

**Two Plays:
Space Girl
and
*Ghost Walks into a Bar***

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Space Girl

By
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Characters

5F,2M with some actors playing multiple roles.

Arugula-16, an alien that looks like a human, female
 Nancy- Her father, ageless, male
 Bruise-20's, female
 Charlotte-16, female
 Denise-16, female
 Becky-16,female
 Zlagdorian Chancellor-female
 Zlagdorian Friend- female
 Usher-female
 Teacher-female
 Announcer-male
 Additional Zlagdorians

Casting:

Actor 1: Arugula
 Actor 2: Charlotte
 Actor 3: Bruise
 Actor 4: Teacher, Zlagdorian Chancellor, Denise
 Actor 5: Usher, Becky, Zlagdorian Friend
 Actor 6: Nancy
 Actor 7: Announcer

The Zlagdorians in the final scene are played by all the actors who played humans in this play, wearing antennae, preferably the springy kind.

Setting

The planetarium, a bare black space full of stars. The other spaces in the play are created within this one. Scene changes may be accompanied by brief planetarium effects.

Notes

denotes when a character is speaking the language of Zlagdor, which is a series of unvoiced clicking and slurping sounds. It is very weird.

This play runs with no intermission.

SCENE 1

The planetarium. ARUGULA and NANCY lie next to each other on the floor to watch the light show, we hardly notice them. A booming voice comes over the speakers. The room lights up with stars.

ANNOUNCER
(Echoing.)

SPACE-ACE-ACE-Ace-Ace-ace-ace-ace...

It's all around us. But what is it?

It's that place full of stars, and planets, and comets, and black holes, and moons, and satellites, and rocks.

It has fascinated humanity since the beginning of time. Since that vital moment in human history when primitive man looked up at the sky and said "Hey, what are those shiny things?"

Since that fateful day, using Science,

Projection of the word "SCIENCE"

We have begun to understand just how vast and complicated our solar system is and how the most important planet, Earth, fits into the grandest scheme of things.

Projection of the Earth.

EARTH-RTH-RTH-Rth-Rth-rth-rth...

The most important planet. That green and blue spherical thing. It rotates. It spins. It circles. It revolves. It is the one planet in all of the solar system that got up out of bed one day and said, "Hey maybe I'll grow some stuff on me. Let's get some little lifeforms going on this thing." It is the only planet that said "Yes" to life.

NANCY cackles. ARUGULA shushes him.

But what is up with those shiny things? Visitors to the planetarium often ask us questions like: "Stars, why do we even have those?" and "Are those the twinkling souls of our dead ancestors?" and even "I thought those were spherical units of plasma held together by their own gravity that shine due to the

thermonuclear fusion of hydrogen into helium that occurs at their core."

Silly visitors. Think of stars as the breadcrumbs of the universe, leading us from one planet to the next, to the ends of the Milky Way and beyond.

We thank you for including the planetarium in your activities today. We realize that the study of space can prompt you to feel tiny and insignificant, a meaningless speck of dust in the vast cosmic void. An itty bitty miniscule little blip on the giant radar of the cosmos, a crumb, a fleck, an ickle weenikin whose problems, hopes, fears, dreams, and disappointments really don't matter at all to anyone in the grandest scheme of things. On behalf of all of us here at the planetarium, we thank you for being here.

And now, we'd like to invite you to clear your mind, sit back, and enjoy the flashing lights.

Music plays. Beautiful swirling projections of the Milky Way, constellations, stars, planets, whatever. ARUGULA begins to sob loudly on the ground. NANCY attempts to comfort her.

NANCY

(Whispering.)

Don't be sad. We'll go back on day, Arugula. Don't be sad. I'll collect my data and...Oh honey, ##### ###.

An USHER with a flashlight approaches.

USHER

(Whispering.)

Um, excuse me, Sir? Miss? You're actually not allowed to lie on the floor during the "Space and Planets" show. We don't let people do that usually. And also you're not allowed to talk.

NANCY

(Whispering.)

Oh no! You talked!

USHER

No, I'm allowed. I'm talking to enforce planetarium policy.

ARUGULA lets out a gasping sob.

ARUGULA
(Through tears.)

#####... #####... ##!

USHER
But um, clearly you're going through something, so I'll
just...Just don't tell anybody I let you stay down here, okay?

NANCY
I will take it with me to my grave! To my grave, young lady!

USHER
Um okay.

The USHER leaves. The light show ends.
Bright overhead lights come back on.
Applause. ARUGULA and NANCY clap
awkwardly from the floor.

Lights down.

SCENE 2

A cafeteria. ARUGULA eats alone. She
has rolled up her square school lunch
pizza into a tube, which she then
shoves into her mouth in one bite.

CHARLOTTE approaches her tentatively,
holding a lunch bag.

CHARLOTTE
Hi.

ARUGULA
(Mouth full.)
Hi.

CHARLOTTE.
Um. I'm Charlotte.

ARUGULA
I'm Arugula.

CHARLOTTE
We're in the same science class. And choir. And gym.

ARUGULA

Yeah.

CHARLOTTE

When you punched Maggie Carter some of her blood got on my locker.

ARUGULA

Sorry.

CHARLOTTE

It was kind of worth it. Maggie's sort of a bitch.

ARUGULA

I got in trouble.

CHARLOTTE

I bet.

...

So, um.

ARUGULA

(Curious.)

Why are you talking to me?

CHARLOTTE

I was getting to it. I noticed you sit alone every day at lunch. And, I also sit alone every day at lunch. And, I thought we could maybe not sit alone every day at lunch. If you want.

ARUGULA

Is it weird to sit alone?

CHARLOTTE

Kind of. No. It's fine. Just sometimes people like to not be alone. Just because, like people look at you funny and also it's weird.

ARUGULA

Do you want to sit here?

CHARLOTTE

Okay.

ARUGULA

You're name is...

CHARLOTTE

Charlotte. I have a sister named Emily. My dad is really into the Bronte's.

ARUGULA

I'm Arugula. I don't have a sister. My dad is really into salad.

CHARLOTTE

Neat.

ARUGULA

I've joined a sport called Roller Derby.

CHARLOTTE

Oh, wow. I could never do that.

ARUGULA

It is going to help with my aggression.

CHARLOTTE

That sounds good.

ARUGULA

It's the greatest.

CHARLOTTE

I don't really know how it works.

ARUGULA

It literally makes the most sense of anything ever.

CHARLOTTE

That's not how you use literally.

ARUGULA

Are you sure? I've literally heard a million people use it that way.

CHARLOTTE

Ok, whatever. Tell me about the game.

ARUGULA

Well you don't call it a game you call it a bout. So everybody skates in a circle, and what it is is each team has four blockers and one jammer, that's this girl Bruise, and the jammer

is fast and scores the points by like going around the circle as much as she can and the blocker's job is to make sure their jammer scores and the other teams jammer gets blocked but they have to stay in their pack and they can only shove people above the waist and not from behind.

CHARLOTTE

You're a blocker?

ARUGULA

Yeah. Well I will be. I'm just in training right now. I need to think of a Derby name. Right now they just call me Young Blood.

CHARLOTTE

What kind of name?

ARUGULA

One that sounds intimidating but humorously so. Like Violent Beauregard or Slaydy Bird Johnson.

CHARLOTTE

Pain Austen. Or Pain Eyre!

ARUGULA

I don't get it. But I don't really get any of them.

CHARLOTTE

Oh, um. They're from books.

ARUGULA

Oh, I don't have any.

CHARLOTTE

You don't have any...books?

ARUGULA

I don't really read books.

...

CHARLOTTE is having a moment.

Is that weird?

CHARLOTTE

How do you even live?

ARUGULA

I don't know.

CHARLOTTE opens her backpack and takes out a book.

CHARLOTTE

Here. I'm halfway through this, but I've read it before. Like a lot. Take it.

ARUGULA

Wuthering Heights. What's wuthering?

CHARLOTTE

Um, it's just like the name of the place in the book. But maybe it means like...windy? In British?

ARUGULA

That makes sense. What do I do with this?

CHARLOTTE

You read it.

ARUGULA

Okay.

ARUGULA opens the book and begins to read.

CHARLOTTE

No, not right now.

ARUGULA

Oh. Ok.

...

You seem like a kind person, Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE

Thanks.

ARUGULA

Why do you eat lunch not with anyone?

CHARLOTTE

Um, I guess I'm kind of like not cool. Like I'm kind of like a nerd. I used to eat lunch with Erin Matthews but her family

moved to Prague over the summer because life is totally unfair. And then I tried to start a Shakespeare reading club, to make friends, but nobody came to the first meeting and Ms. Johnson said she wasn't staying at school late to read Timon of Athens with just me. So...that was a bust. I guess just not a lot of people share my interests here.

ARUGULA

I saw those posters.

CHARLOTTE

Yeah?

She watches Arugula down an entire carton of milk.

CHARLOTTE

So your family just moved here?

ARUGULA

Yeah, from um...Pittsburgh.

CHARLOTTE

That must have been a whole other world.

ARUGULA

I don't know.

CHARLOTTE

So what are you going to do your science project on?

ARUGULA

I was thinking about Uranus.

CHARLOTTE

You can't do Uranus.

ARUGULA

Why not?

CHARLOTTE

Just trust me.

ARUGULA

Okay.

Lights down.

SCENE 3

A Kitchen. NANCY is tossing a salad.
ARUGULA enters and dumps her backpack.

NANCY
Hey Kiddo, you're just in time for salad! Look, cherry tomatoes!

ARUGULA
#####.

NANCY
Arugula, Human please!

ARUGULA
(Sighing)
Cool.

NANCY
How was school?

ARUGULA
Better than usual. I think I made a friend.

NANCY
WHAT? Friends are amazing! They are the gift that keeps on giving! Tell me about your friend!

ARUGULA
She's nice.

NANCY
Nice! That's fantastic! I love it! Nice!

ARUGULA
She might come over this weekend.

NANCY
OH MY GOD!

ARUGULA
But Dad, you have to act normal.

NANCY
I will be the normalest. What do you want to do? Should we make popcorn, pop in a DVD, and do our nails?

ARUGULA

No Dad, you can't hang out with us. We're going to go into my room and close the door and not tell you what we're doing, and you need to stay out here and do Human dad stuff and like check the smoke alarm batteries.

NANCY

I can do that! Human dad stuff! I'll buy smoke alarms, how fun! Oh, I meant to tell you, I talked to your principal today, on *the telephone!*

ARUGULA

Cool, Dad.

NANCY

It looks so primitive, but it really works.

ARUGULA

Did she say something about me?

NANCY

She thinks you're very unique!

ARUGULA

That's bad.

NANCY

Unique is bad? If so, my responses to her were wholly inappropriate!

ARUGULA

It means something good, but they say it to avoid saying something bad.

NANCY

Humans! Amazing! I vote save them.

ARUGULA

Maybe.

Beat.

Hey Dad, I found out what you are today.

NANCY

Oh gee, what am I?

ARUGULA

I mean, the Humans have a word for you. I learned it in Social Studies, you're an anthropologist.

NANCY

An anthro-who-lee-huh?

ARUGULA

Anthro-pol-ogist. It means someone who studies Humans.

NANCY

Are anthropologists also studying them as an emissary of the Universal Committee for Planetary Conservation in order to ascertain whether repairs to Earth's atmosphere would be a worthwhile use of Zlagdorian funds and resources?

ARUGULA

I don't think so, but it's something you can tell people. When they ask you your job.

NANCY

Well that's just nifty! "Hi I'm Nancy Suarez, anthropologist and human male."

ARUGULA

"Hi Nancy, I'm Arugula Suarez. Occupation: student."

NANCY

High five, girlfriend!

They hit the backs of their hands together.

Lights down.

SCENE 4

Kitchen. The ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR'S hologram (or something like it) appears. She looks around the empty room.

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR
(calling)

###? ###? ###! ###!

Nancy rushes in.

NANCY

####!

He takes out a remotelike device and presses a button.

NANCY

Excuse me, I just needed to turn on your translatron. I wouldn't want a human to wander in and hear you speaking Zlagdorian! That would really burn our gravy!

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR
(Robot translator voice)

I have no idea what you are saying. Let me turn on your translatron.

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR presses a button on her own remote.

NANCY

Better?

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

Why weren't you in your kitchen room as planned when I called?

NANCY

I apologize, I was distracted by the television. A dog was riding a skateboard!

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

The television?

NANCY

A truly ingenious Human device made for entertainment!

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

Have they no gladiators?

NANCY

Not anymore. But with televisions you don't even have to leave your house!

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

Alas, this does not seem promising. Not leaving your house breeds laziness and antisocial behavior.

NANCY

Oh, well, the Humans leave their houses many times a day for school and for roller derby and to purchase supplies.

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

Very well. I will not prejudge the humans based on their televisions. How proceeds your research?

NANCY

Proceeds my research well! I have learned so many fun Human facts! But there is still so much to discover.

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

The committee is eager to aurally process your findings.

NANCY

I am already confident that they will vote to preserve the planet's atmosphere based on the great many cultural achievements of the species I have uncovered thus far. Did you listen to the playlist I transmitted?

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

The committee was pleased by the oboe and xylophone. But deeply confused by the guitar and piano based tracks.

NANCY

It grows on you! It really does! And the photos? You liked the photos didn't you?

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

Again, the committee was confused. Why did you transmit photos of photos? And also sad shoes hanging from electrical cables?

NANCY

It's called art! I'm *expressing* myself. It's a human thing I believe bears further investigation.

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

Express yourself back to the matter at hand. What does this planet have that cannot be recreated and better on Zlagdor? What cultural achievements will the Humans achieve if provided with additional time and oxygen?

NANCY

Well...I...It's difficult to say at this time. But I'm sure there's something! Most of the humans are really nice!

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

You have eighteen more Zlagdorian moon cycles.

NANCY

I will not fail the committee.

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

That would be unfortunate on your very first reconnaissance mission. We would find it necessary to reassess your position as an-

NANCY

-Anthropologist?

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

That word is not in our database's dictionary. Is it Human?

NANCY

Yes.

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

Such an ugly language. Include it in your final report.

NANCY

Yes ma'am!

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

Have you ascertained the opinion of the Humans on their imminent demise?

NANCY

Well they seem not to notice it really. Did no one tell them?

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

Any idiot who can hit two rocks together is smart enough to notice their own planet getting warmer.

NANCY

Well I'm sure they can hit two rocks together! I've seen it!

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

How strange and disturbing that the Humans are so disinterested in the propagation of their species. If the Zlagdorian race only had a few hundred years left before the complete and total destruction of their atmosphere, there would be considerable outcry. These Humans seem stupid, much like the Bansogo Race whose planet recently dehydrated due to poor organization and ambivalent leadership, even with generous H-2-O supplementation

from Zlagdor. I am beginning to doubt whether these Humans would even take care of a rejuvenated atmosphere were it provided, let alone make any significant cultural contribution to the universe, if Zlagdorian funds were used to buy them a few thousand years.

NANCY

Well, look at you, Pre-judgment Judy! You better promise me you're going to give this presentation a fair chance!

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

Well...

NANCY

You know what? I'm going to make it my special goal to convince you that it's worth it to not let the Humans kill themselves. Even if the whole committee voted to let them burn themselves out, I'd be happy if I got a yes vote from you!

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

Oh ##, always such a charmer. But in seriousness, your presentation had better be exemplary. If this doesn't work out we can always send you back to your desk.

NANCY

You wouldn't....NOT THE DESK! NOT THE DESK!

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

At the end of the day, some people are interplanetary explorers, and some people are desk people. We'll find out which one you are.

NANCY

Not the desk one! I'm the other one, I swear—

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

You know I like you ##, but don't #### this up.

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR hangs up.

NANCY

Goodbye. I am so fortunate to have a job that challenges me.

NANCY sighs.

Lights down.

SCENE 5

Kitchen. ARUGULA enters with CHARLOTTE.

ARUGULA

So um like, this is like my house. Like.

(Calling.)

Dad!

NANCY appears instantaneously.

NANCY

Oh hello girls! I didn't hear you come in. I was too caught up in checking the *smoke alarm batteries*. YOU MUST BE ARUGULA'S FRIEND!!!

CHARLOTTE

Um, it's nice to meet you, Mr. Suarez.

NANCY

Oh, call me Nancy, please, and you are...?

CHARLOTTE

Charlotte.

NANCY

Oh wow, we both have gender-neutral names! How fun!

CHARLOTTE

Um.

ARUGULA

So, we're gonna go to my room now and not talk to you anymore.

NANCY

Fantastic! Close the door and never ever tell me what you're doing! I've got plenty to do out here. Those smoke alarms aren't going to test themselves.

CHARLOTTE

Are you like a fireman?

NANCY

No, I don't think so. I'm an anthropologist. But "fireman" sounds amazing. Tell me more.

CHARLOTTE

You want me to tell you...what a fireman is...?

NANCY quickly recalibrates.

NANCY

No...no...Of course not!

ARUGULA

Everybody knows what a fireman is.

NANCY

I obviously completely know what it is. Firemen! The lads of the flame! In fact, when I said I was not a fireman, I meant that I am in training to become one. Because of my interest in...fire.

CHARLOTTE

Um. Cool.

...

NANCY

So what are you two girl pearls up to tonight?

CHARLOTTE

Um. I don't know. Hanging out.

NANCY

Hanging out?? Hanging out!! That sounds super duper. I'm sure you two will create a lifetime of memories!

CHARLOTTE

Uh...what do you want to do, Arugula?

ARUGULA

...

...

Um. Do you want to make popcorn and pop in a DVD and do our nails?

CHARLOTTE

That sounds perfect.

Lights down.

Lights up on ARUGULA, CHARLOTTE, and
NANCY watching a movie under a blanket.

MOVIE VOICE 1
Lieutenant, set phasers to Five hundred.

NANCY
(Laughing)
Five hundred! Why not set the gravitational superforcefield to
"off" while you're at it!

ARUGULA laughs. CHARLOTTE is confused.

ARUGULA
Oh no, are you having to swerve to avoid those meteors because
your ship has no cosmic disturbance sensors?

NANCY and ARUGULA laugh. CHARLOTTE
pretends to laugh.

MOVIE VOICE 2
We've got one shot to destroy the magnetic orb, Captain.

MOVIE VOICE 1
Lieutenant, fire the missiles.

CHARLOTTE
Hey, those torpedoes look pretty stupid, right?

