

THE DAY WE KILLED J.W.B.
(BTW HE WAS A TERRIBLE ACTOR)

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Cast of Characters:

Samuel- African American, twenties

Boston Corbett- White, forties

Alice- African American, late twenties- early thirties

Arthur Sunday (AKA J.W. B.) White, late thirties-forties

Ensemble- Our heroes as they will play every other role in this piece. It would be really cool if they switched parts every night, but up to the director so I'll shut up now. 5 actors, ideally 4 women, 1 man.

Doubling as follows a suggestion: Actor 1- Actor/Manager, Ghost

Actor 2- Character Actress, Bible Scholar and Dance Hall Girl

Actor 3-Character Actor, Sheriff

Actor 4- Juvenile and Rapt

Actor 5-Leading Lady, Bored, Blonde and Dance Hall Girl

Time: 1878

Place: Somewhere on the plains of the Midwest.

Though it may fall far short of what I want it to be, I never would have tried at all without these people in my life: Ann, wide of heart and mind, whose devotion to the church of theatre and love of the epic and intimate inspired me; Mark, whose kindness, humor and fretful optimism settle like a gentle rain, making the world a better place; To Carol for trying to understand my obsessions, and loving me more completely than I ever could have imagined. Love you all.

S. C.

It's all in the imagination folks. A little set, a few props and some sound and light.

ACT 1

SCENE 1

Here we go. Another period piece where we reexamine another time through the lens of the present. Yay! We'll see. This scene opens with our ensemble sitting around a table listening in various states of attention to BOSTON CORBETT telling a story he has recounted hundreds of times. It's his story. Maybe the only one he has.

BOSTON

So as God would have it, I sighted the villain through a crack in the barn, pacing like a wounded animal ...dangerous, cunning-I knew what I had to do. God whispered, I OBEYED AANNNNND pulled the trigger-

BIBLE SCHOLAR

Excuse me but the Bible says thou shall not kill-

BORED

Jesus, what time is it?

BOSTON

Brother, I must ask you not to use the Lord's name or his son's-

BIBLE SCHOLAR

THE BIBLE SAYS-

RAPT

SSSSSSHHHHHHHHH! Let him speak!

BOSTON

Madam. I am perfectly aware of the Bible, but these instructions were from the Lord, urging me on as their avenging angel. God smote through me.

RAPT

Please, Mr. Corbett continue-

BORED

FINISH!

BOSTON

Well, I have come to a close. Booth doubled over in agony and fell to the ground mortally wounded, shrieking, the fire ready

to consume, eager to taste the flesh of evil. A brave, but perhaps unwise, comrade rescued him from the fire- but not from DAMNATION. He lay on a porch, a burnt, sobbing shell, lingering between the Light and the Shadow until Death decided it was time. PRAISE THE LORD!

BORED

Except weren't you supposed to take him alive?

SAMUEL

(From the audience)

This story is full of shit.

All but Boston freeze. Out of the audience, SAMUEL, a young African American emerges in T shirt and jeans. He walks on stage, addresses Boston.

SAMUEL

Listen up, you didn't kill anybody-

BOSTON

I most certainly-HOW DARE YOU, YOU-

SAMUEL

I am TELLING you, you didn't kill nobody. Nobody important. Not John Wilkes Booth anyway.

BOSTON

With my own eyes I saw him fall. I was chosen ... how dare you infer you-

Samuel snaps his fingers and Boston freezes.

SAMUEL

Anybody else feel the N word coming on. I sure did. And then, you know even though this is a play and all I'd have to beat his ass. Oh this is a tough motherfucker-crazy too, so I might have had my hands full but ... my name is Samuel and this is MY story. So-

(Stage Manager motions for him to come over to DR)

What!

(to audience)

Hold on.

They confer

SAMUEL

But I'm not in the 19th century now. I can say motherfucker right? I KNOW I can say FUCK. That word is as old as... fuck. Get your phone. GET your phone! Look it up.

(Stage manager does)

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

(To audience)

I'm sorry everybody this should just take-

(Stage manager shows him something on the phone)

See!? I told you. Fuck has been around a long time.

(stage manager leaves)

Okay, little glitch but we're back ... Umm ok where-oh yeah this dude! Boston Corbett. Castrated himself some years back and then had dinner. Only wanted to offer himself to God. I'm serious, snipped that shit off, prayed on it a little and then ate some dinner. So that might give you some perspective what we're dealing with here. Thinks he killed Booth. Maybe. Or has convinced himself he did, seeing as he hasn't accomplished much else. They didn't know who the fuck that was in the barn. Somebody who didn't belong there. They were supposed to take him alive but old Boston, acting under the orders of the voices in his head, fired the fatal shot. Though some witnesses said they never saw him shoot. So they buried A BODY, Boston became a hero and the world moved on. Like it does, like when a dog takes a shit and kicks back a little dirt or grass. Doesn't cover anything, doesn't hide the smell but it's like... we're done here! NEXT!

(Looks at Boston)

Don't look much like a hero to me. Truthfully though I don't think he ever really felt like one. But that night at the barn was his shining moment, and I'm about to take it away.

(Snaps his fingers. Ensemble comes alive. He looks at Boston)

THIS is how you tell a story.

He joins the ensemble as they create the set for the next scene. Boston remains frozen. Lights dim.

SCENE 2

Lights come up. About to start when Samuel notices Boston still frozen. He motions for help carrying him backstage. Okay, now that's done we can start. A large wagon CS with THE ACTOR/MANAGER performing the storm scene from KING LEAR as Lear. CHARACTER ACTRESS is performing the Fool. Behind the wagon on one end, SAMUEL is energetically flapping a fairly large sheet of metal, imitating thunder while on the other end his older sister, ALICE, crashes cymbals together. I think that's supposed to be lightning. We hear the sounds of the crowd: Loud, uninhibited, the type where you will know if they aren't enjoying it. Right now they are.

ACTOR/MANAGER

Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!-

SAMUEL

Now!

Alice and CHARACTER ACTOR pick up 2 wooden pipes and start blowing, making wind noises.

ACTOR/MANAGER

You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks!

On "spout" Alice and Character Actor pick up watering cans and spray the air waving them up and down while Samuel keeps flapping the hell out of that sheet metal.

ACTOR/MANAGER (CONT'D)

You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,
Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
Singe my white head!

At "fires" Alice goes back to the cymbals while Samuel keeps flapping and Character Actor keeps sprinkling.

ALICE

Whew!

ACTOR/ MANAGER

And thou, all-shaking thunder,

Smite flat the thick rotundity o' the world!
 Crack nature's moulds, an germens spill at once,
 That make ingrateful man!

CHARACTER ACTRESS

O nuncle, court holy-water in a dry
 house is better than this rain-water out o' door.
 Good nuncle, in, and ask thy daughters' blessing:
 here's a night pities neither wise man nor fool.

ACTOR/MANAGER

Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! spout, rain!
 Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters:
 I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness;
 I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,
 You owe me no subscription: then let fall
 Your horrible pleasure: here I stand, your slave,
 A poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man:
 But yet I call you servile ministers,
 That have with two pernicious daughters join'd
 Your high engender'd battles 'gainst a head
 So old and white as this. O! O!-

*On the second "O!" he collapses, toppling off
 the wagon. The crowd is impressed.*

ALICE

That is NOT how we rehearsed this.

SAMUEL

(To Alice)

That looked really good.

Huge pause. Crowd is now getting restless.

CHARACTER ACTRESS

(whispering to the fallen Lear)

Tis foul. My cue. Tis. Foul.

ACTOR/MANAGER

Oooooohhh!

CHARACTER ACTRESS

(She wants that cue by God!)

No! Tis foul!

ALICE

He's hurt!

(Rushes to his aid. Crowd now starts to boo.)

Oh, be quiet. Can't you see-Sir Andrew what's wrong?

(Feels his head, then looks at his fingers.)

He hasn't been drinking enough water. Told him a hundred times-

ACTOR/MANAGER

(Weakly)

Alice ... don't fuss.

ALICE

I am going to do more than fuss ...but first-

(Crowd boos louder)

Oh shuuut UP!

(They do. For a moment.)

Let's get you up.

(Motions for character actor to help her. He reluctantly does, scared of the crowd.)

All right, we got you.

They maneuver him over to RS behind the wagon stage.

ALICE CONT'D)

How many fingers Sir Andrew?

(Six)

ACTOR/ MANAGER

(As if staring at something far away)

Ummmm ... let's see ...

Crowd starts to boo loudly.

SAMUEL

Come on Andrew!

ALICE

Show's over!

CHARACTER ACTRESS

That is not your decision to make.

ALICE

Well whose is it then?

CHARACTER ACTRESS

(Looks at CHARACTER ACTOR)

Bob?

CHARACTER ACTOR

Jesus, don't look at me. You sure you can't go on Andrew?

ACTOR/MANAGER rises to his feet with a struggle.

ACTOR/MANAGER

THE ... SHOW ... MUST ... GO ON!

He promptly falls face down.

SAMUEL

(Picking him up)

Not with you it aint.

CHARACTER ACTRESS

What are we going to do?

A couple more of the company walk on in costume, concerned.

SAMUEL

I know the lines.

Everyone freezes.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

Okay, that didn't go over well. This is JUST what they did. Like I cussed in church. But .. I do know the lines. Andrew taught me and what he didn't I watched. Over and over until I knew them by heart.

