

Our Apocalyptic Dream
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ACT I
SCENE I

(A dismal looking landscape. Lights open to Geoffrey and Tiernan sitting in “a tree”. There is a large pile of novels next to Tiernan and a large cache of weapons and survival gear amassed by Geoffrey. Geoffrey is staring intently at a chessboard. Tiernan is reading David Copperfield. Geoffrey scratches his head before hesitantly making a move. He sits back and folds his arms triumphantly and clears his throat. Tiernan glances away from his book towards the chessboard, reaches over and moves a piece, looks back to his book and turns a page. Geoffrey looks down at his move in disbelief.)

GEOFFREY

Dammit.

TIERNAN

Tactics, my love. That's the key to this game.

GEOFFREY

What do you think I was doing this whole time?

TIERNAN

I was beginning to wonder. How long did that move take? Two hours?

GEOFFREY

It did not.

TIERNAN

(referring to his book) In the time it took you to come up with that, David Copperfield grew from a thumb-biting orphan that nobody loved into a rather dull prat that nobody loved.

GEOFFREY

(looking at the board) Speaking of dull prats, how about you shut the hell up and let me think?

TIERNAN

(goes back to reading) Ah. Well, careful you don't strain yourself. We're all out of percocet.

GEOFFREY

If you think I'm going to sit here and listen to you-- *(he stops abruptly, looking out to the audience)* —did you hear that?

TIERNAN

Hmmm?

GEOFFREY

Listen.

TIERNAN

Wind. Rotting trees. Swinging bodies.

Geoffrey notices someone in the distance. Tiernan continues to read.

GEOFFREY

There's someone out there, look!

TIERNAN

Yes, dear.

(he continues to read without looking up)

GEOFFREY

Aren't you going to look?

TIERNAN

Are you trying to cheat again?

GEOFFREY

I don't cheat.

TIERNAN

You're right. Cheating requires an aptitude for winning. I don't need you moving the pieces randomly about the board again.

GEOFFREY

Geez, that was one time. And like, a thousand years ago.

TIERNAN

I especially liked how you managed to check your own king in the process.

GEOFFREY

(ignoring Tiernan) What do you think he's doing?

(Tiernan sighs, lowers his book and looks out to the distance.)

TIERNAN

He's got a noose.

GEOFFREY

Do you think he's--

TIERNAN

-- Looking for a tree.

GEOFFREY

They always come looking for trees. Damn. You realize that that's the first person, well, the first living person we've seen in weeks.

TIERNAN

Don't worry. He won't be alive for long.

GEOFFREY

We should say hello.

TIERNAN

We should mind our own business. Make your move.

GEOFFREY

Why shouldn't we talk to him? *(Tiernan glances over at Geoffrey sternly)* Fine. *(He looks intently at the board, he hesitates at a few moves before carefully picking up a rook and placing it on the board)*. Ha.

TIERNAN

(looking at the board, he moves his piece).

Check.

(Geoffrey looks at the board and roars as he upends the board over the playing

space and hurls it to the ground.)

TIERNAN

Must we do this every time, Geoffrey?

GEOFFREY

I fucking hate this game!

TIERNAN

Well, it's the last time we'll ever play it, I assure you.

GEOFFREY

You say that every time.

TIERNAN

In this case I mean it. Time is running out for us.

GEOFFREY

Shut up.

TIERNAN

The last remains of humanity are dwindling, Dear. Their end is our end. It's inevitable. I don't understand why it upsets you so much to talk about it.

GEOFFREY

(looking out to grove)

I think we should stop him.

TIERNAN

No, Geoffrey

GEOFFREY

Why not?

TIERNAN

He's made his choice. It's the last choice he'll ever make. What gives you the right to take that away from him?

GEOFFREY

Because I can't stand it. War I can handle. Destruction. Catastrophe. Great battlefields of piss and gore is still... life, of a sort. It's fight. That? A forest of ghosts hanging from the branches of dying trees.

TIERNAN

That was almost like poetry. Almost.

GEOFFREY

Fuck you, Tiernan.

TIERNAN

There, there. It will all be over soon enough. For him, for you, for us.

GEOFFREY

But why give up so easily, without so much as a struggle? And after all we helped to build, to create? It's such a waste to let it all end this way. What was the point?

TIERNAN

Because as there is a beginning, there must be an ending. It was a good run. **We** had a good run. The finale was a bit of a disappointment, but some bits in the middle were quite exciting.

GEOFFREY

Humanity has survived an ice age, plagues, civil war, nuclear meltdown, and The Macarena. They walked on the moon! Made super-computers and robots, robots that build super-computers and teeny-tiny dogs that fit in your pocket. We've come a hell of a long way from that cold, dark cave eking out light from a patch of flint. And you're going to just dust off your hands and say "That's it! Humanity is finished!"?

TIERNAN

Geoffrey, you must resign yourself to the fact that the lights are never coming back on. Last call has come and gone. Time to lock up. Don't forget your coat.

GEOFFREY

I really hate you, you know that?

TIERNAN

Mmmm.

(Geoffrey looks at his survivalist cache, chooses an axe, then jumps down from the tree and starts walking toward The Grove.)

TIERNAN

Where are you going?

GEOFFREY

To stop him.

TIERNAN

That *(pointing to the grove)* is neither your place nor mine. Sit down.

GEOFFREY

Make me.

TIERNAN

It's a suicide grove, Geoffrey. Our own little post-apocalyptic Aokigahara. Let them do what they came here to do.

GEOFFREY

As I recall there are signs all over Mt. Fuji and the Sea of Trees asking people to reconsider. And why...because suicide is really just a cry for help. So I'm helping.

TIERNAN

Geoffrey!

GEOFFREY

What's the worst that could happen? He dies?

TIERNAN

That he lives.

GEOFFREY

Oh, *Darling*, how it must hurt to watch them tighten their ropes and swallow their strychnine, and all you can do is watch...bristling with envy.

TIERNAN

(visibly aggravated) What is your game, Geoffrey? You think you can make that pathetic shell of a man want to live again? Here? Now?

GEOFFREY

Would you like to put a small wager on that?

TIERNAN

(puts down his book with a sigh) What specifically did you have in mind, *Dear*?

GEOFFREY

Light. *(beat)* It's where we started. Let it be where we begin again. I wager I can get the whole of the horizon twinkling again with a mere 100 people.

TIERNAN

Three people.

GEOFFREY

Three?

TIERNAN

The first three. Whomever you encounter on the road. No more, no less.

GEOFFREY

(thinks about it) Sure. Why not? I like a challenge.

TIERNAN

Starting with him *(indicating Graham in the grove)*.

GEOFFREY

And what about you?

TIERNAN

I'll be a silent partner, thank you.

GEOFFREY

I don't think so. *(He makes a gesture or indicates an item representing Donkey)*

TIERNAN

You're not serious?

GEOFFREY

I did it the last time. It's your turn now.

TIERNAN

(disgusted) Of all the childish things...you honestly expect me to do that again?

GEOFFREY

You bet your ass.

Geoffrey smiles at deviously at Tiernan. Lights fade out. A donkey brays.

SCENE II

(Scene opens a split second after Graham has just hung himself from a tree in the middle of the hanging wood. All of a sudden, Geoffrey is there, and with a blow of an ax, cuts the rope dropping Graham to the ground. He gets up coughing and retching a bit, stunned and dazed from his brush with death. As he's removing the rope from his bruised neck Geoffrey pulls Tiernan dressed as a Donkey on from offstage.)

Geoffrey

That's gonna leave a mark.

(Graham looks stunned at Geoffrey, momentarily speechless)

GEOFFREY (cont.)

The phrase you are looking for is, "Thank You".

Graham

Thank you?

Geoffrey

You're welcome friend. I have some salve in my pack. That's an awful burn there. Donkey sit.

(Donkey gives Geoffrey a sharp look but doesn't say anything)

Geoffrey

Donkey. We don't want the whip again, do we?

(Donkey sits, albeit reluctantly)

Geoffrey

That's a good donkey.

(Graham watches this whole exchange with mingled curiosity and confusion. He continues to struggle with the noose as Geoffrey searches his pack for some salve)

Geoffrey

Oh, let me help you with that. *(Geoffrey gives Graham a hand getting the noose off)* You tied one helluva knot here my friend. Where'd you learn to do that?
scouts

Graham

Boy Scouts.
the

GEOFFREY

You were a Boy Scout? What rank?

GRAHAM

Eagle Scout...well, not technically. I never earned the final badge.

Geoffrey

(looking at the noose)

Well, you know your Pioneering skills at least. Although, it's probably best not to have those skills these days. *(looking at trees around them)* It seems a bit too handy. *(Geoffrey applies salve to Graham's neck. Sharp intake of breath from Graham)* Oh, whoops! Should have warned you. It stings a bit.

Graham

So, um, how long had you been...watching me?

Geoffrey

Oh, for quite some time actually. I suppose I noticed you the minute you approached that tree.

Graham

Why didn't you stop me sooner?!

Geoffrey

It seemed like something you needed to get through. Intervening would have interrupted a very important moment in your life. I wanted to see what happened. Whether you'd fight or not.

Graham

I was pretty determined up to the point where the rope went taut.

Geoffrey

So what changed your mind?

Graham

I don't know. It's sort of personal, sounds silly to say it out loud....

Geoffrey

(puts an arm around Graham in a fatherly way)

Why don't you tell me all about it, um (looks at Graham expectedly)

GRAHAM

Graham.

GEOFFREY

All right, Graham. What troubles you?

GRAHAM

What's the point?

GEOFFREY

You can trust me.

Graham

No, I mean what's the point anymore? I've managed to stay alive for the past three years and for what? I'm cold all the time. I'm hungry. I'm lonely. When it first happened, I stayed holed up in my apartment for six months. Everything just stopped. Something, somewhere broke. Someone was going to fix it, right? They had to. The lights would come back on. But then they didn't. And now everything is just an empty, dark wasteland. Where am I supposed to go? I don't even have a friend to keep me company. All my friends were on the other end side of the Internet. So what's the point? Just being alive doesn't seem enough.

Geoffrey

Oh there's a point my friend. Life is about to get very exciting. You'll want to be a part of it...trust me. There's no greater time to be alive than right now. Why don't you come with me? Donkey's a good animal, but not much of a conversationalist.

Donkey

Hee Haw (*who's the crappy conversationalist?*)

Geoffrey

(shooting a look at Donkey) I could use some company. And I think you might just be the man I need.

Graham

Who are you?

Geoffrey

Oh just a fellow on the road. My name is Geoffrey. This is Donkey. Now, we best be on our way. *(slaps Donkey on the ass)* Get moving you old ass!