ARUGULA and NANCY stare at her. Sounds
of a dramatic space movie action
sequence.

ARUGULA
Um...yeah.

NANCY
Why would you even steer like that? Like, why would you do it!?
This movie is amazing!

ARUGULA
So funny. Don't you think it's so funny Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE
Totally. Um... does anybody want more popcorn?

NANCY and ARUGULA's hands shoot into
the air. CHARLOTTE picks up the popcorn

bowl and goes out. Before she leaves
she overhears...

ARUGULA
(Whispering.)

Isn't Charlotte the greatest?

NANCY
By far my favorite human. And that is saying something!

CHARLOTTE smiles.

Lights down.

SCENE 6

The Roller derby rink. BRUISE and
ARUGULA stand next to one another, both
wearing skates and helmets.

BRUISE
All right, so get down low. This is your Power Box. You want to
skate fast, right? So you need this 90 degree angle here.

ARUGULA attempts to mimic BRUISE'S
stance.

ARUGULA
Power Box.

BRUISE
Bend your knees more. Are you engaging your core? You've gotta
engage your core or your just going to fall over.

She pushes ARUGULA lightly and she
falls over.

Like that. Shake it off.

ARUGULA
(Getting up)
Wow. I will engage my core so much for you, Bruise.

BRUISE
Heh, okay, you little weirdo. So, same position.

She pushes ARUGULA again and she manages to stay upright.

Good. Remember this. You ready to try moving around?

ARUGULA

I already learned to how to skate.

BRUISE

Yeah but your slow as all get out, so pay attention.

(She demonstrates as she talks.)

I'm going to do this really slowly. So, foot comes straight out to the side, circles around and back to the power box. Transfer the weight, and do the other side. Big circle.

She shows ARUGULA and ARUGULA tries it.

You've gotta get your arms into it for more power. There you go. You feel a little like a duck at first but this is what's going to make you go really fast.

They skate slowly around each other.

ARUGULA

Quack.

BRUISE

You're getting it. Don't rush yet.

ARUGULA

Hey Bruise, guess what.

BRUISE

What's up, Young Blood?

ARUGULA

We're orbiting each other.

BRUISE

Yeah, I guess we are.

ARUGULA

You're like my moon.

BRUISE laughs. They skate closer together. ARUGULA has gotten confident. She shoves Bruise over as she passes her.

BRUISE

What the hell!

ARUGULA

I am here for the shoving.

BRUISE

Well, we're all here to shove people, but you've got to learn to skate first!

ARUGULA

Sorry.

BRUISE

(Getting up.)

It's fine, just warn me if you're going to do that!

ARUGULA

Okay.

BRUISE

You did a good job though. You're gonna be great. I like your energy.

ARUGULA

I like your energy.

Pause.

BRUISE

All right, so let's keep orbiting. You'll be ready for your first bout in no time.

They orbit.

Lights down.

SCENE 7

Separate scenes.

Classroom. DENISE's science presentation is addressed to an invisible class.

DENISE

Venus is named for the Roman goddess of love and beauty, so that's cute. Other than like the moon or whatever, it's the brightest thing in the sky.

In a separate scene, we see NANCY and CHARLOTTE in the stands at a Roller Derby bout as we hear...

ANNOUNCER

And the rookie blocker Leafy Mean makes her first hit of the game! I wouldn't want to get in the way of that healthy serving of roughage!

NANCY

THAT'S MY GIRL! KNOCK 'EM INTO THE NEXT GALAXY!

CHARLOTTE

Woo!

DENISE

Venus is kind of the perfect size, just a little more petite than the Earth, so they totally look cute next to each other in pictures.

NANCY snaps a photo of the bout.

NANCY

TAKE NO PRISONERS! BURN THEIR VILLAGE TO THE GROUND! TO THE GROUND!

DENISE

In general Venus is like a pretty cute planet. But the thing is, when you get up close it's just like this total desert and covered in volcanoes and sulphuric acid or whatever.

CHARLOTTE

So is Arugula's team winning?

NANCY

I have no idea.

DENISE

Scientists think that there used to be oceans and stuff on it and it had an atmosphere kind of like the Earth's a super long time ago, but I guess something went way wrong because it's like totally uninhabitable now.

A thud and a whistle. CHARLOTTE winces.

NANCY

OH COME ON! WHAT KIND OF A CALL IS THAT? ARE YOU ON NARCOTICS? HEY REF, ARE YOU ON NARCOTICS!?

DENISE

And that's Venus!

Lights down.

SCENE 8

A messy bedroom. There is clothing and roller derby gear thrown everywhere. BRUISE messes with her iPod, looking for a song. ARUGULA watches her from the bed. They both wear tank tops, underpants, and knee-high striped socks. They have smudged black stripes under their eyes.

BRUISE

Here we go.

She brings the iPod to the bed and puts one earbud in Arugula's ear, and one in her own.

You know it now, right?

ARUGULA

No...I mean, maybe...

BRUISE

How do you not know The Beatles? What planet are you from?

ARUGULA

I'm from Earth, duh.

BRUISE

You've got so much to learn, Young Blood. Here.

She gives her earbud to Arugula and rises to roll a joint. She is an expert at this.

ARUGULA

What are you doing?

BRUISE

(Laughing.)

What do you think?

She lights the joint and smokes it. She hands it to ARUGULA who tries to imitate her, inhaling deeply. She coughs violently.

BRUISE

You've got to hold it in. Here.

She demonstrates. ARUGULA tries again and coughs some more.

BRUISE

(Laughing.)

What a waste.

She smokes a little more while ARUGULA coughs.

You need some water?

ARUGULA shakes her head no. BRUISE offers her the joint again and she refuses it.

You're cute. I'm glad you came over.

ARUGULA

Thank you. I'm really glad I joined Roller Derby.

BRUISE

Yeah?

ARUGULA

Yeah. And not just because it led to our sexual congress.

BRUISE laughs.

ARGULA

Is that funny?

BRUISE

Yeah, that's funny.

ARUGULA

It's really helped me. Since I found out that hitting people is not socially acceptable.

BRUISE laughs.

ARUGULA

Is that funny?

BRUISE

You know that's funny.

ARUGULA

I don't actually. I have a hard time with humor.

...

I feel strange.

...

But good.

...

Bruise?

...

Do you ever feel like...like you're this alien being, who just like ended up here on Earth with all these humans but you don't really belong? And you're always asking yourself, like, "Am I *doing* this, right?" Like you'll be in the audience at a show and you clap because the humans are clapping, but you're also thinking, "Is this right? Is this how people clap?"

ARUGULA

And that's like a simple thing. Talking to people is even worse. You never know what to say. You're never ready with your beverage order. You think people think your Dad is weird but you don't know why. You answer machines you're not supposed to answer and people look at you.

But then, sometimes, every once in a while, finally, some one thing will click into place. You have this one supercharged burst of understanding that makes like a hundred other little things make sense because you suddenly realize, "Oh. I'm a lesbian alien." And like, at least you figured that out.

Beat.

BRUISE

Maybe you have Asperger's.

ARUGULA

I should go. My dad will be wondering where I am. We were supposed to eat salad together after the bout.

BRUISE

You live with your, Dad?

ARUGULA

Is that weird?

BRUISE

How old are you?

ARUGULA

I'm a sixteen year old girl.

BRUISE

That's not funny.

ARUGULA

Okay.

BRUISE

You're not kidding. You're sixteen years old. When...When were you going to tell me you were sixteen years old? How are you even...you have to be 18 to play Roller Derby.

ARUGULA

I didn't know that. I'm sorry.

BRUISE

God...God! This was like...statutory! I just...I thought I was deflowering some college kid, I... God. You need to leave. This was so not cool of you.

ARUGULA

(Standing and gathering her belongings.)

I didn't know it was important.

BRUISE

No. Of course you didn't. Because you're a fucking child. Did you not hear me? I said you need to leave.

ARUGULA

Okay, Bruise. Can I put on my pants first?

BRUISE

GET OUT! Take your skates.

ARUGULA

Okay, Bruise. I'm sorry, Bruise.

ARUGULA exits, pantsless, carrying her stuff in her arms. Lights.

SCENE 9

Kitchen. NANCY is tossing a salad.
ARUGULA enters, still pantsless and carrying a lot of stuff.

NANCY

Hey, Leafy Mean! You're just in time for salad!

ARUGULA

I don't want any.

NANCY

I don't understand.

ARUGULA

Leave me alone! I don't know why we even moved here!

NANCY

But it's so fun. Are you feeling sadness? Where are your pants?

ARUGULA

I SAID LEAVE ME ALONE!

NANCY

Don't yell at me!

ARUGULA

DON'T TALK TO ME!

NANCY

That's it you're...grounded!

ARUGULA

Fine!

NANCY

Fine!

ARUGULA storms off. NANCY sits and angrily eats out of the salad bowl for a moment. He can't even enjoy it. He gets up and calls to ARUGULA.

NANCY

Arugula? Arugula? I'm sorry I set boundaries. It's an earth parent thing I was trying. From that parent teacher conference I had. You don't have to be grounded if you don't want to. I don't even know what that means, really! Let's go out! Let's go anywhere you want!

ARUGULA

(Calling from offstage.)

BACK TO ZLAGDOR!

NANCY

How about the planetarium?

Arugula screams in frustration, offstage.

NANCY

Well, there's salad down here if you want it.

Lights down.

SCENE 10

The planetarium. Completely dark.

ANNOUNCER

Trigger warning: Black Holes.

BLACK-ACK-Ack-Ack-ack-ack...HOLES-OLes-Oles-oles-oles-oles...

The most sinister and terrifying part of SPACE-ACE-Ace-Ace-ace-ace-ace...

Dark pits of nothing that extend forever into more nothing and darkness and emptiness.

If you stuck your hand into a Black Hole, maybe it would disappear. Maybe you would disappear. Maybe the nothing would eat you alive and no one would hear you scream because you're in a space hole.

So, visitors, don't stick your hand in a Black Hole. That's basically what we're getting at.

And remember, in the space around Black Holes there are STARS!

Music plays. Star effects.

ARUGULA on the floor reads *Wuthering Heights* with a flashlight. She reads an especially good passage aloud to herself as the cosmos swirls around her.

ARUGULA

(Reading.)

"If all else perished, and he remained, I should still continue to be; and if all else remained, and he were annihilated, the universe would turn to a mighty stranger: I should not seem a part of it."

She looks up and shines the flashlight on her face. She talks staring into the light.

ARUGULA

I have learned so much about humanity.

Flashlight off.

SCENE 11

The cafeteria with ARUGULA and CHARLOTTE. Their lunches both include bananas. CHARLOTTE peels her banana. ARUGULA watches her and attempts to do the same. Her banana breaks in half. CHARLOTTE doesn't notice.

CHARLOTTE

Okay, try again.

(She gestures pointedly to a big stack of books in front of her.)

I have a big stack of books.

ARUGULA

So, I guess you really like books, huh?

CHARLOTTE

No. That's wrong. Because I do like books. To be sarcastic—

ARUGULA

—I have to say you don't like them.

CHARLOTTE

Right.

(Pause.)

I have a big stack of books here.

ARUGULA

So, I guess you really want to just murder books with a knife, huh?

CHARLOTTE

That was close.

DENISE enters with her friend, BECKY. She scoffs in ARUGULA and CHARLOTTE's direction.

DENISE

Nice sweater, Charlotte.

DENISE and BECKY laugh and move away.

ARUGULA
(To Charlotte.)

Was that sarcasm?

CHARLOTTE
Um. Yeah. But don't worry about it—

ARUGULA stands and moves purposefully
toward DENISE.

ARUGULA
(Loudly.)
Hey, Denise! I come from a brave and warlike people! #####!

She punches DENISE in the face. General
commotion.

Lights down.

SCENE 12

Kitchen. NANCY is putting the finishing
touches on a complicated looking salad.
ARUGULA and CHARLOTTE enter.

NANCY
Hey, my favorite girls! You're done with school early.

ARUGULA
We ran away.

NANCY
Okay, well guess what I made out of salad? The moors! I made the
English moors out of salad! Look, dressing rain!

He demonstrates dressing rain.

CHARLOTTE
That's awesome, Mr. Suarez.

NANCY
Charlotte, call me Nancy! It's such a beautiful name, why not
use it?

CHARLOTTE
Nancy. It's great.

NANCY

Well I had to do something to celebrate Arugula's journey of self-discovery.

CHARLOTTE

Oh?

NANCY

Did she not tell you the news? Arugula!

ARUGULA

Oh, I forgot. I'm a lesbian now.

CHARLOTTE

Oh.

NANCY

Great, right!?

CHARLOTTE

That's great, Arugula.

ARUGULA

It's not that big of a deal.

NANCY

It's tremendous! Knowing what you want happening with your genitals is tremendous! Are you a lesbian, Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE

Um, no...sorry.

NANCY

That's tremendous too!

CHARLOTTE

It's great that you're so supportive, Nancy.

NANCY

Who wouldn't be? Salad, anyone?

He serves them salad.

ARUGULA

Dad, I think you're going to have to have another parent teacher conference.

NANCY

Well, that will probably be delightful. I have just the tie.
Which rule did you break?

ARUGULA

The no punching rule.

NANCY

That is a hard one. And that is why you're home early?

ARUGULA

Exactly.

NANCY

Ah to be young and bursting with hormones...Did the punched party interfere with a prospective female mate?

CHARLOTTE

No, she was just being a bitch. Arugula was awesome.

NANCY

Arugula is often awesome. By the way, Charlotte, I love love LOVE that sweater.

CHARLOTTE

Thanks. I love love love you guys.

Lights down.

SCENE 13

Outside the Roller Derby rink. ARUGULA waits for her dad to pick her up. BRUISE emerges from the building and sees her.

BRUISE

Hey.

ARUGULA

Hey.

BRUISE

Listen, I think I kind of overreacted the other day. That was not cool of me. I'm sorry.

ARUGULA

Oh.

BRUISE

Okay. And with that, I take my leave of you.

ARUGULA

Thanks for not telling them I'm not eighteen.

BRUISE

Hey, I just know we're going to need you when we play the Brawlers.

BRUISE turns to leave but ARUGULA stops her.

ARUGULA

I listened to The Beatles some more. Beatles, spelled B-E-A-T-L-E-S. It's a pun.

BRUISE

Oh yeah? You liked it?

ARUGULA

I liked Norwegian Wood.

...

Bruise? Could I know your true name?

BRUISE

My true name? It's Bruise Springsteen.

ARUGULA

No, I mean the name you were born with.

BRUISE

Nobody's born with a name, Young Blood. I'll see you around.

BRUISE exits.

ARUGULA

(To no one in particular.)

My name is ###.

Lights down.

SCENE 14

A classroom. NANCY enters for his parent-teacher conference.

NANCY

Ms. Nussbaum?

TEACHER

Oh hello, are you...Mr.Suarez? I'm sorry, I think I was expecting your wife-

NANCY

-Call me Nancy!

TEACHER

-Nancy. Please, sit down. It's very nice to meet you.

NANCY

Thank you. Enchanted!

TEACHER

Now, as I'm sure you're well aware, we've had some problems with Arugula starting fights in school. On Thursday, she attacked another girl in the cafeteria while I was on lunch duty, completely unprovoked.

NANCY

The females of our species are very aggressive, particularly during their adolescent years.

TEACHER

Your species?

NANCY

Family.

TEACHER

Mr. Suarez-

NANCY

-Nancy!

TEACHER

Nancy, I asked you to come in today because I'm worried about Arugula and I am hoping that the two of us can come up with a plan to help her.

NANCY

That's very nice of you.

TEACHER

I'm glad you feel that way. Sometimes when we have these meetings parents feel like their parenting skills are being called into question, and that is certainly not the case. However, when a student acts out to this degree it often points to problems occurring in their environment, outside of school.

NANCY

Amazing, that's just what Ms. Johnson said. And Mr. Frank! And Principal Brewer!

TEACHER

Well, it's a great start that so many people have taken an interest in Arugula's success here at school. But, as recent events have indicated, there is still a lot more work to do.

NANCY

Arugula does all her homework, when it isn't too stupid.

TEACHER

Well frankly, Mr. Suarez-

NANCY

Nancy, please!

TEACHER

Nancy, frankly, it's that kind of attitude that concerns me. Arugula needs to be encouraged to succeed both in the classroom and at home.

NANCY

Have I been not encouraging?

TEACHER

I really don't know what goes on in Arugula's life outside of school. As far as I'm concerned, your home might be another planet.

NANCY

HA. HA. HA.

TEACHER

Let's move on from the topic of Arugula's academic success. What I really wanted to talk about is how we can foster Arugula's formation of interpersonal relationships.

NANCY

Okay, how do we do that?

TEACHER

I would really like to see Arugula form more friendships here. I think if she felt more accepted, a lot of her violent tendencies would cease to be an issue.

NANCY

I am always telling Arugula friends are amazing! I mean, you know, just look at the two of us! We're already so close!

TEACHER

Let's not get ahead of ourselves, Nancy.

NANCY

Oh.

TEACHER

I'd really prefer to keep things professional...I have a boyfriend.

NANCY

Okay.

TEACHER

It's really very concerning that Arugula has not managed to find her niche here at school.

NANCY

Her niche?

TEACHER

Her place. Her way of fitting in. Arugula is very unique.

NANCY

Oh no.

TEACHER

I'm sure she has a lot to offer to the school community. But her bullying of other students, really has to stop.

NANCY

Bullying?

TEACHER

In my experience, teenagers who exhibit bullying behavior are often modeling behavior they see or experience at home.

NANCY

Arugula is very nice.

TEACHER

I'm sure that is the case deep down, but you can't argue with the black eyes she has given several of her classmates.

NANCY

I don't know how I would even do that. But Arugula is nice not deep down.

TEACHER

Pardon?

NANCY

I think you are mistaken. Arugula is nice. And her home is nice.

TEACHER

I can see you're getting a little defensive.

NANCY

And Charlotte told me that that girl she hit was being a bitch.

TEACHER

I really don't think that is appropriate language for you to use about a sixteen year old girl, especially one who happens to be president of the Community Service Club and an A student to boot. And as for Charlotte, well, she's one of the more socially inept-

NANCY

(Standing and moving to the door.)

-You're not nice! You're a bully! And I don't have to listen to you.

TEACHER

Mr. Suarez, please take a seat.

NANCY

Don't bully me, bully!

