

Follow No Strangers to the Fun Places

Lola B Pierson

PRE SHOW

*The following should be on a constant loop through the headphones. There should, independently of this, be pre-show music and all of the normal things that happen before a show.*

RADIO

We'd like to prepare you for what's about to happen, but we'd also like to make sure that every audience member is starting from the same place. The following is a test:

*Three emergency beeps are heard.*

Now is a good time to tell you about a few of our favorite things. We like when Kaspar says "I want to be a person like somebody else was once." We like it when things make us cry and we don't know why. We like it when counting feels emotional. We like it when the sound and lights and acting all happen perfectly at the exact same moment and it feels like magic. We like dogs. I am, of course, using the royal "we."

The following is a test:

*Three emergency beeps are heard.*

So far I have not yet been enough. My work has never received a standing ovation. Before the show starts is not a good time to begin anything. Human audiences will not dig too far in to anything when they know their time is short. Even the phrase "economy of language" feels like a waste of air. The following is a test:

*Three emergency beeps are heard.*

Card stock. Yardstick. Ambulatory. Papal.  
Synagogal. More light. Pardon me. I didn't do  
it on purpose. I need more air. Valerie. Come  
with me, Donald. Never speak.

The following is a test:

*Three emergency beeps are heard. A short snippet of a song without lyrics (something like Brian Eno) is heard. This lasts for some exact period of time, let's say 30 seconds.*

The following is a test:

*Three emergency beeps are heard. Silence for the exact same period of time as the music played.*

The following is a test:

*Three emergency beeps are heard. The dialogue of a Perry Mason episode, the part where Perry is really laying in to the person on the witness stand and they are confessing, saying "I did it, Mr. Mason," is heard.*

The following is a test:

*Three emergency beeps are heard.*

In this one picture the sound of your mother singing to you. And if it has been a lifetime since you heard that try instead to hear her voice.

*5 seconds of silence.*

Did you do it?

OPENING

*Thing 1 walks on stage where there is a radio with a set of headphones. She picks up the headphones and makes an elaborate show of putting them on. There is a sign or a light or a gesture that indicates to the audience it is time for headphones. She should look at each audience member individually to check that everyone is wearing them, only after does she sit. Her voice pipes over the headphones.*

#### RADIO

The lights are going down, which indicates to you, the person sitting in the audience, to conclude your conversation and turn your attention to the stage. Or maybe you weren't having a conversation. Maybe you came alone.

Find a comfortable position, but know that also there's no position you can achieve in these chairs that will be comfortable for the duration of the piece.

The piece will last approximately 66 minutes. You are allowed to move around in your chair during the piece. Don't let the dirty looks of the person next to you get to you. The squeaks the chair makes are not your fault.

The length of the piece is relieving, because too many theatres are putting on long plays these days.

Maybe you bought the ticket because you were pressured to or because you've seen a play here before.

You might be wondering if everyone's headphones are saying the same thing as yours. Or you might be wondering that for the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

## RADIO (cont'd)

first time now. Even if the text said that everyone was receiving the same information at the exact same moment you would have no way of knowing. Even if the text said right now "raise your right hand if you are hearing this" and you watched everyone in the audience raise their right hands you still wouldn't know if the text had said the exact same thing to everyone. You would know that the moment was the same, and you would know that the outcome had been the same, but you wouldn't know that the input has been the same.

*Thing 2 enters. They have a moment.*

Now you might be wondering, "why did I come to this play in the first place" or thinking of the process of buying a ticket. Didn't that provide you with your first clue? Did you buy a ticket online or at the door? Did you arrive early and no one was there to open the door or help you? Did you have an interaction pleasant or unpleasant with the person who took your tickets. Did you wonder where the bathroom is or have you been here before?

You are settling in for The Acme Corporation's newest play *Follow No Strangers to The fun Places*. Perhaps you are here because of the Theatre Of Obligation. You might be thinking to yourself "The Acme people think everything they do is so new and novel, but everything they do ends up feeling the same, and often it's incomprehensible."

Please raise your left hand now.

*Thing 1 raises her hand.*

Please lower your hand.

*Thing 1 keeps her hand up for a moment. There is silence.*

*Thing 1 lowers her hand and shrugs. Thing 2 raises his hand. Thing 1 takes her headphones off, gets out of the way.*

In a moment the actual play will begin and then there will be something you can really sink your teeth into, rather than...

Follow no strangers to the fun places

*A country song, something like "Walking After Midnight" interrupts the previous sentence.*

*Lights up on Kitt, Gina, and Four sitting in a 1980s looking Kitchen. All three of the women smoke. Their inhales are choreographed so they are never doing it at the same time.*

*The music fades slightly so that Radio can be heard again*

#### RADIO

The three actors onstage are all arranged very specifically. Their costumes and the set evoke an era a few decades back, or maybe somewhere far away and rural. The static objects reek of naturalism, a kitchen sink drama, but the movement of the actors feels stylized. Already the play summons the feeling of two plays, as though the actors got lost on the way to one play and mistakenly ended up in the wrong dressing rooms, and then put on the wrong costumes and picked up the wrong props.

*The women switch places. Again, this action is choreographed so it's more like graceless dance than*

*blocking.*

*Kern enters through the doorway. He is soaking wet, covered in mud and blood, and carrying a dirty shovel. Gina rushes over to him and hugs him.*

RADIO

The hug is desperate which could be because the situation is desperate or the relationship is, or possibly both.

*When the actors speak they are on mic and piped through to the headphones.*

KITT

*Puts her cigarette out.*

Well, that's that, I suppose.

*She crosses to the fridge, opens it and gets herself a beer.*

GINA

(To Kern)

You alright?

*Kitt opens her beer. Kern pulls Gina off of himself and crosses to Kitt, taking the freshly opened beer out of her hand. He takes a long chug.*

RADIO

The inciting incident shoots the action off like a rifle, occurring so early in the piece that it gives You, the viewer, the idea that there's already something to catch up on.

FOUR

Kern, what happened?

(CONTINUED)

GINA

Four, just leave him.

KERN

I took care of it.

KITT

What? You want a medal saying you're a hero?

KERN

I didn't see you volunteering.

KITT

Yeah, there's a lot of things you didn't see me doing.

FOUR

Kitt! Stop it!

GINA

We did what we had to and we did it right. The only thing now is to move forward. Kern, go change your clothes. Four, make some coffee.

KITT

Wait.

(To Kern)

Did anyone see you?

KERN

Couldn't have if they tried. Damn near ran off the road myself a few times.

*Kern goes to change.*

FOUR

I'll make that coffee.

RADIO

You are starting to get a sense of what has happened through the characters and their reactions to the situation.