Donkey

Hee Haw! *(if you want to keep that hand, you'll keep it to yourself!)*

Graham

Wait. Just like that?

Geoffrey

Like what?

Graham

I go with you?

Geoffrey

Sure.

Graham

Now?

Geoffrey

Time is of the essence Graham.

Graham

You're not worried about who I might be?

Geoffrey

Should I?

Graham

It just seems odd to meet a stranger on the road and invite him to share an intimate relationship.

Geoffrey

Hey now, I'm not suggesting anything like that.

Graham

I don't mean that kind of intimacy--

Geoffrey

(winks at Graham)

Not yet, anyway.

Graham

What I mean is that, you don't know me from an axe murderer.

Geoffrey

But I'm the one with the axe.

Graham

And you're inviting me to be your traveling companion?

Geoffrey

You said you were lonely.

Graham

But why me?

Geoffrey

Because sometimes it's not about the past. Sometimes it's about potential. What *might* happen, given a chance. *(puts an arm around him again)* We all need second chances, don't you think? *(gives him a pat on the shoulders)* You are a man full of potential, Graham. This is the first moment of the rest of your life.

Graham

(flattered just a bit)

I still find it odd.

Geoffrey

Hey, do you like Charades?

Graham

Um, sure.

Geoffrey

Fantastic. Because Donkey here is absolute rubbish at it.

(Donkey makes an irritated braying sound, and demonstrates the uselessness of his hooves)

Geoffrey (cont.)

(to Donkey)

It's always some excuse with you.

Graham

I also play a bit of chess. Was almost the junior district champion

Geoffrey

Phhh. Chess is for posers. Prep school warmongers who never bloody their own swords, because they can buy armies of cannon-fodder to "earn" their victories. The world burns around them while they sleep in their goose down beds, yanking their stubby puds to the fart song of overindulged genius. (beat) Never cared much for that game.

Graham

You know... I think I'll just go home.

Geoffrey

You don't have a home anymore, Graham.

Graham

Look, this all moving too fast. I just...need some time to think about it.

(Geoffrey pulls out flask)

Geoffrey

And does that normally work out for you, almost Eagle Scout, almost Junior Champion? Carpe diem, my friend. This new world is just ripe for the plucking. There's a place for men

like us. *(puts his arm around Graham)* A chance to start over. A chance to get this world back on track. You wouldn't want to miss that, would you?

(Graham stares at him speechless for a moment.)

Graham

(rubbing his head, he suddenly pauses)

I'm already dead, aren't I?

Geoffrey

Come again?

GRAHAM

(to himself)

No, not yet. I'm still falling. The rope hasn't gone taut yet. *(Geoffrey)* I'm still falling and imagining all of this, aren't I? I imagined you coming along with your... Donkey...to save me. It's classic. You want me to "go" with you, on a "journey" into the West, dodging cannibals, wrestling with brambles, and fornicating with sirens. Except there's a catch. Because when we finally reach the paradise that lies just beyond the horizon then SNAP! *(he clenches his fist as if hold an imaginary rope)* the noose finally tightens. And I cease to exist.

(Geoffrey holds the flask out again towards Graham. Graham takes it, sniffs the flask and takes a deep swig. He bends over and braces himself on his knees from the rush of whiskey.)

Geoffrey

You are quite the storyteller. Reminds me of someone else I knew once, but you don't seem to be as much of an ass. *(Donkey snorts with disapproval.)* Did you just come up with that?

Graham

(Taking a big swig from the flask and coughing) No, it's something I read once in a Literature class. Probably Homer or something.

Geoffrey

Ah, an odyssey. I like it. Well, Graham, shall we begin the Hero's quest? Hopefully with fewer monsters. C'mon, Donkey!

SCENE III

(A table with a sign on front, a la Lucy from Charlie Brown. The sign says, "Psychotherapy", then has several amounts which are marked out from \$100/hour down to \$5, then finally 'Rates Negotiable" Cloris sits at the table. She is dozing. Geoffrey, Graham and Donkey enter from behind Cloris, having just come from the grove. Geoffrey walks up to Cloris, who is still sleeping)

Geoffrey

Psychotherapy, huh?

Cloris

(bolting upright in shock, quickly turning around to see who's there)
Huh, what?

Geoffrey

(points at sign)
You're a psychiatrist?

Cloris

I'm a psychologist.

Geoffrey

A shrink?

Cloris

(quickly gathering her wits but very wary of her "customers")
Yes.... who wants to know?

GEOFFREY

(offering hand)
Name's Geoffrey. But if this is a bad time.....

CLORIS

No no! Not at all. I'm Cloris Watterson, Ph.D. Not a lot of return tickets offered from that direction. More of a final destination. *(she sizes up the lot of them)* So which one of you is the suicidal one? Hope it's not the equine there. I do not offer pet psychology.

DONKEY

Haw! *(who're you calling a pet, lady!)*

GEOFFREY

Who, Donkey? Oh no. It's Graham over here. I stopped him from hanging himself. Cut short his attempt, you might say.

CLORIS

I suspected as much. It is difficult to prevent people from hanging themselves, unless you have the proper training.

GEOFFREY

I don't mean to be rude, but judging from what I saw hanging from the branches in there, your track record is questionable at best.

CLORIS

(shooting Geoffrey a dirty look)

Graham, you are in a safe place, and I am here to help you. Tell me, what led you to the hanging grove to try to end your own life?

(CLORIS pats her "couch", Graham looks to Geoffrey)

GEOFFREY

Go ahead, Graham, have a seat.

(Graham sits on the jumble of trash Cloris has set up to look like an analyst's couch. Geoffrey stands behind Graham, with one hand on his shoulder)

CLORIS

Do you mind?

GEOFFREY

No, not at all. Just jump right in.

CLORIS

There was such a thing as doctor patient confidentiality before the lights went out, I would ask that you still respect it.

GEOFFREY

Oh! Of course, how rude of me. *(taking his hand off Graham's shoulder)* I'll be right over

here if you need me, Graham.

(crosses and sits off from the action. He does not actually leave the "hearing" space at all. Donkey is still sitting near Cloris)

CLORIS

(clearing her throat)

And your donkey?

GEOFFREY

Donkey? He's deaf, he won't hear a thing.

(CLORIS looks suspiciously at Geoffrey and then Donkey. Makes decision to ignore Donkey)

CLORIS

Right. Ok, Graham. Let's dive right in, shall we? What do you feel drove you to the brink of self destruction?

GRAHAM

Um, well, I've been struggling so much ever since the lights went out. And it's been very lonely.

CLORIS

I know. We all lost a lot of friends that day.

GRAHAM

I wasn't the most outgoing guy. Most of my friends were online. But I felt really social that way. I had a blog, I hosted a few forums, I was a guild leader. I was popular...in a way. But when that was gone, I was just... alone.

CLORIS

Graham, you've only mentioned virtual friendships? Didn't you have any *normal* friends?

GRAHAM

(Defensive) They were normal friends.

CLORIS

Of course Graham, but didn't you have any friends that you interacted with physically, as

opposed to virtually?

GRAHAM

(skeptical)

Ok. I guess online friends just seemed easier. You didn't worry about how you looked or what you did. You could be anybody you wanted to be. And now, things are just so hard. Always cold and lonely. I found that rope while dumpster diving--and I just thought--

DONKEY

Hee haw (*why didn't you finish the job, stupid human*)

CLORIS

Are you sure your Donkey is deaf?

GEOFFREY

Definitely. From birth. Deaf and dumb.

DONKEY

Hee-hawwww (*FUCK YOU*)

CLORIS

I think the proper term is "mute".

GEOFFREY

Dumb as in stupid.

DONKEY

Hee-hawwww.

GRAHAM

Um, excuse me? Should I continue?

CLORIS

I'm sorry, Graham, of course. This session is about you and your deep, deep well of loneliness.

GRAHAM

Well, I don't think it's all *that* deep-

CLORIS

Please, Graham. I'm a professional. You exhibit symptoms of social anxiety disorder.

GRAHAM

Ok, but since Geoffrey showed up and I've had someone to talk to, I feel better. I'm glad he stopped me from going through with it.

CLORIS

(scribbling furiously in her notebook)

The solution to your problem is simple, Graham. Your friendship with Geoffrey is a great starting point. Make more friends you interact with face to face. Most people are not as judgemental as you fear, so remember that, and go find yourself some new pals!

GRAHAM

Are you sure you're actually listening to me? Can you cure a disorder in 2 minutes?

CLORIS

There is no need to drag this out, Graham. I have told you what you need to do. Get to work.

GRAHAM

Don't you need to know about my past? My mother? Chronic bed wetting?

GEOFFREY

(cutting Graham off, speaking from his solitaire game)

We don't have that kind of time to spend here. We're kind of on a schedule.

CLORIS

I don't feel discussion would solve your immediate problem, Graham. You might benefit from weekly therapy sessions, but unfortunately my busy schedule will not allow it.

GEOFFREY

(gets up and comes over to Cloris)

Then why don't you clear your schedule and come with us.

CLORIS

What?

GEOFFREY

Graham and I are going to rebuild society one person at a time. (*gesturing to the suicide grove*) Cloris, your talents are wasted here. Why don't you come with us?

CLORIS

You're serious?

GEOFFREY

You're a strong, intelligent, experienced mental health professional. No doubt we'll need your skills.

CLORIS

I do have years of experience. One could say I've been practicing since I was born.

GEOFFREY

And your patient's recovery is paramount. Isn't it?

GRAHAM

Aren't you concerned that I have social anxiety disorder that leads me towards suicidal behavior?

CLORIS

(aggressively)

Graham, I want you to close your eyes and imagine a lighthouse.

GRAHAM

(cooperatively closing his eyes)

A lighthouse?

CLORIS

I find the immediacy of the work I do here gratifying. Save 'em or hang 'em.

GRAHAM

Hang 'em?

GEOFFREY

I can see the appeal, Cloris. But don't you desire deeper interaction? More physical contact?

CLORIS

Physical contact?

(Donkey rolls his donkey eyes)

GEOFFREY

(Pulling Cloris to her feet)

Come with me Cloris. You can help me. We can help each other. It has been a while since you have had any “help”. Am I right? You can see Graham through his treatment., and then our band can focus on rebuilding society. We will be a beacon of survival!

CLORIS

A lighthouse.

GRAHAM

(eyes still closed)

Lighthouse.

CLORIS

(they are both only staring at each other)

Let's do it, Geoffrey.

GRAHAM

(popping open a solitary eye)

Uh, what's happening here?

