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AUGUSTINE'S CONFESSIONS

SCENES FROM AMERICAN LIFE

by John Augustine

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Stanley Wayne Mathis
Gerit Quealy
Constance Schulman

It has subsequently been produced by several New York Theatres under the titles *Augustine's Confessions*, as well as *Quick Takes*.

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Production Notes

The individual plays may be performed in a variety of orders. The idea is to have characters weave in and out of each play, with fun/hip music in between as the actors dance and energetically change the set.

For instance: if GHOST follows NICOLE AND JANE, then the actor playing the waiter could clear any set pieces you need—and as he leaves that area, the actress performing GHOST can enter and the waiter can cross in front of her as she says her first line. You can create relationships between the plays this way—under the change music. But changes between plays should be as quick as possible. Another idea is to have Rebecca Ruth run between plays as “foreshadowing” in Act 1. Then, when she appears in Act 2, the audience will have seen her previously. Likewise, Siobhan could walk by early on reading her book during a set change. She could be riding on the SUBWAY and get “off the train” before that play begins.

Possible show order:

ACT I

The Opening
Generation x
The Subway
Temporary People, Part I: Siobhan
Nicole & Jane
Ghost
Censorship Play

ACT II

Pamper Island
The Three Roses
Window of Opportunity
Kept Boy
Megaphone Man
Temporary People, Part II: Rebecca Ruth
The Closing

Production Notes (continued)

Another show order: Feel free to mix and match from the collection. Especially with the smaller pieces.

ACT I

The Opening
Generation x
The Subway
Temporary People, Part I: Siobhan
Nicole & Jane
Ghost
Kept Boy
Pamper Island

ACT II

Scab Writes a Song
The Three Roses
Megaphone Man
Sarabande
Censorship Play
Window of Opportunity
Temporary People, Part II: Rebecca Ruth
The Closing

One Act Version:

Note: Depending on the specific talent of your actors—you could include SCAB before or in place of, *Megaphone Man*:

The Opening
Generation X
Temporary People, Part I: Siobhan
Nicole & Jane
Ghost
Censorship Play
Pamper Island
The Three Roses
Window of Opportunity
Kept Boy
Megaphone Man
Temporary People, Part II: Rebecca Ruth
The Closing

THE OPENING

Cast of Characters

SIOBHAN
TAMMY
ALEX
JANE
LARRY
NICOLE
MAN
WOMAN
LISA

Production Notes

The Opening can be interpreted in several ways. In previous productions—the first actor entered in the dark. And spoke the first “help” as lights came up. The next two came on—and then the rest of the cast. They stood “Chorus line” style and spoke to each other and the audience. Each actor listened and reacted. Took certain thing personally etc etc.

The important thing is that it is a quick barrage of thoughts—with each individual “beat” worked out.

In another production...loud hip music played as house lights fade to black. The actors enter dancing freestyle and get into place. The music stops! Lights bump up to bright! And the actors begin. This creates a nice energetic beginning and it grabs the audience right away.

I’ve assigned names from the plays in the collection to help you divide up the lines. I’ve include “Man” and “Woman” when I didn’t use a character name. Assign as you see fit. Feel free to decide which actors take which lines.

SIOBHAN. Help.

TAMMY / ALEX / JANE. Help.

EVERYBODY. Helllllp.

LARRY. Bang!

NICOLE. What's the matter?

SIOBHAN. I don't know what to do. I'm lost. Really lost.

MAN. I'm lost too.

SIOBHAN. I don't have a real job. Nothing.

MAN. I don't have a job.

TAMMY. They say the three main stays in ones life are love, money and career and I don't have any. Nothing.

WOMAN. Oh. Well. I've got my own life to worry about.

LARRY. My life is really very good. I am extremely happy. Everything in my life works.

ALEX. Oh dear. Oh dear.

NICOLE. What's the matter?

ALEX. I don't have love, money or career. What should I do. I can't see my way out.

NICOLE. Become a doctor. That's a good career.

ALEX. Oh! A doctor. Duh. That's a good idea. Why didn't I think of that?

MAN. They say learning never ends.

WOMAN. Do you have some thread I can borrow? I'd like to stitch that on my pillow.

MAN. I don't THINK you're bitter.

WOMAN. Think again.

ALEX. I have a confession.

NICOLE. Please don't.

MAN. Generation X is:

TAMMY. Lost.

SIOBHAN. Misguided?

MAN. Generation X is:

NICOLE. Young.

LARRY. No way.

JANE. They were born between 1975 and 1990.

LARRY. No. They're between 1960 and 1987.

MAN. After the baby boomers.

JANE. Really?

MAN. Generation X is:

SIOBHAN. Just another label.

WOMAN. Another way to label someone else.

TAMMY. Another way to know me in ONE second.

SIOBHAN. You don't know me. I have 500 personalities.

WOMAN. What is Generation X?

LISA. All those kids who did nothing with their lives.

ALEX. Kids? I know old people who did nothing with their lives.

SIOBHAN. I've done nothing with my life.

JANE. What's the X stand for?

LARRY. X stands for the unknown.

WOMAN. I'm unknown, aren't you?

MAN. I have no problem drinking. I drink. I pass out. I fall down.
No problem.

NICOLE. You know, you're so funny, I forgot to laugh.

LARRY. The Generation X people are old by now. We haven't labeled the new people who are a mess and will never do anything with their lives.

SIOBHAN. I think we're all one big lost generation.

LARRY. I think the whole country is lost.

NICOLE. You're not paid to think.

LARRY. Actually, I am. It's a new government program where people are paid to think.

ALEX. When I was in the third grade. My mother sent me to the store to buy milk. On the door of the store there was a sign. It said: Homo Milk. 49 cents a gallon. At the age of ten I had never heard the word homogenized, but I knew the word homo because I was called a homo in school. I didn't know what it was, but I knew it was very bad. So when I saw the sign HOMO MILK, 49 cents a gallon, I thought: OH! It must not be that bad after all. They make milk just for me. I proudly asked the lady inside for two gallons of homo milk. She smiled. I knew I was okay.

(Enter more.)

LISA. Thank you for sharing.

NICOLE. My photographer says, I have a hard look and a soft look.
(Smiles.)

WOMAN. Really.

SIOBHAN. She is SO versatile.

NICOLE. Please. Don't hate me because I'm beautiful.

LISA. I don't think that's why. No. Really. I don't. Did I say something wrong.

WOMAN. This is the man who invented the car alarm. Who wants the first shot?

MAN. I'm really upset about something. I wanted to buy an automatic assault rifle—and I went into the K-Mart where I usually buy them and they were all out! I could only get a regular hand gun.

JANE. Why do you even need an automatic assault rifle?

MAN. Cause sometimes you want to gun down a whole group of deer all at once.

JANE. Oh. Well then. okay.

SIOBHAN. It's kind of like, they want to say, "You know, you are our absolute first choice for the job...but, we have to hire just *anyone* else."

NICOLE. Hi. Can you help me? We're looking to hire someone. Do you know anybody just like you?

SIOBHAN. How about me?

NICOLE. Well, no. We want someone just LIKE you.

SIOBHAN. Someone like me but with talent.

LARRY. Oh now. Where's your self esteem?

SIOBHAN. I was absent from school the day they explained it.

WOMAN. I'm old fashioned. I don't want sex on a first date. I want dinner.

(Smiles sweetly.)

TAMMY. Is Manhattan actually an island? I always thought it was just a metaphor.

MAN. Yeah. John Lennon almost bought my parents house in up-state N.Y. But it was more than he was willing to pay. He should have bought it. If he had, he's be alive today.

ALEX. So it's your parents fault for not coming down in price.

LISA. I'm sorry. After using tartar control tooth paste I can no longer order tartar sauce at Burger King. It's just the word. It grosses me out.

NICOLE. Our society today is:

JANE. People today are:

TAMMY. Terminally Vague.

LISA. Style over substance.

NICOLE. I can't get over how good you look.

MAN. You know you're aging when you want to order all that stuff on the info-mercials. Like that bow flex thing.

ALEX. I would say to my father, I wish I could be a doctor when I grow up. Or. I wish I could be an astronaut. And he would say: "Wish in one hand and shit in the other, and see which one fills up first." I got my great outlook on life from him.

LARRY. If you can survive in Miami you can survive anywhere and that is a fact. A known fact.

NICOLE. Miami? Are you on drugs?

LARRY. Don't judge me. Cause I WILL READ YOU, honey. And it will NOT be a chapter from a book you want to hear.

TAMMY. There's just so much to know now.

WOMAN. SPYware.

TAMMY. Adware.

MAN. Gigabytes. Megabytes. Web cams. Pic viewer. Not enough memory. Jpeg. Gifs. Adult Check. Man check. Nude photos...but perhaps I've said too much.

TAMMY. Girls, dogs, horses...extreme farm action! How does this get in my email? Who is sending this to me?

SIOBHAN. My address is: [http colon www dot slash period tilda squiggle squiggle at WRITE ME A LETTER THE OLD FASHIONED way dot com](http://www.tilda.squiggle.squiggle@WRITE.ME.A.LETTER.THE.OLD.FASHIONED.way.com).

TAMMY. Couldn't you just CONSIDER me for the job?

NICOLE. O.K. Drop off your resume.

TAMMY. Can I fax it to you?

NICOLE. Sure. Fax it to me. That way I can NOT respond to you faster.

**PAGES HAVE BEEN CUT FROM THIS SCENE.
THE PLAY CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE.**

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GENERATION X

Characters

ALEX, 25 to 35, age not as important as his need to communicate. A little lost. But energized about figuring out their lives. Playful.

TAMMY, his friend. The one usually left out. She is trying to fit in. To participate.

LARRY, confident. Loves to express his opinions. Not a jerk. Just thinks everyone is interested in what he has to say.

LISA, Larry's girlfriend. Smart. Loves to read. Discuss. Challenge opinions.

Casting Note: LARRY, LISA, and TAMMY can be any race. ALEX should be Caucasian because it is referred to.

(An apartment. Wine.)

ALEX. You see. It's like this.

TAMMY. Uh huh.

ALEX. It's like, I have SO much talent, that I have NO talent.

TAMMY. I don't know if I follow you.

ALEX. I have so much that I have none. They sort of negate each other.

TAMMY. So what you're saying is that you have no talent!

ALEX. Yes. In a way yes. But it's because I have so MUCH talent. It's like, I could be SO GOOD at so many things that it's hard to settle on one.

TAMMY. ...So you're not good at ANYTHING really.

ALEX. No! I'm not saying that. I'm talking about talent. Not the EXECUTION of talent.

TAMMY. Oh...I'm lost again.

ALEX. Okay! It's like this. I'm so good at everything that I'm not really very good (at anything.)

(NOTE: TAMMY begins her line overlapping ALEX roughly at the parenthesis. ALEX completes his line over her dialogue.)

(LARRY enters with coffee and a glass of wine.)

TAMMY. *(Interrupting:)* Oh. I think I get it. A something of everything and a master of none? Like that? What's that expression?

ALEX. Huh? ...Yeah.

TAMMY. Larry. Alex and I were talking about talent.

LARRY. Oh. Yes. An interesting subject.

ALEX. How so, Lare?

LARRY. Well, here's a "for instance" for example. Like we used to do.

ALEX. Uh huh.

LARRY. "FOR INSTANCE."

TAMMY. Oh! Uh huh.

LARRY. I'm at work, right?

ALEX. Right.

TAMMY. I see! At work! Right!

LARRY. And say like the copy machine breaks.

ALEX. It breaks?

TAMMY. How?

LARRY. Well, it doesn't break so much as it runs out of the WHAT'S IT CALLED?

TAMMY. The paper?

LARRY. No! The uh.

TAMMY. The fluid?

LARRY. It's like the fluid.

ALEX. Was the machine plugged in Lare? I've had some experience with copiers. And if they're not plugged in...they don't work.

LARRY. The toner!

TAMMY. The toner?

ALEX. The BLACK INK stuff.

TAMMY. What are we talking about?

LARRY. I'm telling you about being talented in something and my example.

TAMMY. Oh! Uh huh.

ALEX. Go ahead Lare. We're listening. (Do you want some more wine, Tammy?)

TAMMY. Yes. Thank you.

LARRY. (*Begin overlap during ALEX line above:*) The point is, is that the toner is out.

ALEX. Were you drinking white or white zinfandel?

TAMMY. White. How is the white zinfandel? Is it good?

LARRY. This is the really good part...

ALEX. Oh we better listen to Larry. He's telling a story.

TAMMY. Uh huh. Uh huh.

LARRY. The toner is out, and they might have to call the repair company to come fix it or replace it or whatever.

TAMMY. OH-MY-GOD! Uh huh.

ALEX. Wow. You have big reactions.

LARRY. But because I'm smart. Because I'm talented, as you say Alex, I am able to read and follow directions and I read the INSTRUCTIONS on the copier and I am able to fix the machine. I replace the, black ink stuff.

TAMMY. The toner.

ALEX. Do you have a memory problem Larry? Maybe you need ginko balboa. Baloba.

TAMMY. Baloba, I think.

LARRY. I replace the toner and I save our office the two hundred dollars they would have had to pay someone to come look at it.

ALEX. But isn't that included in the price?

TAMMY. Yeah. Do you have what's called a service contract in your office? It shouldn't cost anything to fix it.

(LISA enters from the bathroom. She takes into the conversation.)

LARRY. Whatever. But I think you see my point. I save the company money by being talented. And I don't get paid more for it.

LISA. Is Larry talking about toner again?

LARRY. We thought you fell in.

(LARRY hands LISA her wine.)

LISA. Ha. Ha. So Alex. What's up with you? Any work? Or did you cover this already?

ALEX. No. I'm still kind of looking.

LISA. You don't work? Some people have it so easy.

ALEX. I work.

LARRY. Alex works, Lisa.

LISA. So you DO work.

ALEX. Well not the job I want. I have what I call survival jobs.

LISA. Ooo. Sounds so primitive. I love it.

TAMMY. Does anyone know that store in SoHo that sells primitive art? I can't find it. And I love their stuff.

LISA. It's in SoHo! So what kind of work are you looking for. You're a...what are you again?

ALEX. I'm a photographer.

TAMMY. Alex.

ALEX. Well, I want to be a photographer.

TAMMY. Alex.

ALEX. I need to buy a camera.

LISA. You don't have a camera?

LARRY. That's funny. A photographer without a camera.

LISA. Put it in your stand up routine Larry.

ALEX. Well no. I have a camera. But not the right kind. I need new equipment. But I don't have the money yet.

LARRY. Do you need money, Alex?

ALEX. No. I'm working.

LISA. Where do you work?

LARRY. Cause if you need money.

ALEX. I'm cleaning apartments right now.

LISA. Come on.

LARRY. There's no shame in good honest labor, Lisa.

LISA. But how many apartments can you clean to make any money?

LARRY. You'd be surprised.

ALEX. I do okay.

LISA. Because my cleaning woman gets. How much do you charge?

ALEX. How much do you pay your person?

LISA. Ten dollars an hour.

ALEX. Ten?

LISA. She only asked for six. But I wouldn't do that to those people. I don't believe in taking advantage of people in a desperate situation.

LARRY. But you'll let them clean your toilet.

TAMMY. Oh I never clean my bathroom. It's a mess.

ALEX. I don't go by the hour. I charge sixty dollars for the job.

LISA. Sixty dollars?

ALEX. But it works out to twenty or thirty dollars an hour depending on the apartment.

LISA. Sixty dollars?

LARRY. Not bad.

TAMMY. That's the going rate I think.

LISA. I think it's terrible how uneducated people from other countries have to work for less money.

ALEX. What do you mean?

LISA. Well you make double what Maria makes.

LARRY. Maria doesn't even have a green card. She's happy for the job.

ALEX. It's what I asked for.

LISA. Because you're white you can ask for it.

ALEX. I work very hard.

LISA. So does Maria. Very, very hard.

LARRY. So pay her more, Miss politically correct.

LISA. Will you stop it. I am having a discussion.

ALEX. Yeah but ok. How long does she work for you?

LISA. Once a week. From twelve to six.

ALEX. So she's making sixty dollars. Same as me.

LISA. But she has to work twice as long to make the same pay.

ALEX. No she doesn't. I work fast. Because I'm smart I can get around an apartment without wasting time.

LARRY. Because you're "talented" in this area, getting back to our previous conversation.

ALEX. Right.

LISA. And you don't think it has anything to do with the fact you're white.

ALEX. No.

LARRY. Give her a "for instance," Alex. An example.

ALEX. Okay.

LARRY. Get 'er Alex. Yes!

LISA. (*Scolding LARRY:*) What are you doing? We are having a conversation.

ALEX. If you go to a dentist to have a filling put in. A slow, inexperienced dentist might take an hour.

LISA. Yes...

ALEX. But an EXPERIENCED dentist can do the same filling in half an hour or even fifteen minutes.

TAMMY. And you pay them the same money.

ALEX. Right.

LARRY. Touchdown. Two points. In the basket.

LISA. Larry!

LARRY. You love to win. I love to see someone beat you at your own game.

LISA. You are being really horrible. I was just having a conversation about the economy!

TAMMY. (*Trying to make peace:*) Oh, I don't know anything about the economy.