GINA

You don't have to talk that way to him. It doesn't help anything.



KITT

Are you standing in my father's kitchen and telling me how to talk to my own brother?

*Kern re-enters. There is an intense moment between all of them. The phone rings. It is loud and startling. Four, Kern, Gina, and Kitt look at each other. Kern gestures for someone to answer. Gina hurries over to the phone, picks up the receiver, and holds it to her face without speaking. After a full 10 seconds she speaks.*

GINA

Hello?

*The voice that answers is Kitt's.*

VOICE

Kern, please.

GINA

And who can I say is calling?

VOICE

May I speak to Kern?

GINA

Who is this?

VOICE

Put Kern on. (Long pause)

GINA

It's for you.

KERN

Who...?

Gina, who is it?!

FOUR

*Gina looks terrified and  
shakes her head "no."*

KERN

*Crosses and takes the receiver  
from her.*

Hello.

VOICE

I saw you. I followed you.

*A look of horror spreads  
across Kern's face as he  
stares at Kitt.*

FOUR

Gina, who was on the phone?

KERN

Shut up, Four!

RADIO

A moment ago it started to break apart  
because you could not tell if it was  
intentional or not that the voice on the  
phone was the same as the actress onstage.  
The voice on the phone sounds very much  
exactly like the voice of the woman playing  
Kitt, and you are relatively certain that it  
is the very same voice. Listen again.

VOICE

Sounds like a party over there. Maybe I  
should come join y'all.

KERN

Who is this?

VOICE

Kern, you know who it is.

*Gina rushes over to Kitt and  
starts shaking her or smacking*

(CONTINUED)

*her or something. Kitt is unmoved by this display.*

VOICE

You thought I couldn't see you through the storm, but I did. And I followed you.

KERN

Followed me where?

VOICE

To aaaaaaalllll the fun places.  
(Laughter)

RADIO

If only there were a way to hear the women on stage's voice again. You would think that if it was intentional they would want to reinforce it. There are several possible explanations. 1. It is possible that The Acme Corporation, being a small, underfunded theatre company had the same actor play a live role and also pre-record audio. 2. Potentially, and altogether more likely, the voice on the phone being the exact same voice as one of the actresses onstage is a specific artistic choice, and the familiarity of this voice is why the character of Kern appeared to experience such terror.

VOICE

Look at me.

KERN

*Turns to Kitt. It's unclear if he's talking to the woman in front of him or the voice on the phone.*

What are you doing?

RADIO

The third option is that you, dear viewer, never noticed that the voices were identical and have had your enjoyment of the moment interrupted.

KERN

Who. The. Fuck. Are. You.

BLACKOUT.

THE LIGHTS SLOWLY COME UP DURING THE FOLLOWING.

Scene 2

*The actors remove the  
furniture.*

RADIO

In any of these three cases, or any unnamed case the deconstruction of the work has now derailed the momentum of your investment in the story in favor of your examination of the mechanics. The outer world has intruded into your thoughts and you find yourself unable restore the engagement you felt so fully mere minutes ago.

*The audience is instructed  
somehow to remove their  
headphones. Thing 2 is wearing  
a sling.*

THING 2

Hello, and welcome to The Acme Corporation's newest play *Follow No Strangers to the Fun Places*. We are here to welcome you and remind you to please turn off your cell phones.

THING 1

Why are you wearing that?

THING 2

My shoulder is all messed up.

THING 1

What happened?

THING 2

Nothing happened. It's been getting worse for a really long time. I have to have surgery.

(CONTINUED)

Oh no!  
THING 1

That's not the worst part, the worst part is  
I have to have an MRI.  
THING 2

That is the worst part!  
THING 1

I know!  
THING 2

Will you take a pill?  
THING 1

For the MRI? It doesn't really help.  
THING 2

I wrote the notes that you were just  
listening to.  
THING 1

Now seems like a good time to talk about Tom.  
THING 2

What?  
*Thing 1 looks at him hard.*

Oh, all of a sudden I don't get to say  
anything about the structure.  
*She stares.*

We just got out here.  
THING 1

Okay, then do the introduction.  
THING 2

Okay.  
THING 1

But then talk about Tom.  
THING 2

THING 1

Do you want to do this?

THING 2

No, I just think it would be best to start with the personal relationships to the work.

*She stares at him again. Then back to the audience.*

THING 1

You'll recognize my voice from just having heard it in the headphones. The quality of it is slightly different when it's not mitigated. I would have said that the quality of it is slightly different when it is "live" or "not prerecorded" but that would have distracted you for a moment by making you think about whether my voice was live or prerecorded when you heard it through the headphones. Unmitigated, then, is a cleaner description. What you've just witnessed was the opening scene of *Follow No Strangers To The Fun Places*, the plot of which is gripping and thought-provoking, but the mechanics of which proved a distraction for you, the audience.

THING 2

This is exactly why I said we should talk about Tom.

THING 1

I am talking about Tom, you fucking idiot.  
(To audience)

When we first began as a company we staged a series of shorts and called it *Rogue Waves*. The evening was a success, if you measure success like we do. We produced it at the Bell Foundry where I lived at the time--

THING 2

You said "I." Twice.

THING 1

Okay, thank you.

(To audience)

When I said "I" before and when I said it again just now those last two times I am stacking several meanings. This stacking of identities is another example of the mechanics of a piece undermining the content of the piece as you just experienced with *Follow No Strangers To The Fun Places*. They were explored with amazing beauty and with some clarity in a play called *There Have Been Other Men in My Wife's Bed*, written by a man named Tom Shade.

THING 2

Finish your story.

THING 1

It's not *my* story. It's the chronology of the company.

THING 2

Same thing.

THING 1

Fuck. I don't actually even remember what happened with *There Have Been Other Men In My Wife's Bed*.

THING 2

What? There was the whole thing with Tom and Eric. Eric was going to direct *There Have Been Other Men In My Wife's Bed*.

THING 1

No! Naomi was going to direct *There Have Been Other Men In My Wife's Bed* and we were going to star in it and Eric was going to direct the new thing that Tom never wrote.

THING 2

He did write a new thing. The Joyce thing?

(CONTINUED)

THING 1

Yeah. My dad liked it. He thought it was interesting. He's obsessed with *Ulysses*.

THING 2

Okay.

THING 1

Oh, sorry, am I boring you?

THING 2

No, we're just getting a little off track here.

THING 1

Fine. Why are you taking your sling off?

THING 2

My doctor said I don't need it and that it doesn't actually do anything other than stop other people from bumping it.

THING 1

We were supposed to do Tom Shade's play *There Have Been Other Men in My Wife's Bed*. And I don't exactly remember what happened, but the play was very good and I very much wanted to do it. It dealt with infidelity and being on stage and lying.