GEOFFREY and CLORIS

(Geoffrey looking at Cloris, but putting a finger over Graham's mouth at the same time)

Shh...

CLORIS

(looking at Geoffrey, but pulling down Graham's open eye)

It's going to be okay, Graham, it's going to be just fine.

DONKEY

(chuckles in his donkey way)

Hee haw (*oh shit, Geoffrey, I think you're in over your head.*)

SCENE IV

(Lights up. Geoffrey is gathering firewood. It's more like he is selecting firewood, tossing over imperfect or rejected pieces behind him. Thus, he has gathered very little so far, as this particular neck of the woods is sorely lacking in quality control. Tiernan is unseen at this point.)

TIERNAN

“Men in general judge more by the sense of sight than by the sense of touch...”

(Geoffrey jolts at the sound of a voice and begins looking around.)

GEOFFREY

Tiernan?

TIERNAN

“...few know what you really are...”

(Lights up on Tiernan. Geoffrey spots Tiernan “perched” in a tree reading out loud from the book in his hands.)

GEOFFREY

Oh you're finished being a god so you are a vulture, now?

TIERNAN

I would be honored. Carrion-eaters venerate death. They do not tease with platitudes. But if I am a vulture, then you, my dear, are the cat, toying with your prey, allowing it just enough freedom to give it hope, only to pull it back into your clutches at the last second so its existence is agony.

GEOFFREY

You're accusing me of being cruel?

TIERNAN

I sit here unable to take my own life, yoked to you for the age of man. The end of which you're attempting to delay. That is cruel.

GEOFFREY

The end is not inevitable. You're so miserable you would willingly shuffle off to become a

matched set of minor statues in the hall of failed gods for all eternity? No thanks. As long as I have some power-

TIERNAN

Oh Geoffrey, we are such minor, minor deities. What power? Merely immortal observers left on the side of the road-

GEOFFREY

You agreed to the bet.

TIERNAN

And how is our bet so far? You've lied to a suicidal virgin who merely wanted to do one thing right in his life. Then there is that woman. It must be so nice to have a plaything again, that you can beguile with thoughts of saving the world.

GEOFFREY

Is that a hint of jealousy I detect?

TIERNAN

Tactics, Geoffrey. You are rubbish at them.

GEOFFREY

(dropping his tiny bundle of sticks)

Graham is strong. Hanging oneself is not for the weak minded. That takes determination, Tiernan. It takes fortitude. Any coward can shoot themselves or swallow a bunch of pills. But to tie the noose with your own hands...that's a fighter. He may be willing to let go of life, but not easily. As for Cloris? Sex keeps me sharp.

TIERNAN

I cannot believe you still indulge in that silly distraction.

GEOFFREY

It's what makes the world go around. It builds societies-

TIERNAN

Which leads to wars, which leads to more wars, until finally we have darkness.

GEOFFREY

It takes wars, even a little genocide. But from that comes unified states, ports, trade routes,

industry, technology, art, culture. I bet you within a decade we'll have a working city. Within two, the highways will be filled with vehicles. In three--

TIERNAN

A light, Geoffrey. The bet is that despite your assistance the first three people you meet still won't be able to turn on a single light bulb. I'm not hanging around for the next few centuries waiting for you to fail at rebuilding civilization.

GEOFFREY

It's just- It's so...anti-climactic.

TIERNAN

Tell that to Edison.

GEOFFREY

That was so dull. (in a mocking voice) "What makes a good filament? Let's try boxwood. Let's try baywood. Let's try hickory, dickery, and dock, the mouse went up the pppppphhhht Fuck It.". You and Edison truly made botany more boring than it already is. Now, illuminating the boardwalks of Atlantic City, that was exciting.

TIERNAN

(nearly losing his balance in shock)

What--that-- what the hell is wrong with you? All that "boring" work is what was required to light the boardwalks. No wonder you love humanity so much. You have the same attention span as these children.

GEOFFREY

The bet just seems too damn easy.

TIERNAN

If it is easy, Geoffrey, then why is the world still dark? I do not believe you could make even the crudest of filaments blink back into existence if you were to stumble upon the entire Eastern Co-Op of Electrical Engineers.

GEOFFREY

You underestimate me. Who set the apple at the table of Discord? Who launched a thousand ships? Who brought forth the fire and set it at the feet of humankind? It was **me!**

TIERNAN

(slamming his book close)

Fire was **MINE!** I created it! You stole it from me! Not from "the gods", but from me specifically. Never even invited me along to the party. There are no stories about Prometheus' smarter, more profound brother. In the end, you always make sure that you are the one wearing the laurels.

GEOFFREY

You're jealous.

TIERNAN

(Jumping from his tree and grabbing Tiernan by the collar)
Look, you twat. It's very intricate work. It's circuits and synapses and all the pretty little molecules that make the stars in the sky. I am the creator. I am the architect. And they don't even have a name for me.

GEOFFREY

You know, people might notice you if you smiled more.

TIERNAN

You are the harbinger of destruction, and no one has ever realized it, Geoffrey

GEOFFREY

Sometimes people get hurt. That's how this shit works. You have to destroy to create. I'm the salesman. You're research and development. That's why we work so well together. We are each other's better half. Hey, maybe this time you could be the one to flip the switch. The great hero of the new age of mankind--

TIERNAN

I'm counting down the days until I win and get to kill you.

GEOFFREY

(stops in his tracks)

Listen, about that. You don't really mean--

TIERNAN

Death. Those are the terms of the bet.

GEOFFREY

Fine.

TIERNAN

And I mean it, Geoffrey. Oh, how I mean it.

GEOFFREY

Yeah. Sure. But when I win-

TIERNAN

Then I will be your slave, ok?

GEOFFREY

Exactly— wait no, not my slave, you drama queen. Just that you have to go along with me on this. Trust me. And no fucking loop holes. No tricks. No ambiguities. No semantics. Winner declared winner.

TIERNAN

Obviously. Two more days.

GEOFFREY

Two more days.

TIERNAN

Three people.

GEOFFREY

Who have to work together.

TIERNAN

For mutual survival.

GEOFFREY

To rebuild the world.

TIERNAN

To turn on one damn light!

GEOFFREY

Like I said.

TIERNAN

Yessss. Bring forth the fire, Prometheus. (Under his breath) Wanker.

GEOFFREY

Ha. It's good to be working together again.

TIERNAN

I'm not helping you, Geoffrey. I'm just the ass along for the ride. And to make sure you don't move the pieces while I'm not looking.

GEOFFREY

I gave you a chance to up the stakes...

TIERNAN

Just wait til you see who I have added to the game board. Trust me, turning on a light is plenty challenging.

GEOFFREY

Riiiiight. Maybe you should get a head start on that concession speech.

TIERNAN

Oh, should I now? Maybe something like "It is difficult to join them together... *(He starts ripping pages from the book and throwing them into the air)* It is safer to be feared than to be loved...

(Geoffrey catches one of the pages and looks at it perplexed. He turns to where Tiernan stood, but Tiernan has disappeared.)

GEOFFREY

Tiernan? Where did you go?

(He looks about for Tiernan)

SCENE V

(Cloris sits on a log shivering and stealing glances at Geoffrey while he busies himself pitching a tent. In a futile attempt to keep out the creeping cold, she wraps her thin sweater closer.)

CLORIS

I still don't understand how you could go off into a forest and not come back with a single stick of firewood.

(Her teeth chatter audibly. Geoffrey notices and stops what he's doing and sits next to Cloris. He wraps his arms around her. Cloris brushes him off.)

CLORIS

What are you doing?

GEOFFREY

Offering you some of my considerable body heat.

CLORIS

Thanks, but I'm fine.

GEOFFREY

Oh, well, if you're fine, I'll just go back to getting this tent up.

(Geoffrey goes back to work. A few beats go by and Cloris starts to chatter again. Geoffrey once again stops and wraps his arms around Cloris. Cloris stiffens but doesn't object this time.)

GEOFFREY

Cloris, you're freezing. We need to get blood flowing in your extremities. I'm just going to rub you down a bit. No funny stuff.

(Cloris looks somewhat apprehensive, but gives a stiff nod. Geoffrey begins rubbing her shoulders. Cloris relaxes a bit and stops chattering her teeth. Geoffrey rubs her hands, Cloris relaxes more. Geoffrey starts to rub her calves, Cloris is very relaxed at this point and closes her eyes. Geoffrey begins to rub Cloris' thighs, Cloris jumps up immediately flushed and breathy.)

CLORIS

Okay, that's enough! I think I'm all warm now. I should be fine until Graham gets back. Thanks.

GEOFFREY

Happy to be of service. (Geoffrey cocks an eyebrow) Anything else I can do for you?

CLORIS

Nope, I'm fine. Thanks for asking.

GEOFFREY

Alright then, I'll just go back to pitching my tent. Now where did I put my pole?

(Cloris becomes flushed again. She removes her sweater and fans herself.)

GEOFFREY

Careful, Cloris. You don't want to catch a chill again. Or maybe you do. (Geoffrey shoots Cloris a naughty wink)

(Geoffrey goes back to work on his tent while Cloris paces a bit.)

CLORIS

What's taking Graham so long? Shouldn't he be back by now? He wouldn't even have to be out there if you'd just done your job in the first place.

(Cloris walks over to peer into the forest)

CLORIS (cont.)

Do you think he's alright? Are there any hillbilly cannibals in this area?

GEOFFREY

No, we're not quite in cannibilly territory just yet. I'm hoping to stay well away from it. Normally they only roam in the late fall when they forage for... meat. Seeing as how we're in early spring, we should be fine. Anxious, Cloris?

CLORIS

Of course not! I just want to get a fire built is all. This campsite will be much cheerier with a warm campfire.

GEOFFREY

If it's warmth you require Cloris you should have just said something.

(Geoffrey moves toward Cloris again. She thrusts her hands out)

CLORIS

I'm fine thanks! Let's just...talk for a while, okay?

GEOFFREY

Words, words, words. Why all this talk, Cloris? When there are other things to do.

CLORIS

It's my *job*, Geoffrey. I thought that's what you brought me along for. Besides, here I am, out in the woods with a man I know nothing about!

GEOFFREY

Fine, fine. I suppose you want me to talk about my mother?

CLORIS

I'm actually more interested in how the two of you ended up coming out of the hanging grove together- but only one of you had the rope burns to show for it.

GEOFFREY

I guess it all started back at my castle with those Dallas Cowboys' cheerleaders. You see after we exhausted our supply of wine, things got a bit dull so-

CLORIS

Very funny. Look, if you want to keep your past to yourself, fine. I just thought you might need someone to talk to.