TEACHER

Mr. Suarez, this is extremely immature behavior. It is no wonder your daughter is such a disaster.

NANCY
I COME FROM A BRAVE AND WARLIKE PEOPLE!

TEACHER
Pardon?

NANCY
(A war cry)
#####!

NANCY punches the TEACHER in the face.

Lights down.

SCENE 15

BRUISE's car. Night. BRUISE drives, ARUGULA sits next to her. NANCY sits on the middle seat in the back.

A long and painful silence.

BRUISE
Anybody seen any good movies lately?

NANCY
That. Was. Awful.

ARUGULA
Jail?

BRUISE
You were only in there a couple hours.

NANCY
I am broken on the inside.

ARUGULA
I'm sorry, Dad.

NANCY
Those people were so mean. I didn't know people could be so mean.

ARUGULA

That's because all you do is make salad and buy things at Target.

NANCY

I'm an anthropologist.

ARUGULA

Maybe if you had to, I don't know, spend your entire day around humans you'd know that it's not all "Have a nice day!" and "Can I help you with anything?"

NANCY

I don't want to be on this planet anymore.

BRUISE

Easy there, buddy.

ARUGULA

Let's just go home.

BRUISE

We're almost to your house.

NANCY

We may have to.

Silence.

NANCY

You two just don't know what it's like on the inside. It was all right at first. A man named Big Shifty offered me a free tattoo. I asked if he could do your name, Arugula. He said he only does symbols representing a certain group of which he was a part. I said that sounded fascinating. Then he pulled out a needle and an ink pen and the guards tackled him to the floor. He fought back and they used some kind of electrocution device on him.

BRUISE

Taser.

NANCY

It was awful. I said, "Don't do that to my friend, he was going to give me a free tattoo!" And then another gentleman took offense to me calling Big Shifty my friend. I shouldn't even say gentleman, because he was just the rudest.

ARUGULA

Thanks for driving me to pick up my dad from jail, Bruise.

NANCY

He dunked my head in the toilet bowl and then flushed multiple times.

BRUISE

It's fine, Arugula. You needed an adult.

NANCY

My mouth tastes like iron. I'm going to lie down back here, Bruise who I just met. You have a funny name.

He stretches across the back seat.

NANCY

Oh, this is good.

ARUGULA

Thanks for being an adult, Bruise.

NANCY

Can I stay back here forever?

BRUISE

Sorry man, this is your stop.

BRUISE parks. NANCY opens his door and slithers out of the car, face first. ARUGULA gets out. BRUISE stops her before she slams the door.

BRUISE

Hey, Arugula! Look, I...I hope your dad is okay. And...

...

My parents named me Gretchen.

ARUGULA

...

Goodnight, Bruise.

BRUISE

'Night, Young Blood.

SCENE 16

The planetarium. NANCY waits for the show to start.

ANNOUNCER

Seriously? One guy showed up. We're doing the whole show for one guy? It's 10 a.m. on a Tuesday doesn't he have a job? Huh? I thought the red light meant it was off...aw shit.

Mic clicks off. Mic clicks back on with a terrible noise.

TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES-TIES-Ties-Ties-ties-ties.....

Lights flicker.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we apologize for the inconvenience but we seem to be experiencing technical difficulties at the planetarium this morning. Our apologies. Please just go home. Just go home, sir.

Jesus. Is he leaving? What do you mean it's not... God damn it.

Mic clicks off.

NANCY exits sadly.

Lights down.

SCENE 17

The cafeteria.

ARUGULA and CHARLOTTE eat lunch together.

ARUGULA daintily bites into her pizza. She sets it down.

ARUGULA

Hey, Charlotte. Did you know there's this thing called a Dance?

CHARLOTTE

Yeah! The Spring Fling? ...I mean, I've heard about it.

ARUGULA picks up a handful of fries, molds them into a patty with her hands and stuffs the patty into her mouth.

ARUGULA

Are you gonna go to it?

CHARLOTTE

I don't know. I mean, I'd like to, I guess. But, I don't have anyone to go with, so.

ARUGULA

You can't go not with anyone?

CHARLOTTE

I mean, ideally you have a date. Or you at least have like a bunch of friends to go with so you can like do joke dance moves in a clump, and pretend you only like songs like as a joke but you actually really do like them and know all the words.

ARUGULA

Oh. That sounds kind of dumb.

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, totally. It's so stupid.

ARUGULA

But is it dumb in an enjoyable way?

CHARLOTTE

I don't know. I've never gone to one.

ARUGULA

Well maybe we should go. And be a clump of two. Can you do that?

CHARLOTTE

I mean, yeah, I guess you can.

ARUGULA

I don't mean as a date.

CHARLOTTE

Okay.

ARUGULA

The two of us don't have the chemical magnetism that Bruise and I have.

CHARLOTTE

No, we don't. But we'd go as friends?

ARUGULA

I think the experience will be formative.

CHARLOTTE

Uh, okay. Yeah!

ARUGULA

I will listen to the radio, to try to learn some songs to like ironically.

CHARLOTTE

Okay. It's a date. I mean, it's an occasion. It'll probably be dumb, though.

ARUGULA

Almost definitely.

Lights down.

SCENE 18

NANCY lays sprawled across the couch, recovering from a salad binge. He watches the home shopping network.

HOME SHOPPING NETWORK

Now these are one hundred percent pure cubic zirconium valise clips. And, aren't they just luxurious looking? As you can see they just add that special touch of glamour to any type of small travel luggage.

ARUGULA calls from another room.

ARUGULA

Dad? Dad?

HOME SHOPPING NETWORK

Now I'm just warning the folks at home, these will go fast at this price. We're offering them exclusively to our viewers at \$59.99, next to nothing, really, when you think about the workmanship that went into making each of these clips.

ARUGULA enters and drops her backpack.

ARUGULA

There you are. You didn't just watch TV all day did you?

HOME SHOPPING NETWORK

And I believe we have a caller on the line. Good afternoon, what can I tell you about these great little dazzlers?

NANCY

What does it even matter?

ARGULA

Well it matters because you're supposed to be finding a reason to save the Humans!

NANCY

Everything I need to know is on TV.

ARUGULA

On the home shopping network?

NANCY

#####!!!!

He turns off the TV and buries his head
in the couch.

ARUGULA

I thought we were speaking Human at home.

NANCY

Human is an ugly language.

ARUGULA

How much salad have you had today?

NANCY

It was all we had in the fridge and I don't want to hear it
about how it's bad for me and always goes straight to my hips...

ARUGULA

Well, why didn't you go to the grocery store?

NANCY

Too many Humans there.

ARUGULA

You loved the Humans before.

NANCY

I didn't have the full story before. Look at this, have you watched this?

He turns the TV back on and changes the channel.

NEWSCASTER VOICE

Six civilians dead in a terrorist attack in Tehran where military forces are...

ARUGULA

(Overlapping)

The news? Nobody watches that.

He turns the TV off.

NANCY

I know because it's horrible! Humans do horrible things!

ARUGULA

Zlagdorians do horrible things sometimes.

NANCY

Not like this.

ARUGULA

So you're just going to let them go extinct?

NANCY

No. You don't get it.

ARUGULA

What don't I get?

NANCY

I'm trying to save them!

ARUGULA

How are you saving them by spending all day on the couch?

NANCY

The less bad stuff I know about the Humans, the less I'll have to report back to the committee with. And then maybe, maybe based on their salad and their music and all their great, great, stuff, they'll vote to repair their atmosphere and give these screw ups a chance at making things right.

ARUGULA

I hope you know what you're doing, Dad.

NANCY

I'm a professional.

ARUGULA

Remember, Charlotte's a human.

NANCY

Oh, she'll be long gone before it's an issue.

ARUGULA

But you know what I mean, Dad.

NANCY

I know.

He clicks the TV back on.

HOME SHOPPING NETWORK

Yes, you heard that right, it's \$27.99 for the full set...

Lights down.

SCENE 19

The Roller Derby stands. NANCY and CHARLOTTE watch ARUGULA's bout.

CHARLOTTE

Woooo, Arugula!

NANCY

(Trying but failing to muster up enthusiasm.)

Go Derby Dames. Knock 'em, sock 'em.

CHARLOTTE

LET'S GO DAMES!

NANCY

Throw 'em to the floor and stomp on their dreams.

CHARLOTTE

Are you okay, Nancy?

NANCY

Super duper, Charlotte.
(Yelling.)

Take away their will to go on!

CHARLOTTE

Okay. You seem a little down.

NANCY

Oh don't worry about me, Charlotte. Humans have bigger problems.

CHARLOTTE

Bigger problems than what?

NANCY

It doesn't matter. None of it does.

CHARLOTTE

I feel like that sometimes. It helps to be around friends though. To not be alone.

He looks at Charlotte. A whistle is
blown on the Derby track.

NANCY

You strange, almost unearthly thing!

CHARLOTTE

You read *Jane Eyre*.

NANCY

I read it and committed some passages to memory.

ANNOUNCER

A TREMENDOUS HIT BY LEAFY MEAN!

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, Arugula!

NANCY

Annihilate them, honey!

...

Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE

What's up?

NANCY

If the Earth were going to end, what would you want the aliens to have of Human civilization?

CHARLOTTE

Like to remember us by? I don't know. I feel like most things would be confusing out of context. Like, Roller Derby, I mean, how would you even begin to explain?

NANCY

Oh, I think they'd get hashtag Derbylife. But what would you pick?

CHARLOTTE

Well, I guess I'd want them to have some of our books and stories or whatever.

NANCY

And why is that?

CHARLOTTE

Because then they'd know people tried.

ANNOUNCER

AND WE'VE GOT A BUTT TO THE GUT AND TIME...IS...UPPPP!!!

The crowd cheers.

Lights down.

SCENE 20

CHARLOTTE, dressed up, waits for ARUGULA outside the dance. Faint sounds of pop music.

ARUGULA arrives wearing her Roller Derby outfit.

ARUGULA

Hey, Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE

Oh...hey.

ARUGULA

You look nice.

CHARLOTTE

You're wearing your Roller Derby outfit.

ARUGULA

You said to wear something I feel great in.

CHARLOTTE

I did say that.

ARUGULA

I brought you a corsage.

She holds out a ziplock baggy with a
mass of leaves and ribbons in it.

My dad made it out of salad.

CHARLOTTE

Oh. Thanks.

She takes the corsage from her.

ARUGULA

Do you want me to help you put it on?

CHARLOTTE

You know, I think I might just hold it.

ARUGULA

Let me help you.

ARUGULA ties the corsage around
CHARLOTTE'S wrist.

CHARLOTTE

Thanks.

ARUGULA

It's okay that you didn't bring me one.

CHARLOTTE

Oh.

ARUGULA

Do you want to go in?

CHARLOTTE

Umm...let's wait a minute. I don't really like the song that's playing.

ARUGULA

Not even ironically?

CHARLOTTE

Um, no.

Silence. BECKY, comes out of the dance and walks between them. She glances at the two of them and smirks a little before disappearing to the bathroom.

ARUGULA

Are there a lot of people in there?

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, pretty much like the whole school's in there.

ARUGULA

Oh. That's cool.

ARUGULA does a strange little dance to the music.

Are you sure you don't want to go in?

CHARLOTTE

You know what, dances are dumb. I don't know why we decided to do this. Do you want to just go get ice cream or something?

ARUGULA

Did I do something wrong?

CHARLOTTE

No! I just...You know what, I realized when I peeked in that I'm just totally wearing the wrong thing.

ARUGULA

I think you look nice.

CHARLOTTE

No, I just, I'll be really embarrassed if I go in there. You saw how Becky just looked at what I was wearing. Is it...would it be okay if we just um, skipped this one?

ARUGULA

Well, yeah, if that's what you want to do. You're my friend clump. I'll stay out here with you.

They stand for a moment. ARUGULA bobs her head slightly to the music.

CHARLOTTE

We can dance out here if you want. I mean, at least until Becky comes back.

ARUGULA

Yeah, okay.

They groove to the music. They get kind of into it.

BECKY returns. CHARLOTTE sees her and stops dancing.

BECKY

You two are so weird.

She returns to the Dance.

ARUGULA

Come on, Charlotte. Forget her. I can't punch anyone else this week.

(Dancing at her.)

Look, I learned this on the internet.

They dance.

Lights down.

SCENE 21

A classroom. ARUGULA holds a poster board and speaks to an invisible class.

ARUGULA

Minor-planet designation 134340 Pluto. In the Earth year 2006, Pluto was reclassified by humans as not a planet, but a dwarf planet. I had never even heard of it because it is pretty small and kind of sucks.

Titters from the class.

I say that because it is made of rock and ice and there is really nothing going on there except maybe like occasional drug deals.

TEACHER'S VOICE

Arugula, let's stick to the facts.

ARUGULA

Um okay, um Pluto has five moons, even though it's not a planet. And it gets orbited and orbits and does planet things even though it's not a planet. So that's cool I guess...and...yeah. The End.

SCENE 22

ARUGULA's bedroom. ARUGULA and CHARLOTTE are cutting up magazines and making collages.

ARUGULA

(Holding up an advertisement for a Vegetti or something like that.)

Can I cut this one out?

CHARLOTTE

You can cut out whatever you want. It's going on your wall.

ARUGULA

I think it's cool.

CHARLOTTE

(Holding up a picture of a famous actor)

I'm cutting him out for my wall!

ARUGULA

He is very symmetrical.

A pause. They cut.

CHARLOTTE

Hey, Arugula?

ARUGULA

Yes, Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE

Is everything okay?

ARUGULA

Yes.

CHARLOTTE

You know you don't have to keep secrets from me right?

ARUGULA

What do you mean?

CHARLOTTE

I mean, I wouldn't judge you or anything.

ARUGULA

Judge me?

CHARLOTTE

I'm actually really open-minded about a lot of stuff.

ARUGULA

What stuff?

CHARLOTTE

Like for example, I kind of felt like you didn't want to tell me you were a lesbian.

ARUGULA

Oh.

CHARLOTTE

And we're friends and I want you to trust me with important stuff like that. I mean, I don't keep any secrets from you.

ARUGULA

You don't?

CHARLOTTE

No. I mean, you know about my parents and...and what happens if I eat cheese, and about that thing with Justin, and all kinds of embarrassing stuff.

ARUGULA

I don't think you're embarrassing.

CHARLOTTE

Well, thanks. So if there's anything going on-

ARUGULA

-Do you think I'm embarrassing?

CHARLOTTE

I mean... We don't need to act like everybody else does just to fit into some stupid high school hierarchy. We're better than that. We're independent thinkers.

ARUGULA

But do you think I'm embarrassing?

CHARLOTTE

You're changing the subject. Is something going on with your dad?

ARUGULA

No.

CHARLOTTE

Okay. Because you could tell me if there was. You can trust me.

She holds up a picture.

Here, how about this tiger?

ARUGULA

It's cool.

...

Hey, Charlotte?

Do you ever feel like...like you're this alien being? And like you just ended up on earth and you have no idea how to be human or talk to people or make it through the day with out screwing

something up and having everyone laugh at you because you like got in the wrong line and your skirt is on backwards?

CHARLOTTE

I feel like that constantly.

ARUGULA

You do?

CHARLOTTE

Yeah.

ARUGULA

Like you're an alien?

CHARLOTTE

Completely.

ARUGULA

Charlotte, I am an alien.

CHARLOTTE

(Laughing slightly.)

Um, okay.

ARUGULA

I am not supposed to tell anyone, but I am telling you because you're my best friend.

CHARLOTTE

What are you-?

ARUGULA

My father and I come from the planet Zlagdor. In our language it's called #####. It's beautiful and orderly and full of brave and warlike people. My father was sent to Earth to study the Humans and learn about them by living among them. With the information he brings back to Zlagdor it will then be decided by committee whether or not the Human race is worth preserving. I came with him because he is my father and I had to.

CHARLOTTE

You're being really weird, Arugula. Like weirder than usual.

ARUGULA

I'm an alien!

CHARLOTTE

Okay, prove you're an alien.

ARUGULA

Okay.

ARUGULA takes a remotelike device out of a hiding place and "calls" a friend on Zlagdor. ZLAGDORIAN FRIEND'S hologram (or something like it) appears.

ZLAGDORIAN FRIEND

###! #####?

ARUGULA

#####! ###, Charlotte, ##### ## ##.

ZLAGDORIAN FRIEND

#.

ARUGULA

Um, she said "Hi."

CHARLOTTE

(Softly)

...hi.

ZLAGDORIAN FRIEND

##?

ARUGULA

####!

ARUGULA and ZLAGDORIAN FRIEND laugh at an inside joke. ARUGULA remembers CHARLOTTE.

ARUGULA

(To the effect of: "We're kind of in the middle of something, I'll call you later.")

##, ##### ## ## ## #####. ##### ## ##.

ZLAGDORIAN FRIEND

#. ## Char-lotte. ## ##.

##.

ARUGULA

ZLAGDORIAN FRIEND hangs up.

ARUGULA

Um, she said "Bye."

CHARLOTTE

What the hell, Arugula?

ARUGULA

Do you believe me?

CHARLOTTE

Who was that?

ARUGULA

My friend ###.

CHARLOTTE

Your *friend*?

ARUGULA

Well, on Zlagdor we have antennae...

CHARLOTTE

You think I'm upset about the antennae?

ARUGULA

I don't really know what you're upset about.

CHARLOTTE

I can't believe this.

ARUGULA

I mean, really, when you think about it the universe is more aliens than Earthlings.

CHARLOTTE

I don't...Is your name even Arugula?

ARUGULA

It's my Earth name. My true name-

CHARLOTTE

-And this whole time you've just been waiting to go back to your friends on Zlagdor?

ARUGULA

Yes, but no, not the whole time...

CHARLOTTE

You can't...People don't do this, Arugula!

ARUGULA

Well Humans don't, their space travel is not remotely advanced enough...

CHARLOTTE

You can't just be my friend and then tell me you're an alien!

ARUGULA

I just did that.

CHARLOTTE

It's not...

ARUGULA

Charlotte, are you feeling sadness?

CHARLOTTE

I'm feeling betrayal, Arugula.

ARUGULA

Like Heathcliff? But why?

CHARLOTTE

Because I wanted you to just be weird!

CHARLOTTE gathers her stuff to go.

ARUGULA

Charlotte, wait! I am weird! I am weird! I promise you I am weird!

CHARLOTTE

Just stay away from me, Arugula!

CHARLOTTE storms out.

