

I HATE HELLOS  
TELL ME YOU LOVE ME  
YOU LOST ME AT HELLO  
-- a play by Daniel Curzon

CHARACTERS: (4)  
CASS, male, 25-40, sympathetic, bisexual, struggling actor,  
son, brother, lover, and believer  
VOICE OF PILOT, male, mature, deep and authoritative  
MA, female, 40-60, eccentric, fed-up caregiver  
GOD, played by the actor who plays the pilot AND ALSO BY MA?  
Plus two UNSEEN CHARACTERS

SCENE 1

(CASS enters his family home, represented by a potty chair.)

(ANDY, his younger brother who had multiple problems, is there, but unseen by the audience.)

CASS: (entering a little) Hello! It's me! . . . Ma?

(There is no answer.)

CASS: Andy? . . . *Ma?*

(CASS enters further into the house. He reacts to the potty chair.)

CASS: It's me, Cass! What's going on? Is this some kind of prank? Come out right now!

(His cell phone rings. He answers.)

CASS: Hello?

MA: It's me. Did you arrive yet?

CASS: Yes. (putting her on speaker phone) Where are you?

MA: Out.

CASS: Out? Where?

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MA: I needed a break. I knew you were coming.

CASS: Yeah, but what if I hadn't made it for some reason.

MA: But you did!

CASS: I don't see Andy anywhere? Is he with you?

MA: No. I needed a break from Andy.

CASS: Well, he's not here.

MA: Well, you can bet he's not far! Did you look on the potty? That's where he usually is.

(CASS goes over to the potty chair.)

CASS: I see the potty. I don't see Andy.

MA: Look around for him. Sometimes he gets off and crawls away.

CASS: Why aren't you here?

MA: I told you.

CASS: You can't take a break from Andy.

MA: Easy for you to say.

CASS: He can't be left alone.

MA: Oh, he can too! He crawls off and I can barely find him. And then he's perfectly fine.

CASS: Ma!

MA: Oh, don't lecture me! I don't see you taking care of him.

CASS: I would if I lived here. But I have to be in New York –

MA: Yeah, yeah, yeah, I know. So you can be the big actor!

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CASS: I'm hardly a big actor.

MA: You think I don't know that?

CASS: I'm doing all right. I was in a festival.

MA: I think you should quit while you're ahead and come back here and help me with Andy.

CASS: We already discussed this.

MA: Yeah, and you went ahead and did what you wanted. Never mind me and Andy.

CASS: Maybe you should get some extra help.

MA: We can't afford it.

CASS: Aren't there agencies that will help?

MA: We've used them up already. And they're not cheap!

CASS: So you just go off?

MA: I'm not that far away.

CASS: How far are you?

MA: That's for me to know and you to find out.

CASS: Ma, this isn't funny.

MA: Go look for Andy. See how it *feels*.

CASS: Stay on the phone. I'll look. (Moves to another spot, calls.) Andy! . . . Andy!

MA: Is he there?

CASS: I don't see him.

MA: Sometimes he crawls into a closet. Like you.

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CASS: (not laughing) Ha ha. Which one?

MA: He's tried them all. Try the one upstairs in your old bedroom.

CASS: He gets all the way up there?

MA: He's only helpless when he wants to be.

CASS: Wait a second. I'll call. (Goes to the other side of the stage.) ANDY! It's Cass! (Waits.)

MA: Did he answer?

CASS: No.

MA: What fun, right?

CASS: Ma, I'm sorry you got stuck taking care of Andy because of his . . . problems.

MA: Yeah, so am I. Don't pussyfoot around. Call it what it is.

CASS: It sounds too clinical.

MA: Clinical/Schmnical. It's Andy's own special issues. Deal with it. Not it. *Them!*

CASS: Are you dealing with it – them?

MA: Don't start with me, sonny boy. Years I've been dealing with this. While you run off just like your father.

CASS: I believe Pa died, Ma. Or maybe I'm mis-remembering.

MA: Your father would even die to get out of taking care of Andy!

CASS: Ma!

MA: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm a terrible mother. Look how you turned out.

CASS: Yikes!

MA: Did I hurt your feelings? . . . Good.

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CASS: When are you coming back home?

MA: Who said I'm coming back? I'm having a wonderful time on my own.

CASS: Where are you? At the mall?

MA: I'm having a strawberry phosphate.

CASS: A what?

MA: I'm having some me-time. For one hour out of the day I'm not wiping somebody's ass!

CASS: Andy can't help himself.

MA: Do you think I don't know he can't help himself? You having a gift for the obvious.

CASS: Can we save the insults for later? At the moment we both need to find Andy. Could he have gotten outside?

MA: Have you looked?

CASS: I just got here!

MA: Let me try.

CASS: What do you mean?

MA: Hold your phone up and I'll call him.

CASS: You sure?

MA: It can't hurt. Hold it up.

(CASS holds up his cell phone.)

MA: (as if calling a pig, loudly) Here, soeey, soeey, soeey!

CASS: Ma! What are you doing!

MA: He likes it. (calling again) Here, soeey, soeey, soeey!

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CASS: Stop that! That is so . . .

MA: Oh, get off your high horse, Mr. Would-be Star! As if Andy cares! He loves it when I make the pig sound! So just shut up.

CASS: Ma, I am going to have to report you to . . . to somebody.

MA: Go ahead. Report me. Who's going to take care of Andy then? *You?* In a pig's eye! (calling again) Here, soeey, soeey, soeey!

CASS: Ma, stop it right this minute! (Reacts to the unseen ANDY, who is crawling toward him) Andy? Oh, my God, where have you been? (Listens.) Don't make that pig sound. Please! Andy, don't. (Obviously ANDY is making the pig sound.) (to his mother) Ma, how do I get him to stop that?

MA: Oh, he'll get tired of doing it. Just wait. Bounce a ball. Sometimes that works.

CASS: He's not an infant!

MA: Yes, he is. He's gone downhill since you were here last. Physically and mentally. But then how would you know that, since you're so rarely here?

CASS: It's only been a year.

MA: Really? Seems more like five. But what is they say? Time flies when you're having a good time!

CASS: Come home. I can't cope with Andy by myself.

MA: Is this Ma I'm talking to? (as CASS) *Ma, you can't cope?!*

CASS: If something happened to Andy, you'd never forgive yourself.

(There is no response.)

CASS: Ma!

MA: I'm thinking. I'm thinking.

CASS: You know you don't mean that.

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MA: I'm thinking. I'm thinking.

CASS: You love Andy.

MA: (mechanically) I love Andy.

CASS: You do!

MA: (mechanically) I do.

CASS: He's your own flesh and blood.

MA: You know what really grinds my ass? The way people like you, who don't lift a finger to help, keep telling us who have to do the shit work, literally, what our responsibilities are. You don't know what the hell you're talking about!

(ANDY, still unseen, says something.)

CASS: What's that, Andy? (Listens.)

MA: What did he say?

CASS: I think he said he wants a Coke.

MA: A coke? Does he think I'm made of money?

CASS: Buy him a Coke. I'll reimburse you.

MA: Big spender!

CASS: Bring him a Coke. For God's sake!

MA: Did you know it's his birthday today?

CASS: Yes. That's why I came home.

MA: Home? What's that?

