Two-Character Play

by

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Characters
Audience - Either gender/any age/any number.

Delia - F/19 years old. Also plays Lovely Assistant II.

Actor/Father - M/25-35 years old.

Ambrose - M/21-23 years old. Also plays TV News Anchor.

Brianna - F/18-20 years old. Also plays Lovely Assistant.

One Lover - Either Gender/25-40 years old with short cropped hair.

The Other Lover - Either Gender/25-40 years old with a long thick pony tail.

Isaac - M/18-20 years old. Also plays Actor 1, Magician, and Waiter.

Dancer 1 - Either Gender/18-35 years old.

Dancer 2 - Either Gender/18-35 years old.

Two Stage Hands - Either gender/any age.

Place
The stage of a theatre, the auditorium of a theatre, a university dormitory room, a café, a campus lawn, a room in an old hotel somewhere in Europe, a university psychology lab.

Time
Present.

Playing Time: About an hour with no intermission.

Playwright's Production Note:
In this somewhat experimental piece, the visuals, sound, movement, and other specifics written into the script are as integral as the dialogue. Also please note that, ideally, the play is performed on a classic proscenium stage. In lieu of that, there should be at least ten feet between actor and audience.
AS LIGHTS COME UP, ACTOR 1 ENTERS THE STAGE CONFIDENTLY, HOLDING A THEATRICAL MASK OVER HIS FACE.

ACTOR 1
The actor enters the stage! He is hidden behind a mask of tradition! His journey on this hallowed platform is a clear trajectory toward discovery, a mystery, an entertainment, a-

ACTOR 1 STEPS INTO A WEAK PLANK IN THE STAGE FLOOR AND FALLS THROUGH IT, OR TRIPS OVER SOMETHING LEFT OUT OF PLACE ON STAGE, DAMAGING HIS LEG.

ACTOR 1 (CONT’D)
AAAhhh!

OUT OF CHARACTER, HE MOANS IN PAIN, HOLDING HIS ANKLE.

A SOUND OF COMMOTION BACKSTAGE.

ACTOR 1 (CONT’D)
Shit. Oh Christ, my leg. My leg!

TWO STAGE HANDS RUSH OUT TO GATHER UP ACTOR 1 AND CARRY HIM OFF.

ACTOR IS PUSHED ON BY AMBROSE, UTTERLY CONFUSED. HE DOESN’T KNOW WHAT TO SAY AND SEARCHES IN HIS MIND FOR A MOMENT, THEN TURNS TO THE AUDIENCE, DESPERATE.

ACTOR
(theatrically reciting)
Necessity’s mother of our discontent Exposed by a frequent flier mile laid bare, A canker on the rough hewn cheek of the night, With men and women nearly...
(pause)
...players...
(pause)
...merely...players.
THERE IS MORE COMMOTION OFFSTAGE.
ACTOR LOOKS AROUND HIM, GLANCES TOWARD
BACKSTAGE... THEN HE GETS DOWN AND
BEGINES CRAWLING TO THE FRONT EDGE OF
THE STAGE STILL SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING
TO SAY.

ACTOR (CONT’D)
It’s on a rake! The stage...is slanted.. To expose the actors better to the audience.

ACTOR SNEAKS A LOOK AT THE AUDIENCE.

ACTOR (CONT’D)
Oh, boy.

AMBROSE LOOKS OUT IN FRUSTRATION FROM
BACKSTAGE AND LIGHTS BUMP UP ON BRIANNA
AND DELIA.

BRIANNA SITS WITH PENCIL AND PAPER
DRAWING DELIA WHO POSES WITH A RIPE
TOMATO HELD UP IN HER HAND. ACTOR PULLS
BACK AND WATCHES. A FEW RAGGED PAGES
FROM THE SCRIPT ARE THRUST IN HIS HAND BY
AMBROSE.

DELIA
...So I dropped a hit of acid, and blah, blah, blah, obviously I could tell the whole big...

BRIANNA
God, if I did acid, my head would blow permanently off.

DELIA
Well...? Yeah. ‘Cause once it hits, there's this unbelievable, terrifying...like, irony of
knowing that you've stepped through this particular...doorway, you know, ...that you've
entered this place by your own... You know, you've done this to yourself. And there's
this blazing, shocking realization that this moment that is...interminable..., /iś only to be
followed-

THE TOMATO HAS BEEN DRIFTING DOWNWARD.
BRIANNA

/Okay, hold on. Just...your...lift up the tomato again.

*DELIA LIFTS IT AGAIN.*

BRIANNA (CONT’D)

Sorry. Go ahead.

DELIA

It's the idea that this fat, forever, unbearable moment is only going to be followed by another one just like it and another one after that, and you can't go back. The door is locked now and the only way out is...death.

BRIANNA

Who were you with?

DELIA

Nobody you know.

BRIANNA

Umm-hm.

DELIA

So, then like, ten minutes later, I'm pissing my pants laughing, basically, at the complete ridiculousness of everything that we think is so... important. You know, the coat... on the hanger, the ring on the finger, the...

BRIANNA

...bandage over the cut.

(pause)

DELIA

Yeah, right. It's all like, sopping wet with...comedy.

*SHE GINGERLY PLACES THE WHOLE TOMATO BETWEEN HER TEETH AND MAKES A SILLY FACE AND/OR SOUND. BRIANNA LAUGHS, SHAKES HER HEAD.*

BRIANNA

Always the actor. Do you have all your lines down for tonight?
DELIA
(taking the tomato from her mouth)
I think so. My part is this girl who levitates... and we, you know, you just know she's
going to fall, just because she's like...begging for it. I mean, she's designed for the sole
purpose of advertising 'I Will Not Fall.' 'Cause she's up so high. Or I am. And this great
height where I levitate... just makes a joke...of even the fear of falling. They just cancel
each other out. I'm like a professional high wire walker. Tight rope walker, I'm like a
skyscraper.

BRIANNA
Your Dad's gonna show up, Delia.

DELIA
He's not coming and that's fine. I don't want to talk about it.

BRIANNA
You told him it's opening night, he's not a monster.

THERE IS A KNOCKING, AS ON A DOOR.
SUDDENLY, DELIA ADDRESSES THE AUDIENCE.

DELIA
(quickly, petulant)
They tell me it's essential the play's PG13. They want to keep things inoffensive. You
know, publishers, committees, departments, parents, boyfriends, what have you. It was
my idea to keep the acid story in. But God forbid we offend anybody, God forbid we
gross anybody out. With our selves.

A LOUD MUSICAL FLOURISH PLAYS,
INEXPLICABLY, OVER HER.

BRIANNA
Yeah, so, go on.

DELIA
(just as suddenly back to Brianna)
So yeah, anyway, just as suddenly it is, like, despair. It is...total disillusionment. It's
like... the bottle's empty, the ashtray's puking...42 cigarette butts.

(MORE)
The man's carrying away the boxes with all your stuff, picture hooks are hanging naked on the walls... It's like you're at the gas station off the off ramp at 3 in the morning with the florescent lights over the pumps. It's that sickening moment...when the actor slips from the stage and your eye falls with his foot and you glimpse the carpet of the auditorium.

PAUSE. BRIANNA LOOKS SURREPTITIOUSLY TO ACTOR WHO HAS BEEN WATCHING THEM. HE LOOKS DESPERATELY AT HIS PAGES, READING

ACTOR
(to Audience)
...Uh... stage make-up. It...heightens what already exists...or gives the illusion of something that does not! A ruddy complexion, a broken nose, the...lines of age or the scars of battle..., or simply heightens the contrast between the bridge of the nose and the cheek,...

BRIANNA TRIES TO SHOW DELIA HER DRAWING, BUT SHE DOESN'T LOOK.

AWKWARD STAGE PAUSE... LIGHTS FLICKER.

ACTOR (CONT'D)
...the jawline and the neck... ...
(thinks his part's over, waits...but Brianna looks at him. Reading his lines...)
Stage lights...help create tone, set up...expectation, uh... delineate a playing area, pull the attention of the audience away from one thing and redirect it to...something else.

ONE LOVER AND THE OTHER LOVER ARE ILLUMINATED.

THE OTHER LOVER
It's not...I'm not explaining it right, it wasn't anything that you said, really, it-

ONE LOVER
Okay, but see, why do you say 'it wasn't anything that I said, really'?

THE OTHER LOVER
What do you mean?
ONE LOVER

Are we breaking up already?

THE OTHER LOVER

I could criticize you, terrorize you, analyze you.

(pause, seductively)

...But...I don't want to do that. I don't.

ONE LOVER

(pause, seductively)

What do you want?

THE LOVERS STARE INTO EACH OTHERS' EYES.
BLACKOUT.

THEN LIGHTS UP AS RAP MUSIC ACCOMPANIES TWO DANCERS IN LEOTARDS, FLOWING SILKS, AND BALLET SHOES. THEY ENTER, ONE AFTER THE OTHER, LEAPING ACROSS THE STAGE AND OUT AGAIN WITHOUT ACKNOWLEDGING THE AUDIENCE. MUSIC OUT.

LIGHTS UP ON BRIANNA, DELIA, AMBROSE AND ISAAC SITTING ON A DIFFERENT PART OF THE STAGE. BRIANNA IS STUDYING, DELIA'S LOOKING AT HER LINES FOR THE PLAY. A BANDAGE PEEKS OUT FROM DELIA'S SLEEVE. ISAAC IS PLAYING A HANDHELD VIDEO GAME. AMBROSE SITS, HALF LISTENING THE ENTIRE SCENE, MESSING WITH A P.D.A.

BRIANNA

(to Isaac)

So, I heard you're leaving early for spring break. How can you do that?

ISAAC

Nah, what are you talkin' about? I'm here. I'm staying here. I can just come. And go. Sleep in. Stay out. Chill. Whatever. I'm master of my own destiny here. I'nt that right?

