

# ***blahblah*** a play

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### **Characters 4f/3m**

KARL, late 20s to early 30s

JOYCE, 20's

MARTY, a lost teenager 15-18 yrs old

SIMONE, a celebrity of some sort, 20s-40s

Played by one performer

GUSTAV, an Austrian Baron, late 20s-70s

THE MONSTER, who knows how old?

Played by one performer:

COCO, a party girl, 20s

PIA, a videographer, 20s-30s

Played by one performer:

ARMAND, party animal, gadfly, 20s, Amish

THE BIRTHDAY MAN, wears feathers,  
ageless

### **Setting**

Interior and exterior locations are suggestive. The use of projections and/or transformable scenery for fluid transformations is one way to go.

### **Act One**

#### **Scenes**

- 1 Outside, somewhere in the twilight of suburban America
- 2 The living room
- 3 The bedroom
- 4 The family room
- 5 The kitchen
- 6 A hallway
- 7 The living room

### **Act Two**

#### **Scenes**

- 1 An empty room
- 2 The laundry room
- 3 A walk-in clothes closet
- 4 A hallway
- 5 The attic
- 6 The basement
- 7 Outside, dawn

# ACT 1

## Scene 1

Somewhere in the twilight of suburban America

---

JOYCE and KARL enter wearing  
spring jackets.

I'm bored.

JOYCE

Let's go somewhere.

KARL

Where?

JOYCE

Anywhere, I just wanna see, do something new.

KARL

We don't have any money.

JOYCE

Let's just walk somewhere.

KARL

Walk?

JOYCE

I dunno.

KARL

Alright, how 'bout that new subdivision near the golf course?

JOYCE

Okay.

KARL

And we can talk. You promised.

JOYCE

(They walk admiring the scenery, then, after a few moments the  
sound of a car approaching, its headlights pass over the couple, the  
car passes.)

Wow, nice car.	KARL
We need to talk.	JOYCE
Yeah, I know, okay.	KARL
Looooong overdue.	JOYCE
“Who are we” kinda talk?	KARL
Yeah...	JOYCE
We talk all the time.	KARL
You always say that.	JOYCE
We do.	KARL
Don't.	JOYCE
Things are not good right now.	KARL
They're not bad...	JOYCE
What are they?	KARL
I don't know...Blah.	JOYCE
Yeah...blah.	KARL

(Pause)

JOYCE

Everything is blah...my job is blah, school, my life, family, people, television, blah, the future, blah, a world of blah, people I talk to, all they say is blahblah.

KARL

Me blah too. My career, writing, my music, blah, I wake up facing another big blah. Maybe we're blah and blah. Blahing together. Blahhhhing our relationship...

(They have a conversation using the word "blah" and its many variations).

JOYCE

Blahhhhhhhh.

KARL

Sex...

JOYCE and KARL

Blah blah blah...

JOYCE

See.

KARL

Blah is fun.

(The sudden shadow and sound of a bird passing. They both look.)

KARL

Wow! Did you see that swan?

JOYCE

Whoa, was that real?

KARL

Yes, of course it's real. What are you talking about?

JOYCE

It didn't seem real.

KARL

You didn't think it was real?

JOYCE  
So?

KARL  
You're so weird sometimes.

JOYCE  
It's beautiful, even if it isn't real.

KARL  
Like video game real?

JOYCE  
Is it any wonder swans are in so many human images of love? They travel far, don't they, far afield, everywhere, even to New Guinea and they are always loyal to their mates.

KARL  
Look ... is it molting?

(The hoot of an owl, JOYCE jumps with fright.)

JOYCE  
OH! SHIT! ... That scared me.

KARL  
I'd love to learn more about owls...

JOYCE  
The golf course is a good place to start.

KARL  
You know this might be a good time to start a list of birds.

JOYCE  
There are books.

KARL  
Even apps for your cell phone.

(KARL suddenly searches his pockets for his cell phone. JOYCE looks to the sky at the birds.)

Fuck, I left MY PHONE! Shit.

JOYCE

Waiting for an important call? Everything is going to be OHKAY! Relax.

(KARL'S phone rings and he finds it in a pocket.)

KARL

(To JOYCE then answering phone.)

Wait ... Hello!... HEEEEELLLLLLO?

(Looks at the phone.)

Who the...Unknown?

JOYCE

We'll learn more about the mute swan, he beautiful endangered owl

KARL

(Looking at his phone.)

Yeah...okay.

JOYCE

Bspectacled Singer...

KARL

What?

JOYCE

Black-capped Chickadee...

KARL

Black Capped ... Chickadee?

JOYCE

Yeah. Some birds live over the water. They come ashore only to nest. Brown Creeper, Wilson's Warbler. Some leave for the winter. Others stay right through.

KARL

(Focused on his phone)

Tough little guys...

JOYCE

Some mate for life.

KARL

Huh?... endangered.

JOYCE

Time is running out. Karl?

KARL

Wha? How 'bout we travel the world, see every bird!

JOYCE

The birds of Africa, south of the Sahara...

KARL

The Amazon ... the Congo.

JOYCE

Or we could have a not-so-big year...

(Scanning the sky)

...Just appreciate the birds around here.

KARL

Fortunately, the effects of natural disasters are usually local, bird populations can weather the storm.

JOYCE

You mean if they are dead here don't worry, everything is fine someplace else?

KARL

Yeah...I suppose. No, I mean...

(JOYCE pauses, holding her breath, eyes wide, her arms waving alike a bird. She is having a moment of some sort. KARL looks at her, concerned.)

KARL

Joyce? Joyce!... What?

JOYCE

I just had a bird moment.

KARL

Like a bird? A bird?

JOYCE

Yes, I'm a bird. I don't know why I've had several of these moments lately. I want to be small and innocent, fly away, be close to heaven.



KARL

Things are really fragile, aren't they?

(The call of a crow.)

JOYCE

Hello crow.

KARL

They circle above scenes of death such as battles eating carrion.

(The call of a crow.)

JOYCE

Taking offerings to the dead.

KARL

Why are they so black?

JOYCE

Black aids their psychic ability so they can absorb electromagnetic energy frequencies in the visible spectrum, they are taking the world reflecting no color.

(Call of an owl and crow.)

KARL

What?

JOYCE

Psychic ninjas.

KARL

Maybe we're a crow and owl having a discussion.

JOYCE

What are we saying?

(Making crow sounds)

Kah Kah Kah!

KARL

(Making owl sounds)

Hooo ho hooo, hooo ho hooo!

(KARL and JOYCE communicate, dance and move in an improvisational ritual of a crow and owl).

JOYCE  
That was fun.

KARL  
Verrrry cool.

(KARL and JOYCE arrive at an exclusive sub division. The lights, sound, and atmosphere change).

KARL  
Well, here we are! "Colonial Hollow Estates."

JOYCE  
Sounds like a horror movie.

KARL  
Whoa, honey slow down, take a look at that house!

JOYCE  
Holy nuts! These houses are huge!

KARL  
Nice!

JOYCE  
No.

KARL  
You think we'll ever own a house like this one day?

JOYCE  
Can you really own anything? I mean don't you just hold onto something for a while then you die.

(Thunder, then the sound of soft rain. KARL puts his jacket over his head. JOYCE embraces the rain.)

KARL  
Shit!

JOYCE  
Ahhhh...It's such a soft rain.

KARL  
We're going to get soaked.

JOYCE

It's always been my fantasy to walk naked in the rain. Weather is meant to be revered ... it is talking to us...listen, can you hear?

(They stand for a moment enjoying and listening the rain. After a moment a door appears.)

Hello rain, thank you for caressing me...

KARL

I'm getting soaked ... Look, the door is open.

JOYCE

Karl...

KARL

Com'on, let's go inside.

JOYCE

NO!

KARL

Why not?

JOYCE

I don't think we should.

(The call of a swan.)

THAT SWAN JUST FLEW IN THE FRONT DOOR!

KARL

See! Let's go inside.

JOYCE

We can't just walk in...

KARL

The door is open.

JOYCE

Karl...

KARL  
Don't you wonder?

JOYCE  
A little bit. Are you sure?

KARL  
It's not blah!

(They hold hands and walk a few steps. The atmosphere and sound changes as they enter the house and look around. They are a mixture of curious, apprehensive, and impressed.)

I thought I'd never get to see inside.

(KARL is rubber-necking as JOYCE stands still, almost frightened.)

Wow...we could get lost in here.

(His voice echoes).

JOYCE  
This is crazy, Karl, we should go right now.

KARL  
Joyce, do you ever wonder what will happen to us in the next five to ten years?

JOYCE  
Yes.

KARL  
We could be living in a place like this.

JOYCE  
Karl...Let me be honest.

KARL  
... Okay ...You don't like this.

JOYCE  
Can hear it in my voice?

KARL  
Yes, I know. Okay.

JOYCE

Sometimes my words may seem naïve to you, or Hallmark-y, or put-on or bathetic...

KARL

What?

JOYCE

“Pathetic” with a “B”?

KARL

“Bathos”?

JOYCE

Yes. It comes from the Greek root 'bathos'.

KARL

“Bathos” over the top emotional.

JOYCE

It’s my word for today

KARL

I’m not critiquing you.

JOYCE

YES, YOU DO!

KARL

Bathos is an excellent word for you today.

JOYCE

Screw you!

(MARTY, a teenage boy/girl wearing pajamas with an obvious crotch bulge. He is and carrying a camera enters. )

MARTY

(To KARL)

Can I take your picture?

KARL

Do you mind? Can’t you see we’re in the middle of an important conversation.

(JOYCE nudges him.)

JOYCE

Karl.

KARL

Okay, sorry, we can do a quick one.

(JOYCE and KARL pose as if a happy couple. MARTY takes a flash photo.)

Ouch!

MARTY

Today is my birthday. I can have, say or do anything I want.

KARL

Good for you. Who are you?

MARTY

I'm an emotionally maladjusted teenager.

KARL

Oh, you're smart for your age?

MARTY

Yeah. That's cool...

(SIMONE enters.)

SIMONE

Who are you?

JOYCE

Ahh ... We ... I...

KARL

Karl ... this is Joyce. We live in those cheesy tutor style apartments on the other side of the golf course.

MARTY

(To JOYCE)

Can I take your picture?

JOYCE

No.

SIMONE

(To JOYCE)  
Who are you?

(JOYCE looks closely at SIMONE and then recognizes her.)

JOYCE

OH MY GOD! OHHH MYYY GOOODDD! I DON'T BELIVE ... Excuse me... but,  
ahhh, are you THE "Simone"?

SIMONE

UHH...yeah...

JOYCE

Really? Oh my god, that's what I thought.

(To KARL)

You should totally do a picture with her. She'll make you look good, she's a  
real celebrity.

(KARL takes out his cell phone. KARL and JOYCE take turns posing  
for photos next to SIMONE. Meanwhile, MARTY paces at the  
margins of the space mumbling and repeating fragments of what the  
other are saying, sometimes before it is said.)

KARL

So, do you live here?

SIMONE

Are you trying to scoop some personal information out of me for a tabloid  
exclusive?

JOYCE

No!

SIMONE

(To JOYCE)

I've never partied with you, have I?

(SIMONE looks JOYCE up and down.)

Yeah, when is that gonna happen?

JOYCE

Yeah, and what does that entail? Lots of drugs, rough sex, getting really  
really drunk, puking, rehab, memoirs, then early death?

SIMONE

Nooo, just staying out past four AM drinking, laughing, stupid things. I was with Armand and Peter last night. We had a lot of fun.

KARL

It doesn't take much for me to get tipsy... Joyce?