CASS: (to ANDY) Happy birthday, birthday boy! (ANDY obviously reacts with happiness.)  
Whoa! Whoa, Andy!

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MA: What's he doing now?

CASS: I don't want to say.

MA: What is it? As if I didn't know! He's playing with himself, right?

CASS: (checking) Yes. . . . Andy . . . Andy stop that!

MA: Did he stop?

CASS: Not yet.

MA: Why am I not surprised!?

CASS: How do you get him to stop?

MA: Oh, for Heaven's sake, Cass, he's just celebrating! This time it's his birthday.

CASS: You just let him go on like that?

MA: Have you ever tried to stop somebody from masturbating?

CASS: No!

MA: It takes a special skill!

CASS: That's why I'm asking for your expertise!

MA: Hold up the phone again.

(CASS immediately holds up his cell phone)

MA: (yelling) Andy! . . . Andy! (to CASS) Does he hear me?

CASS: I'm not sure. He's preoccupied.

MA: (yelling) Andy!

CASS: He's listening!

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MA: (yelling) Andy, it's your mother! Put your boo boo away!

CASS: His boo boo?

MA: That's what we call it.

CASS: Andy, put your boo boo away.

MA: You have to distract him.

CASS: How?!

MA: Well, you can let him finish. That usually settles him down, at least for a while.

CASS: I am not letting him finish! Andy! No! . . . *No!*

MA: Did that work?

CASS: (checking) No.

MA: Of course it didn't. Is the phone still up?

CASS: (putting it back up) Yes.

MA: (yelling) Andy! (to CASS) Is he listening?

CASS: Sort of.

MA: (yelling) Andy! Kitty! Pretty kitty!

CASS: There's no kitty here.

MA: He doesn't know that! (yelling) Andy! Kitty cat! Pretty kitty!

CASS: He's listening!

MA: Andy! (She meows.)

CASS: He likes that.

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MA: Has he stop playing with himself?

CASS: He's pausing. Meow again.

MA: Meow! Meow!

MA: What's he doing?

CASS: He's looking around for the kitty cat.

MA: Do it!

CASS: What?

MA: (prompting) Meow!

CASS: I'm not meowing!

MA: And you call yourself an actor! Meow!

CASS: (reluctantly. in small voice) Meow.

MA: Louder.

CASS: (more loudly) MEOW!

MA: That's better. What's he doing?

CASS: He stopped!

MA: Praise Jesus!

CASS: Uh oh, he's starting up again.

MA: Meow some more.

CASS: Meow!

MA: And?

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CASS: . . . It works.

MA: Again!

CASS: Meow. . . . Meow.

MA: Did he stop?

CASS: Yes.

MA: Hey, maybe you're a better actor than I thought.

CASS: Thanks for the compliment, Ma. I think it's my first one.

MA: Just hope it's not the last one. Now button up Andy's pants.

CASS: Come on!

MA: What if a neighbor comes over? Or Social Services. It's hard to explain his dick sticking out. Believe me, I've been there.

CASS: Andy, come over here. (Waits.) Andy, come here. Please.

MA: Is he coming?

CASS: Yes. Slowly. That's a boy. That's a very good boy.

MA: Now zip him up.

CASS: Ma's on the phone, Andy! (Quickly puts the cell phone next to the unseen Andy's ear)

MA: (to CASS) You bastard!

CASS: Say hi to Ma, Andy! (Waits as ANDY says hi)

MA: You're not the bastard, Andy. Your big brother is.

CASS: He likes that. He's smiling.

MA: Did you zip him up yet?

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CASS: No!

MA: Andy, close up your boo boo.

CASS: Close up your boo boo? Really?

MA: You got a better term? God! All these niceties! Get real!

CASS: Okay, okay. (Stern voice) Andy, close up your boo boo!

MA: That's more like it. Did he do it?

CASS: No.

MA: Andy, this is mommy. Close up your boo boo. Come on, close up your boo boo for mommy!

CASS: He stopped pulling on it, but it's still sticking out.

MA: Just go over and button him up!

CASS: He's twenty years old!

MA: So what!

CASS: I'm not going to do it, Ma.

MA: You're useless. (yelling) Andy, I'll bring you a Coke if you close up your boo boo!  
(to CASS) Did that work?

CASS: No.

MA: What's he doing?

CASS: He's just standing there staring at me.

MA: With his boo boo hanging out?

CASS: Yes.

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MA: Is it hard?

CASS: (upset) I don't know. I don't want to know!

MA: Oh, get over yourself. Even if it's hard, it's not for you!

CASS: (looking at his brother) Andy, what's wrong?

MA: What is it now?

CASS: He's crying.

MA: Yeah, he does that too.

CASS: Andy, why are you crying?

MA: Because we're trying to make him put his boo boo away.

CASS: I think it's something else.

MA: Give him some of his medication.

CASS: Which one? Where is it?

MA: Beside the potty. Do you see it?

ANDY: I see the potty.

MA: It's on the back of it. See it?

(CASS goes closer to the potty, checks.)

ANDY: I don't see any medication. Besides, we can't keep Andy medicated all the time.

MA: You are so full of crap I can barely stand to talk to you.

CASS: You're not helping.

MA: *You're* not helping! With your bleeding-heart bullshit! Get your brother some medicine!  
A downer!

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CASS: I can't find it!

MA: He probably flushed it again.

CASS: Andy, did you flush your medication?

MA: What did he say?

CASS: He didn't answer.

MA: Is he still crying?

CASS: Yes.

MA: Big cry or little cry?

CASS: I don't know!

MA: He's probably crying because he can't see the kitty.

CASS: Should we have promised him a kitty?

MA: He'll forget. Give it time. Is his boo boo in or out?

CASS: Still out.

MA: Is he still crying?

CASS: Yes. . . . Andy, what's wrong? (Listens.)

MA: What did he say?

CASS: He peed on himself, I think. He's pointing.

MA: Does he have a diaper on?

CASS: I don't know. I can't see one.

MA: (yelling) Andy, did you leave your di-di on?

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CASS: He still wears a diaper?

MA: When we're lucky.

CASS: Shouldn't he be toilet-trained by twenty?

MA: You were eight. Maybe twelve.

CASS: I was not!

MA: (more softly) Andy, I told you to go pee pee this morning as I left. On the potty!

CASS: Oh, my God! This is a nightmare.

MA: No, it's hilarious. You got to find the fun in life, sonny boy. (yelling) Andy, why didn't you go pee pee when mommy told you to?

CASS: Now he's crying harder.

MA: (yelling) I'm sorry, honey! Mommy's sorry she yelled at you!

CASS: (Listens to ANDY.) What?

MA: What did he say?

CASS: I think he was that he's sorry.

MA: For what?

CASS: For not going pee pee when you told him to. I guess.

MA: I have to help him every single time, or . . . never mind. Just never mind.

(The cell phone goes quiet)

CASS: Ma? (No answer) Ma, are you there?

MA: (after a bit) Yes. (She is crying) I'm here.

CASS: Are you crying?

MA: (crying) No.

CASS: You are too crying.

MA: No, I'm not! (Big burst of tears, sincere ones)

CASS: (at his wit's end) Oh, my God! Ma, don't cry!

MA: Why not? It feels *great!* . . . I'm hanging up now.

CASS: What?! Don't hang up!

(MA hangs up.)