ARGULA

I'm weird, Charlotte!

NANCY appears in the doorway.

NANCY

Arugula, what's all this yelling? Why did Charlotte run away so fast?

ARUGULA

She hates me. Charlotte hates me.

NANCY

I find that hard to believe.

ARUGULA

I wanted to tell her my true name.

NANCY

Don't you like your Earth name?

ARUGULA

I like it but I don't know how to be it.

NANCY

(Wanting to give the best Dad advice ever.)

Isn't it a shame, sometimes...when we have to be a thing?

ARUGULA hugs him tightly.

Lights down.

SCENE 23

The cafeteria. CHARLOTTE sits with DENISE and BECKY. She is dressed cool. DENISE checks the makeup on her black eye in a compact mirror as she talks.

DENISE

And then I was like, there's no way I'm going to the formal with you, you're a flipping freshman. Like what am I some kind of cougar? And like anyway I'm pretty sure Josh is going to ask me, so whatever, you know? Like I have standards.

BECKY AND CHARLOTTE

Totally.

DENISE

Josh is probably just waiting for my eye to heal. Like no one wants to be in the same picture as this right now.

BECKY

What? No!

CHARLOTTE

You're totally pulling it off.

BECKY

Totally.

CHARLOTTE

And like, when it heals you'll look even better than you did before because like he won't be as used to it, you know? Plus, right now you have that like tragic beauty.

DENISE

...That's totally smart.

BECKY

Totally.

DENISE

Charlotte, I'm so glad you stopped hanging out with that weirdo lunatic girl and like started dressing better and stuff.

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, well I mean at first I felt sorry for her, but then she punched you and I was like, "Well, that's the last straw."

DENISE

Was she like totally crazy? Like, tell us some stuff that she did.

CHARLOTTE

Well I mean...she's like totally a lesbian.

DENISE AND BECKY

GASP!

CHARLOTTE

And like one time, towards the end, she like totally freaked out and starting telling me all this stuff about how like, she was an alien from space—

DENISE

What. The Flip. That's so crazy, and she like actually believed it, right?

CHARLOTTE

Yeah. Totally. She was totally like "I'm an alien." And I was like "You're a lunatic. By-ee!"

They laugh.

DENISE

That's so funny. We should call her like..."Space Girl" now or something.

BECKY

Totally.

They laugh. DENISE stands to leave.

DENISE

Ugh, I'm spinning out of control, I need a latte. I'm going off campus. Becky, comesies.

BECKY rises.

(To CHARLOTTE.)

You're staying, I assume?

CHARLOTTE

Um, yeah. I have class.

DENISE

Such a goody-goody. Speaking of, did you get through the math homework? I tried so hard to figure it out last night and just could not wrap my head around it.

CHARLOTTE

(Rummaging in her backpack for the homework)

Yeah, I did it. I can help you if you want—

DENISE

—Great! Can I see yours?

CHARLOTTE

Oh. Um...

DENISE takes the homework from CHARLOTTE.

DENISE

Thanksies. Later bitch.

BECKY and DENISE blow CHARLOTTE air kisses and begin to exit.

ARUGULA enters from the opposite direction.

BECKY
(Whispering audibly to DENISE)

Space Girl!

They giggle and leave. ARUGULA looks at CHARLOTTE. CHARLOTTE looks at ARUGULA.

Charlotte, I-

ARUGULA

CHARLOTTE exits.

ARUGULA eats not with anyone.

She peels her banana perfectly for the first time.

She looks around. No one saw it.

She takes a small sip of milk and sets the carton down.

She suddenly feels everyone looking at her.

She picks up her tray and walks out.

Lights down.

SCENE 24

Kitchen. NANCY arranges the room and himself for his call with the ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR. He has created an elaborate display of Human artifacts on the table, including books, a bowl of salad, skates, a waffle maker, etc. When he's ready, he takes out the

device and presses a few buttons. The
ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR appears.

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR
(Coldly.)

##.

NANCY

Greetings!

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR
The news is not good for your Humans, ##.

NANCY
But the committee hasn't even voted yet. I haven't even done my
presentation. I was going to give you a preview today--

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR
The issue is no longer being put to a vote this year. Due to the
recent budget cuts--

NANCY
-But couldn't we just fix their atmosphere a little?

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR
It is not in the budget. Do not argue with the budget, ##. And
there is also the matter of the security breach.

NANCY
Security breach? But we've been so careful.

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR
What about the arrest you were recently billed for?

NANCY
That was just a teeny tiny accident.

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR
Your assignment was to blend in and to live as one of them.
Imprisonment generally implies a certain disregard for the
status quo.

NANCY
But they never found out I wasn't a Human.

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

And for that you should consider yourself fortunate. You saw the training video about what happens when alien species are discovered on Earth. YOU SAW WHAT HAPPENED TO E.T.

NANCY

I know! I know! I've been careful.

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

And has your daughter been careful?

NANCY

What do you mean?

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

A member of the committee happened to overhear a certain friend of hers bragging about how she had spoken to ###'s new human friend.

NANCY

Oh no.

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

I believe the name was "Char-lotte?"

NANCY

You don't need to worry about Charlotte. She's very nice.

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

Nice is inconsequential to planetary security.

NANCY

I'm sorry, I will talk to Arugula.

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

The damage is completed. However, we have ways of dealing with situations such as these. After all, one solitary being, with no proof, describing their alien experience has never resulted in much of an uproar on any non-allied planet we've dealt with in the past.

NANCY

Exactly, she's completely harmless.

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

However, if you wish to stay on Earth and continue your research until the next fiscal year, in addition to a heightened vigilance with regard to your own and your daughter's behavior, the Earth Girl must be Silenced.

NANCY

Silenced?

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

Otherwise she can lead the Human government right to you. They will drain your blood and test your hair and they will know that you are not one of them. And then the real experiments will start. It is just our policy. If you wish to continue your research on Earth, "Char-lotte" must be annihilated.

NANCY

But you can't annihilate, Charlotte! Why, she's the best human there is! She's our favorite one.

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

Oh ##, we don't annihilate her. You do. A Silencer has been provided.

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR takes out a huge scary alien gun.

Say the word and we will send it through the cosmic datafield.

NANCY

Me! No way!

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

You would sacrifice the whole of Humanity for one seemingly average Earth Girl?

NANCY

The whole of humanity?

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

It's possible the Earth issue will come up again in another nine thousand moon cycles and we'll send someone back down...

NANCY

It might be too late by then! Their atmosphere will be fried!

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

Just like your career. Take the Silencer, ##.

NANCY

I won't do it!

ZLAGDORIAN

You wish to return to your desk? I did not realize how much you enjoyed paperwork.

NANCY

But I...

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR

Let us know what you decide. You have 24 Earth Hours. We are really disappointed in you, Nancy.

ZLAGDORIAN CHANCELLOR hangs up.

NANCY

Daughter of a bitch!

He flips over the salad bowl.

Lights down.

SCENE 25

ARUGULA and BRUISE in their respective rooms. ARUGULA uses the alien remote to call BRUISE on her regular cell phone. BRUISE picks up.

BRUISE

Hello?

ARUGULA

Hi Bruise. It's Arugula. I mean Young Blood. I mean Leafy Mean.

BRUISE

What's up? Is everything okay?

ARUGULA

Everything is hunky dory. I listened to The Beatles today.

BRUISE

Okay. So...Was there something you needed to tell me?

ARUGULA

I just thought maybe you...

ARUGULA freezes up.

BRUISE

Hello? Earth to Arugula?

ARUGULA

I just thought maybe you might want to hang out.

BRUISE

Um...I don't think that's such a good idea.

ARUGULA

Oh. Because I am a sixteen year old girl?

BRUISE

I think you're a great kid, Arugula. But uh, I think maybe we should just be Derby friends.

ARUGULA

Oh.

BRUISE

Unless you have another emergency like before. Then you can call me. I want you to call me if you have an emergency, okay?

ARUGULA

But not just if I am feeling sadness. Okay.

BRUISE

What?

ARUGULA

Okay. Sorry. That's kind of confusing. Okay.

BRUISE

Are you okay?

ARUGULA

Bye Bruise.

ARUGULA hangs up.

BRUISE

Hello?

Lights down on BRUISE.

NANCY enters.

NANCY

Arugula? I need to tell you some things.

ARUGULA

Okay.

NANCY

Are you all right? Have you had another terrible Earth day?

ARUGULA

I've had another terrible Earth day.

NANCY

Well, maybe this will be good news then.

ARUGULA

What?

NANCY

(He forces himself to brighten.)

Actually, it's definitely good news! It's probably the best news I've heard all day. Arugula, we're going home. We're going home to Zlagdor.

ARUGULA

Home?

NANCY

Some people are interplanetary explorers, and some people are just desk people! And I'm a desk people! And it's fantastic to be filled with self-knowledge! Who was I kidding trying to understand Humanity, right?

ARUGULA

And the Earth...?

NANCY

My superiors have really missed me at my desk. The Earth Preservation Issue isn't being put to the vote this year. So, we can just relax! The Humans will figure things out with their atmosphere. They're resourceful as all get out!

ARUGULA

Oh. Maybe.

NANCY

So, it's back to Zlagdor, just like you always wanted...

ARUGULA nods.

You look not happy... You'll feel better when we go home. And you know, we can bring back salad and books and The Beatles. Smoke alarms. Swedish fish. Some of those little baby socks turned into coin purses. That sparkly green nail polish. Diet orange soda. You'll fit in again, Arugula. Everyone will know your true name. You can punch anyone you want!

ARUGULA

I know.

NANCY

And it's not like we'll never go anywhere again. I mean, I might not get sent anywhere for a while. Or ever again. But you've got so much to offer. In a few years, the universe will be your oyster! We should pack oysters!

ARUGULA

I guess no one will really care if I go back to Zlagdor.

NANCY

Nonsense, your friends from home will be so happy to see you!...And as for your friends here, well...Charlotte, Charlotte will be okay.

ARUGULA

Dad, what is going on? Aren't you worried about the Humans?

NANCY

(Brightly)

I am so so worried about the Humans! They'll probably die!

ARUGULA

You're doing this weird thing where you're saying sad things like they're happy.

NANCY

(Same tone.)

Maybe it's because I'm so depressed!

ARUGULA

Well, snap out of it! I'm not ready to leave yet. Charlotte hasn't forgiven me for being an alien and Bruise doesn't know we're in love and you haven't saved the planet!

NANCY

I can't save the planet, Arugula, not without...nevermind.

ARUGULA

What?

NANCY

I don't want you to feel complex sad feelings, so I'm not telling you.

ARUGULA

I'm already feeling complex sad feelings every second I'm on this planet!

NANCY

If we stay on Earth, I have to Silence Charlotte.

ARUGULA

What?

NANCY

My superiors feel it's too risky for us to continue our presence on Earth when someone knows what we really are. She could raise a lot of questions about us with the government, and you know I've got no poker face.

ARUGULA

So because I told Charlotte...

NANCY

She's in real danger. They gave me this big gun. But I won't use it!

ARUGULA

I could punch myself in the face right now.

NANCY

I know you didn't realize your foolhardy actions would lead to our downfall.

ARUGULA

But if we go back to Zlagdor, Charlotte is safe?

NANCY

Yes. And the Humans maybe will...

ARUGULA

Maybe they will preserve themselves.

NANCY

Maybe.

ARUGULA

Well, then I guess we should pack, right?

NANCY

Indubitably.

ARUGULA

And go back to Zlagdor.

NANCY

And go back to Zlagdor.

Lights down.

SCENE 26

The planetarium.

ANNOUNCER

(Boredly.)

SPACE-ACE-Ace-ace-ace...TRAVEL-AVEL-Avel-avel-avel...

It's fast. It's exciting. It's the new frontier.

Projection of an astronaut.

The nation's best and brightest train their whole lives to get shot up into that great unknown. Also monkeys, dogs, and miniature pigs.

Projection of a miniature pig.

And when we ask these modern day explorers, these conquistadors of the cosmos, what the most profound moment they experienced up there was, do you know what they say? Do you, visitors?

One man told us his most profound moment was when he was about to exit the ship to make a repair to the exterior and suddenly

realized that he wasn't wearing a helmet and was about to suffocate slash freeze his head off in the spacemosphere. It occurred to him that he really should stop drinking and also call his mom more often.

Projection of somebody's mom.

But that example aside, the majority of astronauts said their most soul rocking moment was when they first looked at the Earth, that little green planet that could, from their spaceship window.

Projection of the Earth.

Because you see, visitors, when you look at the Earth from a distance like that, something happens in your brain, like a thought but also like a lobotomy. And you suddenly feel this profound connection to everyone you've ever met, and everyone you haven't met, and to cats, and trees, and that weird stuff growing at the bottom of your trashcan. Because you realize you are all so small.

SO-SO-so-so-so-so...SMALL-Small-Small-small-small-small...

And it's really kind of all right. They're all down there repairing power lines, and arguing with their boyfriends, and having epiphanies, and completing mitosis, and starving, and bombing, and seeing snow for the first time. And they're all too small for you to even see. They're all just in the green somewhere on this fragile beautiful thing whose atmosphere is slowly sweating off.

Projection of a miniature pig.

The miniature pig declined to comment.

(Yawning.)

And now...Stars, constellations, planets, you know the drill.

The light show begins.
Amid the lighting effects, ARUGULA and NANCY stand holding hands in their alien clothes. They each have a suitcase in their free hands. A blue light shines down on them. They close their eyes as they are beamed up.
Lights down.

SCENE 27

Lights up on CHARLOTTE giving her science presentation and BRUISE outside ARUGULA's house. Two scenes occur simultaneously. BRUISE knocks on ARUGULA's door and calls out to her. CHARLOTTE holds up a poster board and speaks to an invisible class.

CHARLOTTE

Laniakea is the Hawaiian word for "immeasurable heaven."

BRUISE

Hello? Is anybody home?

CHARLOTTE

The Laniakea Supercluster is a supercluster of over 100,000 galaxies. It includes the Earth, Milky Way, and our whole solar system.

BRUISE

Arugula? You missed practice. Hello?

CHARLOTTE

The borders of a supercluster are hard to define, but the movements of all the galaxies within a supercluster are directed toward a central point called The Great Attractor, making this infinity type symbol, you see here.

BRUISE

Hey, Nancy? Hello?

CHARLOTTE

But the borders are there. It doesn't just go on forever. There's an end, to this Supercluster, at least. It might be immeasurable, but it ends.

BRUISE gives up and exits.

Lights down.

SCENE 28

Zlagdor. A group of several adolescent ZLAGDORIANS train together, ARUGULA among them. They are dressed in matching Zlagdorian uniforms. They have antennae. They "chant" and do a series of strange athletic movements in precise unison.

ZLAGDORIANS

#####! #####! #####! #####! #####! #####! #####! #####!
#####! #####! #####! #####! #####! #####! #####!

ZLAGDORIAN 1 accidentally bumps
ZLAGDORIAN 2. ZLAGDORIAN 2 punches
ZLAGDORIAN 1. The whole group is
quickly taken up in the fray. ARUGULA
separates from the mass of fighting
aliens and takes out a book,
Charlotte's copy of *Wuthering Heights*.
She reads quietly off to the side. The
ZLAGDORIANS slowly notice her and
stare.

ZLAGDORIAN 3

(Judgmentally.)

###, #####.

The ZLAGDORIANS leave, whisper-clicking
among themselves. ARUGULA is alone.

An electronic version of Norwegian
Wood.

End of Play.

Ghost Walks into a Bar

By
Mora V. Harris

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CHARACTERS

IVY: 20-30s, Female. Her hair is pretty much always wet.

CONNOR: Looks 20-30s, Male. Bar-owner, about 5 years dead.

LORNE: Looks 29, Male. A recently dead comedian.

UNDERWOOD: Looks late 30s, Male. A critic who died in 1914.

ANDRE: Looks 20-30s, Male. Died in the 80s, a ghost comedian.

BOO: Any age, Female. Died in the 50s, wears a sheet, rattles chains.

JAN: 20-30s, Male. Norwegian.

MINERVA: 30s, Female. Ivy's boss. The worst.

Boo and Minerva can be played by the same actor.

SETTING

A cemetery. The large and well-kept kind with long winding paths that people jog and push strollers on as if relatively unencumbered by the devastating weight their own mortality. The other locations in the play (Oh, Connor's Bar and Ivy's Office) can be created within this one. The cemetery need not ever fully disappear.

NOTES

With the exception of BOO, the ghosts look like they did when they were human...but different. This might just mean making everybody paler. Their garments should clearly indicate their respective time periods. Maybe Boo wears Saddle Shoes along with her sheet.

The actors playing the ghosts should be careful not to pick up anything that is not specifically mentioned in the script as an item they can touch.

Scene 1

The cemetery. Thunder and lightning.

IVY stands under an umbrella.

She hears the voices of hundreds of ghosts swarming around her. Sad patches of ghostly light swirl through the air like flashlight beams. She listens patiently for few seconds, maybe makes a few mental notes, but eventually has to shout over the noise.

Some or all of the points on the following list are spoken by a myriad of voices, in no particular order. The sentences overlap so we only hear bits and pieces of them.

CEMETERY GHOSTS

- Tell them about our first date.
- I don't want people to think I didn't like them just because I was quiet around them.
- There's a photo on my bedside table from my wedding I want you to use. My daughter will know the one I mean.
- Tell Denise I'm sorry. So so so sorry.
- Tell them I never liked that nickname. I want them to take it off my tombstone.
- Make sure you write about the time we beat State. Don't make it sound braggy, but make sure you say that I threw the pass to Peter that he then threw to Michael for the final touchdown.
- I was one credit away from graduating. Couldn't they just count it?
- I *do not* want it to say anything about the war.
- Write about the time when I was funny.
- I wanted to be cremated. I hate watching myself rot.
- Did you have to make me sound so boring?
- I won that wreath-making contest, you know. My obit just said I made wreaths, but I was competitive.
- Did they find Jack yet? I tried to look for him.
- Tell her I'm still waiting for her.
- The key is under a potted plant on the back porch. Is that a weird thing for you to put in? I just want to make sure they find it.
- He may have gotten the patent, but I invented it first.

- Make sure they know I loved them, even if I didn't always show it.
- Is somebody feeding Sadie? I hope somebody's feeding Sadie.

IVY

(calling over it all)

Hey guys? Hey, cemetery ghosts? I'm looking for a ghost named Jan! He hasn't come in to talk about his obituary. Has anybody seen him?