GEOFFREY

I'm sorry, Cloris, if I offended you. You're right. I am lonely. Desolate. Depraved, even. You are the first person I have seen in months who wasn't toying with me in some way. I guess I have forgotten what a conversation between equals feels like. You do see me as an equal, don't you Cloris?

CLORIS

I never discriminate, Geoffrey. People always need a willing ear. Someone to listen and give them good sound advice. Sanity is a lighthouse on the shore to those drifting in the fog

of their own deluded minds. I offer survivors a guiding light. I bring them into a safe harbor.

GEOFFREY

Right... So, here you are. Taking your talent on the road and bringing apocalyptic survivors back from the brink with a little talk therapy. There're not many who would have come out here by choice.

CLORIS

It's not exactly by choice. When the lights went out I decided to head for my family's cabin near the coast by one of those old lighthouses. I thought there would be enough food there to last for a year. We'd always had such happy times there. But when I got there, the cabin had been ransacked. I'd hoped to find my sister. But it turned out to be cannibillies.

GEOFFREY

You're quite the survivor, Cloris. I admire that.

CLORIS

Wait. That's it. It's perfect!

GEOFFREY

Perfect...what?

CLORIS

Think of it! A lighthouse. How are we supposed to round up more people? We can't count on finding survivors along the way. But a lighthouse? It's a beacon! People will see it from miles around. They'll flock right to it.

GEOFFREY

Cloris, you're brilliant!

CLORIS

Of course, we do have to get it running again...

GEOFFREY

Details Cloris, details. That's where we head in the morning. Your lighthouse.

CLORIS

I guess it's worth a try.

GEOFFREY

You have me tingling with possibility.

(Geoffrey scoots closer to Cloris and looks her straight in the eyes)

GEOFFREY (cont.)

Cloris, I want to trust you. Can I?

(Their eyes meet and they study each other for a moment)

CLORIS

Absolutely. Anything you tell me is in complete confidence.

GEOFFREY

But can I trust you with my very soul? I find myself compelled to share things with you that I've never shared with anyone else. Can I trust you?

(Geoffrey scoots closer to Cloris. Graham starts to enter, sees what's happening, and watches for a moment, unseen by either Cloris or Geoffrey)

CLORIS

Geoffrey, you can trust me.

GEOFFREY

Cloris, I'm drawn to you in a way I haven't been since...well I can't remember really...

CLORIS

Geoffrey, it's getting warm again.

GEOFFREY

Should I-

(Geoffrey starts to back away to give Cloris some air)

CLORIS

(Cloris quickly closes the gap between them and moves in to kiss Geoffrey)
Yes, you absolutely should...

(Their lips just barely touch when Graham enters.)

GRAHAM

Hey guys! I've got wood!

(Cloris jumps out of her seat. Geoffrey jumps up then sits down again and looks up annoyed to see Graham.. Cloris is blushing and embarrassed, as though she wasn't just about to kiss Geoffrey)

CLORIS

Oh hey Graham, you're back!

GEOFFREY

(thick with sarcasm and bile)
Yes Graham! Brilliant timing! (Under his breath) Dammit.

GRAHAM

Uh, did I interrupt something?

CLORIS

Oh, no, we were just...chatting...no big deal

GEOFFREY

(gives Cloris an annoyed look)
Yes, just a little chat. No big deal.

GRAHAM

(skeptical)
Oookay....
(starts setting up the wood to start a campfire, continues setting it up during this exchange)
Guess I'd better get a fire started.

GEOFFREY

It seems rather late to start a fire now. Maybe we should just share sleeping bags to conserve body heat. Cloris, my sleeping bag sleeps 2-

CLORIS

What about Graham?

GEOFFREY

Donkey! You're shacking up with Graham tonight.

GRAHAM

That's ridiculous, I can start a fire no problem.

CLORIS

Where is Donkey?

GRAHAM

Maybe he just went to the bathroom.

CLORIS

I don't know, seems like he's been gone for a while.

GEOFFREY

Dammit Donkey.

CLORIS

You'd better go find him.

(Geoffrey looks at Graham, back at Cloris, he's clearly frustrated, doesn't want to leave these two alone, but knows he can't trust Donkey out of his sight. He stamps his feet a few times quite childishly and grumbles Tiernan's name under his breath)

GEOFFREY

Fine. But Graham had better get the fire started while I'm away. We're having donkey kabobs for dinner! (*Geoffrey stalks off*) Donkey, you are so fucking dead!

(Cloris looks a bit confused as Geoffrey heads off to find Donkey. Graham continues work on the fire.)

CLORIS

Do you really think you can get a fire started?

GRAHAM

Sure, I was an Eagle Scout after all.

CLORIS

Really?

GRAHAM

Yep, I mean I actually didn't earn the last merit badge, but other than that, I'm an Eagle Scout.

CLORIS

Huh.

GRAHAM

Let there be light!

(the fire catches and Graham helps it along a bit, pushes in kindling, etc.)

CLORIS

Oh, that feels so nice. It's been so long since I've felt truly warm. Thank you.

GRAHAM

You're welcome.

CLORIS

I can't believe Geoffrey spent all that time wondering around the woods and didn't come back with so much as a twig. Meanwhile, you find kindling AND get a fire started in less than ten minutes.

GRAHAM

I used to do it all the time when I was a kid. It kind of came back to me after the lights went out.

CLORIS

Well, it's a very useful skill.

GRAHAM

I try.

(they stare into the fire for a beat or two)

Cloris, where were you when it happened?

CLORIS

Ah yes, the question. I can't believe we've been travelling together for two days and it hasn't come up.

GRAHAM

Sorry, was I prying? You don't have to answer.

CLORIS

No, it's fine. It's just sort of sad. I was on the nightshift at work.

GRAHAM

Where did you work?

CLORIS

The State Psych Hospital. I was the intake psychologist.

GRAHAM

Wow. Intense.

CLORIS

I guess. But the truth is, I really liked it. I loved the adrenaline rush when a new patient would come in, the flurry of paperwork, exams, the anticipation that comes with not knowing what a mentally unstable person would do.

GRAHAM

Okay.

CLORIS

I realize it sounds awful, but I hated private practice. You'd see patients for months or even years and you'd tell them over and over again what they needed to do, how to heal themselves, and they wouldn't listen. They wouldn't do it. It started to feel like I was cheating them out of their money.

GRAHAM

Oh. Why'd you come along, then?

CLORIS

Oh, Graham, I'm sorry, I didn't even think about what I was saying! I'm happy to be here, to try and help you. Everything's changed now. I lost so many people going into those damn Hanging Woods. I tried, but no one listened. When I met you, I couldn't believe someone had emerged and I really, really want to help you.

GRAHAM

You don't have to say that just to make me feel better.

CLORIS

(touching his arm)

I'm not. I mean it.

(pause)

Where were you when-?

GRAHAM

(laughs)

Forget it. If you thought your story was sad, you're going to think mine's downright pathetic. You'll probably laugh.

CLORIS

I won't. I promise. My job is to listen without judging, Graham. Please tell me, I'd like to know. And I think it's important for your recovery.

GRAHAM

Okay. As long as you won't laugh. I was playing World of Warcraft with a bunch of friends.

CLORIS

That's not pathetic! That sounds fun. I was always getting invited to game nights, but I used work as an excuse not to go.

GRAHAM

This is a bit different than a game night. The people I was playing with weren't in the same room with me. In fact, we'd never even met. We were playing online.

CLORIS

Oh.

GRAHAM

I was- I guess I still am- a big loser.

CLORIS

Graham you are not a loser. You got a fire started, Geoffrey couldn't do that, I couldn't do that! Graham, you have got a little voice in your head that says you're a loser. That voice is wrong.

GRAHAM

I'm not so sure about that.

CLORIS

Whose voice is that, Graham? You've been hearing that voice so long, you accept it as your own. But it started out as someone else's voice. Your parents, a teacher, kids at school; somebody told you you were a failure and you heard it so much you started to internalize it.

GRAHAM

Wow, I never thought about it that way. I feel like we're finally getting somewhere-

TWITCH

Howdy!

(Twitch is Tiernan dressed as a hillbilly cannibal. He drags behind him a wagon full of groceries and pops out from behind a tree behind Cloris and Graham. Cloris and Graham both jump)

CLORIS

(who has grabbed a knife as a weapon)

Who the fuck are you?!

GRAHAM

(who has grabbed a twig he was using to feed the fire and holds it like it is a weapon.)

Yeah!

TWITCH

Aw, shucks, I didn't mean to scare 'ya. No need to get out your switch.

(he chuckles. Cloris fights back a smile.)

GRAHAM

(realizing what he is holding, throws it to the ground)

I just grabbed the first thing I found.

CLORIS

It's okay, Graham. (she pats GRAHAM's arm) Now who ARE you?

TWITCH

Name's Twitch.

(He holds his hand out for Cloris to shake it. She doesn't.)

TWITCH (cont.)

Okay, suit yourself. I know folks don't take too kindly to strangers these days.

GRAHAM

(noticing his wagon)

Wow.

TWITCH

Like what you see?

GRAHAM

I don't know when I last saw that much food.

TWITCH

You want something?

GRAHAM

Really?

CLORIS

Graham, be careful. He could be a hillbilly cannibal.

GRAHAM

But Cloris, a cannibilly wouldn't have beef jerky! Or marshmallows!

CLORIS

Marshmallows? (CLORIS takes a couple of steps towards the cart, then stops herself)
Wait, how do we know all this stuff is safe to eat? He could just be luring us in so he can eat us.

TWITCH

Cloris, Graham, you've got my word I ain't gonna' eat 'ya.

GRAHAM

That's good enough for me!

(he starts to grab a piece of beef jerky)

CLORIS

(slaps Graham's hand away)

Graham! Well it ain't good enough for me, "Twitch". As delicious as those marshmallows look- wait, are those tampons?

TWITCH

Yep, got all manner of feminine hygiene products right here in my cart.

(he holds a box out to her)

CLORIS

Oh, it's been so long since I've had those... Before I partake in any of your tempting goods, I've got a few questions.

TWITCH

Fire away.

CLORIS

Where'd you get it all?

TWITCH

From my Wag-a-Bag.

GRAHAM

You have a Wag-a-Bag?

CLORIS

Oh how I've missed those.

TWITCH

Yep. Owned it with my dear Frankie Joe before the day all the lights went out.

(looks off into the distance, sadly, maybe takes his hat off and puts it over his heart)

TWITCH (cont.)

May she rest in peace.

CLORIS

Was that your wife?

TWITCH

Common law. She never cottoned to making it official.

