

The Happiest Moment

A play

By Drew Petriello

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CAST

TEL: Female - Age can vary, but she should feel as though she is a little too old to be living the sort of lifestyle she is. Direct and is used to getting her way. From an affluent family. Unemployed and has been living off of family money for a while. Has a macabre philosophy that she channels into Polaroid art.

BETHANY: Female - Older than TEL, but not by much. Born British, but is now a US citizen. Still has an accent. Loads of fun, straight-talking and cheeky. Covering up for deep insecurities.

MILTON: Male - Late 20s, early 30s. A hardworker and stubborn. Trusting and a little oblivious. Sees the good in others. He has been supporting himself since he was a teenager. Recovering sex addict.

ARNOLD: Male - Older than MILTON. A schlub in every sense of the word.

MORDECAI: Male - Late teens, early 20's. Bedraggled and scummy looking. Rarely goes outside, likely lives on 4Chan. Has a fetish for violence, yet has (probably) not actually committed an act of violence himself.

HEADS: See below.

OTHER CAST: GIRL, MAN, OTHER MAN, HOMELESS PERSON, RABBI, MOMMY, DADDY

SETTING

A city in the United States.

NOTES

The HEADS: The ensemble of severed heads consists of actors playing all the characters other than TEL. The HEADS are always onstage. Whenever a character besides TEL comes onstage, they do so by leaving the collective of heads behind. When they go off, they rejoin the HEADS. When speaking as the HEADS, they often chant their speech. While no individual HEADS are ever singled out, they do not always have to speak in unison.

The HEADS play all characters besides TEL.

MINIMUM NUMBER OF HEADS: 4

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF HEADS: However many you want, babe.

RECOMMENDED NUMBER OF HEADS: 7

Scenes: Display the part and scene titles on a flickering CRT TV tucked in a corner of the stage.

0

Darkness.

TEL

I've seen this cycle play out before -

A knife being sharpened.

TEL

This is the happiest moment
It only gets worse from here
So let me make this moment immortal
In our minds.

One last metallic scrape.

Lights.

TEL sits.

She stares out, grinning.

TEL

Which moment... which moment...

HEADS

Which moment... which moment...

TEL

I wonder... I wonder...

HEADS

I wonder... I wonder...

TEL

Six years ago,

HEADS

in the month of May,

a girl	TEL
came out to play.	HEADS
	The GIRL enters, sultry.
I killed her seven years ago	TEL
to the day.	HEADS
I asked her	TEL
to show me the way	HEADS
beyond the stars	TEL
to Heaven's Gate.	HEADS
Eight years ago, she showed me	TEL
how to pray.	HEADS
	The GIRL produces a tab of LSD. She brings it to TEL's tongue.
Ten years ago I heard	TEL
an angel say,	HEADS
to capture this moment	TEL

for the rest of my days.

HEADS

“Memory is too feisty,”

TEL

I heard it say,

HEADS

The GIRL enters. She spreads her legs before
TEL.

so I left an image to remember

TEL

and show it you today.

HEADS

With both hands, TEL thrusts a knife into the
GIRL’s throat.

Symmetry... Symmetry...

TEL AND HEADS
(chanting)

The HEADS continue to chant over TEL’s
speech and the GIRL’s quiet chokes. TEL
slowly draws the knife down the front of the
GIRL’s body.

Symmetry was the key to memory
The LSD fizzing through me
Her sacred blood searing in ecstasy
Symmetry... Symmetry...
The world split in half for me
I was the only one to see
Coming down is the worst part
Coming down is the worst part
Coming down is the worst -

TEL

TEL removes the knife. She holds it high above her head.

All is still and silent.

TEL

I've seen this cycle play out before -
This is the happiest moment
It only gets worse from here
So let me make this moment immortal
In our minds.

As darkness falls, TEL begins to hack the GIRL's head off.

The sound of a Polaroid camera taking a picture.

PART 1 - I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH ME

1

TEL at a cafe looking through her phone, sitting across from BETHANY.

BETHANY

Tel, I *cannot* tell you how excited I am for our trip to Mount Everest my girl.

TEL

Then don't, Bethany.

BETHANY

I've already got all the packing equipment, it's going to be magnificent -

MILTON

(offstage)

Order for "Tel!" Order for "Bethany!"

TEL

(to MILTON)

Bring 'em here!

(to BETHANY)

I'll get my father to send me some money.

BETHANY

While you're at it, tell him you need a new yacht.

TEL

I don't need a new yacht.

BETHANY

But *I* need a yacht, baby cakes.

MILTON

(offstage)

What was that?

TEL

(to MILTON)

I said bring it here!

(to BETHANY)

He's going to have concerns, Bethany.

BETHANY

Like he hasn't dealt with enough from you.

HEADS

Everest will be fun.

TEL

He'll be worried that the Sherpas will try and violate us or something.

HEADS

Quit stalling and go to Everest, you wuss.

BETHANY

They wouldn't dare pull shit on a couple of Americans. The Nepal...ese? Nepalish? Nepalites? Whatever, the Nepal people. They'd be too scared. They've heard of Gitmo.

MILTON enters with two extravagant cups of coffee.

MILTON

Tel? Bethany?

TEL
(to MILTON)

Put ‘em here.

(to BETHANY)

My dad has a thing about foreigners.

BETHANY

Git. Mo.

HEADS

Everest will be fun.

TEL

I’ll remind him.

(to MILTON)

Come on. Put ‘em down.

MILTON
(putting them down)

Yes, miss.

TEL

Don’t call me “miss.”

MILTON

Sorry, mi-, um “Tel”.

HEADS

Play with him.

TEL
(to MILTON as he is about to leave)

Hey, come back over here.

BETHANY

Yay! Mount friggin’ Everest!

HEADS

“Yay” indeed.

...me?

MILTON

Yeah, you.

TEL

Is everything alright?

MILTON
(returning to the table)

Sit down. With us.

TEL

Tel...

BETHANY

Look, mi- I'm on the job.

MILTON

I insist.

TEL

You know I can't -

MILTON

I insist.

TEL AND HEADS

(pause)

MILTON
(glancing about before sitting with them)

Okay, sure, just - be quick, I don't want -

TEL

I've seen you before.

MILTON

...I work here.

BETHANY

Come on, Tel...

TEL
(ignoring her)

So you do.

MILTON
What is... what -

BETHANY
Tel. Don't.

Do you want to fuck?

TEL

What.

MILTON

Goddammit Tel...

BETHANY
(wishing she were anywhere else)

Do you want to fuck?

TEL AND HEADS

MILTON
(laughing nervously)
I - what - um, sorry - I - taken off-guard - why would -

BETHANY makes faces at other people in the
cafe, doing her best to project that everything is
fine and they can all stop watching.

TEL
Caught you staring before. And now. You look pretty. My loins think so too.

BETHANY
Oh God, she said the thing about the loins...!

MILTON
I don't even know you.

So?

TEL

MILTON
I - ah - I guess I just - I like to know people before jumping into that sort of... thing.

TEL

It's no strings attached. Best kind of sex. My condo's close.

BETHANY

I've never needed a fag more in my goddamn life.

MILTON

No, I'm sorry but I'd -

(starting to get up)

Look, I'm on the job.

TEL

Let's have sex.

MILTON

I don't want to get fired.

TEL AND HEADS

Sex.

BETHANY laughs too loudly.

MILTON

No no no I can't, can't now. I, uh, I get off work in a couple hours - maybe I can meet you somewhere for dinner?

TEL

We can meet later - no dinner.

MILTON

Yes. Dinner.

TEL

I just want to fuck you is that -

MILTON

Sssshh sh sh sh sh! I *have* to get back behind the counter, but...

(he scribbles on a scrap of paper)

Okay. Here's my name and number. Call me at five.

(leaving - stopping himself)

And you really have to call. I don't get text-messages. Phone's busted.

MILTON exits. TEL looks over the paper.

TEL

“Milton.”

HEADS

“Milton.”

TEL

What a dumb name.

BETHANY

OH MY GOD. TEL.

TEL

That was disappointing.

BETHANY

That was embarrassing, that was what that was. Oh my goodness, my girl!

TEL

What?

BETHANY

God in heaven, Tel, if you were in need of a good shag, we could've just gone clubbing again, babe. No need for - I mean, in a coffee shop? What the hell?

TEL

I dunno, clubbing's gotten... predictable.

2

The bathroom of a dance club. Thumping bass can be heard.

