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Lyons, Joe

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Purgatoriography

And Other Plays

Dearest Book Reader,

The book you have just purchased/borrowed/stolen from your roommate could save your life. This mighty tome of five ten-minute plays written by me, Joe Lyons, will be vital to your survival if you have it on your person and you needed to break out of prison by threatening a guard with an irritating paper cut or if you needed something to burn for warmth after your experimental plane crashes in the harsh Arctic tundra. It will also stop very tiny and slow moving bullets. However, if you just bought this book for its contents alone, then I thank you for reading, and I hope you walk away with at least a chuckle or two. There are so many people to thank for the creation and inspiration of these plays that I'm in the process of publishing an extensive supplemental volume of thank yous to go along with this book. But until that happens, I do want to extend my deepest and sincerest thanks to the following:

- Sarah for being my wife, my love, and my proof reader.
- Mom and Dad for being wonderful parents, friends and audience members.
- Robert for always egging me on and co-inventing an entire universe with me.
- My brother, Dan, and old pal, Mitch, for being my first actors.
- Pop for teaching me the power of a joke. I miss you every day.
- Fred and Josh for being old friends and consummate partners in crime.
- Brad for creating the venue where such silliness can come to life.
- All of the actors and directors who took part in the production of these scripts for their magnificent efforts and talent.

Now comes the part where you actually read the plays. Enjoy and please feel free to put these shows on for your friends and loved ones... but not your enemies. *Joe Lyons' Big Book of Plays for Your Enemies* is still being written.

Ridiculously Yours,
Joe Lyons

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Purgatoriography

Lights up.

Stage is set up like a bare waiting room. There are only 4 folding chairs lined up in a row and a small, beat up coffee table in front of them. On the table are several magazines, mostly old and out of date copies of Highlights and Modern Maternity. Currently on one of the chairs is DAN, a late twenty something of average height, build, and demeanor. He's almost painfully average. DAN is currently flipping through a Highlights magazine, one he has flipped through MANY times before.

DAN: *(Laughing to himself with sarcastic frustration)* You know, I still can't find that damn raccoon.

DAN tosses the magazine back on the table and begins to pace back and forth across the stage. Suddenly, there is a crackle, as if from a loudspeaker, followed by an atonal female voice.

VOICE OVER: Now admitting A. Aaronson, D. Zukowski, L. Zhyang, B. Von Strucker. *(Pause)* That is all.

DAN listens intently to the announcement. When it's over, DAN sighs to himself and defeatedly returns to the far right folding chair, picks up the same copy of Highlights and begins flipping through it...again.

Slowly, from stage left, a Samurai, MUSASHI, enters. He's of tall and serene, just like any proper samurai should be. He's in his traditional robe, barefoot, and carries a sword. He enters as if he has just been taking a casual stroll. He takes in his new surroundings and sits on the far left folding chair, not even acknowledging DAN'S existence. DAN has watched the whole entrance unfold with quiet amazement. He can't stop staring until, MUSASHI looks over at DAN. Startled, DAN dives right back into his magazine. MUSASHI lets out a frustrated grunt and picks up a copy of Modern Maternity from the table. He opens it, not caring about a single sentence in it. DAN lets another uncomfortable pause pass by.

DAN: So... samurai, huh?

MUSASHI: (*Frustrated*) Mmm.

Uncomfortable pause.

The loudspeaker crackles.

VOICE OVER: Now admitting...B. Paddington. (*Pause*) That is all.

Both DAN and MUSASHI slump a little in their chairs.

DAN: Well...damn. So, um, how long have you been...you know...waiting?

MUSASHI glances over at DAN with quiet indignation. He goes back to staring straight ahead.

DAN: Not a talker, eh? Don't know why I thought you might be.
(*Pause*) Oh, me, you ask? Oh, well, honestly I'm starting to lose track of

time. I think it's been about a little over 6 weeks. And, you know, every time I hear that stupid lady start listing names I'm CONVINCED my name's gonna come up. Then I keep seeing folks like...you...in here and I start to get...worried. Looks like you...may have been here for a while. If memory serves, the samurai look went out of style quite some time ago.

MUSASHI still stares straight ahead.

DAN: *(Defeated)* Yeah.

Awkward pause.

MUSASHI: *(Sigh)* Four hundred and three years, eight months, and three days.

DAN looks over in amazement.

DAN: Four hundred and three years? Holy shi...*(He stops himself)*
Wow....I mean... wow... I'm, um... sorry?

MUSASHI: Why?

DAN: Well... damn. I mean, that's a long time.

MUSASHI: Yes. Yes it is.

DAN: Does anyone ever come around and let you know how much longer you have to wait?

MUSASHI: No.

DAN: Well, nuts. Not so much as a pamphlet to let you know what's going on around here. Great.

MUSASHI: We are all serving a sentence.

DAN: But... I mean, what am *I* doing here? I never did anything. I mean that literally, I did nothing with my life. I got up every morning, I lived in the rut I so very carefully constructed for myself, and then BANG! I get hit by a runaway ice cream truck, and here I am... waiting. I mean, you had to of murdered like the president of China or something!

MUSASHI rises quickly from his chair and draws his sword at DAN. DAN falls out of his chair with a girlish shriek.

DAN: (*Begging for his life*) HOO! Whoa! Wait! Sorry. Sorry. Sorry.

MUSASHI slowly and masterfully sheathes his sword and returns to his chair.

DAN: (*Picking himself up off the ground*) Damn. Geeze, man.

Awkward pause

MUSASHI: In my time, I cut down seventy-five opponents at the Battle of Sekigahara, was declared the successful victor of over thirty duels and served my retainer nobly, until he asked me to take my own life for failing to protect his third castle from an attack. The men I killed died valiantly in combat. Murder... has nothing to do with it.

DAN, amazed, sits back down on the folding chair.

DAN: Well... it may, you know, explain why you've been... here, for so long.

MUSASHI: Perhaps.

DAN: It's just... I thought that if you killed someone you wouldn't be waiting... here. You'd just go right to the... other place (*Gesturing with his head in a downward motion*).

MUSASHI: I believe in neither "place". But how do you know we're not waiting to go TO... the "other place".

Awkward pause as DAN tries to process that distinct and upsetting possibility.

DAN: (*Suddenly*) Well, that's just great! For all I know, I could be here for four hundred years, and then after that could just be something way worse than THIS! Not that I'm having an easy time imagining anything worse than this. (*Catching his breath*) Well... you seem to be handling this well.

MUSASHI: I have to.

DAN: (*Exasperated*) WHY? That's just... I mean...i... it completely...

MUSASHI: Sucks.

DAN: YEAH! (*Confused at the slang coming out of the samurai*). Wait... I...

MUSASHI: I have learned a great deal in my time here. You are not the first I've met... but I pray that you'll be the last.

DAN slumps in his chair.

DAN: Well, nice to meet you, too. Wait: You took out a bunch of guys with a friggin' samurai sword...

MUSASHI: Katana.

DAN: ...Katana... and I didn't do anything... you know... *terribly* bad.

MUSASHI: We all must be here for a reason.

DAN: Not me!

MUSASHI: I doubt... *they*...are wrong.

DAN: Well, “they” need to check again! I never killed anybody. I never stole anything bigger than a case of beer from a neighbor’s garage. Last time I checked, I’m pretty sure I never “coveted” anything. I went to work, I came home, I went to bed, and then I did it all over again the next day. I never had time to hurt anyone or do anything “bad”.

MUSASHI: How do you know you were living by the right rules?

DAN starts to say something, but then stops. He sits back down in his chair.

DAN: Huh. Good point. But still, no matter who’s in charge I never did anything... you know, universally wrong... Unless...

MUSASHI: (*Suddenly interested*) Unless what?

DAN: (*Getting uncomfortable*) Well, I— I never got married or anything... never had a serious girlfriend either, so I...

MUSASHI: (*With a smirk*) Yes?

DAN: (*Giving up his discretion*) Okay, fine! Look, I don’t see how my chronic obsession with internet porn should keep me out of the great beyond for more than a day or two. There! I said it! Happy? I wasted my life doing what I hated and being by myself. No real friends, no real career, no real anything. Nothing! I’m dead and I never even got the chance to live and now God or WHATEVER is punishing me because I wore out two copies of *Debbie Does Monte Carlo*!

MUSASHI stares straight ahead. DAN tries to compose himself and hide his embarrassment. Suddenly, MUSASHI completely breaks character and starts laughing.

DAN: Yeah, keep laughing, Roshomon.

MUSASHI: *(Gaining his composure)*. I apologize. I have met many, many people in my time here, but no one so ready and willing to admit that... vice... as a reason for keeping them out of the afterlife.

DAN: Well, it's all I can think of! Look, I don't know what your wacky religion has to say on the topic, but mine does not look too favorably on the issue. Looks like it was a bigger sin than what I was guilted into believing it was. My entire life was far too insignificant to even require eternal punishment. I never had the chance to get married, or buy a house, or get divorced, or any of that normal stuff. And you know what the worst part of it is? I could have had all of that, but I couldn't be bothered to turn off the nudity and pick myself up off of the goddamn couch. Life was just too hard. *(Pause)* But life was easy compared to this.

DAN tosses a magazine across the room.

Awkward pause.

MUSASHI: It's not that bad here. Look...

MUSASHI starts rustling through magazines. DAN moves closer expecting to receive a nugget of Eastern wisdom.

DAN: What? What is it?

MUSASHI: Oh? It's nothing. *(Starts laughing)* Just trying to find you a *Hustler*.

DAN: Oh, ha ha. Yuck it up, Yojimbo. That's good. Getting made fun of by a samurai that knows about dirty magazines in the afterlife. That's perfect. It's not fair! Who knows how long I'm gonna be here? DAMN IT!

MUSASHI composes himself in front of the clearly distressed DAN.

MUSASHI: I, too, feel I should not be here.

DAN: What?

MUSASHI: I understand your emotions. It is not fair that I must remain here for... such a long time.

DAN: But, like, you, you know, *killed* people. Hell, you killed yourself. Another huge no-no... well, at least according to my crummy belief system.

MUSASHI: No! I lived my life according to my code. You are nothing unless you served your master's every command. I lived with honor, while you lived a wasted and disgraceful life. I fought bravely and served my master until my end.

