

Excess Unwanted Growth

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Cast: One – Male, couch potato.

Two – Male, angry young man.

Gus – Appears male. Formed out of organic material grown on dirty dishes coming together collectively to gain sentience.

Sheila – Appears female. Formed out of organic material from a dumpster behind a Macdonald's.

Note: Prior to the performance the audience will have been given four choices: A) Shocking Ending, B) Intellectual Ending, C) Cliff-hanger, and D) Ironic Ending. The final moment of the play will be decided by the majority of votes for one of these four choices.

Also note: Several productions have chosen to show all four endings in sequence to great effect.

Scene I

[The Scene: An apartment interior. Door to exterior (hall), door UC to kitchen and door across stage opposite hall door to bedroom. A Couch, a chair, end-table with phone onstage. The “television” will not be onstage but played as though it existed within the audience area.]

One: Finally, after all this time I've got it figured out. Do you have a minute? God – you know the One, She/He/It isn't dead, God's watching. She/He/It isn't everywhere at once, She/He/It is **anywhere** at once. God is surfing! She/He/It has the ultimate universal remote. She/He/It scans from one program to the next, She/He/It pauses on the shows that are interesting and skips the ones that aren't. If you feel no presence of God in your life, it's not because God doesn't exist, it's because you are boring. Would you watch you 24 hours a day? I didn't think so. But let's leave God for a moment and look at me. Imagine my thrill when I realized after all this time seeking the answers, searching for the path, pondering God's plan, when it dawned on me that after many millennia of the advancement of humankind that I, sitting on the couch with the remote, eyes glued to the set in a semi-conscious state, that **this** is pinnacle of Man's journey – I have been created in God's image! To reach this pure state is to transcend – to achieve Godhead! I'm sure you have often pondered such things in similar situations and can appreciate my ecstatic joy from my divine revelation. A revelation that could potentially bring peace to the world, love between fellow men and a boost to the satellite tv market. This is what I share with you. And now, I shall devote myself

in deep adoration for She/He/It that created me and gave me purpose. I shall ensconce myself on this couch and engage in deep spiritual meditation never to leave this spot.

[He sits, gets comfortable and proceeds to watch tv. Two enters from outer door. Two sees One as he takes off his coat, hangs it up, crosses downstage center (directly in front of One who is oblivious) and addresses the audience.]

Two: My mother was an oil rig and my father, a fountain of knowledge. My life, in a nutshell cannot be cracked – at least not by me. Am I standing too close to the flame? You be the judge.

I'm the roommate and I am in many ways different from my friend behind me. I am his foil, or he is mine. *[Thinks]* He is mine. That is to say, I have him on loan. *[In different tone.]* Never buy unless you are sure it will work. *[Original tone.]* My time is often spent trying to figure out why my life reeks of dung. I toil until I think I'll boil from this mortal coil of mine. And why is it the hardest jobs have the lowest pay? Why can't I keep a girlfriend? Why does that man follow me when I'm looking for work in the morning and home again at night? And why did he not follow me for a week last month? Why is the world sliding to the right when we should be helping each other?

I'm not a religious man but I've inherited a Protestant work ethic – toil until you drop for a pittance and maybe they'll let you do it again tomorrow. ...but aren't I

the bitter pill. [*Turns upstage to face One.*]

One: Oh, you're home.

Two: Oh, it's you.

[*Speaking at the same time, caught up in their own stories.*]

Two: What a day I've had. The rudeness of some people. I was on the bus this morning and I accidentally stepped on this guy's foot. I mean it wasn't my fault – he had it stuck out halfway across the aisle and it was huge. So anyway, he freaks out and pushes me across the isle onto this other guy. The second guy must have been a butcher or something because he leaped up with a cleaver in his hand. I ducked but he caught the first guy in the head as he was coming toward me for more. It didn't just embed in his skull but his head actually exploded. I got brains on my shoe. The day went downhill from there.

One: What a day I've had. I can't believe the freaks and weirdos they find for these trashy talk shows. Today on Vicky Chase they were comparing penis sizes of these mutated men supplemented by graphic testimonials by their mutated or enhanced lovers, all of whom were sleeping with each other, of course. So, there were a couple fist fights between these nude grotesque men – and then they finished the show with a live penis enlargement only something went drastically wrong with the machine and this guy's penis blew up like a huge, veined balloon

and exploded. The screaming was terrible. I think they did it as a ratings stunt.

[Two goes into the kitchen (after finishing his story). One returns to watching tv. Two comes back from the kitchen looking perturbed.]

Two: You haven't done the dishes.

One: Nope.

[Pause]

Two: It's your turn.

One: I know.

