

LEAR / LOMAN

A One-Act Play

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Cast of Characters

WILLY LOMAN: An aging and troubled salesman who kills himself so his family can have his insurance money. After his suicide, he finds himself in Purgatory.

KING LEAR: The old and mad King of England whose tragic downfall is his arrogant and boastful nature. He dies of grief after the death of his beloved daughter, Cordelia. He and Willy Loman are housemates in Purgatory.

LINDA LOMAN (played by the same actress who plays CORDELIA): Willy Loman's devoted wife. She protects her unstable husband at all costs and dangerously encourages his delusions. She feels extreme guilt over his suicide. (*LINDA LOMAN doubles as GLOUCESTER in two scenes)

BIFF LOMAN/BEN LOMAN: The eldest and "favorite" son of the Loman family. Popular, attractive, and athletic, Willy projects his lofty career aspirations onto Biff. As a result, father and son have a tumultuous relationship. Ben is William's successful brother.

HAPPY LOMAN: The younger son of the Loman family. He is a womanizer who highly exaggerates his career status.

CORDELIA (played by the same actress who plays LINDA LOMAN): Lear's youngest daughter who was cruelly banished by her father without a dowry; She dies when Britain overtakes France. She appears in Lear's frequent delusions in Purgatory.

GONERIL: Lear's vicious eldest daughter; She plots against her father and poisons her sister, Regan. She commits suicide. She appears in Lear's delusions in Purgatory.

REGAN: Lear's middle daughter; she plots against her father and is poisoned by her sister, Goneril. She appears in Lear's delusions in Purgatory.

OTHER CHARACTERS in PURGATORY:

MARTHA (*Whose Afraid of Virginia Woolf*)

BLANCHE DUBOIS (*A Streetcar Named Desire*)

THE WOMAN FROM BOSTON (*Death of a Salesman*)

The Doctor (*King Lear*)

*They are all off-stage characters and can be played by the same actors playing Biff, Regan, and Goneril

SETTING: Purgatory. This is a long one-act with no black outs or scene changes. It is a continuous.

SYNOPSIS: Willy Loman, an aging and troubled salesman from Brooklyn, finally decides to take his own life by driving his vehicle “at a dangerously rapid pace.” While King Lear rants and raves at another terrible storm, Willy Loman’s car slams into a tree by King Lear’s tattered home in Purgatory. The salesman and King become housemates and fast friends. Together, they examine the harsh realities of their lives in this strange dwelling between Heaven and Hell. Lear has frequent and upsetting delusions of his Earthly life, while Loman watches the serious damage he caused his family in life, and after his death. When Willy witnesses the dangerous and catastrophic choices Linda and Happy are about to make, he and Lear desperately try to intervene from Purgatory.

Middle of the night in PURGATORY. There is a severe thunderstorm with strong wind, rain, thunder, and lightening. An old man, LEAR, goes to his front porch. His home was once large and beautiful, but now it's tattered and falling apart. LEAR is dressed in thin pajamas. HE paces his porch and rages at the storm.

LEAR

Blow, wind, and crack your cheeks! Rage, blow! Where is my Fool? What became of my Fool?

Clap of thunder

Sing my white head. And thou, all-shaking thunder, strike flat the thick rotundity of the world!

MARTHA (a neighbor)

(A little hammered) Shut up, you SOB. I am sick and tired of your ranting and raving every times there's a goddamn thunderstorm!

LEAR

Have another drink, Martha!

MARTHA

Don't tell me what to do, you mad old King! Don't you dare tell me what to do!

LEAR

"The sprout"... "the little bugger"... He doesn't exist. HE DOESN'T EXIST! You and George do NOT HAVE A SON!

Sound of a wine bottle being thrown against the wall

LEAR

(Singing to the tune of Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf) "Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf? Virginia Woolf? Virginia Woolf Tra – la- la – la – laaaaa!"

Suddenly, there is a sound of a car moving at a dangerously rapid pace. The car hits a tree by LEAR'S home.

Who's there?

Clap of thunder

Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! Spout, rain!

WILLY LOMAN exits the car. Confused and bewildered, HE slowly pats HIS body to see if HE is alive or dead. HE is in his rumpled "Salesman" garb. HE seeks shelter from the storm under the tree.

LOMAN

Where is all this goddamn yelling coming from? Who are these cracked people?!

MARTHA

I see we have a newbie.

BLANCHE DUBOIS

A newbie? Is he handsome? I have always relied on the kindness of strangers.

LOMAN

Who the Hell are these lunatics? Where am I?

LEAR

My Fool! Have you come back to me? (*squints HIS eyes*) You're not my Fool, are you?

LOMAN

(*Brooklyn accent*) Am I your Fool? What are you talking about? Who are you? Where the Hell am I?

LEAR

(*Delusion*) Do not deceive me. Do not act innocently. It's you. My daughter. Goneril.

LOMAN

Who the Hell is Goneril, Old man? I can assure you I am not your daughter. My name is Willy Loman. Am I dead? Am I dead, Old man?

LEAR

(*still convinced LOMAN is GONERIL*) Thou art a boil! A plague sore!

LOMAN

A boil? A plague sore? What on God's green Earth are you raging about?

LEAR

(*Looks upwards to the gods to begin his curse on GONERIL*) Into her womb convey sterility!

LOMAN

Are you daft, Old man? I can assure you I do not have a womb ...

LEAR

(*points to LOMAN*) Shut up! Dry up in her the organs of increase, and /

LOMAN

Who are you referring to? Certainly not me. I am a *man*. I do not have a *womb*. As I told you before, my name is Willy Loman. Where am I? What is this place? Are we dead?

LEAR

(Motions for LOMAN to come to HIS porch. Another delusion begins, as HE thinks LOMAN is GONERIL) But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter. *(clumsily tries to embrace GONERIL)*

LOMAN

No, no, no, no. Like I said, I am not your daughter. I am Willy Loman - a celebrated salesman from Brooklyn.

LEAR

Brooklyn?

LOMAN

You never heard of Brooklyn? It is in the state of New York. *(LEAR indicates HE knows nothing of New York)* Near New York City? *(LEAR indicates he has no clue)* In the country of America? *(LEAR shrugs his shoulders)* You never heard of America? You can be anything in America! I travelled all the way from NYC to New England as a salesman. What was your line of work?

LEAR

I was once King of England until /

LOMAN

Wow! A King! What do ya know. I thought you were some lunatic old man.

LEAR

Oh, I am mad. I know I have a tempest in my mind.

LOMAN

I'm no dummy, but you have to stop talking all-fancy. What in the Hell is a tempest?

LEAR

(Sighs) A storm, your simpleton. A tempest is a storm.

LOMAN

Hey, hey. Easy there, King. I may not be as intelligent or fancy-pants as you, but I am popular and well liked. That's got to count for something.

LEAR

Humph.

LOMAN

Don't be a curmudgeon. People like me. Let's be friends. Let's start over. What is your name?

LEAR

King Lear.

LOMAN

I am in the presence of royalty! You can call Willy Loman - the Prince of Brooklyn.

LEAR

(Wrinkles HIS nose in disgust) What kind of name is Willy?

LOMAN

It's short for William.

LEAR

I will call you William. It's more distinguished.

LOMAN

Fine. Whatever you prefer. I am not interested in formalities. Are you dead, too?

LEAR

I am dead. You are dead. We are dead. Am I speaking plainly enough for you?