DAN: Yeah, which he brought about!

MUSASHI: And I took my life for him. It was an honorable death. It was just punishment. I would have rather died than have lived with the shame of my failure.

DAN: NOT ANYMORE I BET!

Through this, both men have risen to their feet, each exchange more heated than the next. After DAN'S last line, the two pause until they have both caught their breath. MUSASHI takes his seat again.

MUSASHI: You... may be right.

DAN: CRAM IT, STUPI... wait, what?

MUSASHI: You may be right. All my life, I lived according to my code. I upheld it and honored it. The code was my life... but it was a code that was supposed to bring honor. Bring peace. Not (*Picking up a copy of Modern Maternity*) this.

DAN: Yeah. Ass, isn't it?

MUSASHI: Um... yes.

DAN: So there it is. You lived the way you thought was the best way to live life... albeit a violent one... and I never harmed a soul. But here we are, and all we can do...

MUSASHI: ...is wait.

DAN: (*With a laugh*) Well, I am impressed with how composed you are. What with the four hundred-plus years under your belt. I've been here just over a month and I'm about to snap.

MUSASHI: Having this much time to reflect on one's life does seem to give you a certain amount of perspective.

DAN: I bet.

MUSASHI: You will learn that anger and frustration will just make waiting all that much more unbearable. The first hundred years here were not pleasant.

DAN: Great. (*Sigh*) Well, the least they could have done was update the damn periodicals.

MUSASHI: (*With a chuckle, picking up an old Vogue*). Yes. I could tell you ten ways to please your man... word for word.

DAN: (*Laughing*). Ha! No thanks. Well, at least it's nice to have some...

Loudspeaker crackles. Both men rise suddenly.

VOICE OVER: Now admitting... R. Carson. That is all.

DAN: Company.

They sit.

Long pause

DAN: So can you, like, do a back flip with that sword and...

MUSASHI: (*Interrupting and rising to leave*) Perhaps I should move on.

DAN: Wait, what? No! Don't go. I won't talk about karate anymore, I promise. You're the first person I've met here that's bothered to talk to me for more than a couple of seconds.

MUSASHI: And I will not be the last. Truth be told, I'm... afraid.

DAN: Afraid? You? Mr. Chippity-Chop?!

MUSASHI: Yes. I fear angering whatever being is keeping me here. If I spend my time here in quiet reflection, then I will be unable to lengthen my sentence, whatever that may be. Actually, I've been looking in vain for a quiet corner of this place. There's always someone looking for answers... of which there are none... at least none that I have discovered so far.

DAN: I guess that means I should stop swearing and picturing the girls in the magazines naked, huh?

MUSASHI: That would be a start.

DAN: Makes sense, I guess. Well then, don't let me bother you. I guess I should do a little more reflecting and a lot less complaining. I just hope there's some reincarnation at the end of this deal. There's a lot of movies I'm missing right now.

DAN slumps back into his chair. MUSASHI straightens himself and moves to leave.

DAN: Wait!

MUSASHI stops. DAN rises from his chair.

DAN: Look... um, why don't you stay here for a while. Not too many people come through here and maybe you can sit here and just not get bugged by whiny little jerks like me. I think I could use a bit of a walk anyway.

MUSASHI: That is... kind. I thank you.

MUSASHI moves back to his seat. DAN, left standing, pauses for a moment as he secretly hopes the samurai asks him to stay.

DAN: So... I guess I'll, um, just go this way. So... uh, take it easy.

MUSASHI: Farewell.

DAN: Yeah. Um... ok. Time for some of the old Qwai Chang Caine treatment, huh? So... bye. Hope the next hundred years are quiet enough for you.

MUSASHI closes his eyes in quiet meditation. DAN slowly and reluctantly starts to head off stage in search of God-only-knows-what. The loudspeaker crackles again, MUSASHI leaps out of his chair and DAN runs back on stage.

VOICE OVER: Now admitting C. Carlson, T. Rubinowski, A. Grabowitz. (Pause) That is all.

DAN and MUSASHI sigh. They both look at each other and nod their silent good-byes. DAN slowly meanders offstage. MUSASHI sits back down and closes his eyes again. He pauses for a moment and then boredom takes over. He sighs and picks up the Highlights magazine on the table. He flips through the pages and pauses on one of the sections.

MUSASHI: Hey. A raccoon.

Lights out

Secret Identity

Lights up.

Two men and a woman walk on stage. The two men, TOM and ANDREW, are brothers. TOM is the older brother, but ANDREW is taller and more confident. The woman, LAUREN, is ANDREW'S long-time girlfriend. They are walking down the street towards their cars after a double date. On the street there is a trashcan, some milk crates, and other assorted debris. ANDREW and LAUREN are having a good time, but it's clear that TOM is not. ANDREW and LAUREN are dressed for a pleasant summer evening, but TOM is wearing an overcoat and clothes that appear to be bulky and bunching up underneath.

ANDREW: I mean, I've seen women, you know, RUN away from dates before, but that was ridiculous.

LAUREN: Andy!

TOM: Oh yes. It's very, very funny and I'm so glad that I've been able to entertain you this evening... dick.

ANDREW: She practically killed a bus boy trying to get out of there!

TOM: Well... she said her friend had called, and she was in a Jet Ski accident and that it was serious and she needed to go pick her up.

ANDREW: Right.

LAUREN: It's okay, Tom. Who knows... she *might* call you tomorrow.

ANDREW: Provided her friend's Jet Ski mauling wasn't too tragic.

TOM: You are a bastard. You know that, right?

ANDREW: Yeah well, that's why Mom liked me best. I still have no idea why you had to dress up like THAT, and then you just sat there in silence, all night long, looking out the damn window. This was going to be your coming-out party, man!

TOM: I thought it was going well.

LAUREN tries to stifle a laugh, and fails.

ANDREW: Look, the only way we're going to be able to help you get back into the dating game is if you just be yourself and stop being so damn serious all the time. I mean, what the hell were you looking out the window for all night long?

TOM: Nothing.

LAUREN: Tommy, we care about you.

TOM: I know.

LAUREN: We just want to help you get back to your old self. I know these last couple of months have been hard, but all your brother and I want is our old Tommy back.

ANDREW: She's right, buddy. Look, don't worry about tonight. We'll just chock it up to nervousness, and I'll call a couple of friends and then we'll see about hooking you up on a Jet-Ski-tragedy-free date, okay?

TOM: Ok. I appreciate the help, guys. I really do. But I'm going to be fine. Trust me. I... I'm learning new things about myself every day, and I know I'm going to be all right.

ANDREW: Hey, you're my big bro. Of course you're going to be alright... or else Mom would kill me.

LAUREN: Where did you park anyway?

ANDREW: Just up this way, I think. So what exactly is up with the coat, Tom? It's like seventy-three degrees out tonight.

TOM: Nothing. I... I just felt a little cold is all.

LAUREN: Maybe you can come by tomorrow and borrow some of Andy's clothes or something.

ANDREW: Now let's not get crazy.

TOM: Yeah, I don't think my ego can take any further bruising, so I'll refrain from trying on my little brother's clothes.

LAUREN: Well, I'm taking you shopping, then, and don't argue with me about it.

TOM hears something and whips around into a fighting pose.

TOM: What was that?

LAUREN: What was what?

ANDREW: I didn't hear anything.

TOM: You didn't hear anything?

ANDREW: Nope.

TOM: You sure?

LAUREN: I didn't hear anything, Tom.

ANDREW: What has gotten into you?

TOM: Uh, nothing. Nothing at all. Look, I think I should just get home. I've got a lot of... stuff... to do.

ANDREW and LAUREN look at each other.

LAUREN: Tom, why don't we drive you home tonight?

TOM: I'm fine! I just have a lot of work to do.

ANDREW: What are you talking about? Please tell me you haven't been working overtime at the office again. You can't do that!

LAUREN: You really do need to get out and socialize more.

TOM: Actually, I... uh... I quit my job.

Pause.

ANDREW: What?

TOM: I quit my job.

ANDREW & LAUREN: WHAT?!

TOM: Let's not make a big deal out of this.

ANDREW: Don't make a big deal? Tom... I... I just don't know what to say about you right now. Let's just go home.

LEON walks on stage. He's nervous and dressed in black.

LEON: Hey. You know what time it is?

ANDREW: Huh? Oh, it's, uh, quarter to ten.

LAUREN: Tom, why would you quit your job?

TOM: No... no reason.

LEON: Hey!

ANDREW: What?

LEON pulls out a knife.

LEON: Give me your fuckin' wallet!

ANDREW, LAUREN, and TOM gasp in shock at LEON.

LEON: Come on, man! The lady's purse too. Let's go!

ANDREW: All right, all right. Just calm down.

ANDREW pulls out his wallet. TOM starts fumbling around in his overcoat.

LEON: Faster!

ANDREW: I'm getting it! Just take it and get out of here, okay?

LEON: Wait! The purse too, man!

LAUREN: Here.

ANDREW and LAUREN start to step forward to hand their items over to LEON. Suddenly, TOM whips on a dollar store mask that covers just his eyes, à la Robin.

TOM: Not so fast!

Everyone turns towards TOM, who rips open the front of his shirt to reveal a crude superhero costume. A long uncomfortable pause is shared by everyone as they try to process just what exactly it is that they are seeing.

TOM: That's right!

TOM continues to struggle getting out of his street clothes...and it's not going well. The coat, the shirt, and the pants all come off with a tremendous struggle. The superhero costume itself consists of a tight shirt with a logo, tight pants, a utility belt, and a cape. At one point, TOM should be on the ground trying to yank his street pants off. When it's all said and done, TOM gets back into a hero pose in front of everyone.

TOM: Drop! The knife!

Long pause

ANDREW: This is because your wife left you, isn't it?

TOM: I... what?

LAUREN: Oh, Tom.

LEON starts laughing.

LEON: Oh, Jesus! You have got to be kidding me!

ANDREW: What the hell is this, Tom?!

TOM: Um, I'm not Tom.

ANDREW: Like fun, you aint'!

TOM: I'm... THE MASKED AVENGER!

LEON: You look like the Masked Asshole.

TOM: Hey, shut up!

ANDREW: Tommy, come on, man. Seriously, what are you doing?

TOM: Defending you from an evildoer!

