

Art Duty

Written by

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(NOTE: All roles are and may be played by any ethnicity and any gender)

(OTHER NOTE: Change any pronouns/honorifics as you need)

(LAST NOTE: The play is structured so that it may be performed with a cast as small as 4, with two actors doubling all roles aside from Asher and Tobin.

Suggested doubling is provided below.

That being said, as long as Asher and Tobin do not double, you may cast each role according to the needs of your producing company)

TOBIN: Older than Asher. Has an eye patch.

ASHER: Younger than Tobin. Has no eye patch.

VOMITER: Has no water.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL: Has a spectacular coat.

CAMERA OPERATOR: Has a camera.

BRIEFCASE: Has a briefcase.

SKETCHER: Has a sketchbook.

EGGS: Has a bone to pick.

RICH LOVER #1: Has an eyeball guy.

RICH LOVER #2: Has a hunger.

BELLAMY: Has an apron.

TAGGER: Has a can of spray paint.

CRITIC #1: Has a passion.

CRITIC #2: Has no penchant for subtlety.

SANDY DANIELS: Has a degree in talking.

DUDE WITH TRUCK WE DON'T SEE: Has a truck. That we don't see.

SUGGESTED DOUBLING:

Track 1:
Tobin

Track 2:
Asher

Track 3:
Vomiter
Camera Operator
Sketcher
Rich Lover #2
Bellamy
Critic #1
Sandy Daniels

Track 4:
Leopold Caldwell
Briefcase
Eggs
Rich Lover #1
Tagger
Critic #2
Dude With Truck We Don't See

SETTING:

Art Plaza.

TIME:

Deep winter.

CONTENT WARNING:

Graphic discussion of violence and suicide. Characters point guns at and fire at one another, but resulting violence is depicted offstage.

*"I tried to drown my sorrows, but the bastards
learned how to swim, and now I am overwhelmed
by this decent and good feeling."*

-Frida Kahlo

*"Would Hamlet have felt the delicious
fascination of suicide if he hadn't had an
audience, and lines to speak?"*

-Jean Genet

Got nothing witty today? ASHER

I don't care. TOBIN

Going to be a long day with that attitude. ASHER

It's a long day every day. TOBIN

Yeah. ASHER

Hey, at least we're not throwing up.

Maybe not physically. TOBIN

All right. There's the Tobin we know and love. ASHER

Shut the fuck up. TOBIN

Right. Okay. ASHER

Silence.

ASHER looks behind them at the Art.

Looks back front.

Looks behind at the Art again.

What are you doing? TOBIN

Just looking at it. ASHER

Not the job to look at it. TOBIN

I know that. I just... ASHER

What? TOBIN

I really don't get this one. ASHER

It's not our job to get it. TOBIN

I know that. I'm just saying with the amount of money they spent on it you think it would be...better. ASHER

It's not very good, is it?

Eyes front. TOBIN

My eyes are front. ASHER

Not much to see back there anyway.

Silence.

I wouldn't say that shit too loud. TOBIN

They don't mic us. Just the cameras. ASHER

They can read your lips. TOBIN

No, they can't. ASHER

I've seen it happen. TOBIN

Seriously? ASHER

Yeah. TOBIN

... ASHER

Shit.

Just don't say that shit too loud. TOBIN

Noted. ASHER

Silence.

ASHER
When did you see it happen?

TOBIN
...

I'd rather not talk about it.

ASHER
You're not messing with me?

TOBIN
Why would I lie to you?

ASHER
Because you want me to shut up.

TOBIN
Correlation isn't causation.

ASHER
I guess.

Yeah, okay.

Silence.

ASHER
It's going to be a long day if you don't want to make conversation.

TOBIN
...

ASHER
...

You have any interesting dreams last night?

TOBIN
...

ASHER
I did.

Not last night, this was, like, a week ago. I was at the Market. I dreamt I was at the Market. And you know how they're always out of everything. I was looking for tuna. For some reason, I had this really strong, almost violent, hankering for a tuna sandwich. I don't know how to unpack that part. But I was in the canned aisle, and you know how they're always out of everything. They were out of tuna. So I buzzed one of the intercoms for help, and I asked if they had anything in the back.

TOBIN
Why the fuck would you do that?

ASHER
What?

TOBIN
There's never more in the back, if they still had any, it would be stocked in the front.

ASHER
Well, it's funny you say that, because the intercom said I was welcome to go back and check.

I know. I was shocked. I thought, "I must be dreaming." Which, I guess I was, thinking about it. But I walked across the whole Market to the doors at the back. And I opened them, and the entire back was filled floor to ceiling with cans of tuna. Literally, tuna as far as the eye could see. I had never seen so much in one place. Ever.

And then I picked one up, bought it, and went home.

I woke up before I could make the sandwich.

TOBIN
Why tuna?

ASHER
I don't know. I hate fish.

TOBIN
Fuck fish.

ASHER
Right?

Who even eats fish anymore? It's, like, a delicacy.

Silence.

ASHER
Did you have any interesting dreams, lately?

TOBIN
No.

ASHER
Cool.

Silence.

ASHER looks off to the right again.

Stares.

They're still throwing up.
ASHER

Should we help? Or do something?

Not the job.
TOBIN

Not the job. I know. I know.
ASHER
(Overlapping)

...

God, it's going to be a long day.

Silence.

*The lights blackout as the Clock chimes
Seven.*

SEVEN

Lights rise.

Literally nothing has changed.

TOBIN and ASHER guard the Art.

ASHER looks off to the right.

*ASHER watches (perhaps TOBIN, too) as
VOMITER slowly enters, dehydrated and
exhausted.*

Excuse me.
VOMITER

Excuse me, please?

Yes?
ASHER

Do either of you have any water?
VOMITER

Um...
ASHER

There's a fountain that way.
TOBIN
(Pointing off to the left)

VOMITER

Forgive me. I'm not sure if I can make it.

I exercised a little too vigorously, you see. I threw up quite a bit back in that direction.

ASHER

We saw.

VOMITER

You did?

ASHER

Yeah.

VOMITER

You didn't have any impulse to assist me?

ASHER

Well, we did. But it's not our job to help you.

VOMITER

What?

ASHER

Oh, sorry. We wanted to help. But we couldn't. We're on Art Duty. Can't leave it unguarded.

VOMITER

I see. I didn't realize the installation was today.

ASHER

Mmmhmm! It is.

VOMITER examines the Art.

VOMITER

Looks expensive.

ASHER

It is!

VOMITER

Is that gold?

ASHER

It is.

Silence.

VOMITER

I don't know if I get this one.

ASHER
(Trying to hide his lips so
only VOMITER can see)

Us neither.

VOMITER

Ah.

Anyway. I believe I may be dying. Neither of you have any water?

ASHER
(Looking to TOBIN)

I might...?

TOBIN
(Pointing off to the left)

There's a fountain that way.

ASHER

...

Sorry.

VOMITER

That's okay.

Fuck me, I guess. Have a good day.

ASHER

You too!

*ASHER watches as VOMITER exits slowly
to the left.*

*After they exit, the sound of them
collapsing to the ground and dying.*

ASHER

Oop.

They definitely just died.

TOBIN

...

ASHER
Look, I know we can't give citizens any of our supplied rations, but they looked like they
really needed it.

TOBIN

Not our job.

ASHER

I know.

I just don't understand where the harm is in it, you know?

It's just water.

TOBIN

Look, if you want to break the rules. By all means, break the rules.

Just don't say I didn't tell you so.

ASHER

...

You're telling me you've never broken the rules? Not once?

TOBIN

Of course I have.

ASHER

Okay. Did you get caught?

TOBIN

Yes. I did.

ASHER

Oh.

...

What happened?

TOBIN

...