A MAN is having sex with TEL on a sink,
ANOTHER MAN is having sex with
BETHANY in a stall. BETHANY doesn't
notice the ensuing.

TEL AND HEADS

More...

MAN

Yeah...

TEL AND HEADS

Harder...

Harder...

Faster...

Hit me...

(he does)

Yes...

YES!

MAN

Yeah, you like that? Oh, yeah...

(TEL orgasms)

Yeah, that's right.

(TEL kicks the MAN off of her)

What the hell, I wasn't done!

TEL

I am.

(she takes off her heels and pins him to
the ground)

I've seen this cycle play out before -

This is the happiest moment

It only gets worse from here

So let me make this moment immortal

In our minds.

TEL jams her heels into his eyes.

The sound of a Polaroid camera taking a picture.

1

The cafe.

TEL

Predictable bores me.

BETHANY

Yes, but it's *reliable*. Go on the date.

TEL

But I want -

BETHANY

Go on the date. Could be good for you. Ms. Mopey face.

TEL

I am not mopey .

(beat)

BETHANY

No...

(beat)

Art going any better?

TEL

Are you still job hunting?

BETHANY

Point taken.

(beat)

Speaking of which, could you "donate to the blood bank" to get me through the month?

TEL

Sure. A thousand good?

BETHANY

Thank you, Tel darling. I'll pay you back one day. I promise.

TEL

Art's been boring. And repetitive.

BETHANY

Sorry to hear that.

Yeah. TEL

Struggles of an artist. HEADS

Struggles of an artist. TEL

BETHANY
Well, at least you don't have to worry about starving.

TEL
More worried about the damage on my psyche, but yeah...

TEL looks back at the heads. They wave at her.

TEL
...yeah...

BETHANY
Can't wait for Everest.

TEL
Can't wait...

They lapse into silence. Sip their drinks.

BETHANY
God, I need that cigarette.

?

HEADS
(chanting)
Scrape the bone, skin the knee,
Hold your breath, remember me.
Count to three in the sea,
Drown yourself, begin to see.

Hear footsteps, take the lead,
Kill them all, fortunes bleed.

Bones scattered on the ground.

TEL sleep walks through the bones.

HEADS

(faster)

Graveyards live, what a sight,
Heed the dark, stand in light.
Pour your soul, what a night,
Tell yourself it's alright.
Drain the blood from such height,
Feel the skin, take a bite.

TEL rubs the bones all over her body.

HEADS

(faster)

What you want, hear us say,
Burning gold for your ways.
Torment you night and day,
It's no use, try to pray.
We will laugh when we may,
Your life filled with color gray.

TEL impales herself with the bones.

The HEADS laugh.

HEADS

(faster, louder)

Hear us cry, "you you you,"
Damning you 'cause you slew
These our lives, right in two.
Hear us cry, "you you you,"
Then you'll know, know we knew,
Knew how weak, weakling you.

TEL is fetal.

HEADS
(faster, louder)

Say our name, say our name,
Say our name, say our name,
Say our name, say our name!

TEL

Master!

She hurls a bone at the HEADS.

They shatter.

Laughter.

3

After dinner. MILTON walks TEL back to her
apartment.

MILTON

It sounds heavenly.

TEL

Beautiful place. Sea-line for miles. Golden beaches with no one around... perfect for a
private beach.

MILTON

Never been to a beach.

TEL

You're kidding.

MILTON

Never have. Sad state of affairs.

TEL

You're missing out. This is mine.

MILTON
(appraising the building)

It... wow. Wow.

HEADS

He's already inside.

TEL

It's a condo.

MILTON

Hell of a condo. Artist you say?

TEL

Mm-hm.

MILTON

You must be, like, super successful.

TEL AND HEADS

Not quite.

MILTON

Oh.

TEL

Not all artists starve. Some of us have trust funds.

MILTON

Nice. I'm sorry, you said you were... a photographer?

TEL

Sort of. Provocative Polaroids. That's my brand. I guess.

MILTON

You'll have to show me sometime.

TEL

Smooth.

MILTON

Eh?

TEL

You were a stuttering mess at the cafe this morning. And now you're all charming and shit.

MILTON

I can go back to stuttering, if you'd like. I was surprised by your - uh - it's not every day a woman comes up to me and offers to sleep with me so, um, explicitly.

TEL leads him to the gate. He hesitates.

TEL

C'mon, it's time for the best part.

MILTON

Dinner was fantastic.

TEL

It was good.

MILTON

I - Look, I have to be home. Early shift.

TEL

...what.

MILTON

I'd love to but I... I can't. Maybe some other time.

HEADS

Get him inside.

TEL

I spent dinner with you - I've been waiting half a day to get my brains fucked out.

MILTON

(laughing)

Yeah, well... wait longer.

TEL

It's rude to stand up a lady.

Suppose so.

MILTON

He moves over to her.

HEADS

Get him inside.

TEL

Good boy.

MILTON gives her a quick kiss.

MILTON

Goodnight, Tel. I'd love to see you again.

TEL AND HEADS

This was not the plan.

MILTON

Sorry, babe. Catch you later.
(he begins to exit)

Call me for dinner again. It was fun.

TEL AND HEADS

No.

MILTON

What?

TEL AND HEADS

There will be no second date.

MILTON

I thought you enjoyed yourself.

HEADS

Get him inside.

The HEADS are starting to go crazy. They slobber and stomp and smack bones against each other.

TEL

Yes. I want more enjoyment. Come upstairs. Or there'll be no second date.

MILTON

Sex isn't everything.

HEADS

This is the moment.

TEL

Maybe it is.

HEADS

Take him out.

MILTON

I used to think so too.

They stare at each other.

The HEADS are throwing a fit and are actively fighting each other.

TEL reaches for a knife.

HEADS

GET HIM INSIDE
KILL HIM THEN
KILL HIM NOW
IT'LL NEVER GET BETTER
IT'LL NEVER GET BETTER

MILTON

Give me a call sometime. When you think you can handle it.

He leaves.

The HEADS quiet.

TEL stares after him.

TEL
(to the HEADS)

Does that make any sense to you?

The HEADS mutter a vague affirmation.

TEL
Blue-balls isn't just for men, you know.

HEADS
You know how to relieve the tension.
(beat)

Please.
(beat)

Pleeeeaassee...

4

An alley. A HOMELESS PERSON slumped against a wall, passed out. TEL sits next to them. The HOMELESS PERSON wakes up.

TEL
Hello.

HOMELESS PERSON blinks at her. TEL takes out a checkbook and scribbles in it

TEL
How's... five-hundred thousand dollars sound?

HOMLESS PERSON's nods vigorously. TEL hands them the check.

TEL
There you are.

HOMELESS PERSON begins to walk out. A
HEAD gives TEL a brick.

TEL

You forgot something.

TEL throws the brick at the HOMELESS
PERSON, hitting them in the face. The brick
breaks. They crumple.

TEL stands over the HOMELESS PERSON.

A HEAD gives her a brick.

TEL

I've seen this cycle play out before -

She throws the brick on their head.
It breaks.
A HEAD gives her a brick.

TEL

This is the happiest moment

She throws the brick on their head.
It breaks.
A HEAD gives her a brick.

TEL

It only gets worse from here

She throws the brick on their head.
It breaks.
A HEAD gives her a brick.

TEL

So let me make this moment immortal

She throws the brick on their head.
It breaks.
A HEAD gives her a brick.

TEL

In our minds.

She throws the brick on their head.
It breaks.
A HEAD gives her a brick.

She throws the brick on their head.
It breaks.
A HEAD gives her a brick.

She throws the brick on their head.
It breaks.
A HEAD gives her a brick.

She throws the brick on their head.
It breaks.

The HOMELESS PERSON is motionless.

A HEAD passes TEL a knife.

She raises it as if to chop the HOMELESS
PERSON's head off.

Sound of a Polaroid being taken.

??

TEL can't sleep. She flips through Polaroids.

HEADS

You could have a name
If you were to be discovered.

TEL

That'll never happen.

HEADS

Not when daddy keeps making it go away.

TEL

We have a nice “mutually-assured destruction” thing going on.

HEADS

You could have a name
One of the great serial killers of America.

TEL

A woman to top the list. Has some appeal.
Bundy, Dahmer, Son of Sam, Boston Strangler, Gein, BTK, Gacy...
All the fucked up ones off the top of my noggin. All men.