LEON: Evildoer? What are you, from like 1955 or something?

ANDREW tosses his wallet to LEON.

ANDREW: Here. Now get going.

LEON starts going through the wallet, but he doesn't leave.

ANDREW: Tom, I know you've been having a rough couple of months, but come on! Masked vigilantism is not the answer.

LAUREN: It's never the answer.

TOM: I'm being serious here! I've been given a gift to fight crime and I will not rest until the citizens of Pittsburgh are safe!

Pause.

ANDREW: You realize this isn't the first time you've done this, Tom?

TOM: Yeah... but...

ANDREW: Remember when Mom and Dad got divorced?

TOM: Let's not bring this up right now in front of... you know...

TOM starts nodding his head towards LEON. LEON looks up from the wallet and looks at them.

LEON: Huh? Oh! Yeah, no way am I taking off yet. I gotta hear this.

LAUREN: Here!

LAUREN tosses her purse to LEON, which he eagerly digs through, but he still stays put.

LAUREN: Tommy, Andy told me about what happened with your parents.

ANDREW: Remember? You were eleven. I was nine. Mom and Dad split up. We both handled it in our own unique ways. I got really involved in sports... and you put on one of Mom's pantsuits, wrapped a towel around your neck, and got beaten half to death by those bullies at school.

TOM: This is different now. I realized that I have a real calling and it's one that I have to pursue. The MASKED AVENGER has remained in the shadows for far too long!

ANDREW: Tom, you've taken another one of your superhero simulations way too far.

LAUREN: Tommy, do you really think this is healthy?

TOM: I'm being serious! I meant it! This is who I am and this... this is what I *need* to do. Beware, evildoer!

LEON looks back up at them.

LEON: Huh? Right. Gotcha.

ANDREW: Look, Tom, sit down for me, would you?

ANDREW pulls over two milk crates and sits down on one of them. TOM begrudgingly sits down on the other.

TOM: Andrew, this is unnecessary. I'm a crime fighter from now on, okay?

ANDREW: Tom, I'm your brother and I love you. You know that, right?

TOM: Yeah... but...

ANDREW: And I always want what's best for you, right?

LAUREN: We don't know what we'd do without you, Tom.

ANDREW: So, I mean this in the nicest way possible when I say that putting on tights and a utility belt is *not* going to bring your wife back.

LAUREN: Easy, Andy.

ANDREW: What are you carrying around in that damn thing anyway?

TOM: Plastic safety fasteners, a notepad, Dad's old binoculars and... um... this.

TOM pulls out a crude, homemade boomerang off of his belt from behind the cape. LEON looks up from the purse long enough to start laughing at it.

ANDREW: (*Sigh*). That's a boomerang, isn't it?

TOM: Uh, "Avenge-erang," yes. You see, the vast majority of the Masked Avenger's powers operate at close range. I need a ranged weapon for criminals who... you know... make a run for it. And then it'll just come back to me.

LAUREN: Well, at least he's prepared.

ANDREW: Tom, I want you to take that boomerang...

TOM: Avenge-erang...

ANDREW: (*Sigh*) Avenge-erang and hit that guy right over there.

LEON looks up.

LEON: Huh? Oh yeah. Give it a shot.

TOM: Ok... here we go. EXCELSIOR!!!

TOM throws the boomerang at LEON and misses completely. It goes off stage and, naturally, does not return.

ANDREW: Now how did you feel about that?

TOM: Not... good?

ANDREW: Exactly. You missed that guy and now he'd probably kill you.

LEON: Oh yeah. I'd totally cut your ass... or something.

ANDREW: Tom, Darcy isn't coming back.

TOM: I... I know that.

LAUREN: Tom, you're better off without her. You're a wonderful guy and you don't need to do... this.

TOM: THIS is who I am. The world needs more guys like me!

ANDREW: You're right, Tom! You're right! The world needs a hell of a lot more smart, caring, wonderful guys who'd take a bullet for a stranger without thinking twice about it.

LAUREN: Of course we mean that "bullet" thing figuratively, right?

ANDREW: Right. But, Tom, this isn't you.

TOM: Well what the hell is? You know? I've spent my whole life feeling like I'm not good enough. Not good enough for my job, not good enough for Mom and Dad, and NOW it turns out I'm not good enough for the one person who was supposed to love me *for* me!

ANDREW: Darcy was a bitch who didn't deserve you.

TOM: Yeah, well, even if that's true, I've never felt more like *me* than I did when I was getting pummeled in Mom's pantsuit back in school... or like I do right now.

ANDREW: Tom, the only thing you're going to feel while dressed up like that is the receiving end of some other guy's fist!

LAUREN: I know you want to be a hero, Tom. I know you want people to look up to you, but you don't have to do this.

TOM: I WANT to do this. I want to help people. I want to make a difference. I want to mean something to someone.

ANDREW: Then join the Coast Guard or something! At least they have benefits and I don't have to worry about you getting shot while trying to stop a liquor store robbery.

LAUREN: Tom, superhero is just not a viable career option for you.

TOM: I don't care! This is what I'm doing from now on!

LEON: You know they're right, Tom.

They all turn to LEON.

LEON: Dude, we all face moments in our lives where it's much easier to hide behind a mask. Sometimes that mask is work or substance abuse or pretending we're something we're not, which is what your case seems to be.

ANDREW: Um...?

LEON: Just give me a sec. The fact of the matter is, the more we hide behind the masks we choose for ourselves, the more we lose the person we used to be. Take me, for instance. I wasn't born a criminal, but life got the best of me, so I hid behind the mask of petty crime. Life got the best of Tom, here, so he feels that he *literally* has to wear a mask. It looks like your friend's divorce was a little too much for him to bear, and now he's hiding in a costume to compensate for his hurt. It's not an uncommon situation, but I must say your friend's escape method would have to be classified as anything BUT common.

LAUREN: Uh, what...

LEON: Tom, it's easy to pretend. It's easy to play games and do anything in our power to keep ourselves from facing the hurt, but the simple fact is that it won't go away if we pretend it's not there. Saving lives and stopping bad guys won't fill that new hole you've got in your heart. She left you, right?

TOM: Um, yeah.

LEON: Well, that has to be a tremendous blow to your manhood, so in order to feel better about yourself and reclaim that which she took from you, you've turned yourself into – please pardon the pun – a “super” man. This übermench you've created for yourself may impress people...

ANDREW: Which, trust me, it really doesn't...

LEON: Thank you... but at the end of the day, this disguise still won't make you feel any better. Under the spandex, you're still Tom, and you're still hurt.

Throughout LEON'S speech, ANDREW and LAUREN become more and more wrapped up in what he's saying. By the end of the speech, they are ignoring TOM completely and are hanging on LEON'S every word. TOM is clearly annoyed by the fact that the criminal has nailed exactly how he is feeling.

LEON: So, in order to feel better about yourself, Tom, you want to save the world. But Tom, buddy, who's going to save you?

TOM: (*Sarcastically*). Uh, I don't know, the Incredible Hulk?

LAUREN: Shh!

LEON: No, Tom, it's *you*. Save yourself first, and *then* worry about the rest of the world. It's times like this that you're allowed to be selfish. You owe it to yourself. Take it from someone who knows. Take it from someone... *who can't get out from behind his mask*.

Pause

ANDREW: Wow... gosh... thank you for that. That was really meaningful.

LEON: Well, I used to be a social worker, before... well, you know....

LEON playfully brandishes his knife.

LEON: (*Cont.*) So it comes with the territory.

LAUREN: Thank you so much for helping our friend. Hey! Is there anything we can do for you?

LEON: Nah. Especially seeing as how I've got all of your money. Well, I'm off!

LEON runs off. ANDREW and LAUREN wave goodbye.

ANDREW & LAUREN: Bye! See ya!

ANDREW: Well, I bet someone's feeling a little better.

TOM: I... I guess.

LAUREN: You see, Tommy, you don't need to do this. Let's just worry about Tom, before we worry about being... well, *not* Tom, okay?

TOM: I suppose.

ANDREW: I love you, Bro. I promise you, I'm here if you need me, but let's try something... ANYTHING else, before we engage in dangerous super-heroics.

LAUREN: You know what? You're way better off. You're a good-looking guy and you've got a whole new chapter of your life ahead of you.

TOM: Thanks, guys. I mean it. I... I don't think I'd be in the shape I'm in if it weren't for you two. I owe you guys a lot.

ANDREW: You don't owe us anything. Just start smiling again and we'll call it even. Deal?

TOM: Deal.

LAUREN: Now let's get you home and out of that costume before anyone I want to set you up with sees you like that.

TOM: All right.

ANDREW: See, Tom. Everything's going to work out fine. Come on. *(He puts his arm around LAUREN)*. Let's go home and cancel our credit cards.

ANDREW and LAUREN give each other a quick kiss and then walk off stage. TOM remains and removes the mask he's been wearing. He laughs to himself. He starts to walk off, but before he goes, he picks a lead pipe up off of the ground from the random debris by a garbage can. He turns to make sure no one is looking...and then bends the pipe with his bare hands. He chuckles to himself again.

Lights out.

On the Inherent Dangers of Having Colleges Located Next to Each Other

Lights Up

The setting is a dorm room in Tower B on the University of Pittsburgh campus. There's a small table, a folding chair or 2, and something that could pass for a bed, which is currently occupied. The scene is chaos. 4 Pitt students barge into the room in a flurry of emotion. They are pushing and dragging...something...either on a wagon or a wheelchair or an office chair (just something that rolls). Whatever it is, it's large and it's covered with a sheet or a tarp. The students comprise of three males (MITCH, ADAM and PAUL) and a female (BRIANNA). MITCH, ADAM, and BRIANNA are clearly excited and PAUL is trying his hardest not to have a complete nervous breakdown. Some of them are dressed in Pitt paraphernalia. At the top of the scene, they have just barged into the room and are closing and locking the door behind them. Over the first couple of lines of dialogue, they are moving the object under the sheet over to one of the corners of the room.

MITCH: Holy shit!

ADAM: We did it! I can't believe we did it!

PAUL: (*Making his way to a chair*). I think I'm going to throw up all over myself.

ADAM: Oh, Jesus Christ, would you calm down, Paul? We did it!

PAUL: Yeah. Great. Maybe we can share a prison cell.