DELIA

Really?
BRIANNA
You have to show up, Isaac. You have to show up at least, you know, a very large percentage of the time. You can't just bail.

ISAAC
No worries. Like I don't know that?

BRIANNA
Okay.

DELIA
(the play)
I'll be so glad when this thing's over. My whole life's a war zone because of it.

ISSAC
(over her, to Brianna)
I mean, my writing professor, right? I can see right through her. She's like...I told you I watched her fall on the ice, then later, in class, right?, she made this whole, like, little story about it, and she -

DELIA
I'm going to need some sort of pharmaceutical assistance to even get through the night.

ISSAC
...like made it out to be 'the shit,' ya know?

BRIANNA
(to Delia)
I could never memorize all that though, seriously. Like right now, we're having like three conversations at once and I hear them all going on at the same time in my head. It's very hard for me to separate anything out. It's no wonder I can't make above a B- no matter what I do.

DELIA
Yeah? You've said that.

ISSAC
Hey, it's only school.

BRIANNA
I made three C's freshman year.
AMBROSE

And good luck to ya.

AMBROSE GETS UP AND EXITS.

DELIA
(to Ambrose)

...Later.

BRIANNA

Later, Ambrose.

ISSAC
(correcting Brianna)

Hey, it's first year, Brianna. Nobody’s a freshman now, they're first years.
(to Delia)

Deel.

DElia looks to isaac.

DELIA

What.

ISAAC

What's up with your arm, man?

DElia looks off stage, uncertain.

DELIA

Nothing...

ABRupt lights out. Lights up on actor and delia. actor refers occasionally to a piece of paper in his hand.

DELIA (CONT’D)
(to Audience)

Isaac started acting seriously funky. You know? I saw what he usually wrote. There was never any organizing... thread! That short story made too much sense and it was hilarious. Usually, he doesn't have a clue, I'm talking about any sort of rational, planned-out -
ACTOR  
(to Audience)  
Many theatres still have the long pulleys to raise and lower the curtain.

DELIA  
No narrative, that's the word. Because a story, like history, like music, is supposed to be... one important event after another...that lead...to something. Preferably in order and in one tense. He couldn't do that if his life depended on it, believe me, let alone being witty at the same time. I know him.

ACTOR  
They're at once quaint and slightly pathetic. The musty, heavy, weighted curtains, usually faded, sometimes moth-eaten, frequently maroon. One can imagine too many outdated musicals to please the elder crowds, too much glow tape laid down and pulled up again, /too much-

DELIA  
/Dis...Jointed. He lied, okay? He's pathetic. But Ambrose is the rat bastard. Supposedly he knows all along Isaac was going down. He just let him writhe around like an idiot.

ACTOR  
And when the curtain goes up, so to speak, we 'are' in a place. That place can be barely suggested - a door, a black block signifying a chair... - it can be detailed and rich - or it can be symbolic, metaphoric, like a poem.

DELIA  
Brianna's like 'your dad's not in the audience, sweetie.' Like that's supposed to surprise me? I don't even know what the hell I'm doing here.

SHE LOOKS DEFIANTLY AT THE AUDIENCE.

DELIA (CONT’D)  
Do I look like I care?

S U D D E N  B L A C K O U T .

DELIA'S VOICE  
Hey, who just did that?!  
(pause)  
Hey!!
AM BROSE'S VOICE, AMPLIFIED

Cue 16!

AN ELABORATE LIGHT CUE IS EXECUTED, AND A PROJECTION SCREEN IS LOWERED CENTER STAGE.

DELIA'S VOICE

(quietly)

Ambrose?

A SLIDE ILLUMINATES THE SCREEN. THE SLIDE IS OF AN AUDIENCE WATCHING A BLACKENED STAGE WITH A PROJECTION SCREEN LOWERED CENTER STAGE ON WHICH A SLIDE IS BEING SHOWN. IT IS A SLIDE OF AN AUDIENCE WATCHING A BLACKENED STAGE...

THERE IS COMMOTION BACKSTAGE.

DELIA'S VOICE (CONT'D)

(muffled, from off-stage)

Okay, I won't, just stop it.

LIGHTS UP ON ACTOR CONCERNED, LISTENING - BEFORE HE SPEAKS.

ACTOR

(awkwardly)

Everything...okay?

HE GLANCES AT THE PAPER IN HIS HAND, BUT IS NOW CLEARLY ADDING HIS OWN WORDS.

ACTOR (CONT'D)

(to Audience)

The 'willing suspension of disbelief.' The audience's... willingness to quietly entertain someone else's obviously artificial manipulated, canned version of reality that nothing shall be allowed to taint, however spontaneous, however real.
A DANCER COMES OUT TO CENTER STAGE AND JUGGLES A MOMENT - MAYBE TEN SECONDS.

ACTOR STANDS WATCHING, PERTURBED.

DANCER BOWS TO AUDIENCE. AUDIENCE APPLAUDS OR DOESN'T.

ISAAC, BRIANNA, AMBROSE, AND DELIA ENTER AS DANCER EXITS.

ACTOR BACKS OFF, GRUDGINGLY.

ISAAC RAISES THE SCREEN UNCEREMONIOUSLY LETTING IN SUNLIGHT. THE STUDENTS WEAR BACKPACKS AND BRIANNA CARRIES A BLANKET WHICH SHE OPENS OUT ONTO THE FLOOR. THEY SIT AND TAKE OFF THEIR BACKPACKS TO REST. AMBROSE GETS OUT CANS OF SODA AND HANDS THEM OUT.

AMBROSE
It isn't a fantasy. It's just like...a vision.

DELIA
You wish.

AMBROSE
I'm just saying I don't think it up, it just comes into my head full-blown.

ISAAC
You'd like to get full-blown.

AMBROSE
Eat me, my friend.

ISAAC
Like I said...

AMBROSE HANDS A SODA TO DELIA.
DELIA
I don't want the sugar. I'm drinking water.

SHE PULLS ONE FROM HER PACK.

AMBROSE
Oh, Christ. Are we anorexic now, too?

BRIANNA
Leave Delia alone, Ambrose. Delia wants water, Delia can have water. There is, you know, nothing suspect in this.

DELIA
Let's hear about your little fantasy.

AMBROSE
I said it wasn't a fantasy.

ISAAC
His vision.

AMBROSE
Okay, I'm older. Like uh...late twenties, maybe. And I'm dressed... not the way I dress now. Not so casual, but not... It is casual, but a different idea of what that is. And I have a sense it could be in uh... I don't know where it takes place, but not anything like here. More like...Europe, maybe?

ISAAC
Sweet.

AMBROSE
And I'm waiting for a girl, a woman.

DELIA
Predictable.

AMBROSE
Or she's waiting for me.

ISAAC
Could happen.
AMBROSE
...I totally want to have a part in it, but on some level I don't. Even though I'm at least one of the main characters, if not both.

ISAAC
That's basically dreaming.

AMBROSE
Well, I'm not asleep.

BRIANNA
Did you ever hear of lucid dreaming?

AMBROSE
Where you control what happens in your dreams.

DELIA
See but I wouldn't want that. Isn't that what makes a dream a dream? That you're like...swept along? If you could control it, it's like you're...manipulating your subconscious. Right? I mean, aren't we looking for messages from the subconscious...or unconscious or whichever? Do you know what I'm saying? Do we need to control that, too?

AMBROSE
(mocking)
Do we need to control that, too?

DELIA
Shut up!

ISAAC
Come on! If you could control it, you could do anything. You could fly, obviously. You could blow up whole countries and have sex with anyone.

BRIANNA
Okay!

ISAAC
My bad.

ISAAC CRADLES BRIANNA'S FACE IN HIS HANDS.
SHE PULLS AWAY AND SHAKES HER HEAD.
You could have dinner with your girlfriend every night and have world peace!

BRIANNA
Let's move on.

AMBROSE
You could have absolute power, absolute control.

ISAAC
Dude, you could meet and hang with anybody in the world dead or alive. Jim Morrison, Alexander the Great... You could call Derek Jeter on your cell, or uh...uh Tessla, -

DELIA
Who?

ISAAC
...or Carmen Electra... Tupac, man, you could be like, tell me what happened, Bro?

AMBROSE
What you don't get is it's really just a party of one, right? It's not time travel. It's basically a wet dream where you get to decide when and how you're going to get off. Excuse me, ladies. So, but if it's not in you already... , if it's not something you are inherently capable of...creating, it's... That's where it stops. This is obvious, right? Like Isaac, you're never going to have some brilliant conversation with Tessla about alternating currents in your dream because you, personally, can't think!

DELIA
Okay, who's Tessla?

ISAAC
You're such a dick.

AMBROSE
(over them)
But you could die and be reborn! You could step into hell with waders on and, and never get hot. You could create...man-eating flowers, and, and woman-eating...jeeps. You could jump over mountains and swim way out into the warm ocean. And the ocean could be made of...milk. No one could stop you. You could say yes to everything. Or no to everything. And there would be no...repercussions!
ISAAC
Shit yeah, it's Final Fantasy.

DELIA
(almost to herself)
You could eat whatever you wanted.

THEY LAUGH.

BRIANNA
And your memory would work perfectly and you could paint whole landscapes with your brain, and you wouldn't have to live on campus, or study, or proofread...

DELIA AND ISAAC LAUGH.

AMBROSE
You could be any age or sex.

DELIA
(correcting him)
...Gender.

SHE STANDS AND WALKS OUT OF THE SCENE,
PULLING THE PROJECTION SCREEN DOWN OVER AMBROSE, BRIANNA, AND ISAAC.

AMBROSE'S VOICE
You could have any body. You could have any family.

DELIA EXITS. SCREEN RISES, AND THE LOVERS ARE EXPOSED BEHIND IT.