HEADS

Aileen Wournos.

TEL

She’s chump change.

HEADS

You could have a name,
You and your Polaroids.
The Polaroid Murders.
The Polaroid Killer.

TEL

Nice ring.
I won’t get found out.

HEADS

You won’t.
Not while daddy’s around.

TEL

I’ve no intention of making myself known.

HEADS

You’re known to us
That’s plenty
A captive audience
Polaroid Killer.

TEL

Surprised there wasn't one. Back in the nineties or something.
 (she's flipped through all the Polaroids
 she looks through them again)

HEADS

It is a vain artist who admires her own work
 Over and over and over again.

TEL

It's all I have, shut your mouths.

HEADS

You can't tell us what to do.

TEL

Shut up.

HEADS

It must be infuriating
 This chatter
 You could escape it
 Behind the bars of a prison cell

TEL

Everything I do I do it for you.

HEADS

That's right.

TEL

(she selects one picture she's fond of)
 I've seen this cycle play out before -

HEADS

Again and again and again
 You can't help yourself
 Slave to compulsion
 Slave to us

TEL

This is the happiest moment
It only gets worse from here

(beat)

Do you think it's insecurity?

HEADS

Could be.

TEL

Me and her, together in this Polaroid. Forever. Right after the happiest moment we were ever going to have.

So I made this moment immortal
In our minds.

HEADS

The climax.

TEL

Coming down is the worst part.

But this way it stays fresh. New. Unspoiled by all that messy "after."

HEADS

Aside from the blood.

TEL

What's the time?

HEADS

4:48 in the morning.

TEL

I need to try for sleep.

(she stands up, brings the Polaroids to
the heads)

Hold on to these for me, will you?

(they take them from her)

Thanks.

HEADS

Anytime.

5

TEL and MILTON enter from opposite ends. They walk towards the middle where table and chairs are set up. They sit. It's a super swanky restaurant.

The HEADS serve them their meal.

They eat.

TEL glances up at MILTON, pausing while bringing her fork to her lips. He doesn't notice. She bites.

MILTON does the same.

They both look up, locking eyes.

MILTON puts down his fork. TEL follows his lead.

MILTON

I didn't think you would call. After last time.

TEL

I wasn't going to. But...

Silence.

HEADS

But we couldn't let you go, Milton.

MILTON

Did you hear something?

TEL
(stiffening)

No.

HEADS

Milton. What a dumb name.

MILTON
(craning his neck, looking back at the
HEADS)

Hold on, I think I heard...

TEL is intensely staring at him. Tight all over.

MILTON
Oh. There's live music. A band setting up.

TEL follows his gaze. Instantly relaxes as she
sees what he sees.

TEL
So there is.

TEL returns to eating. MILTON watches her.

TEL
(noticing, mouth full)
What?

MILTON smiles.

TEL
What?

MILTON
This is nice.

TEL
Mm-hm.

HEADS

Stab his fork into his jugular
 Drown him in his water glass
 Stuff a napkin down his throat
 Something
 Oh my god
 Something
 Please
 Anything but -

MILTON looks down to eat food. As he does,
 TEL throws a butter knife at the HEADS.

HEADS

Hey!

MILTON

Something happen?

TEL

Oh! Silly me. Knife just flew out of my hands. How dangerous. Sweaty palms. Very dangerous.

TEL goes to her butter knife. She bends down
 and picks it up. MILTON looks away.

TEL goes to the table, hesitates, not sitting
 down.

TEL

It's been a while.

MILTON

Hm?

TEL

Since I've dated anyone.

(beat)

Since anyone's been interested in me for anything other than a... a one night stand.

(beat)

I must've come off a little strong.

MILTON

I think you said something about your loins wanting me.

TEL

Funny enough, I ordered the pork loin.

MILTON

I'm going to try and not think too hard about what that might mean.

HEADS

You've got him

Sucker him in

TEL

(sitting)

I lead a... bohemian life.

MILTON

This is a one-eighty.

TEL

What?

MILTON

Suddenly you're all coy. Armed with euphemisms.

TEL

Well...

(she plays with the butter knife)

Maybe you make me want to play the long game.

(beat)

I think that's the most disgusting thing I've said in years. Including all the brazen "my loins" stuff.

MILTON laughs. TEL does too.

The HEADS silently argue with one another.

MILTON holds out a hand.

TEL gazes at it.

She takes his hand.

The HEADS collectively roll their eyes, throw up their arms, make exasperated groans and the like.

MILTON

I'm not coming home with you tonight.

TEL

I didn't think so.

(beat)

MILTON

Does that disappoint you?

TEL

Yes.

I think there's something wrong with me.

HEADS

YES.

MILTON

I think there's something wrong with me. With everyone.

(beat)

Is that okay? That I'm not...?

HEADS

NO. No no. No.

NO!

TEL smiles - half because she's genuinely enjoying MILTON, half because she's enjoying making the HEADS go ballistic.

TEL

It's great.

They smile and hold hands.

The HEADS scream and smash things.

TEL

I've got the check.

MILTON

Oh thank god.

TEL

I use my trust fund baby powers for good. Sometimes.

HEADS

Is killing us once not enough for you?!

The two of them smile.

The HEADS yank them apart and destroy the scene around them.

TEL and MILTON maintain their wistful staring into each other's eyes, unaffected by the violence.

6

On one end of the stage is TEL and BETHANY on a yacht. They lean on a railing, sipping wine.

BETHANY

I was starting to think I heard that last of you. What's going on?

TEL

Creative block. Struggles of an artist.

HEADS

(echoing)

Bullshit... bullshit... bullshit...

BETHANY

Oh no.

Yeah. TEL
 Sorry to hear that. BETHANY
 Nothing you can do about it. TEL
 Going to Mount-friggin'-Everest might help to get those artistic juices flowing again. BETHANY
 No Bethany that's... TEL
 Go. HEADS
 Maybe. TEL
 Maybe nothing. It'll help loads. Get that fresh Napalese - Napalish - Napalian? - whatever, get the fresh air in your lungs, it'll really help you my girl. BETHANY
 Maybe. TEL
 Don't be like that. Come on, we've been planning this for ages. If you flake on me now, I can't go. You're my meal ticket. BETHANY
 That's the crux of our friendship right there. TEL
 What, that I syphon money from you and make you do fun things? BETHANY
 Pretty much. TEL

BETHANY

If it weren't for me, you'd mope around your gloomy condo all day like the mopiest mope that ever moped into a mope.

TEL

That doesn't make any -

BETHANY

Tel, I'm using you. I'm using you for your money. I admit it. Your money and your yacht. Now get your camp gear and lets get to Mount Everest already. Once in a lifetime experience, babe!

7

On the other end of the stage, MILTON and ARNOLD sit in a coffee shop.

ARNOLD

I fucking hate coffee.

MILTON

If you don't want it, I'll have it.

ARNOLD

Two cups? At three in the afternoon? Buddy, you gotta be up late? Huh? Gotta thang going on you keeping from me?

MILTON chuckles.

ARNOLD

Shit dude, are you getting laid and not telling me about it?

(silence)

Oh my god you're getting laid.

MILTON

No - that's not...

(grinning like an idiot)

Okay, yes, yes there's a girl, okay? But it's more than just sex. It's not sex. We're doing the romance thing. I like romance.

ARNOLD

She's got your balls in her hand like a goddamn vise.

MILTON

Man, don't be a douche.

ARNOLD

Dude, you don't have the time for dating and not fucking. We've gotta get that webseries shot, man. Do you want to be working at two coffee shops the rest of your life? Sweet, sweet ad revenue and crowdfunding money says "nuh-uh."

MILTON

I know - I just...

6

Yacht.

TEL

Is it just me, or is this wine shit?

BETHANY

Must be because you aren't sharing it with fucktoy Milton.

TEL

Not my fucktoy.

BETHANY

Oh, I'm so sorry. Are you two on the outs or...?

TEL

No, that's not - we're good.

(beat)

Hard as this may be to believe, but we haven't fooled around yet.

BETHANY

Fooled around? My girl, when did you get so innocent?

(beat)

Hold on. You actually haven't...?

TEL

Nope.

HEADS

Feed us.

7

Coffee shop.

ARNOLD

You got an episode or two you can send my way?

(beat)

MILTON

Haven't gotten the chance.

