

the harvey project

by, dave ulrich



a play about life, the universe, and harveys

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A stage play about life, the universe, and Harveys

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The world premiere of The Harvey Project took place at the Openstage Theatre & Company in Fort Collins, CO.

It was directed by Duane Sawyer and featured the following cast and crew:

CAST

(In order of appearance)

Con Woodall as Guy Villeville, Robert Whistlesleeve, Gufa

Rob Seligmann as Harvey Treehorn

Kurt Brighton as Harvey Smith

Matthew Stalker as God

Judith Allen as Mother of God, Ge

Tamara Todres as Beth Chesthill, Computer, Kate

Andrew Quirk as Claude, Charles Seawind, Dr. Smith

Elizabeth Nodich as Summer Westwater

Ken Benda as Thad Gardendale, Dr. Cash, Gary

Erin Quinn as Gina, Florence Heatherwood, Jenni

Steve Butler as John Topping, Writer

Nikki Gibbs as April

PRODUCTION STAFF

Duane Sawyer (Director, Graphic Artist), Judith Allen (Producing Artistic Director), Rob Seligmann (Sound Designer/Sound Engineer), Jan Sawyer (Properties Designer), Adam Short (Board Operator), Toni Alexander (Lighting Designer/Master Electrician), Nikki Gibbs (Assistant Director, Stage Manager), Brandon Short (Assistant Board Operator)

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ACT ONE

(Lights up on GUY, a trial lawyer seated at a table, making a note on a pad of paper.)

(He takes one last look at the notepad and tosses it on the table.)

(He stands and then nods to an invisible judge.)

(Finally he turns and faces the jury/audience.)

(HARVEY TREEHORN, an unusually normal fellow, sits upstage.)

GUY VILLEVILLE: You've heard the prosecution. Well, heck, I'd say you've even seen the prosecution. Jumping up and down. Hemmm'ing and hawww'ing. Gosh dingly dang. They were downright hopping mad! Wouldn't you say?

(A light comes up on HARVEY SMITH, a writer at his desk, typing on a laptop computer.)

(HARVEY SMITH is not unattractive and has an approachable look about him.)

(On one side of him a television hangs overhead, cheating out dramatically to face the audience.)

HARVEY SMITH: Guy Villeville smiles at the audience with charm.

(GUY flashes a charming smile.)

(HARVEY SMITH types along with the dialogue.)

GUY VILLEVILLE: The problem that has presented itself, was the adamant fervor with which everyone — and I do mean everyone — seemed to believe my client...

HARVEY SMITH: Guy whips his head toward Harvey Treehorn.

GUY VILLEVILLE: (whipping his head toward HARVEY TREEHORN) Mr. Treehorn... was guilty. (slowly bringing his head back to the audience) Who needed facts? Or certainty? Someone needed to pay, and my client was most definitely convenient. I'm sure we can all agree on that: the convenience of Harvey Treehorn. (tosses up his hands) Oh we heard all about it. Disturbing the peace, conspiracy, treason and countless lesser charges. Hundreds of witnesses... etcetera. Etcetera. Etcetera. But what baffles me, is how my client's behavior has constituted a crime? It seems he was assumed guilty before this trial even began! Through the periscope of the television, the radio, and blurbs in the local rag — all attacking his character. (coming forward) So what? My client is unemployed. He is uninsured. And he is slightly disabled from chasing dreams that have left him unqualified for adulthood. Does that make him deserve this hotbed of criticism? Oh, we all know what he does. You've seen the

picture... (produces a headshot of HARVEY TREEHORN from the table) He's a playwright known to act from time to time. Yes, he is. Go ahead, scrunch up your faces, make disapproving sounds. We all do. I do. Look closely. Do you see the naiveté? He simply doesn't realize that the theatre has gone the way of the buffalo. Oh, people still play shuffleboard, drink Tab, listen to Three Dog Night. They do, and they can still exist in society — just as Harvey Treehorn can. But I propose this: (walking to HARVEY TREEHORN and handing him the headshot) Harvey here must stay sharp on his own. As a playwright and actor, he cannot have work just because he wants work. So, let's just suppose that what he said was true. What if he really was reading a monologue he had written. Why not? He had an audience. Do you have any idea how hard it is to get an audience in this town? Do you? (he twirls around, when he comes back he fires:) "Ingratitude, more strong than Traitor's arms, quite vanquished him: then burst his Mighty heart!" (warmly) Harvey Treehorn had an audience. For what? He did not know. He performed his words anyway. It is, after all, his self-professed calling. Must we lay blame upon the ignobly ignorant, when their intentions are noble? (he shrugs) You tell me. If I had an audience, I'd probably end up naked. That is my natural instinct. Would I have to go to jail for this? I should think not. What would you do, with an audience? Well, let's ponder that for a moment. (takes a short beat) Harvey here writes lines for plays. Strange in this day, but it is his way. Does that make him responsible for the riot that ensued? I... think... not. Well, pardon my finger wagging... (he wags his finger at them) ... but it is more than just one life in your hands. It is for stages across the globe that I ask you to release Harvey Treehorn. Let him back into his wilderness of denial. For all of the Peter Pans and Pipi Longstockings who wish to entertain us. (he freezes as if he has something else to say, but then abruptly finishes) That is all.

HARVEY SMITH: He starts to go again, and stops. He walks toward the audience.

GUY VILLEVILLE: (starts, stops, then to the audience) But before I go, ask yourself... "What would I do, if I had the audience?"

(There is a knocking on a door.)

(GUY exits and HARVEY TREEHORN falls into a slumped over "waiting" position.)

(Lights up on GOD, a college-aged student, who is sitting at another desk, spinning a pen-like object in his hand, thinking.)

[This is the third of three worlds: There is the world of GOD, the world of HARVEY SMITH, and world of HARVEY TREEHORN. The three worlds are connected in descending order, but never cross. The world of focus should be lit the hottest. Though HARVEY TREEHORN is more puppet-like and falls to "sleep" like a marionette when not in use — HARVEY SMITH is a normal human being, thus suffering free-will when left unattended.]

(Again, there is another knocking on a door.)

GOD: Not now.

(The knocking comes again.)

GOD (cont'd): Not now!

MOTHER OF GOD: God, please open the door. You've been saying that all day.

(Another knock.)

GOD: (irritated) Fine. Come in. (into the pen computer) Index and summarize.

(MOTHER OF GOD enters with a plate of cookies.)

MOTHER OF GOD: I'm sorry to interrupt, God. But I haven't seen you in days. (beat) I...

(She crosses over and sets the plate of cookies on GOD's desk.)

MOTHER OF GOD (cont'd): I brought cookies.

GOD: My time is running out, Mother. Sorry to be short with you, but I'm trying to avoid distraction.

MOTHER OF GOD: I know, I know. I just wanted to see how it's coming.

GOD: It's coming along fine but I need more of a build. Harvey is in a lull.

MOTHER OF GOD: I know it's frightening, honey. I remember the night before my Harvey Project was due. I nearly...

GOD: Mother, please. Chit chat isn't going to help.

MOTHER OF GOD: You really are stuck then?

GOD: Yes! I'm beginning to wonder why I even bothered with Harvey Treehorn.

(HARVEY TREEHORN looks up confused.)

MOTHER OF GOD: Harvey Treehorn? You changed his name?

GOD: No.

MOTHER OF GOD: Have they changed the rules of the assignment?

GOD: (annoyed) No, he's a different Harvey.

(HARVEY TREEHORN slumps over again.)

MOTHER OF GOD: A different Harvey? Does Ge know you're doing this?

GOD: I'm not breaking rules, I'm going above and beyond the assignment.

MOTHER OF GOD: Well don't lose focus just for some extra thing... you don't want to spend another semester redoing it.

GOD: Why would you say that? I won't fail. I know what I'm doing.

MOTHER OF GOD: Of course. I wasn't suggesting that...

GOD: Please Mother. You don't understand. Now I thank you for the support... and the cookies. But, good night.

MOTHER OF GOD: (keeping composure) Well, good night, God. My little genius. And say hello to Harvey — both of them, I guess. Harvey Smith and this Harvey...

GOD: ... Treehorn.

(HARVEY TREEHORN raises his head curiously at the sound of his name.)

MOTHER OF GOD: Yes. Good night. (as she goes) Big day tomorrow!

(MOTHER OF GOD exits.)

HARVEY SMITH: Harvey Treehorn...

HARVEY TREEHORN: Yes?

(GOD stands, taps the pen to his forehead and paces a bit, now dictating to the pen computer in his hand like a Dictaphone. His dictation is with confidence and force.)

GOD: Insert after section 1-7-1-1 subset 'd' entitled 'Mother' and — begin. (beat) "Harvey Treehorn," the writer says. "... is his name..."

HARVEY SMITH: (to himself overlapping) ... is his name. He can't keep up with the world anymore.

GOD: That's why he's so self-conscious.

(HARVEY SMITH begins typing with his dialogue, which comes over the sound system as voice-over.)

HARVEY SMITH (V.O.): That's why he's so self-conscious. But before you'll ever understand what Harvey means to me, you have to understand what I believe. I believe...

(He leans back in strenuous thought. After a beat he leans forward and types again.)

HARVEY SMITH (V.O. cont'd): ... that with the tools in existence today and the sheer volume of information available to us; humans are going to evolve all over again. The divide between those with knowledge and those without will grow a thousandfold. There will soon be no room on this planet for the old, or the foolish — and in time, I will become both. (sitting back he ponders, then sitting forward again, he resumes) On a lighter note, should you ever actually read this, Mother — as I know how you are with email — now that I have had my job for six months, my benefits have kicked in. Yes. I'm insured at long last. It took over thirty years of life, but you may finally heave a sigh of relief. Both medical and dental. (a beat) Love, Harvey. (another beat) P.S. I'm going to

give Harvey Treehorn a job tonight. I'll send it to you as soon as I'm happy with it. (beat)
P.P.S. Thanks for the cookies you sent.

GOD: Harvey Smith sends his message.

(HARVEY SMITH clicks his mouse as if to "send." He moves the mouse again, and then double-clicks.)

GOD (cont'd): Index and summarize. Step to next subset, entitle (beat) "Assurance."
And — begin. (beat) Harvey Smith begins writing a new piece.

HARVEY SMITH: An office conference room. Beth... Chesthill enters and says:

(BETH CHESTHILL enters.)

HARVEY SMITH: Harvey Treehorn.

BETH CHESTHILL: Harvey Treehorn.

(BETH stands above HARVEY TREEHORN with a generic smile. HARVEY TREEHORN starts to stand politely and offers his hand.)

(HARVEY SMITH types along with the following dialogue.)

HARVEY TREEHORN: Yes?

BETH CHESTHILL: Oh. It wasn't a question, Harvey. So.

(After deliberation, she shakes his hand.)

BETH CHESTHILL (cont'd): Congratulations on your employment with us. You must have made quite an impression. Carl Mossgrove is not an easy one to get along with.

(They sit.)

HARVEY TREEHORN: Ah. Well, thank you, I guess. I was rather nervous, this was my first...

BETH CHESTHILL: Spectacular. I'm Beth Chesthill, you may call me Beth. Okay then. Let's get started. Do you have any questions?

HARVEY TREEHORN: Um. Yes. Actually.

BETH CHESTHILL: What is it?

HARVEY TREEHORN: Who are you? I mean, what is it you do here?

BETH CHESTHILL: Oh. Right. I'm H.R. (a beat) Anything else?

HARVEY TREEHORN: (embarrassed) What's H.R.?

BETH CHESTHILL: Human Resources, Harvey. That means I am here to help you. To

guide you and give you assurance.

HARVEY TREEHORN: Insurance?

BETH CHESTHILL: That, too. Assurance. While we speak, perhaps you could be filling out these forms.

(She pushes a small stack of papers to HARVEY TREEHORN and gives him a pen.)

HARVEY TREEHORN: You bet.

BETH CHESTHILL: Eager to get going. That's great Harvey.

HARVEY TREEHORN: Thanks Beth.

(She gives him a look for addressing her as such. Then powers forward rapidly.)

BETH CHESTHILL: This is a standard W-4. This is a Declaration of Citizenship form. We will get copies of your picture ID after you've settled in. Here we have our Confidentiality Agreement.

HARVEY TREEHORN: Confidentiality?

BETH CHESTHILL: It's all just standard requirements for employment here. I could go into elaborate details, but we wouldn't want to spoil the surprise, now would we?

HARVEY TREEHORN: Surprise?

BETH CHESTHILL: I'm joking Harvey. H.R. humor.

HARVEY TREEHORN: Oh!

(HARVEY TREEHORN forces a chuckle and signs the paper.)

BETH CHESTHILL: This is the Clean Criminal Background Affidavit, our Computer Use Care Commitment Policy Agreement, Accidental Death Waiver and 401K Deference.

(The actors freeze for a moment as HARVEY SMITH has stopped typing.)

(He stands and stretches. He then walks off and returns in boxer shorts and a T-shirt. He sits once more and then begins typing again. The actors continue.)

HARVEY SMITH: Charles... Seawind peeks into the room.

(CHARLES SEAWIND peeks into the room as the actors reanimate.)

CHARLES SEAWIND: Whoops, sorry! (to someone offstage) Beth's in there with some guy. I can't do that, Joe. No, I can't do that. (to Beth) Will you be long?

BETH CHESTHILL: This is an orientation, Charles.

CHARLES SEAWIND: Okay! Great then.

(CHARLES exits. A beat.)

HARVEY TREEHORN: Did you say accidental death?

BETH CHESTHILL: Oh yes. Should something tragic happen to you, any debts owed to you, or you to the company will not be applied to your friends and family. To ease their transition. A protective measure for you and your loved ones, and such.

HARVEY TREEHORN: And did you say deference?

BETH CHESTHILL: Not of that Harvey! Of your 401K is all. It's standard, really. You wouldn't be eligible for six months anyway. This simply prevents unnecessary paperwork in the interim. As we approach the six month mark of your employment, you may then re-apply.

HARVEY TREEHORN: And I'll have a 401K?

BETH CHESTHILL: After six months.

HARVEY TREEHORN: From now or then.

BETH CHESTHILL: Of course. (she sighs) Harvey. This is all standard procedure.

HARVEY TREEHORN: Right.

(HARVEY TREEHORN signs the documents. BETH leans in confidentially.)

BETH CHESTHILL: Now Harvey, I need to ask you something.

(HARVEY TREEHORN leans in, too.)

HARVEY TREEHORN: Okay.

BETH CHESTHILL: Do you already have health insurance?

HARVEY TREEHORN: No.

(BETH leans back comfortably.)

BETH CHESTHILL: Okay! We can offer HMO, PPO, or, of course, deference.

HARVEY TREEHORN: What's the difference?

BETH CHESTHILL: Well, the HMO offers a lower deductible, but you cannot choose a doctor. The PPO allows you to choose, but you have a higher deductible. And of course, deference is... deference.

HARVEY TREEHORN: Why would I...?

(CHARLES peeks in again.)

CHARLES SEAWIND: Oh fuck. Sorry. Beth. Have a trouble-maker on your hands, eh?

HARVEY TREEHORN: What does he mean by...

BETH CHESTHILL: Charles, we are doing this as quickly as possible... for someone who is not acquainted with standard procedures.

HARVEY TREEHORN: I'm sorry, it's just...

BETH CHESTHILL: No Harvey! You do not apologize. We are here for you. For your assurance.

CHARLES SEAWIND: Well sorry. And don't get the insurance Harvey. It's a scam. (to offstage) She's still in there with that guy!?!?

(CHARLES exits.)

BETH CHESTHILL: So which kind of insurance would you like?

HARVEY TREEHORN: Why did he say it was a scam?

BETH CHESTHILL: Oh. He deferred. Many employees believe carrying insurance is ridiculous.

HARVEY TREEHORN: Why?

BETH CHESTHILL: Well Harvey, let's just say that you get hurt when... an anvil falls on your hip.

HARVEY TREEHORN: Unh, huh.

BETH CHESTHILL: Well that's going to cost a pretty penny, Harvey. Probably a good twelve hundred dollars. But your deductible could be as much as a thousand dollars. Which means you pay the insurance company one thousand dollars, but in the end you are only saving two hundred. Meanwhile, you've been paying the insurance company a hundred dollars a month from your paycheck. So, let's say all of this happened to you a year from now. You'd have already paid the insurance company twelve hundred dollars, now you pay them an additional one thousand... provided you happen to have it on you. At this point you've paid them twenty-two hundred dollars, so that they can cover you twelve hundred for your accident.