SIMONE

(To KARL)

Last night I drank a whole bottle of Bushmills.

JOYCE

Is it hard to balance life and the celebrity thing?

SIMONE

Thank you for asking. I am so exhausted. The thing with celebrity is that it's very easy to let it control your life. You have all these people that are working with you, parasites that need it ... Record labels, agents, producers, publicist, hair, make up, accountants, managers, lawyers ... You're the artist, you kind of feel indebted to them, you know? Your friends, fans. It's your thing but they're working so hard, so it's very easy to start saying, "yes" to everything, but when you do that you lose yourself. I lost myself! I'm not me, I look like me, I talk like me. I have started turning things down, drawing the line so I don't feel like other things, people are controlling my life. I think it's a healthy. If they have their way with you, they'll have you do doing something all the time, you don't know who or where you are, what you're doing there, supposed to do, its really stimulating but so confusing ...What do you do, anything I would know about?

JOYCE

I'm a grad student and barista.

SIMONE

Oh, how nice.

KARL

I'm an adjunct at the University.

SIMONE

You have a specialty?

KARL

Comparative Lit. French literature.



SIMONE

I studied Proust in France. I lived with this crazy woman. She thought I was her dead daughter. It was such a weird bad situation.

KARL

I teach "Swann's Way" in two weeks...

MARTY

Who's Proust?

JOYCE

He's like the French Shakespeare.

MARTY

So?

SIMONE

I think that Proust's "Remembrance of Things Past" are the best books ever. The memory of a life can be held in a simple little cake. Wouldn't you agree?

MARTY

I want a birthday cake.

KARL

Maybe not in all the world's literature, but in definitely a biggy in Western literature...

JOYCE

And, the longest...

MARTY

Is it better than "Lord Of The Rings?"

KARL

I knew it! You're a Hobbit!

MARTY

I'm an elf!

KARL

Yeah, I'm Gandolf.

MARTY

No you're not.

Yes, I am.	KARL
You're a dwarf.	MARTY
Do I look like a dwarf?	KARL
Duh.	MARTY
No I'm not!	KARL
I know you are, but what am I?	MARTY
I told you who I am.	KARL
You're a wannabee.	MARTY
I know you are, but what am I?	KARL
You're an idiot. Poser.	MARTY
I'm not, you are.	KARL
You're afraid.	MARTY
I know you are, but what am I?	KARL
I know you are, but what am I?	MARTY
I know you are, but what am I?	KARL

Karl? Hello?	JOYCE
It's Marty's birthday.	SIMONE
I know you are, but what am I?	MARTY
I know you are, but what am I?	KARL
Infinity!	JOYCE
No way!	MARTY
Knock it off!	KARL
Knock it off!	MARTY
What are you?	KARL
What are you?	MARTY
A mirror?	KARL
A mirror?	MARTY
CUT IT OUT! YOU'RE SO IMATURE!	JOYCE
I'm sorry, but what we doing here?	SIMONE
(To MARTY) I know who you are.	KARL

What?  
JOYCE

(To KARL)  
I know who you are.  
MARTY

Just browsing today?  
SIMONE

(To KARL)  
Loser. Afraid of your own potential. Fucking waste of space.  
MARTY

(To SIMONE)  
Can I be your fan?  
JOYCE

Have any drugs?  
SIMONE

(To SIMONE)  
I've been drug and alcohol free, almost five months. Addictive personality.  
JOYCE

(To MARTY.)  
STOP GOING ROUND AND ROUND! MERRYGOROUND!  
SIMONE

KARL!  
JOYCE

What?  
(TO MARTY)  
Shut up!  
KARL

I'm talking to Simone! Remember her from that TV show we like?  
JOYCE

(To KARL)  
Make me.  
MARTY

KARL

(To MARTY)  
Why don't you make me?

(MARTY slaps KARL. He turns in recognition to SIMONE.)  
Ohhhh, THAT Simone! WOW!! Nice to meet you!

MARTY

(To KARL)  
Because I don't make monkeys, I just train them.

KARL

(To MARTY)  
You're really immature.

MARTY

(To KARL)  
No I'm not. Yes you are.

KARL

(To MARTY)  
Yes you are! No I'm not.

SIMONE

Okay, ENOUGH! This is way toooo much....

(SIMONE begins to leave followed by JOYCE.)

JOYCE

No! Don't leave me I've always wanted to be like you!

(MARTY tags KARL then runs of in another direction.)

KARL

Joyce! Where are you going?

MARTY

Tag, you're it!

KARL

I'm going to so punch you!

MARTY

Catch me if you caaaan!

KARL

I'm gonna get you!

MARTY

I'm an elf! Na nan da na nah!

(MARTY exits with an elf-like leap followed by KARL.)

## **Scene 2**

In the living room

---

ARMAND places a chair on the stage as GUSTAV enters and looks in the distance. Ominous horror movie-like sounds are heard. KARL enters as if on a mission. He looks around and sees GUSTAVE and after a moment goes to him, curious. GUSTAV is dashing and intelligent, an aristocratic European alternatively bored then amused by the world. At times arrogant, then blasé, then threatening, intense and passionate. Life is a bit of a game for him. He speaks with a slight Germanic accent.

KARL

Sooo, what's it like living in this big ole house?

GUSTAV

Not so bad.

KARL

Nice design.

GUSTAV

Exquisite European design, blending clean line with references to classical traditions. Self-sustaining, energy efficient.

KARL

How long have you lived here?

GUSTAV

There is yoga and meditation in the mornings, I lift weights for tone, watch life from a window called television, there is a gourmet kitchen, take naps

in the sun room, call my friends, we chat, text, we are ironic about civilization willing its own extinction. Ahh, an excellent, well stocked wine cellar, a few Cuban cigars. More idle chat, a spy novel now and then. Sometimes I simply watch dust floating in sunbeams gently forming a layer on the furniture.

KARL

Ohhhhhh kaaaay...

GUSTAV

I take long showers, fifteen massaging showerheads...

(Pausing, reliving the moment)

It is better than sex. The mirror gets steamy. I write my name in it. I lather my body with olive oil and mango creams. I lift some more weights. Do you want to feel my muscles? Com'on...

KARL

That's cool.

GUSTAV

I take photographs, shoot video, I am a keen observer of life. Want to see my photos?

KARL

No, that's okay.

GUSTAV

Video? All HD.

KARL

I have seen it all before.

GUSTAV

Maybe later?

KARL

Nah.

GUSTAV

I play billiards. I like watching the balls collide, knock, bounce, then into the holes. It is like the big bang, the universe created. I really enjoy my lap pool, the Jacuzzi, I live for the sauna. I love texting, twittering like a bird.

KARL

Busy guy.

GUSTAV

I'm an artist of life. Creative type, you know. How 'bout you?

KARL

I teach, write. Have an indie rock band, we play out on weekends.

GUSTAV

That's something. Go on.

KARL

I'm mired in post-modern ennui.

GUSTAV

Ahhh, an intellectual. I like that. Want to talk about the philosophy of exhaustion?

KARL

We can.

GUSTAV

We have a lot in common.

KARL

Maybe.

GUSTAV

Hey, wanna call somebody? Text, twitter, whatever, a video game, some music, masturbate? This is a very hip phone. So many apps, want to know where you are?

(GUSTAV hands KARL his mobile phone)

KARL

Who?

GUSTAV

Anybody, somebody you love. Hungry? Order pizza Chinese, Thai, Indian, Ethiopian, Middle Eastern, Sushi, Mediterranean, life's a menu. I don't know, whatever you like, make a decision. Please...ahh, maybe a call girl with supersized fake tits, a tall black woman with glistening red lips. A trans-sexual with a quivering, hungry mouth? A special massage? Strapped down latex sex, have someone pee on you? Buy something on ebay, Amazon, whatever. Have some fun, I'll watch.

KARL

Is there a library?



GUSTAV

What? That's right you are an intellectual, you read, write, think important things. The library is full of so many thoughts. I find it so morbid. Most of them are dead.

KARL

Who?

GUSTAV

The books, you open them up, your gaze traverses the page, the soul of the writer massaging your eyeballs entering into you. Dead people wrote those books. Reading brings them back to life.

(Pointing and moving to leave.)

Down the hall. Go.

KARL

Maybe later.

GUSTAV

I'm happy you stopped by.

KARL

By chance.

GUSTAV

Chance ... how the spirits speak.

KARL

Is that right?

GUSTAV

You seem anxious.

KARL

Everything is cool.

(KARL realizes something.)

GUSTAV

Something is wrong?

KARL

I had a jacket.

GUSTAV

A black one? Maybe you gave it to the coat check girl. Look in your pocket.

(KARL digs in his pockets pull out a coat check ticket.)

KARL

Coat check? What the...

GUSTAV

Your ticket, don't lose it.

KARL

I don't remember...how, when did...

GUSTAV

But it must have happened you have proof, an artifact. It is logical!

(GUSTAV smiles and looks intently at KARL)

KARL

Why are you smiling?

GUSTAV

I'm as happy as a lark, crazy as a cuckoo.

KARL

You like living here.

GUSTAV

Of course! Everything I want is right here. I can always leave. I own three boats, a house in five countries, I have twenty-six cars.

KARL

Wow. Nice.

GUSTAV

I love each and every one of them. They are like friends, lovers, some old, some new. I get naked, oil my body, lay on the hood caress them. But I have no reason to leave everything I could want is here. Will you be my friend? You do facebook?

(There is a sharp, ominous sound. They pause and look at each other awkwardly. GUSTAV looks around the room.)

KARL

Is something wrong?...Something is wrong.

GUSTAV  
Something you feel?

KARL  
Yeah, maybe.

GUSTAV  
Not really tangible, is it?

KARL  
No.

GUSTAV  
Something. Just can't put your finger on it?

KARL  
You're freaking me out...

GUSTAV  
Atmospheric. Invisible ... in the air?

KARL  
Yeah.

GUSTAV  
Ghosts, virus, diseases, the past, present, and future, everything is mingling, floating around ... a big fog.

KARL  
Fucking everywhere, something...

GUSTAV  
I feel it in my balls.

KARL  
Your balls?

GUSTAV  
Balls, scrodem, testicles, oyster sack, sperm pouch, you know. Underrated as a sensor. Feel your balls.

(A sharp ominous sound. Both men look around and are quiet for a moment.)

The balls speak in mysterious ways. Do you think we're dead?

KARL

But we think we're alive?

GUSTAV

Fucking horror movie.

KARL

A mystery thriller kinda thing.

GUSTAV

Front row seats.

KARL

3-D, surround sound. Super high definition, bucket of buttered popcorn...

GUSTAV

More real than real.

KARL

Yeah...

GUSTAV

Life's a movie.

KARL

What the fuck happened?

GUSTAV

Snuck up on us like a thief.

KARL

Here we are.

GUSTAV

Like slitting your wrist in a warm bath.

KARL

Going is easy.

(They pause motionless as if dead.)

GUSTAV

But I feel great, look great, tanning bed, lift weights, a little squash...

KARL  
I workout, eat organic, vegan...

GUSTAV  
What's your name my... friend?

KARL  
Karl.

GUSTAV  
Ahhhh...the way you said that. K..a..r..l. Karl with a K. Correct?

KARL  
Yeah. Like it?

GUSTAV  
European, sexy, cool, mysterious...Say it again.

KARL  
(With an accent.)  
Kaarrlll.

GUSTAV  
Ohhhh, Fuck...you're so very cool Oh, oh, I know, now I'm putting it together. Like Kafka.

KARL  
Kafka?

GUSTAV  
You look it.