ARNOLD

Man, what's the matter with you? We need to get these eps shot, gotta do a whole season at once. If you don't get me the scripts, we gotta push everything back and -

MILTON

I know, I know, I know, I'm sorry man.

MILTON gets a text message. He pulls out a brand new smartphone from his pocket.

ARNOLD

(re: the phone)

What happened to Old Bessie?

MILTON

Put her out to pasture.

ARNOLD

My god. Is this why you haven't written the - you can't write if you're not starving, is that how it is?

MILTON

Arnold, come on -

ARNOLD

Milton, get your dick straight.

(beat)

MILTON

Tel's rich.

ARNOLD

It all comes together now.

MILTON

Arnold, don't -

ARNOLD

She gets the seismic grip on your testes 'cause she's got dollar bills coming out of her
cooch like a -

MILTON

Arnold -

ARNOLD

Don't you do the "sad Arnold" thing to me. Show me a damn pic.

(snatches the phone from MILTON's
hand - he taps the screen)

She better be worth it as fuck if we're -

Um. How do I unlock it?

MILTON

Figure it out.

ARNOLD

Man, don't be doing this to me.

MILTON

Man, don't be breaking into my phone.

ARNOLD

Man, you owe me this, man.

MILTON

Arnold, stop.

ARNOLD

Don't "sad Arnold" me! Just tell me what stupid combination -

MILTON

Hell no.

ARNOLD

You don't respect me no more... Just gonna plug in random shit and you're gonna get locked outta your phone and then you're gonna -

(he unlocks the phone)

Oh. Really? That's the combo? That's so fucking -

MILTON

Okay, you know what -

(reaches for the phone)

ARNOLD

(pulls it away)

Ah-ah-aaah! This is my reconciliation, baby. This is my payment for your lame ass.

MILTON

Oh my god, you entitled little -

ARNOLD

(suddenly vicious)

Don't!

(silence)

Don't - just. Don't say that. Don't.

MILTON

Okay.

ARNOLD

I'm not entitled.

MILTON

Okay.

ARNOLD scrolls through MILTON's phone.

6

Yacht.

BETHANY grabs TEL by the wrist, presses two fingers against it.

TEL

Bethany!

BETHANY

Hold still.

TEL

Beth, what the fuck are you -

BETHANY
(letting go, relieved)

Oh my goodness.

TEL

What was that all about?

BETHANY

Checking for a pulse.

TEL

What?

BETHANY

I was suddenly very afraid that you'd up and died on me.

TEL

Funny.

BETHANY

Tel, have you been replaced by a bodysnatcher? Zeus would find your sex drive overbearing.

TEL

Don't be dramatic, Bethany.

BETHANY

Oh, you'll know when I'm being dramatic. It's when I run a stake through your heart and reveal your true form as some spindly spider creature. My god.

TEL

Have you no shame?

BETHANY

Oh, *I* have no shame?

TEL

I'm... maturing.

BETHANY

You sure?

TEL

No. Maybe. I don't know.

BETHANY

Could be maturing. Into your final form, you shapeshifting bugthing.

TEL

(she can't help but chuckle)

Maybe something *is* wrong with me.

BETHANY

Oh, Tel.

They share a moment.

7

Coffee shop.

ARNOLD

(prodding MILTON's phone)

Dude, is this *her*?

MILTON

Yes, what -

ARNOLD

Dude!

(bringing the phone right in MILTON's
face)

She's. On. A. Fucking. Yacht.

MILTON

Yes...

ARNOLD

With her fucking *name* plastered on the side.

MILTON

Okay so what are you -

ARNOLD

She owns that yacht! Dude! She's filthy fucking rich!

(MILTON is silent)

She's so fucking loaded man! Oh I get it now, I get it, you got yourself a sugarmomma
letting you suckle on her golden teat -

MILTON

Arnold...

ARNOLD

(mocking)

Bluweeeh Aaaarrn-ooooold!

(normal)

This is why you're together. Right here. Dolla dolla bill. You catch me?

MILTON

I mean... maybe a little.

ARNOLD

And not a bad looker. Shit, man, this fuckin' swimsuit on her, man oh my... That helps
things too.

MILTON

Yes.

ARNOLD

Oh man. Are you a gigolo? Are you that poor?

MILTON

Thanks.

ARNOLD

No - I'm sorry, that was -

MILTON

I'll take that back.

(reaches for his phone)

ARNOLD

Take her money. Fuck her good. That's all you need outta that deal.

MILTON

I'm sticking with romance.

ARNOLD

Dude, this is about the stupid pussy therapy thing isn't it?

MILTON

Arnold -

ARNOLD

Stop. With the fucking. Sad. Arnold. I'm telling you man, that - that crank you got pumpin' you fulla shit about being addicted to sex is taking your money and fuckin' using it to buy hookers.

MILTON

Sex addiction is a real problem.

ARNOLD

No, the real problem is not getting enough sex. Sex addiction. Jesus Christ, yeah, you've got fucking sex addiction, cuz *everybody's* got fucking sex addiction, man! Gettin' it every way you can, baby! Every way, every day!

MILTON

It's a problem! I'm shelling out thousands of dollars a month for my own damn apartment because I fuck all of my roommates girlfriends and suddenly no one wants to live with me.

ARNOLD

Dude, that fuckin' head-doctor's got you going to fucking SAA. I mean Christ, didn't even know there was a Sex Addicts Anonymous, man, what a fucking piece of pussy ass bullshit, I tell you -

MILTON

(pulling a chip out of his pocket)

One year chip. Right fucking here.

ARNOLD

(swiping it from him)

Gimme that.

(reading)

"From Shame to Grace."

(beat)

Oh my god. Oh my fucking God. They've brainwashed you.

MILTON

Arnold...

ARNOLD

No "sad Arnold". They've got you, man. They've converted you. That was their plan all along.

MILTON

(tearing it back)

The Jesus shit is just a part of the program. I ain't gone all holy on you.

ARNOLD

You keep talking, but I think they've reprogrammed you, man. They've done something to the wiring in your head - I think you're programmed to deny it now man, and now they -

MILTON

This is me, Arnold.

ARNOLD

No, if this was *you*, fucking Sir Slayer of Poon Milton Fucking Bosco, then you'd be all up in this rich bitch and pumping her with your goods - enough of this romantic bullshit!

MILTON

I do this the way I want!

(beat)

She's worth it. Okay? I can... I can contain myself. This'll be good for me. For us.

(beat)

ARNOLD

And she has a lot of money.

MILTON

And she has a lot of money.

6

Yacht.

BETHANY

Anyone who can make you a little less gloomy is okay in my book. Whether he's shagging you or no.

TEL

You have that effect on me as well.

BETHANY

I do? Really?

TEL

...of course?

(beat)

You look like you're going to cry. Or maybe vomit.

BETHANY

Oh Tel, oh Tel it's...

BETHANY is trembling. She downs the rest of her wine to keep it from spilling.

HEADS

Coming down is the worst part
Make it stop

TEL

I can loan you an extra thousand. A little “donation for the blood bank.”

BETHANY

(covering her face)

Thank you. Thank you.

(beat)

Tel, without you I’d be dead in an alley of skid row.

HEADS

That can be the end result, if you’d like

We were thinking something involving mountains and snow

But skid row works too

TEL

Don’t say that. You’re... industrious. You’d be fine. Without me.

BETHANY

(wiping her eyes)

Oh, “industrious.” That’s so nice of you to say instead of “conniving bitch who sinks to anything to get by.”

TEL

(moving stiffly, uncomfortable with
comforting someone)

Well... okay, well yes, but you’ve been so many things. I... admire your... ability to try new things. Photography. Architecture. Investing. Weren’t you going to be an engineer at one point?

BETHANY

Notice how I’m not any of those. I’ve failed at every single one, add a dozen. I can’t - focus? I can’t - something’s wrong with... something’s wrong with me.

HEADS

Coming down is the worst part

We’ve tumbled off the peak

BETHANY

I need you, Tel. And I need you to be happy. So I can be happy through you.

TEL

I thought you liked doing the - what's that thing you do on the internet, cam shows?

BETHANY

It's either the internet version of stripping or prostitution depending on my mood at the time. I need to be really *really* fucked up to do it anymore. Like, molly. Seriously fucked up. My body can't take that. And my body can't take *that*. Or my sanity.

(beat)

We both could use a saint. This Milton fellow may be close enough for you.

(beat)

For my induction into sainthood, I'll take you to Everest. Yes baby?