The ghostlights freeze for a moment.
Then they move again as the voices
begin calling, "JAAAAAN JAAAAAN
JAAAAAN..." then peter out.

IVY

Well, keep an eye out, will you?

IVY exits to a chorus of "Don't go!
Ivy! Don't go! I forgot to tell you!"
from the cemetery ghosts.

Scene 2

An abandoned bar. The room is dusty,
run down, and untouched, except for the
bar itself which is spotless and
pristine.

CONNOR, a ghost, wipes it down anyway.

IVY enters in from the rain. She sets
her open umbrella down in the doorway.

IVY

Boy, am I glad to see you. I've been talking to those cemetery
ghosts. Clingy bunch.

She wrings out her hair.

CONNOR

Still haven't found your missing serial killer victim?

IVY

I'm beginning to think he isn't dead.

She sneezes three times.

CONNOR

Is it the dust?

She shakes her head.

CONNOR

Your hair is wet.

IVY

My hair is always wet.

CONNOR

Are you sick?

She nods.

IVY

Been standing out in the rain all week, hoping to get struck by lightning. All I got was a damn cold.

CONNOR

Don't do that.

IVY

I'm not doing anything.

...

Really. I'm not driving with a seatbelt. I'm not getting my moles checked. I'm not looking both ways. I'm not locking my doors.

CONNOR

It's bad luck to have an umbrella open inside.

IVY

I'm not holding onto handrails. I'm not watching my step. I'm not eating healthy. I'm not drying my hair because if I don't dry my hair I might catch a cold and then my cold will make me sneeze and crash my car and then I'll die because I didn't buckle my seatbelt. I'm on step two or three of a multi-step plan.

CONNOR

Ivy, will you just close the umbrella?

She goes to the umbrella and closes it.

IVY

You never used to be superstitious. I'm thinking I could use a little bad luck. Did you know I was walking down the street today and a grand piano fell from a crane? I couldn't believe it. It just smashed into a million pieces right in front of me like in a cartoon. If I had walked a tiny bit faster...

CONNOR

Don't say that.

IVY

If I hadn't stopped to fix my sock...It's these stupid ankle socks they keep sinking down and getting caught inside my shoe. These ankle socks are the reason I'm still alive.

CONNOR

Too bad I always wore dress socks.

IVY

You wore dress socks to the gym once. It was embarrassing.

CONNOR

I'm a classy guy.

IVY

You're something.

...

One more week, Connor.

CONNOR

One more week till what?

IVY

Don't play dumb. You know it'll be five years next Friday.

CONNOR

I don't need a Deathday party if that's what you're asking.

IVY

We made an agreement.

CONNOR

The ghosts who celebrate those days are morbid.

IVY

We agreed that five years was the cut off, if I didn't die of natural causes by then, *alternatives would be discussed.*

CONNOR

You didn't keep up your end of it.

IVY

What do you mean I didn't keep up my end of it?

CONNOR

You were supposed to not try to kill yourself within that timeframe.

IVY

I didn't!

CONNOR

You just told me about standing in lightning storms trying to get struck!

IVY

Oh that doesn't count! I mean how often does someone get struck by lightning? I *probably* wouldn't even die anyway, just get a little crispy. There's just like a tiny chance I would die doing that. Miniscule. Infinitesimal. I've never even written an obit for someone who got struck by lightning and died. Well...no, actually, I have. But that's not the point. They were on a boat.

CONNOR

Ivy, please stop this.

IVY

Don't you want us to be together?

CONNOR

We are together.

IVY

We're not. We have this giant distance between us. I'm alive and you're dead. I can get a cold and you can't.

CONNOR

I can deal with it.

IVY

Well that's great for you, but I have to *live* with it. I have to go to work and be the sad woman everyone whispers about, and on

top of that I have to actually *be* sad. I have to come to this decaying place I used to love every evening and *not* hug you. And for five years I've had to wait for the universe to put me out of my misery. For five years I've spent my days getting narrowly missed by falling pianos and swerved around by cars.

CONNOR

Please don't do anything drastic. Trust me, being dead is nothing special. I'd much rather see you alive. When I agreed to that five year thing, I was stalling, Ivy.

IVY

A pact is a pact.

CONNOR

Don't you like being alive? Breathing, touching things, all of that.

IVY

One more week, Connor. You'll be glad when this is over. I promise.

ANDRE appears.

ANDRE

Ivy! What's up? How's my favorite inter-dimensional couple doing?

IVY AND CONNOR

Fine.

ANDRE

Fine? Fine? Y'all are preparing to watch a ghost comedy night of epic proportions and you're going to tell me you're fine? Shoot, you two ought to be excellent. You two ought to be phenomenal.

UNDERWOOD appears.

UNDERWOOD

It's déclassé to oversell yourself, Andre. And anyway, it's not our first rodeo, as it were.

ANDRE

That's true Underwood, you keep coming back for more.

The sound of rattling chains.

ANDRE

I swear to god, I will kill that ghost a second time! BOO! Not tonight, do you hear me? Not tonight!

The sound of rattling stops.

You better bring 'em out here.

BOO, a ghost, dressed in a white sheet and carrying chains, enters and gives the chains to Andre.

ANDRE

Thank you. We're going to be quiet tonight, right?

BOO nods and exits. ANDRE stows the chains behind the bar.

ANDRE

These chains will be the death of me.

UNDERWOOD

Ivy, my dear, how are you?

ANDRE

Yeah, Ivy give us the scoop on your comings and goings. Your triumphs, your woes, your interactions with physical objects.

UNDERWOOD

Ah, corporeality! That's what I miss the most about being alive.

ANDRE

Well it couldn't be your vast network of friendships.

UNDERWOOD goes up to CONNOR at the bar.

UNDERWOOD

How do you do it, Connor? Rags, glasses, ice...You lift them all with aplomb. Teach me your ways.

CONNOR

I've always been able to touch the bar stuff. My theory is it's to do with my task.

UNDERWOOD

Raw talent! So unfair!

CONNOR

At least you and Andre can leave the building.

ANDRE

But really, Ivy, what's going on? It's been ages!

CONNOR

You saw her yesterday.

ANDRE

So what? I like hearing about Ivy's life. She's so *alive*.

UNDERWOOD

How's the old newsroom grind?

IVY

It's good. It's fine. We've had a lot of deaths already this week. What with The Basement Killer's confession, and there was that shooting.

UNDERWOOD

[tsk noise] Terrible.

ANDRE

(incredulous)

You don't know what she's talking about.

UNDERWOOD

And you have the up to the minute news of the land of the living do you?

ANDRE

I'm plugged in. Speaking of which, Ivy, did you find out about that little matter we discussed last night?

IVY

The drowned woman? She's seeing someone.

ANDRE

Now that's a blow, I'm not going to lie. But I kept up my end of the bargain. I did not find your Norwegian. Must have passed on.

IVY

A violent death?

ANDRE

I know it seems unlikely, but I have looked high and low. Where's he buried?

IVY

That's the thing, they never found his body.

ANDRE

Huh...Sounds like you've got a live one.

LORNE appears.

ANDRE

Whoa, the show's not until eight man.

LORNE

Oh um...

IVY

Oh, Lorne! I told him to come early. I'm glad you made it.

ANDRE

My bad. A friend of Ivy's is a friend ours.

UNDERWOOD

A friend of Ivy's is probably dead.

LORNE

(to IVY)

Thanks for the invite.

IVY

Welcome to Oh, Connor's.

LORNE

O'Connor's. I like it.

IVY

Oh, it's Oh, Connor's.

LORNE

Oh. O'Connor's?

IVY

No, "Oh, Connor's."

LORNE

What?

IVY

Oh, Connor's Bar. O-H, Ohhhh, like "Ohhh that place." It's a pun.

LORNE

Oh. It's really good.

It's not.

IVY

Everybody, this is Lorne. Lorne, everybody.

CONNOR

I'm Connor. I own the place. Or I owned it. This is Andre, the guy in the funny outfit is Underwood.

UNDERWOOD

Charmed.

LORNE

Hi.

CONNOR

What's your poison?

LORNE

Oh no, I got shot.

ANDRE

He means to drink, man! Sit down!

LORNE

Ghosts can drink? I can't even pick stuff up.

ANDRE

He asked can ghosts drink! How long you been dead, man, ten minutes?

LORNE

Only a couple days.

ANDRE

I get it. Ivy, you wanted us to catch this guy up. Connor, make Lorne here something magnificent. Ghosts can drink, but only alcohol. And only your top shelf bottles. Don't question it.

CONNOR

Have you ever had a drink poured by a ghost?

LORNE

No.

CONNOR puts ingredients in a shaker.

CONNOR

You might not know it if you had. If you didn't know your drink had been poured by a ghost, you might just think it was shockingly cold like freshly melted snow and that someone was playing piano music somewhere far off in the distance. A sip of a drink poured by a ghost teases your tongue with the faint smell of an extinguished campfire and damp wool.

LORNE

Sounds like some hipster bullshit.

CONNOR

And it's bitterer. That's why you don't see a lot of ghosts drinking Scotch and drinks like that, even if that was their thing when they were alive. It's a lot to handle now. That's only for the really serious ghost drinkers. And the final thing to know about a drink that's poured by a ghost is that it will never get you as drunk as you want it to.

He pours the cocktail into a glass.

Here is your Pink Lady.

LORNE

Where's yours?

CONNOR

Oh, I'm having Scotch.

LORNE

...

CONNOR

Try it.

LORNE drinks.

LORNE

Wow. That's exactly how you described it. You're good at describing things.

CONNOR

I'm just a keen observer.

LORNE
(looking around)

Nice place.

CONNOR

It's seen better days.

UNDERWOOD

It does have a certain *je ne se quoi*, despite the dust and grime. It reminds me of a little pub in London I'd frequent with Oscar before our falling out.

CONNOR

Oscar...Hammerstein?

Rapidly:

IVY

De la Renta!

CONNOR

De la Hoya!

ANDRE

The Grouch!

UNDERWOOD

Wilde! Wilde! You know I mean Wilde! Good Lord how they exhaust me.

CONNOR
(to LORNE)

So I take it Ivy's writing your obituary.

LORNE

Yeah. I don't envy her the task of making me sound good.

IVY

Please, you're a hero. It writes itself.

ANDRE

You're a hero, man?

IVY

Don't any of you read the paper? I spread it all out for you this morning.

ANDRE

You make us sound like puppies.

UNDERWOOD

I glanced over the Arts section.

CONNOR

I read it. Some maniac shot up a comedy club. He pulled the fire alarm.

UNDERWOOD

Oh bravo!

ANDRE

That's legit man. I just got hit by a bus.

LORNE

It wasn't really a big deal.

ANDRE

Well what happened?

IVY

Andre, he might not want to talk about it.

LORNE

It's fine. I uh...

IVY takes out a small notebook and pen.

Oh you're gonna take notes?

IVY

Sorry, I...for your obit...we didn't get to talk about this earlier, I can not—

LORNE

—No, no that's fine. Uh... I was waiting to go on at Laugh Stacks Comedy House and Pancake Club.

ANDRE

That's a nice venue. Real maple syrup.

LORNE

Well, the guy whose set was before mine was killing it, so, I passed the time by vomiting.

IVY

Oh no. Sorry. Pancake vomit. Go on. Sorry.

LORNE

Anyway I was emptied out, so I came out of the bathroom and into the hall, and I saw this guy and he had a gun...and he fired it...at me. He didn't even think about it just, bang and I was down. I remember his face was totally blank. And he just kept walking past me towards the stage door.

IVY

God...

LORNE

And I was on the floor and I saw this red box on the wall above me and I thought "That's the last thing I'm gonna see."

CONNOR

The fire alarm.

LORNE

And I just didn't want die like that. I wanted it to be loud and I wanted people to know. I didn't want them to just find me later. So I pushed myself up high enough to pull the alarm. And that was it. It wasn't heroic it was just...an impulse. And then I...died I guess.

IVY

It was heroic. You helped people get out.

LORNE

But I didn't mean to.

IVY

...Are you okay?

LORNE

Telling that story...I'm suddenly feeling pretty dead inside.

ANDRE

Shit man. That is heavy. And I'm about to go try and bring laughter to the people.

LORNE

Sorry.

ANDRE

Well don't apologize, hero! But damn.

IVY

(to LORNE)

I don't have to write about any of that if you don't want me to.

LORNE

Okay.

UNDERWOOD

Bringing your work home, Ivy?

IVY

I maybe haven't finished Lorne's obit yet. But I also invited him because he's a fabulous comedian. Or probably fabulous I actually don't know his work at all.

LORNE

That makes seven billion of you.

ANDRE

Hey, maybe comedy has something to do with his task. He was shot in a comedy club.

LORNE

My task?

IVY

The thing you have to do to pass on.

LORNE

Is that a thing? Passing on?

ANDRE

Connor's got a theory.

UNDERWOOD

I've heard it. It's *very good*.

LORNE

What kind of theory?

UNDERWOOD

You know, about why we're here.

LORNE
Humans?

CONNOR
Ghosts.

LORNE
Well, what is it?

CONNOR
Unfinished business.

LORNE
...Sorry, but isn't that kind of a cliché?

CONNOR
Every ghost has a task to perform before they pass on. They just sometimes don't know what it is until they've done it. Sometimes it's as simple as making sure people remember you right, which is where Ivy comes in.

LORNE
Well what's yours?

CONNOR
Making a Sidecar. I dropped dead while mixing one. Doctors said I had a heart defect. I suspect that in order to pass on I have to finish making the drink.

LORNE
Are you kidding me? Why don't you just do that?

ANDRE
He's a Specter Defector. So's Underwood. They're both choosing to stay ghosts. I'd be out of here in a second if I knew how. Same with Boo.

LORNE
Boo?

ANDRE
You'll meet her later. She's shy.

UNDERWOOD
Deranged.

ANDRE
Eccentric.

LORNE
(to CONNOR)
Why do you want to stay a ghost?

CONNOR
Personal reasons.

UNDERWOOD
A woman, of course!

IVY
He's waiting...for me.

LORNE
Like, waiting for you to die? That's grim.

UNDERWOOD
Connor takes a somewhat gothic approach to romance.

CONNOR
Let's change the subject.

IVY
How convenient.

LORNE
Umm...
(to UNDERWOOD)
So what's your deal?

UNDERWOOD
I have theater tickets.

ANDRE
He doesn't want to pass on because he's afraid of who he'll meet on the other side.

UNDERWOOD
I made some enemies certainly, as any good critic will.

ANDRE
One of them killed him with a skull from *Hamlet*.

UNDERWOOD

Mainly, I'm finishing my book. And seeing theater. Oh the seats you can get when you walk through walls.

ANDRE

The skull had been donated for that express purpose.

UNDERWOOD

I'm in no rush to move on.

LORNE

So, you guys don't know what's on the other side?

ANDRE

How would we know?

LORNE

I was hoping things would be more cut and dry.

ANDRE

More like soft and wet. But back to your task...

CONNOR

You said you got shot before your set?

LORNE

Yeah. Why?

CONNOR

Maybe you've gotta do one last show.

LORNE

One last show... I like that.

CONNOR

Can you fit him in, Andre?

ANDRE

You'll go after me.

LORNE

Thanks.

Rattling of chains.

ANDRE

Boo, what did I tell you about those chains!? Sorry about her, she's going through a break up. Well it wasn't a break up so much as she died. BOO!

Scene 3

Ghost Comedy Night.

ANDRE steps up to the mic on the makeshift stage.

ANDRE

Hey everybody, welcome to Ghost Comedy Night at Oh, Connor's Bar! Give it up! I'm your ghost for the evening, Andre the Huge! How's everybody doing tonight? Ya'll ready to get wild inside your minds? Ya'll ready to travel to the extreme depths of ghost comedy in here tonight? I CAN'T HEAR YOU! Ya'll ready for the highs and lows of our wraithish insights into the cosmic comic void? Everybody say YEAH!

His energy drops.

Okay. So, I have some regrets. I know, you look at me and you're like "What regrets can that guy possibly have? He at least died with his pants on." But you see in my whole life I never truly found love.

So, when I wrote this I imagined everyone would go "Awww" there...

Hopefully, the audience goes "Awww."

Thank you thank you, I appreciate that.

I never truly found love because it is physically impossible for me to just talk to women. Screaming at them on the other hand... I did a brief stint as a cat caller, you know, really I did! I'd hang out around bus stops loudly offering to drizzle hot fudge on the female passersby. That's right, *passersby*. It's the plural of passerby, look it up. Anyway I'd be there yelling like, "'HEY BABY YOU WANT WHIPPED CREAM WITH THAT SHAKE?" and they'd be like "FUCK YOU!" and I'd be like "I was just trying to give you a compliment. Damn!" And you know, we'd banter like that.

But you know, strangely enough, none of the women I yelled things at ever wanted to be my sundae. They didn't even want to be my Wednesday; they were just one hundred percent out. I briefly went healthier, because my bus stop was near the Food Co-op, and I'd be like "Hey girl, I want to lick you all over like a made-with-real-fruit popsicle!" But I saw no improvement. In fact I think that just confused them. Finally, I realized I

was just making everyone really uncomfortable and joined weight watchers to try to get a handle on my compulsive eating.

So anyway, now I am reformed—I've learned a lot about myself since getting hit by that bus. Since people can't actually hear me, I spend a lot more time listening to women talk and that's been really good I think. And so I thought tonight I'd go ahead and say all the things I wish I'd had the courage, let alone the opportunity, to say to a woman's face when I was alive. And if, upon hearing this, any of the ladies feel moved to take their phantasmal panties off and deposit them onto the stage, I just ask that you please hold off until the end of the set. Okay, so...

Hey girl. You look really nice today, but I also acknowledge that that is only a miniscule aspect of who you are as a human being.

Can you tell me again about that dream you had? The one where all your teeth fall out? I really like hearing about that.

If you come over to my apartment, I want you to use all the good regular-sized mugs and then not wash them so I have to use the weird big ones that are really only good for soup. That would, that would actually make me like euphoric. I'd be euphoric about that.

Girl, I want to take you out to dinner. Maybe tacos.

I want to listen to your alarm go off like a thousand times in the morning because you don't want to get up. Because that would mean you slept over.

I want to meet your parents and say all the wrong things about politics and God and then have a fight about it that ends with making out.

