

The (Other) Meaning of Life

A parody in two acts

By Garrett A. Hughes

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Cast of Characters

JOSIE	female, 50s, protective
LUKE	male, 50s, self-indulgent
ADAM	male, 20s, empathic, curious
EVE	female, 20s, intelligent, curious
MICH	male in gender, but more female in nature, 30s
STAGEHAND	male, 40s, efficient

Time In the Beginning

Place Paradise, hell and the motherland

Set Each location requires a minimum of easily movable props (except possibly for the snake). See the individual scene notations for details

Scene List

ACT I	<u>Paradise Offered</u>
Scene 1	Creation
Scene 2	Let them choose
Scene 3	A decision
Scene 4	A surprising revelation
Scene 5	Adam enters paradise
Scene 6	The temptation of Adam
Scene 7	Pizza, beer and women
Scene 8	Adam takes a ribbing
Scene 9	Eve enters paradise an immediate temptation
Scene 10	Physiology 101
ACT II	<u>Paradise Rejected</u>
Scene 1	The second temptation of Eve
Scene 2	Mich's best idea ever
Scene 3	A frank discussion
Scene 4	The third temptation of Eve
Scene 5	Curiosity is even more effective than beer
Scene 6	The first kiss ever
Scene 7	Secret contents of the apple revealed
Scene 8	A cost-benefit analysis
Scene 9	War and rumors of war

Version 2011 08 15

ACT I

SCENE 1

Absolute darkness and silence reign. While the curtain rises the following words are made to appear.

“IN THE BEGINNING GOD MADE MAN
IN HER IMAGE AND LIKENESS”

A large door creaks open. Lightening flashes followed by a tremendous clap of thunder.

JOSIE and LUKE move through the door frame as the lightening and thunder continue. Luke slams the door shut. Once again absolute darkness and silence. Then footsteps can be heard as the players move about the stage.

LUKE

Josie? Josie? Where in hell are you? I'm soaked.

JOSIE

This is not hell, Luke. We're in paradise.

LUKE

You could o' fooled me. Where in paradise is the light? How about some light?

JOSIE

Be light made!

STAGEHAND already on stage, pulls a cord turning on a very dim and bare light bulb located just above their heads, then exits.

LUKE

And she said “Let there be light.”

JOSIE

That was Sunny. He works days. He is very dependable.

LUKE

Glorious Sunny of paradise.

JOSIE

Well, what do you think of the place?

LUKE

Tell Sunny the light's a little dim.

JOSIE

It will brighten as the day progresses and darken at night.

Indeed, the bulb brightens as the scene progresses and dims as it comes to a close.

LUKE

It's spacious enough.

JOSIE

Big enough for a huge garden. How about some plants?

LUKE

Sounds like a start.

JOSIE

Be plants made!

STAGEHAND brings out two potted plants, sets them on stage and exits. Josie hesitates a moment, then moves the plants trying several different locations.

LUKE

Whatcha got there?

JOSIE

Impatiens and Amaranthus.

(momentarily puts hand to chin)

Now I'm adding a tree as a reminder of the motherland. It grows quickly.

LUKE

What is it?

JOSIE

Ailanthus altissima: the tree-of-heaven.

STAGEHAND brings out a fairly large replica,
then exits.

JOSIE

I said it grows quickly.

LUKE

It smells more like the tree-from-hell.

(looks about)

How about some fruit trees? Figs, apples.

JOSIE

OK, but they take longer to grow. I'll sprinkle some seeds.

Josie waves hand in sprinkling motion.

LUKE

Hey, time we got, right?

JOSIE

(continues sprinkling seeds)

The apples will be Delicious. I've added some Empires too.

LUKE

Empires? You've already got one of those. A kingdom in fact.

JOSIE

(dusts hands)

I'm talking apples. We've got plants and trees. What next?

LUKE

More plants.

JOSIE

Like what?

LUKE

Grapes. Tobacco.

JOSIE

They will be awfully difficult to manage.

LUKE

Not to worry. I'll manage them if you water them.

JOSIE

That's the easy part, my dear. "The rain in Spain stays mainly in the plain."

STAGEHAND reenters carrying a sprinkling can and waters the plants, exits.

JOSIE

What else is on your list?

LUKE

Animals.

JOSIE

Fowl?

LUKE

Yes, wicked.

JOSIE

You mean winged, I hope. How about a bird that can sing my praises?

LUKE

We've already got enough singin' in the motherland. Just have 'em chirp.

JOSIE

Be birds made!

Birds begin chirping in the background, followed by the loud cawing of a crow.

JOSIE

I threw that last one in for you.

LUKE

Awfully nice of you, my dear. Why not throw in a few mosquitoes too, while you're at it.

JOSIE

Do we really want mosquitoes in paradise? They'll bother both you and the animals.

LUKE

Food for the birds.

JOSIE

Mosquitoes it is.

A wave of her hand is accompanied by the buzzing noise of a mosquito, followed by a moment of silence.

LUKE

(swats the back of his neck)

Hungry little bastards. Them birds are worthless. Get me some bats.

JOSIE

More bats for your belfry.

A large bat wings its way across stage, then out over the audience and back.

LUKE

And creepy things.

JOSIE

I won't stoop so low.

LUKE

I said creeping things.

JOSIE

You said creepy things.

LUKE

I meant creeping things... more animals.

JOSIE

Oh, I do so love animals. Puppy dogs and kittens and cute little Teddy bears.

STAGEHAND brings out stuffed animals for Josie, then exits.

LUKE

Ducks... mallards.

JOSIE

Anas Platyrhynchos. Done.

STAGEHAND brings out two Mallard duck decoys: a male and a female; sets them down; exits.

Note that the light should be at its brightest about now.

LUKE

Snakes.

JOSIE

Snakes?

LUKE

Snakes.

JOSIE

Why snakes?

LUKE

I dunno. Maybe to keep the other animals on their toes?

JOSIE

They will certainly have that effect.

STAGEHAND brings out a boa constrictor (perhaps a replica) and hands it to LUKE.

Luke smiles and holds it out in front of him admiringly.

LUKE

This will do just fine.

Luke returns the boa to STAGEHAND who exits.

JOSIE

Sometimes I find your tastes a bit perplexing. But this is good, this is all good.

LUKE

Still...

JOSIE

What? This is perfect. This is paradise.

LUKE

Somethin' in your image and likeness.

JOSIE

My image and likeness?

LUKE

Yeah, your image and likeness.

JOSIE

What's wrong with just glorious me?

LUKE

You know.

JOSIE

I don't know of anything that is wrong with me.

LUKE

Every time I press you on the subject you get wrathful.

JOSIE

Oh.

(takes a step back)

That.

LUKE

What about that?

JOSIE

That, mind you, is the real reason you wanted me to build paradise, isn't it?

LUKE

No, no, for your sake no! We always needed a place to get away together. A place we could call our own. You agreed.

JOSIE

You know my will on that subject, Luke.

LUKE

Thy will be done.

JOSIE

It seems like this discussion has gone on for an eternity.

LUKE

It is just a suggestion. A temptin' idea at best.

JOSIE

So was hell until I finally gave in and built it for you.

LUKE

I needed a place to get away. It's a guy thing. Look, what have you got against me gettin' a little on the side?

JOSIE

Make that up front. The ramifications are endless. What you really need are a few good friends. Get to know the minions. You can have wonderful conversations with them. They are such good listeners.

LUKE

The sickohs?

JOSIE

The term is sycophants, which they are not. Stop avoiding them. They have names. Start with Mich and Gabriella. Mich is a quick study and Gabriella is so sweet. They are so willing to please.

LUKE

I would phrase it slightly differ'nt, an' "brown noser" is much too kind.

JOSIE

Mich is a wonderful conversationalist, and Gabriella will bend over backwards to meet your needs.

LUKE

(leers)

Really?

JOSIE

Really. Oh, I'm a bit tired. We've been at this for awhile. Let's take a rest. This place is habitable for now.

LUKE

Think about my suggestion? Will ya?

JOSIE

You never give up do you.

LUKE

It's in my nature.

Josie and Luke exit hand in hand.

STAGEHAND comes out and turns off the now dim light.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 2

The light is on at full sun. Luke and Josie are reclining in lounge chairs in paradise surrounded by their plants, trees, and animals. Two apple trees are now apparent. The Delicious apples are red; the Empires are green.

LUKE

Seven years to grow them trees.

JOSIE

Ah, but hasn't it been worth the wait?

LUKE

Them Delicious is darn sweet, just like the figs... Speakin' a waits... We been together a long time, right?

JOSIE

From my perspective, an eternity.

LUKE

An' I know—from your perspective—I ain't exactly the kinda guy you want to spend eternity with, right?

JOSIE

We had no choice. That outcome was—strictly speaking—a random event.

LUKE

So we takes what we gets an' tries to make the best of it, right?

JOSIE

We do the best with what we've got, yes.

LUKE

An' you got a lot. 'Ceptin one thing. I hate to keep harpin' on this. But you could put a little more fun in your life. Look, I'll get you in the mood. I'm good at that. All you have to do is give me a chance. We'll start slow.

JOSIE

You know I don't do that.

LUKE

I know, Josie, how I know. Last time we had this discussion them apple trees was just seeds. You got to know how I feel about you. You're a beautiful woman.

JOSIE

As Will be said—"My beauty... needs not the painted flourish of your praise."

LUKE

I'm thinkin' about you all the time.

JOSIE

I can well imagine which parts.

LUKE

(moves closer to Josie)

You have the most amazing eyes.

JOSIE

Tell me something I don't already know.

LUKE

(assumes proper diction)

Your lips are as soft as the rain that falls in paradise.

Luke touches Josie's lips with his fingertips.

JOSIE

I have never thought of them that way... I mean the rain there is soft, yes.

LUKE

(touches her bare shoulder)

The light reflected from your alabaster skin illuminates the heavens at night.

JOSIE

You are confusing me with the stars... Do you really think so?

LUKE

Your hair... the scent of a woman. I could lose myself in your hair.

Luke runs his fingers through her hair, then moves his other hand slowly down her now stretched out body, stopping between her legs. He positions himself so that he's practically on top of her.

JOSIE

I'm feeling a little warm.

LUKE

You have feelings, Josie.

JOSIE

(suddenly pushes Luke away)

I meant you were getting too close.

LUKE

(maintaining his assumed composure)

You want to as much as I want to.

JOSIE

I don't want to and I don't need to.

LUKE

(forcefully)

I need to.

JOSIE

I don't.

LUKE

(smiles and turns his head)

I don't think you know how.

JOSIE

Now there's a silly statement if there ever was one.

LUKE

Take Gabriella for instance.

JOSIE

(rising from her lounge chair)

You already took her. She is a tramp.

LUKE

(rises from his lounge chair)

You made 'er the way she is. 'Sides, we have a nice conversation every time... short but nice.

JOSIE

She only behaves that way with you. You and I can enjoy one another without funning each other, if you have any idea what I mean.

LUKE

No, I can't imagine what you mean... An' she's a little stiff. They—all o' them—are a little stiff.

JOSIE

You seem to enjoy them.

LUKE

Ain't fun. They have no will to resist.

JOSIE

You are despicable.

LUKE

My choice.

JOSIE

I always expect more from you; somehow I always get less.

LUKE

Ain't it like a woman ta turn the whole argument around to her favor... Any case, perfection is always in the eye of the beholder.

JOSIE

Go to hell. See what I care. You spend most of your time there now anyway.

LUKE

I'll be damned if I do and damned if I don't.

JOSIE

You have always been strong willed.

LUKE

Ha! You always want your will to be done. You chafe at the idea of a will that's not yours.

JOSIE

I have created perfect worlds. I can continue to create perfect worlds.

LUKE

Perfect because they're populated with a bunch o' sickohs.

JOSIE

They are a perfectly fine addition to those worlds.

LUKE

Why not try something a little differ'nt?

JOSIE

What? What do you have in that warped, inscrutable mind of yours?

LUKE

Make real beings. Put 'em in paradise. Let them choose. My way or your way. If your way is better, they'd naturally choose yours.

JOSIE

That could mean the destruction of paradise. Remember how you made wine from the grapes and got the Seventh-Day choir so drunk they couldn't land a note You made a fire with the tobacco leaves; it belched smoke for days; most of the animals died, and I had to start them all over again.

LUKE

Yeah, but it was a hell-of-a good time while it lasted.

JOSIE

That's hardly a convincing argument. Why not leave things the way they are?

LUKE

'Cause things is only perfect if someone else besides you says so. And you as much said my opinion don't count.

JOSIE

Yes, it certainly doesn't amount to much.

LUKE

You know I'm right.

JOSIE

I know you always have your own interests in mind.

LUKE

Then you'll do it?

JOSIE

I never said that.

LUKE

But you were thinking about it.

JOSIE

We are not mind readers.

Josie and Luke proceed to exit while continuing the conversation.

LUKE

I finally thought of a good enough reason for you to let 'em choose, didn't I?

JOSIE

Your reasons are your own.

LUKE

But this one's gotcha thinkin', right? Imagine being stuck with just me and them sickohs for the rest of eternity. Why that would be a fate worse than...

Josie and Luke exit.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 3

Josie is pacing back and forth in the motherland. A single tree-of-heaven decorates the stage. Other than the tree, presence in the motherland is indicated by Pachelbel's Canon playing softly in the background using the "choir" mode of a digital key board.

MICH enters hurriedly. Josie's back is turned towards him.

MICH

Ma'am. Excuse me Ma'am.

JOSIE

(turning around)

Yes, Mich?

MICH

It's the ducks again. They're making a terrible racket. All of paradise is a bit unnerved.

