

Armadillo

A new play

By Joe Correll

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"Reality leaves a lot to the imagination."

– John Lennon

"Our press secretary, Sean Spicer, gave alternative facts to [these claims]"

- Kellyanne Conway, Counselor to the President of the United States

"Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you; they fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord."

-Jeremiah 23:16

"Let's change this story. I'd rather it happened like this instead..."

– Joe Correll, Reality Television Producer

CAST OF CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE.

ROGER - 50's Barbara's husband. Emotional and prone to fits of rage.

DAVID - 30's - Grace's Husband Even tempered and friendly, but hiding a dark secret.

GRACE - 30's - David's wife. Liberal, opinionated, atheist.

BARBARA- 50's - Roger's wife. Conservative, religious, and opinionated.

JEREMIAH- 30's - A stranger. Handsome and a smooth talker and manipulator.

SETTING: A DESERTED DESERT ROAD SOMEWHERE IN NEVADA

ARMADILLO

ACT ONE: SCENE ONE. A DESERT ROAD.

As the audience enters, before us is a stunning landscape featuring the mountains and vegetation of the Nevada desert and Nevada state highway fifty-five, the "loneliest road in the United States". Upstage, a guardrail stretches across the scene. The stage itself is a blacktop with a divided highway "double yellow" lines. Sparse and dry vegetation dot the curb of the road. It is silent with the exception of a wind blowing across the landscape. Then in the distance the sound of automobiles coming from two different directions. The sound gets louder until it is very close. Suddenly horns blare! Tires squeal! The sound of the cars skidding, then a large crash, and thuds of the cars sliding off of the road. A tire bumps across the stage and lands on it's side in the middle. Then for a moment, only silence. Just the sound of the wind blowing across the desert.

After a beat, the sounds of car doors opening and people getting out. We hear their voices from offstage.

ROGER

(off)

What the hell happened? Why did you change lanes like that?

DAVID

(off)

Are you okay?

ROGER

(off)

You were in the middle of the road! Why??

GRACE

(off)

Do you think it's alright?

DAVID
(off)
Yes, it's totally fine.

GRACE
(off)
Thank goodness.

ROGER
(off)
Look at my car!!

DAVID
(off)
You're sure you're okay?

GRACE
(off)
Yes, I think so.

ROGER
(off)
Why did you swerve across the road like that!?

DAVID
(off)
I didn't see it until it was too late.

GRACE
(off)
I hope the baby's alright.

DAVID
(off)
I'm sure it's fine. This could have been so much worse.

ROGER
(off)
It's the middle of the desert, there's no one for miles. What the hell were you thinking?!

DAVID
(off)
I'm sorry sir, I'm just making sure my wife is okay. One moment please.

ROGER
(off)
But I don't understand how this even happened. Look at my car!... Look at your car! It's the middle of the desert! Now what?! Jesus!!

DAVID

(off)

Honey, we're going to have to go back up to the road, and flag someone down. Can you climb this embankment?

GRACE

(off, defensive)

Of course I can.

DAVID

(off)

Don't worry honey, we'll just flag someone down, and get a tow truck to haul us out of this gulley.

ROGER

(off)

I can't believe you swerved like that.

DAVID

(off)

Watch your step, honey. The rocks are loose.

GRACE

(off)

I'm perfectly capable.

DAVID

(off)

Be careful, honey. Don't slip.

David appears from behind and below the guard rail, pulling himself up and over. David is a handsome man in his late thirties or so. He is dressed in a short sleeved button down shirt and shorts. David surveys the surroundings. He reaches over the guardrail and helps his wife, Grace, up and over. Grace is a pretty woman in her mid thirties.

Next David reaches over and lends a hand to Roger. He reaches out to pull him up and over the guardrail.

ROGER

I've got it, I've got it. You've done enough already.

Roger is a man in his fifties. He is dressed in something people might take for "golfing attire".

David looks out at the "audience"
and surveys the beautiful desert
landscape.

DAVID
Wow. No one. Absolutely nothing.

GRACE
But it's gorgeous! Just look at it!

DAVID
The colors. The desert is really beautiful.

Roger tugs on his shirt, pulls
out a handkerchief and wipes his
forehead.

ROGER
It's so hot!

GRACE
You can just see for miles.

Roger paces up and down the road.

ROGER
Do you see any other cars?

DAVID
Your car looks expensive, sir. We should exchange
information.

ROGER
It is expensive. I hope you have insurance because it's
totally your fault.

DAVID
I'm not sure about that, sir. I may have swerved a little,
but your wheel came off and hit us. It must have been loose.

ROGER
My wheel wasn't loose. Why would it be loose?!

David looks at the tire laying on
the road.

DAVID
I don't know. Was it bolted to the axle?

ROGER
Of course it was bolted to the axle! It came off, because you
hit us!

DAVID

I'm not sure about that, sir.

ROGER

I'm sure. I'm very, very sure. I'm an excellent driver. I've never gotten in an accident in my life.

DAVID

Will your car start? Could we use the air conditioning until someone comes?

ROGER

No. I tried. It won't start.

DAVID

Ours either.

GRACE

I wonder how long we can survive in this heat without air conditioning?

ROGER

What?

GRACE

I'd say, thirty six hours, maximum.

Roger goes over to the guardrail
and looks down towards the unseen
accident.

ROGER

This is a disaster. Barbara! Get out of the car! It's 106 degrees.

DAVID

109 degrees. Last I looked it was 109 degrees.

GRACE

David's a very cautious driver.

DAVID

Grace is pregnant.

ROGER

(looking over the rail at
his car)

That was a new car.

DAVID

She's three months pregnant.

ROGER
(staring at his car)

Just look at it.

DAVID
The baby's due at Thanksgiving.

Roger yells down the embankment.

ROGER
(yelling)
Jesus. Oh, for Christ sakes... Barbara? Did you hear me say
get out of the car?

GRACE
Is she okay?

ROGER
She's okay. She's ignoring me.

DAVID
Why?

ROGER
She wanted me to take route 80, but I wanted to take 55
because it said it was a little faster and I thought it would
be more scenic.

GRACE
Look at all the wide open space. It's just spectacular.

ROGER
Which is why there is absolutely no reason we should have had
an accident. No reason! ...Barbara! We're up here... Barbara!

Roger picks up a rock and
violently throws it down the
hill.

ROGER (CONT'D)
You're going to roast like a turkey if you don't get out of
the car!

David pulls out his cell phone
and studies it.

DAVID
Do you have a cell phone signal, sir? Cause my battery is
dead.

Roger checks his cell phone. He
is surprised that the battery has
been drained.

ROGER
No. My phone is dead too.

GRACE
Just like Arlene.

David and Roger are perplexed about their phones. They turn them in their hands, they hold them up to the sky, they try to turn them on and off again.

DAVID
I could swear it was charged the last time I checked it.

ROGER
I don't understand. This is a very expensive cell phone.

He looks over at Grace.

ROGER (CONT'D)
(to Grace)
What about you? Do you have a phone?

GRACE
I don't have a cell phone. They're bad for the environment, and I eschew social media. I use David's if it's an emergency. I'm Grace, and this is David.

Grace extends her hand out. Roger walks away.

ROGER
I know. You already said each other's names. This is a huge, huge mess. Barbara is going to be so pissed. Barbara! Come out of there before the car tips over with you in it! It's not safe.

BARBARA
(off)
Alright. I'm coming. Stop making a scene, Roger.

ROGER
I'm not making a scene, I'm trying to keep you alive.

BARBARA
(off)
Well, stop it.

Roger reaches over the embankment, helping Barbara over the guardrail.

Barbara is a woman in her fifties. Like her husband she is wearing "traveling clothes" that would seem appropriate for golf or tennis. She wears a "visor" to protect herself from the sun.

ROGER

(to Barbara)

Watch yourself, the rocks are slippery.

BARBARA

I've got it!

David walks over to the embankment and looks at the accident.

DAVID

(looking over the embankment)

You're right, sir. The cars do not look good.

ROGER

It was your fault. You swerved.

DAVID

(to Barbara)

Do you need some help?

BARBARA

I'm okay. I'm so sorry about my husbands driving. I don't know why he pulled into your lane.

David walks over to the edge of the stage, and leans around, looking for something in the distance.

ROGER

They swerved!

BARBARA

I didn't see them swerve. They may have swayed a little. You over-reacted, just like always. You know, another accident is going to raise our insurance rates again.

David walks back over to Grace.

DAVID

Honey, I think it's okay. Looks like it got away.

GRACE

Oh thank goodness! I was so worried.

Me too. DAVID

What's okay? ROGER

The armadillo. DAVID

What armadillo? ROGER

The one we almost ran over. DAVID

Did you swerve so you wouldn't hit an armadillo?? ROGER

It had babies. It wasn't the armadillo's fault that we built this road right in the middle of where it lives. GRACE

Barbara. Did you hear that? We got in an accident because they didn't want to hit an God damn armadillo. ROGER

(chastising his language)
BARBARA
Roger! I apologize for his language. He's got a temper, but he's working on it. He's working on a lot of things, aren't you Roger?

A short temper often signals that something else is wrong in your life. GRACE

Honey, I'm concerned. We need to get you into some shade. You're sweating. DAVID

Of course I'm sweating. We're all sweating. We all need to find some shade, David, not just me. Don't single me out. I'm not helpless. GRACE

I'm sorry, honey. DAVID

This is so stupid! Ugh! Why does everything happen to me? ROGER

This wouldn't have happened if we had flown. BARBARA

ROGER

We need to get to town. We'll talk to the police, and let them sort it out.

DAVID

We can't get those cars back on the road in the condition they're in.

ROGER

YOU drove us off the road.

DAVID

Well, technically, your tire hit us, and that caused us to go off the road...sir.

ROGER

WHAT?!!

Grace gazes out across the desert landscape.

GRACE

Look at the clouds! Have you ever seen clouds like that?

BARBARA

Beautiful...I'm Barbara.

Barbara walks over, and shakes Grace's hand.

GRACE

I'm Grace and this is my husband David.

BARBARA

So nice to meet you...We're on our way to Denver for my nieces baptism.

GRACE

That's so funny. We're on our way to a funeral.

ROGER

That is funny.

BARBARA

I'm sorry for your loss.

GRACE

It's okay. It was inevitable.

ROGER

(doubting himself)

We probably should have taken route 80.

Roger paces up and down the road
looking for any signs of life.

ROGER (CONT'D)

This road is completely dead.

GRACE

Just like Arlene.

BARBARA

Roger wanted to take the "scenic route" to save ten minutes.

ROGER

(defensive)

There's nothing wrong with this route. It's the best, and
fastest route. You can't see scenery like this from 80.

BARBARA

(quietly angry)

I'd rather see my niece get baptized.

ROGER

(quietly angry)

It's tomorrow night! We've got plenty of time!

BARBARA

(quietly angry)

The last time I checked it was still eleven hours away, and
that was when we had a signal an hour ago!!

ROGER

We'll make it!

BARBARA

I hope so!

ROGER

Someone will come by and give us a lift!

BARBARA

You didn't even want to come. I should have flown and left
you back in Sacramento!

Grace jumps into the
conversation, overjoyed that they
share something in common.

GRACE

(overjoyed!)

We're GOING to Sacramento!

BARBARA

Oh! What a coincidence. We're headed to Denver.

GRACE

For your niece's baptism?

BARBARA

Yes.

GRACE

AND... we just drove through Denver twelve hours ago.

Barbara realizes they have a
twelve hour drive ahead of them.

BARBARA

Twelve hours Roger.

ROGER

Stop it. That puts us there about 2AM. Plenty of time before
tomorrow night.

BARBARA

Without a car?

ROGER

We'll rent a car in the next town. I will get us there on
time... I'll get us there early.

BARBARA

I hope I don't miss it because you wanted to see a cactus.

She turns to Grace, pleasantly.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Where are you coming from?

GRACE

Kansas City. We're going to see my sisters family in
Sacramento.

BARBARA

A little family vacation. Fun.

GRACE

Sort of.

A beat.

GRACE (CONT'D)

She's dead.

BARBARA

Oh, It's your sisters funeral? I'm so sorry to hear that.

GRACE

It's fine. Happens to every single one of us. Even me. Even you.

Roger points off into the distance.

ROGER

Is that a car?

DAVID

Where?

ROGER

Over there- see that dust?

DAVID

No. I don't see any sign of a car anywhere.

ROGER

You don't see that car?! It's right there.

BARBARA

I don't see a car either.

ROGER

(after a beat)

It's gone now. It must have turned around. But there was definitely a car.

DAVID

I don't think so... Sir.

Roger walks away.

ROGER

Someone's got to come eventually.

Grace wearily sits on the guardrail, holding her back.

DAVID

Honey, are you okay?

GRACE

I'm okay.

DAVID

Are you sure, honey?

GRACE

I said I was okay. Stop asking if I'm okay.

DAVID

I'm sorry, honey.

GRACE

My back is just bothering me. It's the baby.

DAVID

(to Barbara)

Grace is pregnant.

BARBARA

How lovely! When are you due?