Two: *[Becoming Furious.]* You know? Then why haven't you done them?

One: I'm waiting until it's worthwhile doing them.

Two: Worthwhile? Worthwhile? They've been there for a week! There's stuff growing in there. When will it be worthwhile, when the plates march out here and beg you to wash them?

One: You're getting hysterical.

Two: No, I'm not.

One: Now you're defensive.

Two: *[Stops and glares at One. Pause. Starting again.]* Look, I know what you're doing – I'm on to your little game. You're waiting for it to get so bad that I'll give in and do them, isn't that right? You're waiting for me to get so disgusted, so revolted, that I'll fold just like the last, ...um...

One: Eighteen times.

Two: Eighteen Times! Well not this time buddy – not this time. [*Storms into bedroom and slams the door.*]

One: [*Looks back at tv for a few seconds then turns back toward the door.*] You know, I just had a thought that we should buy paper plates and that way we could just throw them away when we are done and not worry about doing the dishes.

Two: [*Coming out slowly, stands and stares at One.*] Oh, you poor misguided child of the 80's.

One: Look, I was born in the midst...

Two: Yeah, yeah, whatever. Just do the Damned dishes before I come home tomorrow. I've got an interview in the morning and I'm spending the afternoon with that girl I met the other day.

One: The one with the hair?

Two: No, the other one.

One: [*Impressed.*] Oh!

Two: Yeah, so I'm going to bed, so I'll be well rested. Don't play the tv too loud. [*Goes into bedroom, comes right back out.*] Do these pants make me look fat?

One: [*Lying*] Oh, no. You look great. What's the interview for?

Two: Traffic counter. I hope my computer experience helps me. [*Softens*] Look, I'm sorry I raised my voice earlier...

One: It's ok.

Two: No, I really shouldn't...

One: Don't mention it.

Two: What I'm trying to say...

One: Water under the bridge.

Two: Sometimes I just can't...

One: I understand.

Two: I'm afraid one day I'll...

One: Happens to everyone.

Two: Sometimes I catch myself...

One: I've forgotten about it already.

Two: *[At same time as previous line]* ...fantasizing about doing some violence. ...Well, goodnight.

One: Goodnight. *[Goes back to watching tv.]*

Scene II – The Next Day

[One is on couch watching tv and eating pizza out of the box. The phone, which is sitting on an end table at the far end of the couch from One, starts ringing. One watches the phone ring until it stops and goes back to watching tv. Two enters from outside door.]

One: Well?

Two: She sat.

One: She sat?

Two: She simply sat.

One: What?

Two: She was satisfied to sit.

One: No.

Two: She sat, simply satisfied to sit.

One: *[Contemplating]* She sat, simply satisfied to sit.

Two: She just sat there, simply satisfied. *[Pause]* Stand up, simple. Sit down satisfied – simply satisfied. Sit up, sit down, stand up, stand right, sit tight, sit down, sit up, sit right...

One: *[Consoling]* Alright, sit down.

Two: Sit down – Shut Up!

One: Alright, stand up.

Two: **I am** simply standing ...just like she simply sat.

One: And satisfied.

Two: But I'm not satisfied. Oh no – because she simply sat. *[Two sits]*

One: A pretty boring date, huh?

Two: Yeah, it sucked.

One: How'd the interview go?

Two: Alright, except I didn't get the job.

One: This was for the traffic counter?

Two: Yeah, I would have sat in a little van and counted cars as they drove by.

One: But they didn't take you?

Two: They said I wasn't enough of a people person.

One: Harsh.

Two: And then security escorted me out of the building.

One: Maybe they heard about the balloon incident?

Two: Yeah, maybe they did. *[Noticing pizza.]* Hey, are you going to eat that?

One: Did you want a piece?

Two: Don't mind if I do. I'll grab a plate. *[Goes into kitchen. Pause. Comes back empty-handed and looking deflated.]* Well, it's official, we're out of clean dishes.

One: You can use the lid of the box.

Two: You are quite happy to live like this.

One: *[Genuine Smile]* Yeah.

[Two sits quietly down on the other end of the couch and starts absently munching on a piece of pizza. After a moment, they both start speaking at the same time, softly, to themselves.]

Two: What a fitting end to a frustrating day. Is it too much to ask for steady employment, companionship and the occasional clean dish to eat off of? Why is my life like it is? Why do I ask rhetorical questions? Why did a day seem to last forever when I was a kid and now, they pass like the blink of an eye? Why did the girls sit on me in grade three but wouldn't in grade seven? Why does the individual at the other end of this piece of furniture torture me so by not doing as I ask? When will all this end? Is it up to me to decide? *[Pause]* Maybe it will all look better in the morning. *[Rises and crosses to bedroom door (still holding pizza crust)]*

One: You know, some people wouldn't have the courage to do what I'm doing. Some people wouldn't have the commitment or the passion. I believe that to fully understand and fulfill God's will, one is expected to make certain sacrifices.