TEL

Technically, I'll be taking you.

BETHANY

Semantics. Oh, trust me honey, it'll be the happiest we'll have ever been together, coming to summit. Ooh! I'm wriggling in excitement just thinking about it.

TEL goes still.

HEADS

Your motto, your creed,
 What are you without us to feed?
 Nothing, that's what,
 You'll be happy and then it's time to bleed.

BETHANY

Tel?

HEADS

You've kept her 'round far too long
 We've seen the climax coming long
 Extinguish length, what experiment,
 Snuff her out in a drift of snow.

BETHANY

...Tel?

HEADS

Snuff her out in a drift of snow
Snuff her out in a drift of snow
Snuff her out in a drift of snow

BETHANY

(clapping her hands together)

TEL!

TEL

Mm?

BETHANY

Tel, my girl, did I scare you?

TEL

I - Sorry. Was thinking.. about...

TEL AND HEADS

Let's go to Everest.

TEL

It'll be wonderful.

BETHANY

Tel, are you -

TEL

I need to steer this fucking thing.

BETHANY

Tel!

It's too late - TEL's gone.

BETHANY

Bugger.

(she begins to smoke a cigarette)

Goddamn saint. Putting up with my shenanigans.

BETHANY takes long drags of her cigarette.

7

ARNOLD

Well, man.

(passing MILTON his cup of coffee)

I'd say you earned the second cup.

MILTON

(sarcastic)

Wow! Thank you so much!

(beat)

ARNOLD

You seeing her tonight?

MILTON

Yeah.

ARNOLD

Have a good date. You hopeless romantic golddigger you.

MILTON

Later, scumsucker.

ARNOLD

(as he's leaving)

Oh no! You've discovered my secret identity, whatever will I do?

ARNOLD cackles his way offstage.

MILTON waits for him to go. He plays with his phone.

HEADS

A golddigger, sex addict, romantic,
So Milton what's up, man?

6 & 7

Yacht - BETHANY smokes. Coffee shop -
MILTON plays with his new phone.

HEADS

Bethany and Milton, peas in a pod,
If you think you'll make it out alive you're sick.
If you think you'll make it out alive you're sick.
If you think you'll make it out alive you're sick.

???

TEL sits in front of the HEADS, as though they
were a tribunal. They hold her Polaroids.

HEADS

What did you do today?

TEL

I woke up. I brushed my teeth, I -

HEADS

Don't be petulant
You know what we mean.

TEL

Oh. That. That trifle of a thing.

HEADS

It is no trifling thing to disobey what gives you purpose.

TEL

Have you considered....
Maybe you're not my purpose anymore?
Maybe I'm free from what happened twelve years ago in the month of May
When a beautiful girl showed me the way to heaven's gate.

HEADS

A date with...

(shuddering)

Milton...

TEL

Yes.

HEADS

And yet

Though you felt us gnawing on you

Pushing through you

Lashing you

For immortalization

To do what must be done to preserve the happiness

To do what must be done to keep us fresh

To do what must be done to add to us

You ignored us

You ignored...

Tel...

Tel...

Do you understand how this makes us feel?

TEL

I feel you needle me in every open pore. You tell me it'll never get any better.

But it does. With Milton. With Bethany. I ignore you for a second or two.

I feel that panic. That I've let it slip away from me. That we'll be coming down.

But I wait a second or two...

And it gets a little bit better.

TEL stands up, brushes her fingers along the
HEADS.

TEL

I think...

I think I don't need you anymore.

Or those Polaroids.

TEL tips over the first HEAD. They fall like
dominoes. They spill their Polaroids on the
ground.

HEADS

What are you without us?

TEL

I... don't know.
We'll see.

HEADS

You'll be back.

TEL

Maybe. Maybe I'll wash my hands of you.

HEADS

You're a slave to your mood
Happy is a moment
The happiest is fleeting
Once you hit the peak there's only down
Once you hit the peak there's only down
You cannot take the down
Tel, we know you well
When you finally feel the down
You'll crave our guidance once again
You'll grow our ranks a thousand times again

TEL

I'm cutting myself off from Daddy's money.

Silence.

HEADS

No.

TEL

Yes.
If there's no one to pay off the cops, you can't keep me killing much longer.

HEADS

Fool
 Rich Daddy's girl
 Never worked hard in her fucking life
 You won't survive a week of "self-sufficiency."

TEL

And you know what?
 I'm going to Everest. With Bethany.
 It'll be the happiest moment we ever have together. That's what everything of ours has
 been leading to - the peak moment.
 There'll still be happiness after.

HEADS

It'll be so dull in comparison.

TEL

But there will still be happiness.
 And there will still be happiness with Milton.
 The coming down doesn't have to be fatal.
 I can do it on my own.
 (TEL has a bone in her hands)
 Doesn't mean I'm not above a bit of fun.

TEL whacks the heads about with the bone.
 Jaunty music plays. She is frighteningly happy.

PART 2 - COMING DOWN IS THE WORST PART

8

A cafe. TEL is flipping through Polaroid
 pictures.

MILTON enters.

MILTON

Hey, hey!

TEL
(hiding the Polaroids)

Mil- what?

I thought you worked at the other cafe. The one over there.
(she points across the street)

MILTON

I do.

TEL

Uh-huh.

MILTON

I work at both here and there.

TEL

Why?

MILTON

Have you seen these rent prices lately? Am I right?
(beat)

You wouldn't know, would you.

TEL

Not a bit.

MILTON

Is there anything I can get you this fine morning?

TEL

No thanks.

MILTON

Why then, may I ask, are you here?

TEL

Meeting an acquaintance. Business associate. Actually, I haven't met him yet. I think it's a him.

MILTON

Oooh, sounds important.

TEL

Eehh...

(beat)

You've never been to the beach.

MILTON

Never.

TEL

My loins think it would be good to take you sometime.

MILTON

That would be lovely. Tell your loins I'm thankful.

13

A beach. TEL and MILTON walking.

MILTON

Gorgeous.

TEL

Yes.

MILTON

Golden orange sunset falling into the ocean,
 Slight breeze in my hair.
 Thank you for taking me here.

TEL

You're welcome.

MILTON

A *private* beach no less.

TEL

Yes.

8

The cafe.

TEL

Here comes my... something person. I'll see you.

MILTON

(quick peck on the lips)

See you .

MORDECAI enters as MILTON exits.

They exchange a look.

MILTON is creeped out.

MORDECAI

Tel.

TEL

Mordecai.

MORDECAI

Do you have...?

TEL

(passing him the Polaroids)

Yes.

MORDECAI

(sifting through them)

These are good.

TEL

Thanks.

(pointing)

That one's from a dance club.

My condo.

The forest.

A synagogue.

Grand Canyon.

Under the highway bridge.
The beach.

MORDECAI

Busy girl.

TEL AND HEADS

Bored girl.

MORDECAI

Whatever it takes.

(tucking the Polaroids away)

How much?

TEL

Two thousand. Each.

MORDECAI

That's a lot.

TEL

I'm a goddamn artist.

MORDECAI

They're good. Not the fucking Mona Lisa.

TEL

Two thousand. Each.

MORDECAI

One thousand.

HEADS

You're selling us cheap.

TEL

Two thousand is getting them cheap. One of a kind. And I won't make more.

HEADS

You know that's not what we meant.

MORDECAI

You can't stop.

TEL

I can.

MORDECAI

You - you can't do this to me. To your customer.

TEL

Funny enough, I didn't make these for you.

MORDECAI

No! You - you can't! You won't! You'll...

No. You'll make these forever okay? I'll pay your stupid price, but you, you gotta keep making these and - and...

TEL

You're in no position to -

MORDECAI

Maybe I know where you live.

(beat)

Maybe I traced your IP address. I want to see all the goods in your condo.

All the goods.

(silence)

TEL

No.

MORDECAI

Stop teasing. I want to see.

TEL

No.

MORDECAI

I will take these to the police, cunt.

TEL

HEADS

See how I'm not scared by your threats. Save me, Daddy.

MORDECAI

You'll go to jail. Jail for cunts.

TEL
I'm not worried. I can... make the
investigation go away.

HEADS
Save me, Daddy.

Bullshit.

MORDECAI

Just try. Cunt.

TEL AND HEADS

Take me to your place.
I want to see
The real thing.

MORDECAI

Mordecai.

TEL

Just do it.

MORDECAI

(beat)

Two thousand.