THING 2

And playing other people.

THING 1

Right and being an actor and being onstage and playing other people and playing yourself, and all that. There was some horrible falling out with Tom. He said a number of unkind things about me in a series of emails to Eric.

THING 2

And then Eric immediately forwarded them to you.

(CONTINUED)



THING 1

He sure did. It was...painful.

THING 2

There was more to it than that.

THING 1

Yeah, but that's the gist. Unpleasantness. So we can't do that show.

THING 2

No. We can't. Oddly, Tom still comes to all of our shows so one night he'll be here watching this and won't that be awkward for everyone?

THING 1

Instead we have elected to write a new play called *A Play Not Unlike There Have Been Other Men in My Wife's Bed*.

THING 2

(Back to audience)

Let's just start.

*A Play Not Unlike There Have Been Other Men In My Wife's Bed*

*Naomi enters into a spotlight.*

*Thing 1 is now Christy, Thing 2 is now Kaya*

NAOMI

Welcome to *A Play Not Unlike There Have Been Other Men in My Wife's Bed*. My name is Naomi. I'm a company member of the Acme Corporation, which is the company that's producing this show. I was directing the remount of *There Have Been Other Men In My Wife's Bed*, but then something happened. Actually, we're having trouble remembering exactly what happened. Please take a moment to turn off your cell phones. I'm playing myself. I have trouble with lines. Let's go on a tour of the play! We have the lights,

(CONTINUED)

*The lights do something.*  
the sound,

*The sound does something.*  
There is the projector. We're not showing a projection in the hopes that you will forget more easily until it is used for its intended effect if we do not turn it on. There's also the Stage Manager.

*A long moment.*  
Uh...line!

STAGE MANAGER  
And of course--

NAOMI  
And of course The actors.

*Kaya and Christy have an intense moment with one another.*

I actually knew my line, but we wanted to give you some example of what the stage manager does, even though that's not....

*Silence.*

CHRISTY  
Naomi is a really good actress. She's like a for real actress. She was a recurring character on a Warner Brothers teen show called *Young Americans*, and she was in a Disney movie, and in an HBO movie and she got to meet Sam Shepard.

In the play I play Lola, but really my name is Christy and it was spelled wrong in the script the first time I saw it, but I didn't say anything. And I have this weird inherent impulse to find someone in the room who I want to impress in one way or another. That's Kaya. He plays Stephen and they were going to let him do a whole thing with his trapeze (he owns his own trapeze and everything), but

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(cont'd)

then they cut it the week before opening.

*Kaya waves.*

We don't really have time to really get into this because Naomi has a big emotional monologue coming up. Right now I'm onstage representing Lola, but you also can't just be anything onstage--you're also a representation of the thing. In this case, I'm Lola, but I'm also (hopefully) the Platonic Ideal of a billion different things. And each of those things is determined by your own personal semiotics. And this is why plays are hard because they're an attempt to to arrange the physical world precisely enough to reflect philosophy in a material way, but objects and movements and figures don't have the same exactness that thought does so those representations always fail, and I would like to get further into this, but as I said before we really don't have time because there's an important speech about Naomi's dad dying from stage 4 lung cancer that we really have to get into right now. Naomi doesn't like talking about herself onstage and she said the only way she would do this next part was if everyone was wearing headphones for it. Please put on your headphones now.

*The audience is instructed to put on their headphones.*

NAOMI

In my dream a man admits to his wife that he is dying and reveals a grotesque lump on his torso. The wife laughs and says, "my doctor says I don't have much time" as she raises her shirt for him to see. She also has a terrible growth. They're suffering from the same disease. Both are convinced their prognosis is worse.

It's hard to talk about my involvement with Acme without taking first about Lola, which is exactly how she wants it. Even this speech is written in the way she feels about

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(CONTINUED)

herself, rather, than the way I feel about her. I would never talk this way about her if it weren't scripted. The thing about being an actor, though, is that the act of memorizing the lines and repeating them, you do start to believe them. And actors say that, and people dismiss them, other theatre people dismiss them most of all, but it's absolutely true. I mean what do you think brainwashing is? Lola and I have known each other for 21 years, and we used to be very close and in a lot of ways we still are. She is...she can be difficult and one of the only ways to be close to her is to work with her. You can ask her fiancé, Myles, about that. About her and work, and intimacy. And how painful it all is.

Everything she does is oriented towards making the most beautiful thing possible, and when you say that it sounds so lovely, but think about it like this: when you are telling someone your most intimate secret, or that you love them, or giving them a gift or a hug, are they thinking the whole time, "i wonder what this would look like on stage?" and would you be happy if they were? I said I would only do this because everyone was wearing headphones.

2 truths and a lie. My father has never told me he loved me. The game "two truths and a lie" was stolen from someone else. One time a dog killed a cat in my house right in front of me. I've always had a complicated relationship with my dad. A few weeks ago my sister, Sonja, and I were driving to West Virginia to see him. He has stage 4 lung cancer and it got diagnosed late so as you can imagine the conversation was-- really horrible. This car had been keeping pace with us and I couldn't figure out why and then I looked over and realized that the dude driving was staring at us while he was jerking off. And my sister is pregnant, like visibly pregnant. Anyway, the last few months have been really hard and I told this story to Lola and I guess she thought the thing to do would be to have me relive it every nice

NAOMI (cont'd)

in a room full of strangers. It's...it's hard to describe what that's like, loving someone like that. Measuring love in applause.

Scene 3

RADIO

You're wondering if you you supposed to be able to hear Naomi's speech. In this case the conceit of the original play proved problematic. The play is meant to embrace honesty through the lies of the stage, or otherwise is meant to embrace falsehoods by embracing the truth of performance. Naomi's speech is both true and a lie. At this point you may be thinking, "This is now two times a story has begun and then broken off. I would like to leave now, or, at the very least, to get on with the play! Every time I settle in to one story or another I'm suddenly interrupted!" It produces an uneasy feeling within you. Etiquette dictates that you may not look at your phone, and certainly initiating a discussion with the other audience members is out of the question. Are you wearing a wrist watch? Is it possible to discreetly check it now? Or perhaps catch a glimpse of the watch on the wrist of an audience member beside you, or one row in front of you and one row over. Do you have a pocket watch in your pocket? If you are my father, the answer is yes. Hi Dad. To relieve you of the burden of timelessness if you cannot access a watch politely we will provide you with the the information that there are exactly thirty-three minutes left in this piece when you hear the three beeps

*The three beeps are heard.*

Since the discussion revolves around lying you may be wondering if you can trust that promise, but needn't worry. You are also approximately 35% more engaged then when you entered the room, but 7% less engaged then when the first play began. Do you agree? If not, make a mental note to yourself to tell

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(cont'd)

the Acme people later that their statistics seem under researched and not entirely based on fact. And now you might be thinking "at long last they must begin this show in earnest at some point!" You may have decided that *Follow No Strangers* is a lost cause, just a short scene to engage your interest as an audience entering into a narrative. Really the second play was where things got going. You hardly continue to care about the first. You can't even remember the man's name. Oh, Kern, that's right. Besides, the second piece seemed to be tied in with the ideas of the larger piece as a whole. You would like to continue on with that piece most urgently. The *Play Not Unlike There Have Been Other Men in My Wife's Bed* with its lies and metatheatricality is the thread you would like to pick up.