ONE LOVER
What. Why are you ...looking at me like that? Say it.

THE OTHER LOVER
I just...want you to...take something off.

ONE LOVER
...Like what?
THE OTHER LOVER

You know what.

(pause)

I just want to watch you...take something off.

ONE LOVER

(pause...)

Well..., let's...have an arrangement, an agreement. You...tell a story...like you can... But a story about us, okay? It doesn't have to be true, I mean, it doesn't have to have actually happened. And if you tell me a story, and keep on telling me, and make me...

THE OTHER LOVER

...What.

ONE LOVER

Mm...just...I'll take things off.

(pause)

And I'll do anything you want.

(smiles)

THE OTHER LOVER

...Really?

ONE LOVER NODS. PAUSE.

THE OTHER LOVER (CONT’D)

Um... Okay... We were...on an elevator when we first met.

ONE LOVER APPROVES AND UNBUTTONS A SHIRT BUTTON; THE OTHER LOVER IS PLEASED.

THROUGH THE SCENE, ONE LOVER UNBUTTONS ONE BUTTON AFTER ANOTHER, SLOWLY AND SEDUCTIVELY, EXCEPT AS NOTED. THE OTHER LOVER LOOKS FOR SUBTLE CUES FROM ONE LOVER AS TO WHERE THE STORY SHOULD GO.

THE OTHER LOVER (CONT’D)

I looked down at the uh...the bandage...the bandage over your arm and... I asked you what had happened. You could easily have said it was none of my business. Because it wasn't really, any of my business...

(pause)

(MORE)
THE OTHER LOVER (CONT’D)
But you said... you'd fallen. You'd fallen in a room in...your parents' house... where they were doing some renovation. And you'd fallen on a...steel coupling, and torn an inch long slit...near your wrist. You'd had...seven stitches. Then... Then the door of the elevator...

ONE LOVER PAUSES UNBUTTONING.

THE OTHER LOVER (CONT’D)
.........wouldn't open...

ONE LOVER PULLS THE SHIRT TOGETHER IN FRONT OF THE BODY.

THE OTHER LOVER (CONT’D)
...at first.

ONE LOVER RESUMES - UNBUTTONS THE LAST BUTTON.

THE OTHER LOVER (CONT’D)
But then it...did, and we both... I... touched your sleeve with my hand as I held the elevator, and we... I looked at you from the corner of my eye and I... I thought maybe you would say something..

PAUSE. ONE LOVER SAYS NOTHING. THEY SMILE.

THE OTHER LOVER (CONT’D)
...but you didn't.

ONE LOVER SLOWLY REMOVES THE SHIRT.

THE OTHER LOVER (CONT’D)
......You didn't say anything at all...

ONE LOVER DROPS THE SHIRT TO THE FLOOR EXPOSING A TIGHT, BRA-LESS TEE-SHIRT.

THE OTHER LOVER (CONT’D)
And in an instant..., you were gone...

LIGHTS OUT ON THE LOVERS.
ACTOR BEGINS SPEAKING WITH NO LIGHT ON HIM. THEN AFTER A FEW WORDS, LIGHTS COME UP ON HIM WITHOUT GRACE. HE READS FROM THE SCRIPT, MORE AND MORE EASILY.

ACTOR
The actor makes the same bargain the audience makes - this willing suspension of disbelief. But while you pretend we exist, we pretend you don't. We actors, we... take classes and workshops and even get degrees in the art of creating seemingly authentic, often intimate behavior and speech under the gaze of a group of strangers. We do what we do up here by skillfully rubbing you out of the picture though we hear you coughing and sneezing and taking hard candies out of their wrappers.

A LOUD TV NEWS PROGRAM COMES UP ON THE SCREEN.

TV NEWS ANCHOR (ON SCREEN)
In Broward County, Florida, in the 2002 Republican primary, 89,012 people registered to vote, while only 10,296 people actually voted. This is an 11.6% turnout, a higher percentage than in many other Florida counties.

SCREEN OFF. CHARACTERS ARE LIT IN TURN, SPEAKING TO THE AUDIENCE.

ISAAC
She fell on the ice outside the library in the quad. I was coming down the stairs and yeah, shit yeah, I helped her up. I don't want to see her fall like that. She's that age where she's not so old it's like a catastrophe. But she's not young enough where it's like, no thing, see what I'm sayin'? She was just like...kind of exposed. Now it feels like 'foreshadowing' as she herself would say, but like bassackwards. 'Cause I'm the one who takes the fall.

BRIANNA
They've got me in this experimental program in the psych department. I have A.D.D. and I can't really concentrate. So I'm in this thing where I'm like sitting there watching this ball of chaos on this screen and I'm supposed to reorganize it with my brain. Like, I move pieces of the thing around...with my thoughts. Or with my concentration, I guess. And I put them into order. I don't know how it works, it's like something off the sci-fi channel. But I go there three times a week for like fifteen minutes, and I actually get paid a little uh, as well.
ISAAC
I brought the short story into class and read it aloud. It was heaped up with, like, 'concrete imagery,' and it was 'lean prose, no flab,' just like the doctor ordered. Also, it happened to be hilarious. Everybody laughed in all the right places. No doubt.

(pause)
They admired me. You could tell by how they looked up at me from their copy with a little gleam in their eye. And when I got my copy back with comments from her next class, she wrote on there that it seemed like I found my 'voice.' She said all my hard work paid off. It was in her same red pen, but it had three exclamation points at the end, so...

AMBROSE
It's no secret that a number of us get unbelievably shitfaced. The university has vans that are basically designated drivers for everybody so students can get shitfaced without killing each other doing D.U.I.s. It's handy. But Delia is the queen of all this. All the drivers know her by name. There's a frat party, she's there. Not necessarily to get laid, but to get wasted. Comes into her morning classes reeking of alcohol. It's squeezing its way out of her pores. I guess one of her profs asked her in for a little conference about it. The 'I Just Wanted You to Know There is Help Available' talk. Delia is astonished! She acts all innocent and ignorant. She's also the queen of that. I, for one, am ill with all the little dramatic rebellions.

ACTOR BEGINS SPEAKING AND LIGHTS BUMP UP ON HIM.

ACTOR
Okay, imagine a time, say Shakespeare's day, when audiences were vocal, cheering, opinionated, even petulant, hot-headed. Standing, moving, sometimes even... throwing things at the players when angered or dissatisfied...

LIGHTS UP ON BRIANNA STILL DRAWING DELIA.

BRIANNA
Oh God, that is nothing like any nose anyone has ever seen.

DELIA
Then do it over. Anyway it was just so intense. It was like a huge pit was being carved out of your stomach. The illusion falling completely away. Like the actor on the stage reaching past the stage, over the feet of the man sitting and watching, so close he can smell the soap that the man used from the men's room, the man can smell that terrible actor smell, that sweat and make-up and poverty smell.
BRIANNA
You have to ask yourself, is this how I want to spend my Saturday nights?

DELIA
It was a Thursday actually. And I'm in this primordial, like, terror...

ACTOR
But Shakespeare's day was a long, long time ago. And over the years, the audience sat down, and sat quietly, and we wrote well-made plays that happen within four carefully constructed walls.

ONE LOVER'S VOICE
(whispered but audible)
...Then what happened?

ACTOR
And the quality of the reality on stage is...confirmed...by the autonomy of the world created by the actors...from the altogether...separate world of the audience.

LIGHTS OUT ON ALL BUT THE LOVERS, USING BODY MICS, NEARLY WHISPERING TO EACH OTHER.

THE OTHER LOVER
I spent four sleepless nights..., the sheet twisted around my forearms...I didn't know where to find you.

ONE LOVER BEGINS TO UNTIE A SHOE. ONE LOVER UNTIES THEN UNLACES BOTH SHOES THROUGH THE COURSE OF THE SCENE, FINALLY TAKING THEM OFF.

THE OTHER LOVER (CONT'D)
I made my voice husky and called in sick. I stopped eating.
(pause)
I...thought I might see you again in the building so I spent hours there. On the... steps outside, ...ascending and descending in the elevator, the stairwell, walking the halls of ... classrooms, offices, ...lounges.
(pause)
ONE LOVER

Did you find me?

THE OTHER LOVER

No. Not then.

ONE LOVER SMILES, SECOND SHOE NEARLY OFF.
PAUSE.

ONE LOVER

...Keep going...

THE OTHER LOVER

...My face was burned from waiting, sitting on the stairs in the sun so long...though it was
fall and...a chill was in the air.

THE SHOES ARE OFF.

LIGHTS OUT ON MOST OF THE STAGE BUT UP
DIMLY ON DELIA. SHE STANDS, BAREFOOTED,
NEAR A FREE-STANDING MIRROR, LOOKING AT
HER BODY IN GYM SHORTS AND A SHORT TEE
SHIRT WITH LONG SLEEVES THAT SHOWS HER
BELLY. SHE IS A HARSH JUDGE. SHE SEES ONLY
HER SELF AND SEEMS UNAWARE OF THE
AUDIENCE.

IN A MOMENT, ACTOR WALKS ON. DELIA
CONTINUES LOOKING AT PARTS OF HER SELF.

AMBROSE ENTERS QUICKLY, HOLDING A
JACKET. ACTOR TAKES IT, PUTS IT ON, AND
EXIT BEHIND THE SCREEN.

A DOOR IS PROJECTED ONTO THE SCREEN, AND
A BOOMING KNOCKING IS HEARD. DELIA
LOOKS PANICKY AT THE DOOR, TUCKS HER
HAIR BEHIND HER EARS WHILE LOOKING AGAIN
AT THE MIRROR, THEN GOES TO THE DOOR.
THE SCREEN RISES TO REVEAL THE ACTOR AS FATHER, WEARING THE JACKET. HE IS UTTERLY IN CHARACTER.

