

COMMEDIA DELLA MORTE

A One-Act Play

by

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CHARACTERS

NICK

Mid-twenties. Agnostic. Nick is still in the denial phase after the death of Lily, his ex-fiancée. His feelings for her never went away, but years ago he just wasn't ready to have kids.

WAYNE

Mid-twenties. A staunch atheist. After the death of his father in his youth, Wayne was able to escape the cult that ensnared his family. As a direct result, he has adopted a dark, cynical outlook on life. Maybe his rude behavior is his own way of grieving Lily. Maybe it's just him.

BRECHTWALD

Shifting between accents and behaviors, one could earnestly describe Brechtwald as anyone -- or anything. He is described as male in the script but could be any sex, any gender, and any adult age.

SCENE: The back room of a funeral home.

AT RISE: BRECHTWALD stumbles in, “Johnny Depp”-esque. Is he drunk? Is he gay? We don’t know. He addresses the audience (exact wording can be changed depending on time of performance, audience, etc. Feel free to improv.)

BRECHTWALD

(speaking in a terrible German accent)

Hey, heyyy good evening, Boston, what’s up? Go Sox, am I right? Haha, yeahhh! How are you doing? So happy to be here.

I just flew in from Berlin, and boy, are my arms tired! Hahaha...

No? That killed in Salt Lake City...

Uh, let’s see what I got here, uh...

I bought a ceiling fan the other day. Complete waste of money. He just stands there applauding and saying “Ooh, I love ceilings.”

(Feel free to add or swap jokes. The important thing is that BRECHTWALD is bombing, hard.)

No? Guys, please. I know this is a funeral, but the crowd shouldn’t be deader than the body.

Ohhh, boohoo! Booo! Fine. Fine. I know when I’m bombing. Let me just try one more. What time did the man go to the dentist? Tooth-hur/ohhh fuck it. You wanna be entertained? I know what entertains crowds like you.

BRECHTWALD dashes out of the room. Beat.

NICK and WAYNE burst into the room. They’re pissed, but they’re good friends. Banter should be quick and snarky.

NICK

(under his breath)

Asshole.

WAYNE

I am not the asshole, Nick, your goddamn Aunt Susan is the asshole.

NICK

She's an old Catholic, Wayne, what did you expect?

WAYNE

What did I expect? I expected to pay my respects and leave! I didn't expect a surprise sermon about why Satan is going to use me as a cumrag because/

NICK

/Wayne, c'mon/

WAYNE

/I haven't accepted magic sky daddy into my heart. Alright? What did I expect!?!/

NICK

/Alright, alright!//

WAYNE

/I mean she started it, you saw that, right?//

NICK

/She asked what church you go to or something/

WAYNE

/No! No! She asked why I didn't close my eyes during the prayer.

NICK

Okay, well, you could've! You know how her family is. And mine! All you needed to do was blink for longer than usual.

WAYNE

Hey, I expect the same religious freedom as everybody else!

NICK

No one is going to arrest you for saying... *(he can't even say it)* saying what you said.

WAYNE

What, calling her ugly?

NICK

No, but you shouldn't have said that either!

WAYNE

Because she called me fat, so/

NICK

/I know, / I know, I know, I know...

WAYNE

All I did was give her a taste of her own medicine!

NICK

Oh, really? That's all you did?

WAYNE

Alright, alright.

The vore comment was too much.

NICK

Yes it was! Where did it even come from?

WAYNE

I don't know, okay? You know this is a sensitive subject for me. You know.

NICK

Right, right, right. I'm- I forgot. I'm sorry. I wasn't thinking about/

WAYNE

No, no, you're right. I'm sorry. I shouldn't have... I'm to blame too. I've fought off women older and more religious.

NICK

Ha. I'm sure Lily would have thought that was funny.

WAYNE

Yeah. She would've.

NICK

(talking to the sky)

You hear that? We're still thinking about you.

WAYNE

Yes we are.

NICK

What's it like up there, huh?

WAYNE

Dude, I... Nevermind.