You know how I always tell you not to ask about my fucking eye?

ASHER

Yeah.

TOBIN

That's what happened.

ASHER

No.

TOBIN

Sure as shit.

ASHER

They took out your eye?

Yep.

TOBIN

Through a straw.

Beat.

TOBIN cracks a smile.

Laughs.

ASHER slowly joins in the laughter.

Laughter.

It subsides.

So...

ASHER

What happened?

TOBIN

I just told you.

ASHER

...

*LEOPOLD CALDWELL enters, followed
by CAMERA OPERATOR.*

*LEOPOLD CALDWELL carries a
handheld microphone and is dressed in a
spectacular, enviable reporter coat.*

*CAMERA OPERATOR carries a camera,
and is dressed in whatever they want.*

All right. Let's get this over with.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Tobin? Good god, is that you?

You're still here?

TOBIN

Looks like it.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

I thought you were retiring.

TOBIN

Didn't work out.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL
Well. Ain't that shit?

TOBIN
Goddamn right.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL
That slut from Channel 5 come by yet?

TOBIN
Nope.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL
Thank God.
(Examining the Art)
This it?

ASHER
It is!

LEOPOLD CALDWELL
Jesus.
Is that gold?

ASHER
It is.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL
These things get fucking weirder every season.

Beat.

CAMERA OPERATOR
Yeah, I don't really get it.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL
Why are you talking? Set up the fucking shot.

CAMERA OPERATOR
Sorry.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL
Don't be sorry. Set up the fucking shot. Do your job.

CAMERA OPERATOR begins to set up the shot.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL
Christ.

Tobin, have you smiled this morning?

Not really.

TOBIN

Great.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

You.

(To ASHER, snapping)

Yes?

ASHER

Leopold Caldwell. Prop Channel 8. You new?

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

I've been on the force for six months.

ASHER

Oh, really?

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

We've met.

ASHER

We have?

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Several times.

ASHER

Why does your face look new?

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

I don't know?

ASHER

Mmm.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Whatever. You ever do one of these before?

ASHER

No.

Perfect. Just stand there, be happy, I'll take care of the rest.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

*LEOPOLD CALDWELL whistles at
CAMERA OPERATOR.*

You ready?

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

CAMERA OPERATOR

Just one...second...

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Sure. Take your time. This is the only stop we have to make today.

CAMERA OPERATOR

What? I thought we had a bunch of--

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

I'm being sarcastic! Set up the shot before we all piss on you.

*CAMERA OPERATOR finishes setting up
the shot.*

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Thank you! Count us down.

CAMERA OPERATOR

And you're on in 5, 4, 3,

(Mouthing the last numbers)

2, 1.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

(Speaking into the mic, at the
camera)

Hello, Nation! Leopold Caldwell, Channel 8's Finest Entertainment Correspondent, coming to you live from Art Plaza at the newest installation. I don't know about you, folks at home, but it's a good thing this weather's made me double up on socks, because this new Art just knocked a pair off my feet! The State--

CAMERA OPERATOR

They're not smiling!

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

What?

CAMERA OPERATOR

Gun dude, you need to smile.

ASHER

What?

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

(To CAMERA OPERATOR)

Quiet.

(To ASHER)

Were you smiling?

ASHER

I thought I was.

Tobin? LEOPOLD CALDWELL

I wasn't looking. TOBIN

They weren't smiling. CAMERA OPERATOR

Aren't we live? ASHER

We're never live, we record in advance. Just smile, okay? Let me see the face you made.
ASHER makes the face they made.

Yeah. Okay. No. That's not enough. Let me see you actually smile.
ASHER "actually" smiles.
It's too much.

Oh, Jesus fuck me. Jesus literally fuck me and impregnate me with himself. Stop.
ASHER stops.
Beat.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL
(To CAMERA OPERATOR)
There's a dead body over there. Go film some B-roll for a minute.
CAMERA OPERATOR exits towards VOMITER'S body with the camera.
LEOPOLD CALDWELL really takes ASHER in for the first time.

What's your name? LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Asher. ASHER

This your first Art Duty? LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Second. ASHER

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Okay.

Well, if Tobin, here, hasn't shot you yet, that at least means you can take direction. So listen up.

Do you know how to smile like a human being?

ASHER

I--

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

The answer should be yes. Just smile.

Look, there's no trick to it. Just be yourself. Don't force it. Follow your heart. You're employed, be happy. You don't have to impress anyone. You can't please everybody. Imagine that everyone watching at home is in their underwear. I do. Remember, they'll be looking at the Art, not you. A watched pot never boils. The early bird gets the worm. If you love what you do for a living, you'll never work a day in your entire life. It's about the journey, not the destination. Everything happens for a reason. No pain, no gain. Pain is just weakness leaving the body. You can't make an omelette without breaking a few eggs. The grass is always greener on the other side. Dance like no one else is watching. You miss 100% of the shots you don't take. The quickest way to find love is to stop looking. Time heals all wounds. Don't do drugs. It's better to have loved and lost than to have never loved at all. Work smarter, not harder. Think outside the bun. Don't judge a book by the cover. Good things come to those who smile.

Okay?

It's propaganda, kid. Not rocket science.

(Yelling)

AGAIN!

CAMERA OPERATOR re-enters, rushing back in and resetting the shot.

As they do, LEOPOLD CALDWELL starts picking their nose.

They retrieve a booger, examine it, then wipe it on TOBIN, who has not seen any of this.

CAMERA OPERATOR

Set!

And you're on in 5, 4, 3,

(Mouthing the last numbers)

2, 1.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

(Speaking into the mic, at the camera)

Hello, Nation! Leopold Caldwell, Channel 8's Finest Entertainment Correspondent, coming to you live from Art Plaza at the newest installation. I don't know about you, folks at home, but it's a good thing this weather's made me double up on socks, because this new Art just knocked a pair off my feet! The State has really outdone themselves this season. Just look at that. It's so shiny.

(To ASHER)

Is that real gold?

ASHER

Uh--yes, it is.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Real. Gold. Get a load of that, folks at home. I could stare at this for hours and just unpack it for days. I'm almost tempted to shirk off my responsibilities and go chat with friends about it in a Java Shop, hahahahahahahahahahaha.

Well. Remember, the installation lasts today only. If you want to see this amazing, life-changing work with your own eyes, get your heinies over to Art Plaza!

(Holding it)

...

CAMERA OPERATOR

And we're out.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

(Dropping the professionalism)

FUUUUUUUUUCK.

(To ASHER)

You did good. You'll go far.

TOBIN

See you around.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Not if I kill myself.

Genuinely. I've been thinking about it.

I know exactly how I would do it.

ASHER

...

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Pills and alcohol. I know a guy.

What about you all?

TOBIN

Bullet to the head.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Ah, that's boring. You're so boring.

CAMERA OPERATOR

I've always been a fan of toaster in the bathtub.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

That's even worse. That's a goddamn cliché.

(To ASHER)

Kid, save us.

ASHER

...

I don't think about killing myself.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

...

...

See you around.

*LEOPOLD CALDWELL exits, followed by
CAMERA OPERATOR.*

Silence.

ASHER

I don't think I like them.

TOBIN

We fucked.

ASHER

What?

TOBIN

Couple of years back. Off and on.

ASHER

Wow.

TOBIN

They're into piss.

ASHER

...

Like...?

TOBIN

Yeah. Golden showers and shit.

Did you...ever...?
ASHER

Did I ever piss on them?
TOBIN

How else would I know what they're into?

...
ASHER

Do you...?

No. I don't.
TOBIN

Why would you pee on them?
ASHER

Why the fuck wouldn't I? I'm not an asshole.
TOBIN

It's not like they were pissing on me.

Silence.

BRIEFCASE enters, on their way to work.

