right and comes half way.)

IQ: I said you would be back.

Blake: (Angrily) Whatever.

(Blake walks about three-quarters of the way to upstage left and then turns to Melo and IQ.)

Blake: (Amazed) You're not fighting? Well that is a first.

IQ: (To Melo) I win the bet. You owe me some lipstick.

Melo: Damn it.

Blake: What?

IQ: I bet Mel that you would find it awkward if we were not fighting. I won the bet.

(Melo takes out about seven different lipsticks from various areas from the body, and holds them out in his hands)

IQ: I'll take the Ruby Rush.

Melo: But that's my favorite. Here you can have the Pinate Paparazzi and the Pink Orchid.

IQ: Can I borrow the Crimson Night one too?

Melo: Umm.

IQ: I'll get you a new Compact.

Melo: (Reluctantly) Fine, I guess.

Blake: Whatever. (Mumbling) A gender confused emo and an all-knowing science lab. What are the odds?

(Blake exits upstage right)

Melo: (Whispering) Is he gone?

IQ: I think so.

Melo: (Whispering) Lipstick? (Melo places all of the lipstick back into their various areas from before.)

IQ: (Whispering) Well I had to say something that would be in char-

Melo: (Whispering) Someone is coming. We'll break chara-

IQ: (Whispering) Quick, emergency skit 13.

(Both IQ and Melo get up and face each other and circle around a chair. Rage re-enters the stage upstage right. Rage relaxes when he realizes that Blake is not here. The others relax seeing that it is only Rage.)

Rage: (Whispering) The loop?

IQ: (Whispering) Yes.

Melo: (Whisper) Come back later. I'll whistle.

(Rage exits upstage right quickly.)

IQ: (Whispering) Any second now. He'll be coming back. He is a little slower then the others. Remember to -

Melo: Yes, yes.

(Blake re-enters and notices that the others are circling each other.)

IQ: Double-crossing shark!

Melo: (Unsure, but playing along) Captain Kirk wannabe.

IQ: How dare you! We made a deal, a binding contract.

Melo: (Getting it) There were no arrangements in writing.

IQ: It was a verbal agreement!

Melo: Verbal Gerbil. I honestly don't really care.

Blake: (Deciding to avert the attention of IQ) You're doing it again with the emotions. You know, showing them.

(IQ and Melo look at Blake)

IQ: (Emotionless) I hate to say I told you so, but I told you so.

Blake: (Defensive) What do you mean? You told me what?

IQ: That you would be back. This is twice now, and I thought it ought to have been said.

Melo: I thought that you once said that gloating was beneath you?

IQ: Now when did I say that? I don't recall ever saying that.

Melo: At the battle of Gettysburg, right after you defeated Napoleon on the Nile, and before the One Hundred-Year war.

Blake: What!

Melo: I know! Isn't it just terrible? You really should keep to your word. (Imitating IQ) It is not proper to be a (screeching) hypocrite!

IQ: I do not sound like that? (To Blake) I don't sound like that do I? (To Melo) I don't sound like that! That is so rude! How dare you!

Melo: I say them as I see them, sweet heart!

IQ: (Enraged) Why you-

Blake: (Butting in again) Well you can't deny that that shows emotion. Now can you?

(IQ turns to Blake and stares him down, but it is ineffective and runs over to her desk and takes out a different textbook.)

IQ: (Recites) The volumetric of the earth's radius in kilometers is 6371.

Blake: Wish me luck. I am going to try and stop this.

(Melo hums The Last Post. Blake turns to face him again.)

Blake: (Continued, though angry) Now that is not funny.

Melo: Right, right.

(Melo stares at upstage right intently.)

Blake: (Confused) Yes?

(Melo clears his throat.)

Blake: I don't get it.

Melo: Get what?

Blake: What you are doing.

Melo: (Quickly) I am doing nothing.

Blake: Huh?

(IQ laughs.)

Melo: (Hotly) What is so funny, Quo?

Blake: Quo?

Melo: (Stalling) -th the Raven, "Nevermore."

IQ: Edgar Allan Poe was never much of public speaker. If I remember correctly his teeth (Lots of emphasis on the word whistled) WHISTLED with the wind whenever he spoke.

Melo: Oh, I thought he enjoyed (emphasis on the syllable hum) HUMus.

IQ: Nope he WHISTLED.

Blake: (obviously confused) Not again. Its like you guys speak in another language.

Melo: (With a fake accent) J'ai habité dans la France, pour dans un petit peu de temps.

Blake: I don't understand. You have lived in France?

Melo: \$i señor.

Blake: Where did you learn Spanish then?

Melo: No sé español. I mean, I don't know Spanish.

Blake: But- but. (Turning to Melo) You heard him? Never mind.

Melo: Je peux parler français tres bien.

Blake: You can speak French?

(Melo nods.)

Blake: (Continued) But not Spanish?

(Melo nods his head, than quickly begins to shake his head as in saying no.)

Blake: (Continued) My head hurts.

Melo: Is something the matter?

Blake: Whatever. I just don't care.

(Blake then turns and begins to walk to IQ. Melodramatic whistles The Last Post. Rage comes in UR, takes a look at the group double backs, and makes the up yours gesture to the UR.)

Rage: Yeah, same to you buddy and your mother!

IQ: (Seeing a chance to escape) Who was that?

Rage: Just the (Yells to get his point across) dirtiest little wench I have ever met in my life!

Melo: Which one?

Rage: That one! Do I always have to explain things to you twice!

Melo: Who was it this time?

Rage: (Full of spite) Hope.

Blake: What exactly did umm she do?

Rage: She told me to take off my jacket.

Melo: Ah, figures.

Blake: What?

IQ: (Whisper) Pssst.

(IQ beckons over Blake.)

IQ: (Whispers to Blake) Rage's jacket is the source of all of his anger issues. It is his most precious possession and justly so. Without that jacket Rage will no longer be angry.

Blake: (Whisper) Wouldn't that be a good thing?

IQ: (Yelling) No!

(The other two look at IQ and Blake. They turn back to what they are originally doing.)

IQ: (Whispering) I mean no. You probably won't get this, but while we are the creations, the children if you will, of the first humans, we are the creators of all of the emotions. You humans created us in a way by showing the first emotions, but after that we supply all of that specific emotion and distribute it to all the humans. They (points to Melo and Rage) supply anger and dramatics accordingly in your world. Get it?

Blake: (Whispering) Kind of. What about tapping?

IQ: (Whispering) We can tap into our reservoir of emotion or information and pass it to someone else. This means, for a short amount of time, the tap-e holds all of that emotion and it bubbles through them forcing them to feel a certain way. Do you understand?

Blake: (Whispering) Yes.

IQ: (Whispering) Good.

Blake: (Whispering) Except.

IQ: (Whispering) Except what?

Blake: (Whispering) Except why are we whispering?

IQ: (Whispering) This information is classified to a human. You could do serious harm to the whole world by harming an Emotion.

Blake: (Whispering) Stupid reason.

IQ: (Whispering) Deal with it. I'm hoping that your intellect can even begin to comprehend the problem that you have been forced to overcome.

Blake: (Whispering) Hey!

(Melo and Rage wander down toward IQ and Blake.)

IQ: (Whispering) Not now. Here they come.

Melo: I mean can't you two get along? I mean she is rather nice most of the time, except around you. I just don't get it. Do you know Quo?

IQ: One of life's mysteries. Though I honestly hope to solve that one. You two fight like a cat and a fox in a bag.

Rage: Yeah whatever.

Blake: Repressed-

Rage: Don't call me that! Nobody calls me that! Got it!

(Rage confronts Blake.)

Blake: Ok man. Ok, just calm down dude. Calm down. Now what should I call you then!

Rage: Rage. Nothing more nothing less, got it?

Blake: Got it. Come to think of it, what do I call you guys anyway? I never did figure that out.

IQ: I am Intelligence Quotient Wechsler at your service.

(IQ stands up and curtsies stiffly and then walks downstage right.)

Blake: As in IQ?

Melo: (Spitefully) The very same.

IQ: Yes. I am currently the Wechsler edition, though I seem to be out of style. Not enough people say I am valid anymore. I disagree. I am the part of the system for mathematics and sciences. There are others for other areas of logic and literature and so forth. We all stand united saying that an IQ test does have validity, even though others say that the test proves nothing.

Blake: But it doesn't. My mom told me that an IQ test only proves how well you can take an IQ test.

(Melo laughs)

IQ: I take it you're below average.

Blake: (Coldly) No. I scored a 110.

(The area of the stage that is lit should be less so now. Downstage right where the chairs are should be darkened. Nobody should notice this. Blake turns to Melo.)

Blake: (continued) And you're Mel.

Rage: No, he's Melo.

Blake: Really? He doesn't look very mellow. (Beat) In fact he is completely opposite.

IQ: Yes, he is quite dramatic.

Rage: Yeah.

Blake: Yeah. You're dramatic.

Melo: Well partially.

IQ and Rage: Completely.

Melo: No that is only part of my name. (Mumbling) Insensitive jerk!

Blake: What?

IQ: He's Melodramatic.

Blake: Didn't we just say that?

IQ: No, I mean yes. What I mean is umm. Could you give me a little help with this one Rage? It's kind of hard to explain.

Rage: (Mr. T-like) That's his name, fool!

Blake: His name is fool? Foolish?

Melo: How dare you! I never expected this from you. It is hard enough being alone here with only these two for company, but I never did anything against you!

IQ: Melodramatic!

Blake: Oh? (Politely) Kind of, I guess.

Melo: Kind of! Kind of! I am completely melodramatic. Don't you dare be-little me you little man!

IQ: Stop that. Can't you see he is not getting it?

Blake: (Unsure) Yeah, what she said.

Melo: Well he deserves everything I have said. All of my displeasure! ¡Tu pequeña persona estúpida con una nariz enorme! Mi nombre es Melodramatic.

Blake: What!

Rage: His name is Melodramatic! (Checks a fake watch) Congratulations you just beat the time of, nothing. You really are dumb.

Blake: (Straw that broke the camel's back) Hey! It's not my fault you guys have the stupidest names in the world! I'm not dumb. Whoever named you was an idiot! What am I saying? You guys are clearly lunatics!

Melo: Now that is not nice.

Blake: You know what, I don't care. I am just so sick of this. Goodbye (whispering) freaks.

(Blake walks downstage left where the chairs used to be.)

IQ: Wait! Don't walk into the shadow!

Rage: Stop!

(Rage rushes to him trying to stop him, but Blake walks into The Darkness. The entire stage goes black. In the blackout all of the actors get into position for the next scene.)

Woman's Voice: (In the black out) My boy, my precious son.

Doctor's Voice: (In the black out) We're losing him, quick stat!

(The sounds of a man trying to re-start a heart. There is also the sound of a static heart rate monitor. It fades away.)

Woman's voice: (In the blackout) I remember when you were just a little boy. Oh my little boy, and you would run all over the place on the farm. One day you got in with that horse. You nearly killed yourself then too. (She cries)

Doctor's voice: (In the blackout) Damn it. I swear I am not going to make him another statistic. Not another statistic.

Woman's voice: (In the blackout) (Crying) But now. Now you are in real trouble. I told you to not get into that car. Those boys were never good, but not you. You are a good boy.

(The sounds of a man trying to re-start a heart. There is also the sound of a static heart rate monitor. It fades away.)

Doctor's voice: (In the blackout) Come on just come on. You can do this. The crash was not that bad. Come on LIVE.

Woman's voice: (In the blackout) No, crying never did solve anything. WHEN you make it through this. No ifs. WHEN you make it through this. You are never street racing again. Come back to me my baby.

(The sounds of a man trying to re-start a heart. There is also the sound of a static heart rate monitor. It fades away. There is a three beats of silence, then the heart rate monitor starts again.)

Doctor's voice: (In the blackout) Yes! Yes. By God yes.

Woman's voice: (In the blackout) My little boy. Come back soon.

(The lights come back to normal. Rage does not have a jacket now. His jacket is slumped over by the chairs. Blake is on his back, and Rage is lying over top of him slightly. Melo is looking over him. IQ is sitting down desperately looking through a textbook. On the title of that textbook it says 'The Human Mind: Symbolic Images.' The light should be closer knit now, giving the appearance of all of them on an island.)

Blake: Where am I?

Melo: He's alive. Quick Quo. (Exasperated) Do something.

IQ: (Desperate) I'm looking this up. Give me a minute.

Blake: I'm fine. I'm fine, Mel.

(Blake rolls Rage off of him Rage groans, but otherwise appears ok.)

Blake: Did you guys hear that? Did you hear the whole thing?

IQ: Yes, yes, now don't stand up yet. We will fix this in a second. I just need to know everything I can about this shadow.

Blake: How did you know it was bad?

IQ: I just did. Didn't you sense it? The negative bleakness of the thing was giving me an odd sensation. I knew it could not be good.

Blake: Oh. Hey. What was that?

IQ: That my friend was a black curtain, a film of darkness that surrounds something. In this case it is surrounding the heart of itself, the shadow sometimes called The Darkness. Apparently it is supposed to mean that time is running out. What is running out? I don't know, but I think it relates to you, Blake, it must. The Darkness took over the area, when you went into the shadow. It was then that we heard your mother and the doctor.

Blake: How did I get back here?

Melo: Rage must have tapped you and brought you too. He went in right after you, and got you here. The tap must have stopped whatever was happening.

IQ: The freeze. It happens when beings are taken into The Darkness like that. The being eventually freezes up like they are water being frozen into an ice cube. Eventually The Darkness takes everything emotions, memories, personality, in some cases even their souls. It is everything that people hate and everything that we try to stop from happening. It is the pseudo-living embodiment of fear. It takes everything and transforms everything till there is nothing left. All that you have always felt afraid of is in there. It was once an emotion like Rage and Dramatic. Fear is perfectly healthy, but it is hard to control. Once a lot of emotions were like that. Jealousy, Sadness, Excitement, and even Rage was beginning to go like that. There wasn't a lot we could do about it. Humans were demanding more and more need for these emotions and there wasn't enough demand to be bottled up in one person. Eventually we found a way to trap most of the emotion into an object, and they didn't become like that shadow. Rage's jacket for example is one of those objects.

Melo: Quo what are you saying! You just destroyed everything that we kept secret that was a safety precaution for Rage and the others, since eternity!

Blake: I know about everything. IQ told me.

Melo: Oh no.