*Naomi finishes her monologue at the same moment. She should be extremely upset.*

*The audience is somehow instructed to removed their headphones.*

THING 1

I very much wish to continue with that piece as well, but it goes like this:

(To Thing 2)

I think we should do Tom's piece.

THING 2

Okay.

THING 1

But I don't want to have to talk to Tom.

THING 2

Didn't we already solve that by having you write the new thing?

(CONTINUED)

THING 1

Also, I have trouble with the fact that it's masquerading as being present but the lines are all prescribed and memorized and everything.

THING 2

Like you want the actors to improv?

THING 1

Like I want the language to be as present as everything else.

THING 2

You want it unplanned?

(To audience)

That was a lie. Actually, it goes like this

THING 1

Was Joyce's daughter really crazy or was she just a woman with a famous father who was terrible?

THING 2

I think she was really crazy.

THING 1

Ruth Malezyczek did that piece about her before she died. It was really good.

THING 2

Yeah, I wish I had seen it.

THING 1

Where did you learn that stuff about Beckett and Joyce?

THING 2

It's in that book I gave you.

THING 1

That book is so long, I can never finish it.

(To audience)

That was a lie, too. It actually goes like this: I say, "I was interested in doing a play about infidelity for a lot of reasons." and you think, "so this person was part of an

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(cont'd)

illicit affair or else got cheated on or else is a very boring person and is interested in things like that because she thinks it makes her interesting." And I say, "But I want most urgently to convey that when I watch a play where the actors are talking to the audience, like in this one right now, or the other one from before, I am aware that these words have been rehearsed with a director or sometimes 2, and the speeches have been given at previous performances, or will be at subsequent performances. And you think "you are ruining this for me. Do not remind me of these things in the moment they are happening." And I say, "I'm sorry. I don't know why I'm doing this other than I thought if we felt it for a moment together in the room maybe I wouldn't feel so alone. And you are, "misery loves company, eh?" and I am,

*Nods.*

*A moment.*

THING 2

So what are we doing?

THING 1

I don't know I came up with the last two ideas.

THING 2

Well every time I come up with an idea you shoot it down.

THING 1

Let's do *Kaspar* again--

THING 2

NO! You already did that and I don't understand that play.

THING 1

What do you mean you don't understand it?

(CONTINUED)



THING 2

I don't like being challenged.

THING 1

I want to do something like that. Or a Beckett or something.

THING 2

We can't get the rights because of the thing we did last time with the Beckett.

THING 1

That's a lie. The Beckett estate doesn't give a shit about us.

THING 2

I thought the whole thing was that you wanted to write something.

THING 1

I can write a thing like that.

THING 2

Oh yeah, that's you. Minimalist and spare.

THING 1

I'm capable of writing that way!

THING 2

Ladies and gentlemen, and those who identify with neither of those categories, we present *Show*.

Show

*Faint spots simultaneously on three faces. three seconds. voices faint,*

*largely unintelligible.*

(Altogether)

WOMAN 1

Yes silent the quiet silence best

MAN

Yes joined together seeing clearly

WOMAN 2

Yes without full absence emptied of all

(Altogether)

WOMAN 1

Alerting me his silence the tipoff knowing  
all well the quiet the worst

MAN

Bottommost piece of shit manifold one thinks  
finally who remains after all

WOMAN 2

No recovery all and sundry each person poor  
creature both saying dumb as a post

*Blackout. five seconds.*

*Spots on three faces. three  
seconds.*

(Altogether)

WOMAN 1

I asked him, is there something

MAN

She lit into me one evening

WOMAN 2

One evening having received

*Blackout. five seconds.*

*Spot on Woman 1*

WOMAN 1

I asked him, "is there something you need to  
tell me?" Having had a contretemps over  
Thanksgiving dinner.

*Spot from Woman 1 to Woman 2*

(CONTINUED)

WOMAN 2

One evening having received the message, "I hope you'll be very happy with him." I thought, "this really" I thought" This is too much.

MAN

She lit into me one evening. She was wild and intense. Going off on how I was offering up an excuse to fuck the...other and she could see it coming from a mile away.

WOMAN 1

"What would I have to tell you?" he asked. As though I hadn't seen it before, as though there hadn't been the...actresses.

WOMAN 2

Can't remember what else was said, can remember, wrote it down, but not allowed to speak of it now for fear of upsetting their thing.

MAN

Dredging up bygone stories, picking at me, as though digging at me for particulars would provide some solace.

WOMAN 1

Went to the source. Invited her for a drink, found her drinking juice, like a child.

MAN

Finally, it was all too much. I confessed everything one night.

WOMAN 2

Seeing her name making me physically ill.

WOMAN 1

I couldn't abide it any longer.

MAN

Her listening to the Charlie Brown Christmas music. The truth willing out.

WOMAN 2

Standing in the second floor of his doll house, naked, I scream

*Screams!*

Am I enough?

WOMAN 1

And her with her chaos and filth and youth.

MAN

I would think of the three of us together on some fantastic occasion. The funeral or the bedroom.

WOMAN 2

Asked to keep silent, never speak. Then there was Christmas. And she, always her, blaming me, and him, never settling.

MAN

Next time I know better how to approach the whole thing.

WOMAN 2

*Screams.*

WOMAN 1

All I wanted was quiet. Some peace, having wholly earned it. In lieu--

WOMAN 2

The doubt, as I came to know it, lasted. He would leave and come back, leave and come back. As a pecking bird of some kind.

MAN

Most of all tired--

WOMAN 2

All the while waiting. And him always saying the wait was almost over. This time for certain he had made up his mind.

WOMAN 1

Wreckage piled up, heaped upon me.  
Endeavoring to rest most of all.

WOMAN 2

I won't.

MAN

Hating myself most of all and them second  
most for torturing me.

WOMAN 2

I could not feel my hands. I remember the  
sound of a siren as I thought, "for good."

MAN

Am I to be blamed?

WOMAN 2

No, this must be better than that, no  
question of him coming again.