What? NICK

I wish you didn't... talk to the sky. WAYNE

Why not? NICK

I mean, if it works for you, great, I guess. Just. Not for me. WAYNE

I was mostly joking. NICK

It makes me uncomfortable. WAYNE

I'm trying to preserve her memory! NICK

I think you're still trying to win her back. WAYNE

Fuck you, Wayne. NICK

NICK exits, slamming the door.

WAYNE
(calling to NICK)

Nick... I'm sorry! That was poor timing. I promise I'm not ruining this on purpose.

Nick! I'm a jerk!

NICK enters.

I'm not mad because you're a jerk. I'm mad because you're right. NICK

I don't always like to be. WAYNE

No, but I find often you do. NICK

Well, I- Not always.

WAYNE

But often.

NICK

Yeah. I do.

WAYNE

NICK

WAYNE

The adrenaline wears off. They relax, seemingly for the first time in days.

WAYNE

Fuck, dude. This is not how I pictured everything ending.

NICK

I miss her so much.

WAYNE

I know, buddy. I do too.

NICK

I don't know what to think.

WAYNE

About what?

NICK

About... what happens after. I know what the best case scenario is.

WAYNE

Yeah? What's that?

NICK

I get to see her again. One day.

WAYNE

Oh. Best case in the sense that- yeah. Okay.

NICK

WAYNE

NICK

But you think that's bullshit.

WAYNE

I'm trying to keep my mouth shut.

NICK

What's the worst case?

WAYNE

What do you mean?

NICK

If you're right. What does that mean?

WAYNE

It means... one day you won't miss her this much.

NICK

That's hard to imagine.

But what if she misses me?

WAYNE

You know where this conversation is headed.

NICK

What if she misses me, and I forget all about her?

WAYNE

She isn't going to miss you.

NICK

How do you know that?

WAYNE

Well... she's not all that active as of late.

NICK

That's not what I meant.

WAYNE

What did you mean?

NICK

I... I'm not sure.

WAYNE

Just... try not to fantasize too much.

NICK

What's wrong with that?

WAYNE

Because she's dead, Nick. She's going in the ground.

NICK

And you're an expert on life after death?

WAYNE

You asked what the "worst case" scenario is.

NICK

What about the soul?

WAYNE

What about my dick, Nick? Just because it'd be cool if my cock rose up to the heavens when I die doesn't mean it will!

NICK

I was hoping for a little more reassurance from such a good friend.

WAYNE

Hey, I'm being honest and realistic. You asked. It's not gonna do you any good to think that Lily will posthumously come back to you. She's not gonna talk to you or listen to you or f- She's not gonna do anything. She's dead. That's where it all ends.

NICK

You don't know that!

WAYNE

She's going in the goddamn ground!

NICK

So you think you're right about everything because you're so cynical?

WAYNE

I'm so cynical because I know what denial does in the long run.

NICK

It's not denial. It's hopefulness at its worst.
Look. Maybe she's not really "gone."

WAYNE

Are you familiar with the five stages of grief?

NICK

Well maybe she's not! Huh? How do you know? How do you know that in all of your equations, and your atoms, and your Einstein and your Freud and your chemistry and your arrogance, how can you tell me there's no way she's still out there?

WAYNE

Nick.

I'm sorry, buddy. I'm not trying to be an asshole atheist or a crusty old Catholic or anything else.

But she's gone.

It doesn't matter where she went. She's not here anymore.

NICK

Well, you're wrong.

WAYNE

What do you mean?

NICK

She is here.

WAYNE

In what sense?

NICK

She just is.

WAYNE

NICK

WAYNE

Listen. I want you to find your own path through this. I don't want to force you in a box you don't want to fit in.

NICK

I appreciate that.

WAYNE

But you need to understand, this is exactly what happened. To me.

NICK

To your parents, you mean?

WAYNE

Yeah. To them. And then me.

NICK

Oh. Jesus.

WAYNE

Don't let Susan hear you.

NICK

How could she? I'm the one who reminds her to turn her hearing aids on.

They laugh a bit. It's bittersweet. A beat.

WAYNE

Are you gonna be okay, man?

NICK

Yeah.

Are you?

WAYNE

I think so. Yeah. I will be.

NICK

Were you ever... angry?

WAYNE

About my dad? Hell no. Him dying was literally the best thing that could've happened to me.