FATHER
(awkward pause)
Hey, how ya doin’?

DELIA
Hey, how you doin’, Dad?

FATHER
Great.

DELIA
Well...great.

FATHER
You want to get something to eat?

DELIA
I'm not hungry, but I can sit with you while you eat.

FATHER
That’s okay, I just thought you might want something.
(another awkward pause)

DELIA
You can come in if you want.

FATHER
Sure, okay.

FATHER WALKS IN WITH DELIA AND THEY SIT IN TWO CHAIRS. FATHER LOOKS AROUND.

FATHER (CONT’D)
(smiling)
It's small but it's home, huh?
DELIA
(pause)
God, it's been like uh...fourteen months?

FATHER
(nodding)
I guess it has.
(pause)
You got a little belly on ya, you drinking a lot of beer?

DELIA
(pause)
Yeah. And a lot of vodka and a lot of tequila.

FATHER
You gotta watch that.

DELIA
It's the Freshman fifteen.
(pause)
It's an expression. Fifteen pounds. It's common...

FATHER
How are classes goin’?

DELIA
I like my history class.

FATHER
Really?

DELIA
Yeah. Everything's connected up and perfect in history. You can usually see how one thing caused another thing. Clear as day. You can't necessarily do that while it's happening, of course. Unless you have the gift of like...the psychic gift or something. And I don't know anybody who has that.

FATHER NODS, A LITTLE CONFUSED.

DELIA (CONT’D)
So, you got business?
FATHER
Ah, yeah. Little bit. About an hour fifteen minutes from here.

PAUSE.

DELIA
So, great seeing you, but I have to go uh...to the theatre. I'm acting in a play.

FATHER
No kidding. I guess that's one way to get a little attention, huh?

DELIA
I get to play a girl who gets in a terrible accident and dies, then comes back to life, over and over again.

FATHER
Like Night of the Living Dead.

DELIA
No. But I gotta go right now, so... Opens tonight, whatever.

FATHER
(standing)
Okay. You have obligations, absolutely. Listen, you write or I'll write...
(pause)
Good seeing you, Delia.

DELIA NODS. LIGHTS OUT ON THEM.

LIGHTS UP ON LOVERS. ONE LOVER UNBuckles THE BELT.

THE OTHER LOVER
I wanted to give up searching.

ONE LOVER STOPS THE STRIP.

THE OTHER LOVER (CONT'D)
I wanted to...put an end to all the...inconvenience and...

ONE LOVER SITS BACK.
THE OTHER LOVER (CONT’D)
And the...burning skin, and the burning legs from going up and down. Up and down. I wanted my life back. My routine. My comfort. You understand that?

ONE LOVER SITS UP AND SLOWLY, SLOWLY, SLOWLY BEGINS TO TAKE THE BELT FROM ITS LOOPS.

THE OTHER LOVER (CONT’D)
(pause...)
But when I thought that way...that I would give up searching...my...I remembered the way it felt when...I touched your sleeve with my hand, just that simple...thing, and my...I knew I had to find you and that that yearning and aching just...made...eclipsed everything else. And all at once...one afternoon, for no reason at all...

THE BELT IS OUT OF ITS LOOPS. THIS HAS A VISCERAL EFFECT ON THE LOVERS.

THE OTHER LOVER (CONT’D)
...I saw you...at the little cafe on the square.

ONE LOVER PULLS THE TEE SHIRT OUT OF THE PANTS.

(breathlessly)
I couldn't believe my luck. You...

(pause)
You were...sipping something out of a thick mug. Sitting outside.

ONE LOVER
It wasn't long after that that they pulled all the outdoor tables inside for the winter.

THE OTHER LOVER SMILES. THERE IS A SILENCE AND NEITHER OF THEM MOVES.

THE OTHER LOVER
You had on a long-sleeved...linen shirt. Your cheeks looked a little raw and your sunglasses...

THE OTHER LOVER PAUSES, CLEARS THE THROAT.
ONE LOVER SMILES THEN STANDS AND
UNBUTTONS THE TOP BUTTON OF THE PANTS,
SO THE OTHER LOVER RESUMES SPEAKING.

THE OTHER LOVER (CONT’D)
...your sunglasses covered your eyes, but you were somber sitting there... until you
looked over and saw me by the entry door.

ONE LOVER UNZIPS THE PANTS.

ONE LOVER
And you entered.

THE OTHER LOVER
I entered, yes, so happy to see you again.

THE SCREEN LOWERS, VISUALLY BLOTTING OUT
THE LOVERS.

A SLIDE OF AN OUTDOOR CAFE IS PROJECTED
ON THE SCREEN. IN IT, ALL THE SEATS ARE
EMPTY. A PAIR OF MIRRORED SUNGLASSES LIES
ON ONE OF THE TABLES.

DELIA ENTERS AND WALKS QUICKLY
DOWNSTAGE CENTER AND ADDRESSES THE
AUDIENCE DIRECTLY, PACING LIKE A CAGED
LION.

DELIA
Who paid you to come here? Huh? Or are you paying by showing up? Promised the
director, one of the actors, the ff--freakin' playwright maybe? Maybe you're looking for a
favor of your own, so you want to kiss some ass. You owe it to the community maybe.
You coming for some class? What! Maybe you came 'cause you feel sorry. Yeah? Is
that it? Well I feel mad sorry for you.

(referring to both Audience and actors)
All of you!

AMBROSE HAS COME TO RATHER FORCIBLY
ESCORT DELIA OFF THE STAGE, SHUSHING HER
AS SHE PROTESTS.
DELIA (CONT’D)
(to Ambrose, struggling)
Hey! What is up?! It’s just a play! It’s not even a play! Stop it!

LIGHTS DOWN OVER DELIA’S WORDS.

THEN SPOTS ILLUMINATE NOTHING, NEAR THE WINGS, WAITING.

DANCERS DANCE ON ABRUPTLY, FOSSE-LIKE, AND MUSIC IS BROUGHT HASTILY UP. DURING THEIR DANCE, INELEGANT DRY ICE FOG PUFFS IN FROM THE WINGS. THE DANCE LASTS NO MORE THAN A MINUTE. MUSIC DOWN.

AMBROSE AND ACTOR ENTER THEN, THOUGH CLEARLY ACTOR IS FORCING HIS WAY IN UNPLANNED. HE DOESN’T READ FROM THE SCRIPT. AMBROSE TRIES TO PROCEED IN SPITE OF HIM. THEY BOTH SPEAK TO THE AUDIENCE.

AMBROSE
When someone is a 'C-' student, they should not come in with a perfect short story. With or without a shiteating grin.

ACTOR
(very irritated)

...'The fourth wall.'

(touches the nonexistent wall at the lip of the stage)

Right here!

AMBROSE
If he had any brains, he’d know that.

ACTOR
The nonexistent, separating wall that we agree exists between us in order to uphold the illusion.
AMBROSE
(over him, continually more angry at the interruption)
Yeah, I helped him find the story, there are a million choices on the web, but I never said
to hand it in like that. You know, not just how he found it.

ACTOR
Some people don't approve of the idea of the fourth wall being broken!

AMBROSE
There are clear cut rules for everything! Including deception!

ACTOR
But it's really quite fluid when you look at it! And in no one's exclusive control!

AMBROSE
(over him, nearly shouting)
So when the shit looked like it was going to hit the fan I had to turn him in! Otherwise, I
could've been implicated somehow!

AMBROSE STARTS TO EXIT SO HEADPHONES ARE VISIBLE IN HIS BACK POCKET.

ACTOR
Got the headset now, huh? Why are you calling the show?

AMBROSE LOOKS AT HIM, SHOCKED THAT HE'S ADDRESSING HIM IN THIS WAY.

ACTOR (CONT'D)
(very quickly to Audience)
'Calling the show!' A term for the work of the stage manager who orchestrates the light
board operator, sound operator, props...

AMBROSE HAS TURNED AND BEGUN WALKING QUICKLY OFF STAGE AGAIN.

ACTOR (CONT'D)
(to Ambrose)
Hey!
AMBROSE
(a shouted whisper, into the headset mic)
Blackout.

BLACKOUT.

LIGHTS UP ON DELIA AND BRIANNA IN DRAWING POSITIONS. DELIA IS NOTICEABLY MORE AGITATED.

DELIA
I started to hallucinate. I was standing in the hallway, everybody else is listening to classical music which I thought would be soothing but was chaos! And I noticed, like, all around my nails? Some of them were bleeding-

BRIANNA
That's gross.

DELIA
From chewing on them, which I didn't know I was even doing. And they just started to squeak and swell, I thought, and the pain, oh my god. Meanwhile, these lunatics are laughing and painting their bodies with glow-in-the-dark paint to Rachmaninoff or something.

BRIANNA
I'm sorry.

(flexing and shaking her hand)
Ah, my hand. Do you think this is gonna pass for still life with vegetables? That's what it's supposed to be. I just figured you're still, and alive.

DELIA
I told Ambrose I'm not hooking up with him any more.

BRIANNA
Oh yeah? I'm sure you'll pay for that.

DELIA
I can't face being with him straight, and I'm running out of excuses to get high around him.
BRIANNA TEARS THE DRAWING FROM THE PAD AND SHOWS IT TO DELIA WHO TAKES IT IN HER HAND.

DELIA (CONT’D)
The sperm donor came to see me today.

BRIANNA
(laying down her pad)
Okay, hold on... I thought he called on the phone. You didn't tell me you saw him. How was it?

DELIA RIPS THE DRAWING IN HALF. BRIANNA WINCES. LIGHTS OUT ON THEM.

ISAAC ENTERS ALONE AND ADDRESSES THE AUDIENCE.