KARL  
What?

GUSTAV  
Kafkaesque.

KARL  
So do you.

GUSTAV  
Nah, really? You're an intellectual.

KARL  
No, you do look Kafkaesque.

GUSTAV

You are too polite.

KARL

Am I turning into a bug?

(GUSTAV looks around then goes the KARL and speaks to him intimately.)

GUSTAV

Are you sure you want to go through with this?

KARL

What?

GUSTAV

I like you.

KARL

Thank you.

GUSTAV

You remind me of me. I like you a lot.

KARL

A lot?

GUSTAV

Testicle talk.

KARL

Are we being gay?

GUSTAV

Noooo. Gay? Remember when gay used to be HAPPY! Care free, not a worry in the world. Like Ginger Rodgers and Fred Astaire spinning on the dance floor! Mirror balls refracting fragmented light like floating in the sky!

(They dance ballroom style, KARL gets into and continues dancing and spinning by himself.)

KARL

We're just being sensitive?

GUSTAV

In tune, feeling too much. Way too much! The details a spectrograph might miss.

KARL

Are you high?

GUSTAV

The world is high! Amphetamines, hallucinogens, herbs, psychotropics, buckets of drugstore colorful, only thing holding the world together!

KARL

Who are you?

(GUSTAV looks around then intimately to KARL.)

GUSTAV

Don't get mixed up with this. Changed forever.

KARL

What?

GUSTAV

I'm a loner.

KARL

So am I!

GUSTAV

A rebel!

KARL

Me too! Without a cause!

GUSTAV

My life is in the middle of nowhere! But that is ... okay.

KARL

You too?

GUSTAV

Now I just accept. Observe eagle eye from my perch naked, glorious, on my balcony looking out over the world, crazy storm clouds rolling in, things go still, except for the gurgling fountain, a cute stature of little boy pissing

into the pool...ahhh, there is a barking dog or perhaps a leaf blower in the distance, besides that, all is quiet, perfect, like death.

KARL

I'm alone.

GUSTAV

I see that.

KARL

Sort of ... Joyce is my girlfriend is somewhere, we ...

GUSTAV

Ahhh, Joyce, from the word Joy. You must be very happy.

KARL

Yeah ... I am.

GUSTAV

But you are uncertain, nagging questions, uncertainties percolate...

(Ominous sounds. They pause and listen.)

KARL

What's going on?

GUSTAV

You'll get used to it.

(More Ominous sounds.)

KARL

(Listening to the floor.)

It's vibrating! Does this house have a basement, a bottom, something foundational, close to the earth?

GUSTAV

An odd question, the earth is very unstable now. There is no bottom only oblivion.

KARL

A balcony?

GUSTAV

Yes...why?



KARL

To look out, see what is coming?

GUSTAV

Why?

KARL

To be forewarn, prepared.

GUSTAV

Won't help.

KARL

Why?

GUSTAV

Nothing means anything anymore yet everything is loaded, like a gun. An exquisite collision of opposites, yin yang, heaven hell, divine ridiculous, male female, everything connected disconnected, all of it collapsing into a swirl. Chaos churning, creating the world again.

KARL

This is giving me the creeps.

GUSTAV

Having fun, making progress, advancing the human species.

KARL

Meeting you, however, feeling the sound of your voice on my body ... is oddly reassuring...

GUSTAV

Find comfort in little things, life's overlooked banalities.

KARL

Is there an attic?

GUSTAV

Ahhh, you are persistent, meticulous, an inquisitive mind! This is good. Memories, hopes ... horrors, dreams they all clutter the attic don't they?

KARL

Then just empty everything out.

GUSTAV

You have a spiritual perspective.

KARL

Is there a bathroom?

GUSTAV

Feeling the need to "relieve yourself"?

(GUSTAV exits. KARL turns to discover the chair is gone. )

KARL

Who are you?

GUSTAV

(Voice Over)

Baron Gustav Aguila von Lichtenberg. But you should know. Am I your aspirations, fears, and fantasies?

KARL

What?

GUSTAV

Have you ever found yourself staring off into space, thinking of nothing?

KARL

Talking out loud, then realizing you are talking to yourself?

(KARL thinks he has been imagining things. Looks for the chair.)

GUSTAV

(Voice Over)

Yes! Do you find in certain situations you are able to do things with amazing ease and spontaneity?

KARL

Yes! Yes!

GUSTAV

(Voice Over)

At other times you can't remember if you have done something or have just thought you did something, saw it in a movie?

KARL

We just talked. We were here.

(Voice Over)  
Yes no maybe.

GUSTAV

I'm awake!

KARL

(Voice Over)  
Are you awake?

GUSTAV

Yes, absolutely! I am awake!

KARL

(Voice Over)  
You're young, full of fecundity, hope, I am so happy for you.

GUSTAV

(KARL exits.)

### **Scene 3**

In the Bedroom

---

JOYCE enters with pillows, drops  
then and is enjoying herself watching  
television. The sound of a reality  
television program is heard.  
ARMAND enters. He is stylishly  
dressed and effeminate.

Where's Simone?

ARMAND

Putting make-up on. She doesn't usually use mascara because her lashes  
are straight, they tend to clump.

JOYCE

You're new here, aren't you?

ARMAND

Yes! We were just pouring Evian in the kitchen.

JOYCE

Are you having fun?

ARMAND

JOYCE

I love the medicine cabinet, it has everything!

ARMAND

Uh... hahaha! You're kooky.

JOYCE

Really?

ARMAND

What are you watching?

JOYCE

She was comparing her relationship to a "rollercoaster", she's still not sure she found love. But she got me thinking, "Am I strong enough for this? Is this really what I want?" I thought it was what I wanted, it felt right, but I didn't expect it to be so difficult...

ARMAND

You felt like "I kind of had nothing to lose?"

JOYCE

When I met Karl I was blown away, he's so smart, but very complicated, I'm open-minded, excited because it was new, romantic, hormones bubbling. Relationships are so much pressure, I'm so emotional I didn't know what to expect, but then after getting to know him...

ARMAND

Reality got in the way.

JOYCE

Yeah. Karl is a great guy, I love him, he's helped me through some very trying times, but now I think we both need different things in our lives. What I want is to feel good, feel like I'm important ... be loved.

ARMAND

You're looking for the right person.

JOYCE

Things change quickly ... They go up and down, back and forth, one minute you feel great the next minute whoa, if you don't know who you are, I'm always looking for something.

ARMAND

I'm sure you'll find what you looking for in here.

JOYCE

Really? It's so exciting meeting so many interesting people. How do you do?

(They shake hands.)

ARMAND

You know honey, in here you meet who you need to meet. Hear what you need to hear. Do what you need to do. Everything is perrrrrrfect.

(SIMONE enters, her hands in front of her.)

SIMONE

Smell! Smell my hands!

ARMAND

Simone, we should to talk.

SIMONE

What do they smell like?

(ARMAND smells her hands then JOYCE does likewise.)

ARMAND

Uh... Bark-like, kinda nice.

JOYCE

Clean...so familiar... oh no ...

SIMONE

Yeah, and ...

JOYCE

What is that?

SIMONE

Heroin!

ARMAND

Honey, is everything okay?

SIMONE

Yeah, yeah, everything is WONDERFUL! Okay, ready?

(SIMONE laughs then she starts posing for photos, ARMAND takes

photos with his fingers.)

JOYCE

Oh no! I need a camera!

(SIMONE takes off her blouse and is wearing a bra and laughing,  
playing out some scene of her own invention.)

OH MY GOD I DON'T BELIEVE THIS!

(JOYCE starts taking photos of SIMONE with her mobile phone)

SIMONE

I'm standing in my little black bra!

(To ARMAND)

Isn't this your wet dream?

ARMAND

Not yet. More.

JOYCE

Normally, if a woman like her is in front of you and she says something like that, you better say "yes".

(JOYCE exits excitedly)

ARMAND

(To exiting JOYCE)

Where are you going?

SIMONE

But I'm not that type of girl!

ARMAND

So, what's going on here?

SIMONE

(Posing)

How's this?

ARMAND

You're such a star.

SIMONE

(Posing)

I know I said I wouldn't pose topless...

ARMAND

You know what happens, all of the sudden all over the web.

SIMONE

I don't care what happens anymore.

(SIMONE poses as ARMAND directs taking "photos" with his fingers.)

ARMAND

Move forward, arch your back, don't blink, smile... be sexy, relax, put you chin up, stand still, incredible, don't blink, move forward, stand still, be sexy, smile... incredible, move forward, arch your back, more back, incredible, one more, put your chin up, that's great, one more, now move back, fantastic, I love that...

(JOYCE enters with t-shirt and hands it to SIMONE)

JOYCE

Here, put this t-shirt on.

SIMONE

Uh... No... I like it though.

JOYCE

Can you please help me with my make-up?

SIMONE

A full make over.

(Giving JOYCE a once over.)

Shit, those clothes!

JOYCE

Can I tell you something?

SIMONE

I am always listening.

JOYCE

I want to be just like you. Be you, glamorous, confident, sexy...

SIMONE

Of course you do.

(SIMONE comes on the JOYCE)

Wanna go down on me?

JOYCE

Ahh, want some Evian? There's some left.

(JOYCE, uncomfortable, moves away.)

SIMONE

I JUST CAN'T WAIT to take you out for some food, party or something, make out...we are birds of a feather!

JOYCE

Two chicks!

SIMONE

I know you can be seduced. I know it! And I'm gonna do it...

(SIMONE spins JOYCE then a bit spaced out, exits. JOYCE spins for a while and when she stops is freaked out, points and stares at ARMAND and has a realization.)

ARMAND

What? ... What?

(ARMAND is freaked out, points and stares at JOYCE as if she just did something. JOYCE has a realization.)

ARMAND

Who are you?!

JOYCE

Oh my god this is going to happen!

ARMAND

Déjà Vue?

JOYCE

Jeja Vue!

ARMAND

What? You're remembering the future?

JOYCE

I'm seeing things past future mixed up ... You're farming in a big wheat field. You're Amish or something, aren't you?



ARMAND

Who are you?

JOYCE

I'm Joyce. In the future we become good friends, Girlfriends!

ARMAND

You are kooky! This is the future or the past?

JOYCE

I don't know, but I feel I can trust you.

ARMAND

... Oh no ... now I'm seeing something!

JOYCE

What? What!

ARMAND

(Having a vision.)

You're going to leave this house and be a better person. A part of you is going to well up, be exposed and die then another part is going to be born. Things are going to get difficult because that is how it gets better. Everything will be all right because you will be rewarded with generosity and love.

JOYCE

Oh my god, Really?

ARMAND

But no dream comes true until you wake up and go to work.

JOYCE

Is that Amish?

ARMAND

We get too soon oldt, und too late schmart.

JOYCE

Thank you, I appreciate what you have done, will do for me.

ARMAND

You've got no time to dopple! Why am I being so Amish?

JOYCE

Nice. I like being on a farm.

ARMAND  
Okay, ruby slippers on Dorothy?

JOYCE  
I'm ready!

ARMAND  
Now click those heels!

(Arm-in-arm they exit as if in the *Wizard of Oz*.)

#### **Scene 4**

In the family room

---

The lights flash and flicker as MARTY enters and sits in a chair and begins screaming. KARL runs in, sees MARTY then stops. MARTY is wearing a girl wearing a dress with a big plastic flower attached to it.

MARTY  
Help!!!! Somebody Save ME! HEEEEELLLLLLP!

KARL  
Hey... Marty, right?

MARTY  
What?

KARL  
How are things?

MARTY  
What?