GRAHAM

What happened to her?

TWITCH

She got taken out by a marauding band of hillbillies that eat people. They dragged dear Frankie Joe off with a bottle of mustard and some potato chips.

CLORIS

Oh, Twitch, I'm sorry.

TWITCH

It's just been me ever since. Sometimes I get so lonely, I talk to the canned goods. So I decided to get out and try to find some people before I damn lost my mind.

(he holds out a beef jerky to Graham, Graham grabs it. He holds a bag of marshmallows out to Cloris)

TWITCH (cont.)

Come on, break bread with me.

(He opens the marshmallows and takes one out and begins eating it. CLORIS eyes him and the bag for a second before taking it and shoving marshmallows in her mouth as fast as she can.)

CLORIS

(with a mouthful of marshmallows)

Thank you! Oh, I'd forgotten how good these things were!

GRAHAM

(between bites of jerky)

Oh yes, thank you. I think this is the best food I've ever tasted! Meat!

TWITCH

(chuckling)

Meat product, son. But these days it's the best we got. Say, you two want to come back with me to the store? I've got a pretty good set up in the back, found some mattresses at Mac's Mattress-Rama. I've got enough food to last us for a long, long time.

GRAHAM

Wow.

CLORIS

While that is tempting, our friend-

TWITCH

You got another person? Well bring 'em too! Where is he?

CLORIS

That's a good question. He should be back by now.

TWITCH

Why don't we head back to my store and leave him a note here? It's not too far.

CLORIS

I don't know. Geoffrey has more lofty ambitions. Something about restarting society , lighting a beacon...

TWITCH

Society needs food, I've got plenty at my store.

CLORIS

True.

GRAHAM

Come on, Cloris, let's go!

(Suddenly Bramble, Geoffrey dressed as a hillbilly, jumps out from behind a tree)

BRAMBLE

What you got here, buddy?!

TWITCH

Where'd you come from?

CLORIS

Who the fuck are you?

BRAMBLE

I'm Bramble, pretty lady.

CLORIS

Twitch, do you know this guy?

TWITCH

That's a good question. What the hell are you doing, "Bramble"?

BRAMBLE

I might ask you the same thing, "Twitch".

TWITCH

I'm just trying to keep things interesting.

BRAMBLE

And I'm fighting fire with fire.

GRAHAM

Uh, what are you two talking about?

BRAMBLE

I'm not sure your little interruption was in the rules.

TWITCH

When will you learn, Bramble, I make the rules.

BRAMBLE

Great, then you won't mind if I make some new ones too. (he grabs Cloris, puts a knife to her throat) I get first dibs!

CLORIS

Graham, help!

GRAHAM

(terrified, not sure what to do)

Uh, um, I'll go find Geoffrey and Donkey!

(GRAHAM runs off)

TWITCH

You sure know how to pick 'em, "Bramble". Looks like you picked two little girls.

BRAMBLE

Fuck you.

CLORIS

No, fuck you!

(she elbows Bramble/Geoffrey, causing him to drop the knife, then turns and knees him in the groin. Picks the knife up from the ground.)

CLORIS (cont.)

Now get out of here! Both of you!

BRAMBLE

(hunched over and in pain and coughing)

Wow. That was impressive.

CLORIS

Leave the wagon.

CLORIS

(holds the knife closer)

Now!

(Bramble and Twitch run off)

CLORIS (cont.)

Okay, Graham, you can come out now.

GRAHAM

(emerges from behind a tree or bush he's been hiding behind)
Cloris, that was amazing.

CLORIS

No thanks to you.

GRAHAM

I was going for help, Cloris, honestly-

CLORIS

Did you find Geoffrey behind that bush?

GRAHAM

No. Are you okay?

CLORIS

I'm fine. (she starts to rummage through the stuff in the wagon) Guess we've got the food supply covered now.

GRAHAM

I can't wait to eat real food again.

(GRAHAM reaches for something in the wagon.)

CLORIS

(slaps his hand away)
You can have the lima beans. Or canned spinach. Take your pick.

(she shoves them at him)

GRAHAM

Cloris, don't do this, I really need your help-

CLORIS

Great! Are you ready for the next phase in your therapy?

GRAHAM

What's that?

CLORIS

A Lima Bean/Spinach Cleanse.

(Geoffrey and Donkey re-enter. Geoffrey has a slight limp)

GEOFFREY

What'd I miss?

GRAHAM

What happened to your leg?

GEOFFREY

I tripped over this ass. (Jerks a thumb at Donkey)

CLORIS

I got us some food.

GEOFFREY

Excellent!!

(he tries to high five her. She leaves him hanging)

CLORIS

Let's go to the lighthouse.

(she starts to gather up her stuff)

GRAHAM

Lighthouse?

GEOFFREY

Yeah, the lighthouse. Keep up, Graham.

SCENE VI

(Lights up on Cloris, Graham, Geoffrey, and Donkey outside of the lighthouse.)

GRAHAM

(out of breath, pulling the wagon)

Could we perhaps give Donkey a turn? I think I'm getting a blister.

DONKEY

Haw!

GRAHAM

I'm not sure this next phase of my treatment is really working, Cloris. You said I'd gain clarity from lugging this thing, but I'm just feeling light-headed.

CLORIS

Clarity? You want clarity? Well, since you left me to be cannibilly food back there, I've had my own moment of clarity. I found that being left for dead sapped me of my ability to care about your recovery. You're on your own, Graham. I'm not wasting another minute of my time on you.

GEOFFREY

And I, for one, would rather not waste any more time listening to this squabble. If you'd look up, you'd see we've reached our destination. Now is no time for petty disagreements.

CLORIS

We're here. It's been such a long time. I remember...The last time I was here (pauses, thinking about it)... It was the happiest day of my life.

GRAHAM

And we can just waltz in here? I mean, if someone else is here they're not going to welcome us with open arms.

GEOFFREY

I have an axe.

CLORIS *(snapping back from her memory)*

First of all, it's not *their* lighthouse. Second, you're suicidal, Graham. You shouldn't mind the slim chance that you may end up locked in a fatal battle with a cannibilly. What have

you got to lose?

(Graham, tired of lugging the wagon, leans against the lighthouse. He happens to have leaned against the door and it falls open.)

GEOFFREY

Hello? Anybody home?

CLORIS

It's been ages since I've been here.

GRAHAM

Can we please just keep our voices down? Let's just do what we came to do and get out of here.

(Geoffrey standing next to a large piece of machinery, trying to read something on its side, Graham follows him)

GEOFFREY

My thoughts exactly, Graham. Looks like this is the generator for the beacon. Think you can give us light?

(Graham peers at the machinery, walking around it, etc)

GRAHAM

Yeah. (beat) Yeah, I think so. I know a lot about engine repair. Well, I read a lot about it, anyway.

GEOFFREY

(slapping Graham on the shoulder and walking away)

Great, Graham. I knew you were the man for the job.

(They hear a board squeak upstairs)

CLORIS

What was that?

GEOFFREY

What?

CLORIS

Did you hear that?

GEOFFREY

You mean that squeaking sound? Relax, Cloris. This place looks like it has been here since God was a boy.

DONKEY

Hee Haw.

GEOFFREY

(calling back to Graham)
How's it going there, Graham?

(Graham has been ignoring the conversation in his examination of the generator)

GRAHAM

These instructions are sort of complex. I'm not sure they're in English. I've read about generators plenty of times, but I think this might be a slightly different model.

GEOFFREY

It's really important to get it running, Graham. A matter of life and death you might say.

(Something falls to the floor upstairs. Donkey saunters over to the spiral staircase and looks up)

CLORIS

Okay, I know I didn't imagine that. I *know* someone is here.

GEOFFREY

Cloris, there is nothing to be afraid of. Lighthouses are supposed to be your "safe place", right?

(goes to put arm around Cloris)

CLORIS

(elbows Geoffrey)
Well I'm telling you this "safe place" doesn't feel safe!

GEOFFREY

Look, we are miles from anywhere. I assure you, no one followed us here-

Donkey

Haw Haw Haw!

Geoffrey

And Graham here is going to have the power on in a jiffy, isn't that right Graham?

Graham

(grunting and struggling with a wrench he has clamped to a giant flywheel on the side of the machine)

Yep, just as soon as I get this belt tightened.

(Noises from above start to get a little louder)

CLORIS

Something feels off. I just keep thinking about those cannabillies. (shudders) I'm not sure what's worse- eating people or marrying your sister.

(Shouting from upstairs. Sounds like something being dragged across the floor. Both Geoffrey and Cloris jump. Donkey starts rubbing his "hooves" together in anticipation)

CLORIS

Okay, *that* was definitely someone.

GEOFFREY

(backing up closer to Cloris)

Any way to speed this up Graham? There's a bit of a *situation* brewing.

(Graham obviously frustrated, kicking the generator)

GRAHAM

I just don't get it. I've seen this done a thousand times, but this damn machine-

(Stomping, crazy laughter from upstairs. Donkey is bouncing up and down with glee)

GEOFFREY

Just throw the switch, dammit! I'm not about to fight off cannibillies in the dark!

CLORIS

(marching over to Graham)

If you want something done right,do it yourself. Now, get the hell out of my way!

GRAHAM

Wait! You'll blow the-

(Cloris pulls a large lever on the side of the generator just as Martha charges downstairs. The lights come on so that Cloris can see Martha on the staircase. Donkey starts braying)

CLORIS

Martha?

(The lights go out)

ACT II Prologue

(Martha is seated at a table in the upper floor of the lighthouse. Table is filled with tea things, a few mechanical spare parts. There is a little elevated basket, lined by a fluffy, miniature cushion. Martin rests on it. "He" is a large glass fuse)

MARTHA

(she takes a careful sip of her tea) Princes who set little store by their word but have known how to over-reach men by their cunning have accomplished great things... *(she sets her cup down and points to the teapot)*...and in the end got the better of those who trusted to honest dealing. *(she begins to sugar her tea, then stops abruptly.)* The prince must be a lion, but he must also know how to play the fox. He who wishes to deceive will never fail to find willing dupes-*(she pauses to listen)* He ought not to quit good courses if he can help it, but should know how to follow evil courses if he must--*(she stops abruptly, having been interrupted. She looks at the sugar bowl with irritation. She points her finger at the sugar bowl)*. First of all, there is no greater rudeness than to interrupt another in the current of their discourse-John Locke. Second-

(She is interrupted by the loud sound of Donkey braying outside)

Oh no, they're here already! Time must have gotten away from me.