ALEX. Ok. Non-sequitur. It's like when you're washing dishes. And there isn't room in the dishwasher for a pan, lets say. And like you want it to fit in the dishwasher because you don't think it will get clean otherwise. You forget you have the power to clean it yourself.

TAMMY. (*Beat.*) BY HAND?

ALEX. Uh huh.

LARRY. Now there's a concept.

LISA. I'm glad I have a dishwasher. I couldn't live without one.

ALEX. Right. But that's my point. So my question to you is.

LARRY. I had hoped this was leading somewhere.

ALEX. Why do we depend on juicers and Quisinarts and blenders.

TAMMY. I could never figure out my Quisinart. It looks so dangerous.

LARRY. So you're talking about machines. The machine age.

LISA. Machines are necessary because we no longer—that is, we have more on our minds. We THINK more. DO more. READ more. I don't think people read enough if you ask me. I read a chapter a day of *Dr. Faustus*. It's like medicine. I love it.

TAMMY. Wow. I can barely read my telephone bill.

ALEX. But remember the simple easy times of peeling potatoes in the kitchen with your grandmother.

LARRY. Is this another non-sequitur?

TAMMY. I never had a grandmother. They all died before I was born.

LISA. Women are waiting longer to have children. Some into their forties.

LARRY. It's changed the American family. The grandparents are dying off.

TAMMY. I thought we were all living longer. I read that somewhere.

LARRY. We are. But the women having babies are forty. And if their parents were forty then the grandparents are eighty—and by the time you're ten, your grandparents are ninety or a hundred and they're dead.

ALEX. What?

TAMMY. I wouldn't want to be a hundred.

LISA. I wouldn't mind. There's so much great literature. I could spend my whole life—SEVERAL lifetimes—reading.

TAMMY. I admire you.

LARRY. (*Flirting:*) I like to read.

(*LISA slaps LARRY's arm.*)

TAMMY. Then I admire you too.

ALEX. What are we waiting for?

TAMMY. Are we going somewhere?

LARRY. What do you mean?

ALEX. What am I waiting for. When am I going to do it. Whatever it is.

TAMMY. I'm waiting to lose more weight.

LISA. You look fine.

LARRY. Uh huh!

ALEX. What are you waiting for, Lisa?

LISA. Is this some sort of rhetorical question?

ALEX. What are you waiting for? When will your life begin?

LISA. It did. It has. This is it. This is my life.

TAMMY. You're happy.

LARRY. I hate this kind of talk.

LISA. I need some more to drink.

LARRY. Do you really NEED another drink?

LISA. I DO if you expect me to PUT OUT later.

TAMMY. Oh dear. Don't fight.

ALEX. I mean, it's like this Lare. Say, I'm lookin' for a job.

LARRY. Right now?

ALEX. This is “a hypothetical.” So say, I’m looking in the *New York Times*.

TAMMY. The want ad section!

ALEX. Yeah.

TAMMY. It’s intimidating!

LISA. Not as intimidating as the real-estate section. Just TRY and find a summer rental. I do it all through referrals.

TAMMY. Lisa, Alex is doing a “hypothetical.”

LISA. Oh, sorry. Go ahead Alex. The want ads. Uh huh?

ALEX. So I’m looking. And like, why does my eye skip past high paying jobs and only land on the low paying jobs. The 20 thousand, the 30 thousand. Why do I feel I don’t deserve more than that. You know?

TAMMY. Oh! I know what you mean. I do that too.

LARRY. Well, are you QUALIFIED for one of the high paying jobs?

ALEX. The point is, why don’t I look at them.

LARRY. No. The point is—maybe you don’t look because you know you are not qualified for one.

LISA. Oh...Do you need a job, Alex? Is *that* what all this is about?

ALEX. No.

LISA. Because if you do. I can talk to my father.

ALEX. No, really.

TAMMY. Lisa, Alex doesn’t need a job. He was doing a hypothetical.

ALEX. It’s just that lately I don’t know who I am or where I’m going.

LARRY. Man. You are one lost mother fucker.

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THE SUBWAY

Cast of Characters

SCARY MAN
VIETNAM VET
FILM STUDENT
COLLEGE STUDENT
UPPER EAST SIDE LADY
REAL ESTATE WOMAN
CLOWN

(A subway car. Characters enter and exit as needed. Two or three people may be on the train throughout.)

SCARY MAN. Ladies and gentlemen. I need to ask for your help. I do not rob. I do not steal. However, I am not opposed to rape and murder.

(Laughs maniacally.)

Any contribution you can make will PROBABLY help stop me from going on a sudden rampage for one more day. God bless you and have a safe trip home.

VIETNAM VET. I need your attention. I need your attention. Sorry to bother you, but I am a Vietnam veteran and I believe that you owe me a living. I am here to intimidate you and make you feel guilty in the hopes that you will support my heroin habit. Society is responsible for me. Thank you.

FILM STUDENT. May I have your attention too, please? I am not a Vietnam vet, but I did see the movie *PLATOON*—and although I liked it very much, I don't care what people say, I think Oliver Stone is a GOOD director, but I still don't feel it actually captured the true horror of the Vietnam soldier, not unlike the one that was just through here. SO! If everyone on this train could give me just ten dollars each, I could make a GOOD film about "Nam," and then enter it in the Sundance Film Festival. The money I make from the film would help me to establish some sort of soldiers fund to do

something or other of which I am not sure of as of yet! But, with your donation, leave me your address and I will mail you an outline of the work I hope to complete by the end of this calendar year. If you can't give money, then please give a smile. They're free. And they give you face value. Though I prefer money. Thank you. Thank you. Nice teeth. You look good. Have you been working out? Thank you. Thank you.

COLLEGE STUDENT. Ummmm, like. Hello? Ok. Like I don't steal or nothin like that neither, but I did borrow money to go to college and like, it used to be okay to just ignore your student loans, but suddenly they seem to be cracking down. I keep getting all these notices asking for the money back! They say if I don't make payments they can turn it over to some collection agency and ask for the whole thing at once! I mean, GOD! That seems unfair. I didn't ask to go to school. I didn't ask to be born. I DID ask for the money but I regret it now. Can anyone help? Aw, c'mon. A wise man once said "A mind is a terrible thing to lose." If you can't give money then I don't want your smile. Money please. C'mon people. These loans aren't going to pay themselves... Money please. Money please. Ah man...you guys SUCK!

UPPER EAST SIDE LADY. Ladies and Gentlemen. May I have a few moments of your time. Believe me when I tell you how difficult it is for me to speak to you today. Quite frankly, my family and I are in trouble... We lost a great deal of money when the Clinton's were elected. Yes. Years later, we are STILL recovering from the liberal damage. I'm really a victim. You see, it's gotten so bad that recently we've had to let our black or African American maid go. Not only is this poor woman out of a job, but our house is a MESS. But *entre nous* she didn't actually clean that well, but she did dust and do the laundry. And the cooking. And the shopping. My husband and two children have had to live in filth these last few months. Believe me. If we knew HOW to clean ourselves, we would. We just don't know HOW. Raisinette, our maid, was very particular about her cleaning supplies. We don't know where she keeps them. If you cannot donate money, then please. Donate your TIME. If everyone on this train would give us just two hours a week, we could get our household back in working condition. You could take turns with the vacuuming and the cooking. It'd be fun! It's a beautiful three

story brownstone. Please help us. Now, who is available for the Tuesday/Thursday slot? You madam? Thank you. Next. Monday/Wednesday. Monday/Wednesday? Thank you. Next?

REAL ESTATE WOMAN. May I have your attention please? I do not rob. I do not steal. I'm in REAL ESTATE. And I have a lovely apartment listed on the upper west side. It has an eat in kitchen and lovely pre-war features, although it is a modern building. It has several closets that COULD be knocked down to create the FEELING of space. It doesn't have a doorman, but there is room for one. You don't see many door women. Why is that I wonder? Ladies! Perk up your ears. I just created more job opportunities for us. Now then. The main room can be used as a living room or a bedroom. It's very versatile. I think it would be a lovely meditation room because it is so WONderfully dark. There is one small window, but you could easily board that up with a book case. Or...for those of you who are not day sleepers, you could easily install several very large picture windows with board approval. God knows what you'd look at. Crack dealers welcome! In fact, I have some good crack for sale right now. Just kidding. That's my sense of humor. Isn't it good? So if everybody would gather by the far door, we can all get off at the next stop and I'll be conducting a walking tour of the upper west side. Bring your check books!

CLOWN. Ladies and germs. I am a clown. Bet you could not guess. I am not collecting for the homeless, I am just a clown. I have always been a clown. I started out in high school as the class clown...and just went on from there. I briefly attended clown college in Florida. But they only teach you how to be a clown in the circus. I have what you might call a really good sense of humor. I don't know where it comes from. But like sometimes, I'll just be standing somewhere and somebody will say something, and then I'll say something, and it will be very funny. Usually people will laugh and wonder where I get my sense of humor. Not from Clown College I can tell you that right now. Humor is a God-given talent they used to say to me...

Or sometimes I'm on the subway, and I'll start to laugh and people will look at me like I'm crazy and I'll say: Hey! I'm not crazy! I was just thinking something really funny. You see? I can crack myself

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TEMPORARY PEOPLE, PART I: SIOBHAN

Cast of Characters

SIOBHAN

(Lights up. SIOBHAN is sitting at a little table in a cafeteria or an outdoor bench. There is a Hostess Twinkie and a diet Shasta Cola on a small table beside her. She is reading Louise Hay's You Can Heal Your Life. We hear what she is reading.)

VOICE. "I love myself. Therefore I work at a job I truly enjoy doing. Working for and with people I love and who love me. And earning a good income."

(She looks up briefly.)

"And earning a good income. And earning a good" She closes the book quickly.

(Note: If voice-over is not possible, another actor can voice what she is reading. If done as a solo piece—the actor can simply read for a moment silently, and begin with the piece.)

SIOBHAN. Well, THIS is no help at all. For eight ninety-five plus tax, I expect to feel better in a hurry. I've tried everything else. And boy oh boy am I tired of being IN recovery. I am tired of being spiritual. I am tired of rocks that supposedly change our moods. I don't want to see another crystal unless it's on Dynasty reruns in the form of Linda Evans. People say that I look like Linda Evans although her shoulders are about seven times wider than mine are.

People always think that I'm somebody else. Bo Derek...Olivia Newton-John...in a certain light...if I wash my hair and wear clean clothes. They think that they know me. They think they saw me on the TV. I tell them, "NO! YOU DON'T KNOW ME. BUT I USED TO WORK AT A NURSING HOME AND MAYBE YOU SAW ME CLEANING YOUR GRANDMOTHER'S TOILET!!"

I hated that job. Cleaning all these toilets.

Sometimes people's number two would stick to the inside of the toilet bowl and I would have to scrub to get it off. I would ask... "HEY! What are you feeding these people?? I can't get their NUMBER TWO off the toilet!!"

Sometimes I would use my own money and buy one of those things that make the water blue. Cause then you can't see the number two.

(Realizes what she said and how it must sound.)

I'm sorry. I honestly had no intention of talking about number two. But you see I'm just so tired of everything so I was reading this book and I am tired of trying to be spiritual. I'm just not getting it. It's EXHAUSTING to say "I Love You" to people when what you really want to do is to run them over with your car. I don't have a car and I can't even rent one cause you need a driver's license AND a credit card. And not just Macy's or one like that. It has to be a MAJOR credit card. God. They act like you're going to steal the damn thing.

(Takes a sip of soda—or just looks off in thought for a beat.)

What else.

I am sick and tired of self-help seminars...self-help books... I'm tired of my A.A. meetings. I go to A.A., A.C.O.A., C.A., S.A., D.A., B.A., M.A., Blae, Blae. And quite frankly, I don't have a fuckin' clue as to what I am doing in these meetings.

I should go to the "I DON'T HAVE A FUCKIN' CLUE" meeting. I don't have a clue... .. Well I don't know.

I hope that I am not too negative for you people. Some of you look scared. Some of you look negative. I like you guys better. I wanted to tell you about my job, but if you'd like we could have an A.A. meeting instead.

OK. I'll start. Hello. My name is Siobhan, and I am an alcoholic. I am also the adult child of five transsexual parents and two bisexual grandparents. And I'm addicted to love and giving to charities and following the Commandments and work... .. work is just so hard!

I quit the nursing home a while ago. I decided that I needed sort of a break from cleaning the toilets until I could figure out if I was going to (*Referring to book:*) HEAL myself or not.

So, I figured I'd get a job as a temporary worker. Something without responsibility, till I got my head together. So anyway, somebody gave me this newspaper intended for people in show business and there were all these ads advertising jobs. Lots of jobs. And they said things like... "BE THE STAR OF YOUR NEXT JOB. Call STAR TEMPORARIES!" Or things like... "Actors and Actresses wanted! Open call! AA Temporaries!"

Now THAT one caught my eye originally because of the AA. But the AA stood for Actors and Actresses. So I thought, well, I'm not an actress, but if they can get jobs, I should be able to.

So I go to this temp place called Madam Flora's Tempting Temps or something like that. I felt like I was going to apply to work in a brothel.

So I get there and say... (*She changes her voice somewhat:*) "Hello. My name is Siobhan, and I would like to register with your firm for possible employment." I thought that this sounded like a person who can work.

And the girl behind the desk said: "Do you know MICROSOFT WORD? WORDPERFECT? MACROWORD? MICROWORD? MULTIMATE? MINIMATE? BLAE, BLAE, BLATE?"

I mean, GOD! Whatever happened to... "Can you answer a phone?" So I said...I'm terrified of computers, but I type thirty-five w.p.m. Words per minute. Then I had to take all these tests that show if I could file the word BOOK after BIRD and stuff like that. Then I needed to type endless forms and meet endless lines of people all to determine if I can be the STAR of my next temp job.

I listed seventeen previous jobs, twenty-three previous addresses...
...ONE personal reference.

And by now, I'm beginning to regret the fact that I didn't just stick to cleaning other people's shit. I was considering answering one of

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NICOLE AND JANE

Cast of Characters

NICOLE

JANE

WAITER

(Cafe. Coffee. WAITPERSON leaves check on table. Smiles. Exits.)

NICOLE. Yeah. So basically I call myself an artist.

JANE. I've always been envious of that.

NICOLE. Really? Why?

JANE. Because you feel okay about calling yourself something that I don't think you've ever really done.

NICOLE. Oh! But now when I say "I am an artist" I mean to say that I love beauty. Light. Shadows. But not just things pertaining to the world of fine art, I love the written word. Sentences. I love complete sentences and the way they can form a paragraph sometimes when you're not even expecting it.

JANE. OH! I know. I was terrible in English. One line for the subject, two lines for the predicate.

NICOLE. I love that. I really do. You see, I'm so delicate. I'm so sensitive that I FEEL things more strongly than other people.

JANE. Oh, uh huh.

NICOLE. But not just a cruelty, or an injustice. Which are DEVASTATING to me.

JANE. Oh! I HATE injustice.

NICOLE. But along with feeling these ANGRY ARROWS MORE than others, YOURSELF, for example.

JANE. Me? I feel angry arrows.

NICOLE. I also feel the opposite more than others. A KIND WORD, a gentle caress...a tilt of the shoulder, a DEW DROP on a rose petal, I FEEL these things more...

JANE. Nicole.

NICOLE. I NOTICE these things.

JANE. Nicole! I feel angry arrows. Please don't say that I don't.

NICOLE. Jane. Jane. Sweetie. Darling. Of course you do. You're very sensitive. I wouldn't have chosen you to be my friend otherwise. (*WAITER is in sight.*) Could I have another double cappuccino?

(WAITER picks up check to adjust. Nods and smiles appropriately.)

JANE. I'll have one too please.

NICOLE. Do you have decaf cappuccino?

WAITPERSON. Mm hm.

NICOLE. Good.

(Points to JANE as if to indicate "give one to her.")

NICOLE. Jane, you should have decaf. You're quite edgy today.

(WAITER exits.)

JANE. I'm not. I'm grieving. You know that.

NICOLE. Wait a minute Jane. (*To WAITER:*) Could you take this ash tray away too, please? I don't even want it on the table. Do I LOOK like a smoker?

(WAITER takes it away.)

NICOLE. Sorry Jane. What were you saying?

JANE. I said I was grieving.

NICOLE. Oh that's right—who was it again—were you very close?

JANE. It was Neal. My good friend. He died last night. And gosh. I don't know. I just don't know how to grieve anymore. It confuses me.

NICOLE. Oh. I know! I had a terrible night when I knew someone that died. I was so devastated. I FEEL death more than other people because I understand it. But go ahead, Jane. You were making a point.

JANE. I wasn't making a point. I was expressing a feeling.

NICOLE. Oh sweetie, of course you were. Were you very sad when your friend died? I know how devastated I would be. I feel death MORE than other people.

JANE. Yes. So you've said. I just don't know how to respond anymore. It's like someone will call me up and say another friend died, and I just go...oh. It's gotten to the point that when someone is killed in an accident or has a heart attack I'm kind of relieved or glad on some level. Because it's different.

NICOLE. You're sharing a lot today Jane. It's very sweet.