ISAAC
I actually never thought she would catch it. You could totally tell she was pumped about it. Like somehow she created a genius. She says 'You have located your voice!' That's one of the things she wrote and... Then about five days later I get an email saying 'There is a serious issue you and me need to discuss. Please come to my office immediately.' Some shit like that. And I knew it was gonna get ugly. It was like when my mom found about a half pound of weed I was selling in the monopoly box when I was in high school. Um, it was at the top of my closet under Risk and Battleship and Humping Hippo's or whatever that was. Basically, there was no call for her to look under all that into the Monopoly Box is what I'm saying. But anyway I click onto this email and I thought I was going to have a heart attack and I started seeing little stars like in a cartoon, like I got knocked in the head with a rock.

HE RAISES THE SCREEN THEN EXITS UPSTAGE.

THE LOVERS ARE EXPOSED AT A TABLE AT AN OUTDOOR CAFE. ONE LOVER STANDS, HANDS ON HIPS, PANTS UNZIPPED. THE OTHER LOVER SITS WATCHING. THERE IS A SILENCE.

THE OTHER LOVER
I came to your table and sat down without asking.
ONE LOVER SITS DOWN IN A CHAIR.

THE OTHER LOVER (CONT’D)

Take off your sunglasses.

ONE LOVER

Please?

THE OTHER LOVER

Take off your sunglasses, please.

ONE LOVER TAKES OFF A WATCH AND LAYS IT ON THE TABLE.

THE OTHER LOVER (CONT’D)

In a split splinter of a second I see your pupils get tight from the sun and see the green in your eyes again. What are you drinking?

ONE LOVER

I've finished. Would you like something?

THE OTHER LOVER

How's your wrist?

ONE LOVER

...See for yourself?

ONE LOVER TURNS OVER A HAND TO EXPOSE A BANDAGED WRIST.

THE OTHER LOVER

May I?

THE OTHER LOVER BEGINS TO PULL AT THE BANDAGE, EVER SO GENTLY. LIGHTS DOWN ON THEM.

A DOOR COMES UP ON THE SCREEN. DELIA ENTERS, LOOKING INTO A MIRROR IN A COMPACT. A KNOCK IS HEARD.
ON THE SCREEN, FATHER OPENS THE DOOR AND FREEZES.

THEN ACTOR AS FATHER ENTERS LIVE AND SPEAKS TO DELIA. THE FILMED IMAGE STAYS FROZEN.

FATHER
What’s this I hear about an emergency room?

DELIA
I fell.

FATHER
Bullshit.

DELIA
Nice to see you, too.

FATHER
What’s this I hear about stitches?

DELIA
It wasn’t even necessary.

FATHER
That, I believe.

DELIA
I have to get to the theatre. I’m in a burlesque. I’m late.

HE GRABS HER BY THE WRIST.

DELIA (CONT’D)
Get your hands off me. You’re hurting my arm!

SHE BREAKS FREE OF HIS GRASP.

LIGHTS OUT AND SCREEN IMAGE OFF/LIGHTS UP ON ISAAC STANDING ON STAGE.
ISAAC
My legs were shaking in my pants and she gave me some bullshit lecture about how plagiarism gives your self the message that what you regularly are isn't good enough. Duh.

(laughs wryly)
Come on, I knew anybody else's story was gonna be better than mine. That's what Ambrose said. And that's just exactly what it was. I should've messed with it. Put a few mistakes in there. Like maybe make it go all of a sudden from talking about the past into talking about the present, and then back again. That would have been more like what I would actually write. I just needed those scores to go up 'cause I was gonna, you know, lose my scholarship and be royally screwed. Brutally toasted.

(pause)
I'm out now, so... I'm out.

BRIANNA ENTERS.

BRIANNA
Isaac!

ISAAC
Hey! Yeah, what's up.

BRIANNA
'What's up?' Where are you going? You missed the psych mid-term this morning.

ISAAC
Yeah, shit. Can you believe that shit? Overslept, man. I'm just uh... We're supposed to get together tonight, right?

BRIANNA
Aren't you supposed to be in calculus right now?

ISAAC
I was gonna call you, 'cause as it turns out, I do gotta get home a few days early. Some shit with my family, so...

BRIANNA
Oh yeah? Is everything alright?

ISAAC
Yeah, definitely. No worries. Just, you know...
SILENCE.

BRIANNA
You have anything to tell me?

ISAAC
(after a short pause, shakes his head)
...No.

BRIANNA
'Cause people who...care about each other are honest with each other. Do you know what I mean?

PAUSE.

ISAAC
Look, I'm goin' on break, you're goin' on break. And when we come back, me and you...me and you'll just take up right where we left off.

BRIANNA
...When you come back.

ISAAC
...Yeah.

ISAAC MOVES TO HER TO GIVE HER A HUG, BUT SHE PULLS AWAY FROM HIM. PAUSE.

BRIANNA
...I don't think so..

SHE WALKS AWAY AS DELIA ENTERS. THEY DO NOT INTERACT. DELIA ADDRESSES THE AUDIENCE AS SHE ENTERS.

DELIA
(petulant)
There's no intermission so you can't get up, doesn't that suck? Isn't your throat getting dry? It's stuffy in here. Caustrophobic, right? Don't you just feel powerless, clueless, hopeless, bored...? We all need some air. I, personally, got a dvd at home I can't wait to watch. Seriously, new release, director's cut. Listen, I can't really see you, and I'm not trying to be a bitch, but don't you just think this is all bullshit.

(MORE)
DELIA (CONT’D)
Like a bad dream you'd like to wake up from. Just another visit you never wanted to make?

(pause, looking around her)
So, why don't we all just leave now? Okay? Come on, just stand up.

AMBROSE ENTERS QUICKLY.

DELIA (CONT’D)
Hurry, get your stuff.

AMBROSE ESCORTS HER FORCIBLY OFF STAGE
AS DELIA PROTESTS.

DELIA (CONT’D)
Leave me alone, get off me! You're hurting my arm! Hey, I can hurt myself a hell of a lot worse than...

(referring to Ambrose, then to the Audience)
...you or YOU CAN! I don't care what you think!

AMBROSE
Yes, you've got to get back to class! Your classmates are waiting. Got to get to the student union building. Your study group, your lab-

DELIA AND AMBROSE ARE GONE.

ACTOR LOPES ON, OUTRAGED.

BEFORE HE CAN SPEAK, NEW LIGHTS HAVE BUMPED UP AND BURLESQUE MUSIC WHINES, SCRATCHY, FROM THE SOUND SYSTEM AS DANCERS DANCE OUT FROM THE WINGS.

THE ACTOR IS FORCED UPSTAGE, OUT OF THE WAY. BUT AGAIN, THE DANCE IS UNCOMFORTABLY SHORT, ONLY A MINUTE OR SO, LIKE A DISTRACTION MORE THAN A PERFORMANCE. ALL AT ONCE, THE DANCE IS OVER!
'APPLAUSE' READS ACROSS THE SCREEN. THE AUDIENCE APPLAUDS OR DOESN'T. LIGHTS OUT AND DANCERS EXIT.

ACTOR BEGINS SPEAKING BEFORE LIGHTS ARE FULLY UP AGAIN AS HE STALKS ANGRILY DOWNSTAGE, NO SCRIPT IN HIS HAND.

ACTOR
(to the Audience)
If you can not have some influence on the story that's being told, then... it's either a museum piece... - matted, framed, and hung. Or...it's tyranny. It's written in the manifesto and there are police around the perimeter. And there are subtle forms of tyranny, mark my words. Some of them have been around so long they're like wallpaper. Some of them are so luscious, they make you salivate. Some of them lull you to sleep, they help you with your depression, they help you with your anxiety, maybe they give you the sense you've got a lot of access to information. I got 400 channels now. I spent three hours trying to edit them down to a number I could understand, that I could negotiate. But nobody's telling me how to respond to or change...anything! Even the news is scripted and rehearsed. You've got to be some kind of a genius to be able to tell pleasure from suffering these days. Somehow we've all come to accept the middle man, taking our credit card numbers over the phone, sending in our prayers to the Almighty, signing us up for the absentee vote. All we've got to do is buy the popcorn, sit back, and watch.

MUSIC COMES UP AGAIN AS ACTOR YELLS HIS LAST LINE.

ISAAC, DRESSED AS A MAGICIAN, COMES ON STAGE FOLLOWED BY BRIANNA, DRESSED AS THE LOVELY ASSISTANT. THEY BRUSQUELY WHEEL ON THE ILLUSION.

ACTOR STANDS FAR STAGE LEFT AND WATCHES, OVERWHELMED.

MAGICIAN
Ladies and Gentlemen! You think, perhaps, you have seen it all. You think, perhaps, there is nothing that will amaze you. But I will now attempt to cut my beautiful assistant in half!
HE OPENS THE ILLUSION LIKE A BOX.

MAGICIAN (CONT’D)

Brianna, if you please.

MUSIC SWELLS AS THE ASSISTANT CLIMBS INTO THE ILLUSION, AND THE MAGICIAN CLOSES IT - HER HEAD, FEET AND HANDS EXPOSED. THE ASSISTANT WIGGLES HER FINGERS AND TOES.

MAGICIAN (CONT’D)

See how she wiggles her fingers and toes!

THE MAGICIAN TWIRLS THE ILLUSION AROUND TO SHOW THE AUDIENCE IT IS NOT AN ILLUSION. HE TWIRLS IT THE OTHER WAY AS WELL.

MAGICIAN (CONT’D)

The saw, if you please.

DELIA, NOW DRESSED AS LOVELY ASSISTANT II, BRINGS THE SAW, BALANCED ACROSS HER TWO HANDS LIKE AN OFFERING. THE TOMATO IS TUCKED BETWEEN HER BREASTS.

THE MAGICIAN TAKES THE SAW TO THE SOUND OF A DRUMROLL.