IQ: We have bigger fish to fry if you will pardon the cliché. Fear has surrounded us. If we don't act now it will devour us all. Do you know how dangerous that would be?

Melo: There would be no melodramatics.

IQ: Or mathematical intelligence.

Blake: Or anger.

IQ: Could you imagine that? Can you even begin to fully understand what would happen if that happened? What would happen to art or science or entertainment? People depend on us as much as they depend on religion or lack of in so many ways that you can understand. Without emotions or qualities such as intelligence or even the seven sins you would be lacking in human essence.

Blake: Well we have to do something then. I don't even care about this destruction of emotions. I don't want to die or to freeze or anything.

Melo: Me either. An emotional flat plane with no euphoric highs, or lows or anything, just nothing! (Hysterical) I can't do that! I can't die! Stop it, Quo!

IQ: It is technically not death for us Mel, well at least for me it is not death. I have nothing to loose, but I see your point. But you have to understand everything. Fear rejected her trap. She was too afraid of it to begin with. She was afraid of everything, had always been that poor girl, but now she was too afraid. Eventually her own fear overwhelmed her and took her. She lost everything to her single emotion. She collapsed in to her self. She took some others with her. Irrationality and craziness were taken by force. Usually she is pretty quiet, but sometimes she does emerge. Sometimes she needs to feed on anything she can.

Blake: Is that why she was trying to pull me? She was trying to feed on me?

IQ: Yes. When Rage got you and tried to bring you back. Fear tried to pull you back toward her center.

(Rage gets up sleepily. He is drowsy, and seems no longer like himself.)

Rage: (Daze-like) Is Blake all right?

Blake: I'm fine. Thank you. Thank you for saving me. How on earth were you able to save me? I mean you could have died! Why on earth did you try to save me?

Rage: Do I look heartless to you? I would never let her take anything be taken by that. Not even Mel or Hope.

Blake: Well thanks. I don't know what to say.

Rage: You're welcome.

(Melo and IQ look at each other oddly as if that had significance.)

Rage: (Continued) You're lucky I got out though. Whatever that was tried to bring me along in with you. It was pulling at my shoulders to let you go. Eventually it succeeded and everything went cold, and I had to grab you again.

IQ: Cold?

Rage: Yeah kind of like ice. Like I had gone into the middle of a snowstorm or something.

Melo: Umm Rage where is your jacket?

(IQ, Rage, and Blake realize the ramifications all very quickly. All three of them begin searching around the desk.)

Blake: Oh no.

Rage: This is really bad. Very bad!

IQ: What on earth!

Blake: Where is it?

Melo: (Unaware) What is it?

IQ: Think Mel! Rage's jacket is where all of the angry emotions are stored. Without it there is no anger or no control of it. It is unthinkable.

Melo: Oh. Can't the jacket operate itself?

Rage: It's not a conscious thing. Like you I release all of that emotion. The jacket just stores it.

Melo: Ok, then the world goes without Anger for a little while. Big deal. We'll find it eventually. I mean where could it have gone?

IQ: You're actually thinking rationally. Where could it have gone?

Blake: Umm I remember Rage wearing it when I left.

Melo: Me too.

IQ: Then that would mean that Rage lost it between here and there. What happened between there and here?

Blake: Well I walked into (realizing) ... shadow.

(There is a pause as that information is grasped into everyone.)

Rage: What does that mean?

IQ: It means you are in serious trouble. If we don't get that jacket quickly you could die.

Melo: But where is it - it in there?

(Rage closes his eyes and moves his arms around in front of him. Eventually his arm stops right where the jacket is located.)

Rage: There!

(A dim light goes on to the location of the jacket, but just enough for the audience to see it without hurting their eyes.)

Blake: I see it.

IQ: How do we get it back, though? That is the question.

Blake: Is there any way we can hook on to it?

IQ: And risk tearing it? If we do that then we have a huge problem. Because there will be no way to solve it. There is no way to fix it here alone. There would be an accident quite easily.

(Silence.)

Blake: Bad?

Rage: Bad. Look I will go get it. When I grab it I should be fine. I'll get the strength to bring it back.

Melo: What if you don't? What if you get stuck out there? Then we have a bigger problem. With both you and the jacket in the shadow who knows what could happen?

IQ: The same thing if one of them is caught, eventual chaos and mayhem. Totally irrational behavior even for humans.

Rage: Look, does anyone else have a better idea?

(There is pause and no one makes a sound.)

Rage: (Continued) Thought not.

(Rage takes a step and then falls down.)

Blake: Rage!

(Rage picks himself up.)

Melo: He's a fool. He is going to die out there.

IQ: What choice does he have? He will die if he doesn't get the jacket. Blake is still weak from the expedition before. I thought you hated him.

Melo: I don't hate him. I don't think I ever did. I don't like him, but I don't hate him. I don't want him to get hurt. I don't want him to die.

(Rage walks into The Darkness solemnly. The others do not say a word. He gets about half way there, and then stops for a beat. He then slowly gets over to the jacket and grabs it. His other hand is freezing up, and he can't get it on. He has no choice but to throw the jacket to the others, doing so he falls over onto the ground. He throws it, but the jacket only gets half way. Rage freezes up on the ground.)

Melo: No!

IQ: Still going. I can see it. The shadow is still moving in on us. I can feel it moving in on us.

Blake: What?

IQ: The Darkness. It is still growing. The jacket and Rage are not enough. It is still coming for us. I thought that they would be enough, but it appears it is not so.

Melo: You wanted this to happen! So you could save yourself?

IQ: No. I did not want this to happen. I think though that this has to be said. It is coming for you Blake.

Blake: What why me? What did I do?

IQ: Nothing. You are human and have a soul. We can only imitate souls or reflect them. It honestly can not effect us unless we stay a very long time in there, but with a soul who knows. This shadow is irrational. I think it is crazy enough to want a soul. Let alone have one and act on it.

Blake: My soul! Well it can't have my soul. It is mine.

IQ: (slightly sarcastic) Justly put, but it wants it just the same.

(IQ goes back to her desk and begins to read. There is a minute of silence. Melo and Blake look at each other.)

Melo: I'm going in.

IQ: In where? If you have not noticed we are trapped.

Melo: I know. I'm going to rescue him.

IQ: How? How on earth are you going to manage that?

Melo: If I get his jacket he should be all right, right. I mean it is not all of him being eaten just some of him. With the jacket the concept of Rage shall live right?

IQ: I don't know. It is worth a shot, but you can't get there and back. That is unrealistic. Heck I am surprised Rage even got to his jacket. The chances of getting to his jacket are ok, but can you need to bring it back or else he is a goner.

Melo: I don't know, but Rage sacrificed himself to get that jacket. If I can save it then I might be able to save him.

IQ: That's faulty logic.

Melo: (Melodramatically) I don't care. This is something I have to do.

Blake: But what if you hurt yourself. What if you cause problems?

Melo: You take risks right?

Blake: Yes.

Melo: A lot of risks?

Blake: Enough.

Melo: For yourself?

Blake: Only.

Melo: Then you wouldn't understand. These beings as much as I hate them and they hate me, are the only ones that can even bear to stand me.

Blake: But they hate you.

Melo: I don't know. They find me annoying and I find them annoying, but in the end they stay. They don't ignore me forever or try to send me away. They just don't want to be around me all the time, and even I know how hard it would be to around me twenty four seven. That is the only reason I understand, because I am around me forever. I have always been around me forever. I find myself annoying, but they still don't mind me as much as the others do. It's like they are my family.

Blake: I guess so.

Melo: So yeah. That is it.

(Melo goes out into The Darkness. He slows down rigidly, but grabs the jacket and throws it to Blake. He takes a step back and falls down as his legs have 'frozen', and he tries to crawl his way back. It does not work and he eventually freezes.)

Blake: (Shaking his head) He didn't even say goodbye.

IQ: Your point is what? Melodramatic did not say goodbye to Rage and apparently he is apart of his family. I don't have a family. I never had. I am an island, and I am fine with that. I am fine with everything. I am perfectly at peace with myself.

Blake: I don't believe that.

IQ: Suit yourself.

Blake: I mean when Melo taunted you, you reacted. You disliked being made fun of. You wanted to get revenge.

IQ: Your point?

Blake: You have emotions.

IQ: I do not. That would make me irrational. I have never been irrational.

Blake: You have emotions. Perhaps you can't admit it to yourself. Perhaps you hide them from yourself, and can't control them. I think you are afraid of showing them. I think you are afraid of showing that you do have emotions.

IQ: I do not have emotions. I have lived for a millennia or so. Why should it change now?

(Without an answer IQ opens up a textbook, and begins reading.)

(Blake walks over to the desk. He is determined to show that IQ does have emotion.)

Blake: You do have emotions. You are going to have to face that fact one-day.

(The lines should intermingle and the idea is that Blake is talking and IQ is ignoring him. Eventually the idea is that they are speaking at exactly the same time, but at an incredible speed and volume.)

IQ: (Recites fact) Deer mice don't have collarbones. They use this adaptation to hide and escape through incredibly small cracks from a quarter of an inch high or above.

Blake: Hello? Are you listening? This won't work.

IQ: (Recites fact) The dwarf sea horse is one-point three inches.

Blake: You will have to admit that you have emotions sometime. If you don't you really are a half-wit. Intelligence AND emotional maturity equal true wisdom.

IQ: (Recites fact) The peregrine falcon has been able to dive at the speed of 349 kilometers per hour and always dives in a forty-five degree angle.

Blake: This really is not healthy. You know my grandfather always said that it is best to face your fears then to live a lie. Since you've lived forever and are likely to live forever, wouldn't it be best to live your life without being targeted as someone who lies to herself, only to fit your narrow minded thinking of what true intelligence can really be?

IQ: (Recites fact) The sperm whale can dive underwater to a depth of about eight thousand two hundred feet.

Blake: Isn't it better to be yourself than something you are not? I mean how much can you take before your mind snaps from fact overload.

IQ: (Recites fact) The Russels Vulture can fly at an altitude of about thirty thousand seven hundred feet. It is the highest any creature anyone can go without technology or dying.

Blake: How much can you take before you wind up doing something you can't explain with rational behavior?

IQ: (Bursting) Hypocrite! You want to talk about snapping! How dare you. All you do all your life is follow orders! You take them from your parents, teachers, friends, family, and even the next-door neighbor with the really bad comb-over! If you want to talk about fitting in you should take a look in a compact and look at yourself. How can you go on, and on, and on about everything! About not lying to yourself and your friends when you are living a lie. You are Blake, but you can't be distinguished from the mundane crowd and deep down that bothers you. It bothers you so much that you are willing to do anything to let it out. Anything even if it means harming others! Even if it means harming yourself! You could have died street racing, and you know it too! But you don't care! You needed to find a way to escape, to explore! And that is why you are here! You are here, because you didn't care enough about creating your own complexities! You could have killed someone street racing! You nearly killed yourself. Don't you realize it Blake? Don't you know why you are here with us? Don't you know that this is all in your head?

Blake: In my head?

IQ: Yes, in your head! You hit your head. Your body is dying outside! You nearly killed yourself completely, and why? Why do you do all this? Why? Because, because, you are too contained. Contained by your own fear, yes I mean that, to let yourself be free! All you do is conform into a reality that you don't like, but are too afraid to change. It is one thing to be chained to an area, a desk, or an idea, but to be forced into living a life, which you hate and can't escape, like me, and it, is another thing to place that chain around yourself and wear the key around your neck. You are

better than that, and you know it too. So don't you dare, don't you have the guts to talk to me snapping! This is entirely your problem! Now fix it.

Blake: (In tears) It is all my fault! It is all my fault!

IQ: (Still angry) Grow up. You showed me that I had emotion. Well I am going to show you that I can use it! You need to get out of here as soon as humanly possible. The shadow is getting closer. If you don't figure it out they (reference Melo and Rage) will die. They will become nothing, and their attributes will no longer happen on the human plane.

Blake: (Angry) Would that be so bad?

IQ: (Calming down) Yes it would be. Without the passion of anger or the silliness of melodramatics you people, you humans would be drab. You would be boring and uninteresting. Lack of entertainment alone would cause you to go insane eventually. Knowing that would drive you insane, and you know it too!

Blake: I need to go home. If I do that the shadow would leave, right?

IQ: No it wouldn't. The shadow responds to fear. I was afraid of it and so it came for me. As long as humans need fear or use fear it will live, but if you recognize fear as it is. Something that is controllable, and not something that can control you! You can understand what this shadow is. What your shadow is. Everything negative about you feeds off of fear. You have to treat it as nothing. You have to treat your fearful thoughts as nothing, but irrational ideas that respond to or are created by fear. This entire scene, the characters, and even you are governed by your thoughts and emotions. You were stuck here because of your fear. I don't know what fears though.

Blake: That is why I couldn't leave before, because I was still curious. I was still curious about you guys. I was still curious about this place. I was still curious about everything. About why, I was even curious about the shadow. About fear itself, even.

IQ: Yes, yes. Even the shadow is also only in your head. Can you see that? Can you do this? Can you face this shadow? Like you made me face my own lies. Can you face the fact that emotions don't rule you, but you rule them? That you can be as intelligent, creative, or even as angry as you ever imagined, but not at the expense of feeding your fears?

Blake: (Breaking down) No. I can't. How can I?

IQ: (Kindly) Faith, faith in yourself. You showed me that I was real. That I was more than just a bunch of facts, that I had all the possibilities to be real and have emotions. You showed me how I could be human, because you had faith in me. You had faith in yourself too. Trust yourself Blake. This is only what you make it to be. The shadow can be anything you want it to be. It can even be light if you want. Face it.

(The sound effect of wind whistling through the rocks is heard.)

IQ: (continued) Your shadow calls you. It wants to change almost as much as I wanted to change. Teach it to change. Force it to change. Face it! Fear is only what you have. Even fear of fear itself is pointless, because fear is nothing. Fear is what you create. If you can face that then you will be fine.

(Blake nods to IQ solemnly, and begins to walk to the center of the stage where he first started the play. He is stopped.)

IQ: Wait!

(Blake turns. IQ throws the jacket to Blake.)

IQ: (continued) Give this to Rage. He needs it right now, who knows what will happen when the shadow leaves and he is without it. Remember the jacket and him are knit together. If one goes completely so does the other one.

Blake: Right. What about Melo?

IQ: If you hurry I can get him all right. He hasn't been in there for too long, and believe me he has a lot of stuff to drain before even changing a fraction of himself.