JANE. It's such a cliché, ...a ...a weird kind of new phenomenon. This multiple grieving. Like in the Holocaust I guess. Except different, cause they knew, or it was all at once or something. Not that, that makes it easier. But this thing. It's still so silent. And you're so alone. Your friends aren't supposed to die till you're 80 or 90 years old...

(NICOLE opens her journal to scribble a quick reminder note.)

NICOLE. Hmm...I wonder if there have been studies done on this topic. I'm so interested in statistics and studies. I love people. How their minds work. I wish I could be a brain cell for one day in Albert Schweitzer's brain. You were telling me about your friend that died. OHMYGOD! Who was it? Did I know him? I'm of course assuming it's a HIM. Oh my god. If I knew him I will be so devastated. Early death hurts me so deeply. I'm of course, assuming he was young. It is so unfair. Who was it?

JANE. It was my friend Neal. I've already mentioned it.

NICOLE. Neal. Neal. Nealy. Nealy O'Hara. *Valley Of The Dolls*. I love that movie. Isn't it sad about Sharon Tate? I'm still freaked out. No, I don't know a "Neal." I don't like that name. Did I ever meet him?

JANE. Yes. You met him once at dinner. At that Martha Stewart opening.

NICOLE. I did? I met the man that died? (*Sound of recognition.*) Was he that short gay guy? The one that arranged her table and made that beautiful mousse in the fish mold?

JANE. Yes.

NICOLE. Oh my god—I am so devastated.

(*Beat.*)

I WANTED TO FIND OUT HOW HE MADE THAT! Now I never will. God. Life is so weird. It just goes to show how you can be here one day and gone the next. And how like you really should APPRECIATE people when they're here. AND HOW IF YOU WANT A RECIPE YOU SHOULD GET IT WHEN YOU HAVE THE IMPULSE. Like that same night I should have followed my psychic impulse to ask for the recipe, but I didn't. I am so freaked out. My astrologer tells me I'm very psychic—MORE than most people and that I should listen to that voice. I'm a Pisces with Gemini rising so I'm VERY intuitive.

JANE. I want to cry but my body feels so heavy.

NICOLE. Oh please! You're thin as a rail. Please. I think you have an eating disorder.

(*WAITER arrives with the cappuccino.*)

NICOLE. Finally! What. Did you have to GROW the beans?

WAITPERSON. Yes. We did. We had to grow the beans. I was back there holding up a sun lamp to the beans but this one darn little bean just wouldn't grow. So I am sorry. But since you've been here for three hours already, I thought you wouldn't mind waiting for the BEST bean to grow. I know that you FEEL things more than your friend here and I know that you can taste the difference between a bean that was FORCED into fruition...and one that has been nurtured. Lovingly. Slowly. To give you, our valued customer, the best cup of fine Italian coffee. So. Yes. We did have to grow the beans.

NICOLE. (*Sincere, flattered:*) That's great! I appreciate all your hard work. I do notice the difference. Thank you for explaining your process to me. I'm very interested in process. That's something you'll learn about me if I come back.

(*WAITER tries to go. She keeps him there with a gesture. She sips the coffee.*)

NICOLE. Ummm. It's very good. It is worth it. The wait. I'm going to recommend this place to all my friends. Now if you'll excuse us, my friend is grieving. Her gay friend died and she needs me to listen now.

(*JANE reacts, a little embarrassed. WAITER and JANE exchange a look.*)

NICOLE. SO. Jane! Did you pick the music for the funeral?

JANE. Well no. I'm not really in charge. I think his lover is planning...(the service).

NICOLE. ...Music for a funeral! Hmmm. Well I love Jazz. Not loud jazz. No. Quiet melancholy jazz. I love jazz. I love saying the word. Jazzzzzz. I love a lone saxophone playing softly in the distance. Get THAT for the funeral!

JANE. I'm sure that Neal hated jazz.

NICOLE. No dear. Not the LOUD jazz. You weren't listening to me. I was speaking of something very simple, very delicate. A lone saxophone playing softly. In the distance.

JANE. Nicole. I have to be honest. I'm starting to ask myself why I'm your friend.

NICOLE. Oh THANK YOU Jane. I love being your friend too. You teach me a lot. Really. Just by listening. I'm a good listener too, but when I'm with you, I talk and talk and it's never boring or anything like that. And I always come up with the most interesting observations.

(*JANE motions for WAITER to bring the check.*)

NICOLE. And after I leave you I go home and write the most interesting observations in my journal. OOO! (*Reaches in bag on floor:*) I

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GHOST

Cast of Characters

JANE

MAN

(A MAN walks past her. She calls out after him. He turns. He looks at her and continues on.)

JANE. Michael! Michael! Stop. ...Oh! I. I'm sorry.
I thought you were someone else. I'm sorry.

(Shift in lights.)

I thought I saw you today. On the street.
Your little butch hair cut. Your cute little jacket.
The way you walk.

But it wasn't you. Just another clone.
Another of the Chelsea boys in a bomber jacket.
Another of the millions doomed. It wasn't you.

Oh but—for that one brief second.
That one brief moment.
I had forgotten you had gone.

And in that lovely moment—how I wanted to run up to you.
Slap your little butt.
See the surprise on your face.
The love in your eyes...

Love not just for me.
...Not for me at all.

It was just always there. Behind your eyes.

LOVE...or...
A light.

God. I suppose

And how it made you sexy.

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PAMPER ISLAND: A GROCERY STORE COMEDY

Cast of Characters

CLERK

WOMAN CUSTOMER

MAN

(The check-out counter in a grocery store. The muzak grows louder in the dark. Music stops abruptly as lights bump up to bright. The CLERK and the WOMAN CUSTOMER are discovered at the counter. CLERK is ringing up groceries.)

CLERK. Vegetablenesss...very good. Yogurt. Very good. Cottage cheese. Very nice...but, oh—oh dear, what's this? *(Grimaces:)* TWO DAIRY PRODUCTS? Well, just be careful. *(Smiles:)* Where are all of your children today?

WOMAN. They're with their father. How did you know I had children?

CLERK. I've seen you in here. I notice things. I notice what people do. Don't kid yourself. I'm what they call a "people person."

WOMAN. Uh-huh.

CLERK. Do you really NEED whole milk?

WOMAN. Yes, I do.

CLERK. *(Still friendly:)* Oh, yeah. That's right. You've got ALL those children.

WOMAN. Uh, huh.

CLERK. Oh! Oh, oh no. I'm sorry. I am sorry, but this won't do. No sir-ee Bob. This will not do. I must say.

WOMAN. What's the matter?

CLERK. You're buying Pampers? Plastic "nothing-real-in-them" diapers?

WOMAN. Yes.

CLERK. Woah! (*CLERK speaks into a microphone by her counter; the sound filling the store.*) Can I have an intelligence check here at counter one please?

(*WOMAN reacts.*)

CLERK. Don't you know what today is?

WOMAN. Double coupons?

CLERK. No, Miss Selfish consumer that is wrong.

(*Makes sound like buzzer.*)

It just happens to be Earth day.

WOMAN. Earth day?

CLERK. Do you think that for one day you can stop thinking about your eighteen children and consider Mother Earth?

WOMAN. What is "Earth day" exactly?

CLERK. WOAHH! (*Into microphone.*) Can I have an AWARENESS check here at counter ONE please? (*Back to WOMAN.*) For your information Miss "I'm-gonna-use-all-the-platic-diapers-I-can-even-if-they-outlive-us-all"...Earth day was started twenty years ago by...some guy. But it only happened once back then because Watergate happened, and all that Cold War stuff was going on. And people like yourself cared more about tricky Dick Nixon than good ole Mother Earth.

WOMAN. Could you ring up my purchases please?

CLERK. Okay.

(*She rings up one item.*)

So here's the thing.

WOMAN. The thing. What thing?

CLERK. The thing I'm trying to explain to you. The earth thing. The fucking Mother Earth thing, man. She's dying, alright? She's fucking dying. Do you hear me? Are you insane? Were you not listening? Were you born in a barn?

WOMAN. I'm not sure what your question is.

CLERK. The question is—Miss Woman-with-five-million-children-to-diaper—is that while you keep having babies...while you just keep spitting out your babies...one after another, one after another, pth, pth, pth, just spitting them out...

(The MAN enters the line.)

WOMAN. Oh. I see. This isn't really about ecology or whatever. This is about you not having a baby.

CLERK. No way.

WOMAN. Yes, way.

MAN. Excuse me? Is this the express lane? Ten items or less?

CLERK. Yes it is. Can you read the sign? Do you have ten items or less?

MAN. Yes, I do.

CLERK. Then you're in the right line. *(To WOMAN:)* The thing I'm telling you—the question is...WHAT are we going to DO with all the pampers your babies are wearing?

WOMAN. What?

CLERK. Where do you think we are going to put them? Do you know that it takes pampers five hundred years to DEgrate.

WOMAN. Degrade?

CLERK. You know, bio-degrate, whatever. Five hundred years. Where do you think we are going to put all the plastic pampers your 20 children are wearing? Don't you realize that in the very near future there will have to be whole islands that will only be used as trash dumps for pampers? Pamper Island. Do you get it? They don't disappear. And that's not all. Barbie Dolls. Think about it. Your great, great, great, great, great, great grandchildren will be able to play with your children's Barbie Dolls.

WOMAN. That's seems o.k. Re-cycling. Right?

(WOMAN checks with MAN. He nods in agreement.)

CLERK. Well it's not OKAY. One day a year we ask you NOT to diaper your 47 children and do you listen?

WOMAN. *(To MAN:)* I don't have 47 children.

CLERK. And garbage bags? You're buying garbage bags?

WOMAN. One really can't argue with you, can one?

CLERK. Not usually. I have my points to make and I make them. *(Into microphone:)* FREEDOM OF SPEECH. That's what makes America great!

WOMAN. Earlier you said that America was dying.

CLERK. No, no, no, no, no. You weren't listening. Helloo? Helloooo? I said that Mother EARTH was dying.

WOMAN. What can I say to please you so that I can end this conversation and pay for my groceries? There's someone waiting behind me.

CLERK. Let them wait. How long do you think your 27 children will be waiting for clean air to breathe?

WOMAN. Now listen! I do what I can. I give to Greenpeace. I support Channel 13. I volunteer at a homeless shelter. It is impossible to keep up with EVERY—SINGLE—fucking cause. *(To MAN:)* I'm sorry. *(To CLERK:)* What else do you want me to do?!

CLERK. Well, for starters, you can stop buying trash bags and don't take your groceries home in OUR bags.

WOMAN. I can't carry my groceries home without bags.

CLERK. Have your ten children help you. One item each.

MAN. Excuse me! I'm really sorry, but. Could we move it along please? I have somewhere to be tomorrow. Is this the express lane or not?

CLERK. *(To MAN:)* Shut up, or I will kill you. *(To WOMAN:)* You can buy bio-degradable diapers.

WOMAN. I've tried the bio-degradable diapers. They leak.

CLERK. They do NOT leak. You have to change them.

WOMAN. I DO change them.

CLERK. You have to change them more than once a month.

MAN. I've used those. They melt on the body.

CLERK. Then use CLOTH diapers. When are you people going to wake up and smell the coffee?

MAN. If you ever hug a baby with a wet booty, then you know they're wearing bio-degradable diapers.

(To the CLERK, the word "booty" is like finger nails on a chalkboard.)

CLERK. Don't say "booty." I hate that word. Whrrhrheh!

MAN. *(Gets an idea:)* Booty? Booty booty booty booty.

CLERK. Whhhhhhet. I hate that word. Stop it.

MAN. Booty, booty, booty, booty, booty.

CLERK. AHHHHH. He's trying to kill me. You're trying to kill me. I can't take this job anymore. You're invading my brain AHHHHHHH.

WOMAN. And just for the record, I only have THREE children.

MAN. Booty booty booty booty booty!

CLERK. Ahhhhhhh! Ahhhhrhrhhh! I hate that word "booty." I can't take you people. AHHHHHHH. I quit. I quit. My head is going to explode! I'M GOING BACK TO MY JOB AT THE POST OFFICE! Ahhhhhhh!

(She runs off screaming. Her head indeed, explodes.)

WOMAN. Thank you. That seemed to work.

MAN. These people with opinions go too far sometimes.

WOMAN. I know. I don't usually shop here. The check-out people always have an agenda.

MAN. Tell me about it.

(WOMAN notices her groceries and furrows her brow.)

MAN. Can I bag your groceries for you?

WOMAN. Oh. That would be very nice, but, I didn't actually pay for them yet.

MAN. Well then, here. I'll ring them up for you. I used to work at Balducci's. *(Or substitute a nice store in your town.)*

WOMAN. Oh, thank you. Now THAT'S a nice store. They have lovely help.

MAN. You know. I know you've been through a lot already, but you really shouldn't buy this kind of Tuna. They kill dolphins.

WOMAN. Dolphins? Oh-my-god. Really?

MAN. Yes. It's true. And as long as we're on the subject, you shouldn't ride on a dolphin's back in a pool either.

WOMAN. I don't.

MAN. And don't visit Sea World either. And don't pay MONEY to see other people ride on the dolphins' cute little backs. Those animals are living in captivity!

WOMAN. I don't. I've never been to Sea World.

MAN. How would YOU like some man, wearing only a SPEEDO riding on the back of YOU? Holding on to YOUR ears?

WOMAN. *(She smiles briefly with the image:)* Well, I uh. Um.

MAN. And you should stop dying your hair, cause they test that dye on little bunnies. Poor little, cute little bunnies. There are all these "Miss Clairol Bunnies" running around with fur the color of "Autumn Hay-ride."

WOMAN. This is my natural color.

MAN. Yeah, right. And you shouldn't eat meat or olives.

WOMAN. Olives? Really? What's wrong with olives?

MAN. And you shouldn't wear FUR or COTTON.

WOMAN. COTTON? Oh now really! Cotton is okay!

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THE THREE ROSES

Cast of Characters

MAN

WOMAN

(A white MAN and a black WOMAN stand side by side. The MAN talks to the audience, occasionally checking with the WOMAN.)

MAN. It was cold. I wanted a drink

WOMAN. He was killing time.

MAN. I see a sign.

WOMAN. What did it say?

MAN. The Three Roses.

WOMAN. I've seen that bar. It's below Canal Street, right?

MAN. A bar my white friend Victoria of Connecticut told me of. I remembered having a drink there once with my pretty blonde friend.

WOMAN. It was empty that night—you were the only two people there.

MAN. I'll go in here. I say to myself. This is a bar I can get a drink in.

WOMAN. In which I can get a drink.

MAN. All of those thoughts passed in and through my brain in what was one flash of a stream of conscious moment. Before I entered the bar.

WOMAN. Whoosh.

MAN. Why then, in that same lightening moment when I opened the door did my heart turn up the volume ever so...

WOMAN. His heart started to beat faster.

MAN. And I say to myself...

WOMAN. Whoosh.

MAN. "You can't go in there." I almost left.

WOMAN. He wanted to leave.

MAN. I can't I go in there.

WOMAN. Why not?

MAN. There are no white people in there.

WOMAN. He thought to himself.

MAN. Oh my god.

WOMAN. It's my god too.

MAN. There are no white people in there.

WOMAN. Too late. You're inside.

MAN. Oh. Is there some sort of meeting going on? Is this a recovery group for heroin addicts? It must be.

WOMAN. Must be.

MAN. There are no white people in there.

WOMAN. He was the only one.

MAN. Well then. Is this a private party. They must all know each other.

WOMAN. Don't they all know each other.

MAN. They must. There are no white people in there.

WOMAN. Well then.

MAN. Should I stay? Or should I leave.

WOMAN. Whoosh.

MAN. Oops. One of them saw me.

WOMAN. She was looking at the clock behind you.

MAN. It's oddly quiet. Not what I expected.

WOMAN. It was quiet for a room filled with natives.

MAN. OH! Thank god. The bartender is white.

WOMAN. Thank god.

MAN. And possibly gay. Yeah. I bet he's gay. Though it's so hard to tell if they're gay now. Now that straight men wear earrings. And talk nicely to women.

WOMAN. Some do.

MAN. Now that straight men are "soft." It's so hard to tell if a man is...that way.

WOMAN. What way?

MAN. You know.

WOMAN. What. Gay?

MAN. Gay. Queer. What is the correct word now.

WOMAN. Faggot. Queen, homosexual.

MAN. What with the new sensitivity and all. "Well, I'm not. But I have a friend that is." The bartender notices that I have been staring at him.

WOMAN. He's not that way.

MAN. I walk in. I walk to an empty spot at the bar. Are they wondering who I am? Do they think I am here to collect the rent.

WOMAN. These mysterious people.

MAN. These people of color gathered together.

WOMAN. Nobody's looking at you.

MAN. Nobody seems to notice me.

WOMAN. Well, they notice.

MAN. In that way that one notices a plane going by...

WOMAN. In the sky in the distance.

MAN. They don't seem to notice that I am the only white boy in the bar. Why do I?

WOMAN. Confessions of a white boy.

MAN. So this is what it's like. To be the only one in a room of others all the same. So that is what it's like. No. I don't think so.

WOMAN. More complicated than this.

MAN. They don't approach me and say... "Hey! Some of my best friends are white." They don't approach me and suddenly take on a white dialect of "Hey dude...that's a really radical shirt you're wearing."

