

# EVERYBODY

by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins

FINALIST FOR THE 2018 PULITZER PRIZE

9 actors (doubling, flexible casting)

This modern riff on the fifteenth-century morality play *Everyman* follows *Everybody* (chosen from amongst the cast by lottery at each performance) as they journey through life's greatest mystery—the meaning of living.

*"This is theatre rather unlike anything you might have seen... unusual, unconventional and eye-opening... Everyman is no barrel of laughs, being a morality play about death. EVERYBODY tells the same tale, with equal emotional heft; but it is not only provocative and involving, it is also funny. Wildly funny, in fact."* —The Huffington Post

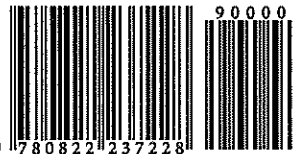
*"...[a] very meta and saucy adaptation..."* —Time Out New York

*"[EVERYBODY] fills the heart in a new and unexpected way."* —The New Yorker

Also by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins  
APPROPRIATE  
GLORIA  
AN OCTOROON  
and others

DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC.

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# EVERYBODY

BY  
**BRANDEN  
JACOBS-JENKINS**



DRAMATISTS  
PLAY SERVICE  
INC.

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

This play is written for a company of nine performers of varying generations and gender and ethnic identities. The exact breakdown of roles should vary from performance to performance via lottery or some other element of chance.

*In order of appearance:*

USHER/GOD/UNDERSTANDING

played by an actual usher—or at least it should initially seem so

DEATH

played by the oldest actor in the company

SOMEBODIES

played by five actors until they become something else

EVERYBODY

played by a Somebody  
*as determined by chance*

FRIENDSHIP/ STRENGTH/KINSHIP/  
BEAUTY/COUSIN/MIND/STUFF/SENSES

played by remaining Somebodies  
*as determined by chance*

GIRL/TIME

played by a young child stolen from the audience—or at least it should initially seem so

LOVE

played by an audience member—or at least it should initially seem so

A, B, C, & D

voiced by Somebodies not playing Everybody  
*(possibly pre-recorded)*

*For James Houghton, 1948–2016.*

# EVERYBODY

I. HERE BEGINNETH A TREATISE ON HOW  
SOMEONE OR SOMETHING—GOD?—SENDETH  
DEATH TO SUMMON EVERY CREATURE TO COME  
AND ACCOUNT FOR THEIR LIVES IN THE WORLD,  
PRESENTED IN THE MANNER OF A MORALITY PLAY

*An Usher enters and doesn't immediately worry about being heard.*

USHER. If you can hear me, clap once.

*Claps.*

If you can hear me, clap twice.

*Claps.*

If you can hear me, clap three times.

*Claps, repeats ritual as needed.*

Hi. Thanks. Thank you all for coming. If we can all focus for a second, I want to go over a few things before the show starts. First, please turn off your cell phones. I'll wait until it is clear to me that all cell phones are off...

*Beat.*

And don't be embarrassed if you forgot. It happens. And we've accounted for this exact moment in our runtime, so you're not inconveniencing anyone... We just don't want you to be one of those people whose phone accidentally goes off in the middle of the show and then everyone kind of whips around on you and turns on you and you're suddenly feeling pulled out of the group experience and that's not great. And we all know that there's almost One in Every Show... Especially here, so...

*Beat.*

Also, interesting fact: If your phone is on “Do Not Disturb” or “moon mode,” it is actually *not off*. In fact, it’s not even on “silent,” because if someone were to call you twice within a short period of time, your phone would think there was some emergency and sort of override the “Do Not Disturb” function and actually...well, disturb. This is one of many features that make our “smartphones” so smart, but it is also why a lot of phones still go off in theatres almost half a century since they were first invented and started committing violence against the Dramatic Illusion... Just an interesting fact.

*Beat.*

Thanks. Now, take a minute to check in with yourself. Are you okay? Is there an itch in your throat? Are you battling some sort of chest cold and feel a cough coming? Did you skip dessert and now you’re craving something sweet? Or perhaps your tongue just tastes a little weird? If you answered “yes” to any of these questions and are now *even remotely* entertaining the notion of a cough drop, hard candy, or *bonbon*, now’s your time to deal with that. I’ll wait until it’s clear to me that all candies and cough drops are unwrapped and/or consumed...

*Beat.*

Okay. Now: Are you feeling fidgety? And is there some sort of noisy paper or plastic wrapper situation in your hand? Some sort of purse or coat filled with a lot of loose change? Put it down. We’ve got our own sound design, but we appreciate your participatory spirit. I’ll wait a moment just to make sure that’s all happening...

*Beat.*

And my apologies to anyone I may have just offended with some sort of medical condition.

*Beat.*

Okay, great. So this is *Everybody*, which is a play. It runs approximately ninety minutes with no intermission—we hope!

*Laughs at own joke, then:*

Let’s see, um... It’s based on another play from the fifteenth century called *Everyman*, which is one of the earliest recorded plays in the English language. Now, for a while, we—or, you know, scholars—thought that this play was sort of collectively authored by a bunch

of monks who loved to put on plays for each other in Old Timey England, but we now know it was, in all likelihood, itself an adaptation of a slightly different, Dutch play called *Elckerlijc*—or *Den Speyghel der Salicheyt van Elckerlijc*—and about whose author we know nothing except that his name was Peter. And it also seems like this Dutch play—*Den Speyghel der Salicheyt van Elckerlijc*—was itself based on a Buddhist fable—and who even knows where the Buddhists were getting their fables from, so!

*Laughs again.*

But, um, it’s safe to say we’re dealing with some fairly *old* and *ancient* material, so maybe let’s trust it to be really wise and meaningful, okay? And be a little forgiving of some of its...storytelling quirks? Like for instance: Some people in this play are not going to play people.

*Beat as that sinks in, then:*

Now, the original play, *Everyman*, purported to be about Life and its transience, which is to say it was really, I guess, about Death. It was also—(*Air quotes.*) “in manner” of a “morality play,” which means that there was a moral to it. Originally, this message was sort of like, “Hey, everybody. Don’t be so crazy in life. Like, you may think all that ‘craziness’ is great initially because it’s really fun but, when you die, you may sort of regret all that fun, because—though we honestly don’t know what happens when you die—we have this *hunch* that you could wind up someplace which is objectively worse than this one—and let’s call that ‘Hell,’ this state of eternal, unfathomable suffering. And this craziness—let’s call it ‘sin’—this ‘sin,’ or at least too much of it, is our idea of how you wind up there. We think. But if you come hang out with us and be Catholic and let us sort of be your managers with regards to all things having to do with existence, we’re pretty sure that, together, we can help you figure out how to not wind up in this place we have such a hunch about.”

*Beat.*

Or, if that weirds you out, there’s also the Buddhist-ness at the heart of the material, which is just saying, like, “Hey, everybody, you know flowers? Like how they bloom in the spring and they’re so pretty when you’re looking at them and smelling them or whatever

but, by winter, they're dead and gone and you literally cannot recall anything specific about the specific flowers you just spent your whole spring smelling and looking at except for this vague memory of having smelled and look at some flowers once, in general, *maybe?*" Okay, this metaphor is a little unwieldy. . . To be honest, I don't really understand Buddhism, but from what I gather, it's about being like, "Everything about you—your existence, your experience, your memory, everything—is like a bunch of flowers. And, like flowers, when you die, all those things that made you You are broken down into the raw material that is used to make new bunches of flowers, so You, as you 'experience' 'yourself' in 'reality,' AKA this unique bunch of flowers, are never coming back. So think about that and what you want to do with the rest of your life, vis-à-vis that." Or something. Again: not Buddhist. And talking about Death, as we all know, is difficult.

*Beat.*

Anyhoo, this is all just to say that this specific play you're at right now is not that play or either of those plays exactly, though it does have similar ambitions. But we'll see.

*Beat.*

The fire exits are here and here. And, now, without further ado: "God."

*Usher leads an applause before Usher begins to shake and seize, as if triggered by the clapping. Eventually, Usher's eyes roll into the back of Usher's head and—*

## II. THE SUMMONING

*"God," who is unseen, speaks through the Usher. "God's" voice is non-human.*

"GOD". THIS IS "GOD".

*There is laughter in the audience.*

WHAT IS THAT LAUGHTER AND TO WHOM DOES IT BELONG?  
IS THAT MY OWN CREATION WHICH BELITTLES ME?

I WOULD HOPE NOT.  
I WOULD HOPE THAT IT WAS MERELY MY IMAGINATION,  
INFINITE AS IT IS,  
PLAYING ONE OF ITS INFINITE TRICKS ON ME.  
BECAUSE, OTHERWISE, THAT WOULD BE INFURIATING!  
THAT WOULD BE THE EXACT SORT OF MOCKERY  
WHICH HAS MOVED ME TO SPEAK IN THE FIRST PLACE!

*If there is still laughing:*

WHY ARE YOU STILL LAUGHING?!