HARVEY TREEHORN: Well that hardly sounds fair.

BETH CHESTHILL: Precisely Harvey. That's why some employees prefer to set aside their own money for emergency use. Does this mean you would like to defer?

HARVEY TREEHORN: I... I think so.

BETH CHESTHILL: Terrific. Then just sign this form.

(HARVEY TREEHORN signs.)

BETH CHESTHILL: Now there is just one more, Harvey.

HARVEY TREEHORN: That's great, Beth.

(She gives him another 'look' at the sound of her name.)

BETH CHESTHILL: This is the employee contribution fund.

HARVEY TREEHORN: What's that?

BETH CHESTHILL: There are certain amenities that we provide, such as a coffee machine, donuts on Mondays, plastic silverware in the lunchroom, cups... You see where I'm headed with this?

(CHARLES peeks in.)

CHARLES SEAWIND: Oh for God's sake Harvey! What's your problem?

BETH CHESTHILL: Charles!

(CHARLES makes a face and exits.)

BETH CHESTHILL: I am so sorry, Harvey. I would never rush you through this. Where were we? Oh yes, employee contribution. To pay for these amenities and any others that may pop up, employees may elect to contribute directly from their paycheck.

HARVEY TREEHORN: How much is that?

BETH CHESTHILL: Well, that depends on the level of company usage each month. It's on a sliding, variable, scale.

HARVEY TREEHORN: I don't know...

BETH CHESTHILL: Of course. It's not a requirement. Your job does not depend on it. It's just a form of... team spirit for lack of a better word. It's more for your co-workers than yourself anyway, so I understand.

HARVEY TREEHORN: I guess it does make sense to do it then.

BETH CHESTHILL: Indeed. It does tell the other employees that you aren't just looking out for yourself.

(HARVEY TREEHORN signs.)

BETH CHESTHILL: (very quickly) Well, that's it Harvey. See, painless! Here is your parking pass and elevator key card. Welcome aboard.

HARVEY TREEHORN: Thanks... Beth.

(They shake hands and HARVEY TREEHORN leaves in a daze.)

(BETH bursts into maniacal laughter.)

(HARVEY SMITH chuckles and sits back with his hands folded on his stomach.)

GOD: Index and summarize. Step to next subset, entitle "War." and — begin. (beat) Harvey Smith is amused by what he's just written. So much so that he thinks his writing has finally distracted him from thinking of Summer Westwater — which had become especially important to him now that Gina was in his life. But the country where Harvey Smith lives --

(Two actors enter with a small scrim. Behind the scrim two more actors begin a shadow dumbshow.)

GOD (cont'd): — which had always professed peace and practiced diplomacy until necessity --

(One dumbshow actor stands foisting a flag and shakes hands with the other actor.)

GOD (cont'd): — attacks another country.

(The flag holder plants the flag, removes a pistol and shoots the other actor. Then shoots randomly in all directions and poses in victory.)

GOD (cont'd): In light of the emptiness this creates inside Harvey Smith, his longing to find Summer returns. Unable to fend off his desire, he decides to write of what she might do in time of war.

(As the dumbshow exits, SUMMER WESTWATER enters and walks up to a podium. She gets in a mid-speech position.)

HARVEY SMITH: (typing) Lights up on Summer Westwater standing center, pounding her fist on top of a podium.

(HARVEY types along with the dialogue.)

SUMMER WESTWATER: (pounding her fist on top of the podium) ...until each path of diplomacy is explored — and charted — we cannot resort to aggression. Nations have spoken against it. The people of this nation have spoken against it. Yet still our leaders ignore the very people who gave them power. (she points emphatically) If your voice is not being heard, I say raise it! If you disagree with your representatives, exercise your right to select new ones. (softer, and genuine) I have my opinions and I have my beliefs. But I tell you this now. If elected, it is your voice through which I will speak. That is my promise... and where I come from, a promise means something.

HARVEY SMITH: Thad... Gardendale springs to his feet from the audience and bounds on to the stage.

(From the house, THAD GARDENDALE leaps to his feet and rushes on to the stage with aplomb.)

THAD GARDENDALE: Terrific. That was just terrific. Applaud, everyone. It's all right.

(THAD leads applause.)

THAD GARDENDALE (cont'd): Okay Summer. How did that feel?

SUMMER WESTWATER: It felt good.

THAD GARDENDALE: It felt good, Thad. We're all friends here.

SUMMER WESTWATER: It felt good... Thad.

THAD GARDENDALE: Great. Okay. Anyone notice anything wrong?

HARVEY SMITH: From the audience Robert... Whistlesleeve answers.

ROBERT WHISTLESLEEVE: (from the audience) She pointed.

THAD GARDENDALE: That's right, Robert. Now, Summer, I know it seems nit-picky when I do this, but believe me it's necessary. Your dad can't buy you a Presidency if you don't at least know the basics. You're on the Zoning Board, right?

SUMMER WESTWATER: No. Councilwoman.

THAD GARDENDALE: That's right. You're here now, taking my Advanced Political Method class in the hopes of moving up to the next level. There's no shame in that. Therefore, we have to be completely honest. That's why I have to ride your ass hard about these basics. So what do we need to remember?

ROBERT WHISTLESLEEVE: (from rote in the audience) It's not aggression, it's suggestion.

THAD GARDENDALE: Correct. So take that finger number two... (he points, then folds the tip of his finger back politician-style) ... and point it right back at you. (a beat) You live and die by the basics. But let's move on before I get started on your suit — much less your name. So. What about the malarkey?

COMPUTER OF GOD: (from the speaker system HAL-like) God, I'm sorry to interrupt, but Thought Checker has no database entry for 'malarkey.'

GOD: Skip all. Reminder post in two minutes.

THAD GARDENDALE: She obviously found a pretty good writer, how was her delivery?

ROBERT WHISTLESLEEVE: (from the audience) I liked the malarkey a lot. Can I get the number of the guy who wrote...

SUMMER WESTWATER: Actually, I wrote...

THAD GARDENDALE: Hey now. That's for after class or the online forum.

SUMMER WESTWATER: I don't like that you call it malarkey...

THAD GARDENDALE: Again, we're talking basics, Summer. Your content is irrelevant.

You could even really mean it. But you can't feel it. We call it 'malarkey' to create a distance between ourselves and the things we say. (coming to the podium to demonstrate) When you get emotional you lose sight of the basics — soon you'll be pointing all over the place. (he chuckles) Class, what did you think of the fist pounding?

ROBERT WHISTLESLEEVE: (from the audience) I liked it.

THAD GARDENDALE: You liked it because it was exciting. Imagine yourself a voter. Some mad woman is on stage pounding her fist on the podium. It can be an effective tool when used properly — by a man. But I don't think the voters are ready for Senator Woodwind here to go Lady MacBeth on them.

SUMMER WESTWATER: Westwater. My name is Councilwoman Summer Westwater.

THAD GARDENDALE: Okay. Summer. You're being much too emotional. You just can't seem to wrap your legs around the basics. If you want me to soften blows and pretend that the rules aren't different for women and men, I could... but this class wouldn't be advanced, it would be 'special.' Is that what you really want? To be in the 'special' class?

SUMMER WESTWATER: I want you to go to hell.

(SUMMER storms off.)

(GINA enters and walks behind HARVEY SMITH, puts her arms around his neck and reads his computer screen.)

THAD GARDENDALE: Well! There goes someone we'll never see on C-SPAN.

(A beat as GINA takes in the last line. THAD remains frozen in position.)

GINA: Hmm.

HARVEY SMITH: What?

GINA: Well...

THAD GARDENDALE: (exactly as before) Well! There goes someone we'll never see on C-SPAN.

HARVEY SMITH: What?

GINA: I don't know...

THAD GARDENDALE: (again, exactly as before) Well! There goes someone we'll never see on C-SPAN.

GINA: I think you need more of a joke on the end.

HARVEY SMITH: Yeah, I know.

GINA: So what do you think it'll be?

GOD: Harvey doesn't know yet.

HARVEY SMITH: I was thinking of using the loser of the last Presidential election... or the Vice President.

GOD: And he never will be happy with it.

(THAD exits.)

GINA: That's cute.

HARVEY SMITH: Cute? Well, then that's out.

GINA: There's nothing wrong with cute.

HARVEY SMITH: Says the waitress.

GINA: You're such an asshole sometimes.

GOD: She shoves him.

(GINA shoves him away.)

GOD (cont'd): And exits angrily.

(GINA goes.)

COMPUTER OF GOD: (from the speaker system, again, HAL-like) God, I'd like to remind you that Thought Checker has no database entry for 'malarkey.'

GOD: (with precise diction) Insert 'malarkey' to path, library, services, dict, custom, Earth. Entry spelling" 'm-a-l-a-r-k-e-y.' No variation of pronunciation. (making it up as he goes, as quickly as possible) Etymology: Slang term. Wales, UK, 1822. Original meaning: Playful combination of 'malaria' and 'key.' Taken from the legend of a British Lieuten... No. Strike that. Taken from the legend of a — sea captain who swallowed a map... before interrogation to prevent thieves from finding his treasure. He gave an elaborate description of the treasure's location to his interrogators leaving out a 'key' element late in the journey that rendered the directions useless. The thorough description was believed to be real just from it's specificity and the sea captain was released. He succeeded in preserving his treasure, however, the map he had swallowed had been infested with malaria which took his life. (impressed with himself) Current definition: Bogus, extensive information without purpose. End Thought Checker addition.

COMPUTER OF GOD: Thought Checker database updated with inclusion of 'malarkey.' Thank you God.

GOD: Index and summarize. Step to next subset, entitle... "Gina's wake." And — begin. (beat) Harvey Smith is confused by the severity of Gina's reaction, but simply sighs and carries on because he has a penchant for passivity in conflict.

GINA: (offstage after an answering machine beep) I swear to God, Harvey Smith. If you don't call by the end of the day, don't bother calling, ever.

(HARVEY SMITH picks up the phone and dials a number.)

GOD: The potential Harvey Smith could suddenly see in Gina — now facing her absence — creates a longing to return to her arms. But Harvey Smith subconsciously felt he deserved to be left. For deep inside him, he knew he cheated on Gina every waking hour and in each dream, with Summer Westwater.

(HARVEY SMITH is looking into his mini-fridge as he talks on the phone.)

HARVEY SMITH: (into the phone with conversation beats) Yes, it was rude. I know it was rude. It was a moment. I was frustrated. Besides, who walks away — just walks away forever? One incident and... I don't know. No, I didn't call her. At first. I did later. Too late. I don't know, Claude. I think I loved her. I know I said she was terribly wrong for... I think I was just scared because I knew she wasn't... (a beat) Nothing. (pause) She never said. I do — miss her... No, that's not stupid. What's stupid is that every time I tell you something like this, your answer is that I'm stupid. Bullshit. Come on Claude. You know you... What? Where? No, I'm gonna stay in and write. Well, I have a hard time doing what's best for me I guess. And going out doesn't solve everything, my friend. Next time. No, I do mean that. Later.

(HARVEY SMITH hangs up the telephone.)

GOD: Index and summarize.

(GOD sets his pen down and picks up a cookie. He takes a bite, then rises, and walks offstage.)

(HARVEY SMITH picks up a remote and clicks on the television. He puts his hands on the keyboard, but doesn't type.)

(The television shows a close-up of a man's face.)

(HARVEY SMITH starts tapping on the space bar absently. The man on the television, JOHN TOPPING, is speaking very info-mercial-esque.)

JOHN TOPPING: There isn't just one way to make money from the comfort of your own home. There isn't even just two. Is there three? No. Hundreds? More. That's right. There are millions of ways to make millions of dollars — in your pajamas! But you look at me and think "John Topping, I don't know how to do it. How can I get what I want?" Well, I can't tell you everything — right now. But I can tell you the most important thing that you could ever do to achieve success: You simply have to know exactly what it is that you want. Only then can you achieve it. Let me give you an example: wealth, great fortune, riches beyond belief...

(HARVEY SMITH starts deleting the spaces he has made.)

JOHN TOPPING (cont'd): ... well those aren't the concern of Harvey Smith.

(HARVEY SMITH's head snaps to attention.)

JOHN TOPPING (cont'd): For Harvey Smith, the possibilities are endless, yet his results thus far have been lacking. So we have to wonder, what is it, that makes Harvey tick? We know it's not just money. Is it fame? Artistic success? No. None of these things — and yet, all of these things. What Harvey seeks is social acceptance. But to achieve his goal he needs wealth, fame, and artistic success. That's right, Harvey Smith. If you attain these things, you too, can gain social acceptance. (a beat) Harvey?

(HARVEY SMITH looks around uncomfortably.)

(HARVEY TREEHORN enters obviously confused.)

(JOHN TOPPING's head snaps around toward HARVEY TREEHORN.)

JOHN TOPPING (cont'd): (bitingly to HARVEY TREEHORN) Harvey SMITH!

(HARVEY TREEHORN wanders back out.)

JOHN TOPPING (cont'd): (gently to HARVEY SMITH) Harvey Smith.

HARVEY SMITH: (hesitantly) Yes, John Topping?

JOHN TOPPING: Why won't you clear your path?

HARVEY SMITH: What do you mean?

JOHN TOPPING: Harvey, your absurdity and obscurity leave your writing with no venue. Don't you know what you need to do?

(HARVEY SMITH shakes his head after a beat.)

JOHN TOPPING (cont'd): I'm not here to tell you, Harvey. You have to unlock those secrets yourself. After all, it's nothing you don't already know.

HARVEY SMITH: I don't know what you're talking about.

JOHN TOPPING: (wryly) Of course you don't. When the truth causes discomfort our impulse is denial. However, that is just the sort of thing that clutters the path of our success.

HARVEY SMITH: The path of our success?

JOHN TOPPING: Your success. How will you clear the obstacles with a lumbering beast on your back? (darkly) You'll have to kill it, Harvey.

HARVEY SMITH: Who are you?

JOHN TOPPING: And murder is only the first step - albeit, the hardest. (brightly) Simply

do that, Harvey Smith, and you'll be well on your way to love and respect.

HARVEY SMITH: Who the hell are you?!

JOHN TOPPING: (100% informercial) I'm John Topping, self-made millionaire and author of seven books including: "Really Real Results," and "Triumph, From Within."

(HARVEY SMITH turns off the television.)

(GOD walks back in with a glass of something to drink.)

(HARVEY SMITH starts typing spaces again.)

(GOD takes a drink, sets the cup down, and picks up the pen computer.)

GOD: (dictating) Step to next subset. Entitle... "Crumbling," and — begin. (beat) Harvey's insecurities and feelings of self-doubt create a chemical imbalance so intense, that he makes himself believe that he is physically damaged.

(HARVEY SMITH is wearing a hands-free from his cell phone and he buries his hands in his hair.)

HARVEY SMITH: No, I've still got it, whatever it is. I can't make it in today, either, Bill. Tell Gary. I gotta go, I think I'm gonna... you know... again.

(HARVEY SMITH ends the call.)

(GOD breathes a sigh of exhaustion.)

GOD: Index and summarize. (after a thoughtful pause) Computer?

COMPUTER OF GOD: How may I assist you, God?

GOD: Please open media document. Wildcard search: (reluctantly) "Ge," and "Better Harvey."

COMPUTER OF GOD: Document retrieved and opened. Shall I play it for you, God?

GOD: Locate topic: "dramatic," within the document.

COMPUTER OF GOD: Found: 12 instances. First instance: Chapter Seventeen "Twists" and Chapter...

GOD: Play "Twists."

COMPUTER OF GOD: Very well.

(A spot light comes up on GE (pronounced GEE with a hard 'g'). She is a majestic-looking woman in flowing white robes. She addresses only the audience.)

GE: Chapter seventeen. Twists. As you know, your Harvey is not allowed to be a significant character on your world's stage. However, this does not mean you cannot

allow dramatic events to take place in his life. Just because your Harvey Smith is not a supreme dictator, a poet of renown, or an adventurous explorer — you may still create a riveting story through the use of "twists." Perhaps your Harvey can face a great danger, or lose something important; such as a job, or a loved one...