But it's different, Nick. I get that. You weren't waiting for her to die so you could escape a cult.

Are you mad?

NICK

Yeah.

WAYNE

I think it's okay to be mad, sometimes.

Maybe this will be good for us, in a weird way. Help us let go. Focus on the important things.

NICK

You think so?

WAYNE

Hey. Maybe the finality of death is the very thing that helps us survive.

NICK

I'm desperate for this to all be a nightmare.

WAYNE

Of course you are, Nick, we all are. Some people put a smile on your face. She always knew how to bring out the best in people.

And, you know, there's plenty of fish in the sea.

NICK

Don't use that line on me.

WAYNE

I don't... really know what else to say in these kinds of situations.

NICK

Well, I appreciate the effort.

WAYNE

For what it's worth, and because I want you to know I'm not made of stone, I cried like a baby last night.

I'm gonna miss her, Nick. A lot.

Did... did that help?

NICK

Not really. But I'm glad you're here.

WAYNE

Of course.

NICK

You know... I was so, so close. We were, I should say.

WAYNE

You and Lily?

NICK

Yeah. We could've made it work. We were talking again, almost every night. About anything. Everything. I thought she was doing well. One time I asked her what kind of cake she wanted for her welcome home party.

WAYNE

Vanilla?

NICK

Chocolate.

WAYNE

Really?

NICK

Yeah. Isn't that weird?

WAYNE

I didn't think she was a fan.

NICK

I know.

WAYNE

But those were good phone calls with her, yeah?

NICK

For sure.

WAYNE

Good. I'm glad. Those will be good memories to hang on to.

NICK

But I know if things had gone a little differently, if, if we just had more time-

WAYNE

Would've been nice.

NICK

It was going to happen. We were patching things up. Coming back together.

WAYNE

NICK

You're thinking something. I hate it when you do this.

WAYNE

Do what?

NICK

Just say it.

WAYNE

I don't think she was planning on making it out of the hospital.

NICK

What? Of course she was. Lily? You don't think she was-

WAYNE

No, I don't.

NICK

That's ridiculous.

WAYNE

Kidney failure's a bitch, Nick.

NICK

Yeah, but- but-

But.

Oh God. She hated chocolate.

NICK slumps to the ground. WAYNE sits to join him.

NICK

Can I tell you something fucked up?

WAYNE

Of course.

NICK

Ever since I found out, any time there was a murder trial or something on the news, I'd think -- that, that right there, that's why we have the death penalty. So if a piece of shit like that reveals how much of a monster he is, at least we get to keep his kidney.

WAYNE

I don't think it works that way.

NICK

No, probably not, but- but that's where my head was at, you know?

WAYNE

I get you. Yeah. Hell, I'd trade my life for her. I'd trade a psychopath's life for hers any day.

NICK

She wouldn't have wanted it though/

WAYNE

She wouldn't have wanted it though/

They pause. Look at each other. Laugh a little more.
Maybe things will be okay.

WAYNE

You know, she gave me something the last time I saw her. She wanted me to have it, but I think maybe you should.

WAYNE pulls out a bobblehead.

You remember this? It's from the Disney trip.

NICK

Oh, Mr. Bobble! Yeah, I remember him!

WAYNE

It belongs with you, dude.

NICK

Oh, I actually already have something like that.

WAYNE

A bobblehead?

NICK

No, she gave me...

NICK pulls a locket out of his pocket. WAYNE fixates on the locket.

Just a few days ago. She said I gave it to her, actually, which I definitely don't remember doing.

WAYNE

That's very strange.

NICK

Yeah. Bizarre. Maybe in her last days, she just kind of stopped keeping track of some things, mentally?

WAYNE

Probably, yeah. I'm sure. Do you know what's in it?

NICK

No, I haven't been able to get it open.

WAYNE

Can I see it?

NICK

Sure.

NICK passes the locket to WAYNE. WAYNE inspects it.

WAYNE

Huh. You know what, my uncle is a locksmith, I bet he could figure this thing out.

NICK

Does it have a lock?

WAYNE

(pocketing the locket)

Yeah, it's right here. Let me get this to him.

NICK

What are you doing?

WAYNE

What do you mean?

NICK

Give it back.

WAYNE

How else are we going to unlock it?