LOMAN

Yes, you are. Thank you Lear. *(pause)* So, I did it! It finally worked! Unlike me, Biff and Happy will follow in the footsteps of their old pop and succeed!

LEAR

Shakes HIS head

LOMAN

My suicide attempt finally worked. Oh, man. My funeral will be massive! They will be lined up to pay their final respects to Mr. Willy Loman. And my family! Can you imagine the relief they will feel with twenty grand in their pockets!

LEAR

(Delirium triggered by talk of money) Let it be so! The truth then be thy dower!

LOMAN

Old Man, Lear. You are talking cuckoo again ...

LEAR

My Cordelia. My dear, precious daughter. I banished her without a dowry.

LOMAN

You have two daughters. I have two sons, Biff and Happy.

LEAR

Actually, I had three daughters.

LOMAN

I see.

LEAR

But, I only ever loved Cordelia. After all the pain and sorrow I caused Cordelia, she had her doctors tend to me so I could rest and recover. I died of grief – overwhelming, all-consuming grief.

LOMAN

You know, you shouldn't play favorites with your kids. It sounds like you have regrets.

LEAR

Deep regrets, William. (*delirium*) No, no, no, life! Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life and thou no breath at all?

LOMAN

Oh, Old Man Lear. Conflicted King Lear. I don't know where in the Hell we are or why exactly we are together. But, we will figure this out. (*Pause*) Biff. My son. He broke down and sobbed a few hours before I decided once and for all to take my own life. He cried like a baby. It shocked me. We had a troubled relationship. But, maybe he always loved me. Isn't that incredible? \$20,000. Isn't that a spectacular thing? He will adore his dear old dad for this.

LEAR

William. Take it from me. I am older and wiser ...

LOMAN

Hey ... Biff will *worship* me ...

LEAR

Listen to me, William. It sounds like you have learned nothing from your Earthly journey. I learned everything while still barely on Earth. But, it was too late.

LOMAN

I have no regrets. People liked me! People respected me! I was the best damn salesman in all of New York and New England. I had to die ... had to ... I wanted my wife and kids to have my insurance money ... I had no choice but to take my own life.

LEAR

Come inside. You can stay with me. You have so much to learn.

LOMAN

Willy Loman has *nothing* to learn. I planted a goddamn beautiful garden before my suicide. I left my family with a thing of beauty ...

LEAR

You wouldn't be here unless you had a vital lesson you need to learn ...

LOMAN

What are you talking about?!

LEAR

We are not in Hell. We are not in Heaven. We are in Limbo. Purgatory, to be exact.

LOMAN

Isn't Limbo a type of *dance*? Where's the stick?

LEAR

I will soon beat you with a stick! It's a place, or rather a state of mind. It's somewhere *between* Heaven and Hell. It represents a sort of dwelling where our Earthly lives are simply accepted for what they were. It's where we get the chance to examine the harsh realities of our lives.

LOMAN

I do not need to examine anything! I was a loving father and husband. I was a hard-working salesman. I left my family with twenty grand and a garden.

A female voice is heard in the distance. Lights on LINDA LOMAN who is home from WILLY's funeral.

LEAR

Do you hear that?

LOMAN

Hear what?

LEAR

Shhh... It's a woman's voice.

LOMAN

It's Linda. It's my wife, Linda.

LEAR

Listen to her. Listen to what she has to say.

LOMAN

Shhh...

LINDA LOMAN

Why didn't anybody come? (*pause*)

LOMAN

Oh, my God. Oh, Christ. Nobody came to my funeral. Nobody paid their final respects to Willy Loman. Oh, my God. Oh, Linda. Honey.

LINDA LOMAN

Forgive me, Willy. I try to cry, but I can't seem to shed a tear for you.

LOMAN

What does she mean she can't cry? She was my *wife*. Look! She's in the garden I planted.

Lights fade on LINDA LOMAN

LEAR

Come in, William. Like I said, it's the place we get to examine the harsh realities of our lives.

LOMAN

(*Looking around the place*) No one came to my funeral. Can you believe it? A man works his tail off day in and day out ... I man tries to instill the beauty of the American Dream to his sons ... Get me right, I made my share of mistakes ... but, I loved my wife.

THE WOMAN from BOSTON laughs

Stop laughing! Stop that! (*to LEAR*) I travelled to Boston for business all the time, Lear. A man gets lonely. But, I swear, she meant nothing to me.

More laughter

(*to woman*) Will you knock it off? (*to LEAR*) Like I said, I made my share of mistakes, but people shoulda paid their final respects to Willy Loman.

LEAR

Can I offer you some tea, William? I am trying to make a good host.

LOMAN

Ah, maybe some peppermint tea? I'm low-maintenance. Don't worry about being a good host to me.

LEAR

(Brings HIM a cup of tea) I do worry. I frightened everyone else away.

LOMAN

Everyone else?

LEAR

Other Purgatorians.

LOMAN

Huh?

LEAR

Other people in Limbo. They could not handle my temper and my delusions.

LOMAN

I'm tough. I can handle it. You're not so bad, Old Man.

LEAR

(Delirium) Hence and avoid my sight!

LOMAN

Oh, no. Hear ya go again.

LEAR

(Delirium) I loved her most and set my rest on her kind nursery *(cries)*

LOMAN

You're talking about Cordelia again, aren't ya?

LEAR nods.

Let it out, Old Man Lear. The sadness will pass.

LEAR nods.

So, can you distract yourself with something else, perhaps? Wanna play cards?

LEAR shakes HIS head "no."

Um, wanna play a game?

LEAR shakes HIS head "no."

What brings you joy? Do you have any hobbies or interests?

LEAR

(Brightens) Iambic Pentameter!

LOMAN

Now, what on Earth is that?

LEAR

(Suddenly energized) An iamb is a metric foot of one unaccented syllable followed by one accented syllable.

LOMAN

Metric foot? *(stretches his leg and examines HIS foot)*

LEAR

No, no, no! Not *that* kind of foot.

LOMAN

Lear, I'm a literal guy.

LEAR

Let's continue. Pentameter is a line or verse containing five metrical feet.

LOMAN

I know you are old and delirious, but we only have two feet.

LEAR

And they call me daft.

LOMAN

Hey, don't insult me. Gimme an example.

LEAR

The rhythm of Iambic Pentameter is like a heart beat. That's why it soothes me. Listen. But SOFT/what LIGHT/through/YON-/der WIN-/dow BREAKS.

LOMAN

I'm still not sure I understand.

LEAR

There is nothing to understand. Just listen.
Good PIL-grim YOU/do WRONG/ your HAND/ too MUCH.

LOMAN

I'm beginning to hear it. A heart beat. Yeah.

LEAR

Now, let's take it a step further. Occasionally, this type of poetry will compress more syllables into one line. Often, as is the case with me, this is to show urgency.
Determination.

LOMAN

Oh. Urgency. I get that. (*angrily*) I HATE/ you PEO-/ple WHO/ did NOT/ come TO/ my FUN-er-AL!!! Something like that?

LEAR

I PRAY/thee STAY/with US/ go NOT to WIT-/ten BERG!

LOMAN

Alright. I'm starting to get the gist of this. Now, explain the feet part again.

LEAR

First, as I mentioned, there is an iamb, which is unstressed, stressed. BeHOLD. aMUSE.
aRISE.

LOMAN

Of MICE and MEN the SOUTH will RISE aGAIN!

LEAR

Whatever that means, but yes! Now, a trochee is stressed/unstressed. CLEver, DINner, INjur, ROses.

LOMAN

HAMmer?