GOD: Computer. Stop media playback.

(Lights out on GE.)

COMPUTER OF GOD: Playback halted.

GOD: Step to next subset, entitle... "Hurt," and — begin. (beat) With inexplicable anger and determination, Harvey Smith makes Harvey Treehorn bleed.

(HARVEY pours a whiskey and pulls his keyboard closer.)

(HARVEY TREEHORN enters and goes center stage.)

(HARVEY SMITH begins typing with determination.)

HARVEY SMITH: Harvey Treehorn is lying diagonal on the floor center stage on his back. In his hand is a...

(HARVEY SMITH looks around for a bit. Looks up in thought. Removes the hand-free, then continues.)

HARVEY SMITH: Pez dispenser.

(HARVEY TREEHORN lies down diagonally on the floor center stage on his back. In his hand is a Pez dispenser.)

(HARVEY SMITH takes a drink of the whiskey. Then continues to type determinedly.)

HARVEY SMITH (cont'd): When he wakes, he realizes that he is lying on the hard ground. He tries to sit up, but gets overwhelmed with pain, and howls out in agony.

(When HARVEY TREEHORN wakes, he tries sitting up but just howls out in agony.)

(HARVEY SMITH takes another drink of the whiskey.)

HARVEY SMITH (cont'd): He raises his hand and presses his thumb on the top of the Pez dispenser.

(HARVEY TREEHORN raises his hand and presses his thumb on the top of the Pez dispenser.)

HARVEY SMITH (cont'd): After a beat of Harvey Treehorn lying on his back, Florence... Heatherwood enters.

(After a beat of HARVEY TREEHORN on his back, FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD enters.)

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: May I help you?

HARVEY TREEHORN: (straining from pain) I do hope so. Nurse, I appear to have fallen from my bed or something. It actually feels like I'm lying on concrete or...

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: Oh, indeed you are. And I am no nurse.

HARVEY TREEHORN: (still in pain) I'm sorry. I hear what you're saying, but both of those things seem kind of... wrong, I guess. Am I delirious?

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: Perhaps. Maybe this will help.

(FLORENCE kisses HARVEY TREEHORN's forehead. He smiles blissfully.)

HARVEY TREEHORN: (quite calm) Oh. That was nice. (beat) You're... you're not a nurse?

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: No, I am not.

HARVEY TREEHORN: But didn't I crash?... I thought that... I remember... Am I dead?

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: Oh no, Harvey. You are quite alive. However, you are rather damaged, my sweet man.

HARVEY TREEHORN: Will I be okay?

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: I do hope so.

HARVEY TREEHORN: Well, what did the doctor say?

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: That's not important, Harvey.

HARVEY TREEHORN: Well, why am I not in bed? Where am I?

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: Oh, my dear, sweet man. You are on the sidewalk, of course.

HARVEY TREEHORN: But I was... I thought I was in the hospital.

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: You were.

HARVEY TREEHORN: Why am I here now?

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: Oh Harvey. My lovely man. You don't have insurance!

HARVEY TREEHORN: So they put me out on the... I've... But I have a call button!

(HARVEY holds it out and pushes repeatedly with his thumb.)

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: Harvey. That's a Pez dispenser. It's for comfort. It's psychological.

(A beat as this lands on him.)

HARVEY TREEHORN: But I have a nurse. I have you.

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: Oh, I'm no nurse. (pause) Why don't you have insurance, Harvey?

HARVEY TREEHORN: I lost my job. Who are you?

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: I'm Florence Heatherwood, the fairy godmother of the uninsured.

HARVEY TREEHORN: You are?

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: Oh yes, my dear, sweet, beautiful man. Now, just relax.

(FLORENCE strokes HARVEY TREEHORN's hair lovingly. HARVEY calms immediately.)

HARVEY TREEHORN: (dream-like pleasure) You are so nice to me Florence.

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: It's why I'm here.

HARVEY TREEHORN: So very nice... Please don't ever leave me. Say you won't ever leave.

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: Oh, but I have to.

HARVEY TREEHORN: Why?

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: It's very complicated.

HARVEY TREEHORN: It's okay. I want you to tell me. Tell me everything. Like a lullaby. I love your voice... it's so... soothing. You're very pretty, too, you know.

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: I know all of that Harvey, they're job requirements. (a beat) Now answer me this time. Why don't you have insurance?

HARVEY TREEHORN: I told you. I lost my job.

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: (scolding) Harvey you absolutely did not lose your job! You cannot lie to me. You have never had insurance. That is the truth, is it not?

HARVEY TREEHORN: I... I just couldn't understand why I should pay for something I may never use.

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: But what if you do need to use it?

HARVEY TREEHORN: Then I'll use my savings.

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: (scolding again) Do you have savings, Harvey?

HARVEY TREEHORN: Not yet, but as soon as I get a raise... when my salary is...

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: ... shhhhh. Relax.

(FLORENCE bends HARVEY TREEHORN upright and he takes a sitting position devoid of pain.)

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: How do you feel?

HARVEY TREEHORN: Just fine. I feel fine. No — I feel great. Maybe better than ever.

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: Please understand Harvey, this is only temporary until I have to go.

HARVEY TREEHORN: I wish you wouldn't.

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: Oh, but I must, my sweet, sweet Harvey.

HARVEY TREEHORN: Tell me why.

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: Are you sure you want that? It's quite complicated.

HARVEY TREEHORN: Yes. Please.

(FLORENCE sighs and kisses his forehead once again.)

(FLORENCE stands, faces the audience and begins:)

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: As you know Harvey, nothing in this world is simple anymore. There's only more right and less right, but the difference is often too slight for the human eye or the human heart to comprehend. Are you still with me Harvey?

HARVEY TREEHORN: Yes... I think.

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: Almost every other industrialized country on this planet offers free health care to all of its citizens; all but yours. However, when an important medical procedure is to be performed, where do others come?

HARVEY TREEHORN: Here?

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: That's right. Because although this country's capitalism is structured to reward brutal business practice, the benefits that society receives — in technology and skill — help to compensate for the undoing of its ethics. Do you understand?

HARVEY TREEHORN: I think so... (dreamily) ... because the greater our skill and prowess the higher we can climb. Therefore, we strive to go further?

(FLORENCE crouches down and speaks sweetly.)

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: That's right Harvey. If we compensate doctors on an infinite scale, they're more prone to rise above competition. So when you need a major

surgery, you can trust you are in the best of hands.

HARVEY TREEHORN: But won't prices reach the point where only the privileged can afford such surgeries?

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: The privileged drive society, and the meek merely watch. One must ask themselves, are the two of equal value?

HARVEY TREEHORN: That seems cruel.

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: Shhhh. It's okay Harvey.

(FLORENCE caresses the top of HARVEY TREEHORN's head.)

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD (cont'd): Just relax. That, dear Harvey, is why we have insurance. To counteract the inflated, but very necessary, economics.

HARVEY TREEHORN: But am I so unimportant?... just because I'm not wealthy?

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: I came to you, didn't I?

HARVEY TREEHORN: But you won't stay.

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: Harvey, the budget only allows for two hundred and sixty-seven of us. Most of the uninsured won't have anyone come at all. You should appreciate the things you do have.

HARVEY TREEHORN: Like my health?

FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD: Oh, Harvey. (with a warm smile) You were the hardest one today. I'm sorry I must leave you. I truly am. Now good day.

HARVEY SMITH: Florence lowers Harvey Treehorn back onto the ground.

(FLORENCE lowers HARVEY TREEHORN back onto the ground.)

HARVEY TREEHORN: No Florence, don't...

HARVEY SMITH: She touches Harvey's head once more and exits.

(FLORENCE touches HARVEY's head once more and exits.)

HARVEY SMITH: Harvey lies there for a moment. The pain returns.

(HARVEY TREEHORN lies there for a moment. He starts to convulse a little and stiffly. He moans in pain.)

HARVEY SMITH (cont'd): Two pedestrians walk by and hesitate in front of Harvey Treehorn. Pedestrian number one tosses a quarter at him.

(TWO PEDESTRIANS walk by and hesitate in front of HARVEY. PEDESTRIAN #1

tosses a quarter at him.)

PEDESTRIAN #1: Is that a... he's got a Pez dispenser!?!

PEDESTRIAN #2: How cute. (a beat) I mean sad. (a beat) Come on.

HARVEY SMITH: Pedestrian number two rushes off dragging pedestrian number one along.

(PEDESTRIAN #2 rushes off dragging PEDESTRIAN #1 along.)

(HARVEY TREEHORN goes entirely limp and stays there motionless.)

GOD: Rejuvenated by the relief he achieved through Harvey Treehorn's suffering, Harvey Smith gave the piece to a small theatre company in Hollywood. After the performances of several writer's pieces that night, he would tell a colleague:

(A WRITER steps out into a spotlight with a beer in his hand, standing as if mid-conversation at a party.)

HARVEY SMITH: I think the exchange between the two pedestrians is my favorite thing of all I've written.

GOD: The writer said nothing and just nodded his head strangely at Harvey Smith's declaration.

(The WRITER nods his head strangely.)

GOD (cont'd): Harvey would question his own judgement fiercely for months based solely on this ambiguous reaction, to his own opinion. He would spend the rest of his time feeling intense competition with this writer.

WRITER: Nice work tonight, Harvey. You going for drinks?

HARVEY SMITH: (still at his desk — very dryly) Yeah.

WRITER: Cool.

HARVEY SMITH: What?

WRITER: What?

HARVEY SMITH: Nothing.

WRITER: Oh.

GOD: The writer would never even notice.

WRITER: Well, see ya there, buddy.

(The WRITER wanders off.)

GOD: Index and summarize. Begin section 1-7-1-2. Start subset a. Entitle ... "The Hunt," and — begin. (beat) Harvey Smith's pain over Gina's absence had transformed into a more fiery need to find Summer. Losing motivation at his day job; Harvey Smith decides a new woman may spark a fresh outlook and energize him. So, with great effort, he gets out more.

(HARVEY SMITH gets dressed.)

(CLAUDE, a Hollywood hipster from the UK, enters with a drink and clubwear on and leans on something like a bar.)

(HARVEY SMITH slips on a black a jacket and walks over with his whiskey in hand and joins CLAUDE at the bar. There is faint alternative music in the background.)

CLAUDE: (in a British accent) You met him a few weeks ago at the Fiddlin' Chicken. Development exec.

HARVEY SMITH: I don't remember meeting a development exec.

CLAUDE: Maybe it didn't come up. 'S not important. So anyway, this geezer's just standing there and some bird stumbles and spills a drink all over his trousers. And know what he said?

HARVEY SMITH: What exactly does a development executive do?

CLAUDE: 'S not important. So, he says...

HARVEY SMITH: It just seems that there are so many executives in film... what is everyone else? Administrative?

CLAUDE: Harvey. I'm trying to tell you a story and you're having a go.

HARVEY SMITH: I'm just curious.

CLAUDE: But it's not relevant to the story.

HARVEY SMITH: Probably, yeah. But I'm still curious, Claude.

CLAUDE: You're always curious about the wrong things, Harvey. Let loose.

HARVEY SMITH: I know.

CLAUDE: You gotta have more fun, mate.

HARVEY SMITH: I know, Claude.

CLAUDE: Have a laugh now and again.

HARVEY SMITH: Yes.

CLAUDE: Know what I mean?

HARVEY SMITH: (hotly) Yes. I know, Claude. But being curious about the wrong things... that is who I am. I can't help it. Knowing what a development exec does is information I will possess, retain and perhaps use in my lifetime. What some brash bastard said to a coke-chucking barbie just looking to be looked at in some goddamn eighteen-and-over... knowing that quip is not something I can use, much less remember tomorrow. In fact, anything Mr. Development Exec said that night probably didn't land on the 'bird' anyway. It will only land in the conversations of fast-aging, non-committal would-be artists hugging whiskey glasses on a weeknight, hoping a supermodel with a heart and a brain will look across the room, reach an epiphany, and rush over to make the world make sense at long last... (takes a breath) ... would-bes just like us.

(HARVEY SMITH takes a gulp of whiskey with an "ahhhh," at the end of it.)

(A long beat.)

CLAUDE: Thinking like that... that's just. Well, it's no wonder you're depressed Harvey.

HARVEY SMITH: I'm stuck Claude.

CLAUDE: Neither of us could have fled our gloomy towns and reached this hazy paradise if we didn't possess a large dose of hope in our blood. So I won't give up on you yet.

HARVEY SMITH: Sometimes it's...

CLAUDE: How about this: An exchange. I'll tell you what a development executive does. In turn, you let loose tonight. You let go, have fun, and go to a club-club with me. It's always pulling teeth with you to do something other than a couple of drinks in a dive like this. Tonight you go out for me, you learn something from me; for you. Deal?

HARVEY SMITH: (after a beat) All right. Deal.

CLAUDE: Brilliant.

(CLAUDE takes a gulp of whiskey. Then a lengthy beat.)

HARVEY SMITH: So...?

(CLAUDE gives him a confused look.)

HARVEY SMITH (cont'd): So what does a development executive do?

CLAUDE: Right. Don't know, exactly. But tomorrow I'll ring him up and find out. Promise.

HARVEY SMITH: That's not cool, Claude.

CLAUDE: Look, I promise. I mean, I've an idea of it. They read the scripts after several other chaps read the scripts and give the ol' green light or kill it... I think.

HARVEY SMITH: So they lack artistic bones in their bodies.

CLAUDE: You're better than that Harvey.

HARVEY SMITH: How so?

CLAUDE: You're the most hopeful guy I know. Don't give in to bitterness and start reducing others.

HARVEY SMITH: No, you're right.

CLAUDE: Positivity, mate.

HARVEY SMITH: I know. You're right, I've been a mess lately.

CLAUDE: These industry people were probably artists and dreamers and the like. Stumbled into a day job — just like us. It takes a common sense, any business, mate. You have to recognize what's good and what's bad in that business. That particular business flirts with the world of art. And the true problem is that the public repeatedly proves that it's shite that they want.

HARVEY SMITH: You think they intentionally feed us crap?

CLAUDE: Why wouldn't they? This is one of the least pretentious cities in all the world — despite the reputation. Everyone here seems to know exactly how superficial they are. They don't pretend to be otherwise. Cheers to that.

HARVEY SMITH: So you're saying that a development exec can recognize art — but if they see it, they won't make it?

CLAUDE: The sadly delusional and the most intuitive of realists are all here. So, yes, even it's only the rubbish they greenlight, these blokes must know the difference. Wouldn't you say?

HARVEY SMITH: I suppose.

CLAUDE: The worst film you see has something in it. Some little signature of clever in it... or else it'd be a 'B' movie, and those don't make it to the screen nowadays. And shows on the telly are a million times better than when we were little.

HARVEY SMITH: I suppose.

CLAUDE: You have to know a thing to kill it.

HARVEY SMITH : Ha! (beat) That's darkly... beautiful, Claude.

(HARVEY SMITH smiles, and raises his glass.)

HARVEY SMITH (cont'd): Well then, here's to shit by design.

CLAUDE: And the murder of art — for the public good.

(They toast and slam the rest of their whiskeys. Sensual, downbeat electronica MUSIC)

comes on and the LIGHTS go colorful club-like. It is very, very loud. CLAUDE and HARVEY SMITH turn and retrieve fresh whiskeys from behind the bar. They turn around and the world has become slightly (!) slow motion. They are moving slightly to the music, watching an invisible crowd — now in a club. CLAUDE grabs HARVEY SMITH's arm and points to a random woman in the house with his drink hand confidentially. The audience cannot hear their conversation over the loud pulsing music.)

(Obviously CLAUDE has been caught because he smiles and waves boldly at her. He then waves for her to come over. Mouths a "Why not?" And then an "Aww, come on.")

(HARVEY SMITH looks embarrassed.)

(CLAUDE turns and sees HARVEY SMITH's expression. He grabs his shoulder and shakes him in encouragement. Then CLAUDE visibly has an idea. He begins urging HARVEY SMITH to open his mouth and stick out his tongue.)

(Finally HARVEY SMITH opens up and sticks out his tongue. CLAUDE produces a couple of hits of ecstasy and drops them on HARVEY SMITH's tongue, then motions for him to down some whiskey.)