CASS: Ma? Are you there? (He hangs up.) (to his brother) Don't cry, Andy. Everything is going to be better. (Listens.) Did you say "How"? I wish I knew, Andy. . . . *I* know! Let's get you to smile! Come on, smile for Cass! . . . Come on! One teeny, tiny smile! You haven't forgotten how to, have you? Guess what. I brought my new camera with me. Let's take a selfie! And no, it doesn't stand for selfish! You do it like this. (Goes closer to the unseen ANDY and arranges the camera at arm's length, to take a selfie of the two of them.) Smile now! Come on, big, big smile! See me! I'm smiling! (Smiles very widely.) (Suddenly notices that ANDY's boo boo is still hanging out.) One minute, one little minute. (Tries to put ANDY's boo boo back inside his pants.) (ANDY resists, moves away.) Andy! Come back here! We can't take a selfie with your boo boo hanging out.

(He chases ANDY but can't catch him.)

You find it funny, huh, that I can't catch you? Well, I don't want to catch you . . . *any more!* I'm all done chasing you. (Listens.) What's that? You want a selfie? No selfie for you until you put away your boo boo. See *my* boo boo. It's put away. (Points to his crotch) Never mind. Forget I said anything about my boo boo. . . . People might not understand. Oh, so now you want a selfie, huh? Well, if you do, you have to give me a big smile! Come on, big smile! (Looks) That's right! That's right! And one more thing. Put away your boo boo. Come on. (upset) Andy! Boo boo! (sternly) No, we are not taking a selfie featuring your boo boo! . . . Ouch! Something just bit me! (Checks his arm.) My God, it's a flea! It's black and tiny, but it's a goddamn flea. (to ANDY) Andy, do you have fleas? I'm sorry. I don't mean you. Are there fleas in the house? Is there a real kitty cat around? (Gets bitten again.) Ouch! There's another one! (Tries to catch the flea.) Got it! (Holds it between his thumb and his forefinger.) (to ANDY) You got to squeeze really hard or they'll jump away. (Squeezes really hard.) (He looks at his fingers.

The flea jumps away) Goddamn it! It jumped. How could it jump after I squeezed it that hard?! (Listens to ANDY) What? The fleas just want to live? Oh, Andy, that's so sweet. But we can't let the fleas win, honey? They'll take over. And then you'll be all covered with red marks. (to himself) On top of everything else. . . . (to ANDY) Did you ever see a flea show, Andy? They jump on trapezes; they ride bicycles; they pull little carts. They're amazing. If we had time, we could train our fleas. They could help you put your boo boo back inside your pants! Would you like that?

(Suddenly MA rushes in)

MA: Mommy's home!

CASS: God, you scared me!

MA: Everything scares you. Hi, Andy! How's my baby?! (She goes over and hurriedly hugs ANDY.)

CASS: (examining a flea) Do you have a cat?

MA: (Leaves ANDY.) No. Why?

CASS: Well, you have fleas.

MA: We do not.

CASS: What's this then? (Shows her the flea.)

MA: I don't see anything.

CASS: Are you sure there are no cats, no strays?

MA: Kristoff next door sometimes brings his pet rat over.

CASS: What?

MA: To play with Andy.

CASS: Yeah, I know – he loves it!

MA: He does.

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CASS: Fleas on rats caused the Black Death.

MA: You are such an alarmist!

CASS: You want Andy to get Bubonic Plague on top of everything else?!

MA: Yeah, that's what I want. Maybe it'll take you too. In fact, I planted the fleas myself.

CASS: And you barely acknowledged Andy just now.

MA: (making a big fuss) Hi, Andy! Hi, Andy! Kisses, kisses! (Kisses toward him.) That'll hold him. Satisfied?

CASS: You're incredible.

MA: Thank you. I try.

CASS: At least you came back.

MA: Yes, because I want to talk to you – about *you*.

CASS: I'm fine. There's no need to talk about me.

MA: Yes, there is. I worry about you, your future, after I'm gone.

CASS: Don't even start.

MA: I just want to ask you one thing.

CASS: No!

MA: Do you or do you not have sex?

CASS: Ma!

MA: Do you? I want to know.

CASS: I'm not telling you such intimate details of my life.

MA: There's nothing on your body I haven't seen before.

CASS: You are crossing so many boundaries, I . . . What has happened to you?

MA: I'm fed up? Don't you get it? So do you or don't you?

CASS: Here, have a flea. (Offers it.)

MA: How can I help you if you won't tell me the sordid details?

CASS: I don't think you can help me.

MA: Of course I can! I'm your mother. Unless nobody can help you.

CASS: That's it. Nobody can help me. So let's change the subject.

MA: I suspect you're a . . . celibate.

CASS: I'm not biting.

MA: You should have been a priest. You would have made a perfect priest. They're celibates.

CASS: I think there are a lot of fallen-away celibates.

MA: I agree. I'm one, a celibate, now that your father's passed. It's not that big a deal, especially since I was practically one when your father was alive.

CASS: TMI!

MA: Did you really know your father? He was a strange, strange man.

CASS: How could you tell?

MA: What is that supposed to mean?

CASS: You're acting pretty strange yourself.

MA: I'm free at last! Free at last!

CASS: Are you sure you aren't having a nervous breakdown?

MA: Oh, that was last week. I'm beyond that now. (to ANDY) Andy, are you hungry? (The unseen ANDY jumps up and down with enthusiasm) Settle down. Settle down. I guess that's a yes. It's always a yes.

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CASS: What does he like to eat?

MA: Burgers.

CASS: Is that all?

MA: Pesto strips.

CASS: Is that it?

MA: I weaned him off Danish pastries with pesto strips. He was getting fat.

CASS: And now he's addicted to pesto strips?

MA: Do you think he's too fat?

CASS: I don't know. Maybe a little.

MA: Why don't you take him to a gym?

CASS: I'm sorry. I'm not taking him to a gym, Ma.

MA: He'd do well there. Throwing the barbells around.

CASS: Could we get him some gym equipment here in the house?

MA: Yeah! It's coming tomorrow.

CASS: It's not such a terrible idea.

MA: It's an absolutely terrible idea. He'd be dead in less than a day.

CASS: You could watch him.

MA: The first time he picked up anything whatsoever he would drop it right on his head. And don't make me say: And about time too! (to ANDY) How we doing over there, buddy? How's that boo boo? Getting cold? Time to put that away! Happy Time over!

CASS: What are we going to do about him? This can't go on. Can it?

MA: Sure it can. It's called life. At least my life.

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CASS: Can we both catch Andy and . . .

MA: Another thing – are you on drugs?

CASS: No!

MA: Heroin? Cocaine? Hydrocodone? Ecstasy?

CASS: You've been studying up.

MA: That's because I'm a “cool” mom.

CASS: Stop watching so much television!

MA: Why? That's my drug.

CASS: (looking over) I think Andy is falling asleep? Maybe we can . . .

MA: Have you ever been on a date, even once?

CASS: I went to my senior prom.

MA: I know. But that was with me!

CASS: It was not!

MA: If you say so. Did you take Andy?

CASS: I'm not even going to answer that.

MA: Do you know what you need? You need to practice. Let's practice you talking to girls. I'll play the girl.

CASS: You're not helping.

MA: You just need practice.

CASS: I do not.

MA: To get good at anything, you need to practice, practice, practice.

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CASS: How many times do I have to say no?