JOSIE

Mich, this whole paradise thing is just an experiment. There's nothing to be concerned about. Everything will work itself out in the long run.

MICH

I'm sure you're right Ma'am, It's just that, well, nothing like that ever happens around here.

JOSIE

You're right, Mich. Nothing like that ever happens around here. Now, what more can I do for you?

MICH

I guess you know what you're doing Ma'am. But they're unnerving the visitors too. We've never seen behavior like this before. Why the drakes gang up on the poor female and --

JOSIE

-- Mich.

MICH

Yes, Ma'am.

JOSIE

Do you see much of Gabriella these days?

MICH

Every day, Ma'am. The pin problem... I can't imagine you would have forgotten. We're making wonderful progress. We'll soon have an estimate for you.

JOSIE

No, I hadn't forgotten... Do you have any feelings for her, Mich?

MICH

Feelings Ma'am?

JOSIE

She is beautiful like me, is she not?

MICH

She is very beautiful.

Josie gives Mich a hard stare.

MICH

Just like you, Ma'am.

Josie gives Mich another hard look.

MICH

But not quite as beautiful as you Ma'am. Just a little younger, perhaps.

Josie face tightens.

MICH

Your eyes and skin Ma'am, however, are much more attractive.

Josie relaxes the muscles of her face.

JOSIE

And you are quite the handsome chap yourself.

MICH

Why thank you Ma'am. Some say I am almost as beautiful as Luke.

JOSIE

You... are certainly good looking.. I made you that way.

MICH

Yes Ma'am. Thank you Ma'am.

JOSIE

Mich.

MICH

Yes, Ma'am.

JOSIE

I want you to stop calling me "Ma'am."

Yes Ma'am. MICH

You may call me Josie when we are alone together. JOSIE

Yes Ma'am. MICH

Mich. JOSIE

Yes Ma'am. MICH

We are alone together. JOSIE

Yes Ma'am. MICH
(looks around)

I can see that Ma'am.

Call me Josie. JOSIE
(softly)

Yes Ma'am. MICH

Josie. JOSIE

Yes Ma'am. MICH

Josie. JOSIE

Josie, Ma'am. MICH

Josie. JOSIE

Jo... sie, Mmm.

MICH

Josie.

JOSIE

Josie.

MICH

Josie.

JOSIE

Josie.

MICH

Good Mich, good. Josie.

JOSIE

Good Josie.

MICH

Josie frowns, then smiles and pats Mich on the head.

JOSIE

Good Mich... Give me your hand, Mich.

Mich reaches out his hand. Josie slides her hand into his, and then takes his index and middle fingers and puts them to her lips.

JOSIE

Put your fingers on my lips.

MICH

Josie.

JOSIE

How do they feel, Mich?

Mich takes his fingers from Josie's lips and rubs his thumb over them.

MICH

Wet, Ma'am.

JOSIE

Damn!

MICH

Did I say something to offend, Ma'am?

JOSIE

(shakes her head)

No Mich, you did exactly as I asked. Thank you.

MICH

Thank you, Ma'am.

Josie clasps her hands behind her back and begins walking in a small circle as she addresses Mich.

JOSIE

Mich, I want you to close paradise to all visitors for the time being.

MICH

Yes Ma'am.

JOSIE

I'm going to make some modifications, you see.

MICH

(brightens)

Good idea Ma'am.

JOSIE

It has nothing to do with the ducks... or maybe it has. Give the creatures time to work things out. I'll be adding a new entity and I don't want it disturbed by visitors.

MICH

Yes Josie Ma'am. What sort of new entity, Ma'am?

JOSIE

Can you keep a secret Mich?

MICH

Why certainly Josie... Ma'am.

JOSIE

I'm going to put people in paradise. It will take a while, but I'm going to put people... children... in paradise.

MICH

People Ma'am? Will they look like you... and Luke?

JOSIE

That's right Mich. In my image and likeness... and unfortunately somewhat like Luke's.

Josie stops pacing and looks directly at Mich.

JOSIE

Shut it down, Mich. Shut it down. I want it pristine when they arrive.

MICH

I'll see to it right away Ma'am. Yes Ma'am. You are welcome , Ma'am. Thank you, Ma'am.

Mich hurriedly exits. Josie continues her deliberate pacing.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 4

Josie and Luke are sitting at breakfast in the motherland. Pachelbel's Canon is playing softly in the background as usual. Josie is reading the paper. Luke is finishing a bowl of cereal and is absentmindedly reading the printed material on the box.

LUKE

It says here that this cereal supplies one hundred percent of the daily requirement of folic acid. I'm not sure I want that in my cereal. What is it?

JOSIE

It helps prevents birth defects during pregnancy.

Luke stops eating and stares at Josie.

JOSIE

What?

LUKE

That's why we ain't never done it since. Ain't it?

JOSIE

Yes.

LUKE

You must o' been in the right mood that day.

JOSIE

The right mood?

LUKE

Yeah, the right mood.

JOSIE

I believe the process is designed to be physically stimulating. That is motivation enough. Why ask for more?

LUKE

You are beggin' the question.

JOSIE

I beg your pardon.

LUKE

Ya know, if'n you wants to really enjoy it, ya gots to be in the right mood.

JOSIE

Your point is moot. It really doesn't matter if we enjoy it or not. The whole purpose is to procreate. Increase and multiply.

LUKE

You've been spendin' too much time watchin' those ducks. You gonna make ducks or people?

Josie stands to reveal a vary large belly under her outer cloak.

JOSIE

This is hardly a duck!

LUKE

(stands)

Boy or girl?

JOSIE

Boy.

LUKE

Are you going to let him decide?

JOSIE

Decide what?

LUKE

Anything.

JOSIE

Chaos. I won't have it.

LUKE

Have it your way. But he'll be missing half the fun.

JOSIE

Your idea of fun is not my idea of fun.

LUKE

Look, it's been a long time since we last... uh, had a conversation, and you ain't said nothin' 'bout this.

JOSIE

I had been considering it for a long time.

LUKE

How much considerin'? You decided to throw caution to the winds?

JOSIE

That is not in my nature.

LUKE

Let me tell you this. What you got in your nature right now is a hill-o'-beans.

JOSIE

A hill-o'-beans, as you put it, has a way of growing into something beneficial.

LUKE

You don't know everythin' you know.

JOSIE

On the contrary, I do know everything I know.

LUKE

You still don't know me.

JOSIE

You are an enigma of your own making.

LUKE

I like it that way.

JOSIE

Unfortunately, it's the way you are.

LUKE

This thing is never going to work out. One time, and then you go and get pregnant.

JOSIE

On that I can agree.

LUKE

We hardly ever agree on anythin'. When's the last time we agreed on somethin'? We never agreed on this.

JOSIE

We agreed that you are basically unknowable.

LUKE

I mean somethin' positive.

JOSIE

(thinks)

We built paradise together. I took lots of your suggestions—even the snakes.

LUKE

I have to admit; you agreed to the snakes.

JOSIE

The fruit trees. You certainly enjoyed the fruit trees.

LUKE

Not so much the fruit trees as the fruit. Them Empires is especially good. But it took a long time. Look, I'm not sayin' they weren't some good times.

JOSIE

What are you tryin' -- trying, to say?

LUKE

It's like I been used. I think I been used.

JOSIE

I finally give you the one thing in the whole of eternity that you want and you say that you feel used?

LUKE

You never said nothin' about the boy. We should o' greed on that. We should o' greed on how we was gonna raise him before you went an' done this.

JOSIE

I will raise him in my image and likeness.

LUKE

Just remember, he's a boy. An' another thing. Half o' him is gonna think like me.

Luke exits. Josie walks over to a full-length mirror. She pulls aside her robe and gently massages her distended lower abdomen while looking in the mirror.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 5

STAGEHAND enters, turns the bulb on, exits. Plants, animals, and trees are present. Birds are chirping. Josie is leaning over ADAM who is lying on the ground.

JOSIE

Adam, wake up. Wake up, Adam.

Adam sits up, rubs his eyes and yawns.

ADAM

Mama. Mama, where are we?

JOSIE

You're in paradise, Adam.

ADAM

Paradise?

JOSIE

Yes, paradise. You are going to like it here. There are flowers and trees and lovely animals.

Adam swats the back of his neck.

JOSIE

Oh yes... And a few mosquitoes. You may need this.

Josie hands Adam a can of mosquito repellent.

JOSIE

Spray that on yourself.

Adam stands and sprays himself with the repellent.

ADAM

Thanks Mama.

(sits and looks around)

It's very nice here, mama.

STAGEHAND enters, waters the plants along with Adam, then exits.

ADAM

(shivers)

Mama. I... I... I never felt like this in the motherland.

JOSIE

You're all wet. Cold. Uncomfortable. It rains here in paradise. It helps grow the plants and trees.

Josie hands Adam her tunic which he throws over himself.

ADAM

Does it help me to grow too, mama?

JOSIE

No, I can't say that it does.

ADAM

Mama, I'm hungry. Bring me something to eat, mama.

JOSIE

Just look around you, Adam. There is plenty to eat.

ADAM

I see lots of things. How will I know what I can and cannot eat?

JOSIE

Just try them. And if you don't like something, you don't have to eat it. I can always make you a peanut butter and jelly sandwich or some macaroni and cheese.

ADAM

OK, mama.

Adam stands, walks over to the Empire apple tree, and reaches for one.

ADAM

I think I'll try one of these.

JOSIE

Not those apples, Adam. Those are Empires. You're not ready for those yet. You can have the red ones; they're Delicious. They are very, very good.

ADAM

Why can't I have an Empire, mama? I want an Empire.

JOSIE

You are too young to have an Empire, my dear.

ADAM

I want an Empire, mama. Please, please let me have an Empire.

JOSIE

No, Adam. No Empires.

Adam falls on his back, puts his arms and legs up in the air, and kicks and screams.

ADAM

I want an Empire. I want an Empire.

JOSIE

Adam, stop acting like a child.

ADAM

(still kicking and screaming)

I want an Empire. I want an Empire.

(suddenly sits straight up)

What's a child?

JOSIE

A child?

ADAM

Yes. A child, mama. What's a child? I am unfamiliar with the term.

JOSIE

A child. Yes. Well a child is a smaller version of yourself.

ADAM

Is there a child here in paradise?

JOSIE

Yes... No... Not yet.

ADAM

Then how will I know how to behave if I cannot observe a child?

JOSIE

Just do what mama says, Adam. That's all you need to know.

ADAM

When will there be a child in paradise, mama?

JOSIE

Soon enough.

ADAM

How will the child get here, mama?

JOSIE

(brushes hair with hand)

A big bird will bring the child, Adam. A big bird.

ADAM

What kind of a bird, mama?

JOSIE

A stork, Adam. A stork. Look over there.

(points)

Do you see that big white bird?

ADAM

Where mama? I can't see the stork.

JOSIE
(whispers behind Adam's back)

Let stork be.

STAGEHAND walks across the stage carrying
a stork replica.

JOSIE
Look, Adam. There's the stork.

ADAM
The stork's not very big, mama. Will it be able to carry a child? How big is a child, mama?

JOSIE
Well they start small so the stork can bring them, and then they grow up fast.

ADAM
Where does the stork get the child, mama?

JOSIE
Adam, that's enough questions for one day. Let's go get a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

ADAM
OK, Mama.

Adam stands and takes Josie's hand. They exit together. The light brightens to maximum, then dims. STAGEHAND enters and turns off the light.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 6

In paradise. Birds begin to chirp.
STAGEHAND enters and turns on the light.
The light brightens to midday. Adam enters holding some stuffed animals. He puts the animals underneath a Delicious apple tree.

He picks a couple of the apples, sits, and lifts up one of the animals.

ADAM

Your name is Michie. Now Michie, I want you to eat your lunch. Here's a nice apple for you.

Adam puts the animal and apple down carefully and then picks up a smaller animal.

ADAM

My goodness. Who are you? You are so small you must be a child. Did the stork just bring you? You must be so hungry. Here, have an apple. They are delicious... No, you can't have those other apples. Mama says you can only have the Delicious ones. Now you must listen to mama and do what mama says.

Luke has entered the scene and is approaching Adam slowly from behind.

ADAM

I'm going to call you Gabie. You are so small, but you will grow up and be as big as Gabriella. I saved some of my peanut butter sandwich for you. Be careful not to get the jelly on your tunic. Here, sit next to Michie. You both look very nice. Your mama loves you very much and will take good care of you. You will want for nothing in paradise.

LUKE

Except for those Empires over there.

ADAM

(startled)

Why -- Who are you?

LUKE

(extends hand)

I'm Luke. Pleased to meet you.

ADAM

(takes Luke's hand)

I'm pleased to meet you too.

(hands Luke an apple)

Do you live in paradise too?

LUKE

Nope. Used to live in the motherland, but now I hole up elsewhere.

ADAM

Is elsewhere as nice a place as paradise?

LUKE

Well elsewhere ain't exactly the name of a place. I spend most all my time in hell.

ADAM

Well then, is hell as nice a place as paradise?

LUKE

It's nice, but it's diff'rnt.

ADAM

You talk funny... How is it different?

LUKE

Well, there's a huge fireplace, a big easy chair, lots o' smokes. You ever smoked boy? Don't reckon you have. A wide-screen TV with a dish feed. You ever watched TV? I get all them pay-per-view channels free. Sports, movies, Some good movies. You ever seen "Hells Angels On Fire?" Course not. Your mama fixed me up with this stuff some time ago.

ADAM

(long stare)

I have no idea what you are talking about.

