

Is a Pig's Ass Pork?  
a 10-minute play

by Joan O'Dwyer © 2021

Characters

Linda 309 - woman: any ethnicity, race or age

Val 347 - woman: any ethnicity, race, aged younger than Linda or Smetana

Smetana 205 - (see endnote) any ethnicity, race or age

*No Scottish or other accents. Actors could have a few tufts of fur sticking out, a random hoof or ear. Or not, Actors wear similar any-era costumes: e.g. flowing robes, togas, trousers.*

Time

Summer, 2254 A. D. (or 292 W. C.)

Place

Very simple set - inside and outside a small house or cave - near former Edinburgh, Scotland (now called Utopia)

*Lights up. LINDA 309 and VAL 347 talk outdoors. .*

VAL

What? What's wrong, Linda?

LINDA

I still don't get why we had to come here. Why didn't your council leader teach you the history of Utopia?

VAL

I told you. She wants us to learn ourselves. She says we'll remember better that way. What's the matter with you? Why are you so against this?

LINDA

I'm not really. I mean, yes, you have to learn our history. It's just that—

VAL

Holy Watson-Crick! What? What?!

LINDA

It's about Smetana 205. She—

VAL

Isn't she a good historian? If not, let's go to someone else and learn.

LINDA

No, no. She's probably the best historian we have. She's just such an odd one. Something very strange about her... I went to school with her, you know, and—

VAL

(looks up to sky)

Dear Watson-Crick, give me patience!

LINDA

All right! Don't say I didn't warn you.

(VAL gives her a look and knocks.)

*Indoors we see SMETANA 205 tidy up. A curtain/barrier is upstage with a picture of Watson and Crick pinned/tacked up. In front of the curtain is a table/box with an object on it covered with a cloth.*

SMETANA

Enter.

*LINDA 309 and VAL 347 enter.*

SMETANA

It is indeed an honor, Linda 309 and Val 347.

LINDA

Oh, you needn't be so formal, Smetana. Please call us by our clone names..

SMETANA

Clone names then, Linda and Val. Shall I begin?

LINDA

Please do, Smetana. As I told you, I brought Val because she doesn't have an overall view of our history.

(whisper)

Her council leader's...umm...progressive.

VAL

My council leader expects us to learn things ourselves, which I am doing.

SMETANA

The best way to learn, Val. It is my job to teach, to fill in gaps where necessary.

LINDA

Smetana is our chief archivist.

VAL

I hang from your every word, Smetana.

SMETANA

(chuckle)

Hang away then, Val. It is good to be appreciated. Utopia, the country we live in now, is where it all began in the 20th century, just before the time we began reckoning Year 1, W. C. or Watson-Crick from the year they won the Nobel Prize.

LINDA

Utopia. Doesn't it mean 'nowhere'?

SMETANA

Unfortunately true, Linda. It literally means 'not a place.' But just as your name means 'pretty' in Spanish and mine means 'sour cream' in Hungarian, names do not mean anything of themselves—

LINDA

Oh, I don't know.

SMETANA

In the last century cloning began.

*Both VAL and LINDA are rapt.*

SMETANA

It began naturally enough: plants and simple organisms. But then there were the experiments. DNA combined from two or more organisms. This supposedly to benefit mankind, especially the scientists, to make them rich and powerful. Not all experiments succeeded.

*At the word 'mankind' LINDA and VAL shudder.*

Corn seeds that contained their own pest control, tomatoes with halibut DNA that matured and went to market in half the time so they could be sold for food earlier, tomatoes with halibut DNA. But it didn't stay long at that level. Then on to pigs biologically altered with human growth hormone to increase their size, laboratory mice coded genetically with the AIDS virus. Certain people soon began cloning themselves – mostly wealthy men, who decades earlier might have had their bodies or heads preserved cryogenically upon death.

VAL

By Watson-Crick! Why didn't anyone stop this misuse of cloning?

SMETANA

Very few know knew of any animal cloning, much less human. In the 1980s chickens without heads, feathers and feet were routinely cloned and given nutrients, so they would lay eggs until their ovaries collapsed. But the only animal cloning incident the public knew about was Dolly the sheep. This place where you now stand is where Dolly was created.