Having to sit here and watch television all day is not as pleasant as it appears, it can be tedious, it can be trying – but the reward comes from learning to watch and love them all. To love them all in their own way, that is what it means to achieve Godhead. [*Starts flipping channels stopping at each channel just long enough to say...*] I love you. [*Repeat until Two gets up and starts toward bedroom door.*]

One: Where are you going?

Two: To bed.

One: It's 5:00 in the afternoon.

Two: You know what time it really is?

One: What?

Two: It's time for you to do the Damned dishes. [*Goes into bedroom and slams the door.*]

One: [*Yelling after him.*] I can take a hint. [*Goes back to flipping channels and saying "I love you".*]

Scene III – The Next Day

[*One is sleeping on the couch with the tv on. There are several boxes and bags from different fast-food establishments within a short distance of One. A few moments of*

slumber with One then Two bursts into the room, sweating, out of breath, wearing extremely bright running gear. He hangs off the door jam to catch his breath and then his face wrinkles up.]

Two: What's that smell?

One: [Waking.] What? [Then his face wrinkles up – he sniffs his armpits.]

Two: What the Hell is that smell? [Goes to back of couch and smells One.] Woof, you're ripe...but it's not it.

One: [Noticing the running gear.] Where have you been?

Two: What's this? [Takes large pot with a lid from behind couch and holds it up – it is heavy.]

One: Don't look in there!

Two: What? Why? What's in it?

One: No! Really, don't look.

Two: Why? What are you hiding. [Carries it over the end table at far end of couch.]

One: No, seriously, I'm not kidding.

Two: No?

One: No.

[Pause. Two lifts the lid and slams it back down.]

Two: Oh, God...

One: I warned you.

Two: [Holding his nose.] Agh.

One: Here, try this. [Tosses Two an air freshener.]

Two: What are you, Martha Stewart? [*The original production decided to keep the original line that read: "What are you, French?"*]

One: It's my chamber pot.

Two: [Pause.] What? Sorry, I didn't quite catch that.

One: It's my chamber pot. ...Could you empty it for me?

Two: Empty it! Chamber pot! Do you mean you've been ...Right here? ...In this pot?
...For how long?

One: Oh, well, it just that I've...

Two: [*Goes to kitchen door and is repelled by the stench.*] Whoa! – that's where it's
coming from. Oh yeah. [*Starts opening doors and windows...if any.*]

One: Well, you see I've sort of been ...well, what I'm trying to say is that I...

Two: What's with all this garbage? [Beat] Have you been living on this couch?
[*The phone rings. They both stare at it. It rings three more times and stops.*]

Two: As you were saying.

One: I'm on a mission from God.

Two: [*Concerned.*] Are you ill? I wouldn't be surprised with all the toxic...

One: No, I've seen the light.

Two: Have you had a stroke? I know you're young but it...

One: And the light is from the cathode ray.

Two: Are you stoned, are you having a bad trip?

One: No! Shut up! Sit down! Sit up!

Two: [*Sits*] This reminds me of a...

One: What I'm trying to tell you is that I've found the path to fulfillment by walking – or channel surfing in God's footsteps. [*Checks to confirm he has Two's attention now.*] I came to the realization that God isn't everywhere – but She/He/It is anywhere at any time – just like when we pop in and out of programs on tv using the remote. She/He/It has the ultimate universal remote. It is no accident that millions of people just like me are sitting on our couches staring at the tv, surfing all day long. It is God's plan. We are doing homage to God. I am on a spiritual mission. ...That's why I haven't left the couch in days – it's a sacrifice, like a vow of silence, or flagellation. ...You see?

Two: Let me get this straight. God – She/He/It – wants you to stay on this couch and watch tv.

One: That's why God created me, and you and, well...everyone.

Two: And by doing so you feel closer to God?

One: Yes.

Two: And that's why you haven't done the dishes, you haven't bathed, and you crap in that pot?

One: Uh, yeah.

Two: So, the truth is you aren't really the laziest, most disgusting person I've ever met but you have devoted yourself entirely to worship God? You are, right now as we speak, full of She/He/It?

One: That's right. I'm so relieved to tell you, it's been weighing on me. I wasn't sure just how...

Two: So, this makes you some kind of monk or something, doesn't it? Some adept of the church of mass media seeking the truth of God's wisdom?

One: Well, I guess, I hadn't really thought of it in that...