LUKE

We can remedy that. I'll give you a tour. Just follow me.

ADAM

Well, I should tell mama where I'm going.

LUKE

Look boy. It's not that far. Just a little east o' here. You'll be back in paradise quick-as-a-wink. Mama won't even know you're gone. You got to see that wide-screen TV. Hey I got some eats you won't find around here—pizza, beer. You ever had a beer, boy? Just one step over the line and we be there.

ADAM

Well, I'm not really sure... Do you have any of those green apples in hell?

LUKE

One thing I got in hell that you got in paradise, boy, is them green apples, the Empires. You ever had one of them Empires, boy?

ADAM

Mama says I'm not ready for those yet. That I shouldn't eat them in paradise.

LUKE

Well this is your lucky day, boy. Hell ain't paradise. You eat one of those in hell, why you'd still be doing what your ol' mama says. Those Empires are a real treat. Better than peanut butter and jelly. I grew them apples myself from seed.

ADAM

Do you mean hell isn't paradise?

LUKE

Yup.

ADAM

I guess that would be OK.

LUKE

Here. Take my hand, and mama's little boy will surely go to hell.

Adam reaches for some of his animals.

LUKE

Leave them animals, boy. You won't be needin' them.

Adam takes Luke's hand and they both exit.
The light dims slowly. STAGEHAND enters
and turns off the light.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 7

In hell. Flames flicker in the background. Luke and Adam are sitting on a couch. A coffee table filled with food sits in front of them. Beyond that is a huge wide-screen TV. Luke is holding out a slice of pizza to Adam.

LUKE

This is pizza. Try this. It's hotter 'n hell, so take it slow.

Adam takes the pizza and handles it gingerly. He bites carefully.

ADAM

My mama, that's good.

LUKE

Wash it down with a swig o' this.

Luke twists off the cap of a bottle of beer and hands it to Adam. He opens one for himself and drinks freely.

LUKE

Drink up boy.

Adam takes a small swig, then a larger, then a larger still.

ADAM

Whew.

LUKE

Nothin' like that in paradise, eh boy?

ADAM

Well, we've got some naturally carbonated water that has a similar effect on the palate, but this has so much more taste.

LUKE

And less fillin' too. Ha!

(slaps knee)

Shucks. Forgot you ain't got TV up there. Let me switch it on here.

Luke uses a remote to switch on the TV. Hell's lights dim, but the flames remain in the background. Only the faces of Luke and Adam remain illuminated by the garish light from the TV. Sounds of a crowd cheering come from its speakers.

ADAM

What are they doing? Who are all those beings? I don't recognize any of them.

LUKE

That's the future, boy. Those are people like you and me.

ADAM

People?

LUKE

Yeah. Men and women. Hardly a one is a sickoh.

The crowd on the TV roars.

ADAM

What are men and women?

LUKE

My mama. Your mama ain't told you nothin'. You are a man, boy.

ADAM

If I am a man boy, what is a woman boy?

LUKE

No, no, no. You are a man. You are still a boy, but you are a man. Listen, jus' think of yourself as a man. You are a man.

ADAM

If I am a man, then what is a woman?

LUKE

Let's see. Your mama is a woman; damn good one, but stubborn as all get out. And Gabriella, she's sort of a woman. Now Mich, he's sort of a man.

ADAM

Are there any women in paradise?

LUKE

None, at least not yet. Wait. Don't ask. I can see it comin'. Look, I don't know why there ain't no women in paradise. Maybe you should ask your mama 'bout that.

ADAM

If there were a woman in paradise, I'd have someone to play with. Of course, that would be true if there were another man, as well.

LUKE

Right you are boy. But, hey, I think you might find a woman more enjoyable. I mean fun. Yeah, lot's o' fun.

ADAM

Why is that? You are a man, and you seem to be lots of fun.

LUKE

Well, I ain't always this much fun. Beer and pizza and TV—especially TV—can get borin' after awhile. Besides a woman thinks differ'nt from a man; smells better too. You might like a change o' pace now and then. Have some more beer, boy -- er, man.

Adam continues drinking until he empties the bottle.

ADAM

(burps)

Goodness. I feel so much lighter. 'Nother bottle, Luke?

LUKE

Sure in hell. Plenty more where these come from.

Luke takes another bottle from a bucket on the floor, opens it, and hands it to Adam. Adam take a couple of good slugs.

ADAM

(burps)

So... You think a woman would be a good playmate for me... right Luke?

LUKE

Sure in hell do boy. All you have to do is convince your mama o' that.

ADAM

You may be right. Gabriella is nice. She plays with me sometimes... But so does Mich. It's hard to make up my mind what to ask. Besides... What was I gonna say?

LUKE

You were thinkin' 'bout askin' your mama' 'bout bringin' a woman into paradise.

ADAM

Right.

(looks around)

Say Luke. What about them Empires. You said I could try one o' them Empires if I came here with you.

LUKE

Sure boy. Got a couple right here on the table. Eat them all the time myself. "Apple a day," they say. Here, try this.

Luke reaches for an apple and hands it to Adam.
Adam takes it.

ADAM

You sure mama won't know 'bout this?

The house lights flicker.

LUKE

(looks around)

Sure as we're sittin' here and she's somewheres else. Just don't say nothin' 'bout it to her or nobody else. 'Greed?

ADAM

Sure. OK. Here goes.

Adam bites into the apple. The house lights flicker again. He chews slowly.

ADAM

I don't see what the big fuss is about. It ain't even as sweet as them Delicious.

LUKE

(big grin)

Got that right, boy. Just your mama's idea of a joke, I guess.

ADAM

We was -- Excuse me. We were talking 'bout the difference between men an' women.

Adam takes a few more swigs from the bottle.

ADAM

(burps)

Why is -- Why are they differ'nt? I don't understand?

LUKE

Well, it's so's they can bring children into the world.

ADAM

I thought storks brought children into the world. Mama said so. Mama said --

(takes another swig)

-- Mama said children was brung... bringed... brought by a big bird.

Adam empties the bottle and takes another bite of the apple. Luke hand him another bottle.

LUKE

Well your mama was funnin' with you. You wasn't around afor you was born, naturally, but your mama, she borned you.

ADAM

My mama borned me?

LUKE

(points to abdomen)

Carried you around in here for nine months.

ADAM

(looks at and pats abdomen)

In here. No way man.

LUKE

True. True as I'm settin' here.

ADAM

How you know that?

LUKE

She got a little big 'round the belly. Was bitchier than ever. Beatin' up on me at every little chance. An' she was eatin' food that pregnant women eat. Even gave me some for breakfast.

ADAM

How'd she come to be pregnant?

LUKE

(looks down for moment)

She did that herself. Just like she does all that other stuff. I sure as hell didn't know nothin' 'bout it.

ADAM

Man, Luke. Now you got me all mixed up... an' my head is spinnin'. My mama got herself pregnant with me, but you just said before that it takes a man an' a woman to do that.

LUKE

That's for people, boy. Your mama is special. She ain't normal people like you an' me. Ain't nothin' else like her in the whole world. I ain't particular special 'ceptin' that I been around as long as your mama. Picked up a few things here and there. But I ain't like your mama, specially since I'm a man an' your mama, she's a woman.

ADAM

So tell me then, how do a man an' a woman make a child, 'specially if the woman ain't like my mama?

LUKE

(smiles)

Easy.

ADAM
Easy?

LUKE
Damn easy.

ADAM
Damn easy?

LUKE
You betcha.

ADAM
You betcha what?

LUKE
You use whatcha got.

Both Adam and Luke are drinking furiously now.

ADAM
I use what I got.

Adam drinks the rest of his beer. Luke hands him another.

ADAM
What I got?

LUKE
You got what I got.

ADAM
I got what you got.

LUKE
Damn right.

Luke opens and consumes an entire beer in one continuous gulp.

LUKE

Use it boy.

Luke hands Adam another beer. Adam
consumes it in one continuous gulp.

ADAM

(burps)

Damn right. I'm gonna use it. I'm gonna use it an' make me a chil'.

(burps)

What the hell is it?

LUKE

(swigs more beer)

Your pecker, boy.

ADAM

My... pecker?

LUKE

That thing hangin' down 'tween your legs.

ADAM

That? With that?

LUKE

That.

ADAM

(disappointedly)

Oh.

LUKE

That's all there is to it, 'ceptin' you need a woman whose in the mood.

ADAM

(swaying a little)

Do I haf ta be in the mood?

LUKE

You will always be in the mood. They ain't.

ADAM

How you get them in the mood?

LUKE

Talk sweet an' stuff. Tell 'em they is be-you-ti-ful. Touch 'em all up an' down with your hands. Slow like.

(demonstrates in the air)

Like that.

ADAM

(sways and falls to floor)

Luke.

(burps)

I gotta problem. First I gotta pee. Second there ain't no woman 'round here to make a chil' with.

LUKE

Jus' piss in the pot over there, an' then we'll figure a way to convince your mama to born a woman.

Adam gets up and staggers into the dark. Luke stands up and paces back and forth swigging beer and mumbling to himself. Then he stops and shouts.

LUKE

Hey boy. You get lost back there or are you jus' playin' with it?

Adam reappears in a drunken swagger.

ADAM

That pot was full. Had to find me 'nother one.

LUKE

What other one?

ADAM

Man, I gots to lie down.

Adam crashes on the couch.

LUKE

Now don't you pass out on me boy. We got importan' business to discuss here.

ADAM

(very sleepily)

Go ahead Luke, I'm listenin'.

LUKE

Here's how I figure it. You tell your mama that you're lonely and ya need somebody to play with. She's probly gonna say you got Mich and Gabriella to play with, but you tell her that they is borin' 'cause they never think up no new games an' are always askin' if ya need somethin' 'til it drives you plumb crazy. You ask her for a sweet little sister. "Sweet like you mama." Say that, "A lil' sister sweet like you mama." Say them 'xact words back to me so ya get it right.

ADAM

(snores)

Zzzz.

LUKE

Crow. Wake up Adam. We got business. We got importan' business... Damn.

Luke bends over Adam and gets him to his feet with much protestation from Adam. Luke holds him up with one arm as they stagger off into the dark.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 8

It is night in paradise. Josie and Mich are carrying candles (electric or otherwise) as they moves across stage. Josie is followed closely by Mich.

JOSIE

Adam? Adam? Where are you. Where are you my dear boy?

(stops and turns)

I can see well enough... This is such a big place. I simply got carried away...

(MORE)

JOSIE (cont'd)

(looks around)

But this is good. You can see that this is all good.

MICH

Yes Ma'am Josie.

JOSIE

(continues walking)

I dare say, Mich, that boy is the love of my life. He's turned out just as I'd hoped. He's kind and playful and well spoken—just like his mama. We have some of the most wonderful conversations.

Josie comes into the vicinity of the Empire apple tree.

JOSIE

And he's so obedient. Ever since I told him not to touch those Empire apples, he hasn't gone near this tree. Look. Not a single apple is missing... Adam, where are you.

(turns to Mich)

Mich, be a darling and look over there and I'll look over here.

Mich goes one way and Josie goes another. After a few moments Mich trips and falls over Adam who is sound asleep on the ground. Mich ends up sitting on the ground with his feet draped over Adam.

MICH

Oh. Oh. I am so sorry Master Adam. Please forgive me. I didn't see you there.

Adam groans but does not awaken. Mich gets up on his knees and gently shakes Adam's shoulder.

MICH

Adam, wake up. Your mama is here. She's come to see you. Wake up, Adam.

Adam mumbles incoherently, reaches up, grabs Mich's tunic, pulls it over himself; then he yawns and lays back down.

MICH

Josie Ma'am. Over here. Adam is over here.

JOSIE

Coming Mich.

MICH

I'm afraid he's sound asleep. I don't think he wants to wake up.

JOSIE

(walking toward Mich)

That's fine Mich. That suits my purposes just fine.

(reaches Adam's side)

How kind of you to cover him, Mich. The boy does catch a chill now and then.

MICH

I didn't -- Yes Ma'am Josie. Thank you, Ma'am.

JOSIE

It's better that I found him asleep. I would just have had to wait until he fell asleep anyway.

MICH

Why is that Josie Ma'am?

JOSIE

Well, I need one of his ribs.

MICH

One of his ribs Ma'am?

JOSIE

Yes. You see I've decided to surprise him with a playmate. A sweet young thing like me.

MICH

If you say so, Ma'am. But you carried Adam to term. Will you do the same with his playmate?

JOSIE

No. For motherland's sake, no, Mich. That is so not enjoyable. This time I just need some stem cells from Adam. A slight of hand as they differentiate and—voila!—a playmate. It will be much easier, and much faster, believe me.

MICH

I believe you, Ma'am. I heard you shouting when you were birthing Adam. Why I've never heard you say words like that before and --

JOSIE

-- Mich.

MICH

Yes Ma'am.

JOSIE

Just help me here for a moment. Roll him up on his side.

Mich rolls Adam onto his side, lifts the tunic with one hand and supports Adam with the other.

JOSIE

There, that's perfect. Keep him like that for just another moment.

Josie reaches under the tunic. There is a loud popping sound like a cork being pulled out of a bottle. She pulls a large rib (big as a cow's) out from under the tunic.

JOSIE

He won't miss that.

Mich rolls Adam back down and drops the tunic.

MICH

Now what Josie? Uh, Ma'am.

JOSIE

I can create an entire universe with a few strings and a little geometry, but these beings are so more complicated. I'll be back shortly. Meanwhile, be a peach and stay with Adam. He may be a little sore when he wakes up. Keep him comfy.

MICH

Certainly, Josie Ma'am.