They unfreeze but you can barely tell.

ACTOR/MANAGER

(Finally)

Bless you Samuel, but you are too ... young.

SAMUEL

Oh, well-

CHARACTER ACTOR

You don't know the lines-

JUVENILE

That's impossible!

SAMUEL

Why?

ALICE

He says he knows them-

CHARACTER ACTOR

There's a difference between knowing your lines and umm Well, knowing them-

SAMUEL

WHAT?

CHARACTER ACTRESS

He means-

JUVENILE

Understanding them!

ALICE

EXCUSE ME?!!!

SAMUEL

(Aside)

Here we go!

JUVENILE

I just mean-

CHARACTER ACTRESS

What he means is-

ALICE

My brother is not a parrot.

CHARACTER ACTOR

No one is saying-

SAMUEL

(Singing chorus of Pink's
ROCKSTAR)

Na, na, she's gonna start a fight!

ALICE

So what did you mean little boy?

SAMUEL

(Still singing)

Na, na, na, na, na, we're all gonna get in a fight!

JUVENILE

WHAT!! HEY ..You Listen ..

ACTOR/MANAGER

Please-

ALICE

I am listening

ACTOR/MANAGER

Please-

CHARACTER ACTOR

We need to do something-

CHARACTER ACTRESS

We have to cancel, if Andrew can't continue-

ACTOR/MANAGER

IF I MAY SPEAK!

CHARACTER ACTRESS

Why are you yelling?

JUVENILE

Please Andrew say something-

ALICE

Let him speak! Go ahead Sir Andrew!

ACTOR/MANAGER

(Weakly)

We have to cancel.

CHARACTER ACTOR

Oh boy!

JUVENILLE

Listen to that crowd!

CHARACTER ACTRESS

So go ahead Bob, tell them-

ALICE

Yes, tell them-

CHARACTER ACTOR

Why me?!!

SAMUEL
(Listening to crowd)

I ain't doing it.

ACTOR/MANAGER

I'll do it. My company. My fault. My responsibility. Full refunds of course-

CHARACTER ACTRESS

Can we afford to do that?

ACTOR/MANAGER

We must. Alice, could you help me on stage?

ALICE

Of course.

(She picks him up gently and with ease and lets him lean on her.)

Hold my arm. Let's go slow.

As they are starting to proceed, ARTHUR SUNDAY tentatively presents himself. He is beautiful in the way statues are as they begin to fall to ruin, his curly dark hair splashed with white, his moustache a thing of glory and vanity. Clothes, like the man, going to seed.

SUNDAY

Excuse me for interrupting ...I perceive there may be some distress with your Lear?

SAMUEL

I'm sorry but you shouldn't be-

CHARACTER ACTOR

He's right this is the backstage-

JUVENILE

We're about to make an announcement-

ACTOR/MANAGER

Terribly sorry sir. Today's performance is regrettably, cancelled. If you will have a seat, I'm just about to let everyone-

SUNDAY

(Ignoring all but Actor/Manager)

See, the thing is I was quite enjoying the show. You had reached my favorite part - the storm. A king fallen from grace,

everything stripped away from him ..is there any way for you to continue?

ACTOR/MANAGER

My friend, sadly no. I take great pleasure in knowing you were enjoying yourself, but-

SUNDAY

I wonder if you would mind if I went on in your in your stead.

ALICE

Who are you?

SUNDAY

(Ignoring)

I have ... some experience in theatre and am familiar with the role.

ACTOR/MANAGER

My friend I so appreciate-

JUVENILE

They are starting to throw things-

CHARACTER ACTRESS

Andrew please-

SAMUEL

ANNNNND a fight just broke out-

SUNDAY

(Begins reciting. 19th century declamatory style.)

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits and
Are melted into air, into thin air:
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Ye all which it inherit, shall dissolve
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

*A hush from our group then applause :
enthusiastic from Character Actress, Actor and Juvenile.
Respectful from Actor/Manager and Alice. Samuel looks surprised.*

SAMUEL

(Aside)

That was good? NEEEEEEEXT!

Crowd noise intensifies. Maybe we see some things being thrown:
fruit, shoes, people etc.

ACTOR/MANAGER

Not bad my friend. Your name?

SUNDAY

Arthur Sunday, at your service.

ACTOR/MANAGER

Let me think a second. Bob? Go out and let audience know that
Mr. Sunday here will continue in the role of Lear. Apologize for
the interruption and let them know we will continue momentarily.

CHARACTER ACTOR

WHY ME?

ALL

BOB!!!

CHARACTER ACTOR

ALL RIGHT!

(Goes on. Clears his throat. Fidgets.)

Look folks, I have something to- put that down, HEY PUT HER
DOWN! Please! Please we are going to continue! In just a few
moments we will continue the performance. Taking over as Lear
will be the distinguished thespian ...uhhhh... really he is very
good ...

(looks toward Sunday but can't get
his attention)

ummm, SUNDAY, his name is SUNDAY! So, please sit down and we are
going to start ..from somewhere.

The following dialogue takes place while
CHARACTER ACTOR makes his announcement.

ACTOR/MANAGER

One thing I must tell you-

CHARACTER ACTRESS

HURRY BOB! Before they start throwing more fruit!

SAMUEL

FRUIT! Look again, they getting ready to toss people.

ACTOR/MANAGER

We are not doing the full play. I have made some judicious cuts-

SUNDAY

You're not doing Tate are you?

ACTOR/MANAGER

Goodness no. Just a few-

SUNDAY

How will I know where to come in?

ALICE

I can help you.

ACTOR/MANAGER

Yes, Alice knows everyone's entrances-

SUNDAY

(To Juvenile)

Can I rely on your assistance?

JUVENILE

Oh, I only know when I come on-

ALICE

I'll get a script.

(She leaves)

SAMUEL

Here's where we keep the props.

SUNDAY

I can see that.

CHARACTER ACTRESS

WE NEED TO GO ON!

(looks at Sunday)

You can't go on like that.

SUNDAY

What do you suggest?

Alice enters with script and a costume draped over her shoulder.

ALICE

(Thrusts script in his hand, then holds costume, a beautiful robe, up to Sunday)

Here you go sir-now let's see, yes it will do-

(Starts to put robe on)

Shoulders a little loose but-

SUNDAY

Excuse me!

(Pulls away)

What is this?

ALICE

Your costume. You can't fit what Sir Andrew is wearing-

SUNDAY

(Snatches robe)

Give it here!

(Puts it on)

Everyone satisfied?

CHARACTER ACTRESS

It looks good.

Character Actor's announcement ends speech ends.

CHARACTER ACTOR

We ready?

CHARACTER ACTRESS

Are we? From "Blow winds"?

ACTOR/MANAGER

Yes. Are you ready sir?

SUNDAY

Yes indeed.

(Becoming Lear. Holds out hand to Character Actress)

Come sweet fool. Let us brave the storm.

SAMUEL

What the-

ACTOR /MANAGER

Godspeed my friend, and thank you.

Lights dim as Sunday and Character Actress mount wagon. Crowd cheers.

SCENE 3

Lights up. We see the company taking a bow, Sunday in front, soaking up the cheers. Lights down, then up dimly, It's night. Samuel is sitting on the edge of the stage, while the stage manager is picking up bits of fruit from the last scene and generally tidying. Samuel good naturedly calls them "slowpoke" and helps, then sits back down and starts to roll a cigarette. Alice enters:

ALICE
UGHHHH!

SAMUEL
Don't start.

ALICE
Filthy habit!

SAMUEL
Gotta have at least one.

ALICE
To give me a reason to fuss.

SAMUEL
Andrew smokes his pipe so-

ALICE
The pipe smells WAAAAY better.

SAMUEL
Don't you have some walking to do? Go ahead. Let me puff the day away.

ALICE
What did the doctor say about Sir Andrew?

SAMUEL
Get some rest. Stay in bed. Drink some water. Same things you would have told him.

ALICE
So we stay a week-

SAMUEL
Maybe two. Do the repertory.

(Pause)

With ... Mr. Sunday.

ALICE

Oh.

SAMUEL

It will be all right Miss Longsteps.

ALICE

I feel ...something.

SAMUEL

What?

ALICE

I don't know. I need to go to my night and see if it can tell me.

SAMUEL

I'll be here when you get back. Take a while. I might smoke two.

She slowly starts to walk to other side of stage into darkness. Spotlight on Samuel.

SAMUEL (CONT'D) There she goes. The biggest chunk of my world. My heart - well ... she made it so really it's hers. Everything I feel she gave me. Alice Longsteps. Seriously, have you seen her walk. That is the walkingest girl in the world. Been following those legs around ever since I can remember. She always waited for me. "Keep up, keep up", but she'd wait. LOOOOONGGG STEPS. Took us away from the farm when the man who ... he got religion one day and told us all we were free. Don't know what Bible he had been reading up to that point but suddenly we were FREE. Not that anybody went anywhere. Being truly free means you've got someplace to go. Then after three days Alice started walking and took me with her all the way to Washington D.C. Carried me when I couldn't keep up, which was a lot of the time. So now ...

(his voice starts to trail off) ...

when she walks at night ...

ALICE

(Picks up where he left off)

He never comes with me.