They stop to look at the Art.

Is this it?
BRIEFCASE

It is.
ASHER

...
BRIEFCASE

I don't get it.

Silence.

*The lights blackout as the Clock chimes
Nine.*

NINE

Lights rise.

TOBIN and ASHER guard the Art.

BRIEFCASE is gone.

SKETCHER is here.

*They sit off to the side, sketching the Art
in their sketchbook.*

Silence.

It's Nine. TOBIN

Bathroom break. ASHER

Yup. TOBIN

Do you want to go first? ASHER

Yup. TOBIN

Silence.

TOBIN turns and exits.

ASHER is left alone.

SKETCHER sketches.

Silence.

Are you drawing the Art? ASHER
(To SKETCHER)

I am. SKETCHER

I can move a little, if you need. ASHER

No. SKETCHER

Thank you, though.

I'm drawing you, too.

Really? ASHER

SKETCHER

Mmmhmm.

You have a kind body.

ASHER

I do?

SKETCHER

Yes.

Silence.

SKETCHER'S phone rings.

They put their sketchbook down and take their phone out of a pocket.

They look at the caller ID, smile, and answer the phone.

SKETCHER

(Into the phone)

Hey, babe.

Mmmhmm.

I miss you, too.

Yeah, no, I'm over at the Plaza.

What do you mean?

Well, yeah.

Mmmhmm.

I told you, though.

I told you I was going to sketch this morning.

I told you I was going to sketch this morning.

The other night.

I did.

Well, if you had a problem with it why didn't you say anything then?

Of course I was serious. Why would I not be serious?

Because I like doing it.

Baby--

Please let me finish.

I do not need this shit this morning, okay? Can we talk about this later?

...

Goddamn you.

No, I am tired of this shit!! Do you know how much I put my interests by the wayside for you?!

I have too!

Fuck you!!

I mean it. Fuck you. I don't deserve this. You don't deserve me.

You don't.

Yeah, I am.

I am. I'm done.

Don't beg.

Stop apologizing.

Stop fucking apologizing.

Of course it's you!!

I'm hanging up.

I am hanging up.

If I see you again I'll fucking rip your genitals off.

I'm sending Carrie for my stuff.

No.

Fucking kill yourself.

SKETCHER hangs up, in tears.

They attempt to wipe away their tears.

They throw their phone on the ground and stomp on it repeatedly.

They attempt to wipe away their tears.

SKETCHER makes eye contact with ASHER.

Beat.

SKETCHER moves to ASHER and hugs them, crying into them.

ASHER, uncomfortable, does attempt to console SKETCHER.

Silence.

SKETCHER lifts their head and looks at ASHER.

Are you doing anything tonight?

SKETCHER

...

Uh...

ASHER

SKETCHER breaks from ASHER and crosses back to their sketchbook.

They write on the sketch and rip it out of the book.

They cross back to ASHER and hand them the sketch.

I'm gonna stay with my friend for a while. If you want to do anything, that's the address.

I'm into everything.

I'll suck your dick or make you suck mine.

Piss. Vore. Whatever you want.

SKETCHER

ASHER

...

SKETCHER kisses ASHER.

SKETCHER exits.

Silence.

TOBIN re-enters and takes up their post.

Silence.

Mmm.
Guess they finished their drawing.

ASHER

...

*The lights blackout as the Clock chimes
Ten.*

TEN

Lights rise.

TOBIN and ASHER guard the Art.

Silence.

I'm not actually retiring.

TOBIN

No?

ASHER

No. Don't get any ideas.

TOBIN

About what?

ASHER

Trying to replace me.

TOBIN

I wasn't.

ASHER

Sure.

TOBIN

I wasn't.

ASHER

Good.

TOBIN

'Cause you aren't gonna.

ASHER
Did I say something? To give you that idea?

Didn't have to. TOBIN

It's the way you stand.

What? ASHER

You're impatient. TOBIN

... ASHER

That doesn't mean I want to replace you.

Sure. TOBIN

Silence.

ASHER tries to analyze the way they stand.

What are you doing? TOBIN

Trying to figure out how the way I stand makes you think I want to replace you. ASHER

It's not going to be obvious to you. TOBIN

Would you care to elaborate, then? ASHER

No. Because you want to replace me. TOBIN

... ASHER

... TOBIN

... ASHER

Are you messing with me again?

TOBIN looks at ASHER.

Into them.

ASHER looks back.

ASHER is unnerved.

TOBIN looks away.

Silence.

I don't want to replace you.

ASHER

Sure.

TOBIN

EGGS enters, dressed in a large, puffy coat.

TOBIN stiffens.

Officers.

EGGS

...

TOBIN

Good morning.

ASHER

So, this is the new Art?

EGGS

It is.

ASHER

Gold.

EGGS

It is.

ASHER

How much was this one?

EGGS

Okay. Let's move along.

TOBIN

I am a taxpaying citizen, I have every right to be here.

EGGS

Just asked a question.

Question that's none of your fucking business.

TOBIN

Hey. I don't mean any trouble. EGGS

Then fuck off. TOBIN

Okay. EGGS

EGGS doesn't fuck off.

Lot of folks come by to see it yet? EGGS

... TOBIN

Not really. No. ASHER

That's a shame. EGGS

I think I actually like this one.

Yeah? ASHER

Well, how can you not like gold? EGGS

But yes. You can tell a lot of thought went into it.

...

So how much did it cost?

What did I just fucking say? TOBIN

I think I have a goddamn right to know. EGGS

Don't tell them. TOBIN
(To ASHER)

That's kind of rude. EGGS

Don't tell them. TOBIN

EGGS
(To ASHER)
Do you take orders from them?

ASHER
...

EGGS
I'm just asking a harmless question.

TOBIN
Shut the fuck up.

EGGS
You don't have to listen to that one, do you? You're equals.

TOBIN
Seniority counts. Don't fucking tell them.

EGGS
Legally, I am a citizen. You have to assist me, right?

TOBIN
Not if you're a bitch.

EGGS
Hey now.

ASHER
They're right, we have to tell them.

TOBIN
No, we don't.

(To EGGS)
Fuck off.

EGGS
I'll go away, just tell me how much it cost.

TOBIN
Fuck off!

ASHER
15.

Beat.

EGGS
15?

TOBIN
You pussy asshole.

Beat.

15 million. For that? EGGS

Percent. ASHER

What? EGGS

Stop. TOBIN

... ASHER

15 percent. TOBIN

... EGGS

Percent of what? ASHER

Of the Nation's capital.

Silence.

EGGS
(Losing it)
ARE YOU FUCKING KIDDING ME?!

TOBIN
(Overlapping, brandishing
their rifle)
STAND DOWN!!

EGGS
(Overlapping)
ARE YOU FUCKING KIDDING ME?!

TOBIN
(Overlapping)
BACK THE FUCK UP!! NOW! NOW!

EGGS
(Overlapping)
ALL THAT MONEY?!?! WHILE WE'RE DYING IN THE STREETS?!

TOBIN
I WILL SHOOT YOU! YOU UNDERSTAND?!
STAND DOWN.

EGGS
(Standing down)
I'm fine.

...

...

I'm fine.
Money well spent.
It looks good.

Silence.

EGGS exits.

Silence.

TOBIN
If someone's only here to cause a scene, you don't have to answer them.

An egg flies in from off.

It hits TOBIN, or the Art, or nothing.

It does not break.

TOBIN lifts their gun and shoots off.

The sound of bullets striking EGGS off.

*Again off, the sound of EGGS collapsing
and dying.*

ASHER
...

TOBIN
That was your fault.

ASHER
(Looking from the body off to
the egg)

...

...

What?
TOBIN

Is that an egg?
ASHER

I don't care.
TOBIN

It didn't break.
ASHER

Silence.