(She stands and quickly crosses to the window, looks out and sees the group trying to get into the door below. We hear continued braying and Donkey's hooves pounding on the door)

Dammit. Martin, you could have warned me about the barnyard beast. *(she jerks her head back to look at Martin)* You know how I hate animals. I swear, if he damages that door, I'll have a new fur coat next winter.

(She turns away from the window, wringing her hands.)

I knew this day would come.

(Begins pacing. Some of the boards squeak.)

I mean, obviously, you tipping me off helped narrow down the time frame. But you know what I mean. I knew this couldn't last forever.

(Stops and starts picking up, patting, and putting down her tea things in turn as she speaks.)

We've had such good times, haven't we? All those long conversations, the laughter, the stories. The rest of the world has collapsed outside these walls. But I've never been happier in my whole life.

(Martha startles suddenly as if suddenly rebuffed. She is holding a large pewter mug of some sort.)

Do? What can I do? They're already here!

(stops and gives the mug and angry look)

Fine, if you think so, why don't you go stop them yourself! Oh, that's right. You can't walk, you're just a mug!

(She throws the mug, it clatters heavily to the ground.)

Look at us, we're already turning on each other.

(She picks up the mug and then sinks down in her chair, rests her chin in her hands, gazing close up at Martin on his pillow)

I know what they want. Its you, Martin. They want you, of course. They'll make it sound like something else. But I bet you my right arm that what they're really after is that old machine down there. And they'll need you to make it work, my dear.

(she picks Martin up, cups him in her hands)

Just look at you! A shining work of art, full of power to light their houses and run their world. But you weren't meant to be a piece of machinery, a base tool for those fools! I saved you from all that. Neither one of us is going back.

(nods her head, listening)

You were right. I should never have gone outside. When will I ever learn?

(Smiles lovingly at Martin)

You're too good for me. But it really *is* all my fault. When I met that man, I should have run as fast as I could in the other direction. But his words- When was the last time anyone cared to talk about Machiavelli with me! I just got all twisted up. You know I've never been much good at talking. With people, that is. How could I have been so stupid to tell him where I'd come from?

(She hits her head against the table)

Stupid, stupid Martha.

(Suddenly she jumps up and puts Martin in her pocket. Her chair falls over)

Maybe I can barricade us all in! Maybe I can still keep them out!

(Martha tries to shove a large, heavy crate across the floor, then stops, exhausted. Its too heavy for her to move)

Who am I kidding. The game's up now, isn't it? I should have known *she'd* find her way here. Why is it that everything that is special to me ends up being taken by her! First it was our parents. Then my husband- I still choke up when I think about what I did to Ted just to keep her away from him. Well, not this time.

(Martha stands and gives the crate a final shove toward the staircase)

She can't have this. Not this time! *(yelling down the staircase)* You hear me Cloris?! Not this time!!

(She charges towards the staircase but stops short, turns back to the table, nods and takes a deep breath)

You're right. There's no need to hurtle downstairs in a blind rage. No, let them think everything is fine. I'll be gracious, endearing even.

(her face darkens)

And just when she and all her friends think they've nothing to fear from Crazy Old Martha- *(she laughs maniacally)* They'll get a lesson they won't soon forget!

(She marches down the staircase, laughing all the while.)

SCENE I

(The lights have just gone out. Cloris goes toward the staircase. Martha continues to walk down the stairs)

CLORIS

Martha? Is that really you?

MARTHA

You shouldn't have come here.

CLORIS

Oh my God, Martha! You remembered! The lighthouse, you *did* remember!

(Cloris hugs Martha. Martha's arms hang at her sides)

MARTHA

Hi Cloris.

GRAHAM

You two know each other?

CLORIS

I think I'd know my own flesh and blood!

GEOFFREY

(looking at Donkey)

Well played.

DONKEY

Hee Haw (*Told you I had a few tricks up my sleeve*)

CLORIS

Martha, this is Graham and Geoffrey. I can't believe you remembered the lighthouse too! That was-

GEOFFREY, GRAHAM, MARTHA

The happiest day of my life!

CLORIS

(shooting them all dirty looks)

Yes. It was, but today - now that I know you're alive, Martha...

(Cloris hugs her again)

MARTHA

We're getting along just fine on our own. We don't need you.

GEOFFREY

"We"?

MARTHA

(a beat, she's "listening" to Martin, although the others don't pick up on it.)
I'm so sorry, where are my manners? Would you like some tea?

CLORIS

Tea?

GEOFFREY

Uh, sure. It's a pleasure to meet you, Martha.

(He goes to kiss Martha's hand. She allows it, but then wipes her hand off on her apron.)

MARTHA

My, aren't you charming? Your new beau, Cloris?

CLORIS

Uh....um....

(looks embarrassed at Geoffrey for some sort of confirmation. There is none.)

CLORIS (cont.)

No?

MARTHA

No matter. I always treat any friend of Cloris just like family. I'll be right back.

(she exits to retrieve the tea and fixings)

(Graham has been back at the generator trying to figure out what went wrong. As Martha exits, he wheels around to Cloris.)

GRAHAM

The fuse is blown! I was working my way through the problem, and then you barreled in and- BOOM. You blew the fuse! Who knows where we'll find another one!

CLORIS

I've just discovered that my sister, who I'd given up for dead, is actually not dead at all. She's right here! Besides, you're still on your own here Graham. That makes the fuse *your* problem.

GEOFFREY

Now, let's not say things we don't mean. Let's just stay calm. Be reasonable. Maybe Martha has another fuse around here somewhere.

(Martha re-enters with tea and a bowl of peas)

MARTHA

(sets the bowl on the table)

I hope you like peas.

CLORIS

Peas with tea?

GRAHAM

I'm not sure this is the best time for a snack.

GEOFFREY

I'd love some peas.

MARTHA

I added a little cinnamon to jazz them up. I thought I'd break out the good stuff since I knew you were coming.

CLORIS

What do you mean by that?

MARTHA

What?

CLORIS

That you knew we were coming.

MARTHA

(laughs nervously)

Oh, it's just an expression, you know!

GEOFFREY

(with a mouthful of peas)

These are delicious!

MARTHA

Just enjoy your fill, the basement is full of them!

GRAHAM

There's a basement? I don't suppose you've seen any spare parts for the generator down there, have you Martha?

(Geoffrey puts an arm around Graham)

Geoffrey

Now Graham, where are your manners? You are a lovely hostess, Martha.

(Geoffrey gives Donkey a look like, this is all you've got?)

DONKEY

Haw haw haw *(you ain't seen nothing yet)*

MARTHA

We haven't had many visitors lately, but one must never forget how to entertain!

GEOFFREY

There's that "we" again.

MARTHA

(giggles nervously)

Oh, you know, sometimes I slip, I was married for 10 years!

CLORIS

(darkly)
I'd forgotten about Ted.

GRAHAM

You lost your husband after the lights went out? I'm so sorry.

MARTHA

Not exactly. *(laughs again)* Anyone want more tea?

CLORIS

(takes Martha's hands, looks her directly in the eye)
Martha, have you been taking your medication?

MARTHA

I don't need that stuff- never have! And just where would I get it now? But don't worry. I'm just fine.

CLORIS

But you were doing so well!

MARTHA

Don't worry about me, Cloris. There's no need, when Martin takes takes such good care of me!

GEOFFREY

(looks suspiciously at Donkey)
Who's Martin?

MARTHA

(nervous laughter)
An old friend, Geoffrey. No one you know.

CLORIS

Martin's back, Martha?

MARTHA

What do you mean back, he never left!

CLORIS

Martha, listen to me, we can find your meds. Come with me. There have to be tons of abandoned pharmacies, I know exactly what you need, I can help you.

GRAHAM

Who's Martin?

MARTHA

He has been very good at watching out for me. Going to the lighthouse was his idea. He warned me I never should have left here. If I hadn't, I never would have met that man!

CLORIS

What man?

GEOFFREY

Where's Martin? Martha, can we meet him?

MARTHA

Meet him? What do you want with him?

CLORIS

Martha, come on, look at me. Focus.

GRAHAM

Does Martin happen to know where you keep the spare fuses?

CLORIS

Again with the damn generator?! Martha, come on, we can go find a drugstore right now. We have plenty of supplies.

MARTHA

I'm not going anywhere, this is my home now. I can't leave my friends!

GRAHAM

Friends?

CLORIS

There's more than one? Oh no, you've gotten worse.

GEOFFREY

So help us, Martha. Who are they? Where are they?

DONKEY

Hee Haw (*Oh, Geoffrey*)

MARTHA

Right under your nose, Geoffrey.

GEOFFREY

Martha, you've been so gracious. I wonder if any of these friends might be mechanically minded?

MARTHA

Dim witted just like the others. You haven't figured it out at all, have you?

CLORIS

Don't do this. You don't need Martin, Martha, come on!

(she tries to physically drag Martha with her, it doesn't work)

GEOFFREY

Come on, Martha, help us get the generator back on.

CLORIS

Come with me! We can get your medication, things can go back to normal.

MARTHA

No! The day the lights went out is the day all of them finally felt free to speak.

GRAHAM

Well, I don't hear anything.

MARTHA

Only to me. They only speak to me.

CLORIS

Who speaks to you, Martha?

MARTHA

Who doesn't? The coat rack, the teapot, the telescope, the barometer, the calculator. It's a wonderful village we have here!

(Geoffrey takes a pea he was about to put in his mouth and considers it)

GEOFFREY

Do the peas talk to you?

MARTHA

Don't be ridiculous, peas can't talk!

(Geoffrey opens his flask, takes a belt of nerve-settling whiskey)

GEOFFREY

Ridiculous. Of course.

GRAHAM

Sounds a bit crowded.

CLORIS

Graham, don't encourage her!

MARTHA

Oh, cozy, yes. But we get along quite well. Although some of them can get quite passionate when we talk politics or philosophy. The creamer and the honey pot are still not on speaking terms.

CLORIS

Martha, don't you see what's happening? The world has gone to hell, and you're locked in a lighthouse debating with the tea service all day long!

MARTHA

No, we don't do that all day long, although it has been a favorite past time of late. But we also tell our stories, jokes, we read aloud and play games. Oh, and every Saturday we perform a play!

CLORIS

A play? Oh, Martha, I have got to get you help right away.

GRAHAM

What plays?

MARTHA

Last Saturday we played Whatever Happened to Baby Jane. (*looks squarely at Cloris. Icily.*) I'd be happy to stage an encore.

GEOFFREY

That won't be necessary.

GRAHAM

I thought that was a movie.

GEOFFREY

(ignoring Graham)

Martha, we need your help. We have to get the lights back on. It's imperative that we get the lights back on. For me- for all of us. Perhaps your friend Martin could help?