GRACE

Thanksgiving.

BARBARA

Well, that is something to truly be thankful for isn't it? I love babies!

GRACE

They are pretty nice.

BARBARA

We never had any of our own... Did we Roger?

An awkward pause between Roger and Barbara. Roger changes the subject.

ROGER

Someone has got to drive by soon, right?

DAVID

I hope someone comes soon. She needs to sit down.

BARBARA

We have some folding camp chairs in the trunk. Roger, go get the folding camp chairs.

ROGER

I'm looking to see if there any cars on the way.

BARBARA

Roger. She's pregnant. Go get the camp chairs. And bring up the Rice Krispy treats. They're probably melting. Grace and I will watch out for cars.

Roger ignores her.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Roger!

ROGER

Okay, okay!

BARBARA

Why don't you just bring up four chairs? One for each of us?

GRACE

David, help him go get the chairs.

BARBARA

He was worried there wouldn't be enough seating at my nieces' baptism.

GRACE

That was very considerate.

Barbara looks over at Roger.

BARBARA

(passive aggressive)

Roger, bring up some water too...you brought water right?

ROGER

We have the two bottles we got at the gas station.

BARBARA

That's it? I already finished mine! You brought chairs but you didn't bring water?

ROGER

You were rushing me out of the house.

BARBARA

I wanted to leave earlier, but you kept dragging your feet. If we had left when I said, we'd be in Colorado by now.

DAVID

We have a whole case of water.

GRACE

We shop at Costco.

BARBARA

(to Roger)

At least someone is using their brain. Go get the chairs, and the Krispy treats-

GRACE

And the water.

The two men jump over the guardrail and disappear.

Grace and Barbara look out over the desert, but not at each other during the following conversation.

GRACE (CONT'D)

It's so pretty, isn't it?

BARBARA

Very.

GRACE

I find the desert almost magical. It's gorgeous. Like a painting.

BARBARA

Yes, it is.

GRACE

It's very special.

BARBARA

Yes, God is good.

GRACE

Oh, we don't believe in God.

A beat. Barbara starts to defend herself, then decides it's better to keep the peace. She backs down and they sit in silence for a moment.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Did you make the Rice Krispy treats yourself?

BARBARA

Yes. They're easy.

GRACE

Rice Krispy's have a lot of preservatives. I've never made them.

BARBARA

They're easy.

Silence.

GRACE

Is it just Rice Krispies and marshmallows?

BARBARA

And butter.

GRACE
That's it?

BARBARA
That's it.

GRACE
You're right. So easy. But not very healthy.

Silence.

BARBARA
I put a chocolate topping on these. I hope it didn't melt.

GRACE
(brightening)
Oh, I do like things with chocolate topping.

BARBARA
(brightening)
I won an award at church!

Awkward silence.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
I wonder what's taking them so long?

A beat. Then Barbara can't take the conversation anymore. She yells off towards the men.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Guys! What's the hold up?

ROGER
(off)
I can't find the Krispy treats!

BARBARA
They're in the cooler.

ROGER
(off)
Why did you put them in there?

BARBARA
To keep them cool!

After a beat.

ROGER
(off)
Got them!

BARBARA
Bring them up here right away please!

ROGER
(off)
Be right there!

DAVID
(off)
Honey, do you want the beach umbrella?

GRACE
Yes, please, we should be in the shade. We should ALL be in the shade.

After a beat Roger and David come over the guardrail passing each other up four folding camp chairs, a pan of Rice Krispy treats, a case of water, a pillow for Grace, a large tool box and an absolutely giant rainbow colored umbrella.

DAVID
I brought up your pillow too, that should make you more comfortable, honey.

David passes out waters. Roger puts up the umbrella.

DAVID (CONT'D)
And here, a bottle for each of us.

BARBARA
Thank you.

DAVID
We'll divide them up evenly.

BARBARA
Thank you. That's very kind.

DAVID
It's only fair.

GRACE
David is a socialist.

BARBARA
I see. How many do you have?

DAVID
I packed a whole case, just... in case.

GRACE
Costco.

A beat.

BARBARA
(To Roger, passive
aggressive)
Did you bring a knife to cut these treats?

ROGER
(snapping)
Of course I did!!

Roger pulls out an enormous Bowie
knife from the tool box.

GRACE
My goodness. That's a big knife. You're like Crocodile
Dundee.

Roger cuts the Krispy treats with
the knife. He becomes frustrated
and starts to stab at them as if
killing something. It's very
violent and scary. Barbara, David
and Grace watch him.

BARBARA
Roger! You're making a mess out of them. Stop it!!

ROGER
They're hard.

BARBARA
Because they were in the cooler!!

Roger stabs them some more, and
then he pulls a whole chunk out,
and rips them with his bare hands
into pieces, and slaps them into
the others hands.

GRACE
Oh, none for me thanks.

DAVID
You should eat something, honey.

GRACE
You know I'm allergic to niacinamide. But you go right ahead.

David sets up the chairs and Grace, Barbara and he sit down by the side of the road. Roger pulls a tire iron out of the tool chest, picks up the tire and tries to loosen the lug nuts with the tire iron.

DAVID

I don't think putting the wheel back on is going to be enough to get the car going, sir.

ROGER

Do you know anything about cars?

DAVID

Not really.

ROGER

Then butt out. I've been working on cars my whole life.

BARBARA

Oh, let him try. He doesn't have any idea how to repair a car. It'll be hilarious.

ROGER

No one else is doing anything. You're all just sitting around eating Rice Krispy treats. One of us has to do something!

Roger struggles with the lug nuts.

DAVID

(changes subject)

Isn't it weird that NO ONE has driven by? No one at all?

BARBARA

It's a little strange. Yes.

DAVID

Could we walk to town?

ROGER

The nearest town is at least ten miles away. I don't think that's a good idea. We should stay with the cars. Jesus, these are tight!

BARBARA

(chastising for language)

Roger!

ROGER

Sorry...Fuck these are tight!

Roger continues to struggle.

DAVID

These Krispy treats are delicious. The chocolate adds a lot.

BARBARA

I stole it. One of the ladies from church had this recipe.

GRACE

Stealing is wrong.

A beat.

GRACE (CONT'D)

But with recipes I guess it's okay.

DAVID

They're nice and chewy. Good texture.

GRACE

David, don't talk with your mouth full. (To Barbara) Have you ever tried to make them with other cereals?

BARBARA

No. I think it only works with Rice Krispies.

GRACE

A woman at my pilates class uses Farro seeds. She really thinks outside the box... The cereal box.

BARBARA

Are they good?

GRACE

I don't know. I'm allergic to marshmallows.

BARBARA

I really prefer them the traditional way. With Rice Krispies.

Barbara takes a deliberate bite
of her Rice Krispy Treat.

DAVID

I always forget which one has two s's.

BARBARA

Two S's?

DAVID

Yes. Desert and dessert. Dessert- two s's right?

BARBARA

Right.

DAVID

Thank you for the "dessert". That we're eating in the "desert".

Roger gives up on the tire.

ROGER

Okay screw it. We're fucked.

BARBARA

ROGER!

ROGER

I'm sorry, but that's what's happening right now.

Roger comes over and grabs the pan of Krispy treats and violently rips a piece out with his bare hands and shoves the entire thing into his mouth. The others try to ignore him.

DAVID

What's in these? They're very good.

BARBARA

Marshmallows, butter and Rice Krispies.

DAVID

So simple.

BARBARA

Yes.

Roger has a giant mouthful of Rice Krispy Treats.

ROGER

(mouth full)

It's hotter than hell out here.

GRACE

Oh, we don't believe in hell.

Silence. They just eat Rice Krispy treats. For quite some time.

DAVID

What did you say were in these again?

BLACKOUT.

ACT ONE: SCENE TWO- AN UNDETERMINED AMOUNT OF TIME LATER.

They are sitting looking at the
desert.

GRACE

It's so quiet.

Silence.

GRACE (CONT'D)

I love the quiet. Don't you?

Silence, for a couple of seconds.

GRACE (CONT'D)

It really lets you think about things.

Silence for another couple of
seconds.

GRACE (CONT'D)

What do you think those rocks are made of?

ROGER

Rock.

Roger and Barbara exchange looks.

BARBARA

(cordially)

It looks like Granite.

GRACE

No, I don't think so.

BARBARA

(she tried)

Then I'm really not sure.

Silence.

GRACE

It's so funny to think... We've been here just a few minutes,
but those rocks have been there for millions of years. It
really makes you think about your place in the universe.

BARBARA

Yes, it does.

GRACE

The formations are very beautiful.

BARBARA

And to think they've been there for nearly ten thousand years.

ROGER

I feel like we've been sitting here for almost ten thousand years.

GRACE

Those rocks have been around for way more than ten thousand years.

BARBARA

Whatever you say. I'm not in the mood to argue.

GRACE

I wasn't arguing.

BARBARA

Okay. Great. I apologize.

GRACE

I just think to believe that those rocks are only ten thousand years old is stupid.

DAVID

Honey, don't say that.

BARBARA

That's very disrespectful.

DAVID

I'm sorry, Grace can be very opinionated.

GRACE

It's not an opinion.

DAVID

(Trying to be cordial)

What religion do you follow? If you don't mind my asking?

BARBARA

Roger and I are Christ's Adventist Christian Congregation of Colorado Springs.

DAVID

Really? My Aunt Marilyn is a Christ's Adventist Christian Congregation of Colorado Springs.

BARBARA

What's her name?

DAVID

It's Marilyn.

Her last name?
BARBARA

I forget. I'm sorry.
DAVID

You forgot your Aunt's last name?
BARBARA

We're not close.
DAVID

That's okay. It's probably Marilyn Stanford.
BARBARA

Yes! That's it! Marilyn Stanford.
DAVID

You belong to a church from Colorado, but you live in Sacramento?
GRACE

I'm from Colorado. We started our own branch in Sacramento.
BARBARA

There's thirty seven people in it. I think they only come for the cookies.
ROGER

It's such a coincidence that your Aunt is a member.
BARBARA
(ignoring Roger)

Do you know her?!
DAVID

No. She's a member of our Boulder branch, that's all I know about her.
BARBARA

That's right! She does live in Boulder! I can't believe you belong to the same church as my Aunt Marilyn!
DAVID

My sister is a Deacon.
BARBARA

My sister is dead.
GRACE

It's a small church, but we're growing.
BARBARA

GRACE

I hope it doesn't grow too fast because it's stupid.

Barbara turns to Grace, and
speaks to her nicely, if a little
condescending.

BARBARA

(as if to a child)

We believe in the Bible. And that's what makes us Christians.

GRACE

I believe in Harry Potter, but that doesn't make me a
Hufflepuff.

The tension between them has
risen. Barbara backs down.

ROGER

Does anybody have a watch? What time is it? How long have we
been here?

DAVID

It's one fifty five.

ROGER

One fifty five?

DAVID

Yes. That's what my Fitbit says.

ROGER

I think it was one fifty five before the accident.

DAVID

Hmmm. I think my Fitbit has stopped. The clock still says one
fifty five.

GRACE

Are the steps still working?

DAVID

Yes, honey.

GRACE

How many steps do you have?

DAVID

Two thousand and thirty three.

GRACE

That's not very many, you should walk around a little bit,
since you ate that Rice Krispy treat.

ROGER
What does it say now?

DAVID
Still one fifty five.

David starts to walk around.

ROGER
(to Grace)
Do you have a watch that works?

GRACE
No, I'm allergic to wristbands and bracelets.

A beat.

GRACE (CONT'D)
And grapes.

A beat.

GRACE (CONT'D)
(to David)
How many steps do you have now?

DAVID
Two thousand and fifty six.

GRACE
Try to get to three thousand.

They all sit in silence for a bit.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Listen to the quiet. You can hear the breeze rattling through the sage brush. Listen. So peaceful. Sssshhhh!

They all listen. Then Grace once again breaks the silence.

GRACE (CONT'D)
So. How do you like living in Sacramento?

BARBARA
It's nice.

GRACE
We like living in Kansas City. It has a surprisingly robust art culture.

BARBARA
That's nice.

Long.....Awkward silence.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Are there a lot of Mexicans in Kansas City?

GRACE

Yes, quite a few.

BARBARA

Okay. I thought so. In Sacramento too.

GRACE

That's nice.

Silence.

ROGER

This is getting to be ridiculous. We've been here at least an hour, and not one car? Nothing? It doesn't make any sense.

DAVID

I do think it's unusual, sir. Even if it is named "the loneliest road in the country".

GRACE

Are there a lot of artists in Sacramento? I heard there were a lot of artists there.

BARBARA

Yes, there are quite a few artists.

GRACE

It seems like a very nice place to live. My sister liked it before she...

BARBARA

Oh. Yes.

GRACE

Right.

BARBARA

Well, there's some crime of course, but we live in a gated community.

GRACE

I don't like gated communities.

BARBARA

It's really just for safety. Keeps us in. Keeps them out.

GRACE

Keeps who out?

BARBARA
The people who don't have the passcode.