*The lights blackout as the Clock chimes
Twelve.*

TWELVE

Lights rise.

TOBIN and ASHER guard the Art.

The RICH LOVERS admire the Art.

They both wear gold, shiny coats.

Lord Almighty.
RICH LOVER #1

It's beautiful.
RICH LOVER #2

I am genuinely experiencing a continuous orgasm. Of the eyes.
RICH LOVER #1

I can't look away.
RICH LOVER #2

I love you. But this is truly the most immaculate thing I've laid my eyeballs upon in my
life above this earth.
RICH LOVER #1

How did they realize eyeballs were ball-shaped? Who first figured that out?
RICH LOVER #2

I would fuck this Art. I would let it fuck me.
RICH LOVER #1

Did they take out somebody else's eye? Were they surprised at how much more there
was to it?
RICH LOVER #2

I would have this Art's babies. RICH LOVER #1

Did they take out their own? RICH LOVER #2

Carry them to term. Nine months. RICH LOVER #1

How many eyeballs are there in the world? RICH LOVER #2

Triplets. RICH LOVER #1

At least twice as many people. RICH LOVER #2

Quintuplets. RICH LOVER #1

I want to taste an eyeball. RICH LOVER #2

What? RICH LOVER #1

What? RICH LOVER #2

... ASHER

... TOBIN

Did you just say you want to taste an eyeball? RICH LOVER #1

Yes. I did. RICH LOVER #2

... RICH LOVER #1

I know a guy. I could make that happen.

Ah. I love you. RICH LOVER #2

I love you, too. RICH LOVER #1

The RICH LOVERS kiss.

They get really into it.

Eventually...

TOBIN clears their throat.

The RICH LOVERS break apart.

Beat.

What about you, Officers?
...
What about what?
You ever eat an eyeball?
No.
Can't say I have.
You sure?
That's a nice eye patch, there. You sure you didn't eat your eye accidentally?
...
I think I'd know.
I mean, I don't know, I've seen weirder things happen.
Me too.
I once saw a guy suck his own dick so hard that it came off.
I watched a triple homicide.

RICH LOVER #1

TOBIN

ASHER

RICH LOVER #1

ASHER

TOBIN

RICH LOVER #2

TOBIN

RICH LOVER #2

RICH LOVER #1

RICH LOVER #2

RICH LOVER #1

RICH LOVER #2

It went right down his throat. Like the perfect toss of a basketball.

RICH LOVER #1

She did it with a knife.

RICH LOVER #2

Nothing but net. Except the net was his esophagus. And his dick was the basketball.

RICH LOVER #1

She tied them all to folding chairs. And carved each of them apart over the course of eight hours.

RICH LOVER #2

It went all the way down to his stomach. He digested his own dick.

RICH LOVER #1

They were triplets. I don't know if that was why she murdered them, but I don't know if it wasn't.

RICH LOVER #2

Over the next 42 to 44 hours, he digested the entirety of his own dick.

RICH LOVER #1

From the first one, she took his face.

RICH LOVER #2

From the stomach to the small intestine.

RICH LOVER #1

From the second, she took his heart.

RICH LOVER #2

From the small intestine to the large intestine.

RICH LOVER #1

And from the third, she took his dick.

RICH LOVER #2

From the large intestine to...you know.

RICH LOVER #1

She didn't eat the dick, though.

RICH LOVER #2

He shit out his digested dick.

RICH LOVER #1

She put it on some mannequin. Along with the face and heart.

RICH LOVER #2

I know what you're thinking.

He put the shit that was his dick where his dick used to be and just used that from then on.

RICH LOVER #1

It was some freakish ritual or something. Maybe. Whatever it was she made, she prayed to it.

RICH LOVER #2

And you're right. That's exactly what he did. Told me to call him Shit Dick.

RICH LOVER #1

I should mention, I was hiding in the closet this whole time. But she didn't know I was there.

RICH LOVER #2

But I didn't. Because I thought it was gross.

RICH LOVER #1

Eventually, she stopping praying and left.

RICH LOVER #2

I told him to fuck off. And he did.

RICH LOVER #1

After a while, I left too.

ASHER

...

TOBIN

...

RICH LOVER #2

So yeah, we've seen weirder things.

RICH LOVER #1

A lot weirder.

ASHER

...

TOBIN

I think I'd know.

RICH LOVER #1

Yeah, you probably would.

RICH LOVER #2

Yeah, you probably would, I guess.

...

Do you think whoever took it out ate it?

TOBIN
Why are you assuming someone took it out?

RICH LOVER #2
Am I wrong?

RICH LOVER #1
Are we wrong?

TOBIN
...

RICH LOVER #2
What's the weirdest thing you two have ever seen?

RICH LOVER #1
Yeah. Regale us.

RICH LOVER #2
Please.

RICH LOVER #1
We're bored.

Silence.

TOBIN
Probably this.

RICH LOVER #1
...

RICH LOVER #2
...

RICH LOVER #1
Are you making fun of us?

RICH LOVER #2
We're baring our souls here.

RICH LOVER #1
Yeah.

RICH LOVER #2
Pretty disrespectful.

RICH LOVER #1
Pretty disrespectful.

RICH LOVER #2
We have a lot of clout, you know.

A lot. You know who we are?
RICH LOVER #1

We didn't mean to disrespect you.
ASHER

...
RICH LOVER #1

...
RICH LOVER #2

We're just Security.
ASHER

We haven't gotten to see as much of the world as you.
RICH LOVER #1

Huh.
RICH LOVER #1

That makes sense.
RICH LOVER #2

That does make sense.
RICH LOVER #1

Kinda makes me sad.
RICH LOVER #2

Have you ever even been out of the Nation?
RICH LOVER #1

Don't tell us you've never traveled out of the Nation?
ASHER

Can't say I have.
TOBIN

Nope.
RICH LOVER #2

OH MY GOD.
RICH LOVER #1

That makes me so sad.
RICH LOVER #2

OH MY GOD.
RICH LOVER #1

You just have to.

You just have to. RICH LOVER #2

Doesn't matter where. RICH LOVER #1

Although the Highlands are lovely. RICH LOVER #2

They ARE. RICH LOVER #1

But anywhere, really. RICH LOVER #2

Thank you for clarifying. RICH LOVER #1

Really. Thank you for clarifying. RICH LOVER #2
(To TOBIN)

I was so offended I was about to ask my lover if their eyeball guy could take your other eye.

Teach you a lesson not to be fucking rude.

But you know your place.

Yeah, you know your place. RICH LOVER #1

You really should travel if you can.

You really should. RICH LOVER #2

Might help you climb the ladder a bit. RICH LOVER #1

The most important part of self-improvement is the art of conversation. RICH LOVER #2

The most important part. RICH LOVER #1

The most important part. RICH LOVER #2

The most important part. RICH LOVER #1

The most important part. RICH LOVER #2

The most important part. RICH LOVER #1

...

You think we should make them practice, dear?

Maybe later. RICH LOVER #2

I could go for a Java.

That does sound nice. Dissect the new Art over a Java. RICH LOVER #1

That's what I was thinking! RICH LOVER #2

I love you. RICH LOVER #1

I love you, too. RICH LOVER #2

The RICH LOVERS kiss.

They get really into it.

Eventually...

They break apart.

Your eyeball guy. If I want one normal, one fried. Can he do that? RICH LOVER #2

I don't see why not. RICH LOVER #1

Oh, thank God. I'm so excited. RICH LOVER #2

Let's go. RICH LOVER #1

All right. RICH LOVER #2

Remember. Conversation. (To ASHER and TOBIN)

And travel. RICH LOVER #1

Travel and conversation.

RICH LOVER #2

Adieu.