WOMAN. Whoosh.

MAN. I sigh a sigh of relief when I realize I am carrying my bag, the bag with the recognizable African material.

WOMAN. You think that makes you one of them.

MAN. Oh good. They'll think I'm one of them. They'll know I'm for apartheid. Or is it against apartheid. Which is correct? Am I supposed to be FOR or against apartheid. I don't know.

WOMAN. Better look it up—and you really should read more.

MAN. I go to the bathroom and leave my bag at my chair.

WOMAN. Because...

MAN. Because I want to prove that I trust them. That I don't think they would steal from me.

WOMAN. You wouldn't do that at the pyramid club.

MAN. That I see no difference between us.

WOMAN. No one even knows you're there.

MAN. I leave my bag at the table when I go to use the rest room. Now I don't want them to think I only came in to use the rest room. I'd better buy a beer first. But then if I carry the bottle into the bathroom with me they might think I peed in my beer.

WOMAN. You need help.

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WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

Cast of Characters

SALLY, mid to late 30s; strong, sexy, intelligent.

LESLIE, her friend; supportive, friendly

Acknowledgements

Window of Opportunity is from Augustine's evening of short plays, *Generation X*. It was first presented by HOME For Contemporary Theatre, N.Y.C. in December, 1993.

Sally Gerit Quealy

Leslie Sherry Anderson

Director Bill Russell

It was presented again in 1994 at Ensemble Studio Theatre as part of an evening of short plays from the Playwrights Unit.

Sally Allison Janney

Leslie Sherry Anderson

Director John Augustine

Setting

Sally's bedroom. D.S.L is a small chair and table with Sally's makeup. U.S.R. is a bed or chaise for Leslie to sit on.

Production Note

Sally begins the play in her lingerie—with a robe, looking at herself in the full-length mirror on the fourth wall. During the play Sally is dressing for the benefit. She puts on garterless stockings and an evening gown. By the end of the scene she has transformed herself. She looks very good. Leslie, already dressed for the benefit is sitting on the bed or chaise. Aside

from getting dressed, she and Leslie are perhaps having a glass of wine.

Sally is in breakthrough. Not breakdown. This means she is excited about analyzing and articulating her problems. She is not meant to be lethargic.

(SALLY, attractive. 30s or 40s. LESLIE, her friend, same or younger. SALLY is dressing for a benefit. She starts off in her under things and is dressing during the play.)

SALLY. *(SALLY stares into a floor length mirror out front:)* Who am I? I just woke up one day and I was in this body, in this house, in this life. Next to that man and I thought, "I don't know who that is." No, I really don't. I'm so afraid to admit the truth to myself.

LESLIE. The truth?

SALLY. I'm so afraid to admit that I'm not in love.

LESLIE. You're not in love?

SALLY. No. I think I was in love with the IDEA of a nice life. An uneventful... ..

LESLIE. *(Trying to encourage her to go on:)* Uneventful...

SALLY. I don't mean uneventful. I mean un-dramatic. Is that a word?

LESLIE. I know what you mean.

SALLY. I find lately that I'm dead inside. Really dead.

LESLIE. Are you seeing a therapist?

SALLY. Well no. But it seems the more self-help books I read, the more meetings I go to, the more I realize what a lie my life is.

LESLIE. Wow.

SALLY. No, it's true. It's like I'm living some idea of something. I don't know. My mind is so cluttered I can't even articulate it. Is that a word?

LESLIE. Yeah, I think so, sure...ar-TIC-u-late. Well, yeah.

SALLY. And then it's like, here I am admitting to you, my friend, another human being that I am not in love with my husband...but the idea of him with somebody else, it makes me want to kill him.

LESLIE. I get jealous.

SALLY. No, but you see it's not about jealousy exactly. I think I want to be **ADORED** by him. But I don't want to love him back. I don't want to make love with **HIM**, but I also don't want him to make love with anyone else.

LESLIE. I understand that. I haven't had sex in two years.

SALLY. But shouldn't I want him to find somebody? Have an affair or whatever. Why do I care?

LESLIE. I think that's normal.

SALLY. See. If he had an affair, maybe he'd leave me alone in the bedroom. So. Theoretically, shouldn't I want him to be fooling around?

LESLIE. I don't think men can be faithful. It's not even their fault. It's something about, something primal. About hunting—or like, the male energy thing. That pounding drums thing in the woods.

SALLY. I married him because he could take care of me. I didn't really know that at the time, but I wanted to be rescued. I wanted him to rescue me from my life. He was older and I used what I had. I used my youth. My hair, my young hands—my breasts. I would consciously dress them up.

LESLIE. You dressed up your breasts?

SALLY. Yes, I did. I really did. I'd wear those little spandex tank tops, this was before the "Wonderbra." I knew what he wanted. I acted like I was interested in what he liked. I read books he read. I even acted like I was bored by the same things. I gave his opinions as my opinions. I became like a chameleon, is that the right word?

LESLIE. Yeah. You changed a lot.

SALLY. Yeah. I adapted so well, that I don't know who I am. And now I'm old.

LESLIE. You're not old.

SALLY. I am! I used what I had. I used my youth. I used it up. I just gave it all away. I see how he looks at a waitress say, when we're out at a restaurant. I see him brighten up when a new college girl secretary comes into his office. He gets the PLAYFULNESS he had when we were dating. He doesn't have that with me now.

LESLIE. Oh. Now that's. Well you're just. I mean, my husband—

SALLY. I hate myself. I really do. I'm not trained in anything. I never finished school. I have no money without him. I don't earn enough to leave. I'm like a live-in prostitute without ever getting paid.

LESLIE. Most of the women in America.

SALLY. No. It's different. I sold out because I was afraid. I saw a train come through and I hopped on in a hurry. I was afraid I couldn't do it alone. I saw this tiny window of opportunity and I went through it.

LESLIE. Wow. This seems really bad.

SALLY. Thank you for letting me ramble. You're a good friend.

LESLIE. No. It's fine. It actually makes me feel better.

SALLY. Oh?

LESLIE. Well, yeah. I was depressed too. You know. I feel all used up too. You know, the feeling of missed opportunity—never having really achieved anything—I thought my life was a mess. But now that I hear you talk, I realize—my life is actually pretty good. I don't feel so bad anymore.

SALLY. I'm sure you didn't mean that to sound the way it did.

LESLIE. Well, I don't know. How did it sound? Maybe I did.

SALLY. No. I'm sure you didn't. You're too nice.

LESLIE. Oh! I'm not too nice anymore. I read Co-Dependant No More.

(SALLY smiles.)

LESLIE. Sally. I think you love him. I think you're in a really good relationship. You've been together longer than my parents. There's no one to date anyway. They're all dead or eighteen. I never thought I'd say it, but what is wrong with the kids these days. Sally, I think you're fine. I just think you're going through your mid-life crisis.

(SALLY snaps her a look.)

LESLIE. Early. Society doesn't treat women like us well. They eat us up and spit us out. I read that somewhere.

SALLY. I just feel really hopeless.

LESLIE. Well, don't feel that way.

SALLY. Oh! Okay!

(She smiles crazily.)

LESLIE. I think you should try Prozac again. Did you read *Listening to Prozac*?

SALLY. No.

LESLIE. OH! Almost forgot. Here. I brought you a crystal. It unblocks something or other and it'll make you feel better. I think it's meant to improve self-esteem. Maybe that's your problem.

SALLY. Oh thanks. That is so thoughtful of you. You see. I don't need drugs. It's the love of a friend I need... It is THAT kind of a gesture that gives me hope.

(She holds the crystal. Happy.)

LESLIE. I don't think they actually work. I've stopped using them.

SALLY. Oh. So you DON'T feel they help?

LESLIE. Well, they didn't help me. But you're different. And more desperate. I think it's all in the mind anyway. Have you read the Louise Hay book, *You Can Heal Your Life*?

SALLY. (*SALLY holds the crystal hoping it will work:*) No. (*Maybe she speeds up dressing here—brushing hair or something—new energy:*) Were you ever at home, trying to decide what to do? And you can like—see a friend, or you can go to a movie, you can LOOK FOR A JOB, or return something to the store, and you can't decide what to do—so you don't do anything?

LESLIE. I do that everyday.

SALLY. So I make a list. And the list is either blank or there are so many things on the list that I decide I can't do anything because there's no time.

LESLIE. The LIST is blank?

SALLY. That's not...that doesn't make sense does it. There's no such thing as a blank list. Isn't there a word for that? In grammar? Blank list, blank list.

LESLIE. Oxymoron. People used to say I was charming.

SALLY. Oh, they said that about me too.

LESLIE. Yeah, but they really meant it about me. No they really did. And I was charming.

SALLY. But—past a certain point—It's gone. It goes away. It dries up. It's how the world is meant to work, I'm afraid. It's only right that new young people come along. Now it is THEIR chance. Their turn to be charming and young and attractive. Mine's over.

LESLIE. It doesn't have to be over. Why do you feel that way?

SALLY. The order was...questions went like this. What are you going to do with your life. Then it was—What DO you do? Soon it will be—What did you do? And I never did anything. But oh. Once. I had so much potential.

LESLIE. At least you HAD potential. I didn't even have that.

SALLY. That's true. About me I mean.

LESLIE. Maybe it's not too late. Can you say *Nam myoho renge keyo*?

SALLY. No.

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KEPT BOY

Cast of Characters

MICHAEL

MAN 1

MAN 2

WOMAN

(MICHAEL speaks to us. Middle of the night. Other characters may appear when mentioned. Perhaps he speaks to us from the edge of a bed. Or leaves the bed and is in “another room.” He is sleeping with someone. His wife?)

MICHAEL. I’m a kept boy. But not in that way.

Just...

Afraid to go it alone.

As my beauty fades.

Boy that sounds queer—

And queer I am. Or so I was told.

when I was young

not old

enough to understand

This special thing that was me.

But boys have it.

Beauty, that is.

There is a beauty about them.

I was one.

Unaware of my special power.

Not till the hour

when it was just tooooooo late to use it.

And now as I lose it.

As it leaves me, ever so slowly—

One day at a time.

Like my recovery.

One day at a time.
Now a cliché.

One day at a time
I slip back into consciousness
out of my drunken stupor

just in time
to see my youth
slipping away.

If only it didn't matter to me.

If only I'd had a career.
A goal.

Something else to GIVE
Besides hair moussed just the right way.

And a little spray
Riiiiiiight.....there!

And a tousled curl.

Albeit tousled with mega care.

Oh this could take me an entire hour.

Then I tell you,

“No, I just jumped out of the shower!
No I never futz with my hair!
It does that on its own.
Yes thank you. I AM lucky.”

(Two MEN walk by.)

MICHAEL. I see two men in love on the street.
Their close cropped hair.
Black boots and ripped jeans
And I regret that I have never loved.
Or loved in that way.

(One of the MEN gets into bed next to MICHAEL. He sleeps. MICHAEL looks at him.)

MICHAEL. What is it like to wake up
Next to a body that drives you crazy?

That makes you *lazy* for the day?
That makes you not want to leave your bed
—even for coffee?

“Hello. Can I get a delivery?
Two coffees and a *pain au chocolat*.
Yes. Just come in. The door is open.
Why don’t I come to the door? Come to the *door*?

No, I cannot leave my lover long enough to answer a door.
He’s TOOOOOO fabulous!”
How long would that feeling last?
The experts say eleven days.

(The MAN in bed is replaced by the WOMAN.)

MICHAEL. My mind snaps out of its fantasy
back to the bed I am in.
Next to the one I care for but do not love.
Not in that way.

More like the love I wanted to give to a father or brother.
Love I never got to express.
To give to another.

But now in my emptiness I give all.

I feel like I may fall
Down. Down... Down.

Till all I am left with is some small piece of me.

A piece that only I can see
The only piece that was not sold,
Given away...
Like some women I have known.

The same ones I have mocked
Who married well

Who sold themselves
And tell the tale of growing old

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MEGAPHONE MAN

Cast of Characters

MEGAPHONE MAN, a voice in Kenny's head. He carries a megaphone.

KENNY, 20s or 30s

MARGARET, his mother. Energetic in her opinions.

CORA, Kenny's great aunt of 101 years old. She just wants to die.

(KENNY, in his early 30s. Next to him is MEGAPHONE MAN, who is dressed in black and has a giant megaphone which he holds right up to KENNY's ear. MEGAPHONE MAN always speaks through his megaphone.)

MEGAPHONE MAN. YOU ARE WORTHLESS. YOU ARE WORTHLESS. YOU ARE WORTHLESS.

KENNY. Does everyone hear that or is it just me?

MEGAPHONE MAN. YOU ARE PATHETIC. YES, YOU ARE. REALLY, REALLY, PATHETIC.

KENNY. Now stop that. I've been told that's simply not true. I'll get support from that woman. My mother.

(KENNY points to MARGARET, his mother, who is on-stage. Seated near MARGARET is CORA, an elderly woman. KENNY crosses to his mother; MEGAPHONE MAN walks close behind him.)

KENNY. *(To MEGAPHONE MAN:)* Must you follow quite so close? *(To MARGARET:)* May I ask you something?

MARGARET. I love all my children the same.

KENNY. That wasn't my question.

MARGARET. All of them. Don't I, Cora?

KENNY. I have a question.

MARGARET. I don't believe in having favorites. I love all eight of my children equally. Even the ones in jail. With total equalness. I love all my children the same.

KENNY. Mom?

MARGARET. But you always were my favorite. Your father, I'm glad he's dead, I mean, God rest his soul, always said you'd be the biggest disappointment of them all. But I never believed it. Did I Cora?

MEGAPHONE MAN. You see? It's true. You're the worst one.

MOM. Go ahead. Talk to me. I always want you to feel you can come to me with a problem. I want you to tell me your problems. That way you won't get on drugs the way so many of them do.

KENNY. I'm not on drugs.

MARGARET. Well, I hope not. I don't believe a person has to take drugs to have a good time. Cause I can't afford to have another one in jail. Not with your great Aunt Cora livin with me now. I need all the money I can get just to take care of her. She's gonna outlive us all. AREN'T YOU, CORA?

KENNY. I have a question to ask you.

MARGARET. Because, hey! There are plenty of things you can do to have a good time. When we were children we just enjoyed each other's company. Nowadays these kids always have to be runnin' somewhere. Having babies at the prom. It doesn't make sense. In my day—if you got pregnant at 16, you married the boy. None of this leavin babies in trashcans all over the place. Cause I don't go for that.

KENNY. Mother? Am I worthless?

MEGAPHONE MAN. You are worthless. Life is a struggle. Money doesn't grow on trees.

KENNY. Mother? Am I worthless?

MARGARET. What kind of question is that? You just do the best you can and you'll be fine.

KENNY. Uh-huh.

MEGAPHONE MAN. You are worthless. Pitiful.

KENNY. Do you hear that?

MARGARET. Hear what? Have you had your hearing checked recently?

KENNY. No.

MARGARET. Cause you should have your hearing checked. Don't wait until something happens.

KENNY. Uh huh.

MEGAPHONE MAN. Don't bother. What's the point.

MARGARET. Cause Cora's over a hundred years old and she still has her hearing. DON'T YOU CORA?

CORA. Are you talking to me?

MARGARET. I SAID YOU STILL GOT YOUR HEARING!

CORA. I can hear. What do I need it for? God should give my hearing to somebody that needs it.

MARGARET. Heavins' to Betsy, Cora, I swear. You slay me. Now. What am I still doing here? I was goin' somewhere. Where was I goin'?

CORA. Where you goin', Margaret?

MARGARET. Say hi to your aunt Cora. Cora! Look, it's Kenny. He came all the way from somewhere to visit you on your birthday!

KENNY. Happy Birthday, Cora. I like your hat.

CORA. Oh. I forgot it was there. Sometimes a toaster stops working at night.

KENNY. Oh. Uh huh.

CORA. Why am I still alive. Kenny? I'm over a hundred.

KENNY. Well, gee. I don't know.

CORA. I should be dead by now.

MEGAPHONE MAN. (*To KENNY.*) You should be dead by now.

MARGARET. Cora. Maybe God has other plans for you.

CORA. Well, what are they? Everyone else is dying. Why don't I get to die?

MARGARET. God's not ready for you yet.

CORA. All the Lipperts are dead. Josephine is gone. Cornelius is gone. All gone.

MARGARET. Hey Cora. I'm still here. I'm a Lippert.

CORA. Yeah, well...they're all dead. Kenny? When you goin' back to wherever you came from?

KENNY. Tomorrow.

MEGAPHONE MAN. Maybe God has other plans. Maybe you're not leaving.

CORA. When you comin' back?

KENNY. Not for awhile.

CORA. Well I hope you have a nice life. I probably won't be here when you come back.

MARGARET. Cora. Don't be so morbid. I have to go somewhere.

CORA. Where you goin', Margaret?

MARGARET. Don't worry where I'm goin', Cora. Talk with my boy. Tell Cora about all your success. He's very successful. But I shouldn't let him hear me sayin' that, he'll get a big head.

MEGAPHONE MAN. No he won't. He knows he's worthless.

CORA. Uh huh.