MA: Well, I'm not helping you if it's a man you'd be talking to.

CASS: Nobody's asking you to.

MA: I have to draw the line somewhere.

CASS: Thanks for your support.

MA: This is how you do it. (Pretending to be a young girl) Hi there, handsome!

CASS: Ma!

MA: Come here often? (encouraging him) Where you from?

CASS: (starts to play his part) Not far.

MA: Of course not all the girls are that easy, you have to realize.

CASS: I know that. Believe me, I know that.

MA: You have to expect some rejection.

CASS: We don't have to practice that.

MA: Sure we do. (suddenly haughty) I was not looking at you. Stop looking at me!

CASS: I'm sorry. I thought you were looking at me.

MA: Are you saying I'm cross-eyed?

CASS: No.

MA: Cuz I am a little bit cross-eyed, or eye-impaired, and it makes guys think I'm interested when I'm not.

CASS: I'm sorry I bothered you. I'll leave now.

MA: Wait! You can't give up that easily. Stop being so self-defecating.

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CASS: I think you mean “self-deprecating.”

MA: I know what I mean. Stop crapping all over yourself. Confidence! Confidence is sexy!

CASS: And what if I don't have any confidence?

MA: You say you're an actor, correct? So act!

CASS: I think other people might see through my act.

MA: Not true! People are very imperceptive. They like razzle dazzle. Give it to 'em.

CASS: I give people more credit than that.

MA: That's why you're a doormat. And you're always going to be a doormat.

CASS: Ma!

MA: Some folks will tell you to be genuine. I say: be phony! It'll take you a lot farther in this world.

CASS: Are we finished practicing?

MA: Do you know the facts of life? I don't think your father ever told you. Did he?

CASS: Not in so many words.

MA: Then you probably don't know.

CASS: You are *not* going to tell the facts of life now.

MA: Ashamed? Take care of your brother for a few years. You'll get over it.

CASS: (looking over) He's asleep.

MA: He could be faking it. He does that.

CASS: Let me see. (Goes over to ANDY, checks him out) Shh. I think he's really asleep. Don't yell at him.

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MA: Believe me, he can sleep through anything when he wants to, even me yelling.

CASS: I'm going to pick him up.

MA: You sure? Don't drop him. He's heavy.

CASS: He's not heavy. He's my brother.

MA: What bullshit! He weighs the same, whether he's your brother or not.

CASS: I think I can handle it.

MA: You're going to need my help.

CASS: I don't think so.

MA: If you drop him, it's on you.

CASS: Okay, it'll be on me.

MA: I'm simply warning you.

CASS: All right, I'm simply warned. (Goes carefully to ANDY)

MA: Don't drop him.

CASS: (gritting his teeth) I'm not going to drop him!

MA: Here, let me put down some pillows. (She finds a couple of pillows nearby)

CASS: I might trip over the pillows, Ma.

MA: I'll walk ahead of you, and if you start to drop Andy, I'll throw the pillows down real fast, to break his fall.

CASS: Are you sure that's a good idea?

MA: Absolutely. Okay, pick him up. I have the pillows.

(CASS picks up the unseen sleeping ANDY and places him over his shoulder)

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CASS: I've got him.

MA: Now one step at a time.

CASS: Where am I taking him?

MA: Put him on the couch. He likes it there.

CASS: What if he wakes up? Will he stay there?

MA: Sometimes.

CASS: How do you keep him there?

MA: You don't want to know. . . . Got him?

CASS: I think so. (Adjusts the rather heavy ANDY to his other shoulder) There! That's better.

MA: Wait! Let's fix his boo boo while we have the chance.

CASS: It's pressed up against me.

MA: I'll reach around.

CASS: Do we have to do that now?

MA: Take the opportunity when you have it!

CASS: Okay, okay. (He turns to open up ANDY more to MA) Can you see his boo boo?

MA: (fiddling) I can't quite get it.

CASS: Don't wake him up.

MA: Can you reach down and press a little bit?

CASS: Which part?

MA: The opening. Pull it shut.

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CASS: Should I press it or pull it?

MA: Try both. See what works. Jesus, Cass, are you helpless?!

CASS: Oh, for god's sake! (Reaches down and closes up ANDY's pants) There!

MA: I'll pull up the zipper. (She does, with difficulty) Got it! Whew!

CASS: (echoing MA) Whew.

MA: See what can happen when we work together?

CASS: Yeah, we're quite the team.

MA: That's why you should come back home and help out.

CASS: We'll see.

MA: That means no.

CASS: We'll see.

MA: Don't worry about me. I won't run off to be an actor. I'll be right here, just me and Andy, like two peas in a pod.

CASS: I'm sorry, Ma. But I have to have my own life.

MA: That's what I used to say, when I was alive.

CASS: Oh, God!

MA: You're a good brother.

CASS: (rocking ANDY in his arms) He's a good kid.

MA: Yeah, it's sweet now. But you'll leave.

CASS: But I'm here now, Ma. I'm here now. (Kisses ANDY's head)

MA: He sleeps so well in your arms because he loves you.

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CASS: Is that it? I think he's just tired.

MA: No, he loves you. He does. I can tell. (Rubs ANDY'S head as CASS holds him)

CASS: (after a pause) Do you love *me*, Ma?

MA: What a question!

CASS: Well, do you?

MA: (rubbing CASS's head) I'm thinking. I'm thinking!

(Lights slowly fade.)

END OF SCENE 1

## SCENE 2

CHARACTERS: (2)

CASS, nicely dressed.

VOICE (over PA system), preferably deep and authoritative

SETTING: An airplane seat. It would be nice if a real airplane seat could be used; otherwise, a chair with arms will do. There is an easily opened suitcase on the floor in front of Cass.

TIME: The Present

LIGHTS UP on CASS

(He is seated facing DOWNSTAGE. He spends much of his time talking across the aisle to an unseen passenger. We do not know if that person is male or female. The audience would be other passengers who happen to overhear what transpires.)

CASS: (to nobody in particular) Nice take-off! (Mimes removing his seat belt) Get that horrible thing off me! (Glances at the passenger across the aisle from him) You seem to be having trouble with *your* seat belt. Here, let me help. (Gets up. Stops) You sure? You got it? (Sits back in his seat.) Those things are killers. More people are killed by seat belts than by plane crashes! Okay, you got it! Good for you. . . . (Turns away, turns back) Hello there! I'm Cass. (Waits for a response) I don't bite! (Waits again) Are you going to be like that? It's a long flight. (Waits) Suit yourself. (He hums) Can you tell what song that is? (Listens) Yeah, I don't know either. (Suddenly) By the way, I'm bisexual. How about you? (Listens) Don't care to say, huh? That's all right. No pressure. I couldn't help noticing you. You're very attractive. (Waits) Hey, don't move to another seat. I promise to

be good. (Waits. Then oily) I'm *very* good. At least that's the word on the street. I wouldn't know for sure. That's because I've never had sex with myself. (Waits) Never! The thought of masturbation is too depressing for words. People are so lonely as it is. Having sex by yourself? Yikes! Now that will really make you want to kill yourself. Don't get me started. What's all this crap about them being over-worked and so busy, busy, busy all the time? Not the problem! The problem is boredom. (Spells it wrong) B-O-R-D-U-M! More people die from boredom than from syphilis. At least that's my personal point of view. What's your name? (Waits) I'm Cass. A lot of people ask me if it's short for Casanova. What do you think? (Leans toward the other passenger) Maybe it is. Maybe it isn't. I'm not telling! (Waits) Do you find me strangely alluring? That's a joke! That's a joke! Hey, don't go. Besides, the plane is completely full. We all have to stay where we are. What were we talking about? Oh, yeah, boredom. Don't you find yourself craving that thing called novelty? Day in, day out, the same old, same old. It's enough to drive anybody downright nuts! You're always hearing about these couples who have been together for, like, twenty years. Twenty years, can you believe that? And we're supposed to all go, "Yippee for them! Aren't they terrific!" Well, I for one don't find it terrific. I think it's sad. You couldn't find one other person to have sex with in twenty years? And don't get me started on the ones who have been together for fifty years! Of course, after that long, who else would want to have sex with them?! (Waits.) Was that mean? I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to be mean. But you can't tell me they're *happy*!