*LINDA jumps back. VAL laughs.*

SMETANA

The public were never told about the hundreds of previous failures to clone a sheep, along with the deaths, deformities and pain involved to the unfortunate animals. Those in charge of genetic engineering wanted to gauge public reaction before revealing that human cloning had been going on for years. Public outrage to Dolly was so palpable that from then until the end of the century documents were hidden. But somehow in 1999 people found out that a scientist had begun cloning himself but had killed the tissue when it began replicating into a meaningful form.

VAL

Was he scared?

SMETANA

Not at all. The scientist had put out the information to promote himself, to make himself powerful through his knowledge. He had already cloned himself many times over.

LINDA

Was that Richard Seed?

SMETANA

Very good, Linda. There's hope for you as a scholar.

VAL

(laughs)

Dick Seed! I remember now. What a name!

SMETANA

Dick Seed once said – quote – “God made man in his own image. God intended man to become one with God. We are going to become one with God. We are going to have as almost as much knowledge and almost as much power as God. Cloning and the reprogramming of DNA is the first serious step in becoming one with God. Very simple philosophy.” End quote.

VAL

Very simple philosophy? Very dangerous one, I'd say.

LINDA

(to VAL)

He was attacked and killed by a mob at a subway station only days later.

SMETANA

True enough.

VAL

No wonder.

LINDA

He was cremated to assure none of his genes could be used again.

SMETANA

Linda, again I'm impressed. But after that the church entered the picture, albeit still in secret. Who else to be replicated than the most godlike of the godly? With plenty of tax-free money at their disposal, soon all higher level churchmen had cloned themselves. Heads of state and corporations got wind of it, and demanded the same privileges.

LINDA

Making wealthy men, heads of state and heads of religion the main clones?

SMETANA

Making these men the only clones. What need is there of women in such a utopian paradise?

VAL

That's outrageous.

LINDA

Of course it is! That kind of thinking would be heretical now.

SMETANA

That's when the women discovered the secret documents. They carried out mass killings and burnings. For generations men had killed in war. Now war was necessary for women's mere survival. It was almost unconscionable what our ancestors did, and some women couldn't bring themselves to do it, but most did. They, one by one and in various ways, killed off all the men. They then burned them, of course. Our Utopia was born in the age post Watson-Crick, with only women remaining.

LINDA

May women rule forever!

VAL

Praise Watson-Crick!

SMETANA

All the paintings, all the books: everything man-made or made about man, all gone. The only thing that remains is this.

*SMETANA lifts cloth from object on table, revealing a replica of Michelangelo's 'David'*

VAL

By Watson-Crick, that's ugly!

LINDA

Hideous, just hideous. I can't look at it any more. Let's go.

VAL

Just a minute, Linda.

(to SMETANA)

Why keep this vile statue? Why keep this place at all? Why not simply blast it away? Burn it as we did the men?

SMETANA

How bloodthirsty, Val! Our council leaders believe that keeping this reminder of our history before us – by having an historian like me as its curator – we may not be inclined to repeat our mistakes. I did say before that words have no meaning in themselves. But as a reminder of our past, words – and an image such as this – can serve us well.

VAL

What is behind that curtain?

SMETANA

Only my humble quarters. And I intend to have a restful nap as soon as you both leave. Not that it hasn't been pleasant having you here.

LINDA

Don't let us stop you. You're a strange one, Smetana, always have been.

VAL

A good teacher, though.

SMETANA

Thank you, Val. Happy to serve.

*LINDA and VAL exit. After a beat, SMETANA sweeps back the curtain/barrier. Hung upstage is a picture of Richard Seed. In front of it is another table/box with jars with strange things floating in them. SMETANA removes one garment after another until naked...or until we can see he's a man. He picks up a jar and looks at it, striking a pose exactly like the 'David.'*

SMETANA

"The only thing that remains is this." How can I keep repeating that straight-faced? Why do we keep these vile reminders of the past, Val? Because we think war is only good when we do it. Cloning is only good when it's our choice. You can't keep a good man down. Didn't a man say that? We shall rise again. Didn't a man say that? Sour cream am I? Even sour cream will rise, too, to become one with God. And didn't I just say that? Very simple philosophy.

*SMETANA laughs - happily or fiendishly - holding jar aloft.*

**THE END...or is it?**

[Endnote: Smetana is to be played by a male actor.]