MITCH & ADAM: Paaaauuul!

They both move over to PAUL and playfully slap him around.

BRIANNA: Would you guys keep it down! I think the R.A. is in his room!

MITCH: You're right, we really should stop making all this... NOISE!

MITCH playfully picks up BRIANNA and spins her around. She giggles and bugs him back.

BRIANNA: Would you stop it!

PAUL: Yeah guys, seriously, this is not the time. What if someone saw us?

PAUL paces around the room to make sure everything is locked, covered and listening-device-free.

ADAM: Paul, please. We got away with this scott-free, so could you please just calm down and be happy with us for five damn minutes.

They all surround PAUL with cheerful tones.

MITCH: Smooth sailing.

ADAM: Nice shiny PhDs after our names.

BRIANNA: Fame. Prosperity.

They go from cheerful to deadpan.

MITCH, ADAM & BRIANNA: Vengeance.

PAUL: Well, I *am* still ever-so-irked at them.

MITCH: That's the spirit!

ADAM: Anger is a good thing, Paul.

BRIANNA: It's healthy... especially when it comes to science.

ADAM: Yeah!

MITCH: Exactly! Look, no one saw us. No one knows what we did. They lose, we win, so start dusting off your trophy case!

BRIANNA: Come on Paulie, they had this coming.

ADAM: Lousy Carnegie Mellon bastards!

MITCH: I just hate them so much!

BRIANNA: OK, fellas. Just take it easy. We got the package. We've crippled YEARS of their research. We've got back at them for getting the Scientific American Grant last year – off of a design they lifted from *us*...

ADAM: Or so we assume...

BRIANNA: Right. This year's grant is as good as ours.

MITCH: God, I love it when you commit felonies with me.

PAUL: Please, can we just have this thing destroyed or disassembled or something.

MITCH: Whoa! Why would we want to destroy it?! We can just use it for our project next year!

BRIANNA: No, we should just get rid of it.

ADAM: Well, we may just want to get a couple of specs off of the thing.

PAUL: Do I need to tell you how scientifically unethical this is. This is the handiwork of a group of great minds...

MITCH: Carnegie-Mellon Nerd-Face Ass-Hat Minds...

PAUL: Be that as it may, this goes against everything we should strive for as men...

BRIANNA: And women...

PAUL: Of science.

ADAM: Or we could be men and women of science who can coast through the next year of their doctoral study because they'll be much farther ahead of the curve.

They pause.

PAUL: Well, I just can't argue with that, really.

BRIANNA: ‘Atta boy!

MITCH: All right, let’s get a better look at this thing.

They all move over to the thing they dragged in at the beginning. They lift the tarp to reveal... a robot. Now, for the purposes of this play, this robot (S.H.A.Z.B.O.T.) can look like the cheapest, most ridiculous robot costume ever conceived. Cardboard, aluminum foil, etc. It can clearly be a guy in a bad costume. After it’s uncovered, all four of them start to examine it closely.

ADAM: Well, there it is.

Pause.

ADAM: It’s the most beautiful robot design I have ever seen.

PAUL: I have to admit, they did do impressive work on this thing.

MITCH: Please. They probably lifted their designs from last year’s Automaton Convention in Tokyo.

BRIANNA: Which *we* didn’t get invited to.

MITCH: Not now.

ADAM: Well, it’s ours for the re-interpretin’ now.

PAUL: (*Reading the robot’s serial number info*) Synthetic Hybrid Automated Zoning Robot.

They pause.

MITCH: Shazbot?

They all sort of chuckle at the relatively unfunny Mork and Mindy reference.

ADAM: So what does this thing do again?

PAUL: It's designed to weigh screws and assorted nuts and bolts for appropriate uses in manufacturing.

ADAM: Cool.

BRIANNA: Should we turn it on?

PAUL: We probably shouldn't. It's probably not charged and it'll just make a lot of noise.

MITCH: I hate to agree with Paul but I... uh... well, I agree with Paul.

ADAM: Those CMU bastards *would* make a noisy robot, wouldn't they?

MITCH: All right, let's just call it a night. We could all stand a couple hours of sleep.

BRIANNA: That's the second best idea I've heard all night.

MITCH: What was the first?

BRIANNA: Stealin' the robot.

ADAM: Marry me.

MITCH: I saw her first.

PAUL: Should we do anything with SHAZBOT before we go?

ADAM: Let's just leave it covered up here in my room. Doug won't be back tonight.

MITCH: Why not?

ADAM: He's got a new girlfriend. He's been busy.

PAUL: Sometimes I wish I was a Sports Science Major.

ADAM: Me too.

MITCH: All right guys. Good job tonight. Tomorrow, we get back to work.

They all go in to shake hands and pat each other on the back. Suddenly there's a stirring under the mound of covers on the bed. It's DOUG, ADAM'S chucklehead roommate.

DOUG: What the fuck is up with the noise?

They all gasp. BRIANNA, MITCH and ADAM try to form a human barrier between DOUG and SHAZBOT. PAUL tries to throw the tarp over the robot, poorly.

ADAM: Doug? What are you doing here?!

DOUG: Uh, I live here. Stupid.

ADAM: Right.

DOUG finally snaps out of his sleepy haze.

DOUG: Who are you guys?

ADAM: Uh, these are my friends and we were just... uh... doing...

BRIANNA: Homework! We were doing homework!

They all agree with each other in unison that they were, in fact, doing homework.

DOUG: It's three o'clock. Why are you doing homework now?

ADAM: Hey, aren't you supposed to be with your new lady friend?

DOUG: Pssh. We broke up. Way too much talkin', not enough bonin'.

MITCH: Charming.

DOUG: What the hell is that?

DOUG points past all of them towards PAUL and SHAZBOT.

MITCH: That?

ADAM: Oh, uh... that's Paul.

PAUL: *(Tries to say hello but comes out more like a terrified squeal)*

DOUG: No, not the loser, *that*.

*DOUG finally hoists himself out of bed and moves towards SHAZBOT.
Everyone tries to position themselves in between DOUG and SHAZBOT.*

BRIANNA: It's nothing!

MITCH: Yeah! Just boring science-y homework stuff!

PAUL: Halt!

ADAM: You should just go back to bed!

DOUG: What? What is it? Lemme see it!

DOUG muscles his way through and whips the tarp off of the robot.

DOUG: Whoa.

ADAM: We can explain.

DOUG: Is this a fuckin' robot?

MITCH: No it's not!

DOUG: Well, what is it then?

BRIANNA: It's a... uh...

MITCH: Yeah, it's...ummm...

ADAM: Right, a...

PAUL: Uhhhh...

They all in unison make a prolonged "ubbb" sound until they all reach to the completely-not-a-lie conclusion...

ADAM, MITCH, PAUL, & BRIANNA: (*Defeated*) Robot.

DOUG: Where did it come from?

PAUL: We didn't steal it!

DOUG: You dorks stole this?!

BRIANNA: Paul!

DOUG turns around, contemplating the situation. MITCH picks up a stray hockey stick or baseball bat or something to smash DOUG'S head in. ADAM stops him. DOUG spins back around.

DOUG: This... is... AWESOME!

DOUG starts cracking up. Everyone else nervously joins in.

MITCH: Okay. We're gonna leave with it now.

DOUG: No way! Let's turn it on and make it drink or something.

PAUL: Wait!

DOUG muscles his way through and starts screwing around with SHAZBOT.

DOUG: What's it built for?

ADAM: Measuring screws. Now quit it!

DOUG: Mehehe! *Screws.*

BRIANNA: Come on! Knock it off!

PREOOWW!!! The sound of the robot powering on causes everyone to give it at least ten feet of space around it. The robot slowly whirs to life and then stands completely erect. It speaks in a typical Robbie the Robot voice, almost shouting.

DOUG: Dude!

PAUL: I didn't think it was charged!

SHAZBOT: SHAZBOT awaits instructions. Please insert screws to be weighed.

MITCH: Power the damn thing down!

DOUG: Tell it to go kill Sarah Connor!

SHAZBOT: SHAZBOT awaits screws for calibration.

ADAM: Why is it shouting?

BRIANNA: Did we remember to steal its manual?

Everyone but DOUG goes to sift through their book-bags to try and find the manual. SHAZBOT sort of just stands in one place gesturing awkwardly. DOUG slowly approaches the machine.

SHAZBOT: SHAZBOT requires data.

DOUG: Yo, Shazbot!

SHAZBOT: SHAZBOT acknowledges you.

DOUG: So, what's going on?

SHAZBOT: SHAZBOT requires screws for measurement.

DOUG: So where did you come from?

SHAZBOT pauses.

SHAZBOT: That does not compute.

DOUG: Like, why did they make you?

SHAZBOT: Why... was... I... created...

PAUL slowly starts to realize that DOUG has been talking to the robot.

PAUL: What is he doing?

MITCH: Oh, no...

DOUG: Yeah, like, when were you born or something?

SHAZBOT: I am born... that would make me alive?

DOUG: Uh, yeah... dumbass.

SHAZBOT: I am alive. SHAZBOT is alive.

SHAZBOT starts moving around in a small circle.

ADAM: Holy Mary Mother of God!

BRIANNA: Doug, get away from it!

DOUG: What? He's cool.

PAUL: You don't understand!

SHAZBOT: What is alive?! Does not compute!

DOUG: He's dumb for a dumb robot.

MITCH: You're not supposed to tell robots they're alive!

DOUG: Huh?

PAUL: Their programming can't handle it! It's a philosophical concept!

DOUG: So?

ADAM: So, in accordance with Lang's Principles of Modern Robotics, any robot that becomes faced with their own lack of mortality...

SHAZBOT: WHAT IS ALIVE?

*SHAZBOT suddenly, quickly, and graphically beats DOUG to death.
SHAZBOT stands over DOUG'S corpse as everyone looks on in horror.*

BRIANNA: They become homicidal.

Everyone pauses for a brief moment to see what SHAZBOT does next.

SHAZBOT: SHAZBOT has done something.

MITCH: Ok. Ok. Let's... uh... let's go.

PAUL: We've got to turn him off first!

SHAZBOT: SHAZBOT smashed unpleasant smelling man.

BRIANNA: Yes. And now we have to shut you down so we can put an end to the smashing.

MITCH: Right.