I think they'd be a whole lot happier if they had had a little novelty. You know what I'm saying? And what about you? Are you married? (Waits) I can wait. I can wait. That was a joke! A joke! Single? Divorced? Bigamist? Now you *know* that was a joke! You gotta make jokes in this life, right? People are so serious all the time! Lighten up – is what I say! And why can't sex just be something to pass the time?! Like on a plane. Ever hear of the Mile High Club? (Listens) Really? You've never heard of it? Well, suffice it to say, it passes the time on an airplane. Not that I've done it. A lot. (Waits) Ever. It's my understanding that it doesn't have to take that long. Especially since it's cramped and nobody looks their best in the mirror of an airplane toilet. It can be over in a trice. How long is a trice exactly? You can be in and out of there faster than a bunny rabbit on Viagra. (Waits) Pardon the metaphor! Not that I personally am all that speedy. The word on the street is that there is stamina – and then there is *my* stamina. (Makes an arm like an erection) If you get my picture. I once went for four hours without stopping. I even called my doctor during the episode and he told me it was okay to continue. Not that I always listen to my doctor. I mean, who is he to tell me whether I can have sex or not?! How about you? Are you into long or short sex? I read somewhere that actual sex usually lasts on average about thirteen minutes. Not these all-night sessions you keep hearing about. What a crock! I think porn is ruining everybody's expectations. What about you? Ever watch porn? I can take it or leave it. Now you may not believe what I am going to tell you. But I was asked to be in a porn movie once. It was my uncle and it

was in black and white and eight millimeter. [Not that I'm bragging, but the word on the street is that I could choke a horse. (Waits) Not that I'd try to choke a horse. I'm not into that bestiality thing. Is that how you say it? Or is it *bestiality*? Whatever, I'm not into it. I mean, who'd want to chokc a horse? Talk about gross!] Am I talking about myself too much? How about you? What do *you* think of *bestiality*, *bestiality*, whatever you call it?!

(Waits) Am I stepping out of bounds here? I apologize. It's just that you're just so damned cute! I don't usually make a play for just anybody on a plane. Trust me! It takes a very special person, like you. [I have pictures of myself, if you'd like to see them. In my wallet. (Reaches for his wallet.) My uncle took them. The lighting is not so great, but you get the picture. (Holds out the wallet. Listens) No? They're really quite good. I tend to have real low self-esteem and so I don't show them to just everybody. I think you'd find them interesting. Not your usual snapshots, that's for sure! (Waits. Puts the wallet away) Okay, never mind. Maybe later?]

(Looking around) God, I'm thirsty. Where's the attendant? (Looks.) Oh, Lord, they're way up there. A person could die of thirst before they get to you. (Suddenly the lights go out.) Geez. Now what?!

(There are two announcement pings.)

VOICE: I'm sorry, ladies and gentlemen, we seem to be having a temporary lighting problem.

But there is nothing to be alarmed about. It should be fixed in no time. Please stay in your seats. In case it isn't clear, this is your captain speaking. Thank you.

CASS: (in the dark) Are we going to die?

(Pause.)

CASS: (to the other passenger) Just goes to show how you need to seize the day, doesn't it?

You never know when you might crash. And there you are, one orgasm you're never going to get. That was brought home to me when my uncle died. Here he was making all these homemade porn films and he ups and croaks at the age of forty-three. Slipped on some lubricant they use in the porn and broke his hip, which just got worse and worse, and then he developed some kind of flesh-eating infection in the hospital. And he died. I ask you – is that fair? No, it's not fair! I decided right then and there at his funeral that you've got to seize the day. Or the day will seize *you!*

(The lights come on)

Hey! We're back!

(Two announcement pings)

VOICE: See, ladies and gentlemen, it was just a temporary problem. If you wish, you are now free to get up and move about the cabin.

CASS: (to other passenger) You want to move about? (Listens) You're good? Okay! (Stands up)

I'll leave you alone now. . . . But *we're* good? Right? (Starts to leave, then comes back)

I carry protection, if that's what's bothering you. (Listens.) It's terrific stuff, they say. It's guaranteed by UNICEF or somebody. It will stop any kind of venereal whatchamacallit -- even Ebola and bird flu. You want to see it? It comes in this real pretty package.

(Looks in his suitcase.) It won't take me a minute to find it. Needless to say, it prevents

sperm from doing their thing. You got to stop those little buggers. I completely understand, especially if you're a woman in that special period. . . . Do you mind my asking if you're a man or a woman? (Listens.) Oh, you'd rather not say? That's fine. Did I tell you I'm bisexual? (Listens) I did? Yeah, I like to get that right up front in the conversation when I meet somebody, so there are no misunderstandings. None! I hate all those arguments like, "Did you sleep with her? Did you sleep with him?" Give me a break! You can't be bisexual and monogamous both! Get real! (Pause) [Do you have any kids? (Waits) No. I don't think I have any either. You never know, do you? Life is strange. Yep. (Pause) Mighty strange. (Pause) I don't suppose you want a kid, do you? (Listens) I couldn't quite hear that. You know, I think a kid of mine would have a head start in life. It's biology. That kid would have excellent eyesight. I have never had to wear eye-glasses a day in my life! How about you? How's your eyesight? (Listens) Any musical talent in your family? I hear that's pretty hereditary too. Look at Muzak [*sic*] -- you know who I mean -- that German kid who was a genius at five! Wolfgang Amadeus *Muzak*! Well, I hbeard that his father was musical before him. Yeah, I'd like a well-hung little musical genius kid with perfect eyesight. (Pause) How about you? Some folks don't like the idea of 'designer babies,' but I say why the hell not?!]

(Two announcement pings)

VOICE: This is your captain again. We are very glad to have you onboard. We hope that you are comfortable. I believe we have solved the lighting issue and everything ought to be

shipshape from here on in. We may experience a bit of turbulence shortly, so we ask you to stay in your seats with your seat belts fastened. I am turning on the seat belt sign for now for your safety. Thank you.

CASS: (calling out) Who do you have to screw to get a drink around here? (to the other passenger) Luckily, I brought some bottles with me. (Fusses with the suitcase. Pulls out a plastic bottle) Want one? It's just water, spring water. With a little bit of alcohol. (Listens) You're sure? It's great! I made it myself. [I call it the Bill Cosby. That's a joke! That's a joke!] Look! (Takes a swig) Ah! Delicious! You got to hydrate. Hydration is salvation. There are far too many dehydrated people walking around this old world, let me tell you. [Sure you don't want one? (Waits) One swallow? No? More for me!]