GRACE
What's the passcode?

BARBARA
I can't tell you that.

GRACE
No, I mean why do you need a passcode?

BARBARA
It opens the gate.

GRACE
No, but why do you need a gate?

BARBARA
It just feels safer with the wall. And it's a community, so there's neighbors.

GRACE
That's nice. Are they nice?

BARBARA
Oh, We don't know them very well.

Silence.

GRACE
Does it have a pool?

BARBARA
Oh yes. A very nice community pool.

GRACE
Did you know that E. Coli bacteria is found in 58 percent of public swimming pools?

BARBARA
I did not know that.

GRACE
Do you know what E. Coli is?

BARBARA
No, I don't.

GRACE
It's poop.

Silence.

DAVID
Honey, you should drink some water...

A beat.

GRACE
How many steps now?

DAVID
Three thousand and fourteen.

GRACE
That's pretty good. Why don't you take a break?

David continues to pace, Roger
leaps up!

ROGER
Look over there- cars! Headed this way!

BARBARA
Oh thank God!

DAVID
Very good news, sir!

Roger is jumping up and down!

ROGER
Whoo hoo! Finally! I knew someone had to come!

He waves his arms in the air at
the approaching cars.

BARBARA
I don't see any cars Roger.

ROGER
Look! Right there! They're kicking up all that dust- looks
like a ten wheeler and a couple of regular cars.

DAVID
I don't see them either, sir.

BARBARA
Roger, you're hallucinating. There is nothing there.

ROGER
Right there!! You can't see it??!

BARBARA
There is nothing there.

DAVID

I believe it's a mirage, sir.

BARBARA

Roger sit down, you've probably got heatstroke.

GRACE

It's true. Heatstroke can cause hallucinations.

Roger leaps up and starts
pounding the ground very
violently with the tire iron. He
is bashing the ground over and
over and over.

BARBARA

What is it? What's happening!?

ROGER

Scorpion!!!!

BARBARA

Oh my God!

GRACE

Why did you beat it to death!?

ROGER

They're poisonous.

BARBARA

Did it bite you?

ROGER

No, I got it first.

GRACE

It's dead??

Roger kicks the ground.

ROGER

It looks pretty dead.

GRACE

You didn't have to kill it!

ROGER

It could have bit one of us. And it was a mercy killing, once I hit it, it was going to die, so I put it out of it's misery.

GRACE

Scorpions are rarely deadly. They'll leave you alone. You don't have to bash them to bits!

Silence.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Unless it was an Arizona Bark Scorpion. Those will kill you.

ROGER

I don't know what kind it was.

GRACE

A bark scorpion has a little "bump" like a tooth just under it's tail. Did it have that?

Silence.

ROGER

You're kidding right?

GRACE

Why would I be kidding? It wasn't going to bother you, and yet you crushed it. Typical human.

DAVID

Grace is a real animal lover.

GRACE

(suddenly very, very angry
at David)

Yes, I am. Especially cats. ESPECIALLY cats. Right David??

DAVID

Let's not talk about the cat right now, okay honey?

BARBARA

(interrupting)

I think I see a car!

A beat.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

No, it's just a dust devil.

GRACE

Oh, we don't believe in the devil.

Awkward silence.

BARBARA

I'm sorry to disagree, but the devil is real.

GRACE
Have you ever seen him?

BARBARA
No.

GRACE
Because he's not real.

Awkward silence.

BARBARA
May I have another bottle of water please?

DAVID
Yes, sure, there's plenty.

BARBARA
How many are left?

DAVID
Don't worry. There's plenty.

Silence. For quite some time.
They look out into the desert,
waiting for rescue.

ROGER
A car has got to come by eventually right?

They sit in silence. After
awhile...

ROGER (CONT'D)
Fuckin' armadillo.

GRACE
It's not the armadillo's fault. It was just living it's life.

ROGER
(motioning towards David)
No, it's *his* fault for not just running the damn thing over.
We'd be in Colorado by now.

BARBARA
We're not going to make it for the baptism are we?

ROGER
We'll make it.

BARBARA
We better.

ROGER

Armadillo's. God damn ugly creatures.

BARBARA

(chastising for swearing)

Roger. Don't swear.

GRACE

They're not ugly. They're actually a very tenacious species. They've been expanding their numbers in the United States, at a rate nearly ten times that of other mammals.

ROGER

Then no one would miss one.

GRACE

It had babies.

DAVID

I couldn't just run it over in cold blood, sir.

GRACE

(defensive)

They're actually very fascinating creatures. Did you know that a litter of armadillos is always quadruplets of the same sex? Always.

ROGER

What?

GRACE

The babies are all either boys or they're all girls. And there are always four of them.

ROGER

I know what it means!

BARBARA

She's right about that, Roger. You should really think twice before killing a bunch of helpless little babies.

GRACE

Not if you can somehow avoid it. For instance, for David and I, it was a very difficult decision as to whether we should have our baby or not. It's not the ideal time for us, but we decided "Okay, we'll have it" And we don't regret our choice, so far. Do we David?

David considers whether or not he regrets the decision. He is a little unsure.

DAVID
(unsure)

No. I don't. Do you?

GRACE
(unsure)

No. We made the right choice. I'm sure of it.

DAVID

Me too.

GRACE

Me too.

Silence.

BARBARA

A difficult decision?

GRACE

Very difficult.

Barbara is disgusted with Grace.

BARBARA

I have a headache. It's hot and I'm hungry. Are there anymore treats?

DAVID

No, they're gone.

GRACE

I have a stick of gum. Do you want a stick of gum?

BARBARA

No. I do not want a stick of gum.

Silence.

ROGER

How much water is left?

DAVID

Let me see. Sixteen bottles are left.

ROGER

My God. I'm roasting like a stupid turkey.

GRACE

Turkey's are actually very smart. Smarter than some people.

ROGER

Oh my God!! Maybe It would be better if we all just died, then we wouldn't have to listen to Mrs. Dolittle over here.

DAVID

Don't insult my wife, sir!

BARBARA

Yes, Roger. No matter what offensive thing she says, we can still be civil.

ROGER

She won't keep her mouth shut- like someone else I know!

DAVID

Sir, I have to ask you to stop talking about my wife like that!

ROGER

I can say whatever I want. This is America!

BARBARA

I think there is someone else here who's the one who can't keep their mouth shut, isn't that right Roger??

ROGER

Are we really going to do this now?!

They all start to argue with one another, until...

DAVID

Hey! Hey! What's that!?

ROGER

Someone is coming!

In the distance the sound of a motorcycle. It grows louder and louder as it approaches.

GRACE

Is it a car?

BARBARA

It's not another mirage is it?

ROGER

No, I think it's a motorcycle! A real, living, breathing motorcycle!

BARBARA

Oh thank God. We're saved. I was really starting to worry.

They all wave at an approaching motorcycle. The sound of it grows louder, then stops just "offstage".

Riding it is Jeremiah. Jeremiah is the friendliest, good natured, fun, people pleaser that has ever walked the face of the earth. He is a good looking and charismatic man, and most people are instantly intrigued and taken with him. He wears worn jeans and a colorful tie-dyed shirt. He does not wear a helmet, or any typical "cycling clothes". He enters with a back pack and a guitar.

JEREMIAH

What's happening here?

BARBARA

Thank you! Thank you so much for stopping. We've been out here for hours.

A beat, Barbara laughs.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

(laughing)

You're real aren't you?? You're not a mirage?

JEREMIAH

(laughing)

I've been called a lot of things, but never that. What happened?

ROGER

They swerved.

Jeremiah walks over to the guardrail and looks down into the ditch.

JEREMIAH

Your cars are down there?

DAVID

Neither are drive-able.

JEREMIAH

Wow. Bummer.

GRACE

We're just glad you came along.

ROGER

No one has been by for over an hour.

GRACE

I don't think it was a whole hour.

JEREMIAH

Oh, well, they couldn't get through. Rock slide. The road's closed, man. I was able to get through on my bike. The cops let me through.

DAVID

What about the other direction? No cars have come from either direction.

JEREMIAH

Oh, I'll bet they shut it down to avoid a bunch of people stuck out here in the heat. Like you four. You're lucky I came along I guess.

BARBARA

Yes, thank you. Thank you so much!

JEREMIAH

Did you call for help?

ROGER

None of our phones work.

JEREMIAH

None of them? Wow. Tough luck.

BARBARA

We haven't been able to reach anyone at all.

JEREMIAH

Really? Wow, that sucks. Sorry about all this.

DAVID

It's not your fault.

JEREMIAH

Well, let me see what my phone is up to!

Jeremiah pulls out his phone.

BARBARA

Thank you!

Grace is looking Jeremiah up and down. She is not sure what to make of this man.

GRACE

(incredulous)

If our phones don't work, yours probably doesn't either.

Jeremiah holds up his phone towards the sky. He looks at Grace and smiles.

JEREMIAH

I got bars!

DAVID

Could you please call someone, let them know we're out here, sir?

JEREMIAH

No sweat. It might be tough for them to get out here though, till the road's back open.

DAVID

It's okay, it's okay. As long as we know someone is coming eventually.

BARBARA

I'm Barbara and this is my husband Roger, and that's David and Grace.

Jeremiah goes over to Grace.

JEREMIAH

Nice to meet you.

GRACE

The police let you through?

Jeremiah extends his hand to Grace.

JEREMIAH

I'm Jeremiah.

GRACE

I'm Grace.

JEREMIAH

I know.

GRACE
(perplexed)

You do?

A beat.

JEREMIAH

Barbara just told me.

GRACE

Oh right.

JEREMIAH

I never forget a face. Especially a pretty one.

David walks over to Jeremiah and intervenes. He smiles big and extends his hand.

DAVID

(big smile)

Hi. I'm David...I'm her husband, sir.

GRACE

(rolling her eyes)

He already knows that, David.

JEREMIAH

(shaking Davids hand)

Nice to meet you, Dave.

Awkward pause.

BARBARA

Thank you for rescuing us, Jeremiah. You're kind of a hero!

JEREMIAH

(smiling)

I get that a lot! Just give me a second while I get someone on the line.

BARBARA

We're very grateful.

DAVID

Yes. Very.

Grace is a bit puzzled, and curious as to why Jeremiah's phone works and theirs do not.

GRACE

I can't believe you have a signal. Who's your carrier?

JEREMIAH

Some new one. Converse, I think it's called.

GRACE

I've never heard of that.

JEREMIAH

It's new.

GRACE

Isn't Converse a brand of sneaker?

JEREMIAH

Is it? I've had it since March. They're new.

GRACE

Is it cheaper than a regular carrier?

JEREMIAH

Yes, it is. By quite a bit.

GRACE

I'll have to look them up. Do they have a website?

JEREMIAH

I'm sure they do.

GRACE

I'm not. How did you find out about them?

JEREMIAH

You're very inquisitive aren't you?

BARBARA

(interrupting)

We have Sprint.

Jeremiah dials his phone, and makes a call.

GRACE

I'm only saying, that I've never heard of a phone company called Converse.

JEREMIAH

It's a pretty good service. I've got bars and you don't!...Hold on.

Jeremiah reaches someone on his phone.

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)

(on phone)

Hello, yeah, hey...I'm out in the desert on fifty and there's some folks out here who seem to have had a bit of a fender bender, and we could use a couple of tow trucks... I know, yeah, but I'm guessing they'll open it back up soon... I'm sorry?...I don't know, I'll check... (to them) Anybody know what the mile marker is?...

ROGER

I don't know, did anyone notice?

DAVID

No. I know we've come at least 200 miles since Reno.

BARBARA

I don't think it was that far. But I wasn't paying much attention. We were listening to an audio book.

Jeremiah has lowered his phone and he appears to be ignoring the caller on the other end of the line, Grace notices, but the others do not.

JEREMIAH

What book?

BARBARA

A Pilgrim's Progress.

JEREMIAH

That's a wonderful book. The journey to the "Celestial City". Such a great religious allegory.

Grace looks from Jeremiah to his phone and back again.

GRACE

Written in 1678, by John Bunyan. It's widely considered the worlds first English novel.

ROGER

It reminds me of Lord of the Rings.

BARBARA

It's definitely the worlds greatest Christian book. Except for the Bible of course.

GRACE

Well, all three of those books are completely made up.

DAVID

(changing the subject)

What mile marker are we at again?

JEREMIAH

I passed one just a ways back.

GRACE

You should tell the man on the other end of the line, because he's been waiting for awhile.

A beat.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Or woman. It could be a woman. I shouldn't have assumed.

JEREMIAH

(smiling)

It just happens to be a man.

A beat.

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)

But it could just as easily have been a woman.

Jeremiah raises the phone to his ear, and speaks to the person on the other end.

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)

Hello? Yeah, we're at about mile marker 268 or maybe 269. Not sure exactly. That's right... I'm sure you'll find us. We're the only ones out here... I don't know, hold on... (to them) you folks have plenty of water?

David pipes up cheerfully and enthusiastically.

DAVID

(over enthusiastic and proud)

Yes!! We have a half a case of water left!!