DELIA TAKES THE TOMATO FROM HER BREASTS AND HOLDS IN ONE HAND. SHE STANDS ASIDE, HER ARMS AND HANDS FRAMING THE MAGICIAN, HER LEGS POSED AT ATTRACTIVE ANGLES, HER BANDAGE COVERED BY HER TIGHT SLEEVES, LIPSTICK COVERING HER CRACKED LIPS, THE TOMATO HELD HIGH LIKE AN OFFERING TO AN INVISIBLE GOD.
MAGICIAN (CONT’D)

(now focusing on Delia)
See how her arms and hands frame me, her legs are posed at attractive angles, her arms are covered by her tight sleeves, and lipstick covers her cracking lips.

DELIA TRIES TO STAY IN CHARACTER. THE FIRST LOVELY ASSISTANT KEEPS MOVING HER FINGERS AND TOES.

DELIA
See...how she moves her fingers and toes!

MAGICIAN
Now, my lovely assistant will lay her arm, wrist up, upon the box!

DELIA SMILES WEAKLY AT THE MAGICIAN, WHO MOTIONS HER TO BEGIN.

CONFUSED, DELIA WALKS BEHIND THE BOX AND LAYS HER ARM, WRIST UP, UPON IT - THE TOMATO STILL IN HER OTHER HAND. THE DRUMROLL BEGINS AGAIN.

MAGICIAN (CONT’D)
And now I will take the saw...

HE TAKES THE SAW.

...and cut through this poor, beautiful young woman's arm!

THE MAGICIAN CUTS DELIA’S FAKE HAND OFF WITH A GRISLY FLOURISH AND IT LIES LIFELESS ON THE BOX.

SHE SQUEEZES THE TOMATO OVER THE RAGGED WRIST AS BLOOD, SOBER. ALL GASP AS THE MAGICIAN HOLDS UP THE FAKE HAND FOR ALL TO SEE.

MAGICIAN/ISAAC

Voila!
TAPED APPLAUSE FLOODS IN. BLACKOUT.

A FILMED SEQUENCE COMES IMMEDIATELY UP

ON THE PROJECTION SCREEN: THE DOOR AGAIN. BUT WHEN THE DOOR OPENS, THE OTHER LOVER WALKS THROUGH IT INTO A HOTEL ROOM. ONE LOVER IS FULLY DRESSED AGAIN AND STANDS BY A WINDOW. THEY ARE SOMEWHERE IN EUROPE. THE ROOM IS SMALL, WITH MUTED COLORS, TIMELESS. THEY ARE SILENT AS THE OTHER LOVER WALKS INTO THE ROOM THEN SITS ON THE BED.

THE OTHER LOVER
(after a moment, impatient)
Come on, alright?

ONE LOVER
What.

(pause)
Aren't you supposed to be the one who-

THE OTHER LOVER
We're wasting time. I need to get back.

ONE LOVER
Why? What do you mean?

THE OTHER LOVER
(curly)
We walk into the hotel room. It has a bed, end table, closet, and a dresser with a mirror. All the colors are muted. Europe, maybe New York City. You take off your shirt and your shoes and your belt.

ONE LOVER IS TENTATIVE NOW, UNCERTAIN OF THE NEW TONE. ONE LOVER TAKES OFF SHOES, THEN SHIRT, THEN BELT WITHOUT PASSION OR PLEASURE.
THE OTHER LOVER (CONT’D)

And the rest.

ONE LOVER LOOKS AT THE OTHER LOVER QUESTIONINGLY.

THE OTHER LOVER (CONT’D)
The pants. You walk to the mirror, look at yourself, and take off your pants.

ONE LOVER LOOKS AT THE OTHER LOVER, THEN MOVES, UNCERTAIN, TO THE MIRROR, TURNS AND LOOKS AT THE REFLECTION.

THERE IS A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. THE LOVERS LOOK UP. THE OTHER LOVER STANDS, PERTURBED, AND OPENS THE DOOR.

ISAAC, AS ROOM SERVICE WAITER, STANDS WITH A TRAY ON WHICH THERE ARE TWO DELICATE TEA CUPS ON SAUCERS AND A FOLDED NEWSPAPER. HE HAS A CLOTH NAPKIN DRAPED OVER HIS ARM.

WAITER

Your tea?

THE OTHER LOVER

(confused)

Sure.

THE OTHER LOVER TAKES ONE CUP OF TEA, CLOSES THE DOOR ON THE WAITER AND LEANS AGAINST IT.

THE OTHER LOVER (CONT’D)

Did you order tea?

ONE LOVER NODS
THE OTHER LOVER (CONT’D)

Sweet.

(pause)

Christ, just do it, alright?

ONE LOVER UNBUTTONS THE TOP BUTTON OF THE PANTS.

THE OTHER LOVER (CONT’D)

(brusquely)

Now take them off. You take them off. The pants are off. You lay on the bed.

ONE LOVER HESITATES THEN TAKES OFF THE PANTS UNCEREMONIOUSLY.

THE OTHER LOVER (CONT’D)

Lay down!

ONE LOVER HESITATES, THEN THE OTHER LOVER COMES, TAKING ONE LOVER'S SHOULDERS, AND PUSHES FORCEFULLY TOWARD THE BED.

ONE LOVER LUNGENS FREE AND GRABS FOR CLOTHES OR SHOES, BUT THE OTHER LOVER GETS TO THEM FIRST AND THROWS THEM FAR UNDER THE BED.

ONE LOVER BOLTS FOR THE DOOR, OPENS IT, AND GOES OUT.

THE OTHER LOVER FOLLOWS AND FOR A MOMENT WE SEE NEITHER OF THEM - ONLY THE SHABBY, ONCE ELEGANT HALLWAY.

ONE LOVER'S VOICE

What are you doing?! Stop!

THE OTHER LOVER'S VOICE

You're making a fool of yourself, get back in the room.
THEN, ONE LOVER SLIPS BACK IN, SLAMS THE DOOR, AND LOCKS IT.

THE OTHER LOVER BANGS ON THE DOOR.

ONE LOVER GOES TO THE MIRROR AND LOOKS IN, THEN LOOKS AT THE BANDAGED WRIST. THE OTHER LOVER FINALLY STOPS BANGING. ONE LOVER TAKES OFF THE BANDAGE. UNDER IT IS A STITCHED CUT. ONE LOVER TEARS AT THE STITCHES WITH FRONT TEETH. IN A MOMENT THE WRIST IS BLEEDING, AND ONE LOVER CRIES A SAD, DIFFICULT TEAR.

THE SCENE FADES, AND CREDITS RUN FOR A MOMENT AS DELIA’S VOICE SOUNDS.

DELIA’S VOICE
(a bit frenzied)
I walked around the corner which was crooked as shit and I knew the mirror was in there because bathrooms have mirrors and I tried to prepare myself for the repulsion or revelation or whatever! I wanted to look at myself. I was all ready to do it. But I was too afraid.

DELIA ENTERS THE STAGE WITH A CD IN HER HAND; SHE IS LOOKING INTO IT LIKE A MIRROR, CHECKING HER SELF OUT, MAKING ADJUSTMENTS.

A KNOCK COMES AT THE DOOR. SHE LOOKS UP AND MAKES A COUPLE FINAL ADJUSTMENTS IN THE 'MIRROR' THEN GOES TO THE DOOR.

SHE TRIES TO MAKE THE SCREEN RISE, BUT IT WON’T GO. SHE TRIES AGAIN, LOOKS AROUND IN A SUBDUED PANIC. SHE TRIES ONCE AGAIN AND IT STILL WON’T MOVE.

THE DOOR OPENS ON THE SCREEN. FATHER APPEARS ON SCREEN WHILE ACTOR AS FATHER ALSO ENTERS ON STAGE.
FATHER

Why am I here?

DELIA

I don't know.

FATHER

I'm here because of you.

DELIA

...Okay.

FATHER

I'm here because I was ordered to come here, by the courts, even though you're supposed to be some kind of adult.

(pause)

Are you happy now?

DELIA

What do you mean?

FATHER

Oh. What do I mean?

DELIA

You wouldn't even answer anybody's calls. It's not my fault they made you come here.

FATHER

Is it my fault?

DELIA

I don't know.
FATHER
I'm here because you and your mom needed to make a federal case, literally, because I didn't do the precious counseling and I didn't answer your incessant emails and phone calls and emergency room visits and 'calls for help,' and trips to rehab. Because I don't fall for your controlling, insane -

DELIA
You're the one who decides when and if we talk on the phone. You're the one who decides if you feel like sending any money, you're the one who controls everything so it's just the way -

FATHER
I'm not having this conversation.

DELIA
Do you see what I mean? That's what I mean!

FATHER
Look at you! You look like a pre-pubescent red-faced little kid having a tantrum. Now you yank everybody and his brother around with you and your issues because you're 'at risk.' Well, I'm at risk, too. My life is at risk of going to hell with this shit. I'm happy when I'm at home! Do you get that? My life is good! You're the only thing standing in the way of that.

DELIA
I'm sorry I don't fit into your new lifestyle, Dad. But you never invite me!

FATHER
It hasn't worked out. I've got bills to pay, work to do, other obligations. Now I'm roped into paying half your tuition so you can-

DELIA
I've tried everything, Dad! I never see you!

FATHER
Well you took care of that this time, didn't you? But you know what? You can make me come here, but you can't change my mind.

DELIA
I'm falling, Dad.
FATHER  
What?

DELIA  
I'm hurt!

FATHER  
Oh, are you still bleeding?

*HE GRABS AT HER WRIST BUT SHE PULLS AWAY.*

DELIA  
Dad!

FATHER  
I have a plane to catch. I was here, okay? Enter that in the records. I spent $350 bucks on a plane ticket to satisfy your manipulations, but you can't change what's in my head, /there's nothing you can say or do to change what I know is true.