(Takes another swig. Puts the bottle back into the suitcase)

I suppose I should go to sleep. I'm really tired. I've been visitng family. Boy, will that tire you! (Stetches) But I find it hard to sleep on a plane. How about you? (Waits) I suppose you'd love to have me go to sleep, wouldn't you? Well, I just might. Those swigs were powerful. (Makes a snoring sound) I have to warn you. I snore when I sleep. I'm told! I've never heard me. Do you snore? Don't tell! I forgive you! Okay, here I go, right off to sleep. (Slumps, head to the side. We hear several snores) (Suddenly waking up) Fooled you! I wasn't really asleep. Maybe I need somebody to knock me in the head, you think? I bet I'd sleep then. (Waits) You feel like knocking me in the head? (Listens) (Laughs too hard, then coughing) (Followed by a big sigh)

Wish I had my own airplane. I'd fly that thing twice the normal speed. I'd be where I want to go in half the time it takes them to pat me down at security. Do you like being patted down by security? I think some of them are *preverts* [*sic.*] Pardon my Swahili! They just like feeling up strangers. Whew! You never know who's working those security lines, let me tell you. I don't feel up strangers. No way. I just talk them up!

(Pause)

Well, I guess I'll say good night. Maybe I can catch a cat nap or two. Sleep tight!

(Slumps in his seat, in a different direction than before)

(Two announcement pings)

VOICE: This is the captain again. (to co-pilot) What? No, don't push that! What are you thinking?! (to passengers) I'll get back you. (to co-pilot) Chris, what's wrong with you?!  
(CASS sits up and listens to this strange, somewhat upsetting conversation by the pilot.)

CASS: (all in whispers to the unseen passenger) Maybe we shouldn't sleep. Do you like costumes? (Reaches down to his suitcase) How about hats? (Pulls out a ship captain's cap, puts it on) You like ship captains? (Leans closer to the other passenger, trying to look sporty in the captain's cap) Ahoy there, matey! (Waits) How about this one? (Puts away the captain's hat, pulls out another one, a cowboy hat) You into cowboys? (Puts the cowboy hat on) Howdy! You from around these parts? No?! Me neither. I guess we're just two scared little heifers on a plane. (Waits, then puts away the cowboy hat. Pulls out another hat from the suitcase) (in Spanish) *Hola!* (He puts on a sombrero) *Como esta?*

[or '*Como estas*' if that is funnier] (Listens) You don't think it suits me? Is it too ethnic? Ethnic is good! (Listens.) I have other hats. (Offers to show them) No? How about underwear? (Listens) Okay, we don't have to have underwear. (Suddenly leers) If you catch my drift. (Leers harder) I'll catch your drift if you'll catch mine. (Listens) Are you sleeping? (Listens) No? Good. Just tell me if I'm disturbing you. (rushing right along) People are just ships passing in the night, aren't they? What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas – unless you post it on Facebook! (Laughs) "Unless you post it on Facebook!" That's a good one! I have a new one: What happens in the Mile High Club stays in the toilet! Especially if your plane is crashing. (Waits) You like that one? . . . You don't wear your emotions on your wrist, do you? Is it "wrist"? You don't even wear them on your face. How cool is that?! Some folks might think you don't have emotions. But this guy knows better. You've got the cool of a someone who'd stick your head into the mouth of a crocodile! If even your head got bitten off, it wouldn't faze you. And I admire that! Far too many hotheads running around this crazy old world. But not you. Not you. (No response) (sadly) Not you.

(Pause)

(after a big sigh) You know what? I think I need some exercise. (Jumps up from seat) They say you need to keep the old blood pumping when you're on an airplane. You could get a bubble in your heart and that would be the end of you right then and there. (Makes a death face) Dead in your seat! (Waits) Have you ever seen a dead person? Not pretty. Not one bit

pretty. People tend not to be at their best when they're dead. Have you noticed that? (Starts doing callisthenics near his seat) (calling to the captain but not that loudly) Hey, captain, how's that argument with whoever going? (to unseen passenger) Ever seen anybody actually die? I saw this woman once who was on a ferris wheel. You know one of those rides that goes up and around. (Demonstrates) Up and around. Well, this woman got to the top of that ferris wheel and stood up. She was showing off. And when that ferrish wheel got to the very top, that woman . . . that woman . . . sat back down and came back to the ground, and *that's* when she fell out. It wasn't far, but she hit her neck wrong and died right there, after about forty-five minutes. I stood there and watched the whole thing. It was awful. (Listens) I was eleven. (Listens) Yes, I knew that woman. (Waits) She was my mother! (Listens) You think I'd lie about a thing like that? Actually, she was the lady who lived next door, but she was practically my mother. My own mother wasn't around. (Waits) She was in prison. (Listens) For? Ah, for . . . rustling cattle. . . . I *think*. It was always a bit vague. (Stops the exercise, falls back into his seat) Whew! That felt amazing! I think I just put another five years onto my life with those moves. You should try it. Will add years. A sound mind in a sound body. (Two announcement pings)

VOICE: (to co-pilot) Get your hands off me, goddamn it! (to passengers) Sorry about that, folks.

Everything is fine here in the cockpit. Everything is fine. (to co-pilot) Stop that!

(Pause)

CASS: (to passenger) If I said that I loved you, would you do it with me? (Waits) I do love you, you realize. I absolutely believe in love at first sight. Some might call it superficial. I call

it super-*special!* You like that? Some people say I have a way with words. What I feel for you is one-hundred percent (spelling it out) L-O-V-E. Or even L-U-V – the British spelling. And it's the first time I have ever felt such a propulsion toward one particular individual – you. What else could it be but love? Would I be spending this much time talking to you if it wasn't total love?! And I do not even require love in return. It's enough that I love you on my own. You could even hate me and yet I would continue to love you. Do you think that you could love me maybe just a little bit? A teensy-weensy? (Waits) Why do you not answer? Here I have put my heart on a plate for you, and all I get back is this . . . stare. And yet life is so short, so very short.

(He throws himself into his seat and then puts his legs over the arm of the seat, toward the other passenger)

If I killed myself for love, would you have sex with me then?

(Two announcement pings)

VOICE: Hello, ladies and gentleman. You captain speaking. The rest of the crew and I hope you are enjoying your flight. Just let us know if there is anything else I, or they, can do to make your flight more enjoyable. Sit back, relax, enjoy a movie or music. We know that you have a choice of airlines. Thank you again for flying with us. Thank you.

CASS: (to captain) That's it? What about the other person up there with you? (to unseen passenger) No, I'm not neglecting you. In our time together I have discovered the one true person I was meant to be with. You! If I don't kill myself, what about marriage? Now

you know I'm dead serious. I have never asked anyone to marry me before. And I never will again. Even if you die. I mean later, a long time from now. I will never, ever ask anyone else to marry me but you. Because, quite frankly, how could I ever find another more suitable, more perfect than you? [You know how these things go. You meet. You can tell within a few seconds – I hate this person. I will never see this person again in my life if I can help it! And then there are those one-of-a-kind meetings, a God's-plan kind of preciousness! Well, that's what we have. True love. Everlasting love.] A love that others can only envy. I even envy myself because of this love. Can love get any better than that!? No, m'am. No, sir. What's your name again? (Listens) I didn't get that. But what's in a name? A rose by any other name would smell as sweet. Unless, of course, it was called "goat puke" or something like that. But you don't smell anything like goat puke. And I like that. . . . A lot. We could maybe even get married here on this airplane! What about that?! Nifty, huh? The pilot could even marry us! Like on a ship, only in the air. Or maybe the purser, if the pilot's not available? Somebody's got to be authorized to perform weddings in the air. It's the law! Perhaps there's even a minister onboard. Do you have a preference? I'm easy myself! A rabbi? A mullah?