Spotlight shifts to Alice and she takes the stage.

ALICE (CONT'D)

One less thing to carry, he says.

(Pause)

The days do have a lot of weight. My hands are always full of something and my mind is always telling me that the steps I take are not mine. At night I take them back.

(She walks and we see the weight disappear.)

ALICE (CONT'D)

What can you tell me my purple night? Yes I see. Yesterday was more of that dark, dark blue you like. What happened to that crimson streak you had last week? More of that please.

Then she sees him. An enormous Bison. Not a human, not a puppet, please. Other than sound and maybe some lighting, we see him through her.

ALICE (CONT'D)

OOOOOOOH my. Look at you. Hello, Mr. Buffalo.

(Pause)

That's quite a head you got on you.

(Bison growls)

Oh noooo, I meant that in a good way. Really. And your beard-very distinguished.

(More growling)

What did I say? Listen, don't be that way. I'm walking, you're walking, we meet, exchange...oh what do they call it-pleasantries, yes and then we keep going. So a good night to you and ..

(The Bison is not convinced)

Look, it's been a hard day and I'm trying to shake it off. Have a heart and let me by.

(Pause)

I'm not scared of you.

(Pause)

Maybe you're scared of me?

(BEAT)

The bison grunts softly.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Why? Look at me? Do I look like I'm hunting. Oh I won't lie, I've Wrung the neck of a chicken or two, but I made it quick. I had to kill A pig once, but it made me feel sad for days. I make more than I take and begin much more than I end. I mean you no harm.

(BEAT)

ALICE (CONT'D)

You still seem scared. Tell me why?

(soft rumble)

Where?

She looks beyond the bison. Her face lights up.

ALICE (CONT'D)

They're lovely. The boy-he's going to be big. Bigger than you. Teach him respect while you can.

(Soft grunt.)

Oh, you don't' have to do that.

The bison gives a low roar and then we hear hooves coming. Close.

ALICE (CONT'D)

(Terrified joy)

OH NO! NO! HELLLLLLOOOOO! Nice to meet you. And you. Oh, baby no need to shove, I see you. I see you all!

(Laughs)

You are blessed sir. You are blessed.

The bison move off. She watches them go.

ALICE (CONT'D)

You all be well. Take care. Thank you, my night. That was a nice surprise. What else do you have to show me?

The walkingest girl in the world starts to move on as the light dim and we follow her long stride into the night.

Scene 4

Mid-morning, two days later. Sunday is pacing up and down, trying to learn his lines. He carries a leather bound volume of Shakespeare's works, closing the book to recite a line, then opening it in agitation when he goes blank. It's not going well.

SUNDAY

O world thy slippery ...turns! Friends now fast sworn,
Whose double bosoms seem to wear one heart,
Whose hours, whose bed, whose, whose ... Damn!

(opens book)

Ah, where is itwhose what-Meals! There we go.

(closes book)

Again.

(Pause. Gathers himself)

O world thy slippery turns! Friend now fast sworn-

Alice enters. She watches him with intense curiosity.

SUNDAY (CONT'D)

Whose double bosoms seem to wear one heart,
Whose hours, whose bed, whose ...MEAL annnd exercise
Are still together, who who ...

Alice tries to get his attention, and holds two fingers up.

SUNDAY (CONT'D)

WHO ..WHO, DAMMIT, WHO DOES CORIOLANUS!

(Sees Alice)

WHAT! What are you doing?

ALICE

Trying to give you a clue.

(Holds 2 fingers and moves
them together)

Twin. The word you were looking for.

SUNDAY

I've no need of your pantomime.

ALICE

You need to learn your lines. I can help.

SUNDAY Where is everyone?

ALICE
Some went to town, some had been and are now sleeping it off-

SUNDAY
So there is no one here to rehearse with? What about the young gentleman-

ALICE
They know their lines-

SUNDAY
Excuse me-

ALICE
Paul, his name is Paul and I won't wake him yet-

SUNDAY
WHY? Tell me where-

ALICE
He needs his sleep. If he wakes up too soon before a performance, he gets nervous-

SUNDAY
Ridiculous!

ALICE
SO, I let him sleep until one half hour before the show. That is how he does his best.

SUNDAY
So there is no one who can help me.

ALICE
Except me.

SUNDAY
Well, that won't be necessary.

ALICE
Perhaps, it will help you to think of this as my job.

(Pause)
It is my job to make sure you are ready. Like I do with all of them .

SUNDAY

I need someone who can-

ALICE

Read?

SUNDAY

Yes. So you understand-

ALICE

Please, let me see the book .

*He stares at her, almost with a sense of dread,
afraid to give the book to her.*

ALICE (CONT'D)

Please.

He reluctantly hands it to her.

SUNDAY

Careful. That's been in my family for a long time.

ALICE

(Reading)

Whose double bosoms seem to wear one heart,
Whose hours, whose bed, whose meal and exercise
Are still together, who twin, as t'were, in love
Unseperable, shall within this hour-

SUNDAY

Nice trick. You obviously heard me reciting earlier, or perhaps
Hearing your m ... employer perform so many times have remembered
It.

ALICE

Yes he has performed it many times. So ...

(Offers him book)

Pick a page. It can be a play or a sonnet.

(Pause)

Go ahead.

(BEAT)

SUNDAY

From the beginning of that soliloquy.

ALICE

Ready.

SUNDAY

Don't give me the line unless I ask for it .

(Beginning)

O world, thy slippery turns! Friends now sworn,
Whose double Whose double

(Alice points to her chest)

BOSOMS seems to wear one heart,
Whose hours, whose bed, whose meal anddammit

(Alice performs a calisthenic)

WHAT!? I said not to- EXERCISE

(Alice nods)

Whose hours, whose bed, whose meal and exercise
Are still together, who twin as't were in love

Unseperable, shall within this hour,

(Growing more confident)

On a dissension of a dolt, break out,

To bitterest enmity ; so fellest foes,

Whose passions and whose plots have broke their ...sleep?

(Alice nods)

To take the one the other, by some chance,

Some trick not worth an an

(Alice mimes an egg)

What? Just-

(She mimes a chicken)

Some trick not worth an egg, shall grow dear friends,

And interjoin their issues. So with me;

My birthplace hate I and my love's upon

This enemy town. I'll enter. If he ...

(Alice mimes a stabbing)

Stabs me? SLAYS me, He does fair justice; if he gives me way,

I'll do his country service.

(Pause)

Why didn't you just give me the line then that ridiculous -

ALICE

You said not to give you the line unless you asked. You never would. And this is how I do it with Sir Andrew. Make it a game. Make it fun.

SUNDAY

Sir Andrew? We have no titles in this country. Its either sir or mister.

ALICE

He is from England. When my brother and I came to work for him he said To call him Andrew but I kept calling him sir. So ..Sir Andrew. It's our little joke.

SUNDAY

I see.

ALICE

Shall we continue?

SUNDAY

No. I'm fine now. That will be all.

She waits. Looking at him. Then glances at the book.

ALICE

(Reading an inscription)

J.W. B . Is that your father?

SUNDAY

(Taking book back)

A friend.

ALICE

Oh. I thought you said it had been in your family-

SUNDAY

A friend of my father. Who then gave it to me.

(BEAT)

ALICE

You ...remind me ... of someone.

SUNDAY

Really, we've never met-

ALICE

Perhaps you just didn't see me.

SUNDAY

That would be likely. That will be all ...Alice.

He doesn't look at her. She waits. For ..what? Thank you? He slowly looks at her and nods. Maybe that was it. She turns and leaves. Light dim.

Scene 5

BOSTON CORBETT sleeping on a bare stage. It is clear he is having a nightmare. 3 dance hall girls enter with Sunday wearing a tux. They began to do the cancan. Then Sunday breaks into song:

SUNDAY

Aint that sweet, Aint that sweet
Boston Corbett thinks he killed me Aint that neat.

GIRLS

SO sweet!

SUNDAY

I'm not dead, I'm not dead,
Yelled Sic simper tyrannis, as I shot him in the head
But I'm not dead.

GIRLS

Looks alive to us!

SUNDAY

You can't catch me, Can't catch me
No matter what you do, I'll get away from you
'Cause you can't catch me.

GIRLS

He's getting away again!

More dancing and then it's the big finish:

ALL

You shot him in a barn, Everyone knows that's a yarn,
He killed the president and then away he went-

SUNDAY

Yoooooo hoooo

ALL

You thought you were God's tool
But they played you ... for a FOOOOOOL!

Boston abruptly wakes up.

BOSTON

Lord, why do you torment me so?

Lights dim. End of scene.

Scene 6

Afternoon right after the show. Sunday holding court with 2 young ladies while Alice and Samuel are cleaning up and watching with amusement.

SAMUEL

He's going to pick the blonde.

ALICE

Samuel, stop!

(Pause)

The redhead. Bet.

SAMUEL

You're not the only one to get feelings. And I'm feeling that if he is late for the show tomorrow, you'll be able to find him sleeping it off next to miss blondie.

ALICE

You know nothing. Men always pick the redheads-

SAMUEL

Some men. White men. But with Mr. Sunday- the redhead is prettier So he'll go with the blonde. Can't be nothing in the world prettier than he is-

ALICE

You think he is pretty?