NICK

Give me back the locket.

WAYNE

Whoa, whoa, whoa, let's talk about this for a second.

NICK

What is there to talk about? Give it back!

WAYNE

But Nick/

NICK

I can hire my own locksmith, if that's what it comes to!

WAYNE

It's giving me bad vibes.

NICK

Bad vibes!?

WAYNE

You need to spend some time apart from it. It's for your own good.

NICK

What are you talking about?

WAYNE

This is only going to distort the grieving process. Trust me. Take mine.

NICK

I don't want the fucking bobblehead, that's not what she gave me!

WAYNE

It's best in my hands/

NICK

No it's not!/

WAYNE

Sure it is.

NICK

She gave it to me, I should have it.

WAYNE

Well, the burden of proof lies on you.

NICK

The burden of my foot up your ass lies on you.

WAYNE

I wish I could better explain, but I can't let you keep this.

NICK

There's no way in hell I'm letting you leave with that.

WAYNE

There's no way on earth I'm letting you keep it.

WAYNE tackles NICK; a small, pathetic wrestling match. Ultimately, WAYNE snatches the locket.

See, Nick? This is what happens when you don't let go!

WAYNE throws open the door to throw the amulet, but is stopped by BRECHTWALD's entrance.

Enter BRECHTWALD. He speaks with a terrible attempt at a German accent. It's awkward.

BRECHTWALD

Hello, gentlemen.

WAYNE

Hi.

BRECHTWALD

How are you doing on this fine day?

Sorry, uh, morose occasion?

WAYNE

Al... alright?

Did you know Lily, or?

BRECHTWALD

Who?

NICK

Lily?

BRECHTWALD

Lil... Lee... Hmm...

NICK

The... deceased?

BRECHTWALD

Oh, that is her name!

WAYNE

Yeah.

BRECHTWALD

Yes, yes, I knew her.

WAYNE

Cool, so uh, if you don't mind we're kind of... doing a private... thing, back here.

BRECHTWALD

Oh, I apologize for interrupting.

WAYNE

Thanks.

BRECHTWALD exits.

WAYNE

Do you know that guy?

NICK

No.

WAYNE

Alright, well... Anyway, I think this is for the be/

WAYNE tries to throw away the amulet. Again,
he is stopped by BRECHTWALD.

BRECHTWALD

Hello, gentlemen.

WAYNE

Look, guy, I'm trying to be polite, but I kind of need you to go away.

BRECHTWALD

Really, Wayne, is that so?...

WAYNE

I'm sorry?

BRECHTWALD

You probably wouldn't have been so rude to me had you known who I am.

WAYNE

And you are...?

BRECHTWALD

Wouldn't you like to know?

WAYNE

Okay, well... once again, we're asking for some privacy.

BRECHTWALD

Oh oh oh, of course, of course. Mein apologies.

BRECHTWALD exits.

WAYNE

Uh, like I was saying...

He checks the door for movement. Nothing.

I'm sorry dude, but this is for your own/

BRECHTWALD bursts in.

BRECHTWALD

What do you call a can opener that doesn't work? A can't opener!

NICK

Look, can we help you?

BRECHTWALD

Oh, ya, Nicholas, you can help me a great deal.

NICK

Okay, great. Go ahead.

BRECHTWALD

But we will have to get to know each other first! Wayne, tell me, why is it you think you are so sad in life?

WAYNE

Why do you think you're so ugly in life?

NICK

Really man, is that just your go-to?

BRECHTWALD

Oh, you two have been very mean to me, I cannot say I am a fan. Perhaps I should not help you bring back Lily...

He starts to leave.

I said, perhaps I should not help you bring back your sweet Lily...

Inches closer to the door.

I'm just... just letting you know that I can totally bring back your dead friend, Nick, did you catch that?

NICK

Yeah, thanks.

BRECHTWALD

Well do you not believe me?

NICK

No, I don't fucking believe you. Fuck you!

BRECHTWALD

Suppose I turned your friend Wayne into ein *schweinigel*, ya? Would that prove to you my magical powers?

WAYNE

Let's just get out of here.

BRECHTWALD

Oh Wayne, you make ein gut point! You already are a sort of *schweinigel*!