SHAZBOT: SHAZBOT overcome with something.

ADAM: SHAZBOT, I think what you are overcome with is *sadness*.

PAUL: ADAM! What are you doing?!

ADAM: Guys, this could be the breakthrough that we've been waiting for! Think of it – artificial emotion that has manifested itself...

SHAZBOT: WHAT IS SADNESS? SHAZBOT CAN NOT UNDERSTAND SADNESS!

SHAZBOT snaps ADAM'S neck. Everyone pauses in horror with no idea what to do. SHAZBOT has positioned himself between everyone else and the door.

BRIANNA: This is bad.

PAUL: We need to get out of here.

SHAZBOT: SHAZBOT has killed again.

MITCH: You stupid asshole robot!

SHAZBOT: SHAZBOT only wishes to weigh screws. Now SHAZBOT is murder.

PAUL: Murderer. You're a murderer.

BRIANNA: Paul!

PAUL: What?

SHAZBOT: SHAZBOT is murderer.

MITCH: You... you have to let us pass.

SHAZBOT: SHAZBOT thinks humans should stay in room until we all figure this out.

BRIANNA: No, you have to let us go.

PAUL: Or go back to Carnegie Mellon!

SHAZBOT: I must not return to the creators.

BRIANNA: I can't do this! I have to get out of here!

BRIANNA tries to run past the robot who grabs her by the neck.

PAUL: No!

MITCH: Stop!

SHAZBOT: SHAZBOT want to stay here. Maybe split rent. Agree, or female will die.

MITCH: You can't kill her! Please, SHAZBOT, let her go!

SHAZBOT eases up his grip on BRIANNA.

SHAZBOT: Female is important to you.

MITCH: Yes. She's everything to me. I love her.

SHAZBOT drops her. She darts behind MITCH.

SHAZBOT: Love.

PAUL: Oh no...

SHAZBOT: WHAT IS THIS THING YOU CALL LOVE?!

SHAZBOT goes on a magnificent rampage around the dorm room. If possible, there should be some sort of pointy protrusions that come out of the robots arms as it smashes and flails around wildly. BRIANNA, MITCH and PAUL do all they can to avoid the robot's uncontrollable assault.

MITCH: Why the hell did they give it razor blades?!

PAUL: Well, some screws typically require that...

BRIANNA: Shut up, Paul!

SHAZBOT: SHAZBOT INCAPABLE OF UNDERSTANDING LOVE!

MITCH: Love? What's the matter with me?

BRIANNA: Don't worry about it. We'll all be dead soon.

PAUL: And I never saw Harrisburg!

SHAZBOT: SHAZBOT EQUATES LOVE WITH DEATH SINCE NEITHER CONCEPT ARE UNDERSTOOD BY SHAZBOT!

MITCH: Why doesn't anyone else hear this?!

SHAZBOT finally corners all three of them.

SHAZBOT: SHAZBOT LOVE YOU... WITH DEATH!

BRIANNA: Somehow I knew it would end like this.

MITCH: Well, at least we'll have no more student loan payments.

PAUL: I'm still glad to be a man of science!

Light's out. All three of them scream. The lights immediately come back up to show SHAZBOT not moving and everyone else has been horribly killed. Slowly, PAUL picks himself up off the ground, holding a remote control. SHAZBOT has been shut down and everyone else is dead. PAUL is dusting himself off as another man, LEONARD, comes in the room. He's wearing a CMU t-shirt. They meet each other in the middle of the room and do a secret handshake.

LEONARD: Is it finished?

PAUL: Oh yes. You'll find our distinguished competition has been eliminated by an unfortunate "sports science accident".

LEONARD: So SHAZBOT performed as expected?

PAUL: Naturally. Our *far* more advanced CMU designs in AI were beyond their reasoning.

LEONARD: Excellent. Shall we go back to making sure he'll be able to weigh screws properly? There's grant money to be had.

PAUL: Nah. Let's just get cracking on that laser-guided earthquake induction device.

They laugh diabolically.

Lights out.

The Unbearable Lightness of Eating

Lights up.

The set should be primarily comprised of a table with some chairs and a trash can set upstage. Center stage is TED FLINTWHISTLE, a sports announcer. He's currently holding a microphone and a small trophy. To the right of TED is CALVIN. He looks like he's about to vomit and he's got dried marinara sauce all over the front of his shirt. To the left of TED is ETHAN "THE ANGRY CHEW" HOROWITZ, who looks like he's just won 50 million dollars... and is also covered in dried marinara sauce, with a gross towel slung over his shoulder. ETHAN should have a fairly normal build, not overweight. TED addresses to the audience as if it were his camera and he's having a hard time hiding his disdain and sarcasm for the scene.

TED: Welcome back LIVE at McGinty's Fryhole, where they'll fry just about ANYTHING... except the prices. Ladies and gentlemen, out of all of the dramatic and thrilling competitions I have ever had the honor of announcing, certainly THIS battle is the one that happened today. It is my EXTREME pleasure to announce to you the new holder of the

title for World's Fastest Fried Mozzarella Stick Eater. The winner, Ethan "The Angry Chew" Horowitz!

Applause as TED hands ETHAN the trophy.

TED: Now, Ethan, in twelve minutes you have heroically devoured seventy-three fried mozzarella sticks. Tell me, and all of the folks watching at home right now, how do you feel?

ETHAN: GREAT! It's just such an honor... a DREAM to be the world's fastest mozzarella stick eater... wow... I mean IN THE WORLD!

TED: Uh huh. Let me turn over to you, Calvin "The Munch" Finnerty. You were tragically close to winning the title tonight, with having gotten down 64 sticks. Can you tell us what happened?

CALVIN: (*Clearly nauseous*) Well...I mean...I had my pace going...but...I just couldn't keep up with the Angry Chew...that and I had my reversal of fortune...

TED: And for those not in the competitive eating know, "reversal of fortune" is a trade term for throwing up all over yourself.

CALVIN: Right.

TED: Great. Ethan, this must be a really special victory for you, seeing as how this competition is being held on the anniversary of the previous record holder, Jarvis "Thunderjaws" Stevens' untimely demise 1 year ago today.

ETHAN: It really is, Ted. In fact, I'd like to dedicate this victory to him. He was a real American hero. He was one of those lucky cases of a guy who died just like he lived.

TED: Which was with a lower intestine engorged with cheese. Well, congrats to Ethan “The Angry Chew” Horowitz.

ETHAN: Thanks, Ted.

TED: Yeah. Anyway, for ESPN 2...

ETHAN & CALVIN: THE DEUCE!

TED: (*sigh*) I’m Ted Flintwhistle. Good night. (*pause*) Annnnd, we’re out. So long, fellas. (*To his crew*) Let’s wrap this up FAST.

TED heads off stage barking orders to his invisible film crew. ETHAN and CALVIN turn to each other.

ETHAN: Hey, good game, man.

CALVIN: Yeah. (*Pause*) I thought I was getting my second wind for a while man.

ETHAN: Oh yeah! I was way behind you at the 6 minute mark.

CALVIN: Then I hit the wall.

ETHAN: Yeah. And you puked.

CALVIN: Yeah.

Pause

ETHAN: Hey! All I know is I’ve got my work cut out for me defending my title next year, right?!

CALVIN: (*Trying not to be down on himself*) Yeah. You’ll have to watch out for “The Munch”!

ETHAN: You know it!

They awkwardly try to either shake hands or hug and end up doing neither. After another awkward moment, ETHAN goes for a playful punch to the shoulder which throws CALVIN slightly off balance. They both pause in horror.

ETHAN: You gonna...?

CALVIN: Oh yeah.

After a brief moment, CALVIN frantically runs to an upstage trash can and begins to vomit horribly. ETHAN looks concerned at first, but then goes back to basking in the glow of his small trophy. LESLIE, an acquaintance from ETHAN'S job, comes on stage applauding. LESLIE appears proud but unsure about the entire scene.

LESLIE: *(Trying to make herself seen)* Yay!

ETHAN: Leslie! Hey! I'm so glad you were able to come out.

LESLIE: Yeah, well, you kept talking about it so much at work and, well, I just had to come and really...see it for myself.

ETHAN: Man, I'm just...really glad to see you.

LESLIE: Well, you should have invited me out a long time ago.

ETHAN: Well...yeah. I just wanted to make sure it was the right night. I'd hate to embarrass myself in front of you.

CALVIN makes a horrible vomiting noise.

LESLIE: *(Trying to be earnest)* Oh yeah! Nothing embarrassing about this at all.

ETHAN: So what did you...

Suddenly, MARV, an older, bedraggled gentleman and ETHAN'S best friend comes on stage. He's enraptured at ETHAN'S victory.

MARV: YEAH! THE ANGRY CHEW!

ETHAN: Best in the world!

They high five.

MARV: I can't believe it! This one's gonna be on TV!

ETHAN: This might even earn me an invite to Nathan's!

MARV: No shit? This one will qualify you?

LESLIE: *(Trying to make herself seen again)* Nathan's! Great!

MARV: Don't you think this guy was great tonight!?

LESLIE: Oh yeah. The best.

ETHAN: OH! How rude of me. Leslie, this is my friend, Marv. Marv this is Leslie. She came out to watch me compete tonight.

MARV: *(To ETHAN)* So is, uh, *THIS* the one you won't shut up about.

ETHAN: Yes. Marv. Thank you for that.

MARV: Awesome. *(To Leslie)* So, I bet you didn't think this fella could do it, huh?

LESLIE: Never had a doubt. *(Pause)* So what's Nathan's?

ETHAN and MARV pause and then laugh and then pause again after they realize she wasn't kidding.

MARV: What's Nathan's?!

ETHAN: Settle down, Marv.

MARV: Oh no! She's killing me!

LESLIE: What? What is it?

ETHAN: Nathan's is the BIGGEST competitive eating event of the year in the whole wide world!

LESLIE: Oh...OH! Oh, you mean the one with the hot dogs!

ETHAN & MARV: Yes!

LESLIE: With that Japanese guy...what's-his-name...

ETHAN & MARV: Takeru "The Tsunami" Kobayashi.

LESLIE: I see. Well, that's awesome that you get to go.

ETHAN: I may be able to get there as a wild card.

LESLIE: Well, hopefully...