Blake: Right. Thank you. Thank you for everything.

IQ: No thank you. You showed me something that I could not reach without you. I am just returning the favor.

Blake: Well goodbye.

(Blake turns and faces the shadow. Blackout. Exit all, except Melo who walks to the downstage center when everyone is clear. A spotlight occurs where he was standing. He is breaking the fourth wall.)

Melo: I would like to formally apologize to everyone about the supposed repeated use of quotes and lines from other people's plays, poetry, novels, and short stories. I apologize extensively for any damage I have done in any way shape or form. Please know that it was in jest as opposed to sarcasm. A deep and heart felt apology to the following brilliant composers of words. In no particular order they are John Keats, William Blake, Robert Frost, T.S Elliot, Anne Bradstreet, Sir Walter Scott, Erin Moure, Edgar Allan Poe, C.S. Lewis, Emily Dickinson, Alfred Lord Tennyson, and William Shakespeare. I apologize profusely and from the heart and now another completely original piece by me Melodramatic, though those cads that call themselves artistic critics will dare deny its clear brilliance. This should sum up our experience completely.

(Melo takes out a tuner, and then blows a few notes. Melo then recite the poem.)

Melo: (continued) "The Meadow and I Two: Revenge of the Wit"

Melo: (continued) A completely original poem by me, thank you very much.

Melo: (continued) If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended:
That you have but slumbered here,
While these visions did appear;
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,

Thank you. thank you! You are too kind. I really was here all evening. (ect)

Rage: Come on and get over here. We have a ladder accident in two minutes, a human female this time. You wanted to play the character of Rage this time right? You have to get ready soon then. Now get out of character and get over hear.

Melo: Yes.

Rage: Then get over here! We don't have much time! (To the audience) Bye everyone.

Melo: Jeez bossy. Anyway where was I?

IQ: We're waiting on you.

Melo: I'm coming. I'm coming.

IQ: (To the audience) Best of luck to you all.

Melo: Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow.

Blake and IQ: (Yelling) Now!

Melo: Coming.

(Melo begins to exit and leaves the spotlight. Then he turns and looks at the crowd and smiles. He hurries back, checks over each shoulder, and then takes a deep bow. The spotlight turns off, before Melo can rise from his bow. After which exits Melo in the dark.)

THE END

A Pleasant Solution



by Eric Smith

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The fee for a single production of this play will be \$20.00

Pleasant Solution

Dramatis Personae

Captive – A 30-ish white male.
Gary – A middle-aged white male, slightly ratty-looking.
Psycho – A punk in his 20s.
Serj – An Indo-European man.
Roommate
Police Chief
Several Police officers (One at the very least)
Reporter

Stage is designed to resemble an old apartment building. There are two rooms in the apartment: the larger SL room is connected to the SR room by a center stage door. The SR room is furnished with a table with two chairs on either end. A door within sight of the audience leads to backstage. This is the front door to the apartment. The room cannot be entered from SR. The SL room has a cupboard and a single chair in it and can be entered from backstage.

Captive awakens in SL room, bound in a chair. He is flanked by Gary, Psycho, and Serj. Psycho is carrying a pistol. At this point, the SR room is unlit.

Gary- Are you awake? Good. You're safe as long as you shut up and stay still. Here's the deal. You've been abducted. As long as everyone in Washington cooperates, you'll be out of here soon and we'll be on our way.

Captive- What? Oh my God. What's going on?

Serj- He wants to know what's going on.

Gary- I'm not deaf. *(To Captive)* I've told you everything you need to know.

Captive- Wha-? Why me? What did I do?

Gary- It's nothing personal, congressman. It's just that people will pay of money a lot for someone as important as you.

Captive- Woah. Woah! Congressman? You got the wrong guy! I'm just a tourist! I'm only in town for the weekend! It's not me-

Psycho- He's trying to sucker you, man.

Captive- No! Please, I'm not who you're looking for. Honestly!

Gary thinks for a moment.

Gary- Serj, check his wallet.

Serj reaches into captive's pocket and produces his wallet. He flips through it.

Serj- It says Lucas Campbell.

Psycho- It's a fake ID!

Gary is getting very agitated.

Gary- Excuse us for a moment. Jonathan, come here a minute.

Psycho- My name's Psycho, man!

Psycho follows Gary off SL. Serj is casually slouching against the wall. Captive is starting to calm down.

Serj- So, ah... what do you do? Since your not a congressman, I mean.

Captive- *(Silent for a moment)* Um, I'm in computers....

Serj- What, like programming and stuff?

Captive- No... web, uh... web design.

Serj- Cool, cool... you like a hacker or anything?

Captive- What? No!

Serj- Right, that's cool. Just wondering. So, ah, where you from?

Captive- What is this, a pub? What the hell do you care?

Serj- *(hurt)* Hey, I was just asking. You don't have to be so mean about it.

Captive- *(Sighs)* Look, I'm sorry.

Serj- If you were sorry, you wouldn't have said it.

Captive- Fine, I'm from Edmonton, OK? Is that what you wanted to know?

Serj- It doesn't matter.

Gary and Psycho re-enter the room SL. Both are agitated.

Gary- Alright, alright... we got the wrong guy. This idiot didn't know who the he was looking for.

Psycho- Look, man, you didn't give me a picture of the target!

Gary- Didn't give you a picture of the target?! We've been planning this for months!

Serj- ...weeks...

Gary- Okay, fine, we've been planning it for a week or so. It doesn't matter; you were supposed to know what the target looked like! You numbskull, you couldn't find your own backside with both hands.

Psycho- Hey! You didn't recognize him either, huh? You should'a known what the guy looked like if you're so friggin' smart!

Gary- Look, let's not play the blame game. We've got to deal with the situation we have. We missed the original target. Instead we have a less valuable captive who is not going to get us nearly as much money.

Captive- Huh! Thanks a lot!

Gary- What?

Captive- I don't think I'm any less valuable than some congressman!

Gary- Well, yeah, you are.

Serj- That's kinda mean to say, Gary.

Gary- Who's side are you on? And don't use my real name. Call me Mr. Black.

Captive snorts in laughter.

Gary- What? What's your problem?

Captive- (*mocking*) Oh, nothing, Mr. Black.

Gary- What's wrong with Mr. Black?

Captive- It's just kinda, you know, kinda cheesy.

Gary- Really? Well, does this situation seem cheesy to you, kid? The name is Mr. Black. Anyway, as I was saying, we're stuck with this guy. He's not worth nearly as much as the congressman, but we'll take what we can get.

Psycho- Let's just waste the weasel.

Serj- Jonathan, how could you even say that? How would you feel if someone said that about you?

Captive- Slightly concerned!

Gary- Shut it! Alright, kid, is anyone in town with you?

Captive- No.

Psycho- He's lying! I can see it in his eyes!

Gary- How soon before anyone realizes you're missing?

Captive- Four, ah, five days before I'm supposed to go home.

Gary- Alright. When that happens, your family will call the police and we can make our demands. Until then, we wait!

Silence as everyone stands around. The silence is painfully long, then:

Serj- How about we just call the police?

Gary- Yeah, okay.

Lights fade. They come up again on Police Chief, who is standing front-center stage. Set behind him is unlit.

Chief- Awright men, listen up. Half an hour ago, we received a call from a Mr. Black. *(Snickering, either from officers in audience or recorded over sound system. Chief smiles)* Yeah, yeah, I know, but this is serious business. Mr. Black has kidnapped a tourist and is demanding \$200,000 for his life. We don't know who the captive is. We don't know where they are.

A police officer calls from the back of the audience.

Officer- Have they contacted the family?

Chief- No, we don't think so. They made the demands to directly to us. For all we know, there may not even be a hostage.

An officer calls (It can be the same one).

Officer- They're making demands to us? Do they expect the police department to pay the ransom?

Chief- I don't know. I get the feeling that Mr. Black hasn't any idea of what he's doing.

Lights fade. They come up again on Captive, who is still bound to a chair in the SL room. He is alone. He looks around a few times, then stands up, revealing that whoever bound his hands did not bind him to the chair. He walks over to the SR door and tries to open it with his bound hands. It is locked. Heavy footsteps are heard from SL. Captive quickly runs back to the chair and assumes his original bound position. Psycho walks in SL. Captive smiles sweetly and looks very innocent.

Psycho- I'm watching you, man. Don't you try anything funny. If I was in charge, we'd 'a wasted you by now, so you'd better be glad that, uh... that I'm not in charge.

Captive- You don't scare me, you witless nut!

This really ticks Psycho off.

Psycho- Does this scare you, jerk-off?

Psycho dramatically whips the pistol out of his pocket. He does it with such gusto that it flies out of his hand and slides to a stop near Captive. Captive dives out of the chair and toward the gun. Psycho, who suddenly looks terrified, dives for the gun. Captive is able to turn over on the ground and grabs the pistol behind his back in his bound hands so it is upside down. He kneels on the ground with his back facing Psycho who is backing off to SL.

Captive- Ha ha! You should learn how to tie a decent knot! (In a deep, mocking voice)
Outwitted!

Suddenly, the center stage door opens and Gary and Serj walk in. They both are holding grocery bags and Serj is noisily slurping on a large slurpee. Gary sees what is going on and pulls out a pistol of his own. Serj stops slurping.

Gary- Drop it.

He drops his gun.

Psycho- Ha! (Deep, mocking voice) Re-outwitted!

Psycho grabs the gun in one hand and Captive's collar in the other and shoves the gun into his temple. Gary and Serj put their bags down on the cupboard.

Gary- How the hell did he get your gun, Jon?

Psycho- He's fast, man. He snatched it right out of my hands. *(Quietly)* And my name's Psycho.

Captive makes a noise and rolls his eyes. Suddenly, there is KNOCKING at the backstage door in the SR room and the lights go up in the SR room. Everyone freezes except for Serj, who walks over to answer it. Gary tenses up and grabs at him.

Gary- What the hell are you doing?

Serj- Don't worry, it's pro'ly just my roommate.

Gary- Roommate? You didn't say you had a roommate!

Serj- You never asked! You just said you wanted to use my apartment for the day!

There is knocking again. Gary motions for everyone to be quiet.

Gary- *(Sweetly)* Who is it?

Roommate is heard from offstage.

Roommate- Hey, Serj, open up man, I'm hungry!

Gary- Serj doesn't live here, go away.

Roommate- What? Who is that? Who's in there?

Serj- No one!

Roommate- Serj? Is that you? What's going on, open up!

Serj looks at Gary helplessly. Gary sighs and pulls out his pistol. Serj's eyes open wide and he waves his hands, "No way". Gary unlocks the door and Roommate pushes it open and walks in. Gary raises his pistol.

Gary- Don't say a word.

Gary trails off as Roommate walks right past him and into the second room, where Psycho still has the pistol shoved against Captive's head.

Roommate sees this and then rummages through the grocery bags without reacting. Suddenly he stops and looks over to Psycho and Captive. There is a pause.

Roommate- Hey.

Beat.

Psycho- Hey.

Roommate produces a banana from the bag and starts chowing down. Gary comes through the door with Serj in tow. The lights in the SR room fade out.

Gary- Alright, funny guy, don't move. You're in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Serj- Come on, Gary, we don't have to...

Psycho- Who is this guy?

Serj- He's my roommate. Hey man, I, ah, I think you should probably head off. I need the place to myself today.

Roommate- Huh! It's my place too, Serj. I'll just stay out of the way of your friends. Don't worry, you won't even notice me.

Gary- That's it, shut up and sit down. We're taking you hostage.

Roommate- Woah. Really?

Psycho- It's too dangerous, man! That'll be two hostages and only three of us! Hell no, man! Hell no! Let's just kill 'im! We can wipe him out and walk away!

Gary- Jonathan, we aren't going to...

Psycho- No! This is too screwed up man! It's way too screwed up! The plan's gone to hell! Game over, man! Game over! Let's just waste them both and run! We... we can run to the Mexican border and start a new life! It's the only option!

Gary- Jonathan!

Psycho- (*Screaming*) MY NAME IS PSYCHO!

Roommate- Really! Wouldn't have guessed.

Lights fade. They come up again on the Police Chief, who is standing front-center stage.

Chief- Right, boys, I've got some more info on the kidnapping. The hostage's name is Lucas Campbell. At least that's what Mr. Black is saying. We still don't know where he's from and we can't find his family. A negotiator was just talking to Mr. Black and they have agreed to talk in person. We'll be going with the negotiator, but we do not enter the building unless something goes wrong. That's it, officers. Suit up.

Lights fade and come up again on the SL room. Captive and Roommate are bound together back to back. None of the captors are present. Roommate begins singing the final verse of HOTEL CALIFORNIA by the Eagles. Captive is becoming more agitated as Roommate begins singing louder and louder. When the verse ends, the Roommate suddenly bursts into the guitar solo, emulating the instrument with his voice with offensive volume and intensity.

Captive- Alright, Alright, shut up! For God's sake...

Roommate- Sorry, man. Hey, you ever been held hostage before?

Captive- (Snorts) No!

Roommate- Yeah, yeah, me neither... It's not so great. Kind of disappointing, actually.

Captive- What were you expecting? Dinner and a show?

Roommate- (Sarcastic) Oh hey! Sarcasm! Good for you, that's really funny No, I just thought that it would be a bit more exciting, y'know? We're just kinda sitting here. It's boring.

Gary (pistol in his belt), Psycho (pistol in hand), and Serj enter from SL.

Roommate- Ooo, maybe I spoke too soon! This looks exciting.

Gary- Alright guys, the negotiator is going to get here soon. If everything goes right, we'll have our money and be out of here by tomorrow.

Psycho- Just doesn't feel right, man. You let that negotiator in here and I bet you we're all dead within the hour! Say something wrong and BAM! The SWAT kicks down the door, hostages are gone, money's gone, and we're full of 9mm rounds! It's screwed up man!

Serj- Wait, Gary, what is the plan now? I don't think it was a good idea that you agreed to meet the negotiator, now the police know where we are.

Gary- Don't worry about it, I've got a plan. Just let me do the talking when the negotiator gets here. And from here on out, refer to me as Mr. Black. We gotta keep my identity safe.

Captive- Uh, keep your identity safe? Isn't the negotiator going to see your face anyway?

Gary- I've just about had enough of you, kid. If you weren't going to get me a hell of a lot of money, I'd let Psycho do whatever he wanted to you.