(Altogether)

WOMAN 1

I asked him, is there something

MAN

We had barely begun it

WOMAN 2

One evening having received

*Spots off. Blackout. Five  
seconds.*

*Repeat. After the repeat is  
done it should end thus:*

MAN

Am I to be blamed for all of this somehow?

*Spot off Man. Black out. Five  
seconds.*

(CONTINUED)

(Altogether)

WOMAN 1

I asked him, is there something

MAN

We had barely begun it

WOMAN 2

One evening having received

*Spots off. Blackout. Five  
Seconds. Spot on Man.*

MAN

We had barely begun it

Scene 4

THING 1

Here is a list of reasons you might fuck  
someone else

1. you really and truly did fall in love with  
someone else
2. there is a feeling of emptiness inside of  
you that nothing can fill, but it is so wide  
and deep that you are driven to constantly  
search
3. your enneagram stacking is sexual, social,  
self preservation. When you are bored it  
feels like you are dying.

THING 2

You seem to be the main character. is that on  
purpose. I'm not criticizing, actually. i'm  
just asking a question.

THING 1

4. You believe that you are so special that  
you deserve 2.

THING 2

(To audience)

I wanted to do a show about Carl Andre and

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

(cont'd)

Ana Mendieta.

THING 1

I had been in Berlin.

THING 2

See, this is the same thing. It's just you talking about your thing.

THING 1

Even fucking talking about the Carl Andre thing is talking about your thing. I hated the idea from the beginning.

THING 2

But you liked it when I pretended to throw you off the balcony.

THING 1

I don't think that's a joke we should share with people. I think it's in bad taste.

THING 2

You're just controlling the entire thing.

THING 1

(to audience)

Please put on your headphones.

(to thing 2)

You had the opportunity to write this show with me, to have your ideas included, to say exactly what you wanted to say. That was the fucking plan, remember? I said, "do you want to do this together?" and you said "YES!" and then when it came time to actually do the work, to sit down and do the writing you wouldn't do it. Because you never want to sit down and actually do the work.

THING 2

I'm not a writer! You always expect me to be something that I'm not and then flip out because I can't do the thing that I told you from the beginning I can't do, but you ignored everything that you didn't want to hear.

(CONTINUED)

*Thing 1 and Thing 2 should continue to fight. The audience is instructed to put on their headphones. This time the Radio voice is Thing 2's voice.*

## RADIO

You will note at intervals where something dramatical occurs you are instructed to put headphones on, as though the makers of the piece don't trust their own ability to construct a theatrical representation of conflict. You are beginning to understand that they--we-- are cowards. And also terrified of disappointing you. Perhaps you believe that an artist's only gifts are those of craft and vulnerability. You would not be the only one. Why have you allowed yourself to be trapped here by the pretense that the play would eventually begin? You may now be wondering if your fellow audience members are having the same experience. You might glance around at them. If they appear to be enjoying themselves it may make you feel angry or superior. When you first entered you felt you would collectively experience something, but you grow less certain with every passing moment. It is possible, you now realize, that some of the people sitting next to you may not be audience members at all, but instead have been planted by The Acme Corporation as another attempt to manufacture and control your experience more closely. But no, you immediately realize, that's simple paranoia brought on by the claustrophobia of this endlessness. Perhaps you came here with someone or more than one someone. You can trust they are on your side. And quite possibly you recognize some faces of the familiar in the audience. Certainly, everything is fine. You are in no danger at present. You simply got carried away

(CONTINUED)



Next To An Enemy In The  
Darkness

BOTH

Please remove the box from underneath your seat.

(Altogether)

HEADPHONES 1

Gaze at the bow, but please do not untie it. You are aware that the person to your right is undoing their bow. You may be feeling anxious or eager to begin. You are not missing anything. You are doing your part. You are exactly where you need to be. This is part of it.

HEADPHONES 2

Untie the string, and open your box. Take your time, there's no need to rush. You may be aware that not everyone is opening their box. Well, their loss, if they don't want to participate. You can only do your part.

(Altogether)

HEADPHONES 1

You are sitting here in the dark surrounded by other people. Convention keeps you in seat. You are next to an enemy in the darkness. You want to be a person like somebody else was once. Occasional disappointment is inevitable. What was it that was being said, just now? Oh yes, you are sitting next to an enemy in the darkness, and the darkness is also an enemy, and you are also an enemy in the darkness. You have learned the meaning of the word "darkness"

HEADPHONES 2

Once opened, your box reveals to you a list of words that were added to Webster's New International Dictionary in the year 1959. Using your choice mechanism please mark any of the words on this list which resonate with you. You may find yourself free to make whichever selections you'd like to, secure in

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

## HEADPHONES 2 (cont'd)

the knowledge that you will not be required to justify or speak about your decisions.

(Altogether)

## HEADPHONES 1

The person next to you is working diligently. Without work a person will suffer. You like to feel useful. You are the one because you are. A person doing should not be interrupted. You are also doing. You are also watching. You are also selecting. You have learned what all of these words mean. You look again. You think again. What have you been thinking all of this time? I don't know why we're here, but I'm pretty sure it's not in order to enjoy ourselves.

## HEADPHONES 2

*The music from Bubble Bobble Plays.*

(Altogether)

## HEADPHONES 1

Untie the string, and open your box. Take your time, there's no need to rush.

## HEADPHONES 2

Have you made all of the correct selections?

(Altogether)

## HEADPHONES 1

For the moment leave your box alone. We have something else we need to take care of and we wouldn't want to keep anyone waiting. Look, someone's giving you an important message. No need to be suspicious. Everyone is an enemy, the darkness most of all.

## HEADPHONES 2

Hand your completed selections to the person sitting on your left. All of your hard work, oh well, everything eventually falls back into order or disintegrates. They are an enemy next to you in the darkness. There's no

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

## HEADPHONES 2 (cont'd)

need to worry. You picked all of the right words.

(Altogether)

## HEADPHONES 1

This bizarre selection of words must mean something, but your head is too full of instructions to think clearly. Whisper the words with markings on them to the person who handed you the card. It's okay if they cannot hear you.

## HEADPHONES 2

Without your words there is nothing to protect you in the darkness. The words were an abstraction of feelings. Was "abstract" one of the words you picked? The enemy is saying something to you. Try to make it out.

(Altogether)

## HEADPHONES 1

Inside of your box you'll find a tiny object and some grass. Make a nest for your tiny object with the grass in your hand. Set the tiny object up in the most pleasing way possible for your enemy.

## HEADPHONES 2

Use the flashlight found inside of your box to help your enemy set up their scene. They need your help providing light. Once everything is all set, illuminate the tiny object.