MARGARET. But I hope you don't get like so many of them. They have a little success and they make it big and it's never enough. People should learn to be satisfied. Then they get a little bit of

something, a little money or what have you, and no matter how much they get they want more. Because hey! It's not how much you have, it's learnin' to be happy with what you've got.

KENNY. I don't have anything.

MEGAPHONE MAN. You are nothing. You...are...nothing.

MARGARET. Because hey! You think you're bad off—there's always someone worse.

KENNY. Oh, that makes me feel better.

MARGARET. Hey. You got you're health. You've got your health, you got everything. Right, Cora?

MEGAPHONE MAN. You don't have your health.

CORA. Why do I have my health? I want to die.

KENNY. I know. I'm sorry you don't die, Cora. Maybe soon.

CORA. Thanks, Kenny.

MARGARET. Stop talkin' that way.

CORA. Do you have your health? Cause if you don't you can have mine.

MEGAPHONE MAN. It's not transferable.

KENNY. Thanks, Cora. I'm fine.

MEGAPHONE MAN. You are not fine. How do you know? Have you checked? You're afraid to check.

KENNY. Thank you for sharing. But I choose not to hear you now. I think I'm going to rent that empty space in my head. So you better just move out.

CORA. Every night I go to sleep and I hope I'll die. But then the next morning I wake up and they make me go to breakfast.

MARGARET. What do they feed you for breakfast, Cora?

CORA. Oh I don't know, Margaret. The same thing I been eatin' for a hundred years. I keep sayin' I'd starve myself, but I like to eat too much. Yeah, all the Lipperts are dead.

MARGARET. Watch Cora. I have to go somewhere and do something.

CORA. I hope I'm dead when you get back.

MARGARET. Cora. You just appreciate what you got. When God wants you he'll take you.

CORA. Why doesn't he take me? He's taking everybody else. Look at all the people dyin'.

MARGARET. Where, Cora? There are no people dyin' here.

CORA. There are people dyin' everywhere. Don't kid yourself.

MARGARET. Well. If people would just learn to behave sensibly, they wouldn't die. Cause I don't go for all that arguin' and fightin' the way people do. There's no sense in it. If all people would learn to talk nice to one another, we'd all get along.

CORA. What is she sayin'?

KENNY. She's saying we should get along.

CORA. I never got along with her.

MARGARET. Cora. Sit here. I'll be back.

CORA. Where you goin', Margaret?

MARGARET. I have to see a man about a horse.

(She exits.)

CORA. Do what? Your mother is crazy.

(CORA falls asleep.)

KENNY. I deserve to be loved.

MEGAPHONE MAN. No you don't.

KENNY. Everything in my life works.

MEGAPHONE MAN. No it doesn't.

KENNY. I am loving and loveable.

MEGAPHONE MAN. You're not. You're perverted sexually, for one.

KENNY. I don't actually think I am.

MEGAPHONE MAN. You are. You like woman in garter belts and studded bustiers. You like men in leather. Men in suits. Men in uniforms. You like women in short skirts and high heels.

KENNY. Maybe I just like fashion.

MARGARET. I'm back. (*Holding cupcakes:*) I don't know where I needed to go or why. Let's have a meaningful conversation.

KENNY. I long for the days when the only choice was Coke or Pepsi.

MARGARET. Coke or Pepsi? What are you talkin' about? You shouldn't drink too much of that. Hey. Have a little if you want it and then stop. Everything in moderation.

MEGAPHONE MAN. Not good enough, not good enough.

KENNY. The steadiness of plain Pepsi and plain Coke was reassuring. But now there is caffeine free, diet caffeine free, caffeine free not diet...and on and on and on because it is not enough. It is never enough, just the way it is.

CORA. Who is Kenny talkin' to?

MEGAPHONE MAN. It's going. Your mind is going.

KENNY. I've always been this way.

MARGARET. When I asked you to have a conversation, I expected you would say something sensible. Are you hungry, Cora?

CORA. No, Margaret.

MARGARET. Cause there's some food over there if you want it.

CORA. I don't want it.

MARGARET. Well, there's no sense in good food going to waste.

CORA. I'm not hungry.

MARGARET. Well, eat it if you want it.

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THE CENSORSHIP PLAY

Cast of Characters

MICHAEL

DAVID

MAN

WOMAN

(Sound of typing in the dark.)

(Lights up on MICHAEL, typing at his computer. Nearby his friend DAVID sits, maybe reading a book.)

(On another part of the stage we see a couple, a handsome MAN and a pretty WOMAN. When we hear their dialogue, their tone is so loud and so angry that their arguing seems too much, and is kind of funny.)

(While they yell at one another, MICHAEL keeps typing.)

WOMAN. You piece of shit! You fucking piece of shit! You're nothing but a piece of shit.

MAN. Oh yeah? Well, what about you?

WOMAN. What about me?

MAN. You're a piece of shit too.

WOMAN. Man, you are such an asshole, I can't believe what an incredible asshole you are. I'm lucky I never married you.

MAN. Oh yeah?

WOMAN. Yeah! And you're drunk half the time. You lie constantly. I don't think you have said one truthful thing in your entire piece of shit life.

MAN. Now you're just trying to hurt me.

WOMAN. Good. You've ruined my life.

MAN. You are so co-dependent.

WOMAN. Oh. You with the big words. Well you listen here you big piece of...

(MICHAEL stops typing, thinks.)

(As soon as he stops, the WOMAN and the MAN freeze in place.)

(DAVID notices MICHAEL has stopped typing, looks up from his book and speaks to him.)

DAVID. How's it going so far?

(DAVID looks over MICHAEL's shoulder at what MICHAEL is writing.)

MICHAEL. Pretty good. I really think I'm working through something. It's really a reflection of my parents' relationship.

DAVID. It must be very cathartic for you.

MICHAEL. Yeah. It is. But more than that, the contest I'm entering wants plays about the "family" with social significance.

DAVID. Oh. Well, if that's true, then I think you need to bring in stronger issues. Make the stakes higher. Cause right now they're just arguing about nothing.

MICHAEL. Uh HUH. I think I know what you mean.

(MICHAEL types. DAVID reads over his shoulder.)

(The MAN and WOMAN couple unfreeze, and begin arguing as ferociously as before.)

WOMAN. Man, you are such an asshole. I'm glad I never married you!

MAN. Oh yeah?

WOMAN. Yeah! And I'm lucky I never had any children with you.

DAVID. Higher stakes.

WOMAN. I'm lucky I had that abortion.

DAVID. I think it needs to be something more.

WOMAN. I'm lucky I had those three abortions.

MAN. Three abortions??? You baby killer. I never knew you had one abortion.

WOMAN. Well, I did! Three. Seven. Ten. I've had so many I can't even count any more. In fact, I think I'm going to have one now!

(WOMAN sits down with a crazy energy, moving her legs apart defiantly.)

(The MAN is shocked by her behavior and screams.)

MAN. Ahhhhhhhhhhh!

(MAN's "ahhhhhhhhh!" Overlap with DAVID's laughing "ooooooo, no.")

DAVID. Ooooooo no. It's getting a little dark. I think you'll offend the right to life people.

MICHAEL. So what?

DAVID. *(Looking at contest rules on the desk:)* Well, it's just that it says here: "Plays for and about the family. For young audiences." I don't think a theatre in North Carolina wants to hear about abortion. But maybe you could adjust it for them.

MICHAEL. Why?

DAVID. Cause their prize is a thousand dollars.

MICHAEL. But that's censorship.

DAVID. It's a thousand dollars.

MICHAEL. Okay.

(MICHAEL goes back to typing.)

(The MAN and the WOMAN unfreeze again. Now their energy is totally different. They are incredibly sweet and loving to one another, even kind of icky.)

MAN. Hi Honey, I'm home.

WOMAN. Hello, dear.

(WOMAN smiles warmly. MAN and WOMAN embrace sweetly.)

MAN. You are so beautiful. I am so lucky I married you. God smiled the day you were born.

WOMAN. Darling. That is so beautiful. I'm very much in love with you. I said the rosary for our relationship in church today.

MAN. Really? Well it worked. All day long I've felt surrounded by a golden heavenly light. Your prayers sure do work well.

WOMAN. Thank you. And your prayers work well too.

MAN. How are the children?

WOMAN. They're fine. Billy drew a tree in school today.

MAN. Art! That's nice

WOMAN. Finger paints.

MAN. *(Innocently:)* I hope the tree doesn't look too much like a penis.

WOMAN. *(Innocently:)* No, it looks like a tree. Billy is very talented.

DAVID. I don't think you can say penis.

(MICHAEL presses the delete key five times, in response to what DAVID just said. Then he types:)

MAN. *(Innocent, friendly:)* I hope the tree doesn't look too much like a dick.

WOMAN. No it looks like a tree. Billy is very.

DAVID. Dick is worse than penis.

(MICHAEL deletes and types again.)

MAN. I hope the tree doesn't look too much like a fuck pole.

WOMAN. *(Wide-eyed, sweet:)* Fuck pole. Honey, I've never heard you talk that way before.

DAVID. Stop it. You're being silly. Here. Let me.

(DAVID reaches over MICHAEL, or sits next to him, and types his own version.)

(During this next exchange, the MAN and the WOMAN keep relating to one another.)

(DAVID types, and the WOMAN speaks.)

WOMAN. I hope the tree doesn't look too much like a "thing-ie."

(MICHAEL types and the MAN speaks.)

MAN. I hope it does.

(DAVID types.)

WOMAN. Honey. Let's go to bed.

(MICHAEL types.)

MAN. And do what?

(DAVID types.)

WOMAN. Let's play.

(MICHAEL types.)

MAN. Okay. Let's go. I'm going to turn this computer off and tickle you with little angel kisses.

(DAVID types. WOMAN speaks what DAVID types, and addresses herself to MICHAEL rather than the MAN.)

WOMAN. Wait a minute. How come when you write us, it's always a man and a woman? I want you to stop that. You should write about men sometimes. I mean, are you gay or aren't you?

(MICHAEL types again. WOMAN goes back to talking to the MAN. MICHAEL types.)

WOMAN. *(To MAN:)* Shut up and kiss me.

DAVID. I was writing the woman.

(The MAN and the WOMAN sound affectionate for real in this final section.)

(MICHAEL types, and the MAN speaks.)

MAN. Shut up and kiss me.

(DAVID types.)

WOMAN. Make me.

MICHAEL. I'm lucky I never had any children with you.

(DAVID types.)

WOMAN. You are so bad.

MICHAEL. You're bad.

(DAVID types.)

MAN. How did I get so lucky to get involved with you?

MICHAEL. I'm lucky too.

DAVID. Bootsie?

MICHAEL. Uh huh?

DAVID. I...

(DAVID types.)

MAN. ...love you.

MICHAEL. Thank you. And I...

(MICHAEL types.)

WOMAN. ...I love you too.

DAVID. Make him say it.

(MICHAEL types again; MAN speaks again.)

MAN. I love you too.

DAVID. Now you say it.

(MICHAEL types again; MAN speaks again.)

MAN. I love you too.

DAVID. *(To MICHAEL:)* Come on. You. Out loud.

(MICHAEL doesn't want to speak out loud; types for WOMAN again.)

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TEMPORARY PEOPLE, PART II: REBECCA RUTH

Cast of Characters

REBECCA RUTH

(Enter REBECCA RUTH. Her smile welcomes us. She is wearing a wedding gown and a veil. She has a small purse. She carries a lipstick. She is in the powder room of the Pierre Hotel.)

REBECCA RUTH. Usually lipstick is the **FIRST** thing I put on. I hate my lips. They're **TOO THIN**. The bottom one isn't as thin as the upper lip, but it is thin—and I don't want to have plastic surgery—at least not on my lips. How can you stand to look at me without lipstick?

(Gasp.)

I'm not wearing my pearls!

Well I feel naked without my pearls. I do. I don't believe I walked all the way over here without my necklace. Uhhgg. I wonder who saw me. Who did I talk too?

I talked to that depressing woman Siobhan but I can't remember if she is important or not. She might be very important, you know, somebody I should know, but I think she was just a secretary. Oh! That's right. She was nothing. She was just a temp. She was no one.

Don't get me wrong. I do temp work too. Not today, of course.

I hope they don't stop calling me for work because I asked for today off. Maybe I should call them and just check in.

That Siobhan looked awful. She did. Now really, I mean this in the nicest way. She's a very close friend. She is one of the dearest people I **KNOW!** But she had on that dress and it was just so awful. She was wearing flat shoes with a silk dress.

Anyway.

Can I talk to you? I feel that we're very close. I do want to hear what you have to say—but just let me tell you this one thing. Then, you can talk. But first let me tell you.

(She interrupts herself:) THAT'S a nice dress. Where did you get it? Oh, it's beautiful. WHERE did you get it? Oh, but before you tell me where you got it—and I do want to know—let me just tell you this one thing. Then I'll listen to you.

(She interrupts herself—speaks to a different person:) How ARE yooou? It's so good to SEE you. How's your family? Oh! I DO want to hear about your family, but before you tell me, let me just tell you this one thing. I'll make it quick.

Do you think this color is okay? My LIP stick I mean. I know that white is okay. Isn't white for a wedding dress a beautiful idea? I like white. Don't you? I look GOOD in white. Except my hips are HUGE. How can anyone love me with hips this HUGE?!

I look good in black too, but I'm just so tired of black aren't you? Oh! I'm sorry, and you're WEARING black. Well, it looks good on you. Black is good to wear if you think you're over weight. But I don't think it really hides a thing.

Oh, my god! I am so sorry. I hope you don't think I'm talking about you. You look great! What I wouldn't give to look like you. I'd give my right arm for your thighs...but then I wouldn't have a right arm and you wouldn't have thighs. I'm just kidding. I'm trying to learn to be happy the way I am, but I'm not. How can I be happy with these hips and these lips. Hips and lips. These two things are able to control ninety percent of my thinking day.

Okay. Okay. This is really hard to admit. I'm going to admit something to you. Something that really embarrasses me.

(Considers it.)

No, I'm not. I'll admit that later. I'm afraid you won't like me if I admit this thing right now. You probably don't like me already. Oh no. I thought that more people would like me if they met me in white. I mean, it's pretty hard not to like somebody in a wedding dress. Even if you hate them, you usually pretend you like them that day...

That's not the horrible thing I have to admit. It's something else. But I can't tell you that now.

I hope this dress is okay. It's too late to take it back.

(She sits and studies her face in a hand mirror for a moment.)

I'm just so desperate to be liked that I think it puts people off.

People sense that you're desperate then they don't like you. Why shouldn't they like me?

I'm sorry, I'm just thinking out loud. I don't know how to think quietly. Watch. I'm going to try to think quietly for a moment. You watch. Let's see if I can do it. Here I go.

(She is silent for a split second, then.) Can't do it!

Now I'm going to try to have no expression on my face. Here I go. This is me with no expression.

(She takes all expression off of her face.)

There's this photographer that will only photograph people with no expression. He won't let them smile. He feels that this is the only way to see who a person really is. He said that when we smile—we cover up who we are.

He says that we cover up our soul with the smile.

(She considers this.)

I don't believe that, do you? I think you can have a soul either way. I'll prove it. Watch.

Smile? No smile.

Smile? No smile.

You didn't see my soul disappear did you? Ingrid Bergman had the most beautiful smile. But she also had a beautiful soul.

(She starts to circle the room like a caged animal.)

I should have a boyfriend. I have a beautiful soul! But I don't like any of the men I meet—And I meet lots of men. Some very dear men with warm souls and good hearts—you know, men with a

gentle spirit. But all the men with warm hearts and gentle spirits are MARRIED.

(She stops moving and studies the audience.)

Do you think it was inappropriate of me to show up at my sister's wedding in a wedding dress?

Well, why shouldn't I? I COULD be married if I wanted to be. And what else do you wear to a wedding? Granted it's not mine, but even so. I thought that if I came to her wedding in a wedding dress, then people would know that somebody once asked ME to get married too. I don't want people to think nobody ever asked me!

I was asked, but then he didn't show up to the CHURCH or TEMPLE. I don't want to tell you which. I'm afraid you'll judge me.

I was hoping that if some heart-felt warm man was going to ask me and never did—he might figure this was his last chance and he might marry me. I would already be dressed for it. Haven't you ever heard of a double wedding? But I guess my sister didn't really plan for that.

I want a nice wedding don't you? I almost had one.

Well, there's still plenty of time.

(She sees herself in the mirror and screams:) AHHHHH! I'M FORTY YEARS OLD!

I don't look forty though, do I? Oh, I do look forty. I do. I do. I wish I were saying "I do, I do" but I don't really. Oh, god. Okay. Okay. Coming down now. Coming down. Coming down.

(She sits during the "Coming down. Coming down" and swallows a few pills from a bottle that is in her purse.)

So many people get angry if you even MENTION Prozac.

I want to be committed. Doesn't that sound peaceful? A nice white room. A white bed. I could cut off some of this material and make a nightgown. I could make a dress for that Siobhan but I don't sew. Why doesn't she sew? She probably drinks. That's why she looks so old. I wonder how tall she is. I'm sure she's taller than I am. Everybody is. I'm too short! AHHHHHHHH! I didn't mean to say that!