Psycho smiles. There is KNOCKING at the apartment door and lights go up in the SR room. The negotiator is heard from offstage.

Negotiator- Mr. Black? It's me, Michael. We talked on the phone. Are you there?

Gary- Uh, yeah! *(quietly)* Alright, everyone stays in this room and keeps quiet. I'll be back.

Gary walks through the door to the SR room. SL lights fade with other players still on stage. They all freeze (In most situations, actor should freeze when their room is unlit). Gary opens the apartment door and reveals the negotiator.

Negotiator- *(Offers a handshake)* Good evening, Mr. Black. Is everything still going okay?

Gary shakes his hand. They both sit at the table.

Gary- Yeah, we're alright.

Negotiator- Is Lucas safe?

Gary- Yeah, he's safe. Listen, Mike... can I call you Mike? Is that fine?

Negotiator- Mike is fine.

Gary- You don't prefer Michael?

Negotiator- Mike is fine, Mr. Black.

Gary- Okay. Anyway, Michael, we gotta talk. I've taken a second hostage.

Negotiator freezes up.

Negotiator- Is... is the second hostage safe?

Gary- Yeah, he's safe.

Negotiator- Who is he, Mr. Black?

Gary- He lives here. Uh... I don't know his name. I can go get it.

Negotiator- I've checked the file on this apartment. His name is Serj.

Gary- Uh, no... he's not Serj. That's not his name.

Negotiator- Are you sure? Serj Kocharian is the only person who lives in this apartment.

Lights fade on SR room and go up on SL room. Roommate and Captive are still bound on the ground. Serj and Psycho are nearby. Psycho still brandishes a pistol.

Serj- Hey, Psycho, I've got to go to the bathroom. I'll be back in a minute.

Psycho- Be quick, man. I don't trust this new guy. He's gonna try to take us for a ride. Why didn't you mention him before he arrived?

Serj- I just didn't think of it.

Roommate- Yeah, man, I don't know what's going on here.

Serj- You gotta calm down, Jonathan. Why don't you put that gun away? Give it to me.

Psycho looks suspicious.

Psycho- No way. You just hurry up and get back soon.

Serj shrugs and exits SL. Captive turns talks to Roommate quietly.

Captive- Something's going on here. Something's not right.

Roommate now seems serious.

Roommate- Just shut up and don't move. Not a noise.

Captive- What? What's going on?

Psycho- Hey! No talking.

As Psycho talks, Serj walks back on SL with two machine pistols, both with silencers. He points one at Psycho.

Serj- Drop it or you're dead.

Captive- Oh my god.

Psycho turns to Serj but does not raise his gun.

Psycho- Serj?! You double-crossing piece of....

Serj- Drop it, Jon.

Psycho drops the pistol. Serj bashes Psycho with his pistol and he falls senseless to the ground!

Roommate- Untie me, Serj. Hurry up.

Serj- Right.

Serj walks over to the two captives and unties Roommate. When he finishes, he gives the second machine pistol to Roommate.

Captive- Wait! Aren't you... didn't he... what the hell are you doing?!

Roommate- Quiet down. Serj, what's going on? This isn't the right guy.

Serj- Yeah, I know. The idiot (*he gestures to Psycho*) got him instead of the congressman.

Roommate- Damn! The negotiator's here now too... that means the police have the place surrounded.

Captive- What is this? Are you going to let me go?

Serj- No, no... you stay here. (*Talking to Roommate*) We can take Gary and Jonathan hostage now and get some more money, or hold them hostage until we get transportation to Mexico. This can still work if we can only get Gary away from the negotiator before they strike a deal.

Roommate- Congressman or no, we can get a lot of cash for all three of them!

Gary calls from SR room.

Gary- Serj! Come here!

Serj- (yells) Ah, I can't right now. Why don't you come here??

Gary- Get your ass in here!

Roommate shrugs. Gary walks into the SR room. Lights fade in the SL room and go up in the SR room. During the SL blackout, Psycho should be moved against the wall and bound.

Serj- Yeah, boss?

Gary- Who the hell is that in there? Michael here says that you're the only one who lives here.

Serj makes eye contact with the Negotiator and is getting visibly nervous.

Serj- No, he's my roommate. He just moved in. We've, ah... we've taken him hostage.

Negotiator- (Knows something is wrong) Serj, this is your apartment?

Serj- Yes, sir.

Negotiator- What are the names of your hostages?

Serj- Lucas Campbell and... Dan.

Negotiator- Dan who?

Serj- Smith.

Negotiator- I see. Mr. Black, if you wouldn't mind, I'd like to ask Serj here some questions. Would you excuse us?

Gary- Uh... yeah. Ok. I'll just go into the back room.

Gary gets up and goes to the door. Serj sits down. As Gary opens the door, he is still facing the SR room, looking at Serj. The lights fade in the SR room and go up in the SL room as Gary walks through the door. In the SL room, Captive is bound on the ground. Roommate is on the far side of the room with his gun pointed at Gary and a finger to his lips, urging silence. Psycho is propped against the wall. As Gary closes the door, he turns and sees the situation.

Gary- What the...?

Roommate- Silence. Sit.

Gary- Dammit, Serj, you back-stabber!

Captive- Sit down, Gary, don't get us killed.

*Gary puts his hands on the back of his head and kneels on the ground.
Roommate walks over and binds him, removing the pistol from his belt.*

Gary- Hmm! So what are you going to do now, "roomie"? Now that you're in charge, do you have a plan?

Roommate- Of course, what do you take me for? We can get a car and the money now, give one of you back as a sign of goodwill, and keep the other two until we reach Mexico.

Captive- I respectfully volunteer to be the first one released!

Gary- Ha! It'll never work! You'll be dead before you reach the car.

Roommate- I know from experience that it works more often than you'd think. And I'm sure you had a better plan!

Gary- Never underestimate the unfathomable genius of Mr. Black!

Roommate- I'm getting tired of listening to your drivel, be quiet.

After a few moments, Captive says quietly to Gary:

Captive- So, was your plan any better than his?

Gary- No, mine was pretty much the same.

Lights fade on SL and go up on SR where Negotiator and Serj are seated at the table.

Negotiator- I ask you again, Mr. Kocharian, who is the second hostage?

Serj- I've told you a hundred times! His name is Dan Smith! Look, I'm sick of this.
(Yelling to the SL room) HEY! How's it going in there?

Roommate- *(SL)* Uh, fine! Everything's under control!

Serj- Get in here man!

The door to SL room opens and Roommate walks through with his gun at his side.

Negotiator- Is this another one of your men?

Roommate- Yeah, you can call me Mr. Black.

Negotiator- Sorry, what?

Serj- No, dude, Gary's already Mr. Black.

Roommate- What? Oh yeah, I forgot, sorry. Uh, call me Mr. Green.

Negotiator- No problem. Most criminals like to call themselves Mr. Black. It's a very popular alias.

Roommate- Ya don't say?

Serj- Alright, let's get down to business. Michael, Mr. Green and I have taken control of the situation. We have taken Lucas Campbell, and Gary – Mr. Black, that is – and one of his men as hostages. We are demanding \$200,000 for each of their lives, that is \$600,000 total, and a car capable of seating five with a full tank of gas. We will release one hostage when the car and money arrive, and the other two when we and the money reach Mexico. Comprene?

Negotiator- Yes, I understand, but who do you expect to pay the money?

Serj- The families, or the government. We don't care, just have the money by Sunday or we execute a hostage.

Negotiator- Mr. Green, you are going to a whole new level if you kill a hostage. Are you sure you want that?

Roommate- Just get the damn money and we won't have to worry about it.

Negotiator- I should go inform the others of these developments. I can call you afterwards and touch base. Is that alright?

Serj- Yeah, get out of here.

The negotiator exits through the door to backstage. Serj locks it.

Serj- Now we wait.

Lights fade. They come up again on the Police Chief, who is standing front-center stage.

Chief- Okay, we've... we've got some interesting developments in the case. I've just spoken to the negotiator who was talking with Mr. Black and it seems that there

has been a shift of power within the apartment. The owner of the apartment, Serj Kocharian, and an unidentified man have taken Mr. Black and his accomplice hostage. That's not all either. The boys at the station have been trying to find the first hostage's family. It seems that Lucas Campbell is the CEO of an oil drilling company and is worth hundreds of millions of dollars. His left toenail is more valuable than the other two captives combined. Luckily, Kocharian and his buddy don't know that... yet.

A police officer calls from the back of the audience.

Officer- Is Mr. Campbell's company willing to pay for his ransom?

Chief- Uh, no, actually. You see, they come out on top if Mr. Campbell is murdered. Some insurance clause or something. They also said the publicity would be good... I dunno. Our main concern is getting those people out of there, no matter what. The negotiator is going up again to give a counter-proposal. Stay sharp, boys... this could get crazy.

Lights go down and come up the SL room. Captive is bound on the ground, Gary is bound to the chair, Roommate is leaning against the SR wall near the door to the SR room. Serj is standing SL. Psycho is still against the wall.

Serj- Come on, when is that negotiator going to get back?

Captive- What's the matter – bored?

Serj- Shut up.

Roommate- Better get used to it, Serj. There's going to be a lot of waiting before we get the money. They'll wait right until the end before they give it over, and they'll try to make deals right up until the end. Just make sure you never give them any room. Don't budge an inch from our demands.

Captive- You won't get any of that money! Just give up now and you'll end up in jail instead of a coffin.

Serj- Jail? There's no way I'm going to jail. I need this... This is my one chance for happiness! I've been working since I could hold a broom, and what do I have? A dirty little apartment that I can't even pay for anymore? I got nothing! You can't make it in this country if you're a foreigner... I'm as American as Gary or the negotiator or the goddamn president! I've lived here since I was a baby, but I'm still spit on, stepped all over. Me and my family have found nothing here. The American dream.... It's a goddamn lie. If you want to be happy, if you want money, you gotta do something about it. This... this is the only way I can be

happy, be free. I will not go to jail if we fail. "Live free or die", they say. That's what I intend to do. Live free or die.

Gary- You're a frigging lunatic.

A PHONE RINGS.

Serj- I'll get that. Watch them.

Roommate- Sure.

Serj exits SL.

Captive- So, you got a big story 'bout why you're doing this?

Roommate- Like that drama-queen Serj? No... I just like money. Serj... he may be all riled up about how life isn't fair and all that, and he's committed, but he doesn't know what he's doing. Not really. Me, I do this for a living. This ain't my first job. Kidnapping, trafficking... ah, why the hell am I telling you all of this? Should keep my mouth shut.

Serj re-enters SL.

Roommate- What's the word?

Serj- Ah, he's trying to strike up a new deal. He's coming up to talk.

Roommate- I said don't move an inch, Serj! *(There is knocking at the apartment door)* Dammit, I'll go talk to him. You can't screw this up now by caving in.

Serj- I can do this myself.

Roommate- No, you can't. This is the first big job you've done, and you gotta smarten up. I'll do the talking.

Roommate walks through the door to the SR room.

Serj- Dammit.

Captive- He's really pushing you around.

Serj- That lowlife, he's just in this to make some extra cash. He doesn't need it.

Captive- It sounds like you're the one who really needs it, Serj. You should be out there talking to that negotiator, not that guy.

Serj- Yeah, but he knows better than I do. He's done more jobs than me.

Gary- He sounds like an idiot to me.

Captive- What do you say, Serj? You should go take control.

Serj- You're right. You... you better not move a muscle until I get back.

Serj jogs over to the door and goes through to the SR room.

Gary- (chuckles) Smooth talking, Mr. Campbell!

Captive- Thanks, now let's find a way out of here.

Lights go down on SL room and up on the SR room. Roommate and Negotiator are seated and Serj is standing. He raises his gun to Negotiator.

Serj- Get up. I'm taking you hostage.

Negotiator- What?!

Roommate- You're kidding me.

The gun spins onto Roommate.

Serj- You too. Put the gun down and get up.

Roommate puts the gun down and stands up. Serj grabs the gun, gestures for Negotiator to get up and leads them into the SL room. Lights go down on the SR room and up on the SL room. As before with Gary, they do not see the situation in this room until they have entered. Gary and Captive have freed themselves and liberated the guns previously carried by Gary and Psycho. They have the guns raised at the new arrivals. Psycho has been freed and is coming to. Captive is helping him to his feet as Serj and the others enter.

Serj- Oh...

Gary- Brilliant planning, Serj, leaving us unattended! (He sees that both Roommate and Negotiator are now captives) Umm, why, why are those two looking rather oppressed?

Serj- Um...

Captive- You forgot to tell him to give us the gun!

Gary- Oh, yeah. Give us the gun.

Psycho is on his feet. He reaches into his pocket and pulls a knife out of his pocket. He grabs Captive and holds the knife to his throat.

Psycho- Someone tell me what's going on or I'll cut him!

Captive- It's cool, Psycho, Serj betrayed you but now we've got him!

Serj grabs Negotiator and puts his gun to his head.

Captive- DAMMIT!

Serj points his gun at Captive. Reacting, Gary points his gun at Serj. Seeing an opening, Roommate advances on Gary. Captive stops him by pointing his gun at him.

Negotiator- Now, let's not overreact here, guys. I'm a professional negotiator and I'm sure that we can reach an agreement here...

Roommate- What do you suggest?

Negotiator- Well, ah... first, what is it that we all want here?

Serj, Roommate, Gary, Psycho- Money.

Negotiator- Is that all? Does anyone want anything other than money?

Captive- I want to go home.

Negotiator- I see. I think I have a pleasant solution that will leave us all happy... If you let me go I'll tell you all how to make millions of dollars.

Sounds of mistrust from others, with of course a death threat from Psycho. Captive is looking uneasy.

Negotiator- Lucas Campbell is the CEO of a huge oil company and is worth millions of dollars!

Everyone looks at Captive.

Captive- No one asked.

Lights fade. They come up again on the REPORTER behind a desk.

Reporter- The kidnapping of Heartland Oil CEO Lucas Campbell has ended this hour with all suspects escaping custody. Campbell himself was not harmed in the ordeal. In a disturbing press release, Police Chief Arnold Holtken has revealed that the kidnapping was planned and executed by police officer Michael Willis, the department's chief negotiator. Willis contacted police earlier this hour and revealed that he has been planning the operation for months and has assembled a crack squad of four con-men, one of who has been identified as Armenian Serj Kocharian. It is unknown if the kidnapers have received any money, but Heartland Oil has said that it bravely refused to negotiate with the terrorists despite their deep concern for their CEO. Coming up after the break, we ask: Serj Kocharian... Landed Immigrant, or Al-Qaeda operative? Later in the program, we discuss the White House's decision to raise the Homeland Security Advisory System from sweet, calming blue to violent, terrifying orange and it's relation to the kidnapping. You're watching KNS News, because you never know where it will happen next.