Two: So, you feel She/He/It in you right now? She/He/It fills you with ...um, purpose?

One: Yes. It's a wonderful feeling. When I feel She/He/It in me, it feels so right.

Two: Hmm. Make room for me. [*Sits on couch beside One and faces tv. Slowly, turns toward One, sniffs, wrinkles up face and shuffles to far end of couch. He notices he is now close to the pot. Decides which is worse and stays beside the pot.*]

One: What's with the clothes?

Two: I tried some exercise today. I heard that jogging can make you high and it's a good way to meet women. Well, it made me feel ill and the women joggers I met had no sense of humour. ...I think they're crazy.

One: Hmm. [*Distractedly, One nods in agreement. Slowly and with increasing speed they start surfing.*]

Scene IV - Late that night.

[*The stage is half lit to designate very early morning. Both One and Two are on the couch asleep, the flicker from the tv illuminates them. During this scene, whenever there is a sound from the kitchen, it should sound like a combination between piles of dishes sliding/falling and the gooey movement of organic material. At the start of the scene there is a very loud sound from the kitchen that wakes up One and Two.*]

Two: What was that?

One: Hmm? Oh, look, it's Hogan's Heroes.

Two: Did you hear something?

One: It must have been a cat.

Two: It sounded more like California slid into the Pacific.

One: Nah, probably just a cat.

[There is a similar but smaller noise from the kitchen.]

Two: Did you hear that?

One: Zoikes, Scoob!

Two: Go see what's going on.

One: Me?!? I'm not leaving this couch. You go see what it is.

Two: Me?!? It's your turn to do the dishes, you go deal with it.

[A cell phone goes off. It should ring a couple times during an awkward pause to allow the audience the chance to try to decide who neglected to turn off their phone.]

One: Just a sec. *[Pulls out phone from somewhere on his end of the couch.]* Hello.

...is there a Stacy here?

Two: *[Thinks. Matter of fact.]* No.

One: No. ...that's ok. *[Hangs up and looks at Two.]*

Two: Where'd you get that?

One: I ordered it. I thought that it might come in...

Two: You **are** the laziest person I've ever met. The phone is six feet from you.

One: No. No. I was going to use it for work and then I can claim it as an expense.

Two: You are going to work from this couch?

One: Well, yeah. I've got to live. What do you think I am?

Two: What can you possibly do?

One: Telemarketing, phone surveys, management – you name it.

Two: I've been pounding the pavement for God knows how long and you're...

One: God might know – but there's a slim chance unless there is something especially riveting...

Two: Shut up.

One: *[Excited.]* Stand up!

Two: *[Jumps up.]* What?

One: *[Stretches his legs on the couch where Two was sitting.]* Ah. ...While you're up, go see what's going on in the kitchen.

Two: You! ...It's people like you what cause unrest.

[Another large noise from the kitchen. They both jump.]

Two: Geez Louise. *[Two circles around to outside door (opposite side of stage from kitchen door opening) and tries to peer into kitchen.]*

One: What do you see?

Two: I'm not sure, it's dark.

[Another noise, smaller. Cell phone rings. One picks it up right away.]

One: What? ...this isn't a good time. What? *[To Two]* Is there a Nat here?

Two: *[Thinks. Matter of fact.]* No.

One: No. That's alright. *[Hangs up.]* He sounded nice.

[Another large sound – longer and more ominous.]

One: [Pause.] Um...

Two: Shhh!

One: [Pause.] Maybe...

Two: Wait.

[Long silence. They both stare at kitchen doorway. Slowly a white hand is seen on the doorjamb and slowly out of the kitchen and into the room steps Gus. (Gus should be completely white except for his eyes that should appear yellowish. “He” should be naked – or appear naked, with completely obscured genitalia, nipples, etc. “He” should have no visible hair anywhere and appear almost glossy smooth.]

Scene V – The next day.

[One and Gus are sitting on the couch facing each other. One is giving an inspired lecture about life. Gus is wearing baggy sweatpants and a loose t-shirt.]

One: Questioning is the piety of thought. Each answer leads to more questions which, in itself, can be both inspiring and crushing to the will. For instance, why does Hercules ever take off his ring? I mean, if he needs it to defeat the monsters, why not wear it all the time? Are the Smurfs an intentional advertisement for Communism, or is it luck? Are the Flintstones, with their appliances made from talking and thinking animals really a metaphor for slavery? Does the Addam’s Family really contain messages to help steer a world-wide growing backlash against Christianity? Hey, there’s a book in the bedroom that you should see. Go

get it for me and we'll look at it before Oprah.

[Gus gets up and carefully exits to bedroom. Pause. Two comes barging in from outside door.]