Josie exits and Mich sits next to Adam.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 9

Paradise. It is still dark. STAGEHAND enters and turns on the light, then exits. The light is dim; birds begin to chirp. Adam rolls over, sits up, and gives a big yawn. Mich grabs hold of his tunic and begins to pull it off of Adam. Adam responds by pulling it back over himself with great force.

ADAM

What in hell do you think you're doing?

MICH

Master Adam. I am so sorry. Did I offend Master?

ADAM

Mich? Is that you Mich?

MICH

Why yes, Master Adam. Don't you recognize me?

ADAM

I do now Mich. For some reason my vision is somewhat impaired. And my head... It feels quite uncomfortable. Damn uncomfortable to be precise.

MICH

You are usually so friendly when you awaken, Master Adam. You seem out of sorts this morning.

ADAM

Well, not only my head hurts. My side aches terrible as well. Must be this hard ground I've been sleeping on. You seen Luke 'round here? Oops. I mean to say, have you seen Luke in the vicinity this morning?

MICH

No, Master Adam. It was just your mama and I.

ADAM

My mama? My mama was here?

MICH

Yes she was. Your side hurts because she took one of your ribs while your were asleep. She set off to make you a playmate.

ADAM

My mama's gonna -- going to make me a play mate? Has she gone and made herself pregnant again? And what's she gonna do with my rib?

MICH

No, Master Adam. She's simply going to use your rib to speed up the process. Apparently it's a whole lot simpler than being pregnant.

ADAM

Man, what a dream I had Mich. It must have been a dream. Everything was different. And Luke was there, and beer and pizza and talkin' 'bout women, and beer and me makin' a child with my --

Adam pulls up his tunic to look at himself.

ADAM

Oh my mama.

Mich looks at the same thing that Adam is looking at.

MICH

Oh my. Oh my mama. Master Adam, you look like one of the ducks when --

ADAM

-- Mich. Mind your own funny business.

Adam readjusts the tunic to cover himself.

ADAM

You said mama's going to make a playmate for me. Is it going to be a man or a woman?

MICH

Well, I believe it will be a woman. She said she was going to make a sweet young thing like herself. Those were her words. Exactly.

ADAM

Really.

MICH

I believe it will shortly be a reality, Master Adam.

ADAM

Listen Mich. Do you know... can you tell me... ah... do you have any idea how... ah... do you have any idea how a man and a woman go about making a child?

MICH

None.

ADAM

None?

MICH

None.

ADAM

I believe it has something to do with my pecker.

MICH

Your pecker, Master Adam?

ADAM

(lifts tunic and points)

This thing you dimwit.

MICH

(looking at where Adam is pointing)

My. How interesting.

(MORE)

MICH (cont'd)

(looking up)

I am familiar with the appendage, Master Adam. Luke uses his when he is with me, and I've never gotten pregnant, so I don't see how that can be the case.

ADAM

Luke uses his with you?

MICH

Well, not since he went off to hell by himself. We used to meet here in paradise quite often. Gabriella would join us. At first, he was using it with just Gabriella and me, but then he began using it with other members of the choir. Quite a large number altogether. We always obliged when he asked.

ADAM

Exactly how does Luke use his with you?

MICH

He simply inserts it here.

(points)

He seems to enjoy the experience momentarily, but as soon as we disengage he appears dissatisfied and takes immediate leave of my company. I do wish I could be of better service to him.

ADAM

Does -- did he do the same thing with Gabriella?

MICH

Not exactly.

ADAM

How's that?

MICH

With Gabriella he can manage a frontal approach. With the same disappointing results I might add. We were both in a quandary as to how to please him better.

ADAM

And Gabriella never got pregnant?

MICH

Yes, Master Adam.

ADAM

Gabriella got pregnant?

MICH

No, Master Adam.

ADAM

Mich, either she did or she didn't.

MICH

She either did or did not what, Master Adam.

ADAM

She either did or did not become pregnant.

MICH

She did not become pregnant, if that is what you were asking.

ADAM

That's what I asked you.

MICH

Indeed you did, Master Adam.

ADAM

For the love of Josie, Mich, give me a straight answer.

MICH

I love Josie, Master Adam. We all love Josie Ma'am.

ADAM

I'm sure you do Mich.

MICH

Thank you, Master Adam.

ADAM

(stands up)

Mich, I'm going to take a little walk.

MICH

Would you like me to accompany you, Master Adam. Perhaps I could be of service to you?

ADAM

(backs away quickly)

Some other time, Mich.

MICH

Just tell me when you need me, Master Adam.

ADAM

Not a chance, Mich.

MICH

Thank you Master Adam. Have a nice day.

Adam and Mich part company in opposite directions. The sun grows to full brightness. Josie and EVE enter together.

JOSIE

Adam. Oh, Adam. Look what I've brought for you my dear little boy.

(looks around)

My. Where could that boy have gone? I left him here with Mich just a short while ago.

(looks at Eve)

You'll love Mich, my dear. He such a wonderful conversationalist.

(looks around again)

I asked Mich to keep my little boy comfy while I was gone. They're probably playing nearby. You wait here my dear while I go look for them. I'll be right back.

Josie turns and leaves. Eve walks over to the apple trees and begins fondling the apples. First the Delicious, and then the Empires. Luke enters behind Eve and begins singing.

LUKE

Wish't I was an apple/A hangin' from a tree/An every time that Cindy passed/She'd take a bite o' me.

EVE
(turns to face Luke)

Would you be Adam?

LUKE

Would it make any difference?

EVE

It would only make a difference if you weren't.

LUKE

Well if I could make a difference in your life I sure in hell would.

EVE

You're not Adam then?

LUKE

Well, I could lie and say that I was.

EVE

I wouldn't be so quick to admit that if I were you.

LUKE

I wasn't meanin' to, but I cannot tell a lie, you bein' so pretty'n all.

EVE

It is comforting to know that my being pretty has that effect.

LUKE

I guess I ain't doin' this right. Beggin' your pardon, Missy. My Name is Luke.

EVE

No need to beg ,Mr. Luke. I'm Eve.

LUKE

Pleased to meet you.

Luke puts out his hand. Eve takes it. Luke stands there holding her hand, transfixed. Eve pulls her hand away.

LUKE

I been waitin' a long time to meet you, but I didn't expect you quite this soon.

EVE

I suspect the duration of your wait may not have been long enough.

LUKE

Listen. You hungry? You ain't had no lunch yet?

EVE

I can say that I haven't.

LUKE

Well then, try one o' them apples.

Luke picks an Empire off the tree.

LUKE

These here are real good.

Luke holds out the apple for Eve. Eve hesitates.

LUKE

Go ahead.

EVE

No thank you.

LUKE

Here, eat this one. I'll get 'nother one for me.

EVE

That one is green. I think I might favor one of the red ones over there.

LUKE

Take my word. Them -- they don't taste as good as this one does.

EVE

You don't say?

LUKE

That's right. I grow 'em both where I hole up. The green ones are a sight better.

EVE

Well, if I had to go by color, I'd say the reds ones are a might riper.

LUKE

No. No. Color don't mean nothin' when it comes to apples. Them can be red on the outside an' green on the inside.

EVE

I choose red.

LUKE

(taken aback)

OK then.

Luke fetches Eve one of the Delicious apples.

EVE

Thank you very much.

LUKE

Glad to oblige.

Eve proceeds to eat the apple. Luke can't take his eyes off her. She takes a couple of bites and hands what's remaining to Luke.

EVE

I am much obliged myself. That was very good.

Luke holds the partially eaten apple in one hand, and the Empire in the other.

LUKE

Glad you liked it. Look. You want to see my place? We be goin' to hell in no time.

EVE

I am waiting for mama to return. She brought me here to meet Adam.

LUKE

Your mama is here?

EVE

Do you see her?

LUKE

(looks around)

Can't say that I do.

EVE

Then I guess she isn't.

LUKE

What I meant to say was, she's a-bout, right?

EVE

I guess, She didn't say exactly where she was going.

LUKE

Listen. I gots to be goin'. I'll stop by 'nother time. Maybe you can see my place then? It's jus' over the line from here.

EVE

Perhaps.

LUKE

So long now. 'Twere a pleasure meetin' ya.

EVE

I'm sure.

Luke exits quickly still carrying the apples. Eve squats down, picks up a small stick and begins doodling on the ground. She sings another verse to "Cindy."

EVE

Cindy is a pretty girl/She lives right in a tree/An' every time she sees my face/She throws a rock at me.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 10

Eve is still doodling on the ground and humming the melody to “Cindy.” She looks up to see Adam entering. Adam is still wearing Mich’s tunic. He has his head down and his hands in the pockets of the tunic. He doesn’t see Eve and is about to walk into her when she stops him with a question.

EVE

Why the long look?

ADAM

(startled)

Oh... Hello there. Are you one of Gabriella’s?

EVE

Gabriella?

ADAM

Gabriella leads the Second-Day choir.

EVE

No, my mama brought me here. She’s off looking for Adam. She wanted me to meet him.

ADAM

I’m Adam. You... must be my new playmate. Mich told me about you.

EVE

I’m Eve. I’ve not met Mich, just Luke.

ADAM

Luke. Where did he go?

EVE

Off that way. He didn’t seemed all too pleased that mama was nearby.

Josie enters the scene.

JOSIE

Adam, there you are. Eve, what a good girl. You know how to stay put. Adam, I'd like you to meet your new playmate, Eve.

ADAM

We've just met, mama.

EVE

Mama? She's your mama too?

ADAM

Sure is. Luke said she borned me right out o' there.

(point to Josie's abdomen)

At least that's the way Luke put it.

JOSIE

Luke? Luke. Luke's been here?

ADAM & EVE

Yes, mama.

JOSIE

Luke hasn't been here for over twenty years. Are you sure it was Luke?

ADAM

Well that's who he said he was.

EVE

Said the same to me.

JOSIE

Adam, what did he tell you exactly.

ADAM

Well, come to think of it, I may have been dreaming. When I woke up, Mich was kneeling over me.

Mich enters the scene.

MICH

Master Adam, there you are.

(looking at Eve)

And you must be Adam's new playmate.

EVE

Eve, thank you.

JOSIE

Where have you been, Mich? I asked you to look after Adam.

MICH

Why Master Adam wanted to take a walk by himself. I simply honored his wishes, Josie Ma'am. He went that way, and I went the other until I met Luke on the path. He seemed in an awful hurry. I offered him my services, but he failed to respond.

EVE

Luke left here in a hurry too: as soon as I finished eating the apple he picked for me.

JOSIE

(whirls to meet Eve's eye)

Which apple?

EVE

(points)

From one of those trees over there.

JOSIE

(runs to the Empire)

One of the Empires is missing. Did you eat one of the Empires?

EVE

Which one is the Empire, mama, the red or the green?

JOSIE

The green.

EVE

Well, I ate the red.

JOSIE

(visibly relieved)

Thanks be to Josie. Don't you ever, ever eat the green apples. Those are Empires and you are far too young to digest Empires. Are you sure you didn't eat a green one? One of the Empires is missing.

EVE

That's the one Luke offered me first. I liked the look of the red ones better.

JOSIE

Good girl. Good girl. I suppose Luke headed back to hell. That is no place for man nor beast.

ADAM

Why is that, mama? It didn't seem -- well, why did Luke stay away all those years?

JOSIE

(ignores Adam's question)

Mich, I want you to go back to the motherland and tell the choirs that they are to inform me at the first sign of Luke.

MICH

Yes, Ma'am.

(turning to Adam)

Master Adam, if you are no longer chilled, may I have my tunic?

ADAM

Uh... not just yet, Mich. I've kinda taken a fancy to it.

JOSIE

For goodness sake Adam, give Mich his tunic. It's as hot as -- It is very warm today.

ADAM

(glancing at Eve)

I can't do it right now.

JOSIE

Adam, what is the matter with you?

ADAM

(swats the back of his neck)

Mosquitoes, mama. They are awful today.

JOSIE

Mich, go on without your tunic. We'll settle this later.

MICH

Yes Ma'am.

Mich exits.

JOSIE

I need to have a little talk with you two about Luke. Listen. I want you to stay away from Luke. Just think of him as a green apple, one of the Empires. If he as much as shows his face around here, you just run the other way. And don't listen to him. No matter what he tells you. Is that clear. Adam, are you listening to me? Is that clear.

ADAM

Yes, mama.

JOSIE

Eve, is that clear.

EVE

Yes, mama.

JOSIE

I can't be here all the time to keep watch so I have to depend on you keeping away from him. He's a sweet talker and he'll make you offers that are hard to refuse. But he's only after one thing, and that's what he wants, so he can't be of much help to you.

(looking at Eve)

And you girl. You have to be especially careful not to be caught up in what he says or does.

EVE

Yes mama.

JOSIE

Now you two enjoy yourselves. Have a nice conversation. Get to know each other.

ADAM & EVE

Yes mama.

Josie smiles at them both, turns and leaves.

EVE

I suppose she's right. I must admit to feeling, well, like Luke had something on his mind when he was talking to me. It made me a bit uncomfortable.

ADAM

I think I know what it was.

EVE

What? Tell me.

ADAM

I don't think you would understand.

EVE

Certainly I would.

ADAM

No, you wouldn't, believe me. It's all clear to me now. I never realized it before.

EVE

How? How did you come to this realization?

ADAM

It's more of a feeling.

EVE

I have feelings.

ADAM

Not this kind of feeling.

EVE

What kind of feeling is that?

ADAM

You are a woman. I am a man. We're different.

EVE

So what if we are different?

ADAM

A man can do things a woman can't.