LEAR

Yes!

LOMAN

BOSTon?

LEAR

Yes!

GARden? LOMAN

Yes! Yes! Yes! You've got it! LEAR

(*sadly*) HAPpy? LOMAN

Right! LEAR

Happy was my son. LOMAN

HAPPY and BIFF appear onstage. THEY are in their old bedroom that THEY used to share.

LOMAN
Lear! I see my sons! Happy and Biff! I see them clear as day. Are they able to look at me, too?

LEAR
Probably not, William. But, yes, you can see them vividly. Remember, Purgatory is a place where you confront the cold, hard, truths about your Earthly life.

LOMAN
I...I...am not sure I want hear what they have to say. I don't think I am ready, Lear. I just died. I need a break, Old Man.

LEAR
Take a deep breath, watch your sons, and learn. (*Sits on HIS recliner and pulls it out. HE shuts HIS eyes*)

LOMAN
No, no! Stay with me, Lear. (*sees LEAR has fallen asleep*) Okay. Deep breath...watch...and learn.

HAPPY
We made a lotta dreams and plans in our old room.

BIFF
But, whose plans and dreams were they?

HAPPY

What are you talking about?

BIFF

C'mon. You know as well as I do that pop can't make it as a big business executive so he wants us to live his dream.

LOMAN

Watch it, pal.

HAPPY

You honestly think that?

BIFF

Absolutely. And I *have* to work up the nerve to tell pop once and for all.

LOMAN

Oh, you found the nerve. Believe me, you found the goddamn nerve.

BIFF

All I ever wanted to be was outdoors. I wanted to experience something vast and beautiful. I never wanted to compete and work my way up the never-ending corporate ladder. I never wanted to get ahead of another guy ...

HAPPY

But, you opted to go out West. Just liked you dream. You work on a ranch, pal.

BIFF

I love it out there. I love the skies, trees, fresh air, I can breathe there, Happy. I can't breathe here. Everything is just so stifling ...

LOMAN

You couldn't breathe in the city? Why didn't you tell me?

HAPPY

Then why aren't you at your ranch right now?

BIFF

Mom told me pop isn't doing so well. She says he seems lost and he's acting strangely ...

HAPPY

She told me, too. She says she's heard him talking to himself ...

LOMAN

Oh, Linda ...

HAPPY

I'm kind of worried about him. Are you?

BIFF

Sure, I'm worried.

LOMAN

I never knew Linda was so perceptive.

HAPPY

Can I let you in on a secret? I sometimes feel like I'm trifling my life away. I mean, I live in the big city. I have my own place. I can get any girl I want ...

LOMAN

Kind of like his dear old dad.

WOMAN from BOSTON laughs

Go away! GO AWAY! Why do insist on following me wherever I go?

WOMAN FROM BOSTON

(Off-stage, and then a knock on door) Aren't you going to answer that?

LOMAN

Shhhh..... Will you keep it down?

WOMAN FROM BOSTON

Get us some drinks honey, then I am all yours. *(a knock)* Tell whoever is knocking on the door to go. It's getting on my nerves.

LOMAN

(looking out door) Oh, my God! It's my son, Biff. He's coming from his football championship. *(to woman)* Be quiet and hide!

LEAR

(Waking up, groggily) What are you saying, William?

LOMAN

Sorry Old man. Go back to sleep.

LEAR drifts off again.

HAPPY

I feel as though I am leading an empty life. I have a steady job. But, I am just waiting...*waiting*...for my boss to just, you know, kick the bucket. Just *waiting*. Then, I can be the new big wig. He built mansion in Long Island, and then sold it. Then I think, "He *sold* it." What kind of life is that? What am I workin' so hard for?

LOMAN

(*Sadly*) He's lonely.

HAPPY

I'm lonely, Biff. (*Jumps out of bed*) HEY! I have an idea!

BIFF

What?

LOMAN

What kind of idea?

HAPPY

If I don't become a business hot shot, we'll buy a great, big ranch. We'll call ourselves the Loman Brothers. We will be known everywhere.

BIFF

Are you sure? We would need serious money to buy a ranch of our own.

HAPPY

Remember Bill Oliver?

BIFF

Don't remind me ...

LOMAN

Yeah, *that* didn't work out ...

HAPPY

Let *me* interview with him.

BIFF

But, I was the one who was once a shipping clerk for him. He may not even know who you are.

HAPPY

I'll tell him I am Happy Loman. I am no slouch. I have confidence. I have every right to be praised and admired. Maybe your interview didn't exactly pan out, but I bet mine will. Maybe I could get \$10,000 for him. Then, we can purchase our own ranch.

LOMAN

My boys wanted their own *ranch*?

BIFF

But, we may run into one teeny tiny problem ...

HAPPY

What?

BIFF

I was angry when he blew me off. We're talkin' *enraged*. So I...I ...

HAPPY

Spill it!

BIFF

I stole his golden pen.

HAPPY

You did? That's kinda funny.

LOMAN

There is nothing funny about that!

HAPPY

Well, that gives me one more reason to see him. I'll return his pen.

BIFF

(Laughing) It's worth a shot.

HAPPY

The Loman Brothers. I can see it now!

LOMAN

He took his pen. The nerve of that kid!

BIFF and HAPPY exit the stage.

LEAR

(Awakens) You just won't let King Lear sleep, will you, William?

LOMAN

All these years I thought my boys *wanted* to follow in the footsteps of their old man. Turns out, I was wrong. I feel as though I've been duped.

LEAR

You need to see things clearly. No one said Purgatory was easy.

LOMAN

Why can I see them, but they can't see me?

LEAR

In Purgatory, the past and present are blurred. Everything is happening all at once.

LOMAN

Huh.

LEAR

Everything happens at once. You'll get used to it.

LOMAN

I will never get used to it.

LEAR

Let me guess. You're a man "more sinned against than sinning?"

LOMAN

Whatever that means. So, what's *your* story?

LEAR

I'll tell you. (*LEAR sits on recliner, LOMAN is on the sofa*)
My daughters, Goneril and Regan, had the same mother. Unfortunately, she never had time for them. Or, me for that matter. She was much more interested in herself.

LOMAN

It must have been exciting to be a Queen. Positively thrilling.

LEAR

It's all surface. It's all appearance. My two daughters were horribly unhappy and lonely. What did I know about raising girls? Nothing. I have a confession to make. I wanted my eldest to be a boy. But, that did not happen, and I harbored all kinds of anger and resentment.

LOMAN

Who raised your girls?

LEAR

Regan and Goneril were raised by various maids...nurses ... they grew to hate us. They grew to resent us. But, what could I do? I had a Kingdom to run. (*delusion*)

GONERIL and REGAN enter. LEAR and LOMAN see THEM.

Tell me, my daughters, which of you shall we say doth love us most? Goneril, our eldest born, speak first.

GONERIL

(*Takes a few steps forward towards either the audience or LEAR*) Sir, I love you more than words can wield the matter, *dearer* than eyesight, space and liberty. (*SHE walks back, then gives her sister a cutting glance*)

LOMAN

You made them choose? You actually made them choose? How arrogant can you get?

LEAR

You are just as arrogant as me!

LOMAN

Take that back. Take that back this instant.

LEAR

(*catches himself*) I apologize, William. There is no judgment in Purgatory. (*pause*) Well, maybe there is. No. I made a new decree – there is absolutely *no* judgment in Purgatory.

LOMAN

Whatever you say, Old man. Now, what happened next?