KARL  
You don't remember me?

MARTY  
Okay, sort of. You're browsing, right?

KARL

Yeah.

MARTY

You just wanted to stop by, connect, say hello?

KARL

Yeah ... I thought you were a boy.

MARTY

That a problem?

KARL

No.

MARTY

What do you really want?

KARL

Nothing.

MARTY

Help yourself.

KARL

To what?

MARTY

Nothing! ... Everybody wants something. Everybody's trying to get whatever they can for themselves. Why are you being nice to me?

KARL

I don't want anything.

MARTY

Sure, okay. You've got a problem.

KARL

Did I say something? What's up, I'm just trying to connect, keep things on the low down.

MARTY

What, now you're trying to be young, hip, cool?

KARL

I was just...

How's it really going? MARTY

I'm lost. This place is so... KARL

So fucked up? MARTY

Have you seen Joyce? KARL

Joyce? MARTY

You met, we talked, you took photos. KARL

When? MARTY

You don't remember, do you? You must still have the photos, Joyce, pretty face, great bod ... KARL

This is boring, talk about me. MARTY

How do you like school? KARL

Closed! MARTY

What? KARL

I got some things you need to see. Come here. MARTY

Like what? KARL

A new, improved, squirting flower. MARTY

(MARTY squirts KARL with the flower she is wearing.)

KARL

Shit! Whydadothat?

MARTY

Lighten up. Taking things way to seriously!

(KARL notices a blood soaked bandage on MARTY arm.)

KARL

What happened? You're bleeding?

MARTY

Fucking life.

(KARL takes MARTY'S arm.)

Ouch, owwie, I'll be all right.

KARL

You're bleeding, you need help.

MARTY

No, don't I'm viral, diseased, contagious. Call 911!

(KARL takes a closer look at the wound.)

KARL

Wait a minute...

MARTY

I'm going to die!

KARL

Fake blood ...

MARTY

The pain is real. Ahhhhh...Ahhhh...ooohhh ahhhh...

(MARTY looks as if in pain, her face contorts then the sound of a fart.)

KARL

Did you just fart?

Super stink bomb! MARTY

Fuck, what did you eat? Damn! KARL

I love my fragrance. Bon Appetite! MARTY

Are you having fun? KARL

I'm immature, doing what's expected. MARTY

Can you help me? I'm looking for ... KARL

A new brain? MARTY

No! KARL

(Laughing hysterically.) MARTY  
Your head is too big, how about regular size?

What's so funny? KARL

(MARTY pulls a shrunk head out and begins talking to it.)

Shrunk head? MARTY

You're way too fucked up for someone so young. KARL

And, ahhhh, what's your point? MARTY

You're really immature, bored. KARL

(MARTY starts to leave.)

Goodbye!

MARTY

A-D-D!

KARL

(MARTY turns offended.)

No, I'm not.

MARTY

What?

KARL

Fucked up.

MARTY

Yes, you are.

KARL

So are you.

MARTY

Hey, I'm trying to be an adult here, okay.

KARL

Adult? You mean that group of people that have totally shit all over the world? That would make me happy, everything will be okay, be adult, make shit, leave shit, live shit, be shit? Holy shit I'm an adult now I can shit shit all the time!

MARTY

(A little replica reality on a table appears with houses and people and bushes. MARTY and KARL stand over it. Only the replica is illuminated.)

Okay, you want me to be like an adult? Come here I want to show you something.

Where did this come from?

KARL

MARTY

I need to understand so I've made my own world, where I hide and hope, where I can assert some control over my destiny. Glimpse purity, even if it is fake. It is my fake. Very adult!

KARL

You made this?

MARTY

See this house, very tall, taller than the house it sits next to. I'm so much better than everybody else in my castle keep. Manicured lawns, see, the leaves are mostly gone; the illegal Mexicans have blown them all away. Señor que me corte el césped voy a hacer un buen trabajo todo el mundo pensará que usted es una persona rica e importante y tendrá que pagar mi mierda y que me sub humanos, pero ¿qué más hay de nuevo? See my sports car, SUV. Oh, look! Here you are!

KARL

This is incredible.

MARTY

Look inside... can you see? Look close.

KARL

Hey, there's a little me and little you in there. We're talking!

MARTY

If you listen they are saying exactly what we're saying.

(Faint echoes of dialog are heard.)

KARL

This is amazing.

MARTY

It's on a cul-de-sac. Its all about diversion, stasis, self-reflexive, hermetic. It doesn't provoke connectivity, not its function.

KARL

It is about isolation, introspection.

MARTY

Really adult. Now, look closely at the tree.



KARL

(Reading)  
"Karl loves Joyce".

MARTY

See, you made your little mark in a little world. Your love connected heaven and earth.

KARL

It did?

(Sound of a doves cooing.)

MARTY

Whoa! Look! There are doves cooing, sitting on the branches.

KARL

You made this world?

MARTY

You did ... do you want to be my friend?

KARL

You're really lonely.

MARTY

Can you be my Godfather? A mentor? Teacher, champion, guardian angel, anything like that?

KARL

What are you talking about?

MARTY

Take responsibility, protect me in case something happens.

KARL

Is something going to happen?

MARTY

Something always happens ... Wait, I have to, I need to take some photos!

(MARTY starts taking photos of KARL.)

KARL

Marty, what's with all the photos?

MARTY

What? I want to know I existed, that things are real, that I met you, Karl. You said you'd be my friend. When I'm really lonely I will look at these photos, remember the good times we had, we'll be smiling, happy, carefree having a good time. Can I call you?

KARL

Marty, you need to get out more.

MARTY

I know. But this is all I know.

KARL

Do you know the way out?

MARTY

There is no way out.

KARL

There is always a way out.

MARTY

Yeah! The Birthday Man knows!

KARL

Who?

MARTY

He's in the basement, knows everything.

KARL

The Birthday Man?

MARTY

It's my birthday, he'll be cool.

(MARTY leaves. KARL follows.)

## **Scene 5**

In the kitchen

---

Two kitchen stools are placed. JOYCE and SIMONE are being tended to by ARMAND who brushes JOYCE'S hair. JOYCE is wearing a pair of ruby

shoes. PIA is in the process of interviewing and video taping JOYCE and SIMONE for a program. ARMAND turns on floodlights.

PIA

(To the Booth)  
Okay, Peter, you ready?  
(To SIMONE and JOYCE)  
Can we try this again?

JOYCE

I'm ready!

SIMONE

I am always ready!

JOYCE

I always wanted to be on television, knew I was meant for more.

PIA

We'll pick up where we left off. Rolling.

(To the audience.)

Hello, greetings, welcome back. Where are you Joyce?

JOYCE

We are now in the kitchen. We just ate all the Chinese food.

PIA

How are you doing, Simone?

SIMONE

You know, last night I was on this very spot, I looked everywhere for alcohol, anything, but I couldn't find any. Now I remember, Armand drank all the beer.

JOYCE

Is that his real name?

SIMONE

His real name is Herman, which he hates. Small town in Ohio, doesn't speak to his family any more. Farmers. Amish maybe.

ARMAND  
No one understands me.

JOYCE  
I'm so sorry.

SIMONE  
We got drunk and passed out.

JOYCE  
Then what happened?

SIMONE  
How would I know?

JOYCE  
I want to know everything.

SIMONE  
Hazy. Its coming back to me .... My friend Coco showed up. She wanted to party, she always wants to party, she's always hungry, she loves pickles but she hates milk, especially low fat, which is all I had to drink because Armand drank all the beer.

ARMAND  
One lie brings the next one with it.

PIA  
Get excited about it. Yeah! Whoo!

JOYCE  
(To ARMAND and PIA.)  
I thought this was my show.  
(To SIMONE)  
You love Coco so much!

SIMONE  
She's fun, carefree, you'll love her.

JOYCE  
I do already.

SIMONE  
She wears tights all the time so she doesn't have to shave.

JOYCE

I bet she looks good in tights.

SIMONE

She crashed on the sofa like fifteen minutes after that. When she woke up she said something about forgetting to take her Zoloft.

PIA

That's exciting. Isn't that awesome?

JOYCE

Unbelievable.

PIA

(To SIMONE)

What else did you talk about?

SIMONE

Stuff.

JOYCE

Like what?

PIA

Any advice, Simone?

SIMONE

Okay ... I am who I am, and what I am, and I will be what I will be. Ok? I am who I am. Not was to be, but I am. Can you imagine that? I am who I am. I am who I am. I will be who I am and what I am. I will be who I am and what I am. In other words, I'm going to do it. I am who I am. I am what I am. I will be who I am. What I am I will be. Not going to be. Not was. I am who I am! I am what I am! And I will be what I will be!

ARMAND

Green eggs and ham!

SIMONE

You are who you are and who you will be who you are. Who do you think you are?

JOYCE

You know, Simone, when I talk to you I feel like I'm going on vacation.

SIMONE

I never take vacations.

JOYCE

Everyone needs a vacation.

SIMONE

Vacations with postcards freak me out! They remind me another part of my life is over.

JOYCE

I'm so sorry...

SIMONE

Depressing!

PIA

Okay, let's talk about something easy.

SIMONE

What about?

JOYCE

Coco makes you feel good.

SIMONE

You know Coco?

(Calling)

COCO! COCO!

(SIMONE suddenly gets up and moves to an exit, JOYCE follows her.)

JOYCE

You have such a cool life.

(SIMONE stops and turns to JOYCE.)

SIMONE

I know. We're becoming great friends, so exciting. What's wrong?

JOYCE

My shoes are too tight.

SIMONE

If your shoes aren't comfortable, you're not drinking enough. Do you like it here?

JOYCE

I love this house, I feel so free here with you all.

SIMONE

It has rooms I've never been in. Never know what is going to happen next.

PIA

Okay, now lets go deeper, something, serious, dramatic.

SIMONE

Okay. Coco and me watched the sun come up and go down.

PIA

Now just relax. Put the key in the lock, unlock the door.

(ARMAND turns off the flood lights and both he and PIA use hand held lights following JOYCE and SIMONE.)

JOYCE

Then something really strange happened.

SIMONE

Oh no! I didn't know that...

JOYCE

You are going to tell me what happened.

SIMONE

Whoa! I don't know if I can do his.

PIA

(To SIMONE)

You must, for your fans.

(To JOYCE)

Isn't this so awesome?

JOYCE

I'm feeling a little weird. Am I supposed to feel this way?

ARMAND

You can't make cider without pressing apples.

SIMONE

This is like a TV episode. Is this a TV episode? One of those housewife reality things with a supernatural theme?

PIA  
Now lets go deeper, deeper, and deeper...

SIMONE  
The dog barked.

JOYCE  
It was the pizza delivery guy.

SIMONE  
NO! Who are you?

JOYCE  
I ordered a bunch of stuff from Pizza Hut when it came I wondered if I should have it since I was on a no carb diet.

SIMONE  
Some night, huh?

ARMAND  
And, on that very night...

JOYCE  
Something horrible happened...

SIMONE  
How do you know?

JOYCE  
Four years ago...

SIMONE  
I can't, I don't know if I can go on!

PIA  
Simone, please.

SIMONE  
I can't.

PIA  
You must.

JOYCE  
On an isolated road. In a dense fog...



SIMONE

It is coming back to me.

JOYCE

I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT THIS!

ARMAND

The gem cannot be polished without friction, nor a person perfected without trials.

JOYCE

It was the worst accident ever.

SIMONE

So much going on. There was this sound...

(Sound of a crash.)

JOYCE

Then everything went silent.

SIMONE

Then the phone rang, I didn't want to answer because I was tired and hungry, I wanted to eat.