Lights fade.

Right Foot Red



by Taryn Hesketh

Caution: Professionals and Amateurs are hereby warned that "Right Foot Red" by Taryn Hesketh is subject to royalty. It is protected under Copyright Law. Inquiries regarding performance rights and royalties should be directed to: Taryn Hesketh at
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The fee for a single production of this play will be \$20.00

Right Foot Red

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This play was written in the Winter of 2005/6 D/S 12 Teacher: Ms. Sharon Conrad

Setting: A Canadian home in 1968. It's Mervin's birthday party in the family room.

Characters:

Mervin: The fourteen year old birthday boy. His sarcastic and blunt ways conflict with his conservative mother and grandma. He wants his freedom and his own life.

Mom: A middle-aged, overbearing Christian mother who will not let her little-boy grow up. Her constant "loving gestures" for Mervin, is actually an embarrassment to him.

Jaylen: A young teenage girl who has a bubbly attitude and is one of Mervin's good friends.

Brandon: The twin brother of Jaylen, who gives Mervin a hard time about his family's characteristics.

Grandma: The stereotypical Grandma who lives in the past and unknowingly embarrasses her grandson, Mervin.

(Mom enters her well decorated family room, with a bundle of balloons to tie to the "birthday chair." While humming to her herself, Mervin walks in. He just woke up, still in his pajamas, looks around in shock. He takes a look at what his Mom has done for his birthday party. When Mervin was just about to say something his Mom exits. He's still looking around, finding new things by the second with a more dramatic look than the one before. But then he discovers the worst of the worst, a "birthday chair." He saunters over to the other side of the room.)

MERVIN: OH MANNNA!

MOM: I'm in the kitchen!

MERVIN: I didn't say "MAMA" I said "manAAAA"

(Mom walks in with a big smile.)

MOM: Exciting isn't it? My little boy is just growing up so fast.

(While Mervin's Mom is talking, Mervin is staring at his "birthday chair" for a long, awkward silence.)

MERVIN: Soooooo..so.. What's this?

MOM: Well it says "Mervin's Birthday Chair," kind of self explanatory to me.

MERVIN: But Mom, I'm fourteen now.. c'mon..

MOM: Well, that's why it's a little bit more "groovy" this time.

(She points out the hippie flowers decorating his birthday chair.)

MERVIN: What? What does that even mean? Me growing up now symbolizes hippie flowers?

MOM: Oh! Don't be a Grumpy Gus.

(Mervin stares blankly at nothing.)

MERVIN: I'm going back to bed.

MOM: Oh you're such a Negative Nelly, your guests will be arriving at noon sharp! I called all your friend's Moms to confirm.. and to..

MERVIN: What? And to what?

MOM: Just to see what kind of parents they are, you know it's just a mother worrying.

MERVIN: You're worried about a birthday party you planned? I asked eight friends to come over, you confirmed with their parents about a party at noon that's going to be in this overly decorated tacky family room.

MOM: Well I'm sure their parents will be a little concerned.

MERVIN: *(under his breath)* About your sanity?

MOM: Alrighty no more dilly dallying, get those wonderful trousers on .. *(Mervin leaves)* Your nice ones! Ummm, I think I put them ..ahh.

(Mervin walks out with a coat hanger full with a wardrobe: a dress shirt, a belt and his trousers.)

MERVIN: Or basically wear what you already planned on me wearing...

MOM: Well, I have to take pictures for the family to see.

MERVIN: I.. don't... understand..you.

MOM: I love you banana muffin!

MERVIN: That's the last time you get to say that until...forever, kay?

MOM: Okaaay, I understand, it's not all "hip and groovy" to say in front of your friends.

MERVIN: And don't say groovy either, I'm not a hippie, you're scared to walk past them when you're in town.. So really, it doesn't work.

RIGHT FOOT RED

TARYN HESKETH

MOM: Well they don't shower or do anything productive, but complain about the world.

MERVIN: Kay.. I'mma... gonna .. get changed now.

MOM: Okay then, as you know..(*Mervin gets ready to mock his mother..*) I don't like dilly dalliers! Oh Mervin! Great minds do think alike! (*Stove timer goes off*) Oh oh oh your cake Mervin! (*Mom exits*)

MERVIN: Okayyy then, I'm just going to go into my room.. and kill myself.

(Mom walks back on stage.)

MOM: I'm sorry banana.. what did you say?

MERVIN: Oh I just said ahh.. just said I'maa gonna go spruce up myself .. you know.

MOM: Oh neat-o! I can't wait to see you in your new trousers!

(Mom exits.)

MERVIN: You know.. like go and change.. (*sigh*) Will I ever leave this place? Like in four years.. am I still going to be in the problem.. Naa, she'll be dead by then.. She's gotta be dead by then.

(Mom enters.)

MOM: I love it when you talk to yourself.. I think it's wonderful you still have a wild imagination.. I can remember way back when you were... (*Mervin exits.*) Okay then we will talk when you're looking snazzy!

(Telephone rings.)

MOM: Hello?.. Oh I'm sorry he's getting changed for his birthday party.. Can I take a message? Samantha? Samantha from elementary school Samantha? Mervin invited you without consulting me? Well I'm sorry you are uninvited. Why? Because when I was picking up Mervin from school one day I saw you take a drag from your friend's cigarette. I don't like teenagers who fall into peer pressure! (*Hangs up.*)

MERVIN: (*from off stage*) Who was that?

MOM: It's not important Mervin... We will talk about this later! *(Door bell rings)*
Your guests are here now anyway.

MERVIN: *(Mervin enters.)* Lovely.

(Jaylen and Brandon enter.)

BRANDON: Hey Mervin how are ya? Happy Birthday!

JAYLEN: Yeah! Happy Birthday, I love what you did to the place.

MERVIN: Yeah it's a tornado of my Mom plastered everywhere.

(Brandon goes over to the coffee table and picks up a picture.)

BRANDON: What are these?

MERVIN: Oh well.. every birthday I have, my Mom takes a picture of me and lines them up by age.

BRANDON: Oh well that's ..great, and the birthday chai..

MERVIN: Shut up.

(Mervin sits down and turns on the T.V.)

JAYLEN: So, get anything for your birthday? Where's your dad?

MERVIN: Out of town. He promised to give my Mom the big talk before he left. Yea, I don't think that happened.

JAYLEN: I think you're overreacting a little bit. Your Mom seems pretty cool. At least she's trying right?

MERVIN: Trying to do what? Kill me? Or for me to kill myself?

JAYLEN: Oh c'mon lighten up.

BRANDON: Yeah, lighten up.. .

MERVIN: C'mon all of this is ridiculous. It's not Memory Lane over here. *(Mervin gets up to show his baby blanket.)* It's psycho.

JAYLEN: Well I guess this is unnecessary.

MERVIN: Jaylen, everything in this room is unnecessary.

BRANDON: I kind of think it's all amusing.

MERVIN: Well I'm glad you're having a great time Brandon.

JAYLEN: Well hey, maybe since this is your first year in high school, that it will be the last time your Mom will do this... or something.. uhmm you know?

BRANDON: It would be great if what you said made any sense.

MERVIN: Or if my mom made any sense. Like who calls their son "Mervin".. How could my dad even accept a name like that into the family? Like I can't even force people to call me Merv.. Merv? Ugh.

JAYLEN: Okay seriously Mervin get over it you're just making your birthday worse than it has to be. *(Gets up and turns off the T.V.)* Like we can't go anywhere, I'm sure your mom wouldn't even allow it, so just make the best of it.. And I'm sure people will show.. You know it has only been twenty minutes.

(Mom walks in.)

MOM: Hello Mervinteers! *(Mom giggles to herself while Jaylen, Brandon and are in shock by what she had just said.)* I just made up some plates of food for you guys.. I well thought there would be more.. people coming.. *(Mervin groans and shoves his face into his pillow)* But I'm sure you all can eat a lot for growing bodies, going through a rough time.. *(Mom leans down)* You guys know what I'm talking about right?

JAYLEN Oh, I really don't know what you're trying to "imply" can you go into further detail?

MOM: Your Mom hasn't told you? Well it's okay, I'm just glad I forced the school to stop teaching sex ed at your school. Mervin? What are you doing? Why do you have your face smushed in a pillow.. Don't be embarrassed this is a stage young adults go through! Mervin.. Mervin? Mervin?

MERVIN: *(Takes his face out of the pillow.)* Yes mother.

MOM: That's better! Now we can all see your face. I'll go bring out some snacks for all of you to enjoy. *(Mom leans over to Jaylen.)* You can meet me in the kitchen if you would like to.

MERVIN: Mom I really don't think Jaylen thought my birthday party was going to turn into a sex ed class.

MOM: Well I'm just saying..

JAYLEN: Uhm.. Maybe some other time I'll come by.

MOM: Oh that will work for Mervin and I. He always talks about you. *(Mom winks at Mervin and leaves.)*

BRANDON: HAHA you talk about my sister?

MERVIN: Uhh, no man, you believe what MY MOM says? You're crazy then.

(Mom walks out with three large platters of food.)

MOM: This will do you guys. Mervin, how many people did we invite?

MERVIN: I don't know like eight or something, why?

MOM: Well it's not a bad turnout.

(Brandon and Jaylen look at each other.)

MERVIN: Uhhm, I count Brandon and Jaylen as one, because they are brother and sister, let alone twins. So one person showed up.

BRANDON: Erm, thanks Mervin.

MERVIN: Why are you bringing this up anyways?

MOM: I just had a surprise for you that's all. I know you're going to love it too.
(Mom exits.)

MERVIN: *(Mervin has a big smile on his face.)* OH MY GOSH! Maybe she's not crazy after all. MAYBE she's like taking us to a concert like a RAD concert or we are going on a trip to like JAPAN WOULDN'T THAT BE SO SWEET TO GO TO JAPAN? Or maybe she's going to leave and BUY US ALCOHOL.. Do you think Brandon? Brandon I could so see it happening now.

BRANDON: Wow, PLEASE don't get your hopes up, you're going to be in a horrible mood when your Mom tells us what her surprise is.

MERVIN: NO MAN I can see it. I totally deserve it too. C'mon you guys know I deserve something like this.

(Mom walks in with papers.)

MOM: Okay Mervin! I want you to sit in your birthday chair because this is a surprise.

MERVIN: OKAY! *(Mervin runs over to the chair.)*

(Brandon and Jaylen look around worried.)

MOM: Don't peek! *(Mom turns around.)*

JAYLEN: PSSST *(Jaylen throws the clicker at Mervin to grab his attention. Mervin looks over with a big smile on his face. Jaylen mouths the words, "Stop it.")*

BRANDON: Just uhmm, you know, let him deal with it by himself.

JAYLEN: Fine but if he's going to be a bigger bastard, he's going to have one person left at his damn birthday party.

MOM: Okay Brandon and Jaylen *(They both stop bickering at each other and smile at his mother.)* How long have you been friends with Mervin?

BRANDON: Uhh like since we were five or whatever... So eight or so years?

RIGHT FOOT RED

TARYN HESKETH

MOM: Correct!

JAYLEN: Kay?

MOM: *(Walks over to Brandon and Jaylen to hand out the papers.)* I have prepared a test so you can PROVE how much of a friend you are to my dear Mervin.

MERVIN: What?

MOM: What dear?

MERVIN: Is this the surprise?

MOM: Of course it is!

MERVIN: Oh my Gosh!

MOM: What! What is it?

MERVIN: Wow uhm.. nothing at all.

MOM: Alrighty! Then let's get started!

MERVIN: Uhhh, I'll be right back. *(Mervin exits.)*

MOM: Okay there are only eight questions.. You need to write them down on the paper and I will ask them to you. So c'mon separate!

(Brandon and Jaylen separate on the other side of the couch.)

MOM: Okay, what's Mervin's middle name?

BRANDON: Where did Mervin go?

(Jaylen looks around confused, Brandon starts dazing off.)

MOM: Oh? He left? Well that just isn't fun. MERVIN?!

MERVIN: *(Shouts from off stage.)* WHAT?!

RIGHT FOOT RED

TARYN HESKETH

MOM: Please come out here and entertain your guests.

MERVIN: No! No thank you.

MOM: Mervin.....

MERVIN: No Mom! I'm not coming out of my bedroom.

MOM: Mervin come out now please.

(Jaylen and Brandon are looking really uncomfortable. Mervin walks out with an angry look.)

MERVIN: Look mom, I just want a normal party. No one showed, you did EVERYTHING you could, you're running the whole party, just let us be. Please you have done enough. Like finish your quiz, then I don't know we will eat? What are we even eating?

MOM: Oh my goodness! I forgot about the pizzas, they are waiting at the pizza place. So I'll be back soon okay?

MERVIN: Thank you!

(Mom exits.)

JAYLEN: Well I'm sure that makes you happy. Just for your information, next time you try to burst something out to your mother, try and do it in .. uhmm I don't know .. private? Maybe, because I have never felt so awkward in my life.

MERVIN: Sorry, but I'm sure you wouldn't have dealt with your mother if she acted like mine.

JAYLEN: So how come you haven't opened your presents yet? Open mine!

MERVIN: You think my Mom won't mind?

BRANDON: Uhmmmm.. no

MERVIN: Thanks Brandon.

RIGHT FOOT RED

TARYN HESKETH

(Brandon has a big grin on his face.)

BRANDON: Wait! Before you start, I brought some awesome music.

MERVIN: Are you serious?! What did you bring?

BRANDON: CREAM MAN!

MERVIN: Are you serious? How did you get it in my house?

BRANDON: HAHA, I just took the Perry Colmo covering.

MERVIN: Genius!

JAYLEN: I don't understand what's so great about it, Mervin you're at our house most of the time and we play these records all the time.

MERVIN: It sounds so much better in my house though because it's TOTALLY forbidden.

(Mervin puts the record in and starts dancing around to the couch.)

BRANDON: Here dude, *(Hands over the present.)* It was uhm, all of Jaylen's idea.

MERVIN: Thank ya.