*FATHER HAS BEGUN TO EXIT.*

DELIA  
/Dad, stop walking away! Listen to me!

FATHER  
This shit doesn't work on me. I'm going back to my family.

DELIA  
Why don't you love me? Huh? Why?

*HE STOPS.*

FATHER  
Jesus, look at you. If I wasn't so pissed, I'd be sick to my stomach. Do you really think this is the way to make people care about you?

DELIA  
(breaking down)
No. No I don't, I... I know I'm horrible. I know that, Dad. I know I look like a red-faced little piece of shit. I hate the way I look.
FATHER
Failing your classes like a fuck-up...

DELIA
Dad, it's PG 13! You can't say that!

FATHER
...getting high like a fuck-up, doing alcohol and pills and taking some fucking kitchen knife and-

DELIA
I know that!

(pause)
I'm horrible. I know that. But I wasn't always horrible, was I? Huh? Just tell me when you stopped loving me? Just tell me that.

THE FILMED VERSION OF FATHER CONTINUES,
BUT ACTOR CAN NO LONGER GO ON AS FATHER.

FATHER
Okay, you're breaking up.

ACTOR TAKES OFF THE JACKET AND LOOKS AT
DELIA AS THE SCREEN FATHER CONTINUES
SPEAKING.

DELIA TURNS HER FOCUS TO FATHER ON
SCREEN, SEEMINGLY UNAWARE OF ACTOR.
THEIR LINES COME FAST AND FURIOUSLY NOW.

I'm about to go into a tunnel, so I'm probably going to lose you.

DELIA
(confused)
What tunnel?

ACTOR
(tenderly)
Delia.
DELIA DOES NOT TURN TO HIM.

FATHER
I need to deal with this toll booth, I'm getting off here.

DELIA
What do you mean?

ACTOR
Scene's over.

HE LOOKS, CONFUSED, AT THE SCREEN, AND BACK TO DELIA.

FATHER
The plane's about to take off, Delia, is what I mean. And they're saying I have to turn off the cell phone. You know the regulations.

DELIA
Dad, where are you going? We made you come here!

ACTOR
Just stop looking at the screen.

FATHER
(over him)
Do you want me to break another federal law? I'll let you know when you can have my new phone number. If you can have it.

ACTOR
Come on. That's it.

FATHER
(over him)
Somewhere between now and then, you have to get real.

ACTOR
Stop the scene!

DELIA
But what do you mean!? How do I act more real? Dad, just tell me what to do-
THE SCREEN IMAGE FREEZES AND LOOKS OUT AT HER, EMOTIONLESS.

AS DELIA CONTINUES BELOW, ACTOR TRIES TO RAISE THE SCREEN OR TURN IT OFF.

AMBROSE COMES ON STAGE WEARING THE HEADSET, WATCHING.

DELIA (CONT’D)
Dad, no!! It's real! I promise! But I'm slipping! I'm falling! I'm hurt!

DELIA HOLDS BACK TEARS, UTTERLY ABANDONED AND OUTRAGED. FATHER FADES OUT AND OFF. STATIC COMES UP ON THE SCREEN.

DELIA GOES ONTO HER KNEES.

ACTOR STEPS REGRETFULLY BACK INTO THE SHADOWS AND WATCHES HELPLESS AND HORRIFIED. EVEN AMBROSE IS SPEECHLESS.

DELIA (CONT’D)
Don't you know what red is? Emergency!

SHE BREAKS THE CD IN HER HAND.

DELIA (CONT’D)
Don't you know what red means? Stop! Right now! Look! Danger! Fire!

SHE TAKES ONE JAGGED EDGE AND HOLDS IT OVER HER WRIST OVER A FRESH PATCH OF SKIN, HIGHER ON HER ARM THAN THE STITCHES THAT HAVE BEEN SLOPPILY PULLED OUT.

DELIA (CONT’D)
Red. That's an emergency! Danger! Stop! PAY ATTENTION! SOMETHING BAD COULD HAPPEN UNLESS YOU PAY ATTENTION!
SHE SLITS THE SKIN ON HER ARM WITH A BIT OF STRUGGLE AND IT BLEEDS, DRIPPING DOWN ONTO THE STAGE. THERE IS A SAD ECSTASY TO HER WORDS.

DELIA (CONT’D)

(slowly)
It means Stop..., Stop, stop... It means Love...., Veins....., Roses...., Hearts...., Valentines...., Lips...., Love....

DELIA HOLDS HER ARM IN HER HAND AS LIGHTS DIM OUT. SHE REMAINS, VERY DIMLY LIT, DURING THE FOLLOWING SCENE.

DOWNSTAGE LEFT IS A SMALL CAFE TABLE AND TWO CHAIRS. SUNGLASSES, A THICK MUG, A CRUMPLED CLOTH NAPKIN, AND A NEWSPAPER FOLDED INTO EIGHTS LAY ON THE TABLE. A RED SCARF IS DRAPED OVER ONE CHAIR.

ONE LOVER ENTERS IMMEDIATELY AFTER LAST SCENE AND SITS IN A CHAIR - BEFORE ANYONE CAN MOVE. THE OTHER LOVER ENTERS AFTER A MOMENT. THE BANDAGE IS BACK OVER ONE LOVER'S WRIST.

LIGHTS FADE UP ON A RISER WHERE BRIANNA SITS WITH THE ELECTRODE STUDDED SKULLCAP ON HER HEAD, HOOKED UP TO A COMPUTER.

THE OTHER LOVER
I come to the table and ask if I might sit down.

ONE LOVER
I say, "of course."

THE OTHER LOVER SITS.

THE OTHER LOVER
I ask how much longer you think they’ll have the tables outside.
I say, "this is the last day."

I inquire about your wrist.

I look at you, but I'm...a little cautious. Shy, even.

You swallow hard.

I say "see for yourself?"

I notice how you answer, in a question, and I know that you're asking for more than this. You're saying, "Can you endure it? Will you? At this proximity?" I take your hand and turn it over.

ONE LOVER

My heart pounds.

ONE LOVER NODS.

THE OTHER LOVER LIFTS THE BANDAGE AND PULLS IT GENTLY ASIDE.

ONE LOVER IS EXPOSED. THE OTHER LOVER IS GENTLE AND AWED.

Ah, Jesus.... You must have been in so much pain.
ONE LOVER
I fell in my parents' house when they were doing some renova-

THE OTHER LOVER
You told me.

ONE LOVER
I fell on the ice.

BRIANNA TAKES THE SCULLCAP FROM HER HEAD AND DROPS IT IN FRUSTRATION.
LIGHTS CHANGE ON BRIANNA AS SHE LOOKS TO THE LOVERS. THERE IS A LONG PAUSE.

ONE LOVER (CONT’D)
...I did it. I did it myself.
(pause)
I cut myself.

THE OTHER LOVER
I know.
(pause)
You should leave that off. Let it get some sun. Some air.

ONE LOVER
But it's really hideous, it's really-

THE OTHER LOVER
No. Leave it.
(pause)

LONG PAUSE, THEN THEY SMILE GENTLY, A LITTLE AWKWARDLY, AT EACH OTHER.

ONE LOVER
So...

THE OTHER LOVER
...So.
ONE LOVER

(pause)
...Did you want to see when that movie started?

THE OTHER LOVER

...Yeah.

(pause)
Why don't I do that.

THE OTHER LOVER PUTS ON THE MIRRORED SUNGLASSES, PICKS UP THE NEWSPAPER, AND LEAFS THROUGH IT FOR THE MOVIE LISTINGS.

ONE LOVER LOOKS LOVINGLY AT THE OTHER LOVER AND THE REFLECTION OF THE SELF IN THE SUNGLASSES. LIGHTS OUT ON LOVERS.

SOMEBWHERE DURING THIS LAST INTERACTION, DELIA STANDS UP, WATCHING THEM, CONFUSED.

HOUSE LIGHTS RISE A LITTLE, ALMOST IMPERCEPTIBLY, AS SHE SPEAKS.

DELIA

(to Audience, nearly coming to tears again)
You don't know what they're talking about, I know you don't. What do you care about the stories of a bunch of circus freaks? How could it possibly matter what I feel, what they feel, what happens for a hour in a place you go to once every year or two out of some sense of...obligation? It's nothing! You probably don't even live here, you probably don't even think of me or wonder about me, or even want to know how mother fucking angry I am! Isn't it hideous? Don't I just scare you away? Don't you just want to walk out and keep on walking?! Go ahead! Just walk out. We have nothing in common. I don't even look like you!

AMBROSE COMES QUICKLY DOWNSTAGE.
ACTOR FOLLOWS CLOSE ON HIS HEELS.

AMBROSE

HOUSE OUT!

HOUSE LIGHTS GO OUT.
AMBROSE TAKES CENTER STAGE WITH A PIECE OF PAPER IN HIS HAND.
( to Actor and Delia)
Are either of you aware of the fact that your insane actions have consequences!?
(reading loudly, quickly, officiously)
This is a list of the plays that are not to be performed which have been recently banned. This could happen to you. Vagina Monologues, banned in Argentina, Malaysia, Singapore, Uganda, and a load of colleges in the US. Opera Keoco: banned in Indonesia. The Bootee banned in Algeria. Nehru and the Tantrik Woman, India. Crazy From My Country, Iraq. The Falklands Play, banned by the BBC, Life Versus the Paperback Romance, banned in Charlotte, North Carolina; Paradise in Cincinatti, The Answer in Chicago-

ACTOR
Stop! Alright! Is that even a real list? It's the 21st century. My God, what are they afraid of? How can they still be burning books, calling in the authorities? Why?!

AMBROSE
I'll tell you why, because your instability could lead to...other instability. That's why. You can't be trusted! This is a perfect example.