JOYCE

How did you get into my head!

SIMONE

The police.

JOYCE

When I arrived they were pulling my father's body from the wreckage...

SIMONE

From a horrible, twisted, bloody burning wreck! It was the worst accident...

JOYCE

Daddy, poor daddy...daddy.

(Sound of trashcans.)

SIMONE

Life is soooo sooooo spooky scary!

PIA

So scary.

JOYCE

He had to sell the farm, he was never the same after that. Please, I don't want to talk about this any more! CAN WE CHANGE THE SUBJECT PLEASE!

(ARMAND turns the floodlights off.)

ARMAND

Let me comb your hair, you're all stroubly!

(ARMAND goes to JOYCE)

SIMONE

I stared in that episode.

JOYCE

I need to move on. Let it go.

PIA

(To JOYCE)

Are you okay? We're still rolling.

JOYCE

Do you ever find when life gets so difficult its like watching television or a movie and it is no longer your life? Like a far away dream.

PIA

This is great, keep it going.

SIMONE

Yes! Yes, I become so involved in fantasies and dreams...

JOYCE

What are your dreams?

SIMONE

I'm rolling down a hill and into a nest of snakes!

JOYCE

No, not that kind of dream.

SIMONE

Can you repeat the question?

JOYCE

I mean a dream you dream about all the time. Something that keeps you going, dreaming about it. Hoping it will come true. Something you live for?

SIMONE

Wow, do you have dreams like that?

JOYCE

All the time.

SIMONE

I'm soooo jealous.

JOYCE

You don't?

PIA

(To JOYCE.)

Fantastic, keep going.

SIMONE

Mine are all about a big house. I get lost in it. People are watching me.

JOYCE

My dream is to live in the city of eternal love where everyone loves everyone, everything is beautiful, soft, fresh ...

SIMONE

That's so Audry Hepburn. What's stopping you?

JOYCE

Karl.

SIMONE

Who's Karl?

JOYCE

You met him.

SIMONE

Oh, the boyfriend.

JOYCE

He's around here, somewhere ...

SIMONE

You're insecure, you don't want to lose him, you think you won't find someone else. You have become comfortable with him, it's easy, even though it is not going anywhere. He's such a nice guy you don't want to hurt his feelings. You don't want to be alone.

JOYCE

I love him.

SIMONE

If he knew how important your dreams are to you, he'd change his mind. Joyce, that's your name, right?

JOYCE

Why can't you remember my name?

SIMONE

Names are not important, that you exist and why is what's important!

(SIMONE begins to cry.)

PIA

(To SIMONE.)

Simone, you're upset.

SIMONE

Pia! I'm trying to keep the dramatic interest going! Please?

ARMAND

Ready?

JOYCE

Huh? What?

(A loud sharp sound. The lights change. JOYCE becomes transfixed.)

PIA

Fuck, what was that?

JOYCE

I know exactly what it was.

ARMAND

Any moment can change your life. You just have to be there.

JOYCE

Armand, I've been waiting for somebody to put it to me like that for so long. Simone, thank you, too.

SIMONE

You're ... welcome?

(JOYCE pauses looking around her. The other women become uncomfortable with her stare.)

JOYCE

I really should be going now.

PIA

What just happened?

SIMONE

(To JOYCE.)  
Don't be scared. Are you okay?

JOYCE

Time to follow my dreams!

PIA

Now let's leap forward in time.

JOYCE

Where's the door? SHOW ME THE DOOR!

(JOYCE throws up her hands gesturing this way and that like a conjuring dance.)

SIMONE

Okay...It is over there someplace, down the hall to the left. Right, left, over there! I don't know.

JOYCE

Where?

SIMONE

Over there! THERE! THERE! YOU'RE LEAVING ME TOO!

PIA

(To JOYCE.)

Now everyone, stay calm. Say to yourself, I am the loop that goes 'round and 'round in your head, flowing warmth. Whoever you think you presently are, thank yourself.

JOYCE

What?

SIMONE

Please! Don't leave!

JOYCE

I know, I always have trouble with good-byes.

(JOYCE walks out and SIMONE follows)

SIMONE

Hey, don't leave me. I'm a celebrity. I'm insecure. We'll have fun I'll show you the rest of the house. What do you want? I'll give you something. We'll party with my movie star friends. Uh ... Okay, what's your name, please I forgot.

JOYCE

(Off Stage.)

JOYCE! JOYCE! JOYCE! IT COMES FROM JOY!

SIMONE

Hey, where are you going? Joy? JOY? Wait!

(SIMONE follows JOYCE out as ARMAND shuts down the on stage spot lights.)

PIA

(To Audience)

Now close your eyes and stick out your tongue to the universe, imagine your own peculiar vibration and go deeper, deeper, deeper back several thousand years into the collective human psyche. Free yourself from complexities as you continue to listen to the sound of my voice... Relax.

(BLACKOUT)

## Scene 6

A hallway

---

KARL enters and looks for signs of MARTY.

MARTY

(Off Stage)  
KARL? Where are you?

KARL

(Calling out.)  
I'm right here! MARTY!

MARTY

(In the distance)  
KARL! Are you being a weird nincompoop? Oh, man, I told you to put your thinking cap on?

KARL

I have my thinking cap on!

MARTY

Did you check out the tracks?

KARL

What tracks?

MARTY

The tracks others have left behind.

KARL

(Looking)  
I'll check out the tracks...tracks? What tracks? I don't ...

MARTY

You're looking with your eyes! The tracks are all over the place.

(Foot and handprints are revealed all over the surfaces of the stage.  
KARL sees them and tries to make sense of what he is seeing).

KARL

Okay, I get it... the tracks are going in ... all sorts of directions. Which one, okay ... here ... going both directions, ones coming back ... gone ... went all the way around, halfway back up ... at a certain point they all end. Gone!

Karl?  
MARTY

(Calling out.)  
KARL  
MARTY! Stay where you are, I will find you!

(In the distance)  
MARTY  
I'm waiting for you.

(Calling out.)  
KARL  
I'll be your godfather, I'll protect you, whatever you want. Okay? ... Marty?

(In the distance)  
MARTY  
Thank you, Karl.

(Calling out.)  
KARL  
MARTY! WAIT I'M COMING!

(KARL looks at the tracks, decides to go one way, then turns to go another way and then finally exits another way. The tracks fade.)

## **Scene 7**

In the living room

---

JOYCE runs in from another room  
followed after a moment by SIMONE.

JOYCE  
KARL, KARL!  
(Turns to SIMONE)  
Leave me alone. What have you done with Karl?

SIMONE  
Who?

JOYCE  
And where the FUCK is the exit?

SIMONE  
No need to be angry.



JOYCE

ANGRY IS GOOD. I used to be a calm clean person. KAARLLLLLL!

SIMONE

You are upset ... OHH, I know what it is ... you love this boy, Karl.

JOYCE

I'm having a panic attack right now. Claustrophobic.

SIMONE

You look good.

JOYCE

Why do you keep following me?

SIMONE

I have sedatives.

JOYCE

What do you want from me?

SIMONE

Love me, look at me, be my friend!

JOYCE

You're so sad and lonely.

SIMONE

I thought you wanted to be like me?

JOYCE

This is not the life I want.

SIMONE

I need some action, wanna party?

JOYCE

Don't you have something better to do?

SIMONE

I drink. Want another drink!

(Laughs.)

Are you sick? You look sick...

(JOYCE does not feel well.)

JOYCE

Stress migraine, the ladies room. Where is it? I'm going to puke up all this shit in me.

SIMONE

(Texting on her cell phone)

I'm going to dance with my friends if I can find them. Ladies room? "There ain't been no ladies around here in a long time!" ... I have friends, I'll text them, we'll have fun...

JOYCE

What friends?

SIMONE

I have friends everywhere! Everybody wants to know me.

JOYCE

Imaginary friends?

SIMONE

No. Everyone is watching ...

(SIMONE recognizes variously audience members).

Do you know these people? They know me or they think they do... Look at them everybody is desprate, lonely in their own little way. So we party and have fun when we can!

(SIMONE points)

Hi! Oh, and there and there ... Hi, haven't seen you in a while! How are you? Fine? How's everything? You are looking gorgeous darling.

(SIMONE'S vision vanishes.)

And then poof! Gone. You see who and what when you need to... Ohhh, but look at you, you're upset, all this is way too much for you right now. I'm leaving, maybe I'll see you later. Or maybe I won't see you because you won't see me because you don't need to see me. See what I mean?

JOYCE

Goodbye!

SIMONE

Why aren't you married to him? Is it because of that guy you met at Starbucks, took home for a weekend and screwed? He took all those photos, put them on the web like a porn star but you got pregnant. Stupid! You're no "poor me" no "I'm innocent" goodie two shoes!

JOYCE

(Calling out.)  
How dare you?

SIMONE

I need a little space right now, all this is too much, nice glass of white wine.

(SIMONE exits)

JOYCE

I'm staying! ... I don't know where else to go!

(After a moment COCO enters from the opposite direction. She is the party girl from hell. JOYCE is a little freaked out. )

COCO

Hi everybody!

JOYCE

What are those scratches on your face?

COCO

I don't know. I kind of went crazy. I started scratching all over. They had to hold me down.

JOYCE

Who held you down?

COCO

It's nothing. I'm okay. It was consensual. I was just craving a Caesar Salad, where's the kitchen?

JOYCE

Who are you?

COCO

I'm Coco, I'm a coat check girl. I take everyone's coat and I hang them up. Later, I hand them back. When coats fall off the hanger I put the coats back on the hanger. Sometimes the coats come in at once I think, oh no, did I get the right ticket on the coat? But no worries, I'm able piece it together Whew! It's really mental sometimes, you wouldn't think. Other times I'm bored! I sit there for like five minutes, watch people go to the bathroom. The other day I watch girls go into the boy's bathroom, boys to the girl's bathroom. I wanted tell them that it's the wrong one, but then I thought they might be transsexual, or maybe they were just girlish looking boys or

boyish looking girls. It's all cool. Normally I'm pretty hateful, pissed off, but I'm not hateful when I do coat check, the drugs iron me out. Its like everybody is my people, everything is cool ...

JOYCE

Where's my jacket?

COCO

I checked your jacket. People give me five-dollar tips just for hanging up their things, so they can be free, spontaneous, real. It's an activist humanitarian thing I do.

JOYCE

I don't have any money, can I have my jacket?

(KARL walks in and goes to COCO)

COCO

One time this guy just walked up outta nowhere and French kiss me.

(KARL kisses and fondles her.)

Hey, who the fuck are you?

KARL

The sucker punch kisser...

JOYCE

KARL!!!

COCO

(To KARL.)

I like. Do it again.

(KARL walks out.)

COCO

I like being a coat check girl. When I was a stripper I was always taking it off, I hate shaving my pussy to look like I'm seven years old, now I'm always taking, putting clothes away. You know what would be perfect if right now somebody gave me like, all the Cheeze Doritos I could ever want. That would be fucking amazing.

(KARL enters with GUSTAV. COCO is immediately attracted to KARL. JOYCE is not feeling well.)

Okay...Hi, aren't you ... we're gonna be seeing a lot more of each other.

GUSTAV

(Pointing to JOYCE.)  
By the way, Karl, is that your girl?

KARL

Yeah, that's my girl over there. Joyce!

(KARL waves to JOYCE who is not looking good.)

GUSTAV

She's hot! You do Coco, I'll do Joyce.

KARL

Joyce is my girl.

GUSTAV

(To KARL pointing to COCO)  
Okay, I'll help you, you're rusty, now you speak...