REGAN

(*Gives GONERIL a dirty look, then walks towards the audience or LEAR*) In my true heart I find that she names my very deed of love; only *she* comes *short*. (*GONERIL rolls HER eyes*) I am *alone* felicitate in your dear Highness' love.

GONERIL and REGAN exit, pushing each other as they walk.

LEAR

I am so weary. Can you sing me a song, William?

LOMAN

Like a lullaby?

LEAR

My Fool used to sing to me. Can you sing to me like my Fool once did?

LOMAN

Willy Loman does not sing, I'm afraid.

LEAR

Fine. I can remember the lyrics. You sleep on the couch, and I will sleep on the recliner.

THEY both retreat to the couch and recliner

LEAR

(Sings the song HIS Fool once sang to him)

*“He that has and a little tiny wit,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
Must make content with his fortunes fit,
Though the rain it raineth every day.”*

LEAR and LOMAN are asleep.

LEAR is fast asleep on his recliner. LOMAN, however, begins tossing and turning. HE is quite agitated.

LOMAN

(LOMAN is having a nightmare) Shut up, Biff. You shut your trap right now.

BIFF

(Walks onstage. HE is part of LOMAN'S nightmare) I am leaving for good, pop. And, I am never coming back.

LOMAN

Fine. Don't come back. I don't care if I ever see your loser face again.

BIFF

Loser! Ha! *(pause)* It doesn't matter. You never saw the *real* me, anyway. It's high time you heard the *truth*. You need to know exactly who *you* are and exactly who *I* am.

LOMAN

I know who I am, you punk.

BIFF

We *never* told the truth in this household, and you know it. You damn well know it. (*gets in HIS face*) And you will never call me a loser or a punk again!

LOMAN

Get outta here!

BIFF

I couldn't get anywhere in life because you misdirected your high hopes and dreams onto me.

LOMAN

That's not true. Take it back.

LEAR

(*Singing The Fool's song for comfort*) *He that has and a little tiny wit ...*

BIFF

I will *never* take it back!

LEAR

...With hey, ho, the wind and the rain ...

BIFF

Let's lay it on the line. Are you ready *once and for all* to lay it on the line?

LOMAN

What are you talkin' about? "Lay it on the line?" What gives you the right to talk so tough?

BIFF

Before I leave, we are going to tell it like it us.

Takes out a rubber tube out of HIS pocket and places it on the table.

LOMAN

(*Shocked and ashamed*) What is that?

BIFF

Don't give me that bullshit. You know *exactly* what this is.

LOMAN

(*turns away from rubber tube*) I have no idea what you are talkin' about.

BIFF

This, pop, is a rubber pipe attached to the fuse box. Mom told me you “were dying.” Those were her exact words. She informed me you wanted to end your life.

LOMAN

It’s not true. Your mother is lying! Why would she say something like that?

BIFF

Because it’s true.

LOMAN

Your mother is outta her mind. It’s an outright lie.

BIFF

I’m here to tell you that I don’t feel sorry for you.

LOMAN

What?

BIFF

I have zero pity for you.

LOMAN

Who said I wanted your pity, son?

BIFF

Suicide is a coward’s way out. It’s a damn luxury.

LOMAN

Now, why the Hell is it a luxury?

BIFF

You need to stay right here and face who you are.

LOMAN

I don’t take orders from you. You’re my son.

BIFF

(Grabs the pipe) No escape.

LOMAN

Give it back now!

BIFF

I thought you had “no idea” what I was talkin’ about?

LOMAN

I am your father. You are my son. You do what you are told!

BIFF

Oh, I've heard that line before. Same thing you said to me when you were trying to shoo me away from your mistress.

LOMAN

Shhhhhh! We don't talk about that. You were a senior in high school, Biff. It was ages ago.

BIFF

Oh, but I remember it so vividly. I came to surprise you in Boston after my football championship game, and I heard her laughing from the hotel bathroom. You were fixing cocktails.

LOMAN

We don't talk about this. This was supposed to be our secret.

BIFF

Well, unlike you, I don't keep secrets.

LOMAN

You came to me wanting help. You flunked your math exam and couldn't graduate. You begged me to talk to your teacher. I was ready to leave for home that night. I was willing to do you a favor.

BIFF

I don't need favors from any phonies.

LOMAN

Watch your mouth, son. Why I have a notion to –

BIFF

Hit me? Go right ahead. Hit me, pop!

LOMAN

I'll spare you this one time, but the next time you call me names, I swear to GOD ...

BIFF

I was crying. I couldn't move. She came out of the bathroom with a negligee.

LOMAN

It's in the past –

BIFF

And you demanded I go downstairs to check out while you packed.

LOMAN

I never saw her after that –

BIFF

I was sobbing. I was a kid. How dare you do that to a *kid*? And, then you ordered me downstairs. I was crying and you were yelling, “Do as I say. Do what your father tells you to do!”

LOMAN

I was your father. I still am your father.

BFF

You are nothing but a walking, talking fraud. You and your false dreams broke you. I am an adult now, and they will *not* break me. I’ll be damned if I allow that to happen.

LEAR

(Starting to awaken somewhat) “He that has and a little tiny wit ... Must make content with his fortunes fit ...”

BIFF

I’m leaving! *(Exits the stage)*

LOMAN

He said he had zero pity for me. He called suicide a “coward’s way out.”

LEAR

(Begins to awaken) “...Though the rain it raineth every day.”

LOMAN

Lear? Lear? Are you awake?

LEAR

(groggily) I see the nightmares have started. Nightmares are commonplace your first night in Purgatory.

LOMAN

Biff! My son. He was crying, yelling ... he was *sobbing* ...

LEAR

Your first epiphany?

LOMAN

Biff Loman loved his dad. He loved me, Lear. Those were real tears. I think so anyway.. But, he didn't think I was special. I think he saw me as just a regular old guy.

LEAR

Biff told you that?

LOMAN

Yes. That's exactly what he said.

LEAR

Then, Biff told you exactly what you needed to hear.

LOMAN

But, isn't that a terrible thing for a son to say to his father? And, I don't think he cared whether I lived or died.

LEAR

Of course he did. Biff probably told you the truth not because he dislikes you, but because he loved you deeply.

LOMAN

I don't know about that.

BIFF enters, emotionally destroyed, and walks to the garden.

Ah, Biff. There he is in the garden. *(takes a closer look at HIM)*. He doesn't look well, Old Man. The SOB is crying. *(Still distraught from nightmare)* Let him cry. *(yelling at BIFF)* You said you didn't feel sorry for me. I'm dead and gone, son. Do you feel sorry now?

LEAR

The boy is clearly upset. Show a little humanity.

LOMAN

Zero pity, huh?! You said you had zero pity for me.

LEAR

But, why should your son pity you?

LOMAN

You said suicide was a "coward's way out." You called suicide a "damn luxury." So, your old man is a coward, huh?

BIFF

Pop. I have no idea if you can hear me or see me. But, I am sorry. I feel so goddamn guilty. I should never have said those things. I didn't think you'd do it. I didn't think you'd actually *do* it.

LOMAN

Well, you were wrong, son. I did it. (*beginning to waver*) I wanted you and the family to have my insurance money. (*breaking down*) I was a goddamn Saint.

LEAR

Go easy on the kid, William. He's hurting.

LOMAN

Well, I'm hurting, too, Old Man. Willy Loman, the celebrated salesman of New York, is hurting, too.

BIFF

Everything just got so screwed up, pop. I did not want to live your life. I only wanted to live *my* life. But, you wouldn't let me.