(Suddenly the airplane begins to shake. Cass leaps up, but has trouble standing.)

Oh, my God! What's happening?! (Listens) No, it's not God punishing us! Why would you say *that*? We're just having a nice talk here, that's all. There are a lot worse people God could be punishing! (Stumbles) Whoa! Steady there!

(Two announcement pings)

VOICE: (to co-pilot) Take that, you son of a bitch! (Sound of choking) Die! Die! You bastard!

(Pause)

VOICE: (to passengers) Ladies and gentlemen, this is the captain speaking. We are experiencing that turbulence we mentioned before. We will get through it in a little while. In the meantime, please take your seats if you are not already seated. And fasten your seat belts securely. Thank you.

CASS: I'm not staying in that seat! (Stumbles around) Who do they think they are, treating me like some sheep, all tied up?! I'm a human being! I will be treated like one! (Falls down) If I break something, I'm suing! I'm suing even if I don't break something! What kind of airline is this?! Can't even control the turbulence! (The turbulence suddenly stops) (to the turbulence) You'd better stop! (He sees that it has stopped) (sitting down, to the other passenger) How about that? I made the turbulence stop! . . . You feeling okay? No upset tummy? (Waits) Me neither. Got a stomach like a steel trap. Air sickness, my ass! Get over yourself, I say. Some people are so dramatic! Don't fly if you can't handle it. Right?

(Two announcement pings)

VOICE: We have passed the turbulent area, I am happy to report. It should be clear for the remainder of our flight. But just to be on the safe side, please remain in your seats with your seat belts fastened. Thank you. . . . Attendants, there is a clean-up in the cockpit. Please come forward.

CASS: (loudly and sarcastically to the Voice) Thank *you*!

VOICE: Will the passenger who was doing calisthenics in the aisleway earlier kindly refrain. We are not a gymnasium. In case it isn't clear, this is your captain speaking.

CASS: What a buzz kill! I hope he crashes! ( Listens) No, I'm not worried. I always carry a parachute when I fly. (Reaches for the suitcase) You can't be too careful. (Listens) No, I don't have a second one. . . . But you could hang onto me when I jump. (Listens) Sure, I'd do that for you.

(Pause)

Has anyone ever pursued you as hard as I have? (Listens) Yeah, I didn't think so. . . . I mean that as a compliment. (Listens) Well, you could *take* it as a compliment. (Listens) No, I didn't mean nobody else thinks you're attractive. I meant to me you're *super*-attractive, and that's why I have devoted most of this flight to you. (Listens) Are you going to be that way now? (Listens) Of course I respect you! Why wouldn't I respect you? We haven't even had sex yet. (Listens) No, that doesn't mean I wouldn't respect you if we had sex in the toilet. I'd respect you more! Who wants clean sheets all the time?!

(Listens) Well, you don't have to get all hot and bothered about it. I know how to take no for an answer. Maybe we should just not talk anymore. (Listens) Good! I agree. (Mimes zipping his mouth shut, then turns upstage)

(Pause)

CASS: (turns back to the other passenger) Actually, I'm a virgin. This is all just a lot of bluster. I've never had sex with myself or anyone else in my entire life. On my word of honor!

I just decided that this flight was going to be the start of a whole new phase in my life. But I guess I blew it. . . . I guess I've blown most things in my life. I was born – what's the opposite of prematurely? Postmaturely? Whatever! I came into this world with a full set of teeth and a full beard. I have some baby pictures, if you care to see them? (Gestures toward the suitcase) No? Well, having a beard when you're a baby isn't easy, let me tell you. Besides having to shave with little fists, it's hard to see yourself in the mirror. And kids can be cruel. Even parents can be cruel. "Stop growing that beard!" my mother used to say to me. "It reminds me of your father when you suckle my breast." Needless to say, I got very little breast feeding when I was a baby. But I was plucky, a plucky little kid, with a full beard. [That is, until I developed this skin condition, and my beard dried up and fell off. If I thought the beard was a hardship, I had no idea what that skin condition would do to my self-image. (Listens) I don't really want to say what the condition was. In fact, they had no name for it. The doctors – and there were many – just called it "That Condition." They could barely bring themselves to look at it -- or me. And I couldn't blame them. I couldn't bear to look at myself either. . . . Excuse me while I wipe away a tear. (Wipes away a tear)] It doesn't matter if you don't believe me. I have learned over the years that you can't count on people's sympathy. Believe me, there's very little sympathy out there. (Points to the audience) Hard hearts – that's what's out there. And you're a fool if you think it's any different. . . . But I overcame "That Condition." Oh, yes, I took control of it, and I said, "You're just a Human Condition! That's all you are! And

I've got you by the short and curlies and I'm not letting go until you go away! Go away! "

And do you know what happened? That's right. My Human Condition went away, and I have not been troubled with it once since I turned eighteen years old. And that's my advice to everybody. Get rid of your Human Condition as soon as you can, and you'll be a lot better off in this old world. Now if I were a preacher, I'd say "Amen." But I'm not a preacher. So we'll do without the "Amen." An "Amen" doesn't make it true anyhow.

"Amen" to that, say I!

(Two announcement pings)

VOICE: Ladies and getnlemen, we will be arriving at our destination in a very few minutes. We have been ordered to circle the airport because there are several other planes that need to land before we do. Rest assured that we will get you to your final destination safe and sound. Thank you once again for flying Carpe Diem Airlines – the airline with a flair! This is your captain signing off until we have landed. Thank you. . . . Attendants, I am still waiting for clean-up in the cockpit!

CASS: (to the Voice) I guess we're not going to get anything to eat and drink! Well, I can fix that. (Searches the suitcase) I have something delicious in here. (Finds a bottle of pills, opens it) This will kill my appetite. Permanently. (Listens) No, I'm joking. (We should be able to tell that he is *not* joking this time) (Listens) No, you can't have one. They're just for me. I said before I started that this would be my last hurrah. Well, *hurrah!* They're supposed to be fast, these pills. They ought to be; they cost enough. I don't actually have

anywhere I'm going. Can you believe that? I'm just sort of flying around. Around in circles, like this airplane. (Draws a circle with his finger) And then you crash – if you're lucky! . . . Is that depressing? Good Lord, let's not be depressing! Anything but that! But it's not depressing. It's liberating. When your flight is over, you ought to know it's done. Why keep circling and circling, hoping for an orgasm in the toilet?! It's over, kiddo. It's over! (Takes a poison pill) (to the other passenger) Don't get up, not that you were going to! It's too late in any case. I can already feel that pill singing me to my rest. (Somebody said that. I didn't make it up. It's kinda pretty, especially for saying "You're dead." Don't you think? (Getting groggy) Whoa there! I'm groggy. Now I'm really feeling it. I wonder if I'll go to Hell. What do you think? Don't answer that. Leave me at least one illusion. (Groggier still) You are born with a Human Condition and then you go to Hell. Sounds about right. You'll find my ID in my suitcase. (Almost out) I hope I haven't been too much of a bother on this flight. I meant well! And it wasn't personal! (Dies.)