JAYLEN: What's that supposed to mean? It's a great idea he always wanted it.

(Mervin opens the present.)

MERVIN: YES! TWISTER! Do you know how much my mom hates this.. This and the Ouija board.

JAYLEN: Well, I can see why the Ouija board, but uhm Twister?

BRANDON: I don't think I feel up to playing right now I'll spin.. the thing.

JAYLEN: Okay.

(Jaylen and Mervin set up Twister.)

RIGHT FOOT RED

TARYN HESKETH

BRANDON: Okay are you guys ready?

MERVIN: Obviously!

BRANDON: Okay right foot yellow.

(Mervin and Jaylen do the actions.)

BRANDON: *(Spins the spinner.)* Left hand green, left foot blue, left hand red, right foot blue.

JAYLEN: Okay seems like I can't move anymore.

MERVIN: So you give up?

JAYLEN: HAHA fat chance "Merv."

MERVIN: Shut up Jaylen.

BRANDON: Okay.. Right hand blue.

(Jaylen is now on top of Mervin.)

MERVIN: Uhh...

JAYLEN: HAHAHA! Do you give up now?

MERVIN: For how awkward this is.... *(Moments pass)* No.

BRANDON: Nice pose Jaylen.

(Mom walks in, the kids backs are towards the door, they don't know she has arrived.)

JAYLEN: Pssshh, Brandon what do you expect? This game is all about flexible, crazy positions.

(Mom turns around slams the pizza on the table to grab their attention. While she slams the pizza down, Jaylen falls on top of Mervin, Mervin quickly pushes her off.)

JAYLEN: Ouch Mervin! You're so fiesty! *(Jaylen chuckles and looks around.)*

MOM: Mervin, what are you doing?

MERVIN: It's uhmm.. uhh *(trying now to look at her in the face.)* It's just aaa Twister..Mom.

MOM: How come you're turning red and can't look at me and tell me it's Twister?

MERVIN: Well I don't know.. maybe.. because..

MOM: Because Jaylen was directly on top of you and told us all what Twister is really about. And what is this devil music doing on?

MERVIN: Nooaa.. *(awkward silence)* Like c'mon it's a Milton Bradley game.. you know.. our family game nights of Monopoly... and stuff.. And it's Cream Mom. *(turns off the music.)*

MOM: Mervin have you not heard of sex in a box.. Do you think I haven't looked through this game; its nickname is sex in a box! *(Mom paces back and forth)* Oh dear oh dear oh dear!

BRANDON: Uhmm.. Look we will just take Twister back and get something else. *(Moments pass.)* Really, it's no big deal. Uhhh.. we're not interested in the whole sex thing. Well I think, I mean, I guess I'm the wrong person to ask.

MERVIN: Brandon, no one asked you anything.

BRANDON: Well, I'm just saying, like you know Mervin's a guy and a friend.. soo.. no uhmm "interest?" in uhmm Mervin, well for me anyways. And you obviously know Jaylen, well that's gross, she's like me, you know if I was a girl, I would be Jaylen. Like stick a dress on me and I'm her.

(Moments pass.)

JAYLEN: Well said Brandon.

MOM: Well then I guess I just have to know between you two.

MERVIN: Who two? As in Jaylen and I two? What? There is no two? It's single.. single Mervin.. single Jaylen... Single.

MOM: So there are no relations?

MERVIN: *(sigh)* No Mom we don't have relations.

MOM: Great answer Mervin. *(Doorbell rings, Mom runs to get it.)*

MERVIN: *(looks down)* What would you do if I killed myself?

BRANDON: Laugh

MERVIN: Look guys, I'm really sorry about this. Thanks for sticking around though.

BRANDON: No problem! *(Punches Mervin.)*

MERVIN: Ow..? Thanks? Anyways can you guys go into my room for a bit. I know how Jaylen loves getting involved in my family arguments.

JAYLEN: Yeah sure

(Brandon and Jaylen leave. Mervin sits on the couch and can hear his mom talking in the kitchen.)

MOM: *(Yells from offstage.)* Guess who's here Mervin?

MERVIN: *(to himself)* Sigh, the most beautiful girl, Jaylen coming to tell me how much she loves me. *(Mervin dozes off with the biggest grin. Jaylen comes out with a beautiful dress and dances around.)* She's so beautiful! *(Jaylen comes over to Mervin.)*

JAYLEN: Oh Mervin! I have loved you since I met you.

MERVIN: Really? I love you too Jaylen. *(Jaylen kiss Mervin on the cheek, he wakes up and realizes his grandmother kissed him. He quickly stands up.)* What the... *(He turns around and sees his imagination of Jaylen dancing off stage.)* MANNNNAAA!

MOM: Mervin! Grandma came over! You are so spoiled! So many surprises, this early afternoon.

MERVIN: Haha ya! It's like a birthday party for a four year old, party at noon, Grandma comes to visit. Thanks... Thank you.

GRANDMA: So Mervin dear? How's my muffin cake doing?

MERVIN: Uhmm, fine Grandma.

GRANDMA: You must feel like a real boy now!

MERVIN: What I'm not Pinocchio, I have been a "real" boy for awhile I'm in high school now.

GRANDMA: Don't get smart with me boy! I mean you're fourteen now. It's a big change, like a new era.

MERVIN: Why? No it isn't.

GRANDMA: Sure it is.

MERVIN: Well actually it's like another day. *(Mervin laughs.)* It's not like...

GRANDMA: Don't question your damn Grandmother Mervin, I'm always right.

MOM: Or your mother.

((Mervin stares confused.))

MERVIN: What are you two even talking about, seriously here, am I the only sane one?

GRANDMA: Ohh so I see he has hit the "I know everything teenager stage." See Mervin that's your hormones and mood swings.

MOM: You should have been here earlier; they had Twister out and everything! It was a disaster.

(Mervin makes no sound but freaks out quietly and Brandon walks out to say hello but hears Twister and leaves.)

GRANDMA: Oh my goodness! Twister? Might as well not be a virgin anymore Mervin.

RIGHT FOOT RED

TARYN HESKETH

MERVIN: *(gets up)* Good bye family.

MOM: It's ridiculous though don't you think mother?

GRANDMA: It's those hippies, those damn hippies.

MOM: Mervin wait.

MERVIN: Thanks for stopping by, but I'm leaving ... this room.

GRANDMA: Well I wasn't finished talking to you, I got you something, sit down.

MERVIN: Okay. *(Sits back down on the couch.)*

GRANDMA: It's in the kitchen because I couldn't wrap it. Can you be a good boy and go and grab it for me Mervin and bring it out for us all to see?

MERVIN: Sure... I'll just get up again, when you told me to sit down. *(Mervin exits.)*

MOM: You're too good to him Mom.

GRANDMA: I know.

(Mervin enters with a tiny fish bowl.)

MERVIN: Thanks for the fishbowl... Grandma *(with a fake smile.)*

GRANDMA: Sea Monkeys!

MERVIN: I beg your pardon?

GRANDMA: It's for Sea Monkeys Mervin, you are at that stage where you should be able to have some responsibility, bring it over here.

MERVIN: There's nothing in here but water.

GRANDMA: Come here. *(Grabs a package from her purse opens it and pours it in.)*

MERVIN: That's a sugar packet!

GRANDMA: Ooops! Here it is. The eggs come in packets.

RIGHT FOOT RED

TARYN HESKETH

MERVIN: Is that so? Sounds natural... Hey! Does that happen in real life? Because I swear I don't belong to this family.

MOM: Mervin!

MERVIN: Obviously just kidding.

GRANDMA: There!

MERVIN: Mmm lovely.

(Brandon and Jaylen walk in.)

MERVIN: These are my friends Grandma.

JAYLEN: Hi! I'm Jaylen.

GRANDMA: *(Looks at Jaylen.)* So you're the Twister fanatic eh?

BRANDON: Actually that's me.

GRANDMA: *(Has a disgusted look on her face and looks at Mervin.)* Wonderful, I'm going to go into the kitchen and make some coffee.

MERVIN: Thanks for the Sea Monkeys! I'm going to name each and everyone after you and Mom.

GRANDMA: That's nice dear. *(Mom and Grandma exit.)*

BRANDON: We were watching you from your room. *(Brandon laughs.)*

MERVIN: That's great, did you see how crazy they are, especially together.

JAYLEN: So, I guess there's no pizza?

MERVIN: Oh crap! MOM!

MOM: *(Mom enters)* Yes dear?

MERVIN: Where's the pizza?

MOM: I burnt it. *(Tries to walk offstage.)*

MERVIN: What? Wait how could you burn it if you didn't even make it?

MOM: Well when I came in with the pizza you guys had your mind on something else. So I put it in the oven, Grandma showed up, and it got burnt.

MERVIN: Well what are we supposed to eat? Is that cake ready?

MOM: *(Leans over and whispers)* Well, Grandma and I were talking, you guys were playing Twister, now chocolate and sexual stuff are quite unacceptable in this household, I would just feel uncomfortable if you were eating your birthday cake.

MERVIN: *(Stares blankly)* Did Twister abuse you or something when you were younger?

MOM: We didn't have sexual games in my day dear; the world is a scary place now. But I did make Jell-O if you guys want some.

JAYLEN: Yea that would be great! Thank you!

(Mom exits Brandon starts laughing.)

BRANDON: *(Laughing)* Your Grandma and Mom are worried about your sex drive, *(Moments pass)* and she gave you Sea Monkeys!

MERVIN: I am ... aware... of that, thanks.

JAYLEN: Shut up Brandon.

(Grandma enters)

GRANDMA: *(coughing)* Mom's making you guys Jell-O, but you can't have Jell-O without the whip cream. I can put some on for you guys if you would like.

MERVIN & JAYLEN: No... no thank you.

GRANDMA: Well, what about you dear.

BRANDON: Well, uhmm I don't think I...

GRANDMA: *(coughing)* It's wonderful darling I'll make sure there's some on there for yours especially. *(Grandma exits.)*

BRANDON: Damn it.

JAYLEN: HAHA you got Grandma's old cough saliva on your Jell-O!

(Mom enters.)

MOM: Well, here's your Jell-O.

MERVIN: Thanks mom.

JAYLEN: Thank you.

(Grandma enters.)

GRANDMA: There you are dear.

BRANDON: Thanks... a lot.

(Mervin and Jaylen are eating their pudding, Brandon is just playing with his.)

MOM: Hey, did you guys know what Jell-O is made out of?

MERVIN: Huh?

MOM: What Jell-O is made out of.

MERVIN: I don't know sugar..

GRANDMA: More than that! Try boiled animal bone marrow and cartilage!

(They all put their bowls down. Brandon looks down at his bowls and starts laughing)

BRANDON: I am SO happy that this is made out of animal parts.

MOM: Aww, do you guys not want it anymore? It still tastes the same every other time you guys eat it.

MERVIN: No it doesn't. Thanks for the information though.

(Grandma exits and Mom is leaving.)

BRANDON: Can we finish the quiz you started on Mervin. I really want to finish it. I really hate starting something and not finishing it. Don't you ever get that feeling?

MERVIN: What are you doing?

MOM: Oh I certainly can! Just let me put these dishes away. *(Mom exits.)*

MERVIN: Why are you doing this?

BRANDON: To see what happens. Excited?

MERVIN: I really don't care Brandon, I don't have to do it. *(Goes to turn on the T.V. Mom walks in and turns it off right away while paying no attention to Mervin.)*

MOM: Okay, so there are eight questions, you guys did get your first answer down, so now we are on number two.

MERVIN: Do you really have to do this here?

MOM: You know what? You're not really interested in this are you?

MERVIN: No, I'm really not.

MOM: Here, *(hands over the paper with the questions on them.)* You can ask your friends the questions. Oh this would be a great action shot, not just some sitting down smiling pictures everyone takes! But you have to make sure you think there is no camera when I'm taking the pictures okay? *(Mom exits.)*

MERVIN: *(Gives a long stare, then looks down at the paper.)* Oh, okay uhmmm when did we move into this house?

BRANDON: Were we even born yet?

MERVIN: *(Chuckles.)* That's true and also you moved here after us. Just make up a day. *(Jaylen and Brandon write something down.)*

MOM: Okay! *(Flashes a picture when she gets in. Everyone looks up and she takes another picture.)*

MERVIN: Oh here's a good one that we should all know. What's my mother's maiden name..?

(Mom turns to Brandon and Jaylen with a big smile on her face.)

BRANDON: Piece of cake! Pshh.. *(Writes something down.)*

MOM: Okay! Stand up now Mervin.

MERVIN: Why?

MOM: Because as I said before, I need an action shot while you are "quizzing" your friends. So stand up, c'mon.

(Grandma enters.)

MERVIN: This is ridiculous! *(Mervin stands up.)* Kay now what do you want me to do?

GRANDMA: What's going on?

MOM: I'm trying to get an action shot of Mervin quizzing his friends.

GRANDMA: Ohh! Quizzes, I remember when I put quizzes on for your Mom.

MOM: Yes Mom, the tradition still lives.

MERVIN: Not when I have kids.

MOM: Mervin! You moved out of place!

GRANDMA: Here I'll help.

MERVIN: No thank you Grandma, the Sea Monkeys were really enough.

GRANDMA: Oh shush! *(Moves Mervin around, and takes her time)*

MOM: MMM, more to the left.. Well no I can't really see his face anymore.. Move him so I can see his face... Yes that's good... *(Moments pass)* Mmm.. move his elbow a bit.

MERVIN: Oh c'mon, are you serious. Are you both serious.

MOM: I have never been more serious in my life Mervin; this is our Christmas card this year!

MERVIN: Okay fine, hurry up. *(Mom takes the picture.)*

MOM: Okay wait, I want a back up one! *(Mom takes another picture.)* Okay, Grandma and I are going to finish our coffee I'll call the parents to come and pick up their kids in a half hour.

MERVIN: Mom, you're calling one parent, it's about three o'clock and they live down the road.

MOM: Mervin, I am responsible to whatever happens to Brandon and Jaylen and if they don't get home safely.

MERVIN: Yea, yea okay.

(Grandma and Mom exit.)

MERVIN: Well, thanks for coming, it shows a lot, believe me.

JAYLEN: Not too worry, I didn't waste much of my day anyways. *(Laughs)* Just kidding, maybe tonight we can all go out to a movie for your birthday.

(Mom and Grandma enter.)

MOM: Hey! I thought that since your friends are leaving soon you should open my birthday present.