RICH LOVER #1

Auf Wiedersehen.

RICH LOVER #2

The RICH LOVERS exit.

Silence.

You okay?

TOBIN

...

ASHER

Yeah.

You?

TOBIN

...

Same shit, different day.

ASHER

Yeah.

...

Yeah.

Silence.

What time is it?

ASHER

*The lights blackout as the Clock chimes
Thirteen.*

THIRTEEN - THE PREVIOUS DAY

Lights rise.

The Art is not there.

*On one side of the space, at a cafe table,
ASHER and BELLAMY.*

On the other, at another, TOBIN.

ASHER and TOBIN face opposite directions. They have not noticed one another, nor will they.

Everyone drinks Javas.

BELLAMY
So your profile said you work for Security?

ASHER
Yep.

BELLAMY
God, that must be exciting.

ASHER
Uh, not really.

BELLAMY
No?

ASHER
No, it's actually mostly just standing around. Guarding things.

BELLAMY
What kinds of things?

ASHER
Parties. Events. People.

BELLAMY
Sounds exciting.

ASHER
Well, we're always outside the room they're in.

BELLAMY
Oh.

ASHER
We are guarding the new Art tomorrow.

BELLAMY
Oh!

ASHER
Yeah, you should come by. If you're not busy.

Maybe I will. BELLAMY

Have to see how the rest of this goes first, don't we?

I'm having a nice time. ASHER

Me too. BELLAMY

Beat.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL enters, walking to TOBIN.

Sorry I'm late. LEOPOLD CALDWELL

You're fine. TOBIN

What the fuck is this? LEOPOLD CALDWELL

What? TOBIN

You didn't get me anything? LEOPOLD CALDWELL

I don't know what you drink. TOBIN

Yes, you fucking do. LEOPOLD CALDWELL

No. I don't. TOBIN

Two shots, Extra Dark, caramel fluid. LEOPOLD CALDWELL

I don't know what that means. TOBIN

Everybody gets caramel fluid. LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Not everybody. TOBIN

LEOPOLD CALDWELL
What are you drinking?

TOBIN
I don't know.

I just asked for Java.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL
Oh, get fucked.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL exits.

ASHER
Do you like working here?

BELLAMY
As much as anybody likes where they work.

ASHER
Yeah.

BELLAMY
Haha. Thankfully it only leaves me mostly burnt out at the end of the night instead of totally.

ASHER
You said you wrote music?

BELLAMY
When I can find the time, yeah.

ASHER
What do you play?

BELLAMY
Violin.

ASHER
Really?

BELLAMY
Yeah.

ASHER
That's so cool.

BELLAMY
You think? It's kind of nerdy.

ASHER
No, it's cool. It's, like, a delicacy. It's got history to it.

I guess I get that.

BELLAMY

*The sound of a loud, uncomfortable
buzzer.*

Sorry. Gimme a sec.

BELLAMY

BELLAMY stands and exits.

Silence.

*ASHER and TOBIN still do not notice one
another.*

LEOPOLD CALDWELL re-enters.

So what is this? What'd you want to talk about?

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Business first.

TOBIN

*LEOPOLD CALDWELL sighs, then
reaches into their spectacular coat and
pulls out a transparent bag full of pills.*

*They plop the bag on the table as TOBIN
pulls out a wad of paper currency.*

*TOBIN hands the currency to LEOPOLD
CALDWELL and picks up the bag of pills.*

You said these'll take care of me?

TOBIN

Oh yeah.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL
(Counting the money)

Like that.

(Combined with a mouth
sound for punctuation)

Good.

TOBIN

Wait.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Remind me, you trying to get high or trying to die?

The first one.

TOBIN

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

...

Give me those back.

TOBIN hands back the pills.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL grabs a different, but exactly the same, new bag of pills from their coat and plops them on the table.

Jesus Christ.

TOBIN

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Yeah, yeah.

TOBIN

You're a terrible drug dealer.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

You're a terrible Security Guard.

TOBIN

That's not fucking true.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Yeah, I guess.

TOBIN

Fuck you.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Fuck you.

TOBIN

Fuck you.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Fuck your mother.

TOBIN

Fuck your ancestors.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

They're dead. Necrophiliac.

TOBIN

Least I can get aroused without getting pissed on.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL
HEY. DO NOT FUCKING KINKSHAME ME.

TOBIN

...

You're right, that was a low blow.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Low blow.

TOBIN

Sorry.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Fuck.

Beat.

*BELLAMY enters the space with TOBIN
and LEOPOLD CALDWELL.*

They serve LEOPOLD CALDWELL a Java.

BELLAMY

Two shots, Extra Dark, caramel fluid?

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Thank you, darling.

BELLAMY

Thank you. Have a Java Day.

BELLAMY exits.

Beat.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

What the hell does that mean?

Have a "Java Day."

TOBIN

They have to say it.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Just because they have to say it doesn't mean they have to say it.

TOBIN

Sure.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

What is a not "Java Day?" What makes a day a "Java Day?"

The Java.

TOBIN

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

...

That's fucking dumb.

TOBIN

Didn't say it wasn't.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

I hate this place.

TOBIN

Yup.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

I have to go do an interview later. One of the farmers out in the rural country. For a fucking piece about leather. I have to ask him how he skins the cows for their hides. What makes a good hide? How do you remove the flesh from the hide? What's the best method for that? How quickly do you have to salt the hide to slow decomposition? How do you take all the hair off the hide?

BELLAMY enters the space with ASHER.

BELLAMY

Sorry about that.

ASHER

Don't be. I get it.

BELLAMY

Where were we?

ASHER

Violin.

BELLAMY

Yes. Do you play anything?

ASHER

Um...

No.

BELLAMY

You hesitated.

ASHER

I did.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

How do you tan a hide? What is tanning? Why do you do it? Why do you have to re-tan a hide? Why isn't once enough?

BELLAMY

So what does that mean? You do, but don't think you're good? Or you want to?

ASHER

Uh, the second one.

BELLAMY

That one's more fun.

ASHER

Yeah.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

How long does it take to dye the leather? Do you have to do it in a sterile environment? Are certain colors harder to achieve than others?

BELLAMY

What do you want to play?

ASHER

It's kind of dumb.

BELLAMY

I'm sure it's not.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Why do we finish the leather? What the hell does that mean? Are we cumming on it? How do you impress a pattern on it? What do you do with the rest of the cow?

ASHER

Harmonica.

BELLAMY

Fuck off.

ASHER

Yep.

BELLAMY

I love that.

ASHER

It's dumb.

BELLAMY

No, it's not. Why harmonica?

ASHER

I don't know, you know? I guess I just like the image. There's something about the sound of it that's always...said something to me. I don't know what.

BELLAMY

That's what matters.

ASHER

Yeah?

BELLAMY

Yeah.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Even once it's fucking done, there's more questions. What's the difference between high quality and low quality leather? Where does PLEATHER fit in? What is pleather? Who discovered pleather and how? Does it make a difference in the bedroom? Does pleather scientifically turn people on more or less than real leather?

BELLAMY

Violin wasn't a choice.

ASHER

No?

BELLAMY

No. I love it, don't get me wrong. I really do. But I didn't choose it. My parents did.

ASHER

Oh, wow.

BELLAMY

Yeah.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Like, I don't want to do that this afternoon, you know?

TOBIN

Huh.

Would think that'd interest you.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Why?

TOBIN

Your coat.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

...

Is this leather?

TOBIN

I don't know.

BELLAMY

I got lucky. That they chose something I fell in love with.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

This is the one thing I own that doesn't make me want to kill myself.

BELLAMY

It feels like the one thing I have that doesn't make me want to kill myself.

ASHER

Really?

TOBIN

Really?

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

I don't know. Probably.