A beat, they all look at David.

JEREMIAH

We're fine on water, but get out here as soon as you can right?... Yup. You've got my number? Oh you don't?... It's five, five, five - two, three, one, six. I'm Jeremiah. Yes, right, Jeremiah, twenty-three, sixteen. You got it. Nice to meet you Carl, we'll see you soon... Okay, you too... Hey, bring a couple of bags of chips or something won't you? These folks look pretty hungry. Okay, thanks so much....okay... Bye... They'll be here as soon as the road is clear.

BARBARA

Praise the Lord.

JEREMIAH

Amen.

BARBARA

(passive aggressively towards Grace)

Thank you, Jeremiah. It's nice to hear from someone who actually believes in God.

Jeremiah motions towards the landscape.

JEREMIAH

Why wouldn't someone believe in God? Just take a look at this picture right here- Someone created all of this right? It didn't just "appear" one day by magic.

GRACE

(towards Barbara)

She thinks it did.

He motions to the desert.

JEREMIAH

(to Grace)

Just look at all that beauty, and tell me there's no God.

GRACE

There's no God.

Silence.

GRACE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. But it's true.

JEREMIAH

Look around, someone had to create all of this magnificence, right?

GRACE

Plate tectonics and erosion.

JEREMIAH

Well, plate tectonics and erosion didn't make you.

GRACE

Excuse me?

JEREMIAH

I'm just saying all the beauty in the world isn't random.

A beat. Grace is flustered by Jeremiah's compliment.

GRACE

I need some water.

DAVID

I have some right here!

Barbara immediately changes the subject.

BARBARA

I really hope someone comes soon. Roger and I are actually on our way to my niece's baptism. She's nine.

JEREMIAH

I don't have a niece. Or a nephew. I don't have any brothers or sisters. Or parents.

BARBARA

Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. It must be lonely for you.

JEREMIAH

Not really, I spend my time on the road meeting all kinds of nice people like you. I love hanging out with strangers. You learn a lot.

Grace has been stewing and thinking about Jeremiah. Then she challenges him, but puts on a cheerful disposition.

GRACE

(sweet, but she's testing him)

Your phone number starts with five, five, five? Isn't that what they use on TV shows and movies? I thought it wasn't a real number?

Jeremiah challenges her right back.

JEREMIAH

Actually, it used to be that way, but they released all the five, five, fives a few years back, and now a lot of people actually do have it. But I get that all the time.

GRACE

I've never heard that.

JEREMIAH

It's pretty easy to google.

GRACE

I can't believe you had cell service.

BARBARA

(refuting Grace)

I'm glad that you did.

David comes over and shakes Jeremiahs hand vigorously.

DAVID

Thank you so much again, sir. We're very lucky...And you don't have to stay. Sir. We'll be fine now, but we appreciate your stopping and being so kind. But you can go now. We're just fine, so... um...you can go. Sir.

JEREMIAH

Not at all. I'm glad I was able to get through. And I'm happy to wait here with ya'll till that truck comes by.

ROGER

We're fine.

BARBARA

Would you like a bottle of water?

JEREMIAH

I am kind of thirsty. I've got some beef jerky if ya'll are interested.

GRACE

(challenging)

What kind of accent is that?

JEREMIAH

(challenging back)

Excuse me?

GRACE

You said "ya'll". Where are you from?

JEREMIAH

Virginia.

GRACE

Which part?

JEREMIAH

West.

GRACE

West Virginia?

JEREMIAH

No. Western Virginia.

GRACE

I see.

JEREMIAH

Have you been there?

GRACE

No.

JEREMIAH

It's nice.

GRACE

I'm sure it is.

Barbara gets out a bottle of water and gives it to Jeremiah.

BARBARA
Jeremiah, please, have some water.

JEREMIAH
Yes, Ma'am. Would you like some jerky?

Jeremiah pulls a bag of beef jerky from his back pack. Roger grabs it out of his hand.

ROGER
(towards Barbara)
Thank God, you brought some real food. We've just been eating cereal and sugar, because no one packed real food.

JEREMIAH
I'm happy to share.

Jeremiah drinks down the entire bottle in one gulp. He throws the bottle on the ground, littering. Grace surreptitiously retrieves it.

BARBARA
Who knew we'd be rescued by a handsome stranger? It's kind of romantic.

ROGER
Oh, Jesus Christ. Here we go.

BARBARA
(chastising)
Roger!!

GRACE
(to Jeremiah)
You just littered.

JEREMIAH
What?

GRACE
You just threw that plastic bottle on the ground. Do you know it takes thousands of years for plastic to break down? And it can choke wild life.

ROGER
(under his breath)
Like armadillo's?

JEREMIAH

I'm sorry. I wasn't littering. I was just setting it down.

GRACE

(disbelief)

You were just setting it down?

JEREMIAH

Yes. I was going to pick it up later.

GRACE

But you threw it like you were littering.

Jeremiah comes close to Grace.

JEREMIAH

I would never litter.

Jeremiah holds a piece of jerky out to Grace, as a peace offering.

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)

Have some jerky.

A beat. Grace gazes into Jeremiah's eyes. Then she snaps out of it.

GRACE

(defiant)

I don't eat meat.

JEREMIAH

(cheerfully)

Well, I've been thinking of going veggie myself. I'm a bit of an animal lover, and I feel kinda bad every time I eat one.

Grace immediately perks up and engages with Jeremiah. She is SO excited! Finally something she can get behind.

GRACE

Oh, I love animals too!...Especially cats. Right David?... It's not a hard transition!!! Really it's not. You should do it. You'll feel so much better. I just LOVE animals, that's what got me started.

David walks over and takes the jerky out of Jeremiah's hand.

DAVID

I like jerky.

He looks over at Grace.

DAVID (CONT'D)

And animals.

He rips into a piece, chewing it aggressively.

JEREMIAH

Yeah, it's too bad you had to take out those poor critters back there.

GRACE

(alarmed)

What critters?

JEREMIAH

Back there, a bit of unfortunate roadkill.

GRACE

Oh no!!

JEREMIAH

I'm afraid so.

Grace turns towards David angrily.

GRACE

David! You told me they were okay!!!!

DAVID

I thought they were okay. They seemed okay.

GRACE

(angry)

But you're not sure?

DAVID

I'm pretty sure, at least I thought I was.

GRACE

Did you lie to me again?!

DAVID

No, I'm not lying, I really thought they were okay.

GRACE

You were driving too fast!

DAVID

Honey, I'm sorry if I killed the armadillos.

GRACE

A lot of good that will do them now.

DAVID

Well, I'm sorry, honey. I really thought they got away.

GRACE

I can't believe it. Oh. This is just awful. You can be so irresponsible, David. This is just like what happened to Sprinkles all over again!

BARBARA

Who's Sprinkles?

GRACE

My cat.

ROGER

Why is everyone getting so worked up?? It's just a bunch of stupid armadillos.

JEREMIAH

Armadillos? Nah, you mean tortoise's.

David and Grace become very confused.

DAVID

Tortoise's?

GRACE

Are you sure?

JEREMIAH

It was a family of tortoise's. I didn't see any armadillos. Armadillo's don't hang out much here. They like water.

Grace is once again, questioning Jeremiahs sincerity.

GRACE

They do, but they've been really proliferating in Nevada.

JEREMIAH

That may be, but these were tortoise's.

GRACE

(alarmed)

Not desert tortoise's?

JEREMIAH

I'm afraid so... Does anyone feel like it's getting hotter?

Jeremiah takes off his shirt, deliberately, showing off. He's muscular, ripped, and gleaming with sweat. He's shows off his body suggestively. Grace and Barbara notice. Even Roger and David are stunned. A beat. David decides he'd rather Jeremiah keep his shirt on.

DAVID

(intimidated by Jeremiah)

I think it's actually getting cooler. The sun is going down.

A beat.

DAVID (CONT'D)

It feels like it's getting colder to me. The desert can get really cold at night.

JEREMIAH

You're right about that Dave. We should be prepared. We're going to need a fire when the sun goes down.

ROGER

You think we're going to be here after dark?!

JEREMIAH

Better safe than sorry. Dave, why don't you look around for some firewood, something we can burn.

DAVID

David.

JEREMIAH

Grab some of that sagebrush, and I'll get us set up. I was a boy scout, I'm pretty good at starting fires.

He pulls a lighter from his pocket and flicks it.

DAVID

I hope you have sunscreen on. We have some in the car.

GRACE

David, go gather some kindling.

David wanders around looking for sticks to burn.

BARBARA

You're really prepared, Jeremiah.

JEREMIAH

That's the Scout motto. "Be prepared". It's too bad those desert tortoises weren't prepared for your Honda Civic.
(laughs)

ROGER

Desert tortoise? Is there more than one kind of tortoise?

A beat. Grace is distracted by Jeremiah's glistening, perfect body.

GRACE

(to Jeremiah)

Yes, there is. And desert tortoise's are a very endangered species. They're Nevada's state reptile.

ROGER

Nevada has a state reptile?

GRACE

(to Jeremiah)

Yes, it does. The desert tortoise.

ROGER

Don't turtles live in ponds? They live in the water. Not the desert.

GRACE

(to Jeremiah)

They're not turtles. They're tortoise's. There's an enormous difference. And they can live on very little water. The Desert tortoise can store water in their bladder for months at a time without urinating. Also they can turn their urine into crystals when their body needs to save water.

A beat. A moment between Grace and Jeremiah.

GRACE (CONT'D)

(to Jeremiah, quietly)

They can live up to a year without water...

Sexual tension between Grace and Jeremiah.

GRACE (CONT'D)

(to Jeremiah)

They are incredible creatures.

Grace breaks the tension and turns on David.

GRACE (CONT'D)

And apparently my husband just ran over a whole family of them.

DAVID

(confused)

They really looked like armadillo's.

JEREMIAH

Go check it out for yourself. It's not pretty.

David doesn't want to see dead armadillo's. Or tortoises.

DAVID

Thank you. We're fine, thank you... I think you can go now, sir.

GRACE

Did you find any sticks yet? It's starting to get cold.

The colors of a sunset stream over them. Grace begins pacing back and forth in a panic. Is she panicked about the tortoises or Jeremiah?

GRACE (CONT'D)

(pacing)

This is bad. Killing the desert tortoise is illegal. They are endangered and protected. David, I can't believe you killed a whole family of them. And then lied to me about it...Again.

DAVID

I wasn't lying, honey! I really thought they were okay.

GRACE

(flatly)

You're such a liar.

JEREMIAH

I'm real sorry to bring bad news.

BARBARA

(flirting)

You brought the phone. That's all that matters.

JEREMIAH

You're very welcome.

BARBARA

You must be tired and dusty. Why don't you sit down? Over here. Next to me. Let's watch the sunset. Isn't it beautiful?

GRACE

The bright colors are caused by pollutants in the air.

BARBARA

Roger, let him have your chair.

JEREMIAH

I'm fine. I don't want to take someone's seat.

BARBARA

It's no trouble.

Turning on Roger.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Roger get up!! Give him your chair!

Roger doesn't move.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Roger, let him sit down!

ROGER

He said he doesn't want to sit down!

BARBARA

Just let him rest for a minute. Jeremiah, come over here and rest for a minute.

JEREMIAH

Really, I'm fine to stand.

BARBARA

Roger!!

Roger stands and kicks his chair over and walks away. Jeremiah picks up the chair and sits.

JEREMIAH

Well, if you insist.

BARBARA

So, Jeremiah, Do you travel a lot? You're single?

JEREMIAH

(laughs)

Yup! I'm not married, never have been.

BARBARA

Well, that's surprising. You're very handsome.

GRACE

He's not that handsome.

JEREMIAH

Thank you, Ma'am. But most women are turned off by my meandering lifestyle.

BARBARA

Oh, not me. It sounds so romantic and adventurous!

GRACE

I don't like meandering. I like to know where I'm going. Otherwise, what's the point? You're just going nowhere.

David comes over with a handful of sticks.

DAVID

I found a tumble weed.

JEREMIAH

Nice, Dave. Just arrange them in a small pile right there. Leave some space between them for ventilation.

David starts to set up the fire.

BARBARA

You're a musician?

JEREMIAH

Of a sort. It pays the bills.

BARBARA

A professional! I always wanted to learn to play an instrument.

JEREMIAH

Why didn't you?

BARBARA

I got married. I've never really known a professional musician before. Do you play for a lot of people?

JEREMIAH

No, Ma'am. I play, people put money in the case, I ride on to the next point of interest.

BARBARA

Very exciting life you lead. I'm a little bit jealous of it.

ROGER

You do exactly the same thing every single day. You'd have no idea how to meander!

BARBARA

Maybe not, but you sure know how to. I wish I had done things differently when I was young. I think it's too late for me now.

JEREMIAH

Well, I personally believe anything is possible.

BARBARA

Well that is true, with God all things are possible.

JEREMIAH

Matthew, nineteen.

BARBARA

That's right! You know your Bible!

JEREMIAH

I grew up with the Bible. I'm kind of a Bible nerd-

BARBARA

(blurting out)

Oh, I find that very sexy.