*Beat.*

HOW MUCH LONGER MUST I SIT BY  
AND WITNESS ALL MY CREATURES  
IN THEIR HEARTS  
GROW MORE AND MORE UNKIND TO ME?  
FOR WHY SHOULD LAUGHTER COME WHEN I REVEAL  
MYSELF?  
BECAUSE OF THE VESSEL I HAVE CHOSEN?  
BECAUSE I HAVE NO EYES?  
WHAT NEED WOULD I HAVE FOR THESE PUNY ORGANS?  
TO APPREHEND THIS MINOR PLANE OF MATTER  
AND ILLUSION  
THAT I'VE LET YOU INHABIT?  
I, WHO HAVE USHERED EVERY DETAIL OF THIS WORLD  
INTO BEING—  
AND MOVE IT FORWARD WITH MY VERY BREATH,  
WHICH IS TIME?  
I, THE ALL-SEEING,  
I, THE ALL-FEELING?  
THE OMNISCIENT,  
THE OMNIPOTENT,  
THE OMNIPRESENT?  
I NEED NO EYES!  
I POSSESS THE VANTAGE OF DIVINITY  
AND FROM IT I SEE IT IS YOU, LAFFER—  
IF YOU INDEED EXIST—  
WHO ARE UNSEEING—  
PUTTING SUCH ESTEEM IN YOUR EARTHLY VISION,

LIVING IN SUCH ARROGANCE AND PRIDE,  
SUCH SMUG SELF-SATISFACTION,  
SO PLEASED WITH YOURSELF  
AND SO VERY DEFORMED FROM MY...  
DREAMS  
FOR YOU.  
INSTEAD OF LAUGHTER,  
HOW ABOUT A THANK YOU  
FOR THE GIFT OF LAUGHTER?  
OR THE GIFT OF PLEASURE ITSELF?  
OR OF BEING ITSELF—  
AN EXPERIENCE TO YOU WHICH I HAVE MERELY LOANED!

*Beat.*

BUT PERHAPS I AM SPEAKING TO NO ONE  
AND ONLY TO MYSELF.  
I AM BUT PERFECTION IN PURSUIT OF PERFECTION  
AND THIS WORLD WAS ONLY A WHIM  
—ONE EXPERIMENT OF MANY—  
TAKEN UP TO SIMPLY SEE WHAT COULD BE.  
HERE, THOUGH, IT SEEMS  
A CERTAIN LOVE DID DEVELOP FROM MY LABORS,  
WHICH WAS A SURPRISE.  
I HAVE LOVED THE THING I HAVE MADE—  
I CONTINUE TO LOVE IT—  
BUT PERHAPS THIS EXCESS OF LOVE HAS LED TO  
A BLINDNESS,  
BECAUSE THE THING I CHOSE TO BE OF GREATEST ASSISTANCE  
HAS REVEALED ITSELF TO BE, PERHAPS,  
THE GREATEST CURSE.  
EVERYBODY WAS SUPPOSED TO MAKE  
A DWELLING-PLACE OF MY MAGNIFICENCE HERE,  
ASSISTING ME IN MY GREAT WORK,  
BUT I SEE THAT, LEAVING THEM ALONE IN THEIR LIVES  
AND WICKEDNESS,  
THEY BECOME WORSE THAN BEASTS—  
THAN WEEDS!—  
DEVOURING UP THIS WORLD I HAVE FASHIONED AS EVEN

NOW,  
THROUGH ENVY AND OTHERWISE,  
THEY DEVOUR UP EACH OTHER!

*Beat.*

HOW CAN IT BE  
THAT OF ALL MY PRODUCTIONS,  
IT IS YOU WHO HAVE DETERIORATED SO SEVERELY  
AND INTO SUCH DISAPPOINTMENT?  
AND DON'T YOU HEAR THE REMAINDER OF MY CREATION,  
THE WONDER THAT IS EVERYTHING,  
CRYING OUT FOR JUSTICE AGAINST YOU?  
MY LOVE MUST BE FAIR AND ALL-ENCOMPASSING!  
THIS IS ALL VERY TAXING.  
I REQUIRE DATA.  
I MUST HAVE A RECKONING OF EVERYBODY'S PERSON  
SO THAT I MAY ACCOUNT,  
IF ANY,  
FOR MY PERFECTION'S MOST PERFECT ERROR!  
(*Calling out.*) DEATH?! DEATH! REVEAL YOURSELF!

*Death emerges from the audience.*

DEATH. Over here.  
"GOD". OH. HELLO.  
DEATH. Hey. How are you?  
"GOD". TO BE HONEST, I'M NOT IN THE BEST MOOD.  
DEATH. Oh no, is there something I can do?  
"GOD". ACTUALLY, YES, THERE IS, DEAR ASSISTANT. DO  
WHAT YOU DO AND GO SEEK OUT EVERYBODY AND BRING  
THEM TO ME ASAP.  
DEATH. Alright—  
"GOD". I NEED THEM TO GIVE ME SOME SENSE OF HOW  
AND WHY THEY HAVE LIVED THE WAY THEY HAVE LIVED  
SO I CAN MAKE THE APPROPRIATE ADJUSTMENTS TO MY  
BELOVED EXPERIMENT EVERYTHING.  
DEATH. Okay, and what kind of form would you like this "sense"  
to take?

"GOD". I DON'T KNOW! CAN'T YOU JUST FIGURE IT OUT?  
YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I HAVE TO DO!

DEATH. Okay...

"GOD". THANK YOU.

DEATH. Feel better.

"GOD". I DON'T NEED YOU TO TELL ME HOW TO FEEL.

*Usher opens Usher's eyes and exits.*

DEATH. (*Anxious.*) "Figure it out." What does it mean when "God" just leaves you to "just figure it out"? Oh, man. I'm not a mind-reader! I'm just Death! It's like sometimes "God" can forget that not everything knows Everything!

*Scans audience.*

Where even is Everybody?

*Finds Somebody, who is asleep.*

Oh, there they are.

*Wakes Somebody up, gently.*

Hey, Everybody...

1<sup>ST</sup> SOMEBODY. (*Waking up.*) Hm hnh wh—?

DEATH. Hey, hi.

1<sup>ST</sup> SOMEBODY. Hi?

DEATH. Nice shirt.

1<sup>ST</sup> SOMEBODY. Oh, uh, thank you? It's / from [WHEREVER THE SHIRT IS FROM].

*Over the following, Death moves from one Somebody to another until all of the Somebodies in the audience are identified. "God" may be referenced with air-quotes.*

DEATH. (*Finds another Somebody.*) Where are you coming from?

2<sup>ND</sup> SOMEBODY. Are you talking to me?

DEATH. Yes.

2<sup>ND</sup> SOMEBODY. [WHEREVER HE/SHE/THEY HAVE JUST COME FROM].

DEATH. Cool, cool...

*Finds another Somebody.*

Hey, do you remember "God"?

*Beat.*

3<sup>RD</sup> SOMEBODY. What's that?

DEATH. Do you remember "God"?

3<sup>RD</sup> SOMEBODY. Do I *remember* "God"?

DEATH. Yes.

3<sup>RD</sup> SOMEBODY. "Do I remember 'God'?" I don't understand. "Do I remember 'God'?" Do you?

DEATH. Uh, yes, actually?

*Finds another Somebody.*

I was just talking to "God" and even though you seem to have forgotten about "God," "God" thinks about you pretty much all the time and now "God" wants you, so I'm here to come grab you.

4<sup>TH</sup> SOMEBODY. Grab me?

DEATH. Yes.

4<sup>TH</sup> SOMEBODY. Well, what does this "God" want with me?

DEATH. Oh, right, thank you!

*Finds the final Somebody.*

"God" also needs a...report from you.

5<sup>TH</sup> SOMEBODY. What kind of report?

DEATH. Just, like, some general sense of your time here and how you spent it, how you lived your life so wrong and why—You know: like a presentation.

5<sup>TH</sup> SOMEBODY. What? Why?

DEATH. I think it's for internal purposes, but I'm not sure, because "God" doesn't ever really tell me everything. I'm just sort of like an assistant—

1<sup>ST</sup> SOMEBODY. (*Interrupting.*) Okay, but listen: I don't know this "God" friend of yours and I certainly don't know who you are—

DEATH. Oh, I'm sorry, I thought that was clear: I'm Death.

2<sup>ND</sup> SOMEBODY. Excuse me?

DEATH. I'm Death? Who fears no man?

3<sup>RD</sup> SOMEBODY. No you're not.

DEATH. What? Yes, I am! I'm Death, who fears no man and it is commanded that all be obedient to me!

4<sup>TH</sup> SOMEBODY. Prove it.

DEATH. What do you mean prove it?

5<sup>TH</sup> SOMEBODY. Prove it.

*Death sighs, relenting, and whispers something quite extensive in Somebody's ear. All of the Somebodies seem to hear it and jump up from their seats, frightened. Peeling themselves out of the audience, they begin to respond as a chorus.*

DEATH. See? Now let's go!

SOMEBODIES. Wait—who sent you?!

DEATH. (*Getting annoyed.*) I just told you: "God." "God" sent me.

SOMEBODIES. So "God" is real?!

*Beat.*

DEATH. Now, see: I'm never really sure how to answer that. I mean, doesn't that sort of depend on your definition of "real"? Like I don't know what's "real" to you? What you see? What you feel? And why isn't it ever enough that *I'm* real?

*Beat, then the various Somebodies begin to split up the lines—and lines within lines—amongst themselves.*

SOMEBODIES. Okay, listen—You're not catching me at a great time for this.—Like I said: I have so much going on right now—and so much left I still have to do—I'm so sorry but I—I just can't go with you today—

DEATH. Oh, honey, don't worry about any of that because all you have to do is what I say you have to do because I'm Death and it is commanded that you all be obedient to me and today it is you, Everybody, that I arrest and nobody I spare—

SOMEBODIES. (*Fumble for wallet.*) Arrest? Oh, so you're like a cop? Okay—Well, in that case: Look, I get it. You're just doing your job. Here, let me give you a little something for your trouble—

*Take out money.*

Yes, here we go. Why don't you take this and let's just defer this matter until another day, huh?

DEATH. Don't you think if I accepted bribes, I'd have all the money in the world? Honestly, I'd have the world itself at this point.

*Beat.*

And that is also offensive to cops!

SOMEBODIES. Come on! You just came out of nowhere! With, like, no warning! This is so scary!