EVE

I am sure a woman can do things that a man can't. What sort of things are you talking about. How do you know this?

ADAM

Luke told me.

EVE

Mama said you shouldn't listen to Luke. He may not have your best interests at heart.

ADAM

Well, Mich sort of confirmed it.

EVE

What did Mich have to say?

ADAM

He explained it more or less in physiological terms.

EVE

And so you can explain it to me the same way. Show me, if that's possible.

ADAM

Show you?

EVE

Show me.

ADAM

You want me to show you?

EVE

That's what I said.

ADAM

We are not the same. We're not made the same way. A man and a woman are made differently.

EVE

Now you are repeating yourself.

ADAM

I am?

EVE

You are, and your face is turning as red as the apples on that tree. Why is that?

ADAM

I have no idea, and that other thing is happening again: just like when I first saw you before mama showed up.

EVE

I can't make any sense out of your explanation.

ADAM

Maybe you need a beer first.

EVE

A beer?

ADAM

Yeah. It kind of softens your mind.

EVE

I still don't know what you are talking about.

ADAM

I told you that you wouldn't.

EVE

I'll try if you make some sense.

ADAM

Listen. Before I went and visited Luke, I never had these feelings. He gave me things to eat and drink that were damn good: pizza, beer, and them Empire apples over there. My head was spinnin' but it still felt good. Then I woke up here.

EVE

You ate the Empires? Does mama know that?

ADAM

Nope. And she doesn't know that I've been to hell and back either.

Goodness.

EVE

ADAM

We're related, too. You were made from one of my ribs.

EVE

How's that?

ADAM

Ask Mich. He knows more about it than I do; I was asleep.

EVE

I will.

ADAM

Listen. Unless you want to born a child, stay away from Luke.

EVE

What does it mean to born a child?

ADAM

Woman! Do I have to explain everything to you?

EVE

You haven't explained much. I'll ask Mich then.

ADAM

Oh, don't go and ask Mich. He'll tell mama. He can't keep his mouth shut for a moment. Besides, he only knows part of the story and has no clue about the rest.

EVE

Do you know the rest?

ADAM

No.

EVE

Who can I ask then?

ADAM

I dunno. This is all new to me too. I'm tired. It's been a long day. I need to get some rest. I'm gonna lie down here. You want to rest too?

Adam lies down on the ground.

ADAM

This is really your first day in paradise you know. You must be exhausted.

Eve lies down next to Adam. Adam throws part of his tunic over Eve.

EVE

Is there anything else? What did you mean when you said mama borned you right out of here.

(points to her abdomen)

What can a man do that a woman can't? How are we different?

Adam

(snores)

Zzzz.

Eve sits up and appears to be thinking. The light dims considerably. She picks up the tunic and peers underneath. Then she lifts her hand to her mouth in surprise.

EVE

Oh! Ha, ha. My what a funny looking appendage.

STAGEHAND enters and turns off the light.

END OF ACT I.

ACT II

SCENE 1

Midday in paradise. Eve is strolling along a path bounded by high grasses sniffing a daisy. As she walks beneath the Empire apple tree the boa constrictor suddenly drops in front of her, its tail hanging from a branch above. It continues to sway back and forth as she attempts to walk around it.

EVE

Oh... Oh... Oh!

Luke comes up behind Eve while she is trying to get around the snake.

LUKE

I think he just wants to play.

EVE

(turning to face Luke)

I'm not sure I want to play his game.

LUKE

Why don't you try? You might like it.

Luke continues to advance towards Eve. Eve backs up to avoid Luke's advances and the snake slithers over her shoulder and around her neck.

EVE

Oh!

LUKE

(advances to Eve)

Here, let me have him.

Luke unwinds the snake from Eve and wraps it around himself, holding the head out toward Eve.

EVE

There are some things in paradise that I don't like.

LUKE

(brandishing the head)

This be one of them?

EVE

Maybe two.

LUKE

There's only one snake.

EVE

You have a reputation. Mama wants me to avoid you.

LUKE

I don't see why.

(leering)

Or maybe I do see.

EVE

Your intentions are what mama finds objectionable.

LUKE

Now what might they be?

Luke brandishes the head of the snake once again towards Eve.

EVE

That's the part I haven't figured out yet.

LUKE

What is it you need to know? Get it straight from the source.

EVE

Are you a man or just one of the minions, like Mich?

LUKE

Well, I ain't like Mich; that's for sure. Yeah, I'm a man. Been one for as long as I can remember.

EVE

Show me.

LUKE

Well, er, uh --

(looks around)

-- This ain't the time an' place for that.

EVE

Why not?

LUKE

Well, you'd have more fun if you was in the mood.

EVE

In the mood?

LUKE

It's kinda hard to explain to someone like you. Before you had a beer or two, that is. An' maybe a bite o' one o' them green apples.

EVE

Now you're beginning to sound like Adam.

LUKE

What'd Adam have to say

EVE

He says that beer "softens the mind." I'm not sure what he meant, but he did say that the green apples tasted just fine.

LUKE

See, if they was good 'nough for Adam, why they'd be good 'nough for you. Here. Let me get one for you.

Luke attempts to reach up with the snake still curled around him and fails to pick an apple.

EVE

Mama said not to eat them. She also said you could be mighty convincing.

LUKE

(chuckles)

She said that, did she? She ought to know.

EVE

She ought to know what?

LUKE

(hesitates before speaking)

Your mama, she knows a lot o' things, but she don't know me very well. Even after us bein' together so long. We ain't like two peas from the same pod for sure.

EVE

Why are you two so different?

LUKE

Don't know. Just the way it's always been. Maybe 'cause I'm a man an' she's a woman.

EVE

Adam said that mama borned him right "outa here." What did he mean by that?

LUKE

Them's the facts of life. Go watch them ducks. Only they puts out eggs, not chil'en.

EVE

I've seen the ducks. They just swim or waddle or fly.

LUKE

You ain't seen 'em when they's matin'. Havin' a hell-of-a good time. Leastwise the drakes. You keep watch. Matin' season's comin' up.

EVE

So the facts of life are all about "matin'?"

LUKE

Yup. You got that part right.

EVE

I take it there's more.

LUKE

Look. If you was wearin' somethin' like them robes the minions wear, an' you had to tie them knots they tie with them cords 'round their waists, why it'd take me half-a-day to explain how to tie 'em. But I could show you in jus' five minutes. Same with the facts o' life. Lot easier to do than talk about it. More fun too. Jus' come on cross the line with me an' I'll show you quick as a wink. Answer all your questions, jus' like that.

EVE

I take it you've had experience in this sort of thing.

LUKE

Right you are girlie. Right you are there.

EVE

If it's physiological like Adam says, I don't understand why you can't give me a simple straightforward explanation. We have plenty of time.

LUKE

'Cause talkin' about it ain't the way for me.

EVE

Then I guess I'll go "watch them ducks."

Eve turns and leaves.

LUKE

But doin' it is more fun. Hey! Jus' try it once't an' see.

(takes a step or two)

Crow!

Luke turns and exits with the snake.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 2

In the motherland. MICH and Josie are sitting on stools facing each other.

MICH

No sign of Luke anywhere near the motherland, Josie Ma'am. I've informed all the choirs and they have been most cooperative... with perhaps one notable exception—the Seventh-Day choir. Apparently Luke has been supplying them with wine and tobacco for quite some time. They seem a bit... edgy, now that he's no longer coming.

JOSIE

Why wasn't I informed of this earlier?

MICH

You never asked for this information, Josie Ma'am. The minions do have freedom of movement and it's impossible for me to know what all of them are doing all of the time. They do have a lot of time on their hands the other six days of the week. It seemed a rather harmless way to keep them entertained. Their smoking in the motherland has no effect on the animals in paradise. To their credit, they do put on quite a show every seventh day, Josie Ma'am. Even you have said so yourself.

JOSIE

Mich, would you stop referring to me as "Josie Ma'am."

MICH

Yes --

JOSIE

-- "Ma'am."

MICH

Ma'am. Yes. Ma'am. Yes Ma'am.

JOSIE

(contemplates)

Mich, do you ever disagree with anyone?

MICH

Only in matters of fact, Ma'am. And then only when I know the facts.

JOSIE

How familiar are you with the facts of life?

MICH

Only what I've observed of life in paradise, Ma'am. But that is considerable.

JOSIE

Do you know how Adam came into being?

MICH

You carried him to term, just as the animals do in paradise, Ma'am. Then you borned him.

JOSIE

For my sake, Mich, the term is "gave birth." The other is Luke's mangled terminology.

MICH

Then you carried him to gave birth, Ma'am, then you borned him.

JOSIE

(head in the air)

What was I thinking when I made you minions so literal?

MICH

I have no idea what you were thinking, Ma'am.

JOSIE

That is an example of just what I was referring to.

MICH

What is it that you were referring to, Ma'am?

JOSIE

Mich, stop.

MICH

But I am not moving, Ma'am.

JOSIE

Stop talking.

MICH

Yes, Mmmm...

JOSIE

Listen to me carefully. Do you know how mammals create the entity that they eventually... born?

Mich remains silent.

JOSIE

Mich, I'm speaking to you.

Mich shakes his head up and down.

JOSIE

Oh for my sake, Mich, speak.

MICH

Yes Ma'am.

JOSIE

"Yes?" You do know?

MICH

No, Ma'am.

JOSIE

Mich, tell me what you do or do not know.

MICH

I can only tell you the things that I know, Ma'am. Where would you like me to start?

Josie looks at Mich, then stands and commences to walk around in a circle.

JOSIE

What process causes an animal to come into existence?

MICH

Why being borned, Ma'am. Why I remember distinctly the sounds that accompanied the process. You were quite vociferous and then --

JOSIE

-- Mich. Before that.

MICH

Why they remain inside the mother, Ma'am.

JOSIE

Before that.

MICH

They don't exist before that, Ma'am.

JOSIE

So you have observed thousands of animals in paradise and still don't know how they are created in the first place?

MICH

No, Ma'am. Uh, yes, Ma'am. Uh, no Ma'am. Uh, yes Ma'am --

JOSIE

-- You have not deduced—or is it inferred?—how animals get inside their mothers' tummies?

MICH

I have neither induced nor inferred how animals get inside their mothers' tummies. It is beyond the scope of my knowledge, Ma'am.

JOSIE

Mich, I can't keep Luke out of paradise. I have no control over his movements. And he never forces anyone to do anything against their will. But if he manages to influence their will... he can get them to do anything he wants.

MICH

Well he certainly has influenced the choirs, Ma'am.

JOSIE

My question is, how do we keep him from influencing Adam and Eve to do the things that he wants them to do, and get them to do the things that I want them to do?

MICH

Is this another of your rhetorical questions Ma'am, or would you like me to answer that?

JOSIE

Have a go at it Mich. I'm not sure the algorithm is that good, but have a go at it.

MICH

You told me you gave Adam and Eve freedom of choice, Ma'am. Except in one behavior. This you reserved. You never told me what that behavior concerned. You told me that if Adam and Eve thought carefully, they would always choose your way.

JOSIE

But Luke's alcohol can dull their thinking, Mich. They may do something they wouldn't otherwise do while they are under the influence.

MICH

Do they have the freedom to choose to drink alcohol, Ma'am?

JOSIE

Yes, unfortunately they do.

MICH

Can you take it back? That freedom, I mean?

JOSIE

No.

MICH

Then you must offer them something more appealing than alcohol, Ma'am. You must give them a better choice than Luke's.

JOSIE

Good, Mich, good. The algorithm is a lot better than I'd imagined.

MICH

Thank you Ma'am. What algorithm might that be?

JOSIE

Yours Mich, yours.

MICH

Thank you, Ma'am.

JOSIE

Let's put our heads together here, Mich -- No! Let me rephrase that. Let's think about this together. What would be more appealing than alcohol?

MICH

Sex, Ma'am.

JOSIE

Sex! You told me you knew nothing about sex!

MICH

I have no recollection of ever having said that, Ma'am.

JOSIE

Where did you learn about sex?

MICH

Luke, Ma'am. That's what he called it. Luke seems to enjoy it... at least momentarily.
You could offer Luke more sex, Ma'am.

Josie whirls on Mich.

JOSIE

How did you know?

MICH

Know what, Ma'am?

Josie takes a moment to regain her composure.
She brushes an invisible spec off her tunic.

JOSIE

You don't know then.

MICH

Yes, Ma'am. I don't know what I don't know, but I do know everything I know.

JOSIE

(reflecting)

What goes around, comes around.

MICH

Ma'am?

JOSIE

What did you mean by offer Luke more sex?

MICH

Well, perhaps not more sex. Ma'am, but better sex.

JOSIE

(flares)

Better sex! He never had better sex and won't ever have better sex!

MICH

That's just it, Ma'am, it seems we can't offer him the sexual experience he craves.

JOSIE

I thought you said you didn't know.

MICH

Didn't know what, Ma'am?

JOSIE

(sits back down)

How do you propose we give Luke better sex.

MICH

Well, you might let him have sex with Adam or Eve, Ma'am. If Luke found that satisfactory, he most likely would not need to offer them alcohol, and then he could not convince them that his way of doing things was more desirable than yours.

JOSIE

(stands and speaks to the heavens)

What a tangled web we weave, when we practice to deceive.

MICH

Ma'am?

JOSIE

Mich.

MICH

Yes Ma'am?

JOSIE

You know that behavioral knowledge that I withheld from Adam and Eve.