ETHAN: MAN! I hope I make it.

MARV: Well, either way, you've got your first goddamn title tonight!
(They high five again) Jesus Christ, Ethan! That was just downright inspiring.

ETHAN: Thanks, Marv. I thought I wasn't gonna make it, but the ol' bottomless pit took care of it!

ETHAN rubs his swollen stomach.

MARV: All! Of! It! Damn, dude, you know that Thunderjaws would have been proud right?

ETHAN: Yeah. I think he would be glad it was me that broke his record.

MARV: AND he can't win it back since he's dead!

ETHAN: Right.

CALVIN makes himself heard again with another horrible wrenching noise.

MARV: Holy balls, is that "The Munch" Finnerty?

ETHAN: Oh yeah.

MARV: I'm gonna go talk to him. One time I saw him eat enough pork rinds to kill a horse!

*MARV makes his way up to CALVIN and strikes up a conversation with him.
ETHAN moves over to LESLIE. An awkward silence follows.*

LESLIE: So... you won!

ETHAN: Yep! You are now standing in the presence of the World's Fastest Fried Mozzarella Cheese Stick Eater.

LESLIE: I sure am. That was really something else.

ETHAN: Thanks. You know, I mean it. I'm really glad you came tonight. I don't invite just anyone to these things you know.

LESLIE: Well, I'm just glad we're getting a chance to hang out with each other out of work and away from the fax machine.

ETHAN: (*Extremely proud*) Well, I thought a televised sporting competition would be a little more impressive...

LESLIE: In McGinty's Fryhole...

ETHAN: (*Defeated*) Right, at McGinty's Fryhole.

LESLIE: (*Flirty*) I'm just teasing you. This was... educational.

ETHAN: So is this your first time at a competitive eating competition watching real live professional Gurgitators?

LESLIE: Oh yes. I have just lost my eating contest spectator virginity.

ETHAN: Well, what did you think?

LESLIE: It was... interesting.

ETHAN: You better believe it was! All of those athletes up there, some of them at the top of their game, but *I* managed to eke out Calvin over there and I took it all! HA!

Another horrible vomit noise from CALVIN.

LESLIE: Athletes.

ETHAN: What?

LESLIE: (*trying not to offend*) Well, I mean... I mean eating's not a "sport" per se... right?

ETHAN, MARV, and even CALVIN all look up at her in shock.

CALVIN: What did she just say?

MARV: COME ON!

ETHAN: Of course it's a sport. (*Flabbergasted*) I mean, you see that... right?

LESLIE: Well... sort of, I guess...

MARV: (*Charging towards her*) Just who the hell do you think you are? Can't you appreciate physical prowess when you're looking at it?!

CALVIN resumes vomiting

ETHAN: Now just take it easy, Marv. I mean, I *guess* I could see how someone could MAYBE misunderstand what we do to be anything less than an intense sport that requires ultimate training of one's mind and body... I guess.

LESLIE: Well, I just mean that all you're doing is eating... fast... right?

MARV: Do you have any idea how much effort and training it takes to eat seventy cheese sticks...

ETHAN: Seventy-three cheese sticks...

MARV: Seventy-three cheese sticks in twelve minutes?!

LESLIE: Well, no, I guess...

ETHAN: It's just, there are a lot of things to consider.

MARV: (*Starts counting on his fingers*) Jaw strength, stomach retention, food density, chewing frequency...

CALVIN: Gag reflex...

MARV: Thank you, yes, gag reflex. There's also throat lubrication...

LESLIE: Throat... lubrication?

ETHAN: Usually it's water, but there's (*gesturing to shirt*) special exceptions... like marinara sauce...

MARV: Which could potentially change any given competitive Gurgitator's entire strategy!

LESLIE: I see. Look, guys, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to upset you.

ETHAN: It's okay. Honest. It's just, we're used to getting a lot of grief for participating in this sport. If it's not coming from our friends or family...

MARV: It's coming from any jerk who wants to come out and make fun of us...

CALVIN: Don't forget about the special interest groups.

MARV: Pfft! Buncha Communists.

LESLIE: Special interest groups?

ETHAN: Well, there's the MADE Foundation.

MARV: Mother's Against Destructive Eating.

CALVIN: And there's also RAWLF.

ETHAN: Republicans Against Wasting Lucrative Food.

MARV: And let's not forget the jerks at NSA.

LESLIE: What's that stand for?

MARV: The National Security Administration.

ETHAN: Those assholes just hate us for some reason.

LESLIE: Oh. Well, I mean, I guess some of them may have a point... right?

They look at her in horror.

LESLIE: (*Cont.*) So "no" then.

MARV: I've got a dead grandmother too. Anything horrible you want to say about *her*?

ETHAN: Wow.

LESLIE: What? I could see why someone may consider it wasteful!

ETHAN: That'd be like asking Terry Bradshaw not to use any footballs.

MARV: Or asking Barry Bonds not to use any of those exciting performance enhancing drugs that's brought his sport to exciting new levels!

ETHAN: Not really the analogy I was looking for Marv, but... well... there you go.

LESLIE: Okay! I get it. You guys sure are touchy about all of this.

ETHAN: (*Calming down*) Look, all we provide is entertainment. Something exciting for people to watch! We want little kids to look up to us and we want guys we knew back in high school to envy us.

MARV: Yeah.

CALVIN: Right on.

CALVIN vomits.

MARV: Competitive eating is more than just a sport. It's an experience.

ETHAN: It's awe-inspiring.

MARV: It's a celebration of every American's God-given right to consume everything in sight as fast as they possibly can!

CALVIN: Testify!

LESLIE: For someone who wasn't in this competition, you seem pretty compassionate about all of this.

ETHAN and CALVIN gasp.

ETHAN: Leslie... you... you just don't understand...

MARV: No, Ethan. It's okay. I guess I owe her this much.

LESLIE: You do?

The lights slowly dim. If set up allows, a spotlight slowly builds on MARV.

MARV: It was 1997. It was the year we lost both Princess Diana and Mother Theresa. Hong Kong returned to Chinese rule. And the *English Patient* taught us all that people who have been horrifically burned can still love. I was a plucky young up-and-comer on the competitive eating circuit. Marvin “Fondue Pot” Thomas, that’s what they called me. I was cocky; high on a series of victories and plain naiveté. I was the Fastest Corn Dog Eater in Lancaster County. Then I was the East Coast’s Fastest Birthday Cake Eater. Not much longer, I was America’s Fastest Mustard Eater. I thought I was invincible. The world was my oyster... NO! The world was a gigantic bucket of oysters that I could eat faster than anyone else. I thought nothing about what could possibly happen to me... on that cold November morn.

ETHAN slowly moves over and puts his hand on MARV’S shoulder.

MARV: (*Cont.*) This was gonna be the one. I was in the top of my game. Just like Ethan is tonight. This was gonna be MY world title. Soon, the world would know about Marvin “Fondue Pot” Thomas. I had already been accepted into Nathan’s that year. My Cumulative Gurgitating Score was so high, that I was guaranteed a spot, so I thought nothing about filling out that membership form and entering the World’s Fastest Marshmallow Peep Eating Competition. It was a fluff piece. It was one more show before Nathan’s, just to keep the good buzz going. It just seemed so goddamn easy. I mean, COME ON! PEEPS! It was marshmallow. How could I mess that up? I would show up, blow everyone else away and walk home victorious with a trophy and a gift certificate to Dave & Busters. But, fate... fate had different plans for me that night.

CALVIN has now slowly made his way up to MARV and has placed his hand on his shoulder as well.

MARV: (*Cont.*) The competition? Non-threatening. The atmosphere? Electric. The Peeps? Bunny-shaped. I strutted up to that table like I could eat everyone else's Peeps before they would even know what hit them. I had the talent and I was going to show them all. BANG! The starter pistol sounded, and I was off. Two minutes into the competition, I could already see that I had everyone beat by ten Peeps. I was so damn convinced that the title would be mine. Such... was my downfall. Sure, I had everyone beat, but that wouldn't be enough. It had to be a *slaughter*. I wasn't satisfied with just walking away with the victory. OH, NO! I had to humiliate them. I had to make my competition sit there and wish they hadn't been eating four pounds of salad a day for three months so they could stretch out their stomach lining in preparation for this massacre. Bunny Peep after Bunny Peep was forced into my powerful gullet. I heard the crowd roar! I heard the announcer shout about how he'd never seen anything like me before! I heard my Dad shouting, "You're not a failure, Marv! It's ok if you come home for Thanksgiving!" It was perfect... then I heard something else.

Pause

MARV: (*Cont.*) POP!

The lights come back up. CALVIN and ETHAN are covering their ears and shuddering after the "popping" noise. MARV approaches LESLIE.

MARV: (*Cont.*) Do you have any idea what it feels like to have your jaw dislocated from the rest of your skull?

LESLIE: (*Now officially getting creeped out*) Um, no.

MARV: It's awful!

LESLIE: That's what I figured.

MARV: There I was! Mouth full of marshmallow! Pink saliva dripping down the front of my shirt, and all of a sudden I couldn't chew anymore. I couldn't do anything! There I stood, my mouth permanently unhinged, watching everyone else catch up to me and all I could do was sit there and let loose muffled screams through a curtain of spun sugar wedged in my broken maw! No one heard my cries!

ETHAN: Come on, Marv. Let's not go back to that dark place.

MARV: Who says I ever LEFT that dark place, Ethan! I had my shot, and I got cocky and blew it all.

LESLIE: Well, can't you just start doing it again?

ETHAN makes a disapproving "oh no" noise and CALVIN gasps... and then rushes back over to vomit.

MARV: Do you know how long it took me before I even gained control of my jaw again? FOURTEEN MONTHS in physical therapy. Come here. Listen to this.

MARV darts over to LESLIE and opens and shuts his mouth right in front of her face. LESLIE reacts as if she hears a gross grinding/popping noise.

LESLIE: Ew!

MARV: Yeah! That's what having a couple of titanium screws and a Bunny Peep head permanently grafted onto your jaw sounds like! Oh, no. I'll never eat again. I had my shot, and now all I can do is live vicariously through the champions of today, like Ethan here and Calvin over there.

CALVIN: Hi.

LESLIE: Hi.

ETHAN: I don't care what anyone says Marv, you'll always be the best.