DEATH. Don't act like you don't know me, that you haven't seen me—and sought nourishment from me—and profited from me. I am the incoming tide which spares no life—and certainly no man's! So pull it together and let's go—

SOMEBODIES. Well, when do I get to come back?—I need to give some people a heads-up.

DEATH. Never. Once you're there, you can never come back... (*Unsure.*) I think.

*Beat.*

I actually have to ask someone about that. But you should assume the answer is never.

SOMEBODIES. But what about all my friends—my family?!

DEATH. What about them?

SOMEBODIES. Am I ever going to...see them again?

DEATH. Well, I mean, are they here?

SOMEBODIES. No, but—What if they were here? Could they come?—Could I bring someone?

DEATH. (*Sarcastic.*) Sure, if any were brave enough to come with you, but I mean...

SOMEBODIES. Then let me go find someone! Please?!—To come with me? Yes! Death, you seem sweet—gentle, even!—I'd feel so much better if there was someone else with me who also knew the world I was leaving!—And they might also help with this presentation!

DEATH. Uh—

SOMEBODIES. I really want to give "God" what "God" wants—I want to do a good job for "God"—and so do you, right? You seem to work for "God."—"How I've lived my life and why"? I just don't have something like that sitting here and ready to go.—Something



like that takes a lot of preparation.—And this is the first time I'm even hearing about this.—And I haven't kept a consistent diary since I was in high school—Even though people are constantly giving me notebooks as gifts!—And my memory is bad!—If I could bring someone, they could help and also keep me company!—Please!—Please!—Spare me until I find someone to come with me on this journey!—Please! Have a heart!—You see how scared I am!—Please!—You seemed open to it a second ago!—Please!—Have a heart!—Please! / PLEASE! HAVE A HEART!

*Death's voice suddenly changes into something very frightening and non-human.*

DEATH. OKAY THAT IS ENOUGH! I AM NOT GOING TO TELL YOU AGAIN! I AM DEATH, WHO FEARS NO MAN, AND IT IS COMMANDED THAT ALL BE OBEDIENT TO ME AND I WILL NOT HAVE A HEART FOR IT IS HEARTS THAT I STOP WHEN I PLEASE AND NOW YOU'VE GOT ME SCREAMING AND UPSET AND I DO NOT LIKE DOING THINGS LIKE THIS!

*Beat.*

This is already hard enough work without everyone thinking you're some sort of a bitch!

*Beat, exasperated.*

But you know what? Who am I? I've only been doing this since the Beginning of the Beginning! I don't know why in the world you wouldn't think that I have seen and heard and know it all but, sure, go ahead, why don't you go try and "find someone" to come along with you. Maybe they will help with this mysterious account. Who knows? I have to go get into my traveling clothes anyway.

*Death starts to exit.*

SOMEBODIES. Really?

DEATH. Sure.

SOMEBODIES. Oh my God! That's great! That's so nice of you. I can't believe that worked. How long do I have?

DEATH. You have until I come back.

SOMEBODIES. Which is when?

DEATH. Whenever I'm done changing. Which won't be long. So

don't get crazy!

*Usher reenters, interrupting. Usher in a coat, keys in hand, and carries a portable bingo cage or a similar lottery device. Usher is followed by any/all late seating.*

USHER. Hey, I'm sorry. I just have one more announcement to make but wanted to wait until Late Seating because it's sort of important that everyone hear it...

*Allows late seating to happen.*

Okay, great. Hi.

*Lottery starts.*

So, you may or may not already know this from marketing materials but, in this play, it is specified that the actors' roles from this point forward be decided by lottery every night. This is done in an attempt to more closely thematize the randomness of death while also destabilizing your preconceived notions about identity, et cetera, et cetera, blah, blah, blah. Honestly, all it really means is that our incredible ensemble of performers here have memorized the entire script but have just received—or are receiving—one of five roles to play tonight and, in all likelihood, you are about to see a version of the show which has never been performed out of 120 possible variations.

*Lottery should be over.*

Now there's been a lot of back and forth internally over whether or not audience members would "buy" this as real, but I guess the way we see it is that you either do or you don't! That's on you! Anyway, I'm heading out now, because I have some errands to run, but you guys enjoy yourselves, get home safe, and please consider a Season Subscription to [NAME OF THE THEATRE]. Thank you! Please hold your applause; I'm sure I'll be seeing you again. Bye bye!

*Usher exits.*

DEATH. (*Waxing poetic.*) "And now out of thy sight I flee  
so make thee ready shortly  
for here's the day from which they say  
that no one living gets away!"

EVERYBODY. (*Revealing self.*) I'm sorry. I totally missed what you

just said.

DEATH. (*Eyes rolling.*) You're dying, Everybody. Starting now.

*Blackout.*

### III. "AND THAT'S WHEN I WOKE UP..."

*In the dark, there is a conversation.*

EVERYBODY. And that's when I woke up.

C. Huh?

B. When the lights went out on Death?

EVERYBODY. That's right.

A. Wait—are we talking about a dream or are we talking about a play?

EVERYBODY. My dream. But it was also a play.

B. That you were watching?

EVERYBODY. No. That I was more like "in." But, I guess, yes I was also watching it. Somehow.

C. Were other people watching?

EVERYBODY. Like an audience? Yes. I think so.

A. That Usher moment was very confusing. Why did they come back?

*Beat.*

EVERYBODY. Unclear.

D. So do you know what I think it means?

EVERYBODY. Wait, I'm not done yet.

B. What do you mean you're not done yet?

EVERYBODY. There's still more dream.

B. But I thought you said you woke up?

EVERYBODY. I did, but then I fell back asleep and the dream kept going.

B. Then why did you tell us you woke up?!

EVERYBODY. I don't know. I thought the interruption was important. It was a part of the...whole experience. And maybe being

awake affected the rest of the dream and I don't know—Should I stop? I can stop.

D. No, no, keep going—

B. Yeah, keep going.

EVERYBODY. Okay, so, I wake up. And I feel like I feel after I've taken a Bad Nap. You know what I'm talking about? One of those naps where you've slept for too long or too late and you wake up and you feel like...an animal?

C. I hate those.

D. It has something to do with your REM cycles.

EVERYBODY. Really? I always thought it was something I'd ate but, anyway, I wake up and it's the middle of the night. I can see it's completely dark. I don't really know where I am. I can't tell what's real and what's not—to the point where I'm not even sure I'm awake. And I start thinking about the dream I just had and about how people, in ancient times, thought of dreams as *visions*, right? And I'm like, wait, did I just have a *vision*? And then I lay back down and I guess I sort of start drifting back to sleep and I'm just like, / Was that a...

### IV. A CHORUS

*Lights rise slowly on Everybody, who is listening to a single Somebody speak, but it is somehow Everybody's voice coming out of Somebody's mouth: a lip-synch.*

EVERYBODY. (*Voiceover.*) Was that a dream or was that a vision? Were you even asleep? Are you still asleep? Or are you really dying? Is this how Death comes to you? In a dream? Though if Death really is just a matter of taking a trip and giving some sort of presentation at the end, then it might not be that bad. You've definitely imagined worse. Like Nothingness...

*Beat.*

Still this presentation also seem really involved because it's like: Are

you supposed to have this memorized? And you've done a terrible job keeping track of your life. And, in your defense, it's not like anyone told you that you should be paying so much attention to the details of your life! (In fact, you've been conditioned by Society and the Media to think that paying so much attention to the details of your life was a sign of Narcissistic Personality Disorder, which is a mental illness, and you're not mentally ill. You think.) But also how were you even supposed to do this? And starting from when? When you were a newborn? An infant? When you had no access to language or memory as a tool for the recording of experience? That would have been impossible! And no one ever told you the exact point at which your life became a thing you were supposed to be responsible for tracking! So this assignment is sort of like a trap! Like entrapment! Like Life is entrapment! So you know what? No. You are not going to beat yourself up for not having been genetically programmed to magically know how to care about your own life to the point of pure, paralyzing self-obsession—of self-consciousness! You had other things to do! You had to feed and clothe yourself! You had to participate in society! You had to live!... Right?

*Beat.*

Wait—did you *have* to live? Why did you have to live again?

*Beat.*

OH NO DID LIFE NOT HAVE A POINT?

*Beat.*

No, come on. It totally had a point! Right? It had to. Because it wasn't all bad. There were so many great things about life. For example: other people—or certain other people—meeting them, spending time with them. That was always so good. As if Life were really just some sort of...medium through which souls or spirits or whatever could communicate and touch and be with each other? (Though that's assuming the soul exists.) But maybe you're put on the Earth to find the people who uniquely fill your life up with joy and *be* with them—your Soul Mate—or Soul Mates! And then maybe Death is just somehow a continuation of that—like Life is one level of the Soul Mate game and Death is the next. And wait—Didn't Death say you could bring someone, right? You could bring someone along to keep

you company? And maybe they would help with this presentation? Yeah! This is good. This is good! Find someone to come with you!

## V. FRIENDSHIP

*In full light, Somebody becomes—*

FRIENDSHIP. Oh my God! Everybody?

EVERYBODY. Friendship?! Oh my God!

FRIENDSHIP. What is up?!

EVERYBODY. I was just thinking about you!