SAMUEL

So does he. So do they. Men can be pretty, women handsome, they're Just words-

Sunday leaves with both women.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

AAAAANNND we both lost. Now that's just greedy.

ALICE

Poor dears. They think they are with the man they saw on stage. He is nothing like that.

SAMUEL

It's called acting.

ALICE

No, I mean Coriolanus is very honest. He is who he is. He hides nothing. Our Mr. Sunday is hiding something.

SAMUEL

What? Wait ...I don't care.

ALICE

You don't care that he is hiding something?

SAMUEL

No. Not a teeny tiny bit. I don't like him at all and even if I did it wouldn't be enough to care.

ALICE

What do you care about?

SAMUEL

Me, myself and you.

ALICE

In that order?

SAMUEL

Welllllll push come to shove it's probably Me, you and myself. Gotta love yourself first.

ALICE

What about Sir Andrew?

SAMUEL

If I have any leftover care he gets it.

ALICE

Samuel!

(Pause)

What's wrong?

SAMUEL

I think ... Andrew is lying to me.

ALICE

Ooooh, I know what this is about-

SAMUEL

Oh, you do do you. Well then tell me why-

ALICE

You are asking a lot of him.

SAMUEL

Don't I give a lot? Don't I build his sets, make and repair props. Fix the wagon and coaches-

ALICE

You are very good at that -

SAMUEL

AND that doesn't help. You telling me that. Him telling me that. His thanks. Just 'cause your good at something doesn't mean you want to do it all the time. I'm good at more than that and some of those I like a lot more. He wants to thank me-let me go on stage.

ALICE

That's not possible right now.

SAMUEL

Why-

ALICE

Because no one wants to see you there.

SAMUEL

No, they want to see old men playing young and young men playing old and hear pretty voices say beautiful words that you forget right after 'cause they went in one ear and out the other. I could make those words stay with them. Much better than someone like MR. SUNDAY. It all could start with Andrew.

ALICE

No. It should start with me.

(Pause)

He reminds me of someone.

SAMUEL

Who?

ALICE

Arthur Sunday. When I sold flowers in Washington, by the theater, there was a man who bought them for his women. His skin was whiter than his shirt, his curly hair hung over his black, doll eyes. He never looked up, threw the money at me like it burned his hand and then tied the flowers in the women's hair. But ...that man is dead.

SAMUEL

Sounds like just another white man.

ALICE

No.

(Lost in thought)

Not just another.

She walks away. Samuel watches her and lights dim.

Scene 7

The kind of night described as a sailor's delight, with a burnt orange sky. We see a small fire, sparks eager to join the battle between the dark and the light. Alice walks on as if in a trance, and the fire explodes and tosses burning pages from what we now see is a book. Alice catches one of the pages. She blows on it softly and then starts to read. Her eyes widen in fear as she walks toward the fire as it slowly dies and lights dim.

Scene 8

Next morning. The actors are arriving for rehearsal. Sunday strolls in last accompanied by the blonde, who now has a flower in her hair. Samuel smiles triumphantly but Alice only stares at the flower.

SUNDAY

Thank you my dear for your ...hospitality. I found-find You positively enchanting.

BLONDE

May I expect you after the show?

SUNDAY

Alas, I feel I may be too taxed by the day's labors to be suitable Company. It is Hamlet you know, that sweet, sad prince.

BLONDE

Oh, I don't know it.

SUNDAY

That is unfortunate.

BLONDE

But I want to. If I can get away I promise I'll be there. Then maybe ...

SUNDAY

We shall see. Now if you will excuse me the muse is calling and I must answer.

Dismisses her and sees Paul our juvenile.

SUNDAY (CONT'D)

Paul! Paul! It is Paul isn't it?

JUVENILE

(Pleased to be recognized)

Yes!

SUNDAY

You are my Laertes correct?

JUVENILE

Yes sir.

SUNDAY

I'd like to talk to you about-

(Pulls out script)

Act 5-our duel.

ALICE

(Seeing the script)

Oh, you've decided to use the script. Good.

SUNDAY

(Not looking up from script)

Seemed more practical.

(Grabbing Paul)

Run lines with me, will you Paul.

They walk away from Alice and
the rest of the company.

JUVENILE

Where do you want to start?

SUNDAY

Oh, that won't be necessary. I really just wanted ... to say ...
how IMPRESSED I've been by your work the last few days. You have
so much potential it's just staggering. I hope that doesn't
embarrass you, but I believe in speaking frankly.

JUVENILE

(Floored)

Oh ... that's ...THANKS!

SUNDAY

Please, it is a pleasure to see a comet in the making. Like
that celestial object leaves us in wonder as it streaks upon the
sky, so shall you create an awe in all that are lucky enough to
see you tread the boards. Such a fine voice! I admit a bit of
envy, I had to work hard to achieve the tones You now hear. And
Paul, not to turn your head but I have seen a certain effect you
have upon the comely sex.

JUVENILE

(Slightly alarmed)

Huh? What

SUNDAY

Women, Paul, Women. And I caution you not to take advantage, but to understand Your power and govern it with a certain temperance.

JUVENILE

Uh ...well I will certainly try-

SUNDAY

Do your best lad. Paul I see so much in you, so much that could be yours If only ... if only-now this is for your own good, given by one who, when your age, possessed a similar failing. For all my laudable gifts ...I lacked fire. Initiative. And regrettably ... and I want so badly for it not to be true-I WANT to be wrong-

JUVENILE

(Over whelmed by the torrent)

What? What!

SUNDAY

I see ... and don't begrudge a kindly observation, promise me no ill will for any advice-

JUVENILE

I WON'T! I swear.

SUNDAY

Well then. Paul ... I am afraid I see that same lack of fire in you. No initiative. You do as directed-nothing more. Oh yes, you perform that task admirably, but A comet ... as I judge you to be, has to do more. A monkey can perform tricks, do what he is told, hell a dog can do that, but a comet goes his own way. He does not wait to be told what to create, HE CREATES!

JUVENILE

I want to be a comet.

SUNDAY

Do you Paul? Do you?

JUVENILE

YES!

SUNDAY

Well, I BELIEVE you.

(Chuckles)

There's the fire. Now if I could draw your attention to our duel.

*The lights dim as they begin to talk,
almost conspiratorially. Spotlight on Boston
Corbett as he enters from the back of the house.*

BOSTON

Praise GOD! My destination. Oh good and just provider forgive me for not bending knee in thanks. I am just so weary in flesh and mind. I have always been a weak man in the flesh, like so many, but prided myself that my mind was iron, forged by you. And that was wrong. I understand you must punish me by sending these minions of the dark to follow me, but it is the Visions you have inflicted upon me ... must I suffer those as well? To doubt what I have known, to see my greatest service as only a mirage. To take the truth that provides me food and solace, and wonder if it's a lie. Let me rest tonight Lord, for I must speak tomorrow.

He lies down and spotlight goes out.
Lights up on the rehearsal:

JUVENILE

(Hopping off wagon in obvious pain and bleeding)

OH MY GOD!

ALICE

Paul! Stop, let me see.

LEADING LADY

He's bleeding! Poor thing!

CHARACTER ACTOR

WHAT HAPPENED? The duel-

SUNDAY

Merely a scratch. Nothing a little whisky can't take care of.

JUVENILE

Ahhh, it really hurts!

ALICE

I know, I know it does. Samuel run and fetch the alcohol and Some cloth.

SAMUEL

Be right back.

(He leaves)

ALICE

Put your hand right there. Good, just a little pressure. Don't worry Paul, it will be fine, it's not deep.

(Turning on Sunday)

What was that!

He ignores her.

ALICE (CONT'D)

WHAT WAS THAT?!!! MISTER SUNDAY!

SUNDAY

He tried to thrust when he should have parried. He'll do better tonight.

ALICE

THAT is NOT how the duel is performed-

SUNDAY

No. It was better. Or it will be. Feel better Paul.

(He turns to leave)

I'm off to lunch-

ALICE

You ...YOU CAN'T JUST LEAVE-

(Grabs his left wrist)

YOU CAN'T-

Sunday whirls around wincing in pain.

SUNDAY

DAMN YOU!

He slaps her hard. Everyone freezes except Samuel who has entered and drops the alcohol and cloth.

SAMUEL

(Sprints in slow motion)

Sometimes-

Sunday unfreezes.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

You just have to-

Alice unfreezes.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

FIGHT!

He lunges at Sunday and they go tumbling. Everyone unfreezes. Chaos. At first Sunday seems helpless to Samuel's fury, then, like a cornered, wounded animal, he fights back. Hard. Dirty. This is not a pretty fight, it's 2 people trying to kill each other.

ALICE

SAMUEL! BABY NO!

She tries to pull him off. Finally the Character Actor helps her, while two of the women try to pull Sunday away, almost shielding him. Samuel grabs his left wrist and tears his shirt.

SUNDAY

Ahhh GOD DAMN YOU!

We see his bare arm. On his wrist is an ugly old scar, like a burn. Or like someone tried to remove something. Alice is almost bear hugging Samuel. She is strong, while Bob holds on for dear life. Sunday turns and runs.

CHARACTER ACTOR

JESUS H. CHRIST !

SAMUEL

LET ME GO!

ALICE

NO! You going to have to fight me and you don't want to do that. Please! Please stop!

LEADING LADY

I can't believe you hit him!

SAMUEL What!