MARTHA

I don't often introduce him to others. He's not used to being the center of anyone else's attentions.

CLORIS

Would you just give it up, Geoffrey! He's her teacup! He's her fucking teacup! My sister is fucking loonier than a toon!

DONKEY

Hee Haw *(demented laugh)*

MARTHA

(laughing)

No he's not! Oh, Cloris you're so silly. *This* is Martin.

(she takes a large glass fuse out of her apron pocket)

CLORIS

Oh shit.

GEOFFREY

(pointing at the object in Martha's hands) That's "Martin"?

Graham rushes forward and grabs Geoffrey, whispering in his ear)

GRAHAM

That's it. That's the fuse!

GEOFFREY *(whispering back)*

You're sure? Certainty is not your strong suit.

GRAHAM

I've read more than my fair share of schematics. All we have to do is replace the fuse with, well, Martin, and BAM. Let there be light!

MARTHA

Yes, *this* is Martin. Isn't he pretty. *(giggles)* He's modest, but it's okay to flatter him. I think he secretly likes it.

GEOFFREY

Well, Cloris, I fully understand your desire to go into psychology...

GRAHAM

Where did you get that, Martha?

MARTHA

(nervously)

Never mind, it's not important. I'll just put him away now. *(she puts him back in her pocket)*
Did everyone get enough tea?

(Cloris and Graham advance toward Martha)

CLORIS

Martha, Can I hold Martin?

MARTHA

No.

(she starts backing away from them)

GRAHAM

Martha, did you find Martin here?

MARTHA

No. No he's from home. From one of Ted's boxes in the attic. He's just an extra part. He was just lying around. (*arguing with Martin*) Shh, I just said that to throw them off, I know you're not extra!

GRAHAM

All we need is a little help.

MARTHA

I'm done helping.

GEOFFREY

Give me the fuse, Martha.

MARTHA

(*taking "Martin" out of her pocket yet still holding it close*)

I can't do that. I won't lose him to you! I've had a lot of loss in my life. The chipped teacups, the dropped vases. All those plates that got away from me while drying the dishes.

CLORIS

And your dead husband.

MARTHA

I have had a lot of loss.

CLORIS

Really just the husband.

MARTHA

And now I have Martin and I'm not giving him up.

GEOFFREY

Martha, let's be reasonable. Surely you can see that giving up Martin is what's best for me. (*Donkey snorts*) For us I mean. For everyone.

MARTHA

And when you say “everyone” are you including all my friends?

GRAHAM

They want the lights on too. They want to bring your message to the world!

MARTHA

No! I’m not going to let you ruin my life! (to Cloris) You’ve been ruining my life since you were born. You should have died in that crib fire.

CLORIS

(now she’s angry)

I knew it! I knew you tried to kill me. No matter how Mom and Dad glossed over it, I always knew it was you.

MARTHA

What did you expect? I had nine wonderful years. And then you had to come along and ruin everything. Then it was nothing but *Cloris*. Cloris doesn't talk to *her* dishware, Cloris doesn't pretend the toothbrush is *her* best friend! Well I won't let that happen again.

(looks over at the tea pot on the table)

Don't tell me how to talk to my sister. I can hate her if I damn well please.

(looking at the fuse in her hand)

And don't give me that “blood is thicker than water” bit again, Martin. What would you know about that?

CLORIS

I ruined your life? What about you burning my Barbies on the front lawn? What about that, huh? I can still smell the stench of burning plastic and grass!

MARTHA

They asked to be delivered from their demonic possession! What kind of person could deny that?

(listens, to Martin)

I've got this under control! Just stay out of it!

CLORIS

How am I even supposed to finish an argument with you if you keep talking to your little precious companions there?! And you know what else? I think you don't want to go back on your medication because then you'll be boring and alone! You think you're so unique just because your toilet plunger "talks" to you!

GEOFFREY

Ladies, please. Calm your hysteria. I need to get the lights on. Martha, let me talk to Martin.

MARTHA

You won't be able to hear him, you're not special!

(begins to back up the staircase)

GRAHAM

Then ask him for us. Maybe he'll tell you he *wants* to go into the machine.

MARTHA

And leave me? Never! You're all just jealous. Because you're just like everyone else. You've been jealous ever since you were a little girl. You and my husband!

CLORIS

Well I'm jealous of Ted because he doesn't have to deal with any of your insanity anymore!

MARTHA

You know what this lighthouse means to me, Cloris? This is the first place I heard them. Any of them. You and mother and father were playing. Happily. I was all alone. Sitting in the rain. Alone. No one wanted to play with ugly, 13 year-old Martha. And I saw a shell in the sand. I picked it up and put it to my ear. But rather than the ocean, I heard them. For the first time. They paid attention to me. They had time for me. They-

(Graham makes a lunge for the part.)

MARTHA

What are you doing?

CLORIS

I had no idea.

MARTHA

(to Martin)

I'll never let them take you. Or any of you. I'd rather see all of them die than any harm come to you! *(she holds the part aloft, over the side)* Stay where you are.

GEOFFREY

Well played, Donkey. This one is crazier than bat shit.

DONKEY

Haw.

GRAHAM

(he's right by Martha at the foot of the stairs)

Just hand it to me Martha. You don't have to do this.

GEOFFREY

The fuse. Keep your eye on the fuse.

MARTHA

You think you've got me pegged, don't you? Poor old Martha. Crazy old Martha.

CLORIS

You said it, not me. *(realizes she needs to be professional)* Martha, I'm sorry, that wasn't nice. Let me help you!

MARTHA

Well, there's more to this old bag than you think. How do you know this lighthouse isn't booby trapped!

GRAHAM

(calling over his shoulder to Geoffrey)

She's got a good point there.

GEOFFREY

Just keep your eye on that fuse.

CLORIS

You haven't booby trapped the lighthouse, Martha. Just take a deep breath and give us the

fuse. Just give us Martin.

MARTHA

(reaching the top of the stairs)

You'll have to pry him from my cold dead hand! I can't stand it! I can't stand any of you! (to Martin and gesturing around the room) They won't let me be happy with you! (to Cloris & Graham) I can never be happy with any of you either!

GRAHAM

Easy there, Martha.

GEOFFREY

Keep your eye on the fuse, Graham. Just get the fuse!

GRAHAM

(a little bit aggravated)

I've got this Geoffrey!

MARTHA

(istill holding Martin over the edge, speaking to "him")

Don't you see? Things could have been perfect. If they'd just left us alone!

(listening to Martin for a very short beat)

Give them a chance? They'd never let us be together!

(listens)

I can't believe what I'm hearing! Just shut up!!!

(listens)

Now you're defending her! She always turns the ones I love against me!

(listens)

This is why I had to kill Ted!

(Graham has reached Martha. Martin still hang precariously over the railing of the stairs)

GRAHAM

Just take it easy, Martha. I understand how you feel.

MARTHA (to Martin)

Oh Martin, I'm so sorry!

(she throws Martin over the railing, "he" smashes on the ground. Graham lunges, but

doesn't catch him in time)

GEOFFREY

No!!

MARTHA *(to Graham)*

I don't need you! I don't need any of you!! *(to Cloris)* And you. You're not my sister. I'd rather die than be your sister anymore!!

(Martha takes off running to top of stairs, throws herself off, out of sight to audience. Graham tries to stop her, Cloris screams and runs for the stairs)

DONKEY/TIERNAN

Checkmate

GEOFFREY

(taking off running, looking back over his shoulder at donkey, who has started taking off this donkey parts)

Shit.

(Lights out)

SCENE II

(Cloris and Graham stand at the top of the lighthouse. Cloris is holding Graham's sleeve as he has almost plummeted down as well. She pulls him back, then starts leaning over the rail screaming her sister's name)

CLORIS

MARTHA!!! MAAAARTHAAAAA!!!

GRAHAM

Cloris, no! You'll fall!

CLORIS

(not moving) I need to go after her! There must be some rope around here somewhere!

(Cloris starts to climb down in search of rope when Graham grabs her and pulls her in for a big hug)

GRAHAM

She's gone.

CLORIS *(pushing Graham off of her)*

I've got to-

GRAHAM

No.

..

CLORIS

I couldn't save her.

Cloris breaks down crying

(Tiernan enters and completes his magical transformation. After he assumes human form, he pulls the axe from Geoffrey's pack and slams it on the wall of the lighthouse making a terrific din.)

TIERNAN

Geoffrey! Oh Geoffrey my dear. Come out, come out wherever you are!

(Tiernan swings the axe against a wall of the lighthouse in a terrific shower of sparks.)

TIERNAN (CONT.)

It's so terribly barbaric isn't it? I think this one was designed for knocking down doors - should your family barricade themselves in a hotel bathroom and you need to... get them out.

(Tiernan runs the ax against the floor making an even more unpleasant sound.)

TIERNAN (CONT.)

GEOFFREY! Or kill them. GEOFFREY COME OUT HERE!

(Geoffrey steps on stage.)

GEOFFREY

I'm here.

TIERNAN

It's over, Geoffrey. You failed.

GEOFFREY

Failure has such a finality to it.

TIERNAN

Your life is forfeit Geoffrey.

GEOFFREY

Tiernan - One last bet. 2 more people.

TIERNAN

No Geoffrey.

GEOFFREY

Your choice. Two people, 48 hours, they'll turn lead to gold.

TIERNAN

Oh Geoffrey. Alchemy? Really?

GEOFFREY

C'mon Tiernan. You like gold right? Who am I kidding, everyone likes gold.

(he elbows Tiernan in the ribs, and Tiernan slams him on the ground with the ax.)

TIERNAN

Geoffrey. I'm tired of this. A bet's a bet.

GEOFFREY

Double or nothing.

TIERNAN

On your knees. I want to collect.
(Geoffrey gets on his knees.)

CLOVIS

(From above)
Geoffrey, what's going on?

TIERNAN

Just stay out of this.

GEOFFREY

This is Tiernan, our faithful pack animal. He's going to kill me.

GRAHAM

We have to stop him!

(Graham and Cloris descend the staircase)

TIERNAN

No you don't, Graham. You see, Geoffrey and I have been playing a game this whole time. And this is the last move.

CLOVIS

Is this true Geoffrey?

GEOFFREY

I'm not going to lie to you Cloris...

(few beats go by, but Geoffrey doesn't go on)

TIERNAN

Oh Geoffrey...still no stomach for the truth. *(to Cloris)* You and Graham were his pawns. Martha was my queen. I've won. Let this be a final lesson Geoffrey, save your queen for the end game. Now if you don't mind, I'll have my payment.