She catches herself.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

I mean... I'm so sorry!

JEREMIAH

(laughs)

I know what you mean.

DAVID

(working with the sticks)

How does this look?

JEREMIAH

We're going to need more wood than that.

David walks around looking for more firewood. Grace has become frustrated with Jeremiah.

GRACE

Not everything is possible. Some things are just impossible.

JEREMIAH

What do you think is impossible?

Grace thinks about it. She's very upset.

GRACE

We can't bring that family of tortoise's... or armadillo's or that poor innocent scorpion back to life.

BARBARA

Jesus came back to life.

GRACE

If you say so.

The sun is going down quickly.
The stars start to come out one
by one.

ROGER

Scorpions. Nasty things.

JEREMIAH

Did it bite you? They're mostly harmless you know.

Grace is thrilled that Jeremiah
is actually siding with her. She
runs over to him excitedly.

GRACE

(excited)

That's what I was trying to tell them!

JEREMIAH

Except of course...

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)

The Arizona Bark Scorpion.

GRACE

The Arizona Bark Scorpion.

They smile at each other and
share a moment.

JEREMIAH

Those will kill you.

GRACE

(smiling big)

They sure will!

Jeremiah walks right up to Grace,
he and Grace have an intimate
exchange, close to each other,
their noses nearly touching.

JEREMIAH

But they're pretty rare. It probably wasn't one of those.

GRACE

I told them they didn't need to kill the poor thing.

JEREMIAH

Of course not. Scorpions are completely harmless creatures.

GRACE

(almost hypnotized)

Right! Exactly! Scorpions are completely harmless creatures!

A beat.

ROGER

I'm pretty sure they're not.

David brings over a big handful
of wood. Jeremiah helps him
arrange it.

JEREMIAH

(arranging the wood)

Nice job, Dave. Now, the trick is to put some really small
stuff on the bottom, and then layer the wood so that the
bigger pieces are on top.

DAVID

I know how to build a fire.

JEREMIAH

Well, good for you, Dave. Why didn't you say so?

DAVID

(with an edge)

I know how to do a lot of things...sir.

GRACE

Especially how to kill poor helpless creatures.

JEREMIAH

In fairness, Dave really tried to miss those poor little
beavers.

GRACE

Beavers?? You said tortoises.

JEREMIAH

I'm pretty sure I said beavers.

DAVID

I knew it! I thought they looked like beavers!

GRACE

They really looked like armadillos. They WERE armadillo's.

JEREMIAH

Beavers and armadillo's are very, very similar. Impossible to
tell them apart from a distance.

GRACE

That's not true.

JEREMIAH

Have you ever seen them side by side?

GRACE

No.

JEREMIAH

You should sometime. It's remarkable.

GRACE

(very irritated)

There's no beavers in the desert.

JEREMIAH

(as to a child)

Yes, as a matter of fact there are, actually the Nevada Sand Beaver is very common in these parts.

GRACE

(angry)

I've never heard of the fucking Nevada Sand Beaver!!!

DAVID

(with an edge)

Not everything is on Wikipedia...Honey.

GRACE

Shut up David!!

ROGER

Yeah, shut up Dave!!

BARBARA

Roger, stay out of it. You shut up!

ALL

(They begin ARGUING)

They all start to argue. Jeremiah lights the fire, and it catches quickly and blazes up.

JEREMIAH

I think everyone is getting a little cranky...Who wants to play a game?

ROGER

A game?!

JEREMIAH

I think everyone is getting tense from being stranded out in this dessert. So I'm thinking, why not kill some time with a game?

BARBARA
(intrigued)

What kind of game?

JEREMIAH

A guessing game, something where we can learn about one another.

DAVID

I don't want to play a stupid game.

JEREMIAH

I think we're going to be here awhile Dave. We're probably going to be here all night. Why don't you go set up the tent?

DAVID

We don't have a tent.

BARBARA

We have a tent in the trunk. How did you know?

JEREMIAH

Because I know Roger like's to "Be Prepared".

BARBARA

Roger go get the tent.

GRACE

Dave, you help him set it up.

JEREMIAH

Good idea. Get the tent, and then we'll have some fun.

Roger and David go to get the
tent.

GRACE

I don't want to play this game either.

BARBARA

Grace, as long as we're stranded in this dessert, we might as well play to pass the time.

GRACE

Desert.

BARBARA

That's what I said.

GRACE

You didn't. You said we were "stranded in this dessert".

BARBARA

I never said that.

GRACE

You did.

JEREMIAH

So the game is, we each have to guess a secret about each other. It goes like this. First a person holds their arm out over the fire, like this. Then they say three things about themselves, only two of them are a lie. Then the other four of us has to guess which is the truth. Whoever thinks they know first has to stab the person, like on Family Feud. Whoever stabs the persons arm first, gets to guess first. If you get it wrong, it goes to the next person, and so on and so on.

BARBARA

(excited!)

Like the buzzer on Family Feud! Whoever is fastest!

JEREMIAH

Right!

Grace is trying to decipher what Jeremiah may or may not have said.

GRACE

It sounds stupid.

JEREMIAH

The winner gets a bottle of water, because we're running out, so the stakes will be higher.

Roger and David lug a tent over the embankment and onto the stage.

DAVID

There's plenty of water.

JEREMIAH

The last I looked there were only three bottles left.

DAVID

That can't be right...sir.

JEREMIAH

(laughs)

I guess we drank more than we thought.

GRACE
 (to Jeremiah)
 Did you say we *stab* them?

JEREMIAH
 What?

GRACE
 You said they hold out their arm, and when we know the answer we stab them.

JEREMIAH
 Stab them? Why would you do that? I said grab them. You grab their arm, and who ever guesses the truth first wins. Stab them? Don't do that! (laughs)

GRACE
 I'm pretty sure you said "stab".

BARBARA
 I'll go first.

JEREMIAH
 Okay, hold your arm out over the fire.

BARBARA
 Over the fire?

JEREMIAH
 Not so you get burnt. Just over it so it's as hot as you can stand it- that way you'll talk faster when you tell your three facts.

Barbara stretches her arm over the fire.

BARBARA
 It's very hot.

GRACE
 You said three facts, but two of them are supposed to be a lie, right?

JEREMIAH
 Exactly. One lie, and two facts.

GRACE
 Two lies, one fact.

JEREMIAH
 Exactly.

BARBARA
 This is very hot.

JEREMIAH

You can start now, Barbara. I know it's a little painful, but also it can be really fun.

BARBARA

(In pain, but trying to be a good sport)

It is a little fun.

JEREMIAH

Exactly.

BARBARA

Can I start? It's burning my arm pretty badly.

JEREMIAH

That's just part of the game. No pain, no game.

The guys are still putting up the tent.

ROGER

This pole goes into this larger one, idiot.

DAVID

Why don't you just set it up yourself??

GRACE

I'm the only one playing the game.

JEREMIAH

(ignoring her)

Okay, ready, and ...go!

BARBARA

Okay.... One. After I finished college, I moved to Paris and for a brief time danced with the Royal Parisian Ballet. Two. I am deeply allergic to ketchup and pimentos. Three. Once Upon a Time, last month, I caught my husband having sex with his boss. This is really hurting me.

Awkward pause.

JEREMIAH

Grace, any idea? Make a guess? Grab her arm!

Grace grabs her arm.

GRACE

I think it's number three, that's the truth!

BARBARA

You're right. You win.

Grace shakes her fist in
"victory" Barbara puts down her
arm.

DAVID
(calling over)

Roger is gay?

GRACE
(turning on David)

Why would you assume that? Why would his boss have to be a man? He couldn't possibly have a female boss? Really? This is exactly the kind of thing I've been talking about, David.

DAVID
I'm sorry, I shouldn't have assumed.

GRACE
(irritated)
Finish that tent.

David goes back to working on the
tent.

BARBARA
His boss' name is Carl Martinez. He's a Hispanic Mexican latino man. And he's not even attractive. He has a weird mustache and a mole on his ass.

Roger goes over to her, letting
go of the tent and it falls on
David.

ROGER
I wasn't doing anything. I was just sitting at my desk. I was not participating in any way. He was doing all the work. It was sexual harassment, I was a victim. He was fired. And he's not Mexican. He's from Ecuador.

BARBARA
What's the difference?? He was fired. You're right about that. But then why did you feel the need to go to his house three weeks ago in the middle of the afternoon?

ROGER
I didn't go to his house.

BARBARA
I was there. I followed you.

ROGER
Oh! That! Yeah, yeah, yeah. I was dropping some of his things he forgot at the office.

BARBARA

What things?

ROGER

I don't know. Some pictures. A box of pens. A package of Certs. Just a few things. I thought I'd be nice and drop them off right at his house.

BARBARA

You didn't even have the decency to close the front door. I saw the whole thing!!!

Awkward moment, then Roger panics.

ROGER

You just stood there and watched?!

JEREMIAH

Watching, is one of the best ways to learn about what makes people tick. I love watching.

BARBARA

Roger, it's disgusting!

ROGER

I know it is. I'm trying to stop.

BARBARA

Try harder!

ROGER

What about you?! Did you really have to tell every single person at church about it? And his wife? He's probably gonna lose his kids, Barbara!

BARBARA

Good. They shouldn't be with someone like that.

ROGER

That's not very "Christian"! At church everyone stares at me like I've done something horrible.

BARBARA

You did.

ROGER

And why the hell do we have to go to church five times a week?!

BARBARA

You need every minute you can get. You're a weak man Roger!

ROGER

I'm sorry, but I'm not responsible!! It's the demons. You said so yourself.

GRACE

There's no such thing as demons.

BARBARA

(angry)

Will you please stop saying things aren't real?! Demons are very, very real. I've seen them. Many, many times.

GRACE

Really? Where?

BARBARA

What do you mean "where"?

GRACE

Where did you see these demons? In your attic? In the cereal aisle next to the Rice Krispies? Was it at the Best Buy?

BARBARA

You're starting to get on my nerves.

GRACE

If there are Demon's running around, that's some pretty big news.

BARBARA

(calming down)

I think you're pregnant, and hot, and I totally understand that you're on edge. Let's just rewind and relax.

GRACE

It's just when someone tells me that they've seen lots and lots of demons running around Sacramento, I have to call bullshit.

David has become tangled in the cords and poles of the tent. He busts out in anger.

DAVID

WHAT IS WRONG WITH THIS FUCKING TENT???

A beat. They all look over at him. Then he goes back to trying to set up the tent.

BARBARA

Roger, I know you've been skipping your reorientation classes, but you're not ever going to get better without your classes and lots and lots of prayer.

I'm trying to be understanding about this to a point, but you have to do the work.

ROGER

It was just a mess up. I went over there to apologize for getting him fired, and it sort of, just...slipped out.

BARBARA

You should have resisted, prayed about it and called up your reorientation buddy.

ROGER

I don't know if I really should be around my reorientation buddy, anymore.

BARBARA

You have to resist better! God isn't going to fix everything for you.

GRACE

That's very true, he's not. Because he's made up. Like Dumbledore. A completely made up person.

BARBARA

God is not a person. He's God...Roger, you need to pray about this every single day! Every time you get those feelings you need to drop to your knees and pray!

ROGER

What's the point!?? I don't even believe in God.

BARBARA

What?!?

GRACE

Thank you!

BARBARA

Roger, I can't believe you're saying something like that!

GRACE

He's just being rational. Religion is delusional.

DAVID

That's not nice Grace.

GRACE

But it's true.

DAVID

How do you know? You don't know any more than anyone else.

GRACE

I know what facts are.

DAVID

(defensive)

It's not a fact. It's faith. And I believe in God.

GRACE

What?! Since when??

DAVID

Since forever.

GRACE

You never told me that. That's something pretty important that you should have told me, liar.

DAVID

Because you would have made fun of me.

GRACE

Of course I would! It's stupid. Praying is stupid. The idea of God is stupid. He's made up to make people feel better about dying. That's it.

BARBARA

God is NOT a waste of time!!

She splashes Grace with the contents of her water bottle spilling it everywhere. Jeremiah looks on in amusement.

ROGER

(very angry)

Yes! It's a waste of time! It doesn't do any good at all. I'm just sick in the head, and that's that!!!!

Roger picks up the Bowie knife and begins violently stabbing Graces' pillow.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Leave me alone, Barbara! Jesus Christ!!

Grace shrieks.

BARBARA

He does this all the time. He won't do anything. He doesn't have the balls for it.

ROGER

(pleading to David)

Dude, why didn't you just run over the Goddamn armadillo, or tortoise, or sand beavers, or whatever the fuck they were? I'd be in Denver by now, and none of this would be happening.

David has gotten the tent set up.

DAVID

Ha! There! I got it!

A beat. Then the tent immediately collapses.

DAVID (CONT'D)

FUCK!

JEREMIAH

I think Grace wins that round. Who wants to go next?

BLACKOUT.

END OF ACT ONE.

ACT TWO: SCENE ONE - AN UNDETERMINED AMOUNT OF TIME LATER.