BELLAMY

Yeah. It is.

Is that sad?

ASHER

Maybe?

TOBIN

Why don't you retire?

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

What?

BELLAMY

That might be the crippling depression talking. Sorry.

TOBIN

Why don't you retire?

ASHER

Don't be. I'm sorry.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Because I have fucking bills.

BELLAMY

Why are you sorry?

TOBIN

You have to make enough selling pills.

ASHER
I'm sorry that--you feel that way.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL
You think?

BELLAMY
I mean, it's okay. Everyone that feels way.

TOBIN
You have to make more doing that than reporting.

BELLAMY
Do you not feel that way?

LEOPOLD CALDWELL
The State pays pretty fucking well.

ASHER
I...

LEOPOLD CALDWELL
How else do you think I can afford a coat like this?

TOBIN
Pills.

ASHER
I don't. I genuinely don't.

BELLAMY
You've never thought about killing yourself?

LEOPOLD CALDWELL
What are you suggesting?

ASHER
No. I don't think about it.

BELLAMY
Interesting.

TOBIN
You could start your own business. Strike out on your own. Might make you happier.

BELLAMY
That's really interesting.

ASHER
Is it?

LEOPOLD CALDWELL
And why are you, of all motherfuckers, suddenly talking about enterprising?

I'm retiring. TOBIN

Fuck off. LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Fuck off. BELLAMY

What? TOBIN

What? ASHER

You're a lying piece of shit, yes, you have. BELLAMY

You are not retiring. LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Yes, I am. TOBIN

No, I haven't. ASHER

Everyone has. You don't have to lie about it. BELLAMY

You're lying. LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Nope. Just did. TOBIN

What? LEOPOLD CALDWELL

What? ASHER

I get that you're trying to impress me, but lying isn't a good way to do it. BELLAMY

I'm not lying. ASHER

You fucking liar. LEOPOLD CALDWELL

I'm not lying. TOBIN

I swear.

ASHER

You're fucking lying.

BELLAMY/LEOPOLD CALDWELL

I'm not lying.

ASHER/TOBIN

Today's my last day.

TOBIN

BELLAMY

...

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

...

ASHER

...

Bellamy. I'm not trying to offend you.

BELLAMY

...

The sound of a loud, uncomfortable buzzer.

BELLAMY

Hold that thought.

BELLAMY stands and exits.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

So when I show up at fuck early o'clock? Tomorrow? You won't be there?

TOBIN

Nope.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

...

LEOPOLD CALDWELL starts to laugh.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL laughs.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Okay.

Okay. Okay.

What did you actually want to talk about?

That was it.

TOBIN

...

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

You're serious?

Never been more serious about anything.

TOBIN

LEOPOLD CALDWELL stares at TOBIN.

TOBIN stares back.

Well, shit.

LEOPOLD CALDWELL

Cheers.

TOBIN and LEOPOLD CALDWELL clink their Javas.

ASHER sits alone.

The lights blackout as the Clock chimes Fifteen.

FIFTEEN

Lights rise.

The Art is back.

TOBIN and ASHER guard the Art.

No one else is there.

It's Fifteen?

ASHER

Yup.

TOBIN

Great.

ASHER

Silence.

Can I ask you a personal question?

ASHER

I'd prefer you didn't.

TOBIN

...

ASHER

Did I do something to offend you?

What?

TOBIN

I get the impression you don't care for me.

ASHER

You get the impression I don't care for you?

TOBIN

Yes.

ASHER

What gave you that impression?

TOBIN

Everything. That you say. And do.

ASHER

...

TOBIN

Did I do something?

ASHER

You're not special. I don't care for anyone.

TOBIN

You seem like you especially don't care for me.

ASHER

This conversation certainly isn't helping.

TOBIN

Right.

ASHER

Right. Sorry.

Silence.

TAGGER enters, dressed in darker garb and something that obscures their face.

They say nothing.

Neither do ASHER and TOBIN.

TAGGER takes out a can of spray paint.

They shake it.

Oh my god.

TOBIN

...

ASHER

TAGGER starts to spray paint the wall.

Whether they paint something verbal, an image(s), or a combination of the two, it is explicit, vulgar, and not complimentary of the State.

As they paint:

Your turn.

TOBIN

What?

ASHER

Go fucking stop them.

TOBIN

Me?

ASHER

Yes, you. Do the goddamn job.

TOBIN

Right.

ASHER

Uh...

ASHER approaches TAGGER.

TAGGER does not stop painting.

Hello. Um.

ASHER

Please stop.

TAGGER does not stop.

Please stop doing that.

ASHER

TAGGER does not stop.

You need to stop doing that. Now.

ASHER

TAGGER does not stop.

Please stop.

ASHER

Shoot them.

TOBIN

If you don't stop, I am going to have to shoot you.

ASHER

TAGGER does not stop.

If you do not stop, I will have to shoot you.

ASHER

TAGGER does not stop.

You've warned them. Shoot them.

TOBIN

TAGGER does not stop.

Seriously. I will shoot you. I have to.

ASHER

TAGGER does not stop.

Please!

ASHER

TAGGER does not stop.

Shoot them, what the fuck?!

TOBIN

PLEASE STOP!

ASHER

TAGGER stops.

Stares at ASHER.

ASHER stares back.

TAGGER sprays ASHER in the eyes.

ASHER reacts, screaming in pain and covering their eyes.

TAGGER runs.

TAGGER exits.

TOBIN lifts their gun and shoots off.

The sound of bullets striking TAGGER off.

Again off, the sound of TAGGER collapsing and dying.

Silence, aside from ASHER'S pain.

TOBIN

(To ASHER)

You wanna know why I especially don't care for you?

Shit like that.

You're a fucking flower.

ASHER

...

Oh my god my eye.

They got my eye.

TOBIN

...

(Pointing off to the left)

There's a fountain that way.

ASHER

Could you just help me?

TOBIN

...

(Looking around)

...

Fucking come on.

The lights blackout as the Clock chimes Sixteen.

SIXTEEN

Lights rise.

TOBIN and ASHER guard the Art.

ASHER is now wearing TOBIN'S eye patch.

Both of TOBIN'S eyes are now visible, and neither of them have visible damage of any kind.

Silence.

ASHER
I can't believe you have both eyes.

TOBIN
Shut the fuck up.

ASHER
What the hell?

TOBIN
You tell anyone, I swear to God, I'll give you a fucking reason to keep that eye patch.

ASHER
Why would you lie about that?

TOBIN
News flash. I lie about everything. Dumbass.

ASHER
Why?

TOBIN
Because information is power, you fucking imbecile. If you don't understand me, if you don't know anything about me for sure, it keeps me in control.

ASHER
Why do you need to be in control?

TOBIN
...

If you have to ask that, you'll never understand.

ASHER
Understand what?

TOBIN
How things work.

ASHER

What?!

TOBIN

No wonder you never think about killing yourself.

ASHER

WHY IS THAT A PROBLEM?! WHY IS THAT SUCH A PROBLEM WITH EVERYONE?!

You say that like I'm the one with the problem!

TOBIN

You are. It's weird.

ASHER

No, it's not!

TOBIN

It really fucking is.

ASHER

...

Oh my god.

Oh, Jesus Christ, fuck.

TOBIN

Just shut the fuck up.

Finish today.

Silence.

ASHER

Life isn't about finding a reason to not kill yourself.

TOBIN

Then what the fuck is it?

ASHER

...

Not that!

TOBIN

...

Sure.

Silence.

CRITIC #1 enters, dressed in critiquing uniform.

CRITIC #1
Good afternoon, Officers.

TOBIN
Do you think about killing yourself?

CRITIC #1
Bi-hourly.

TOBIN
(Re: ASHER)
They fucking don't.

CRITIC #1
Really?