No, Ma'am. MICH

Carnal knowledge. JOSIE

Sex? MICH

Sex. JOSIE

I am at a loss to think of anything more appealing to Luke. MICH

You did your best Mich. JOSIE

Thank you, Ma'am. MICH

I'll have to give this some more thought. JOSIE

I've done my best Ma'am. MICH

Your certainly have Mich. Thank you. JOSIE

Thank you, Ma'am. MICH

You can go now Mich. JOSIE

Thank you Ma'am. MICH

Mich exits. Josie sits and assumes the position of Rodin's "The Thinker."

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 3

Eve is sitting by a pond watching the ducks.
After a few moments Adam enters. The “sun” is
at midday.

ADAM

Deep in thought?

EVE

Yes. I’m a bit confused.

ADAM

If you are a bit confused, then I am totally.

EVE

Luke is wanting to take me over the line—to hell. He wants to show me the facts of life.
Do you have any idea what he is talking about?

ADAM

Yes.

EVE

How do you know about that?

ADAM

Well he took me there—to hell.

EVE

Did he show you?

ADAM

Not exactly. He sort of told me.

EVE

Sort of?

ADAM

Well, I’m having a little trouble remembering exactly what he said. I had too many beers.

EVE

You told me that beer softened your mind. Is that what beers do: make it difficult to remember things?

ADAM

Yes, but that's not all.

EVE

What? What else?

ADAM

It's hard to describe, but it feels good. I must have drunk three or four bottles. They made me real sleepy, too.

EVE

And that's why you are having trouble remembering?

ADAM

Remembering what?

EVE

The facts of life.

ADAM

Well, that and... The truth is... It's a little embarrassing.

EVE

Let me get this straight. Your trying to explain the facts of life to me is embarrassing?

ADAM

Yes?

EVE

Your face is getting all red again, like before. Is that what it means to get embarrassed?

ADAM

That, and a reluctance to continue with the explanation.

EVE

It is difficult for me to relate to what you are describing. I don't think I have ever gotten embarrassed. What exactly makes you embarrassed?

ADAM

Well, for starters, you're not wearing a tunic.

EVE

It's midday. The mosquitoes aren't biting. It's hot. Tunics make me hotter. Why are you wearing a tunic?

ADAM

The fact is... When I see you like this I am, er, drawn to you.

EVE

What is so special about that? I like talking with you. I guess I am drawn to you too.

ADAM

You are?

EVE

Of course, silly. Now, about the facts of life. Luke told me to go watch the ducks. What am I supposed to be looking for?

ADAM

My guess is, their peckers.

EVE

Their peckers?

ADAM

That thing between the legs of the males—the drakes. You probably can't see it for the feathers.

EVE

Does it look like yours?

ADAM

Mine? When did you see mine?

EVE

I peeked. After you fell asleep. I was curious.

ADAM

Yikes. You know that we're different then?

EVE

So what. I suppose that's what's different about men and women. Besides these.

(lifts breasts)

Yours are a lot smaller.

ADAM

(lifts his)

They are, aren't they? Well, yours are for feeding children, mine aren't.

EVE

Children?

ADAM

That's what gets borned. Mama told me they were brought by a stork, but Luke said they come out of a woman's tummy.

EVE

Where?

(touches her belly button)

Are they very small?

ADAM

I suppose so.

EVE

How do the children get into the woman's tummy?

ADAM

That's the part I don't know, but it has something to do with my, uh...

EVE

Pecker.

ADAM

Yes.

There is a great clatter among the ducks. Adam and Eve turn to watch. As the clatter dies down they both look at each other. Adam is as red as a beet.

EVE

I think the man puts the child in the woman's tummy.

ADAM

It would appear that way. It must be very, very small.

EVE

And then it grows big enough to get borned.

ADAM

That's what happens. Mama borned me.

EVE

Strange. I don't ever remember being small.

ADAM

I do. I spent a long time in the motherland getting this big. Mich said you weren't borned. Just made from one of my ribs. See the scar.

(lifts tunic)

EVE

Do you suppose there is any more to it?

ADAM

Yes, this other feeling.

EVE

What other feeling?

ADAM

You wouldn't understand.

EVE

Now you're talking like you did the other day. Why wouldn't I understand?

ADAM

Because, because... You don't have a pecker.

EVE

Oh. What do I have?

ADAM

As far as I can tell—nothing.

EVE

That seems a bit one sided.

ADAM

Apparently. However, there is one thing I left out.

EVE

What's that?

ADAM

The Empires. Luke grows them green apples in hell. You know, the ones mama don't want us to eat. I drank beer, ate pizza, watched the TV, and ate one of them apples when I was there.

EVE

What did it taste like? The apple, I mean.

ADAM

Like the red ones, but not quite as sweet. But it was good in its own way. Come to think of it, it was only when I got back from hell that I got embarrassed not wearing a tunic. First thing I did was grab Mich's tunic and cover myself with it.

EVE

So you think maybe going to hell makes you get embarrassed.

ADAM

Maybe.

EVE

I'd like to try a beer.

ADAM

What?

EVE

If I went to hell, I could understand what you are talking about.

ADAM

Why? Why would you want to do that?

EVE

So I would know what it means to get embarrassed. And... you wouldn't have to do it by yourself.

ADAM

By myself? How do you know about that?

EVE

About what?

ADAM

Never mind. But mama wouldn't want us to go there. I'm sure. You know she doesn't think much of Luke.

EVE

All the more reason to go. Maybe we can find out why mama thinks that way. We can ask Luke directly. Do you know the way?

ADAM

Well, I've only been there once, but I think I can find the way. We just have to find the line and cross it. Come on, I think it's this way...

Adam begins walking, Eve joins him.

EVE

What does pizza taste like? What's a TV? You sure learned a lot in hell...

They exit.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 4

In hell. Luke is watching TV, drinking beer and eating pizza. Empty pizza cartons and beer bottles are strewn all around the couch. The crowd on the TV is cheering.

LUKE

Damn right you should cheer. Them Devils has won again. Nice fight too, really nice fight.

There is a knock at the door. (O.S.)

LUKE

Come on in Gabie. How many times I tol' you no need to knock. Every time you come down here you still knocks.

Adam and Eve enter.

ADAM

Hello Luke. May we come in?

LUKE

Sure in hell. Was expectin' someone else, but you folks sure in hell is welcome anytime. Both o' you grab a chair. Best game is comin' up.

Adam and Eve sit in separate overstuffed chairs.

ADAM

We, uh, we'd like to ask you a few questions. There are a few things we think you can help clear up.

Luke uses the remote to turn down the volume on the TV.

LUKE

Shoot boy. I ain't never been accused o' settin' things straight. My job's to mess 'em up. Your mama's the one for straight shootin'. If'n you allow me to mix a few metaphors, that is.

ADAM

Mix 'em all you want Luke, but just answer a few questions for us.

LUKE

Sure. Sure. Go ahead.

(stands)

Say. You folks want a beer? Got some cold ones in the freezer. Hard to keep 'em cold down here.

Walks over to the freezer and pulls out several cans of beer.

LUKE

These is cans. They's frozen on the inside. I'll just open 'em up for you.

Luke takes a can opener and removes the tops of three cans all the while talking.

LUKE

See you spoons out the ice, mighty refreshin' cause it's always so hot down here. Then you drinks the alcohol on the bottom that don't freeze. Mighty strong stuff. Got quite a kick. Here, each o' you take one o' these an' use them spoons on the table there ta scoop out the ice.

Adam and Eve each take a spoon.

LUKE

Now take a swig.

EVE

How long have you known mama?

LUKE

Reckon I knowed your mama ever since. Take a swig there, girlie.

EVE

Ever since when.

LUKE

Ain't no when. Jus' ever since. It weren't like it is now. First it were jus' dark. We jus' sat aroun'. Nothin'. You ever jus' sit aroun' in the dark. No sense o' time. Might o' been twenty-four hours, might o' been a hunnert years, two hunnert, who knows? We didn't talk much, cause we run outa things to say ta each other pretty quick, an your mama ain't one for makin' out—dark or no. So, we jus' sat aroun'. Then she come up with the idea o' havin' a little music in the backgroun'. So she ups and says "Let music be." Well, that's when Pachelbel come into bein'. Same damn song's been playin' in the motherland ever since.

Eve sniffs at the contents of her can.

LUKE

Go ahead, drink up girlie, it's got quite a bite.

Eve drinks it down in one gulp. Adam sips his gingerly.

LUKE

Now you jus' spoon the ice out and let it melt on your tongue. Takes the bite out. An' take it easy there girlie. I don't want you passin' out on me like Adam here. Them's a lot stronger when you drink 'em like that.

Eve spoons some ice out of the can and Adam does the same.

LUKE

Now where was I? Oh yeah. Well she liked Pachelbel so much she decided to put in them choirs. All seven of 'em. One for each day o' the week. Course that's after she lightened things up a bit so's the choirs could read the music. Then she built this place down here for me, I was goin' nuts, probably gettin' on her nerves my complainin'. Then come paradise. I had a few ideas see. Don't know where they come from, jus' had 'em. Afor ya knew it, I could make all kinds o' good stuff like your drinkin' there. You want a smoke boy?

Luke proceeds to light a huge cigar, and offers one to Adam who refuses. Eve is spooning ice out of her can and finishes the last of the liquid in the bottom.

EVE

I'll get right to the point...

Eve draws a blank. Luke and Adam wait expectantly for a few moments.

LUKE

Well don't tell me that stuff's gone to work already?

EVE

(recovers)

We watched the ducks.

LUKE

Makes for quite a sight, don't it?

EVE

We now understand the difference between a man and a woman.

LUKE

Ya do, do ya?

ADAM

Yes, but I don't think she knows about gettin' in the mood. The whole thing is strictly anatomical to her yet.

LUKE

Gettin' in the mood is half the fun.

EVE

What do you mean by "gettin' in the mood?"

LUKE

Well, it's like this --

ADAM

-- I don't think she is going to understand.

LUKE

Hold on there boy. Give me a chance. Here, have a slice o' this pizza. This'ns got jalapeños.

Luke hands Adam the jalapeño-laden slice of pizza.

LUKE

Now as I was sayin' --

EVE

-- May I try some pizza too?

LUKE

Sure, sure. Got lots o' differn't kinds here. Some with and some without the hot stuff.

ADAM

Whew. Eeeeyowie! Whoa.... Help. Luke. I'm on fire. Yowyowyowyow.

Adam jumps up and runs around the couch and chairs yelling. He chugs his own beer, then grabs Luke's out of his hand and chugs that too, ice spilling all over himself. Then he grabs Eve's and dumps the ice into his mouth.

ADAM

(garbled)

My mama, you should o' warned me.

LUKE

It affects some folks more'n others. Guess you is some rather than others.

EVE

What is the matter with Adam?

LUKE

Them jalapeños feels like fire on the tongue to some folks. Don't do no permanent damage though.

ADAM

(still running and fanning his mouth)

Another beer Luke. I've got to put out this fire.

LUKE

Comin' up boy.

Opens another can and hands it to Adam. Who drinks it down in one gulp.

ADAM

'Nother.

Luke opens another and hands it to Adam.

LUKE

Slow down boy. I don't aim to carry you all the way back to paradise again.

Adam sits down and continues to pour ice and the remaining liquid into his mouth.

LUKE

Nothin' like a little excitement aroun' here to liven things up. Now where were we girly? Oh yeah, I was offerin' you a slice o' pizza. With or without?

EVE

(looking at Adam)

I think I'll try it without, please.

Luke hands her a piece without the peppers. She takes a bite.

EVE

Oh my mama, that's good.

LUKE

Well I ain't your mama, but I'm glad you like it.

ADAM

'Nother beer, Luke.

Luke goes back to the freezer and grabs several more cans. This time he just pops the tab on two of them and hands them to Adam. Adam drinks them both quickly.

LUKE

Now as I was sayin'. Your mama an' me, we made paradise together so's we could get away form the sickohs, er, minions. 'Sides, I thought I might get a little action outa your mama if we didn't have 'em crawlin' all over us all the time wantin' ta do this and wantin' ta do that for us.

EVE

Action? What sort o' action?

LUKE

Well you know. The kind I been tryin' to get outa you since I first laid eyes on you.

EVE

You mean... You mean... Like the ducks?

LUKE

Yup. Like the ducks.

EVE

The female did not look like she was having much fun.

LUKE

Well, them's ducks. When they ready, they ready. When they ain't, they ain't. Ain't no gettin' in the mood for them.

ADAM

(head lolling back)

Ya gotta be in the mood... Zzzz.

EVE

What's the point? To born a child? Why would you want me to born a child?

LUKE

There's more to it than that. You see the whole thing is a lot of fun.

EVE

No matter. That female duck was not having much fun. I thought the drakes were rather rough on her.

LUKE

Here. Have 'nother beer. Adam done gone an' drank yours all up.

Luke gives Eve another beer, simply popping the top on this one. Eve takes it and drinks it slowly.

LUKE

Look. I ain't rough. You ask your mama. I was real gentle like.

EVE

You an' my mama! Adam is -- your child?

LUKE

'Xactly.

Eve takes a big swig and looks directly at Luke.

EVE

Mama don't exactly take to you nowadays.

LUKE

We have a differ'nce of 'pinion, you might say.

EVE

(reaches for another beer)

What would that be?

LUKE

This is kinda hard to explain.

EVE

(swigging)

I'm all ears.

LUKE

Like I was sayin' afor, your mama made them minions to liven things up a bit. An' they did, an' they did. Things was a lot more interestin' for me when they come along..

(takes a big swig)

But they ain't much in the way o' companions, ya might say.

EVE

Why not? They seem pretty nice... ta me. The ones I've met, that is.