FRIENDSHIP. I was just thinking about you, too! Oh, man! I miss you! What is going on? You seem a little depressed! Is it still the election? Is it the weather? Is it Global Warming? Is it the impending threat of Nuclear War? Or is it just politics? Is it identity politics? Or is it your job? Is it your career slash lack of a career? Is it that person we both hate? Oh no! It's not that person we both love, is it? Is it your relationship slash lack of a relationship? Is it our relationship? Remember that time we sort of hooked up? That was weird, right? But it's good we got over it, right? Right? We got over it, right? Oh man, Sports? Sports! Hey, have you seen that movie? Did you see the last episode of that other show everyone watches? Did you hear that we are in a Golden Age of Television? But don't you also want to cut back on screens slash caffeine slash alcohol slash gluten slash carbs slash red meat consumption slash media consumption, because, like, aren't you so tired of the media? Aren't you so tired of social media? But I liked all those pictures you put up of that small child slash animal in your family slash social circle. Ugh, one of my parents is being so annoying. How is your one family member that I always ask you about? Hey, remember that inside joke? Ha ha ha ha ha. Yeah. Hey, remember all the other people we know? Do you still talk to them? Did you hear Whatshisface got engaged slash divorced slash remarried slash divorced again? Whatsherface is having a kid slash another kid slash her kid is having a kid? Do you remember that time we all did that thing together that one time?

Do you ever look back on that moment like, “Wow. That was the most important, most formative experience of my life and, at the time, I had literally no idea how much the rest of it was just going to suck in comparison”? I do. I think about that all the time...

*Goes to a dark place, snaps out of it.*

Is that why you're upset? Tell me, because you see seeing you upset makes me upset!

EVERYBODY. Now I'm kind of worried about telling you...

FRIENDSHIP. Hey, hey, hey, Everybody, look at me. How much have we been through together? Haven't we seen each other at our best and our worst? You can tell me anything. Now: Did someone do something to you? Who was it? I will kill them! I'll kill them!

EVERYBODY. Come on—

FRIENDSHIP. I'm serious! I would die for you! You know that!

EVERYBODY. ...Really?

FRIENDSHIP. Yes! I would literally go to hell and back for you!

EVERYBODY. Literally?

FRIENDSHIP. Yes! Hello! That is the-def-i-ni-tion-of-a-B-F-F. Now what is happening?!

EVERYBODY. Okay. Well, I have been summoned—

FRIENDSHIP. Okay.

EVERYBODY. To go on a very long and very difficult-sounding journey—

FRIENDSHIP. Okay.

EVERYBODY. To give a presentation on my life and why I've lived it the way I've lived it—

FRIENDSHIP. Okay and to who?

EVERYBODY. ...To “God.”

FRIENDSHIP. Wait, wait—Who?

EVERYBODY. “God”?

FRIENDSHIP. ...Do you keep saying “God”?

EVERYBODY. Yes.

FRIENDSHIP. Like: “God-God”?

EVERYBODY. Yes. “God-God.”

FRIENDSHIP. Hold up. So are you saying “God” is *real*?

*Beat.*

EVERYBODY. Well, apparently, that depends on *your* definition of “real.” Like what is “real” to you? Like what is “reality”?

*Beat.*

FRIENDSHIP. Okay, I'll think on that later. Keep going.

EVERYBODY. Well, basically, I'm begging you to please come with me and keep me company—

FRIENDSHIP. / Uh—

EVERYBODY. As you literally just said you would as my BFF who would go with me to hell and back—

FRIENDSHIP. Wow, did I really just say all that? Okay. Well, this sounds like a sort of scary trip. And also sort of long. When would we get back?

EVERYBODY. Well, technically, I think we would never come back?

FRIENDSHIP. / Uh—

EVERYBODY. But, actually, I was told that they weren't 100% sure and that they could check for us—!

FRIENDSHIP. Wait—“They”? Who is “they”?

EVERYBODY. Um, Death?

*Beat.*

FRIENDSHIP. Excuse me?

EVERYBODY. Death? Death was just here and told me all this and, uh, is coming right back here shortly to...grab me, slash...us?

FRIENDSHIP. WHAT? OH HELLLL TO THE NOOOO! No, no, no, no, no, no, no! There is no one in my *life* that I would accompany on a trip like that! That is crazy! Not even my parents, who annoy me sometimes, but they are incredible people and I love them!

EVERYBODY. But you promised me “to hell—”

FRIENDSHIP. “And back.” Remember I said: “And back”?

*Beat.*

We've *always* had communication issues.

EVERYBODY. Friendship, please! You're right: This is scary and I'm scared but think of all those hard times we turned into good ones because we had each other! This would be just like that! Please! I'm desperate and I need you now more than I ever have—more than I ever will!

FRIENDSHIP. Everybody, Everybody... I said no. But, do you want to get something to eat or drink before you go? Or get laid? Because I'll keep you company there—though, wait, didn't you say Death is coming back? Actually let me get the hell out of here!

*Friendship starts to exit.*

EVERYBODY. What?! Friendship?! Are you really leaving me like this?

FRIENDSHIP. Yeah. Sorry.

EVERYBODY. But I'll never see you again!

FRIENDSHIP. (*Getting emotional, realizing.*) Oh my God. You're right. Wow. This is...really goodbye. Oh, man, Everybody. This makes me so sad. I'm going to miss you so much! You've been such an incredible friend to me. You changed my life.

*Looks for something.*

I have to give you something.

*Finds it.*

Here. Please, have this.

*Friendship presents Everybody with an ugly trophy.*

EVERYBODY. What is this?

FRIENDSHIP. It's a Lifetime Achievement Award.

*Friendship hands the ugly trophy to Everybody.*

EVERYBODY. For what?

FRIENDSHIP. For achieving your life.

*Beat.*

But also, I guess, for dying before me.

EVERYBODY. What am I supposed to do with this?!

FRIENDSHIP. I don't know. Whatever you want, homey. I've got, like, a million more to get rid of. Now byeeeee! (*To self.*) Ugh. Why does everything bad always happen to me?!

*Friendship exits, seems to run into some people outside.*

(*Offstage.*) You guys, I'm so upset! My friend is dying! But I've made art about it! Please, come look!

*Blackout.*

## VI. "THIS IS A DREAM?"

*In the dark, again, there is conversation.*

D. I'm sorry—This is all still a dream?

EVERYBODY. Yes.

D. Okay. It's just sort of hard for me to follow.

C. Me, too.

A. Yeah, and why are people talking like that?

EVERYBODY. Talking like what?

A. I don't know, like... (*Imitating Friendship.*) "Whatever you want, homey!"

*Beat.*

EVERYBODY. I'm sorry, but did you actually just say that out loud?

A. Say what?

EVERYBODY. What the fuck is wrong with you?

B. / Whoa!

EVERYBODY. That was so offensive! Fuck you!

C. Whoa, whoa, whoa—!

A. What?!

EVERYBODY. Tell me: How are people "supposed to talk" in *my* dream, you fuck!

A. Dude, okay, I think you are taking my words *completely* out of context—

EVERYBODY. What "context"? You're *policing* the way that I dream, you piece of shit?

C. Guys, guys, guys, come on, come on—

B. Yeah, we were having such a nice time—  
EVERYBODY. Am I the only person who heard that? Am I crazy?  
B. I'm sure that is not what they meant.  
A. I honestly don't even understand what just happened.  
D. Sorry sorry. That was sort of my fault. I should have let you finish before I started analyzing everything.  
EVERYBODY. Thank you.  
D. Sorry, sorry. Please keep going.  
EVERYBODY. (*Sighs, then.*) Anyway, so, Friendship abandons me and I'm like, / You idiot—!

## VII. A CHORUS

*Lights rise slowly on Everybody, who is now listening to two Somebodies speak in unison, but it is somehow Everybody's voice coming out of both of their mouths: a double lip-synch.*

EVERYBODY. (*Voiceover.*) You idiot! Do you feel like crap? Good, stupid. How could you be such a sucker? All that time you wasted on Friendship—keeping them company and entertained and distracted with all sorts of bullshit while your own precious life ran out—What were you thinking? Why did you do that? Because Friendship—what? Gave off the impression that you weren't alone in a cold, heartless universe? That life might have meaning? But you are alone, genius. Every human is an isolated thing trapped inside its isolated Self, waiting to die. Ugh! How did this happen? It was Society and the Media wasn't it? Fucking Society and the goddamned Media, conditioning you to fear isolation and solitude, whereas if you had spent more time on self-reflection and contemplating solitude and journaling in those notebooks everyone kept giving you, you wouldn't be feeling so cheated at the end of everything! You wouldn't have fallen into Friendship's dumb trap! Was it all lies? Have all your relationships with other humans really been nothing but mutual delusions? Convenient mirror tricks played to keep up the charade that there might be a reason for your being here but really you're just some sort of blip in the grand scheme of

nothingness, some kind of random phenomenon—a mistake—placed here on Earth by some sadistic force only to be tortured by the very fact of Being itself, which is something you never asked for in the first place?

*Beat.*

No. You're not some sort of isolated phenomenon. The very basis of your Self is just a genetic mishmash of other Selves. You are a part of something. Think of the long line of accidents and miracles and struggles and victories that it took to bring you into life. When you hold all that in your head, doesn't it almost feel like...like...sacred or holy or—that the very fact of your being alive proves a connection between you and the very beginning of everything, to—to "God." And that connection is your family. Wait! Your family may actually help you here! Kinship is way different than friendship! You share the same biological information, so that means they're genetically programmed to be immediately sympathetic, because whatever happens to you is sort of happening to them, too. And some of your family members have known you since before you were even aware of yourself as a Self, so they could also help you with this presentation of how you've lived your life and why—Where is your family? Maybe one of them will come with you! Find your family!

## VIII. FAMILY

*In full light, one Somebody becomes—*

COUSIN. Everybody! What is up, cous'?

EVERYBODY. Cousin?!

*And the other Somebody becomes—*

KINSHIP. Hey, you.

EVERYBODY. Kinship?! Oh my God!