LIGHTS OUT  
THEN BACK ON QUICKLY

VOICE: Ladies and gentlemen, this is your captain speaking. Apparently we have had some misfortune onboard our flight today. One of our passengers has poisoned himself. I wish I could say I was joking. But I believe some of you saw it for yourselves. Or could I be mistaken? Perhaps you all could tell me if you saw something else instead. Is that possible? You could let us know by putting your hands together and applauding for what you saw take place. In case it isn't clear, this is your playwright speaking.

(Cass jumps back to life. The other passenger is still across the aisle)

CASS: (to other passenger) I hope I haven't been too much of a bother on this flight. I meant well. And it wasn't personal. (to members of the audience) How about you? Want to join the Mile High Club? . . . How about you? How about *all* of you into the toilet? We'll set a record!

VOICE: How many of you saw that?

(The audience applauds as it wishes)

VOICE: Or what about this? Did anybody happen to see this?

(CASS jumps back to life)

CASS: (to the other passenger) Your last chance before I kill myself! (Holds the pill to his mouth) (Listens, surprised) Really? You want to join the Mile High Club? With me? Really? You're sure? Well, let's go then! It just so happens that this pill is not poison after all. It's actually a contraceptive *and* a profilactic *and* an aphrodisiac. And it's said to be good for the heart too!

VOICE: Is that what happened? They joined the Mile High Club, did it once, and never saw each other again?! (The audience will applaud as it wishes) Got it. Or could it possibly have been this last one?

(CASS jumps backs to life)

CASS: (to the other passenger) You've thought it over and you *will* marry me?! You don't think we're completely incompatible, barely know one another, and most likely are grossly

unsuitable for each other, especially sexually? For us, it's the real thing and not forced whatsoever?! . . . You know what – I think so too. Come my love. (Holds out his hand to the unseen passenger) For "at my back I always hear/ Time's winged chariot hurrying near!"

(He comes downstage and offers to take the unseen hand of the other passenger.)

VOICE: Is that the end? The two of them? But just how *much* do you want it?! Oh, I know you want it. Just tell me just how much you want it!

(The audience will applaud as it will, but probably loudest for this last ending)

LIGHTS OUT

VOICE: (in the dark) For God's sake, how many times do I have to ask for clean-up in the cockpit?!

NO INTERMISSION

SCENE 3

CHARACTERS: CASS  
                  ANDY (unseen)  
                  LOVIE (unseen)  
                  GOD

TIME: Two years later

SETTING: CASS's small apartment, with a backward (twisted) loveseat for two

(Enter CASS carrying a bag of groceries)

CASS: Got some groceries!

(Nobody answers)

CASS: Yum Yums!

(Still nobody answers)

CASS: I'm going to give it away to the homeless!

(LOVIE emerges from somewhere. The audience cannot see this person, and the sex is still indeterminate)

CASS: Ah, there you are, Lovie! You want to cook tonight? (Listens) Of course you don't. How about some okra? You like okra? (Reacts to LOVIE's hatred of okra) Okay, so you don't like okra. No need to spit on the floor. Here, let me clean that up. (Gets a paper towel and wipes the floor) Guess what! I got an acting gig today, the first one in quite a while. I get to play a banana! Equity! We can pay some of those bills. Yay us! How's the refrigerator? I don't hear it making that noise right now. Did you fix it? (Listens) Of course not. Did you call that repairman? I left you his number. (Listens) Of course you didn't. We'd better get that fixed or we won't have any sherbet. That sherbet we have has melted and re-frozen three times now. (Finishes putting away the groceries) I know you don't like sherbet, but I do. . . . Want to cuddle?

(CASS goes to the loveseat and sits down, gestures for LOVIE to join him)

A cuddle and a half after a hard day's labor! I registered twenty-two colonoscopies today!

(LOVIE is reluctant.)

One little cuddle!

(LOVIE joins CASS in the other side of the twisted loveseat)

That's better! It's our anniversary. Did you know that?  
 Three years! We've been a couple for three whole years! (He hugs the unseen LOVIE with a big hug) This is my real yum yum. (Another hug, but then LOVIE moves away)  
 Where you going? Do you call that a hug? . . . By the way, where's Andy? (Listens)  
 Don't tell me he's in the closet again. I thought we had cured him of that!

(Gets up from the loveseat)

Andy? It's Cass! Yum yums! (to LOVIE) How long has it been since you saw him?  
 (Listens) You don't remember? (Listens) I realize he runs off, but it wouldn't kill you to watch where he goes. (Listens) I realize that he's not your relative; he's mine. But I thought we had an agreement that since your're not working, you would . . . never mind.

(calling) Andy! Andy! . . . (reluctantly, with resignation) Here, soeey, soeey! (Listens to LOVIE) I know it's awful, but it works! Here, soeey,soeey, soeey!

(The unseen AN DY appears)

There's my special boy!

(ANDY runs over and hugs CASS around the chest)

Whoa, there, big fella! You almost knocked me down. (Listens to LOVIE) He knocked you down this afternoon? (Listens) I realize that he's gotten very big. But he was just trying to show you some affection. (Listens to LOVIE) He used a baseball bat? He didn't! You're making that up.

(Suddenly ANDY is coming toward CASS with the baseball bat)

Andy, no! No! No baseball bat. (Listens) I realize it's aluminum, but it still hurts.  
 (Listens) We'll play baseball later, okay? Catch. You like catch, don't you? Maybe we can all three play. Lovie loves to play catch. Don't you, Lovie?

Why are you always so passive? After three years, you'd think you'd make one decision on your own. (Listens) I'm not nagging! I'm suggesting. How we doing on cleaning up

your space? (Listens) You did? Let me see. It sounds wonderful. (CASS walks over to LOVIE's space. LIGHTS UP on total clutter. We can't see LOVIE, but we can see books, dishes, old mail, paper bags, other junk in big piles, the bigger the better)

CASS: I don't see anything cleaned up. (Listens) You threw away what? (Listens) Some political flyers? (Trying to be positive) Well, that's great, Lovie! It's a start. (Listens) No, I won't shut up about the hoarding now. (Listens) Well, fuck you too, Lovie. Are you sure Andy doesn't hide in the clutter? And that's why we can't find him sometimes? (Listens) No, I don't want you to move out. I just want you to stop hoarding. You do not need every Neil Young poster ever made! (Listens) I know you love Neil Young, but we have to share this place. Maybe Andy could help clean up. What about that? (Listens) You'd kill him. Okay. I thought you and Andy were getting along somewhat better recently. Right?

(ANDY, although unseen, chases LOVIE with the baseball bat. CASS tries to placate both.)

Andy, no! No baseball bat waved at Lovie! No! . . . And, Lovie, put down that frying pan! You two are going to be the death of me! We have to to work this out! Why don't you both sit in the loveseat and everybody cool down? (Listens) Because I said so. Don't you want to cool down? Look at the two of you in that loveseat! You'd think it was made for you!

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