That is queer.

ASHER
...

CRITIC #1
Would you care to explain yourself?

ASHER
I--

I shouldn't have to.

CRITIC #1
Ah! But you must.

Humanity is not allowed the lack of explanation. That majesty, we give only to Art.

Think upon that whilst I make my observances.
(Examining the Art)

This is the piece?

TOBIN
Yup.

CRITIC #1
Lord above.

It's beautiful.

I am genuinely experiencing a continuous orgasm of the eyes.

I cannot look away.

Is that gold?

ASHER

It is.

CRITIC #1

Good god, the insight. The prowess.

I would fuck this. I would let it fuck me.

I would have this Art's babies and carry them to term.

ASHER

What does it mean?

CRITIC #1

...

What?

ASHER

We don't really get it.

CRITIC #1

...

My sweet child.

If you have to ask that, you'll never understand.

ASHER

...

CRITIC #1

No wonder you never think about killing yourself.

ASHER

...!

CRITIC #1

I just informed you that Art does not owe us an explanation. Art owes us nothing but its existence. I should know. I am a critic. I critique things. I look at things, think thoughts about those things, and then write those thoughts down, turning them into critique. I used to critique for no compensation. But now? Critiquing things earns me my living. I am quite well-known for my critique. And I am held in high regard. I am also humble. And an alcoholic. As a critic, I do not think myself above anyone. Being a critic means that I am anyone. I represent anyone. The Everyperson. Yes, I am immensely knowledgeable about humans, Art, and all things in-between, but I am not above thee. I simply have the gall to yell "theater!" in a crowded fire. I have the wherewithal to point at something and say, "this is something that means something else."

Everyone makes things, my sweet, innocent, delicate, unblemished child, but only those who have what it TAKES...find the passion to create Art. Art with a capital A.

This is known. I have tried to make things. I failed. That is why I became a critic. Someone critiqued the thing that I had made. So I killed them. Before I was a critic, I was a madman. Am I mad today? Trick question. We are all mad. And critique is the only thing that keeps us sane. That keeps us pure. That keeps us alive.

A world without critique is a world without critique.

Have I made myself clear?

ASHER

...

No!

CRITIC #1

Oh. Bless your heart.

It is my wish you will one day understand.

ASHER

...

CRITIC #1

May I have intercourse with this?

TOBIN

No.

CRITIC #1

I figured. I had to try.

Thank you. Thank you for sharing this moment in time with me.

I will cherish this memory until I forget it.

Good day.

CRITIC #1 exits.

ASHER

...

...

CRITIC #2 enters, dressed in critiquing uniform.

CRITIC #2

Hey, Officers. This the new piece? I gotta critique it.

TOBIN

Yup.

CRITIC #2
(Examining the Art)

Hmm.

...

...

It's shit.

CRITIC #1
(Yelling from offstage)

YOU SON OF A BITCH!

CRITIC #1 re-enters, beelining for CRITIC #2.

Over the following, they put them into a chokehold and choke them out.

CRITIC #1
YOU TAKE THAT BACK! YOU TAKE THAT BACK RIGHT NOW!

CRITIC #2
[Being choked sounds].

CRITIC #1
THIS ART IS NOT SHIT! YOU ARE SHIT! IT IS YOU WHO ARE SHIT!

CRITIC #2
[Being choked sounds].

CRITIC #1
YOU ARE UNWORTHY TO LOOK UPON ITS GREATNESS! I SHOULD PLUCK OUT THINE EYES!

CRITIC #2
[Being choked sounds].

CRITIC #1
SLEEP!

SLEEP!

SLEEP!

SLEEP.

SLEEP.

Sleep.

Sleep.

Sleep.

That's it.

That's it.

Sleep now.

Sleep.

Sleep.

*CRITIC #1 lets go of CRITIC #2, now
passed out on the ground. Maybe dead.*

Beat.

CRITIC #1
(Breathing hard)

...

...

Some people just...

Some people just don't appreciate subtlety, you know?

Silence.

CRITIC #1 exits.

Silence.

ASHER
(Re: CRITIC #2)

They're not getting up.

TOBIN

Just put 'em with the others.

*The lights blackout as the Clock chimes
Eighteen.*

EIGHTEEN

Lights rise.

TOBIN and ASHER guard the Art.

No one else is there.

Is it Eighteen? ASHER

Yup. TOBIN

Bathroom break? ASHER

Yup. TOBIN

Do you want to go first? ASHER

You go. TOBIN

Okay. ASHER

ASHER turns and exits.

TOBIN is left alone.

Silence.

SANDY DANIELS enters, rolling two suitcases behind them.

Excuse me? SANDY DANIELS

... TOBIN

Excuse me? SANDY DANIELS

TOBIN
Don't need to talk to me to look at the damn thing.

SANDY DANIELS
I'm not here for the Art. I am looking for you. And your partner.

TOBIN
Why?

SANDY DANIELS
(Extending a hand that TOBIN
doesn't take)

Sandy Daniels. I have a degree in talking.

Right. You must be Asher.

TOBIN

Tobin.

SANDY DANIELS
Ah. I was told Officer Tobin had only one eye. Wears an eye patch.

TOBIN

Yep.

SANDY DANIELS

...

Yes, anyway, I handle the Caldwell family's legal affairs.

TOBIN

So you should probably be bothering them, right?

SANDY DANIELS

Normally, yes. Some circumstances have arisen.

TOBIN

What? Leopold finally kill themselves?

SANDY DANIELS

Yes. Actually.

TOBIN

...

What?

SANDY DANIELS

They killed themselves. This afternoon.

TOBIN

...

SANDY DANIELS

I understand how hard it must be to hear the news.

TOBIN

...

SANDY DANIELS

And, of course, I offer my sincerest condolences.

TOBIN

...

SANDY DANIELS

From what I have been led to believe, you two shared a cordial and sensible relationship.

TOBIN

How'd they do it?

SANDY DANIELS

What's that?

TOBIN

Pills? They overdose?

SANDY DANIELS

No. Uh, they...drowned.

TOBIN

Drowned?

SANDY DANIELS

In their bathtub.

It was full of their own urine.

To the brim, actually, it was remarkable. I have no idea how long it would take a human to produce that amount.

TOBIN

Good for them.

SANDY DANIELS

I'm sorry?

TOBIN

Nothing.

Thanks for the shit news. Now fuck off.

SANDY DANIELS

...

Um. I still have to--

TOBIN

What?

SANDY DANIELS

Have no fear. You make me quite uncomfortable. Your shtick is very effective. I will leave posthaste. I just have to give you these suitcases.

TOBIN

...

They left us their shit?

SANDY DANIELS

Everything. Actually.

To you, their entire pill collection.

To your partner, Asher. Their coat.

TOBIN

(Cracking an expression that
is not necessarily a smile, but
certainly not a frown)

...

Leopold left the rookie their coat?

SANDY DANIELS

Yes.

TOBIN

That's funny.

SANDY DANIELS

Is it?

Haha.

TOBIN

Shut up.

SANDY DANIELS

Okay.

(Re: the suitcases)

Should I just leave these here?

TOBIN

Yeah, fuck off.

SANDY DANIELS

(Fucking off)

Very nice talking to you, Officer.

*SANDY DANIELS exits as ASHER re-
enters.*

As they pass each other:

SANDY DANIELS
(To ASHER)

Merry Christmas!

ASHER

What?

But SANDY DANIELS is gone.

Beat.

ASHER

Who was that?

(Re: the suitcases)

What are these?

TOBIN

...

ASHER

Tobin?

TOBIN

Hey, come over here.

ASHER

Is everything okay?

TOBIN

Just come over here.

I gotta tell you something.

*The lights blackout as the Clock chimes
Nineteen.*

NINETEEN

Lights rise.