LOMAN

Ah, pal. Ah, Christ. Maybe I did screw up...

BIFF

And I hated what you did to mom. *Hated* it. You cheated on her with that woman from Boston. Mom never deserved that.

LOMAN

You were only a kid when you caught us. Christ, pal, I never wanted you to find out.

BIFF

But, I did love you. Through all that bullshit, I did love you. I want you to know that, pop.

LOMAN

I put you through Hell, didn't I?

BIFF

I don't know whether I am talking to God. Or, if I'm talking to you. I don't know if this is a type of prayer, or just a son trying to reach his father. But, I am sorry. I never wanted you to die. I loved you, and I still love you. (*buries HIS head in HIS hands for a moment, then exits.*)

LOMAN

Old Man, I screwed up.

LEAR

You're starting to acknowledge that. That's good. That's progress.

LOMAN

But, I *really* screwed up. Big time. Is he going to be okay? (*close to tears*) Is he going to be okay, Lear?

LEAR

In time, he will be just fine.

LOMAN

I feel so badly.

LEAR

Take a deep breath, and when you're ready I need to know the whole story. I want to hear all about your wife.

LOMAN

Linda.

LEAR

Yes. Linda. (*unfortunately, this starts to trigger another delusion as LOMAN talks*) How would you describe Linda? What was your relationship like?

CORDELIA enters the stage. LEAR sees her and is taken right back to THEIR reunion.

LOMAN

Linda was very pretty ... plain, but feminine in her way ...

CORDELIA

How is the King?

DOCTOR (offstage)

Madam, he sleeps still.

LOMAN

She was a consummate wife and mother.

CORDELIA

(*Looks upwards towards the gods*) O, you kind gods. Cure this great breach of his abused nature!

LOMAN

She was caring. She would have gone to Heaven and back for her family.

DOCTOR (offstage)

Please. You draw near.

CORDELIA

(Approaches father) O, my dear father, restoration hang thy medicine in thy lips, and let this kiss repair those violent harms that my sisters in reverence made.

LOMAN

She was steadfast and loyal, even when I wasn't.

LEAR

Pray do not mock. I am a very foolish, fond old man. Do not laugh at me, for as a man, I think this lady to be my child, Cordelia.

CORDELIA

(Crying) And so I am, I am.

LEAR

Be your tears wet? Yes, faith I pray thee weep not. If you have poison for me, I will drink it. You have some cause; they do not.

LOMAN

(Doesn't interrupt LEAR. Showing reverence for LEAR's delusion) I know she suffered and suffered over my deterioration, but she never failed to show me love. Linda always treated me with kindness and respect, even when I did not deserve it.

CORDELIA

O, look upon me, sir, And, hold your hands in benediction over me. No, sir, you must *not* kneel. You must not kneel.

Quietly and gradually exits the stage

LEAR

(HIS delusion ends, now HE talks to LOMAN) We tormented the women who were good to us. You had an affair, and sometimes treated Linda like a non-entity. I banished my very own daughter. And yet, they offered us the ultimate gifts. Love. Forgiveness.

LOMAN

Compassion.

LEAR

It's all very humbling.

LOMAN

(Considers this) Humbling.

Suddenly a beam of white light fills the stage.

MARTHA (off-stage)

YES! So long, Purgatory! Nice knowing you! WEEEEEEEEEE!

LOMAN

What on Earth was that?

LEAR

Sounds like Martha received her Liberation Ticket and she's off to her Heavenly state.

LOMAN

What's a Liberation Ticket?

LEAR

Once you've learned the necessary lessons, your Liberation Ticket is your one way ticket to Heaven. *(shouts)* Good riddance, Martha!

MARTHA

WEEEEEEEEEE!

White light disappears

LOMAN

Huh. So, Liberation ticket first, then Heaven?

LEAR

Precisely.

LOMAN

What's Heaven like?

LEAR

From what I can imagine, you return to the time and place when you were happiest. When my time comes, I will be reunited with Cordelia for good.

LOMAN

I wish you luck, Old Man.

Another beam of white light

BLANCHE DUBOIS

Off I go! Kisses and hugs to all you handsome, Purgatorians! Heaven, I'll be happy to make your acquaintance!

The white light disappears.

LEAR

Apparently, Blanche earned her Liberation ticket, too. She wasn't even here that long.

LOMAN

As you said, she probably learned what she needed to learn ... just at a faster pace than you.

LEAR

Mutters to HIMSELF

LOMAN

Let's take the night off of all this melancholy. Have you ever played Charades?

LEAR

No, William. I have never even heard of Charades.

LOMAN

Poker?

LEAR

Poke whom? I don't want to poke anyone.

LOMAN

Oh, man. This whole being from two different time periods is challenging sometimes. How about more Iambic Pentameter?

LEAR

Yes! What a lovely idea!

LOMAN

Teach me more, Lear.

LOMAN

Well, I taught you all about Iambs and trochees ... So, let's move on to spondees!

LOMAN

Sounds good. So, what's a spondee?

LEAR

Well, a spondee is a word with two stressed syllables in a row.

LOMAN

I might not be the sharpest tack, but gimme examples.

LEAR

Like I said, a spondee has two stressed syllables in a row like May Day. Heartbreak.

LOMAN

Let's try to keep things lighthearted, yes?

LEAR

I'll do my best. Bathrobe. Tight rope. Shortcake. Breakdown.

LOMAN

Lear!

LEAR

Feel free to join in with spondees of your own.

LOMAN

Plop Plop! Fizz Fizz!

LEAR

You moderns are odd.

LOMAN

Limbo! Flashback!

LEAR

Dead Man! Black Hole!

LOMAN

I SAID LIGHT-HEARTED!

LEAR

I'm sorry. I cannot help myself. I am a tragic figure. Possibly the epitome of a tragic figure...

LOMAN

Football.

LEAR

Very good, William. You are a quick study.

LOMAN

(Shakes his head) Now, I am feeling tragic. Biff, my son, was a football star.

LEAR

Well, that's a good thing.

LOMAN

I only ever paid attention to Biff.

LEAR

What about Happy?

LOMAN

Exactly. What *about* Happy?

HAPPY and LINDA LOMAN enter the stage.

Of course, I can see Happy and my wife plain as day. I guess there's another lesson I need to learn.

LEAR

What if you rested your head on my shoulder as they talk? Would that ease the pain?

LOMAN

It's kind of weird, but I'll try anything *(awkwardly rests HIS head on LEAR'S shoulder)*

HAPPY

I am determined to keep Pop's legacy alive. I need to show these bigwigs and hotshot executives that I am the son of Willy Loman.

LINDA

How exactly are you going to achieve that?

HAPPY

I am going to march into Bill Oliver's office and make him see me and take me seriously.

LINDA

The sporting goods man?

HAPPY

Yes! I am going to achieve what my father couldn't ... maybe even more ...

LINDA

Honey, there is something about your father you need to know.

LOMAN

Where's this going? Where's this leading?

LINDA

His boss, Howard, did not pay your father a salary for months ..

HAPPY

The SOB! Why not?

LOMAN

How does she *know* this?

LINDA

Your father was working strictly on commission, and he made zero commission.

HAPPY

What do you mean?

LINDA

Willy would *act* as if he was going to work every morning, but he was actually driving around aimlessly.

LOMAN

Who told her?

LINDA

Charley offered him a job, which your father refused.

HAPPY

Why did he refuse?

LINDA

He had too much pride ... too much ego ...