## BOTH

*Dan Deacon's USA I plays for  
45 seconds.*

Please put everything back into your boxes and remove your headphones.

Scene 5

THING 2

I didn't like that.

THING 1

I knew you wouldn't.

THING 2

You said there wouldn't be audience participation.

THING 1

It's not really. I mean they don't have to talk or anything.

*Long pause.*

CAITLIN

(Prompting him)

You know, I actually don't know if Kaya is the right person to play me.

THING 2

You know, I actually don't know if Kaya is the right person to play me.

THING 1

Oh?

*Long pause.*

CAITLIN

(Prompting him)

I mean I think Christy is right--

THING 2

I know the line, Caitlin! This is just stupid. I mean I think Christy is right for you. Kind of perfect actually and I like the idea of the two of them together. But I don't think it actually represents our thing all that well.

THING 1

Okay, well it's kind of too late for that.

(CONTINUED)



KAYA

Okay.

*New Thing 2 (Stephen) Enters*

THING 2

You always make me look like a monster.

(To audience)

Kaya wasn't even sure he was going to do this piece. The week of the first read he texted and said that Single Carrot had offered him a part in Peter Pan at the same exact time as this show and they were more willing to accommodate his work schedule. It was a whole thing and we thought we might have to recast.

*A moment.*

THING 1

This is Stephen. He'll be playing himself now.

THING 2

The last one didn't work because it was too centered on language.

THING 1

WHAT?!

THING 2

It was just all talking.

THING 1

It was specifically manufacturing an experience that extended beyond language.

THING 2

It's not sustainable.

THING 1

That's just one of the 4 things you say when I start working on something and you don't immediately like it.

(To audience)

"It's not sustainable" was the exact thing he said about this gem, *"Let Us Now Praise Famous Capital: And I'm Only Giving It One*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

(cont'd)

*Star Because You Can't Give Zero Stars!"*

Let Us Now Praise Famous  
Capital: And I'm Only Giving  
It One Star Because You Can't  
Give Zero Stars!

*A big commotion is heard  
offstage!*

SISTER

(Offstage)

All over Alabama the lamps are out!

*A loud crash and a thud like a  
body falling to the ground.  
Sister enters.*

Workers of the world unite! You have nothing  
to lose but your chains!

*Maid enters.*

MAID

Everything that was directly lived has moved  
away into a representation.

SISTER

Beetlejuice drank from our alcoholic  
beverages without even asking us!

MAID

*Looks behind the door, sees  
the dead groom, gasps!*

You won't hear it nicely. If it hurts you, be  
glad of it.

SISTER

The waitress was awesome, brought us a new  
one but Beetlejuice continued to spit all  
over our drinks and all over the table.  
Definitely will not be dining here again,  
regardless of how much I love Tim Burton and  
his films.

(CONTINUED)

MAID

*Indicating where they could  
take the body.*

The house is left alone.

SISTER

Hideous. The legs are like 4 feet long making this bear look like a creepy Gumby thing. I got this for Valentines Day and would rather have had a cheaper more proportional bear. I mean this isn't even cute.

MAID

One star. Legs are awful.

*Bride enters, calling to  
sister for help.*

BRIDE

When I received my Ritz Bundle every cracker crumbled in my hand. Very disappointed.

SISTER

In proportion therefore, as the repulsiveness of the work increases the wage decreases.

*The bride exits, followed by  
Sister. The Maid starts to  
move the body. Mother enters  
and Maid tries to hide the  
body.*

MOTHER

Went to dinner for our 30th anniversary. Soup came ice cold and slimy. Couldn't get a waiter to help. Entrée came and was also ice cold. Again the waiter could not be found. Food manager couldn't care less. Wound up eating tasteless food in my room late at night. Worst night ever.

MAID

I have said a good deal more here on what ought to be than what is.

*Mom exits, Maid starts to move*

(CONTINUED)



*the body, Mom immediately re-enters.*

MOTHER

In a world which is topsy-turvy the true is a moment of the false.

*Mother exits, followed by Maid. Sister re-enters.*

MAID

It would have been nice if they had told me that the house was haunted!

SISTER

You never live an inch without involvement and hurting people and fucking yourself everlasting.

*Bride enters.*

BRIDE

Update: These are too crumbly. Half of them gets wasted because they break into pieces just getting them out of the sealed bag. (Or they're already broken in pieces.)

*Bride exits. Maid re-enters.*

SISTER

I would like to send my kid to school with crackers that are not already in pieces.

MAID

I will just go back to buying them one box at a time at the grocery store.

*They remove the body, re-enter.*

SISTER

One star, and I'm only giving it one star because you can't give zero stars.

*The cat burglar enters.*

---

Scene 6

---

THING 2

Okay, enough!

THING 1

It barely started!

THING 2

I don't understand what it means for me to be on stage. What are we saying?

THING 1

I don't even want you to be on stage at all. I'm trying to come up with a solution that doesn't involve hiring an old white guy actor to replace a younger person of color because you decided last minute that he wasn't the right fit.

THING 2

I think we should acknowledge the weirdness of him playing me at some point.

THING 1

We should swap you in for him for that scene and then bring him back and explain it.

THING 2

Fine.

*Kaya comes back out and replaces Stephen.*

THING 1

I don't want to have an intermission, but we need to sell drinks because this show got very expensive.

THING 2

I think it's really problematic to interrupt the flow of a show with an intermission.

THING 1

Yeah, of course.

THING 2

Then why'd you say it? I'm sorry.

(A moment)

I did write something for this, but I figured you wouldn't like it.

THING 1

Oh? Should we try it now?

*Thing 2 pulls a script and reads from it.*

*THING 2 addresses the audience.*

THING 2

You need to define "formalism." i think it can mean different things in different contexts. i know that the critic michael kirby used it to describe a certain kind of 1960s performance--

THING 1

I don't want to use any more of it than that.

THING 2

See? I KNEW you wouldn't like it! But you still grumble about me not writing!!!

THING 1

That "monologue" is a critique of a paper proposal I wrote for you. You're surprised that I don't like it as your attempt at "helping?"

THING 2

This is entire script is your criticisms of me. A diagram of how terrible I am!

THING 1

Every time i send YOU something i've worked very hard on you're like "there are typos."

(CONTINUED)

THING 2

well, there are! should i not tell you about them???

THING 1

This is abusive.

THING 2

I feel like throwing you off a balcony right now.

THING 1

You can't say that on stage. It's EXTREMELY problematic in terms of representations of gender violence.

(To audience)

This is the part where I needed to add a transition, but I got the flu and my brain stopped working because all I did was watch *Cheers* for four days.

THING 2

(Excited)

I've been watching *Cheers* too!

THING 1

I know.