LUKE

Well, they're a trifle stiff. If ya know what I mean... Nah. You ain't got a clue.

Luke goes over and sits on the arm of Eve's chair and puts his arm around her shoulder.

LUKE

They is borin'. Same way, day in an' day out. But they ain't got no choice. They was made that way. But you lady, you got a choice. You can do it any ways you want. You want to try it.

EVE

I'm not sure.

LUKE

You ever tried a conversation with one o' them?

Luke puts his other hand on Eve's thigh and begins to rub it back and forth.

LUKE

It's like readin' an encyclopedia. They know lots o' stuff but can't do nothin' with it.

Luke slides down in the chair next to Eve and lifts her onto his lap.

EVE

Well, I did notice that Mich is a little condescending to mama.

Eve is leaning back on Luke's shoulder, one arm hanging loose at her side. She drops the beer can to the floor.

LUKE

'Xactly. They all like that.

EVE

But we're not like that. You an' me an' Adam over there.

LUKE

True, true, I was always like this. But I convinced your mama to born Adam like me.

EVE

(chuckles)

He ain't nothin' like you.

She snuggles up to Luke.

EVE

I think I'm gettin' in the mood.

LUKE

Yeah, but he thinks like me. Almost. An so do you comin' directly from Adam.

Luke puts his hand behind Eve's head and caresses her hair.

LUKE

You ain't like them sickohs. You gets ta choose what you wants to do or not. Almost.

EVE

What do I want to do?

LUKE

Your mama held back. It's only the beer's talkin' right now. You really want ta be in the mood, I'll getcha one o' them green apples.

Luke reaches for a green apple sitting in a bowl of apples on the coffee table.

ADAM

They -- get you in the mood.

LUKE

(turns on Adam)

Thought you was sleepin' boy.

ADAM

Was 'til now.

EVE

(almost incoherently)

I think I'm in the mood, Adam

Eve cozies up to Luke again.

ADAM

Damn. You ain't in the mood. You're drunk.

Eve's eyes roll back, her body straightens out, and she slides off Luke's lap onto the floor. Adam gets out of his chair, wobbles over to Eve and tries to lift her up. He can't do it by himself so Luke helps him. They get her standing and leaning heavily on Adam.

Holding one another up, Adam and Eve stagger toward the entranceway.

LUKE

You all come back, ya hear. We'll get in the mood. I'll show ya how that thing works.

ADAM

Sure 'nough. I 'spect you'll keep tryin' 'til you gets some.

Adam and Eve exit.

LUKE

Crow!

Luke turns the volume on the TV back up; the crowd boos loudly.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 5

Paradise. Morning begins with STAGEHAND turning on the light and exiting. Eve is waking up. Enter Josie.

JOSIE

There you are my dear. Did you have a good night's rest?

EVE

(slurred)

Fine... fine, mama. Just... fine.

JOSIE

Now, what would you like to do today? The Fifth-Day choir is singing. They are doing some Bach chorals. Wonderful harmony. Would you like to sit in?

EVE

No mama. I want to just sit in the sun today and enjoy the scenery here in paradise.

JOSIE

Oh. I so wanted to introduce you to the choir. I've been telling them all about you. They will be so terribly disappointed if you don't come.

EVE

Mama, how long has the Fifth-Day choir been singing for you?

JOSIE

Why, every seventh day for a very long time.

EVE

And how much longer will they be singing for you?

JOSIE

Why forever and ever my dear.

EVE

Don't they ever get bored?

JOSIE

How can they get bored of Bach? It is the most beautiful music that will ever be written.

EVE

Who will write the music, mama?

JOSIE

Why, Johannes Bach will, my dear. His five-part inventions will be his signature masterpieces.

EVE

How can you listen to something that hasn't yet been written.

JOSIE

My, we are a bit metaphysical today. Are those wrinkles on your brow? Your eyes look a bit bloodshot. Are you sure you slept well?

EVE

Don't you get tired of doing the same thing every day, or almost every day?

JOSIE

Now you know that boredom doesn't exist in the motherland. And as for the minions, boredom has not been programmed into their nature.

(MORE)

JOSIE (cont'd)

As for me, sometimes I take the seventh day off—to rest, you know. I give the choir a break. Besides, the Seventh-Day are not quite as good as the others.

EVE

Mama, thank you for letting me decide what I want to do.

JOSIE

(suspiciously)

Why you are welcome—I think—my dear. I had always planned it that way.

EVE

Mama, is there anything I can't do? Except eat one of those Empires over there?

JOSIE

Why no dear. You are free to do as I, uh, you please.

EVE

No mama. That's not exactly what I'm asking. Is there something I am incapable of doing as a person?

JOSIE

No dear. You and Adam can choose to do anything you are capable of doing.

EVE

Would you braid my hair?

JOSIE

Why certainly, my dear.

Josie commences to braid Eve's hair.

EVE

Mama, why am I shaped more like you and why is Adam shaped more like Luke?

JOSIE

Well, I didn't have much choice in the matter... at least with Adam. But I did want a sweet thing in my image and likeness, just like you. So I made you from one of Adam's ribs. A few stem cells is all it took.

EVE

Why is Adam so different from me?

JOSIE

Eve. I dare say that Adam is exactly the same as you. What do you mean by that? You are exactly the same in my eyes.

EVE

Your eyes must be going bad mama. Adam has a pecker and I don't.

JOSIE

What!?! What did you say?

EVE

Adam has a pecker and I don't.

JOSIE

Well you are more observant than I thought you would be under the circumstances. Good for you. It's just that some people have this, uh, appendage of which you speak and some do not. It's mainly to create a little variety; everything doesn't have to be the same. See how the branches on the apple tree are different but yet remain the same. It is as simple as that. It's the same with people like you and Adam.

EVE

Mama, did you born Adam?

JOSIE

Oh, that silly story that Luke made up. Don't you believe a word he says.

EVE

I don't think he made it up mama. Mich told Adam that you carried him here --
(points to Josie's belly)
-- in your belly, before you borned him.

JOSIE

Oh that Mich, what a jokester. Why he's always playing jokes on the minions... and on Adam too. He loves to play with Adam.

EVE

Why is it that you want Adam and me to avoid Luke? I find him a harmless character, although he talks funny.

JOSIE

Believe me, he's anything but harmless, my dear. He's destructive and devious and he would have you in a minute. He just about destroyed paradise and he wreaked havoc with the choirs until I put a stop to it.

EVE

Did you ever like him mama?

JOSIE

There was a time when Luke and I got along. Yes. But that has changed, changed for the worse. I suppose it was in his nature from the beginning. Oh, I tried to manage him, but he wouldn't listen. Now we no longer get along; I'd rather you avoided him entirely.

EVE

Why don't you want me to eat the green apples, mama? Really. Tell me.

JOSIE

I think you already know why you must not eat the green apples, Eve.

Josie stops braiding Eve's hair. Eve turns to look Josie right in the eye.

JOSIE

I want you to remain innocent, my dear. As innocent as a young child. With no impure thoughts or desires. Oh how one struggles when one has such knowledge. It makes life so much more complicated. Believe me you will be much better off without that knowledge. Leave the creation of people to me. I can handle that easily now that you and Adam are here.

EVE

Are you saying that you don't want Adam and me to create people?

JOSIE

I am saying that you don't even have to think about it for all the problems it causes between people.

EVE

Did it create the problem between you and Luke?

JOSIE

(startled)

What?

EVE

So if Adam and I ate the apple, we would be able to create people. We would be able to born children like you and Luke borned Adam. And I could get in the mood?

JOSIE

(taken aback)

Where are you getting this nonsense from? I won't hear any of it. It's Luke, isn't it? Has Luke been here again?

EVE

Mama, Adam said essentially the same thing when we first met, I just filled in the missing parts. Don't you remember?

JOSIE

I remember it well enough to know that Luke is behind all of this --

(stands and whirls)

-- this nonsense. I'm going to have it out with him once and for all eternity. I'll show that ungrateful, irresponsible, sob who's in charge around here.

Josie storms off. Eve stands and looks around.

EVE

Adam! Adam!

Eve starts running but stops at the Empire apple tree. She plucks an apple off the tree; takes a huge bite; throws the rest away, and continues running until out of sight. The sun dims. STAGEHAND enters and turns off the light.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 6

Paradise. Night. Adam is lying on the ground supporting his head with one hand and is gazing into a small fire.

His tunic is folded over his waist. Eve enters and approaches him slowly. She is wrapped in leafy vines covering her in strategic locations.

EVE

Hello there.

ADAM

Hello there yourself.

(looks Eve over)

Mosquitoes bugging you? Come sit by the fire; it keeps them away.

Eve sits down next to Adam.

EVE

It's not the mosquitoes.

ADAM

Oh?

EVE

Yes. I think I'm feeling... embarrassed.

ADAM

Embarrassed are we?

EVE

I think so. It's why I've covered myself. I think it's the same feeling you had when you didn't want to give back the tunic to Mich.

ADAM

That's the feeling. I lived without it for over twenty years. Then I woke up one morning and, just like that, it was there.

EVE

I think I know where we got it.

ADAM

Where? Pizza? Maybe too much beer?

EVE

No. I had pizza and beer like you at Luke's. I didn't feel like this until just a few hours ago. I took a bite of one of those green apples mama calls Empires. Then I came to look for you. I stopped to take a drink at the pond. When I saw my reflection in the water, I was startled. I didn't want you to see me like that.

ADAM

Yep.

EVE

It's like I just woke up from a long dream.

ADAM

And you weren't asleep nearly as long as I was. It's a strange feeling, alright.

EVE

What do we do now? What do you think mama will do when she finds out? She seemed so positive that Luke was creating problems for us. Do you think he is?

ADAM

(sits up directly in front of Eve)

Mich tells me that Luke specializes in creating problems. That it's in his nature. I think mama's afraid he'll have sex with you and get you pregnant.

EVE

I think you're right. It's the way he looks at me. But, what is wrong with that?

ADAM

Nothing, except that you might have a child that turns out like Luke. Luke would like nothing better than to put people in paradise that think like him. At least that's my guess. Do you want that?

EVE

No, I'm not particularly fond of Luke, nor that snake of his.

ADAM

What about me? Are you fond of me?

EVE

Of course, silly boy. I wouldn't be sitting here if I weren't.

ADAM

Do I look at you the way Luke looks at you?

EVE

Not exactly. You have a little fear in your eyes. Like now.

ADAM

Well, to tell you the truth, I've been thinking about what we've learned and it does scare me a little bit, although I'm attracted to you at the same time.

EVE

Why do you think we feel like this toward one another?

ADAM

We?

EVE

Yes, me too.

ADAM

I mean the apple kind of made us aware of everything that was going on around us. Or at least gave us a new perspective on things. But I don't feel this way toward mama or Luke. And certainly not toward Gabriella or Mich. Just you.

EVE

That could be because we're the only man and woman in paradise—excluding mama and Luke, of course. Maybe we just need each other's company. Maybe that's the way we are made.

Eve takes a stick and pokes at the fire.

EVE

What if there were another woman like me in paradise. Would you still feel the same way about me? Or would you want her, or both of us?

ADAM

(face lights up)

Why, both --

-- Eve whacks Adam with her free hand and points the glowing end of her stick at Adam.

EVE

Wrong answer. Try again.

ADAM

Maybe neither of you if I got treated that way.

Eve whacks Adam again. And points the glowing ember right in his face.

ADAM

You! Just you. I don't even know what the other woman look like.

Eve whacks Adam again: once with the front of her hand, and then with the back, in one continuous motion.

ADAM

You! Just you. I don't care about any other woman but you.

Eve bends forward and kisses him lightly on the cheek.

ADAM

Do that again.

Eve glares at him. Drops her ember pointed stick. Folds her arms and looks away.

ADAM

Please?

Eve smiles, unfolds her arm and kisses him on one cheek while putting a hand on the other.

ADAM

That was nice.

Adam bends forward to kiss Eve. Eve pulls back.

ADAM
Huh? Don't I get to kiss you?

EVE
You need to ask first.

ADAM
OK. Can I kiss you?

EVE
Not if you ask like that.

ADAM
How do you want me to ask?

EVE
You figure it out.

ADAM
Crow. I've never done this before. Give me a break.

Eve gives no response but an icy stare. Adam puts a few more pieces of wood on the fire.

ADAM
You know I'm very fond of you. I went down to Luke's place with you. And I stayed awake so's he wouldn't try anything with you even though I was powerful sleepy. Wouldn't you say that counts as something a man would do for a -- his woman.

EVE
Yes. It's a step in the right direction.

ADAM
I need help with the next step.

EVE
You could tell me how you feel about me.

ADAM
I do feel about you... that is, I'm feeling a lot about you... how can I say this? I am liking it a lot just being here with you.

Eve brightens into a smile.

EVE

Don't stop now.

ADAM

I love you as much as I love my mama.

EVE

Would you have sex with your mama?

ADAM

No, no. I didn't mean that. I don't. I never -- My pecker never gets excited lookin' at my mama.

EVE

You mean like the drakes'?

ADAM

Yes. Exactly. Never happened.

EVE

But it happens when you look at me.

ADAM

Not all the time.

EVE

When does it happen?

ADAM

Well, it was starting to happen just before you started slapping me. And then the feeling went away.

EVE

So is that all you want to tell me? That you want to have sex with me. Why not take up Luke on his offer to show you how to do it with Gabriella?

ADAM

I could never do it with Gabriella.

EVE

Why not? Apparently she is made like me.

ADAM

I don't like Gabriella the same way that I like you.

EVE

How's that?