WAYNE

Fine, asshole, go ahead and turn me into a sh... vine-in-gull, go for it.

BRECHTWALD

(making a conjuring motion)

Okay, Wayne, you have asked for it now! In ze name of the father, the son, und the holy ghost!

WAYNE doesn't flinch.

(now in a terrible Brooklyn accent)

Alright, Wayne, you got me, okay? I can't turn you into a fuckin' pig, and I'm not a fuckin' magic German wizard or some shit.

But I can bring back Lily.

WAYNE

This is emotional abuse.

BRECHTWALD

Oh, unlike stealing a locket from a desperate man who's lost the woman he loves?

WAYNE

What?

NICK

I'm not desperate!

WAYNE

No, I mean how did you know that?

BRECHTWALD

Wouldn't you like to know?

WAYNE

Yes. I would. Stop asking that.

BRECHTWALD

I have my ways.

Hey. Nick. Just listen to what I have to say, and I'll be on my way, okay?

NICK

Fine, man, I'll hear you out. What's your plan?

BRECHTWALD

Alright, alright, it's very simple. All I need for you to do, is you kill Wayne.

BRECHTWALD winks at the audience and gives a thumbs up.

NICK

Yeah, I'm not going to do that.

BRECHTWALD

Nick, I don't think you understand. I can bring back anyone you want. Everyone you want.

Oh and Wayne? That goes for you too, butthead. You want your daddy back? I'll fuckin' bring him back. But ya gotta kill Nick.

WAYNE

Yeah, I'm also not going to do that.

BRECHTWALD

You'se guys don't believe me, huh?

NICK

No, man, we do not.

BRECHTWALD

Well, why don't you meet the lovely lady? I'll be right back.

BRECHTWALD exits.

NICK

So like is there an insane asylum around here, or?

WAYNE

Dude, I kind of want to get out of here.

NICK

How does he know our names?

How did he know about my dad?
WAYNE

Maybe he was eavesdropping?
NICK

Oh, yeah, yeah that's probably it.
WAYNE

Well maybe//
NICK

BRECHTWALD returns. With "LILY" (a sock puppet). He speaks through the sock puppet as LILY.

(as LILY)
Hi, Nick... I'm really sorry I got you into this.
BRECHTWALD

Holy shit, Lily!
NICK

NICK looks at WAYNE. "Are you seeing this?"
WAYNE looks at NICK. "No, I'm not fucking seeing this."

Lily?
NICK

(as LILY)
It wasn't my idea, Nick, I promise.
BRECHTWALD

(believing it more)
Lily?
NICK

Yeah, Nick, it's her.
BRECHTWALD

So... are you...?
NICK

WAYNE

Alright, I think this has gone on long enough.

Listen, bitch, what you're doing is fucking sick. What, is this some fucked up prank show? Is that what this is? You and Nick both in on it?

BRECHTWALD

Hey man, I've gotta make a living somehow!

NICK

Wayne, she's right there. Lily, you're...

BRECHTWALD

(as LILY)

I'm here, Nick. I'm right here.

WAYNE

Yo, what the hell is happening? Nick, it's a sock puppet.

BRECHTWALD

People see what they wanna see, Wayne.

NICK rushes to embrace LILY.

BRECHTWALD removes the sock puppet.

BRECHTWALD

Hey, hey. Looking's for free. Touching's gonna cost you.

NICK

What are you?

BRECHTWALD

I'm whatever you want me to be, toots.

NICK

Are you God?

BRECHTWALD

Something like that, maybe.

NICK

Are you... the Devil?

BRECHTWALD

I'm somewhere in between.

...Zuul?
NICK

What did you spike his drink with?
WAYNE

Still don't believe me, huh?
BRECHTWALD

No, I don't.
WAYNE

Well, you're really not my target market.
BRECHTWALD

What do you think, Nick? Do we have a deal?
WAYNE flips off BRECHTWALD.

Jeez. Harsh.
How about you, Nick, we got something goin' on?
BRECHTWALD pulls a knife out and slides it over to NICK.

Hahaaa, I thought so.
NICK

I'm not going to kill Wayne.
BRECHTWALD

No?
Why not?
NICK

First off, I couldn't do it! He's too much bigger than me!
WAYNE

And I mean... also because I'm your best friend, right Nick?