*Everybody embraces Kinship.*

KINSHIP. Uh, oh. What's wrong? Something's wrong. What do you need? Is it money? Is it shelter? Is it something to eat? Something to

drink? A shoulder to cry on? Is it a life lesson? Do you need someone to keep a secret? (*Whispers, re: Cousin.*) Do you want to hear someone else's secret? (*Full-voiced.*) If so, that's what we're here for, but if you're looking for sexual partners, you're going to have to look elsewhere.

COUSIN. Yeah, fam. That would violate the incest taboos central to all human cultures.

EVERYBODY. Thanks you guys. So here's the deal: I have been summoned to go on this journey, from which it seems unlikely I will ever return and, not only that, but, at the end of it, I have to give some sort of presentation on how I've lived my life and why I've lived it that way—which I think means talking about all bad things that I've done but also, I think, the good things I did—if I even did any—but, anyway, I've come to beg you to please please please go with me, not only because it would be so great to have at my side someone—or someones!—I truly, truly love but also because I did such a poor job of keeping track of my life that I can't really remember all the things I've done but you've known me this whole time so you might actually be able to help me fill in some of the gaps!

KINSHIP. Sorry—who is this for?

EVERYBODY. For "God"?

KINSHIP. "God"?

COUSIN. Wait! "God" is real?!

KINSHIP. (*Swats Cousin.*) SEE?! I TOLD YOU!

EVERYBODY. Actually it depends on your definition of "real."

KINSHIP. But "God" must be real if "God" came to you and asked you for this account, right?

EVERYBODY. Well, actually, it was Death that came to me, who I guess is, like, "God's" assistant?

KINSHIP. / Ummmmmm...

COUSIN. (*Loud.*) WHAT?!

*Beat, still loud:*

THAT IS SO SCARY!!

EVERYBODY. I know! I'm so scared! But Death said I could bring someone with me and I went to Friendship first but then Friend-

ship was a total flake and I don't know what I'll do if you abandon me, too, because then that will literally mean that life has been nothing more than a cruel trick and human relationships no more than meaningless illusions, so please say you will come with me! Please! PLEASE—!

COUSIN. (*Comforting Everybody.*) Hey, hey Everybody, hey. Come on. Stop it. Stop it. There is no reason to cry. You have nothing to be afraid of. Remember our family motto?

EVERYBODY. No?

COUSIN. Well, when you do remember it, I'm pretty sure it's really going to help. And, also, a defining feature of this family is our sort of vague inner strength and our modest track record of occasionally overcoming specific kinds of obstacles, so I think you're really selling yourself short. I am 99% sure you have as much bad in you as you have good and vice-a versa, and if you want somebody to come along with you on this journey, I'm absolutely 100% positive that you'll find some family member other than me because I'm not going with you I'm sorry I'm just your cousin.

EVERYBODY. (*To Kinship.*) What about you, Kinship? You'll go with me, won't you? You're more than my cousin! We share more genetic material so we're supposed to be more biologically programmed to watch out and care about each other!

KINSHIP. This is actually sort of complicated, because I totally would if I could but... I'm really sick right now?

EVERYBODY. Sick how? Like terminally? That's perfect!

KINSHIP. No, I, um, hurt my toe earlier and so I can't really travel.

*Limps.*

Ow. See?

EVERYBODY. I can carry you?

KINSHIP. NO YOU CAN'T!

*Beat.*

Because I also have a cough... That's part of...the sickness.

*Coughs and limps around.*

But you know what?!

*Searches around the audience.*

Why don't you take...

*Finds a small girl.*

This little girl! She seems like she might be really helpful and a lot of fun, like she can dance. Kids also know a lot of jokes, which will help lighten the mood. Right, Little Girl? You know how to have a good time! (*Whispers to Everybody.*) Plus she's so young she won't really understand what's going on! (*To Girl.*) Let's see what she says. Hi, Little Girl. My family member here is about to die and needs someone to go with them to the afterlife. Do you wanna die with my family here and accompany them to the afterlife, Little Girl?

*No response.*

No?... No?... No?... You don't?... You do or you don't?... Hello?... Yes? No?... Was that a nod?... No?... Hello? No? Yes?... Do you? Do you not?... Yes? No?... Is that a yes?... No? That's a no?... Or is that a no?... Or is that a yes?... Yes? Or no?... No? You don't?... You do?... Yes?... No?... No?... Yes—

EVERYBODY. (*Frustrated.*) Will you leave that little girl alone and just tell me: Are you going to stay here or are you going to go with me?!

KINSHIP. Oh, you need someone to stay? I can do that for you!

*Embraces Everybody.*

I'm so glad I could help! (*To Girl.*) What's that? You need to go to the bathroom? I'll take you. Gotta help this little girl find the bathroom! Bye now!

*Kinship exits the theatre with the Girl, who panics as she's being dragged out.*

GIRL. (*Fearful, screaming.*) MOM? MOM?! WHAT'S HAPPENING? WHAT IS THIS? MOMMY?! MOMMYYYYYYYYYY!

*Beat.*

EVERYBODY. This is so annoying! My whole life, all I've heard are promises of family love and devotion, but when I need them the most, all that love and devotion turns out to be just stupid sounds and random emoting people related to me have been making to fill up the empty air of living! Why are we such lying, stupid sacks of garbage? Why do artists and writers and politicians and religious

figures who talk and write and preach about all this bullshit get all our praise, when it's clearly all just a vast conspiracy, a bunch of garbage lies we tell each other to cover up the fact that we are a bunch of useless, stupid animals with nothing else to do but—what? See how much damage we can cause to everything and get away with? Make more of ourselves?! Why?! To keep this deception alive? This selfishness? This cruelty? Fuck! I'm so sad! Why the fuck did I have to share the planet with all of you monster assholes? What was the point of it all? Why was I even born? And, when I was born, what was it that made me start breathing? Because it certainly wasn't me! WHAT THE FUCK?!

COUSIN. Everybody, can I just be really honest with you for a second?

EVERYBODY. Okay?

COUSIN. Real talk, cousin to cousin: Don't you think you're being sort of the asshole right now?

EVERYBODY. What?

COUSIN. Don't you think what you're doing is sort of selfish? Like you can't just decide I'm a garbage person based on whether or not I want to die with you. I mean, you just *just* confirmed this whole "God" thing for me but it sounds like everybody's got some sort of presentation they're expected to deliver, so it's like how am I supposed to go with you but also get myself ready, too? You know what I mean? There's only so much time in the world and everyone knows multitasking leads to diminished quality in the overall work and honestly, like, maybe it's not all about you, Everybody? You know what I mean? Maybe the point of life is that everyone has to wrestle with it on their own terms. Actually, you know what? Let me go and get started on figuring out this presentation, because it sounds like a lot of work. Man, I wish somebody had told me earlier—but see? This is why I'm thankful for family. They tell you those things no one else will...at some point...if you're lucky. And I guess I'm lucky. Thanks for the heads-up, Cousin. I wonder if it will help if I think and talk about "God" more? Then my presentation would just be like, "Well, honestly, I spent a lot of my time talking about you, man!" Do you think that's what "God" wants? But then that's like super-weird, because it's like: Then why was I given the option of *not* doing that? Like what if "God" is like: "That's it?! That's all



you did with the greatest gift I have to offer?!" Man. Life is just constantly like... Wow, man. It's like... Woooooooooooooooooooo—

*Cousin exits the theatre and seems to run into some people outside.*

Yo yo yo, do all you guys know about "God"?!

*Blackout.*

## IX. "I'M SORRY I JUST HAVE TO SAY SOMETHING"

*In the dark, again, there is conversation.*

A. I'm sorry, I just have to say something, I'm sorry—

*Beat.*

EVERYBODY. Okay...

A. I just feel like you totally misheard my comments from before and now you're sort of doing this on purpose.

EVERYBODY. Doing what on purpose?

A. What I said clearly was not, like, a "race thing" and now I feel like you're really leaning into some sort of street slang thing in the / telling of this—

EVERYBODY. Okay, this is exactly the problem. Just because you don't want to recognize it as a "race thing" doesn't mean it wasn't one. "Race" is not something you're just allowed to opt in and out of whenever it's convenient for you and, what you said was racially offensive—

A. You don't get to tell me what I said! You don't know what I meant!

EVERYBODY. No, I think you don't know what you meant, clearly—

B. Come on, you guys—

C. We were just talking—

EVERYBODY. No! You literally just like racialized my unconscious! That's crazy! People are allowed to speak however the fuck they want in my dreamspace, okay?

A. Oh my God, no one was "racializing" your—I was making a joke!

EVERYBODY. Oh, really? What was the joke?

A. I just... That's just not how you normally talk, okay? And I was pointing that out!

EVERYBODY. What the fuck would you know about how I "normally talk"? Maybe the way I talk when I'm not around you is "normal" and when you're around I put on an ugly fucking accent so you won't feel so bad about how stupid you sound? Did you ever think about that?

A. Okay, you know what? I'm sorry I even said anything—

EVERYBODY. Me, too—!

B. You guys, you guys, come on stop.

*Beat.*

C. So...what happens next in your dream?

EVERYBODY. I... I lost my place.

D. Your cousin just called you an asshole.

EVERYBODY. Oh, right and left the theatre, yes, okay. So.

*Sighs, collects themselves.*

Okay. So I'm alone again and I'm like, / Your cousin was right—

## X. A CHORUS

*Lights rise slowly on Everybody, who is alone with the ugly trophy, listening to his/her/their own voice. Occasionally, he/she/they lip-synchs with him/her/himself, appearing somewhat nuts.*

EVERYBODY. (*Voiceover.*) Your cousin was right. Of course. Your cousin is always right. Everybody's got to go through this. Not just you. It was selfish to ask someone—anyone!—to die for you. Why are your cousins so right all the time?! Oh, man...