(HARVEY SMITH does this.)

(The cast, except HARVEY TREEHORN, comes on stage in club wear and begins to dance sensually in slight slow motion as works with the music chosen. CLAUDE goes into the crowd dancing. HARVEY SMITH hesitates. He begins to move more as the drugs take effect. The dancing grabs a different beat of the music and becomes real speed. Finally, HARVEY SMITH sets his glass down, joins the crowd, dancing with abandon.)

(As the MUSIC fades out, the crowd dances away and HARVEY SMITH stumbles upstage and lies down beside the still motionless HARVEY TREEHORN.)

GOD: Index and summarize. Step to next subset. Entitle... "Desolation," and — begin. (beat) Trips to the clubs with Claude would only make Harvey Smith feel more incompatible with the women he was physically attracted to. Feverishly, Harvey Smith would dream of meeting his Summer Westwater at long last — even though he knew deep inside that he wasn't ready for her.

(HARVEY SMITH stirs. Gets to his feet and makes his way to a table with a cup of coffee on it. He sits and holds the cup lovingly as though he were hungover.)

GOD: More than ever, Harvey Smith begins to worry that he may not recognize Summer should he ever find her. Or panic if he did.

(APRIL enters and sits at the coffee shop table. HARVEY SMITH steals glances at her. After some debate, he make his move.)

HARVEY SMITH: (to APRIL) I'm sorry...

(HARVEY TREEHORN "wakes" and from the ground completes the line.)

HARVEY TREEHORN: ... and I come here to you with great humility and frustration.

HARVEY SMITH (to APRIL) You see...

(SUMMER enters and sits at another table.)

HARVEY TREEHORN: ... my English is astonishingly poor.

(HARVEY TREEHORN rises and, walks over to SUMMER. The following lines should overlap a bit.)

HARVEY SMITH: ...I'm not good at this.

HARVEY TREEHORN: (to SUMMER) The shortcomings of my comprehension of this language that I am now ploughing awkwardly forward in — are almost immobilizing.

HARVEY SMITH: (to APRIL) I have great problems with small talk. I get weird or...

APRIL: (to HARVEY SMITH) It's okay.

HARVEY TREEHORN: (to SUMMER) However, the extreme grandeur of your physical beauty and the tremendous depth I somehow recognize in your eyes...

HARVEY SMITH: (to APRIL) Even though I'm not much of a... this-place-kind-of-guy — I looked at you and couldn't resist...

HARVEY TREEHORN: (to SUMMER) ... your eyes force this advance of mine, despite my embarrassing and near-crippling inability to communicate adequately in your native tongue.

(HARVEY TREEHORN kneels before SUMMER.)

HARVEY SMITH: (to APRIL) I mean... I guess, that the fact that I've even come over here means you're very...

HARVEY TREEHORN (cont'd): (to SUMMER) If only I could do your many and fantastical attributes justice by describing them for hours on end in your beautiful language whose mastery continues to elude me!

HARVEY SMITH: (to APRIL) I dunno. You see, I just wanted to come over and tell you that I think you are quite beautiful — I mean physically, sure...

HARVEY TREEHORN: (to SUMMER) Still, I long to note the sensual curve of your upper lip, the sleek angle of your soft cheek, or the inviting porcelain smoothness of your neck, so that perhaps you would look past my laughable and impenetrable accent, and perchance recognize the tenderness of my desire and appreciation.

HARVEY SMITH: (to APRIL) Despite my stupidity in these situations, I wish you could see that there is something — good — inside me.

HARVEY TREEHORN: (to SUMMER) Curse this feeble brain for taunting me with merely a few words to manipulate in this complex language of yours! Couple that with my sloppy construction and lack of knowledge required to string my minuscule vocabulary together in a way that would make sense... and I could well be the most frustrated man on Earth!

HARVEY SMITH: (awkward and indecipherable) Hehhh.

(HARVEY SMITH gives APRIL an embarrassed and indecipherable look to go with his strange sound.)

HARVEY TREEHORN (cont'd): Frustrated — because I am now bowing before a most heavenly creature and have not the verbal acumen to share my recognition of your majesty, nor the skill to explain that no obstacle would invoke fear, if the exchange were entrance into your world and your heart.

(HARVEY TREEHORN places his hand over SUMMER's heart on 'heart'.)

HARVEY SMITH : (to APRIL) I would like to... to know you, I guess.

(HARVEY SMITH nervously places his hand on his head.)

(A beat as SUMMER looks at HARVEY TREEHORN incredulously.)

(APRIL looks at HARVEY SMITH with motherly remorse.)

SUMMER WESTWATER: (to HARVEY TREEHORN) This is one of the most extraordinary experiences of blissful happenstance I have yet encountered. I suffer pleasing and sudden shock hearing your words, so much so that I swoon.

APRIL: (to HARVEY SMITH) That's very sweet. Strange, but sweet.

(SUMMER takes HARVEY TREEHORN's hand from her heart and entwines her fingers in his.)

(APRIL puts her hand on HARVEY SMITH's shoulder with no trace of sexual tension.)

SUMMER WESTWATER: (to HARVEY TREEHORN) For I, too, have a terrible comprehension of this English language, and I am never understood. However, I grasp every strange syllable you utter.

APRIL: (to HARVEY SMITH) I do understand.

SUMMER WESTWATER: (to HARVEY TREEHORN) I have oft believed that no one spoke or would ever speak as poorly as I. Therefore, I beg it be true that just as you speak in this same stumbling and clumsy manner, it is no accident that I hear my own voice in yours.

APRIL: (to HARVEY SMITH) I know it must be hard to do this. I'm not so comfortable with it, either.

SUMMER WESTWATER: (to HARVEY TREEHORN) And that you will in turn make sense of my grammatical and lyrical madness as I have yours.

APRIL: (to HARVEY SMITH) You do seem very nice.

SUMMER WESTWATER: (to HARVEY TREEHORN) For somehow, I can pluck your words from the air before me as though they were answers to questions that have haunted me for infinite hours. Please, tell me, lest I return to my melancholy solitude, that you in turn, understand me.

APRIL: (to HARVEY SMITH) But...

HARVEY TREEHORN: (to SUMMER without thinking) Good lord... my words ring in your ear with resounding echoes of meaning?

HARVEY SMITH: (to APRIL) Uh huh.

(A pause. HARVEY TREEHORN quickly takes his hand from SUMMER's and stands.)

HARVEY TREEHORN: (to SUMMER) Of course, with all of my tortured and thirsty heart's desire I wish I could make sense of your "grammatical and lyrical madness." However, my weak mind cannot wrap around your labyrinth of words, though I, too... "swoon."

HARVEY SMITH: I see. Well thanks... for your time. And — sorry.

HARVEY TREEHORN: (to SUMMER) So! — farewell to thee...

HARVEY SMITH: (overlapping) Um...

HARVEY TREEHORN: (to SUMMER) ...glorious perfection.

APRIL: (to HARVEY SMITH) April.

HARVEY SMITH: April.

(HARVEY TREEHORN and HARVEY SMITH exit quickly.)

(APRIL and SUMMER start to drink their coffee again. They stop.)

(APRIL shakes her head at the ridiculousness.)

(SUMMER WESTWATER shouts off to HARVEY TREEHORN.)

SUMMER WESTWATER: You...!?!?!

(SUMMER WESTWATER throws her coffee cup offstage at HARVEY TREEHORN.)

(We hear the offstage sound of a thud and a body falling to the ground.)

(SUMMER WESTWATER quickly exits. APRIL casually ups and leaves.)

GOD: Index and summarize. Step to next subset. Entitle... "Anger," and — begin. (beat) As Harvey Smith becomes more aware of his helplessness and hopelessness with women. He deduces that his problem with finding one, is because he wants one. He concludes that the best way to rid himself of the cloud of desperation that follows him is to focus on becoming successful. But this only leads him to feel embarrassed by his lack of notable accomplishment as a writer thus far. Whenever he refers to himself as such, he fears people disbelieve him. Bombarded by this imagined disbelief, he blames me.

HARVEY SMITH: (head buried in his hands) Why was I given this desire and made to struggle so hard to achieve completion? Was I given only enough talent for encouragement, yet doomed by limited abilities?

(GOD reaches over and grabs a cookie. As he leans back in his chair to eat it... the television clicks itself on. GOD doesn't notice this as he picks up his glass and takes a big drink of his beverage.)

(JOHN TOPPING's head is on the screen.)

JOHN TOPPING: Only you can clear the path of success, Harvey Smith.

(The television clicks off again as HARVEY SMITH looks up at the TV — too late.)

(GOD sets his glass down and rubs his temple as he dictates.)

GOD: In the mind of Harvey Smith, his shortcomings were simply caused by my poor development of his character. Harvey Smith would question my choices to the end of this project. But questioning himself would plague him far more. For it was, in fact, his contradictory mix of narcissism and self-doubt that caused his large and ambitious writing projects to fall short of completion.

(GOD stretches as HARVEY SMITH looks at his watch.)

GOD (cont'd): (yawning) Index and summarize.

(GOD sets his head down on his desk and begins napping.)

(HARVEY goes toward his bed unbuttoning his shirt, but freezes in front of it. He starts to move toward his desk. Then he moves toward the door. After a beat he retrieves his cell phone. He dials a number with his thumb, and slips his black jacket on. As he exits we hear:)

HARVEY SMITH: Claude? Hey...

(BLACKOUT as loud club music hits and on the opposite side of the stage we see a backlit silhouette of a WOMAN dancing sensually.)

(The WOMAN dances offstage as the music fades out. The lights come up.)

(Next to HARVEY SMITH in his bed is a woman, KATE. She is a very attractive girl in

her early to mid-twenties. They each rustle individually. Eventually they both realize the presence of the other.)

HARVEY SMITH: Oh... uh...

(Suddenly KATE leaps from the bed and starts gathering her scattered clothes. She is in her underwear.)

KATE: Fuck me. Dammit. Dammit, dammit!

HARVEY SMITH: (sitting up) No, um... I mean, you don't have to...

KATE: Oh Jesus. Please just lie the fuck back down. Dammit!

(KATE picks up her jeans and pulls them on.)

HARVEY SMITH: But...

KATE: Look pal, just go back to bed. (to no one in particular) JESUS CHRIST!

HARVEY SMITH: Well don't yell. My goddamn head hurts.

KATE: Mister. I don't know who the hell you are, and this is... just... (takes a deep breath) I gotta go.

HARVEY SMITH: And I'm saying you don't have to...

KATE: What? Go? (looks at HARVEY SMITH) OH MY GOD! Nice Kate. Real good.

(KATE begins looking for something specific and talks to herself offhandedly.)

KATE (cont'd): Good one. Well done. Not even that hot, and he lives in a dump. Might as well fuck someone from work. Nice job. Well done Kate.

HARVEY SMITH: Just be calm. I'm as confused as you are. I kind of remember... you... but...

KATE: Okay. I don't need you to... WHERE THE FUCK IS MY BLOUSE?!

HARVEY SMITH: I'll help, but it'll be easier if we handle the situation like... you know... civil... What's your name?

KATE: Fuck off.

HARVEY SMITH: See, that's what I mean. That makes it harder to stay calm so we can find...

KATE: Don't say 'we' — ever. There's no 'we.' We don't do anything. Just tell me where my goddamned blouse is, asshole.

HARVEY SMITH: I — don't — know. At this point I could barely tell you my name. And

my head hurts like a sonofabitch. That's all I really know at this point.

Kate: (to herself as she continues her search) I can't believe my fucking friends let me fucking do this.

HARVEY SMITH: (deadpan) I'm Harvey. It's nice to meet you... again, I guess... I'm going to go brush my teeth now.

(HARVEY SMITH gets out of bed wearing only his boxers. He stretches and then exits, unapologetically scratching himself.)

(KATE looks under the bed. She finds her blouse and pulls it out. She turns it around to find the opening, but gets interrupted by the need to cry.)

(HARVEY SMITH is unaware of her crying and matter-of-factly goes about his business.)

HARVEY SMITH: (from offstage obviously brushing his teeth) Look, I'm sorry about this. (spits) Things like this happen. I'm trying to be nice about it. And you getting mad's not gonna make it any better. (rinses and spits again) Or make it go away. (returning) So just relax and let me make you coffee. (sees her crying) Oh.

KATE: (trying to be composed) Don't look at me.

HARVEY SMITH: I'm not. I mean, I don't mean to... Kate, right?

(KATE nods with her head down.)

HARVEY SMITH (cont'd): I'm really very sorry. I wouldn't have... you know... if it didn't seem like... or if you weren't... Do you like coffee?

(KATE nods.)

HARVEY SMITH (cont'd): Sit tight.

(HARVEY exits.)

(KATE slides her blouse on and leans back against the side of the bed looking up at the ceiling.)

HARVEY SMITH (cont'd): (from offstage) I'm harmless, really. And friendly enough, I like to think. So before we part ways — all angry about having done something rash and... I don't know... guilt-ridden, we can have a nice chat over coffee. (returning empty handed) Perhaps I'll find you charming and lovely, and you'll find me kind and candid, and then we can walk away unashamed about... You know, able to say, "Hey, I met this really cool person last night." And nobody has to know, or care, that we slept together. You know?

KATE: (after a beat) I thought you were bringing me coffee.

HARVEY SMITH: It's brewing.

KATE: Oh.

HARVEY SMITH: So Kate's impatient. There. That's a start.

KATE: Fuck off.

HARVEY SMITH: She's angry and she curses a lot.

KATE: Is this supposed to be cute?

HARVEY SMITH: It's supposed to be... I don't know — warm.

KATE: I don't need warm.

HARVEY SMITH: What do you need?

KATE: Coffee.

HARVEY SMITH: See, now that's cute.

(KATE breathes out audibly.)

KATE: So who the hell are you supposed to be, anyway?

HARVEY SMITH: Harvey.

KATE: You said that already.

HARVEY SMITH: I didn't think you'd heard. Or cared.

KATE: I didn't.

HARVEY SMITH: Care. But you heard.

KATE: Yes.

HARVEY SMITH: Who the hell are you supposed to be?

KATE: Kate.

HARVEY SMITH: I gathered that. See? This is going so very well. Hold on.

(HARVEY exits.)

(KATE gets up and starts to exit. She hesitates and sits on the chair behind HARVEY SMITH's desk. She picks up some of his print outs and glances them over.)

KATE: What are you, some kind of writer?

HARVEY SMITH: (from offstage) Yeah. Cream and sugar?

KATE: Neither. What kind?

(HARVEY SMITH returns with two mugs of coffee. He hands one to KATE and she cradles it with both hands.)

HARVEY SMITH: Oh. By day or by night?

KATE: Just answer the fucking question.

HARVEY SMITH: Do you have to be so antagonistic?

KATE: (groans) I do when you keep answering my questions with questions. That pisses me off.

HARVEY SMITH: And I bet there are very few things that do that.

KATE: What the hell, dude. I thought we were going to be... civil? And you just keep being a smart ass.

HARVEY SMITH: I'm poking fun at you to lighten the situation. I can stick to making fun of myself if you'd prefer it.

KATE: Whatever. (looking at the print outs) What kind of name is Harvey Treehorn?

(HARVEY TREEHORN sits up at the mention of his name.)

HARVEY SMITH: A strange one with an air of possible realism but a playfulness that suggests possible invention.

KATE: You could always change it.

HARVEY SMITH: I like it.

KATE: What girl wants to admit she slept with a Harvey Treehorn? Sounds like a porn name.

HARVEY SMITH: Oh. Right. Ahhh, no, it's not my name. Not, my name. I'm Harvey Smith.

KATE: Well that's not much better.

HARVEY SMITH: Not very fuckable, eh?

(They smile.)

KATE: No. Not really.

HARVEY SMITH: Harvey Treehorn is just a character.

(HARVEY TREEHORN slumps over again.)

KATE: Why'd you name him Harvey? Isn't that kind of vain? Or creepy? Creepy and

vain.

HARVEY SMITH: Well, maybe. I hadn't really thought of it that way. He just does things like... he's just... (walks over) well my life is the... (gathering up the printouts) ... those are more for me than anyone.

KATE: So you're a writer of the broke and delusional type.