NICK

Yes. Of course.

BRECHTWALD

Uh-oh, Wayne, that didn't sound all too convincin' to me. Maybe you'll take my offer instead, huh?

WAYNE

I'm not going to kill Nick to bring back Lily.

BRECHTWALD

Oh no, of course not. Not Lily. But... your father, maybe?

WAYNE

BRECHTWALD

Think about it.

NICK

Well.

I tried pinching myself.

Didn't work.

WAYNE

Nick, you don't think this guy is for real, do you?

NICK

No.

WAYNE

Good.

NICK

Do you?

WAYNE

Fuck no. What did you see when he told you Lily was in the room?

NICK

I saw her. I saw my soulmate.

WAYNE

Okay, well I saw a sweaty old sock.

NICK

Good.

WAYNE

You understand there's a logical explanation here.

NICK

Of course.

Alright, let's root through our options... Number one.

We're both crazy.

WAYNE

No, Nick, you are crazy.

NICK

But how would we both be crazy and have the exact same hallucination?

WAYNE

We didn't. It was a sock.

BRECHTWALD

If I might interject, Wayne, maybe you're the one seeing what he wants to see?

NICK

Alright, number two. I'm crazy.

WAYNE

Do crazy people hallucinate other crazy people who think they might be crazy? He drugged you!

NICK

Possibility... three? He's... real?

BRECHTWALD

Jesus, this is takin' forever. Why won't you'se two'se just stab each other already?

WAYNE

Fuck you.

BRECHTWALD

Oh, Wayne, I don't think -- *(pulling out another sock puppet, this one with a handlebar moustache)* your father! -- would be comfortable with that kind of language.

BRECHTWALD

(as WAYNE'S FATHER)

Hello, son! I love you! Bring me back from the dead by killing your friend!

BRECHTWALD

Well, Wayne? Don't you want your old man back?

NICK

Holy shit...

BRECHTWALD

(as WAYNE'S FATHER)

Please, Wayne! I regret my mistakes! I'm so sorry!

WAYNE

I'll give you credit, the googley eyes were a nice touch.

BRECHTWALD

(German)

Mein guten, you can see through my guise? *Scheisse!*

BRECHTWALD switches back to LILY.

BRECHTWALD

(as LILY)

Nick, help me! Help me!

NICK

Anything, Lily!

BRECHTWALD

Ohhh Nicky, I just want to hold you and kiss you and this time you're cool about wanting to have kids, right?

NICK

Yes, yes!

BRECHTWALD

(as LILY)

Please just kill Wayne!

NICK

WAYNE
You are looking at a sock!

NICK
I think we both know that's not true.

WAYNE
...What!?

NICK
You can admit it. You didn't mean it when you said you'd trade your life for hers.

WAYNE
I meant every word. I didn't say you could kill me because a Gilbert Gottfried impersonator told you to!

BRECHTWALD
(still in Brooklyn accent)
I sound nothing like him!

NICK
Let's all stop pretending. This is the real deal. You hear that, babe?

BRECHTWALD
(as LILY)
Ohhh, I love it when you call me that!

WAYNE
Goddamnit, Nick, you idiot!

NICK
I... I'm sorry, Wayne.

He inches towards the knife.

WAYNE
Nick, no.

NICK
I have to do this.

NICK dives for the knife and grabs it.

WAYNE

No, Nick, wait! My dad had a twin! That explains everything!

NICK

He did?

WAYNE

Yes, yes, my dad had a twin! That must be who he keeps bringing in here! I bet Lily had a twin, too!

NICK

No, she was an only child.

WAYNE

As far as you know. I bet she had a twin that she didn't even know about!

NICK

That would make sense.

WAYNE

Yeah, it does! It does make sense. So please, if you trust me, come with me out of this fucking nightmare room, and let's go get you checked out, alright?

NICK

Alright.

WAYNE brushes past BRECHTWALD.

WAYNE

'Scuse me.

WAYNE flings open the door. Except, no he doesn't -- it's locked.

NICK

Let me try.

NICK can't budge it either.

WAYNE

Let us the hell out of here.