THAT's the thing I was afraid to tell you. Oh, I am too short. And you cannot be short in the corporate world. It's true. Only tall people get jobs in power. There's a psychological thing about trusting tall people. You feel safe with a giant as your lawyer. You don't feel safe with Barney Fife, you know, Don Knotts, defending you in court.

It's so stupid. I know. When I COULD afford to go to therapy—now I spent all my money on this dress—and I can't afford to go anymore and I don't have enough to eat half the time. Why should I give my money to hungry people? I deserve to look pretty. If I don't look pretty, I won't get hired.

What was I talking about? Therapy. And what do they tell you? They tell me I'm strong and wonderful and that I deserve this or that, and I know this.

I mean, I looked at Siobhan on the street in the ugly silk dress and the flat shoes—I hope you don't think I'm judgmental—and I know somehow in my heart of hearts that I am MORE attractive and more talented and more worthwhile—and I don't mean to make you think that I think that she is not worthwhile—I'm sure she is. But even though I know this—I still feel like I'm less than this ugly old woman in flat shoes—and she's not old, she's younger than I am.

Anyway, I still feel embarrassed to tell this secretary that I am just a receptionist. And I don't even have a permanent job with health benefits like she does.

I'm just a temporary...I'm a temporary person.

She's a temp too, but she's a PERManent temporary. Isn't that a crazy notion? A permanent temporary. I'm even less than that. I'm a temporary, temporary.

Oh, god. What is life about? I wish we were still living in the nineteen fifties and I could just marry some man and have him take care of me. Is that so awful?

I didn't fight for women's rights. Please, don't all of you women out there get all angry with me. I'm glad you have your rights to become lawyers and all that—but now—because of your wanting to be a doctor, I have to be a temp! I have to WORK for a living just

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THE CLOSING

Cast of Characters

SIOBHAN
ALEX
REBECCA RUTH
MAN
LARRY
LISA
WOMAN
CHECK-OUT-CLERK
TAMMY
JANE
PERSON OF COLOR
NICOLE
RICH LADY
MEGAPHONE MAN
WOMAN FROM "GHOST"
PERSON

SIOBHAN. Remember when everything was possible, but then, nothing happened?

(ALEX and REBECCA RUTH enter.)

ALEX. May I take your picture? There's a sadness in your face. Even when you smile.

REBECCA. I'm sorry.

ALEX. No. I like it. You look like you should be a queen from the 16th century.

REBECCA. A queen. That is really very sweet. Thank you.

(MAN and LARRY, and LISA enter.)

MAN. I'm a football player and a dress designer.

LARRY. That doesn't make sense. How can you be both.

LISA. You don't fit into his box.

(WOMAN and CHECK-OUT-CLERK enter.)

WOMAN. I'm never satisfied. I get exactly what I ask for, and I'm still not happy.

CHECK OUT CLERK. *(Entering:)* My head is going to explode.

(TAMMY and JANE enter.)

TAMMY. I wish I needed to read a newspaper. I wish I had that feeling that I just had to read something.

JANE. I never read. I stare at the *New York Times* and like my brain goes dead.

PERSON OF COLOR. Don't EVEN get me going on what I think of the GAP.

NICOLE. The gap?

PERSON OF COLOR. Cause I am SO over the Gap.

TAMMY. What is he/she talking about?

PERSON OF COLOR. It's a propaganda organization. Don't try to make me look like you.

MAN OR WOMAN. You ALREADY look like a Gap ad.

PERSON OF COLOR. That was really very cruel.

(Exits.)

MAN OR WOMAN. I thought it was a compliment.

JANE. I wasn't making a point, I was expression a feeling.

RICH LADY. Believe me. If we knew HOW to clean ourselves, we would. We just don't know HOW.

(Exit.)

ALEX. Can I have some HOMO milk please?

MEGAPHONE MAN. You are worthless!

LARRY. I love Court TV. I am actually in love with Court TV.

WOMAN. Oh I know me too.

LISA. There's too much to read. I don't waste my time watching TV.

MAN. I love Cliff notes. I can't read a book all the way through.

WOMAN. I can't read Cliff notes all the way through.

(Exits.)

LARRY. I want to be on court TV. Guilty! Guilty! That's what I'd say.

JANE. There are too many people dying. I don't know how to feel sad anymore.

NICOLE. You're sharing a lot of feelings today, Jane. That's very sweet.

(Exit.)

LARRY. Guilty! Guilty!

MAN. Who cares? Does anyone care? We're all gonna be dead in 60 years.

REBECCA. Some of us less.

ALEX. Could I have some HOMO milk, please?

LISA. Is Larry talking about toner, again?

SIOBHAN. I'm not someone else. I don't know who I am, but I'm not someone else.

(Exits.)

LISA. We're trying to figure out why Alex doesn't move forward in his life.

ALL. You're are worthless.

ALEX. Well, I bought a camera.

MAN. That's good, Alex. Take our picture.

WOMAN FROM "GHOST". I thought I saw you on the street today.

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SCAB WRITES A SONG

Cast of Characters

MOM

DAD

SCAB

LEOPARD

(A very ugly kitchen. Lights up on MOM and DAD downstage of table. SCAB and LEOPARD are seated at the table.)

(MOM is in a floral housedress and terry cloth slippers. DAD is in a polyester leisure suit, with a t-shirt.)

(LEOPARD wears a black sleeveless t-shirt and tight leopard pants [or skirt], with black stockings and little boots. She looks sexy though trashy.)

(SCAB looks odd. He looks extremely nebbishy, but is trying to maybe look hip. He has on a t-shirt and black pants. On his arms he has several leather bracelets; he is wearing one very noticeable earring. His hair is slicked down [unflatteringly], and he wears non-hip, black frame glasses.)

(SCAB is writing music. [drawing musical notes on paper] Near him is his saxophone. [If the actor playing SCAB does not play Sax—he could use a Kazoo or another instrument.]

(LEOPARD is watching him and picking at some cheese doodles.)

(MOM and DAD address the audience in a jovial and friendly manner.)

MOM. Hello. I am the mother.

DAD. And I am the father.

MOM. We have a son. His name is SCAB. That's Scab over there. He works at Burger King. It's the only job he can get. But at least he pays our bills.

DAD. We named him Scab because he looks like a scab.

MOM. That thing with him is his girlfriend or his sister. We don't remember.

DAD. I think she's his sister. We do know that her name is Leopard.

MOM. She seems to dance topless in Burger King.

DAD. No, Mom. Scab works in Burger King. Leopard dances in a topless bar.

MOM. If we had things our way...we wouldn't have a son except we didn't know about abortion when we were in grade school.

DAD. And by the time we found out about abortion we were in high school.

MOM. But by then Scab was already in kindergarten.

DAD. And the abortion doctor said he was just too far along to perform the operation.

MOM. These stupid "right-to-lifers."

DAD. They say that human life begins in the womb at conception.

MOM. But we don't think it begins till grade school.

DAD. We think we should be allowed to abort our children up until age twelve.

MOM. By age twelve you usually have a pretty good idea of whether or not you even want to have a child.

DAD. All this talk about abortion has made me hungry.

MOM. O.K. Dad. Let's get breakfast.

(They exit. Lights brighter on SCAB and LEOPARD.)

LEOPARD. Scab. What is that?

SCAB. It's a saxophone, Leopard.

LEOPARD. What's it for?

SCAB. It's part of my "get rich quick" scheme. I'm gonna write a song and sell it and leave home.

LEOPARD. (*Pointing to the music:*) What's that big black thing, Scab?

(SCAB suddenly speaks in an exaggerated cockney accent. It sounds weird, but is probably his idea of how a British rock singer sounds.)

SCAB. Leopard...It's a G Clef. You know, if you're going to 'elp me sell this song you've got to learn more about muuuuusic. That's the G Clef. That's a note. That's a note. And that's another note.

LEOPARD. Why are you talking in that voice?

SCAB. (*In his own voice:*) I'm working on my new personality. If we ever expect to get out of here we have to change our image. It helps if you can make yourself look and sound like you're from another country. You'll find that in most cases, famous people are from other countries.

LEOPARD. Don't I look like I'm from another country?

SCAB. (*Cockney:*) Nowww. I don't think sowww.

LEOPARD. I don't like the way Mom talks about abortion. Don't they seem too young to be our parents?

SCAB. (*Back in his own voice:*) They were only in grade school when they got married. Maybe we were adopted.

LEOPARD. I hope so.

(MOM and DAD re-enter upstage right. MOM carries still packaged and frozen T.V. dinners, and a beer.)

MOM. This is our son.

DAD. You can see why we call him Scab.

MOM. If you pick at a scab it will never ever heal. You must never pick at it.

DAD. So we pretty much leave Scab alone.

LEOPARD. Who are they talking to? What is wrong with this family?

MOM. We can't tell if Scab is in love with Leopard or if he just wants to look like her. You're starting to look too much like Leopard, Scab.

DAD. You can't tell the boys from the girls these days.

LEOPARD. Is that my earring you're wearing?

SCAB. Yes.

LEOPARD. How many times have I told you not to wear my earrings?

SCAB. Fourteen times.

LEOPARD. Alright, then.

MOM. What did I tell you kids about fighting? Why can't people just learn to get along?

LEOPARD. We weren't fighting. I was just asking him a question.

MOM. Then don't ask him any questions. If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all.

LEOPARD. But Mom, he's always using my mascara and fashion accessories.

MOM. What did I tell you about calling me "Mom"? You were an after thought. An after birth. I didn't even know you were in there. There was Scab and then...ppppfh...another Scab.

LEOPARD. Why do you tell me to talk nice then you don't.

MOM. Because I'm inconsistent.

DAD. Our Leopard is a looker. I'll say that for her.

(LEOPARD is grossed out by DAD's comment.)

MOM. Except she has a mouth like a sewer and hair like a rat's nest. Is that the style now? Is that how they're wearing their hair these days?

DAD. Oh, now Mom, don't say "sewer," you'll make me hungry.

(MOM laughs uproariously.)

MOM. Dad likes to joke around. Let's all sit down to a nice breakfast. I made Swanson's T.V. dinners.

LEOPARD. I hate T.V. dinners for breakfast.

MOM. You eat what's put before you and you appreciate it. Do you hear me? I'm not talking for my health.

LEOPARD. I hear you. *(She examines her dinner:)* They're frozen.

MOM. Food loses flavor when it's cooked too much.

LEOPARD. But it's frozen.

MOM. Scab! What are you writing there? Eat up so you're not late for work. How do you think we're going to pay our bills if you get fired? Money doesn't grow on trees, you know. I'm not made of money! Jesus, Mary and Joseph. I swear you kids irk me. Talk to us.

SCAB. Mooomm. I'm doing something.

MOM. Well stop doing something, and eat your breakfast. I hope you like leftovers, Leopard.

LEOPARD. These are leftovers?...ah, man. Whoever heard of leftover T.V. dinners?

(LEOPARD picks at her dinner slightly.)

DAD. That's right, Mom. Oh, look Mom. Leopard is eating her T.V. dinner.

MOM. Whoa. Big deal. Let me get my camera. *(To audience:)* And don't think she doesn't eat. She eats. She eats like a cow and still she keeps her girlish figure. I just look at a piece of cake and I gain ten pounds.

LEOPARD. Really? I don't think that's possible.

MOM. Oh, believe you me. It is.

LEOPARD. Well, you're probably overweight because you eat too much.

DAD. Fuckin-shit fuck piss cock cunt.

(MOM laughs.)

MOM. Oh! Oh, dear! You'll have to excuse my husband. He's a tourette. He has the Tourette Syndrome. Sometimes he cusses at random. He talks in voices too. You can imagine how much fun he is in bed.

DAD. *(In a Truman Capote voice:)* Pussy shit. T.V. dinner fuck. Let's eat our food now piss heads of cuntatious eaters.

MOM. Stop that. *(Smiles, slapping his arm. Sometimes she finds him amusing:)* What's wrong with you?

(Note: DAD's Tourette outbursts do seem to be automatic and not willed. Likewise, his imitations are not planned acts: it's more like having a tic. The actor can be good at the imitating, or not good; either is fine.)

SCAB. Mom? I tend to agree with Leopard about looking at food and gaining weight.

MOM. What? You have an opinion? You scab-head. You can talk?

SCAB. Yes. I can talk and I have an opinion. I was trying to help with the nice dinner conversation!

MOM. Wow. I'll need a sip of beer before I hear this.

SCAB. I can go back to my work.

MOM. No, no. Go ahead. Talk

SCAB. Well I tend to agree with Leopard. You don't just look at cake and gain weight.

MOM. Oh yes I do. I look at cake and I gain ten pounds. Don't I, Dad?

DAD. *(Jimmy Stewart voice:)* Well, sure she does. She does. Yes. Uh huh. I've seen it happen, don't kid yourself. *(Another voice:)* Fuckie, fuckie, piss head. Daisy?

LEOPARD. No, cause. Listen to this. *(Emphatically to MOM:)* If people could gain weight looking at food, then the United States would send a picture of cake to Ethiopia and they would all gain ten pounds!

(She exits.)

MOM. (*Calling off:*) For your information. Miss Topless Burger King dancer—that is not how it works. (*She explains to audience:*) In order to gain weight looking at food, you have to have enough to eat already. If you're starving it doesn't work. Right, Dad?

DAD. (*As Bogart:*) That's right, sweet heart. (*His own voice:*) Bring the mustard when you ouch! Dag nabbit. (*John Wayne:*) I wrestled that to the floor!

MOM. Oh, for crying out loud...TALK IN YOUR OWN VOICE.

DAD. (*As Paul Lynde:*) This is my own voice. I was born with it. (*Carol Channing:*) Well, we could have a little doggie, but it might do poo-poo all over, and dadsie wadsie would have to clean it up.

MOM. Man alive. You know, if you had a brain you would be dangerous. I wish I had a tape recorder so you could hear yourself.

DAD. (*As Nixon:*) I really wish you would talk nice to me. And please. No tape recorders... (*His own voice:*) Fucking shit brains PUPPY DOG!

MOM. Fuck you fuck you fuck you! I can do that too you know.

(*DAD looks wounded.*)

DAD. Alright. I was just asking. You make me nervous when you raise your voice.

MOM. Well, I'm unhappy too, you know. Did you ever stop to consider that? Huh, did ya?

DAD. Darling, you know I have a problem. (*John Wayne:*) Whoa. Children at play. Don't fall in the mustard.

(*LEOPARD re-enters with a suitcase.*)

MOM. Don't talk to me. Get a life. I'm getting tired of you. I just want to have a nice meal. Talk to Leopard.

DAD. (*As Truman Capote:*) Leopard. Do you know why I wrote *In Cold Blood*?

LEOPARD. No. Why?

DAD. Because I ran out of ink.

MOM. Oh God. He's on a roll now. Mr. Funny man. That was so funny I for got to laugh.

DAD. *(As Groucho:)* Scab. Did you know you could sue the city?

SCAB. I can sue the city?

DAD. For building the sidewalk so close to your ass.

SCAB. Is that supposed to be funny? I don't get it.

LEOPARD. I think it's a joke about how short you are.

DAD. *(As Paul Lynde:)* Come sit on my lap, Scab and I'll show you the trick that got me my start.

SCAB. Mommm...

DAD. *(As Carol Channing:)* Now I'll perform the act that made me famous.

MOM. Oh. This oughta be good.

(DAD stands on table. This is his trick.)

DAD. *(Still Carol voice:)* Looky, everybody how tall I am!

MOM. You get down from there. That's enough. I don't go for that. I don't believe in it. I don't want to hear a peep out of you.

(DAD sits, stares off.)

MOM. Leopard. You still look hungry. You're too skinny. Here. Eat Dad's food. He's out for the night now.

LEOPARD. I'm not hungry. This will be enough.

MOM. Think of all the starving children who would kill themselves for a T.V. dinner.

LEOPARD. Well mail it to them.

MOM. The doctor wants you to eat, Leopard. How do you expect to get better if you don't eat?

LEOPARD. I'm not sick. You're the one that's sick. Both of you.

MOM. Well, there's no sense in good food going to waste.

SCAB. Mom! Dad! I finished the first part of my song.

DAD. *(As Jackie Gleason:)* Alice! What is this? I can't eat this! *(Johnny Carson:)* Well. Let's see what we have tonight. WE have frozen peas. Roast beef au jus. Peach Cobbler. Cock eater.

SCAB. Moooom. I've finally finished the song that is going to make me a million dollars so I can leave home.

MOM. You're not leaving home.

SCAB. Yes I will. And then I'll buy you a new house with a real dining room. And I'll quit Burger King and I'll be happy—and other stuff will happen that will be good. Maybe I'll get Dad in therapy. OK. *(Switches to cockney voice:)* 'ere's me new personality. All right. 'ere I go. Me new personality and my song.

(SCAB plays the first line of "Food, Glorious Food" [hot sausage and mustard] from "Oliver" on his saxophone.)

(NOTE: It doesn't have to be a saxophone. Any instrument would be fine. Even a kazoo.)

SCAB. Well, that's just the beginning, but 'ow do you like it so far?

LEOPARD. Scab, honey. I'm sorry but you didn't write that.

SCAB. *(All in his new "voice":)* I didn't write that?

LEOPARD. No.