Grace is alone in a chair looking out into the night. After a moment, Jeremiah walks in.

JEREMIAH

Peaceful, isn't it?

GRACE

Why are you still here??

JEREMIAH

Is Barbara sleeping?

GRACE

I don't know. I wasn't really paying attention. I guess she and David are in that tent over there.

JEREMIAH

Roger too?

GRACE

He went off to urinate... He didn't say urinate, but that's where he went.

JEREMIAH

Too bad he's not a tortoise. I hear they can really hold their water.

GRACE

Don't make fun of me.

JEREMIAH

Speaking of water, I brought you some. I have half of a canteen.

He holds the canteen out to her.

GRACE

If you had water, then why did you drink ours?

JEREMIAH

It looked like you had plenty.

GRACE

I don't think that's very nice.

Awkward pause. She takes the canteen and drinks some.

JEREMIAH

You don't like me do you?

GRACE

I don't even know you.

JEREMIAH

I feel like I know you.

GRACE

I've only known you for a couple of hours.

JEREMIAH

No, I mean *know* you. I think I've got you figured out.

GRACE

Do you now? I'm pretty sure I've got you figured out. You're a liar.

JEREMIAH

I prefer story teller.

GRACE

Then the things you were saying... they were lies!

JEREMIAH

Lies can also be the truth.

GRACE

No, they can't! Lies cannot be the truth. They're one or the other.

JEREMIAH

Or they can be both.

GRACE

(frustrated, changing the subject)

Stop saying that! Go get some more wood and get this fire going! I'm cold!

JEREMIAH

You're cold? Here, have my jacket.

Jeremiah takes off his jacket.

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)

Sorry, I'm a little sweaty.

A moment between Jeremiah and Grace

GRACE

My hands are cold that's all.

JEREMIAH

Here...

Jeremiah takes Graces hands and rubs them. He strokes her hair.

GRACE

What are you doing?

JEREMIAH

I like you Grace.

GRACE

Well, I don't like you.

JEREMIAH

You just say what's on your mind. Completely honest. Most people aren't like that.

GRACE

You better stop it, or I'm going to call my husband.

JEREMIAH

Really? I don't think so. You don't even like your husband.

GRACE

(she agrees)

What? That's not tr-

He leans in and kisses her. She pushes him off. A beat. Then she kisses him back. He lays her down and gets on top of her and they kiss long and hard. ROger yells from offstage.

ROGER

(off)

You better watch out for snakes!

Grace leaps up. Jeremiah laughs. Roger enters.

GRACE

Roger! You were gone a long time!

ROGER

Yeah. I had to kill a rattlesnake.

GRACE

What??!

ROGER

Yeah.

GRACE

Why?!

ROGER

It tried to bite me.

GRACE

Snakes do not bite people without being provoked in some way. They just don't!!

ROGER

This one tried to bite me for no reason.

GRACE

Liar.

JEREMIAH

It's too bad Roger. Rattlesnakes are actually very friendly and gentle creatures.

GRACE

(angry)

Yes Roger, rattlesnakes are actually very friendly and gentle creatures!!!

A beat.

ROGER

I'm pretty sure they're not.

BLACKOUT.

ACT TWO: SCENE TWO - AN UNDETERMINED AMOUNT OF TIME LATER.

Now there are two poles with a strand of colorful Chinese lanterns. David is sleeping on a full size air mattress under the Chinese Lanterns. There is also a banner hanging outside the tent, with a large dove, that says "Camping for Christ"

Jeremiah and Roger are awake watching the fire. Jeremiah is in a chair, Roger is sitting on the ground wearing lounging pajamas.

JEREMIAH

The fire feels good. It gets pretty cold at night out here in the dessert.

ROGER

Yeah. Thanks for making the fire. I was never good at building fires.

JEREMIAH

I'm very good at starting fires.

Silence. They look out into the night.

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)

Looks like it's just you and me.

ROGER

I can't believe they all fit in that little tent.

A beat.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Barbara's probably going to divorce me.

JEREMIAH

Really? You think so? You didn't do anything wrong.

Roger comes to a realization that he's been right all along.

ROGER

I didn't, did I?

JEREMIAH

No, of course not. I was surprised at how upset she got.

ROGER

She's pretty high strung.

JEREMIAH

I'm sure you were just blowing off some steam... so to speak. Guy fun.

They laugh.

ROGER

Yeah. Exactly what I thought. It wasn't a big deal.

JEREMIAH

All guys do it. It's perfectly normal. You shouldn't feel bad.

ROGER

You think all guys do that?

JEREMIAH

Sure. Of course. You didn't do anything wrong.

Jeremiah comes up behind Roger and rubs his shoulders. Roger tenses.

ROGER

Do you do...that?

JEREMIAH

I'm a very open minded person.

Roger relaxes. Jeremiah continues to rub his shoulders. He strokes Rogers hair.

ROGER

Me too.

Jeremiah leans in and kisses Roger. Roger recoils.

JEREMIAH

It's okay Roger.

ROGER

I don't think this is a good idea-

JEREMIAH

Relax will you? You're so uptight.

Jeremiah kisses him again. Roger kisses him back.

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)

I'm sorry you're in this situation out here. All over a family of stupid sand beavers.

ROGER

So fucking stupid. What an idiot. And that wife of his...

JEREMIAH

Yeah. I know you're not crazy about her.

ROGER

I hate people like her. Women think they know everything. They think they're better at everything. All they do is bitch, bitch, bitch. That's why I like spending time with guys more.

Jeremiah playfully ruffles his hair.

JEREMIAH

(playfully)

And having your dick in their mouth.

ROGER

Sure, yeah. Or vice versa. It's just guy stuff, right?!

Jeremiah nods.

ROGER (CONT'D)

I think that Grace woman is making things worse. Barbara was gonna drop the whole Carl Martinez thing, but now, I'm fucked and she'll probably steal all my money...And that guy-

JEREMIAH

If he had just run over those fuckin' armadillo's.

ROGER

Yeah. Fuckin' armadillo's. Or were they tortoises? Or sand beavers?

JEREMIAH

Who knows? They're all basically the same animal.

ROGER

Yeah they are.

They look out into the night,
after a moment Roger is filled
with regret.

ROGER (CONT'D)

I probably shouldn't have done it.

JEREMIAH

Don't beat yourself up over it. It's that David's fault we're all stuck out here.

ROGER

Fuck that guy.

JEREMIAH

Yeah. Fuck him. Makes you just wanna stab him and shake him, doesn't it?

ROGER

You read my mind, brother. Would you hand me a water?

JEREMIAH

Oh, the water's gone.

ROGER

It's gone?

JEREMIAH

Yeah, someone finished the last of it.

ROGER

Probably that fuckin' guy.

JEREMIAH

Yeah, pretty sure it was him.

ROGER

I'm so glad you came along, or I'd be stranded out here in the middle of the dessert with my wife and a couple of a-holes. You're definitely one of the good guys...Just listen to that motherfucker snore.

JEREMIAH

So annoying. You know what's good for stopping snoring?

ROGER

No, what?

JEREMIAH

A good stabbing.

Awkward pause. Then Jeremiah laughs.

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)

(laughing)

Dude! I'm kidding! Why would you want to stab that guy?

Now Roger laughs.

ROGER

I wouldn't.

JEREMIAH

But I wouldn't blame you if you did... Look, here. I just so happen to have one bottle of water left. It's yours.

Roger swigs.

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)

Thanks man!

He takes the water.

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)

Hey, dude, I'm having trouble opening this bottle. The plastic won't come off. Where's that knife of yours?

Roger picks up the big Bowie knife.

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)

Thanks!

David snores.

ROGER

You know what I wish? I wish someone would just stab that guy and shut him up.

JEREMIAH

Oh...Me too.

Roger leaves and walks off into the night. After a moment Barbara comes out of the tent.

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)

Barbara, I thought you were asleep.

BARBARA

I can't sleep.

JEREMIAH

Stop. Stay right there!

BARBARA

What is it??

JEREMIAH

The moon- the way it's bouncing off of your hair.

BARBARA

What? What are you talking about?

JEREMIAH

Come over here and sit next to me.

She walks towards him and sits down.

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry about Roger. I can't believe he did that to you.

He strokes her hair.

BLACKOUT.

ACT TWO: SCENE THREE - LATER THAT NIGHT.

Roger sits in one of the chairs looking out into the night. Now, Next to the mattress is a small table with an alarm clock and a book, and a floor lamp. The women are in the tent. Jeremiah is far off to the side sitting on the guardrail in the shadows.

Roger holds up his knife and looks at it. He looks at the knife. He stands up and looks over at David. He looks at the knife. He walks over to David and looms over him. He raises the knife. David stirs. Roger lowers the knife. Barbara pokes her head out of the tent.

BARBARA
(waking up, whispering)
Roger, can you get me a water please?

ROGER
(whispering)
We're out of water.

BARBARA
(whispering)
What? I thought we had plenty.

ROGER
(towards David)
That guy drank it.

BARBARA
(aloud)
He drank the last bottle?!

Barbara comes out of the tent.

ROGER
Yeah.

BARBARA
Without telling us? Without sharing?

ROGER
Yeah.

Barbara gets up, goes over to David and kicks him. David leaps up. Grace comes out of the tent.

BARBARA
Hey! Asshole! Did you drink the last of the water and not tell any of us?!

Barbara pulls the blanket and shoves David off of the bed. Grace rushes at Barbara.

GRACE

Leave him alone! It wasn't your water to begin with!

Barbara shoves Grace to the ground.

BARBARA

The water was supposed to have been divided up evenly!

GRACE

Maybe he was saving it for me! I'm pregnant you know, I need it the most.

ROGER

There is no more water! None at all!

GRACE

David! Did you drink all the water??

DAVID

No! I don't know who drank it! Maybe they drank it!

ROGER

We did NOT drink it!

DAVID

I don't know where it went!!

GRACE

David are you lying to me again?! This is just like what you did with Sprinkles!

ROGER

Who's Sprinkles??

GRACE

I told you. My Cat. David was supposed to be babysitting my Cat. David let her out, she ran away, and he decided to replace her with a similar looking cat, and lied to me about it! He is a liar!

DAVID

I wasn't babysitting your fucking cat!! A cat is not a baby!! It's an animal! A stupid fucking animal. And I didn't "lose" it. I killed it.

GRACE

(shocked, taken aback)

What?

DAVID

Yeah. That's right. I killed your fucking cat. It was sleeping and I broke it's neck! Stupid fucking cat!

GRACE

Why would you do something so awful!! You are an evil man. I hate you!! Why would you do that!??!

DAVID

Because you killed our child!

Silence.

GRACE

It wasn't a baby! I was barely pregnant. It was a zygote! We weren't ready to have a baby! You didn't have a job, we had no money, my sister was dying, why would you want to bring a child into a situation like that?! And now I've replaced that baby with a brand new better one.

DAVID

You didn't even ask me! You just murdered my child.

GRACE

It wasn't murder! It was a procedure!

DAVID

You didn't even consult with me!!!

GRACE

So you killed my cat??!

DAVID

Yes! I did. I killed Sprinkles. What are you going to do about it??? Kill this baby too?? I'd like to say we're even, but we're not! And I also ran over those armadillo's or tortoises, or sand beavers, or whatever the fuck they were on purpose! So fuck you, Grace!!!

Grace grabs the knife right out of Rogers hand and plunges it into David. He collapses onto the ground. Grace is stunned at what she has done.

GRACE

(shocked)

I...I...I don't know why I did that... I didn't even think about it. I just did it, like I had no choice. Like it was just the next thing I was supposed to do...Oh, my God...

Grace starts crying hysterically.

Then Jeremiah begins a "slow clap", building to applause.

BARBARA

Why are you clapping??!

ROGER

Yeah, what's wrong with you??

JEREMIAH

(trying to lessen the
tension)

Everyone calm down. David is fine. He's fine.

GRACE

(in a panic)

He's not fine!! Look at him! David! Look at me! Come on, open your eyes, God damn it.

JEREMIAH

Relax Grace. He's fine. He's totally fine. Sometimes the dessert can play tricks on you.

BARBARA

Tricks?? I'm so confused. What is happening??

JEREMIAH

Okay. Okay, I'm sorry. I know this is a little confusing.

A beat.

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)

Okay. Take a breath, and look out there, over the desert.

GRACE

(screaming!)

DESERT!!!

Barbara and Roger squint out into the darkness.

JEREMIAH

Barbara, Roger...Do you see all those people?

BARBARA

What people? I don't see any people.

JEREMIAH

All of those people watching us.

ROGER

Watching us?? There's nobody watching us!

BARBARA

It's just rocks and cactus.

GRACE

(through tears)

Jeremiah can you please call a doctor?? Please!!

JEREMIAH

There's no need. He's fine. Aren't you David?

David warily sits up.

DAVID

Yes- I think I'm fine actually... I'm not sure how, but I feel pretty good.

BARBARA

I don't understand what's happening!?

Jeremiah crosses to the apron of the stage.

JEREMIAH

Look closer. All those people. You can see them if you squint.