I want to make you seven different mix tapes and forget to give you any of them.

Basically, I just want to know you, because you seem kind of funny, and nice.

He clears his throat.

All right, so next up we have Lorne! Give it up for Lorne everybody!

ANDRE steps down to sounds of ghostly applause.

LORNE moves up to the mic.

LORNE

Thank you Andre. Another round of applause for Andre.

So, I'm Lorne. This is my first time doing stand up as a ghost. Thanks, thanks. After this I'll be able to officially say I've played to a dead crowd.

Anyway. I was going to talk about my love life tonight. But it's actually just...there's not a lot there, and what's there is pretty depressing. Like Andre, I have never found love.

I'm okay, don't feel bad, you know, I'm survivor. Except for the fact that I died. But other than that I'm a survivor!

And I've been recently informed by our local newspaper that I am a hero. Yup. Me. This guy. The fuck up in the suspenders.

What kind of kills me about this whole situation, well not kills, but you know, gets to me, is that I'm a glimmer of hope? Like people see this horror on the news and then they hear about me and are like "Oh well at least there's some good in the world." I'm this guy who slipped in his own blood dragging himself up a wall to pull an alarm so that someone would come help him. It wasn't so that less people got shot for no reason by a dude who's like having wet dreams about Adolf Hitler in the afterlife right now. And by the way, where's his goddamn ghost? He's the one who gets to finish his business on Earth? And here I am just... GOD DAMN IT. You know whatever. I'm sorry Andre, this was a bad idea. Lorne out.

LORNE walks off.

Scene 4

The bar. Later. IVY, CONNOR, LORNE, UNDERWOOD and ANDRE sit together. BOO rattles chains.

UNDERWOOD

What a disaster.

ANDRE

Happens all the time when ghosts try to be funny.

LORNE

Ghost after sad ghost...

CONNOR

Thought it would never end.

ANDRE

Hardly laughed all night.

UNDERWOOD

This reviewer would not recommend.

UNDERWOOD finishes his drink and puts
his head on the bar.

IVY

It wasn't that bad.

(to LORNE)

Are you okay?

LORNE

Yeah. Just probably should've waited before getting back on the horse.

CONNOR

We'll do it again. When you're feeling more like yourself.

LORNE

I think I might like to feel like someone else for a while.

ANDRE

...Hey man, you're a person you know. You're a ghost but you're a person. Don't let that go. Then you end up rattling chains in somebody's attic, you know? A white sheet over your head like Boo. Give it a rest Boo!

CONNOR

Boo, want a drink?

BOO stops rattling and comes to the bar. CONNOR gives her a glass, which she drinks under her sheet.

LORNE

I thought that kind of thing was just a myth.

ANDRE

The sheet and the chains? It happens to ghosts who forget their identity from when they were alive. Boo's a severe case.

LORNE

Do you know what happened to her?

ANDRE

I met her when she'd been dead...a while, maybe 30 years. I think she had some kind of cancer maybe. She had been a chess champion, absolutely the smartest ghost I ever met. We used to watch people play at those tables in the park together. But she was waiting for somebody who was still alive. Holed up in his attic and watched as he got married, had kids, that kind of thing. He died one day and passed straight on to the other side. Boo stopped coming to watch the chess games, so I went to check up on her. She wouldn't come out of the attic. Said she had chains to rattle. Her face was white as a white sheet. A real clean one. After a while she stopped talking to me and I stopped visiting. Too sad, you know? Then one day, a few years back, she showed up here. City knocked down her house I guess. She just walked right in and rattled her chains at us, didn't say anything. I knew it was her though.

LORNE

Ghost stories.

ANDRE finishes his drink and rises.

ANDRE

I've got a Deathday party to hit up over on Carson Bridge. Gotta keep those guys from causing too many accidents. Thanks for the drinks Connor. Lorne, nice to meet you. Hope I get to see your stand up sometime. For real.

LORNE

Thanks.

ANDRE

See ya Connor. Ivy.

CONNOR

Sayonara.

ANDRE leaves.

LORNE
You guys aren't going?

CONNOR
I don't leave the bar.

IVY
He can't.

LORNE
That sucks.

CONNOR
Everyone I need to see comes here. Ivy keeps the bar stocked.

LORNE
You don't get bored? Lonely?

CONNOR
The guys come by most every night. And Boo's great company.

BOO's glass rolls out from under her
sheet.

LORNE
You ever worry about ending up like her?

IVY
That won't happen.

CONNOR
You seem awfully sure about that.

IVY
I'm dead sure. You won't be waiting that long.

CONNOR
What's that supposed to mean?

IVY
Nothing. Just a feeling.

CONNOR
You're not planning something are you?

IVY
Huh? I'm not planning anything. It's just a feeling.

CONNOR

It had better be.

IVY

It is!

LORNE

Y'all are weird.

IVY

I'm gonna make a call.

She moves away and takes out her phone.

Hi...uh police? This is Ivy Graves from *The Quotidian Proclaimer*...No no I don't need a quote, I just was calling because I received an anonymous tip? On the phone? ...Uhh yeah Jan Fredrikson, the supposed last victim of the Basement Killer? I don't think he's dead. I mean somebody called and said he's not dead. So you should maybe like look for him? I don't know they didn't say how they knew. Well I know that's what the Killer said but it seems like it's worth checking...
UmmIdon'tknowbye.

She hangs up quickly.

Well, at least I've done my civic duty. I need to go to bed.
I'll see you guys tomorrow.

She begins to exit.

CONNOR

Hey, come here.

IVY

What?

CONNOR

I'm sorry. You know I'd wait for you a hundred years, right?

IVY

I know. But I don't know if I can wait that long. Goodnight.

CONNOR

Goodnight.

LORNE

Bye.

UNDERWOOD waves slightly as IVY exits.

LORNE

What was that about?

CONNOR

We made an agreement, back when I died...When that happened, she wanted to die too. I made her promise to wait five years. I didn't think she'd still want to after enough time had passed, but I guess...

LORNE

Wait, you think she's going to kill herself? But she's so nice.

UNDERWOOD

She's an incredibly sad woman.

CONNOR

You haven't talked in a while.

LORNE

She can't be that badly off. She's got lots of friends.

CONNOR

They're all dead.

UNDERWOOD

The modern theatergoer is uncomfortable with bit characters.

LORNE

Somebody's wasted.

UNDERWOOD

No listen to me, the lucky ones get to tell a joke, but most of them clear some plates, or take someone's jacket, or arrest somebody, and then disappear into the backstage...blackness.

LORNE

Do you think somebody should've walked her home? I'm just going to catch up with her and walk her home.

UNDERWOOD

This is important you philistine!

LORNE exits.

UNDERWOOD

The modern theatergoer is just not comfortable with bit characters.

CONNOR

You've said.

UNDERWOOD

Because she, and I say 'she' for political correctness, she wonders what that actor does back there in the dark. Do they get to leave? Do they really have to stick around for the whole damn show when they have absolutely nothing to do after they...

UNDERWOOD disappears into his own mind.

CONNOR

Underwood?

CONNOR snaps in front of his face and UNDERWOOD jerks into alertness.

UNDERWOOD

Finish their one speech!

You see, the modern theatergoer hates to be confronted with their own mortality. That's the problem with bit characters. Their lives are short and immaterial to the story. Nobody wants that. Nobody wants to be immaterial.

CONNOR

Well, you're material to me, Underwood.

UNDERWOOD

Liar.

Scene 5

IVY's office at the newspaper. MINERVA, her boss, sits on IVY's desk.

MINERVA

So I just looked them right in the eyes and said, "Seriously? Are you kidding? Seriously, are you making a joke? The front page goes to the The Basement Killer. People get shot all the time! But the Basement Killer only happens once, am I right?" I mean, of course, any other week I'd say "Oh yeah, the Laugh Stacks shooting all the way." But this week? Really there's no

contest. Anyway, back to you Ives; With all these sort of "fun" deaths going on, we might have to push a few of these old folks on the list back. Maybe see if they've got any room in the classifieds for just something short? Or just scrap 'em.

IVY

But I've already written them.

MINERVA

Of course you did, what are we paying you for? But what do you want, for me to put them on my refrigerator? Just stick 'em up there with a fruit shaped magnet and give 'em a gold star? This is the news business honey, and I'm going to need you to focus on the matter at hand.

MINERVA takes out a list and refers to it.

For instance last week, where we had Little Old Ladies-L-O-L, ha! I slay. Where we had LOLs 1, 2, and 3, we could have had this foreign serial killer victim you left out...Jan Fredrikson? Am I saying that right? Who knows. Anyway, the man was held in a basement for three months. Interesting, yeah? Interesting, news, interesting...Am I making any sense to you at all?

IVY

It's just I've been having trouble tracking him-I mean, his family-down for an interview.

She makes a vague gesture towards her computer.

You know. Norway and everything. I'll get right on that.

MINERVA

Focus plus Fabulous equals Figures, Ives. That's what I always say. If you ever want to move up on this crazy totem pole of life, you're really going to need to up your game. The big dogs don't have time for your little struggles, okay hon? You want to walk with the big dogs you better learn to roll over and play dead, okay girlfriend? You're a star. Love you. Have that on my desk ASAP. Smooches.

MINERVA exits.

IVY puts her head on her desk.

LORNE peeks in.

LORNE
Uhh...is this a bad time?

IVY
Huh? Oh hi!

LORNE
You told me to come by.

IVY
Yes sorry. I just...I'm going to need a little more information for your obit if you want me to leave out the uh...

LORNE
Grizzly details?

IVY
Death.

LORNE
Right... Hey, umm...so the guy who shot me? Are you...did he...?

IVY
He hasn't come in. God, that would be freaky. I think he probably passed on. And we don't usually print obituaries for murderers anyway.

LORNE
Right. Me and him probably made the front page though, huh?

IVY
No, actually. The serial killer I mentioned...he confessed to a bunch of murders. It was kind of big news. I'm sorry. You were definitely in there!

LORNE
No. That sounds just about right. Never a headliner...
So, how come you can see us? I mean, you're a human right, you're not like a vampire or something.

IVY
Yeah, I'm a human. Um, I'm not really sure why, I've just been able to see ghosts for the last five years or so. Ever since Connor died, actually. Before that I just wrote obituaries the old fashioned way.

...

I think there were signs before that though. That I had a... connection with the dead. When I was six, my pet budgie flew into a wall and died. I cried myself to sleep for a month because I thought I could hear him flapping against the walls of his cage. And then of course my whole family died in a fire, while I was away at a sleepaway camp, so there's that.

LORNE

Jesus.

IVY

Yeah it was pretty traumatic I guess.

LORNE

Is that why you wanted to write obituaries?

IVY

I also do Lost Pets. But basically, I just wanted to write and this job was open. Funny how things work out.

LORNE

Funny.

IVY

So. Why don't you just give me some background information on yourself? A fun fact?

LORNE

I'm blanking on fun facts.

IVY

An amusing anecdote?

LORNE

...

IVY

...Want to sleep on it?

LORNE

I don't—

IVY

—You don't sleep. That was dumb.

LORNE

In life, I was a fantastic sleeper.

IVY

Yeah?

LORNE

Really one of my main talents. I would occasionally wake myself up laughing though.

IVY

Really?

LORNE

Yeah, my dreams would make me laugh. That's how you know you either belong in comedy or under heavy medication.

IVY

Or both.

LORNE

Or both!

IVY

Did your dreams ever make you cry?

LORNE

No. Do yours?

IVY

Sometimes they do.

LORNE

You dream about your fiancé? And your family? And your budgie?

IVY

I dream about this fat baby angel, like from a Valentine's card, but kind of mean looking? And his arrows are real. And me and my fiancé and my parents and my sister and various childhood pets are all lined up together, but he's aiming his arrow straight at me. And I just look at him right in his creepy little baby eyes and say, "Do it." And he lets go of the arrow and I watch it speeding towards me, but then it always turns at the last second to hit my mom—it always starts with my mom. And he keeps firing them and firing them until everyone but me is dead. And then he looks at me and shrugs because he's out of arrows and I just cry over all the bodies until I wake up.

LORNE

...Your hair looks wet.

IVY

I don't usually tell people about that.

LORNE

Why is your hair always wet?

IVY

It's been raining a lot...Are you going to say something about my dream?

LORNE

That's a weird dream. Sorry. I'm thinking about how I'll never have wet hair again.

IVY

(irritated)

That is a blow.

LORNE

So do you think you have enough for my obit?

IVY

Yeah, I think I can piece something together.

LORNE

And are you...okay?

IVY

Are you okay?

LORNE

I'm okay.

IVY

Okay.

LORNE

Okay. Then I will let you get back to work. Uh...maybe I'll come back and see you later.

IVY

Maybe.

LORNE exits.

IVY picks up her phone and dials. While she's talking she removes a bottle of

pills from her desk and fiddles with it.

IVY

Hi...uh police? This is Ivy Graves from *The Quotidian Proclaimer*...Yes it's me again. Um, so I was just checking up on how things were progressing with the Jan Fredrikson search. Oh no I'm sure you do know how to do your jobs. Well no I'm not a psychic. Well, I'm sure your psychics are great. I have to respectfully disagree....I can't reveal an anonymous source... Well how hard is it really to just look in a few basements? I mean this is a human life we're talking about here, I'm not calling because I forgot my sweater at the station! Incidentally, did anyone find a blue cardigan...?

She looks at the bottle of pills in her hand.

You know what, it doesn't even matter. I don't even care anymore. You can't take it with you, you know? I mean, one day soon I could be dead and do I really want people going through my stuff and saying, "Jesus this gal had a buttload of navy cardigans."...Okay well, if the Lost and Found is right there...

What am I doing?

She hangs up.

She breathes for a moment.

She determinedly opens the bottle of pills. She pours it into her mouth.

UNDERWOOD appears.

UNDERWOOD

You have got to be joking.

IVY jumps and coughs violently.

Oh, I apologize, did I make you choke on your suicide pills?

IVY

I had a headache, Jesus. You're so paranoid. You think just because someone has a headache they're trying to kill themselves. You're so melodramatic.

UNDERWOOD

Oh brava, brava diva, a spell-binding performance, if the spell you're casting is one to make me disbelieve everything you say! Not my best, but you need help woman! Is this about Connor?

IVY picks up the pills that are scattered around the floor.

IVY

God, you know, not everything is about Connor. The world doesn't revolve around Connor and the fact that Connor's dead and I'm totally alone and hate my life and don't have anyone to talk to about it because anyone I talk to about it will just think I am crazy and obsessed with my dead fiancé Connor and they won't get that it's not even about Connor it's about me!

IVY cries.

UNDERWOOD

Oh. I...You're really crying. Just weeping. Umm...

He can't give her a hug.

He sits cross-legged across from her and waits until she calms down.

She wipes her tears with her hair.

IVY

Don't tell anybody.

UNDERWOOD

I am the very soul of secrecy.

Beat.

IVY

You're going to tell everyone, aren't you?

UNDERWOOD

Only out of the deepest concern for your well-being!

IVY

I just think I'd be happier dead.

UNDERWOOD

That's an absurd thing to say to a ghost.

IVY

I just feel like I'm always the one that's left, you know? I'm the last cookie on the plate.

UNDERWOOD

You've been lucky. You've survived. You've lived to tell the tale.

IVY

Lucky me.

...

Please don't tell Connor, Underwood. I still have some time left before his fifth Deathday. I don't want him to be mad at me or say I didn't keep up my end of the deal. Underwood?

UNDERWOOD

Don't look at me like that.

IVY

Please? My friend? My confidante? My pal? My chum? My glum chum?

UNDERWOOD

...Jezebel.

IVY

Saint.

Scene 6

Separate scenes.

LORNE reads his obituary from a newspaper he does not hold. It might be spread on the floor in front of him.

JAN talks to an unseen doctor.

LORNE

"Lorne Cross was a man trying to figure out the Hows of his life:..."

JAN

I never knew how great Norway was until I came to America.

LORNE

"How to make his mom proud, how to be a good person, how to lose weight without exercise,"

JAN

You get here and everyone is like "Norway...isn't everyone super healthy there? And there are no pregnant teenagers and no violent crimes and no stray animals."

LORNE

"How to talk to women without sounding dumb, how to fit a whole pizza in his mouth, and how to deal with the fact that we're all just going to die."

JAN

We have all of those things in Norway. But not as much. Yes, I've been taking them.

(to himself)

Sometimes you forget. Shut up.

LORNE

Usually he did this onstage in front of crowds of up to thirty people."

(to himself)

Thirty's generous.

JAN

There is still death in Norway. And there are still reasons to leave.

LORNE

"There are few people brave enough to do that and make it funny."

JAN

I think about The Basement Killer still. Randy.

LORNE

"So if you're going to call him brave, it should first be for that."

JAN

I lock my door at night. But I leave my windows open because I like the breeze. Not much breeze in the basement.

LORNE

"Who knows if Lorne would have stuck with stand up comedy, and who knows if he would have figured out how to do any of those things. But the willingness to try in front of everyone, was a gorgeous, beer-soaked, um-ing and uh-ing thing."

JAN

Is there a flower shop nearby? I'd like to buy some flowers for someone. Flowers with a little card that says "Thanks." And maybe there is a picture of a flower on the card.

LORNE

"Without him, the world is a little less honest, and a little less smelly."

JAN

There are so many occasions appropriate for flowers. Flowers for death, flowers for escaping death, flowers for birthdays, flowers for Valentine's...

LORNE

"In lieu of flowers—ah the rest is bullshit."

LORNE just stares at his obit for a moment.

JAN

I keep thinking about my obituary that didn't get written. I wonder what it would say. And would it be in English or Norwegian? I think about my tombstone that didn't get carved and what would be carved on it. My name, for sure. And dates.

Lights fade.

Scene 7

IVY's office. IVY tries to work but LORNE is hanging out.

LORNE

You look busy.

IVY

Yeah, I am. I have a lot of work to finish up so I probably won't be great company.

LORNE

That's okay. Hey, do you mind if I try out some material on you? Ghost comedy—it's like a completely different audience. Their humor is a lot darker for one thing. And the whole library of poop jokes is out because, you know, we don't poop. I was amazed just how much of my material was actually just about pooping. I really have to up my game now. Get into that intellectual headspace. Stuff about dating is fair game though. Ghosts do date. Well, you know that.

IVY

(typing)

Uh huh...

LORNE

Okay. So, I won't go through the whole thing, but the basic gist is you know, I have trouble dating both because I'm a ghost and because I have many qualities that are unappealing to women...