*Beat.*

You have been living your whole life completely wrong. Everything has been a lie! And now it's too late to do anything about that. Death will be back here any moment. This is a disaster! Why do

your last moments on this Earth have to be so miserable? What was the point of it all—of all the good feelings? Of joy, relief, excitement, happiness, belonging? Of feeling anything in the first place? Why make you so acquainted with the world and its treasures and then take it all away? But maybe it's not your place to know why. But then why were you given the ability to wonder why? Ugh!

*Beat, seeing ugly trophy:*

You're going to miss so many things. You're going to miss your apartment slash house. You're going to miss all your favorite things—your favorite places, your favorite nature places, your favorite stores, your favorite restaurants, your favorite foods, your favorite snacks. All your books and your music and your laptop and your tablet and your phone and your various streaming accounts. Your great tchotchke collection slash collections. You're going to miss all your money you worked so hard to earn!

*Beat.*

Wait...you've actually accumulated a lot of amazing stuff over time. Maybe you could bring some of it with you? It might actually be sort of comforting to have it with you on this journey, since all your friends and family are the worst, and when you hold certain things in your hand, don't memories of when and where you found it or who gave it to you come back to you? It's been such a nice way to keep your past with you and—wait!—that means it might also help you with this stupid presentation! Like a visual aid! Where is your stuff? You should find your stuff! Get your stuff! (*Shouting out.*) STUFF?! / STUFF?!

## XI. STUFF

*Stuff is revealed—a walking, talking person-sized version of the ugly trophy.*

EVERYBODY. STUFF?!

STUFF. Hello?

EVERYBODY. Stuff?! Stuff! It's me!

STUFF. Everybody? What is going on? You're screaming.

EVERYBODY. Stuff, I need your help!

STUFF. Of course. I am here to help you with any problem in the world. How much do you need?

EVERYBODY. It's actually not a...problem with *this* world.

STUFF. Tell me more...?

EVERYBODY. Well, basically, I've been summoned to go on this scary journey at the end of which I have to give a presentation on my life to someone or something which I'm pretty sure now is definitely "God" and, anyway, I'm super scared and over the years you have been such a comfort to me and all the pieces of you are basically all the pieces of my life here and, at the very least, due to Capitalism, my labor has been literally translated into the abstract value with which I purchased you, so in some ways you are actually the sum total of how I spent a lot of my time on this planet; so I'm begging you, go with me and keep me company and help me support my presentation—And, also, you know what I just realized? Some of you is so unique and special and one of a kind, maybe "God" might actually appreciate some part of you as a gift or an offering or something? Wouldn't you like to meet "God," who made you, with the help of mostly foreign manual / labor?

STUFF. Okay, stop talking. First of all, Everybody, I am so flattered that you would even think of me for this, but unfortunately, I can't come with you.

EVERYBODY. Why not?

STUFF. Well, you know that I can't move.

EVERYBODY. I would carry you!

STUFF. Yeah, but there's so much of me, piled so high in so many corners and on your shelves and in various closets and storage units and bank accounts, I would just slow you down—

EVERYBODY. That wouldn't necessarily be a bad thing—

STUFF. Yes, it would. I'd be too much of a distraction—

EVERYBODY. No, you wouldn't!

STUFF. Baby. Yes, I would. And it already sort of sounds like obsessing over me and chasing me down and having more of me

might be what's distracted you from focusing on this presentation or whatever in the first place.

EVERYBODY. Yeah, but no one told me I should have been doing that! Stuff, come on, think of all the pleasure we've shared!

STUFF. We have had fun together—

EVERYBODY. One of the great joys of my life has been knowing you were the only part of this world that I could truly call mine—

STUFF. Call yours? Wait a minute. Everybody—did you think...? Please tell me you're joking.

EVERYBODY. About what?

STUFF. Do you think that I belong to you?

EVERYBODY. Well, yes?

STUFF. Oh, man.

*Beat.*

I guess I did it again...

EVERYBODY. Did what?

STUFF. (*Sighs.*) How do I put this? Okay, Everybody. I...I sort of have a problem where, without really being aware of it, I apparently just like...*destroy humans*? Does that make sense? It's like something I'm working through but like, at the end of the day, I guess I'm just so enchanting or comforting or beautiful or there's some sort of Object Relational Thing in your programming that I exploit or something but, at the end of the day, I just...ruin you. I've done it again and again and I'm sorry. Because, honestly, what's going to happen is that, when you're dead, some other helpless Somebody is just going to come along and I'm just going to wind up doing the same cruel thing to them that I've done to you and... It's a horrible cycle. But I guess, on some level, that's just something I like to do to people? I'm so sorry.

EVERYBODY. (*Realizing.*) You...shit!

STUFF. Did you just call me "shit"?!

EVERYBODY. Yes, you bunch of goddamned fucking shit! You deceived me! You trapped me in your trap and ruined my life!

STUFF. Listen, I just told you I'm working through it! Existence is a

process of self-discovery for everything—not just people! And, like, WHY ARE YOU SCREAMING AT ME?! I AM JUST A COLLECTION OF INANIMATE OBJECTS! YOU ARE PROJECTING YOUR OWN ISSUES WITH SELF-HATRED ONTO ME AND I AM NOT GOING TO BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THAT!

EVERYBODY. Oh God, you're right—!

STUFF. I know I'm right!

EVERYBODY. You already took my love and now I'm giving you my mind?! Oh, man! It's over! It's over! My life—it was all a joke! Am I a joke? Has something somewhere been laughing at me this whole time? Is this all hell?! Am I already in hell? I have nothing! No one! Nothing! It was all meaningless. I am completely, completely alone!

*Weeps, desperately claws at Stuff.*

Please just come with me? Just the smallest piece of you that can be spared? Please? I'm begging you! Please!

STUFF. I SAID NO! GET OFF OF ME—GET THE HELL OFF OF ME AND GET A GRIP!

*Blackout.*

## XII. "YOU KNOW WHAT? FUCK YOU!"

*In the dark, again, there is a conversation.*

EVERYBODY. And that's how the dream ends.

D. That's it?

EVERYBODY. Yes that's it. Any thoughts?

*Beat.*

A. (*Sort of out of nowhere.*) You know what? Fuck you, Everybody!

EVERYBODY. What?

A. You know I'm not a fucking racist! I'm friends with you! We're friends! Or at least I thought we were friends!

EVERYBODY. What does our being friends have to do with whether or not you're a cryptoracist?

A. Oh, so now I'm a *cryptoracist*?! Oh my God.  
EVERYBODY. Please don't make this a whole white-fragility thing.  
A. What? I'm not even white! You're white!  
EVERYBODY. Whiteness is a performance, friend, not a genetic truth.  
A. I was making a joke.  
EVERYBODY. A derisive joke! Why is my internal life so goddamn funny to you, huh?  
A. Okay, see? This is the problem! How is anyone supposed to ever have a real goddamn dialogue about anything when people can just jump down your throat like this based on nothing?!

EVERYBODY. Uh, I was under the impression we were actually having a dialogue but it doesn't seem like you want to have it because it would require you to acknowledge that you don't know what you're fucking talking about. Or maybe you just don't want to recognize my subject position as having equal value?

A. Okay, you know what? I'm out of here!  
EVERYBODY. Of course you are—  
A. Where is my coat?!

B. Wait don't go—  
C. Yeah don't go—  
A. No. I don't have to take this. I don't even know why I thought it would be a good idea to sit around this dickhead's deathbed and listen to them ramble on about their dreams in the first place! I guess I thought, if I were dying, a little company might be nice, but what could that mean to a lifetime prick like this one who's been a prick every day or his/her/their life and apparently will be a prick until the moment it's all over. Goodbye!

D. Wait—  
EVERYBODY. Let 'em go. They're right. I don't have time for this. I've already spent my entire life dealing with this crap. I refuse to spend the last moments of it pushing the same rock up the same hill. Just because you're uncomfortable with the world doesn't mean you get to project that onto other people. My insides don't have to look like your insides in order to be valid. I am a different Self from your Self. How is it so hard to understand that I am not your Self?

Why does the reality of that seem to throw people into crisis?  
C. So then what are we doing here?  
EVERYBODY. What?  
C. Why are you telling us this dream if you're some special Self that no one else can ever understand with their special Selves?  
EVERYBODY. I did not say we are incapable of understanding each other! I just—I just wanted you to help me figure out what it means—my dream!—and I've been having it every night for the last however many nights! I'm not asking you to comment on the way people are acting or how they sound! I just want to know what the dream means!

D. Well, I think the meaning is pretty obvious.  
EVERYBODY. Then what is it?  
D. You're dying. And you're dying alone.  
EVERYBODY. What?!

*Lights reveal Everybody waking up in the theatre. Everybody looks around themselves, searching for their friends. Meanwhile, an Audience Member is getting up to leave and sort of making a big fuss of doing so.*

(Searching.) Hello? Where did everybody go—  
*Notices Audience Member leaving.*  
Hello?... Excuse me?  
*Audience Member stops, realizing they're being addressed.*  
Yes, you. What are you doing?  
AUDIENCE MEMBER. ...I'm leaving...?  
EVERYBODY. What? Why?  
AUDIENCE MEMBER. My friend missed late seating. And I'm just not enjoying myself.  
EVERYBODY. Okay...?  
AUDIENCE MEMBER. Sorry...  
*Turns to go, then turns back.*  
For the record, this is all pretty offensive.  
EVERYBODY. Offensive?

AUDIENCE MEMBER. I came here really excited about—like really wanting to go on this journey with you—and I usually love everything they do here—but I feel like I've just been a prop, like I've been made to just sit here and this whole thing has been some sort of showbiz inside joke, so—

EVERYBODY. Wait, I don't understand. What are you finding so offensive?