TEL

One thousand and your place.

MORDECAI

Worthless -

TEL

You'll leave here
You'll forget about me
I know where you live
I'll enter
While you sleep
I'll look my fill
I'll take my fill.

MORDECAI

Silence.

TEL AND HEADS

I have something to show you.

MORDECAI

That's more like it.

-1

MOMMY and DADDY mime the following as the HEADS sing. They are silhouettes. TEL watches, as though a small child.

HEADS

(singing)

When Tel was a young girl
Her Mommy gave her all she wanted and more
When Tel was a young girl
Her Daddy gave her no attention, just chores

13

The beach.

MILTON

Where's your camera?

TEL

Pardon?

MILTON

Your camera? For the Polaroids? The, uh -

TEL

Oh. Yes. My art.

(beat)

Beach sunset isn't exactly my subject.

MILTON

Still. Would make a lovely Polaroid. Artistic Polaroid. A lot of them.

TEL

I get the hint, silly.

(beat)

But no.

12

Strong wind. Snow. Everest. TEL and
BETHANY hike.

BETHANY

Oh my goodness!

TEL

Mm?

BETHANY

Oh my goodness!

TEL

Yeah.

BETHANY

Mount Friggin' Everest!

TEL

Yeah...

Much more impressive, this close up.

BETHANY

Wow wow wow.

TEL

If this...

This could be what meeting God is like.

Nothing compares.

HEADS

Except for that one little thing.
 The killing thing.
 That's what we're talking about here.

BETHANY

You're welcome. Mopemaster General.

TEL

It's all because you made me.

BETHANY

And don't you forget it, my girl.

TEL

Thank you.

BETHANY yelps.

TEL

What?

BETHANY

(laughing)

I don't think I've ever heard you say those words before!

(beat)

My girl, Tel, are you - are you crying?

TEL

It's the wind.

BETHANY

Oh, baby girl...

HEADS

Snuff her out in a drift of snow
 Snuff her out in a drift of snow
 Snuff her out in a drift of snow

TEL walks up to BETHANY.

TEL hugs her.

Oh my - Tel, my girl!

BETHANY

I have something to say to say.

TEL

Tel, you're making me blush.

BETHANY

It comes...

HEADS

I think...

TEL

All our years of friendship...

It's been leading up to this moment.

BETHANY

Tel... this is so unlike you.

TEL AND HEADS

This is the way it has to be.

TEL

No. It doesn't.

HEADS

Excuse you?

BETHANY

What are you talking about? Oh my goodness, is the thin air - I think that's what it is - is it - are you okay?

TEL
(breaking away)

I think that's what it is.

HEADS

The fuck it is.

BETHANY

It's okay, my girl. It's okay.

They sit in the snow. BETHANY rubs TEL's back. TEL jerks away, then returns.

HEADS

SNUFF HER OUT IN A DRIFT OF SNOW
YOU'RE PASSING THE MOMENT

TEL flips off the heads behind her.

BETHANY notices. Confused head tilt.

TEL

That mountain don't scare me.

HEADS

For Christ's sake...

BETHANY

(flipping off Everest)

Yeah, go bugger yourself, you tall twat!

They laugh.

BETHANY

Feeling better?

TEL

HEADS

A bit.

NO

BETHANY

Good.

(beat)

I'm so glad we did this.

10

A synagogue. TEL and a RABBI.

RABBI

Forgiveness in the Jewish tradition is quite different from the Catholic which is in turn different from the various other Christian traditions, and even then, different Jewish traditions follow different -

TEL

I'm not interested in the semantics.

RABBI

Few are, but it is important, in this case.

(beat)

I cannot forgive you. That is not the way.

TEL

Then how can you help me?

RABBI

I am distant from what you have done. You must forgive yourself. Even more than that, to experience forgiveness in its fullest, those you have wronged must forgive you. Seek it from them, not me.

(pause)

TEL

I've wronged a lot of people.

RABBI

So have we all.

HEADS

They're all dead.

TEL

None of them are around to forgive me.

RABBI

No one said it would be easy.

TEL looks forlorn.

RABBI

But... for one in need of as much comfort as you... stand beside me. Let us pray on the meaning of forgiveness. Of repentance. Like this:

The RABBI stands across from TEL and demonstrates Jewish prayer position. TEL copies him.

RABBI

Thumbs to your forehead...

TEL adjusts.

RABBI

A little more bent...

TEL adjusts.

RABBI

Good, my good gentile. Let us pray to the holy.

They pray.

9

TEL's condo. TEL enters with MORDECAI. He looks at the HEADS, awestruck.

TEL

I was going to throw these out. Lucky you.

MORDECAI

My goodness...
It's amazing
Better than you'd led me to believe.

TEL

If you like monsters.

MORDECAI

There's a lot of them.

TEL

I get bored often.

MORDECAI

This one's eyes are stitched.

TEL

Yes.

MORDECAI

(gleeful)

Still blood.

TEL

Don't come all over my condo, now.

MORDECAI

Not yet.

Silence.

MORDECAI

(touching one)

...real live dead flesh...

TEL

Don't touch.

You've seen "the goods."

Cash and go.

MORDECAI

I haven't seen all the goods.

11

TEL's condo. She is flipping through Polaroids.

There is a knock on the door.

ARNOLD

(offstage)

Hey.

TEL doesn't notice him.

ARNOLD
(offstage)

Ahem. Hey.

TEL ignores him.

ARNOLD
(offstage)

Hey. Tel.

(whistles)

Hey.

TEL opens the door. ARNOLD in the
entry way.

TEL

Do I know you?

ARNOLD
Nah. Maybe. Milton ever... uh...
(he collects himself, tries again)

I'm Arnold.

TEL

Which one?

ARNOLD

Huh?

TEL

I've met a few Arnolds.

ARNOLD

Oh. Uh. Milton's Arnold.

TEL

Milton's Arnold.

ARNOLD

Yeah.

Okay. TEL

Arnold Wheezer. ARNOLD

Okay. TEL

Look, I - Okay. So... he hasn't told you about... Um. I'm a filmmaker. ARNOLD

Yeah? TEL

Producer. ARNOLD

Interesting. TEL

We're gonna make a hit webseries. ARNOLD

I'm sure. TEL

He's never told you? ARNOLD

No. TEL

Oh. ARNOLD

Filmmaker. TEL

Yup. ARNOLD

Producer. TEL

Yeah. ARNOLD

What do you want with me? TEL

I'm gonna make you a star, kid! ARNOLD
(doing a bad old-timey accent)

No, but, I uh, I uh... (laughs at his quote)

He wants you. HEADS

You want me. TEL

I - what? No, no I - I - ARNOLD

You're a bad liar. TEL AND HEADS

I - look, I - I - ARNOLD

Get him inside. HEADS

Arnold, eh? TEL

Get him inside. HEADS

Filmmaker, eh? TEL

Get him inside.
HEADS

Producer, eh?
TEL

Get him inside.
HEADS

Come inside.
TEL

Get him inside.
HEADS

She motions for ARNOLD to enter.

Get him inside.
HEADS

TEL leads ARNOLD in.

ARNOLD takes in the place. A shiver runs through him. He's thinking too much with his dick to care.

TEL appraises him.

ARNOLD walks around. Examines the place. Looks at TEL. Looks away. Back to TEL

13

The beach.

TEL and MILTON stare out into the sunset.

MILTON
Did I ever tell you about Arnold?
(beat)

TEL

You might have mentioned him. Once.

MILTON

He was... a good friend. In spite of...

(beat)

The police found him. Dumped in a ditch. Naked. No suspect.
Made me really think about... life. How short it is.

TEL

Yes.

9

TEL's condo.

TEL

You're not serious.

MORDECAI

(moving towards her)

Oh yes, yes, very.

TEL

You're not smart. Just another gore obsessed troll with an insatiable boner -

MORDECAI

(producing a gun)

Fuck you.
Get naked.

TEL stares at him.

She takes her shirt off

MORDECAI rubs his cock through his pants.

He orgasms.

TEL throws her shirt in his face.

He fires the gun - it misses wide.

TEL digs her nails into his arm and pries the gun from him.

TEL

Shooting off impatiently. Not surprised.

She shoots him in the genitals.

She stands over him.

TEL

Self-defense... when was the last time?

HEADS

Three years ago.

TEL

I thought it was two.

HEADS

Could have been five.

TEL

Was it seven?

HEADS

Could be nine.