Barbara walks to the edge of the stage.

BARBARA

What's going on?

JEREMIAH

Okay, this is going to be a little hard to explain, but stay with me.

A beat.

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)

None of this is real.

They look at him in utter confusion.

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)

This is all fake. All of it. We're all...wait for it... in a play!

A beat.

BARBARA

What did you say? It sounded like you said "we're all in a play"

JEREMIAH

Exactly. That's exactly what I said. All of this. The road, the mountains, the cactus, the sky. All fake.

BARBARA

What do you mean fake??

ROGER

That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard. And I've heard a lot of stupid things!

Jeremiah goes to the "backdrop" and touches it so that it billows.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Huh? How did you do that??

JEREMIAH

It's not really the sky. It's a backdrop. See??

He does it again.

BARBARA

What do you mean we're in a play? That's ridiculous. We're all hallucinating. That's what's happening. We all have heat stroke.

Barbara walks over to the backdrop and touches it. She jumps back in shock.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Oh my God! He's right!! The sky is just a backdrop!

JEREMIAH

That's right. This whole day has just been a play. Not real at all.

Grace gets up and walks over to Jeremiah, accusing him.

GRACE

That's stupid! We've been driving all day. We came from... where did we come from? I've forgotten what to say.

JEREMIAH

No, you've forgotten your line.

GRACE

I didn't really stab David?

JEREMIAH

You stabbed him yes, but it's not real. You were acting. You're not responsible for your actions, because you're in a play. None of this is real. It's all fake. Do you see the audience?

BARBARA

(surprise!)

I do see them!

ROGER
(surprise)

I do see them!

DAVID
(surprise)

I do see them. They've been watching this whole time?

JEREMIAH
Yes. It's a play... fake, fake, fake.

GRACE
Absurd! You're a liar.

Jeremiah yells to an unseen
person.

JEREMIAH
Hey, Jerry- can you make it day now please?

The lights change to daytime.

GRACE
What's happening???

BARBARA
Is that why there are no cars? No one ever driving on this
road?

JEREMIAH
Exactly. It's not a road. It's a stage. You can't drive a car
on a stage. Well, not this stage...That's why I'm riding a
motorcycle. And in this production they couldn't afford a
motorcycle so it was just a sound effect off stage left.

Roger has an epiphany!

ROGER
(a lightbulb)
I *thought* it was completely unbelievable that no one was ever
driving on this road.

JEREMIAH
It is *absolutely* unbelievable. Things like that only happen
in plays, movies or fairytales. Not in real life.

ROGER
And I thought it was weird that, that tent appeared out of
nowhere. I don't even own a tent.

DAVID
Or an air mattress. Who brings an air mattress to a Baptism?
Now this is all starting to make sense.

GRACE

So, you're trying to tell me that none of this is real? None of it? My whole entire life is not real? And I'm just supposed to believe you?

DAVID

Honey, we can see the audience. They're all sitting right there.

GRACE

I don't see any audience. You've all gone insane. We've been out in the dessert too long... I mean desert. And we are hallucinating!

BARBARA

The word is dessert. Desert is something you eat after dinner.

GRACE

No it's not. It's not. I'm sure it's not.

JEREMIAH

Are you really sure? The dessert can really play tricks on your mind.

GRACE

You said none of this is real.

JEREMIAH

It's not real. Or maybe it is. Reality is subjective.

GRACE

Reality is not subjective. It's not subjective at all. What's real is real, what's fake is fake.

JEREMIAH

Things can be real and fake at the same time. Two opposite things can be true at the same time. Like the sky.

GRACE

What about the sky?

JEREMIAH

It's blue right?

GRACE

Yes.

JEREMIAH

(cheerfully)

But at the exact same time it's ALSO red. And would you say it's up or down?

GRACE

The sky is always up.

JEREMIAH

Except when you're up, then the sky is down.

GRACE

No, it's still "up".

JEREMIAH

It all depends on how you look at it.

GRACE

Something can't be up AND down.

JEREMIAH

What's real is what I believe is real. Or what I can convince people is real.

GRACE

That's not true.

DAVID

Honey, look at all the people. ...You can't see them? They're watching us.

JEREMIAH

(to David)

And you're not really married to her. You're name is Steven Irwin, and you're not married to this woman. (Grace) You're in love with the stage manager, Tiffany. But she doesn't like you at all. It's made you very depressed and caused you to start improvising your lines. Haven't you noticed you say "honey" and "sir" an awful lot?

David looks off into the wings and waves.

DAVID

Huh...I hadn't noticed, sir. Hi Tiffany!...(To Jeremiah) Steven Irwin?...Am I the Crocodile Hunter?

JEREMIAH

Yes. Yes you are.

ROGER

I have a question.

JEREMIAH

Go right ahead.

ROGER

Am I attracted to women in this version of reality?

JEREMIAH

You are.

ROGER

Thank God.

JEREMIAH

But you're an alcoholic in a very unhappy marriage. It's called type casting. Your name is Roger Barrymore.

ROGER

I'm Roger in the play AND real life?

JEREMIAH

Type casting.

BARBARA

I have no idea what I'm supposed to say next. I always know what I'm supposed to say next.

GRACE

I'm sorry, but I find this all completely unbelievable. I know we left the house this morning, I know my sister recently died, I know my whole backstory-

She puts her hand over her mouth.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Did I just say backstory?... I'm sorry, but I still don't believe any of this.

JEREMIAH

You don't believe any of it, because none of you are GOOD actors. This is community theater. If you want to be good actors, you have to BELIEVE it! You have to be in the moment. You guys are all over the place. We're lucky this is just a preview.

BARBARA

What about you? Are you real? Or are you an actor?

JEREMIAH

I'm both. I'm very real, and I am an excellent actor.

GRACE

You're all trying to make me crazy.

JEREMIAH

No, I'm trying to show you how things really are. Here-

He goes over to the edge of the stage and addresses an audience member.

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)

May I borrow your program?

He takes a program from an audience member.

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)

Here take a look- see this is a program, and here is the cast list.

GRACE

Grace... Dolores Finkelstein. You expect me to believe my name is Dolores Finkelstein? That's a terrible name. It sounds made up.

JEREMIAH

(laughing)

No, no, no that's not your name. That's silly. Look here.

He pulls out a slip of paper.

GRACE

(reading the paper)

Tonight the role of "Grace" normally played by Delores Finkelstein will be played by Henrietta Hullabaloo.... Who the hell is Henrietta Hullabaloo???

JEREMIAH

You are. Your name is Henrietta Hullabaloo. You're the understudy.

BARBARA

You're doing an excellent job tonight Henrietta. And you were so nervous before we all went on. Saint Genesius pray for us.

David practices his diction.

DAVID

Red leather, yellow leather, red leather, yellow leather.

GRACE

Where did you get this fake program?

JEREMIAH

See- here is your picture, right here with your bio.

GRACE

That picture doesn't look anything like me. That woman is fifteen years younger than me.

JEREMIAH

That's called your headshot. They never really look like the actual actor.

GRACE

My name is NOT Henrietta Hullabaloo! This is not a play. This is a desert, not a dessert. Those are all facts, and you are all lying to me.

DAVID

(With impeccable diction)

Two toads, terribly tired, trotted along the road. Said toad number one, to toad number two, It's hot and I carry a load!

BARBARA

(with impeccable diction)

Said toad number two to toad number one, why don't we return to the pond?

ROGER

(with impeccable diction)

Said toad number one to toad number two, what a splendid idea, of walking I've never been fond.

ALL INCLUDING JEREMIAH

(with impeccable diction)

So they turned in their tracks and they hurried away, not wasting a moment of time. And there in the pond for the rest of the day, They wallowed in ooze and slime.

JEREMIAH

I'm telling the truth. That's an absolute, indisputable fact.

GRACE

(sobbing)

I don't understand.

JEREMIAH

It's simple. You saw Steven get stabbed, but he's perfectly fine, there's no blood is there? How do you explain that?

GRACE

I don't know.

JEREMIAH

I'll tell you how. Wendy the costume girl does not want to do laundry after every performance, and she convinced the director that we didn't need to show any blood, and that people would believe he was stabbed without actually having the character of David bleed all over his costume. It's called suspension of disbelief.

GRACE

We are not wearing costumes! And we are not characters. We're real live people.

David smells his armpit.

DAVID

My costume needs to be washed. Will somebody tell Wendy please?

GRACE

Why is this happening?? David why are you doing this to me?? Is this because of the thing? Stop it, because it's very, very mean. We are not in a play!

JEREMIAH

Well, you're partially right. It's not technically a play. It's a play with music.

Jeremiah picks up his guitar and begins to play and sing

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)

DRIVING DOWN THE ROAD ON A HOT SUNNY DAY

DAVID, BARBARA, ROGER

OH YEAH!

JEREMIAH

THINGS WENT WRONG WHEN SOMETHING GOT IN THE WAY.

DAVID, BARBARA, ROGER

SHOOP, DOO, DOOBIE DOO DOO

JEREMIAH

A SWERVE, A CRASH, A SKID OFF THE ROAD!
WHAT THE HECK DID WE HIT? SOME BIG HORNY TOAD?
THERE'S NO ONE FOR MILES, THERE'S NOTHING ON ZILLOW
WHAT DID WE HIT?

DAVID

A BIG FAT TORTOISE!

ALL

SO WE SIT AND WE WAIT, AND WE WAIT AND WE WAIT
AND WE WAIT AND WE WAIT, AND THINGS DON'T LOOK GREAT
AND WE WAIT AND WE WAIT, AND WAIT ALL DAY LONG
AND WE'RE PRAISING THE LORD THAT JEREMIAH CAME ALONG.
YES, WE'RE PRAISING THE LORD THAT JEREMIAH CAME ALONG.

DAVID

WE'RE STUCK IN A DITCH, AND WE'RE COVERED IN DIRT

BARBARA

STRANDED ALONE, SITTING IN THE DESSERT

ROGER

IT'S TOO DARN HOT, WE'VE ONLY ROCKS FOR A PILLOW

Jeremiah vamps on the guitar.
They wait for Grace to sing.

BARBARA

Come on Henrietta, it's your line...

JEREMIAH

Give it to her again Roger.

ROGER

IT'S TOO DARN HOT, WE'VE ONLY ROCKS FOR A PILLOW

GRACE

(tentatively singing and
making up a song)

WE'RE STUCK IN THIS MESS 'CAUSE OF A DAMN... BEAVER.

GRACE (CONT'D)

How do I know this song? I don't understand what's happening
to me!!

JEREMIAH

Dance break!

They all dance.

ALL

SO WE SIT AND WE WAIT, AND WE WAIT AND WE WAIT
AND WE WAIT AND WE WAIT, AND THINGS DON'T LOOK GREAT
AND WE WAIT AND WE WAIT, AND WAIT ALL DAY LONG
AND FOR SOME SORT OF REASON, WE ALL KNOW THIS SONG
AND FOR SOME SORT OF REASON, WE ALL KNOW THIS SONG

The song ends with a big finish

GRACE

What happens now?

JEREMIAH

Blackout.

The lights go out.

Then the lights come back up.
Nothing has changed.

GRACE

How did it get dark and then light again?

JEREMIAH

It's a blackout. It happens when we change scenes and jump
around in time. This is a new scene. It's Act Two, scene
four.

GRACE

You can't jump around in time.

DAVID

In a play you can.

GRACE

We are NOT in a play!! If we're in a play, then who wrote it?? It's terrible.

JEREMIAH

Joe Correll wrote it.

GRACE

Who the heck is that?

JEREMIAH

The person who wrote this play. Look, we have to finish it before we can go home. The audience paid good money to see this play and we need to finish it.

BARBARA

I don't think everyone paid. I think ticket sales were low so they papered the house.

GRACE

What's papering the house?? You all sound like crazy people.

JEREMIAH

Let's just pick it up where we left off.

BARBARA

I've forgotten where we were?

JEREMIAH

We were about to play a game.

ROGER

I think we were way past that.

DAVID

We were up to the part where Roger stabbed me.

JEREMIAH

I don't think so. There's no scene where someone gets stabbed in this play. It's a light hearted comedy. A crazy farce. No one dies in a comedy. There's always a happy ending. Let's pick it up from the guessing game. Grace you were about to tell your two lies and one truth.

GRACE

I thought those were Barbara's lines... I said lines. Am I saying lines right now?

JEREMIAH
Everything you say is a line.

GRACE
What do I say next?

JEREMIAH
If you've forgotten what to say next, you just yell out
"line!"

GRACE
Line!

No answer.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Line!

No answer.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Line!

JEREMIAH
The stage manager must be out having a smoke. I'll give you
my line and I bet your lines will come to you.

DAVID
Tiffany smokes? I should get her to quit.

GRACE
Okay, that sounds reasonable.

JEREMIAH
Okay, hold your arm out over the fire.

GRACE
Over the fire?

JEREMIAH
Not so you get burnt. Just over it- that way you'll talk
faster when you tell your two lies and one fact.

Grace stretches her arm over the
fire.

GRACE
This is very hot.