CHARACTER ACTOR

Well now-

Sunday enters with a pistol pointing it at Samuel.

SUNDAY

THIS WILL FINISH YOU, YOU STUPID SON OF A BITCH! HERE-

Alice shields Samuel as a shot rings out. She doubles over bleeding from the abdomen. For a moment even Sunday is stunned. Then Character Actor knocks the gun out of his hand.

SUNDAY (CONT'D)

(Shrieking at Samuel)

Look what you made me do. LOOK WHAT YOU MADE ME DO!

Samuel cradles Alice.

ALICE

(Whispering, trying to pull his head close)

J ...

Thrusts paper in his hand.

SAMUEL

Stay with me. Stay with me, Stay with me

(Lights dim)

Stay with me, Stay with me-

(Blackout)

(BEAT)

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

Alice?

END OF ACT 1

ACT 2

Scene 1

Lights up on two jail cells. Samuel is pacing up and down in one, while in the other we see a figure wrapped in a blanket, presumably sleeping night of over celebration off.

SAMUEL

(Addresses audience)

Don't act surprised to see me here. DO NOT act surprised to see me here. You knew this was going to happen. Her death was ruled an accident. Not even an unfortunate one, just an accident, accidental shooting. I'm here because I punched, MANY times, a white man who slapped my sister. If I had killed him, they wouldn't have even bothered. .. Just sent me to her real quick.

SHERIFF enters with ACTOR/MANAGER

SHERIFF

All right feller, someone here to see you.

(To Actor/Manager)

So we understand each other? Get him and go.

ACTOR/MANAGER

Understood and ... thank you for your help.

SHERIFF

Uh huh.

Sheriff unlocks Samuel's jail cell and leaves.

SAMUEL

What does he mean go?

ACTOR/MANAGER

I'll explain everything, but let's do as he asks and-

SAMUEL

What does he-

ACTOR/MANAGER

The sheriff has been a very reasonable man considering-

SAMUEL

Considering what?

ACTOR/MANAGER

Well, everything that has happened-

SAMUEL

You mean my sister being killed?

(BEAT)

ACTOR/MANAGER

Yes.

SAMUEL

No. No one cares about that.

ACTOR/MANAGER

Oh, goodness you are so wrong. I-

SAMUEL

Then you understand that I'm not going anywhere. What about you?

ACTOR/MANAGER

Samuel, please that's just not-listen I've worked out a deal-

SAMUEL

Deal?

ACTOR/MANAGER

Listen to me please! Now as I said the sheriff has been fairly reasonable, all things considered. The District attorney less so until-

(motions greasing a palm)

no worries about that, it had to be done. So now you are free to go and in exchange we must be gone by night fall. You, me, the company ...

(sighs)

I would have liked a few more days of rest, but ah well. What will be ... And we will be a bit shorthanded. A couple members of the company have left. Decided to stay behind. With Mr. Sunday ...of all things he has decided to start his own company and they apparently will join him. There's ingratitude. So ...and he has the effrontery to be putting on a performance tomorrow. Quite a bit of talk from all the town folk about it. Due to ...never mind. Let's be on our way.

SAMUEL

And my sister? She's not going with you as well. You said that you were leaving shorthanded 'cause two of the company left but nothin' about her. She was your company.

ACTOR/MANAGER

Of course I am devastated about her loss-

SAMUEL

NO, I'm dev- whatever word you just used. I'm broken. You just ... It's a bump in the road to you Andrew.

ACTOR/MANAGER

That's not true. I am, was-

SAMUEL

Fond. That what you were going to say? The word y'all use when you kind of care about someone? Appreciate is another. I so APPRECIATE EVERYTHING YOU DO SAMUEL. Well I appreciate you paying to get me out. Really do. I'll find a way to pay you back.

ACTOR/MANAGER

(A bit of recognition and guilt)

Forgive me if my words are falling short-

SAMUEL

Nothing to forgive.

(Holds out hand)

Thank you ...sir. For everything.

ACTOR/MANAGER

Samuel You can't ...you just can't stay-what will you do?

SAMUEL

I've got something in mind.

Actor/Manager reluctantly shakes his hand.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

Goodbye sir. Be well.

ACTOR/MANAGER

And you.

SAMUEL

Alice loved you. Just so you know. Where is she?

ACTOR/MANAGER

It's a lovely spot. Near our camp. Little cross marks the spot. She liked the wide open spaces so much and there are these group of wild flowers close by ... don't know what they are called- she would. They are beautiful.

Actor/Manager leaves as Sheriff enters with BIBLE SCHOLAR.

SHERIFF

(To Samuel)

Get a move on now boy.

(To the blanket in the other cell)

MR. CORBETT? MR CORBETT?

The blanket stirs and Boston raises his head.

BIBLE SCHOLAR

That's him! That is our lecturer! Sheriff, what on earth is the meaning of this.

SHERIFF

That's him? My deputy found him wandering outside of town, muttering to himself-

BOSTON

I must correct you sheriff-those mutterings as you call them, were a conversation I was having with my Lord and your-

SHERIFF

Oh, you were praying-

BOSTON

No, this was more of a -

BIBLE SCHOLAR

I am SO sorry Mr. Corbett. Please excuse the mistake-

BOSTON

I did try to explain to the young man, but he insisted-

BIBLE SCHOLAR

Sheriff-release him at once!

SHERIFF

I am going to-

BOSTON

An honest mistake and I found the accommodations fairly comfortable. Is there an audience for me?

BIBLE SCHOLAR

Oh yes! Not as big as I hoped but they will make up for it with their enthusiasm. We are all eager to hear of your bravery.

BOSTON

It is God who was responsible. I was a humble tool or weapon if you-

SHERIFF

What's this lecture about again?

BIBLE SCHOLAR

SHERIFF! I am just embarrassed. Sheriff, this is the man who avenged our late President Lincoln. This is the man who shot John Wilkes-

BOSTON

PRAISE THE LORD! All the credit-

BIBLE SCHOLAR

Booth.

Samuel freezes to attention.

SHERIFF

This is him?

(Not impressed)

Well all right then. Sorry about the misunderstanding.

BIBLE SCHOLAR

Shall we go?

(A discreet sniff)

Would you like to freshen up?

BOSTON

I will go as God sees fit to present me.

They leave. Samuel slowly walks after them, stops, removes a bloody book page from his shirt, looks at it, tucks it away and exits as lights dim.

Scene 2

We continue from the beginning. Same as the opening, like Yogi Berra said "It's déjà vu all over again."

BOSTON

So as God would have it, I sighted the villain through a crack in the barn, pacing like a wounded animal ...dangerous, cunning-I knew what I had to do. God whispered, I OBEYED AANNNNND pulled the trigger-

BIBLE SCHOLAR

Excuse me but the Bible says thou shall not kill-

BORED

Jesus, what time is it?

BOSTON

Brother, I must ask you not to use the Lord's name or his son's-

BIBLE SCHOLAR

THE BIBLE SAYS-

RAPT

SSSSSSHHHHHHHHH! Let him speak!

BOSTON

Madam. I am perfectly aware of the Bible, but these instructions were from the Lord, urging me on as their avenging angel. God smote through me-

RAPT

Please, Mr. Corbett continue-

BORED

FINISH!

BOSTON

Well, I have come to a close. Booth doubled over in agony and fell to the ground mortally wounded, shrieking, the fire ready to consume, eager to taste the flesh of evil. A brave, but perhaps unwise, comrade rescued him from the fire- but not from DAMNATION. He lay on a porch, a burnt, sobbing shell, lingering between the Light and the Shadow until Death decided it was time. PRAISE THE LORD!

BORED

Except weren't you supposed to take him alive?

SAMUEL

(From the audience)

This story is full of shit. Listen up, you didn't kill anybody-

ENSEMBLE GASPS

BOSTON

I most certainly-HOW DARE YOU, YOU-

SAMUEL

I am TELLING you, you didn't kill nobody. Nobody important. Not John Wilkes Booth anyway.

OUTRAGE

BOSTON

With my own eyes I saw him fall. I was chosen ... how dare you infer you-

Ensemble turns on Samuel with a fury.

BIBLE SCHOLAR

WHAT ON EARTH!

RAPT

WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?!!!

BORED

WHO THE HELL LET HIM GET IN HERE!

Rapt, Bored and whoever else advance upon Samuel.
Bible Scholar seeks to console Corbett.

SAMUEL

(aside)

This may have been a bad idea.

Reaches for something in his pants.

RAPT

Grab him! C'mere you-

The men rush Samuel who grabs anything within reach and starts swinging.

SAMUEL
(To Boston)

I NEED TO SPEAK TO YOU!

BORED
Ain't nobody wanna hear what you have to say boy!

BIBLE SCHOLAR
THAT'S THE ONE WHO ATTACKED THAT ACTOR!

SAMUEL
I NEED TO TELL-

RAPT
REALLY?

BORED
SON OF A BITCH!

BIBLE SCHOLAR
SUNDAY! MR. SUNDAY!

BORED
GET A HOLD OF HIM DAMMIT! GOD DAMN HOLD HIM-

SAMUEL
YOU- GET OFF OF ME. GET YOUR FUCKIN-

Boston has been almost in a trance. At God Damn he
springs back to life, eyes flashing.