(GUSTAV whispers and KARL responds as if possessed).

KARL

"Hi, I love your haircut. It's very retro. "

COCO

Well, aren't you cute? Thanks for noticing. I cut it myself. I was going for that 1920s look.

KARL

Why did I just say that?

COCO

I cut it a little too short.

GUSTAV

No, it looks great.

KARL

"No, it looks great."

COCO

Hi, I'm Coco.

(COCO takes out her cell phone and takes photos.)  
Click. Click. Click.

(Half whispering.)  
Let's go take pictures in the bathroom.

GUSTAV  
Karl gets the point.

KARL  
Gustav, why the fucking subtitles?

GUSTAV  
Not me, the testicles are swelling up, talking up a storm.

(JOYCE, feel ill, walks over to KARL.)

JOYCE  
Why am I not surprised?

KARL  
With what? What?

JOYCE  
You want to FUCK her!

KARL  
Okay, let's get out of here.

COCO  
(Dancing to attract KARL.)  
I'm so artsy...

JOYCE  
Quit that!

COCO  
I show my naked body as art...

JOYCE  
Karl, this is not my scene.

COCO  
(To KARL.)  
You get me wet.

KARL  
Coco takes my hand.

(COCO does so.)

COCO

You know I am the owner of an exquisite piece of art. Want to know what it's called?

KARL

Sure.

COCO

My pussy! Let's go. I love taking photos when I'm horny.

GUSTAV

She takes out a little bag of powdered drugs. Let's do a "bump" first?

(COCO takes out a little bag.)

COCO

Let's do a "bump" first?

(GUSTAV whispers in KARL'S ear.)

KARL

"Is that how it works? "

JOYCE

That's NOT "how it works!"

COCO

Well... I hope you don't mind.

(GUSTAV whispers in KARL'S ear)

KARL

"I'd love to see your naked body."

COCO

(To JOYCE)

Sorry to destroy your love fantasy...

JOYCE

Fuck off.

COCO

(To KARL grabbing him by the shirt.)

You're not gay right? You better not be gay...

(COCO starts dancing again.)

Uh... KARL

You're just a dick to her. JOYCE

I love dick! COCO

(JOYCE texts on her phone.)

GUSTAV  
What's Coco doing? She looks...wow, she's hot. Now look at Joyce, what is she up to? She's busy doing something.

KARL  
I feel my testicles vibrate ... no it's my phone. It's a text. Coco is taking off her shirt. As I reach for my phone. The text is from Joyce.

(COCO takes her shirt off.)

It reads...

JOYCE  
"I will rip you a new asshole, you piece of shit."

COCO  
Everybody look at me!

JOYCE  
I know, you're being artsy or whatever, but people have feelings.

(GUSTAV and KARL jolts.)

KARL  
"Why don't we get a hotel?"

JOYCE  
Karl, you are being manipulated!

COCO  
That girl is ruining my vibe.

(COCO poses, showing off her body.)



JOYCE

(Playing sick)  
Karl, I'm sick, you have to take care of me!

COCO

I am getting pissed off.

GUSTAV

That Coco is relentless.

JOYCE

Slut.

COCO

Absolutely!  
(Fondling and shaking her breasts.)  
Look... wow... Look at me, ohhhh yeah, my tits are making a political statement...

KARL

I look at Joyce.

JOYCE

I want to go, Karl!

COCO

(To KARL)  
This scene getting familiar?

(SIMONE enters wearing an obvious wig.)

COCO

Wait!

SIMONE

Oh my God! I didn't even know you were still around!

(COCO is laughing.)

COCO

I'm so buzzed I don't care anymore!

SIMONE

I've been looking all over for you!

COCO

Here I am!

SIMONE

Yeah! What I fell in love with are your fantastic cheekbones and the way you stare at my mouth when I talk. Sexy.

(Turns to JOYCE)

Her name is ... Joyce! Right? She's really confused.

COCO

This is not her scene anymore.

JOYCE

Fuck off.

SIMONE

Hey, Do you like my new wig?

COCO

You always look amazing.

SIMONE

I can't believe it! The last time I saw you, you nearly died...

COCO

I sometimes think it was ... today!

SIMONE

We used to be the best of friends.

COCO

Then we drifted apart.

SIMONE

I went on tour, you started hanging out with the wrong crowd.

(To KARL)

When I got to her hospital room she was all hooked up to an I.V. I wanted to do a photo shoot right there in the hospital. I wanted it to be "a scene" to document her survival in its full glory.

JOYCE

I am really sick and fucked up.

SIMONE

Maybe we can be friends again.

COCO  
You always look amazing. Wanna party?

JOYCE  
I'm not a party girl anymore!

(SIMONE and COCO begin to leave, COCO turns to KARL.)

SIMONE  
Can you please photograph us?

KARL  
Sure.

(KARL takes a photo with his cell phone. SIMONE turns to JOYCE who is not doing very well.)

SIMONE  
Just text me! Okay? Don't forget...Honey, you look stunned.

JOYCE  
WHERE'S MY JACKET? I WANT MY JACKET!

KARL  
Your jacket?

COCO  
(To KARL)  
We shouldn't really hang out cause you're fighting with your girlfriend, my presence isn't helping.

JOYCE  
Hey, fucking coat check girl, where the fuck is my jacket?

GUSTAV  
(To Audience)  
Now be honest, is this keeping you on the edge of your seat?

KARL  
Wow, who are all these people?

GUSTAV  
Friends. Go on.

KARL

To be honest, I'm carried by it because ...

GUSTAV

You know that something good has to be coming ...

KARL

Yeah.

JOYCE

I DON'T KNOW WHAT GOOD IS GOING TO HAPPEN! WHO THE FUCK WAS THAT BITCH COCO?

KARL

Joyce...

JOYCE

HOW FUCKING DARE YOU TREAT ME LIKE THIS!

KARL

Me? Like what?

GUSTAV

(To Audience)

I know, I know...There are parts where things get really intense, there are other really slow, mundane parts. We just did a little intense part for Joyce.

(GUSTAV disappears.)

JOYCE

(to KARL)

Where's the fuck my jacket? I don't remember checking it! I liked that jacket. You gave it to me, remember?

(BLACKOUT)

## ACT 2

### Scene 1

An empty room

---

JOYCE

What is this place?

KARL

An empty room ...

JOYCE

No, I mean this place place!

KARL

Okay, we're lost.

JOYCE

How did we get lost?

KARL

Things just happened.

JOYCE

You think it's my fault.

KARL

Okay, everything is my fault!

JOYCE

I just wanted to talk.

KARL

Things are moving too quick for me. I open one door, then I step into a hallway, somebody suddenly appears, oh no! I thought I was doing the right thing, then...

JOYCE

This is not all about you! It thought we were in this together? WE NEED TO TALK!

KARL

Can you not get psycho? RELAX! I need to figure this out.

JOYCE

You just have to have it your way, can't listen to me. Did you hear what I just said? Have ever said?

KARL

We went for a walk! I was being spontaneous, open, alive to the moment. Shit happened. Okay?

JOYCE

Oh, I'm not alive, spontaneous?

KARL

I didn't say that. We have to get out of this place, everything will be good.

JOYCE

No, you couldn't leave it alone, let's go inside the door is open, take a look!

KARL

You didn't have to come with me!

JOYCE

(Scolding him.)

What did you expect me to do, it was raining, WE were taking a walk. WE needed to talk!

KARL

WE are talking now. Can you not scold me?

JOYCE

You always do what you want. Are we a couple? Answer me!

KARL

I'm sorry, I'm sorry, okay? I didn't know it would turn out like this. I apologize, are you all right?

(JOYCE holds out her hands, they are shaking.)

JOYCE

Look at what you've done to me, I'm a nervous wreck! My stomach...

KARL

Maybe it's good all this happened.

JOYCE

What? Are you fuckin' kidding me?

KARL

Everything happens for a reason!

JOYCE

I used to be adventurous, care free, what happened? I tell you what, because I always do things you want to do!

KARL

What are you talking about?

JOYCE

Because I'm not your shadow, I HAVE A LIFE!

KARL

What happened to you?

JOYCE

To me? US!

KARL

TO US! We're not... it's not the same.

JOYCE

Do you remember your haiku when we first met?

KARL

Midnight, fast food place  
The din of conversation  
Watching your mouth move

JOYCE

You acted like a big shot. I had to buy dinner.

KARL

I sadly recall  
How everything changed the day  
I first held your hand

JOYCE

Tell me how you really feel.

KARL

I want to.

JOYCE

Go, I don't care what you say, all I ask is you be honest with me.

KARL

Okay. Are you happy?

(Pause.)

JOYCE

No, at this moment, no. Tell me.

KARL

You got heavy, boring; watch way too much television, Bachelorette, Housewives, Lifetime, all the time. That's honest.

JOYCE

YOU THINK I'M FAT!?

KARL

NO! Heavy, wrong word ... like a weight, metaphysical weight. Burdened...

JOYCE

Do you still love me?

KARL

Of course, I do!

JOYCE

Okay, where is this going? Do you really love me?

(Animal-like sounds of THE MONSTER.)

JOYCE

KARL!

KARL

Shit...What was that?

JOYCE

It's a monster...

KARL

We need to get out of here. Gotta stay calm.

(THE MONSTER enters - it is an amorphous blob of white taffeta and tulle, the same material used in wedding dresses. The MONSTER jumps around a little confused, its sound a cross between sexual pleasure and painful moaning growling).

JOYCE

KARL!!

KARL

What the fuck is that?  
(To the MONSTER.)



DOWN BOY...

JOYCE

It's not a dog! It's a monster!

(THE MONSTER roars.)

KARL

KIMBA KIMBA, UNGAUA KIMBA!

JOYCE

WHO ARE YOU, TARZAN?

KARL

Hey, I'm trying. See that door over there?

JOYCE

Yes...Karl?

KARL

When I count to three I want you to go through that door, keep running, don't look back...

JOYCE

What? NO! I'M NOT LEAVING YOU!

KARL

THIS IS NOT A DISCUSSION.

JOYCE

No, Karl, please, no no...don't you understand how much I love you?

KARL

You changed my life, our love until the end of time.

(They kiss. MONSTER stops and quizzically then proceeds sort of confused.)

Now do this for me. OKAY?...JOYCE?

JOYCE

No, no, KARL!!!

(THE MONSTER moans and groans.)

KARL

(To the MONSTER)  
This is my fight. Okay.

(To JOYCE)  
ONE...TWO...THREE...NOW!

(JOYCE, crying, hesitates moving to the door.)

I NEED YOU TO GO! RUNNNNN!

JOYCE

I LOVE YOU!

(JOYCE exits as THE MONSTER and KARL circle and face off.)

KARL

YOU WANT A PIECE OF ME? COM'ON LETS SEE HOW TOUGH YOU ARE!

(THE MONSTER chases KARL off.)

## **Scene 2**

In the laundry room

---

KARL re-enters from another place,  
confused as to how he got there.  
Sound of a washing machine and/or  
dryer is heard.

KARL

How'd I get here?

(MARTY, as a boy, enters from the other side of the stage with  
theatricality.)

MARTY

How do we get anywhere? Don't worry, Karl. I know you'll find your wife.

KARL

We're not married.

MARTY

Do you have kids?

KARL

You're like a CD skipping.

MARTY

Change the song.

JOYCE

(Off Stage)

Karl? Are you there?

KARL

JOYCE!?

JOYCE

(Off Stage)

KARL!

KARL

I owe you a big apology. There's something I want to say. I've learned something through all this...Joyce?