HARVEY SMITH: Not exactly.

KATE: So you actually sell this shit.

HARVEY SMITH: No. I have a day job. Can we talk about Kate for awhile?

KATE: Why? I'm in your kraw, I wanna keep going. Do you get riled up easy, Harvey?

HARVEY SMITH: My kraw?

KATE: Shut up, I'm from Arkansas.

HARVEY SMITH: My grandmother lives there.

KATE: No shit?

HARVEY SMITH: Yeah. In Benton.

KATE: Bullshit. I'm from Benton. No way. That's bullshit.

HARVEY SMITH: Seriously. I was there a couple of Christmas' ago.

KATE: No fucking way. How'd you know I was from Benton? Are you some sort of stalker? No, I told you last night.

HARVEY SMITH: I didn't know.

KATE: I told you last night, didn't I?

HARVEY SMITH: Nope.

KATE: Then tell me something from Benton.

HARVEY SMITH: Uhh... something Springs Road...

KATE: Spring Hill Road?

HARVEY SMITH: Maybe. No. Maybe, Geyer Springs Road?

KATE: That's Little Rock.

HARVEY SMITH: Well I don't know where I am when I'm there. 30 highway? Saline Hospital.

KATE: This is crazy.

HARVEY SMITH: It's true.

KATE: But crazy. (awkward beat) This is good coffee.

HARVEY SMITH: Yeah, thanks. (beat) I need an aspirin.

KATE: Me too.

HARVEY SMITH: Be right back. And by the way, I've been there plenty of times, but I still never heard anyone say "kraw."

(HARVEY SMITH exits to get aspirin. KATE smiles.)

(GOD wakes up. He looks down and sees KATE. He is confused for a moment.)

GOD: Who...? What...?

(GOD picks up the computer pen and wags it at KATE.)

(KATE sets her coffee on the desk and exits the other door.)

HARVEY SMITH: I've got Aleve, Advil, and Tylenol. Pick your poison.

(Silence.)

HARVEY SMITH (cont'd): Kate?

(HARVEY SMITH returns with a couple of pills. Seeing KATE is gone, he pops them both in his mouth and chases it with coffee.)

(HARVEY SMITH sits at his desk with an ambiguous look on his face. He picks up his stack of print outs and glances over them. He tosses them back on the desk and drops his head back looking at the ceiling for a beat. He sighs, then drops his head back down. Absently glancing around the suddenly empty apartment, his eye catches the clock. He looks at it strangely for a moment, and then realization comes.)

HARVEY SMITH: Oh crap.

(HARVEY SMITH stands, scrambles around throwing on clothes, slips on shoes, packs his laptop into a briefcase, and rushes out the door.)

(He reappears from one side of the stage and begins crossing hurriedly to the other. Cast members cross the opposite direction. When HARVEY SMITH sees JOHN TOPPING they have an electrically awkward moment of near recognition.)

GOD: Begin next subset of 1-1-7-2. Entitle "Broken," and — begin. (beat) Harvey Smith constantly fears his poor time management will get him fired from his day job...

(HARVEY SMITH meanders off stage.)

GOD (cont'd): ... but no one ever seems to notice, or care. While relieved, he is also a bit hurt by this.

(Lights reveal CLAUDE, leaning against the wall; relaxed, with a Styrofoam cup of coffee in hand.)

(HARVEY SMITH rushes back on the stage with his briefcase.)

CLAUDE: Harvey!

HARVEY SMITH: Hey Claude.

(CLAUDE sidles up beside him grabbing the crook of his arm to swing him around to make room for the grand entrance of JENNI, a very attractive co-worker walks by.)

JENNI: Hey Harvey. Claude.

HARVEY SMITH: Hi Jenni.

(CLAUDE smiles at her. The moment she passes he speaks to HARVEY SMITH)

CLAUDE: No chance, mate. She might as well be married to some bloke. Seven years, now. And lives with him.

HARVEY SMITH: Uhh... (lowering his voice) Claude she's right there getting coffee!

CLAUDE: So?

HARVEY SMITH: So, talk about it later.

CLAUDE: Why? What difference does it make. I'm not saying anything bad. I'm just saying that when they're shackled up, you can forget about it.

HARVEY SMITH: I know, but by relaying this information to me now might clue her in that I think she's... you know.

CLAUDE: And I'm saying it doesn't matter. For one, if she were available you should let her know anyway. For two, she's not. And furthermore, she's really, really, really not.

(JENNI returns, the two men freeze.)

JENNI: (walking by them again stirring a coffee) You two are worse than a couple of schoolgirls, you know that? (she takes a sip) It's not a bad thing. (tossed back as she exits) I think it's cute.

CLAUDE: (to JENNI as she's goes off) You know, it's easier to be miserable than leave someone you live with.

HARVEY SMITH: Claude!

CLAUDE: (to HARVEY) Well, it's true. It's just a safety measure for the insecure, know

what I mean? It's like planting a flag in your love when you don't trust it.

HARVEY SMITH: (after a thoughtful beat and a head shake) Every once in awhile I'm reminded what makes you bearable at nine-thirty in the morning.

CLAUDE: What's that?

HARVEY SMITH: Though your insight is often dark and skewed, it can, indeed, be insight.

(They smile.)

CLAUDE: So, what happened with that bird last night?

HARVEY SMITH: Oh crap. I gotta get my computer turned on.

CLAUDE: Do you get anything?

HARVEY SMITH: Claude, I really do have to make it look like I've been here for...

CLAUDE: You all right? You feeling down? We should go out again tonight.

HARVEY SMITH: We'll talk about it later.

CLAUDE: Say the word, mate, you're my favorite wingman. Oh. Hey. I've got a couple of friends coming into the city for dinner. Sushi with them and we could hit the town.

HARVEY SMITH: (exiting) Maybe. Yeah, probably. That sounds nice.

(A WOMAN walks by and smiles at CLAUDE. CLAUDE follows her off.)

(HARVEY returns through a different door. He sets his briefcase down. He picks up the phone and dials a three digit code that we hear through the sound system.)

[The following phone scene happens very rapidly and throughout HARVEY SMITH is unpacking his laptop computer and setting it up on the desk.]

(A pre-recorded series (or offstage voices) comes on.)

MESSAGE SYSTEM: To check your...

(HARVEY SMITH pushes a key and we hear it beep cutting the MESSAGE SYSTEM off.)

MESSAGE SYSTEM: If you are dialing from your ext...

(HARVEY SMITH pushes a key and we hear it beep cutting the MESSAGE SYSTEM off.)

MESSAGE SYSTEM: You have three new messages. To lis...

(HARVEY SMITH pushes a key and we hear it beep cutting the MESSAGE SYSTEM

off.)

MESSAGE SYSTEM: First new message:

MESSAGE ONE: (the voice of BETH CHESTHILL) Hello, Harvey, this is Beth Kennedy again, I'm a freelance...

(HARVEY SMITH pushes a key and we hear it beep cutting the MESSAGE off.)

MESSAGE SYSTEM: This message will be deleted when you hang up. Next new message:

MESSAGE TWO: (the voice of FLORENCE HEATHERWOOD) Mr. Smith, I called last month and left you a message. I'm Florence Woodman, a freelance...

(HARVEY SMITH pushes a key and we hear it beep cutting the MESSAGE SYSTEM off.)

MESSAGE SYSTEM; This message will be deleted when you hang up. Next new message:

MESSAGE THREE: (the voice of CHARLES SEAWIND) Harvey Smith! Hey buddy. Charles Sherwin again, freelance...

(HARVEY SMITH pushes a key and we hear it beep cutting the MESSAGE SYSTEM off.)

MESSAGE SYSTEM: This message will be deleted when you hang up. End of new messages.

(HARVEY SMITH hangs up. From offstage a voice, GARY, rings out.)

GARY: Harvey?

HARVEY SMITH: Yeah?

GARY: Harvey?

HARVEY SMITH: Gary?

GARY: You here?

HARVEY SMITH: (rolling his eyes a bit) Yeah.

(HARVEY SMITH pushes the start up button on his computer.)

GARY: Where're we at on Richmond?

(The start up chime of his computer rings out and HARVEY SMITH cringes as it becomes clear that he just arrived.)

HARVEY SMITH: Virginia?

GARY: Have you read the work order?

HARVEY SMITH: Which one?

GARY: The one for Richmond.

HARVEY SMITH: Virginia?

GARY: Did you read it?

HARVEY SMITH: Apparently not.

GARY: Did you get the work order?

HARVEY SMITH: I'm not sure.

GARY: Well do you have it?

HARVEY SMITH: Hold on, let me look.

(HARVEY SMITH starts looking through a stack of papers on his desk "in box.")

GARY: Because they're asking about it.

HARVEY SMITH: Unh huh.

GARY: You know what happened to me, Sunday night, and last night?

HARVEY SMITH: What's that?

(HARVEY SMITH types his password into the computer, then continues looking for the work order paper.)

GARY: I try to park, Sunday outside Karen's and then at the goddamn drug store last night — street parking. And it's a two car spot between drives. On the street, you know?

HARVEY SMITH: (still looking) Yeah.

GARY: And some asshole parks right smack in the middle. Two car spot — right in the middle. What kind of person does that?

HARVEY SMITH: A selfish person, Gare. (pulling a paper from a folder) I got it.

(HARVEY SMITH pulls out a piece of paper.)

GARY: Bring it in here. Two different people. Two nights in a row. There should be laws for it. You know, when there is a blatant breach of etiquette, that should be ticketable.

(HARVEY SMITH rises and starts walking. He stops and sways a bit.)

GARY (cont'd): Parking tickets are supposed to prevent injustices. Clear out for rush

hour, street cleaning, prevent bottlenecks and what not. Not for just quotas and cash that the city never accounts for. Harvey are you bringing it?

HARVEY SMITH: Hold on Gary, I'm feeling a little...

GARY: I nearly left a note — both times — if I weren't in a hurry. But when are we ever not in a hurry? Assholes! (beat) You're what?

HARVEY SMITH: I think I stood up too quickly and...

GARY: What's that you say, Harvey?

HARVEY SMITH: I think... think I'm...

(HARVEY SMITH stumbles a bit, and collapses.)

GARY: Harvey?

(LIGHTS out.)

END OF ACT I

ACT TWO

(LIGHTS come up starkly on one side of the stage where HARVEY TREEHORN enters in a hospital gown. He sits in a chair and waits.)

(DOCTOR CASH, the doctor for HARVEY TREEHORN, enters with a clipboard.)

GARY: (from offstage echo-dreamlike) Harvey? Harvey?

DOCTOR CASH: (with GARY's second "Harvey?") Harvey? Harvey Treehorn?

HARVEY TREEHORN: Yes.

(DOCTOR CASH flips a couple of pages on the clipboard absently.)

(HARVEY SMITH gets up from the floor and sits in a chair.)

DOCTOR CASH: (to HARVEY TREEHORN) I'm Dr. Cash. I've looked up your insurance benefits and I'm going to explain to you what your options are. Do you know what your options are in your health plan?

HARVEY TREEHORN: No. I just got it for Florence.

DOCTOR CASH: Your wife.

HARVEY TREEHORN: Oh. No. My... godmother.

(DOCTOR SMITH, the doctor for HARVEY SMITH enters with a clipboard.)

DOCTOR SMITH: Harvey, how do you feel?

HARVEY SMITH: Confused.

DOCTOR SMITH: (warmly) I bet.

HARVEY TREEHORN: (nervously humorous) Can you just tell me what I've got?

DOCTOR SMITH: Not one for suspense, I take it.

HARVEY SMITH: Not really used to being in this situation.

DOCTOR SMITH: I bet. (a beat) You have Type 2 diabetes.

DOCTOR CASH: Cancer.

HARVEY SMITH: Really?

DOCTOR CASH: Of the liver, lung, and prostate. And there's mild testicular... and of course, there's some brain, but that's mostly benign.

HARVEY TREEHORN: Mostly?

DOCTOR SMITH: It's not uncommon for adults. The upside is that we caught it before it was a very bad incident.

HARVEY SMITH: Yes, how fortunate.

DOCTOR SMITH: I understand. It's unnerving. For the most part this only means your habits will have to change — for the rest of your life. Not dramatically, mind you, but things will have to be altered. Routine habits established.

HARVEY TREEHORN: Okay. (a beat) I... don't really know...

DOCTOR CASH: ... your options? That's why I'm here. We'll go over your coverage, determine your deductible, and see what you can handle out of pocket. Then we can determine how much time you have left.

HARVEY TREEHORN: How much time I have left?

DOCTOR CASH: It could be a couple of months to a couple of years... depending on what you can afford.

HARVEY SMITH: Are you sure?

HARVEY TREEHORN: Are you sure?

DOCTOR SMITH: Of course.

DOCTOR CASH: That's very funny Harvey. You can pay your deductible, I hope. Otherwise we'd have to put you down right now.

HARVEY TREEHORN: What?!

DOCTOR CASH: That was a joke, Harvey. M.D. humor.

HARVEY TREEHORN: Oh. How much is my deductible?

DOCTOR CASH: Fifteen hundred dollars. Do you have it?

HARVEY TREEHORN: Not at the moment...

(DOCTOR CASH frowns sternly.)

DOCTOR CASH: Hmmm.

HARVEY TREEHORN: I mean, I can get it.

DOCTOR CASH: Today?

HARVEY SMITH: No. No. You can't be serious. I mean, yes. I know I know you are, but... I don't know, I'm supposed to say that sort of thing, right?

HARVEY TREEHORN: No. Absolutely not. I don't have fifteen hundred dollars available on command. I have to save for this sort of thing.

DOCTOR SMITH: Well, you can't ever fully prepare for an emergency. That's the nature of them.

DOCTOR CASH: Then I'm terribly sorry Mr. Treehorn. We can't get started until you do.

HARVEY SMITH: Well, I don't want to waste any time thinking about it. Let's just move forward.

(DOCTOR SMITH leads HARVEY SMITH out.)

HARVEY TREEHORN: How do you intend to make anything off of me if you let me just get worse and die before I have time to pay you?

DOCTOR CASH: Mr. Treehorn! You act as if I am trying to profit from your misfortune. No, I only take the hard line out of fiscal responsibility to the entire medical insurance... business. If we don't strictly adhere to the guidelines and if we started to work flexibility and personal care into our... care. Well, the paperwork would get very spotty and difficult, indeed. You wouldn't want that, would you?

HARVEY TREEHORN: Well yes. Yes, I would!

(The phone begins ringing.)

DOCTOR CASH: (moving toward the phone) That's very selfish isn't it, Mr. Treehorn?

HARVEY TREEHORN: I don't think so.

(DOCTOR CASH raises a finger.)

DOCTOR CASH: (to HARVEY TREEHORN) Hold on. (to the phone) Hello? Uhhh, yeah. Put her on. (to HARVEY TREEHORN) Sorry, just a second. I have to... (to the phone) Yeah? (beat) Uh huh. (beat) No. No, that's bullshit. I don't care. No, I'll walk. I will. Look, I don't care what the final price is, if eight hundred fifty thousand down isn't enough to show that we can handle it, then I'll find a more reasonable realtor in the neighborhood and live happily just down the road. Just because it's exactly what we want and where we want it, they think they can bully us. Fuck 'em. Tell 'em that. Tell them to tell them: we'll walk. (beat) No, honey. No. I — I know you love it more than anything. And you'd give up both of your Lexuses... would it be Lexuses? (beat) Well either way. Yes, and the Jag, I know. The point is, they won't let us go away. I promise you that. They just need to see the strength of our conviction. You know me. I'd wipe my ass with a hundred fifty 'g' and flush it down the toilet, just to know they didn't wring an extra dollar out of me, that I didn't want to pay. (beat) It'll be fine. Hon. It'll be fine. If I'm wrong you can have the boat if we divorce. No. Not that one, silly. The middle one. (chuckles) Yeah, you almost got me. Love ya, sweets.

(DOCTOR CASH hangs up the phone. He looks at HARVEY TREEHORN and sighs.)

DOCTOR CASH (cont'd): I'm sorry Harvey. I wish there was something I could do, but without your deductible up front, my hands are tied.

HARVEY TREEHORN: I don't understand why I can't pay payments for the deductible.

DOCTOR CASH: Look, Harvey, how on earth would we survive at this clinic if we began work based solely on someone's word?