BOSTON
BROTHER! I cannot allow-

SAMUEL
I HAVE TO-

ENSEMBLE
TEACH HIM A LESSON!

BOSTON
The Lord's name to be taken in vain.

ENSEMBLE
GET HIM! KICK-

SAMUEL

TALK- GET OFF OF ME! LEAVE-

ENSEMBLE

HOLD HIM! GET HIM OUTSIDE! GET HIM OUTSIDE! GET THE
SHERIFF! HOLD HIM! GET THE SON OF A BITCH DOWN-

SAMUEL

(Breaking away, with everything he has
left, to Boston)

TALK TO ME YOU LYING MOTHERFUCKER!

ALL ACTION STOPS.

(BEAT)

(BEAT)

ENSEMBLE

WHAT?!

*The stage manager peeps out with a concerned look
at Samuel.*

SAMUEL

(Looking right back at them)

Don't even start.

BORED

What the -

BIBLE SCHOLAR

That's ... DISGUSTING!

BOSTON

(In full evangelical fervor)
Lay aside the garments that are stained with sin,
And be washed in the blood of the Lamb ;
There's a fountain flowing for the soul unclean,
O be washed in the blood of the Lamb!

BIBLE SCHOLAR

Oh my.

RAPT

MR. CORBETT?

BOSTON

(Saint Vitus has hold of him now. Dances.)
Are you washed in the blood,

IN THE SOUL CLEANSING BLOOD of the LAMB?
 Are your garments SPOTLESS? Are they WHITE as SNOW?
 Are you WASHED, in the BLOOD, of the LAAAAAAAAAMB?!

BIBLE SCHOLAR
 (To Samuel)

Look what you did-

RAPT

GOD ALMIGHTY-

ALL

LOOK WHAT YOU DID!

BORED

JEEEEEEESUS CHRIIIIIIIIST! GOD DAMN!

Boston awakens from his fervor, walks over and punches Bored.

BOSTON

Brother, I asked you not to take the Lord's name in vain.

(Pulls Samuel away from crowd)

While I do not know why this Negro calls me Mother fucker, or even- It is between me and him and God and does not concern you. The lecture has ended. May I presume a hat was passed around?

Someone timidly offers him the hat.

BOSTON (CONT'D)

Praise God.

(To Samuel)

Come. You wish to speak and we shall.

BORED

Just a second-

BOSTON

BROTHER! I see in your eyes a wish to fight, but know I have faced double your numbers and lived to see the next day.

He means it. This is the soldier. Uncertainty and a confused buzz from the crowd. Lights dim as Samuel and Boston leave.

Scene 3

Sundown, outside of town. Nothing but wide open space, which is being treated to an electrical storm. Sunday stands with his back to the audience.

SUNDAY

Where I come from, with a storm comes the rain. As Jonah traveled in the belly of a whale, so have I been carried in the bowels of this earth, only to be spit up on this Hickburg, Wasteland, U.S.A.

(Turns to audience)

Bit ungrateful to Fate perhaps. After all one must start from somewhere. Or begin again. And given enough space and time a man can outrun anything.

He walks a bit contemplating his new kingdom.

SUNDAY (CONT'D)

All those years of trying to go ...unnoticed. That had to end. I missed attention and seeing admiration in my fellows eyes, my glory reflected in their faces. That's what we all live for. Never trust someone who willingly stands in the corners, a wallflower trying not to be seen. Either they feel not worthy of partaking or are too dishonest to admit the need. Neither is the case with me. Things grow twisted without light. Goodbye darkness! You were useful for a time.

(More lightning)

Yes, yes. You missed your cue. I already did Lear.

He strides away. The night wishes to make its entrance and chases away the lightning which hurriedly follows Sunday off stage. Blackout.

SCENE 4

Shortly after sundown. Boston and Samuel walking through town.

SAMUEL

Look, if you're just looking for a place to shoot me in the back, just go ahead-

BOSTON

I have never shot a man in the back. In the face, belly, arm, wherever would do the most good. We need to move quickly-

SAMUEL

WHERE? WHY?

BOSTON

I am a man pursued by shadows. During the day I can keep track of them, at night they hide but -

(Bolt of lightning)

HERE!

(Thrusts Samuel and himself in the light)

SEE!

He points to their shadows.

SAMUEL

What? Those are our shadows-

BOSTON

ARE THEY? Yes. So they are.

(Pause)

For now.

SAMUEL

You have a lot on your ...mind. I'll just-

BOSTON

So who do you work for?

SAMUEL

Well ...what has that- I used to work-

BOSTON

STUPID QUESTION CORBETT! You are obviously With the Union. BUT! WHAT IF- could they be so clever, those grey coated sonsofbitches so many who I popped Off like bottles, would the Confederates be so bold to use A Negro as a spy? Unlikely but-

SAMUEL

I'm not-

BOSTON

Perhaps I am giving them too much credit. You are much more likely to be-

SAMUEL

A SPY!

BOSTON

For either? So ... (Darkly) Who do you serve? Are you an assassin?

SAMUEL

NO!

(Hopeless)

Just a man looking for an answer in the wrong place.

BOSTON

You have the anger of an assassin but not the direction.

(Pause)

How do you know?

SAMUEL

What?

BOSTON

That he is not dead. That I'm lying

(BEAT)

BOSTON (CONT'D)

When I don't know.

A cat meows somewhere offstage.

BOSTON (CONT'D)

What was that?

SAMUEL

Umm sounded like a cat.

BOSTON

Yes. That is what it SOUNDED like.

MEEEEOOOOWW

BOSTON (CONT'D)

SHHHHH.

Starts to creep toward the meow

SAMUEL

(I'M GOING TO GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE)

Okay.

Boston creeps toward the meow while Samuel moves in the other direction.

BOSTON

(Directed to offstage cat)

Excuse me. EXCUSE me. What is your business here?

MEEEEEOOOOOWWW

BOSTON (CONT'D)

Well, I must ask you to move on. This is a -
 (sees Samuel trying to get away)
 private conversation . Scat!

MEEEEEOOOOOWWW

BOSTON (CONT'D)

BE THAT AS IT MAY! SAMUEL STOP!

Samuel starts to run.

BOSTON (CONT'D)

A soldier doesn't flee!

SAMUEL

I'm not a soldier!

BOSTON

A BRAVE man doesn't run.

Samuel stops.

SAMUEL

Fine. I'll walk then.

(Reaches in his pocket)

` Cause I sure ain't scared of you. Crazy fuck.

BOSTON

(Simple. By rote. Very honest)

To be , or not to be, that is the question:
 Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
 The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,

Samuel turns.

BOSTON (CONT'D)

Or to take arm against a sea of troubles
 And by opposing end them.

SAMUEL

(Straight from the heart)

To die-to sleep, No more, and by a sleep to say we end
 The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks,
 That flesh is heir to: 'tis a consummation
 Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep,
 To sleep,

BOSTON

perchance to dream

Moves toward Samuel.

BOSTON (CONT'D)

Ay there's the rub:
 For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
 Must give us pause-there's the respect
 That makes calamity of so long life.

Samuel moves toward Boston

SAMUEL

For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
 Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely
 The pangs of dispriz'd love , the law's delay,
 The insolence of office, and the spurns
 That patient merit of th'unworthy takes,
 When he himself might his quietus make With a bare bodkin?

*Samuel pulls out a small knife. Boston
 reaches over and gently takes it from him.*

BOSTON

(Jabbing his hand with the knife)

Well ... perhaps not this bodkin.

SAMUEL

What the hell! Stop! Ugh, stop doing-

BOSTON

Whatever plans you had for that it will not be equal to the task.

(Showing his hand)

See? It has drawn little blood.

SAMUEL

(Taking the knife back)

I was going to sharpen it.

BOSTON

I have been called: a coward, drunk, fool, in... corrigible, insubordinate, a nuisance, villain and many, many times crazy or touched. In the eye of the beholder they may all be true. I have been hailed a hero too, but I never took that to heart any more than the others. But I have never been called a LYING MOTHER FUCKER- to my face. Not even God has done that. What proof do you have?

Samuel reaches inside his shirt and pulls out a couple of bloody pages.

BOSTON (CONT'D)

(Reading slowly)

The Plays of William Shakespeare

(Scanning another page)

J.W ... B.

(BEAT)

BOSTON (CONT'D)

This is a start. Walk with me. Tell me about this man.

SAMUEL

Sunday. He calls himself Arthur Sunday.

BOSTON

Tell me. If I believe my greatest service ...if I have been deceived, We walk together for a while.

SAMUEL

We're not walking together. We just might be going the same way.

They slowly exit, Boston still looking at the pages. Lightning flashes and then-Blackout.

SCENE 5

Late night outside of town. A little makeshift cross and a new grave. A few, scattered petals on the grave pack their bags, while the flowers they came from wave goodbye. Silence, maybe just a little wind. Then we hear it: The sound of hooves coming close to the grave and a low, mournful rumble, then a higher pitch, like a whistle. We hear more hooves and more rumbling, roaring, forming a prayer surrounding the grave: followed by a loud command and respectful silence. The sound of the herd moves away and all we hear is the wind ...then a soft, lonely cry. Blackout

SCENE 6

An hour or so later. We find Boston and Samuel sitting around a campfire, finishing the remains of something Samuel obviously did not enjoy. Boston licks his fingers, then puts the last bit of meat on a stick and holds it over the flame. His hand shakes a bit.