MERVIN: Oh, okay sure... Where is it?

MOM: I'm not giving it to you yet.

MERVIN: What? But you just said..

MOM: I didn't decorate that birthday chair for nothing Mervin.

MERVIN: Oh, right. *(Walks slowly over towards his Birthday Chair.)*

MOM: Alrighty! Here you go.

MERVIN: *(Mervin un-wraps his gift slowly and finds a sweater and opens it up and all this chocolate falls out. Mervin looks confused and looks up to his Mom who winks at him)* I don't get it.

MOM: What? It's your favorite chocolate bar. I got tons of them for you!

MERVIN: But you just wouldn't let any of us eat the chocolate cake because of our "sex drive" or whatever.

MOM: It's just your hormones dear, a mother knows best.

GRANDMA: What a great present you have there Mervin!

MERVIN: Yeah thanks Mom.

MOM: Wait! There's more.

MERVIN: Oh, cool.

MOM: *(Mom walks over to Mervin and pulls out an Archie comic's magazine.)*
I wrote in it, look.

MERVIN: *(Mervin reads the note silently.)* Thanks Mom.

MOM: Read it out loud.

MERVIN: Okay, it says without any exception for a whole year you will buy me every new Archie comic that comes out until my next birthday.

BRANDON: Now that's clever.

MOM: Yes, anyways I'll be right back, I'm just going to get Jaylen and Brandon's "goodie bag" for coming to your party Mervin.

MERVIN: Oh, okay.

(Mom exits.)

GRANDMA: Oooo, what's this?

MERVIN: What?

GRANDMA: *(She points down at Twister.)* Is that a new rug your mother has gotten?

JAYLEN: A polka-dot rug?

MERVIN: It's not like it wouldn't go with this room anyways.

GRANDMA: This is such a beautiful rug!

(Mom enters with two bags with Jaylen and Brandon's name on each of them.)

MOM: Here you guys go!

BRANDON & JAYLEN: Thank you.

MOM: Jaylen, would you mind if you could take a picture of Mervin, my Mom and I?

JAYLEN: Sure. *(Mom hands Jaylen the camera.)*

GRANDMA: Darling where did you get this rug? You never told me about it.

MOM: Isn't it wonderful? I love how it brings the family room together

GRANDMA: I can't believe I haven't seen this before

MERVIN: What are you talking about,

GRANDMA: The rug dear.

RIGHT FOOT RED

TARYN HESKETH

MERVIN: The rug? That rug, the one that we are standing on? *(Mervin starts snickering)* So uhm, where did you buy the rug from then Mom?

MOM: Eaton's catalogue dear.

GRANDMA: Oh I think I saw it in there.

MERVIN: Yeah, you know there or the toy store.

(Brandon and Jaylen start laughing.)

JAYLEN: Anyways, why don't we make this shot an "action shot."

MOM: You're right! *(Mervin, Grandma and Mom get ready for the picture.)*

JAYLEN: Okay, center yourselves out a little bit. Uhhh, Grandma would you mind putting your foot on that red dot?

GRANDMA: Certainly.

MOM: I think this action pose will be the fourteenth edition to your birthday memories! I also think this one will be going out for Christmas cards this year.

MERVIN: Now that's something I can't wait for.

(Jaylen flashes the picture and lights fade.)

Translating Heidegger



by Emily Nixon

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The fee for a single production of this play will be \$10.00

Translating Heidegger

Scene opens on a dingy stage. There is nothing on stage but a crappy sofa and to the right of it, a wooden telephone table with nothing on it. A teenager (Fish) lounges on the couch, taking up as much room as possible. He wears shredded punk pants, with many poorly attached safety pins to hold them together and has many patches of fabric with names of punk bands on them attached by safety pins. He wears boots or really old, tattered converses and a jean vest with the sleeves hacked off. He has many chains attached to it and many band pins attached in a random fashion. He has a swastika drawn on his back with Sharpie with a big 'x' through it. Underneath is written 'Gegen Nazis'. He has a generally greasy appearance. He appears to be snoozing with his mouth open and appears to be taking up too much space, as though he is overly comfortable. A door shuts loudly offstage, and a young (8-12 year old) boy (Jordan) enters. He is conservatively dressed, but in a manner that does not suggest that he is a child. Perhaps darker colours and a turtleneck or a nice sweater. There should be no apparent style and the clothing should be nondescript. He enters slowly, a bit cautiously, in an attempt not to wake the older boy. He surveys the room briefly, just to take it in, and then moves over to the older boy. He stands by the arm of the sofa, right beside the other boy's head, very close, just standing there. It should not look as though he is a soldier on post, just as though there is no space and he has chosen to stand. It should look as though he could maintain this position for hours. But, after a second...

Fish: *(Without opening his eyes)* They make you come too?

Jordan: Not really, it is my Grandpa's funeral.

(Silence)

Fish: You can sit down, you know.

Jordan: Well there isn't really anywhere to sit.

Fish opens his eyes and shifts lazily so that there is some room for Jordan, only enough for him to sit perfectly straight though.

Fish: Hey Jordan.

Jordan: Hi Fish.

Fish: *(After a second)* Where's your mom?

Jordan: I don't know, I think she's in the other room sorting out the flowers or something.

Fish: Isn't this thing over yet?

Jordan: I don't even think it's started. Why aren't you in there?

Fish: Why should I be? There's not much point. *(Jordan looks at him funnily)* I didn't like him when he was alive, why should I pretend I do now that he's dead? *(Silence)* So does your mom know you're here?

Jordan: She won't notice I'm gone.

Fish: Awwww. Poor neglected baby.

Jordan: That's not what I meant. I just meant that she's busy. It's not like she's ignoring me.

Fish: Well that's what she does though, isn't it?

Jordan: No! That's not what she does, she just works a lot.

Fish: And so you never get to see her because she's always away, right?

Jordan: What? No. She takes me everywhere she goes. I don't know where you're getting that nonsense.

Fish: (*Snorts*) 'Nonsense', right. (*Jordan looks irritated*) I have nothing against your mom, she's a babe.

(*Jordan shoots him a disgusted and angry look. Fish's pager goes off. He pulls it off his hip, or wherever he decides to keep it, and looks at the number. He sticks it back in his pocket. The two of them sit there for a moment, Jordan playing with his pants and Fish filling up the couch. Fish speaks arrogantly*)

Fish: You're bigger than the last time I saw you. (*Jordan doesn't say anything*). Guess that happens when you're a kid. (*He sits up more so that Jordan has a lot more space*) Sorry.

Jordan: (*Accusingly*) So why aren't you at Grandpa's funeral?

Fish: Well I'm here, aren't I?

Jordan: But are you planning to go to the ceremony?

Fish: No, not really.

Jordan: Why?

Fish: Like I said, I didn't like him when he was alive and I'm not going to act like the rest of these hypocrites and pretend I do now just 'cus he's dead.

Jordan: You don't think anyone liked him?

Fish: No, I think some people did, I just don't think they're here.

Jordan: How come?

Fish: They're all dead or hate this family.

Jordan: Have you ever talked to anyone who said they didn't like him?

Fish: No, but it doesn't matter if they say it. I told my mom I wasn't coming in and she wasn't happy about it, but I know she didn't like him either.

Jordan: How?

Fish: You know that look people get when they say something they feel but they're "not supposed to say"? Stupid sheep.

Jordan: So what didn't you like about Grandpa?

Fish shrugs. His pager goes off again. He takes it off and looks at it.

Fish: Again!

Jordan: Who was it?

Fish: Some chick.

Jordan: do you think it's important?

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Fish: Naw, probably not.

Awkward Silence.

Jordan: Do you know how long funerals usually last for?

Fish: About an hour, hour and a half.

Jordan: Have you ever been to one before?

Fish: Yeah, just went to one this month actually.

Jordan: Really? *(Trying to make a joke)* Was that for someone else you didn't like?

Fish: It was for my best friend.

Jordan: Oh... sorry.

Fish: Why are you sorry? You didn't kill him.

Jordan: Uh...I guess I'm just sorry that you're upset.

Fish: Then thanks. Too many people talk and talk and have no idea what the hell they're talking about. Everyone just talks in these recycled clichés all day that they've heard other people say, but don't really mean anything. I have no problem with people trying to communicate through subtext, you know, like you just did. You basically told me that you were sorry I was upset by saying you were sorry my friend died, but I think it's stupid that people spend all day pretending to be doing this. *(Jordan nods) (Flippantly, a little bit condescendingly)* I mean, we're such a desensitized culture that we're just pretending we're smarter than we are. That we can connect through subtext all day. I don't buy it.

Jordan: When was the last time I saw you?

Fish: I think at Christmas a few years ago when we all went to Missouri.

Jordan: Right. I remember. You didn't act like this then.

Fish: Like what?

Jordan: *(Rolls his eyes)* Come on, you know what I mean *(Fish juts his chin out)*. You were a lot more fun then.

Fish: Why do I want to be fun? I don't want to dance like some stupid monkey. Oh "be fun, be fun". Whatever. *(Arrogantly, like it's his own)* It is not through the process of thought that one expresses performativity.

Jordan: *(In a mock snobby voice)* How Judith Butler of you.

Fish: *(Completely taken aback)* What? How do you know her?

Jordan: Oh come on, why^o hasn't read Contingency, Hegemony? Known for being one of philosophy's greatest know-it-alls.

Fish: You've really read that? Have you read any other philosophy?

Jordan: Yeah sure. Right now I'm reading On the Essence of Truth. That and the 156th Animorph book.

Fish: Heidegger was the smartest thing to ever come out of this piece of shit world.

Jordan: *(thoughtfully)* ...Really...

Fish: Every word that man said was gospel. His statements on the filth of the quotidian were profound.

Jordan: ... You agree then, with his harsh xenophobic and anti-Semitic beliefs...

Fish: Uh...

Jordan; you agreed then, with his comment that people should stop thinking for themselves because the Fuhrer was the one and only present in reality.

Fish: Heidegger didn't say that!

Jordan: Yeah he did. He was a Nazi.

Fish: Shut up kid, you don't know what you're talking about.

Jordan: He was too a Nazi! With membership card number 312589!

Fish: *(totally thrown off guard)* How the hell do you know that?

Jordan: I can just remember stuff like that.

Fish: But don't most kids remember jingles and lines from comic books and stuff like that? Not Heidegger's Nazi membership number?

Jordan: Sorry.

Fish: Don't apologize. Can't believe you've read it. Have you read any other philosophy?

Jordan: Yeah, well, Being and Time, but I've also read some Sartre.

Fish: Seriously?

Jordan: *(Possibly joking)* Yeah, I saw it on my bookshelf and I just picked it up and started reading it.

Fish: It wasn't too difficult? Did you read it with anyone else?

Jordan: No, no. It was a little confusing at first, but I looked up some of the concepts on the Internet and it was okay. *(Shrugs)* they were pretty neat to read actually.

Fish: *(As in "Duh")* Yeah! *(Pager beeps)* Crap, what is it? *(Whips it out and verifies the number)* Okay, now this is getting kinda weird.

Jordan: Same person?

Fish: Yeah.

Jordan: Do you think something's wrong?

Fish: *(Worriedly)* Could be. *(Thinking)*. Why would she keep calling me today? There's nothing going on today. Did I see her at the party Friday? Yeah I did. What did I...*(startled look of realization comes on to his face)* Okay. Maybe. *(In response to self)* Maybe it's not about that. Maybe it's something else.

(Exhales)

Jordan: What? (Breaks Fish out of hypnosis)

Fish: It's just, uh, I think I may have talked to her about something really really important. Shit. (Rubs his hands together nervously)

Jordan: Like?

Fish: Nope. Nothing I want to talk about.

Jordan's mom (Linda) enters stage left. She is a blonde, good-looking, sophisticated (but not in a lawyerish way, in a sophisticated hot way). Her hair has a lot of body, making her look more like a bombshell, but not like an '80's teen or a hooker. She is dressed a little too attractively for a funeral in a way that seems a bit obtrusive. She is dressed less inconspicuously than Jordan, but definitely not flashy. This woman should not be played as overly sexual. She should be intelligent, confident, and definitely attractive. We should receive some new information about Fish by seeing this intelligent-looking woman he is attracted to. She shouldn't fully enter, if possible. She is tired. She should instead enter in a way that makes it look as though she is just there to pop in for a second.

Linda: Jordan, did you want to come out here for a second? (She waves in an occupied way to Fish and mouths "hi" quickly, then looks back to Jordan immediately)

Jordan: Why, Mom?

Linda: I thought you might like to come see your Grandfather.

Jordan looks uncomfortable.

Jordan: I just saw him.

Linda: Yes darling, I know that, but everyone else is saying their own special goodbyes right now and I thought it might be nice...

Jordan: Look Mom, I'd really rather not.

Linda: (snaps) Jordan! You get in there right now and say goodbye to your Grandpa.

Jordan: (apologetically) I don't want to (Looks to Fish for support).

Fish: Can't he just stay here with me, Auntie Linda?

Linda: I don't think so, Phillip. Grandma wants to see him. She's been asking for him all morning.

Fish: (Sarcastically) Well she could just come in here and see him.

Linda: Yeah, sure, I'll just go back into that horrible room with all those crying, miserable, complaining people and say "Sally, I'm sick of your scrutinizing. Just shut up and go drive someone else crazy! (Creating her mother in the space) In fact, what are you even doing here anyways? Everybody knows you were sick of grandpa! I've been listening to you complain about him and to all your friends tell me how much you complained about him for 6 months! Why don't you— Aggh! (Releases breath in frustration, almost in tears) (Calming herself down, controlled:) Fine Jordan, if you want, you can stay here.

Jordan and Fish look at each other. Jordan looks uncomfortable. He steels himself up and nods very tersely.

Jordan: *(Tensely)* Okay. Thanks mom. *(Turns away)*

Linda *exhales defeated.*

Linda: *(Acceptingly)* Fine, Jordan. I know you don't want to. It's okay...

Jordan: Thanks.

Linda *walks over to the couch and collapses there beside Fish, exhaling loudly.*

Linda: This whole thing has just been so crazy. *(She motions for Jordan to come sit with her, he does. She strokes his hair as she talks)* *(To Jordan)* You know I hate this, honey. *(Jordan nods)* I really wish we didn't have to do this. He's not even my dad. You know your father's not even here? At his own dad's funeral? *(Jordan shrugs)* What kind of man? *(Mocking)* I'm sure he's very "busy" though, with... work or something. What a... wonderful man, your father.