TOBIN and ASHER guard the Art.

No one else is there.

Silence.

ASHER is not doing the best.

ASHER

...

...

Can I ask you something? TOBIN

... ASHER

What? ASHER

Never mind. TOBIN

No! No. Please. ASHER

I just can't believe you're initiating a conversation.

Okay, fuck you. TOBIN

Sorry. Please. Please, I can't stand here in silence anymore. ASHER

Please.

Why'd you take this job? TOBIN

... ASHER

I don't know. Why did you?

No, fuck you. Why did you? TOBIN

... ASHER

ASHER shrugs.

You went to School, right? TOBIN

Yeah. ASHER

You get the degree? TOBIN

Yeah. ASHER

TOBIN

So you could have done anything. Food Service. Trade Service. Hell, the military's always bombing somebody.

Why'd you pick this?

ASHER

I guess...

I don't know. I guess...

I thought'd be...

Easy.

TOBIN

...

Easy?

ASHER

Yeah.

Easy.

Beat.

TOBIN cracks a smile.

Laughs.

The most they have all day.

Maybe in their entire life.

ASHER slowly joins in the laughter.

Laughter.

It subsides.

TOBIN

You think this shit is easy?

ASHER

...

No, I--

TOBIN

It is.

It is? ASHER

Yeah. Easiest fucking job in the world. You're goddamn right. TOBIN

... ASHER

What's wrong? TOBIN

I...me. I think I was wrong. ASHER

I think you're wrong.

All we do is stand here all day. TOBIN

Yeah, but it's not easy. ASHER

No? Maybe it is. Maybe you're just making it harder than it needs to be. TOBIN

You know why I joined?

Just wanted to be able to legally kill someone I didn't like.

... ASHER

TOBIN laughs.

How are you like this? ASHER

What? TOBIN

I don't understand you. ASHER

Well, I don't understand you. Fucking weirdo. TOBIN

Killing people shouldn't be easy. ASHER

TOBIN

Yeah, but it is.

Spoken like somebody who doesn't want to kill themselves.

ASHER

Stop saying that. Please.

TOBIN

Why? What are you gonna do?

ASHER

I'm not going to do anything, just please stop.

TOBIN

It's not normal.

ASHER

Neither are you! You need to talk to someone!

TOBIN

Talking to you.

ASHER

A professional! Who's qualified to unpack your shit!

TOBIN

Oh, doctors? Sure.

Rather kill myself than pay someone to talk at 'em for an hour.

ASHER

Then fucking do it!!

Beat.

TOBIN

Excuse me?

ASHER

Fucking kill yourself, then!! If it's so normal! If it's so reasonable! Just do it!

You said it, "bullet to the head," just go ahead and do it already!

TOBIN

...

ASHER

What are you waiting for?

Fucking come on, you pussy!

You scared bitch! Do it!

TOBIN

...

ASHER

...!

TOBIN

...

ASHER
(Pointing their gun at TOBIN)

DO IT!

TOBIN

...

ASHER

COME THE FUCK ON!!

TOBIN

...

ASHER

If you don't do it, I will. I swear to God.

TOBIN

...

...

No, you won't.

ASHER

...

...

...

ASHER puts down their gun.

ASHER

No.

But neither will you.

Because if you really wanted to kill yourself, you'd have done it by now.

TOBIN

...

It's a little more complicated than that.

Why? How?
ASHER

TOBIN gestures to the Art.

...
ASHER

What?

TOBIN
(Re: the Art)

That's how.

That's what it's about.

Of course you don't get it.

...
ASHER

It's not subtle.
TOBIN

...
ASHER

...

...

What time is it?

*The lights blackout as the Clock chimes
Twenty.*

TWENTY

Lights rise.

*TOBIN and ASHER stand around as
DUDE WITH TRUCK WE DON'T SEE
loads the Art onto a dolly or
transportation mechanism.*

DUDE WITH TRUCK WE DON'T SEE
Good golly. This cunter is heavy.

Still can't believe you two just get to stand here all day.

Wish my job was as easy as yours.

The Art is ready for transportation.

DUDE WITH TRUCK WE DON'T SEE
All right. I'm good here. You good?

TOBIN
Yup.

ASHER
Yeah.

DUDE WITH TRUCK WE DON'T SEE
All right. Go get fucked up. You've earned it. After a long, hard day of nothing.
(Examining the Art)

...

You know, I'll be honest. I'm pretty sure I get this one.

But that doesn't mean it ain't shit.

*DUDE WITH TRUCK WE DON'T SEE
exits, transporting the Art.*

ASHER AND TOBIN are alone.

There is nothing left to guard.

Silence.

TOBIN
So.

ASHER
So.

TOBIN
...

ASHER
...

TOBIN
Look, I, uh...

...

ASHER
...

TOBIN
You gonna be okay?

ASHER

...

Same shit, different day?

TOBIN

Hah.

There you go.

ASHER

Are you going to be okay?

TOBIN

No.

But that's okay.

Maybe I'll retire.

ASHER

Actually? Or are you just fucking with me again?

TOBIN

I don't know.

Guess we'll find out tomorrow.

They see each other for a moment.

Eye to eye.

TOBIN

Gimme' my fucking eye patch.

ASHER

Right. Um.

ASHER takes off the eye patch and hands it to TOBIN.

TOBIN

See you around.

TOBIN exits, wheeling their LEOPOLD CALDWELL suitcase behind them.

Silence.

ASHER takes in the Plaza.

It's cold.

They put their hands in their pockets.

*Surprised at feeling something unexpected
in one of them, ASHER removes
SKETCHER'S sketch from the pocket.*

They stare at it.

Consider it.

*Both the drawing and the address written
on it.*

Whatcha' looking at?
BELLAMY

*ASHER looks up to see BELLAMY, outdoor
winter wear over their work uniform.*

Bellamy?
ASHER

You said I should come by, yeah?
BELLAMY

I...didn't think I was ever going to see you again.
ASHER

Yeah, well.
BELLAMY

I figured if I stopped by you'd let me hold your gun.

Uh. I can't, actually. We're not allowed.
ASHER

I'm fucking with you.
BELLAMY

Sorry I reacted how I did. Yesterday. I forget not everybody vibes with that kind of shit.

That's okay.
ASHER

Apology accepted.

Exciting day?
BELLAMY

You know...
ASHER

It's funny.

Okay. BELLAMY

I don't know if I'd call it exciting. ASHER

Definitely interesting.

Mmm. BELLAMY

What's in the suitcase?

Oh, uh. ASHER

The reporter on Channel 8?

Leopold Caldwell? BELLAMY

Yeah. They killed themselves. ASHER

Ah, that sucks. BELLAMY

Yeah. ASHER

They left me their coat.

That's a bitchin' coat. You try it on? BELLAMY

Uh, no. ASHER

Do it. BELLAMY

Come on.

Okay. Uh. ASHER

ASHER unzips their LEOPOLD CALDWELL suitcase.

They remove the coat and put it on.

A moment.

BELLAMY

Well, do a spin or something. Wear it.

ASHER complies.

Beat.

BELLAMY

Huh.

ASHER

Is it too much?

BELLAMY

You'll grow into it.

ASHER

Right.

They share a laugh.

BELLAMY

(Examining the space where
the Art was)

So this is it, huh?

ASHER

What?

BELLAMY

This one actually looks nice. I usually hate them. Think they're pretty vapid.

ASHER

...

Oh! No, they took the Art away already.

BELLAMY

What?

Oh. So this is just the Plaza?

ASHER

Yeah.

BELLAMY

Ah.

Huh.

ASHER

...

Well, it still looks nice.

BELLAMY

...

Yeah.

ASHER

Yeah, it does, actually.

END OF PLAY.