TEL

Self defense

HEADS

Is abnormal

TEL

This won't be quick

HEADS

This won't be kind

TEL

There is no cycle
 This isn't happiness
 This isn't a moment
 This is eternity.

????

TEL sits in front of the HEADS. They eat her.
 She lets them.

HEADS

Too long, too long

TEL

How many years?

HEADS

One

TEL

Perhaps two

HEADS

Or three

TEL

Or four

HEADS

Or a dozen

TEL

I don't

HEADS

Remember anymore.

TEL

How hollow

Is the rotten oak?	HEADS
	TEL
How rotten	HEADS
Is the moldy bread?	TEL
Too long, too long	HEADS
Do you feel	TEL
The same	HEADS
Do you feel	TEL
Insane	HEADS
Do you feel	TEL
Wanted	HEADS
Do you feel	TEL
Whole	HEADS
Do you feel	TEL
Safe	

Do you feel HEADS

Like this will end TEL

Do you feel HEADS

The cycle TEL

Do you feel HEADS

The happiness TEL

Do you feel HEADS

Finally TEL

Do you feel HEADS

Yes TEL

Do you feel HEADS

The HEADS finish eating her.

12

Everest. BETHANY sits beside TEL.

BETHANY

You might not see much of me for a while.

TEL

Why?

BETHANY

I'm moving back. To England. For a while at least.

Wind.

TEL

Oh.

BETHANY

I spoke to my parents for the... the first time. In a decade. Something awful like that.

(beat)

I'm an ungrateful daughter. And they... no questions, they just... they're willing to...

The HEADS smile.

BETHANY

Thank you so much, Tel. For everything. I would be dead without your generous "blood bank donations." I truly believe that.

(beat)

And I'm still an ungrateful friend. I'm sorry.

BETHANY rubs TEL's back.

-1

HEADS

(singing)

When Tel was a young girl

Her Mommy found out that Daddy had a whore

MOMMY walks in on DADDY getting a
blowjob from GIRL.

HEADS
(singing)

When Tel was a young girl
Her Mommy fought Daddy to settle the score

MOMMY and DADDY argue.

11

A bed is onstage. TEL and ARNOLD stand on
opposite sides of it.

They stare at each other. A long silence.

So...
ARNOLD

Silence.

Milton's friend.
TEL

Mm-hm.
ARNOLD

Some friend.
TEL

Hey, now don't...
ARNOLD
(laughs nervously)

Some girlfriend. About to...

About to what?
TEL

You know. With me. His friend.
ARNOLD

What with you?
TEL

ARNOLD
(laughs nervously)

Don't play stupid.
We're here to do... what it is... two adults... do. When they're alone.

TEL AND HEADS

Killing or fucking?

ARNOLD
(laughs nervously)

Good one. Um. The second. We're here. In the bedroom. Because. We're adults. About to do.... you know.

TEL

I'm not so sure. You look like a man, but seeing as you can't come out and just say the thing, you may as well be twelve years old.

ARNOLD
(laughs nervously)

You're a... you're a lady, man. It would - would be rude of me to be so... so coarse.

TEL

Smooth.

ARNOLD

I never claimed to have a lot of game, okay? I never -
Man, Milton. There's a guy with game. One look from him and ladies just - uh -

TEL

Excrete moisture from their vag?

ARNOLD
(laughs nervously)

I was going to say "drop their panties," but uh, yeah. Yeah.

TEL

I haven't cheated on him.

ARNOLD

He hasn't slept with you. I don't think. Which is strange.

TEL

I know. Strange.

ARNOLD

Hasn't slept with anyone in over a year.

TEL

Hm.

ARNOLD takes his shirt and pants off quickly, awkwardly. He is down to is underwear, pants around his ankles. They stare at each other.

TEL

This is uncomfortable.

ARNOLD

Not great with... um, not great with...

TEL

You look like a greased ball bearing.

ARNOLD

Oh, ha ha, hey now -

TEL

Do men ooze sweat when they're aroused? I ask because in my copious experience, I've never encountered it, but I'm usually focused on other things.

ARNOLD

Okay, now that's just mean.

TEL

You think I'm just going to leap all over the sight of a naked man, you entitled little -

ARNOLD

Don't say that.

TEL

What, "entitled?"

ARNOLD

Stop it!

TEL

Ooh, I've hit a nerve, you entitled little boy -

ARNOLD

Cut it out!

TEL

- hoping to get your dick sucked by the floozy, ooh, so sad. He thinks he's entitled to my gifts.

ARNOLD

Don't say that! I'm not entitled! I'm not! I'm not! I'm not!

(beat)

TEL

No...

ARNOLD

It's not like you don't have your...

(has trouble saying the word)

...privileges either, missy. I know about your money.

TEL

I'm entitled.

ARNOLD

Hypocrite. Judging me for... judging me...

TEL

I don't pretend like I'm not what I am. I don't pretend like life's lottery hasn't paid me out a trillionfold. I don't get pissy when somebody notices. Unlike a certain other entitled person in this room.

ARNOLD

Okay, you know what...!

ARNOLD tries to lunge for TEL, but his pants are still around his ankles. He trips and falls.

Peals of laughter from TEL.

ARNOLD

(squirming on the ground)

Don't do - don't laugh at - I'm not -

TEL

Oh, this is it - I can tell.

HEADS

That was it.

13

The beach.

Waves.

MILTON

...love the sand...

MILTON walks along the shore. TEL stands still. She breathes deep.

She pulls out her knife, concealing it behind her.

She walks over to him.

MILTON

...hey, Tel?

She stops.

TEL

Yes?

MILTON

This is wonderful.

TEL AND HEADS

Yes.

MILTON

How many dates is this?

TEL

Don't know.

MILTON

Gotta be at least a dozen.

TEL

Yes.

MILTON

Isn't this better? Than if you'd had me... you know. Day one?

9

TEL's condo.

MORDECAI whimpers on the ground.

She finds the bullet-hole.

She sticks a finger in.

She twists her finger.

She breaks one of his fingers.

TEL

Will the cops leave me alone if I plead self defense?

She breaks one of his fingers.

HEADS

Depends.

She breaks one of his fingers.

TEL

If I leave his tortured corpse in an alley way -

She breaks one of his fingers.

TEL

- if there is no flow of money -

She breaks one of his fingers.

TEL

- will they still link it back to me?

She breaks one of his fingers.

HEADS

Who can say?

She breaks one of his fingers.

HEADS

Getting carried away.

She breaks one of his fingers.

HEADS

Daddy is just a call away.

She breaks one of his fingers.

HEADS

Daddy is just a call away.

She breaks one of his fingers.

HEADS

Daddy is just a call away.

She drags him to the HEADS.

She puts one of his hands into one of the HEADS' mouths. It bites.

She puts the other hand into one of the
HEADS' mouths, spreading his arms like a
crucifix. It bites.

TEL

Jesus loves me

HEADS

This I know

TEL

He tried to fuck me

HEADS

And he died slow.

TEL splits MORDECAI open from throat to
pelvis.

She pries him apart.

The HEADS smile.

10

TEL and the RABBI stand in prayer.

HEADS

We would've done the same
If we'd known the truth, just like you
They'd have done the same
They'd forgive you, if they knew

TEL snaps upright.

HEADS

This is all
This is all
This is all
This is peace

11

TEL's bedroom. ARNOLD squirms on the ground with his pants down.

TEL
(to HEADS)

Be a dear, will you?

HEADS

We have many implements
Saw, knife, screwdriver, nails
Bone, pipe, crowbar -

TEL

A bone sounds like fun. Pass me a tibia.

HEADS
(they pass her a bone)

Do the work.

TEL

The Lord's work.

12

Everest. BETHANY rubs TEL's back.

TEL grips BETHANY by the throat.

TEL strangles BETHANY.

TEL
(panting)

You... *spoiled it!*
Always with... these goddamn cycles!

BETHANY
(choking)

Tel - what the - Tel -

10

The RABBI prays.

TEL

I've seen this cycle play out before -

TEL grabs the RABBI by his tallit. She strangles him with it.

11

TEL strikes ARNOLD in the crotch wielding the bone like it's a hammer. She's grinning. She straddles him.

TEL

I've seen this cycle play out before -

Ahe strikes ARNOLD's head with the bone.

10

TEL strangles the RABBI with his tallit.

TEL

This is the happiest moment

12

TEL strangles BETHANY.