AUDIENCE MEMBER. How I'm being portrayed. Or not being portrayed. I thought this was supposed to be about everybody?

EVERYBODY. Wait, what...are you?

AUDIENCE MEMBER. What am I?

EVERYBODY. Yeah like...what...are you—that you're so offended? I'm confused.

AUDIENCE MEMBER. Um, I'm Love?

EVERYBODY. Oh...

LOVE. Oh, so now you recognize me? That's interesting. Goodbye!

*Love turns again to leave.*

EVERYBODY. Wait!

*Love stops.*

Can you tell me: Is this real or is this a dream?

LOVE. This is a theatre.

EVERYBODY. Oh, God, this has... I feel like I just woke up from a bad nap, you know? Where you like sleep too long and—

LOVE. Yeah, you're dying.

EVERYBODY. Am I dying? Death said, Death was going to change before it came back. Are you Death?

LOVE. I just told you I'm Love.

*Done with this encounter, Love exits the theatre. Everybody runs after it.*

EVERYBODY. (Offstage.) Wait!

LOVE. (Offstage.) / Ow!

EVERYBODY. (Offstage.) Did you say you were going to come with me on—on the journey?

LOVE. (Offstage.) That's why I came here. To go on a journey. And I've just been ignored, basically, this entire time. Now please get off of me!

EVERYBODY. (Offstage.) Oh, no! Please don't go! No one else will come with me! Everyone else has left me. You can't leave too! Please!

LOVE. (Offstage.) Yeah, sorry...

EVERYBODY. (Offstage.) No! What do I have to do? Tell me: What can I do?

*Everybody reenters, gradually luring Love back into the theatre.*

LOVE. (Offstage.) What can you do to what?

EVERYBODY. Make you stay! Anything! I'll do anything! Anything just say it? What do you want to see?

*Beat, as Love reenters.*

LOVE. Um. You could humiliate yourself a little more. That's always fun to watch.

EVERYBODY. Humiliate myself how?

LOVE. Do you have, like, a whip or something?

EVERYBODY. A whip? No. I don't have a whip.

LOVE. Then take off your clothes.

EVERYBODY. What's that?

LOVE. Take your clothes off.

EVERYBODY. You want me to...?

LOVE. Get naked. Or I'm leaving.

EVERYBODY. ...Is that it?

LOVE. I'll think of some other stuff, but let's start there.

*Beat.*

Go ahead.

*Everybody undresses, slowly, uncomfortably.*

(Stopping Everybody at some point.) Okay, okay, that's good.

EVERYBODY. Now what?

LOVE. Now repeat after me.

EVERYBODY. Okay.

LOVE. Say: I've been very disappointing.  
EVERYBODY. I've been very disappointing—  
LOVE. To myself.  
EVERYBODY. To myself.  
LOVE. Louder: I'VE BEEN VERY DISAPPOINTING—  
EVERYBODY. I'VE BEEN VERY DISAPPOINTING—  
LOVE. TO MYSELF.  
EVERYBODY. TO MYSELF.  
LOVE. Now run around while you say it.  
*Naked, Everybody runs around the entire theatre and keeps running.*

I'VE BEEN VERY DISAPPOINTING!  
EVERYBODY. I'VE BEEN VERY DISAPPOINTING!  
LOVE. TO MYSELF!  
EVERYBODY. TO MYSELF!  
LOVE. BECAUSE MY BODY—  
EVERYBODY. BECAUSE MY BODY!  
LOVE. IS A MYSTERY!  
EVERYBODY. IS A MYSTERY!  
LOVE. TO MYSELF!  
EVERYBODY. TO MYSELF!  
LOVE. I AM ANGRY!  
EVERYBODY. I AM ANGRY!  
LOVE. AT MY BODY!  
EVERYBODY. AT MY BODY!  
LOVE. I AM ANGRY!  
EVERYBODY. I AM ANGRY!  
LOVE. AT ITS CHANGING!  
EVERYBODY. AT ITS CHANGING!  
LOVE. MY ANGER AT EVERYTHING—  
EVERYBODY. MY ANGER AT EVERYTHING—

LOVE. IS DUE TO THE FACT—  
EVERYBODY. IS DUE TO THE FACT—  
LOVE. THAT MY BODY—  
EVERYBODY. THAT MY BODY—  
LOVE. KEEPS CHANGING!  
EVERYBODY. KEEPS CHANGING!  
LOVE. I DON'T LOVE—  
EVERYBODY. I DON'T LOVE—  
LOVE. CHANGING!  
EVERYBODY. CHANGING!  
LOVE. I DON'T LOVE—  
EVERYBODY. I DON'T LOVE—  
LOVE. CHANGE!  
EVERYBODY. CHANGE!  
LOVE. I DON'T LOVE—  
EVERYBODY. I DON'T LOVE—  
LOVE. THAT I HAVE NO CONTROL!  
EVERYBODY. THAT I HAVE NO CONTROL!  
LOVE. BUT I HAVE NO CONTROL!  
EVERYBODY. BUT I HAVE NO CONTROL!  
LOVE. THIS BODY IS JUST MEAT!  
EVERYBODY. THIS BODY IS JUST MEAT!  
LOVE. I SURRENDER!  
EVERYBODY. I SURRENDER!  
LOVE. AGAIN: I HAVE NO CONTROL!  
EVERYBODY. I HAVE NO CONTROL!  
LOVE. AGAIN!  
EVERYBODY. I HAVE NO CONTROL!  
LOVE. KEEP GOING!  
EVERYBODY. I HAVE NO CONTROL! I HAVE NO CONTROL!  
I HAVE NO CONTROL! I HAVE NO CONTROL! I HAVE NO  
CONTROL! I HAVE NO CONTROL! I HAVE NO CONTROL! I

HAVE NO CONTROL! I HAVE NO CONTROL! I HAVE NO CONTROL! I HAVE NO CONTROL! I HAVE NO CONTROL!

LOVE. This body is just meat.

EVERYBODY. THIS BODY IS JUST MEAT! THIS BODY IS JUST MEAT! THIS BODY IS JUST MEAT! THIS BODY IS JUST MEAT! THIS BODY IS JUST MEAT! THIS BODY IS JUST MEAT! THIS BODY IS JUST MEAT! THIS BODY IS JUST MEAT! THIS BODY IS JUST MEAT! THIS BODY IS JUST MEAT!

LOVE. I surrender.

EVERYBODY. I SURRENDER! I SURRENDER! I SURRENDER! I SURRENDER! I SURRENDER! I SURRENDER! I SURRENDER! I SURRENDER! I SURRENDER! I SURRENDER! I SURRENDER! I SURRENDER!

*Everybody—naked, exhausted—achieves something.*

*Catharsis?*

*Blackout.*

### XIII. LA DANSE MACABRE

*Skeletons dance macabre in a landscape of pure light and sound.*

### XIV. THE JOURNEY

*Lights reveal Everybody and Love, who is now also naked, just as Death returns in its "traveling clothes."*

DEATH. Alright, I'm back. Let's...go... (*Seeing Everybody and Love.*) Uh, what is happening here?

LOVE. (*To Everybody.*) Okay, I'll go with you. (*To Death.*) Hi. Sorry. We're ready.

DEATH. (*To Everybody.*) Who is this?

EVERYBODY. This is Love?

DEATH. You actually found someone? Weird.

*Love and Everybody notice the Usher, poking his/her/their head in. Death notices them noticing and spins around.*

LOVE. Hi.

USHER. Hi!

DEATH. Can we help you?

USHER. Oh, I'm just checking in. You guys still good?

DEATH. Uh, I think so.

USHER. Okay, well let me know if you need help with anything. I'm just back here with my team.

DEATH. Who are you?

USHER/UNDERSTANDING. I'm Understanding. (*Re: Everybody and Love.*) They know me. I work here. (*To Everybody and Love.*) Hello.

EVERYBODY. Hello.

UNDERSTANDING. (*To Death.*) I just wanted to make sure you guys were good.

EVERYBODY. Wait—If you're Understanding, who is your team?

UNDERSTANDING. Have you not met them?

EVERYBODY. I'm not sure. Have I?

UNDERSTANDING. (*Shouting off.*) Guys! Come here!

*Four virtues—Strength, Beauty, Mind, and Senses—enter. They all wear the exact outfit Everybody began the play in. Beauty also wears a long wig, garlanded with flowers. The other virtues carry an assortment of objects.*

STRENGTH. (*Brandishing a huge sword.*) What's going on?

SENSES. (*Swigging from a bottle of wine.*) What's going on?

BEAUTY. (*Twirling long hair.*) What's going on?

MIND. (*Searching through a large book.*) Yeah, what's going on?

EVERYBODY. Who are all of you?

STRENGTH. Hi. I'm Strength.

SENSES. Five Senses.

BEAUTY. Beauty.

MIND. Your Mind. What's going on?

DEATH. Uh...I'm escorting Everybody to a plane of existence beyond this one and from whence there is no return.

STRENGTH, BEAUTY, SENSES, & MIND. Ooooooooooooooooooh!!

STRENGTH. Can I come?

EVERYBODY. Come? With me?

STRENGTH. (*Giving sword to Everybody.*) Yes! Like soldiers in battle!

EVERYBODY. Uh, sure?!

SENSES. (*Giving wine to Everybody.*) Me, too! I've got a good feeling about this.

BEAUTY. (*Putting flower in Everybody's hair.*) Yeah, it sounds really beautiful so...me, too.

MIND. (*Giving the book to Everybody.*) Everybody, I want you to go with a good plan and deliberation, so that's why you should bring me.

EVERYBODY. Really? Okay!

DEATH. Guys, this is suddenly a really large group. (*To Everybody.*) Are you absolutely sure?