CLORIS

Wait! Who the fuck are you two? I don't appreciate being someone's pawn, how do you think you would feel if-

TIERNAN

I don't feel. I don't care. I find this whole situation intolerable. I was hoping for my sake that I would be proven wrong for once. And you humans would get your ass out of your heads. I mean-

GEOFFREY

(snickering) Ass out of-

TIERNAN

Oh, shut up, you know what I mean-

CLORIS

I don't know who- or what- you are, but my sister is dead and you seem mightily responsible.

TIERNAN

Who cares?! She would have died anyway.

Cloris

But she was *my* sister. And it wasn't *your* choice to make.

Tiernan

Really, Cloris. Poor Martha seemed pretty decisive at the end. Pity she didn't share your sisterly love.

Cloris

You bastard!

(Cloris rushes at Tiernan, grabs for the axe, after a short struggle she comes up with the axe. Geoffrey jumps up from his place on his knees)

GEOFFREY

Who has the queen now?!

CLORIS

Looks like I'm the one making decisions now.

TIERNAN

And I suppose you want an apology of some sort from me.

CLORIS

I just want justice.

TIERNAN

Then if its justice you're after, why not kill him too? He's the one that started this. Two birds with one stone, you might say.

GEOFFREY

Whoa, let's not speak hastily.

TIERNAN

Geoffrey, you're just like them. These humans value life so much, when you're all going to die!

CLORIS

What?

GEOFFREY

Cloris, Tiernan brought your sister into this, I had nothing to do with that!

CLORIS

Is that true?

TIERNAN

(sighs)

I suppose, but first Geoffrey brought in you, so I had to bring in your sister. It's really a chicken and egg sort of thing. Hmm, how appropriate, since your sister was completely cracked.

(she brings the axe up to strike and advances on Tiernan. The end is finally coming.)

TIERNAN

Everyone dies. Humans, animals, trees-

GEOFFREY

Vultures.

TIERNAN

(Looks at Geoffrey, smiles.)

Even vultures die too, it would seem.

(Just as Tiernan is about to back off stage, Cloris raises the axe to strike the blow)

Finally, some peace and quiet.

(Cloris kills Tiernan with one blow. Graham gets splattered with blood.)

SCENE III

(Cloris steps back from Tiernan's lifeless body with a gasp and look of shock. The axe hangs loosely in her hand. Graham reacts with dismay. Geoffrey's look is harder to read. It is somewhere between shock, wariness and maybe a hint of sadness. Geoffrey walks slowly over to Tiernan's head, picks it up, and he closes his eyes.)

GRAHAM

Cloris? Cloris!? *(he shakes her arm)* Are you all right?

CLODIS

Yes. *(distant and numb)* I think. What just happened?

GRAHAM

Uhhh.. I don't know. I think you just killed Donkey, or Tiernan, whatever he was. *(he walks over to Tiernan's body and picks up an arm, letting it flop to the ground)* He's definitely dead.

GEOFFREY

(insulted) Take your hands off of him, Graham! *(to Cloris)* Do you have any idea what you've just done?

CLODIS

He killed my sister! She deserved justice! Now, come clean Geoffrey, or you're next. What the fuck has been going on? I saw him change from Donkey to a man!

GEOFFREY

(Petting Tiernan's body)

It's been so long, I think we've actually forgotten. We struggled, played our games, made our bets and watched the world turn. We were the flies on the wall. And the monsters under your bed. The warmongers, the king makers, and the bringer of plagues. But you. The architect. The creator. The engineer. What will the world be now?

GRAHAM

Geoffrey? Are you ok?

GEOFFREY

(still looking down at Tiernan's body)

Do you know what this means?

CLORIS

(warily)

What?

GEOFFREY

That I won. Hahahahahahahahah! (*jumps around Tiernan's body*) I won, you bastard! I fucking beat you! Thousands and thousand of years, and I finally beat you. What was that about saving your queen for the end game you smug mother fucker?! Ha!

GRAHAM

I don't understand. What did you win?

GEOFFREY

(to Cloris) And you. Cloris. You're MY queen!

(*he kneels before Cloris*)

CLORIS

Get away from me!

GEOFFREY

Tiernan, Donkey, would have killed me. Never knew he had it in him. But you, my savior (*he leans in to kiss her*)

CLORIS

Hey! hey! (*she pushes him away*) You haven't answered me yet. (*indicating to Tiernan*) He was a donkey, and then he's a man, and then he's your would-be executioner. Explain.

GEOFFREY

That's kind of a long story.

CLORIS

Then give us the Cliffs Notes.

GEOFFREY

I was never good at the short version of anything. Tiernan had a great analogy for it. Damn! That bastard was good for something after all. It's not like we were demons, exactly. More like what you might call gods, but not really goddish gods. There aren't really

human words for it. Ah, how much do you know about yoga?

CLORIS

Geoffrey! People are fucking dead! One by my own hand. If you don't want to be next I suggest you get to the goddamn point.

GEOFFREY

You see, Tiernan believed the world was unsalvageable and I thought it still had some spark left, so we made a bet, and you guys were our, well, game pieces so to speak, and we had this idea about turning a light on and yadda, yadda, yadda, end game, your sister (makes a falling gesture with his hand), and then you (makes hacking motion) Tiernan.

CLORIS

What? We aren't game pieces, Geoffrey, we're people! All that talk about saving humanity, rebuilding society and it was really just a game you were playing? You didn't care at all, you just stood there and let all this happen!

GEOFFREY

Well I couldn't interfere per se. Not physically. We're...we're more like watchers. I do care. I really, really do. That's what set this whole thing off.

CLORIS

You like to watch? Well watch this!

(Cloris decides to kill Geoffrey and begins to rush at him with the axe.)

GEOFFREY

(backing away fearfully)

Cloris...

GRAHAM

(stepping in between Cloris and Geoffrey)

I can't let you do this, Cloris. You're my friend, but so's Geoffrey. I've never had real friends before. I won't let you take that away from me.

CLORIS

Friend? You still think this asshole is your friend, Graham? He manipulated you, lied to you, and you are still defending him?

GRAHAM

He saved my life!

GEOFFREY

I did!

CLORIS

Fine. Time to progress in your therapy, Graham, it's all about cutting off toxic relationships.

(she swings at Geoffrey again)

GEOFFREY

Cloris, stop. You're angry at me. You're angry at the world. But you have a chance to change it. *(he dodges her axe again, a little too close this time)*. Woah! I apologize for my lack of...tact in the matter. But I'm sincere in the goal. We can still do it. *You* can still do it. I can show you. *(she rushes Geoffrey and presses her body against his, trapping him against the wall. She presses the axe to Geoffrey's throat. Geoffrey doesn't struggle)* Just stop! *(Cloris pauses)* You have something special now, something that no person has had in a long, long time... at least in my recollection. And trust me, my recollection goes back a long, long way.

GRAHAM

What are you saying, Geoffrey?

CLORIS

You've got 30 seconds.

GEOFFREY

Tiernan's blood Cloris. Taste it.

CLORIS

I'm done playing Geoffrey. Talk!

GEORFFREY

No game Cloris. The truth you want, the knowledge, it's all right here. *(Geoffrey runs his finger over the axe collecting a sample of Tiernan's blood. He holds his finger out to Cloris, indicating that she should lick it)*

CLORIS

This is ridiculous.

GEOFFREY

I'm a crow, in a tree, in a grove, at the end of the world. Of course it's ridiculous. And yet very real. Very powerful.

(Cloris looks at him cautiously. She leans in to lick the blood...)

GRAHAM

You're not actually going to do it?

CLORIS

I've had a very odd day, Graham. This doesn't seem so weird right now.

GRAHAM

Wait--

(Before Graham can cross to Cloris, she has licked the blood from Geoffrey's finger. She makes a sucking-lemon face and hesitates. She waits a moment and seems to swoon on her feet. She steadies herself and glances sharply toward Geoffrey.)

CLORIS

Oh my God.

GEOFFREY

You see what I mean now?

GRAHAM

(approaching Cloris)

Cloris? What's going on? Are you ok?

CLORIS

I'm...fantastic. My eyes. I can see things...

GRAHAM

(he reaches for the axe)

Let me--

CLORIS

(she swings the axe at him)
Back off, Graham.

GRAHAM

(hurt)
Cloris?

GEOFFREY

You see it now, don't you? The connection. Together we can change the world. We can pull humanity by its puppet strings, or just sit back and watch the world flow and ebb again. You've always wanted to help people, right? This is your chance, Cloris. In ways you could never have imagined. And so much more.

GRAHAM

Geoffrey? What about me? Am I coming, too?

CLORIS

Sorry Graham. This ride is a two-seater.

(Cloris walks over to Tiernan's body. She tears open his chest, rips out his heart, and devours it. Her perception of her environment shifts dramatically. She begins to laugh giddily)

GRAHAM

Wait, Cloris. Let me-

GEOFFREY

It's not for you, Graham.

GRAHAM

Why can't I--

CLORIS

This is amazing. This is so fucking amazing.

GRAHAM

(to Geoffrey)
You said I was special! That I had special skills, things that nobody else had. You saved me

when I tried to kill myself. You can't leave me, Geoffrey!

GEOFFREY

You are special, Graham. Remember when we first met? Remember the journey you'd imagined into the west? Dodging brambles, fornicating with sirens? That's all still out there waiting for you. Don't you want to see what happens when you reach the promised land? Taste the ambrosia?

GRAHAM

No! We can rebuild together! That's what we're supposed to do! I don't want to do this alone.

CLORIS

(wiping her mouth, standing taller and bolder than before)

This is your divine intervention, Graham. All the great heroes, they first met with the gods on the road. And then they went on to do great things. Complete great quests. That's how it always starts.

GRAHAM

I'm not cut out for journeys and quests.

CLORIS

Graham, I think you're cut out for more than you know. But if you want the easy way out...well, you've still got your noose.

(Cloris kisses Graham on the cheek and hands him the axe)

GRAHAM

Cloris...

GEOFFREY

So, this mean you've accepted?

CLORIS

(smiling)

You're a bastard, Geoffrey. I love you. I hate you.

GEOFFREY

As it should be.

CLORIS

Absolutely. Let's go.

(Cloris grabs Geoffrey by the arm and pulls him bodily towards the exit.)

GEOFFREY

So, Cloris, what's your game? Not chess, I hope...

(Graham stands dumbfounded at his sudden solitude. He looks around, at the body on the floor, the mess made from the recent struggle. He upturns a chair and sits and rummages through his pack. He pulls out his noose. In one hand he holds his noose, in the other he holds the axe. Lights fade as he ponders his next move.)