(LIGHTS UP on a room where everything is white. The LIGHTS (at full) are nearly blinding.)

GE, in her white robes, sits in a massage chair with her face buried in the 'pillow.'

(Her masseuse, GUFU, stands behind her dressed in white with his hands hovering over her as if massaging her with open hands... but he is making no physical contact.)

(There is a white bookcase with white books, a white desk and a white table.)

(On the table is a line of crystal orbs that are the completed Harvey Projects.)

(On the wall is a poster featuring a large Harvey Smith smiling with his arms folded. The poster has the headline "101 Ways to a Better Harvey Project - 8th Edition" and a byline "by Ge." At the bottom it reads "Available for download it now!")

GOD enters in white with a white backpack slung over his shoulder.

GE: God. You're late.

(He sets his backpack on the floor.)

GOD: You've always taught us that time is abstract in nature and therefore controllable.

GOD sits in a white chair.

GE: True. However, you should adhere to restraints placed upon time by your peers. The collective perception of time can be averaged and it is a paid respect to do the mental mathematics... and of course, it helps one to avoid unfortunate circumstances; like encroachment upon a mentor's massage time.

GOD: I apologize. Why don't you fold time so that you may relish it?

GE: What have I always told you was the greatest power a deity may possess?

GOD: Restraint.

GE: Did you believe me?

GOD: Of course.

GE: Hmmm.

GOD: Look, I didn't intend to be late, Ge.

GE: But are you sorry?

GOD: If you are finished scolding, perhaps we could begin.

GE: Such impatience.

(She sighs deeply and lifts her head to look at GOD.)

GE (cont'd): God, if you are merely anxious for your grade, you'll have to wait a good while longer. We've much more to talk about than the numerical value that I've placed on your project.

(Back to HARVEY SMITH's world.)

(GOD cools his heels and GE lowers her face into the pillow as the massage continues.)

(HARVEY SMITH is sitting in a chair facing JOHN TOPPING who is sitting in a chair opposite.)

HARVEY SMITH: I've never done this. Really. (a beat) So I'm not sure where to start. (a beat) I guess.

JOHN TOPPING: This is your time, Harvey. You start wherever you wish. You must have some sense of what is bothering you. Give me an example of what is causing your frustration and anxiety. Be it a relationship with someone else, or your career, perhaps. This is your time, Harvey.

HARVEY SMITH: You look... I don't know. Familiar. Have we met?

JOHN TOPPING: Perhaps.

HARVEY SMITH: Hmm.

JOHN TOPPING: We could try to place it, or we could move forward. Again, I don't want to be repetitive, but this is your time, Harvey.

HARVEY SMITH: Yes, yes, I know. I suppose I'm stalling because I don't know where to start.

JOHN TOPPING: I understand that. Finding a beginning is the greatest struggle for most of my patients. But once we find the problem, the solution is a downhill slide.

HARVEY SMITH: You think so?

JOHN TOPPING: Let me tell you a brief, but true, anecdote. I had a friend who worked for a phone service. When a problem arose he was often asked how long it would take to fix it. Every time he was asked, the answer was the same: "About five minutes." When he saw or heard their incredulous reaction to this statement, he would then add

that he couldn't start fixing it, until he knew what was wrong — and that could take all day.

HARVEY SMITH: That's great.

JOHN TOPPING: And true.

HARVEY SMITH: Well, okay. Um, I think I told you this in the form, but I'm a writer...

JOHN TOPPING: Yes, of course. And how do you feel about that? Are you happy with your work?

HARVEY SMITH: Well... at times. I mean yes. I'm not sure. I have a hard time with consistency.

JOHN TOPPING: In your writing?

HARVEY SMITH: Yes. And I suppose my... life. It's just — well, actually, too much consistency in my writing, I guess. My life, my mind is so scattered, and my ideas are so —

JOHN TOPPING: Okay Harvey. I'm going to stop you there.

HARVEY SMITH: Oh. Did I say something that...?

JOHN TOPPING: No. You're stammering.

HARVEY SMITH: Okay.

JOHN TOPPING: I'm going to say this again. This is your time, Harvey. Use it well and wisely. You know things about yourself that only you can know. I am here to be the one person you don't have to hold back in front of. Stammering often indicates censoring. Censoring is going to drive you to make this therapy as ineffective as your own life has been.

HARVEY SMITH: I never said my life has been ineffective.

JOHN TOPPING: Tell me, without hesitation, your own assessment of your problems. What is wrong with Harvey Smith?

HARVEY SMITH: Harvey has... (a beat) First person or...?

JOHN TOPPING: Just go, Harvey. Do it! Let it out.

(HARVEY SMITH begins spilling and as JOHN TOPPING interjects their repartee becomes more and more rapid-fire excited.)

HARVEY SMITH: Harvey drinks too much.

JOHN TOPPING: Good, Harvey. Go on.

HARVEY SMITH: Harvey is paranoid about his day job.

JOHN TOPPING: Tell me why — quickly.

HARVEY SMITH: Harvey is so much older than the people his level that he feels his inexperience will be called out despite his strength of wisdom.

JOHN TOPPING: Give me more.

HARVEY SMITH: Harvey has commitment issues though he's ready to love.

JOHN TOPPING: Terrific! Why?

HARVEY SMITH: He has commitment issues because he's been in love with a character of his own making for as long as he can remember.

JOHN TOPPING: Her name?

HARVEY SMITH: Summer Westwater, and he still believes he can find her in reality.

JOHN TOPPING: What does Harvey write?

HARVEY SMITH: He writes ironic, and sometimes farcical, social and political commentary in the form of short-plays but they are always just that --- short.

JOHN TOPPING: Does he want more than that?

HARVEY SMITH: He wants more than anything to expand and do something complete, and different, and remarkable. But they always end up the same.

JOHN TOPPING: The same how?

HARVEY SMITH: Abstract and hopeful, cynical and real all at once.

JOHN TOPPING: Yes. Keep going.

HARVEY SMITH: And above all, short.

JOHN TOPPING: Keep going.

HARVEY SMITH: He writes about his own life and experiences and opinions through another character of his own creation that bears his own name...

JOHN TOPPING: He's also Harvey Smith?

HARVEY SMITH: No, his last name is as overblown as the character is in relation to his maker — in an overblown world.

JOHN TOPPING: In relation?

HARVEY SMITH: Exaggerated life in an abstract world, but still reflective of Harvey Smith's life in the real world.

JOHN TOPPING: What is this fake Harvey's name?

HARVEY SMITH: It's Harvey.

JOHN TOPPING: Say it. Say the full name!

(HARVEY TREEHORN rushes on stage as HARVEY SMITH says:)

HARVEY SMITH: Harvey Treehorn!

JOHN TOPPING: Harvey Treehorn?

HARVEY SMITH: Yes, it's Harvey Treehorn!

JOHN TOPPING: (standing) Kill him!

HARVEY SMITH: Yes!

(HARVEY TREEHORN flies backwards as if struck by an invisible force.)

HARVEY SMITH (cont'd): (losing all thunder) What? No. No, I can't.

(HARVEY TREEHORN, dazed, begins to get back to his feet.)

(JOHN TOPPING moves to HARVEY SMITH and hovers over him.)

JOHN TOPPING: You can. You must. (putting his hand on HARVEY SMITH's shoulder)
Kill — Harvey — Treehorn.

HARVEY SMITH: I can't.

JOHN TOPPING: Nonsense! You're the only one who can! Do it, Harvey!

HARVEY SMITH: I... I will! Harvey Treehorn will die tonight!

(HARVEY TREEHORN flies backwards again.)

(Back to the deities.)

GOD: What's to discuss, Ge? I fulfilled the assignment. Can I just get my grade?

GE: Indeed, you fulfilled the obligations and then some. In fact, I have never seen a student create such a detailed world around the Harvey assigned to them. A character who creates characters. Two worlds in one Harvey Project.

GOD: And...

GE: ... one world was more detailed than any student before you, the other as superficial as your peers.

GOD: It's nice that you recognize my sense of irony.

GE: I could make quite a list out of your strengths... yet you have weaknesses that

degenerate your every accomplishment.

GOD: Like?

GE: Impatience, for one.

GOD: I'm simply ready to build my true world and put my studies behind me. Surely that is understandable to a practitioner — especially one able to recognize my abilities.

GE: (to the MASSEUSE) Gufa. That will be all for now.

GUFA: Yes, Ge. Shall we schedule another appointment?

GE: No.

(GE stands and straightens her clothes.)

(She gives GUFA a small clear orb, or a marble.)

GE (cont'd): I put a little extra knowledge in this one, Gufa. Take it slowly.

GUFA: Thank you, Ge.

GE: You're welcome. Now go, I'll contact you when I know more of my schedule.

GUFA: Very good. Thank you.

(HARVEY SMITH and JOHN TOPPING have left and HARVEY TREEHORN stands alone on the other side of the stage.)

(GUFA touches the orb to his forehead, takes a deep breath of pleasure.)

(GUFA wheels out the massage chair as he exits.)

(GE watches GUFA go. When he's left she turns back to GOD.)

(HARVEY SMITH returns to his desk at home. He is stuffing papers into his wastebasket, and drops in archive CDs.)

(Lights focus on HARVEY TREEHORN, alone.)

HARVEY TREEHORN: I lay between the wisps of fragmented bittersweet, ebbing already. Why couldn't I hug the clouds and stay a child forever, chasing the coattails of magic? My world was created. It's not that I'm angry, I just wanted more time. This perpetual retrospect is most unkind, for now I understand. I understand and can do nothing. I bid myself good night eternally, for myself is all I could ever see. Forget me soon, God, so that I may truly sleep.

(Lights return to GOD and GE, now alone.)

(HARVEY TREEHORN disappears.)

GE: Restraint. Your insolence would be unbearable to a lesser deity. It certainly was to your poor Harveys.

GOD: There was nothing wrong with my project.

GE: For all of your complexity and all of your creativity, your confidence is blinding. You lack...

GOD: ... patience? Yes. I know. However, I do not hold that trait in as high a regard as you. May we move on now?

GE: No. (a beat as she looks at him reproachfully) Just because you create a character does not mean you can control how he or she may feel. You can guide them toward an emotion, but you cannot give them one.

(GE walks to the line of crystal orbs and chooses one – GOD's. She continues on to her desk as she speaks and sits behind it.)

GE (cont'd): If you cannot comprehend what your character is feeling, you will lose them entirely — just as you did in your project.

GOD: Why are you saying that? My project turned out fine.

GE: You had placed measurements upon time for your Earth?

GOD: Yes.

(GE holds up GOD's project.)

GE: In the time that passed on your Earth between when you turned in your project, and when I examined it — your Harvey Smith killed his Harvey...

GOD: Treehorn.

GE: ... Treehorn. And he found his Summer — despite you.

GOD: I find that hard to believe.

GE: As he did you. Harvey gave up on you, God. And in doing so, found you, as well. But the God he discovered in his heart was not written in the books of men.

GOD: I didn't give him the strength.

GE: Because you failed to prepare against your antithesis.

GOD: No manifestation of evil approached my Harvey Smith.

GE: Because you didn't look. And evil, he certainly was not.

(GOD stands abruptly.)

GOD: What are you accusing me of?

GE: There is that tremendous temper — famous all over your Earth. Calm yourself down.

(GE places the orb in the line with the rest of the Harvey Projects.)

GE (cont'd): You have much to learn about who you are.

GOD: And you know who I am, better than I?

GE: I know you think you're good.

GOD: But you think I am not.

GE: I believe there is good in you.

GOD: But were it on scales...

GE: I do not wish to provoke you.

GOD: You fear me?

GE: I fear having to teach you a very different kind of lesson.

GOD: Why?

GE: Because you are intelligent and inventive.

GOD: Then what is the problem?

GE: You are not wise.

GOD: So you say.

(GE stands.)

GE: Stop provoking me. I refuse to join in this bickering.

GOD: You still wrestle with restraint? If you desire to raise your mind against me, then do it! I wish to see what you are capable of.

GE: If you go into the universe with an expulsion on your record, you'll be lucky to be offered a small planet in as desolate a solar system as you were given for the Harvey Project. Is that what you want?

GOD: I don't care where I'm placed. I'll succeed.

GE: You think your war-torn Earth has any end but self-destruction?

GOD: It was a great practice exercise. There are things I would change, of course.

GE: While your planet was a clever concept, it was tragically doomed from the execution. Your vanity and inconsistency created a mess beyond repair.

GOD: Now you sound too vain to admit you've a student that could create a more dramatic planet than your Docilear.

GE: Strange that no other deity has criticized my construct, despite the fact that it has been studied daily by students, professors, historians, and the greatest minds in the Deitus. Do tell me, what fault do you find with the central planet of my much revered solar system?

GOD: It's dull.

GE: Because there is no war? Battles are fought daily, but they are of words and intellect. Brute destruction is reserved for tales of a mind's creation. Realization of such a thing is a blight upon any deity's record.

GOD: There's no drama without conflict.

GE: Again, there are verbal disagreements and ideas in conflict everyday. But there is always a peaceful resolution.

GOD: And the fun in that...?

GE: Watching a race advance.

(GOD crosses toward a line of Harvey Projects.)

GOD: Like my colleagues did?

(GOD pats the top of an orb.)

GOD (cont'd): Shall we see how clever and inventive they were?

(HARVEY SMITH rises from behind the orb. He is not GOD's HARVEY SMITH.)

GE: Those projects are not for your eyes.

GOD: (to HARVEY) What is your name?

HARVEY SMITH: (brightly) Harvey Smith.

GOD: Tell me about yourself.

GE: God, stop this immediately.

HARVEY SMITH: I like to fish. I like to eat fish. I pray to Gib everyday. I have a wife. She is nice to me. I have two children...

(GOD pats the orb again and HARVEY SMITH lowers back down.)

(GOD smugly turns back to GE.)

GOD: My human's advanced faster than any race in known history and you know that. I think you know that.

GE: There is always a price for impatience.

GOD: What price would Earth have to pay for rapid progress?

GE: (bitingly) The minds of your humans were not ready for the dangerous technology of their own creation. Most technology sprang from efforts toward war. They learned technology to destroy themselves before they learned to understand one another first.

GOD: So says you.

GE: (getting heated) And why wouldn't I? Yes, your race advanced in technology and rose to an intermediate ability to multi-process. But how were they to understand the power of harnessing positive energy? Positivity had no place in a world that could not rise above differences. They were programmed to focus on the negative.

GOD: Why would I want to use the default positivity ratings? A bland, friendly place...

GE: (hotly) ... a world where the mind can grow so radically that each individual is able to create their own peace.

GOD: Earth would have overrun Docilear technology within another sixty Earth years.

GE: To what end? Self-destruction?

GOD: Perhaps. Why not?

GE: If so, what is the point of creation at all?

GOD: Without closure my humans would be as frustratingly banal and boring as your Dociles. It's better to burn out, than fade away.

GE: I will have to alert the board if this discussion goes any further in this direction.

(GOD stands in resolute silence as GE returns to her desk.)

(LIGHTS go up on HARVEY SMITH's workplace.)

(CLAUDE is eying a girl – SUMMER – as HARVEY SMITH ambles in coolly without his briefcase.)

(HARVEY SMITH does not notice that SUMMER is sitting with her legs crossed in the lobby, flipping the pages of a magazine.)

CLAUDE: (happily surprised) Harvey!

(CLAUDE positions HARVEY SMITH so his back is to SUMMER so he can continue to watch her as they chat.)

HARVEY SMITH: Claude. How's it going buddy?

(SUMMER looks up at the exchange in mild disinterest and returns to her magazine. HARVEY is still oblivious.)

CLAUDE: Harvey, you scared the bloody hell out of us. You all right?

HARVEY SMITH: Never better my friend.

CLAUDE: Magnificent. They said you could come back to work this soon? You should take more time, mate.

HARVEY SMITH: I'm not here to work, I'm here to quit.

CLAUDE: You found something else?

HARVEY SMITH: Nope.

CLAUDE: If you wait and get sacked you'll get unem...

HARVEY SMITH: It's all right. I found just what I need.

CLAUDE: What's that?

HARVEY SMITH: The fear of God.

CLAUDE: Fear of God?