Fish: *(Not really a question)* Uncle Brian didn't come? *(Laughs to himself in a way that is slightly unsympathetic. Try to have fish Somehow leaning on the telephone table at this point to create a more interesting visual. His position should display some of the original arrogance we saw in him at the beginning of the play. Neither Jordan or his mom should see this gesture; it is for the audience's benefit).*

Linda: Yeah, he was a real keeper.

Fish: Good thing getting divorced is cheaper than getting married. That's a good wedding present, someone should just the bride and groom a lawyer discount package or maybe weddings should be lawyer sponsored events seeing as the aftermath is where they get most of their business from. That'd be nice "Brought to you by Anderson & Smith divorce lawyers" right across the top of the cake in icing. *(Laughs derisively).* I'm never getting married.

Linda: *(turns to him)* Oh really, you watch. You say that now.

Fish: Nope. Not for me. I plan to live a life completely comprised of cheap beer, cheap punk concerts, and sexual promiscuity.

Linda: *(Laughs amusedly. It should be apparent through this scene that they have a good relationship)* Right. I'll see you at your wedding, loser.

An ancient female voice calls from off stage.

Voice: Linda!

Linda *sighs disappointedly.*

Linda: Guess I got to go guys. *(Gets up off the couch and turns to look at Jordan again)* It's fine if you don't want to come... I guess I'll just try to talk to Grandma or something. Bye Phillip.

Exits the same way she enters. Silence for a minute.

Jordan: Kind of weird to be talking about weddings at a funeral, isn't it?

Fish: I dunno. Point here's not the funeral.

Jordan: *(Puzzledly)* What's the point?

Fish: Like I said, the point here's a whole bunch of good Christian fakes coming to see a dead guy they never liked so they aren't damned or some crap like that.

Jordan: Oh come on Fish, you don't really believe that!

Fish: I do! Look at the way your mom talked about what his own wife thought of him. He wasn't this great guy everyone's acting like he was... What was that about you not wanting to see Grandpa either? Sure sounded like that was the case when Linda was here.

He's caught Jordan.

Jordan: Well, I didn't HATE him like you think we all did.

Fish: (*Snorts*) "We all". Right. I know and you know that neither of us fit into the "we all" in this family. No matter how perfect everyone seems to think you are. Even if you are going to grow up to be a little Shakespearean scholar or whatever, grade-boy.

Jordan: I don't get good grades.

Fish: My ass.

Jordan: I heard you do though.

Fish: (*Silent for a second*) ... So?

Jordan: So why are you making fun of me for them and I don't even get them.

Fish: Yeah, right.

Jordan: I don't! I don't care about grades, I don't care about school, I don't care about any of it.

Fish: then why's Grandma always so proud of you? Why's she always showing you off like your some kind of smarty-pants?

Jordan: My mom tells her I get good grades.

Fish: Why?

Jordan: It's what she wants to hear.

Fish: Grandma or your mom?

Jordan: Both of them.

Fish: Why don't you just try then?

Jordan: I'm just like you. I don't like performing for other people either, but minus the Judith Butler.

Fish laughs.

Fish: So tell me, do you... well I guess did you like Grandpa?

Jordan: Nope.

Fish: You neither hey? No one did.

Jordan: Well he wasn't really all that nice.

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Fish: To you?

Jordan: yeah. Whenever I'd come over, he'd always scrutinize me and say these horrible things.

Fish: Like what?

Jordan: *(Hesitantly)* He'd look at me with his good eye and say 'I'm on to you kid...I'm on to you.'

Fish: God! What the hell does that mean?

Jordan: *(Continuing)* I was always worried that he was telling the truth. That he really did know all about me.

Fish: Know what?

Jordan: Uh... I don't want to tell you.

Fish: No, come on! He was my Grandpa too. I hated him too. *(Jordan doesn't budge)* Come on! I'll tell you a secret.

Jordan: Will you tell me about the friend that keeps calling?

Fish: *(Hesitates)* Yeah...fine.

Jordan: Okay. *(Chickens out)* I guess it's not even that bad really.

Fish: Come on. I won't be mean about it, I promise.

Jordan: *(Looks at him, then believes him)* I don't think I'm who everybody thinks I am. I don't get good grades. I don't care about friends. I don't really want to do well. My mom lies to everyone and pretends like I do—I asked her too—I know *(Stuttering)* I know she doesn't care about it and she loves me anyways, but I feel...so stupid! Everybody thinks I'll do all these great things—no, it's even worse than that: everybody knows I'll do all these great things because it's "just who I am". That's what Grandma said when I tried to tell her. But I don't want to. I don't want to have to work hard. I'd rather relax my whole life—be a failure like Uncle Hal calls it. But I do! I do want to do that. I don't want to do this working hard stuff. *(Leans forward)* I don't even care if I graduate from high school.

Fish: Shit...and all this time everyone thought you were a total suck up.

Jordan: Everyone?

Fish: Okay, well, just me but... Shit.

Begins to laugh.

Jordan: What?

Fish: Damn that's funny. I love it when people surprise me like that. 'Snot often it happens.

Pager rings again. Fish looks at it and stresses out.

Fish: Crap. I wish I could call her.

Jordan: I do have a cell phone, would you like to use it?

Fish: Yeah, please.

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Jordan pulls a cell phone out of his pocket (maybe Jordan should have a sweater with a pocket or something) and looks at it.

Jordan: I'm going to have to fix it first.

Fish: What's wrong with it? Is it still going to work?

Jordan: Yeah. I just dropped it a little while ago. I have to hold the 'on' button for a bit first for it to work.

Fish: Okay, fine... nice work on dropping your phone.

Silence. Fish is visibly stressed. He starts pacing.

Jordan: Why did you come?

Fish: Are we still on this?

Jordan: I'm curious.

Fish: Okay. I was forced to come?

Jordan: Seriously? Who forced you?

Fish: My mom.

Jordan: She made you come here... but then you snuck off to go sit in this room?

Fish: No. That was kinda her too.

Jordan: What do you mean?

Fish: She said that she didn't want me embarrassing the family or some shit like that.

Jordan: Ouch. I'm sorry. That's really unfair.

Fish: *(shrugs)* Yeah, well.

Jordan: *(Looks down at the phone and releases button)* I think the phone should be ready soon. Do you want to tell me what it's about?

Fish: No.

Jordan: Aw, come on, I told you.

Fish: *(looks at Jordan and then trusts him)* Okay. Fine... my friend... I had a friend named Nikolas. He was from Hamburg. A really, really cool guy: dropped out of school to work in Serbia with land mine victims and refugees. He saw a lot of really bad stuff there between refugees and soldiers... decided to make a film about it. I was helping him on it. He was such a good guy. I was in Serbia part of last year with him— you probably know about that. — we interviewed a whole bunch of people there. My parents weren't happy about me going— well my mom wasn't happy about me going, but I went anyways, even though she refused to pay for me. She was a total bitch about it. She couldn't fucking figure it out that it was something actually important, not like a bullshit church camping trip or some crap like that that she's always saying I don't commit to enough. I ended up using my college funds for it. She was pretty pissed about it. We got into a lot of fights about that one. She didn't find out about it 'till I left, but then she cut off

my bank account while I was there so I had to come back. I couldn't even borrow money of anyone. As soon as I left...Nikolas was working on the film, working in the minefield trying to get some really good shots—it would have been so good. They would have been amazing; he was such a fantastic cameraman. Fuck, he stepped on a mine. The stupid fuckin' soldiers told him that there was a clear path where he was walking and they fuckin' lied. Right before I left too, we got in a fight. He told me to stop acting like such a punk loser and get off my ass and actually do something with my life. I've been thinking about next year a lot since he said that. That was a month ago. The stupid government just cleared for his body to come back into Canada...Anna's in charge. She's supposed to find out when they're letting him back in...that's the chick that keeps calling me. She's supposed to go down to the border and pick him up if it's today. We were going to have a funeral as soon as possible. I need to get out of here. That's why I'm so pissed to be here. I shouldn't be here; what the hell am I doing here? It's not right. I'm here for this shithead of an old man who's done fuck all but treat people like shit and run a slave labour company instead of waiting to see if I can (*looks uncomfortable*) help Nikolas.

Jordan: Why aren't you at home, then?

Fish: My mom said she'd kick me out if I didn't come.

Jordan: She probably wasn't didn't mean it...

Fish: (*Directly*) She did. And I can't afford that. I'm not going on welfare, despite what she wants me to.

Jordan: What, you think your mom...

Fish: Hell yeah. She treats me like I'm a bum; she talks about me like I'm a bum. She hates me. And I don't care. I'm not gonna be a loser, fuck what she says. She thinks that because I dress like a punk, that's what I am. Doesn't matter if my teachers tell her I'm smart, doesn't matter if I have an IQ of whatever the hell it was. She thinks he's a punk, he's lazy he's a failure.

Jordan: Has she ever said that?

Fish: Yeah.

Silence.

Fish: Can I use your phone?

Jordan checks it, starts that it's ready and then hands it over. Fish moves upstage to get out of the audience's focus to use the phone. Jordan's mom enters.

Linda: Finally, a break. We've got five minutes to the ceremony. I'm supposed to go round up you guys.

Jordan: I'd really kind of like to stay in here for a bit...if that's fine.

Linda: Why? What's going on in here?

Jordan: Um...nothing. We've just been talking.

Linda: About anything in particular?

Fish walks back downstage into the scene, looking determined. He hands the phone to Jordan.

Fish: I gotta go.

Jordan: Why?

Linda: Why? What's wrong?

Fish: I gotta go see Anna. Stuff's not working out.

Linda: What's going on?

Fish: Friend needs my help. She's at the border and things aren't working out. She needs me. I have a clean record.

Linda: What's going on? Why do you need to get to the border?

Fish: I have to pick up something really important.

Linda: You can't leave now. I was just talking to your mom. There's no way she's going to let you leave. She's already pissed about your behavior before you came here. She says you guys are going home to have a serious talk.

Fish: I didn't do anything! I don't have time for this crap. What did she say to you?

Linda: That you'd been a complete terror to live with for the past few years and something needs to be done about it. She did also mention something about your dad.

Fish: My dad...I'm not going. I don't care what she says. *(To Jordan)* See. She'd rather ship me down to live with my dad then put up with me. It's just about the worst thing she could do to me.

Jordan: Why?

Fish: My dad lives in the States. Not only is it the States, but I can't go anywhere there. It would completely screw me up getting into McGill for next year, like I want to.

Jordan: Couldn't you just apply internationally or something?

Fish: That's not the issue. My dad's not going to pay for me to go to university. If I want to get anywhere, I need to go to Uni., for that I need to stay with my mom. My stepdad's the only one who can afford to send me if I don't get full scholarship.

Jordan: So go for full scholarship.

Fish: I can't. I've already screwed up my grades this year by going to Serbia. *(Remembering)* Shit. I've got to go.

Linda: Fish, don't go. Don't screw things up worse with your mother.

Fish: I have to! This is more important.

Linda: Fish, WHAT do you need to do? What's going on?

Fish: Do you remember me telling you about Nikolas a little while ago?

Linda: Yes, of course.

Fish: When he died, the people in Serbia couldn't do anything for him. The refugees he worked with wanted to give him a burial, but they died before they could. Someone set off a mine in the camp; there was a crisis. They had no time to do it. The best thing that the Red Cross could do was to send his body back here, and believe me, that was hard enough. I need to go get...his body. My friend Anna was going to, but apparently she's running into crap at the border because of her record.

Linda: So what needs to happen?

Fish: I need to get down there, now.

Linda: No one else can go? Where are his parents?

Fish: His parents don't live here. They didn't even know he was in Serbia.

Linda: Do you need anything to get down there?

Fish: I need a car.

Jordan: And your mom won't drive you?

Fish: Please.

Jordan: That's ridiculous.

Fish: Yup. Pretty much my mom's just a bitch.

Linda: I don't think it's that—I mean, I know your mom's a bitch (*to Jordan*) She's on you dad's side of the family, what can I say—it's more, I think, that she doesn't realize that it's real. I think she thinks you're playing one of your games with her.

Jordan: You think she thinks that he's pretending his friend is dead?

Linda: No, I think it's more that she just sees the power struggle of the situation. (*To Fish*) Really, why else would she make you be here, she knows you didn't like Grandpa, no one did. She's just not seeing what the real situation is.

Fish: No, you're right, but it's frickin' stupid. Why the hell would I do that?

Linda: Like you don't play power games with your mother, Fish.

Fish: (*With disgust*) I would *never* play with something like this.

Linda: But you've got to see where she's coming from Phillip, otherwise you two will never sort this stuff out. Look, if you need me to, I'll drive you down there.

Fish: Yeah?

Linda: Right now, let's go.

Fish grabs his coat/vest, which has at some point before this been taken off, to go.

Jordan: Wait, can I come?

Linda: I think you should stay here with Grandma.

Jordan: No...

Linda: Shoot, I feel really, really bad about this. I don't want you to feel like I'm abandoning you... but I think someone needs to stay here.

Fish: You can explain to grandma where we are...or cover for us...

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Jordan: You guys aren't even supposed to leave.

Fish: Jordan, look. This is really important. I know you understand that. At least, you understood that when I was telling you about it earlier. Don't go all 'my mom' on me.

Jordan: Fuck you.

Linda: *Shocked (because Jordan never swears) and disciplinary*) Whoa.

Jordan: What the hell does that mean?

Fish: *(Firmly)* I meant that you're missing the point. This isn't about you not coming. We need someone to stay here and talk to my mom so your mom doesn't get in shit.

Jordan realizes this.

Jordan: Okay.

Linda: *(Closes her eyes)* Thank you.

Jordan: *(said like one would say 'Bye Fish, love you')* Fish.

Fish: *(Smiles and acknowledges)* Jordan.

Jordan: So I guess I'll see you later.

Linda: Where are you going?

Jordan: To go see Grandma.

Linda: Don't let her hang off you the whole time, it's not necessary. She'll try; she'd really upset right now.

Fish: And don't let my mom yell at you for us leaving...tell her...that I'll be home as soon as I can tonight.

Jordan nods.

Fish: Thanks a lot Jordan, I really need this.

Jordan: I guess I'm gonna have to go see Grandpa too, eh?

Fish: Hey, if he tells you you're a loser, tell him I'm here. He always said I was more of a loser than you.