Chiefly my inability to flirt successfully. Which means I end up going up to women and saying things like,

"Are you a library book? Because I want to check you out and then forget about you until I get emailed a fine."

You probably don't get that one, you seem very responsible.

IVY

Oh no, that was funny, I'm just uh...hold on...

LORNE

Hey Ivy, "are you a limited edition boxed action figure? Because I want to take you out and diminish your retail value considerably." That one needs work.

Now these next ones—

IVY

—Lorne, I'm sorry I just really need to finish this today!

LORNE

Oh. Okay. Sorry.

IVY

Lorne, I don't mean to hurt you. I think you're great. But...you know this is weird, right? You walk me home from the bar every night. You show up at my office every day.

LORNE

I just want to see you. I keep finding myself near you. I can't help it.

IVY

I'll see you at the bar, okay? It's just too much. I'm sorry.

LORNE

Don't worry about it you know, it's not like I'll be replaying this conversation in my head for all of eternity or anything.

LORNE leaves.

IVY

Lorne!

MINERVA enters.

MINERVA

Ivy, you busy? Let's talk. I want to talk about your future. Now's a good time, right?

IVY

Uh...

MINERVA

That's one of the things I want to talk to you about Ivy, all these "Uh's." They make you sound simple. It's your duty to womankind to try not to sound so simple Ivy.

IVY

I was just trying to think...

MINERVA

And stop saying "Just," don't "Just do" just "do!" We're in the word business, Ives. The words you use matter. They matter almost as much as your physical presentation. I mean what is with the hair, Ives? And your eyes, have you been crying? You always look like that. You always look like somebody kicked the sick puppy that lives in your heart.

IVY

Sorry.

MINERVA

And that's another thing. The apologizing. I can't have the women I work with walking around apologizing for their very existence all the time. Maybe if you weren't always apologizing

I wouldn't have to break this news to you like this, but here we are, I've got a job to do and you've got a desk to pack up. Hello? How are things over there on the Ivory Coast?

IVY

Uhh...I mean...wh-What?

MINERVA

You had this weird blank look on your face. Your eyeball looked like a glazed donut.

IVY

Sorry?

MINERVA

What did I say about apologizing? Am I apologizing for what I'm saying to you right now?

IVY

I guess not.

MINERVA

Right, and I'm not going to, because the facts are the facts are the facts, girlfriend. And there's nothing you or I can do about the fact that people aren't reading the papers anymore, and they especially aren't reading the Obits.

IVY

Are you firing me?

MINERVA

Oh no, no no no, sweet Princess Ivy of the sad sad sea, I'm not firing you, we're not firing you. People die and somebody's got to mention it, right? We are cutting back though. Your beat's going online only, and let's try to keep it to the more interesting deaths, okay hon? Maybe six or seven a week, all right? By the way, how fun will it be for you to work from home? I'm jealous of you, Ives. Really I am.

IVY

The obits won't be in the paper anymore?

MINERVA

Not in the physical paper, no. And we want less of them. Have I been unclear? I feel like I'm an incredibly clear and concise conversationalist, everybody says that. Anyway, I'll back up, there's this new thing called The Internet? You probably use it to play some sad game with farm animals and vegetables with

faces, gah gross, anyway, there's this fabulous way we can make your words exist online, and not actually exist in the physical world which is really just a lot more work for everyone, and call me callous, but if you have time to read about a couple of old ladies who died in their sleep, you have time to look it up on the internet. So, I'm going to need you to talk to HR, and work out all the boring details to get this train on the tracks. Exciting things happening, Ivy! Exciting things!

IVY

Wha...I...

MINERVA

No need to thank me. Just write me something pretty when I kick the bucket into a blaze of glory in about two hundred years. Ha!

She begins to exit.

Oh, and by the way, we very much want you to keep covering Lost Pets. I love looking at their sad little furry eyes, gah they kill me. They just slaughter me with those eyes. But that'll be online too. Talk later girlfriend, you're a trooper! Oh, and could you get that stuff stapled for my meeting? Fantastico!

Minerva exits.

IVY starts angrily stapling.

IVY
(mimicking)

You're a trooper!

STAPLE.

Love you!

STAPLE.

JAN enters with flowers. He makes the tiniest noise in his throat. IVY doesn't notice.

IVY

Smooches!

STAPLE.

THEY JUST SLAUGHTER ME.

STAPLE. STAPLE. STAPLE.

JAN
(to himself)

Just do it, man.

(to IVY)
Excuse me...Are you Ivy Graves?

IVY
Oh. Speaking. I mean, yes, I am, that's me.

JAN
These are for you.

IVY
Oh, who are they from?

JAN
From me...I'm Jan.

IVY
Oh I'm sorry, I...Sorry. Thank you.

JAN
Thank you. I was told you insisted to the police that I was alive over several phone calls. They told me you are very awkward.
Idiot you sound like an idiot. I bet she hates flowers. She hates flowers. She hates them.

IVY
I love flowers.

UNDERWOOD enters. JAN doesn't see him.

JAN
You do? Good. Good.

IVY
You look good...for someone who was held in a basement for...

JAN
Three months. Yes. I got some sunlight and I'm taking vitamins A, B...all the letters. And I've already stopped talking to myself so that's good. My doctors say that's very good.

IVY

Well, I'm glad you don't need an obituary. I mean, I'm glad you're okay.

JAN

Okay.

...Are you...wet?

IVY

Excuse me?

JAN

Your hair.

IVY

Oh! Yes. My hair is wet.

JAN

Okay.

I'm going to go so...

IVY

Perfect! I mean, thanks for stopping by.

JAN sets the flowers down and goes out.

JAN

(to himself)

What is wrong with you?

UNDERWOOD

Who was that?

IVY

Nobody, just this guy who almost got serial killed.

UNDERWOOD

Intriguing. And he brought you flowers. You're keeping secrets, Ivy.

IVY

It wasn't like that.

UNDERWOOD

Wasn't it? ...He had a certain old world charm.

IVY

He's Norwegian.

UNDERWOOD

Well, you know what they say about Norwegians...uh...
What do they say about Norwegians?

IVY

They have a very high literacy rate.

UNDERWOOD

Thatta girl.

IVY

You don't have to check up on me all the time, you know.

UNDERWOOD

I think we both know, I do.

IVY

Why don't you go hang out in Arts & Leisure?

UNDERWOOD

Art is dead and Leisure murdered it.

IVY

That's a little extreme.

UNDERWOOD

Besides, those fools couldn't come up with a zingy one-liner to save their lives. Their attempts at comedy are nothing short of tragic—There! Without even trying! I am a genius. What a waste to have died so young...Remember that.

Scene 8

The bar. All the ghosts are gathered.
BOO rattles chains gently.

LORNE

Hey Andre, can I get on the list for the next comedy night?

ANDRE

You do you, boo. BOO! Enough!

UNDERWOOD
(to LORNE)

Back into the fray, eh?

CONNOR
Listen up guys, you're probably wondering why I've gathered you all here. I want to talk about Ivy.

LORNE
What about her?

UNDERWOOD
Isn't it obvious?

ANDRE
Uh oh.

CONNOR
Ivy is becoming impatient. She's not suicidal, but she has nothing to live for.

LORNE
Oh come on...

CONNOR
My fifth Deathday is approaching fast. And I have reason to believe she might try something.

ANDRE
Right on man, tell us what you need us to do.

LORNE
Hold on guys, I've been spending time with Ivy...a lot. And she never talks about what you're talking about. I just don't think she'd try to kill herself.

UNDERWOOD
She already has.

CONNOR
How?

ANDRE
When?

UNDERWOOD
Pills. Umm...day before yesterday.

LORNE

What kind of pills?

ANDRE

And you left her alone after that?

CONNOR

When were you going to tell us?

UNDERWOOD

Gentlemen, let's not point the finger, the situation is too dire!

LORNE

She might've just had a headache.

UNDERWOOD

Don't be obtuse.

ANDRE

Where is she now?

UNDERWOOD

She had a meeting with her HR.

BOO rattles chains to get their
attention and gestures to CONNOR.

CONNOR

As I suspected, it's time.

LORNE

Time for what?

CONNOR

Time for me to make a Sidecar.

BOO wraps her chains around her neck
like a noose.

UNDERWOOD

Ahem. Might I suggest, *not* dying a second death when your fiancé
is in the middle of...whatever this is?

CONNOR

Technically she's my ex-fiancé.

ANDRE

But you're still *together*. I mean, she's like *invested*. Like *really invested*.

CONNOR

(to ANDRE)

Well, what do you want to do about it?

ANDRE

I have a thought...but it's a little...You're not going to like it.

CONNOR

Spit it out Andre.

ANDRE

She needs a rebound. A non-ghost rebound.

LORNE

You want to set her up?

CONNOR

No.

UNDERWOOD

Now, wait a minute Connor, Andre might have something there.

CONNOR

We're not doing that.

LORNE

Who would we even get?

ANDRE

He's got to be alive.

UNDERWOOD

Alive is a must.

CONNOR

Over my dead body are you setting up my fiancé with another man!

UNDERWOOD

Connor, I really think you should try to be more noble about this.

CONNOR

You can't just tell someone to be noble!

ANDRE

Okay how about this: Next time she's here, we get her to order a pizza, and when the pizza gets here...hope the pizza guy's cute.

They do not dignify this with a response.

UNDERWOOD

Oh! I know someone who is alive. And Ivy knows him!

LORNE

Who?

UNDERWOOD

Jan.

CONNOR

Who?

UNDERWOOD

He brought her flowers.

ANDRE

That sounds promising.

UNDERWOOD

He was kept in a basement for months.

ANDRE

That less so.

UNDERWOOD

We are in crisis mode here, Andre.

CONNOR

Here's what's happening, I'm passing on, and Ivy won't see the point in killing herself anymore. And then if she wants to date someone else, well I'm not here to see it.

ANDRE

Connor, dude, no. You can't just disappear on her.

LORNE

I still think you guys are being paranoid. And she seemed plenty capable of taking care of herself the other day.

UNDERWOOD

Connor. You told me once that you thought she'd move on in five years, stop wanting to die. How did you think she was going to do that?

CONNOR stands.

CONNOR

I don't want any part in this. Just let me know when it's done.

ANDRE

Damn Connor, that's noble as shit.

Scene 9

A single spot on UNDERWOOD.

UNDERWOOD

The modern theatergoer is uncomfortable with bit characters. The lucky ones get to tell a joke, but most of them clear some plates, or take someone's jacket, or arrest someone, and then disappear into the backstage blackness. The modern theatergoer feels...weird about how that actor's parents paid for them to go to acting school. She wonders what that actor does back there. Are the other actors with bigger parts totally judging them? Do they get to leave? Do they really have to stick around for the whole damn show when they have absolutely nothing to do after they finish their one speech?

The modern theatergoer hates to be confronted with their own mortality. That's the problem with bit characters. Their lives are short and immaterial to the story. However, the fact of the matter is, we are all bit characters in someone else's story. That cashier who gave you your change earlier? Yes, you. He's saving up for medical school, to prove his brother wrong. That lady whose dog tried to sniff you the other day? She doesn't even like dogs, but is terrified of living alone. That dog? He's moved three times in the last year and just wants to remember what home feels like.

All of those characters are dead.

...

Dead to you, that is. And you're dead to them. You're all stuck in somebody's backstage blackness. You're not getting mentioned in the review.

In an attempt to stave off death on a narrative level, you collect the friend profiles of everyone you meet, you exaggerate the significance of insignificant conversations, you keep your interactions with people in nametags brief and to the point. Or maybe you avoid new people because they just aren't important to your story. You measure your days in solitary cups of coffee drunk with music on blast, locking out the noise of the bit characters around you. This is interesting to no one, incredibly undynamic. Fortunately there exist some characters, who do not care if you have earbuds in, who can creep in and destroy your life in this horrifically terrible way and, if you survive, leave you staggering around, blindly reaching out for someone who can pull you out of that dark pit.

JAN enters with a book of mandalas. He sits and looks at it.

And that is how one day you find yourself in a bookstore, staring into the cover of a book of therapeutic mandalas thinking, "Yes. Perhaps this is the thing I've been waiting for. This is the thing that will bring me peace." But you leave the store without buying any colored pencils. And isn't that just like you, in a way?

You wish you had someone to tell that story to. But, if you did, would you have bought that book in the first place?

Scene 10

Bar. CONNOR sits with IVY.

CONNOR

...

On the morning of the day I died, I found a gray hair. Did I ever tell you that?

...I panicked for a moment about getting older. About my hair falling out and my face sagging. My gut poking out like my dad's. And my heart almost stopped when I thought, "What if Ivy loses interest? What if she's just not into it anymore?"

And then I imagined your body growing softer, your skin becoming like crinkled tissue paper. The wrinkles I can see around your eyes when you smile would be always there, just permanent. We'd mold around each other while we were sleeping the way trees can

sometimes, and our bones would slowly creak apart from each other as we got out of bed in the morning...

I left the gray hair where it was, thinking how nice it is that our bodies will change.

IVY

...

CONNOR

...

His hand floats on her shoulder. Her head floats on his hand. A memory of touch. They rest like this a moment.

BOO enters and leans her head on Ivy's other shoulder.

ANDRE enters and they all straighten.

ANDRE

Hey, why's it so dead in here? [drum kick sound]

What's up party people?

IVY

Hey Andre.

UNDERWOOD appears from somewhere else.

UNDERWOOD

Evening, gentlemen. Ivy, doing well?

She nods. ANDRE cozies up to IVY at the bar.

ANDRE

How you doing Ivy? You look especially beautiful tonight and like there are many good things in your life to look forward to.

IVY

Have you been talking to Underwood?

ANDRE

Never more than I absolutely have to. I just suddenly had the urge to tell you I think you've got a lot of things to live for. Food items alone make a good long list.

JAN enters and sees IVY.

JAN

You!

IVY

Jan?

JAN

She acts so innocent.
What are you, a witch?

The ghosts freeze awkwardly even though
JAN can't see them.

IVY

What?

JAN

I come out of the shower this morning and see "IVY" is written
in the steam on my mirror. I am eating my cereal and instead of
"O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O" the cereal spells "I-V-Y" Those letters don't
come in the cereal, only O's are in the cereal!

IVY

I don't know what you're—

JAN

—Then I hear a voice, saying O'Connor's Bar. O'Connor's Bar.

IVY

It's Oh, Connor's Bar.

JAN

I don't understand that joke. And the voice doesn't stop!
O'Connor's Bar O'Connor's Bar O'Connor's Bar.

ANDRE

I thought we were going to do her office address.

JAN

It doesn't stop until I come all the way to this place and find
you here sitting alone in an abandoned building like
a...sociopathic killer! So what are you going to do? You going
to kill me? You going to lock me in a basement? Good choice! I
have experience!

CONNOR

Boo? Where were you today?

BOO shrugs.

IVY

I'm sorry, Jan, I don't know what that was. I'm not a witch. I didn't lure you here to kill you.

JAN

Really?

But that's exactly what she *would* say. Tell her to prove it. Prove it.

IVY

How do I prove I'm not a witch?

CONNOR begins to mix a drink.

JAN

...Say...a prayer...

IVY

I don't really know any...I mean okay...uhh...

(singing weakly)

"Silent Night....Holy Night...All is calm, all is bright."

JAN

Is that a prayer?

IVY

My family wasn't religious!

JAN

You gotta get out of here, man. You don't want another situation. You gotta get out of here.

CONNOR hands IVY a drink.

IVY

Hey, do you want a drink? It'll calm you down. Or you can go if you want. I'm really not trying to keep you here.

JAN

It might be poisoned.

IVY

I promise it's not poisoned. Would I poison you? I sent the police to help you.

JAN

My god, she's pretty. She doesn't look like a witch at all.

ANDRE does a little victory dance.
UNDERWOOD swats at him.

IVY

I'm not a witch, I promise. And I wasn't sitting in an abandoned building by myself.

JAN takes the drink.

IVY

...Do you believe in ghosts?

Scene 11

A ghost comedy night. LORNE at the microphone. He is much more deadpan than last time.

LORNE

Hello. Hello. How's everybody doing. I got shot in the stomach. Yeah, just boop, right there.

People say laughter's the best medicine. To those people I say...

"I got shot in the stomach."

People say time heals all wounds. To those people I say...

"I got shot in the stomach."

I would have greatly preferred prompt medical attention.

"Time heals all wounds" combined with "Laughter is the best medicine" would be like someone coming up to me while I was bleeding out—and this could have happened, I was in a comedy club—and saying, really slowly, "Hey...you wanna know something funny?"

But, after death, that's when the jokes really start to flow. Maybe not immediately after...

That's part of why I'm doing this. Like, if I make you guys laugh, I could pass on tonight.—Which is really kind of a “laughter is the best medicine” situation. Kind of a “time heals all wounds” situation.

But now that I'm standing up here, I'm feeling like it's not going to work. I'm feeling like maybe I'll stick around for a while.

Some kind of “Woo!” from the audience.

Thank you!

A little applause from the ghost audience is cut by...

Have I mentioned yet that I got shot in the stomach?

You know, some people have sensitive stomachs. I had a pretty sensitive one myself. You see I just couldn't digest...bullets. I'm bullet intolerant. I go to a restaurant and I have to say, “In the Burrito de Muerte...are there, are there bullets in that?”

Some people tell me I have a gallows sense of humor. To those people I say “No...I thought I explained...”

I got shot in the stomach.”

No gallows. That...that wasn't an issue.

The one good thing about all of this, and I promise you, I'm gonna end on an uplifting note here...I was recently rejected by a woman. Because things are going pretty well for me right now. Been very fortunate lately. And uh, when it happened she said “I'm sorry if I hurt you.”

And I was like... “Dude. I got shot in the stomach...”

That hurt way more.”

Thanks everybody. Lorne out.

He lingers by the mic for a moment to see if he disappears. When he doesn't, he speaks into it again.

And Lorne still here.

Scene 12

Office. IVY is packing up her stuff.
JAN is helping.

JAN

Thanks for letting me help you move. I'm trying to get outside more. Use my muscles.

IVY

Well, it's nice to not have to do it by myself.

JAN

I can't believe they would stop printing your articles. You're a very good journalist.

IVY

They're just obituaries.

JAN

You also do lost pets!

...

She looks upset. Maybe you should ask her about it. Just say, "Are you okay?" Are you okay?