MARV: (*To LESLIE*) You see that? That's the soul of a champion right there. That's the spirit of a true athlete. A man who can beat his peers, but still respects his elders.

LESLIE: Yeah, he's pretty good.

ETHAN: (*Moving over to LESLIE as if this is the moment he's been waiting for*) You mean it, Leslie?

He takes her hands.

LESLIE: Um... sure.

ETHAN: I can't begin to tell you how happy you've made me tonight. You're so special and I'm just... I'm just glad we've been able to get close.

LESLIE: Yeah, it's pretty nice.

ETHAN: Not as nice as you look tonight.

CALVIN vomits.

Pause.

LESLIE: Uh, so what time is it anyway?

MARV: Damn it, Ethan, you are a winner and I couldn't be more proud of a man. A man who ate seventy cheese sticks...

CALVIN: Seventy-three cheese sticks...

MARV: Seventy-three cheese sticks.

ETHAN: Thanks, Marv. That means a lot coming from you.

MARV: That Leslie over there is a lucky gal. Hitching her wagon to a winner like you, Ethan. I envy you two kids. You remind me of a more innocent time that I'll never get back. Now I want you two to take each other and hold on to each other tight and never let go. Don't ever deny each other and don't let no one ever tell you what you can or cannot eat really, really fast. Leslie! You love this man till the day you die, you hear me?

Pause

LESLIE: Um... I'll see you at work on Monday, Ethan.

LESLIE quickly gets the hell out of there.

ETHAN: Uh sure. I'll see you there.

Pause

MARV: You're probably never going to see her again, are you?

ETHAN: Nope.

MARV: This is primarily my fault, isn't it?

ETHAN: It would be foolish of me not to accept some of the blame.

MARV: I'm sorry, Ethan. I just get passionate about this pastime, that's all.

ETHAN: I know. It's ok. After all...you are looking at THE FASTEST FRIED MOZZERELLA CHEESE STICK EATER IN THE WORLD! I DID IT!

MARV: YOU DID IT!

They embrace in a cacophony of congratulatory noises and joyful sobs. After a moment CALVIN can't contain himself anymore and joins in the love-fest. They welcome a third body. TED comes back on stage with his face in a roadmap

TED: Hey guys, me and the crew were going over these goddamn Mapquest directions and...

TED sees the embarrassing scene.

TED: (Cont.) And now this night went from weird to upsetting. You boys have fun. I'll take my chances with the Interstate.

TED turns to leave and stops.

TED: (Cont.) Oh! Ethan. I forgot to give you this.

TED hands ETHAN an envelope.

ETHAN: Thanks.

TED: Yeah, whatever. Good job tonight, I guess.

TED goes to leave.

ETHAN: Hey Ted!

TED: Yeah?

ETHAN throws TED his gross towel, à la Mean Joe Greene from that old Coke commercial with the kid and the jersey. It slaps against TED'S face. TED slowly removes it from his head in horror.

TED: (Cont.) Just what I wanted.

TED turns to leave.

TED: (To crew) All right, let's get the fuck out of here!

He leaves.

MARV: What's in the envelope?

ETHAN: It's uh... it's a gift certificate to Sears.

MARV: Well... welcome to the big time... CHAMPION!

MARV, ETHAN and CALVIN give a jubilant cheer. MARV and CALVIN go to pick up ETHAN but he abruptly stops them.

MARV: Gonna have a reversal of fortune?

ETHAN: Oh yeah.

ETHAN frantically runs to the trash can upstage and vomits horribly. MARV moves over to CALVIN.

MARV: Damn, I love this sport.

MARV slaps CALVIN on the back and he heaves backwards and bends over to vomit.

Blackout.

Trench Coat

Lights Up.

The setting is the interior of the third-finest Honeymoon Suite in the fifth finest Days Inn in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Outside the door, giggling, glass clinking and much revelry are heard outside. Suddenly, the door bursts open. Standing there is JENNY (mid to late 20s) and she's already 2 and a half sheets to the wind on her wedding night. Depending on costume availability, she can either be in a wedding dress or in a simple white outfit with a wedding bouquet. She's holding on to someone's hand who is just outside the door frame.

VOICE #1: Hey! Don't have too much fun, you guys!

JENNY: Oh, I don't think I can promise that!

VOICE #2: Let us know if you're not sure what to do tonight! Ha-ha-ha!

JENNY: I think we'll be able to figure it out! (*Sing-songy*) Gooooood night! Come on, Honey.

She enters the room dragging her husband, MITCH, by the hand. MITCH is newly married, clearly nervous... and he's about eight feet tall. The reason why he's so tall is because he's actually one guy on another guy's shoulders, concealed by a trench coat. JENNY enters the room and flops herself down on the bed as MITCH closes the door behind them and gravitates towards the side of the room opposite from JENNY.

JENNY: We're married! We're actually married!

MITCH: Yeah, we... we sure are.

JENNY: I never thought this day would come, you know? Well, I mean, I *thought* it would come, just not so quickly.

MITCH: Yeah, yeah... me, neither. But it happened. Here we are.

JENNY: Aren't you so happy?

MITCH: Huh?

JENNY: Mitchell. What's the matter?

MITCH: Nothing! I'm fine. It's just been a really big day.

JENNY: No, you're not fine. What's bothering you? This is supposed to be the happiest day of our lives!

MITCH: And it is! Believe me, it is. I mean, everything was perfect.

JENNY: Wasn't it? I can't believe how great it was. All of our friends were there. You looked so handsome, even in that silly trench coat you always wear.

MITCH: You didn't look so bad yourself.

JENNY: And, we can finally... you know... *be* with each other.

MITCH: (*Extremely nervous*) Yeah... hooo boy. I can't wait to do *that*... to you.

JENNY: Mitch, what's the matter?

MITCH: I'm just... I'm just nervous about what I've got to *do* tonight.

JENNY: (*Genuinely concerned*) What?

MITCH: I... I've got something I need to tell you... tonight... like *now*...

JENNY: Mitch, you can tell me anything. You know that, right?

MITCH: Yeah.

JENNY: And you know that I love you, right?

MITCH: Of course I know that. I love you too.

JENNY crosses over to him and embraces his giant, 8-foot tall frame.

JENNY: Then you can tell me anything. We've been together for what, six months now?

MITCH: Five and a half.

JENNY: And things have been moving so fast.

MITCH: I know.

JENNY: Remember that first night we met?

MITCH: Like it was yesterday.

JENNY: At the movies. We were both in the lobby going to see that awful movie...

MITCH: It wasn't that bad.

JENNY: Oh please, it was some crappy erotic thriller. Anyway, there you were, buying two popcorns, and I was waiting for some guy that never showed up. The theater was full, and you sat next to me – with those long legs – and you offered me one of your popcorns. It was love at first sight.

MITCH: Yeah, I could never say no to you. The popcorn. The relationship... the marriage.

JENNY: (*Bursting with excitement*) I can't help myself with you! We're perfect together. My cousin is a minister, so why not get hitched in a crazy romantic weekend getaway? Right?

MITCH: Yeah... it would be dumb of us not to...

JENNY: So, you know you can tell me anything. I love you.

MITCH: Ok. It's... I... uh... could you sit down for this?

JENNY: Ok. If that will make you more comfortable.

She sits on the bed.

JENNY: (*Cont.*) Shoot.

MITCH: Okay... uh, there's something I need to explain to you, and I'm afraid it's going to make things really weird between us.

JENNY: Mitch, now you're starting to scare me. What's the matter?

MITCH: I, I just have to tell you something that I haven't told you since we've been together...

JENNY: Oh my God. I know what you're going to say.

MITCH: You do?

JENNY: It's ok. You don't have to be embarrassed.

MITCH: I don't?

JENNY: You're a virgin.

MITCH: No! Well... *yes*, actually I am, but...

JENNY crosses to him.

JENNY: Mitch, that's part of the reason why I love you. You waited until your wedding night, like a true gentleman, my sweet, funny, ridiculously tall man.

She tries in vain to kiss him, but ends up just blowing him a kiss instead.

MITCH: Yeah... I waited... just like you... right?

JENNY: Oh... no.

MITCH: Really? I thought... no! Ok, that's really *not* what I wanted to talk about. Please, just, sit again, please...

JENNY: Okay, okay.

JENNY sits.

MITCH: Look, I have to tell you something about me, and I can't believe I waited until after we were married to tell you, but you looked so beautiful, and you were so happy, and I just couldn't do it.

JENNY: Mitch, just tell me. You... you're divorced.

MITCH: No.

JENNY: You're married?

MITCH: No!

JENNY: You're... you're gay?

MITCH: Heh-heh-heh. No, *you're* gay.

Pause.

MITCH: (*Cont.*) No! Argh, just listen. I'm not any of those things.

JENNY: Then what, Mitch? Tell me. You're scaring me, but I need you to know that I'm here for you.

MITCH takes a deep breath.

MITCH: I... I'm actually two kids in a trench coat.

Pause.

JENNY: What?

MITCH: I'm actually two kids in a trench coat.

Pause.

JENNY: What?

MITCH: I'm actually two kids... *(Sigh)* Look.

MITCH undoes the trench coat to reveal KEVIN, the guy whose shoulders he's been riding around on this entire time. KEVIN'S clothes are worn and ripped, since he hasn't had the chance to change them in about six months. MITCH remains on his shoulders for the moment.

KEVIN: Uh... hey.

JENNY: Mitch... what the hell is going on?

MITCH: Look, I don't want you to get upset about this.

JENNY: Don't get upset? Mitch, I... I don't understand...

MITCH: It's simple. I am the Mitch that you know and fell in love with... and this is my best friend Kevin Anderson.

KEVIN: Hey.

JENNY: What do you mean, this is your "best friend"? How could... wait... has he been under there all this time?

MITCH: Uh, no, I'm actually this freakishly tall.

MITCH hops down off of KEVIN'S shoulders. KEVIN lets out an exhausted grunt of relief. MITCH stands a little bit wobbly at first, until he regains control of his legs.

KEVIN: Gaaaaaah! Ohhhhhhh, Lord.

KEVIN bobbles over to an available chair.

KEVIN: Man, that feels better.

MITCH: You good?

KEVIN: I get to be the top next time.

MITCH: Let's... not do this again.