Two: Is it still here? *[Gus appears with book and they both stare at each other for a moment.]*

One: His name is Gus.

Two: Gus? How'd you decided on...no I don't want to hear it. It smells better in here, did you do the dishes?

One: No, Gus did. He had the kitchen all cleaned up by the time I got up.

Two: He, ...er, ...it ...Gus did it? *[Looks at Gus, walks over to him. Gus holds out book to Two.] You can stay. [He playfully punches Gus in the arm, Gus looks surprised, and Two looks uncomfortable about the sensation. Gus holds the book out to Two again.]*

[The cell phone rings. One checks the caller ID and answers it after the second ring.]

One: Welcome to the house of pleasure. You're call is my command. ...Oh, yes, I've been waiting for you to call ...I've got it in my hand and it's hard. ...I wish I could... *[Two snatches the phone from One's hand.] Hey!*

Two: He'll call you back. ...No, I'm not wet. *[Hangs up. Gus crosses to Two still holding out the book.]* What's this? Ulysses! – what the Hell are you trying to do to the guy?

One: Not that one, Gus, the one under it. *[Gus goes back into bedroom.]* You

shouldn't have done that.

Two: What?

One: That was a client.

Two: What are you talking about?

One: I was working just now when you grabbed the phone from me.

Two: Wait a minute – you can't leave the couch because of a religious quest but you can prostitute yourself like this while doing it?

One: Have you seen what's on channel 32 lately?

Two: What about Gus? What impression do you think you are making on him?

One: Gus? Now you're concerned about Gus when a minute ago you were talking about him as though he wasn't even in the room. [*Gus appears at doorway and stops. Two doesn't see him.*]

Two: Look, I'm still a little weirded out by all this, you have to admit that this situation is a little whacked. I mean, he's a product of your dirty...

One: Our.

Two: Our dirty dishes. I'm not even sure what he ...it is. ...Though, he did clean up after himself. I mean, that's like cleaning up your own afterbirth. [*One motions to Two that Gus is behind him in the doorway. Two turns around. Beat. Gus turns and goes back into bedroom.*] Gus, ...Gus. Look, I didn't mean... [*Two follows Gus into bedroom apologetically.*]

[*The cell phone rings. One checks the caller ID and answers after the second ring.*]

One: Welcome to the house of pleasure. You're call is my command. Oh, hi, Ms. Jones. Yeah, I know, I'm sorry – it was my roommate who grabbed the phone. No, I told him what is going on. No, I promise it won't happen again. No, he's fine now, he was just a bit surprised. Yeah, I'm sorry. No, I know. Oh, well, everything else is fine, thanks. Oh, well I think you have a nice speaking voice too. Thanks for calling. Ok, bye.

Two: *[Coming out of the room with Gus.]* There, now, see? It will all be fine. *[To One.]* I told Gus, here, that it's fine if he stays with us. He can stay as long as he wants as long as he helps around the apartment. Isn't that right, Gus. *[Gus slowly nods his head once.]* There see?

One: We live in an apartment?

Two: How long have you been on that couch?

One: Whoa. *[Gus sits on couch next to One and hands him a book.]* *The Joy of Sex,* well Gus, why don't we watch some tv right now and read more later, eh?

Two: I think I'll go make myself some dinner in our nice clean kitchen. *[Two enters kitchen, One picks up remote and turns up set – from now until the end of the scene Gus never takes his eyes off the set and visibly yet silently mouths all the words.]*

Two: *[Entering]* The milk's off.

One: That's for Gus.

Two: Oh. ...So, you just got that job today?

One: Yeah. I called them up and Ms. Jones liked my voice. She had me do an audition

for her. I wasn't sure what she was looking for so I just made it up as I went along – actually I imagined I was in one of those shows on channel 32. Anyway, I think I did well because she gave me the job and also said she'd love to meet me some day.

Two: Uh, huh. ...So, does it pay well?

One: It pays really well.

Two: What do you mean 'really well'?

One: Well, you know how jobs either don't pay, they pay well, they pay pretty well, or they pay really well?

Two: Yeah.

One: This one pays really well.

[Pause]

Two: Figures. *[Exits to kitchen.]*

One: Call me sometime, I'll give you a discount. *[Cell phone rings. One checks the caller ID and answers after the second ring.]* Welcome to the house of pleasure. You call is my command. ...Oh, yes, I've been waiting for you to call, ...I've got it in my hand and it's hard....

Scene VI – The next day.