SCAB. Go on.

LEOPARD. You didn't. That's "Food, Glorious, Food."

SCAB. That is? The song I just played?

LEOPARD. The song you just played.

SCAB. That's food, glorious food?

DAD. *(In a regular voice; spoken:)* Food, glorious food. Hot sausage and mustard.

LEOPARD. I'm sorry.

SCAB. *(Defeated, in his voice:)* God. It is so hard to be original. Just when you think you wrote the song that is going to transport you

out of this hellhole someone tells you it's been written. You mean, I didn't make that up?

LEOPARD. No.

SCAB. But I spent a whole hour on it.

LEOPARD. I know. Maybe you can still leave home. Maybe you could become the **MANAGER** of Burger King.

SCAB. No...you have to be smart to be the manager.

LEOPARD. Oh. I'm sorry, Scab.

SCAB. I thought I was finally going to get out of here.

MOM. I'm a little bit sorry too, Scab.

SCAB. Gosh, thanks Mom.

MOM. What did I tell you about calling me Mom? You call me, "woman that didn't kill you at birth."

LEOPARD. Why do you talk that way? It's not normal. You offend everybody.

MOM. (*Seething:*) Oh, really... I didn't know I was offending you. You should have told me sooner. Learn to speak up for yourself.

LEOPARD. I'm learning. You're a terrible cook! Your food is always frozen. So there! And you should stop talking about abortion. There's something terribly wrong with you. You make me sick to my stomach.

MOM. Well! I'm sorry you feel that way.

(Sniffle a little, and drinks beer.)

LEOPARD. (*To SCAB:*) I guess you'll be going back to Burger King, huh?

SCAB. Guess so.

(They look at DAD. He is smiling and rolling his eyes up in his head, showing the whites.)

SCAB. (*Tired of it all:*) Aw, man! What is wrong with Dad?

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PROMESA

Characters

FRANK WARD, a man in a business suit.

JAMIE RODRIGUEZ, younger than Frank. Dressed up for an appointment, but still a “street kid” feel. Kinda dangerous—but not from anything he does. Something about his aura. Sexy, probably in his twenties. Could be older.

Place

A room in Frank’s house.

Time

Now.

(Frank’s living room. With lights up we discover FRANK sitting in a chair. He has been waiting.)

(JAMIE has just arrived; he is perhaps removing a coat.)

FRANK. Jamie. What was our deal?

JAMIE. Ah, Frank.

FRANK. You promised you would be on time.

JAMIE. I messed up. I’m sorry man. Did the guy leave, Frank. Did he go?

FRANK. How can I help you—if you don’t show up when you say you will?

JAMIE. Ah, Frank.

FRANK. No. Really Jamie. Do you think I have a right to be angry? Jamie?

JAMIE. Yeah man. You go ahead. Whatever.

FRANK. Because I'm doing this for you.

JAMIE. I know you are, man. I know.

FRANK. I'm putting my reputation on the line.

JAMIE. I know you are. I appreciate that, Frank.

FRANK. Why were you late?

JAMIE. It's not what you think, Frank.

FRANK. Then what was it?

JAMIE. Do you want me to go, Frank? Do you want me to leave?

FRANK. No. I'm just. I don't know—I don't know why I stay involved in your life.

JAMIE. Ah c'mon, Frank. You know why. You're my friend. Right? Am I right? Am I right, Frank?

FRANK. Sometimes I think I'm being used.

JAMIE. Aaay. Frank. That's a two-way street. You know what I'm sayin'?

FRANK. Sometimes I think I should cut you loose.

JAMIE. I mean, lighten up, Frank. Life ain't that serious. I keep tellin' myself that. It ain't that serious. But then again, it is serious. I'll leave you with that.

FRANK. Jamie.

JAMIE. Life's a serious proposition, Frank.

FRANK. I have to go.

JAMIE. Oh. Ya leavin', Frank? Ya goin' somewhere?

FRANK. Yeah. I need to leave in an hour. And I have to take a shower. So you'd better just leave.

JAMIE. Oh. A shower. That'll take about a minute. But hey. Whatever. If ya have to go—then cool—you know, whatever. *(Smiles:)* You gotta wash the clingers from your cooler?

FRANK. What?

JAMIE. Aaayy. That's a joke, Frank. Lighten up. ...I don't wanna lose ya, man. You're a swell guy. Really. *(He touches FRANK's shoulder:)* Don't cut me off man. ...Hey, Frank. When you gonna grow your beard?

FRANK. You mean, grow it back?

JAMIE. Yeah. Or your stash man. You're cool with a stash.

FRANK. I like being clean-shaven.

JAMIE. Oh. The clean-shaven look. Yeah, I think I like you better with the stash man. You're cool with the stash. You know what you look like without a beard man? You know what?

FRANK. What.

JAMIE. Do you want me to tell you? You look like a bald pussy.

FRANK. -----! -----!

JAMIE. Ah man. That's a little humor, man. You need to lighten up man.

FRANK. I'm just worried about you, Jamie.

(JAMIE starts to unbutton his shirt.)

JAMIE. Why man? I'm—I'm just—I'm philosophizing, man. I'm thinking about life, Frank. Life is fucked up, man. I hope my problem ain't a woman—that I need a woman. I hope that ain't my problem. Cause women are the evil of the world, Frank. Don't get me goin' on that subject, Frank. It's...I get that from my pop. He's more...he tells me. He says to me. "Do you know what a friend is, Jamie?" And I say, "What, pop? What is a friend?" And he says, "A friend is someone who will see you shoveling your car out of snow and they stop and help you even though they are late for work. That is what a friend is." And I told him, "Yeah, pop. That's all well and good...but do you know what JESUS said a friend is?" And so on and so forth. So you see, Frank. I throw that philosophy right back in his face. And it makes him think. You see, I'm a thinker, Frank. ...What are you thinkin', Frank. Why're you so quiet, man?

FRANK. I'm worried that you're abusing yourself, Jamie.

JAMIE. No man. No.

FRANK. I'm worried that you're drinking again or using drugs.

JAMIE. Ah, man. You been readin' too many of your books, man.

FRANK. Are you using, Jamie?

JAMIE. Drugs? No, Frank. I ain't smoked no herb for I don't know how long...95, 96, 97. Frank. Not for a while. And drugs man? No man. I don't use no drugs, man. I'm clean.

FRANK. What about alcohol?

JAMIE. Alcohol? What, Frank? *(With a laugh:)* You think I'm keepin' a bottle hidden behind the bathroom door, Frank? Is that what you think? You wanna frisk me, Frank? You wanna see if I have a bottle hidden in my pants?

FRANK. No. I just worry that you're—

JAMIE. I don't drink, Frank.

(JAMIE goes into Frank's kitchen.)

FRANK. I'm just worried that you're abusing yourself.

JAMIE. *(From off:)* I don't drink, Frank.

FRANK. Not at all, Jamie?

JAMIE. No, man. *(He returns with a beer:)* Nothin'. Nada. I drink beer. But I don't drink alcohol.

FRANK. Are you drunk everyday?

JAMIE. No, Frank.

FRANK. How many times a week are you drunk, Jamie?

JAMIE. No, Frank. You see the thing is, like I told you about my old man. What I was sayin' about philosophy. Do you know who that guy is that had that show on the television about truth? About finding the truth? Do you know who that is, Frank?

FRANK. Uh huh. Whatever.

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INNOCENT VICTIMS

Cast of Characters

WOMAN

MAN

Production Notes

This is a piece for two people. Preferably a woman and a man. As odd as it may seem—it's important to find the humor in this piece. i.e. The casual way the woman sometimes “corrects” the man's grammar, etc. The way they hear what the other has said. And it's ok to have some restrained anger also.

WOMAN. Another one.

MAN. Another phone call.
Another talking slowly on the telephone.

WOMAN. Another one.

MAN. Another one who—can't move.
Straining to speak.

WOMAN. Straining.

MAN. To have life in his voice.

WOMAN. Straining.

MAN. To make me think he hasn't changed.

WOMAN. A beautiful boy.

MAN. A beautiful man

WOMAN. Another one.

MAN. Another one with the virus.

WOMAN. They're getting closer.

MAN. I didn't use to know so many.
Another one.

WOMAN. Another one. Over the age of twenty-three. Another of the men—the younger boys, the junior gays won't talk to.

MAN. "Don't date over twenty-three years old. You're safe if you date under twenty-three."

WOMAN. They say with confidence. Such pride in their youth.

MAN. Such confidence.

WOMAN. The confidence that only youth can give you.

MAN. Such safety in their youth.

WOMAN. They think.

MAN. Don't fuck anyone older than you.

WOMAN. Darling, don't say "fuck."

MAN. Okay.

Don't stick your dick in a butt older than twenty-three.

WOMAN. Let them die off.

MAN. I'm so glad the junkies and the faggots are dying off. I'm so glad the niggers are dying. I'm so glad the little nigger mommy and her crack baby are dying.

WOMAN. How convenient for us.

MAN. We don't have to line them up like we did in World War
Two.

All those ugly junkies and faggots and icky horrible people will die
now.

Though it is too bad about Kimberly Bergalis.

WOMAN. Who was that again?

MAN. The girl who got AIDS from her dentist.

WOMAN. Oh, that's right. That was sad. An innocent victim.

MAN. She's an innocent victim.
Let's make her a hero.

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MAURICE

Cast of Characters

MAURICE

(An old black queen reminisces upon seeing an old photograph.)

MAURICE. I didn't waste it, no.

I knew I was cute.

I knew I had something to show.

My hair was thick and long. It hung in my face.

It flirted with the summer breeeeeze

It punctuated my innocent, "hello."

Yeah, I didn't waste it.

When they told me,

"Use it while you can—cause, honey. It don't last."

I didn't sneer and say,

 "Oh yeah? Not me.

 I'll make it past the age of thirty.

 And still have it all. I'll still be flirty."

No...

I didn't say that.

I believed them when they told me how it goes.

How everyone knows

 that aging

 is

 the great

 equalizer...

And now that time has come.

I see an old photo.

Oh honey. One that I thought was so ugly?

That I used to hide it

And now. Whoa boy,
I display that pic with pride!
Cause MAN. I was friggin cute then.

I'm so glad I knew it.

Cause now...
this next chunk of time can be spent on
Learning and resting.

No competing in the muscle arena for me.
I already did that, honey
and won.

And now that time
is way done.

What a relief not to have to say,
"Sorry...I can't go home with you today. But thanks for the beer."

What a relief.
Not to have to say "no."

They don't ask now anyway.

The joke is on someone.
I wish I knew who
Cause
If I can accept me now, all wrinkled and chubs...

When I DO go to the clubs,
I won't feel bad if I hear the word, "troll."

Are you getting old?

Well, never ever fear...

Cause I was once where you are now
my dear.

So even if you are mean to me today...
And walk away
when you see me come near

Don't you worry.
Cause someday (with luck) you too will be this side

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SARABANDE

Cast of Characters

MAN
MUSIC STUDENT
ANOTHER MUSIC STUDENT

Production Note

This piece is for one man and two other actors. If performed as a monologue alone—the man can take the lines given to the student..

(A practice room in a music conservatory.)

(A MAN enters and sits at a piano bench.)

MAN. It was fourteen years ago today
The day I heard you died.

Unable to get the right information
Of how or why

Unable to cry openly
And with nothing else to do
Except wait...

I rushed.

Ran to the conservatory
Filled with the tiny practice rooms
Like a shadow box
or a dolls house.

I ran to a piano in a small room.
The same room I had played in
So many times before.
The same room with the small window
You would watch me through.

How I loved to look up from my practice
Only to discover your little face
Peering at me through the tiny rectangle window...

Urging me to "continue to play"
or "stop and visit with you"
Whichever I preferred.

But music held no candle to you
I always stopped.
I think you knew I always would.

Fourteen years ago today
I threw myself to the bench

My mind racing
With the words told to me
By someone you didn't even know.

ANOTHER MUSIC STUDENT. "Did you hear about Dave Bunce?
He's dead."

MAN. Sitting alone

Lost by myself

I immediately played the piece
As if to POUND or IMPRINT...
Stamp with the heaviest force
Pound you into my memory
Forever through this piece.

This Sarabande
Into my brain

Hoping
That by playing this piece
With all my love and power
That it would somehow imprint you
On—to me...

 In my body
 In my soul

Forever...

A part of you waiting to be conjured up
 With the first notes
 Of the lovely Debussy Sarabande.

But you are gone.
 And the mystery still surrounds your death

MUSIC STUDENT. (*Crosses and speaks to ANOTHER STUDENT:*)
 “He was cleaning his gun. That’s what I heard.
 Or was it you know, self...you know self...
 You know, self inflicted.”

MAN. Now this music is all I have
 To remember you by.

That freshman girl you dated only a few times
 She is her sadness
 Allowed to mourn you openly.
 Friends around her
 Consoling her.

While I.
 In my respect for you
 Forced to keep my love a secret
 From her and your family.

How grateful I am
 That I confessed my love to you
 In the Pizza King
 Over root beer in plastic yellow tumblers.

I said,
 “I’m in love with you.”
 You asked,
 “Can you channel that feeling into a friendship?”

wow

That made me love you even more.
 “Can I channel it?
 Yes, I can channel it. I can.”

I can.

How grown up of you not to freak out.

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MRS. SMITH PLAYS THE PIANO

Cast of Characters

MRS. SMITH, a loud, scary, funny, controlling, drinking woman in her 50s or 60s. (at least 20 years older than boy)

BOY, an innocent. Physically 18 to 30 years old.

DONNA, another innocent in her early 30s.

Time

Now.

Place

The music room.

Scene 1

(Music room. A piano. On the wall are the famous paintings of Blue Boy and Pinkie. Enter MRS. SMITH.)

MRS. SMITH. Hello! Hello, hello everybody. Do you know who I am? Hmm? Well, then. Let us figure it out together. Now then. The name of the entertainment is, *Mrs. Smith Plays the Piano!* I am not a piano am I. So. Since there are only TWO things on the stage and I am not ONE of them, I might very well be the other *object d'art*. NO? Would somebody please call out my name so that anybody still in the dark about who I am may be in the light. Call it out. Blankety blank plays the piano. Say my name. I just like to hear it. Go ahead. Speak up.

(Ad lib till name is called from audience.)

Oh. Thank you. But I do hope that this doesn't mean that you will be calling out the entire evening. TRY AND KEEP A LID ON IT BUSTER! My real name is Miss Dora. But I have my piano students

and protégés call me Mrs. Smith. This way if my students or protégés, try and sue me, they won't be sure if I'm married or not.

(Smiles sweetly then suddenly DETERMINED:) I AM MRS. SMITH and I am about to play the piano for you! All this talk and no action make me restless. *(Calling off:)* Boy! Make ready the piano for the inevitable Mrs. Smith.

(BOY enters and "readies" the piano.)

MRS. SMITH. I call myself the inevitable, because I WILL happen eventually. NOW. For instance.

(She sits at the piano and plays oom pa pa, oom pa pa:)

I shall begin with a waltz? You like? You like the waltz? Do you?

(Now listen. When I ask a specific question I expect an answer. There is only one of me up here...so when Mrs. Smith asks a question like, "DO YOU LIKE THE WALTZ?" You'd better answer if you know what's good for you.)

(Sweetly:) Do you KNOW what's good for you? Carrots are good for you as well as radishes...actually a balanced diet...everything in moderation.

(Oh I don't care what you eat. Eat shit! ...or merde as the Spanish say which also means bon voyage as the Hebrews say which means GOOD LUCK! Merde. THERE! I've come full circle. Do you like the waltz?)

(She sits again.)

I for one love THE *BLUE DANUBE*. Not the river, the waltz. The Danube itself is actually quite unappealing. On any given day one might see garbage of all sorts floating about such as bottles, pieces of wood, pieces of animals, condoms. Yechhh. I am glad however, to see that people are actually using condoms...but they just fill up with water and just float down the river.

(She sits again.)

I think it was just this image which inspired Scholtz to write The *BLUE DANUBE*. No, not Scholtz...what was his name. Oh some-

body tell me. Who wrote the *Blue Danube*? Yes. yes, just call it out. It's all right.

(Ad lib as before.)

Yes. Strouse...He wrote many nice waltzes. He also wrote the musical *ANNIE* didn't he. Hmm...he was prolific. That means he wrote a lot. A plethora, I tell my students. Where are my students do you suppose. I wear supp hose you know. Shapely legs don't you think? I used to be a dancer. I did. I danced with the Royal Ballet of Pittsburgh.

I was the prima Ballerina for many years before I divorced the Count and decided to devote my life to music and my students.

(Notices her legs again. Shows them teasingly to the audience:) The uniformity in color is due mainly to the texture of the nylon. A pervert invented nylons...or was it a pervert who invented pantyhose... ..well, a pervert invented something. Don't kid yourself. I'm afraid that I'm beginning to lose something in the translation.

Perhaps I just need a rest. BOY! Oh, boy? Yes dear, can you be sweet and bring me a glass of water...no make it tea. Ah just bring me a scotch. I teach better when I drink scotch. Oh. Thank you BOY. Just leave the bottle. And you may sit over there and listen politely. On second thought BOY, I'm afraid that you distract me. You look especially sweet today. You'd better leave. Come back later when you're ready for your lesson.