BOSTON

More?

SAMUEL

No! No thank you.

(Noticing tremor)

Doesn't that make it hard to shoot?

BOSTON

It goes away with a gun in my hand.

SAMUEL

What is it?

BOSTON

My hand is an instrument of God and I think it is eager to do their work. It shakes with anticipation.

(Pause. Tiny smile)

Or maybe I am growing old.

SAMUEL

So you were a sergeant in-

BOSTON

Yes.

(BEAT)

SAMUEL

So ... What's it like to kill someone?

BOSTON

Easy.

(BEAT)

(BEAT)

SAMUEL

Really?

BOSTON

I never killed a someone. It was war. They were soldiers who if given the chance would have killed me. I fought without concern for the lives I was taking, thinking of only the souls. Giving

them a chance to be saved before they strayed too far from grace.

SAMUEL

Think you ever sent anyone to hell? I mean they can't all go to heaven.

BOSTON

Where they were with God I cannot know.

SAMUEL

So damnation might be a possibility.

BOSTON

Yes.

(Pause)

It was ... is war. I am a soldier. Perhaps the war ends tomorrow, Maybe it goes on. The greycoats will still hunt me. For me it is a question of did I FAIL.? Has this been a lie? To you it is revenge. You don't care who he is.

SAMUEL

He's the man who killed my sister.

BOSTON

And maybe killed-

SAMUEL

I don't give a shit.

BOSTON

Fair enough.

(BEAT)

BOSTON (CONT'D)

Mother. Fucker.

SAMUEL

WHAT?

BOSTON

I have heard the word fuck. Never have had occasion to use it. Fornication. You are implying that I ... fornicated with my mother?

SAMUEL

It's just-

BOSTON

That is disgusting. And a lie.

SAMUEL

Look, I was angry-

BOSTON

But in a sense ANY man could be a Mother Fornicator. Perhaps-

SAMUEL

Have it-

BOSTON

If a man has a wife, and she bears him a child then ... if they still have Relations after that -as some do, then he would be a ... Mother Fucker-

SAMUEL

I am so sorry I said-

BOSTON

And there is nothing wrong with that.

SAMUEL

(Trying to end the subject)

Nope. Nope. Nothing at all. So-

BOSTON

That is not a well thought slur. On one hand unnatural and unlikely, On the other an expression of love and a means ...

Boston falls silent. A sadness comes over him like a blanket which he shakes off.

BOSTON (CONT'D)

After my wife, years ago, the Lord rescued me, recruited me out of despair. I wished to serve them fully, but felt desires for these painted women who offered themselves... Not all of me refused.

(Recites)

"There are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs For the sake of the kingdom of heaven."

Samuel is shocked. We can see the temptation to say something smart but:

SAMUEL

If I was God I wouldn't want anyone to do that for me.

BOSTON

So tomorrow we go to see a play. And wait for a sign.

SAMUEL

You mean for an opportunity. Then what?

BOSTON

If it is the man, there would be no gratitude for bringing him in alive. No earthly reward for killing him twice.

(Pause)

I have never been to the theatre. But I see a poetry in what may be.

SAMUEL

You just read Hamlet then? It's a good story but-

BOSTON

Hamlet is a play?

SAMUEL

Shakespeare, you-

BOSTON

I don't read anything but my bible. And an occasional newspaper.

SAMUEL

Oh so you heard someone ? You got a -

BOSTON

What?

(Pause)

I'm tired. Good night Samuel.

Samuel stares as Boston stretches out. Fire is almost out. He slowly rolls over on his side. Moments pass. Alice enters keeping her distance. She is dressed in all grey.

ALICE

This is not what I expected. Not at all. I fell in this well with no bottom but many voices, and then felt something reach out and pull me back. Maybe this is not where I was supposed to go ...

(Sees Samuel)

But it's where I want to be.

(Sits in between Boston and Samuel)

Apologies if I'm not following the rules but I think heaven can wait.

(Defiant)

I'm staying.

BLACKOUT

END OF ACT 2.

ACT 3

SCENE 1

A few minutes later. Alice is still sitting between the men, looking at Samuel.

BOSTON
(Sleeping)

Alice?

ALICE
(Startled)

Oh! I'm sorry!

(Gets up)
You ... can see me? How can you-

BOSTON
I see much better with my eyes closed. Know much more when I'm asleep, only to forget when I wake. At first I thought you might be someone else.

ALICE
Who?

BOSTON
My wife. I keep hoping she will visit, just to let me know. But all these years ... maybe tomorrow.

ALICE
I'm sorry to have disturbed you. I'm not sure how this all works, How I'm supposed to be-

BOSTON
You've come to say goodbye. That's nice.

ALICE
Well ...I don't think so. I'm not ready to leave-

BOSTON
Good for you. That one still needs looking after. He has a lot of Hurt, which will take him far; he needs to remember that he was loved.

ALICE
Can you forget?

BOSTON
It's possible. I'll leave you alone.

He turns over.

ALICE
(Softly)

This reminds me of when you were little and we walked to Washington. We camp for the night, listen to all the sounds And then you'd make me tell you a ghost story. Well I have one more, but I don't know how it ends.

(Pause)

Samuel, this is not what it was supposed to be. We were going To see each other jump the broom, start families, move away, write once in a while, and then one day I'd visit you and see my handsome brother and give him the best hug, only to hear him say "Uhh Aunt Alice, my father is over there". And you'd Be OLD AND FAT. I might have a few wrinkles. Then we'd ..

(BEAT)

Then we'd ...

She starts to cry.

ALICE (CONT'D)

DAMMIT! I don't even have any tears! You know what? You know what! I do know how the story ends. The brother goes on to live a good life. He remembers the kind of man he is, the man his sister knew he'd be and never lets anyone tell him differently. THE END.

She looks back at Boston.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Be well soldier.

(To Samuel)

Don't visit my grave. I won't be there. Rest in peace.
Not yet.

Lights dim.

SCENE 2

Sunday, accompanied by two of the ensemble, bring out a large poster he directs them to hang. Too high, then too low and finally he asks them to move it a little left. He's finally satisfied and they leave. The poster is brown with black lettering and reads:

ATTENTION! AN EVENING OF THEATRE, CULTURE
and **ENTERTAINMENT!**
SHAKESPEARE, MARLOWE, BOUCICAULT,
and others
PERFORMED BY THE NOTED THESPIAN **ARTHUR SUNDAY**
and other members of
HIS NEWLY FORMED COMPANY.
5:00 PM to SUNDOWN. JUST OUTSIDE OF TOWN.
LOOK FOR THE STAGE. A HAT WILL BE PASSED.
PLEASE BE GENEROUS!!!

SCENE 3

A little after 5, with a hazy, almost red sky, the sun deciding to leave a little early. Or maybe it's being forced off. Lights up on Sunday taking a bow, soaking in the raucous applause. Lights down although we still hear crowd noise. Light up as from the back of the house come Samuel and Boston.

SAMUEL

So, see any signs yet? Any prairie dog inviting for a chat. Or are you Looking for a face in the clouds or a bunch of angry grasshoppers?

BOSTON

The sky is a little overripe. My eyes are burning some. But no. Nothing. If it is supposed to come, it will.

SAMUEL

Dust. Lot of dust in the air. Not a lot of wind though. SOOOOO we wait for this sign and then ... what?

BOSTON

Samuel, this morning I woke up in possession of a feeling Of responsibility for you that I didn't care for much. Soldier Can't afford that. So ... goodbye. Thank you for your help, Pay your respects to your sister; leave justice in the hands of God and through him-me.

SAMUEL

Fuck you and your God. That son of a bitch is no kin of mine. He didn't create me. Somebody did but it wasn't him. My mother had me, my sister raised me. God hasn't done shit. Neither will you.

BOSTON

BROTHER SAMUEL-

SAMUEL

DON'T TELL ME WHAT-

BOSTON

I CANNOT ALLOW-

SAMUEL

EVER- WHAT? WHAT CAN YOU DO?

BOSTON

(trying to control himself)

You don't understand. PRAISE GOD! PRAISE GOD! FORGIVE HIM LORD!

SAMUEL

NO! I DON'T WANT IT!

BOSTON

ASK FOR HIS FORGIVENESS!

SAMUEL

WHY DON'T YOU-

BOSTON

ASK-

SAMUEL

AND YOUR GOD-

BOSTON

FOR THEIR FORGIVENESS!

NOW. Kneel. (Pulls out his gun)

SAMUEL

I ain't doing shit for you.

BOSTON

Not me. Them. I don't care what you think of me.
(kneeling)

I'll do it with you.

SAMUEL

Shoot me.

BOSTON

Then who will remember your sister?

(Pause)

I'll say a prayer. Then you. Talk to God. They will listen.

Samuel slowly kneels.

BOSTON (CONT'D)

Thank you. Dear Lord. I talk to you often or talk at you often. I hear your instructions. I know many ask of you. Want of you. Please forgive Samuel. He is angry at the death of his sister and knows not what he says. He is angry- like I was. Running away. Bring him back to you how you choose. Probably not as a soldier. He thinks for himself a little too much for that. Please forgive me as well. The thought of seeing a sign today brings me much joy and breaks my heart for it will mean I FAILED. Again and again and again. Once more I hope to redeem myself in your eyes and my own. AMEN!