BRECHTWALD

(Brooklyn)

But Wayne, how much fun would that be? Now we can play for as long as we like!

WAYNE screams, hoping someone outside will hear.

Hey, help! We're locked in here!

WAYNE

Help! Anyone!

NICK

Let us out!

WAYNE

Mein hands are tied, Wayne. There ist nothing I can do!

BRECHTWALD

Maybe he'll let us out... once...

NICK

Once what, Nick?

WAYNE

I don't know.

NICK

Once you kill me?

WAYNE

Yeah or maybe once you kill me!

NICK

Nick, I'm not going to kill you.

WAYNE

Well that's what I told you!

NICK

Nick, how would I kill you? You have the knife!

WAYNE

You could bash my head into the wall.

NICK

Nick, I'm not waging a war of hypotheticals with you.

WAYNE

NICK

No, you'll probably just stab me right away. No hypothetical involved.

WAYNE

Think! There has to be a way out of here.

NICK

You're right.

WAYNE

Here, I'll lift you up to that vent, and then maybe you can... I don't know, that could work, right?

NICK

Right, sure.

Or... I could lift you up.

WAYNE

Well no, that doesn't make any sense, I'm way bigger than you.

NICK

I've got strong bones.

WAYNE

I'm not going to hurt you.

NICK

WAYNE

Nick, we've been drugged, or something! There's a logical explanation for this! Nobody can revive the dead, that's the only universal truth! There is life, and then death immediately follows!

NICK

I'd just prefer life.

WAYNE

Nick, you have to trust me.

NICK

Get away from me!

NICK and WAYNE back into separate corners.

BRECHTWALD puts on his “God” sock puppet, complete with pope hat.

BRECHTWALD’s over-the-top impression of a spooky ghost echoes through the room.

BRECHTWALD

(as GOD)

Nick, it’s God...

You should totally kill your friend...

That shit would be pretty cool...

WAYNE

Nick.

I am your best. Friend.

This is fucking insane.

NICK

Wayne, I’m sorry.

NICK raises the knife and slowly approaches WAYNE.

WAYNE

Nick, no!

NICK raises his arm to strike, but WAYNE dodges out of the way.

In desperation, WAYNE rips off his shoes and socks to make a sock puppet. He mimics BRECHTWALD’s “LILY VOICE.”

WAYNE

(as LILY)

Nick, please don’t kill Wayne!

NICK drops the knife.

NICK

Lily! What happened to your face?

WAYNE

(as LILY)

Uh, yeah, I had a stroke while you and Wayne were fighting... listen, he's using you, Nick! He's manipulating you! I would never want you to kill your friend!

BRECHTWALD

(German)

Hmm, Wayne, you seem to have quite the intimate knowledge of Lily... tell me, what exactly was your relationship with her?

WAYNE

(as LILY)

What are you talking about?

NICK

You guys, I'm so confused, who am I supposed to stab?

WAYNE

(as LILY)

Jim Henson over there!

BRECHTWALD

(as LILY)

No no, Nick, stab Wayne! He fucked me!

NICK

What?

WAYNE

(dropping the facade)

What?

Nick... no, Nick, I...

NICK

What!?

WAYNE

I didn't mean to.

NICK

Answer me. Is this true?

BRECHTWALD

Wait, holy shit, that actually worked?

NICK

You fucked her? When? Was it when we were engaged?

WAYNE

No, Nick, I didn't sleep with her! By... common definitions. But there was one night...

Look, the details aren't important, alright? I would never do anything to hurt you. Put the knife down.

Meanwhile, BRECHTWALD takes out a marker and sock and begins drawing one of the audience members.

BRECHTWALD, now wearing the audience member puppet, begins talking directly to the Audience. He sits in the audience next to him/her.

BRECHTWALD

(Brooklyn)

This is gettin' pretty damn good!

NICK

What happened between you two?

WAYNE

Some things are better left unsaid, Nick.

NICK

What did you do? Tell me!

WAYNE

It's between me and her.

NICK

I'll kill you just for this. You had it out for me the whole time, you betrayed me!

WAYNE

What are you talking about?

BRECHTWALD

(as audience member)

Wow, people really see what they want to see, huh? Did you get that?