HARVEY SMITH: It's time to be hungry again. Time to write because I need to. Time to remember survivalism.

CLAUDE: Eye of the tiger nonsense?

HARVEY SMITH: You got it. I'm off to tell Gary right now.

CLAUDE: Only you can know what you need, Harve. Miss you though.

HARVEY SMITH: (walking off): Oh, you'll still be my wingman.

(They smile as he goes off.)

(CLAUDE moves toward SUMMER.)

CLAUDE: Hello there.

SUMMER looks up.

SUMMER: Hello back.

CLAUDE walks over to her.

CLAUDE: I'm Claude. What's your name?

SUMMER: Summer.

CLAUDE: Why that's gorgeous. Can't say I've ever known a Summer.

SUMMER: And I've never known a Claude.

(A short pause.)

CLAUDE: So what brings you to our humble home, Summer?

SUMMER: I'm training you for the switch to our layout program.

CLAUDE: Are you now?

SUMMER: I am.

CLAUDE: What for?

SUMMER: Efficiency.

CLAUDE: Now that's just terrific. And how long's that take?

SUMMER: Most of the day.

CLAUDE: That's all we get you for? Summer never seems to last long enough 'round here.

SUMMER: Wow. No one's ever used that Summer/summer thing before. You're quite clever.

(Extends her hand for a shake.)

(CLAUDE shakes her hand unenthusiastically.)

CLAUDE: Yes, well nice effort, but I come from a land that's been perfecting sarcasm for many centuries.

SUMMER: Yeah. Well, sorry to break your balls when your defenses were down.

CLAUDE: You're really here just for the day?

SUMMER: Yes. But there's phone support through the next three months. Possible visits, if necessary.

CLAUDE: Delightful. Have you done this very long?

SUMMER: That depends on your perception of long. It's different for everyone.

CLAUDE: Yes, I suppose. Wait. (eyes her slyly) Was that a silly innuendo joke?

SUMMER: Perhaps. It is amazing how many people never get it when I do that. My little secret with myself.

CLAUDE: You've a dirty mind then?

SUMMER: Oh yes. But it's all in the mind. I'm a good girl.

CLAUDE: Really?

SUMMER: The best.

CLAUDE: At what?

SUMMER: Ah ha. Like minds. But that's it. Done.

CLAUDE: Oh come on. We've just started.

SUMMER: Nope. Strangers only get a glimpse. Almost two years, to answer the actual question.

CLAUDE: And how long have you been playing flirty innuendo word games with unsuspecting strangers?

SUMMER: Who says I was flirting? I tend to flirt only with people who have a shot.

CLAUDE: And I don't?

SUMMER: Oh no.

CLAUDE: Why not?

SUMMER: Dunno. Can't explain it. But no.

CLAUDE: That's fair.

SUMMER: Nothing against you. It's a gut thing.

CLAUDE: I understand, it's no problem. In fact...

(A pause.)

SUMMER: What?

CLAUDE: I... (sighs) No. It's just something strange. A strange... feeling.

SUMMER: How so?

CLAUDE: I don't know. It's just very strange that I've... nothing more to say. You've got me stymied. Right beautiful lass comes in to show us a thing or two, and I've nothing more to say.

SUMMER: I guess that's a compliment.

(CLAUDE studies her in an odd manner.)

CLAUDE: But I've always something to say. (a new thought) Actually...

SUMMER: Yes?

CLAUDE: Actually, I do have something more to say that's not in my character. I'm going to do it anyway, so you should understand the gravity of what I am about to do.

SUMMER: Um. Okay.

CLAUDE: You see, I'm that guy. I lunge. Something beautiful, I lunge. That's me. Don't care if I fall on my face, know what I mean? (an amused sigh) I really can't believe I'm doing this.

SUMMER: (hesitantly) Uh huh.

CLAUDE: I think you need to... Bullocks. Are you? Do you have a...?

SUMMER: No. But...

CLAUDE: This may very well be the only selfless thing I have ever done.

SUMMER: Selfless?

CLAUDE: I'd love to woo you even though you've said... but, you see I can't, because --

SUMMER: Claude. I'm here to work, I don't think it's appropriate to...

CLAUDE: No, no, no. I mean, yes. I know. But my point! Ha. I can't quite explain, but I've got this odd desire to do a thing for my dear friend.

SUMMER: Claude, please.

CLAUDE: No, I know. This is...

SUMMER: ... going to be awkward, is what it is.

CLAUDE: No, no, you aren't for me, I know that.

SUMMER: I'm getting a bit uncomfortable.

HARVEY SMITH walks in beaming.

CLAUDE: Don't. (sees HARVEY) Harvey! (aside to SUMMER) Sorry. (to HARVEY) Yes. Harvey. (nods his head toward SUMMER) Harvey Smith, meet Summer here. She'll be training your department today.

SUMMER: Yes. I'm...

(Upon hearing this – still in stride – and seeing SUMMER, HARVEY SMITH suddenly loses all ability to walk. He stumbles in front of them both, falls and rolls.)

(He quickly gets to his feet, rushes to SUMMER and takes a moment. Then, almost breathless says:)

HARVEY SMITH: Sorry. Hello. Ahhhh. It is an extreme pleasure to meet you, at last. (a painful beat and realization that he said something foolish) But please, pardon me, but I do have to run and take... care... of something.

(HARVEY SMITH rushes off from whence he came.)

SUMMER: (to CLAUDE)

At last?

(CLAUDE shrugs.)

(In the distance HARVEY is shouting:)

HARVEY SMITH: Gary! Gary, wait! I take it back!

(CLAUDE gives an awkward chuckle.)

CLAUDE: Yes. (awkward laugh) That's our Harvey. You won't find another anywhere in the world.

(Returning to the deities.)

GE: (seething and yet, calm) Let's discuss your antithesis and see if we can get any closer to having you understand my point.

GOD: There really was no antithesis. They didn't stick. On the whole, my humans were too intelligent to hang on to silly demons and hocus-pocus. Each attempt at an antithesis failed.

GE: A deity does not create an anthesis. One rises to balance the work of the deity. That is the nature of the entire Deitus.

GOD: Then why is your whole solar system so at peace when you must have an antithesis of your own?

GE: Because training a race patiently embeds something deep within them. Something that outside influences and tests of character cannot take away. If the deity is truly fair and balanced, without merely claiming to be so, the antithesis will hardly be noticed.

GOD: You are making my point.

GE: No, I am not. You must take the time to raise your children. You can't make a couple of visits, flood the planet, imbue a hasty set of rules — then just fold your arms, sit back and wait. You never even bothered to justify why your planet had been around

so long before you arrived.

GOD: Faith.

GE: Faith is simplistic circular reasoning. It's the fail safe path of the lazy used in many of the provided templates.

GOD: The back history was merely extra credit! I was only required to create a Harvey Smith of 30 years. I could have used one of the templates without having any effect on my grade. I chose to create a developed world that was entirely mine and you dare to call me lazy?

GE: But you chose to interact early and walked away for the prolonged (and less exciting) slow growth period early in the semester — which is when they needed you more than ever. Early development is essential and you left them in dark and deadly times.

GOD: It taught them perseverance and strength. They didn't need to know more.

GE: Yes, they learned strength and perseverance, but you did not teach it. That is why you continually underestimated them. Even a little honesty would have made the faith easier to bear as the race advanced.

GOD: You talk like they needed an antithesis.

GE: And now we've reached my point. Because, from necessity, they had one.

GOD: Who?

GE: It was different for everyone. Some never found him. But he was everything you were not. You were invisible to them; he was everywhere he could be undetected — by you. You taught them fear; he offered confidence. You were evasive; he was available.

GOD: The freedom I granted them through my absence is where I displayed the restraint you value so much.

GE: Restraint is withholding power you possess for the safety of others, or a greater plan. It is not born of carelessness or laziness.

GOD: I cared. And I was not lazy. Besides, you still haven't proven there was an antithesis. (beat) What about my devout followers?

GE: They followed you in name only. In their hearts they didn't truly believe that you were evil and spiteful. Despite everything the monks had transcribed from the mouths of the simple in earlier times. In their minds, they remade you, to be exactly what you were not, but what they wished you to be.

GOD: For example?

GE: They believed you would be forgiving, that you cared for each individual. They thought you had a plan and were simply practicing patience. They had faith that a fair world was merely a day away... or at least that a heaven awaited. They believed the unjust would one day get their due. (pause) They thought you could answer their undying question.

GOD: Which was?

GE: Why. (beat) Why they were there. Then they could certainly figure out what to do. They were eternally confident that you would tell them — grant them that one boon.

GOD: To do that would have made them weak and dependent. (pause) And boring.

GE: To flourish, every race needs hope. The farther they grew, the more you let the powerful spin out of control, and the meek to be forced into hopelessness.

GOD: That is the nature of any modern republic. It was an inevitable evolution. I believe an ethical republic will grow slowly and without focus.

GE: Are you not alarmed at what I am telling you?

GOD: What are you telling me?

GE: That your antithesis was good.

(HARVEY SMITH AND SUMMER entering in the middle of a walk.)

(SUMMER sees a basketball lying on the ground. She runs over to pick it up.)

SUMMER: I can't believe someone left this out.

HARVEY SMITH: Looks like a good one, too.

(SUMMER fakes a pass to HARVEY. He snaps to attention.)

SUMMER: Ha ha! Gotcha.

HARVEY SMITH: Once.

SUMMER: Oh I can get you again.

(She dribbles the ball a few times. She's not bad.)

HARVEY SMITH: So where are you from? Originally.

SUMMER: That's complicated.

(She dribbles around HARVEY and does a looping hook shot over his head. HARVEY runs forward and intercepts it.)

HARVEY SMITH: Well, I've got time.

(HARVEY bounce passes it to her.)

SUMMER: You'd better. We just started this damn date.

HARVEY SMITH: Damn date?

SUMMER: That's right, mister. (dribbles) Better be grateful I gave up all the other offers.

HARVEY SMITH: I bet you did.

SUMMER: I was a military brat. I'm from all over.

(She passes it to him.)

HARVEY SMITH: Really?

(HARVEY dribbles toward her and tries to bounce it through her legs, a trick he obviously knows. SUMMER closes her knees in time to stop it and it lamely rolls forward.)

SUMMER: Forty-two of the fifty states in fact.

HARVEY SMITH: That move would've been really cool, by the way. (tiny beat) Was it hard growing up like that?

SUMMER: Oh no.

(SUMMER has run up and stopped the ball with her foot. She sits on it trying to balance.)

SUMMER: I was an inquisitive child. I always found mind candy wherever I was. Mom always said I was born smiling, like: "Okay, let's get this life going!" And Dad was very good at finding time.

(HARVEY sits on the edge of the stage.)

HARVEY SMITH: What about schools?

SUMMER: Oh, I liked the variety, really. Most of my education came from what I learned at home, anyway. School just taught me to play nice.

HARVEY SMITH: Did you play nice?

SUMMER: Most of the time.

(She kicks him playfully, while still balancing on the ball.)

HARVEY SMITH: Were there rebel years?

SUMMER: Of course, I guess. But not to the degree that anyone would have noticed, really. I just liked having little secrets. Never over-the-top, but I had my secret rebellions.

HARVEY SMITH: Now that's intriguing.

SUMMER: Oh really? So you focus on the risqué?

(She kicks him again.)

HARVEY SMITH: No.

(HARVEY grabs her ankle and twists just enough to make her turn and fall off the basketball.)

HARVEY SMITH: But I already sense an inherent — goodness, in you. (passes a sly look) It makes me wonder just what you consider rebellion.

(She sits up and into Indian-style. She plops the ball in her lap.)

SUMMER: Well, I didn't drink to get drunk at parties, or play with drugs — much. I wasn't a sex maniac, but I had it. (she rolls the basketball off) No, I never mastered the art of living dangerously, but I did want experience. Thing is, I refused to chase it at the risk of my life or livelihood.

HARVEY SMITH: Very healthy perspective. Especially when you were seventeen.

SUMMER: (knocking her fist on her chest) Old soul in there.

HARVEY SMITH: I know what you mean.

(Pause.)

SUMMER: Harvey?

HARVEY SMITH: Yeah?

SUMMER: When I ran into you... or rather, when you ran into the ground. (smiles) You said it was nice to meet me — at last. What did you mean by that?

HARVEY SMITH: Ah. I knew you were bound to ask. (beat) I really wish I hadn't said it. And I'm not sure how to say it now... or if I should.

SUMMER: Why?

HARVEY SMITH: It might frighten you.

SUMMER: Should it frighten me?

HARVEY SMITH: No, no. At least I don't think so. But I think it probably will.

SUMMER: Then just tell me. I'm a no nonsense kind of gal. And I appreciate blunt honesty.

HARVEY SMITH: I'm very good at the blunt honesty thing, but I think this just might call

for some self-censorship.

SUMMER: Harvey. I think you're gonna have to do this.

HARVEY SMITH: I know. It just scares the hell out of me.

SUMMER: Why?

HARVEY SMITH: Because it might ruin everything — before we have anything.

SUMMER: I'm beginning to see why you think I might get freaked out.

HARVEY SMITH: You see?

SUMMER: Yeah. But that's just because you're being so mysterious and cryptic. If you'd just come out with it, it could be a lot easier to swallow.

HARVEY SMITH: I know.

SUMMER: So out with it.

HARVEY SMITH: All right. (beat) It's just... I feel things rather strongly.

SUMMER: Are you really going to start like that?

HARVEY SMITH: Okay. You can't do that when I'm about to rip my heart out and show it to you.

SUMMER: That sounds hot.

HARVEY SMITH: Don't be cute. It makes it harder.

SUMMER: See? That's hot!

HARVEY SMITH: All right lady, I can't do it.

SUMMER: Okay. I'll stop. Go ahead.

HARVEY SMITH: Hrrmph.

SUMMER: Come on, show me that slimy, sexy heart of yours.

HARVEY SMITH: You're killing me, woman.

SUMMER: Pulsing aorta and all.

HARVEY SMITH: (playfully) I'm out, babe. You missed it.

SUMMER: Okay, okay. I'm sorry. (she shoves him gently) Ready? Serious Summer, coming right up.

HARVEY SMITH: (laughing) Yeah, I bet she is.

SUMMER: No. I'm serious. Please. Go ahead.

HARVEY SMITH: Hey, you're the one asking for this.

SUMMER: I know. Go on.

HARVEY SMITH: (eyes her playfully suspicious) So. I've learned the hard way that I feel these ridiculously strong emotions — just for the sake of: Feeling. A strong. Emotion. You know, because I want to experience it, not really because I do... Feel it.

SUMMER: Something a lady loves to hear.

HARVEY SMITH: Right. You see, when I let the poetry of my emotions fly — it's like turning on a pair of high beams. And though rabbits may freeze in headlights, they eventually run. So if you want to catch a rabbit, you need to keep your headlights off — or, your mouth shut, in my case. (beat) This isn't making any sense at all, is it?

SUMMER: Yeah, no. And I think it's supposed to be deer in headlights.

(They smile together.)

HARVEY SMITH: What I mean to say, is that if I do this... it's going to be blinding. And rabbits run. Which is usually for the best, really... because the feelings would never last. It was always just a false burst of... (beat) But not with... (beat) I just don't want you to run.

SUMMER: I don't think either of us has enough information to know what we will do, or want to do, Harvey. Either way.

HARVEY SMITH: Exactly my point.

(Pause.)

SUMMER: Did I miss something, or am I no closer to getting an answer to my question?

HARVEY SMITH: No. You're right. (sighs) If I avoid telling you why I said that, you may run because I seem like some scary stalker guy who's hiding something... But if I do tell you, you may run because you think I'm insane.

SUMMER: Well. I'm very, very curious — and alarmed — now... to say the least.

HARVEY SMITH: Right. But you know, fuck it. Now that I think about it. If I'm right, then you can't run. So here goes...

(Pause.)

HARVEY SMITH (cont'd): Ready?

SUMMER: I think so.

HARVEY SMITH: You're sure?

SUMMER: Harvey.

HARVEY SMITH: Okay. Here it is in the most simplistic way I can offer... I know you already.

SUMMER: Umm...