EVERYBODY. I guess. I have here Strength, Mind, Beauty, and Five Senses—and Love and Understanding; I don't know what better companions I could ask for...

DEATH. Fine. Uh, I guess Everybody follow me?

*Everybody and co. follow Death for a few feet before she stops them. Suddenly, the walls move slightly or the floor is pulled up and a very real-seeming grave is revealed. After a beat:*

Alright! Everybody in!

BEAUTY. In where? This dirt hole?

DEATH. "In this grave  
you all must creep  
and rot to Earth  
for there to sleep."

*Beat.*

BEAUTY. What?

DEATH. It's the only way to the other side.

BEAUTY. Oh no. I'm meant to be seen and admired, so I'm out of here! Bye!

EVERYBODY. What? Beauty?! Where are you going?!

BEAUTY. I can't hear you! La la la la! Beauty is deaf!

*Beauty exits. Everybody seems uglier.*

EVERYBODY. (*To Understanding.*) What the—?

UNDERSTANDING. (*Shouting after.*) Beauty?! (*To Everybody.*) Beauty has a tendency to fade.

STRENGTH. Everybody, I think I also have to leave you too. I don't love the sound of this whole rot thing...?

EVERYBODY. Wha—Then you're all going to betray me! Strength, come on, just stay a little while longer!

STRENGTH. No thanks.

EVERYBODY. You said you would come with me on this long voyage! You said that!

STRENGTH. Yeah, but I think I've come with you far enough. And I sort of regret even coming this far. Things have gotten so weird. So I'm just gonna do me and get on up out of here.

EVERYBODY. You know what? Fuck you! I honestly thought you'd be more reliable!

STRENGTH. Fuck you! Go throw yourself in that hole already.

*Strength exits, running.*

UNDERSTANDING. Strength! Don't run out! (*To Everybody.*) Strength ran out.

*Everybody seems weaker.*

MIND. Everybody...

EVERYBODY. OH MY GOD, MY MIND, NOT YOU, TOO! NO! NO! WHAT AM I GOING TO DO WITHOUT MY MIND?!

MIND. I'm sorry. Whenever Strength leaves, I wind up going pretty soon after, so...

EVERYBODY. Mind, I pray to you, for the love of all things good in the world, just...look into my grave just once. Just look and tell me what you see.



MIND. I can't. I'm too sensitive. Scary Things make me black out. Farewell, Everybody. It was nice being relatively intelligent with you.

*Mind exits. Everybody seems feebler-minded.*

UNDERSTANDING. The mind goes.

SENSES. Everybody, now I need to go.

EVERYBODY. Oh man. I think I'm actually going to start crying...

*Everybody starts crying. It goes on.*

SENSES. (*Comforting.*) Everybody...

EVERYBODY. I really thought you would be with me through the end...

SENSES. I think this is the end. Right?

*Death shrugs.*

No? We don't know?

*Beat.*

In any case, it's not you. It's really not. It's me. Good luck, okay? It's going to be great. Everybody does it, so you're gonna do it...because you're Everybody. Bye.

*Senses exits in one direction, reappears, and then exits again in another direction.*

UNDERSTANDING. Senses got lost...

*Everybody goes blind.*

EVERYBODY. What happened to my—I can't see! Oh God! Oh God! I can't see! (*Cries.*) Has everything left me?!

LOVE. (*Taking Everybody's hand.*) I'm still here. I'm going to come with you.

EVERYBODY. (*To Understanding.*) Wait—Understanding, are you still there?

UNDERSTANDING. Yes.

EVERYBODY. Will you come with me, too?

UNDERSTANDING. I don't think I can, because I actually supervise those fools, but what if I stand here by the grave and watch you go as far as I can for as long as I can. Is that alright?

EVERYBODY. Yes. Thank you.

UNDERSTANDING. You're welcome.

EVERYBODY. Love. My one true friend. The others have deserted me, every one; I loved them better than my Love alone.

DEATH. Get ready.

*Everybody stands up, pulls themselves together.*

EVERYBODY. Okay. One more second.

*Takes a moment.*

Goodbye, Everything.

LOVE. It's time to go.

*Everybody staggers over to the grave, guided by Love, and they start to go down into the grave. Before they can exit, Evil enters the theatre awkwardly.*

EVIL. (*To an audience member, loud whisper.*) I'm so sorry! Is this Everybody?

LOVE. Hey, buddy! I'm over here!

EVIL. Oh my God, hey! I was so confused for a second! Sorry, I'm late, I had a—You know what? It's not even worth going into—this place is such a nightmare to get to—but I'm here now! Did I miss anything good?

LOVE. No, you're good, come on. The journey's just started.

EVERYBODY. I'm sorry, but who is there?!

EVIL. Oh, sorry, hi! I'm all the shitty evil things you've done to the world and other people!

EVERYBODY. What? What?!

EVIL. (*Whispers.*) We've totally met before but you may not remember me. Nice to see you again! (*To everyone else.*) Alright, I'm ready! Let's go!

DEATH. Let's go!

LOVE. Let's go! Yay!

EVERYBODY. Wait! WAIT! WH—

*Love and Evil pull Everybody into the grave. Death climbs in after them.*

DEATH. See you in a bit...

*Death disappears into the grave.*

*Understanding watches for a bit, maybe laughs a little at something it sees, shakes its head, then it gets solemn. Beat, as Understanding stares off into space, thinking about something. Once it's clear that whatever's happening down there is over, Death climbs out of the grave, startling Understanding.*

Will you help me up?

UNDERSTANDING. Sure.

*Understanding helps Death up and out of the grave.*

DEATH. Thank you. Oof. Everybody has finally come to their end. (Noticing Understanding's mood.) Are you okay?

UNDERSTANDING. Yes, sorry. I'm just trying to wrap my head around some things that just happened.

DEATH. You know it's really going to be okay, right?

UNDERSTANDING. I know. But I also just wish that it all wasn't such a huge secret. You know? What would be so wrong with just... knowing a few more details beforehand? You know? Wouldn't that make me a better person?

DEATH. I don't know. Would it?

*Time enters, played by the small child who was kidnapped earlier.*

TIME. Hi.

DEATH. Hey!

UNDERSTANDING. Hi there.

TIME. Are you guys almost done?

DEATH. Yes, yes. Just finished.

TIME. Great, sorry. Something entirely different has this space reserved, so we've gotta wrap things up, okay?

DEATH. We're just leaving.

TIME. Excellent.

*Time starts to exit before Death stops her.*

DEATH. I'm sorry to do this, but do we know each other? I feel like we've met before.

TIME. I had the same feeling actually. Where would we have met?

DEATH. I don't even know. What's your name?

TIME. I'm Time.

DEATH. Yes! Yes yes yes! Oh my God yes! I used to date your brother, Space!

TIME. Oh my God, right! Death?

DEATH. Yes! We met at History's thing!

TIME. Oh, yes! You came with Grief! Hi!

DEATH. Hi!

TIME. You look so great!

DEATH. Oh stop it—You look great!

TIME. What have you been up to?

DEATH. Ugh, you know. Same old, same old.

TIME. Right. You think we'd get sick of doing the same thing.

DEATH. Oh, do you know Understanding?

TIME. No. Hi.

UNDERSTANDING. (Shakes Time's hand.) Hi!

TIME. It's so nice to meet you.

UNDERSTANDING. This is so embarrassing, but I'm actually a huge fan.

TIME. Stop it. That is such a crazy thing to say.

DEATH. Wait, what are you guys doing right now? I'm due for a little break.

TIME. No shit! Me, too. What are you going to do?

DEATH. I was thinking about doing a little star watching or something.

TIME. Ooh! I'm obsessed with stars!

DEATH. Me, too! (To Understanding.) Hey, do you want to join us?

UNDERSTANDING. Oh. That's so nice of you. (To Time.) I have like a million questions I've been dying to ask you. But I have some thoughts I need to wrap up, if that's okay? But maybe you guys start and I'll just catch up. Is that okay?

DEATH. Uh...sure?

TIME. Just try to be done before Nature gets here. She does clean-up and can seem nice, but she's actually a total nightmare.

UNDERSTANDING. Of course. Thanks.

TIME. No worries. Nice shirt, by the way.

UNDERSTANDING. Oh, thank you!

TIME. Where did you get it?

UNDERSTANDING. It's from [THE NAME OF THE THEATRE].

TIME. Okay, I have no idea what that is. (*To Death.*) Shall we?

DEATH. Let's go.

*Death and Time exit together, holding hands. Understanding crosses back to wherever Usher started.*

USHER. Now I don't really know what any of that was but, again, this was based on something very very very old so please be respectful. Also it was in manner of a morality play, which means there's a moral and you may already be thinking this, but just in case: "Ye hearer, take it of worth, old and young: All things upon this Earth are but Vanity—Beauty, Strength, Mind, Senses, do man forsake, just as his foolish friends and kinsmen who to him fair spake: All fleeth save his Love, which beyond he doth take." And, I guess, his Evil, too, so... Hmm... Why is it these plays about death always only ever wind up trying to tell us about life? I guess it's because no one's ever really figured out what happens after we die, huh? I guess anything could happen. And maybe it's a mystery we're never going to actually solve—never supposed to solve. The only thing we do know is we can't come back and undo all the messed up stuff we did to the world and each other and all the future each others waiting to inherit this place. "For after death amends may no man make, for then Mercy and Pity doth him forsake." Or something. Maybe let's just all be a little better about recycling. Also really really listening to each other, and maybe being less judgmental and more forgiving but, also, owning up to our mistakes and being open to changing our own minds. Lead with our Understanding. You know: just being nice to each other. For once. And I'm talking about Everybody.

*Beat.*

Have a good night.

FINIS

## PROPERTY LIST

(Use this space to create props lists for your production)