(Pause as they listen for a response.)

MARTY

Karl, don't be afraid. Love is not a monster. Isn't there something else you want to say?

KARL

(To the room in general.)

It's incredible that you put up with my shit, even a bit. Thank you, Joyce. I thank you for your smile. It makes me weak, day after day, week after week. I saw it a moment ago. How you are so perfect is unreal. I don't know. I can't put my finger on it. All I know is I've been struck by lightening. I've stopped fighting. It's scary. Not really. I love it. And wherever we're going, whether it's sunny, raining, chilly or snowing. Anything can be extraordinary now. Not that I couldn't before, but now it means more. I have someone to turn to. You may not know how to react to it, but you'll learn to. I won't cheapen our love with words. We can do better than words. I look to the day when no words need to be spoken between us. And that something inside us that was sleeping wakes us from this spell.

MARTY

Whoa. I am your incredibly secret admirer.

KARL

Com'on, we gotta find her.

(KARL and MARTY go to exit, MARTY does so, but KARL is met by

GUSTAV who gives him a glass of wine.)

### Scene 3

In a walk-in clothes closet

---

Meanwhile SIMONE and JOYCE enter and are seated on the floor applying eye make-up and drinking from a bottle of Jack Daniels. KARL and GUSTAV are at the other side of the stage drinking wine. ARMAND enters excitedly with a microphone and goes to KARL.

SIMONE

(To JOYCE)  
See? Feel better?

ARMAND

Check check, one, two.

SIMONE

(To ARMAND)  
You're recording this?

ARMAND

(To SIMONE)  
Do you mind?

SIMONE

I'm not going to sing, I'm under contract.

ARMAND

Check. Check.

GUSTAV

So, tell us about your day today.

KARL

(To Microphone)  
I woke up at about eight thirty and I got in my car and said goodbye to Joyce.

SIMONE

How's your recording level?

ARMAND

Good.

GUSTAV

Then what?

KARL

Then I drove to a restaurant near the airport ...

SIMONE

(Sings overlapping with KARL'S following line.)

"I'm leavin' on an airplane, don't know when I'll be back again..."

KARL

...drank some coffee, hung out by myself working on some songs for an album.

ARMAND

What kind of album?

KARL

A mystery. About relationships. About a deep yearning to find balance in an unbalanced world, finding and losing connection.

GUSTAV

(To KARL.)

You seem different. Something has changed.

SIMONE

How do we look Joyce?

JOYCE

We look good.

GUSTAV

(To KARL)

Looks like your girlfriend is moving on ...

KARL

(To JOYCE and SIMONE)

You guys are a couple?

ARMAND

A couple of freaks!

JOYCE

(Suddenly sick)  
Ugh. I need to vomit. I'm gonna vomit...

GUSTAV

Really, are you serious?

JOYCE

Un-hun... I know I know I shouldn't drink...this shit tastes like shit. Why do I drink this shit? What is this shit? Is something in this shit is that why I feel like shit? Because this shit makes me feel like shit, think like shit, oh shit, SHIT!

ARMAND

That's performance art hot...Karl, is she your girlfriend?

KARL

Yeah, she's cool.  
(Laughs.)  
We've been dating for about four years.

GUSTAV

Does she trust you?

(KARL looks at JOYCE who is sick.)

KARL

Uhhh... I think so, used to. I think it's a little tough for her. I go away every weekend with my band. She finds that hard to accept.

JOYCE

Every weekend he fucks other women.

ARMAND

Oooouuuu, What's it like being in a band?

KARL

Um... every show I do is more a less a party atmosphere. She doesn't like girls talking to me at all after shows or anything like that.

JOYCE

I'm right here!

KARL

I know she's not into that but I think she trusts me, maybe... I hope.

JOYCE

ASSHOLE!

ARMAND

Do you guys have an open relationship?

KARL

Most of the girls I meet after shows and stuff, students, they're cute but I'm barely interested. I like my girlfriend alot so...

JOYCE

LIAR!

ARMAND

What does she have that none of the other girls have?

KARL

I just know her. I don't know. Her tight little ass. When I caress her ass I think, yes, there is a god!

ARMAND

I love that story.

JOYCE

IT IS A STORY!

ARMAND

Do you take your shirt off sometimes when you perform?

KARL

Anytime it gets a little hot for me I have no problem taking my shirt off.

(ARMAND admires KARL'S muscles.)

ARMAND

Adonis.

SIMONE

Douche Bag!

KARL

Yeah, I come from a background playing with rock bands and rappers, what not.

JOYCE

"I'm way more rock oriented than DJ oriented."

GUSTAV

(To JOYCE)  
Feeling better?

ARMAND

You play a musical instrument?

KARL

I've played a little guitar in my band, "Sperm Machine"....

GUSTAV

YEAH!

KARL

I was really into that. Now I just play laptop, but I write my own lyrics, I'm really into Ezra Pound, Jimmy Morrison, John Donne, Basho, you know.

(KARL mimes playing his laptop as if in concert.)

ARMAND

I really love your presence.

KARL

Thank you. Yeah, I'm like raw, unmolded, doing my own thing...

(KARL mimes playing his laptop, leaping and jamming, doing a beat box with his mouth and oblivious to others until the end of the scene.)

ARMAND

(To JOYCE)  
So tell me, do you like giving him head?

JOYCE

I'm not feeling very well.

SIMONE

That's okay be yourself.

JOYCE

I'll just be a minute I need to puke, take a shower.

(SIMONE escorts JOYCE out. JOYCE is not feeling well)



SIMONE

(Exiting)

Everything will be all right, Simone will heal you.

(JOYCE and SIMONE exit followed by GUSTAV. ARMAND disappears. KARL remains on stage as the scene shifts.)

ARMAND

Joyce. I want to interview you now.

#### **Scene 4**

In a hallway

---

JOYCE enters and is in a sharp, confining down light. KARL is in the shadows. The walls move.

KARL

Joyce? Is that you?

JOYCE

Yes. I'm here.

KARL

Are you all right?

JOYCE

I just want to find a box somewhere, hide, curl up, cry.

KARL

We need to get out of here.

JOYCE

WE do?

KARL

We'll ...

JOYCE

We'll?

(KARL enters into the light with JOYCE.)

KARL

Fuck, Joyce, yes, we'll, you and me, we will have to find the others before it is too late. Have you seen Gustav?

JOYCE

What others?

KARL

I need to find Marty.

JOYCE

Marty?

KARL

It's happening to us.

JOYCE

What?

KARL

And Gustav. Don't you remember?

JOYCE

What are we talking about?

KARL

Gustav is this well dressed man, old world, he's a Baron, tasting ineffable delights under the attentive gaze of Simone. He is the steady-eyed rally driver hurling this turbo-diesel down some god-forsaken African back-road; and that virile-looking fellow at whom a woman is gazing amorously because he uses toilet water with a wild scent; that is him too. What I'm saying is that he is essentially masculine, because he is my ego ideal.

JOYCE

I don't know who you are anymore.

KARL

Everything is going to be okay.

JOYCE

What's happening?

KARL

It is all about the fine balance of opposites.

JOYCE  
Walls are moving...THE WALLS ARE MOVING!

KARL  
Get a grip.

JOYCE  
Everything is okay for you?

KARL  
Absolutely, I am just drawing images from the inexhaustible stock of the unending history of the present.

JOYCE  
What?

KARL  
Joyce, you're not yourself.

JOYCE  
Who the fuck is anymore!

(SIMONE and GUSTAV enter and the walls stop moving.)

KARL  
Gustav!

SIMONE  
Do you feel at home here?

KARL  
Totally.

JOYCE  
I feel like a foreigner...

GUSTAV  
A stranger?

KARL  
I'm right at home.

(GUSTAV turns to the audience as SIMONE move in slow motion towards JOYCE)

GUSTAV

I feel at home only in the anonymity of the highway, service stations, big stores or hotel chains. For me the oil company logo, Shell, Chevron, you name it, is a reassuring landmark. Then I go to the supermarket shelves and am relieved to see the familiar, reassured everything is sanitary, household food products, multinational brand names, Nestle, Kraft, General Mills, I'm home its real Auntie Em...

(Clicks his heels.)

JOYCE

Simone, please leave me alone. I am in a better place now.

KARL

Has anyone seen Marty?

SIMONE

I had children. I remember now.

JOYCE

What is it with Marty?

KARL

Why is remembering so difficult?

SIMONE

(Showing the cuts on JOYCE'S arms.)

I cut myself, see, to feel more alive...

JOYCE

Leave me alone.

SIMONE

I used to know what I was doing.

JOYCE

My mother was suicidal. She cut herself. Killed herself.

KARL

It's this house. It forgets, remembers, repeats, projects, haunts, that's what it does.

GUSTAV

Do we have thoughts or do thoughts have us? Future, past spin. Some survive, others disappear, reconfigure.

JOYCE

This house has so many questions pretending it has the answers!

SIMONE

(To JOYCE)

I'm remembering.

KARL

Our lives are the answer.

GUSTAV

(To audience)

This is crazy shit, isn't?

JOYCE

Yesterday I was ... was it yesterday?

SIMONE

Yes, I was in the bathroom. I was bleeding all over the bathroom floor standing there at the sink not even knowing the floor was bloody. I wanted an abortion so I willed a miscarriage.

JOYCE

That happened to me!

SIMONE

No!

JOYCE

That's my memory! You fucking stole my memory!

KARL

Joyce? What are you ...

SIMONE

You didn't want it! It is one of the most painful things I have ever endured!

JOYCE

Fuck You! No it's not! That was my baby! That happened to me.

GUSTAV

Dead babies never die.

KARL

Joyce?

JOYCE

Yes ... Karl? Is that you? Are you sure?

KARL

Joyce? Yes!

JOYCE

We have to find a place within that is strong, to stay close to who we are, what is important.

KARL

Joyce, its all my fault, there's ugly in me.

(KARL exits his body moving in a herky-jerky way, as if controlled or possessed. GUSTAV exits. JOYCE goes to a window and looks out of it. SIMONE watches her, singing a soft lullaby.)

## **Scene 5**

In the Attic

---

ARMAND enters dressed as an  
Amish farmer.

ARMAND

Who's here? Stand and unfold yourself.

SIMONE

Isn't she gorgeous?

ARMAND

She's right like, we have most timely met.

SIMONE

She's pregnant with herself.

JOYCE

Armand, is this the attic?

ARMAND

You had no trouble finding here your way?

JOYCE

How did I get here?

ARMAND

A weary, toilsome way it was. Didst meet with questioning ones?

JOYCE

Yes.

ARMAND

Well, are you welcome here.

SIMONE

She's looks so tired.

ARMAND

She wonders me.

SIMONE

There is so much life in you.

JOYCE

I can't stay here.

ARMAND

If you stay here you'll burst in ignorance. Do you want to go?

JOYCE

I do.

(JOYCE goes to a door, turns.)

SIMONE

You're pregnant.

JOYCE

I was, not any more. Where does this go?

SIMONE

To your future, your dreams?

JOYCE

Really?

SIMONE

Or the gate to hell?

JOYCE

Why?

SIMONE

Welcome to the Bermuda Triangle.

JOYCE

I need to leave.

(JOYCE enters into the doorway and vanishes. Voice off stage.)

Can you pleaseessse help me? Where's the light?

ARMAND

A nipping, eager darkness.

SIMONE

Help!? I'm not a huge fan of charities. I never know where the money is going, or where it will end up. I try to be generous with the people whose lives I know I can do something to make better. If I'm at a Starbucks and the barista is particularly pleasant...And a good driver, He will give a generous tip. Think about it. That puts him in a good mood. He takes a lunch break and is nice to the man behind the counter. The man behind the counter goes home and is nice to his wife. They make love. Nine months later, a baby is born. And the beat goes on...