You guys get the message of the play? Did you... no?

Because... like, the puppet thing, and the... did you...

Alright, just... just keep watching. You'll get it.

NICK

You didn't even care that she died!

WAYNE

Nick, people grieve in different ways! Some of us shut down, and some of us go on murderous rampages! But most people choose the first one!

BRECHTWALD

(as audience member)

Boo! Choose the second one!

NICK

Aghhhh!

NICK tackles WAYNE. They struggle during the following.

BRECHTWALD engages with the audience member next to him (some improv skill needed here).

BRECHTWALD

So, what do you think Nick should do? Huh? The whole place is waiting to hear your answer! What should he do? What should he do?

(If they try to speak, interrupt them.)

Yeah, I don't really give a shit what you think, let's ask the playwright.

BRECHTWALD draws a RYAN DUNN sock Puppet. His voice sounds like a mix between Danny DeVito, Gilbert Gottfried, and the Candy King from Wreck-It Ralph. With a face to match.

BRECHTWALD

Mr. Dunn?

BRECHTWALD

(as RYAN DUNN/MORON VOICE)

Did you tell them that people see what they want to see?

BRECHTWALD

Yeah, I think they got that.

BRECHTWALD

(as RYAN DUNN)

Good because I'm really trying hard to get that across!

BRECHTWALD

(as AUDIENCE MEMBER)

What the hell is wrong with you?

WAYNE

Fine, Nick, I'll tell you! I'll tell you what happened!

NICK pauses long enough for WAYNE to grab the knife.

NICK

What happened?

WAYNE

Nothing, Nick! I respect you too goddamn much as a friend to say any more than that!

NICK

Liar!

WAYNE

Just because you think you love her doesn't mean you can hold onto her like a fucking pet! You have to let her go!

WAYNE throws the knife on the floor.

This isn't going to bring you peace, it's going to bring you more pain! It doesn't matter who you hurt!

NICK

Speak for yourself.

WAYNE

Nick.

I'm so sorry. I had no idea what she... alright, well no, I did know what she meant to you, but... at some point you've gotta realize you're living a lie! Now, definitely, but back then too, right? It was over. You were never getting back together.

BRECHTWALD groans.

He draws another sock puppet. This time it's WAYNE.

BRECHTWALD

(as WAYNE)

Funny, she was calling your name the whole time.

NICK

What did you just say to me?

WAYNE

What?

BRECHTWALD

(as WAYNE)

Nothing, just that the pictures are still on my phone!

BRECHTWALD

(as WAYNE's FATHER)

Nice one, son! Tap that ass!

NICK grabs the knife and raises his arm again, but WAYNE rips off his own pants and puts them on his head.

NICK

Wayne, where'd you go?

WAYNE

(as BRECHTWALD)

Wayne, who is Wayne? It is I... that German fuck!

BRECHTWALD

(Brooklyn)

Hey, what the hell, man, you can't do that!

WAYNE

(as BRECHTWALD)

I can do whatever I want, it's really not clear what the limits of my power are!

Listen, Nick. I can bring back Lily way easier than that imposter can. All you need to do is give me the knife.

NICK
How do I know which of you is the real genie?

BRECHTWALD
Jesus, you think I'm a genie?

WAYNE
(as BRECHTWALD)
You're goddamn right I'm a genie!

BRECHTWALD
Do I look like a fucking genie to you?

While BRECHTWALD is distracted, WAYNE lunges behind him, choking him with the locket chain. BRECHTWALD collapses, dead.

NICK

WAYNE

NICK

WAYNE

NICK

WAYNE
Jesus Christ, I need a drink.

NICK
(in a German accent)
Would you like un Schnapps, perhaps?

WAYNE freezes.

...What did you say, Nick?

NICK
(back to American)
Huh? Nothing. I said, "Let's go get a drink."

As NICK walks to the door, he pauses.

(German)

It really is a beautiful picture of you two, by the way.

The door is suddenly unlocked. NICK exits.

WAYNE slumps, clutching the locket. He checks "BRECHTWALD's" pulse -- but he's gone. He pulls a small key out of his pocket, undoes the locket, and stares at the faces contained within.

BLACKOUT.

END OF PLAY.