TEL

That was... the happiest... moment!

BETHANY

(struggling)

Hi-hilarious - stop now - please -

11

TEL

This is the happiest moment

She strikes ARNOLD's head with the bone.

10

TEL strangles the RABBI with his tallit.

TEL

It only gets worse from here

11

TEL

It only gets worse from here

She strikes ARNOLD's head with the bone.

12

TEL strangles BETHANY.

TEL

It got worse... got worse!

BETHANY

I'm just - home - haven't been home -

11

TEL

So let me make this moment immortal

She strikes ARNOLD's head with the bone.

10

TEL strangles the RABBI with his tallit.

TEL

So let me make this moment immortal

12

TEL strangles BETHANY.

TEL

But I'll make... that moment... immortal...

BETHANY

Papa...!

10

TEL strangles the RABBI with his tallit.

In our minds.

11

TEL

In our minds.

TEL strikes ARNOLD one last time.

12

TEL strangles BETHANY.

TEL

And forget the rest of it!

10

TEL lets the RABBI fall.

TEL

Do you forgive me?

HEADS

We forgive you.

Sound of a Polaroid camera taking a picture.

11

TEL returns the bone to the HEADS.

TEL looks down at ARNOLD's corpse.

The sound of a Polaroid camera taking a picture.

12

BETHANY goes limp.

TEL continues to strangle her.

Wind.

TEL lays BETHANY out in the snow.

The sound of a Polaroid camera taking a picture.

?????

TEL is staked to the ground with bones.

Projected Polaroids of MILTON and
BETHANY.

Screechy static sounds.

HEADS
(distorted voices)

FAR TOO LONG
Have these fucks been around
FAR TOO LONG
Have they been allowed to live
FAR TOO LONG
Have they been on the coming down
FAR TOO LONG
Have you waited
FAR TOO LONG
Have they taken advantage of your kindness
IT WILL NEVER GET BETTER
IT WILL NEVER GET BETTER
IMMORTALIZE
IMMORTALIZE
IMMORTALIZE

Projected Polaroid of MORDECAI's corpse.

HEADS

REMEMBER THIS FEELING
How good it was to take out the trash
REMEMBER THIS FEELING
How wonderful it was to immortalize
REMEMBER THIS FEELING
How beautiful it is to add to our ranks
REMEMBER THIS FEELING
How happy you were
REMEMBER THIS FEELING
How you don't have to deal with the mess
IT WILL NEVER GET WORSE
IT WILL NEVER GET WORSE
IMMORTALIZE
IMMORTALIZE
IMMORTALIZE

The static climaxes to a screechy high-pitch.

The static cuts out.

Sound of a phone ringing through a receiver.

Click of it being answered.

DADDY

Hello?

TEL

Dad. I could use some money.

-1

HEADS

(singing)

When Tel was a young girl
Her Daddy killed Mommy in a fit of gore

DADDY bludgeons MOMMY to death with a
bone.

HEADS

(singing)

When Tel was a young girl
Her Daddy saw Tel had seen it through the door

DADDY looks at TEL.

HEADS

(singing)

When Tel was a young girl
Her Daddy begged to stay quiet evermore

DADDY, on his knees, tries to explain things to
TEL.

HEADS

(singing)

Tel got anything she wanted from Daddy evermore
Tel got anything she wanted from Daddy evermore

TEL nods. DADDY relaxes.

DADDY
(singing)

Keep quiet, Tel...

HEADS
(singing)

Tel got anything she wanted from Daddy evermore

TEL
(singing)

Keep quiet, keep quiet

ALL
(singing)

Tel got anything she wanted from Daddy evermore

13

The beach.

Silence between TEL and MILTON. Sound of waves.

TEL squeezes the knife.

TEL
I've seen this cycle play out before...

MILTON whips around. He grabs TEL by the face - she is stunned.

He kisses her.

She drops her knife in the water - they embrace.

The knife is pulled into the sea.

MILTON

Hey.

(beat)

There's something I need to tell you.

TEL

What is it?

MILTON

I...

(he reaches into his pocket, brings out the
one-year SAA chip)

Just...

(he presses it into her palm)

I think there's something wrong with me. Or used to. I hope.

TEL

(looks at it)

"From Shame to Grace." What...?

MILTON

I haven't been... entirely...

(he removes it from her hand)

It's from a dark chapter of my life. I really long, dark chapter.

They both look down at the chip for a time.

MILTON chucks the chip into the sea.

They watch it float away.

The sun sets.

PART 3 - THE HAPPIEST MOMENT

14

Darkness. The sound of TEL and MILTON
making love.

Slow light. A bedroom. The HEADS are not onstage.

TEL rides MILTON slowly.

MILTON

Tel...

They go faster.

Faster.

They climax.

She collapses on him.

They breathe together.

TEL snuggles into him.

TEL

Thank you.

MILTON

Thank *you*.

(beat)

Let's go again.

TEL

Are you serious?

MILTON

(getting on top of her)

C'mon, let's go again.

TEL

I'm done for tonight.

MILTON

What?

(playfully prods her body)

I thought you were Ms. Insatiable Loins over here.

TEL

(laughs)

Yeah, well. I've become Ms. Satiated Loins.

MILTON tickles her. TEL laughs.

MILTON stops.

MILTON

You're serious.

TEL

...yeah?

MILTON

Are you...? Please. Another round.

TEL

No, Milton. Come down here and hold me.

MILTON

(flipping TEL onto her front)

Just a quick one.

TEL

No. Stop.

MILTON

(kissing her neck)

Come on.

TEL

(trying to get out from under him)

Milton. I'm not interested.

MILTON

(pushing her down)

Hey now -

TEL tries to squirm out, but MILTON presses harder.

MILTON takes a hand off of her to adjust the angle of his penis.

TEL twists out from under MILTON and slaps him across the face.

MILTON's initial reaction is anger. It becomes horror.

He backs away from TEL.

Silence.

MILTON

I...

I'm sorry. I thought I was over this.

I'd been... I went to SAA. For a year. For a whole year I was clean. I was good. I didn't have sex with anyone. For a year.

A HEAD enters.

It walks towards TEL, holding a knife, handle end towards TEL.

MILTON

I don't know...

I don't know what came over me.

I think something's wrong with me.

I start... I can't stop.

I can't stop.

Insatiable. Me.

I've done some terrible things.

I've lost so many people.

I've fucked everything up.

"From shame to grace."

I thought... I thought I was free.

"From shame to grace."

But then we...

And I couldn't...

I'm sorry.

Tel, I'm so sorry.

The HEAD stops right in front of TEL.

Only light on the HEAD and TEL.

HEADS

Why are you so upset?

TEL

I thought we were happy.
I thought I could escape you.

HEADS

Foolish girl.

TEL

Why can't I escape you?

HEADS

Because
Other people
Are such
Disappointments

TEL

Something's wrong with me.

HEADS

You're just like him
An addiction this strong
You thought you could quit us cold-turkey
You thought you could quit us by taking away Daddy
You thought you could quit us with an allowance or two
A cheat day or two or three or a dozen
You can't quit us
Coming down is the worst part

TEL

I was so happy with him.
Every moment.

HEADS

It can stay that way
Eternally
Immortalize.

TEL

(closes her eyes)

I see a future so clearly.
Where we are happy all the time.
And when we argue, it's not so bad.
And we love each other.
There's a house somewhere in the county side. In Canada. The house is a cabin. We
huddle in the living room by a log fire. He's a novelist. I'm a photographer. There are
three dogs. Willow, Buster and Rufus. They run free in the vast back yard. We go into
town, and everyone knows who we are. We say hello. Mrs. Jensen smiles and makes us
hot cocoa. Mr. Jensen mutters something about the economy and we nod along.
We're thinking about adopting. We've built a child's bedroom that will one day have the
best little girl on the whole Earth. We're not ready for her yet, but the day is coming
soon. At night we see the stars. We look into the night sky and we tell stories about the
shapes in the stars.
We're not afraid.
We're free.
You've been gone.
The stains are all gone.

Silence.

HEADS

What
A robust
Delusion
That could never be you
Immortalize what you had
Immortalize
Immortalize
Immortalize

Silence.

TEL opens her eyes.

TEL takes the knife.

The HEAD disappears. Lights on TEL and MILTON.

TEL points the blade of the knife against MILTON's chest.

They stare into each other's eyes.

They breathe together.

Static builds as light fades.

THE END