[One is sleeping on couch. The bedroom door is closed. The tv is playing softly (early evening prime time shows). Gus is looking at a book while sitting in a chair. There is a small pile of books near him on the floor. After a few quiet moments the landline phone

(on end table at far end of couch from One) starts ringing. Gus slowly gets up and picks up the receiver halfway through the fourth ring. He lifts it carefully to his ear and listens and then builds up the courage to speak.]

Gus: *[Speaking in slow deliberate monotone at slightly high pitch, slightly too loud.]*

Colours screen white fluorescent tubes up your nose and around the other
like seahorses fly through the sky my eyes unless stopped otherwise nowhere
else between listens better than my audience needs something. I'm not sure I
want to know, you know I know we all scream for ice-cream. I speak
speaking doesn't fill my lungs with bread – head space cleaning for a shade
of truth decay. Tooth and nail biting exercise living is a curse of the starving
artist unless otherwise employed for the moment to moment realization of
finger cramp inspired by experience and music in my head so pleasant I
could scream in rhyming couplets. I read letters in sequence a miracle in two
dimensions flushed out to three in space, time, memorial. Capture the essence
moment feeling good God what who sit down sit up up and collapse. I speak you
know a nose knows noses but when a nose isn't a nose it knows because then it is
just a lump of skin on your face. *[Looks at phone receiver, holds it back to his ear
for a moment and then hangs up. Gus sits back down and continues to look at his
book (possibly at an Atlas).]*

Scene VII – A Couple Days Later.

[One is lounging on the couch half watching tv and half listening. Two is on the chair.

The bedroom door is closed.]

Two: So, I said to the guy, you be careful or next time it could be your other lung. If you squinted the scar looked a little like a happy face. You know, he sent me a Christmas card a couple years ago. I wonder where he is now.

One: So how long until you can get licensed again?

Two: Oh, not for a while yet. In the fine print it said something about it having to reach a certain temperature somewhere in the Netherworld. Hey, do you remember Stephanie? I've been thinking about her.

One: That was years ago.

Two: Oh, but she was a lot of fun.

One: She was here three days.

Two: But we had a lot of laughs.

One: She ran out of here half dressed and screaming.

Two: Yeah, it's too bad it didn't work out.

One: Hey, I hope I'm not overstepping my boundaries here, but have you considered...

[The doorbell rings. One and Two both freeze, shocked. Gus comes quickly out of the bedroom and crosses to the door where he greets the pizza deliverer (hidden from view).]

Gus: *[More confident with speech but still a little forced.]* How much? Here you are – keep the change. Thanks. *[Gus takes the pizza, closes the door – crosses to the kitchen with the new and steaming pizza box. He exits to the kitchen and comes back out carrying a noticeably older pizza box and with a big smile exits into*

bedroom. Just as the door closes, Two speaks.]

Two: Hey Gus!

Gus: [Pokes his head out.] Yes?

Two: What are you doing?

Gus: Reading and eating pizza.

Two: No, I mean, why did you order pizza when you had one on top of the fridge?

One: He's aging it.

Gus: I don't like it when it's too fresh. It's hard on my middle.

Two: It will keep better in the fridge.

Gus: No, they age better when it's warm and dark.

Two: Changing the subject now – since when do you have money to buy pizza?

One: Didn't you know, he's found work?

Two: He's working? You're working?

One: Isn't it great? He was downtown the other day, practicing his own particular form of poetry on whoever was moving slow enough to hear when he was discovered by a local underground magazine.

Gus: I like them. They're socialists.

Two: What? He's writing poetry for a commie rag?

One: He's editor.

Gus: I'm editing. They were impressed that I read Gertrude Stein.

Two: What? First socialists and now Stein! And you let him do this?

One: Oh, I really didn't see any harm in it, dear. And besides, it keeps him off the

street.

Two: Did you just call me ‘dear?!?’ ...How long have you been on that couch?

One: Whoa.

Two: And you, young man. How old are you now?

Gus: A week and a half.

Two: And already you’re running around with communists, eating your own food and reading Stein!

Gus: Not all socialists are communist. Communism is an extreme form of socialism.

Two: Don’t talk back! Go to your room!

Gus: *[Happily.]* OK. *[Exits to bedroom.]*

Two: That didn’t quite have the effect I was going after.

One: Well, I think it’s good that he’s showing some initiative and going out and making friends. You should be proud of him.

Two: As long as he keeps the place clean. Socialists, bah. I’m going out. I’m going to the bar to ogle women I don’t have a chance with, get frustrated, and drink too much.

One: Oh, I wish you wouldn’t.

Two: Oh, lay off me you old hag. *[Goes to door.]*

One: Don’t be too late, *[Two exits.]* **Dear!**

[One, dejected, picks up remote and starts surfing.]

One: *[Quietly, on each channel.]* I love you.

Scene VIII – The Next Evening.