(Pause)

So now ...I believe Brother ...er, whatever kin we are in Your eyes, has something to say.

(click of gun)

SAMUEL!

SAMUEL

You want me to me pray. Put away the gun.

BOSTON

Do you promise?

SAMUEL

I'm going to say what I want. You won't like it.

BOSTON

As long their name is not taken-

SAMUEL

FINE!

(Searching)

So first of all, I don't think it's right to be forced to pray. That should be My choice. So ...why my sister? She never did anything to anybody. Is that how you treat people who love you? I loved her and I know you keep people in your heart- not good enough. I want them here. So I'm selfish. In YOUR image. What's left? Yup.

(Looks at Boston)

Yeah this storm cloud. Me. Arthur Sunday or J. W.B or whoever the fuck he is. All I wanted, want was someone to act like killing her wasn't spilling some coffee on your shirt and I couldn't get that. That's not right. And by the way, when you call people you should think about HOW You call them. She deserved better.

(pause)

I'm done.

BOSTON

Amen.

Punches Samuel hard knocking him out.

BOSTON (CONT'D)

You won't be alone Samuel. I'm sure someone will find you. Forgive me Alice.

Lights dim on this part of the scene.

BOSTON (CONT'D)

Make some memories that don't haunt you.

*Lights up on Sunday bowing to thunderous applause
of the ensemble.*

SUNDAY

THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

(Full showman)

You know ladies and gentlemen. When I came to this town, a humble traveler in search of a home, I must confess I didn't think it would be here. Mercy no! And then I was so villainously attacked

(Audience boos)

and the outpouring of affection and support has been astonishing.

(CHEERS)

So I said to myself "Arthur can't you see? GOD has worked once again in a mysterious way."

ENSEMBLE

PRAISE GOD!

SUNDAY

My bruises became hearts full of love-

ENSEMBLE

Yes!

SUNDAY

My PAIN and SORROW transformed into JOY! My loneliness turned-
INTO A COMMUNITY OF BROTHERS AND SISTERS!

ENSEMBLE

AMEN! AMEN! AMEN!

SUNDAY

THANK YOU DEAR LORD FOR

(DRAMATIC PAUSEWAIT FOR IT)

Finding me a home.

ENSEMBLE

YES! YES! WELCOME!

Alice appears in the back of the crowd.

SUNDAY

You are too kind. How's that hat looking there my friend?
Thank you for being so Generous! Well lets-

(like a magnet his eyes find Alice)

Uhhh, well ...well ...

(turns away)

Little warm isn't it. And look at that ... sky-

(Looks back. She's gone.)

Well, let's get to a little more Shakespeare shall we?

ENSEMBLE

YAY! DO ROMEO, DO MACBETH-

SUNDAY

(Recovering)

How about a little Hamlet. The GHOST SCENE!

Audience applauds. Boston enters the crowd.

SUNDAY (CONT'D)

Where wilt thou lead me? speak; I'll go no further.

GHOST

(Enters with hood and back turned)

Mark me.

SUNDAY

I will.

GHOST

My hour is almost come,
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames
Must render up myself.

SUNDAY

Alas, poor ghost!

GHOST

Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold.

SUNDAY

Speak; I am bound to hear.

Ghost turns around. It's Alice.

ALICE

So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

AUDIENCE FREEZES.

SUNDAY

What?

*He staggers back, looking at the audience,
realizing he's not in Kansas anymore.*

ALICE

I am thy **VICTIM'S** spirit,
Doom'd for a certain term to walk
the night,
And for the day confined to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purged away. **Weeelllll it Really hasn't been that
bad-**

(Continuing)

But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison?-house,
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy **middle aged** blood,
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,
Thy knotted and combined locks to part
And each particular hair to stand on end,
Like quills upon the fretful porpentine:
But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O, list!

SUNDAY

O God!

ALICE

YOU CUT ME OFF! Revenge for my foul and most unnatural murder.

SUNDAY

Murder!

ALICE

THAT'S WHAT I SAID! Murder most foul, as in the best it is;
But this most foul, strange and unnatural.

*She comes closer. He wants to run, but he can't.
Alice suddenly looks up:*

ALICE (CONT'D)

OH NO!

She leaves and another ghost comes on.
WORLD UNFREEZES. AUDIENCE IS BOOING !

GHOST

Mr. Sunday? Mr. Sunday?

Food is being thrown. Samuel enters.

SUNDAY

WHAT IS GOING ON ???

*A haze appears. It pushes its way through
the crowd leaving a trail of coughs behind.*

BOSTON

Praise GOD! A sign.

SAMUEL

THERE YOU ARE!

The ground begins to rumble.

ENSEMBLE

STAMPEDE! BUFFALO STAMPEEEEEDE!

*Chaos. Light then dark. Screaming. Sunday is
still in a state of shock.*

BOSTON

(Advancing toward the stage)

NOW!

SAMUEL

(Fighting his way through the fleeing crowd)
CORBETT! YOU SON OF A BITCH!

BOSTON

(knocked down by the crowd)

GO AWAY SAMUEL!

(grabs gun)

Let the almighty-

(points revolver)

have mercy-

His hand starts to shake violently.

BOSTON (CONT'D)

NO! Please!

SAMUEL

CORBETT!

(Turns around. Sees something big.)

CORBETT!

Alice appears.

ALICE

SAMUEL. REMEMBER THE MAN YOU ARE.

BOSTON

PLEASE LORD-

SAMUEL

BUFFALO!

BOSTON

ANGELS! AN ARMY-

SAMUEL

LOOK OUT!

*He runs toward Boston who still tries to aim.
Sunday breaks his trance and leaps from the stage:*

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

TELL ME-

He's almost there.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

WHY I-

Leaps towards Boston

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

SHOULD CARE!

Knocks Boston out of the way. Sunday runs.
Darkness. Screams.
BLACKOUT

SCENE 4

A few minutes later. Still dark from the dust and maybe a stray hoof in the distance. Boston and Samuel untangle.

SAMUEL

GOD DAMN! THOSE WERE SOME ANGRY ANIMALS!

BOSTON

(weakly)

What?

SAMUEL

Don't even start! DO NOT- GET UP!

(pulling him up)

Get up. You all right?

BOSTON

Yes. It appears I am-

Samuel punches him.

SAMUEL

Now how are you?

BOSTON

A little worse for the wear.

SAMUEL

Good. You're welcome.

BOSTON

For wha-

SAMUEL

You stupid ass, for not letting you get crushed by a buffalo. Speaking of ...

(Surveying the damage)

Whoa.

(Spies something)

Umm ...

(walks over to body)

Come here.

Boston walks over.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

Is that- Nah. I'm not touching it.

BOSTON

(Kicking over body)

It would appear to be.

(Reaches over to left wrist
and pulls sleeve down)

I thought you said ...

The initials J.W.B are on the wrist in ink.

SAMUEL

Huh? No, no, no there was a scar on his wrist. I told you.

BOSTON

Yes. You did. How-

SAMUEL

Whoa, I don't know. I swear-doesn't matter. Looks like you got your man. Or the buffalo got him for you. Yeah, they did.

BOSTON

Yes.

SAMUEL

Don't look so disappointed. I mean you did shoot somebody in that barn- I mean obviously the wrong man but, he probably wasn't up to any good, He probably had something to do with it. Right?

BOSTON

Perhaps.

SAMUEL

Soooo ...

(looks around)

Go ahead. Go on.

BOSTON

WHAT?

SAMUEL

SHOOT HIM!

BOSTON

WHAT? NO!

SAMUEL
HURRY UP!

BOSTON
NO!

SAMUEL
DO IT!

BOSTON
I CAN'T! I SHOULDN'T!

SAMUEL
DO. IT. Do it, do it, do it-

Boston shoots the body of Sunday.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)
Now you'll always really be the man who shot John Wilkes Booth.

BOSTON
This is not how I thought-

SAMUEL
But it's gonna have to do. Now, get the hell out of here and I'm doing the same. Goodbye Corbett.

BOSTON
Goodbye Samuel.

SAMUEL
Don't let any shadows catch you.

BOSTON
I'll try. Perhaps they'll give up the chase.
(Exits)

Samuel stares after him.

SAMUEL
Don't bet on it. World when you finally decide to gobble him up, just swallow him whole. Don't. Chew.

SCENE 5

Samuel by Alice's cross. The Ensemble and stage manager are taking off what remains of the stage. He motions to one of them help him remove it and the little grave.

SAMUEL

Take this. She's not there. Never was.

(To audience)

So that's my story. You can say it's bull shit, but ... Now I want to apologize about the title. Kind of misleading. WE didn't kill anybody, that was all buffalo. But it wouldn't be the first time somebody took credit For something they didn't do and it won't be the last. And truthfully, The Day The Buffalo Ran Over J.W.B. or The Day The Buffalo Stomped John Wilkes Booth, didn't quite have that ring to it. So what's the moral of this story? Don't piss off animals a lot bigger than you! Try not to be a shitty person? I don't know. Maybe carry those you love in your hearts. That way, in some way, you'll never lose them. That's the best I got right now.

(Pause)

Let me think on it some more.

(He exits)

Lights dim as the stage manager sweeps up the grave.

END OF SHOW