*Switching gears.*

I found these tapes at a thrift store.

THING 2

That's a lie.

THING 1

Yes, that one is another lie. I'm not allowed to tell the truth about where I got the tapes from.

THING 2

Oh come on.

THING 1

No! Using the tapes is bad enough! We absolutely cannot talk about where we got them.

(To audience)

I know this might feel like a Chekhov thing where we're putting the gun on stage in the first act to have it go off in the third, but in this instance we actually cannot and will not tell you where the tapes came from.

*Headphones on.*

Gabe and Claire Tapes

GABE

Yello.

CLAIRE

Well, there you are.

GABE

Yes.

CLAIRE

What's new?

GABE

Not too much.

CLAIRE

Well I thought I'd stay over for the, uh, for the weekend. And I was wondering what your arrangements are. It's a holiday weekend. And um

GABE

You mean for shopping?

CLAIRE

No. I mean for eating.

GABE

Oh for eating, alright.

CLAIRE

And so I've got an awful yen, I wanna go out to, uh, Atman's. And I'm wondering if you want to meet me out there. I like to take that subway, you know it's zip zip zip, no traffic, no nothing, so I like that. And, um, I think I will stay over.

(CONTINUED)

GABE

You're talking about tomorrow now.

CLAIRE

Yeah, tomorrow, uh

GABE

Friday.

CLAIRE

Is the holiday? Well not Friday--

GABE

Tomorrow is Easter. Things are closed, I mean you know businesses are close, the bank is closed, market is closed, so um

CLAIRE

Well I know, but--

GABE

Good, Good Friday is what it is actually.

CLAIRE

Wednesday. Tomorrow's Thursday isn't it?

GABE

No, today is Thursday.

CLAIRE

Oh no no no, that's right

GABE

Today is Thursday.

CLAIRE

Yeah, today, Today is Thursday, that's right. Well, alright

GABE

Well, alright, if you wanna go out there I wouldn't mind it.

CLAIRE

No I don't want you. Well, I want you meet you out there, you see?

GABE

Yeah, okay you can meet me out there I can take you out there whatever you'd like. Whatever you feel like doing.

CLAIRE

I don't feel quite comfortable in your car, you see? Uh, I'm sorry. You know, in the past, I've al--I know the last time I was in it, it didn't crack, it didn't break down or anything, but that was a short ride, and it's a long long ride up there. But you have faith in it so that's alright, that's fine for you. Now, uh, let me think about it, alright.

GABE

okay

CLAIRE

Now you say, when is Easter? I just was wondering if I ought go back to New York.

GABE

Well, See? Good Friday is tomorrow and Easter Sunday is Sunday, see?

CLAIRE

That's right, right right.

GABE

I don't know what Saturday would be. I guess it's..uh...it's part of it.

CLAIRE

Well, that uh, that uh, the subway doesn't run on Sunday. I found that out.

GABE

Oh it doesn't run on Sunday?

CLAIRE

No, but it runs on Saturday. But it won't be good for me because you see I have to take a bus and the buses are very slow from here and I have to come back the same way, you know, and it's, it's, a bit of a chore, if it's not a, you know, a weekday.

(CONTINUED)

GABE

Well eat closer by, if that's uh...

CLAIRE

Beg your pardon?

GABE

I said find a place to eat that's closer by.

CLAIRE

Well, I won't get the same food, will I?

GABE

What's the food that's so good that you like so much out there?

CLAIRE

Well, they have a lot of good things, I love their shrimp salad. And uh, everything that they have really tastes good to me.

GABE

What about that shrimp, uh, salad that they have at the gourmet counter of the new Giant now? Of the Giant?

CLAIRE

Well I haven't tried it yet.

GABE

Oh, you haven't? Well, that gourmet section everything is supposed to be top notch, you know?

CLAIRE

Oh really?

GABE

They charge you plenty for it, but it's top notch.

CLAIRE

Yeah,

GABE

Yeah, the chicken salad is about nine dollars and thirty cents a pound or something like that.



CLAIRE

Well that's alright everything is up and if you want to get something of quality you have to pay for it, that's right unless you cook it yourself, fix it up, and i wouldn't even know how to fool with that. So how are you feeling by the way?

GABE

I feel alright.

CLAIRE

Just alright? Not very good huh?

GABE

Well, I'm just busy that's all. I feel okay.

CLAIRE

Well, look, by the way, I saw an ad, are you still interested in buying a house?

GABE

Yes, I am.

CLAIRE

You're on your own, you understand? Now, and don't jump on me, because I'm talking to you, I'm just giving you facts, do you understand? Some years ago, and you'll know your memory is better than mine.

### Scene 7

RADIO

The truth at this point is inescapable, the play will never actually start. These short vignettes were all constructed as an elaborate ruse to engage your human predisposition to narrative. Dickens writes, "there was a gay fiction among us that we were constantly having a good time, and a skeleton truth that we almost never were." The members of the Acme Corporation would like you to know that the human brain's attachment to linear narrative is actually a

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

## RADIO (cont'd)

fallacy. This has been extensively discussed and adequately proven by a number of studies in neuroscience and neurobiology. A detailed bibliography will be provided to you upon request at the conclusion of the show. The brain processes information through connections. It is actually the spaces between thoughts, ideas, stories, or images in which you, audience member and human, are you. The brain isn't attached to narrative. The brain is attached to attachment. You are beginning to suspect there may not even be a projector.

*Headphones off.*

## THING 1

Okay, now on the level. We obviously knew all along that we were never going to complete any of these plays. Okay, now. On the level. It didn't feel like lying when we started. I wanted you to feel how it feels when we try to make something. Last week someone asked me how to direct a play and then immediately said, "it's like trying to remember a dream," which is a much better description than anything I've ever come up with.

## THING 2

I don't think we should talk so much about how the sausage is made.

## THING 1

Okay, now. On the level. It's a pleasing arrangement of bullshit I overheard.

## THING 2

"follow no strangers to the fun places" is just something that was on a poster hanging in my hotel room in China.

## THING 1

Virginia Woolf writes, "for in a question like this truth is only to be had by laying together many varieties of error." And now you are thinking, "we already did this part where you talked about the mechanics of the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

## THING 1 (cont'd)

thing and were emotional and we had an emotional moment together." Which makes me extremely angry. Because that's the whole fucking point that I'm trying to make!

## THING 2

We're running out of time.

## THING 1

No shit, motherfucker! You explain it if it's so fucking easy.

## THING 2

She's upset because--

## THING 1

No! Not like that! Do it right!

## THING 2

Okay, jeeze, no need to bite my head off. she's upset because it hurts to watch our work. it is never how we imagine it and because it's collaborative you have to rely on other people, and because it's time based you have to keep watching it every single night.