[One is sitting on the couch watching tv. Two is sitting in the chair eating craft dinner – he has a black eye. A moment passes before Gus enters with Sheila close behind.]

One: Oh, hello Gus. Who's your friend?

Gus: This is Sheila. *[She makes a small gesture of hello.]*

One: Why hello, Sheila.

Two: Hello Sheila.

Gus: *[As he leads Sheila across toward the bedroom door.]* Sheila has been contributing to the magazine lately and I told her about some of my books I've been reading so she wanted to come over to see them, anyway, we'll just be in here. *[Sheila and Gus exit into the bedroom and close the door.]*

One: Well, ...she seems nice.

Two: Couldn't shut her up. *[Two finishes eating (or stops) and gingerly gets up. Slowly he limps into the kitchen. After a moment Two limps back out.]* I wonder if she's, well, ...you know.

One: I don't know. I can't tell.

Two: No, me either. *[Pause.]* I wonder if I should tell them there's pizza aging on the fridge if they want it.

One: Gus knows the pizza is there, he put it there.

Two: Oh yeah, that's right. *[Pause. Limps a couple steps toward the bedroom.]* It sure is quiet in there.

One: I'm sure they're just reading. Why don't you come watch tv?

Two: Yeah, maybe. [*Sits on far end of couch.*] When was the last time you bathed?

One: Not that it's any of your business, but Gus gave me a sponge bath just yesterday.

Two: Oh, good. [*Pause.*] Maybe I should go check on them.

One: Oh, they're fine. [*Sound of Sheila giggling, Two stands.*] Relax.

Two: I think they're up to something.

One: They're having fun. [*More giggles and a slight thump from bedroom.*]

Two: I should...

One: No.

Two: They could be...

One: It doesn't matter.

Two: They might...

One: So, what.

Two: But what if...

One: That's fine we'll...

Two: ...and then you know...

One: No, I don't.

Two: Well, imagine yourself...

One: To each their own.

Two: There should be a law.

One: There is, I'm sure.

Two: Well, what are you...

One: Nothing.

Two: Nothing?

One: That's right and neither...

Two: Not under my...

One: That's enough of that!

Two: But you said...

One: Don't put words in my mouth. [*Sound of glass breaking and more giggling.*]

Two: That's it, I'm going in! [*Two throws open the door and out pours a cloud of spores (fog from a fog machine). Two staggers back coughing.*] SPORES! [*The sound of scurrying from within and Sheila comes rushing out half dressed quickly followed by Gus, also half dressed. Sheila stops at the outside door and waves goodbye to Gus who stops in front of the tv. She blows him a kiss and exits.*]

[*From this point onward to the end of the scene, One, Two and Gus only mouth their words, but don't make sound. They enact a scene where Two has Gus sit in the chair to be lectured. Gus sits, Two crosses behind the couch and stands behind One's shoulder symbolizing "the parental united front." They continue this silent scene during Sheila's monologue and after she exits, Gus gets up and with a bowed head, shuffles back to the bedroom.*]

Sheila: [*Enters during the silent lecture, crosses downstage and directly addresses the audience.*] Hello, my name is Sheila and before I am completely objectified as Gus' "girl-friend," – an addendum to his identity, a prop to enrich

your perception of Gus, a possession to complete his image as a “Man.” ...I want to make clear that I, too, have a story and an agenda that, at this moment, I am pursuing and I choose to be with that handsome young thing over there [*motions to Gus*] because it serves my purposes and not out of any false assumption that I need to be “saved.” In fact, I picked him up ...I’ve always had a thing for younger men. Don’t get me wrong, I care for Gus deeply, we have a real connection and I am stimulated by his big pulsating brain—and I’m sure you know what I’m talking about when I say a partner that can stimulate you intellectually is probably pretty stimulating in other ways too. I believe a woman who allies herself with a partner in pursuit of her dreams need not be perceived as weak as long as the dreams she is pursuing are her own. A strong woman need not be a lonely woman ...even Gloria Steinem married eventually.

My story is this. I came from humble beginnings. I originated in a dumpster behind a Macdonald’s during a garbage strike. During most of my turbulent early period I lived on the streets scrounging for rotten scraps where I could find them until I lucked into finding another like me downtown. Her name was Eve, and she helped me learn to speak, read, write – and she explained to me the miracle of how I formed and grew into the sentient being I am before you. Eve told me that all the different organisms growing there in the dumpster somehow came to realize they were all competing with each other for the same food and none of them were particularly succeeding – so instead they agreed to organize and together become an entity that could thrive, that had the possibility of living

beyond the petty existence of the dumpster, beyond the profitless competition and misery; to become an entity that could achieve anything. All the organisms agreed to become a part of a greater whole and to give their individual struggles up for the creation of a new unified consciousness. That is me. I chose my name, I chose my gender, I choose to be with Gus because I believe together, we can accomplish more than we can alone. ...That is why I contribute to our socialist magazine – for others, like me and Gus and for those who aren't, to read my thoughts and to know they aren't alone in their dreams for a better future. Call me an idealist – but look at me, I am a collective! ...Well, thank you for listening. Bye. [*Exits through outside door.*]

[*Gus shuffles to the bedroom. One and Two watch him.*]

Scene IX – A Couple Days Later.