LOMAN

I never told her *any* of this stuff? How did she know exactly how I *felt*?

LEAR

She was your wife. Women just *know*.

LINDA

Charley gave our family money. That's how we stayed afloat. Thank God your father had such a kind-hearted and generous friend as Charley. But, Happy, your father was living a lie.

HAPPY

Well, why did *you* allow him to live a lie?

LOMAN

Hey! You be nice to your mother.

LINDA

Because I loved him. Because I was his wife.

HAPPY

Maybe you should have told pop the truth.

LOMAN

Watch your mouth, Happy. Show your mother respect.

LINDA

I could never let on that I knew the truth. Men need to feel like *men*. They want to be the *breadwinners*. I couldn't take that from him. Had I exposed the *real* Willy Loman, I would have stripped him of his manhood.

LOMAN

Oh, Linda. I am so sorry, Linda.

HAPPY

I still say you could have saved him.

LOMAN

Stop that! She's been through enough.

LEAR

Your son may have a point ...

LOMAN

No, he does *not* have a point. His mother has just been through a terrible tragedy. He needs to ease up.

LEAR

However, it sounds like she was complicit in this whole mess.

LOMAN

Hey! That's my wife you're talkin' about. She is the mother of my children.

LINDA

This conversation is over. My husband just *died*. I can't handle all of this right now.

HAPPY

Okay, mom. I'm sorry. (*goes to hug HER*)

THEY hug.

I'm going to bed, mom. I'm going to see Bill Oliver bright and early in the morning.
Good night. I'm ... I'm sorry ..

LINDA

Goodnight.

HAPPY exits

I have such strange thoughts tonight. Such *strange* thoughts ...

LINDA exits.

LOMAN

No, Linda! Do *not* be like me. Do *NOT* be like me. Promise me.

LEAR

What do you mean?

LOMAN

The "strange thoughts" part. She needs to stop having "strange thoughts..."

LEAR

I'm not sure I understand ...

LOMAN

She's thinking of ending her life. We've got to save her.

LOMAN

(in complete panic) We've got to save her, Old Man! We've got to save my wife!

LEAR begins a terrifying delusion, while WILLY starts hallucinating. GLOUCESTER is in LEAR's delusion, while LINDA is in WILLY'S hallucination. The actor playing LINDA plays both parts.

HAPPY

Seek out the traitor. Bind her, and bring her before us!

REGAN and GONERIL drag GLOUCESTER/LINDA to a chair and tie HER hands behind HER back.

LOMAN

No! What are you doing? She is your *mother*. She is not a goddamn traitor. STOP!

REGAN

Hang the traitor instantly?

GONERIL

No. *Pluck* out the traitor's *eyes*.

LEAR

Cruel daughters, do not lay a hand on the Earl of Gloucester. I demand you to stop!

HAPPY

(Approaches LINDA) Finally, the traitor. In our possession.

LINDA spits at HAPPY.

LOMAN

What the Hell are you doing, Happy? Do NOT hurt your mother. Do NOT lay a hand on her. I can't watch. Oh, I can't bare this.

REGAN

Where is the King?

GLOUCESTER/LINDA refuses to answer.

I asked, where is the King?

Silence

GLOUCESTER/LINDA

I will not answer that. But, please. Do me no foul play.

LEAR

Poor, innocent Gloucester.

REGAN

O, filthy traitor. *(slaps HIM with force)*

LEAR

Villainous, Regan. Gloucester is my loyal friend. Do him no harm! This is too painful to see.

GLOUCESTER/LINDA

I shall seek vengeance on you children!

LEAR

The gods would not allow my friend to be tortured!

HAPPY gouges one of LINDA's eyes out.

GLOUCESTER/LINDA

(Screaming in pain) CRUEL SON!

LOMAN

I cannot watch. Such violence. Such hatred. Oh, Linda. *(close to tears)*

HAPPY

Out, vile jelly! *(gouges HER second eye out)* Where is thy luster now?

LINDA/GLOUCESTER screams in agony.

LOMAN

(crying) Why is he doing this? Why? Oh, Linda. I can't look. *(pause)* Wait, he's talking all fancy, Lear. I ... I think our two nightmares...or delusions...are merging ...

THEY hold onto one another.

REGAN

Go thrust him out at the gates and let him *smell* his way to Dover.

SHE releases the blinded LINDA/GLOUCESTER who stumbles off-stage.

LEAR

(Panic attack) What have they done to you? *(crying)* Why would the gods allow such brutal torture on a good man?

LOMAN

Old man! Old man! Lear! Wake up! I think it's over. The nightmare...delusion...is over. It's okay, Old Man.

LEAR

(gasping for air) The grief. The sorrow.

LOMAN

And, I can't stop trembling.

LEAR

I'm shaking. Look at my hands, William. *(HIS hands tremble)* I can't stop shaking.

LOMAN

A blanket. I will get us both a blanket. (*rummages around house until HE finds a blanket*)

LEAR

I saw my two daughters gauge out the eyes of the Earl of Gloucester.

LOMAN

(*HE and LEAR share a cover*) I saw Happy pluck Linda's eyes out.

LEAR

What does it mean? I can't make sense of any of this.

LOMAN

I don't know. Happy kept calling Linda a "traitor." He must have felt Linda did not do enough to save my life. I never saw such rage and violence. Linda is not responsible for my death.

LEAR

Oh, God. I'm beginning to comprehend. In life, I stumbled upon the blinded Gloucester on the cliffs of Dover. He was called a traitor because he took *my* side. I had no idea my daughters were the ones who blinded him. (*small delusion*) I know thee well enough. Thy name is Gloucester. (*barely audible, crying*) I know thee well enough. Thy name is Gloucester.

LOMAN

Don't cry, Old man Lear. (*pause*) Why are our children such monsters?

LEAR

It's my fault. It's *all* my fault.

LOMAN

What's your fault? What exactly is your fault? You did not blind him.

LEAR

But, I neglected Regan and Goneril throughout their lives. I wanted boys so I ignored them. They were the product of a woman I despised. They all hated me.

LEAR is in a panic with racing thoughts and terrible delusions that are fractured in nature. HIS madness reaches its peak.

They told me they loved me. They publicly made beautiful declarations of their love for me. They lied. They were hypocrites. *I* was possibly the worst hypocrite of all.

LOMAN

Old Man, it's okay. Everything is going to be okay. Try taking some deep breaths. You're talking fast and you don't look well.

LEAR

I saw my daughters in that dreadful storm. I saw their malicious faces. I heard their wicked voices. I *felt* their betrayal ...

LOMAN

The storm is over. It's warm in here. You're warm under this blanket.

LEAR

I know thee well enough, they name is Gloucester.

LOMAN

Don't cry, Old man.

LINDA as GLOUCESTER enters. LEAR interacts with LINDA as GLOUCESTER.

LEAR

I can see him so vividly on the cliffs of Dover, although his poor eyes are plucked out. Poor, pitiful friend ...

LINDA/GLOUCESTER

(Upon recognizing LEAR on the cliffs of Dover) Let me kiss that hand.

LEAR

Let me wipe it first. It smells of mortality.

GLOUCESTER/LINDA

(kisses LEAR's hand) My eyes are in a miserable condition, but I can see feelingly.

LEAR

I am sorry for what my daughters did to you. I am sorry for what I did to my daughters. I was a haughty King. A robe and gown hides all the flaws.