Boy is a rather gifted pianist, you know. However, he seems to only want to play the classics. I'm trying to expose him...ah. to. Joplin, say...Scott and Janis. and of course THE WALTZ. The inevitable waltz...because it WILL happen.

(Sings:) The blue, blue dan nube. blue dan. dan nube. The blue, blue dan nube nube nube dan nube. Get out your hot lube lube lube blue dan. Lets have that hot lube, blue dan you boob. Lets all sing blue dan. dan dan lube boob.

Oh...I really am not what you would call a singer. To make up for it I'm modest. However, I do have one of my *protégé ici aujourd'hui ce soir*...And she is going to sing for you now. Her name is Donna.

I believe she does have a last name but we'll have to forget that for the moment and concentrate on hearing her sing the waltz. I've written down the correct words for her so there shouldn't be a problem. Are you ready for Donna? Let's bring her out together with a round of applause.

(She does not enter during applause.)

MRS. SMITH. There seems to be some problem.

(If applause does not die down on its own, MRS. SMITH should quiet the audience and go toward the door. Enter DONNA.)

DONNA. I'm sorry to just walk in. The door was unlocked. I mean, I knocked and knocked and didn't get an answer and well, I got so worried. I mean you're not a young woman and I thought MY GOD SHE COULD BE DEAD! Although I suppose that if you were actually dead then there wouldn't actually be any HURRY to get in and find you. In fact it could be rather creepy to find a dead woman, I mean. Depending on how long the body had been there. I guess if it had just died then it wouldn't be that bad. It might just look like the person was sleeping. Of course if it were a violent death like that of my father, you know, if he had been shot in the head a few times, then there would be blood all over the place and it wouldn't look like the person was sleeping at all. I mean you would have to question a person's motives who would fall asleep in their own blood. I don't think I know anyone who has done that. Did I wake you? I don't SEE any blood.

MRS. SMITH. DONNA! Your lesson is only one half of an hour long. And I am afraid that with your delay in arrival and this last piece of business...you've already cut into a great deal of it.

DONNA. Oh, I'm sorry Miss Dora, Mrs. Smith. It's just that I was thinking about when my father was shot in the head. And it sometimes makes me sad.

(MRS. SMITH sits at the piano.)

MRS. SMITH. Well, don't think about it! Now. You've kept these nice people waiting long enough. We'll skip the vocal exercises for today and begin with Scholtz's Waltz... "The Blue Danube."

DONNA. But I'm not a singer. I'm a pianist. I'm working on a Mozart sonata and the Bach inventions?

MRS. SMITH. Now, Donna. I've been telling these people

DONNA. What people.

MRS. SMITH. Now don't be COY Donna, they want to hear you sing. Although Donna is part of my "continuing education" department she does have a lovely voice. You have to commend her for keeping up with her lessons with a husband, a home to keep clean and what with the baby and all

DONNA. What are you talking about. I'm not married.

MRS. SMITH. OH. HO! So you like to keep them guessing too. A chip off the old block...I must say. Now sing.

(MRS. SMITH gives DONNA the music or perhaps she has already been holding it. MRS. SMITH begins the introduction.)

DONNA. But I'm not a singer!

MRS. SMITH. DONNA!

DONNA. *(Singing as well as her talent allows her to:)* The blue, blue dan nube. Nube nube. Blue dan. The dan nube is blue. Blue blue. dan. dan. I want to sing it for you, the blue. Ooo Ooo. Let's all join in too. Blue dan. dan. nube.

(Stops singing.)

DONNA. I'm confused by this song. Are these the original lyrics?

(MRS. SMITH takes the music from her hand and examines it.)

MRS. SMITH. That's odd. I don't understand it. I wrote these words myself. DONNA! This is a cruel joke you've played on Mrs. Smith. And in front of all these people. I don't know who put you up to this, but if this is your idea of a joke, you've got another guess coming! I think that you owe these people an apology.

DONNA. What People!

MRS. SMITH. Apologize!

DONNA. But I didn't do anything.

MRS. SMITH. Apologize.

DONNA. I...Uh... Well... ..I'm uh... Sorry.

MRS. SMITH. You feel better don't you dear. Of course you do. How about some nice fresh tap water. I would offer you scotch but I only have enough for me.

BOY! Bring the student a glass of warm tap water no ice. Cold water is bad for the vocal chords. And don't let the faucet run. I don't have stock in the water company you know. And bring me my scotch. Have you met Boy, he's rather GIFTED you know.

(DONNA examines MRS. SMITH. Beat.)

DONNA. I think that perhaps I'd better go. I seem to have come at a bad time.

MRS. SMITH. Don't be silly Donna, you haven't had your piano lesson.

DONNA. Oh. So you admit that I am a piano student!

MRS. SMITH. Of course dear. Why else would you be here?

DONNA. Then why did you make me sing in front of all these people.

MRS. SMITH. *(With a glint in her eye:)* What people.

DONNA. Oh. I don't know what's wrong with me. It started out like such a nice day. Oh...well. Not that nice actually but I do have all my limbs. Arms and legs. "Limbs" is such a hard word to hear. *(She begins weeping:)* I have problems articulating.

MRS. SMITH. There, there, THERE. Donna. Dear Donna. Sweet pretty Donna. Lovely Donna. Darling Donna. Dirty DONNA. Nasty Donna. Bad! Bad! Donna. Now sit down and get ready for your lesson. And you'd better be prepared. That's all I have to say.

(A stunned DONNA takes her seat at the piano and meagerly begins a d minor scale.)

MRS. SMITH. *(Takes a drink of scotch:)* That's beautiful Donna. Very nice. Perhaps you'd like BOY to give you your lesson today. Would you like that?

DONNA. No. You're my teacher.

MRS. SMITH. Now Donna. BOY can teach too. He's a very talented pianist. His teachers were always saying. You really must learn to be more flexible. How do you expect to learn anything? Boy? Bring me my chair!

(Enter BOY still wearing a sweatshirt. He carries her special chair a rocking chair.)

MRS. SMITH. Boy. You're so quiet. You've hardly said a word all week. *(To audience:)* Is it just me, or does everyone think Boy is just so cute that you could just cook him up and eat him for dinner? I haven't had dinner. Boy? How would you like me to stuff an apple in your mouth and eat you for dinner?

Is it HOT in here BOY, or is it you. That last line didn't come from me it came from the devil. Boy. I'm afraid I'll not move on as long as you're standing there looking all hot in that thing you're wearing. It's too distracting.

You'd better just take it off. It's o.k. We're all friends here. Aren't we Donna?

(DONNA still playing the same scale only now in octaves. MRS. SMITH watches BOY remove his shirt.)

MRS. SMITH. Can you go on to something else. An arpeggio or something?

(DONNA bangs a few chords on the keys.)

MRS. SMITH. You have a very sharp side. Don't you Donna.

DONNA. I'm sure I don't know what you mean.

(DONNA begins playing the Brahms Lullaby.)

MRS. SMITH. That's lovely Donna.

(MRS. SMITH starts to nod off in her chair. DONNA continues for a bit, until she senses MRS. SMITH is sleeping.)

DONNA. Boy. Boy. Talk to me. There's something wrong here. She's not well. I mean, more than usual. I don't know if you've noticed, but I think she drinks. I have reason to believe that your life is

in danger. DANGER! boy. *(Taken aback:)* You know, you are really cute. Do you work out or is that natural?

You're probably one of those people that were just born that way. I just look at a piece of cake and I gain ten pounds. *(Desperate:)* We've got to get out of here. *(Sincerely:)* Boy. Even though we've just met, I consider you to be one of my closest friends. I hope we'll always keep in touch. But, boy. Is there something else that I can call you? I feel somewhat uncomfortable calling you boy. What is your name?

BOY. ymay ealray amenay siay oybay. oday uoyay etgay tiay henway iay altay niay igpay atinlay.

DONNA. *(Beat. Then:)* What?

BOY. I said. My real name IS Boy. And then I said. Do you get it when I talk in Pig Latin.

DONNA. Oh.

BOY. You see. I went to St. Thomas Aquinas High School. And I was supposed to study Latin. But then I wouldn't have had enough room on my schedule for marching band. So. I secretly took marching band and I never took Latin. But of course when my family or the teachers asked me how Latin was going, I had to have a bluff. So I would talk in Pig Latin and they never caught on. I've heard that the two languages are very similar anyway so I never got caught. Even as an altar boy when I was serving Mass, you know, before they turned the altar around? I always said all the prayers in Pig Latin. The Wednesday Novenas were my favorite. Pig Latin comes in handy for lots of other reasons to. But you know, sometimes I can't always control when I do it. I don't seem to have any problem with you though. That's cause you're nice. Either that or you have low self esteem. I'm starting to feel embarrassed. Oh oh, here I go. Erehay lay ogay. Histay siay hetay irstfay imetay hattay lay alkedtay ormallynay.

DONNA. What?

BOY. I said. This is the first time that I was able to talk normally.

DONNA. I see.

(MRS. SMITH wakes up.)

MRS. SMITH. Oh dear. How long have I been sleeping. Who cares. Time is relative. I see from my reflection in your young faces that I had BEAUTY sleep as opposed to DEEP sleep.

Well, well, well. Oh! Oh dear! It's time! Time. Time for the waltz. Boy will play. I will sing. And Donna will Dance. Yes! Dance the Waltz. Dance Donna, Dance!

(As BOY plays the Introduction to the Blue Danube, DONNA reluctantly pulls a tutu on over her dress. MRS. SMITH sings Danube in Pig Latin or tries to dance a pas de deux with DONNA as lights fade.)

Scene 2

(Lights up dimly on DONNA and BOY. Brighter on MRS. SMITH.)

MRS. SMITH. Hello Everybody! Do you know who I am? Of course you do. I didn't have a chance to change my name in the few moments that the lights were down. It's a very involved process where one must go to court and swear. Not the "F" word or anything like that. I have no reason to change my names. I have not committed any crimes...in the last year. At least I don't remember. So many things are escaping me lately. My mind is so unreliable. That's why I keep young people around me.

(Referring to BOY and DONNA:) Well, Donna is not that young but she is younger than I am. And BOY, well, it's hard to tell his age. But he certainly is cute. We've established that. His name is young or at least implies youth but on some days he seems only in his early teens. On other days he seems to be in his thirties. Boy is an iguana. No that's not right. He's an enigma. I suppose it is possible that he be an enigmatic IGUANA...but then I wouldn't want him in the music room. I might prefer to keep Boy in a cage. There's a thought. Perhaps I should put boy in a cage.

Boy? Would you like to be in a cage? Then we can sell you to the circus.

BOY. hatway? rsmay. Mithsay?

MRS. SMITH. I asked you if you want to be in a cage?

BOY. ohay! Iay eessay. Iay on'tday nowkay hatway otay aysay.

MRS. SMITH. Well, if you don't know what to say, don't say anything. My mother used to say, "If you don't know what to say keep your mouth shut!" Now Boy. There is a large bird cage in the hall. Go see if you can squeeze yourself in. If not, we'll have to buy a larger one. But bear in mind that the more money I have to spend on your cage, the less I can spend on the little luxuries that would make your little cage comfortable.

(MRS. SMITH falls asleep. DONNA looks up from the piano.)

DONNA. You don't have to listen to her Boy.

BOY. Iay nowkay.

DONNA. Then why do it? Leave this place.

BOY. Hereway ouldway Iay ogay?

DONNA. What!

BOY. WHERE WOULD I GO. I have no where else to go!

DONNA. Do you have any family?

(BOY is silent.)

DONNA. Boy? What's wrong?

BOY. I'd better get in the cage.

(He exits.)

MRS. SMITH. *(Wakes up:)* Why are you two talking as if I am not here. I'm not dead yet you know. Don't count your chickens before they're hatched. I've got a lot of good years left in me. And I can still cause plenty of damage so watch your step young lady you're treading on thin ice. Practice the BARTOK.

(DONNA timidly plays the Bartok Microcosmos or improvises quietly.)

MRS. SMITH. Hello everybody. Do you know who I am? Of course you do. That is a rhetorical question. I am not actually sure what a rhetorical question is so I tried to use the dictionary like they

taught us in school...but it was no help at all. One has to know how to spell the word one wishes to look up. Oh look what that cat drug in.

(BOY manages to get himself back in the room while inside a large bird cage. Mrs. Smith sits at the piano playing or humming.)

MRS. SMITH. Donna! Feed the bird.

(DONNA gets a "feeder" and attaches it to the cage. BOY sucks from it. DONNA slumps down on the floor and strokes the cage. BOY makes whatever bird noises he can.)

MRS. SMITH. Oh? Do I hear a pretty little bird singing? I think I do. They say birds only sing when they are very very happy! You must be a very happy bird.

And why not! You're well taken care of. You've got a roof over your head. Food on the table. Well, food in your cage. There are a lot of children who would love to have that bottle to suck on. You kids these days don't know what you have. You just don't appreciate what I do for you.

We were so poor when I was growing up we didn't have enough to eat half the time...and we wouldn't think to talk back to our parents. The more you get, the more you want. We had to walk to school. We had to take our lunch. We had to sleep in our own rooms. We didn't get to sleep with our parents.

We didn't have the luxury of a pretty gold cage. Oooo you kids IRK me. You take everything for granted. Money doesn't grow on trees you know. I'm not MADE of money you know.

DONNA. Mrs. Smith. Isn't my lesson time up by now. I can't afford to pay you for two lessons.

MRS. SMITH. Now, Donna. You know that when it comes to learning, I put my own financial gain at the bottom of the list. I don't expect you to pay for more than a half hour.

DONNA. Thank you, Mrs. Smith.

MRS. SMITH. "Thank you" doesn't pay my bills. Money does.

DONNA. *(Sigh.)*

MRS. SMITH. Donna, you really could be such a pretty girl. Get me my bag over there and I will work a miracle on you. And don't bother to thank me. Why?

DONNA. Because "thank you" doesn't pay your bills, money does.

MRS. SMITH. That's right. If you learn one thing today then perhaps my life will not have been in vain.

(DONNA gets the purse and pulls the bench close to MRS. SMITH.)

DONNA. What are you going to do?

MRS. SMITH. I'm going to make you pretty to see if you can attract Bird. Here we go.

(MRS. SMITH applies much makeup to DONNA making her look like a drag queen.)

MRS. SMITH. Some eye shadow. We need to bring out the eyes. They sink right into your head. Your whole face is all one color. Your lips are the same color as your teeth. It's no wonder Bird never pays you no mind.

BOY. Onnaday. Onnaday.

MRS. SMITH. Shhss. Bird. We ladies are trying to make ourselves beautiful for you men folk. Now just a LITTLE rouge...

(She puts on a great deal.)

...men actually like a lot of rouge. It makes them think that you are blushing. Men like women to blush. It means that they might still be a virgin...or at least not that experienced. And just a touch of lipstick. Of course with your thin lips, we'll have to make them look bigger. This is called the "baby doll" look. And oh my god! Girl. Your hair. It's so limp. *(Heavy sigh.)* Why did I ever agree to do this for you. *(Heavy sigh.)* The things I do for you kids and you don't appreciate a damn thing. Hand me the hair spray.

DONNA. Mrs. Smith. Miss Dora. I didn't ask you to do this. I only wanted to work on my lesson.

MRS. SMITH. Donna. You don't expect for a moment that I should have to look at you for a whole lesson looking the way you did. You

looked terrible. You're much prettier now. You LOOK like a lady. In a certain light, you remind me of me when I was a younger girl. Take the bench and sit at the piano. And I don't want to hear a peep out of you!

Bird. Why don't you come out of that silly cage for a while and I'll make you pretty too.

Now don't try to fly away, little birdie. Here we go. Now little boy birds don't usually wear makeup. But this is just make believe. Don't go to that damn school and tell all those damn teachers who think they know something about something that your mother dresses you up. We are having what is known as quality time.

(DONNA looks stunned at the piano and probably plays a bit. MRS. SMITH puts make up on BOY. Bright red exaggerated lips. Dark blue eye shadow.)

MRS. SMITH. You are a very lucky boy. Boy wishes I would feed him the way mommy birds feed baby birds. I tell boy that he is not really a bird and that he will sit at the table like a polite young man or he'll go to bed without supper! Donna?

DONNA. Yes?

MRS. SMITH. Nothing. Just checking that you didn't drop off to sleep. I swear. It seems that children need more sleep than I do and they don't do a thing. Where is all their energy, I ask them.

Oh, look Donna. How pretty I've made Boy. He's so pretty he should have been a girl. Everybody says so. He has such pretty eyes. Donna, I think Boy has prettier eyes than you do. We use BLUE eye shadow on boy. He is so pretty...He looks just like the painting of BLUE BOY above the piano. Do you know who painted *Blue Boy*? Gainsborough. I love *Blue Boy* and *Pinkie*. They are always shown together. Stupid people assume that they were painted by the same artist. They most certainly were not.

But they are lovely together. *Blue Boy* and PINKIE girl. Pretty as a picture. Oh look. I have my own *Blue Boy* and *Pinkie* girl. Lovely. Pinkie? Play me the Brahms Lullaby. Who wrote the Brahms lullaby?

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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