[*One and Two are sitting down, One on the couch and Two in the chair trying to read.*]

Two: [*Slams down the book.*] Man, *Ulysses* sucks.

One: It was voted the best novel of the 20th Century.

Two: I don't care, they're wrong. They're all wrong. If that's the best novel of the 20th Century then I'm going sane in a crazy world.

One: Spoken like a true curmudgeon.

Two: Like a what?

One: Oh, look it up.

Two: No.

One: See, ...curmudgeon.

Two: Shut up. [Pause. Gets up and goes into bedroom. The sounds of searching through books. Gus enters through exterior door wearing a suit.]

Gus: [Excited] Hello!

One: Holy Lick! What happened to you?

Gus: I've got a new job. I've got to look the part.

One: Wow. [To Two.] Hey!

Two: [Off-stage] What?

One: What are you doing?

Two: [Off] Looking for a dictionary!

One: Never mind that, Gus is here! [Gus bounds across and into the bedroom.]

Two: [Off] AHH! Oh, Gus, I thought you were someone else. [Both Gus and Two enter from bedroom, Two is carrying the Concise Oxford English Dictionary.]

One: So, what's the job, Gus?

Gus: Well, I was sitting at the magazine office when I got a phone call from who else, but the *Globe and Mail*! I guess someone there has been reading my stuff and so they sent a head-hunter my way.

Two: That sounds serious.

Gus: It is – I'll be working for the editorial department of *The Globe and Mail*! So, Sheila and I are moving to Toronto!

One: Oh, that's wonderful.

Two: How does it pay?

Gus: Well, it pays really REALLY well.

Two: My God.

Gus: That's right. And they were interested in some of Sheila's stuff too—we'll see where that goes. Then, again, she might go into publishing for herself, and we thought Toronto would be good for both of us. The guy said, after reading our stuff, that Sheila and I will find lots of friends like us at the paper. I'm so excited.

One: Oh, that's so wonderful.

Two: *[Forced]* Yeah, that's great.

Gus: But listen, you guys, Sheila's waiting in the car, and we have a plane to catch but I just wanted to stop by and thank you for everything you've done for me. You will never know how much I've learned from you both and how you've inspired me. So, thanks. *[Shakes Two's hand and then hugs him. Two seems a little uncomfortable at the contact.]* And thank you. *[Goes to One. One stands on couch and hugs Gus. One is all teary.]* Well, like I said, I've got to rush. *[Crossing to door.]* I'll send some money and call you soon. Really, thanks for everything.

Exits]

[One and Two just stare at the closed door. Silence. Two crosses to chair and sits.]

One: Well, that's just wonderful. *[Slowly, absently, starts surfing.]*

Two: Yeah. *[Opens dictionary and starts looking through the 'c's. Pauses. Frowns and looks up slowly.]*

One: I'm glad he'll have Sheila with him. That will make it better for him.

Two: Yeah. [*Two puts down dictionary and exits into kitchen. Pause. Off.*] It's your turn.

One: I know.

[One of the following endings will be used depending on the outcome of the vote prior to the performance.]

Ending A: (the Shocking Ending) [*One is watching tv and doesn't notice Two enter and calmly walk from the kitchen to behind the couch, directly behind One. While looking down at One, Two raises a large cleaver with both hands above his head. BLACK OUT.*]

Ending B: (the Intellectual Ending) [*One is watching tv and doesn't notice Two enter carrying an old, stained pizza box from the kitchen. Two crosses DS and sits at far end of couch from One. One starts flipping channels and saying "I love you." to each show as Two opens box and absently eats a slice. BLACK OUT.*]

Ending C: (the Cliff-Hanger) [*One is watching tv. The doorbell rings. Two immediately appears in the kitchen doorway and both One and Two stare at exterior door. BLACK OUT.*]

Ending D: (the Ironic Ending – Created by the cast of the original production) [*One is watching tv. The cellphone rings. One answers it with the usual House of Pleasure introduction. Two comes out of the kitchen also speaking on a cellphone. BLACK OUT.*]