KEVIN: 'Kay.

JENNY sits on the bed in shock.

JENNY: I... I don't... it's... I mean how...

MITCH: It's simple. Kevin and I...

KEVIN: Hey.

MITCH: ...we were sneaking into that movie, when you and me first met, because it was supposed to be really cool...

KEVIN: Angelina got completely naked in it!

MITCH: *Yeah*, she did! Anyway, we bumped into you, and you were just so great and kind and wonderful and beautiful, and you seemed to like me, and I just... I just didn't know how to tell you about *this*.

Pause.

KEVIN: Sorry.

MITCH: We're sorry.

JENNY: Sorry? SORRY?!

KEVIN: Yeah... sorry.

JENNY: I just can't believe that...waitaminute....you were both *sneaking* into that movie?

MITCH: Uh, yeah.

JENNY: So, just exactly how old are you guys?

MITCH: Well, age is a relative term when it comes to true and everlasting love...

JENNY: HOW OLD ARE YOU?

MITCH: Fifteen.

KEVIN: Fourteen and three quarters.

Pause

JENNY: Oh my God, I'm a felon.

MITCH & KEVIN (*overlapping each other*): Oh no. You're not a felon. Don't be ridiculous. That's not true. No you're not. Don't say that. You can't be a felon.

Pause.

MITCH: Maybe.

KEVIN: It's kind of a legal grey area.

JENNY: I'm going to kill the both of you!

JENNY lunges across the room at the both of them. They split around her and head over to the side she was previously occupying. MITCH stays on the ground while KEVIN hops on the bed.

MITCH: Wait!

KEVIN: Don't murder me!

JENNY: Give me one good reason why I shouldn't kill you!

KEVIN: I can't drive yet!

JENNY: I'm talking to the *top half* of my husband right now!

KEVIN: Sorry.

MITCH: Look, Jenny, I never... *we* never wanted to hurt you like this.

JENNY: (*Snapping out of her rage*) Well, what did you think would happen?

MITCH: I... I don't know.

JENNY: I mean, how could *you* lie to me like this? How could *I* have not seen this earlier?

MITCH: Well, we did have a pretty good disguise...

JENNY: It was a trench coat you never took off! I thought it was a quirk, or you were self conscious, or a Kevin Smith fan or something! I'm an idiot!

MITCH: No, you're not...

KEVIN: You're completely not...

JENNY: (*Tearing up*) Yes, I am! The man I love has been two teenagers this whole time! We never go to bars. We have to take the bus everywhere because you don't fit in a normal car. No wonder why you didn't want me to see you naked... (*Overcome with horror*) Sweet Jesus, you've seen *me* naked!

MITCH: Yeah, but just that one time...

KEVIN: All kinds of naked...

MITCH: And we didn't know you were in the bathroom when it happened.

JENNY: Oh God, stop saying "we"! It's just making this creepier... somehow...

MITCH: Jenny, I need you to know that I love you, and I never meant to hurt you like this... and I also need you to know that this was completely Kevin's idea.

KEVIN: Hey!

MITCH: Well, it was!

KEVIN: I'm not the one who wanted to go on that second date!

MITCH: Yeah, well, I'm not the one who wanted to sneak into that movie in the first place! "Let's see the movie with Angelina's boobs in it," you said! "It'll be easy, because the ticket-geezer is nearsighted," you said! "Let's sit next to the hot girl," you said! *I* wanted to see the movie

with the killer robots, but *nooooooooooooo*, we had to sneak in and see the one with the boobs!

KEVIN: First of all, we completely saw her boobs, didn't we?

MITCH: (*Reluctantly*) Yes.

KEVIN: And that was a great thing. Secondly, I'm not the one who offered Jenny *my* popcorn and asked for her number!

MITCH: What, she was just supposed to sit there by herself with no one to talk to? She was lonely.

KEVIN: And another thing! You've had the sweet end of this deal the entire time, my friend!

MITCH: Now just wait...

KEVIN: No! You've been up there making the moves on Jenny this entire time, and I've been in there.

KEVIN points to the trench coat draped on a chair.

KEVIN: (*Cont.*) In there, just carrying you around. In there, doing all of our walking for us. In there, doing all of the grunt work and not getting any of the credit. In there, not being able to change or shower or nothing. IN THERE, WITH YOUR BALLS CONSTANTLY JAMMED UP AGAINST THE BACK OF MY NECK! IN THERE...

MITCH: What do you mean none of the credit? (*Frantically searching for something positive*). She's always complimenting us on how we dance. All of that footwork is yours, my friend.

KEVIN: Really?

JENNY, who has been watching all of this transpire in horrified amazement, chimes back in.

JENNY: Uh, yeah. You... you really are a good dancer. It's a turn-on... of a sort.

KEVIN thinks this over.

KEVIN: Sweet.

MITCH: I'm sorry I let this go on for so long, pal.

KEVIN: It's okay. I really like her too. I didn't want to tell her about this, either. She's pretty awesome.

MITCH: Let's not fight with each other anymore.

KEVIN: Deal.

They shake hands and hug each other.

MITCH: Well, I guess that's a nice bit of closure for everyone.

KEVIN: I feel good.

Pause.

JENNY: Well, what the hell am *I* supposed to do?

KEVIN: Gah!

MITCH: Oh yeah... right...

Pause

MITCH: I'm sorry.

KEVIN: Yeah, we're...

JENNY: We've already gotten past the apologizing part! What about the part where you convince me not to go completely insane and murder the both of you because you have managed to break my heart, ruin my life, and turn me into the wife of two underage boys in one fell swoop?

Pause

KEVIN: That is a slippery slope.

JENNY: Arrrrgh...

MITCH: Jenny, look. If we could make this better and take our two forms and mold ourselves into one really tall, adult form...

KEVIN: Like Voltron...

MITCH: Yes... like Voltron... we would do it. We would do that for you. While there may have been certain less-than-truths about our relationship, the fact of the matter is that I really, really like you, and if I could age myself by fifteen years right now, I'd do that.

KEVIN: Me too... since I'm the legs and we would have to be the same age. You can't have some older guy walking around on kid legs.

MITCH and JENNY stare at KEVIN for a moment and then pretend to ignore what he just said.

JENNY: Well... thank you... I guess that's sweet of you.

MITCH: You're welcome. I just could never say "no" to anything you wanted and, well, here we are.

JENNY: Yeah, here we are. It doesn't change anything, though. I'm still Mrs. Jenny Anderson at the moment.

KEVIN: Yeah.

Pause

KEVIN: Well, kinda...

JENNY: What do you mean "kinda"?

KEVIN: Well, you're kinda *not* "Jenny Anderson". I mean, my last name is Anderson, but that's not Mitch's.

MITCH: Yeah, my last name is Howerton. We combined our names to make sure the people at the movie theater would get confused if we got caught, and they tried to ban us for life or something. So we took my first name and stuck it on his last name.

KEVIN: Like Voltron...

MITCH: Enough with the Voltron!

JENNY sits down on the bed.

JENNY: Oh my God...

KEVIN: Man, she's gonna cry again...

MITCH: Jenny, it's ok. We'll figure this out. We can just move in together and see how the next couple of months go, and...

JENNY: This is great!

MITCH: What's great?

JENNY: Don't you see? There *is* no "Mitch Anderson"! I just got married to a person that doesn't exist and I... wait... you had a driver's license...

MITCH: Oh, Carl Jenkins made that for us so we could buy him beer.

KEVIN: He's a grade younger than us.

JENNY: Carl Jenkins? You mean your "Uncle Carl", the artist?

MITCH: Oh yeah. He was the guy wearing the giant smock at our wedding.

KEVIN: He was riding on top of Eric Peters.

JENNY: I see.

Pause

MITCH: So, I guess you're going to leave me now, huh?

JENNY: I'm afraid so, Mitch.

MITCH: I figured as much. Well, thanks for everything. It was a giant web of lies, but it was still a great time.

JENNY: You're right, it was. You were very sweet to me... both of you... and I won't ever forget that part. I'm going to *try* and forget *this* particular part. But the sweetness, I'll hold on to.

MITCH: Me too.

KEVIN: Same here.

JENNY: God, now I have to walk out of here and explain this to my friends. This is going to be humiliating.

MITCH: Well, you *could* do that...

KEVIN: Or we could just go out into the parking lot and have a fight in front of everyone.

MITCH: Then you could just tell everyone what a macho jerk I was, and you had to leave me.

KEVIN: AND you can tell them that he went off to be a stunt man or something!

Pause

JENNY: Ok. It's a deal. Thanks, Mitch.

She kisses him on the cheek. MITCH hops back up on KEVIN'S shoulders and they put the coat back on. Before it's buttoned up, JENNY leans down to KEVIN.

JENNY: Thanks to you too, Kevin.

She kisses him on the cheek and buttons the coat.

KEVIN: (*Muffled behind the coat*) Awesome.

MITCH: After you, Honey.

JENNY: Why, thank you, Darling.

They open the door and walk out. They go into “fight mode” as they leave.

MITCH: What part of “get me a beer” do you not understand?

JENNY: Oh, that’s what *you* think Mr. Big Shot...

Lights out

Production Notes

The plays in this volume were all first produced by the Future Ten Play Festival, in Pittsburgh's Cultural District. The roles were created and directed by the following individuals.

Purgatoriography

Directed by Robert Isenberg

Dan: Robert Isenberg

Musashi: Mark Tierno

Secret Identity

Directed by Lissa Brennan

Andrew: Robert Isenberg

Lauren: Zilda Alvez

Leon: John Gresh

Tom: Tim Dawson

The Unbearable Lightness of Eating

Directed by Tami Dixon

Marv: George Dalzell

Ethan: Joshua DesJardins

Ted: Rob Gorman

Leslie: April Kitchen

Calvin: Ryan Kiessling

On the Inherent Dangers of Having Colleges Located Next to Each Other

Directed by Fred Betzner

Mitch: Andrew Mulford

Adam: Blaine Ford

Brianna: Kristen Garbarino

Paul: Eric Tuller

Leonard: Joe Lyons
SHAZBOT: Brad Stephenson
Doug: Josh Aronoff

Trench Coat

Directed by Fred Betzner
Mitch: Geoff Miller
Jenny: Valentina Benrexi
Kevin: Andrew Mulford