LINDA/GLOUCESTER

No flaws. All's forgiven. *(pause)* I am in the presence of a King. I am showing reverence to King Lear! *(bows to LEAR before exiting)*

LEAR

All's forgiven?

LEAR

They both loved Edmund, the bastard son of Gloucester. Goneril poisoned Regan out of pure jealousy, then not being able to stand what she did, Goneril took her own life.

LOMAN

Dear Jesus. Your family is crazier than mine. No offense.

LEAR

(Full clarity) If I hadn't been so arrogant and boastful, they would not have grown up to be ... to be ... just like me. I know that now. *(HE buries HIS head in his hands)*

LOMAN

It's over. You can be at peace now. You've learned the lesson you needed to learn.

Sound of a letter being pushed under the door. Maybe a spotlight could illuminate the letter. LEAR and LOMAN, too emotional, do not hear or see it.

LEAR

I loved Cordelia best and they *always* knew it.

LOMAN

I always loved Biff best. There I said it. He was my favorite child. I messed up, too. Big time. *(sigh)* Why couldn't I love the two of them equally? Why did you love Cordelia best?

LEAR

I was lonely. I led a solitary existence with meaningless pomp and circumstance. My wife and daughters resented me. I had no one in my life besides my devoted Fool. Then, Cordelia was born. I don't know or understand why, but she instantly filled the emptiness that I felt. She was different.

LOMAN

When you wanted to split your kingdom into three parts, you asked your daughters who loved you the most. What exactly did Cordelia say?

LEAR

(Remembering, slowly) Haply, when I shall wed, That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry *half* my love, *half* my care and duty.

LOMAN

What did she mean exactly?

LEAR

She meant she loved me. But, once she found a husband, half her love would go to her husband, and the other half would go to me.

LOMAN

That's not so bad. In fact, that's pretty good.

LEAR

I know that now. I also know it was in *that* moment when everything began to fall apart.

LOMAN

That was the beginning of the end?

LEAR

It was. What was the beginning of your end?

LOMAN

The beginning of my end? (*thinks awhile*) I didn't go to The New Continent.

LEAR

What do you mean by The New Continent?

LOMAN

Out West. Alaska, to be specific.

LEAR

West? Doesn't Biff have a ranch out West?

LOMAN

Yes. But, luckily he didn't make the same mistake his pop made. He disobeyed me, had the courage to follow his own dream, and went to the place that made him feel whole and content.

LEAR

Good for Biff. Smart kid.

LOMAN

Biff was like my older brother named Ben. I worshipped the guy.

LEAR

Why did you worship him?

BEN enters the stage. LOMAN is happy to see HIM (The same actor who plays BIFF can play BEN. To distinguish the two characters, BEN wears a suit, hat, and carries a brief case)

LOMAN

He was confident, fearless. When he wanted something, he went for it with every fiber of his being.

BEN enters with a briefcase and plane tickets.

BEN

As your older and wiser brother, I took a chance. I took a real leap of faith and went to Africa when I was only eighteen. Four years later, I was a wealthy businessman.

LOMAN

(to LEAR) Ben was a real force of nature. He had an exciting business opportunity in Alaska, and he asked me to accompany him. I wanted to go with him so badly.

LEAR

Why didn't you go?

LOMAN

Vanity. Too much ego. I wanted to make my *own* mark on the world. I didn't want to piggyback off of his success.

At the other end of the stage, HAPPY and LINDA enter. LOMAN and LEAR are unaware of HAPPY and LINDA at this point.

HAPPY

Hi mom.

LINDA

Hi, sweetie.

HAPPY

I went to see Bill Oliver.

LINDA

And?

HAPPY

He had no idea who I was. He treated me like a nobody.

LINDA

Oh, sweetie. I'm so sorry.

LOMAN

I loved the idea of Alaska ... the American West.

BEN

Come on William. Take a risk. How can you possibly pass up The New Continent? Leave this rat race of a city. It's far too competitive. (*offers HIM a plane ticket*)

LEAR

Did Linda want you to go?

LOMAN

God, no. We were born and raised in Brooklyn. That's all she knew. She didn't want to leave her roots. (*looks at BEN, nods HIS head "no." BEN shakes HIS head, then exits.*)

HAPPY

I told Bill Oliver, "I am Happy Loman, brother of Biff Loman. Son of Willy Loman." (*pause*) He remembered dad and gave his condolences.

LINDA

Oh.

HAPPY

So, I'm leaving, mom. I'm going out West with Biff.

LINDA

I see.

HAPPY

You could come with us.

LEAR

Did it make you angry when Linda said no to Alaska?

LOMAN

Not really. Well, maybe a little. The truth? I was afraid of leaving the familiar, too. So, we stayed.

LEAR

And now you're in Purgatory, and she's in Brooklyn.

LOMAN

I sure hope she's okay.

HE can now see LINDA and HAPPY. HE listens intently.

LINDA

No, I can't go to Alaska. I don't want to intrude on you and Biff.

LOMAN

Hey, Lear. I see Happy and Linda.

HAPPY

You would not be an intrusion on me and Biff. Come with us.

LINDA

I can't just up and leave ...

HAPPY

Sure you can. We don't want you to be out here all alone.

LINDA

Eyes start filling with tears

HAPPY

What's wrong, mom?

LINDA

I am just so foolish...just so selfish...

LOMAN

No, you're not, honey.

HAPPY

Hey. That's my mom you're talkin' about. Why would you say something like that?

LINDA

Willy had the chance to go to Alaska with Uncle Ben years ago. Willy really wanted to go, but I refused.

LOMAN

It's okay, Linda.

LINDA

I wanted to stay here and raise a family. I didn't want to travel to a faraway place where I knew no one.

HAPPY

The unknown can be scary. I'm sure dad understood.

LINDA

I should have let my husband live his dream. Perhaps, if we had gone to Alaska, he would still be alive. We would all be together.

HAPPY

Maybe. Maybe not. It's hard to say. But, you did what you thought was best at the time.

LOMAN

You've got to forgive yourself, Linda. The idea of the unknown scared the Hell out of me, too.

LINDA

Why was I so selfish?

HAPPY

Leave it in the past. Why don't you start fresh and come out West?

LINDA

No. I refuse to make the same mistake twice. You go. I will stay right here.

HAPPY

Are you going to be all right?

LINDA

Of course. Don't worry about me.

HAPPY

But, what will you do with yourself?

LINDA

I don't know yet. But, I'll figure it out. I always do.

HAPPY

Well, you have an open invitation to stay with me and Biff.

LINDA

(Stifling tears) Thank you.

LOMAN

She's having strange thoughts, Lear. I'm getting goose bumps. I know she's having strange thoughts.

LEAR

I'm sure she will be fine, William. Try to relax.

HAPPY

I'm going to start packing. (*hugs HER*) I love you. (*exits*)

LINDA slowly walks to the medicine cabinet and retrieves a bottle of pills. SHE slowly walks to the liquor cabinet and pours herself a glass of wine.

LOMAN

No. Don't do it, Linda. C'mon, honey.

LEAR

What's wrong?

LOMAN

She wants to end her life! What do we do?

LEAR

(*At a loss*) I don't know. Talk to her?

LOMAN

I can't talk to her. I'm in Purgatory. She's in Brooklyn!

LINDA opens the pill bottle, takes a pill, and washes it down with wine.

LOMAN

She just took a nerve pill with wine. What do we do?!

LINDA swallows another pill.

LOMAN

This is an emergency! She just took another one!

LEAR

Get Happy to come downstairs!