HARVEY SMITH: In a way. (beat) In a way that requires a certain disconnect from the rules of the world as we know them. But I've known you my entire life. My entire life. It may sound crazy — maybe it is crazy — but I've waited and waited for you. I've written about what you'd do in situations... I've heard your name whispered upon blades of grass, bouncing on the crest of the wind, echoing through hallways. That was pretty dramatic. Did you see that drama?

SUMMER: First rate, pal.

HARVEY SMITH: Yeah. Well, you've motivated a lot of that kind of crap. (smiles gently) But seriously Summer, it's been there as long as I can remember. And I knew all along that if I found you I'd know it in an instant. I've been waiting... so long — for my Summer to come.

(HARVEY looks away.)

SUMMER: Sometimes we think we know a thing...

HARVEY SMITH: Please don't do that. I am realistic about this madness. I know it sounds like juvenile silliness, and I probably wouldn't believe it myself were I not unwillingly bound to this... premonition. You know? I mean, I knew you'd have a past as real and foreign to me as can be. But I also knew that inside you'd still be the same. (looking back) The essence, the soul, the intangible you.

SUMMER: Who I am inside.

HARVEY SMITH: Yes.

SUMMER: So what is it you think is inside me?

HARVEY SMITH: Inside I believe you're incapable of being anything but genuine. And yet you're unpredictable. And I think you're crazy about me already — but you have no idea why.

(A beat.)

SUMMER: Well I...

HARVEY SMITH: I think you'd pick a fight just to see me flustered, and then you'd make love to me to wash it all away. You're sly and sweet simultaneously. You'd let me toss words away, and then be the secret Muse who tucks them inside yourself to make sure they're not lost forever.

SUMMER: Harvey...

HARVEY SMITH: The world is a touch better place with you in it — and everyone near you can feel that. If you claimed me, I'd be filled with inexorable pride every second I live beyond that day. You are motivation and inspiration.

SUMMER: Do you think this amuses me?

HARVEY SMITH: And I'll never grow tired of you, just as I've never grown tired of searching for you. It doesn't really matter what you are. I can feel that. And it's all... more than fine. More than good. It's simple, wondrous, magic.

SUMMER: Harvey. You're not even listening to me.

(A beat as he really looks at her.)

HARVEY SMITH: I'm sorry.

SUMMER: You do know how silly this sounds, correct?

HARVEY SMITH: Absolutely! But I do believe it. I've seen you, heard you, slept beside you for many years. And finding you now...

SUMMER: I think you've got the wrong girl, Harvey.

HARVEY SMITH: *(leaning in)* Finding you now... begins the most difficult task of my entire life.

SUMMER: *(shakes her head)*: What's that?

HARVEY SMITH: Not screwing it up. Because as much as I can truly believe — already — that you're the one I've always dreamt of. How could I possibly make you believe it, or feel for me?

SUMMER: You can never make anyone do anything.

HARVEY SMITH: I know. But you can screw something up you feel is written in your fate, because you're hasty and blunt and the other person has the right to disagree.

(Pause.)

SUMMER: Like I said, I don't think I know enough to agree or disagree with you on anything at this point. But this is quite a thing.

HARVEY SMITH: I know. Why would you believe? That's my dilemma. I believe with all of my soul that I'm right. Here in a world that grows out of magic, loses hope, and treats love as a necessary beginning to a passionless friendship. And if I blow this... if I can't explain it properly...

SUMMER: You don't explain feelings.

HARVEY SMITH: Well of course you can't. Because with the other person it's... faith. I guess.

SUMMER: Have you ever had a relationship, Harvey? A real relationship?

HARVEY SMITH: Yes.

SUMMER: A real relationship?

HARVEY SMITH: Long enough to wonder why I wasn't asking... (sighs in frustration) But just having a fear of commitment justified the fear itself, you know? But if I did commit I would have betrayed her, myself — and you. I've only just met you — in reality — but I don't have that fear. As crazy as that may sound.

SUMMER: No fear of commitment?

HARVEY SMITH: With you? No. None whatsoever. I would marry you this moment if you'd let me. All rules are out the window with you.

SUMMER: That's...

HARVEY SMITH: ... overwhelming?

SUMMER: Well hell yes!

HARVEY SMITH: I know. And crazy.

SUMMER: Well it's difficult to...

HARVEY SMITH: Believe.

SUMMER: Imagine... and believe. People don't... You don't say that...

HARVEY SMITH: But it's true — to me and in my world.

SUMMER: Harvey, this is our first date.

HARVEY SMITH: I know.

SUMMER: This is our first date.

HARVEY SMITH: I know that.

SUMMER: You don't sound like you know that.

HARVEY SMITH: Look, I didn't want to say anything. You made me. Well, no, I had to after my slip of the tongue. But I can't lie. Never to you. So that's why I give this confession, though you'll probably run... (looks up at her sheepishly)... rabbit.

SUMMER: Wow. (deep breath) You are an odd character Harvey Smith.

HARVEY SMITH: That's me. One of a kind.

SUMMER: I'm beginning to think.

HARVEY SMITH: Summer, I'd give anything to have you not run. But if you want to, I completely understand.

SUMMER: Just who are you, anyway? (looks hard at him) Are you just messing with my mind?

HARVEY SMITH: No.

SUMMER: Then who the hell are you?

HARVEY SMITH: I'm Harvey Smith, believer in great, true love as a gift of God. I'm Harvey, who understands that great love still needs to live in the coarse reality of this world... but will still love your every detail. Your every detail, despite life's exhausting complexity. (a very long pause) Summer?

SUMMER: (almost a whisper) Yes?

HARVEY SMITH: I'm more afraid that I may lose you now than I ever was of not finding you at all.

SUMMER: I don't know what to say to you Harvey.

HARVEY SMITH: I know. I'm sorry to lay this at your feet.

SUMMER: What am I supposed to do? With this... information.

HARVEY SMITH: I don't know.

SUMMER: Well neither do I.

HARVEY SMITH: Can you answer one question?

SUMMER: Maybe.

HARVEY SMITH: Are you going to run?

(She turns her head out to the audience and pauses.)

SUMMER: Not right now. (slowly grows a smile) After all, we still haven't even had dinner.

(HARVEY smiles. SUMMER springs to her feet and holds her hand out. HARVEY takes it and she helps him up.)

(She puts her finger to his lips.)

SUMMER (cont'd): Now shhhh. No more talk of this.

HARVEY SMITH: Yes ma'am.

SUMMER: Harvey. I'm serious. No more talk of this. Ever.

HARVEY SMITH: Yes.

SUMMER: I'll disappear.

HARVEY SMITH: Okay.

SUMMER: So shhh.

HARVEY SMITH: Right.

SUMMER: Do you promise me?

HARVEY SMITH: Yes.

SUMMER: Good. Because I'm hungry and I do not wish to eat alone.

(She pulls him offstage.)

(Returning to the deities.)

GOD: So?

GE: So? Your antithesis was good, because you were not. Many who gave up on you, found him. In one form or another. The theoretical you became him. Even your Harvey found him — right beneath your nose.

GOD: How...? Who? To Harvey?

GE: Yes.

GOD: That's a lie. (a long pause) Show me.

GE: All right.

GE pulls open a drawer in her desk and rifles through several white envelopes.

(She pulls one out, opens it, reaches in, and pulls out GOD's actual pen computer from ACT I.)

(She pushes the "mic" button as she walks to the front of the desk.)

GE (cont'd): Index all data on drive. Notify upon completion.

GOD: How did you get that?

COMPUTER: (after a short beat, over the speaker system) Task completed.

GE: Find character "Topping" and phrase "path of our success." Notify completion and character identification.

COMPUTER: (over speaker system) Task completed. One character found. Character

identification: John Topping.

GE: Create local materialization of character. Notify.

COMPUTER: (over speakers) Task completed.

GE places the pen computer on the desk and folds her arms.

GE: John Topping?

(JOHN TOPPING emerges from underneath the desk like a backward submarine periscope.)

JOHN TOPPING: Yes. (a beat of confusion) Yes, yes, you can achieve your goals. Just like me. I'm John Topping, author of...

JOHN TOPPING wanders away from the desk his back to all.

GE: That's enough Mr. Topping. I'm Ge, it is a pleasure to meet you.

(JOHN TOPPING turns toward GE but still does not notice GOD.)

JOHN TOPPING: Hello, Ge. The pleasure is mine.

GE: And do you remember God, here?

(Upon seeing GOD, JOHN TOPPING suddenly dives for cover behind GE's desk.)

GE: Mister Topping? (silence) Mister Topping, you may reveal yourself.

JOHN TOPPING: I don't wish to be rude, but I'd really rather not.

GE: I am not asking. I assure that you will be safe here.

JOHN TOPPING: Are you certain?

GE: Yes. Now if you would please.

(JOHN TOPPING rises again and looks at GOD with trepidation.)

GE (cont'd): I would like for you to tell me about Harvey Smith.

JOHN TOPPING: Oh yes. (after a reflective beat) Harvey Smith fancied himself an eventual tragedy. He was mired in the short stories of an overblown personification of himself: Harvey Treehorn. He had to sever his dependence on this character to flourish as a writer and accomplish his goals. Only through successful writing would he have the confidence to find true love. And only through true love would his success bear no limitations.

GE: And what did you do Mr. Topping?

JOHN TOPPING: I taught him how to conquer his fear... and destroy Harvey Treehorn.

GE: Why should he destroy Harvey Treehorn?

JOHN TOPPING: Harvey Treehorn was a hindrance. A security blanket. He needed to write beyond himself.

GE: Why did you decide do this?

JOHN TOPPING: When you know how to help someone, it is the duty of a caring individual to give that help. I only offered my belief in him.

GE: When did you do this?

JOHN TOPPING: (pointing at GOD) When he was away.

GE: Why did you do it when God was away?

JOHN TOPPING: I thought he would be angry if he caught me.

GE: You thought God would be angry that you were helping someone?

JOHN TOPPING: He seemed to revel in hopelessness and failure for all but a few. Which is why traps were placed before Harvey Smith throughout his life, decimating his confidence.

GE: And you found this unfair?

JOHN TOPPING: Of course, that is why I intervened when I could go undetected.

GE: What form did you take for Harvey Smith?

JOHN TOPPING: Many. I was a homeless man in the park. Often a television image. A therapist. I sat next to him on a plane once. He hates to fly.

GE: What if I told you that Harvey Smith successfully killed Harvey Treehorn... and found his Summer?

JOHN TOPPING: I would be most pleased for him. And I would love to film his testimonial for a new segment. Success stories are very inspirational to others. Will I see him again?

GE: It is doubtful.

JOHN TOPPING: That's regrettable. I love to use real-life examples when I can.

GE: You are very thoughtful Mr. Topping.

JOHN TOPPING: (humbly) Oh I wouldn't say that. A little motivation and inspiration can give anyone redirection.

GE: Nevertheless, you are very noble.

JOHN TOPPING: Oh I don't think so. I selfishly receive personal satisfaction from such

work.

GOD: He can't be serious.

GE: Very well Mr. Topping...

JOHN TOPPING: No, no, it was nothing for me to...

GE: Mr. Topping. That's quite enough.

(GE picks up the pen computer and gives it a shake.)

JOHN TOPPING: Right.

GE: (to COMPUTER) End materialization routine.

(JOHN TOPPING disappears beneath the desk just as he came.)

COMPUTER: Task completed.

(GE lays the pen computer back on the desktop.)

GE: God?

GOD: What?

GE: Do you have a response to all of this?

GOD: Why would I? I understand the point you are trying to make, but I disagree. Just leave it at that.

GE: What exactly is my point?

GOD: I refuse to play this game.

GE: This is no game.

GOD: You are baiting me. You create some ridiculous phantom and claim he was an antithesis because you feel that having one is compulsory, yet, I do not believe I had one.

GE: You think I've invented Mr. Topping? Tell me, do you also deny that you are unfit to command a world of your own?

GOD: I am far more fit to create and control than you. I'd rather destroy my creations than watch them dance in sunshine and sugarcane with the plastic smiles of a monotonous life.

GE: You are reckless and...

GOD: Mistakes are funny, Ge. Fear entertains and tragedy makes tales to retell. As much as I would like to take credit for the Earth's madness that developed over the

semester, my imagination could never have come up with the evils of my blessed human beings.

GE: You are proud then?

GOD: I was the fiction to their truth. And they taught me that anything worth taking a moment's of your attention can only end in destruction. The rest... is the rest, and who really cares?

GE: I do.

GOD: And that is your weakness. I didn't meddle beyond those whisperings during human infancy. They became what they became on their own.

GE: You didn't meddle, you say? I studied your equations carefully. The kinder a human was, the harder the hills they had to climb. Work tripled and rewards diminished.

GOD: Without mountains to climb, what would they celebrate? It takes little spirit to amble over a small hill.

GE: We could argue indefinitely and it is growing tiresome. You came here for your grade. I shall give it to you now.

GOD: I appreciate that.

GE: Your assignment is evaluated in three parts.

GOD: Yes.

GE: The first part of your assignment was to take a planet, create a human population, and grow the population as much or little as you wished, in preparation for the Harvey Smith you would create. For this first part of your assignment you receive a perfect one hundred percent.

GOD: Thank you.

GE: You receive this because I feel you created a complex and developed society — far beyond the level of any student that preceded you.

GOD: It is good to hear you be rational.

GE: However, I must also note that I disapprove of your methods.

GOD: Which is rather narrow-minded.

GE: (takes a fierce breath) The second part of the assignment was to grow and develop a detailed Harvey Smith. Again I must give you 100 percent for your cleverness and extra efforts. Again, I do this while disapproving of your methods.

GOD: It is good to hear you be fair with your grades, even though you inappropriately allow personal bias to enter into your evaluations.

GE: (ignoring the challenge) As you know, many students in my class have leapt into their own planet as a result of an impressive assignment. My recommendations are rarely questioned by the Council and have always survived scrutiny. This third and final part does not consist of a number, but rather my recommendation to the Council.

GOD: In other words, this is all that really matters.

GE: No. But my recommendation is the determination of your fate. In your case, the nature of my decision was unprecedented, to put it lightly.

GOD: I should hope.

GE: My unusual recommendation brought an unusual result. My judgement was called into question. This led to a thorough examination of your project by independent parties and the Council of Deities themselves. (beat) We have all come to agreement as to what your punishment shall be.

GOD: Punishment?!

GE: In a manner of speaking. A unique lesson to match the unique characteristics of what you have done.

GOD: This is ridiculous! You must know that I will call for an appeal.

GE: Who would you appeal this to? The Council themselves have agreed.

GOD: But... So! What? What are you going to do? What is my "punishment" exactly?

GE: We haven't destroyed your Earth. We left it in the desolate Tutorial Zone. Your power will be stripped and you will be given only the abilities, mental and physical, of your humans.

GOD: To what end?

GE: You must live with them. If you learn something, you will return to us. If you do not, you may well witness the human race's self-destruction first hand.

GOD: (shaking his head in disbelief) You've lost it. You've cracked, Ge.

GE: I've been given the authority. (she picks up the pen computer) And in fact, you'll be going there now.

(GOD lunges at GE and they wrestle for the pen computer on the desk.)

(The SOUND OF STATIC kicks in and the lights flicker along with it, both effects in the rhythm of the wrestling match.)

(GOD takes control of the pen computer in his fist and lifts it into the air in victory and freezes as the lights peak and go to BLACKOUT.)

(STREET NOISES come up and the lights slowly rise in the warmer tones of natural

light.)

(GOD is stretched out on a sidewalk. His arm raised up with it in the same victory pose. In the place of the computer, however, there is a Pez dispenser in his hand.)

(HARVEY SMITH and SUMMER enter in nice clothes, arm in arm. As they pass GOD, HARVEY SMITH tosses a quarter to him.)

(SUMMER stops.)

SUMMER: Is that a... he's got a Pez dispenser!?!

HARVEY SMITH: How cute. (a beat) I mean sad. (a beat) Come on.

(HARVEY SMITH rushes off dragging SUMMER along.)

(GOD sits up looking confused.)

(HARVEY rushes back in, opens his wallet and removes all bills. He kneels down and claps them in GOD's free hand.)

HARVEY SMITH: (beat) May God bless you.

(HARVEY SMITH rushes off.)

(GOD looks at the money in his hand as the LIGHTS fade to blackout.)

END OF PLAY