(JOYCE re-enters the room.)

JOYCE

That's a closet, my dead father and mother are in there.

ARMAND

But, ah, the air bites shrewdly.

SIMONE

So what we're saying is ... is get real, improve your attitude.

JOYCE

How dare you?

SIMONE

What is your attitude towards life?

JOYCE

Good. Healthy.

SIMONE

Really?



JOYCE

Yes! Am I being accused of lying?

SIMONE

Yes.

JOYCE

I do not think I have lied.

ARMAND

Such as the tree is, such is the fruit.

SIMONE

Have you ever looked in a mirror and not recognize yourself? Why do you have no memory of some important events in you life?

JOYCE

I wanted to forget!

ARMAND

When stars together sang, while space with music rang, and worlds from chaos sprang, this earth, then steaming, in the primeval storm, took shape in spheric form, then slowly grew less warm, with rains down streaming, talking to you, cleansing you.

SIMONE

How about feeling that your body does not seem to belong to you?

JOYCE

Like it belongs to somebody else?

SIMONE

Yeah.

JOYCE

Sometimes I think other people, objects, the world around me are not real. That I'm being controlled by something, I don't know what.

SIMONE

Of course, to get ahead, you can't waste time thinking about such things.

JOYCE

Why is everything so complicated?

SIMONE

Remember when you were young, you felt like you were full of possibility. You rode your new bike, looked at your lonely goldfish in the little round bowl. You had all the time in the world.

JOYCE

I fell off my bike and got back on. I need to leave. Where's Karl?

SIMONE

You two love each other, I can tell.

JOYCE

Yes, I do love him.

SIMONE

There's nothing more beautiful than ...

JOYCE

WHAT?

SIMONE

... than watching your relationships fall apart. It hurts so good.

JOYCE

This isn't fair.

SIMONE

Killing each other should not be part of a love story.

JOYCE

Why me?

ARMAND

Tis not for you to pry into the reason why, now must you straightway hie.

SIMONE

Just a cute little chick.

JOYCE

I am not a bird trapped in a house fluttering against the windows yearning for freedom.

SIMONE

Time to wash your face and get ready to go!

ARMAND  
Farewell, my friend, our meeting's at an end.

JOYCE  
What's in that direction?

SIMONE  
Your shadow.

(A shadow looms large.)

JOYCE  
Okay!

(JOYCE turns decisively and exits towards her shadow.)

ARMAND  
Hillo, ho, ho, good friend.

(BLACKOUT)

## **Scene 6**

The basement

---

THE BIRTHDAY MAN is found on stage. After a moment, KARL, led by MARTY enters. THE BIRTHDAY MAN moves in a ritual-like way.

THE BIRTHDAY MAN  
Do you have a pass?

KARL  
Who are you?

THE BIRTHDAY MAN  
Sorry, need a pass

MARTY  
Wow ... The Birthday Man.

KARL  
You're the Birthday Man?

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

How much is your life worth?

KARL

My life?

MARTY

The Birthday Man.

THE BRITHDAY MAN

Can I buy it? How much?

KARL

I wouldn't sell my life for anything.

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

Not for a hundred, million, billion, trillion dollars?

MARTY

The fffuuuckinnng BIRTHDAY MAAAAAN!

KARL

You're crazy.

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

(Smelling KARL)

Something smells dead.

MARTY

(To KARL)

You're an idiot.

KARL

I know you are, but what am I?

MARTY

I know you are, but what am I?

KARL

I know you are, but what am I?

MARTY

I know you are, but what am I?

KARL

I know you are, but what am I?

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

You know what I'd do if I were you?

KARL

What?

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

Retrace my steps. Retrace my steps. Retrace my steps. Retrace my steps...

KARL

That's it?

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

Are there any questions?

KARL

Yeah, where is Joyce?

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

I just imparted a simple, profound truth ...

KARL

Yeah? And I thought Joyce would be in the basement, near the foundation.

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

The earth is unstable, foundations shifting. That's the world, life. That's love. That's okay.

MARTY

The basement is sooo cool.

KARL

Where is Joyce?

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

Can't answer that one.

KARL

I'm leaving, now. Com'on kid.

(KARL and MARTY turn to leave)

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

OHHH, now you're leaving?

(MARTY exits, KARL returns.)

KARL

We just took a walk, Joyce and me. We were bored, blah. I wanted to tell Joyce how much I loved her, how fucked up I've been how fucked up I'm feeling the world but still feeling so much for her.

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

Never been down this street before.

KARL

We're lost, but Joyce she's the only thing that gives me sense to proximity to the world, I want her to know that.

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

You were walking, on a journey together into the deep night, everything was quiet, everything was perfect, the moon high, bright in the sky, you could hear your footfalls echoing on the pavement, your skin glowed with life. The faint flickering stars watched you, a man and a woman, once again walking on the earth. Then, a light sprinkle of rain, a breeze, a chill, a door opened.

KARL

I want my life back!

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

No going back.

KARL

At least help us get out of here.

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

You'll need to make some decisions.

KARL

Which way?

(THE BIRTHDAY MAN points in one direction then another, then another.)

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

That's the best I can do.

MARTY

Come on, we'll figure it out.

(MARTY begins to leave in one direction then an ominous sound.)

KARL

Shit.

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

Can I be honest?

KARL

I don't know.

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

People like you are lost in here, in this house, upstairs, every day, week, month, year, time, space, all of it, a concept.

KARL

Shit like this happens all the time?

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

You don't see, do you?

KARL

See what?

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

The others, we're surrounded, they are all over, souls are like fireballs, feel their heat? Some are real, others want to be real, all watching, wondering...

KARL

Watching?

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

Some are alive, others already ghosts of who they were. Others dead with no hope. Some waiting, like babies to be born. They're all here. Everybody's here!

KARL

This is ongoing, never ending?

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

Not my fault.

KARL

You don't even try to help.

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

I can only do so much. The rest ... up to you.

MARTY

(Off Stage)

Karl.

KARL

My life means everything to me.

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

Do something.

KARL

What?

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

Yesh ... When did you last see your life?

KARL

My life?

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

You heard me!

MARTY

(Off Stage)

You should try to answer him!

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

You parked your life like a car, lights on motor idling, and...

KARL

... when I came back it was gone.

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

Can you think of anyone who'd want to take it?

KARL

Everyone wanted my life.

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

Com'on, really?

KARL

It was a good life.



THE BIRTHDAY MAN

You think you're so special.

KARL

Tell me, where my life is!

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

Oh, or what, you will lose patience with me?

KARL

I want it back!

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

The apocalypse lives in all of us.

KARL

(Yelling.)

HELP!!!!

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

(Holding his ears.)

Owwwie, ohhh, my ears hurt! ... Do you think anyone can hear you?  
Anyone cares?

(JOYCE enters, then SIMONE enters from elsewhere.)

JOYCE

KARL! Are you all right?

KARL

(To JOYCE.)

You heard me?

(JOYCE and KARL embrace.)

JOYCE

I've been looking all over for you.

KARL

I found you.

SIMONE

What is going on here?

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

We're just talking.

JOYCE

(To THE BIRTHDAY MAN.)  
Who are you?

KARL

He stole it!

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

I swear it wasn't me!

MARTY

Feel your balls, dwarf!

JOYCE

(To THE BIRTHDAY MAN and MARTY.)  
Leave him alone.

KARL

He stole my life!

JOYCE

What?

SIMONE

Yeah, okay.

JOYCE

(To KARL.)  
Have you lost your mind?!

KARL

(To THE BIRTHDAY MAN)  
You're a thief!

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

I swear, I didn't do it.

JOYCE

Karl, calm down. Everything is going to be all right.

SIMONE

(To KARL.)  
Do you have any proof?

KARL

No ... Not exactly.

MARTY

People lose their lives all the time. They have to blame someone.

SIMONE

(Pointing to KARL.)

Just look at him. Bathetic.

JOYCE

(To KARL)

Why would he steal your life?

SIMONE

Over the top emotional!

MARTY

Grow up, Karl.

ARMAND

Time to be a man.

KARL

I ... I guess I was wrong.

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

We don't have to involve the authorities, do we?

KARL

It was a mistake.

JOYCE

I think that you owe the Birthday Man an apology.

KARL

I'm sorry. I don't blame you.

(KARL is about to shake hands but suddenly THE BIRTHDAY MAN spreads his arms/wings, demonstrating to KARL to do the same. The atmosphere changes as the two "fly" around the space with the other watching.)

Well, good-bye. Thank you.

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

Good! We can finally move on to new business.

KARL

It's simple, isn't it?

THE BIRTHDAY MAN

Who ever returns your life is obviously the one who took it. Where you left is where you'll find it.

ARMAND

Bravo!! Bravo!!!

ALL

(Singing.)

Happy Birthday to you! Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday dear Kaaaaarl, Happy Birthday toooooooooo youuuuuuu!

(THE BIRTHDAY MAN and MARTY pull back the curtain to reveal a door to the outside.)

## Scene 7

Outside. Dawn.

---

KARL and JOYCE walking, look a little spaced out. The sound of a swan is heard. KARL is holding his arms as if cold. JOYCE opens her body to the morning chill. They are not wearing jackets.

KARL

Look, a swan! A swan!

JOYCE

Beautiful.

KARL

A little chilly.

JOYCE

No, so fresh, alive.

Yeah...

KARL

Accept, don't expect.

JOYCE

(They watch the birds for a moment then JOYCE begins walking in another direction.)

Hey, we live that way.

KARL

Karl ... I'm going to follow that swan.

JOYCE

Where's it going?

KARL

It doesn't matter.  
(Pause.)  
You going to be all right?

JOYCE

(KARL nods with understanding.)

Watching those brown eyes  
Myself reflected in them  
They no longer care

KARL

Sorry.

JOYCE

You were right.

KARL

I'm making my dreams come true.

JOYCE

So, you're leaving!

KARL

You don't think that's a good idea.

JOYCE

KARL  
Not my decision.

JOYCE  
What's wrong?

KARL  
Nothing, good luck. I just know you're going to find the life you want.

JOYCE  
Come with me.

KARL  
Nah ... It's your life.

(An Owl hoots and they watch it fly in the opposite direction from the swan.)

I'm going to follow that owl.

JOYCE  
We have our lives back.

KARL  
I'm sad.

JOYCE  
So am I.

(KARL begins to leave, going in the other direction.)

JOYCE  
Wait. Don't go yet. There's something...

KARL  
I need to go, too ...What?

JOYCE  
It's about what happened.

KARL  
Yeah. WOW! Yeah, what happened in there?

JOYCE  
I owe you a big apology.

KARL

No, no you don't, I owe you, I didn't mean what I said or did, Joyce. Honest.

JOYCE

I know you didn't. I didn't mean, sorry...

(Pause.)

KARL

No sorrys. If it wasn't for us happening, we wouldn't be here now, right?

JOYCE

We were beautiful together.

KARL

Forever and forever.

JOYCE

Forever a memory, part of the world's ether.

KARL

We made our contribution. Thank you m'lady.

(KARL bows, JOYCE curtsies)

JOYCE

Everything is perfect ... One more? Please?

KARL

Really?

(JOYCE nods)

KARL

Okay.

(Pause as KARL thinks.)

The moment two bubbles  
Are united, they both vanish.  
A lotus blooms.

JOYCE

...Thank you, that was beautiful.

(BLACKOUT)

**Fin**