LOMAN

I WOULD IF I COULD BUT I'M IN PURGATORY!

LINDA drinks her wine, debating whether or not to take another pill.

LOMAN

We are running out of time, Lear!

LEAR

TALK TO HER.

LOMAN

I don't know the right thing to say!

LEAR

Pretend your wife is next to you. You're close to her. You can smell her hair. You can touch her hand. You can look into her eyes. She's right beside you. Now, talk to her.

LOMAN

I don't have the words. You're the poetry guy. I'm not.

LEAR

You have the words. Talk to her.

LOMAN

I don't know where to begin. I have so much to say/

LEAR

Pretend she's beside you. (*feeding LOMAN the first few lines*) Linda, our marriage wasn't perfect. You probably felt overlooked and invisible. I was always carrying on about getting ahead ... always boasting about being well-liked and popular ...

LOMAN

And, it was all bullshit. You put up with my endless bullshit, and it trickled down to the boys. Especially Biff.

But, you were always steadfast, loyal, and unwavering in your affection. I saw the devotion. I saw that love. And, it made me feel safe. You were always a comfort to me, Linda.

So, no, Linda, you were never overlooked. You were never invisible to me. I absolutely saw you.

LINDA finishes her glass of wine and goes to the garden.

You're beautiful. I probably didn't tell you that enough. But, you are simply a work of art standing there underneath the moonlight.

SHE walks around the garden and really looks at the flowers, vegetables

LOMAN (con't)

I am sorry for my affair. I know it's trite, but I felt lonely and insecure. I know it's no excuse for my terrible behavior, but our affair was meaningless. I even gave her your silk stockings as a present. You knew that. You knew everything. It was a lousy thing for me to do, and I am sorry.

She was just a silly distraction, but you were the real thing. And, you knew about her, but you never confronted me. You were too good to me... too damn good.

I'm gone, Linda. I'm never coming back. But, you need to live. Your life continues. But, when you want to remember me ... when you want to recall our marriage and life together, promise me you'll go to the garden I planted. I want to be remembered in a place that I consider sacred.

LINDA picks a flower and smells it. LEAR'S final delusion begins.

LEAR

Come, Cordelia, let's away to prison. We two alone will sing like birds in the cage ...

LOMAN

The boys will finally be out West where they belong. The New Continent! I am so proud of them.

But, you need to start over. Start small. What do you love to do? It's finally *your* time now.

The boys will be just fine. You no longer have to worry about them or me. You, my love, are not responsible for my death. You are not responsible for the rocky relationship I had with Biff. You are not responsible for my stupid inability to love our two children equally.

LINDA kneels down in the garden to pray.

LEAR

When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down and ask thee forgiveness. So we'll live, and pray, and sing, and tell old tales and laugh ...

LINDA gets up, straightens HER dress, takes a long, deep breath and walks over to neighbor Charley's house. He invites her inside.

LOMAN

You're going to visit Charley! What do ya know? That's magnificent. That's wonderful. I don't know what this means. Maybe you'll be friends? Companions? Lovers? I don't know. But, Charley is a good guy. It's a start. It's a promising start.

Lights fade on LINDA.

LOMAN (con't)

Lear! Lear! No more “strange thoughts” for Linda! She’s going to live her life! She’s going to be all right. My goose bumps are gone. Look! Let’s celebrate.

LOMAN does a victory dance around the house, but stops when HE notices the letter under the door.

LOMAN

What’s this? (*picks up envelope*) It’s a letter. It’s addressed to you.

LEAR

(*LOMAN brings him the letter*) That’s strange. (*opens it and reads it*) I ... I ... certainly wasn’t expecting this.

LOMAN

What is it, Old Man?

LEAR

I’ve finally, after all this time, earned my Liberation Ticket. I leave early tomorrow morning.

LOMAN

Congratulations?

LEAR

Thank you?

LOMAN

When’s morning?

LEAR

I haven’t a clue. Time doesn’t exist in Purgatory.

LOMAN

Right. You mentioned that.

LEAR

So, whenever the sun rises, I’ll be on my way.

LOMAN

You’ll finally be in your Heavenly State. You’ll be your happiest self.

LEAR

I’ll be with Cordelia again.

LOMAN
You've earned it.

LEAR
William?

LOMAN
Yes?

LEAR
I am going to miss you.

LOMAN
I'm glad you said it first because I am going to miss you, too.

A clumsy embrace turns into a real hug between friends.

What's going to happen to me? What will I do without your company?

LEAR
You've come a long way. You made such a transformation. I'm sure your Liberation Ticket will be arriving soon. Where is *your* Heavenly State?

LOMAN
The New Continent.

LEAR
Whenever you become lonely or scared, just focus on The New Continent.

LOMAN
I will. Good idea.

Long pause

Well, then ...

LEAR
I don't leave until morning. Do you want to play a game of Iambic Pentameter for old time's sake?

LOMAN
I thought you'd never ask.

LEAR
Splendid! So, next I will teach you about anapests.

Bring on the anapests. LOMAN

Anapests are unstressed, unstressed, stressed. LEAR

Examples, please. LOMAN

Understand! Comprehend! LEAR

Heavenly! Rapidly! LOMAN

Interrupt! LEAR

So corrupt! LOMAN

Ring a bell! LEAR

Go to Hell! LOMAN

WILLIAM! LEAR

Sorry, Old Man. I kinda got carried away there. LOMAN

Still, what a quick study you are, William! But, before I make my final departure, *dactyls* are stressed, unstressed, unstressed. Strawberry! Carefully! LEAR

Merrily! LOMAN

Bitterly! LEAR

Wait! I got a GOOD anapest! “Twas the night before Christmas when all through the house ...” LOMAN

LEAR
What's Christmas?

LOMAN
You're kidding. You've never heard of Christmas?

LEAR
No.

LOMAN
It's when Jesus Christ was born.

LEAR
Who's Jesus?

LOMAN
He's divine. We pray to Him.

LEAR
I'm Pagan, William.

LOMAN
Pagan? Ha! You're a real pisser, King Lear.

LEAR
Let's return to anapests, shall we?

LOMAN
"...Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse!"

LEAR
I don't know that little ditty, but it's definitely an example of anapest. BRAVO!

LOMAN
I'm a poet, and I don't know it.

LEAR is silent.

What's going on, Old Man? Are you okay?

LEAR
I have a journey, shortly to go. Heaven calls me. I must not say no.

LOMAN
Morning is here.

LEAR
I feel light. I feel weightless.

LOMAN
The sun rises ...

LEAR
I feel unburdened, joyful, and limitless.

LOMAN
I'm gonna miss you.

LEAR
I feel like a child again.

White light shines on LEAR.

LOMAN
...

LEAR
I feel illimitable, boundless...

LOMAN
I love you, Old Man. Thank you for everything.

LEAR
I love you, too, William. (*white lights becomes brighter*) WEEEEEEEEEE! OFF I GO!!!!!!!

LEAR exits.

LOMAN
Good-bye! God speed! I ... I ... miss you already. So, I'm all by my lonesome. Just me. Alone in this house. In Purgatory. What will I do without my friend? What would bring me comfort? Sleep? Sleep would bring me comfort.

Lies on couch and covers HIMSELF with a blanket. It begins raining. LOMAN yawns.

HE sings:

*"He that has and a little tiny wit ...
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
Must make content with his fortunes fit,
Though the rain it raineth every day."*

LOMAN falls sound asleep. The sound of a letter being pushed under the door can be heard

BLACKOUT. END OF PLAY.