JEREMIAH
You can start now Grace. I know it's a little painful, but
also it can be really fun.

GRACE

It is a little fun.

JEREMIAH

Exactly.

GRACE

It's burning my arm.

JEREMIAH

That's just part of it. Okay, ready, and ...go!

GRACE

Okay... um... One. After I finished college, I moved to Paris and for a brief time danced with the Royal Parisian Ballet. Two. I am deeply allergic to ketchup and pimentos. Three. My husband David, killed my cat because he was mad I had an abortion.

Barbara grabs her arm.

BARBARA

It's number three right?

GRACE

Yes. You win.

ROGER

She already told that story. That's cheating.

BARBARA

You should forgive him Grace. Forgiveness is an everlasting treasure.

GRACE

Who said something stupid like that? Jesus?

BARBARA

No. I did. It's my line.

GRACE

WE ARE NOT SAYING LINES!! I hate this play!!! This is NOT a light hearted comedy! I want this play to be over!

JEREMIAH

Not yet. There's still one more scene.

ROGER

Are we in a play or not?

BLACKOUT.

ACT TWO: SCENE FIVE - MOMENTS LATER/DAYS LATER

They are all in the exact same spots.

JEREMIAH

Act Two, Scene Five. Moments Later slash Days Later. They are all in the exact same spots.

A beat.

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)

Good morning everyone!

GRACE

How could it be morning?? The lights went out and came back on and now it's supposed to be the next morning?? How do I know if it's really morning or not??

BARBARA

The lights were blue for night, and now they're amber for day. It's called stage lighting, and the lights convey a passage of time.

ROGER

Does anyone want to go to Applebee's after the show?

JEREMIAH

What show?

DAVID

The show that we're all in.

JEREMIAH

I'm not sure what you're talking about. Everyone better sit down. You're all dehydrated.

ROGER

I am thirsty. Can someone hand me a water?

JEREMIAH

We ran out of water two days ago, remember?

DAVID

Two days ago?? But the play only started an hour and a half ago. Wait a minute, aren't I supposed to be mad about something? What was it? I think I've forgotten my line... Line! Line! Line!

BARBARA

I'm so confused.

GRACE

Why am I so thirsty??

JEREMIAH

You've all started hallucinating. Sit down.

BARBARA

Is someone coming to rescue us?

JEREMIAH

I'm here to rescue you. In fact, I was saving this for a special occasion...

He goes to his backpack and pulls out a water.

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)

There is one bottle of water left. It's my water, but I'm willing to share it with you all.

BARBARA

Thank you!! Thank you!!

DAVID

We're so lucky you came along.

Roger rushes Jeremiah and shoves him to the ground. He grabs the water and tries to gulp it. The other three attack him and try to get the water. They are all on the ground fighting over the last bottle of water while Jeremiah looks on in amusement. Suddenly Roger starts spitting.

ROGER

What is this?? This isn't water! It's sand!

They stand up, and dump out the bottle. It is filled with sand.

JEREMIAH

Are you all okay? That's not sand. It's water. And you're spilling it!

GRACE

It's not water. It's sand.

JEREMIAH

Wow. You're worse than I thought. You better drink something.

GRACE

We're not drinking sand!

JEREMIAH

Drink it.

No!
GRACE

Drink it!
JEREMIAH
(emphatic)

No.
GRACE

Drink it.
JEREMIAH
(emphatic)

No.
GRACE

Drink it.
JEREMIAH
(emphatic)

No.
GRACE

Drink it.
JEREMIAH
(emphatic)

Okay.
GRACE

She tries to drink the sand.

We're all hallucinating.
DAVID

Are we going to die??
BARBARA

No one is going to die. Not as long as I'm here. No one dies.
JEREMIAH

Right. No one dies as long as he's here. It's a light hearted comedy right?
ROGER

Will someone come to rescue us at the end?
BARBARA

A deus ex machina? That happens all the time in plays right??
GRACE

What's a deus ex machina?
ROGER

GRACE

It's when people are in a seemingly unsolvable predicament, and at the last second an unrelated power steps in and saves everyone. It comes from ancient Greek plays where a machine would lower actors, playing gods, onto the stage, and the god would save the day.

BARBARA

I don't see any machines with gods on them. Maybe we should pray about it. "Dear gods, please send an actor on a machine to unexpectedly save us from this hopeless situation"

GRACE, ROGER AND DAVID

Amen.

Barbara is feeling a little superior to Grace.

BARBARA

(pointedly to Grace)

I thought you didn't believe in God?

GRACE

Apparently it really all depends on the situation I'm in. If he's around, now would be a good time for him to show up.

DAVID

Grace, you should sit down. This can't be good for the baby.

GRACE

You're right.

JEREMIAH

What baby?

BARBARA

Her baby. She's three months pregnant. She needs water.

JEREMIAH

Grace isn't pregnant. Are you Grace?

GRACE

Yes I am.

JEREMIAH

I can tell. And you definitely are not having a baby.

DAVID

Grace... not again?!

GRACE

No, no. I'm definitely having a baby. I can feel it.

Really? Right now?

JEREMIAH

Grace holds her hand on her stomach. She becomes confused.

GRACE

Not right now, no.

BARBARA

How can you tell if she's pregnant or not?

JEREMIAH

Because we've only been dating a short time. We're waiting, aren't we Grace?

GRACE

I'm confused.

DAVID

So am I.

GRACE
(to Jeremiah)

You and I have been dating?

JEREMIAH

Of course. You remember.

GRACE

I'm not sure... Were we riding through the desert on your motorcycle?

JEREMIAH

You DO remember.

GRACE

The rock slide. The police let us through...right?

JEREMIAH

Exactly. Probably because you were flirting with that cop.

GRACE
(smiles)

It worked. He let us through.

JEREMIAH

It did. You're good! Feeling any better?

GRACE

Yes. Yes. I think I got a little mixed up. I'm sorry, honey.

JEREMIAH

It's understandable.

GRACE

Of course, of course, I'm so sorry, honey.

JEREMIAH

It's not your fault. It's been a long day.

GRACE

You're right, honey. I think we've done all we can for these folks. We should go, honey. I'm sure someone is coming to save them soon, honey.

JEREMIAH

Right. Someone will come to save them soon.

GRACE

Of course they will, honey.

DAVID

Grace?!

GRACE

We'll just go on ahead, and see what's taking so long. Honey, we better go. It was nice meeting you all.

DAVID

You're not going off with him Grace..

GRACE

Who's Grace?

DAVID

You are.

GRACE

I don't think that's right. It was nice to meet you all. I hope we'll keep in touch. You can find me on Instagram under Henrietta Hullabaloo.

JEREMIAH

Good luck you guys! If you need me it's Jeremiah, twenty-three, sixteen. Bye! You're on your own!

BARBARA

Jeremiah twenty three sixteen. Easy to remember. Like in the Bible.

JEREMIAH

Exactly. Just like in the phone book.

BARBARA

You mean Bible.

JEREMIAH

Phone book, Bible. Same thing. You can look me up in there.

BARBARA

I don't need to look it up. I have the Bible memorized. Jeremiah twenty three sixteen. "This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you; they fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord."

Barbara smiles and stares out into the dessert.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Such a pretty verse. Just lovely. I also memorized The Great Gatsby and Fifty Shades of Gray.

JEREMIAH

Lovely. Goodbye!

GRACE

Bye!! Good luck!

DAVID

Grace, stop! Don't desert me in the dessert!

They start to leave. Jeremiah stops, comes back, and addresses the audience.

JEREMIAH

(to the audience)

Just so there's no confusion, because I know you're all wondering and coming to your own conclusions, and even though there is nothing I'd enjoy more than all the arguments in the car on the way home from the theater... I, Jeremiah, am not the devil, I'm not a demon, or spirit, or a malevolent force. I'm nothing paranormal or as interesting as that. Why did I come here?... It's very simple. I'm nothing more than one of you. I saw something I wanted, and I took it. (He rubs Grace's head like a dog) Isn't she pretty?...So. Here it is. We're all in a play. All of us. See the audience around you? Squint and you can see them. So, you can do whatever you want, because it's not real. It's just a play. So go for it. It's all fake. All Made up. And you know exactly which one of you is ruining the play for the others. That lady unwrapping the candy. The asshole texting right next to you. That couple that won't shut up, and have to explain the whole God damned play to each other. The old man snoring. That woman who didn't piss before this show started. If we could just get those people out of the theater, we could all enjoy this play a whole lot more.

His tone changes to that of a stand up comedian at the end of a set.

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)

Have a safe ride home! If you've been drinking, call an Uber, or not. It's only your life, so don't worry about anyone else.

Grace and Jeremiah exit.

ROGER

Is this a play or is this real?

BARBARA

I don't know Roger.

ROGER

Where's the audience?

BARBARA

I don't see them anymore.

Roger jumps in pain.

ROGER

Ow! Shit!!

He stamps his foot on the ground.

BARBARA

What's wrong?

ROGER

Something bit me!

BARBARA

Bit you? What was it??

ROGER

Scorpion.

BARBARA

Well, scorpions are completely harmless creatures, you know. Except for the Arizona Bark Scorpion. Those will kill you. What kind of scorpion was it?

ROGER

I don't know.

BARBARA

Did it have a little bump under it's tail? Arizona Bark Scorpions have a little bump under their tail.

Roger bends down and looks at the Scorpion.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Well?

ROGER

It has a little bump under it's tail.

BARBARA

Oh no! An Arizona Bark Scorpion.

ROGER

Am I going to die?

BARBARA

Yes, I think so.

ROGER

So is this real? Are we really hallucinating and stuck out here? Are we both going to die?

BARBARA

I think this is real.

ROGER

We have no water, and we've been out here for days. I got bit by an Arizona Bark Scorpion. I think we're royally fucked.

DAVID

(to himself)

I know I'm married to her.

BARBARA

(a little sad)

Roger I don't want to die out here all alone in the dessert...

ROGER

Maybe someone will come. Maybe Jeremiah and his nice girlfriend Henrietta, will send someone back for us. Maybe they'll have some scorpion antidote with them.

BARBARA

Yes, maybe Jeremiah will send a deus ex machina. I think all we have to do is wait a little longer and we'll be saved by a deus ex machina named Sandra Bullock.

ROGER

Yes. I'm sure Ms. Bullock will come to save us soon.

David holds his stomach.

BARBARA

David, what's wrong?

Blood billows onto Davids shirt.
He falls to his knees.

DAVID

I'm bleeding...

BARBARA

In the play?

DAVID

What play? I think Grace did stab me after all.

He collapses. Barbara and Roger
look up at the sky waiting for a
deus ex machina.

DAVID (CONT'D)

This really, really hurts.

Roger feels bad for David and
wonders if it would be best to
put him out of his misery as a
kindness. He picks up the tire
iron and holds it over David's
head.

ROGER

(to Barbara)

What do you think?

BARBARA

(resigned)

Okay. If it will make you feel better, and him feel better. I
feel very bad about it, but we can't let him suffer. It's not
wrong. It's merciful.

DAVID

You have something that will help me? My God, so much blood.

ROGER

Yes, I have something that will help you.

He approaches David from behind
as David looks out at the
sunset/audience.

DAVID

Thank you!! Thank you. I don't want to die in the desert.

ROGER

Now, what I want you to do is look out at the sunset.

DAVID

What am I looking for? Is this real?? Or is this a play??

ROGER

Now hold very still and you'll feel better in a few seconds. Look out there! Can you see all the sand beavers and tortoises and armadillos?

DAVID

Yes I see them!

ROGER

Keep looking....

He raises the tire iron over David's head.

DAVID

My blood is everywhere....It really hurts...I feel like I'm dying! This is just in the play right?! Are we going to wash my costume and then go to Applebees?

ROGER

Sure. We can go to Applebees in just a minute. Barbara are you sure? Is this really the right thing?

DAVID

Where's Grace??

BARBARA

Roger, don't drag it out. If you're going to do it, just do it.

DAVID

I don't understand what's happening?? Is this real or not?? I'm dying? Will I be back for the curtain call?

ROGER

I'm sorry to say brother, but I don't think you'll be back for the curtain call. This is real. Look out there, in the dessert, Look!..... An Armadillo!

Roger bashes David's head in repeatedly. SMASH. SMASH. SMASH. SILENCE.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Poor guy.

Roger and Barbara sit together in the dessert. Off in the distance the sound of trucks and traffic growing louder and louder.

BARBARA

Roger! I think I see a tow truck! It's a deus ex machina! We're saved!

ROGER

Really?

BARBARA

No. I guess it's just a sound effect. A sound effect can't save us. No one is ever coming to save us. What should we do!??

ROGER

We have to finish this right now Barbara, or you and I will suffer very painful deaths from dehydration and scorpions in the dessert. I know exactly what to do.

Roger holds up the tire iron over Barbara's head.

BARBARA

What's that, Roger??!

ROGER

Blackout.

BLACKOUT.

During the curtain call David remains "dead" on the stage. After the others bow they gesture to him for applause. He stays dead.

END OF PLAY