## THING 1

(To audience)

Now seems like a good time to tell you that I am also a monster. But I wrote the play so you don't see that part as much.

## THING 2

Oh, I think they see enough.

## THING 1

(To audience)

Please take out your binoculars. You'll need them for this next one.

Wir wollen alle eine person  
sein, wie jemand anders einmal  
war

KASPAR

Hallo!

ANOTHER KASPAR

Hallo!

A DIFFERENT KASPAR

Hallo!

KASPAR

Vielen dank, dass sie gekommen sind! im  
folgenden gibt's eine besondere nachricht für  
Peter Hinderberer.

A DIFFERENT KASPAR

Aber wenn sie deutsch verstehen, dann ist sie  
auch für sie!

ANOTHER KASPAR

Richard foreman schrieb einen artikel,  
genannt "wie man ein schauspiel schreibt, in  
welchem erzähle ich wirklich mir wie man das  
macht, aber wenn du die richtige bist, dann  
erzähle ich auch dir."

KASPAR

Aber hier zu guter letzt ist die besondere  
nachricht.

ANOTHER KASPAR

Wir wissen, dass diese deutsche übersetzung  
ist ja nicht ganz korrekt.

A DIFFERENT KASPAR

Na ja, müssten wir eigentlich unsere  
Übersetzerin beschwatzen, dies alles zu tun.  
Sie hat das zuerst abgelehnt, weil sie gesagt  
hat, dass das Deutschsprechenden Publikum es  
eine schreckliche Übersetzung finden würden.  
Dieser bei uns gerade gesprochene Satz war  
eigentlich überhaupt nicht im originalen  
Text, dass sie (ich) gegeben war, und sie  
(ich) hat das als eine Art Protest hinzufügt.

KASPAR

Und wer war diese person?

ALL

Cricket!

ANOTHER KASPAR

Und Peter, wir hätten Ihnen direkt gefragt,  
aber wir wollten, dass est eine -

ALL

Überraschung sein würde!!!!

BLACKOUT. THE AUDIENCE PUTS HEADPHONES ON

Scene 8

RADIO

The pace of the piece at this point is paradoxical. At once it has finally begun and seems like it may end. At the beep there are approximately 7 minutes left. You may want to begin preparing what you will say to your companion, if you have a companion, when the show is over. But if we know you, as we think we do, you have been preparing that all along, or at least at several points before now. You have, perhaps, experienced the play and have objectified yourself by thinking about how you will describe it in the future. So we have failed you in even this one task: to keep you present for 66 minutes.

*The beep is heard. The  
headphones are taken off.*

THING 1

(To audience)

I have the feeling you'll think this next part is a lie, or is exaggerated for performative impact, but actually it's true and you can either wait and see what happens with Acme shows next year or you can just believe me right now that this actually

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

(cont'd)

happened 2 weeks into rehearsals for this play.

(To Thing 2)

I have to talk to you about something serious.

THING 2

Okay.

THING 1

This has to be our last project together.

*A moment.*

THING 2

Okay.

THING 1

I mean we can still run the company together and do admin stuff, but we can't work together any more on artistic stuff.

THING 2

I mean, I'm not surprised, I kind of knew this would happen on some level. I actually thought...

THING 1

It's isn't even just....I mean it is that, of course. But it's also. I'm just so tired. And when we do this--the way we are with each other. It just takes so much. And all we do is yell at each other. And I want--I very much want to find a balance, but I can't. Not like this.

THING 2

(To audience)

We could go over the details and the history, but I'm not sure if--it would be very hard for us to convey to you exactly what it means.

(To her)

You know....I hate to say this, but we obviously have to put this in the show.

THING 1

I know. That was the first thing I thought too.

THING 2

Of course.

THING 1

Don't be mad.

THING 2

I'm not mad at all.

And Finally It Is. And there's  
nothing more to say.

OPERA

Scene 9

THING 1

What the fuck was that?

THING 2

That was the opera you wanted.

THING 1

The lyrics were so weird. Why was it like a love song?

THING 2

It's that song you sent me.

THING 1

What song?

THING 2

(Singing)

At night I think of you. I want to be your lady baby.

THING 1

That was a joke!

THING 2

You wouldn't write any lyrics! It's never enough for you. Nothing is ever fucking good enough. That was the problem the whole time. I was trying so hard and it was never fucking enough!

THING 1

I don't want fight any more. I'm sorry. Do you think Shelley Long and Rhea Perlman were friends in real life?

THING 2

Probably not. I don't think any of them really liked Shelley.

THING 1

That makes sense. I just thought...I don't know.

THING 2

What?

THING 1

It didn't work. Not really.

THING 2

You wanted to put the other thing in as part of the ending.

THING 1

Which thing.

THING 2

The thing about us.

THING 1

Oh. Right. This is not what I thought it would look like.

THING 2

Right.

THING 1

I wish it was better.



THING 2

I know. Me too.

THING 1

And I wish we were better too. And I wish. I wish that I didn't have to go.

THING 2

Yeah.

THING 1

I really don't want to.

THING 2

I know.

THING 1

(To audience)

Now you are probably asking yourselves, "then why do you do it, if it is all so disappointing? The actors work so hard and we, the audience, we pay you good money and sit here and watch you for 64 minutes and all you do is complain! It's no wonder you're miserable!"

THING 2

And then we say, "But don't you wake up every morning and hope to be the best version of yourself, too? Except you never are." Then you think, "I'm never what I want to be." Neither are we.

(To her)

You have to go now.

THING 1

I know.

*She doesn't move.*

THING 2

You have to leave the stage or they don't understand it, right? I mean they do, but they don't really.

THING 1

I know that! Obviously! Jesus Christ, just give me a fucking minute.

*A moment.*

I'm sorry I yelled at you. Doing this with you made me feel not so all alone.

THING 2

Are you sure you want to say that on stage?

THING 1

*She shrugs.*

It doesn't matter now, right?

THING 2

I'm sorry.

THING 1

Me too. It sort of feels like it was all for nothing now.

*They hug. Or they don't. Thing 1 exits, the entire cast watches her.*

THING 2

Follow no strangers to the fun places, a play not unlike there have been other men in my wife's bed. Show, next to an enemy in the darkness, Let us now praise famous capital, and I'm only giving it one star because you can't give zero stars. We all want to be a person like somebody else was once. And Finally It Is. And there's nothing more to say

*Headphones on.*

RADIO

You have now reached the conclusion of *Follow No Strangers to The Fun Places*. It occurs to you now that this was all a series of devices, just like any other play. The arrangement of objects and bodies, the jokes, the music.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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(cont'd)

Please stand. Everyone. Stand. Now please  
applaud.