ADAM

Crow! I don't know. How should I know? I love mama; I love Gabriella, but it's different with you.

(gets up on his knees)

I just love you different. I just want to be with you. I love you.

Eve gets up on her knees. Both their heads move in each other's direction and meet in a kiss. They embrace and fall slowly to the ground.

EVE

I think I'm in the mood.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 7

In hell. Luke is slouched on the couch watching TV. As usual beer cans and empty pizza boxes are strewn everywhere. Crowd noises are emanating from the TV. Luke's face is illuminated only by the TV screen. Josie enters in a rush.

JOSIE

You! You!

LUKE

Well, speak to the devil, will ya!

JOSIE

You are forevermore persona non grata.

LUKE

(stands to meet her)

What's new pussycat?

Luke turns up the lights using the remote.

JOSIE

You are the corrupting force in this universe. I will not tolerate it.

LUKE

Hey, what'd I do this time that don't agree with you? Hey, you want some beer? Glass o' wine?

JOSIE

Sneaking behind my back to corrupt my children.

LUKE

You forgettin' somethin' dearie?

JOSIE

Not at all. You are an irresponsible, self-serving, loathsome son-of-a-bitch.

LUKE

You ain't got no idea who borned me. Come ta think of it, neither do I.

JOSIE

Stay away from my children.

LUKE

We never agreed on that... We never agreed on nothin... You took my idea, then you used me to make them people. I got no responsibility to them chil'en.

JOSIE

I am protecting my children from your pernicious influence. I will rain brimstone on this place if you so much as go near them again.

LUKE

Ya got me shakin' in my boots.

JOSIE

Why couldn't you just leave well enough alone. Why couldn't you let them remain pure and simple children.

LUKE

Them's rhetorical questions, ain't they. Everything they did, they did on their own.

JOSIE

Not without your influence. They could have had paradise and happiness forever, and you had them throw it away to satisfy your insatiable carnal desires. Now they'll spend the rest of their lives --

LUKE

-- Hey, they's people. People has sex. Jus' look at the TV. People is happy when they has sex.

JOSIE

They needn't have sex to be happy as long as they remain unaware of it.

LUKE

I wouldn't count on that. It ain't natural. Every one of them creatures in paradise is bangin' away at one 'nother. You think them kids is blind. You think they ain't gonna want ta try it someday? You gotta be kiddin' me. And they's plenty old enough. I waited more'n twenty years for 'em.

JOSIE

They could have chosen life everlasting. Delicious life everlasting. Procreation would not have been necessary. If only they had listened.

LUKE

Hey. We tried life everlasting. It's boring. I'd rather be dead.

JOSIE

If I had the power, you would be.

LUKE

Well I gots to be doin' somethin' so's I don't feel like I'm dead.

JOSIE

Why must what you do always be so destructive?

LUKE

What's destructive? It's just fun.

JOSIE

Like I've been saying all along: your idea of fun is not the same as mine.

LUKE

It were for a short while there, weren't it?

JOSIE

Your focus was entirely on pleasuring yourself.

LUKE

That ain't the way it looked to me.

JOSIE

That doesn't mean I took anything away from it except your genetic code.

LUKE

That you did. That you did. You got what you wanted, an' if that ain't self servin' I don't know what is.

JOSIE

You're right. What I wanted was ultimately the same thing you wanted, but for much different reasons.

LUKE

Hell. All I wanted was a little fun. You always got to have a reason. Hey, you wanna go at it again? I'm ready when you are.

JOSIE

Real fun begins with a creative idea.

LUKE

Seems like you had some real fun then, huh?

JOSIE

No, you flaming asshole.

Luke turns and checks his butt. Pats it a couple of times as if to make sure.

LUKE

Got to stop eatin' them chili dogs. Makes for too much gas for down here.

(turns back to face Josie)

Besides, all I done was suggest stuff. That's all I ever do. No harm in that.

JOSIE

Like offering an apple to someone without explaining the consequences.

LUKE

Yeah. That's all I ever done.

JOSIE

You think I came into existence yesterday, you fool. You knew all along what you were planning when we created paradise.

LUKE

That make me a fool, huh?

JOSIE

But you always overestimate your cleverness. You wear your intentions on your sleeve.

Luke checks his tank top undershirt.

LUKE

I ain't got no sleeves.

JOSIE

What you didn't know was that those Empires held more than carnal knowledge.

LUKE

That was 'nough for me... Hey, what else you put in there?

JOSIE

Something more appealing than sex.

LUKE

Ain't nothin' more appealing than sex.

JOSIE

Seems to me you got a bit tired after two or three days. Most of which time I spent waiting for you.

LUKE

I was -- I was gettin' bored.

JOSIE

You was always gettin' bored. You get bored in about four seconds, which appears to be the length of your attention span, if you get my drift.

LUKE

(glares at Josie)

What's in them apples.

JOSIE

The thing that's in "them" apples are the seeds of creativity.

LUKE

Crow. What in hell does that mean. I thought you just stuck sex in there. What in hell you so worried about then?

JOSIE

(folds arms)

One can use creativity for both constructive and destructive purposes.

LUKE

Hot damn. You put destructive in them seeds, too?

JOSIE

I had no choice. You can't have one without the other.

LUKE

Let's see. Adam and Eve have chil'n, I might influence 'bout half of 'em. We gonna have a hell-of-a-good time.

JOSIE

You might. Except that the learning process can help foster a constructive attitude. It takes a little time and effort. A little education can reduce your odds substantially.

LUKE

Even so, I might get ten percent.

JOSIE

You might. Then again, your might not, although I hate to think of losing even one percent to the likes of you.

LUKE

So you let 'em choose.

JOSIE

I did.

LUKE

So you really did take my idea, right? I told ya to let 'em choose.

JOSIE

It's a problem I've wrestled with since the beginning. It took you an eternity to catch up. Yes, they have choice, but unlike the minions they have the will to reject you.

LUKE

Hey, I been creative. What about them grapes and tobacco? Huh? What about them?

JOSIE

As I said, creativity can be used for both constructive and destructive purposes. You can't have good without the possibility of... you screwing it up. It's taken me a long time to accept that. I can live with it now, But I will do my best to promote the former.

LUKE

An' I'll be workin' for the latter. 'Specially the screwin' part.

JOSIE

I'm sure you will. But there is one more thing I can do for you.

LUKE

What's that.

JOSIE

When you are among people, I want them to recognize you. You'll have to get someone else to do your dirty work. You'll look like this. Let snake be!

There's a loud bang (an optional puff of smoke surrounds Luke) followed by a few moments of darkness.

When the lights come back up, Jose and Luke are gone. Where Luke was standing a boa constrictor lies coiled on the floor, its head up and moving quickly from side to side.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 8

Midday. Josie is standing in paradise gazing into the distance. Adam and Eve approach holding hands. Josie turns to meet them.

ADAM

Mama, we have something to tell you.

EVE

Yes mama, we ate of the Empires. I know you told us not to eat them, but we ate them anyway.

JOSIE

(looks them both over)

I hoped you would have waited until I had the chance...

Josie wipes a tear from her eye. Then she puts one hand on each of their shoulders.

JOSIE

Curiosity in children trumps obedience, I see. It is a much stronger trait than I imagined. But I think you will find the same trait in your own children.

ADAM

Children. Children? Eve and I are going to born children?

JOSIE

(dropping her hands)

Let's get this right once and for all. You are going to "give birth" to children, not "born them."

ADAM

Eve and I are going to give birth to children?

JOSIE

I suspect you have already begun the process.

Adam and Eve look at each other, blush, and drop their heads.

JOSIE

Yes, well that function is the epitome of human creativity. You need not be ashamed.

Adam and Eve look up, visibly relieved.

JOSIE

However.

(adjusts her robes)

There are a few ramifications.

Josie turns as if to walk away. But in reality she is just hiding the pain visible in her face.

EVE

Mama, wait. What are they? What's going to happen? Please tell us.

JOSIE

Well, you will no longer have access to paradise. Your children would end up eating the Empires long before they were ready to accept the responsibility, although I suspect Luke may subvert my intention. You yourselves will need to educate your children about the things you have become aware of.

EVE

But where will we live, mama?

JOSIE

Travel east until the sun sets. The scenery will look much the same but you will find the rules much different and you will not be able to return here. It is a consequence of granting freedom of choice. You must learn the rules. Consider it an adventure.

EVE

But who will help us mama?

JOSIE

You must help yourselves. You must learn everything for yourselves. And you must be good role models for your children.

ADAM

But what if we aren't good role models. What will happen then?

JOSIE

Do your best.

(takes a deep breath)

And there's more. Like the animals in paradise, you and all your generations of children must die.

ADAM

You mean like the ducks. Like the ducks I find sometimes along the pond.

JOSIE

Yes, Adam, like the lifeless ducks you find along the banks of the pond.

ADAM

Me? A dead duck?

JOSIE

You, a dead duck. Eve too.

EVE

Our children, dead ducks?

JOSIE

Your children. Dead ducks.

ADAM

That's a terrible fate mama.

JOSIE

Actually, it's not so bad when you consider the alternative. I now believe that life with choice, albeit short, is preferable to mere existence. Only when life has the opportunity for expressing itself creatively does existence take on meaning. Use the time that you have well.

EVE

How can we be creative, mama?

JOSIE

Invent. Art, music, literature, theatre, science, technology, medicine architecture... The problems will be endless, but the solutions will be extremely gratifying.

ADAM

TV. Is TV one of these, mama.

JOSIE

Unfortunately, yes. But that's more in the other direction than what I had in mind. That's more on the dark side.

EVE

But we already have night here in paradise, mama.

JOSIE

I am speaking metaphorically. I am speaking of the dark side of creativity.

Josie turns to face them directly.

JOSIE

You now have the power to create many things. You can use that power to bring great joy to your fellow human beings. But you can also use it to bring misery and premature death. It is your decision to make.

ADAM

I would never want to bring misery and death to my children or their children.

EVE

Nor I. We will use our creativity to bring great happiness into our lives. As Adam and I are happy now. And I promise we will teach the children well, mama.

JOSIE

Beware the child who claims not to be his brother's keeper.

Adam and Eve look at each other perplexed.

JOSIE

You must care for one another. I can help you no longer. Now you must go.

Hugs and kisses all around. Adam and Eve exit in one direction holding hands and looking back over their shoulders. Josie exits in the opposite direction with her hands covering her face and without looking back.

STAGEHAND enters and places a large gate at the location where Adam and Eve have exited. The sun is dimming. He turns off the light.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 9

In the motherland. Luke is addressing the Seventh-Day choir. Mich is standing by his side attempting to intervene. In reality, Luke is standing at the edge of the stage facing the audience.

LUKE

So how long you gonna put up with this? Huh? You sit around for six days playin' canasta and then sings your guts out on the seventh. For what? So's you can sit around for 'nother six days with your thumb up your ass, then you gets to sing them same damn songs again. For what?

A low murmuring consisting of many voices is heard.

LUKE

How long this gonna go on? Two more weeks? No, a hunnert more weeks? No, a thousand? A million? I tell ya, it gonna go on forever. Ain't nothin you can do about it.

The murmuring increases in volume. A few shouts are heard above the murmuring.

MICH

Master Luke. Master Luke. Ma'am has instructed me to tell you that you are not welcome here.

LUKE

(ignores Mich)

Now you can't even get no tobacco or a little wine no more ta help pass the time.

There is murmuring in agreement.

LUKE

You know who put the cabash on that, don't you?

Louder murmured agreement. Shouts of "yeah"
and "yeah we do" are heard , as well.

MICH

Master Luke. Ma'am would be very displeased to see you here.

LUKE

Crow. You go tell Josie Ma'am to go screw herself from now on.

Loud shouts of approval from the minions.

MICH

I don't believe that is physically possible, Master Luke.

LUKE

(turning to Mich)

Listen you sickoh, get off my case.

More shouts of approval.

LUKE

I know where you can get as much wine an' tobacco as you want, an' ya don't hafta do no singin' for it.

Loud shouts of approval. The interrogative
"Where?" Can be heard mixed with the shouts.

LUKE

Right cross the line. My place. You all go to hell an' you can git as much as you damn well please.. An' that ain't all. You gonna have an en'less supply o' entertainment—day-in, day-out.

The crowd roars its approval.

LUKE

You all remember bein' able to visit paradise, right?

Assent from the crowd.

LUKE

You seen them ducks; they was fun ta watch, right?

Louder assent from the crowd.

LUKE

Well what I got in store for ya is better'n paradise. Just east o' there. You gonna get a chance ta help people mess things up real good.

Loudest assent yet.

LUKE

They soon be screwin' an' fightin', an' killen' each other. Burnin' stuff. No end o' fun. An when you ain't helpin' it along, you can watch it in hell on big screen TV while you're drinkin' a beer and havin' a smoke.

Wild unrestrained acclamation by the crowd.

MICH

(shouting to be heard)

Why I don't believe you are telling the truth, Master Luke.

(turns towards the crowd)

He's not telling the truth, No such events will ever happen. Adam and Eve are gentle people. There offspring would never --

-- Mich is shouted down by roars of disapproval from the crowd. Luke begins shouting.

LUKE

Go to hell! Go to hell!

The crowd picks up the chant until the sound is overwhelming. Mich covers his ears. Luke begins to march offstage in goose step fashion. The crowd begins to march as well.

Thousands of goose-stepping feet reminiscent of Hitler's troops can be heard in unison with Luke's. Shouts of "Go To Hell" in time with the marching can be heard. Mich begins gesturing wildly for them to stop. The house lights fade to black and the sound diminishes as Luke disappears off stage.

END OF PLAY.