IVY

Yeah. I'm just sad. My fiancé's dead. He's one of the ghosts I told you about. He dropped dead making a Sidecar. Five years ago today.

JAN

Oh. Sorry. That's terrible.

IVY

I don't think I'll ever be quite the same.

JAN

...But you'll be better than you are now.

IVY

How do you know?

JAN

It's how life works. I came to this country because I wanted to be better. I thought I could be better here. Then I was taken by The Basement Killer, and suddenly I was much worse. But there were days when the sun would shine through the cracks in the floorboards and I could see the drawings I'd made in the dirt. And on those days I was a little better.

IVY

I'm concerned you might have low standards, Jan.

JAN

Low standards are the key to living a happy life.

IVY

You thought you'd have a better life here than in Norway?

JAN

It's not important. Just listen. Right now, I am better than I was when I was trapped in a basement. But I'm not better than I was before I got trapped in a basement, and I don't know if I ever will be. But I *will* be better than I am now. Because maybe you will laugh, or we will go get a donut, and I will be a little better, and then sometime maybe I will be able to stay that way for a whole day or two days or two years maybe. And you will be better too.

IVY

I don't know if I have things like that. Things that will make me better. It's stupid because I haven't been through anything really traumatic like you.

JAN

You lost your love.

IVY

But I didn't really.

JAN

We both had our lives changed because of one person. And it wasn't something we did or a mistake we made. It was just...

IVY

Random. And horrible.

JAN

But sometimes things are random and horrible but in the end it's okay.

IVY

And sometimes it isn't. Sometimes it just ends horribly.

Scene 13

The bar. CONNOR is drinking alone. Boo gently rattles chains.

LORNE appears, in a panic.

LORNE

Have you heard?

CONNOR

Hey Lorne.

LORNE

You heard about Ivy?

CONNOR

Have a drink. It's my Deathday.

LORNE

Dude, we've got to do something.

CONNOR

What are we gonna do? We're ghosts, Lorne. We can walk through walls. We can go invisible. We can drink. But we can't help Ivy.

LORNE

We've got to do something. Should we go to the hospital?

CONNOR

I can't go to the hospital! You think I wouldn't be at the hospital right now? What kind of person do you think I am? I'd do anything to go to the hospital. Why the hell aren't you at the hospital?

LORNE

I was just there but I left. I wanted to make sure someone had told you.

CONNOR

...

LORNE

I didn't know what to do. I didn't want to see her that way.

CONNOR

Half dead? You only like her if she's alive and perfect and breathing. You don't know a thing about her. You'd love anyone with a pulse.

LORNE

...I never meant to start haunting your fiancé.

CONNOR pours LORNE a drink.

CONNOR

I can't really blame you, she's exceedingly hauntable...But it is irritating, I'll say that.

He passes him the drink.

What happened?

LORNE

I thought you'd already heard.

CONNOR

Down the ghostvine. Andre was going over to check things out. I want the details.

LORNE

She walked into a burning house.

CONNOR

Whose house?

LORNE

A stranger's. I guess she just saw an opportunity. The fire fighters pulled her out. She didn't burn but she inhaled a lot of smoke.

She looked dead but she wasn't.

CONNOR

...

LORNE

You really didn't want her to do it.

CONNOR

Of course not.

LORNE

I wondered if you were just saying that.

CONNOR

I want her to live.

LORNE

But still, you can't stop her from dying if she wants to.

CONNOR

I tried to. I tried to make it sound unappealing. She asked me what it felt like when I died. I said it felt like having your soul torn apart by wolves. Like running your entire body through a garbage disposal a hundred times. Like being ripped from the universe by a giant godly hand.

LORNE

Wow did you really feel all that? I didn't.

CONNOR

No. I was lying. She knew I was lying. Dying felt like that moment when you're about to fall asleep and you suddenly feel like you're plummeting into an abyss and you wake up with a start. Did you ever get that? —Or, better analogy, when you miss a step on the stairs. Dying felt like that. Like a full body hiccup.

LORNE

Dying is easy.

CONNOR stands with renewed energy.

CONNOR

We've got to do something.

LORNE

Now you're talking.

CONNOR

We can watch her.

LORNE

We can watch her!

CONNOR

We can keep her here.

LORNE

We can keep her here!

CONNOR

We can make her happy. I know how to make her happy.

LORNE

You do?

CONNOR

Puns. Hot chocolate. Turn off the sad dog commercials before she can see them. Remind her to bring bags to the grocery store. Let the onions get a little crispy. Rhyme things for no reason. Quit smoking. Light fireworks. Secretly put gas in her car. Lick the envelopes for her. Sing on roadtrips. Mix two kinds of ice cream.

LORNE

Connor...

CONNOR

Be bad at wrapping presents. Spring for the soft toilet paper. Hold her while she's sleeping. Let her cry if she wants. Suggest stupid names for our future kids. Let her pick the movie. Turn on the fan. Put paprika on the popcorn. Kiss her when she's sweaty. Be the one to get up and turn off the light.

LORNE

Connor! Shut up!

Sorry.

You can't do any of that. Neither of us can do any of that.

CONNOR

...

CONNOR picks up a bottle and a glass
and carries them off into another room
in the bar.

LORNE exits.

BOO scrapes her chains along the floor.

She rattles them together and drags them along the bar stools.

ANDRE appears. He's very drained.

ANDRE

Boo.

He moves to the counter to get a drink.

BOO rattles louder.

ANDRE

Boo, come on now. Not tonight. BOO!

The rattling intensifies. The sound is larger than life.

ANDRE

Boo I will rip that sheet right off you! So help me god Boo, not tonight! BOO!

BOO rattles the chains at him.

ANDRE

Oh do you want to play that game? Because I don't think you want to play that game! You think you're the only ghost with problems? You think you're the only ghost who's made mistakes? The only ghost with stuff to take back? Some of us couldn't even kill ourselves right! Some of us couldn't even step in front of a bus right. You know you're not the only one who can rattle some chains.

He goes over to her and picks up some of her chains and shakes them at her.

ANDRE

You want to play this game?

BOO does.

Because we can play this game!

ANDRE violently rattles the chains at her.

ANDRE

YOU KNOW SOMETIMES YOUR BEHAVIOR JUST COMES OFF AS SELF-
ABSORPTION, BOO! SOMETIMES I JUST WANT TO TAKE THESE CHAINS AND
RATTLE THEM MYSELF BUT I DON'T, YOU KNOW THAT? BECAUSE WE CAN'T
ALL JUST RATTLE CHAINS BECAUSE WE'RE SAD! BECAUSE WE HAVE
NOBODY! BECAUSE WE DON'T KNOW HOW TO DIE RIGHT!

He rattles.

STUPID STUPID CHAINS!

BOO rattles.

They both rattle chains.

BOO drops her chains. Soft music begins
to play. Something sweet and from the
50s. ANDRE doesn't hear it at first.

He exhausts himself and drops the
chains.

ANDRE

God damn it, Boo.

He pants.

Are you the one making that music play?

BOO nods.

Is that from when you were alive?

BOO nods.

It's nice. A little hokey but nice.

BOO walks up to him and sways a little.

ANDRE

What're you looking at?

BOO rotates slowly, 360 degrees.

Are you...dancing? You want to dance?

They slow dance awkwardly. And then it
becomes less awkward.

Boo. I'm sorry I stopped coming to see you. I'm sorry I let you get so bad.

BOO puts a finger over his mouth to silence him and keeps dancing.

All right. I can be quiet.

...I've been so lonely Boo. My whole life and my whole death I've had lots of friends, lots of people to talk to, but I've been so lonely.

BOO puts her sheet over ANDRE so that they are both covered. She kisses him.

Whoa. Hey Boo.

BOO

Beatrice.

ANDRE

...

Beatrice. That was your name, wasn't it?

BOO

Beatrice.

ANDRE

...It's nice under here, Beatrice. I get it.

They continue to dance.

Boo...I mean, Beatrice...You feel like you're disappearing. I think we're disappearing.
I almost don't want to. But here we go.

The lights fade to black.

Scene 14

Cemetery. IVY colors a book of mandalas. She periodically uses an inhaler.

MINERVA, dressed in black, walks by and notices her.

MINERVA

If it isn't Ivy Graves.

IVY

Oh. Minerva! I forgot you were a person.

MINERVA

I'll forgive that since I hear you were on the psych ward for two weeks, you little...firefly.

IVY

What are you doing here?

MINERVA

I just came from a funeral.

IVY

Oh. I'm sorry. Who died?

MINERVA

Some rich girl's cat. Whatever happened to a good old shoebox, am I right? I mean, stick 'em in a shoebox, bury 'em in the backyard away from the sprinkler. I mean if you can afford a tiny catsized burial plot in a historic graveyard, you can afford to be more sensible with your income, am I right? I mean, am I right? I mean who has funeral for a cat and expects people to come to it. I mean, seriously, who does that?

IVY

...It was your cat, wasn't it?

MINERVA

...Meowgaret Cat-cher. But I just called her Meowgs.

IVY

I'm sorry. I'm sure she was a really great cat.

MINERVA

Thank you. She was a good friend. Do you mind if I sit?

MINERVA sits next to IVY.

MINERVA

I never minded cemeteries. They're just parks really. But today I can't help feeling like I'm walking on top of people, just walking right over them while they're just lying there. It sounds like it should be a good feeling, doesn't it? But today

it just feels like my stilettos could be sinking into someone's brain every time they get stuck.

IVY

The people are buried way too deep for that, I promise.

MINERVA

You should come by the office sometime, Ives. Talk about the layout on the Obits webpage. We could have coffee or just chat. You know I love a chat! I mean as long as that isn't going to make you do something crazy. Are you...stable, hon? Aren't going to freak out on me, are you? We miss you, you know.

IVY

I'm just not sure what we'd talk about.

MINERVA

Well, we'd *just* have to find out. You remind me of a cat, sort of. Has anyone ever told you that? A sort of sad, hairless cat.

IVY

I'll take that as a compliment.

IVY gestures to the book.

Do you want one of these?

She tears out a mandala and gives it to MINERVA.

You never know what will help.

MINERVA

Isn't that a little pathetic?

She takes the mandala.

Thank you.

She stands stoically.

MINERVA

Smooches, Ivy! You're a star.

MINERVA exits.

IVY coughs. Inhaler.

UNDERWOOD appears.

UNDERWOOD

What have you done to yourself?

IVY

Bronchial infection due to smoke inhalation.

UNDERWOOD

...

IVY

It's hard for me to breathe.

UNDERWOOD

Running into a burning house. Only you and horses would do such a thing.

IVY

And firefighters.

UNDERWOOD

Thankfully.

IVY

It seemed unfair. I'd been waiting for my house to burn down for years with me in it. When I saw that one burning right down the street from mine I just thought..."Close enough."

UNDERWOOD

You don't know how glad I am it didn't work.

A beat.

IVY

(gesturing to the book)

Jan gave me this. And the pencils. I don't even know when he bought it. In the hospital he hardly left my side. Wanted to come to therapy with me. They didn't let him do that. You could say me and Jan are getting along like a house on fire. Meanwhile some friends of five years, I'm only just seeing now. After almost two weeks.

...

UNDERWOOD

Andre and Boo passed on.

IVY

They did?

UNDERWOOD

It's why they didn't come to see you. And you have always known that I am a coward.

IVY

...

UNDERWOOD

How could you, Ivy?

IVY

...I had to.

UNDERWOOD

And what if you had just passed on? What would Connor do then? He can't even leave the bar!

IVY

He could have made a Sidecar.

UNDERWOOD

Do you want that?

IVY

...

UNDERWOOD

A change must occur, Ivy. I agree with you there. We certainly can't go on this way. You taking care of us. Us keeping you from living.

IVY

I tried.

UNDERWOOD

I think perhaps we ghosts have been selfish. But it was only out of love. I hope you know.

IVY

...

UNDERWOOD

I once had a friend named George.

IVY

...Bernard Shaw?

UNDERWOOD

No, Thorpe. He was of no significance in the theater. He was my butler. You know, did my buttons and things. He had an awful gravelly voice. Something went wrong there, you know, when he was a child, some kind of illness. He'd say things to me like, "Now, Master Underwood, will we be having the good silver cufflinks, or these sapphire ones you bought during what I hope was some type of epileptic fit." He gave me all my best lines for my reviews without seeing any of the plays. And he never minded that I used them. Maybe because he couldn't read. All this is to say, on the other side...He's someone I'd like to see.

UNDERWOOD removes his manuscript from his jacket.

UNDERWOOD

It's finished. My book. *The Failings of Playwrights: Victorian Through Present Day*. It's the only thing I've been able to touch all these years. I've checked it over, proofread, annotated, numbered all the pages. All that's missing are the words "The End." Don't say a word, Ivy, don't say a word. It's time for me to face the music. I think I'll wander down to the river to do it. There's one place that's stayed the same all these years.

He begins to walk off with the manuscript.

UNDERWOOD

Oh and by the by, I give your suicide attempt zero stars!

He is gone.

Scene 15

A ghost comedy night. LORNE at the microphone.

LORNE

Good evening. How's everybody doing tonight.

I'm doing great. Thanks for asking. Best shape of my death. I'm seeing this great woman. She can't see me but...

LORNE

I'm just kidding. No, I've actually been spending some time with a fellow ghost, she's a therapist.

Now, I know what you're going to say it's not a date if you're actually receiving therapy from her. I know that. Now.

Let's get serious. Now, show of hands: Has anybody here ever been in love? Okay, all right. No need to brag about it. And now, has anybody here ever been in love with someone who is alive? Couple people, okay.

So, I fell in love with a living person. And at first being a ghost with a crush wasn't really different from being a human with a crush. I'd just sort of stand near her. Just...kind of like this. Standing. I'd see if she went in another room. Then go stand near her in there. Very cool. Standing. I'm pretty sure she didn't even notice it.

And then I got less cool about it. Her boyfriend noticed. Hey man. And, in addition, I just started finding myself *moaning*. And I felt like such a cliché because here I was this moaning ghost. I'd be going, "OoOoOh it's so unfair. OoOoh why can't she love me? OoOoh I wish I was alive!"

And then something happened that made me kind of like, "Oh."

And I realized I had been way too worried about being sad and unloved and missing that whole part of my life, and not worried enough about *her*.

She's not here tonight, as you will all be relieved to hear. But for the record—

He absentmindedly puts his hand on the microphone. Then he realizes he has put his hand on the microphone.

For the record, I think really loving someone means wanting them to live forever and, like, be there, for the world. Even if that idea makes you feel really lonely.

And...well, shit. Lorne out.

Black out.

Scene 16

The bar. Empty except for CONNOR who measures the ingredients for a Sidecar into a shaker.

IVY enters and he hides.

IVY

Connor? Hello? Connor?

Connor where are you?

...

...Connor?

This isn't really funny. I'm sorry about what I did but I need you to come out and talk to me.

Hey, seriously. Connor?

It's raining outside. But my hair is dry, how about that? I didn't cry into it all day. It was never really because of the weather. Overactive tearducts and a lack of Kleenex preparedness.

Connor?

She sees the Sidecar ingredients and empty glass.

Oh my god. Connor, no.

...

JAN enters with flowers.

JAN

I thought I might find you here. What's wrong? I thought you loved flowers.

IVY

He's gone. They're all gone. He didn't even say goodbye.

JAN

Some people are bad at goodbyes.

IVY

...

JAN

What was he like?

IVY

Um....I don't know. He way over-thought everything, especially jokes. I mean, "Oh, Connor's Bar," come on.

JAN

Yeah I didn't want to say anything.

IVY

He always wanted to do everything just right and he couldn't stand for anything to be messy or sticky...he really hated it when things were sticky.

He was really good at describing things. Sometimes I didn't know how I felt until I heard him describe it.

He liked to plan things. He was reliable. He wasn't the kind of person who could do an Irish goodbye or French exit at a party. He had to go around and shake everyone's hand.

JAN

I only know a Norwegian hello.

IVY

He would never leave without saying goodbye.

JAN

Did you write all that in his obituary?

IVY

I never wrote his obituary. Maybe I should. I really should.

He takes her hand and looks into her eyes.

JAN

...Do you want to go and eat a donut?

IVY

Yeah. Just give me a minute.

JAN exits.

IVY places the flowers on the bar.

IVY

I know you're hiding Connor.

CONNOR appears. He struggles to find words.

You don't have to say anything. Just make your drink.

CONNOR mixes two Sidecars as he talks.

CONNOR

Have you ever had a drink poured by a ghost? It tastes like all the things you miss. It's like drinking a sock that's been in the microwave; a warm, scratchy, lumpy throated, swallowed a too big bite taste. It's like a liquid obituary.

IVY

But, if you drink it in the presence of a ghost, then at least you're not drinking alone.

He garnishes the glasses and hands one to IVY.

CONNOR

One part lemon juice.

IVY

One part Cointreau.

CONNOR

One part Cognac.

IVY

Shake with ice.

He raises his glass.

I'll miss you, Connor.

CONNOR

Do that. But not too much. Cheers.

They clink glasses.

They each take a sip.

Lights.

Epilogue

The cemetery. IVY colors mandalas. JAN enters with two coffees and a balloon.

JAN

I got your coffee. Only cream. No sugar. Like a crazy person. And there was a man who offered to sell me a balloon, so I bought you a balloon.

IVY

Thanks Jan.

She sets the mandalas down and takes the coffee and the balloon.

JAN

How are the mandalas? They helping?

IVY

Yes, they help.

JAN

You started working again. I saw on the quotidian proclaimer dot com backslash obituaries and lost pets dot H-T-M

IVY

Yeah. Well, people die and someone has to mention it right?

JAN

It doesn't have to be you always.

...

I read something on the Internet today that I loved. It was poetry. I memorized it. Do you want to hear it?

IVY

Sure.

JAN

Lost Pet

Señor Bones

Cairn Terrier—This is a word, Cairn?

Color: Tan Age: 5 years Size: Small

Last seen in Murphy Park.

He loves the bushes.

Abused by his previous owner,

Señor Bones may be skittish.

However, if a treat, such as hot dogs, is presented

He'll walk right up to you and follow you wherever you go.

If found, please call Sidney at

Nine two nine, four seven one, six zero zero six.

He takes her hand.

JAN

Is it getting easier to breathe?

IVY

Yes, Jan. It's getting easier.

She uses her inhaler.

End of Play.