ACTOR
Of what?

AMBROSE
Of incredibly unstable elements.

DELIA
(nearly to herself, realizing)
Us...
(the Audience)
and them.

AMBROSE
Things could be stable. With a little discipline, a little more rehearsal, a decent budget-

ACTOR
No, no, no. You're right, Ambrose. For once, you're right. Because...it is unstable. In fact, every night it's a different play. It's uncontrollable, gets away from you.
AMBROSE

Like a friggin' riot.

ACTOR

(dawning)
Right? Because tomorrow night,

(referring to specific audience members)
...he'll be home talking to his brother from Texas instead of here, she'll be mixing it up at the bar. She'll be buying a book on Amazon.com, he'll be writing something down so he doesn't forget.

DELIA IS LISTENING TO THEIR ARGUMENT INTENTLY.

AMBROSE

(to Actor, over him)
You'll be picking up your last paycheck,

(Delia)
- she'll be looking for a job.

ACTOR

(over him)
And a completely new audience will be here in their places./

AMBROSE

(into his headset)
Cue 47!

NOTHING HAPPENS.

ACTOR

/And because they aren't here, the play is essentially rewritten. The laughs come in different spots...

AMBROSE

Stop talking about them!

DELIA

(to the Audience)
You inquire about my wrist.
UNCERTAIN, DELIA TAKES OFF HER LONG-SLEEVED SHIRT AND DROPS IT TO THE FLOOR. UNDERNEATH, SHE HAS ON SOMETHING SLIGHT, AND TWO BANDAGES NEAR HER WRIST ARE EXPOSED. THE LINES BELOW CONTINUE AS SHE DOES THIS.

ACTOR
Some lines are forgotten, others are misquoted - and it's different! It's new!

AMBROSE
(to Delia)
Are you going to strip now?

ACTOR
Say a woman smokes too long outside and walks in late...

AMBROSE
(to Delia)
They don't want to see that!

ACTOR
(over him)
...and an actor sees her come in and feels sad and rejected and his whole performance changes...

AMBROSE
(to Actor)
Your work should be predictable, consistent...

ACTOR
(over him)
...and a completely new texture emerges in the script.

AMBROSE
- it should be more like a film....

ACTOR
(over him)
Because the story that we tell...
AMBROSE

...like TV!

DELIA MOVES TO THE TABLE, TAKES ONE LOVER'S SCARF, EXAMINES IT, AND PUTS IT ON DURING THE FOLLOWING.

ACTOR
(over him)
...and the...the audience that responds reform the shape of their relationship every second... Like a...cloud of combustible gasses. It's something between us! A call and a response! Like the people in the church say 'yes!'

AMBROSE
Well, this sure as hell isn't any church!

DELIA
(to the Audience)
I say, 'I did it.'

ACTOR
(had it, finally focusing exclusively on Ambrose)
Oh, I'm sorry, Ambrose! You've got 'the list!' You're calling the show! You're dictating exactly what comes next!

AMBROSE
I'll tell you what's next! The same thing that's always next. She sucks it up and goes home. You take your bow. They file out and go get a drink or drive back to wherever and get on the internet or watch America Has Talent or whatever they do and we call it a day.

DELIA
(to the Audience, over Ambrose)
I say 'I did it myself.'

AMBROSE
These people know exactly what their role is. They know exactly what they're supposed to do.

ACTOR
Buy the popcorn, sit back, and watch?
AMBROSE
You know what? There's nothing wrong with that. They have nothing to prove here. You are a stand in. A half-assed, improvising understudy! And you're fired!

DELLA SITS DOWN AT THE CAFE TABLE.

ACTOR
And you're a controlling, tight-assed bully. A simpering, tyrannical coward! And you have no power to tell me if I do or don't-

AMBROSE
Get ready for your exit!
(into head set)
Cue 47!

NOTHING HAPPENS.

ACTOR
(looking up at the light booth)
House lights to half!

NOTHING HAPPENS.

AMBROSE
Cue 47!

ACTOR
(grabbing for the headset)
Give me the headset.

AMBROSE
(pulling them away)
No!

ACTOR
You know, where the hell's our real stage manager? What have you done with Lauren?

AMBROSE
(into mic)
J.D., cue 47! Let's go!
NOTHING HAPPENS. AMBROSE EXITS IN A RUSH.

ACTOR
(concerned)
Jesus, this is no joke. Where is she?!

ACTOR RUNS OUT AFTER AMBROSE.

ACTOR’S VOICE
(from offstage)
Lauren?!

DELIA WATCHES THEM GO, THEN LOOKS OUT AT THE AUDIENCE AGAIN, ALONE ON STAGE. SHE PAUSES, UNCLEAR HOW TO PROCEED.

THEN SHE SPEAKS TO THE AUDIENCE VERY SLOWLY. SHE DOESN’T PINPOINT ANY ONE PERSON, HER EYES SEARCH THEM AS A WHOLE, WAITING FOR A SIGN. SHE IS THE LOVER NOW, NOT DESPERATE OR DEMANDING, BUT VULNERABLE AND EXPOSED.

DELIA
And then... And then a member of the audience ...stands up. She just...stands up.
(PAUSE.)
She says, 'excuse me,' and she begins to step carefully over the feet of the people in her row, even though it’s kind of dark. Some of them stand up for her to pass. A hundred eyes turn to her and she swallows hard. Her heart pounds.

PAUSE. HOUSE LIGHTS RISE JUST A LITTLE; SHE WAITS, NERVOUS, THEN SPEAKS VERY SLOWLY.
A [wo]man stands up. People rise for him to pass, and when he gets to the aisle his hands are damp, and he walks to the stage, and he climbs up the steps and just...

SHE REACHES OUT A HAND, NOTICES HER BANDAGES, STEELS HERSELF AGAINST SELF-HATRED, AND KEEPS SPEAKING.
...takes my hand. He wants to be here. By some kind of miracle, he...just reaches out and... I can feel his warm flesh and blood hand. I can see the color of his eyes. (MORE)
DELIA (CONT'D)
He can smell the hairspray and the sweat up here and see the dust on the floor and he squints from the glare in his eyes. Everything changes.

PAUSE; SHE WAITS.
We're live. You can change everything.

SHE WAITS.

ENDING #1: THE FINAL TWO LINES ABOVE, ENDING WITH 'YOU CAN CHANGE EVERYTHING,' ARE ONLY SPOKEN IF NO ONE HAS STOOD AND COME TO THE STAGE YET.

IF AT ANY EARLIER POINT AN AUDIENCE MEMBER DOES STAND, DELIA CONTINUES HER OTHER LINES AS ABOVE ADJUSTING HER PRONOUNS TO FIT THE GENDER OF THE AUDIENCE MEMBER WHO RESPONDS AND ENDS WITH 'EVERYTHING CHANGES.'

DURING THE ABOVE, MAYBE THE AUDIENCE MEMBER HAS TAKEN DELIA'S HAND. SHE HAS FINISHED HER LINES AND THEY HAVE LINGERED IN THAT MOMENT.

THEN DELIA OFFERS THE AUDIENCE MEMBER A SEAT AT THE TABLE.

A LITTLE SELF-CONSCIOUS, THE AUDIENCE MEMBER SITS, AND THEY ARE TOGETHER. DELIA PUTS ON THE SUNGLASSES.

DELIA (CONT'D)
(after they are sitting, to the Audience Member)
And then we sit together. I ask how much longer you think they'll have the tables outside.

PAUSE. MAYBE THE AUDIENCE MEMBER KNOWS THE LINE OR OFFERS ANOTHER. IF NOT...

DELIA (CONT'D)
You say 'this is the last day.'
AUDIENCE MEMBER

This is the last day.

DELIA SMILES GRATEFULLY.

ISAAC ENTERS AS A WAITER, BALANCING A TRAY CARRYING TWO THICK MUGS. HE PLACES THE MUGS IN FRONT OF DELIA AND THE AUDIENCE MEMBER. DELIA TAKES OFF HER GLASSES AND CATCHES ISSAC’S EYE, CURIOUS. HE SMILES, NO WORRIES. ISSAC EXITS.

DELIA AND THE AUDIENCE MEMBER SIT A MOMENT MORE, CLINK MUGS, AND DRINK. BLACKOUT.

IN THE DARK, THE REST OF THE CAST ENTER AND STAND IN A LINE. THE AUDIENCE MEMBER STANDS WITH THEM.

LIGHTS COME UP AND ALL BOW TO THE AUDIENCE. AUDIENCE APPLAUDS OR DOESN'T. END OF PLAY.

ENDING #2: ON THE OTHER HAND, IF NO AUDIENCE MEMBER COMES, THE DIALOGUE SHOULD STOP JUST SHORT OF 'EVERYTHING CHANGES' - THEN ON TO THE NEXT TWO LINES. THEN, THE REST OF THE CAST, EXCEPT AMBROSE, ENTER THE STAGE. THEY LOOK AT THE AUDIENCE. SHORT PAUSE.

DELIA
(to herself)

Or nothing.

AMBROSE ENTERS WITH HEADSET ON.

AMBROSE
(into head set)

Music!
MUSIC COMES UP AND LIGHTS GO TO BLACK.

THE SCREEN LIGHTS UP BRIGHT. THE CAST EXITS IN THE DARK.

ON THE SCREEN, THE ENTIRE CAST STANDS IN A LINE FACING THE AUDIENCE. ACROSS THEIR IMAGE READS ‘APPLAUSE.’ THE AUDIENCE APPLAUDS. THE CAST BOWS ON SCREEN, THEN BOW AGAIN.

EVENTUALLY, HOUSE LIGHTS COME UP TO ESCORT THE AUDIENCE OUT OF THE THEATRE AS THE ACTORS ON SCREEN CONTINUE TO BOW MONOTONOUSLY.